

Scots' Form in the Suburbs

by [Mark Noll](#) in the [June 1, 2010](#) issue

The sedentary Presbyterians
awoke, arose, and filed to tables spread
with white, to humble bits that showed how God
almighty had decided to embrace
humanity, and why these clean, well-fed,
well-dressed suburbanites might need his grace.

The pious cruel, the petty gossipers
and callous climbers on the make, the wives
with icy tongues and husbands with their hearts
of stone, the ones who battle drink and do
not always win, the power lawyers mute
before this awful bar of mercy, boys
uncertain of themselves and girls not sure
of where they fit, the poor and rich hemmed in
alike by cash, physicians waiting to
be healed, two women side by side—the one
with unrequited longing for a child,
the other terrified by signs within
of life, the saintly weary weary in
pursuit of good, the academics (soft
and cosseted) who posture over words,
the travelers coming home from chasing wealth
or power or wantonness, the mothers choked
by dual duties, parents nearly crushed
by children died or lost, and some
with cancer-ridden bodies, some with spikes
of pain in chest or back or knee or mind
or heart. They come, O Christ, they come to you.

They came, they sat, they listened to the words,

“for you my body broken.” Then they ate
and turned away—the spent unspent, the dead
recalled, a hint of color on the psychic
cheek—from tables groaning under weight
of tiny cups and little crumbs of bread.