

Module 402: John Knox

The Reformation of Religion in Scotland, by John Knox. Introduced and edited for the web by Dan Graves.

“I am not master of myself, but must obey Him who commands me to speak plain, and to flatter no flesh upon the face of the earth.”

Module Introduction.

Knox is credited with saying, “A man with God is always in the majority.” Although he had many supporters during the Reformation of Scotland, he stood seemingly alone at several crucial moments, especially in his confrontations with Mary, Queen of Scots.

His career as reformer began when he joined George Wishart as a bodyguard. Wishart was shortly afterward burned as a heretic by one of the haughtiest and most vicious archbishops who ever lived: Cardinal George Beaton.

Young nobles murdered Beaton in retaliation. They compelled John to become their chaplain. Thus he was captured in a French punitive action which followed, and exiled to the galleys, where he came close to dying. At his lowest ebb, he heard the bells of St. Andrews, Scotland, and vowed he would live to carry the Gospel to his native land.

The Church of Scotland was in a sad state. Scottish leaders acknowledged as much. In 1549 a provincial council of Catholic clergy that met in Edinburgh found that “the two roots and causes” of all the troubles in the Church were “the corrupt manners and profane lewdness of ecclesiastical persons of almost all ranks, together with their crass ignorance of letters and all culture.”

Upon Knox’s release (or escape) from the galleys, he did not at once return home, but studied abroad with reformers such as Calvin and Cranmer; and he pastored congregations of Scottish exiles. Conditions were not ripe for his return to his native land until 1559. But after he returned, he stood unshakable against all that the Queen Regent, and later the Queen, could hurl at him—

the one man with the spiritual authority to speak his mind against royal resistance to reform.

Through the force of his faith, Scotland's church was reformed with a Calvinist doctrine and a government of elders. John was in the center of its policy and decisions until his death in 1564. In time, the Presbyterian church, which he had helped create, spread around the world and its theology and structure were significant in the American Revolution.

Knox wrote a *History of the Reformation of Religion in Scotland*, from which we have excerpted representative passages. In a few places we have edited the original text to make Knox's meaning clearer to modern readers. Knox's history began with the execution of Patrick Hamilton for preaching reform, and ended amidst the intrigues of Mary, Queen of Scots. Our selections follow his structure. Throughout his history, he spoke of himself in the third person and we have kept that approach.

1527-1528. Hamilton executed for preaching Justification by Faith.

The zeal of God's glory did so eat [Hamilton] up, that he could not remain long [out of Scotland], but returned to his country, where the bright beams of the True Light, which by God's Grace was planted in his heart, began most abundantly to burst forth, both in public and in private. He was, besides his godly knowledge, well learned in philosophy. He abhorred sophistry, and wished that the text of Aristotle should have been better understood and more used in the schools than it was: for sophistry had corrupted all, both in divinity studies and in the humanities. In short process of time, the fame of his reasons and doctrine troubled the clergy, and came to the ears of Archbishop James Beaton, who so worked upon Master Patrick, that he got him to St. Andrews, where, after a conference of several days, he had his freedom. When the bishops and the clergy had fully understood the mind of Master Patrick, fearing that by him their kingdom should be damaged, they worked upon the King (James V) who was young then, and altogether controlled by their advice, that he should pass in pilgrimage

to St. Duthac in Ross, intending that no intercession should be made [by him] for the life of the innocent servant of God.

Meanwhile Patrick, suspecting no such cruelty as in their hearts they determined, remained put, a lamb among the wolves, till, one night, he was seized in his chamber, and by the Archbishop's band was carried to the Castle of St. Andrews. In the morning, brought to judgment, he was condemned to die by fire for the testimony of God's truth. The charges for which he suffered were but of pilgrimage, Purgatory, prayers to saints, and for the dead, and such trifles; although matters of greater importance had been in question, as his treatise may witness. Now, in order that the condemnation of Master Patrick should seem to have greater authority, they caused it to be subscribed by all those of any rank that were present; and to make their number greater, they even took the signatures of children, as long as they were of the nobility. The Earl of Cassillis, who lately died in France, then being but twelve or thirteen years of age, was compelled to add his signature to Patrick's death, as he himself admitted.

