

David Bogue (1750–1825), Congregational Minister at Gosport. A frequent visitor to the London Scots Presbytery and a zealous advocate of missions.

Scottish Missionaries ordained by the London Scots Presbytery in the 1790s

ROY MIDDLETON

The 1790s witnessed the beginning of the modern Protestant missionary movement. What eventually became known as the Baptist Missionary Society was formed at Kettering on 2nd October 1792. William Carey, as their first missionary, arrived in Calcutta on 13th November 1792. Three years later the London Missionary Society was formed in 1795 and John Love along with several of his colleagues in the Scots Presbytery played significant roles in the formation of the Society. During John Love's ministry in London three men came before the Scots Presbytery seeking ordination in order to proceed to missionary service. The lives of the men which the Scots Presbytery ordained provide an instructive insight into the early Protestant Missionary movement. This is so with respect to the range of the men offering themselves for service overseas, their motivation, and the tension in Scotland over what was the appropriate way to conduct missions to the heathen. Two of the men were ordained by the Scots Presbytery for service in India whilst the third went to Sierra Leone. John Love with his zeal for missions was actively involved in the ordination of all three. The significant role of the London Scots Presbytery in launching of the modern missionary movement has been almost entirely overlooked in mission historiography.

1. Nathaniel Forsyth¹

I. Application to the Scots Presbytery

When the London Scots Presbytery met on 23rd July 1794 at Thomas Rutledge's meeting house at Broad Street, Wapping, Henry Hunter, the

¹ The main source of biographical information on Forsyth is 'The Memoir of the late Rev. Nathaniel Forsyth, Minister of the Dutch Church, Chinsurah,' *The Calcutta Christian Observer*, Vol. 2 (Calcutta, 1833), pp. 589-598. All the other brief sketches of his life are dependent on this account, including W. H. Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography, containing biographical sketches of distinguished Christians who have lived and died in the East* (3 vols., Calcutta, 1850-1852), Vol. 1, pp. 173-181. Brief notices of Forsyth are included in D. M. Lewis (ed.), *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography, 1730-1860* (2 vols., Oxford, 1995), Vol. 1, p. 399; C. E. Buckland, *Dictionary of Indian Biography* (New York, 1968), p. 152. His letters are in the archives of the Council for World Mission (formerly the London Missionary Society) at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.

Clerk,² was absent and James Steven, the minister of the Scots congregation at Crown Court, Covent Garden, was appointed Clerk *pro tempore*. Steven then presented an application to the Presbytery from Nathaniel Forsyth in which he was asking to be taken on trials for licensing as a Minister of the Gospel. Forsyth had commenced his studies in the Burgher Synod under the tutorship of the Synod's Theological Professor, George Lawson of Selkirk, but had scruples about some aspects of the Burgher Synod's testimony and wished to transfer to the Church of Scotland with a view to missionary service. The Presbytery told Steven to inform Forsyth that he should come to their next meeting make a personal application and bring certificates regarding his character and his regular course of study at a Scottish university. Accordingly, at the next meeting of the Presbytery Forsyth appeared in person and brought certification of both his moral character and of his classical and philosophical studies at Glasgow University. The Presbytery then asked for details of his theological training under Lawson and appointed Thomas Rutledge, the Moderator, along with John Love and James Steven as a committee to converse with Alexander Waugh and Alexander Easton,³ the two Burgher Secession ministers in London, regarding their opinion of the applicant.

At a meeting of the Presbytery on 3rd December 1794 Forsyth produced a certificate from George Lawson that 'Mr Forsyth had been under his instruction as a student of divinity during the harvest of 1792.'⁴ The committee appointed to converse with the London Burgher ministers reported:

² The term used for the Presbytery Clerk in the minutes of the London Scots Presbytery is that of Secretary.

³ Alexander Easton (1767-1842) was the first minister of the Burgher Secession congregation in Miles Lane, London. This congregation originated in 1790 with a few members of Alexander Waugh's Burgher Congregation at Wells Street who were resident in the eastern parts of the city and desired to extend the interests of the Secession Church in the metropolis. Accordingly they began another Burgher congregation, nearer their residences, at first in a rented chapel in Red Cross Street. This step was taken with the sanction of the Associate (Burgher) Presbytery of Coldstream (under which the congregation of Wells Street then was), and, with the hearty concurrence of Wells Street congregation. After worshipping for two years in the rented chapel, the congregation purchased a chapel in Miles Lane, and removed to it on 25th December 1795. Easton was a popular preacher and after his theological training he received several calls from Burgher congregations. The Synod decided that he should go to Red Cross Street in London where he was ordained in September 1792. Regrettably the connection was dissolved in 1801 due to his intemperance. In 1804 he became the Burgher minister at Hamilton; however, after two years he was suspended *sine die* for intemperance. He then renounced his connection with the Burghers and was deposed by their Synod in December 1806. It appears that he then became a teacher of Classics in Glasgow. For biographical details see Robert Small, *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church, 1733-1900* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1904), Vol. 2, pp. 218-219; Kenneth M. Black, *The Scots Churches in England* (Edinburgh, 1906), pp. 211-215.

⁴ MS. *Minutes of the Scots Presbytery in London*, Vol. 1 (cited afterwards as MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*), p. 131. This certificate by Lawson makes clear that the statement in what appears to be the first brief account of Forsyth's life is incorrect. 'The memoir of the late Rev. Nathaniel Forsyth, Minister of the Dutch Church, Chinsurah' in *The Calcutta Christian Observer*, Vol. 2, p. 589 states 'he pursued his studies in the University of Glasgow, from whence he removed for the *prescribed number of years*, to the Divinity Hall, under the Rev. Professor G. Lawson of the Burgher Associate Synod' (emphasis added). The statement is repeated in the account of Forsyth in Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, Vol. 1, p. 173.

that nothing had arisen to the disadvantage of Mr Forsyth's literary, moral or religious character but that on the contrary these gentlemen had expressed themselves in terms of high approbation of Mr Forsyth amounting to a declaration that if his ... scruples regarding his former connections with them could be removed they would be disposed with open arms to receive him.⁵

Following this report a motion was put forward and the Presbytery resolved,

That Mr Forsyth's request be granted and that the Moderator and Messrs. Love and Stephen (Steven) be a committee of examination to converse with Mr Forsyth and in the event of them being satisfied with his proficiency to appoint him one or more <minutes unclear at this point> as to them may seem meet to be discussed at the next meeting of Presbytery.⁶



Anthony Crole
(1740-1803), the tutor
who employed Forsyth
as his assistant.

It is to be regretted that the minutes of the five subsequent sederunts of the London Scots Presbytery are lost and there is therefore no account of his ordination. The only further reference to Forsyth is of a meeting eight months later when it is recorded, 'Mr Forsyth delivered his exercise and addition as presented which was taken forward as part of his trials. As part of his further trials the theology of the fourth century and the 110th Psalm in Hebrew were appointed.'⁷ It seems probable that after Forsyth left Scotland and settled in London, he was a tutor in an Academy run by Anthony Crole⁸ and preached in the London area as he had opportunity.

That Forsyth was with Lawson for only a short period is confirmed by the absence of any reference to him in the list of Lawson's students for 1792 in William Mackelvie, *Annals and Statistics of the United Presbyterian Church* (Edinburgh, 1873), p. 669.

⁵ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, pp. 131-132.

⁶ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, p. 132.

⁷ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, p. 134.

⁸ The authority for Forsyth being a tutor in an academy run by Anthony Crole is the account of Forsyth's life that was printed in 1833, seventeen years after his death, in *The Calcutta Christian Observer*, Vol. 2, p. 589. Anthony Crole (1740-1803) was born in Fettercairn near Montrose and was trained as a cabinet-maker. At the age of twenty-two he went to London and set up his own business and availed himself of every opportunity of hearing the Gospel. William Cruden, the minister of the Church of Scotland at Crown Court, was the ministry on which he chiefly attended. Having been persuaded that he should enter the ministry he relinquished his business and went for training at the Countess of Huntingdon's College at Trevecca. He was at first an itinerant in the Countess's Connexion and was then called to a chapel in London which moved successively to Pinner's Hall and then to Founders' Hall. Crole was a keen student and an ardent catechiser of youth and may have taught both young men and those intending to proceed to the ministry in his own home on a small scale. He appears to have engaged Forsyth, when a student, as his assistant. There is no detailed account of Anthony Crole's career; the most extensive is the one written almost immediately after his death and published in the *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 11 (London, 1803), pp. 413-419. The accounts in Walter Wilson, *The History and Antiquities of the Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses in London, Westminster, and Southwark; including the Lives of their Ministers from the Rise of Nonconformity to the present time* (4 vols., London, 1808-1814), Vol. 2, pp. 293-301; Geoffrey F. Nuttall, 'The Students of Trevecca College, 1768-1791', *The Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, Session 1967, Part II (London, 1968), p. 271; and J. A. Jones, *Bunhill Memorials* (London, 1849), p. 35 are almost entirely dependent on the *Evangelical Magazine*. However, none of



Greville Ewing, an early Scottish advocate of foreign missions.

II. The projected Robert Haldane mission to India

Nathaniel Forsyth was born in 1769 at Smalholm Bank, near Lochmaben in Dumfries-shire and was the first London Missionary Society (LMS) missionary to India. He was a friend of Robert and James Haldane whose zeal in the cause of missions led them in 1796 to seek permission from the East India Company to become missionaries to India at their own expense. In order to fund the mission, Robert Haldane⁹ planned to sell his large estate in Scotland. Forsyth was to have been part of a group of missionaries that besides the Haldane brothers included David Bogue of Gosport, Greville Ewing,¹⁰ and William Innes.¹¹ Haldane's

these biographical accounts, nor the standard histories of the Dissenting Academies, refer to Crole operating such an institution. See H. McLachlan, *English Education under the Test Acts being the History of the Nonconformist Academies, 1662-1820* (Manchester University Press, 1931); J. W. Ashley Smith, *The Birth of Modern Education: The Contribution of the Dissenting Academies, 1660-1800* (London, 1954) and Mark Burden, *A Biographical Dictionary of Tutors at the Dissenters' Private Academies, 1660-1729* (Dr Williams's Centre for Dissenting Studies, online publication, 2013).

