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Kettering 1792 and Philadelphia 1814:

THE INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH BAPTISTS UPON THE FORMATION OF AMERICAN BAPTIST FOREIGN MISSIONS 1790-1814 (1)

THE rise of the Baptist missionary spirit in America is part of a far wider movement among the churches in the country, and to understand fully the Baptist position in this we shall have to consider briefly the wider movement.

As far back as the end of the sixteenth century, when Englishmen were colonizing America, there were plans to evangelize the natives on the continent,¹ and in the next century several men were engaged in regular work among the natives. Men like Alexander Whitaker "the Apostle to the Indians," and John Eliot, who worked among the Mohicans, were the pioneers. Eliot's work attracted such attention that the Long Parliament passed an act creating the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England in 1649. Collections for its support were taken in Cromwell's army, and in the churches, and over £12,000 was raised to support its agents: men like Eliot, the Mayhews, Sargeant and Jonathan Edwards.² With the victory of the Established Church in 1688, there came the desire to extend the blessings of Anglicanism to the colonies, and so the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (1698) and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (1701) came into existence, of which the S.P.G. was the most significant agent of Anglicanism in the colonies.³

Of more immediate interest was the founding in 1709 of the Society in Scotland for Promoting Christian Knowledge, usually called the "Scotch Society" to distinguish it from the English S.P.C.K. In 1730 the Scotch Society set up a Board of Correspondents in Boston with a view to extending missionary work to America. By 1741 the Board had moved to New York and was sponsoring work among the Indians of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Of all the missionaries they employed David Brainerd was the most well-known. He died of pulmonary consumption in Northampton, Mass., at the age of 29, having literally given his life in the service of the Indians. An account of his life was published in 1749 by Jonathan Edwards, which was really his journal edited by Edwards.⁴ His pitiful story, his privation, and premature death fixed the interest of the next two generations upon the missionary calling, and his journal influenced, among others, William Carey.⁵

But all the heroism of the pioneer missionaries was rendered futile

by "the land hunger of the white settlers, the susceptibilities of the natives to the disease and vices of the white man, and perhaps, as significant as any of them, the inability of the Protestant missionaries to adapt their method of appeal to the needs and the understanding of the natives."⁶ Nevertheless, despite the failure, we can see the strong English influence in this missionary activity.

After the Revolutionary war two urgent matters faced American Protestantism. One was the re-organisation of the churches nationally, now that ties with England had been severed; the other was to establish proper relationships between the Church and the State.⁷ The churches were dispirited after the war, many of them having been used as centres for military operations by the Revolutionary forces; and there was a disturbing interest in religious liberalism, "those infidel doctrines" which, wrote Timothy Dwight, "are vomited upon us from France, Germany and Great Britain."⁸ The propounders of Deism, led by men like Thomas Paine, mounted a double attack on an eighteenth century Calvinism which had to a large extent lost contact with the growing secular spirit of the age. They claimed that the churches were "no other than human inventions, set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit."⁹ The other line of attack was the assertion that man possessed of reason, could find Truth in the natural world and in his own experience, without the aid of any authoritarian interpreters, such as scriptures and ecclesiastics. Though this type of thinking was limited to an intellectual élite in America, it nevertheless produced a tremendous counter-attack from orthodox Christianity. The counter-attack was linked closely with the Second Great Awakening, and resulted in a fantastic growth of all Protestant Churches, especially Methodist and Baptist Churches.¹⁰

The Second Great Awakening had as one of its direct results the founding of "Domestic Missions", i.e. missions to those in the continually growing frontier towns in the West, and to the Indians who were settled in the various States. In the organising of such missions methods were taken over directly from the Missionary Societies organised in England. The two Missionary Societies which played an important part in this were the English Baptist Missionary Society, founded in 1792 at Kettering, with work in India, and the London Missionary Society formed in 1795 on an interdenominational pattern. The New York Missionary Society (1796) was the first American interdenominational society and had work among the Chickasaw Indians of Georgia and Tennessee. It also supported Elkanah Holmes, on behalf of the N.Y. Baptist Association, who worked among the Tuscarora and Seneca Indians.¹¹ This was soon followed by the formation of denominational missionary societies in various States. The Congregationalists of Connecticut organised such a Society in June 1798.¹² The Presbyterian General

Assembly began work among the Cherokee Indians in 1803.¹³ The Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Society was formed in Boston on May 25th, 1802, under the leadership of Thomas Baldwin, sending out three missionaries to the frontier within the year. The object of the Society was to "furnish occasional preaching and to promote a knowledge of evangelistic truth, in the new settlements, within these Northern States, or farther, if circumstances should render it proper." In the years following Societies were set up in Maine, Philadelphia, New York, Woodstock, Genesee, Connecticut and New Jersey.¹⁴ It was this prior concern for those in need within their own continent which was the logical fore-runner of foreign missionary activity in America.

