



# ST GILES' LECTURES.

FIRST SERIES—THE SCOTTISH CHURCH.

## LECTURE V.

### THE REFORMATION, 1559 TO 1572 A.D.<sup>1</sup>

By the Rev. DONALD MACLEOD, D.D., Minister of the Park Church, Glasgow ; and one of Her Majesty's Chaplains.

IT may be well to give at the outset a brief *résumé* of the chief events between 1559 and 1572. Mary of Guise, who acted as Regent for her daughter, had put the preachers of the Reformed doctrine 'to the horn'—a process equivalent to proclaiming them rebels. This led to a civil war between the Lords of the Congregation, who had espoused the new opinions, and the Regent, assisted by a strong body of French veterans. In June 1560, the Regent died, and during the following month the Protestants, with the aid of an English army, obtained the mastery. The *Confession of Faith* was immediately afterwards accepted by the Scottish Parliament. Next year Queen Mary

<sup>1</sup> The following authorities, among others, have been consulted : Laing's edition of Knox's Works ; *Booke of the Universall Kirk* ; Sir David Lindsay's Works ; Peterkin ; *Register of the Scotch Privy Council* ; the Histories of Wodrow, Calderwood, Keith, Tytler, Robertson, M'Crie, Froude, Cunningham, and Burton ; Sprott's preface to *Book of Common Order* ; Schierns' *Bothwell* ; *Life of Kin kaldy*, &c.

arrived from France, and began gradually to increase her influence in the hope of ultimately restoring Romanism. Her marriage to Darnley was connected with this design, and might have led to serious results, had not the assassination of Rizzio in 1566, and the murder of Darnley in 1567, plunged the country into new confusion. The surrender of the queen at Carberry-hill, and her defeat at Langside the following year, completed for a time the ruin of Mary's power in Scotland. The Regent Moray, during his brief career, gave for the first time the sanction of the Crown to the Reformation; but his death in 1570 involved the country again in civil war. Until 1573, the Queen's party, under the leadership of Maitland of Lethington and Kirkaldy of Grange, held Edinburgh Castle. In the five years from the abdication of Mary at Lochleven, till Edinburgh Castle fell in 1573, no fewer than four regents were appointed; and of these two were assassinated. The war was bitter and bloody, but ended in the final overthrow of the hopes of the queen, and, with her, of the Romish Church in Scotland.

The time had now arrived when the final issue betwixt Romanism and Protestantism was to be tried in Scotland.

It was June 1559, and Perth was full of determined men, who, laying aside for the time steel jacket and morion, so as not to appear openly in arms against the government, had gathered to display their sympathy with the Reformers. The Queen-Regent, Mary of Guise, had mustered her forces at Stirling, and had vowed that though 'the preachers preached as truly as St Paul,' she would silence them. On the 25th of the month John Knox arrived at Perth, and the cause of the Reformation passed into the strong hands of the man who, within a year, was to carry it to victory.

When Knox began the great struggle of his life, he was upwards of fifty-four years of age. He had passed through many experiences. For ten years he had been a priest of the

Romish Church: he had stood sword in hand beside George Wishart, when he, so soon to become a martyr, preached in the Lothians: he had shared the rough fortunes of the garrison of St Andrews: he had been for nearly two years a galley-slave, now sweltering under the burning sun of the Loire, and now chained to the oar on the German Ocean: for four years he had ministered in England, and, alien as he was, had risen through sheer force of character to be one of the king's chaplains and his personal friend, to find himself consulted on delicate affairs affecting the Church, and to have a bishopric within his gift: he had lived for several years on the Continent in close intercourse with some of the keenest intellects of that or any other age; and when he now left his foreign home, it was amid the 'weeping of grave men' who had learned to love as well as to venerate him. Although he had hitherto been only for a comparatively short period actively engaged as a preacher in his native land, yet he was already recognised as the leading man of his party. His correspondence abroad had been extensive, and his influence powerful. Thus ripe in experience and worn with hard service, he threw himself into the front rank of the Reformation; and, as if possessed of some inherent right, he was accepted from the first as its chief. 'I assure you,' said Randolph, years afterwards, in a letter to Secretary Cecil, 'the voice of that one man is able, in an hour, to put more life in us than six hundred trumpets continually blustering in our ears.'

To know John Knox is to know the Scotch Reformation, for he embodies at once the virtues and the faults which characterised the movement. It is no exaggeration to say that during the stirring period under review his voice was more powerful than that of the sovereign or of any statesman. He was pre-eminently patriot as well as preacher, statesman as well as ecclesiastic. Many of the state-papers now preserved in the English Records Office are in his handwriting, and are known to have been his composition. His influence,

while founded on the response which the conscience of the nation gave to the truth he preached with a voice of thunder, did not lack the support that such carnal weapons as sword and spear supplied. He had only to issue his summons, and thousands of steel bonnets were ready to march across moor and over mountain to enforce his policy. For years the General Assembly was more representative of the popular will than was the secular government. It is true that the preachers did not always gain the day against the barons; but when they failed, it was on points which were not calculated to rouse enthusiasm. It was not to be expected that the people would rush to arms when the question in dispute was the amount of stipend to be paid to ministers and schoolmasters, or when the sackcloth sheet was to be enforced on the unwilling lords. On these two points, the Church certainly failed in its contention with the Privy Council and the Parliament; but on all others the voice of the General Assembly was practically the voice of the nation. And Knox was the very soul of the Assembly. There were others there—Willock, Craig, Winram, Erskine of Dun, men of learning and force of character—whose names are not unworthy to be compared with his. The Reformation certainly owed much to the great ability and statesmanship of the Regent Moray; but Knox was its embodiment. We shall therefore deal with the Reformation and Knox as identical terms, and speak of the *Confession of Faith* as Knox's Confession; of the *Book of Common Prayer* as Knox's Liturgy; of the Genevan Catechism and Psalm-books as Knox's Catechism and Psalm-books; and of the *Book of Discipline* as an expression of his genius. We shall in this way be able, without any sacrifice of historical truth, to create a more living picture of the forces then at work, by investing them with a certain personal interest.

I propose to direct your attention to two chief topics: I. The Church system and general polity of the Reformation; and II. The character and work of Knox.