⁹ For an account of the lives of the Haldane brothers, see Alexander Haldane, *The Lives of Robert Haldane of Airthrey and of his brother James Alexander Haldane* (Edinburgh, 1855).

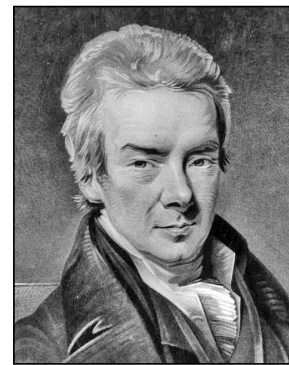
¹⁰ Greville Ewing (1767-1841), was the primary architect of Scottish Congregationalism and a pioneer statesman of Scottish foreign missions. Born at Edinburgh and trained at Edinburgh University for the ministry of the Church of Scotland, he was ordained in 1793 as an associate minister of Lady Glenorchy's Chapel in Edinburgh where Thomas Snell Jones was the senior minister. He rapidly gained influence as an expository preacher and proponent of home and foreign missions. He took an active part in the formation of the Edinburgh Missionary Society, becoming its first Secretary. He was also co-founder of the *Missionary Magazine*, which he edited for three years from its foundation in 1796. He began an association with Robert and James Haldane in 1796 which lasted until 1808. With the Haldanes he supported the idea of an itinerating ministry throughout Scotland and the establishment of preaching centres in Scotland's major cities called 'Tabernacles'. Ewing found the Church of Scotland inflexible and resigned his ministry at Lady Glenorchy's Chapel in 1798. In July 1799 he became minister of the Glasgow Tabernacle, where he remained until 1836. Ewing wholeheartedly embraced Congregational principles and engaged in disputes with the Haldanes over church order and baptism. He assisted in the foundation of the Glasgow Theological Academy in 1809 and of the Congregational Union of Scotland in 1812 and remained a tutor at the academy until 1836, training the first generation of Scottish Congregational ministers in what was then termed moderate Calvinism. Both Ewing and his colleague Ralph Wardlaw held to an Amyraldian view of the Atonement. In 1821 he was awarded a DD by Princeton College, New Jersey. For biographical details see J. J. Matheson (daughter), *A Memoir of Greville Ewing* (London, 1843); Nigel M. de S. Cameron (ed.), *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology (DSCHT)* (Edinburgh, 1993), p. 309; Harry Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism* (Glasgow, 1959), pp. 86-93, 268; William D. McNaughton, *Early Congregational Independence in Lowland Scotland* (2 vols., Glasgow, 2005-2007), Vol. 2, pp. 28-34; *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* – online edition (cited afterwards as ODNB).

¹¹ William Innes (1770-1855) was a Church of Scotland minister in Stirling who adopted Independent views and resigned his charge. This was accepted by the Presbytery, but on complaint, the General Assembly ordered him to return to his charge. This he failed to do and was libelled and deposed from the ministry on 8th October 1799. He then became part of Robert Haldane's Tabernacle movement and was settled in the Tabernacle, Dundee, on

intention was to establish and support a college in Bengal for the instruction of missionaries in the Oriental languages, and so qualify them for their work among the people.

Haldane's scheme for a mission to Bengal was defeated. An application to the Court of Directors of the East India Company requesting their permission to proceed to India was denied. By a series of Acts of Parliament in 1773, 1784, 1786, and 1793 a measure of regulation had been placed on the East India Company. However, it still functioned as a regularised subsidiary of the Crown with very considerable power. The Company had taken a position of neutrality with regard to the religious and social affairs and decided not to interfere with the traditional cultures of the people by supporting missionary work. The Company's policy was one of non-interference regarding Indian education, favouring rather traditional Hindu or oriental learning. The policy of non-interference was probably based on the fear that if missionaries provided education in English to the people, as an aid to their conversion, that it would offend the Hindu subjects of the Company and create unrest. They also believed that missionary activity in India would affect both their business policy and the diplomatic role of the Company.

Haldane's group had proposed placing themselves under the patronage of the LMS. Though the mission had the support of William Wilberforce, the Government led by William Pitt¹² were unwilling to overrule the all-powerful East India Company.¹³ It was



*William Wilberforce
(1759–1833), the
politician, philanthropist,
and slavery abolitionist.*

¹⁹th October 1800. These early tabernacles were Congregational churches. When Innes, along with Haldane, who was his brother-in-law, adopted Baptist views, he became a minister of that denomination in Elder Street (later this congregation moved to Dublin Street) in Edinburgh. At the same time as being a Baptist minister he carried on business as a bookseller. He was awarded a D.D. from Washington College, Pennsylvania in 1848. For biographical details of Innes, see Hew Scott (ed.), *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae* (8 vols, 2nd edn., Edinburgh, 1915-50), Vol. 4, pp. 325-326 (cited afterwards as Hew Scott, *Fasti*); *DSCHT*, p. 431; George Yuille, *History of the Baptists in Scotland* (Glasgow, 1926), pp. 123-124; David W. Bebbington (ed.), *The Baptists in Scotland* (Glasgow, 1988), pp. 43, 97, 327. For his ministry in the Tabernacle movement at Dundee, see James Ross, *A History of Congregational Independency in Scotland* (Glasgow, 1900), pp. 275-276; Escott, *A History of Scottish Congregationalism*, p. 268.

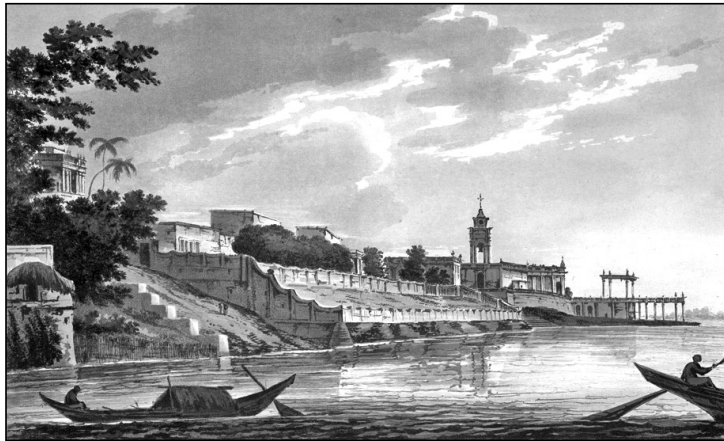
¹² Haldane's biographer writes regarding the Prime Minister, 'Mr Pitt no doubt regarded the scheme as a well-meant utopian ebullition of youthful zeal.' Haldane, *Lives of Robert Haldane and James Alexander Haldane*, p. 100. Robert Haldane was thirty-two in 1795.

¹³ For comprehensive details of Haldane's plan, its rejection by the directors of the East India Company, and the involvement of leading politicians, see Haldane, *Lives of Robert Haldane and James Alexander Haldane*, pp. 89-114; James Bennett, *Memoirs of the Life of David Bogue* (London, 1927), pp. 203-213; Matheson, *A Memoir of Greville Ewing*, pp. 90-120. Chester Terpstra provides detailed evidence that extracts from Bogue's 1790 tract, *Reasons for seeking a Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, submitted to the consideration of the candid and impartial*, had been sent to the Government in London by an unsympathetic Church of Scotland minister asserting that the missionary impetus was driven by democratic principles, and that this was a factor in the project being rejected. See Chester Terpstra, 'David Bogue DD, 1750-1825: pioneer and missionary educator' (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1959), pp. 333-334.

then decided that Forsyth should sail alone, in a vessel belonging to a friend bound for the Cape of Good Hope; from whence it was hoped he might obtain a passage to Bengal. He finally arrived in Calcutta in December 1798.

III. Ministry at Chinsurah

Forsyth began his mission in the town of Chinsurah, a settlement then belonging to the Dutch on the western bank of the river Hooghly, about thirty miles above Calcutta. It was at one time the capital of the Portuguese territory in Bengal. Though it was situated in the midst of the British possessions, it was entirely independent of British rule. This small town became the first missionary station occupied by the LMS in India, and Forsyth was the Society's first missionary to India's millions. William Carey (1761-1834), the famous Baptist, who had preceded Forsyth by five years as a missionary to India, owed his gaining a foothold in India to the providential fact that Denmark held a small patch of Indian territory around Serampore, and threw over him and his colleagues the mantle of her protection. Richard Lovett comments: 'It is one of the ironies



A contemporary view of Chinsurah, the Dutch settlement in Bengal.

of history that while Great Britain, one of the most powerful of European nations, from whom Carey sprang, exerted her power to frustrate his benevolent aims, Denmark, one of the least influential of European peoples, was able to hold open the door of blessing through which Carey and his colleagues, and also

Nathaniel Forsyth, entered to begin their beneficent labours for the millions of India.¹⁴ Though Forsyth would labour largely in Dutch territories, he gained entry to India on a Danish vessel. In the first eight years of its existence, the LMS was able to send and maintain only one solitary missionary in India. There were many reasons for this, which readily account for the seeming slackness of the LMS Directors. The India of 1800 was a very distant country and the East India Company was bitterly hostile to all efforts towards the evangelisation of the Hindu population. Missionaries were expressly forbidden to land, and even if they succeeded in landing were deported by force.

Forsyth was fiercely independent; he supported himself and lived in spartan simplicity. He is described by George Gogerly, one of his immediate successors in the Bengal Mission, 'as being a man of most singular self-denial and large heartedness, and as generous to an extreme. His whole time, talents, and property he devoted, most conscientiously, to his missionary work, and to

¹⁴ Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895* (2 vols., London, 1899), Vol. 2, p. 14.

the relief of suffering humanity. From the funds of the LMS he never received anything, with the exception of a few dollars when he embarked for India. His private resources were exceedingly limited; and, in consequence, his mode of living was very simple and inexpensive. His friend, James Edmond,¹⁵ said of him ... "For a time he had no stated dwelling-place, but lived in a small boat, in which he went up and down to preach at the different towns on the banks of the river."¹⁶ The Dutch local government appointed Forsyth as minister of the Church at Chinsurah, and after frequently refusing any remuneration for his services, he consented at last to accept fifty rupees a month. After a while, however, he again declined any financial support, saying, 'I have no use for it, I can do very well without it, why should I take what I do not require? Pray apply it to the relief or assistance of some who really need it.'¹⁷ It is clear that his personal expenses must have been very small, and this accounts for his readiness to help those requiring pecuniary assistance and for the appearance of his name in various lists of subscriptions for 100 rupees. At stated times of the year he distributed alms to the poor, thus exemplifying his favourite maxim, with regard both to temporal and spiritual benefits, 'Freely ye have received, freely give.' He tended the sick and gave virtually all he possessed to the poor.

