

TIME FOR FAVOUR

**SCOTTISH MISSIONS TO THE JEWS
1838 – 1852**

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Thou shalt arise and mercy yet
Thou to mount Sion shalt extend:
Her time for favour which was set,
Behold is now come to an end.

Psalm 102.13 Scottish Metrical Psalter

Abstract

This study is an original and extensive investigation of the development and influence of Scottish Presbyterian missions to the Jewish people in the period 1838-1852. Brief popular accounts of this story have been written, most notably David McDougal's chronicle *In Search of Israel* (London, T. Nelson, 1941). In addition several scholarly works have touched on the Jewish mission tangentially, these include the contributions of Addley, Palmer, Yeaworth, Kool, Chambers and Roxborough. The first four scholars hold largely uncontroversial views of the Scottish Jewish mission, whereas the latter two require detailed response. Don Chambers' 1971 Cambridge Ph.D. thesis *Mission and Party in the Church of Scotland 1810 – 1843*, holds that the Jewish mission was eccentric and atypical of the mission schemes of the Church of Scotland. John Roxborough's 1999 study *Thomas Chalmers: Enthusiast for Mission* curiously neglects Chalmers' enthusiasm for missions to the Jews. Both authors are challenged by a fresh evaluation of original sources: Roxborough in chapter two and Chambers in chapter seven. The period 1838-52 was critical for the development of Scottish missions to the Jewish people. Although sympathetic interest in the Jews had become entrenched in the Church of Scotland in the preceding centuries, opportunity to practically engage in mission was not afforded until the formation of the *London Society for the Promotion of Christianity among the Jews* in 1809. The subsequent withdrawal of the Scottish Presbyterians from the LSPCJ inhibited further involvement in mission until the decision of the 1838 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to establish a committee for the conversion of the Jews. The first phase of the mission terminated in 1852 with the expulsion of the missionaries from the Austrian domains, specifically from Hungary and Moldavia. In chapter one the roots of the mission are traced to certain general religious influences and the spiritual heritage descending from the Reformation via the 'Second Reformation' of the seventeenth century to the eighteenth century revival movements. Attention is paid in chapter two to the formation in 1838, by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, of a Jewish missionary committee. The influence of both the *Edinburgh Christian Instructor* and the establishment in 1809 of Scottish auxiliaries of the LSPCJ is considered. The roles of Robert Wodrow and Thomas Chalmers are evaluated. In chapters three to five the membership, remit and strategic contribution of the 1839 'Mission of Inquiry' is analysed. A critical analysis of the key motivations behind nineteenth century Scottish mission to the Jews forms the substance of chapter six. The influence of Edward Irving, and the revival of interest in the fulfilment of Biblical prophecy is traced. An investigation is made of the millennial controversy between the premillennial theories of the Bonar brothers and the postmillennial views of David Brown. It is argued that eschatological factors were balanced by strong ethical considerations, particularly indebtedness to Israel as the source of the Scottish church's rich spiritual heritage. In chapter seven, financial and other popular support for the cause is considered. Chapters eight to ten contain a detailed examination of the establishment of the European missionary work, particularly that of Daniel Edward at Jassy and Lemburg, and John Duncan and his team at Pesth (Budapest). The influence of the Disruption (1843) is traced, as well as the impact of the Hungarian revolution of 1848 and the subsequent expulsion of the missionaries in 1852. The relative success of these ventures is assessed. The study concludes, in chapter eleven, by demonstrating the influence of the mission on the revival of evangelical spirituality in the Hungarian Reformed Church, the establishment of the Jewish missions of other Presbyterian churches and the founding of the *British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews*.

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Abbreviations

<i>Annals</i>	<i>Annals of the Free Church of Scotland</i>
Bon 1	<i>The Church of Scotland's Care for Israel</i> , the manuscript of <i>Narrative of a Visit to the Holy Land and Mission of Inquiry to the Jews</i> .
BSPGJ	British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Jews.
CMR	<i>Children's Missionary Record of the Free Church of Scotland</i>
DSCHT	<i>Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology</i>
DNB	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
ECI	<i>Edinburgh Christian Instructor</i>
<i>Fasti</i>	Hew Scott, <i>Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanæ</i> (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, [3 rd Ed. 1915-1928])
HMFR	<i>Home and Foreign Missionary Record of the Church of Scotland</i>
HMFRCFS	<i>Home and Foreign Missionary Record of the Free Church of Scotland</i>
LSPCJ	London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews
MB1	Minute book of the Committee for the Conversion of the Jews (NLS Dep. 298/249)
MB2	Minute book of the Committee for the Conversion of the Jews (NLS Dep. 298/250)
MB3	Minute book of the Committee for the Conversion of the Jews, (NLS Dep.298/203)
MBRPC	<i>Minute Book of the Reformed Presbyterian Church</i>
MACCH	M'Cheyne Archive in New College Library, Edinburgh.
<i>Memoir</i>	Andrew A. Bonar <i>Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray M'Cheyne</i> (Dundee: William Middleton, 1852 [2 nd edition])
<i>Narrative</i>	Andrew A Bonar.& R. M. M'Cheyne <i>A Narrative of a Mission of Enquiry to the Jews from the Church of Scotland in 1839</i> (Edinburgh: William Oliphant, 1878 [3 rd edition])
NAS	National Archives of Scotland
NCL	New College Library
NIDCC	<i>New International Dictionary of the Christian Church</i>
NLS	National Library of Scotland
PGACS	<i>Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland</i>
PL	Horatius Bonar <i>Prophetical Landmarks</i> (London: James Nisbet, 1847)
RD	Andrew Bonar <i>Redemption Drawing Nigh: A Defence of the Premillennial Advent</i> . (London: James Nisbet, 1847)
RSCHS	<i>Records of the Scottish Church History Society</i>
RThJ	<i>Reformed Theological Journal</i>

Introduction

Why Study the Scottish Presbyterian Jewish Mission?

Prior to my ordination in 1975, I served as a missionary in central Nigeria and from 1975 to 1985, as a Presbyterian minister in Belfast, Northern Ireland. In 1985 I was appointed Assistant General Secretary of *Christian Witness to Israel*, with whom I served until 2002, the last eleven years as General Secretary. During that period of approximately thirty years, I have increasingly felt the impact of post-modern pluralism on missions generally, and on Jewish evangelism specifically. Today, for many in the Church, Jewish mission is an anachronism, whilst for the Jewish community it is generally considered arrogant and aggressive.¹

This study suggested itself when it occurred to me how appalled and bewildered the Scottish church of the mid-nineteenth century might have felt if it had been aware of the modern view of its missionary sympathies. When, in 1838, the Church of Scotland established its Jewish mission it considered its motives to be entirely benevolent, even affectionate. Reproaching itself for its hitherto longstanding neglect of the Jewish people, it had, at last, 'turned her heart towards them.'² It was my acute and, at times, painful awareness of the tension between the traditional and contemporary views of Jewish evangelism that challenged me, as a minister of the Free Church of Scotland, to critically evaluate the Scottish Church's own view of its motivation and activity in this field. This, together with the additional reasons stated below, convinced me that it was time to undertake new research into a story never before the central focus of an academic study.

The End of an Era

My interest in research was timely, for, arguably, the era of Scottish Presbyterian church missions to the Jews had ended in 1981. That year the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland redefined its relationship to the Jewish people in terms of dialogue with the community rather than the evangelisation of individuals.³ This decision gave rise in 1985 to a lengthy report, *Christians and Jews Today*, produced under the auspices of the newly established Board of World Mission and Unity.⁴ Speaking respectfully of the past work of the Jewish Mission Committee, the Board saw itself as entering into a wholly different relationship to the Jewish people.⁵ In typical

¹ Cf. e.g. Blu Greenburg, 'Mission Witness and Proselytism' in Tanenbaum, Wilson, Rudin (ed) *Evangelicals and Jews in an Age of Pluralism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984) pp.229-230; Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *The Crucified Jew* (London: Fount, 1992) pp. xx, 229-231; Graham Keith, *Hated Without a Cause* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997) pp.73f, 238, 281; Jacob Jozc, *The Jewish People and Jesus Christ After Auschwitz* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981) pp.1572-167, 209f; Anna Maxted 'Inter-faith Group Condemns Tactic Used by Missionaries' in *Jewish Chronicle*, 26/7/91; Bernard Levin 'Clodhoppers on Crusade' in *The Times*, 27/1/92.

² Robert Buchanan *The Ten Years Conflict* (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1852) vol. I, p.326.

³ *Church of Scotland General Assembly Reports, 1981*. Cf. David Torrance, *The Witness of the Jews to God* (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1982) Appendix A [2].

⁴ *Church of Scotland General Assembly Reports, 1985*. Appendix VII p.36 & 365.

⁵ *Ibid.* p.361-377.

Presbyterian fashion the Assembly report was sent down to the Presbyteries for consideration but two years later less than half of the Church's forty-six Presbyteries had bothered to respond. The momentum, which had been sustained for one hundred and fifty years, had been overcome by inertia and, for a majority of its Presbyteries, the Church of Scotland's relationship with the Jewish people had become unimportant and uninteresting.⁶ In the years that followed the Board broke with the hitherto customary practice of reporting to each General Assembly on Jewish related issues. Curiously, it even remained silent on the much vaunted, but in fact, stillborn, dialogue project considered so important in the nineteen nineties. During the same period the political situation in the Middle East had blurred the Church's historic view of Israel, as the Jewish people. Israel was now synonymous with the State of Israel. By 2000, sympathy for the Palestinian cause and the influence of political correctness had led to the Board dropping the term Israel in favour of a mythical entity called Israel/Palestine. As the new millennium commenced it was evident that the Church of Scotland, through its Board of World Mission and Unity, had officially jettisoned its traditional view of, and relationship to, the Jewish people.

By 1921 the decimated Free Church of Scotland, consisting of the small minority which had resisted the 1900 union with the United Presbyterian Church, was, despite its ideological commitment, unable to sustain a church mission to the Jews. The Foreign, Overseas and Jewish Missionary Committee was instructed to fulfil this aspect of the Church's missionary mandate through the agency of the *British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Jews* (BSPGJ), now known as *Christian Witness to Israel* (CWI). None of Scotland's other small Presbyterian bodies, the United Free Church of Scotland, the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the Associated Presbyterian Churches, and the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing), has a Jewish mission of its own, though, the latter four profess some degree of commitment to the principle.

The Questions

What were the historical, cultural and spiritual factors that paved the way for the establishment of the Scottish Jewish mission? What was it that contributed to Scotland's enviable reputation as a nation virtually devoid of anti-Semitism, especially when its general record in race relations is often considered to be so bad?⁷

Today it is commonly alleged that Jewish evangelism, traditionally understood, is inconsistent with sound theology.⁸ Yet Scottish missions to the Jews were founded, staffed and supported by

⁶ Ibid, Appendix IX, p. 395.

⁷ Report of the Commission for Racial Equality, 1997/8. Cf. Jenny Booth 'Scotland Has The Highest Racism Rates In The UK' and 'Racism Alive and Well – and Here' in *The Scotsman*, 10th May 1999.

⁸ Cf. e.g. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1961) II, 2, 34; Karl Barth, *Karl Barth Letters 1961 - 1968* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1981) p.25; 'Christian/Jewish Dialogue' in *Report of the Overseas Council of the Church of Scotland, 1980*; Paul Van Burren, *A Christian Theology of the People Israel* (New York:

people of the highest theological competence. What was the theology that provided the conceptual framework for the development of missionary witness to the Jewish people?

The Scottish Jewish mission was a popular religious movement, the product of the thinking, planning and praying of the Church of Scotland and, after 1843, the Free Church of Scotland. It enjoyed the leadership and support of some of the most highly motivated and gifted Church leaders of the era, including Thomas Chalmers, Robert Wodrow, Robert S. Candlish, Alexander Moody-Stuart, Alexander Black, Alexander Keith, Andrew Bonar, Robert Murray M'Cheyne,⁹ John Duncan and Daniel Edward. Who were these men and what did they contribute?

It was the opinion of Gavin Carlyle that this work 'gave an impetus to Jewish mission, the effect of which will never pass away.'¹⁰ What is the evidence for the success of this branch of missionary activity? Was there truth in the claim that through the work of the missionaries large numbers of Jewish people embraced the Christian message and the claims of the Gospel? What is the evidence? What, if anything, was their long-term legacy? How did the Scottish Church contribute to the establishment of other important Victorian Jewish missions, including the Jewish mission of the Irish Presbyterian Church (1841) and the BSPGJ (1842)?

The Resources

Despite the many divisions, unions, and reunions of an almost constantly reorganising Scottish Presbyterianism, many of the official records of the Jewish mission have survived remarkably intact. In 1929, when the Church of Scotland was reunited with the majority of the United Free Church of Scotland, itself the product of the union in 1900 between the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church, the Committee's records returned to the possession of the Church of Scotland. They are now lodged in the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh. The material on which this study is largely based includes committee minute books, ledgers for church schemes, survey questionnaires and some outgoing and incoming correspondence. The bulk of the

The Seabury Press, 1983) p.324-328; Geoffrey Widgoder, *Jewish—Christian Relations Since the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) pp.127-9, 137-8.

⁹ There is no consistent spelling of this name. His closest friend, Andrew Bonar in his *Memoirs and Remains of Robert Murray M'Cheyne* 1844, and one of the most recent writers, Iain Hamilton in *DSCHT* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993) ad. loc., both use M'Cheyne. This would seem to have been his own spelling and that could be considered as the last word on the subject; his signature, however, is not always entirely unambiguous. Despite contemporary evidence to the contrary, subsequent authors, including Alexander Smellie in his 1913 biography *Robert Murray McCheyne* (London: National Council of Evangelical Free Churches, 1913) and Allan H. Harman in his *Mission of Discovery* (Tain: Christian Focus, 1996), consistently use McCheyne. To add to the confusion, I possess early editions of both the *Memoirs* and the *Narrative of a Visit to the Holy Land and Mission of Inquiry to the Jews*, co-authored by M'Cheyne and Bonar (Edinburgh: William Oliphant and Co., 1878) which have McCheyne on the cover and M'Cheyne throughout the text! Curiously, precisely the same ambiguity is evident in the production of the latest biography, L J Van Valen *Constrained by His Love: A New Biography on Robert Murray McCheyne* (Tain: Christian Focus, 2002). Van Valen adopts M'Cheyne, whilst the publisher uses McCheyne on the cover, and the inconsistency is perpetuated by the authors of three appended commendatory notes. Apart from quotations, and out of deference to the usage of the man himself and his contemporaries, I have consistently opted for 'M'Cheyne'.

¹⁰ Gavin Carlyle *A Memoir of Adolph Saphir D.D.* (London: J.F. Shaw & Co, 1894) p.57.

official outgoing secretarial correspondence, however, consists of letter books of wet copies, many of which have become badly damaged and remain, despite modern technological aids, largely illegible.

Other major primary sources are held in the collection of New College library, Edinburgh. These include the manuscript of Bonar and M'Cheyne's *Narrative*, as well as important collections of M'Cheyne's, Bonar's and Chalmers' papers, most of which are in excellent condition. The published and unpublished papers and records of the General Assemblies of both the Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland provide important material.

There is also a large number of contemporary published works. These include two important series of lectures on the conversion of the Jews, held in Edinburgh and Glasgow.¹¹ Of major importance are Andrew A. Bonar and Robert M. M'Cheyne's *Narrative of a Mission of Enquiry*. Some of Bonar's other writings are important, including his introspective personal reflections in his *Diary and Life* and, particularly, his 1847 volume on eschatology and prophecy, *Redemption Drawing Nigh*, the latter providing an important contribution to the eschatological debate considered in chapter six of this study.¹² The two standard biographies of John Duncan, by David Brown and Alexander Moody Stuart, as well as Duncan's own *Pulpit and Communion Table* and *Rich Gleanings*, together with Knight's *Colloquia Peripatetica* and its introductory biographical sketch, all trace their subject's commitment to and involvement in the Jewish mission.¹³ The memoirs of contemporary travellers to Palestine set the Mission of Enquiry in a wider context.¹⁴ The Jewish mission was of great popular interest and therefore articles, comment and news reports are to be found in both the contemporary Christian and general Scottish press. Significant in this respect is the *Edinburgh Christian Instructor* (1810-1840) which from its inception carried news and articles connected with Jewish mission, and after its demise, its place as chronicler of the mission was assumed, first, by the Church of Scotland's *Home and Foreign Mission Record* and then by *The Home and Foreign Mission Record for the Free Church of Scotland*, as well as, to some extent, the *Jewish Missionary Herald*, founded in 1846 as the organ of the BSPGJ.

¹¹ The Edinburgh lectures were published as *The Conversion of the Jews: A Series of Lectures* (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1842) and those in Glasgow as *A Course of Lectures on the Jews by the Ministers of the Established Church in Glasgow* (Glasgow: Collins, 1839).

¹² Andrew A. Bonar & R. M. M'Cheyne *A Narrative of a Mission of Enquiry to the Jews from the Church of Scotland in 1839* (Edinburgh: William Whyte, 1842); Andrew A. Bonar *Diary and Life* (rpt. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1960); Andrew A. Bonar *Redemption Drawing Nigh: A Defence of the Premillennial Advent* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1847).

¹³ David Brown *The Life of Rabbi Duncan* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872); Alexander Moody Stuart, *The Life of John Duncan*. (Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1872); John Duncan *Pulpit and Communion Table* ed. David Brown, (rpt. Edinburgh: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1969); ed. J.S. Sinclair, *Rich Gleanings After the Vintage from "Rabbi" Duncan*. (Edinburgh: Chas. J. Thynne & Jarvis, Ltd. 1925). Knight, William *Colloquia Peripatetica* (Edinburgh: Douglas, 1879).

¹⁴ Cf. e.g. A. W. Kinglake *Eothen* (1844, rpt. London: Picador, 1995); John Wilson *The Lands of the Bible Visited and Described in an Extensive Journey Undertaken with Special Reference to the Promotion of Biblical Research and the Advancement of the Cause of Philanthropy* (Edinburgh: William Whyte, 1847), two volumes; Edward Robinson *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai and Arabia Petrea*, two volumes (London: John Murray, 1841).

Modern scholarly research has skirted around the fringes of the Scottish Jewish mission. Palmer's 1955 PhD thesis on Andrew Bonar, a major contributor to the early development of the mission, takes a largely uncontroversial view of Bonar's involvement. Yeaworth's 1957 research on Robert M'Cheyne, considers the important personal involvement of his subject in the Jewish mission until his early death in 1843, again from a largely uncontroversial perspective. Don Chambers' 1971 Cambridge Ph.D. thesis *Mission and Party in the Church of Scotland 1810 – 1843* contains an important chapter on the Jewish Mission, which he considers to have been an anomaly among the mission schemes of the pre-Disruption Kirk, an eccentricity produced by 'revivalist' tendencies to be found in evangelical circles in Scotland's newly industrialised Central Belt. In chapter seven I have challenged and rejected this notion as an anachronistic interpretation of the available material, showing that the Jewish mission was not only mainstream but, arguably, enjoyed the status of being the premier mission of the Church of Scotland, widely and strongly supported by the whole church. Addley's 1994 survey of the foreign mission of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland provides a helpful chapter on the Irish Presbyterian Jewish mission and although it does not develop the connection between the Irish mission and M'Cheyne and the Scottish Church, it, nevertheless, corroborates my own research, contained in chapter eleven, on the relationship between the two churches. A. M. Kool's 1993 University of Utrecht Ph.D. thesis considers the Church of Scotland's Budapest Jewish mission from a 'second world perspective.'¹⁵ This present study, however, develops more thoroughly the same subject from a first world perspective. John Roxborough's *Thomas Chalmers: Enthusiast for Mission* (1999) is curiously and inexplicably silent on Chalmers' personal commitment to the Jewish mission.¹⁶ This silence invites a challenge and this I have sought to give in chapter two, showing from Chalmer's personal records and writings his enthusiasm for this area of mission. In summary, it may be said that whilst all the above authors have investigated aspects of the Scottish Jewish mission, for none of them has it been central to their thesis.

The Period

Why focus on the brief period 1838 to 1852? Whilst Scottish interest in the Jews may be found in the centuries antecedent to 1838, it was not until that year that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland established its *Committee on the Conversion of the Jews to the Faith of Christ*. In the winter of 1838/9 a series of highly influential lectures was held in Glasgow. The Church's four-man survey group, named the Mission of Inquiry, visited Europe and Palestine in 1839-40. In 1840 the Church sent out its first Jewish missionary, Daniel Edward to Jassy, Moldavia. In 1841 missionaries arrived in Pesth, Hungary. The Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843 and the formation of the Free Church of Scotland had a profound effect on the mission, positively, all

¹⁵ Published as Anne Marie Kool, *God Moves In A Mysterious Way* (Utrecht: Boekcentrum, 1993), p.1-6.

¹⁶ John Roxborough *Thomas Chalmers: Enthusiast for Mission, The Christian Good of Scotland and the Rise of the Missionary Movement* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1999).

the missionaries transferred to the Free Church, negatively, John Duncan was moved from Pesth to Edinburgh to occupy the chair of Hebrew at New College. At its first General Assembly in 1843, the Free Church of Scotland endorsed Jewish Mission, which continued to flourish under its auspices. The crushing, by the Austrians and their Russian allies, of the 1848 Magyar uprising led to Austrian repression of Protestantism in Hungary. This resulted in the expulsion, in 1852, of all Scottish missionaries in the Austrian territories and the termination of this crucial first phase of the mission.

A number of books, periodical articles and academic works trace the subsequent development of the Jewish missions initiated by or influenced through contact with the Scottish Churches from the mid-nineteenth century into the twentieth century. Popular accounts include Gidney's definitive history of the LSPCJ; Exley's brief history of the BSPGJ and Allen's biography of Dr Arnold Frank.¹⁷ The reports of the Budapest and Warsaw Conferences summarise missionary activity to 1927.¹⁸ Notable amongst recent academic work is Dr. Kai Kjær-Hansen's 1995 volume *Josef Rabinowtsch og den messianske bevegelse* (Arhus: Forlaget Okay-Bog, 1988)¹⁹ and Dr. Mitchell L. Glaser's 1999 Fuller Theological Seminary PhD thesis, *A Survey of Missions to the Jews of Continental Europe 1900-1950*.

¹⁷ W. T. Gidney *The History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews: 1809 - 1908* (London: London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, 1908); Frank Exley *Our Hearts Desire* (London: British Society of the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews, 1942); Robert Allen *Arnold Frank of Hamburg* (London: James Clarke, n.d.);

¹⁸ *The Christian Approach to the Jew: being a Report of Conferences held at Budapest and Warsaw in April 1927* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1927)

¹⁹ English translation by David Stoner: Kai Kjær-Hansen *Joseph Rabinowitz and the Messianic Movement* (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1995)

CHAPTER ONE

The Jew is regarded as a sort
of aboriginal Presbyterian ...

Chaim Bermant

General Influences

Scottish acquaintance with Jewish people probably dates from about 1290, when Jews found a refuge in Scotland after the violent expulsion of the English Jewish community.¹ One hypothesis holds that Jewish children and young people from English families were, immediately prior to the expulsion, forcibly baptised and sent away from their parents to Northumbria and Southern Scotland.² Other Scots made acquaintance with Jewish people through pilgrimage, trade and travel.³ Closer contact became possible for Scottish students, including those training for the Christian ministry, when in the late eighteenth century Jewish students started to attend the Scottish universities.⁴ By 1780 there was an established Jewish community in Scotland, although not religiously organised until some years later (1816 Edinburgh, 1823 Glasgow).⁵

Significantly there are no records of Scottish anti-Semitism; persecuted and harassed elsewhere in Europe, Jews fared well in Scotland. The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* comments: 'relations between Jews and non-Jews in Scotland have always been harmonious.'⁶ For example the minutes of the Edinburgh town council record the goodwill shown to David Brown, a Jewish trader who, in 1691, applied for and was granted exceptional permission to reside and trade in the city.⁷ Scottish philo-Semitism resulted in Edinburgh taking a prominent role in the struggle for Jewish emancipation.⁸ Scottish popular Romantic literature, such as the novels of Sir Walter Scott (1771 - 1832), portrayed Jews with sympathy. In *Ivanhoe* the Jewish Rebecca is by rights the heroine, but *Ivanhoe* eventually married Rowena. In Scotland this plot outraged popular opinion, leading to Scott confessing, in the 1830 edition, that 'the character of the fair Jewess found so much favour in the eyes of some readers, that the writer was censured,' he, therefore, provided an apologia,

¹ Cf. A.M. Hyamson, *A History of the Jews in England* (London: Methuen and Co., 1908) p.87; Lester K. Little, 'The Jews in Christian Europe' in *Essential Papers on Judaism and Christianity in Conflict* Jeremy Cohen (ed.), (New York: New York University Press, 1991) p.284; Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *The Crucified Jew* (London: Harper Collins Religious, 1992) p.70.

² Cecil Roth, 'The First Jews in the Land' in *Jewish Chronicle*, 6th May 1938, p.32.

³ The Scottish Reformer, George Wishart, met a German Jew when they were 'sailing upon the waters of Rhine', W. C. Dickinson (ed.) *John Knox's History of the Reformation in Scotland*, (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1949) p.238.

⁴ Kenneth E. Collins, 'Jewish Medical Students and Graduates in Scotland, 1739-1862' in *Jewish Historical Studies* vol. XXIX 1982-1986 p.75f.

⁵ 'Scotland' in *The Standard Jewish Encyclopaedia*. (London: W. H. Allen, 1959). Cf. Chaim Bermant, *Troubled Eden* (pub. Date) p.54ff.

⁶ 'Scotland' in *The Encyclopaedia Judaica* (London: Macmillan, 1972); T. M. Devine *The Scottish Nation 1700 - 2000* (London: Penguin Books, 1999) p.498f. Cf. Introduction. fn.4.

⁷ Cited by John Cosgrove, 'Scottish Jewry' in ed. Stephen W. Massil *The Jewish Year Book 5760-5761* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 2000) p.12f.

⁸ Abel Philips *A History of the Origins of the First Jewish Community in Scotland, Edinburgh 1816* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1979) p.25.

justifying the original plot in terms of the balance of historical probabilities.⁹ Scott's sympathetic portrayal stands in marked contrast to the anti-Jewish attitudes dominant in literary circles south of the Border.¹⁰

Philo-Semitism, found similarities between the Jews and Scots, some of them rather bizarre. In 1714, John Toland, the English Deist, published his *Reasons for Naturalizing the Jews in Great Britain and Ireland*, fancifully believing a good number of his readers had Jewish blood in their veins, most notably those who were Scots. The evidence he adduced was dietary, 'so many of them in that part of the Island, have such a remarkable aversion to pork ...to this day, not to insist on some other resemblances easily observable.'¹¹ Roth too notices the aversion to pork, and links it with the forcible conversion of Jews in the thirteenth century, and, somewhat bizarrely, suggests that Jewish influence in Scotland may have been responsible for the introduction of porridge into the diet!¹² Somewhat more convincingly, though still in whimsical mood, the Rev. Dr. Alexander Moody Stuart, a leading advocate of the Scottish Jewish mission, believed that the popular Scottish interest in the Jews was explicable in terms of Jewish-like traits evident in the Scottish people, including, love of the Hebrew Bible, love of their own land, the simplicity of their worship, their devotion to the moral law, particularly that of the Sabbath, and an 'adaptability in settling in all lands and making money in them'.¹³ Robert Murray M'Cheyne, prominently involved in the mission, reflecting on Scottish loyalty to the Bible and the Sabbath, came to see the Scots as in some sense, 'God's second Israel.'¹⁴

Jewish opinion concurs. Writing in 1979 of the religious foundation of Edinburgh's community, Abel Philips believed, the Scots, 'had freed themselves from the intolerance of a bygone age...they were a people who held in reverence the teaching and moral principles of the Old Testament.'¹⁵

The Bible

Modern scholarship acknowledges the Jewish roots of Christianity.¹⁶ But there is nothing new in that concept; in Christian Britain, down through the centuries, the idea developed of a kind of

⁹ Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe* (London: Penguin, 1984) p.544.

¹⁰ Cf. David Vital *A People Apart: A Political History of the Jews of Europe, 1789-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) p.186f.

¹¹ Cited by Leon Poliakov *The History of Anti-Semitism*, English translation by Miriam Kochan, (London: Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1975) vol. III. p.63.

¹² Cecil Roth, op. cit., p.32.

¹³ Kenneth Moody Stuart, *Alexander Moody Stuart* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1899) p.145.

¹⁴ Robert Murray M'Cheyne, sermon 'Our Duty to Israel,' in ed. Andrew Bonar *Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray M'Cheyne* (Edinburgh: William Oliphant, 1844) p.442.

¹⁵ Philips, op. cit., p.44.

¹⁶ Cf. Daniel Juster *Jewish Roots: A Foundation of Biblical Theology for Messianic Judaism* (Rockville: Davar, 1986) passim; John Murray, 'The Nature and Unity of the Church,' in ed. Iain H. Murray *The Collected Works of John Murray* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1977) vol.2, p.321ff.; Dan Cohn Sherbok *Messianic Judaism* (London: Cassell, 2000) p.87; David Tracy, 'Dialogue and the Prophetic-Mystic Option' in ed. D. A. Pittman, R. L. Habito and T. C. Muck *Ministry and Theology in Global Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), p.418f. C. Wilson *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) passim.

national affinity with ancient Israel. Trade, travel and pilgrimage contributed to this belief.¹⁷ After the Reformation, when the British became a Bible reading people, this notion gained impetus and became part of the national psyche.¹⁸ According to Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) the Bible linked the genius and history of the English to the genius and history of the Jews.¹⁹ By the mid-nineteenth century, however, the Anglican inclination to see the Church as the New Israel, was used by some Tory bishops to justify withholding from the Jewish community the emancipation that had been enjoyed by Roman Catholics since 1829.²⁰

Scotland's sense of kinship with ancient Israel, every bit as strong as that of England, was not expressed in terms that suggested the Church had superseded Israel in God's favour. Chaim Bermant, the Jewish writer and commentator, as small boy emigrated from Eastern Europe and grew up in Glasgow, his experience led him to write, 'I doubt if there is a country in the world where Jews have been more readily accepted and more happily integrated, than in Scotland.'²¹ This he believed was attributable to a common devotion to the Hebrew Bible, so that in Scotland, 'the Jew is regarded as a sort of aboriginal Presbyterian.'²² It has been argued that many Scots were better acquainted with the history and literature of ancient Israel than they were with that of their own land, not only in south and central Scotland but, as Donald Meek argues, particularly so in the Highlands. Here a high degree of familiarity with the Bible produced, 'a remarkable fusion of Judaic and Highland perspectives'.²³ As the Biblical history of Israel became the national saga of Scotland, it more radically pervaded society and its structures than was generally the case in England. The theological basis for Bermant's comment is Presbyterian ecclesiology, which maintains a strong doctrine of the *communio sanctorum*, the fellowship and unity of the covenant people in all ages.²⁴ Andrew F. Walls speaks of it in the following terms:

the Christian... is linked to the people of God in all generations, and most strangely of all, to the whole history of Israel, the curious continuity of the race of the faithful from Abraham. ... the Church, has this... adoptive past ... [which is] a 'universalising' factor,

¹⁷ Michael J. Pragai, *Faith and Fulfilment* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 1985) p.8. See also St Adamnan *De Locis Sanctis*, Eng. Tran. Denis Meehan, *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae*, vol. 3, (Dublin, 1958).

¹⁸ E.g. John Owen, 'The Shaking and Translating of Heaven and Earth,' in *The Works of John Owen* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1966) vol.8 p.266. Cf. Iain H. Murray *The Puritan Hope* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1971) p.83-104; cf. J. A. De Jong, *As The Waters Cover the Sea*. (Kampen: Kok, 1970). p.13-26.

¹⁹ Barbara Tuchman *Bible and Sword* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1984) p.80.

²⁰ Bishop Samuel Wilberforce in *Hansard* ser. 3, 98. 25 May 1848, col. 1378. Cf. Frances Knight, 'The Bishops and the Jews' in ed. Diana Wood *Studies in Church History vol. 29: Christianity and Judaism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, for The Ecclesiastical History Society, 1992) p.390. Cf. Robert Young, *The Success of Christian Missions* (London, 1890) p.77; Owen Chadwick *The Victorian Church* (Edinburgh: A & C Black, 1970) Part I, p.484f.

²¹ Chaim Bermant, cited by Cosgrove, *op. cit.*, p.22.

²² *Idem*.

²³ Donald Meek, 'The Bible and Social Change in the Nineteenth Century Highlands' in David F. Wright (ed.) *The Bible in Scottish Life and Literature* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1988) p.184.

²⁴ Cf. e.g. John Howie in *Sermons Delivered in Times of Persecution in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Johnstone Hunter & Co, 1880) p.59.fn., 'I observe, that the Jewish and Christian Church is only one and the same Church under different administrations; so that which is morally binding under the old, can never be abrogated or antiquated under the New Testament dispensation.'

bringing Christians of all cultures and ages together through a common inheritance...²⁵

Gratitude to Israel

The Scottish church has had a profound indebtedness to the Jewish people as the source of its greatest good and this gratitude has found expression in prayer. This is typically expressed by two of Scotland's most influential Christians, Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661) and Thomas Boston (1676-1732). Rutherford believed the Church had benefited from the prayers of the Old Testament covenant community, as the elder had once prayed for the younger now the younger must pray for the elder.²⁶ On March 11th, 1716, Boston preached at Ettrick a sermon on Zechariah 12.12 *Encouragement to Pray for the Conversion of the Jews* in which he asserted the Church's indebtedness to the prayers of the Jews, 'Brethren, we of the Gentile world, were shut up in the prison of unbelief, then they walked at liberty, but minded us. Now they are in that prison and we are let out, and shall we forget them.'²⁷ Boston enlarged on the nature of the debt owed to Israel.

All the means of grace, and acceptance through Jesus Christ, that we have now, we had originally from them. They were our masters in the knowledge of God, and first put the book, even the book of God into our hands, Isa ii. 3; Luke xxiv. 47. It was their Moses, their prophets, their apostles, (all of them Jews) that wrote in this book, by which eternal life is brought to us. Nay, it is their countryman Jesus, who is the ground of all our hope... It was the light that came out from among them, that enlightened our dark part of the world. And now that our teachers are blinded, will we not put up a petition for them, Lord that they may recover their sight.²⁸

Similarly Lachlan Mackenzie of Lochcarron (1754-1819) commented: 'Let us remember that the Church was 4,000 years praying for the appearance of the Messiah. We have not been praying half that time for the conversion of the Jews....'²⁹ Such utterances reflect the obligation set out in the Kirk's confessional standards, for both the *Larger Catechism* at Question 191 and the *Directory for the Public Worship of God*, called for prayer for the Jews.³⁰ One feature of Scottish church life in the past was the appointment of days of humiliation and fasting. Boston alludes to two such occasions when prayer for Israel's restoration was a marked feature of such days.³¹

Gratitude was particularly in order for the way in which the Holy Scriptures had been transmitted to the Church through the meticulous care of Jewish scribes.³² John Lorimer considered this

²⁵ Andrew F. Walls, 'The Gospel as Prisoner and Liberator of Culture,' in *The Missionary Movement in Christian History* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996) p.9.

²⁶ Andrew Bonar (ed.), *Letters of Samuel Rutherford* (Edinburgh: Oliphant Anderson and Ferrier, 1891) p.59.

²⁷ Sam. McMillan ed. *The Whole Works of the Late Rev'd Thomas Boston of Ettrick* (Edinburgh: George and Robert King, 1848) Vol. III, p.358.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 466-7.

²⁹ Cited Murray, *op. cit.*, p.102.

³⁰ All citations of *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, *The Larger and Shorter Catechisms* and *The Directory for the Public Worship of God* are from the edition published by The Publications Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church, Inverness, 1976. Cited henceforth as *WCF*.

³¹ Boston, *op. cit.*, p.361.

³² John G. Lorimer, 'Immediate Duties of the Christian Church in relation to Israel — Answer to Objections' in *A Course of Lectures on the Jews* (Glasgow: Collins, 1839) p.422.

particular benefit alone should be a major motive for engaging in missions to the Jews.³³ Dr. Alexander Black, a member of the 1839 Church of Scotland's deputation to Palestine, wrote in his introduction to the published edition of a series of lectures held in Edinburgh during the winter of 1838/39, 'We are indebted to them, as the chosen people of God, for all the spiritual privileges that we enjoy, by the possession of the records of Divine Revelation.'³⁴

Motivated by the belief that the Church was not only under obligation to the mandate of Jesus, but also the debt of gratitude it owed to Israel, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland published, in 1839, an evangelistic tract addressed *To the Children of Israel in all the Lands of their Dispersion*.³⁵ Conscious of its moral obligation to the 'Seed of Abraham', the Church found itself, with growing momentum, impelled to commence missionary endeavour: 'How can we but seek the good of that people, by whose means, at first, our fathers turned from dumb idols to serve the living and true God, and from whom we have received those oracles of truth which everywhere testify of his Anointed?'³⁶

National Covenanting.

The Calvinistic theology adopted by Scotland at the Reformation and expressed in *The Scots Confession* of 1560, affirmed the essential unity of the Old and New Testaments and the continuance of one covenant community from earliest time.³⁷ The belief that the Church and the Old Testament covenant community are one, led to the application of covenant theology to the exigencies of politics, producing documents such as *The National Covenant* of 1638 and *The Solemn League and Covenant* of 1643.³⁸ As Thomas M'Crie put it, 'our ancestors were naturally led, by similarity of circumstances, to imitate the covenants of ancient Israel, when king, priests, and people, swore mutual allegiance to the true God.'³⁹ James Walker also recognised the Jewish origin of covenanting referring to the compilers' work as 'after the Jewish fashion.'⁴⁰ The strength

³³ *Ibid.*, p.441.

³⁴ Alexander Black, 'Statement Submitted to the Committee of the General Assembly on the Conversion of the Jews,' in *The Conversion of the Jews: A Series of Lectures Delivered in Edinburgh by Ministers of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1842) p. vii.

³⁵ The text of the Assembly tract *To the Children of Israel in all the Lands of their Dispersion* was largely compiled by Robert Wodrow an elder from Glasgow, it can be found in Robert Wodrow, *The Past History and Future Destiny of Israel*. (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1844) p.231. ff.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.232.

³⁷ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* Book 2, chap. 10 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960) p.428. Cf. Heidelberg Catechism; The Belgic Confession; The Second Helvetic Confession. Cf. The Scots Confession, chaps. IV, V & VI, XVI, in *John Knox's History of the Reformation in Scotland*, (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1949) Appendix vi. p. 257. The Reformed view is contrary to Anabaptist teaching, which relegates the Old Testament to an inferior position; cf. W.D.J. McKay, *An Ecclesiastical Republic* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1997) p.11f.

³⁸ Robert G. Clouse, *Covenant Theology* in J. D. Douglas (ed.) *NIDCC* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1974). The Scottish Covenants are contained in *WCF*, p.347ff. & p.358ff.

³⁹ Thomas M'Crie *The Story of the Scottish Church* (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1988) p.70.

⁴⁰ James Walker *The Theology and Theologians of Scotland, 1560-1750* (Edinburgh: Knox Press, 1982) p.93. Cf. Patrick Walker *Six Saints of the Covenant* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1901) Vol. I, p.278; also John Howie (ed.), *Sermons Delivered in Times of Persecution in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Johnstone, Hunter & Co, 1880) p.59f. Other representatives of the Scottish covenanting tradition include, George Gillespie 1613-1649), Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661), Richard Cameron (c.1648-1680) and Walter Smith (c.1653-1681).

of the 'covenanting' tradition led Alexander Smellie curiously to overlook the original Middle Eastern locus of the history of redemption and to remark that it was in Scotland that 'covenants have their native air and most congenial home'.⁴¹

Psalms in Worship.

The earliest Jewish Christians were devoted to the synagogue and its ways. It was to be expected therefore that their liturgical practice would be modelled on that of the synagogue whose services consisted of prayer (tefillah), the singing of psalms unaccompanied by instrumental music, the reading and exposition of Holy Scripture (Torah and derashah), the affirmation of a credal statement (shema) and an offering (tzedekah). Men and women were segregated in worship, the men were bareheaded and the women veiled. The posture for prayer was standing.⁴² It was precisely these elements of worship that were reintroduced into Christian worship by Knox and the Scottish Reformers, who following Calvin in Geneva, rejected what was considered sophisticated, corrupt, inaccessible, or unbiblical in the worship of the late mediaeval church and adhered to what has become known as the 'regulative principle'.⁴³ This is the belief that only those modes and components specifically sanctioned in Scripture are to be adopted in worship.⁴⁴ For centuries the Church of Scotland application of this principle led to an almost exclusive use of metrical psalms in public praise. The use of metrical psalms in Scotland, in both public and family worship, further fused the national religion to the thought and sentiment of ancient Israel. Frequently the only books possessed by poorer families were the Bible and the Metrical Psalter, sometimes bound together in a single volume. James Hogg (1770-1835), the author of *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, spoke for many when he remarked that he '...was greatly taken with our version of the Psalms of David, learned the most of them by heart, and have great partiality for them....'⁴⁵

Alexander Keith, the first convenor of the Free Church of Scotland's Jewish Committee, questioned the legitimacy of the Scottish covenants, considering a national covenant as unique to Israel: '...God never made, and never will make, a National Covenant with any people but one — the children of Abraham...'
Cited by James L. Wylie *Disruption Worthies* (Edinburgh: Thomas C. Jack, 1881) p.336.

⁴¹ Alexander Smellie, *Men of the Covenant* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1962) p.15.

⁴² Cf. C.W. Dugmore, *The Influence of the Synagogue on the Divine Office* (London: The Faith Press, 1964) p.8; William D. Maxwell, *An Outline of Christian Worship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936) p.2. Robert W. Weller, *Worship Old and New* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994) p.38; ed. E. Jones. *The Study of Liturgy* (London: S.P.C.K., 1992) p. 69ff; ed. D. A. Carson *Worship: Adoration and Action*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House 1993) p.118.

⁴³ Cf. John Knox, 'Disobedience to Godis voyce is not onlie when man doith wickitie contrary to the preceptis of God, but also when of gud zeal, or gud intent, as we commonlie speak, man doith any thing to the honour or service of God not commandit by the express Word of God...' *The Works of John Knox*, vol.3. (Edinburgh: James Thin, reprinted New York: AMS Press, 1966) p.37. Cf. also *The Book of Common Order* (1562), *The Directory for Public Worship* (1645) in *WCF*.

⁴⁴ Cf. Calvin, 'For that which Augustine tells us is true. No one is able to sing things worthy of God other than that which he has received from God: That is why when we have searched here and there and all over, we cannot find better songs, nor songs more appropriate to use than the Psalms of David....' Cited by Hughes Oliphant Old *The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship* (unpublished essay in Rutherford House Library, Edinburgh) p.354.

⁴⁵ Cited by Ian Campbell, 'James Hogg and the Bible' in David F. Wright (ed.) *The Bible in Scottish Life and Literature* (Edinburgh: St Andrews Press, 1988) p.96. Cf. John Brown 'Jeems the Doorkeeper' in *Rab and his*

The English Dissenter, poet and hymn-writer Isaac Watts (1674-1748) sought to 'Christianise' the Psalms by seeking to remove their Jewishness, making the proud boast that he was the first to have 'led the Psalmist of Israel into the Church of Christ without anything of the Jew about him'.⁴⁶ Whereas, in Scotland the Hebrew origin of the Psalter was gratefully embraced.⁴⁷ In the Gaelic Psalmody of the Highlands and Islands the affinity with Israel was sustained not only in verbal terms but also through a musical style said to bear a remarkable similarity to the praise of the synagogue.⁴⁸ To the Presbyterian mind it was an indescribable tragedy that those who had given the church its simplicity in worship and the definitive manual of praise were themselves unaware of its Messianic consummation in the person and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth.

The Sabbath

Both Moody Stuart and M'Cheyne considered the Scottish commitment to the moral law, especially the fourth commandment with its Sabbath institution, to be a main point of contact with the heritage and traditions of Israel. The strict observation of the first day of the week, as the Christian Sabbath, had become an integral and cherished part of Scottish Christian life. This was not itself the product of the Reformation, though clarified and codified in Reformation teaching, but had been inherited from the Celtic Church.⁴⁹ The Scottish Sabbath was established both by Acts of Parliament and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, but it was essentially a popular institution, the maintenance of which owed most to the preaching and example of parish ministers and the discipline of the lesser courts of Presbytery and Kirk session.⁵⁰ A parallel between Jewish and Presbyterian thought was the idea that the faithful keeping of the Sabbath bore a close relationship to the welfare of the family.⁵¹

Desecration of the Sabbath was seen as a vice. In the nineteenth century plans to run Sunday train services were vigorously resisted by evangelical Christians. M'Cheyne argued that it was precisely the issue of Sabbath violation that had led God to cast away Israel; 'Sabbath-breakers' would bring the same curse on Scotland.⁵² With other Scottish churches the Free Church of Scotland was a staunch upholder of Sabbath observance, but such commitment was lost on those outside the evangelical world who increasingly stressed the discontinuity between Israel and the Church. In a comment more perceptive than perhaps he appreciated, Robert Lee objected to the Free

Friends (London: Dent: Everyman Library, 1970) p.117; Robert Burns 'The Cottars Saturday Night' in *Poetical Works of Robert Burns* (Glasgow: Collins, n.d.) p.136.

⁴⁶ Cited by Henry A. Glass, *The Story of the Psalters* (London: Kegan, Paul & Trench, 1888) p.48.

⁴⁷ William Knight, *Colloquia Peripatetica* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1878) p.128.

⁴⁸ See A.P.W. Fraser, 'Praise: The Melody of Religion' in C. Graham (ed.) *Crown Him Lord of All* (Edinburgh: Knox Press, 1993) p.86.

⁴⁹ W. D. Killen, *The Ecclesiastical History of Ireland* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1875) vol. I. p.38. Cf. John Paul II. *Dies Domini: Keeping the Lord's Day Holy* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1998) p.21.

⁵⁰ James Gilfinnan *The Sabbath Viewed in the Light of Reason, Revelation and History*. (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1863) pp. 158, 160.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.240.

⁵² R. M. M'Cheyne, sermon 'I Love the Lord's Day,' in A. Bonar (ed.) *Memoir*, p.543.

Church indictment of Sabbath violation, with which, 'It must be difficult', he said, 'for any intelligent man, unless he were a Jew, to agree.'⁵³ For the Evangelical, however, Christians ought to be thankful to the Jewish people and to reverence the spirit of the Hebrew legislation.⁵⁴ For those who revered Israel's laws it was no huge leap to desire Israel's salvation.

The Spiritual Heritage

Within the Scottish Church of the seventeenth century the belief was to be found that there was a link between the restoration of the Jews and the hope of better days for Scotland. Among those who kept alive that hope was Thomas Boston (1676 - 1732), whose sermon *Encouragement to Pray for the Conversion of the Jews*, is the primary source for understanding his mind in this matter.⁵⁵ For Boston, prayer for the conversion of the Jews not only held the key to renewal in the Church of Scotland but also the realisation of God's international purposes:

Have you any love to, or concern for the church, for the work of reformation, for the reformation of our country, the reformation of the world? ...then pray for the conversion of the Jews.⁵⁶

His discovery in 1699 of *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, convinced him that the gospel is to be offered freely to all people, and its reprinting in 1718 led to a popular acceptance of an evangelistic and missionary Calvinism.⁵⁷ ⁵⁸ In the opinion of James Walker:

Boston and the Marrow men, first of all our divines, entered fully into the missionary spirit of the Bible; were able to see that Calvinistic doctrine was not inconsistent with world conquering aspirations and efforts.⁵⁹

In 1720 the Church of Scotland was not ready for such teaching and the General Assembly condemned *The Marrow* as contrary to Scripture and the subordinate standards of the Church.⁶⁰ Ministers were prohibited from recommending it and were to dissuade their members from reading it. The Assembly's decision became a test applied to ministerial candidates, effectively

⁵³ Drummond and Bulloch, op. cit., p.307.

⁵⁴W. Knight op. cit., p.127.

⁵⁵ Boston *Works* vol. III, p.354-371.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.359f.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.155. *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* (1645), probably compiled by Edward Fisher, was an anthology of extracts from Reformed theologians such as Calvin, Beza, Luther and some English authors. Its purpose was to show that the free offer of the Gospel was not inconsistent with God's sovereignty in salvation. Its unconventional language led to controversy and allegations that its doctrine was at variance with the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. Cf. David C. Lachman *The Marrow Controversy* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1988); James Walker *The Theology and Theologians of Scotland, 1560-1750* (rpt. Edinburgh: Knox Press, 1982); John Macleod, op. cit., p.139f.

⁵⁸ Lachman, op. cit., p.135-6.

⁵⁹ James Walker, op. cit., p.94.

⁶⁰ The Assembly was dominated by Moderates, they were not opposed to the doctrine of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* but resented the intellectual limitations of adherence to 'man-made' creeds. Leaders of the Scottish Enlightenment, their main interests lay in science, philosophy and history; they had a strong aversion to evangelical and experiential religion. Thomas Chalmers, who had been one of their number, described a typical moderate sermon as 'like a winter's day, short and clear, and cold', adding, 'The brevity is good; the clarity is better; the coldness is fatal. Moonlight preaching ripens no harvests.' Cf. G.N.M. Collins *The Heritage of Our Fathers* (Edinburgh: Knox Press, 1976) p.37; H. R. Sefton *DSCHT* ad. loc.

barring Evangelicals from the ministry. The lay membership, predominantly evangelical, was further alienated by another Act calculated to weaken their own powers in the selection of ministers by increasing the powers of lay patrons.⁶¹ In consequence many ordinary members and not a few ministers turned to the praying societies for congenial fellowship and mutual encouragement.

It has become axiomatic that prayer and evangelical missions are inextricably connected.⁶² Certainly the rise of Scottish Jewish missions can be traced back to a revival of prayer, corporate as well as personal and private. Informal groups for prayer and Bible reading had existed in Scotland from the fifteenth century.⁶³ Knox encouraged their establishment for nurturing Reformation principles.⁶⁴ The 1639 General Assembly sought to curtail them but was resisted successfully by such ministers as Samuel Rutherford, Robert Blair and John Livingston.⁶⁵ In the second half of the seventeenth century, small and secure prayer cells sustained the faith of harassed Presbyterians denied by intolerant Episcopacy the services of like-minded ministers. At such gatherings people prayed for the restoration of the Jews. Walter Smith's *Rules and Directions* laid down that prayer should be made that 'the old offcasten Israel' might experience its 'ingrafting again by faith'.⁶⁶ The spirit of these groups gave rise to evangelistic action both at home and overseas.⁶⁷

In September 1741, William M'Culloch, the minister of Cambuslang, a parish five miles south east of Glasgow in the Presbytery of Hamilton, heard George Whitefield preach in Glasgow and inspired by what he heard, as well as by reports of the revival in New England, pressed Whitefield to come to Cambuslang at the first opportunity.⁶⁸ The following July, Whitefield assisted at M'Culloch's communion services, with an impact so great that the immediate, if unconventional, decision was made to hold another communion the following month, where crowds between 30,000 and 50,000 attended, with many conversions.⁶⁹ This Scottish manifestation of the Great Awakening resulted in an increased concern for local evangelism and worldwide mission.⁷⁰

⁶¹ Cf. McCrie, p.465f.

⁶² Cf. John Vincent Taylor *The Go-Between God* (London: SCM, 1972) p.223ff; George W. Peters *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980) p.339ff; R. Pierce Beaver *Intercession for Missions* in (ed.) Neil, Anderson and Goodwin *Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1970) ad. loc.; A. F. Walls *Missionary Societies and the Fortunate Subversion of the Church* in *The Missionary Movement in Christian History* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996) pp.244-245.

⁶³ Cf. Thomas M'Crie *The Life of John Knox* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1855) p.15-16.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.350-1; Cf. Knox *Works* (Edinburgh: James Thin, 1895) Vol. I, pp. 275-6.

⁶⁵ Act anent Ministers Catechising, and Family Exercises *Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 1639* (Edinburgh: W. Ritchie 1843) p.43. Cf. Arthur Fawcett *The Cambuslang Revival* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1971) p.64f.

⁶⁶ Patrick Walker, *Six Saints of the Covenant* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1901) vol. II. p.94.

⁶⁷ Cf. D. E. Meek *Scottish SPCK* in DSCHT, p.761.

⁶⁸ For a thorough treatment of the details of M'Culloch and the parish, see Fawcett, op. cit., p.29 - 56.

⁶⁹ Fawcett, op. cit., p.119.

⁷⁰ Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996) p.79.

The American philosopher and theologian Jonathan Edwards (1703-58), viewed revivals as part of a spiritual continuum, dating back to Pentecost, whereby evangelical life would, from time to time, be renewed and reinvigorated.⁷¹ Around 1743, Edwards detected that the Great Awakening in Northampton, Massachusetts, was faltering, this he attributed to a lack of faithfulness in prayer.⁷² In order to regain the earlier vigour of the revival and propagate it in other lands, he proposed to M'Culloch the launching of a *Concert for Prayer*, the reintroduction, on an international basis, of an old Scottish tradition of covenanting to pray for a common cause. Around the same time, under the leadership of John McLaurin (1693-1754), some of his congregation at St. David's, Glasgow had undertaken the discipline of promising each other to unite in prayer, over an agreed period of two years.⁷³ In 1748 Edwards published his classic *apologia* for the practice in *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth*.⁷⁴ Edwards proposed that those so minded 'keep a day of fasting and prayer; wherein all should unite on the same day.' This was greatly strengthened by the suggestion of the Scottish ministers to make that day 'a regular, recurring day of prayer'.⁷⁵ This ecumenical co-operation led directly to William Carey's pioneering missionary initiative of 1792, something which has become a commonplace in the historiography of Christian world mission.⁷⁶ Less remarked, but no less clear is the connection between the Concert and Jewish missions.

For Jonathan Edwards the conversion of the Jews was a crucial element in the international expansion of the Christian church.⁷⁷

Nothing is more certainly foretold than this national conversion of the Jews... When they shall be called, that ancient people, who alone were God's people for so long a time, shall be his people again, never to be rejected more. They shall be gathered into one fold together with the Gentiles... Though we do not know the time in which this conversion of Israel will come to pass; yet thus much we may determine from Scripture, that it will be before the glory of the Gentile part of the church shall be fully accomplished; because it is said, that their coming in shall be life from the dead to the Gentiles.⁷⁸

Edwards not only provided Jewish missions with the stimulus of theological rationale but his biography of David Brainerd (1718-1747) set before the Church an inspiring role model of self-sacrificial missionary service. In the same year as the Cambuslang revival, Brainerd was employed by the *Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge* (SSPCK). The society, established in

⁷¹ Cf. e.g. I. H. Murray, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-55; De Jong, *op. cit.*, pp.119-121; David J. Bosch *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1995) p. 277f.

⁷² Cf. De Jong, *op. cit.*, p.131.

⁷³ Fawcett, *op. cit.*, p.224f.

⁷⁴ Edwards *Works* vol. 2. p. 310.

⁷⁵ Rooy, *op. cit.*, p.292.

⁷⁶ Walls, *op. cit.*, p.79; De Jong, *op. cit.*, p.175-181; Fawcett, *op. cit.*, p.228-233; Bosch, *op. cit.*, p.280; George W. Peters *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago: Moody, 1972) p.344; Jim Reapsome 'Carey, William' in ed. Scott Moreau, *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000) ad. loc.; J. Verkyl *op. cit.*, p.23.

⁷⁷ Edwards, *op. cit.*, p.286.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 607.

1709 on the foundations of an earlier praying society, supported missionary work among the indigenous people of Pennsylvania, employing David and his brother John.⁷⁹ Bizarre though it may seem from today's perspective, eighteenth century missions to native Americans had their roots, at least partly, in concern for the salvation of the Jews. For many decades there had been keen interest in 'the ten lost tribes'.⁸⁰ The Amsterdam rabbi who had successfully championed the resettlement of the Jews in England, Menasseh Ben Israel (1604-1657), subscribed to the theory, as did Thomas Thorowgood (1650), as well as orthodox Calvinists such as the pioneer missionary John Eliot (1604-1690).⁸¹ Eliot thought he detected in the Amerindian religion and language degenerate vestiges of 'the Jewish revelation'.⁸² According to Walls, such thoughts led Eliot to consider that his own work was a sign that God would convert Israel too.⁸³ Edwards, who had, himself, been a missionary to the Indians, expected the restoration of 'the remains of the ten tribes, wherever they be' as well as Jews, though he does not seem to have explicitly associated the ten tribes with native Americans.⁸⁴

The most direct link between the Cambuslang revival and modern missions to the Jews, however, was through the work and influence of Claudius Buchanan (1766-1814).⁸⁵ Arthur Fawcett was doubtless right to consider that, 'M'Culloch would have rejoiced to see Buchanan, once held in his arms and part of the spiritual fruit of the revival days of 1742, building the kingdom of God in India and seeking to send the good news into China'.⁸⁶ Yet it is greatly to be regretted that Fawcett totally ignores Buchanan's significant contribution to Jewish missions, particularly when it has been demonstrated by J. A. De Jong that Buchanan was the 'leading Anglican apologist for missions among Jews'.⁸⁷

Buchanan's maternal grandfather was Claudius Somers, a convert of the 1742 revival and one of M'Culloch's elders. The family's hope that he would enter the ministry of the Church of Scotland seemed dashed when he set off to explore the Continent but his plans misfired and he did not get beyond London where he came under the influence of John Newton the rector of St Mary, Woolnoth.⁸⁸ Educated at Cambridge under the patronage of Henry Thornton, Buchanan became a protégé of Charles Simeon⁸⁹ To Simeon, the evangelisation of the Jewish people was 'the most important object in the world'.⁹⁰ Acting on this conviction he helped found the LSPCJ.⁹¹ In 1794,

⁷⁹ D. E. Meek *Scottish SPCK* in DSCHT ad. loc.

⁸⁰ Hugh Schonfield *The History of Jewish Christianity* (London: Duckworth, 1936) p.106.; facsimile reproduction of: R.R. *Full Account of the Proceedings of the Jewes* (London: Jewish Chronicle, n.d.).

⁸¹ Mechoulam and Nahon (ed.), Menasseh Ben Israel *The Hope of Israel* (London: The Littman Library, 1987) p.115ff.; cf. Rooy, op. cit., p.230ff; De Jong op. cit., p.63-78.

⁸² Rooy, op. cit., p.231.

⁸³ Walls, op. cit., p. 59.

⁸⁴ Edwards *Works* vol. I, p. 607.

⁸⁵ Hugh Pearson, *Memoirs of the Life and Writing of the Rev. Claudius Buchanan, D.D.* (Seeley and Burnside, 1834); Fawcett, op. cit., p.235-236.

⁸⁶ Idem.

⁸⁷ De Jong, op. cit., p.194, Cf. p.192, 196.

⁸⁸ Pearson, op.cit., p.19.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.29. Cf. H.C.G. Moule *Charles Simeon* (Intervarsity Fellowship, 1948) p.112.

⁹⁰ Moule, op. cit., p.95-96; Gidney, op. cit., p.273.

Newton floated the idea that Buchanan could serve in India and after a brief period as Newton's curate at St. Mary, Woolnoth, he was appointed as one of Simeon's five East India Company chaplains.⁹² He arrived in Calcutta in March, 1797 to take up the post of vice-provost of Fort William college.⁹³ In May 1806, he left Calcutta to investigate 'the present state and recent history of the eastern Jews', specifically the Cochin Jews and the fabled Bene Israel of Bombay.⁹⁴ In both communities he purchased important Hebrew manuscripts and held evangelistic conversations.⁹⁵ Returning to Calcutta, Buchanan brought back with him a Hebrew 'moonshee' (secretary or writer), and Judah Misrahi, a Cochin Jew and proficient translator, as well as ancient manuscripts, which Carey 'beheld with veneration.'⁹⁶ In December 1807 he paid a final visit to Cochin en-route to England; he somewhat patronisingly records that he found 'all my Jews and Christians ... in fine health and spirits, and highly gratified at my unexpected arrival.'⁹⁷ The community was agitated by questions of the interpretation of biblical prophecy; calling a meeting to discuss the matter, he entered into the debate with some enthusiasm recording, 'Some Jews interpret the prophecies aright, and some in another way; but all agree that a great era is at hand.'⁹⁸

On his return to England he deposited in Cambridge his valuable collection of manuscripts, which included a one hundred and fifty year old Hebrew New Testament, translated by a rabbi from Travancore, who had in the course of his work become a Christian. As Buchanan put it 'His own work subdued his unbelief.'⁹⁹ Buchanan had this transcribed at his own expense, with the intention that it should form the basis of a fresh translation of the New Testament in the 'pure style of the Hebrew of the Old, for the benefit of Jews, and in aid of the laudable design for this purpose of the London Society for the conversion of that ancient people'.¹⁰⁰ Such was his enthusiasm for the project, he freely expressed his profound annoyance that the newly formed society was so slow in producing so basic a tool.¹⁰¹ His reproofs were taken to heart; the work was entrusted to a Jewish scholar, Judah d'Allemand, and a Gentile colleague and by 1814 Matthew's Gospel was completed, the other books appearing in rapid succession.¹⁰² Buchanan's influence in

⁹¹ Simeon visited Scotland to advocate the cause of the LSCPJ. Cf. Moule, *Ibid.*, p.124.

⁹² Pearson, *op. cit.*, pp.83-84 The five, appointed between 1793 and 1813, were Buchanan, Thomas Thomason, David Brown, Daniel Corrie and Henry Martyn. Cf. Gidney *op. cit.*, p.69.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 91 & 121ff.

⁹⁴ John Serjent *Henry Martyn* (J Hatchard and Son. 1828), p.173-4. Cf. Padwick, *op. cit.*, p.85. Pearson, *op. cit.*, p.202. For the Bene Israel see *Bene Israel* in *The Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Macmillian, 1972) ad. loc.; E.M. Jacob Gadkar *The Religious and Cultural Heritage of the Bene-Israels of India* (Bombay: Gate of Mercy Synagogue, 1984) 2. Vols. For Cochin Jews see J.H. Lord *The Jews in India and the Far East* (Bombay: S.P.C.K., 1907) and 'Cochin Jews' in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* ad. loc. Menasseh Ben Israel, author of *The Hope of Israel*, also speaks of the Cochin Jews, *op. cit.*, p.154.

⁹⁵ Pearson, *op. cit.*, p.254.p.262, 263.

⁹⁶ *Idem.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.291.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.293.

⁹⁹ Buchanan's speech at the public dinner and meeting of the London Society 14th June, 1810, précis in *The Edinburgh Christian Instructor* (Oliphant and Balfour, 1810) vol.1, p.206. Cf. vol.1, p.138. Also cited by Gidney, *op. cit.*, p.113.

¹⁰⁰ Pearson, *op. cit.*, p.327.

¹⁰¹ ECI *op. cit.*, p. 208; Gidney, *op. cit.*, p.55.

¹⁰² *Idem.*

the formation of LSPCJ policy, led to a concerted attempt, in December 1814 to recruit him as the secretary of the society, but he refused, owing to 'radical objections to the constitution of that society in its present form, and suggested renovation and improvement'.¹⁰³

Fifteen years later, in 1829, Joseph Wolff (1796-1862), the Jewish adventurer and Christian missionary visited Pune. Here he was introduced to the work of John Wilson (1804-75), of the *Scottish Missionary Society*, whose work with the Bene Israel owed much to Buchanan. Wolff remarked that it was 'wonderful that Gentiles from Scotland should be the instruments of re-teaching the children of Israel their native language.'¹⁰⁴

By the middle of the nineteenth century a number of factors combined give the Scots an awareness of a common spiritual heritage with the Jews, as well as a deeply felt obligation to them. This paved the way for mission as an expression of familial gratitude, a heartfelt concern to share the blessings of covenantal salvation. Through its reading of the Bible, the development of its theology, its ecclesiastical practice, and its spiritual inheritance, the Church of Scotland had entered into 'adoptive past'. As John Duncan would later observe:

we must all become Jews. That nation retains its hold of the world. There is an Israelite naturalisation for us all. Salvation is of the Jews; and metaphorically we must all become Jews — i.e. we must enter into the Jewish heritage, and reverence the channel in which all our great blessings have come down to us.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.410. His objections related to then interdenominational basis of the society; he wanted it to be an Anglican organisation. His position eventually won through, the Dissenters (Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, etc.) seceded, the Presbyterians channelling their enthusiasm into the Scottish project.