There were other influences which helped forward the cause of missions. At the turn of the eighteenth century there was a feeling of despair at the victory of the reactionary forces in Europe generally, and in France in particular. But some, taking their cue from Carey's *Enquiry*, turned the situation from despair to optimism, adopting the military tactic that the best form of defence is attack. Carey had written :

"The face of most Christian countries presents a most dreadful scene of ignorance, hypocrisy, and profligacy. Various baneful and pernicious errors appear to gain ground, in almost every part of Christendom; the truths of the gospel, and even the gospel itself are attacked, and every method that the enemy can invent is employed to undermine the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . All these things are loud calls to Christians and especially to ministers to exert themselves to the utmost in their several actions and to try to enlarge them as much as possible."¹⁵

Addressing the newly formed New York Missionary Society in 1796, Alexander McWhorter also called for a crusade against the enemies of the Gospel. After appealing for the support of missions on the usual grounds, he added :

"Besides these considerations which address our sense of gratitude and interest, there is another no less powerful, which arises from the peculiar circumstances of the times. Infidelity abounds. It hath assumed an imperious air, and glories in the expectation of a speedy extermination of the religion of Jesus. To confound its vain hopes we are called upon to show, by our activity in the cause of truth, that the Spirit of Christ continues to animate His Body: that there is still life and energy in his Church, and that the prospect is as distant as ever of the gates of hell prevailing against her. . . . Should we even fail in our immediate expectations we may aid all those who shall have better success. And if sinners are brought to the Saviour our object is gained. In the Temple above it will make no difference whether they are gathered from the banks of the Mississippi, the Gambia, or the Ganges."¹⁶

The *Theological Magazine* of Jan./Feb. 1798 carried a letter from a "well-wisher of missions" contending that the church was growing under the oppression of her foes, and that the church at

home would be strengthened if it abandoned defensive tactics, and launched an all-out offensive for the conversion of the heathen.¹⁷

John H. Livingstone in a sermon before the N.Y.M.S. in 1799 saw the situation thus :

“ Under the frown of infidelity, and in defiance of that infernal power which, with accumulated energy and fury, is making havoc of the Churches, the Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon them as waters upon the dry ground, and . . . in the Indies, in the islands of the Pacific ocean, and in Africa, the precious name of Jesus is now proclaimed by their heralds.”¹⁸

In the Congregational churches the fight against infidelity was carried on within the church. The foundation of Andover Theological Seminary was part of the fight against the rise of “ liberal ” thought in Congregationalism. Harvard, the home of Calvinistic orthodoxy and Puritan learning, was captured by the liberal camp when Henry Ware of Hingham, a man with Unitarian views, was elected to the Hollis Chair of Divinity. To counter this a group of conservative ministers withdrew their support from Harvard, and founded the Andover Divinity School. It was among the students of this college that a group known as “ the Society of the Brethren ” committed themselves to the cause of foreign missions, amongst whom were the first four missionaries to sail under the auspices of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1812. Adoniram Judson and Luther Rice, two of this group, moved from a Congregational to a Baptist position on the voyage and thus gave the necessary impetus needed to bring about an American Baptist Board for Foreign Missions which was formed in 1814.¹⁹

Linked very closely with this “ crusade against the enemies of the gospel,” in the mind of the missionaries, was the influence of “ Consistent Calvinism ” which had been propagated by Samuel Hopkins contrary to the older Calvinistic views, on the basis of Edwards’ thought. Hopkins maintained that one must be willing, even anxious, to spend eternity in hell if it should chance to please God to send one there. This complete submission to the sovereign will of God was termed by Hopkins and his followers “ disinterested benevolence ”; and it was the sense of duty which resulted from this that Judson and his friends stressed as the motive power which impelled them to go to the East.

“ As the young enthusiastic disciples of Edwards and Hopkins went into the waste places and jungles of the world, they went determined to lift mankind to a higher and a better plane of living. Even though the vast majority of mankind, in the opinion of the missionaries was destined to spend an eternity in excruciating and indescribable torment for the greater glory of God, still disinterested benevolence might well be the outstanding characteristic of all who had reason to believe themselves numbered amongst the elect. . . . It was not romance, nor was it

primarily the spirit of adventure that impelled them to leave friends and kindred and go to inhospitable lands, there to suffer privation, and perhaps martyrdom. . . . They were under obligations to act, not in accordance with their own interests, but in harmony with the spirit of disinterested benevolence."²⁰

In such a spirit they sought to take the best America had to offer to a world set in heathen darkness. We may find it impossible to accept the theological reasoning which sent them out on such an errand, but they can only be judged by their faithfulness to the ideal of disinterested benevolence.

The rise of infidelity in Europe, the phenomenal response to Paine's *Age of Reason*, and the increasing interest in missions, combined with visible results of the Second Great Awakening, led many ministers of the gospel to re-examine Biblical prophecy, with a view to knowing if the millenium was at hand. In fact the fulfilment of scripture prophecy was believed by many to be the ultimate weapon against deistical scepticism, which would be confounded completely when confronted with the unmistakable evidence that long delayed prophecies were being fulfilled. Timothy Dwight and John H. Mason were both quite convinced that the beginning of the 19th century would see the millenium, and Christ's return to earth. Pointing to the conversion of the heathen and the eventual restoration of the Jews to Palestine, as evident signs of the times, many, both orthodox and unorthodox, believed a new era was beginning.²¹ The formation of the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity among the Jews in 1809 received considerable attention in the missionary journals on both sides of the Atlantic,²² as did Buchanan's sermon *Star in the East*, in which the author, after wide travel in the East, gave it as his opinion that the Jews were about to accept Christianity.²³

