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THE LONG REFORMATION OF THE DEAD IN SCOTLAND



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For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
2012

Abstract

This thesis argues that, although attempts were initially made at the Reformation of 1560 to reform Scottish burial practices, and thereafter further attempts were made fairly consistently throughout the following decades and centuries, it was actually not until the Disruption of 1843 and subsequent events that there was any true measure of success in the reform of Scottish burial practices. Prior to the Reformation Scotland was a Catholic nation, although in terms of burial practices it was somewhat different to other Catholic countries. This individuality of burial practice was to continue throughout the three centuries covered by this thesis. Following the Reformation attempts were made by the various Kirk authorities throughout Scotland to reform burial practice along Protestant lines. These attempts were largely uniform throughout Scotland, although certain regional variations existed, for instance attempts made to ban practices such as the *coronach* in the Highlands and Islands. Some of these attempts were successful, others were less so. Additionally, reforms aimed at the lower social orders were more successful, on the whole, than those aimed at the upper classes, as the upper classes could afford to pay nominal fines after a breach of the rules concerning burial. However, over the period the goals of the early reformers to ensure that in death all were seen to be equal, regardless of class or social status, and the removal of practices deemed to be superstitious or intercessory, were more or less ignored. By the time of the Disruption burial practice in Scotland was barely related to the ideals of Knox and the other early Scottish reformers. However, with the expulsion of the Free Church of Scotland from the Kirk owned burial grounds, new locations had to be sought. These were ultimately found in the newly opened public cemeteries. These were locations set aside for burial alone, and were not consecrated, two of the core ideals of the early Scottish reformers. Additionally, there were no graveside sermons and no attempts at intercession on behalf of the dead. Finally, after three centuries, at least one group of Scottish Presbyterians had almost fully embraced the reformation of the dead.

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Acknowledgments

I would like to thank, in no particular order, all of the following people who have helped to make this possible. The Leverhulme Trust, David and Joanne Raeburn, Jenny Sutherland, Emily Ball, other friends too numerous to list, Hilary Grainger, Stephen White, Peter Jupp, and my supervisors; Douglas J. Davies and Alec Ryrie. Thank you all for your help and support.

Chapter One

Introduction

Aims

This thesis argues that, although attempts were initially made at the Reformation of 1560 to reform Scottish burial practices, and thereafter further attempts were made fairly consistently throughout the following decades and centuries, it was actually not until the Disruption of 1843 and subsequent events that there was any true measure of success in the reform of Scottish burial practices. Although small gains were made and small successes enjoyed in the years after 1560 it was the adoption of the public cemeteries by the Free Church of Scotland following the Disruption that finally marked the success of the Scottish Reformation as applied to burial practices. The notion of the Long Reformation is becoming more widely accepted in Early Modern scholarship, with works such as *England's Long Reformation*¹ and *The Long European Reformation*² taking the subject up to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In a similar vein this thesis asserts that the reform of Scottish burial practices initiated at the Reformation of 1560 cannot be considered a success in any real measure until the latter half of the nineteenth century.

This is an important study in several ways. A study of this nature shows that, even in an age when Scotland was perceived as being a relatively highly secularised nation, the burial practices of many groups and individuals were influenced by the religious history of the country, even if those individuals were themselves secular. It reinforces Scotland's unique place in European history, highlighting the fact that, despite the geographical proximity with England, Scotland was not actually influenced by its southern neighbour to any great extent, despite historical claims to the contrary. It also shows the importance of owning death. As will be seen below, for any group to show their dominance of society they must control the ways in which people are buried. All of these issues are addressed within this thesis.

This thesis on the post-Reformation theology of death in Scotland forms part of a larger, Leverhulme Trust funded, co-authored interdisciplinary project focusing on the development of cremation in Scotland, from its inception to the modern day. As a part of this project this thesis provides the starting point for the larger work, investigating the

¹ N. Tyacke, ed., *England's Long Reformation, 1500-1800*. (London: UCL Press, 1998).

² P. G. Wallace, *The Long European Reformation; Religion, Political Conflict, and the Search for Conformity, 1355-1750*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004).

development of Scottish burial practices, from the pre-Reformation period, through to the mid nineteenth century, just prior to the developing interest in the notion of cremation in Scotland. Major societal changes, such as the Scottish Reformation and the Disruption, are investigated, in order to determine the effect they had on the burial practices of Scotland, as seen above. As with the larger project, this thesis is an interdisciplinary study, approaching the subject from theological, sociological, and anthropological points of view, as well as historical, both legal and ecclesiastical. The larger project has a significant focus on architectural history, and that discipline, too, is represented here, although to a lesser extent, in sections that investigate intra-mural burial and the development of monuments and tombs. It is important to note, however, that one discipline that has not been included in any significant manner is archaeology. It is unfortunate that there is not better integration between history and archaeology, as it would most certainly prove beneficial to both disciplines.³

Similar studies have been undertaken for England and various areas of Europe,⁴ and it is important that such a study be undertaken for Scotland, in order to highlight the unique nature of Scottish burial practices. As will be seen in Chapter Two below, Scotland has always had its own religious practices, independently of its neighbours. Of course, there have been studies into Scottish burial practices undertaken by historians such as Andrew Spicer,⁵ Margo Todd,⁶ and Keith Brown,⁷ but all of these studies are very brief, and deal only with the Reformation. There have also been recent works produced on the latter period of Scottish history relating to death and burial,⁸ but these too are very tightly focused and remain within a relatively short timeframe. Accordingly, this study begins before the Reformation and continues on until after the Disruption. Indeed, the ideal forms of burial dreamt of at the Reformation were as important for the Free Church's choice of burial

³ Two archaeological texts have been employed in this study, although it is solely for historical reference that they have been consulted.

⁴ See, for example, V. Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500-1670*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); R. Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480-1750*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); C. M. Koslofsky, *The Reformation of the Dead. Death and Ritual in Early Modern Germany, 1450-1700*. (London: MacMillan Press Ltd; New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 2000).

⁵ A. Spicer, "Defyle not Christ's kirk with your carrion': burial and the development of burial aisles in post-Reformation Scotland." In *The Place of the Dead. Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. B. Gordon and P. Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 149-169.

⁶ M. Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002).

⁷ K. M. Brown, *Noble Society in Scotland*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004).

⁸ See, for example, M. Smith, "The Church of Scotland and the Funeral Industry in Nineteenth-century Edinburgh." *The Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. 88.1, No. 225. (2009), pp. 108-133.

location as the fact of their expulsion from the Kirk owned burial grounds following the Disruption. The *Longue Durée* approach employed here serves to highlight the fact that, despite continued pressure from both without and within, Scotland retained its distinct nature in its adherence to Presbyterianism, and yet at the same time it was only one individual Presbyterian group that can be argued to have ever succeeded in the reform of burial in Scotland. Without such an approach it would be impossible to get a complete picture of the events that lay behind the adoption of the public cemeteries by the Free Church.

Methodology

Although this is an interdisciplinary study, the primary approach is historical. To that end many original materials, both printed and in manuscript form, have been utilised. However, as was stated in 1762, “The Records of Scotland in their present situation are daily exposed to many accidents,”⁹ thereby ensuring that few have survived to this day. As a direct result of this paucity of records, in this thesis there is a wide variety of source material, from original works of a theological nature, to Commissariat records, the accounts of the Lord High Treasurer, and even personal diaries. There is, of course, a wide range of secondary material that has also been consulted.

Additionally, the disciplines of history and theology have long interacted very well with each other in many studies, and such interaction has also proven useful in this study, as can be seen, for example, in the investigation in Chapter Five of the reformers’ various understandings of John 11:35.¹⁰ Similarly, the anthropological and sociological sources employed in this study have also interacted well with the historical and theological sources, as can be seen in the section of Chapter Three which addresses the reform of Scottish rites of passage as they apply to burial tradition. Of course, as a historian, casting a historical eye over these other disciplines has been largely unavoidable, but that too has proven enlightening and useful for the study, in that while the use of disciplines other than history has informed the historical narrative to an extent, so too has the use of a historical eye upon these other disciplines informed the way in which they were used. The interdisciplinarity employed in this study has, however, also provided challenges with which to be engaged. As

⁹ “Memorial Concerning the State of the Records of Scotland, 1762.” *The Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. 28, No. 106. (1949), p. 147.

¹⁰ See below, pp. 112-119.

stated above it is understood that disciplines such as theology and history complement each other, and as such there is no difficulty in employing both disciplines in one study. It was somewhat more difficult, however, to employ anthropology and sociology in a way that did justice to the material and the approaches used in attempting to understand that material. There were, however, clear benefits to using such a comparative method. An example of this, albeit framed with all due caution, can be seen from the analysis of an Aboriginal Australian hunter gatherer society from the early twentieth century, which helped shed light upon some potentially similar dynamics in Scottish Highland society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹¹

History, however, remains the central approach to this study, and it is partly because of this approach that a chronological narrative has been adopted, beginning in pre-Reformation Scotland and ending in post-Enlightenment Scotland. Throughout this study, however, there are slight variations from the chronological narrative to pursue thematic material. This has not proved a problem as the themes that are pursued in this manner themselves largely adhere to the chronology, in that they mostly developed individually at specific points in history.

This thesis focuses upon changing burial traditions within the main religious groups present in Scotland at the time; namely Protestants, both Presbyterian and Episcopalian, and Catholics, as enough remained in Scotland throughout the period under investigation to have had an effect on Scottish burial practices. Although other groups were present in Scotland, such as Quakers and Jews, it was not until the very end of the period dealt with in this thesis that they were present in any significant numbers. As such the burial practices of these groups will not be mentioned until the end of this thesis. For the majority of the period covered here burial practices and rituals in Scotland were controlled by the Church, be that the Catholic Church in the pre-Reformation period, or the Church of Scotland¹² following the Reformation. As such it is primarily Church oriented material that has been employed in this study, and changes to the religious landscape of Scotland that have been investigated. Indeed, until the Enlightenment it was the case that it was almost exclusively the ordinances of the Kirk that affected Scottish burial practices, although periodically the efforts of groups or individuals to subvert the official policy of the Kirk relating to burial also had an effect on these practices. Additionally, until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries there

¹¹ See Chapter Five, pp. 109-112.

¹² Referred to throughout the thesis as the Kirk.

were very few instances of secular authorities imposing any changes to burial practices. Therefore it is, again, not until the end of this thesis that the position held by the secular authorities concerning burial in Scotland has been consulted, and the effects these had on burial practices duly investigated.

It is, perhaps, slightly unusual for a primarily historical thesis to cover such a long period of time. However, as stated above, the notion of the Long Reformation has become more widespread in recent years, and as such it is less surprising that such a period is covered in this study, particularly in light of its focus. Additionally, the concept of the *Longue Durée* needs to be taken into account, particularly as this study shows that the burial practices of nineteenth century Scotland had been informed and driven by the events of the years following the Reformation of 1560, and, in some cases, by even earlier events. First pursued by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre of the *Annales School* between the First and Second World Wars, the *Longue Durée* approach to historical writing concentrates on slowly evolving aspects of history, and as such covers longer periods of time. Additionally, it incorporates more sociological aspects of history, such as the use of sociological studies into suicide in this thesis. It was subsequently employed by historians such as Phillipe Ariès and more recently Roger Chartier.¹³ By employing the *Longue Durée* approach a more complete picture of Scottish burial has been presented here. Rather than just focusing on snapshots, as it were, of Scottish history, such as the changes of the Reformation period, or the secularisation of the Enlightenment, the gradually changing nature of Scottish burial reform is highlighted.

The starting point of 1542 was chosen as this was the year of James V's death, and it was less than twenty years until the Scottish Reformation. This allows for a brief overview of pre-Reformation Scottish burial practices, and gives a glimpse into the state of these practices in the run up to 1560. The end point of 1856 was chosen as this was the year of the death of Hugh Miller, a founding member of the Free Church of Scotland. Both men were laid to rest in Edinburgh, although in very different ways. As shall be seen, James V unsurprisingly received a burial fit for a king, whereas Miller was buried in the Grange, one of the newly opened public cemeteries. Interestingly, however, this was in no way considered a shameful burial, despite the fact of his suicide and the fact that the Grange was unconsecrated, as will be seen in detail in Chapter Eight. Additionally, within these three

¹³ See, for example, R. Chartier, *Cultural History: Between Practices and Representations*. Translated by Lydia G. Cochrane. (Cambridge: Polity, 1988).

centuries a number of major societal events occurred in Scotland, from the Reformation through to the Enlightenment and the Disruption amongst others, which had some impact on burial practices.

In terms of the historical method itself, considering the period of time covered, and the subject matter in particular, it is perhaps unsurprising that a similar approach to that used by historians such as Phillipe Ariès, Margo Todd, and Keith Brown has been employed in this study, in that a chronological narrative is pursued, yet thematic issues are also highlighted and addressed. Ariès in particular was a proponent of the *Longue Durée* in regards to burial practices,¹⁴ and while this study does not cover the same duration as some of his work, it does attempt to present the material in a similar fashion. In their work on Reformation Scotland both Todd and Brown include brief sections on death and burial, as seen above, and in this study a similar approach has been taken, although in much greater detail and covering a longer period of history.

Historiography

Although a not inconsiderable amount has been written concerning death and burial in its historical context, as has been stated above, there has been very little that has dealt with Scotland. There have been brief studies on specific areas of Scottish burial practices, for instance Andrew Spicer's "'Defyle not Christ's kirk with your carrion': burial and the development of burial aisles in post-Reformation Scotland," and there have been brief overviews of the subject, as seen in Margo Todd's *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland*¹⁵ and Keith M. Brown's *Noble Society in Scotland*.¹⁶ Additionally, all of these studies are centred on the Reformation period. Audrey-Beth Fitch's *The Search for Salvation; Lay Faith in Scotland, 1480-1560*¹⁷ is a work that is focused on death and notions of the afterlife in pre-Reformation Scotland, and mention is made throughout that work of burial, but again, this is a study of a relatively short period of time. As has also been seen

¹⁴ P. Ariès, *Western Attitudes toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*. Translated by Patricia M. Ranum. (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974); *The Hour of our Death*. Translated by Helen Weaver. (London: Allen Lane, 1981).

¹⁵ In Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland*, sections on death and burial are spread throughout two chapters, pp. 183-226; 315-360, although neither of these chapters focus solely on the subjects of death and burial.

¹⁶ Brown, *Noble Society in Scotland*, pp. 251-270.

¹⁷ (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2009).

above, there have been recent works such as Michael Smith's "The Church of Scotland and the Funeral Industry in Nineteenth-century Edinburgh" or Glenys Caswell's "An exploration of coffin-related rituals and practices in Scottish Presbyterian funerals"¹⁸ that deal with the later period of Scottish history, but these too are predominantly focused on one specific area of burial practice. The simple fact of the matter is that there has been no in depth study of Scottish burial practices covering any aspect of the period dealt with here. Concerning the works that deal with death and burial in other parts of early modern Europe there can be precious few parallels drawn and little extrapolation can be made between the cases in Europe and those in Scotland. As will be seen in this thesis, in this area Scotland was very different from its neighbours.

Another important aspect of this thesis is its geographical range, covering as much of Scotland as possible. As will be seen in Chapters Five and Seven, the Highlands and Islands of Scotland were actually quite different from the Lowland areas in terms of culture and the practices that surrounded death and burial. Many works that deal with Scottish history focus, quite logically, on specific areas of the country.¹⁹ Additionally, those works that deal with death and burial tend to follow a similar pattern, although both Todd and Brown's works do make some attempt to address the facts of the situation in the Highlands. This thesis, however, places the geographical differences between the regions of Scotland into context. The burial practices of the north and south of Scotland are compared and contrasted, and it is shown in this thesis that, by the authorities within the Kirk at least, the practices of the Highlands and Islands were considered deeply suspect. Of course, in some instances older collections of local history, such as M'Kay's *The History of Kilmarnock*²⁰ or MacGeorge's *Old Glasgow: the Place and the People, From the Roman Occupation to the Eighteenth Century*,²¹ amongst others, have proven quite valuable, and in many instances have provided intriguing stories of local burial traditions and even the occasional scandal.

Also taken into account in this thesis is the folklore of death and burial in Scotland. Although becoming more widely recognised as a valuable tool for historians, folklore has in the past frequently been ignored or dismissed as irrelevant, an attitude also pervading much formal anthropological study. This thesis, however, attempts to combine these folkloric

¹⁸ *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, Vol. 10, No. 4. (2010), pp. 306-319.

¹⁹ See, for instance, F. A. MacDonald, *Missions to the Gaels, Reformation and Counter-Reformation in Ulster and the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, 1560 – 1760*. (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2006); J. McCallum, *Reforming the Scottish Parish. The Reformation in Fife, 1560-1640*. (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010).

²⁰ (Kilmarnock: Archibald M'Kay, 3rd edn, 1864).

²¹ (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1880).

elements with more traditional histories in order to achieve a much more complete image of Scottish burial practices, traditions, and rituals. Rather than just investigating the officially held position on death and burial, this thesis also addresses what the common man and woman believed and desired to see in burial practice. Studies such as James Napier's *Folklore: or, Superstitious Beliefs in the West of Scotland within this Century*,²² John Dalrymple's *The Darker Superstitions of Scotland*,²³ Walter Traill Dennison's *Orkney Folklore & Sea Legends, studies of traditional life and folklore*,²⁴ and J. Maxwell Wood's *Witchcraft and Superstitious Record in the South-Western District of Scotland*,²⁵ have proven particularly useful in this endeavour.

In terms of theology there are two aspects that are dealt with in this thesis. The first is the historical aspect; the theology that the early reformers such as Calvin, Zwingli, Knox, and Luther used when addressing the subject of death and burial. Works such as Calvin's *Institutes*²⁶ and his commentary on John's Gospel,²⁷ have proven particularly useful, as within these works the subjects of death, burial, and the emotions appropriate following a death are addressed. Although the interaction with the work of the European reformers on the subject is relatively brief, this thesis does interact with Knox's work on the subject in quite some detail, despite the relative paucity of material, again attempting to cover as much of his work on death and burial as possible. Additionally, Knox's work, and those of other Scottish theologians of the time, such as William Birnie and James Melville, has been placed within a Calvinist context in order to determine to what extent Calvinist attitudes towards death and burial were evident in Scotland. It is somewhat unfortunate that outside of the collaborative works *The First Book of Discipline* and *The forme of prayers* Knox wrote no more on the subject of death and burial. As such all that can be said concerning his thought on the subject has to come from these works, with some slight extrapolation from Calvin's own thought on the matter. Zwingli, too, was surprisingly quiet on the matter. Other theologians, however, both Lutheran and Calvinist, and even some Catholics, did produce work in this area that has proven useful. On the Catholic side of the debate Ninian Winzet

²² (Paisley: Alex Gardner, 1879).

²³ (Edinburgh: Waugh and Innes, 1834).

²⁴ (Kirkwall: The Orkney Press Ltd, 1995).

²⁵ (Dumfries: J. Maxwell & Son, 1911).

²⁶ J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Translated and edited by Ford Lewis Battles and John T. McNeill. 2 vols. The Library of Christian Classics, 20-21. (London: SCM Press; New York: Westminster Press, 1960).

²⁷ J. Calvin, *The Gospel According to St John, 11-21, and The First Epistle of John*. Calvin's Commentaries. Translated by T. H. L. Parker. Edited by David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance. (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1961).

addressed the subject,²⁸ whilst, in addition to those reformed theologians listed above, Wolfgang Musculus addressed the issue of appropriate emotional responses to death in his commentary on John's Gospel.²⁹ Again it must be stated that there has been little recent work dealing with specific Scottish instances, but in this area there have been other recent works that have proven useful in a wider context, such as Jaime Clark-Soles' *Death and the Afterlife in the New Testament*,³⁰ a work that has helped shed light on the theological texts that Calvin and Knox would have had in mind when writing on death and burial, and Matthew Elliott's *Faithful Feelings; Emotion in the New Testament*,³¹ which provided useful insights when addressing the emotional context of funerals that Calvinist theologians were interacting with in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The second theological aspect that is dealt with in this thesis concerns more modern theological work on the issue of death and burial. There have been several useful works produced on this subject in recent years, including Paul Sheppy's *Death Liturgy and Ritual*,³² Stephen Voorwinde's *Jesus' Emotions in the Fourth Gospel; Human or Divine?*,³³ and Douglas Davies' *The Theology of Death*.³⁴ These works, in combination with the more historical works listed above, and the anthropological and sociological works that will be listed below, have aided the developing notions of how the Scottish laity may have understood the messages of the theologians during the period covered by this thesis. They have also proved useful to the discussion of concepts such as the doctrine of election, and particularly as it applies to death and burial.

Of course, cultural themes are addressed in this thesis that are somewhat less tangible than the physical and even theological realities of death and burial, and for these the anthropological aspect of this study has proved particularly useful, from classical to more contemporary studies. Studies such as Emile Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*³⁵ and Radcliffe-Brown's *The Andaman Islanders*³⁶ provided invaluable insights into some key social features of grief and mourning amongst less developed

²⁸ J. K. Hewison, ed., *Certain Tractates, together with the Book of Four Score Three Questions, and a translation of Vincentius Lirinensis by Ninian Winzet*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh and London: Printed for the Scottish Text Society by William Blackwood and Sons, 1888).

²⁹ C. S. Farmer, *The Gospel of John in the Sixteenth Century; The Johannine Exegesis of Wolfgang Musculus*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

³⁰ (New York and London: T & T Clark International, 2006).

³¹ (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2005).

³² (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003/2004).

³³ (London: T & T Clark, 2005).

³⁴ (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2008).

³⁵ Translated by Joseph Ward Swain. (New York: The Free Press, 1965).

³⁶ (New York: Free Press, 1964).

societies, and these studies have enabled the identification of potentially similar social dynamics in the society of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Arnold van Gennep's *The Rites of Passage*³⁷ allowed extrapolations to be made as to how death, burial, and the surrounding rituals may have been viewed and interpreted in early modern Scotland, and, of particular interest, how these interpretations may have changed due to the Reformation of 1560. Related to this, the study of emotions in and of themselves has become increasingly important in recent years.³⁸ To that end works such as Catherine Bell's *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*,³⁹ Gary Ebersole's "The Function of Ritual Weeping Revisited: Affective Expression and Moral Discourse,"⁴⁰ and particularly Metcalf and Huntington's *Celebrations of Death. The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual*⁴¹ have all proved helpful in developing ideas about potentially ritualistic elements of Scottish funerals throughout the period covered by this thesis. In combination with the other anthropological texts listed above, and more historical works such as Edward Muir's *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*,⁴² Susan Karant-Nunn's *The Reformation of Ritual; an interpretation of Early Modern Germany*,⁴³ and Craig Koslofsky's *The Reformation of the Dead. Death and Ritual in Early Modern Germany, 1450-1700*,⁴⁴ these works have enriched the discussion on the geographical differences concerning burial practices within Scotland. Concerning the latter part of this thesis, Roy Rappaport's *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*⁴⁵ discusses the concept of Ultimate Sacred Postulates, which has been used in this thesis to explain the animosity between the Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland following the Disruption of 1843, despite their shared Presbyterianism. This animosity led, as shall be seen in Chapter Eight, to the denial of Free Church access to Church of Scotland burial grounds, a situation that led in turn to an interesting development in Scottish burial practice, as shall subsequently be seen.

³⁷ Translated by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960).

³⁸ Cf. P. Goldie, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); J. Corrigan, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Emotion*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

³⁹ (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

⁴⁰ In *Religion and Emotion; Approaches and Interpretations*, ed. J. Corrigan, pp 185 - 222. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁴¹ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn, 1991).

⁴² (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn, 2005).

⁴³ (London and New York: Routledge, 1997).

⁴⁴ (London: MacMillan Press Ltd; New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 2000).

⁴⁵ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Finally, this thesis has interacted with several sociological works. Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*⁴⁶ provided a valuable insight into the development of the Protestant Work Ethic in Scotland, and the subsequent possible representation of the Protestant Work Ethic and notions of membership of the elect in the funerary monuments of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. George Minois' *History of Suicide, Voluntary Death in Western Culture*,⁴⁷ Alvarez's *The Savage God: A Study of Suicide*,⁴⁸ Durkheim's *Suicide; A Study in Sociology*,⁴⁹ Fedden's *Suicide; A Social and Historical Study*,⁵⁰ and even Foucault's *Discipline and Punish; The Birth of the Prison*⁵¹ all aided the discussion within this thesis of the burial of those who had committed suicide, and the laws and social justifications of the denial of Christian burial to these unfortunate individuals. Robert Hertz' "A Contribution to the Study of the Collective Representation of Death"⁵² also proved useful in this context, dealing as it does with topics such as why certain groups become, in death, taboo. These works, in combination with R. A. Houston's recent historical work *Punishing the Dead? Suicide, Lordship, and Community in Britain, 1500-1830*,⁵³ and Alexander Murray's *Suicide in the Middle Ages*,⁵⁴ certainly allowed for a more complete picture to be drawn concerning the burial of suicides in Scotland. Elsewhere, studies such as Jan Bondeson's *Buried Alive; The Terrifying History of Our Most Primal Fear*⁵⁵ provided a degree of quantifiable evidence for otherwise unsubstantiated rumours, particularly when rumours such as individuals being buried who were not quite dead may have led to the development of Scottish traditions such as the watching of the corpse, or the like-wake.

Chapter Summaries

The argument presented at the beginning of this Introduction is pursued by this thesis over the following seven chapters. Chapter Two briefly addresses the situation of Scottish

⁴⁶ Translated by T. Parsons. (London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2001).

⁴⁷ Translated by L. G. Cochrane. (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

⁴⁸ (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971).

⁴⁹ Translated by John A. Spaulding and George Simpson. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1952).

⁵⁰ (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1972).

⁵¹ Translated by Allen Lane. (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1977).

⁵² In *Death and the Right Hand*, eds. R. and C. Needham, pp. 27-86. (New York: Free Press, 1960).

⁵³ (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁵⁴ (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998/2000).

⁵⁵ (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001).

burial in the years leading up to the Scottish Reformation. It considers the burial practices common in Scotland that the early Scottish reformers wished to address, such as the cost of funerals, practices that took place following a death and funeral that were perceived by the reformers as ‘superstitious,’ and the fact that there were clear differences in the funeral practices of the various social classes in Scotland at the time. It also highlights the fact that Scotland has always been somewhat different in terms of religious practice, even when ostensibly sharing the same religion as its neighbours.

The first part of Chapter Three addresses the written compositions produced around the time of the Scottish Reformation that specifically address burial practice, on both the Protestant and Catholic sides of the argument. It argues that the works produced by the Scottish reformers aimed to completely overhaul burial practice; much to the chagrin of those committed to Catholicism, and actually led to accusations of disrespect for the dead. Section two addresses more practical issues, namely that the reform of burial did not take place immediately following the Reformation, and this is clearly displayed in the lingering and determined adherence to the pre-Reformation practice of intra-mural burial. However, as the final section shows, it is precisely this continued adherence to the old ways of death that provoked the various Kirk authorities to begin to compromise concerning burial within the Synods and Presbyteries of Scotland, and thereby gradually instituting the reform of burial.

Chapter Four continues to address the period of the Scottish Reformation, although its focus is more on continuity and change. Pre-Reformation practices that survived the Reformation are investigated, from those whose survival is unsurprising, such as the treatment of the bodies of criminals, through certain ambiguous practices such as the transportation of the corpses of the nobility to their traditional burial grounds, and also those practices whose survival is particularly surprising, such as recorded instances of explicitly Catholic practices following 1560.

Chapter Five addresses the concepts of memory and grief in the period following the Reformation yet prior to the Enlightenment. It is in this chapter that the first explicit geographical differences within Scottish burial practices can be seen in the various approaches to grief displayed throughout Scotland. It is particularly interesting to note the attempts to suppress certain emotional practices within the Highlands by the Kirk authorities in that region. Also addressed within this chapter is a more physical aspect of memory and grief; namely the development of monuments and tombs. Here, too, we find regional variance, although it is less well defined than that of emotional displays. This fifth chapter

closes with an investigation into how the developing notion of the Protestant Work Ethic affected the development of forms of memorial to the dead, particularly in light of the doctrine of election, as this was to become an important aspect of Scottish Protestantism.

Chapter Six addresses the written compositions produced in the post-Reformation period that concern death and burial. It was during this period that a Scottish Protestant version of the *Ars Moriendi* was produced by Zachary Boyd, and this work is compared to the pre-Reformation *Ars Moriendi* texts of Chapter Two. Additionally, the texts that were produced during this period do not always entirely agree with those produced at the time of the Reformation, and this chapter investigates these differences and their effect on Scottish burial practices. Finally, this chapter closes with a section dealing with the Scottish funeral sermon in the seventeenth century, based upon the few printed examples that have survived. Sermons were to have been removed from funeral practice following the Reformation, yet it can be seen that, in certain places, they lingered. However, as this chapter shows, almost all of these surviving sermons are Episcopalian in origin, and as such highlight the divides within Scottish Protestantism at the time, and the varying attitudes towards funeral practice that accompanied them.

Chapter Seven then deals with the period of the Scottish Enlightenment, and in this chapter there is once again a clear division along geographical lines. The first section of this chapter details the state of burial practices in the Highlands at a time when the rest of Scotland was beginning to be seen as modernising. This provides for an interesting comparison between the burial practices in the north and the south. The second section of this chapter deals with a practice that was not restricted by regional bounds, although had fallen from use for a period after the Reformation; the use of the dead bell. This chapter investigates to what extent the dead bell did ever truly fall into disuse, and if it did, why this was the case. Also dealt with here, although to a lesser extent, is the use of the steeple bells following a funeral, a practice that certainly was to end at the Reformation, but was brought back into use around this period. Finally, this chapter addresses a less savoury aspect of death and burial in Scotland at this time; the fascinating developments in Scottish burial customs designed to combat the threat of disinterment posed by the Resurrectionists. It is because of the activities of the Resurrectionists that items such as mort-safes and watch-towers can still be found in some Scottish burial grounds to this day.

Finally, Chapter Eight marks the end of the period under consideration in this thesis; post-Enlightenment Scotland. In this chapter the opening of the public cemeteries is

addressed, as is their rise in popularity. The Glasgow Necropolis is used as a case study in the layout of these non-denominational burial grounds. Additionally, and indeed crucially, the decision of the Free Church of Scotland to embrace the public cemeteries, in particular the Grange in Edinburgh, is detailed in this chapter. Also addressed in this chapter is the fact that by the post-Enlightenment period there were large and elaborate funerals being seen once more in Scotland. The pomp and ostentation of these funerals is investigated, as are the arguments of certain Scottish theologians, such as Thomas M'Crie, that such displays of prominence are anti-Presbyterian, and perhaps even display attempts to enforce Anglicanism upon Scotland. Finally, this chapter ends with a section on the treatment of suicide cases in Scotland, throughout the entirety of the period covered by this thesis. This section serves to highlight the extent to which Scottish burial practice changed, and began to be secularised, over the course of the three centuries following the Scottish Reformation.

Because individual conclusions are drawn at the end of each chapter the conclusion to the thesis, Chapter Nine, is comparatively brief. It does, however, explicitly emphasise the argument that the adoption of the public cemeteries by the Free Church of Scotland following 1843 spells the success of the reform of burial attempted at the Reformation and made explicit in *The First Book of Discipline*⁵⁶ and *The forme of prayers*.⁵⁷ The burial practices that were adopted by the Free Church agree entirely with the ideal of the early reformers in that there are no ceremonies, no 'superstitious' or intercessory acts, and the burial ground has not been consecrated. Despite the fact that Scotland was rapidly becoming more of a secular nation, for one group the reformation of burial was finally to succeed in the second half of the nineteenth century.

⁵⁶ J. K. Cameron, ed., *The First Book of Discipline*. (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1972).

⁵⁷ W. D. Maxwell, *John Knox's Genevan Service Book, 1556. The Liturgical Portions of the Genevan Service Book used by John Knox while a Minister of the English Congregation of Marian Exiles at Geneva, 1556-1559*. (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1931).

Chapter Two

Pre-Reformation Scotland

Prior to the Reformation of 1560 Scotland was, of course, a Catholic nation, and had been since the decline of the Celtic Church in the early Middle Ages. As will be seen below, during this period of Scotland's history burial practices did not differ greatly from those seen throughout the rest of the Catholic world, although some slight differences did occur. This chapter focuses on these pre-Reformation burial practices, and attempts to explain what death looked like prior to the Scottish Reformation, for both the commons and the nobility alike. What the Scottish people expected of death, and what was expected of them in death, both their own deaths and the deaths of those around them, will be looked at below, in order to set the scene for the events that would occur following the parliament of August, 1560. Additionally, what these rituals and ceremonies may have represented for the Scottish people will be looked at below. This chapter will focus primarily on the two decades leading up to the Reformation, beginning with the death of James V in 1542, although in order to fully show the rituals and ceremonies that surrounded death in Catholic Scotland it will occasionally prove necessary to include examples from outside of this period.

The Funeral of James V

James V died on 14 December 1542, at Falkland Palace, Fife, from a suspected nervous collapse following the battle with the English at Solway Moss.¹ His body was likely embalmed, and following a solemn and mournful Christmas at Falkland the body was transported to Edinburgh, escorted by a funeral cortege, on 7 January, "in maist honourabill maner, with greit funerall pompe,"² and accompanied by "the Cardinall [David Beaton, Archbishop of St Andrews (1539-1546)], Erles of Arrane, Argyle, Rothies, Merschall, and mony utheris nobill men."³ The following day the body of James V was buried at Holyrood

¹ It is now considered more likely that his death was the result of a virulent disease. A. Thomas, "James V (1512–1542), *king of Scots*", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14591>], < accessed 3 October 2011 >

² J. Lesley, *The History of Scotland, From the Death of King James I. in the Year M.CCCC.XXXVI, to the Year M.D.LXI.* (Edinburgh: The Bannatyne Club, 1830), p. 166.

³ Ibid.

Abbey, next to his first wife, Madeleine, and his two sons.⁴ The funeral was an elaborate affair, as befitted a king, and the chapel was decorated in deep mourning. There was a black velvet state cloth, with a white satin cross, lined with black buckram and fringed with black silk.⁵ The crowned effigy of the late king carried a sceptre and targe, and was laid on a canvas pallet made for the occasion. A cloth coat of arms was lined with gold and crammessy satin, and a banner was fringed with gold and red silk.⁶ A painter, Robert Denys, was hired for the “colloring of the Dolorus Chapell witht the clubbis, speris, chandelaris and uther wark in the kirk, all of blak collouris.”⁷ The tomb itself, no longer extant, was decorated with a carved lion and an inscription in Roman letters eighteen feet long by the French artist Andres Mansioun.⁸ The procession was led by a bellman, and the queen’s chariot had been covered in black for the occasion, with reins of black silk.⁹ Alms were delivered to the poor of Edinburgh who had been present at the soul mass and dirge performed for the late James V,¹⁰ and for some time after his death “there was great lamentation and mone made for his death throughout all parts of his realme, for he was verie well-beloued among his subjects.”¹¹

Of course, as king, James V received treatment in death that others in Scotland may not have expected, despite the notion that in death all are made equal. However, it is somewhat surprising the extent to which the ceremonies and procedures seen at James V’s burial could also be seen at the burials of those lower in the social orders in Scotland at the time. As will be seen in successive chapters mortcloths, similar to the aforementioned state cloth of James V, though much less extravagant, would be expected by even very modest members of a parish, in some instances even following the Reformation. The higher social orders in Scotland, the aristocracy, would have expected their arms and honours to be proudly displayed at their funerals, and the majority of these funerals would also have seen the chapel, or indeed the kirk itself, painted in fashions similar to that described above. Diriges and masses for the dead, which will be looked at more closely below, were at this time almost universal, provided the funds for their founding were available. Finally, as will be seen in

⁴ Thomas, “James V (1512–1542), *king of Scots*.”

⁵ J. Balfour Paul, ed., *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*, Vol. VIII. (Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1908), p. 141.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 143–147.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

¹¹ R. Holinshed, *Holinshed’s Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*. Vol. V. *Scotland*. (London, 1808), p. 528.

subsequent chapters, it was very important in certain Scottish circles that there be a very visible presence of grief following a death.

Masses for the Dead and other Intercessory Acts

As mentioned above it was a common practice in pre-Reformation Scotland to provide a sum of money or a suitable charitable action, such as the foundation of a school or hospital, in order to found a soul mass to be performed for a certain period of time following one's death. Intercessory acts such as these had become popular around Europe in the seventh century, although they had not been unknown before then, merely somewhat neglected.¹² In Scotland, for instance, prayers for the dead had apparently been practised from the time of the Celtic Church.¹³ The ubiquity of such acts in Scotland was actually representative of a wider European increase in lay spirituality, an increase seen in more frequent masses for the dead, as well as greater numbers of church foundations and enthusiasm for pilgrimages and the cults of the saints.¹⁴ Additionally, as Denis McKay stated, "It is not remarkable that thoughts of death constantly re-awakened by the celebration of the 'sawl mess togiddir with the ringenye of the bellis' were never far from men's minds in an age when sudden and premature death from violence, malnutrition, primitive gynaecology and medicine, the ever-active pest and less dramatic forms of illness, was a commonplace."¹⁵ All of these actions, but particularly those that related to the death of an individual, were intercessory in nature, and this, in turn, was due to the fact that the laity believed that they would need the assistance of the living, as well as Jesus, Mary, and the saints, to progress through purgatory towards salvation.¹⁶ It was believed that purgatory was an agonising experience for the dead, and that they were entirely helpless to alleviate their own suffering. They were therefore entirely reliant on the actions of the living to attempt to lessen the time spent in purgatory.¹⁷ These masses were believed to assist the souls of the dead; the more masses performed for an individual, the less time that individual would have to spend in

¹² Ariès, *The Hour of our Death*, p. 152.

¹³ A. Bellesheim, *History of the Catholic Church of Scotland; From the Introduction of Christianity to the Present Day*, Vol. II. (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1887), p. 394.

¹⁴ A. Fitch, *The Search for Salvation; Lay Faith in Scotland, 1480-1560*. (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2009), p. 1.

¹⁵ D. McKay, "Parish Life in Scotland, 1500-1560." In *Essays on the Scottish Reformation, 1513-1625*, ed. David McRoberts. (Glasgow: Burns, 1962), pp. 110-111.

¹⁶ Fitch, *The Search for Salvation*, p. 86.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

purgatory. Additionally, the laity were encouraged by those around them, their friends, relatives, and the clergy, to resist the attempts of the devil to interfere with the soul's progress towards salvation by supporting these intercessory acts.¹⁸ Although the amount of masses performed was frequently specified by the founder, they were occasionally dependent upon the sum provided or the charitable act performed, and the frequency with which the masses were to be repeated. Some were to be performed monthly, some daily.¹⁹

Yet masses were not the only intercessory act that could be performed for an individual following death. Simple prayers for the deceased were another method by which people attempted to lessen their own or another individual's time in purgatory.²⁰ Oftentimes prayers for the dead were founded alongside masses, and sometimes quite considerable sums were left to that end. In 1515 Lady Catherine Lauder left £10 "for the funeral rites and for the chaplains and poor who were to celebrate and pray for her soul."²¹ In 1520 William Dunbar stated in his will, "on the day of my burial, to the poor, other pious works, and to the said friars £1400..."²² By providing money to the poor in exchange for prayers for their souls after death, Lady Catherine and others like her were attempting to show God and the community that they were good Christians, concerned for the state of their souls, and as such should not have to suffer too long the agony of purgatory.

The foundations for masses and prayers for the dead, while occasionally intended to be perpetual, tended to be shorter term practices. The obit, however, was a foundation for an annual mass, commemorating the life and death of the individual who had founded it. As with other masses and prayers for the dead the obit, and its attempt to reduce time spent in purgatory, was not restricted to the soul of the founding individual exclusively. Named individuals would also benefit from the foundation, and the majority of obits also named the reigning monarch, as at the time it was believed that individual sin could bring God's wrath upon the nation as a whole.²³ The obit was such an important aspect of Christian life and death in Scotland that in some cases they were founded years in advance, although the date of

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 185.

²⁰ An unusual example of the foundation of prayers and masses for the soul of someone other than the founder can be seen in the 1554 murder of George Drummond of Leidcrief by the Lairds of Drumlochy, Ardblair, and Gormok. In an offer of assythment by the three lairds was included the foundation of masses for the soul of the murdered man. J. Wormald, "Bloodfued, Kindred and Government in Early Modern Scotland." *Past & Present*, No. 87. (1980), pp. 73-74.

²¹ Fitch, *The Search for Salvation*, p. 37.

²² W. Forbes-Leith, *Pre-Reformation Scholars in Scotland in the XVIth Century, Their Writings and their Public Services, With a Bibliography and a List of Graduates from 1500 to 1560*. (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1915), p. 28.

²³ Fitch, *The Search for Salvation*, p. 4.

the annual celebration would ultimately be the date of death of the individual who had founded it, or that of their husband in the case of married women.²⁴ The importance of the obit for both the Scottish laity and clerics can be seen in the fact that a mere repetition of the ceremony on the anniversary of the founder's death was not always seen as sufficient for a speedy passage through purgatory. In some instances the foundation of the obit specified the use of the proper attire and equipment. Improper execution of the ceremonies was seen as potentially detrimental to the soul in purgatory who, as stated above, was completely reliant upon these rituals. In one instance the founder of an obit specified that "on the day of his decease the clergy was to sing solemnly a Dirige with mass in the morning, and that it include all the Octaves."²⁵ Another particularly interesting obit was very specific as to the ceremonies to be performed:

The OBIT founded in the year of our Lord 1542, by Mr George Lockert, dean of Glasgow, in the church of St John of Ayr, to be celebrated by himself alone for the souls of James Lockert, his father, and Mariote Multray, his mother, on the last day of March, which day the said Mariote died, in the year of our Lord 1500. And after the death of the said dean, on the day of his death, for the dean himself and his brother, Mr John Lockert, and their parents, for which service the chaplains of the said church shall have twelve shillings of yearly revenue from the tenement of Robert Neil, lying on the back part of the same in the said burgh, between the tenement of William Nisbet on the south part, and the tenement of James Schaw and John Redman on the north part.²⁶

It is interesting to note that Lockert himself intended to perform the ceremonies listed in the obit until his own death, at which point he would become one of those benefitting from the ceremonies. The obit continues:

Which twelve shillings shall be divided between the chaplains present in their surplices, and others ministering at the sacrifice of the altar in the said office of the dead, with the whole *placebo*, *dirige*, with nine lessons and mass of repose, in chant,

²⁴ Ibid., p. 88.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 173.

²⁶ *The Obit Book of the Church of St John the Baptist, Ayr*. Ed. James Patterson. (Edinburgh: Thomas G. Stevenson, 1848), p. 47.

on the morrow; also each on that day or the next shall say the foresaid mass of requiem for the souls above said, and cause the great bells of the church to be rung properly thrice at the *placebo* and *dirige*, and thrice at the mass, with the hand-bell through the town, to summon the people to pray for the same as usual.²⁷

As seen above, in the account of the funeral of James V, and as will also be seen in greater detail below, the procession of the hand bell through the town on such occasions was an important aspect of funerals and obits, as it encouraged the population to offer prayers for the deceased. The use of the great bells of the church, however, the steeple bells, was reserved only for those who could afford them. As will be seen in Chapter Seven this was a practice that was addressed by the various Kirk authorities following the Reformation. The obit ends:

And during the same office of the dead, with the mass, they shall place beside the tomb of their parents a footstool decently covered, with two lighted tapers, - the chaplains not in ordinary singing the office of the dead privately by themselves or reading with their brethren; and after the *placebo*, *dirige*, and mass, they shall walk in procession to the tomb, and there, standing round it, chant the psalm '*De profundis*.' The whole being properly celebrated, holy water shall be sprinkled round about.²⁸

This obit was very clear in its instructions, and it could be suggested at this point, from the statement that the chaplains were not to wear their ordinary clothes, in some cases the chaplains were doing precisely this. Lockert was clearly attempting to guard against such laxity.

Finally, in addition to founding an annual mass, and specifying the amount of prayers to be said for the soul of the deceased, obits frequently stated where the deceased wished to be buried; usually within the kirk, and in proximity to an altar. A high percentage of the altars specified in obit foundations were those dedicated to the Virgin Mary, as prayers to her were seen as being particularly effective at reducing time spent in purgatory.²⁹

In addition to obits, soul masses, and prayers for the dead there was one more practice that was viewed as intercessory in pre-Reformation Scotland, namely the use of the Dead Bell. Although the Dead Bell continued to be used in Scotland following the Reformation, as

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Fitch, *The Search for Salvation*, p. 144.

will be seen in Chapter Seven, its use was stripped of any intercessory meaning. Prior to the Reformation, however, the Dead Bell was used to inform the community of the death, and to instruct them to pray for the soul of the deceased, as seen above in the obit of George Lockert. Unlike the post-Reformation use of the Dead Bell, in pre-Reformation Scotland the bell was largely reserved for the benefactors of the churches or the clergy themselves, as can be seen from the fact that in December 1454, the will of a certain John Stewart specified that “on the day of the discesse of the said Johne Steuart yherely, tyll ger Sant Mongouse bell be rungen throw the toun for the said Johnes sawle.”³⁰ Additionally, in November 1509, Sir Archibald Crawford, the vicar of Cadder, specified in his will, “I leif to Sanct Mongowes bell to pas throwe the toun one salmes day eftyre noune, and one the morne forroure nyne, to gar praye for mye faderis saule, mye moderis saule, my awin saule, and all Christyne saulis, aucht peneis of annual of the said place.”³¹ In this way, for a relatively modest sum, an individual could ensure that a large portion of the community would offer prayers for their soul following their death, thereby reducing even further the time spent in purgatory.

As stated above, in pre-Reformation Scotland such intercessory acts were seen by both the laity and the clergy as not only effective, but essential for the soul’s progress through purgatory towards salvation. Indeed, in the *Catechism* of 1552, possibly at the behest of John Hamilton, Archbishop of St Andrews (1547-1571), were laid out some of the justifications for intercessory action.³² The work states that such prayer helps those souls in purgatory,³³ and highlights the fact that St Augustine entreated his readers to pray for the souls of the dead.³⁴ It goes on to state that Augustine’s own mother, Monica, “a litil a fore hir dede desirit sanct Augustine hir sonne, to have remembrance of hir at the altar of our Lord, quhilk as he sais, he did with gret diligence, and also causit other priestis quhilk was in his company to do the same.”³⁵ But it was not only Augustine who was shown to have been in favour of intercessory prayer. John Chrysostom also accepted the efficacy of such actions. He states that “the saulis departit may be helpit be celebratioun of the Mes,”³⁶ and that “a synnar is

³⁰ A. MacGeorge, *Old Glasgow: the Place and the People, From the Roman Occupation to the Eighteenth Century*. (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1880), p. 23.

³¹ *Ibid.* It should be noted that the Dead Bell in Glasgow was referred to as Saint Mungo’s bell.

³² There is little evidence to suggest that this was a work that enjoyed a wide dispersal, but the ideas contained within, particularly those concerning intercessory actions, are likely to be representative of the majority of the clergy and laity in pre-Reformation Scotland. *The Catechism of John Hamilton, Archbishop of St Andrews, 1552*, ed. Thomas Graves Law. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1884), p. ix.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 280.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 281.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 282.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

departit, thairfor it becummis us to be blyth, that synnis ar ceissit, and evil is nocht hepit, and alsmeikil [as much] as we may we suld labour that he may be helpit, nocht with greting, bot with prayars and supplicatioun, almous deidis and oblatiouns.”³⁷ The *Catechism* was clearly in agreement with Chrysostom in that the souls in purgatory benefited from the intercessory actions of the living, but not from the excessive emotion displayed after an individual’s death.³⁸ This was an interesting position, as by this time there had developed a highly ritualised element to the grief displayed during mourning. As Ariès notes, Roland, in the *Chanson de Roland*, at his own death wept and could not keep himself from sighing. “But this emotion was short-lived, as was the subsequent mourning by the survivors. It was a ritual moment.”³⁹ Additionally, “since approximately the twelfth century, the excessive mourning of the Early Middle Ages had become ritualized. It only began after death had occurred and it was manifested in the garments and manners and had a specific duration, precisely fixed by custom.”⁴⁰ Despite these commonly held attitudes towards grief and mourning it is clear that some within the Church were beginning to doubt the efficacy of such actions. Therefore, according to the *Catechism*, rather than entering into such ritual displays the living should pray on behalf of the quick and the dead, with faith, hope, and charity, and direct those prayers to God and the saints, as these prayers can only serve to hasten the journey of the souls of the dead through purgatory.⁴¹

However, not all aspects of the intercessory acts described above were universally accepted in pre-Reformation Scotland. Writing in 1533, John Gau condemned those who would seek salvation from any other source than the holy Trinity. He stated that man can know, without any doubt, that God:

wil do weil to hime and haiff cuir of hime and prouid for hime and deliuer hime fra al ewil and trowis [trusts] this noth of the paip na cardinal na thair legatis na of ony oder mortal ma[n] quhow grit that ewer rwisz thair power thow ma weil trow that they

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ The *Catechism* was also against the superstitious belief against burying in the north part of the kirkyard. It states, “Siclik supersticion is amang thame, that will nocht berisch or erde the bodis of thair freindis on the North part of the kirk yard, trowand that thair is mair halynes or vertew on the South syde than on the North.” *The Catechism of John Hamilton*, p. 51. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, this would prove to be a long held superstition in Scotland, even following the Reformation.

³⁹ Ariès, *Western Attitudes toward Death*, p. 9.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 66. Here Ariès is using ritualised in the general, rather than technical or anthropological, sense of the word. The way in which the grief displayed at funerals and during mourning, particularly in its more excessive or ritualised forms, was viewed by the reformers will be looked at in closer detail in Chapter Five.

⁴¹ *The Catechism of John Hamilton*, pp. 283-284.

haiff vardlie power but trow nocht thairfor that they haiff power to saiff and to giff the ye euerlestand blis of hewine.⁴²

It could be suggested that in this passage Gau was not actually referring to intercessory acts following the death of an individual, but it is clear that he believed only God could offer salvation. As stated above, the Scottish laity at the time believed that prayer to the saints, in particular Mary, would prove effective in reducing the time spent by a soul in purgatory. It is this belief that Gau was writing against. As he goes on to state, “Heir euerie man sal mark that neyne sal put thair hop in the virgine Maria or trow that schw cane saiff ony man for prayer or seruice dwne to hir. Thairfor euerie man sal put thair hop alanerlie in Iesu Christ for thair is na oder saluour bot he alene.”⁴³ For Gau the problem was not that individuals were seeking to reduce the time their souls spent in purgatory through intercessory acts, it was rather that these acts were directed at any agency other than the Trinity. For Gau the saints could not reduce the time a soul spent in purgatory, and therefore any prayers or masses offered up to them would not prove effective. Regardless of his objections, the practice of seeking intercession from Mary and the saints continued until the Reformation and, as seen above, was even given greater licence in the *Catechism* of 1552.

Burial in Pre-Reformation Scotland

As seen above, it was not uncommon in pre-Reformation Scotland for obit foundations to specify where the deceased was to be buried, and, ordinarily, the chosen burial location was in the kirk. The aforementioned William Dunbar specified in his will, “I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, the blessed Virgin Mary, and all the saints, and my body to be buried in the Church of Blackfriars in Edinburgh.”⁴⁴ James M’Gregor, Dean of Lismore, who died in 1551, specified that he was to be buried in the choir of the old kirk of Inchadin.⁴⁵ Almost every section of Scottish society claimed the right to be buried either in the kirk or the kirkyard as these were consecrated spaces, and as such would ensure that the

⁴² J. Gau, *The Richt Vay to the Kingdome of Heuine*, ed. A. F. Mitchell. (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1888), p. 26.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁴⁴ Forbes-Leith, *Pre-Reformation Scholars in Scotland*, p. 28.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

body would be reunited with the soul at the Day of Judgment. Additionally, the bodies were usually aligned facing east, in expectation of Jesus' arrival from the east on the Day of Judgment.⁴⁶ Even when a body was buried within the kirk the location was still important. Bodies buried close to the high altar were closer to the performance of the Eucharist, and this was seen as giving the deceased a greater chance of attaining salvation. But a burial location near to other clerical rituals also had a degree of spiritual benefit. The choir was also a popular burial location due to the frequency with which clerical ceremonies were performed there.⁴⁷

Interestingly, however, there was at this time a canonical prohibition against intra-mural burial throughout the Catholic world that had been in place since the Council of Braga in 563 AD. Burials were allowed in the consecrated ground surrounding the kirks, but not inside the buildings themselves. Yet despite the fact that this prohibition against intra-mural burial was not always followed, there were still those within the Church who wished to see it enforced. Indeed, John Chrysostom went so far as to oppose burial within even the towns and cities. He wrote: "Watch that you never build a tomb within the city. If a cadaver were placed where you sleep and eat, what protests you would make. And yet you place the dead not near where you sleep and eat, but upon the very limbs of Christ."⁴⁸ This sentiment, that burial could somehow corrupt the Gospel, would resurface again after the Reformation, if, indeed, it ever truly went away, as shall be seen in subsequent chapters. Returning to the prohibition against intra-mural burial, exceptions were, of course, made for priests, bishops, monks, and certain privileged laymen, "exceptions that immediately became the rule."⁴⁹ Despite the prohibition burial within the fabric of the kirk was merely subject to fines, regardless of the social status of the deceased and their family. As Ariès states, "The only effect of the canonical prohibitions, besides maintaining a principle, was to make the customary practice of burial in church subject to the payment of a fee."⁵⁰ As such the higher echelons of Scottish society would have found it easier to arrange for kirk burial than others. But this did not mean that only the nobility received such a burial in Scotland. The various craft guilds in Scotland ultimately functioned as religious fraternities, and as such "provided

⁴⁶ Fitch, *The Search for Salvation*, pp. 36-37.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 38.

⁴⁸ In Ariès, *Western Attitudes toward Death*, p. 15.

⁴⁹ Ariès, *The Hour of our Death*, p. 46.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 50.

for the burials and masses for the souls of deceased members.”⁵¹ They also ensured that the funerals, masses, and diriges were attended by all members of the guild, as absences were fined.⁵²

However, there were those who either could not afford the fines imposed upon intramural burial, or actively chose burial outside of the fabric of the kirk. Yet even in the kirkyard there was to be found a strict order of burial locations. In a study of burial on the Isle of Bute it was found that towards the end of the medieval period the lower kirkyard was traditionally used for the burial of women, with the upper enclosure strictly reserved for men.⁵³ This practice, also seen in various parts of Ireland, was possibly developed from an earlier practice whereby the upper enclosure of the kirkyard had been reserved for monks, whereas the lower enclosure was for the laity.⁵⁴ It is interesting to note that, in this particular kirkyard, St Blane’s, this segregation probably continued until well after the Reformation, as such a practice was specifically condemned by the Presbytery of Dunoon in 1661.⁵⁵

The Order of the Burial Service in Catholic Europe

In Europe, prior to the thirteenth century, it was common for burial masses to begin before the death of the individual concerned, usually beginning at the first agonies of death, and these were a regular series of low masses that could last between a few days and a year.⁵⁶ The clergy, and the occasional powerful or important layman, received a Requiem mass in place of a low mass.⁵⁷ The burial took place on the day of death,⁵⁸ and there was no ceremony at the church before the absolution at the graveside.⁵⁹ Following the thirteenth century it became more common for the burial to occur on the day after death.⁶⁰ A service was held in the church, ending with the final absolution at the grave, although interestingly this did not require the presence of the body, which would arrive in time for it to be buried,⁶¹

⁵¹ R. Lamond, “The Scottish Craft Gild as a Religious Fraternity.” *The Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. 16, No. 63. (1919), p. 196.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 198.

⁵³ D. Pringle, “The Medieval Parish Churches of the Isle of Bute: St Blane’s, Kingarth, and St Mary’s, Rothesay.” *Scottish Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 2. (2000), pp. 125-126.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 126-128.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

⁵⁶ Ariès, *The Hour of our Death*, pp. 173-175.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

whilst different masses were said simultaneously at different altars.⁶² Although surviving records are few in number, there is no evidence to suggest that in Scotland the practices surrounding burial were any different. Indeed, as Ariès earlier states, certain burial practices spread to all of Latin Christendom, practices which persisted for “at least a thousand years, with only slight regional differences.”⁶³ On the whole, therefore, it is relatively safe to assume that these practices were also present in Scotland.

There was, however, at least one practice known in Europe and even England in the late medieval and early modern periods that was apparently absent from Scotland; namely the use of the Ossuary or Charnel House. In various areas across Catholic Europe a body would not remain in its grave perpetually. In these areas, once a period of time sufficient to allow the body to be reduced to dry bones had passed, the bones of the deceased would be disinterred. They would then be collected in the Charnel House or Ossuary, often collated by the types of bones rather than by individual skeletons. As such it was not uncommon to have rooms housing nothing but femurs, tibias, or skulls, and in Europe there still exist some striking examples of Charnel Houses.⁶⁴ However, despite the fact that Shakespeare has Macbeth state, “If charnel-houses and our graves must send those that we bury back, our monuments shall be the maws of kites,”⁶⁵ there is no evidence to support the existence of Charnel Houses in Scotland during this period.⁶⁶ Of course, as shall be seen in Chapter Three, had there been any Charnel Houses in Late Medieval and Early Modern Scotland, it is almost certain that their use would not have survived the Reformation.

Burial and Rites of Passage

The Dutch anthropologist Arnold van Gennep stated:

On first considering funeral ceremonies, one expects rites of separation to be their most prominent component, in contrast to rites of transition and rites of incorporation, which should be only slightly elaborated. A study of the data, however, reveals that

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 92.

⁶⁴ For more on Charnel Houses see, for example, Ariès, *The Hour of our Death*, pp. 53-60.

⁶⁵ Act III, Scene IV.

⁶⁶ Recent discoveries on the Orkney Islands have shown that pre-Christian examples of Ossuaries seem to have existed in Scotland. Cf. [<http://www.scotsman.com/news/charnel-house-gives-up-its-secret-1-000-human-bones-1-1691696>], <accessed 4 July 2012>

the rites of separation are few in number and very simple, while the transition rites have a duration and complexity sometimes so great that they must be granted a sort of autonomy. Furthermore, those funeral rites which incorporate the deceased into the world of the dead are most extensively elaborated and assigned the greatest importance.⁶⁷

This can be seen in pre-Reformation Scotland from the fact that the intercessory acts seen above were such a prominent aspect of the practices surrounding death. Their purpose was hopefully to aid the dead in their journey of transition into paradise. Separation was, of course, an important part of Scottish burial practices, and a certain level of visible emotion was expected upon a death. However, this emotion was not allowed to suggest a lack of faith in the resurrection. For the late medieval Scottish Catholic, death was most certainly not the end of existence. Every ceremony that has been looked at above ultimately served as such a transitory rite, and in the case of soul masses, they certainly displayed a duration that fits with van Gennep's statement concerning their importance. It was not, however, the acts themselves that were assumed to aid the dead, but through the acts that aid was asked of God, Jesus, Mary, or the saints on behalf of the dead. However, should such acts not be performed, there could well be dire consequences. As van Gennep goes on to state:

Like children who have not been baptized, named, or initiated, persons for whom funeral rites are not performed are condemned to a pitiable existence, since they are never able to enter the world of the dead or to become incorporated in the society established there. These are the most dangerous dead. They would like to be reincorporated into the world of the living, and since they cannot be, they behave like hostile strangers toward it. They lack the means of subsistence which the other dead find in their own world and consequently must obtain them at the expense of the living. Furthermore, these dead without hearth or home sometimes have an intense desire for vengeance. Thus funeral rites also have a long-range utility; they help to dispose of eternal enemies of the survivors. Persons included among the homeless dead vary among different peoples. In addition to those already mentioned, this

⁶⁷ A. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*. Translated by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), p. 146.

category may include those bereft of family, the suicides, those dead on a journey, those struck by lightning, those dead through the violation of a taboo, and others.⁶⁸

From this it is clear why such elaborate, if variable, funeral services are seen across the world. Of course, in the Catholic world a lack of funeral rites did not necessarily prevent salvation. The soul of a deceased individual for whom no intercessory acts were performed could still ultimately attain salvation, although the duration of the stay in purgatory would be assumed to be considerably lengthened.⁶⁹ On the whole, therefore, the intercessory acts seen above were deemed necessary rites of transition, without which the soul of the deceased would have to struggle through the journey towards salvation alone and unaided. It is interesting to note that in Scotland, and indeed Catholic Christianity as a whole, unlike in certain other cultures, there was no true rite of reincorporation for the dead. It was not possible for the late Medieval and Early Modern Catholic to say when, if ever, the soul of the deceased attained salvation. As such it would have been inappropriate to perform a rite of reincorporation for the deceased. One could not know whether or not the performance of intercessory acts had been successful until the resurrection. Perhaps this is part of the reason for such complex rites of transition as seen above. It was important to do all that was possible on behalf of the dead, as they certainly could not look after themselves.

The Cost of Death

Of course, such intercession on the behalf of the dead as has been seen above did not come cheap, and neither did burial. However, as has also been seen above, there were organisations, such as the Scottish craft guilds, that provided help for their members, or more specifically their surviving relatives, on the occasion of their death. In instances where the deceased had made no provision whilst still alive, and was not a member of a guild or confraternity, however, other sources of funding needed to be found. The Ecclesiastical Statutes of the thirteenth century state:

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 160-161,

⁶⁹ There were those, however, who would never be granted salvation, namely those who had taken their own lives. In medieval and early modern Scotland their burials reflected this belief, and these practices will be investigated in Chapter Eight.