I. The fundamental principle of the Reformation was the paramount authority of Holy Scripture. Not the Church alone, but the nation and every member of the nation were bound to obey the Word of God. The Church and the nation were with Knox identical terms; and not with him only, for indeed neither Romish Church nor Protestant, no statesman or theologian of that time, ever dreamed of civil government being purely secular. Voluntaryism in the modern sense was not even discussed. The battle, therefore, which had primarily to be waged, was between the authority of Scripture and the authority of the Pope. The Reformation under Knox did not turn on questions of ecclesiastical order, like the later contest between Prelacy and Presbytery. The peculiar claims of Presbytery were as yet scarcely asserted, though they were acted upon. Nor did it turn then, as it did nearly a century afterwards, on the lawfulness of Liturgies. It was a contest, as Knox would unhesitatingly have phrased it, betwixt the authority of God as given in His Word, and the authority of all the Bishops, Cardinals, and Councils who dared to oppose or add to that Word. The one was true, the other was false; the one was of God, the other of man. With such convictions regarding the absolute rule of Scripture, he could make no compromises. The duty of the Church was to make known what the Scriptures taught; and, unless contrary Scripture could be shewn, it was the duty of king and people to submit.

This principle was entirely different from that which primarily determined the Reformation in England. With Henry VIII. the chief question was the supremacy of the crown, and as long as authority was transferred from the Pope to the English monarch, he cared little for any change in doctrine or in ritual. For many years the mass was virtually retained, and the desire of the king to preserve historical continuity prevented all sudden changes in public service. But in Scotland the Reformation was the work of the people, and

effected in spite of the Executive. The barons, with a few exceptions, cared little for the doctrines of the preachers. Nearly all of them were governed by purely selfish motives, and many of them were ready to return to Rome, as some did return, when the Reformation no longer served their interests. The movement was essentially a popular movement, consequent on newly awakened religious convictions, and partaking of the excitement which usually accompanies such outbursts. A great modern authority has told us that the law of reaction is the true key to history, and the saying finds a vivid illustration here. The rupture with the past was complete. At one bound the Church leaped over ten centuries, and went back to the Scriptures and the early Fathers. Much that was beautiful and reverent may thereby have been sacrificed, but the principle was the only logical one by which the popular movement towards reform could then have been conducted.

The greatness of Knox can be measured better by what he tried to build up than even by his intrepidity and firmness in attacking the errors and corruptions which had demoralised both the Church and Society. We stand amazed at the rapidity with which the Church of the Reformation was furnished not merely with a Confession of Faith, but with a richness and variety of instrumentality, in startling contrast to the denuded and unsystematic condition of the Church now.

We shall describe the system which it was then proposed to establish, under the following heads: (1) The doctrine of the Church; (2) The worship of the Church; (3) The discipline of the Church.

(1) In four days after Commission had been given by the Scotch Parliament of 1560 to Knox and his four associates to draw up a statement of doctrine, they were able to lay before it a Confession of Faith which may in many respects be favourably compared with the later symbol of the Westminster Divines. It was not the first experience which Knox had in drawing up a doctrinal system. He had assisted at the revision of the English

Articles of Edward VI. in 1552, and had himself compiled a Confession for the English congregation of Geneva. The Scotch Confession, however, while betraying acquaintance with other models, is original, independent, and masterly. It is divided into twenty-five sections, treating of the principal subjects with which it is the province of theology to deal. The general scope of the treatment is Calvinistic, as might have been expected from the relationship of Knox and the Reformers generally to the great Genevan doctor; nevertheless, the spirit of the whole is broader, more human, and, if we might use the expression, more modern than that of the Westminster Standards. So satisfactory did it appear to such a man as Edward Irving, that he used to read it twice a year to his London congregation. 'This document,' he says, 'is written in the most honest, straightforward, manly style, without compliment or flattery, without affectation of logical precision or learned accuracy, as if it came fresh from the heart of laborious workmen, all day long busy with the preaching of the truth, and sitting down at night and embodying the heads of what they continually taught. Its doctrine is sound; its expression is clear; its spirit is large and liberal; its dignity is personal and not dogmatic, and it is redolent with the unction of holiness and truth.' So also does another authority, widely removed from Irving, speak of it. 'As far back as the Reformation,' says Dean Stanley, 'there were indications of deeper insight—exceptional and quaint, but so expressive as to vindicate for Christianity, even then, the widest range which future discoveries may open before it. In the first Confession of John Knox, the Reformers had perceived what had been so long concealed from the eyes of the Schoolmen and the Fathers—that the most positive expressions, even of their own convictions, were not guaranteed from imperfection or mutability; and the entreaty with which that Confession is prefaced, contains at once a fine example of true Christian humility, and the stimulus to the noblest Christian ambition:

“We conjure you if any man will note in this our Confession any article or sentence repugnant to God’s Holy Word, that it would please him of his gentleness, and for Christian charity’s sake, to admonish us of the same in writing, and we upon our honour and fidelity do promise him satisfaction from the Holy Scriptures, or due reformation of that which he shall prove to be amiss.”’ For nearly a hundred years this Confession was the only recognised standard of the Church of Scotland. The greatest battles the Church ever waged were fought under it. It was the authoritative creed of the Melvilles, the Hendersons, the Rutherfords, and must ever be regarded as an extraordinary evidence of the intellectual grasp and theological attainment of those who, in four days, drew up such a document to be adopted by the legislature of their country.

(2) But Knox had mature views regarding the necessity of furnishing the Church with a suitable guide for its worship, as well as its faith. Hitherto, the Protestants had been in the habit of using the English Liturgy of Edward VI. ; but John Knox had had a twofold experience regarding Liturgies. He was intimately acquainted with the Anglican Prayer-book of that time ; and he had been forced more than once to discuss its merits. He was also familiar with the Liturgy of Geneva, and as soon as he could assert his influence, he did not hesitate to recommend the substitution of the Swiss Prayer-book for that of England. He disapproved of what he termed the ‘mingle-mangle’ of the Anglican Liturgy. He noticed how much room was still given in it for customs that might lead back to superstition, and for statements that might naturally reintroduce in substance the very doctrines of priestly power against which he had contended. And, in spite of all that England owes to her Prayer-book—the grandest devotional service ever furnished to a Christian Church—we cannot, in the light of modern controversies, deny that Knox had some ground for the suspicions which he entertained as to the dangers that might accrue from the ambiguous character of many

passages. He accordingly persuaded the Assembly to take the Genevan Prayer-book as a basis; and in four years afterwards, what is popularly termed Knox's Liturgy became the Service-book of the Church of Scotland. With the exception of one or two passages that are coloured with the passionate feeling of the time, it is a dignified and impressive Liturgy, not altogether unworthy to be compared with that of the sister Church. The services are copious and varied. There are forms of prayer for public worship, for the administration of the sacraments, for marriage, for visitation of the sick; besides services for special occasions, such as the ordination of ministers, the observance of fasts, and the administration of ecclesiastical discipline. A comparatively large provision was also made for praise, hymns as well as psalms being printed with fixed tunes, and care taken that the people should be taught to sing them well. After the issue of the *Psalter* in 1564, there commenced those interesting institutions called 'Sang Schules,' which not only stimulated the study of music in Scotland, but secured great efficiency in congregational singing. We find, for example, an instance of as many as two thousand people singing the second version of the 124th Psalm, to the very music to which it is still sung, and able to do so with a harmony in four parts.