¹⁰⁴ Gidney, op. cit., p.115.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p.125.

CHAPTER TWO

the evangelization of the Jews should rank as the first and foremost object of Christian policy.

Thomas Chalmers.

From Voluntary Societies to Church Scheme

The Edinburgh Christian Instructor

The *Edinburgh Christian Instructor* was founded in 1810 by Andrew Mitchell Thomson (1778-1831) with a policy of communicating 'evangelical content in a cultured and intellectual style'.¹

Thomson's vigorous and campaigning editorial policy led to the *Instructor* becoming the principle voice of the evangelical party in the Church of Scotland and the dominant nineteenth century Scottish religious periodical.² Principal Burleigh ranked Thomson on a par with Chalmers, it was to his 'vigorous leadership the growth in the Evangelical party within the Church owed much.'³ The magazine, consistently encouraging and supporting all forms of missionary enterprise, helped to build support in Scotland for Jewish missions by carrying regular news reports of the work of different societies, as well as by reviewing relevant publications.

Thomson took a clear, though low-key, position in the dispute surrounding the disruption of the *London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews*, when its Dissenter supporters withdrew prior to its reconstruction in 1815 as an Anglican Church society.⁴ By 1814, the LSPCJ which had been founded in 1809 as an offshoot of the non-denominational London Missionary Society, had become racked by tensions between Anglicans and Dissenters.⁵ A majority of the Dissenters were Presbyterians, one of the most influential being the Rev. Dr. William Nicol, minister of the Swallow Street Scottish National Church in Piccadilly, London, and a former director of the London Missionary Society.⁶ Through the *Instructor*, Thomson, mounted a spirited defence of Presbyterianism and showed a distinct coolness towards Anglicanism.⁷ After publishing in the October issue a very full, four page report of the LSPCJ 1815 annual meeting, no further reports of LSPCJ activities, other than the most cursory notices, were published and for the period 1826-35 no

¹ Fasti 1:105f., cf. David A. Currie Thomson, in (ed.) Donald M. Lewis *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography*, (Blackwells, 1995) ad. loc.

² J.H.S. Burleigh *A Church History of Scotland* (Hope Trust, 1983) p.313.

³ Idem. Cf. W. Stephen *History of the Scottish Church* (David Douglas, 1896) p.584.

⁴ *London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews* hereafter LSPCJ.

⁵ *ECI*, Vol.10 p.282f (April 1815). Cf. W. T. Gidney, *The History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews: 1809-1908* (London: London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, 1908). p.46f. For a Jewish view of the controversy see 'A.D.S.' *Jewish Witness No. II*. Ed. Ridley H. Herschell *Jewish Witnesses that Jesus is the Christ* (Aylott & Jones, 1848) p.48f.

⁶ Fasti 7:500; cf., Jones, *Bunhill Memorials*, (London: J. Paul, 1849) vol.2, pp.190-4; George G. Cameron, *The Scots Kirk in London* (London: Becket Publications, 1979) p.45ff.

reports of the society's work are printed at all. From 1815 Thomson focused on Scottish involvement in mission to the Jews, such as the work undertaken by John Dickson, John Mitchel and William Glen in Astrakhan in the course of their general duties on behalf of the *Edinburgh Missionary Society Among the Jews*, and that of Robert Morrison among the Kaifeng of Hunan province, China, who were thought by Thomson to be possibly descended from the ten tribes of Israel.⁸ The periodical covered the story of the establishment of the various Scottish auxiliary missionary support societies, such as the formation in 1818 of the *Edinburgh Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews*. The level of Thomson's interest in missions to the Jews can be ascertained by considering that as a random sample, the three bound volumes numbers 21 to 23 (1822-24) contain reports of thirty-five, thirty-six and forty-three different missions and auxiliaries, plus articles on the qualifications for missionaries, the importance of missionary work, and letters defending missionary activity. Other material relevant to Jewish missions, included sermons such as Thomas Chalmers' on *The Utility of Missions* preached in 1814 for the *Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge*,⁹ correspondence on the restoration of the Jews,¹⁰ an answer to '*An Address from an Israelite to those who attempt to promote Christianity among the Jews*,¹¹ and reviews of books, including those for children such as *Salome, or the Conversion of a Jewess, a Tale for the Young*,¹² and *Reconciliation; or a Voyage to Palestine*.¹³ By thus disseminating missionary information, indulging in controversy, as well as giving strong support to the Presbyterian cause, the *Instructor* in no small way helped to create a climate advantageous to the establishment of a distinctive Scottish mission to the Jews.

Auxiliaries and Penny Societies

The first accessible and practical way for Scottish Christians to be directly involved in missions to the Jews was by supporting the work of the LSPCJ. In 1810, the year following the inception of that society, a number of Scottish auxiliary societies were established, such as those in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Perth.¹⁴ Some were established as 'Penny Societies,' the members resolving 'to devote at least one penny sterling per week,— to be paid weekly or quarterly as found most convenient, and transmitted to said society, once a-year or oftener, if it shall accumulate to a respectable sum.'¹⁵ By 1811 the *Edinburgh Christian Instructor* could report on the formation of a large number of such

⁷ ECI, Vol. 3, p.122 (Aug. 1811).

⁸ ECI, Vol. 15, p.202f (Sept. 1817) Cf. Vol. 16. P.198 (March 1818), Vol. 16, p.275 (April 1818). For Morrison, cf., Michael Pollak *Mandarins, Jews and Missionaries: The Jewish Experience in the Chinese Empire* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1980) pp. 129, 152.

⁹ ECI, Vol.12, p.47f (Jan.1816).

¹⁰ ECI, Vol.15, p.311 (Nov.1817).

¹¹ ECI, Vol.23, p.805 (Dec.1824).

¹² ECI, Vol.24, p.265 (April 1825).

¹³ ECI, Vol.27, p.345 (April 1828).

¹⁴ Gidney, op. cit., p.45; ECI, Vol.1. p.285 (Nov. 1810); HFMR No. 1 July, 1839, p.12.

¹⁵ ECI, Vol.1, p, 95 (December 1810).

auxiliaries.¹⁶ Some, like that founded at Leith, also supported other Christian missionary work, such as that of *The British and Foreign Bible Society*.¹⁷ The Scottish auxiliaries were much valued by the LSPCJ and they were invited to send a delegate, Mr Cunningham of Glasgow, to the LSPCJ dinner and meeting in London on 5th June 1811.¹⁸ There were women's societies too, such as the *Biggar Female Auxiliary Association for Promoting Christianity among the Jews* (1813). This too was a penny society; 'every female contributing at a Penny a week, shall be a member of the Association.' The rules, however, laid down that the funds were to be handled by 'a man accustomed to the transaction of business, and that he shall attend all meetings of the Committee, but without any power to vote'.¹⁹ Some of the societies, such as Leith, considered how they might themselves prosecute missionary work amongst the Jewish people who lived in their districts.²⁰ Others, such as the Kilmarnock society, had links back to the old praying societies.

Subsequent to the departure, in 1815, of the Dissenters from the LSPCJ, it was inevitable that Presbyterian solidarity would be reflected in the support structures established in Scotland. One such was the *Edinburgh Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews* founded on 25th June 1818, at a meeting in the George Street Assembly Rooms, the meeting being addressed by Rev. H. Grey, minister of St Cuthbert's, Edinburgh. Though the Edinburgh Society continued to support the work of the LSPCJ, it was not an auxiliary, being independent it allowed itself the freedom to take any direct missionary action it though appropriate.²¹ By 1820 two missionaries were employed, Mr Bozzart from Switzerland and Mr Besner of the University of Tubigen, Germany.²² Nor indeed was it a Penny Society; its larger subscriptions reflected the great prosperity of the Scottish capital: 'Each subscriber to contribute half a guinea annually shall be a member. Contributors of five guineas to be life members.'²³

The Aberdeen Association for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews was founded on similar principles.²⁴ Subscriptions were one shilling or more a quarter, life membership at three guineas. A committee was constituted consisting of a President, treasurer, two secretaries, and 20 other directors.²⁵ The joint secretaries were Gavin Parker and John Duncan. Duncan's biographer, David Brown, writes of having in his possession a manuscript in Duncan's handwriting containing part of the report Duncan

¹⁶ ECI, Vol.3, p.61f (July 1811).

¹⁷ ECI, Vol.5, p.424 (Dec. 1812).

¹⁸ Idem.

¹⁹ ECI, Vol.10, p.67 (Jan. 1815).

²⁰ ECI, Vol.7, p.131 (Aug. 1813).

²¹ ECI, Vol.17, p.56 (July 1818).

²² *Scottish Missionary Review*, March 1820, p.77.

²³ ECI, Vol.17, p.56 (July 1818).

²⁴ ECI, Vol.19, p.755f (Nov. 1820).

²⁵ Idem.

prepared for reading at the first annual meeting.²⁶ An address appended to the report, laments the failure of Christians to evangelise the Jews and strongly urges not only prayer but action on the part of Aberdonian Christians.²⁷

As the Jewish communities in Leith, Edinburgh and Glasgow grew, some of the auxiliaries and associations saw opportunities for direct contact. Some, like Leith, came up against insuperable difficulties but others fared better. In February 1833, *The Glasgow Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews*, which had been established in 1812, on a constitution similar to its Edinburgh and Aberdeen counterparts, employed a Jewish-Christian missionary, Morris Mark Cerf, for work in Glasgow and Edinburgh; he was to spend three months in each location and be closely supervised.

The spread of auxiliary societies throughout the country was patchy; there are no records of the establishment of any truly Highland auxiliaries, yet even in the more remote and impoverished parts of Scotland enthusiasm for mission to the Jews was expressed through generous financial support.²⁸ Through voluntary societies the seed of popular support for Jewish missions was sown, nurtured and ripened into missionary activity, and paved the way for the establishment of a Scottish Church mission to the Jews.

Robert Wodrow: the Father of the Jewish Mission

A Glasgow merchant, Robert Wodrow (1793-1843), was the true pioneer in promoting Scottish interest in the Jewish people, studying their history and characteristics, he was generous in philanthropic relief of needy Jewish people, and deeply committed to bringing to them the Christian message.²⁹ His academic skills included expertise in Church history, familiarity with Jewish and Rabbinic writings and considerable ability in Hebrew and Greek.³⁰ Wodrow was an enthusiastic promoter of the international Prayer Union, embracing 'thousands of congregations and tens of thousands of private Christians', which organised annual prayer meetings, including intercession for the conversion of the Jews.³¹ He was also most active in promoting the study of unfulfilled biblical prophecy; an area of biblical research close to the heart of many evangelical ministers and church members.³² His own researches led him to compute a speculative timeframe for the fulfilment of Danielic prophecy, committing it to print in an important work under the title of *The Past History and*

²⁶ David Brown, *Life of the Late John Duncan* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872) p.232f.

²⁷ *Idem*.

²⁸ *ECL*, Vol.17 p.56 (July 1818) Cf. Gidney, *op. cit.*, p.60.

²⁹ John J. Lorimer, *Preliminary Essay in Robert Wodrow, The Past History and Future Destiny of Israel*. (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1844) p.v.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p.xii.

³¹ *Idem*.

³² *Ibid*. p.xvii.

Future Destiny of Israel which was posthumously published in 1844.³³ It was Wodrow who, in 1838, would move in the General Assembly the key overtures that resulted in the formation of the Jewish committee, of which he was selected as a member, being also appointed to serve as the secretary of the Glasgow Jewish sub-committee.³⁴ Chosen to be a member of the 1839 Mission of Inquiry, he stood down owing to poor health.³⁵ His *magnum opus* in the field of evangelism was an unattributed address *To The Children Of Israel In All The Lands Of Their Dispersion* sent out from the 1841 General Assembly, under the signature of the moderator, Robert Gordon.³⁶ It was Robert Smith Candlish who revealed Wodrow to be the chief author of this remarkable production, remarking that it was 'beyond any commendations that the Committee could bestow upon it'.³⁷ David Brown considered that, 'For scriptural character, elevated Biblical strain, and unction, it has probably never been surpassed by any human composition.'³⁸ The report was circulated through all English-speaking countries; it was also translated into Hebrew, nearly all European and some Oriental languages. After his death in 1843 Wodrow's wife visited many parts of Europe to personally distribute copies of the letter.³⁹

Wodrow's contemporaries had no doubts as to his true place in the establishment of the mission to the Jews. David Brown remarked that his 'enlightened zeal for the conversion of Israel burned like a flame for many years.'⁴⁰ Gavin Carlyle spoke of him as 'the father of the Jewish mission' who was 'accustomed to devote whole days to fasting and prayer on behalf of Israel.'⁴¹ Likewise John Duncan, in addressing the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland in 1862 referred to the influence of 'the excellent Robert Wodrow' as critical in influencing the Church to undertake mission to the Jews.⁴² William Wingate wrote with typical Victorian flourish: 'The Jewish Mission of the Church of Scotland originated with one of the sweetest and most beautiful specimens of Divine Grace I have ever known, Robert Wodrow, of Glasgow.'⁴³ In the light of these generous plaudits, it is remarkable that modern historians have failed to give due recognition to Wodrow. Yearworth's research fails to mention his contribution and refers to him only in the context of his

³³ Lorimer considered that Wodrow's hermeneutic had been anticipated both by Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) and the inventor of logarithms, John Napier (1550-1617) who were both interested in the study of prophecy. Ibid. fn. p.xxii.

³⁴ *Principle Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*, 1838, VIII, Act on the Conversion of the Jews. Cf. Lorimer, op. cit., p.vi.

³⁵ Cf. Bonar, *Memoir* p.93; Bonar & M'Chyene *Narrative* p.2.

³⁶ The letter - *To the Children of Israel in all the Lands of their Dispersion* is printed as an appendix in Robert Wodrow *The Past History and Future Destiny of Israel*. (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1844) p.231.

³⁷ *Report of the Jew's Committee in The Home and Foreign Missionary Record of the Church of Scotland* 1841, p.348.

³⁸ Brown, op. cit., p.296.

³⁹ Carlyle, op. cit., p.2.

⁴⁰ Brown *The Life of Rabbi Duncan* (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1986) p.295 fn.2.

⁴¹ Gavin Carlyle *Mighty in the Scriptures: A Memoir of Adolph Saphir DD*. (London: John F Shaw, 1894) p.2.

⁴² John Duncan, *Assembly Address* in Sinclair ed. *Rich Gleanings from Rabbi Duncan* (Edinburgh: Chas. J. Thynne & Jarvis, Ltd., 1925) p.371.

proposed but unrealised role as a member of the Mission of Inquiry.⁴⁴ Chambers' study makes no reference to him at all.⁴⁵ Drummond and Bulloch mistakenly consider Andrew Bonar to be the prime motivator in the establishment of the Jewish mission.⁴⁶ Addley also fails to recognise his contribution.⁴⁷ Wodrow's contemporaries, those closest to the foundation of the Jewish Mission, never underestimated his key role.

Thomas Chalmers: Enthusiast for Jewish Mission.

In 1838, at its formation, Thomas Chalmers, Scotland's 'greatest nineteenth-century churchman' was appointed a member of the General Assembly's Committee for the Conversion of the Jews but it seems he did not attend a single meeting, his name never being found in the sederunt.⁴⁸ This itself prompts the question of what possibly could have been the level of his interest in this branch of the Church's mission? To judge both from Chambers' work, and even more so from Roxborough's studies, it was negligible.⁴⁹ Apart from a cursory footnote on the fund-raising potential of his preaching, Roxborough's work on Chalmers as an 'Enthusiast for Mission,' reveals absolutely nothing of any fervour for the cause of the Jewish mission.⁵⁰ Indeed, a cursory reading of his diary might seem to justify such a view, for in June 1818 he records his intense irritation at acceding to an invitation to speak in Glasgow on behalf of the LSPCJ and provide accommodation for two members of a delegation.

Friday.— Had to attend the Jewish Society about twelve, so that this Society in fact has lost me two complete days, one in preparing for it, and another exhibiting for it. You will see how utterly this distraction is at variance with my best and dearest and, I think, most valuable objects. My determination against personal share in their proceedings has been strengthened by this new instance of the mischief of such an interruption.⁵¹

Yet, in his *Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans* he writes of Jewish mission as the primary object of Church policy. It would indeed be a strange anomaly if Chalmers was out of step with what was the

⁴³ Cited by Gavin Carlyle, *Life and Work of Rev. William Wingate: Missionary to the Jews* (London: R.L. Alan, n.d.), p.7.

⁴⁴ David Victor Yearworth *Robert Murray McCheyne (1813-1843): A Study of an early nineteenth century Scottish evangelical* (unpublished Ph.D University of Edinburgh, 1957) p.258ff.

⁴⁵ Don Chambers *Mission and Party in the Church of Scotland, 1810-1843* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1971); Cf. Don Chambers, *Prelude to the Last Things: the Church of Scotland's Mission to the Jews*, in *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, 1975, xix 1. P.43.

⁴⁶ Andrew L. Drummond & James Bulloch *The Church in Victorian Scotland - 1843-1878* (Edinburgh: St. Andrew Press, 1975) p.172.

⁴⁷ William Palmer Addley *A Study of the Birth and Development of the Overseas Missions of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland up to 1910*. (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis Queen's University, Belfast, 1994) p.89ff.

⁴⁸ A. C. Cheyne in DSCHT ad. loc.

⁴⁹ Chambers, op. cit., p.113. John Roxborough *Thomas Chalmers: Enthusiast for Mission* (Rutherford House, 1999); Cf. Stuart Piggin and John Roxborough *The St. Andrews Seven* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1985).

⁵⁰ John Roxborough op. cit., p.185.

⁵¹ William Hanna *Memoirs of Thomas Chalmers D.D. LL.D.* (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable & Co, 1854) vol. 1 p.479.

most popular missionary scheme in early Victorian Scotland.⁵² How then can we reconcile the exasperation felt by Chalmers in 1818 with his later unambiguous commitment to the cause?

It must not be forgotten that by 1818 the LSPCJ's reputation in Scotland was thoroughly tarnished; the insistence by the Anglicans that baptisms be carried out only by Episcopally ordained ministers had led to the 1815 secession of the Presbyterians, and the opprobrium of Thomson and the *Instructor*. Rightly or wrongly, the society was seen as hostile to the Presbyterian cause.⁵³ Secondly, the relative importance to Chalmers of the LSPCJ lecture and the visit of the delegation can be judged from the fact that they took place at a time of great busyness.⁵⁴ Hanna records the almost intolerable demands parish ministry made on Chalmers at precisely the time the delegation arrived. On the Sunday of that week he preached twice and conducted fourteen baptisms; on the Monday, whilst Chalmers slept, the delegates slipped away at 5:30. Chalmers started his day's work at 7:00; he conducted a marriage at eight (it took half-an-hour), he breakfasted with a group of preachers, students and teachers, walking with them in the Botanic gardens. On Tuesday morning he finished his preparation for the Jewish Society; in the afternoon he visited or 'went through' 230 people the district of Mr Brown, one of his elders. At 8:00 p.m. he preached to eighty-five of them in a house in the district. On Wednesday he went out to Mr Falconer's in the country and enjoyed an overnight break – indulging in strawberries and cream! On Thursday he continued visiting in Brown's district, where he spoke to another group of about eighty people and went to bed by ten.⁵⁵

We must also take into consideration that the evolution of Chalmer's interest in missionary causes grew considerably in the years after his involvement with LSPCJ. His real interest in missions, that which led to the establishment of the *St. Andrew's University Missionary Society*, took place after his appointment as Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of St. Andrews in 1823.⁵⁶ Turning to Chalmers' *Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans*, posthumously published in 1854, we find his exegesis of the crucial chapters, 9 to 11, led him to affirm the central significance of mission to the Jewish people as part of the programme of the Church.⁵⁷ The Church's witness to Israel was not only mandatory, especially in the light of what he believed to be the drawing to a close of that nation's prolonged period of unbelief, but ranked unambiguously, 'as the first and foremost object of

⁵² De Jong has demonstrated that Jewish mission was 'the major new emphasis of the period,' op. cit., p.198 Cf. Hugh Watt *Thomas Chalmers and the Disruption* (Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1943) p.152.

⁵³ ECI, vol.10, p.282f.

⁵⁴ Cf. e.g. Stewart Mechie *The Church and Scottish Social Development 1780–1870* (Oxford University Press, 1960) p.52f.

⁵⁵ Hanna, op. cit., p.479.

⁵⁶ *Memoirs* vol. 2. p. 151 & 156. Three members of this society became missionaries, each involved in Jewish mission, without it being their main activity. They were Alexander Duff, William Sinclair MacKay, David Ewart and Robert Nebsit. Cf. Wilson to Macgill: 25th February 1839, NLS MS. 7531. Folio 215 – 218; Letter to Dr. Chalmers, dated Smyrna, 19th June, 1843 in J. A. Wallace *Testimonies in Favour of the Principles and Procedure of the Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: W. P. Kennedy, 1844) p.95.

Christian policy.’⁵⁸ For Chalmers the missionary priority of the Church was to bring the claims of the Messiah before the Jewish people and, moreover, to do so humbly and winsomely.

We should make Christianity the object of emulation and desire to the Jews... Let us not wonder that this influence has hitherto come so little into play. This is not altogether owing to Jewish insensibility. The failure is ours — at least as much, if not more, than theirs. ... The light of our religion has not so shone upon them as to make it glorious in their eyes.⁵⁹

If the Church should succeed in its task, he expected a definitive change would take place in the nation of Israel: it would become predominantly Christian.⁶⁰

If it should be argued that the exegetical accuracy demanded of commentary writing is no measure of personal commitment, Chalmers’ exegesis can also be viewed in the light of his more subjective and personal reflections such as his *Sabbath Scripture Readings*. These short devotional meditations were commenced around 1841 and continued to the period immediately before his death in 1847. His reflections on Romans 9 are couched in a meditative and prayerful style, in which he appears to recall, with regret, an earlier, inadequate, commitment to the cause of Israel:

And let me also be more considerate of the Jews than before, and of their many claims on the sympathy and service of Christians.⁶¹

Finally, there is indubitable evidence of his financial commitment to the cause in his personal account book for the years 1838 – 47.⁶² The hand writing is barely legible in places, but the following entries relating to the Jewish mission are clear: Nov. 19th 1839 - Jewish collection 23/-; 27th March; 1840 – Jewish collection 20/-; 26th June 1843 – Jewish collection £1.; Feb. 26th 1845 – Jewish collection 20/-; Dec. 23rd – Jewish collection £1; 24th June – Jewish collection £1. These sums compare very favourably with his other donations to missionary objects and judging from the dating of these donations, it would seem they were contributions over and above anything given through the stipulated annual collection for the Jewish mission.⁶³

Robert M’Cheyne considered Chalmers’ support for the mission to the Jews to be whole hearted, for along with the names of Thomas Guthrie, Moody Stuart and Robert Candlish, Chalmers’ name also appears in a list in the small pocket book M’Cheyne carried with him throughout his journey on

⁵⁷ Thomas Chalmers *Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans* (London: Thomas Constable & Co, 1854) vol. 2. p.373.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p.377.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 370.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p.388.

⁶¹ Thomas Chalmers *Sabbath Scripture Readings* in ed. W. Hanna *Posthumous Works of the Rev. Thomas Chalmers* (Edinburgh: Sutherland and Knox, 1858) vol. IV, p.210.

⁶² NCL CHA 6.25.12.

⁶³ PGACS 1839.

behalf of the Jewish committee, a list of those for whom he prayed, and from whom he could expect prayerful support.⁶⁴

What emerges from an analysis of this cumulative evidence is that Chalmers' interest in the Jewish mission grew from an initial reluctant involvement with LSPCJ in 1818, to become, five years later, a broad based commitment to missions in general, emerging in the late 1830s and 40s as a commitment to the priority of Jewish mission. By the time of the Free Church of Scotland's formation and assumption of the leading role in the Jewish mission he came to see his earlier reluctance as unworthy, and consequently entered into a new and deeper commitment to the project; a commitment that was both theological and personal, financial and prayerful. Owing to his great importance in the Scottish Church during this era, it is necessary to correct both Chamber's misrepresentation, and Roxborough's under estimate of Chalmers' place in the story of the Jewish mission.

The Committee for the Conversion of the Jews.

In 1837 Wodrow and his supporters judged the time to be ripe for Scottish support of mission to the Jews to be channelled no longer through voluntary societies and auxiliaries but into official Church structures. Corroboration of Wodrow's good judgement regarding the popular mood comes from an anecdote connected with Dr Alexander Moody Stuart. In 1838 he was visited by the Hon. Mrs Smith of Dunesk, the wealthy daughter of the celebrated Henry Erskine, lawyer and wit. She had brought a donation of one hundred guineas for the use of the Church of Scotland Mission to the Jews. Moody Stuart had to point out that, at that moment, there was no such mission! However Mrs Smith was not easily put off, and added: 'Well, lodge this money in the bank till the Lord has need of it for that mission.'⁶⁵

Wodrow promoted the idea of petitions or overtures being sent from congregations all over Scotland to the General Assembly asking for the establishment of a committee whose remit would be that of promoting Jewish mission as a Church scheme.⁶⁶ His success can be judged from the *Summary of Printed Overtures*, engrossed in the papers for the General Assembly of 1838, which lists 12 overtures from presbyteries and provincial Synods urging the case for the commencement of missionary work among the Jews.⁶⁷ Chambers alleges that as none of these Presbyteries or Synods were truly

⁶⁴ NCL Macch 1.9.

⁶⁵ Kenneth Moody Stuart *Alexander Moody Stuart DD: A Memoir* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1900) p.145. Cf. HFMR No. 3. September, 1838, p.47; HFMR No.5 November 1, 1839, p.80.

⁶⁶ 'Overture' is the technical Presbyterian term for a petition sent with the view of inducing the General Assembly to adopt any measure within its legislative or executive functions. Cf. A. Heron, DSCHT, ad. loc.

⁶⁷ Printed Papers of Assembly: National Archives of Scotland CH 1/2 174.

Highland, interest in the Jews was only regional and not national.⁶⁸ Whilst it is true that the majority of overtures were confined largely to central Scotland and the industrialised cities, Highland support was not lacking, rural Perthshire, north of the Highland Line, was represented by overtures from the Presbyteries of Perth, Auchterarder and Dunblane and, as we shall see, strong support from the more remote Highlands and Islands was forthcoming. Chambers also fails to notice that with the exception of the south-western synod of Dumfries, no overtures were presented from the lowlands and Border presbyteries; whilst the north-east of the country was represented by overtures from Aberdeen and Fordoun. Furthermore, evidence that these overtures had in fact caught the general mood of the Church of Scotland is provided by the Assembly's unanimous decision that the church engage in missionary witness to Israel, a remarkable unanimity at a time of increasing tension between Evangelicals and Moderates. The unanimous vote indicated that the Evangelicals had won the argument that preaching was to be directed to the salvation of men and women, rather than simply their moral and cultural advancement. Gone at last was the fudging characteristic of 1796 General Assembly, that had acted with an ambiguity that approved of mission in principle but at the same time, by preventing any action being taken, strangled it at birth.⁶⁹ The point was made, and has often been repeated, that 1838 this was the first time that 'any Christian church *as a church*' had expressed its commitment to missionary activity among the Jewish people.⁷⁰

Dr. Stevenson MacGill was appointed convener of the Committee for the Conversion of the Jews, with W. G. H. Laurie appointed as clerk; the large committee was sub-divided, one sub-committee working in Glasgow with J. G. Lorimer as convener, and an eastern group meeting in Edinburgh, having R. S. Candlish as its convener.⁷¹ The Committee was served by one hundred ministers and elders, a most impressive array of talented people, but they were not all expected to regularly attend committee meetings, they formed a pool of leadership representative of the Church and able to establish local sub-committees and relevant support structures.⁷² At the behest of the Assembly, two sub-committees were immediately established, the Western and the Eastern, meeting in Glasgow and Edinburgh respectively. The Committee's remit of the was:

to receive, and prudently expend, any contributions which may voluntarily be made by individuals, associations, or parishes, towards this object: Appoint the Committee to collect

⁶⁸ Cf. Don. Chambers *Mission and Party in the Church of Scotland, 1810-1843* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1971) pp.113 ff.

⁶⁹ Cf. A. F. Walls, *op. cit.*, p.167; A. F. Walls *Missions: Origins* in Cameron (ed) *DSCHT* ad. loc.; Roxborough *op. cit.*, p.192-193.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* p. vi. This claim may be specious as the Moravian church committed itself to missions to the Jews about a hundred years earlier. Cf. e.g. Richard V. Pierard, *Zinzendorf* in J.D. Douglas, *NIDCC* (Exeter: Paternoster 1974) ad. loc.; Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1970) vol.1, p.172f.

⁷¹ The committee's title was Committee for the Conversion of the Jews, in the literature of the period it is also called *inter alia* the Jew's Committee, Jewish Committee, Jewish Missions Committee. For MacGill, see *Fasti*: 7:401, 444.

⁷² Printed Papers of Assembly: National Archives of Scotland CH 1/2 174

information respecting the Jews, their numbers, condition, and character, — what means have hitherto been employed by the Christian Church for their spiritual good, and with what success, — whether there are any openings for a mission to their nation, and where these are most promising, — and generally with full power to take all prudent measures, both at home and abroad, for the advancement of the cause; and report to next General Assembly.⁷³

The General Assembly issued a copy of the Act to every minister, with copies also being circulated to ministers of the Presbyterian Synod of Ulster, as well as to ministers in England and the Colonies.⁷⁴ The Act was accompanied by a letter, under the signature of MacGill, the Convener, requesting the Church to recognise that the establishment of the project was indeed a cause of gratitude to God, but such were the innate difficulties of the task that it would constitute a challenge to the Church's prayers and patience. The project could not be prosecuted without adequate funds and therefore congregations were encouraged to contribute generously. Finally, MacGill requested, in the light of the Committee's remit to gather and analyse information, that members of the Church communicate 'facts of importance, or suggest hints that might be useful....'⁷⁵

This appeal drew forth a ready response, indicative of the strong popular support the mission enjoyed within the church. To facilitate the Assembly's remit a sub-committee drew up two questionnaires, one for areas of Jewish residence, the other for ministers of the Church asking about local interest in and support for the mission, four examples survive in the archive of the National Library of Scotland.⁷⁶ Some correspondents advocated the seemingly exotic locations of Jamaica and North Africa, particularly Tunis and Egypt.⁷⁷ It was natural that India should have been considered by the Committee, for the claims of India's Jews on the Church had been before the Church for many years through John Wilson's advocacy and the publication of Buchanan's *Researches*. Wilson also considered that Bombay might serve as a strategic access point to Jewish communities in both India and Arabia, especially the large community in Aden.⁷⁸ Aden was seen as the key to the Yemenite hinterland, where it was estimated a population of 200,000 Jews lived — 'exceedingly numerous and exceedingly easy of access... having their hearts open to Christian Teachers.'⁷⁹ In April 1840 the Committee received further correspondence indicating the importance of the Aden community.⁸⁰ John Duncan, meanwhile, believed he saw great potential much nearer

⁷³ *The Principal Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*, 26th May 1838.

⁷⁴ Lorimer to Laurie NLS Acc 11820, 13th October 1840.

⁷⁵ Op. cit., p. x ff.

⁷⁶ NLS Acc 11820.

⁷⁷ MB1, p.50; Mr Wemyss to Dr Gordon HMFR No. 13 July 1, 1841, p.192; Deniston to R. S. Candlish HMFR No.15 September 1, 1841. P.214; HMFR No. 23 (May 1st 1841) p.325; HFMR No. 11 (May 1, 1841) p.160.

⁷⁸ Wilson to Macgill: 25th February 1839, NLS MS. 7531, folio 215 – 218; Wilson to Brunton: 16th April 1839, NLS MS. 7531: folios 237-8.

⁷⁹ MB1, p.8.

⁸⁰ HFMR No.7 (April. 1st 1840) p.150. Cf. Letter from John Wilson, HMFR No.10 (April 1, 1840) p.150 and letter from Alexander Duff HFMR No. 10 (May 1, 1841) p.159.

home, to him London was a most desirable location for a missionary.⁸¹ Other European locations had been suggested; and it was, of course, inevitable that the claims of Palestine itself should seriously be considered. But how could all these competing claims be weighed and a decision taken on the basis of so little intelligence and research?

⁸¹ MB1, p.76.

CHAPTER THREE

The General Assembly ...acknowledge the high importance of using means for the conversion of God's ancient people...

Act on the conversion of the Jews,
Edinburgh, 26th May 1838

The Mission of Inquiry: The Deputation

After sifting through the returned questionnaires and letters, in a final attempt to determine the best location for the first mission station, the Committee, at the suggestion of Dr Candlish, commissioned a Deputation to travel through Europe to Palestine and back, and, by compiling a report of what they had seen and learned, provide for the Committee the first-hand knowledge it lacked. At a meeting on 6th March 1839, Candlish read a letter from Dr Keith of St Cyrus recommending Dr Alexander Black of Aberdeen as one of the Deputation. The Eastern sub-committee approved the name of Robert Murray M'Cheyne of Dundee, put forward by Candlish. It was suggested also to appoint the Rev. Andrew Bonar of Collace, 'who has long been turning his attention to this subject' but his millennial views posed a problem for some members of the Committee. After discussion, it was agreed that all three should go, and Candlish was directed to intimate to the three their appointment. It was also agreed to appoint Robert Wodrow.¹ Wodrow declined, so, barely a month before their departure, the Committee 'strongly expressed their opinion of the propriety of Dr Keith forming part of the Deputation'.² Who then were the four entrusted with the task of directing the Committee in its crucial choice?

Considering his place as the 'father of the Jewish mission', his erudition and spiritual motivation, the Committee's desire that Wodrow, an elder, should join the ministers and take his place on the Deputation was entirely warranted.³ Yet it was not to be; by 1839 Wodrow was unfit, the committee's invitation was 'an appointment which broken health alone prevented him from fulfilling'.⁴ In 1843, the year of his death, his biographer could refer to his health as 'for a long time feeble'.⁵

At 52, Dr. Alexander Black was the senior member of the Deputation in age, though no one was actually nominated as leader. Born the son of a humble market gardener in Aberdeen in 1789, he was educated at the grammar school and Marischal College; first, studying medicine, and then

¹ MB1, pp.3, 4.

² MB1, p.6.

³ Carlyle, *Mighty in the Scriptures: A Memoir of Adolph Saphir* (London: Shaw & Co., 1894) p.2.

⁴ Lorimer op. cit., p. vii.

⁵ Idem.

divinity. He was ordained in 1818, and in 1832 became professor of divinity at his *Alma Mater*. He possessed great ability as a linguist; being especially proficient in Hebrew and other Semitic languages and was reputed to have been able to speak nineteen languages in all, and to write in twelve.⁶ Thomas Guthrie once said that he and John Duncan were so proficient in languages ancient and modern that they could literally talk their way to the Great Wall of China.⁷ In addition, Black had a thorough knowledge of rabbinic literature and so was a natural choice for the Deputation. Black, for all his erudition, was the most silent member of the team, rarely is he found vocalising an opinion, taking leadership or writing a contribution, he produced no journal and acquired little fame in connection with the mission, yet his judgement was considered sound and his contribution highly valued by the Committee. As we will see, perhaps his major contribution to the success of the mission was to fall off a camel.

Three years younger than Black, Dr. Alexander Keith, son of Dr. George Skene Keith, minister of Keith Hall, Aberdeenshire, was also educated at Marischal College before being licensed to preach on 17th March, 1813. Having been presented by George, Prince Regent, to the coastal parish of St Cyrus, Kincardineshire, he was ordained in August 1816. In December the same year he married Jane Blackie, the daughter of an Aberdonian plumber.⁸ Keith's interest in the apologetic value of fulfilled prophecy resulted in a number of widely acclaimed books on the subject. It was to the first *Evidences of the Truth of the Christian Religion Derived from the Literal Fulfilment of Prophecy*, that he owed his selection for the Mission of Inquiry.⁹ With the hope of recording photographic images, for this, his first, visit to Palestine he equipped himself with Calotype equipment, but the paper became spoiled and unusable. In 1844 he revisited Palestine with his son, George Skene Keith M.D., a pioneer of photography who created some of the first Daguerreotype images of Palestine for the engravings in the 1844 illustrated edition of his father's book, one of the earliest, if not the very first, to have been illustrated by the use of photographs. Reputedly Keith was no linguist. Andrew Bonar is said to have commented that 'he could scarcely speak any language; but he had such a kind and winning way ...that he never failed to get what he wanted!'

Of the four members of the Deputation, it was the two younger men who became by far the best known. One was a fine boned, elegant young man, with large almond shaped eyes, an aquiline nose, and a shock of fair hair curling inwards from a central parting. This was the twenty-six year old Robert Murray M'Cheyne, minister of the new parish of St. Peter's established in an industrial area

⁶ William Ewing, *Annals of the Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1914) Vol. 1. p.49.

⁷ Cf. Alexander Moody Stuart *John Duncan LL.D.* in ed. James L. Wylie *Disruption Worthies* (Edinburgh: Thomas C. Jack, 1881) p.236.

⁸ *Fasti*, 5:483; DNB Vol. XXX. p. 316.

⁹ *Fasti*, ad. loc.

of Dundee, where many of his congregation lived in grim and overcrowded tenements.¹⁰ M'Cheyne was a gifted individual, having learned to read Greek when a boy, he excelled at Hebrew when at Edinburgh university, being able with some fluency to hold a conversation in the language. He also had artistic, musical and poetical gifts.¹¹ M'Cheyne has suffered from an unfortunate image as an overly pious, otherworldly, almost effeminate, young man. The famous *Memoir*, by his close friend Andrew Bonar, whilst being an admirable biography in many respects, fed a voracious Victorian appetite for sentimental hagiography from which M'Cheyne's reputation has never fully recovered, being further undermined by a posthumous remark from William Garden Blaikie, that he had brought to the Scottish pulpit 'an almost feminine quality.'¹² His friend, Thomas Guthrie, however, portrays a thoroughly manly individual. Sometime in 1837, he and M'Cheyne travelled together to Errol, Perthshire to visit the minister, James Grierson. Guthrie recollected how M'Cheyne spotted Grierson's gymnastic apparatus set up in the manse garden.

No ascetic, no stiff and formal man, but ready for any innocent and healthful amusement, these no sooner caught M'Cheyne's eye than, challenging me to do the like, he rushed at a horizontal pole resting in the forks of two upright ones, and went through a lot of athletic manoeuvres. I was buttoning up to succeed, and try if I could outdo him, when, as he hung by his heels and his hands some five or six feet above the ground, all of a sudden the pole snapped asunder, and he came down with a tremendous *thud*. He sickened, was borne into the manse, lay there for days, and was never the same again.¹³

Early in 1839, partly due to palpitations of the heart, which may have resulted from his fall, and the onset of what was considered to be tuberculosis, M'Cheyne was compelled to lay down his pastoral responsibilities in Dundee and temporarily retire, under doctor's orders, to his parent's house at 20 Hill Street, Edinburgh.¹⁴ It was during his time in the city that M'Cheyne struck up a close friendship with Robert Smith Candlish, the minister of St. George's, and his wife, with whom he would, every now and then, dine.¹⁵ Candlish's able mind was wrestling with two important matters: the need to gather information for the Jewish Committee; and the equally pressing need of his young friend. One afternoon, as he walked through Edinburgh's New Town, he met his former assistant, Alexander Moody-Stuart. Fifty years later Moody-Stuart recalled the event:

I met Dr. Candlish one afternoon in Ainslie Place, and we spoke about Robert M'Cheyne having been advised to go abroad for his health. The conversion of Israel, in which Dr

¹⁰ Fasti, 5.340, see also Bonar's *Memoir*; Alexander Smellie *Robert Murray McCheyne* (London: National Council of Evangelical Free Church, 1913); L. J. Van Valen *Constrained by Love* (Tain: Christian Focus, 2003). Cf. David Victor Yeaworth *Robert Murray McCheyne (1813 – 1843): A Study of an Early Nineteenth Century Scottish Evangelical*. (Ph.D thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1957); Ian Hamilton *M'Cheyne, Robert Murray* in DSCHT ad. loc.

¹¹ Fasti, idem. Cf. Yeaworth, op. cit., p.265.

¹² William Garden Blaikie *The Preachers of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2001), p.295.

¹³ Thomas Guthrie *Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie* DD and *Memoir by his Sons*. (London: Daldy, Ibister, & Co., 1874) p.174.

¹⁴ Andrew Bonar *Memoir and Remains of the Rev. Robert Murray M'Cheyne* (Edinburgh: William Oliphant, 1878) p. 91f.

¹⁵ Cf. NCL MCCH 2.1.45. For Hamilton see Fasti, 1.187.

Candlish was deeply interested, had already been taken up by the General Assembly, but without the adoption of any practical steps. With the sanctified fertility of resource that characterised him, he said to me, 'Don't you think it might be well to send M'Cheyne to Palestine to inquire into the state of the Jews?' — to which I cordially assented, and he followed it up, with all his promptness and ardour.¹⁶

M'Cheyne readily submitted to the idea, the thought of missionary involvement being no new thing to him. As a student, his reading of missionary classics such as the memoirs of Henry Martyn and the life of David Brainerd, had moved him to consider becoming a missionary.¹⁷ By June 1833, he had become perplexed that perhaps his motive might have been self-seeking; was he not, he asked himself, dangerously in love with 'the romance of the business' and the esteem that might accrue to him in the public eye?¹⁸ It was around this time and in this frame of mind that he attended a meeting in Stirling to hear Dr. Alexander Duff, the Church of Scotland's first missionary to India. He gladly responded to what he heard, and felt able to write: 'I am now made willing, if God shall open the way, to go to India. Here I am; send me!'¹⁹

Though some friends were concerned that his strength might break down in such an arduous undertaking as a trip to Palestine; others were entirely positive. The Rev. Alexander Cumming, writing to accept an invitation to preach at a St Peter's communion, said he was delighted, '...you would return with a blessing to your people after expending your energies in behalf of God's ancient people.'²⁰ Some members at St. Peter's were anxious about their own spiritual welfare during their pastor's absence, so they wrote him expressing their affection and honest worries, 'Dearly Beloved Pastor if it is ordained that you are to leave us what will become of all the sweet Monday evenings that we have spent out of your own loving desire for our spiritual welfare.'²¹ The St. Peter's Kirk Session, whatever may have been their personal apprehensions, accepted the decision of the Committee in good grace and wrote a moving letter to bid their minister farewell.²²

The final member of the Deputation was M'Cheyne's close friend, Robert Candlish's former parish assistant, the twenty-nine year old Andrew Bonar, then the minister of Collace, Perthshire. During the General Assemblies of 1828 and 1829, Bonar, as a nineteen-year-old student at Edinburgh University, had listened to Edward Irving's lectures on prophecy and became convinced of the premillennial position. His interest in the cause of Israel steadily developed and when in Edinburgh entertained the 'hope of seeing some Jews in the town.'²³ At least once Bonar visited the newly established Edinburgh synagogue and, with an air of youthful arrogance, recorded in his diary that it

¹⁶ Gavin Carlyle, *Mighty in the Scriptures: A Memoir of Adolph Saphir D.D.* (London: John F. Shaw and Co., 1894) p.3.

¹⁷ Bonar. *Memoir* p.13, cf., p.17, 18.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.22.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.41.

²⁰ MACCH 2.1.61. Cumming to M'Cheyne (2/3/39).

²¹ MACCH 2.1.63. Alex. Flemming to M'Cheyne (no date)

²² MACCH 2.1.67. St Peter's Kirk Session to M'Cheyne; the letter carries 25 signatures.

was, 'interesting, and instructive too, to us who look upon their delusion with a better knowledge.'²⁴ Bonar found no difficulty in believing that his coming to Edinburgh in 1836, to work at St. George's under Robert Candlish, partook something of the nature of a special divine commission, 'for the sake of drawing attention the Jews, and being able to do something for them.'²⁵ As a parish missionary, working from the Rose Street hall, he had numerous opportunities to meet Jewish people and even taught some of their children in the church school. On Friday, 7th June, 1837, he recorded in his diary a conversion he had had with a local Jewish man, Joseph Leo. A week later he had begun to instruct Leo, 'who seems really anxious to know.' Two months later, on 5th August, to the great delight of Bonar, Leo became a member of St. George's by baptism.²⁶

To Bonar such personal contacts were significant. Writing to Alexander Sommerville he asks, 'Now, Alic, is there not something from God in all this? Is not Christ saying to me that I am right in peculiarly loving Israel?'²⁷ Believing this to be the case he undertook to equip himself appropriately. In November 1830, he recorded that, 'A few days ago bought a Hebrew Bible, with the Rabbis' notes, etc. It may be important to my studies hereafter. I have thought that I may yet be able to read Hebrew with as much ease as ever I can read Latin or Greek.'²⁸ He was elated when the Church of Scotland began to take serious interest in this cause but was 'unsettled' by Candlish's suggestion that he go with M'Cheyne 'for six months to inquire about the Jews'. If he was unsettled, the Committee, despite Candlish's enthusiasm, was uncertain about his suitability as a member of the Deputation. On Friday 1st March, 1839 Somerville wrote to M'Cheyne, summarizing a committee meeting held on 25th February, at which pessimism had been expressed over Bonar's suitability: he wrote, 'As to Andrew I fear his millenarianism will knock the prospect of his going on the head.'²⁹

Despite his apprehensiveness, Bonar was envious of M'Cheyne's position and was bitterly disappointed that, perhaps, after all he might not go. He begged M'Cheyne to write to Candlish, his old boss, 'without delay and at length', adding, as if his frustration was upsetting his spiritual equilibrium, 'I have not forgotten prayer and supplication, ...we must "continue in them".'³⁰ This flurry of panicky activity proved needless. The General Committee had already met and decided that he should go. Candlish immediately wrote informing him that he was 'appointed along with M'Cheyne, ...and Dr Black to go upon the expedition.'³¹ Ironically, Bonar received Candlish's note on the 8th March, the same day that he wrote to M'Cheyne appealing for help, Candlish's letter having probably arrived by the same post which took away his letter to M'Cheyne.

²³ Palmer, op. cit., p. 76.

²⁴ Andrew A. Bonar, *Diary and Life* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1960) p.7.

²⁵ Idem.

²⁶ Op. cit., 54; 65.

²⁷ Majorie Bonar ed. *Reminiscences* p.172.

²⁸ Bonar *Diary*, p.11.

²⁹ NCL MACCH 2.4.1 Somerville to M'Cheyne, (emphasis Somerville's).

³⁰ MB1, p.170.

It was hard for Bonar's country congregation to come to terms with what seemed to them a rather bizarre expedition. Bonar, however, relished the exoticism of the venture. On the very day he departed from the parish, a farmer met him on the road and greeted him in broadest Scots, 'Ye'll be gaun to Pairth the daay, mistèr Bonar?' 'No!' came the reply, 'I'm going to Jerusalem.'³² One old woman in the parish asked how her minister would get there and when she was told he would travel via Egypt she promptly threw up her hands in despair, uttering, 'Oh, then, we'll nae see him again for forty-years!'³³

³¹ Bonar *Diary* p.77.

³² D. P. Thompson, *On the Slopes of the Sidlaws* (Edinburgh: The Munro Press, 1953) p.6.

³³ Bonar *Diary*, p.78.

CHAPTER FOUR

Then said I, Wither goest thou?
And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem,
to see what is the breadth thereof,
and what is the length thereof.

Zechariah 2.2. (Authorised Version)

The Mission of Inquiry: The Expedition

British Travellers to the Levant

When in 1796 Napoleon's armies occupied Italy, it was said that 'the map of the Grand Tour was rolled up.'¹ No longer could wealthy young gentlemen be packed off to complete their cultural education and cultivate their acquisitive skills by travelling through France, Switzerland and Italy. Adventurous and aristocratic British travellers needed a new destination for their education and amusement. For the likes of Lord Byron, his companion Hobhouse, the Earl of Elgin and others, Greece had become the new objective, a destination both logical, in artistic and cultural terms, and attainable. With Greece being under Ottoman rule, many travellers inevitably came into contact with the alluring world of the Levant. In the wake of the romantic and dilettante travellers scholars came to Greece and Turkey and moved on to explore Egypt and Palestine, the theatre of Biblical history.² By 1839 the numbers of British travellers arriving in Palestine from Egypt had become so great that William Young, the newly appointed Consul in Jerusalem, wrote to his superior, Col. Campbell, the British Agent and Consul in Cairo expressing his concern and suggesting that a native Vice-Consul be stationed in Hebron, *en route* to Jerusalem, to provide assistance to those having made their 'long and painful journey'. Campbell's curt reply gives a graphic impression of the demands made by the increasing numbers of tourists, '...if agents were named at all places where British Travellers resort, I should have to name Agents in every town in Syria.'³

Many of these travellers to the Levant were remarkably unconventional. Such as the Irish adventurer Costigan who in 1835, died following a 'romantic though rash' attempt to explore the Jordan and the Dead Sea in an open boat in the heat of the middle of July.⁴ Among this new wave of travellers were a number of women, such as Jane Digby and Hester Stanhope.⁵ M'Cheyne and Bonar entered Sidon, shortly after Hester Stanhope's death, and witnessed the sight of her possessions being

¹ Hugh Tregaskis *Beyond the Grand Tour – The Levant Lunatics* (London: Ascent Books, 1979) p.7.

² J. B. Lightfoot *Saint Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.) p.1.

³ Albert M. Hyamson *The British Consulate in Jerusalem in relation to the Jews of Palestine, 1839-1914* (London: Jewish Historical Society, 1939-1941) p.19. (Unconventional capitalisation is Campbell's).

⁴ Edward Robinson *Biblical Researches in Palestine* (London: John Murray, 1841) Vol. I. p.339.

⁵ For Lady Digby see Hibbert, *op. cit.*, p.229. For Lady Stanhope see DNB *ad. loc.*; Hibbert, *op. cit.*, p.229f; A. W. Kinglake *Eothen* (London: Picador, 1995) pp. 74–99; Louis Loewe *Diaries of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore* (London: Jewish Historical Society of England, 1983) p.63f.

transported to market by camel caravan.⁶ One intrepid female traveller to the Ottoman Empire who would have a minor but significant part to play in the story of the Scottish Jewish Mission, was Julia Pardoe, who visited and wrote about Constantinople in 1835.⁷ Standing out prominently from the large number of Gentile travellers to the East, are two Jews, Joseph Wolff and Sir Moses Montefiore. Wolff, who had earlier been converted to Christianity, became an enthusiastic missionary to Jews, as well as Muslims. In 1827 he had, through Edward Irving, sought ordination from the Scots presbytery in London but this had been refused.⁸ Throughout the years 1827 to 1838, Wolff travelled widely in the Near East.⁹ The memoirs and diaries of Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore chronicle visits to Palestine, the first taking place in 1827.¹⁰

By 1839, steamships and hotels had democratised the Grand Tour, and aristocratic peregrinations had been replaced by Thomas Cook's popular middle class 'Great Circular Tour of the Continent.' The days of leisurely, if somewhat adventurous, travel in an 'unspoilt' Levant were fast drawing to a close. No longer was it necessary to travel the eastern Mediterranean in a Greek *felucca*, though for romance and adventure some continued so to do. Yet, it was precisely this process of modernisation that facilitated the rapid transit of a wide spectrum of travellers, including missionaries, explorers and Biblical scholars and artists, such as Edward Robinson of Union Theological Seminary, New York who visited Palestine in 1838, watercolourist David Roberts also toured the region in 1838, and Holman Hunt visited in 1854.¹¹

Although engaged in a project related to the spiritual welfare of the Jews, a people who had yet to make their full impact on the region, the four travellers from Scotland were in fact in the vanguard of British Middle East exploration. Over the next hundred years, following in their camel's prints, but more often than not pressing east of the Jordan into the world of the Bedu and their black tents, would come a long line of British Arabists, desert explorers, soldiers and writers, including explorers like Charles Doughty and Bertram Thomas, the first to cross Arabia's Empty Quarter; soldiers like the inimitable Lawrence of Arabia, and John Bagot Glubb, the founder of the Arab Legion; and finally, Wilfred Thesiger.¹² West of the Jordan, in Palestine, would come men more aligned with the

⁶ *Narrative*, p.241f.

⁷ Carlyle *Saphir*, p.432.

⁸ *Minutes of the Scots Presbytery* Vol. 2. March 29th, 1827 p.99.

⁹ Joseph Wolff *Journal of the Rev. Joseph Wolff* (London: James Burns, 1839).

¹⁰ For Sir Moses Montefiore see Loewe, op. cit. One of Sir Moses aunts, Lydia Montefiore, was a Jewish Christian, see A. Bernstein *Some Jewish Witnesses for Christ* (London: Operative Jewish Converts Institution, 1909) p.371 ff.

¹¹ For Robinson's journey see Edward Robinson *Biblical Researches in Palestine* (John Murray, 1841). For Roberts see James Ballantine *Life of David Roberts* (Edinburgh, 1866); DNB ad. loc.; Wolfgang Schuler *In the Holy Land: Paintings by David Roberts, 1839* (Tel Aviv: Steimatzky, 1991). For Hunt in Palestine see Richard S. Lambert *For the Time is at Hand* (London: Andrew Montrose, 1947) pp.54f.

¹² For Doughty see Charles M. Doughty *Travels in Arabia Deserta* (Cambridge, 1888). For Thomas see Bertram Thomas *Across the Empty Quarter of Arabia* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1932). For T. E. Lawrence see the autobiographical *The Seven Pillar of Wisdom* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1935); Michael Assher *Lawrence: The Uncrowned King of Arabia* (London: Viking, 1998). For Glubb see Sir John Bagot Glubb *A Soldier with the Arabs*

Scottish delegates, including Zionist adventurers like Orde Wingate, himself a descendent of one of the first of the Scottish missionaries to the Jews.¹³ A. W. Kinglake astutely described many of these adventurers as belonging to a class of people who in playing their game, endured 'toils and hardships which are so much more amusing to gentlemen than to servants'.¹⁴ A description scarcely applicable to the members of the Mission of Inquiry.

From Edinburgh to London

On 6th March, 1839, Moody Stuart indicated that to that date only £160 had been subscribed for the expenses of the Deputation.¹⁵ The Committee, therefore, agreed that 'expenses should be defrayed from other than Mission funds'.¹⁶ A sub-committee was appointed 'to make the necessary arrangements and raise separate funds'.¹⁷ The enthusiasm of the members of the Deputation was evident in the letters of acceptance that had been received from Black and Bonar, and it was reported that Keith had been 'making various suggestions for the consideration of the sub-committee'.¹⁸ To facilitate the Deputation in travelling through other jurisdictions and to ensure its safety, the Committee secured all necessary passports, papers and documentation.¹⁹ These included a formal Commission from the General Assembly, inscribed by the Moderator of the General Assembly and the Convenor of the Jewish Committee, indicating that the Deputation was a *bona fide* Church of Scotland delegation.²⁰ Further security was obtained in the form of a letter from the Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston. Additional letters of introduction were obtained from members of the aristocracy and gentry, including Julia Pardoe, which were to be collected when the delegates reached London.

Some indication of the personal arrangements made by the travellers for their convenience and comfort in the course of their journeys can be gleaned from M'Cheyne's detailed records and correspondence with his family. His little black notebook lists the provisions he required, including tea, biscuits and brandy.²¹ A blunt letter from his father, Adam M'Cheyne, reminded him that for the success of the venture, as well as for the sake his own health, it was necessary to be efficient in dealing with logistical problems.

(London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1957). For Thesiger see Wilfred Thesiger *The Life of My Choice* (London: Fontana, 1988); Michael Assher *Thesiger* (London: Viking, 1994).

¹³ Orde's grandfather was William Wingate, who served in Budapest as one of the first missionaries sent out by the Church of Scotland. For Orde Wingate see, Christopher Sykes *Orde Wingate* (London: Collins, 1959).

¹⁴ Kinglake, *op.cit.*, pp. 74–99.

¹⁵ MB1, p.5.

¹⁶ MB1, p.4.

¹⁷ MB1, p.5.

¹⁸ MB1, p.5.

¹⁹ M'Cheyne and Keith's passports have survived and are in the collection of New College Library.

²⁰ MB1, 26th March 1839, p.5; Cf. Lorimer to Laurie, 6th April, 1839 NLS Acc 11820. The Committee treasurer's accounts indicate that the sum of 5/- was paid for vellum, and 4/- for the services of a clerk to produce the commission. NLS Ms. 18999 p.19.

²¹ Black note book NCL MACCH 1.9 A small De La Rue leather covered note-book, approx. 2x4 inches.

Your mother is quite distressed that you have no thin clothes with you for the hot climate and to use when travelling. I understand the other gentlemen are all suitably provided in this respect, I really wish you would all meet and overhaul each other's baggage so as to ascertain what each requires in addition to his equipment. I send you with this a pair of plain trousers which I think you will find pleasant for travelling especially on horse back if you should have occasion to mount anywhere. I also earnestly recommend you also to get a Travelling Bag which you will find quite indispensable for keeping your morning gown, night clothes, foul linen and many other things in constant use. It will prevent your trunks from being over-crowded as they are, and thrown into confusion every time you have to seek for anything. You will find your maps in the other portmanteau.²²

In another of M'Cheyne's notebooks, c.1838 – 39, is a curious list of clothing, without date or reference, or any other kind of clue: a suit of black, 3 flannels, shirt coat, 7 shirts, nightgown, 8 handkerchiefs, 2 neck cloths, 2 towels, 2 night caps, 1 cap, 3 books, 1 bag, 5/- sterling.²³ Is this what he carried in his travelling bag? Certainly the reference to 5/- sterling and a mere three books, rules out the possibility that this is a complete inventory of his possessions when travelling. The De La Rue pocket notebook also lists some of the expenses incurred on the journey. The fare from Leith to London cost £3.9.0d and 5/- was spent to get from London docks to Hampstead. We read also of payments made through booking offices, and tips proffered to drivers and guards. He also recorded that to reach the cross-Channel boat at Dover they travelled from London by 'fly,' a fast one-horse covered carriage.

As late as its meeting in March 1839, the Edinburgh sub-committee had not finalised the itinerary. It was thought that a degree of flexibility was essential and the travellers were expected to use their initiative in responding to the exigencies of local circumstances.²⁴ At one point M'Cheyne was of the opinion that they might usefully reach Malta via the North African coast, where they might visit Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli to meet missionaries such as T. C. Ewald of the LSPCJ, and visit the Sephardic Jewish communities in the region.²⁵ A promise of funding for the establishment of a new station in Aden had been made, prompting a rather belated suggestion that, if possible, two of the Deputation, who had already left Britain, should visit the Protectorate.²⁶ Laurie, the Committee's secretary, therefore, wrote to Robert Wodrow informing him that it had been 'resolved that the Deputation should be written to request two of them to proceed thither for information.'²⁷ However, in London, over dinner, Sir John McNeill, ambassador to Persia, advised against attempting to establish a mission station in Aden, or even visiting it. He also suggested that, rather than travel by sea across the Mediterranean, the Deputation would be best 'to go from Aleppo to Constantinople

²² Adam M'Cheyne to R.M.M. NCL MACCH 2.1.72.

²³ MACCH 1.11.

²⁴ MB1, p.4.

²⁵ M'Cheyne to Parents, 9th April 1839. MACCH 1.4.

²⁶ MB1, p.6 (undated minute).

²⁷ NLS Ms 18999, 23rd April 1839, p.14.

by land'.²⁸ The final plan, was to proceed via France and the Mediterranean to Egypt and from thence to travel through Palestine, returning to Scotland through Central Europe. This, with the adjustment necessitated by the circumstances which befell Dr Black, was the route which was followed. Bonar, Black and Keith set off from Greenock for London on Friday 5th April, 1839.²⁹

Travelling ahead of the rest of the party, to make preparations for their journey, M'Cheyne departed from Leith bound for London. His red journal gives a unique account of his journey from Edinburgh to London and his brief stay in the city.³⁰ Curiously, none of M'Cheyne's biographers have made significant use of this material, despite the fact that it casts light on this interesting interlude. Bonar's *Memoir of M'Cheyne* compresses his time in London into a single paragraph; Alexander Smellie provides us with little more.³¹

On the Wednesday, 27th March, at 4.45, a pleasant evening, as he recalled, with a light breeze, he boarded the steamboat *Caledonian*. Opposite him at dinner he observed, 'a Jewish countenance... he was very gentlemanly – heard afterwards that his name was Tobias.'³² Before breakfast next day he engaged Mr Tobias in conversation, and asked him if he could read Hebrew. He said he could, but asked how M'Cheyne knew him to be a Jew - 'said I must be a good Physiognomist'. Tobias, much to M'Cheyne's disappointment was not religious: 'he ridiculed the reading of prayers in an unknown tongue – said that two thirds of the synagogue do not understand Hebrew.' M'Cheyne was further surprised when Tobias scorned the keeping of two days at the commencement of Passover — 'he would keep one and quite enough' — he also denied the inspiration of the Bible, although he said he had 'Tsitsit and Tephillin and Torah in the bottom of his portmanteau.'³³ M'Cheyne, face to face, perhaps for the first time, with an ordinary, modern, Jewish man, recorded his disillusionment: 'I suppose this is a genuine specimen of the worldly infidel Jew'. He therefore set himself to 'convince him that he was ignorant of true happiness not knowing how to be forgiven.'³⁴ By 11 a.m. on Friday 29th March, the *Caledonian* was making its way along the Thames and by 5 p.m. M'Cheyne had settled into his lodgings at Hampstead Heath, and was concluding a letter to his parents. He had found the journey entirely refreshing, 'I feel a great deal the better of the voyage — The palpitation has quite left me...'³⁵ In the same letter he confessed his nervousness at the thought of attempting to negotiate the metropolis without his three companions: 'I know not how I am to get about London

²⁸ M'Cheyne to parents. 9th April 1839, MACCH 1.4.

²⁹ MB1, p.6.

³⁰ MACCH 1.8.

³¹ *Memoir* p.90; Smellie, op. cit, p.100f.

³² MACCH 1 a.8. p.1.

³³ 'Tsitsit' the fringed garment, also called a Tallit, is worn by male Jews at prayer; tephillin, sometimes known as phylacteries are two small leather boxes bound, one on the forehead and the other on the left arm for prayer; Torah, refers to a copy of the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

³⁴ MACCH 1.8 p.1.

³⁵ MACCH 1.4.

without them.' But his records show that he managed remarkably well, for during the following days he took every opportunity to see the sights of London.³⁶

He informed his parents and sister, Eliza, that he rode through Regent's Park 'in a carriage with Mrs Tate'. On another occasion, frustrated to find that some friends on whom he called were not at home, he went to see the shops of the West End, where he 'walked through Burlington Arcade and the Quadrant and called on James Nisbet, the bookseller.'³⁷ The next day, being the Sabbath and feeling 'a little fatigued', he decided to worship in Hampstead and sat through two Anglican services, neither of which really pleased him; he described both sermons and ministers as either 'feeble' or 'very feeble indeed', adding that there was 'little or nothing of Christ'.³⁸ Nothing he saw or heard in Hampstead altered his low opinion of the Anglican ministry, which he scathingly criticised to his parents.³⁹ The days following were occupied with obtaining equipment for the expedition and continuing to enjoy the sights of London including St Paul's Cathedral, which he found very impressive, even if, 'more for looking at than for use.'⁴⁰

Some of his time was taken up with meeting the friends and influential supporters of the mission, including J. B. Cartwright, the secretary of LSPCJ, whom he visited at the society's headquarters at Palestine Place, Bethnal Green⁴¹ He met Aaron Saul, a Jewish Christian, who had opened up a little reading room in which Jewish people could sit, relax and read the tracts and books provided.⁴² On the evening of Friday 5th April, M'Cheyne attended the Erev Shabbat service at a synagogue and was much taken with the splendour of the new buildings with their impressive Hebrew inscriptions, lit by the light from many chandeliers. In contrast to the slower paced services back home, he was disconcerted by the speed with which the rabbi and the two tenor cantors conducted the service. Most of all, however, he appreciated a prayer, in the form of an intercession on behalf of the new Queen. On the second Sunday, 7th April, he walked into town from Hampstead and worshipped at St. John's, Bedford Row, a rallying point for London's evangelical Anglicans, and spent the whole day in the company of the minister, the Honourable and Reverend Baptist Wriothseley Noel, an

³⁶ MACCH 1.8 p.3.

