



*Thomas Haweis (1734–1820)*

Thomas Haweis took a leading role in the organisation of the London Missionary Society. He is recognized as the father of its first mission to Tahiti in the South Seas. Haweis was the son of a Redruth solicitor and was converted under the ministry of Samuel Walker of Truro. At Oxford he started a second Holy Club among the undergraduates. After assisting Martin Madan, the chaplain to the Lock Hospital in London, he was offered the living at All Saints, Aldwinckle, Northamptonshire, which he held until his death. His church quickly became a centre of evangelical influence. In 1774 he was appointed a chaplain to Lady Huntingdon and following her death he was named as the trustee-executor of her estate.

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# John Love in London

## – Part 5 –

# The first mission of the London Missionary Society

ROY MIDDLETON

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### I. The failed Tahiti mission of 1791

As early as 1788 a mission to the islands in the Pacific had been one of the dreams of William Carey. He, like many others, had been attracted by the adventurous voyages of the naval officers, Samuel Wallis (1728–1795) of the *Dolphin*, William Bligh (1754–1817) of the *Bounty* and particularly by the accounts that James Cook (1728–1779) gave of his travels to the South

Sea Islands of the Pacific.<sup>1</sup> A mission to these islands was also the lifelong passion of Thomas Haweis, one of the Countess of Huntingdon's chaplains, and a prominent Director of the London Missionary Society (LMS), who had also been enthralled by the thrilling narratives of Wallis and Cook.

It was in late 1789 that Haweis first broached to the aging Lady Huntingdon the idea of sending missionaries to Tahiti. With her characteristic evangelistic zeal she immediately offered him two of her Trevecca students to be trained for that purpose. The two men were Michael Waugh aged twenty-eight and John Price aged twenty.<sup>2</sup> Haweis immediately accepted



Selina, Countess of Huntingdon –  
Founder of the Trevecca College and  
the Connexion bearing her name.

the offer and undertook to educate the two students at his own expense. In addition to their Trevecca training, Haweis and a colleague gave them a comprehensive course in English grammar and sufficient Latin to enable them to read a Latin Testament. They were also given an intensive course in geography and history so that they were aware of the islands to which they were going. To this were added the practical skills of gardening, the use of the axe and saw, needlework – in order that they could care for their clothes – and the rudiments of first-aid and nursing. With this in view, Haweis secured the approval of a surgeon at a

casualty hospital for them to be present whilst patients' wounds were being dressed. It was Haweis' opinion that these practical matters would be of far more use in Tahiti than introducing them to classical literature.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> William Carey noted, 'My attention had first been awakened after I was at Moulton (his first pastorate in the Northamptonshire village) by reading the *Last Voyage of Captain Cook*.' F. Deauville Walker, *William Carey: Pioneer Missionary and Statesman* (London, 1926), p. 56. Carey had obtained Cook's *Voyages* in the autumn of 1783; S. Pearce Carey, *William Carey* (London, 1924), p. 39. On the influence of Wallis and Bligh, see Richard Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society, 1795–1895* (2 vols., London, 1899), Vol. 1, p. 117 and Arthur Skevington Wood, *Thomas Haweis, 1734–1820* (London, 1957), p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> For Waugh and Price (1769–1847), see Geoffrey F. Nuttall, 'The Students of Trevecca College, 1768–1791', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, Session 1967, Part II (1968), pp. 275, 277; Wood, *Thomas Haweis*, pp. 170–181.

<sup>3</sup> Wood, *Thomas Haweis*, pp. 171–172.

In June 1791, whilst Haweis was supplying the Countess of Huntingdon's Spa Fields Chapel in London, he heard that William Bligh was to make a second voyage to Tahiti to convey the bread-fruit plant from the South Seas to the British West Indian Colonies. Haweis saw this expedition as the opportunity he had been waiting for and took immediate steps to procure passages for Waugh and Price. He visited Bligh at his home in Lambeth and with the aid of Bligh's wife, who was sympathetic to the project, secured his agreement. His next task was to obtain the permission of the British Government for the two candidates to sail on Bligh's ship, the *Providence*. He was helped in this rather difficult task by William Romaine who evidently had some influence in the Admiralty. It seems probable that it was Romaine that put him in touch with a friend of his called Ambrose Serle.<sup>4</sup> He was a naval man and a prominent figure in the Admiralty who had amongst his other friends a number of prominent evangelicals such as John Thornton, John Newton, Augustus Toplady, and Legh Richmond. Serle put Haweis in touch with Rear Admiral Sir Charles Middleton<sup>5</sup> who, along with William



Charles Middleton – Lord Barham.

<sup>4</sup> Ambrose Serle (1742–1812) was a naval officer, a British civil servant and a writer. In 1772 he became under-secretary to the Earl of Dartmouth (then Secretary of State for Colonies) and was with him in North America during the early phase of the War of American Independence. He was made Clerk of Reports in 1776, and his career in public administration continued with his appointment as commissioner of the transport service with care for the prisoners-of-war in 1795, a responsibility he held for many years in wartime. He was a staunch Calvinist and the author of *Horae Solitariae* (1776) and the *Christian Remembrancer* (1776). For biographical details of Serle, see Donald M. Lewis (ed.), *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography, 1730–1860* (2 vols., Oxford, 1995), Vol. 2, pp. 995–996; *Dictionary of National Biography* (DNB). The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (ODNB) is less detailed.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Middleton, first Baron Barham, (1726–1813) was appointed Comptroller of the Navy in 1778 after a distinguished naval career. He was created a Baronet in 1781 and became the M.P. for Rochester in 1784. He was promoted Rear Admiral in 1787, Vice Admiral in 1793, and Admiral in 1795. After serving as one of the Lords of Commission at the Admiralty he became First Lord of the Admiralty in December 1794 and was raised to the peerage in 1805. He was an early member of the Evangelical party in the Church of England and one of William Wilberforce's closest friends. For biographical details, see *Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography*, Vol. 2, p. 769; *DNB* and *ODNB*.

Wilberforce, secured the permission of the Government for the mission to the South Seas.

Haweis' plan was, however, frustrated; when Waugh and Price arrived in London, they began to lay down conditions prior to their departure. They first demanded a pension, should they have to come back, along with a guarantee of a return fare. Haweis agreed to bear the travelling expenses and provide for them in the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion if, after a fair trial abroad, they proved their ability. They then produced an ultimatum that finally wrecked the scheme. They refused to sail unless they were given episcopal ordination. With Romaine's help, Haweis applied to Beilby Porteous, the Bishop of London, who referred the matter to John Moore, the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Archbishop quite simply refused to ordain Trevecca students that were not university-trained. Though Haweis appealed to Waugh and Price to go with Bligh they refused until they had received episcopal ordination. Haweis was to later express the view that, though he was at first deeply disappointed at their withdrawal, in consequence of their subsequent conduct the event left him with no cause of regret.<sup>6</sup>

Although little is known of Michael Waugh's subsequent career, John Price became the minister of St Paul's Church in Blackburn in 1799 which was at then a congregation of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion. The church had been built in consequence of a dispute between the Thomas Starkie, the vicar of Blackburn, and his curate Samuel Dean which resulted in a separation. The curate was highly esteemed by many of the parishioners who resolved to build him a church by subscription which was opened in 1791 and dedicated to St Paul. The liturgy of the Church of England was used, and it was in every sense of the word considered as an Established Church building; which, unsurprisingly, Starkie refused to certify for consecration. Dean, at some stage, adopted the views of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) and several of his adherents became sympathetic to his opinions.<sup>7</sup> The majority of the congregation disapproved of Dean's changed theology which resulted in him leaving Blackburn in 1799 and becoming the minister of the New

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<sup>6</sup> Wood, *Thomas Haweis*, p. 181. It is not clear what their subsequent conduct was to which Haweis is referring.

<sup>7</sup> One of the errors of Swedenborgianism was their denial of the doctrine of the Trinity. For details of Swedenborg's views, see John McClintock and James Strong (eds.), *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature* (Grand Rapids, 1981 reprint), Vol. 10, pp. 52-53.

Jerusalem Temple in Cross Street, Haddon Gardens, in London.<sup>8</sup> This was a vast building that the Swedenborgians could not afford to keep up which eventually became the Scotch Church, Haddon Garden, where Edward Irving was the minister from 1822–1827.

At this stage the trustees of St. Paul's in Blackburn placed the congregation under the authority of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, and it was served by John Price from 1799 to 1829 as a minister of that Connexion. In 1829 the St. Paul's building was eventually consecrated as a Church of England place of worship and Price achieved his desire of episcopal ordination. He was admitted to ministerial standing in the Church of England from 1830 as Perpetual Curate of St. Paul's. Price left Blackburn in 1841 to become the rector of Pitchcott in Buckinghamshire where he died



John Price.

on 15 January 1847 aged 78.<sup>9</sup> Another Trevecca student, Thomas Lewis, offered to go alone, and came up to London prepared to sail.<sup>10</sup> It was, however, deemed inexpedient to send out one man alone and Bligh sailed without a companion being found for Lewis.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The New Jerusalem Church was the title assumed by the congregations that had adopted the views of Swedenborg. For a detailed account of the New Jerusalem Church and its doctrinal basis, see McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Vol. 7, pp. 14-19.

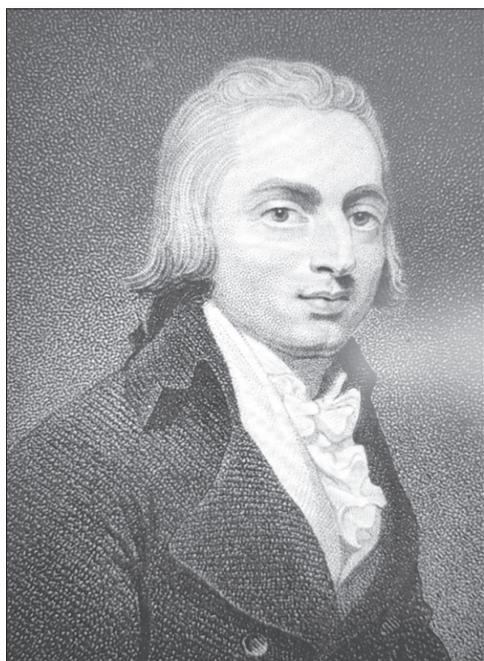
<sup>9</sup> For details, see William Alexander Abram, *A History of Blackburn, Parish and Town* (Blackburn, 1877), pp. 297-299, 352; D.G. Goyder, *A Concise History of the New Jerusalem Church: With a critical account of her defenders; an Abstract of her doctrines* (London, 1827), pp. 42-43, 64-66; Hew Scott (ed.), *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae* (8 vols., 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., Edinburgh, 1915–50), Vol. 8, p. 492-494 (cited afterwards as Hew Scott, *Fasti*).