In addition, a friend of missions placed at his disposal a small bungalow at Bandel, about three miles above Chinsurah, from which spot he regularly walked every Sabbath morning to discharge his duties. Another field of labour into which Forsyth entered was the superintendence and tuition of a large school at Chinsurah, which had been deprived by death of its former master. For this purpose he left Bandel, and having purchased a large house and extensive premises at Chinsurah, he settled there. The same remarkable diligence, Christian simplicity, and forgetfulness of self, marked his conduct in this as in all his other engagements.¹⁸ Robert May (1788-1812), who joined Forsyth in 1812, was an educationalist of no mean power. Hence the particular branch of mission work which he chose was the instruction of the young, for which he was eminently qualified, and in which he proved most successful. He had studied under David Bogue at Gosport and established no less than thirty-six vernacular schools containing nearly 3,000 boys, among whom were

¹⁵ James Edmond (1759-1833) was a Scot brought up in a poor but godly home who in his late teenage years forsook the paths in which he was trained as a child. He was eventually converted under the preaching of Matthew Wilks in William Roby's Independent Church in Manchester. Roby was a keen supporter of the LMS, and under his guidance Edmond became a missionary, first to South Africa with Johannes van der Kemp (1747-1811) and then to Bengal where he worked with David Brown. Henry Martyn spoke enthusiastically of his labours. It was here that he met Forsyth. Edmond's funeral sermon was preached by Thomas Dealtry (a protégé of Charles Simeon of Cambridge) who was at the time the minister of the Old Church in Calcutta and was to later become the Archdeacon of Calcutta and then the Bishop of Madras. An interesting and instructive account of Edmond's life is in Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, Vol. 2, pp. 233-244. It is touching to read the account of Edmond's father expostulating with him and earnestly praying for his conversion whilst he was in a state of rebellion (pp. 233-234).

¹⁶ George Gogerly, *The Pioneers: A Narrative of facts connected with Early Christian Missions in Bengal chiefly relating to the operations of the London Missionary Society* (London, 1871), p. 60.

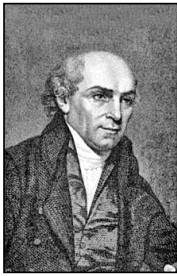
¹⁷ Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, Vol. 1, pp. 176-177.

¹⁸ Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, Vol. 1, p. 178.

more than 700 sons of Brahmins. His attention to these schools occupied a great portion of his time, and necessitated an amount of exposure to the sun which proved very prejudicial to his health; predisposing him, according to George Gogerly, to 'attacks of fever and congestion of the brain, of which he died on the 11 August, 1818.' His period of labour in Bengal mission field was exactly six years; he had landed in Calcutta on 11th August 1812.¹⁹

Though Forsyth devoted himself wholeheartedly to his mission work, particularly among the Europeans in Calcutta, Chinsurah, and Bandel, he was conscious of the need of additional labourers. He was delighted to hear of the possibility of a Mr Thom coming from Gosport, doubtless at the urging of David Bogue. However, he still wrote to Rev. Sir Henry Moncrieff Wellwood (1750-1827) the minister at St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh and the leader of the Evangelical or Popular Party in the Church of Scotland asking him to send more labourers into this vineyard; he added, 'Should they come even at the same time with our brother Thom from Gosport, that need not by any means prevent him, for our Lord wants many labourers here. Let them all come – all will be welcome to Him and me.'²⁰

IV. Forsyth and William Carey



William Carey, the first Baptist missionary to India who worked with Forsyth.

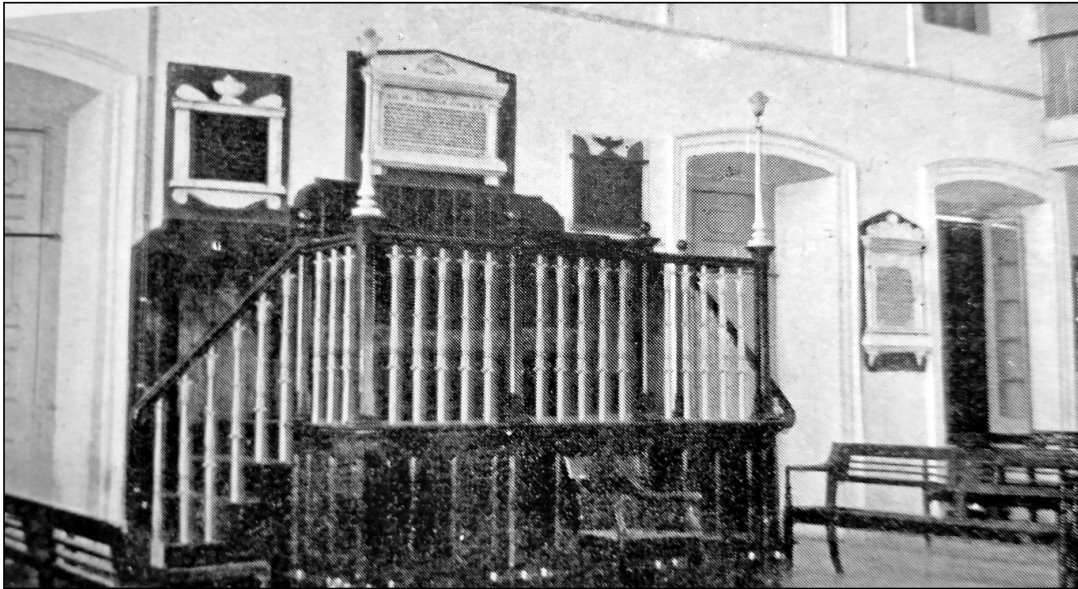
Forsyth went frequently to Calcutta to preach at the General Hospital with the permission of David Brown, then the senior chaplain of the East India Company. William Carey commenced missionary work in Calcutta in 1801, meeting at first in a home. A proposal was then made by David Brown and Claudius Buchanan²¹ a year later to construct a place of worship in Calcutta for preaching to Europeans, natives, and sailors. Buchanan and Brown undertook to use their influence to prevent opposition on the part of the authorities. The Dissenters met for many years in hired premises that were not always very suitable. One such large hall was in the house of an undertaker and worshippers had Sabbath by Sabbath to walk past a range of coffins to arrive at the place of worship. The chapel that was

¹⁹ For biographical details of Robert May, see Lewis, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography, 1730–1860*, Vol. 2, p. 758; Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795–1895*, Vol. 2, pp. 16–17; Gogerly, *The Pioneers*, p. 61; B. H. Badley, *Indian Missionary Directory and Memorial Volume* (Calcutta, 1866), p. 22.

²⁰ Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, Vol. 1, p. 176.

²¹ Both David Brown (1762–1812) and Claudius Buchanan (1766–1815) were Anglicans and East India Company chaplains. Both had come under the influence of the Cambridge Evangelical, Charles Simeon. Brown was the first to be appointed and was the leader among the notable group of chaplains who served in Bengal. The group also included Thomas Thomason and Henry Martyn. Buchanan had been converted under the ministry of John Newton at St. Mary Woolnoth in London. Both Brown and Buchanan were friends of the Serampore Trio of Baptist missionaries (William Carey, Joshua Marshman, and William Ward) and encouraged them in their work of Bible translation. For biographical details, see Charles Simeon, *Memorial Sketches of the Rev. David Brown* (London, 1816); Hugh Pearson, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Claudius Buchanan* (2 vols., Oxford, 1817). For brief accounts of the lives of Brown and Buchanan, see Lewis, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography, 1730–1860*, Vol. 1, pp. 147, 159; Gerald H. Anderson (ed.) *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (New York, 1998), pp. 94, 98–99; ODNB.

eventually built for Carey in Calcutta was called the Lall-Bazar Baptist Church and, according to a resolution adopted at a meeting of the subscribers, it was opened by Nathaniel Forsyth, in conjunction with Carey, on 1st January 1809. Forsyth conducted the evening service. At the time the resolution was conveyed to him, he was also asked whether he would preach regularly at the chapel. This he agreed to do as it opened for him a new field of service; he preached there regularly on a Sabbath evening to the close of his life.²²



Lall Bazar Chapel in Calcutta where both Carey and Forsyth preached.

Forsyth's first biographer says that he 'was a man of prayer, he loved and lived upon communion with his God; and it is when we draw aside the veil and behold him in retirement, that we cease to wonder at his holy energy, his undaunted courage, and his uncommon abstractedness from the things of earth. Intercourse with heaven was "his meat and drink," and to do the will of heaven's God and King was his delight. The flame which burned so brightly that all men might see the reflection of the light it caused, was kindled on the altar of devotion, for he passed "whole nights in prayer to God," or "rising up a great while before day, he departed into a secret place himself alone," to hold long and uninterrupted fellowship with the beloved of his soul.'²³

V. His last days

Forsyth's injudicious mode of living in a country like Bengal: denying himself almost the common necessities of life, refusing to travel either by carriage

²² For the history of Carey's church in Calcutta, see Edward Steane Wenger, *The Story of Lall Bazar Baptist Church, Calcutta* (Calcutta, 1908). For Forsyth's involvement in Lall Bazar Chapel, see Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, Vol. 1, p. 180; S. Pearce Carey, *William Carey* (London, 1924), p. 264. Adoniram Judson, the American missionary, went to India holding Congregationalist views. He then studied the baptismal controversy in order to controvert the Baptist missionaries. However, his researches led to his becoming a Baptist and he was baptised by William Carey in the Lall-Bazar Chapel.

