THE SCOTTISH REFORMATION

JOHN KNOX AS A REFORMER IN ENGLAND AND ON THE CONTINENT

PRAYER
SCRIPTURE: John 13:12-20
HYMN: 413 "In the Hour of Trial"

JOHN KNOX IN ENGLAND:

When Knox was released from the French galley he could not safely
return to Scotland. The capture of St. Andrews in 1547 had been
followed by a renewal of persecution. The clergy petitioned the Privy
Council to enforce the laws against heresy. When Hamilton was con-
secrated archbishop church and state combined in a policy of repression.
In November, 1549, a Provincial Church Council in Edinburgh passed a
resolution to make a diligent inquisition as to heresies. With con-
ditions such as these the Reformation made very little progress during
the time Knox served in the galley. Romanism was identified with
patriotism. Protestantism was suspect because in the Scotch mind it
was associated with England. The Roman party made the most of a
document found among the papers of Balnaves when St. Andrews was taken.
The document contained the signatures of two hundred Scottish noblemen
who had secretly pledged themselves to the service of England. A month
after the capture of St. Andrews the English Protector Somerset had
crossed the border with a large army to force Scotland to renew the
betrothall between Edward VI and Mary Stuart which had been agreed on
in 1543. Somerset had counted on support from the Reformers in Scotland
but they united with Romanists to oppose the hated English. The Primate
and his clergy distinguished themselves as champions of Scottish
independence in the battle of Pinkie, September 10, 1547, when Scots
were defeated, losing 10,000 men. Somerset was not strong enough to
follow up the victory so that the end result was to further alienate
the Scottish people that the proposed marriage was supposed to conciliate.
There had been further invasions by the English in the winter and spring
of 1547-48 further alienating the Scots. In June 1548 a French army of
6,000 came to the assistance of the Scots, greatly strengthening the
Romanist party. In July, 1548 the betrothal of Mary Stuart to the
Dauphin, Francis II of France was approved by the Estates. Later in
the month the young queen was taken to France for her education. France
would be her home for the next thirteen years and her mother, Mary the
Guise, remained as Regent for her in Scotland. The Regent was dedicated
to destroying all Reformation sentiment in Scotland. Knox was dedicated
to preaching and there was no place for his preaching in Scotland.

Knox felt grateful to England for taking the lead in the treaty
that had resulted in his release from the galley in the early months
of 1549. By April he was in England where he would spend the next five
years. In the Scottish mind England was associated with Protestantism.
Henry VIII had broken with the pope. Before Knox Scottish Protestants
had found places in the English Church. In 1535, Alexander Alane, a
friend of Patrick Hamilton, through Cranmer's influence found a place
as a lecturer in divinity at Cambridge. He was the first to expound
the Old Testament in the original Hebrew at Cambridge. For a time
Wishart had taught at Cambridge. Four Scottish Dominicans had found
places in England. Alexander Seton became chaplain to the Duke of
Suffolk and became a popular London preacher. John MacAlpine became
a canon of Salisbury Cathedral. Thomas William, one of Knox's earliest
instructors in the Reformed faith, became a Protestant evangelist in
Bristol. John McDowel, whom Knox praised for prudence, learning and godliness, became a chaplain to the Bishop of Salisbury and one of the first to publicly preach in that diocese against papal supremacy. Earlier in the reign of Edward VI three Scots had been enrolled in a list of eighty accredited preachers: John Willock, a Dominican from Ayrshire, who would later labor with Knox in Scotland; John McBlair of Galloway, who became Vicar of Newcastle; John Rough, the ex-chaplain of St. Andrews, who would be a martyr under Bloody Mary. At a time when Somerset and Edward VI were pushing the Protestant cause many of the English clergy were lukewarm or hostile. Scottish refugee preachers were needed by the English reformation. By nature Knox had a deep distrust of the English but he also had great sympathy with English who had suffered at the hands of the Romanists. His qualifications and his spirit caused him to find a quick welcome from the English. By April 7, 1559 his name was added to the select corps of licensed preachers.

His first assignment was to Berwick near the border of Scotland. The town was in territory ceded to the English by Scotland about seventy years earlier. The population was partly English and partly Scottish. It was in the diocese of Durham of which Tunstall was bishop. Tunstall had acquiesced in the Reformation of Henry VIII but had no sympathy for the reforming policy of Cranmer and Edward VI. He adhered to Roman doctrine and ritual. Knox had his commission directly from the Privy Council so that he was able to operate independently without too much interference from the bishop. He labored in Berwick from April, 1549, to April, 1551. A large garrison of English soldiers was stationed in Berwick. The morals of soldiers and civilians were low. The town was characterized by bloody quarrels, disorder, and robbery. Knox declared later that he preached Christ among them with much weakness and fear. Knox brought peace and order to the town. Knox not only aggressively preached Protestantism throughout the diocese, he also sowed some of the earliest seeds of Puritanism in England. It is thought that he carried his message to the inhabitants of the Island of Lindisfarne (a letter dated May, 1551, by a refugee, John ab Ulmis, states that he found the inhabitants rightly instructed in religion). Although the First Prayer-book of Edward VI had been sanctioned and its liturgy ordered to commence on Whitsunday, 1549, Knox introduced his own communion service that was very close to the later Puritan service. Kneeling at communion was discontinued. Carlyle designated Knox as the chief priest and founder of English Puritanism.

