

JOHN KNOX, PREACHER.

BY PROF. E. C. DARGAN, D. D.

Works of Knox, ed. David Laing; *Life of John Knox*, Thos. McCrie; *Life of Knox*, P. Hume Brown; *John Knox, His Ideas and Ideals*, James Stalker; *John Knox*, Henry Cowan; Sermon on *The Source and Bounds of Kingly Power* (title given by editor), in Fish's *Masterpieces of Pulpit Eloquence*.

The traditional date of Knox's birth is 1505, and so the Christian world observes the current year as the four hundredth anniversary. And if, with Professor Cowan and others, we hold that the date is from eight to nine years too early, the matter is too uncertain to make much difference. We are at least not far out in celebrating the great Scottish reformer's memory in this year. The character and career of John Knox offer much of fadeless interest to the student of religious and political history. His is one of the great historic figures which cannot be left out of view in any adequate study of the stirring age in which he lived. Powerfully influential in his own time, his life has been richly fruitful in all subsequent times. For it was given to Knox more than to any other one man to mould the religious life of his country in an age when the religious question was uppermost amid the fierce debates of intellect and the warring policies of statecraft. The place of Scottish thought in the history of the last four hundred years has been one of power. Scotch views of religion, of morals, of civic duty, have extended around the world, and have been no small force in maintaining the best ideals and practice on these momentous concerns. The main instrument of Knox's power was preaching. Something of a statesman he was, something of a theologian, very much of a reformer, but chiefly and above all else a preacher. It is

therefore fitting that this phase of his great career should receive emphatic recognition and the fullest possible treatment.

But as a matter of fact the preaching of Knox usually has only incidental notice in the accounts of his life and work. The reason for this seemingly strange fact is, that, while the traditional accounts of Knox's preaching are numerous and vivid, the literary remains are scanty almost to nothingness. In his *History of the Scotch Reformation* Knox himself makes occasional record of both the substance and the effects of his preaching, but there is only one sermon reported in full. Besides his own writings there are few notices of his pulpit work in contemporary literature, and of the powerful effects produced by his sermons. Then, as we know that this was his chief employment and the main instrument by which he accomplished the great and enduring results of his labors, we know that his word was with power. It is by putting together such facts as these, together with the story of his life and preparation, that we can form our necessarily imperfect estimate of John Knox the preacher.

Every great man's life is of course in large part the fruit of his training; and certainly no great preacher can be properly estimated without reference to the facts of his up-bringing and preparation for his task. So also the moulding influence of the events of his life and the larger movements of his age must be taken into account. It is self-evident then that Knox as preacher must be studied both in the course of his own personal history and in that of his times.

Only brief review, however, of the main outline of Knox's life, with incidental reference to the stirring scenes in which he moved, is here needed. The life of Knox falls into five distinct periods: (1) His early life up to his conversion to the Protestant faith; (2) The beginning of his career as reformer, and his captivity in the French galleys; (3) His five years' sojourn and

work in England; (4) His residence abroad with his visit and influence in Scotland; (5) His final residence and work in Scotland.

The first of these periods extends from 1505 (or 1513-14, as some authorities contend) up to 1543, or thereabout, when he first began to come under decided reformatory influences. This was the time of his education and early bent toward his life-work. He was born of middle-class folks, respectable and sturdy. Of his earliest schooling little or nothing is known, but there was a grammar school at Haddington, his birthplace, where it is presumed he received the customary elements of a preparatory education. There is some dispute whether his university training was at Glasgow or St. Andrews. Cowan argues for the latter place, but McCrie and others believe it was at Glasgow. At any rate, whether at one or the other University, Knox took the usual collegiate education of his times, enjoying the instructions of John Major, the most accomplished Scottish humanist of his age. He was also associated with George Buchanan the poet, with whom he formed a lifetime friendship. Although Major was a learned man and no doubt left a permanent influence on the mind and character of Knox, the standard of education was by no means high in Scotland at that time. In fact Knox never was a scholar in any proper sense, certainly not in comparison with Luther or Calvin, nor indeed with many other leaders of the Reformation. He was, as we may say, a fairly well educated man according to the standards of his day and country. Later studies, especially under Calvin's influence, and particularly in the languages of the Bible, supplied some of the lack of his early culture.