<sup>10</sup> Lewis was eventually one of the first missionaries to sail to Tahiti with the LMS five years later.

<sup>11</sup> The most detailed account of Haweis' 1791 attempt to send missionaries to Tahiti is Arthur Skevington Wood, 'The Failure of a Mission 1791', *Congregational Quarterly*, Vol. 32 (1954), pp. 343-351; See also Wood, *Thomas Haweis*, pp. 170-172, 177-181; Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, pp. 117-119; *Gentleman's Magazine*, New Series, Vol. 27 (April 1847), p. 446.

## II. Preparations for the London Missionary Society's first mission

On Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September 1795 in Surrey Chapel, the last day of the public meetings at which the LMS was founded, the ministers assembled in the morning between 8 and 9 in the schoolroom connected with Chapel.<sup>12</sup> Following a discussion on the financial prospects of the Society, Matthew Wilks proposed that the first attempt of the Society should be to send missionaries to the South Seas. Thomas Haweis, the Rector of All-Saints, Aldwinckle, was asked to speak on this subject at the close of the morning



James Wilson.

service, and to give in the name of the first volunteer. Accordingly, following the sermon by Rowland Hill, the minister of the congregation, Haweis delivered a discourse of considerable length setting out the reasons why, in his view, the first missionary attempt should be to the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands. The speech was very wide-ranging covering matters like the climate, type of government, language, and the means of transporting missionaries, and Haweis implied that the native population would welcome the missionaries. He concluded his address by pointing out that James Wilson had

offered to captain the vessel that would take the missionaries to the South Seas and detailed something of his remarkable career.<sup>13</sup> He even pointed out that Wilson had advised that on the return voyage, with the permission of the East India Company, they could bring back a freight shipment of tea or sugar that would help defray the cost of the journey. Haweis then supported his views by his actions when he announced that he was willing to give

<sup>12</sup> For details see, Roy Middleton, 'John Love in London: The Origins of the London Missionary Society', *Scottish Reformation Society Historical Journal (SRSJ)*, Vol. 10 (2020), pp. 191-193.

<sup>13</sup> For biographical information on Wilson's interesting career, see John Griffin, *Memoirs of Captain James Wilson* (London 1819); John Morison, *Fathers and Founders of the London Missionary Society* (2<sup>nd</sup> one-volume edn., London, undated), pp. 539-551; the article on Wilson by Peter J. Lineham in *Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography*, Vol. 2, p. 1207; Middleton, 'The Origins of the London Missionary Society', pp. 199-201.

£500 to the project.<sup>14</sup> Haweis' address was highly approved by the LMS Directors who ordered that it be printed as a 'Memoir on the most eligible part to begin a Mission and the most probable means of accomplishing it', along with the sermons preached at the formation meetings of the Society.<sup>15</sup> The decision that the first mission of the LMS should be to the South Seas was finally made the following day on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1795. This was a matter of great importance and received considerable attention. After a full consideration of all the available information, it was agreed, in line with Haweis' wishes, that the first mission of the society should be sent to Tahiti, or some other island among the South Sea Islands. In addition, it was agreed that as early as possible, missions should be attempted to other locations including the coast of Africa, the Malabar coast, Bengal, or the island of Sumatra.

*(a) John Love and the missionary candidates*

The first task which claimed the attention of the LMS Directors was the examination of those applying to be missionaries and the selection of suitable candidates. John Morison observes, 'This they felt to be a solemn trust, and, considering their inexperience and the difficulty connected with finding agents in all respects qualified for such an undertaking, it will be conceded by all candid minds, that they were, with some few exceptions, wisely directed in their choice. That they were not infallible in their selections can be no impeachment either of their discretion or their integrity. While some of their first missionaries lived to disgrace their high and holy calling, the majority of them sustained a career of honourable and devoted service.'<sup>16</sup>

In order to obtain suitable candidates for the mission to Tahiti, special committees were formed in different parts of the country where those who offered their services as missionaries were first tested and examined. Those selected by the local committees were then interviewed by an examining committee of the LMS Directors in London. Among the men on the London committee were Thomas Haweis and John Love, who, as the LMS secretary, was the main point of contact for missionary

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<sup>14</sup> To put Haweis' personal commitment of financial support in current context, in terms of 2020, a sum of £500 would be approximately equivalent to £57,000.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Haweis' discourse is printed in *Sermons preached in London at the formation of the Missionary Society, September 1795 to which are added Memorials* (London, 1795), pp. 159-183; Wood, *Thomas Haweis*, p. 202.

<sup>16</sup> Morison, *Fathers and Founders of the London Missionary Society*, p. xxiii.

candidates. A number of the letters have been preserved that John Love wrote to prospective missionary candidates in the autumn on 1795 and the spring of the following year.<sup>17</sup> In his reply to one correspondent, we gain an insight into the selection procedures that the examining committee had adopted. In a letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> December 1795 Love writes, 'your letter has been read with much pleasure by the committee appointed for examination of candidates...and will be laid before the monthly meeting of Directors.'<sup>18</sup> At an early stage in the process of selecting suitable candidates it became clear that there was a sharp difference of opinion, both on the question of the suitability of candidates and of the training that was required prior to sending them to the mission field. On one side of the debate was Thomas Haweis and on the other were David Bogue and John Love.

Haweis considered the primary qualification to be the call of the Holy Spirit that had been ratified by the examination of the Church. Such candidates might be found, he thought, not in the schools of learning, but amongst the faithful in the churches. Whilst Haweis did not underestimate the advantages of education, he was not persuaded that the knowledge of dead languages was essential to the proclamation of the Gospel. He, therefore, came to this important conclusion: 'A plain man, with a good natural understanding, well read in the Bible, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, though he comes from the forge, or the shop, would, I own, in my view, as a missionary to the heathen, be infinitely preferable to all the learning of the schools, and would possess, in the skill and labour of his hands, advantages which barren science could never compensate.'<sup>19</sup> Whilst David Bogue and John Love heartily concurred with Haweis on the need for conversion and a call to the work, they also thought that the missionaries should be given specific and detailed training for the mission that they were undertaking, and that zeal, though commendable and essential, was not in itself sufficient. In response to a candidate applying to go to Tahiti, whilst stating that he will lay the candidate's letter before the examining committee at the first opportunity, Love adds a word of caution, 'You have probably thought of David's case respecting the building of the temple. The Lord approved his zeal, yet for wise reasons declined to employ him in that work.'<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See *Letters of the late John Love, Minister of Anderston, Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1838), pp. 156-158, 158-161, 172-173.

<sup>18</sup> *Letters of John Love*, p. 158.

<sup>19</sup> *Sermons preached in London at the formation of the Missionary Society*, p. 15.

<sup>20</sup> *Letters of John Love*, p. 172. Letter dated 19<sup>th</sup> March 1796.

In his article ‘To the Evangelical Dissenters who practise Infant Baptism’ that had played such a significant part in the formation of the LMS, Bogue had made public his conviction that a special course of training was necessary for missionary candidates.<sup>21</sup> He had written:

It is highly probable that some zealous men would present themselves, who are well qualified to go immediately on a mission among the heathen. But in general they will require some previous instruction; and therefore it will be necessary to found a Seminary for training up persons for the work. An able and eminently pious minister in a central situation must be sought for to superintend it. And as the education of a missionary must be in many respects widely different from that of those who preach in Christian countries, it may be expected that every man of talents will unite his endeavours to render the plan of instruction as well adapted to answer the end in view, and in every respect as complete as possible.<sup>22</sup>

John Love, who shared Bogue’s view, articulated his concern in a letter to a fellow minister written in March 1796:

I am more and more established in the fullest certainty, that the rash ideas of many respecting the easiness of finding persons truly qualified for this work are the quintessence of folly and vain arrogance. In the course of conversations with the missionaries here for their instruction, I see at once the difficulty, the possibility and absolute necessity of polishing those shafts that are to be thrown into the very centre of the host of Satan.<sup>23</sup>

Whilst the first missionaries were on their way to Tahiti, the LMS were considering a further joint mission with the Edinburgh and Glasgow Societies to Sierra Leone. John Love, in writing to the Edinburgh Missionary Society, voiced his strongly held view that at least a proportion of educated missionaries should form part of each mission. The letter captures perfectly both his and Bogue’s views; he wrote:

I am directed to suggest the great importance of the brethren in Scotland exerting themselves to find well qualified missionaries, as

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<sup>21</sup> See Middleton, ‘The Origins of the London Missionary Society’, pp. 167-168 for the significance of Bogue’s *Evangelical Magazine* article.

<sup>22</sup> *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 2 (1794) p. 380. Bogue’s article was reprinted in full in *Sermons preached in London at the formation of the Missionary Society*, pp. iii-vi. A helpful exposition of Bogue’s concerns by David Boorman will be found in his article ‘David Bogue and the Education of the Missionary’, *Banner of Truth Magazine*, Issue 108 (September 1972), pp. 15-21.

<sup>23</sup> *Letters of John Love*, pp. 170-171. Letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> March 1796.

well to provide the means of their being sent to the heathen. This idea it is hardly necessary for me to enlarge upon. It is sufficiently known that those who offer to this service in this country, though warm and zealous, are often very deficient in doctrinal information; which deficiency might be compensated by a proportion of missionaries who have enjoyed in the early period of life greater opportunities of instruction. It is from Scotland that we hope for missionaries of liberal education and learning, without a share of which advantages it is to be wished that no mission may go forth, especially among the more civilized heathen.

