

[NOTE: There are several quotes in this article and the original spelling has been kept.]

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ARTICLE I.

## JOHN KNOX AS THE ENGLISH AND AS THE SCOTTISH REFORMER.

[by the Rev. Stuart Robinson]

In connexion with a notice of Dr. Lorimer's monograph on the "Knox Papers," recently discovered in the Williams Library, it was proposed in our number for July last to present the character of John Knox as a Reformer in the new light thrown upon it by the discovery of these papers. And as the best method of presenting this character, it was proposed to exhibit him, first, in the light of the newly discovered papers, as the English Reformer; then, with the key to his character thus furnished, to reëxamine the current conception of Knox as the fierce, implacable, narrow, iron-sided Reformer of the Church of Scotland.

It has been shown from the "Knox Papers" that in his career as a Reformer of the Church of England under Edward VI., and among the English exiles on the Continent, embracing nearly the first half of his public life, Knox exhibited little of the fierceness and harshness of character which is popularly attributed to him; and therefore the presumption is that any fierceness and harshness exhibited by him during his career as the Scottish Reformer may not have been from the inherent tendencies of the man's mind and heart, but because the circumstances that surrounded him and the work which he was called upon to do, forced upon him as the leader of reform the exercise of harsh and seem-

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ingly fierce treatment of his adversaries. The purpose of the present writing in continuation will be, by a brief examination of some peculiarities of the Reformation in Scotland, to show that whatever of fierceness, harshness, and apparent narrowness and bigotry may seem to have marked the public conduct of Knox, came not from any change of the nature, spirit, and character in Knox, the English Reformer, but from the necessities of his new position as a Reformer in Scotland.

It is very commonly said that the difference between the Reformations of England and Scotland was that in England the Reformation was accomplished by the king, whereas in Scotland it was a Reformation accomplished by the people. The true statement of the case is, as may be seen by a careful study of the details, that while in England the Reformation was indeed monarchical, in Scotland it was *baronial*. And this difference was most important in this, that, while in England the monarch was practically omnipotent at the era of the Reformation and did reform the Church at pleasure, in Scotland the principles and spirit of the feudal system still prevailed to such a degree that the barons were fully a match for the throne, not only when the throne was occupied by a woman or a child, but even when a vigorous man might be seated upon it. It was these barons who first began the conflict with Popery. Even before the death of James V., Cardinal Beaton is said to have presented to that monarch a list of 360 landed proprietors suspected of heresy. Wishart, anterior to 1546, had preached the gospel under protection of the powerful barons; and when he was murdered, a conspiracy of barons avenged his death.

But while many of these barons were, no doubt, true Christian men and sincere Protestants, many of them, on the other hand, were avaricious, self-seeking, treacherous politicians, who were ready enough to run with the Reformation and overthrow Popery, not chiefly because Popery had trod under foot their liberties, but because Popery had immense estates and offered a rich spoil. For at the period of the Reformation it is estimated that fully one-half of the whole property of the kingdom of Scotland was held by the Church. It is no railing accusation of the clergy

that these barons were avaricious beyond degree. It was the testimony of one of their own number. For even so early as 1543, the Regent Arran is represented to have said that unless the sin of covetousness made them reformers he did not see how a reformation could ever be effected. Nor was the propensity to plunder confined to barons on the Protestant side after the overthrow of Popery. The revenues of the crown in Scotland were very meager, and when it came to providing means for the support of Queen Mary with all her French ideas of the grandeur and display suitable to the dignity of a queen, nothing was more natural than that she should look to these confiscated estates of the Church. Having been already wrested from the Church, no scruples of sacrilege hindered her from seizing them—nay rather of claiming them as part of the patrimony of the crown. The Protestant Reformer who assumed that these estates and revenues which had originally been consecrated to religion were still a sacred trust, to be devoted to the religious interests of the people, must necessarily, therefore, find himself in the position of an agent intrusted with treasure, between two hostile bands of freebooters, with no option, however amiable, if a brave and honest man, but to fight and to fight fiercely. The application of these suggestions to the case of Knox will be seen farther on.

It will be remembered that the overthrow of Popery as the religion of the kingdom of Scotland had already been practically effected by the barons and gentlemen combining under the title of “Lords of the Congregation,” who represented such bodies of the people as had refused longer to attend upon the service of the mass, and were accustomed to gather in private houses for a separate worship. The document known as the “First Covenant” was signed by such powerful nobles as Argyle, Glencairne, Morton, John Erskine of Dun, and others, so early as Dec. 3d, 1557, nearly two years before the return of Knox from the Continent. This Covenant declares: “We do promise before the majesty of God and his congregation that we by his grace shall with all diligence continually apply our whole power, substance, and our very lives, to maintain, set forward, and establish the most blessed word of God and his congregation, and shall labor at one possibility to have faithful ministers truly and properly to

minister Christ's gospel and sacraments to his people." This bond had already knit these Protestants into one body and pledged them to a definite line of conduct.

In the following year we find these Protestants boldly petitioning the Queen for reformation in what Calderwood styles "*The first Oration and Petition of the Professors to the Queene Regent in the beginning of the yeere 1558.*" In this petition they crave protection "against the most unjust tyrannie used against your graces subjects by those that be called the estates ecclesisastical," and ask for these five things—

"*Furst*, humblie we aske, that as we have, by the Jawes of this realme, after long debate, obtained libertie to reade the holie bookes of the Old and New Testament in our commoun tongue, as spirituall foode to our soules, so from hencefurth, it may be lawfull that we may meete, publickly or privatly, to the commoun prayers in our vulgar tongue, &c.

"*Secundlie*, if it sall happin in our said meetings, anie hard place of Scripture to be read, of the which no profite ariseth to the hearers, it sall be lawfull to anie persons qualifeid with knowledge, being present, to interpret and open up the said hard places, to God's glorie and the profite of the auditorie, &c.

"*Thirdlie*, that the holie sacrament of Baptism may be used in the vulgar tongue, that the godfathers and the godmothers and the witnesses may not onlie understand the points of the league and the contract made, &c.

