

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



*Buy me a coffee*

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



**PATREON**

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_sbet-01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_sbet-01.php)

# CREATIVE MISSION IN KALIMPONG, INDIA: THE CONTRIBUTION OF KATHERINE GRAHAM (1861-1917)

IAN RANDALL

SENIOR RESEARCH ASSOCIATE, CAMBRIDGE CENTRE FOR CHRISTIANITY WORLDWIDE AND  
SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW, KIRBY LAING CENTRE FOR PUBLIC THEOLOGY.

The missionary work of John Anderson Graham (1861-1942) has been the subject of ongoing interest. The homes for children which he founded in Kalimpong, India, from 1900 onwards, are being celebrated this year, 125 years later.<sup>1</sup> In 1931-32 he was Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, a role not filled by any other overseas missionary. James Minto wrote what became the standard biography, *Graham of Kalimpong* (1974). The book covers some of the work done by Katherine, who married John Anderson (as he was typically known). and Minto rightly highlighted that their marriage was 'a love match'; they 'needed each other, with their marriage 'a complete fulfilment for both of them'. This was expressed in their words and actions. Again, Minto notes how they 'shared all their hopes and expectations' and no scheme that John Anderson came up with 'was undertaken without a discussion with Katie [as she was known in the close family] whose practical mind often saw flaws or difficulties which the burning enthusiasm of Graham had overlooked or glossed over'.<sup>2</sup> All of this is true, but the role of Katherine has not been considered so far apart from in relation to her husband. This article seeks to bring out her contribution to the creative mission in Kalimpong, especially through using the rich archive held in the National Library of Scotland.<sup>3</sup> When Katherine and John Anderson were apart, they wrote to each other almost every day. In utilising letters Katherine wrote, her voice can be heard in a way that has not happened before.

## MISSION AND MEETING IN EDINBURGH

Katherine McConachie was the eldest daughter of John and Margaret McConachie of Edinburgh. Both her parents came from Morayshire.

---

<sup>1</sup> See <https://drgrahamshomes.co.uk/our-story>

<sup>2</sup> James R. Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong* (Edinburgh: Blackwell, 1974), pp. 16, 34.

<sup>3</sup> Personal and family correspondence of John Anderson Graham and Katherine Graham, 1884-1919, is to be found in: Acc.6039. National Library of Scotland (NLS). I am most grateful to Alison Metcalfe, Archivist and Curator at the NLS, for her help.

John was a native of Rothes, on the banks of the River Spey, ten miles south of Elgin. Margaret was born in Cottinch in Duffus, not far from the coast, and known for the nearby Duffus castle. Prior to her marriage, Margaret was a nurse, and it is said that was a favourite nursing assistant of Professor Joseph Lister, the founder of antiseptic medicine and a pioneer in preventive medicine. In the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, Lister conducted his famous experiments in antiseptic surgery in the years from 1869 to 1877, when he moved to London. Lister hoped Margaret would go with him to London, but she refused to leave Scotland. She and John had three girls and two boys. It is significant that the three girls all went to St George's High School for Girls, in Melville Street, which was founded in 1888 by a group of Victorian women led by Dame Sarah Mair, and aimed to provide education to girls previously denied it.<sup>4</sup> It is clear that John, who was in business, and Margaret, had aspirations for their daughters. John died while the family were still growing and Margaret opened her own small nursing home in Hailes Street, Edinburgh.<sup>5</sup>

Although Katherine, who was born on 14 December 1861, did not follow her mother into formal nursing training, she was deeply concerned for the health and wellbeing of poor children in Edinburgh. This led her to take up work in the early 1880s connected with child welfare, including health, clothing, proper food, and housing, concerns that would be central commitments throughout her life. A book published in 1891, *Slum Life in Edinburgh*, set out in stark terms the horrific, often poverty-stricken conditions for many adults and children in the slums around the Grassmarket and the Royal Mile.<sup>6</sup> There were wider problems connected with poor relief. A report in 1885 found that children in workhouses in Scotland were receiving half the amount of food that was considered reasonable in England.<sup>7</sup> The involvement Katherine had was not under the auspices of poor law provision, but was supported and coordinated by churches and Christian agencies. One of the agencies was Carrubber's Close Mission, which drew support from several denominations, with figures such as James Gall, a Free Church of Scotland minister, and William Robertson, a Church of Scotland minister and promoter of urban

<sup>4</sup> See Judith Fewell and Fiona Paterson, *Girls in their prime* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1990).

<sup>5</sup> Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>6</sup> T.B.M., *Slum Life in Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: James Thin, 1891).

<sup>7</sup> M. McNeil, *Half-Yearly Report to the Board of Supervision*, June 1885, cited in Helen Jane MacDonald, 'Children under the Care of the Scottish Poor Law, 1880-1929' (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1994), p. 186.

mission, taking leadership. Those serving were to be in an evangelical church.<sup>8</sup>

The church of which Katherine was a member was St Cuthbert's Church of Scotland, Edinburgh. It had a history of social action and at the time when Katherine was active in this area James MacGregor was the well-established and respected minister, having alongside him a younger ministerial colleague in his twenties, Andrew Wallace Williamson. The congregation was large and energetic. Both the ministers later became Moderators of the Church of Scotland General Assembly.<sup>9</sup> It was through her care for children that Katherine met John Anderson Graham. He was born on 8 September 1861 in London, to a Scottish Presbyterian family. His father was a customs official. John Anderson's early education was at Cardross Parish School, after his father and mother moved to Cardross, Dunbartonshire, in 1862, and then later he was at Glasgow High School. This led to employment in Edinburgh in the civil service. In Edinburgh, his church was St Bernard's, where the minister was John McMurtrie, who became editor of the Church of Scotland's *Life and Work* magazine. John Anderson helped McMurtrie prepare magazine material, including coverage of missionary endeavours.<sup>10</sup>

A new phase of life opened for John Anderson when he left his civil service post to study at Edinburgh University, graduating MA in 1885. With a call to Church of Scotland ministry having been confirmed by McMurtrie and others, he proceeded to studies in Divinity for three years. After his first year, he was in Dresden in Germany for a period of study and while there he had a deep spiritual experience, bringing assurance that he was 'really pardoned', and he resolved that he 'would work for Christ with my whole heart'. He relayed this conviction to Professor Archibald Charteris, who had become his spiritual mentor, and at the same time he told Charteris that he was considering overseas service.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Anon., *These Fifty Years: The Story of Carrubber's Close Mission, Edinburgh 1858-1909* (Edinburgh: The Tract and Colportage Society of Scotland, 1909); R. M. Robertson, ed., *William Robertson of the Carrubber's Close Mission: Reminiscences of a Life of Blessing* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1914), cited by Christina Christie Lumsden, 'Class, Gender and Christianity in Edinburgh 1850-1905: A Study in Denominationalism' (PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2012), pp. 152-3.

