



Abstract from Article

THE POLITICAL THEORY OF JOHN KNOX

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Abstract

No man was less suited to a life of affairs in church and state than was John Knox. Yet, by a curious trick of fate, he was forced by the exigencies of his times to assume the role of official prophet and leader of a whole kingdom. For there was no one else. The success of the Reformation not only in Scotland, but throughout Europe, depended on the defeat of the French Romanising faction in Scotland. Without Knox's energy and indomitable will, and without his preaching gifts, the Queen's party would have won and a Franco-Scottish "axis" would have been formed in support of the Counter-Reformation. In these circumstances England, under the vacillating Elizabeth, could never have preserved her Protestantism, even if she had been able to maintain her independence. Knox was internationalist enough to realise these facts, as did some of the English statesmen. Throckmorton, the English ambassador to Scotland, in asking Cecil for a favour for Knox, pointed, out "of what importance the success of things touching religion in Scotland is for us." In this crisis of British and European affairs, Knox stood forth as the champion of the fixed and invariable law of God. He indulged in no equivocation. He had no doubts. He saw his aim of a godly covenanted kingdom and pursued it without deviating to the right or to the left. His one end was to glorify God, and in the pursuit of this end as he saw it he was willing to sacrifice all other values or principles whatsoever.

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