"*Fourthlie*, we desire that the holie sacrament of the Lord's Supper, or of his blessed bodie and blood, may likewise be ministred to us in the vulgar tongue, and in both kindes, according to the plaine institutioun of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

"*Lastlie*, we most humblie require that the wicked, slaunderous, and most detestable life of the Prelats, and of the state ecclesiasticall, may be reformed, that the people by them have not to occasioun (as of manie dayes they have had) to contemne their ministerie and preaching of the Word, whereof they sould be messingers," &c.\*

And Calderwood relates how notwithstanding "in the moneth of Aprile this yeere, 1558, that mercillesse tyranne, the Bishop of Sanct Andrewes, apprehended and putt to death most cruellie Walter Mills;" and notwithstanding "the Queen Regent's double-dealing with the professours," still "the gospel flourished;"

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\*Calderwood's History, Vol. I., p. 335.

how the old Earl of Argyle took the protection of John Dowglas, caused him to preach publicly in his house, and reformed many things according "to his counsel;" and how "the congregation" struggled on against the Queen and the French through 1558 and 1559, until 21st October, 1559, when the lords, barons, and burgesses gathered in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, did after consultation and hearing an argument from Scripture on the lawfulness of deposing sovereigns, from John Willocke, the preacher of Edinburgh, did declare "An Act of Suspension of the Queen's regiment." So that everything was ripe for the great act of Parliament of August, 1560, which abolished Popery and established Protestantism, before John Knox stepped upon the public stage in Scotland on the 2d day of May, 1559.

And as it was not Knox who raised the storm in Scotland, so neither did he rush unbidden into the conflict as a volunteer warrior impelled by the love of conflict and battle. He had indeed kept up earnest communication with the Lords of Congregation. He had in October, 1557, written those letters from Dieppe which had so immediate and powerful an effect in rousing the languishing zeal of the reforming barons, and which probably caused the framing of the first covenant already referred to. But those letters, be it remembered, were occasioned by their having invited and urged him to come to Scotland and then themselves failing in faith. For the letters refer to sacrifices which they had caused him to make to no purpose—even the giving up his beloved flock at Geneva, the leave-taking that caused so many brave men to weep, the tearing himself away from his unprotected family, etc. The point of these letters is not that he is eager for the conflict, but that they should have disturbed his peace at Geneva and induced him to come to Dieppe, on his way to Scotland, there to learn that they had abandoned the enterprise in which they had implored his help.

It is true also that in 1558 he published "The Appellation of John Knox from the cruell and most unjust sentence pronounced against him by the false bishops and cleargie of Scotland; with his supplication and exhortation to the nobilitie, estates, and commonaltie of the same realme." But surely it is not to be

regarded as evidence of a fierce and warlike spirit that a man should assail indignantly a decree of death pronounced against him because in a visit to Scotland in 1556 he had preached the doctrine of justification by faith alone, of which he gives this account:

“This doctrine I did beleewe to be so conformable to God’s holie Scriptures that I thought no creature could have beene so impudent as to have damned anie point or article of the same. Yitt neverthelesse, me as an hereticke, and this doctrine as hereticall, have your false bishops and ungodlie clergie damned, pronouncing against me a sentence of death, in testificatioun whereof they have burnt a picture.”\*

No doubt the vigorous and masterly argument into which this “Appellation” extends produced a profound impression in Scotland, and did much toward bringing about the uprising against Queen Mary and her French. But no one will say that a man whom ecclesiastical tyrants are endeavoring to disgrace before his countrymen by a sentence of death and burning in effigy, exhibits any special fierceness and malignity of spirit in making defence in no measured terms against such antagonists.

After turning back from Dieppe, discouraged and mortified, to his quiet studies and communion with Calvin in Geneva, it may well be supposed that Knox would not go back as a volunteer to the ecclesiastical battle that came to its crisis in 1560. It was only at the most earnest entreaties of the “Lords of the Congregation,” with expressions of sorrow, for the previous failure of courage in 1557, the news of which stopped him on his journey to Scotland and turned him back at Dieppe, that he was induced to come. He came both because of the urgent appeals from Scotland, backed by appeals hardly less earnest from Calvin and the leading spirits of the Reformation.

It is sufficiently evident from the brief allusions already made to the condition of things in Scotland, that on Knox’s arrival it was too late for the most moderate and strife-hating man to preach peace and reconciliation. And indeed he must have been more than man if after his long exile all the energies of his nature had not been roused in preaching the gospel to his long oppressed

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\*Calderwood’s History, Vol. I., p. 348.

and benighted countrymen, now thirsting for the word of life. In a letter to Mrs. Anne Locke from Leith, May 3d, 1559, the day after his landing in Scotland, he says:

“I am uncertane as yitt what God sall further worke in this countrie, except that I see that the battell sall be great, for Satan rageth even to the uttermost, and I am come, I praise my God, in the brunt of the battell.”

And in another of his letters when as yet he had not been six weeks in the country, he bursts forth in this strain:

“O that my heart could be thankfull for the superexcellente benefite of my God! The long thirst of my wretched heart is satisfeid in abundance that is above my expectatioun: for now fortie dayes and moe, hath my God used my tongue in my native countrie to the manifestatioun of his glorie. Whatsoever now sall follow as tuiching my owne carcase, His holie name be praised! The thirst of the poore people here, as weill as of the nobilitie, is woundrous great, which putteth me in comfort that Christ Jesus sall triumphe for a space heere, in the north and the extreme parts of the earth. We feare that the tyrannie of France sall, under cloke of religioun, seeke a plaine conquest of us. But God is potent,” &c.\*

Here is the very spirit as yet of Knox, the English Reformer. The effects of his preaching is described by all contemporary writers as very marvellous. No doubt the main design of the Lords of Congregation in calling Knox to Scotland was that he might by his preaching rally the masses to sustain the work of Reformation now thoroughly begun. But he spoke no less freely and plainly to noble than to peasant. Even before the Parliament of 1560 had risen, he had preached that series of discourses on Haggai, the spirit of the whole of which is fairly represented by his bold appeal to the nobles against their selfish greed after the spoils—applying to them the words of the prophet and demanding of them—“Is it a time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses and this house lie waste?” It was this appeal that roused Lord Maitland to anger and drew from him the sneer, “We may now forget ourselves and bare the barrow to build the house of God.” It was soon apparent that many of the Lords of the Congregation were ready to cast off Knox as soon as he had served their purpose.