At the place of execution Master Patrick gave to his servant, who had been a chamber-child to him of a long time, his gown, his coat, bonnet, and such like garments, saying: "These will not be useful in the fire. They will be useful to you. After this, you can receive no commodity from me, except the example of my death, which, I pray you, bear in mind. Although it is bitter to the flesh, and fearful before men, yet is it the entrance into eternal life, which none shall possess who denies Christ Jesus before this wicked generation."

The innocent servant of God being bound to the stake in the midst of some coals, some timber, and other material gathered for the fire, a train of powder was made and set on fire, which neither kindled the wood nor yet the coals. And so remained the appointed to death in torment, till men ran

to the castle again for more powder, and for wood better able to catch fire; which at last being kindled, with loud voice he cried: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! How long shall darkness overwhelm this realm? How long will you allow this tyranny of men?" The fire was slow, and consequently his torment was worse. But most of all he was grieved by certain wicked men, among whom Alexander Campbell, the Black Friar, was principal, who continually cried, "Convert, heretic! Call upon our Lady! Say *Salve Regina*."

To whom he answered, "Go away. Stop troubling me, you messengers of Satan." But while the aforesaid friar still roared one thing in great vehemency Master Patrick said unto him: "Wicked man, you know the contrary, and you have confessed the contrary to me. I appeal you before the Tribunal Seat of Jesus Christ!" After which and other words, which could not well be understood for the tumult, and the fierceness of the fire, this witness of Jesus Christ got victory, after suffering long, on the last day of February, in the year of God, one thousand five hundred twenty and eight years. The friar also departed this life a few days later — in what state of heart we refer to the manifestation of the General Day! But it was plainly known that he died in Glasgow, in a frenzy, and despair.

1541. Cardinal Beaton Persecutes Protestants.

On St. Paul's Day [25th January 1544], before the first burning of Edinburgh [in May], the Governor and the Cardinal came to Saint Johnstoun and there, upon envious denunciation, a great number of honest men and women were called before the Cardinal and accused of heresy. Although they could be convicted of nothing except suspicion that they had eaten a goose on a Friday [fish day], yet four men were sentenced to be hanged, and a woman to be drowned; which cruel and most unjust sentence was without mercy put in execution. The names of the men that were hanged were James Hunter, Robert Lamb, William Anderson, James Rannelt, burgesses of St. Johnstoun. At the same

time were banished Sir Henry Elder [a priest], John Elder, Walter Piper, Laurence Pullar with various others, whose names came not to our knowledge.

The cardinal, that sworn enemy to Christ Jesus, and of all in whom any spunk of true knowledge appeared, held several persons about that same time in prison. Among these was John Roger, a Black Friar, godly and learned; one who fruitfully preached Christ Jesus, to the comfort of many in Angus and Mearns. That bloody man caused Roger to be murdered on the ground of the Sea Tower of St. Andrews, and then had him thrown over the Craig, spreading a false rumor, "That John, seeking to fly, had broken his own craig [neck]".

1545-46. George Wishart Martyred.

The manner of Master George Wishart's taking was thus: — Departing from Haddington, he took his good-night as if it was forever, of all his acquaintances, especially from Hugh Douglas of Longniddry.

John Knox pressing to go with him, Master George said: "No, return to your pupils, and God bless you. One is sufficient for one sacrifice. He then caused a two-handed sword, which commonly was carried with him, to be taken from John Knox, who, although unwillingly, obeyed and returned with Hugh Douglas. With Master George were the Laird of Ormiston, John Sandilands of Calder, younger, the Laird of Brunestane, and others, with their servants, on foot — for it was a harsh frost — to Ormiston. After supper, he held a comfortable purpose of the death of God's chosen children, and merrily said, "Methinks that I desire earnestly to sleep;" and "Shall we sing a psalm?" So he chose the fifty-first Psalm, which began thus in Scottish metre:

**Have mercy on me now, good Lord, After Thy great
mercy, My sinful life does me remord* Which sore has
grieved Thee.**

*remord = cause me remorse

Which being ended he passed to his chamber, and, sooner than he usually did, went to bed with these words, "God grant quiet rest."