In Knox's congregation at Berwick was Mrs. Elizabeth Bowes, the daughter of Sir Roger Aske of Yorkshire. Her husband, Richard Bowes, was captain of Norham Castle, a few miles from Berwick. He had been knighted for his prowess at Flodden. Richard Bowes was Romanist. His wife sympathized with the Reformation and became a devout follower of Knox. The Bowes had ten daughters and five sons. Knox and the fifth daughter, Marjorie, pledged themselves to one another before witnesses, but the marriage did not take place until 1555 or 1556 because of the Father's opposition to the marriage.

During his ministry at Berwick Knox was summoned to appear in April, 1550, before the Council of the North of which Bishop Tunstall was a leading member to explain why he declared the mass to be idolatry. The council was composed of twenty-three representatives of clergy, nobility, and gentry appointed to secure conformity to parliamentary enactments concerning religion. Knox was not cited as an offender but was called to give his confession in a sermon before a large congregation gathered in the Church of St. Nicholas at Newcastle. Knox
declared that the mass as celebrated by Romanists was idolatrous. His preaching was in accord with acts of Parliament which had abolished the unscriptural features of the mass, which included the consecration of altars, candles, vestments, ungodly invocations and diabolical conjurations. The sermon brought Knox prominently before the court, church, and people as a leading champion of Protestant doctrine.

Early in 1551 the Privy Council moved Knox from Berwick to Newcastle. In this more prominent place he diligently spread his Reformation ideas and practices throughout the northern region. In 1552 he was appointed one of six royal chaplains to Edward VI. Two chaplains at a time resided at the court. The other four travelled throughout the country preaching. Knox had an opportunity to preach before the king and his ministers. His influence grew rapidly. Before the end of 1552 Northumberland, who had replaced Somerset, recommended Knox for the bishopric of Rochester. Knox refused the appointment. He did not trust Northumberland. He did not want to be in his debt. Knox suspected that it was part of a plot to silence him. Knox had been speaking out against wickedness in high places. Knox was a keen observer of men and he was in a position to observe much corruption in the government. In a ferocious sermon at Christmas, 1552, at Newcastle in the pulpit of St. Nicholas's, he blasted those who professed Reformation faith and then opposed the changes it required. He denounced those who supported Reformation from the wrong motives. He branded them traitors to the Crown and to England. In his last sermon before the King in Westminster in April, 1553, he took as his text Christ's words to Judas about "He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me."

Knox was offered the vicarage of Allhallows in London but he turned it down fearing he would be expected to follow usages that had not been sufficiently reformed.

Knox had become one of the most influential reformers in England. A Flemish refugee commented on the great influence he had over so many. Critics complained that one man could exercise so much authority. Knox introduced the practice of sitting during communion, and it became frequent by 1552. Knox took an active part in the writing of the Forty-Two Articles promulgated in 1553. Also he shared in the work of the revision of the Book of Common Prayer. He was not able to secure the adoption of an article prescribing sitting for communion but he is thought to have been the author of the so called "Black Rubric" that states that kneeling in communion is not a confession that the bread and wine had changed into the body and blood of Christ. The very efforts to get rid of him are testimony to his great influence. In April, 1553, he was summoned before the Council to explain his refusal of the vicarage of Allhallows. He cited his opportunity to preach as a royal chaplain and the fact that he did not want an office such as the vicarage without fuller powers to enforce discipline. He was also attacked for advocating sitting at communion. His defense was the example of Christ at the institution of the Supper.

Knox considered the death of King Edward VI on July 6, 1553, a great calamity and a divine judgment on England. With the death of Edward his royal chaplaincy and his commission as a preacher came to an end. He kept on preaching. On July 26, a week after Mary Tudor's accession, he preached at Carlisle. In August he preached in Kent. In September he preached in London. Parliament on December 20 ruled that there should be no form of service except that used in the last year of Henry VIII. The mass had been restored. On December 22 he wrote that he tried to preach every day. When Mary became queen many Protestants fled to the
continent. Daily more of Knox's friends were fleeing. They urged him to flee. When he learned that his letters were being intercepted he realized there was no place for him in England. He was not afraid to die but he believed God had other work for him. He wrote, "My prayer is that I may be restored to the battle." He had to postpone his marriage. His staying in England would have put Marjorie in grave danger. He promised to return and marry her.