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\*Calderwood's History, Vol. I., p. 470.

The great theme of the revilers of Knox as a preacher has been the popular rising against the priests and monks and the destruction of ecclesiastical buildings and ornaments, which followed immediately upon his itinerant labors as a preacher immediately upon his arrival. But it is very questionable whether Knox is to be held responsible for the consequences of outbreaks of popular fury, which were evidently beyond his control. Row,\* indeed, speaking of the arrival of Knox and his powerful preaching, accepts as probably authentic the simile of the crows which tradition attributes to the Reformer, and justifies its wisdom:

“So the Reformation,” says he, “passed forward daylie; needles kirks and idolatrous, prophan, sumptuous buildings, were demolished; and I think it wes true that Mr. Knox said, ‘Doun with those crow nests, else the crowes will big in them againe.’ And was there any wrong there? I will not justifie all particulare things done at that tyme, in casting doune some kirks which had been usefull for God’s service; in taking away bells, and ruggin doun such ornaments as might make the doers of that great commoditie worldlie (riche); for can any think that in such a great alteration in a kingdome everie man did everie thing rightlie?”

But Calderwood, in reciting the details of these riots of the Reformation, shows how again and again, as at the burning of Skoone, Mr. Knox and the lords endeavored to save ecclesiastical property from the hands of violence. And he makes it evident that the inciting cause to most of these devastations was not Knox’s preaching, but the sense of outrage suffered from the ecclesiastics by the masses. Thus he recites how at Skoone, as the destruction of the Abbey was going forward,

“A poore aged matron, seeing the flamme of fire ascending and perceaving manie offended [that is the lords and Knox’s friends who had dissuaded], said in sober maner, ‘Now I see God’s judgements are just, and no man is able to save (alluding to Knox) when He will punishe. According to my remembrance this place hath beene nothing elles but a denne of whoormongers. It is almost incredible to beleeve how manie wives have beene defyled, and virgins deflowred, by these filthie beasts which have beene fostered in this denne, but speciallie by that wicked man, the bishop. If all men knew as muche as I, they would praise God, and no man would be offended.”†

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\*Row’s History of Kirk of Scotland, p. 12.

†Calderwood’s History, Vol. I., p. 472.



So in the case of the destruction at Perth. The riot grew out of the circumstance, that, as after Knox's sermon against idolatry a priest undertook in contempt to celebrate mass, a boy who stood near the altar cried out against it; then, as Calderwood proceeds to narrate—

“The preest gave the boy a great blow; the boy in great anger taketh up a stone, and throwing it at the preest, hitt the tabernacle, and brake doun an image. Immediatlie after, the whole multitude cast stones, and dispatched the tabernacle and other monuments of idolatrie, before the tenth man within the toun was advertised of it. When the noise of this went through the town, a great multitude, not of gentlemen or zealous professours, but of rascalls and the inferiour sort of people, assembled to that church. When they found that nothing was further to be done there, they runne without deliberatioun to the Grey and Blacke friers. . . . The spoile was, permitted to the poore. The preachers had before threatened all men that for covetousnesse' sake sould putt their hand to suche reformatioun. . . . Men's consciences were so beaten with the Word, that they had no respect to their own particular profite.”\*

To the same purpose is Knox's own account (Knox Hist, of Ref. in Scotland, Vol. I., p. 318-19) of his arrival in Scotland and his relation to the Perth or Sanct Johnstown affair:

“The secound of Maij, 1559, arryved Johne Knox from France, who ludgeing two nyctis onlie in Edinburgh, hearing the day appointed to his brethren (to appear before the Queen) repared to Dundee, whare he earnestlie requyred thame, ‘That he myght be permitted to assist his brethrein, and to geve confessioun of his faith with thame; ‘which granted to him, he departed to Sanct Johnestoun with thame; whare he began to exhorte, according to the grace given unto him. . . . The Lard of Dun, cuming to Sanct Johnestoun, expounded the caise evin as it was (the Queen's order to ‘put the preachers to the horn, prohibiting all men to give aid and comfort to them’), whiche understand, the multitud was so enflammed, that *neyther could the exhortatioun of the preacheare, nor the commandiment of the magistrat, stay thame* from distroying the places of idolatrie.”

There is, therefore, no reason to suppose that Knox had any further responsibility for the destruction of the monasteries and other ecclesiastical property than have the public men immediately concerned for the destruction of property by infuriated mobs, which so often occurs even in the most enlightened and loyal States of what is claimed to be “the best government the

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\*Calderwood's History, Vol. I., p. 441-42.

world ever saw.” And even assuming that it was his powerful appeals that excited the multitude, it was not unnatural that even a moderate and amiable man, under the sentence of death passed upon him by tyrants in contempt of all law, and speaking on the question of life or death to himself, should speak a little violently.

The historians and critics hostile to Knox, however, are wont to assail both him and his co-laborers in the ministry at a point further back, and to ring the charges upon the incongruity of a minister of the gospel of peace making use of his sacred position for assailing the political men and measures of the time at all. The obvious fallacy underlying this criticism is its anachronism in applying to the men of a revolutionary age, struggling against a despotism that recognised no such rights as either civil liberty or liberty of conscience, the measure of conduct proper to be applied to the ministry in the 19th century, under constitutional governments.