The raising up and drawing forth to the work missionaries of the higher order especially, and possessing the distinguished qualifications which may, in some degree, supply the place of apostolical endowments, is eminently and very immediately the work of the great Lord of the harvest. Yet steady prayer and means may be employed by intelligent friends of this work, that the greatest of all human undertakings may not be without the exertion of the noblest human abilities, acquirements, and excellencies. It is to be wished that the lustre of exalted, sanctified, seriousness, and of extensive solid learning, may be thrown around the work of illuminating heathenish countries; as well as of the essentially necessary graces of faith, patience, humility, and zeal.<sup>24</sup>

However, in the early days of the LMS, and with respect particularly to the first Tahiti Mission, David Bogue and John Love were unable to carry the day and the view of Thomas Haweis prevailed. Within a week of the Society's formation the Board of Directors had adopted a set of rules for the examination of missionary candidates. Rules 2 and 3 were especially significant and addressed the issue dividing Bogue and Love from Haweis. They read:

2. It is not necessary that every missionary should be a learned man; but he must possess a competent measure of that kind of knowledge which the object of the mission requires.
3. Godly men who understand mechanic arts may be of signal use to this undertaking as missionaries, especially in the South Sea Islands, Africa, and other uncivilised parts of the world.<sup>25</sup>

Commenting after the passage of a century on the attitude behind these resolutions, Lovett remarks:

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<sup>24</sup> *Letters of John Love*, pp. 196-197. Letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> January 1797.

<sup>25</sup> Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, pp. 43-44.

Doubtless many of the Directors feared that it was hardly possible in the face of the enthusiasm they had so recently witnessed to keep rigidly to the course of true wisdom, and to insist that no man should be sent forth until he had received at least two or three years intellectual and spiritual training, and had evidenced his fitness for the foreign field by exhibiting the capacity to stand the searching discipline of college training. To require such calm and dispassionate views was to expect far more than ordinary mortals could give. It is also practically certain that many connected with the management of the Society had most erroneous views, first as to what heathen life was like, and secondly as to the type of man best fitted to deal with it. ‘Godly men who understood mechanic arts’ were by not a few of the fathers placed much higher in the scale of usefulness among uncivilised nations than the student, the preacher, the man of scholarly and disciplined mind. The enormous waste of resources caused by the practical adoption of this view in the early years of the Society’s work is an object lesson for succeeding generations.<sup>26</sup>

The LMS were to learn by painful experience that they ought to have heeded the words of David Bogue and John Love.

In the spring and summer of 1796 John Love wrote a number of letters in his official capacity as a secretary of the LMS to the infant local missionary auxiliaries/societies in Scotland and to Scottish correspondents who were giving their support to the London society. These letters provide a fascinating insight into the process by which the missionaries were selected. Writing to the Edinburgh Missionary Society,<sup>27</sup> Love observes:

As to the examination and preparation of candidates, I wish it were in my power to suggest any useful hints. We are yet in our infancy; and, as we advance, feel the weight and difficulty of the work, and perceive more and more need of that wisdom which is from above and wholly different from worldly cunning. Our first object respecting candidates is to be satisfied that they are truly pious, and that their views respecting this work are upright and intelligent, and that the Spirit of the Lord hath in a special manner bended their hearts towards it. Then we look after

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<sup>26</sup> Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, pp. 46-47.

<sup>27</sup> The Edinburgh Missionary Society was renamed in 1819 as the Scottish Missionary Society. The formation of the Society is detailed in J.J. Matheson (Ewing’s daughter), *A Memoir of Greville Ewing* (London, 1843), pp. 71-76. For the history of the range of Scottish Societies imitating and supporting the LMS, see the lengthy and very valuable article on ‘Missions’ by the mission historian Andrew F. Walls in Nigel M. de S. Cameron (ed.), *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology (DSCHT)* (Edinburgh, 1993), pp. 567-594, especially pp. 568-570 on the Scottish Societies.

other qualifications of understanding, temper, and improved knowledge, according to the intended situation of the candidates. There are about eight or ten ministers, generally, in the Committee of examination, who ask questions round at pleasure. Every candidate is examined at least twice; and the Committee is generally unanimous, or rather always, respecting the recommendation or rejection. We trust we have observed much of the presence and guidance of the infinitely gracious Lord in this part of the work. A great degree of clearness and satisfaction has attended the examination of some candidates. Cases, which seemed at first obscure, have been afterwards made plain, and improper objects have been manifestly discovered. Our number of accepted missionaries is now above twenty. It is intended to form two or three distinct settlements of missionaries in different parts of the South Sea, that the extent of the object may bear some proportion to the magnitude of the expense of a ship solely for that purpose.<sup>28</sup>

Reflecting his view that there was need for qualified men on the mission, the LMS Secretary, writing to a prospective candidate who had clearly been trained at a Scottish University or among the Seceders, makes this observation:

It will be peculiarly and inexpressibly pleasing to my mind to find, that the seminaries of my country are able to furnish missionaries well instructed to the kingdom of God, and adding to exalted piety and zeal literary improvements and abilities, such as may command respect among the more learned and civilized Pagan nations. One or two such, united in each mission with others who, though inferior as to advantages of education, possess the pure simplicity, patience, and zeal, which are inspired from above, would, I apprehend, form that combination which, in respect of means, promises fairest for extensive and solid success. Your hint respecting the danger of mistakes in the outset of the work deserves the most serious regard.<sup>29</sup>

Love touches on the subject again in a letter to John Snodgrass in Paisley, a leading member of the local missionary society in Love's home town, who had asked him for news on how the mission to the South Seas was proceeding.<sup>30</sup> He begins his response by congratulating his townspeople on

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<sup>28</sup> *Letters of John Love*, pp. 174-175. Letter dated 25<sup>th</sup> May 1796.

<sup>29</sup> *Letters of John Love* p. 160. Letter dated 4 December 1795.

<sup>30</sup> Regrettably, the recipient's name has been edited out. In this case the recipient, based on internal evidence, was almost certainly Love's friend John Snodgrass, the Church of Scotland minister at the Middle Parish in Paisley, who was an evangelical. Love had

their liberality, adding that in proportion to its size, the people of Paisley have given more to the LMS than any other city or town in the island. Love then goes on to give a progress report as at the beginning of June 1796 on how preparations for the mission were proceeding. He writes:

I wish it were in my power to gratify you with any new striking intelligence respecting the great objects of our concern. You are already in possession of the most material occurrences at the general meeting. Our attention has been engaged since in following up the resolutions then adopted, to make the experiment of a mission to the South Sea islands, on a larger scale than at first was intended, by sending a greater number of missions, (three or upwards), and placing them in three or four distinct stations at some considerable distance from each other. The commercial gentlemen in the direction are much engaged about securing a proper vessel for the expedition. They were last week on the point of making a purchase, but were disappointed by the unexpected sale of the ship in view. This disappointment, however, may turn out to advantage, as a less expensive vessel may yet be found, and equally adapted to the purpose. Provision is likewise making of a variety of articles proper to be sent, to engage the notice and favour of the natives of the islands. We have also been much employed in the examination of fresh candidates. The number of missionaries, especially of the inferior class, and who may do much good among the uninstructed people whom this attempt embraces, will be abundantly sufficient. There are two or three, if not more, who appear qualified to sustain with respectability the character of public ministers and pastors.<sup>31</sup>

As Love indicated, in June 1796 they had sufficient missionaries of what he calls ‘the inferior class’, that is who were craftsmen and tradesmen. In addition, at that time, the examining committee, had identified two or three whom they regarded qualified to be ministers. Love also informed Snodgrass that the LMS Directors were now planning to send missionaries to more locations in the South Seas than Tahiti. After the examination process was complete the total number of men chosen for the mission was thirty-one.<sup>32</sup> Twenty-seven were either craftsmen or tradesmen and four would go as ministers of the Gospel.

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assisted at his communion seasons when he was home in Paisley. For biographical details of Snodgrass, see Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 3, p. 179.

<sup>31</sup> *Letters of John Love*, p. 177. Letter dated 6<sup>th</sup> June 1796.

<sup>32</sup> Eventually, just thirty went to the South Seas. Edward Hudden, a butcher by trade, and his wife had to leave the *Duff* before the ship set sail due to Mrs Hudden’s health.

Though Bogue and Love had not been successful in persuading their fellow LMS Directors with respect to the need of specific and detailed training prior to sending men to the mission field, they regarded it as crucial that in the few months before these men went to the South Seas they should be given at least some form of training. David Bogue had been training students for the ministry for a quarter of a century, and had run his own academy since 1789; he was therefore well equipped for the task. In this urgent and concentrated task he was assisted by John Love. As an experienced minister, Bogue regarded it as essential to warn these intending young missionaries of the realities of life, so that, when difficulties came, they would not fail and bring a reproach upon their religion.

John Love's letters again give us a glimpse into the concentrated last-minute training they were trying to provide, and his own sense of inadequacy for the task. He writes, 'I must acknowledge my endeavours in this matter convince me very deeply of my own ignorance and shallow acquaintance with the everlasting gospel, and the way of conveying it with energy to the heart of man. At the same time, through the supply of the Spirit of Jesus, I think I have some success in these attempts; and that this mission will on the whole turn out well and that I shall derive from this exercise considerable personal improvement.'<sup>33</sup> Besides assisting Bogue in formal training, Love's concerns seem to have been twofold. The first was at this late stage to encourage the private study of scripture, theology, and Church history. To one applicant he gives this advice:

But into whatever tract of service the infinitely wise Lord may conduct you, I beg leave to suggest, additionally to what has been already mentioned, that it will be much for your advantage that you acquire an enlarged acquaintance with the precious word of God. For this purpose I recommend to you to make a regular progress through the Bible, from beginning to end, praying over each chapter, and attentively considering it, without slavishly depending on any human commentators, though these in their place are highly useful. In addition to Mr. Hervey's, with whose excellent writings you are already acquainted, I would recommend to you the life of Mr. D. Brainerd, as, published by Mr. Edwards of New England, Boston's *Fourfold State* and Halyburton against Deism. I will be glad to hear from you; and commending you and your designs to the rich grace and mighty power of Jesus, the glorious Saviour of lost souls.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> *Letters of John Love*, pp. 170-171. Letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> March 1796.