Furthermore, as to the mortuary from an intestate estate, that having been received which was already owing to the church, a third part of the third part is [still] due to the church. But from an estate disposed of by will, temporal debts being first proved and deducted, let the disposable property be divided in three parts; if the dead's part exceeds [...?], let a cow be given to the church of the parish. If it is said that the defunct has nothing, let it be believed on the oath of two neighbours, and let the biggest and best coverlet be given up.⁷⁰

It is interesting to note that, in cases where it is claimed that the deceased had nothing to give, this would only be accepted upon the avowal of two neighbours, and even then the Church would not leave empty handed. The Statutes continue:

Let the payment for the thirty masses [for the soul of the deceased] be divided between the parson and the chaplain, and so with the sum for the anniversary mass. And if anyone dies without bequeathable property, let the heirs who have [such goods and gear] be compelled to pay the debt to the church on his behalf. And when infants die let their debts to the church be paid from any inheritance to which they would have been entitled. And for infants whose mothers die, let them pay to the church not less than the parents would do.⁷¹

At this point it becomes very clear as to why there would arise complaints concerning the cost of death in pre-Reformation Scotland. Even in cases of child mortality the Church would have to be paid. Finally, the Statutes end with the following regulations concerning burial itself:

And let not a deceased person be carried [for burial] from the place in which he dies save by the licence of his own priest; by whose arrangement the funeral rites may be absolutely [reserved] for the church [of the parish]. If the defunct choose a special place of sepulture, let him in the first place be carried to the church of his parish, and, the dues being paid there, let him then be conveyed to the place he has chosen. Note

⁷⁰ *Statutes of the Scottish Church, 1225-1559*. Transl. D. Patrick. (Edinburgh: Printed at the University Press by T. and A. Constable for the Scottish History Society, 1907), pp. 46-47.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

that if a man live in two parishes and die in one of them, he will give to each church a corpse-present, and the upper coverlet, unless he were a freeholder.⁷²

The dead's part was the part of the dead man's moveable property he was entitled to dispose of by testament. If he left neither wife nor child behind he could dispose of all of it. If he left both wife and child he could dispose of a third of it, and if he left wife or child he could dispose of half of his moveable property.⁷³ In 1420 the Provincial Council of Perth deemed that in these cases one third of the property of the deceased was to go to covering funeral expenses and prayers for their soul, the remaining two thirds going to the wife and children of the deceased.⁷⁴ If the deceased happened to die insolvent it was the responsibility of their heirs to pay the dues of the Church.⁷⁵ These, however, were just the official costs. It was also expected that on most occasions an offering would be made to the priest. "Marriages, baptisms, burials, would each, as was only natural, bring in a gift, larger or smaller, to the clergyman."⁷⁶ Indeed, the situation in Scotland was to become worse, leading to frequent complaints about the costs surrounding burial. In the final years before the Reformation the situation had become so bad that the following statute was produced:

Item for relief and aid of the poor, and to put an end to the clamour and murmers of grumblers at mortuaries, this provincial synod has decreed that the same shall be paid as follows: to wit, on a division of the dead's inventoried goods, after deduction of his debts, having been made in their just parts, when the dead's part shall have amounted only to ten pounds money Scots, only forty shillings shall be paid to the vicar of that parish as composition for the annal of the mortuary, which was wont to be paid, and for the uppermost garment; and when the dead's part shall not have amounted to ten pounds, but shall have ranged between that sum and twenty shillings, relative payment out of the dead's part shall be made to the vicar in the proportion above stated, at the rate of forty shillings to the ten pounds; and when the dead's part shall not have exceeded twenty shillings, nothing shall be paid out of it for the mortuary or

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 47, n. 1.

⁷⁴ Bellesheim, *History of the Catholic Church of Scotland*, Vol. II, p. 63.

⁷⁵ J. Dowden, *The Medieval Church in Scotland; Its Constitution, Organisation and Law*. (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1910), p. 246.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 180. Records suggest that a similar practice occurred in Ireland. Cf. C. McNeill, "Harris: Collectanea De Rebus Hibernicis." *Analecta Hibernica*, No. 6. (1934), pp. 436, 439.

the uppermost garment. But if the dead's part shall have exceeded the sum of ten pounds of the said money Scots, then the vicar shall be paid in full for the premises, as was customary of yore, the present statute notwithstanding.⁷⁷

The fact that what was essentially a reformed and renewed pricing structure for funeral dues had to be produced in Scotland suggests that, prior to this statute, individuals were being over-charged, and that the poor in particular were suffering because of it. No longer could individual priests and vicars charge exorbitant fees for a burial. However, as shall be seen in the following chapter, even this attempt at reforming Scottish burial practices could be seen as being a half measure.

However, it was not merely the service and the presence of the clergy that had to be paid for. In certain circles it was expected that the funeral be rather ostentatious. Whilst few funerals reached the level of ostentation displayed at the funeral of James V, as seen above, there were certainly those who desired as ostentatious a funeral as possible. In these instances the cost of the funeral would, unsurprisingly, be higher still. The mortcloth, which, as will be seen in subsequent chapters, was an accoutrement of death that was to survive the Reformation, had to be rented from the parish,⁷⁸ and the decoration of the chapel or kirk would not come cheap either. In the case of the funeral of James V, the velvet, buckram, satin, and silk cost £188, 3 shillings,⁷⁹ not an insubstantial amount. In pre-Reformation Edinburgh the 'great' candlesticks used at burial were rented out on a sliding scale, depending on the wealth of the family of the deceased, ranging from 2 d to 9 shillings, 6 d.⁸⁰ However, despite the myriad costs associated with funerals in pre-Reformation Scotland, it is somewhat surprising the extent to which certain circles wished to preserve these practices following the Reformation, as will be seen in Chapter Four.

⁷⁷ *Statutes of the Scottish Church, 1225-1559*, pp. 178-179.

⁷⁸ It would appear that the mortcloth was genuinely expensive to manufacture, however, and as such it is unsurprising that parishes would wish to recover their expenses. On Bute after the Reformation the mortcloth was rented out for 40 shillings a night. Cf. J. K. Hewison, *The Isle of Bute in the Olden Time*, Vol. II. (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1895), pp. 288-289. In Dalkeith, by the middle of the seventeenth century, the cost of manufacturing a mortcloth had risen as high as £96, 18s. Cf. GD328/3. An interesting comparison can be made between the cost of the mortcloth and the total cost of the burial and wake of a certain George Forrest in 1645, which came to £86. Cf. A. Montgomerie, "An East Lothian Executor's Accounts, 1645-1650." *The Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. 30. (1951), p. 145.

⁷⁹ Balfour Paul, ed., *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*, Vol. VIII, p. 141.

⁸⁰ R. Adam, ed., *Edinburgh Records; The Burgh Accounts: Volume Two. Dean of Guilds Accounts, 1552-1567*. (Edinburgh: Printed for the Lord Provost, Magistrates and Council, 1899), pp. 7-9, 21, 22, 35-37, 51-54, 66-69, 82-85.

Whilst there were those in Scotland who needed the assistance of the guilds, as seen above, there were others for whom the costs associated with death were no real burden. For the better off in Scottish society these intercessory acts were much easier to arrange than they were for the poor, and as such were visible signs of social status.⁸¹ As will be seen in the following chapters the divide of the social classes in death was an issue that was to be attacked time and again, as reform minded theologians attempted to stress that in death all were equal, and as such the funeral was not the occasion to highlight one's social standing.

The *Ars Moriendi* and Good and Bad Deaths in Scotland

With the possible exception of the foundation of masses and obits, the majority of practices seen above were in the hands of those left behind. It was the duty of the living to see to the care of the dead. There were, however, certain practices that an individual could do that were believed to have an impact upon their inevitable death. The *Ars Moriendi*, or the art of dying, was the title given to treatises on the subject of dying well. In Early Modern Europe a good death was seen as important, as it could be an indication of the state of the dying individual's soul, and as such the chances of their soul attaining salvation. In pre-Reformation Scotland two good examples of *Ars Moriendi* texts could be found in 'The Craft of Deyng',⁸² composed in Scotland in the fifteenth century, and *The Book Intytulid the Art of Good Lywing & Good Deyng*,⁸³ originally published in France, but translated into Scots by Thomas Lewington. These two works were rather straightforward manuals on death and dying, and as such would have been easily understood by the laity, particularly *the Art of Good Lywing & Good Deyng*, containing as it did many well executed wood cuts.⁸⁴

It is interesting to note, however, that neither of these works makes any mention of burial. This could be due to a notion that burial had little impact on the soul's chance of salvation, yet, as has been seen above, that was certainly not the case. A good burial was crucial to lessening one's time in purgatory, so it is somewhat surprising that this issue is not addressed in these *Ars Moriendi* texts. Perhaps the concept of the decent burial was so well

⁸¹ E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars; Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400-c. 1580*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 328.

⁸² "The Craft of Deyng." In *Ratis Raving and Other Early Scots Poems on Morals*. Ed. R. Girvan, pp. 166-174. Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons Ltd., 1939

⁸³ T. Lewington, *The Book Intytulid the Art of Good Lywing & Good Deyng*. (STC-791. Paris, 1504).

⁸⁴ Fitch, *The Search for Salvation*, p. 6.

understood in pre-Reformation Scotland, indeed Catholic Europe as a whole, that it need not be addressed in such works. Perhaps, as the *Ars Moriendi* at the time was a manual for the dying, it was assumed that the individual concerned had taken care of the burial arrangements while still in good health, and as such could do no more to ensure their wishes were carried out. As seen previously burial arrangements were often taken care of in wills. However, some European *Ars Moriendi* works suggest that in some instances the will was not taken care of by the time an individual was dying.⁸⁵ In these instances it may well also have been the case that burial arrangements had not been dealt with either, and as such it would not be unreasonable to expect some mention of burial in these texts. Additionally, while intended to be manuals for the sick and the dying it was not solely those two categories of people that read these works. Indeed, by the time of the Counter-Reformation in sixteenth century Europe it was widely understood that these texts were used as another type of pious devotional literature for everyday life.⁸⁶ Again, in this instance it seems unusual that such works did not contain advice as to the correct Christian burial. Regardless of the reasons, in pre-Reformation Scotland the *Ars Moriendi* tradition contained no instructions as to the correct Christian burial. As shall be seen in Chapter Six, however, the Reformation did not spell the death of such works in Scotland, and a new, Protestant version of the *Ars Moriendi* was eventually to be produced, one that did concern itself with the burial of the dead.⁸⁷

Of course, as there was a widely known template for a good death, it was also widely understood that there were ways in which one could undergo a bad death. Although not all instances of a bad death would necessarily impede one's progress through purgatory others almost certainly would. Some bad deaths were, to an extent, unavoidable. Death in battle, without the administration of the final Sacraments, and ultimately burial in a common grave, could be seen as a bad death, although not necessarily one that would overly increase the time to be spent in purgatory. This would certainly have been the case following the Battle of Pinkie Cleugh in 1547, concerning which it has been stated that a week after the battle news reached London of the outcome, "and even then many of the Scottish dead lay stripped and unburied, the colour of their skins changed greenish."⁸⁸ In this instance it is clear that little could have been done to ensure a good death for those involved. Other examples of bad

⁸⁵ Ariès, *The Hour of our Death*, p. 196.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 303-304.

⁸⁷ Of course, Protestant *Ars Moriendi* works had been known in Europe since shortly after the first of the Reformations, with the first such work appearing in Germany in 1519.

⁸⁸ D. H. Caldwell, "The Battle of Pinkie." In N. MacDougall, ed., *Scotland and War, AD 79-1918*. (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd, 1991), p. 61.

deaths, however, almost certainly did extend the time spent in purgatory, and could possibly deny ultimate salvation to the individual concerned. If an individual died whilst excommunicated they would be denied Christian burial in consecrated ground,⁸⁹ and whilst this would certainly be perceived as extending the duration of the stay in purgatory, if not ensuring damnation in most cases, it was possible for excommunication to be lifted post-mortem. The fourteenth century Synodal Statutes of St Andrews state:

we decree and by statute we forbid any one holding a cure in our diocese, by whatever title he may be rated, who has charge of Christian burial conducted by himself or another, to admit within his churchyard any one who may have elected to be buried there whom he knows to have in life been excommunicated by canon law or specifically, in general or in particular; unless he shall have sufficient evidence of his having been absolved by him who has the power to absolve. But let the contravener know that he will be *ipso facto* suspended from priestly functions for a year.⁹⁰

Again, as such the deceased would not necessarily be forever denied salvation, despite this being considered a bad death. There was, however, no guarantee that the excommunication would ever be lifted. A particularly unfortunate example of the denial of consecrated burial can be seen from the thirteenth century Constitutions of Bishop David stating that if the priest's concubine died in his house she was to be denied Christian burial.⁹¹ It is unclear what was to be done concerning the burial of the priest when he died, although if he died before his concubine she was to receive nothing from his will.⁹²

The Scottish Protestant Martyrs

Occasionally there were deaths which were not clearly good or bad, or, perhaps more accurately, were at one and the same time considered good and bad. Specifically these were those individuals who were executed for heresy. In the eyes of the authorities these were undeniably bad deaths, and if the executed had not recanted then salvation would be forever denied to them. However, to those groups that the executed individuals represented they

⁸⁹ Fitch, *The Search for Salvation*, p. 87.

⁹⁰ *Statutes of the Scottish Church, 1225-1559*, pp. 73-74.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, p. 60; Dowden, *The Medieval Church in Scotland*, p. 311.

⁹² *Statutes of the Scottish Church, 1225-1559*, p. 60.

were martyrs rather than heretics, and although they had suffered, they had done so for their faith, and as such had endured a good death, one that would be rewarded by salvation. In Scotland, between 1528 and 1558, there were approximately twenty executions for heresy, beginning with Patrick Hamilton and ending with Walter Myln. All who were executed were accused of being Protestants, and all who were executed were burned at the stake.⁹³ As a result of this method of execution there was, of course, no body to inter, and it is unclear what was done with the ashes. As will be seen in Chapter Four when the ashes of those who had been burned at the stake for witchcraft were to be disposed of they were deposited in water, wherever that was convenient. It is uncertain whether or not the ashes of the Protestant martyrs in Scotland were treated in such a manner, although it is also possible that they were merely left where they lay, allowed to disperse in the wind and the rain. Alternatively they may have been swept up and dumped in some other undisclosed location.

For the Protestant reformers, as will be seen in subsequent chapters, it was not hugely important that these individuals did not receive Christian burial, as it was clear to them that the martyrs had already been granted salvation. In some instances certain martyrs were eventually commemorated where they were executed, such as the location of Patrick Hamilton's death in St Andrews, which is now marked with a 'PH',⁹⁴ or even the cairn of stones that was repeatedly built upon the location of Myln's execution. Concerning the cairn in remembrance of Myln Knox stated:

In testification that they would his death should abide in recent memory, there was cast together a great heap of stones in the place where he was burnt. The Bishop and Priests, thereat offended, caused once or twice to remove the same, with denunciation of cursing, if any man should there lay any stone. In vain was that wind blown; for still was the heap made, till the Priests and Papists did steal away by night the stones to big (*build*) their walls, and to other their private uses.⁹⁵

⁹³ For a complete list of Scottish martyrs, and those accused of heresy, see M. H. B. Sanderson, *Cardinal of Scotland. David Beaton, c. 1494-1546*. (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd, 1986), pp. 270-284. Cf. J. Foxe, *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online or TAMO* (1583 edition, pp. 997, 1282-1299) (HRI Online Publications, Sheffield, 2011). [<http://www.johnfoxe.org>], <accessed 17 July 2012>

⁹⁴ It is, unfortunately, unclear as to exactly when this monument was laid.

⁹⁵ J. Knox, *The History of the Reformation of Religion within the Realm of Scotland*, ed., C. J. Guthrie. (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1899), pp. 155-156. Cf. J. Moffat Scott, *The Martyrs of Angus and Mearns; Sketches in the History of the Scottish Reformation*. (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1885), p. 263. Unfortunately neither Knox nor Moffat Scott recall what happened to the ashes of Myln, merely that a cairn was built upon that spot. As Guthrie notes, a granite obelisk, erected in 1842, now stands on the site of the 'heap of stones.' Cf. Knox, *The History of the Reformation*, p. 156, n. 1.

Of course, there is also the distinct possibility that the martyrs needed neither graves nor monuments, as the effects their deaths had on Scotland proved to be monument enough. Following the martyrdom of Hamilton Knox had John Lindsay state: “My Lord, yf ye burne any mo, except ye follow my counsall, ye will utterlye destroy your selves. Yf ye will burne thame, lette thame be brunt in how [low] sellarris; for the reik of Maister Patrik Hammyltoun hes infected as many as it blew upoun.”⁹⁶ Additionally, according to Foxe from the ashes of Myln sprung thousands of Scottish Protestants.⁹⁷ Their deaths themselves were their monuments as, for the reformers at least, they ultimately aided the success of the Scottish Reformation.

It is interesting to note, however, considering Myln’s religious leanings, that the “patience, the boldness, the constancy and hardiness of the venerable martyr moved the multitude so profoundly, that they made great mourning and lamentation, and refused to be comforted.”⁹⁸ As will be seen in Chapter Five such a display of emotion may have proved problematic for the reformers, although prior to the Reformation the crowd would certainly not have known what was expected of them in that regard, as the Reformation drew near, and the practices that surrounded death and burial in Scotland were set to be altered dramatically.

Conclusion

It is clear that the practices seen on the occasion of an orthodox death⁹⁹ in pre-Reformation Scotland, the rituals and the ceremonies, were ornate, complicated affairs. They required advance preparation and planning, both spiritual and material, and nothing was free. Indeed, the costs were such that many could not afford them without the help of guilds and other associations. Without these practices, though, there was little hope for a speedy journey through purgatory for the soul in question.¹⁰⁰ There were, however, other considerations to

⁹⁶ J. Knox, *The Works of John Knox*, Vol. I. Edited by David Laing. (Edinburgh: The Bannatyne Club, 1864; reprint New York: AMS Press Inc., 1966), p. 42. Spottiswood, however, has this occur at the time when Henry Forrest was to be burnt for heresy. Cf. *The Works of John Knox*, Vol. I, p. 42, n. 1. Regardless of the quote’s provenance, the point remains the same.

⁹⁷ T. S. Freeman, “‘The reik of Maister Patrik Hammyltoun’: John Foxe, John Winram, and the Martyrs of the Scottish Reformation.” *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 27, No. 1. (1996), pp. 43-44.

⁹⁸ Moffat Scott, *The Martyrs of Angus and Mearns*, p. 260.

⁹⁹ As opposed to an unorthodox death such as death by execution.

¹⁰⁰ In addition to their intercessory applications, it is probable that such practices as the soul masses were also intended to act as a form of remembrance, ensuring that the deceased was remembered as a member of a specific parish and a specific community. Cf. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 334-335.

be taken into account. Clearly, if the payment of a sum would in return hasten one's journey towards salvation, then surely the payment of a greater sum would have an even greater effect. As such it would appear that it was in fact easier for the rich to attain salvation, despite scriptural claims to the contrary.¹⁰¹ Despite a widespread belief that poverty brought its own spiritual rewards it could seem that, even if the poor had lived a blameless life, their chances of passing swiftly through purgatory, when the rich were commanding the better burial locations and the attentions of the clergy to aid their own passage, may have been somewhat reduced. Of course, the upper echelons of Scottish society, as elsewhere in the Catholic world, made a point of providing for the poor in their obits and soul mass foundations, but again it is more likely that this was done from a desire to speed their own process through purgatory rather than any selfless desire to aid those less well off. As will be seen in subsequent chapters the notion that one's status in life should be reflected in death was deeply ingrained in Scottish society, despite such medieval tropes as death as the great leveller.¹⁰² It was against this ingrained notion of the importance of social status that the reformers would have to struggle in order to once again show death as the great leveller.

¹⁰¹ Matthew 19:24; Mark 10:25.

¹⁰² This will be seen in greater detail in Chapter Six.

Chapter Three

Reformation Scotland¹

In August 1560 a session of the Scottish Parliament met and officially decreed Scotland to be a Protestant nation, thereby signalling the success of one of the last Reformations in Europe. Following this success, those who had been crucial to the efforts for the reform of the Kirk in Scotland, particularly John Knox, began in earnest to produce works aimed at eradicating the last vestiges of Roman Catholicism in the practices of the Scottish Kirk. Two important works in the years following 1560 were *The forme of prayers and ministration of the Sacraments*,² originally composed in Geneva in 1556, and *The Doctrine and Discipline of the Kirke of Scotland*,³ also referred to as *The First Book of Discipline*, originally composed in 1560. These two works and their instructions as to the correct Christian methods for the disposal of the dead will be investigated in the first section of this chapter.

The Scottish Reformation was a decidedly Calvinist, or Reformed Protestant, movement. Indeed, due to the similarities in their theologies, it is no surprise that Knox, Calvin, and Zwingli shared certain beliefs as to the ideal Christian burial. As will be seen below, one aspect of pre-Reformation burial that Knox was particularly keen to reform was the performance of intercessory acts upon the occasion of a burial. Calvin and Zwingli shared this position. It was believed by all three reformers that the removal of any belief in purgatory had proven the inefficacy of these intercessory acts, acts they therefore deemed ‘superstitious.’ Indeed, as Calvin states in the *Institutes*: “But Satan has not only stupefied men’s minds, to make them bury the memory of the resurrection together with the bodies of the dead, but has endeavoured to corrupt this point of doctrine by various fictions, with an ultimate view to its total subversion.”⁴

¹ Aspects of this chapter have appeared in an earlier draft as G. D. Raeburn, “The Changing Face of Scottish Burial Practices, 1560-1645.” *Reformation & Renaissance Review*, Vol. 11, No. 2. (2009), pp. 181-201.

² *The forme of prayers and ministration of the Sacraments &c. vsed in the English Church at Geneua, and approved by the famous and godlie learned man, John Caluin.* (STC-16564. Edinburgh: Robert Lekprewik, 1562).

³ *The Doctrine and Discipline of the Kirke of Scotland.* (Wing-C4224. London: Rob. Young, 1641).

⁴ Calvin, *Institutes*, III, 25, 5. Cf. J. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol. II. Additionally, in 1551 Calvin wrote to Edward VI of England. In the letter Calvin stated, “Then there are manifest abuses which cannot be endured, such as prayer for the souls of the departed, of putting forward to God the intercession of saints in our prayers, as also of joining them to God in invocation. I do not doubt, Sire, that you are aware that these are so many corruptions of true Christianity.” Cf. *Letters of John Calvin*, Vol. II. Translated by Jules Bonnet (New York: Burt Franklin reprints, 1972), p. 302.

As Margaret Sanderson has stated, “It is easier on the whole for us to form some idea of what first-generation Scottish Protestants were taught than of how they may have apprehended the message.”⁵ It is precisely because of this fact that the documents produced at the time of the Scottish Reformation will be of such importance in this study. Of course, *The forme of prayers* and *The First Book of Discipline* were not the only works produced around the time of the Scottish Reformation that concerned death and burial. Other notable examples include William Birnie’s *The Blame of kirk-Buriall*,⁶ and James Melville’s *Ane Fruitful and Comfortable Exortatioun anent Death*,⁷ and both of these works will also be looked at below and in subsequent chapters.

This chapter will also look at the extent to which these new instructions concerning death and burial were adhered to initially, and how these practices were adapted and changed over the first decades following the Reformation.

Writing Death in the Scottish Reformation

As seen above, following the Scottish Reformation of 1560, many works were produced and published concerning all aspects of the Christian life and death. It is, of course, those that concern burial regulation and legislation that will be examined here.

Of course, it was not just the Protestant Reformers who were producing works at this time, although few Catholics in Scotland or elsewhere concerned themselves with the burial practices of the Reformed Protestants. One Catholic writer who did mention burial practices, albeit very briefly, was Ninian Winzet, whose works will be examined below. There are, however, arguably two formative documents for burial regulation in Reformation Scotland, and these will be examined first.

⁵ M. H. B. Sanderson, *A Kindly Place? Living in Sixteenth-Century Scotland*. (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2002), p. 156.

⁶ W. Birnie, *The Blame of Kirk-Buriall*. (STC-3089. Edinburgh: Robert Charteris, 1606).

⁷ J. Melville, *Ane Fruitful and Comfortable Exortatioun anent Death*. (STC-178155. Edinburgh: Robert Wald-graue, 1597).

The forme of prayers and ministration of the Sacraments

Not all of the works produced that dealt with burial reform had been composed after the Reformation; some did, in fact, pre-date 1560. Originally produced in 1556 for use by the Scottish and English congregations in Geneva, *The forme of prayers and the ministration of the Sacraments* is perhaps the first work relevant to Scotland that contains instructions as to the correct Reformed Protestant method of the disposal of the dead. The section concerning burial contained within its pages is a surprisingly succinct passage, and simply states that:

The corps is reverently brought to the grave, accompanied with y [*sic*] Congregation; without any further ceremonies: which being buried the minister goeth to the Church, if it be not farre of, and maketh some comfortable exhortation to the people, touching death and resurrection.⁸

This passage, so short and to the point, is a monumental work. In one paragraph hundreds of years of traditional approaches to burial in Scotland are officially declared null and void. There is no perceived need to list the now prohibited practices of the Catholic Church as they have officially been disposed of. This is now the method by which the dead are to be buried, regardless of social class or status. Maxwell noted that the new burial procedures were, in fact, influenced by the extremes of the perceived superstitious practices of the Catholic Church, as seen in the previous chapter, and that this led to the complete lack of service at early Reformed Protestant funerals.⁹ Indeed, *The forme of prayers* would seem to be clear on the subject; there are to be no ceremonies at the graveside. However, as Maxwell subsequently noted, later commentators such as Sprott and Wodrow did not necessarily agree with this position. Sprott particularly took the passage to imply that graveside sermons may be held if the kirk was too far away.¹⁰ This may be due to the fact that, as Sprott notes, not all of the early copies of this passage are identical. In some copies “which being buried” is followed by “the minister if he be present, and required, goeth to the church.”¹¹ Additionally, some copies end the passage by stating that the minister “then

⁸ *The forme of prayers*, p. 65r.

⁹ Maxwell, *John Knox's Genevan Service Book, 1556*, p. 56.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 57, n. 7.

¹¹ G. W. Sprott, *The Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland*. (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1901), p. 80.

blesseth the people, and so dismisseth them.”¹² Sprott goes on to note the addition in Scotland of the words ‘if he’ (the minister) ‘be present and required,’ as they appear in no other version of this passage. As he states: “This change shows that the Church wished to leave the question of a funeral service open, and that the Scottish rubrics were well considered.”¹³ It may well be the case, as shall be seen below, that Sprott was possibly correct in this interpretation, as Knox himself may not have been above bending the rules upon occasion. Interestingly, Maxwell doubts if Calvin’s funeral services in Geneva were quite as severe as those laid out by *The forme of prayers*.¹⁴

It seems quite remarkable that the passage concerning the reform of burial contained within *The forme of prayers* is so brief. Indeed, it is so brief that there is not even any Scriptural justification or explanation given for burial in the manner here described. However, it may be the case that there does not need to be any Scriptural explanation given, as the Catholic practices that the reformers were attempting to cease were themselves not based upon Scriptural practice. Rather, they were traditions that had grown within the Church throughout the centuries. If there had been any specific passages within the Bible that had stated such practices were not to take place it would have been less likely for them to have grown in the first place. This is not to say, however, that outside of *The forme of prayers* and, as shall be seen below, *The First Book of Discipline*, that other writers did not attempt to find Biblical passages that legitimised the new burial practices. Birnie’s *Blame of Kirk-Buriall* in particular employs Scripture to explain the Kirk’s policy towards decent Christian burial. This too will be investigated in more detail subsequently.

It was, of course, one of the central tenets of the European Reformations that the laity should have access to religious texts, both Scriptural and educational, in the vernacular, and this was certainly no less true in Scotland. Indeed, *The forme of prayers*, in 1567, became the first ever printed book in Gaelic,¹⁵ through its translation by John Carswell as *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh*.¹⁶ It is interesting to note that, although the Scottish Highlands and Lowlands

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., p. 200, n. 12.

¹⁴ Maxwell, *John Knox’s Genevan Service Book*, p. 163, n. 2.

¹⁵ In any of the Gaelic languages.

¹⁶ R. L. Thompson, ed., *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh: John Carswell’s Gaelic Translation of the Book of Common Order*. (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1970). Carswell was an important figure for the Reformation in the Highlands, which, although hardly an initial success story, would have been much less successful without Carswell. He was the bishop of the Isles, the abbot of Iona, and personal chaplain to the fifth Earl of Argyll, Archibald Campbell. Carswell’s translation of *The forme of prayers* had been commissioned by the Kirk in order to aid the Reformation in the Highlands. Cf. Sprott, *The Book of Common Order*, p. xv.

at this time had, to a certain extent, differing burial practices,¹⁷ the section of *The forme of prayers* concerning burial is translated in *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh* almost verbatim, whereas the rest of the translation was perhaps adapted somewhat by Carswell to fit the Highland life.

Interestingly, at the same time as the Scottish Reformation the Church of England under the headship of Elizabeth was using *The Book of Common Prayer*,¹⁸ and it was possibly this book that was being used in Scotland by the Protestant Lords of the Congregation prior to the introduction of *The forme of prayers*. *The Book of Common Prayer* also has a brief section concerning burial, yet it is remarkably different from that contained in *The forme of prayers*, containing as it does a set order of service including psalms and prayers to be performed at the graveside. Arguably, there is nothing contained within the order of burial that could be interpreted as intercessory, or even ‘superstitious,’ but it is clear that this was a work that Knox would not have approved of. Indeed, shortly after *The Book of Common Prayer* was reinstated in the Church of England, Knox was involved in the production of a Scottish work that lay out in more detail the correct form of Christian burial.

The Doctrine and Discipline of the Kirke of Scotland

Originally produced in 1560,¹⁹ *The Doctrine and Discipline of the Kirke of Scotland*, or *The First Book of Discipline*, also contains in its pages a section concerning burial and the correct methods, according to Reformed Protestant beliefs, of the disposal of the dead. Following a brief affirmation of the bodily Resurrection, *The First Book of Discipline* states:

Provided that superstition, idolatry, and whatsoever hath proceeded of a false opinion, and for advantage sake, may be avoided, and singing of Masse, *placebo* and *dirige*, and all other prayers over, or for the dead, which are not onely superstitious and vaine, but also are idolatry, and doe repugne to the plaine Scriptures of God. For plaine it is, for every one that dyeth, departeth either in the faith of Christ Jesus, or departeth in incredulity. Plaine it is, that they that depart in the true faith of Christ

¹⁷ See Chapter Seven, pp. 163-177.

¹⁸ J. E. Booty, ed., *The Book of Common Prayer, 1559; The Elizabethan Prayer Book*. (Washington, London and Toronto: Folger Books, 1976), pp. 309-313. *The Book of Common Prayer* was initially produced in 1549, revised in 1552, and revised and re-introduced in 1559.

¹⁹ It was produced by the same ministers who had produced the *Scottish Confession of Faith* of 1560, namely the six Johns: Douglas, Row, Spottiswoode, Willock, Winram, and Knox.

Jesus rest from their labours, and from death doe goe to life everlasting, as by our Master and his Apostles we are taught. But whosoever departeth in unbelieve, or in incredulity, shall never see life, but the wrath of God abides upon him. And so we say, that prayers for the dead are not onely superstitious and vaine, but doe expresly repugne to the manifest Scriptures and veritie thereof. For avoiding of all inconveniences we judge it best, that neither singing, nor reading be at burial. For albeit things sung and read may admonish some of the living to prepare themselves for death, yet shall some superstitious think that singing and reading of the living may profit the dead. And therefore we think it most expedient, that the dead be conveyed to the place of buriall with some honest company of the Kirk, without either singing or reading; yea, without all kind of ceremony heretofore used, other then that the dead be committed to the grave, with such gravity and sobriety, as those that be present may seeme to feare the judgements of God, and to hate sinne which is the cause of death.²⁰

As has been seen in the previous chapter, prior to the Scottish Reformation the practices of singing and the reading of sermons were the norm at funerals in Scotland. This work's section on burial has clearly set out with the intention of explaining why these practices are wrong and un-Christian in order to bring about their end. However, Maxwell states that in the first edition of *The First Book of Discipline* permission is given on certain occasions to deviate from the strict rule:

And yit, nochtwithstanding, we are not so precise, but that we ar content that particular Kirkis use thame [*i.e.* prayers, reading, and singing] in that behalf, with the consent of the Ministerie of the same, as thei will answeir to God, and Assemblie of the Vniversall Kirk gathered within the Realme.²¹

Cameron, on the other hand, has this section as part of an *additio*.²² He suggests that “the proposals of the reformers were too narrow,”²³ and, providing that the consent of the General Assembly had been secured, “that individual congregations ought to have the liberty to make

²⁰ *The Doctrine and Discipline of the Kirke of Scotland*, pp. 70-71.

²¹ Maxwell, *John Knox's Genevan Service Book*, p. 164.

²² Cameron, ed., *The First Book of Discipline*, p. 46.

²³ *Ibid.*

use of reading and singing.”²⁴ He goes on to state that this *additio* “may represent the Church’s judgment in the matter and may be regarded as an indication of its awareness of a different practice in some reformed congregations.”²⁵ If this is indeed the case then it is interesting that the General Assembly would make such a judgment, particularly in light of the fact that it could be seen as tolerating some ‘superstitious’ practices. As will be seen below, the Kirk was determined, in many cases, to stamp out perceived ‘abuses,’ so it seems odd they would tolerate acts that could be deemed to be intercessory.

As noted above, the Scottish reformers were keen to remove sermons from funerals, for fear they too may be seen as intercessory. *The First Book of Discipline* states:

We are not ignorant, that some require a sermon at the buriall, or else some place of Scripture to be read, to put the living in minde that they are mortall, and that likewise they must die. But let these men understand, that the sermons which be daily made serve for that use; which if men despise, the funerall sermons shall rather nourish superstition and a false opinion, as before is said, then that they shall bring such persons to a godly consideration of their own estate.²⁶

As shall be seen below, the notion of the funeral sermon was important for the laity in sixteenth and seventeenth century Scotland, and, as a result, some sections of society, in particular the upper classes, were slow to accept the abandonment of the practice. Cameron notes that “John à Lasco’s *Forma ac Ratio* makes provision for a sermon if the funeral could not be held on a preaching day.”²⁷

Although *The First Book of Discipline* is undoubtedly an important text concerning the reform of burial practices in Scotland, its impact should not be overstated as it was far from being a widely disseminated text. It was produced in 1560, as stated above, yet it did not appear in print outside of Knox’s *History of the Reformation in Scotland* until 1621 in Europe and 1641 in the British Isles. As such, and as will be seen below, it is somewhat

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 200, n. 75.

²⁶ *The Doctrine and Discipline of the Kirke of Scotland*, p. 71.

²⁷ Cameron, ed., *The First Book of Discipline*, p. 200, n. 76. Lasco’s vision of the ideal funeral was itself very interesting. He states: “Concerning burial of the dead we must not employ any theatrics – any pagan or papal device – but rather we should retain the utmost simplicity, at the same time with the public honour of the funeral, for the edification of the Church.” In M. S. Springer, *Restoring Christ’s Church; John a Lasco and Forma ac ratio*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 92, n. 83.

unsurprising that this work did not have a wider impact on the reform of burial practices throughout Scotland as a whole.²⁸

Burial, the Resurrection, and Reforming Rites of Passage

As noted above, *The First Book of Discipline* also stresses the importance of the resurrection. It states:

Buriall in all ages hath beene holden in estimation to signifie that the same body which was committed to the earth should not utterly perish, but should rise againe, and the same we would have kept within the Realme.²⁹

The idea of the resurrection was an important aspect of Reformation thought, particularly in relation to death and burial. Indeed, as Calvin writes in the *Institutes*:

The very importance of the subject ought to increase our ardour. Paul justly contends, that if Christ rise not the whole gospel is delusive and vain (1 Cor. 15:13-17); for our condition would be more miserable than that of other mortals, because we are exposed to much hatred and insult, and incur danger every hour; nay, are like sheep destined for slaughter; and hence the authority of the gospel would fail, not in one part merely, but in its very essence, including both our adoption and the accomplishment of our salvation.³⁰

Without the doctrine of the resurrection, and aware of the realities of the putrefaction of corpses, it is no surprise that the laity could potentially adopt the concept of the immortal soul rather than the resurrection of the body, and, in the minds of the clergy, thereby potentially

²⁸ An interesting example of divergent practices can be seen from Montrose. Following the Reformation, but prior to 1581, it seems to have been the case that, on the occasion of a burial, the kirk in Montrose followed a set form of funeral sermon, prayers, and even a funeral hymn. Cf. "The Forme and Maner of Buriall used in the Kirk of Montrois." In D. Laing, ed. *The Miscellany of the Wodrow Society*. (Edinburgh: printed for the Wodrow Society, 1844), pp. 291-300. As will be seen subsequently, the North East of Scotland was an area that did not whole-heartedly embrace Reformed Protestantism, and Catholicism and Episcopalianism remained strong in that region. This is, perhaps, an early indicator of those sentiments.

²⁹ *The Doctrine and Discipline of the Kirke of Scotland*, p. 70.

³⁰ *Institutes* III, 25, 3.

abandon Christian burial altogether.³¹ With the assurance of the bodily resurrection emphasised it was important that Christians received an appropriate burial. This remained the case even after the trappings of Catholicism were to be excised from Protestant funerals, as it was not the ‘superstitious’ or intercessory acts that affected the resurrection, but rather the situating of the body within the grave itself. As James Melville states in *Ane Fruitful and Comfortable Exortatioun*:

For as in nature the seede is cast in the furrowes; so in Christian burials, is the body laid in the graue: and as the seede after it is corrupt and rotten, begins againe to sprout and growe vp in a stalke, or Tree, flourishing and bringing forth fruite: so dois the bodie fresh and vigorous rise againe from corruption to life...³²

It was important that the Reformers stress this point. Intercessory or superstitious acts may now have been forbidden as they were perceived to have no intrinsic benefit, but the body itself must always be treated with respect and receive a decent, Christian burial. As will be seen below this desire that the body receive a decent burial may seem at odds with certain other Reformed Protestant practices concerning burial, practices that could lead to the suggestion that the body was of lessening importance in reminding the populace of the inevitability of death. This may well be true, but that is not to say that the Scottish Reformers now considered the dead body an empty vessel. It was still important that the body received a fitting burial. It is interesting to note that, with the removal of intercessory acts from burial, the act of burial itself could be suggested to have become a rite of separation rather than a rite of transition.³³ Under Reformed Protestantism the soul of the deceased was no longer believed to be enduring purgatory, and as such intercessory acts could not aid the transition of the soul through purgatory, yet this can still not be considered as a rite of reincorporation for the dead. Although the doctrine of election states that the soul of the deceased will go to either heaven or hell, it was still not always obvious to which option the soul would go. As such it was still the case that rites of reincorporation would be inappropriate following death

³¹ D. J. Davies, *The Theology of Death*. (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2008), p. 21. This is, of course, an extreme view, and it is unlikely that the clergy feared that bodies would be left to rot in the open. The abandonment of Christian burial, however, rather than just the disposal of the corpse, would have been a concern for some members of the clergy.

³² Melville, *Ane Fruitful and Comfortable Exortatioun*, pp. 52-53.

³³ See Chapter Two, p. 32.

in Scotland. It would seem to be the case that, following the Reformation, burial marked only the physical separation of the dead from the living, until the resurrection.

Ninian Winzet and the Reformation of Burial

It is unfortunate that Knox wrote no further concerning burial and his views thereon. All of his thought on the subject is contained in the two passages just examined, and neither contains any theological explanation. However, as seen above, it was not only the Scottish reformers who were producing works addressing the changes made within the Kirk, although few Catholic writers appear to have concerned themselves with the new ceremonies, or lack thereof, surrounding death. One such Scottish Catholic who did was Ninian Winzet, the abbot of Ratisbon in Regensburg, Germany. In his address *To The Caluiniane Precheouris*³⁴ Winzet includes a brief section concerning burial. He states:

Sen [since] the Prophetis and Patriarkis in the Auld Testament had sik cuir for thair honorable sepulturis, and commandit that eftir thair deth thair banis to be cariit furth of the cuntre of strangearis; and in the New Testament siklyke we reid nocht only of oure Saluouris maist honorable and magnifik burying, bot also of St. Iohne the Baptist, and St. Steuin, with wtheris, - and all this wes done, we ar assurit, for the honour of the bodyis, in hoip of the resurrectioun, - we will nocht spei, in aduentuir ze be crabit, gif ze beleue firmlie the resurrectioun with ws? Bots en ze aggre with ws in that beleif, quhy hef ze dishonorit sua the bodyis and sepulturis of the Princis of Scotland, and wtheris our noble Progenitouris, and wappit thair banis schamefullie furth of thair sepulturis, and maid also a filthy stable of beistis to strangearis vpone our maist excellent Kingis body, quha last decessit? Gif ze allege ony occasioun of idolatrie at the saidis sepulturis, that trifle is na excuse to zou, except ze grant zour selfis mair ruid and barber than euir wes natioun vnder heuin, to tak occasioun of idolatrie quhare nane is.³⁵

In this passage Winzet is primarily addressing two concerns; the correct method of showing respect to the nobility in death, and monuments to the dead. The Reformed Protestant

³⁴ N. Winzet, *The Buke of Fourscoir-Thre Questions*. (Antwerp, 1563).

³⁵ Hewison, ed., *Certain Tractates*, Vol. I, p. 113. A marginal note adds "Na Iow nor Turke wald hef playt this padzeane to thair eldaris."

attitudes to both of these subjects will be examined in much greater detail in subsequent chapters, but it will prove useful at this stage to investigate Winzet's thoughts on the subject as a counterpoint to the first wave of Scottish Reformed Protestantism. Winzet notes that in the Old Testament certain individuals deserving of the highest respect did indeed continue to receive such respect following their deaths. This respect was shown in the manner of their funerals and in the fact that they were brought home from foreign lands, if not in their whole body then certainly in the form of their bones. This respect was to continue into the time of the New Testament, and Winzet tells his audience that this was due to hope in the resurrection. He goes on to note that, despite their differences, both Protestants and Catholics believe in the resurrection, and as such Winzet wonders how the Reformed Protestants can be so disrespectful to their deceased. As will be seen below this was a common concern of Catholic observers of Calvinist funerals.

This is, unfortunately, a relatively brief passage, but Winzet did produce another passage that, whilst not dealing specifically with the Reformed Protestant burial practices, can certainly be applied to them. His *Vincentius Lirinensis* contains a section concerning the increase and alteration of religion. In this passage Winzet asks if it is acceptable to increase or alter religion over time. He states:

Bot perchance sum man wil inqueir: Suld thair be, heirfor, in the Kirk of Christ na inress of religioun? zis, lat inress be had, and that weray grete. For quha is he sa inwyous to man, sa odious to God, quha wald preiss to stay that thing?³⁶

For Winzet it would appear that increase in religion is acceptable, possibly even to be desired, as it acts to further the glory of God. Indeed, a man would have to be envious of those around him, and not valued in the eyes of God, if he desired to prevent or reverse the increase of religion. Change, however, is not acceptable. He goes on to state:

Thair is a gret difference betuix the floure of barneage and the maturitie and rypnes of the eild. Bot zit, the samyn ar auld men quha afoir wes childer: that, albeit the state and forme of the ane and the samyn man be changeit, zit nochttheless ane and the samyn natuir, ane and the samyn persoun remanis.³⁷

³⁶ Hewison, ed., *Certain Tractates*, Vol. II, p. 57.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

Here Winzet is stating that it can occasionally be difficult to tell the difference between increase and change. However, the Church, like a child grown into an adult, may look completely different but still actually be the same institution. As an individual develops and becomes greater over a lifetime, so does the true Christian Church, and it is unnecessary for the reformers to attempt to reverse the process in order to once again find their view of the true faith. For Winzet it is clear that if anything is changed, no matter how apparently inconsequential, the end result will be the eventual abandonment of the Church. As such, this belief may be applied to the reformers attitudes to death and burial; they may seem inconsequential, it may seem that the true essence of Christianity is not being altered by changing these practices, but for Winzet that is exactly how the decline of Christianity will begin. As will be seen below, it was not necessarily only Scotland's remaining Catholics that held such opinions concerning burial.³⁸

Of course, Winzet was not the only Scottish Catholic to write about death and the perceived Protestant disrespect for the subject. In 1580 was published *Certaine Demandes Concerning the Christian Religion and Discipline, proponed to the Ministers of the new pretended Kirk of Scotland*.³⁹ In this work the author, John Hay, a Scottish Jesuit, attacks this very issue. He queries, "Quhether in making stables of the kirks of Scotland, sua that the hors war stabled on our kings graves, and in raising vp the bones of Christian men, resembled ye rather to be Christians, or infideles and paganes."⁴⁰ For Hay the answer is clear. By showing such disrespect for the dead these so called Protestants are no more than pagans. Almost half a century later this same issue was attacked by Alexander Baillie in his 1628 work, *A True Information of the Vnhallowed Offspring, progresse & impoisoned fruits of our Scottish-Caluinian gospel*.⁴¹ In this work Baillie expands upon Hay's accusation. He states:

And that the universal world might know their unspeakable hatred & rage against the Catholik church & religion, they at the first made stables in *Halyrudhous*, which was

³⁸ Winzet's burial is itself particularly interesting. Hewison states; "The brethren in whose hands he died, laid the father abbot to rest within the ancient church of St James, in the sanctuary on the gospel side, about twenty-four feet from the high altar, with obsequies in keeping with his office and dignity. They placed a monument over his place of sepulture, where it is still to be seen. On its upper half is carved in bas-relief the figure of an abbot in his vestment, and with the insignia of his office." Hewison, ed., *Certain Tractates*, Vol. I, p. lxxi. Winzet was, of course, buried outside of Scotland, but as a well respected and deeply admired member and abbot of his community, and a devout Catholic.

³⁹ In T. G. Law, ed., *Catholic Tractates of the Sixteenth Century, 1573-1600*. (Edinburgh and London: Printed for the Scottish Text Society by William Blackwood and Sons, 1901), pp. 31-70.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 269-280.

renowned not only for holynes & deuotion wont to be therin, bot also for that it was the *Burial place* of our Kings & their royal children, which surely suld make al true-hearted cuntrymen the more to abhore their abominable & barbarous beastlines, yea & their more then Turkish ingratitude towards their natiue Princes & Souerains, who sturred not to let horses dung on their moales, without any regard to God or their Kings.⁴²

Again, the comparison is being made here between Protestants and infidels, in this case the Turks, due to their apparent disrespect for the dead. It could be suggested, based upon the accusations made by Hay and Baillie, that Winzet's fears were correct. What began as a small change, a stripping away of ceremony and 'superstition,' ultimately began to escalate, in Catholic eyes at least, into a complete disregard for the noble deceased. Indeed, rumours would ultimately spread throughout the Catholic population of such disrespectful treatment of all Catholic corpses, regardless of status. In 1657 or 1658 it was rumoured that in Inverkeithing:

A Calvinist farmer ventured to plough up, and sow with corn, the enclosure around an old chapel, long since ruined. The ground was once used as a graveyard, and always hitherto had been held sacred. But when autumn came, and he went to look for his crop, he found to his horror, every grain of corn swollen and dripping with what looked like fresh blood.⁴³

Elsewhere it was rumoured that in Galloway in 1702, after being incited by local ministers, common people desecrated the graves of two Catholics, and threw their bodies to be eaten by wild animals.⁴⁴ Of course, the first instance at least now seems a work of fantasy, but the second could possibly have been true, and would certainly have been believed by the Catholic population of Scotland. Indeed, it is entirely plausible that the majority of the Catholic population would have believed the first rumour, or at least have wanted to. Whether or not accusations of such treatment were actually true, particularly the disrespect

⁴² Ibid., p. 273.

⁴³ W. Forbes-Leith, ed., *Memoirs of Scottish Catholics During the 17th and 18th Centuries*, Vol. I. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1909), p. 75.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 190.

shown towards the noble deceased, will be investigated throughout this and subsequent chapters.

Continuing Adherence to Intra-Mural Burial

As Michael Graham has pointed out, “the Scottish Kirk was hardly reformed when the Queen returned [in 1561]. The goals had been set in the first *Book of Discipline* and elsewhere, but the process of erecting the new order had only just begun.”⁴⁵ This new order, however, had very powerful supporters. As Keith Brown has stated, “there can be little doubt that it was the Lords of the Congregation themselves, the nobility, who made the Reformation happen.”⁴⁶ Yet despite this support, instituting the new order was not a straightforward process. After 1560 “Catholic rites did not disappear entirely, and nobles were better able than most to ignore clerical disapproval.”⁴⁷ However, as shall be seen, it was not only lingering traces of Catholicism amongst the nobility that the Kirk had to be concerned about. Nobles who had accepted Protestantism continued, in some instances, to be buried in unseemly fashion, whether that involved intra-mural burial or elaborate funeral processions.

An example of a funeral that appears to flaunt the newly instituted regulations involves the burial of the Regent Moray, James Stewart, in 1570, whose funeral was presided over by none other than Knox himself. Calderwood, in his *History of the Kirk of Scotland*, records that:

Upon Tuisday the 14th of Februar, the regent’s corps was careid from the Abbey of Halyrudhous to the Great Kirk of Edinburgh, and was bureid in the south ile. Mr Knox made a sermon before the buriall upon these words, “Blessed are these that dee in the Lord.” Manie of the nobilitie were present. He moved three thowsand persons to shed teares for the losse of suche a good and godlie governour.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ M. Graham, “Social Discipline in Scotland, 1560-1610.” In *Sin and the Calvinists, Morals Control and the Consistory in the Reformed Tradition*, ed. R. A. Mentzer. *Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies*, Vol. 32. (1994), p. 130.

⁴⁶ K. M. Brown, “In Search of the Godly Magistrate in Reformation Scotland,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 40, No. 1. (1989), p. 553.

⁴⁷ Brown, *Noble Society in Scotland*, p. 260.

⁴⁸ D. Calderwood, *The History of the Kirk of Scotland*, Vol. II, ed. T. Thomson (Edinburgh: The Wodrow Society, 1843), pp. 525-526. Cf. Sprott’s earlier assertion that graveside sermons would have been acceptable had the church been too distant.

It seems strange that Knox would even tolerate such a funeral, as he was arguably one of the authors of *The First Book of Discipline*, wherein it is stated that:

In respect of divers inconveniences we think it neither seemly that the Kirk appointed to preaching and ministration of the Sacraments shall be made a place of burial, but that some other secret and convenient place, lying in the most free aire, be appointed for that use, which place ought to be walled and fenced about, and kept for that use onely.⁴⁹

Yet, despite the apparent violation of the newly developing Reformed Protestant burial practices, Knox did tolerate it. However, due to a clever manipulation of the Kirk's opposition to intra-mural burial, the final resting place of the Earl of Moray was technically acceptable, and explains why Knox had no apparent hesitation in presiding over the funeral. This will be returned to in greater detail below.

Of course, Knox had no hesitation in enforcing a Reformed Protestant burial in other situations. Following the death of the queen regent, Mary of Guise, in 1560, Knox ensured that no 'superstitious' elements would be allowed in Scotland. He writes:

The question was moved of her burial: the preachers boldly gainstood, 'that any superstitious rites should be used within that realm, which God of his mercy began to repugn;' and so conclusion was taken, that her burial should be deferred till farther advertisement; and so was she wrapped in a coffin of lead, and kept in the castle, from the 9th of June, until the 19th of October, when she by pioneers was carried to a ship, and so conveyed to France: what pomp was used there, we neither heard, nor yet regard.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ *The Doctrine and Discipline of the Kirke of Scotland*, p. 71. In the *Second Book of Discipline* the need was noted, in certain areas of Scotland, to combine two or more parishes for want of more ministers. In these areas the principal and largest kirks are to be maintained in good order, "and the other kirks, which are not found necessary, may be suffered to decay, their kirk-yards always being kept for burial places." Cf. J. Knox, *The History of the Reformation of Religion within the Realm of Scotland*. (Gale CW3319544232. Edinburgh: H. Inglis, 1790), p. 542; J. Kirk, ed., *The Second Book of Discipline*. (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1980), p. 231. It is important to note, however, that even in this instance it is only the kirk yard that is to be used for burial, not the kirk itself. Interestingly, by the eighteenth century at least it was not always the case that burial grounds belonged to the Kirk or parish, they were occasionally in private hands. In these instances the permission of the owner of the land needed to be sought before a burial could take place, particularly during the sale or transfer of the property. Cf. CH2/1326/3, pp. 54-58.

⁵⁰ Knox, *The History of the Reformation of Religion within the Realm of Scotland*, p. 254. Of course, others saw this instance in a different light. For Catholics, even three centuries later, "Knox alone sought, by means of the

In contrast to the burial of the Regent Moray, the burial in November 1572 of Knox himself was unremarkable, and he was laid to rest in the graveyard at St Giles with little ceremony. Calderwood states:

Upon Wednesday after, he was buried, being convoyed by the Erle of Morton, regent, and lords who were in the toun for the time. When he was layed in the grave, the Erle of Morton uttered thir words:- ‘Here lyeth a man who, in his life, never feared the face of man: who hath beene often threatned with dag and dager, but yitt hath ended his dayes in peace and honour. For he had God’s providence watching over him in a speciall maner, when his verie life was sought’.⁵¹

This was how the ideal Protestant funeral, according to the Kirk, should appear. There was no sermon, no prayers for the dead, no superstition, and the deceased was not buried in the church, but in a location set aside for that purpose alone.⁵²

most loathsome slanders, to vilify the character of this excellent princess; and it was doubtless at his instigation that the rites of Christian burial were denied to her remains in Scotland.” J. Hosack, *Mary Queen of Scots and Her Accusers, Embracing a Narrative of Events from the Death of James V. in 1542 until the Death of the Regent Murray in 1570*. (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1869), pp. 48-49.

⁵¹ Calderwood, *The History of the Kirk of Scotland*, Vol. III, p. 242.

⁵² One wonders if Knox would have approved of the fact that his burial location now rests under a car park, space 23, at the rear of the cathedral. Interestingly, one of Knox’s successors in Edinburgh, James Lawson, died and was buried in London in 1584, along Reformed Protestant lines. He was buried in the churchyard at Bedlam, apparently with no ceremonial practices. Cf. *The Miscellany of the Wodrow Society*, pp. 445-452. The funeral of John Carswell, the Bishop of the Isles who was instrumental for the Reformation in the Highlands, is yet another fascinating example of an unexpected burial. Gillies notes: “After his censure by the Assembly, Carswell withdrew from Court and retired to Carnasarie, where he died in the year 1572. He was buried, by his own desire, at the Priory of Ardochattan. The leaden coffin lies below the floor of the kitchen of the present mansion - house, which was, with a spirit of desecration hard to excuse, built over a part of the old graveyard. Such was the weight of the coffin, the violence of the storm which prevailed on the funeral day, and the consequent hardships endured by the mourners, that a saying is still current when any extraordinary event happens, ‘*Cha d ’thainig a leithid bho latha adhlaic a Charsalaich*’ (‘There has not been the like since Carswell’s funeral day’).” P. H. Gillies, *Netherlorn, Argyllshire, and its Neighbourhood*. (London: Virtue & Co., 1909), pp. 152-153. I am indebted to Dr Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart for this reference. Calvin’s funeral in Geneva in 1564 had been of a similar nature to that of Knox. Thomas Fuller writes; “He was buried in the common Churchyard, without any extraordinary pompe, and without any Grave-stone laid over him.” T. Fuller, *Abel Redivivus, or, The Dead Yet Speaking*. (Wing-F2401. London, 1652), p. 284. Unlike Knox, however, Calvin’s exact burial location is now unknown, which would appear to have been Calvin’s goal from the outset. Unlike Calvin and Knox, however, Zwingli was killed in battle by Vokinger of Unterwalden, and as such his body was not disposed of with such honour. Fuller writes; “being in this misery he was demanded by his enemies, whether he would yeeld unto Papisticall invocation of the Saints; being not able to speake, he refused it apparantly by the motion of his head, and by the lifting up of his eyes to heaven, he gave them to understand, that he would invoke and call on none but on the Lord above; wherefore in a raging and cruel manner took his life away from him, condemned his body to be cut in foure quarters, and to be burnt unto ashes in the fire.” Fuller, *Abel Redivivus*, p. 94. Fuller goes on to state that it was believed Zwingli’s heart survived the flames and was saved by his friends. Potter adds that Zwingli’s ashes were mixed with dung to prevent them from being collected as relics. G. R. Potter, *Zwingli*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 413.



The burial location of John Knox



Monument to the Regent Moray in St Giles, Edinburgh



Monument to the Countess of Argyll in St Giles, Edinburgh

An interesting appendix to this example occurred in 1588 upon the death of the Countess of Argyll. Graham records the lack of protest over her burial next to the Earl of Moray in St Giles. He notes, “Moray, in death even more than in life, was much beloved by the leadership of the Kirk.”⁵³ Being beloved by the Kirk, it would seem, allowed one certain privileges in death that were not open to other, less beloved, individuals.

There were, however, other avenues available to those who, having embraced Protestantism, wished a burial that did not strictly adhere to the Protestant ideal. One of these avenues involved ambitious Kirk elders. An example of this can be seen from Rothiemay, where in 1606 a fine of forty shillings was imposed upon those who buried their relatives within the fabric of the kirk. As Graham notes, this was far from outside of the means of the prominent families in the area.⁵⁴ By imposing such nominal ‘fines’ the elders of Rothiemay were, in effect, instituting a system whereby prominent families could continue to be buried in ways they believed befitted their station in life, regardless of the official Reformed Protestant policy, and a similar record from Dunblane in 1583 shows that this system was, at the very least, also being considered there. Brechin Kirk actively forbade intra-mural burial unless the burial had been paid for,⁵⁵ and the issue of intra-mural burial in return for a fee was referred to the Stirling Presbytery in order to ascertain its viability, but the response came back that ‘This is perilous and thairfoir thocht it not meit to be done.’⁵⁶ Regardless of the potential boost to Kirk revenues it would seem that, in Stirling at least, the official policy was to stand. Indeed, it would seem to be the case that this was a fairly widespread phenomenon, as the General Assembly was required to pass enactments against intra-mural burial in 1588, 1597, 1638, and 1643.⁵⁷ Additionally, there is a record from St Andrews from 1581 that makes reference to an earlier act of the Assembly:

The quhilk day, anent the complent offerit to the sessioun be Mr. Thomas Buchannan, Commissionar off Fyffe, concerning the buriall off certen personis maid off lait

⁵³ Graham, “Social Discipline in Scotland, 1560-1610,” p. 151, n. 105.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 152.

⁵⁵ D. B. Thoms, *The Kirk of Brechin in the Seventeenth Century*. (Perth: The Society of Friends of Brechin Cathedral, 1972), pp. 61-62. Frequently, however, in Brechin the fees were never forthcoming.

⁵⁶ *Stirling Presbytery Records, 1581 – 1587*, ed. J. Kirk (Edinburgh: Printed for the Scottish History Society by Clark Constable Ltd, 1981), p. 110.

⁵⁷ H. Colvin, *Architecture and the After-Life*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 296.

wythin the parroche kirk off this citie, contrar to ane certen act and ordinance maid in the Generall Assemblie.⁵⁸

In some cases it was the refusal of the local authorities themselves to adhere to the General Assembly's instructions as to appropriate burial locations that allowed for the continuing practice of intra-mural burial. An example of this can be seen from the fact that, in 1577 "a complaint was made to the General Assembly that the Laird of Rossyth had been buried within the kirk. On questioning, it seems that the Provost and Bailies of Dunfermline had sanctioned the burial."⁵⁹ The reasons behind their actions, however, remain unclear. Perhaps in this instance too there were unspecified financial benefits. In other instances certain individuals were open about their intentions. From Lochbroom in 1650 a record states that, "Murdo Ma^cEwir, one of the Elders, presumptuously avowing his resolu[tio]n to bury in the Kirk, deposed from the office of eldership, and summoned *apud acta* to compeir before the P[re]s[b]yt[er]ie at Dingwall the 24 day of Sep[tember] instant, to receive farther censure."⁶⁰ In one particularly interesting case a certain Mr John Hamilton, son of Sir William Hamilton of Sanquhar, Dumfries and Galloway, while the ministers, elders, and deacons of Mauchline kirk were in session, broke down the doors of the kirk and there buried his father, despite the fact that Sir William was actually a member of a different parish.⁶¹ In Lanark in 1624 the Laird of Sheilhill promised to refrain from kirk burial in all time

⁵⁸ *St Andrews Kirk Session Register, 1559-1582*, ed. D. H. Fleming (Edinburgh: Printed at the University Press by T. and A. Constable for the Scottish History Society, 1889), p. 452.

⁵⁹ A. Spicer, "'Rest of their bones': fear of death and Reformed burial practices." In *Fear in Early Modern Society*, eds. W. G. Naphy and P. Roberts (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 174.

⁶⁰ *Records of the Presbyteries of Inverness and Dingwall 1643-1688*. ed. W. Mackay (Edinburgh, Printed at the University Press by T. and A. Constable for the Scottish History Society, 1896), p. 195.

