

# The Scottish Reformation

The Reformation in Scotland's case culminated ecclesiastically in the re-establishment of the church along Reformed lines, and politically in the triumph of English influence over that of France. John Knox is regarded as the leader of the Scottish Reformation

The Reformation Parliament of 1560, which repudiated the pope's authority, forbade the celebration of the mass and approved a Protestant Confession of Faith, was made possible by a revolution against French hegemony under the regime of the regent Mary of Guise, who had governed Scotland in the name of her absent daughter Mary, Queen of Scots, (then also Queen of France).

The Scottish Reformation decisively shaped the Church of Scotland[2] and, through it, all other Presbyterian churches worldwide.

A spiritual revival also broke out among Catholics soon after Martin Luther's actions, and led to the Scottish Covenanters' movement, the precursor to Scottish Presbyterianism. This movement spread, and greatly influenced the formation of Puritanism among the Anglican Church in England. The Scottish Covenanters were persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church. This persecution by the Catholics drove some of the Protestant Covenanter leadership out of Scotland, and into France and later, Switzerland.

## John Knox

John Knox (c. 1513 – 24 November 1572) was a Scottish clergyman, theologian and writer who was a leader of the Protestant Reformation and is considered the founder of the Presbyterian denomination in Scotland. He is believed to have been educated at the University of St Andrews and worked as a notary-priest. Influenced by early church reformers such as George Wishart, he joined the movement to reform the Scottish church. He was caught up in the ecclesiastical and political events that involved the murder of Cardinal Beaton in 1546 and the intervention of the regent of Scotland Mary of Guise. He was taken prisoner by French forces the following year and exiled to England on his release in 1549.

While in exile, Knox was licensed to work in the Church of England, where he rose in the ranks to serve King Edward VI of England as a royal chaplain. He exerted a reforming influence on the text of the Book of Common Prayer. In England he met and married his first wife, Margery Bowes. When Mary Tudor ascended the throne and re-established Roman Catholicism, Knox was forced to resign his position and leave the country. Knox moved to Geneva and then to Frankfurt. In Geneva he met John Calvin, from whom he gained experience and knowledge of Reformed theology and Presbyterian polity. He created a new order of service, which was eventually adopted by the reformed church in Scotland. He left Geneva to head the English refugee church in Frankfurt but he was forced to leave over differences concerning the liturgy, thus ending his association with the Church of England.

On his return to Scotland he led the Protestant Reformation in Scotland, in partnership with the Scottish Protestant nobility. The movement may be seen as a revolution, since it led to the ousting of Mary of Guise, who governed the country in the name of her young daughter Mary, Queen of Scots. Knox helped write the new confession of faith and the ecclesiastical order for the newly created reformed church, the Kirk. He continued to serve as the religious leader of the Protestants throughout Mary's reign. In several interviews with the Queen, Knox admonished her for supporting Catholic practices. When she was imprisoned for her alleged role in the murder of her husband Lord Darnley, and King James VI enthroned in her stead, he openly called for her execution. He continued to preach until his final days.

# Emigration from Scotland

In 19th-century Scotland, emigration was the result of both force and persuasion. Until about 1855, a number of the emigrants from the Highlands were actually forced to leave the land because of evictions. In the Lowlands, the decision to move abroad was nearly always the outcome of the desire to improve one's living standards. Whatever the reason, Scotland lost between 10% and 47% of the natural population increase every decade.

The scale of the loss was only greater in two other European countries: Ireland and Norway. However, even these countries were dwarfed by emigration from Scotland in the years 1904–1913, and again in 1921–1930, when those leaving (550,000) actually exceeded the entire natural increase and constituted one-fifth of the total working population.

## Leaving the Highlands

The eviction of Highlanders from their homes reached a peak in the 1840s and early 1850s. The decision by landlords to take this course of action was based on the fact that the Highland economy had collapsed, while at the same time the population was still rising.

As income from kelp production and black cattle dried up, the landlords saw sheep as a more profitable alternative. The introduction of sheep meant the removal of people. The crofting population was already relying on a potato diet and when the crop failed in the late 1830s and again in the late 1840s, emigration seemed the only alternative to mass starvation.

The policy of the landlord was to clear the poorest Highlanders from the land and maintain those crofters who were capable of paying rent. The Dukes of Argyll and Sutherland and other large landowners financed emigration schemes. Offers of funding were linked to eviction, which left little choice to the crofter. However, the Emigration Act of 1851 made emigration more freely available to the poorest.

The Highlands and Islands Emigration Society was set up to oversee the process of resettlement. Under the scheme a landlord could secure a passage to Australia for a nominee at the cost of £1. Between 1846 and 1857, around 16,533 people of the poorest types, mainly young men, were assisted to emigrate. The greatest loss occurred in the islands, particularly Skye, Mull, the Long Island and the mainland parishes of the Inner Sound.

## Photograph of evicted Family, Lochmaddy, Outer Hebrides, 1895

After 1855, mass evictions were rare and emigration became more a matter of choice than compulsion. Between 1855 and 1895 the decline in the Highland population was actually less than in the rural Lowlands and certainly much lower than in Ireland. The Highlands experienced a 9% fall in population between 1851 and 1891, while Ireland in the same period faced a 28% fall. The Crofters' Holding Act of 1886 gave the crofters security of tenure and this also slowed down the process of emigration. Between 1886 and 1950, over 2700 new crofts were created and a further 5160 enlarged.

However, despite the increase in the number of crofts, the exodus from the Highlands continued. In 1831, the population of the Highlands reached a peak of 200,955, or 8.5% of the total population of Scotland. In 1931, the comparable figures were 127,081 and 2.6%. In the west Highlands, for every 100 p