<sup>9</sup> Lord Christopher Nicholson Johnston Sands, *Life of Andrew Wallace Williamson* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1929).

<sup>10</sup> R.D. Kernohan, *Scotland's Life and Work* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1979), p. 14.

<sup>11</sup> Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong*, pp. 9-10. Charteris was Professor of Biblical Criticism in the University of Edinburgh.

On John Anderson's return from Germany, he and Katherine met, and they recognised that the many contacts John Anderson had built up by that time were of great value in seeking to assist children in the slums. Over the course of a few months, she brought to his attention individuals who might be given foster homes. On 10 June 1887, for example, she wrote to 'My dear Mr Graham' and asked if he knew of a 'good home' for a boy, Paddy McQueenie. She was hoping for a reply but recognised that it might be a while, as John was travelling outside Edinburgh. She concluded 'Happy you to be going to the country!' and signed 'Most sincerely, Kate McConachie'.<sup>12</sup>

The formality of 'Mr Graham' was soon to change, since John proposed to her later in June and she accepted. Her next letter, on 2 July 1887, was to 'My darling Ian'.<sup>13</sup> Further travels had taken John Anderson to Keswick, in the Lake District, superintending some boys from Edinburgh at a camp in connection with the annual holiness Keswick Convention.<sup>14</sup> Katherine was thankful for his 'long interesting letter' and was sure his time in Keswick would bring 'great joy'. She affirmed that neither of them belonged to the 'nothing to do class!' That brought her to a request: she was looking for accommodation for a young woman who was in prison but was to be released that week.<sup>15</sup> By this time, both John and Katherine were associated with the Edinburgh University Missionary Association and while this was directed primarily to overseas mission it did bring together those who saw the need for mission in Scotland.<sup>16</sup> As part of her growing interest in theology and mission, Katherine wrote in July 1887 about looking into 'Natural Theology', reading Hegel - not with great enthusiasm - and being inspired by the life of Ion Keith-Falconer, son of the Earl and Countess of Kintore, Aberdeenshire. He had entered Trinity College in the University of Cambridge in 1874 and academic achievement led to his being appointed Lecturer and then Professor of Arabic in the University. In the 1880s, his thoughts turned to overseas mission,

<sup>12</sup> Katherine to John Anderson, 10 June 1887, Acc.6039 Box 2(2), 1886-1888. NLS.

<sup>13</sup> Katherine to John Anderson, 2 July 1887, Acc.6039 Box 2(2). NLS. Although John Anderson Graham was always 'John' or 'John Anderson' in wider circles, in Katherine's communications she (alone) called him 'Ian'.

<sup>14</sup> For Keswick, see Ian Randall and Charles Price, *Transforming Keswick: The Keswick Convention Past, Present and Future* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000).

<sup>15</sup> Jo Turner and Helen Johnston, 'Female prisoners, aftercare and release: Residential provision and support in late nineteenth-century England', *British Journal of Community Justice*, 13/3 (2015), pp. 35-50.

<sup>16</sup> For this missionary-supporting body see the Edinburgh University Missionary Association, AA 3.3, 1825-1926, in the University of Edinburgh archives.

and he became a Free Church of Scotland missionary to the Arab World. Having only just begun his outreach, however, he died after attacks of malaria.<sup>17</sup> This story of sacrifice affected Katherine.

Along with her work in poor areas of Edinburgh, Katherine was beginning to help John Anderson with proofs of written material. He was the national secretary of the Young Men's Guild, founded at the instigation of Charteris in 1880, to encourage young men towards devoted service for Christ within the Church of Scotland. Charteris was the Honorary President and he had recruited John Anderson, who with typical activism was putting together material for what had become 681 branches of the Guild, with 25,871 members.<sup>18</sup> Katherine wrote on 23 July 1887 that she had been 'chasing up the printer' for proofs of Guild reports. If the printer did not produce them in time, she threatened, 'I'll... him.'<sup>19</sup> The nature of the threat remained unclear. Contact with Edinburgh University and in particular the Divinity Hall meant that Katherine, with her vivacious nature, was noticed by other Divinity students, and she had to explain to John that 'there were no relationships with anyone else'. Another conversation about relationships was with her mother. Margaret and Katherine were close, and it was a relief - as Katherine reported on 28 July to John (who was travelling over the summer on behalf of the Guild) - that her mother had accepted that going abroad was likely in the foreseeable future. Margaret had protested, but largely in fun. Katherine's future was becoming clearer.

## KALIMPONG: DESTINATION AND DEVELOPMENT

In 1885 one of the prominent members of the Young Men's Guild, James Dunlop, from Hamilton, Lanarkshire, proposed that the Guild should sponsor its own overseas missionary, and Guild members across the country endorsed this.<sup>20</sup> The Church of Scotland Foreign Mission Committee suggested that someone could serve in Kalimpong, a hill town in the Himalayan foothills of West Bengal - within the Church of Scotland's Eastern Himalayan Mission - with the Guild raising the financial support. This was agreed. John Anderson offered himself as the first candi-

<sup>17</sup> Katherine to John Anderson, 10 and 20 July 1887, Acc.6039 Box 2(2). NLS. See Robert Sinker, *Memorials of the Hon. Ion Keith-Falconer* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell & Co., 1888) for what Katherine was reading.

<sup>18</sup> For the history, Mamie Magnusson, *Out of Silence: The Women's Guild 1887-1987* (Edinburgh: St Andrew's Press, 1987).

<sup>19</sup> Katherine to John Anderson, 23 July 1887, Acc.6039 Box 2(2). NLS.