Before midnight, the place was beset about so that none could escape to raise the alarm. At the first word, Master George said, "Open the gates. The Blessed will of my God be done!"

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The Bishops, with their accomplices, condemned this innocent man to be burned as a heretic, thinking truly, that they should do to God good sacrifice, in which they fulfilled the saying of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of St. John 16: "They shall excommunicate you; indeed, and the time shall come, that he who kills you shall think that he has done to God good service."

THE PRAYER OF MASTER GEORGE WISHART "O Immortal God! How long will you allow the great cruelty of the ungodly to exercise their fury upon Your servants, who do further Your Word in this world? . . . O Lord, we know surely that Your true servants must suffer, for Your name's sake, persecution, affliction, and troubles in this present life, which is but a shadow, as You have shown us by Your Prophets and Apostles. Yet we desire You, Merciful Father, that You would conserve, defend, and help Your Congregation, which You have chosen before the beginning of the world, and give them Your grace to hear Your Word, and to be Your true servants in this present life."

By and by, they caused the common people to leave, whose desire was always to hear that innocent [Wishart] speak. The sons of darkness then pronounced their sentence definitive, not having respect to the judgment of God. When all was done and said, my Lord Cardinal caused his

tormentors to pass again with the meek lamb unto the Castle, until such time as the fire was made ready. When he was come into the Castle, there came Friar Scott and his mate, saying [to Wishart]: "Sir, you must make your confession unto us."

He answered : "I will make no confession unto you. Go fetch me yonder man that preached this day, and I will make my confession unto him." Then they sent for the sub-prior of the abbey, Dean John Winram, but what he said in this confession I cannot show.

When the fire was made ready, and the gallows, at the west part of the Castle of St. Andrews near the priory, my Lord Cardinal, dreading that Master George Wishart at the last should be rescued by his friends, commanded to aim all the ordnance of the castle against the place of execution, and commanded all his gunners to stand beside their guns, until such time as he was burned. They bound Master George's hands behind his back, and led him out with their soldiers from the castle, to the place of their cruel and wicked execution. As he came forth of the castle gate, there met him certain beggars, asking of him alms for God's sake. To whom he answered : "I need [the use of] my hands, with which I used to give you alms. But the Merciful Lord, of His benignity and abundant grace, that feeds all men, vouchsafe to give you necessaries, both unto your bodies and souls."

Then afterward met him two false friends — I should say friars — saying: "Master George, pray to Our Lady, that she may be a mediatrix for you to her Son."

To whom he answered meekly: "Stop! Tempt me not, my brethren." After this, he was led to the fire, with a rope about his neck, and a chain of iron about his middle. When he came to the fire, he sat down upon his knees, and rose up again; and three times he said these words: "O Thou Savior of the World, have mercy upon me! Father of

Heaven, I commend my spirit into your holy hands." Then he turned to the people and said : "I beseech you, Christian Brethren and Sisters, don't be offended at the Word of God because of the affliction and torments that you see prepared for me. But I exhort you, love the Word of God and suffer patiently, and with a comfortable heart, for the Word's sake, which is your undoubted salvation and everlasting comfort. Moreover, I pray you, show my brethren and sisters, which have heard me often, that they cease not to learn the Word of God which I taught them, despite any persecutions in this world, which doesn't last. Show them that my doctrine was no wives' fables, after the constitutions made by men. If I had taught men's doctrine, I would have gotten greater thanks by men. But for the true evangel, which was given to me by the grace of God, I suffer this day by men, not sorrowfully, but with a glad heart and mind. For this cause I was sent, that I should suffer this fire for Christ's sake. Consider and behold my face. Ye shall not see me change color! This grim fire I do not fear: and so I pray you to do, if any persecution come unto you for the Word's sake ; and not to fear those who slay the body, and afterward have no power to slay the soul. Some have said I taught that the soul of man should sleep until the Last Day; but I know surely that my soul shall sup with my Savior this night, before six hours are up—for whom I suffer this."