³⁷ For Nisbet see John A. Wallace *Lessons from the Life of the Late James Nisbet, Publisher, London, a Study for Young Men* (Edinburgh: Johnston and Hunter, 1867); William Arnot *Life of James Hamilton* (London: James Nisbet & Co, 1870) pp. 431, also 284, 320, 330, 332, 415; NBD ad. loc.; *Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography* ad. loc.

³⁸ MACCH 1.8.

³⁹ MACCH 1.4.

⁴⁰ MACCH 1.4.

⁴¹ M'Cheyne to Parents, 9 April 1839, MACCH 1.8. M'Cheyne's letters to his parents were published as ed. *Adam M'Cheyne Familiar Letter by the Rev. Robert Murray M'Cheyne* (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1848), they are also included in Bonar's *Memoir*.

⁴² For Aaron Saul see Gidney op. cit. p.160, 221; Bernstein op. cit. p.448.

enthusiastic promoter of missionary and evangelistic schemes.⁴³ He found Noel's style of ministry very much more to his liking.⁴⁴

On Tuesday 9th April the Deputation was once again gathered together: 'Met my brethren of the Deputation, arrived here the night before, with joy...' ⁴⁵ Bonar, Black and Keith had brought M'Cheyne news of his family in Edinburgh.⁴⁶ They all dined together at the Nisbet's home and afterwards attended the great prayer meeting organised to bid them farewell.⁴⁷ The previous week M'Cheyne had ridden out to Wapping to discuss with the Church of Scotland minister, Dr Crombie, arrangements for printing Robert Candlish's appeal on behalf of the Mission of Inquiry, and to call a prayer meeting at the Regent Square church, at which the seven congregations of the London Presbytery could send them away 'in the Apostolic mode.'⁴⁸ The meeting was very well attended by Presbyterians, and also by Anglicans, as well as a number of Jewish Christians. M'Cheyne, satisfied and encouraged, recorded the meeting in his red journal, '...many converted Jews present, Frey, Calman, etc. Met... Capt. Crawford who had been at Jerusalem.'⁴⁹

Many arrangements had to be made in the two days that followed, including the collection of passports and other documents guaranteeing them safe conduct, 'to the Foreign Office about our Passport – Got promise of a Government Passport and consular Letter.'⁵⁰ M'Cheyne's account of his time in London provides further evidence that demonstrates the fallaciousness of Donald Chambers' notion that the Mission of Inquiry was an naive venture got up by enthusiastic evangelicals without the support of people of expertise and influence. The Deputation could count on assistance from supporters at the very heart of the British Establishment. For example, on Thursday 4th April, M'Cheyne enjoyed dinner with Sir John McNeill and his wife, who had lately returned from Persia. McNeill, a native of Colonsay, had risen to high office in the Foreign service under Palmerston, and in 1836 had been appointed ambassador to the Shah of Persia. He was enthusiastic about the Church's plans and offered helpful information and expert advice regarding Jewish populations in Persia; to the disappointment of the committee in Edinburgh, he spoke of Aden as unstable and therefore unsuitable as a mission station. Such information M'Cheyne committed to his journal.⁵¹ McNeill further facilitated the Deputation by providing two letters of introduction, one addressed to Col. Taylor at Baghdad, should the Deputation ever reach there; the other an open letter of introduction for M'Cheyne personally.

⁴³ MACCH 1.8 For Baptist Noel see DNB ad. loc; D. W. Bebbington in ed. Donald M. Lewis *Dictionary of Evangelical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1995) Vol. 2 ad. loc.

⁴⁴ MACCH 1.4.

⁴⁵ MACCH 1.8.

⁴⁶ MACCH 1.4.

⁴⁷ MACCH 1.4.

⁴⁸ MACCH 1.4.

⁴⁹ MACCH 1.8 p. 7.

⁵⁰ MACCH 1.8.

⁵¹ MACCH 1.8 p.5.

The Deputation could also count on the support of Lord Ashley, at thirty-eight, some twelve years older than M'Cheyne he was 'deeply interested in the cause.'⁵² Then, on the 10th April 1839, the day before their departure from Dover they all dined at Sir George Grey's.⁵³ Grey was the member of parliament for Devonport, serving as judge-advocate-general in Viscount Melbourne's second administration (1835-41), joining the cabinet in 1841 as chancellor to the duchy of Lancaster, before becoming home secretary under Lord Russell in 1846. Here at his home they also met, amongst others, Arthur Kinnaird, the banker and member of parliament for Perth, and keen supporter of many evangelical and philanthropic causes.⁵⁴ M'Cheyne recalled that Kinnaird was 'much interested and kind'.⁵⁵

They slept that night at the Nisbets and on the following day, Thursday, they called on Lord Aberdeen (who in 1841 would become foreign secretary in Peel's administration, and prime minister in 1852). Beyond simply recording the event, M'Cheyne made no additional comment about the visit, which, perhaps, is not so very remarkable in view of the fact that Aberdeen was fiercely hostile to the position taken by all the delegates regarding the Auchterarder case and the Non-Intrusion debate. Aberdeen and Chalmers exchanged a lively correspondence on this question. Chalmers' first letter is dated 23rd March 1839, shortly after the House of Lords heard the Auchterarder Case, and just four days before M'Cheyne left Edinburgh for London. If, less than three weeks later, it was still lying on Aberdeen's desk and fresh in his mind it could be considered most remarkable that he deigned to see them at all, but it was probably politically inexpedient for him to 'cold-shoulder' a delegation from the Church of Scotland.⁵⁶

After dinner they packed, and 'at seven this evening set off for Dover'. M'Cheyne noted that the 'thought that we were really on our way raised our hearts'. The overnight coach took them to Dover and it being a cold night, they all travelled inside the coach, with the Nisbets following in another.⁵⁷

From France to Egypt.

From Dover the Deputation crossed the English Channel to Boulogne, taking a route through France, via Paris and Lyon to Marseille and travelling as far as possible by river steamer. Although it was, on the whole, a pleasant and interesting trip, it was of little consequence as far as the object of

⁵² MACCH 1.8. For Anthony Ashley Cooper, seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, see DNB ad. loc. Amongst numerous other social and religious causes, he ardently espoused the right of the Jews to return to Palestine as well as advocating missions to the Jews, cf. Michael J. Pragai, *op. cit.*, p.44f.

⁵³ Grey's mother was an evangelical, a friend and supporter of Wilberforce, who 'impressed upon her son in early days a fervent and simple piety which never left him'. See DNB ad. loc.

⁵⁴ See DNB ad. loc.

⁵⁵ MACCH 1.8 p 8.

⁵⁶ Aberdeen was resolutely opposed to any diminishing of the powers of patronage in the Scottish church. For his opinion of the non-intrusion case, see *The Correspondence Between Dr Chalmers and the Earl of Aberdeen in the years 1839 and 1840* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1893).

⁵⁷ MACCH 1.8.

their journey was concerned and, apart from a few incidents, it need not detain our attention. At Boulogne, they were disappointed to discover that the public stage coach, or *diligence*, in which they hoped to travel to Paris was not due to depart until the following morning. This, however, gave them an unexpected opportunity to meet 'a very interesting Jew, a person of education and agreeable manners, who spoke English fluently'.⁵⁸ They discovered this man had spent a year living among the Indians of North America to test the reliability of the theory that native Americans were descendents of the ten tribes of Israel. He had concluded they were not. As their conversation developed his general sympathy towards Christianity became evident. He had heard of Keith's *Evidences of Prophecy* and was presented with an autographed copy by the author. Such an opportunity to discuss the claims of Christianity with a Jew, on the very first day of their mission was a source of great encouragement and they took to heart his parting advice, 'If you wish to gain a Jew, treat him as a brother'. If, for the Committee, the primary purpose of sending out the Deputation was intelligence gathering, for the participants themselves, as this encounter illustrates, it was equally a mission in the more normative evangelical understanding of the term. Freely distributing evangelistic tracts from the window of the *diligence*, making gifts of books, Bibles and Bible portions, and holding conversations with Jewish and non-Jewish people alike, the Deputation was intent on carrying the gospel to both 'the poor blinded Papist' and 'the poor despised Jew,' as they termed the people to whom they turned their attention.⁵⁹

They arrived in Paris on the morning of Sunday, 14th April and set out on foot for the Marboeuf Chapel to hear the preaching of Frédéric Monod.⁶⁰ By contrast to the accustomed stillness of a Scottish Sabbath, they were greatly distressed at the Parisian disregard for the sanctities of the Lord's Day and 'felt this violation of the Holy Day very painfully'.⁶¹ No city, they thought, reminded them more of what Sodom might have been before its destruction.⁶² M'Cheyne commented in his notebook, 'There is a look of vice about the streets... I do not think it can be lawful to a Christian to live in Paris.'⁶³ From Paris they passed through Chatillon-sur-Seine and Troyes, to Dijon and on to Chalons-sur-Saone, where they embarked on the steam boat that would carry them, via Lyons, to Marseilles. In Marseilles they learned that around a thousand Jews lived in the city and met a Rabbi who was quite willing to show them the synagogue and take their tracts.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.4.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.32.

⁶⁰ Frédéric Monod (1794-1863), and his brother Adolphe (1802-1856), were pastors of great influence in La Réveil, a strongly orthodox movement in the French Reformed Church. Both men had Scottish connections; Adolphe's conversion had come about through his contacts with Thomas Erskine, and Frédéric had come to Christian faith after hearing Robert Haldane preaching in Geneva. Cf. ed. J.D. Douglas *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Paternoster Press, 1974) ad. loc.

⁶¹ *Narrative*, p.21.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.7f.

⁶³ MACCH Notebook, April 14th, 1839, cited Yearworth.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.15.

They were disappointed to discover that the steamer from Marseilles bound for Malta had left the previous day and the next one would be ten days later. They resolved, therefore, to go to Malta via Italy and so see as much of the Jewish community of Leghorn (Livorno) as possible.⁶⁵ The Jewish community in Leghorn numbered approximately 10,000 individuals, many of whom had found refuge in Tuscany after being discouraged from settlement in the Papal States. The Deputation was able to meet with Jewish leaders, rabbis and scholars in the city, and a vigorous, yet good natured, dialogue was maintained both with scholars at the Jewish library and, particularly, with a Sephardi rabbi, called Bolaffi.⁶⁶

Their rapport with the Jewish people was much enhanced as a result of the treatment they had received from the authorities, it being their opinion 'that Popery is equally the enemy of Protestantism and of Israel'.⁶⁷ The Deputation were still smarting from a fresh effect of that historical enmity. Almost as soon as they had landed, they had been summoned to appear before the Commissary of police, who had their books and tracts seized and forwarded to the Censor at Florence for scrutiny.⁶⁸ In due course, their tracts were returned but because Keith's *Evidences of Prophecy* contained interpretations of Biblical data opposed to those of the Roman Catholic Church they were confiscated. Their sentence was an immediate and perpetual banishment from Tuscany, something the Scottish ministers considered they 'could easily bear'.⁶⁹ Embarking from Leghorn on Friday, 3rd May, a three day voyage brought them to Valletta, Malta, where they first experienced, what was for them, that exotic blend of different nationalities characteristic of the eastern end of the Mediterranean.⁷⁰ Although the city and the island possessed great beauty and had biblical curiosity, owing to its association with the Apostle Paul, there was little to engage their interest, as the Jewish community was very small. From Malta they sailed north-east via the Greek islands before taking a south-easterly course past the eastern cape of Crete, to arrive at Alexandria on Monday, 13th May.⁷¹

From Egypt to Lebanon

At the eastern end of the Mediterranean there were many differences, cultural and political, with which British travellers had to come to terms, not the least being that they were travelling in a region distinguished by Islamic history and culture. In addition, the hostilities between Muhammad Ali, the Ottoman viceroy in Egypt, and the Sultan in Constantinople, of which they had read much in the

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.20.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.23ff.

⁶⁷ *Narrative* p.31.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.20-21.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p.32.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.35-36.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.46.

British press, now formed the immediate context of their lives.⁷² In 1831, smarting at the refusal of Sultan Mahmud II to make him governor of Syria, and encouraged by France, Muhammad Ali had occupied the Holy Land and introduced a modernised and centralised administration. His rule further opened the region to Western influences, including the presence of the LSPCJ, which in 1822-23 had taken tentative steps to secure a Palestine Mission in Jerusalem, and where, in 1824, it had established the world's first medical mission. By 1833 the Rev. J. Nicolayson had consolidated the LSPCJ's Jerusalem base and at the time of the arrival of the Deputation from Scotland was building the first Protestant church in the Holy Land.⁷³

On the day of their arrival bubonic plague had made its appearance in Alexandria, which meant that their original intention, to enter the Holy Land by sailing from Alexandria to Jaffa or Beirut, was now impractical, because the time spent in quarantine would impose too serious a delay. They decided, therefore, to travel overland by way of the ancient coastal route and the border town of El Arish. Even so, urgency was necessary because it was expected that within a few days a quarantine station might also be established at El Arish itself.⁷⁴ As desert expeditions normally set off from Cairo, Alexandria was not the ideal place to obtain equipment, yet with the help of a servant of the English Consul, a visit to the bazaar was organised and tents, carpets, quilts, cooking gear and provisions were all purchased.⁷⁵ They also secured the services of two servants, Ibraim and Ahmet, experienced in desert travel, 'for three months at the cost of 36 dollars each.' Ibraim had the previous year travelled with Edward Robinson's expedition as a junior helper to the more experienced guide, Hajji Komeh.⁷⁶ The mutual respect that developed between Ibraim and his clients, particularly the younger men, Bonar and M'Cheyne, is evident in the affectionate way they took leave of each other at Beirut, two months later.⁷⁷

Before the serious work of the desert march began the travellers indulged themselves in the luxury of submitting to a Turkish bath. After they had disrobed and had towels wrapt around their waists, with another wound around their heads as a turban, they were laid on their backs, soaped all over and well scrubbed with a rough glove of camel hair. This was followed by a shower of warm water. Next they were shampooed, their finger joints flexed until they cracked and their feet scraped. They were slightly alarmed, if not by the experience itself, then by the fact they had entrusted themselves to the care of 'Mahometans with shaved heads and black skins'. After coffee and sherbet they came away

⁷² J. A. R. Marriot *A History of Europe 1815 – 1939* (London: Methuen, 1931) p.167; M. E. Yapp *The Making of the Modern Near East, 1792-1923* (London: Longman, 1987), p.145ff.

⁷³ Gidney op. cit., p.117ff.

⁷⁴ *Narrative* p.50.

⁷⁵ *Idem*.

⁷⁶ Robinson op. cit., pp.51-52. 'Ibraim,' rather than 'Ibrahim' is used in the *Narrative*; Robinson used the alternative form.

⁷⁷ *Narrative* p.252.

'not a little amused, as well as refreshed'.⁷⁸

After two days in Alexandria, on the morning of Thursday 16th May, they were awakened by the noisy arrival of sixteen donkeys and ten Egyptian lads, together with Ahmed and Ibraim. Loading up their baggage, and passing through the city gate, they commenced their journey east and north towards the Holy Land.⁷⁹ A week later, in the vicinity of biblical Zoan, the donkeys were replaced by eight camels with their Bedouin attendants. Camels were better suited to the softer going of the sandy coastal desert. The speed of travel was roughly estimated by Bonar and M'Cheyne to be 'somewhat less than three miles an hour'.⁸⁰ The next day, Black having been made drowsy by the motion of the camel had fallen off. The accident, though trivial enough at the time, became, as a result of the chain of circumstances to which it gave rise, the hinge upon which pivoted the final decision as to the location of the first mission station.⁸¹ Although not seriously hurt, Black recovered so well that they were able to advance a few miles to spend that night and all the next day, it being the Sabbath, in a poor Arab village called Menagie.

The border was crossed on the 31st May, well ahead, as they had hoped, of any attempt to establish a quarantine camp in the area. They were very conscious that they were now in the Promised Land itself, a new mood of keener awareness and muted excitement became perceptible as they found themselves in the location of the great acts of biblical history, the theatre of the drama of redemption.⁸² On 3rd June they passed through Khanounes (Khan Younis) and circumvented Gaza, where the plague was raging, to cross the Wadi Sorek on the 5th. They then swung eastwards to reach Latroon (Latrun) and the main Jaffa to Jerusalem road. Here they entered the narrow defile that leads up through the Judean hills to Jerusalem and were greatly impressed by its beauty.⁸³ The following day, Friday 7th June, after a further seven hour camel trek they came within sight of Jerusalem. Christian travellers, having been brought up from childhood with Bible stories in which Jerusalem features so prominently, have often found it emotionally overwhelming to arrive at the Holy City. M'Cheyne, on drawing near to the city dismounted from his camel and ran forward to gain the first sight, of 'the most wonderful spot in the whole world – where Jesus lived, and walked, and prayed, and died, and will come again'.⁸⁴

The first contact they sought to establish was with the newly appointed British Consul, Mr William Tanner Young, who was himself a member of the committee of the LSPCJ and who had arrived in

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.51.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.53.

⁸⁰ *Narrative*, p.76.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.77. Cf. NCL Bon. 1. p.158.

⁸² *Narrative*, p.94.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.95.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.96.

Jaffa on 4th February, 1839, taking up his post in Jerusalem in April, less than two months previously.⁸⁵ The Muhammad Ali crisis and the subsequent intervention by the European powers had provided the opportunity to establish a British Consulate in Jerusalem. Lord Shaftesbury, a strong advocate of the cause of Jewish settlement in Palestine, argued that the Consul should provide support for the growing Jewish community in the Holy Land, as well as serving more obvious British interests.⁸⁶ He had urged the Foreign Secretary, his step-father-in-law, Lord Palmerston, to instruct the Consul accordingly.⁸⁷ In a letter dated 31st January 1838, Palmerston had instructed John Bidwell, a civil servant in the Foreign Office, to write: '...it will be a part of your duty as British Vice Consul at Jerusalem to afford Protection to the Jews generally...'⁸⁸ On arrival at Jerusalem, Young accurately anticipated the significance of the new British Middle East policy for the diaspora Jewish community: 'The remotest village in Europe that contains a Jewish resident will hear the news that Great Britain has been the first among the nations to show herself the friend of the Children of Israel.'⁸⁹ Evidence to justify British concern for the small, though growing, Jewish community in the land was readily available. Even to the Deputation, who only spent ten days in the city, there were clear signs of vicious Christian anti-Semitism, which sometimes caused the persecuted Jews to seek the protection of Muslim families.⁹⁰

Young placed himself immediately at the disposal of the Deputation, warning them that as the plague was still in the city it was inadvisable to camp on the Mount of Olives, as they had planned to do. He promptly found suitable alternative accommodation in two large and comfortable rooms. In addition he introduced the Deputation to Lord Abercorn's son, Lord Claud Hamilton, and his companion, Lyttleton, who had just arrived from Petra. Hamilton was greatly surprised to meet Black whom he had known well when Black was the minister of the parish of Tarves, Aberdeenshire.⁹¹ They had not long been in their rooms when John Nicolayson of the LSPCJ arrived. Nicolayson, of Danish origin, had been sent from London in 1831 to build on the work started by Joseph Wolff and continued by Dr. George Edward Dalton, the pioneer of medical missions. In 1833 he purchased a property on the edge of the Jewish quarter and thus established himself as the first Protestant minister to be permanent settled in Jerusalem.⁹² Nicolayson ushered the Deputation up to the mission house on Mount Zion, lying just within the Jaffa gate, and beside the Citadel of David. Here they were utterly charmed by their new accommodation, its window looking out over the old city, the Temple Mount lying in the middle distance and the Mount of

⁸⁵ The most accessible source of British Foreign Office papers relative to the establishment of the Jerusalem Consulate is the selection published by Albert M. Hyamson *The British Consulate in Jerusalem in relation to the Jews of Palestine, 1838-1914* (London: Jewish Historical Society, 1939-1942)

⁸⁶ Hyamson, op. cit., p. xxxiii.

⁸⁷ Pragai, op. cit., p. 45;

⁸⁸ Hyamson, op. cit., p. 2 (Bidwell's draft was initialled by Palmerston)

⁸⁹ *Narrative*, p. 149.

⁹⁰ *Idem*.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 127

⁹² Gidney, op. cit., p. 178.

Olives on the horizon. Here too, beside them, they saw, in process of construction, Christchurch, the new Anglican church, the first Protestant place of worship to be built in the Holy Land.⁹³

Of the many intriguing sights and scenes that occupied them during ten days in the city, Mount Zion stood out as particularly significant; much of its land had been given over to agricultural use and this greatly impressed them all, but especially Keith, whose book *The Evidences of Prophecy* had been written without the benefit of first hand observation. He could now see for himself that Zion was, quite literally, ploughed like a field and the debris of the ages stood as heaps of stones, as both Jeremiah and Micah had prophesied.⁹⁴ Keith, Bonar and M'Cheyne made much of what they took to be the 'literal fulfilment of prophecy,' and far from finding these realisations discouraging, they took them as signs for good: if God had literally fulfilled promises of judgement, would he not also fulfil his promises to restore the Jews?⁹⁵

In addition to those provided by Nicolayson, Young also passed on a set of statistics, based on those he had collated and included in his 25th May report to Palmerston, in which he had assessed the Palestinian Jewish community to be some 9690 souls. The Jerusalem community was considerably increasing, though most of its members lived in considerable poverty, with as many as 10% being acknowledged paupers. Victims of prejudice, Jewish people sought to 'purchase toleration' by paying more for the rent of their houses than did others. In Young's view, the frequent outbreaks of plague were also used by unscrupulous traders to further extort money from the community.⁹⁶ Young's revised population estimate, as given to Bonar and M'Cheyne, veered on the generous side when compared with his report to Palmerston, which was very similar to Nicolayson's. Though these sets of figures do not agree in all respects, they both indicated that the size of Jewish settlement in the Holy Land was far less than the Deputation had been earlier led to believe.⁹⁷

The new settlements of European Jewish migrants had been greatly encouraged by the Jewish philanthropists Sir Moses Montefiore and Edmund de Rothschild.⁹⁸ It so happened that Montefiore was then camped on the Mount of Olives and on 10th June the Deputation visited him to discuss Jewish resettlement of the Holy Land and to assure him 'that the Church of Scotland would rejoice in any amelioration he might effect in the temporal condition of Israel'. They were 'received with great kindness', being served with cake and wine.⁹⁹ Montefiore made mention of their visit in his diary.¹⁰⁰ Visits were also made to religious and historical sites within Jerusalem, but like many

⁹³ *Narrative*, p.129. Cf. *Memoir* p.96.

⁹⁴ Jeremiah 26.18; Micah 3.12.

⁹⁵ *Narrative*, p.130; HMFR 2nd Sept, 1839, p.34.

⁹⁶ Wm. T. Young to Viscount Palmerston, Jerusalem, 25th May, 1839, in Hyamson, op. cit., p7.

⁹⁷ HFMR 2nd Sept, 1839, p.35.

⁹⁸ Cf. Dan Cohn Sherbok *Israel* (SPCK, 1992) p.152; Pragai op. cit., p.22f.

⁹⁹ *Narrative*, p.143.

¹⁰⁰ Loewe p.179

Christian travellers, before and since, they were disappointed by their visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.¹⁰¹ Some compensation came in the form of trips to other Jerusalem sites and outings to Bethlehem, Hebron, and Bethany, a favourite spot for Bonar and M'Cheyne, who twice walked around the foot of the Mount of Olives to visit the village.¹⁰²

Notwithstanding the risk of plague, they needed to fulfil the reason for their presence in the city by making a visit to the Jewish Quarter. Although there were, according to Nicolayson, some 5,000 Jews in Jerusalem, only about eighty German and Polish Jews lived in the Quarter. Here there were two synagogues, one each for the Sephardi and Ashkenazi members of the community. Much poverty was evident in the poor furnishings of the Ashkenazi synagogue, from where they crossed into an equally ill kept reading room and from there to the home of seventy year old Rabbi Haiim who, on their arrival, had sent a present of wine to them via Nicolayson, with whom he maintained a friendly relationship.¹⁰³ They also paid a visit to the Western Wall, 'to which Jews are allowed to go, that they may pray and weep over the glory that is departed. ...[they] believe that prayer still goes up with most acceptance to God, when breathed through the crevices of that building...'.¹⁰⁴ On their final day at Jerusalem, 18th June, they made a walking tour of 'its more notable scenes,' a route which is easily traceable today.¹⁰⁵ All they had seen and learned in their visit to Jerusalem, had left them both moved and highly motivated, anxious that their impressions of the city's Jewish community would be lasting.¹⁰⁶

The Deputation and their entourage headed north out of Jerusalem, accompanied for a few miles by Nicolayson. Their route through Samaria traversed the central spine of hills, before veering north-west along the ridge of the Carmel to the port of Haifa. Apart from a small community at biblical Sychar, no further Jewish communities were discovered in the hills of Samaria, and no more would be found until they arrived, ten days later, at Haifa. Here, because of outbreaks of plague south of Carmel, a quarantine station was located. Its regime, based on the most dubious scientific principles, ensured that travellers would endure inactivity and boredom either 'for fourteen days, or, if they consented, to have all their clothes bathed in the sea, for seven days'.¹⁰⁷ Other travellers were also detained in the vicinity, including Lord Hamilton and Lyttelton, as well as Sir Moses Montefiore and his followers, who arrived shortly after the Scottish ministers. Montefiore's diary records his

¹⁰¹ *Narrative*, p.139ff. Cf. Robinson, op. cit., p.374; *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement*, 1885, pp.79-80. Murphy-O'Connor op. cit., p.49.

¹⁰² M'Cheyne's letter in HMFR 2 Sept., 1839.

¹⁰³ *Narrative* p.183. Reif points out, Bonar and M'Cheyne's Hebrew was of the biblical variety. S C Reif *A Mission to the Holy Land - 1839* (Glasgow Oriental Society Transactions Vol. XXIV. 1971/72), p.6.

¹⁰⁴ *Narrative*, p.190-191. Modern visitors to the Wall will be familiar with the practice of depositing written, faxed and e-mailed prayers between the joints of the blocks; verbal prayers are still uttered with the face in close proximity to the wall.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.196-7.

¹⁰⁶ *Narrative*, p.197.

¹⁰⁷ *Narrative*, p.230.

pleasure at meeting the Deputation once more.¹⁰⁸ Sir Moses and Dr Keith frequently walked together on the beach, discussing their understanding of how the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures might have found fulfilment in the general dereliction evident in the land. Montefiore found the conversations interesting, as he had considered the same questions independently, but he resolutely refused any attempt by Keith to move the discussion into consideration of the New Testament.¹⁰⁹

Their quarantine over, they set sail northwards on Monday, 1st July in a large open boat, without any kind of shelter, along the coast to Beirut. They passed Acre, where a few days earlier they had heard the guns saluting Muhammad Ali's recent victory over the Sultan at Nizip, and shortly after they passed Sidon were they heard 'the distant sounds of rejoicing in honour of the recent victory'.¹¹⁰ A few hours later they disembarked at Beirut, where they took stock of the past and planned for the future. It was agreed that it was essential to visit Galilee, where they believed as many as 1,200 Jews lived in Tiberius and possibly another 2,000 in Safed (Zefat). Black, who that year celebrated his fiftieth birthday, had doubts as to whether his constitution was up to any more fatiguing travel: the fall from the camel in Egypt, the general hardships of the journey, the effect of the heat, as well as his mood since quarantine at Haifa, all conspired to discourage him from further exertions. After much discussion, thought and prayer together, it was unanimously concluded that he and Keith, the two older members of the Deputation, would depart on 7th July for home, travelling by steamer to Constantinople, then through the Black Sea, along the Danube to Pesth and Vienna, then by the Rhine to Holland, and so to London and back to Edinburgh. They would visit what Jewish communities they could and compile information for the Committee.¹¹¹

M'Cheyne and Bonar now turned southwards to visit Galilee. Ibrahim's and Ahmed's contracts had terminated at Beirut and their place was taken by Erasmus Scott Calman, a Lithuanian Jewish convert, who would accompany them back to Britain. Calman, described as of a 'very gentle and kindly spirit', was no stranger, having met M'Chyene and Bonar at the prayer meeting held in the Regent Square Church, London, prior to their departure.¹¹² His usefulness as a travelling companion was much enhanced by his fluency in both Arabic and German and, having already completed five years service with Nicolayson in Jerusalem, knew well the country through which they would be passing.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ Loewe, *op. cit.*, p.190.

¹⁰⁹ *Idem.*

¹¹⁰ *Narrative*, p. 238, for the celebrations of the battle of Nizip see p.233, and Loewe *op. cit.*, p.191.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.249.

¹¹² MACCH 1.8 p.7.

¹¹³ *Narrative*, p.249.

Bonar and M'Cheyne: Beirut to Scotland, via Galilee.

In the afternoon of July 8th, after bidding farewell to Ibraim and Ahmed, Bonar, M'Chyene and Calman set out for Galilee. Their route took them through Sidon, and Tyre, a 'wreck of a town', before they reached Cana two days later.¹¹⁴ The following morning, although being warned by a military officer of the danger of Bedouin raiders on the road to Saphet, they nevertheless decided to attempt to reach the town without an escort.¹¹⁵ Apart from Bonar falling off his mule on the ascent up to Saphet, without hurt to himself, the journey was uneventful. The local Jewish population were amazed when told that in such a dangerous area and in such troubled times, they they would rather trust in God than carry guns.¹¹⁶

Calman, Bonar and M'Cheyne spent four days reconnoitring the area, observing the inhabitants, visiting synagogues and Jewish cemeteries and coming to the conclusion that of all the places they had so far visited Safed was undoubtedly best suited as a site for a mission station. The people, mostly impoverished Sephardim, were generally friendly even though they were 'shy to us, because they had been warned from an influential quarter to have no dealings with us'.¹¹⁷ Reflecting on the possibilities, the Deputation considered that an ideal arrangement might be for missionaries to be based in cooler Saphet during the heat of summer, resorting to Tiberius in winter, 'where the cold is scarcely felt'.¹¹⁸ The major hindrance, however, remained the unsettled state of the region.¹¹⁹

Recommencing their journey on Monday, 15th July, they descended to Capernaum, and, following the west side of the Sea of Galilee, arrived the same day at Tiberius, where they spent two days visiting biblical locations, eating fish from the lake and familiarising themselves with the local Jewish community. From Tiberius, they crossed the plain of Esdralon to reach the northern slopes of Mount Tabor which, despite some risk from Bedouin raiding parties in the area, they decided to ascend.¹²⁰ A few days later, on the Carmel ridge, their servant, Antonio, in retracing his steps to find a lost cloak, was attacked by Bedouin, robbed of his horse and all his clothes and left naked at the roadside.¹²¹ With little further excitement the group made its way, once more through Tyre and Sidon, reaching Beirut on Saturday 20th June. Finding that the next steamer for Smyrna sailed the following week, they reconciled themselves to restful days writing up their journals in Giuseppe's comfortable inn, where they had earlier stayed with Black and Keith. According to the *Narrative*,

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.259.

¹¹⁵ *Idem.*

¹¹⁶ The Deputation's policy of travelling unarmed differed from that adopted by Robinson's party who carried weapons, thinking 'the mere show of arms would protect... from annoyance and vexations...' They therefore 'purchased two old muskets and a pair of pistols' with no intention of using them. Cf. Robinson, *op. cit.*, p.51.

¹¹⁷ *Narrative*, p.284. Some weeks earlier the Saphet community had been warned by some of Montefiore's attendants that the Scottish ministers were bent on 'making them Christians'. Cf. p.277.

¹¹⁸ *Idem.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.285.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.299-301.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp.312-314.

among the diversions enjoyed that week was a short visit to Sir Moses Montefiore and his wife, who were said to be waiting for a steamer to Egypt.¹²² The curious thing about this is that, according to Montefiore's diary, Montefiore was not in Beirut on that date, but in Malta, having arrived there on 18th July, after embarking from Beirut for Alexandria on 10th July, onboard HMS *Acheron*.¹²³

At this convenient point, M'Cheyne and Bonar attempted to draw some conclusions from their expedition. Their summary consisted of five arguments in favour of establishing missionary stations in the Holy Land. Firstly, the Jewish community in the Holy Land was impoverished, oppressed and vulnerable, but responded to those who showed them kindness. Secondly, although the Jews in the land were strictly Orthodox, their belief in the Bible as God's Word and their expectation of the coming of the Messiah provided common ground for worthwhile interaction. Thirdly, because Jerusalem and Judea were the very centre of the Jewish world whatever happened there would be widely reported across the diaspora. Fourthly, in the face of Christian anti-Semitism and Islamic hostility, the Jewish community looked on the British as their friends. Lastly, work established in the Holy Land would be strongly supported by the Christian public.¹²⁴ They concluded, '...the Holy Land presents not only the most attractive, but the most important field for missionary operations among the Jews.'¹²⁵

At 5 o'clock on Sunday afternoon, 28th July, M'Cheyne, Bonar and Calman embarked on the Austrian steamer, *Schnell-Segler*, for Smyrna (Izmir: Turkey). About three days before, M'Cheyne had suffered a bad bout of fever, which continued to trouble him until they arrived in Smyrna on 1st August, where a British surgeon, serving on board an English frigate, was able to attend to him. The kindly attentions of the Rev. and Mrs W. B. Lewis who lived at Bouja, just outside Smyrna, greatly alleviated his condition. Through Lewis, who had formerly worked with the LSPCJ but had the previous year been appointed chaplain to the British Consul in Smyrna, they were introduced to John (Giovanni) Baptist Cohen, a Jewish Christian from Constantinople who also worked for the LSPCJ.¹²⁶ Cohen, a great linguist, who had suffered greatly on account of his conversion to Christianity, had, by 1839, gained acceptance among the 9,000 Smyrnan Jews. M'Cheyne's health though improved was not considered good enough to enable him to continue the journey and it was therefore decided he should remain in the care of Lewis until he was fit enough to travel to Constantinople.¹²⁷

¹²² *Ibid.*, p.320.

¹²³ Loewe, *op. cit.*, p.197. There seems to be no way of reconciling the conflict in these two disparate accounts.

¹²⁴ *Narrative* p.322.

¹²⁵ *Idem.*

¹²⁶ *Narrative* 327, For Lewis see *Gidney op. cit.*, p177 (*Gidney's* reference to the *Narrative* is to the first, two volume, edition).

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.330; *Gidney, op. cit.*, -173f; *Bernstein, op. cit.*, p.172.

From Smyrna, Bonar and Calman boarded the Austrian steamship *Stamboul* and two days later disembarked at Constantinople (Istanbul). Christian work among Constantinople's Jewish community was carried on largely by the LSPCJ, through the agency of Rev. S. Farman, who had been stationed in the city five years earlier and had seen three Jewish people baptised.¹²⁸ One of these, a German Jew called Merkuson, had come to Christian faith through the influence of Schaufler, the American missionary.¹²⁹ Three days were spent trying to gain an adequate impression of the complex Jewish community, which consisted not only of Sephardim and Ashkenazim, but also a sizeable number of Karaites, whose distinctive feature was adherence to the Hebrew Scriptures alone as the source of authority, rejecting, as normative the teachings of the Talmud.¹³⁰ The benefits and opportunities of locating a missionary among the 80,000 strong community seemed obvious, but these had to be offset against the high cost of living in the city, and the total lack of protection afforded to Jewish inquirers or converts.¹³¹

As they planned to leave Constantinople on Monday, 26th August, they were delighted to find M'Cheyne aboard that day's steamer from Smyrna, fully recovered from his bout of illness. A few hours later all three departed for the Danube aboard the *Fernando Primo*, commanded by 'a kind, intelligent Englishman.' At midday on 28th they entered the mouth of the Danube, and sailed up to Galatz (Galati: Romania) the next day, where they disembarked for a quarantine of a week's duration.¹³² Charles Cunningham, the British vice-Consul in Galatz, took a great interest in the party and provided for their use his *brashovanca*, a carriage without springs equipped to carry four passengers, until they reached Jassy (Iasi). The importance attached to Wallachia and Moldavia, modern Romania, can be judged from the fact that they devoted twenty pages of the *Narrative* to descriptions of its large Jewish community, commenting that, 'it is impossible not to feel their vast importance and inviting aspect as the scene of a Jewish Mission'.¹³³ In Jassy they discovered that the Jewish population numbered about 20,000, approximately half of the city's population.¹³⁴ In their usual round of visiting Jewish schools, synagogues and other aspects of community life, one sect that excited their curiosity was the newly established Chassidic Chabad group.¹³⁵ At the other extreme, they met 'neologian' Jews, committed to the liberal interpretation of Judaism characteristic

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.350; Gidney, op. cit., 174.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.352 For Schaufler see William G. Schaufler *Autobiography of William G. Schaufler* (New York: Anson D F Randolf & Co, 1887)

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.364-365.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p.351. Whilst the Jewish community enjoyed official recognition by the Porte, none was afforded converts. Gidney cites the account of the incarceration and torture of a young convert who had been handed over to the Turkish authorities by a rabbi in Smyrna. Cf. Gidney, op. cit., p. 177.

¹³² *Ibid.*, pp.370.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p.424.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.409.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 412 - 418.

of the Reform movement.¹³⁶ A summary of their report to the Committee in Edinburgh on the visit to Wallachia and Moldavia was published in the *Home and Foreign Missionary Record*, indicating that a missionary might be given permission to work in the Jewish community but would undoubtedly face the animosity of the Orthodox church.¹³⁷

From Wallachia and Moldavia, the Deputation entered the territory of Austrian Poland, well aware of the antagonism of the Habsburgs to any form of Protestant evangelism.¹³⁸ At the quarantine station they were viewed with some suspicion and their books were examined, though none were taken away from them. Later they faced another, more hostile, policeman who accused them of being Jews travelling under false passports.¹³⁹ Purporting to be evidence of illegal activities, letters were produced to show they had been seen in a synagogue, where they had joined in the *Shema* prayer, and were known to have bought tephillin, or phylacteries. At this Bonar and M'Cheyne were 'perplexed as well as amused.' Standing on their dignity as 'Protestant pastors from Scotland' where, they expostulated, all ministers were taught Hebrew, they admitted they had read in the synagogue, but 'only to shew the Jews that we knew their language', and as for the tephillin, they were but souvenirs. This satisfied their interrogator and he gave them back their passports. All their books, however, were taken from them, including their personal Bibles, and sealed in a parcel which they were forbidden to unwrap until they should leave Austrian territory.¹⁴⁰

They saw evidence in the Polish Jewish community of the deep tensions generally existing between traditionalists, who held tenaciously to orthodox Jewish life and practice, and secularists who longed for political emancipation and social integration. Nowhere was this contrast more clearly seen than in two events they attended. The first was a deeply traditional Chasidic celebration of the feast of Simchat Torah, at which the Torah scroll was processed through a dancing congregation, celebrating the giving of the Law.¹⁴¹ The second encounter was with a group of 'Jews of the New School' or Reform movement and like most Reform Jews in Poland that Bonar, Calman and M'Cheyne met, they made it clear that political emancipation, with the opportunity to assimilate, was the only Messiah they would look for.¹⁴² As they passed through the countryside close to the Russian (Ukraine) border, they discovered, much to their interest, whole communities in which Jewish life and culture was dominant.¹⁴³ When they arrived in Cracow (Krakow) they were 'deeply impressed with the importance of this city as a field of labour in the cause of Israel.'¹⁴⁴

¹³⁶ 'Neologian' is an archaic term used to describe one inclined to novel (rationalistic) views in theology.

¹³⁷ HMFR No.6, December 1839, p.88.

¹³⁸ *Narrative*, p.426, 435.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.457.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.457ff.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.438.

¹⁴² *Narrative*, p.446.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.452f.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.480.

On 15th October they crossed from Austria into Prussia and on 19th they arrived at the Grand Duchy of Posen (Poznan: Poland) where, they were told, lived 'upwards of 73,000 Jews, there being some in every town of the province — a vast field for a Jewish Missionary'.¹⁴⁵ It was here that the *Edinburgh Ladies Association on Behalf of Jewish Females* had established and supported schools for Jewish children.¹⁴⁶ Here too they discovered that considerable numbers of Jews were willing to attend special church services, which were announced whenever missionaries were in town, though in other places nearby people had walked out at the introduction of distinctive Christian teaching.¹⁴⁷ In Berlin they gathered information from Becker, the LSPCJ missionary, who told them the city had a Jewish population of 5,000.¹⁴⁸ An undoubted highlight of their visit to Berlin was the opportunity afforded to visit the University and attend one of Neander's lectures.¹⁴⁹ Neander had been born in 1789 as David Mendel, but when in 1806 he embraced the Christian faith he changed his name to Neander, or the 'new man', adding the Christian names Johann August Wilhelm. By 1839 he had become an eminent church historian, producing between 1822-1852 a multi-volume Church history. A powerful opponent of rationalism and higher criticism, he likewise disliked pietism; M'Cheyne and Bonar, being both of a somewhat pietistic bent, were perturbed when his classes neither commenced, nor ended, with prayer.¹⁵⁰ Their final port of call in Europe was Hamburg where they met J. C. Moritz, one of the most revered of the LSPCJ missionaries.¹⁵¹ It was while there that they read a brief but tantalising newspaper notice of the revivals that had taken place in Kilsyth and in M'Cheyne's church, St Peters, Dundee. On hearing this news they hastened home; arriving in London on 6th November, where they were met by the Committee, a few days later reaching Scotland.¹⁵²

Black and Keith: Beirut to Scotland, via Pesth.

The Committee for the Conversion of the Jews had considered the religious intolerance characteristic of the Habsburg domains was inimical to the establishment of mission work in Hungary, and, in addition, there was no British Consul resident at Pesth. Although there was a large Jewish community, no plans had been made to visit the city and no contacts there had been established.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p.487.

¹⁴⁶ See page 104, 106.

¹⁴⁷ *Narrative*, p.494.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p.502.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p.508.

¹⁵⁰ For Neander see Bernstein, op cit., p.389ff.

¹⁵¹ For Moritz and Hamburg see Gidney op. cit., p.168; Cf. Bernstein op. cit., ad. loc.

¹⁵² *Narrative*, p.519.

¹⁵³ Gavin Carlyle *Mighty in the Scriptures: A Memoir of Adolph Saphir DD.* (London: John Shaw and Company, 1894) p.4; Appendix A, p.430-431.

Having left Bonar and M'Cheyne in Beirut, Black and Keith had made their way along the Danube with little of note happening until they arrived in Pesth.¹⁵⁴ Here they had to wait for a change of steamers for their onward journey to Vienna and this gave them time to investigate the extensive Jewish community in the city and establish contact with those able to provide information - Rabbis, Professors and Protestant clergymen. The extraordinary willingness to debate with Christians was something neither Black nor Keith had witnessed before: one rationalist Rabbi threw down the gauntlet to them: 'Send us a missionary, and we will reason with him.'¹⁵⁵ Such encounters seemed to indicate the suitability of Pesth as a mission station, leading Keith to write: 'of all the cities we had visited, none was to be compared to it, as the promising site of a Jewish mission.'¹⁵⁶ Keith and Black, however, had to use the greatest caution as this was a time when even the circulation of the Bible was considered by the Austrian authorities to be politically subversive.¹⁵⁷

Seemingly, the only thing which stood in their way was the Habsburg regime, and as they walked the streets of Pesth the palace of the Prince Palatine seemed to defy them, destroying all hope. Yet, it was precisely from that location that help came. The Archduchess, Maria Dorothea, was not a Catholic but a German noblewoman of the House of Württemberg, a Lutheran much influenced by the Württemberg Pietist movement.¹⁵⁸ As a result of the death of her son, some years previously, she had privately taken up reading the Bible, and this had created a deep concern for the spiritual welfare of Hungary.¹⁵⁹ For some days prior to the arrival of Keith and Black, the Archduchess had experienced wakeful nights and was filled with a premonition that some great thing was about to happen.¹⁶⁰ Meanwhile both Keith and Black were feeling the effects of a hazard of summertime river steamer travel, a condition popularly called 'Danube fever'. Keith, however, soon manifested symptoms of cholera, slipped into a coma and seemed to be lying on the very threshold of death itself. Black was so distressed by his friend's illness that it worsened his own condition, his fever returned with a fresh virulence and he too was diagnosed as suffering from cholera.¹⁶¹

As part of their preparation for their journey the Deputation had taken the precaution of obtaining letters of introduction from people of position and influence. One was from Julia Pardoe, the renowned traveller, who as an acquaintance of Prince Esterhazy, had been introduced to the

¹⁵⁴ The modern name Budapest was not in use until the construction the Széchenyi Chain Bridge linked the twin cities of Buda and Pesth. Cf. e.g. Gall & Hollo *The Széchenyi Chain Bridge and Adam Clark* (Budapest: City Hall, 1999) p.12ff.

¹⁵⁵ Carlyle, op. cit., p.430.

¹⁵⁶ Idem.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Andrew Wheatcroft *The Habsburgs* (London: Penguin, 1996) p.251.

¹⁵⁸ For Maria Dorothea see Georg Bauhofer, *The History of the Protestant Church of Hungary From the Beginning of the Reformation to 1850* (London: James Nisbet & Co, 1854) p. xxx; Kool op. cit., p.97-101.

¹⁵⁹ David Brown *The Life of John Duncan* (Edmonston and Douglas, 1872) p.307

¹⁶⁰ Idem.

¹⁶¹ Carlyle, op. cit., p.432

Archduke and Archduchess.¹⁶² In a remarkable coincidence, she and her mother were present in the city at this time and were soon made aware of the seriously ill Black and Keith. She secured an appointment with the Archduchess to inform her of their condition. The Archduchess replied that the Archduke had recently given her a copy of Keith's *Evidences of Prophecy* and, as Miss Pardoe unfolded their story, became convinced that this was the event for which her broken nights were a preparation. Shortly after, when Keith began to regain some strength, she began a regular pattern of visiting him every other day; her kindness included sending to the hotel a bed long enough to allow him to lie comfortably, as he was very tall. She had Austrian soldiers posted at each end of the road to limit access by noisy carriages, and ordered the patient's main meal to be prescribed by the royal physician and delivered hot from the palace kitchen.¹⁶³

In Keith she found a confidante and sympathetic counsellor, and became as enthusiastic for a mission to the Jews in Pesth as was Keith himself, stating that should the Church of Scotland begin work in Pesth 'she would place her own person between it and whatever danger might assail it.'¹⁶⁴ Her visits to Black and Keith's hotel, however, gave her enemies an opportunity to attempt to implicate her in a conspiracy; it being darkly rumoured that Scottish Protestants planned to establish a mission for the conversion of Catholics. She dismissed the danger as inconsequential, 'They can only lodge a complaint with Metternich, and all he can do is to present it to the Empress.'¹⁶⁵

Slowly, Keith and Black began to recover and by early November Black left Pesth to take up lodgings in Vienna until the next Spring, before proceeding to Scotland. Casting light on this largely undocumented period, there is among M'Cheyne's papers an extract of a letter, dated 30th November 1839, from James Nisbet, the London bookseller, to W. Laurie, the secretary of the General Committee, urging him to forward to Candlish important information concerning Black and Keith's need of a travelling companion to be sent out from Scotland.¹⁶⁶ These pleas did not go unheeded; Keith's son, George, then a medical student in Edinburgh, went to Pesth and tactfully administered to his father 'more decisive and effective treatment', without which it was thought he would not have recovered.¹⁶⁷ Keith and his son remained in Pesth until the winter was past and he was well enough to return home. The Archduchess assisted them on their way with generous provisions including a supply of food, one of the silver spoons has survived and is held in the collection of New College Library.¹⁶⁸ Black and Keith, travelling separately, arrived back in Scotland in the Spring of 1840 and

¹⁶² Idem; cf. Brown, op. cit., p.304

¹⁶³ Carlyle, op. cit., p.436.

¹⁶⁴ Brown, op. cit., p.312

¹⁶⁵ Brown, op. cit., p.310

¹⁶⁶ Laurie to RMM, NCL MACCH 2.1.82

¹⁶⁷ Carlyle, op. cit., p.436

¹⁶⁸ Cf. McDougall, op. cit., p.35.

Keith was commissioned by the Committee, along with M'Cheyne, who had been approached in November, to prepare and deliver the Committee's report to the General Assembly of 1840.¹⁶⁹

From the quarter they least expected, help had come. This, with what he saw of the Jewish community, convinced Keith that Pesth was without doubt the best location for establishing the first mission station. Such was his enthusiasm for advocating Pesth that he had to admit that he might have been somewhat tedious in promoting it as the most suitable location for the first mission station. Certainly, the comment was made, that the only difference between 'Pesth' and 'pest' was the letter 'h'!¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ MB1 p.24.

¹⁷⁰ Brown, *op. cit.*, p.313

CHAPTER FIVE

...we must not only be evangelistic, but evangelistic as
God would have us be — not only dispense the light on
every hand, but dispense it first to the Jew.

Robert Murray M'Cheyne

The Mission of Inquiry: The Literature

The Notebooks

Robert M'Cheyne, whilst staying in London, had breakfast one morning with Sir Robert Inglis, once rather unflatteringly described as 'an old-fashioned Tory, a strong churchman, with many prejudices and no great ability'.¹ M'Cheyne, however, remembered him as 'a very kind man' and acknowledged that from him he 'received many excellent hints as to travelling in the East', including sound guidance about keeping a journal. Inglis' opinion was that 'half a line on the spot is worth half a page of recollection'.² We can be very grateful that M'Cheyne heeded this advice and made good use of his sketch and notebooks, two of which have survived.³ The larger of the two is a plain page notebook, measuring 5" x 8", bound in marbled boards with a red cloth spine, containing sketches of the expedition, with notes. The opening entry, providing information on M'Cheyne's preparatory visit to London was written on 27th March, 1839, the following pages record details of the European stage of the journey up to 26th April in Leghorn, there follows 23 blank pages. The account of their journey was resumed on 30th May, at El Arish, near the Egyptian border, and continues to 6th June when the Deputation was at Doulis, in Palestine. Another break follows, with no material relative to the Mission of Inquiry until close to the end where an appendix records information about Jewish settlement in Palestine, as gleaned from Nicolayson, and similar information on some of the European communities, as given by Pieretz. There follows two lists of qualifications considered necessary for a missionary to the Jews; one is culled from Nicolayson, the other from Pieretz. Two other notebooks have been referred to in a previous chapter; the most interesting being a small black Del La Rue leatherette pocket notebook, which contains sketches and notes of the Mediterranean leg of the journey, with lists of names and addresses, covering the period from 18th March, to c.17th May, 1839.⁴ The substance of these notebooks provides detail and colour for the *Narrative*, in which some parts are reproduced verbatim, whilst other material is worked into the text less conspicuously.

Just before the Deputation departed, Robert M'Cheyne's father, Adam, suggested that his son might make tactical use of a notebook, passing on some humorous advice which he had gleaned from Lord Lindsay on how to deal with difficult Ottoman officials:

¹ DNB ad. loc.

² MACCH 1.8 p.7.

³ MACCH 1.8; 1.9.

⁴ MACCH 1.9.

Pull out your Note Book eye the man attentively pretending to write down a minute description of his person – ask his name – which if he refuse to give, no matter – pull out, open and read your firman [Ottoman passport] – make the parchment crackle – talk to your friends about Mehemet Ali or Ibrahim Pasha – with much austerity – and in all probability the man will be your humble servant.⁵

The Letters

During his absence, M'Cheyne wrote 13 letters to his father and mother, and his sister Elizabeth, whom he addressed as Eliza. These are in the collections of New College, which also holds another half-dozen letters written to his supporters, friends and the congregation of St. Peter's, Dundee.⁶ The ten pastoral letters to the St. Peter's congregation are now in the collection of the Free Church of Scotland.⁷ As these substantially overlap with the official letters written to Robert Candlish, the Convener of the Edinburgh sub-Committee, they add little to our knowledge.⁸ The letters written to the Committee, however, are of great importance, both in terms of their immediate impact on the Church and also for the part they played in forming the basis of the *Narrative*. Although these were official communications, such was their popular interest that they were speedily published in the *Home and Foreign Missionary Record*.⁹ The enthusiastic desire on the part of the Church to receive news of the Deputation is evident from the adjustment made to the editorial plans: the publication, in the July edition, of the Jewish Committee's 1839 General Assembly report was postponed and letters from Bonar and M'Cheyne were inserted in its place. Over the next six months news of the Deputation took pride of place in the magazine, often being featured on the first page. The editor asked, 'if even their letters are thus interesting,' what would it be like to hear first hand their stories and experiences, 'how much will they have to tell us when we see them face to face?'¹⁰ With the publication of the last letter, written from London on 11th November, 1839, the editor could look back with justifiable satisfaction at having provided for his readers the 'whole journey, detailed in their own fresh and interesting narratives, as they have been given in successive numbers of this Record.'¹¹

⁵ Adam M'Cheyne to R.M.M. MACCH 2.1.72.

⁶ Edited by his father, Adam M'Cheyne, the letters were published as Robert Murray M'Cheyne, ed. *Familiar Letters* (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1848).

⁷ MACCH 1.4 Reprinted in *Memoir* p.96, 97, 171, 173, 174, 224, 230. The 10 pastoral letters are published on pages 179-224. The author possesses a note from Mr. G S Anderson, 71 Harrington Gardens, London, SW, dated 28th May 1912, and addressed to Sir Andrew Wingate, president of the BSPGJ, intimating the discovery of the mislaid letters. Anderson requested they be 'placed in careful hands; as I love them as the finding of a "lost treasure,"' he added, 'I am gratified that you share my joy at the recovery of the M.S. Letters.' Passing from the possession of the BSPGJ, the letters are now in the collection of the Free Church of Scotland.

⁸ MACCH 2.1.75-80.

⁹ HFMR No.1, July 1839, p.9-11; No.3, September 1839, p.33-37; No.4, October 1839, p.59-62; No.5, November 1839, p.70-75; No.6, December 1839, p.86-88.

¹⁰ HMFR No.5, November 1839, p.70.

¹¹ HMFR No.6, December 1839, p.86.

Reports of Meetings

Bonar and M'Cheyne arrived back in Scotland on 11th November and were present at a meeting of the Edinburgh sub-Committee on 16th November, which had been convened by Candlish at short notice. It was agreed that they should 'address a public meeting at the West Church on the evening of Tuesday the 19th and that there should be a meeting of the General Committee on Wednesday....'¹² Neither M'Cheyne nor Bonar are listed in the sederunt of any Committee meeting from 16th November until 21st May, 1840, because both were kept busy 'in attending meetings in different parts of the country giving intelligence.'¹³ With a view to recruiting two more missionaries and influencing future leaders, they had been requested by the Committee to pay special attention to the Scottish universities.¹⁴

Both men reported to their Presbyteries, and despite the Presbytery of Perth's original reluctance to release him, Bonar evidently enjoyed reporting to them: 'I was called to give a statement of our mission to the Jews, in which I felt considerable freedom....'¹⁵ During the week ending 22nd December, he had travelled to Glasgow and Greenock, 'attending special meetings for the Jews, where I felt especially helped in preaching upon the subject'. January 1840 saw him visiting the Kelso parish of his brother Horatius, and, whilst there, making trips to Ancrum and Jedburgh as well.¹⁶ About the same time, Robert Wodrow, writing on behalf of the Glasgow sub-committee, gave advice on how M'Cheyne and Bonar's forthcoming visit to Glasgow could be best used to stimulate interest in the Jewish mission, 'the more closely we adhere to Scriptural rules and examples, the more likely it is that our efforts will be blessed for the Conversion of Israel.'¹⁷

These Deputation undertakings were also financially successful, stimulating the generosity of the ordinary, often very poor, members of the Church. When forwarding a sum to the treasurer, M'Cheyne added a note:

I sent you sometime ago 10s., collected by a good woman in my parish, for the Jews. I send you 10s. more, collected by two persons in humble life, giving a halfpenny a day. The rest, £61:10:8d., is a very interesting sum of money. You know the Lord has been doing great things in Blairgowrie, saving many souls, and refreshing many of his own children. The minister proposed a thanksgiving to God, not of words only, but of substance; none were to give but those who were really thankful. In about four days the above sum was contributed. Few of the rich gave anything; so you have here the fruits of the praise of the poor of God's people in Blairgowrie. Such offerings are worth £1000 from the world. It is to be devoted to the *first Jewish missionary*. It was presented to me at an immense meeting in the Church.¹⁸

M'Cheyne and Bonar's lengthy report to the Committee was essentially a compilation based on their journal reports and letters to Candlish, which had been given wide publicity in *The Home and*

¹² MB1, p.17 Cf. Advertisement in *The Scotsman* 23rd November 1839 and HMFR December 1839, p.87.

¹³ MB1, p.27.

¹⁴ MB1, p.22.

¹⁵ Ed. Majory Bonar, op. cit. p.79.

¹⁶ Ibid. p.80, 81.

¹⁷ MACCH 2.1.87 Wodrow to M'Cheyne (no date). Emphasis original.

¹⁸ HMFR No.8, February 1840, p.126. Emphasis original.

Foreign Missionary Record. In the light of the eventual decision of the Committee to establish Pesth as one of the first centres of mission activity, it may seem remarkable that little or nothing of Dr Black's and Dr Keith's researches are to be found in print. *The Home and Foreign Missionary Record* expressed its concern for the safe return of both men, who had been delayed by recurrent illness, and, of course, it reported on their safe arrival back in Scotland, but neither a letter nor a report mentioning Pesth was published in its pages.¹⁹ This notable lack of publicity, however, was not inadvertent; it was deliberate. The sensitivities of seeking to commence missionary activity within the sphere of Habsburg jurisdiction required, what today might be termed, a news blackout.²⁰ Not only would careless publicity jeopardise the imperial patroness of the Jewish mission, the Archduchess, Maria Dorothea, but also the very work itself would be compromised. Shortly after his return, the Committee had officially requested Keith, to prepare, for the press, a narrative account of his and Black's experiences when returning to Scotland, via the Danube. He declined, stating that the 'object was not to satisfy curiosity, but to establish missions.'²¹ This policy of secrecy was maintained until well after the expulsion of the missionaries from Hungary in 1850; indeed that expulsion was, according to Keith, at least partly attributable to careless publicity given to the work through an American periodical.²² There is no evidence to suggest that Black ever made his views known to the public, and Keith did not go into print until 1867, when he contributed four substantial articles to the Religious Tract Society periodical *The Sunday at Home*.²³ Lack of public statement, however, did not preclude either of them from privately making the fullest representation of their case for the pre-eminent suitability of Pesth. Indeed, as we have noticed, Keith gained a certain notoriety in the Church of Scotland for his resolute campaigning on behalf of the Jewish community of that city.

The Committee's Report to the General Assembly of 1840

At its meeting on 20th November, 1839 the Committee decided to write to M'Cheyne, who had yet to make his maiden Assembly speech, to invite him to prepare and deliver, with assistance from Dr. Keith, the official report for the 1840 General Assembly, which would, necessarily, be an account of the Mission of Inquiry.²⁴ As well as being published in the official Assembly papers, the report was also made available to the general public through the pages of the July, August and September 1840 numbers of *The Home and Foreign Missionary Record*. It was pointed out that, for two reasons the report was not narrative: in the first place, it was considered that to have provided narrative would have unacceptably lengthened what was an Assembly report; in the second place,

¹⁹ HMFR No.4, October 1839, p.59; No.4, November 1839, p.70; No.6, December 1839, p.88; No.8, February 1839, p.126.

²⁰ *The Sunday at Home* No.675, 6th April 1867, p.212.

²¹ *Ibid*, 6th April, 1867, p.213.

²² *Idem*.

²³ *Ibid*, 8th April, 1867, p.212f; No. 676, 13th April 1867, p.232f.; No. 667, April 20th, 1867, p.245f.; No.678, 27th April, p.261f..

²⁴ MBI, p.22.

the Committee had already commissioned M'Cheyne and Bonar to write the *Narrative*.²⁵ What was provided was an analysis of the most suitable locations for establishing mission stations, with comments on other possible sites; a statement of what might be an appropriate missionary *modus operandi*; a list of the qualifications required of missionaries; a discussion of the problems that might be encountered; and the principle arguments for undertaking such a task at that time.

Reflecting M'Cheyne and Bonar's preference, the first possible location mentioned in the report was Safed in Palestine. Mindful of the work of the LSPCJ station in Jerusalem, the report highlighted Galilee as the most suitable area in which to locate a Scottish missionary, holding as it then did half of the Jewish population of the Holy Land.²⁶ In favour of Palestine, the report presented a six-point argument, which apart from the addition of the first point, was substantially the same as that M'Cheyne and Bonar had concluded when in Beirut.²⁷ Firstly, political control under the Egyptian Pasha, Mohammad Ali, was favourable to Jewish settlement in the land, even to the point of allowing Jews to become landowners. Secondly, Jewish communities in Palestine were open and friendly to Protestant missionaries. The third reason was the orthodox Judaism of the Palestine communities, a better hearing for a missionary might be obtained among those who believed in the imminence of the coming of a personal Messiah, and who also held to the inspiration and authority of the Tenach. Fourthly, Judea was the centre of the Jewish world and the impact of the gospel there would have international repercussions. Fifthly, the establishment of a British consulate at Jerusalem had resulted in the Jewish community believing the British were their friends. Finally, the Holy Land, of all places, seemed best suited to attract the support of the Scottish Christian public.²⁸

Other suitable locations included Jassy and Bucharest, an unspecified location in Hungary, Posen, Smyrna and Constantinople. The population estimates were given for each along with comments on their suitability. Jassy was preferred to Bucharest on account of the Jewish community being seven times larger, but both comprised a 'wonderful field ...hitherto entirely unoccupied.'²⁹ Hungary, specifically Pesth, was placed in the centre of the report, after Jassy and Bucharest, but before Posen, Smyrna and Constantinople. Although its claim was presented in rather less words than any other suggested location, by the careful use of language, no doubt drafted by Keith, its superiority was clearly indicated. The large Jewish community, the 'lowest estimate is 250,000; but there are said to be at least 300,000,' was three or four times the size of other communities. In addition, it was considered that the Reform movement made many Hungarian Jews susceptible to Christian influence..³⁰ The report also briefly surveyed the lesser claims of Leghorn, Corfu, Gibraltar, Northern Africa, Egypt, Baghdad, Austria, Krakow, Berlin, Hamburg, Salonika, and

²⁵ HMFR No.13, July 1840, p.190.

²⁶ Ibid, p.191.

²⁷ Cf. p.62.

²⁸ HMFR No.13, July 1840, p.190-191.

²⁹ Idem.

³⁰ Idem.