Closely linked with a renewed interest in prophecy was the renewal of the Church by prayer. The Concert of Prayer, which forms the basis of the 19th century missionary movement, originated in Scotland in 1744, and was written about by Jonathan Edwards in 1747 in a pamphlet called *An humble attempt to promote explicit agreement and visible union of God's people in extraordinary prayer for the revival of religion*.²⁴ In England the ministers of the Northamptonshire Association issued a call to prayer in April, 1784, asking that "the whole interest of the Redeemer be affectionately remembered and the spread of the gospel to the most distant parts of the inhabitable globe be the object" of the prayers.²⁵ To support this movement John Sutcliff of Olney published in 1789 an English edition of Edwards' *Humble Attempt*, writing his own preface to the book. Arising out of this prayer movement came the formation of the English Baptist Missionary Society in 1792. In America a similar Concert of Prayer was organised by a meeting of

clergymen in Lebanon, Connecticut, in 1794, who sent out requests for concerted prayer on the first Tuesday of every quarter of the year at 2 p.m. beginning in January, 1795. The movement gained ground, and by 1816 the first Monday in every month was the generally accepted time.²⁶

Before turning to a detailed study of the influence of individual English Baptists upon the American Baptist Church, we must finally consider the effect of English missionary literature on American missionary thought. It was very common for magazines of the period to give in great detail facts about peoples and places as then unknown to the Western world, and among such magazines those connected with the newly formed missionary agencies carried a great deal of the material.

The Theological Magazine, published in New York from 1795-99 gave publicity to the work of the missionaries from England in India and Otaheite (Tahiti), reprinting letters and articles from English and Scottish missionary magazines. For example, the June-July, 1798, number has accounts of Carey's work in Serampore and the work of the Anglican chaplain John Clark in Sierra Leone, which had originally been published in the *Edinburgh Missionary Magazine*.²⁷

The New York Missionary Magazine and Repository for Missionary Intelligence was first published in 1800 and carried many articles from such British publications as *The London Evangelical Magazine*, *The Biblical Magazine*, *The Edinburgh Missionary Magazine*, and the *Christian Observer*, all of which were drawn upon freely for the purpose of enlightening the American public on the latest missionary strategy.²⁸

The Massachusetts Missionary Magazine was run at a profit from its inception in 1803. In 1808 it was united with *The Panoplist*, edited by Jedidiah Morse. *The Panoplist* first appeared in 1805 as an organ of the conservative Congregationalists, and sought to expose New England Unitarianism as nothing but infidelity in disguise. By 1820 the Magazine was known simply as the *Missionary Herald*.²⁹

The General Assembly's Missionary Magazine or the Evangelical Intelligencer first appeared in 1805, and carried mostly material concerning the history of missions, notably those of the Moravians, the London Missionary Society, the English B.M.S., and the various missionary organisations of Scotland.³⁰

The Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine was edited for its first fourteen years by the Rev. Thomas Baldwin, pastor of the Second Baptist Church, Boston. This magazine reached a wide audience of readers from Maine to Georgia.³¹ The Philadelphia Association Minutes for 1806 give an example of the successful way the magazine was sold in other Associations :

"Brother Rogers submitted to the Association, 'Proposals for the continuing by subscription, the Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine, published for the benefit of the Society.' This Association recommend the work to the Churches, and for their information observe that eight numbers are already published, and that it comes out quarterly, at twelve and a half cents each number. Our brethren W. Rogers and Peter Wilson were appointed agents for this work, within the bounds of the Association."³²

In this magazine full accounts of the work of Baptist missionaries in India, Africa and the South Seas, regularly appeared along with the news of American revivals and American Indian Missions. In 1817 the name of the magazine was changed to *The American Baptist Magazine*.

There were also several other short-lived magazines which all reflect the same trend of dependence upon English missionary activity and writing for their material.

It is against this background that we must place the influence of English Baptists upon American Baptists in the formation of American Baptist Foreign Missions in 1814.

The Contribution of Carey, Ward and Marshman

The presence of three Baptist missionaries in India, who were also in contact with influential laymen and ministers in America, was one of the determinative factors in the creation of American Baptist Foreign Mission interest.

One of Carey's contacts in the States was Dr. William Rogers, a Baptist minister who was a professor at the University of Pennsylvania. The correspondence can be traced through the minutes of the Philadelphia Association, which in 1794 records: "In consequence of information communicated to this Association by Brother William Rogers it is desired that all donations for the propagation of the Gospel among the Hindoos, in the East Indies, to be forwarded to him."³³ The following year a further minute again asked the churches to send their gifts for the work of the mission through Dr. Rogers.

Carey and Fountain, writing to the Society on December 9th, 1797, declare: "America we are happy to hear, has caught the missionary flame. Just before the news arrived, we were speaking about it, and wishing that the brethren would bestir themselves; not thinking that while we were speaking their missionaries had gone forth."³⁴ The next year when Carey wrote to Sutcliff he says: "It is with pleasure I hear of a missionary spirit breaking out in America and on the Continent."³⁵ This information may have come in part with the letters from Dr. Rogers, which accompanied the gifts of money for the mission. At any rate, by 1800 a regular correspondence between the two of them was established. On 30th December, 1800, Carey wrote to Rogers:—

“ Very dear brother in Christ,

Yours of 24th May arrived here on the 25th of October, with the parcels, and afforded us a very luxurious feast. It gives us great pleasure to find we are thought of, and prayed for, in so distant a quarter of the globe. I shall very highly prize your correspondence and hope now you have begun, you will continue to write by every opportunity.