Then he prayed for those who accused him, saying: "I beseech Thee, Father of Heaven, forgive them that have of any ignorance, or else of any evil mind, forged lies upon me. I forgive them with all my heart. I beseech Christ to forgive them that have condemned me to death this day ignorantly." Last of all, he said to the people on this manner: "I beseech you, Brothers and Sisters, to exhort your prelates to the learning of the Word of God, that they may be ashamed to do evil, and learn to do good. If they will not convert themselves from their wicked errors, there shall soon come upon them the wrath of God, which they shall not escape."

Many faithful words said he in the meantime, taking no thought of the cruel torments prepared for him. Last of all, the hangman, his tormentor, upon his knees, said: "Sir, I pray you, forgive me, for I am not guilty of your death."

To whom he answered: "Come here to me." When he was come to him, he kissed his cheek, and said: "Look! here is a sign that I forgive you. My heart, do your duty!" Then, the trumpet sounding, he was put upon the gibbet and hanged, and there burned to powder. When the people beheld the great tormenting of that innocent man, they could not withhold from piteous mourning and complaining of the innocent lamb's slaughter.

After the death of this blessed martyr of God, the people began in plain speaking, to condemn and detest the cruelty that was used. Yes, men of great birth, rank, and honor, at open tables swore that the blood of Master George should be revenged, or else it should cost life for life.

1547. Many Protestants, including Knox, sent to the French galleys.

The Heads of the Appointment [major points in the terms of the surrender] were: "That the lives of all within the Castle should be spared, as well English as Scottish; that they should be safely transported to France; and in case, on the conditions to be offered them by the King of France, they could not be content to remain in service and freedom there, they should, upon the expenses of the King of France, be safely conveyed to whatever country they would require, other than Scotland." With the Governor they would have nothing to do, neither yet with any Scotsman; for they had all traitorously betrayed them. "Which," said the Lord of Grange — a man simple and of most stout courage — "I am assured God will revenge, before long."

The galleys, well furnished with the spoil of the Castle, after certain days returned to France. Escaping a great danger —

for they all struck upon the back of the sands— they arrived first at Fecamp, and thereafter passed up the Water of Seine, and lay before Rouen; where the principal gentlemen, who expected freedom, were dispersed instead and put in various prisons. The rest were left in the galleys and miserably treated there. These things were done at Rouen despite the promises; but princes have no fidelity farther than for their own advantage. Then the galleys departed to Nantes, in Brittany, where, upon the water of Loire, they lay the whole winter.

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Then was the joy of the Papists both of Scotland and of France in full perfection; for this was their song of triumph

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Priests content you now! Priests content you now! For Norman and his company has filled the galleys fow.

The Pope wrote letters to the King of France and to the Governor of Scotland, thanking them heartily for taking the pope's pains to revenge the death of his "kind" creature, David Beaton, the Cardinal of Scotland; desiring them to continue in the severity with which they had begun, so that no more such deeds would be attempted. All those who were captured in the castle were sentenced to perpetual prison; and the ungodly [victors] judged that after this Christ Jesus would never triumph in Scotland.

One thing we cannot neglect to mention. From Scotland was sent a famous clergyman — laugh not, reader! — Master John Hamilton of Milburn, with credit to the King of France, and to the Cardinal of Lorraine. Yet he knew neither French nor Latin, and some say his Scottish tongue was not very good! The sum of his negotiation was that those of the castle should be sharply handled. In which suit he was heard with favor, and was despatched from the court of France with letters, and great credit, which that famous clergyman

forgot by the way; for, passing up to the craig of Dumbarton, before his letters were delivered, he broke his neck; and so God took away a proud, ignorant enemy.

1559 Arrival of Knox

In this meantime, after the preachers were summoned [to the queen] (that is to say, the second of May 1559), John Knox arrived from France, who, lodging only two nights in Edinburgh, hearing the day appointed to meet his brethren, repaired to Dundee, where he earnestly required them, that he might be permitted to assist his brethren, and to give confession of his faith with them. This having been granted him, he went to St. Johnestoun with them; where he began to exhort, according to the Grace of God granted unto him. The queen, perceiving that the preachers did not appear, began to utter her malice; and, notwithstanding requests made in the contrary, gave command to declare them rebels, prohibiting all men under pain of high rebellion to assist, comfort, receive, or maintain them in any sort.