<sup>20</sup> D.G. Manuel, *A Gladdening River. Twenty-Five Years Guild Influence among the Himalayas* (London: A.&C. Black Ltd., 1914), pp. 30-1.

date, and conferences of the Men's Guild in 1887-88 led to a unanimous vote for him to be supported as the first Guild missionary.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, Katherine's letters to him showed how she was engaging with contemporary thought, with a view to mission. She was appreciating 'a grand broad Christianity', and enjoyed a discussion group containing some Divinity students. Topics ranged from Reformed theology to Buddhism. Her reading included Thomas Carlyle's *Reminiscences*, W.H. Mallock's *New Republic*, and T.H. Huxley's *Science Primers*. She was also following correspondence in *The Scotsman* on the Westminster Confession of Faith. In September, when John's classes started up again, he was exhausted from travelling and he was persuaded to go to his class only by Katherine, who considered that the tutor owed her a 'heavy debt'. With India in mind, in November she recommended to John Anderson an essay, 'In an Indian temple', which she had read and 'liked it very much'.<sup>22</sup>

As well as preparing for the future through discussions and reading, Katherine was thinking about the deepening of her own spiritual life. Her reading in 1888 included *The Christian*, which featured articles by writers and speakers such as F.B. Meyer, whom John Anderson had heard at Keswick. Meyer advocated deeper spiritual experience out of which came fruitful, practical service.<sup>23</sup> One concern Katherine had in relation to this was that John Anderson continually over-worked, and she mentioned that in letters. Somebody had said to her: 'See to it that Mr Graham takes 2 days to do 5 days' work and not just one day!' Another theme in her letters in this period was the need for sermons to emerge from authentic spirituality. She was 'bored listening to long harangues by a few Revs of our esteemed Presbytery'. In July, however, she had been at a conference in Edinburgh at which two American missionary statesmen, A.T. Pierson and A.J. Gordon, were leading speakers. They were, she wrote, 'on fire' with zeal, and they wanted 'the blessing they had received to be transmitted to others'. The Scottish missionary Alexander Hetherwick had also

<sup>21</sup> Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong*, pp. 13-14. For earlier missionary history in the region see John Bray, 'Early Protestant Missionary Engagement with the Himalayan Region and Tibet', in John Bray, ed., *Ladakhi Histories: Local and Regional Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 249-70.

<sup>22</sup> Katherine to John Anderson, 31 July 1887; 13 August 1887; 23 August 1887; 24 September 1887; 8 November 1887, Acc.6039 Box 2(2). NLS. 'In an Indian Temple' was in a book by Edwin Arnold, *Lotus and Jewel* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1887). Katherine was keeping up with very recently published books.

<sup>23</sup> For Meyer's message, see Ian Randall, *Spirituality and Social Change: The Contribution of F.B. Meyer (1847-1929)* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2003), esp. chapter 5.

spoken, appealing for action for Africa. Katherine hoped for great results from the meeting, especially 'mission revival' in 'our land'. She was sure she would not forget that night.<sup>24</sup>

The few months before John Anderson and Katherine left Scotland were hectic. John's ordination was followed two days later by the wedding. The ordination was unique, with hundreds of members of the Young Men's Guild present, and although John Anderson was presented to the Edinburgh Presbytery by the Church of Scotland Foreign Mission Committee this was jointly with the Young Men's Guild. He would be an agent totally supported by the Guild, while working under the direction of the Foreign Mission Committee.<sup>25</sup> For Katherine these were highly emotional days, especially so given her personality. She had been appalled by a conversation with a friend who had spoke of loving sentiments as 'gush with little or no foundation!' Katherine, who revelled in such sentiments, had a wish: 'May her eyes be opened!' Although at the wedding ceremony she did not give a speech, in responding to congratulations she gave on 'oration'. Following the wedding came departure. On 20 January 1889, John Anderson preached a farewell sermon to members of the Guild at St George's Church, Edinburgh. He and Katherine then set out for India, via Switzerland, Austria, and Italy, staying with Professor Charteris and his wife Catherine in the Austrian Tyrol.<sup>26</sup> It was like a second commissioning to mission.

The Grahams sailed from Venice, changing ships at Suez, and reached Calcutta on 21 March 1889. With his usual activism, John Anderson preached his first sermon in India on the next day, in the Scots Kirk, Calcutta. Two weeks later they travelled on to Darjeeling, the final part of the journey on ponies. William Macfarlane had laid the foundation of the Church of Scotland's mission work in the Eastern Himalayas two decades before the arrival of the Grahams and the Presbyterian church in Kalimpong was named the Macfarlane Memorial Church. A further development was the decision in 1887 by the Scottish Universities' Mission to support a Training Institute at Kalimpong to train teachers and catechists.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Katherine to John Anderson, 8 January 1888; 17 June 1888; 30 June 1888; 18 July 1888; 20 July 1888, Acc.6039 Box 2(2). NLS. For Pierson, and also Gordon, see Dana L. Robert, *Occupy Until I Come: A. T. Pierson and the Evangelization of the World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

<sup>25</sup> Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>26</sup> Arthur Gordon, *The Life of Archibald Hamilton Charteris* (London: Hodder & Stoughton), p. 389.

<sup>27</sup> Elizabeth G.K. Hewat, *Vision and Achievement, 1796-1956: A History of the Foreign Missions of the Churches united in the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1969), pp. 163-4.



In 1889 the Kalimpong district had three main tribes - the Lepchas, the Bhutias and the Nepalese - and John Anderson took on the supervision of local preachers whose activities extended over four centres. There was also a strong emphasis on education. Kalimpong and the area around had nine schools in 1889, with 274 students. There were only a few girls being educated, and in 1890 Katherine started - as a creative innovation - a small girls' school which was to become the Kalimpong Girls School. Initially she had two helpers, one from the Church of Scotland mission in Calcutta and one a young Bengali Christian. As the school expanded, the Church of Scotland Women's Guild added a trained teacher, Lily Waugh, to take responsibility for boarders. A Women's Training College was to develop.<sup>28</sup>

Medicine was another area to which Katherine gave attention at an early stage. Soon after their arrival, she started a small dispensary in the Kalimpong mission grounds.<sup>29</sup> As with the schooling, there was crucial financial support from the Woman's Guild in Scotland, who responded to a letter from Katherine. She was glad there was a beginning but was aware of the limitations of the clinic. Diseases such as dysentery, tuberculosis and hepatitis were common, and the goal quickly became a cottage hospital. The foundation stone of a building was laid in 1892 by the Scottish co-founder of the Darjeeling Tea Company, George Christison, and a qualified medical missionary, Dr. Charles F. Ponder, arrived in August 1893. He had been a tea planter in Darjeeling and then had studied at medical school in Edinburgh. As an indication of the need, he was reckoned to have treated 1,588 patients in the temporary dispensary in one month, October 1893. A 25-bed hospital was opened in 1894, with Bengali government as well as Church of Scotland support, and the name given was Charteris Hospital, as a reminder of all that was owed to those who had guided John and Katherine. Dr. Ponder was seen in Scotland as a representative of a Guild vision. His immediate concern, however, in line with Katherine's, was more local. He began training three local assistants soon after his arrival, and in 1895 they passed their government examinations.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Dick Bahadur Dewan, *Education in the Darjeeling Hills: An Historical Survey, 1835-1985* (New Delhi: Indus. 1991), p. 119; cf. *Eastern Himalayan Church News*, June 1970, p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> See Alex McKay, 'Missionary Medicine and the Rise of Kalimpong', in his *Their Footprints Remain: Biomedical Beginnings Across the Indo-Tibetan Frontier* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), chapter 1 (pp. 55-84), esp. p. 72.