The glorious work going on in America, the establishment of Mission Societies, and the like, call for our most lively thanks, and have given us every encouragement—Oh, may our God graciously bless and increase these undertakings, till the world be full of his glory!

I was much shocked at seeing in some of the American newspapers advertisements headed by:

TO BE SOLD,
A NEGRO MAN, &c.

I hope no Christian keeps a slave; if this should be the practice (for custom often blinds the eyes of even good men) in the southern parts of the United States, it will not be difficult to answer the enquiry in a certain association letter you sent me, ‘ why the churches in those parts are in so languishing a state ’; but I hope every one who names the name of Christ, departs from the iniquity of holding their fellow-creatures in slavery, and that it is the practice of only those who are the enemies of God.”³⁶

In 1801 Dr. Rogers read letters “ received by him from brother Carey at Serampore, in the East Indies ” which the Association responded to by minuting their joy “ in every prospect of success of the gospel ” and wishing the missionaries God speed in their tasks.³⁷ An extract from the journals of the Missionaries published in the *Periodical Accounts* records letters from Dr. Rogers reaching them on 2nd August, 1802.³⁸ The correspondence continued over many years and encouraged Dr. Rogers to champion the cause of foreign missions in the United States. He wrote a Circular Letter for the Philadelphia Association commending Missions, and in particular the formation of the Philadelphia Baptist Missionary Society in 1804-05, which was concerned with work in America. This letter is probably his most cogent piece of missionary encouragement. He outlined first the principles upon which missions proceed. These are a deep conviction of the fallen state of the human race; the total inability of the sons and daughters of men to deliver themselves; the fact that in Christ there is all the fulness of salvation that poor and miserable sinners stand in need of; the knowledge that this way of salvation shall be known in all the earth; and the conviction that this great work is to be effected by God Himself. Next he turned to the great commission of Christ and traced out the response to it from the times of the Apostles onwards, quite naturally emphasising the work of men such as Eliot, Brainerd, and Edwards. This is followed by a detailed statement of the rise of the B.M.S. in England, the present state of the work in India, and a passing reference to work in Sierra Leone. He concludes this section by reference to the

work which is being done by the New York and Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Societies and the newly-formed Philadelphia Baptist Missionary Society, among the Indians and the Frontier settlers in America. In the final section he enumerates "the encouragements we possess for future exertions," appealing to the fulfilment of scripture prophecy which is taking place as a result of the missionary advance of the Church, and looking forward to the "millennial days" which are coming soon. Throughout the letter we can see a continual dependence upon, and reflection of, English Baptist thought about the missionary task of the Church.³⁹

Another of Carey's contacts in America was the Rev. Thomas Baldwin, of Boston, with whom he conducted a lively correspondence from about 1800 onwards, several of the letters appearing in the *Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Society Magazine*.⁴⁰ In one of these letters Carey made clear what he thought American Baptists ought to be doing in the missionary task of the church. In a letter dated 30th July, 1807, he wrote :

"It has always been my opinion that all in America, whose hearts the Lord stirs up to this work, should either go to the Indians, or the back part of their own country, or the neighbouring islands, Cuba, St. Domingo, etc. I hope these fields will soon be occupied with labourers in the harvest of the Lord."⁴¹

The Rev. John Williams, one of the prime movers in founding the New York Baptist Missionary Society, was another of Carey's correspondents. In a letter dated October 1800, Carey wrote to Williams of the difficulties confronting the Serampore missionaries as they sought to bring the gospel to the Hindus. But by the summer of 1802, replying to a letter from Williams bought by Capt. Hague, he writes of the changed situation :

"What hath God wrought? Eighteen months ago we should have been in raptures to have seen one Hindu eat with us; now it is sometimes difficult to find room for all who come. Nine Hindus have been baptized of whom seven walk so as to be an honour to the gospel."

In 1803 Carey wrote again to Williams, commenting on the Jamaican House of Assembly decision to prohibit the education of Negroes, and their religious meetings.⁴²

Carey corresponded with these men, though he had never met them. But his knowledge of them was increased and his attraction to them strengthened through his personal friendship with Capt. Wickes of the *Criterion*, a ship which plied between India, England and America.