There is little or nothing known of Knox's life during the rest of these early years. Conjecture and the few stray hints that we possess make it probable that somewhere between 1530 and 1540 he was ordained a priest, and also was notary; from which it is inferred that he was not a regular parish priest. But that he was a stu-

dent of the Fathers, especially Augustine, during this time is known. How far he was drifting toward Reform principles does not appear, but it is not unlikely that in all these years of retirement he was laying the foundation for his subsequent great activity, in thoughtful study of the religious questions of the age. His thorough acquaintance both with the Reformation theology and with the Catholic conditions of the day shows that these silent years were not devoid of study. Toward the end of this obscure period of the future reformer's preparatory career he seems to have heard some evangelical preaching from his future colleague, John Rough, and from Thomas William, a Dominican friar who held some reformatory opinions. No doubt these exerted some influence, but little is really known on these points.

The second stage of Knox's life extends from about 1543-5 to 1549. During this time some of the more potent influences in his career as preacher and reformer were operative. Coming under the influence more and more of the Reformed views Knox is watched by the Catholic authorities. He is taken under the protection of two gentlemen who are themselves inclined to Protestantism, and becomes the instructor of their sons at Longniddry. He teaches not only the rudiments of learning, but also gives instruction in the New Testament. To his expository lectures others than his pupils are admitted, and we may consider now that Knox's reformatory preaching has begun in this modest way. Already his lectures show the drawing quality of the man as a speaker and expounder of the Word. He is thus occupied when the decisive moment comes for all his after life. The eloquent and devoted George Wishart comes from England back to his native Scotland to preach the new doctrines. Just when and how he made a captive of Knox we do not know, but Hugh Douglas of Longniddry—Knox's patron—was a friend of Wishart and his cause, and Wishart preached in the neighborhood. The story of Wishart's capture and execution under the tyrannous persecution of Cardinal

Beaton does not belong here, but Knox held a sword for Wishart and offered to go with him to St. Andrews for his trial. Wishart refused the brave and generous but useless offer, telling Knox to return to his pupils.

After Beaton's assassination by the outraged friends of Wishart the times became more and more unsafe for Knox. He was accordingly taken with his pupils into the Castle of St. Andrews, whither the murderers of Beaton, and the now considerable body of Protestants, had taken refuge. Here under these singular auspices the great preaching career of John Knox took its actual rise. His lectures (still kept up) to his pupils and others drew attention to his remarkable powers of expository speech, and his knowledge of the mooted questions of religion, and, his skill in argument, pointed him out as a leader among the refugees. The story of his "call" to the office of preacher to this strange congregation is told by himself in his *History of the Reformation*. John Rough, the priest, had broken with the Catholic party and committed himself irrevocable to the Reformation by taking refuge with the "Castilians", as the refugees at St. Andrews were called. With a magnanimity which reminds us of the similar proceeding of Farel with Calvin at Geneva, Rough urged Knox to become pastor and preacher to the congregation, either in his place or as his colleague. Knox resisted his importunities and those of others, saying that "he would not run where he had not been called." Upon this, Rough preached a sermon on the calling of a minister by the people as the proper and scriptural way, and at his conclusion turned to Knox and said: "Brother, ye shall not be offended albeit I speak unto you that which I have in charge, even from all those that are here present, which is this: in the name of God and of his Son Jesus Christ, and in the name of these that presently call you by my mouth, I charge you that ye refuse not this holy vocation; but that as ye tender the glory of God, the increase of Christ's kingdom, the edification of your brethren and the comfort of me, whom ye