1559: Destruction of the Monasteries.

[Before the monasteries were destroyed] the preachers had threatened all men, "that for covetousness' sake none should put their hand to the Reformation," and so no honest man was enriched thereby the value of a penny. Their consciences so moved them, that they suffered those hypocrites [the monks] to take away what they could of that which was in their places. Adam Forman, the Prior of Charterhouse, was permitted to take away with him as much gold and silver as he was well able to carry. So were men's consciences before beaten with the Word, that they had no respect to their own particular profit, but only to abolish idolatry, and the places and monuments thereof. In this they were so busy, and so laborious, that within two days, these three great places, monuments of idolatry, to wit, the Grey Friars and Black Friars, and Charterhouse, a building of a wondrous cost and greatness, were so destroyed, that the walls only did remain of all these great edifices.

These things being reported to the queen regent, she was so enraged that she did vow utterly to destroy St. Johnestoun, man, woman, and child, and to consume the same by "fire, and thereafter to salt it, in sign of a perpetual desolation. We — thinking that such words might escape her mouth in anger, without really meaning to act on them, because she was a woman set afire by the complaints of those hypocrites who flocked unto her, as ravens to a carrion — returned to our own houses; leaving in St. Johnestoun John Knox to instruct, because the people there were young and rude in Christ. But she, set afire, partly by her own malice, partly by order of her friends in France, and not a little by bribes, which she and Monsieur d'Oysel received from the bishops and priests here at home, continued in her rage. And, first, she sent for all the nobility, to whom she complained that we intended nothing but a rebellion. She did grievously magnify the destruction of the Charterhouse, because it was a king's foundation, and because there was the tomb of King James the First; and by such other persuasions, she got most of them to agree to pursue us. Then hastily sent she for her Frenchmen; for it was, and ever has been, her joy to see Scotsmen dip one with another's blood. No man was at that time more determined against us than was the Duke, led by the cruel beast, the Bishop of St. Andrews, and by others who still abuse him, the Abbot of Kilwinning, and Matthew Hamilton of Milburn, two chief enemies to Christ Jesus — yes, and in other circumstances enemies to the Duke, and to his whole house, in so far as they may procure their own particular profit. These and such other pestilent Papists ceased not to cast faggots on the fire, continually crying, "Forward upon these heretics! We shall once for all rid this realm of them."

1560. The Confession of Faith is read to Parliament and ratified.

The *Confession of Faith*, was publicly read, first in audience of the Lords of the Articles, and afterward in audience of the whole parliament. There were present not only such as

professed Christ Jesus, but also a great number of the adversaries of our religion, such as the forenamed Bishops of St. Andrews, Dunblane, and Dunkeld, and some others of the temporal estate, who were commanded in God's name to object, if they could say anything against that doctrine. Some of our ministers were present, standing on their feet, ready to answer, in case anyone would have defended the Papistry, and impugned our assertions: but when no objection was made, there was a day appointed for voting on that and other heads. Our Confession was read, every article by itself, over again, as they were written in order, and the votes of every man were required accordingly.

Of the temporal estate, only these voted in the contrary: the The Earl Marischall, Earl of Athole, the Lords Somerville and Borthwick; and yet for their disassenting they produced no better reason, but, "We will believe as our fathers believed." The Bishops — Roman Catholic we mean — said nothing. The rest of the whole three estates, by their public votes, affirmed the doctrine; and many the rather because the bishops would not and dared say nothing in the contrary; for this was the vote of the Earl Marischall: — "It is long since I have had some favor unto the Truth, and since I have had a suspicion of the Papistical religion; but, I praise my God, this day has fully resolved me in the one and in the other. For, seeing that my lords bishops — who, with their learning can bear witness to the truth, and with their zeal should bear witness to it — would, I suppose, challenge anything that directly disputes the truth of God — seeing they speak nothing to contradict the doctrine proposed, I cannot but hold it to be the very truth of God, and the contrary to be deceivable doctrine. Therefore, so far as in me lies, I approve the one and damn the other: and I do further ask of God, that not only I, but also all my posterity, may enjoy the comfort of the doctrine that this day our ears have heard. Yet more, I must vote, as it were by way of protestation, that if any persons ecclesiastical shall after this oppose themselves to this our Confession, they shall have no place

nor credit, considering that they, having long advisement, and full knowledge of this our Confession, not one is now found in lawful, free, and quiet parliament to oppose themselves to that which we profess. Therefore, if any of this generation pretend to do it after this, I protest that he be reputed rather one that loves his own commodity and the glory of the world than the truth of God, and the salvation of men's souls."