This contact was first made when Capt. Wickes, a Presbyterian elder of Philadelphia, had conveyed Marshman and Ward and their associates to India in 1799. The deepness of this friendship can be

judged by the frequency with which Wickes is mentioned in the extracts from the journals of the missionaries which were printed in the *Periodical Accounts*. Capt. Wickes' own feelings are reflected in a letter he wrote to the London Committee of the B.M.S. :

"When I was informed by Mr. F— that the passengers we are to take out were Christian missionaries truly my heart rejoiced. It brought strongly to my mind a desire which I had felt some years past, when this business was much talked of, that I might have command of a ship that should convey some of these messengers of peace to the heathen. And now it seems God is about to grant me my desire. I am master of the *Criterion*, sir, and am not ashamed to confess myself a lover of the gospel and them that preach it. . . ."43

On the voyage out Marshman wrote in his journal :

"June 23. . . . It is a singular mercy that so precious a Christian has been given us for our Captain. . . . He engages with us in prayer, joins us at our conference and experience meetings—and takes every opportunity to leave his gay company in the cabin, and sit and participate in our conversation; consequently every attention that can contribute to the convenience of the women and children is constantly paid."44

Ward, in his journal, records for June 6th :

"This evening we had a most precious hour at prayer. Captain Wickes read from the 12th verse of the 33rd of Exodus, and then joined in prayer. Our hearts were all warmed. We shook hands with our dear Captain, and in design, clasped him to our bosom. With what affection he did pray for us—for our missionary success. . . ."45

Though Ward's *Farewell Letters* were published after his visit to America, in 1821, it is not without significance that several of them were addressed to friends of the mission in America. Among these were Dr. Staughton, Dr. Chaplin, Dr. Baldwin, and the Revs. Daniel Sharp and Lucius Bolles, all American Baptist ministers who were instrumental in creating foreign mission interest in the denomination.⁴⁶

Captain Wickes not only formed the personal contact between Serampore and the American churches, but made a personal effort to get financial support for the work of translation that was going on at Serampore, from the American churches. In 1805 he was entrusted with a thousand guineas for the translation work from British Baptists. Placing this money in the care of Mr. Robert Ralston, a wealthy Presbyterian merchant of Philadelphia, he put the challenge to the American churches by inserting the following advertisement in many of the current missionary journals and religious papers :

"PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL"

To all who love the prosperity of Zion, and are disposed to aid in propagating the Gospel among the Heathen.

The Subscriber, lately returned from a voyage to the East Indies

touched in Europe, and was in London in August last, where he received from the Baptist Missionary Society in England, for propagating the gospel among the heathen, one thousand guineas, to be sent in the spring to the Missionaries in Bengal, for the purpose of printing the Sacred Scriptures in one of the languages of that country. There are seven languages that the Missionaries there aim to translate and publish the Scriptures in. They have made such progress in three of these that it is expected that the above sum will enable them to complete the work. The money is now in the hands of ROBERT RALSTON, Esquire, of Philadelphia, who will forward it in due time. Should any individual society, or congregation of people in the United States of America, be disposed to contribute to this good work, Mr. Ralston will gladly receive whatever may be sent to him for that purpose, and add it to the above sum, to be forwarded to the Missionaries at Serampore, Near Calcutta.

(Signed)

BENJAMIN WICKES (Sen.), Philadelphia, Nov. 1805.⁴⁷

This letter attracted a great deal of attention, and the copy of it in the *Assembly's Missionary Magazine* for April, 1806, was followed by a letter signed by many prominent Philadelphian ministers, certifying that what the letter said was perfectly true, and appending a list of men who would be willing to forward donations to Mr. Ralston. Among these were such men as Dr. Rogers, William White, Dr. Staughton, and Dr. Richard Furman, all prominent Baptist ministers.⁴⁸

Several of the Baptist Associations followed the example of the Philadelphia Association in 1806, and recommended a collection to be taken in the churches.

On June 3rd, 1806, Fuller wrote to Ralston :

"We make an annual collection in London. I have several times made it, but never till this spring collected more than four hundred pounds. This time the collection amounted to upward of eight hundred pounds. Of all the nations upon earth, I think it is the duty of Britain and North America to disseminate the gospel."⁴⁹

On November 29th, 1806, Ralston replied with news about the collections made in America for the translation fund :

"The aggregate now shipped from hence including the thousand guineas which you sent by Captain Wickes is 10,424 dollars."⁵⁰

Robert Ralston not only handled sums of money for the Serampore missionaries, but on occasion gave free passage to missionaries and their belongings on voyage for Serampore. The difficulty of getting passages for missionaries in the East India Company's ships, meant that from 1802 onwards there was a steady stream of missionaries who went to Serampore in American ships, often via the United States. In 1803, in a letter dated December 5th, Andrew Fuller wrote to Rev. John Williams, New York :

"Dear Sir,

As four young men and their wives and a child are likely to be a while in your city on their way to Bengal, we take the liberty to recommend them to your brotherly kindness, persuaded from your former conduct to our brother Chamberlain that you will willingly give them every assistance within your power.

Their names are Richard Mardon, John Biss, William Moore, and Joshua Rowe. They and their wives are members of Baptist Churches and walked as becometh the gospel. Each of the young men has preached in our Churches with good acceptance. They will advise with you, Mr. Collier, Mr. Jno. F. March, and Ezekiel Robins, Esqr., on whatsoever they may need advice. To these gentlemen we have been recommended by Dr. Rogers of Philadelphia. We will thank you to present our Christian love and introduce our brethren and sisters to them.

They will show you their instructions and be thankful for your advice and assistance in carrying them into execution; especially in directing to a suitable place, or places during their stay in your city, where they might be a moderate expense, and in negotiation of a draft on the Society.

Our Society will be much obliged to you and your friends for their assistance.

