THE SCOTTISH REFORMATION

JOHN KNOX ON THE PATH TO REFORMATION

Prayer
Scripture: Daniel 7:24, 25
Hymn: 604 "Be With Me, Lord"

After the martyrdom of George Wishart, John Knox was a marked man with the hierarchy on his track. The parents of his pupils were suspected persons. Knox was tutor to Francis and George Douglas, sons of Hugh Douglas, the Laird of Longniddry, and Alexander Cockburn, son of John Cockburn of Ormiston. He instructed the boys in grammar, human authors, and the Gospel of John. The readings and lectures on John's gospel were probably delivered in the chapel at Longniddry which afterward bore the name, "John Knox's Kirk."

THE ASSASSINATION OF CARDINAL BEATON:

Followers of Wishart plotted the death of the archbishop. They were gentlemen of repute, not ignorant fanatics. William Kirkcaldy, Laird of Grange was a leader in the conspiracy. Another leader was John Leslie, also a Laird of Grange, and brother of Norman Leslie, Sheriff of Fife. Included were Sir James Learmonth of Dairsie and Provost of Saint Andrews and Sir John Melville, Laird of Raith. After the death of the Archbishop papers were discovered in his quarters that these men were listed among those the archbishop had planned to have arrested and executed. The archbishop, after the death of Wishart had been very diligent in eliminating those he considered a threat.

Early on the morning of May 29, 1546, William Kirkcaldy with six others approached the porter at the gate asking, "Is My Lord walking?" The archbishop had been busy the night before he told his servants, going over accounts with Mistress Marion Ogilvy, and would need morning sleep. She had been seen slipping out a private gate early in the morning. For some time the archbishop had had workmen busily strengthening his castle in case it should be attacked either by land or by sea. The fortifications were almost finished (Knox called the castle "Babylon"). The drawbridge over the moat had been let down early in the morning to receive lime, stones, and other necessities for the building. While the porter was busy talking to William and at the same time speaking to the workmen, Norman Leslie with a small company entered. When John Leslie and four others approached the porter started to raise the drawbridge but they knocked him in the head and threw him into the moat, after taking his keys. The guards were overpowered. There were some shouts. The workmen fled. The Cardinal awakened. He shouted through his locked chamber door, "Who calls?" When John Leslie replied and ordered him to open the door, the cardinal tried to hastily hide a chest of gold under some coal. He pushed chests against the door. When the conspirators brought burning coals to set the door on fire the cardinal finally opened the door, crying, "I am a priest, I am a priest." John Leslie and Peter Carmichael, a strong gentleman, were going to kill him without a word, but James Melville pushed them away and began preaching to the cardinal, declaring that this judgment of God should be carried out with greater gravity. Holding the point of his sword against the cardinal he said, "Repent thee of thy former wicked life, but especially of the shedding of the blood of that notable instrument of God, Master George Wishart, which albeit the flame of fire consumed before men, yet cries it a vengeance upon thee,
and we from God are sent to revenge it. For here, before my god, I protest, that neither the hatred of thy person, the love of thy riches, nor the fear of any trouble thou could have done to me in particular, moved, nor moves me to strike thee; but only because thou has been, and remain an obstinate enemy against Christ Jesus and his holy Evangel." He plunged his sword into him with the cardinal still crying, "I am a priest." Some sixteen men had captured the Castle of St. Andrews.

Word quickly spread through the town of the attack on the castle. The Provost, Sir James Learmonth of Dairsie, and a crowd gathered at the moat crying out, "What have you done with my Lord Cardinal?" The conspirators with a pair of sheets hung the body of the cardinal from the wall by an arm and a foot, shouting to the people to see their god. The crowd scattered and the conspirators packed the body in salt at the bottom of the Sea-Tower where the cardinal had imprisoned many people.