<sup>30</sup> Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong*, p. 36.

Another creative initiative was teaching skills that would benefit local women, and here Katherine drew from her knowledge of cottage industries in the highlands of Scotland. For Katherine, acquiring skills could enable women to gain more satisfaction in work as well as making some money to help the income of the household. Women were involved in field cultivation work but there were times in the year when little was being done in the fields. Weaving was already an established skill in and around Kalimpong and traditional Tibetan designs were in demand.<sup>31</sup> The new 'Kalimpong Home Industries' took shape in 1897. As time went on, through teachers Katherine recruited, women became expert at knitting, embroidery, and crochet work. Dunfermline linen, Alloa yarn and British silk were imported for them to work on. The Home Industries started to produce socks, stockings, silk ties, tea cloths, bed spreads, bags, and other articles. Money was needed, but gifts came in, including a substantial gift from a Hindu friend of Katherine's, and, later, one from a Scot, Mrs McKean. There was also a grant from the Government. To a large extent, it was younger women who were involved in finer hand work. But Katherine found ways to encourage older women, for example to breed poultry.<sup>32</sup>

It is not that all of Katherine's experiences in this early period were positive. She found it hard when John Anderson was travelling elsewhere in India, and this became increasingly necessary as time went on. The growth in Kalimpong demanded increased financial backing and funds had to be raised. In a letter in November 1891 Katherine spoke of feeling 'very miserable'. She was not sleeping well and wished John was with her. At that point she was caring for the first two of what would be six children born to the Grahams: David Chateris, born in December 1889, and John (known at home as Jack) Stevenson, born in May 1891. When John Anderson was away, frequent letters continued, as was their practice, and the subjects covered by Katherine wove in domestic and communal matters. On 12 January 1893, for example, she reported that she had taken the boys up to the 'silk house' - we 'trailed up' - to find the building of the house progressing only slowly, as the bricks were not dry enough. She was also keeping up with the building of the hospital. Two extra masons were working on the arches. Finally, she appreciated what Lucy (Waugh) was doing, with twenty-eight girls in the boarding school.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Cole, *Dream Weavers: Textile Art from the Tibetan Plateau* (Singapore: Times Edition-Marshall Cavendish, 2004).

<sup>32</sup> Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong*, pp. 93-4.

<sup>33</sup> Katherine to John Anderson, 10 November 1891; 12 January 1893, Acc.6039 Box 2 (3). NLS.

## WIDENING THE WORK

The early to mid-1890s saw a widening of the mission in Kalimpong. One task Katherine took on was to prepare publicity for use in Scotland. Professor Charteris was raising the profile of the links between Scotland and Kalimpong.<sup>34</sup> In the course of a week in January 1893, Katherine covered in five letters to John her varied concerns and activities. She was turning photographs she had taken into lantern slides, which could be shown when representatives of the mission were speaking. She also had involvement in the production of the *Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Sikkim News*, and having seen some proofs she found the headings being used ‘striking and suggestive’. Food was an issue: potatoes were doing well; cheese had to be thrown away as the rats had got to it; there was not enough milk, as some cows were unwell, and she was concerned about the effect of lack of milk on ‘the bairns’. In tracing the boys’ development, she was pleased that David, aged two, had said – in English – that the nursery was ‘very nice’. John was replying to the letters and reported that his journey would take in the Khyber Pass. Katherine hoped he would navigate the Pass well.<sup>35</sup>

As Kalimpong’s Charteris hospital facilities grew, Charles Ponder’s sister arrived to assist him and increasing numbers of patients were treated.<sup>36</sup> The hospital became established as the medical training centre in the district. A Leprosy Home was added. Money was an ongoing issue and Katherine helped in that area by careful book-keeping. She also undertook some nursing training, perhaps thinking back to the way her mother had that calling. The government was content that the hospital should fulfil a central role and there was some government funding. However, the primary source of finance was the Women’s Guild. Houses for the doctor and for the nurses were built.<sup>37</sup> In a booklet by Archibald Fleming, the third editor of *Life and Work*, then minister of St Columba’s Church, London, as well as a pioneer religious broadcaster, Katherine was termed ‘The Lady of Healing’. In a chapter with this title, Fleming also spoke of the description of Katherine as ‘nursing mother’ in Kalimpong. In Fleming’s view, Katherine was the far-seeing brain behind the ministry of the

<sup>34</sup> *Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Sikkim News*, 1893, p. 26.

<sup>35</sup> Katherine to John Anderson, 13, 14, 16, 17 and 18 January 1893, Acc.6039 Box 2 (3). NLS.

<sup>36</sup> Manuel, *Gladdening River*, pp. 134-7; cf. Jayeeta Sharma, ‘Kalimpong as a Transcultural Missionary Contact Zone’, in Markus Viehbeck, ed., *Transcultural Encounters in the Himalayan Borderlands: Kalimpong as a “Contact Zone”* (Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing, 2017), pp. 25-53.

<sup>37</sup> Manuel, *Gladdening River*, pp. 172-6.

hospital.<sup>38</sup> In 1897, a branch dispensary was opened and other dispensaries followed in 1904 and 1912. Dispensaries were also opened in the Darjeeling district.<sup>39</sup> Katherine was concerned that there should be sustained Christian witness in medical settings.<sup>40</sup>

The Home Industries continued to develop. There were added areas, such as training for men and women in handicrafts such as carpentry, Tibetan rug and handbag weaving, and block-printing. The teaching and training laid the foundation for the Kalimpong Arts and Crafts Centre and Arts' College. A reputation for first-class quality was built up. One crucial development in lace-making took place in 1904 which Katherine saw as providential. Catherine Channer, who had qualifications for teaching not only ordinary Torchon and Cluny laces, but finer kinds like Brussels, Italian, Honiton and others, came on a visit to Kalimpong. She had taught in the English Midlands and was joint authoress of a book on lace-making. At the time of her visit to Kalimpong, Catherine Channer was well settled in Darjeeling, with a significant income for her teaching. However, Katherine appealed to the government for help and she was able to match the salary. Channer worked for four years, establishing the Kalimpong Lace School as part of the Home Industries, and when she had to leave owing to ill health she had trained a successor, Gladys Korb. Over time, the laces produced by the school gained acceptance and appreciation in national and international markets. Six other Lace Schools were opened in villages near Kalimpong. In 1911, when Queen Mary visited India, newspapers such as *The Times of India* reported that Katharine Stewart-Murray, the Duchess of Atholl, had gifted a lace handkerchief from Kalimpong to the Queen. At that point the lace-making had 162 employees.<sup>41</sup>

In 1900, as noted above, John Anderson began opening homes for children, on a cottage model, and it is this aspect of the mission which became the best known. He had a particular concern to take in Anglo-Indian children, who were often ostracised by both communities. As the

<sup>38</sup> Archibald Fleming, *John A. Graham of Kalimpong*, DD (Edinburgh: Church of Scotland, Foreign Mission Committee [1931]), chapter 4, 'The Lady of Healing'. In an essay by Subhadeep Paul, 'The Kinetic Mission of Kalimpong', in Bashabi Fraser and Deb Narayan Bandyopadhyay, eds., *Lakshmi's Footprints and Paisley Patterns: Perspectives on Scoto-Indian Literary and Cultural Interrelations* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2024), pp. 115-128, there is a misleading reference to John Anderson Graham marrying 'Lady Katherine' (p. 116).