Yours etc.,

Andrew Fuller."⁵¹

On August 1st, 1804, Fuller wrote again to Williams thanking him and the friends in New York for the kindness they had shown the missionary families during their stay, and giving them a long extract from the latest letter of William Ward.

Within three years John Biss, who had been so eager to serve on the mission field, was advised to return home with his family for health reasons. They sailed from Calcutta in the *Bremen*. When the ship arrived in America, the Rev. William Staughton wrote to Fuller as follows :

"Philadelphia, May 2nd, 1807.

Dear Sir,

Captain Singleton of the ship *Bremen* from Calcutta arrived at this port last Lord's day evening. On the morning before the arrival I received information that sister Biss and four little children were on board, her husband having 'finished his course' while crossing the ocean. After public service I communicated the afflicting information to our Church who immediately decided upon a comfortable place for her accommodation. The excellent Mr. Ralston directed his carriage to be waiting at the wharf to convey her and her little ones to their lodgings.

Our sister informs me that it was the opinion of the physician who attended our dear departed brother at Serampore, that such was the nature of his complaint (an induration of the liver) that only a voyage to Europe could effect a cure, and that if such a voyage were taken, his restoration would in all probability follow—To the Measure, the brethren of the Mission House, cheerfully consented—The first two weeks after sailing his health greatly amended, but, the joyful hope this circumstance inspired, soon, together with our brother gave up the

ghost—he died—February 5th. He was afflicted with sore temptations and trials in his sickness, not however without frequent discoveries of his interest in the grace and care of the Redeemer. Delirium for two days preceded his death.

Mrs. Biss appears to have borne the trial with that holy fortitude which it is the nature of the gospel to supply. She deeply feels her loss but the consideration that 'the right hand of the Lord is full of righteousness' even when it administers the bitterest draught enables her to say 'the cup which my Lord hath given me shall I not drink it.'

I scarcely, I hope, need assure you that every kind office in the power of the members of our Church will be gladly fulfilled.

It has appeared on mutual consultation and reflection, that our sister Biss continue in America until we learn the views of the society. Her heart is set on the service of Christ in the Mission—She is already in part acquainted with the Bengalee language—The widows of deceased missionaries have hitherto I believe found a home at the Mission House without the pain of supposing their presence a burden—Mr. Ralston offers her a passage, gratis, in his own ship which is now building and in which Captain Wickes expects next November to sail, and the amiable temper and deportment of our sister the captain says, rendered her dear to the Mission Family. These with other considerations which will easily suggest themselves to your mind, have led us to conclude it will be better that she stay here awhile than risk the possibility of the toil and expense of a voyage to England and a return again to this country on her way to India.

I have written a few lines to Dr. Ryland on this subject and sent them by another vessel. Mr. Ralston and Captain Wickes will also write.

I beg leave to present to the Society my thanks for the undeserved 'token of respect' with which they have favoured me, and to renew the assurance that with no less degree of affectionate respect than when our personal intimacy was greater, I am, dr sir,

Your unworthy brother,

W. Staughton.

Mr. Fuller.

P.S.—I forgot to say that Mrs. Biss feels desirous of returning to India.³⁵²

Acting upon this the committee decided to take advantage of Mr. Ralston's offer, and in a letter dated July 9th, 1807, Andrew Fuller wrote to William Ward :

" . . . We have received letters lately from Philadelphia informing us of the death of our dear brother Biss on his passage and of the safe arrival of Mrs. Biss at that city. The brethren there finding her mind inclined to return to Serampore, kindly offered her and her children accommodation till they c^d write to us whether to send her to England or India. Mr. Ralston at the same time informed us that Capt. Wickes intended another voyage to India about the beginning of Novr this year, and offered to take Mrs. Biss and her family back gratis (we finding the stores) if we thought proper to send her. We had many letters passing on the subject among the brethren Ryland, Sutcliff, Morris, Blundell and myself. We all thought we sh^d have been more satisfied if we had known the minds of the brethren at Serampore. Morris and Blundell tho't she ought not to be sent back without their concurrence. But to have waited for this wd not only have been keeping her an undue time in America, but losing the opportunity of sending her by Capt. Wickes.

If her own mind had been to have come home we wd have voted for it at once tho' she and her family would have been a weight here. Perhaps she may be the same with you. If so you can but draw upon us so much the more. Upon the whole the majority were for accepting Mr. Ralston's kind proposal and sending her back again. . . . Mrs. Biss' case . . . had many difficulties attending. . . . We have done what appeared for the best. . . ."⁵³

This incident is dealt with fully because it throws an interesting light upon the work of the B.M.S. in the early days, and shows how close were the ties between America, Serampore and England in this period. It also clearly illustrates the valuable part played by Mr. Ralston, and the great impetus which must have been given to the foreign mission interest in America as a result of missionaries staying in America on their way to and from the field.