²³ *The Calcutta Christian Observer*, Vol. 2, p. 594.

or palankeen,²⁴ but always walking where he could not be conveyed by boat, produced, as might be expected, the prostration of a naturally strong constitution; and, after eighteen years of labour, Mr Forsyth died at a friend's house in Chandannagar, near Chinsurah on 30th January 1816 aged 47 years. Thus fell the first pioneer connected with the LMS in Bengal. He was buried in the graveyard at Chinsurah where a stone marks the spot. It was placed there in his memory by a friend in London.²⁵ In his last illness, Forsyth wrote to a friend making reference to the Baptists at Serampore and their manner of public worship with which he was in hearty sympathy. 'If you see any of the brethren from Serampore, tell them I have been very ill, and am not yet out of danger. I have no doubt of their sympathy and prayers, and that they would do anything in their power for my recovery and comfort. I much admire the simplicity and fervency with which they worship God and preach the gospel of his Son, like all the old Puritans and churches of the Reformation, without Popish ceremonies.'²⁶

In 1849, thirty-three years after Forsyth's death, after seeing little fruit, the mission Forsyth begun at Chinsurah was transferred to the Free Church of Scotland. The chapel, costing £1,000 to build, was gifted to the Free Church on condition that the 'pure Calvinistic doctrines, agreeable to the terms of the title-deed, should continue to be preached in it.' On 20th August 1849 the chapel was re-opened by Alexander Duff as part of the Free Church of Scotland mission in India.²⁷

2. William Tennant, LL.D.²⁸

I. Ordination

John Love was the moderator of the Scots Presbytery during 1795, and when the Scots Presbytery met at Broad Street on Wednesday 5th August 1795, it was also his turn to preach before the brethren. After the minutes of the previous meeting were approved and several items of ongoing business were dealt with, the two main matters on the Presbytery agenda were firstly, to hear Nathaniel Forsyth deliver the Presbytery exercise that he had been appointed



William Tennant.

²⁴ A palankeen (or palanquin) was a covered litter for one passenger, consisting of a large box carried on two horizontal poles by four or six bearers. He never employed bearers to carry him in this way as he viewed it as 'a piece of cruelty'. Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, Vol. 1, p. 180.

²⁵ The stone was erected by a Captain Hugh Reid. The inscription is detailed in *The Calcutta Christian Observer*, Vol. 2, p. 598.

²⁶ Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, Vol. 1, p. 181.

²⁷ Robert Hunter, *History of the Missions of the Free Church of Scotland in India and Africa* (London, 1873), p. 105.

²⁸ The main sources of biographical information on Tennant are a paper read before the Edinburgh Institute on 25th January 1814 by AM, 'Memoir of the Life and Writings of William Tennant LL.D.', printed in *The Scots Magazine and Edinburgh Literary Miscellany*, Vol. 76 (Edinburgh, 1814), pp. 489-493; *Public Characters of 1805* (London, 1805), pp. 393-401.

to deliver, and, secondly, to receive an urgent application from a Glasgow University graduate to be taken on trials with a view to ordination to the gospel ministry. The application came from William Tennant. The Presbytery minute details what took place:

Dr Tennant represented to the Presbytery that having in prospect to go to India as chaplain to a regiment requested the Presbytery to receive him on trial in order to be ordained. Dr Tennant then produced an extract of his license, letters from ministers respecting his good character and his diploma as LL.D. from the University of Glasgow. Which being considered it was unanimously resolved that Dr Tennant be immediately taken on trials for ordination – that Acts 4:12 be appointed him as the subject for popular sermon to be delivered at London Wall on Wednesday next at noon.²⁹

The Presbytery met again a week later on Wednesday 12th August at the London Wall Church to hear Tennant's popular sermon on the text appointed, 'Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.' The Presbytery sustained his discourse as contributing to his trials. David Bogue of Gosport, a founding father of the LMS,³⁰ with a profound interest in missions, was a visitor at this meeting of the Presbytery and present during all the proceedings. The Presbytery then required Tennant, as a further part of his trials, to deliver an exercise on Romans 3:25 in the vestry of the Scots Church London Wall in three days' time on Saturday 15th August at 9 o'clock. They then resolved that, in the event of his trials being satisfactory, the Presbytery would proceed to his ordination five days later on Thursday 20th August at the London Wall Church when David Todd would preach and John Love, as moderator, would ordain. In order that everything was fully arranged, Charles Lorimer was appointed to begin with prayer, Thomas Rutledge was to read the Scriptures, Henry Hunter was to give the charge, and James Steven was to conclude.³¹ At the meeting on the Saturday, Tennant's exercise was clearly satisfactory and he was required to preach once more before the Presbytery on the day scheduled for his ordination. Accordingly, the Presbytery met again on 20th August and Tennant delivered the discourse that had been prescribed which was unanimously sustained by the Presbytery. They then proceeded to ordain him according to the previous arrangements.³² The period between Tennant's application and his ordination was just fifteen days; this was in marked contrast to Forsyth whose trials took over a year to complete. The most likely explanation for the urgency seems to have been the arrangements regarding his passage to India and the fact he was to become one of the King's Chaplains.

II. Early life

William Tennant was born in November 1758 at Corton, near Ayr. He was just seventeen months younger than John Love, the minister who ordained

²⁹ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, pp. 133-134.

³⁰ The meetings at which the LMS was formed took place over an eight-day period commencing just over a month later on Monday 21st September 1795.

³¹ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, pp. 135.

³² MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, pp. 136-137.

him. His father, John Tennant, was a farmer of some ability. He managed the very large estate of the Earl of Glencairn in which he introduced many of the improvements that were then taking place in agriculture. Having accomplished the agricultural plans of the Earl, much to his satisfaction and his own credit, he retired in order to manage a farm of his own. This he did with sufficient skill that he was able to rear a numerous family,³³ most of whom occupied respectable positions in society. William Tennant was the eldest son of the family and received the first rudiments of education under the tuition of John Murdoch in Alloway, Ayrshire.³⁴ As the paper before the Edinburgh Institute points out, 'What adds much to the interest of this part of Dr Tennant's story, is, that he was the play-mate and school-fellow of the celebrated Robert Burns. We do not find indeed that they were class-fellows, though they studied under the same roof, and were taught by the same Master.'³⁵

Tennant then went to the Grammar School at Ayr where he was taught by an uncle – David Tennant. From Ayr he went to Glasgow University where he studied Classics and Classical Literature. In two successive years he obtained the prize for the best specimen of classical criticism and literary composition against competition that included both William Schaw Cathcart, the 1st Earl Cathcart,³⁶ and Matthew Baillie,³⁷ who was the son of James Baillie, John Love's Divinity professor at Glasgow University. Tennant then entered the Divinity Hall at Glasgow University to study for the ministry in compliance with both his own wishes and those of his father. His biographer writes: 'In his theological studies and exercises, prescribed for young men who are candidates for the ministry, he acquitted himself with his usual ability.'³⁸ Interestingly, William Tennant and John Love were contemporaries in Glasgow. Tennant was pursuing his University course whilst Love was in the Divinity Hall.³⁹

³³ He had at least thirteen children, though one source says fifteen and another fourteen.

³⁴ John Murdoch (1747-1824) was a prolific author. He wrote several books on the pronunciation, orthography, and vocabulary of the French language, translations of French literature, in addition to dramas and works of fiction. The only biographical material on Murdoch is a pamphlet by William Will, *John Murdoch, tutor of Robert Burns* (Glasgow, 1929).

³⁵ *The Scots Magazine*, Vol. 76, p. 489. This article speaks of Murdoch teaching Tennant and Burns at the parochial School at Ochiltree near Cumnock. The more detailed and extensive research on Burns locates the school in Alloway where the poet was born. The *ODNB* account of Burns states that his father 'obtained a tutor for his children and those of four local families' (accessed 17th September 2018). The tutor was Murdoch.

³⁶ William Cathcart (1755-1816). After studying at Eton, he went first to Dresden University then studied law at Glasgow University. On completion of his studies he became a distinguished soldier and was eventually appointed as Britain's ambassador to Russia. See *ODNB* (accessed 18th September 2018).

³⁷ Matthew Baillie (1762-1823) studied Greek, Latin, mathematics, and general philosophy at Glasgow University. He then acquired a scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford. He became an anatomist and physician with an enormous private practice in London. See *ODNB* (accessed 18th September 2018). Matthew Baillie's sister was Joanna Baillie (1762-1823), the poet and playwright.

³⁸ *The Scots Magazine*, Vol. 76, p. 490.

³⁹ Though the dates at which Tennant was at either the University of Glasgow or the Divinity Hall are not recorded in the sketches of his life, the period of his university course can be determined from the biographical accounts of two contemporaries. William Cathcart was at Glasgow between 1773 and 1777 and Matthew Baillie between 1774 and 1779. John Love was in the Divinity Hall between 1772 and 1778.

After completing his Divinity course, Tennant became a tutor to the children in a well-placed family in the west of Scotland. This position, due to ministerial appointments being in the hands of patrons, afforded him every reasonable prospect, in due time, of a living in the Church. He held the same office afterwards successively in two other families of equal respectability and interest; and in consequence of these connections he had every reason to expect that his prospects in the Church would be speedily realised according to his wishes. These ambitions, however, did not materialise. Ayrshire was a notoriously 'Moderate' county and his prospective patrons were clearly of that persuasion. Tennant was an Evangelical and though, according to his biographer, of 'unimpeachable virtue and a preacher of the first order', the gate to the ministry during the 'reign of the Moderates' was barred against him.

III. Military chaplaincies

In the difficult position in which he found himself, and feeling rather downcast, he procured a commission as chaplain in the 101st Regiment of Foot raised by Colonel William Fullarton (1754-1808)⁴⁰ who had seen military service in India. Fullarton had settled to a country life, been elected a fellow of the Royal Society of London and Royal Society of Edinburgh, and resumed a parliamentary career, sitting for several constituencies and finally for Ayrshire from 1796 to April 1803. The 101st Regiment, to which Tennant was chaplain, was disbanded after a year and the officers were reduced to half-pay. Tennant was left with a meagre income of £72 a year. Shortly after this, about the year 1790, he published a book on natural history for which Glasgow University, in appreciation of the merit of the work, conferred on him, in 1795, the degree of LL.D., the highest the University had in its power to bestow.

Having been reduced to a half-pay chaplaincy, Tennant was forced to look for alternative employment, and he cheerfully accepted, around 1795, the invitation of a younger brother, then resident in India, to join him in that country. At first he intended to establish an academy for the education of young men in the various branches of knowledge which would be required by those seeking professional employment in India. However, the scheme of an academy was abandoned when he was appointed by the king to a chaplaincy in the army with the 78th Regiment of Foot, then serving in India. It was at this stage that Tennant sought ordination from the Scots Presbytery of London. The speed with which he was ordained was doubtless due to his academic attainments, and to his having previously trained for the ministry in Scotland, and also, very probably, to John Love's knowledge of him when they were together in Glasgow.