The priests, the Governor, and the French Queen Dowager called for the cardinal's death to be revenged. A reaction set in among the nobles. The conspirators were outlaws and should be punished. John Hamilton, the bastard brother of the Governor was chosen to be archbishop in the place of the slain cardinal. The Earl of Angus and his brother, Sir George Douglas, began raising a force to besiege the castle where the conspirators welcomed those who approved of the assassination and made preparations to hold the castle. The siege began the last of August and continued to near the end of January, 1547. Those holding the castle were able to bring in supplies from the sea. English ships visited the castle with supplies and carried John Leslie and Henry Balnaves to England to negotiate with Henry VIII for support. When the besieging army saw it could not take the fort and fearing the English would support those in the castle, peace was negotiated. The Abbot of Dunfermline and the Laird of Montquhanie represented the government forces. The peace terms were that the conspirators could continue to hold the castle until the Governor should secure for them from the pope absolution for the slaughter of the cardinal. The conspirators would never be pursued by the law for the slaughter nor would any of their goods be held. The conspirators had captured the son of the Regent, the Earl of Arran, and were holding him as a hostage. The peace terms allowed them to continue to hold him as a guarantee. Actually neither side intended to abide by the peace terms. Each side intended to use the peace to gain time. The government needed time to raise a larger land force and time to persuade the French to attack the castle by sea. The conspirators in the castle needed time to perfect an alliance with England. England was offering help in return for a renewal of the marriage alliance of Edward and Mary.

JOHN KNOX IN THE CASTLE OF ST. ANDREWS:

With Hamilton on his trail John Knox feared for his life. He could no longer safely maintain residence at Longnidry. He had to constantly be moving from place to place. Knox toyed with the idea of fleeing to Germany. He even thought of taking his pupils with him. His patrons fled to the castle; they wanted Knox to continue to tutor their sons. They urged him to take refuge in the castle. Knox knew he was a marked man in the pope's camp. If he refused the invitation to the castle he would be an outcast in the Protestant camp. His loyalty was with those who had avenged the death of Wishart. Knox
arrived at the castle in April, 1547.

When Knox arrived at the castle the defenders numbered about one hundred fifty. They were a mixed multitude. Some were ardent Protestants and deeply religious, people that Knox considered genuine members of the congregation of the Faithful. Some had little interest in religion. Their concerns were political and economic. Some had joined the conspirators out of sympathy for their cause; some had fled to the castle out of fear of persecution. John Rough, ex-chaplain of the Regent, had been appointed minister of the Castle congregation. Two supporters who were in and out of the castle were Henry Balnave, the Regent's ex-Secretary of State, who had promoted the Act of Parliament in 1543, authorizing the use of vernacular Scriptures, and also the poet, Sir David Lyndsay, who had been unsparing in his attacks on clerical vice and greed.

Knox trained his pupils in Catechism and had them recite in the parish church. He continued his lectures on the Gospel of John and allowed anyone who was interested to attend the lectures. Knox was shocked at the lives of some of the defenders of the castle and he began to admonish them for their gross impiety and immorality. His audiences grew. Rough, the castle minister, began urging that he needed help in the castle ministry. Rough was a man of the best reputation and was loved by the people, but he recognized that he was not the most learned. He needed a helper to evangelize the people of the town and some one who would be able to carry on controversy with the divines of the Church and the University. He and Balnavaes began urging Knox to accept the office of preacher. Knox utterly refused declaring that he would not run where God had not called him.

Rough, Balnavaes and Lyndsay began planning a formal call. Rough prepared a sermon on the right of the members of the congregation to choose their own minister when they discerned a man had the gift of God, and of the heavy responsibility of refusing such a call. At the conclusion of his sermon he 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 displeasure and desire that He shall multiply His graces with you."

Then turning to the congregation he asked, "Was not this your charge to me? And do you not approve this Vocation?" They answered, "It was; and we approve it."