The Liturgy of Knox was not imposed with exclusive strictness, for it might be used merely as a guide, and room was expressly afforded after sermon for extempore prayer. Yet there can be little doubt that the practice of the Church for many years was towards a comparatively strict use of the Prayer-book. It was enjoined that in all large towns prayers should be read daily in church, except when the week-day sermon was preached; and in other places, not supplied with a fixed ministry, the 'reader' was to gather the people at least once a week, for the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and of the prescribed prayers. For a hundred years this Liturgy of Knox was the law of the Church of Scotland, and for about seventy

years it was universally observed. Its abandonment was in consequence not of Scotch or Presbyterian influence, but from the teaching of English sectaries; and by a strange reversal of modern associations, it was rebuked by the General Assemblies of that time as an 'innovation.' As in the case of the *Confession of Faith*, still more in regard to the devotional equipment of the Church, we may look back to the earlier years of her history with feelings of regret, that what appears the healthier, richer, and more efficient system of our first Reformers should ever have been superseded. Besides the Liturgy, a Catechism was supplied for the instruction of children, to which were attached forms of prayer for daily use in the household, for grace before meat, and for special occasions. The Church thus took a powerful grasp of the religious necessities of the country, and met its requirements with an almost imperial plan of Christian training. Nothing essential was left to the amateur efforts of individuals or voluntary societies, but a well-considered scheme was at once established, practical and far-reaching, and fortunately not hindered in its application by sectarian division within the dominant Protestantism.

(3) The *Book of Discipline* is perhaps even a greater testimony to the patriotism and statesmanship of Knox. It was a book of discipline in the sense of the Latin *Disciplina*—a book of training—the statute-book of the Church, in which his plan for educating the people as a Christian commonwealth was exhibited. It therefore embraced not merely the correction of morals, as the term 'church discipline' usually signifies, but the whole polity of the Church, as distinct from its creed or the order of its worship. It includes the organisation of the Church in respect of its office-bearers; the regulation of schools and colleges with their endowments, and the nature of the education to be imparted; the maintenance of the poor; and the principles on which ecclesiastical censures are to be administered. We shall take a brief survey of each of these important subjects.

(a) *The Organisation of the Church.*—It would be difficult to rank under any of the usual ecclesiastical systems the type of Church organisation which prevailed during the first twenty years of the Reformation. Knox did not entertain any very strong beliefs as to the necessity of ordination, although his views respecting the sacraments were 'higher' than what are now practically held. He did not believe that any special grace or Apostolic descent of authority was received from the mere laying on of hands. Personally, he regarded the call of the people of God (for from the first the Church recognised the popular voice in the election of ministers), the trial of gifts by the Church, and due appointment, as all that was necessary for valid orders. But whatever value may lie in the doctrine of Apostolic succession, the Church of Scotland, in the days of Knox, and certainly the Church since 1638, did possess it through its presbyters. Nearly all the first ministers of the Church had previously been priests, and although irregularity in the form of ordination crept in during the first twenty years of its history, yet this quickly vanished with the *Second Book of Discipline*, and the High Church Presbyterianism of the Melvilles. The validity of orders through the line of Presbyters was then recognised and acted on by the Church of England, and by all the churches of the Reformation. The framers of the Thirty-nine Articles, and such divines as Tillotson, Grindall, and even the High Church Bancroft, acknowledged the position of those ordained by presbyters alone. Presbyterian ministers were freely admitted, and even made bishops, without reordination.<sup>1</sup> But the point of orders was subordinate in the days of Knox to the more difficult problem, as to how the spiritual wants of the country were to be overtaken at all. The first General Assembly consisted of forty-two members; and of these only six were ministers. On counting up the names of all

<sup>1</sup> See a series of papers on Apostolic Succession in the *Christian Instructor* for 1838; also a Sermon preached in 1873 before the Synod of Aberdeen, by Rev. Geo. W. Spratt.

those, lay or clerical, throughout the country, who, in addition to the members of Assembly, were considered suitable for acting as ministers or readers, only forty-three could be named. There were therefore not ninety persons in the whole country on whom the first General Assembly could rely for assistance in the great work committed to its charge. Common-sense dictated the one course which was fitted for utilising these small resources. The basis of the Church system was Presbyterian, for it consisted of the three offices of presbyter, elder, and deacon—whose functions were similar to those now associated with the names—but following the example of some of the foreign Churches, Scotland was divided into ten dioceses or districts, over each of which it was proposed that a Superintendent should be appointed. These superintendents were not in any sense bishops. They might be laymen, were under the authority of the Assembly, and had no exclusive right to ordain. There was also another extremely useful office recognised—namely, that of Readers. Teachers or Doctors were also recognised as Church functionaries. This system was the best possible for the time. It is stamped with the common-sense of Knox, who, anything but an ecclesiastical doctrinaire, took the readiest instruments for accomplishing the work in hand. The effect justified the practical wisdom of the Reformer, for so great was the advance that, in 1567, there were about two hundred and eighty-nine ministers and seven hundred and fifteen readers, with five superintendents, labouring in the Church.

(b) The provision made for ecclesiastical discipline was ample, through all the various stages of humiliation, from privy censure to excommunication. The severity with which it was exercised is a painful feature in the history of the Reformation. It was one of the few customs of the Romish Church which the Protestants preserved. But while we may feel justified in condemning them, we must not forget that such efforts were urgently needed in order to create a higher

public tone on questions of morality. Everything we know tends to prove that all ranks of society were steeped in shameless coarseness. The Reformers, as Christian men, could not admit the excuse 'that other countries were equally bad, or that such was 'the habit of the times.' They had their Bibles in their hands, and knew what God required of His Church; and so they determined to purify it by reproofing wrongdoers, as well as by preaching the gospel. It is to their credit that they were impartial as well as brave in their rebukes. No class was spared. The Lord High Treasurer was dealt with as faithfully as the humblest peasant; and on none did the hand of the Church fall with greater severity than upon any minister overtaken in a fault. The result, for a time at least, and so far as appearances went, justified the stern *régime*. Knox could challenge the verdict of his contemporaries as to the beneficial effect upon society.