Russia. All offered excellent opportunities, but were either much smaller communities, or, like Austria and Russia, were inaccessible to Protestant missionaries.³¹

Missionaries should, preferably, be ordained ministers of the Church of Scotland and, ideally a pair should be allocated to each station. The question as to whether missionaries should be Jewish or Gentile was nicely balanced, with the perceived advantages and disadvantages stated in both cases. The report also welcomed the idea of lay missionaries, either natives of the country, or Jewish Christians, working under the supervision of an ordained minister.³² One question, which occurred to the Committee, was whether or not schools founded on Christian principles should be established as part of the mission, and if so, were they as likely to be successful as had generally been the case in India? Was it likely that a Christian education intended to 'train up the young in a grammatical knowledge of the Word of God' would 'remove a mass of rubbish' and 'uncover the ear in some measure for the glorious Gospel'?³³ The experience of the schools in Posen suggested it might. There, it was said, Jewish young people had 'more knowledge of Christianity in their hearts than the children of the Christians.'³⁴ One thing the report was adamant about was the great importance of transparency; if education was to be offered to Jewish young people it should be clearly and openly Christian, and there 'should be no concealment of our motives. It is unworthy of a Christian, and calculated to create suspicion.'³⁵

The pioneering medical work of Dr. George Edward Dalton, and his converted Jewish assistant, at Jerusalem, intrigued the Committee with the possibility of entering the uncharted territory of medical missions. Dalton's work had been effective in breaking down barriers of prejudice, and despite the Jerusalem rabbis attempting to prohibit contact with the missionaries though the issue of a *cherem*, or threat of excommunication, the people still attended the clinic and the *cherem* was finally totally disregarded.³⁶ In justifying consideration of a medical mission, the report argued from biblical principle. If Jesus and his Apostles had conducted a ministry to body as well as soul, should not also the Church of Scotland consider such a ministry?³⁷ In addition, books and tracts would be indispensable adjuncts to whatever other methods were adopted. The Deputation had formed the view that controversial tracts were generally unhelpful, a 'plain Christian tract, such as you would give to a nominal Christian, will be often found to be best adapted for a Jew.'³⁸

In setting out the qualifications of a missionary to the Jews the report focused largely on the necessary literary and linguistic attainments. To work in Palestine the missionary would ideally be able to speak Hebrew and Arabic, with Spanish, Italian and German also being important. He would have achieved a competent knowledge of Jewish literature, especially the Talmud and

³¹ Ibid, p.214

³² Ibid, p.215.

³³ Idem.

³⁴ Idem.

³⁵ Idem.

³⁶ Idem.

³⁷ Ibid, p.216.

³⁸ Idem.

Kabala. In Europe there would be great benefit of being able to 'speak to the Jews in their mother tongue' that is to say, in Yiddish. Beside such 'fair talents', young men should also possess 'persevering habits' and 'true love to Israel and toward Israel's God in their hearts'; it would be a considerable advantage if they had 'a quick invention, and vivid imagination'.³⁹ Singleness of devotion and purpose transcended all other attainments: 'the grand requisite for a Jewish missionary, as for every other minister of Christ, is, that he be determined to know nothing among the Jews, but Christ and him crucified.' Earlier the report had specified the *desiderata* that its missionaries would be 'wise and scriptural men'.⁴⁰

In the Committee's opinion, one of the most challenging problems related to the welfare of Jewish converts. If missionary work, as was hoped, resulted in Jewish people making a profession of Christianity, and if the Jewish converts, as was expected, would be ostracised for their faith by their former friends and family, and consequently lose their employment, what could be done to provide economic support for them? Appeal was made to the experience of other churches and societies, such as the LSPCJ's *Operative Jewish Converts Institution*, at Palestine Place in London's East End, with its printing press and bookbindery.⁴¹ The danger was that the provision of material help could be misrepresented as an inducement, and 'a bait to all kinds of impostors'.⁴² The solution proposed to this dilemma, to be applied in Palestine, was to send out 'one or two pious mechanics ...to live among the Jews, and to teach young enquirers a trade by which they might earn their bread'.⁴³ If a young man could be trained to be a tailor, shoemaker, watchmaker, or a silver or goldsmith, patronage from the Gentile population, if not the Jewish, could then be secured and the 'painful trials of poverty and voluntary banishment would no more haunt his mind and deaden his convictions'.⁴⁴

The report also addressed the question of the spiritual encouragement of converts. If Jewish Christians, either forcibly or voluntarily, went into exile, they would leave the sphere of the missionary's influence and prematurely abandon the nurture and instruction of the mission. This could only have a deleterious effect on their spiritual development, and on the missionary, who would be left alone, as at the beginning of his work. The answer was to provide structures for economic support, as well as spiritual nurture, so that without even having to articulate the faith, the life of new converts, hopefully, would demonstrate that, 'by becoming a Christian, he has become a wiser, holier, and better man'.⁴⁵

The final section anticipated the riposte, that work among Jews would be futile because they were 'lying under a curse of judicial blindness'. On the contrary, there was every encouragement to

³⁹ Idem..

⁴⁰ Idem.

⁴¹ Cf. *Gidney op. cit.*, p.77. .

⁴² HMFR No.13, September 1840, p.217.

⁴³ Idem.

⁴⁴ Idem.

⁴⁵ Idem.

undertake such a mission, had not the Deputation see evidence of what Professor Tholuck had pointed out that more converts had been made in the previous twenty years 'than since the first ages of the Church'?⁴⁶

Yet another protestation was anticipated: 'is it wise, in the present condition of the other schemes of our Church, to engage in a new enterprise?' Was it not enough to address the needs of the Church at home, without engaging in overseas missions? The answer was clear and unequivocal. It was not only deemed to be wise to engage widely in missionary endeavour, but it was crucial to the very continuance of the Church itself.⁴⁷ The reward would be God's blessing on the Church of Scotland; it was surely not without significance that revivals in Kilsyth, Dundee and a number of other places had broken out in 1839:

in the very same year in which God put it into the hearts of the ministers of the Church of Scotland to send out messengers to inquire after Israel and seek their good, — at the very time they were away on their blessed errand, God should have visited his people in Scotland.⁴⁸

M'Cheyne concluded the report with an impassioned appeal to the 'Fathers and Brethren' of the Church of Scotland, couched in the words of the Apostle Paul, from Romans 9.1 and 10.1 and 'sat down amidst great applause'.⁴⁹ The Moderator, in expressing the thanks of the Assembly, identified himself fully with 'the claim which you have to the warmest thanks of the house.'⁵⁰ In response the Assembly instructed the Committee to take appropriate steps to implement its plans by sending out missionaries to the most suitable stations, and elevated the Jewish mission to the status of being the fifth of the official schemes of the Church, sanctioning an annual collection on the second Sabbath of March.⁵¹

From delivering the Committee's report, as his maiden General Assembly speech, M'Cheyne travelled to Belfast, with Candlish and Keith, who were also appointed delegates of the Church of Scotland at the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, after the union of the Synod of Ulster and the Secession Synod on 10th July, 1840.⁵² That historic Assembly, as well as the one following, was highly significant for Irish Presbyterian involvement in Jewish missions, a subject to which we will have cause to return.

The Sermon

Judging from the number of meetings M'Cheyne and Bonar addressed, it is reasonable to assume that they might have produced a substantial repertoire of sermons and addresses on the subject of

⁴⁶ *Idem*; cf. *Jewish Intelligence*, 1837, p.97, cited by Gidney, *op. cit.*, p.170.

⁴⁷ HMFR No.13, September 1840, p.218. *Emphasis original.*

⁴⁸ *Idem.*

⁴⁹ *The Witness* 23rd May 1840

⁵⁰ *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*, 22nd May, 1840.

⁵¹ *Idem.*

⁵² *Memoirs* p.134. Cf. *Belfast Newsletter* 14th July 1840.

the evangelisation of the Jews. If that were so, they have not survived. The only surviving sermon is one of M'Cheyne's, which he preached, for the first time, on 17th November 1839, less than a week after his return to St. Peter's. Entitled *Our Duty to Israel*, it gives a most useful, and representative, insight into his thought, illuminating the theological and biblical principles entailed, it suggests a pragmatic response to the opportunities then offered.⁵³

In many respects the sermon, as published, is stylistically typical of the evangelical Scottish Presbyterian pulpit of the day, being an exposition of a biblical text, in this case Romans 1:16, under a number of sub-divisions, or 'heads', with pointed practical and spiritual application. What makes this sermon slightly different is the amount of illustrative material drawn from M'Cheyne's personal experience. Although the printed form of the sermon can be read in as little as ten minutes, it is highly unlikely that in delivery it would have been so brief.

The 'doctrine', or thesis, he attempted to draw from the text was that of the priority of Jewish missions, based on the words 'to the Jew first'. Without entering into technical linguistic or grammatical details, M'Cheyne produced four arguments to prove his assertion. Firstly, alluding to the phrase 'to the Jew first' in Romans 2.6-10, he sought to draw attention to what he, and most other evangelicals of his day, would have seen as the particular vulnerability of the Jewish people to divine judgement. God had specially chosen them, they had received 'more light than any other people' both by being given the Bible and having had Messiah sent to them. Because 'they have sinned against all this light — against all this love... their cup of wrath is fuller than that of other men.' Compassion therefore required Christians to respond to the Jewish people as a physician might respond to a dying man, or as the lifeboat might respond to passengers from a sinking ship; those most at risk deserved the first attention.

Secondly, it '*is like God to care first for the Jews*', and because Christians ought to be godly they ought to cultivate a love for the Jewish people. His third point was the accessibility of Jewish communities of Egypt and Palestine, Constantinople, Wallalchia and Moldavia, Austria and Prussian Poland; therefore, the Church had to heed what Providence, as well as the Word of God was saying to it: 'Do you think that our Church, knowing these things, will be guiltless if we do not obey the call....'

Finally, M'Cheyne argued that the Jewish people still had a divine destiny to fulfil; they were the natural missionaries; once they embraced the gospel, God's universal blessing would flow out to the world with increasing effect. Not wishing to overstate his case, M'Cheyne cautioned against the thought that he was advocating mission to the Jews alone, Jewish mission was to be seen as part of world mission: "Go and preach the gospel to *all* nations," said the Saviour. Let us obey his Word like little children.'

⁵³ *Memoir* p.447.

In drawing his sermon to a close, M'Cheyne reasoned that by seeking to take the gospel to the Jewish people, in accordance with biblical principle, a much needed blessing would accrue to the Church.⁵⁴ The argument reached its climax in alleging that concern for the spiritual welfare of the Jewish people would provide an antidote to the troubled state of the Church of Scotland, then passing through the struggles of the Ten Year Conflict.⁵⁵

There is no record in the *Memoirs* or elsewhere of this sermon being preached in Scotland, or of its effect on a Scottish congregation but an estimate of its value can be gained from the first edition of the BSPGJ's magazine *The Jewish Herald*, published in January 1846, almost three years after his death, in which the sermon was freely distributed as 'a characteristic specimen of the style of his pulpit compositions, and merits the attention of all Christians.'⁵⁶ M'Cheyne was highly regarded as a preacher. Andrew Bonar recalled that he 'went about his public work with awful reverence'. His sermons, delivered with verbal 'skill and elegance', were coupled with modesty and 'mild' dignity. His determination to be understood, rather than to impress, made him eschew Latinate terms and scholarly references, preferring words of Anglo-Saxon origin, accessible to 'the most illiterate in his audience'.⁵⁷ Though committed deeply to the theology of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, his preaching was neither academic nor doctrinaire: 'it was not *doctrine* alone that he preached; it was *Christ*, from whom all doctrine shoots forth as rays from a centre.' Considering himself as naturally inclined to court popularity, he was all the more inclined to guard against it.⁵⁸ William Garden Blaikie, in his 1887 *Cunningham Lectures*, depicted M'Cheyne as no wild fundamentalist innovator, as Donald Chambers has alleged he was, but a preacher firmly rooted in Scottish tradition and theology, and gifted with what was considered an appealing style.⁵⁹

The sermon was preached in Belfast during his visit in 1840, where Bonar claimed it had a marked effect, 'many ministers, as they came out, were heard saying, "How was it we never thought of the duty of remembering Israel before?"'.⁶⁰ A curious comment in view of the high degree of interest in Jewish missions then evident in the Irish Presbyterian Churches, but consideration of that must be deferred to a later chapter.

⁵⁴ *Memoirs* p.454. Emphasis original.

⁵⁵ For a concise treatment of the Ten Year Conflict from a Church of Scotland perspective see K. R. Ross *Ten Years Conflict* in DSCHT ad loc.; for an English perspective see Sir Llewellyn Woodward *The Age of Reform 1815 – 1870* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938) p.526f.; for a Free Church of Scotland perspective see Norman L. Walker *Chapters from the History of the Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1895), pp.1-16; Robert Buchanan *The Ten Years Conflict* (Glasgow: Blackie and Sons, 1852).

⁵⁶ *The Jewish Herald* vol.1, no.1 January 1847, p.10

⁵⁷ See *Memoir*, p.63–66. Emphasis original.

⁵⁸ See *Memoir*, p.63–66. Emphasis original.

⁵⁹ William Garden Blaikie *The Preachers of Scotland from the Sixth to the Nineteenth Century* (T & T Clark, 1888) p. 294. A 'feminine' quality was detectable in the timbre of his voice as a 'slow and almost singing cadence', which James Hamilton considered as an affectation. William Arnot *The Life of James Hamilton* (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1870).

⁶⁰ *Memoir* p.135.

'A Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry.'

Entrusted by the Committee to collaborate on the task of producing a published account of their journey, Bonar and M'Cheyne were faced with the problem of finding a quiet place and sufficient time in which to write. Not only in Kilsyth and Dundee, but in many places around them revival was taking place, and this placed additional burdens on both men who were frequently requested to preach in nearby parishes and to travel further afield to give talks about the Jewish mission.⁶¹ Indeed so perturbed had been the Eastern sub-committee at M'Cheyne's slowness in completing the revision of Bonar's draft that it chided him and directed he get on with the task.⁶² M'Cheyne was himself conscious of the conflict of responsibilities and had complained to Bonar that he found 'it hard to carry on the work of a diligent pastor and that of an author at the same time.' It did not, however, prove possible for him to complete the work in 1841 but, carefully heeding the admonition of the Committee, he exchanged parishes with Bonar for a month, and the work of writing commenced in earnest in March 1842.⁶³

Bonar described the creative collaboration between the two authors as 'pleasant... as sheet after sheet passed under the eyes of our mutual criticism.'⁶⁴ The manuscript completed by May 1842, is now in the collection of New College, Edinburgh. The first draft is largely in the hand of Bonar, but has many revisions in the hand of M'Cheyne, thus enabling ready detection of the relative contributions of the authors.⁶⁵ According to Robert E. Palmer, the New College manuscript is the final draft, 'exactly' as sent to the printer.⁶⁶ But that in fact is not the case, as further editorial refinement resulted in interesting and important points of difference between the manuscript and the published book. For example, the printed version of the *Narrative*, insists that a missionary to the Jews, 'should be one who fully and thoroughly adopts the principles of *literal* interpretation' of the Bible. The manuscript, however, has a different reading; in M'Cheyne's hand it states '*grammatical* interpretation'⁶⁷ This may or may not indicate something of a tension between the thought of M'Cheyne and Bonar on matters of eschatology and hermeneutics, but in view of the tendency for M'Cheyne's editorial amendments to take precedence over Bonar's original text, it is very unlikely that he held any real objection to the use of the term 'literal interpretation.' Indeed, in another place it is M'Cheyne who amends Bonar's text to indicate that the much respected

⁶¹ For the revivals in Kilsyth and Dundee see HMFR, No.3, September 1839, p.41-42; ed. Marjory Bonar, op. cit. p.79-83; *Memoir* p.116ff; 234.

⁶² MB1 p.86

⁶³ *Memoirs*. p.142.

⁶⁴ *Idem*.

⁶⁵ Bon.1 *The Church of Scotland's Care for Israel, being a Narrative of enquiry into the present condition of the Jews in Palestine and other countries made by a Deputation of ministers of the Church of Scotland in the year 1839, and drawn up by two of their number, Rev'd Robert M. M'Cheyne and Rev'd Andrew A. Bonar*, published as *A Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews from the Church of Scotland in 1839* (Edinburgh: William Whyte & Co, 1842), it was also published in London by James Nisbet, and later in Edinburgh by William Oliphant & Co. By 1878, 30,000 copies had been published.

⁶⁶ Robert E. Palmer *Andrew A. Bonar (1810-1892) A Study of his Life, Work and Religious Thought* (Unpublished Edinburgh University Ph.D Thesis, 1955) p.300f..

⁶⁷ Bon. 1. p.338. Italics mine.

Nicolayson, the LSPCJ missionary in Jerusalem, also insisted that a missionary candidate hold to a 'literal interpretation of prophecy'.⁶⁸

Palmer's assertion, that 'the volume is largely the work of Bonar', is certainly open to debate.⁶⁹ Bonar, it would appear, prepared a preliminary draft, by constructing the outline of the book and by compiling the factual account of their journey; M'Cheyne embellished the more pedestrian style of Bonar with a graphic use of descriptive material. It would, however, be mistaken to conclude that M'Cheyne's contribution was merely editorial, supplementary and decorative.⁷⁰ Large blocks of his observations and comments indicate a very substantial contribution to the book. Out of some eight hundred manuscript pages, few are free from M'Cheyne's crossings out, or his insertions of alternative renditions, or the provision of additional and fresh material from his pen being interleaved with Bonar's work. There is little evidence of Bonar challenging or suggesting alternatives to M'Cheyne's contributions.

Interleaved with the pages of the manuscript are additional notes or comments for the publisher.⁷¹ The pagination of the manuscript is perplexing and does not, of course, accord with the printed version, the first edition of which was bound in two volumes of some 342 and 391 pages respectively.⁷² Despite being a collaborative venture, Palmer was quite right to point out the remarkably seamless flow of language in the printed version, which would frustrate any reader's ability to determine what each contributor had written.⁷³

Set out in chronological order, the *Narrative* is essentially an account of Jewish communities among which the Deputation travelled. They provided a minute description of the Holy Land for the express purpose of stimulating interest in, and support for, the mission to the Jewish people. The authors argued that an interest in the land would lead readers to an interest in the people who 'once possessed it and who still claim it for their own'.⁷⁴ Stefan C. Reif was much impressed by the Scottish 'affection for the land [which] is exemplified in numerous passages....'⁷⁵ To the objective presentation of facts and statistics, were added subjective impressions, observations and passionate opinions. Some poems, and pen and pencil illustrations in a somewhat naïve style, were added by M'Cheyne, and in some editions the publisher supplied fold-out maps to show the route of their travels.

⁶⁸ Bon. 1. p.411f.

⁶⁹ Palmer p.301.

⁷⁰ It was M'Cheyne who described scenery so well, often making comparisons with the Scottish landscape he knew so well, and it was he who provided detailed and colourful accounts of the different peoples encountered. Cf. e.g. Bon.1, reverse p.24, left margin p.77. And it was M'Cheyne who, with a dramatic touch, inserted the observation that when arriving at Jerusalem he dismounted and 'hurried forward on foot over the rocky footpath, till he gained the point where the city of the Lord comes first in sight.' Bon. 1. p.239.

⁷¹ One such note to the publisher can be seen between pages 569 & 570. It is addressed to 'Dear James', probably James Nisbet, the London publisher.

⁷² For example, at page 463 in the manuscript there is the insertion of part of chapter 6, commencing with a page numbered 518; page 464 continues after the page numbered 543.

⁷³ Palmer op. cit. p.301

⁷⁴ *Narrative* Preface to the first edition, p.v.

⁷⁵ Stefan C. Reif *A Mission to the Holy Land – 1839* (Glasgow Oriental Society Transactions Vol. XXIV. 1971/72) p.3

The *Narrative* makes considerable demands on the biblical literacy of the modern reader; something, it seems, the authors felt they could take for granted with the readers of their own generation. The editor of the *Home and Foreign Missionary Record* regarded an open Bible as absolutely indispensable to a proper reading of the reports which underlay the *Narrative*.⁷⁶ It was written in a style that ordinary readers would find accessible, 'a plain narrative, so that even the most unlearned reader, if only familiar with the Scriptures, may follow the writers in their visit to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.'⁷⁷ This high degree of familiarity with the Biblical text is something we earlier noted as characteristic of many people in Scotland, of all classes, during the nineteenth century and earlier. As well as thousands of biblical allusions, too numerous to cite, the authors provided hundreds of biblical references, nearly six hundred in the first volume alone. Reif considered there to have been 'about a thousand scriptural passages... referred to or illustrated in the book.'⁷⁸

The *Narrative* reflects the author's unequivocal commitment to the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, the catechisms and the *Directory of Public Worship*.⁷⁹ These documents are quite uncompromising in describing what are perceived as the inadequacies of other denominations and religions.⁸⁰ Reif rightly pointed out that 'it would of course be anachronistic to expect members of the Deputation to display a tolerant attitude towards Rabbinic Judaism.'⁸¹ Yet perhaps he oversimplified, what is in reality, their rather complex attitude to Judaism. Whilst it is true that strongly derogatory epithets such as 'wretched', 'childish', 'ridiculous' or 'silly' were used to describe some orthodox Jewish religious practices, yet more characteristic was the sorrow and compassion they felt as they saw, what they took to be, the tragedy of Israel's loss of its own religious destiny by its rejection of the Messiah.⁸² Their analysis of Judaism was not, however, simplistic: a careful reading reveals an intriguing tension or ambivalence in their attitude. Whilst they considered orthodox Judaism could be criticised for the reasons already mentioned, it was, however, 'untainted by the infidelity of France or the neology of Germany'. In holding the 'Old Testament to be indeed the Word of God', and given 'a real expectation of the coming of the Messiah', common ground could be found with Christianity, and missionary work could be facilitated by building on it.⁸³ Likewise, the influence of the rationalism of the Reform movement was not considered all negative, for it too held out promising opportunities for fruitful missionary contact. In places like Taranapol in Poland, they had found an openness to change, evident in a denial of the supremacy of the Talmud, and a willingness to challenge traditional beliefs. The problem was that with the rejection

⁷⁶ HMFR No.3, September 1839, p.33

⁷⁷ *Narrative* Preface to the first edition, p.v.

⁷⁸ Reif, op. cit., p.2

⁷⁹ From 1711 to 1889, all licensed ministers of the Church of Scotland were required to subscribe to the *Westminster Confession of Faith* in terms of the following Formula of Subscription: 'I do hereby declare, that I do own and believe the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith ...to be the truths of God; and I do own the same as the confession of my faith.'

⁸⁰ Cf. e.g. *WCF* 25:6.

⁸¹ Reif, op. cit., p.6.

⁸² *Narrative* p.197.

⁸³ *Ibid*, p.321. The wording of this observation found its way into the 1840 Assembly report.

of the Talmud had also come a rejection of the Bible.⁸⁴ The attraction of attempting missionary work among the Karaites lay precisely in their aversion to the Talmud but their retention of Scripture.⁸⁵

Counterbalancing all their religious and doctrinal absolutism was a genuine empathy with individual adherents of other religions, especially the Jewish people and nowhere is this more moving expressed than in their sympathetic observation of orthodox Ashkenazi worship in Safed:

Some clapped their hands; others clasped both hands together, and wrung them as in an agony of distress, till they should obtain their request. A few beat upon their breasts. ... All of them, old and young, moved the body backward and forward, rocking to and fro, and bending toward the ground. ...one young man remained behind prolonging his devotions, in great excitement. We at first thought that he was deranged, and was caricaturing the rest, but were assured that, on the contrary, he was a peculiarly devout man. ...often he bent his whole body to the ground, crying aloud, "Adonai, Is not Israel thy people?" in a reproachful tone, as if angry that God did not immediately answer.⁸⁶

The effect of witnessing this scene was profound and lasting:

We never felt more deeply affected at the sight of Israel. It was the saddest and most solemn view of them that we had yet obtained. — Sincere, anxious, devout Jews "going about to establish their own righteousness." None seemed happy; even when all was over, none bore the cheerful look of men who had ground to believe that their prayers had been accepted. Many had the very look of misery, and almost of despair.⁸⁷

A table is attached to the *Narrative* as an Appendix VII to show the 'striking similarity in the main features of Judaism and Popery, proving they have one author'. Such comments can only be understood in the light of the Confessional theology espoused by the authors, namely, that the Bible was the sole authority in all matters of belief and practice, and that salvation was through faith alone and by Christ alone.⁸⁸ If, as they believed, that for Jews the dubious source of authority was the Talmud, that the messianic office of Jesus was spurious, and salvation was obtained by meritorious *mitzvoth*, then Catholicism was deplorable because it added the authority of tradition to that of Scripture, Mary's intercessions to the sufferings of Christ, and good works to faith. Their opinion of the Greek Church was equally unflattering, the Moldavian priests were considered, 'low in character... found openly drinking in a tavern at any hour of the day. Though they are priests, yet they often carry on business, and they oppose the Bible.'⁸⁹ In comparison with their 'own happy Scotland,' Catholic countries were held in the grip of an insidious spiritual force.⁹⁰ Protestant Lutherans were also suspect, inasmuch as some were not considered totally free from the taint of Rationalism.⁹¹ But, by far the strongest condemnation was directed at those

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 446.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p. 365.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p.278-9. Cf. Reif, *op. cit.*, p.8.

⁸⁷ *Narrative*, p.278-9.

⁸⁸ *WCF*

⁸⁹ *Narrative*, p.372.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p.468.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, p.486.

whose religious proclivities led them either into apathy, or hostility, toward Jewish people. The proof that Roman Catholicism, along with the Armenian and Greek churches, was anti-Christian, lay in the hostility they showed to the Jewish people.⁹²

A further notable feature of the *Narrative* is its authors' insistence that the return of Jewish settlers to the land of Israel was fulfilment of biblical prophecy, and a welcome portent of the expected acceptance by the nation of Jesus as Messiah.⁹³ The conversations that Keith held with Montefiore, both at Jerusalem and Haifa, had been centred on such things as 'making roads... that it might be the beginning of the fulfilment of prophecy', or pointing out that 'prophecies... had been fulfilled in the desolations of the land' and what could be done to reverse them.⁹⁴ Significant in facilitating Jewish return to the land, was the British government's policy in the appointment a Consul in Jerusalem.⁹⁵

Finally, the *Narrative* casts an important sidelight on the use of Hebrew in nineteenth century Jewish communities, both in the Holy Land and in the Diaspora. Scottish Presbyterian ministers were expected to have competence in Hebrew, the subject appearing in the syllabus of the divinity studies required for ordination. Both Black and Bonar were considered to be accomplished Hebraists, but although their training was in the classical form of the language, they found themselves able not only to read inscriptions, but also to hold simple conversations in the language.⁹⁶ To Reif their observations are proof of 'Jewish attempts at that time to utilise the Hebrew language... as a vernacular.'⁹⁷ Alan M. Harman has also argued that the *Narrative* provides useful evidence for the use of Hebrew as a living language in Palestine prior to the work of Beh Yehuda later in the century.⁹⁸

The Committee's concern that any delay in publishing would have an adverse effect on potential sales of the *Narrative* were ill-founded; finished in May 1842 it was published shortly after. In grateful recognition of their substantial contribution to the cause of the Jewish mission, the General Committee granted the copyright to M'Cheyne and Bonar, with all the financial rewards that might flow from such a highly successful publishing venture.⁹⁹ The financial potential of the venture can be understood when we note that the cost of production of the first edition was £349.13.8., with an income from sales of £388.15.5, turning a nice profit of £39.1.9. By February 1843 the second edition was almost sold out and a third would be required.¹⁰⁰ By 1847 the *Narrative* had been published in America and translated into French and Dutch, and that year the

⁹² *Ibid*, p.149. Emphasis original.

⁹³ *Narrative* p.164.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p.143, 223.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, p.321.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 43-44.

⁹⁷ Reif, op. cit., p.4.

⁹⁸ ed. Alan H. Harman op. cit., p.14; Cf. T.V. Parfitt, 'The Use of Hebrew in Palestine 1800-1882' in *Journal of Semitic Studies* 17, 1972, pp.237-252.

⁹⁹ MB1, p.169.

¹⁰⁰ MB1, p.167, 169.

number of copies published in Edinburgh and London had passed 23,000 copies, it was well on the way to being an international best seller. By 1878 over 30,000 copies had been sold.¹⁰¹

The *Narrative* was received with much acclaim. To Thomas Chalmers it had 'the greatest value'.¹⁰² The *Presbyterian Review* commended its 'concordance-like command of Scripture and recommended it be read at prayer meetings, given to children as Sabbath School prizes, and placed in parish libraries.'¹⁰³ The *Jewish Missionary Herald* warmly commended it as a 'delightful volume', which already had claimed the attention of 'all lovers of Israel'. To this reviewer it was 'a well-written book of travels' having the additional value of 'affording a very minute account of the state of the Jewish people.' He did, however, raise one caveat concerning the practice of seeking to understand the biblical milieu in terms of the 'customs prevalent at the present time in the east.' There was, he felt, 'little scope for originality' in this department, and even 'less benefit to the higher purposes of biblical interpretation.'¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ The *Narrative* was published in Paris in 1844 as, Andrew A. Bonar and Robert Murray M'Cheyne *Les Juifs d'Europe et de Palestine: voyage de MM. Keith, Black, Bonar and M'Cheyne, envoyés par l'Église d'Écosse*. (Paris: Chez L.-R. Delay, 1844); in the USA as, Andrew A. Bonar, and Robert Murray M'Cheyne. *Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews from the Church of Scotland in 1839*. (New York: Presbyterian Board of Pub., 1843). Editions shortly followed in other languages, including Dutch, in which language it has remained in print until the present. A recent English edition was published as: ed. Alan M. Harman, Andrew A. Bonar and Robert M. M'Cheyne *Mission of Discovery* (Tain: Christian Focus, 1996).

¹⁰² Smellie, op. cit., p.100.

¹⁰³ *Presbyterian Review* July 1842, pp.175-186.

¹⁰⁴ *The Jewish Missionary Herald* No.5 May 1846, p.109f.

CHAPTER SIX

I am neither 'pre' nor 'post'. I am willing to hear what the Pre-millennialists have to say, provided it does not take away from the Pentecostal dispensation. Can you tell me of any system that reconciles the literal taking of Ezekiel's temple with the Epistle to the Hebrews?

John Duncan

Motivating the Mission: Ethics or Eschatology?

It has been alleged that the main driving force behind Jewish missions was a deliberate attempt to fulfil Biblical prophecy. As the title suggests, Don Chambers' paper *Prelude to the Last Things: the Church of Scotland's Mission to the Jews* asserts that the Jewish mission was 'largely a product of extremist energies' connected with 'revivalist phenomena and the air of apocalyptic excitement'.¹ In the early 1970s a number of books sought to link missions to the Jews to the theories of Puritan post-millennialism.² On the other hand, Adolph Saphir, a Jewish convert of the Scottish mission, argued that it was the premillennial interpretation of prophecy that equipped the Church of the nineteenth and early twentieth century with 'sufficient prophetic light, in order to go to the Jews'.³ More recently Mitchell Glaser has linked the influence of pre-millennialism to Jewish missions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁴ In reference to missions generally, David J. Bosch has shown that in all its diverse forms the premillennial influence has 'spawned a variety of sub-species... All of these, without exception, have become astonishingly active in missionary projects worldwide'.⁵

Eschatology, unquestionably, exerted a powerful influence on nineteenth century missions to the Jews, but its influence must not be exaggerated. As we have noticed in the first chapter, the sense of profound gratitude to the Jewish people felt by Scottish Christians, proved to be another powerful stimulus and, as we shall notice at the conclusion of this chapter, obedience to the missionary mandate of the risen Christ was yet another. Without diminishing either the influence or importance of eschatology in the thinking and strategy of the leaders of the Jewish mission, it ought not to be considered that its impact was commensurate with the amount of time, thought and ink expended on the discussion of its arcane intricacies.

¹ Don Chambers *Prelude to the Last Things: The Church of Scotland's Mission to the Jews* (Edinburgh: Scottish Church History Society Records XIX, 1 1975) p.51. Cf. Don Chambers, *Mission and Party in the Church of Scotland, 1810-1843* Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge University, 1971 p.113, 121-123.

² Cf. e.g. Iain H. Murray *The Puritan Hope* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1971); J. A. De Jong *As the Waters Cover the Sea* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1970).

³ Adolph Saphir *Christ and Israel* (London: Marshall Morgan and Scott, 1911) p.93.

⁴ Mitchell Glaser *A Survey of Mission to the Jews in Continental Europe 1900-1950* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1999).

⁵ David J. Bosch *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1995) p.315.

'The Literal Interpretation of Prophecy'

One phrase that crops up time and again in the literature of the Scottish Jewish mission is 'the literal interpretation of prophecy'. Some care needs to be taken in understanding this term; it is true that subsequent discussion of eschatology largely attributes the idea of 'literalism' to premillennial schemes of prophetic interpretation, but it is dangerous to do so in the context of the Scottish debate. As we shall see, both premillennialists and postmillennialists had no inhibition in using the term to represent the basic hermeneutical principle operative in their reading of the biblical text. Taking care to handle correctly the different biblical genre, though not altogether agreeing as to the best method of doing so, both sides in the debate distanced themselves from the tendency to allegorise or spiritualise the prophetic promises.⁶

One of the earliest and most influential discussions of the significance of the fulfilment of biblical prophecy was by Alexander Keith. Fifteen years earlier, in 1823, he had written his *magnum opus*, with the marvellously self-explanatory title: *Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion Derived from the Literal Fulfilment of Prophecy; Particularly as Illustrated by the History of the Jews, and by the Discoveries of Recent Travellers*.⁷ In the introduction to *Evidence of Prophecy*, as the work was more popularly known, Keith explains that the foundational principle that guided his handling of the biblical material was 'literal interpretation'. The mere existence of a prophetic genre, he argues, is itself no evidence of the truth of Christianity, all turns on credible fulfilment. Are the prophecies proved to be true? Keith's view was that prophecy is often dark and impenetrable, 'vague and ambiguous', and will remain so until 'history becomes its interpreter'. Prophecy contributes to the credibility of Christianity only to the extent that its 'numerous and distinct predictions ... have been literally accomplished'.⁸

Starting with an investigation of the Messianic prophecies, Keith demonstrated their literal fulfilment in the person, life, character and mission of Jesus Christ. Enumerating some of the most prominent prophecies of the suffering of Christ, he concluded that they, 'need no forced interpretation, but apply, in *the plainest, simplest, and most literal manner*, to the history of the sufferings and of the death of Christ.⁹ In like manner he also handled the biblical predictions concerning the foundation of the Church and the early propagation of the Gospel, as well as the history of the Jews and the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. He also took cognisance of numerous specific prophecies related to the various regions of the Holy Land and the surrounding nations, the history of the Arabs, and the Seven Churches in Asia. In truth there was nothing novel in Keith's exegetical method, it was, in essence, but a reiteration of the hermeneutic of the

⁶ Cf. e.g. David Brown's critique of Thomas Arnold's reluctance to see the fulfilment of prophecy in concrete terms, believing that it speaks only of 'principles' not 'facts'. David Brown, *The Restoration of the Jews* republished as Steve Schlissel and David Brown in *Hal Lindsay and The Restoration of the Jews* (Edmonton: Still Waters Revival Books, 1990) p.101.

⁷ Alexander Keith *Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion Derived from the Literal Fulfilment of Prophecy; Particularly as Illustrated by the History of the Jews, and by the Discoveries of Recent Travellers* (Edinburgh: William Whyte and Co. 1848, 36th ed.) By 1848 this work had passed through 36 editions.

⁸ Keith op. cit., p.8.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.35 Emphasis mine.

Reformation; that is to say, the text should be understood in a plain and straightforward manner, eschewing all unnecessary tendencies to allegorization or spiritualization. In the foreword to his commentary on Romans, Calvin warned against approaching the interpretation of Scripture differently: 'It is therefore, presumptuous, almost blasphemous to turn the meaning of Scripture around without due care, as though it were a game we were playing.'¹⁰ Any tendency to allegorization would, to the degree that it is exercised, diminish the apologetic value of prophecy as an evidence of the truth of Christianity. Like Calvin, Keith's apologetic depended entirely on 'the facts of history.'¹¹

We have already taken notice of how M'Cheyne and M'Cheyne considered the principle of the literal or, as M'Cheyne put it at one point, the *grammatical*, interpretation of prophecy to be a *sine qua non* for those who would be missionaries to the Jews.¹² Their colleagues, the lecturers at Glasgow, in the winter of 1838/9, Anderson, Somerville and Buchanan all expounded the Scriptural and subsequent history of the Jewish people in terms of the literal fulfilment of prophecy.¹³ Looking beyond the present time to the restoration and conversion of the Jews, Patrick Fairburn, by far the most cautious advocate of literalism, nevertheless, held the main principle of prophetic interpretation to be straightforward, 'if in the one part the fulfilment that has taken place be unquestionably a literal one, we must look for a literal fulfilment in the other also.'¹⁴ Alluding to the perverse tendency, common then as now, to take literally the prophecies of Israel's judgement but to see the promises of restoration as merely figurative, he expostulated:

When I see that God has magnified his faithfulness in giving the dark side of the prospective history the most literal and complete verification, shall I think so harshly of his character, or so meanly of the consistence of the prophetic word, as to suppose that he will not also verify *to the letter* the other and brighter side, but allow it pass away into some vague generality?¹⁵

To those supportive of the Jewish mission, no 'vague generalities' would satisfy; the expectation was that the Jews would be literally restored to their old land, as well as being converted to Christ.

¹⁰ Cf. John Calvin *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans* in, trans. Ross MacKenzie, Calvin's Commentaries, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Edinburgh: St. Andrew Press, 1961) p.4.

¹¹ Keith, op. cit., p.14.

¹² See page 79. M'Cheyne appears to have understood *grammatical*, in a manner similar to Karl A. G. Keil. For Keil, 'grammatical', as in *grammatico-historical* meant not so much 'the sense required by the laws of grammar' as 'literal'; it was the 'simple, direct, plain, ordinary and literal sense of the phrases, clauses and sentences.' Cf. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. *Towards an Exegetical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981) p.87-88.

¹³ Jonathan Anderson, Alexander Somerville, and Robert Buchanan in *A Course of Lectures on the Jews by the Ministers of the Established Church in Glasgow* (Glasgow: William Collins, 1839) p.373.

¹⁴ Patrick Fairburn, Future Prospects of the Jews in *A Course of Lectures on the Jews by the Ministers of the Established Church in Glasgow* (Glasgow: William Collins, 1839) p.373.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.374. Emphasis mine.

Edward Irving and the Millennial Controversy

In May 1828 Edward Irving organised a series of twelve lectures on prophetic themes scheduled to take place in Edinburgh during the week of the General Assembly.¹⁶ These meetings became something of a spectacle, attracting huge crowds and making it necessary to switch to the West Church, the largest church in Edinburgh.¹⁷ Alexander Thompson's *Edinburgh Christian Instructor* carried a long and devastating critique of Irving's lectures.¹⁸ To the *Instructor*, the problem with Irving's proposed interpretation of prophecy was twofold; his methodology was suspect and his conclusions unsatisfactory.¹⁹ Not only did the *Instructor* challenge Irving's historical analysis but his hermeneutical principles were also held up to ridicule, and as much of the biblical material was drawn from the Book of Revelation, the reviewer questioned both his modesty and discretion.

If Calvin, mighty though he was in the Scriptures, thought himself not qualified to comment on this book of mystery... we, in these, days will show at least some prudence in not thrusting upon the reluctant belief of others the *ipse dixit* of our own dogmatism.²⁰

Finally, although there was no meeting of minds between the protagonists, Irving was commended for raising 'a subject of great interest'. Whilst it was hoped that 'he and his able coadjutors will modify their system' all Christians, nevertheless, were exhorted to be 'alive and awake to any new light that may be thrown upon the subject of the Second Advent and the millennial reign of Christ.'²¹ The following year, 1829, the *Instructor* refrained from further discussion of Irving's lectures. That year Irving, having arranged a further series of meetings failed to obtain the use of the West Church and flirted with the notion of delivering his lectures in the open air, in the event, however, wiser counsels prevailed and he took Hope Park Chapel, on the south side of Edinburgh.

Unsympathetic to his eschatology, Arnold Dallimore is rather too dismissive of Irving's influence, who at this time managed to attract a number of allies, two of whom would be powerful advocates of the premillennial cause.²² Having been impressed by Irving's oratory at the meetings of 1828, Andrew and Horatius Bonar, then divinity students, asked their mentor, Thomas Chalmers, if it would be advisable for them to attend his meetings. Unhesitatingly, Chalmers replied, 'Go on,

¹⁶ Mrs Oliphant *The Life of Edward Irving* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1862) p.227f. Cf. *ECI* No. CCXIII April 1828, Vol. XXVIII, No. IV. P.292.

¹⁷ Cf. *Lectures on Prophecy in Caledonian Mercury* 24th May, 1828 – 9th June, 1828.

¹⁸ *ECI* op. cit., pp. 474-490; 527-538; 592-604.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.477. It is curious that we see in Irving, in 1828, a combination of Romanticism and Patristics, the same elements which, at approximately the same period, when nurtured in an Anglican context, gave rise to the Oxford Movement. In Irving, these elements, when added to belief in the restoration of the charismatic gifts, produced the Catholic Apostolic Church.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.483.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.604.

²² Arnold Dallimore *The Life of Edward Irving: The Forerunner of the Charismatic Movement* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1983) p.94. On the same page Dallimore represents as bizarre Irving's acceptance of Drummond's view that the 'ten lost tribes had been discovered in Cashmere and Bohara' but in chapter 1 (p.17) we noticed considerable interest in this idea amongst eighteenth century Presbyterian and evangelical thinkers.

gentlemen... this thing will do you no manner of harm'.²³ If this counsel was intended to encourage young theological students to stretch their minds and cultivate their critical faculties, it certainly must not be construed as Chalmers' personal imprimatur on his former assistant's substance or style. The previous year Chalmers had written, 'For the first time heard Mr Irving in the evening. I have no hesitation in saying it is quite woful [sic]. This is the impression of every clergyman I have met, and some think of making a friendly remonstrance with him upon the subject.'²⁴ Returning to hear another address in the series, he was no better pleased, remarking that it too was 'unsatisfactory and obscure.'²⁵ Chalmers' negative judgement of Irving was not shared by the Edinburgh crowd, as Mrs Oliphant commented, his 'wonderful popularity was higher at the conclusion than at the beginning.'²⁶

Chalmers' sanguine disregard of the potential influence of Irving upon divinity students was totally misplaced; what 'manner of harm' his influence might have done is one thing, but by the end of the week Irving had certainly won over the Bonar bothers, and much influenced their coterie of acquaintances, perhaps Robert M'Cheyne too.²⁷ Shortly after, Andrew Bonar confided to his diary, 'I have been hearing Mr Irving's lectures all week, and am persuaded now that his views of the Coming of Christ are truth'.²⁸ It was Irving's handling of Matthew 24 that so completely convinced him; years later he recalled, 'That chapter decided me on the subject. I could not see a foot-breadth of room for the Millennium before Christ comes in the clouds.'²⁹ Irving's influence on Andrew's brother, Horatius, was no less profound; his premillennial views first developed in 1828, before the lectures of that year, but was reinforced by them and remained solid for sixty years, until his death in 1889.³⁰

If Chalmers was not much impressed by his former assistant's handling of matters eschatological, that ought not obscure the thought that Chalmers himself harboured a certain sympathy towards premillennialism; traces of a premillennial sympathy may be detected in some of his expository

²³ *Cit.*, ed by Robert E. Palmer *Andrew A. Bonar (1810-1892): A Study of His Life, Work and Religious Thought* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis: NCL, 1955), p.50.

²⁴ Hanna *op. cit.*, vol. 2 p.172.

²⁵ Hanna *op. cit.*, vol. 2 p.173-4.

²⁶ Mrs Oliphant, *op. cit.*, vol.II p.23.

²⁷ I. H. Murray in *Puritan Hope* p.285, denies that M'Cheyne shared the Bonar brothers' premillennial views. So does N. R. Needham in *DSCHT* p.563, but cites no evidence. Norman C. Macfarlane is adamant that he certainly was premillennial; Norman C MacFarlane *Scotland's Keswick* (Edinburgh: Marshall Brothers Ltd., n.d.) p.122. William Addley more cautiously considers the question unproven; William Palmer Addley *A Study of the Birth and Development of the Overseas Missions of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland up to 1910*. (Belfast: Unpublished Ph.D. thesis for Faculty of Theology of the Queen's University, 1994), p.98. In view of M'Cheyne's early death and the lack of direct reference to his millennial views, either from his own pen or from those of his contemporaries, it is hard to be dogmatic about his eschatological position. It must be significant that A. A. Bonar, M'Cheyne's biographer does not claim him as a premillennial ally, though he had no hesitation in asserting Chalmers as one. See fn. 32.

²⁸ A. Bonar, *Diary* (24 May 1829).

²⁹ A. Bonar *Sheaves After Harvest* (London: Pickering and Inglis, n.d) p.43-44.

³⁰ John James Bonar, Note on Dr Bonar's Prophetical Views in *Horatius Bonar D.D.: A Memorial* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1889) p.95.

comments, for example, those on Psalm 50.1-6; 68.18-35.³¹ Andrew Bonar was so bold as to claim in print, that Chalmers had in fact declared himself to be on the side of the premillennialists.³²

Horatius and Andrew Bonar: Israel and Prophecy.

Before proceeding to consider the controversy itself, it is important to note that most of the major protagonists in the thirty-year long eschatological controversy, which raged between 1828 and the 1860s, were themselves directly involved with the Jewish mission. We have already noted the key role played by Andrew Bonar in assisting the establishment of the Jewish mission. His brother Horatius was also a most enthusiastic supporter, visiting the Holy Land and writing of his experiences there.³³ David Brown was the convenor of the Jewish committee from 1854 to 1857. Patrick Fairburn sharply dismissed premillennial expectations of Jewish territorial restoration and what he took to be its corollary, 'a revived Judaism' as both alike 'chimerical', but nevertheless supported and encouraged Jewish missions, speaking on their behalf in the 1839 Glasgow lecture series and writing enthusiastically of their work in *The Interpretation of Prophecy*.³⁴ In essence the controversy was hermeneutical rather than strictly eschatological. According to Horatius Bonar, the right interpretation of the 'prophecies concerning Israel are the key to all the rest.'³⁵ He saw it as lamentable that many of the expositors of his day, 'make no scruple to spiritualise all that the prophets have fore-spoken concerning the children of Abraham according to the flesh.'³⁶

The literary controversy broke out in 1845 when the Bonar brothers strongly disagreed with David Brown's defence of postmillennialism in a long running article in the pages of the *Free Church Magazine*.³⁷ Holding their own view with great tenacity, and arguing with considerable ability, the irenic Bonars, considered Brown's rather robust attack on premillennialism as unfortunate. In his preface to *Prophetical Landmarks* Horatius wrote, 'I have striven to avoid the attitude of disputation as much as possible, and to treat with respect the judgement of brethren in Christ who differ from me.'³⁸ In *Redemption Drawing Nigh* Andrew counselled against those, 'on both sides... who have employed a bitter and dogmatic tone. Why, then, should we break out into harsh words, and cast unkind imputations on each other?'³⁹

As an able and practised exegete Horatius Bonar recognised the existence of different literary forms in Scripture; it was, therefore, he believed, necessary to judge precisely what was literal and

³¹ Thomas Chalmers *Posthumous Works*, vol. iii. p.51, p.69.

³² Bonar *Sheaves After Harvest* p.44.

³³ H. Bonar *The Desert of Sinai: Notes of a Journey from Cairo to Beersheba* (London: James Nisbet, 1857).

³⁴ Patrick Fairburn *The Interpretation of Prophecy* (reprint London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1993) p.286.

³⁵ Horatius Bonar *Prophetical Landmarks* (London: James Nisbet, 1847) p.273. Hereafter, PL.

³⁶ Op. cit., p.273.

³⁷ *The Free Church Magazine*, June to November, 1845. David Brown's magazine articles were published in book form the following year as *Christ's Second Coming: Will it be Pre-millennial* (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1846).

³⁸ PL, p. v.

³⁹ Andrew Bonar *Redemption Drawing Nigh: A Defence of the Premillennial Advent* (London: James Nisbet, 1847) p. vii. Hereafter, RD.

what was figurative, and then to determine how best to interpret what was figurative. The problem lay most, he believed, with the figurative material, and held to the idea that the literal was, *a priori*, foundational and primary, the figurative being exceptional and secondary.⁴⁰ Therefore, it followed, in his mind, that clear reasons had to be established before departing from the plain or literal reading of the text. If a literal reading was utterly untenable, only then, he suggested, should a figurative or spiritual reading be preferred.⁴¹ He was to hold fast to such hermeneutical principles throughout his lengthy ministry; writing to the 1879 Prophetic Conference at Mildmay he testified to his conviction that: 'LITERAL, if possible, is... the only maxim that will carry you right through the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation.'⁴²

Against Brown, he held that it was necessary to renounce the idea that a 'whole chapter is one scene' or a passage contained but 'one grand idea.' Instead, he called for a precise and exhaustive approach to the text, 'interpreting verse by verse and clause by clause, and affixing an exact and definite sense to each.'⁴³ Handling the biblical text in this way, however, raised the question of how might the literal fulfilment of the prophecies in regard of Israel be considered consistent with the promises of the Gospel and the teaching of the New Testament. Might Bonar's hermeneutic lead to an inconsistent elevation of the national aspirations and expectations of the Jewish people and the subsequent diminution of the essential spirituality of Christianity? His answer was succinct and clear:

We believe the literal accomplishment of the prophecies regarding the Jews, in which there appear to be many temporal blessings as well as spiritual: but we lay no further stress upon these than the Word of God lay, — we admit spiritual blessings to be the highest and noblest.⁴⁴

Among the prophetic temporalities for which Bonar contended, one seems to have been key to his thought, that of the restoration of 'the throne of David'.⁴⁵ Drawing his reader's attention to the promises given to the Messiah that he would one day sit on 'the throne of David' he avoided the crass literalism that required 'a literal and visible occupation' of a physical throne in Jerusalem, but insisted that the promise did, at least, mean 'the peculiar sovereignty of Messiah over the literal Israel.'⁴⁶ Yet, the reference to 'the throne of David' was not a general allusion to the lordship of Christ over his people, nor simply what *The Westminster Confession of Faith* meant when it designated Christ as 'the King and Head of the Church'.⁴⁷ Undeniably Christ was Lord over his Church, but he also stood in a specific relation to Israel as their unique Davidic king. Horatius

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.275.

⁴¹ Bonar warns of a utilitarian or pragmatic approach to a text by which its interpretation is influenced by a perception of what would be deemed the most useful or edifying understanding; the comparative value of a spiritual or literal reading is irrelevant.

⁴² *Cit.*, ed by John James Bonar op. cit., p.102.

⁴³ PL, p.280.

⁴⁴ PL, p.288.

⁴⁵ The expression occurs 11 times in the Tenach (Old Testament), four times in the historical books and seven times in the prophets; it is found once in Isaiah (Isaiah 9.7) and six times in Jeremiah (Jeremiah 17.25; 22.2,4,30; 29.16; 36.30). The concept occurs more frequently, e.g. Psalm 45.6, cited in the New Testament in relation to Christ's kingship in Hebrews 1.8.

⁴⁶ PL, p. 297.

⁴⁷ Cf. WCF p.120.

Bonar considered Christ's rule over his Church to be a present reality, whereas his enthronement over Israel lay somewhere in the future; it would take place more or less concurrently with the fulfilment of a cluster of other prophetic temporalities, including the restoration of the people to the land of promise, the land itself being restored to productivity and prosperity, and the city of Jerusalem rebuilt.⁴⁸

Andrew Bonar also sought to avoid allegations that premillennialists held to a materialistic view of the Kingdom of the Messiah, 'to believe the earth will be the locality and the theatre [of the rule of Christ], implies nothing unspiritual.'⁴⁹ He quoted in favour of his own view a citation by Edward Bickersteth of an anonymous seventeenth century author, alleging that the Kingdom: 'is to come upon earth, yet it shall not be an earthly or a worldly kingdom, as the Chiliasts and some Jews vainly dreamed, but a *gloriously spiritual and holy kingdom*.'⁵⁰

Another point of contention with some of his contemporaries was, what he saw to be, their promiscuous tendency to borrow certain terms that originally were designations of Israel, or, what he chose, perhaps anomalously, to call 'the Jewish Church', and use them as expressive of the 'spiritual' Church. These appellations included 'Israel', 'Zion', 'Jerusalem' etc. Bonar readily admitted that the New Testament used the very same language to denote the Church of Christ and could not therefore totally oppose such use. The problem with this, however, was that using such '...figures of the spiritual and not of the Jewish Church, occasioned much confusion in the interpretation of prophecy'.⁵¹ The usage of the New Testament, argued Bonar, was complex; at times it used such terms 'spiritually', but 'most frequently' they were used in a literal and geographical sense.⁵² It could at least be said of the New Testament that: 'It *preserves*, instead of changing the former meanings of these familiar terms. It does not, indeed, preclude us from using them in a spiritual sense; but it plainly shows that such is not their natural and scriptural meaning.'⁵³ But to do justice to biblical usage, more than that required to be said:

If, then, the New Testament be the key of Old Testament prophecy, we can be at no loss to see at least the general principles upon which the latter is to be expounded. *There is no New Testament authority for spiritualizing the name of Israel, Judah, Jerusalem, Zion.*⁵⁴

Consistent literalism, as well as being a correct principle of interpretation, had, in Horatius Bonar's opinion, significant missionary and evangelistic implications. What credence would 'a stout hearted Jew' give to any attempt by a Christian to convince him of the truth of the Gospel if the Christian insisted on a literal belief in the judgement of Israel and its banishment from the Land, but believed in only a spiritualised fulfilment of the promises of restoration?

⁴⁸ PL, p.302.

⁴⁹ A. Bonar *Redemption Drawing Nigh* p.334.

⁵⁰ RD, p.334. Emphasis original. The citation is from an anonymous work edited by Edward Bickersteth, *A Sober Inquiry; or Christ's Reign with His Saints*, 1660.

⁵¹ PL, p.307.

⁵² PL, p.309-310.

⁵³ PL, p.310. Emphasis original.

⁵⁴ PL, p.310. Emphasis mine.

You insist upon his believing that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah promised to the fathers, because everything spoken in the law and the prophets concerning him had been literally fulfilled; you dwell on this point — the exact and literal fulfilment of all the predictions regarding him, and here you stand on ground altogether impregnable.⁵⁵

If Israel's present state as a scattered and persecuted people is the literal outcome of prophecy, what credibility has the missionary if he insists that Israel's restoration is to be merely figurative?

Israel has been literally expelled from Canaan; but he is only to be figuratively restored! He has been literally scattered among the nations; but he is to be only figuratively gathered! All this is gravely asserted upon New Testament principles, in the name of Christ and his apostles! What can a Jew think of Christianity after this?⁵⁶

We can, at this point, interject some objections to some of Bonar's views. For example, his relentless desire for hermeneutical consistency raises serious problems, not least his tendency to see Israel and the Church as two distinct peoples of God, an implicit denial of traditional Scottish covenant theology which insists on a unified covenant community made up of both Jews and Gentiles.⁵⁷ His hermeneutical rigidity fails to allow for the dynamic fulfilment of Old Testament promises in the New Covenant era in different, perhaps more spiritual guises. Indeed, it can be argued that the Old Testament prophets themselves anticipated a spiritual fulfilment of some of their predictions and that the New Testament itself does not favour such unbending literalism.⁵⁸

Apart from questions of a strictly hermeneutical and theological nature, the overall practical impact of premillennialism on missions to the Jews has often been less than helpful, though it must be acknowledged that a great many able and faithful missionaries, both Jewish and Gentile, have espoused its tenets.⁵⁹ Of major concern is the tendency of the premillennial interpretation to shift the missionary focus away from the communication of the Gospel promise of salvation to the salvific impact of the return of Christ. To be sure, Bonar and his colleagues, not being prophets themselves, could not have known how great a negative impact on missionary endeavour their views would make, especially when taken up and developed by less competent exegetes and

⁵⁵ PL, p.311.

⁵⁶ PL, p.313.

⁵⁷ Cf. Chp.1. p.18f.

⁵⁸ E.g. Louis Berkhof *Systematic Theology* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1958) p.712-713.

⁵⁹ As well as the Scottish premillennialists, many of the founders or leaders of nineteenth and early twentieth century British and American Jewish missions were of a similar premillennial persuasion. A list of such names would include John Wilkinson, founder of the Mildmay Mission to the Jews (London: 1876); David Baron, founder of Hebrew Testimony to Israel (London: 1893); William Blackstone, founder of the Chicago Hebrew Mission (Chicago: 1887); Gideon Lederer, who laboured as an independent missionary (New York c.1860-80). Adolph Saphir and Alfred Edersheim, converts of the Scottish mission in Budapest, both adopted premillennial views. In her biographical notes of her mother, the daughter of Ridley Herschell, founder of the BSPGJ, draws attention to the powerful influence exerted on her mother's generation by Henry Irving's premillennialism. Miss Herschell *Memoir of Helen S. Herschell* (London: Walton and Maberley, 1854) p. 111f. R. G. Codrington has alleged that a majority of Jewish Christians have espoused premillennialism, in one or other of its forms. Reginald G. Codrington *An Apparaisal of Modern Jewish Evangelism – with Special Reference to South Africa* (MTh dissertation, Department of Missiology, University of the Western Cape, 1983), p.61.

theologians.⁶⁰ If it is believed that a relatively small number of Jewish people in all ages would believe in Christ and that the more significant impact on them, both as a nation and a people, would be the Second Coming itself, it is not hard to see how belief in the imminent return of Christ diminishes evangelistic urgency, and undermines confidence in the effectiveness of the Christian proclamation. Horatius Bonar's own hope for the outcome of missionary activity was confessedly pessimistic; missions were but one of fourteen listed signs of the imminence of Christ's return, and no great hope of success could be attached to them. Both Bonar brothers agreed that the task assigned to missions '...is not the conversion of the world, but the gathering out of the election', with the clear implication that the elect may be few.⁶¹ Building on a premillennial foundation, but developing it beyond the opinions of the premillennialists, twentieth century non-evangelising Christian Zionism has abandoned evangelism and pinned all its hope of Israel's salvation on the return of Christ and his millennial reign from Jerusalem.⁶²

Even in the Bonar's day, desertion of belief in the effectiveness of evangelism had begun to erode confidence in its absolute necessity. Although it could be said that 'a goodly number [of Jews] are now... turning their eyes to the Cross' this, in Horatius Bonar's mind, did not presage a generally positive response to the Gospel, for missionary work could not be expected to secure the restoration of Israel. Remarkably this otherwise great stalwart of evangelism and missions, held that Israel's 'full salvation... is reserved for the coming of their Messiah.' It would take place 'then and not till then...'⁶³ Andrew, likewise concurred, 'There is not to be any national turning of Israel to the Lord till that day.'⁶⁴

To this, Andrew Bonar made an additional striking emphasis. He considered that great though the impact of the return of Christ would be, the work of conversion would, nevertheless, continue after the Second Advent. When asked about this he advocated a version of the doctrine of the second chance, that is to say, after the return of Christ, in the Millennial Age, it would still be possible to obtain salvation through the exercise of personal repentance and faith. He believed that at Christ's return, 'all Christendom', those who had heard but did not respond, as well as those who had made a fraudulent profession of Christian faith, would find 'the door ...finally and for ever shut'; excluded by their own unbelief, they 'shall be punished on that day with everlasting ruin'. Nevertheless, 'the Heathen' who had never heard, and 'the mass of outcast Jews' who had 'never pretended to honour Christ' would be afforded further opportunity to believe and be saved.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Cf. John S. Ross, 'Beyond Zionism: Evangelical Responsibility to Israel' in *Mishkan*, Jerusalem, 1989, p.8ff.

⁶¹ PL, p.388 Cf. RD, p.186.

⁶² Johannes Verkyl *Contemporary Missiology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmanns, 1978) p.141f.

⁶³ PL, p.389.

⁶⁴ RD, p.181.

⁶⁵ RD, p.157.

The effect of such views gaining a firm and consistent hold on the evangelical community would extinguish zeal for missions and evangelism. Indeed, if such a second chance should be accessible, it could be argued that if there was any risk of resolute rejection, it might be detrimental to a person's eternal well-being to urge them to accept, prematurely, during their life on earth, the message of the gospel. Surely, it would be preferable to leave people in ignorance for as long as possible, in the hope that a clearer and more powerful revelation, at or after the return of Christ, would elicit a positive response.⁶⁶

With his deep and lifelong commitment to missions in general and the Jewish mission in particular, it is understandable that the inevitable ensuing charge of demoralising and undervaluing the efforts of missionary colleagues stung Andrew Bonar deeply and called forth his strong refutation. In his view, it was the postmillennialists who had done far more to discourage and undermine confidence in missions than those of premillennial expectations.⁶⁷

Many missionaries, including those to the Jewish people, as the subsequent history of missions would prove, would find more encouragement in premillennial ideas than in the theory of postmillennialism.⁶⁸ Yet, arguably, the price of such immediate encouragement has been the loss of hope of ultimate success. Even in its darkest days, the Church hoped, as it prayed, for better things in this world before the return of Christ, believing the Scriptures promised such. For centuries it has been held that Christ would successfully build his Church in the world. People have confidently prayed, 'Your will be done, on earth, as in heaven'. Faith and hope have fed on such promises, as 'the earth will be filled with the glory of God as the waters covered the sea.' The new premillennial pessimism reversed centuries of Christian optimism; by imagining itself, perhaps, to be the last generation on the earth before Christ's imminent return it denied to the Church a meaningful future and to Christian missions any significant outcome.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ The issue is of considerable contemporary relevance; religious pluralism is today challenging Christian exclusivism, with the result that a growing number of evangelicals (Harold Netland cites *inter alia* Oswald Saunders, Millard Erickson, Norman Anderson, Donald McGavran, John Stott, Clark Pinnock and Donald Bloesch) have held out, in some form, the possibility, beyond the grave, of the salvation of those who have never heard of Christ. See e.g. Harold A. Netland *Dissonant Voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) p.262ff.

⁶⁷ RD, p.186.

⁶⁸ Opposing the premillennial missiology, Iain H. Murray, citing A. A. Hodge, lamented the attempt 'to convert the world directly by units', preferring 'to plant Christian institutions in heathen lands, which will, in time develop according to the genius of the nationalities.' (I. H. Murray, *op. cit.*, p.205) Today, Hodge's approach has been discredited because of its dependence on the support of either defunct colonial structures, or sympathetic national governments. Despite the twentieth century being marked out by communist and other forms of religious persecution, the unprecedented growth of the Church in the century has largely been carried out through the kind of personal evangelism espoused by the premillennialists. Cf. David B. Barrett *World Christian Encyclopedia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982) p.3; Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk *Operation World* (Carlisle: Paternoster Lifestyle, 2001) p.4.

⁶⁹ I.H. Murray, *op. cit.*, pp.185-206.

David Brown and Postmillennial Literalism

David Brown (1803-1897) embraced premillennialism through his contact with Edward Irving, under whom he served as assistant from 1830-32, at the Regent Square, National Scotch Church, London. By 1845 he had renounced it, opposing its principles first through the publication of the article in the *Free Church Magazine*, then through the publication in 1846 of *Christ's Second Coming: Will it be Premillennial?*, and, finally, fifteen years later, in 1861, in a slim volume entitled *The Restoration of the Jews*.⁷⁰ *Christ's Second Coming* is to be ranked alongside Patrick Fairburn's *The Interpretation of Prophecy* as a most able defence of old school Scottish postmillennialism. Both books had great relevance to the Jewish mission.