⁶¹ *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assemblies of the Kirk of Scotland, from the year M.D.LX. Part First. M.D.LX.-M.D.LXXVII.* (Edinburgh, 1839), pp. 272-273. It is of further interest to note that the burial of an individual in the incorrect parish is not an isolated incident. At St Madoes, Perthshire, in 1672 a complaint was made due to "many coming from other parochins and burying their dead in our church yeard w[ith]out acquainting either the minister or any member of sessione." The record goes on to state "that scarce ther can be room (without apparent danger) of burying of our own ffar lesse to admit off strangers, upon this consideratione the sessione does inact and ordaine the beddell that he brak no ground in the church yeard to any stranger w[ith]out he gives ffor the poor[']s use ffor each man and woman threiteen shillings four pennies scots and for every child 10s." R. H. R. Lidell, "Saint Madoes and Its Clergymen: Notes on a Perthshire Parish, 1640-88." *The Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. 25, No. 100. (1928), pp. 264-265. Additionally, in Leith members of the North Kirk were allowed to bury in the South Leith kirkyard for a fee. Cf. Robertson, D., ed. *South Leith Records, Compiled from the Parish Registers for the years 1588-1700; and from other original sources.* (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1911), p. 116.

coming,⁶² yet in 1639 had to repeat his promise after burying his wife in the kirk of Quothquen.⁶³

Despite the General Assembly's continued attempts, the issue of intra-mural burial was not one that the various Kirk Sessions were immediately successful in reforming, and the problem of intra-mural burial was to continue throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In South Leith in 1633, despite the fact that in 1612 permission had been granted to her husband to build a tomb within the kirk for his wife and posterity,⁶⁴ the right of kirk-burial next to her husband was given to Barbara Logan only upon payment of one hundred merks to the poor.⁶⁵ By 1674 the price had dropped to fifty merks.⁶⁶ In Coupar Angus the Kirk Session, on March 12, 1696, went as far as to establish a price structure for such burials:

ten pounds Scots money as the pryce of every buriall place for each man or woman within the midle of the said church from the on end to the other, and five pounds Scots for each child within twelve years of age, (excepting allwayes, that space of ground, betwixt the ston pulpit door on the west and the baptism seat on the east of the pulpit forward from the south wall to the pillars of Arthurstans loft, as the constant buriall place of the ministers of the paroch and their families).⁶⁷

Further to the imposition of a fine of forty shillings, seen above, in Rothiemay in 1642 it was laid out that kirk burial would cost those living within the parish four pounds. Those who lived outside of the parish were charged eight marks if they were of advanced years, twenty shillings if they were children under seven, and forty shillings if they were between seven and fifteen years old.⁶⁸ Elsewhere, it would appear that in Glasgow certain kirk buildings were set aside for burial. In August 1601:

The bailleis and counsale, with advyse of the deikines, hes ordainit Sanct Moungeois kirk yarde beyond the Gallogate brig to remane and be ane buriall place in tyme

⁶² *Selections from the Registers of the Presbytery of Lanark, M.DC.XXIII.-M.DCC.IX.* (Edinburgh: Printed for the Abbotsford Club, 1839), p. 2.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁶⁴ Robertson, *South Leith Records*, p. 10.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁶⁷ *The Diocese and Presbytery of Dunkeld, 1660-1689*, Vol. II, ed. J. Hunter (London, New York, Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1917), p. 471, n. 1.

⁶⁸ *Extracts from the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie, A.D. M.DC.XXXI.-M.DC.LIV.* (Aberdeen: Printed for the Spalding Club, 1843), p. 32.

cumyng bothe in kirk and kirkyarde, and to be dyikit round about and ane yet for to be ane entres, and to be performit be the towne and the maister of work.⁶⁹

Additionally, as late as 1701, it was deemed that the managers of the former Blackfriars kirk in Glasgow had acted correctly in selling burial places within the walls of the kirk.⁷⁰

On the other side of the issue, certain areas of Scotland were keen to suppress the practice. The Presbytery of Edinburgh made several attempts to end the practice of intra-mural burial in Holyrood, in November 1588, May 1593, and again in September 1598.⁷¹ In May 1642, it was announced by the Kirkcaldy Presbytery that, “Anent buriall in the kirk of Kingorn the brethren according to ane act of the Assemblie of Glasgow inhibiting kirk burialls inhibits any kirk buriall in the kirk of Kingorn heirafter.”⁷² Burials prior to this decision are not necessarily to be removed from the kirk, but no further burials are to take place within its walls. In this instance not even the nobility were allowed to continue the practice. In May 1643, “The Presbytrie appoynts Mr Frederik Carmichell to speak to the Laird of Strathenrie that he give satisfactioun for his uncivill behaviour in breakeing the kirk door of Leslie and buryeing of his sister.”⁷³ Additionally, the following year, “Anent the kirk buriall in Weyms, the Erle of Weyms excused himself of that whilk was done, and promises for tyme comeing to build ane place without the kirk.”⁷⁴ Additionally, a visitation made to Kincardine, also in Fife, in 1586 stated the result that, “It is ordenit that na buriall be in the kirk heireftir bot all to be bureit in the kirkyard wythout respect off persones, quhilk thai promesit to observe.”⁷⁵ It would appear that the desire for a separate place to be used only for burial remained strong in at least one part of Scotland, despite the efforts of certain individuals, once again primarily those of the nobility, to continue the older practices. In Dysart in 1645 “Mr Harie Wilkie declaired that the act aganest kirk buriall was violat in the Weyms by bureing of the Laird of Innerleyths bairne.”⁷⁶ Areas such as Lanark, however,

⁶⁹ *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Glasgow*, Vol. I. (Glasgow: Printed for the Scottish Burgh Records Society, 1876-1908), p. 225.

⁷⁰ *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Glasgow*, Vol. IV, pp. 326-327.

⁷¹ “Visitations of the Kirk of Holyroodhouse, by the Presbytery of Edinburgh. M.D.LXXXIII.-M.D.XCVIII.” In *The Miscellany of the Wodrow Society*, pp. 462-464.

⁷² *The Presbytrie Booke of Kirkcaldie, being the record of the proceedings of that Presbytery from the 15th day of April 1630 to the 14th day of September 1653*, ed. W. Stevenson (Kirkcaldy: James Burt, 1900), p. 233.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

⁷⁵ J. Kirk, ed., *Visitation of the Diocese of Dunblane and other churches, 1586-1589*. (Edinburgh: Scottish Record Society, 1984), p. 36.

⁷⁶ *The Presbytrie Booke of Kirkcaldie*, p. 290.

seem to have struggled somewhat when it came to preventing intra-mural burial.⁷⁷ As with the Laird of Sheilhill, seen above, in 1625 the Laird of Anastoun promised to abstain from all kirk burial in all time coming, following the burial of his father in the kirk of Symington.⁷⁸ In 1626 James Lindesay of Belstane buried his child in the kirk of Carluke. He subsequently promised to build an aisle for his own burial.⁷⁹ In 1629 Thomas Baillie was summoned before the Presbytery for burying his child in the kirk of Lamington.⁸⁰ In 1637 the Presbytery of Lanark deemed it necessary to reiterate the act of the Assembly against intra-mural burial,⁸¹ although it would appear that this had only limited success, as in 1642 a certain John Bartram was censured for kirk burial.⁸²

Other areas of Scotland, however, were not always obviously on one side of the debate or the other. Indeed, despite the actions of the Kirkcaldy Presbytery and the Diocese of Dunblane, even within the Synod of Fife there were various attitudes towards the subject. Areas such as Perth and Fettercairn were of the opinion that such burials should be fined:

It wes statute and ordained that no les penaltie be exacyed of such as sall burie any, or have buried any person within the kirk then ten tibs. and that no cautione be takin for payment thairof, but ether present payment, or ane pledg of sufficient avayl.⁸³

So too were Portnacraig, Forgound, and Kilspindie.⁸⁴ Linlithgow and Slamannan both decided to issue licenses for kirk burial,⁸⁵ whilst areas such as Falkland were of the same opinion as Kirkcaldy, stating that “Buriall within the kirk dischargeit; and a purpois among the parochineris for bying somuch ground without the toun as may serve for buriall.”⁸⁶ In South Leith, whilst allowing intra-mural burial, as seen above, the Kirk Session specified that waste ground lying to the north side of the kirkyard was, from 1649, to be used as the burial ground for the ministers.⁸⁷ However, in 1671 it was specified that no burials were to take

⁷⁷ It is, of course, possible that in truth Lanark was no worse than any other part of Scotland, and perhaps it is merely the case that the Presbytery there was more diligent in recording these incidents.

⁷⁸ *Selections from the Registers of the Presbytery of Lanark*, p. 3.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁸³ *Selections from the minutes of the Synod of Fife, 1611-1687*. (Edinburgh: Printed for the Abbotsford Club, 1837), p. 17.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 30, 64.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 25.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁸⁷ Robertson, *South Leith Records*, p. 87.

place in St James' chapel without permission,⁸⁸ and by 1682 the chapel had been reserved for the burials of the Kirk Session unless a fee of one shilling was paid.⁸⁹

Additionally, there were, of course, areas of Scotland wherein the burial practices can be seen to have varied over time and in specific instances. In Lanarkshire in 1616 the Session of the kirk of Libberton censured Hew Somerville for "violating and abusing the Kirk with buriell."⁹⁰ In 1621, however, the right to bury in the north aisle of the kirk of Libberton was given to James Wynram,⁹¹ and this was confirmed in 1625, provided that Wynram agreed to rebuild the aisle from its ruinous state.⁹² In a fascinating twist, in 1632 the aforementioned Hew Somerville was himself allowed to be buried in the kirk of Libberton upon request by his son, who claimed his father's ancient right of burial.⁹³ Elsewhere, in the Presbytery of Dunkeld in 1679, William Lindsay, Bishop of Dunkeld from 1677, died and was buried in the kirkyard at Meikle.⁹⁴ Two decades later Andrew Bruce, Bishop of Dunkeld from 1679-1686 and Bishop of Orkney from 1688-1689, was buried in the kirkyard of Anstruther-Easter.⁹⁵ Thomas Glas, minister of Dunkeld, desired, upon his death in 1682, to be buried in his parish church,⁹⁶ and William Nairn, Moderator of the Presbytery of Dunkeld, who died in 1687, specified in his will that he should be buried in the kirk of Kinclaven.⁹⁷ Elsewhere, in Kingussie in 1642 the Synod of Moray lamented "The frequencie of burialls within bothe churches being regraited and that nothing did accrue from thence to the improvement of the common guid, it is ordained ten marks be paid for ilk burial befor they brack the ground."⁹⁸ In 1649, however, the Synod set up a committee "to try what may be found about this buriall of Mr Lachlan Grant's mother-in-law her corps in the kirk of Pettie contrair to the Acts of the Generall Assemblie."⁹⁹ In Grange in 1650 "Mr Robert Watson, minister, is charged with various irregularities: - He debarred others from kirk burial, but suffered his daughter's son to be buried within the kirk."¹⁰⁰ In the same year at Inverkeithney James Grant, an

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 125.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 141.

⁹⁰ GD122/2/303.

⁹¹ GD122/2/310.

⁹² GD122/2/323.

⁹³ GD122/2/339.

⁹⁴ *The Diocese and Presbytery of Dunkeld*, Vol. I, p. 209.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 224.

⁹⁶ *The Diocese and Presbytery of Dunkeld*, Vol. II, p. 307.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 191.

⁹⁸ W. Cramond, *Extracts from the Records of the Synod of Moray*. (Elgin, 1906), p. 64.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 99.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 104. Cf. *Extracts from the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie*, pp. 121, 127.

excommunicated Catholic, was buried without permission in the kirk of Inverawin.¹⁰¹ In Croy in 1651 “Allan Ros, alledged parochiner in Croy, at least haunteth often their, scandalous for breaking up the kirk doore, intending to burie dead their, he cannot be fixt upon be a summons.”¹⁰² Finally, in 1658 the Synod of Moray stated:

Anent the referrs of the presbyterie of Aberlour concerning the buriall of the corps of Alexr. Leslie of Coirake ane excommunicate papist in the Kirk of Rothes the Synode ordaines that such of the defunctes kinsmen and others as wer chieflie instrumentall in bringing the corps thither be conveyened befor the session of Rothes and the said presbyterie and censured as also that this matter be represented to the Justices of Peace in Bamfshire to be redressed by them in a civile way.¹⁰³

Clearly the Synod of Moray initially believed that charging for intra-mural burial was acceptable, but quickly changed to a negative view of the practice. However, under the restoration of Episcopacy, there was a dispute between two parties as to who had right to bury in Strathavon parish kirk. One party claimed the right due to longstanding practice, the other due to permission from the Bishop of Moray. The latter was required to prove his right, and was ultimately excommunicated.¹⁰⁴ It would seem that the Synod of Moray once again changed its position on the issue of intra-mural burial. Also within the bounds of the Synod of Moray, in Dumbennand in 1636, “It is ordained that the earth shall not be opened in the church till the buriall silver be payed.”¹⁰⁵ At Bottarie in 1644, however, “it was regraited be the bretherin that they could not get burialls in kirkis restrained.”¹⁰⁶ It is unfortunately unclear as to whether or not the charges for kirk burial applied throughout the Presbytery of Strathbogie, now Huntly, or merely in certain parishes such as Dumbennand.

In addition to the newly instituted Reformed Protestant instructions concerning intra-mural burial, there was also the issue of sanitation to be taken into consideration. In certain kirks, particularly in the north of Scotland, it was reported that the situation had become so bad that it was becoming detrimental to the preaching of the Gospel. In April 1684:

¹⁰¹ Cramond, *Extracts from the Records of the Synod of Moray*, p. 106.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 112.

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp. 124-125. Of course, it has been claimed that excommunicated Catholics were to be denied Christian burial. Cf. Forbes-Leith, ed., *Memoirs of Scottish Catholics During the 17th and 18th Centuries*, Vol. I, p. 49.

¹⁰⁴ Cramond, *Extracts from the Records of the Synod of Moray*, pp. 151-152.

¹⁰⁵ *Extracts from the Presbytery Book of Strathbogie*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 52.

Mr. Thomas Houston, Minister of Boleskine, regretted by his letter to the breyren of the Exercise, that all persons of all ranks indifferently buried their dead within his church, not only his own parochiners but some o[thers] of the neighbouring paroches, so that severall coffines were hardly under ground, which was like to be very dangerous and noisome to the hearers of the word within the s[aid] church.¹⁰⁷

However, as William Mackay states:

Boleskine was not worse than other parishes. The dogs that followed the people to church fought over the human bones that protruded through the earthen floor; and for the malignant fevers that so often ravaged the country, the foul air which the worshippers breathed while they worshipped was not less responsible than the insanitary condition of their dwelling-houses.¹⁰⁸

It could of course be that Mackay was being somewhat sensational in his re-telling of the case, and that tales of dogs fighting over human bones is somewhat excessive. However, as the records of the Synod of Argyll state:

As an indication of the reality of the sanitary objection it may be noted that in 1709 the Presbytery of Dunoon, on a petition by the minister, the session and the majority of the heritors, in which reference is made to the stench occasioned by the burials in the church of Kilmun, found it necessary to order the whole floor of the church ‘to be overlaid at least two feet deep with new earth for levelling the said floor and removeing the offensive, unwholesome smell.’¹⁰⁹

At Lochalsh in 1649 the Presbytery required that “the Kirke floore [be] pavemented, [that] no burialls be within the Kirk,”¹¹⁰ at Lochcarron, also in 1649, “and [that] no burialls to be within y[e] Kirk,”¹¹¹ and at Lochbroom in 1650 the Presbytery found, “That the act of the g[enera]ll assembly against buriing in kirks is not observed, for remeid [there]off the minister

¹⁰⁷ *Records of the Presbyteries of Inverness and Dingwall 1643-1688*, p. 118.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

¹⁰⁹ *Minutes of the Synod of Argyll, 1639 – 1651*. ed. D. C. MacTavish (Edinburgh: Printed at the University Press by T. and A. Constable Ltd. for the Scottish History Society, 1943), p. 62, n.

¹¹⁰ *Records of the Presbyteries of Inverness and Dingwall 1643-1688*, p. 150.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

is ordained peremptorily to processe the c[on]traveeners, and the elders exhorted to c[on]tribut and be assisting to the hindering it in tyme coming.”¹¹² Clearly the situation needed to be addressed. A significant portion of the population of Scotland wished to have intra-mural burial, and was pursuing it to the detriment of the health of parishioners. Of course, as shall be seen below, a compromise would be reached that would ultimately aid the situation.

The Development of Burial Aisles

As mentioned previously there were several avenues open for those who sought intra-mural burial, and perhaps the most important avenue of them all can be seen in the aforementioned explanation of the Earl of Moray’s burial location, namely the classification of burial aisles as extra-mural.¹¹³ Burial aisles were essentially annexes built onto the side of pre-existing kirk buildings, often also serving as accommodation during services for the family of the laird who had it built, and as a display of their position in the local society.¹¹⁴ Spicer has noted the intriguing nature of these burial aisles, due to the fact that they were structurally one with the fabric of the kirk. In some instances a laird’s loft was even constructed over the burial vault, opening directly onto the main body of the kirk. As Spicer states, in these instances, “the separation between the dead and the living was particularly tenuous.”¹¹⁵ Tenuous or not, the majority of the Kirk certainly approved of burial aisles. In 1606 William Birnie, the minister for Lanark, produced his *Blame of Kirk-Buriall*. In it he fiercely denounces the practice of intra-mural burial, stating, “So then sen [since] the source of this superstition is from the old Heathen (the which in running through Rome is made the more muddy) as thou would not seeme to patronize such papisticall paganisme, byde never by thy burial in Kirk.”¹¹⁶ Birnie’s stance seems to have been that of the majority of the

¹¹² Ibid., p. 195.

¹¹³ Another possible explanation for Knox’s decision to speak at the funeral may be found in an anonymous account of the end of Knox’s life. Concerning the murder of Moray it states: “This illustrious man being particularly dear to Knox, on account of his great piety and integrity of life, it is impossible to describe what grief he felt at his death.” *The Works of John Knox*, Vol. VI, p. 651. The presence of emotions, and in particular grief, will be dealt with in Chapter Five.

¹¹⁴ A. Spicer, *Calvinist churches in early modern Europe*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 66-67.

¹¹⁵ Spicer, “‘Defyle not Christ’s kirk with your carrion’: burial and the development of burial aisles in post-Reformation Scotland,” p. 168.

¹¹⁶ Birnie, *The Blame of Kirk-Buriall*, sig. D2v.

members of the Kirk at the time, who were constantly attempting, often in vain, to remove the practice of intra-mural burial from their own kirks, as seen above, in order to institute the new practices introduced at the Reformation. Birnie and the other ministers, however, seemed to accept that burial aisles did not constitute intra-mural burial. Birnie states, “And because they were but adjacent and incontiniguous, being but severally set as to-falles to the continent Kirks, they got therefore among vs the name of Iles, that yet they keep. And this kynde may content our most honourable.”¹¹⁷

Yet not every Presbytery agreed. In Kinghorn, the Presbytery clearly forbade kirk burials, however, the records go on to state that, “that is to say within the bodie of the kirk as for the Iles leaves that for further consideratioun.”¹¹⁸ In this instance it rather seems that the Presbytery was merely considering the notion. Indeed, two years later, in 1644, the records indicate that a decision had been made and that burial aisles were to be considered intra-mural. The records state:

the minister declaires that he haveing spoken to the Clerk of Register the Presbyteries judgement anent the burying of his father, My Lord of Durie, for obeying the act of the Generall Assemblie for kirk buriall yit notwithstanding that he had transgressed the samyne by burying his father in the Ile. The Presbytrie thinks meitt to remonstrat to the Clerk of Register to the violatioun of the act of the Generall Assemblie anent kirk buriall and the neglect of thair advice thairnanent.¹¹⁹

Kinghorn was not the only parish to deem burial aisles as intra-mural. In 1645 the Presbytery of St Andrews prevented a burial from taking place in an aisle, declaring it to be against the act of the Assembly,¹²⁰ and the Presbytery of Cupar denied burial in the aisle of lord Burghley in 1656, as it was considered a public place for the preaching of the Gospel.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Ibid., sig. C4r.

¹¹⁸ *The Presbytrie Booke of Kirkcaldie*, p. 233.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 274.

¹²⁰ *Selections from the minutes of the Presbyteries of St. Andrews and Cupar, M.DC.XLI.-M.DC.XCVIII.* (Edinburgh: Printed for the Abbotsford Club, 1837), p. 23.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 173. In at least one instance an accusation was made that there were personal reasons behind decisions concerning burial aisles. In 1612 the mother and brother of James Hay, who following his death had been buried beside the bodies of his father and another brother in an aisle of the Croce kirk of Peebles, complained that five weeks after the burial the minister, in an act of malice against the deceased, brought forward an act of the Assembly forbidding burial within the parish kirk. The family of the deceased complained that this was unreasonable, as the Croce kirk was not the parish kirk of Peebles, and that the deceased had been buried in an “outile” rather than the choir. Cf. GD34/959.

These parishes, however, were in the minority. The majority accepted the use of burial aisles. In Aberdeen, for example, on 13 March 1650, the records state:

It was recommended to the elders and deacones to think upon the outstricking of ane dore in the south ile and devyding the wast p[art] of the kirk that is not commodious for heiring to be ane buriall p[art].¹²²

Indeed, the records suggest that the use of burial aisles actually survived in Aberdeen until at least 1707.¹²³ In some instances it was the case that the more wealthy local inhabitants took matters into their own hands. In St Vigean, Angus:

Sir Peter Young of Easter Seatown, Almoner to the Kings Majestie, has laitlie bigged, vpon the north syde of the kirk, ane Ile, to serve for him self and successoures for ane buriall. Quhilk the said rycht Reverend Father and remanent assistantis in the visitatioune allowed, and appoynted that ane patent sall be giffen be his Lordship for declaratioune thair of to the posteritie.¹²⁴

This acceptance of the theoretical distinction between burial aisles and the kirk buildings themselves allowed certain notable individuals such as the Earl of Moray and his wife, as well as the Catholic fourth Earl of Atholl, to be buried within such buildings as St Giles. In the case of the Earl of Atholl, however, there is a record of the General Assembly attempting to ensure that no Catholic practices were involved, presumably because of his very public adherence to Catholicism. The records state:

The Kirk thocht meit to direct from the Assembly Mrs [sic] John Row and Johne Durie to desire of them that all superstition be avoyed thereat; quho reportit that they had made information to their honors, that the bruit was of same superstitious rites

¹²² *Records of Old Aberdeen, M CCCC XCVIII – M CM III*, Vol. II, ed. A. MacDonald Munro (Aberdeen: Printed for the New Spalding Club, 1909), p. 40.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 118. In the Episcopalian north of the country burials continued to take place inside of churches until at least the end of the seventeenth century, with even Kirkwall Cathedral being home to such burials. Cf. Craven, J. B. *A History of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Caithness*. (Kirkwall: William Peace & Son, 1908), pp. 129, 151. However, the practice did not only survive in the north of Scotland. In March, 1728, John Blackader wrote to the Provost and Magistrates of Stirling, requesting permission to bury his father in the West Church of Stirling. Cf. B66/25/669.

¹²⁴ *Selections from the minutes of the Synod of Fife, 1611-1687*, p. 40.

qwhilks were prepared for the buriall, as ane qwhyte cross in the mortcloath, lang gownes with stroupes and torches: quhair answer was that it was not ane crosse, and grantit the gownes and denyit the torches; alwayes desyred the Kirk to direct two to sie if sic things as was prepared were superstitious, and they sould be reformat: according qwhairto war immediately sent to them David Fargysone, John Braid, and John Durie, to declare, The Kirk thocht the crosse and stroupes superstitious and ethineque lyke, and to desyre them to remove the same; who returnit with answer, that the Lords should cause cover the mortcloath with black velvet, and the stroupes should be removit.¹²⁵

Additionally, the right to be buried in an aisle would occasionally be conferred upon an individual who had been deemed to have earned it through his activities whilst alive. As a record from Edinburgh in 1584 states, “In respect of the honour and dignitie sumtyme borne within the towne be vmquhill Archibald Stewart, quha wes provost of the sam, and for vther guid caussis and consideratiouns moving thame, grantes and consentis that the said Archibald sall be bureit within the Hie Kirk of this burgh at the ile callit St. Antones Ile.”¹²⁶

In a defence of the continuing practice of intra-mural burial and the development of burial aisles, it has been suggested that, at the local level, the Scottish Reformation exhibited a certain amount of genius, in that there was an apparent willingness of sessions to compromise with official instructions.¹²⁷ This, however, while certainly true in some instances, is possibly an overly optimistic view of human nature. The development of burial aisles could certainly be seen as an appropriate compromise for those who wished to be buried as close to the kirk building as possible, yet the same can hardly be said for the ‘fines’ imposed upon those who continued to bury the deceased within the kirk building itself.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ A. Peterkin, ed., *The Booke of the Universall Kirk of Scotland: wherein the Headis and Conclusionis devysit by the Ministers and Commissionaris of the particular kirks thereof, are specially expressed and contained*. (Edinburgh: The Edinburgh Printing and Publishing Co., 1839), p. 187. In an interesting case with parallels to that of the fifth Earl of Argyll (see Chapter Four, p. 85) it was believed that the fourth Earl of Atholl’s death was the result of poison. “About the same time, whill Atholl repaired, among other noblemen, to Stirlin, he was poysoned, as all the doctors affirmed, except Doctor Preston. He was desired to taste of it; and having tasted a little of it with his tongue, almost had died, and was after, so long as he lived, sicklie. The Erle of Morton was slaundered as guiltie of the poysoning, but he cleared himself at his executioun.” Calderwood, *The History of the Kirk of Scotland*, Vol. III, pp. 442-443.

¹²⁶ *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh*, Vol. IV. (Edinburgh: Printed for the Scottish Burgh Records Society, 1869-1882), p. 348.

¹²⁷ Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland*, p. 341.

¹²⁸ There were, of course, instances where there were genuinely practical reasons for allowing intra-mural burial or the use of burial aisles. In 1638, St Machar’s, Aberdeen, was essentially falling down, and the Kirk Session did not have the funds necessary to maintain its upkeep. The Marquis of Huntly, however, wished to be buried

Additionally, concerning intra-mural burial and burial aisles, there were other factors that hindered the Assembly's goals. The Assembly had, on several occasions, attempted to obtain from Parliament an act prohibiting intra-mural burial. In 1573 it was stated, "Lett also ane article be formed and given in at the Parliament, for law to be made against such persons as make common buriall places of the paroch kirks, being commanded by the contrary."¹²⁹ Additionally, in 1598 the Assembly stated their desire to "craue a redress of the buriall, that ane act of Parliament may be made, discharging burialls in the kirks."¹³⁰ That same year, however, James VI "thought good that ane supplicatione should be given in to the next Parliament, craving that for the avoyding of burialls in Kirks, every nobleman sould bigg ane sepulture for himselfe and his familie,"¹³¹ thereby lending his support to burial aisles rather than a law against intra-mural burial. It seems that Parliament never issued an act against intra-mural burial, despite the attempts of the Assembly. In fact, despite a gradual abandonment of the practice of intra-mural burial,¹³² it would not be until 1817 that the law would be changed. As Alexander Dunlop stated:

in a late case, very favourable to its exercise, the place of sepulture being in an aisle somewhat detached and unseated though opening into the body of the church, the Lord Ordinary, (Lord Pitmilley,) found that the party claiming such a right, was not entitled to exercise it, notwithstanding the clear proof of the usage by his family; and he acquiesced in his lordship's judgment. This may now be considered to be the law.¹³³

within the kirk, and as such paid 300 merks, ostensibly for the upkeep of the kirk. He was subsequently allowed to be buried within the fabric of the building. Cf. CH2/1020/58.

¹²⁹ *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assemblies of the Kirk of Scotland, Part First*, p. 280.

¹³⁰ Peterkin, ed., *The Booke of the Universall Kirk of Scotland*, p. 466.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 467.

¹³² Although becoming less common, there were still occurrences of intra-mural burial throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In 1745 the second Earl of Breadalbane specified in his will that if he died in the palace of Holyroodhouse he was to be buried in the chapel there. If he died anywhere else he was to be buried with his ancestors in the chapel of Finlarig. The burial was to be done in a private manner, without any pomp or show. Cf. GD112/26/56. Aberdeenshire seems to have held to the practice longer than anywhere else in Scotland, with a record from Foveran in 1753 locating a burial inwards from the Udney loft. Even there, however, the practice seems to have ceased by 1762. Cf. CH2/164/34, pp. 7, 9. Interestingly, however, burials in the Abbey of Holyroodhouse seem to have continued until at least 1895. Cf. "Burials in the Abbey of Holyroodhouse." *Northern Notes and Queries or the Scottish Antiquary*, Vol. 15. (1901), p. 227.

¹³³ A. Dunlop, *Parochial Law*. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood; London: T. Cadell, 1830), pp. 51-52. In South Leith it can be seen that by 1826 all burials were located outside of the fabric of the kirk. Cf. CH2/716/120. Interestingly, in 1855, an act amending the laws governing burial in Scotland allowed for occasional vault burials. Cf. GD16/40/86, p. 6. On at least one occasion a burial vault had originally been a burial aisle. In 1819 the Alloa Chapel, wherein had been the burial aisle of the Earls of Mar, was pulled down. The site was subsequently turned into a vault for the family. Cf. A. W. C. Hallen, "The Burial Place of the Earls of Mar."

The Scottish Reformation was largely a centralised affair. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, areas such as the Highlands and Islands were slow to embrace the Reformation, and this in turn meant that they were slow to adopt the new burial practices instituted by the reformers. It was not, however, merely the sheer distances involved that impeded the spread of the Reformed Protestant ideals. In some cases the Reformation was slow to spread through the laity and even the clergy themselves. The ideal methods of the disposal of the dead had been outlined in *The forme of prayers* and *The First Book of Discipline*, but these ideals did not please all sections of Scottish society, particularly concerning the practice of intra-mural burial. The idea that intra-mural burial did nothing to aid the chances of the deceased entering heaven may have been accepted by members of the aristocracy, but to an extent it is understandable that the Scottish aristocracy were, in some cases at least, initially resentful of the implication that their funerals should be no different from those of the commons. Being buried within the kirk itself may not reduce their time in Purgatory, but it certainly showed the community at large that they had been important. Was social status just to be discarded upon death? It could be suggested that the dead can be seen to live on in the status of their descendants. Indeed, some members of the aristocracy certainly felt that their higher status should continue to be recognised, and they were aided, in certain instances, by members of the clergy themselves through the institution of ‘fines.’ Whether these fines were introduced in order to fund the parish, dissuade the nobility from intra-mural burial, or merely line their own pockets is uncertain, and it may well be that it was a combination of all these reasons and more. The belief held by certain members of the nobility that their status should allow for intra-mural burial was only aided, of course, by the fact that certain prominent figures such as James Stewart, the Regent Moray, were allowed such a burial. Decisions such as this, however, were often complicated by the circumstances surrounding the death. Moray had been murdered, and even though the Reformed Protestant ideal was that death is the great leveller, it may have been damaging to society if greater respect had not been shown in such an instance.¹³⁴ It could be suggested that Knox, who

Northern Notes and Queries or the Scottish Antiquary, Vol. 9. (1895), p. 63. In 1856 the Marquis of Dalhousie requested that the old kirk in Cockpen parish be converted into his family burial vault, and that other burials be located in the new burial ground. Cf. GD40/14/34.

¹³⁴ As Clodagh Tait has stated concerning the rituals present at heraldic funerals, “The primary aim of these rituals was to heal the dislocation suffered by society on the death of one of its members. Of course this is the aim of any funeral, but in the case of important individuals the damage to society is considered particularly severe, and the associated ceremonial needs to address a wider range of issues.” C. Tait, “Colonising Memory: Manipulations of Death, Burial and Commemoration in the Career of Richard Boyle, First Earl of Cork (1566-1643),” *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, Vol. 101C, No. 4. (2001), p. 127.

personally presided over the funeral of Moray, recognised the expedience of honouring him thus. For Knox and the other reformers death certainly was the great leveller, but if a society cannot honour its important figures, particularly if they have been murdered, then the Reformation may have found travelling to be even more difficult. Even Knox himself received a burial that befit his station, being laid to rest within the grounds of St Giles, but not within the fabric of the building. This was certainly no snub, as it is clear that Knox would not have wished for intra-mural burial.

As has been seen, Knox's writings on intra-mural burial were clear, but his beliefs concerning burial aisles are less so. It was partly in order to combat the slow abandonment of intra-mural burial that the concept of the burial aisle was introduced, and mooted by prominent members of the Kirk, such as Birnie in *The Blame of Kirk-Buriall*. Burial aisles had the tenuous distinction of being considered separate from the fabric of the kirk, but they were close enough that the prominent members of the parish could still receive a suitable burial without violating any tenets of Reformed Protestantism. The concept of the burial aisle clearly went against the ideal that burial grounds were to be removed from inside town and city walls as specified in *The First Book of Discipline*, yet it seems in this case that certain compromises had to be made. As has been seen, the success that the Scottish Reformation enjoyed was due, in no small part, to the support of the aristocracy. The leaders of the Kirk must subsequently have found it difficult to convince the aristocracy that they were now only to have humble funerals, funerals indistinguishable from the common man or woman. For many within the Kirk the development of burial aisles was a suitable compromise. It was not the case, however, that every instance of continuing intra-mural burial among the aristocracy was just a display of social status. As seen above the Reformation spread slowly from its central base, and certain areas of Scotland were slow to adopt it. One such area was the North-East, which was known to be a Catholic stronghold. It is a distinct possibility that lingering adherence to Catholicism was occasionally hidden behind the desire to have a suitable aristocratic burial. It is unclear what the remaining Catholic aristocracy felt concerning the development of burial aisles, as the vast majority of Scotland's remaining Catholics could not openly profess their beliefs. It may be the case that they too accepted burial aisles as a suitable compromise. Regarding Knox's own burial there is, unfortunately, little evidence beyond Calderwood's account. Knox left a will, but it contains no instructions as to how or where he wished to be buried. It could be suggested

that his burial outside of St Giles, but still in the kirkyard rather than outside of the city walls, was both a tribute to his beliefs and a show of respect for the man himself.

Conclusion

From the evidence presented in this chapter it may seem that the Scottish Reformers were attempting to strip all ritual aspects from burials. It was certainly the case that attempts were made to strip all empty superstition and intercessory practices, which were undoubtedly ritualistic. Indeed, in *The History of the Reformation*, upon being asked why the Kirk may not devise ceremonies to decorate the sacraments, Knox replies “Because the Kirk awght to do nothing, butt in faith, and awght not to go befor; but is bound to follow the voce of the trew Pastor.”¹³⁵ Concerning England, Thomas Cranmer, in *The Book of Common Prayer*, agreed that the majority of ceremonies should be removed from Christian practices. However, he goes on to state that “wythout some Ceremonies it is not possible to keepe any order or quiete discyplene in the church.”¹³⁶ For Knox, of course, this was not the case, and the partial removal of ceremonies did not go far enough.¹³⁷ Calvin, in a letter to Farel from April 1539 stated his dislike for the overabundance of “trifling or superfluous”¹³⁸ ceremonies, and in a letter to Edward VI in January 1551 stated that “simplicity and order be observed in the use of ceremonies,”¹³⁹ yet did not comment specifically on burial ceremonies. As seen above, however, it has been suggested that the Scottish Reformed Protestant burial practices were actually more severe than those that took place in Geneva. In Scotland, the funeral sermon, on the occasions one took place, was often taken by the clergy as an opportunity to extemporise on the subject of death and the afterlife, but such sermons rarely followed a set form, which could in turn be seen as somewhat anti-ritualistic. Robert Scribner has stated that:

¹³⁵ *The Works of John Knox*, Vol. I, p. 195. Knox also asks, in *A Godly Letter to the Faithful in London*, “How know ye that theis your workes, rytis, and ceremoneis pleaseis God, seing ye haif not his commandement to do the same?” *The Works of John Knox*, Vol. III, p. 180.

¹³⁶ *The boke of the common praier and administratio[n] of thee Sacramentes, and other Rytes and ceremonies of the Churche, after the use of the churche of Englande*. (STC-16271. 1549), fol. xxxv^r.

¹³⁷ Of course, as Clare Kellar has noted, it was only a minority of voices on either side of the border for whom the lack of doctrinal consensus posed any serious concerns. However, as is subsequently noted, the variations did “have important implications for the future relations between the countries.” C. Kellar, *Scotland, England, and the Reformation, 1534-61*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), p. 212.

¹³⁸ *Letters of John Calvin*, Vol. I, p. 137.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol II, p. 302.

It is also incorrect to argue that the Reformation created an antiritual form of religion which dispensed with sacred time, places, persons, or things. After initial attempts to abolish or reform life cycle rituals, many, such as churching and confirmation, reappeared in modified form, even within the Reformed tradition.¹⁴⁰

It is true that many ritualistic aspects of pre-Reformation Christianity made their way back into practice, even within the Reformed Protestant tradition, but does this necessarily mean that the initial reformers themselves were not attempting such a creation? This too is a subject that will be addressed more closely in Chapter Five, when it will be shown that the Kirk continued to attempt to remove other ritualised aspects of burials throughout Scotland, for fear that ritual actually impedes genuine feeling. The argument against this is, of course, that the lack of ritual itself can become ritual, but was this what the reformers in Scotland had intended?

Whether or not the reformers had been attempting to strip ritual from burial practices is debateable, however, it may be the case that the leaders of the Scottish Reformation were attempting to remove the importance of the body on the occasion of a death. As Chapter Two has shown, pre-Reformation Scotland practised certain ceremonies that actually highlighted the continual presence of death, as did every Catholic nation at the time. As death was an ever present spectre the dead body itself had a role to play in reminding the people that they should be spiritually ready for their own death. This was done through various ceremonies such as intra-mural burial, graveside sermons, the foundation of soul masses and obits, and, in other areas of the Catholic world if not Scotland, the removal of bones to charnel houses. As seen in this chapter, every one of these ceremonies was affected by the Reformation. Soul masses and obits were to cease throughout Scotland, and as has been seen the graveside sermon was also largely removed from burials, at least initially. Of course, intra-mural burial was not as successfully reformed, despite the best intentions of the leaders of the Reformation. However, as seen above this is most likely due to a desire to have burials that reflected the social status of the deceased, rather than a lingering adherence to the importance of the body, or any potential beliefs in the intercessory efficacy of such burials. It is also possible, however, that there were those in Scotland who wished to adhere to the old ways of death. For them it would not matter that such practices were to cease following the

¹⁴⁰ R. Scribner, "The Reformation, Popular Magic, and the 'Disenchantment of the World,'" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 23, No. 3, Religion and History. (1993), p. 483.

Reformation, and they would continue to observe them in private for many years to come, as successive chapters will show.

Of course, despite the fact that the Scottish reformers had attempted to strip away from burial all that was deemed to be intercessory or superstitious in nature, in combination with the attempts to reduce the importance of the body following death, it was not the case that this displayed a lack of respect for the dead. The Scottish reformers were attempting to remove all unnecessary additions to the Christian funeral rite, not the rite itself. It was still important that a corpse receive a Christian burial, just the simplest possible. The rite was to become a burial in ground set aside for that purpose alone, aligned to the east, at a depth of six feet. However, as will be seen in more detail in Chapters Four and Eight, this did not prevent the exclusion of outsiders. Traditionally such individuals were buried in the unconsecrated north of the kirkyard, as seen in Chapter Two. Although in theory no ground was to be consecrated for burial following the Reformation it will be seen that in certain cases beliefs in the importance of consecrated ground were to continue. However, for the reformers it was not the burial that would prevent incorporation into the world of the dead, rather it was, of course, the Day of Judgment.

Chapter Four

Continuity and Change in Reformation Scotland¹

As was seen in the previous chapter, following the Reformation several works intended to govern burial practices were produced. In many cases, however, the instructions contained within were not strictly adhered to, for a variety of reasons. One reason not fully investigated in the previous chapter is the simple fact that not every individual willingly abandoned Catholicism following the Reformation. It is easy to state that Scotland became a Protestant nation, but that does not take into account the fact that there will have been those within the country that still adhered to Catholic beliefs and practices. For these groups, families, and individuals it was not possible to simply abandon their faith, yet they could not openly display their beliefs. As such they had to adhere publicly to Protestantism while continuing to practise Catholicism in private. There were certain individuals, however, who had fewer problems in openly displaying their Catholicism, particularly if they wielded a certain amount of power or influence. These individuals were, of course, members of the aristocracy. The burial practices used by the families of these individuals, both aristocratic and common, will be investigated in this chapter.

Additionally, not all pre-Reformation burial practices had been reformed in the years following 1560, for example how the state was to deal with the bodies of those who had been executed. These burial practices will also be investigated below.

To Remain Catholic or Adopt the New Practices?

Of course, as seen in the previous chapter, Catholic practices did not disappear entirely after 1560, and as such there were instances where it was not merely the chosen location of a burial that went against the instructions of the General Assembly. In 1597 the General Assembly ordained “that no pictures or images be caried about in burialls, vnder the paine of the censures of the Kirk.”² Of course, this instruction was not immediately adhered to, as can be seen from the funeral, in 1605, of William Gordon of Gight, a particularly vivid

¹ Aspects of this chapter have appeared in an earlier draft as G. D. Raeburn, “The Changing Face of Scottish Burial Practices, 1560-1645.”

² *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assemblies of the Kirk of Scotland, from the year M. D. LX. Part Third. M.D.XCIII.-M. DC. XVIII.* (Edinburgh, 1845), p. 939.

example of lingering Catholic burial practices, as during the procession one of his tenants carried a spear, at the top of which a crucifix had been attached.³ Furthermore, in 1606 the fifth lord Ogilvy was buried amidst “some superstitious ceremonies and rittes as gif the professioun of papistrie had been specialie licensed and tolerated.”⁴ In these instances, however, the General Assembly did not merely turn a blind eye. A complaint against “the insolency of Papists, chiefly in the North parts”⁵ was made, and, indeed, taken very seriously. The General Assembly of 1606 elected to present a petition to James VI and I in order to ensure no Catholic practice went unpunished. James quickly responded to the petition, and “for the superstitious rites used at the buriall of the Lord Ogilvy and Gight ‘his Majesties pleasure was, that their sons should be called before the Councell and committed, but no sentence should be given till the whole circumstances were tried and notified to him’.”⁶ It is not clear, however, what action, if any, was ever taken. Additionally, in Aberdeen in 1604 and 1618 there are records of attempts to prosecute artists for having painted crucifixes for use at funerals.⁷ It was not, however, just the north of the country that was to prove problematic.

Elsewhere, and somewhat more vague in nature, in Dunfermline in 1650 an inquiry was ordered by the Presbytery as “some information was given to the Synode anent some superstitious rites vsit in the buriall of the late Laird of Fordell.”⁸ Additionally, in 1654 in St Andrews, “The brethren, in ther severall charges, are exhorted to take notice of Dirigies after burialls, for suppressing them.”⁹ Occasionally, of course, a desire to adhere to the old ways of death came not from dedication to the old faith, but from an awareness of social standing. As has been seen in Chapter Three, and will be seen in more detail below, the reformers had attempted to end displays of wealth and power at funerals. Some members of the aristocracy appear to have accepted the ban on intra-mural burial, but were less willing to abandon displays of wealth and power. Indeed, the desire to display one’s social status in death was to remain strong throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. At the burial of the Earl of Mar in Alloa in 1689 there were four ushers in mourning garb, the coffin was adorned with small escutcheons, a mortcloth, cyphers, and a helmet and coronet, and the footmen were also

³ Brown, *Noble Society in Scotland*, p. 260.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ J. Spottiswood. *The History of the Church of Scotland*. (Wing-S5022. London: J. Flesher, 1655), p. 502.

⁶ Ibid., p. 503.

⁷ CH2/448/2, p. 72; CH2/448/3, p. 262. Cf. Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland*, p. 191.

⁸ *Selections from the minutes of the Synod of Fife, 1611-1687*, p. 170.

⁹ *Selections from the minutes of the Presbyteries of St. Andrews and Cupar*, p. 67.

garbed in mourning.¹⁰ Yet these funerals were not just for the family of the deceased. Society was also watching, and judgements would be made if a funeral was seen to be inadequate. In a letter to the Earl of Arran, dated 28 April 1695, the Duke of Hamilton writes of the funeral of the Duke of Queensbury. Hamilton writes that Queensbury was carried by an “ugly common closs hearse and hackney horses” in very bad order, and that there was a very small company present. The funeral was rumoured to have cost £1000, despite the poor show, and that an additional £1000 had been spent on a tomb.¹¹ As will be seen in Chapter Five, it was important that one be viewed by one’s peers as deserving of respect.

Of course, it was not merely extremely elaborate funeral processions, or adherence to practices deemed superstitious, that demonstrated the extent of lingering Catholicism within Scotland,¹² particularly among the aristocracy. Since the Reformation the General Assembly in Scotland had been attempting to end the practice of funeral sermons. These attempts, however, often proved to be futile as they made little impression on the nobility, who clearly believed they were deserving of praise at their funerals.¹³ In addition, the attempts to eradicate the funeral service were often thwarted by the parish ministers themselves, as they frequently saw them as “an opportunity to exemplify virtue.”¹⁴ Of course, this was a problem that was far from endemic within the Kirk, as can be seen from the fact that in 1594 the presbytery of Haddington warned the sixth lord Seton against a Sunday funeral for his brother, a warning he chose to ignore. Seton chose the local schoolmaster to preach the sermon, a man who, according to Brown, was “almost certainly a Catholic.”¹⁵ In this case it can, of course, be argued that the sixth lord Seton chose a Catholic to preach the funeral sermon due to a possible clandestine Catholicism held by himself, in which case the presbytery’s warning would always have fallen upon deaf ears. It is, however, worth noting that the attempt was made, against a member of the nobility no less, to prevent a funeral sermon from taking place, when elsewhere other members of the Kirk were themselves

¹⁰ GD124/15/192.

¹¹ GD406/1/4006.

¹² One particularly interesting, if vague, record from Edinburgh in 1585 states, “The foresaid bailyeis and counsall... being convenit, considerand the evill bruit of ane misbehaviour toward the deid committet daylie be the buriarres, quhome the bailyies can nocht owersie without greitt daynger, thairfore the maist pairt fynds that the buriall be transportet to the nether yaird of the Hie Kirk for a seasoun, and ordanis the dene of gild to caus mak ane dure and entres in the kirkheweh [kirk-wall] to the samyn.” Cf. *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh*, Vol. IV, pp. 434-435. It is unclear as to the exact nature of the abuse taking place, but evidently the council wished for burials to take place in a location where they could safely be supervised.

¹³ Brown, *Noble Society in Scotland*, p. 264.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid. Seton was subsequently summoned before Haddington Presbytery and “was admonished on his submission to guard against transgressing in future.” Cameron, ed., *The First Book of Discipline*, p. 201, n. 76.

continuing the practice. Of course, burials were not to take place on the Sabbath regardless of whether or not a funeral sermon was preached. In 1633 the Presbytery of Lanark censured the minister Robert Somerville for leaving his flock to attend a burial on Sunday.¹⁶ At Elgin in 1648 the Synod of Moray stated that “because regrate is made that in landward, especiallie toward the highlandis, the publict worships is greatlie prejudged be Sabbath dayes burialles, therefore the Assemblie recommend that by Sabbath dayes burialles the publict worships be not prejudged, and to endeavour the restraint of kirk burialles.”¹⁷ Interestingly, in September 1695 it was determined that burials were not to take place in Calton burial ground in Edinburgh until after the afternoon service between March and October, although between November and February burials were allowed to take place between the two sermons.¹⁸ This was evidently a phenomenon that was not restricted to one part of the country.

From the fact that there are several existing records of the funerals of sixteenth and seventeenth century nobles that did not adhere to the General Assembly’s instructions as to the ideal burial it may seem that this was the norm. However, this is, of course, not the case. Nor is it the case that it was only the aristocracy that were choosing to ignore the General Assembly’s instructions regarding this matter. However, as Colvin has stated, “an inscribed stone, a painted board or just a mound of earth was all that marked the graves of countless ordinary people, pagan or Christian, Catholic or Protestant.”¹⁹ The simple fact is that, with the notable exception of John Knox amongst certain others, those funerals that did follow the pattern of the ideal Protestant burial were not recorded in great numbers, or have not survived. An example of a surviving record of a funeral that did follow the ideal pattern concerns that of the ninth Earl of Errol in 1631. He was buried at Slains on the day of his death in a quiet ceremony attended only by local friends and domestic servants. In his will he had left instructions that any money that could be spent on an extravagant funeral should instead be given to the poor. Interestingly enough Errol was a committed Catholic.²⁰ Apart from these few exceptions, however, it is those that were atypical that have survived as they are the ones that have interested historians over the years. In many cases the details of the

¹⁶ *Selections from the Registers of the Presbytery of Lanark*, p. 9.

¹⁷ Cramond, *Extracts from the Records of the Synod of Moray*, p. 91.

¹⁸ Robertson, *South Leith Records*, p. 180.

¹⁹ Colvin, *Architecture and the After-Life*, p. 364. For an example of lingering Catholicism among the common people of Europe see R. A. Mentzer. “The Persistence of ‘Superstition and Idolatry’ among Rural French Calvinists.” *Church History*, Vol. 65, No. 2. (1996), pp. 220-233.

²⁰ Brown, *Noble Society in Scotland*, p. 261. It is, however, uncertain whether the ninth Earl’s funeral was conducted in such a manner as to demonstrate his simple Christian virtue or to play down his Catholicism. Catholic apologists have suggested that Errol’s intent was actually the benefit of the poor, as laid out in the will. Cf. Bellesheim, *History of the Catholic Church of Scotland*, Vol. IV, p. 30, n. 1.

funeral itself can only be extrapolated from the fact that all that survives are final words or perhaps eulogies for the deceased. In the case of the fifth Earl of Argyll, Archibald Campbell, all that has survived is a simple wall plaque with a Latin inscription highlighting the importance of his lineage, his noble character, and his commitment to Protestantism to the extent that he had been willing to suffer and die for his beliefs.²¹ Other than the eulogy, all that is known about the fifth Earl's funeral is that it took place at Kilmun, on the shores of Holy Loch in Argyll, next to most of his ancestors,²² and that rumours circulating at the time suggested he had been poisoned.²³ In this particular example it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that had the fifth Earl's funeral in any way violated the instructions of the General Assembly a record of this would have been preserved as, without the fifth Earl, his predecessors, and his Campbell kin, "Protestantism would not have made any real impact"²⁴ in Gaelic Scotland.

Other memorial inscriptions have survived from this time, but not all have the same tone as that of the fifth Earl of Argyll. The tombstone of Sir James Johnstone, erected in 1608, forever preserves "the fact that the dead chief 'was maist tresonabillie murtherit, by the eighth lord Maxwell'."²⁵ In this case it would seem that preserving the memory of a crime was more important than extolling the virtues of the deceased. George Hay tells of a contrary example in the kirk of Lochgoilhead in Argyll, dating from the seventeenth century, yet with no date of death. According to Hay it is probably a monument to the ninth laird Campbell, who had been declared an outlaw in Edinburgh in 1662 for several violent murders.²⁶ For the Campells of Ardkinglas it seems, understandably, more important that in this case his crimes and his punishment were not to be remembered.

Of course, intra-mural burial, access to burial aisles, and even the ability to adhere to more traditional modes of burial were options largely reserved for those with money and

²¹ J. E. A. Dawson, *The Politics of Religion in the Age of Mary, Queen of Scots*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 46-47.

²² G. and P. Anderson, *Guide to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, including Orkney and Zetland*. (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 3rd edn, 1850), p. 108.

²³ "In the end of this moneth of September the Erle of Argyle quha had gottin and obtenit pairtesing with his wyff quha was ane base sister to the quein of Scotland be consent of the parliament, himsellff being culpabill and the said Erle of Glencairn, depairtit of this present lyff verrie haistellie at Lorne and it was judgeit that he sould have beine poysonit." R. Lindesay, *The Historie and Chronicles of Scotland*, Vol. II. Ed. A. J. G. Mackay (Edinburgh and London: Scottish Text Society, 1899), p. 310.

²⁴ J. Dawson, "Calvinism and the Gaidhealtachd in Scotland." In *Calvinism in Europe, 1540-1620*, eds. A. Pettegree, A. Duke, G. Lewis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 247.

²⁵ Brown, *Noble Society in Scotland*, p. 268.

²⁶ G. Hay, *The Architecture of Scottish Post-Reformation Churches, 1560-1843*. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 207.

influence. The poorer members of Scottish society had no such options following the Reformation.²⁷ Indeed, in the majority of cases the poor would not even be buried in a coffin. In 1563 the General Assembly stated:

Touching the buriall of the poore in every parochin to landwart , it is ordainit that a beere be made in every paroch to carrie the dead corpes to buriall, and that village or house wher the dead lyes, with the nixt house adjacent therto, or a certaine number of every house, sall convey the dead to the buriall, and eird it saxe foote under the eird; and that every superintendent within his awin bounds requyre the lairds and barrones within the same to make ane act in ther court tuiching this ordour, and cause ther officers warne ther narrest neighbours wher the dead lyes, to convey the samin to buriall as said is, according to ther said act; and farder, that the superintendents take ordour heir as occasioun sall serve.²⁸

In Edinburgh in 1584 it was ordained “that nane be bureit in the mwre bot be the beir and nocht careit vpoun mennis bakis or sledis for sweirnes of the buriaries.”²⁹ On the Isle of Bute each parish owned a common chist, used to convey the poorer deceased to the kirkyard for burial. Occasionally there was a charge for the use of the chist. In Kingarth in 1693 the cost was twenty shillings.³⁰ As will be seen in Chapter Eight the use of the bier for the burial of the poor would continue in some areas of Scotland until at least the nineteenth century. Elsewhere the use of the bier for the poor was brought on by external circumstances. In South Leith in 1695 starvation was so rife amongst the poorer inhabitants that it was necessary to bring them for burial upon the bier, wrapped only in a shroud.³¹ By the next year, however, this had become standard practice, and a coffin was only to be used for the burial of the poor if it was provided by the friends or family of the deceased.³² As seen in Chapter Two, prior to the Reformation there were associations which would provide funerals for their members, and variations of this practice continued in certain areas after the Reformation. In 1610 the elders of the South Leith Kirk Session who were Maltmen agreed

²⁷ Of course, as will be seen in Chapter Seven, some areas of Scotland held on to Catholicism longer than others, and in those areas the older forms of burial continued.

²⁸ *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assemblies of the Kirk of Scotland, Part First*, p. 43.

²⁹ *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh*, Vol. IV, p. 432. [That none be buried within the walls of the kirk-yard but by the biere, and not carried upon men’s backs or sleds through the idleness of the buriars].

³⁰ Hewison, *The Isle of Bute in the Olden Time*, Vol. II, p. 288.

³¹ Robertson, *South Leith Records*, p. 178.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 182.

to provide funerals for their servants, provided that the other corporations would do the same.³³ Of course, for those who were not in a position to benefit from such an arrangement, the kirks themselves would often collect money for the poor from their parishioners, either from collection boxes at funerals,³⁴ or as a fee for allowing intra-mural burial, as seen above. It would seem that, for the poor to avoid burial in the common paupers' graves, they had little choice but to adhere to the acts of the General Assembly following the Reformation, although by doing so, they would periodically benefit from the punishment of those who did not.³⁵

The Transportation of Corpses

Returning to the case of the fifth Earl of Argyll, as seen above, depending on where he actually died, not everyone within the Kirk would necessarily have approved of certain circumstances surrounding his funeral. As has been seen in the previous chapter, for Birnie, the aforementioned minister for Lanark, and other ministers within the Kirk, burial aisles were acceptable, possibly even desirable, as they recognised their theoretical distinction from the kirk buildings themselves. What was not acceptable was the apparent belief that one plot of earth was better than another as a burial location. As he states; "for as fishe in every sea is at home, so we in every earth, if we be the Lords, to whom the earth and her implements do all appertaine."³⁶ As such, had the fifth Earl of Argyll died in any other place than Kilmun itself, Birnie would not have approved of his corpse being transported in order to be laid to rest next to the majority of his ancestors. The fifth Earl actually died at Barbreck, also in Argyll, yet distant enough that Birnie still would not have approved. What would he have thought of the second Marquis of Hamilton whose body was transported from London to

³³ Ibid., p. 8.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 137.

³⁵ It should be stated, however, that it was not always the poor who benefited from the costs surrounding death and burial. In 1636 Andrew Dow petitioned the Synod of Moray for the money his kirk had taken from burials to build himself a stone house, as he had recently been the victim of arson. He was granted the burial silver of Abertarff. Cf. Cramond, *Extracts from the Records of the Synod of Moray*, p. 39. Of course, some individuals were somewhat more underhanded in their appropriation of these funds. In March 1675 and October 1676 a certain Robert Craig was accused of taking the money from burials intended for the poor for himself. Robertson, *South Leith Records*, pp. 131, 135.

³⁶ Birnie, *The Blame of Kirk-Buriall*, sig. C2v. Pierre Viret, writing in Lausanne in the 1550s, also held that, for the Christian, no one piece of land was any more suitable than the rest. However, for Viret land could be corrupted by the presence of 'infidels.' Cf. B. Roussel, "'Ensevelir honnestement les corps': funeral corteges and Huguenot culture." In *Society and Culture in the Huguenot World, 1559-1685*, eds. Raymond A. Mentzer and Andrew Spicer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 199.

Scotland in the company of 400 coaches in 1625?³⁷ This practice, of course, was not limited to the fifth Earl of Argyll, and was actually widespread among the nobility of Gaelic Scotland. Jane Dawson has noted the importance of being laid to rest in the clan burial ground, even if this lay outside of the local kirk, or was even situated a far enough distance away that a considerable journey with the coffin became necessary.³⁸ Dawson goes on to note that the funeral customs of the Highlands in many cases were not explicitly Catholic and, as a result, “could be left intact by the Protestant Gaelic ministers who, at the same time, had no compunction about changing the funeral service itself.”³⁹ It would seem from this that the ministers of Highland parishes were much more willing to compromise than certain of their southern counterparts. For the Gaelic ministers it was much more important that any specifically Catholic remnants were removed from traditional Highland burial practices, rather than attempting to impose a totally new structure upon their parishioners. For the Gaelic aristocracy adherence to the traditional burial sites had no religious connotations. “Burial amongst one’s ancestors served to demonstrate the permanence and stability of a family and it was a tradition which remained strong even after the Reformation.”⁴⁰ It has been stated that these clan burial grounds “were no less sacred places,”⁴¹ and indeed perhaps they were not, but this does seem to rely upon a fairly loose definition of sacred.

It was not just the Gaelic aristocracy, however, that were transporting corpses for burial. A particularly interesting example of the corpse of a non-Gaelic noble being transported involves the fourth Earl of Huntly. Huntly had died a traitor at the battle of Corrichie in 1562, and his body had posthumously faced treason charges and forfeiture in Edinburgh. Following the overturning of the forfeiture three years later “what remained of his corpse was exhumed from the Blackfriars graveyard in Edinburgh, and carried in procession to the port of Leith from where it was sent home by sea for honourable burial.”⁴²

³⁷ Brown, *Noble Society in Scotland*, p. 263.

³⁸ Dawson, “Calvinism and the Gaidhealtachd in Scotland,” p. 251.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

⁴⁰ Spicer, “‘Defyle not Christ’s kirk with your carrion’: burial and the development of burial aisles in post-Reformation Scotland,” pp. 151-152.

⁴¹ Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland*, p. 338, n. 80. For further discussion on the definition of sacred and the concept of ‘sacred space’ see, for example; J. Sheehan, “Sacred and Profane: Idolatry, Antiquarianism and the Polemics of Distinction in the Seventeenth Century.” *Past and Present*, No. 192. (2006), pp. 35-66; M. F. Graham, “Conflict and Sacred Space in Reformation-Era Scotland.” *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3. (2001), pp. 371-387; L. Doran, “Defending the Sacred: From Crac de Chevalier to Aghavillier: A Common Thread.” *History Ireland*, Vol. 15, No. 6. (2007), pp. 15-19; J. H. Kilde. *Sacred Power, Sacred Space; An Introduction to Christian Architecture and Worship*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); W. Coster, A. Spicer, eds. *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁴² Brown, *Noble Society in Scotland*, pp. 259-260.

Following his re-burial at Strathbogie “his honouris and airmes was newly proclemit at Edinburgh.”⁴³ It seems that the final resting place of the fourth Earl of Huntly, and the associations it carried with it, were so important to his family as to justify the journey his corpse undertook.⁴⁴

The Burial of the Executed

As has been seen previously, following the Scottish Reformation of 1560, the General Assembly in Scotland had been attempting to eradicate the practice of intra-mural burial in favour of the technically acceptable burial aisles or the much more desirable separate burial grounds. There were sections of society, however, that had been denied burial in consecrated ground both before and after the Reformation, namely those who had committed suicide or who had been executed. The French sociologist Robert Hertz stated:

Finally, the type of death also causes numerous exceptions to the normal ritual. All those who die a violent death or by an accident, women dying in childbirth, people killed by drowning or by lightning, and suicides, are often the object of special rites. Their bodies inspire the most intense horror and are got rid of precipitately; furthermore, their bones are not laid with those of other deceased members of the group who have died a normal death.⁴⁵

The following section will investigate whether or not this continued to be the case in Scotland following the Reformation for those who had been executed. Cases of suicide will be investigated in much closer detail in Chapter Eight.

Unfortunately, records from Scotland relating to the disposal of the bodies of those who had been executed is largely incomplete, and in some cases extrapolation has to be made from surviving examples from England and elsewhere. Additionally, as has been seen with the burial of the aristocracy, it is more common to find surviving records of these more

⁴³ Lindsay, *The Historie and Chronicles of Scotland*, Vol. II, p. 189.

⁴⁴ The practice of transporting the corpses of nobles to ancestral burial grounds can also be seen in Europe during this time period. Cf. Roussel, “‘Ensevelir honnestement les corps’: funeral corteges and Huguenot culture,” p. 194.

⁴⁵ R. Hertz, “A Contribution to the Study of the Collective Representation of Death.” In *Death and the Right Hand*, eds. R. and C. Needham (New York: Free Press, 1960), p. 85.

notable individuals rather than the common man or woman. Calderwood, in his *History of the Kirk of Scotland*, does record several executions, but rarely details of the subsequent disposal of the body. There are, however, one or two examples that do make mention of the body following the execution. The first example that is of particular interest actually concerns an English noble, Thomas Howard, the fourth Duke of Norfolk, who, in 1572, was executed following accusations of Catholicism and high treason for plotting to marry Mary, Queen of Scots. Calderwood notes that:

He was beheaded with an axe, and his head shewed to the people. After he had lyin an houre, his bodie and head were careid by his domesticks in a beare to the nearest kirk, and bureid; for the queene had mitigated the punishment pronounced at his doome.⁴⁶

This is a particularly fascinating example as the Duke of Norfolk's body, following his beheading, was reunited and buried at St Peter ad Vincula, a chapel within the walls of the Tower of London. This is fascinating as it shows that even those convicted of high treason could, upon occasion, receive a Christian burial.