The 78th Regiment of Foot was a Highland regiment raised in the late-eighteenth century for service against the French in the French Revolutionary Wars. It was later involved in worldwide military activities in India, Egypt, and South Africa. Tennant was a chaplain to the regiment during their action in India. The accounts of his career give no details of his activities as a chaplain. Having chosen to be ordained by the distinctly Calvinistic and

⁴⁰ For biographical details of Fullarton, see *Dictionary of National Biography* (cited afterwards as *DNB*), and *ODNB*.

evangelical London Scots Presbytery, and having been declined preferment by the Ayrshire Moderates, one assumes that Tennant was concerned for the souls of the soldiers and would, as their chaplain, have sought to take to them the Gospel message. However, such information as we have regarding his stay in India is entirely of a literary character and of his literary pursuits. His biographer writes:

On his arrival in India, Dr Tennant was admitted a member of the Asiatic Society, which at once tended to gratify his taste and promote his literary views. This society was instituted by the celebrated Sir William Jones, and had for its object the promotion of Eastern literature, and the investigation of the antiquities, so numerous and interesting, which the Eastern world presents to the inquisitive mind. The advantages of this literary connection, and the opportunities of observation derived from his office, as chaplain in the army, Dr Tennant did not allow to pass-away unimproved. The means of observing the manners and habits of eastern nations, which he enjoyed during the progress of the army to which he was attached, laid the foundation of his interesting work on the customs of the east; as it furnished him with materials drawn from actual observation and immediate converse with the natives.⁴¹

The progress of the 78th Regiment during the eventful period in which Tennant was in India afforded him an unrivalled opportunity of exploring the country, and conversing with the local inhabitants, along a line of the army's march of over three thousand miles.⁴² Tennant did not allow these



Major General Arthur Wellesley leading the charge at the Battle of Assaye.

opportunities of observation derived from his office as a chaplain to escape. He made careful observations of the manners and habits of eastern nations, and this on a scale that was only possible to a person associated with an army on the march. Aided by his classical education, his literary connections, together with his own zeal in the acquisition of knowledge, and the advantages of the relative leisure connected

with his office, he was able to gather a vast amount of information on the Indian continent. His stay there and the extensive observations he made rendered him eminently qualified to describe a people he saw who were so different from European manners and usages.⁴³

It is worthy of remark that in 1803, a year after Tennant had returned to Edinburgh, the 78th Highland Regiment along with 74th (Highland) Regiment

⁴¹ *The Scots Magazine*, Vol. 76, p. 491.

⁴² William Tennant, *Indian Recreations consisting chiefly of strictures on the Domestic and Rural Economy of the Mahomedans & Hindoos* (2 vols., London, 1804), Vol. 1, p. xvii.

⁴³ *Public Characters of 1805*, p. 398.

of Foot, the 19th Light Dragoons and eight divisions of the Madras native infantry under the command of Major General Arthur Wellesley, who would become the famous Duke of Wellington, took part in the Battle of Assaye. This was a major battle of the Second Anglo-Maratha War fought between the Maratha Empire and the British East India Company. The Maratha Empire, or the Maratha Confederacy, was an Indian power that dominated much of the Indian subcontinent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The battle, which was a struggle for the control of India, occurred on 23rd September 1803, near Assaye in western India, where an outnumbered Indian and British force under the command of Wellesley defeated a combined Maratha army. The battle was Wellesley's first major victory and one he later described as his finest accomplishment on the battlefield, even more so than his more famous victories in the Peninsular War, and his defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte at the Battle of Waterloo.⁴⁴

IV. Literary pursuits

After an absence of seven years in India, Tennant returned to Scotland in 1802, settled in Edinburgh and for the rest of his life followed a literary career. He does not seem to have sought to become a minister in the Established Church. In line with what appears to have been his major preoccupation, he became a member of a select Edinburgh society, who met by rotation at each other's houses, for the purpose of reading essays, receiving the remarks of their friends, and enjoying the benefit of free and liberal conversation. This society consisted of several of the clergy of the city, some of the professors, teachers of the high school, and other gentlemen of literary habits.⁴⁵ Immediately on his return he commenced the preparation of the work for which he is best known in literary circles: the publication a year later in 1803 of a two-volume work entitled *Indian Recreations consisting chiefly of strictures on the Domestic and Rural Economy of the Mahomedans & Hindoos*. It is an extensive work; the first volume has 438 pages and the second 434 pages. The volumes are essentially ninety-two free standing essays written by Tennant at various places whilst he was in India accompanying his regiment on their vast treks in that part of Asia. The essays are dated and the location at which they were written is recorded. They detail his observations of the country and cover a vast range of topics on the domestic and rural economy of India and also include his comments on Hindoo worship, Mahomedan cruelty, the climate, and especially the agriculture of country. The volumes would have provided a fascinating account to readers in Scotland and England who were unfamiliar with Indian history and culture. In 1807 these volumes were followed by a third entitled *Thoughts on the Effects of the British Government on the State of India*, which was reprinted a year later as the third volume

⁴⁴ The literature on this decisive battle, its significance, and on Wellesley's involvement, is extensive and includes Simon Millar, *Assaye 1803: Wellington's First and 'Bloodiest' Victory* (Oxford, 2006); Randolph G. S. Cooper, *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and the Contest for India* (Cambridge University Press, 2003); M. S. Naravane, *Battles of the Honourable East India Company* (New Delhi, 2014), pp. 69-71.

⁴⁵ *The Scots Magazine*, Vol. 76, pp. 491-492.

Evangelicals. His view was, that before the heathen could be Christianised they must first be civilised: that education and culture must precede the gospel proclamation. Tennant was scathing of what he had seen of the early Protestant missions in India. Ian Douglas Maxwell has written:

From the very beginning of Scottish interest in missions in the mid-eighteenth century, differences in approach had emerged between the two wings of Scottish Presbyterianism, namely, evangelical and rational Calvinists. In discussions concerning the propagation of the gospel beyond Christendom, the question at issue was the relative priority of differing mission methods: whether biblical and apostolic preaching should come first or rather the communication of the civilizing rationality that many assumed to be essential to a full comprehension of Christian faith. By the end of the eighteenth century this debate had entered Presbyterian consciousness to such an extent that any discussion of missions ran the risk of becoming polarized around the two positions. In the popular mind they came to be regarded as mutually exclusive.⁵¹

Tennant, in the first volume of *Indian Recreations*, has an essay written in Calcutta in 1796 entitled 'Efforts of Europeans in the conversion of the natives'. In this he appears to critique Carey and the Baptists, whose mission was at Serampore in Danish territory,⁵² when he writes:

A society of well disposed persons in Britain collected a fund many years ago, and sent out missionaries; and though that establishment still subsists in Calcutta, no conversions of any moment have ever dignified its labours. It has for some time been united with a Danish society, formed upon a similar plan, and with the same views: after thus combining their efforts and their resources, the mission is at present in a more languishing state than ever. An elegant church has been erected, but none of the natives, even of the lowest cast, has as far as I can learn, ever condescended to come under its roof: the edifice is therefore used as one of the ordinary places of worship for the English inhabitants.⁵³

Then, using language which most Evangelicals who agreed with the prior need to civilise would not have approved, Tennant expounds his strongly held conviction that education and civilisation are necessary prior to the preaching of the Gospel.

In order to their being Christians, it was first requisite to make them reasonable creatures, a title to which savages, with hardly a single intellectual idea, have surely but little claim. The first fruits of the American vineyard were, therefore, useless, by being premature. The acquiescence of the simple convert, in doctrines to him incomprehensible, could be attended with no

⁵¹ Ian Douglas Maxwell, 'Civilization or Christianity? The Scottish Debate on Mission Methods, 1750-1835', in Brian Stanley (ed.), *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment* (Grand Rapids, 2001), p. 124.

⁵² William Carey arrived in India in 1793, over a decade before Tennant published the first two volumes of *Indian Recreations*. Krishna Pal, the first convert, was baptised at Serampore in 1800, four years after the essay was originally written by Tennant on the 'Efforts of Europeans in the conversion of the natives'. However, by 1821 the Baptists had recorded more than 1400 baptisms.

⁵³ Tennant, *Indian Recreations*, Vol. 1, p.207.

alteration either of belief, or of conduct; no additional light was conveyed to his understanding, nor any new motive supplied to influence him in the practice of duty. His name and appellation were alone changed; and if there be any virtue in charms or names, he was a complete believer from his childhood. Were, therefore, the whole body of the multitude of Hindostan, from caprice, or views of interest, at once to abandon their system in the present state of their intellectual improvement, the circumstance might be a triumph to the missionaries: but it could by no means be construed into a victory to truth; nor would the number of real Christians be augmented by this apostasy. In their present ignorance, not of religion, but of every moral precept, to lay before them the sublime doctrines of Christianity is to violate its prohibitions, by 'casting pearls before swine'.⁵⁴

He then explains how, in his view, mission strategy should proceed among the Hindoos of Bengal:

The best informed persons here are fully of opinion, that to increase the influence of pure religion among the natives, you must begin by improving their knowledge; which can only be effected by instructing the youth. Happily the natives have no aversion to commit their children to the tuition of Europeans: they are rather ambitious that they should acquire the accomplishments of reading and writing English, as the means of enabling them to prosecute some lucrative branch of trade, or of introducing them as upper servants in the employ of the British. The Hindoos will not indeed allow their children to eat or sleep under the same roof with Europeans; but they suffer them to remain at a day school, which, for these purposes, is sufficient. So much is this their desire, that there are several of their children now taught by Europeans; and many more by such of the natives themselves as understand a little English. Where neither of these opportunities can be afforded, there are many instances of spelling books in our language being found in their houses, and copies for writing, purchased by those who imagine they may acquire these branches of knowledge by their own private application ... the children of half a million of people in Calcutta might be taught to read and write: and a foundation laid for putting into their hands plain instructive books of morality and natural religion: and he pays Christianity a bad compliment, who imagines, that it will not recommend itself to such as are tolerably acquainted with these subjects.⁵⁵

The essay concludes with an explanation of how he thinks this massive task of education leading to conversion might be undertaken:

There has always been much difficulty in finding sober and diligent Europeans, willing to confine their prospects to the painful drudgery of teaching in India. The task of instructing the native children might probably prove the most irksome of any. The prospect of making a large fortune in the cotton, silk, or indigo business, however uncertain, has always sufficient attractions to withdraw persons of education from a line of life unjustly deemed unimportant and degrading. In the present circumstances, this obstacle could easily be surmounted in Calcutta. The children born to Europeans by native women are every year increasing in number, and employment for them will soon become a matter of serious attention: they are at present excluded by the regulations,

⁵⁴ Tennant, *Indian Recreations*, Vol. 1, pp. 208-209.