According to Principal John Macleod, Brown was 'among the foremost theologians of his generation'.⁷¹ In 1857, after a period in pastoral ministry, he became Professor of New Testament Exegesis, Church History and Apologetics at the Free Church College in Aberdeen, and was appointed Principal in 1875. He stoutly defended the view that not only was the national conversion of the Jews clearly predicted by Scripture, so too was their return to Palestine and by so doing he explicitly challenged the writings of a number of highly esteemed contemporary scholars.⁷² *The Restoration of the Jews* shows Brown differing from both postmillennialists and premillennialists; he disapproved of the spiritualising tendencies found in some of the former, and deplored what he saw as the confusion of the latter, some of whom were insisting that a return of the Jews to the Promised Land would mean the rebuilding of a Third Temple and the subsequent resumption of the Jewish sacrificial cultus. For Brown, both views were untenable. Against the spiritualising postmillennialists he called for a more literal interpretation of prophecy.⁷³ But his regard for literalism did not lead him to adopt an inflexible hermeneutic, if a literal reading of a prophecy tended to eclipse the clear prescriptive teaching of Jesus, then he counselled his readers to 'let the literalities go.'⁷⁴ He was as at pains to point out what he saw as the inherent dangers in the positions of both parties as they attempted to construct consistent systematic hermeneutical approaches to Scripture.⁷⁵

Like the Bonars he too attempted to do justice to the various genres evident in the Bible, but unlike them his approach was dynamic and flexible, citing with approbation a passage from J. A. Alexander's commentary on Isaiah:

⁷⁰ David Brown, *Christ's Second Coming: Will it be Premillennial?* (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1846). A modern reprint of *The Restoration of the Jews* is found in Steve Schlissel and David Brown, *Hal Lindsey and the Restoration of the Jews* (Edmonton: Still Waters Revival Books, 1990), henceforth referred to as RJ.

⁷¹ John Macleod *Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History since the Reformation* (Edinburgh: Knox Press, 1974) p.279.

⁷² Especially, two Presbyterians, Patrick Fairburn and J. A. Alexander, and two Anglicans, one evangelical, E. W. Hengstenberg, the other High Church, Thomas Arnold. In 1839, Arnold had published *Two Sermons on the Interpretation of Prophecy* which expounded the view that Israel had been superseded by the Church. For Anglican supercessionism, the forerunner of modern 'replacement theology', see Frances Knight, 'The Bishops and the Jews' in ed. Diana Wood *Studies in Church History vol. 29: Christianity and Judaism*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, for The Ecclesiastical History Society, 1992) p.390.

⁷³ RJ. p.70.

⁷⁴ Op. cit., p.106.

⁷⁵ RJ. p.100.

whether any prophecy is general or particular, literal or figurative, can only be determined by a thorough independent scrutiny of each case by itself, in reference, form, and substance, text and context, without regard to arbitrary and exclusive theories, but with a due regard to the analogy of Scripture⁷⁶

Using this general hermeneutical approach, Brown embarked on the exegesis of a number of crucial texts, in both Old and New Testaments, to show the necessity of holding to the belief that the restoration of the Jews entailed both their conversion to Christ and their literal return to Palestine.⁷⁷ A return by the Jewish people to their ancient homeland would not *by itself*, however, constitute the fulfilment of prophecy. Ezekiel 37.21-28 foretold that a return to the land was connected with a return to the Lord: the promise is of 'the final resettlement of the whole nation in their own land, *under Christ, as their King...*'⁷⁸ Jews might return to Palestine, as they were doing at Brown's time, but unless they also embraced faith in Christ their return could not be construed as the promised restoration.

It might be asked, of what immediate relevance were Brown's views in the context of the Scottish Jewish mission? The answer, to some extent, is to be found in his influential commentary on Romans published as part of the famous Jamieson, Fausset and Brown *The Holy Bible and an Original and Copious Critical and Explanatory Commentary*. Here, writing on Romans 11:12-16,26-31, he shows that the future restoration of the downtrodden and scattered Jews is a consequence of the perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant, and is inextricably linked with missionary activity.⁷⁹ Considering that JFB was published some twenty-five years after the foundation of the Jewish mission, well past the time when Brown crossed the eschatological watershed, there is no reason to believe that his theological and practical commitment to the Jewish Mission had altered over the intervening years. Indeed, on his death in 1897, a letter of condolence from the Jewish Committee, addressed to his daughter, bore testimony to the consistency of his devotion to the cause:

In common with the whole church, they gratefully remember Dr. Brown's eminent services, and his personal worth, but in a special manner they recall his early devotion to the cause of the Conversion of the Jews *long before the Church of Scotland formally took any action in the matter.*⁸⁰

Brown's influence on behalf of the Jewish mission was further perpetuated in his biography of his friend John Duncan, the pioneer missionary to the Jews of Budapest.⁸¹ Doubtless, Brown would have been pleased to be able to claim his friend John Duncan as a fellow post-millennialist, whereas, in fact, he represents Duncan as holding to a somewhat ambivalent eschatology. It is

⁷⁶ RJ. p.117.

⁷⁷ RJ. p.122 Emphasis original.

⁷⁸ RJ p.147 Emphasis mine.

⁷⁹ Brown in Jamieson, Fausset and Brown *The Holy Bible and an Original and Copious Critical and Explanatory Commentary* (Glasgow: William Collins, 1863) vol. III. 119 ad. loc. (emphasis mine).

⁸⁰ Norman L. Walker Op. cit., p.179; William Garden Blaikie *David Brown* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1898) p.354, (emphasis mine).

⁸¹ David Brown *The Life of the Late John Duncan* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872).

Brown who records the amusing anecdote when Duncan was accosted in June 1869 by a young English lady who pressed him to declare his views on eschatology. To which he replied:

“I am neither 'pre' nor 'post'. I am willing to hear what the Pre-millennialists have to say, provided it does not take from the glory of the Pentecostal dispensation. Can you tell me any system that reconciles the literal taking of Ezekiel's temple with the Epistle to the Hebrews?” When parting from her, he said, ‘Now mind there must be no more slain beasts.’⁸²

The complexities of the doctrine of the Millennium aside, Duncan, like Brown, was sympathetic to the idea that the Jewish people would one day be restored to Palestine. The Rev. Robert Sandeman, a nephew of Duncan's housekeeper, recorded Duncan's remarks on the teaching of Deuteronomy 11 regarding the geographical extent of the Promised Land: ‘They have never got that in verse 24, and Dr. Keith says in his book that therefore they must get it yet.’⁸³

The Ethical Imperative of Jewish Mission

In the first chapter, we noted the impact of the teaching of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, the *Larger Catechism* and the *Shorter Catechism*, as well as the *Directory for Public Worship* on Scottish concern for the conversion of the Jewish people. The nineteenth century Church of Scotland and, after its establishment in 1843, the Free Church of Scotland, were both confessional churches and adherence to official teaching would require, where possible, engagement in missions to the Jews. Indeed, it may be argued that by considering itself ‘confessional’ a Church is in fact saying that it is a missionary church, that it accepts the moral obligation of bearing witness to Christ and his gospel before the unbelieving world.⁸⁴ Although the millennial controversy heightened awareness of unfulfilled biblical prophecy relevant to the conversion and restoration of the Jewish people, and so contributed to the development of Jewish missions, we ought not to exaggerate the influence of eschatology nor consider it the sole motivation behind the mission. It is much more helpful to see the outworking of more general theological, moral and spiritual obligations as the primary influences behind nineteenth century missions to the Jews.

In this respect the development of Jewish missions in Scotland was broadly parallel to that in England. The LSPCJ had been established in 1809, during the upheavals of the Napoleonic wars, when prophetic expectations had been greatly aroused and when many believed they could detect portents of the rapidly approaching end of the age, but the compilers of the first annual report sought to draw attention away from prophetic speculations, and called on supporters carefully to:

distinguish between the restoration of Israel to their own country, and the conversion of Israel to Christianity. If nothing peculiar appeared in the aspect of the times — if neither Jews nor Christians believed the future restoration of Israel — if no exposition of prophecy had awakened attention or excited expectation in men's minds — if it were

⁸² Ibid., p.416.

⁸³ Ibid., p.489.

⁸⁴ C. G. M'Crie *The Confessions of the Church of Scotland: Their Evolution and History* (Edinburgh: MacNiven & Wallace, 1907) p.18.

possible to place things as they stood many centuries ago — still your committee would urge the importance and propriety of establishing a Jewish Mission.⁸⁵

For the LSPCJ it was not unfulfilled prophecy so much as deep gratitude, coupled with obedience to the missionary mandate of Christ, which constrained it to share the Good News with the Jewish people. Gidney shows how the LSPCJ resisted the rise of premillennialism in England and rejected its 'crude speculations.'⁸⁶ Likewise in Scotland, the primary motivation that under-girded mission to the Jews was the force of moral duty. This may be seen in the wording of the many Overtures sent up from Church of Scotland Presbyteries, calling on the 1838 General Assembly to commence work among the Jews. The language of these documents consistently draws attention to the obligation owed by Christians to the Jewish people. The overture from the Presbytery of Edinburgh recognised the Jewish people had 'an equal claim to the sympathy and exertions of Christians and the Church at large ...in seeking the conversion of those descendents of Abraham to the faith....'⁸⁷ Glasgow recognised that the Jews had 'strong claims on our gratitude and sympathy...'⁸⁸ Perth was grateful of having 'by the divine appointment, received all their spiritual privileges through the medium of the Jewish nation....'⁸⁹ Likewise Fordoun recognised that 'salvation is of the Jews, and all spiritual blessings, which we as a Church of Christ enjoy, have been derived through them....'⁹⁰ The emphasis of the overtures is maintained by Robert Murray M'Cheyne. Despite his keen interest in the 'literal fulfilment' of prophecy and his close association with the Bonar brothers, his only published sermon on missions to the Jews had very little to say about prophecy but much about moral obligation. Indeed this is clearly stated in the very title of the sermon: *Our Duty to Israel*. The motivation M'Cheyne highlights in this sermon is not eschatological but emanates from Christian compassion.⁹¹

The 1838/39 Glasgow series of lectures concluded with a paper by J. G. Lorimer of the *Immediate Duties of the Christian Church in Relation to Israel*; he spoke of unfulfilled prophecy, his hopes of a Jewish return to the land of Palestine and a glory exceeding the most brilliant days of Solomon, but added, ...what would this avail if the Jew retained his alienation and ungodliness, and after a few brief years of outward show, died the enemy of God, and of all that is spiritually good?⁹² According to Lorimer, then, the primary object of Christian work amongst the Jews must aim not at the deliberate fulfilment of Biblical prophecy but at their reconciliation to Christ and the salvation of their souls. The Edinburgh series of lectures, the counterpart of those held in Glasgow, were held to, 'show the obligations on Christians to earnest prayer and renewed efforts

⁸⁵ W.T. Gidney op. cit., p.35.

⁸⁶ Ibid p.211.

⁸⁷ Summary of Printed Overtures in Printed Papers of Assembly. NAS CH 1/2 174

⁸⁸ Idem.

⁸⁹ Idem.

⁹⁰ Idem.

⁹¹ *Memoir*, p.444.

⁹² John G. Lorimer, 'Immediate Duties of the Christian Church in Relation to Israel: Answers to Objections' in *A Course of Lectures on the Jews by Ministers of the Established Church in Glasgow* (Glasgow: William Collins, 1839) p.409.

on their behalf.⁹³ The obligations incumbent on Christians were not perceived to be derived from eschatological considerations; of the seven lectures delivered, only two addressed questions of prophetic expectation. Knowing how important was prophecy in his scheme of things, the lecture by Andrew Bonar is of particular interest. Entitled *The First Captivity and Restoration of the Jews Viewed in Reference to the Coming of Messiah*, it refers to Christ's commission in Acts 1.8, as the main motivation of for the Church of Scotland to engage in mission, 'we are to go as his witnesses to Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth'.⁹⁴ Consistent with his Calvinism, he urged that the restoration of Israel should be seen as a direct work of God, conversion was not a task within the power Church.⁹⁵ And yet, consistent with evangelical Calvinism, he also argued that, 'Conversion, shall be in them the same process as with us, produced by the same truth and the agency of the same Spirit.'⁹⁶ To the printed version of the Edinburgh lectures is appended an important official statement from the Jewish Committee, prepared by Dr. Alexander Black, which clearly and unequivocally sets out moral obligation as the primary motivating force behind the Church's endeavour to evangelise the Jewish people.⁹⁷ Anticipating by more than seventy years the writings of Roland Allen, Black also saw mission as arising spontaneously from within a spiritually healthy Christian Church.⁹⁸

Christianity contains within itself the germ of its own expansion; for wherever its power is felt, wherever its blessing are rightly appreciated, there will be a corresponding desire and endeavour to impart to others the possession of so valuable a gift.⁹⁹

What then are to make of the balance between moral obligation, obedience to the commands of Christ, spontaneous expansion and prophetic expectation as factors motivating the Scottish Jewish mission? The foundational motivation could be said to be obedience to the missionary command of Christ; the Church was to be his witness to the Jewish people, but together with this went the obligation to share its blessings with the Jewish people who had been the source of its greatest good. The obligation of obedience to its Lord, indebtedness to Israel coupled to a prevailing spirit of evangelistic spontaneity, resulted in mission to the Jews. What sustained the Scottish Jewish mission through all the difficulties it faced was eschatology; there was an almost universal belief that Israel would yet be restored by faith in Jesus the Messiah. To be sure, pre and post millennialists understood the fulfilment of prophecy differently but there was sufficient consensus to allow both to work side by side in the task of mission. There is little to suggest that, unlike some modern premillennial Christian Zionists, the Scottish Jewish mission ever set out deliberately to fulfil predictive prophecy. Prophecy and the anticipation of fulfilment did not

⁹³ *The Conversion of the Jews: A Series of Lectures Delivered in Edinburgh by Ministers of the Church of Scotland*. (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1842) p. vi.

⁹⁴ Andrew A. Bonar *The First Captivity and Restoration of the Jews Viewed in Reference to the Coming of Messiah* in *The Conversion of the Jews*, p.68.

⁹⁵ Op. cit., p.68. Emphasis mine.

⁹⁶ Idem.

⁹⁷ Alexander Black, 'Statement Submitted to the Committee of the General Assembly on the Conversion of the Jews' in *The Conversion of the Jews* p.vi. Emphasis mine.

⁹⁸ Cf. Roland Allen *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church and the Causes which Hinder it* (London: World Dominion Press, 1927).

⁹⁹ Black, op. cit., p.xv.

provide the missionary agenda, that was supplied by the prescriptive teaching of Scripture, though it did fortify the confidence that such a scheme was not in vain.

Alexander Black clearly articulated how he and his contemporaries saw the relationship between evangelistic endeavour and God's promises:

In every instance, the work of human conversion is God's. He alone can render the means effectual that are in any case employed for this purpose; but there is every encouragement to be derived from a reference to His express promises and declarations with respect to the Jews, for entertaining the hope that his blessing will not be withheld from the endeavours that are made, in humble and single-hearted dependence on the all-powerful influence of his holy Spirit for gathering the dispersed of Israel into the fold of Christ.¹⁰⁰

What place did the Church's prayer for Israel's restoration have? Black again:

To pray for His blessing, therefore, is no less a duty, than sedulous application of appropriate means. He has declared the work shall be accomplished; but for this will He be inquired of by those who are desirous that the day of the redemption should draw nigh.¹⁰¹

In 1843, after fifteen years of exhausting service in India, including work among the Beni Israel, John Wilson of Bombay, was returning to Scotland accompanied by the young Parsi convert, Dhanjibai Naroji; their nine months journey took them by sea to Aden and on to Suez, and then by a circuitous overland route through Egypt, Palestine and Syria, until, following in the footsteps of Black and Keith, they reached central Europe via Cyprus, Turkey, the Black Sea and the River Danube.¹⁰² They had been requested by the Jewish committee to visit Jewish communities of the Middle East, to supplement the research of the 1839 Deputation.¹⁰³ There was no doubt in Wilson's mind as to what primarily motivated him to undertake such an arduous journey in seeking suitable locations for mission stations among the Jews, it was 'to repay to them those mighty obligations under which we are placed for the distinguished blessings for which, under God, we are to them indebted.'¹⁰⁴ And in an appendix extending to a hundred pages in his *Lands of the Bible* Wilson affirmed indebtedness as the primary influence at the heart of the Church of Scotland's Jewish missionary programme, 'The Church of Scotland acted only according to the dictates of true philanthropic prudence, when it turned its particular attention to the Jews.'¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pxxiv.

¹⁰¹ Idem.

¹⁰² John Wilson *The Lands of the Bible* (Edinburgh: William Whyte, 1847) vol. 2, p.292

¹⁰³ Ibid., vol.1. p.x.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., vol.1. p.2.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., vol.2. p.630.

CHAPTER SEVEN

That race, beloved for the father's sake, has a large place
in our Church's liberality, and a warm place in its heart.

Alexander Moody Stuart

'A General and Cordial Support'

The discussion of motivation leads us next to ask if the project was, in fact, as popular as Professor Hugh Watt claimed, that, 'No vessel was ever launched with greater acclamation and hope than the Church of Scotland's Jewish Mission.'¹ To what extent did it enjoy the support of general church members and adherents? The answer is that even before its inception as a church scheme, until well into the late nineteenth century, Jewish missionary work enjoyed enthusiastic and generous support. The substantial contribution of ministers, academics and intellectuals was matched, maybe even surpassed, by the popular support of the wider Church. Popular enthusiasm, stimulated by fund-raising public lectures, resulted in generous financial and dedicated prayer support, not only from the more affluent parts of the Church but also from the impoverished Highlands. A remarkable and distinctive contribution came from Scotland's Christian women and children.

Public Lectures.

The idea of using public lectures in Scottish cities, as a means of promoting the work of the Committee, seems first to have occurred to Robert Lorimer. In a long letter read to the Committee on 9th October 1838, he gave notice that popular lectures would be held in Glasgow during the ensuing winter, and suggested a similar course be held in Edinburgh.² These would present a powerful *apologia* for engagement in missions to the Jewish people. At Glasgow the contributions of Sommerville, Buchanan and Fairburn took some cognisance of prophetic and eschatological matters, whilst those of Henderson, Willis and Duncan related more directly the principle doctrines of the Faith to the conversion of the Jews.³ The concluding lecture by John G. Lorimer emphasised that the main motivation was to share the gospel with the people from whom the Gentile world first received it.⁴ *The Home and Foreign Missionary Record of the Church of Scotland* recorded that the Glasgow lectures, when first delivered in St Stephen's, raised the sum of £30 and a further £20 was added when they were re-delivered at St Johns.⁵

¹ Hugh Watt *Thomas Chalmers and the Disruption* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1943) p.152; cf. Black to Candlish, 13th May, 1840 NLS 11820.

² MB1, p.2. Hereafter, MB1

³ The Glasgow series was published as *A Course of Lectures on the Jews* (Glasgow: William Collins, 1839).

⁴ Op. cit., p.447.

To the Edinburgh sub-committee, the idea of holding public lectures was controversial, necessitating 'considerable discussion as to the propriety' of such an innovation. A sub-committee appointed to consider the matter warmly approved and resolved that the lectures should take place during the winter months of 1838/39, at St. George's church.⁶ Like Glasgow, the Edinburgh lectures were also fund raising events to assist in meeting the costs of the deputation 'now on their way to Palestine and the Continent.'⁷

Covering similar subjects to those addressed at Glasgow, the Edinburgh lecturers discoursed on the Biblical history of Israel and its theological and practical consequences both for Jews and Christians. George Muirhead dealt with the call of Abraham and the uniqueness of the Jewish people; Andrew Bonar spoke on *The First Captivity and Restoration of the Jews, Viewed in Reference to the Coming of Messiah*; Charles Brown considered how the history of the Jewish people prepared for the coming of Christ. Henry Grey dealt with the question of the destruction of the Temple in 70AD and its consequences for Christianity and Judaism.⁸ Robert Elder looked at the perplexing matter of the suffering of the Jews from 70AD to the nineteenth century. The penultimate lecture was delivered by Alexander Moody Stuart and addressed the obligation laid on every Christian to 'love and honour the Jew'. The final lecture was delivered by Robert Smith Candlish, who took a prophetic and eschatological subject, the connection between the future spiritual welfare of the Church and the restoration and conversion of the Jews. As well as having a strong and direct appeal to their original audiences, the Scottish lectures inspired at least two other similar series in England.⁹

Financial Support

The General Assembly of 1838 exercised towards the new committee 'a caution completely Scottish.'¹⁰ Although it did not grant general fund raising powers, it nevertheless did empower the Committee 'to receive, and prudently expend, any contributions, which may voluntarily be made by individuals, associations, or parishes, towards this object'.¹¹ On June 28th 1838, in a letter sent to all ministers in Scotland, Macgill, the convenor of the Committee, reported that it was then in possession of nearly £200.¹² The 1839 General Assembly designated the Jewish Mission as the 'Fifth Scheme' of the church and devised for it a system for obtaining regular congregational collections. Except for the first year, the collection for the Jews would fall on the fourth Sabbath of August,

⁵ HMFR 1841, p.47

⁶ Ibid., 13th November 1838, p.2 – 3.

⁷ NLS Ms. 18999 23rd March 1839.

⁸ The Edinburgh series was published as *The Conversion of the Jews* (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1842).

⁹ Published as, *The Destiny of the Jews and their Connection with the Gentile Nations* (London: John Hatchard & Son, 1841) & *Lectures on the Conversion of the Jews by Ministers of Different Denominations* (London: W. Alyott, 1843).

¹⁰ David McDougall, *In Search of Israel* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1941) p.25.

¹¹ *The Principle Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*, 26th May 1838.

¹² Cf. Stevenson Macgill in *Lectures on the Jews* (Glasgow: William Collins, 1839) p.x.

unless this was a Communion, in which case it would be taken up on the Sabbath immediately preceding. The Committee was also permitted to raise additional funds in support of its aims.¹³

Astute regarding any opportunity for fund raising, Candlish sent out a printed appeal to the Edinburgh city ministers.¹⁴ A few months later a similar letter was also sent to Divinity students at Edinburgh University.¹⁵ Shrewdly, he confessed to the Committee he had failed to observe the notice in the *Missionary Record* intimating the annual collection for the work and, therefore, assumed that he was not unique in this regard and so proposed that 'a circular letter be sent to every parish by the Convenor, stating the prospect that soon several missionaries would be employed and urging the necessity of support.'¹⁶ As a result of its successful efforts, the Committee's financial report to the General Assembly of 1840 was justifiably optimistic:

The contributions for the year ending 21st May, have amounted to £4531, 3s. 10d.; last year they were £2888, 7s., showing an increase for the present year of £1642, 16s. 10d. The Committee would remind the Church, that, although hitherto their income has exceeded their expenditure, the abundant liberality of Christian friends has encouraged them to proceed, with the hope that, by the blessing of God, there may very soon be in their employment a corresponding body of labourers, whose support will require the full and sustained amount of the contributions.¹⁷

At their overseas mission stations, the Church's missionaries encouraged local converts to develop interest in the Jewish mission. From such far off mission stations as Kaffraria in South Africa, the Rev. John Bennie, of *The Glasgow Missionary Society*, forwarded a donation of £23.¹⁸ In Canada, exiles and emigrants driven from Scotland by ruthless landlords and poverty, established their own auxiliary societies to support the Jewish work. The pages of *The Home and Foreign Missionary Record* bear testimony to their interest and generosity. More than once, the same Canadian mechanic sent £5; the Rev. J. Clugston of Quebec contributed £1.1.0, as did the Rev. Thomas Wilson of Perth in Upper Canada.¹⁹ The Committee's abstract from the accounts of 1841-42 record receipt of a total of £295.11.3 from 'Furth of Scotland', of which £143.2.3 came from England, £21.14 from Ireland, £20 from India, £38.12 from Canada and £72.3 from South Africa.²⁰

Highland Support.

It is necessary to reply to Don Chambers' misinterpretation of the curious fact that no Highland Presbytery responded to Robert Wodrow's call for the submission of overtures to the 1838 General

¹³ MB1, p.14.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.15.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.21.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.50.

¹⁷ HFMR 1840, p.348.

¹⁸ HMFR 1841 p.269.

¹⁹ HMFR Advertising Sheet i – iii (vol. 1, 1839 – 1841).

²⁰ MB1, p.71.

Assembly.²¹ Firstly, Chambers has seriously underestimated the Highland influence within Scotland's city churches and presbyteries. Large scale migration of Highlanders, seeking employment in Glasgow's engineering shops, Dundee's mills and Aberdeen's granite quarries swelled the population of the cities considerably. It is estimated that by 1835 there were in Glasgow about 20,000 monolingual Gaelic speakers, and by the middle of nineteenth century the Highland community had risen to approximately 45,000.²² Greenock drew large numbers of Highlanders from Argyllshire.²³ Whilst many of Dundee's immigrants were single women from the surrounding countryside, or textile workers from south Ulster, yet there were considerable numbers of workers of Highland origin.²⁴ In light of the relative poverty of many and the absolute poverty of some, it is all the more remarkable that such working people were able to contribute so much, in small amounts, both to the Church of Scotland Jewish Mission and the subsequent Free Church of Scotland counterpart.²⁵

The second factor to which Chambers failed to do justice was the distinctive religious ethos pertaining in the Highlands, one effect of which was to be suspicious of Lowland 'activism'. Dr. John Kennedy, the great champion of Highland Christianity, conceded that Highlanders might manifest a 'want of that activity which distinguishes Christians elsewhere'.²⁶ This ought not, however, to be overstated, for from 1800 there had existed a missionary organisation attuned to the character of Highland evangelicalism. Established by Rev. Dr. Angus Macintosh of Tain and Rev. Alexander Fraser of Kirkhill, with other ministers of Easter Ross, Inverness and Sutherland, *The Northern Missionary Society*, together with *The Easter Ross Ladies' Missionary and Bible Society*, drew widespread support from the many missionary minded Christians of the northern counties, evidenced by, 'large congregations assembled, and very liberal collections ... raised.'²⁷

At 10s 6d, the annual subscription to the *Northern Missionary Society* was itself testimony to the commitment of its members.²⁸ Further evidence of Highland enthusiasm for missions resulted from the visit, in 1835, of Dr. Alex. Duff, the Church of Scotland's pioneer missionary to India, who was himself a Gaelic speaking Highlander. Immediately following his visit, the Presbytery of Tain passed a unanimous resolution forming 'itself into an Association in support of the General Assembly's

²¹ Chp.2, p.68.

²² Ian R. MacDonald *Glasgow's Gaelic Churches* (Edinburgh: The Knox Press, 1995) p.4. For Aberdeen see Ian R. MacDonald *Aberdeen and the Highland Church* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 2000) pp.2f.

²³ Tom Devine *The Scottish Nation* (London: Alan Lane, 1999) p.162.

²⁴ Irene Maver *Urbanisation in Cooke, Donnachie et. al. Modern Scottish History* (Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press, 1998) p.164.

²⁵ Cf. MACCH 1.10; for Free Church of Scotland see *Annals* p.298f, 501f.

²⁶ John Kennedy *The Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire* (Inverness: Northern Chronicle, 1897).

²⁷ John Kennedy *The Apostle of the North: The Life and Labours of the Rev. Dr. M'Donald* (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1866) p.287.

²⁸ *New Statistical Account of Scotland 1845*, Vol.14, p.297.

Mission.²⁹ In 1840 members of the *Northern Missionary Society* contributed funds in excess of £700 to the Church of Scotland's Jewish Committee.³⁰ Influenced by the region's separatist and anti-clerical traditions arising from a widespread suspicion of Moderate ministers within the Established Church and its committees, the *Northern Missionary Society* maintained its separate identity until after the Disruption, when the Free Church provided a more congenial outlet for Highland missionary zeal.³¹ This doubtless explains the Jewish Committee's Northern members' lack of response to the invitation of 2nd June, 1840, to form themselves into a sub-committee after the manner of Glasgow and Edinburgh.³² In 1841, John MacDonald, the minister of the Black Isle congregation of Urquhart, the 'Apostle of the North', the most famous minister of the day in the Northern Highlands but widely known and much appreciated further south, was appointed by the General Assembly to be a member of the Jewish Committee.³³ When inducted to Urquhart in 1813, he found his predecessor, Charles Calder, had organised a missionary auxiliary in the parish, which each year subscribed around £50 to missionary causes.³⁴

It would have been altogether remarkable if Chambers had been correct and it could be proved that the Gael did not have a keen interest in the Jews, for as Donald Meek reminds us, 'The parallel with the children of Israel was attractive'.³⁵ The contrary was the case, as the enthusiastic interest shown in the baptism of Ezekiel Caspar Auerbach testifies. Auerbach, a thirty-five year Jew from Warsaw, Poland, was baptised and received into membership of an Inverness Church in March 1830. Well before the service commenced, 'the Gaelic Church was crowded to excess, the doors and passages being completely blocked with persons anxious to witness a scene so novel in this part of the country'.³⁶

The evidence of substantial financial support from the region further exposes the superficiality of Chambers' assessment of Highland interest, as notices in *The Home and Foreign Missionary Record* bear witness. Donations were recorded as coming from places such as Lochgilphead; Kingussie; Duthil; Kincardine; Ullapool; Edrachillis; Rassay; North Uist and South Uist; and Uig, Lewis.³⁷ This list includes not only relatively prosperous locations, such as Kingussie but also seriously impoverished areas like South Uist.³⁸ Throughout the Western Isles, communal poverty was so widespread that it was rare to charge fees for school attendance and it was deemed necessary to provide clothing for

²⁹ Colin MacNaughton *Church Life in Ross and Sutherland* (Inverness: Northern Counties Newspaper and Printing and Publishing Company, 1915) p.354.

³⁰ HFMR Subscription Sheet 1840 p.144.

³¹ Norman L. Walker, op. cit. p.133, Cf. Lesley A. Orr MacDonald *A Unique and Glorious Mission: Women and Presbyterianism in Scotland 1830-1930* (Edinburgh: John MacDonald, 2000) p.112.

³² MB1, p.25.

³³ MB1, p.25.

³⁴ Kennedy op.cit., p.287f.

³⁵ Donald Meek *The Bible and Social Change in the Nineteenth-Century Highlands* in ed. David F. Wright *The Bible in Scottish Life and Literature* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1988) p.187.

³⁶ *The Inverness Journal* 5th March, 1830.

³⁷ HFMR November, 1839.

school children.³⁹ Buildings designed for worship were, at times, described as 'of a very wretched description', even, in some places, 'a mere hut.'⁴⁰ Yet despite the impoverishment common in the Western Isles there was a keen and generous interest in the Jewish mission. A letter to *The Home and Foreign Missionary Record*, by the minister of the generally destitute parish of Knock, Isle of Lewis, testifies to the liberality of his people in sending a donation for £12.10.2.⁴¹ The sacrificial nature of this gift is evident from the fact that just two years previously Knock had been one of the Lewis parishes to receive famine relief. It is remarkable that such people were able to provide cash for donations, when as a result of the generally prevailing poverty in Lewis at this time a cash economy hardly existed and even the modest fees of the heavily subsidised local schools were paid not in cash but in 'fish, mutton, eggs, fowls and butter'.⁴²

Highland overtures to the Assembly may have been lacking, but generous financial support for missions generally, and the Jewish mission specifically, was not wanting. Notable but not untypical is the anecdote recorded by Dr. John Macleod in *By-paths of Highland Church History*. A Highland Christian, Donald of Guisachan (Domhnull na h-urnuigh – Donald of the prayers), went to visit Macqueen of Strontian in his manse, and having heard the minister speak of the Jewish cause made a contribution. On his way home, however, he considered the matter further and concluded he had not been sufficiently liberal; he retraced his steps to the manse and donated a further generous sum.⁴³

Prayer Meetings.

From the seventeenth century, according to the requirements of the *Directory for the Public Worship of God*, prayer for the conversion of the Jews had been an inherent part of Presbyterian public worship.⁴⁴ In addition to the prayers of public worship, private prayer meetings were also established. Delivering the last of the Glasgow lectures, held during the winter of 1838/39, John G. Lorimer (minister of St. David's parish, Glasgow and Convenor of the Glasgow sub-Committee) concluded by emphasising the importance of the Church's prayers for the success of missionary witness.⁴⁵ To him it was most encouraging that, 'not a few both in England and Ireland and Scotland are exercised in regard to prayer for Israel at the present moment, in a special manner, in such a way as they never felt before...'.⁴⁶ Then, using an old line of argument but, he felt, one none

³⁸ Cf. *New Statistical Account*, ad. loc.

³⁹ Thomas Brown. *Annals* p.687.

⁴⁰ HFMR No. 15. Sept. 1st 1840) p.208-209.

⁴¹ Cf., *HFMR* 1841, Highlands, p.98; Skye p.148f; Uists, Harris, Barra, Uig-Lewis p. 123, 208f.

⁴² Donald MacDonald *Lewis: a History of the Island* (Edinburgh: Gordon Wright Publishing, 1978) p.142.

⁴³ John Macleod *By-paths of Highland Church History* (Edinburgh: Knox Press, 1965) p.43.

⁴⁴ WCF, p.377.

⁴⁵ J. G. Lorimer, 'Immediate Duties of the Christian Church in Relation to Israel' in *A Course of Lectures on the Jews* (Glasgow: William Collins, 1839) p.426.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 428.

the less valid, he stated that the Church had derived great benefit from the prayers of Jews and was thereby obligated itself to pray for them.⁴⁷

From around this time, throughout Scotland the leaders and pioneers of the Jewish mission were asked to speak at public prayer meetings specially convened. Such events attracted great crowds. It was reported of a meeting in St Andrew's church, Edinburgh, that 'the church was crowded, and the interest manifested in the proceedings of the evening was very great.'⁴⁸ The Western sub-Committee also 'resolved to hold stated prayer meetings, in different churches, during the winter.'⁴⁹ The earnest appeal of the *Home and Foreign Missionary Record's* correspondent reveals the kind of matters for which such groups prayed, 'Let a spirit of prayer be sought. Labourers are needed, and the blessing of the God must be sought, that the Committee may be directed aright in the selection of the first missionary station, on which they will be called very soon to decide.'⁵⁰

For nineteenth century Presbyterians, Lowland as well as Highland, prayer was imperative; mere activism was utterly inadequate; without God's blessing there could be no success in the work, for ultimately it was not human activity, but divine. With a characteristic sureness of touch, in his 1839 Glasgow lecture on *The Work of the Holy Spirit in Reference to the Jews*, John Duncan accurately summed up the prevailing popular attitude:

Societies may be formed, churches as such may enter into the field, sermons may be preached, inquiries may be made, information obtained, plans organized, funds profusely furnished, missionaries instructed and sent forth, institutions formed, bibles and tracts distributed with the most abundant liberality, and discussions upon discussions held interminably, but all in vain without the Spirit. God will not give his glory to another. The residue of the Spirit is with Him, and will be bestowed in answer to believing, earnest, importunate, persevering prayer. Oh then pray – pray without ceasing, that the salvation of Israel may come out of Zion.⁵¹

Women's Support

By the early years of Victoria's reign many associations had been established in Scotland to mobilise female expertise and interest for the benefits of a wide variety of church causes, educational, social and missionary and such writers as Lesley A. Orr MacDonald have rightly pointed out the historiographical neglect of the subject.⁵² In connection with the Jewish mission women's groups, such as the Female Penny Societies, set up to support organisations such as the *British and Foreign Bible Society* and the *London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews*, had become famously effective at fund raising. An anecdote illustrates. In 1843, shortly after the Disruption, a visitor to Dr

⁴⁷ Idem.

⁴⁸ HMFR No. 18 (December 1st 1840) p.258.

⁴⁹ Idem.

⁵⁰ Idem.

⁵¹ John Duncan 'The Work of the Holy Spirit in connection with the Conversion of the Jews' in *A Course of Lectures on the Jews* (Glasgow: William Collins, 1839) p.330.

Alexander Duff's school in Calcutta was greatly moved by the deprivation suffered by the school owing to the decision of Dr. Duff and his colleagues to associate with the newly established Free Church of Scotland. The visitor promptly wrote to his sister, a lady of influence living in the Highlands: 'Could not you ladies, *who are so good at begging*, set to work to get up a subscription, and send him the amount to purchase books and apparatus?' The response was immediate and within a short time £1,000 was sent to Dr. Duff.⁵³

The *Edinburgh Ladies Association on Behalf of Jewish Females* was founded in 1840 and a Glasgow counterpart was set up at around the same time, with other similar groups being rapidly established in some of the provincial towns.⁵⁴ In time individual associations often developed particular interest in specific areas of the work; Edinburgh raised support for Constantinople; Glasgow took an interest in Palestine; Paisley was involved with Budapest. These groups provided not only financial and prayer support, but also contributed personnel too, with a number of lady teachers undertaking the supervision of mission schools overseas.⁵⁵ These Victorian women were often remarkably robust in their relationship to the Committee, making direct access to accurate and transparent reporting a precondition of funding. *The Dundee Ladies Association* of St John's Parish stated that they were willing to contribute a first donation of £40 and then £35 per annum subsequently; on condition 'that the Conductor or Conductors of the School communicate directly with the Association furnishing such information as may interest the subscribers.'⁵⁶

Whilst very adroit at fund raising, women's associations also played an important role in educating the Church, often drawing to its attention matters of interest to women. In typical crusading Victorian style, untrammelled by political correctness, they set themselves to champion the social and religious rights of their Jewish sisters; particularly those living in traditional closed orthodox communities. Arguing that 'the case of the Jewess in all countries where the Talmud holds its dominion is indeed a very sad one', they protested against traditions that relieved women of their duty of studying the Torah, considering such exclusions to be a 'haughty contempt for the female mind'. They likewise complained about the disqualification of Jewish women as legal witnesses, but most of all were outraged by the fact that women were even excluded from the synagogue *minyan* – the quorum of ten men required as a precondition of regular public synagogue worship. In their eyes, this tradition was an intolerable imposition of a 'proud and presumptuous contempt of women'. Likewise they abhorred the use of a prayer used by Jewish men, which daily blessed God for not making them women.⁵⁷ In the opinion of the women of the *Edinburgh Ladies Association on Behalf of Jewish Females*, such demeaning of their Jewish sisters condemned them to illiteracy, superstition and

⁵² Orr MacDonald, *op. cit.* p.3.

⁵³ Thomas Brown *Annals of the Disruption* (Edinburgh: Macniven and Wallace, 1884) p.509. Emphasis mine.

⁵⁴ HFMR No 27 Sept, 1841 p.258, 377.

⁵⁵ *Idem.* Cf. p.174.

⁵⁶ MB1, p.30.

a preoccupation with trivia, such as dress and personal appearance. They saw it as their divine calling to strive to effect a greater degree of equality, such as that they permitted at the schools they supported at Posen, in Prussia, where Jewish girls were taught the Scriptures along with Jewish boys.⁵⁸

The report of the Edinburgh association for 1841 revealed the women's impatience with the slowness of the men of the Committee to get men into the locations chosen to commence missionary work. Rather testily, they asserted that they had women teachers ready to take up their posts, but the appointed missionaries 'are only on their way, and have not reached their destination'. In the meantime, however, there was much work to do. Monthly women's prayer meetings in St. Luke's, St. George's, St. Stephen's and New North churches had to be organised, which, predictably but anomalously had to be 'conducted by ministers of the Gospel.' From the Edinburgh women, appeals went out across the Church for the 'formation of auxiliary associations *everywhere* throughout the country', resulting in the establishment of associations in such diverse places as Glasgow, London, Inverness and Dunipace, in rural Stirlingshire.⁵⁹

As well as becoming teachers in the schools, women also participated in other areas of the Church's missionary witness to the Jewish people. Among the converts of the mission, Jewish Christian women such as Elizabeth Saphir participated directly in the work. Nor can we adequately understand the progress of the mission without due consideration of the indispensable contribution of Maria Dorothea, the Archduchess of Hungary. But, for the time being, we note the testimony of John Wilson of Bombay concerning his wife, the exemplary Margaret, who like other missionary wives, was herself active among her local Jewish community:

She instituted and organised six female schools; she trained teachers; she visited scholars and parents at home. She taught several adult females to read. During my long journeys she managed, with much fidelity and prudence, the general concerns of the mission, and she always freed me from many secular cares connected with its business... she ever communicated with me the most valuable counsel, and the most exciting encouragement in my work.⁶⁰

Women's interest in the Jewish mission had, of course, antedated the establishment of any formal Church structures. Wealthy aristocratic women generously provided funds for establishing the mission. The Hon. Mrs Smith of Dunesk persuaded Dr. Candlish to bank her gift of one hundred guineas until such time as a committee existed that could make use of it.⁶¹ Throughout the years, her name continued to occur in subsequent lists of subscribers, showing her to be one of the most

⁵⁷ Cf. Orr MacDonald, *op. cit.* p.173f.

⁵⁸ HMFR No.18 (Dec. 1st 1840) p.259.

⁵⁹ HMFR No.27 (Sept 1st 1840) p.377.

⁶⁰ John Wilson *Memoir of Mrs Wilson of Bombay* (Edinburgh, 1838) p.515, cited in Orr MacDonald, *op. cit.* p.112.

⁶¹ Kenneth Moody Stuart *Alexander Moody Stuart DD: A Memoir* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1900) p.146.

generous supporters of the work. Amongst many other donations, she contributed £52 to the expenses of the deputation for Palestine.⁶² She also supplemented her personal contributions by raising funds within her circle of acquaintance, and succeeding in obtaining donations from at least fifteen contributors.⁶³ At her death in 1873, she left to the Free Church the sum of £600 for a mission station in Palestine, the money lay in the bank for twelve years before being used for establishing work at Tiberius and Safed.⁶⁴ She, and others like her, are to be counted among the true visionaries and pioneers of the mission.

Although there seems to be no record of any financial contribution to the Jewish mission from Elisabeth, sixth and last Duchess of Gordon, her interest in and generosity towards Free Church causes is well established; she is the only woman whose name is recorded in *Disruption Worthies*. In November 1840, in the midst of the non-Intrusion controversy, at her Aberdeenshire home, Huntly Lodge, she received Thomas Chalmers, Robert M'Cheyne, Andrew Bonar and Alexander Moody-Stuart, who were simultaneously active the Church struggle and the establishment of the Jewish mission. A little later she invited Andrew Bonar, who had the previous year taken part in the survey to Palestine, to give 'a lecture on the Jews'.⁶⁵ After 1841 a particularly warm friendship developed between the Duchess and members of the Budapest mission, especially the Duncans and the Wingates. When in 1844-5 the Wingates were on furlough from Hungary, she invited William to act as her chaplain at Huntly Lodge. In October 1848, a time of political crisis and revolution in Hungary, she wrote to Wingate informing him that 'Dr Keith is here' and expressing her deep concern for the welfare of the missionaries and their patroness, 'I feel most deeply interested in all that concerns your Hungarian Mission and our beloved Archduchess. The accounts are really most fearful, but the Lord reigneth.'⁶⁶ Her interest in the Jewish mission in Hungary led to her to establish a warm personal acquaintance with the Archduchess and when in 1846, Maria Dorothea was visiting her mother, the Duchess Henrietta of Wurtemberg, at Kirkheim, the Duchess of Gordon and her nieces, accompanied by Dr Keith, arranged to stay with her for eight days. The friends exchanged letters, necessarily circumspect owing to Maria Dorothea's position in the higher echelons of Habsburg society. At least once, the Duchess of Gordon sent her gifts.⁶⁷

Another aristocratic patron of the cause was Lady Colquhoun of Luss who subscribed £50 towards the expenses of the deputation to Palestine and collected further funds for that venture, as well as

⁶² HFMR No.3, Sept. 2nd, 1839, p.47.

⁶³ Cf. Collection lists of the *Home and Foreign Missionary Record* for November 1839; e.g. HFMR No.5, Nov. 1, 1839, p.80.

⁶⁴ Moody Stuart, op. cit., p.146.

⁶⁵ Ibid., op. cit. p.251.

⁶⁶ Gavin Carlyle *Life and Work of the Rev. William Wingate Missionary to the Jews* (Glasgow: R.L. Allan & Son, no date), p.141.

⁶⁷ Moody Stuart *Elisabeth, Last Duchess of Gordon* p.298. Cf. Carlyle, op. cit. p.138f.

making other generous donations.⁶⁸ Another affluent anonymous lady, known to Robert M'Cheyne, 'offered a grant for the permanent support of a school on the Continent. The committee requested . Mr Candlish to write accepting the grant.'⁶⁹ Likewise it was a woman's generosity that enabled the founding of yet another school at Posen, in the area of Etroschin, the school being opened 'on the faith of the grant of £40 from Mrs Baxter formerly accepted by the Committee'.⁷⁰

Children and Young People

From the earliest days of the Church of Scotland's missionary activity, the pages of *The Home and Foreign Missionary Record* were occasionally enlivened with colourful and sometimes poignant accounts of financial contributions from children. A few examples illustrate. Three children from Glasgow sent 6/6; 5/- came from some children in Culross, and 3/2 was the produce of a penny-pig. Most touchingly, a mother sent £1, being the pocket money of her deceased son, aged 7 years. Five boys, who met weekly for prayer, kept a missionary box, which when full yielded 2/6, and was forwarded on their behalf to Edinburgh by their minister, the Rev. John Bonar.⁷¹

The publication, in 1845, by the Free Church of Scotland, of *The Children's Missionary Record* imaginatively aroused and sustained the interest of the Church's children. This official production of the Board of Missions and Education was produced monthly from January 1845, priced at ½d. Most issues were between twelve and twenty pages long, and were attractively produced in a small size, measuring approximately 2½" x 3½". Providing information from all fields of the Free Church's own missionary activity, as well as stories from other parts of the world, together with church historical articles, and illustrated with numerous wood-cuts, the paper encouraged young people to develop a wide interest in missions. During its first year of production, Dr Makellar, the Convenor the Board of Mission and Education, reported to the 1845 General Assembly that the paper had a circulation of 25,000 per month.⁷² By 1846 this had risen to 32,000.⁷³

Articles frequently appeared which called on children to engage in regular prayer and financial stewardship, and so provided young people with opportunities for active involvement in mission, rather than a merely passive fascination. A regular feature was the publication of statistical lists of financial contributions from the Church's children. The June 1845 issue carried 12 pages listing these 'Juvenile Offerings' to the missionary schemes. The donations were variously categorised as contributions from Sabbath schools, juvenile associations and missionary boxes. The relative prosperity of the southern and eastern areas of Scotland, compared to north and west, is illustrated

⁶⁸ HFMR No. 3. September, 1838, p.47.

⁶⁹ MB1, p.22.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁷¹ Cf. e.g. HFMR 1841 p.143, p.204f.

⁷² *Children's Missionary Record* No.6 June 1845, p.81.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp.97-106.

by the general omission of contributions from the Highlands and Islands. The total sum collected for the year 30th March, 1844 to 31st March, 1845 was £394.1.4½.⁷⁴

Projects designed to fire the imagination of children included calculating the distance that would have been covered by their total offerings, if paid in half-pennies, each measuring one and an eighth inches, when laid side by side. This came out at a somewhat pedantic but fascinating 3 miles, 2 furlongs, 34 poles, 8 yards, 0 feet, one and an eighth inches.⁷⁵ Young Sandy Moffat, from Bridge of Weir, informed the editor that boys in his class had calculated that the sum of all donations that year to the Free Church, some £776,425.1.5, when translated into ha'pennies would stretch from his village to Dr Duff's school in Calcutta!⁷⁶ By 1850 there were annually some 35 pages of financial statistics, in three columns, acknowledging receipt of donations. That year they totalled £1,450.18.2 from all parts of Scotland: from Coldstream in the south to Stromness, Orkney in the north, from the populous Central region to remote Stornoway in the Western Isles. Contributions also came from the children of emigrant Scots communities living in Australia and Canada.

In 1850 thirteen projects benefited from these funds, and the sum earmarked for the Jewish Mission came to £258.6.4, making it the best supported project, second only to the general Foreign Missions fund.⁷⁷ Children were encouraged to practice simple acts of self-denial, so that their donations would be earned rather than simply passed from parent to child to the mission board. One child, for example, was commended for accumulating sixpence as a result of 'taking his tea, for a time, without sugar.'⁷⁸

From time to time, letters from children to the missionaries were published, such as one from 'two very young ladies of noble descent' who had sent money for 'Indians and Jews' to Dr John Wilson of Bombay.⁷⁹ Children were not only encouraged to work, give, and pray for overseas missions, they were also instructed to share the Gospel directly themselves with their contemporaries. In an article entitled *Children should be Missionaries*, young readers were challenged to be active Christian witnesses at home.⁸⁰ One article concluded with the words: 'Learn how every Christian, old and young, high and low, may be, ought to be, a missionary.'⁸¹

The magazine often featured articles about Jews, Judaism and the Jewish mission. The very first issue contained an article about a wealthy and influential rabbi, who, fleeing from Russian

⁷⁴ CMR June, 1846 p.98.

⁷⁵ CMR July 1845, p.115.

⁷⁶ *Idem*.

⁷⁷ CMR June, 1850, p.101 – 136.

⁷⁸ CMR January, 1846 p.4.

⁷⁹ CMR June 1845, p.90f.

⁸⁰ CMR February, 1847 p.24.

⁸¹ CMR October, 1847, p.206.

persecution, had come to live in Jassy (Iasi), Romania, where he had made contact with Herrman Phillip, the Free Church missionary.⁸² The second issue carried a racy account by Dr Keith of the personnel required for the Jewish mission.⁸³ Another contribution was the publication of a letter from Elizabeth Saphir, the sister of the Hungarian Jewish Christian, Adolph Saphir. She wrote of the circumstances which had led to the establishment, by her brother Philip, of the girl's school in Pesth.⁸⁴

Just after the launch of the *Children's Missionary Record*, in 1845, Dr Makellar had stated, 'is there not reason to hope that what is brought before these young ones, in this little publication, which is got up with all care and attention, and Christian spirit, may be sowing the good seed of the kingdom in the young mind...'⁸⁵ These earliest expectations seemed well founded. The production of the magazine was an investment in the future; by stimulating the missionary interest of its young people, the Free Church of Scotland was able, in later years, to staff and support both its growing missionary work overseas, including its Jewish mission, as well as many evangelistic enterprises at home.

With the growth of informed interest and popular enthusiasm for the project, the Committee on the Conversion of the Jews had every reason to believe itself supported in its work by the wider Church. From the leaders of the Church, to the Sabbath School children, from the industrial Lowlands to the impoverished Highlands and Islands, there was, as Hanna had put it, 'a general and cordial support'.⁸⁶ The committee was well placed to turn a principled commitment into a practical involvement.

⁸² CMR January, 1845, p.9.

⁸³ CMR February, 1845, p.18.

⁸⁴ CMR June, 1847, p.100f.

⁸⁵ CMR June 1845, p.81.

⁸⁶ William Hanna *Memoirs of Thomas Chalmers* (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable, 1854), vol.1, p.447

CHAPTER EIGHT

Faith and perseverance are the grand
requisites in a missionary to Israel.

R. M. M'Cheyne.

The General Assembly's First Missionary to the Jews.

Following the return of the Deputation, the Committee had two issues occupying its attention, both requiring decisions to be made with some degree of urgency; the first being the selection of the most suitable missionaries, the second the choice of the most appropriate location for the first mission station. William Chalmers Burns, who was serving as *locum* at St Peter's, Dundee, during Robert M'Cheyne's absence on the Mission of Inquiry, had the previous year written a tentative letter to the Jewish Committee making general enquiries about service in Aden.¹ The Committee, meeting on 12th August, 1839, instructed Candlish to obtain the information requested and 'correspond farther with Mr Burns.'² At its next meeting, Robert Wodrow reported that John Duncan, minister of Milton Church, Glasgow, was 'willing to devote his services either at home or abroad in the cause in which the Committee were engaged.'³ This offer of service occasioned 'much discussion' as it was considered highly desirable to secure Duncan's services and send him and Burns to Bombay to prepare under John Wilson's tutelage for missionary service in Aden. By October, however, the Committee's minutes record that complications obliged Burns to withdraw his offer.⁴ Writing nine years later while on his way to China, he commented, 'My engagement in Dundee stood in the way'.⁵ The complications to which he alluded were connected with the revival taking place under his ministry at Dundee: 'finding myself in the midst of a great spiritual awakening, I was obliged to make known ... that, while my views regarding missionary work remained unchanged, yet I found that I must for the time remain where I was.'⁶

With Burns unavailable and doubts being cast over the stability of Aden, the Committee had to rethink its strategy and as it did a further letter was received from John Duncan, clearly indicating his own desire 'if it meet with the approbation of the Committee and Presbytery to give himself entirely to Jewish labours.'⁷ The Committee enthusiastically accepted his offer, taking him on as an instructor of young men offering themselves as missionary candidates. His remuneration was the normal rate for a missionary in the East, namely, a salary of £250.0.0, with travelling expenses

¹ The standard biography of Burns is by his brother: Islay Burns *Memoir of William Chalmers Burns* (London: James Nisbet, 1870)

² MB1, p.12

³ *Ibid.*, p.13

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.15.

⁵ Burns, *op. cit.* p.56.

⁶ *Ibid.* p.83ff..

⁷ MB1, p.31

of £50.0.0.⁸ On 12th August, 1840, the Committee, on further reflection, agreed to appoint Duncan as their first missionary to the Jewish people.⁹

At an earlier committee meeting, a letter from Dr. Black had indicated a strong preference as to the location of the first mission station, and, although precisely where that was is not recorded, we can be pretty certain that Black's judgment harmonised with that of Dr. Keith that Pesth was eminently suitable. To balance this view Moody Stuart represented Bonar and M'Cheyne's opinion, that Palestine was by far preferable. Undaunted, Keith 'stated fully his reasons for preferring Hungary to Palestine in the meantime.' Faced with an impasse, the Committee deferred making a decision until a special meeting could be convened for 3rd August, at which Keith, M'Cheyne and Bonar would be in attendance.¹⁰ The meeting, held at 13 Queen Street, Edinburgh, was a joint gathering of the Eastern and Western sub-Committees to 'confer together, and with the late Deputation to Palestine, respecting the first station to be chosen for the settlement of a missionary to the Jews'.¹¹ Bonar and Black were unavoidably absent but both submitted letters stating their preferences. After 'conferring at great length' the following points of strategy were agreed. Although it was thought desirable to establish a mission station in Palestine, especially in Galilee 'as soon as circumstances render it advisable', the unsettled state of the country made missionary work 'inexpedient if not impossible'. The European Jewish communities seemed to 'afford the most favourable opportunities... particularly Hungary, Wallachia and Moldavia' but the Committee declined to specify precise locations, leaving that to the judgement of the missionary 'on the spot'. It was considered that Palestine would require to be occupied by at least two missionaries, but in Europe a single labourer, with an assistant, might get something established. It was erroneously believed that no serious opposition to missionary work would arise from any European government and the large number of Jews in Hungary, Wallachia and Moldavia would afford 'a reasonable hope of many enquirers.' Finally, 'on account of the cheapness of provision, and the abundance of labour' work in Europe would be less challenging economically.¹²

Having established the principles that would underlie the selection of the most suitable station, it was, however, decided, yet again, to postpone making the final choice.¹³ The Glasgow committee suggested that before that step be taken a special season of prayer be held in various churches, to last 'for a week or so'.¹⁴ The Edinburgh sub-committee agreed, also wanting to 'postpone making definite arrangements in the meantime'.¹⁵ An Edinburgh prayer meeting was finally arranged for the evening of 17th November, 1840 at 7 o'clock, when 'it was agreed that Dr Keith and the other

⁸ Idem

⁹ Ibid., p.35

¹⁰ MB1, p.32

¹¹ Idem

¹² MB1 p.32 - 34.

¹³ Ibid., p.35

¹⁴ Ibid., p.36

¹⁵ Ibid., p.37

members of the Deputation be invited to give an address'.¹⁶ The importance of this decision, and the competing claims of the various parties, imposed a great burden on committee members as they laboured through four meetings of the General Committee and a similar number of meetings of the Glasgow and Edinburgh sub-committees, before coming to a decision.

It was at this time of cautious deliberation that the name of Daniel Edward was added to the list of candidates. Although less well remembered than Duncan, it was Edward who was the true pioneer of the General Assembly mission to the Jews. Consideration of the competing claims of Pesth and the Holy Land had to be laid aside, because it was Daniel Edward's destination that had first to be decided. Robert Candlish, Edward himself, and others proposed that he be sent to Jassy.¹⁷ The Committee saw the common sense behind this reasoning but, nevertheless, felt thwarted that Palestine and Pesth were out of reach, and recorded the hope that Pesth, at least, might be occupied as soon as possible.¹⁸ It was at this meeting that, having heard from the two sub-committees, the Committee resolved the outstanding problem by appointing Duncan as their missionary to Pesth.¹⁹ To add to the list of eligible candidates, the Glasgow Committee reported that William Wingate had offered his services.²⁰

Daniel Edward

Daniel Edward was born in 1815 in Edinburgh; he graduated M.A. from the University of Edinburgh in April 1836 and immediately commenced studying for a divinity degree.²¹ It was during this course that he offered himself for service to the Church's Jewish mission. As was the custom, he was required to demonstrate his suitability for missionary work by preaching at the Tolbooth Church before an 'examining committee' consisting of Dr Dickson, Mr Cunningham, Mr Elder, Mr Candlish, Mr Bruce and Mr Moody Stuart.²² It was recorded on 21st May that he, 'had been examined and had given satisfaction.'²³ The minutes also record the decision that he should not proceed immediately to commence missionary labours, but that he should 'prosecute his studies for a limited time partly with Mr Duncan and the members of the Deputation under the direction of the Committee.'²⁴ Edward's studies at Berlin coincided with those of William Wingate who, the following year, would join the missionary group in Pesth.

In Berlin Edward and Wingate took lessons in German from Karl (Solomon) Schwartz a young Polish Jewish Christian, then a licentiate of the Hungarian Reformed Church, who would also become a missionary. Wingate wrote that Schwartz, 'made known his wishes to me, and I put

¹⁶ Ibid., p.41

¹⁷ Ibid., p.46

¹⁸ Idem.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.48

²⁰ Ibid., p.49f.

²¹ *Fasti* 7:715, cf. *Annals*, ad. loc.

²² MB1, p.23-24

²³ Idem.

²⁴ Idem.

him in communication with the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews. They accepted him as their missionary and he was at once appointed to occupy Constantinople.²⁵ Wingate's claim to have influenced the course of Schwartz's life was perhaps stronger than the reality. Bernstein's account attributes greater influence to a comment of Schwartz's landlady:

It is all very nice for you to teach these young men foreign languages in order that they may be qualified to preach the Gospel to the heathen. Have you thought of your own brethren who live in your own neighbourhood without the light of the Gospel?²⁶

Edward, upon completion of his studies, returned to Edinburgh, where he graduated B.D. on 10th March 1841. The following day he was ordained to the Christian ministry by Robert Candlish at St. George's, Edinburgh.²⁷ In early summer, with Hermann Philip as his assistant, he departed for Moldavia, arriving in Jassy on 16th June. Five years before his death and fifty years after the event, Edward recalled their arrival in the city:

after a toilsome journey (but we were young and vigorous and made nothing of the fatigue), it was with thrilling hearts that we saw, from the brow of a hill to the south of the town Sokela, Jassy spread out before our eyes, glittering with numberless spires and cupolas covered with polished tin that reflected the rays of an almost tropical sun, the residence of the prince, with its 25,000 Jews, a third of the population, and far more than half in importance.²⁸

If the journey had been 'toilsome', so too was the work Edward and Philip had entered into. The Deputation had been well aware of the sensitivities in Jassy, as well as the opportunities, and reported that the Orthodox Church would not tolerate missionary incursions amongst their members.²⁹ Even if Edward and Philip confined themselves to the Jewish community they could not be certain that disruptions and protests could be altogether avoided. Indeed when they managed to discuss the claims of the Gospel with Jewish people in the town of Bottuschani, the ensuing civil tumult almost resulted in their arrest and imprisonment.³⁰ The main force behind the opposition to their work was Rabbi Aaron Moses Ben Jacob Taubes, who had been appointed to Jassy in 1841. Taubes (1887-1852) was a formidable foe, being a gifted organiser and a highly authoritative figure in the Jewish community, to whom even 'the most famous rabbis turned with their problems.'³¹

One of the first projects to which the missionaries turned was the establishment of a school for German and Jewish children, but the results were not greatly encouraging. Jewish hostility was further provoked by the baptism in 1844 of Benjamin Weiss, a Jewish merchant from Galicia.³² The previous year, marked in Scotland by the Disruption and the founding of the Free Church of

²⁵ Gavin Carlyle *Life and Work of Rev. William Wingate: Missionary to the Jews* (London: R.L. Alan, c.1900) p.9. Cf. Bernstein op. cit. p.468

²⁶ Bernstein op. cit. p.468

²⁷ Lionel Alexander Ritchie 'Daniel Edward (1815-1896) and the Free Church of Scotland Mission to the Jews in Central Europe' in *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, vol. 31, 2002.

²⁸ HMFR 1891, p.75 cited by Ritchie.

²⁹ HMFR No.6, December 1839, p.88.

³⁰ Ritchie, op. cit.

³¹ *Encyclopaedia Judaica* vol. 15, p.834

³² Ritchie, op. cit.

Scotland, saw Edward and Philip investigating missionary possibilities among the Jews in Constantinople, where they called on Schwartz and agreed that Philip would remain with him as a translator.³³ By 1845 it was reported to the Free Church General Assembly that although five Jewish people had been baptised the work had taken its toll on Edward's health. So at the instigation of the Committee he returned home to Scotland for a few months of rest and recuperation.³⁴ During this furlough he was introduced to Catherine Grant, a sister of a former college friend, William Grant, then the Free Church minister in Ayr. In her autobiographical *Memoir of Mrs Edward*, Catherine described herself, no doubt truthfully but a trifle immodestly, as 'that friend's sister' whose eligibility to be Edward's wife was enhanced by being 'a kindred spirit, glowing with the same ardent love for the house of Israel, and qualified by natural gifts and acquired attainments to be a help-meet in his home and in his work.'³⁵ For the meanwhile separated from Catherine, Edward returned to Jassy to commence his second term of service. In Catherine's imagination he was going back to a 'distant and desolate home in Moldavia', but he would not be long alone, for they had planned that she should follow him as early as possible and that they should meet and marry in Germany. On 25th August 1846 their wedding took place in the little principality of Nuewied, according to the rites of the German Reformed Church. Immediately afterwards they departed for Jassy, encumbered with their luggage and chattels, including a travelling carriage and a piano.³⁶

Jassy and its Jewish Community

The two Danubian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, which form modern Romania, were strategically placed at the junction of the Russian, Austro-Hungarian and Turkish empires and had, for centuries, been part of the Ottoman Empire, but since the treaty of Adrianople (1829) they had come under Russian protection. The terms of the treaty gave each Principality a degree of autonomy, as well as the benefit of free navigation on the Black Sea and the Danube, arrangements that had greatly facilitated the itinerary of Drs. Black and Keith.³⁷ The generally impoverished state of the region is well documented in the *Narrative*, where M'Cheyne and Bonar record the privations of travel and the poor state of the roads in both Wallachia and Moldavia. As modern road building did not commence until after 1840, they suffered either the total discomfort of riding in a post-cart filled with straw, or the relative discomfort of an unsprung *brashovanca*, a covered travelling carriage.³⁸

³³ MBI, p.162.

³⁴ Catherine Edward *Missionary Life Among the Jews in Moldavia, Galicia and Silesia* (Edinburgh: Hamilton, Adams and Co., 1867) p.33.

³⁵ *Idem*.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.34, 41f..

³⁷ Cf. Marriot, *op. cit.*, p.64.

³⁸ For M'Cheyne's sketch of a post cart see *Narrative*, p.377. The authors of the *Narrative* commented that in Jassy a carriage was indispensable owing the badness of the roads. *Ibid.*, p.411. Cf. Catherine Edward's comment, 'As to telling you of *the* road, it were impossible, for most of the country was roads; every one drove where he liked.' *Op. cit.*, p.45.