understand well enough to be oppressed by the multitude of labours, that ye take upon you the public office and charge of preaching, even as ye look to avoid God's heavy displeasures, and desire that he shall multiply his graces with you." Then turning to the people he asked if he had not spoken their will and commission. They approved. Knox was greatly troubled, and in tears. For several days he kept to himself and was bowed with the weight of the responsibility thus thrust upon him. But he recognized his duty, and soon had occasion to exercise his ministry in a notable fashion. A priest had preached a sermon in defence of the Roman positions, and at the close Knox offered to prove that the pope was "anti-Christ," and more of the same sort. "And so (thus Knox himself reports) the next Sunday was appointed to the said John to express his mind in the public preaching place. Which day approaching the said John took the text written in Daniel, the seventh chapter (Dan. 7:24, 25) beginning thus: And another shall rise after them, etc." The substance of the sermon is given as follows: 1. He showed the love of God to his church. 2. He treated of the state of the Israelites then in captivity, and of the four empires (Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman), in the destruction of which "rose up that last beast, which he affirmed to be the Roman church." 3. But before opening up the corruptions of the papacy he "defined the true church." After that he says, "Every one of these heads sufficiently declared, he entered to the contrary; and upon the notes given in his text he showed that the Spirit of God in the New Testament gave to this king other names, to-wit, 'the man of sin', 'the anti-Christ', 'the whore of Babylon.'" While these terms could not be personally applied to individual popes they belong to the office, and are illustrated in the lives of individuals. "And then began he to decipher the lives of divers popes, and the lives of all the shavelings for the most part. Their doctrines and laws he plainly proved to repugn directly to the doctrine and laws of God the

Father and of Christ Jesus his Son." Then he took up the doctrine of justification by faith, argued against purgatory and the mass, and offered in conclusion to prove all he had said by the Scripture and history. He adds as comment: "Of this sermon, which was the first that ever John Knox made in public, was there divers bruits. Some said, 'Others sneed the branches of the papistry, but he strikes at the root, to destroy the whole.'" Other remarks indicated variously the profound impression made by this first real sermon delivered by the now fully committed reformer. Other ministrations were not so notable as this, and soon the seige and capture of the castle sent the refugees into exile, some of them as toilers in the French galleys. One of these unfortunates was Knox. For several years he was thus a prisoner at hard labor. Once the galley on which he toiled was brought in sight of St. Andrews and the castle was pointed out to Knox. With prophetic courage he declared that he would again preach the gospel there. And so he did.

In 1549 the third stage of Knox's life begins, with his release from the galleys and his residence of five years in England. It is probable that he owed his release to the Protestant English government during the reign of Edward VI. Under state influence Knox received an appointment as preacher at Berwick, where his diligence, boldness and power in the pulpit are attested by numerous hints, but from which no literay remains survive. Later he was transferred to Newcastle, where during his Berwick ministry he had paid a visit and had rendered vigorous testimony before a company assembled by Bishop Tunstall of Durham to hear him explain his conduct as a preacher. Tunstall had endeavored to punish Knox thus, but had really given him a good opportunity to speak his mind. So now at Newcastle as regular minister he had abundant opportunities to enhance his former reputation as a bold preacher of Reformed doctrine. During this time also he was appointed one of the six royal chaplains, and his duties not only gave him

opportunity of preaching before the court at times, but also that of itinerating in various parts of the country. Knox was not the man to slight opportunities for preaching, and his service was very fruitful. His boldness in making application of his discourses to men and affairs is strikingly shown in a famous discourse which he gave before King Edward's council, in which he said that good kings were often abused by bad councillors, and after adducing the instances of David and Hezekiah, he proceeded to say: "What wonder is it, then, that a young and innocent king be deceived by crafty, covetous, wicked and ungodly councillors? I am greatly afraid that Ahithophel be councillor, that Judas bear the purse, and that Shebna be scribe, comptroller and treasurer"! At a later time Knox complains of himself that he had not always been as faithful in rebuking manifest iniquity as he ought to have been. We hardly know which is more surprising: the boldness, or his depreciation of it. During this English sojourn he was offered a bishopric, but declined. He was also betrothed to Marjorie Bowes of Berwick, whom he later married. But his residence in England came to a close soon after the accession of Mary Tudor. Knox was reluctant to leave, but finally yielded to the dictates of prudence and the entreaties of friends, and went to the Continent.

