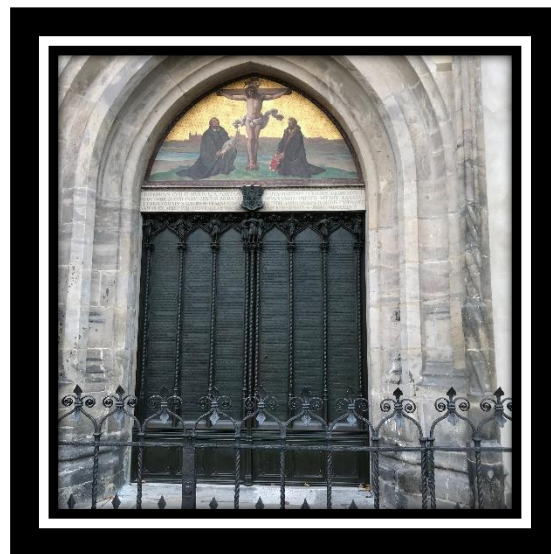


Martin Luther's influence on the history of the Scottish Reformation

Patrick Hamilton was the first martyr of the Scottish Reformation – the first person to die for his faith. He was born 1504 into a rich family who were related to the king. At the age of about fourteen he went to university in Paris. While he was there he heard about the teachings of Martin Luther.

Martin Luther reacted to the corruption and false teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, when, on the 31st of October 1517 he nailed 95 theses of protest, on the door of the Roman Catholic church ("Schlosskirche") in Wittenberg. It was clear to him that faithful people were exploited in the name of "God".

Ordinary people did not have access to the Bible in their own language and could only know about or encounter the words of the God by listening to the clergy. He reacted to the POPE that he is not God who can grant forgiveness by challenging the POPE that he is translated the New Testament in German within 11 weeks. He also stated on the 18th of April 1521 when he was standing on the trail said: "Unless I am convinced by the testimony of



or by evident reason-for I can believe neither pope nor councils alone, as it is clear that they have erred repeatedly and contradicted themselves-I consider myself convicted by the testimony of Holy Scripture, which is my basis; my conscience is captive to the Word of God. Thus I cannot and will not recant, because acting against one's conscience is neither safe nor sound". He translated the whole Bible in German in 1534 which not only helped the people to understand who God is in their own language but also to educate people to learn to read and write in the language they spoke. Luther was shocking everyone by declaring that men and women could only get to Heaven by putting their faith in Jesus Christ, and not by their good works. He said that people should be allowed to read the Bible for themselves to see if what he was saying was true.

After finishing university in France, Hamilton came home to Scotland and in 1524 became a Professor at the University of St Andrews. Luther's books were banned in 1525 but many copies of them were still available, along with the first translation of the Bible from Greek into English by William

Tyndale in 1526. Hamilton became convinced that Luther's teachings were from the Bible and was converted. However, St Andrews was the centre of Roman Catholicism in Scotland now and his new beliefs attracted the attention of Archbishop James Beaton in 1527. Twenty-three-year-old Hamilton was not yet ready to take on the Roman Catholic Church, so he fled to Germany.

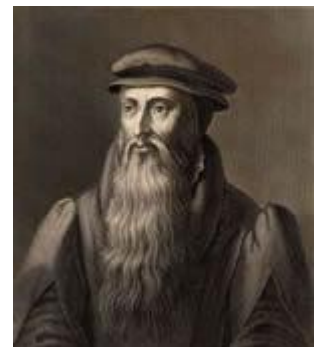
In Germany, Hamilton wrote a book called Patrick's Places. The main point of the book was that people can only be saved through faith in Christ and not by good works. At the centre of everything Patrick Hamilton believed and taught was Jesus Christ and what He had done. He became determined to go back to Scotland to preach the good news, even though he knew it would be to risk his life.

Patrick therefore returned home and devoted himself to preaching. His brother and sister both became believers through his preaching and many others followed. Archbishop Beaton quickly became aware of his return however and summoned Patrick to appear before him. His accusers allowed him to preach openly in the university for about a month, hoping that he would give them more evidence against him. However instead many important people were converted.