Differing political aspirations and intellectual views had developed in Wallachia and Moldavia during the decades leading up to the revolutionary year, 1848. In the Wallachian capital, Bucharest, intellectuals had been influenced by French notions of nationality, and welcomed those who, regardless of their ethnic origin, were committed to Wallachian culture and who would endorse the goals of the national struggle. Almost anyone could become Wallachian by adoption, except Sephardic Jews, who were never accepted.³⁹ In Moldavian Jassy by contrast, the prominent thinkers were receptive to the ideals of the German Nationalist Romantics; the effect of which was the development of a conservative and more deeply racial view of national culture.⁴⁰ Some conservative nationalists, including an influential group in Jassy, believed that national identity could not be adopted or learned, but was transmitted through blood.⁴¹ As would become painfully evident in the twentieth century, racial discrimination and anti-Semitism were inherent in such theories. During their visit to Jassy, Bonar and M'Cheyne seemed totally unaware of the existence of such ominous tendencies.⁴² Glenny, however, claims that, 'In this city one of Europe's most virulent strains of anti-Semitism found a fertile culture in which to develop.'⁴³ In 1839 approximately one third of the population of Jassy was Jewish, with around 200 synagogues, some very large. The British Consul reckoned it to be just under a half of the whole population, perhaps 20,000 out of 50,000.⁴⁴

If Hungary during the mid nineteenth century was inclining towards Jewish emancipation, its southeastern neighbours were moving in the opposite direction and from 1829, under Russian influence, anti-Semitism significantly increased. Jews were generally forced, after the Russian model, to live within the restrictions of a 'pale of settlement'.⁴⁵ In this time of change many Romanian Jews had renounced traditionalism and there had been widespread acceptance of Reform Judaism. Others, also reacting to the instability of the times, had taken up with the new ultra-traditional Habad movement, which had been introduced from Belorussia, through the publication in 1842 in Jassy of the works of its founder Shneur Zalman.⁴⁶ As Bonar and M'Cheyne found, a third discernable trend inclined some to examine afresh the oft repeated but hitherto largely rejected claim that Jesus was indeed the Jewish Messiah. Jassy was a dynamic and fluid community, but its relative openness, which, along with its size and influence, had commended it as a suitable place for the establishment of a mission, turned out to be misleading; there would be no easy pickings in Jassy.

³⁹ Glenny, *op. cit.*, p.448.

⁴⁰ M. E. Barlen *The Foundations of Modern Europe 1789 - 1871* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1968) p.208.

⁴¹ Glenny, *op. cit.*, p.65f..

⁴² *Narrative* p.408 - 9. Cf. Glenny, *op. cit.*, p.449.

⁴³ Glenny, *idem.*

⁴⁴ *Narrative* p.408 - 9. Cf. Glenny, *idem.*

⁴⁵ 'Rumania' in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (London: Macmillan, 1971) vol. 14, p.387.

⁴⁶ *Idem.*

The Work: Struggles and Joys.

Returning, in 1846, to the little mission station at Jassy, Daniel and Catherine Edward were in optimistic mood because the Committee had sanctioned their implementation of some of the most modern methods of missionary enterprise. As well as the school, which had been established earlier, there were plans to equip a workshop and provide tradesmen whose training courses would enable the new converts to make an independent living. James Bonar, a cabinetmaker, had arrived the previous year, and the Committee also promised to send Mr Connacher, a locksmith.⁴⁷ Catherine enjoyed her new home, describing it in a letter to her brother as 'very pretty; the green cotton looks nice and the tartan divan.' It was, however, rather cramped, having to accommodate two assistants as well as Hermann Philip and Alfred Edersheim, and a number of servants too. Catherine commented ruefully, 'we cannot go on in this way.'⁴⁸ They didn't. By December 1847 they had moved to a larger house, where Catherine still had 'a pretty nice study (green)' but with enough rooms for the family to have a number for their own use, sharing a communal dining room.⁴⁹

In addition to Hermann Philip, now the catechist, the Committee had appointed the Rev. Alfred Edersheim, an ordained minister to support Edward. Edersheim had been born in Vienna in 1825, becoming a student in Budapest. He was unusually able, not least in linguistics. As well as his native German, he was able to speak Latin, Greek, Hebrew, English, French, Hungarian and Italian. In Budapest he had met the Scottish missionaries and through them was introduced to Christian teaching and in 1844 he was baptised. Being 'full of life and vigour' he was sent to complete his theological study under John Duncan, who had left Pesth in 1843 to become the first Professor of Hebrew in New College, Edinburgh, the denominational college of the Free Church of Scotland.⁵⁰ Edersheim was licensed in 1845 by the Free Church Presbytery of Edinburgh, and for a few months, at the permission of the Committee, served, with great acceptance, the new Free Church congregation at Makerstoun, in the Presbytery of Kelso.⁵¹ On 27th October, the Committee formally appointed him as a missionary.⁵² Conscious that he might perhaps have been dragging his heels in Makerstoun, and keen to obtain his services as soon as possible, the Committee instructed him to depart for Constantinople in order to arrive in May 1846, and from there to join Edward in Jassy, where later the same year he was ordained a missionary to the Jews.⁵³

In Jassy, the opposition from Rabbi Aaron Taubes continued, with threats of excommunication being made against any member of the Jewish community who dared go near either the mission

⁴⁷ Edward, op. cit. p.35.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.47.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.56-57.

⁵⁰ Brief biographical accounts are to be found in: Gavin Carlyle *Memoir of Adolph Saphir* (London: John F. Shaw & Co, 1894) p.48f. Bernstein, op. cit., ad. loc.

⁵¹ MB1, p.360. For Makerstoun see *Annals*, vol.2, p.34.

⁵² MB1, p.366.

⁵³ MB1, p.372. Cf. *Annals* vol. 1, ad. loc.

or school.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the work continued, with mornings in the mission house being dedicated to study, although Catherine was pleased to be able to say that they were 'continually interrupted by Jews calling....'⁵⁵ Throughout the months more interest was awakened, until by the end of November twelve people were seeking baptism. The missionaries, however, were suspicious that some of the enquirers might be insincere. For some time they had reasons to suspect that ulterior motives were also at work, some Jewish people having sought baptism only as a way of divesting themselves of what they considered to be the burden of their Jewish identity.⁵⁶ In fact, for most Jews making a Christian profession was far from easy, indeed, when placed under pressure some who had been baptised renounced their Christian convictions, others, however, remained faithful despite all obloquy.⁵⁷ To these and to gentile enquirers the Edwards opened their home; Catherine excitedly wrote to her brother, that their '*saal* was almost full... upwards of sixty people, and about twenty-five long bearded Jews.'⁵⁸

All the workers spoke German, the *lingua franca*, and could thereby easily make themselves understood, but for cultivating a closer acquaintance with individuals, and for general access to the community, and especially for making contact with women, it was necessary to learn either 'Jüdisch' (Yiddish) or Hebrew. Perhaps because it gave her deeper access to Scripture, Catherine preferred the latter and studied it assiduously.⁵⁹ At this stage of their missionary career, Catherine's accounts give the impression of a busy household, challenged by the difficulties of the task but fundamentally happy in their work. She, at any rate, seemed to flourish, 'I have grown quite fat again; my face is absolutely vulgarly round and my health is, I am thankful to say, very much improved.'⁶⁰

But in the same letter, in the very next sentence, an ominous note is struck: 'Dr. — has raised a storm among the Jews.'⁶¹ The anonymous doctor was John Mason, from Dumfries, who in December 1845 had arrived from Scotland to open a dispensary and through his medical skill to help break down the barriers of suspicion in the town.⁶² Accused by Edward of 'certain irregularities,' the Committee felt compelled to ask him to leave Jassy in May 1847, stating their preference 'that he did not settle in any of the places where their missionaries are.'⁶³

Another set-back rocked the station in Jassy, namely, the removal of Alfred Edersheim to Scotland, under a cloud of dishonour. It seems he had got into difficulties with the Committee

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.48.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.57.

⁵⁶ Idem.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.58.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.60.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.60.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.62.

⁶¹ Idem. Mason a medical man from Dumfries had been taken on by the Committee in December 1845 for service in Jassy at the salary of £250 p.a., Wood to Mason, NLS MS 19000 p.195.

⁶² Ritchie has cast doubt on the Mason's medical qualifications but see, *Nomina Eorum qui Gradum Medicinae Doctoris in Acedemia Jacobi Sexti Scotorum Regis Quae Edinburgi est, Adepti Sunt* (Edinburgh: 1845) p.226. There is, however, no absolute proof that the graduate is the same Mason.

⁶³ MB1, p.47.

over the confusion connected with his intention to get married.⁶⁴ Edersheim, who had confessed his guilt, was suspended from the ministry by his Presbytery and had his salary withdrawn by the Committee.⁶⁵ Around the same time a dispute broke out between himself and Edward concerning certain personal financial matters. The Committee was appealed to, but it firmly declined to 'interfere in the accounting between Mr Edward and Mr Edersheim, and advise that the parties refer the matter to some lay friend for adjustment.'⁶⁶ Edersheim's suspension was lifted the following March, subsequent to his marriage to Miss Mary Bloomfield, which appeared 'to remove any queries that still existed to his being suspended'. The Committee, however, declined to reinstate him as a missionary, stating as their reason that it would be 'inexpedient in existing circumstances.'⁶⁷ In 1849 he was translated to the Free Church of Scotland charge of Old Machar, Aberdeen, where he remained until he removed to Torquay in 1863. Due, partly, to a lack of transparency on Edersheim's part and to heavy-handedness on the part of the Committee, the Free Church of Scotland lost the services of one of the most notable Jewish Christians of his generation.⁶⁸

The problems relating to Dr. Mason and the suspension of Edersheim were followed by the obduracy of Philip when required to return to Jassy following a spell with in Galatz. Finding both Edward and the general situation in Jassy difficult, especially from a family point of view, Philip had obtained permission from Edward, but not from the Committee, to visit Galatz to explore its suitability as another mission station. His trip proved abortive, because the Committee was 'resolved not to occupy Galtaz [and] instructed him to return to Jassy'.⁶⁹ He, however, for allegedly family reasons, went instead to Constantinople, but the missionaries there could make no use of his services. In an earlier minute, dated 16th May 1848, the Committee had taken notice of his 'willingness to go anywhere the Committee pleased, except to Moldavia', and was naturally concerned to learn that William Wingate's advice had confirmed him in his unwillingness to return to Jassy.⁷⁰ Philip, however, was resolute and tended his resignation to the Committee and, without waiting to hear if it had been accepted, brought his family to Scotland.⁷¹ In May 1849 Philip informed the Committee he had found alternative employment.⁷²

Edward inevitably came under a certain amount of criticism from the Committee, partly for his mishandling of the crisis, and partly due to his lack of communication prior to undertaking 'changes in the arrangements of the station'.⁷³ Whilst this might be taken to mean nothing more than that Edward was a man of initiative and enterprise, who did not want opportunities to pass

⁶⁴ MB1, pp.73-75.

⁶⁵ MB1, p.74.

⁶⁶ MB1, p.156.

⁶⁷ MB1, p.94.

⁶⁸ MB1, pp.353, 356, 358, 359. After an unhappy relationship with the English Presbyterian Church, Edersheim withdrew to join the Church of England, in 1882 becoming Warburtonian Lecturer in Lincoln's Inn, Lecturer on the Septuagint in the University of Cambridge, and preacher to the University of Oxford.

⁶⁹ MB2, p.160.

⁷⁰ MB2, p.97.

⁷¹ MB2, p.160.

⁷² MB2, p.178

⁷³ MB2, p.77.

as he waited for communication with Edinburgh, the reality seems different. It would seem that in some regards he was unwilling to respect the authority of the Committee, and was stubbornly prepared to go contrary to their wishes. In addition the British Consul at Jassy had cause to complain of his overbearing behaviour towards the staff of the Consulate, although a Mr Weiss had informed the Committee that the Consul, though previously friendly, was notorious for his 'variable spirits and capricious temper'. The Committee agreed to hold their counsel until such time as Mr Edward had opportunity to offer an explanation, which, when it came, was entirely to their satisfaction.⁷⁴

The Committee minutes, admittedly a rather one-sided record, clearly reveal that the Committee sometimes contributed to the difficult and stormy relationship between itself and Edward. When, for example, he took it upon himself to make an inquiry through the good offices of his brother-in-law, Mr Grant of Ayr, the Committee fired off a short-tempered missive stating that, 'in future they expect and require that all the communications on the business of the Committee, should be made to the Committee direct.'⁷⁵ Then, less than a year after the Committee had notified its workers of a reduction of salaries by £50, it further added to the Edwards' difficulties by its tardy response to a request to reimburse some outstanding expenses claims, which had left the Edwards heavily out of pocket.⁷⁶ Owing to an increase in financial support, the decision to reduce salaries was rescinded, but probably not before it had further depressed the missionaries' morale.⁷⁷

Despite the many struggles and trials they had to endure, Catherine's letters, at this stage, were a model of discretion. Apart from the first anonymous reference to Dr Mason, there is nothing to identify any specific problem relating to the internal workings of the mission. Yet, from time to time, there were vague allusions to difficulties under which they had to labour, especially when Daniel was the only ordained missionary on the station. Instead of complaining, Catherine euphemistically described themselves as living 'in the midst of realities', or, surrounded by matters of 'great and deep interest...[not] easily related, especially by writing'.⁷⁸ She was frankest when sharing their sense of bitter disappointment at the all too brief meeting with the Duncans at Galatz, who because of the quarantine regulations had declined to visit Jassy. That failure to visit the people in the little church in Jassy, wrote Catherine 'was a weakening of our hands', adding 'Alas! we soon had proofs how much we needed his counsel and support'; a footnote states 'Mrs Edward here refers to a sore trial to which the Mission was subjected, and which ultimately led to the breaking up of the station at Jassy'. Catherine expressed no bitterness towards the Duncans, describing Dr. Duncan as 'dear Dr. Duncan', and on hearing of his sudden illness, 'our beloved father'.⁷⁹ It is easy to imagine that had he heard them, her comments, albeit unintentionally, would have deeply wounded John Duncan's hypersensitive conscience.

⁷⁴ MB2, p.162, 165.

⁷⁵ MB2, p.226.

⁷⁶ MB2, pp.230, 278-280.

⁷⁷ MB2, p.246-247.

⁷⁸ Edward, op. cit. pp. 65, 79.

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp.107, 108

Pressures, however, increased, and in a following letter Catherine describes them as a 'load and weight of anxiety that was pressing us to the very earth'.⁸⁰ It was with great relief that they took a brief holiday, returning to find the Committee's correspondence supportive and caring, provision having been made to send the Wingate family from Pesth to join them in Jassy for the winter of 1847/8.⁸¹ A sign of the stress under which the missionaries were labouring, and a clue to their nature, is the increasing bitterness shown by Catherine to the Jewish people around them. Over the years, Daniel and Catherine's attitude shifted, subtly and almost imperceptibly, from a romantic fascination with Jewish people, their customs and traditions into criticism and negativity, which at times of greatest difficulty verged on anti-Semitism.⁸²

Evidence of their bitterness is not hard to find. Jassy, wrote Edward, was a station 'peculiarly trying'; it severely 'tests the whole character of the Christian labourer — his energy, his perseverance, his faith, his love.'⁸³ It soon became evident that they were not passing this test. In May 1848, about the time of the General Assembly, Catherine wrote to her brother William, giving vent to her pent up exasperation. Informing him of outbreaks of anti-Semitism in Poland, she considered them altogether unremarkable:

That the Jews are hated is certainly not wonderful. They are like horse leeches in a country, adding nothing to its wealth, and sucking out the very heart-springs of wealth from the natives. The cultivators and purchasers doubling the price of the produce, which, instead of going to reward the diligent, is consumed by the indolent, idle population, which is likewise detested for its cunning, fraud and filth. Such are the Jews of Moldavia, and from such are to be gathered the elect ones.⁸⁴

The Committee's annual report to the 1848 General Assembly, dependent as it was solely on intelligence from the Edwards, reflected this analysis, referring to the Jewish population of Jassy as 'oppressed, degraded and semi-barbarous', a people 'without the advantages of accompanying civilisation.' It is not easy to detect, through the intervening layers of prejudice, who precisely it was that Catherine was describing, but her comments about an 'indolent, idle population' perhaps hint that she might have had in mind the ultra-orthodox Habad. With their stress on intellectuality and the study of Torah, the young men of the sect then, as today, spent relatively little time at ordinary work and much time in study in the yeshivas. The Habad then, as today, were among the fiercest opponents of Christian missionary activity. Rabbi Taubes was opposed to the mission, the Habad Hasidim followed his policy, and the ordinary Jewish population deliberately, or inadvertently implemented it. It was such opposition, not paranoia, that led the Edwards to believe that spies, who noted their names, watched the Jews who called at their house:

They have got the names of 240 who have visited us in the last fortnight, and upwards of 600 who are known to be guilty of frequenting our premises. In consequence partly of

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.108

⁸¹ Ibid., p.109

⁸² For their earliest attitude towards Jewish people, see Edward, op. cit. p.40.

⁸³ HFMRFCs 1848 no.482

⁸⁴ Edward, op. cit. p.142

this, partly of events which had previously occurred, the Rabbi has now pronounced another Ban...⁸⁵

That such fears were soundly based was borne out by the harassment suffered by those who had been helped by them. A notorious and distressing case was that of Naphtali Horowitz, a young man from Austria, whose contact with the missionaries resulted in false legal charges being lodged against him. The missionaries, having every reason to believe that he had genuinely embraced the Christian faith, planned to baptise him and thus remove him from Jewish jurisdiction. Enraged, some from his own community reported him to the police, alleging the trumped up charges of his theft of a silver candlestick. Horowitz was brought to trial for larceny and for attempting to escape military service. The plot however failed, and much to the chagrin of his enemies he was acquitted.⁸⁶

One of the greatest encouragements the missionaries experienced also turned out to be the catalyst for some of the fiercest opposition they had to face. A Rabbi called Nahum Birman had, for a considerable period of time, been reflecting on the claims of Christ. Edward had been attempting to instruct him and, in due course, much to the distress of his wife of twenty-five years, he presented himself for baptism, along with his three children. The following morning, knowing full well that his action would bring down the wrath of the community upon his head, he went to open his shop as usual, 'it almost cost him his life. Upwards of a thousand Jews assembled, stones were thrown, and all manner of abuse heaped on him.'⁸⁷ The police intervened and put a watch on his premises; the authorities giving orders that Jews on the streets could be beaten. With the arrival of two Cossacks, and then towards evening a detachment of 'strong Germans', there were all the makings of a very ugly incident. Birman eloquently and effectively pled that his own people would be spared their attentions, but no-one was under any illusion as to what would have been his fate should the police not have intervened, 'could they have gotten him, they would have minced him to shreds.'⁸⁸

As Nahum and his girls moved in with the missionaries, the hostilities shifted from his shop to the mission home, which was surrounded, stoned, and finally, an abortive attempt was made to break in at night.⁸⁹ Trying to communicate the impact of such stressful events, Catherine wrote to her brother, 'I believe you can scarce form an idea of the struggles, both spiritual and bodily, which we have all come through.'⁹⁰ By September 1847 Daniel and Catherine were lonely, dispirited and utterly 'worn out.'⁹¹ Daniel's report to the Committee indicated clear signs of the stressful nature of the work and the Committee's report to that year's General Assembly, reflected his weariness and pessimism. Edward felt that both he and the work was either unknown or

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.84

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp.91-95.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p.100.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.101.

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp.103-4.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.103.

⁹¹ Ibid., p.109.

misunderstood, and this he at least partly attributed to his own failures; he had, he said, 'hitherto completely failed in setting the station properly before the eye of the Church.'⁹²

The arrival of the Wingates, visiting from Pesth, brought the comfort of congenial Christian friendship. Wingate confessed to them that the situation in Moldavia was very much more difficult than anything he had experienced in Pesth, where he had never come across such 'bigoted Talmudical Jews.'⁹³ Wingate recorded in his journal that he found the Edward's morale low and the situation discouraging, he considered the little church 'very low in spirituality.' To help cultivate the spiritual and communal life of the church, he started two Fellowship Meetings, one on a Wednesday, the other on Saturday and spent time praying with the Edwards and their colleagues. Although on his return to Pesth, he flattered himself his efforts in Jassy had not been wasted, in reality, his contribution was too little, too late.⁹⁴ Being thus forced to see through the shocked eyes of her guests, the precariousness of their situation, Catherine, discounting all the help previously afforded by Jewish Christians such as Hermann Philip and Alfred Edersheim, and any support forthcoming from the Committee, unburdened herself to her brother and sister-in-law in an emotional torrent of complaint and self-pity.⁹⁵

Withdrawal from Jassy

Despite the protracted and helpful presence of the Wingate's, Catherine's first letter of 1848 started on a very low note. Writing in January to her brother, she lamented, 'Satan's blows had been well nigh too strong for us. All loveliness, all joy had fled from us.'⁹⁶ It was thus with heavy hearts that they prepared for the bi-annual celebration of the Communion. Their spirits, however, were temporarily lifted when a number of Jewish contacts let it be known they too wanted to take their place at the Lord's Supper. One was Nahum Birman, who brought with him eight other Jewish friends, all deeply impressed by his commitment to Christianity.⁹⁷

Then, to add to all their other problems and discouragements, Jassy was visited by cholera. The Government considered placing the city under quarantine, a move that would have had the most serious repercussions. Catherine considered that had that policy prevailed perhaps half the people would have died of starvation, it being the depths of winter, with few reserves of food available.⁹⁸ Although her letters indicated the severity of the weather, she had never 'conceived that the thermometer ever fell so low, except in polar regions,' she did not, however, comment further on the progress of the cholera.⁹⁹ As the winter passed and milder weather conditions prevailed, the disease once more took hold on the community with a fresh virulence. Writing in June to Alexander Moody Stuart, who had succeeded Keith as the convener of the Committee, Edward

⁹² MB2, p.27.

⁹³ Edward, op. cit. p.117.

⁹⁴ Gavin Carlyle *Life and Word of the Rev. William Wingate* (Glasgow: R. L. Allan & Son, n.d.) p.112.

⁹⁵ Edward, op. cit., p.127. Emphasis original.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.119.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.120.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.121.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.124.

informed him of the chaos created by the epidemic.¹⁰⁰ Staring death daily in the face, gave many people recourse to serious religious reflection. Thus the epidemic was not without positive results for the mission, Edward wrote, 'Previous to this last visitation, all was looking dead and desolate around, causing many questionings and searching of heart.'¹⁰¹ As if the cholera were not enough, 1848 brought with it the revolutionary convulsions that shook much of Europe, affecting Jassy too. By early April rumours of revolution were being heard around Jassy; a few days later, fires broke out across the city and people rushed here and there to secure their valuables. In the Jewish community people 'were running about on the streets... screaming and weeping — "*die Revoluzy ist gekommen!*" (The revolution is come!).'¹⁰² As with the cholera so with the revolution, all business came to a halt and crowds fled the city as the Russians imposed themselves on the region.

It was amidst all these upheavals that the Wingates decided to return to Pesth, where their own work was also threatened by the prospect of revolution. Unsurprisingly, Catherine's trepidation was expressed in her correspondence, 'You may believe how anxious and nervous all these things are apt to make one.'¹⁰³ By June the question was raised as to whether or not it might be wisest to leave Jassy and seek to establish the work in a less troubled area. Political changes had swept away virtually all the restrictions which had been once considered insurmountable to the organization of evangelistic work in Galicia, Austrian Poland. Although the situation was still far too unsettled for itinerant work to be safely undertaken, it was thought feasible to commence work in a city like Lemberg. During the month of June, as such thoughts passed through their minds, yet another outbreak of cholera wracked the city and renewed revolutionary activity provoked the Prince to invite assistance from the Russians, who entered Jassy in July. The impact on the local economy of a camp of some 30,000 Russians was crippling, with costs escalating as provisions became increasingly scarce.

On 31st July, amid revolution and epidemic, Catherine gave birth to their first child, a daughter.¹⁰⁴ To Daniel, the joy, also brought a new priority, the welfare of his wife and child, he, therefore, wrote to the Committee requesting approval to close the work in Jassy and open up a fresh work in Lemberg before the winter should set in.¹⁰⁵ The Committee acceded to his request, sanctioning the family's removal and reflecting that in the circumstances, Lemberg would be a suitable location for the commencement of a new work. At which juncture we, terminate our narrative of the endeavours of Daniel Edward, the General Assembly's first missionary to the Jews.

It is difficult for us today to adequately evaluate the work at Jassy. Despite the numerous difficulties, discouragements and opposition the mission was not so fruitless a venture as perhaps

¹⁰⁰ HFMRFCs, vol. III, no.21, September 1848 p.521.

¹⁰¹ Idem.

¹⁰² Idem.

¹⁰³ Edward, op. cit., p.139.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p.153.

¹⁰⁵ HFMRFCs vol. III., no.23 November 1848, p.561.

might at first be thought. Even Catherine Edward, who was disinclined to exaggerate the positive, nevertheless acknowledged 'many and lasting fruits of the seven and a-half years of labour there.'¹⁰⁶ During Daniel Edward's work in the town some twenty-nine Jewish people had been baptised and although some fell away again, the work did not sink without trace. Catherine could claim that ten or twelve years later when Rev. Theodore Meyer visited Jassy, he found some surviving evidence of the work of the pioneers.¹⁰⁷ Amongst those encouraging the Edwards to believe that their labours had not been futile were an influential rabbi, Nahum Birman; a successful merchant in India, Naphatali Horowitz; two converts, Mr Weiss and Samuel Neuman, who became unordained missionaries to their own people; and Michael B., a young man saved from the cholera, who became the librarian to the Prince of Moldavia.¹⁰⁸ Despite the enthusiastic recommendations of the Deputation and the earlier optimism of the Committee, it could be said that Jassy with its unremitting difficulties and challenges provided the counterpoint to the remarkable success at Budapest.

Nor could it be claimed the Committee had always handled the personal, spiritual and psychological problems of the missionaries competently. Little pastoral attention seems to have been paid to the workers when their pessimism and frustration turned, at times, into destructive bitterness. Yet it is all too easy, with the benefits of hind-sight and long experience, to propose twenty-first century remedies to nineteenth century pioneer problems. What can fairly be said, however, is that to a large degree the irascible Daniel Edward exemplified M'Cheyne's twin desiderata of faith and perseverance in a missionary to the Jews. The Edward family left Lemberg after little more than a year, expelled by the Austrian government at the same time as the missionaries in Pesth, and after a brief spell in Scotland took up a long residence in Breslau where Daniel enjoyed many years of fruitful missionary work.¹⁰⁹ He retired from his work in 1896, aged eighty-one years old, and died the same year.

¹⁰⁶ Edward, op. cit., p.158

¹⁰⁷ Idem.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., pp.160-162; McDougall, op. cit., pp.60-61.

¹⁰⁹ For the work in Lemberg and Breslau see Edward, op. cit., *passim*; Ritchie, op. cit.; George Schnucker *The East Friesians in America* (Topeka: Josten Publishing, 1986) p.142, 154.

CHAPTER NINE

I beg the Gospel for Hungary;
I beg it for God,
I beg it of you.

John Duncan

Budapest, c.1840

In his *Introduction to the Science of Missions*, J. H. Bavinck, the Dutch missiologist, has rightly reminded us that, 'abstract, disembodied and history-less' people do not exist, 'only very concrete sinners exist... It is obviously then a great error on my part if I do not take a person's culture and history seriously.¹ It is appropriate, therefore, to pay attention to the social, political and material milieu into which the Scottish missionaries came, and in which they lived and worked until 1852. This was a context radically different in many regards to that with which they were familiar at home, we must therefore consider certain socio-political factors in Habsburg Hungary; the dynamics and tensions in the Budapest Jewish community; the strategic contribution a civil engineering project made on the mission; the place and influence of the Archduchess, Maria Dorothea and her circle; and show that the arrival of the Scots in Hungary in 1841 was not the first ecclesiastical contact between the two nations.²

Habsburg Hungary.

In the Europe of the 1830s revolution was in the air. According to Francis I, the Austro-Hungarian Habsburg emperor, 'all the world had gone mad'.³ Through the powerful influence of music, art, poetry and writing, the older forces of conservatism were facing the challenge of Romantic radicalism. Romanticism, with its aspirations of the heart and visions of the imagination had created a hunger for change; its restless energy making its presence felt not only in the arts but also in politics, where it became identified with the quest by subjugated peoples for national independence.⁴ Notwithstanding the impression of apparent stability, cracks were beginning to show in the antiquated structures of the Habsburg Empire. Loosely joined together through marriage alliances, its disparate parts were unable to construct an effective resistance to the powerful forces at work creating strong national aspirations among Germans, Italians, Magyars, Slavs and Croats. Aware of the impending nationalist challenge, the Emperor Francis I had called upon his Hungarian subjects to remain loyal to him and the Habsburg dynasty; the focus of which in Hungary was the viceroy or palatine, Archduke Joseph, the uncle of Francis I. His Archduchess was a Protestant, Maria Dorothea of Württemberg, the confidante of Dr.

¹ J. H. Bavinck *Introduction to the Science of Missions* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1960) p.81.

² The Habsburg territory of Hungary, before the 1918 Versailles (Trianon) treaty, was three times larger than at present, with a population approximately three fifths larger. Cf. Marriot op. cit. p.542.

³ Cited in A. M. Kool *God Moves in a Mysterious Way: The Hungarian Protestant Foreign Mission Movement 1756 – 1951* (Boekcentrum, 1993) p.32.

⁴ See e.g. Eric Hobsbawm *The Age of Revolution 1789 – 1848* (London: Abacus, 1999) p.313.

Alexander Keith and the enthusiastic but covert patroness of the Church of Scotland's scheme to establish a mission in Budapest.

Opposing the Habsburg hegemony was the moderate constitutional Magyar national movement associated with the names of Count Istvan Széchenyi (1791–1860) and Ferenc Deak (1803–1876), who sought for Hungary parliamentary reform, tax reviews, the abolition of serfdom, free speech, religious equality and the use of Magyar language.⁵ Széchenyi, quick to see the benefits of technological improvement, promoted the establishment of railway links to the west, steamboats on the Danube and major civil engineering projects, such as the macadamising of roads and the construction of the suspension bridge, which was to bear his name, the first permanent link between the twin cities of Buda and Pesth.⁶ An aristocrat himself, Széchenyi believed reforms would gradually evolve through the influence of his peers. From at least 1841, he had personal awareness of the activities of the Scottish missionaries and could be trusted by Archduchess Maria Dorothea to take action on her behalf against their Roman Catholic opponents.⁷

Lajos Kossuth an erstwhile lawyer and journalist, born in 1802 into a poor but noble family from Monok, near Zemplin, opposed Széchenyi's moderate approach. Kossuth would settle for nothing less than total political autonomy from Austria, a goal to be achieved, if necessary, by revolution and military action. Such radicalism had led to him being jailed for four years for the crime of high treason. Ordinary Hungarians, Kossuth believed, could be aroused to patriotic fervour through a popular movement aimed at exposing the tyrannical repression of Hungarian identity by the Habsburg administration.⁸ Vienna, through the Palatine, was, however, prepared resolutely to oppose change: its police system sought to silence reformers, and censor the work of Nationalist Hungarian painters, poets and writers.⁹ An intolerantly Roman Catholic regime, it repressed Protestant religious activity and scarcely tolerated changes of religious affiliation, except when Protestant marriage partners became Catholics.¹⁰ In the eighteen thirties the 'religious question' was frequently and vigorously debated in the Hungarian Parliament and as Protestant Hungarians developed a growing antipathy towards Catholic Austria, so also their discontent increased that 'any self-respecting country must needs incorporate in its legal statute books the dogmas of an alien power'.¹¹

⁵ J. A. R. Marriot *A History of Europe 1815 – 1939* (London: Methuen, 1931) p.146f.

⁶ Ed. E. Barker, G. Clark, P. Vaucher *The European Inheritance* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954) vol.III. p.36. Cf. Szilvia Andrea Holló *Szechenyi's Role from the Idea to the Passing of the Bridge Act* in ed. Gall & Hollo *The Szechenyi Chain Bridge and Adam Clark* (Budapest: City Hall, 1999) p.12ff.

⁷ Brown op. cit. p.311.

⁸ Marriot, Idem.

⁹ Andrew Wheatcroft *The Habsburgs* (London: Penguin, 1996) p.251; Anna Szinyei Merse (ed.) *The Hungarian National Gallery* (Budapest: Corvina, 1994) p.40.

¹⁰ Georg Bauhoffer. *The History of the Protestant Church of Hungary From the Beginning of the Reformation to 1850* (London: James Nisbet & Co, 1854) p.431.

¹¹ Imre Revesz *History of the Hungarian Reformed Church* (Budapest: Hungarica America, 1956) p.111.

The Budapest Jewish Community

The earliest attested Jewish community in what is now Hungary, but was then the Roman province of Pannonia, dates from the second or third century AD.¹² Through the Middle Ages the community grew, though documentary evidence is rare and an almost impenetrable darkness envelops the period.¹³ It emerged again into the light with the intriguing account, in the 13th century halakhic compendium of Jewish law, the *Shibbolei haLeqet*, of the judgement and punishment of two merchants found guilty of Sabbath desecration when their wagon broke down near Esztergom. By the 16th century, the Esztergom community had grown to something in excess of 1000 persons.¹⁴

For centuries the Jews of the Habsburg domains suffered the humiliation of being subject to a discriminatory levy, the so-called, toleration tax.¹⁵ The 1832-36 Diet of the Hungarian Parliament had debated the legitimacy of this tax, and after a protracted struggle, led by Ferenc Deák and supported by the liberal aristocracy, the Diet presented to Vienna a bill for its abolition. For supposedly fiscal reasons, however, the bill was not ratified by Vienna.¹⁶ The Diet of 1839-40, held when Keith and Black were in the country, once more took up the question, arguing that Jews were not a separate nation and should not therefore be excluded from the ordinary privileges of Hungarian citizens.¹⁷ Moreover 'the Jewish religion should be counted among the accepted religions, its followers should have equal rights and, if they are worthy, should even be able to receive noble rank'.¹⁸ Such proposals were, in the main, supported by Lajos Kossuth, the rising leader of the more radical nationalist reformers.¹⁹ After further amendments, the Diet issued an Act extending to Hungarian Jews a package of civil rights, including the right to establish factories, acquire plots of land, and engage freely in commercial activities. Though not as comprehensively liberating as the Jewish community had hoped, the Act was nevertheless a significant advance and was widely greeted as such.²⁰ From this time Jewish people could, at last, make significant advances in commercial and professional life. For example, in 1839, Zsigmond Saphir (1806-1866), a relative of the Saphirs who were among the first converts of the mission, became the first Jewish editor of a Hungarian newspaper, the *Pester Tagblatt*.²¹

The main religious changes taking place in the Hungarian Jewish community, in the period immediately preceding the arrival of the Scottish missionaries largely centred on the growing

¹² Raphael Patai *The Jews of Hungary* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996) p.22f.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 27f.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 32-33.

¹⁵ *Idem.*

¹⁶ *Idem.*

¹⁷ *Idem.*

¹⁸ Cited by Patai, *idem.*

¹⁹ *Idem.*

²⁰ *Idem.*

²¹ Carlyle *op. cit.*, p. 21-28, cf. Patai, *ibid.*, p.254.

influence of the Reform movement.²² In general the movement abandoned tradition and embraced change. Church-like trappings such as organs and mixed choirs, with hymns and sermons in the vernacular were introduced into the worship of the Synagogue. Reform accepted assimilation and renounced the obligation of *aliyah*, or migration to Palestine, as well as belief in a personal Messiah. The Talmud was dismissed as fabulous and incredible, and some radicals, like Holdheim, went so far as to approve mixed marriages and substituted Sunday for Sabbath observance. Reform-minded Jews diminished the personal authority of the rabbi, localising authority in the community itself. The arrival of the Scottish ministers in Pesth coincided with a time of 'intense... agitation for religious reform among Hungarian Jews...'²³ Patai lists six major reforms on which the Pest Reform Society's programme was based: observance of the Sabbath on Sunday; the abolition of the 'exceedingly purposeless' dietary laws; the abolition of the Jewish calendar, the reduction of memorial observances and, except for Yom Kippur, the abolition of fast days; liturgical reformation, including briefer services with vernacular prayer and without the wearing of symbolic clothes or the covering of the [male] head; circumcision to be made non-obligatory; the Ten Commandments alone to be the basic religious principles with the Talmud and all other traditional laws, rites and observances declared invalid.²⁴

Such innovations were strongly resisted by the more conservative leaders of the Orthodox community, who threatened to expel theological students from their yeshivas (rabbinic colleges) if they so much as touched the new translations.²⁵ This animosity led to the harassment of reformers such as Mordecai Weisz, who had criticised the practice of kashrut (Jewish food laws) and taught that traditional clothing was antiquated and should be abandoned. As a result of the vitriolic attacks on his person Weisz abandoned Judaism altogether and adhered to Christianity.²⁶ Weisz was by no means the only Hungarian Jewish intellectual to feel crushed between the upper and nether millstones of a reactionary Orthodox Jewish community and the illiberal Roman Catholic Habsburg regime.²⁷ In rejecting the intolerance and immutability of Jewish orthodoxy and attempting a radical reconstruction of Judaism, Reform sought to offer a viable alternative to conversion to Christianity.²⁸ But, as Patai points out, Reform by attempting to 'invalidate the accusation that Jews "stubbornly kept themselves from the other denominations"', served to open the door into the Church, once it was accepted that believing in Jesus as Messiah was not a denial of Jewish identity.²⁹ As we shall see in the next chapter, the more influential converts of the Scottish mission, such as the Saphirs, Alex. Tomory and Alfred Edersheim came from non-orthodox backgrounds. Prior to the arrival of the missionaries, a number of prominent Jews had

²² For Reform Judaism see David Philipson *The Reform Movement in Judaism* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1907); Leo Trepp *A History of the Jewish Experience* (Berhman House, 1962) pp. 297-298, 301-307; Dan Cohn Sherbok *The Jewish Faith* (SPCK, 1993) pp.6-7; *Encyclopedia Judaica* ad. loc.

²³ Philipson, op. cit., p.379.

²⁴ Patai, *ibid.*, p.248.

²⁵ *Idem.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.242

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.251

²⁸ E.g. Deborah Hertz *Seductive Conversion in Berlin 1770—1809*, in ed. Todd M. Endelman *Jewish Apostasy in the Modern World* (Holmes and Meir, 1987) p.72.

²⁹ Patai, op. cit., p.248.

converted to Christianity, including Moritz Gottlieb Saphir (1795-1858), Leopold Julius Klein (1804-74) and Karl Beck (1817-79).³⁰ A notable example was Mór Ballagi (Moritz Bloch, b.1816) who became an ordained minister in the Hungarian Reformed Church and taught theology in the Theological Academy in Budapest.³¹

This is perhaps an appropriate juncture to note the different connotations, Jewish and Christian, of the word 'convert'. As a noun there is broad agreement that it describes one who, either freely or under duress, has decided to change his religious affiliation. There is a wider divergence of opinion as to its meaning as a verb. The difference in understanding is to some extent encapsulated grammatically. Jewish writers generally use the active voice to indicate that a person has 'converted'. Evangelical and Reformed Christians, however, use the passive voice, to indicate that a person has 'been converted'. Additionally, when Jewish writers use the term 'to convert' it often carries overtones of duress. In Evangelical and Reformed Christian theology, conversion is understood to be '...our willing response to the gospel call, in which we sincerely repent of our sins and place our trust in Christ for salvation.'³² Both the willingness and the sincerity of the response are essential, conversions are not considered genuine if obtained through the application of any kind of coercion or material inducement. As strict subscribers to the Calvinistic standards of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, the Scottish missionaries adhered firmly to this view of conversion; superficial changes of religious affiliation were discouraged, being considered deplorable.³³ John Duncan speaks for them all, 'I preach a free gospel to every man... but I know that its acceptance without the help of the Spirit is an impossibility.'³⁴ The Scottish tendency was to be cautious of alleged conversions; church membership would be, and often still is, deferred until the credibility of a convert's profession of Christian faith is established. Adherence to such theological principles inhibited Scottish missionaries from playing a numbers game.

In 1836, Löw (or Löb) Schwab was appointed Chief Rabbi of Pesth. Born in Moravia in 1794, Schwab was a brilliant pupil of the famous Rabbi Moses Sofer. Once in Pesth, he sought to bring his irenic spirit to bear on some of the divisive tensions between the Reform movement and Orthodoxy.³⁵ Although no advocate of Reform, Schwab became a strong advocate of 'Magyarisation', being convinced that emancipation would only come if the Jewish community convincingly demonstrated its loyalty to Hungary. In consequence, he published a number of his

³⁰ Patai, *op. cit.*, p.252

³¹ Ed. Géza Komoróczy *Jewish Budapest: Monuments, Rites, History* (Budapest: Central European University Press, English edition 1999) p.88-91, see also William O. McCagg, Jr., *Jewish Conversions in Hungary in Modern Times* in ed. Todd M. Endelman *Jewish Apostasy in the Modern World* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1987) p.88f. It seems the common source for Komoróczy and McCagg is Imre Sándor's memorial to Ballagi in *Akadémiai Emlékbeszédek* (Budapest: Akademia, 1893).

³² Wayne Grudem *Systematic Theology* (Leicester: IVP, 1994) p.709.

³³ WCF 9:4, 10:1-2.

³⁴ William Knight *Colloquia Peripatetica* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1879) p.86.

³⁵ Schwab died in Budapest in 1857. Today, he is principally remembered as being responsible for the building of the magnificent Dohány Street Synagogue, distinguished both by its size and flamboyant Moorish-Byzantine style. I am indebted to Dr Ilona Benoschofszky, Director of the Jewish Museum in Budapest, for information on Schwab.

own works in Hungarian and preached in Hungarian and German, rather than Yiddish.³⁶ As testimony to his leadership it was reported that 'in the city's Jewish school the pupils had made excellent progress in the Hungarian language.'³⁷ In 1848 Schwab sided with the nationalist revolution led by Lajos Kossuth, with the failure of the revolution he was imprisoned by the Austrians. As we shall see, Schwab and Duncan, the leader of the Scottish mission in Pesth, enjoyed a cordial and sincere acquaintance.

The process of modernisation in the Hungarian Jewish community in the period immediately prior to the arrival of the Scottish mission created a renaissance which produced Hungarian Jewish writers, editors and journalists, scholars and artists, lawyers and physicians, industrialists and merchants, financiers and bankers. Many affirmed their loyalty to Hungary and helped to hasten the emancipation of their community.³⁸ Such open-mindedness facilitated acceptance of the missionaries.

The Széchenyi Chain Bridge.

In 1832 Count István Széchenyi's interest in the modernisation of the Hungarian infrastructure was focused on solving the problem of erecting a permanent bridge between Buda and Pesth. As the Danube is prone to heavy flooding temporary bridges, used since Roman times, had to be removed when floods threatened and re-erected when the danger had passed. Until the end of the 18th century a permanent bridge had not been considered feasible.³⁹ In February 1832 a Bridge Society was founded and the same year Count Széchenyi, in company with György Andrássy, head of the Hungarian government's technical department, was sent by the Society to London to seek advice from notable bridge builders including W. Tierney Clark and Thomas Telford.⁴⁰ Tierney Clark's design for the Hammersmith Bridge in London caught Széchenyi's eye and served as the model for the Budapest Bridge.⁴¹ Clark appointed an enterprising twenty-eight year old Scot called Adam Clark, no relative of his, to be his resident engineer in Hungary but there is no record that he established contact with the missionaries.⁴² The project was financed by the sale of shares, and work commenced in September 1839. The bridge was officially opened on 20th November 1849, its incomplete structure having been a battle ground in the Hungarian revolution of 1848.⁴³

Most of the manual labourers on the project were local Hungarians who, according to Imre Gáll, were 'overseen by skilled workers such as machine operators, foremen and iron fitters, who came

³⁶ See Patai, *op. cit.*, p.245, 272f.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.272

³⁸ See Patai, *op. cit.*, p.250-268.

³⁹ Szilvia Andrea Holló, 'Széchenyi's Role from the Idea to the Passing of the Bridge Act' in Bibo, et. al., *The Széchenyi Chain Bridge and Adam Clark* (Budapest: City Hall, 1999) p.12f.

⁴⁰ William Tierney Clark, or Clarke (1783-1852) is normally styled Tierney Clark.

⁴¹ Judit Brody, 'William Tierney-Clark: Civil Engineer' in Bibo, et. al., p.63.

⁴² E.g. Paul Stirton, 'Adam Clark: the Enterprising Scot' in Bibo, et. al., p.78f; T. M. Devine *The Scottish Nation, 1700-2000* (London: Allen Lane, 1999) pp.249-272. Stirton also cites R. A. Buchanan 'Gentlemen Engineers: the Making of a Profession', *Victorian Studies*, vol. 26, no.4, Summer 1983, pp.407-429.

⁴³ Mrs Károly Horvoi, 'Adam Clark' in Bibo, et. al., p.88f.

to Hungary from England [sic]' and were said to have 'worked in an exemplary, disciplined manner....'⁴⁴ According to Gáll, there were sixty-two expatriate families and these provided an ostensible reason for the presence in Hungary of the Scottish Protestant ministers. The Scottish masons were under the direction of a committed English Christian called Teesdale, whose family, with the families of the other British workers, formed the nucleus of a little Protestant congregation.⁴⁵ Shortly after his arrival in 1841, John Duncan was appointed as their unofficial chaplain.⁴⁶ The bridge project became crucial, not only for defining the identity and status of the united city of Buda-Pesth but also, strange though it may seem, for the strategic development of the Scottish mission to the Jewish people of Hungary.

The Hungarian Churches, Scotland and the Jews

The condition of the Protestant churches in Hungary prior to the arrival of the Scottish ministers was such as to cause Hungarian Reformed Church minister, Pal Török, to complain that 'rationalism, imported from Germany, reigned supreme among the Evangelical [Lutheran] preachers and Professors of Theology.'⁴⁷ Smith, likewise, considered that, 'During the long continued spiritual decline through which Hungary had passed, the elementary ideas of the Christian life had well-nigh died out.'⁴⁸ And Israel Saphir, one of the early converts of the mission, alleged that 'there was not a village in all Hungary in which they knew that there was such a thing as evangelical religion.'⁴⁹ Keith, however, considered matters not so bleak as that, commenting that 'there were three Evangelical ministers in Hungary, one of whom came two day's journey to see me, as I afterwards went to see him.'⁵⁰ There is in these statements the taint of dramatic hyperbole and such pessimistic analysis must, to some degree, be tempered by the perspective of Georg Bauhoffer, chaplain to the Archduchess, who stated that in the period c.1825-30 the rural magnates, if not the ministers, had astonishingly 'clear views and evangelical principles.'⁵¹

The arrival of the Scottish missionaries in Pesth in August 1841 was by no means the first contact between the Hungarian Reformed Church and the Church of Scotland, nor was it the origin of the Hungarian Church's interest in the Jews. Hungarian students in Heidelberg and England in the second half of the sixteenth century would likely have been acquainted with, or heard of one of the foremost Hebraists of their generation, the Jewish Christian John Immanuel Tremelius (1510-80). Converted through the influence of Peter Martyr, Tremellius embraced the Reformed faith; coming to England in 1547 he taught Hebrew at Cambridge where he enjoyed the friendship of

⁴⁴ See Imre Gáll, 'Chain Bridge – the History of Construction,' in Bibo et. al., p.141. Gáll's comment in footnote 11 refers to the skilled workers as 'English', whereas in fact many were Scottish. For the stonework, Aberdonian quarry-workers and masons were employed, partly on the grounds of their skill with granite but also because they were cheaper than those from England. See Stirton, op. cit., p.82.

⁴⁵ Gavin Carlyle *Life and Work of William Wingate* (Glasgow: R.L. Allan & Sons, no date) p.26.

⁴⁶ Smith, Idem.

⁴⁷ Cited by Brown op. cit., p.322.

⁴⁸ Smith, op cit., p.11; cf. Kool, op. cit., p.103f..

⁴⁹ Cited by Brown, op. cit., p.323.

⁵⁰ Idem; cf. Robert Smith in *Sunday at Home*, Nov. 24th, 1866, cited by Kool.

⁵¹ Bauhoffer, op. cit., p.428.

bishops Cranmer and Parker. On the accession of Mary Tudor he returned to the Continent and lived at Heidelberg where he served as professor of Old Testament from 1561 to 1577. His chief literary work was a Latin translation of the Bible from Hebrew and Syriac, published in Frankfurt between 1575 and 1579 and in London in 1580. He compiled a Chaldaic and Syriac grammar, published in Paris, 1569. He also translated Calvin's catechism into Hebrew (1551), and produced the *Catechism for Enquiring Jews* (1554), which was still in use at the beginning of the twentieth century. Curiously, it was Tremelius' translation of Exodus 3.2 into Latin, rather than the Vulgate, that provided the Church of Scotland with its motto, *Nec Tamen Consumeatur*, which was unofficially adopted in 1691.⁵²

Graeme Murdock's study of the Reformed Church in Hungary and Transylvania in the seventeenth century has demonstrated that the history of participation between the two churches reveals a broadly similar outlook on the Jewish people.⁵³ By the 1640s a few Hungarian Calvinist students were found in Puritan England and at least one studied in Scotland.⁵⁴ Many of the English Puritans, including William Ames and Edward Calamy, were committed to the same belief in the conversion of the Jews as that held by Scottish Presbyterians.⁵⁵ Two other central European Jewish Christians involved in theological education in Scotland in the same period were Julius Conradus Otto [Naphtali Margoloth], of Vienna and Paul Shaletti. Margoloth, served as Professor of Hebrew & Semitic Languages in Edinburgh from 1642 to 1656, and Shaletti gave instruction as an Additional Lecturer at King's College, Aberdeen, 1669-1672.⁵⁶ Instruction by Jewish Christian theologians was available not only to Hungarians able to afford travel to the west, but also to those of the Reformed Church who were taught theology during the late 1630s by David Valerius at Sárospatak in north-east Hungary. Valerius was a Jew of Spanish origin who became a Christian through contact with Johan Alsted of the academy in Gulyafehérvár.⁵⁷ Alsted included among his international circle of friends the Scottish minister, John Durie, whose postmillennial views, including belief in the conversion of the Jews, accorded broadly with the eschatology of leading ministers of the Synod of Transylvania.⁵⁸ It is not surprising, therefore, that from time to time the Reformed Church in Hungary had contemplated missionary activity not only to the Turks, who occupied southern Hungary, but also to Jews.⁵⁹ The remarkably mobile

⁵² For Tremellius as a Jewish Christian, see Bernstein, op. cit., ad loc.; W. T. Gidney *The Jews and their Evangelisation* (London: Student Christian Movement, 1899) p.88. The symbol of the burning bush surrounded by the Latin motto *Nec Tamen Consumeatur* was first used in 1691 when the printer George Mossman included it on the title page of *The Principal Acts of the General Assembly*. See A. I. Dunlop *Burning Bush* in DSCHT; George C. Cameron *The Scots Kirk in London* (London: Becket Publications, 1979) p.210. fn.1; G. D. Henderson *The Burning Bush* (Edinburgh: St. Andrews Press, 1957) chp.1.

⁵³ Graeme Murdock *Calvinism on the Frontier 1600-1660: International Calvinism and the Reformed Church in Hungary and Transylvania* (Oxford: Oxford Historical Monographs, 2000).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.49.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.59, 61, 72. For Calmay's interest in the Jews see Iain H. Murray, op. cit., p.72.

⁵⁶ I am grateful to Dr Jack C. Whytock for personal communications regarding Jewish Hebrew instructors in Scottish universities. Cf. Jack C. Whytock 'The History and Development of Scottish Theological Education and Training, Kirk and Secession (c.1560-c.1850)' (Ph.D. thesis: University of Wales, Lampeter 2001), pp.475-477.

⁵⁷ Murdock, op. cit., p.83.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.88, 132f.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.140-41.

community of seventeenth century European Reformed churches, through its fertile interaction between English Puritans, Dutch Reformed thinkers, Bohemian and Hungarian reformers and Scottish Presbyterians produced a network in which arose a broadly consensual Reformed eschatology that embraced among its elements belief in the conversion of Israel.

In 1746, Matthew Bohil, a Hungarian Calvinist pastor, was imprisoned by the Jesuits but through the generous help and succour of a Jewish rabbi he was enabled to make good his escape. As the Protestant Churches languished under Roman Catholic Habsburg rule, the story of Bohil took on significance not just as historic event but also as a mythic symbol of the solidarity in suffering of Jewish and Protestant victims of Habsburg intolerance.⁶⁰ But it would not be until the nineteenth century that Habsburg repression would ebb sufficiently to allow the international and ecumenical interaction that would enable the Protestant churches to focus their thought and energy on how best to fulfil their gratitude and obligation towards the Jewish people.

During the period of Highland Clearances (c.1830-c.1880), Scottish attention was drawn to Hungary's struggles in the revolution of 1848 and its aftermath. Krisztina Fenyő, in her study of the Scottish Highlands during the famine years (1845-1855) makes the point that

The Scottish papers, especially the *Inverness Courier*, were fascinated by the 'Hungarian struggle' and drew romantic parallels between past Scottish rebellions and the struggle for independence. ...the Hebrides and Hungary were not so far apart as they would have appeared on the map.⁶¹

The Inverness Courier may indeed have drawn links with past Scottish struggles but Hugh Miller's articles in *The Witness* more substantially strengthened the contemporary link between Hungary and the Hebrides by depicting as analogous the land struggles in the Highlands and the revolution in Hungary.⁶² Fenyő, however, seems not have considered that the familiarity of Hebridean crofters with events in Hungary was in part, at least, a consequence of their enthusiastic and active support of the missionaries in Pesth, whose activities were widely reported both in the religious and secular press.

Maria Dorothea and her Circle.

In chapter five we have already been introduced to Maria Dorothea, the Palatine Archduke Joseph's third wife. Coming of German Protestant background, she expressed strong support for the idea of the Scottish mission and showed much kindness to Dr Alexander Black and Dr Alexander Keith when they were stricken down with typhoid fever during their return home to Scotland from Palestine.⁶³ Among Maria Dorothea's interests, László Kósa lists, relief for the

⁶⁰ Georg Bauhoffer *History of the Protestant Church in Hungary* (London: James Nisbet, 1854) p.322ff..

⁶¹ Krisztina Fenyő *Contempt, Sympathy and Romance* (Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press, 2000) p.79.

⁶² Cf. e.g. *The Witness*, 8th September, 1849 & *The Inverness Courier* 26th July, 1849.

⁶³ László Kósa 'The Age of Emergent Bourgeois Society, from the Late 18th Century to 1920. I. Everyday Culture' in ed. Kósa *A Cultural History of Hungary* (Budapest: Corvina Books Ltd. 2000) p.93f..

poor, support for Bible printing and evangelisation, personal involvement in the nursing of the sick, and the founding of various moral and religious associations.⁶⁴ Maria Dorothea was at the centre of evangelical life in Budapest during its heyday; from at least 1839, she maintained her religious patronage and influence until her husband's death in 1847.⁶⁵ Under her sponsorship there came into existence an international and interdenominational group of evangelical Protestants, including Scottish Presbyterians, Hungarian Lutherans (such as Dr Joseph Szekács) and Hungarian Reformed clergy (represented by Superintendent Pál Török). In this evangelical context, she also brought together the political rivals, Count István Széchenyi and Lajos Kossuth, who both espoused the evangelical cause.⁶⁶ As the Hungarian Lutheran historian, Dr. Tibor Fabiny, has pointed out, the formation of Maria Dorothea's group marked the beginning of a new era in Hungarian Protestantism.⁶⁷

It is little wonder that her circle, with its international Protestant connections and its nationalist and democratic tendencies, was viewed with grave suspicion from Vienna. The Catholic clergy constantly intrigued against her and spied on her.⁶⁸ She, however, bravely derided such dangers as inconsequential. The missionaries, nevertheless, recognised that her situation was not without personal risk and, in their correspondence, referred to her in code as 'the sister on the hill'.⁶⁹ Their suspicions proved well grounded. On the day of her husband's funeral, in January 1847, she proposed to leave Budapest.⁷⁰ But her decision was far from voluntary, she was ordered to remove to Vienna.⁷¹ In such revolutionary times, to a paranoid regime, a Protestant widowed Archduchess, was considered a threat to the security of the Catholic Habsburg hegemony and therefore to be marginalized.⁷²

Such then was the religious, political and social context prevailing in Hungary in August 1841, when four ministers of the Church of Scotland arrived to establish, by clandestine methods if necessary, a mission to the Jews of Pesth. Who were they and what were their backgrounds?

⁶⁴ Kósa, idem.

⁶⁵ Kool, op.cit., p.104.

⁶⁶ Kósa, idem.

⁶⁷ Fabiny, cited by Kool op. cit. pp.100, 110.

⁶⁸ Brown, op. cit., p.305, 310; Keith *Sunday at Home* p.247.

⁶⁹ Carlyle, op. cit., p.10; cf. Brown op. cit. p.350.

⁷⁰ Gavin Carlyle *Life and Work of William Wingate Missionary to the Jews* (Glasgow: R. L. Alan and Son, n.d.) p.110.

⁷¹ Bauhoffer, op. cit., p.444.

⁷² Kool, op. cit., p.183.

CHAPTER TEN

The happy, happy days I spent in Pesth
John Duncan

The Budapest Mission

The Missionaries

Four missionaries were appointed by the Committee to undertake the establishment of the mission station at Pesth. John Duncan, who had in 1840 offered himself to the Jewish committee for missionary service, was appointed as the leader of mission group.¹ He was then forty-four years of age and minister of Milton Church, Glasgow. Duncan was born in Old Aberdeen in 1796 to parents who were members of the Secession Church. Educated at Aberdeen Grammar School, he showed right from the outset great interest in languages and metaphysics, the two subjects which were to be his life-long intellectual passions. So great was this early interest that he was once discovered, during class, furtively reading a copy of Aristotle hidden under his bench, much as a twentieth century schoolboy might have read *The Beano*.² He entered Marischal College, Aberdeen, in 1810, and four years later he graduated M.A. When a student Duncan espoused the atheistic pantheism of Baruch Spinoza but nevertheless undertook theological studies, becoming a member of the Church of Scotland in 1816. Under the influence of one of his tutors, Dr Mearns, his scepticism fell away and he was able to believe in the existence of God.³ In 1825 he was licensed to preach, a step taken, he tells us, 'in ungodliness and doctrinal unbelief and heresy'.⁴ His Christian conversion, under César Malan, brought an immediate sense of peace, which nevertheless, in time, subsided into pessimism. He found help from reading John Owen, Herman Witsius, and John Love, and from personal association with Gavin Parker and James Kidd, and so passed through an experience he called his 'second conversion'. Duncan retained such a dread of superficiality that he was never again able to be entirely sure that his faith was genuine and that he was indeed a true Christian.⁵

Duncan possessed the most remarkable intellect. As well as proficiency in Hebrew and all the cognate languages, he was familiar with Sanscrit, Bengali, Hindustani, and Mahratti; he enjoyed a high degree of fluency in many European languages and an amazing facility to express himself in the most elegant Latin.⁶ His linguistic ability, knowledge of Jewish and Rabbinic literature, style of teaching, and deep interest in the Jewish people gave rise to him being accorded the apt

¹ See chapter 8, p.116.

² The standard biography of John Duncan is David Brown *The Life of Rabbi Duncan* (Glasgow: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872) p.14.

³ *Ibid.*, p.76.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.110.

⁵ For a detailed study of Duncan's problem of Christian assurance see John E. Marshall, "'Rabbi" Duncan and the Problem of Assurance' in *Banner of Truth*, issue 201 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust) p.24ff..

⁶ MB1, p.35. Although Duncan was the first appointee, it was, of course, Daniel Edward who first engaged in missionary work on behalf of the Church.

nickname, 'Rabbi' Duncan.

Duncan married twice. In 1813 he married Janet Tower of Aberdeen, to whom a daughter, Annie, was born in 1838, her mother dying the following year. Not long before the departure of the missionary party in 1841 Duncan married Janet Douglas-Torrance, the widow of John Torrance, described by Hew Scott in *Fasti* as a surgeon from Kilmarnock and by Brown as an officer. Janet had two daughters by her first marriage, Annabella, who in 1842 married William Allan, one of the Pesth missionary party, and Margaret, who in 1843 married another of the Pesth missionary team, William Wingate.⁷ A third daughter, Maria Dorothea, was born in 1843.

William Wingate, the next in seniority, was born in Glasgow on 7th October 1808, the eldest son of Andrew Wingate, a mercantile entrepreneur, who had earned a prominent place in Glasgow civic life.⁸ The family resided in Blythswood Square, then one of the most fashionable and expensive residential areas in the city. Educated at Glasgow Grammar School and Glasgow University, where he studied law, William became a partner in his father's business. After a period of religious disinterest, his deep distress caused by the death of his wife, Jessie Buchanan, to whom he had been married for only three years, led to a spiritual conversion. He subsequently became a member of the Tron Church under the ministry of his cousin, Dr. Robert Buchanan and was ordained an elder. It was through friendship with Robert Wodrow that his interest in the Jewish mission was aroused. In chapter eight we have noted his acceptance by the Committee as a missionary, his studies in Berlin and his work with Daniel Edward.⁹ On September 12th, 1843, Wingate married again, his bride was John Duncan's stepdaughter, Margaret Wallace Torrance.¹⁰

The third member of the team was Robert Smith. A farmer's son, Smith was born in 1817 at Benholm on the Aberdeenshire coast, and educated 5 miles away at St Cyrus, where he came under the influence of Alexander Keith, then the parish minister. In 1835 he became a student of Marischal College, Aberdeen, and from there he moved to Aberdeen University where he completed a divinity course preparatory to applying for the ministry of the Church of Scotland.¹¹ During his divinity studies he offered himself as a missionary to the Jews. After receiving testimonials affirming his suitability, one examining committee reporting that they 'were highly satisfied with his attainments and qualifications,' he was accepted as a missionary by the Jewish Committee on 3rd March 1841¹² Prior to his departure to Pesth later the same year he was licensed

⁷ *Fasti* 3:714 & 717.

⁸ The standard biography is Gavin Carlyle *The Life and Work of William Wingate, Missionary to the Jews* (Glasgow: R. L. Allan & Son, n.d.)

⁹ MB1, p.49f..

¹⁰ Carlyle, op. cit., p.32.

¹¹ *Fasti* 7:716 Apart from the entry in *Fasti*, little biographical material is available. Cf. Robert Smith *Early Days of the Mission to the Jews at Pesth* (Glasgow: Oliphant, Anderson and Frerrier, 1893); Thomas Lindsay, 'Memoir' in Robert Smith *Quiet Thoughts of a Quiet Thinker* (Edinburgh, 1896).

¹² MB1, p.48.

by the Presbytery of Fordoun and placed under the tutelage of Dr. Duncan in preparation for his ordination.¹³

The final member of the group was William Owen Allan. Allan was born in 1812, at Torthorwold, Dumfriesshire, studying divinity at the University of Glasgow.¹⁴ Being selected to join the 1841 mission to Pesth, his continuing theological education was supervised by Duncan. The Committee in seeking to expedite matters petitioned the 1842 General Assembly for permission for Allan to proceed to ordination even if his theological studies had to be slightly truncated. The Assembly carefully balancing the desirability of 'high qualifications', with the need of 'additional labourers among the Jews' and the 'peculiar circumstances' in which the Committee was then placed, agreed to waive Allan's attendance at the final session of Divinity and Church History, and authorised his ordination on 10th November 1842 by the Presbytery of Hamilton.¹⁵

It was with great anticipation and enthusiastic support from all the Church that the party, minus Wingate, who would travel out later, made their final arrangements for departure to London in the middle of June 1841, in readiness for crossing the Continent to Hungary.¹⁶ As the missionaries assembled in London, the eastern sub-committee in Edinburgh entered into fresh discussions with the western sub-committee to attempt to resuscitate the old plan of establishing a mission station in Palestine. Persuaded by the sub-committees' arguments, the General Committee agreed that Duncan 'should be instructed to hold himself in readiness to proceed to Palestine on receiving directions to that effect....'¹⁷ In early July, the Committee, through Moody Stuart, made contact with Dr Keith to enquire whether he might be disposed to return to Palestine with companions of his own recommendation in order to establish a mission.¹⁸ Before writing to Keith, however, Moody Stuart sought Robert M'Cheyne's opinion of the likelihood of Keith's willingness to go to Palestine. M'Cheyne felt strongly that Keith would be best employed in Pesth.¹⁹ Unsurprisingly, Keith's reply confirmed M'Cheyne's judgment.²⁰ If Keith was available, the old plan to establish two stations would be resurrected, Keith would be offered leadership of the work in Pesth and Duncan Palestine. But on 11th August, Keith dashed the Committee's hopes

¹³ Ibid., p.65.