Another five years (1554-1559) of exile from his native land was broken into by a visit of nearly a year's duration to Scotland, but was chiefly spent at Geneva. We cannot here trace the details, but the memorable things are that part of the time he was pastor of a congregation of English exiles at Frankfort, where disagreements over the liturgy divided the congregation and drove Knox away; part of the time he was in charge of an English church at Geneva, where he was much beloved as pastor and preacher; for a short while, during an enforced waiting period, he boldly preached the word at Dieppe to a band of discouraged Huguenots; and part of the time he was permitted to be in Scotland, where his preaching and

presence gave great encouragement to the Reformed cause. Of his preaching itself during this time we have no specimens, but only some detached accounts. Thus Professor Cowan has put together some very interesting notices of Knox's work at Dieppe. He quotes a writer of a later period as saying of the work at Dieppe: "Under his brief ministry the number of the faithful so increased that they dared to have preaching in broad daylight." A priest of Dieppe, writing in the eighteenth century, but from data furnished by much older records, speaks of Knox as "a learned man," "vehemently zealous," and "so eloquent that he controlled the minds of men according to his will." A contemporary resident of Dieppe writing to Calvin speaks of "Master John Knox, a singular instrument of the Holy Spirit, who according to the graces bountifully poured out upon him by the Lord, has faithfully promoted by his preaching the glory of Christ, during the short time that it has been in his power to have fellowship with us." Testimony is also borne to the effect of his preaching—as at Berwick and Newcastle—in the conversion and moral renovation of men, even the hardened and vicious.

The success attending his visit to Scotland was simply marvellous. He preached constantly, from place to place, winning converts, confirming the Reformers, and awakening the rage and jealousy of the Catholic party. He was summoned to Edinburgh to appear before the authorities, and showed both wisdom and characteristic boldness in going. For some reason the trial did not come off; and on the contrary Knox utilized the occasion to preach in private houses to crowds for ten days. With pardonable elation he writes to his mother-in-law, Mrs. Bowes, at Geneva: "Rejoice, mother, the time of our deliverance approacheth. The trumpet blew the old sound three days together, till private houses of indifferent largeness could not contain the voice of it. Sweet were the death that should follow forty such days in Edinburgh as I have had three." But the time was not yet ripe for him

to remain in Scotland, and an urgent summon from his flock at Geneva called him back there for a few years.

The sojourn at Geneva, with its diligent ministry in preaching and pastoral service, with its association with Calvin and other notable Reformed leaders, with its comparative leisure and its incentives to study, with its domestic life and social intercourse, was a most important stage in the moulding of John Knox for the great and distinctive work of his life. In fact all the varied and trying experiences of his life hitherto are but preparations for the final period of his career, which now begins.

The crowning part of Knox's life and service begins with his arrival in Scotland in May, 1559, and ends with his death in November, 1572. Between these dates lies a time of strenuous labor and lasting achievement. The political and religious history of Scotland in this stormy period is inextricably interwoven with the life and deeds of the reformer, and all may be read in the histories of the Scottish Reformation, and in the biographies of Knox. Our present concern is only with his preaching. He began at once, and his power over men from the pulpit is from now on one of the chief guiding forces of the age. Two signal instances of this occurred soon after his arrival in the country. The Queen Regent—Mary of Guise, mother of Mary Stuart, who was still in France—was trying, with the aid of the Catholic Archbishop Hamilton to oppress the Protestants. She had summoned some of the preachers to appear and answer for their conduct in preaching without license. But through some misunderstanding of her own language they had not answered the summons and had been outlawed for that! It was a trap, but did not succeed. Knox promptly took part with his persecuted brethren, the Protestant Lords took up arms, and a civil war broke out. While the Reformers were gathered at Perth, Knox preached a powerful sermon in the town church against idolatry, meaning the mass. Immediately afterwards, when it came the turn of the Catholics to use the church, a priest under-

took to celebrate mass, before the congregation had retired. A youth standing among some Protestant gentlemen remarked that it was a shame, after what they had just heard, to practise idolatry then and there. The offended priest struck the boy, who retorted by throwing a stone, which missed the priest but broke an image. This was like a spark in a magazine, and led to a riot which resulted in the destruction of all the images in the church, and further to the demolition of the two monasteries in the town. Knox disclaimed responsibility for this act, and said it was not that of serious "professors," but of "the rascal multitude." But it was an evidence of how profoundly his sermon had aroused the minds of the people, though of course other things conspired to produce the outbreak.