(c) The rest of the *Book of Discipline* referred chiefly to the uses to which the revenues of the ancient Church were to be applied. The property of the Romish Church was enormous, amounting to about one-half of that of the whole kingdom, and the Church, the poor, and the education of the people, were the three objects to which it was proposed to dedicate a proportion of these resources. A modest but sufficient provision was to be laid aside for the decent sustenance of the ministry; the deserving poor were to be supported in their own parishes at the sight of the elders and deacons; and the very highest possible education—far higher than ever has been attained since—was to be supplied to the people. The commonwealth had a right, Knox said, to assert a paramount claim on every child, and to compel it to be educated. If poor, their expenses were to be paid; but no father, of whatsoever estate or condition, was 'to use his children at his own phantasy,' but must 'be compelled to bring them up in learning and virtue.' Schoolmasters were accordingly to be attached to every church; while in 'upland' districts, the reader was to

attend to the necessities of the young. Grammar or secondary schools were to be erected in every considerable town; and the whole system linked on to the universities. In the parish school, instruction was to be given, not only in elementary subjects, but in the rudiments of Latin; while in the grammar-schools, the tongues—embracing Latin, French, and perhaps Greek—rhetoric, and philosophy, were to be taught. Once every quarter the pupils at all the schools were to be examined, and any scholar, however poor, shewing aptitude for learning, was to be directed in his studies, through the grammar-school to the university. The curriculum for such students was long and thorough, extending, in the case of the learned professions, to at least the twenty-fourth year of a man's age. Liberal endowments were proposed for the teachers and professors, and a splendidly equipped staff was to be appointed to each of the universities. For the maintenance of this magnificent national system, embracing the support of the poor, the efficiency of the Church, and the education of the whole body of the people, it was proposed to take as much as was requisite from the enormous endowments of the ancient Church. A grander scheme for the elevation of a people never emanated from the brain of patriot or statesman—and it was a scheme whose accomplishment was then quite within the power of the nation. If Scotland was, in one aspect of the polity, to be made a kind of modern theocracy, in which all departments of government were to be guided by Scriptural texts and examples, it was, according to another part, to be raised to the front rank among educated nations. The former design would undoubtedly have broken down when the relative functions of the civil and ecclesiastical jurisdictions came to be determined. For Knox drew no very distinct line betwixt the two. The State was as much bound to govern the Church and enforce Scriptural rule on its observance, as the Church was bound to press Scriptural rule on the State. But the educational project sketched by Knox is magnificent.

Such were the system, the creed, the worship, the polity of the Church of the Reformation ; and when we contemplate the massive structure thus planned in the space of four years, chiefly by the genius of one man, we know not which is the more prominent feeling—astonishment at the grandeur of the system, or indignation at the unprincipled cupidity of the nobility and barons which prevented its execution. For the barons, who were ready to adopt the *Confession of Faith*, refused the *Book of Discipline*. It was ‘but a devout imagination,’ said worldly-wise Lethington ; and he was right. Assent to abstract doctrines was very different from submission to any interference with dissolute living, and still more from thwarted avarice. ‘The belly hath no ears,’ replied Knox, who felt that reasoning and principle were alike thrown away upon the hungry landowners who had enlisted in the army of reform for the sake of the plunder consequent on its victories. There were doubtless conscientious and patriotic men like Argyll, Moray, and Glencairn among them, who were in full sympathy with the preachers ; but they were the exception. For years they had as a class been bribed either by England or France ; and they now displayed a rapacity, the disgrace of which can only be equalled by the injury inflicted upon the country. In vain the preachers protested. They alone remained pure of the taint of avarice. For years the ministers, cheated by false promises and resolutions of the Privy Council, and denied possession even of manse or glebe, lived in honourable beggary.

II. *Character and Work of Knox.*—Two figures stand out from the crowd in the stirring scenery of the Reformation in Scotland. John Knox and Queen Mary are the historical representatives of the two great currents of opinion and policy which then contended for the mastery. They were each endowed with an intellect of unusual vigour, with keen political insight, and with a most resolute will. Mary was

in her own way almost as remarkable as Knox. To quickness of perception, subtlety of project, and heroic bravery, she added a beauty and fascination which supplied exquisite instruments for her skilful and ceaseless diplomacy. She had all the artistic grace and charm of the Stuarts; and if some of their faults also, these were combined with greater mental power and force of character than were found perhaps in any other of her race. Every one must regard with generous pity the young girl whose misfortune it was to be cast into a position for which by temperament and education she was so utterly unfitted. We must admire her devoted loyalty to her creed—a virtue by which some others of her race also lost their crowns. But while doing so, we join issue with the romantic school which, affecting a sentimental loyalty to the Stuarts, would canonise Mary as a saint and martyr. We have a very different conviction regarding her. From the first, she only lacked opportunity to have extinguished the Reformation in a sea of blood; and in all her coquetting with the Protestants, the smooth glove she wore covered a gauntlet of steel. She had been taught as a girl to gaze upon the martyrdoms of which the Huguenots were the victims. For some time after her arrival in Scotland, she acted her part skilfully and without guilt; but the barbarous assassination of Rizzio, perpetrated under circumstances of the coarsest brutality, seems to have demoralised her finer nature. That terrible scene, when the poor wretch, clutching at his mistress for protection, was dragged forth to his doom by the hard-featured barons, and the still more terrible discovery of the complicity of her husband Darnley—had awakened a fierce desire for revenge. The malign influence of Bothwell completed the moral injury she had sustained, and all ended—God knows alone through what gradual steps she was led on!—in the terrible crime of Kirk-o'-Field.

John Knox has been the object of almost as keen detraction as Queen Mary, but the closer our examination, the more

we are forced to recognise in him one of the noblest men—sincere, truthful and brave—our country ever produced. He has been described as a rigid Puritan who frowned down laughter and innocent amusements; a ruthless iconoclast, to whom we are indebted for roofless cathedrals and ruined abbeys; as intolerant as any cardinal or inquisitor, exchanging the infallibility of the Pope for that of himself and the General Assembly. Men suppose they can trace the influence of Knox in the miserable barns which have taken the place of the old Gothic churches, and throw upon him the blame of the ugliness which has so long characterised our ecclesiastical system.