The Influence of Fuller, Pearce and Grigg

If Carey's influence was felt in America, no less an impact was made by the supporters of the B.M.S. in England. Andrew Fuller, the untiring secretary of the Society, had many contacts in America. The Philadelphia Association Minutes for 1805 record: "By particular request recent letters received by the corresponding secretary from our brother Carey in India, and Dr. Fuller in England, relating to the progress and concerns of the Bengal mission, were read and gave particular satisfaction."⁵⁴ As early as 1796 we find him corresponding with Rev. Samuel Hopkins about the spread of the Hopkinsian movement over the previous years. Hopkinsianism had released the energies of a dead hyper-Calvinism in America, in much the same way as "Fullerism" had in England, though the two systems were quite distinct in the way in which they achieved this.⁵⁵

Writing to Carey in 1798 Fuller says:

"The spark which God stirred you up to strike has kindled a great fire not only in Europe but America. I read a letter lately from a society in New York who are endeavouring to station missionaries all along their frontiers."⁵⁶

Fuller also knew Captain Wickes, and writing to Carey in 1799 makes his first mention of him, though the friendship was to grow over the years.

"Having got the printing and type William Ward is going to India. We have also taken a passage in an American ship, the *Criterion*, Captain Wickes, now lying at Wapping stairs."⁵⁷

His contacts with John Williams in New York and William Staughton in Philadelphia have already been noted, and we should

mention his contact with Lucius Bolles of Salem, Massachusetts, who passed on information about the mission to the Philadelphia Association and other bodies.⁵⁸ He corresponded regularly with the New York Missionary Society from 1798 after the committee in England had received letters from New York requesting that such a contact should be made.⁵⁹

The Rev. Samuel Pearce was another member of the committee who had contacts with America. In membership with the Canon Street Church, Birmingham, was Mr. Thomas Potts, who as a youth had been in the Deep South of America, before emigrating to England. "Prior to the Revolution he had won great favour among the Indians, for they had freely granted him large tracts of land in the vicinity of New Orleans. Later he was known for his kind treatment of the Negroes; a troublesome habit which incensed certain of the wealthy slave owners. Nothing much was heard of him until in England he became the owner of a lucrative trading business, and a deacon in the church of Dr. Samuel Pearce." It was this Thomas Potts who gave Carey the necessary £10 for publishing the *Enquiry*.⁶⁰

Pearce early established a contact with Dr. Rogers of Philadelphia. In fact it seems likely that Dr. Rogers first came to know about the mission through Pearce. On the 3rd September, 1792, Pearce wrote :

"Reverend and Dear Sir,

I have taken the liberty of enclosing a few publications for your acceptance; some of them you will peruse with approbation, especially Mr. Carey's *Enquiry*, &c. Every good man must approve of the design, though different ideas are entertained of its present practicability. At a minister's meeting to be held at Kettering, the ensuing month, it is proposed to form a plan for realizing a mission among the heathen. . . . Surely our brethren of the Western World will cordially join spirit with us, though in person 3,000 miles apart, and daily pray, 'Lord, let thy kingdom come'."⁶¹

Consequent upon the Kettering meeting, and the setting apart of Carey and Thomas for the work, Pearce wrote again to Dr. Rogers, 14th January, 1793 :

"In my last, I think I intimated a design, formed by some friends of religion in this country, of establishing a mission among the heathens. I will enclose a printed copy of the rise and plan of a society formed for this purpose, with the resolutions adopted down to the committee meeting for Nov. 1792.

At our last meeting held at Kettering on the 9th instant, we agreed to form a junction with Mr. Thomas. Mr. Carey of Leicester (author of the publication I had the pleasure of inclosing with my last) is to be his colleague. A man every way fitted for so important a service; and it is expected they will both sail for India, the beginning of April next."⁶²

It was probably this letter and its enclosures that Rogers read to the Association in 1794.

On 28th October, 1794, Pearce again writes to Dr. Rogers, sympathising with him upon the death of his wife, but soon the letter turns "into a passionate plea for such a Missionary Arousal in America as he was watching and sharing in England."⁶³

Pearce had two other connections of importance in America. Though his premature death cut short his contact with them, his influence stayed with them over the years. In 1793 William Staughton, a member of his church who had been trained for the ministry at Bristol, went out to America to minister in Charleston, South Carolina. It was as a student that Staughton had been present at the meeting which saw the founding of the Missionary Society in 1792 at Kettering. He never lost his enthusiasm for the missionary cause, much of which, no doubt, he had caught from his pastor, Samuel Pearce. To a full consideration of his part in the creation of the foreign mission spirit in America we must turn later. The other connection of Pearce's in America was Jacob Grigg, the partner of James Rodway, who together went on the mission to Sierra Leone in 1795. Their "ordination and designation service" took place on September 16th, 1795, at the Canon Street Church, Birmingham, and Pearce accompanied them on their journey to London, buying them some necessary books, and staying with them until their ship sailed.⁶⁴

The mission to Sierra Leone was short-lived. Neither of the men found it possible to adapt themselves to the "slave factory" which they passed on their various journeys, neither did the natives trust them or give them friendship. Recurrent attacks of fever led to Rodway's recall, and his return to Bristol in 1796. Grigg, remaining alone, seems to have got on the wrong side of the authorities with regard to the practice of slave trading, though all mention of this, as such, is studiously avoided in all the published accounts of the mission. Grigg was given three alternatives; to return to England; to leave Sierra Leone, and remain at Port Logo further up the coast; or take his passage in the first available ship to America. Grigg settled for the latter and arrived in Norfolk, Virginia, early in 1797. He spent a great deal of his time in the South, and was still adamant against slavery, being one of a number of Baptist ministers who in 1804 started a crusade against slavery. His uncompromising stand against slavery involved him in moving often from one church to another. Of importance for this study is the fact that Grigg is listed as one of the delegates from Richmond, Virginia, to the meeting in Philadelphia on 18th May, 1814, for the founding of a Foreign Mission Society among the Baptists, which eventually became known as the "Triennial Convention," because the delegates met every three years, and was known finally as the American