Soon afterwards the Reformers transferred their headquarters to St. Andrews. Now Knox had the coveted opportunity to fulfill his prediction, made while a prisoner on the French galleys years before, that he would again preach in the place where he had begun his work. But the archbishop threatened that he would train some small cannon on the church and have Knox shot if he entered the pulpit. That was the way to stop him—if indeed there was any way! His friends tried to persuade him to postpone his sermon, but he answered that his life was in the custody of God, whose glory he was seeking, and persisted in his design. The archbishop was afraid to execute his threat, and Knox preached to a great crowd. He took for his topic our Lord's expulsion of the traders from the Temple, and made the obvious application to the duty of purifying worship there and then. Other sermons followed. As a result, not by the "rascal multitude" this time, but by orders of the town authorities, the mass was abolished, pictures and images were removed from the churches, and the monasteries probably dismantled—though this may have occurred later. Other towns speedily followed the example of St. Andrews in abolishing the mass and the

images. These were the outward acts which showed how deeply the sentiments of the Reformation had taken hold of the people, and how the preaching of Knox, while not the sole was a very influential force in producing that result.

During the further progress of the civil strife Knox was called to the pastorship of St. Giles Church at Edinburgh, and on the capture of the city by the Protestant forces he occupied his pulpit and preached a notable sermon on the principles and purposes of the Reformation. Soon afterwards the fortunes of war were adverse to the party of the Protestants, and the forces of the Regent took Edinburgh. It was stipulated that Reformed preaching might continue, but the Protestant leaders thought it best for Knox to retire with the army, and to leave John Wilcox in charge of the congregation in Edinburgh. Before leaving Edinburgh Knox had begun a discourse on the eightieth Psalm. Meantime came the retirement of the Reformers. To the tried and dejected band on their stop at Stirling he continued his interrupted discourse. His own account of it in his *History of the Reformation* (Vol. I., p. 465 ff.) runs thus: "He divided the Psalme in three partis, to-wit: (1) In a prayer; (2) In the ground whairupon thair prayer was founded; (3) And in the lamentable complaintes, and the vow whiche thei maik to God." It was this third part which he took up at Stirling. He acknowledges that many of his hearers had need to humble themselves before God for their sins, and that their troubles were in part the consequence of their own faults. But he urged repentance and trust, and with confident earnestness assured his comrades of the final triumph of their cause. Of the effect of the sermon he says (p. 473): "The sermon ended, in whiche he did vehementlie exhorte all men to amendment of lyffe, to prayeries, and to the workis of charitie, the myndis of men began wonderouslye to be erected." Professor Cowan (*John Knox*, p. 215) says: "That this idea was no mere outcome of self-esteem is

indicated by the testimony of contemporaries, and by the resolution of the Council of the Congregation that very afternoon to continue the conflict, and to apply again to the English Government for assistance." In a foot-note Dr. Cowan quotes from George Buchanan a description of the discourse as a *luculentam concionem*, and his saying that Knox "raised the minds of many into a sure hope of speedy deliverance." Also an old historian is quoted who speaks of the leaders as "taking new courage, partly being persuaded by godly sermon made by John Knox."

Nor was it on this one occasion only that the preacher had to cheer the discouraged patriots and reformers. Later at Cupar he encouraged them with "a comfortable service," when his discourse was based on the account of Christ's coming to his disciples as they rowed in the night (John 6). He said that the fourth watch was not yet come, but he was sure the Lord would deliver his own. (Cowan, p. 217). Stalker (*John Knox*, p. 58) quotes Randolph, the English ambassador at this time, as saying that Knox's voice "was able to put more life into men than five hundred trumpets continually blustering in their ears."