Now, we would not conceal the faults with which Knox is fairly chargeable. The language he employed—sometimes in public prayer—regarding the religion and character of Mary, seemed even to his contemporaries needlessly coarse and strong. His interviews with the Queen were marked not by the dexterity of the courtier, but by the unflinching faithfulness of a man to whom a great cause was intrusted. ‘I know that many have complained,’ he said on his death-bed, ‘much and loudly, and do still complain of my too great severity; but God knows that my mind was always free from hatred to the persons of those against whom I denounced the heavy judgments of God. . . . For a certain reverential fear of my God who called me, and was pleased of his grace to make me a Steward of divine mysteries . . . had such powerful effect as to make me utter so intrepidly whatever the Lord had put into my mouth, without any respect of persons. Therefore I profess before God and his own holy angels that I never made gain of the sacred word of God, that I never studied to please men, never indulged my own private passions or those of others, but faithfully distributed the talent intrusted to my care for the edification of the Church over which I did watch. Whatever obloquy wicked men may throw upon me respecting this matter, I rejoice in the testimony of a good conscience.’ ‘It was unfortunately not possible,’ writes Carlyle, ‘to be

polite with the Queen of Scotland, unless one proved untrue to the Nation and Cause of Scotland. A man who did not wish to see the land of his birth made a hunting-field for intriguing ambitious Guises, and the Cause of God trampled underfoot of Falsehoods, Formulas, and the Devil's Cause, had no method of making himself agreeable.' It must, however, be remembered that this method of speaking to a sovereign was not uncommon in that period. It may be paralleled by the language Latimer privately addressed to King Henry VIII., and by the sermons preached by Reginald Pole regarding the marriage of Anne Boleyn. There are indeed things which Knox has written that we wish he had never penned. The models he put before him were unfortunately borrowed more from the Old than from the New Testament ; and Samuel slaying Agag, Elijah executing the priests of Baal, the Israelites exterminating the Canaanites, and such-like events, were recognised not only as teaching general principles, but as affording to himself title to apply the principles, and to act towards Mary and her co-religionists with the rigour of ancient Judaism. The man, indeed, felt he had no choice. The true key to his severity is to be found in nothing personal, but in his deep awe of God's word and in the belief that he was God's prophet, sent to apply that word to every political as well as religious matter that might occur. 'I find no more privilege granted unto kings by God, more than unto the people to offend God's majesty,' were his grave words to Lethington ; but he adds : 'When kings do expressly oppose themselves to God's commandment, the people are bound to execute God's law upon them.' Such principles, when cautiously interpreted, are undoubtedly true, but they become dangerous if their application is to be left in the hands of every self-constituted judge of the occasion which renders their vindication necessary.

But without concealing those defects and exaggerations, we believe that Knox was the very opposite of what a certain type

of detractors would fain represent him. So far from being a sour Puritan, his history shews a man full of humour and *bonhomie*, with an intense sense of the ludicrous. Our space does not admit of our giving illustrations of the humour with which his history abounds. We would simply refer to the descriptions of the carrying 'the young Sanct Geile,' and of the fray between the partisans of the two bishops in' Glasgow Cathedral.

There was surely something of the geniality of Luther in one who on his death-bed caused a visitor 'pierce ane hoggit of wine which was in the cellar, and willed the said Archibald to send for more as long as it lasted, for he would never tarry until it were drunken.' He indeed denounced dancing at the court, and put down Maid Marian and the May-pole; but we have too much evidence as to the character of the dancing and of the popular sports of those times, not to attribute his condemnations to other causes than harsh Puritanism. He was certainly intolerant, but toleration in the modern sense is an anachronism in the sixteenth century. He insisted on the suppression of the mass, whether in the Queen's chapel or in the remote Baronial keep. On the authority of a verse in the Old Testament, he even urged the execution of the 'mass-mongering papists' as idolaters. But putting aside doctrinal beliefs, we must not forget that the mass was then the symbol of a system which was pledged to exterminate Knox and every Protestant. The Council of Trent was then issuing its decrees for the extinction of heretics, and the Catholic powers, including Queen Mary herself, were leagued for their execution. The dark-minded Philip was filling Spain with *autos-da-fe*; Alva was ravaging the Netherlands; the Duchess of Parma was crushing liberty in Holland; France was preparing for St Bartholomew; even Elizabeth of England was but a half-hearted Protestant. It would have required superhuman toleration in a man of the keen political insight of Knox to remain indifferent to the possible destruction of faith and liberty, of which every mass—

that was celebrated was practically the pledge. Even now we could not view with calmness a Queen in visible opposition to the Protestant faith, and bringing her priest with bell and candle to every castle she visited. Knox saw how Mary from the day of her arrival in Holyrood was by her bewitching grace acting as a solvent on the stern convictions of his associates. Moray for a time was fascinated; Lethington was won over. The men who tried to 'swim betwixt two waters' were increasing; Popery began to shew itself! It was necessary for Knox and the preachers to stand firm. The mass was idolatry; and if the country would escape the judgments with which God had visited the sins of the Kings of Judah and Israel, the Queen must not be privileged to disobey Jehovah. But his intolerance was in word only, for whatever he may have said or urged, it must be remembered that there was no martyrdom during the time Knox had influence. He was certainly intolerant in the modern sense; but it was precisely such intolerance as could alone have produced the Reformation. The colourless 'Liberal Thought' of the present day, with its hesitation as to all religious beliefs, would never have emancipated Scotland. It required the firm, almost relentless, grasp of determined men, who had no doubts, but who could boldly say, 'Thus saith the Lord,' as they hurled falsehood and superstition from their seats, and built up religion and political freedom.

It has long been the habit to refer every ruined shrine in Scotland to the vandalism of Knox and the Reformers; and there is perhaps no class of Scotchmen who condemn Knox on this account more than the landed gentry, who stand aloof from the Church of Knox. There is no class, however, who are less entitled to be heard in accusation. Knox did his best to check 'the rascal multitude' which ruined the churches of Perth and destroyed Scone. Cathedrals, abbeys, and churches were undoubtedly cleansed of their images, altars, and other superstitious symbols; and monastic establishments and one or two cathedrals received even a rougher handling. But the

destruction effected by the Reformers in a time of great popular excitement is not to be compared with that caused by the invading armies of England, and was infinitely less than what was produced by the sacrilegious penuriousness and carelessness of the Scotch heritors. Were we to trace the causes to which we must attribute, on the one hand, the utter ruin of so many ancient and noble piles, and on the other, the meanness of so many of the edifices which now serve as parish churches, it would be found that the connection is very slight with the Reformation or with any principle inherent in Presbyterianism. One of the keenest controversies Knox had with the Privy Council was to secure the repair of churches, 'in such a manner as appertaineth as well to the majesty of the Word of God as unto the ease and commoditie of the people.' The spirit of Puritanism imported into Scotland a century afterwards, undoubtedly did much to destroy the feeling of art among the people; but the expense of upholding the ancient buildings, the value of the lead and slates which protected them, and their convenience as quarries from which ready-made materials might be had for erecting farm-houses or mansions, have demolished our churches and abbeys infinitely more than ever Knox did.