¹⁴ Fasti 7: 714. There is a great paucity of biographical material connected with Allan, and little can be discovered of Allan prior to his joining the mission team in Pesth. *Fasti* makes reference to an untraceable volume, White's *Life of John Duncan*, p.106. It is no surprise to find his name linked with that of Duncan, for not only was he a colleague, he was also his son-in-law. After expulsion from Hungary in 1852, Allan briefly served as a missionary in Constantinople and Damascus. He became minister of the Danish Protestant congregation at St. Thomas in the West Indies, before returning to Europe for his final period of ministry in Prague, he retired to Edinburgh.

¹⁵ Act Anent the Conversion of the Jews in *Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*, 20th May, 1842; cf. MB1, p.129f..

¹⁶ Brown, op. cit., p.296.

¹⁷ MB1, p.65.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.69.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.71.

²⁰ Idem.

by indicating that he was willing to go to Pesth only for, 'a short time, if his health permitted, to introduce any of the Committee's missionaries who might be stationed there.'²¹

Arrival in Pesth

These negotiations were probably unknown to the missionaries waiting in London, and having no concrete instructions to the contrary, Duncan, his wife and stepdaughter, together with Allan and Smith, departed according to schedule for Hungary. They crossed the Channel, and passed through Germany to enter Austria at Linz.²² As they approached Linz, they were concerned not to betray their purpose to the Austrian police and considered destroying any incriminating books they possessed, particularly Duncan's copy of the Assembly's tract. Their reluctance not to lose this useful document, however, gave rise to a curious 'Duncanesque' plan. The tract's pages would be divided among them, memorised and then reconstructed from memory on the other side of the border. Mrs Duncan, however, did not trust the retentiveness of her memory and hid her portion in her shoe! Smith considered she had acted imprudently because, if questioned by the authorities concerning concealed papers, Christian honesty would have obligated her to divulge her secret.²³ No challenge, however, was offered and the party continued their journey by river steamer from Vienna to Pesth, arriving after midnight on Sunday, 22nd August, in the midst of 'a magnificent thunderstorm'.²⁴

Their coming coincided with the great annual fair. The city was thronged with people and because private rented accommodation was hard to come by, they put up at a hotel, whilst searching for a suitable permanent home for the mission. As they were eager to commence their activities as soon as possible, services for English residents were announced for the following Lord's Day, and despite limited publicity, thirty persons attended the first service.²⁵ Within a fortnight, a suitable place of residence and work was found in the Bella Gasse, the basement room when cleaned, whitewashed and equipped with a desk and chairs, provided a very serviceable place of worship.²⁶ Normally, two services were held each Lord's Day. The main morning service was normally conducted by Duncan, and the afternoon service by Smith. Their congregation consisted for the most part of the workmen engaged on Széchenyi's bridge project, with their families. In addition 'a considerable sprinkling of Hungarians and Germans, and especially Jews, were attracted to the services....'²⁷ Jewish motives for attendance were mixed; some came out of genuine religious interest, others were keen to improve their English, the study of which was then fashionable in Hungary.²⁸

²¹ Ibid., p. 78.

²² Robert Smith *Early Days of the Mission to the Jews in Pesth* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1893) p. 8f..

²³ Smith, op. cit., p. 8.

²⁴ Idem.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 10.

²⁶ Idem.

²⁷ Idem.; cf. Gavin Carlyle *The Life and Work of William Wingate* (Glasgow: R. L. Allan, n.d.) p. 42.

²⁸ Smith, Idem.

Rapid mastery of the local language, preferably before commencing work in the field, is considered a great missionary *desideratum*. Smith subscribed to this theory, idealistically advocating that, 'before proceeding to his field of labour, the missionary should be so far advanced in his preparatory acquirements as to be able to enter fully on his work with the least possible delay.'²⁹ But, as many missionary candidates can corroborate, time for intensive language study may all too easily be lost when the demands of a new work exert their own pressures, it was so for the Scottish missionaries; the theoretical ideal was forced to concede to the exigencies of reality.³⁰

Shortly after their arrival, Duncan consented to marry two British subjects. The Archduke sent for him, received him kindly but indicated that marriage in Hungary was a civil as well as a religious affair, to be performed only by clergymen recognised by law. His actions, therefore, had been illegal and were not to be repeated. Duncan contended that as a Church of Scotland minister he was entitled to conduct a marriage between British subjects. The diplomatic and conciliatory Archduke resolved the matter by asking Duncan if he would in future only conduct marriages as the vicar of a legally recognised pastor. From that day forward the missionaries conducted marriages, baptisms and other ordinances under the authority of the Hungarian Calvinist pastor Pal Török, with whom a close and supportive friendship developed.³¹ As a consequence of the Archduke's intervention the ministerial status of the missionaries was both strengthened and regularised.

As far as cultural sensitivity was concerned, Duncan was rather ahead of his time, 'he felt it a duty to adapt himself to [Hungarian] habits, usages and ecclesiastical regulations.'³² Applying his linguistic genius, within three months of his arrival in Pesth he mastered both the difficult vocabulary and grammar of the Magyar language, but modesty did not permit him to speak it in public. His Hungarian colleague and friend, Pal Török, superintendent of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Pesth, testified to his, 'wisdom, modesty, and judicious procedure. He thus won us all, and carefully and happily avoided every cause of offence - all conflict with the political and ecclesiastical authorities.'³³ He very carefully cultivated close relations with people of influence, including Reformed, Lutheran and Roman Catholic clergy, as well as leaders in the Jewish community. This circle of acquaintance included the Chief Rabbi, Löw Schwab. Duncan and Schwab had much in common, sharing a scholarly knowledge of the Hebrew language and Judaism; they also delighted in mathematics and philosophy. Duncan took a great interest in the Jewish schools and offered two Hebrew Bibles and two copies of the Torah as prizes and donated an English Bible, complete with New Testament, to the head-master. Schwab invited Duncan to attend the marriage of his daughter to a young rabbi, who was delighted to make the acquaintance

²⁹ Smith, *Ibid.*, p.10.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.11.

³¹ Moody-Stuart, *op. cit.*, p.66-67.

³² Brown, *op. cit.*, p.315

³³ *Ibid.*, p.317.

of a man he had heard so much about.³⁴

Being in the habit of spending whole days in receiving visitors Duncan delighted to bring into play his remarkable conversational and persuasive powers. His home was 'thrown open to the Jews; they saw all their habits and ways, and had Christianity presented before them without being forced upon them. His very peculiarities seemed to suit them, and to attract rather than offend.'³⁵ Duncan's encounter with a twenty-one year old medical student, Sandor Tomory (1818-1895) gives insight into his evangelistic method. When he first began to show an interest in Christianity Tomory approached a Roman Catholic bishop from Vienna, who drew his attention to the existence of the Protestant missionaries in Pest and, remarkably, encouraged him to visit them. In a note to Moody Stuart he vividly recalled the occasion:

Three days later I was introduced to the dear man. In a most syllogistic way, and in fluent Latin, he brought out the truth of the gospel, and urged me to accept Christ as my Saviour. But quite in keeping with the character of the doctor, with the ruling passion, in the same breath he began to teach me in English. While the tears were yet in my eyes and his, he began to conjugate an English verb, and made me repeat it. After that I saw him almost daily till he left for Italy. This was in the year 1842.³⁶

Tomory was the first convert of the Pesth mission, and after his theological education in Scotland he became a missionary to the Jewish people of Constantinople.³⁷

Though sent specifically as a missionary to the Jews, Duncan believed that his mission could only succeed as the Church in Hungary generally prospered. His missiology reflected elements also found in the thinking of his Anglican contemporary, Henry Venn (1796-1873), who advocated the subservience of mission to the wider interests of the Church and in this connection had used the graphic expression, 'the euthanasia of mission'. When a mission fulfilled its task and a strong Church had been established, with local leadership in place, the mission, as the servant of the Church, was to die well.³⁸ In one of his earliest letters to the Committee Duncan expressed similar priorities, advocating that the missionaries 'labour for the revival of true religion (both as regards sound doctrine and godly living) in the Protestant Churches of the land' which would then be 'the best instrument for carrying on the work of gathering in the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'³⁹ His commitment to the primacy of the wider Church over narrow denominational issues caused Duncan, though a Presbyterian with an affinity to the Hungarian Reformed Church, to establish close friendships with Lutheran ministers, such as George Bauhofer. He once succinctly described his generous ecclesiology: 'I'm first a Christian, next a Catholic, then a

³⁴ Gavin Carlyle *Mighty in the Scriptures: A Memoir of Adolph Saphir D.D.* (London: John F Shaw, 1894), p.11f..

³⁵ Carlyle, "Mighty in the Scriptures," p. 437.

³⁶ Alexander Moody Stuart *Recollections of the Late John Duncan* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872) p.73.

³⁷ *Annals*, vol.1, p.345. See also p.46f..

³⁸ For Venn see Max Warren *To Apply the Gospel: Selections from the Writings of Henry Venn* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1971) p.63. Another parallel between the two thinkers was their concern to utilise 'Native Agency', the first tentative step towards indigenisation.

³⁹ Brown, op. cit., p.319.

Calvinist, fourth a Paedobaptist, and fifth a Presbyterian. I cannot reverse this order.⁴⁰ When Maria Dorothea planned to build a Lutheran place of worship in the Buda Castle district, such convictions led Duncan to appeal to the Free Church of Scotland for financial help.⁴¹ The Church contributed 20,000 Austrian florins, two thirds of the total cost, to the project.⁴²

The Pesth station was now successfully organised: official legitimacy as ministers to the bridge builders had been established; tolerable dealings maintained with Government; exceptionally good relations enjoyed with the palace and the local Protestant community; and, above all, a rapport established with some of the Jewish community. The missionaries and the Committee had good cause to be grateful. As the 1842 General Assembly drew near the Committee in Edinburgh began to draft its report. In order to retain the support of the Scottish public and not betray any impression of confusion or indecision sometimes evident in their meetings, the Committee prepared a modestly encouraging report, omitting all reference to its occasional contradictory manoeuvres.⁴³

Duncan had a tendency to suffer from the cold. During the winter of 1841-2 his health had deteriorated, so the following winter the Committee allowed him to go to Leghorn, in Italy, where he might be able to accomplish the aims of the mission in a more congenial climate. But Duncan was frustrated in Leghorn; he missed the work in Pesth and as soon as Spring came he was anxious to return to Pesth as promptly as possible. Arriving back, he found the small congregation thriving and growing. Although a possibility of division over an unspecified 'matter of practice' had arisen, the situation had been handled with great wisdom and the crisis had passed. He was delighted with his junior colleagues and the diligence with which they had managed the station in his absence. He heaped lavish praise on them, 'Messrs. Smith and Wingate... are astonishingly assiduous — conversing with inquirers, teaching Greek and theology, holding meetings for prayer, and for instruction.'⁴⁴

The Disruption

The same minutes of 3rd May 1843 that recorded the decision to permit Duncan's return from Leghorn to Pesth, concluded with a terse but mundane remark: 'The Committee appoints the Convenor to prepare the report to be laid before the next Assembly.'⁴⁵ The report was not, however, placed before the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and none of the missionaries and few of the Committee would ever again be answerable to that Church. In the early afternoon of 18th May 1843 the Disruption of the Church of Scotland took place, when

⁴⁰ William Knight *Colloquia Peripatetica* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1879) p.8.

⁴¹ Brown, *op. cit.*, p.321.

⁴² The church is sited at the junction of Tancsics Mihaly Street and Fortune Street. Its first pastor was George Bauhofer, historian of the Hungarian church. In the vestry is the only known portrait of Maria Dorothea.

⁴³ MB1, p.125.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.248.

⁴⁵ MB1, p.186.

hundreds of seceding ministers left the Church of Scotland to reassemble in the Tanfield Hall as the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland.⁴⁶ The Committee's report, delivered by Dr. Keith on the second day of the Assembly, much to his liking, was the first report to be received by the Free Church. He was said to have often remarked 'that it was "to the Jew first" the Free Church of Scotland turned her regards.'⁴⁷ A blank page, number 189, provides the only hiatus in the record as the Committee's minute book effects its smooth passage, from the Church of Scotland to the Free Church of Scotland, through one of the most turbulent and stormy seas ever to engulf the Scottish Church.⁴⁸

On 31st May 1843, the first meeting took place of the Free Church of Scotland's *Committee for Promoting Christianity among the Jews* and the first item of business for the renamed and reorganised Committee was to read and sign the *Protest* and have it engrossed in the minutes.⁴⁹ Some of the old structures were modernised. The main Committee remained large and broadly representative of the Church's regional diversity, with Keith appointed as convenor. In addition there was an executive or Acting Committee of twenty-six ministers and elders of which Candlish was convenor. For convenience of meeting, it was, for the most part, Edinburgh based, and authorised to transact regular business. The western sub-committee, based in Glasgow, was retained with Lorimer as convenor and as a new departure, designed to ensure greater integration between all the Free Church's missions committees, three members of the Jewish Committee, Robert Candlish, Andrew Bonar and James Julius Wood, were appointed to be members of the newly formed Board of Missions.⁵⁰

In a new spirit of ecumenicity, the Committee discussed inviting 'Evangelical Dissenters in Scotland to join in missions to the Jews and that this might perhaps be suggested at the meeting of the Assembly in October.'⁵¹ This gesture, whilst not immediately adding to the missionary ranks of the Church, nevertheless, paved the way for later cooperation with the Reformed Presbyterian Church and the United Presbyterian Church, and helped future collaboration with the Irish Presbyterian Church. As a matter of urgency, the Committee decided that the missionaries should be canvassed regarding their denominational loyalties, assurance having been given that if they adhered to the Free Church, they would be retained on the original terms and conditions of their

⁴⁶ Thomas Brown *Annals of the Disruption* (Edinburgh: MacNiven and Wallace, 1884) p.91-98.

⁴⁷ *Annals* p.98.

⁴⁸ Minute book of the Committee for the Conversion of the Jews, (NLS Dep. 298/249) at this point becomes the Minute Book of the Free Church of Scotland Committee for the Conversion of the Jews. NLS Dep. 298/203, which is identical to 298/249 up to this point, thereafter becomes the Minute Book of the Church of Scotland Committee for the Conversion of the Jews. Evidence of a degree of cooperation, or at least facilitation, between the two churches is hinted at by the existence of the copy minute book.

⁴⁹ MB1, p.210f. The change of name did not reflect any change, theological or strategic, perhaps it demonstrates greater sensitivity to Jewish predilections by avoiding the term 'conversion'. The 'Protest' of 1843, together with the 'Claim, Declaration and Protest' of 1842 are the foundational and constitutional documents of the Free Church of Scotland and may be consulted in *Practice and Principles of the Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Knox Press, 1995 [8th edition]) pp.122ff., 137ff..

⁵⁰ MB1, p.217, 219.

⁵¹ MB1, p.238-9.

engagement.⁵² All the Church's missionaries, Foreign and Jewish, decided to throw in their lot with the Free Church.⁵³ Owing largely to matters of geography and communications, the missionaries to the Jewish people were the first to respond.⁵⁴

If the new church had all the missionaries, it was a very different story concerning finance. At the Disruption, the old Committee's treasurer, Archibald Bonar adhered to the Free Church and continued for a while in financial control. It was, however, only a short time before the Church of Scotland asserted the funds were its entitlement and in late May, 1843, representatives of the Church of Scotland made known to the Free Church Committee the full extent of its claim. The Free Church disputed this assertion, arguing that the funds had been subscribed to facilitate the work the missionaries were presently engaged in and should, therefore, be allocated in proportion to the number of missionaries adhering to either body.⁵⁵ The dispute rumbled on, and at its meeting on 12th October the Free Church Committee reaffirmed its resolve to obtain access to the funds.⁵⁶ The Church of Scotland acting committee responded by stating that a decision would be made by the next General Assembly, which when it met rejected the Free Church's case, no funds were transferred and the Free Church had to set to work to raise everything necessary to support the work.⁵⁷ What was needed to carry on the work for another year was £3,500; exactly the sum lying at the disposal of the Church of Scotland, not one penny of which was made over.⁵⁸

The Free Church members rose to the challenge and between April and December 1844 contributions amounting to £3,400 flooded in. They came from Scotland's industrialised cities and towns in the Central Belt, and despite the fact that famine gripped large parts of the north, a steady flow of donations also came from the Highlands and Islands; from Lewis in the west, to Cromarty in the east, from the Shetland islands and Wick in the north and from Dunkeld in the south.⁵⁹ Beyond Scotland, gifts came from countries near and far; from England⁶⁰ and Ireland,⁶¹ from Madeira,⁶² Canada, South Africa,⁶³ and India⁶⁴. Donations came from individuals and collections from public meetings, Sabbath Schools, Youth Associations and Children's Missionary Societies. Legacies provided some larger gifts. Others collected their contribution in missionary boxes. Some donations were anonymous, e.g. from 'a friend', 'a friend in the country', 'a friend of

⁵² MB1, p.217.

⁵³ The sole exception was a lady missionary at Calcutta named Ann Petrie, *Fasti* vol. 7. p.686; as Mrs Anderson see *Fasti*, vol.1, p.247.

⁵⁴ MB1, p.240-41. McDougall, *op. cit.*, p.56.

⁵⁵ MB1, p.220.

⁵⁶ MB1, p.244.

⁵⁷ Thomas Brown, *op. cit.* p.502; Walker, *op. cit.*, p.170.

⁵⁸ Walker, *Idem*.

⁵⁹ *Ledger for Schemes*, MS 18927: p.143f [NLS] E.g. Sheildag, £1.4.0; Knock, £1. 0.0; Trumisgarry, £1. 2.6; Dunkeld, £1.10.0; Laggan in Badenoch, £2. 7.6; Cromarty, 5.0; Shetland, £5. 0.0; Wick, £2. 5.0.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.151. Including a legacy of £100.0.0 from the estate of Rev John Abernethy, Bolton, Lancs.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.153 A gift of £1.0.0 was sent from The Juvenile Missionary Association at Knockbracken Reformed Presbyterian Church, near Belfast.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.152.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.148.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.152. 820 Rupees = c.£82.0.0.

(a named scheme)', or 'a humble cottager from Moffat'.⁶⁵ Other contributions came from named donors: men, women and children. One gift of 11/- was accompanied by a box of trinkets, perhaps to sell and so supplement the cash donation.⁶⁶ Subscriptions were large and small, some restricted to specific projects and others for use at the discretion of the Committee. And it must be noted that what was given to the Free Church Jewish mission was in addition to the provision of funds needed to pay for the ministry at home and overseas, as well as for the provision of the entire denominational infrastructure after the loss of all churches, manses and schools hitherto used by its ministers and members. In addition, this sacrificial giving took place during the period known as 'the Hungry Forties', a time of severe hardship and famine in the Scottish Highlands and Islands. In a spirit of cordial reciprocation, the Budapest Sabbath School collected funds for those 'suffering famine in the Highlands and Ireland.'⁶⁷

Probably, the most serious effect of the Disruption on the Budapest mission was the decision of the General Assembly of the Free Church to appoint Duncan to the Chair of Oriental Languages at New College, lately established in Edinburgh for the training of Free Church ministers. Informed of his decision, he agreed to accept the Chair 'though with much difficulty.' As 'he was to leave Pesth on the 3rd of October' the Committee 'renewed their former expressions of regret at the loss of Dr. Duncan's valuable services' but 'trusted that he would be able to return to Pesth for some time each summer.'⁶⁸

Duncan was present in Edinburgh and attended a Committee meeting in November, creating a mild furore by reporting that he had 'brought to this country two young converted Jews, Edershiem and Tomori [sic], formerly mentioned, for education as missionaries, also Adolph Saphir, the son of Mr Saphir at Pesth and that he wished some arrangement come to immediately regarding their residence and maintenance.'⁶⁹ Despite an earlier decision to receive Edersheim and Tomory 'as students of Theology in connection with the Committee and to allow the sum of fifty pounds for their necessary support',⁷⁰ Duncan did not feel the Committee had sufficiently removed from his shoulders all financial liability. The Committee, on the other hand, without wishing to break their promise to those already under its care, sought to stem any further use of its own funds for this purpose and, accordingly, fired a warning shot across the bows of Duncan and the missionaries remaining in Pesth in the form of a strongly worded minute.⁷¹ The following year, the incorrigible Duncan was further reminded of the 'inexpedience of bringing more boys to Scotland for education, it being the opinion of the Committee that such a charge does not at present lie within the scope of its operations.'⁷² This hard line ought not, however, to be construed as evidence of a lack of sympathy towards Jewish young men who sought to be missionaries to

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.146.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.147.

⁶⁷ MB1, p.243.

⁶⁸ MB1, p.243.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p.250.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.241.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.253.

⁷² Ibid., p.292.

their own people, only that such a project did not fall within the Jewish Committee's remit. It was, consequently, decided to refer the matter for help to the recently formed BSPGJ strongly recommending the formation of an 'Institution for enquiring Jews in London'.⁷³

Apart from the discussion of matters relating to the removal of Duncan to Scotland, the Committee minutes reveal that it had remarkably little to discuss concerning Pesth for the years 1843 to 1847. This was due not to any inactivity in the branch; rather the reverse was true. Smith and Wingate, however, were managing this large volume of activity with great efficiency and without need of assistance, other than financial, from Edinburgh.

In October 1843, Duncan commenced an unbroken period of twenty-seven years (1843-1870) as Professor of Hebrew. There is little doubt that the Church's decision to transfer him from Pesth was lamentable, removing from the ranks of the mission one of its most useful mission leaders, with scant benefit to the college's Hebrew course. Although a brilliant Hebraist, Duncan was a very mediocre teacher of elementary Hebrew, entirely lacking the discipline and application necessary to keep order in his class. Both his own minister, Alexander Moody Stuart and Alexander Whyte who commenced his studies at New College in 1862, towards the end of Duncan's career, commented on his inadequacy as a teacher.⁷⁴ Duncan humbly acknowledged his failures, once remarking that he should never have left the Jewish Mission merely to teach the Hebrew language.⁷⁵ Brown's opinion was that very little of the best of his friend came out either in the Professor's Chair or the pulpit.⁷⁶

Notwithstanding his removal to Edinburgh, Duncan maintained a lively interest in all that was taking place in Pesth, corresponding in French with Archduchess Maria Dorothea, and in Latin with his friend and former colleague Pal Török.⁷⁷ Perhaps his most powerful contribution to the cause of Jewish mission was made when he spoke to the Jewish Report in the General Assembly. Between 1847 and 1867, he delivered six 'highly animated and elevated' addresses, 'marked by genius and spiritual power'.⁷⁸ Although markedly over optimistic regarding the speed of the realisation of eschatological events, his reflections nevertheless inspired and motivated the Church to maintain its missionary vision and to be confident of ultimate success. His language in all these addresses shows originality, brevity, clarity of expression and precision of vocabulary, amply justifying Moody Stuart's comment that he had a 'fastidious sense of the music of words'.⁷⁹

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.254.

⁷⁴ Moody Stuart, *op. cit.*, p.161; G. F. Barbour *The Life of Alexander Whyte D.D.* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923) p.106f.;

⁷⁵ James Steven Sinclair (ed.) *Rich Gleaning After the Vintage from "Rabbi" Duncan* (London: Thynne and Jarvis, 1925) p.359.

⁷⁶ Brown, *op. cit.*, p.447.

⁷⁷ For correspondence with Maria Dorothea see Brown, *op. cit.*, p.351. For an example of his correspondence with Török see NCL Mss. Box 49.2.1.

⁷⁸ Sinclair, *op. cit.* pp.359-388.

⁷⁹ Moody Stuart, *op. cit.*, p. 165; cf. Knight, *op. cit.* p.xv.

The Reconstruction of the Church of Scotland Mission.

Making all due allowance for Free Church rhetoric and hyperbole, the Disruption had left the Church of Scotland Jewish mission in crisis and disarray. Although the Kirk had retained all the funds, it had lost all the European mission stations and all the missionaries, as well as the leading members of the Committee and sub-committees. A new acting Committee was appointed, which lost no time in turning its attention to recruiting and appointing new missionaries and identifying potential locations for new stations. Contact was made with two Jewish Christians, Rev. Jacob Samuel and Mr. Markus Sacks as well as 'a Mr Simpson of London' who expressed 'a strong desire that this Committee would countenance and support a Society in London for the keeping up of Jewish Female Schools.'⁸⁰ The convenor, Rev. John Hunter, had earlier met with Sacks and had been impressed with his 'piety, talents and other qualities.'

It was Samuel, however, who caught the eye of the Committee.⁸¹ In 1830 he had gone from Glasgow to work independently in Calcutta among Indian Jews, but was then resident in Edinburgh and interested in a new appointment.⁸² In June, 1843, he tabled a lengthy document containing his proposals for what he considered to be the best way of conducting missions to the Jews in India, Persia and Arabia.⁸³ The hitherto clear-headed and somewhat reticent members of the Committee seem to have been almost swept off their feet. Their fulsome testimonial to his virtues, engrossed in the minutes, amounted to an encomium, lauding his 'good talents and indomitable zeal,' his 'ardent love for his countrymen,' his intimate 'acquaintance with their language and literature, and peculiar customs and habits,' and above all his 'great experience of missionary labours among them.'⁸⁴ It was agreed he should be employed as a missionary in India, Persia and Arabia, subject to yet further discussion to determine the most appropriate procedures to follow.⁸⁵ Standing in marked contrast to the warm acceptance of Edersheim, Tomory and Saphir, first into the Church of Scotland and then into the Free Church, Samuel, despite the Committee's adulation, was never truly integrated into the Church of Scotland. He was not accorded an entry in *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, where he is mentioned only in passing, and the same holds true of all the Jews who served the Kirk's Jewish mission during this first post-Disruption period.

In 1845 the Church of Scotland responded to an earlier plea from its former India missionaries, Wilson and Duff, by sending Edward Laseron and his wife to work amongst the Beni Israel of Cochim.⁸⁶ It was hoped that eventually ordained missionaries would be sent to Bombay and that he would be able to establish a working relationship with a local missionary Board.⁸⁷ According to

⁸⁰ MB3, p.153.

⁸¹ Gidney mentions a J. Samuel, engaged as a teacher at Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta in 1826. Gidney, op. cit., p.114.

⁸² Cf. *Fasti*. 7:713.

⁸³ MB3, p.156.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.162.

⁸⁵ *Idem.*

⁸⁶ MB3, p.717-722. For Laseron, see Bernstein, op. cit. p.327.

⁸⁷ MB3, p.717-722..

Bernstein, what in fact transpired was that around 1854 he fell out with colleagues, was brought back to Scotland and his ministry terminated.⁸⁸ That was the same year as James Bonthorne (1830-1881) was appointed as the first post-Disruption Church of Scotland minister to be a missionary to the Jews.⁸⁹

In 1846 a mission was jointly established with the remaining members of the Church of Scotland Presbytery of London, a majority of which had sympathised with the Free Church and proceeded to form the English Presbyterian Church.⁹⁰ This mission grew out of contact with a Mr and Mrs James Simpson, and led to the employment of the Rev. Edward Douglas.⁹¹ Douglas had been born into a Jewish family in Germany. At the age of 22, when travelling in the USA, his 'strong and inveterate prejudices' against the gospel were overcome by a 'serious and prayerful perusal of the Word of God.'⁹² Of excellent personal and religious qualities, he obtained a good theological education in the theological seminary of the Associate Reformed Church in Newburg in the United States and became an ordained minister of the Associate Reformed Presbytery of New York. He had also served as a minister of a German Reformed Church in America, where he had 'laboured with great acceptance' for almost a year until his health broke down.⁹³ At a meeting on 6th April the Committee approved the appointment of Douglas as an agent of the Church of Scotland, under the superintendence of the London Presbytery with the request it would raise additional support for his work.⁹⁴

Douglas was encouraged to work generally among London's Jews, recruiting lay members of the Church of Scotland in London to form a board of management. It was suggested that a chapel be rented to enable him to more effectively communicate with interested Jewish people and others who might attend.⁹⁵ This innovative West End mission was based at the refurbished Halkin Street chapel, Belgrave Square, where it flourished.⁹⁶ By December 1846 he was able to report that 'there were two Jews now soliciting the Ordinance of Baptism for themselves and for an Infant' and requested advice on 'the propriety of having the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper administered at the Chapel.'⁹⁷ As the work progressed the Committee, the Presbytery and the Board had every reason to be satisfied by its growth and success in having 'a number of Jewish converts added to the roll of the church.'⁹⁸ In 1853 Lawrence Macbeth succeeded Douglas. The mission was closed down in 1866, the congregation having merged with the English Presbyterian congregation of

⁸⁸ Bernstein, op. cit. p.327.

⁸⁹ Fasti vol.7, p.714.

⁹⁰ MB3, p.287-8. Cf. McDougall, op. cit., 68-69.

⁹¹ MB3, p.287-8.

⁹² Ibid., p.308.

⁹³ Ibid., p.293. Cf. p.308.

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp.295-296.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.297

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.325.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.329.

⁹⁸ Kenneth Macleod Black *The Scots Churches in England* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1906) p.286.

Ranelagh Square to form Belgrave Presbyterian Church.⁹⁹ A new building was erected in 1882, and Dr Adolph Saphir, one of the first converts of the Pesth mission, was appointed the first minister, he served for a period of six years.¹⁰⁰

According to Hew Scott in *Fasti*, the post-Disruption Church of Scotland, during the period 1843 to 1856, being unable to obtain missionaries from among its own ranks, carried out Jewish mission largely by proxy.¹⁰¹ David McDougall, a former editor of the Church of Scotland's *Jewish Mission Quarterly*, summed up the various efforts at reconstruction thus, 'None of these took on the character of a permanent station.'¹⁰² The reality is, that, from 1843, the mainstream of Scottish Jewish missionary activity ceased to flow through the Church of Scotland.¹⁰³

The Converts of the Mission

William Wingate has provided us with an intriguing record of the converts of the mission during his period of service in Pesth.¹⁰⁴ The list contains the names of over seventy people, of all ages, drawn from all strata of society, including students, surgeons, soldiers, musicians, teachers, successful businessmen, society ladies, even a Baroness and a Rabbi. The age range runs from children received with their parents to the seventy year old Rabbi Husch; the majority, however, were young men in their twenties. Wingate was also frank about the failures: not all continued in the faith; four were excommunicated in 1843-4; one 'fell into scandal' and another 'went back to Judaism.' The most fruitful years of the mission appear to be 1843-4 when 28 adults professed Christian faith.

Wingate's evidence challenges tediously and tendentiously repeated allegations that Jewish missions only enjoy success at the margins of Jewish society or among those who, in pre-emancipation days, could not within the Jewish community itself 'make a living with their minds'.¹⁰⁵ This is not to deny that changes of religious allegiance, motivated purely by socio-economic considerations, were common in Hungary at the time.¹⁰⁶ Such were not, however, in the main, the converts of the Scottish mission. Further evidence of a fundamental change of heart in

⁹⁹ Cameron, op. cit., p.115. Cf. *Fasti*, vol.7, p.496.

¹⁰⁰ Carlyle *Mighty in the Scriptures* p.273f..

¹⁰¹ *Fasti* 7.713

¹⁰² McDougall op. cit., p.67.

¹⁰³ In 1900 the initiative in Scottish Jewish missions passed to the United Free Church (a union of the majority of the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church) when all the missionaries joined the new Church. At the reunion of 1929, when the majority of the UF Church rejoined the Church of Scotland, the missionaries to the Jews followed *en bloc*. McDougall, op. cit., p.100. In 1921, the Free Church of Scotland, still holding to the principle of a Jewish mission but having been unsuccessful, for over a quarter of a century, to recruit missionaries from its own very depleted ranks, took the decision to invite the BSPGJ to be its agent in this field of Christian witness; an arrangement which continues to the present. Cf. Prof. Moore, 'Missions to the Jews' in ed. William J. Cameron *The Challenge of Our Heritage* (Edinburgh: Free Church College, 1932) p.35; Frank J. Exley *Our Hearts Desire* (London: BSPGJ, 1942) pp.56, 85.

¹⁰⁴ Carlyle *Wingate* p.124.

¹⁰⁵ William O. McCagg, Jr. 'Conversion in Hungary' in Ed. Todd M. Endelman *Jewish Apostasy in the Modern World* (New York: Holmes and Meirs, 1987) p.152.

¹⁰⁶ Patai, op. cit., p.371f.

those listed by Wingate is afforded by twelve out of fifty-five who became either missionaries or ordained ministers. Although it will be necessary, owing to their influence and future importance, to highlight the lives of some of the more prominent converts, there were others, ordinary people, whose stories are instructive in helping us see something of the dynamics of that spiritual change of mind, heart and life that testify to the authenticity of conversion.

W. Friereich, a rabbinical student, had particularly fond recollections of long discussions with Duncan in 1842 as they explored the rabbinic writings. As an enthusiastic advocate of the Jewish heritage, national identity, language and religion, Friereich was invited to write an anti-missionary defence of the synagogue in order to 'silence the new disturbers of the peace of Judaism.'¹⁰⁷ He proceeded to draw up an outline of his defence, showing from the Tenach the ultimacy of the Hebrew Scriptures and the impossibility of further revelation. Assured of his position and the soundness of his planned exposition, he announced to the missionaries his plans. This gave further opportunity to discuss with the missionaries the status of the New Testament. These discussions prompted him to re-read the New Testament and subsequently to announce to his friends in the synagogue that he could no longer go through with their project. For two years he undertook a comparative study of Christianity and Judaism, reading such classic works of British Calvinistic theology as *The Westminster Shorter Catechism*, *The Westminster Confession of Faith* and Thomas Boston's *Human Nature in its Fourfold State*. His friends noticed a change taking place in his thinking; from being an advocate of Orthodox Judaism, he now attempted to defend the Christian gospel as 'the new way of life.'¹⁰⁸ To some degree he was successful. A number of friends came with him to meetings held by the missionaries. According to Wingate's report to the Committee, he became greatly impressed by reading Daniel 7.13-14 as a representation of Jesus Christ.¹⁰⁹ Shortly afterwards, he suddenly and unpredictably abandoned all outward interest in religion and went to live in a Hungarian city without a Jewish population. Here he gained employment in the home of a nobleman, but despite enjoying all the luxuries provided by his new employer, he became homesick and returned Pesth, and being not as irreligious as the impression he had cultivated, sought out the missionaries once more. They thought they detected a profound change in him and believed he had been converted. They were entirely supportive of his desire to be baptised by 'the Rev. Mr T', a minister of the Hungarian Reformed Church, almost certainly Török.¹¹⁰

The same year, in Buda, on the opposite bank of the Danube, a Mr Brown had been baptised with his wife and five young children by Bauhofer, the Archduchess's chaplain and minister of the new Lutheran Church in the Castle District. A congregation of about 300 Protestants, Roman

¹⁰⁷ MB2, p.15. For details of these conversions, we unavoidably depend on the Minute Book as the only extant true primary source: owing to the acute political sensitivities reports in periodicals are much edited versions of the minutes; original correspondence does not seem to have survived; only much latter were accounts published by some of the original participants in the mission, but they add nothing significant to the records of the Committee.

¹⁰⁸ MB2, p.16.

¹⁰⁹ Idem.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.18. He features in Wingate's list of converts for the year 1846.

Catholics and Jews witnessed the administration of the sacrament, and heard Brown, described by Wingate as a 'hard working tradesman,' make a public declaration of his faith.¹¹¹

Brown had been greatly influenced through contact with Israel Saphir and despite much opprobrium from his erstwhile friends in the synagogue he would not be dissuaded from making confession of his Christian faith. He announced 'that now he felt true peace of conscience, and, though poor, would not exchange his position that day for anything that was in their power to offer him.'¹¹² The day following this interaction, he and his family were shocked when he was summoned to appear on a charge of disturbing the peace. With much trepidation he made his way to court, but when his accusers failed to turn up the magistrates sent him home. The next day he received a fresh summons to answer three charges. It was alleged he had been trading illegally, for unknown to any but his former friends in the synagogue he, a Bohemian, had never obtained authorisation to carry on his business in Buda. He also had a child of ten weeks who, contrary to law, had neither been baptised nor circumcised. Thirdly, he was suspected of not having paid that year's toleration tax, the poll tax levied on every Jew. The magistrate dismissed the first charge, ordered his child to be baptised or circumcised within three days, and instructed him to pay the tax. The Jewish elders, who organised the payment of the tax, assessed him as owing an extortionate sum, equivalent in Sterling, at the current rate, to £2.14.00, whereas in fact he was only liable for a charge of 5/-. The magistrate intervened and reproved the elders, who lowered the sum to a still punitive 18/-. With that he, and they, left the court for the synagogue where he paid what was due and obtained a receipt for it. He was submitted to a further barrage of questions and invective. Finally, it being inconceivable to them that any Jew would become a Christian unless lured by promises of reward, asked him what it was he stood to gain from professing faith in Christ. 'Laying his hand on his heart, he said, "God has promised in his Word and I have received what I expect. I have it *here*. I have already received what God in his Word promised. More I ask not. More I expect not."¹¹³

This testimony, supported by comments from the minister, deeply moved the congregation, 'a great part of whom were in tears, not excepting the minister.'¹¹⁴ One of those observed weeping was described as an 'elderly respectable looking Jew', who on further enquiry was discovered to be one of the synagogue elders who had contrived the summons against Brown. Wingate reported that a consequence of Brown's baptism was a gathering in Old Buda of a small group of Jewish men to read and discuss the New Testament.¹¹⁵

The most influential conversions occurring at that time took place in 1843 when the entire family of Israel Saphir became Christians. Saphir was one of three brothers: of whom, one, Moritz

¹¹¹ Ibid., p.19, 21.

¹¹² Idem.

¹¹³ Ibid., p.21.

¹¹⁴ Idem..

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p.22.

Gottlieb, also embraced Christianity and became famous as a poet and satirist.¹¹⁶ Israel had made his fortune as a wool-broker and was now an influential member of the community and close friend of the Chief Rabbi. He was active in Pesth as an educationalist, having founded a leading school for the education of children from the more wealthy Jewish families.¹¹⁷ He had acquired a good knowledge of Hebrew, French and German and, in his late fifties, had learned English in order to read Shakespeare untranslated.¹¹⁸ Saphir had first made contact with Scottish ministers in 1839, when Keith and Black were taken ill and were delayed in Pesth.¹¹⁹ This earlier contact with Keith, coupled with his interest in the English language, led him, accompanied by his young son Adolph, to attend the missionary's services.¹²⁰ Both Adolph, a precocious boy of eleven, and his father gradually accepted the claim that Jesus was the Messiah. At first they remained reticent about their views.¹²¹ Then, on 7th June 1843, Saphir and his entire family then resident in Pesth (his son Philipp then being absent at Carlsruhe) together with Maria, their 24-year-old servant, were baptised by Pal Török, in the Hungarian Reformed Church. Saphir's address, delivered at the baptism service was published and widely circulated in Hungary.¹²²

Reputedly, Israel Saphir, 'was the bosom friend of the Chief Rabbi, and the most leading and trusted man in every benevolent and useful undertaking.'¹²³ Undoubtedly shaken by Saphir's conversion, we can readily understand Schwab's dilemma when the duty fell on him, as Chief Rabbi, to publicly denounce in the synagogue anyone who would dare give up his children to 'those outside the community.' Saphir was in the synagogue at the time and all knew to whom the sermon was addressed.¹²⁴ Tipped off, allegedly by Schwab himself, that he would be expelled as a director of the school, Saphir pre-empted disciplinary action by tending his resignation as principal Director.¹²⁵ To the great credit of Schwab, this mildly denunciatory sermon, based on Isaiah 53, a favourite text of the missionaries, was the extent to which his criticism went. According to Smith, in later days Schwab openly declared that 'notwithstanding all, Mr Saphir is an honourable man.'¹²⁶ According to the usually well-informed Carlyle, the two remained friends, though having to draw a veil over their friendship by meeting clandestinely in private rooms in a bookseller's shop in Pesth.¹²⁷ Schwab was now hoist by his own petard: he who had hitherto held up Saphir as a virtual paragon of Jewish rectitude and was now embarrassed by his conversion to Christianity, discovered that his protégé's influence was not so easily disposed of. Indeed it was Smith's view that Saphir's conversion and baptism was nothing less than strategic; making it easier for other interested Jews themselves to take the step, 'A hundred other conversions could

¹¹⁶ Patai, *op. cit.*, p.251f.; Carlyle *Mighty in the Scriptures* p.444ff.

¹¹⁷ Brown, *op. cit.*, p.333.

¹¹⁸ Carlyle *Mighty in Scriptures* p.16f..

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.435.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.17.

¹²¹ Carlyle, *Mighty in the Scriptures*, p.17f

¹²² Smith, *op. cit.* p.17.

¹²³ Smith cited by Carlyle, *Mighty in the Scriptures*, p.24.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.25.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.26.

¹²⁶ *Idem.*

¹²⁷ *Idem.*

not have produced the same impression as his.¹²⁸ From the time of his baptism to his death Saphir was deeply and publicly involved with the work in Pesth.

Israel Saphir's eldest son, Philipp, at the time of the baptism of his family, was undergoing instruction as a teacher in Carlsruhe. He had been converted in 1842 in Pesth through a sermon preached by Carl Schwartz, missionary to the Jews of Constantinople, and returned from Carlsruhe in 1845 to establish in Pesth a free school for poor Christian and Jewish children. In addition he set up an association for young men based on and inspired by George Williams' foundation the previous year, in England, of the *Young Men's Christian Association*.¹²⁹ Whilst in Germany, during a walking tour of Baden and Württemberg, he was involved in an accident and severely damaged his foot, which never recovered, leading to his early death aged thirty-one.¹³⁰ The school commenced in September 1845, when a solitary pupil, the son of a Jewish widow, was instructed at Phillip's bedside; to which he had been largely confined from December 1844.¹³¹ The first mention of the enterprise in the Committee's records is a minute dated 29th October 1846. For both security and strategic reasons it was decided to leave the operation of the school to Saphir, and not make it a part of the Committee's official work. As it was 'getting on remarkably well,' it was agreed that it ought to be financially supported, 'the expense defrayed by the Committee, which would amount to £30 a year.'¹³² By 1847 the school had grown to some one hundred and twenty children: Philipp wrote in his diary, 'The school goes on admirably, most of the children, nearly all, are Jews.'¹³³ Philipp's *Letters and Diaries*, edited by his brother Adolph, were published soon after his death in 1852. A note towards the end commented that, 'It is now [June 1852] attended by about 350 children, almost all of them belong to Jewish families.'¹³⁴

The Saphir to achieve most prominence, however, was Adolph, Israel's youngest son. He, in fact, was the first in his family to become a Christian, whilst still a young boy of twelve.¹³⁵ When Duncan was recalled to Edinburgh, Adolph travelled with him and spent his first college session in the Duncan home, accompanied by Edersheim and Tomory. After Edinburgh he continued his

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.24.

¹²⁹ The YMCA was founded in London in 1844 by George Williams (1821-1905). Williams, a Scottish tailor, became a member of Crown Court Church of Scotland, London, and after the Disruption a member of James Hamilton's 'Ecclesia Scotia' at Regent Square. See Clyde Binfield *George Williams and the YMCA* (Sheffield Academic Press in association with YMCA England, 1994) p.16, 56ff. The Budapest work established by Philipp Saphir c.1845 may be counted as among the first groups inspired by Williams' work, but if Kool is correct, Saphir's work may not have been formally linked with the YMCA World Alliance. Cf. Kool, *op. cit.*, p.158. C. P. Shedd draws attention to the founding of an association at Budapest in 1879, further strengthened by a visit from Charles Fermaud in 1883. He also somewhat confusingly attributes to Professor Aladar Szabo the announcement of the formation of a YMCA in Budapest in May, 1892. See C.P. Shedd, ed., *History of the World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations* (London, 1955) pp.250, 263, 330 & 368.

¹³⁰ *Letters and Diaries of Philipp Saphir Edited by his Brother* (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1852) p.32.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p.64f..

¹³² MB1, p.432.

¹³³ *Letters and Diaries*, p.115.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.130.

¹³⁵ Bernstein, *op. cit.*, p.445.

studies in Berlin, where he stayed with his brother-in-law Carl Schwartz, who was stationed there as a missionary of the Free Church of Scotland.

In 1848 Adolph returned to Scotland to take up the post of tutor in the family of a Mr William Brown of Aberdeen. In 1854, on completion of his divinity studies, he was ordained by the Belfast Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and appointed missionary to the Jews in Hamburg. From 1861 to his death in 1891 he was minister in a succession of Churches, including South Shields, Greenwich and London, at both Notting Hill and Halkin Street, off Belgrave Square. He was also a prolific author.¹³⁶ In W. O. Hill's famous painting of the Disruption, *The First General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland: Signing the Act of Separation and the Deed of Demission at Tanfield, Edinburgh, May 1843*, the young Adolph Saphir is located in the right hand foreground of the canvas, pointing to a map of Palestine. He is standing in front of Dr. Keith, between Dr. Alex. Black and Dr. John Duncan, with Andrew Bonar seated behind them.¹³⁷ Although his presence in the picture has a certain iconic value, it is nevertheless anachronistic, as Saphir was in Pesth at the time of the Disruption.

Another convert of note was Alfred Edersheim. As the missionary colleague of Daniel Edward, we have already referred to his conversion, ordination and early missionary career.¹³⁸ Edersheim, who came to live and work in Britain, was the only known Hebrew Christian clergyman to have been invited by Dean Stanley to preach in Westminster Abbey.¹³⁹ Alexander Tomory, whose conversion in 1843 we earlier noted as an example of John Duncan's evangelistic approach, was licensed in 1847 and sent, for a period of a few months, to work in Jamaica.¹⁴⁰ On his return he was appointed as a missionary to Constantinople, where he laboured until his death in 1895. He was ordained a minister of the Free Church of Scotland in 1858.¹⁴¹

The Deportation of the Missionaries

Towards the end of the 1840s the work in Pesth was conducted in a period of increasing political tension and instability. The assertion of Magyar independence over Habsburg hegemony led to the revolution of 1848, which, in turn, led to the expulsion of the Scottish missionaries in 1852.

Unexpectedly present at a meeting of the Committee of 25th September 1848, were William Wingate and Robert Smith. It was not a crisis in the work that brought them to Scotland but the outbreak of revolutionary war in Hungary.¹⁴² In the absence of the Scottish ministers, it was reported that Wingate and Smith had placed oversight of the mission in the hands of Israel Saphir

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.446, Cf. Carlyle *Mighty in Scriptures*, passim.

¹³⁷ William Garden Blaikie *After Fifty Year, 1843-1893* (Thomas Nelson and Son, 1893) p.107f..

¹³⁸ See chapter 8

¹³⁹ Carlyle *Wingate*, p.227.

¹⁴⁰ MB1, p.431.

¹⁴¹ *Annals*, vol.1, p.345.

¹⁴² MB2, p.151.

and Georg Bauhofer. The Committee considered the two missionaries had acted 'wisely and prudently.'¹⁴³ It was decided in February 1849, that the Wingate family should remove to Leghorn in Italy to await the outcome of the war in Hungary.¹⁴⁴ Smith, meanwhile, was requested to undertake a tour of Bohemia and Germany, particularly to visit Prague in order to carry out reconnaissance and to encourage Schwartz in Berlin, whose commitment seemed to be flagging.¹⁴⁵ Towards the end of 1849 the circumstances in Pesth seemed stable enough for the return of the two families.¹⁴⁶ They discovered that during the war enquirers had proliferated as the hostilities had created many fresh opportunities to discuss the religious questions which, in a climate of uncertainty, weighed on the minds of the Jewish people.

Early in 1852 a fresh crisis broke. On January 15th the Austrian Government ordered Smith and Wingate, long deprived of the support of the Buda Palace, to abandon Pesth and promptly remove themselves and their families from the Austrian dominions. The same instruction was simultaneously given to Edward in Lemberg. According to the Free Church version of events, this was a vindictive act, part of the ruthless crushing of the Magyar revolt and the repression of Protestantism within Habsburg borders.¹⁴⁷ Only five days after the expulsion of the missionaries, and with almost breathtaking adaptability, the Committee suggested that instead of coming home, one of the families might relocate to Amsterdam.¹⁴⁸ This tactical adaptation to the circumstances must not be seen as the Free Church's passive acquiescence to the Austrian intervention. Meeting on 20th January the Committee had passed a resolution 'to communicate with Government with reference to the removal of their missionaries so soon as they were in full possession of the facts.'¹⁴⁹ Wingate was also present at a short Committee meeting held on 3rd February to approve letters and initiatives taken by Alexander Moody Stuart, the Convenor, to expedite the interview with Government officials.¹⁵⁰ Moody Stuart had promptly departed for London. Picking up an entourage of sixteen sympathetic supporters, including the Earl of Shaftesbury and Arthur Kinnaird, MP for Perth, he sought a meeting with the Foreign Secretary, Earl Granville, to present to him the Committee's statement and to make verbal representation.¹⁵¹ Writing from Wood's Hotel, London, on 2nd February, he requested Granville to meet his deputation on either the 4th or 5th. He did not anticipate a lengthy meeting, 'A few minutes will suffice to state the case,

¹⁴³ Idem.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p.169.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p.173. For Smith's report see 'Report of the Jewish Committee' in *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland*, 1849. Schwartz had requested permission to leave Berlin and go to Holland.

Ibid., p.219.

¹⁴⁶ MB2, p.225.

¹⁴⁷ MB2, p.361.

¹⁴⁸ Idem.

¹⁴⁹ Idem.

¹⁵⁰ MB2, p.363.

¹⁵¹ Granville (1815-91), Palmerston's successor, held office from Dec. 1851 to Feb. 1852. See Sir Llewelyn Woodward *Oxford History of England: The Age of Reform* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962) p. 250, fn.1; DNB under Leveson-Gower, Vol.11, p.1029. The deputation consisted of representatives of the Protestant Alliance (Earl of Shaftesbury, J. Head, M.P., Colonel Alexander, Rev. E. Auriol, Dr. Steane, J. Cook Evans, Esq., John MacGregor, Esq.) representatives of the Free Church of Scotland (Hon. A. Kinnaird, Rev. M. Stuart, Rev. Dr. Keith, Rev. Dr. Lorimer, J. G. Wood Esq., Rev. W. Wingate, Rev. R. Smith.) and three members of the Scottish Reformation Society (Rev. Dr. J. Hamilton, J. Nisbet, Esq., C. Cowan Esq., M.P.).

and it will greatly oblige us if you will kindly name an hour either on Thursday or Friday, as we are waiting in town for that sole object.' The meeting was held on Friday 5th.¹⁵² Granville, who had read reports of the expulsions in the press, had on 27th January instructed the British Ambassador in Vienna, the Earl of Westmoreland, to 'ascertain the truth of these reports.'¹⁵³

The Free Church's statement indicated that, from the time of their arrival in Pesth in 1841, the activity of the missionaries had been completely a-political and carried out with the 'the knowledge and approbation of his Imperial Highness the Viceroy of Hungary.' It also alleged that the reason why Wingate and Smith had retired from Pesth during the civil war of 1848 was 'to avoid all imputations of intermingling in political matters with which directly or indirectly they have never interfered.'¹⁵⁴ It was pointed out that it had never been suggested 'that they had transgressed any law of the country', indeed their conduct had always been inoffensive and they 'enjoyed the affection of a large portion of the community'.¹⁵⁵ Relations with officials, including the late Archduke, had been excellent.¹⁵⁶ The expulsion of the missionaries meant that British subjects in Pesth had been denied the right to worship in their own language, as it was they who held the only English language service in Hungary. Having resided in Hungary for ten years, the law of the land entitled the missionaries to be treated as citizens, however, on 15th January, Smith and Wingate, 'summarily and without cause' had been ordered out of Hungary. They had been told that if they did not willingly go within the stipulated period they would be forcibly expelled. The Austrians had made no allowances for the fact that the missionaries possessed medical certificates indicating that, for their children of 'tender age' and for the sick members of their families, such a lengthy journey in the depth of winter would be dangerous. In addition, their expulsion also meant the effective loss of much of their property. Granville was, therefore, requested to 'vindicate the rights of these missionaries as British subjects' and procure redress against their losses, restoration to their spheres of work and protection whilst engaged in it.¹⁵⁷

For Granville, the Hungarian revolution generally, and Lajos Kossuth in particular, was a touchy matter. He had become Foreign Secretary in Russell's government because his predecessor, Palmerston, had been sacked for having the temerity to entertain Kossuth against the wishes of the Prime Minister.¹⁵⁸ His half-heartedness was also attributable to his own conviction that the missionaries had indeed broken the law and Britain, therefore, had little or no claim on the Austrian Government.¹⁵⁹ What reinforced his position and explained Westmoreland's increasing timidity in handling the matter was that the Austrian Government was putting it about that two

¹⁵² Parliamentary Papers 144, *Correspondence Respecting the Expulsion of Messrs. Edward, Wingate and Smith from the Austrian Dominions* (London: Harrison: 1852) item 2. This correspondence presented to both Houses of Parliament contains 42 items and runs from January 27th to June 17th, 1852. Henceforth PP144,,

¹⁵³ PP144, item 1.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, item 3.

¹⁵⁵ *Idem.*

¹⁵⁶ *Idem.*

¹⁵⁷ MB2, p.368.

¹⁵⁸ Woodward, *op. cit.*, p.249.

¹⁵⁹ PP144, item 7.

press articles had allegedly appeared which were said to have emanated from the missionaries, one in the *Free Church Missionary Record* and the other in a New York paper, *The Independent*, in which they had admitted involvement in illegal activities.¹⁶⁰

As the Committee waited for the outcome of Parliamentary elections and diplomatic initiatives, their patience was in short supply, and it fell to Moody Stuart to chivvy up Granville's successor, Malmesbury, who had become Foreign Secretary in Lord Derby's new administration. In a brief note couched in an almost peremptory tone, he wrote, 'I will be much obliged to your Lordship if you can communicate the result thereof for the information of the Committee, that they may report the same to the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, which meets at an early date.'¹⁶¹ In his reply of 28th April, Malmesbury indicated that the Government was unwilling to undertake any further representations on behalf of the missionaries, and considered any loss and distress suffered as entirely of their own making.¹⁶² In addition he strongly rejected the Church's publicly expressed dissatisfaction with Westmoreland's representation.¹⁶³

Moody Stuart's response of 10th May was a courteous but uncompromisingly robust rebuttal of all the allegations made against the missionaries, implying Malmesbury's personal incompetence in not ascertaining the Committee's understanding prior to forming his own opinion of the matter. He stood by 'every particular' contained in his original representation and stated his desire 'to convince your Lordship by a brief but definite reply to every charge.'¹⁶⁴ Referring to the press articles attributed to the missionaries, he stated that the letter in the *Free Church Missionary Record*, in which Smith had allegedly stated the 'real object' of the mission, was a total fiction; it did not exist. He was less confident, however, in dealing with the somewhat embarrassing evidence in *The Independent* and chose attack as the best form of defence:

The Austrian Government must indeed be at a loss for evidence... when it is driven to seek it in an American paper with which nobody connected with the mission has anything to do, or has ever seen, but even there the writer is said to have expressed his expectation of the mission being soon suppressed, not by Austrian law, but by the "Austrian Government," which can at present by no means be identified.¹⁶⁵

At the Free Church General Assembly in May, the Moderator, Dr. Andrew Makellar, naturally weighed in on side of the missionaries and on 28th June, Hugh Miller's paper, *The Witness*, published Makellar's public rejoinder to Malmesbury's letter of 13th May. Makellar reaffirmed the General Assembly's full confidence in the missionaries' account and expressed his concern at the Government's lack of 'promptitude and earnestness', something for which the circumstances called. He was also pointedly critical of what he saw as Westmoreland's failure to obtain 'redress

¹⁶⁰ Idem. Cf. *The Independent*, New York, 23rd October, 1851.

¹⁶¹ PP144, item 28.

¹⁶² Ibid., item 29.

¹⁶³ Idem.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., item 32.

¹⁶⁵ PP144, item 32.

for a grievous wrong inflicted on subjects of her Majesty.¹⁶⁶ It was all to no avail. Despite Westmoreland's further representations, the final position of the Austrian Government was to reject all claims for compensation. Not only was there no compensation, there was no reinstatement either. The Committee, its European mission in tatters, would now have to devise a new strategy. With Smith, Wingate and Edward all in Scotland, it was, therefore, determined to hold, during the General Assembly in May, a private conference with Assembly commissioners and missionaries to discuss 'their future labours and where in their opinion they could most efficiently be employed.'¹⁶⁷ The Assembly feted the missionaries as heroes; they were all invited to address the house, with Duncan speaking on the current, post-war, state of the Protestant Churches in Hungary. The Assembly warmly approved the idea of the private meeting and promised to make arrangements to facilitate it before the end of its sittings.¹⁶⁸ It turned out a total failure, 'few members attended and nothing definite was done.'¹⁶⁹

Undaunted, the Committee speculated on possible future activities: the Continent was not to be abandoned, but London, despite the activities of the LSPCJ, the BSPGJ and the Church of Scotland, offered many openings for evangelistic ministry. Breslau was also a possibility to be considered. In June the Committee turned its attention to the maintenance of the mission's Hungarian workers still employed in Pesth. In the post-war clamp down, the colporteurs, who had been trained by Duncan, Smith and Wingate, had suffered considerable indignities from the Austrian police and could not continue their work. Because distribution of Bibles, Gospels and Protestant pamphlets had been made illegal, the Committee considered the colporteurs redundant and decided to give them six months notice that their services would no longer be required.¹⁷⁰ Wingate, who had always entertained a very high regard for the work of such men, known in contemporary mission circles as native agent, published in the February 1852 *Home and Foreign Missionary Record* a letter strongly critical of the attitude of the Committee towards them.¹⁷¹ This public intervention, backed with a letter to the Committee secured for them an extra three months reprieve and salary.¹⁷²

By August 1852 it was agreed that Edward would go to Breslau, where he remained until his retirement in 1896.¹⁷³ Wingate went to London under an initial misapprehension that he was doing so at the behest of the Committee, but whose letter, based on a curious unapproved minute

¹⁶⁶ *The Witness*, July 31, 1852.

¹⁶⁷ MB2, p.373-4.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.385-6.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.389.

¹⁷⁰ MB2, p.400. Cf. Letter from William Wingate in *Home and Foreign Missionary Record of the Free Church of Scotland* vol.3, p.39f..

¹⁷¹ Letter from William Wingate in *Home and Foreign Missionary Record of the Free Church of Scotland* vol.2, p.235f. The question of 'native agency' was a much discussed issue at the time. In 1848, Henry Venn and the CMS had held an important conference on the matter, and Venn reported that the resolutions adopted had 'been acted upon in several Missions...' Warren, *op. cit.*, p.64-65.

¹⁷² MB2, p.417.

¹⁷³ MB2, p.399.

of 21st December, rapidly disabused him.¹⁷⁴ Wingate explained that the confusion related to a proposal he and Smith had made to the Committee that, after the expulsion of 1852, they should be permitted to commence missionary work in London. Some of the Committee's most influential members, including Candlish, Cunningham and Moody Stuart, the convenor, had agreed. Wingate prepared to act on their opinion. Others on the Committee were opposed to the proposal on the grounds that it might result in unhelpful competition with the work of the other societies and churches; this opinion prevailed. The Committee expressed its gratitude to Wingate for his faithful service and regretted its inability to sanction his work in London but agreed to pay his salary for another year.¹⁷⁵ Carlyle records Wingate's final decision, 'Finding I was the means of dividing brethren by my continued endeavour to start this mission in London, I resigned in 1854 or 1855, but returned after some years, and carried on a mission for many years without taking a salary from any Church.'¹⁷⁶ Smith went on to work with Schwartz in Amsterdam and later in Frankfurt. Problems with his eyesight led him back, in due course, to conclude his years of ministry in the quiet country parish of Corsock in Dumfriesshire.¹⁷⁷

Thus it was, in this rather untidy manner that the first phase of the Scottish mission to the Jews of Europe drew to its conclusion. It remains, in the next chapter, to attempt to assess the effectiveness and the overall results during this remarkable period of pioneer missionary activity.

¹⁷⁴ MB2, p.408.

¹⁷⁵ MB2, p.423.

¹⁷⁶ Carlyle *Wingate*, p.183.

¹⁷⁷ *Annals*, ad. loc.; cf. Carlyle, *idem*.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

We did not expect that the conversion of Israel would be short and easy.

Alexander Moody Stuart

The Legacy

Commenting on the work at Pesth during the period 1841-1852, Gavin Carlyle concluded that:

Few missions, either Jewish or other, have had so remarkable a history or so widespread an influence as that of Pesth. It gave an impetus to Jewish missions, the effect of which will never pass away.¹

What degree of objectivity can be attributed to such a sanguine statement or is an assessment by a Free Church of Scotland minister, closely attached to the Jewish mission, to be dismissed as mere partisan hyperbole? It will be the purpose of this final chapter to attempt to assess the accuracy of this statement and evaluate the success and influence of this first phase of the Scottish Jewish mission both in Pesth and elsewhere.

As well as the work carried on by the Scottish churches, the first half of the nineteenth century also saw the founding in Britain, Germany, Switzerland, and Norway of other Protestant missions to the Jews.² The results of all this activity were considerable; it is estimated that by 1900 as many as 250,000 Jewish people had professed faith in Jesus as the Messiah and had been baptised into the Christian Church.³ A review of the work undertaken from 1839 to 1932, led Professor Moore of the Free Church of Scotland College to conclude that, 'in proportion to the effort expended, [it was] the most fruitful of all missionary work undertaken by the Christian Church.'⁴ Yet, in the opinion of William Garden Blaikie, that remarkable first phase of missionary activity contrasted markedly with the following period to 1893, he wrote, 'there has been no repetition of the brilliant epoch 1843-44, either at Budapest or at any of the other mission stations.'⁵

¹ Carlyle, *op. cit.*, p.57.

² Missions to the Jews established during this period include the LSPCJ (1809), Berlin Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews (1822), Saxon Mission (1822), Basle Association of Friends of Israel (1830), Strasbourg Association of Friends of Israel Society (1835), Berlin Proselytes Union (1836), West German Association for Israel (1822), Church of Scotland Mission (1838), Irish Presbyterian Mission (1841), British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews (1842), Free Church of Scotland Mission (1843), Norwegian Jewish Mission (1844), Holland Auxiliary (1844), Lubeck Friends of Israel (1844), Bavarian Union (1849). Cf. Adolph Saphir et. al. *Israel Mine Inheritance being Addresses delivered at the Jewish Convention held at Mildmay park, October 1st, 2nd, & 3rd, 1889* (London: John F. Shaw & Co., 1889) p.268; Anon *The Christian Approach to the Jews being a Report of Conferences on the Subject held at Budapest and Warsaw in April 1927* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1927) p.198f.

³ J. F. de la Roi *Die Evangelische Christheit und die Juden* (Eng. trans. *Jewish Baptisms in the Nineteenth Century*) cited by Gidney *The Jews and their Evangelisation* (London: Student Volunteer Missionary Union, 1899) p. 104.

⁴ Professor Moore *The Challenge of our Heritage* (Edinburgh: Free Church of Scotland, 1932) p.37.