<sup>34</sup> *Letters of John Love*, p. 158. Letter dated 30<sup>th</sup> November 1795. We do not have the letter of the applicant to which Love was responding. It is clear that he had been

*(b) Love's Addresses to the Tahitians*

The second way in which Love sought to help the young missionaries was to provide examples of the way they should proclaim gospel to natives in heathen darkness – people who could not read or write and were largely uncivilised. With a view to aiding the band of missionaries he prepared a small volume that was published in 1796, prior to their leaving for the Pacific, entitled *Fifteen Addresses to the People of Otaheite designed to assist the Labour of Missionaries*.<sup>35</sup> The book was designed to give guidance to the missionaries on how to begin their evangelistic task once they arrived in the South Sea Islands. John Love took a great deal of time and care in producing these *Addresses*. Writing to a fellow minister on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1796 he says, 'I shall derive from this exercise considerable personal improvement. Of this you will judge, when I am able to show you the *Addresses to the People of Otaheite*; three of which I have finished, and I must add nine more to complete the series.'<sup>36</sup> Then, three months later, in a letter to a Scottish minister connected with the recently formed Glasgow Missionary Society, he explains his object in producing the *Addresses* to the heathen in Tahiti and seeking his opinion: 'I hope to submit to your inspection, in the course of a month or two, a series of short addresses, wherein I am endeavouring to mark out the track of instruction in treating with such untutored minds on the sublime and mysterious things of divine revelation, and to exhibit a specimen of the way of representing the truth in a simple and interesting manner. I beg your acceptance of this account of the views which at present occupy my mind in reference to the important work.'<sup>37</sup>

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reading the writings of James Hervey (1714–1758), the Rector of Weston Favell. Hervey's main writings were his *Meditations* and his famous defence of Calvinism, *Theron and Aspasio*. The volumes that Love recommends are Jonathan Edwards, *An Account of the Life of David Brainerd* (which in 1795, just less than fifty years after it was published, had already become a missionary classic); Thomas Boston, *Human Nature in its Fourfold State*; and Thomas Halyburton, *Natural Religion Insufficient and Revealed Religion Necessary...or, A Rational Enquiry into the principles of the modern Deists*.

<sup>35</sup> John Love, *Addresses to the People of Otaheite designed to assist the Labour of Missionaries and other instructors of the ignorant* (London, 1796). The addresses were reprinted in the volume published shortly after his death: John Love, *Sermons preached on various occasions; with Fifteen Addresses to the People of Otaheite; and a Serious Call respecting a Mission to the River Indus* (Edinburgh, 1826), pp. 259-367. Otaheite is the now-obsolete name for Tahiti.

<sup>36</sup> *Letters of John Love*, p. 171. Letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> March 1796.

<sup>37</sup> *Letters of John Love*, pp. 182-183. Letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1796.

The book was published in August 1796 and Love sent a copy to his parents with the following background information and his hopes for its usefulness:

In the small book which I have sent you, and which took its rise from a series of conversations with several of the missionaries who are now about to sail from Plymouth to some of the remotest and darkest parts of the world, the most essential truths are stated in a simple manner and without the entanglements of controversy. It may, therefore, if attended with Divine power, be useful to those who wish to come close to that instruction, which must be taken fast hold of that we may enter eternity with true confidence and comfort. But it will have little savour to quibbling minds, whether orthodox or the contrary.<sup>38</sup>

In his 'Introductory Address to all the Members and Friends of the Missionary Society' which precedes the addresses, Love writes:

The Lord of the harvest hath prepared a numerous band of missionaries, and hath provided the means of their conveyance to a remote region of the globe. Their faith is of that kind, we trust, for which Jesus will pray that it fail not, the smoking flax among them such as he will not permit to be quenched. But they must pass through the heap of great waters. And where is the Moses to stretch out his rod over these waters? or the Elijah to smite them with his mantle, that 'the overflowing of the water may pass by; that the deep, harmless, may utter his voice, and lift up his acclaiming hands on high?'

When our missionaries stand on heathenish shores, they will need the faith and patience of him who said, 'Though he slay me yet will I trust in him.' It is easy to speculate, in the shade, on their arduous situation. But the elevation of faith; the rich communication of wisdom and power from on high, essential to their comfort and success, are beyond what most of us are capable to imagine. I hope the tear of pious, brotherly, concern will often drop from the eyes of the reader, while this little book is in his hands, to think how it may now be faring with our dear missionary brethren!

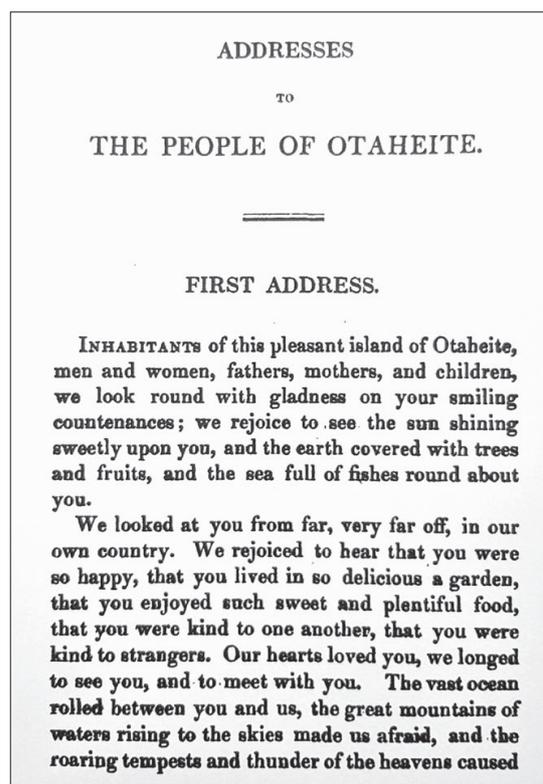
My Brethren and Fathers will, I trust, candidly regard my solicitude to serve this important cause by the present publication. I felt it my duty to make the attempt, hoping to afford assistance to some of the Missionaries in discovering the simplest methods of conveying scriptural truth to untutored minds. The approbation of some friends, whose judgment I highly respect, encourages me to send these *Addresses* with the Missionaries, and to present them to the attention of the world. Perhaps they may assist the

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<sup>38</sup> *Letters of John Love*, p. 184. Letter dated 25<sup>th</sup> August 1796.

pious endeavours of Christian parents, and may attract the notice of some, who are otherwise averse from the consideration of heavenly truth. And, in reference to the present mission, the concern and prayers of its friends may be excited and directed, by a minute and particular exhibition of the leading truths of the Bible, as accommodated to the ideas of minds just emerging from the horrid shades of Pagan darkness.<sup>39</sup>

John Love lived during the period of the Scottish Enlightenment and a pivotal feature of the way in which theology was taught in the Scottish Universities was that in explaining the centralities of Christianity an exposition of natural theology would normally precede that of revealed theology. This was a view embraced by the Moderates and by some, though not all, Evangelicals. John Love was among the Evangelicals who embraced this strategy. The *Addresses to the People of Otaheite*, taken as a whole, undoubtedly present the message of salvation by free grace. Those addressed are told they are lost in sin and that they are under God's wrath and curse. They are told of their need as lost sinners of a new birth, of the message of salvation based entirely on the work of the Lord Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing sinners to Christ. The *Addresses* begin, however, in Scottish Enlightenment fashion by focusing on natural theology. Love first deals with creation and the existence of God being revealed by the creation.<sup>40</sup> Jehovah is explained as Triune in address eight<sup>41</sup> and it is only in the ninth address of the fifteen that the name of Jesus appears.<sup>42</sup> Until then Christ is referred to as a 'Man that Jehovah would send' or the 'Great Saviour.'



The first page of Love's *Addresses to the People of Otaheite* in the 1796 edition.

<sup>39</sup> Love, *Addresses to the People of Otaheite*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-32.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

The issues both of mission strategy and of the message to be delivered on the mission field were debated at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1796, just six months prior to the LMS missionaries sailing to Tahiti.<sup>43</sup> The debate has been pictured in Disruption polemics as evidence that whilst the Evangelicals were zealous for overseas missions, the Moderates were opposed to missions. It is undoubtedly correct that the Evangelicals were more zealous for missions than the Moderates. The issues in debate at the 1796 General Assembly were, however, more complex than supposedly Moderate outright opposition to overseas missions. The overtures before the 1796 Assembly were to support the burgeoning infant missionary societies being set up in Scottish towns – in many cases to support the LMS – and there were two main elements in the Moderate call to reject these overtures. The first was not, should the Church sponsor missionary work, but rather whether it would give official approval to the inter-denominational missionary societies and the local voluntary groups of Evangelicals that had initiated them. It was the issue of whether missionary work should be undertaken by societies or by the Church itself. The second main issue in the debate was over mission strategy and the message to be delivered by the missionaries. The view of the Moderates was that, in order for missionary work to be effective and for the Biblical message to be understood, civilization and education must precede the proclamation of the gospel.<sup>44</sup> In addition, in keeping with Scottish Enlightenment theology, they thought that an explanation of natural theology should usually precede revealed theology.<sup>45</sup> This view of mission strategy, though largely advocated by the Moderates, did have some support among Evangelicals, one of whom,

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<sup>43</sup> For a discussion of this debate and the relevant literature, see R. Middleton, ‘Scottish Missionaries ordained by the London Scots Presbytery in the 1790s’, *SRSJH*, Vol. 9 (2019), pp. 126-153 (esp. pp. 145-147).

<sup>44</sup> For the factors leading to the 1796 missions debate in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, its history, and implications see David A. Currie, ‘The Growth of Evangelicalism in the Church of Scotland, 1793–1843’, (PhD thesis, University of St Andrews, 1991), pp. 139-188; Gavin White, “‘Highly Preposterous’: origins of Scottish Missions”, *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, Vol. 19:2 (1978), pp. 111-124; Ian Douglas Maxwell, ‘Civilization or Christianity? The Scottish Debate on Mission Methods, 1750–1835’, in Brian Stanley (ed.), *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment* (W.B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2001).

