

Spring History & Heritage -- #1 (March 24)

Martyrdom --- (Tabletalk articles, March 2014)

This sacrificial act of faith, wrote the early church father Tertullian, was in God's good providence "the seed of the church" sealed in blood? In ancient Roman times many saints suffered its pangs, the effect of which, ironically, was not to uproot Christianity but to fertilize its growth expand its harvest of souls. Likewise, in 16th-century Scotland, the blood of the Protestants (Patrick Hamilton, d. 1528; George Wishart, d. 1546; et al.) proved the seedbed of Protestantism in its Calvinist, Presbyterian form.

Scottish Kirk --- (Tabletalk articles, March 2014)

This religious body, from roughly the 1500s through the 1700s, was largely responsible for the spread, with modifications of its own making, of Calvinism? An entire nation, as it were, studied the great Genevan's ministry, conformed its own standards of Christian belief and practice to his, and carried such influences to the world via multitudes of emigrants. Presbyterian church government, devout Lord's Day observance, and the Westminster Confession of Faith were among the influences.

John Knox --- (Tabletalk articles, March 2014)

This fearless preacher (c. 1514--1572), of whose birth we presently observe the 500th-anniversary, became the chief architect of the Scottish Reformation? Through trials and tribulations, including two years as a galley slave and refuge in Calvin's Geneva, he finally returned to Scotland to stay (1559) and build upon the ministries of earlier, martyred Reformers like Hamilton and Wishart. His passion and prayer ("Give me Scotland or I die!") was to see his native land fully enlightened by the Word of God.

Scots Confession --- (Tabletalk articles, March 2014)

This doctrinal statement, foundational to the Scottish Reformation, was approved by the nation's parliament (which also nullified Roman Catholicism) in 1560? In tandem with the "First Book of Discipline," the statement upheld the so-called "solas" of Protestantism and mirrored faithfully the theology of Geneva's John Calvin (1509-1564). Curiously, six Scots named "John" collaborated on the doctrinal standards, the most celebrated being, of course, John Knox (c. 1514--1572).

Scots-Irish --- (Tabletalk articles, March 2014)

This Northern European people migrated in droves, first within the British Isles in the 1600s and then onward to America in the 1700s? As many as 500,000 settled in the Middle and Southern Anglo-American Colonies (PA to GA), mostly in the western hills, bringing along their Calvinism, Presbyterianism, and their fiercely independent spirit. They gave us Francis Makemie ("Father of American Presbyterianism"), the College of NJ (Princeton), and, to some extent, the Revolution itself (secession from Britain).

(our first Q&A set for the spring is based on the feature articles on the Scottish Reformation in *Tabletalk* magazine, March 2014)