Knox, abashed and terrified, and with tears flowing down his cheeks, fled to his chamber. He secluded himself for several days, showing no sign of mirth. When he came forth it was to preach.

Dean John Annand, Principal of St. Leonard's College, for a long time had been troubling Rough in his preaching. Knox wrote a tract supporting Rough and attacking Annand and answering his arguments. When Annand could no longer answer their arguments he took refuge in
an appeal to the church. In a sermon in the parish church of St. Andrews he declared that the church had damned all Lutherans and heretics; therefore there was no need for further disputation. Knox publicly challenged Annand at the end of the sermon to define the church and to give proof from God's Scriptures of the true church. He called on him to show how to discern between the immaculate spouse of Jesus Christ and the mother of confusion, spiritual Babylon, that the people might not imprudently embrace a harlot instead of the chaste spouse. He challenged him to show in plain words how to be sure they were submitting to Jesus Christ and not to Satan. Knox charged that the Roman Kirk was so corrupt that it was a synagogue of Satan and its head, the pope, was the man of sin spoken of by the apostle. He offered to prove "the Roman Church of his day further degenerate from the purity which was in the days of the Apostles, than was the Church of the Jews from the ordinance given by Moses, when they consented to the innocent death of Jesus Christ." The people responded by calling on Knox to give his proofs in a sermon.

The following Sunday John Knox preached his first sermon. It was in the parish church of St. Andrews. He took for his text Daniel 7. He began by showing God's great love for his church and that he had warned it of dangers to come. He briefly traced the history of the Israelites whose sins caused them to be carried to Babylon into captivity. He spoke of the four great empires: Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman. He declared that the king that arose to speak words against the Most High and who would speak words against the saints of the Most High was the Roman Church. The beast of which the prophet warned was fulfilled in the corruptions of the Papistry. The true church was built on truth with Christ as its pastor. The king of whom Daniel warned the people of God in the New Testament is called "the man of Sin", "The Anti-Christ," and "the Whore of Babylon." He described the lives of some of the popes. He declared that only the blood of Christ purges from sin. He contrasted justification by faith only with the Papists doctrine of works of the law that included such inventions of men as pilgrimages, pardons, and such "baggage." He declared that the papistical laws were repugnant to the Evangel. The papal laws ordered men to abstain from meats and marriage; Paul had declared that such teaching was the doctrine of devils. The pope blasphemed when he claimed to be the successor of Peter, the Vicar of Christ, and head of the church, and the most holy and most blessed, and that he could not err. The church's claim to relax the pains of those in Purgatory was the merchandise of the Babylonian harlot.

Knox urged that if anyone present thought he had taught anything not in Scripture that he should give him proof of his error from Scripture. Knox promised to show the original source of what he had preached. In his audience that day were Master John Major, professors from the University, the Subprior, John Winram, many canons and friars. No one contradicted him.

The sermon brought strong reactions. One said, "Others lop off the branches of the Papistry, but he strikes at the root, to destroy the whole." Another said, "If the doctors and our Magistrates defend not now the Pope and his authority, which in their own presence is so manifestly impugned, the Devil have my part of him, and of his laws both." One elderly man is reputed to have said, "Master George Wishart spake never so plainly, and yet he was burnt; even so will he be." The Laird of Nydie, a fervent and upright man, declared, "The tyranny of the Cardinal made not his cause the better, neither
yet the suffering of God's servant made his cause the worse. And therefore we would counsel you and them to provide better defenses than fire and sword; for it may be that else ye will be disappointed; men now have other eyes than they had then."