⁵⁵ Tennant, *Indian Recreations*, Vol. 1, pp. 214-215.

from any appointment in the service of the (East India) Company, civil or military. Their education, and their limited ambition, seem to point them out as the most proper persons for the tuition of the native children; while their numbers are more than sufficient to supply every appointment of this kind, which either the benevolence, piety, or zeal of the present age appear likely to suggest. The contemplation of a measure of this kind, is the more pleasing; because if it shall ever be adopted, it will place in a useful profession a numerous class of unfortunate youth, who for no fault of their own, have been abandoned by their progenitors on one side; and on account of their Christian education, excluded from the society of those on the other.⁵⁶

Tennant ends the essay, sadly, in very derogative terms with respect to the early missionary effort: 'Had one half of the sum been bestowed in this manner, which has been expended in haranguing the ignorant multitude, by still more ignorant missionaries, very different consequences might have been the result: at all events, the contributors to the measure, would have the satisfaction of having the exercise of their benevolence, approved by that of their reason.'⁵⁷

VI. Missions debate in the Church of Scotland General Assembly of 1796

Six months before Tennant wrote his essay in Calcutta, the same issue of mission strategy formed part of the famous missions debate in the May 1796 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. This debate has been pictured in Disruption polemics as evidence that whilst the Evangelicals were zealous for overseas missions the Moderates were opposed to missions.⁵⁸ A statement in the speech of George Hamilton of Gladsmuir made during the debate is provided as proof of the thesis. He is reported as having said at the beginning of a long speech, 'To spread abroad the knowledge of the Gospel among barbarian and heathen nations seems to me highly preposterous, in so far as it anticipates, nay, as it even reverses the order of nature.'⁵⁹ Miller's application of this in the midst

⁵⁶ Tennant, *Indian Recreations*, Vol. 1, pp. 215-216.

⁵⁷ Tennant, *Indian Recreations*, Vol. 1, p. 216. A much enlarged exposition of Tennant's views on mission strategy is embodied in his essay which was awarded the Buchanan prize by Edinburgh University. This is to be found in the second edition of his *Thoughts on the Effects of the British Government on the State of India* which was issued as the third volume of *Indian Recreations*. See William Tennant, *Indian Recreations, consisting of Thoughts on the Effects of the British Government on the State of India* (1808), Vol. 3, pp. 247-347.

⁵⁸ This argument finds its classic statement in the five articles entitled 'The Missions Debate' that Hugh Miller contributed to *The Witness* between 25th September 1841 and 9th October 1841. They were subsequently printed in Hugh Miller, *The Headship of Christ and the Rights of the Christian People* (8th edn., Edinburgh, 1875), pp. 130-186. Miller's account has been regarded by Church of Scotland mission historians as biased and partisan. Robert Weir has written regarding Miller's account of the debate that it 'may be compared to an historical romance written by a violent partisan. It gives the main incidents detailed in the original narrative, but to these it adds much imaginary matter coloured by strong prejudice. Unfortunately some writers on this subject have obtained their knowledge of the debate only from the version of the bitter controversialist, and the real character of the proceedings has thus sometimes been misrepresented.' Robert W. Weir, *A History of the Foreign Missions of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1900), p. 15.

⁵⁹ [Robert Lundie], *Account of the Proceedings and Debate in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 27 May 1796* (Edinburgh, 1796), pp. 17-18. The account is cited in Miller, *Headship of Christ*, p. 152. The authorship of the anonymous account of the 1796 debate was incorrectly attributed by Hugh Miller to Robert Heron, a ruling elder from New

of the ‘Ten Year’s Conflict’ is as follows: ‘It furnishes a better illustration of the true character of Moderatism than they will be able to find for themselves almost anywhere else; and it were surely well they should all thoroughly know what sort of a religion it is which has so lately challenged for itself an exclusive right to be recognized as the state religion of Scotland.’⁶⁰ Whilst it is undoubtedly correct to assert that the Evangelicals were far more zealous for missions than the Moderates, the issues in debate at the 1796 General Assembly were more complex than supposedly Moderate outright opposition to overseas missions.

The LMS had been organised in London in September 1795, less than a year before the missions debate in the May 1796 General Assembly. The Glasgow Missionary Society and the Edinburgh Missionary Society were launched in February 1796 just months before the debate. The topic came before the Assembly in consequence of two overtures from the Synods of Moray and Fife; one called for the Assembly to support the new missionary societies, whilst the second advocated taking up collections for them.⁶¹ There were two main elements in the Moderate call to reject the overtures. The first was, not whether the Church would sponsor missionary work on its own account, but whether it would give official approval to the missionary societies and the local voluntary groups of Evangelicals that had initiated them. It was the issue of whether missionary work should be undertaken by societies or by the Church itself.⁶² The second main issue in the debate was over mission strategy. This is reflected in Hamilton of Gladsmuir’s speech when it is seen in context. The view of the Moderates was that, in order for missionary work to be effective and for the Biblical message to be understood, civilization and education must precede the proclamation of the gospel.⁶³ In addition, in keeping with Scottish Enlightenment theology, they thought that an explanation of natural theology should also precede revealed theology.⁶⁴

Galloway. The correct identity of the author, based on contemporary letters held in New College Library, was Robert Lundie, then a divinity student in Edinburgh. See the helpful explanation in David A. Currie, ‘The Growth of Evangelicalism in the Church of Scotland’ (Unpublished Edinburgh University Dissertation, 1990), p. 162, n. 41.

⁶⁰ Miller, *Headship of Christ*, p. 130.

⁶¹ The text of the overtures is in Lundie, *Account of the Proceedings etc.*, p. 4.

⁶² According to the eminent missionary historian, Andrew F. Walls, over sixty local mission societies were founded in Scotland by 1825. See A. F. Walls, ‘Missions’ in *DSCHT*, p. 569.

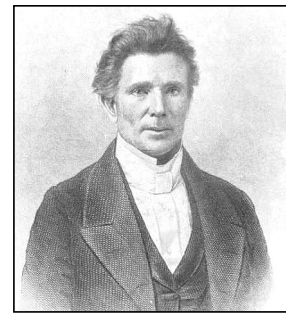
⁶³ For the factors leading to the 1796 missions debate in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, its history, and implications see, Currie, ‘The Growth of Evangelicalism in the Church of Scotland’, pp. 139-188; Gavin White, ‘“Highly Preposterous”: origins of Scottish Missions’, *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, Vol. 19, Part 2 (1978), pp. 111-124; Maxwell, ‘Civilization or Christianity? The Scottish Debate on Mission Methods, 1750-1835’. There are two further papers in *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment* that cast a great deal of light on the mission-strategy concept that was so widely embraced in Scotland of civilization/education prior to gospel proclamation. See Natasha Erlank, ‘“Civilizing the African”: The Scottish Mission to Xhosa, 1821-64’, pp. 141-168; and Brian Stanley, ‘Christianity and Civilization in English Evangelical Mission Thought, 1792-1857’, pp. 169-197.

⁶⁴ A leading exponent of this theological outlook was Principal George Hill (1750-1819), Professor of Divinity at St. Andrews and the leader of the Moderate Party after the death of William Robertson in 1780. See George Hill, *Lectures in Divinity* (6th, edn., Edinburgh, 1854), pp. 132-144. The ideas of such men were based on what they viewed as Paul’s procedure in Athens as detailed the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 17.

VII. *Evangelical advocates of the civilization strategy*

This view of mission strategy, though largely advocated by the Moderates, did have some support among Evangelicals, including Alexander Duff and John Love. Though heartily committed to missions and the desire to see native peoples converted, and avoiding the type of language used by Tennant and Hamilton of Gladsmuir, they did hold to the priority of education, civilization, and beginning with natural theology.⁶⁵ John Love's *Addresses to the People of Otaheite*,⁶⁶ designed to be used by the LMS's first mission to Tahiti, were composed on the basis of natural theology. John Morison has observed regarding Love's addresses:

It has been doubted by some, whether the method of appeal adopted by Dr Love in these addresses was strictly consistent with the models laid down by inspired men. Had the missionaries adopted his suggestions, there is reason to fear that the conversion of the South Sea Islanders would have been retarded rather than promoted. With all the rich imaginings which distinguish these addresses, they seem to proceed upon an erroneous principle; and to give countenance to the idea, too prevalent at one period in the public mind, that, in order to prepare heathen men for the reception of Christ's gospel, *there must be a previous training* in what has been called the doctrines of *natural religion*. Now, the very reverse of this notion has been inculcated by the stern lessons of experience; and those missionaries who have been most successful in subverting the powers of heathenism, and in converting idolatrous or savage minds to the faith of Christ, have been men who adhered with greatest simplicity to the example of the great apostle of the Gentiles at Corinth, and who have 'determined not to know anything among men, save Jesus Christ and him crucified'.⁶⁷



Alexander Duff
(1806-1878), *Missionary to India and Free Church of Scotland missionary statesman.*

VIII. *Later life*

William Tennant after his return to Edinburgh seems to have engrossed himself almost entirely in literary matters. In 1810 he was elected annual president of the Edinburgh Subscription Library, an establishment that was patronised by many of the most respectable citizens of the city. Tennant also very clearly inherited his father's interest in farming. The volumes on *Indian Recreations* record in detail the agricultural practices that he had observed in India and in 1810 he read a paper to the Agricultural Society of Edinburgh. It was a technical and historical paper on the steps which had

⁶⁵ For Duff's defence of the priority of education, see Maxwell, 'Civilization or Christianity? The Scottish Debate on Mission Methods, 1750-1835', pp. 137-140.