But without dwelling further on the misrepresentations of which Knox has been the subject, let us glance at the work he accomplished besides that already sketched. One work of Knox was the creation of a new class in Scotland—the seed of the nation that was to be—religious, educated, strong in conviction even to bigotry, self-reliant, industrious and bold. Hitherto the feudal system had placed all the power of the country in the hands of the great lords and barons. The burghs had perhaps more than a semblance of freedom from feudal dependence, but it was little more than a semblance. Neither the lesser barons, living in their 'Peels,' round which clustered the cots of hinds and shepherds, nor the villagers dwelling near the parish church or by the great abbey, ever dreamed of

asserting their individual opinions or their rights. There was no middle class, there were no Commons to form a Third Estate along with the Crown and the temporal and spiritual peers. But the Reformation, as it was founded on an appeal to 'every man's conscience in the sight of God,' accompanied by enlightened instruction in Divine truth, produced the natural result of kindling a sense of personal responsibility in all who received it, and of emancipating the manhood of the country from the bondage of blind obedience to priest or baron. After the religious revolution of 1560, when the country was covered with evangelists, when the policy of the General Assembly found living voice in every pulpit, and when the mind of the leaders of the Church was expounded by every superintendent, minister, and reader, in all corners of the land, there came a mighty stirring of the slumbering masses. Men commenced to think for themselves, and to recognise their responsibility to God as members of the commonwealth. Conviction grew into devotion, and the Scotch small proprietors, burghers, artisans, and peasantry, beginning to breathe somewhat of the indomitable spirit which afterwards secured the freedom of their country and their faith, now grew into a powerful middle class—firm through conviction. 'It was not for nothing,' says Mr Froude, 'that John Knox had for ten years preached in Edinburgh, and his words been echoed from a thousand pulpits. Elsewhere the plebeian element of nations had risen to power through the arts and industries which make men rich—the commons of Scotland were sons of their religion. While the nobles were splitting into factions, chasing their small ambitions, taking security for their fortunes, or entangling themselves in political intrigues, tradesmen, mechanics, and poor tillers of the soil had sprung suddenly up into consciousness, with spiritual convictions for which they were prepared to live or die. The fear of God in them left no room for the fear of any other thing, and in the very fierce intolerance which John Knox had poured into their convictions, they had

become a force in the State. The poor clay, which a generation earlier the haughty barons would have trodden into slime, had been heated in the red-hot furnace of the new faith . . . . Scotch Protestantism was shaped by Knox into a creed for the people; a creed in which the 'Ten Commandments were of more importance than science, and the Bible than all the literature in the world; narrow, fierce, defiant, but hard and strong as steel.' The middle class which John Knox was inspiring with his own convictions, was the beginning of that Scotch people to whom we belong. The Scotch people have grown with the Scotch Church. The Church has been the palladium of popular liberty, the mother of education, the trainer of the people in truthfulness and in an independence regulated by a supreme loyalty to the Word of God.

The work of Knox in Scotland was felt far beyond the country in which he laboured. The entire population of Scotland at that period was about the same as that of Glasgow in the present day. But the victory of Protestantism in Scotland was more complete than in any other country in Europe, except perhaps the Republic of Geneva. The German Protestant States were as yet part of the Catholic Empire; the Protestants of Holland and the Netherlands were struggling to relax the grasp with which Spain was attempting to strangle their new beliefs; the policy of England was hesitating; but Scotland at one stride had passed out of the most corrupt ecclesiastical system in Europe into the purity of the primitive faith. This had its influence on contemporary history. It had a very marked influence then and afterwards upon England, and many a despairing heart abroad got new courage from the spectacle. But the political as well as religious principles which were then expounded scattered a seed which took root in other times and places. Cromwell, the Puritans—maligned as they are by those who enjoy the fruit of their struggles—the English Revolution of 1688, the constitutional monarchy of the present day, and America

as it now is, may trace the stream of their history to its fountain-head in the victory of Knox over absolutism and in the assertion of the supreme rule of Scripture.

The position of Knox and of the Reformation was long critical, and the difficulties which had to be contended with were enormous. Knox was well acquainted with the ceaseless diplomacy and 'practices' going on among the Catholic powers for the extirpation of heresy, but he could not have realised the danger in which his country more than once stood. The perils to which the Church was exposed from parties in Scotland were small compared with that which was threatened by larger movements, which, if successful, would have crushed liberty and religion from John o' Groat's to the Land's End.

There were two occasions on which foreign intrigue so supported the designs of Mary and the Catholic party in England and Scotland as to bring affairs to the very edge of a precipice over which Protestantism and liberty would have been hurled, and on both of these occasions the danger was averted by the occurrence of great crimes. Immediately before the assassination of Darnley the train had been skilfully laid for something being done 'for the restoration of the auld religion,' as the Queen herself confessed in her letter to Archbishop Beaton, her ambassador at Paris. We cannot here describe the particular steps which had prepared the possibility of her success. Point after point had been gradually reached, until the goal of her ambition was all but attained. Such of the Scotch Lords as had been the very soul of the Reformation were in banishment, and their estates were about to be confiscated; the power of the sword was for the first time in her hand; she had been able to restore the Bishops to their seats in Parliament; several powerful nobles had returned to the old faith; the mass was being celebrated with startling freedom, and friars were preaching in Holyrood; it was even said that new altars were ready to be placed in St Giles'. But at the

very moment when the plot had reached its crisis, Rizzio was assassinated, and the kingdom thrown into confusion. Had the Queen possessed the skill to have used that crime to her advantage, it might have been the means of strengthening her throne and of advancing her designs. But Mary could not forgive the outrage she had sustained at the hands of her husband, and her mad attachment to Bothwell, followed by the atrocity of Kirk-o'-Field, her subsequent reckless bearing, and her surrender at Carberry, led first to her compulsory resignation, and finally to her imprisonment in England. She was branded by the populace as an adulteress and murderess, and as far as the commons of Scotland were concerned, her influence sank with her reputation. The Reformation passed safely through its first great peril, and the Regency of Moray for a time gave security and the formal sanction of the crown to the Church as restored to purity.