<sup>45</sup> A leading exponent of this theological outlook was Principal George Hill (1750–1819), professor of divinity at St. Andrews and the leader of the Moderate Party after the death of William Robertson in 1780. See George Hill, *Lectures in Divinity* (6<sup>th</sup> edn., Edinburgh, 1854), pp. 132-144. Those who advocated this approach based their ideas on what they viewed as Paul’s procedure in Athens as detailed the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 17.

as we have mentioned, was John Love, and another, a few decades later, was Alexander Duff. They held to the priority of education, civilization, and beginning the gospel proclamation usually with natural theology. John Love's *Addresses to the People of Otaheite* were composed on the same basis of gospel presentation. John Morison has observed regarding these addresses;

It has been doubted by some, whether the method of appeal adopted by Dr. Love<sup>46</sup> in these addresses was strictly consistent with the models laid down by inspired men. Had the missionaries adopted his suggestions, there is reason to fear that the conversion of the South Sea Islanders would have been retarded rather than promoted. With all the rich imaginings which distinguish these addresses, they seem to proceed upon an erroneous principle; and to give countenance to the idea, too prevalent at one period in the public mind, that, in order to prepare heathen men for the reception of Christ's gospel, *there must be a previous training* in what has been called the doctrines of *natural religion*. Now, the very reverse of this notion has been inculcated by the stern lessons of experience; and those missionaries who have been most successful in subverting the powers of heathenism, and in converting idolatrous or savage minds to the faith of Christ, have been men who adhered with greatest simplicity to the example of the great apostle of the Gentiles at Corinth, and who have 'determined not to know anything among men, save Jesus Christ and him crucified'.<sup>47</sup>

The *Addresses*, though intended by Love to assist the missionaries in explaining the way of salvation to the Tahitians, as far as the historical record is concerned, were never used. Indeed, it was not until February 1802, over five years after they landed in Tahiti, that the missionaries were able to speak to the Tahitians in their own language.<sup>48</sup> The first

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<sup>46</sup> After John Love returned to Glasgow, his ability and reputation as a scholar and theologian was widely acknowledged and led, in November 1815, to an invitation to be one of the candidates for the professorship of divinity at King's College, Aberdeen. He complied, but due to the ascendancy of the Moderates, the vacant chair was filled by one who sympathized with their theological stance. The academic authorities in Aberdeen were, however, so impressed by Love that he was awarded the degree of D.D. at Marischal College the following year.

<sup>47</sup> Morison, *Fathers and Founders of the London Missionary Society*, pp. 261-262. The evangelical historian, Brian Stanley, whilst rather overstating the case, says regarding Love's *Addresses*, that as LMS Secretary he was the leading representative in the Pacific 'who endeavoured to model the Tahitian Mission on the civilizing principles he had learned from the Scottish Moderates', Stanley, 'Christian Missions and the Enlightenment: A Re-evaluation', in Stanley (ed.), *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment*, p. 17.

<sup>48</sup> Richard Lovett records the event as follows: 'The missionaries on Tahiti were now beginning to come into closer touch with the people, for near the end of the letter comes

missionaries rightly saw that the priority was to acquire an understanding of the language of Tahiti and then reduce it to writing in order to give them the Scriptures. In this task, without prior training in language skills, they had to construct an alphabet before they could begin to translate the Bible into Tahitian.<sup>49</sup>

After Love's association with the missionaries as an instructor, and his concern regarding the tasks with which they would be faced, he gives this testimony regarding them in a letter to a minister in the Glasgow Missionary Society: 'I must, however, take the liberty of requesting you, and other brethren, who are favoured with near access, to the God of our salvation, to be more and more importunately concerned in behalf of that body of missionaries here, amounting probably to about thirty, which is about to engage in this serious warfare. Several of them I have had much opportunity to converse with, and they have engaged my esteem and affectionate concern; and I wish it were in my power to lay them with weight on the spirits of many who are near to the Lord.'<sup>50</sup>

It was Thomas Haweis' view, as we have mentioned, that 'A plain man, with a good natural understanding, well read in the Bible, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, though he comes from the forge, or the shop, would ... be infinitely preferable to all the learning of the schools, and would possess, in the skill and labour of his hands, advantages which barren science could never compensate.' Haweis' view prevailed and the missionaries in this category heavily outweighed those ordained as Gospel ministers. There were twenty-six artisan missionaries in comparison to just four ordained men. The trade that was most prominent was that of either carpenter or cabinet-maker; seven men had this as their trade. There were also, in the band of artisans, two each of the following trades; bricklayer, weaver, tailor or linen draper, and shoemaker. Their number was completed by a harness-maker, a gardener, a surgeon, a cotton manufacturer, a hatter, a cooper, and a gentleman's servant. These men, as well as those who were ordained, were given such training as was

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this sentence, "We have the satisfaction of informing the Missionary Society that by the grace of God we hope, for the first time, publicly to address the natives on the next Lord's day. Brother Nott will be the speaker." This event marks the beginning of evangelistic work. From February 26 until April 5, 1802, Nott and Elder were engaged in a preaching tour throughout the island. The results were not wholly discouraging, and it was often a work of difficulty to collect an audience; but the native mind was enabled to become more familiar with elementary Christian truths.' *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, p. 177.

<sup>49</sup> Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, p. 184.

<sup>50</sup> *Letters of John Love*, p. 182. Letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1796.

possible by Bogue and Love in the few months prior to their departure. However, as we shall see, many of them were ill-equipped for life in the South Seas and proved unequal to the task to which they were called. This was, however, by no means the case with all of them; several proved to be outstanding missionaries and lived to see salvation come to the South Sea islanders.

*(c) Transporting the missionaries to the Pacific*

The newly appointed Directors were faced with the responsibility of organising a mission at the other side of the world. This involved not only selecting and training the band of missionaries but raising a very large sum of money, and procuring the means of taking them on a vast journey, along with all the necessary equipment, to the South Seas. In his discourse on the Thursday of the week in which the society was formed, Haweis had outlined two basic options of conveying the missionaries to Tahiti. The first was to buy a small ship belonging to the Society employed solely in the service of the mission, with the possibility of carrying back a limited cargo to defray some proportion of the expense. The second option involved entering into a contract with the Government to convey stores or convicts to Port Jackson, or Norfolk Island.<sup>51</sup> This would involve either hiring or purchasing a ship of considerable size, upwards of 500 tons. Such a vessel would be able both convey the missionaries to the South Seas along with all the equipment and stores that they would need along with convicts to Australia on behalf of the Government.

Haweis strongly favoured the second suggestion, which, despite the expense involved, seemed, in his view, to offer the greatest advantages. He firmly believed it to be a sound commercial proposition and, as we have seen, he was prepared to back it to with his own financial resources. Haweis also thought that carrying convicts to Australia would be an evangelistic opportunity: they would treat them well, and the missionaries would be able to speak with them. Haweis added with regard to the convicts: ‘if it pleases God to bless the missionaries labours to a few, if only to one, the benefit of that man, or woman, to

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<sup>51</sup> The main location for the transportation of convicts to Australia was Sydney, New South Wales. The First Fleet of British ships sailed into Botany Bay on the 18th January 1788 but quickly assessed conditions as unsuitable and moved to Port Jackson (Sydney Harbour). A satellite colony was also established over 1,000 miles away at Norfolk Island in the Pacific Ocean between Australia and New Zealand which was then virtually uninhabited. It was also intended that the island would be a source of food in an attempt to overcome incipient famine in the early years at Sydney Cove.

the colony and their fellows is incalculable; real Christianity will do more than those who have never known its true influence can entertain any conception of, even an infidel must acknowledge the experiment is worth attempting; it can do no harm – it may do an immensity of good to the nation itself.<sup>52</sup>

The Directors reflected on how they might secure a suitable ship to take the missionaries to Tahiti. It was suggested that a passage might be bought on a South Sea whaler, but this was soon rejected as impracticable. The Directors set up a committee to explore the two possibilities proposed by Haweis in his address which had by then been published and was before the public. It was eventually agreed that a ship belonging to the Society was judged to be the most eligible plan. Haweis was actively involved in the quest for a suitable vessel. He again solicited the help of Ambrose Serle, who had shown such practical interest in the 1791 attempt. Through Serle he approached Sir Charles Middleton; now one of the Lords of Commission at the Admiralty. Serle agreed with Haweis that a commercial vessel sponsored by a company on behalf of the Society would be the least expensive proposition. After several abortive efforts, the *Duff*, a vessel of 300 tons, was bought at a cost of £4800. This was a smaller vessel than that originally envisaged by Haweis and was unable to be employed in transporting convicts to Australia in addition to its main purpose of transporting the missionaries along with their equipment. The price of the vessel was greater than was at first anticipated, and caused some hesitation.<sup>53</sup> However, the purchase was made in faith, and the money was eventually raised from a generous Christian public. The vessel had been very recently built by Peter Everitt Mestaer at King and Queen Dock, Rotherhithe in London and was launched on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1794. Its first owner was J. Carbine who ran a business that traded between London and Gibraltar. In accordance with Serle's recommendation, the *Duff* was sponsored by the company of Cox & Co. on behalf of the LMS and her trade route was changed, firstly in 1796 to sail from London to Port Jackson in Australia, and a year later, from London to the South Seas. The *Evangelical Magazine* reported, 'The Friends of the Society in London, and some other places, particularly Sheffield, have contributed liberally various articles, either as stores, or for the equipment of the Missionaries.'<sup>54</sup>

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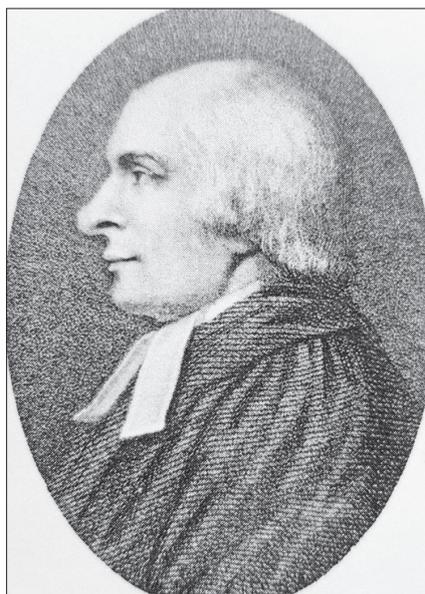
<sup>52</sup> *Sermons preached in London at the formation of the Missionary Society*, pp. 174-175.

<sup>53</sup> In 2020 terms, the cost of the vessel was approximately £550,000.

<sup>54</sup> *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 4 (1796), p. 342.

*(d) Ordination and dedication of the missionaries*

Amongst the men chosen for the South Seas mission were four that were deemed sufficiently qualified to go as ministers of the gospel. Their names were James Fleet Cover (1762–1834), John Eyre (1768–1834), John Clark Jefferson (1760–1807), and Thomas Lewis (1765–1799). None of them had previously been ordained.<sup>55</sup> Other than the thirty-one-year-old Lewis, who had been trained at the Countess of Huntingdon’s College at



James Fleet Cover.



John Eyre.