KNOX IN GENEVA:

Knox was one of the last Protestant leaders to flee the England of Mary Tudor. He escaped to France. He found refuge with Swiss refugees in Dieppe. He sent a pastoral letter back to Mrs. Bowes which contained an Exposition of Psalm VI. He dispatched "A Godly Letter to the faithful Christians in London, Newcastle, Berwick, and to all others within the realm of England that love the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." He was deeply troubled in mind that the fate of the true religion in England could be determined by the opinions of one woman. If the personal whims of the sovereign could settle the religion of a nation he could see no future for the Reformation anywhere. Knox was moving toward the conclusion that it would be right for Protestant subjects to resist by force the subversion of religion by a Catholic ruler. Knox laid the question before the leaders of the Reformation on the Continent. He spent two months touring Switzerland, visiting Calvin in Geneva, Beza in Lausanne, and Bullinger in Zurich. He had four questions to put to them. One was a question of whether Christians owed obedience to sovereigns in their minority. The second had to do with the propriety of a female sovereign and her right to transfer her government to her husband. The third was whether Christians should submit to a ruler who enforced idolatry. The fourth was whether Christians should give aid to the nobility in resisting an idolatrous sovereign. Calvin and Bullinger condemned armed resistance and insisted on prayer and patience. Beza was inclined to agree with Knox and in 1554 published his Treatise on the Authority of the Magistrate in which he agreed with Knox. Knox had come to the conclusion that he would later carry back to Scotland that the nobility had the right and duty to resist by force a ruler who threatened the true religion. Knox returned briefly to Dieppe hoping for information from Scotland and England. He learned that Mary was imprisoning and burning Protestants. He learned that Mary the Guise was crushing Protestantism and that the marriage of Mary Queen of Scots and Philip of Spain was approaching. In 1554 Knox published his Faithful Admonition to the faithful remaining in England expressing his conclusion and his ideas of a true church. It aroused greater persecution against Protestants and alienated many of those in England who resented such an admonition from one who had escaped to safety.

Knox returned to Geneva. In September 1554 he received a call to become minister of a congregation of English Protestant exiles in Frankfort. It was a congregation with Puritan leanings that had secured permission to meet in the church of the Cistercian nuns. Knox wanted to stay in Geneva to learn what he could from Calvin. Calvin urged him to accept the call to Frankfort. Knox arrived in Frankfort in November, 1554. Almost from the beginning he was in deep trouble. The congregation had been granted the use of the church building on condition that they follow the Walloon doctrine and ritual modeled after those of Geneva. Part of the congregation wanted to follow the Prayer Book of Edward. Knox prepared for the congregation a service-book modeled after
that of the Walloon minister, Pullain, and that of Calvin. Knox offered to retire for the sake of peace. Thomas Lever from Zurich was called to be an associate minister. Lever favored the English liturgy. Both parties agreed to submit the quarrel to Calvin. Calvin deprecated so much fuss over forms and gave his opinion that some foolish things that lacked purity could be allowed for the sake of peace. A compromise was adopted in February, 1555. The English liturgy would be used but the congregational responses and the commemoration of the saints were to be omitted. The surplice would not be worn. Sitting would be substituted for kneeling at the Lord's Supper.

Shortly after the compromise Richard Cox, who had been Chancellor of Oxford, arrived with a new company of exiles. Cox insisted on the English liturgy, including the responses. The new exiles made those who favored the English Prayer Book the majority. Knox was willing to be silent. The magistrate, Johann von Glauburg, a Calvinist, warned the congregation that the use of the building had been granted on condition that the Walloon liturgy be followed and unless they met the condition they would be denied use of the building.

The majority led by Cox retaliated by informing the Frankfort magistracy that Knox in his Faithful Admonition had declared that the emperor Charles V was "no less an enemy to Christ than ever was Nero." The emperor at the time was only sixty miles from Frankfort. The magistrates forbade Knox to preach and requested that he leave the city. Both parties sent letters to Calvin. Calvin declared, "I cannot keep secret, that Master Knox was, in my judgment, neither godly nor brotherly dealt withal." Knox returned to Geneva about the end of March, 1555.

Knox arrived in Geneva at a very important time. Calvin and his Puritan supporters were in the final phases of their struggle with the Libertine party over the right of the Church apart from the State to excommunicate and over the admission of strangers to the full rights of citizens. Calvin triumphed on both issues. The church was granted the right of excommunication. Early in 1555 fifty foreigners were admitted to citizenship. The Libertines resorted to lawless violence on the night of May 13, 1555. Their conspiracy failed, the leaders of the rebels were beheaded, and Calvin's supremacy in Geneva was established.