John Hamilton, who had been chosen archbishop but had not yet been consecrated (Knox calls him "the bastard Bishop"), heard of the sermon and sent a note to the Subprior of St. Andrews, John Winram, "That he wondered that he suffered such heretical and schismatical doctrine to be taught, and not to oppose himself to the same." Winram, who was also Dean of St. Leonard's College, called a convention of Grey and Black Friars, to which he invited John Rough and John Knox. He had submitted to the convention a series of nine articles which he said had been gathered from the teaching of Rough and Knox. The articles were:

1. No mortal man can be the head of the Church.
2. The Pope is an Antichrist, and so is no member of Christ's mystical body.
3. Man may neither make nor devise a religion that is acceptable to God; but man is bound to observe and keep the religion from God as received, without chopping or changing thereof.
4. The Sacraments of the New Testament ought to be ministered as they were instituted by Christ Jesus, and practised by his Apostles; nothing ought to be added unto them; nothing ought to be diminished from them.
5. The Mass is abominable idolatry, blasphemous to the death of Christ, and a profanation of the Lord's Supper.
6. There is no Purgatory in which the souls of men can either be punished or purged after this life; but heaven's rest to the faithful, and hell to the reprobate and unthankful.
7. Praying for the dead is vain, and to the dead is idolatry.
8. There are no bishops, except they preach even by themselves, without any substitute.
9. The tithes by God's law do not appertain of necessity to kirk-men.

The Subprior declared that the strangeness of these articles had moved him to call for their answers. Knox declared that if any one of the articles was contrary to the truth of God it should be opposed. If the articles were true they should be taught to the people. The Subprior declared they had not gathered to judge or debate but to hold a familiar talk. Knox declared nothing should be done in religion that could not be done in faith. The Subprior declared that the ceremonies of the church were helps to faith. Knox declared that faith comes by hearing the Word of God and that what is not of faith is sin. The Subprior jested that surely one could take a drink without searching for an express word of God. Knox replied that it was no jesting matter. Nothing in worship is pleasing to God or lawful to man except what God in express words has commanded. The Subprior turned the argument over to a Franciscan friar. Arbuckle, who was anxious to speak. Arbuckle undertook to prove that the ceremonies such as anointing with oil, the use of salt, candles, spittle were all ordained by God. Knox declared these did not come from the Word of God but from the pope. When the friar could not find these in the Scriptures he declared, "That the Apostles had not received the Holy Ghost, when they did write their Epistles; but after, they received him, and
then they did ordain the ceremonies." The Subprior broke in, "Father what say ye? God forbid that ye affirm that; for then fare-
well the ground of our faith." The friar appealed to the authority of the church. Knox declared the church had no authority against the word of God. The friar could not find any better authority for Purgatory than Virgil in the sixth Aeneid.

The Roman party refused to continue the discussion, and ruled that after that only the Roman clergy could preach the Sunday sermon in the parish church. Knox could only preach on week-days. The Roman clergy avoided controversial subjects.

Knox's ministry was fruitful and many of the townspeople turned to his Reformation doctrine. Many abstained from participation in Holy Communion; some took it but repudiated the superstitious features. Knox introduced a public celebration of the Lord's Supper according to a Reformed ritual with no acknowledgement of transubstantiation. Some regard this the beginning of the Reformed Church in Scotland.

The bishops, the priests, the Governor, the French Regent Queen were enraged at the proceedings at St. Andrews. They began to cry, "What are we doing? Shall ye suffer this whole realm to be infected with pernicious doctrine?" The Regent Queen called for help from France.

THE FALL OF SAINT ANDREWS:

Henry VIII died about a month after the truce between the government forces and the conspirators. The English decided to continue aid to the besieged rebels. The Admiral of the Fleet, Andrew Dudley, had orders to harass the Scots and to intercept any French ships bringing aid to the government forces. The English soon changed their policy out of fear that the French might invade England. When the French King Francis I died in March and Henry II became king of France, he made it clear that he would uphold the old religion, that he intended to incorporate Scotland into France, and that he intended to send enough reinforcements to crush all Protestant factions and all pro-English factions. This further alarmed the English. By January, 1547, the Council of Trent had made it clear that the Roman church intended to crush Protestantism by military force and utterly destroy it. England did not dare give further help to the Scottish rebels for fear of bringing the war to England. On June 29, 1547, when twenty-one French galleys appeared on the horizon under the command of Leo Strozzi, Prior of Capua, the English did not interfere.