Trevecca, it seems very probable that the other three had not received any formal theological education. Cover was aged thirty-four and had been a schoolmaster in Woolwich: he was a married man with a twelve-year-old son. Eyre (no relation to his namesake John Eyre the editor of the *Evangelical Magazine* and a leader in the LMS) was the youngest of the four at twenty-eight and was married to a woman aged sixty-four. Prior to being accepted by the LMS, Eyre was a block-maker – which seems to mean he was some form of joiner, possibly making blocks connected with the printing trade. Jefferson was the oldest at thirty-six and, like James

<sup>55</sup> There is little biographical information on the early lives of the four men. All have a record, though brief, in Charles Surman’s Index at the Dr Williams Library and in James Sibree, *London Missionary Society: A Register of Missionaries, Deputations, Etc. from 1796 to 1923* (4<sup>th</sup> edn., London, 1923), p. 1. There are articles on Cover and Eyre in A.G.L. Shaw and C.M.H. Clark (eds.), *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne University Press, 1966, available online) and on Jefferson in Gerald H. Anderson (ed.), *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (New York, 1998), pp. 330–331. Lewis is included in Nuttall, ‘The Students of Trevecca College, 1768–1791’, p. 274.

Cover, he had been a schoolmaster. Prior to his call to the mission field he had preached to a small congregation that gathered in his own house at Fowey in Cornwall.<sup>56</sup> As all four men were dissenters, episcopal ordination was out of the question.<sup>57</sup>

The first to be ordained was Thomas Lewis who, four years earlier, had offered to go alone to the South Seas when the original two Trevecca students had refused to go unless they were episcopally ordained. As a student at Trevecca, who had been supplying congregations in the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion for several years, ordination was for him relatively straight forward. He was ordained along with three other men on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1795 at the Independent Chapel at Odiham in Hampshire.<sup>58</sup> Though he seems to have been ordained specifically as missionary to Tahiti, the Surman Index at Dr Williams Library states that he became the minister of the Odiham Church until he left for the South Seas. The *Evangelical Magazine* records the Odiham ordination:

On Thursday, the 5th of November, 1795, at the Chapel at Odiham, in the county of Hants, Mr. Lewis (one of the Missionaries going to Otaheite), Mr. Drew, Mr. Holmes, and Mr. Newbury, were publicly set apart to the work of the Ministry, by ordination; when the Rev. Mr. Young, of Canterbury, opened the service in the morning, by reading suitable Scriptures out of the 3d and 33d chapters of Ezekiel; after which the Rev. Mr. Bennett, of Goring, prayed. After prayer and singing, Mr. Young delivered a discourse on the subject of ordination, from Acts 13:2-3. After which, each candidate delivered (extempore) an account of God's gracious dealings with his soul, and of his call to the Ministry. Then Mr. Drew read the Confession of Faith (printed for such occasions, in this Connexion), and the candidates signified their assent to its articles, by holding up their right hands. Mr. Young then proceeded in the Ordination Prayer, accompanied with the laying on of hands of the two ordaining Ministers. After this, Mr. Bennett

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<sup>56</sup> The *Evangelical Magazine* recorded in August 1798 that since Jefferson had left for the mission field, the work in Fowey had not suffered due to his absence, that it was being regularly supplied, and that a neat and commodious chapel had been built. *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 6 (1798), p. 337.

<sup>57</sup> Though the Countess of Huntingdon had originally viewed her chapels as being connected with the establishment, this relationship ended in the early 1780s when she was forced to register some of her chapels as dissenting places of worship under the Toleration Act. See Alan Harding, *The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 296-357.

<sup>58</sup> It may well be that at that time this old Independent Chapel had a link to the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion. In the late eighteenth century, chapels seem to have moved in and out of the Connexion quite freely.

prayed, and delivered the Charge, from 1 Timothy 4:16. In the evening the Rev. Mr. Jefferson, of Basingstoke, preached a sermon from Philippians 2:16 – ‘Holding forth the word of life.’<sup>59</sup>

Both the Directors and the LMS examination committee clearly deemed that all four men were suitable for ordination to the ministry. The London Scots Presbytery had often been asked to ordain men for missionary service. However, if a man had not received any theological training, the Scots Presbytery would require that such training took place before they would ordain, and, in addition, the men would be subject to examination by the Presbytery.<sup>60</sup> As the majority of the Directors, led by Haweis, did not regard such education as necessary for missionary service, and as the men were intended to sail to the South Seas in months, the Scots Presbytery was not an avenue for ordination. The only realistic option was for the LMS Directors to arrange themselves for the ordination of Cover, Eyre, and Jefferson.

Of these, James Cover and John Eyre were ordained first. This took place on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1796 at Holywell Mount Chapel, Shoreditch, where William Francis Platt (1758–1831), one of the ‘Fathers and Founders’ of the LMS, was the minister.<sup>61</sup> Holywell Mount Chapel had been built by a Church of England clergyman and, following the death of the previous minister, a Mr. Morton, the Trustees applied in 1789 to the Countess of Huntingdon to recommend to them a minister. She recommended Platt who had been trained at her college at Trevecca and who remained the pastor

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<sup>59</sup> *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 4 (1796), p. 206. The ministers officiating at the ordination were Thomas Young, the minister of the Countess of Huntingdon’s Chapel then in Palace Street, Canterbury; Thomas Bennett, then in Goring, who later became the minister on the Connexion’s Chapel in King Street, Birmingham; and Joseph Jefferson, the Independent minister at Basingstoke. For details of Young and the Canterbury Congregation, see Thomas Timpson, *Church History of Kent* (London, 1859), pp. 310-314. For Bennett, see J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* (London, 1855), p. 191. Both Young and Bennett were Trevecca students and are listed in Nuttall, ‘The Students of Trevecca College, 1768–1791’, pp. 270, 277. There are biographical details of Jefferson (no relation to the prospective missionary) in the biography of his son. See John Whitridge, *Memoir and Remains of Joseph Brown Jefferson, Minister at Attercliffe near Sheffield* (Manchester, 1826), pp. 1-2, 5-6.

<sup>60</sup> See Middleton, ‘Scottish Missionaries ordained by the London Scots Presbytery in the 1790s’, pp. 127-129, 136-137, 150-151.

<sup>61</sup> For a biographical account of Platt, see Morison, *Fathers and Founders of the London Missionary Society*, pp. 397-406; *Evangelical Magazine*, New Series, Vol. 9, (1831), pp. 405, 421-423; J.A. Jones (ed.), *Bunhill Memorials: Sacred Reminiscences of Three Hundred Ministers* (London, 1849), pp. 209-211.

until 1828. In 1796 Holywell Mount Chapel was, therefore, a congregation of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion.<sup>62</sup> The *Evangelical Magazine* of September 1796 gives details of the ordination service at which John Love was the preacher:

Ordinations: On July 26, at Holywell Mount Chapel, Mr. Cover and Mr. Eyre, two of the Missionaries going to the South-Sea. The service was introduced with prayer by Mr. Reynolds. Mr. Platt asked the questions, and received from Mr. Cover and Mr. Eyre, a very satisfactory account of their religious experiences, and their call to this important undertaking. Mr. Eyre, of Hackney, offered the ordination-prayer, with the imposition of hands. Mr. Love delivered a short, but judicious charge, from Jeremiah xx: 9, 'Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.' Mr. Wilks concluded the work of the evening with prayer.<sup>63</sup>

Two days after the ordination of Cover and Eyre, on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July 1796, a solemn service of dedication took place in London at which both the ministers and the artisan missionaries were set apart to missionary service in the South Seas at Sion Chapel, Whitechapel, which was a congregation of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion.<sup>64</sup> Notice of the meeting had been given from the pulpits of the friends of the LMS in London on the preceding Sabbath; accordingly, several thousands of people were assembled long before the time that worship was scheduled to commence. The report in the *Evangelical Magazine* describes the

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<sup>62</sup> Morison, *Fathers and Founders of the London Missionary Society*, p. 400; D.C. Jones, B.S. Schlenker, and E.M. White, *The Elect Methodists: Calvinistic Methodism in England and Wales* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2012), p. 249.

<sup>63</sup> *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 4, (1796), p. 385. All the ministers taking part were Directors of the LMS. John Reynolds was the minister at the Independent Congregation at Camomile Street in London; he, like Cover and Eyre, had received no formal theological training. Walter Wilson says, 'His judgment concerning the great truths of the gospel coincided with Calvin, and to those doctrines he expressed a zealous attachment'. John Eyre, who offered the ordination prayer, (not to be confused with the missionary with the same name), like Platt and Wilks, had been trained at Trevecca and was the Church of England minister at Homerton and the principal editor of the *Evangelical Magazine*.

<sup>64</sup> In 1790, the year before the death of the Countess, the Connexion took over a former theatre on Whitechapel Road, which was fitted out as Sion Chapel. The dressing rooms were turned into vestries, and a pulpit built on the front of the stage. It was chosen for the service as it was the most spacious building to which they readily had access. The original chapel burnt down in 1864 and was rebuilt two years later by Congregationalists as Sion (New) Chapel.



The Countess of Huntingdon's College at Trevecca where both Platt and Eyre had been trained.

gathering: 'So crowded and serious an assembly has been seldom seen on any occasion. Every ear was attentive to the judicious and solid discourses of the preachers; and every heart seemed to feel when those servants of God, who had freely offered themselves in this arduous undertaking, solemnly pledged themselves to persevere in the name and strength of the Lord.'<sup>65</sup>

No fewer than ten Ministers were engaged in this extraordinary gathering. Four ministers engaged in prayer at various stages in the service: three were Anglicans – Thomas Haweis, John Eyre, who read from the *Book of Common Prayer*, and John Walker, who was a fellow at Trinity College, Dublin.<sup>66</sup> The fourth minister to engage in prayer was the

<sup>65</sup> *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 4 (1796), p. 342.

<sup>66</sup> John Walker (1768–1833) was the son of Matthew Walker of Roscommon, a minister in the established Church of Ireland. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin and ordained shortly afterwards. He seceded in 1804 when he offered to resign his fellowship and was promptly expelled. He founded a congregation in Stafford Street, Dublin, which rejected any clerical order and tended to high Calvinism. After some visits to Scotland, Walker moved to London in 1819. Being a classical scholar, he supported himself by lecturing and writing. On receiving a £600 pension from Dublin University in 1833, he returned to Ireland. His followers styled themselves 'the Church of God' and were called 'the Walkerites'. Walker in his own day was compared with John Glass and Robert Sandeman. Though there were some similarities in their separationism, Walker was at pains to distinguish his theological position from that of Glass and Sandeman. For biographical details, see the article on Walker by Timothy C.F. Stunt in *Blackwell*

Independent, Joseph Brooksbank. The sermon was preached by John Love's senior colleague, the Clerk of the London Scots Presbytery, Henry Hunter. His text was Luke 10:1-11, 16-20 concerning the Saviour sending out the seventy, two-by-two. The twenty-nine missionaries<sup>67</sup> then stood round the communion table and Haweis, in a short prayer, commended them to their work and to the Saviour's almighty care and love, praying for the success which he alone can command.