After the voting and ratification of this our Confession, by the whole body of the parliament, there were also pronounced two acts, the one against the mass and the abuse of the sacraments, and the other against the supremacy of the pope.

1560: The Preparation of the Book of Discipline.

After the Parliament dissolved, consultation was had, how the kirk (church) might be established in a good and godly policy, having been altogether defaced by the Papists. Commission was given to Master John Winram, Sub-Prior of St. Andrews, Master John Spottiswood, John Willock, Master John Douglas, Rector of St. Andrews, Master John Row, and John Knox, to draw up in a volume the policy and discipline of the kirk, as well as they had done the doctrine in the Confession of Faith. This they did and presented to the nobility, who did peruse it many days. Some approved it, and wished the same to have been set forth by a law. Others, perceiving their carnal liberty and worldly commodity somewhat to be impaired by it, were unwilling [to accept it], with the result that the name of the Book of Discipline became odious to them. All statement of the book that were repugnant to their corrupt affections, were termed in their mockage, "devout imaginations." The causes we have before declared, — some were licentious; some had greedily gripped the possessions of the kirk; and others wanted their piece of Christ's coat [Christ's clothes were divided by the soldiers who crucified him]. The chief great man that had professed Christ Jesus, and refused to

subscribe the Book of Discipline, was the Lord Erskine [afterwards Earl of Mar, and Regent of Scotland]. No wonder, — he had a very Jezebel as his wife, and besides, if the poor, the schools, and the ministry of the kirk got what was due them, his kitchen would lack two parts and more of that which he now possesses. There were none within the realm more unmerciful to the poor ministers than were those which took the greatest rents from the churches.

1563 A stormy scene at Holyrood.

The Provost of Lincluden, Robert Douglas of Drumlanrig by surname, gave the charge that the said John should present himself before the queen; which he did soon after dinner. The Lord Ochiltree, and several of the faithful, bore him company to the Abbey of Holyroodhouse; but none passed to the queen with him in the cabinet except John Erskine of Dun, then Superintendent of Angus and Mearns. The queen in a vehement fury, began to cry out, that never prince was handled as she was.

Queen Mary. "I have borne with you in all your rigorous manner of speaking, both against myself and against my uncles [the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine]. Yes, I have sought your favor by all possible means. I offered unto you presence and audience whenever it pleased you to admonish me; and yet I cannot be rid of you! I vow to God, I shall be once revenged!" With these words, scarcely could Marna, her secret-chamber boy, get napkins to hold her eyes dry for the tears; and the howling, besides womanly weeping, stopped her speech.

The said John did patiently abide all the first fury, and, at opportunity, answered:

John Knox. "True it is, Madam, Your Grace and I have been at various controversies, in which I never perceived Your Grace to be offended at me. But, when it shall please God to deliver you from that bondage of darkness and error in

which you have been nourished for the lack of true doctrine, Your Majesty will find the liberty of my tongue nothing offensive. Outside the preaching place, Madam, I think few have occasion to be offended at me. There, Madam, I am not master of myself, but must obey Him who commands me to speak plain, and to flatter no flesh upon the face of the earth."

Queen Mary. Queen Mary. "But what have you to do with my marriage?"