<sup>39</sup> Cindy Perry, *Nepali around the World: Emphasizing Nepali Christians of the Himalayas* (Kathmandu: Ekta, 1997), p. 77, n. 88.

<sup>40</sup> Katherine to John Anderson, 11 December 1901, Acc.6039 Box 3 (2). NLS.

<sup>41</sup> Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong*, pp. 93-4; Sandip C. Jain, 'The Lace Industry of Kalimpong', *Sikkim Express*, 5 February 2023.

homes multiplied, he was able to take in Anglo-Indian children from slum areas in Calcutta, along with the majority of the children who came from the plantations of Assam and Darjeeling, the offspring of white planter men and the women who worked in the plantations. They became known as 'tea garden children'. Although the homes were not Katherine's first priority, she was fully supportive of the endeavour. In the early 1900s she was looking out for places that might be suitable for homes. New homes were being built and she reported to John Anderson on progress – or lack of it, sometimes because of shortage of wood – when he was away. She was also keen to encourage prayer for the homes, together with all areas of mission, and in 1902 she was delighted about the numbers at prayers meetings. At other meetings she led singing, playing a harmonium which had come (probably through her mother) from Joseph Lister. Typically, worship embraced the whole of creation and in January 1903 she was pleased to find boys in one of the homes engaged in gardening.<sup>42</sup>

An important dimension of the Grahams' life in Kalimpong was the large number of guests entertained. One was Annie Taylor, who stayed at the Guild mission house. She was known in Scotland: in 1894, *The Scottish Geographical Magazine* published an article by her, 'My experiences in Tibet', which was derived from a paper she read at Royal Scottish Geographical Society meetings in Edinburgh and Glasgow in December 1893.<sup>43</sup> This was followed by a popular book in 1895, *Pioneering in Tibet*.<sup>44</sup> She had appealed for twelve missionaries for Tibet and Evan Mackenzie, from Dingwall, in the north of Scotland, was among the first to respond, accompanied by his wife, Elizabeth, and their infant child. There were six others from Scotland – from Peterhead, Aberdeen and Peterculter in the north, and Dunfermline, Lochgelly and Greenock in Scotland's central lowlands. Only two came from England (from London). Unusually for a small British-based initiative, four were Scandinavians seeking mission opportunities. Katherine was fascinated by hearing Annie describing how she led a band of missionaries seeking to work in Tibet. The band did not stay together, as Annie's style was too individualist. The Mackenzies joined the mission in Kalimpong.<sup>45</sup> Annie settled in Yatung, ministering

<sup>42</sup> Katherine to John Anderson, 15 December 1901; 1 November 1902, 3 January 1903, Acc.6039 Box 3 (2). NLS.

<sup>43</sup> Annie R. Taylor, 'My Experiences in Tibet', *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. 10, No 1 (January 1894), pp. 1-8.

<sup>44</sup> Annie R. Taylor, *Pioneering in Tibet* (London: Morgan & Scott, 1895).

<sup>45</sup> John Bray, 'Stumbling on the Threshold: Annie R. Taylor's Tibetan Pioneer Mission, 1893-1907', *Bulletin of Tibetology*, 50/1&2 (2014), pp. 91-116; Ian Randall, 'Annie Royale Taylor (1855-1922): A Missionary Adventurer in Tibet', *Priscilla Papers*, 39/2 (2025), pp. 19-23.

in various ways to Tibetans. Another unusual guest of the Grahams was 'Mr Judd', who travelled the roads writing texts on outcrops of rocks. He had a long beard, did not wash very often, and wanted to greet fellow missionaries with a brotherly kiss - which Katherine tried to avoid.<sup>46</sup>

Others who were not engaged in Christian mission were welcomed. Kalimpong's proximity to Tibet ensured a constant stream of so-called 'Tibetologists' and 'Nirvanaseekers' and most visited the Grahams. It was Katherine who was central to the hospitality: guests revelled in the relaxed atmosphere she created and the fun generated. At meal times the six Graham children were fully involved in conversations. David, Jack, Peggy, Isa, Bunty, and Betty were encouraged to express their opinions and they in turn learned a great deal from their varied guests. Also, on returning from his trips John Anderson would recount in detail all that had happened and people he had met. The Grahams were interested in what was termed the neighbouring 'closed lands' of Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan, and John Anderson developed a good relationship with the Maharajas of Bhutan and Nepal. In 1897 he wrote popular-style book on Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan, for the benefit of the Men's Guild in Scotland as well as other readers, with an introduction by Sir Charles Elliott, Lieutenant-General of Bengal.<sup>47</sup> Along with welcoming those who called to see them, Katherine sometimes found that conversations in the bazaar with travellers prompted her to extend hospitality and on one occasion she met a student who then stayed for two weeks and later set up residential accommodation elsewhere in Bengal similar to what he had seen in Kalimpong.<sup>48</sup>

## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

The perspectives of John and Katherine Graham stretched beyond their immediate Himalayan area. John Anderson's most wide-ranging book was *The Missionary Expansion of the Reformed Churches*.<sup>49</sup> This combined careful scholarship with a call to service. A Bible School was developed in Kalimpong to train local evangelists. In her letters, Katherine expressed hopes for the missionary message to be received. In the early twentieth century she became increasingly aware of the global interconnectedness of the ministry in Kalimpong. She wrote in January 1903

<sup>46</sup> Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong*, p. 97.

<sup>47</sup> J.A. Graham, *On the Threshold of Three Closed Lands: The Guild outpost in the Eastern Himalayas* (Edinburgh: R&R Clark, 1897). The first edition, of 10,000 copies, sold out. A second edition followed in 1905.

<sup>48</sup> Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong*, p. 98.