Mr. Froude suggests with excellent judgment and discrimination—

“The power of passing censure upon the conduct of public men in the name of right and wrong is one which in one form or other has existed and ought to exist in every well ordered community; and the pulpit critiques of the age grew out of the necessities of the case, since there was no press, as now, to canvass proceedings of the Parliament and the government.”\*

And Dr. McCrie, before him, had made, with still more point, a like suggestion:

“The pulpit was in fact the only organ by which public opinion was or could be expressed; and the ecclesiastical courts were the only assemblies in the nation which possessed anything that was entitled to the name of liberty or independence. Parliament had its business prepared to its hand and laid before it in the shape of acts, which required only its assent. Discussions and freedom of speech were unknown in its meetings. The courts of justice were dependent on the will of the sovereign, and frequently had their proceedings dictated by letters and messengers from the throne. It was the preachers who first taught the people to express an opinion; and the assemblies of the Church set the earliest examples of a regular and firm opposition to the arbi-

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\*Froude’s History of England, chap. 29.

trary and unconstitutional measures of the court. This is a fact which has been overlooked by most modern writers, who instead of presenting accurate and liberal views of the state of society at that period, have too often amused their readers by pointing sarcasm or turning elegant periods on the arrogant pretensions and dangerous encroachments of a Presbyterian hierarchy.”\*

This statement of the case leaves nothing more to be said on this point.

So much, then, for the first movements of John Knox as a Scottish Reformer. There is nothing in his conduct at the opening of his career which, when properly considered, militates with the view of his spirit and conduct as an earnest but moderate Christian minister when laboring under the auspices of Edward VI. as a Reformer in England. Nor if we now proceed to consider the views of a reformation of religion upon which he proceeded, will there be found any evidence of want of moderation in the measures which he proposed to execute.

In his letter of exhortation to England, January 12, 1559, Knox develops the germinal principles of his scheme of Reformation. After declaring that Popish priests should not be allowed to direct the flock, that a plurality of benefices to one man should not be permitted, but the pastoral charges be given each to a single minister who shall be required to discharge fully the office of preaching Christ crucified, he proceeds to say—

“Lett none that be appointed to labour in Christ’s vineyarde be entangled with civil affaires, and as yee call them the affaires of the realme. . . . For, as tuiching their yeerelie comming to Parliament for maters of religioun, it sall be superfluous and vaine, if God’s true religioun be once so established, that after it never be called in controversie. . . . So that the ministers, albeit they lacke the glorious title of lords, and the divelish pompe which before appeared in proud prelats, yitt must they be so stout and bold, in God’s cause, that if the king himself would usurpe anie other authoritie in God’s religioun than becometh a member of Christ’s bodie, that first he be admonished according to God’s Word, and after, if he contemne the same, be subject to the yoke of discipline. . . . Now last, for the preservatioun of religioun, it is most expedient that schooles be universallie erected in citeis and all cheefe touns, the oversight whereof to be committed to the magistrats and godlie learned men, that of the

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\*McCrie’s *Life of Melville*, Vol. I., p. 213.

youth, godlie instructed among them, a seede may be reserved and continued, for the profite of Christ's kirk in all ages."\*

Here, then, we have the germinal ideas of Knox's programme of reformation, which will be found to be the key to all his subsequent conflicts in Scotland—an unsecularised ministry of one order only preaching Christ crucified, a spiritual free Church under Christ as its only Head, and education for not only the masses of the people, but education of the higher order, to secure an intelligent ministry. This last, if anything could be called such, may be termed "John Knox's hobby." And to his brave struggles and labors in that behalf, under God, has Scotland been indebted for the singular intelligence and intellectual superiority both of her people and her ministry for three hundred years past.

The limits of a single article are too restricted to allow us to follow the reform through the subsequent twelve years of his labors in Scotland, and prove that, in every important battle waged by him, it may be shown that his unyielding sternness and unsparing blows came not so much from any harshness or lack of calmness and moderation in the spirit of the man, but rather from the very nature of the issues involved and the peculiar circumstances of danger which continually surrounded him and the cause which he represented. These rendered it imperative upon him to keep up a perpetual battle for life or death. Referring now briefly to some of the more prominent causes of conflict in the attempt to carry out Knox's programme, it will be found that these may be comprehended under three general items: his struggles against the insincere and treacherous barons as soon as they found that he could not be used for their ends; his struggles with the remnants of the partially destroyed prelacy of Scotland; and his struggles against the usurpations of the crown.

It has been already intimated that the great peril to the Reformation in Scotland was the scramble for the spoils of the old Church, a prize so great as to cover one-half or more of all the property of the kingdom. Knox perceived at a glance on his arrival that the Church, though purged of her idolatry, was at the same time to be stripped of her possessions and turned a beg-

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\*Calderwood's History, Vol. I., pp. 429, 430.

gar into the streets. True, the cause of Christ may, under ordinary circumstances, trust securely to the enlightened faith and piety of Christ's people for support, when that piety has become properly enlightened, and has a far richer fund in the liberality of its earnest members who consecrate themselves and their possessions to the Master's service, than in the coffers of the State or rich endowments. But at that period the great doctrine of the Christian oblation had not yet been developed. Knox and his compeers had not yet seen that great truth. And what wonder when so large a portion of Christian Scotland does not yet see this truth in all its fullness?

He therefore at once set up the claim, to the disgust of many even of the Lords of Congregation, that the estates and revenues of the Church, having been consecrated originally to religious purposes, should now be applied, in conformity with their sacred character, to the purposes of the Reformed Church, for the sustentation of the ministry, the feeding of the poor, and particularly to the education of the people. Therefore in the First Book of Discipline—the first Reformed Church constitution—provision is made for dividing the Church patrimony in accordance with the general purposes for which it had originally been given, to be distributed under the direction of deacons, into three portions: one for the support of preachers of the gospel among the people; one for the poor; and one for the support of schools for the Church and kingdom. Maitland truly represented a large number of the barons in pronouncing, from the first, the whole revenue “a devout imagination.” Knox found to his sorrow and surprise that barons might be zealous for religion without being themselves religious; or though they may have professed and thought themselves religious, yet their religion was no bar to their selfishness and greed. His experience at that early day was the experience of many a mistaken servant of God since, who has imagined that true religion may be promoted by alliance with kings or presidents, lords or senators, parliaments or congresses. He was never allowed to carry out the scheme of the First Book of Discipline by reason of the greed of these reforming barons; and even for so much as was gained, he was obliged to be in perpetual

conflict with the treacherous leaders of the state and fight his way foot by foot.