⁵ W Garden Blaikie *After Fifty Year, 1843-1893* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Son, 1893) p.110

The establishment of meaningful parameters for evaluating the results of Christian evangelistic work is notoriously difficult. Gidney, assessing the results of the first century of activity by the LSPCJ, was forced to conclude:

We know not what standard to set up, or what test to apply. The tabulation of ...statistics is always risky, never accurate... The fallacy of argument based on them is proverbial, and when they are brought forward as a test of operations...the fallacy is immensely greater. ...mere enumeration... may mean little or much, anything or nothing.⁶

This is not special pleading in order to whitewash failure and represent it as success, nor is Gidney alone in his inability to find adequate criteria to assess spiritual phenomena. Other mission agencies also expressed an abhorrence of mere statistical 'success'. *The Findings of the Budapest Conference on the Christian Approach to the Jew* (1927) demonstrates a caution characteristic of European missions to the Jews:

When a Jew applies for baptism, the missionary should do his utmost to test his profession and observe his life lest there be any ulterior motives in his mind. The aim of missions is not to "make propaganda," but to win souls for Christ....⁷

Although the Scottish mission saw a considerable number of converts at its various stations, no evidence exists that official statistical records were ever collected. The Committee's minute books do not assist us in assessing numerical success, and it was, as we have noticed, with great discretion that Wingate recorded details of the seventy or so converts at the Pesth station during his period of service, not even bothering to distinguish Jewish converts from Gentile. Besides, determining success in terms of a poll-count would have been repugnant to Scottish Calvinists, a contradiction of their belief that the work of conversion was not theirs but God's. In an address to the Free Church Assembly of 1864, Duncan spoke of the success of the Pesth work with great and characteristic reserve.⁸ Success, in his estimate, could not be scientifically quantified because much of it was hidden from human observation, he preferred to speak simply, if rather vaguely, of the 'happy state of things' or the enjoyment of 'heart-cheering tokens of our Divine Master's presence.'

If the Church was unable to provide statistics, it might be thought that, on the other hand, Jewish Christians, in order to justify both their personal convictions, and provide propaganda for their cause, might be liable to the temptation of hyperbole. Yet that is not what we find. Reporting to the Jewish Convention held in Mildmay Park in 1889, the Rev. Carl A. Schönberger, brother-in-law of Adolph Saphir and former Free Church of Scotland missionary in Pesth, was very reluctant to speak about results:

⁶ Gidney, op. cit., p.623.

⁷ Anon. 'The Findings of the Budapest Conference' in *The Christian Approach to the Jew: Being the Report of Conferences held in Budapest and Warsaw in April 1927*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh House Press, 1927) p.18.

⁸ Ed. James S. Sinclair *Rich Gleanings After the Vintage from "Rabbi" Duncan* (London: Chas. J. Thynne & Jarvis, 1925) p.378.

Results. Ah! we cannot perhaps speak so much of results, if by results you mean individual conversions and baptisms. Now I do not regard the work from that point of view at all. I have no sympathy for those who speak of converts as if they were mere commerce, paid for at so much per head. Results are with Him, and not with us; still, the results have been great and glorious.⁹

Nor are Jewish sources particularly helpful in assessing the effectiveness of the Scottish mission. Although Patai describes conversions in Hungary as 'rampant' and suggests that huge numbers of Jews went over to Christianity, he fails to differentiate between those who experienced a spiritual conversion, and those who, for largely socio-political reasons, simply changed their religious affiliation. His explanation of conversion is seen exclusively in terms of the latter dynamic:

Since their fathers had done everything to get as close to the *urí* (gentlemanly) class as possible, the only additional step that remained for them, which they could not resist taking, was to convert.¹⁰

McCagg, with Patai, fails to take cognisance of the Scottish Jewish mission in Pesth and neglects the impact of any spiritual dynamic. He prefers to interpret conversion as a sociological phenomenon related to the rise of the Hungarian Jewish middle class and the process of Magyarisation in the pursuit of Hungarian national identity, 'when, as in Hungary in the 1830s and 1840s, enlightened Jews became involved with the romantic revivals of the eastern European nationalities, they had to convert.'¹¹ Jewish statistical sources cited by Randolph L. Braham indicate there may have been some 100,000 'Jews of Christian Confession' in post-World War I Hungary and the Hungarian ceded territories.¹² But these figures, which one suspects have been neatly rounded up, or down, are far too late to be of assistance in assessing the period 1841-52. In the absence of any really useful statistical data, it would seem better to assess the outcome of the mission in terms of four areas of influence: the influence of some of the converts; the effect of the mission on the renewal of the Hungarian Reformed Church; the development of the Budapest school; and finally, the impact of the Scottish mission on the formation and practice of Jewish missions elsewhere.

The Influence of the Converts.

In chapter ten we have taken notice of the conversion and the subsequent distinguished missionary and ministerial careers of Jewish Christians such as Alexander Tomory, Alfred Edersheim and Adolph Saphir. Through them a second generation of converts were won to Christian faith and it is here that the ramifications of the impact of the Jewish mission on the

⁹ Ed. Adolph Saphir, C.A. Schönberger, 'Movements in Russia and Hungary' in *Israel Mine Inheritance: Being Addresses delivered at the Jewish Convention held at Mildmay Park, October 1st, 2nd, & 3rd, 1889* (London: John F. Shaw, n.d.) p.221.

¹⁰ Cf. Patai, op. cit., p.373.

¹¹ McCagg, op. cit., p.153.

¹² Randolph L. Braham *The Politics of Genocide: The Holocaust in Hungary* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1981) Vol.1, p.77. Source: Hungarian Jewry Before and After the Persecutions (Budapest: Hungarian Section of the World Jewish Congress, 1949) p.2.

wider Christian Church is to be glimpsed. For example, Adolph Saphir, at the Jubilee celebration of the Scottish Jewish mission held at the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland in 1889, drew attention to Gideon Rueben Lederer's part in the conversion of Samuel Isaac Joseph Schereschewsky (1831-1906). According to Bernstein, Lederer, a son of a rabbi and for a time a rabbi himself, became a Christian at the age of thirty under the ministry of the Scottish missionaries in Pesth.¹³ He is mentioned in Wingate's list as coming to faith in Christ in 1844, along with his twenty-four year old wife.¹⁴ Saphir's reference connects him to Schereschewsky:

God has given abundant success in your Mission. There have been many converts, and converts' converts. ...Lederer, one of the early converts, went to New York, and, among others, was the means of the conversion of Schereschewsky, who afterwards became missionary and bishop in China.¹⁵

Schereschewsky, born in Lithuania, was a graduate of the University of Breslau and emigrated to the United States in 1854. Before leaving Europe he had received, read and was influenced by the Hebrew New Testament published by the LSPCJ at the instigation of Claudius Buchanan. In the USA he met Lederer and was baptised. In 1857 he entered New York Theological Seminary and was ordained as a minister of the Protestant Episcopal Church. In 1859 he left for China as a missionary of his church. According to Latourette, Schereschewsky was 'the outstanding missionary [of his church] during the second half of the [nineteenth] century.'¹⁶ He was a remarkable linguist. During his twenty years in China he assisted in the translation of the New Testament into Mandarin, completed the entire Old Testament himself, as well as the Book of Common Prayer and a Mongolian Gospel of Matthew. Amongst other projects, he rendered the whole Bible into the classical Chinese of Easy Wen-li, together with four catechisms.

Elected bishop of Shanghai and consecrated in 1877, Schereschewsky founded there a college where Chinese young men could study Christianity and Western science.¹⁷ In Peking, in March 1867, he received a visit from three young Jews from the indigenised Chinese Jewish community at Kaifeng, in the central Chinese province of Honan. This, coupled with a previous visit of one of the missionaries to Kaifeng, led to the decision to send Schereschewsky on a reconnaissance mission with a view to establishing a mission there.¹⁸ Due partly to the unsettled nature of the region and anti-foreign agitation it was considered imprudent to proceed with setting up a mission.¹⁹ An earlier abortive attempt to contact the Kaifeng Jews by the Jews of London had

¹³ Bernstein, op. cit., p.330.

¹⁴ Carlyle *Life and Works of William Wingate*, p.124.

¹⁵ Ed. David Baron *Christ and Israel: Lectures and Addresses on the Jews by Adolph Saphir* (London: Morgan and Scott, 1911) p.10.

¹⁶ K. S. Latourette *A History of the Expansion of Christianity. Volume 6, The Great Century: North Africa and Asia 1800-1914* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1971) p.319.

¹⁷ Ibid. p.320. Cf. Timothy Man-Kong Wong 'Schereschewsky, Samuel Isaac Joseph' in ed. A Scott Moreau *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000) p.856.

¹⁸ Michael Pollack *Mandarins, Jews, and Missionaries: The Jewish Experience in the Chinese Empire* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1980) p. 187.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.197.

been channelled through Robert Morrison (1782-1834), the 'austere Scot' who was 'the father of Protestant missions in China.'²⁰

In the story of Schereschewsky and China missions a intriguing symmetry of influence is apparent: one strand flows from Claudius Buchanan and his advocacy of the translation of the New Testament into Hebrew by the LSPCJ, another runs through Wingate to Lederer, both combine in Schereschewsky coming to faith, baptism and embarking on a life of Christian ministry. From there the momentum flows on to the present through the impact of Schereschewsky's Bible on millions of China's Christians. A small part of the story then traces a remarkable trajectory. In 1996, Lan Yih-Ming (Grace Lan), influenced by her reading of the Chinese Bible, became the first Mandarin speaking Chinese Christian missionary to the Jews and the following year commenced missionary work in Wingate's home city of Glasgow, barely five miles from Cambuslang, the childhood home of Buchanan.²¹

In a letter to the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, on the occasion of the Jubilee of the Jewish Mission in May, 1889, Professor Franz Delitzsch, alluding to the conversion of the Saphir family by way of a pun on Isaiah 54.11, commented that 'Sion's Restorer' had laid the foundation of the Scottish mission in Budapest 'with *sapphires*.'²² The edifice built on that foundation was complex and recent research has thrown a remarkable side-light on how Duncan and his colleagues may have helped shape the modern history of the Middle East and the creation of the State of Israel. William D. Rubenstein has drawn attention to the fact that British politician Leo Amery, for reasons best known to himself, hid the fact his mother was Elizabeth Johanna Saphir.²³ She is the Mrs Amery referred to by Gavin Carlyle as a cousin of Adolph Saphir.²⁴ According to Amery, she fled to Britain at the outbreak of hostilities in 1848.²⁵ Amery's middle name, as originally given, was Moritz, the same as his uncle, the satirist Moritz Gottlieb Saphir, whose adherence to Christianity awakened the curiosity of his bother Israel Saphir.²⁶ To hide his Jewishness, further complicated by the conversion to Christianity of so many of his family, Amery changed the spelling to Maurice. It was Amery, crypto-Jew and pro-Zionist, as assistant secretary to the British war cabinet in 1917 who is credited with drafting the momentous Balfour Declaration advocating a Jewish 'National Home' in Palestine.²⁷ The impact of the Balfour

²⁰ Ibid., p.152. For Morrison see John C. Pollack, 'Morrison, Robert' in NIDCC.

²¹ Personal interview. Since c.1985 Christian Witness to Israel has employed a number of Chinese missionaries to the Jews. Cf. Staff Book of Christian Witness to Israel.

²² Carlyle *Mighty in Scriptures* p.313. Emphasis original.

²³ William D. Rubenstein 'The Secret of Leopold Amery' in *History Today* February 1999, pp.17-23.

²⁴ Carlyle, *ibid*, p.448.

²⁵ Leo Amery *My Political Life* 3 Volumes (London: Hutchinson, 1953-55) cited by Rubenstein p.17.

²⁶ Carlyle, *idem*.

²⁷ The declaration is contained in a note from Arthur Balfour to Lord Rothschild; dated November 2nd, 1917 it consists of the following words: 'I have much pleasure in conveying to you on behalf of his Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet 'His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status

Declaration on the Middle East has been widely discussed, but its immediate effect on the Zionist cause has been summed up by David Vital as setting 'Zionism down in the real political world once and for all: to fight its corner...'²⁸ Significantly, it was Amery who contributed to Zionism's military capacity by assisting Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinski to place under British command the several thousand volunteers of the Jewish Legion, to form the Haganah, the precursor of the Israel Defence Force.²⁹ The world of the Haganah provides the setting for another curious alignment of two of the descendants of those who played a part in the Pesth Jewish mission. William Wingate, so influential in the conversion of the Saphirs, was the grandfather of the British Zionist and soldier, Orde Wingate. Before achieving fame as a leader of Special Forces in Burma, Wingate had served in 1939 as an Arabist in Palestine with the British army.³⁰ Having a romantic notion to lead a Jewish army, he formed and commanded the Jewish counter-insurgent Special Night Squad.³¹ Leo Amery first met Wingate, 'one day during the winter of 1939 to 1940' and was immediately impressed with him.³² It was, we remind ourselves, Orde's grandfather who had been so influential in the conversion of Israel Saphir. It is intriguing to consider what each might have made of the other had they been aware of their antecedents!

The Renewal of the Hungarian Reformed Church

In the report submitted to the 1847 General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland there is an interesting paragraph by Wingate, the author of the Pesth section of the report:

We rejoice to see that the majority of the ministrations... in the Hungarian Protestant Churches, are fitted to arouse and awaken sinners. Those who know the state of things five years ago, will bless the God of all grace for the great and glorious change.³³

Five years previously, in *Sunday at Home*, Smith described his first impression of the Hungarian Protestant churches as under 'the black pall of an almost universal torpor and death.'³⁴ Israel Saphir concurred, adding, 'there was not a village in all Hungary in which they knew that there was such a thing as Evangelical religion.'³⁵ Keith, however, did not consider that matters were just as bleak as all that, confidently commenting that 'there were three Evangelical ministers in Hungary, one of whom came two day's journey to see me, as I afterwards went to see him.'³⁶ The reason advanced to explain this decadence was the negative impact of rationalistic theology on

enjoyed by Jews in any other country" I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.' Leonard Stein *The Balfour Declaration* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 1961) *frontispiece*. (Punctuation original)

²⁸ David Vital *A People Apart: A Political History of the Jews of Europe, 1789-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) p.629.

²⁹ Rubenstein, *op. cit.*

³⁰ Christopher Sykes Orde Wingate (London: Collins, 1959) p.104ff.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.150ff.

³² *Ibid.*, 224.

³³ Minute book of the Committee for the Conversion of the Jews (NLS Dep. 298/250) p.26.

³⁴ Robert Smith cited by Kool, *op. cit.*, p.103.

³⁵ Brown *op. cit.*, p.323.

³⁶ Brown, *idem*.

the Protestant Church.³⁷ Much as he had serious misgivings about many aspects of Roman Catholic theology and tradition, not least the very name of the church, preferring the circumlocution 'the Western Church,' John Duncan, nevertheless, often sided with Catholics against Protestant rationalists, because he found 'that the Catholics quote Scripture six times for the Protestants' once.'³⁸

In 1841 only a small minority of ministers, including Török and Bauhoffer in Budapest, shared the evangelical outlook of the Scottish ministers. Even so, they were suspicious of the idiosyncrasies of Scottish Presbyterianism, including the tendency for the ministers in Pesth to refer to themselves as 'missionaries,' a term associated in Hungarian Protestant minds with Jesuit adventurers.³⁹ According to Smith it took over two years to break down these obstacles and establish a real rapport.⁴⁰ The result of this achievement was the commencement in 1844 of 'weekly clerical conferences' or ministerial fraternal, for the study of Scripture and prayer.⁴¹ Although Smith makes no mention of it, it was, as we noted in chapter twelve, Maria Dorothea herself, who first brought together the local ministers and the Scottish missionaries. Rationalistic Protestant ministers, who wished to attend, were not excluded; for example, Michael Lang, the Pesth Lutheran minister, regularly attended. The meetings were held on Thursdays and any visiting foreign minister in Buda or Pesth was invited to attend.⁴² The fraternal served as a forum through which was circulated information concerning the Scottish innovations, such as the establishment by the missionaries of a Sunday school, which became a model followed by many Protestant churches throughout the country.⁴³

Although the fraternal commenced in 1842, two years earlier the Scottish ministers encouraged Lutheran and Reformed Church collaboration in the production of a Christian newspaper, 'on a Scriptural basis' which attacked 'false opinions' and church abuses, provided information on the wider Christian cause and promoted 'a missionary spirit.'⁴⁴ In addition, arrangements were made for the distribution of Christian literature through a network of local agents, some of whom were converts of the mission. And so, by one means and another, Hungarian churches were prepared for more overtly evangelistic and missionary work. As Wingate remarked:

In this way the Protestant Churches were educated and prepared for the next important stage in mission work: the evangelisation of Hungary by trained evangelists selected from the best and most experienced of the converts from Judaism. The conversion of the Jews became in this way 'life from the dead' to the professing Protestant Churches greatly needing the testimony of living, earnest Christianity...⁴⁵

³⁷ Cf. Kool, *idem*.

³⁸ Moody Stuart, *op. cit.* p.69.

³⁹ Smith *Early Days*, p.21. Cf. Kool, *op. cit.* p.104

⁴⁰ *Idem*.

⁴¹ Smith, *idem*.

⁴² Kool, *op. cit.*, p.104.

⁴³ Imre Revesz *History of the Hungarian Reformed Church* (Washington: Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, 1956) p. 147. English translation by George A.F. Knight.

⁴⁴ Bauhoffer, *op. cit.*, p.436.

⁴⁵ Carlyle *William Wingate*, p.49.

According to Kool, the Scottish missionaries' influence, directly and indirectly, extended to theological reform, Bible distribution, diaconal work, spiritual renewal and the establishment of a strong Hungarian home missions movement.⁴⁶ In addition, the foundation was laid for the Hungarian Protestant foreign missions movement. The influence of the Scottish mission was strong and for many years the established momentum was not only maintained but also steadily increased until in 1887, Aladár Szabó established, in the Hold utca headquarters of the Scottish mission, regular meetings promoting foreign missions:⁴⁷

These meetings, profiting from the international 'network' of the Scottish mission, were of infinite importance in the calling of the first missionaries of the [Hungarian] missionary societies...⁴⁸

The impetus given to spiritual life in Hungary by the Scottish mission led to the establishment of many evangelical and missionary societies including the *Young Men's Christian Association* (YMCA) and the *Women Students Christian Federation* (WSCF).⁴⁹ Standing for the last time in the old Scottish mission building in Hold utca, Béla Keneszy (1858-1919), the great mission leader and bishop of the Hungarian Reformed Church, expressed his appreciation for the Scottish influence:

I received the first truly serious impressions of God's Word there in that big hall... All this wells up in my memory and fills my spirit with gratitude to those who were instruments in the hands of the Lord for me to see and find my Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ.⁵⁰

The Budapest School

When, on 27th September 1849, Philipp Saphir died, aged 26, control of the school passed to the capable hands of his father, Israel Saphir.⁵¹ Throughout the war and the troubled years that followed, the school was 'not meddled with, nor the resident converts.'⁵² The policy of the Committee, in keeping it independent of mission or church control, was fully vindicated. Indeed, not only did it remain functional, it positively flourished in the aftermath of the 1848 revolution, despite the expulsion of the missionaries in 1852. Writing in 1852 as editor of Philip's letters, his brother Adolph, commented:

Since Philipp Saphir's death, the school has continued steadily to increase. It is now (June 1852) attended by about 350 children, almost all of them belonging to Jewish families.⁵³

⁴⁶ Kool, op. cit., p.105-107.

⁴⁷ The English equivalent of the Hungarian term 'utca' is 'street.'

⁴⁸ Kool, op. cit., p.110, cf. p.106.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p.183.

⁵⁰ Kool, op. cit., p.146.

⁵¹ Norman Walker *Chapters From the History of the Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1895) p.172.

⁵² Ed. Adolph Saphir, *Letters and Diaries of Philipp Saphir* (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1852) p.125. Cf. Walker, Idem.

⁵³ Ibid., p.130.

In the decade after 1852, however, the numbers of Jewish children steadily declined until, in 1862, it was reported that 337 children attended, of which only 153 were Jewish. In 1863, after a hiatus of a decade, the Free Church recommenced work in Pesth, by sending Andrew Moody, the nephew of Alexander Moody Stuart, to reorganize the school in its new buildings at Hold utca.⁵⁴ In 1900 all the Free Church missionaries, including those at Budapest, joined the United Free Church of Scotland, and at the reunion with the Church of Scotland in 1929 the school came under control of the Church of Scotland. Detailed comment on the work between 1852 and the present is outwith the limits of this study, but it is appropriate to notice, as a legacy of the original work and in the spirit of its founders, the role played by the school, the mission headquarters and the staff in the rescue of Jewish people from the Nazis.

In 1932, Miss Jane Mathison Haining (1897-1944) was appointed matron of the girl's school, to which, at this time, was attached a home for destitute girls.⁵⁵ After a furlough in Scotland in 1939, Haining returned to Budapest. With the outbreak of war her employers, the Church of Scotland, had sought to dissuade her from remaining in Budapest but she would not leave. David McDougall, writing in 1941, poignantly remarked, 'Miss Haining, the matron of the girl's home, stayed on after the others, and she is there still. By roundabout ways we hear from her sometimes.'⁵⁶

Shortly after the Germans entered Budapest, in March 1944, Jane Haining was denounced to the SS and in May was arrested as a spy. She was charged on eight separate counts, including listening to the BBC. She admitted accusations such as working with Jews, as well as the perverse charge that 'she had wept when sowing the compulsory yellow star on the girls clothes.'⁵⁷ Jane was removed to Konzentrationslager Auschwitz, where she was tattooed as prisoner 79467. She died, aged 47, probably in a gas chamber with a batch of Hungarian Jewish women, on 17th July 1944.⁵⁸ The death certificate, issued by the German legation, contained the following statement:

Miss Haining, who was arrested on account of proven espionage against Germany, died in hospital, July 17th of cachexia, following intestinal catarrh.⁵⁹

The Hungarian Jewish community commemorates Jane Haining's sacrifice by a plaque erected in 1984 in the Scottish Mission in Vörösmarty utca. In Scotland a memorial stained glass window was installed in her old church, Strathbungo Queen's Park. In Israel, in 1997, Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes Memorial in Jerusalem awarded her the status of Righteous

⁵⁴ McDougall, op. cit., p.81.

⁵⁵ Judy Steel, 'The Nithsdale Martyr of Auschwitz' in *Discover Scotland*, no.38.

⁵⁶ McDougall, op. cit. p.163.

⁵⁷ Idem. Cf. Braham, op. cit., p.987. DSCHT, ad. loc.

⁵⁸ David McDougall *Jane Haining, 1897-1944* (Edinburgh: Church of Scotland Board of World Mission 1998 [2nd edition]) p.26f.

⁵⁹ Steel, op. cit.

Among the Nations 'for her selfless dedication to the children.'⁶⁰ More recently, the *Association of Contemporary Church Historians* has suggested her memory be perpetuated among modern Christian martyrs in Westminster Abbey.⁶¹

Haining, in giving her life for her charges, is thought to be the only Scot to perish in a Nazi death camp but she was not unique among those associated with the Jewish mission in caring for oppressed Hungarian Jews. In the summer of 1942 *Jó Pásztor Misszió* (Society of the Good Shepherd) had been founded to save Jewish Christians from the threat of deportation.⁶² The leading figure behind *Jó Pásztor* was József Éliás, a resourceful young Jewish Christian minister of the Hungarian Reformed Church. The organisation has been criticised for concentrating its efforts exclusively on behalf of converts to Christianity, leading Moshe Y. Herczel to allege the Hungarian Churches were guilty of 'completely or nearly completely ignoring the plight of the [non-Christian] Jews.'⁶³ Such allegations, however, have been firmly rebutted, both by Éliás and his colleague at the *Szkót Misszió*, János Dobos.⁶⁴ In a personal conversation with the author, Dobos, who served as the minister of the Scottish Mission in Vörösmarty utca from 1946-78, reported that in attempting to save non-Christian Jews from extermination in Auschwitz, he and his colleagues freely gave away baptismal certificates. Maintaining the tradition of the mission, they did not, however, baptise anyone unless a credible profession of faith was first made; according to Dobos, there were very many baptisms.⁶⁵

Herczel's rather grudging appreciation of the *Jó Pásztor*, is offset by Braham's generosity:

The leadership of the [*Jó Pásztor*] Committee was entrusted to the Reverend József Éliás, himself of Jewish background. Among his closest associates were Dr. Imre Kádár, the secretary of the Committee; Emil Hajos, deacon; and Reverend Károly Dobos, Dr. Ferenc Benkő, and Andor Borbás as well as a host of volunteers, who devoted their energies to social and charitable work as well as to serving the needs of the converts.⁶⁶

Braham further states that after the pro-Nazi coup of 1944 by the Hungarian fascist *Nyilas* party, the *Jó Pásztor* movement sheltered some 1500 Jewish children in 32 homes, feeding and protecting them with assistance from the Red Cross, which established a special department for the purpose.⁶⁷ Éliás, blacklisted by the *Nyilas*, was forced to go underground almost immediately after the coup but continued clandestine work.⁶⁸

⁶⁰ DSCHT, Yad Vashem

⁶¹ www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/akz/akz2211.htm

⁶² Braham, op. cit. p.778.

⁶³ Moshe Y. Herczel *Christianity and the Holocaust of Hungarian Jewry* (New York: New York University Press, 1993) p.191.

⁶⁴ Personal interviews with Elias in March 1988 and Dobos on 7th October 1990.

⁶⁵ Personal interview.

⁶⁶ Braham, op. cit., p.1051.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.1052-3.

⁶⁸ *Idem.*

When, in 1945, in a last ditch attempt to alleviate the consequences of the persecution, the *Association of the Christian Jews of Hungary* (Magyarországi Jeresztény Zsidók Szövetsége) was established, it was the Vörösmarty utca buildings that were the registered headquarters.⁶⁹ With the end of World War II the property of the Scottish Mission fell under the control of the communists, returning to the control of the Hungarian Reformed Church in the early nineteen nineties.

Scottish Influence in the Growth of Jewish Missions

The Scottish mission to the Jewish people exerted a powerful influence on other Presbyterian Churches in the United Kingdom and beyond. We can trace this influence in the formation of the *British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews*, as well as the Jewish missions of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Calvinistic Methodist Church (Welsh Presbyterian) and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

The desire of the Church of Scotland to commence work in London, through the London Presbytery, led directly to the formation of the BSPGJ, now known as *Christian Witness to Israel*, a society that has maintained a place in the forefront of Jewish missions from 1842 to the present day. The story commences with an Overture from the Newcastle Presbytery to the English Synod of the Church of Scotland, held in London in 1841. The Overture requested that:

the Synod take immediate measures for promoting Missionary operations among the Jews and Heathen, to be continued in conjunction with those of the Church of Scotland.⁷⁰

Through his personal contact with the Jewish Christian Ridley H. Herschell (1807-1863) and by his own observations, during his time in the city on his way to Hungary, John Duncan saw the great potential of London as a mission station. At this time the Scottish Jewish community was in the low hundreds, while London was home to a growing population of some 18-20,000 Jews.⁷¹ Along with new immigrants from the Continent, there was a growing anglicised, educated and organised community, with a strengthening middle class.⁷² Herschell, had arrived in London in 1825.⁷³ Born Haim Herschell in Strzelno, Prussia, in April 1807, he was educated at the University of Berlin, and whilst journeying to Hamburg successfully contrived to obtain an

⁶⁹ Braham, op. cit., p.464.

⁷⁰ Ed. Leone Levi *Digest of the Acting and Proceedings of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in England 1836—1866* (London: R.K. Burt & Co, 1869) p. 91.

⁷¹ Harold Pollins *Economic History of the Jews in England* (London & Toronto: Associated University Presses Ltd., 1982) p.243.

⁷² Ibid., p.87f.

⁷³ Anon. 'Incidents in the Life of Rev, Ridley Haim Herschell' in Ed. John Dunlop, *Memories of Gospel Triumphs of the Jews during the Victorian Era* (London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1894) p.40-41. Ridley Herschell was the father of Lord Herschell, Lord Chancellor of England. Cf. DNB ad. loc.

outside seat on a hired carriage and fell in with the hirer, a Herr Heintz, who took an interest in him. Heintz:

entertained him at Hamburg, paid his fare to England and gave him introductions to several of his acquaintances in London, and, among the rest, one to the Duke of Wellington, which it does not appear that Haim ever used.⁷⁴

From London, Herschell moved to Berlin and Paris and finally returned to London, taking up residence in a home for Jewish converts and inquirers, run by a Jewish Christian, Erasmus Simon. In April 1830, despite threats to his life, he presented himself to the Bishop of London for baptism. Attending meetings in London at which Edward Irving spoke, he met Miss Helen S. Mowbray, daughter of a Leith merchant and the following September they married.⁷⁵ Helen Mowbray was intellectually very competent, having around 1827 made a detailed study of prophetic passages of Scripture. She had been attracted to Irving because of 'his upholding the literal interpretation of the Scriptures.'⁷⁶ With a desire to support her husband in his work, she became competent in Hebrew and familiar with rabbinic writings.⁷⁷ Shortly after their marriage, the Herschells opened and ran a home for destitute Jews in Woolwich. In 1835 he was invited to become a minister of a congregation in Scotland, but feeling himself called to work as an evangelist rather than a pastor, he declined the invitation and took up work as a home missionary in the village of Leigh, Essex.⁷⁸ In December 1838 he commenced work at the Church of Scotland's Founder's Hall Chapel, Lothbury.⁷⁹ Among his hearers were many Jews, who were not only curious as to his beliefs and teaching but also sought relief for their poverty. Responding to these needs he established, in 1841, the *Jews Benevolent Fund* and opened a home for inquirers and converts.

Responding to Duncan's initiative, on the 3rd August 1841 the western sub-committee in Glasgow considered the advisability of establishing a mission station in London. In February 1842, the western sub-committee wrote to Rev. James Hamilton of the National Scotch Church, Regent Square, London, to ask him to approach Herschell regarding this project.⁸⁰ In the meantime Herschell was establishing his own contact with the Church in Scotland, writing to the eastern sub-committee, 'urging the formation of a Committee in London, for the conversion of the Jews in that city, in connection with the Church of Scotland.'⁸¹ At its meeting of 4th May, the Committee considered this a matter of great importance and instructed Candlish to 'forward the letter to the Rev. J. Hamilton, London, with a request that he would see what can be done in the

⁷⁴ Idem.

⁷⁵ Idem.

⁷⁶ Anon. "*Far Above Rubies*" *Memoir of Helen S. Herschell by her Daughter* (London: Walton and Maberly, 1854) p.111-2.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.128.

⁷⁸ Dunlop, p.42; "*Far Above Rubies*" p.141ff.

⁷⁹ Dunlop, p.42, gives 1838, Herschell's daughter has autumn 1839, p.166. For Founder's Hall Scotch Church 1665-1944 see George G. Cameron *The Scots Kirk in London* (Oxford: Becket Publications, 1979) p.15ff.

⁸⁰ Copy minute of the western sub-committee in Minute book of the Committee for the Conversion of the Jews (NLS Dep. 298/249) p.96.

⁸¹ MBI, p.111.

matter.⁸² In line with the English Synod's decision the previous year, Hamilton's reply was most enthusiastic: a meeting of ministers and elders of the Church of Scotland congregations in London had been held on 13th May:

Their firm conviction [was] that a very extensive field for hopeful labour exists among the Jews in London and that an auxiliary to the Church of Scotland's Jewish Scheme, would find much favour among the Christians of the Metropolis and that it was the request of the Meeting that this Committee would recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of some measures for the immediate formation of such an auxiliary.⁸³

The Committee concurred with the wishes of the Presbytery and went one step further, suggesting that the committee to be formed should be inter-denominational in character and agreed:

to request that the Assembly appoint the ministers and elders of the Church of Scotland in the Presbytery of London, to form a committee for promoting the conversion of Jews in that city, as an auxiliary to, and in connection with this committee, and with power to invite the cooperation and assistance of all others friendly to this object.⁸⁴

In May 1842 the General Assembly granted the petition of the Committee in the following terms:

The General Assembly... do hereby request and authorize the said ministers and elders together with such others in communion with this church as they may associate with themselves to act as a Committee on behalf of this church, and in subordination to the acting Committee before referred to, for the purposes of collecting funds as well as of managing and superintending such missionary operations among the Jews in London, as it may be found desirable to institute; with instructions to the said Committee in London, to avail themselves as far as possible, of the concurrence and cooperation of the Christians of other denominations who may be willing to give their aid to this good work of the Lord.⁸⁵

In line with this desire, the control of the London work was to pass from the Church of Scotland to the officers of an autonomous non-denominational body formed in November 1842. James Hamilton, Robert M'Cheyne's close friend, invited him to preach at the November 1842 communion services in Regent Square. On 7th November a meeting was held in Regent Square to consider the founding of a missionary society for the Jews of London. M'Cheyne was invited to attend. Those present included Dr Burder, a Congregationalist minister from Islington; Dr Alexander Fletcher, Secession Church minister at Stepney; Dr. Henderson, a lecturer of Highbury College; Rev. John Cumming of Crown Court Church of Scotland; Rev. James Brown of London Wall Church of Scotland; Rev. William Yonge of Albany Congregational chapel, Brentford; Peter Lorimer of Islington Church of Scotland; Rev. Ridley Herschell, Islington and Rev James Hamilton, National Scotch Church, Regent Square.⁸⁶ M'Cheyne was invited to open the meeting with prayer and the group then proceeded to form themselves into *The British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Jews*, electing Hamilton and Henderson to be the first

⁸² Idem.

⁸³ MB1, p.113.

⁸⁴ MB1, p.112. Emphasis mine.

⁸⁵ Act anent the Conversion of the Jews, 20th May, 1842 in MB1, p.130.

⁸⁶ Minute Book 1 of BSPGJ, p.1.

secretaries.⁸⁷ Curiously, but perhaps understandably, in the light of the holding of the pre-Disruption Convocation in Edinburgh on the 17th of the same month, there is no mention of the formation of the BSPGJ in either M'Cheyne's or Hamilton's biographies, though both refer to M'Cheyne preaching for Hamilton at his communion services.⁸⁸

The Church of Scotland enthusiastically endorsed the new society. The appropriate minute reads:

A letter from the Rev. James Hamilton, London, dated 7th December 1842, was laid before the Committee, sending a Minute of the formation of the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews, which had been instituted in November last, to consist of Christians of Evangelical principles, interested in the above object, and the more immediate field of whose operations was to be in London and the large towns of the United Kingdom. The Committee recorded their heartfelt joy at the formation of this society, which on so Catholic a basis proposed to occupy such an important field of labour among the Children of Israel, and had resolved to maintain a friendly correspondence and cooperation with this Committee, and considering that the objects that this Society had in view were the most important, and such that this Committee had intended at one time to carry out itself, and that from the Constitution of the Association and the character of those interested in it, there seemed no doubt that these objects would be done in a proper spirit, and that a grant in aid of their funds might enable them to commence operations immediately, Resolved, to make a grant for this purpose of £500.⁸⁹

The relationship between the Church of Scotland and BSPGJ continued until the Disruption, at which point members of the English Synod largely threw in their lot with the Free Church cause and formed the Presbyterian Church in England. Subsequently the link with the Free Church became stronger and continues to the present. A distinctively Scottish work in England recommenced in August 1846 when a Scottish Mission to the Jews was established at Halkin Street, Belgrave Square, supported by a grant from the Jewish Committee of the Church of Scotland. The first missionary and minister was Henry Douglas and the work became famously associated with the ministry of Adolph Saphir.⁹⁰ *Fasti* records that 'after considerable success the Mission came to an end with the sale of the building in 1866.'⁹¹

A third strand of Scottish influence can be traced through the involvement of the Reformed Presbyterian Church's Jewish Mission in London. In June, 1844 *The Free Church Magazine* contained the following article:

New Mission to the Jews.— A proposal has been made by Mr John Finlay, that measures should be adopted to commence a mission to the Jews from the Reformed Presbyterian Church, which met with the approval and applause of all present; and we are happy to say, that Messrs Finlay, who have already given such liberal support to the missions of the Church, have offered £100 to assist in setting this additional scheme agoing. We trust the matter will be brought before the synod, and receive the cordial approval of the Church.— *Scottish Presbyterian*⁹²

⁸⁷ *Idem*.

⁸⁸ Arnot, *op. cit.*, p.214; *Memoir*, p.146.

⁸⁹ MB1 p.157-8.

⁹⁰ *Fasti* 7: 497. Cf. Cameron, *op. cit.*, p.115.

⁹¹ *Fasti*, *idem*.

⁹² *The Free Church Magazine*, June 1844, p.191

The Reformed Presbyterian Church was founded as an expression of dissent from the re-establishment of the Church of Scotland at the Revolution Settlement of 1690, at which time the Church of Scotland no longer considered the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant to be perpetually binding.⁹³ In the winter of 1844/5, Dr William Symington had arranged to discuss the possibility of a Reformed Presbyterian Jewish missionary being temporarily seconded to the Free Church of Scotland in order to gain missionary experience. The Free Church Committee responded warmly to this suggestion but there is, however, no evidence the scheme was carried through.⁹⁴

Under the influence of the generally heightened awareness of the opportunity for Jewish missions then present in Scotland, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland established its Jewish mission in the Spring of 1845.⁹⁵ The first missionary was John Cunningham. Born in Newtonlimavady in Co. Londonderry, he studied in Scotland where he proved himself an able student, graduating from Glasgow in 1836. Eleven years later, due to his services to his Alma Mater as assistant Professor of Natural Philosophy he was awarded an LL.D. He was reputed to have the strength of character necessary to withstand the frequent opposition with which he met in the pursuance of his task.⁹⁶ Goold gives the date for the commencement of Cunningham's missionary activity in London as October 1846. However the *Minutes of the Society of the Reformed Presbyterian Church* in London and the records of the BSPGJ, in fellowship with whom he worked, suggest, that in fact, he commenced his activities in May.⁹⁷ A letter introducing him to the committee of the BSPGJ was delivered by hand, by Cunningham himself; it requested the closest possible co-operation and asked the BSPGJ Committee to give direction regarding a suitable sphere of labour and a description of the manner of work Cunningham might take up.

The first meeting of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in London had been held, at 18 Arundle Street, Strand, on 28th July, 1845.

Members present, Samuel Carson, James Neilson, George Lillie, Peter, Andrew and Alexander MacDowell. The Rev. J. Carslaw, Messrs Bennie and Keith, of Glasgow, being in London at the time, were present, and, encouraged the Brethren to persevere in the maintainance (sic) and advancement of a Covenanted Testimony in this great metropolis.⁹⁸

⁹³ DSCHT ad. loc.

⁹⁴ MB1 p.308 (meeting arranged), p.310 (meeting aborted), p.312 (meeting held).

⁹⁵ W. H. Goold *The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland: Its Origin and History, 1680 – 1876* (Edinburgh: Parlane, 1893); Cf. McDougall *In Search of Israel*, p.71.

⁹⁶ Goold, idem.

⁹⁷ Cf. BJS MB:1:189, letter introducing Cunningham from Dr. W. Symington (described in BJS MB:1 as a minister of the Secession Church in Glasgow) indicates that Cunningham was 'set apart...to missionary work among the Jews' on 14 May, 1846. The letter introducing him to the committee of the BJS was delivered by hand, by Cunningham himself. It requested the closest possible co-operation and asked the BJS committee to give direction regarding a suitable sphere of labour and a description of the manner of work Cunningham might take up.

⁹⁸ Minute Book of the Society of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in London (MS in the collection of United Reformed Church Historical Society, Westminster College, Cambridge) 28th July, 1845, unpaginated.

Meeting once a week for 'social worship' the congregation had been looking for a suitable place of worship, following the finding of which they would 'apply to the sister Church in Scotland and Ireland for preaching'.

Mr J. Cunningham a Probationer of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, joined the Meeting May 25th [1846]. Having been sent a missionary to the Jews in London. Mr Cunningham commenced to preach to the Brethren on 14th June in the Presbyterian Chapel, Edward St. Wardour St. [Soho] and continued to preach regularly every Sabbath afternoon at 3 o'clock with great acceptance to the Brethren.⁹⁹

The London congregation to which Cunningham came in 1846 had been forced to vacate the Presbyterian chapel in September that year and were without a meeting place or public services until January 1847.

In the meantime Mr Cunningham was ordained by the Presbytery of Glasgow [and] returned to London, to his Jewish Mission, having rented the house No 6 Burton Street Burton Crescent. He commenced to preach every Sabbath in his own hired house, the hands of the Brethren were greatly strengthened by this step, and also by having added to their number, the Father and Sister of the Rev'd J. Cunningham.

From September 20th 1846, in listing the financial statistics, the congregation minute-book described the regular collections as, 'received at Sabbath services, in behalf of the London Jewish Mission of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.' The amount remitted by the congregation for Jewish missions in 1851 was £21.10.0, but by 1852 this had declined to £11.13.1½, because of £8.7.11½ contributed to 'ministerial support', foreign missions and the 'Romanist mission'.¹⁰⁰

Cunningham continued in his work for a period of thirteen years in which he 'diligently sowed the seed, but he reaped no harvest. Once and again a gleam of hope appeared, only to be followed by disappointment.'¹⁰¹ This seems remarkable in view of the growth in the number of converts that other missionaries and agencies were experiencing. Goold hints that the problem perhaps lay with Cunningham himself: whilst his 'zeal and patience were worthy of all admiration... some of the methods he pursued were of questionable wisdom.'¹⁰² Dissenting from the 1858 Synod's resolutions relaxing the ban on Reformed Presbyterians voting in political elections, he resigned as a missionary, and left the Church. The Synod was unable to find a suitable successor and abandoned its mission to the Jews.¹⁰³

The Scottish enthusiasm for Jewish missions influenced Christians in Wales, especially those of the Calvinistic Methodist Church. During 1811, Thomas Charles of Bala, a pioneer of the *British and Foreign Bible Society* and keen advocate of missions, asked the founder of the LSPCJ, Joseph S.

⁹⁹ Idem.

¹⁰⁰ Minute Book of the Society of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in London.

¹⁰¹ Goold, op. cit., p.307

¹⁰² Idem.

¹⁰³ McDougall, op. cit., p.72.

C. F. Frey, to visit North Wales in order to speak about his work in London and so appeal for help.¹⁰⁴ At the meetings of the North Wales Calvinistic Methodist Association held at Ruthin, in March 1845, Dr Keith, convenor of the Free Church Jewish committee, was present. The minutes record that 'with great warmth he showed the obligations of the Christian Church to realise the present condition of the seed of Abraham, and to pray and labour for their conversion.'¹⁰⁵ Following the Ruthin meetings, John Mills of Llanidloes, who was at the time the minister of the Ruthin church, informed friends that he had felt very exercised by what he had heard from Keith and had subsequently developed a strong desire to work among the Jews. At the June meeting of the Association Board, in Bala, the subject of a mission to the Jews was further considered.¹⁰⁶ From the very beginning, attempts to establish a Jewish mission ran into opposition. The North Wales Association, meeting in Llanrwst decided to raise the issue with their brethren in the south. The southern Association agreed to the proposal to send a missionary but opposed the establishment of a mission arguing that 'no new Society be formed, as might be gathered is the intention from the expression, "A Mission to the Jews."¹⁰⁷ Morris comments:

It is clear from the Minutes of the Board, and those of the Associations, that the new undertaking was not entered upon with much enthusiasm, nor indeed with perfect unanimity....it was argued that evangelistic work among the Jews was more closely related to the *home* Mission work of the churches of the Christian lands in which they dwelt, than to their *foreign* missionary efforts.¹⁰⁸

Dr Keith, and others, suggested that the Welsh church might commence work in Hamburg, where there was strong Jewish population. The Directors of the Board, however, declined to allow Mills to operate overseas, officially giving as the reason that he had not yet proved himself suitable for the task and that he should gain experience by working for twelve months in London. Mills removed to London in 1846 and commenced work co-operating with the BSPGJ. Although his time in London was considered to be successful, the Directors demanded he continue there for another year. The following year they again judged his work satisfactory but revised their earlier considerations of commencing a work in Hamburg, confirming that he should remain permanently in London. The July 1848 minute reads, 'having understood that the metropolis affords a wide field for labour and receiving no little satisfaction in Mr Mills' reports, the Board resolved that the Mission to the Jews should now be regarded as permanently established.'¹⁰⁹

By all accounts, Mills methods were standard for the time; he distributed tracts and Scripture portions, sought to get a New Testament into every Jewish home he visited, set up a small library and held popular lectures. He aimed to break down prejudice against the claims of Jesus as

¹⁰⁴ John Hughes Morris *The History of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists Foreign Mission* (Cardiff: C.M. Book Room, 1910) p.272f; Cf. John Hughes Morris *The Story of our Foreign Mission* (Hugh Evans & Sons, 1930) p.100.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* p.274.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. BSPGJ Minute Book 1, p.219 (June 1846).

¹⁰⁷ Morris, *idem.*

¹⁰⁸ *Idem.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.275

Messiah and to show a friendly Christian face to those Jews he met. Three years after Mills commenced work, a young Jewish man, Henry Wolf, professed to have become a Christian, stating that, 'the veil was taken away from his heart.' On Whit-Monday 1851, in Rose Place Chapel, Liverpool, he was baptised, much to the fascination of the large numbers of visitors attending the preaching services held at that time of the year.¹¹⁰

However opposition to the work was growing. For some, the results were too sparse; for others, Mills' methods were considered too controversial, though it is hard to see why. The Directors gave permission for him to continue for another three years; effectively declaring their lack of confidence in him by insisting he submit to the direction of a London based supervisory committee. The opposition subsided and the decision was taken to continue 'as long as our circumstances permit, and while we have any reason to hope that the missionary's labour, under the Lord's blessing, may prove advantageous.'¹¹¹

The following year Mills visited Palestine to 'acquaint himself with the true state and character of the Jews in their own country.'¹¹² At home, fresh opposition to his work broke out, creating strong divisions in the Monthly Meetings of the Calvinistic Methodist Associations all across the Principality. Although the London committee was enthusiastic to continue and was renting a chapel to help the work forward, by 1859, the tide of opposition was too strong to be resisted. Just when the decision to abandon the work was about to be made, the forbearing Mills took the initiative and resigned. Ironically, with the passage of time, it transpired that Mill's work was not as unproductive as his critics had maintained; through his influence a number of Jewish people did make public profession of Christian faith.¹¹³

Another, earlier, association between Wales and the BSPGJ came through I. P. Cohen, of whom little can be discovered. The first BSPGJ minute book records:

Mr I P Cohen from Swansea was introduced by letter from the Rev G T Warner and examined by the Sub-Committee. After which it was agreed to recommend that Mr. I P Cohen be placed under the care and instruction of Rev W. C. Yonge at Brentford, with a view to qualify him for the office he seeks.¹¹⁴

At a meeting held at Moriah Chapel, Caernarfon, on 15th August, 1846, Mr W. P. Williams moved the formation of an Caernarfon Auxiliary supporting the BSPGJ.¹¹⁵ With Rev. David Jones in the chair, Rev. Israel Naphtali was invited to address the meeting, with the Rev. W. Williams, Pentref, translating into Welsh.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.276.

¹¹¹ Idem.

¹¹² Idem.

¹¹³ Ibid., p.278.

¹¹⁴ BSPGJ MB:1.187

¹¹⁵ Cf. Unidentified newspaper cutting pasted in BSPGJ MB:1.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. p.219.

The Scottish Church's enthusiasm and influence in the field of Jewish mission was also strongly felt by her sister church, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The ascendancy of the confessional party in the Synod of Ulster over the Non-subscribers in the first half of the nineteenth century, led, in 1840, to the union of the Synod of Ulster with the Secession Synod, thus forming the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.¹¹⁷ Robert M'Cheyne attended that Assembly as a delegate of the Church of Scotland.¹¹⁸ He arrived in Belfast to find the soil well prepared for missionary outreach to the Jews. M'Cheyne preached on Romans 1:16, and Bonar claimed it had a most marked effect, 'many ministers, as they came out, were heard saying, "How was it we never thought of the duty of remembering Israel before?"'.¹¹⁹

By 1841, the idea of missions to the Jews had become highly popular in the Ulster Church. *The Belfast Newsletter* carried Jewish statistics and other relevant articles.¹²⁰ That year two memorials were presented to the first General Assembly petitioning it 'to take into consideration the propriety of adopting measures for the Conversion of the Jews.'¹²¹ One was from the Presbytery of Belfast, and the other, from the laity of the town, had 1,400 signatures appended.¹²² According to one account, when the pages of this memorial were joined together in one scroll, it reached completely around the walls of the Rosemary Street church where the Assembly sat.¹²³ Another account, closer to the occasion, has it that it 'extended from the pulpit to half way down the house.'¹²⁴

During the debate some reservations were expressed about the propriety of a new church undertaking such an immediate involvement in a new mission, but others, like William Graham of Dundonald, seconding the motion, argued that the Irish church should follow the example set before it by the 'gigantic step which the Church of Scotland had made' for 'they owed much to the Jews' whose claims on them 'were stronger than any other—stronger than those of the inhabitants of their native land.'¹²⁵ The arguments he urged, reported the *Newsletter*, included the fact that 'Jesus was a Jew':

It was pleasant to converse with the Irish in their own language, as he had done; but there was something more delightful, to address the Jews in Hebrew—for although the language of India was sublime, and the language of the Irish was soft, the Jewish language was sacred. To him there was a deeper theme, a holier subject; it was the blood of a Jew which atoned for the sinner's transgressions; it was upon a Jewish head that the crown of thorns was placed; it was a Jewish heart which was pierced and bled.¹²⁶

¹¹⁷ James Seaton Reid *The History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland* (Belfast: William Mullen, 1867) vol.3, p.476ff.

¹¹⁸ *Memoir*, p.134.

¹¹⁹ *Memoir*, p.135.

¹²⁰ Cf. *Belfast Newsletter*, 15th May, 12th June 1840, 15th June 1841.

¹²¹ *Belfast Newsletter*, 13th July, 1841.

¹²² Idem. Cf. Thomas Hamilton *History of the Irish Presbyterian Church* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1887) p.169.

¹²³ Hamilton, idem.

¹²⁴ *Belfast Newsletter*, 13th July, 1841.

¹²⁵ Idem.

¹²⁶ *Belfast Newsletter*, 13th July, 1841.

Many Irish Presbyterians considered it most fitting that the Assembly unanimously passed its Jewish missionary resolution on the Jewish Sabbath, Saturday 10th July, 1841, with the words:

The General Assembly ...feeling deeply humbled for their past neglect of that people do hereby resolve, by the grace of God, immediately to establish a mission to the seed of Abraham".¹²⁷

Candlish was appointed a delegate from the Church of Scotland to the 1841 Irish General Assembly and heard the animated discussion concerning the prospect of establishing its own missionary work among the Jewish people. Initially the Irish Assembly favoured close cooperation with the Church of Scotland but, after further consideration, determined to appoint its own missionary. Candlish reported enthusiastically, 'their having formed a mission of their own, would not prevent their acting practically along with this [the Church of Scotland] Committee.'¹²⁸

Addley attributes the transformation from apathy in 1840 to enthusiasm in 1841 largely to the impression left by the delegation from Scotland and especially the 'incalculable effect of M'Cheyne's visit.'¹²⁹ Over half a century later, W. D. Killen's prodigious memory remained highly impressed with M'Cheyne's contribution. As Addley rightly points out, Killen was not at all given to hagiography, indeed he was critical of M'Cheyne's transgressions of 'the canons of the elocutionist,' and disliked his mannerisms and pulpit oratory, yet he wrote: 'When here at this time he spoke once and again, and all his addresses produced a marvellous impression.'¹³⁰

The Irish church maintained regular contact both with M'Cheyne and the Scottish Committee. Individuals wrote concerning the interpretation of prophecy.¹³¹ The committee wrote asking information regarding the appropriate level of remuneration for the salaries and allowances to be paid to missionaries.¹³² On one occasion, to expedite the establishment of work in Palestine, that enterprise closest to M'Cheyne's heart, it offered one of its own missionaries.¹³³ The reciprocal arrangement worked satisfactorily, causing the Scottish General Assembly to record its gratitude:

The Assembly thankfully acknowledge the benefit of the happy cooperation of this Church and their sister Church in Ireland in this field of Christian labour, as well as the assistance rendered by the missionaries of the American Churches.¹³⁴

¹²⁷ *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, 1840-50* p.60.

¹²⁸ MB1, p.70.

¹²⁹ Addley, op. cit., p.96.

¹³⁰ W.D. Killen 'The Story of the Union' in *Jubilee of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland* (Belfast: 1890) p.71.f. Cited by Addley.

¹³¹ Cf. *Memoir* p.245.

¹³² MB1, p.91

¹³³ MB1, p.91

¹³⁴ MB1, p.278.

To encourage, support and cement this relationship, reports and missionary information from the Church of Scotland was made freely available to all Irish Presbyterian ministers; though how many availed themselves of the offer is unclear.¹³⁵

Although the Scottish work was not the premier British Jewish mission in terms of chronology, that honour being accorded to the LSPGJ founded in 1809, yet it has legitimate claim to be considered a genuinely pioneering work, if by pioneering is meant, a mission that not only carries out a significant operation itself but provides a quality of leadership that others follow. In this final chapter we have traced some of the strands of influence of the first phase of the Scottish Jewish mission in the decade between 1838-1852. Denominational and interdenominational Jewish missions welcomed this leadership and allowed themselves to be influenced through contact with the Scottish work. Not only so, but the methodology utilised by the mission, underpinned by its Scottish theology, has proved to be enduring, providing a standard repertoire of missionary methods, many still considered effective today. The structure of the Budapest report of the 1927 conference on *The Christian Approach to the Jew* reads almost like an inventory of the means used by the Scottish mission: Christian education, medical missions, philanthropy and community centres, and the widespread production and distribution of the Bible and Christian literature.

The work of the Scottish mission was significant because in order to determine the most suitable locations for its operations, the Church had undertaken a programme of careful research, including sending out questionnaires to ministers and missionaries and, especially, the 1839 Mission of Inquiry with the subsequent publication of the *Narrative*. At the heart of the Scottish strategy, however, lay not methodology but theology, namely, a deep conviction that Jesus of Nazareth was the fulfilment of Hebrew Messianic expectations. At its best, the challenge to which the mission sought to rise, sometimes with more success than at others, was how to present this highly controversial, if not offensive, claim in a way that did not patronise Jewish people, nor encourage them to effect a spurious change of religious affiliation through promises of material or social inducements. There can be little doubt that the project, in the years to 1852, was successful in bringing a large number of Jewish people to faith in Christ. Driven by the foundational principle of gratitude to and love for the Jewish people, the Scottish mission produced missionaries like John Duncan, who once allowed himself to be cheated out of £5 by two poor Jews, '...that I might gain an opportunity of slyly stealing away a prejudice or two, and insinuating a word for him who is the Gentile's light and Israel's glory.'¹³⁶ One hundred years later, it was this same spirit of loving sacrifice which, raised to its zenith, inspired Jane Haining to combat anti-Semitism to the death.

¹³⁵ Addley, op. cit., p.96.

¹³⁶ Sinclair, *Rich Gleanings*, p.371.

Conclusion

As a prelude to mission, a combination of factors formed a strategic affinity between Scottish Presbyterians and the Jewish people. These included the general influence of the Bible, as generations of Post-Reformation Scots absorbed the Hebraic ethos in both Tenach and New Testament, as well as its prescriptive teaching. This in turn created a profound sense of gratitude to Israel for being the historical conduit of their religious privileges. This empathy was further reinforced by the adoption in the Scottish Church of the Hebraic practice of national covenanting. The influence of the Synagogue on Presbyterian worship, Psalm singing, and the veneration of the Lord's Day as the Christian Sabbath, all predisposed Scottish Christians to a sympathetic interest in the spiritual welfare of the Jewish people. Public prayer each Sunday for the Jewish people was incorporated in the liturgical provisions of the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms and, especially, the Directory for Public Worship, adopted by the Church of Scotland in 1647. The desire for active engagement in Christian witness to the Jewish people was the logical outcome of influences brought to bear on, and arising from, late sixteenth century Presbyterian protest movements, such as the praying societies, as well the sporadic practice of the Church of Scotland in calling for days of fasting and humiliation, in which prayer for the restoration of Israel prominently featured. The transatlantic Concert for Prayer, instigated by the Scottish and American leaders of the eighteenth century Great Awakening was of strategic significance in the development of a missionary spirit. The *Edinburgh Christian Instructor* enthusiastically supported the founding, in 1809, of Scottish auxiliary societies of the *London Society for the Promotion of Christianity among the Jews* which gave Scottish Christians their first opportunity of practical engagement in Jewish missions.

The reconstruction of the LSPCJ as an exclusively Anglican body, after the secession of the Dissenters, led to the withdrawal of the support of the *Edinburgh Christian Instructor* at about the same time as the Glasgow based elder, Robert Wodrow, was laying the foundation for an authentically Scottish entry into the field of Jewish missions. These factors, synchronising with the arrival of reports from the Church's mission stations in India, especially in Bombay, of active engagement with the Beni Israel Jewish community, led in 1838, to the General Assembly responding positively to overtures from a number of Presbyteries, by establishing a committee for the conversion of the Jews with a membership of one hundred ministers and elders.

It has been necessary to redress the remarkable omission by John Roxborough, in his *Thomas Chalmers: Enthusiast for Mission*, of Thomas Chalmer's enthusiasm for the Jewish mission. The allegation by Don Chambers that the formation of the Jewish mission was atypical of the Scottish missionary vision and was a product of 'revivalist' tendencies considered characteristic of the industrialised Central Belt has been examined and refuted. Also, *contra* Chambers, it has been demonstrated that support for the Jewish mission was not confined to the Central Belt, but was

co-extensive with the Church's boundaries and included moral support and financial contributions from the impoverished Highlands, as well as from expatriate communities overseas. The unique roles of both women and young people as enthusiastic promoters and supporters of the mission project have been chronicled.

Examination has been made of the formation and membership of the 1839 Mission of Inquiry, sent by the Church to survey Jewish communities in Europe and Palestine, with a view to deciding the best location for the first mission station. The Mission of Inquiry has been set in the wider context of the Grand Tour, as the upheavals of the Napoleonic wars and the modernisation of travel, extended the concept beyond an educative tour of Europe to a romantic and adventurous tour of Greece, Egypt and the Levant, with Palestine, the Holy Land, as the ultimate destiny.

Use has been made of important material from M'Cheyne's letters and other manuscripts that have hitherto lain largely neglected by all of Robert M'Cheyne's biographers. In reassessing the character of M'Cheyne, it has been possible to correct the somewhat effeminate, pietistic and hagiographic view that has become prominent since the publication of the *Memoir* and the subsequent analysis of William G. Blaikie on M'Cheyne's preaching. Without undermining the spiritual essence of the man, it has been possible to prove that M'Cheyne was a very masculine young man with a spirited and adventurous outlook on life, whose participation in physical activity was only limited by a combination of serious ailments.

Careful investigation of both published and unpublished literature on the Mission of Inquiry, especially Bonar and M'Cheyne's *Narrative*, and Stephan Reif's and Alan Harman's work, has demonstrated that the use of Hebrew by the Palestine Jewish community of the time was much more extensive than previously thought. Despite the political instability of the region, M'Cheyne and Bonar's report, published as the *Narrative*, enthusiastically argued the case for the establishment of a mission station in Palestine. It was, however, the remarkable experiences of the two senior members of the delegation, Drs Black and Keith, returning earlier by a different route to Scotland, that overwhelmed the case for Palestine and led the Church to think in terms of setting up the first mission stations in European Jewish communities, especially those of Jassy in Moldavia and Pesth in Hungary.

Attention has been paid to the argument that the primary motivation of the Jewish mission was eschatological in nature and it has been argued that eschatology, though important, was but one strand of a complex web of motivating ideas, including a deep consciousness of the ethical imperative of gratitude. An analysis of the eschatological debate between the Bonar brothers and David Brown has been made. It has been possible to demonstrate that the term 'literal interpretation of prophecy' was eschatologically neutral. As used both by premillennialists and

postmillennialists, it reflected the classical gramatico-historical hermeneutic common to both sides of the debate, which debate was internal to the Jewish committee. In the light of modern premillennial Dispensationalism and Christian Zionism, it is instructive to note that it was the postmillennial David Brown, not the premillennial Bonars, who produced the definitive, and, arguably, the as yet unanswered, apologetic for the view that the restoration of Israel includes both a return to its ancient homeland as well as a return to the God and Father of Jesus Christ.

The account of the sending of Daniel Edward to Jassy as the Church of Scotland's first missionary to the Jews draws on the material from Catherine Edward's published account, as well as the minutes of the Committee. Concurrent with this research, Lionel Ritchie was also researching an article on Edward for the *New Dictionary of National Biography* and produced a paper, published by the *Scottish Church History Society*, which is somewhat more restricted in scope than chapter eight. We can largely concur with his research, except for an important difference of opinion over the misdemeanours of the probably self-styled 'Dr' Mason. The dishonourable recall to Scotland of Alfred Edershiem, one of the key converts of the Budapest mission, increased the burdens under which the Edward family lived, conducting their mission among a community overtly hostile to its progress. These acute stresses led to Catherine's disillusionment and resulted in outbursts of an overtly anti-Semitic nature. They serve to counterbalance the harmony and the success of the mission in Pesh.

When, in 1841, John Duncan's team of Scottish missionaries arrived in Pesh, they were able to build on the foundations laid by Black and Keith's remarkable rapprochement with the erstwhile protectress of the mission, the evangelically minded Archduchess, Maria Dorothea. Duncan strengthened this liaison by recruiting the support of the Archduke himself. Duncan's missionary methods were demonstrably at the cutting edge of mid-nineteenth century missiological thought, as a comparison with the leading theories of contemporary missionary strategists and theoreticians such as Henry Venn, readily shows.

The Disruption of the Church of Scotland and the formation of the Free Church of Scotland, to which all the missionaries adhered, had little negative effect on the work in Pesh, apart from the lamentable removal of Duncan to Edinburgh, to teach elementary Hebrew at the Free Church's New College. Positively, despite the refusal of the Church of Scotland to release the funds collected for the missionaries, the assumption of Free Church control of the mission, as the premier mission of the church, opened it up to more modern management influences, as well as a more generous provision of funds.

To arrive at a tenable understanding of the effectiveness of the Scottish mission it is necessary carefully to evaluate the relative strengths of the competing ideological and theological currents. Jewish writers such as Moshe Herczel and Randolph Braham readily admit to the plethora of

Hungarian converts to Christianity during the mid-nineteenth century, but attribute these not to the influence of the mission but to the secularising influences prevalent in a Jewish community seeking to establish for itself a secure place in a modern nation state. Due attention must be paid to the Jewish and Christian usages of the verb 'convert', with their contradictory connotations. Finally, recognition must be given to the profound reluctance of nineteenth century Calvinistic missionaries to exaggerating the success of their work, a tendency not always scrupulously followed by their supporters and later advocates.

Notwithstanding such caveats, the success of the mission was remarkable. To it can be attributed the production of influential Jewish converts and the revival of the Hungarian Protestant churches. In the wider world beyond, the influence of Scottish mission extended not only to contemporary British and Irish Presbyterian churches, but also reached down through the decades to the present day. It produced the commitment to the Zionist vision of the eccentric Orde Wingate, the pro-Zionist scion of William Wingate, who was influential in the conversion of Israel Saphir. One of Saphir's physical descendents was the crypto-Jew Leo Amery, who drafted the Balfour Declaration, entrenching British commitment to a Jewish State in Palestine. The narrative concludes by showing how the spirit of the Scottish mission, established in Pesth in 1841 produced, almost exactly one hundred years later, the sacrificial commitment characteristic of the members of the Hungarian *Jó Pásztor Misszió* (Society of the Good Shepherd) in rescuing Jewish people from Hitler's holocaust and culminated in the martyrdom of Jane Haining, the matron of the Budapest *Szkót Misszió* (Scottish Mission) school, in Auschwitz.



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