Even the partisans of Mary, shocked by her follies, if not her complicity in the actual murder of Darnley, for a time abandoned their plots in her favour. But it was only for a brief time. Fotheringay, with its fair prisoner, soon became the centre of new 'practices.' Conspirators were busy among the English Catholics, and Spain once more took up the thread and began to spin new combinations for the overthrow of Elizabeth and the establishment of Romanism under Mary. She was to marry Norfolk, and Norfolk was to lead the Catholics of England to her side. Scotland became broken up into contending factions. The Queen found the ablest of all her counsellors in Maitland of Lethington, and he 'practised' with such effect among the nobles—who for different reasons, chiefly selfish, were jealous of the Regency—that a strong force was organised for the maintenance of her cause. Kirkaldy of Grange held Edinburgh Castle in her name. Dumbarton Castle, until taken by the extraordinary daring of Crawford of Jordanhill, protected her interests in the West. The Hamiltons, Buccleuch, Fernihirst, the reivers of the Border, Huntly, and

the men of Aberdeenshire and the North-east, espoused her cause. The country was for a time steeped in bloodshed. Money was freely poured into Scotland—now from France, and now from Spain—and used according to the policy of the moment. As the plot thickened, darker measures were projected. The Spanish Armada was to be anticipated. Plans were laid for the reception of a Spanish force, which the Duke of Alva was to land in Aberdeenshire. Had it not been for Knox and the men from Angus to the Lothians, from St Andrews to Glasgow and Galloway, who would have died for their religion, Maitland might possibly have secured the country. Alva was, as usual, dilatory. He perhaps recognised the difficulties which the firmness of the Reformers presented to the success of his project, but delay he did until the second great crime occurred in the Massacre of St Bartholomew, which blasted for ever the hopes of Mary and of Romanism in the kingdom.

Knox was indeed 'inflexible,' as Lethington wrote to the Queen. Although shattered in body through a stroke of apoplexy—having 'tacken gude nicht of this world,' and 'creiping upon his club' as he went to the kirk-session in St Giles'—yet the unquenchable fire flamed into its old strength as it was stirred by the treachery and danger he beheld on every side. For years the minister of this same church of St Giles—then the only church in Edinburgh—he had preached in it twice every Sunday, and thrice during weekdays. It was here that in the ears of lords and courtiers the impassioned preacher rang out the brave words that shaped the policy of the time. It was of his pulpit in this church he said: 'I am in the place where I must speak the truth, and the truth I will speak, impugn it who so list.' We cannot look round on these walls without seeing them repeopled with the men whose names still live—the young Lord James, the subtle Lethington, the wretched Darnley, the rough Bothwell, or the fierce Huntly drawing back with a scowl and 'tugging his bonnet over his eyes' as he winced under the fervid denuncia-

tions. It was here that the dark crowd of three thousand men gathered to listen to the funeral sermon over the dead Regent of happy memory. And now Knox, struggling with weakness, strove as of old to warn friends and foes. Edinburgh was then as a beleaguered city, and he was in the midst of danger. The roar of cannon disturbed the midnight as well as the day. The retainers of the Hamiltons, who bore him no good-will, might at any time stab him as they jostled along the causeway. A gun-shot came crashing into his room as he sat in his house down there in the Canongate. Kirkaldy of Grange did his best to protect him. His friends offered to form a body-guard for his defence; and chiefly to save them the risk of injury, he yielded to their petitions and went for a time to St Andrews—the city to him of so many memories. After he left Edinburgh (May 1571), it was for a time given up to the conflict between the castle and the supporters of the king. The Church was closed. Cannon were mounted on St Giles' steeple, and nothing was heard but the 'ringing of artillery.'

We cannot forbear giving here the well-known and graphic picture which James Melville, then a young student, draws of Knox's appearance when in St Andrews: 'I heard him teache there the prophecies of Daniel, that simmer, and the wintar following. I haid my pen, and my litle buike, and tuk away sic things as I could comprehend. In the opening up of his text, he was moderat the space of half an houre; but when he enterit to application, he made me so to *grew*, and tremble, that I could not hald a pen to wryt. . . . I saw him, euerie day of his doctrine, go hulie and fear, with a furring of marticks about his neck, a staff in the an hand, and gud godlie Richart Ballanden, his servand, halding up the uther oxtar, from the Abbey to the parish kirk, and be the said Richart, and another servant, lifted up to the pulpit, whar he behovit to lean, at his first entrie; bot, er he haid done with his sermone, he was sae active and vigorous, that he was lyk to ding the pulpit in blads and flie out of it. . . . Mr Knox wald sum tyme com in and

repose him in our college yeard, and call ws schollars unto him, and bless ws, and exhort ws to knaw God and his wark in our contrey, and stand be the guid cause, to use our tyme weill, and lern the guid instructiones, and follow the guid exemple of our maisters.'

While in St Andrews, events were hurrying on which gave Knox the greatest anxiety. The dangers from without were only a little worse than those from within the Church. The Regent Morton, who was the embodiment of the grasping spirit of the Scottish nobility, had managed, partly by threats and partly by reasoning, to persuade the Church to restore the bishops. Some of the reasons for such a step were at the time obvious. The loss of the spiritual estate in parliament would have destroyed the balance of power and implied a serious revolution in the Constitution. Although it should be only in name, the seats vacated by the bishops and abbots must be filled up. There were other causes less honourable. The restoration of the old ecclesiastics, or rather the institution of 'Tulchan' bishops and abbots, was a device whereby the barons might more securely drain the Church of its property. This event, however, properly falls to be discussed by my successor. Knox made no formal protest to the Assembly against their appointment, although in his public preaching and in private conversation he 'discharged his conscience that the Kirk of Scotland should not be subject to that order.' He tried, however, to secure the arrangement from some of the evils he suspected would arise, for he counselled the Assembly to take order that the bishops should account to the Church and not to the nobles for the revenue of their dioceses, and earnestly warned them against the sin of themselves entering into simoniacal compacts. Had his counsels been acted upon, many a future scandal and trouble would have been saved.

Knox felt that his time on earth was short. A truce between the contending factions, accompanied by an earnest request by the people of Edinburgh for his return, brought him back once

more to his old charge. He was too feeble to make his voice heard in the Cathedral Church, and a smaller place was appointed for his services. His sermon at the induction of his colleague Lawson was the last he ever preached.