<sup>49</sup> J.A. Graham, *The Missionary Expansion of the Reformed Churches* (Edinburgh: R&R Clark, 1898).

about her perception that there were merits in boarding schools as places of transnational encounter and recalled that someone they knew had seen no need for such endeavours: 'Gussie couldn't bear the idea of a boarding school here'. She was busy writing letters back to Scotland to convey the needs, as the number of children being cared for grew to several hundred. One of the potential supporters for educational projects was German and - as Katherine said, in a letter to John Anderson - he 'insisted on talking German'. In fact, Katherine enjoyed languages and was teaching French as one of the aspects of education within her own family. She also enjoyed English teaching and in March 1903 was pleased when a report she had written was circulated in Scotland and seemed to be 'read very well'.<sup>50</sup>

Keeping in touch with Europe was important to Katherine. On the occasions when she was on furlough or for family reasons was back in Scotland, she was eager to know what books were being produced. She had ongoing interest in volumes of theology but also in reading novels. Her contacts stretched beyond Britain to the ways in which education and welfare were being undertaken in other parts of Europe. She met two young Swedish nurses sent by the Queen of Sweden to gain ideas from Scotland. During some months Katherine spent in Scotland in 1904, she looked at possibilities for boarding schools for some of the family, but the decision was made to keep everyone together in Kalimpong. On that visit Katherine's base was Kinghorn, Fife, and she travelled to speak at missionary meetings. A letter on 18 June was written while she was on the train to Aberdeen.<sup>51</sup> She also met David G. Manuel, a Church of Scotland minister and historian, who then visited Kalimpong in 1905, spending five months away from his congregation, and subsequently wrote two books about the East, the second specifically about Kalimpong.<sup>52</sup> All of this made an international audience more aware of what was being done and in 1905 John Anderson received the Kaiser-i-Hind medal from the Viceroy of India, with Katherine being recognised in the same way in 1916. These medals were tributes to their public service roles.

Katherine's time in Scotland was refreshing, and demanding. She came back having a wider circle with whom to connect and the letter writing needed was something she always took seriously. Her writing ability throughout her life was remarkable. In 1906 John Anderson was in Scotland and one long letter she wrote to him outlined how after regularly

<sup>50</sup> Katherine to John Anderson, 6 January 1903; 1 March 1903, 16 March 1903, 1 October 1903; Acc.6039 Box 3 (2). NLS.

<sup>51</sup> Katherine to John Anderson, 18 June 1904, Acc.6039 Box 4 (1). NLS.

<sup>52</sup> The first was D.G. Manuel, *Eastern Impressions* (Perth: John MacGregor & Co., 1907); the second was *Gladdening River*.



getting up early to write letters she was teaching in school all day. On Sundays, as well as playing the organ at the English language services in the church, she was also attending services conducted in Hindi. She was concerned about a lack of funds for all that had been taken on and was sorry that a newsletter highlighting Kalimpong's needs had been delayed. Furnishings were needed for new homes. However, a paper in India had commented favourably on the work. She had heard back from John earlier that he was going to stay in Scotland until the 1907 General Assembly. At the Assembly, J.R.M. Mitchell, who studied theology at Edinburgh and Cambridge, was elected moderator. He had a commitment to international Presbyterian ministry. Katherine hoped John would have a good time at the Assembly and added: 'You must take me to it the year you are Moderator!'<sup>53</sup> He did become moderator, but that was in 1931-32, more than a decade after Katherine's death.

After his return from Scotland, John Anderson had some months at home but early in 1908 he was travelling extensively in India, often – as before – to raise money. Katherine was glad that meetings were going well but was concerned that he did not have proper equipment to project slides he was showing. A greater concern was her husband's health. To have three months back in Scotland was one idea she raised, and that proved necessary later. Her experience was that she was being thrown back on herself for every little decision. However, that had spiritual benefit: 'This throws me back on Him and I believe He is teaching me Himself some very valuable lessons these days.' Having voiced this in January, in May there were further struggles, and she wrote that she had been fearful about the amount of work to be done. She then asked herself, 'Why am I so fearful?' It seemed that for all her experiences since her early years in Edinburgh she still had more to learn, and she wrote, 'I marvel at God's long suffering with me'. By June she had recovered from this period of questioning and was enjoying teaching a women's group regularly. A visiting speaker had, disappointingly, been 'a bit dreich!' Another visitor, however, had brought an encouraging report about mission among the Santals in India.<sup>54</sup> The Norwegian Lutheran Mission had been working among them since the later nineteenth century.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Katherine to John Anderson, 11 December 1906. Acc.6039 Box 4 (1). NLS.

<sup>54</sup> Katherine to John Anderson, 11 January 1908; 22 January 1908; 24 May 1908; 5 June 1908. Box 4 (1) Acc.6039. NLS.

<sup>55</sup> See Marine Carrin and Harald Tambs-Lyche, 'The Santals, though unable to plan for tomorrow, should be converted by Santals', in R.E. Frykenberg, ed., *Christians and Missionaries in India* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), pp. 274-94. For later mission among Santals, by English Presbyterians, see Ian Randall, 'Mission and Unity: The Contribution of Alan Gordon MacLeod



It was decided by the family in 1909 that Katherine would spend time in Scotland in 1910. The arrangements made always meant that one Graham parent would be with the children. Katherine was interested in exploring what chaplaincy involved, as people had been coming and opening to her their inner thoughts. One had wanted to make 'a full confession' - and 'so he did!' Also, she was keen to take advantage of time in Edinburgh for theological reading as she had been in some 'ecclesiastical discussion' with non-Presbyterians - who had been dismissed by Presbyterian worthies as 'having an indefinite vagueness!'<sup>56</sup> What was a surprising opportunity for Katherine in Edinburgh was that she was able to attend meetings of the World Missionary Conference being held in the Assembly Hall of the United Free Church of Scotland. In an excited letter to John, she spoke of this possibility.<sup>57</sup> The World Missionary Conference, held from 14 to 23 June 1910, has been recognised as a pivotal event in the history of world Christianity. There were 1,215 official delegates. The Conference chairman was John Mott, an American Methodist layman who was very well known as a leader in the student movement.<sup>58</sup> Katherine's report is particularly valuable, in that she was a member of the public, not a delegate.