Calderwood's second example that is of particular interest involves the execution of a Scottish noble, and former Regent, James Douglas. Douglas was the fourth Earl of Morton, and had also been charged with treason for suspicions concerning his involvement in the murder of Darnley.⁴⁷ Calderwood writes that, following the execution:

His bodie lay upon the scaffold till eight houres at even, and thereafter was careid to the Neather Tolbuith, where it was watched. His head was sett upon a prick, on the

⁴⁶ Calderwood, *The History of the Kirk of Scotland*, Vol. III, p. 204.

⁴⁷ The circumstances surround the burial of Darnley, following his murder in 1567, are themselves fascinating. Pearson notes the false accusation that the "corps without any decent ordour wes cast in the erth on the nycht without any ceremony or company of honest men." [Cf. Calderwood, *The History of the Kirk of Scotland*, Vol. II, p. 346]. According to Pearson the corpse was actually embalmed, and subsequently laid to rest in the Royal vault at Holyrood forty days after the murder. K. Pearson, "The Skull and Portraits of Henry Stewart, Lord Darnley, and their Bearing on The Tragedy of Mary, Queen of Scots." *Biometrika*, Vol. 20B, No. 1. (1928), pp. 37-38. Perhaps even more interesting are the details surrounding the confusion over the burial of David Rizzio, in whose murder in 1566 Darnley had been suspected of being complicit. George Buchanan, keeper of the Privy Seal in 1688, "saith that Queen Mary caused bury David Rizio almost in the arms of Queen Magdalene King James V. his first Queen in the Church of Holy-Rood-House, yet in the end of 1688, when the vault wherein she was interred was discovered at the demolishing of the superstitious Pictures and Carvings of that Kirk, there was no Corps found therein, but Queen Magdalene's, King James V's. close by hers, and by him the Coffin of Henry Lord Darnley, and the Coffins of King James V. his two sons, all of them embalmed in lead with their names on their several Coffins of lead, and the Coffin of the Countess of Argyle who was natural daughter to King James V. lying cross their feet, which takes up all the room in that vault: And Bishop Lesly in answer to Buchanan saith that David Rizio was buried in the Porch of the Abbay Church." SRO1/33, p. 191.

highest stone of the gavell of the Tolbuith, toward the publict street. So ended this nobleman, one of the cheefe instruments of the reformatioun of religioun; a defender of the same, and of the king in his minoritie, for the which he is now unthankfullie dealt with.⁴⁸

The Earl of Morton's body was buried in a common grave in Greyfriars kirkyard, while his head was to remain on public display, a more common fate for the remains of those who committed treason. It was not, however, to remain there indefinitely. Calderwood goes on to state:

Upon Moonday the 10th of December, the Erle of Morton's head was taikin doun off the pricke which is upon the high gavell of the Tolbuith, with the king's licence, at the elleventh houre of the day; was layed in a fyne cloath, convoyed honorablie, and layed in the kist where his bodie was buried. The Laird of Carmichaell careid it, shedding tears abundantlie by the way.⁴⁹

Although his head and body were to be separated for a much longer time, approximately eighteen months, as in the case of the Duke of Norfolk, Douglas' head and body were eventually to be reunited and buried in the same grave. Pitcairn preserves the Royal Warrant that was issued to have Douglas' head taken down:

Prouest and baillies of our burgh of Edinburgh, We greit zow weill. It is our will and We command zow, that incontinent efter the sight heirof, ze tak doun the heid of James sum tyme Erle of Mortoun of the pairt quhair it now is plaiceit, vpon zour awld tolbuith; swa that the sam heid may be bureit: For the quhilk this our lettre sall be to zou sufficient warrand. Subseryvit with our hand, At Halyrudhous, the aucht day of December, and of our reigne the sextene zeir, 1582.⁵⁰

The fact that Douglas' body was buried in a common grave is very interesting. As has been seen above there was some dispute within the aristocracy at the time as to what constituted an appropriate burial. The Earl of Morton, however, had been a vocal supporter of

⁴⁸ Calderwood, *The History of the Kirk of Scotland*, Vol. III, p. 575.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 692.

⁵⁰ R. Pitcairn, *Criminal Trials in Scotland*, Vol. I. (Edinburgh: William Tate, 1833), p. 116, n. 6.

the Reformation, so it is entirely possible that he himself would have sought such an unremarkable burial. It is, however, probable that the Duke of Norfolk would have preferred a burial more suited to a noble of his standing. This is an interesting comparison. The Duke of Norfolk, as seen above, was eventually treated with a certain amount of respect in that, even though he had been convicted of treason, his head was not to be displayed for any length of time, and was swiftly buried in a Christian fashion. Yet, as a member of the English aristocracy he would have, prior to his arrest and trial, expected and desired a grander funeral and burial. On the other hand, the Earl of Morton, also convicted of treason, did have his head displayed for approximately eighteen months before it was reunited with his body. The Earl of Morton did, indeed, also receive a Christian funeral, except, as a leading member of the Reformation he should ultimately have been content with the funeral and burial he received. However, we will, unfortunately, never know the truth of the matter. An interesting counterpoint to this is the execution of the Earl of Montrose, James Graham, in 1650, for his efforts on behalf of Charles II against the Covenanters. Montrose, and his loyal companion William Hay of Dalgetty were executed in Edinburgh, and both bodies were hastily buried under the public gibbet.⁵¹ However, in 1661, following the Restoration of the previous year, both bodies were disinterred and reburied with full ceremonial honour in the aisle of St Giles Cathedral.⁵² Their efforts on behalf of Charles II had clearly not been forgotten.

Calderwood's is not the only Scottish historical narrative to contain information regarding certain interesting examples of executions. Pitscottie's *Chronicles of Scotland* also contains several fascinating cases. Pitscottie writes:

In the moneth of Januar the laird of Nevttoune callit Hepburne that fyrit the traine of poulder quhen the king was slaine and the zoung laird of tallow war hangit and quarterit beand at the kingis slauchter and their bodyes war brunt in poulder in lyk maner.⁵³

As with the Earl of Morton, as seen above, John Hepburn of Newton and John Hay of Tallow were executed in January 1568 for their part in the murder of Darnley. Unlike Morton,

⁵¹ J. C. Robbie, "The Embalming of Montrose." In *The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club*. (Edinburgh: Printed by T. and A. Constable for the members of the club, 1908), p. 33.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁵³ Lindesay, *The Historie and Chronicles of Scotland*, Vol. II, pp. 201-202.

however, their punishment was to be much more severe. They were hanged and quartered,⁵⁴ and their bodies were burnt in powder. Mackay notes that “the burning of their bodies in powder is a late instance of the retributory mode of punishment, which made the criminal’s punishment imitate that he had inflicted on his victim.”⁵⁵ In this situation, of course, there would have been no body left to bury, which in itself was part of the point of this method of execution. As with the ashes of those who had been burnt at the stake it is unclear exactly what happened to these remains, although it is highly likely they were merely left where they lay.

Concerning a similar case in 1569, Pitscottie states:

At this tyme ane callit William Stewart quha was lyone herauld was brunt in Sanctandros becaus he was ane of thame quha had conspired the regentis slauchter and fled away with the cryme to the castell of Dumbartane and had to the castell [of] Edinburgh.⁵⁶

In this instance Stewart was executed for his part in the attempt on the life of the Regent Moray. It is interesting, however, in that he was burnt at the stake, a punishment usually reserved for witchcraft or heresy. Mackay notes that elsewhere “his execution is dated 15th August 1569, and the burning ascribed to his being condemned for witchcraft.”⁵⁷ Indeed, Pitcairn preserves a letter from Lord Hunsdon to Sir William Cecil in which is stated Stewart was burned for “Conjuration and Witchcraft.”⁵⁸ Pitcairn goes on to state that it was believed that Stewart had been “Conspyring to take the Regent’s lyffe by Sorcery and Necromancey.”⁵⁹

While executions for witchcraft were, to a certain extent, commonplace in Early Modern Europe, it has been suggested that in Scotland in particular supposed witches were pursued diligently, with methods of interrogation being particularly vicious and cruel.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ No mention is made of drawing, but it is possible that they also suffered this.

⁵⁵ Lindesay, *The Historie and Chronicles of Scotland*, Vol. II, p. 445.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 446.

⁵⁸ Pitcairn, *Criminal Trials in Scotland*, Vol. I, p. 510.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 510, n. 2.

⁶⁰ Cf. C. Lerner, *Enemies of God; the Witch-Hunt in Scotland*. (London: Chatto & Windus, 1981); J. Goodare, ed., *The Scottish Witch-Hunt in Context*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); J. Goodare et al., eds., *Witchcraft and Belief in Early Modern Scotland*. (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008).

Concerning the case of Stewart and the sheer number of witches executed in Scotland Pitscottie writes:

At that tyme quhen my lord regent was in the north land and at the regentis hamecuming to Sanctandros the said William Stewart was broucht furth of Edinburgh to Sanctandros and justified and siclyk that same zeir thair was twa witches brunt in Sanctandros and siclyk in Dundie and vthiris plaices to the number of ten or thairby quha pronunscat at thair deid that my lord regent should be slaine be the schot of poulder and that becaus he pat downe the puire vitches and saiffit gretter in his awin cumpanie daylie with him.⁶¹

Mackay notes that between the dates of 16 May and 12 August 1569 four women had been tried for witchcraft, but that the trials are not recorded in the Books of Justiciary.⁶² Pitscottie, however, states that approximately ten women had been burnt at the stake for witchcraft around this time, and that these women had all spoken out against the regent Moray at their executions for his habit of persecuting witches. Once again it is unclear as to what would have been done with the ashes of these women, but it is likely that they would have been left to disperse naturally. However, Christina Larner had suggested that the ashes of those burnt at the stake, specifically those executed for witchcraft, would occasionally have been thrown into the sea in places such as St Andrews, leading to such place names as The Witches' Lake.⁶³ In one particularly gruesome episode a woman accused of witchcraft was executed in the parish of Irongray, Dumfries, during the reign of James VI by being enclosed in a tar-barrel, set ablaze, and then rolled into the Water of Cluden.⁶⁴ Clearly, in this instance there would have been no body or ashes left on land. It should briefly be noted that occasionally, when the local authorities were seen not to be diligent enough in their activities by the local populace, matters could be taken out of their hands. Maxwell Wood notes the sad tale of Elspeth M'Keand, an old woman from Palmallet, near Whithorn, Dumfries and Galloway. He writes:

⁶¹ Lindesay, *The Historie and Chronicles of Scotland*, pp. 217-218.

⁶² Ibid., p. 448; Pitcairn, *Criminal Trials in Scotland*, Vol. I, p. 510, n. 2.

⁶³ Larner, *Enemies of God*, p. 110; J. G. Dalyell, *The Darker Superstitions of Scotland*. (Edinburgh: Waugh and Innes, 1834), p. 636.

⁶⁴ J. Maxwell Wood, *Witchcraft and Superstitious Record in the South-Western District of Scotland*. (Dumfries: J. Maxwell & Son, 1911), p. 122-123.

On one occasion she was arraigned before the magistrates of Whithorn for some supposed uncannie doings, but the authorities, not endorsing the general belief, set her at liberty. So disappointed and enraged were the community at her liberation that they caught her and inserted a host of new brass pins in her body, and afterwards dragged her down to the shore at Dinnans, holding her below water until life was nearly extinct. The old woman never fairly recovered from this cruel treatment, and when she died her remains were objected to as not being fit to rest in the Kirkyaird.⁶⁵

Burning at the stake, however, was not the only unusual punishment meted out in Early Modern Scotland when the crime was perceived to be worthy. Pitcairn notes that, on 30 April 1591, John Dickson was sentenced after being found guilty of the murder of his father in 1588:

For the quhilk cryme, the Justice, be the mouth of James Scheill, dempstar, ordanit him to be brokin vpoun the row, at the mercat croce of Edinburgh.⁶⁶

Pitcairn goes on to note that the row refers to the wheel. He states:

This was an unusual punishment in Scotland, and was reserved for cases of the utmost atrocity. An instance of a criminal being broken upon the wheel occurs in the case of Robert Weir, for the murder of John Kincaid of Warriestoun... He was sentenced to be ‘brokin vpoune ane row quhill he be deid, and to ly thairat during the space of xxiiij houris: And thairefter his body to be tane vpone the said row, and set up in ane public place, betuix the place of Warestoun and the town of Leyth; and to remane thairupoune, ay and quhill command be gevin for the buriall thair of.’⁶⁷

As mentioned above, the majority of surviving records detailing the fate of those to be executed during this time concern the nobility. However, if the case was particularly notorious then records are more likely to survive due to lingering interest in the case. An example of this can be seen immediately following the Reformation, in March 1561. Pitcairn

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 96-97. No year is given for this account.

⁶⁶ Pitcairn, *Criminal Trials in Scotland*, Vol. I, p. 241.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 241, n. 2.

records the case of Adam Colquhoun, who was convicted of poisoning Robert Rankin, a household servant of Patrick Hamilton of Bogside. Mr Colquhoun was:

To be taken to the Gallows at the Castle-hill of Edinburgh, and HANGED thereon until he be dead; and immediately thereafter his body to be BURNT to ashes.⁶⁸

Again, through lack of concrete evidence, what was to be done with the ashes can only be assumed.

As will be seen in instances of suicide, the disposal of those who had been executed was not actually affected by the Scottish Reformation, as the same methods seem to have remained in use. Indeed, there are some fascinating examples from prior to the Reformation, such as the case of Richard Latimer, convicted in 1550 of treasonable fire-raising and associating with the English. Latimer was sentenced to be hanged and quartered,⁶⁹ although, once again, the ultimate disposal of his corpse is not recorded.

Of course, as seen above, when it came to the disposal of the bodies of the common men and women executed even following the Reformation less is known than cases concerning the nobility, as fewer records survive. Often all that remains of these individuals are records such as the following from 1572:

Dec. 29. - Jonet Boyman, spouse to Williame Steill. Delatit of diuerse crymes of Wichecraft. 'CONUICT AND BRINT.' [Burnt]⁷⁰

It is possible, to a certain extent, to extrapolate as to the methods of the disposal of these bodies in Scotland from surviving records from England. As an example of this, Clare Gittings notes that, in England during this time, "Surgeons were allowed a small number of corpses of executed murderers each year for anatomy. These occasionally appear in the parish registers of London churches; in February 1615 at St Martin's, Ludgate, 'was buried an anatomy from the College of Physicians'."⁷¹ As will be seen in Chapter Seven it was certainly the case in the seventeenth century that the Scottish medical schools were provided

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 420. Emphasis in original.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 348.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 38. Emphasis in original.

⁷¹ C. Gittings, "Sacred and Secular: 1558-1660." In *Death in England, an Illustrated History*, eds. P. C. Jupp and C. Gittings (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 149.

with the corpses of such individuals, although the numbers were comparatively low. It is likely that the majority of individuals who had been executed, provided their remains had not been burned, ended up with simple burials, perhaps communal or even paupers graves, located, as seen above, in the north end of the kirkyard, or other unconsecrated ground. Some notable examples, such as the Earl of Morton, would ultimately receive a Christian burial, but it is unlikely that this would be the case for the common man or woman.

Conclusion

As has been seen above, the desire to be buried within the kirk, investigated in the previous chapter, was not the only pre-Reformation practice that was to linger in Scotland. Some, such as the disposal of executed criminals, were to continue after the Reformation with little to no interference from the clergy. These practices, brutal as they may seem today, were considered the norm in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the Scottish reformers were to make no attempt to alter them. Other pre-Reformation practices, however, were to be changed. In *The Blame of Kirk-Buriall* Birnie addresses not only the concept of burial aisles, but also the perceived notion that, in the same manner as intra-mural burial, the geographical location of the deceased's final resting place had a certain amount of significance. Whether this entailed transporting the corpse to a family's traditional burial ground, or avoiding 'contaminated earth,' for Birnie it was unacceptable, and in dire need of reforming. For Birnie earth was earth, and it was preferable that the dead be buried where they had died.

As stated in the previous chapter, it can hardly be argued that the Reformation of burial practices in Scotland happened overnight. Indeed, fifty years after the Reformation the initial attempts had still not entirely succeeded. Certain pre-Reformation practices continued, and indeed would continue well into the seventeenth century, as will be seen in subsequent chapters. Perhaps the earlier assertion that this willingness to compromise was part of the genius of the Scottish Reformation is correct. Despite the initially strong stance taken by the Reformers perhaps it became clear, as the years went past and the resistance to certain aspects of burial reform continued, that compromises would have to be made. Of course, as the leaders of the Reformation themselves passed away, it may have become easier for their successors to make such compromises. Knox clearly knew when it was important for the nation that an exception to the strict rules concerning intra-mural burial should be made, but

it is extremely doubtful that he would have deemed acceptable a local laird's claim to a right to such a burial. The Regent Moray had been murdered while leading Scotland, the Laird of Rossyth merely wished a burial he saw as befitting his station in life. For Knox's successors, however, maybe it was the willingness to compromise that fuelled the continuation of the ideals of Reformed Protestantism. Ideals that, as will be seen in the following chapters, would soon become under threat from outside influences.

Chapter Five

Memory and Grief in Post-Reformation Scotland¹

This chapter deals with post-Reformation forms of memory and grief and their representations, both physical, in terms of monuments and tombs, and emotional. The first section of this chapter will investigate the presence and display of emotions both at funerals and surrounding death in general. It will be investigated within this chapter whether or not there was a ritualised element to these emotional displays, and, if so, whether or not ritualised displays of emotion were viewed differently to more spontaneous displays of emotion. This will also tie in to the notion of regional differences within Scotland, in that it is possible that these emotional displays, and the potential for ritual within these displays, varied from area to area. Once again, it will prove necessary to consult the works of theologians, in particular those of the Reformed Protestant tradition, from outside of Scotland in order to obtain a more complete picture of Calvinist attitudes to grief. In addition to this, seventeenth century Scotland also saw the development of more elaborate forms of memorial, particularly in terms of the aforementioned monuments and tombs. This development will be investigated below, and the views of some of the more vocal theologians of the time concerning such memorials will also be looked at.

The Presence of Emotions at Funerals

As seen in Chapter Two, prior to the Reformation there were, of course, traditions that were practised at funerals throughout Scotland, regardless of the geographical area, that were to be discontinued following 1560. The most common of these were the graveside prayers and funeral services for the deceased, as these were seen to be intercessory in nature. These intercessory prayers, however, obviously also contained an emotional element, in that they were considered to be a comfort for the friends and family of the deceased. Ralph Houlbrooke has noted that, in Reformation England, the abandonment of intercessory acts by the reformers ultimately deprived the relatives of the deceased of a crucial method by which

¹ Aspects of this chapter have appeared in an earlier draft as Raeburn, "The Changing Face of Scottish Burial Practices, 1560-1645."

grief could be dealt with; namely, channelling that grief into actions.² This did, however, have certain positive results, in that means of commemoration were developed more fully. Houlbrooke notes “The Protestant clergy, denied the confessional, poured forth from pulpit and press a stream of practical advice on all aspects of Christian duty, including the management of grief.”³ North of the border, however, Protestant clergy did not have the same range of options as their southern counterparts. As Houlbrooke subsequently notes, the more militant Protestants, such as Knox, viewed sermons and intercessory acts as unscriptural, and rife with the potential for raising the deceased up as a better Christian in death than they ever had been in life, all in return for a not insubstantial payment.⁴ As has been seen previously, with Knox at the helm of the Scottish Reformation all such abuses were to be excised from Scottish funerals. There was to be no ritualised avenue for the release of the emotions, primarily grief, that surrounded death.

As has been seen elsewhere, at no time following the Reformation did Scotland ever become entirely Presbyterian, or even entirely Protestant. There were constant Catholic influences throughout the period, and a surprising number of people, mainly from the ranks of the nobility, who refused to give up their Catholicism. This meant that, of course, Catholic burial practices were to continue in certain parts of Scotland, regardless of what the General Assembly wished the case to be. However, as has been seen above, even those who had adopted Protestantism, and in many cases had aided the spread of the Reformation and its ideas, did not universally accept the new regulations concerning burial. As such, despite the prohibition against them, funeral sermons and graveside prayers did not simply disappear following the Reformation.

The Scottish Lowlands

Of course, as has been noted previously, there were many differences in the practices of the various areas of Scotland. The Scottish Lowlands at this time had a more or less Anglo-Saxon culture, and, prior to the Reformation, funerals had a character that reflected those influences. If the family of the deceased were wealthy enough, and the deceased had been of high enough social standing during life, this would be reflected in the funeral, often

² Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480-1750*, p. 228.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 297.

with large heraldic displays. Indeed, a mere half-century after the Reformation William Birnie felt the need to state:

For although the death by all men should be thought to be a kynde of defeat from God, yet our Heroik burials are oft led lyke a martiall triumphe, wherein the toutting of trumpets, trampling of steades, and trouping of men ranking themselves under stately standerts, and punicall pinsels, displayed for whivering in the winde, may sufficiently testifie the dedolence of men, as if by an undantoned courage they would quarrelously demand the combate in revenge of the dead. And as if the worne (man) were able to stand out against the thunder-bolts of death delashed by God.⁵

In 1643 the General Assembly perceived the need to produce the following act:

considering the great abuse of burying within Kirks, wherein GODS publick worship is exercised, notwithstanding diverse Acts of this Kirk, prohibiting the same; And that through toleration thereof, other abuses in hinging of Pensils and Brods, affixing of Honours and Arms, and such like scandalous Monuments in the Kirk, hath crept in. Therefore for remedy hereof, do hereby ratifie and approve the former Acts and Constitutions made against burials in Kirks. And inhibites and discharges all persons of whatsoever qualitie, to bury any deceased person within the body of the Kirk, where the people meet for hearing of the Word, and administration of the Sacraments; And als inhibites them to hing Pensils or Brods, to affixe Honours or Arms, or to make any such like Monuments, to the honour or remembrance of any deceased person upon walls, or other places within the Kirk, where the publike worship of God is exercised.⁶

Funerals of the Lowland aristocracy during this time were clearly seen as opportunities to show the larger community how important the deceased was, how loved they had been, and how much they would be missed. In attempts to demonstrate these last two points the family of the deceased would frequently hire 'saulies,' professional mourners dressed in black

⁵ Birnie, *The Blame of Kirk-Buriall*, sig. C1v-C2r.

⁶ A. Peterkin, ed., *Records of the Kirk of Scotland, Containing the Acts and Proceedings of the General Assemblies, From the Year 1638 Downwards, as Authenticated by the Clerks of Assembly*. (Edinburgh: John Sutherland, 1838), p. 349.

gowns and hoods, and carrying black staves.⁷ This was clearly a display of ritualised grief, but does that necessarily imply that ritualised grief is in no way genuine? The reformers seemed to think that this was the case, forbidding as they had done such superstitious rituals and practices. However, William A. Christian Jr. has stated that “Weeping was learned behaviour, both a sign of feeling *and a means to excite it*. And the spectacle of public weeping was grounded in a set of assumptions about the necessity for emotional display to God, to one’s neighbors, and to oneself.”⁸ Ritual perhaps, but not necessarily emotionally counterfeit. The French sociologist and anthropologist Emile Durkheim, influential in the study of religion, however, stated of Aboriginal Australia that a “family which allows one of its members to die without being wept for shows by that very fact that it lacks moral unity and cohesion: it abdicates; it renounces its existence.”⁹ For Durkheim it was clearly more important that the emotions were displayed for the benefit of society rather than their presence be genuine, although it is, of course, a possibility that such displays did provoke genuine emotion as a learned response to the performance.¹⁰ As Christian goes on to state, in the Catholic world, and therefore Scotland prior to 1560, the emotion displayed by people could be used a test for their spiritual condition. Emotions, and particularly the meaning behind them, were important for those actively seeking holiness.¹¹ It seems clear how this could very easily have led, in some instances, to ritualised grief replacing genuine grief, but it still does not imply that this was always the case. As will be seen below, however, following the Reformation the opposite attitude was to become prevalent, particularly in Reformed Protestantism. It was now to be the case that the true Christian displayed only moderate grief on the occasion of a death. Excessive grief displayed a lack of faith.

Regardless of whether or not it was the case that excessive displays of grief hid a lack of genuine emotion, the General Assembly, in 1560, saw fit essentially to outlaw these ritual practices on the occasion of funerals. It was now considered unseemly to have excessive displays of grief at funerals. Instead they should now be solemn occasions, wherein the

⁷ W. McMillan, *The Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church, 1550-1638*. (Edinburgh: The Lassodie Press Ltd., 1930), pp. 287-288. The word ‘saulie’ is probably derived from ‘soul.’

⁸ W. A. Christian Jr., “Provoked Religious Weeping in Early Modern Spain.” In *Religion and Emotion: Approaches and Interpretations*, ed. J. Corrigan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 33. Emphasis mine.

⁹ E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. Translated by Joseph Ward Swain. (New York: The Free Press, 1965), pp. 445-446.

¹⁰ Although the terms ‘genuine’ and ‘ritualised’ are constructs of western thought it is relatively safe to suggest them as appropriate terms for the approach of the reformers to the subject of the emotional responses to death in the Highlands and Islands.

¹¹ Christian Jr., “Provoked Religious Weeping in Early Modern Spain,” p. 39.

spiritual fate of the deceased was contemplated rather than attempting to intercede with God on their behalf with prayers and excessive displays of how much they were loved. However, as John Corrigan has stated, “Great divides sometimes open between seemingly official church endorsements of a certain kind of emotionality in religion and the religious experiences of the lay membership.”¹² As such, it is unsurprising to find that these rituals were to persist throughout Scotland following the break from Rome. Indeed, the description of the ‘saulies’ given above came from the funeral in 1634 of the first Earl of Buccleugh, at Hawick, in the south of Scotland.

Highland Scotland

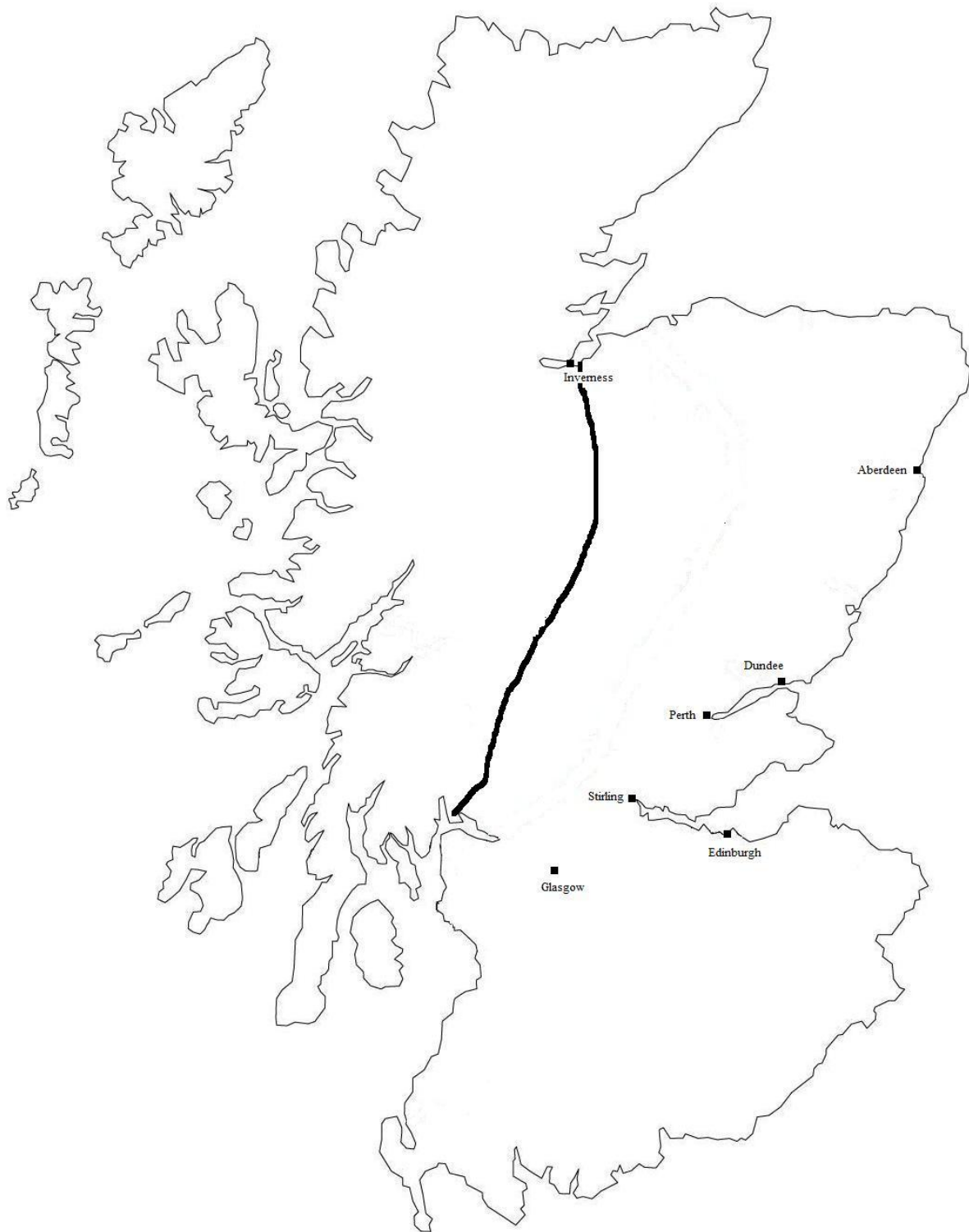
Highland Scotland, including the Western Isles, was culturally very different from the south and east. It possessed a Gaelic, clan based culture that, prior to the Reformation, had its own funeral practices and traditions. Perhaps the most interesting of these traditions was the *coronach*, the ritual wailing and shrieking of older women at certain times during the funeral. This, of course, is not a practice that is limited to the Scottish Highlands. Evidence from Ireland suggests that during this same period the Catholic Church was attempting to outlaw the *caoineadh*, the Irish lament, which was essentially the same practice.¹³ Interestingly enough, a very similar practice had been outlawed in the Basque region of Spain in 1526.¹⁴ David Person, writing in 1635 concerning the Turkish controlled areas of Greece, stated:

Whensoever any remarkable person dieth, all the women thereabouts after their old heathen custome, meete together about the house of the deceased and there choosing the loudest and shrillest voices to beginne, betimes in the morning they make lamentable howlings and cryes; weeping and tearing the haire from their heads, beating their teats and breasts, with their nailes, defacing their cheekes and faces, they conduct him to his grave singing by the way his praises, and recounting what memorable things he had done in his life. Which custome *Aëtius* an ancient Historian

¹² J. Corrigan, “Introduction: Emotions research and the Academic Study of Religion.” In *Religion and Emotion*, p. 19.

¹³ P. Lysaght, “‘Caoineadh os Cionn Coirp’: The Lament for the Dead in Ireland,” *Folklore*, Vol. 108. (1997), p. 66.

¹⁴ M. Goldie, “The Scottish Catholic Enlightenment.” *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 1. (1991), p. 52.



Approximate extent of the Highland/Lowland divide.

of our Country observeth to have beene used of Old amongst our British, *and yet in our Highlands is observed.*¹⁵

The Highland ministers, unsurprisingly, took exception to this practice, and subsequently attempted to ban it. However, as was the case with the ‘saulies’ mentioned previously, these attempts were not entirely successful. In 1642 the Synod of Argyll stated:

Because it is a commoun custome in some of the remottest pairts within this province of ignorant poore women to howle their dead unto the graves, which commonly is called the *corronach*, a thing unseemely to be used in any true Christian kirk, where there is preacheing and profession of the comfortable resurrection of the dead, Wherefor for the restraineing thereof it is ordained that every minister both in preacheing and catechiseing endeavore to inform them how unseemely to Christians, and offensive to God, and scandalouse to others the lyke practice and careage must be.¹⁶

This is perhaps the most explicit description of why the ministers in the Highlands and Islands disapproved of the practice,¹⁷ and it shows that the *coronach*, the Highland lament, had persisted in certain parts of Argyll, which was somewhat of a success story for the Highland Reformation, for almost a century after the Scottish Reformation. Indeed, it is not the last reference to the practice from Argyll. The minutes of the Synod from 1658 state that “It is recomended to the severall presbyteries that they take care to supress ... the abuse of *corronaching* or crying at burials.”¹⁸ This perhaps suggests that, if the *coronach* was surviving in Argyll, a fairly consistently Protestant area, then it is likely that it was also surviving in the more remote areas of the Highlands and Islands. Indeed, Martin Martin,

¹⁵ D. Person, *Varieties: or, A Surveigh of Rare and Excellent Matters*. (STC-19781. London: Richard Badger, 1635), pp. 160-161. Italics mine.

¹⁶ *Minutes of the Synod of Argyll, 1639 – 1651*, p. 61.

¹⁷ Elsewhere it has been stated that “The keening woman in particular took on attributes which marked her as removed from the mundane order of society: she dishevelled her hair, bore her breasts, drank the blood of the dead, and assumed the persona of one gone mad. This allowed her to stand outside the bounds of her community and to express her anger and pain without being confined by its codes of conduct.” M. Newton, *A Handbook of the Scottish Gaelic World*. (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), p. 202. It is not explicitly clear whether or not such practices were part of the Scottish *coronach* as opposed to the keening exhibited by other Gaelic and Celtic cultures, but it is clear that such behaviour would certainly be disapproved of by the Highland ministers.

¹⁸ *Minutes of the Synod of Argyll, 1652 – 1661*. ed. D. C. MacTavish (Edinburgh: Printed at the University Press by T. and A. Constable Ltd. for the Scottish History Society, 1944), p. 175.

writing in 1698 of St Kilda, at the time the remotest populated part of Scotland, lying 41 miles off of the Outer Hebrides, states that:

They put the Faces of their Dead towards the East when they Bury them, and bewail the Death of their Relations excessively, and upon those Occasions make doleful Songs; which they call Laments. Upon the news of the late Mack-Leod's Death, they abandoned their Houses, Mourning Two Days in the Field...¹⁹

Before his execution in 1747 the Jacobite eleventh lord Lovat, Simon Fraser, expressed his desire to receive the *coronach* following his death.²⁰ It is unclear, however, as to whether or not it was practised in this instance. Thomas Pennant writes that, as of 1769:

The *Coranich*, or singing at funerals, is still in use in some places: the songs are generally in praise of the deceased; or a recital of the valiant deeds of him or his ancestors. I had not the fortune to be present at any in *North Britain*, but formerly assisted at one in the South of *Ireland*, where it was performed in the fullness of horror.²¹

John Lane Buchanan, writing of the Hebrides in the 1780s states:

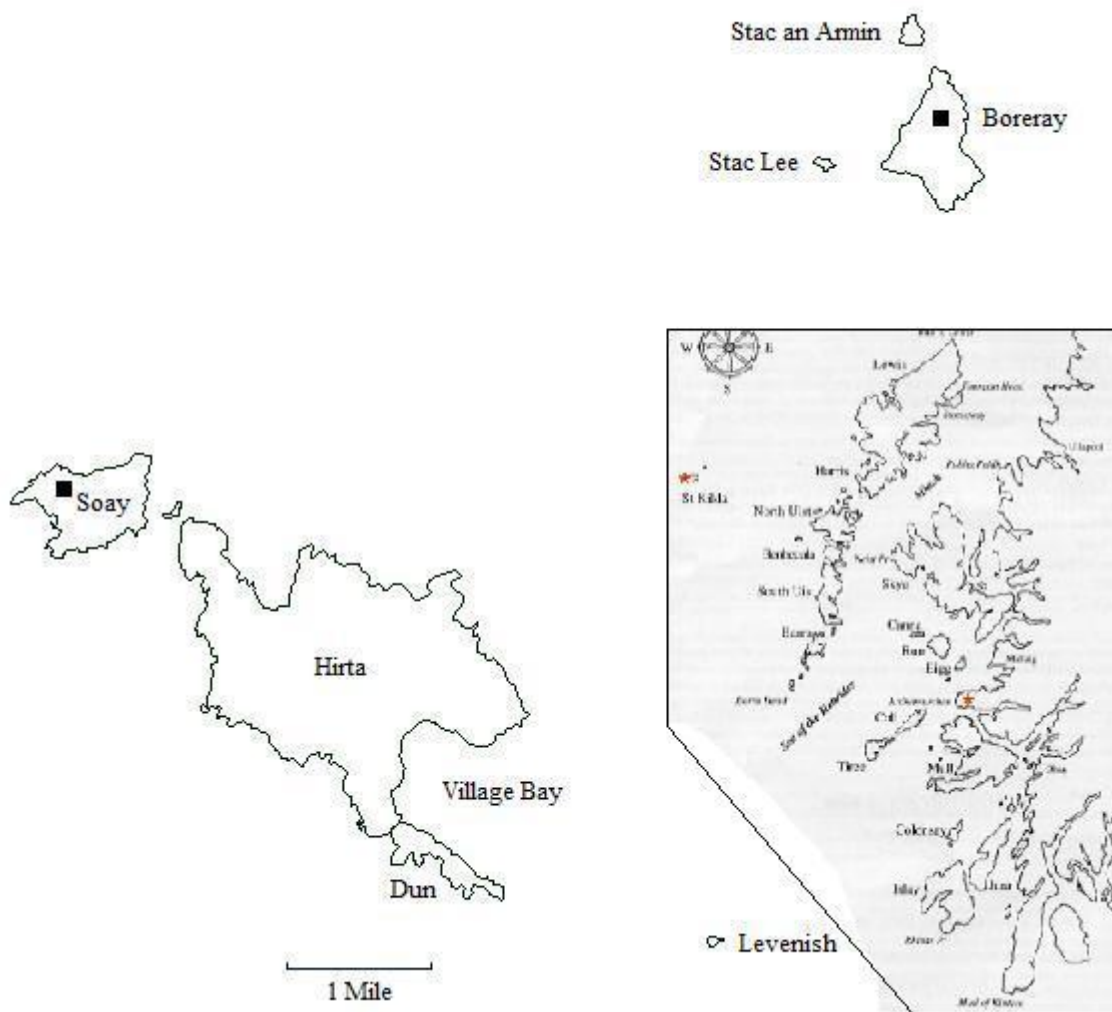
Burials are preceded by the large bag-pipe, playing some mournful dirge. They continue playing till they arrive at the place of interment, while the women sing the praises of the dead, clasping the coffins in their arms, and lie on the graves of their departed friends. It is common to see women coming out to stand by the way-side, who are strangers, as the corpse is carried along, with certain mournful ditties in their mouths, and making great lamentations; while they in the meantime ask some of the attendants where the corpse came from, and whether they are men or women.²²

¹⁹ M. Martin, *A Late Voyage to St. Kilda, the Remotest of all the Hebrides*. (Wing-M847. London, 1698), p. 112.

²⁰ *The Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, Vol. II. (Aberdeen: Printed for the Club, 1842), pp. xx-xxi.

²¹ T. Pennant, *A Tour in Scotland; MDCCLXIX*. (London: Benj. White, 4th edition, 1776), pp. 112-113.

²² J. L. Buchanan, *Travels in the Western Hebrides: From 1782 to 1790*. (London: G. G. J. And J. Robinson, 1793), p. 169.



St Kilda.

Burt, in his letters from Inverness in the early nineteenth century, makes the first obvious reference to the *coronach* in Scotland being performed for financial reward. He states:

The upper class hire women to moan and lament at the funeral of their nearest relations. These women cover their heads with a small piece of cloth, mostly green, and every now and then break out into a hideous howl and Ho-bo-bo-bo-boo, as I have often heard is done in some parts of Ireland.²³

Beriah Botfield, writing of a journey in 1829 stated “Laments, as they are called, or funeral dirges, constitute a very important and favourite branch of Highland music.”²⁴ However, as Michael Newton states; “When the practice of keening was effectively banned, the bagpiper led the procession and often seems to have adapted the music of the keening songs.”²⁵ In this instance it is therefore possible that the lament referred to by Botfield was played by the piper rather than sung by the women. Perhaps most fascinating of all is R. C. MacLagan’s account from 1914, in which he claims for an unspecified area of the Highlands that “At funerals the wake or watching of the body, *laithi na canti* (the days of lamentation), have from the oldest times on record even to the present day been accompanied by what Spenser calls ‘dispairful outcrys’.”²⁶ Clearly the practice survived in certain areas of the Highlands for almost a century and perhaps longer after the Reformation. But why should this be the case? Bruce Gordon notes that when Zwingli in Switzerland eradicated Catholic burial traditions he too encountered lingering adherence to the old ways, because “the old rites offered a great deal of pastoral comfort and simply to abolish them left a terrible void.”²⁷ Perhaps then these ritualised emotional outpourings were simultaneously acting as a conduit for true grief, grief that could find no expression within the reformed burial practices? There were, however, other reasons that the practice was not entirely trusted. Houlbrooke notes, in his study of death in Early Modern England that:

²³ E. Burt, *Letters From A Gentleman In The North Of Scotland To His Friend In London*, Vol. II, ed. R. Jamieson. (London: Ogle, Duncan, and Co., 5th edition, 1822), p. 108.

²⁴ B. Botfield, *Journal of a Tour through the Highlands of Scotland during the summer of MDCCCXXIX*. (Edinburgh: J. Johnstone, 1830), p. 327.

²⁵ Newton, *A Handbook of the Scottish Gaelic World*, p. 245.

²⁶ R. C. MacLagan, “‘The Keener’ in the Scottish Highlands and Islands.” *Folklore*, Vol. 25, No. 1. (1914), p. 84. MacLagan seems not to be referring to a lament played on the pipes, but the actual *coronach*. This claim, however, should perhaps be taken with a pinch of salt, as there is the possibility of an attempt to romanticise the Highlands for outsiders by increasing the extent of surviving pre-Christian practices.

²⁷ B. Gordon, *The Swiss Reformation*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 273-274.

‘To weep Irish’ meant to feign sorrow. It was a commonplace axiom that those who felt the least true sorrow often made the greatest show of it. Hamlet’s mother, who had followed her husband’s body, ‘Like Niobe, all tears’, married his brother a month later. Violent, uncontrolled grief, it was observed, commonly spent itself soonest, in a rapid mood-change which spoke of inconstancy and instability.²⁸

Of course, displays of emotion themselves were not forbidden at this time. As the Swiss reformer Pierre Viret had stated, “The grief of those who are witness to death must be able to express itself, but not to excess.”²⁹ Indeed, in the *Institutes* Calvin himself stated that “You see that to bear the cross patiently is not to have your feelings altogether blunted, and to be absolutely insensible to pain...”³⁰ It seems clear that for most, if not all, of the reformers emotions had their place at a funeral, but that these emotions should not be allowed to become excessive. This, too, is a point that will be returned to subsequently.

Ritual vs. Spontaneous Grief

So is ritualised grief any less valid than spontaneous displays? The anthropologist Radcliffe-Brown, in his work on the Andaman Islanders, stated that:

The Andamanese do weep from sorrow and spontaneously. A child cries when he is scolded or hurt; a widow weeps thinking of her recently dead husband. Men rarely weep spontaneously for any reason, though they shed tears abundantly when taking part in the rite. The weeping on the occasions enumerated is therefore not a spontaneous expression of individual emotion but is an example of what I have called ceremonial customs.³¹

For Radcliffe-Brown then, it is quite clear that ritualised displays of emotion are far different from spontaneous displays of grief, although he accepts that “wailing at the prescribed moment and in the prescribed manner creates within the wailer the proper sentiment.”³²

²⁸ R. Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480-1750*, p. 225.

²⁹ Roussel. “‘*Ensevelir honnestement les corps*’: funeral corteges and Huguenot culture,” p. 198.

³⁰ Calvin, *Institutes*, III, 8, 9.

³¹ A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Andaman Islanders*. (New York: Free Press, 1964), pp. 239-240.

³² P. Metcalf; R. Huntington, *Celebrations of Death*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn, 1991), p. 26.

Durkheim, too, in his work on Aboriginal Australians, was of the opinion that mourning, in particular group mourning such as the *coronach* was not the spontaneous display of emotion. He stated:

If the relations weep, lament, mutilate themselves, it is not because they feel themselves personally affected by the death of their kinsman. Of course, it may be that in certain particular cases, the chagrin expressed is really felt. But it is more generally the case that there is no connection between the sentiments felt and the gestures made by the actors in the rite. If, at the very moment when the weepers seem the most overcome by their grief, some one speaks to them of some temporal interest, it frequently happens that they change their features and tone at once, take on a laughing air and converse in the gayest fashion imaginable. Mourning is not a natural movement of private feelings wounded by a cruel loss; it is a duty imposed by the group. One weeps, not simply because he is sad, but because he is forced to weep. It is a ritual attitude which he is forced to adopt out of respect for custom, but which is, in a large measure, independent of his affective state. Moreover, this obligation is sanctioned by mythical or social penalties. They believe, for example, that if a relative does not mourn as is fitting, then the soul of the departed follows upon his steps and kills him. In other cases, society does not leave it to the religious forces to punish the negligent; it intervenes itself, and reprimands the ritual faults. If a son-in-law does not render to his father-in-law the funeral attentions which are due him, and if he does not make the prescribed incision, then his tribal fathers-in-law take his wife away from him and give him another. Therefore, in order to square himself with usage, a man sometimes forces tears to flow by artificial means.³³

As will subsequently be seen, it is possible that Durkheim's belief that, upon an interruption, grief turns rapidly back to laughter, can be seen in certain aspects of Highland funerals, particularly during the wake, perhaps suggesting that the participants knew what was expected of them, but did not always find it easy to suppress any natural inclinations towards good humour.

Durkheim's early notion that periodically genuine grief is felt by individual participants in the rite also seems to be supported by Metcalf and Huntington, who state their

³³ Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, pp. 442-443.

opinion that “the psychic process of grieving only partially intersects with the performance of death rites. As we plainly say, it may be that ritual sometimes aids the process, but it could as easily be no help at all, or even an extra burden to bear.”³⁴ Perhaps, then, the participants in the *coronach* occasionally wished they did not have to perform this ritual when they were truly grieving. However, if that were truly the case, why then did they continue the practice for almost a century after the Reformation? This is an issue that will be returned to later.

From this there seems to be some indication that the various Kirk authorities, following the Scottish Reformation, viewed these pre-Reformation practices with a certain amount of suspicion, similar to the way in which Radcliffe-Brown later characterised the practices of the Andaman Islanders. These ritual displays of emotion, in addition to being indecent, disorderly, and suggestive of a lack of faith in the resurrection of the body,³⁵ were reminiscent of the superstitious intercessory practices that were to be abandoned. However, not everyone would have agreed that that necessarily meant that the grief they expressed was any less valid. Indeed, to Catholic eyes the reserved nature of Protestant funerals gave the opposite impression, as can be seen from Florimond de Raemonde’s testimony concerning Huguenot funerals in France. He states:

The pastor does not even attend, unless the deceased is someone of great standing and even then he attends as a private person rather than as a pastor. The entire group moves in silence, for no one would dare even to mutter a prayer to God, lest he or she be taken for a papist. You see how far their impiety extends. It is certainly tearful to see, along with this miserable treatment of the dead, the loss of their souls.³⁶

In light of this it is perhaps more understandable that these pre-Reformation practices survived for so long after the Reformation.

³⁴ Metcalf; Huntington, *Celebrations of Death*, pp. 4-5.

³⁵ In that, had the resurrection of the body been accepted and understood, there would have been fewer reasons to display such excessive grief.

³⁶ Roussel, “‘Ensevelir honnestement les corps’: funeral corteges and Huguenot culture,” p. 200. From this it would seem that in France it was clearly not compulsory for the minister to even attend the funeral, unless he chose to do so in a personal, non-ministerial, capacity. Interestingly, as Sprott notes, in 1554 the second edition of Pollanus’ liturgy was published in Frankfurt. Pollanus was Calvin’s successor in Strasbourg, and this liturgy was actually a translation of Calvin’s Strasbourg liturgy, with the addition of the phrase, “at funerals the pastor is to go before, and give an exhortation and prayer at the grave.” Cf. Sprott, *The Book of Common Order*, p. 198.

John 11:35 and the Reformation

Of course, the decision taken by the Reformers to remove these practices from Protestant funerals is itself fairly understandable. These ritualised displays of grief, in particular the aforementioned *coronach*, would often lead to irrational, perhaps even mindless behaviour, which seemed to deny any belief in the doctrine of election, or, perhaps, no comfort in the belief that the deceased was now in God's hands. However, considering the reformers' adherence to the concept of *sola fidei*, this in itself should have posed no problems. As Debora K. Shuger has stated, "The emotions present a threat to rational objectivity but not to faith, particularly if one understands faith in the Protestant sense of *fiducia*, or trust."³⁷ Therefore it seems entirely possible both to engage in ritualistic displays of grief and to adhere to Protestant concepts of death and resurrection. Against this, however, is the simple fact that, for the reformers, the only true way to measure someone's faith, particularly at such a time as a funeral, was whether or not the individual concerned was carrying themselves in the correct Protestant manner, namely with a certain solemn dignity. Anything more than restrained emotions could be perceived as an attempt to intercede with God to ensure that the deceased, because they had been so loved during their life, would attain salvation.³⁸

However, in a recent study on biblical emotion, Matthew Elliott has noted that, in the New Testament "sorrow and grief are profound human emotions that help us come to grips with tragedy. When something of great value is lost, our hearts express sorrow."³⁹ On the face of it this statement in no way disagrees with the position of the reformers. As seen previously both Viret and Calvin accepted the value of emotion, in its properly modulated release. However, Elliott argues that, to a certain extent this may be due to a traditional denial of grief in the story of the death of Lazarus in John 11. John 11:35 clearly states "Jesus wept," but this is not taken to be a sign of grief at the death of Lazarus. Rather:

... it is 'because of the faithless and hopeless lamentation for the dead with which he finds himself surrounded... His saving life giving work puts an end to lamentation for

³⁷ D. Shuger, "The Philosophical Foundations of Sacred Rhetoric." In *Religion and Emotion*, p. 121.

³⁸ Part of the problem concerning these displays, however, was also the fact that attempts were being made to 'civilize' the Highlands, and such displays of emotion were considered unseemly and disorderly.

³⁹ M. Elliott, *Faithful Feelings*. (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2005), pp. 204-205.

the dead (Luke 7:13)... All natural mourning for those who have fallen asleep is now eradicated by the living hope of the resurrection (Rom. 8:17, 18).⁴⁰

So how did the reformers themselves interpret this particular passage? Unfortunately, perhaps, John Knox himself never published a commentary on the fourth Gospel, and Zwingli ignored the passage.⁴¹ Of course, the same cannot be said for other theologians within the Reformed Protestant tradition, for instance Bullinger and Bucer, both of whom take the view point that Jesus is expressing genuine sorrow.⁴² Following a similar vein, for Wolfgang Musculus the passage was perfectly clear, yet posed a further question; for whom was Jesus weeping? Additionally, as Craig Farmer has noted, Musculus wondered “how was it in keeping with Jesus’ superior character to weep? Does it not bespeak a lack of control or weakness of temperament that he should give such public vent to his emotions?”⁴³ This concern of Musculus is a very interesting question, and one that Calvin had attempted to answer.⁴⁴ Calvin writes; “It seems absurd to some when we say that Christ, as one among men, was subject to human passions; and they think that the only way He sorrowed or rejoiced was by taking into Himself those emotions, when He thought fit, by some secret dispensation.”⁴⁵ For Calvin, however, this is not the case. He goes on to state that “When the Son of God put on flesh He also of His own accord put on human feelings.”⁴⁶ And as a result Jesus is actually expressing genuine emotion in John 11:35. There is, however, a difference between the genuine emotions of Jesus and the genuine emotions of humanity. Calvin goes on to write that “Our feelings are sinful because they rush on unrestrainedly and immoderately; but in Christ they were composed and regulated in obedience to God and were completely free from sin.”⁴⁷ And here lies the crux of the matter. Emotions in and of themselves are understandable and even expected. They should, however, be released in a

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 207.

⁴¹ Elsewhere Zwingli stated, “That a person, out of concern for the dead, calls on God to show them mercy, I do not disapprove. But to stipulate a time for this and to lie for the sake of gain, is not human, but devilish.” H. Zwingli, *Writings, Volume One. In Search of True Religion: Reformation, Pastoral and Eucharistic Writings*. Translated by H. Wayne Pipkin. (Allison Park, Pennsylvania: Pickwick Publications, 1984), p. 353.

⁴² Farmer, *The Gospel of John in the Sixteenth Century; The Johannine Exegesis of Wolfgang Musculus*, p.164.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 163.

⁴⁴ For more on emotions and their place within Calvin’s Geneva see D. Keck, “Sorrow and Worship in Calvin’s Geneva: their Place in Family History.” In *Piety and Family in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honour of Steven Ozment*, eds. M. R. Forster and B. J. Kaplan (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 201-218.

⁴⁵ Calvin, *The Gospel According to St John, 11-21, and The First Epistle of John. Calvin’s Commentaries*, p. 11.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 12.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

fashion that attempts to emulate the restraint shown by Jesus. We should not shriek or wail, but express our grief in a dignified manner. As Calvin concludes; “Thus Paul does not demand of us a stony numbness, but tells us to grieve in moderation, and not abandon ourselves to grief like unbelievers who have no hope (1 Thess. 4.13). For Christ also took our emotions into Himself, so that by His power we may subdue whatever is sinful in them.”⁴⁸

Of course, instructive text concerning emotion need not revolve around specific biblical passages. In Scotland, James Melville took the Reformed Protestant admonishment against excessive emotions even further than Calvin. He states:

Now it rests to satisfie such, who fears their great losse and hurt by death; and first them who heavily regrates the want of their Parents, husbands, wives, children, brethren, sisters, speciall friendes, and sik vthers: Let sik first consider that quhilk hes beene clearly declared; that they haue no cause to lament for them, that are taken so to their rest in respect of their estate; vnlesse they wald shew them selues envious of their weifare...⁴⁹

Melville here is clearly echoing Calvin and others who have stated that excessive emotion is unwarranted as the hope of the resurrection should limit grief. Melville, however, does not echo the position held by other reformers that some emotion is understandable, and acceptable if properly modulated. However, whether or not this is due to Melville holding a belief that all emotion should be banished from death is unclear, and it is entirely possible that the section is consolatory in nature. Rather than stressing that emotions on such an occasion are inappropriate, perhaps Melville is attempting to comfort the relatives of the deceased by reminding them of the resurrection. If this is in fact the case, then it would seem that Melville and Calvin share the same opinion concerning the emotions surrounding death and burial.

From all of this evidence it seems clear that emotional responses to death were and should have been acceptable for the Reformers, even though they themselves would perhaps have preferred that these emotions were kept to within suitable bounds. However, it also seems undeniable that the ritualised displays of emotion seen at Scottish funerals in both the

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 13.

⁴⁹ Melville, *Ane Fruitful and Comfortable Exortatioun anent Death*, pp. 43-44.

Highlands and the Lowlands did certainly contain true grief at the passing of a loved or respected individual. Can they then be said to be merely intercessory acts? The answer to this question is, unfortunately, yes and no. True grief aside, in post-Reformation Scotland any act that seemed to be attempting intercessory action was anathema, be it the *coronach*, the hiring of saulies, or even simple prayers at the graveside. The family and friends of the deceased had no choice but to trust to God, and therefore accept the resurrection. However, if these rituals were seen by those performing them as having no particular religious connotations, then perhaps they should not be seen as intercessory. These practices may not have been attempts to show God how deeply the deceased had been loved, but attempts to show the community, as seen in Chapter Two. This leads us back to Corrigan's earlier statement wherein "Great divides sometimes open between seemingly official church endorsements of a certain kind of emotionality in religion and the religious experiences of the lay membership."⁵⁰ Conversely, the General Assembly may have outlawed these practices at the Reformation for the religious connotations they perceived were held within, but the practitioners continued as they felt there to be no religious connotations present.

But what of those who did suppress their grief in order to appear as true, devoted Christians, yet were suffering in silence? Sir Archibald Johnston of Wariston, writing in the first half of the seventeenth century following the death of his wife stated "My terrors was so horrible, my troubles so comfortles, and my fears so hoples, and al so excessivly vehement as my saule was thrauen unto hell out of the very fear of hell."⁵¹ Johnston, it would seem, despite his obvious grief, still managed to take comfort in his faith. He goes on to state: "Lord, thou knouest quhat ever was, ever schal be my choose, to witt thyself, O God the Fayther with thy love, God the Sone with al thy graces, God the Holy Ghost with al thy consoloations."⁵² There will have been others, however, who did not possess a faith as strong as that of Johnston, and who also will have had to have suffered in silence. Of course, the clergy during this time were not heartless monsters, and in such cases would reassure the grieving individual of the resurrection, but if they did not have a strong faith to begin with, this may have been of little comfort.⁵³

⁵⁰ J. Corrigan, "Introduction: Emotions research and the Academic Study of Religion." In *Religion and Emotion*, p. 19.

⁵¹ G. M. Paul, ed., *Diary of Sir Archibald Johnston of Wariston, 1632-1639*. (Edinburgh: Printed at the University Press by T. and A. Constable for the Scottish History Society, 1911), p. 20.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

⁵³ Some, of course, found comfort in the Gospel, and an example from England from the same period can be seen in Nehemiah Wallington's notebooks. Following the death of his daughter he states, "The greefe for this

As mentioned previously, there is some considerable doubt as to whether or not the emotions displayed during funeral rites were genuinely felt by the participants. The simple fact of the matter is that, almost four hundred years after the events described, it is impossible to say with any certainty what the participants in these rituals truly felt. Was their emotion any less valid for being ritualised? Unfortunately, we may never know. It is far from being a simple matter. As Fernandez noted, “various participants in the same ritual, observing the same symbols, can interpret what is occurring very differently.”⁵⁴ If the participants in the rituals themselves may have been feeling different levels of emotion, how are we to ascertain what these levels were half a millennium later?

Additionally, the matter is somewhat confused by the historical record. There are surviving records from both Ireland and Continental Europe that suggest the practitioners involved in the *caoineadh* or its continental equivalents were frequently subsidised, indicating perhaps the practitioners possessed a semi-professional nature.⁵⁵ For Scotland, however, unlike the *saulies*, who were clearly professionals, there are very few records relating to the *coronach* that indicate a financial arrangement until the nineteenth century. This, of course, does not mean that the practice of the *coronach* was never subsidised prior to the nineteenth century, nor does it mean that there were no professional practitioners within Scotland. Indeed, as Domhnall Stiùbhart has stated, “Women’s involvement with the spiritual is perhaps epitomised by the *bean-tuirim* (professional mourning woman), apparently kept by the township for keening the *coronach* at local burials.”⁵⁶ However, again concerning the inhabitants of St Kilda, Martin records that:

These poor people do sometimes fall down as they climb the rocks, and perish. Their wives on such occasions make doleful songs, which they call lamentations. The chief topics are their courage, their dexterity in climbing, and their great affection which they showed to their wives and children.⁵⁷

childe was so greate that I forgoote myself so much that I deed offend God in it[.]” His wife subsequently counseled him to consider it his daughter’s wedding day, and asked “will you grive to see your daughter goe home to her Husband Christ Jesus where shee shall never want, but have the fullnesse of joy for evermore[?]” D. Booy, ed., *The Notebooks of Nehemiah Wallington, 1618-1654*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 59.

⁵⁴ S. C. Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual*. (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 41.

⁵⁵ P. Lysaght, “Hospitality at Wakes and Funerals in Ireland from the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Century: Some Evidence from the Written Record,” *Folklore*, Vol. 114, No. 3. (2003), p. 406; S. C. Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual*. (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 192.

⁵⁶ D. U. Stiùbhart, “Women and Gender in the Early Modern Western Gàidhealtachd.” In *Women in Scotland: c. 1100 – c. 1750*, eds. E. Ewan and M. M. Meikle (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), p. 240.

⁵⁷ Martin, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, p. 316.

In this instance, at least, it seems that these laments are occasions of genuine emotion performed spontaneously by relatives of the deceased, and not by semi-professional practitioners. It seems implausible that these women would have been recompensed for having performed the lament at the funerals of their own relatives.⁵⁸ Of course, it is possible that, despite there being no financial arrangements in this instance the *coronach* was still performed from some perceived social expectation. As seen above, Durkheim believed that if the social expectations of grief were not met then a family would be judged by society, and this is echoed by Huntington and Metcalf, who highlight the fact that “In many societies, crying at funerals is not merely tolerated, it is required by custom, and at predetermined moments the entire body of mourners will burst into loud and piercing cries. Just as suddenly, the weeping halts and the tears that had just been running so profusely cease.”⁵⁹ There is the outside possibility that this was also true of the Highlands, and a family that did not either perform the *coronach* themselves or arrange to have it performed for them would be judged by society as morally bankrupt. Of course, as Huntington and Metcalf go on to state, “There is not necessarily a universal theory of grief.”⁶⁰ As such, any social obligation that may have been felt at the performance of the *coronach* does not necessarily preclude the presence of genuine emotion.

Of course, not all of the reform movements felt the same way as Calvinism in that tradition and non-scriptural practice were to be completely excised from the graveside. As Susan Karant-Nunn has stated about Lutheran Early Modern Germany:

If someone died without repentance, and hence without absolution and the sacrament, he must likewise undergo burial completely without ceremonial – without knell, procession, song, or clergy – stuck quietly into the ground in the presence of any relatives who wished to be present. And often he was laid in unconsecrated ground,

⁵⁸ Confusing the issue even further, H. Cameron Gillies states of the Gaelic attitude towards funerals: “Our word for a funeral or burial is altogether lovely. It is *tiodhlacadh* or the gift – the same word you would use in giving a wedding present to a bride. There is no sorrow in the concept nor any sadness. It is simply the change or the further continuation of the journey.” H. Cameron Gillies, *The Gaelic Concepts of Life and of Death*. (Dundee: John Leng and Co, Ltd; Glasgow: Alexander MacLaren and Son, 1913), p. 26. This, of course, begs the question of why the *coronach* or similar is practiced when there is no sadness on the occasion of a death if not for ritual purposes? It is interesting to note, however, that this text makes no mention of a practice such as the *coronach*.