On the 29th of February Hamilton was summoned for trial. He refused to deny his beliefs and was sentenced to be burnt at the stake the same day for being a heretic (accepting false doctrines). His death was slow and painful because the fire kept going out, and it took him six hours to die. His death was a turning point however. Archbishop Beaton was advised that if he had to burn any more heretics, he should do it in deep cellars so that no-one would know, because 'the reek of Mister Patrick Hamilton has infected as many as it blew upon'. His courage, brilliance and gentleness inspired many. Throughout Scotland, as people heard of his death, they began to ask why it had happened. The teaching of God's Word, instead of dying, spread.

The start of the Scottish Reformation

John Knox, the most famous Scottish Reformer, was born near Edinburgh in 1505. He went to his local school and then to university in St Andrews, before becoming a deacon and a priest in the (Roman Catholic) Church.



From 1542, Scotland was governed by Regent Arran as Mary Queen of Scots was still a baby. Arran benefited reform in Scotland in many ways. Firstly, he passed a law that allowed people to read the Bible in their own language. He then appointed the Protestant Thomas Guillame to preach around Scotland, and it was through his preaching that John Knox was converted. The biggest influence on Knox's life however was George Wishart.

After Wishart's death in 1546 as a martyr, Knox taught the sons of a number of Protestants who had captured St Andrews Castle. Some of those in the castle called Knox to become their minister. At this he burst into tears and ran off to his room because of what a responsibility he knew it would be. A few days later however he accepted the call. In the summer of 1547 French warships attacked the castle. Knox was taken prisoner, kept aboard in one of the ships and forced to row it in chains with other galley slaves. After 19 months however he was set free, and went to England where Archbishop Cranmer was working to promote the Reformation, and he was appointed as a preacher [in Berwick]. He attacked the Roman Catholic mass as idolatry because it was 'invented by the brain of man' and not commanded by God. In 1551 he was invited to live in London and preach before king Edward VI.

In 1553, the Roman Catholic Mary I became Queen. Knox was now in danger, so he left for Europe. He became minister in Frankfurt in Germany and then in Geneva in Switzerland where John Calvin was also a minister. In between he returned to Scotland to get married and preach, and was surprised at how far the teaching of the Reformers was spreading.

In 1559, he came back to Scotland for good. The Scottish people were now ready to end Roman Catholicism once and for all, after the death of another martyr Walter Mill. In the autumn, he became minister at St Andrews. The people in St Andrews had been convinced by Knox's preaching and had taken all the pictures and images out of the church.

1560 was a very important year in the history of the Scottish Reformation. The Scottish Parliament passed laws getting rid of the mass and the Pope's power in Scotland. Knox and five other men, all called John, wrote important documents such as the "Scots Confession of Faith", which explained what the church believed. In the summer, Knox became minister in Edinburgh. In December, the first General Assembly met in Edinburgh.

From 1567 until he was assassinated three years later, Scotland was ruled by the Protestant Regent Moray. The Parliament met in the same year and passed more laws in favour of the Reformation. The years from 1560

onwards saw worship simplified, evangelism, care of the poor and more education, so the ordinary people could read the Bible. Instead of the outward forms of Roman Catholicism, public worship was now based around reading, preaching and singing from God's word.

Knox continued preaching for the rest of his life and died in 1572. When he was buried, it was said that 'Here lies a man who in his life never feared the face of man'.

Application

John Knox saw how important it was for the church to do what the Bible said, and not just what they thought was right. He wasn't afraid to stand up to anyone, even kings and queens, for what he knew was right. His preaching was used by God to transform the whole of Scotland.

The Reformed/Presbyterian churches have since the Reformation followed 5 principles namely:

- Sola Scriptura – The Word of God alone
- Sola gratia – all are saved through the grace of God alone
- Sola Fide – all are saved through faith in Jesus Christ alone
- Solus Christus – Jesus Christ's redemption, ascension must be central
- Sola Deo Gloria – to God be ALL the Glory!