John Cunningham's History, page 356, with equal force and beauty remarks of the First Book of Discipline:

"No document could possibly throw more light upon the opinion of the Reformers. It is in fact the plan of the temple which they designed to rear. If in anything in our Church as it now stands differs from 'The Book of Discipline'—if it has not the breadth of foundation, or length of pinnacle, or richness of ornament there indicated, it is because the after execution has fallen short of the original plan—it is because the builders who raised the fabric had not the same views as the architects who designed it."

It cannot indeed be denied that Knox denounced "in the vernacular" this greed of the secular leaders; yet as is so often the case, the villainy of treacherous Judases is so astounding that if an honest man endeavors to characterise it even in the most moderate terms, he seems to the world at large, unacquainted with the facts, to speak in a harsh spirit and to be pouring forth the mere vituperation of passion.

Knox's own account of the difficulty of getting his "First Book of Discipline" accepted by the lords is indeed given in not very mellifluous terms. After relating how, at the request of the nobility, he himself and five other ministers prepared the Book, he proceeds:

"Which thei did and presented to the nobilitie, who did peruse it many days. Some approved it, and willed the saym have bene sect furth be a law. Otheris, perceaving their carnall libertie and worldlie commoditie somewhat to be impaired thairby gruded, insomuche that the name of the Booke of Discipline became odious unto thame. Everie thing that repugned to their corrupt affectionis, was termed in thair mockage 'devote imaginationis.' The caus we have befoir declaired; some had greadelie gripped to the possessionis of the kirk; and otheris thought thei wald nott lack thair part of Christis coat; yea, and that befoir that ever he was hanged, as by the Preacbearis thei war oft rebuked. The cheaf great man that had professed Christ Jesus and refuissed to subscribe the Book of Discipline was the Lord Erskyn; and no wonder, for he besydis that he has a verray Jesabell to his wyffe, yf the poore, the schooles, and the ministerie of the kirk had their awin, his keching (kitchen) wald lack two parttis and more, of that whiche he injustlie now possesses. Assuredlye some of us have woudered how men that professe godlynes could of so

long continewance hear the threatnyngis of God against theavis and against thair housses, and knowing thame selfis guyltie in suche thingis, as war openlie rebucked, and that thei never had remorse of conscience, neather yitt intended to restore any thingis of that, whiche long thei had stollen and reft. Thair was none within the Realme more unmercyfull to the poore ministeris then war thei whiche had greatest rentis of the churches. But in that we have perceaved the old proverbe to be true—‘Nothing can suffice a wreche;’ and agane, ‘The bellie hes none earis!’ Yitt the same Book of Discipline was subscribed by a greate parte of the Nobilitie; to witt, the Duckis Grace, the Erle of Arrane,” etc.\*

In a subsequent portion of his History, referring to the miserable compromise to which the Assembly had to submit, viz., to allow the Queen and the avaricious nobles two-thirds of the Church revenues, leaving one-third only to the support of the Church, and that transferred with conditions and restrictions, he remarks, with still more sharpness, “The first two parts are *freely given* to the devil, and the third must be divided between God and the devil: and the devil *will soon get three parts of the third.*” Nor was he without grounds for such anticipation, as may be inferred from what subsequently became matter of grave historical record. It is affirmed that the Earl of Cassilis was negotiating with the Abbot of Glenluce for the *feu* of his Abbey (for the Lords of the Congregation had generously agreed to leave incumbents in possession of their estates during life), when, pending negotiations, the Abbot died. The Earl bribed a monk to forge the necessary papers for the dead Abbot. He then employed one of his retainers to assassinate the monk lest he should reveal the forgery—on the principle that “dead men tell no tales”—and then, last of all, caused his uncle to hang the retainer lest he should reveal the murder! Moreover, this Earl, when another Abbot refused to recognise a contract with the preceding not ratified by the crown at the time of his assassination, roasted the recreant Abbot before a slow fire until he was induced to ratify the papers giving the Earl the *feu* of the abbey, though with a hand that could scarcely hold the pen. This Abbot brought his complaint before the Council: but the Earl was too powerful to be punished, and the matter was compromised by a

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\*Knox’s History of the Reformation in Scotland, Vol. II., p. 128.

small pension paid by the noble tormentor to his victim, who was a cripple through life from the roasting.

Surely the man called to stand in his lot, defending the Church of God from such robbers, and rebuking sin in high places and low places in such a generation, should not be expected to mince words, to act with gentleness and contrive smooth and glossy compromises! The meekest and holiest of men must have become in such circumstances a man of war. And when it is remembered that these conflicts were not with the minions of Popery, but with men who were pretending to act with them as reformers of Popery, it must magnify one's conceptions of the marvelous courage of the man.

It will perhaps be said, however, that Knox betrayed the same harshness of spirit in his ecclesiastical controversies as well where the issue was not between him as an honest man and faithful servant of the Church and a den of thieves, but between one form of church government and another. But a little examination of the question will show that really the issues, as between Presbytery and Prelacy intrinsically, were hardly involved at all in the conflict between Knox and the secular Prelates in Scotland. It was chiefly because these nominal Prelates furnished the opportunity to the avaricious barons to carry on their stealings, and set before the Popish court an open door to enter and practise its strategies against the Reformed Church, that Knox and his friends had constant occasion for strife with them.

It has been already intimated that at the overthrow of Popery the Lords of the Congregation, partly perhaps from generosity, but also for political reasons, agreed not to disturb the incumbents of prelatical and other benefices during the lifetime of those then in possession, while at the same time prelacy was set aside and presbytery established in 1560, so far as concerned *spiritual jurisdiction*. Neither by the General Assembly nor the masses of the people was the jurisdiction of the prelates recognised thereafter in the Church. But for political reasons, in order to keep up the ecclesiastical branch of the Parliament, the sees seem to have remained undisturbed. The explanation of this anomaly of establishing Protestantism in 1560, and yet leaving the old