Baptist Missionary Union. Grigg settled at the New Market Street Baptist Church, Philadelphia, in 1817, and linked up again with William Staughton, his one-time fellow student at Bristol, who was then the pastor of the Sansom Street Baptist Church in Philadelphia. When the new building of the New Market Street Baptist Church was opened in 1818 it was Staughton who preached the dedicatory sermon: and a few years later Grigg was one of the agents for the Columbian College, of which Staughton had been elected Principal.

Grigg and Staughton presented a unique influence on American Baptist foreign missionary thought. Grigg had been a missionary for the English Society, and Staughton had been from the beginning a founder of the Society, and its continual supporter over many years. It is to a consideration of Staughton's influence that we shall next turn.⁶⁵

. (To be concluded)

FOOTNOTES

¹ O. W. Ellsbree, *The Rise of the Missionary Spirit in America: 1790-1815*, Williamsport, U.S.A., 1928, Chapter I. See also E. A. Payne, *The Growth of the World Church*, London, 1955, pp. 20-36.

² Ellsbree, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁴ Oswald J. Smith, *David Brainerd: His Message for To-day*, London, 1961, pp. 41-65.

⁵ A. de M. Chesterman, "The Journals of David Brainerd and William Carey," *Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. XIX (Oct. 1961), pp. 147-156.

⁶ Ellsbree, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24.

⁷ Russell B. Nye, *The Cultural Life of the New Nation 1776-1830*, 1960, Chapter 9.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

¹⁰ Ellsbree, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-36.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 51-54.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 56-71.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-75.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 76-81.

¹⁵ William Carey, *An Enquiry: into the obligations of Christians to use means for the conversion of the heathen*, London, 1961 (Facsimile Copy), p. 66.

¹⁶ Ellsbree, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101, and Nye, *op. cit.*, pp. 222-227.

²⁰ Ellsbree, pp. 151-152.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 122-124, 130-131.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 133.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

²⁵ E. A. Payne, *The 1784 Prayer Call*, Ter-Jubilee Volume of the B.M.S., London, 1945.

- 26 Ellsbree, *op. cit.*, p. 136.
 27 *Ibid.*, p. 104.
 28 *Ibid.*, p. 55.
 29 *Ibid.*, p. 60.
 30 *Ibid.*, p. 75.
 31 *Ibid.*, p. 78.
 32 A. D. Gillette (Ed.), *Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association 1707-1807*, Philadelphia, 1851, pp. 421-425.
 33 *Ibid.*, p. 298.
 34 *Periodical Accounts of the Baptist Missionary Society*, Volume I (1800), p. 390.
 35 *Ibid.*, p. 477.
 36 *The Baptist Annual Register*, Volume IV (1802), pp. 809-811.
 37 Gillette, *op. cit.*, pp. 358-361.
 38 *Periodical Accounts*, Volume II (1801), p. 185.
 39 Gillette, *op. cit.*, pp. 426-433.
 40 S. P. Carey, *William Carey*, London, 1923, p. 131.
 41 H. S. Burrage, *History of the Baptists of New England*, American Bapt. Pub. Socy., 1894, p. 150.
 42 S. P. Carey, *op. cit.*, pp. 192, 210, 236. See also *Periodical Accounts*, Vol. II (1801), p. 278.
 43 *Periodical Accounts*, Vol. I (1800), p. 505.
 44 *Periodical Accounts*, Vol. II (1801), p. 14.
 45 *Ibid.*, p. 2.
 46 William Ward, *Farewell Letters: to a few friends in Britain and America on returning to Bengal*, London, 1821.
 47 Bruce M. McGraw, "William Carey and the American Missionary Interest," *The Chronicle*, Vol. V (April, 1942), pp. 76-77.
 48 *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.
 49 Ellsbree, *op. cit.* See footnote 14, p. 106.
 50 *Periodical Accounts*, Vol. III (1806), pp. 219-220.
 51 Andrew Fuller Letters, Angus Library, Oxford.
 52 Letter in B.M.S. Archives.
 53 Andrew Fuller Letters.
 54 Gillette, *op. cit.*, p. 412.
 55 Ellsbree, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
 56 Andrew Fuller Letters.
 57 *Ibid.*
 58 *Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association*, 1814, Article 18.
 59 *Periodical Accounts*, Vol. I (1800), p. 417.
 60 McGraw, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
 61 *Ibid.*, p. 71.
 62 *Ibid.*, p. 71.
 63 S. P. Carey, *Samuel Pearce: Baptist Brainerd*, London, n.d., pp. 165-166.
 64 *Ibid.*, p. 177.
 65 H. G. Hertsell, "Jacob Grigg—Missionary and Minister," *The Chronicle*, Volume 6 (April and July, 1943), pp. 83-90, 130-143.

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