In a letter to John of 20 June, Katherine described how she had hoped to hear the Archbishop of Canterbury, but tickets for the public had gone. However, she obtained a ticket to hear John Mott, who was received with a 'great ovation' that 'brought the house down'. Subsequently she was able to attend most sessions. The conference was 'really wonderful' and to look down from the public gallery on delegates 'gathered from all parts of the world' was inspiring. She appreciated the devotional meetings led by 'the saintly Bishop Moule', with her heart warmed as prayer was made for India. She was able to meet and have a private conversation with Handley Moule - then Bishop of Durham and the leading theological figure at the Keswick Convention - and his wife Mary. Moule told Katherine that interest in mission would be much greater after Edinburgh. He said: 'The Master is in the conference.' Among other evangelical Anglicans, Sir John and Lady Kennaway were 'particularly friendly', and she learned more about public life from Sir John, who had been a prominent politician. Another meeting was with an evangelical leader who spent time in parts

---

(1911-1984', *The Journal of the United Church History Society*, 10/9 (2021), pp. 481-99.

<sup>56</sup> Katherine to John Anderson, 31 July 1909. Acc.6039 Box 4 (2). NLS.

<sup>57</sup> Katherine to John Anderson, 11 June 1910. Acc.6039 Box 4 (2). NLS.

<sup>58</sup> Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 2009) is the authoritative book on the Conference.

of Europe, Lord Radstock. In what was quite a lengthy conversation, he told Katherine how 'the Lord was blessing his work among Society people in Paris'. This led to significant ministry in Russia. Something Katherine found 'curious' was his statement: 'There is little religion in Protestantism'. He then explained that in his view a time was coming when there would be 'no Protestantism or Romanism, only Jesus'. She also talked with Temple Gairdner, of the Church Missionary Society in Egypt.<sup>59</sup>

On 21, 22 and 23 June, Katherine gave further updates. These were not so much about personal conversations as about the Conference in general. There was a hope, she said, that Greek Orthodox and Roman Churches were now in closer relationship with Protestants and at the next world conference on mission their representatives 'would be present!!' This was said, she observed playfully, in the United Free Church Hall, 'under the shadow of John Knox!' At this news of ecumenical possibilities in relation to mission, delegates responded 'with one voice AYE!' On the preparation of missionaries, covered by delegates such as Georgina Gollock, Katherine felt she had not received that preparation.<sup>60</sup> As the Conference drew to its close, Katherine gave some reflections. Some who might have been expected to make an impression had not done so. She instanced the Archbishop of York, Cosmo Lang. She mentioned William Paterson, Professor in the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh, noting with her typical humour that it was said 'he was becoming quite interested in missions!' There was, she commented, a feeling that the Church of Scotland had been somewhat remiss in not recalling some of its best missionaries to the conference. The close saw a 'wonderful consecration meeting', in which John Mott, 'through the influence of God's Holy Spirit, led every soul of the great gathering to God alone'. To make up to an extent for John Anderson not being there, Katherine would order the nine volumes from the Conference. They would, she assured him, 'contain the most exhaustive information on every subject pertaining to missions'.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Katherine to John Anderson, 19 June 1910. Acc.6039 Box 4 (2). NLS. Temple Gairdner wrote an account of the conference: W.H.T. Gairdner, *"Edinburgh 1910": An Account and Interpretation of the World Missionary Conference* (Edinburgh & London: Oliphant, Anderson & Farrier, 1910).

<sup>60</sup> See Ian Randall, *Georgina Gollock (1861-1940): Pioneering Female Missiologist* (Cambridge: CCCW, 2023), pp. 66-70.

<sup>61</sup> Katherine to John Anderson, 21, 22 and 23 June 1910. Acc.6039 Box 4 (2). NLS. In these letters the exclamation marks have been shown as they were written.

## LIFE AND LEGACY

After Edinburgh 1910, Katherine stayed a few more weeks in Scotland. She was receiving gifts of money for Kalimpong, some specifically for the Industrial School, of which she was the Honorary Superintendent. A notable gift as a legacy was from Charlotte Anderson of Woodside, Fife, who left money in her will to the Kalimpong Medical Mission.<sup>62</sup> Through the hard years of the First World War, Katherine continued to devote herself to the work which she loved, but her health deteriorated. She had warned John Anderson about over-stretching himself, but she had failed to apply this to herself. On 15 May 1919, Katherine died, at 57. Illness had required an operation, from which she never recovered.<sup>63</sup> The *Calcutta Statesman* of 16 May paid a tribute to an 'exceptionally gifted woman' who was 'an outstanding figure in the missionary and industrial development of Bengal'. She was 'the presiding genius over an awakening which is without question destined to leave an equally deep impression upon the industrial life of the country'. The article spoke of her hospitality, which she extended along with her husband to 'thousands of visitors of Kalimpong'. She could, it concluded, have shone in politics, business, or any other sphere to which she might have chosen to give 'her remarkable talents and personality'. But it was her Christian faith which led her and which was expressed with 'grace and tenderness'.<sup>64</sup>

Those who knew Katherine in close family life or as close friends and colleagues, shared personal tributes. They spoke of the laughter that she generated, and her love for young people. She also had an eye for detail as part of care; in buildings she knew, for example, she noted when any piece of crockery needed replacing. When it came to the girls in the school, she not only spoke to them individually but looked out for needs such as new dresses. Her colleagues spoke about the well-known 'K.G.' which appeared on notes and suggested action. But this was not her expecting others to do the work; she was herself, her friends said, 'a woman of action'. In what she said and did there was a combination of tact, thoroughness, common sense, sympathy, and friendliness. Others spoke of her impact – an impact she did not realise she had – at retreats that had been held for the missionary team when there was breakfast together followed by prayer, Bible study and teaching. Also, the local workers connected with the mission were invited to a one week retreat each year. Katherine believed in sharing

<sup>62</sup> *Dundee Courier*, 12 February 1907.

<sup>63</sup> Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong*, p. 96.

<sup>64</sup> 'In Memoriam', *Calcutta Statesman*, 16 May 1919.

life together and in a combination of prayer, Bible study and listening to one another.<sup>65</sup>

Further reports covered events that took in Katherine's funeral. The *Eastern Himalayan Missionary News* report averred that no event in the history of Kalimpong had 'stirred the depths of feeling' across the district as had the death of Katherine Graham. Although she had been ill, to lose her was a great shock. People of every 'race and caste and language' came together, drawn by a bond of common grief and shared loss. For many of them, even if they did not know her well, Katherine was 'The Mother of us all'. In her struggle with illness, she had kept 'strenuously at work as long as it was physically possible'. When it became evident that she might be facing terminal illness she showed 'faith and courage', qualities that had marked her life. Many people gathered in the Macfarlane Memorial Church to pray for her restoration and along with that to commit her in life and death, whatever was to come, to God's love and keeping. After her death, hundreds passed by to see her in repose and when the funeral was held the church was filled to overflowing. Huge crowds followed the coffin to the place of burial and among the songs that the approximately 1,500 people took up in worship was 'Shall we gather at the river...' with the refrain, 'Yes, we'll gather at the river... Gather with the saints at the river, That flows by the throne of God.'<sup>66</sup>

In his biography of John Anderson Graham, Minto noted that John Anderson had torn the pages for the greater part of May 1919 from his diary. His wife's death affected him greatly, as it did the whole family, especially since she was in what could have been the prime of her life and she had been at the centre of plans for the furtherance of her areas of work.<sup>67</sup> In Scotland the Men's Guild and Women's Guild members were deeply affected. Katherine had kept in close touch by letter and by visits when she was in Scotland. In a 'Guild Mission' statement there was reference to 'the great loss which the mission had sustained' through the death of Katherine Graham, and on behalf of those who led the work of the Guilds in Scotland deep appreciation was expressed for her ministry in Kalimpong. The Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland also wanted whole-heartedly to associate themselves with this. 'Her service to the mission had been invaluable', the Committee stated, and she had been 'the inspiration of many of the most important developments in

<sup>65</sup> Tributes from colleagues, *Eastern Himalayan Mission News*, June 1919.