Then five ministers chosen by the Directors for the act of dedication stood together around the communion rails. They were Thomas Haweis, John Reynolds of Camomile Street Independent Church, John Love of Artillery Street Presbyterian Church, Alexander Waugh of Wells-Street Oxford-Road Burgher Congregation, and Matthew Wilks, of the Calvinistic Methodist Whitefield's Tabernacle. The ministers then each took a Bible<sup>68</sup> from the Communion Table, where they had been previously placed, and five of the missionaries approached the communion rails and kneeled down, when the ministers, with the Bibles in their hands, advanced, and each in succession addressed to the person kneeling before him the words, 'Go, our beloved Brother, live agreeably to this blessed Word (putting the Bible into his hands) and publish the Gospel to the Heathen, according to your calling, gifts, and abilities.' Each missionary then replied in words to this effect, 'I will, the Lord being my helper.' Five others then knelt down, and the same ceremonial was repeated, till all the missionaries received their dedication. Edward Williams, who had moved from Carrs Lane, Birmingham to Rotherham, then addressed the Missionaries, who were still standing round the communion rails and delivered to them a charge from Genesis 17:1, 'I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be thou perfect', in which he spoke to them quite pointedly regarding their conduct and their tempers and set before them what he considered the Biblical encouragements for such an arduous undertaking, specifically, 'I am God all-sufficient.'

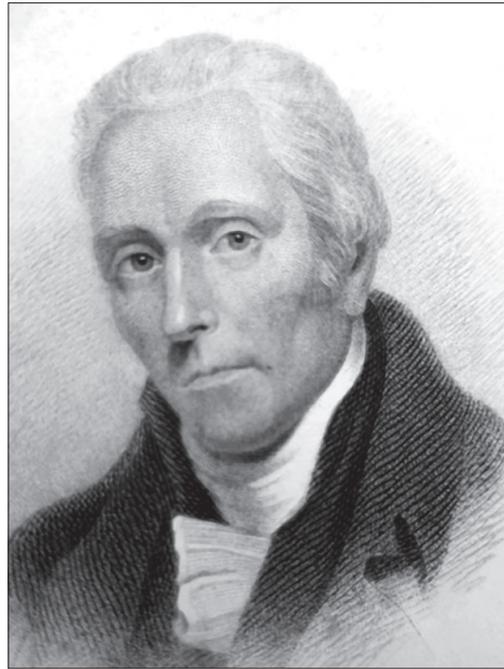
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*Dictionary of Evangelical Biography*, Vol. 2, p. 1151; *DNB*; Grayson Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals: Protestant Secessions from the via media, c.1800-1850* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 77-104; C.P. Martin, 'Recollections of the Walkerite or so-called Separatist Meeting in Dublin', *Christian Brethren Research Fellowship Journal*, Vol. 21 (May 1971), pp. 2-10.

<sup>67</sup> George Veeseon, an artisan missionary, was later added to the list.

<sup>68</sup> The beautifully bound Bibles, which were presented to the Missionaries, had been given by John Bailey, a member of John Eyre's Hackney congregation. This passage was written in each, with Bailey's own hand, 'Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'

The ‘Narrative to the Solemnity’ that preceded the printed sermon of Hunter and Williams’ charge to the missionaries makes the following observation: ‘The whole was a scene of such impressive solemnity, as has hardly ever been witnessed; the Ministers and the Missionaries seemed alike so deeply affected with the awfulness of the work before them, whilst the congregation expressed the sensations of their souls in silence, tears, and secret prayer.’ The account of the service in the *Evangelical Magazine* concludes with these words: ‘Such a sight was truly impressive, not merely on account of its novelty, or



Edward Williams, the preacher  
at the dedication service.

the advantages that may result to the heathen world, but for the cordial affection which so happily subsists, and evidently increases in Ministers of different denominations, who, previous to this institution, had neither fellowship nor intercourse with each other.<sup>69</sup> This spirit of unity across denominational boundaries was one that John Love shared; writing to a correspondent in Paisley, describing the South Seas mission six months prior to the meeting in Sion Chapel, he observed:

A willing union is formed among evangelical professors of the truth of various denominations; their fears and jealousies of each other are scattered; missionaries are found, some of them (at least one) prepared years before for the work, and their further improvement in knowledge and meetness for such a service, is with all diligence: carrying forward; in a trying time the hearts of many are opened to devise liberal things, and to cast their bread on the most distant waters: persons in the sea-faring, surgical, &c., lines, are brought forward by the impulse of heavenly zeal to sacrifice the best temporal prospects to this high cause: public meetings

<sup>69</sup> *Sermon and Charge delivered at Sion Chapel, London, July 28 1796* (London, 1796), pp. ix-x; *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 4 (1796), p. 342. The sermon by Henry Hunter and Edward Williams’ charge, along with ‘A short narrative of the solemnity’ and the ‘Counsels and Instructions for the Regulation of the Mission’, were published at the request of the LMS Directors. The account in Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, pp. 128-129 is dependent on the above sources.

for prayer on this subject are attended with desirable marks of continued ardour, earnestness, and, indefatigable zeal.<sup>70</sup>

The *Duff* was being loaded and was almost ready for embarkation. Though three of the four men that were going to the South Seas as ministers had been set apart to the Gospel ministry, John Jefferson had not yet been ordained. Accordingly, this was arranged by the LMS Directors to take place less than a fortnight after the Sion Chapel meeting on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> August at Haberdashers Hall where Joseph Brooksbank, another of the Founding Fathers of the LMS was the minister of an Independent congregation. The *Evangelical Magazine* records the ordination directly after that of Cover and Eyre:

Mr. Townsend began with prayer. Mr. Eyre, after a short address to Mr. Jefferson, requested him to give some account of the work of God upon his heart, of his call to the ministry, and what induced him to engage in the duties of a Missionary. Mr. Brooksbank offered the ordination prayer, and several ministers assisted in laying on of hands. Mr. Jerment delivered a short, but sensible discourse on Acts xxii. 11. ‘Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.’<sup>71</sup>

The writer for the *Evangelical Magazine* remarked concerning the two ordinations that ‘the persons ordained have preached for several years, with acceptance and success. Two persons, called under Mr. Jefferson’s ministry, accompany him as Missionaries.’ The writer then went on to reflect on the evangelical unity manifested in the two ordinations that was to be the hallmark of the early years of the LMS: ‘Two such ordinations have seldom occurred, in which Episcopalians, Seceders, Antiburghers, Presbyterians, Independents, and Methodists all united.’<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> *Letters of John Love*, p. 166. Letter dated 27<sup>th</sup> January 1796.

<sup>71</sup> *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 4 (1796), p. 385. John Townsend, John Eyre, Joseph Brooksbank and George Jerment were all Founding Fathers of the LMS. Eyre and Brooksbank were also Directors of the Society.

<sup>72</sup> *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 4 (1796), p. 385. The comment that two persons called under Jefferson’s ministry were accompanying him to the South Seas must imply that two of the artisan missionaries were either converted or called to missionary service under Jefferson’s preaching in his home at Fowey in Cornwall. As the biographical information regarding the artisan missionaries is even more slender than for the ministers it is not possible to determine with accuracy the artisan missionaries referred to. One of them may have been William Pascoe Crook (1775–1846) who was born at Dartmouth and studied at Plymouth; see the article on Crook in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

The awaited day had now arrived; the *Duff* was now loaded with all the equipment that the missionaries were taking to the South Seas and was ready for boarding. The LMS Directors on the same day as Jefferson's ordination organised a farewell communion service in Haberdashers' Hall where they had met for the ordination. Again, the *Evangelical Magazine* records the occasion:

The Directors, and other active friends of the Society, several of whom were ministers, assembled with the Captain, the missionaries and their wives, at Haberdashers' Hall, and, dropping all consideration

of little party-distinctions, mutually commemorated the death of the Lord Jesus, having first recommended to his merciful protection and care their dear brethren and sisters, from whom they were to be speedily, and perhaps finally, separated. If ever God was present in the assemblies of his saints, surely he was present on that occasion. Every heart was affected; and, we trust, the serious impressions then made will never be erased. Dr. Haweis, as the oldest minister, led the worship, and Mr. Reynolds, next to him in years, concluded it: Dr. Hunter prayed; Mr. Wilks and Mr. Eyre addressed the congregation; and Mr. Platt, Mr. Brooksbank, Mr. Townsend, and others, assisted in distributing the elements. Such a scene of love and harmony was truly edifying and refreshing. Surely it may be said, 'What hath God wrought!' It was a little specimen of what the church in the latter days will experience, when love, like death, will level all distinctions. It was even a foretaste of heaven.<sup>73</sup>

The documentary sources do not specifically record John Love as being present at Jefferson's ordination and the subsequent united communion service, but as some of his ministerial colleagues in the Scots Presbytery took an active part in the proceedings and as he had been actively involved in the ordination at Holywell Mount and the designation service at Sion Chapel, it seems very probable that he was present.<sup>74</sup>



William Platt, Minister at the Countess of Huntingdon's chapel at Holywell Mount. Platt was involved in the ordinations and at the farewell communion service.

<sup>73</sup> *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 4 (1796), p. 382.

<sup>74</sup> It is almost certainly due to the editing of John Love's *Letters* that there no reference to these meetings in his printed correspondence. Indeed, in these crucial two months of LMS activity, between 23<sup>rd</sup> June and 26<sup>th</sup> August 1796, there are no printed letters.