John Knox. "If it please Your Majesty patiently to hear me, I shall show the truth in plain words. I grant Your Grace offered unto me more than ever I required; but my answer was then, as it is now, that God has not sent me to wait upon the courts of princes, nor upon the chambers of ladies; but I am sent to preach the Evangel of Jesus Christ, to such as please to hear it. It has two parts — repentance and faith. Now, Madam, in preaching repentance, of necessity it is that the sins of men be so noted, that they may know wherein they offend. But the most part of your nobility are so addicted to your affections, that neither God's Word, nor yet their Commonwealth, are rightly regarded. Therefore, it is appropriate for me to so speak, that they may know their duty."

Queen Mary. "What have you to do with my marriage? Or what are you within this Commonwealth"

John Knox. "A SUBJECT BORN WITHIN THE SAME, Madam. And although I am neither an Earl, Lord, nor Baron within it, yet has God made me — however insignificant I am in your eyes — a profitable member within the same. Yes, Madam, to me it appertains no less to forewarn of such things as may hurt it, if I foresee them, than it does to any of the nobility; for both my vocation and my conscience demand plainness of me. Therefore, Madam, to yourself I say that which I spoke in public: — Whenever the nobility of this

realm shall consent that you be subject to an unfaithful husband, they do as much as in them lies to renounce Christ, to banish His truth from them, to betray the freedom of this realm; and maybe in the end they shall bring small comfort to yourself."

At these words, howling was heard, and tears might have been seen in greater abundance than the matter required. John Erskine of Dun, a man of meek and gentle spirit, stood beside her, and suggested what he could to mitigate her anger. He gave her many pleasing words regarding her beauty, her excellence, and how all the princes of Europe would be glad to seek her favor. But all this was but to cast oil on the flaming fire. John Knox stood still, without any alteration of countenance for a long season while the queen gave way to her inordinate passion.

At last he said: "Madam, in God's presence I speak. I never delighted in the weeping of any of God's creatures. Indeed, I can scarcely endure the tears of my own boys whom my own hand corrects; much less can I rejoice in your Majesty's weeping. But, seeing I have offered to you no just occasion to be offended, but have spoken the truth, as my vocation requires of me, I must sustain, albeit unwillingly, your Majesty's tears, rather than I dare hurt my conscience, or betray my Commonwealth through my silence."

At this the queen was even more offended, and commanded him to get out of the cabinet, and to await her pleasure in the outer chamber. The Lord of Dun stayed; and Lord John Stewart, Prior of Coldingham [the queen's brother] came into the cabinet, and they both remained with her for about the space of one hour. John Knox stood in the chamber, as if invisible — so afraid was everyone — except that the Lord Ochiltree bore him company. Therefore began he to attempt talking with the ladies who were there sitting in all their gorgeous apparel; which when he saw them, he merrily said, "O, fair Ladies! How pleasing were this life of yours, if

it should last forever, and then in the end we might pass to Heaven with all this charming stuff. But shame on that knave Death, who will come, whether we want him or not! And when he has laid on his arrest, the foul worms will be busy with this flesh, be it never so fair and so tender; and the silly soul, I fear, shall be so feeble, that it can neither carry with it gold, garnish, fringes, pearls, or precious stones!"

By such means he procured the company of the women! And so he passed the time till the Lord of Dun willed him to depart to his house until summoned again. The queen would have had a verdict from the Lords of the Articles, if Knox's manner of speaking did not deserve punishment. But she was counselled to desist; and so that storm quieted in appearance, but never in her heart.

Discussion Points

What motivated Cardinal Beaton to pretend to hear Patrick Hamilton but then seize and kill him? Do you think his plan succeeded?

Why would Cardinal Beaton want to make it appear John Roger died in a foolish effort to fly?

What did Wishart mean when he said, "one sacrifice is enough"?

Does it surprise you that Knox was so little involved in the Reformation of Scotland until 1559?

What was the queen regent's response to the destruction of the three monasteries. Was she justified?

What reason did three lords give for not accepting the new confession of faith? What argument did the Earl Marischall give for accepting it? Since the Catholic bishops were under no threat if they spoke up to defend their faith, why do you think they remained silent?

What motives does Knox attribute to those who opposed the book of discipline?

What reasons did Knox give for speaking out as he did about the queen's marriage. As citizens, do we have a

responsibility to speak up when we see our nation
headed to disaster?
What did Knox mean by "The silly soul...shall be so feeble"?