<sup>66</sup> 'Kalimpong's Grief', *Eastern Himalayan Mission News*, June 1919.

<sup>67</sup> Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong*, p. 99.

connection to it.' Deep sympathy was conveyed to John Anderson Graham.<sup>68</sup>

Lord Ronaldshay, the Marquess of Zetland, an advocate of the achievements in Kalimpong, started a movement to build a chapel as a memorial to Katherine Graham. Among his principal commitments was to India and its aspirations. After studying at Trinity College, Cambridge, he visited Ceylon, Egypt, and Kashmir, before joining the staff of Lord Curzon, then Viceroy of India, in the spring of 1900. Between 1900 and 1906, he visited Persia, Burma, Russian Central Asia and Siberia, Mongolia, China, and Japan. In 1917 he became Governor of Bengal, and he retained connection with India long after returning to Britain.<sup>69</sup> He was therefore ideally placed to launch a world-wide appeal. It was also the case that a new chapel was needed, as Christian worship had extended significantly and services were being held in different languages at different times. The response to the appeal was immediate and generous, and all that happened was a great comfort and strength to John Anderson. He always spoke of the new Chapel affectionately as 'Katie's Chapel' or 'Katie's Church'. In the planning stages he had voluminous correspondence with his friend Henry Lennox Anderson, an architect associated with St Columba's Church, London, who gave his services freely as architect and designer and detailed almost every stone of the chapel for the builders.<sup>70</sup>

The design of the church emphasised simplicity and beauty, with delicate grey stone pillars, elegant proportions, and high vaulted roof. The stained-glass windows, appropriately in view of Katherine's love of children, showed the childhood of Jesus. They were the work of Douglas Strachan from Aberdeen, one of the greatest artists - perhaps the greatest - in the revival of stained-glass work in Scotland in the twentieth century. His name was synonymous with large-scale public artworks and memorials, not least the Peace Palace at The Hague in the Netherlands. He was also deeply committed to Christian art, to enhance church buildings, and he was commissioned for creative work in St Margaret's Chapel at Edinburgh Castle, with a depiction of St Columba; the Crombie Window at St Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen, depicting St Machar on mission; and King's College Chapel, the University of Aberdeen, with a depiction of

<sup>68</sup> Guild Committee Minutes, 18. Dep. 298. NLS.

<sup>69</sup> See his book: Lawrence John Lumley Dundas, *Lands of the Thunderbolt, Sikkim, Chumbi, and Bhutan* (London: Constable, 1923). He followed this with two other volumes.

<sup>70</sup> H. L. Anderson contributed to the classical streetscape of the City of London, as did his father, despite refusing to participate in competitive tenders and being opposed to advertising.

Mary and Joseph.<sup>71</sup> For Kalimpong, because of his interest in needy children, Strachan charged only half his usual rates and also gave a large donation.<sup>72</sup>

Two baptistries were installed - one for baptisms of infants and the other for the immersion of those professing faith. This second baptism made it clear that John Anderson and the Graham family wanted the Chapel to be fully interdenominational. Gifts from individuals included the organ, and, from St Columba's Church, London, a stone pulpit paid for by the minister, Archibald Fleming, his wife, and other members.<sup>73</sup> The Chapel was opened in 1925, with the name Katherine Graham Memorial Chapel. Victor Bulwer-Lytton, Earl of Lytton, who was born in India and was then Governor of Bengal, was among those who spoke. The whole service was shared by several ministers from across the denominations. Lord Lytton said that no worthier memory of Katherine Graham could have been selected, 'none which could better promote the work to which she dedicated her life'. In this building, he continued, 'her memory will ever be held dear, and her example shine as a guiding light to future generations of workers and children.' He stressed that building materials had been obtained locally and construction was under local supervision. He described the Chapel as 'an offering from Kalimpong to one who won the hearts of all who came in contact with her; it will serve as an everlasting emblem of the spiritual influence which Mrs Graham exercised.'<sup>74</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The life and work of John Anderson Graham has been written about and analysed by authors in various publications. So far this is the first attempt to look at Katherine Graham, although the lives of the two were intimately intertwined. A larger study would examine - for example - the letters from John Anderson that made up one half of their voluminous and deeply affectionate correspondence. In the scope of this brief study, it is only elements of what Katherine wrote that have been included. Her story has some consistent themes, related to creative ministry. In Edinburgh she was concerned for the welfare of children and this was a feature throughout her years in Kalimpong. Indeed, through what she did, scholars from the school in Kalimpong were in touch with young

<sup>71</sup> Kirstie Waterston, 'Douglas Strachan', *Press and Journal*, 3 July 2025.

<sup>72</sup> Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong*, pp. 100-101.

<sup>73</sup> There was a long-standing link between the Grahams and the Flemings.

<sup>74</sup> Minto, *Graham of Kalimpong*, p. 102.

people in Scotland, exchanging of letters.<sup>75</sup> Another constant desire was for authentic spirituality. Whenever she found this, she was inspired, but where it was absent, she was deeply dissatisfied. A further characteristic was her profoundly passionate nature. This was seen in her relationship with her husband, with her own children, and in somewhat different but heart-felt ways with her colleagues and the children in her care. However, there was also change as time went on. Kalimpong offered new challenges not known in Scotland. Much of what Katherine did was new, and was a response to the setting in India - such as the Home Industries. She was also open to her views being expanded, and found that this happened significantly through Edinburgh 1910. Perhaps the words spoken in 1925 sum up her life: through her, 'spiritual influence' was experienced, and her creative ministry meant that others were enabled to flourish.

---

<sup>75</sup> Church of Scotland Foreign Mission Committee minute book, 1919-21. MS. 7535. NLS.