

Windows of Witness (Acts 4:20) **(John Knox)**

Reference, Quotes from - *Champions of Truth (RTS) 1922*

As JC Ryle states in *The Christian Leaders*, "The instruments that God employs to do his work in the world deserve a close inspection." It is again our honor to look at another such life greatly used by our Lord. As exhorted in Hebrews 13:7, may you and I follow in their faith.

John Knox (1505-1572), was called by his contemporaries the Apostle of the Scots. His childhood, however was one in which Scotland saw much prohibition against the truths of God's Word. In 1525, Scottish Parliament prohibited the works of Luther from being introduced to the country, stating that the Scots were hitherto "clean of all such filth and vice." Those who proclaimed God's truth were seized and burned before the old college of St. Andrews. As the smoke would rise from the flames, it "...infected all on whom it blew, and the blood of martyr after martyr in every county of Scotland became the seed of the unborn Scottish Church."

It was in this backdrop of opposition to Biblical doctrine, which the Lord raised up John Knox. Even while many were being condemned, others burned alive, and the Bible was being cursed in most vulgar tongue, those who read it in secret increased the more. What Knox refers to on his death bed as the "casting of his first anchor", were the writings first used of God to bring him to look at the world through a theological lens. He was introduced to the works of Jerome and Augustine, which more importantly led him back to the apostles, evangelists, John's Gospel, and Paul's Ephesian letter. Knox closely followed the "learned, pious, and kindly preacher", George Wishart. Knowing that Wishart was in danger of arrest and assassination, Knox attached himself very near to him, constantly carrying a sword to protect the preacher. Finally Wishart was arrested, and soon perished as a martyr at St. Andrews, with Knox nearby.

At this very place of St. Andrews, the Lord was now preparing John Knox for the work He had for his life. Now a man above forty years old, our Lord had brought Knox to the second crisis in his personal life, his call to public ministry. A man of great humility he had shrunk with great sensitivity, from "putting himself forward in the Church, and even in this extremity of the little St. Andrews flock, refused to usurp the great pastoral office." As the church recognized God's hand upon Knox - Knox was ultimately convinced by our Lord that the Gospel "was to be preached by him to his countrymen at the hazard of his life."

After preaching at St. Andrews for only a few months, Knox was arrested and thrown into the French galleys, where He toiled in their captivity, yet "never wavered". As they sailed from land, Knox saw in the dim distance, the steeple of St. Andrews, when he said, "I shall not depart this life till that my tongue shall glorify His Godly Name in the same place." Divine Providence returned Knox to Scotland, and in 1558 our Lord placed a "fervent thirst" upon Scotland. Thousands were described as "night and day sobbing and groaning" for the Water of life. Thousands of lives and, indeed, the entire country of Scotland was changed in the course of the next two years. "Ever since that year, 1560, the Gospel...has been free in Scotland." May our Lord be pleased to give us such fervency and confidence in His Word!

~ Pastor Tim Hodge