

HEROES OF THE CHURCH: John Knox



To John Knox:

*Gentler spirits have lived
in Christendom*

More gracious messengers preached

The word of Christ

without a-dinging the pulpit,

But God knew what He was doing

When He chose you

to build his Church.

He knew the temptations to compromise,

The dulcet voice pleading in tears

the soft hand of scheming sovereignty

You were keen as steel,

As deaf as ice:

God's man

for God's work

in God's time.

SHERWOOD ELIOT WIRT

I. John Knox (c. 1514-1572) – Long, Lost Brother of Martin Luther?

II. Context of the Scottish Reformation

A. Medieval Catholic Church was being challenged by Reformed movement of Luther and others

B. The Martyrdom of Patrick Hamilton (d. 1528)

C. Martyrdom of George Wishart (d. March 1546) and Assassination of Cardinal Beaton (d. May 1546)

“Go home to your bairns [“children”]. One is sufficient for sacrifice.” - Wishart to Knox

1. Knox as galley-slave for French Navy

“I know how hard the battle is between the spirit and the flesh, under the heavy cross of affliction, where no worldly defense, but present death does appear. I know the grudging and murmuring complaints of the flesh; I know the anger, wrath and indignation, which it conceives against God, calling all His promises in doubt, and being ready every hour to utterly fall from God.” - John Knox

*“The master of the galley was glad to be rid of him; because he never had good success so long as he kept that holy man in slavery...” – T. Stapleton and Martiall, 1580, in *The History of the Reformation by Knox**

III. Knox in Exile (in England, 1549-1554,...until “Bloody Mary” comes to town!)

A. Knox pastored in England freely under reign of Edward VI

B. ‘Bloody’ Mary Tudor ascends to throne, Knox flees to Frankfurt (1554-1556)...

C. Knox heads to Geneva (1556-1559)!

“...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 to be so sincerely reformed, I have not yet seen in any other place beside.” - John Knox

1. Wrote *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558)
2. John Calvin's Response



IV. John Knox in Scotland (1559): “God’s Trumpeter”

- A. The Scots Confession of 1560
- B. Meetings with Mary, Queen of Scots
 1. First Meeting – Mary “could be blessed in Scotland as Deborah was in Israel.”
 2. Fourth Meeting – “Madam. And albeit I neither be Earl, Lord, nor baron with it, yet God has made me (how abject that I ever be in your eyes) a profitable member of the same.”
- C. Knox the Preacher, Plain and Powerful
- D. Death on November 24, 1572

“I have indeed formerly sustained many contests in this frail life, and many assaults from Satan; but at this time that roaring lion hath most furiously attacked me and put forth all his strength, that he might devour and make an end of me at once. Often before hath he placed my sins before my eyes; often tempted me to despair; often endeavoured to entangle me with the allurements of the world; but these weapons, being broken by the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, he could accomplish nothing. But now he has attacked me in another way; for the cunning serpent has endeavoured to persuade me that I have merited heaven itself, and a blessed immortality by the faithful discharge of the ministerial office committed to me. But, blessed be God, who suggested to me those passages of Scripture by which I was able to grapple with him, and extinguish this fiery dart; among which were these: ‘What hast thou that thou hast not received?’; and, ‘By the grace of God I am what I am’; and, ‘Not I, but the grace of God in me.’ And thus vanquished, he went away; wherefore I give thanks to my God by Jesus Christ, who was pleased to grant me the victory.” - John Knox

V. Lessons from John Knox

- A. The Priority of the Word of God
- B. Willingness to Stand for Truth
- C. Encouragement in Troubled Times

“Let us not despair, albeit all the strength not only within us, but also appearing in others, vanish and forsake us. Remember, sister, that God never brought any excellent work to pass till first man’s judgement was despaired thereof; and this His Majesty does, to notify His power to the sons of men. Abel cried not for vengeance upon Cain the murderer till first his blood was cruelly shed; Joseph obtained not dominion and power till first he suffered great trouble and imprisonment . . . ; Moses was not received in protection of Pharaoh’s daughter, till first he was exposed to the danger of the flood. And finally, Jesus Christ, our champion and head, did not obtain victory above all His enemies, so that after they might not trouble nor molest Him any more, till first He suffered the vile death of the cross.” -Knox to Mother-in-law after fleeing England