⁵⁹ Metcalf; Huntington, *Celebrations of Death*, p. 24.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

tapping thus the remaining conviction among the people that sanctified earth contained protective power.⁶¹

Interestingly enough, what is seen as an unsuitable burial in Lutheranism, almost a punishment in certain ways, is in fact the ideal Calvinist burial. Karant-Nunn does, however, go on to note that there were certain similarities between Lutheranism and Calvinism during this period. As with Calvinism, as seen previously, the Lutheran reformers were keen to discourage excessive displays of grief. She states:

It may be that the growing tendency of the bereft to decorate their persons with all manner of black apparel – with whole outfits if they were rich, with mere borrowed armbands if they were poor – reflects more than urban affluence and the imitation of elites. It may be that these silent accoutrements of mourning are an alternative way of showing grief when the openly, or ‘excessively,’ emotive is discouraged. The demonstration of feeling is, of course, not the same as feeling itself.⁶²

The suppression of outlets for grief clearly led to the development of new methods to display that grief, new methods that may themselves have developed into rituals over time. Take for instance the Victorian practices of mourning, which, although the subject for another study, were clearly ritualised, yet just as clearly descended from the practices described by Karant-Nunn above. This process can also possibly be seen in the later development of monuments and mausoleums as forms of memorial. In many ways it is true that these monuments came to signify the importance of the deceased and their social standing, but that was also one of the purposes of the martial aspect of Lowland funerals mentioned earlier. It could well be that, whilst developing the Calvinist doctrine of election into a justification for funeral monuments, these monuments also reflected the grief of those who erected them, particularly if they had been encouraged to restrain their grief upon the occasion of the funeral. As Howard Colvin records:

Sir John Clerk of Penicuik (1649-1722) was the head of a family remarkable for its contribution to the cultural and intellectual life of Scotland. Though a strict Calvinist

⁶¹ Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual*, pp. 168-169.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 188-189. Of course, it was not just Protestant factions that were attempting to suppress such practices. As with the *coronach* the Catholic Church was attempting a similar undertaking at the same time.

in religion he was in some ways a forerunner of the Scottish Enlightenment and was keenly interested in architecture. When his first wife, Elizabeth Henderson, died in 1683 he built a mausoleum outside the east end of Penicuik church which he designed himself.⁶³

It seems clear that it was important that his wife was remembered appropriately, probably due more to the emotion he held her in than her social status. Once the avenues of ritual and spontaneous graveside emotional displays had been removed perhaps true grief was now to be expressed over a longer period of time through a permanent marker of that grief?

Perhaps the older rituals that have been looked at above also had their roots in true grief, and the search for a method to appropriately process that grief?⁶⁴ Even if that is the case, however, it does not prevent the true emotions initially present in the rite from being diluted or removed over time, and as a result it could well be the case that ritualised emotion is indeed less profound than spontaneous grief.

Monuments and Tombs

Another aspect of Scottish burial practices and the memorialisation of the deceased during this period that should be looked at in closer detail is the development of monuments and tombs. Returning to Birnie's *Blame of Kirk-Buriall* it seems that, at least for some members of the Kirk, monuments posed no real issues. He states, "For true honours monuments should ever haue place. And what virtue hes win in this world, should not be suffered to dy with death."⁶⁵ However, Birnie does also offer three conditions upon which the erection of a monument should be dependant:

First of personall discretion, whereby this kynde of honour may redound onely to the honorable in God. For as the graue of Elisha wold not contain the souldiers corps, 2. King. 13. No more should the graue of the godly honourable be profaned with the

⁶³ Colvin, *Architecture and the Afterlife*, p. 303.

⁶⁴ This is, perhaps, an example of Davies' 'words against death,' whereby death is denied the last word, as it were. See D. J. Davies, *Death, Ritual and Belief: The Rhetoric of Funerary Rites*. (London and New York: Continuum, 2nd edn, 2002); *A Brief History of Death*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).

⁶⁵ Birnie, *The Blame of Kirk-Buriall*, sig. C3v.

gracelesse ginge. The next caution is to keepe distinction of place, that men presume not to seeke honour where God onely should; for feare of his jelousie, who cannot abyde Dagon to play jake fellow-lyke. And sen God hes taken in the Kirk for his owne Innes, let it suffice thee, lyke a doore-keeping David, Psal 84, or a watch-man Vrias, 2. Samuel, 11. to ligge in the court without. Yea, sen all the earth is before vs that wee may ly where wee will choice, if nothing can content our greede but the Lords peace, we are guilty with Achab of Naboths wine-yarde. The last caueat is moderation: that in making thy monument thou keepe such a measure that it become not another Mausoly, that is, the worlds ninth maruell.⁶⁶

Many of the monuments and tombs in Scotland actually followed these principles, and it has been stated that there was, and in many cases still is, “a post-Reformation class of tombs unlike any to be met with in England – tombs, not as there intramural, but placed outside in God’s acre.”⁶⁷ However, from the descriptions of some of these tombs, it could be suggested that Birnie’s advice was not always followed to the letter. “In many cases these are substantial fabrics, quadrangular enclosures open to the sky, with heavy iron gates in front, and mural monuments placed on the opposite walls.”⁶⁸ Another example can be seen from “the lofty tombs erected against churchyard walls. The style of these is *cinco cento*, and the display of columns, cherubs, symbolic devices, and armorial bearings, gives to them a florid and often an overburdened effect.”⁶⁹ Clearly, while taking Birnie’s advice in many cases by having monuments and tombs erected outside of the fabric of the kirks, many chose to ignore the suggestion concerning moderation.

Of course, as may be expected, advice such as that of Birnie was not always followed even as closely as in the above examples. An interesting example of such a monument is that in remembrance of the first Earl of Kinnoull, George Hay, who died in 1634. As Deborah Howard has noted, there are several aspects to this monument that are interestingly atypical. The majority of effigies on monuments and tombs are depicted as reclining, hovering between life and death. Hay’s effigy, however, is clearly depicted as being alive, and furthermore the effigy is not depicted as kneeling in prayer, which would normally have been

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ “Sculptured Monuments of Scotland,” *The Scottish Antiquary, or, Northern Notes and Queries*, Vol. 6, No. 22. (1891), p. 58.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

the case for the few effigies that were also depicted in life. Instead Hay's effigy is seen to be acting out his role as Chancellor of Scotland, a depiction that was unusual outside of the effigies of scholars or writers. As a member of the aristocracy Hay would normally have been depicted in death, as stated above. As Howard states, "This is a monument not to record his death, nor even to assure succeeding generations of his religious salvation through virtue, but instead a triumphantly secular image to perpetuate the memory of his energetic and enterprising life."⁷⁰ The first Earl of Kinnoull was a Catholic, educated at the Scots college at Pont-à-Mousson in France, and so it is quite interesting that the monument is seen as being secular in nature, perhaps in order to downplay Hay's Catholicism while highlighting his importance in the affairs of Scotland.

Closely related to the monuments of the noble deceased were the tombs of the aristocracy, which also served to praise the deeds and honours of the deceased. In Moray in 1625:

James Farquharson of Cales by ane supplicatioun desyred the authoritie of the Synod to concurr with him by giving libertie vnto him for building a burial place vpon his vnqll. father in the kirkyaird of Dolas the bretheren of the Synod finding by report that the laird of Altar pretendit some intres in that bussiness ordans Mr George Cuming to adverteis the said laird of Altar to be present to morrow for giving his consent to the said work.⁷¹

The Bishop of Moray ultimately gave his consent to the project, and instructed the Laird of Altar to do the same.⁷² There was a similar occurrence in Strathbogie, now Huntly, five years later, and the Bishop once more consented.⁷³ Elsewhere, in 1675 the Bishop of Argyll, William Scrogie, was buried in churchyard of Dumbarton, but with a "handsome monument over his grave adorned with his arms and an inscription."⁷⁴

Occasionally, however, the desire to honour the deceased came not from the family, but from the monarch. In 1579 James VI, in a letter to the heir of chancellor Atholl, suggested "that prominent friends and kinsmen of the king should be buried 'in sic honorable

⁷⁰ D. Howard, "The Kinnoull Aisle and Monument," *Architectural History*, Vol. 39. (1996), pp 41-42.

⁷¹ Cramond, *Extracts from the Records of the Synod of Moray*, p. 11.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁷⁴ Craven, *Records of the Dioceses of Argyll and the Isles*, p. 122.

and publict places as we mycht the rather be moved to remember thame, and thair gude service, in thair lyvetymes, and thair posterities for thair sakes’.”⁷⁵ True to his word James VI did indeed praise many of his deceased nobles. He wrote a laudatory poem in honour of chancellor Thirlstane, to be inscribed on his tomb at Haddington. The tomb of the first lord Belhaven, at Holyrood abbey, “praised his ‘loyalty towards his prince, love of his country, kindness to his relations, and charity to the poor’.”⁷⁶ The tomb of the provost of Dumfries, Francis Irvine, proudly proclaimed “from beyond the grave that ‘for king and country have I served’.”⁷⁷ There is, however, evidence to suggest that, comparatively speaking, restraint was used in these monuments and tombs, and this becomes clearer when these Scottish tombs are compared with those of prominent Scots who were laid to rest south of the border or on the Continent. The tomb of the second Duke of Lennox and his wife in Westminster Abbey “was the grandest of any Scottish noble of this period,”⁷⁸ outshining even that in France of the tenth Earl of Angus, whose family “erected a magnificent black and white marble monument in the abbey at St Germain-des-Prés.”⁷⁹ All of these are, of course, overshadowed by the tomb of Mary Queen of Scots, also in Westminster Abbey, which is larger than that of Elizabeth I, an arguably political decision by the instigator of both tombs, Mary’s son, James VI and I.⁸⁰

Indeed monuments were to become an increasingly common form of memorial to the dead in Scotland, with a particular increase in the number of obelisks. As Colvin notes, an obelisk of more than fifty feet was erected over the vault of the Earls of Cromarty in Dingwall kirkyard in approximately 1714,⁸¹ and by the middle of the nineteenth century it was no longer just the nobility who were to receive such honours in death, as can be seen from the fact that an obelisk near Ruthwell, Dumfries-shire stands to the memory of Reverend Henry Duncan, a Free Church minister and founder of savings banks.⁸² It could be

⁷⁵ Brown, *Noble Society in Scotland*, p 266.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Cf. P. Sherlock, “The Monuments of Elizabeth Tudor and Mary Stuart: King James and the Manipulation of Memory,” *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 46. (2007), pp. 263-289.

⁸¹ As Botfield notes, “On leaving Dingwall, we remarked an obelisk opposite the kirk, indicating the burial place of the Earl of Cromarty, who, eccentric in death as in life, there lies entombed.” Botfield, *Journal of a Tour through the Highlands of Scotland*, p. 101.

⁸² Colvin, *Architecture and the After-Life*, pp. 343-344. The Cromarty obelisk still stands in Dingwall today, although it is no longer surrounded by the churchyard, but rather a car park. Interestingly, Burt writes in the early nineteenth century that there was another form of memorial monument in the Highlands; that of the funeral pile or cairn. He writes that these piles of rubble are treated with the utmost respect and are “more religiously

suggested that the development of more elaborate tombs and monuments for those who could afford them is a sign of the beginnings of the Protestant Work Ethic, as will be seen below, and this is possibly reinforced by the fact that, by the middle of the nineteenth century elaborate monuments and tombs were not restricted to the nobility. There is, however, another possible reason behind the growth of these structures; namely that they were very effective means of propaganda. Clodagh Tait has noted similar trends in Ireland, and suggests that they are so effective because the propaganda disseminated by them is so subtle.⁸³ As Tait has highlighted, the elements of a monument, both visual and verbal, combine to tell the story of an individual and of a family, but in a very one-sided manner. Because the reality of the monument is controlled by the patron the monument is not restricted to a mere reflection of the individual's identity and status. Rather, "they are active voices in the creation of a socially acceptable identity, while at the same time displaying this identity in such a way as to create an impression of continuity, rather than disruptive novelty."⁸⁴ As such, the monuments and tombs of the noble families in Scotland may well have served as a display of the family's prominence, as a method of propagating the notion of that prominence, and as an anchor fixing said prominence in the history of the family. In light of this it could well be suggested that the propaganda of the monuments and tombs went hand in hand with the developing notions of the aforementioned Protestant Work Ethic. Instead of displaying the prominence of the nobility monuments and tombs were now performing the same tasks for those who had risen to greatness through success in business endeavours. The monuments of these newly elevated families were perhaps intended to legitimise their new place in society; partly by aping the customs of the nobility, partly through the aforementioned subtle propaganda.

The final type of monument for the dead that emerged in Scotland during this time is the retroactive monument for martyrs, as seen in the erection in 1706 by James Currie of Pentland of a memorial monument to the martyrs of the 1679 Battle of Bothwell Bridge. The martyrs were Covenanters who had been captured following the battle and subsequently executed in Edinburgh, their remains being buried in communal pits in Greyfriars' churchyard.⁸⁵ The monument was erected near the graves, in the section of the churchyard

preserved among them than, with us, the costly monuments in Westminster Abbey." Burt, *Letters From A Gentleman*, Vol. II, p. 109.

⁸³ Tait, "Colonising Memory," p. 108.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ As one Covenanter later said, "in the late time of persecution, some of our highly honoured martyrs were hung up before the sun, and not allowed honourable burial, in contempt of him whose image they did bear, and

reserved for criminals.⁸⁶ Currie obtained permission from Edinburgh Town Council to erect the monument, provided that the only inscription was Revelation 6:9-11, a passage dealing with the souls of those slain because of the word of God.⁸⁷ Although these instructions were initially followed, the verse being inscribed upon a sculpted open Bible, in 1771 a further inscription of considerable length was added, addressing the acts committed during the years of dispute between Covenanters and Royalists.⁸⁸

The Protestant Work Ethic and the Memorialisation of the Dead

It has been stated that the development of more elaborate forms of memorial in Scotland was possibly related to the development of the Protestant Work Ethic, but, when taken into consideration with the doctrine of election, how can that be said to be the case? As suggested previously, the doctrine of election in some ways prevented such displays of social status or even grief as potentially inappropriate, as who can say which individuals are of the elect? There was, however, a rather clear progression from the doctrine of election to the development of more elaborate memorials. In light of the doctrine of election the German sociologist Max Weber stated:

The world exists to serve the glorification of God and for that purpose alone. The elected Christian is in the world only to increase this glory of God by fulfilling His commandments to the best of his ability. But God requires social achievement of the

whose cause they did seal with their blood, so malignant enemies of Christ and his cause, shall fall and rot, and lie unburied, to the lothing [*sic*] of all flesh.” *A Collection of the Dying Testimonies of some Holy and Pious Christians, who lived in Scotland before and since the Revolution.* (Kilmarnock: Printed by H. and S. Crawford, for J. Calderwood, 1806), p. 428. Of course, it was not just the Covenanters who were posthumously punished. Rumours at the time suggested that a knight and baron, a Catholic, died after being imprisoned by Covenanters. “He died, and was being carried out to burial, when – O unheard of barbarity, even among Calvinists! – all who met the dead body, enclosed in its coffin, actually pelted it with stones and mud and heaped filth upon it, and loaded the dead man and all the papists, as they call the Catholics, with reproaches, uttering the most horrible imprecations. It is thus that the Calvinists are taught by their ministers to pray for the dead.” Forbes-Leith, ed., *Memoirs of Scottish Catholics During the 17th and 18th Centuries*, Vol. I, p. 211. Elsewhere, in 1679, there were accusations that Covenanters dug up the graves of two of the Bishop of Argyll’s children, broke open the coffins, and ran the bodies through with their swords, leaving the remains of the children disinterred. This is possibly reinforced by the fact that in the High Court of Justiciary, on 10 November 1679, an indictment was raised against some of the Covenanters for various crimes, one of which was the desecration of the graves of children of the ‘orthodox clergy.’ Cf. Craven, *Records of the Dioceses of Argyll and the Isles*, p. 135.

⁸⁶ W. Andrews, ed., *Bygone Church Life in Scotland.* (London: William Andrews & Co., 1899), pp. 262-263. Currie himself had suffered for the Covenanters’ cause.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 263-266.

Christian because He wills that social life shall be organized according to His commandments, in accordance with that purpose. The social activity of the Christian in the world is solely activity *in majorem gloriam Dei*. This character is hence shared by labour in a calling which serves the mundane life of the community.⁸⁹

As such it was important for all Christians to strive towards a calling to which they were dedicated in their work, rather than inconsistent odd jobs or manual labour, wherever possible. However, as Weber goes on to state:

The question, Am I one of the elect? must sooner or later have arisen for every believer and have forced all other interests into the background. And how can I be sure of this state of grace? For Calvin himself this was not a problem. He felt himself to be a chosen agent of the Lord, and was certain of his own salvation. Accordingly, to the question of how the individual can be certain of his own election, he has at bottom only the answer that we should be content with the knowledge that God has chosen and depend further only on that implicit trust in Christ which is the result of true faith. He rejects in principle the assumption that one can learn from the conduct of others whether they are chosen or damned. It is an unjustifiable attempt to force God's secrets. The elect differ externally in this life in no way from the damned; and even all the subjective experiences of the chosen are, as *ludibria spiritus sancti*, possible for the damned with the single exception of that *finaliter* expectant, trusting faith. The elect thus are and remain God's invisible Church.⁹⁰

It was normal that Calvinists during this time periodically questioned their status as potential members of the elect, and Calvin himself had a ready answer to the problem. But as Weber subsequently notes, not all Calvinists shared Calvin's rock hard certainty:

Quite naturally this attitude was impossible for his followers as early as Beza, and, above all, for the broad mass of ordinary men. For them the *certitudo salutis* in the sense of the recognisability of the state of grace necessarily became of absolutely dominant importance. So, wherever the doctrine of predestination was held, the

⁸⁹ M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Translated by T. Parsons. (London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2001), p. 64.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.



Monument to the Earls of Cromarty, Dingwall

question could not be suppressed whether there were any infallible criteria by which membership in the *electi* could be known.⁹¹

Regardless of the fact that, for Calvin, it was impossible to know if an individual was a member of the elect, the vast majority of Calvinists continued to attempt to find methods by which such a distinction could be made. The laity continually asked of the clergy how an individual could tell if they were a member of the elect, and the answer came back:

On the one hand it is held to be an absolute duty to consider oneself chosen, and to combat all doubts as temptations of the devil, since lack of self-confidence is the result of insufficient faith, hence of imperfect grace. The exhortation of the apostle to make fast one's own call is here interpreted as a duty to attain certainty of one's own election and justification in the daily struggle of life. In the place of the humble sinners to who Luther promises grace if they trust themselves to God in penitent faith are bred those self-confident saints whom we can rediscover in the hard Puritan merchants of the heroic age of capitalism and in isolated instances down to the present. On the other hand, in order to attain that self-confidence intense worldly activity is recommended as the most suitable means. It and it alone disperses religious doubts and gives the certainty of grace.⁹²

Therefore it was suggested that if one doubted that they were of the elect then it is possible that they were in fact not, and as such they should strive for self confidence. The individual concerned should therefore strive to attain that self confidence through intense work in their chosen calling. As was stated previously, such a drive for productivity was potentially a sign of grace. However, as Weber goes on to state; "The Calvinist also wanted to be saved *sola fide*. But since Calvin viewed all pure feelings and emotions, no matter how exalted they might seem to be, with suspicion, faith had to be proved by its objective results in order to provide a firm foundation for the *certitudo salutis*."⁹³ But by what results should the Calvinist have been able to identify true faith and true membership of the elect? For Weber

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 66.

⁹² Ibid., pp. 66-67.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 68. This suspicious view of emotions may help explain the approach towards practices such as the *coronach*, as seen above, pp. 103-112.

the answer was “by a type of Christian conduct which served to increase the glory of God.”⁹⁴ Indeed, God helps those who help themselves.⁹⁵ Therefore, success in one’s calling was taken to be a sure sign of membership of the elect. Conversely laziness, or an unwillingness to strive for success, was seen as symptomatic of a lack of grace,⁹⁶ and justification for such a view was taken from 2 Thessalonians 3:10, in which Paul states “if a man will not work, he shall not eat.”

The attainment of wealth as a fruit of labour in a calling was taken as a sign of God’s blessing, of membership in the elect.⁹⁷ Indeed, Calvin himself saw no hindrance to the efficacy of the ministry in their wealth. Rather, it was a “thoroughly desirable enhancement of their prestige.”⁹⁸ As such, if an individual had become wealthy during his lifetime as a result of his own endeavours rather than through an inheritance or title, then it could safely be suggested that the individual concerned was of the elect and would be saved. As a direct result of this it is somewhat unsurprising that an elaborate monument, memorial, or gravestone be commissioned after their death by their family, or even before their death by themselves.⁹⁹ They were of the elect and had no reason to hide it.

Conclusion

It must not be forgotten that Scotland was not a uniformly Presbyterian country during the seventeenth century. Despite the lingering Catholicism of the North-East and areas of the Highlands and Islands there were continual disputes within the Church of Scotland as to whether a Presbyterian or Episcopalian church government was to be preferred. This, of course, led to the 1638 National Covenant and the Wars of the Three Kingdoms, although the situation itself was not resolved until 1690 with the Presbyterian faction within the Church of Scotland emerging as the victors. It is interesting to note, however, the differing beliefs concerning burial held by the two factions, and this will be looked at in more detail in subsequent chapters.

⁹⁴ Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 69.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 105.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 116.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 104.

⁹⁹ Cf. J. Finch, “According to the qualitie and degree of the person deceased’: funeral monuments and the construction of social identities, 1400-1750.” *Scottish Archaeological Review*, Vol. 8. (1991), p. 112.

The presence of emotions at funerals in Scotland seems to have been of particular interest to the early Scottish reformers, as the ways in which emotions are expressed can possibly indicate what a certain individual believes concerning death. The reformers were keen to highlight the fact that certain emotional displays were inappropriate, whether due to an implied disbelief in the resurrection of the body, or an attempt at intercession with God on the deceased's behalf. Also to be reformed were perceived ritual displays of emotion,¹⁰⁰ as these were seen to be less than genuine. For a true Christian, who accepted the doctrines of election and the resurrection, grief and emotion were to be carefully controlled. To show no grief at all was considered to be heathenish, as it is only right and proper that emotion is shown at the passing of a loved one.¹⁰¹ However, excessive grief could indicate a lack of belief in the resurrection or election.¹⁰² If the resurrection is not accepted then an individual, believing that death is the end of the body and soul, may be seen to be grieving excessively. Likewise, if the deceased is of the elect then there is no need to grieve excessively as they will enter into paradise. Conversely, of course, if the deceased is not of the elect, then excessive grieving would still be inappropriate, as there is nothing that can be done for them; God will not intercede on their behalf due to displays of emotion. Additionally, such ritual displays of emotion such as the *coronach*, seen above, were to be suppressed throughout Scotland as they too were seen as superstitious, heathenish, and, to a certain extent, attempts at intercession with God. Of course, these attempts at suppression were not particularly successful, and the *coronach* in particular was to persist in the more remote areas of Scotland for some time to come. Indeed, in many ways the Highlands and Island of Scotland were in the interesting position of being very slow to reform burial practices, yet becoming more open to those not of the area. Indeed, the eighteenth century would see increasing numbers of tourists such as Johnson and Boswell, who saw fit to comment upon the practices they saw taking place around them. This will be looked at in closer detail in Chapter Seven.

The seventeenth century also saw the gradual development of monuments and tombs as forms of memorial within Scotland, particularly among the nobility and the higher

¹⁰⁰ Of course, as seen previously, the majority of rituals were to have been removed from the events surrounding death for fear of their potentially superstitious nature.

¹⁰¹ In a sermon in November 1626, Boyd stated, "Satan is seldome among mourners: he liketh most the laughers of these who can not saye with Sarah, the Lord *hath made me to laugh* [Gen 21:6]." D. W. Atkinson, ed, *Selected Sermons of Zachary Boyd*. (Aberdeen: Printed for the Scottish Text Society by Aberdeen University Press, 1989), p. 264. Emphasis in original.

¹⁰² Following the death of Knox's wife in 1561, Calvin wrote to Christopher Goodman; "Though I am not a little grieved to hear that our brother Knox has been bereaved of his affectionate wife, I rejoyce nevertheless that he has so far mastered his affliction as not to suffer it to prevent him from strenuously discharging his duty to Christ and the church." *Letters of John Calvin*, Vol. IV, p. 186.

echelons of society. As seen above it is likely that this was a side effect of the development of the Protestant Work Ethic. One interesting aspect of this, however, is that it saw the gradual development of a proto upper-middle class. Success in business was becoming an indication of perceived membership of the elect, and memorials of those individuals of wealth but no noble lineage began to develop into more elaborate forms. Of course, memorials to the nobility continued to develop alongside the new forms. Another particularly interesting aspect of monuments to the dead was the emergence of official monuments to groups of people, such as the monument in Edinburgh over the graves of executed Covenanters. Perhaps, as Chapter Eight will endeavour to answer, the boundaries of social strata in Scotland were beginning to be redrawn, and ordinary people were beginning to have their voices heard.

It could be suggested that monuments form a static version of emotion, in that they represent the emotions of those who erected the monuments, in particular the emotions they felt towards the deceased, and this is certainly the case today. It is somewhat more difficult to argue that this was the case in post-Reformation Scotland. As has been seen above emotions were expected to be restrained upon a death, and the doctrines of election and the resurrection should aid in the restraint of emotion. As such, in the eyes of the Calvinist ministry at least, monuments and tombs should not be reflective of emotions, grief or otherwise. Of course, that is not to suggest that those who erected these monuments felt no emotions whatsoever, and the drive to erect a monument almost certainly sprang from more than just a desire to display one's social standing or potential membership of the elect. In light of this perhaps it can be suggested that monuments form a static version of emotion, although in post-Reformation Scotland that emotion is displayed as a monument to one's social status and worldly success.

Chapter Six

Rewriting Death in Post-Reformation Scotland¹

As seen in Chapter Three the various religious publications of the Reformation period had, to a certain extent, an impact upon burial practices, and the same can be said for the 1645 publication of *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God Throughout the Three Kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland*.² Known elsewhere as the *Westminster Directory*, this work aimed to standardise the religious practices of the three kingdoms named in the title. The impact this work had on Scottish burial practices will be investigated later in this chapter. Of course, this was not the only composition relating to Scottish burial practices produced during this time period. In 1628 Zachary Boyd produced *The Last Battell of the Soule in Death*,³ a work firmly within the *Ars Moriendi* tradition that contains a section concerning burial practices. This aspect of the work will be investigated in this chapter.

Finally, Scottish funeral sermons of the seventeenth century will be investigated here. Despite official instructions to the contrary funeral sermons continued to be an aspect of Scottish burial practices, at least within certain religious groups. Indeed, several funeral sermons were actually published during this time, and these will be investigated closely below.

Zachary Boyd and *The Last Battell of the Soule in Death*

As seen in Chapter Two, the *Ars Moriendi*, the art of a good, or appropriate, death, was an integral aspect of late medieval and pre-Reformation end of life preparation. In 1628 Zachary Boyd produced *The Last Battell of the Soule in Death*, which, as stated previously, is a work firmly within the *Ars Moriendi* tradition. There are, however, several rather important distinctions between this work and the examples of the tradition from before the Reformation, and these are all the result of the fact that this was a clearly Protestant work.⁴ *The Last*

¹ Aspects of this chapter have appeared in an earlier draft as Raeburn, “The Changing Face of Scottish Burial Practices, 1560-1645.”

² *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God Throughout the Three Kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland*. (Wing-D1549. Edinburgh: Evan Tyler, 1645).

³ Z. Boyd, *The Last Battell of the Soule in Death*. (STC-3446a5. Edinburgh, 1628).

⁴ The first Protestant *Ars Moriendi* works had been produced in Germany over a century earlier. See A. Reinis, *Reforming the Art of Dying*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

Battell is divided into eight sections, each taking the form of a conversation lasting the course of a day between a man on his death bed and various other parties, including a Pastor and a ‘Carnall Friend.’ It is the last section of the work that will be focused on below, as this section concerns the impending burial of the ‘Sicke Man,’ an aspect that, as seen in Chapter Two, was not a part of pre-Reformation *Ars Moriendi* texts, and the discussion involves the aforementioned ‘Carnall Friend.’

The discussion begins with the Carnall Friend inquiring of the Sicke Man, “Where would yee bee buried? Were it not expedient that your *Corps* lye into the *Church*, where are buried those which are in greatest account in this world?”⁵ Of course, as seen in Chapter Three, intra-mural burial was continuing in parts of Scotland during this time, and continued to be viewed as a more suitable form of burial for those of a certain status. Boyd, of course, has the Sicke Man reply:

What haue I to do with this world, or with the *fashions of this world, which passe away?* Wherefore should I make the glorious House of God a fleshpottle of corruption? Fye vpon our folie! Should it bee conuenient that my *stinking bones* cast vp anie *noysome vapours*, for to trouble the *living* at the seruice of the *Euerliuing*?⁶

In the Sicke Man’s reply Boyd is asserting his adherence to the belief that intra-mural burial can avail the dead of no preferential treatment from God, and was actually a lingering fashion from before the Reformation. Rather than being an appropriate burial for those of the higher social orders it was actually an inappropriate burial due to the negative impact it had on the living. In order to bury someone within the walls of the church the fabric of the building had to be disturbed, and in the case of insufficient depth of burials it was not unheard of, according to Boyd at least, for the smell of the decomposing body to pervade the very church. Boyd, through the Sicke Man, goes on to ask:

What aduantage shall it bee to my Soule, to come and fetch this bodie out of a *Church* more than out of a *Church yeard*? What prerogatiue shall it bee to my bodie in that day, that it hath beene buried into God’s House? God’s House in Scripture is called,

⁵ Z. Boyd, *The Last Battle of the Soul in Death*, ed. Gabriel Neil. (Glasgow: George Richardson, 1831), pp. 389-390. Emphasis in original.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 390.

An House of Prayer; but in no place is it called, *A place of buriall*. Let no man make mee an euill example after my death.⁷

The Carnall Friend seems to accept the Sicke Man's desire for extra-mural burial, however, possibly only on the level of not disturbing the fabric of the church. His next line of inquiry concerns a tomb for his dying friend. Up to this point Boyd has been in agreement with the majority of the members of the Kirk; intra-mural burial was a leftover superstition from the pre-Reformation Church and should be excised forthwith. However, as seen previously, some within the Kirk did not feel the same way regarding monuments or tombs, and Birnie in particular wrote in their favour. As suggested in the previous chapter it is possible that Birnie was actually of the majority view in this matter, and that tombs were becoming more acceptable for the great and the good of Scotland. Boyd, however, disagrees, and has the Sicke Man ask: "Why trouble yee mee with vanitie in death, who is now mourning for the vanitie of my life?"⁸ He goes on to state: "*Tombes wherein the dead are buried, will be buried themselves.*"⁹ It is clear that Boyd viewed tombs as empty vanity and further displays of earthly status that will, in time, be forgotten. There was, however, a better use of funds. He states: "O the folies of men's heartes, who vainlie and needleslie waste vpon their dead vanities, that which might build houses for the poore!"¹⁰ Boyd was clearly displaying some compassion for the less well off under his care, theoretically a central tenet of Reformed Protestantism, but it is also possible that he believed such charity would provide a more suitable, and longer lasting, monument to the memories of the deceased. It would seem that for Boyd the most suitable burial was that of the original Reformed Protestant method; namely simple, unceremonious, and without superstition. Boyd has the Sicke Man express his admiration of Beza, Calvin's successor in Geneva, who on his own death bed stated: "*Lay mee vnder the greene Turfe.*"¹¹ As the Sicke Man goes on to state: "How manie *Marters* haue beene burnt into ashes which haue beene cast vp into the winde, and scattered vpon the waters!"¹² The implication being that there are none higher in the Church than those who gave their lives for it, and they cannot have a tomb over their bodies. Indeed, as Birnie

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid. Emphasis in original.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 391. Emphasis in original.

¹² Ibid. This seems to reinforce the suggestion made in Chapters Two and Four that the ashes of those executed at the stake were, for the most part, either left to disperse in the wind or, in coastal regions, thrown into the sea.

himself had stated in 1606; “for as fishe in every sea is at home, so we in every earth, if we be the Lords...”¹³ Boyd here seems to be asking that, if it is acceptable for a true Christian to be buried anywhere, why should the nobility have tombs or monuments? This seems, however, to be a rhetorical question. It is at this stage that Boyd brings in a more obvious aspect of the *Ars Moriendi* tradition, in that he has the Sicke Man state: “The chiefe thing at burialls whereof men would take heede, is that the *dead burie not the dead*. Woe to these buriers when these who are *dead in sin* burie them who are *dead for sin*.”¹⁴ Up to this point Boyd’s composition reads as if it were aimed solely at excising the lingering errors in Scottish burial practices, much like Birnie’s earlier work. Boyd does, however, ensure that there are messages about living and dying well spread throughout the work.

Next to be attacked by Boyd through the Sicke Man is the funeral sermon. The Carnall Friend states: “Seeing the pompe of buriall displeaseth you, yee may bee willing that a funerall Sermon bee made for your praise and commendation.”¹⁵ To this the Sicke Man replies: “Let Christ bee preached and not sinful man. Away with that preaching whereof man is the Text!”¹⁶ From this it is clear that Boyd was firmly of the belief that funeral sermons did nothing for the dead, and in fact only served as an attempt to make the deceased appear to have been a good Christian, whether that was true or not. Boyd has the Sicke Man go onto state:

If I haue liued well, my life shall *grace and praise mee sufficientlie*; if not, wherefore should I make the *Trumpeter of trueth* to become a *libeller of lyes*?...

Such comfortes are only for the liuing but not for the dead. O the vanitie of stinking pride which blasteth the Soules of men with most filthie staines!

Tell mee, I pray you, who made Christe’s *funerall Sermon* when hee was laid into the Graue? Hee whose life could neuer preach, is not worthie to bee preached vpon after his death. If while wee liue our life *preach*, it will *preach* also after our death.¹⁷

¹³ Birnie, *The Blame of Kirk-Buriall*, sig. C2v.

¹⁴ Boyd, *The Last Battle*, p. 391. Emphasis in original.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 391-392.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 392.

¹⁷ Ibid. Emphasis in original. Boyd is unlikely to have known that, astonishingly, in 1609 Philipp Han gave a funeral sermon in Magdeburg Cathedral for Christ. Cf. S. C. Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Feeling; Shaping the Religious Emotions in Early Modern Germany*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 202.

As seen in previous chapters the initial position of the Church of Scotland was identical to that of Boyd's almost seventy years later. However, as will be seen below, this position had not remained a constant throughout the Church of Scotland, with some ministers holding the position that funeral sermons had a valid place in Scottish burial practices. As the Sicke Man states: "But men must bee preached, will yee say, for such is now the fashion."¹⁸ This is followed, however, by a suggestion that Boyd, while personally disapproving of the concept of the funeral sermon, would tolerate them if they were honest. The Sicke Man goes on to state: "Well, if men will bee preached with *Seraphicall tongues*, let him who preacheth their *vertues* also preach their *vices*, as the Prophets did of olde, not sparing Kinges."¹⁹ Rather than a sermon wherein the deceased is overly praised, if funeral sermons are to be preached at all they should list both the good and the bad, thereby giving a full picture. Boyd was keen to stress that this actually has a degree of Scriptural warrant, noting examples such as David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and Jehosaphat amongst others. Yet Boyd also seemed to believe that if funeral sermons were of this pattern then they would actually cease to be practised. The Sicke Man states: "If yee would preach my *vertues*, yee must also preach my *vices*, and then when should that Sermon haue an end?"²⁰ It is clear that humanity has more vice than virtue. In this section concerning funeral sermons, however, Boyd included a caveat. The Sicke Man states:

For all that is saide, I would not absolutelie blame *Funerall Sermons*, for the death of God's Sainctes is *precious in his sight*. That which is *precious in the eyes of God*, may bee declared *glorious in the eares of men*. But yet with leaue, I must say that with reason in a great part of our Churches, they haue beene *abrogate and casseered* [removed] because of abuse. Seeing the *Brazen Serpent* which was made at the first by God's own appointment, was broken in pieces for the abuse thereof, and disdainfullie called *Nehushtan*, a lumpe of Brasse, much more thinges which God neuer commanded in his word for to bee, beeing filthilie abused, may bee rejected.²¹

For Boyd the funeral sermon was not inherently bad; it had merely been abused by successive generations, and subsequently had been rightly removed from most burial practices. It would

¹⁸ Boyd, *The Last Battle*, p. 392.

¹⁹ Ibid. Emphasis in original.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 393. Emphasis in original.

²¹ Ibid. Emphasis in original.

seem that, for Boyd, in this instance it was easier, and more pragmatic, to remove rather than reform. As the Sicke Man goes on to state:

Let all abuse bee taken away. As for mee I would not that men should bee too contentious and eager in thinges neither bidden nor forbidden by God. *Paul* and *Barnabas* for an indifferent thing came at last to such an *heate*, that they departed one from another. But I cannot reade that euer they met againe.²²

Boyd goes on to note that if it were only those who were truly deserving of a funeral sermon that received one then it would not be detrimental to praise them somewhat. “Why should not the *glorie of God’s graces* in his Sainctes, *passe along and glance clearly* in the eyes of these that are aliue?”²³ This, however, was not the case. Funeral sermons, when they were delivered, were performed for any individual who could afford one, and yet they all performed the same function; the praise of the deceased.

For Boyd, however, it would seem that the discussion he had created thus far had become too focused on the material aspects of death, as he has the Sicke Man state: “let me intreate you not to bee so worldlie minded. It may bee that shortlie as I am now, so shall yee bee.”²⁴ It is at this point in the composition that Boyd returns to a more obvious *Ars Moriendi* focus, albeit from the aforementioned Reformed Protestant position. As such, the focus is no longer on what will be done with the body of the deceased, but rather the moments leading up to death. While there are prayers for the Sicke Man they are primarily concerned with asking God to help him endure the upcoming struggle, rather than asking for a place in heaven. Intercessory prayers are, of course, considered to be empty superstition in Reformed Protestantism, and as such do not appear in this composition. In an interesting development of the Catholic *Ars Moriendi* tradition this preparation for death is no longer aimed at earning salvation through a good death, but rather attempting to find assurance of election, or as much assurance as can be had in this world.²⁵ As Atkinson has noted *The Last Battell*, while far from a seminal work in terms of Scottish literature, is a very useful source for Scottish Reformed Protestant attitudes towards death and burial.²⁶

²² Ibid., p. 394. Emphasis in original.

²³ Ibid. Emphasis in original.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ D. W. Atkinson, “Zachary Boyd and the *Ars Moriendi* Tradition.” *Scottish Literary Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 1. (1977), p. 7.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 16.

A Directory for the Publique Worship of God

As has been seen in Chapter Three, in 1556 and 1560 two documents had been produced, both of which included in their pages attempts to legislate burial practices in Scotland. However, in 1645, a third was published, entitled *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God throughout the three Kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland*. The publication was supported by an Act of the General Assembly ensuring the establishment and observation of the document. On the face of it this document merely reiterated the sentiments of its two predecessors, with the addition, however, of one crucial sentence. “That this shall not extend to deny any civill respects or differences at the buriall, suitable to the ranke and condition of the party deceased whiles he was living.”²⁷ All of a sudden, it would seem, burials were now permitted to reflect the social status of the deceased. A far cry from *The First Book of Discipline*, wherein it is stated that, “For seeing that before God there is no respect of persons, and that their Ministrie appertaineth to all alike, whatsoever they doe to the rich in respect of their Ministrie, the same they are bound to doe to the poorest under their charge.”²⁸ Arguably this only relates to the removal of sermons from all funerals, be they for rich or poor. However, it could also be argued that *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God* was now authorising, or at the very least tolerating, pomp and circumstance at the funerals of those who were seen to be deserving of such. One wonders what Birnie would have said to this notion. As has already been seen, Birnie was not opposed to monuments recording the achievements of a lifetime, but excessive funeral displays were another matter entirely. A clue to the possible reasons behind this apparent change of tack can be found in the very title of the document itself. *The First Book of Discipline* refers specifically to Scotland, and *The forme of prayers* can claim descent from the practices of the Genevan Church under Calvin. *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God*, however, is attempting to unify the practices of the three kingdoms of Scotland, Ireland, and England. Indeed, since the Union of the Crowns in 1603 under James VI and I, there had been a certain degree of influence crossing the border both northwards and southwards. In Scotland in 1638 an act was passed by the General Assembly to “discharge funerall sermons, as savouring of superstition. The Assembly referreth the former part of this article anent buriall in Kirks to

²⁷ *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God*, p. 58.

²⁸ *The Doctrine and Discipline of the Kirke of Scotland*, p. 71.

the care of Presbyteries, and dischargeth all funerall sermons.”²⁹ Unlike previous acts attempting the same end, this one appears to have actually been initially somewhat successful. McMillan notes that the Scottish commissioners to the Westminster Assembly were opposed to funeral services, but that the English Puritans present were very much in favour of services. However, in the interests of uniformity, following a debate of several days it was agreed that funeral services were to remain suppressed.³⁰ Of course, there is no specific mention of sermons within the section of *A Directory for the Publique Worship* concerning burial, and as such it seems obvious that the Act of 1638 and the publication of 1645 were in agreement on this issue. However, as is stated in the *Directory*:

Howbeit, we judge it very convenient, that the Christian friends which accompany the dead body to the place appointed for publike Buriall, do apply themselves to Meditations, and Conferences suitable to the occasion: and, that the Minister, as upon other occasions, so at this time, if he be present, may put them in remembrance of their Dutie.³¹

Whilst far from being explicit, this does seem to be authorising a sort of ‘unofficial’ funeral sermon, more in the nature of a private spiritual conversation. It would appear to be the case that, in the span of a mere seven years, the Kirk in Scotland had gone from an outright prohibition on funeral sermons to a clandestine approval of them. It should be reiterated at this stage that Presbyterianism in Scotland was not fully established until 1690, shortly after the accession of William of Orange. It must also be highlighted here, however, as Mullan has stated, “at no time did the entire country become Protestant, and a steady flow of Catholic Scots continued to arrive from various Continental locations throughout the entire period.”³² As such, even though Scotland ‘officially’ became a Protestant nation in 1560, and ‘officially’ became a Presbyterian nation in 1690, at no point throughout the intervening years was the country solely populated by Protestants. Perhaps it was simply the case that, with all of these outside influences, the Kirk wanted to ensure that the people heard the correct message. It may have meant conceding the point on funeral sermons, but at least they would be the

²⁹ Peterkin, *Records of the Kirk of Scotland*, p. 37.

³⁰ McMillan, *The Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church, 1550-1638*, p. 286.

³¹ *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God*, p. 58.


³² D. G. Mullan, “Writing the Scottish Reformation.” In *Literature and the Scottish Reformation*, eds. C. Gribben and D. G. Mullan (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. 22.

correct kind of funeral sermons. Interestingly 1638, in addition to the act of the General Assembly referred to above, also marked the signing of the National Covenant as the Presbyterian majority of the Kirk in Scotland was unhappy with the interference of Charles I in the ecclesiastical affairs of Scotland.

The suggestion that funeral sermons had been clandestinely reintroduced in Scotland in order to combat Episcopalian influences from south of the border, however, could be somewhat negated by the fact that the *Directory* had more of a Scottish influence than is possibly expected.³³ Indeed, as stated above, it was the Scottish delegates' intransigence on the matter that led to the issue of sermons not being explicitly mentioned in the text. In fact, as Leishman records, the issue was of such importance to the Scottish commissioners that they refused to join the rest of the Westminster Assembly when John Pym's funeral sermon was preached.³⁴ However, despite the influence that the Scottish commissioners managed to exert concerning this issue, it may actually be the case, as suggested above, that the *Directory* is not as clear as possible concerning funeral sermons. On the face of it all of the commissioners agreed to suppress sermons at the house of the deceased, and "apparently at the grave also."³⁵ Additionally, the instructions contained within the pages of the *Directory* need to be "strained somewhat to sanction any subsequent service in the church."³⁶ Yet, as seen above, the rather vague paragraph concerning the remembrance of the duty of those attending the funeral could certainly be interpreted in favour of sermons. Leishman suggests, however, that following the introduction of the *Directory* that religious ceremonies were, from that moment on, completely avoided at Scottish funerals,³⁷ but can that truly be said to be the case? It is certainly the case that, upon a literal reading of the text of the *Directory* that this was to be the official practice for Scotland, but, returning again to the rather vague nature of the paragraph quoted above, is it not possible that the Kirk was content to turn the occasional blind eye?

Although, as with *The forme of prayers* and the *First Book of Discipline*, the section of the *Directory* concerning burial is a relatively short passage, it actually occupied the

³³ T. Leishman, ed., *The Westminster Directory*. (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1901), p. xiv.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xl. Pym had died on 8 December 1643, and had been buried at Westminster Abbey. However, following the Restoration of 1660, Pym's body was exhumed as the burial was deemed to be unauthorised, and his remains were subsequently re-buried in a communal pit. C. Russell, "Pym, John (1584–1643)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22926], <accessed  20 April 2011>

³⁵ Leishman, *The Westminster Directory*, p. xl.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xli.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

commissioners at the Westminster Assembly for several days, as seen above. There was in fact some debate as to whether or not the section should be included at all, as some commissioners, particularly the English Puritan commissioners, felt that the act of burying the dead should not be one of the duties of the ministry.³⁸ In defence of their position they actually suggested that Leviticus 21:1-11, wherein is listed some of the rules for priests, gives scriptural warrant to the absence of the minister from the graveside.³⁹ Ultimately, of course, the decision was made that the section should be included, so it was necessary to discuss what to include within the section, and, as Leishman notes, “the discussions turned on the questions what should be done before, at, and after the interment.”⁴⁰ In the first instance, the question of what should occur before the burial, there appears to have been no disagreement that there should be no religious ceremonies performed. The question of what should occur at the funeral, however, was not so straightforward. It was agreed, following a suggestion by the English commissioner John Lightfoot, that prayers beside the corpse should be forbidden, and for conformity with the Reformed Church of the Netherlands and the Spanish Edicts of 1567 it was determined that psalms should not be sung at funerals.⁴¹ The question of the funeral service itself was, of course, not so straightforward. As seen above, there was a distinctly vague nature to this aspect of the *Directory*, and Leishman has also noted this. He states: “at first sight it seems as if service at the grave had also been prohibited.”⁴² During the discussions concerning the funeral, however, a proposal had been made that something might be said at the very moment of the burial, yet this proposal was met with silence. As Lightfoot noted at the time:

And so the minister left something to his liberty... Dr Temple moved again, Whether a minister, at putting the body in the ground, may not say *We commit the body to the ground, &c.* And it was conceived by the Assembly that he might, and the words *without any ceremony more*, do not tie him up from this.⁴³

³⁸ Ibid., p. 139.

³⁹ Additionally, this faction of the Assembly disapproved of burial within churchyards, and the wearing of mourning attire, both of which the Scottish commissioners would probably have viewed in a similar fashion.

⁴⁰ Leishman, *The Westminster Directory*, p. 140.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid. Emphasis in original.

Leishman agrees that the passages concerned are vague, and have several possible readings, not all of them obvious. For Leishman, however, a set form of words is not a ceremony. Rather a ceremony consists of an action such as baptism, or the symbol of marriage being the wearing of the rings.⁴⁴ As he states, “the words are not prayer, could not well be sung, and need not to be read, and so the letter of the statute would be obeyed.”⁴⁵

Perhaps unsurprisingly, it was the issue of funeral sermons following the burial that was to be the most controversial issue to be debated by the Assembly. It seems to have been a polarising issue, in that the Scottish and English commissioners held directly opposing views on the subject. As Scottish commissioner Robert Baillie stated:

Our difference about funeral sermons seems irreconcilable: as it has been here and everywhere preached, it is nothing but an abuse of preaching to serve the humours of rich people only for a reward; our Church expressly has discharged them on many good reasons; it's here a good part of the minister's livelihood, therefore they will not quit it.⁴⁶

In this instance it would seem that Baillie is referring to the injunctions against funeral sermons as laid down by *The First Book of Discipline*,⁴⁷ and it could be suggested that this was the view of the majority of Scottish ministers at the time.⁴⁸ Of course, the English view of funeral sermons was substantially different to that of the Scots, hence the difficulty faced by the Westminster Assembly. As seen above, the Scottish commissioners had refused to attend a funeral sermon in honour of John Pym, whereas Lightfoot, on two separate occasions, had to excuse himself in order to preach funeral sermons.⁴⁹ Indeed, subsequently for Lightfoot and the English commissioners, the words as they are laid out in the *Directory* actually allowed for funeral sermons, while, of course, the Scottish commissioners outwardly disagreed.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 141.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ As seen in Chapter Three, although written in 1560, *The First Book of Discipline* was not published as a stand-alone work until 1641.

⁴⁸ It would seem, however, that the Scottish commissioners only voiced objections to the differing treatment of social strata in funeral sermons, as no comment seems to have been made concerning the allowance in the *Directory* for displays of social status at the funeral itself.

⁴⁹ Leishman, *The Westminster Directory*, p. 142.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

As will be seen below, it is possibly due to the aforementioned vague nature of the *Directory* concerning funeral sermons that partly lead to their subsequent reintroduction in Scotland. There was, however, a certain variation in attitudes towards the *Directory* in Scotland. In Kirkcaldy in 1645 the records note that one minister, Thomas Hogg, refused to follow the *Directory* until he knew the opinions of other presbyteries.⁵¹ Another, James Symeson, called the *Directory* a novelty.⁵² In Methven, Perthshire, in 1709:

It was reported, on December 21, that two clergymen had ‘performed the English Ceremonies’ at the burial of Mr Patrick Strachan, viz: Messrs William Smith, and Thomas Rhind, designated chaplain to the laird of Balgowen, elder, both of whom lived in the parish of Methven; and that they had been cited to appear before the Presbytery. Neither was present, however.⁵³

The clergymen in question were accused of attempting to “harden papists in their superstition, and fostering the same among protestants.”⁵⁴ In Dunkeld in 1711, Henry Murray, the Episcopal minister, was summoned before the presbytery for using the *Book of Common Prayer*. The records state:

‘You follow the order prescribed in the said Liturgie for burying the dead, particularly upon the sixth day of November, One thousand seven hunderth and eleven years, or one of the other of the days of the said moneth, in and about the Burial place of the Burgh of Perth, at the funerals of Bathia Omay, late spouse to Robert Conquerer, merchant in the said Burgh, which rites and ceremonies are condemned by the constitutions of this Church in her First Book of Policy, and Directory for Publick Worship, as being of most dangerous consequence, and her constant practice consonant thereto; in the performance whereof, you assisted at the foresaid burial, which gave no smal offence, these ceremonies being altogether forraign and strange to the people of North Brittain, ever since their Reformation from Poperie.’⁵⁵

⁵¹ *The Presbytrie Booke of Kirkcaldie*, p. 289.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 287.

⁵³ *The Diocese and Presbytery of Dunkeld*, Vol. II, p. 335.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 336.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

Clearly, whilst some Scottish presbyteries would ultimately allow the reintroduction of funeral sermons, perhaps due to the *Directory*, others would hold firm to their objections, and continue to attempt to prevent the occurrence of sermons on the occasion of a funeral.

From this it becomes very difficult to suggest that the *Directory* is as clear a document as either *The forme of prayers* or the *First Book of Discipline*. Of course, in many ways the *Directory* is a clear document concerning funeral regulations, yet there are, as seen above, two rather vague aspects to the work; the above quoted paragraph concerning Christian friends and the remembrance of duty, and the nature of ceremonies. For Leishman it is clear that a form of words does not constitute a ceremony, and as such the recitation of certain words or phrases on the occasion of a funeral does not go against the instruction contained in the *Directory*. By that logic the paragraph wherein the minister is allowed to remind those present at a funeral of their Christian duty is not a clandestine reintroduction of funeral sermons. Additionally, there is no ceremony present, so the *Directory* does not contradict the two previous works. However, it could be suggested that, despite not being a ceremony, a set form of words for a funeral could potentially be interpreted as a superstitious practice, and would subsequently violate the two previous works concerning burial.

All of this is somewhat complicated by the fact that, in 1644, the year before the publication of the *Directory*, a work was published in London entitled *The Platforme of the Presbyterian Government: with The Forme of Church-Worship, and The Particulars of the Manner and Order thereof: According To the Word of God, and Practice of our Brethren of The Church of Scotland*.⁵⁶ Within this work are laid out the practices that surround burial, apparently according to the Church of Scotland:

Though Buriall be no part of the Worship of God, nor of the worke of the Ministry; yet an honest and competent number of Christians, are to accompany the Christian friends of the dead unto the Grave, that they may comfort one another by the way, and to see the buriall done in a grave and decent manner, remembring that sin is the cause of death, that Christ hath overcom death and the grave, and that they who dye in the Lord, rise againe to life everlasting. And without singing or reading, which the superstitious doe conceive to be profitable, for the dead; without Funerall Sermons, which do beget superstition, and tend to flattery, make the Gospel to be preached with

⁵⁶ *The Platforme of the Presbyterian Government: with The Forme of Church-Worship, and The Particulars of the Manner and Order thereof: According To the Word of God, and Practice of our Brethren of The Church of Scotland. Published by Authority.* (Wing-P2401. London: R. Austin, 1644).

respect of persons, and are most pressed by such as doe least regard Sermons at other times; and without Feasting, with affectate shewes of mourning, and any further pomp or Ceremony, than civill differences and respects do require.

The places of the assembling of the people for the Word and Sacraments, ought not to be places of Buriall, which is therefore forbidden.

Registers are ordained to be kept, of the names and times of all that are baptized, of all that are married, and all that are buried.⁵⁷

In certain respects this document is very clear. In Scotland there were no funeral sermons. Burial was not part of the duties of the Ministry. Interestingly, an acknowledgment of the social standing of the deceased was also acceptable. What is unclear, however, is what function this document truly served. Was it subsequently made obsolete by the *Directory*? Was it only intended to show an English audience how Scottish Presbyterianism operated? As will be seen in Chapter Eight, at least one subsequent Presbyterian minister, Thomas M'Crie, held it to be valid, and for him it was not contradicted by the *Directory*. Perhaps, then, this work serves as a confirmation that the *Directory* is not in favour of funeral sermons.

Unfortunately, however, due to the varying possible interpretations of the section of the *Directory* concerning funeral sermons, it is very difficult to categorically state that the work is either for or against them, be they overt or clandestine. Leishman has asserted his belief that funeral sermons did not take place in Scotland at this time, although he accepts that they did gradually resurface in certain parts of the country.⁵⁸ But was this actually the case? Did the funeral sermon ever truly disappear from Scottish burial practice? The subsequent section of this chapter shall endeavour to ascertain if this was indeed the case.

Scottish Funeral Sermons in the Seventeenth Century

As seen above, Leishman has argued that there were no funeral sermons occurring in Scotland at the time of the *Westminster Directory* in 1645, and that there had been no Scottish funeral sermons for some time before that, following a ban on the practice by the General Assembly in 1638. However, is it in fact the case that funeral sermons had ceased in

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

⁵⁸ Leishman, *The Westminster Directory*, pp. 142-143.

Scotland? Even as a generalisation this is an assertion that seems hard to defend, as Scotland at the time was not a unified country in terms of outward ecclesiastical forms, as the struggle between the Presbyterian and Episcopalian factions of the Church of Scotland continued. While, in theory, the Presbyterian faction should have been against the notion of the funeral sermon the same can not necessarily be said for the Episcopalian faction. Indeed, Mr Andrew Boyd, Bishop of Argyll, who died in 1636, seems to have spent a good portion of his time in preaching funeral sermons, sometimes adapting his regular sermons. As he noted:

Albeit the following Sermon was preached by me *Andrew*, Bishop of *Argyle*, in my ordinary Church of *Denoon* for my ordinary part of Scripture; yet I have thought good to subject it to the other preaching, able to serve to the same purpose; But I have changed many both words and sentences to draw it to the pertinency of Funerall.⁵⁹

In actual fact at least three works were published in Scotland, the first in 1633 and the second and third both in 1635, which prove the concept of the funeral sermon had not been entirely abandoned during this time. 1633 saw the publication of *A Fvnerall Sermon, Preached at the buriall of the Lady Iane Maitlane, daughter to the Right Noble Earle, Iohn Earle of Lauderdale, at Hadington, the 19. of December, 1631*,⁶⁰ and in 1635 was published *Funerals of a Right Reverend Father in God Patrick Forbes of Corse, Bishop of Aberdene*,⁶¹ and Ninian Campbell's *A Treatise Upon Death*,⁶² which was based upon an earlier sermon.

The first of these publications is a relatively short piece, yet addresses several notable subjects, including the proper Christian emotions on the occasion of a death, and the levelling of social strata in the afterlife. It is unknown if the minister, Mr I. Maitland,⁶³ had Presbyterian or Episcopalian leanings, and the text does not give many ready hints. Early in the sermon, however, Maitland states:

It is I know expected I should speake somewhat of her; and why should I frustrat your expectation? for though these speeches should not be Panegyricks, onely for the

⁵⁹ Craven, *Records of the Dioceses of Argyll and the Isles*, p. 74. Episcopalian burials were regularly accompanied by ceremonies, including a burial service and a funeral hymn. Cf. Craven, *Records of the Dioceses of Argyll and the Isles*, pp. 354-355.

⁶⁰ (STC-17142. Edinburgh, 1633).

⁶¹ (STC-11151. Aberdeen: Edward Raban, 1635).

⁶² (STC-4533. Glasgow: R. Young, 1635).

⁶³ Possibly Mr J. Maitland.

praises of the dead; but rather instructions for the living, yet I see not why their due commendations, because of their excellent vertues, should be suppressed, since God, in them, by them, is glorified, others edified. And hath not the holy Spirit told us, that, *As the memorie of the wicked shall rot, so the memorie of the just shall be blessed.* Prov. 10.7. *The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance,* Psal. 112.6. If with God, why not with man?⁶⁴

It could be suggested that, had Maitland been a Presbyterian then the relative merits of the late Lady Jane would not have been referred to, particularly not in such a fashion as above. However, while Lady Jane is certainly shown to be an exemplary Christian, it is a comparatively short section of the sermon.

A more important aspect of the sermon concerns emotions, namely the appropriateness of emotions on the occasion of a death. Of course, the view of Reformed Protestantism concerning emotions has been dealt with in Chapter Five, but its presence within funeral sermons is particularly interesting, and will be dealt with here. During this particular sermon Maitland states:

The eyes of all who knew her, the tongues of all who heard of her do abundantly testifie, not a private but a publique sorrow: and shall we condemn that, which God and Nature commands? Christ and his Saints practised it. We finde the Patriarches and holy men mourning over their dead: our blessed Saviour shedding teares over *Lazarus*; and shall it then be strange if we behold her worthy parents lifting up their voyces with cries, being deprived of such a divided peece of themselves?⁶⁵

For Maitland it would appear that emotions were acceptable, and most certainly understandable. What parents would not cry over the death of their daughter? Indeed, if the Patriarchs, and even Christ, were seen to have shed tears over the loss of loved ones, then what chance would ordinary parents have of restraining their emotions? However, as with the majority of the Protestant Reformers, Maitland felt the need to qualify this statement. As he goes on to state, “Not to mourn, is not onely graceless, but unnaturall; to be immoderate in

⁶⁴ I. Maitland, *A Fynerall Sermon, Preached at the buriall of the Lady Iane Maitlane, daughter to the Right Noble Earle, Iohn Earle of Lauderdale, at Hadington, the 19. of December, 1631.* (Edinburgh, 1633), p. 6. Emphasis in original.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8. Emphasis in original.

our mourning is not Christian, but Heathenish.”⁶⁶ Perhaps here Maitland was condemning practices such as the *coronach*, or its equivalents. Maitland clearly adhered to the notion that the doctrine of the Resurrection should prevent emotion upon a death from becoming overbearing. As he states, “Mourn then we may, we should, but to exceed in our *mourning as those who have no hope*, we may not, we should not.”⁶⁷ For true Christians, those who accept the resurrection, death was not the end. It was therefore inappropriate to lament the death of a loved one excessively. On this issue even Presbyterians and Episcopalians agreed.

The final aspect of this funeral sermon that will be looked at here involves the levelling of social strata following death. Maitland, of course, held the universal opinion that the distinctions in social class in this life are just, and not to be questioned. However, following death the levels of society will not be so clear. He states:

Here indeed we have distinction of states, callings, persons, and that justly; but *Pallida mors*, this *change* doth equall all; you know the comparison of the chesse-men, while the play lasteth, there is distinction of them; being esteemed as they may best serve our purpose; but the play ended, and check-mete given, all promiscouosly are hurled in the box; and often the least lies above the greatest: So here, though men be more or lesse regarded in respect of the foresaid differences; yet when this *change* comes, whereby the play of this life is ended, then we are equally hurled in the grave, and often the poore mans dust lies above the rich. When ye behold a heap of bones, who can say, here are the rich mans, there the poor’s?⁶⁸

For Maitland the point is clear. Life is fleeting, and while an awareness of social distinction in this life is important and should certainly be recognised, that does not give license to the higher orders of society to treat those below them badly. After all, the meek shall inherit the earth.⁶⁹ The poorer classes are not to be mocked, and charity should be generous.

In many ways Maitland’s sermon follows the notion that the sermon should serve to edify the living rather than glorify the dead. Of course, Maitland refers to the deceased Lady Jane in glowing terms, yet he does so only briefly, and the rest of the sermon is focused upon the correct Christian responses to death; the correct display of emotions, and the subsequent

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 9. Emphasis in original.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 14. Emphasis in original.

⁶⁹ Matthew 5:5.

contemplation of death by the living. Arguably, of course, a sermon should not have taken place, and likely would not have, were it not for the relative importance of the Earl of Lauderdale. It can, however, be suggested that other sermons for the higher orders of society would not be so diligent in their attempts to edify the living and not glorify the dead.