Before the French galleys had arrived Knox had thundered against the rebels that God was displeased with their wicked lives and had called him to preach against their corrupt doings. If they did not repent they would not escape the judgment of God.

The French galleys opened fire upon the castle. The rebels returned the fire with the castle guns, fighting valiantly. The artillery duel lasted a couple of days. It looked like the rebels might drive the ships away; they rejoiced over this early success. Knox lamented that they could not see what he saw. He declared that they would be delivered into the hands of the enemy.

The attack from the sea was to prepare for a strong force to attack by land. The French Regent Queen had her armies ready to march. On July 18 her troops arrived before St. Andrews and dug their trenches. Their canons were planted in St. Salvator's College, in the streets, and in the abbey steeple. The rebels boasted that the castle was strong and could hold out until the English army arrived to rescue
them. When they pointed to the thick stone walls, Knox replied, "Egg-shells!" Plague broke out in the castle and a number died. Knox declared it was the judgment of God on their wickedness. Only one hundred twenty remained.

At four o'clock in the morning on July 31, both land and sea forces began a terrific barrage against the castle. For six or seven hours the attack continued in a driving rain storm. William Kirkcaldy carried a message to the French offering to surrender on suitable terms. The French offered very favorable terms. All the defenders would be taken to France where they would be freed to take refuge in any place they might choose provided they would not return to Scotland. The castle surrendered.

Of course the French did not recognize any obligation to keep faith with heretics. The rebels were taken to France where the nobles were thrown into French prisons. The commoners were made galley slaves. Knox became a galley slave. The galley slaves were chained by their necks in groups of fives and sixes. The rebels were chained to the worst of French criminals. They were chained to their oars, night and day, summer and winter. Their diet was mainly bread and water. They slept in rain and cold in the open under the oar benches. They rowed ten to twelve hours without relief. The slave master walked up and down the walk-way applying the whip to the backs and shoulders of the slaves. Anyone claiming to be ill was beaten severely. Knox was not a robust man and his health suffered badly from the ordeal but they could not break his spirit. Knox compared his fate to that of the Jews in Babylonian captivity. Daily the French lectured the slaves on the errors of the heretics and exhorted them to repent and come back to the mother church and they would be freed. One day they passed a statue of Mary for the galley slaves to kiss. When the statue was placed in Knox's hands he threw the statue of Mary into the sea calling on her to save herself. He expected to be killed or at least more severely beaten. Instead the French discontinued the exhortations. In the winter of 1548 when Knox's ship, the Notre Dame, was in the harbor of Rouen, Henry Balnaves was able to send to Knox from his prison, a treatise on "Justification by Faith" that he had written in the prison. Knox would later annotate and publish it. One day the ship was sailing off the coast out from St. Andrews. Sir James Balfour who had also been made a galley slave asked Knox if he recognized the land. Knox replied that he knew it and would one day preach there again.

When in French ports Knox managed to send secret messages to Kirkcaldy, Carmichael, Robert and William Leslie to escape their prison provided they could do it without killing. A galley slave had little chance to escape. Few galley slaves lived as long as three years. Over and over Knox assured his fellow slaves that God would deliver them.

In February or March of 1549 the French freed the galley slaves. The English, French, and Scottish governments had negotiated a peace treaty that included the release of prisoners. Knox was freed. All those who had surrendered at St. Andrews were set free except James Melville who had died in the prison of the Castle of Brest.

Knox made his way to England where Edward VI was king. There he joined in the work of Reformation. He would carry on his back and shoulders the scars of the Catholic lash and deeper scars in his soul. When one reads his harsh denunciations of the harlot of Babylon he should remember the eighteen or nineteen months Knox served in the galley of the French Catholics.