spiritual estate as it existed under the Papacy still existing as one of the estates of the realm, and in possession of a large part of the land of the country, is to be found in the indisposition of the Scotch to political changes and revolutions. The argument would be—Is it wise to let the spiritual estate come to nought, which heretofore has been the first estate in the realm? Shall none but barons and burgesses hereafter sit in Parliament? Shall the checks and balances of the constitution be destroyed? Will the throne and the aristocracy be safe against this rising power of the burghs without the aid of the clergy? What will become of the College of Justice if its eight ecclesiastical senators are taken away? So even though the thieving barons pounce upon the Church's estates, yet some way must be contrived to preserve at least the shadow of incumbency by ecclesiastics to fill the needful places in Parliament and in the Judiciary. Here, therefore, in the political necessities of the case, and not from any zeal for Episcopacy, are we to look for the explanation of the fact that side by side with Presbytery established are found Popish bishops in possession of their secular rights and dignities as appointees of the Pope, while all spiritual functions were taken away from them and all authority and exercise of jurisdiction in the Church was forbidden them. Superficial Episcopal writers have made use of this singular arrangement, as they have also of the arrangement for superintendents in the "First Book of Discipline," to show that the succession of the episcopal line was not broken, and that the ideas of Knox were somewhat prelatical. It was beyond doubt an unwise experiment for the Scottish Reformers. Taking advantage of it, the court and the avaricious nobles sought to make a permanent right out of what was at first a mere temporary concession. The court resisted the abolition of these mere political sees, because they counted just so many more votes for the court party in Parliament; the greedy barons, because it opened to them an opportunity of pocketing part of the revenues as a fee for protecting the bishops in them. Hence the singular Anomaly of bishops without authority to exercise any of the functions which pertain to the bishop's office in the Church. Episcopacy is welcome to whatever advantage may accrue to the

argument in favor of Prelacy from the existence in Scotland of bishops, who, instead of watching over flocks “over which the Holy Ghost made them overseers,” had no function but to vote with the court party in Parliament and perpetuate the title by “apostolic succession” to certain revenues for greedy nobles to prey upon. And this fact that the sees with their revenues were not abolished, though every sort of spiritual and ecclesiastical authority was taken away, is just all that can be claimed. It is the sheerest nonsense to say that the three classes of ministers provided for in the First Book of Discipline—superintendents, local pastors, and readers—was a conformity to Episcopacy, when the Book itself shows that the superintendent had none of the functions pertaining to a prelate, except those common to a bishop and an evangelist. Nor was the reason for the appointment of superintendents any other than simply the emergency of a Church without a sufficient number of ministers, which was therefore obliged to improvise readers, lay exhorters, under the oversight of superintending evangelists. To appoint superintendents and to give authority to them on the one hand, and to appoint Scripture readers under the direction of the evangelists on the other, was at the greatest possible remove from Prelacy. For the First Book of Discipline, under the head of Superintendents, expressly declares—

“We consider that if the ministers should be appointed to several places there to make their residence, that then the greatest part of the realm should be destitute of all doctrine: and *therefore* we have thought it a thing most expedient for this time, that from the whole number of godly men be selected ten or twelve to whom charge should be given to plant and erect kirks, to set in order and appoint ministers.”

It was not, however, the fault of Knox and his co-reformers that this anomaly of bishops, having no spiritual functions, was allowed in Scotland. They seem indeed to have submitted in silence to the arrangement of the politicians, at first, so far as to allow the bishops then in office to enjoy their revenues during life, and indeed some of these bishops joined them as ministers in the General Assembly. But when in the course of time the sees became vacant by death, and the prospect was that the spiritual branch of the legislature should become extinct and the court

lose one of its powerful auxiliaries, there, was evinced a determination to fill these vacancies. This of course was opposed by the Church, which was now organised and established as Presbyterian. The attempt to revive Episcopacy by the court was regarded as a virtual subversion of the spiritual powers of the Reformed Church, and Knox and his co-workers were obliged to take firm ground. It was a battle for life, and indeed was the beginning of the grand struggle between Presbytery and Prelacy, which continued with various success for the next one hundred and twenty years.

When the Parliament at Stirling in 1571, in spite of the General Assembly, appointed bishops to the vacant sees, Knox and his friends declared they would die rather than submit to such an exercise of the secular power in the Church and such an invasion of her liberties. And when the compromise was proposed at the Convention of Leith in 1572, that political bishops should be appointed to hold these secular sees only until the king's majority, as before the Reformation—that these dignities should be conferred on ministers only, that these bishops should be subject to the General Assembly in spiritual matters and to the king in temporals—though Erskine of Dun fell into the trap thus set by Lennox, Mar, and Regent Morton—Knox, now broken down age and infirmity, exerted all his remaining strength to extinguish this germ of Episcopacy thus attempted to be planted in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland under the deceitful plea of preserving unity. Both in his private correspondence, in the General Assembly, and in a public letter, with his characteristic firmness and courage he exposed this fraud of political bishops without pastoral office. The result was that the people derided them as “Tulchan Bishops”—stuffed calves, to deceive the cow and induce her to let down her milk freely. The true ministers refused to accept the office, and the Assembly—even though these “Tulchan Bishops were subjected to the power of its superintendents and had not the sole power of ordination and jurisdiction over a whole diocese as prelates—never recognised the arrangement beyond merely the registration of the act, nor ceased to contend against it till the very shadow as

well as the power was removed. Still this stratagem afterwards furnished the enemies of Presbytery a *pou sto* for their machinations, and put such creatures as Boyd, Archbishop of Glasgow, into position to vex the Church.

That Knox was profoundly impressed with the conviction that Prelacy is contrary to the order which Christ established in his Church, is evident enough from the fact that he had refused a bishopric in England when not only it was pressed upon him, but when he was seriously called to account for refusing it. Still in England he worked as a reformer in perfect harmony with prelates. That he warred against and would make no compromise with Prelacy in Scotland implies no change of his views or of his catholic spirit after leaving England. For the issues in Scotland were not at all the intrinsic merits of Episcopacy as against Presbytery, but whether he would consent to the continuance of a, political agency outside the Church which had been established to serve as an instrumentality to the crown and the nobles to plunder the Church's revenues and endanger the liberties of Presbyterianism.