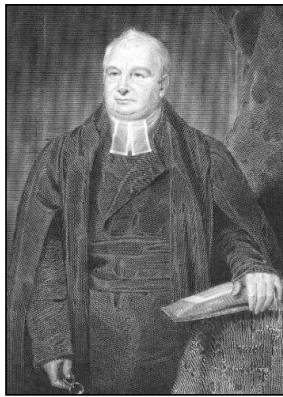
⁶⁶ Love's addresses are reprinted in the volume published shortly after his death, John Love, *Sermons preached on various occasions; with Fifteen Addresses to the People of Otaheite; and a Serious Call respecting a Mission to the River Indus* (Edinburgh, 1826), pp. 259-367. In the biographical introduction by the present writer to the Free Presbyterian Church Publications Committee reprint of the *Memorials of John Love, D.D.* (2 vols., Glasgow, 2015), Vol. 1, p. lxxvii, the date of this volume is incorrectly given as 1846.

⁶⁷ John Morison, *The Fathers and Founders of the London Missionary Society* (London, 1844), pp. 261-262.

led to the improvement of Scots Agriculture.⁶⁸ A year later an application was made to him to accept the presidency of the Edinburgh Institute, to which he readily agreed, and which office he held till the time of his death. In March 1812 his health obliged him to retire to the country in hopes that the attentions of his friends and native air might restore him to health. He had been labouring under the disease from which he died since his return from India. He died on 26th May 1813 at his sister's house at Glenconner in the parish of Ochiltree, where he had spent the last year of his life.⁶⁹

3. John Clark

I. Lady Glenorchy's Chapel, Edinburgh



Thomas Snell Jones,
the minister at Lady
Glenorchy's, Edinburgh.

John Clark was the son of Alexander Clark, the beadle or 'minister's man' at Lady Glenorchy's Chapel in Edinburgh.⁷⁰ The minister, Thomas Snell Jones,⁷¹ had been invited by Lady Glenorchy to be the minister of her chapel in Edinburgh. With this in view, he was ordained by the Scots Presbytery in London on 9th June 1779. His assistant at the time was Greville Ewing whose biographer (his daughter) speaks of Alexander Clark as a highly valued visitor of the afflicted and as being peculiarly gifted in social prayer.⁷² As a young man Alexander Clark had been a hearer of Thomas Gillespie when he was a minister in Dunfermline.

Marjory Bonar, in her introduction to the *Diary and Letters* of her father Andrew A. Bonar, writes:

⁶⁸ The paper is printed in the June 1810 issue of the *Farmer's Magazine, A Periodical Work exclusively devoted to agricultural and Rural Affairs*, Vol. 11 (Edinburgh, 1810), pp. 168-180.

⁶⁹ *The Scots Magazine*, Vol. 76, p. 492.

⁷⁰ For biographical information on the Clarks, see J. J. Matheson, *A Memoir of Greville Ewing* (London, 1843), pp. 79-81; William Lindsay, 'Life and Times of Thomas Gillespie', in James Harper, John Eadie and William Lindsay, *Lives of Ebenezer Erskine, William Wilson and Thomas Gillespie, Founders of the United Presbyterian Church* (Edinburgh, 1849), pp. 292-293; K. R. M. Short, 'A note on the Sierra Leone Mission and Religious Freedom, 1796', *Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. 28:8 (October 1980), pp. 355-360; *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 5, New Series (1827), p. 518; Bruce L. Mouser, 'Origins of Church Missionary Policy accommodation to Imperial policy: The Sierra Leone quagmire and the closing of the Susu Mission, 1804-17', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 39 (2009), pp. 1-18.

⁷¹ Thomas Snell Jones (1754-1837) was born in Gloucester and lost both his parents whilst still a child. He was brought up among Methodists and at the age of eighteen entered Lady Huntingdon's College at Trevecca in Wales and after a short assistantship in Plymouth became the minister at Lady Glenorchy's in Edinburgh. He was invited to become the minister at Lady Glenorchy's in Edinburgh through the influence of a fellow student at Trevecca, John Clayton (1754-1843), who had been called to be the pastor of the King's Weigh House congregation in London. At the time of his call to the King's Weigh House, Clayton had been invited by the Lady Glenorchy to fill the pulpit of her chapel in Edinburgh. This he declined and recommended to her ladyship a fellow-student Thomas Snell Jones, who occupied the post for fifty-eight years and became Lady Glenorchy's biographer; see Thomas Snell Jones, *The Life of the Right Honourable Willielma, Viscountess Glenorchy* (Edinburgh, 1822). For biographical information on Jones, see D. P. Thomson, *Lady Glenorchy and Her Churches* (Crieff, 1967), pp. 41-43; Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 1, p. 79.

⁷² Matheson, *Memoir of Greville Ewing*, p. 79.

Lady Glenorchy's Chapel may be called the spiritual home of the Bonars of that time, and has always been closely associated with them. It was built by Lady Glenorchy in 1774, in connection with, but independent of, the Established Church of Scotland. The minister, Dr Jones, a Welshman, and a man of very strong personality, seems to have exercised much influence over



Lady Glenorchy's Chapel in Edinburgh.

them all, and his peculiarities were remembered and often recalled in after-days. One of these was his strong dislike to paraphrases and hymns. One day an unfortunate minister gave out a paraphrase for the congregation to sing, when the door behind him in the pulpit suddenly opened and Dr Jones's voice was heard saying, 'We sing no paraphrases here!' Andrew Bonar's father and brother were both successively elders in the Chapel, and many other relatives were intimately connected with it. The old Chapel had two galleries, and on Communion Sabbaths the delight of the boys was to go to the upper one and look down on the white-covered pews below. In after years, when addressing the children in Finnieston at a Communion service, Dr Bonar recalled these times in Lady Glenorchy's Chapel, and told how he used to long to be among those who sat at the Lord's Table. But then, he said, he thought he needed to have many good things about him before Christ would take him, and before he would be ready to sit at His Table. He added, 'It was a good while before I learned that that was a mistake, and that Christ would take me at once just as I was, and that it was after coming to Him that I was to learn to have good things about me.' In 1844 the old chapel was taken down to make room for the railway, and many on-lookers went on a misty December morning to see the good Lady Glenorchy's coffin lifted from the old building and laid in the West Kirk burying-ground.⁷³



*Andrew A. Bonar
who attended Lady
Glenorchy's as a boy.*

⁷³ Marjory Bonar (ed.), *Andrew A. Bonar, Diary and Letters* (London, 1894), pp. xi-xii. The Banner of Truth reprint has omitted Marjory Bonar's introduction.

II. Sierra Leone experiment

It was in this spiritually vibrant atmosphere that Alexander Clark's son, John Clark, was raised. After studying divinity at Edinburgh University he came in January 1796 to the London Scots Presbytery desiring ordination in order to go as a missionary chaplain to the Sierra Leone Company which had been formed in 1792.⁷⁴ The company was set up in order to found a British colony in Africa to enable the re-settlement of black American ex-slaves and the 'Black-poor' of London. It was a scheme for Africa's spiritual and commercial regeneration. As early as 1789 William Wilberforce had advocated legitimate commerce as the best way to cut off the slave trade at its source within Africa. Commerce and Christianity was an anti-slavery ideology. In the late eighteenth century the abolition and the missionary movements were closely linked. The Sierra Leone Company was the first institution that was formed with the specific object of the abolition of the slave trade, the civilization of Africa, and the introduction of the Gospel.

Zachary Macaulay, the son of a Church of Scotland minister and an associate of Wilberforce, was at that time the Governor of Sierra Leone.⁷⁵ Macaulay asked John Erskine, the leader of the Evangelicals in the Church of Scotland and minister of Old Greyfriars in Edinburgh, to recommend a person whom he thought would be suitable as a chaplain to the colony. Erskine strongly recommended Clark as 'a young man whose piety, zeal and diligence signally qualified him for such a mission.'⁷⁶ After John Clark had successfully completed his Presbytery trials it was John Love, who on 3rd February 1796 was called upon to preach at his ordination. A year earlier Love had been appointed Secretary of the London Missionary Society and was heavily involved in mission work.⁷⁷ Following Clark's ordination, Love, along with James Steven and Henry Hunter,

⁷⁴ For a history of the Sierra Leone Company and colony, see Andrew F. Walls, 'A Christian Experiment: the Sierra Leone colony', in G. J. Cuming (ed.), *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith* (Studies in Church History, Vol. 6, Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 107-129, reprinted in A.F. Walls, *Crossing Cultural Frontiers: Studies in the History of World Christianity* (New York, 2017), pp. 91-109; Stephen Tomkins, *The Clapham Sect: How Wilberforce's circle transformed Britain* (Oxford, 2010), chapters 10, 11, 13, and 17; Ernest M. Howse, *Saints in Politics: the Clapham Sect and the growth of freedom* (London, 1953), pp. 46-50.

⁷⁵ Zachary Macaulay (1768-1838) was born in Inveraray, the son of John Macaulay (1720-1789), the Church of Scotland minister of the parish. Zachary's sister had married Thomas Babington of Rothley Temple, Leicestershire, a country gentleman and an ardent Evangelical. Macaulay stayed with them for a time and they were the means used for his conversion. It was through Babington that Macaulay came to know William Wilberforce and Henry Thornton, leading members of the Clapham Sect, and became the editor of their magazine the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*. From 1792 to 1799, he was governor of the Sierra Leone Colony. Macaulay became a leading member of the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. He was also a supporter of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Church Missionary Society, and the Society for the Suppression of Vice. He was the father of the historian Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-1859). For details of his life, see *DNB*; *ODNB*; Vicountess Knutsford (his granddaughter), *Life and Letters of Zachary Macaulay* (London, 1900); Charles Booth, *Zachary Macaulay: His Part in the Movement for the Abolition of the Slave Trade and of Slavery* (London, 1934); Iain Whyte, *Zachary Macaulay, 1768-1838: The Steadfast Scot in the British Anti-Slavery Movement* (Liverpool University Press, 2011).

⁷⁶ Matheson, *Memoir of Greville Ewing*, p. 79.