Knox was greatly impressed with Calvin's moral power. Knox later described the Libertines as men who hated the reformation of manners and as men filthy in life. In 1556 he wrote that the Church of Geneva "is the most perfect school of Christ that ever was in the earth since the days of the Apostles. In other places I confess Christ to be truly preached; but manners and religion so sincerely reformed I have not yet seen in any other place."

One result of Calvin's triumph was the admitting of English refugees to citizenship and accommodations were provided for their common worship. Knox was chosen to be their pastor. It was a happy choice for both.

A few weeks after he began his work as pastor in Geneva Knox received a letter from Mrs. Bowes urging him to return to Scotland to continue the Reformation. Against his better judgment he returned to England and Scotland for a ten months' visit in 1555-56. In August 1555 on his way to Scotland he visited Berwick and was married to Marjorie Bowes.

Knox returned to Scotland for nine months. He was astounded at the progress made by the Reformation and by the eager reception given
him by people of all classes. He arrived in Edinburgh near the end of September, 1555. He preached privately at first in the house of James Sym. Soon he received invitations from Reformed leaders throughout Scotland. He spent the winter and spring (1555-56) in evangelistic labors. At a conference in the house of John Erskine in Edinburgh he rebuked Protestant leaders for continuing to attend mass to avoid persecution. He travelled over Scotland in answer to invitations from nobles to preach in their homes. Many young nobles heard him—men who would later be leaders in the Scottish Reformation—Archibald Lord Lorne, afterwards fifth Earl of Argyle; Lord James Stuart, son of James V, who would become "Good Regent" Moray; and Lord Erskine, eventually Sixth Earl of Mar and Governor of Edinburgh Castle. Knox administered communion in the Reformed manner. In the spring of 1556 he was at Kilmacolm on the Clyde. He visited Calder in West Lothian and Dun. His welcome surpassed all expectations.

The catholic clergy were greatly aroused and Knox received a summons for trial at Blackfriars' Church in Edinburgh on May 15. They expected him to flee from Scotland. Knox came for his trial that the discomfited bishops decided not to hold. Emboldened by such success Knox wrote a long letter to the Regent, Mary the Guise, admonishing her to reform Scotland. Knox was somewhat crushed when he learned that she laughed at his letter.

In the middle of the summer, 1556, Knox received a letter from his congregation in Geneva, begging him to return to his pastorate. Knox returned to Geneva. After his departure from Scotland he was summoned to trial, burned in effigy, and excommunicated.

During his absence from Geneva his congregation had been granted the Church of Notre Dame la Neve, situated near the Cathedral of St. Peter, where Calvin preached. The congregation numbered about 212 people. Among its elders were Miles Coverdale, the translator; Thomas Sampson who had been Dean of Chichester; William Whittingham, husband of Calvin's sister-in-law, and Knox's successor as pastor; John Bodley of Exeter and his son, Thomas, founder of the Bodleian Library of Oxford; Thomas Bentham the Hebraist and later Bishop of Lichfield; and James Pilkinson who would become Bishop of Durham. The congregation included ten men who had been members of Orders, ten students preparing for the ministry, and many representatives of the gentry and mercantile class. The congregation used the Book of Geneva. Knox, following the example of Calvin, was very busy with preaching, visiting, and academic work. He was also busy writing. In 1558 he wrote a Letter to the Commonalty of Scotland. His most elaborate treatise was the work on Predestination which was published on his return to Scotland in 1560.

It was a happy time for Knox. His wife bore him two sons. Nathaniel was baptized May, 1557, with Whittingham as "god-father"; Eleazer was baptized in November, 1558, with Coverdale as "witness." Calvin praised Mrs. Knox as "a wife whose like is not found anywhere." During this period Knox was associated with such men as Calvin, Beza, Farel, Peter Viret, Vico of Naples, and the Colladon brothers--Nicholas succeeded Calvin as Professor of Theology and Germain who helped Calvin draw up the code of laws for Geneva. Among the great accomplishments of the congregation of Knox was the famous Geneva translation of the Bible and the metrical Psalter. These would be carried back to Scotland.

In May 1557 Knox received a letter from four Protestant nobles of Scotland—Lords Lorne, Glencairn, Erskine and James Stewart—urging him to return to Scotland. His congregation did not want him to go but he felt constrained. When he reached Dieppe he received a letter
that the time was not ripe for his return. Knox remained at Dieppe until the spring, 1558. He stayed busy strengthening the Reformation there and prepared his famous *First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, against the three women ruling in England, France and Scotland who opposed Protestantism. Its publication coincided with the accession of Elizabeth to the throne of England. She would never forgive him and barred him from England forever. Knox returned to his congregation in Geneva.