The death of the Queen Regent put an end to the civil war. Soon afterwards the young Queen Mary Stuart, now a widow, was recalled from France and put into her rightful authority. The story of her troubled reign lies apart from our present study, and even her long and stubborn struggle with Knox and the party of Reform must be only mentioned. Soon after her arrival she had the mass celebrated at Holyrood palace. On the following Sunday Knox from his pulpit at St. Giles declared that that one mass filled him with more fear than if ten thousand soldiers had been landed to fight against his country. On hearing of the sermon Mary sent for Knox, and the first of his famous interviews with the giddy young queen took place. In these interviews the subject of Knox's plain preaching was several times brought up,

but he declared that it was his duty to preach what he believed God would have him preach, "and flatter no flesh on the face of the earth." Another time when something said in a sermon was objected to, Knox told the queen that she had suffered the fate of those who get second-hand news, that if she had been at the service herself she would have had it more correctly! And when some one remarked that he was not afraid to speak his mind to the queen, he said, "Why should the pleasing face of a gentlewoman make me afraid? I have looked in the faces of many angry men, and yet have not been afraid above measure."

Soon after Mary's ill-advised marriage with Darnley that royal fool condescended to attend services at St. Giles and hear Knox preach. But he was by no means pleased or edified by the discourse. He came home "crabbed," and that very night Knox was summoned before the Privy Council and interrogated concerning his sermon. He replied that he had said nothing but what was in his text. Yet he was ordered to desist from preaching while their majesties were in Edinburgh, but as they went away soon afterwards, and the prohibition was not renewed, the silence was a short one. But the most interesting thing concerning this discourse is that Knox wrote it out afterwards as well as he could from memory, and it is the only full sermon that we have from him. In the preface to the sermon (quoted by Stalker, p. 97) Knox thus writes: "Wonder not, Christian reader, that of all my study and travail within the Scriptures of God these twenty years, I have set forth nothing in expounding any portion of Scripture except this rude and indigested sermon, preached by me in the public audience of the Church of Edinburgh the day of the year above mentioned. That I did not, in writing, communicate my judgment upon the Scriptures, I have ever thought and yet think myself to have most just reason. For, considering myself rather called of my God to instruct the ignorant, comfort the sorrowful, encourage the weak, and

rebuke the proud, by tongue and lively voice, in these most corrupt days, than to compose books for the age to come, seeing that so much is written, and that by men of most singular condition, and yet so little observed, I decreed to contain myself within the bounds of that vocation whereunto I found myself especially called." We see here some of Knox's opinions of the value of preaching as a means of present influence, and also of the purposes of a ministry to which he felt himself directly called of God.

The sermon itself is worthy of the reputation of Knox, occasioning the reader no disappointment when compared with the accounts of his preaching. The text is from the prophecy of Isaiah, chap. 26, verses 13-21, "Other lords besides thee have had dominion over us, but by thee alone will we make mention of thy name," etc..

After a brief and skilfull introduction in which he compares the way in which a mariner handles his ship in a storm to the manner of the prophet in adapting his discourse to the occasion, he deduces these three thoughts: (1) Sometimes the prophet simply pours forth complaints over the existing evils and trials, as in verses 13, 17, 18; (2) Sometimes he resists the tempest and denounces the enemies of God; (3) Sometimes he urges patience and promises deliverance. The sermon does not separate sharply these thoughts, as the passage of Scripture itself does not, but rather mingles them as they come up in the exposition, which follows the order of the text. Yet in the main the three thoughts appear as the groundwork of the discourse. I. COMPLAINT, verse 13. 1. He explains the meaning of the prophet. (1) Whence authority comes. (2) To what end authority is appointed of God. 2. He makes application to existing conditions. What God requires of kings and others whom he has put in authority. (1) Knowledge of God himself. (2) A willing mind to obey God's laws. Here the application is clearly made. II. DENUNCIATION. verses

14-19. Here, as in the text, the thoughts are not kept very distinct because all three are involved in this part of the passage, but he manages to declaim against the wicked here as "dead men," and to bring in a sharp admonition to tyrants. Then he turns to the comforting strains of his text and that brings him to: III. CONSOLATION. Verses 15, 16, 19-21. 1. He speaks of the tokens of divine favor, "thou hast increased the nation, etc." 2. Then he discusses the divine visitation: (1) Upon the wicked; (2) To his people. 3. He now comes (19-21) to the prophet's *reassurance* to the people. (1) He contends against despair. (2) God calls upon his people. (3) He will surely avenge them. Then the sermon concludes with a prayer.