On 28 March 1635, Patrick Forbes of Corse, Bishop of Aberdeen, died, and was buried in St Machar's Cathedral on 9 April 1635. Shortly after his death a collection was published in Aberdeen consisting of, amongst several other documents, five sermons relating to his death and burial. Of these five sermons only one was preached at the funeral itself, the other four occurring in the days following, taking the form of memorial sermons. They touch upon a number of topics, ranging from purgatory to *psychopannychia*, or soul-sleep, yet all mention Forbes in a good light.

The first sermon was preached at Forbes' funeral by Robert Baron, professor of Divinity at Marischal College, Aberdeen, and outspoken Episcopalian.⁷⁰ During the course of the sermon Baron speaks at length against purgatory, and, as with Maitland, seen above, makes note of the differences between rich and poor. He states:

But within a short tyme death putteth an end to that difference, and equalleth them in glory & happinesse with kings & Emperors. Ye that are rich, co[n]sider this, and despyse not the Poore, when ye look vpon their base, and contemptible wordlie estate: but rather be readie to helpe them; remembering this which the Sprit of God here telleth you, That if they *die in the Lord*, they shall one day bee participant of that same Kingdome, that same Robe of immortalitie, that same Banquet of Angels, which yee looke for.⁷¹

As ever, the death of any individual is to be viewed as an opportunity by the living to contemplate their own death, and by extension the way they live their lives. Baron goes on to praise Forbes as a good preacher and bishop, and ends his sermon with the injunction to "Goe, celebrate the Funeralls of our Venerable, and moste worthie Bishop: you shall never see the Funeralls of a worthier Praelate while you liue."⁷²

⁷⁰ Baron was one of the 'Aberdeen Doctors' who strongly opposed the national covenant. I. M. Thompson, "Baron, Robert (c.1596–1639)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1498], <accessed 31 May 2011>.

⁷¹ *Funerals of a Right Reverend Father in God Patrick Forbes of Corse, Bishop of Aberdene*. (Aberdeen: Edward Raban, 1635), pp. 6-7. Emphasis in original.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 58.

Three days after Forbes' burial, on 12 April 1635, two further sermons were preached in Aberdeen; one in St Machar's by Alexander Scrogie, and another in St Nicolas' kirk by William Guild.⁷³ Although Scrogie, in his sermon, makes an interesting suggestion, namely that when a good Christian dies, the Church undergoes troublesome times,⁷⁴ the vast majority of his sermon is focused upon how good a bishop Patrick Forbes had been. Guild's sermon, too, praises Forbes as a good bishop, although the focus of his sermon is the difference between godly and ungodly deaths.

The last two sermons took place on 15 and 16 April 1635, both in St Nicolas, by Alexander Ross and James Sibbald respectively. Sibbald's sermon, the last to be preached, was somewhat different to the other four, in that, while Forbes is, of course, praised as a good bishop, he is also portrayed as having been crowned by God in heaven. This statement follows from the assertion that all Christians are crowned by God, but that pastors are esteemed above others. Sibbald states:

*GOD giveth a greater honour to pastors; to whom Hee sayeth, as it were, I haue made Heaven and Earth; but I giue thee power to make Earth Heaven: I haue made cleare Lightes; but make thou more cleare: thou canst not make a man; but thou mayest make him gracious, and acceptable unto Mee.*⁷⁵

Sibbald suggests that this can be extrapolated to suggest that bishops are, in fact, necessary for the Church, but not so far as to allow for a pope. As he goes on to state:

Thus yee see that Christian Bishops haue their Crowne, and that precious. Their outward Crowne, though olde, can not bee compared vnto it: it is but a small resemblance thereof.

⁷³ Of the 'Aberdeen Doctors' only two did not give a funeral sermon for Forbes; William Leslie, and Forbes' son, John (perhaps understandably). R. P. Wells, "Guild, William (1586-1657)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11720], accessed 31 May 2011.

⁷⁴ This statement is backed up by reference to the Spanish seizing Wittenberg after Luther's death. *Funerals of a Right Reverend Father in God*, p. 60. The suggestion here would seem to be that, following the death of Forbes, the Church of Scotland would soon undergo traumatic events, perhaps validated by the conflict surrounding the national covenant from 1638 and the subsequent Wars of the Three Kingdoms.

⁷⁵ *Funerals of a Right Reverend Father in God*, p. 102. Emphasis in original.

If anie man will strayne the words farther, and labour to finde *the Pope's triple Crowne of Golde* heere, his travell will bee lost: For that is exalted not onlie aboute the Church, but also aboute the Crownes of Kinges...⁷⁶

As with Scrogie's sermon, however, it would seem that the main focus of Sibbald's sermon is praise for the late bishop, devoting approximately eight pages to the subject.⁷⁷

Although the last to be dealt with here, the penultimate sermon in the series was preached by Alexander Ross,⁷⁸ and while it does praise Forbes to an extent,⁷⁹ a potentially more important theme concerns the fear of death. Ross opens his sermon by stating:

This duetie had beene performed ere nowe, were not *Death* (fearing that my vnappeased grieffe, through sense of my great losse, should haue made me to burst out into bitter and Tragicke *Invectives* agaynst *her*; and so haue brought you all in hatred with *her*, as with that which the Philosopher saieth is *omnium terribilium, terribilissimum; of all thinges that are terrible, the most terrible*) did arrest mee, by *her* mightie Herauld *Sickness*: to the end, that by neare communing with *her*, I might knowe, and impart the same vnto you also; that *shee* is not so indeede, as *her* grieflie looks doe praetend: not an enemy to the Godlie, as nowe in our mourning *shee* is holden to be, but a friend: and herefore, in your mourning, you should bee comforted.⁸⁰

Indeed, the very nature of death has been changed by the death of Christ, and as such death is no longer to be feared by the godly.⁸¹ Forbes, as a godly man and bishop, was almost certainly among the elect, and certainly would not have feared death, even in his darker moments. As such to mourn him had no real purpose. Rather, as Ross asserts, the

⁷⁶ Ibid. Emphasis in original.

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 140-148.

⁷⁸ Ross would become a member of the 'Aberdeen Doctors' opposed to the national covenant, but would ultimately leave Scotland and become a minister of the Church of England. Upon his death in 1654 he was buried in a church near Eversley, Hampshire. D. Allan, "Ross, Alexander (1591-1654)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24110], < accessed 31 May 2011 >.

⁷⁹ *Funerals of a Right Reverend Father in God*, pp. 170-173.

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 149-150. Emphasis in original.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 150.

congregation should be offering thanks to God for Forbes, not on his behalf, but rather thanking God for the privilege of having known such a godly individual.⁸²

Each of the five men that preached a funeral sermon for Patrick Forbes of Corse knew him personally, and as such it could be suggested that Forbes would have, if not desired, then at least not have begrudged such treatment after death. Forbes, however, who had not always been a member of the Episcopalian faction of the Church of Scotland, had actually started his theological career as a staunch Presbyterian, and firmly believed the episcopacy was not a necessary church institution. There is some debate as to whether or not Forbes actually accepted his eventual bishopric willingly, or in order not to offend the king.⁸³ Of course, whether or not Forbes was as staunch a member of the Episcopalian faction as his colleagues or his bishopric suggest, his opinion of his funeral sermons will never be known, and, in any rate, would not affect the reality of five sermons having been preached in his honour.

The final funeral sermon from before 1645 to be looked at here was the 1635 publication, *A Treatise Upon Death: First publickly delivered in a funerall Sermon, anno Dom. 1630*. As the title suggests, Ninian Campbell had originally offered this work as a sermon on the occasion of the joint funeral in 1630 of John Crawford of Kilbirny and his wife.⁸⁴ The sermon is a substantial piece, having subsequently been expanded upon by Campbell before publication, and it touches upon many of the common themes surrounding death that have been seen above, as well as some less well treated aspects. Campbell runs through the material in a systematic manner, analysing along the way Hebrews 9:27; 'it is appointed for men once to die.'⁸⁵

The sermon begins, logically enough, with a brief explanation of the nature of death, and initially Campbell attempts to remove a common misconception. For Campbell death is not the process of losing life, but rather the process of loosing life.⁸⁶ For Campbell it would seem that when life is lost oblivion ensues, but death is not the end of life, merely the next stage. The soul is set loose from the body and given over to life eternal. There are, however, three distinct types of death; natural, violent, and spiritual. Natural death is, as the name suggests, the death that every animal and plant experiences. Violent death can also be

⁸² Ibid., pp. 173-178.

⁸³ D. G. Mullan, "Forbes, Patrick, of Corse (1564-1635)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9843], <accessed 31 May 2011>.

⁸⁴ *Scotish Elegiac Verses. M.DC.XXIX.-M.DCC.XXIX.* (Edinburgh: Thomas G. Stevenson, 1842), p. 1.

⁸⁵ N. Campbell, *A Treatise Upon Death: First publickly delivered in a funerall Sermon, anno Dom. 1630*. (Glasgow: R. Young, 1635), sig. B3v.

⁸⁶ Ibid., sig. B5v.

experienced by the rest of nature, in that it is death through the interruption of the natural course of events. The last of the three types of death, spiritual death, is the worst type, as it is the death that occurs when an individual has given in to sin or has become reprobate.⁸⁷ As such, if you desire to die well, you must live a good, Christian life.⁸⁸

Of course, these are not uncommon concepts in the funeral sermons that have been seen above, and Campbell includes such other tropes as death as the great leveller of society,⁸⁹ and the correct Christian method of mourning, Campbell's treatment of which shall be returned to below. However, there is one aspect of Campbell's thought displayed here that could suggest a more Presbyterian leaning than the clearly Episcopalian sermons seen above, in that Campbell is against ostentatious funeral monuments and tombs. He states "they would erect sumptuous tombes, speaking trophees, gorgious monuments"⁹⁰ to the dead, that the dead themselves know nothing about. Campbell goes on to state:

And after this life he must be in one of these two estates without a third, either in hell sempiternally confined; and if he bee there, what comfort can hee receive of funerall preparations, multitudes of convoy, bearing of branches, and such like superfluities, which reach not beyond the span of this life? or if he be triumphing in heaven, no earthly pompe, no humane magnificence, no worldly preheminance can adde any thing to that superexcellent weight of glory...⁹¹

Here Campbell is stressing the futility of funeral monuments due to their inefficacy. As seen in Chapter Five even Birnie tolerated monuments, and, as will be seen below, Scottish Episcopalians had somewhat differing views from the official Presbyterian stance as to appropriate burial locations.

As mentioned previously, in this sermon Campbell also deals with the correct Christian manner of mourning the dead. For Campbell, as with other commentators on the subject, mourning is acceptable and understandable, and this is justified through Matthew 5:4; 'Blessed are those who mourn.'⁹² However, as is common, moderation is the key. Campbell states:

⁸⁷ Ibid., sig. B5v-B6r.

⁸⁸ Ibid., sig. E7v.

⁸⁹ Ibid., sig. Er-Ev.

⁹⁰ Ibid., sig. B8r.

⁹¹ Ibid., sig. B8r-B8v.

⁹² Ibid., sig. C7v.

Let us not burst out into womanish complaints... Nor unto heathenish and comfortlesse exclamations in cursing the elements... or immoderate lamentations of some Paganes... nor unto the sottish and blockish stupiditie, apathy, or indolence of the Stoicks... who with *Epictetus* thought no more of the death of their trustie and best friend then of a pitcher, fallen & broken upon the ground.⁹³

Of course, as seen above, it was not appropriate to display excessive amounts of grief, but it was important that a certain amount of grief be present. The loss of a loved one, even while accepting the doctrine of the resurrection, is a trying time and, as such, grief is to be expected. However, as Campbell goes on to state:

But yee will say, What? may we not weep exceedingly at funerals, being grounded upon that same publick example of the *Israelites*, 2. *Chron.* 35.24? *I answer.* Indeed all occasions are not alike, by reason of the divers qualities of the defunct, who being all one to God, to man are not so. Therefore if at any time great lamentation should have place, and if the nobilitie, ministry, commonaltie, should utter their inward grief, with outward gesture – of cloathes or speeches; then it should be especially at the death of the good, godly, and vertuous princes, who because they are Gods lieutenants, deputies, and viceregents, and vive representations on earth, God himself calleth them gods, and will have them to die like men.⁹⁴

As seen previously, in many countries during this time, including Highland Scotland, excessive lamentation upon the occasion of a death was not uncommon, and Campbell seems to understand why people would wish for such a display. As he suggests, if such a display were to be appropriate then it surely should be reserved for those who God calls gods; the royalty. However, they will still die like men. For Campbell it would be more appropriate to mourn thus for our own sins, as the death of the great and good is in itself a judgement from God on society.⁹⁵ Campbell goes on to quote Ecclesiasticus as a wise, if not canonical book:

⁹³ Ibid., sig. C7r-C7v.

⁹⁴ Ibid., sig. C8v-Dr.

⁹⁵ Ibid., sig. Dv.

*Let tears follow the dead, and cover his body according to the custome, and neglect not his buriall, and then comfort yourselves for your heavines, for it cannot do him good, but hurt you.*⁹⁶

As with monuments and tombs, excessive grief can do nothing for the deceased.

Finally, as with the sermons seen above, Campbell, too, makes mention of the deceased in his sermon, although in a somewhat different manner. He states:

To pray God for them, we should not, for it will not availe them; to praise them (howbeit praise worthie) I am assured that criticks and censurers would take to themselves larger matter, then perhaps were given them, all consenting with one voice and minde, that I a friend were driven by the violent streame of affection, and the tempestuous storme of passion, either upon the *Scylla* of ostentation, or Charibdis of affe[c]tation.⁹⁷

Campbell here seems once more to be displaying a distinct Presbyterian leaning, in that intercessory prayers are seen as pointless, and the praising of the deceased is seen as inappropriate. Yet there is clearly an emotional aspect to his relationship with the deceased, as it seems that he wished to praise them, but was restraining himself for fear of the response it would provoke. As a result, instead of praising them for their Christian virtues, thereby potentially making them appear better Christians than they were, Campbell focuses on their other qualities, such as their devoted love for each other. Additionally, the time when all will be reunited in glorification is anticipated eagerly, and as such Campbell ends his sermon by asking the congregation to join in prayer asking for the end times to come quickly.⁹⁸

Of course, as seen above, the wording of the *Westminster Directory* concerning funeral sermons is somewhat vague, although in Scotland it was largely understood to forbid them. However, as was the case before the publication of the *Directory* in 1645 sermons continued to be performed at funerals in Scotland and in honour of the dead. In fact the publication of such sermons increased in Scotland after the Restoration in 1660.⁹⁹ Of these

⁹⁶ Ibid., sig. Dv-D2r.

⁹⁷ Ibid., sig. G5v.

⁹⁸ Ibid., sig. Hr.

⁹⁹ Three had been published by 1635, as seen above (although one publication included five sermons it has still only been counted once, as they were all for the same individual). There were no published sermons between 1636 and 1672, and nine were published between 1673 and 1699. Of those nine four had been preached in

later funeral sermons four will be looked at here; *The Blessedness of the Dead that Die in the Lord, Preached at the Funeral of James Late Marquess of Montrose*,¹⁰⁰ *The Certainty of Death and Judgement: Delivered in a Funeral Sermon Preached at the Exequies of the Right Honorable, Eminently Religious, and Most Vertuous Lady, My Lady Marchioness of Montrose, In the Chappel of Abruthwen, January 23. 1673*,¹⁰¹ the sermon preached at the funeral of Henry Scougal in Aberdeen in 1678,¹⁰² and the *Funeral Sermon at the Interrment of the Very Great and Noble Charles late Earl of Southeske*.¹⁰³

Although published in 1673, *The Blessedness of the Dead that Die in the Lord* was originally delivered in 1669 at the funeral of James Graham, the second Marquis of Montrose, by the archbishop of Glasgow, Alexander Burnet. As the title suggests, the sermon is based upon Revelation 14:13, ‘blessed are the dead that die in the Lord,’ which Burnet suggests is the best scripture to comfort against the fear of death.¹⁰⁴ Compared to the sermons of the 1630s, as seen above, Burnet’s is relatively short. In it he touches upon such points as the good death, “If we would die the death, we must live the life of the righteous,”¹⁰⁵ and includes a brief description of heaven and the afterlife.¹⁰⁶ Throughout the sermon Burnet is very careful not to praise the late Marquis for his Christianity, perhaps in case, as seen above, he is taken as attempting to show the deceased as a better Christian than he was. He does, however, praise the Marquis’ noble lineage, stating that it will act as a suitable memorial.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, as he states elsewhere, “Among many other evidences, and expressions of our reverence, and respect to the memory of the dead, I find these two: (moderat weeping and mourning, and a modest commemoration of these vertues, and graces which have been most rare and remarkable in them)...”¹⁰⁸ It would seem, however, that such restrained praise is not quite enough for the archbishop of Glasgow. He states:

England, yet were subsequently published in Scotland. Elegies and commemorative poetry have not been included.

¹⁰⁰ (Wing-B5752. Glasgow: Robert Sanders, 1673).

¹⁰¹ (Wing-R1986. Glasgow: Robert Sanders, 1673).

¹⁰² Reprinted in H. Scougal, *The Works of the Rev. Henry Scougal, together with his Funeral Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Gairden; and an account of his life, and writings*. (New York: R. Carter, 1839), pp. 223-271.

¹⁰³ (Wing-S2081. Edinburgh: James Watson, 1699).

¹⁰⁴ A. Burnet, *The Blessedness of the Dead that Die in the Lord, Preached at the Funeral of James Late Marquess of Montrose*. (Glasgow: Robert Sanders, 1673), p. 10.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 14-15.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 5.

This remembering and hearing commemorated the life and death of the deceased, being the best and readiest way... to beget in us a fervent zeal, and vehement desire to imitat and follow his holy and heavenly example. And certainly none will envy deceased persons that praise and commendation which is due to them, but some black-mouthed *Momus* or *Zoilus*, who envy others that honor and happiness, to which themselves cannot pretend... the conscience of their own unworthiness makes them conclud, that the commending of others is a virtual and indirect taxing, or condemning of themselves: but it is not the apprehension or fear of such unjust clamors or calumnies, but the conscience of my own insufficiency that discourageth me, to pay that debt which is due to the memory of this eminent person, whose dead corps is here before us.¹⁰⁹

It seems unlikely, however, that the archbishop of Glasgow, later to become the archbishop of St Andrews, would restrain himself from praising the Christian virtues of a deceased individual just for fear of being accused of attempting to make them a better Christian, and, as such, it is unclear as to why he did restrain himself in this instance. Perhaps Burnet honestly believed he himself was not worthy to praise the Marquis' virtues, perhaps he considered the Marquis' virtues somewhat meagre.

Also published in 1673 was *The Certainty of Death and Judgement*, a funeral sermon for Lady Isabel Douglas, the widow of the second Marquis of Montrose, preached by Arthur Ross. Ross takes as his text Hebrews 9:27, the same as Campbell's sermon, seen above. As seen previously a common theme of most funeral sermons seems to have been death as the great leveller, and Ross, here, also addresses this subject, although in a slightly different fashion:

Neither the Kings Scepter, nor the Captains sword, can secure themselves from death: Neither young nor old age, strength nor weakness, can avoid it: Neither law nor learning, birth or beauty, can ward against. The best Physick hath no force to bear off this fatal blow. It doth not stand upon thy birth, nor bear regard unto thy beauty. It will not be charmed with fair colors, nor courted with thy airy complements. Neither the subtilties of Logick, nor the sutties [*sic*] of Law, can plead an hours prerogation. It hears not the widows cryes, nor halts it for the orphans tears. It pulls down the

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 7.

Prince from his Royal couch, the Preacher from his retiring closet, as well as the poor man from his cottage: As it spares not the meanest beggar, so neither the greatest Magistrat upon the Bench.¹¹⁰

Previously the subject was expounded upon in order to advocate a more tolerant attitude to the lower social orders. Here, however, Ross seems to be highlighting the fact that, as death comes to us all, no one individual, regardless of social status, should see themselves as being exempt from having to lead a good Christian life. Indeed, when addressing the day of judgement, Ross states, “But then Christ will unmask this dissembling world, & wipe off their false varnish: outward gilding will not pass for true gold in that general day of doom.”¹¹¹ For Ross, however, the late Marchioness was certainly not one such individual, as, according to Ross, the late Lady Isabel freely surrendered and resigned her soul to God.¹¹² As he goes on to state, “She loved more to be good then great; and glorying more in grace then nature, accounted holiness her most honorable coat of armes.”¹¹³ Ross does not seem hesitant in recounting the deceased’s most Christian virtues. As he states:

I know large encomiastick discourses upon the dead are much condemned by divines, unless their lives do well deserve them: And therefore if any suppose I have said too much of this memorable Monument of vertue; I profess from this place, from which men should speak truth, that I think more for the advantage of her memory then I have said, or am capable to express.¹¹⁴

It would seem that, in this instance, Ross has actually restrained himself, although he does end his sermon by stating; “And ye may suppose, that after this, ye shall never be sent for to attend the funeral of such a honorable, holy and famous Saint, who was faithful to the death, and now hath received the Crown of life.”¹¹⁵

In 1678, at the age of 28, Henry Scougal, son of Patrick Scougal (later bishop of Aberdeen), died from consumption. At his funeral Rev. Dr. Gairden preached a sermon on

¹¹⁰ A. Ross, *The Certainty of Death and Judgement: Delivered in a Funeral Sermon Preached at the Exequies of the Right Honorable, Eminently Religious, and Most Vertuous Lady, My Lady Marchioness of Montrose, In the Chappel of Abruthwen, January 23. 1673.* (Glasgow: Robert Sanders, 1673), p. 9.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 5.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 1.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 19.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 21.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 22.

Philippians 1:21 (-‘for me to live is Christ, to die is gain’), although he stresses that he does not want to over analyse these words.¹¹⁶ The opening section of this sermon does, however, dwell upon the spiritual life of Christ and how for us to live as Christ is to spread his word.¹¹⁷ Gairden then goes on to spend some time discussing the better qualities of Scougal, of which there were many. Indeed, for Scougal, to live *was* Christ.¹¹⁸ However, as a truly humble Christian, Scougal is recorded as stating, “when you have the charity to remember me in your prayers, do not think me a better man than I am; but look upon me as indeed I am, a sinner. A most miserable sinner!”¹¹⁹ For Gairden, however, this is clearly not the case, and in a similar manner to Ross, seen above, he has actually had to restrain himself from speaking more on the subject, stressing the fact that all that he has said of Scougal is true.

The final sermon to be looked at here is the 1699 *Funeral Sermon at the Interrment of the very Great and Noble Charles Late Earl of Southeske*, by Robert Scott. This sermon initially appears somewhat different to the examples looked at above, in that it has two distinct sections. The sermon begins with an entreaty for us to be like Job. We should not expect the fiery chariot of Elijah, and must instead be prepared for death.¹²⁰ Scott states that we do not understand death,¹²¹ and as such we should fear death, or at least we should fear a bad death. However, “like the common Scar-Crow, which is set up to fright Birds from the early or tender Seed,”¹²² the fearful images that represent death soon lose their efficacy. As Scott goes on to state:

So that nothing from without us is like to make Men Serious. All the Funeral Parads on Earth, all the Paleness that sits upon the Faces of our dead Friends, and all the Solitude it leaves upon their Families, serve but a little to amuse the Minds of Natural men, and, e’re we are aware, the Impressions are gone.¹²³

¹¹⁶ *The Works of the Rev. Henry Scougal*, p. 225.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 230-232.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 234-259.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

¹²⁰ R. Scott, *Funeral Sermon at the Interrment of the very Great and Noble Charles Late Earl of Southeske, Who Died at His Castle of Leuchars in the Shire of Fife, upon the 9th. of August. And was Interr’d at His Burial-place near His House of Kinnaird in the Shire of Angus, upon the 4th. of October 1699.* (Edinburgh: James Watson, 1699), pp. 1-2.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-4.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

For Scott all of the external reminders of death will serve no purpose if it is not within us to strive to attain a good death. He then proceeds to highlight the fact that death will separate us from our material goods. He states:

Thy Possessions shall not avail thee, when for an inch of the Earth thou finds thou hast lost a spann of Heaven, even all the Regions of Blessedness. Nor shall thy Pleasures relish with thee in the midst of these Flames thy Lusts have kindled upon thee. Remember how narrow thy Lodgings are in the Grave, and how Scant thy Provisions are among the Damned.¹²⁴

Spiritual goods are clearly much more important than material. In this first section Scott also makes mention of the recent development of groups of atheists and semi-deists, stressing that their beliefs are wrong and that this can be seen by God punishing the wicked and helping the good.¹²⁵ He goes on to dismiss these groups by stating, “Nay these bitter Resentments of a Natural Conscience, are but the Fore-runers of that Worme that never dieth in the Regions of the Damned.”¹²⁶ The final aspect of the first section of this sermon is an attack against the intercessory masses performed by the Catholic Church. Scott stresses that these masses can do nothing for the dead, redemption cannot be bought.¹²⁷

The first section of this sermon is quite different from the examples looked at above, in that it seems to have a stronger emphasis on the good and bad death, in that Scott suggests that we should actually fear the bad death, whereas earlier examples of funeral sermons aimed to show that we should not fear death at all. Of course, this is the only funeral sermon published in Scotland in the seventeenth century to have taken place after the official establishment of Presbyterianism, and the opening section of this sermon certainly has a distinct Presbyterian feel. However, the second section of the sermon is very different, as Scott proceeds to discuss at some length the Christian virtues of the deceased. Scott, of course, was one of the Episcopalian ministers allowed to keep their benefices following 1689, and as such probably shares the views of the authors of the sermons shown above that the virtues of the deceased should be spoken of. As he states, “to make their *Light so shine*

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 9.

¹²⁵ Ibid., pp. 13-15.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 16.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

before Men, that others seing their Good Works (at least hearing of them) may Glorify their Father which is in Heaven.”¹²⁸


Clearly funeral sermons were taking place in Scotland both before and after the publication of the *Westminster Directory* in 1645, although Leishman’s claim to the contrary may hold true for the period between 1638 and 1660, when no funeral sermons were published, although this, of course, does not prove that none were preached. It is, however, interesting to note that, with the possible exception of Ninian Campbell, all of the individuals to publish funeral sermons during this period were Episcopalian.

Conclusion

As Chapter Three has shown, an important aspect of the Reformation in Scotland was the printed word, and books and pamphlets continued to be an indispensable tool throughout the seventeenth century, some examples of which have been examined above. In 1628 Zachary Boyd published *The Last Battell of the Soule in Death*, a work firmly within the *Ars Moriendi* tradition, but from a Protestant point of view. This, of course, was not a new concept, as the first Protestant *Ars Moriendi* works had been produced in Germany over a century earlier. In Scotland, however, they were comparatively rare. Boyd’s text is thorough and comprehensive and, importantly for this study, contains a discussion of the correct burial practices that should be followed in Scotland. From the text it is clear that Boyd himself is in agreement with the early Scottish reformers, as he condemns intra-mural burial, and indicates that he does not approve of monuments or tombs. As seen in Chapter Five even Birnie seemed to accept monuments, although possibly due to slight leanings towards the Episcopalian faction of the Kirk.¹²⁹

1645 saw the publication of *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God*, or the *Westminster Directory*, which was an attempt to standardise the religious practices of Scotland, England, and Ireland, partly due to the fact that all three countries now shared a monarch. This was a work similar in intent to the earlier *First Book of Discipline* and *The forme of prayers*, both examined in Chapter Three, although it does convey slightly differing

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 17. Emphasis in original.

¹²⁹ V. T. Wells, “Birnie, William (1563–1619)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2462], < accessed  29 June 2010 >.

views of the correct Protestant burial practices, namely that it was now acceptable to emphasise the deceased's social status at their burial. There is, however, one aspect of the *Westminster Directory* that is somewhat vague as to its interpretation, namely that concerned with funeral sermons. As seen above, in Scotland the *Westminster Directory* is believed to have been understood as forbidding funeral sermons, and Leishman has stated that no funeral sermons took place in Scotland at that time. The Presbyterian faction of the Kirk were certainly against them, and Boyd, in *The Last Battell*, lists them as one of the current abuses surrounding burial practices, although he does seem to suggest that it is the funeral sermon itself that has been abused, and that there is nothing inherently wrong with them. The Episcopalian faction within the Kirk, on the other hand, seemed to have approved of the concept, and three distinct sets of sermons were published before 1645. Interestingly, despite the understanding that the *Westminster Directory* forbids funeral sermons, five Scottish funeral sermons were published in Scotland in the second half of the seventeenth century.

Of course, those printed funeral sermons have themselves become valuable documents for a study of death in post-Reformation Scotland, and they display several prominent themes, such as death as the great leveller, the appropriateness of emotion on the occasion of a funeral, and various refutations of the Catholic doctrine of purgatory and the use of intercessory masses. It is particularly interesting to note that all of the Scottish funeral sermons printed in Scotland in the seventeenth century made a point of mentioning the various merits of the deceased. Of course, this is one of the very reasons that funeral sermons were not to take place during this time, as they lent themselves to attempts to show the deceased as a better Christian than they actually had been. The counter argument, however, was that by highlighting the virtuous aspects of these, almost exclusively noble, individuals, the audience would be inspired to live their lives in a Christian fashion, whether from fear of a bad death, or a desire to attain a good death.

As stated previously all of the funeral sermons from this period were delivered by individuals from the Episcopalian faction of the Kirk, with the possible exception of Ninian Campbell, and it is interesting to note that a funeral sermon was published in Scotland in 1699, a decade after the success of the Presbyterian faction. Of course, a number of Episcopalian ministers had been allowed to retain their benefices upon taking the Oath of Allegiance, and they almost certainly would have continued to perform funeral sermons upon request.

Chapter Seven

The Scottish Enlightenment

After a long and tumultuous Reformation period Scotland finally saw Presbyterianism established throughout the land at the end of the seventeenth century, although, as has been stated previously, it cannot be said that Scotland was ever truly totally Presbyterian. However, various burial practices had been developed throughout the period of change since the Reformation, and under Presbyterianism these began to be addressed by the various Kirk Sessions, Synods, and Presbyteries throughout Scotland. In some cases attempts were made to excise them once more, others were consolidated. One such practice was the use of the hand bell following a death, a pre-Reformation practice seen in Chapter Two. Its continued use in Scotland following the Reformation will be looked at below.

The Enlightenment of the late eighteenth century saw a growth of intellectual pursuits, and, to a certain degree, a move away from the superstitious beliefs of the past. One aspect of the growth of intellectual pursuits that is of particular interest is the notion of the ‘tour.’ It was during this period that the first tourists appeared in the more remote areas of Scotland, and their notes, diaries, and journals help shed light on the practices of these previously inaccessible areas of the country. It is, to a certain extent, necessary to take some of these accounts with a pinch of salt, however, as the Highlands and Islands of Scotland were considered by these visitors to be rather unsophisticated, particularly in comparison to southern Scotland and England at the time, areas from which the majority of these travellers originated. As a result of this it is possible that some of the burial practices that are mentioned in these diaries, and investigated below, are either rose tinted or condescending. Regardless, the fact that a comparison of burial practices in most areas of the country becomes possible at this stage makes these accounts incredibly valuable.

There were, however, darker aspects to the effect of the Scottish Enlightenment upon burial practices throughout the country. Due to an increasing demand for the corpses of the recently deceased for the study of human anatomy a group of individuals known as the Resurrectionists came into existence. These men, working alone or in small groups, would steal the corpses of the recently deceased, often digging up the graves in the dead of night, and sell their wares to the doctors of the Scottish cities. Although the work of the Resurrection men has been studied elsewhere it will be looked at briefly in this chapter, as it

is a significant aspect of the history of Scottish burial; both for the tales of the Resurrectionists themselves, and of the counter-measures employed by those who did not wish to see the recently deceased go under the anatomists' knives.

Burial in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland

As seen in Chapter Five, there was a certain degree of regional difference in the various Scottish burial practices, stemming from the differing cultural heritage of the various areas of Scotland. Unfortunately, perhaps, there are substantially more surviving records of burial practices relating to the Scottish Lowlands than to the Highlands, but records of Highland burial practices do survive, and in several cases come from the journals of the first individuals to tour the area.¹³⁰ These records are of particular interest, not just for the details of Highland practices that they relate, but for the view of the Highlands held by contemporary outsiders that they show. However, in certain accounts there can be said to a degree of anti-Scots propaganda,¹³¹ and as such perhaps some accounts of Highland life and death should not be taken at face value. Accounts of burial traditions in the Highlands and Islands also highlight several different practices; for instance the *coronach*,¹³² lyke-wakes or late-wakes, and differences between the burials of the nobility and the common people, and these differences will be explored below.

‘Watching’ the Corpse

Throughout the whole of Scotland the practice of ‘watching’ the corpse¹³³ was known as the late-wake or lyke-wake, but the traditions that accompanied the practice were

¹³⁰ M. Rackwitz, *Travels to terra incognita. The Scottish Highlands and Hebrides in early modern travellers' accounts, c. 1600-1800*. (New York, München, Berlin: Waxmann Münster, 2007), pp. 485-494. Rackwitz has included accounts of travels through parts of Scotland not considered to be in the Highlands, and as such these accounts have not been included here.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 486.

¹³² See Chapter Five, pp. 103-112.

¹³³ Although no specific examples survive of the supposed corpse actually not being quite as dead as believed, and subsequently waking up during the period of being watched, it is not beyond the realms of possibility that this occasionally occurred. Recognising an individual as deceased was not an exact science at this time, and elsewhere in Europe mistakes certainly occurred, with the occasional premature burial taking place. Cf. J. Bondeson, *Buried Alive: The Terrifying History of Our Most Primal Fear*. (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), pp. 238-257. It is therefore relatively safe to assume that such occurrences were not unknown in Scotland, and that part of the ritual of the wake was to ensure the deceased was actually deceased.

somewhat different in the Highlands and Lowlands. Marjorie Plant suggests that the Lowland practice was simple; those watching the corpse sat and drank in silence.¹³⁴ Whilst this may have been the norm in the Lowlands, it was certainly not always the case. As is stated in the South Leith Kirk Session Records from 1613:

The qlk day ye sessioun beinge informit of sum insolence at lykwaikes comitted laitie, they have ordained, yt quhosoeuer sall comit suche lyk in any tyme cuminge sall be wairded of yair persounes al also sall pay ane pecuniall soume according to their habilitie.¹³⁵

In this instance it seems likely that the insolence referred to concerns less than decorous behaviour as the result of too much alcohol. As Plant goes on to state of the Highlands, however:

the Highlanders' gruesome idea of watching was to hold a solemn dance round the corpse, and to keep up the ceremony until morning. The widow or widower, or other chief mourner, led off the first dance to the dismal strains of a lament, and neighbours and friends joined in; and they repeated the process night after night. In some districts the practice was still being kept up quite late in the century.¹³⁶

Pennant, too, seems to bear witness to the apparent excesses of the Highland wake. He writes:

The *Late-wake* is a ceremony used at funerals. The evening after the death of any person, the relations and friends of the deceased meet at the house, attended by bagpipe or fiddle; the nearest of kin, be it wife, son, or daughter, opens a melancholy ball, dancing and greeting, *i.e.* crying violently at the same time; and this continues till day-light; but with such gambols and frolicks among the younger part of the company, that the loss which occasioned them is often more than supplied by the

Indeed, rumours of the dead 'returning to life' can be found in the south west of Scotland. Cf. Maxwell Wood, *Witchcraft and Superstitious Record*, p. 219.

¹³⁴ M. Plant, *The Domestic Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1952), p. 258.

¹³⁵ Robertson, *South Leith Records*, p. 11.

¹³⁶ Plant, *The Domestic Life of Scotland*, p. 258.

consequences of that night. If the corps remains unburied for two nights, the same rites are renewed. Thus, *Scythian*-like, they rejoice at the deliverance of their friends out of this life of misery.¹³⁷

Walter Traill Dennison, a nineteenth century folklorist, writing on the traditional practices of the Orkney Islands, notes that there the 'leek-wak' juxtaposed serious purpose with the opportunity for frivolity. Some of the traditions that were held to be important, however, were observed without apparent knowledge of their origins. He states: "A plate or saucer filled with salt was placed on the breast of the dead. The origin of this custom I have not been able to discover. The old people who practiced it said they only did it because it was wont to be done."¹³⁸ Regarding the west of Scotland Napier states that the saucer of salt is there placed on the chest of the deceased to guard against any swelling of the body, although he adds that its original purpose was to prevent the devil from disturbing the corpse.¹³⁹ Pennant too mentions the placing of salt upon the deceased. He states:

On the death of a Highlander, the corps being stretched on a board, and covered with a coarse linnen wrapper, the friends lay on the breast of the deceased a wooden platter, containing a small quantity of salt and earth, separate and unmixed; the earth, an emblem of the corruptible body; the salt, an emblem of the immortal spirit. All fire is extinguished where a corps is kept; and it is reckoned so ominous for a dog or cat to pass over it, that the poor animal is killed without mercy.¹⁴⁰

J. Maxwell Wood notes that this aversion to cats and dogs around the corpse can also be seen in the south west of Scotland.¹⁴¹

Related to the practice of putting a dish of salt on the chest of the deceased is that of the sin-eater. There are unsubstantiated references to the sin-eater having existed in

¹³⁷ Pennant, *A Tour in Scotland*, p. 112. Interestingly, Pennant claims this as an ancient English or Saxon custom, mentioned by Chaucer in the Knight's Tale, and forbidden by the Church in 1240. The behaviour of the young is said to come from a similar Nordic practice.

¹³⁸ W. T. Dennison, *Orkney Folklore & Sea Legends; Studies of traditional life and folklore*. (Kirkwall: The Orkney Press Ltd, 1995), p. 149.

¹³⁹ J. Napier, *Folklore: or, Superstitious Beliefs in the West of Scotland within this Century*. (Paisley: Alex Gardner, 1879), p. 60.

¹⁴⁰ Pennant, *A Tour in Scotland*, p. 111.

¹⁴¹ Maxwell Wood, *Witchcraft and Superstitious Record*, p. 217.

Scotland,¹⁴² but it seems that there are no actual references from outside of romantic literature. Indeed, Maxwell Wood admits there is no evidence of such a practice in South West Scotland despite rumours to the contrary.¹⁴³ There are no references to sin-eating in any church records, no traveller's account mentions such a practice, and works such as the *forme of prayers* or the *First Book of Discipline* make no mention of the practice either. Even oral traditions tend to be backed up by historical records of one form or another. If it ever existed in Scotland it certainly would have been condemned by the reformers as Catholic 'superstition.' As no condemnation is apparent it seems safe to suggest that any belief in the existence of sin-eaters in Scotland, at least during the period covered by this study, stems from an overly romanticised notion of the Highlands and Islands rather than actual historical practice, perhaps encouraged by Fiona MacLeod, aka William Sharp, in the novel *The Sin-Eater and Other Tales*.¹⁴⁴ In the novel Sharp, who despite claims to the contrary was actually from Southern Scotland, combines Gaelic and Highland cultures with more general Celtic culture. As Cameron Gillies notes, there is a distinct difference between all three of these separate cultures,¹⁴⁵ and perhaps it is due to this confusion that the sin eater was believed to have existed in Scotland.

Other customs that certainly did occur were not always quite so serious. Returning to the Orkneys, Dennison goes on to state:

To prevent evil from the spirit world, the inside of the door was in old times 'sained,' that is marked with the sign of the cross. As an additional safeguard, the watchers always provided themselves with a Bible or Psalm-book. In the days when bibles were scarce and dear, the minister's was often borrowed for the occasion. The book of Esther was a general favourite at 'leek-waks.'

These 'leek-waks' were highly appreciated in their day. The glamour of superstitious fear, induced by the proximity of the dead, seems to have added zest to the jokes, often practical, the telling of stories, and drinking of ale. As night wore on, and some

¹⁴² See, for example, S. Livingstone, *Scottish Customs*. (Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd., 1996), p. 52; Maxwell Wood, *Witchcraft and Superstitious Record*, p. 218; Napier, *Folklore*, pp. 60-61.

¹⁴³ Maxwell Wood, *Witchcraft and Superstitious Record*, p. 218.

¹⁴⁴ F. MacLeod, *The Sin-Eater and Other Tales*. (Edinburgh: Patrick Geddes & Colleagues; Chicago: Stone & Kimball, 1895).

¹⁴⁵ Cameron Gillies, *The Gaelic Concepts of Life and of Death*, p. 5. It is interesting to note, however, that this publication is self avowed propaganda on behalf of Gaelic culture by the Dundee Highland Society (Branch of *An Comunn Gaidhealach*), and, as seen in Chapter Five, also fails to mention the *coronach*. It is possible, therefore, that any perceived 'primitive' aspects of Gaelic culture have been redacted.

of the party were overpowered by sleep and ale, a favourite trick was practiced on one of the sleepers, by pinning a corner of the sheet lying over the corpse to the dress of the sleeper. By a sudden noise the sleeper was then startled from his slumbers, when springing to his feet, he generally brought the salt plate with a clatter to the floor, and finding himself held by something apparently coming from the corpse, he would roar in mortal terror. During his agony of fear, his struggles to disengage himself would sometimes bring the dead body to the floor. Such unseemly pranks were not always harmless, as the story is told of a young woman on whom this trick was played, and who lost her reason by the fright.¹⁴⁶

However, writing of the Western Hebrides, Buchanan states that:

They seldom display much mirth at late-wakes, as they do in many parts of Scotland; but sit down with great composure, and rehearse the good qualities of their departed friend or neighbour. Their grief soon subsides after they are buried; and many have speedily replaced a lost wife by some of their former acquaintance.¹⁴⁷

It could be suggested here that this is an example of the condescension referred to in the introduction, as Buchanan seems to be suggesting that the grief displayed by the Islanders is much more transitory, and as such probably less genuine, than the emotions of Southern Scots and English visitors, attitudes with clear parallels to the views on Highland ‘ritualised’ grief as seen in Chapter Five. The initial quiet contemplation of the deceased referred to by Buchanan is also mentioned by Burt in his letters, but, as he goes on to state, “in time the bottle is introduced, and the ceremony quite reversed.”¹⁴⁸

In several accounts there is an indication that the excessive drinking and eating at Highland funerals and wakes is somewhat ritualised. Plant notes that this ritualised aspect extends even so far as to the order in which the various alcoholic beverages are served.¹⁴⁹ It was not, however, just eating and drinking that appear to have been somewhat ritualised. Burt states that:

¹⁴⁶ Dennison, *Orkney Folklore & Sea Legends*, p. 150.

¹⁴⁷ Buchanan, *Travels in the Western Hebrides*, p. 170.

¹⁴⁸ Burt, *Letters From A Gentleman*, Vol. I, p. 218.

¹⁴⁹ Plant, *The Domestic Life of Scotland*, p. 258. There is a particularly intriguing, but unsubstantiated, rumour from the south west of the country that has a minister offering a prayer before each round of drinking at the wake. Cf. Maxwell Wood, *Witchcraft and Superstitious Record*, p. 225.

After the death of any one, not in the lowest circumstances, the friends and acquaintance of the deceased assemble to keep the near relations company the first night; and they dance, as if it were at a wedding, till the next morning, though all the time the corpse lies before them in the same room. If the deceased be a woman, the widower leads up the first dance; if a man, the widow.¹⁵⁰

Clearly, there were traditions that were to be followed to the letter upon the occasion of a Highland death.

As with the *coronach*, as seen in Chapter Five, the various Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, and Synods in the Highlands were not entirely happy that such practices should continue, and attempted to prevent them from taking place. In Moy in March, 1675, the Presbytery was attempting to have the minister, Mr Rorie, removed, and one of the reasons for this action was his treatment of these practices. The elders, “Beeing enquired if he and they did lay a restraint upon pypeing violeing and danceing at Lickwaks, Answered not as yet.”¹⁵¹ The Presbytery evidently decided that there was not enough reason to dismiss the minister, but stressed that, “He is desired to discharge danceing, pypeing, and violeing at likwaks, and to punish y[e] guiltie with church censures.”¹⁵² It is unclear to what extent the Presbytery was successful in its undertaking. Of course, such attempts were far from unknown outside of the Highlands. In 1648 the South Leith Kirk Session “Desyrs [tha]t [the]r[e] be no Laich wakes at all in speciall now in tyme qn ye plague is beginning to breack out agane.”¹⁵³ Perhaps in this instance the Session deemed wakes to be inappropriate in such a time of suffering, or perhaps they aimed to prevent the further spread of the disease. In Burntisland in 1609, and in Perth in 1645 there were also attempts made to end the like-wake.¹⁵⁴ In Glasgow in 1646 an attempt was made to ban the practice. The records state: “that ther be na meiting at lykwakes nor after burials.”¹⁵⁵ The Synod of Moray, in 1663, seems to have been somewhat more tolerant, in that no attempt was made to ban like-wakes, although they desired them to be sombre occasions, with no dancing, playing, or licentious

¹⁵⁰ Burt, *Letters From A Gentleman*, Vol. II, p. 107.

¹⁵¹ *Records of the Presbyteries of Inverness and Dingwall 1643-1688*, p. 52.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹⁵³ Robertson, *South Leith Records*, p. 82.

¹⁵⁴ CH2/523/1, f. 34; CH2/521/8/1, f. 16v. Cf. Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland*, p. 213.

¹⁵⁵ *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Glasgow*, Vol. II, p. 108.

behaviour, and with as few people in attendance as possible. This order was subsequently repeated in 1675.¹⁵⁶ Similarly, in St Andrews in 1644:

The Presbyterie being very sensible of the great abuses within these bounds at lykewakes and burials, especiallie by drinking after the same, doe appoint Mr. James Bruce, and Mr. Andro Honyman, to consider of overtures for restraining therof, and represent them to the Presbyterie the next day.¹⁵⁷

As with the Synod of Moray, in this instance it was decided to reduce attendance at like-wakes to as few individuals as possible.¹⁵⁸ Interestingly, the aversion to wakes was not just a Reformed Protestant peculiarity, and nor did it arise at the Reformation. Indeed, as the Aberdeen Statutes of the thirteenth century state, “Likewise at the funerals and exequies of deceased lay persons, we forbid singing and dancing to take place; since it does not become us to laugh at the weeping of others, but in a case of the kind rather to grieve as they do.”¹⁵⁹ It would appear that wakes, much like the coronach, were approved of by neither Protestants nor Catholics.

Death and Highland Society

In the diary of his 1705 tour of Scotland Joseph Taylor notes “That when any one dyes out of a noble Family, all the doors and Entryes are painted black, with some dashes of white, to make it look more dismall, and an Hatchment of the persons Arms and the Marriages of his Family, hung up over the front door.”¹⁶⁰ Pennant, too, at Dornoch, noted that the doors and window shutters of the burial vault had been decorated with teardrops upon a dark background, and that on the occasion of a laird’s death this decoration may be extended to other doors of the kirk.¹⁶¹ As seen in Chapter Two, this is a practice that dates back to before the Reformation. Samuel Johnson, during his tour of the Inner Hebrides with his companion James Boswell, makes mention of the custom of elaborate and expensive

¹⁵⁶ Cramond, *Extracts from the Records of the Synod of Moray*, pp. 133, 160-161.

¹⁵⁷ *Selections from the minutes of the Presbyteries of St. Andrews and Cupar*, p. 19.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁵⁹ *Statutes of the Scottish Church, 1225-1559*, p. 42; Dowden, *The Medieval Church in Scotland*, p. 246.

¹⁶⁰ J. Taylor, *A Journey to Edenborough in Scotland*. (Edinburgh: William Brown, 1903), p. 120. Although the description given is observed to have taken place in Edinburgh, it is the Earl of Cromarty, a Highland chief, whose mourning is being described.

¹⁶¹ Hay, *The Architecture of Scottish Post-Reformation Churches*, p. 193.

funerals, although in his highly editorialised style. Of the Isle of Skye he states, “Funerals were formerly solemnized by calling multitudes together, and entertaining them at great expense. This emulation of useless cost has been for some time discouraged, and at last in the Isle of Sky is almost suppressed.”¹⁶² Elsewhere he states:

The disposition to pompous and expensive funerals, which has at one time or other prevailed in most parts of the civilized world, is not yet suppressed in the islands, though some of the ancient solemnities are worn away, and singers are no longer hired to attend the procession. Nineteen years ago, at the burial of the Laird of Col, were killed thirty cows, and about fifty sheep. The number of the cows is positively told, and we must suppose other victuals in like proportion.¹⁶³

It is interesting to note Johnson’s obvious dislike of the practice, stemming, perhaps, from his fierce Anglicanism. Elsewhere he is seen to be clearly opposed to Presbyterianism,¹⁶⁴ yet it is also interesting that Presbyterians would share his dislike of the elaborate funerals in the Inner Hebrides.

Of course, as seen above, only the higher echelons of Scottish society would receive such elaborate burials. Concerning the lower orders of Highland society at the time, Burrell claims:

The method of buryal is here very remarkable amongst people of inferior rank, whose bodies when put into a coffin are carried by their neighbours on a ladder covered with plaid to the churchyard, where they dig a grave and throw them in without the ceremony of funeral service, which is not used in Scotland.¹⁶⁵

It is almost certain that Burrell here is somewhat exaggerating the situation. Yes, funeral services were not to take place, but the act of throwing the corpse into the grave is highly unlikely. Additionally, concerning the grave being dug after the deceased had been brought to the grave site, Boswell states:

¹⁶² S. Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, ed. P. Levi. (London: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 116.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹⁶⁵ J. G. Dunbar, ed., *Sir William Burrell’s Northern Tour, 1758*. (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1997), p. 85.

I observed, in this church-yard, a parcel of people assembled at a funeral, before the grave was dug. The coffin, with the corpse in it, was placed on the ground, while the people alternately assisted in making a grave... A traveller might, without further inquiry, have set this down as the mode of burying in Sky. I was told, however, that the usual way is to have a grave previously dug.¹⁶⁶

Interestingly, however, it would appear that this had been the usual way of preparing for a burial on the Isle of Bute. Hewison writes that, before 1660:

the corpse was brought to the churchyard before the grave was dug – relatives usually performed this office – and left on the ground till the grave was ‘hocked.’ To end this indecency, the session ordained that ‘in time coming, the grave be hocked before the corps comes to the kirk-yard, under the pain of 40s. to be paid by him whose duty the session shall find it is to look to the dead’s buriall.’¹⁶⁷

Of course, as seen previously, some traditions surrounding burial were practised throughout Scotland as a whole. One such tradition, which will be investigated in more detail below, was the announcement to the community at large of a death by way of a ringing bell being carried throughout the local area. Burt, in his letters, states of ordinary burials:

The corpse is carried, not upon men’s shoulders, as in England, but underhand upon a bier; and the nearest relation to the deceased carries the head, the next of kin on his right hand, &c. and, if the church-yard be anything distant, they are relieved by others as occasion may require. The men go two and two before the bier, and the women, in the same order, follow after it; and all the way the bell-man goes tinkling before the procession, as is done before the host in popish countries.¹⁶⁸

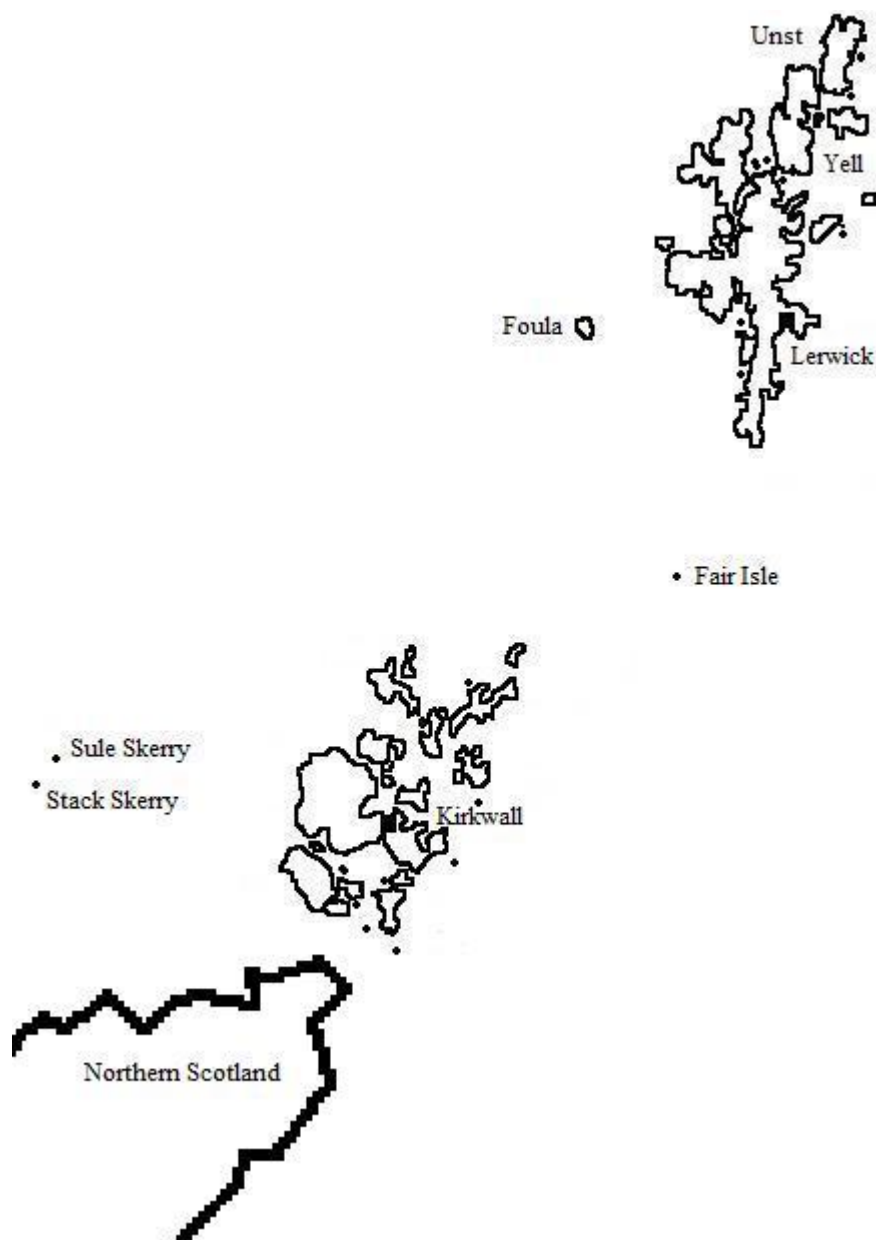
Dennison, too, notes the use of the bell following a death in the Orkneys, although he also notes that its use had begun to disappear by the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁶⁹ Burt goes on to note that funerals of ordinary individuals were led by a piper, whose bagpipe “was hung with

¹⁶⁶ J. Boswell, *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, ed. P. Levi. (London: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 300.

¹⁶⁷ Hewison, *The Isle of Bute in the Olden Time*, Vol. II, p. 288.

¹⁶⁸ Burt, *Letters From A Gentleman*, Vol. I, p. 217. Note the use of the bier, as described in Chapter Four.

¹⁶⁹ Dennison, *Orkney Folklore & Sea Legends*, p. 153.



Orkney and Shetland.

narrow streamers of black crape,”¹⁷⁰ and were accompanied by Highlanders “in their usual garb.”¹⁷¹ Interestingly, Burt also notes that the minister, “who is always invited, performs no kind of funeral service for those of any rank whatever, but most commonly is one of the last that leaves the place of burial.”¹⁷² It would appear that, in a similar fashion to Huguenot funerals in seventeenth century France,¹⁷³ there were no services at the funeral, even though, in the Highlands at least, the minister was always present. Why his presence seems to have been required while no services were to be performed is not made clear. As Burt subsequently notes, however, a service for the deceased was held some time after the funeral, in the form of a dirge or a lament in the style of the *coronach*.¹⁷⁴

The Funeral Feast

Following the burial of the deceased, certain members of the burial party would be invited back to the home of the deceased for more substantial refreshments, and these feasts were known, on occasion, to last for several days.¹⁷⁵ As Burt states, following the return of the party from the burial, “all sorrow seems to be immediately banished, and the wine is filled about as fast as it can go round, till there is hardly a sober person among them.”¹⁷⁶ As was the case with wakes, there appears to have been a degree of ritual in these funeral feasts. Buchanan states:

On those occasions, there is great profusion of meat and drink brought to the place of interment, where the expenses generally bear a proportion to the rank and fortune of the person deceased, to prevent the imputation of meanness; and they seldom separate while the cask contains any spirits to wash down their sorrow: which seldom happens before their griefs are converted into squabbles [*sic*], and broken heads, which some of them carry home as marks of remembrance for their lost friends.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁰ Burt, *Letters From A Gentleman*, Vol. I, p. 217.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 219.

¹⁷³ See Chapter Five, p. 111.

¹⁷⁴ Burt, *Letters From A Gentleman*, Vol. I, p. 219.

¹⁷⁵ Rackwitz, *Travels to terra incognita*, p. 487. It should be noted that few accounts hold first hand reports of this practice. The majority of traveller’s accounts of noble funerals are second hand at best.

¹⁷⁶ Burt, *Letters From A Gentleman*, Vol. I, p. 219.

¹⁷⁷ Buchanan, *Travels in the Western Hebrides*, pp. 169-170. Once again Buchanan could be accused of condescension in his account.

It could be suggested that any reputation the Highlanders possessed for overindulgence actually stemmed from such ritual practices, or a sense of duty to the deceased, in terms of honouring their memory, and acting as a good host. Indeed, as Boswell notes after landing on Mull, “We hoped to have procured some rum or brandy for our boatmen and servants, from a publick-house near where we landed; but unfortunately a funeral a few days before had exhausted all their store.”¹⁷⁸ This sense of duty would certainly explain the instances where the feast lasted for an excessive amount of time, yet there are other possible reasons for such behaviour. Plant records that:

When Lachlan Mackintosh died, in 1704, his Inverness-shire mansion was filled with guests for a whole month, and cooks and confectioners were brought specially from Edinburgh to cater for them. It is easy to understand why the company should be reluctant to break up, considering the difficulty they must have had in gathering together at all. The same kind of thing happened in Iceland, where it was not unknown for a party of twelve hundred guests to stay on for fourteen days.¹⁷⁹

It would seem that for the host, it was important to honour the deceased with the traditional watching of the corpse, followed by a lavish feast at the funeral, and for those in attendance it was a valued opportunity to reaffirm social and familial bonds, often prevented through the vast distances of the Highlands.

Of course, as was the case with other apparently ritualised aspects of Scottish funerals, as seen previously, the various Kirk Sessions did not approve of the wake or funeral feasts, although not entirely for theological reasons. Funeral feasts in particular were incredibly expensive, and the Sessions disapproved of such a frivolous waste of money. It was actually possible, in instances of the death of the head of the family, to financially ruin oneself and one’s family through these activities.¹⁸⁰ Indeed, in 1729 the Lairds of Lorne, in Argyll, agreed an attempt to curtail such expense on the occasion of a funeral. The agreement begins:

¹⁷⁸ Boswell, *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, p. 364.

¹⁷⁹ Plant, *The Domestic Life of Scotland*, pp. 259-260.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

Whereas a Custom too long observed does more & more prevail within the Division of Lorn contrary to the practice of most o[the]r parts of Scotland of Comoners convening in great numbers to Lateuake & funerals before the day of Interment...¹⁸¹

The agreement essentially attempted to end the accumulation of expense at funerals by legislating that attendees do not arrive until the day of the funeral wherever possible, and stay for only a brief visit. It is unfortunately unclear the extent to which this endeavour was a success.

There was, however, a probable final act to the ritualised events immediately after the funeral, in that “the guests cheerfully fulfilled the duty expected of them: to buy up the contents of the home at prices higher than they would have dreamt of paying elsewhere.”¹⁸² In this way, even if financial ruin had been approached through lavish expenditure on the funeral of the deceased, there was some financial security through the guests’ understanding of the unspoken agreement between the host and themselves.

Unfortunately, despite the occasional reference to practices on the Orkney Islands, there are far fewer records for the Northern Isles, but some do survive, occasionally showing burial traditions apparently unique to those areas of Scotland. In Unst bystanders were observed throwing three clods of earth, one after another, after a passing funeral procession,¹⁸³ and elsewhere in Shetland, “The moment the funeral procession had started, the straw on which the corpse had been laid was burnt, and the ashes narrowly examined, to see if any footmarks could be seen amongst them. If any were found, they were supposed to be those of the next person who would die in the house.”¹⁸⁴

Catholicism in the Highlands and Islands

As has been stated previously, at no point following the Reformation was the attempted suppression of Catholicism ever entirely successful. Certain areas of the Highlands and Islands continued to be a stronghold for Catholic belief. In areas such as

¹⁸¹ “Agreement of the Lairds of Lorne to Curtail the Expenses of Funerals, 1729.” *Northern Notes and Queries or the Scottish Antiquary*, Vol. 1. (1888), p. 5.

¹⁸² Plant, *The Domestic Life of Scotland*, p. 260.

¹⁸³ J. R. Tudor, *The Orkneys and Shetland; Their Past and Present State*. (London: Edward Stanford, 1883), p. 174.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

Badenoch the remains of pre-Reformation chapels and burial grounds were treated by the locals with respect, almost veneration. Blundell tells of one such location:

Of these the oldest is at Rabellick, on the north side of the Spey, about a mile above the village of Crathie. It is situated on the top of a small knoll at the side of the Markie Burn, and has slight indications of having had a rough fence of turf and stone around it. There are no indications of grave-stones, either standing or horizontal. Tradition says that it was last used about the time of Montrose's wars, and that so few able-bodied men were left in the glen that the women carried the bodies to the burial-place. It was also used at a later period for the interment of unbaptized infants, but not within the last hundred years.¹⁸⁵

In Knoydart, "are here two graveyards distant only fifty yards from each other. The one is nearly square, and within this none but Catholics have ever been buried. In the other, however, which is circular, there have been burials of Catholics and Protestants alike."¹⁸⁶ Elsewhere, in Braemar a monument stands in Castletoun kirkyard, erected no earlier than 1809, on which is the inscription: 'Sacred to the memory of the Roman Catholic Clergymen who are interred here.' Several dates are also inscribed on the stone, the oldest of which is 1708.¹⁸⁷ From these examples it could be suggested that in the Highlands and Islands a certain degree of tolerance existed between Catholics and Protestants, and this may well have been the case. However, in Strathavon in 1736:

Mr John Gordon, the Curator of Gordon, writes from Fochabers, 10th April, to Robert Farquharson, Auchriachan at the Duchess of Gordon's sight and desire, informing him that his friend Mr William Grant was complained of for having said Mass, where the minister was wont to perform worship, and had performed the Office for the Dead in the Kirk and Kirkyard.¹⁸⁸

Clearly there were limits to any tolerance displayed between the two groups.