Scarcely had he returned to Edinburgh before the country was startled with horror by the intelligence of the Massacre of St Bartholomew. 'At first, it was the news of the assassination of Coligny which arrived; but post followed post, bringing fresh accounts of the most shocking and barbarous cruelties. It is believed that seventy thousand persons were murdered in one week. For several days the streets of Paris literally ran with blood.' When the tidings of this horrible butchery (for which a solemn procession to be made to the church of St Louis, the patron saint of France, a *Te Deum* to be sung, and a year of jubilee to be observed, were ordered by the Pope) reached Scotland, the effect was profound and universal. John Knox and the Reformers, many of whose personal friends were among the victims, were appalled. All parties in the state were horrified. Those who had hitherto supported the Queen, felt now that her cause was doomed. The wavering Elizabeth of England was startled from her trickeries. Kirkaldy and Lethington still held out in the castle, but they knew that their days were numbered. Lethington indeed was dying. For months he had been a living miracle, for never did keen intellect consort so strangely with an exhausted frame. The two men, dying within so short a distance of each other, who had once been friends, were now separated by greater differences than political feuds. 'Never,' wrote the English Randolph, after visiting Maitland in the castle, 'have I found in so weak a body, a mind less mindful to God, or more unnatural to his country.' Unable to bear the noise of the guns, he, with his little lapdog, was carried down to one of the cellars; and eleven days after the castle was taken, he died, it was supposed by poison administered by his own hand.

The Massacre of St Bartholomew, which was intended to

crush Protestantism in France, saved Protestantism to Scotland and England. As the murder of Darnley five years before occasioned a reaction of horror which frustrated the plans of Mary and her foreign advisers, and by placing Moray in power, led to the recognition of the Reformation as the religion of the State, so now the crime of the Medici destroyed for ever the influence of Mary and Romanism in Scotland. In less than a year Edinburgh Castle fell, and the brave Kirkaldy, reconciled to his old friends, died on the scaffold under circumstances of weird interest.

But long before the taking of the castle John Knox entered into his rest. For months before the end came, almost every letter he wrote bore touching proof of his weariness of life and his desire to depart. 'John Knox with my dead hand and glad heart praising God.' 'Wearie of this world and thirsting to depart.' 'Call for me, deir brethern, that God in his mercy will pleis put an end to my long and painful battell. For now being unable to fight as God sometimes gave me strenth I thrist an end, befoir I be moir troublesum to the faithful; and yet Lord let my desyre be moderat be the Holy Spirit.' These and such-like are the expressions which occur frequently in his writings at this time.

There are few more touching records than the account of his last hours, preserved by his faithful servant Richard Bannatyne. The simple pathos of the narrative reveals the personal and tender affection which Knox inspired in those who knew him—an affection of which we have many incidental notices, disproving the popular belief that he was distinguished by a harsh and repulsive nature. On the Tuesday after he preached his last sermon at the induction of Lawson, 'he was stricken,' writes Bannatyne, 'with a grit hoist,' which so enfeebled him, that he had to leave off his ordinary reading of the Bible; 'for ilk day he red a certane chepteris, both of the Auld Testament and of the New, with certane psalmes, quhilk psalmes he passed through euerie moneth once.' . . . 'The Friday, which

was the 14 day, he rose above his accustomed dyet; and yit when he did ryse, he could scairse sit in a stuile: and then being demandit what he wald doe up? said, he wald goe to the Kirke and preich, for he thocht it had been Sunday; and said that he had been all nicht meditating upoun the resurrectione of Christ, which he sould haue preichit after the death of Christ, whilk he had finishit in his last sermonde the Sunday befor; for oft and monie tymes he wishit—and desyred of God that he mycht end his dayis in the teiching and meditatioune of that doctrine, quhilk he did.' . . . 'On Sunday, the 16 day, he kept his bed and would not eat,' having mistaken it 'for the first Sunday of the Fast,' on account of the Massacre of St Bartholomew.

'Upoun Fryday, the xxi day, he commandit Richard to gar make his kist (coffin) whairin he was borne to his burial. Sunday, the 23 day (which was the first Sunday of the Fast), at efternounge, all being at the kirke except thame that waited upoun him. . . . He said the Lordis Prayer, and the Beleife, with some paraphraise, upon euerie petitione and article of thaim; and in saying "Our Father which art in heaven," he says, "Who can pronounce so holie wordis?" . . . He wald oftin burst furth, "Live in Christ!" and "Lord grant us the rycht and perfyte hatred of syn, alsweill be the document of thy mercies as of thy judgmentis." "Lord grant trew pastoris to thy Kirke, that puritie of doctrine may be reteaned." . . . A litill efter none, he caused his wyfe reid the 15 Chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthianis off the resurrectione. A litill efter he sayes, "Now, for the last, I commend my saule, spreit, and bodie (pointing upoun his thrie fingeris) unto thy handis, O Lord!" Thaireftir, about fyve houris, he sayis to his wyfe, "Goe reid whair I cast my first ancre!" And so shee read the 17 of Johnes Evangle; quhilk being endit, was red some of Calvinis Sermondis upoun the Ephesianis. We, thinking that he was a sleip, demandit gif he heard? Answerit, "I heir, and understandis far better, I praise God." . . . Half

ane houre eftir ten, or thairby, we went to our ordinar prayeris (whilk was the longer or we went to thame, becaus we thocht he had bene sleipand) ; quhilk being endit, . . . Robert Campbell sittis downe befor him on a stule ; and suddanlie thair-efter he sayis, “ Now it is cum ! ” for he had gevin ane long siche and sobe. Then Richard sitting doun before him, said, “ Now, sir, the tyme that ye have long callit to God for, to wit, ane end of your battell, is cum ! And seeing all naturall power now failes, remember upon these comfortable promises, which often tymes ye have schawin to us of our Salvioire Jesus Christ ! and that ye may understand and know that ye heir us, make us some signe.” And so he lifted up his one hand, and incontinent thairefter randerit the spreit, and sleipit away without ony paine, the day afoir said, about ellevin houris at evin.’

In this manner died John Knox on the 25th November 1572. Within a few yards of this place where we are now met, he lies buried in that grave over which it is reported that the Regent Morton pronounced the well-known and well-deserved eulogium : ‘ There lies one who never feared the face of mortal man.’

‘ It seems to me hard measure,’ says Thomas Carlyle, ‘ that this Scottish man, now after three hundred years, should have to plead like a culprit before the world : intrinsically for having been, in such way as it was then possible to be, the bravest of all Scotchmen ! . . . He is the one Scotchman to whom of all others his country and the world owe a debt. He has to plead that Scotland would forgive him for having been worth to it any million “ unblamable ” Scotchmen who need no forgiveness.’

‘ What I have been to my countrie,’ wrote Knox himself, ‘ albeit this unthankful aige will not knowe, yet the aiges to come will beir witness to the treuth.’ It will be our shame, and the shame of Scotland, if that confidence is not justified.