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Scottish Reformer.

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Reformation in Scotland: -

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The Scottish Reformation was popular and thorough. Here we have a movement which carried the country in spite, not because of what the sovereign wished. Up to this time the Scottish crown was no great power in the nation. With the coming of Queen Mary, that sovereign who if any could have raised the position of sovereign to one of real power, the commons and lords were already opposed. In Scotland religious questions played a large part. The Reformation was thoroughly revolutionary and religious men played a large role in its accomplishment. In many respects it was a one man show. Scottish Presbyterianism is quite justified in saying such large tribute to John Knox. It was not unconnected with politics and social considerations. The Reform of the church and its courts was as much a civil issue here as in any country. In Scotland the movement was especially connected with the rise of the common man and of democratic principles. Education was another important element in the movement. These are the main characteristics of the Scottish Reformation.

In Scotland more than in any other country, the medieval church had reached a state of corruption. The clergy were wealthy and immoral as well as ignorant. The nobles and landed gentry were poor. Perhaps this was one sure source of income was to settle a nominal clerical position for one of their sons. As has been mentioned the country was behind in its development away from the centralized feudalism.

The middle class however was becoming educated. Lollardism was strong among this group. The poems of Sir David Lindsay and numerous satires illustrate the widespread, anti clerical feeling. Scholars educated in France and other European countries were spreading Protestant ideas. From 1525 to 1542 a series of acts show the vain attempt of the government to stop the increasing spread of Protestant literature. Patrick Hamilton's martyrdom in 1528 served only to increase popular interest in the doctrine which the government was attempting to stamp out. The types of legislation indicate the basis of Scottish Protestant thought. There was opposition to Papal authority, to the images of the saints and Prayers to Mary. When James V died the reformation entered the political arena in the quarrel over the regency.

By this time the Protestant party saw that its only hope lay in a change of the country's foreign policy. The traditional foreign alliance with France must be broken and the long unpopular alliance with England put in its

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place. This policy seemed at first successful. Mary the child queen was to be married to Henry's Edward and educated in England. However when two protestants for his chaplains.

However the Governor was weak and since the Defeat of Pinkie the Scots mistrusted and disliked the English. Cardinal Beaton of St. Andrews was able to renew the French Alliance and send Mary to France the child wife of Francis II. The Regent, Mary of Guise was in favour of Rome. Persecution of protestants began.

The reformation supporters besieged and captured St. Andrews castle, murdered the Cardinal and made his castle their harbour of Refuge. Here Knox comes in to the picture. A priest with a peasant background he had been converted of protestant ideas. He followed the preacher George Wishart on his tour as his dauntless defender. In 1546 when George was martyred Knox fled to Saint Andrews. Here against his will almost, he became the minister. His preaching was strongly anti Papal. "Others snapped at the branches, this man struck at the Root".

In 1547 the castle was captured by the French and Knox served nineteen months as a Gally slave. He was released by the negotiations of Edward VI and called to England to preach. For four years he worked here, was well liked, offered a bishopric and was influential in the suppression of Edward's second prayer book. Then Knox went to the continent. During his stay here and especially at Geneva he studied Reformation principles and methods. He became well versed in the Scottish movement.

In 1555-56 he paid a visit to his native land visiting no time in getting into the already increasing reformation movement. By 1557 the protestant supporters thought themselves strong enough to form an alliance. Scotland's history, even in this late date because of its clinging feudal system, is full of these alliances. They had as much force almost as the strictly legal enactments of the Estates of the Realm - still a feudal assembly. Here the "Lords of the Congregation" bound themselves in what was the first of the nation's covenants. To establish the word of God and support its faithful ministers. This group was covenanting in definite opposition to the Regent. Knox was asked to return the next year the Lords attempted to give the congregation a definite organization based on scriptural warrant. It was essentially what came to be the

scottish Presbyterian system although lay preachers and superintendents of districts were incorporated because of the lack of churchmen.

The Regent reluctantly permitted the new organization to function in some districts but refused to sanction legislation reforming the church courts. In 1559 Knox returned, The Regent was told her limits of power with reference to things spiritual and temporal. However between 1559 and 1560 things looked dark for Scottish Protestantism. English aid was definitely needed in face of the French soldiers in the country. Chastell was reluctant to send aid to the author of "The First Trumpet Blast". However Lord Cecil was able finally to send help. In 1560 many of them died and the Treaty of Edinburgh freed Scotland from the domination of France.

The band of Protestants increased, the people favoured the English alliance. Knox became minister at St Giles and continued his electrifying preaching. The congregation organized itself into eight fully constituted churches with four superintendents. It prevailed upon Parliament to pass its Confession of Faith. Papal jurisdiction was denied and the Mass prohibited. The first Book of Discipline was passed in the House of Assembly but was held up in the "Estates" until the clause granting the consecrated church lands to the interests of popular education was deleted. However the church was set up along familiar lines. Thus was the session, the synods and General Assemblies, but as yet no Presbytery.

In 1560 when the General Assembly met for the first time, a book of psalms two including only six numbers, The Book of Common Order, Knox's liturgy and a Book of Psalms was passed. Arrangements were made for the use of Calvin's Catechism. The traditional emphasis on popular education was there although Knox's grand schemes were not permitted to go into effect.

By 1561 Mary the Queen returned to Scotland. She was loved and popular and a committed Papist. Had it not been for the shrewdness of Knox she might have carried the country. She never ratified the acts of the Estates establishing the Scottish church. She held mass for her own household. However Knox opposed her on all points. Often he was alone but he held out, jealous of his rights as a common citizen of the realm, until Mary's inconstancy was her own undoing. First, now a widow of France, she married an unpopular and weak Catholic Spaniard. Her chief adviser was a foreigner and despised. She then became infatuated with Lord Darnley during which time her husband went into such a jealous state that he definitely became dangerous. Finally she fell in love with Lord Bothwell whom she married after her husband was suspiciously murdered. This was too much for the people. Mary was deposed. The new King James VI was too young. The Earl of Moray, a Protestant, signed the acts, Scottish Protestantism was established.