¹⁸⁵ O. Blundell, *The Catholic Highlands of Scotland. Vol. I, The Central Highlands*. (Edinburgh and London: Sands and Co., 1909), p. 123.

¹⁸⁶ O. Blundell, *The Catholic Highlands of Scotland. Vol. II, The Western Highlands and Islands*. (Edinburgh and London: Sands and Co., 1917), p. 68.

¹⁸⁷ Blundell, *The Catholic Highlands of Scotland. Vol. I, The Central Highlands*, p. 115.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

As seen above, the Highlands and Islands of Scotland were, at this time, very different in terms of culture and practice to the Scottish Lowlands and to England. However, the extent to which this was the case only became more widely understood once individuals such as those mentioned above began to tour the region. They brought back with them tales of barbarism and outdated beliefs and practices, in most cases tainted with the condescending and patronising attitudes of the visitors. There was, however, a kernel of truth in all of these accounts. The Highlands and Islands as a region was lagging behind the rest of the country in terms of lifestyle and education, and as such certain practices survived longer in the north than anywhere else, as can be seen in Chapter Five concerning the survival of the *coronach*.¹⁸⁹

It is interesting to note, too, the way in which the residents of the Highlands and Islands were viewed by their Southern Scottish contemporaries. Martin Martin, a Highlander by birth but educated in the Lowlands, whose travels were also investigated in Chapter Five, ordinarily treated the locals with a certain amount of respect, but even he could prove impatient with local customs. Concerning a tradition in one of the Islands that men and women be buried in separate burial grounds, otherwise the corpse of the wrong gender would be found to have been disinterred the next morning, presumably by the spirits of those who were meant to repose there, Martin orchestrated the burial of a recently deceased gentleman in the women's burial ground. Of course, the corpse remained under the ground and, as Martin states, "This instance has delivered the credulous natives from an unreasonable fancy."¹⁹⁰ Regardless of the fact that an occasional pinch of salt has to be taken with some of the travellers accounts of the Highlands and Western Islands, they are still, in and of themselves, valuable resources. As shall be seen subsequently, it was during this period that the rest of Scotland began to rapidly develop, and burial practices in the south were to develop accordingly. Yet in the Highlands and Islands the more traditional practices were to survive for some time.

¹⁸⁹ Elsewhere, Fraser-Mackintosh notes that in areas of the Highlands where clan disputes were common, "Funerals were generally seized upon as a convenient opportunity 'to have the matter out'." C. Fraser-Mackintosh, *Antiquarian Notes, Historical, Genealogical, and Social (Second Series): Inverness-shire Parish by Parish*. (Inverness: A. & W. Mackenzie, 1897), pp. 233-234. In this instance he refers to an incident in Glenelg in the early nineteenth century which led to several arrests for assault and battery.

¹⁹⁰ L. Hardy, "The Western Isles of Scotland (Circa 1716)." *The Scottish Antiquary, or, Northern Notes and Queries*, Vol. 10, No. 37. (1895), p. 10.

The Dead Bell and the Kirk Bells

According to Scottish Protestant practices, as previously examined, the ideal funeral should contain nothing superstitious or ceremonial. There was, however, at least one ceremonial practice at Scottish funerals that either survived the Reformation, or resumed shortly afterwards; namely the use of the 'Passing Bell' or 'Dead Bell.'¹⁹¹ As Thomas Somerville (1741-1830), minister for Jedburgh in the Scottish Borders, records in his diary:

Thus, in all the towns I was acquainted with, every death was immediately made known to the inhabitants by the passing bell. This was usually done by the beadle or kirk officer, who walked through the streets at a slow pace, tinkling a small bell, sometimes called the *dead-bell*, and sometimes the *passing-bell*, and, with head uncovered, intimated that a brother (or sister), whose name was given, had departed this life. A few years ago, the officer in Jedburgh was obliged to make this announcement at once, however unseasonable the hour. A *lykewake*, too, took place in the night, or during the several nights intervening between the death and the funeral. As the intimation made by the passing bell was understood to be a general invitation, great crowds attended the funeral.¹⁹²

It would seem that the use of the Passing Bell had once more become commonplace in Scotland long before Somerville had noted its use. Indeed, the earliest record of the use of the Bell following the Reformation comes from Edinburgh in 1563,¹⁹³ shortly followed by Glasgow in 1577,¹⁹⁴ and in 1608 the South Leith Kirk Session informed the Bellman he was to have permission from them before ringing the bell at burials.¹⁹⁵ In August 1621 the Dumbarton Kirk Session Records on two separate occasions mentions that the Bell is to be rung "befoir all persones deceased,"¹⁹⁶ and in *The Presbytrie Booke of Kirkcaldie* a reference is made to the controversy surrounding the Dead Bell of Dysart on April 5, 1632,¹⁹⁷ yet the

¹⁹¹ Also referred to elsewhere as the 'Skellet' or 'Mort Bell.'

¹⁹² J. G. Fyfe, ed., *Scottish Diaries and Memoirs, 1746 – 1843*. (Stirling: Eneas Mackay, 1942), p. 238.

¹⁹³ *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh*, Vol. III, p. 171.

¹⁹⁴ *Burgh Records of the City of Glasgow, 1573-1581*. (Glasgow: The Maitland Club, 1832), pp. 86-87.

¹⁹⁵ Robertson, *South Leith Records*, p. 5.

¹⁹⁶ *Dumbarton Burgh Records, 1627-1746*. (Dumbarton, 1860), p. 127. [Includes Kirk Session Records from 1620].

¹⁹⁷ *The Presbytrie Booke of Kirkcaldie*, p. 37.

controversy is in the fact that the Dysart Bell actually belonged to the parish of Markinch,¹⁹⁸ rather than any issues concerning its use. Mention is made of the use of the Dead Bell in Edinburgh in 1639¹⁹⁹ and in Peebles in 1696.²⁰⁰ In Aberdeen in 1702 the ownership of the bell had been in dispute, with the end result being that the bell was the property of the church rather than the Baillies.²⁰¹ In Stirling in 1710 a new Dead Bell was commissioned,²⁰² yet, interestingly enough, by 1741 the use of the Dead Bell had fallen out of fashion in that town.²⁰³ Additional evidence of the Dead Bell comes from Thomas Morer, an English minister who had spent time as a chaplain to a Scottish regiment. In 1715 he wrote that “As soon as the party is dead, notice of it is given by the sound of an hand bell and a cryer.”²⁰⁴ It is uncertain of what area Morer was actually writing, although his knowledge almost certainly came from the soldiers he ministered to.

The use of the Bell was also to be noted by visitors to Scotland in their accounts of the journey. In 1705 Joseph Taylor noted its use in Edinburgh,²⁰⁵ and in his letters from the north of Scotland Burt notes:

For inviting people to ordinary buryings, in all parts of the Low-country as well as here, a man goes about with a bell, and, when he comes to one of his stations (suppose the deceased was a man), he cries, ‘All brethren and sisters, I let you to wot, that there is a brother departed this life, at the pleasure of Almighty God; they called him, &c. – he lived at, &c.’ – And so for a woman, with the necessary alterations.²⁰⁶

The naturalist John Ray, writing specifically of Dumfries in 1661 and attesting that the same is true of Dunbar, states:

when any one dies, the sexton or bell-man goeth about the streets with a small bell in his hand, which he tinkleth all along as he goeth, and now and then he maketh a stand,

¹⁹⁸ *Selections from the minutes of the Synod of Fife, 1611-1687*, p. 112.

¹⁹⁹ RH9/17/59. Certificate by the bellman, Robert Dalglesche, of the burial in 1639 of Isobel King.

²⁰⁰ *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Peebles, 1652-1714*. (Glasgow: Printed for the Scottish Burgh Records Society, 1910), p. 153.

²⁰¹ *Records of Old Aberdeen*, Vol. II, p. 106.

²⁰² *Extracts from the Records of the Royal Burgh of Stirling. A.D. 1667-1752*. (Glasgow: Printed for the Glasgow Stirlingshire and Sons of the Rock Society, 1889), p. 124.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

²⁰⁴ *Selections from the Records of the Kirk Session, Presbytery, and Synod of Aberdeen*. (Aberdeen: Printed for the Spalding Club, 1846), p. lxix.

²⁰⁵ J. Taylor, *A Journey to Edenborough in Scotland*, pp. 137-138.

²⁰⁶ Burt, *Letters From A Gentleman*, Vol. I, pp. 216-217.

and proclaims who is dead, and invites the people to come to the funeral at such an hour. The people and minister many times accompany the corpse to the grave at the time appointed, with the bell before them, where there is nothing said, but only the corpse laid in.²⁰⁷

It is interesting to note, in Ray's account, the use of the Bell, but the continuing lack of any other ceremonial at this time, which is perhaps an indication that the use of the Bell was viewed as nothing more than a simple way of announcing a death to the community at large. Indeed, in Kilmarnock in the mid eighteenth century this also seems to have been the case:

A hand-bell, called *the skellat-bell*, and by some, *the passing-bell*, from being used when the spirit of an inhabitant had passed from time into eternity, was rung through the streets by an individual, who, as he went along, announced, with a solemn air, that such a person (mentioning his or her name) had departed this life. He also named the day and hour when the remains of the deceased would be interred, and invited all to attend them to their last resting place.²⁰⁸

Interestingly, in Dundee in 1720, "The Councill upon serious consideration appoint the Bellman to be discharged (prohibited), when he is proclaiming any dead person through this Town, to proclaim the defunct person faithfull Brother or Sister, but only that there is a Brother or Sister departed..."²⁰⁹ In the early eighteenth century Adam Fergusson, minister of Logierait, opposed the Bell being rung at each burial, "unless the parish repay the money pay'd for it,"²¹⁰ a request that was met. This is perhaps another indication of the Bell being viewed as a tool for announcing a death and nothing more. Of course, if this truly was the case, would the tradition that a bell be used for the occasion be so strictly adhered to? Perhaps, as the bells broke over time, they would be replaced by other, equally functional musical instruments, rather than having new bells made.

²⁰⁷ J. Ray, *Memorials of John Ray, consisting of his life by Dr. Derham; Biographical and Critical Notices by Sir J. E. Smith, and Cuvier and Dupetit Thouars. With his Itineraries, etc*, ed. E. Lankester. (London: Printed for the Ray Society, 1846), p. 161.

²⁰⁸ A. M'Kay, *The History of Kilmarnock*. (Kilmarnock: Archibald M'Kay, 3rd edn, 1864), p. 114.

²⁰⁹ *Charters, Writs, and Public Documents of the Royal Burgh of Dundee, the Hospital and Johnston's Bequest: 1292-1880*. (Dundee: Printed by Order of the Provost, Magistrates, & Town Council, 1880), p. 176.

²¹⁰ *The Diocese and Presbytery of Dunkeld*, Vol. II, p. 413, n. 4.

While it seems to be the case that, in the instances given above, there were no superstitious elements to the ringing of the bell following the death of an individual, this cannot be said always to have been so. Prior to the Reformation the ringing of the bell not only announced the death, it also instructed the populace to pray for the soul of the deceased.²¹¹ Prayers for the dead were, as seen previously, forbidden at the Reformation, and as such it could be suggested that the use of the Dead Bell may have been suppressed following 1560 in order to prevent such intercessory prayers. However, it could also be suggested that the use of the bell itself had no intercessory or superstitious meaning; it merely reminded people of their pre-Reformation duty. Neither *The forme of prayers* nor *The First Book of Discipline* mention the use of the Dead Bell, and as such it is difficult to say with certainty whether or not its use continued or was suppressed following the Reformation, although, in light of its use in Edinburgh as early as 1563 it must be stated that any attempt made at suppression was far from successful. William Birnie certainly disapproved of the ringing of the Dead Bell, referring to it as superstitious, yet he does not specifically mention its use in Scotland, merely in the “Anti-christian worlde.”²¹² It is possible that the use of the bell resumed in Edinburgh and Glasgow shortly after the Reformation, and subsequently spread to the rest of the country in relatively short order.

Of course, there are certain examples of bells other than the Dead Bell being rung around the time of a death, namely the kirk steeple bells themselves on the occasion of a funeral. For instance, at the funeral of Bishop Haliburton in April 1665 “the bells of Perth tolled from 10 o’clock.”²¹³ As was the case with the Dead Bell, in this instance it is relatively clear that the bells were not being rung for superstitious reasons, rather they were intended to honour the deceased. However, as seen previously, in the ideal Reformed Protestant funeral individuals were to receive the same treatment in death, regardless of rank or status, yet it is highly unlikely that the bells would be rung on the occasion of every funeral. Indeed, in Aberdeen in 1695 it was “thought fitt there be payed for the use of the Kirk four libs. for the ringing of the bells to such who are buried in the Church yeard.”²¹⁴ In Brechin there was the option of ‘doubling the bells,’ whereby both the steeple bells and the Dead Bell would be rung, a service that, before 1676 cost £2, after 1676 increasing to £6 13s. 4d. This service,

²¹¹ Robertson suggested that the custom of ringing the Hand Bell on the occasion of a death began as a superstitious practice, aimed at scaring away evil spirits. Robertson, *South Leith Records*, p. 139.

²¹² Birnie, *The Blame of Kirk-Buriell*, sig. C4r.

²¹³ *The Diocese and Presbytery of Dunkeld*, Vol. I, p. 132.

²¹⁴ *Records of Old Aberdeen*, Vol. II, p. 96.

however, was reserved for the ministers, baillies, and their wives and children.²¹⁵ In May 1646 the South Leith Kirk Session decreed that the Bellman could ring the steeple bells at burials if he received an unspecified sum,²¹⁶ and Stirling, too, imposed a charge for the ringing of bells at funerals, yet in that Burgh it was clear that the money was not intended to line the pockets of the Kirk. A record from Feb, 1695, states:

The magistrats and counsell taking to consideratione that the ringing of the kirk bells at the interment of burgesses and others may be beneficiall to the poor of this place, therefore they appoint and ordaine everie burges who shall at any time coming seek and gett the benefite of the said bells for any of his familie, or any friend or relatione who shall gett the use of the said bells for any burges, shall pay theirfore four pounds Scots money, and each stranger or inhabitant who is not ane burges and shall get the benefite of the said bells at their interment shall pay theirfore ten merks money forsaid, and the saids soums to be payed into the kirk treasurer for the behove of the poor.²¹⁷

Stirling's response to the desire of its more prominent citizens to be recognised in death as in life can be said to be somewhat pragmatic. It is unlikely that such a desire would ever truly be suppressed, and as such it seems logical to use that desire to aid the poorer inhabitants of the area. As with intra-mural burial and the development of burial aisles, seen in Chapter Three, certain individuals will always be willing to pay for preferential treatment. Although such practices go against the teachings of the reformers they can certainly be seen, in this instance at least, to be beneficial for the poor.

The use of the Dead Bell in Scotland following the Reformation is an interesting subject. Although no records survive in which the use of the Dead Bell is explicitly forbidden,²¹⁸ both its use and the practice of tolling the kirk bells following a death were certainly frowned upon and condemned by certain individuals. It is difficult to suggest, however, that either of these practices were ever specifically forbidden rather than

²¹⁵ Thoms, *The Kirk of Brechin*, pp. 64-65.

²¹⁶ Robertson, *South Leith Records*, p. 72.

²¹⁷ *Extracts from the Records of the Royal Burgh of Stirling*, pp. 74-75.

²¹⁸ Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland*, p. 340, n. 86.

discouraged.²¹⁹ In an ideal Scotland the majority of reformers would almost certainly have seen the Dead Bell forbidden. The reason for its continued survival is most likely due to a re-designation of its purpose. It no longer scared away spirits or called the populace to prayer. Rather, it announced the simple fact of a death.²²⁰ The ritual ringing had been retained, if repurposed.²²¹ It is also interesting to note that, if a ban had been in place, or even if the use of the Dead Bell had merely been discouraged, it only took little over a century for its use to become widespread throughout Scotland once more.²²²

The use of the Dead Bell in Scotland, and the attempts made at discouraging the practice, are rather representative of the wider attempts at reforming burial practices in general. There was, perhaps, some initial if limited success in some of the more densely populated towns and cities of central Scotland, but the practice was to linger in the more remote areas of the country, eventually resurfacing in some of the areas that had discouraged its use. There are, of course, several reasons why such a practice would survive for so long, not least of which is the fact of its practicality. But also, perhaps, it spoke to a sense of community, and it certainly played on the laity's adherence to pre-Reformation beliefs. Ultimately, the use of the Dead Bell would cease in Scotland, but this is not to suggest that this was a delayed success for the reformers, rather the fading away of an ancient practice that ceased to be relevant as populations grew but communities shrank.

The Resurrectionists²²³

In the seventeenth century it had been the custom that the medical universities of Scotland were each provided with four corpses annually, two male and two female, for public

²¹⁹ In 1593 Glasgow Presbytery had attempted to limit the use of the Dead Bell, rather than implementing an outright ban. Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland*, p. 340, n. 86; Mitchell Library CH2/171/1, f. 3v.

²²⁰ Although there is no evidence to directly support this supposition for Scotland, it is plausible that the use of the Dead Bell following a death triggered a learned emotional response, namely grief, in the populace. Indeed, if this was the case, such a response to the ringing of the bell would not have disappeared immediately following the Reformation.

²²¹ Margo Todd seems to doubt that, in this instance, there was not some cynical manipulation of the populace, in that the use of the Dead Bell carried rather substantial fees, perhaps calling upon latent beliefs among the laity of the bell's pre-Reformation uses. Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland*, p. 340.

²²² Of course, the use of the bell did not become entirely universal once more. Several mentions are made of the existence of the hand bell in Berwickshire parishes, but in none of them had its use been reverted to. Cf. J. Robson, *The Churches and Churchyards of Berwickshire*. (Kelso: J. & J. H. Rutherford, 1893).

²²³ The University of Aberdeen has recently completed a project on the Resurrectionists in Scotland. See www.abdn.ac.uk/bodysnatchers/index.php

dissection.²²⁴ By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, however, there was an even greater demand from the medical schools throughout Scotland for the corpses of the recently deceased for the study of anatomy. This increased demand led to the growth of a group of individuals known as the Resurrectionists; men who would disinter the corpses of the recently deceased and sell them to the doctors of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, and Aberdeen. Of course, the friends and relatives of the deceased did not want them to be exhumed, and as a result of this several methods were developed throughout Scotland to prevent such occurrences.²²⁵ It is interesting to note the scale of the problem. Despite there being only four Anatomy Schools in Scotland examples of Mort-Stones, large stones placed on top of the coffin in the grave to prevent access to the corpse, can be seen from Prestwick in the south to Rogart in the north.²²⁶ The Western Highlands seem to have been largely exempt from the problem, with the majority of examples of counter measures seen in the east. Mort-Safes seem to be unknown in the Northern Highlands,²²⁷ but common elsewhere. Mort-Houses were largely restricted to the east coast,²²⁸ whilst watch houses were very common in the south and along the east coast and Moray Firth.²²⁹

The simplest method to deter potential grave robbers was to maintain a presence in the kirkyard overnight. To that end many kirks built watch houses and towers to station those whose duty it was to prevent such activities.²³⁰ Indeed, in Kilmaronock:

In the centre of the churchyard stood the old church of Riccarton, a small structure of considerable antiquity which will be remembered by many of the old inhabitants of the village and of Kilmaronock, for many of them have worshipped in it, and in their turn watched the little golgotha by night to scare the resurrectionist and prevent the desecration of the dead.²³¹

²²⁴ "Act for Delyverie of Dead Bodies to the Colledge of Aberdene, 1636." In *The Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, Vol. II, p. 73. The corpses were of the 'poorer sort;' criminals, rebels, etc.

²²⁵ It should be noted here that the bodies sold to the medical schools in Scotland were not removed exclusively from Scottish burial grounds. Indeed, the Resurrectionists from England and Ireland would happily sell their wares to Scottish doctors. Cf. Fleetwood, John F. "The Dublin Body Snatchers: Part One." *Dublin Historical Record*, Vol. 42, No. 1. (1988), pp. 32-40.

²²⁶ www.abdn.ac.uk/bodysnatchers/mortstones.php <accessed 26 January 2012>

²²⁷ www.abdn.ac.uk/bodysnatchers/mortsafes.php <accessed 26 January 2012>

²²⁸ www.abdn.ac.uk/bodysnatchers/morthouses.php <accessed 26 January 2012>

²²⁹ www.abdn.ac.uk/bodysnatchers/watchhouses.php <accessed 26 January 2012>

²³⁰ J. Ritchie, "Relics of the Body-Snatchers: Supplementary notes on Mortsafe Tackle, Mortsafes, Watch-Houses, and Public Vaults, mostly in Aberdeenshire." *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, Vol. 55. (1920-1921), p. 226.

²³¹ A. R. Adamson, *Rambles Round Kilmaronock, with an Introductory Sketch of the Town*. (Kilmaronock: T. Stevenson, 1875), p. 53.



Mort-Safe, Greyfriars Kirkyard, Edinburgh

This method, however, was not always successful, as occasionally the relative comforts of the watch house took precedence over an unpleasant night time tour of the kirkyard.²³² Another method, such as that authorised by the Kirk Session of St Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, in 1738 was to increase the height of the walls surrounding the kirkyard to deter night time access.²³³

Other methods intended to prevent the activities of the Resurrectionists focused on the bodies themselves. In many kirkyards throughout Scotland public vaults, or Mort-Houses, were built, wherein the corpses of the recently deceased would be laid. They would remain in these locked vaults until they had decomposed enough that they were no longer of any use to the students of anatomy.²³⁴ A further method by which the same ends were obtained was the use of the Mort-Safe. There are several varieties of Mort-Safe, all of which perform the same function; namely obstructing any attempt at exhuming a body. Mort-Safes were mostly constructed from heavy iron, ordinarily in the shape of a coffin on top with iron bars forming a cage, and were placed around the coffin of the recently deceased.²³⁵ The coffin and Mort-Safe would then be buried, and, in a similar fashion to the vaults described above, the body would be left until it had decomposed past the point of any usefulness. The Mort-Safe would then be dug up and used again.²³⁶

Eventually, of course, these methods would become less necessary, as in 1832 the Anatomy Act finally governed the legal provision of corpses to the medical schools, by giving them rights to the unclaimed bodies of paupers. Although body-snatching did not stop overnight, Resurrectionists were still at work in the late 1830s,²³⁷ it did slow down.²³⁸ This, in turn, meant that the kirkyards did not have to be watched so closely, and objects such as

²³² J. Ritchie, "An Account of the Watch-Houses, Mortsafes, and Public Vaults in Aberdeenshire Churchyards, formerly used for the protection of the dead from the Resurrectionists." *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, Vol. 46. (1911-1912), pp. 289-290.

²³³ D. Love, *Scottish Kirkyards*. (London: Robert Hale, 1989), p. 144.

²³⁴ Ritchie, "Relics of the Body-Snatchers," p. 227. Examples also survive in Northern Ireland. Cf. J. Skillen, "The Resurrectionists in County Antrim." *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, Third Series, Vol. 2. (1939), p. 25. Antrim would have been a convenient location for the Resurrectionists to remove their wares to Scotland.

²³⁵ Some Mort-Safes were simply large boulders placed on top of the coffin before the grave was filled in. These, however, eventually proved ineffective, as the Resurrectionists found ways of removing them. Ritchie, "An Account of the Watch-Houses," pp. 295, 298.

²³⁶ Not all Mort-Safes were dug up; some appear to have been designed for one use only, others seem to have been forgotten about. Interestingly, there seems to have been at least one occasion when the Mort-Safe did not perform its intended function, as, in 1915, a Mort-Safe was dug up in Aberlour which surrounded a coffin containing no body. Ritchie, "Relics of the Body-Snatchers," pp. 223-224.

²³⁷ J. Knott, "Popular Attitudes to Death and Dissection in Early Nineteenth Century Britain: The Anatomy Act and the Poor." *Labour History*, No. 49. (1985), p. 1.

²³⁸ Loudon, writing in 1843, states, perhaps optimistically, "fortunately a law has been passed which renders these precautions unnecessary." J. C. Loudon, *On the Laying Out, Planting, and Managing of Cemeteries; and on the Improvement of Churchyards*. (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1843), p. 8.

the Mort-Safe gradually became mere relics, abandoned in the kirkyards or in the ground.²³⁹ However, not everyone approved of the Act; the poorer elements of society viewed it with horror.²⁴⁰ Indeed, as recently as 1831 a riot had broken out in Aberdeen following the discovery of evidence of human dissection.²⁴¹ Belief in the Resurrection of the body remained strong in Scotland, and the population continued to desire appropriate burial.²⁴² Interestingly enough, as Michael Smith has suggested, not everyone could necessarily rely upon the Kirk to provide such a burial. Indeed, in 1847 and 1848 159 and 168 bodies respectively were sold by the Kirk to the medical schools for dissection, in order to ease pressure on its funds.²⁴³ This is not to imply that the Kirk entirely approved of such a process, as tensions certainly existed between the Kirk and the medical schools.²⁴⁴ It is, however, interesting to note the extent to which the two groups would work together when the need arose.

At this time the poorer sections of Scottish society were not widely educated, but even if they were aware of the advances to knowledge that these dissections would bring, it is unlikely that many would have willingly given themselves over to the anatomists. Indeed, it was held that the dissection of a corpse somehow affected one's chance of resurrection. The events surrounding this issue show that, despite the fact that the educated portions of society at the time were making great leaps forward in human knowledge and understanding, the common people held true to what they knew. They believed in the Resurrection over science, and as such, justly wished to protect the bodies of their loved ones and themselves. As a result of this, the fact that the Anatomy Act provided corpses to the medical schools from the poorer sections of society did little to convince them of the beneficial aspects of the study of dissection. For the simpler Christians of the time it was important that burial be seen as permanent, or at least as a secure resting place until the time of the Resurrection. However, this was no longer guaranteed to be the case. The developments seen above that were intended to prevent the bodies of the deceased from being disturbed grew out of fear, but also of necessity. It is, perhaps, also partly due to this fear that the cemetery movement grew in Scotland, as will be seen in Chapter Eight, as the new cemeteries also provided a higher

²³⁹ At least one vault, however, was constructed as late as 1835, in Belhelvie, Aberdeenshire. Ritchie, "An Account of the Watch-Houses," p. 315.

²⁴⁰ Knott, "Popular Attitudes," p. 1.

²⁴¹ *The Times*, Dec 26, 1831.

²⁴² Of course, as Knott highlights, it was also important to the labouring classes that they not be "buried like dogs." Knott, "Popular Attitudes," p. 13.

²⁴³ Smith, "The Church of Scotland and the Funeral Industry in Nineteenth-century Edinburgh," p. 117.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

degree of security for the bodies of the deceased. Christians could bury their dead with confidence that they would not subsequently be denied the Resurrection through the interfering attentions of the medical schools, provided they had the ability to secure a plot in a cemetery.

Conclusion

As seen above, it is clear that the Scottish Enlightenment had little impact in the Highlands. While the Lowlands became a world class economic system based on productive farming, heavy industry, and textile manufacture, the Highlands remained a land stricken by poverty.²⁴⁵ Victorian observers, following the Highland potato blight of the 1840s, determined the roots of these differences to be the fact that the “Highlander was fundamentally conservative, blindly attached to the customs and practices of the past.”²⁴⁶ This is a point that can be argued concerning the burial practices of the area, as “the burial rites of a people are the customs to which they usually most persistently cling.”²⁴⁷ As the following letter to *Northern Notes and Queries* from 1897 shows, some practices that would by that time be considered somewhat outdated, if not barbaric, in the Lowlands, continued for a long time in Highlands:

There is an old funeral custom in this parish. Occasionally a sad group of men can be seen in the evening near the gate of the burying-ground waiting for something. They are waiting for the sun to set, because they are going to bury the dead body of an infant that has not been baptised. I have heard it said that there is a belief that the infant would have a difficulty in getting into heaven if its body were buried while the sun is above the horizon. I am told that a similar custom prevails in some parts of England.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ T. M. Devine, “A Conservative People? Scottish Gaeldom in the Age of Improvement.” In *Eighteenth Century Scotland: New Perspectives*, eds. T. M. Devine and J. R. Young. (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999), p. 225.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ J. Spence, *Shetland Folk-Lore*. (Lerwick: Johnson & Grieg, 1899), p. 85.

²⁴⁸ “Funerals of Unbaptised Children, Kiltarn, Ross-Shire.” *Northern Notes and Queries or the Scottish Antiquary*, Vol. 11. (1897), p. 29.

Indeed, by the time this letter was written the Glasgow Necropolis had been in use for sixty five years. However, as seen above, it is dangerous to assume that all areas of the Highlands and Islands had unified practices. Dennison notes of the Orkneys:

When a child died before being baptized, it was not subject to the barbarous rule once in full swing in England, but was buried in the churchyard. In the case of death previous to baptism, the parent's wrote the child's name on a slip of paper and placed it in the coffin with the child as a passport to Paradise, it being at one time believed that no one could enter there without a name.²⁴⁹

Clearly the Scottish Enlightenment had not enlightened the whole of Scotland.

Of course, there were changes that were taking place throughout Scotland as a whole, not just in the more remote areas, or even the more developed areas, and this chapter has investigated one particularly interesting example, in that recorded instances of the use of the hand bell to announce a death increase dramatically by the eighteenth century. As seen above it is unclear whether or not the use of the hand bell to announce a death was outlawed at the Reformation. It would not be surprising if the practice had been forbidden, as superstitious and ritual beliefs had gone hand in hand, as it were, with the use of the bell. However, there are no records that explicitly forbid its use, and, although there are no records immediately following the Reformation of its use, it is not long before the bell began to be heard again. Perhaps, as suggested in Chapter Five, it was important for a community to display unity on such an occasion, and the bell allowed this to be initiated relatively easily. As a side note, the ringing of the steeple bells had been outlawed following the Reformation, yet had begun to be seen again in Scotland following the ascent of Episcopal party in the Kirk. The use of the steeple bells lingered, however, even under the consolidation of Presbyterianism, and this chapter has briefly investigated the justification of their persistence in certain areas.

As stated above it could be suggested that the Scottish Enlightenment did not truly affect Scotland as a whole, just certain areas of the country. For those areas that it did affect, again, namely the south and east of the country, it brought with it, on occasion, some new, somewhat unpleasant, practices surrounding death. It was during this time that the Resurrectionists and their activities became more widespread, as the demand from the

²⁴⁹ Dennison, *Orkney Folklore & Sea Legends*, pp. 155-156. Shipwrecked sailors, however, were buried in the north of the kirkyard. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

medical schools of Scotland for the corpses of the recently deceased for dissection grew. Of course, the advances in medicine and human anatomy that derived from these practices are widely recognised, and at the time were a crucial aspect of the Enlightenment. For the common man and woman, however, the thought of the body of a recently deceased loved one, or even of their own body after death, being dissected on a table by a group of medical students, filled them with horror. As such it is unsurprising that the lower elements of Scottish society would quickly see the appeal of the newly opened cemeteries, as will be seen in the next chapter.

Chapter Eight

Post-Enlightenment Scotland

In the previous chapter it was seen that during the time of the Scottish Enlightenment there were actually many parts of the country in which the older traditions concerning burial were still adhered to. Indeed, in truth it was not until the early nineteenth century that the ideals of the Enlightenment spread from the population centres and began to affect the beliefs of the common people. It is possible, however, that this spread of new ideas was aided by population growth, and, in turn, by the growth of the population of the dead in Scotland. It was during the early nineteenth century, throughout the United Kingdom as a whole, that the overcrowded nature of kirkyards and city burial grounds became known. As a result of growing health problems, epidemics, and simply the unsightly nature of these burial grounds the notion of cemeteries, a theory laid out at the time of the Reformation, became more widespread. The first of these cemeteries to be opened in Scotland was the Glasgow Necropolis, and it and others of its kind will be investigated below. It is particularly interesting that, as unconsecrated ground, these cemeteries were the first intentional multi-denominational burial grounds in Scotland. This chapter will also look at a trend that became much more widespread in Scotland following the country-wide funeral services following the death of Princess Charlotte in 1817; namely the public funeral. Important public figures, both noble and political, were beginning to receive large, ostentatious funerals, and these funerals were performed wholly in the public eye. There were various reasons behind these developments, and these will be looked at below. Additionally, not everyone in Scotland accepted these changes with open arms. The work of one such dissenter, Thomas M'Crie, a Secession minister, will also be looked at in some depth in this chapter.

Finally, the development of the treatment and burial in Scotland of those who had taken their own lives will be traced below, from the very beginnings of the Reformation to the post-Enlightenment period. Examples of the burial of individuals who had committed suicide will be looked at from Scotland as a whole, and the development of the treatment of their corpses will be investigated, from the early denial of burial in consecrated or 'sacred' ground, to the gradual reacceptance of these tragic individuals, highlighted in the burial of Hugh Miller, a founding member of the Free Church of Scotland, in the Grange cemetery in Edinburgh in 1856.

The Rise of the Cemeteries

As seen in Chapter Three, following the Scottish Reformation of 1560, the *First Book of Discipline* stated that, in place of intra-mural or even kirkyard burials “some other secret and convenient place, lying in the most free aire, be appointed for that use, which place ought to be walled and fenced about, and kept for that use onely.”¹ This, however, was an idea that never really proved popular in Scotland. The desire for burial in the kirkyard remained strong, and even following successive bans by the General Assembly some sections of Scottish society continued to seek intra-mural burial. That is not to say, however, that there were no burial grounds along the lines suggested by the *First Book of Discipline*. In Edinburgh, as early as 1561, it was decided that:

because it is thocht gude that thair be na buriell within the kirk, and that the kirk yard is nocht of sufficient rowme for bureing of the deid, and for eschewing of the savour and inconuenientis that may follow thairupoun in the heit of somer, it wald be prouidit that ane buriall place be made farer fra the myddis of the toun, sic as in the Gray Freir yaird, and the samyn biggit and maid close.²

The following year this decision was reinforced by the Queen.³ Of course, this was still far from ideal, and became more of a problem as the city grew up around the new burial ground. Similarly, in Dundee in 1564, the former Greyfriars kirkyard was given over to the burgh as a new burial location,⁴ although it too would eventually be swallowed up by the growth of the town.⁵ By the nineteenth century, however, the idea of cemeteries as appropriate burial locations had grown, and ultimately these cemeteries would bring together all echelons of Scottish society.⁶ The first planned Scottish cemetery was the Necropolis in Glasgow,

¹ *The Doctrine and Discipline of the Kirke of Scotland*, p. 71.

² *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh*, Vol. III, p. 106.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 147. Interestingly, on at least one occasion a new burial ground was deemed inferior to the old. From Moray in 1667 a record states, “Robert Innes of Meurtone and Alexanser Douglas of Spynie supplicate the Synod anent parties not being allowed to bury in the old churchyard of Kinloss and they maintain the new kirkyard is unsuitable. The Synod order the corps presently lying unburied to be interred in the old burial place and a Committee is appointed to visit the place on Tuesday.” Cramond, *Extracts from the Records of the Synod of Moray*, p. 138.

⁴ *Charters, Writs, and Public Documents of the Royal Burgh of Dundee*, p. 40.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 230.

⁶ Colvin, *Architecture and the After-Life*, p. 364.

opened in 1833, and designed from the start to be multi-denominational,⁷ with sections for Catholics, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Jews,⁸ and Presbyterians. Indeed, it did not take long for the Necropolis to become popular, and it has been estimated that “nearly every eminent Glaswegian who had died between 1832 and 1867 was either interred within the Necropolis or was represented by a cenotaph.”⁹ Nor was it long before other cemeteries began to be opened. The Southern Necropolis in Glasgow was opened in 1840 and in Edinburgh cemeteries were opened at Warriston in 1842, Dean in 1845, and both Grange and Dalry in 1846.¹⁰ The first of the Edinburgh cemeteries, Warriston, also known simply as the Edinburgh cemetery, was founded by the Edinburgh Cemetery Company, and designed by architect David Cousin, who would also subsequently design the Dean cemetery.¹¹

It was not, however, only leanings towards religious tolerance that had led to the development of purpose built cemeteries. The kirkyards in the towns and cities had, by the early nineteenth century, become massively overcrowded, and this was correctly believed to be the cause of poor health and even epidemics that surged through the poorer levels of society.¹² Of course, the health risks associated with burial grounds had been understood since at least the sixteenth century in Scotland. In the license granting the use of the former Greyfriars kirkyard in Dundee it is stated:

We, understanding that the kirkzarde of oure burgh of Dondei is situat in y^e myddis yairof, quhairin y^e com[m]one traffique of merchandice is usit; And als y^e deid of oure said haill bur[gh] is buryit; And throu occasioun of y^e said buriall pest and uther contagius seikness is ingenerit: And efter infectioun it maks y^e sam to perseveir and continue to y^e grit hurt nocht onlie to y^e Inhabitants of oure said bur[gh] bot alsua of y^e haill Realme.¹³

⁷ J. S. Curl, “John Claudius Loudon and the Garden Cemetery Movement.” *Garden History*, Vol. 11, No. 2. (1983), p. 139.

⁸ It is interesting to note that, although groups such as Jews and Quakers had their own burial grounds from the early nineteenth century in the case of the Jews and the mid to late eighteenth century in the case of the Quakers (Cf. CH10/1/43, CH10/1/50), these groups still required express permission to extend their burial grounds under the 1855 Burial Act. Cf. GD16/40/86, p. 5.

⁹ Curl, “John Claudius Loudon,” p. 140.

¹⁰ See J. Gifford, et al, *The Buildings of Scotland: Edinburgh*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984).

¹¹ *Historic Scotland*. [http://hsewsf.sedsh.gov.uk/hslive/hsstart?P_HBNUM=27937], <accessed 13/10/2010>

¹² See, for example, M. E. Hotz, “Down Among the Dead: Edwin Chadwick’s Burial Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England.” *Victorian Literature and Culture*, Vol. 29, No. 1. (2001), pp. 21-38.

¹³ *Charters, Writs, and Public Documents of the Royal Burgh of Dundee*, p. 40. Interestingly, Koslofsky has noted that Luther’s primary justification for extra-mural burial was medical. Luther reasoned that if “it is dangerous to maintain burial within the city walls because ‘vapours and mists arise from the graves to pollute the air’, then the duty to protect human life alone would be ‘ample reason to locate churchyards outside the

Additionally, the emotions behind the monuments that had been built to honour the memory of the noble deceased had proven short lived. As Strang stated in *Necropolis Glasguensis*,¹⁴ a work outlining the many good reasons for the public cemeteries; “In Scotland it is of every-day occurrence, to find the lie given to the most pompous monuments, a few months after their erection, by the moss overgrowing and obscuring the epitaph which vows and intends unceasing remembrance of the dead.”¹⁵ Additionally, due to their overuse certain burial grounds had become barren places, with ground so often disturbed that no grass would grow.¹⁶ In certain areas it was not unknown for livestock and wild animals to graze in burial grounds. To prevent such an occurrence in Peebles in 1652:

by reasone of the want of ane (sufficient) dyke round about the same (whilk is also taken in consideratioun be the heritores in the landward parochie) the counsall for their pairt enactes and ordanes that all the inhabitantes within this burgh haveand hors leid, each hors, six loades of clay, beginnand upon Moonday for the first quarter, and so furth each day therafter throw the quarteris of the toune...¹⁷

city’.” Cf. Koslofsky, *The Reformation of the Dead*, p. 47. Luther had actually been advocating extra-mural burial as far back as 1525, long before Calvin and Knox had pressed for burial reform, and he so argued for medical rather than religious reasons. Cameron notes that in Scotland too the initial desire to remove burials from built up areas may have been fuelled by sanitary considerations, as “in 1563 the Assembly decreed that in rural areas the body be buried ‘saxe foote under the eird’.” Cameron, ed., *The First Book of Discipline*, p. 201, n. 77. The 1855 act amending Scottish burial laws ultimately allowed for the determination, upon a complaint, of whether or not burial grounds had become dangerous to health, or offensive or contrary to decency. Cf. GD16/40/86, p. 4. It is this that ultimately led to the closing of the burial ground in Dundee known as the Howff that had been granted in 1564 by Queen Mary. Cf. *Charters, Writs, and Public Documents of the Royal Burgh of Dundee*, p. 230.

¹⁴ J. Strang, *Necropolis Glasguensis; with Observations on Ancient and Modern Tombs and Sepulture*. (Glasgow, 1831).

¹⁵ Quoted in Loudon, *On the Laying Out, Planting, and Managing of Cemeteries*, p. 10. To guard against this in future Loudon suggested the payment “to the proprietors or directors of the cemetery a sum considered sufficient to preserve [monuments] in repair in perpetuity, or for a certain number of years.” Loudon, *On the Laying Out, Planting, and Managing of Cemeteries*, p. 39.

¹⁶ Curl, “John Claudius Loudon,” p. 138. The varying areas of Scotland, and their geography, could also affect burial grounds. Of a Shetland parish it has been stated; “This Church is surrounded with Banks of Sand, two or three paces distant from the Water, consequently no good Burial place, for, if it blow but an ordinary gale, many of the Coffins are discovered, and sometimes naked Corpses; for all have not Coffins.” G. Goudie, ed., *The Diary of the Reverend John Mill, Minister of the Parishes of Dunrossness, Sandwick, and Cunningsburgh in Shetland, 1740-1803*. (Edinburgh: Printed at the University Press by T. and A. Constable for the Scottish History Society, 1889), p. lxi. In some cases it was the Kirk Session themselves who were responsible for the state of the cemeteries, and peculiarly they frequently discouraged people from paying attention to the graves. In South Leith, individuals who would put turf upon the grave of a friend would have to pay £3 Scots to the poor. Cf. Robertson, *South Leith Records*, p. 141.

¹⁷ R. Renwick, *Gleanings from the Records of the Royal Burgh of Peebles, 1604-52*. (Peebles: Watson & Smyth, 1892), p. 250. Interestingly, this was far from the earliest example of an order to enclose the kirk yards. The constitutions of Bishop David, from 1242, state that kirk yards should be enclosed so as to prevent access to wild animals. Cf. *Statutes of the Scottish Church, 1225-1559*, p. 57. From Orkney in 1688 there is a kirk session record ordering the payment of workmen for laying the kirk floor and for building a new dyke around

The development of purpose built walled cemeteries, outside of the towns and cities, would fix all of these problems, by allowing much more room for burial, and yet allow for a certain natural beauty.¹⁸ As J. C. Loudon, an early advocate and planner of public cemeteries, stated:

The *main object* of a burial-ground is, the disposal of the remains of the dead in such a manner as that their decomposition, and return to the earth from which they sprung, shall not prove injurious to the living; either by affecting their health, or shocking their feelings, opinions, or prejudices.

A *secondary object* is, or ought to be, the improvement of the moral sentiments and general taste of all classes, and more especially of the great masses of society.¹⁹

The same desire for aesthetics can be seen in the design of the Edinburgh cemeteries of the same period. As the Edinburgh Cemetery Company Prospectus of 1842 explained, “the spread of education, and the dissemination of works of art and science... have led all classes to desire that the style, situation and the whole arrangement of Public Burial Grounds should be improved.”²⁰ For Loudon, however, it was important that the designers of the new cemeteries not go too far in their attempts to alleviate the misery and gloom previously held by burial grounds, as this could lead to the new cemeteries becoming rather gaudy places.²¹ He also states, however:

A garden cemetery is the sworn foe to preternatural fear and superstition. The ancients, from their minds being never polluted with the idea of a charnel-house, nor their feelings roused by the revolting emblems of mortality, contemplated death without terror, and visited its gloomy shrine without fear. With them death was

the burial ground. Cf. GD106/233. Of course, walls do not necessarily prevent access to wild animals, and Glasgow Necropolis now plays host to Roe deer on a regular basis.

¹⁸ George Blair went so far as to state that the natural beauty of the Glasgow Necropolis “crowned with its monumental terraces; its claims to distinction as the first ornamental cemetery in this country; its close proximity to the old Cathedral, and to other objects of antiquarian interest; the ready access to it from the city, and the noble view which it affords of the surrounding country, render it a favourite resort of our citizens as well as a principal attraction to strangers visiting Glasgow.” Curl, “John Claudius Loudon,” p. 140. It was not, however, the first burial ground in Scotland where aesthetics were considered. In Lochgoilhead in 1816 a committee was appointed at the parish of Kilmorich to ensure that the burial ground there was enclosed. In 1819 the same committee went to the burial ground with “a considerable number of firs and other plants” with the aim “to ornament the place where their Relations who have gone before them & their forefathers have been Deposited.” CH2/1169/7, p. 84.

¹⁹ Loudon, *On the Laying Out, Planting, and Managing of Cemeteries*, p. 1. Emphasis in original.

²⁰ *Historic Scotland*. [http://hsewsf.sedsh.gov.uk/hslive/hsstart?P_HBNUM=27937], <accessed 13/10/2010>

²¹ Loudon, *On the Laying Out, Planting, and Managing of Cemeteries*, pp. 8-9.

tranquillity, and the only images which were associated with it, were those of peaceful repose and tender sorrow.²²

Clearly there was a middle ground in which the new cemeteries could be designed in order to keep people in mind of the tranquillity of death, but avoid the contemplation of horrors.

The Kirk, the Free Church, and Death

As stated previously, following the Reformation the Kirk had begun a process of withdrawing from the practices surrounding death.²³ However, it retained almost exclusive control of burial locations, particularly in the south of the country. This was all to change with the introduction of the cemeteries, particularly in terms of the revenue the Kirk Sessions stood to lose.²⁴ By ensuring burial took place in the kirkyards various items could be added to the expense of the funeral, such as the renting of the mortcloth, sombre clothing, and even providing ‘baton-men’ and mutes to lead a procession.²⁵

Additionally, by the end of the eighteenth century both Episcopalians and Catholics were beginning to be tolerated in Scotland, yet neither had any of their own burial grounds. Both groups had little choice but to use land belonging to the Kirk, leading to difficulties in openly practicing their own differing burial rituals. As stated above, the Necropolis in Glasgow was planned from the start as a multi-denominational facility, and in Edinburgh the Edinburgh Cemetery Company aimed to remove any impediments to religious freedom, allowing those conducting burials in their cemeteries the freedom to perform the relevant religious ceremonies.²⁶ But it was not only Episcopalians and Catholics who were to benefit

²² Ibid., p. 11.

²³ Brown, *Noble Society*, p. 251.

²⁴ Smith, “The Church of Scotland and the Funeral Industry in Nineteenth-century Edinburgh,” p. 110.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 112.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 129. It is interesting to note that the areas of cemeteries given over to Episcopalian burial were consecrated, while those aimed at Presbyterians were not. There appear to have been several forms of consecration used by Episcopalian bishops. One form, first used at the consecration of a burial place for General Lochart of Lee, at Dryden, 15 March 1790, went as follows: The bishop and half of the clergy walked around the ground, offering a prayer. The bishop then asked the proprietor of the ground if he desired that this land be set aside, dedicated to God, for use as a burial ground. Following an answer in the affirmative the bishop then offered another prayer, after which parts of Psalms 88, 89, and 115 were said, followed by readings from Genesis 23:2 onwards, 2 Samuel 2, and parts of Ecclesiastes. Then, if a choir were present, parts of Psalms 89 and 90 were sung, or said by the bishop if there was no choir. Following this a final prayer was offered. Cf. CH12/15/162. A very similar form was observed at the consecration of a burial ground for the family of Elgin and Kincardine at Broomhall in 1759. Cf. CH12/16/208. For yet another Episcopalian form of consecration of a burial place see Craven, *Records of the Dioceses of Argyll and the Isles*, pp. 348-351.

from these developments; other Presbyterian groups stood to gain too. Following the Disruption of 1843 the Free Church of Scotland broke from the Kirk. The Kirk, however, retained possession of the majority of the buildings, including the kirkyards. There was initially bad feeling between the two groups, and this even extended to burial rights. In 1845 the Kirk contested the right of the Free Church to bury in land that the Free Church had legally purchased. An interdict was issued and, interestingly enough, following the prohibition of Free Church burials on the land the first two burials to take place were influential members of the Kirk, who had been instrumental in the issuing of the interdict.²⁷ This was not an isolated incident, as a similar record from Argyllshire shows,²⁸ and indeed in one case an elderly gentleman, whilst looking upon the graves of some of his children in the Kirk owned burial ground was told that, unless he left the Free Church he “shall never lie beside those below.”²⁹

For the Free Church and other dissenting groups the new cemeteries were clearly an opportunity too good to be missed. Indeed, founding members of the Free Church, such as Thomas Chalmers, Hugh Miller, and Thomas Guthrie were all buried in the Grange cemetery in Edinburgh, and it is easy to see why. The new cemeteries were, in many ways, ideal for Presbyterian burial. They were used for no other function than burial, and they were walled off and separate from the cities. And, importantly, those sections reserved for Presbyterians were not consecrated. Take away the other denominations and it may be suggested that Knox himself would be hard pressed to disagree.

It is interesting to note that this situation arose from the fact that, unlike the Catholics and Episcopalians, who were allowed to inter their dead in Kirk owned burial grounds, the Free Church were denied this right. Why should it be the case that a Presbyterian group would allow non-Presbyterians to bury their dead in Presbyterian burial grounds, but deny that same right to fellow Presbyterians? The anthropologist Roy Rappaport, whilst discussing Ultimate Sacred Postulates, provides an answer. An Ultimate Sacred Postulate is essentially the core of what any individual group believes, for instance the Scots Confession of Faith.³⁰ As Rappaport states:

²⁷ T. Brown, *Annals of the Disruption*, Vol. II. (Edinburgh: MacLaren & MacNiven, 1878), pp. 161-162.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

³⁰ R. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 263.

Enmity between separate communities that once did, but no longer do, accept the same Ultimate Sacred Postulates, or that even have come to distinguish themselves on less fundamental grounds (e.g., on matters of ritual practice or points of exegesis) is especially bitter. Apostates and heretics have been reviled *more*, and treated worse, than infidels in the course of Christian history, possibly because their errors are taken to be wilful, and to constitute betrayal as well as sacrilege.³¹

By the early nineteenth century the animosity between Protestants and Catholics in Scotland had become almost familiar, and in many ways it could be suggested that the two groups did not think of themselves as the same religion. The Free Church of Scotland, however, *was* the same religion, and the same denomination as the Kirk. The very fact that they had only recently split from each other made the animosity so much stronger, and as a result the Free Church was prevented by the Kirk from using Kirk owned burial grounds. The same reasoning will also be seen below in the brief schism of Glasgow's Jewish community.³² The opening of the public cemeteries was, for the Free Church in particular, an opportunity to establish its own burial ground and its own burial traditions, and as a result, to cement its own new identity. That the new cemeteries were shared with other denominations and other faiths did not matter. What mattered was, from the very beginnings of the Free Church, it could establish its new burial traditions in the public cemeteries, and, as suggested before, they were the ideal Presbyterian burial location. No longer did they have to struggle with the Kirk over where to bury their dead.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 327-328.

³² Similarities can also be seen from France in the late sixteenth century. French Protestants had been given access to certain cemeteries in order to bury their dead, but the Catholics who continued to use those cemeteries interfered. For both sides the right to use the cemeteries symbolized their membership of a community, but the established Catholic order did not wish to share their sacred space with outsiders. The Protestants, on the other hand, were desirous of using the old cemeteries as they had been the burial places of their ancestors; they did not want to be seen as abandoning the past. Cf. Ariès, *The Hour of our Death*, pp. 315-316. Interestingly, by the early seventeenth century, in certain areas of France Protestants and Catholics came to communal decisions to share cemeteries, although partitioning them into adjacent burial grounds. Through such partitions both groups could be secure of their place in the community, although it led, on occasion, to Catholic claims of Protestant plagiarism of monuments and tombs. Cf. K. P. Luria, "Separated by Death? Burials, Cemeteries, and Confessional Boundaries in Seventeenth-Century France." *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 2. (2001), pp. 189, 200.

Glasgow Necropolis

As stated above, part of the reason for the growth of the cemetery movement in the early nineteenth century was the growing recognition of the insanitary conditions associated with inner city burial grounds. George Blair noted that the total abolition of the unwholesome practice of intra-mural burial was a stated goal of those behind the Glasgow Necropolis, and, perhaps controversially, he states, “we believe that we are not a little indebted to the recent repeated visitations of one of the most awful and mysterious scourges that afflict humanity,”³³ referring, of course, to the wave of epidemics that had spread through the poorer areas of British cities. As he goes on to state of London, such burial arrangements “cannot fail to have hurried prematurely into their graves thousands and hundreds of thousands.”³⁴

It must be stated, however, that the notion of a public cemetery in Glasgow was not universally accepted overnight. Indeed, there were several factors that could well have impeded the development of the Necropolis at any stage of the discussions. In addition to ushering in a new era concerning sanitation and the burial of the dead in Glasgow the Necropolis was to be the first cemetery of its kind in the whole of Scotland.³⁵ Whilst it is true that Scotland at this stage was predominantly and officially Presbyterian, and, as suggested above, in theory Presbyterians should have willingly embraced the concept of the cemetery, that does not mean that the Necropolis did not initially conflict with certain national and religious prejudices.³⁶ It is one thing for the educated elite of a Church or State to understand that there should be no superstition surrounding burial, and that burial locations should not be considered sacred, but if the common populace have held to certain beliefs for any length of time they will be hard to shake. However, as has been seen above, the Necropolis proved popular very quickly, and the notion of the public cemetery subsequently spread to the other towns and cities of Scotland.³⁷

As stated above, the Necropolis was designed from the start to be religiously inclusive, and located within its boundaries were sections for all of the Christian denominations of Scotland, but also a burial place for Glasgow’s Jewish community. The

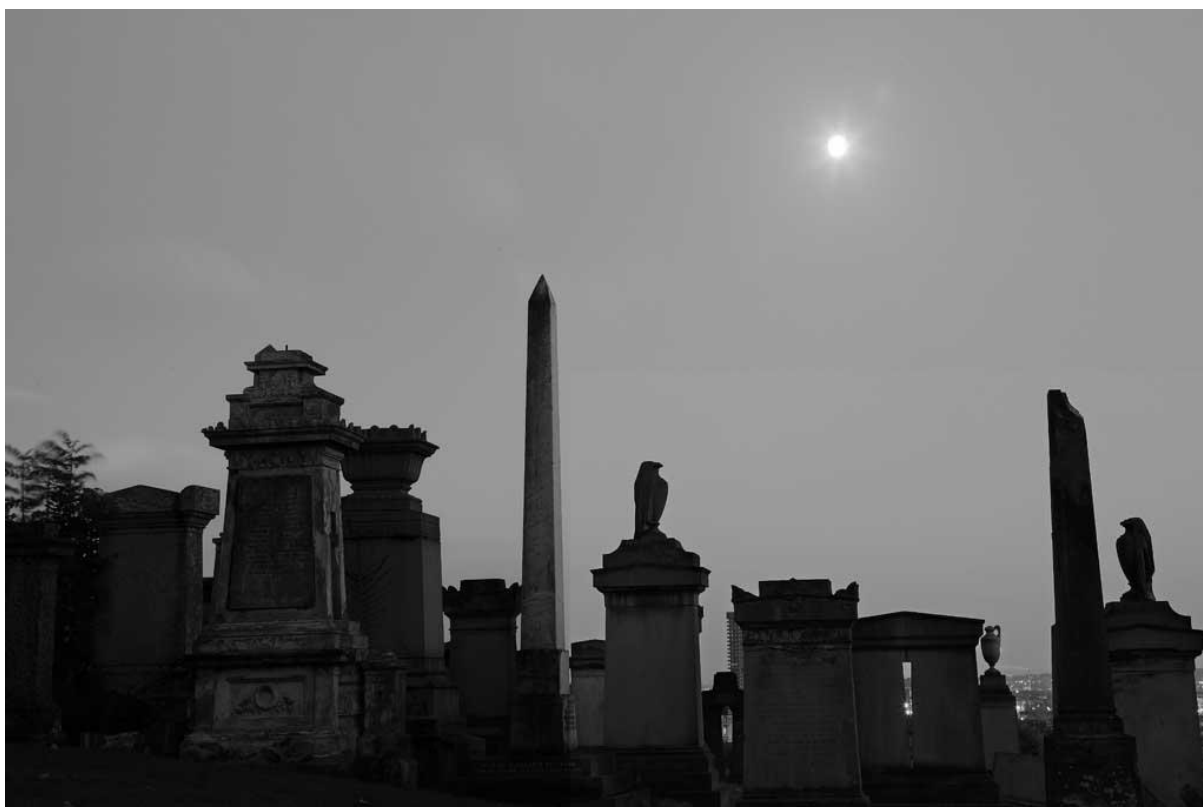
³³ G. Blair, *Biographic and Descriptive Sketches of Glasgow Necropolis*. (Glasgow: Maurice Ogle & Son; Thomas Murray & Son, 1862), p. 3.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*



Glasgow Necropolis



The Grange, Edinburgh

section of the Necropolis given over to Jewish burial was, perhaps unsurprisingly, not in the centre of the cemetery, but rather at the edge of the site. As Blair states:

Some allowance must be made for olden prejudices, even although they do not rest on any valid principle, and therefore it is perhaps well that the burying-ground of the Jews has been placed in this sequestered corner, which may be regarded as a suburb of the beautiful city of the dead. Although the position is a partial separation, it is not an exclusion, and perhaps the arrangement is equally satisfactory to both Jew and Christian.³⁸

It may well be that Blair had accurately assessed the situation, and that the Jewish community would not have been entirely willing to share their burial space with their Christian neighbours. Blair describes the burial location as being particularly suitable to the Jewish community, in that it is located at the edge of the site, framed by a disused quarry. Parallels are clearly being drawn between this location and the Cave of Machpelah, purchased by Abraham for the burial of Sarah in Genesis 23:9-17, which was a cave located at the edge of a field.³⁹ It is interesting to note that in 1842 Glasgow's Jewish community endured a small schism that would show parallels with the better known Disruption of the very next year. For a brief time there were two Jewish communities in Glasgow, yet the burial site within the Necropolis had been granted prior to the schism. Ultimately the larger of the two groups felt that they now held exclusive rights to the Jewish section of the Necropolis, and subsequently denied the smaller group access to the site. This was, of course, ignored, and this led the larger group to issue an interdict against the smaller.⁴⁰ Fortunately for the smaller of the two groups the situation that had led to the schism was eventually resolved. However, Blair reports that there are two burials adjacent to the Jewish section of the Necropolis, yet remaining outside of it. One is probably the result of the schism, the other an indication that the choice of location suited the Jewish community as much as the Christian community, in that the deceased had been prevented from receiving a Jewish burial as he had married a Christian woman.⁴¹

³⁸ Ibid., p. 337.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 339.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 339-340.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 347.

Of course, the adoption of the public cemeteries did not counter all of the social problems of the time overnight. It was a very real fact of life at the time that, if an individual or the family of the deceased could not afford to bury them they would either go to the anatomists, as seen in the previous chapter, or to the common graves; graves designed to take multiple bodies. These common graves were particularly detrimental to sanitation issues, as they were frequently over-filled and rarely were they dug to a sufficient depth. The public cemeteries could not provide an individual grave for every body, it was simply unfeasible. Loudon, however, in his designs for public cemeteries, always took this into consideration. Common graves were a necessary part of a burial ground, so it was crucial to plan them properly. Loudon ensured they would be deep enough, and that once they had reached capacity they would be permanently sealed. They could also take a vast amount of space. To remedy this Loudon suggested locating them in areas that private graves were unlikely to be placed, or to locate them on either side of a private grave that had a large monument, as these could occasionally interfere with other private graves. It would also ensure that, aesthetically, the monument was fully appreciated by not having it cluttered up with other, smaller, grave markers. Always considering the beauty of the cemetery, Loudon also suggested that until a common grave had reached its capacity it should not be covered with turf or flowers, as to see such a grave be opened would be more shocking to any observers than if it did not appear to have been completed.⁴²

As detailed above, in theory the new cemeteries should have appealed to Presbyterians for various reasons, but was that actually the case? Blair notes that the effective centrepiece of the Necropolis was, and still is, the monument to John Knox, yet he queries what the Reformer himself would have thought of the cemetery. In Chapter Three the changes that the Scottish Reformation imposed on the customs of death have been documented, and it has been suggested that, as Knox himself urged the adoption of burial locations separate and distinct from the kirkyards, that the early reformers would have

⁴² Loudon, *On the Laying Out, Planting, and Managing of Cemeteries*, p. 41. It is, of course, important to note that there were various reasons for the digging of common graves. The Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745, and the events at Culloden in 1746 led to the situation where, "The immediate aftermath of the battle saw the dead from both sides gathered, sorted into groups and buried in collective graves without any markers or memorials." J. R. and M. M. Gold, "The Graves of the Gallant Highlanders': Memory, Interpretation and Narratives of Culloden." *History and Memory*, Vol. 19, No. 1. (2007), p. 21. Culloden was the last major battle on British soil, although soldiers would continue to be laid to rest in common graves overseas for many years to come. Additionally, in times of pestilence and plague the normal rules of burial occasionally had to be suspended. In 1645 plague erupted in Edinburgh and Leith, and the dead had to be buried where they died, ordinarily in the parks, rather than in the kirkyards for fear the plague may have returned. Cf. Robertson, *South Leith Records*, pp. 58-62. Following an outbreak of 'infection' in Aberdeen in 1647 the dead were buried "in the sands." *The Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, Vol. V. (Aberdeen: Printed for the Club, 1852), p. 108.

approved of the innovations of the early nineteenth century. Blair, however, does not seem quite so sure. He states:

Almost all that was *externally* beautiful and ornamental, either in religion or in the sepulchre, was swept away at the Reformation. The tide of reaction from Romish mummerly rushed to an opposite extreme. Religion became almost repulsive in its stern uncompromising simplicity. Its spirit was preserved; but not the external graces which even the sturdy Presbyterianism of this day stoops to borrow from art.⁴³

The reaction of the reformers to Catholic religious practices may seem heavy handed, but Blair agrees that, at the time, they were necessary. As he goes on to state, “A bold and unsparing hand was needed to sweep away the idols from the high places of Popery in this awakened land. Our noble Reformer and his disciples were the men of the time.”⁴⁴ That the image of Knox now stands in the middle of the first public cemetery in Scotland, however, does not seem entirely logical to Blair. He goes on to state:

Their posthumous influence penetrated even into the tombs of the dead, as well as the homes and hearts of the living, and converted our cemeteries and churchyards into melancholy regions of desolation and death. It was not a little remarkable, therefore, that a monument to John Knox was destined to be the first ornament of the first garden-cemetery in Scotland. The stern Reformer now stands surrounded with much that would have seemed to him an idle mockery of death.⁴⁵

This is, perhaps, a valid point. Although Knox probably would have approved of the notion of a burial place separate from the kirkyard it is doubtful, as has been seen previously, that he would have approved of the elaborate monuments to the dead.⁴⁶ However, as seen in Chapter Five, the Protestantism of Knox and the reformers was not identical to the Presbyterianism of eighteenth and nineteenth century Scotland. Monuments and tombs had become acceptable. Thomas Chalmers, the first moderator of the Free Church of Scotland, whilst still a minister

⁴³ Blair, *Biographic and Descriptive Sketches of Glasgow Necropolis*, p. 177. Emphasis in original.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

⁴⁶ Whether or not Knox would have approved of a statue of himself is another matter entirely, although, as the Conclusion shows, it may be that he would not have disapproved.

in the Kirk in fact conducted a religious service at the laying of the foundation stone for the monument to Knox in 1825.⁴⁷ Indeed, as seen above, the Free Church swiftly adopted the new cemeteries as regular burial locations. Despite the possibility that Knox may not have approved of all aspects of the new cemeteries, it is clear that Presbyterians, on the whole, did.