But the contests of Knox with the royal authority, particularly with the famous Mary Queen of Scots, have furnished the chief ground for the indictment brought against him of harshness and narrowness, yea, even of savage ferocity. There is no space here to go into that large subject which has furnished material for hundreds of poets, romance writers, sentimental historians, and anti-Presbyterian essay writers, to say nothing of the thousand eloquent effusions of debating society orators. That Knox in all this conflict spoke and wrote harshly is freely admitted. The Fourth Book of his own History of the Reformation in Scotland furnishes abundant evidence that with a very rough hand he was wont to tear off the masks of the traitors who disgraced the Protestant religion which they professed by their plunderings, their conspiracies, their feuds., and their assassinations.

Cunningham,\* while conceding to Knox qualities seldom found in such stormy periods of civil convulsion—describing him as

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\*Church History of Scotland, pages 406-7.

unselfish, sincere, consistent, unswerving, and firm amid continual vicissitudes; with hands clean of bribes and never enriched by the spoils—yet condemns him as guilty of coarse, virulent, and dictatorial conduct towards persons whose position commanded respect; of a fanatical fierceness towards Mary and her mother simply because they were Papists; and a cruelty which pursued them through life with a rancor rooted in religion. But that his rough denunciations of the queen did not come from his hatred of her as a Papist simply, but his hatred of her treachery and her despotic notions, is manifest from the fact that he dealt with the Protestant nobles just as roughly when they exhibited treachery and hypocrisy. Witness his account of what the preachers (no doubt meaning himself) uttered in the way of denunciation of the nobles in the winter of 1562 in Edinburgh, and in view of the recent death of the Earl Huntley in a fray, whose death Mary is said to have regretted, even though brought about by her own partisans:

“The winter after the death of the Erle Huntley the Court remaned fair the maist part in Edinburgh. The preacheouris war wondrous vehement in reprehension of all manner of vice which then began to abound, and especially avarice, oppression of the poor, excess, ryotouse chear, banketting, immoderat dancing, and hurdome, that thair of ensues. Whairat the Courteouris began to storne and began to pyck querrallis against the preacheouris, alledging that all their preaching was turned to raylling. Whairunto one of them [no doubt Knox himself] gave answer as followeth : ‘It cumis to our earis that we are called raillaris, whair of albeit we wonder, yitt we are not eschamed, seeing that the most worthie servandis of God that befoir us have travailled in this vocation have so been steiled. But unto you do I say, that the same God who from the begynning has punished the contempt of his word, and hes poured furth his vengeance upon such proud mockeris, shall not spair you; yea, he shall not spair you befoir the eyes of this same wicked generation for the pleasur whair of ye despyse all holesome admonitionis. Have ye not sein one greater than any of you [meaning Huntley] sitting whair presentlie ye sit, pyck his nails and pull down his bonnett over his eyes, when idolatrie, witchcraft, murther, oppression, and such vices, war rebuked? Was not his common talk, When the knaffis have railed their fill, then will thei hold their peace? Have ye not heard it affirmed to his owin face that God should revenge that his blasphemy even in the eyes of such as war witnesses? Then was the Erle Huntley accused by you as the manteaner of idolatrie and only hinderar of good order. Him has God

punished even according to the threatenings your ears heard; and by your hands hath God executed his judgment. But what amendment in any cause can be espied in you? Idolatry was never in greater rest; virtue and virtuous men were never in more contempt; and vice was never more bold nor less feared punishment. And yet who gilds the queen and court? Who but the Protestants? O horrible slanderers of God, and of his holy evangel. Better it were in you plainlie to renounce Christ Jesus than thus to expose his blessed evangel to mockery. Yf God punishes not you that this same age shall see and behold your punishment, the Spirit of righteous judgment guideth me not.'

"This vehemence provoked the haterent, not onlie of the courtiers, but also of divers others against the speaker: for such as be in credite never lack flatterers. (They said) 'their brethren of the court were irreverentlie handled. They did what they myght: such speaking would cause them do less.' And this was the fruite the preacher gathered of their just reprehensions."\*

In his roughest speeches to Queen Mary, the Reformer never exceeded the plainness of this denunciation of the treacheries and chicanery of the men of the Protestant party. It was not only, or even chiefly, as a Papist that Knox denounced Queen Mary; but because he evidently conceived her pretended convictions in favor of Popery to be worn as a cloak by her to hide her schemes for the overthrow of the liberties of Church and State.

The rudeness charged upon Knox in the case of the Queen is the more readily made to appear more blameworthy because it was harshness toward a fascinating young woman, whom gallantry should have caused a man of high instinct to treat with courteous consideration. But when the woman, however fascinating personally, becomes the agent and representative of the most dangerous despotism, scheming again to fasten the shackles of the cruelest slavery upon a free people who have just broken the shackles; nay, of a fanatical despotism, that with power in its hands, as recent experience in England and subsequent experience in France showed, would not hesitate a moment to *extirpate* any Protestant people, it was no time for playing the courtier. Knox was obliged to speak and act towards this seductive siren of Popery and prerogative, not as his native gallantry and courtesy would prompt him, but in a style that suited the people of

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\*Knox's History of the Reformation, Book IV., pp. 361-3.

that day, and which would enable them to perceive the snares laid for them. The selfish nobles, under the fascinations of royalty having, in Knox's figure, "received a baptism with the holy water of the court," played false to the people, and thereby laid upon Knox almost the whole burden of keeping them roused to a sense of their danger, which he could do only by the use of a language that suited their taste.

After all that the apologists of Mary may say in her behalf, these facts seem established beyond question: That she came from France to take the crown of Scotland in 1561, with a full knowledge of the overthrow of Popery and the establishment of Protestantism by formal law of the realm, and that law heartily sustained by the great body of the people; and came with deliberate purpose to overthrow the Reformation. That most imprudently she obtruded her Popery, and under the guise of private scruples of conscience sought to ensnare the nobility and withdraw them from the support of the Protestant cause by claiming their protection and support in her personal rights of conscience as a Papist; and then into a conspiracy with her to seize upon the ecclesiastical property as the patrimony of the crown. That she introduced among a plain and frugal people French courtiers and French debaucheries that filled all virtuous men with horror and alarm. That from the very first her insincerity and treachery, and contempt for all covenant engagements, made it impossible for the people to trust her even when she may have intended to keep her promise. That in a country which had established constitutional liberty and rights of conscience, she planted herself upon the monstrous old dogma, of the duty of the subject to obey the prince as the lord of the conscience. That she set at defiance all the established proprieties and decencies of good society in the amours and debaucheries of her court—herself setting the example of scandalous intrigues and being the occasion of murders and assassinations among rivals for her attentions, if not accessory to them. It is unnecessary to add, as might readily be done, to this list of the errors and the crimes of this woman, the fact that she signed, with others of the French royal family, the decree for the extermination of the French Pro-

testants. We had selected passages in abundant confirmation of this general statement from the contemporary records in the "Book of the Universal Kirk," and from the histories of Knox, Row, and Calderwood, and the Autobiography and Diary of James Melville, but space fails for further citations.