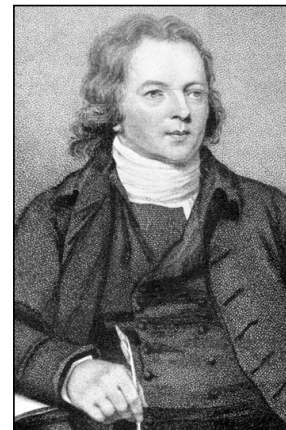
⁷⁷ Morison, *Fathers and Founders of the London Missionary Society*, pp. 254-267.

signed a letter explaining the actions of the London Scots Presbytery to the ministers in Scotland that had certified to the Presbytery the extent of his studies and testified to his character.⁷⁸ Clark sailed to Sierra Leone accompanied by Zachary Macaulay and two other pious young men as catechists. Mrs Matheson, in the biography of her father Greville Ewing, writes of Clark:

The letters received from him, were exceedingly interesting; and served, not only to encourage the hopes of those who were projecting missions to the heathen; but gave, at the same time, such an idea of his prudence and devotedness, that, in afterwards sending out missionaries to the Foulah nation, the London Society confided them, in a great measure, to his advice and direction. Among other departments of usefulness, while in Edinburgh, he had been the teacher of Lady Maxwell's Sabbath evening-school. My father accordingly, on one of his visits to that school, detailed the particulars of Mr Clark's safe arrival at the place of his destination, the commencement of his labours, and his hopes of success; especially in connexion with a Sabbath-school which he had formed, on a similar plan to the one which he had left—my father endeavouring by the recital, and by the affection of the young people for their former teacher, to excite in their minds an interest, on behalf of the children of injured Africa.⁷⁹

III. Mission to the Foulah nation

The reference by Matheson to the Foulah Mission highlights one of the earliest attempts by British missionaries to take the gospel to Africa. When Clark, Macaulay, and the catechists sailed to Freetown on the *Calypso* in February 1796 they were accompanied by six Methodist missionaries chosen by Thomas Coke with the object of commencing a mission to the Foulah people, and a number of support staff.⁸⁰ Prior to leaving Portsmouth, Clark in conducting worship gave out one of Isaac Watts' psalms to be sung; another Scot, a Mr Wilson who was to be a store-keeper for the Sierra Leone Company, in Macaulay's words, 'protested loudly against this, and said he could not conscientiously submit to having any psalms sung except those of the Church of Scotland version.'⁸¹



Thomas Coke, 'The Father of Methodist Missions'.

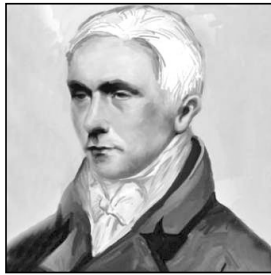
⁷⁸ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, pp. 139-143.

⁷⁹ Matheson, *Memoir of Greville Ewing*, p. 80.

⁸⁰ The Foulah (or Fula) people lived in the mountains to the north of Sierra Leone. On the basis of a report by James Watt and Matthew Winterbottom – two explorers commissioned by the Sierra Leone Company to go to the Foulah people – both the company and Thomas Coke, the Father of Methodist Missions, concluded that the Foulahs were 'ingenious, comparatively well informed, kind to strangers, docile and tractable.' See John Vickers, *Thomas Coke: Apostle of Methodism* (Epworth Press, London, 1969), p. 290. They were traditionally a nomadic, pastoralist, trading people that herded cattle, goats, and sheep.

⁸¹ Knutsford, *Life and Letters of Zachary Macaulay*, p. 119. Thomas Snell Jones, the minister at Lady Glenorchy's in Edinburgh, though ardently committed to exclusive psalmody in public worship, had written to Macaulay warning them that Wilson was one whose views were suspect. (ibid).

On board the *Calypso*, Clark had conducted public worship. Macaulay described the gathering as follows, ‘Our Chaplain, Mr Clarke, who pursues the same mode of proceeding as Mr Jay, preached to about forty people, one-half of whom at least may be said to be truly religious characters.’⁸² The early mission attempts to the Foulahs were, in Andrew Walls words, ‘not a very inspiring story.’⁸³ The Methodist mission was a complete failure. The missionaries were totally unwilling to endure life without the comforts of home, and they never expected to do any physical labour in order to support themselves. Macaulay describes their arrival at Freetown: ‘This morning there was nothing to be heard among the missionary ladies but doleful lamentations and bitter complaints. To their astonishment Freetown resembled neither London nor Portsmouth; they could find no pastry cooks’ shops, nor any gingerbread to buy for their children.’⁸⁴ They all resigned and took the next ship back to England.⁸⁵ The Baptists sent out two men to Sierra Leone in 1795. One was young and feeble, and had to be sent home quickly; the other got heavily involved in Freetown politics, and was extradited, as well as receiving the full weight of Andrew Fuller’s reproof.⁸⁶



Zachary Macaulay,
Governor of Sierra
Leone and member of
the Clapham Sect.

Two further failed missions were attempted. The first was by the Glasgow Missionary Society⁸⁷ who sent as their first missionaries two young tradesmen with little education to Sierra Leone in March 1797. One, after falling ill, returned home to Scotland, trained as a surgeon, threw off the profession of religion and avowed himself an infidel. The other was more interested in worldly affairs than in missions, remained in Sierra Leone and became involved with the slave trade.⁸⁸ Another mission, destined originally to the Foulah country in Sierra Leone, took place in 1797-98 as a result of correspondence between the Glasgow, Edinburgh, and London Missionary Societies. It was agreed that six men, two from each society should go to Africa and be under the guidance of, and act in consultation with, the Governor Zachary Macaulay and the

⁸² Knutsford, *Life and Letters of Zachary Macaulay*, p. 115. Knutsford, unlike other sources, spells Clark with an ‘e’. The reference to Mr Jay is to William Jay of Bath (1769-1853). For details of his life, see George Redford and John Angell James, *The Autobiography of William Jay* (London, 1854, reprinted by the Banner of Truth Trust, 1974).

⁸³ Andrew F. Walls, ‘A Christian Experiment: the Sierra Leone colony’, p. 112.

⁸⁴ Knutsford, *Life and Letters of Zachary Macaulay*, p. 122.

⁸⁵ For a detailed description of the mission, see Vickers, *Thomas Coke*, pp. 287-297. Briefer accounts are in Whyte, *Zachary Macaulay*, pp. 72-73; W. J. Townsend, H. B. Workman, G. Eayrs, *A New History of Methodism* (2 vols., London, 1909), Vol. 2, p. 292.

⁸⁶ For the Baptist Mission to Sierra Leone, see Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society, 1792-1992* (T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1992), pp. 23-24. The most extensive account of the engagement in politics is Basil Amey, ‘Baptist Missionary Society Radicals’, *Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. 26:8 (October 1976), pp. 363-376.

⁸⁷ After his return to Scotland from London, and his induction at the Anderston Chapel of Ease in Glasgow, John Love became the Secretary of the Glasgow Missionary Society.

⁸⁸ For details of this tragic episode, see William Brown, *History of the Propagation of Christianity among the Heathen since the Reformation* (3 vols., Edinburgh, 1854), Vol. 2, pp. 450-454; Robert H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale: South Africa, the Story of a Century, 1841-1941* (Lovedale, South Africa, 1940), pp. 27-28.

Company's chaplain, John Clark.⁸⁹ Before they left, during their stay at Gravesend, Henry Brunton from the Edinburgh Society and Peter Ferguson from the Glasgow Society had conducted several services of public worship. A discourse by Brunton was destined to produce disastrous results, as it led to serious theological contention among five of the six missionaries.⁹⁰ Though the directors of the Sierra Leone Company sought to resolve the matter, they were unsuccessful and the dispute increased during the passage to Freetown. The four missionaries from the Glasgow and London Societies refused to have any fellowship with Brunton. On their arrival Macaulay tried to settle the dispute, apparently without success. As the Foulah people were at war with some of their neighbours, Macaulay sent the missionaries from each society to different places. Within a short time disease had taken three of the six to an early grave, a fourth was murdered, a fifth was so unsuitable for the work and so unamenable to discipline that the London Society terminated his connection with the Society. Only Brunton remained who for a short period following Clark's death took his place as the chaplain to the Sierra Leone Company.⁹¹

IV. *The 'white man's grave'*

Amidst all these trials and disputes the young chaplain, John Clark, seems to have conducted himself exemplarily. Though he was criticised by the Methodist colonists from Nova Scotia under the leadership of a negro preacher, Moses Wilkinson, who objected to a sermon he preached from Luke 14:23, 'Compel them to come in', he sought to pacify their concerns. He was superintendent of the Sabbath Schools and was fiercely accused by a Baptist School teacher, employed by the Company, for seeking to take people away from their own congregations to his ministry as chaplain. Amidst it all, Clark kept his balance and responded, in Macaulay's words, with greatest mildness. The Governor was very fond of him and regarded him as a congenial friend. In the early nineteenth century Sierra Leone was known as the 'white man's grave.' At first, Clark withstood the climate better than some of those who had accompanied him. He preached almost every day of the week, however; and in consequence of both his labours and the climate, like so many who would follow him to the African continent as missionaries, he experienced an early death on 3rd December 1798.⁹²

⁸⁹ John Love must have been intimately involved in this: not only had he preached at Clark's ordination, but he was also one of the Secretaries of the London Missionary Society.

⁹⁰ Brown comments: 'Mr Brunton was unquestionably to blame for the objectionable manner in which he expressed his sentiments, and for the unhallowed temper he manifested in the course of these unhappy disputes.' *History of the Propagation of Christianity among the Heathen*, Vol. 2, p. 415. There is an entry on Henry Brunton in Gerald H. Anderson (ed.), *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (New York, 1998), pp. 97-98.

⁹¹ For details of this conjunct mission of the three societies, see Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895*, Vol. 1, pp. 479-480; Brown, *History of the Propagation of Christianity among the Heathen*, Vol. 2, pp. 415-420, 453-456; Knutsford, *Life and Letters of Zachary Macaulay*, p. 199; Shepherd, *Lovedale*, pp. 28-29.

⁹² The most detailed account of Clark's labours in Sierra Leone is in Knutsford, *Life and Letters of Zachary Macaulay*, pp. 115, 118-120, 130, 136-139, 157, 181, 189-190, 208, and an account of his death pp. 210-213.