The Funerals of the Great and Good in Nineteenth Century Scotland

As seen in Chapters Three and Four, certain sections of Scottish society felt the need, or perhaps the right, to practise funerals that displayed their rank in life. Despite the instructions of the reformers in the years after 1560 these practices continued in Scotland and by the nineteenth century had become increasingly elaborate and powerful spectacles. Additionally, with the rise of the cemeteries, as seen above, it could be suggested that the established Church of Scotland was losing control of burial practices. Indeed, considering that the increasing number of private cemeteries ultimately led to groups outside of the control of the Kirk having their own burial locations, this is somewhat unsurprising. As seen above, following the Disruption it was the newly emerged Free Church of Scotland that first utilised the private cemeteries *en masse*, and it is the public funeral of one of their founding members, Thomas Chalmers, that will be looked at first.

The Funeral of Thomas Chalmers

Chalmers, the first moderator of the Free Church of Scotland, died from suspected heart disease in the early hours of Monday, 31 May 1847.⁴⁸ Although it has been suggested that Chalmers had “in truth taken little to do with Church affairs after 1843,”⁴⁹ this in no way lessened the impact his death had on the Free Church, nor indeed Edinburgh as a whole. As Hugh Miller was later to write in the *Witness*:

Not the Free Church only, but the whole Christian world, will deplore this loss. It is the foremost champion of Christianity who has fallen – it is the mind that acted with

⁴⁷ Blair, *Biographic and Descriptive Sketches of Glasgow Necropolis*, p. 170.

⁴⁸ *Bristol Mercury*, 12 June 1847.

⁴⁹ D. MacLeod, “Hugh Miller, the Disruption and the Free Church of Scotland.” In *Hugh Miller and the Controversies of Victorian Science*, ed. M. Shortland. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 204.

the greatest power on society that has passed so unexpectedly from amongst us. To estimate the character and powers of the illustrious dead, and the service he rendered to the world, would require greater equanimity than it is possible at present to command.⁵⁰

Chalmers' funeral took place on Friday, 4 June 1847, in Edinburgh. As Miller related in the *Witness*:

One would have supposed... that the whole community were prepared to do reverence to the memory of the great and good man who has just departed. In the early part of the day... great numbers of ladies and gentlemen in deep mourning were seen issuing from all quarters of the city, and slowly wending their way, either to the different places of rendezvous, or to take up a position along the line of the mournful procession. As we passed through the principal streets of the city, we observed that business was generally suspended, and that many of the shops were closed.⁵¹

Chalmers was laid to rest in the Grange cemetery, at the time just south of the city, apparently at his own request,⁵² and the procession to the cemetery was of a scale infrequently seen in Edinburgh. As *The Express* was to report, "The funeral was the longest that perhaps ever took place in Edinburgh or in Scotland, all classes and denominations vieing [*sic*] with each other in paying the last tribute of respect to this venerated divine."⁵³ The *Witness* reported that there were three staging points for the procession. At St Andrew's Free Church gathered the Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, delegates from the Presbyterian churches of England and Ireland, and foreign ministers in the city for the assembly. In the Hall of New College assembled the representatives of other denominations and the deacons of the Free Church. Finally, in Charlotte Square congregated the general public who wished to show their respect to the memory of Chalmers.⁵⁴ Following a devotional exercise the General Assembly of the Free Church began their march to Chalmers' house, stopping along the way to allow other groups to join the procession. Miller relates how the groups were "dressed in

⁵⁰ *The Witness*, 5 June 1847.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *The Express*, 7 June 1847.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *The Witness*, 5 June 1847.

deep mourning” or in official uniforms.⁵⁵ Upon reaching the approach to the house the procession stopped, and the members of the Free Church present entered the house to attend further devotional exercises. These exercises were brief, and the procession began its journey to the cemetery once the coffin had been placed in the hearse.⁵⁶ Miller states:

On entering the cemetery, the procession was arranged along the different walks leading to the grave. None of the carriages were admitted to the cemetery grounds, and the coffin was removed from the hearse at the gate, and carried to the grave shoulder-high by six men. On the approach of the coffin the procession defiled to the side, leaving space in the centre for the mourning train to pass through. The coffin was then lowered into the grave by the immediate relatives of the deceased, and in a few minutes the clods were heard rattling upon the coffin which contained all that was earthly of one of Scotland’s best and greatest men. The lid of the coffin bore the following inscription: - “Thomas Chalmers, D.D., died 31st May, 1847, aged 67 years.”⁵⁷

Interestingly, Miller makes no reference to the route taken by the funeral cortege from Chalmers’ house to the cemetery. The Grange lies just under a mile from Chalmers’ house, yet the distance travelled by the funeral procession was approximately three miles, and it would appear that this circuitous route was “intended to enhance the impact of the spectacle.”⁵⁸ It is certainly the case that more residents of Edinburgh wished to observe the procession than would have been able to line a direct route from Chalmers’ house to the Grange as, on top of the estimated two thousand members of the procession, there was possibly as many as one hundred thousand spectators.⁵⁹ As John Wolffe has stated:

The Free Church General Assembly organized the proceedings, and the whole impressive spectacle held great significance for them. The Free Church had been in existence for only four years at the time of Chalmers’s death: the loss of its greatest leader was a cause of great emotional distress and insecurity, but it also provided an

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ J. Wolffe, *Great Deaths; Grieving, Religion, and Nationhood in Victorian and Edwardian Britain*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 118.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

opportunity for a very public show of strength and demonstration of status and support.⁶⁰

Although the desire to honour the memory of Thomas Chalmers was an important aspect of the decision to plan such a public funeral it should also be stressed that it was primarily a show of solidarity in the face of adversity and grief for the Free Church and for the public as witnesses.

Of course, the funeral of Thomas Chalmers was not the first elaborate public funeral to be held in Scotland since the Reformation. However, not all of these funerals followed the instructions actually left by the deceased. In many cases it was felt by the friends, relatives, or even the public themselves that such a funeral was deserved. As has also been seen above it was not unheard of for families, particularly of the aristocracy, to ignore the instructions left in a will, or made in person, for a funeral. Of course, it is entirely possible that these instructions were never meant to be followed, and were rather expressed as an attempt at humility. A later example of this can be seen from the first Earl of Marchmont's funeral in 1724. Marchmont had requested that he receive a burial "without any pomp or vain show,"⁶¹ yet actually received a burial that was rather ostentatious.⁶² These funerals, however, differed from examples such as that of Chalmers in that they were only truly public at a much lower level, often including only a few local dignitaries and some curious onlookers from the surrounding area, in addition to the family and friends of the deceased. It would not be until the death of the princess of Wales, Princess Charlotte, in 1817, that Scotland would begin to see funerals that could truly be described as public.

Thomas M'Crie and the Death of Princess Charlotte

Following the death of Princess Charlotte of Wales in 1817 a period of mourning was declared in the United Kingdom, with "all persons [to] put themselves into decent

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ J. Balfour Paul, "The Last Days, Death, and Funeral of Patrick, First Earl of Marchmont, Ex-Chancellor of Scotland." *The Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. 11, No. 41. (1913), p. 33.

⁶² Ibid., pp. 34-37. The corpse was transported to Edinburgh from Berwick, accompanied along the way by groups of up to sixty mourners. At Edinburgh the coffin was covered by a mortcloth embroidered with the sixteen coats of arms of Marchmont and his closest relatives. Marchmont was laid to rest in his family's plot in the Canongate kirkyard.

mourning.”⁶³ In Scotland all of the churches were immediately “clothed in the garb of mourning,”⁶⁴ and all of the pulpits “deplored the common loss.”⁶⁵ But not everyone in Scotland agreed that this should have been the case. Thomas M’Crie, a Secession minister, certainly did not. For M’Crie it was bad enough that social custom was beginning to dictate a change in the Scottish way of mourning, in that mourning was to be done in public on such an occasion. Yet on this occasion Scotland had been asked, in the eyes of M’Crie at least, to “divest themselves of their religious principles, at least for one day, and testify their sympathy for royal affliction, by worshipping according to the rites of the Church of England.”⁶⁶ For M’Crie the problem lay not with Scotland being asked to show their grief at the loss of Princess Charlotte. That the Scots could do; rather the problem lay in the fact that Scotland was being asked to ignore two and a half centuries of Scottish tradition opposed to burial services.⁶⁷ Of course, as seen in the preceding chapters, the situation in Scotland since the Reformation had never been entirely as clear cut as M’Crie states, yet for him this was a clear challenge to Presbyterianism, as it was the entire Scottish nation, rather than just one or two individuals or families, who were being asked to “assemble themselves in their various churches, to symbolize with, and as far as practicable, join in the worship performed over the grave of the dead at Windsor.”⁶⁸ If this was as far as the situation was to go then it seems likely that M’Crie would have dropped the issue rather sooner. This was not to be the case. It seemed highly unlikely to M’Crie that this suggestion would be received favourably in Scotland, yet that is precisely what happened. Those who, like M’Crie, stood opposed to the suggestion on religious grounds were labelled by those who approved of it as hypocrites and traitors.⁶⁹

M’Crie seems not have taken issue with the burial in Windsor itself. Princess Charlotte was a member of the Church of England; it was natural that she be buried by them according to their practices. That they wished to see their order of service imposed upon the whole of the United Kingdom was, however, an issue for M’Crie. Yet he seems to find it strange that they should wish to do so. This was the first occasion that had led to such a

⁶³ *Caledonian Mercury*, Nov 13, 1817.

⁶⁴ T. M’Crie, *Miscellaneous Writings, Chiefly Historical, of the Late Thomas M’Crie, edited by His Son.* (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1841), p. 558.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 559.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

request being made, and M'Crie suggests that it was due to "the cry of a mob."⁷⁰ As seen above, it was, on occasion, the will of the public that a certain individual receive such a public funeral, yet allowing it would set a bad standard. Indeed, in the following decades such public funerals did become more frequent.

M'Crie, however, had more of a problem with how this issue was applied to Scotland than simply questioning the authorities' willingness to comply with public opinion. In England it was not such an imposition that the public demanded a burial service; as stated above such a service was recognised by that Church. However, that the Scottish populace, and indeed members of the clergy, should receive a request such as this, and grant it, displayed, according to M'Crie, an astonishing amount of ignorance.⁷¹ Against this it had been claimed that what was to be performed on the day of Princess Charlotte's funeral was not a funeral service. To this M'Crie replied:

If any should pretend to condemn religious exercises at the place of interment, and yet maintain the propriety and expediency of their being performed with a view to it, at the distance of three hundred miles from the place, we really do not deem it necessary to enter into reasoning with such persons. The truth is, the design for assembling for worship on that day was publicly avowed and universally understood; and whatever private reasons individuals may allege for their compliance, they must be judged on such occasions, not by these, but by the native and obvious import of their external conduct.⁷²

As stated above, M'Crie is, of course, incorrect in his assertion that no funeral service had been practised in Scotland since the Reformation. He is correct, however, in stating that "the laws prohibiting it have been renewed and repeated at different periods."⁷³ He goes on to acknowledge that during Scotland's brief time under Episcopacy funeral sermons did, in some instances, creep back in, but that they were the only innovation concerning burial.⁷⁴ Furthermore, following the Union between Scotland and England, "the form and purity of worship presently in use within this Church shall *remain and continue unalterable*."⁷⁵ For

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 562.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 562-563.

⁷² Ibid., p. 563.

⁷³ Ibid. For M'Crie the *Westminster Directory* clearly ratified these restrictions.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 564-565.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 567. Emphasis in original.

M'Crie this essentially means that any innovations forced upon the Scottish Church by magistrates is illegal.⁷⁶

From his account M'crie seems to possess a certain amount of suspicion that, following the general acceptance of the request for a country-wide funeral service for Princess Charlotte, there could now possibly be an attempt made to introduce "kneeling at the communion, absolution at the point of death, and extreme unction itself,"⁷⁷ as, in Scotland, they have equal reason to be present as the burial service. It is, however, unlikely that M'Crie genuinely felt that this was on the horizon, and was instead employing fear tactics in his pamphlet, but again, M'Crie did not want a bad precedent to be set.

At this point in the work M'Crie seems to back track from his earlier suggestion that the burial service that was performed by the Church of England was more acceptable than that forced upon the Scottish churches. He highlights that the Jews and the earliest Christians did not practise any fixed burial service, and actually attempted to prevent the possible idolatry and superstition that could ultimately surround the corpse.⁷⁸ He then goes on to point out that the practices of the early Church were not to last long. Indeed, superstitious and corrupting practice crept into Church tradition, but these innovations were allowed to remain as they "were naturally pleasing to the gross multitude."⁷⁹ Of course, M'Crie is not suggesting that all of the superstitions and innovative practices surrounding death were adopted by the early Church at once; rather they crept in gradually. That they were allowed to do so is due to the fact that one was initially accepted, thereby leaving open the door for the rest to enter through.⁸⁰ For M'Crie that is precisely what the Presbyterian churches in Scotland had now done by granting the request and performing funeral services for Princess Charlotte. From this point it seems that they have little choice but to do the same thing again in the future. As M'Crie asks, "when it shall please Heaven to take away our good old king, can they do less, as an expression of grief for their loss, than they have done for that of his

⁷⁶ It is interesting to note that, for M'Crie, the *Directory* is clear that there are to be no funeral sermons in Scotland, and that this passage is strengthened by that in *The Platforme of the Presbyterian Government*. Cf. M'Crie, *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 566.

⁷⁷ M'Crie, *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 568.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 570-571.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 571.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 573. For M'Crie, such practices were, of course, entirely removed from Scottish worship at the Reformation. However, the same cannot be said for England. "In this and in many other points she retained the principal rites and forms of the Popish Church, chiefly with the view of giving as little offence as possible to those who remained attached to the ancient superstition." M'Crie, *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 575. M'Crie is not necessarily stating that the English Reformation was incomplete, as he goes on to state that many of the superstitious practices surrounding burial were softened. However, as they were never removed completely they did begin to creep back in.

granddaughter, who held no official situation, and was in law and in fact a subject?"⁸¹ Nor would this just be the case for the royal family; individuals of great political importance would have to receive the same treatment too. On the local level, individuals of importance to towns or villages may begin to expect such treatment. At the time of writing none of these situations had occurred, but M'Crie was certainly against complacency. It would be worse, in the long run, for Scottish Presbyterianism to willingly or even passively subject itself to such developments, rather than fighting unsuccessfully against them. As was the case in Troy, it was through ignorance that the cause of its own downfall was admitted. M'Crie hoped that the funeral service for Princess Charlotte was not Scottish Presbyterianism's wooden horse.⁸² Yet it seemed possible that this was the case. Glasgow, Perth, and Edinburgh all deliberated individually upon the suggestion of a country-wide funeral service, but only Edinburgh initially refused to take part. The magistrates, however, much to the disgust of M'Crie, eventually gave in to pressure exerted by members of the press, and the service went ahead as it did in Glasgow⁸³ and Perth.⁸⁴ Of course, not all ministers of the Church of Scotland agreed to perform the service in Edinburgh. One such was Reverend Thomson, the minister of St George's, and this did not go unnoticed by the Scottish press,⁸⁵ who denounced it as an outrage that demanded satisfaction.⁸⁶ Indeed, it was subsequently suggested erroneously that Mr Thomson was disloyal to the crown.⁸⁷ These ministers, however, were in the minority, even taking into consideration the fact that throughout the country there were individuals who refused to take part, and that no Presbyterian church in the whole of St Andrews performed the service.⁸⁸

Of course, all of the arguments against the service set out by M'Crie were ultimately in vain, as the service had already taken place. As to the fear that this was but the beginning, M'Crie seems to have been correct; such funerals did begin to be demanded by the public, or

⁸¹ M'Crie, *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 583.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 585-586.

⁸³ *Caledonian Mercury*, 22 November 1817. Thomas Chalmers actually gave one of the sermons in Glasgow, and is said to have spoken with fervour, energy, and pathos.

⁸⁴ M'Crie, *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 594.

⁸⁵ *Caledonian Mercury*, 20 November 1817. It must be noted that the refusal of certain individual kirks to preach upon the occasion is merely mentioned here, no editorial comment appears to be offered.

⁸⁶ M'Crie, *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 597.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 602. The accusations of disloyalty actually came from an anonymous pamphlet addressed to Thomson, likely also to have been M'Crie's inspiration for penning his text on the subject. *Caledonian Mercury*, 20 December 1817.

⁸⁸ M'Crie, *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 604.

occasionally by the friends and associates of the deceased, if they had been of some standing.⁸⁹ J. H. A. MacDonald (1836-1919) writes of Edinburgh:

The funerals of my boyhood time were imposing spectacles. The Scot who repudiated all ceremony and symbolism in his worship was ceremonious, even to the verge of pompous absurdity, in his burying of the dead. Although his church services were marked by a baldness that was extreme, when it came to a burial, display was rampant and expense was lavish. I feel certain that the costs of a marriage could not compare with those of a funeral. The joyful spent little on trappings, the mourners poured out money like water.⁹⁰

MacDonald goes on to describe the funerals he was witness to as a child, which included ‘saulies’⁹¹ stationed first on either side of the house door then proceeding in front of the cortege, which was in turn followed by up to eight baton men. Both groups of men were, of course, dressed in deep mourning.⁹² The hearse and horses were bedecked in black and silver and topped with black plumes.⁹³ At the place of burial the sextons waited with the mortcloth, ready to spread over the coffin and “those who bore it to the grave,”⁹⁴ a ceremonial veiling for which they were privileged to receive fees. For those who wished such a display but had not the means to fund it comfortably, it could involve “as great a loss to the deceased’s estate as follows now from the State demand for death-duties.”⁹⁵ These ceremonial aspects of funerals, in Edinburgh at least, were not easily given up. MacDonald relates how, following the death of his stepmother:

I had a tough fight with the undertaker over the ‘baton men.’ He made it plain to me that it would be a meanness that would lead to remark if I did not have them. ‘Oh sir,

⁸⁹ Not all such demands came to fruition, however. Following the death of the portraitist Sir Henry Raeburn in 1823, the Edinburgh professors of art attempted to organise such a funeral, but it ultimately did not come to pass. W. Raeburn Andrew, *Life of Sir Henry Raeburn*. (London: W. H. Allen and Co., 1886), p. 87.

⁹⁰ J. H. A. MacDonald, *Life Jottings of an old Edinburgh Citizen*. (London, Edinburgh & Boston: T. N. Foulis, 1915), pp. 186-187.

⁹¹ See Chapter Five, pp. 100-103.

⁹² MacDonald, *Life Jottings*, p. 187.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 188.

ye should hev the baton men; it'll not be worthy of the occasion if ye don't,' was the kind of plea he urged, and I had to cut him short with an emphatic 'no.'⁹⁶

Finally, MacDonald states:

Another piece of display in connection with deaths was still observed in my boy days. It was the custom of those who thought that their position called for it, to put up a hatchment on the dwelling-house, and keep it there for some months after the death. It was a large square, hung diamond fashion, with the arms of the deceased painted upon it. Such a thing has not been seen in Edinburgh for nearly half a century.⁹⁷

For Wolffe, "the subsequent development of observance of this kind in Scotland is therefore a revealing touchstone of the erosion of a traditional Presbyterian stance in favour of broader religious expressions of Scottish identity."⁹⁸ Perhaps, then, the changes to Scottish attitudes to death that were to follow the public service for Princess Charlotte were inevitable, and nothing M'Crie could have written would stop them. Religious tolerance was becoming more common, and with the opening of cemeteries such as the Necropolis and the Grange there was no need for members of religious groups outside of the Kirk to be covert when burying their dead. Indeed, by this stage even Catholic burial practices had begun to be re-established in Scotland. St Andrew's Catholic Society, a Benefit and Burial Society, had been instituted in Edinburgh in 1785, and thrived. It had proven so popular that in November 1789, its statutes, laws, and regulations were made public.⁹⁹ In 1811 Bishop George Hay, the Vicar Apostolic of the Lowland District, died in Aberdeen, and was buried in "a picturesque little Burying-place, of ancient date, overhang[ing] a steep bank round which the river Don sweeps."¹⁰⁰ Several Protestant gentlemen attended his relatively simple funeral, which consisted of the hearse, the Pitfodels carriage, and two post-chaises.¹⁰¹ In 1828, following the death of Bishop Alexander Cameron, Hay's successor, the funeral service of the Catholic Church was, "for the first time, publicly performed, with the proper Ceremonial, in Scotland,

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Wolffe, *Great Deaths*, p. 117.

⁹⁹ J. F. S. Gordon, ed., *The Catholic Church in Scotland from the Suppression of the Hierarchy till the Present Time, Being Memorabilia of the Bishops, Missioners, and Scotch Jesuits*. (Glasgow: John Tweed, 1869), pp. 294-295.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 452.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 453.

since the Reformation.”¹⁰² Perhaps had the Kirk gone to greater lengths to ensure sanitary conditions in their burial grounds, or had they not squabbled with the Free Church to the point where that new institution had little option but to embrace the cemeteries, in combination they could have maintained control of Scottish burial practices for longer. Of course, as seen above, Chalmers himself had such a public funeral thirty years later, but that example did not necessarily display any non-Presbyterian traits. There appears to have been no funeral service, there were no ostentatious displays of lamentation or grief, and Chalmers was not laid to rest within the fabric of a kirk.¹⁰³ Indeed, as seen above, the new cemeteries seemed ideal Presbyterian burial locations, and it is unlikely that M’Crie himself would have had any issue with them. However, the service for Princess Charlotte did go against Presbyterian belief, and subsequent public funerals also began to show such characteristics, just as M’Crie had suggested that they would. What M’Crie could not have known, of course, is that, although the innovations he feared would become common occurrences at Scottish funerals, according to one witness at least, as seen above, few of them were to last even a century following the death of Princess Charlotte.

The Burial of Suicides

Throughout the preceding chapters a gradual change in Scottish burial practices has been seen, particularly in relation to the burial of those seen as outsiders, such as those of different religious beliefs. There is one group, however, who have historically been viewed as outsiders by almost every society in the world; namely the suicides. In Early Modern Europe it was commonplace for those who had committed suicide to be denied Christian burial. John Weever, in his 1641 work *Ancient Funerall Monuments* states that:

And we vse to bury such as lay violent hands vpon themselues, in or neare to the high wayes, with a stake thrust through their bodies, to terrifie all passengers, by that so infamous and reproachfull a buriall; not to make such their finall passage out of this present world.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 460.

¹⁰³ The following Sunday sermons were given concerning death, and they were certainly emotionally charged spectacles, but they cannot be said to be funeral sermons, nor was any set form of service given over the coffin.

¹⁰⁴ J. Weever, *Ancient Funerall Monuments*. (STC-25223. London: Tho. Harper, 1631), p. 22.

For Weever it would seem that the main object of such a practice was to discourage others from taking their own lives, as they too would receive such a burial. Keith Thomas, however, notes that there may also have been a belief that “the ghost of a man who had killed himself would not rest quietly until a stake was driven through the corpse’s heart.”¹⁰⁵ It is tempting to suggest that these practices were perhaps far more common in England than they were in Scotland, as there are far fewer records of such forms of disposal occurring in Scotland. It is possible that this is largely due to the lack of surviving records concerning the disposal of the bodies of those who had taken their own lives north of the border. However, as will be seen below, it is also possible that the differences in religious practice between England and Scotland also had a certain impact on the burial of cases of suicide. In Scotland it seems to have been much more common in these cases for the bodies of those who had taken their own lives to be buried away from the bodies of those who had not committed suicide. McMillan records the 1582 case wherein the Perth Kirk Session decreed that a man who had drowned himself in the River Tay be buried on a small island in the river known as the Little Inch. The reason behind this decision being that the kirkyard was for “the burial of the faithful that depart in the fear of the Lord.”¹⁰⁶ McMillan goes on to note that another suicides’ burial ground was located at the meeting point of the lands of three local lairds near the head of the Enterkin Pass, at the border of Lanarkshire and Dumfries-shire. This no man’s land, as it were, would often see the bodies of those who had taken their own lives brought from considerable distances.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, in *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, James Hogg, writing in the early nineteenth century, makes mention of just such a place, another suicides’ burial ground at the meeting point of three estates.¹⁰⁸ At the turn of the nineteenth century two examples from Kilmarnock show similar treatment of the remains of suicides. Both were women who had hanged themselves. The body of one was “thrown into an old coal-pit,”¹⁰⁹ whilst the body of the second:

¹⁰⁵ K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), p. 711.

¹⁰⁶ McMillan, *The Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church, 1550-1638*, p 295; CH2/521/1, f. 86v.

¹⁰⁷ McMillan, *The Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church, 1550-1638*, p 295.

¹⁰⁸ J. Hogg, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. (London: Penguin Books, 2006), pp. 198-210. Whether the location mentioned is indeed such a place is uncertain, as it may just have been a case of folklore and local rumour. It is interesting to note that even today certain locations in Scotland are known as the final resting places of those who had committed suicide. Three miles from Moy, in the Scottish Highlands, on the slopes of Creag Meagaidh is a location known as Mad Meg’s Cairn, reputed to be the grave of an eighteenth century suicide.

¹⁰⁹ M’Kay, *The History of Kilmarnock*, p. 182, n.

met with a fate still more revolting to humanity. It was taken by stealth from her own house, and cast into a pit in the vicinity of Riccarton. It was afterwards brought back to Kilmarnock, and boiled during the night at the Town Green, in a large pot which had been taken from the door of an ironmonger's shop. This was done, we believe, by some individuals who wanted her bones to form a skeleton.¹¹⁰

As McMillan subsequently notes, however, the practices recorded by Weever were far from unknown in Scotland and, indeed, survived long after the Reformation. A record survives from the early nineteenth century where an individual who had taken his own life was buried at a cross roads outside of Cupar in Fife. Certain friends of this individual, however, were unhappy with this situation, and under cover of darkness moved the body to the family's plot in the local kirkyard.¹¹¹ Perhaps the family and friends of this individual did not wish their reputations to be tainted by his suicide, or perhaps there was some lingering belief in the efficacy of 'sacred' or consecrated ground. Indeed, as a Scottish reader of *Notes and Queries* stated in 1852, "We are all aware of the popular repugnance to permitting the bodies of suicides to be interred within the 'consecrated' or 'hallowed' precincts of a churchyard."¹¹²

Regarding this point, it is interesting to note that none of the regulations concerning the disposal of the corpses of those who took their own lives are dealt with in either the *forme of prayers*, *The First Book of Discipline*, or the *Directory*.¹¹³ It seems just to have been understood that these unfortunates were to continue to be denied Christian burial, in Scotland a practice dating back to at least the Constitutions of David, Bishop of St Andrews, in 1242, wherein it is stated:

Moreover, we will that if any one have been overtaken by sudden death he shall not lack Christian burial, unless he have died an excommunicated person or been killed in some deed in which he commits mortal sin. For with whom in life we are in communion, with him also in death ought we to be in communion.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ McMillan, *The Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church*, p. 295.

¹¹² M. MacDonald, "The Secularization of Suicide in England 1660-1800." *Past & Present*, No. 111. (1986), p. 88.

¹¹³ In England the 1662 edition of *The Book of Common Prayer* reinforced the prohibitions against the Christian burial of suicide cases by stating that the Office of the Dead was not to be used "for any that die unbaptized, or excommunicate, or have laid violent hands upon themselves." F. Proctor and W. H. Frere, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer*. (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1902), p. 636.

¹¹⁴ *Statutes of the Scottish Church, 1225-1559*, p. 63.

From this it would appear that following the Reformation not all Catholic practices were to be dismissed out of hand. In theory, of course, the desire to be buried within consecrated ground should have disappeared at the Reformation. Indeed, as seen previously, the consecration of burial grounds should itself have ceased at the same time. As Robert Houston has noted, the law in post-Reformation Scotland refused to recognise any burial space as *res religiosa*,¹¹⁵ although Catholics and Episcopalians continued to value the consecration of such spaces. However, without actively ‘de-consecrating’ burial grounds, it is highly likely that these burial grounds continued to be perceived as consecrated, or, at the very least, ‘sacred.’

As mentioned above it is possible that Scottish Calvinism had a certain impact on the burial of those who had killed themselves. Regarding suicide itself, Henry Fedden has suggested that, by removing God to a plane of inaccessible superiority, Calvin essentially minimised humanity and indirectly reduced the value of the individual soul, which previously had acted as a deterrent to suicide.¹¹⁶ Georgia Noon has taken this argument further, by suggesting that the doctrine of predestination was actually conducive to suicide.¹¹⁷ Of course, Calvinism was actually opposed to suicide, and, as seen above, Scottish suicides did not receive ordinary Christian burial. However, the burial that was allowed for suicide cases in Scotland seems, on the whole, to have been much less severe than that of England or the Continent, with the individual concerned, in most cases, being buried in a location set aside for such occasions. Of course, ordinary Scottish burial customs were different to those seen in England, and it is possible that the Calvinist insistence upon the removal of all ceremony from these ordinary burials had an impact on the burial of suicide cases. However, the lack of ceremony at ordinary burials does not necessarily prevent the punishment of a corpse of a suicide, although the aforementioned doctrine of predestination does. It seems logical that an individual who would take their own life would not be seen to have been one of the elect, and, as such, there is little point in the punishment of the corpse, even as a discouragement to others. Of course, in certain individual cases the punishment of the corpse did serve a purpose. Janet Hill, accused of witchcraft, hanged herself in prison prior to her trial in 1629. In response to this act her body was dragged by a horse to the Gallowlee, and she was subsequently buried under the gallows.¹¹⁸ Such treatment served as a punishment for

¹¹⁵ R. A. Houston, *Punishing the Dead? Suicide, Lordship, and Community in Britain, 1500-1830*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 216.

¹¹⁶ H. R. Fedden, *Suicide, a Social and Historical Study*. (New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc., 1972), p. 158.

¹¹⁷ G. Noon, “On Suicide.” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 39, No. 3. (1978), p. 377.

¹¹⁸ Larner, *Enemies of God*, p. 119.

attempting to evade legal justice. In another instance the friends of Lady Pittathrow, a member of the aristocracy who had also taken her own life in prison following accusations of witchcraft, were reprimanded for giving her a normal burial.¹¹⁹ In this case, however, it is unclear whether the reprimand was for successfully removing the possibility of the corpse being treated in the same manner as that of Janet Hill, or merely for refusing to bury her in a location reserved for suicides, such as those described above. As a member of the aristocracy the friends of Lady Pittathrow may have expected her to receive different treatment after death, regardless of the fact of her suicide or the regulations laid down following the Reformation. However, it must not be forgotten that Lady Pittathrow had been accused of witchcraft, and, aristocracy aside, she could not have expected Christian burial.

The different treatment of the various social classes is, as ever, fascinating, and there are suggestions from England and the Continent that once again the guidelines for the disposal of the bodies of those who had taken their own lives may not have applied in equal measure to members of the aristocracy. As Minois has pointed out, “Shakespeare had one of the gravediggers in *Hamlet* say of Ophelia, ‘If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o’ Christian burial’ (act 5, scene I).”¹²⁰ In many cases it would seem that the suicide of a noble was officially recorded as an accidental death, or death as a result of melancholia. This was, of course, not solely due to their status as members of the aristocracy, but also a reaction to the fact that the property of suicides became forfeit, a law that was not rescinded in Britain until 1870.¹²¹ If the deceased was found to have been insane the death would not be ruled suicide, and the property would not become forfeit.

As seen previously, there were varying methods of the disposal of the dead throughout Scotland, and this also extended to the treatment of those who had committed suicide. In the Scottish Highlands there seems to have been a popular belief that the burial of a suicide within sight of the sea would drive away herring for seven years, and, as a result, any individual who took their own life would be buried behind the kirk. Sheila MacDonald, writing in 1903, recalls as a child overhearing a discussion concerning the burial of a woman:

who ‘put herself aside,’ as it is expressed in Gaelic. Her people, who were by way of being superior to such beliefs, were anxious that she should be buried in the family

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ G. Minois, *History of Suicide, Voluntary Death in Western Culture*. Translated by L. G. Cochrane (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), p 146.

¹²¹ E. Wicks, *The Right to Life and Conflicting Interests*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 186.

grave; but this was not at all relished by the community, and after a good deal of wrangling she was interred in a remote corner of the churchyard, well out of sight of the sea.¹²²

This practice clearly survived until at least the nineteenth century. Additionally, as MacDonald goes on to note, the local inhabitants were not shy about taking matters into their own hands, should the need arise. MacDonald relates the story of an Englishman staying in the area who committed suicide and was buried by his relatives in full view of the local loch, despite the protests of the community:

So indignant were the natives at this violation of their traditions that one night shortly afterwards, a party of them disinterred him at midnight, carried the remains away to another churchyard in an inland parish ten miles away, and there re-buried him.¹²³

As has been seen previously, however, it could be suggested that in the more remote parts of Scotland the older beliefs concerning death held sway for longer. The same cannot necessarily be said for the more populated areas to the south.

The Case of Hugh Miller

John McManners notes that, following the Enlightenment in France, the treatment of the corpses of those who had taken their own lives began to change. No longer were the bodies dragged on the hurdle and hanged. Rather, discreet burials began to be performed, either early in the morning or late at night.¹²⁴ For Michel Foucault the reason for the cessation of punishment the corpse had previously received, and not just the corpses of those who killed themselves but also the torture of living criminals, was due to a growing belief that it was not the physical body that was to be punished, but rather the soul of the individual in question.¹²⁵ When applied to a living criminal this developing belief would ultimately lead to the reform of

¹²² S. MacDonald, "Old-World Survivals in Ross-Shire." *Folklore*, Vol. 14, No. 4. 1903), pp. 369-370.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 370.

¹²⁴ J. McManners, *Death and the Enlightenment; Changing Attitudes to Death among Christians and Unbelievers in Eighteenth-century France*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 409-411.

¹²⁵ M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish; The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by A. Lane. (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1977), p. 16.

the prison system and the reduction of corporal punishment. When applied to a suicide case there was now no earthly thing that could be done as punishment.¹²⁶ In this sense it could be suggested that at this time Scotland was somewhat more advanced than other European nations in that it was already recognised as somewhat futile to punish the corpse of a suicide, beyond denying it a Christian burial, as only God could judge and punish the soul in question.¹²⁷

In light of this, as seen above, examples of such physical treatment of the corpse in suicide cases is rare from Scotland, and as such, the corpses of those who had committed suicide largely received the same treatment following the Scottish Enlightenment. There remained, however, a social stigma attached to suicide, and, as a result, it was important to the families of the deceased that the suicide be recognised as stemming from insanity or melancholia. Andrew Edgar, writing in 1886, stated that “The modern spirit of Christianity is more sympathetic, and adds no reproach to either sorrow, or mental weakness.”¹²⁸ Certainly, with the growth of the private cemeteries, as seen above, it became clearer, for Presbyterians at least, that burial space was no longer consecrated ground. This, combined with a greater understanding of the reasons behind suicide, should, and in some cases certainly did, ensure that those who had taken their own lives could once again openly be buried in honourable circumstances. One such example is the burial of Hugh Miller.

Miller was a devout Presbyterian; a founding member of the Free Church of Scotland, and the founding editor of the *Witness*, a newspaper largely devoted to the Free Church. On Christmas Eve 1856, Miller awoke from the latest in a series of terrible nightmares. He wrote a brief note to his wife, Lydia, took up a pistol kept near the bed, put it to his chest, and fired. Miller’s funeral took place on the following Monday, 29 December 1856. As Bayne was later to record, “The excitement occasioned by the event throughout Scotland was tremendous, and no such funeral had taken place in Edinburgh since that of Chalmers. He was laid in the

¹²⁶ Similarly, it was due to this developing attitude that blasphemy ceased to be a criminal offence throughout Europe. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 17.

¹²⁷ Interestingly, in the latter half of the nineteenth century European suicide rates rose, in some countries quite sharply. As Durkheim notes, this rise led some authors to suggest that the previous methods of punishing those who committed suicide, as well as their families, should be reintroduced; suggestions that were, of course, not implemented. Durkheim himself believed that such actions would ultimately be futile. E. Durkheim, *Suicide; A Study in Sociology*. Translated by J. A. Spaulding and G. Simpson. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1952), pp. 370-371.

¹²⁸ A. Edgar, *Old Church Life in Scotland: Lectures on Kirk-Session and Presbytery Records. Second Series*. (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1886), p. 254. Elsewhere Edgar emphasises that such tolerance “was but in its infancy last century. In 1769 a Dissenter in Mauchline committed suicide and the Session Clerk had actually the malignity to exult over the occurrence,” entering in the Register of Deaths that he had “CUT HIS OWN THROAT.” Edgar, *Old Church Life in Scotland* (Vol. 1), p. 282, n. [Emphasis in original].

Grange cemetery, near the spot where Chalmers rests.”¹²⁹ Indeed, there seems to have been many similarities between the funerals of these two men. As with the funeral of Chalmers, the attendees of Miller’s funeral consisted of a cross-section of Edinburgh society as a whole, from members of the churches, to the dignitaries of the day, and a vast amount of the common people, drawn together to bid farewell to such a hugely respected man. At one o’clock that afternoon, following devotional exercises by Dr Guthrie,¹³⁰ Miller’s remains, although not conveyed to the Grange cemetery in quite such an extravagant manner as those of Chalmers, were transported from Portobello to Edinburgh in a plumed hearse, drawn by four horses. During the journey the funeral cortege was met and accompanied to the cemetery by in excess of thirty carriages and a long line of pedestrians, beginning at two o’clock at Waterloo Place with the kirk session of Free St John’s Church, members of the Royal Physical Society, and Miller’s colleagues at the *Witness*.¹³¹ It was met at the Grange by a large crowd that did not disperse until Miller had been finally laid to rest.¹³² At the request of the city Magistrates, the shops and businesses along the route of the funeral cortege were closed, and the streets and bridges of the city were lined by large crowds of spectators.¹³³

It is highly unlikely that had Miller’s death occurred even a mere fifteen or twenty years earlier his funeral would have been so extravagant, although it is interesting to note that even in this somewhat more tolerant age Miller’s friends and family felt the need to ensure his death was seen as a result of his mental illness.¹³⁴ The *post-mortem* concluded that the cause of death was indeed “inflicted by his own hand,”¹³⁵ yet went on to state that “from the diseased appearances found in the brain, taken in connection with the history of the case, we have no doubt that the act was suicidal *under the impulse of insanity*.”¹³⁶ These facts, however, were not immediately reported. On the very day of his death the *Witness* initially stated that Miller’s death was the result of a tragic accident,¹³⁷ an account, according to Roy

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 484.

¹³⁰ *Glasgow Herald*, 31 December 1856.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² *Caledonian Mercury*, 30 December 1856.

¹³³ *Glasgow Herald*, 31 December 1856.

¹³⁴ As stated above at this time the property of suicides was still considered forfeit. Additionally, it is interesting to note that elsewhere in Europe at this time that a diagnosis of ‘madness’ actually prevented a crime from having occurred. If an individual was deemed insane then he or she was not, as became the case, not guilty through diminished responsibility, as a crime was deemed to never have actually taken place. Hence, if in the depths of delirium an individual was to take their own life, they would not actually be committing suicide. Cf. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 19-21.

¹³⁵ P. Bayne, *The Life and Letters of Hugh Miller*, Vol. II. (London: Strahan & Co., 1871), p. 482.

¹³⁶ Ibid. Emphasis mine.

¹³⁷ *The Witness*, 24 December 1856.

Porter, that was a “hasty cover-up.”¹³⁸ Indeed, on 27 December 1856, a different account, written by Dr Hanna, appeared in the *Witness*, which emphasised Miller’s over-work and the resultant exhaustion and mental disorder.¹³⁹ It is interesting to note that Dr Hanna and the four physicians involved in the *post-mortem* were family friends rather than outside specialists.¹⁴⁰

Further evidence in support of the argument that Miller’s friends and contemporaries had gone to certain lengths to remove any stain of suicide from the event can possibly be seen in the records of sermons preached in the Free churches of Edinburgh on Sunday, 28 December 1856. It was reported that Dr Guthrie gave a sermon in which he stated:

that though a man were to die in the wildest delirium, that could not quench his soul’s hope of salvation for eternity. I would have urged you to seek that eternal life, which shines like a star in the midst of all this darkness, and of which – come death where it will – come death when, come death how it may – yet death, thou king of terrors, thou canst not deprive the man, who, while reason sat on her lofty throne, gave his heart to God, and consecrated his genius and his talents to the service of the cause of Christ.¹⁴¹

It would seem that, even though Miller had taken in his own life in the depths of his mental disorder and “wildest delirium,” because of the fact that he had given his heart to God whilst still sane he could still hope for eternal salvation. If this is indeed the case then it was only right and proper that he received the funeral of a faithful Christian. Indeed, as Guthrie went on to state “It does not matter how a man dies; what matters is, how he lived.”¹⁴² Regardless of the circumstance surrounding Miller’s death he remained a Christian, and should be buried as such.¹⁴³

The emphasis that had been placed on Miller’s mental disorder was not to fade away even after he had received his Christian funeral. The topic was revisited and re-emphasised in Bayne’s 1871 biography. He states that “It is a melancholy satisfaction to reflect that, in no case of suicide which ever took place, can the evidence of insanity have been more express or

¹³⁸ R. Porter, “Miller’s Madness.” In *Hugh Miller and the Controversies of Victorian Science*, ed. M. Shortland. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 265.

¹³⁹ *The Witness*, 27 December 1856.

¹⁴⁰ Porter, “Miller’s Madness,” p. 268.

¹⁴¹ *Manchester Times*, 3 January 1857. It is also interesting to note that in the course of this sermon Guthrie claims an aversion to any semblance of funeral sermons, and asserts that this sermon is certainly not a funeral sermon.

¹⁴² *Manchester Times*, 3 January 1857.

¹⁴³ Perhaps unsurprisingly Guthrie himself was buried in the Grange cemetery following his death in 1873.

conclusive.”¹⁴⁴ Bayne, as with others who had known Miller during his life, seems intent on preserving the memory of the life rather than the circumstances of the death. It could be argued that, to this end, a clear emphasis has been placed on Miller’s mental disorder, up to and including his own self-diagnosis. Bayne asserts that Miller seems to have known he was developing a mental disorder of some sort, and through his discussion with those around him in effect made it a matter of record.¹⁴⁵ As such his suicide was not to be condemned as a sinful act; if anything it should be pitied. That such a great man, a devout Christian and loving husband and father, should be brought to such an end by a mental condition should be seen, according to Bayne at least, as a tragedy. It seems that Bayne’s plan was to succeed. As Porter has stated, Bayne’s is the only version of these events, and all subsequent narratives are wholly dependent on this.¹⁴⁶

As stated above, the attempts made from 1560 onwards at reforming Scottish burial practices do not explicitly mention what is to be done in the case of suicide, and it seems to be the case that the pre-Reformation practices are to continue. However, when the doctrine of election is taken into account, in combination with the reformers’ ideal of a burial with no ceremonial, it becomes unclear as to why the pre-Reformation practices should have survived. Indeed, as has been seen previously, Birnie stated, “for as fishe in every sea is at home, so we in every earth, if we be the Lords, to whom the earth and her implements do all appertaine.”¹⁴⁷ Of course, Birnie here is stating that it does not matter where a Christian is to be buried, not that a suicide should be buried amongst Christians, but there are other factors to take into account. Following the Reformation burial grounds were no longer to be consecrated, and as such the presence of a suicide could hardly corrupt the ground in which the faithful departed lie. Additionally, in the Reformed Protestant schema, those who had taken their own lives were not part of the elect, and arguably had not been able to alter the course of their lives. Conversely, those who had died as Christians were members of the elect, and the presence of a non-elect individual in their midst can hardly be said to put them at a disadvantage on the day of Judgement. It is therefore somewhat illogical that suicides should have continued to receive non-Christian burial in Scotland following the Reformation. However, as seen throughout this thesis, old prejudices died hard, and suicide continued to be seen by many as a crime against God, one that needed to be punished. As such it is perhaps unsurprising that the

¹⁴⁴ Bayne, *Life and Letters of Hugh Miller*, Vol. II, p. 482.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 482-483.

¹⁴⁶ Porter, “Miller’s Madness,” p. 267.

¹⁴⁷ Birnie, *The Blame of Kirk-Buriall*, sig. C2v.

methods of burial reserved for suicides continued for so long after the Reformation, only to begin to be readdressed following the Enlightenment and the rise of the cemeteries.¹⁴⁸ As Miller's case shows, society was beginning, albeit slowly, to view suicide in a different light. Presbyterians no longer necessarily viewed it as symptomatic of being outside of the elect.¹⁴⁹ As such there was even less reason to deny these individuals Christian burial, particularly in the unconsecrated ground of the Presbyterian cemeteries. This is perhaps another example of the slowly forming notion that every individual could be equal in burial.

Conclusion

At the same time as the Anatomy Act was being introduced, as seen in Chapter Seven, the Necropolis in Glasgow had become the first public cemetery in Scotland. As seen above there were several reasons that those behind the push towards such cemeteries felt they should be adopted. The city burial grounds had reached, and exceeded, their capacities. The land had become barren from constant disruption, and the press of bodies, both under the ground, and above it in the areas that surrounded these burial grounds, ensured that disease was never far away. Aesthetically they were blights on the cityscape, essentially dead swamps in the centre of the Scottish cities. Socially they were effectively seclusion zones, where only certain groups would be allowed to bury their dead, or, if outsiders were allowed to use the land to bury their own dead it was not free, and conditions were applied. The public cemeteries, as seen above, were the answer to all of these issues. They had the space to take the dead, and were planned in such a manner that they would not become full for quite some time, and would prevent the spread of disease. They were also planned from the very beginning to be beautifully landscaped, providing a comforting place for the relatives of the deceased to contemplate life and death. Finally, they were religiously inclusive, providing a final resting place for all of the residents of the cities, regardless of religious affiliation. This is a particularly important point, and not just for Catholics, Episcopalians, or members of the Jewish community, but particularly for dissenting Presbyterians. The Kirk would allow

¹⁴⁸ Suicide in fact continued to be illegal in England until 1961, although, interestingly, suicide was never an offence against Scots Law.

¹⁴⁹ According to the *British Medical Journal*, by the end of the nineteenth century Scottish suicides were "peaceably allowed to be buried in the churchyard." "'Unsound Mind' Verdicts On Suicide." *The British Medical Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 1660. (1892), p. 910.

Catholics and Episcopalians access to the Kirk owned burial grounds, but repressed the majority of their burial rites. With the opening of the public cemeteries, however, they were now free to bury as they chose, and they were also free to consecrate their sections of the various cemeteries, a practice the Kirk certainly did not believe in.

As has been seen from Chapters Three and Four, even though the Scottish reformers had attempted to prevent the nobility from performing ostentatious funerals, the desire never went away, and, in truth, such funerals continued to be practised. In the early nineteenth century, however, the funerals of individuals deemed by society to be important, be they the nobility, politicians, or other popular figures, became public affairs. The first of these in Scotland was arguably the nationwide funeral service performed in honour of Princess Charlotte in 1817. There had, of course, been state funerals prior to that, but the service for the Princess of Wales was not just a state funeral, although she certainly did receive such a funeral in Windsor. Rather, the Scottish churches were encouraged to perform a funeral service, a thing in theory anathema to Presbyterianism, across the country on the same date. The surprising extent to which this was complied with has been investigated above, as well as the opposition to it from Thomas M'Crie. Despite the objections of M'Crie, however, a trend had been started, and more and more public funerals were held, including one for the first moderator of the Free Church of Scotland, Thomas Chalmers, investigated in some detail above. It may seem surprising that Chalmers would receive such a funeral, but it was highly unlikely that he asked for such to be performed. It appears that Chalmers merely requested to be buried in the newly opened Grange cemetery in Edinburgh. The funeral was certainly orchestrated by the Free Church as a public display of identity, and to honour their fallen leader. Of course, public funerals need not go against the principals of Presbyterianism, and it appears that Chalmers held to the tenets of his Church. Additionally, large funerals, be they public or state funerals, can be an aid to public morale, as the funeral of the murdered Regent Moray, led by John Knox, and seen in Chapter Three, has shown.

The final aspect of this chapter is, in many ways, a success story for the Scottish Enlightenment, in that it marks the progress of the treatment of those who had taken their own lives in Scotland, from the Reformation to the public funeral of Hugh Miller. As seen above, Scotland, as with all European countries of the time, did not dispose of the corpses of suicide cases respectfully, seeing them as self murderers to be punished, and their goods and property to be made forfeit. It is perhaps unsurprising that over the course of three centuries there were few if any perceptible changes to this belief, but that does not mean that by the

time of Miller's suicide in 1856 a more sympathetic attitude was not beginning to be held. Of course, by ensuring that the suicide was recognised as due to mental health issues such as melancholia it could be suggested by the surviving family that it was, in actual fact, not a suicide, as the prevailing attitude towards suicide was still one of condemnation. Indeed, through the actions of his friends and family, Miller himself received a public funeral almost equal to that of Chalmers almost a decade earlier, and he too was laid to rest in the Grange cemetery as a devoted member of the Free Church of Scotland. In time public attitudes towards suicide would change, and the corpses of those who had taken such action would no longer suffer punishment, nor would their property be forfeit. It was during this time that the seeds of these changes had been sown.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

One of the stated goals of the Scottish reformers following 1560 was the reformation of burial practices in Scotland, with the aim of removing all perceived Catholic superstitious and intercessory acts. However, as has been seen throughout this thesis, burial practices in Scotland were continually changing and evolving, and would continue to do so for several centuries. So, at what point, if any, can it be said that the reformers succeeded in their goal? Certainly not at any point in the first fifty years following the Reformation, as seen in Chapters Three and Four. Of course, as has been seen, certain areas of Scotland reformed burial practices more quickly than others, and certain aspects of pre-Reformation ritual were reformed throughout Scotland more effectively than others. However, at no point did burial practices begin to closely adhere to the standards desired by the reformers. Nor were Scottish burial practices successfully reformed in the period between the Reformation and the Enlightenment, as seen in Chapters Five to Seven. As has been seen it was during this period that the monuments and tombs for the dead, which the reformers would certainly not have approved of, became more elaborate and more widespread, particularly in light of the developing notion of the Protestant Work Ethic. Of course, with the 1645 publication of the *Directory*, the situation became somewhat more complicated, as it effectively undermined some of the stated intentions of the early reformers concerning burial, as seen in Chapter Six. Additionally, the conflict between the Episcopalian and Presbyterian factions within the Kirk also affected burial practices, making the waters even more muddy, as it were. Even in post-Enlightenment Scotland there were areas, particularly the Highlands and Islands, where the older ways of burial held on for considerably longer than areas perceived as more civilised, such as the south and east of the country.

In fact, it would not be until the mid nineteenth century that the reform of burial attempted at the Reformation would attain any real measure of success, and this went hand in hand with the opening of the public cemeteries. At the Reformation it was determined that burials should take place with no ceremony, no intercessory acts, no superstition, and in an unconsecrated location that was set aside for that sole purpose. Ceremonies, intercessory acts, and superstitious practices were gradually reformed over the decades and even centuries that followed the Reformation, but it was not until the opening of the public cemeteries that the location of burial had finally met the standards set by the reformers. As has been seen,

these were locations designed for the sole purpose of burial; they were initially outside of the towns and cities, and, in the sections reserved for Presbyterians at least, they were unconsecrated. It would seem that they were indeed the perfect burial location. Of course, by the time Scottish burial practices truly began to reflect the desires of the early reformers Scotland had become a very different place. The old prejudices were themselves being reformed, and other faiths and denominations were beginning to be tolerated. Additionally, the Kirk had begun to lose its control over Scottish burial. As a result of these changes each group was allocated its own burial locations within the public cemeteries, and the order of burial that each group practiced was different. As such there were areas of the public cemeteries that had been consecrated, and in which graveside prayers would take place, practices that the reformers would definitely have disapproved of.

It could be suggested that Scotland's Reformation was never entirely successful. As has been seen throughout this thesis and elsewhere at no point did the country ever become entirely Protestant; there remained a Catholic presence in Scotland.¹ Of course, before developing notions of tolerance began to spread in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries this had only a limited effect on the reformation of burial. It certainly hindered it in some parts of the country, but in others it made no discernible difference. However, once the notion of tolerance had spread and been adopted as official policy there was little the Kirk could do to prevent Catholics and Episcopalians from burying as they desired, although they were initially limited to the public cemeteries. Of course, it was the clash between Episcopalians and Presbyterians that would have the more substantial effect on the efforts to reform burial, and, as has been seen above, in areas such as the north-east the Episcopalian faction of the Kirk thrived, and continued to adhere to their own methods of burial, including consecrated burial grounds and graveside prayers.

In some respects, however, the reformation of burial was ultimately successful. It took three centuries, and followed at least two schisms within the Kirk, but with the adoption of the public cemeteries, by the Free Church of Scotland in particular, it can finally be said

¹ Additionally, as seen in Chapter Two it had become clear that, just prior to the Scottish Reformation, the cost of burial had become unbearable for some in Scotland. Although this situation was helped by the removal of the majority of Catholic practices surrounding death it would become the case that the costs involved in Protestant death rites would themselves continue to rise. It is an unfortunate truth that the poor in Scotland, from the pre-Reformation to the post-Enlightenment, could never truly afford the necessities of burial, leading to the paupers graves, as seen in Chapter Eight.

that the ideals of the early reformers concerning burial were at last being adhered to.² It is interesting to note that it was the expulsion of the Free Church from the Kirk owned burial grounds that ultimately allowed for the final success of the reformation of burial. However, whilst the 1847 burial of Thomas Chalmers in the Grange perhaps marked the final success of the reformation of burial, it can also be suggested that it came too late. The practices that the Free Church had adopted were not spread to the other denominations and faiths within Scotland, and with the tolerance of these other groups there was no need for them to adopt the form of burial used by the Free Church. The reformation of burial, therefore, can only be said to be a success in that at least one Presbyterian faction began, at last, to follow the order of burial as it was laid out during the Reformation. Perhaps, then, it was not a successful reformation after all? However, if the desire of the early reformers to impose uniformity of practice across the nation is ignored, then it can still be said that the reformation of burial was ultimately successful, in that a Presbyterian faction, the Free Church of Scotland, who certainly saw themselves as the true inheritors of the mantle of Knox and the other Scottish reformers, adopted the burial practices that the early reformers had set out. The desire for national uniformity can safely be ignored in this context as the simple fact of the matter is that the world had become a very different place over the course of the three centuries following the Scottish Reformation. The leaders of the Free Church understood this. It was no longer possible for there to be a truly Protestant Scotland.

Additionally, although it could be suggested that some of the innovations concerning burial practices that had occurred since the Reformation, in particular the memorialisation of the dead, negated the success of the reformation of burial, this is not actually the case. Yes, it is true that the use of monuments had become commonplace since the seventeenth century, and in the Necropolis there was even a monument to Knox, which he may or may not have approved of,³ but in many cases even these had developed along Reformed Protestant lines, justified by the doctrine of election and the development of the Protestant Work Ethic. Similarly, the developing trend of large funeral processions for the great and good amongst Scottish society may initially seem to fly in the face of Reformed Protestant tradition, as there

² This is not to suggest that the early reformers were entirely Presbyterian in their outlook, but it is certainly the case that they would have identified more closely with Presbyterian ways of death than any other in the nineteenth century.

³ Although, on the face of it, it may seem that Knox would have explicitly been against such a monument, this may not actually be the case, as he certainly had a sense of his own importance, as well an understanding of the importance of unifying symbols for a nation, such as the funeral of the murdered Regent Moray, over which he had presided.

was to be no ceremony on the occasion of a funeral. However, as seen from the procession for Thomas Chalmers, there was nothing involved other than the sheer size of the procession itself that could be said to have been against the teachings of the reformers. Even Knox himself understood that, periodically, society requires a display on behalf of the dead if they were of some importance. Of course, funeral processions for those of other denominations may well have included elements which went against the teachings of the reformers, but as has been seen above, by the nineteenth century it was no longer possible to hold everyone up to the same standards; it was much more important to police one's own. There were, however, certain developments to burial practices for which it is harder to say with certainty whether or not the early reformers would have approved, in particular the treatment of those who had taken their own lives. As seen previously there was a gradually developing trend away from the *post-mortem* punishment of those who had committed suicide, and these individuals were slowly being allowed into the burial grounds. Again, in cases such as the burial of Hugh Miller in 1856, it could be said that it was important, both for the Free Church and the community as a whole, that Miller receive a Christian burial. He had been a public figure, to an extent, and to treat him with disrespect in death would have damaged the Free Church. Yet his burial in the Grange highlights the fact that, as unconsecrated ground, there was no logical reason that any suicide should have been denied burial along Presbyterian lines. However, it is unclear how Knox would have felt concerning this issue, as he never wrote on the subject. Despite the lack of logical reasons for the denial of Christian burial to suicides it may well have been the case that Knox was in favour of the status quo. Regardless, as with developing notions of religious tolerance, the rehabilitation of suicides would continue in Scotland, albeit slowly, until they were no longer denied access to the same burial grounds as their family and friends. Of course, because it is impossible to say what Knox's attitude towards this issue was, it could be suggested that this, too, negated the success of the reformation of burial. Yet the opposite is actually true; it highlights the success of the notion that, for the Christian, earth is earth, and there are no benefits to burial in a certain location. The reformation of burial succeeded in Scotland. It was a protracted affair, a long and continued struggle, but success was ultimately achieved.

The French philosopher Jean Baudrillard stated:

There is an irreversible evolution from savage societies to our own: little by little, *the dead cease to exist*. They are thrown out of the group's symbolic circulation. They

are no longer beings with a full role to play, worthy partners in exchange, and we make this obvious by exiling them further and further away from the group of the living. In the domestic intimacy of the cemetery, the first grouping remains in the heart of the village or town, becoming the first ghetto, prefiguring every future ghetto, but are thrown further and further from the centre towards the periphery, finally having nowhere to go at all, as in the new town or the contemporary metropolis, where there are no longer any provisions for the dead, either in mental or physical space.⁴

Perhaps, then, with the introduction of the public cemeteries in Scotland, which were initially based on the outskirts of the towns and cities, it had become the case that the dead had ceased to exist in the ways that they previously had in Scotland. As seen in Chapter Three the Reformation saw a change to the rites associated with death, as the deceased were no longer seen to be in quite the same state of transition as they had been prior to the Reformation. As a result, burial rites had become rites of separation, although, due to the notion of the resurrection, the separation was temporary. The dead, however, were becoming less important. There were no more obits requiring perpetual prayers for the deceased, and there could be no intercession on their behalf. In a sense the dead had to be left to their own devices, and it was much easier to do this once they had been relegated to the edges of society. Indeed, as has been seen above, following the burial of the deceased the living went back to their lives, for they could do nothing else. All of the displays on behalf of the dead took place prior to the funeral, and were one off occasions. Perhaps the reformation of burial in Scotland truly succeeded when the dead were finally removed from society.

It has been stated elsewhere that the genius of the Scottish Reformation can be seen in its willingness to compromise when presented with challenges. Whether or not this was initially the case has been debated above. However, it certainly became the case that the reformation of burial would never have succeeded to the extent that it did had the Kirk, and subsequently the Free Church, not been willing to adapt to new situations. On the face of it it may seem that by the time the reformation of burial had succeeded it had become a moot point; the world had changed. But that, of course, does not mean that individual denominations should cease from striving to adhere to the goals set down by their

⁴ J. Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*. Translated by Iain Hamilton Grant. (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1993), p. 126.

predecessors. It would appear that the Free Church, upon their expulsion from the Kirk owned burial grounds, managed to achieve this goal.

Of course, more changes to the Scottish ways of death were just around the corner, and one of these in particular would prove to be a great challenge, not just to the Free Church, but to the majority of denominations and faiths within Scotland. The conditions surrounding burial in Scotland that had led to the development of the public cemeteries also led certain individuals to the idea of cremation. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis the work undertaken here is intended to lead into a larger interdisciplinary project on the development of cremation in Scotland, and it is in that work that the struggle between the Churches and those in favour of cremation will be seen.

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