It may be confidently submitted to the judgment of candid and intelligent men whether it was not rather to the honor than to the reproach of John Knox, that when the barons and other political leaders of the people succumbed to the flatteries, the fascinations, and the intrigues of the queen, he sternly stood out against all the allurements whereby she sought to cast her toils over him also, and silence his testimony for the truth of Christ and the liberty of his people; that he stood out as a faithful tribune of the people contending earnestly for the faith. That in fulfilling his mission as a Reformer, he was stern, harsh, and uncompromising, is to be attributed to the circumstances that surrounded him in a great life-and-death struggle, rather than to any fierceness of nature, any fanaticism in his religion. His career as an English Reformer shows that he was neither fierce nor fanatical. He was indeed a man of genius, with a ready wit and a lively imagination, and his discourses and writing, sparkle everywhere with the flashings of his keen Damascus blade. It may be shown indeed—nay, he himself tells us—that sometimes his own brethren deprecated his uncompromising spirit, his bold measures, and his unsparing denunciations of villainy in high places. But what witness for the truth ever fought and won the battle for liberty in any great civil and religious convulsion, who had not precisely the same experience? His very success has come from a far-sightedness, a breadth of view, and strong convictions that ordinary men cannot enter into. A large part, if not a majority, even of good men, at such a time are men of feeble convictions or no convictions touching the great truths involved in the controversy. Their timidity, self-ease, and self-interest take upon them the guise of zeal for "the peace of the Church." The wily enemies of liberty and truth understand the strategy of assailing this weak point of the Church with the cry, "Let us have peace," and of sending away the ships of the Greeks, in order to induce the voluntary breaking down of the impregnable wall



and receiving within the fatal horse filled with enemies. Our own recent civil and ecclesiastical convulsions have abundantly illustrated, and are still illustrating, how men of broader views and stronger convictions, no matter how averse to strife, when compelled to witness for the truth and denounce its enemies, seem to the men of feebler convictions—and especially men of feeble brain as well as feeble convictions—to be “troublers of Israel.” And there is a certain cast of piety which prevails more or less in every generation which, forgetting the apostle’s admonition, “Add to your faith virtue,” (ἀρετήν, manly energy,) is piping ever its pusillanimous note of “peace, peace,” even when “the enemy are coming’ in like a flood.” We offer this general fact as sufficient offset to the showing that some of Knox’s friends deprecated his sternness and bold denunciations.

This article has extended far beyond the original purpose of the author. But we cannot forbear citing, as the last proof of Knox’s true nobility of nature, the beautiful picture of him in his old age and in his death, from James Melville:

“Bot of all the benefits I haid that yeir was the cuming of that maist notable profat and apostle of our nation, Mr. Jhone Knox, to St. Androis. \* \* I hard him ther teache the prophecie of Daniel that simmer and the wintar following. I haid my pen and my little book and tuk away sic things as I could comprehend. In the opening upe of his text he was moderate the space of an halft houre; but when he enterit to application he maad me sa to grew (shudder) and tremble that I could nocht hald a pen to wryt. \* \* Mr. Knox wald sumtimes cum in and repose him in our colleage yeard, and call us scholars unto him and bless us, and exhort us to knaw God and his work in our country, and stand be the guid cause; to use our time weill and lern the guid instructionis and follow the guid example of our maisters. Our haill college, maisters and scholars, war sound and zelus for the guid cause. The uther twa colleges nocht so. \* \* \* I saw him everie day of his doctrine go hulie and fear with a furring of martriaks about his neck, as taff in ane hand, and guid godlie Richart Bul-lenden his servant halding upe the other oxtar, from the abbey to the paroche kirk: and be the said Richard and another servant was lifted upe to the pulpit whar he behovit to lean at his first entrie; bot or he had done with his sermont he was sa active and vigorous that he was lyk to ding that pulpit in blads and flye out of it! Sa soon after his coming to Edinbruche he becam unable to preatche; and sa instituting in his room

be the ordinar calling of the kirk and congregation Mr. James Lansome, he tuk him to his chamber, and most happilie and comfortable departed this lyff.”\*

The man of whose last days the memories of a college student were such as these, could have been stern and harsh only for the same reason that Elijah was. And indeed the life and character of John Knox bears a striking resemblance to that of the great prophet reformer of Israel.



## ARTICLE II.

### THE ONE VISIBLE CHURCH AND THE MANY DENOMINATIONS.

When we speak of a local church convening in one place for the worship of God, there is no danger of being misunderstood. When the apostle Paul declares that “the care of all the churches” rests upon him, we easily apprehend his meaning. The churches of Macedonia or of Asia have a distinctness in our minds that requires no illustration to render the terms more expressive, or their signification more palpable. But when we undertake to define the Church in a more comprehensive sense, whether provincial, national, or universal, a difficulty is at once experienced that demands for its solution much thoughtful consideration, and a careful analysis. What do we mean by the “Church of England, the “Methodist Church,” or the “Lutheran Church ?” What exact idea is conveyed to our minds by “the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth?” It is obvious that, in such cases, definition is as difficult as it is important. Its importance cannot be overestimated. As to the task, its arduous nature becomes more and more apparent as we advance in the effort to accomplish it. Whether it is possible to attain the end, in any degree satisfactory to the conscientious reader, is the object of the present inquiry.

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\*Mr. James Melville’s Diary, pp. 26 and 33.