Such is the structure of the sermon—so far as it has any, but it rather follows, as was common with Luther and Calvin and others of the time, the order of the text in an exposition in the manner of the ancient homilies. The exposition is not very close, but is accurate for the most part, and shows the reformers' instinct for keeping to the Word of God. The application is telling, not overdone, but thorough and fearless. The preacher's boldness and lack of tact are abundantly in evidence. How he could have expected a Catholic and a king—especially such an one as Henry Darnley—to be otherwise than "crabbed" upon hearing such a discourse passes belief. But in fact Knox was never bent on pleasing his auditors, and this was an occasion not to be missed to put some plain even if unwelcome truth into royal ears. He has much to say of "papisty," speaks of Ahab and Jezebel in a way that even a greater fool than Darnley could scarcely have misunderstood, and lays down the law for kings and rulers in a fashion that never could be pleasing to would-be tyrants. The style is clear, vigorous and flowing, showing power both of language and construction. We endorse the judgment of McCrie who says of the sermon: "It affords a very favorable specimen of his talents, and shows that if he had applied himself to

writing he was qualified for excelling in that department. He had a ready command of language, and expressed himself with great perspicuity, animation and force." These qualities are apparent in his *History* and other writings, which, notwithstanding his apology in the preface to this sermon, are considerable in sum. But we surely judge that his spoken style had all the swing and fervor of noble speech as distinguished from animated written discourse. A man who could write as Knox did would speak with far greater effect, if he had in addition the faculty of utterance, as we are sure he had. This sermon shows that power also, for it has the quality of fine imagination mingled with feeling. There is courage and conviction, sympathy, logic and burning earnestness. Surely if any man ever illustrated the proverbial *perfervidum ingenium Scotorum*, that man was John Knox in his preaching.

We cannot here follow the course of affairs in the sad history of Scotland during the remainder of Mary Stuart's faulty and troubled career, and after her deposition and exile. Upon the occasion of the coronation of the infant James VI. at Stirling Knox preached in the old Greyfriars' Church a notable discourse, using as a text the account of the crowning of the boy king, Joash, after the usurpation of Athaliah. One more great occasion called forth all the powers of the preacher. This was the funeral of the Good Regent Murray, who had been assassinated by a personal and political enemy. The vast assembly that gathered in St. Giles' Church, the heartfelt grief of the nation, and the long and tender friendship—only for a time interrupted—between the good earl and the faithful preacher, all made up an occasion to stir the preaching powers of Knox to a masterly effort, and he rose to the demands of the sad hour. The text was, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord," and the discourse, we are told, "moved three thousand persons to tears." Here we see the tender side of the preacher's nature. It was there all the time, as many another incident shows, but the bold and polemic element

of his make-up was more demanded, as he thought, by the needs of his times, and is the better known characteristic of his utterance.

One often quoted description of Knox's manner of preaching in his old age has come down to us, and though well known it cannot be spared here. It is from the pen of James Melville, then a student at St. Andrew's where Knox was making an extended visit toward the end of his life. The passage from Melville's autobiography is thus quoted by Professor Cowan (p. 348): "I heard him teach the Prophecy of Daniel that summer 1571) and the winter following. I had my pen and my little book and took away such things as I could comprehend. In the opening up of his text he was moderate the space of half an hour; but when he entered to application he made me so to grow and tremble that I could not hold a pen to write. I saw him every day of his doctrine (i. e., during his teaching) go hylie and fear (slow and wary) with a furring of martricks about his neck, a staff in one hand, and good godly Richard Banatyne, his servant, holding up the other, from the Abbey to the parish Kirk; and by the said Richard and another servant lifted up to the pulpit, where he behooved to lean on his first entry. But ere he had done with his sermon he was so active and vigorous that he was like to ding that pulpit in blads and flee out of it."

In sum, as a preacher Knox had from God the native and indescribable gift of oratory—he spoke so as to move the feelings, arouse the wills, and mould the characters of men; he had the backing of a strong and sturdy character, splendid courage, and a masterful energy; he had the inward power of a real conversion to God, spiritual experience, and deep and abiding sense of his call and of the truth of his message, he had the talent of language, the easy and fluent utterance needed for his task; and he used it all "as ever in his great Taskmaster's eye."