### III. The South Seas mission

The next day, Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> August 1796, at about five in the morning the missionaries, destined for the South Seas, embarked on board the *Duff* and sailed from Blackwall to Gravesend. The *Evangelical Magazine* records the occasion, ‘Though they embarked at so early an hour, vast multitudes attended. The deck was crowded, many of the Directors and friends accompanying them down the river. A hymn from the Countess of Huntingdon’s Collection, was sung:

*Jesu, at thy command  
I launch into the deep;  
And leave my native land,  
Where sin lulls all asleep;  
For Thee I fain would all resign,  
And sail to heaven with Thee and Thine.*<sup>75</sup>

The sailors in the ships on each side the river, hearing the singing, stood in silent astonishment, and many serious persons on the shore waved their hats, bidding the dear servants of God farewell.<sup>76</sup> Captain James Wilson had to take the *Duff* eastward on the Thames to reach the coast; crowds were on the shore at Woolwich, Gravesend, Chatham, and Sheerness as the vessel proceeded along the Thames. When they reached Dungeness on the south coast the wind changed and they could go no further. There the whole ship’s crew assembled on the quarter-deck for public worship on the Sabbath. The missionaries read the Scriptures, prayed, and gave out the hymns, and Thomas Haweis, Joseph Brooksbank, and Matthew Wilks, who had determined to accompany them in their voyage to Portsmouth, each preached on board the *Duff*.<sup>77</sup>

#### (a) *Delayed departure*

On the Monday evening, after a sermon by John Jefferson, the crew were favoured by a gale and the *Duff* came to anchor on the following morning, 16<sup>th</sup> August, at Spithead on the Solent near Gosport and Portsmouth. To

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<sup>75</sup> *A Select Collection of Hymns universally sung in the Countess of Huntingdon’s chapels, collected by her Ladyship* (1786), No. CLXXIX, p. 272.

<sup>76</sup> *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 4 (1796), p. 382.

<sup>77</sup> Haweis preached from 2 Corinthians 12:10, ‘Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak then am I strong.’ Wood, *Thomas Haweis*, p. 209.

their regret, they then found that the same wind which brought them from Dungeness had taken to sea the East India convoy they had hoped to join. The convoy was needed, as Richard Lovett points out, due to the war raging between England and France.<sup>78</sup> Waiting for another convoy was a long and weary business. The delay at Portsmouth turned out to be almost six weeks. No sooner did the *Duff* come to an anchor than numerous friends, who anxiously awaited her arrival, came on board supplying Wilson, his crew and the missionaries, with vegetables, live-stock, and every other article that would contribute to their comfort. During this stay at Spithead a number of the LMS Directors and supporters visited the ship and conducted worship on board the vessel. Thomas Haweis, as his biographer details, ‘lost no opportunity of preaching during this enforced interval.’<sup>79</sup> John Love was staying with David Bogue at Gosport for ten days in anticipation of the *Duff* arriving in Portsmouth.<sup>80</sup> In consequence of the delay, on 11<sup>th</sup> September, the missionaries’ two theological instructors conducted public worship on board the vessel. In a letter written by Love over two months after the event he describes their visit to the *Duff*:

I had ... the opportunity, as had been before agreed on, to preach on board on the Lord’s Day twice, and Mr. Bogue once the same day. I preached on board on the Wednesday following. In this singular pleasing and solemn situation, I endeavoured to convey to that uncommon audience the best counsel in my power; first, in reference to their work among the heathen, from Ecclesiastes, xii, 10, ‘The preacher sought to find out acceptable words; and that which was written was upright, even words of truth,’ then in the style of consolation, from Psalm lxxxix: 10, ‘I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide and I will fill it,’ and lastly of admonition, as to those evils from which persons employed in public work need to be progressively purified, from Malachi, iii, 2-3, ‘But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.’ I was much delighted with the appearance and spirit of the captain and the whole company, both in public services and in conversation. The time, however, of

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<sup>78</sup> Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, p. 131.

<sup>79</sup> Wood, *Thomas Haweis*, p. 210.

<sup>80</sup> *Letters of John Love*, p. 186, Letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> November 1796. Though the printed text of the letter refers to Love staying in ‘Gravesend’ that is a typographic error corrected to ‘Gosport’ on the Errata page of the volume.

their real departure did not arrive till some days after. But with what solemn weight of concern ought we, from our resting places at home, to follow in spirit these messengers through the perils and exercises of their voyage, into the scene of their trial, where wisdom more than human will be necessary, with all the self-denial, zeal, and constancy of martyrs. It will be a proof of the soundness and solidity of our zeal and faith in behalf of this great work, if we continue in this earnest concern until we are well assured that the arm of the Lord has indeed awakened and put on strength. Nothing is so much to be feared as a trifling, careless, presumptuous confidence, without laying deeply to heart our unworthiness and the great importance and difficulty of this work. If the friends of this institution are indeed, in reference to it, of a humble and contrite spirit, the high and lofty One will dwell with them, and will effectually countenance their endeavours.<sup>81</sup>

Whilst the ship was delayed on the Solent two events occurred with respect to the band of missionaries. Mrs. Hudden's heart failed. She was the wife of Edward Hudden one of the artisan missionaries. The *Evangelical Magazine*, explained the situation, 'Being of a delicate constitution, and naturally timid, the winds and waves so alarmed her fears, that it was thought proper, she and her husband, though much against his wish, should be set on shore.'<sup>82</sup> Lovett gives more details from the official journal kept on board the vessel, 'Mrs. Hudden, being affected by the sea, as most of us had been at first, fell into such a dejection of mind as engaged us to send her on shore at her request. Her husband went with her, though reluctantly; a man of meek and quiet spirit, and might have been a useful member of the community; but the Directors thought it by no means right to separate man and wife.'<sup>83</sup> The second matter regarding the missionary band was the death and burial of James Cover's thirteen-year-old son, James Junior, on 25<sup>th</sup> August. He had been ill for about five weeks and was in the last stages of pulmonary tuberculosis and wished to accompany his parents. The funeral took place the following day at the Anglican burial ground in Portsmouth. All the missionaries were present and the bereaved father desired to make some suitable observations at the graveside but was prevented from doing so by 'the parish priest'.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> *Letters of John Love*, pp. 186-187, Letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> November 1796. The 11<sup>th</sup> September date of the Sabbath on which Love preached on the *Duff* is from William Smith, *Journal of a voyage in the Missionary Ship Duff* (New York, 1815), p. 6. Smith was one of the artisan missionaries.

<sup>82</sup> *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 4 (1796), p. 383.

<sup>83</sup> Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, pp. 131-132.

<sup>84</sup> Smith, *Journal of a voyage in the Missionary Ship Duff*, p. 5.

The LMS Directors gave to the missionaries what they called their ‘Counsel and Instructions’ which were printed as an appendix to Henry Hunter’s sermon and Edward Williams’ charge, delivered on the day of public designation at Sion Chapel.<sup>85</sup> These ‘Counsels’ recommended the setting up of a Committee of Management to deal with both practical and spiritual matters on the voyage. The relevant section of advice regarding the Committee was as follows:

The management...should be conducted by a Committee of five, elected by the whole body of the missionaries. The determinations of this Committee should be considered as final. Of this Committee the Captain is of course one, and permanent Chairman during the voyage. At the end of one month while on board, and three months afterwards, one of the Committee should go out by rotation, and another be chosen in his place by the whole body. To this Committee...must belong the arrangement of public religious services, the cognizance of immoralities, errors, and disorders, and the direction of all endeavours respecting the Heathen.<sup>86</sup>

The *Evangelical Magazine* summarised how these instructions were put into effect:

Judicious regulations have been established for the preservation of their health, and the improvement of their minds, during the voyage. Agreeably to the instructions of the Directors, lately printed, with the sermon and charge, delivered on the day of public designation, the whole body proceeded to the choice of a Committee. The four ordained ministers being unanimously elected, among other arrangements, appointed Mr. Lewis to be librarian, and Mr. Harris to be steward, an office distinct from that of the ship’s steward, having for its object the care of all the missionary stores. They determined that four sermons should be preached by the ordained ministers every week, two on the Sunday, and the other two at proper intervals, that there should likewise be public service on the morning and evening of every day, in which all the missionaries should engage by rotation. That these daily services should consist of singing, prayer, reading the Scriptures and an exposition or short sermon, the whole being comprised within a limited time, that while the gifts of the brethren are exercised, prolixity may be avoided. Different classes were to be established for grammar, geography, navigation, the Greek and Hebrew languages, and

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<sup>85</sup> The Counsels and Instructions were printed in *Sermon and Charge delivered at Sion Chapel, London, July 28 1796*, pp. 51-70.

<sup>86</sup> *Sermon and Charge delivered at Sion Chapel, London, July 28 1796*, p. 56.

particularly the Tahitian, so far as it could be acquired from a vocabulary collected by Dr. Haweis along with one printed in the quarto edition of Captain Cook's voyages.<sup>87</sup>

In addition, to preserve in their minds a lively sense of the nature and importance of the missionary service, they were to assemble at certain parts of every day when the best qualified are to read from such books as Jonathan Edwards' *Life of David Brainerd*, David Cranz's *The History of Greenland, including an account of the mission carried on by the United Brethren in that country*, George Henry Loskiel's *The History of the Moravian Mission among the Indians in North America*, and other writings of it similar tendency. Little societies were also to be formed, both among the missionaries and sailors, for the purpose of social prayer, and the strengthening each other's hands and mutually relating their Christian experiences.<sup>88</sup>

The *Duff* eventually set sail for the South Seas on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1796. Though she sailed at 5 a.m., Thomas Haweis went on board and spoke a parting word to the assembled ship's company. He preached from Hebrews 3:1, 'Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus', after which all joined in singing Charles Wesley's hymn, 'Blest be the dear uniting love'. Haweis then went to each missionary personally to give his benediction and handshake. He took a last farewell of Captain Wilson. Then he left the ship on which all his hopes and dreams and prayers were focused. His own words best convey his feelings:

I descended, with a thousand different sensations, the ladder I had so often mounted, and sat myself down in the stern of the boat: the sail was hoisted. I looked back, and prayed for them; we were in a moment out of hearing, we waved to each other, the boat flew through the water, the distance increased: the *Duff* began to mingle among the multitude of vessels around her; soon she became indistinguishable from them. I shall see them probably no more. God be praised who has led us hitherto; we will bless Him, and say, Hitherto He hath helped us, for His mercy endureth for ever.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 4 (1796), pp. 383-384.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 384.

<sup>89</sup> Thomas Haweis, 'A Journal of a visit to Portsmouth and its environs, in the Ship *Duff* with the Missionaries who embarked for the South Seas', MS, p. 35, cited in Wood, *Thomas Haweis*, p. 211. Haweis' manuscript 'Journal' is in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, New South Wales.

*(b) The missionary voyage of the Duff*

The following day at 6 p.m. the missionaries saw the last sight of Land's End; for some of them it would be their last sight of England – they would never return. It is outside of the scope of this paper to give any detailed account of either the journey of the *Duff* to and from the South Seas or a history of the LMS's first missionary enterprise. We shall merely seek to provide an outline.<sup>90</sup>

By the direct instruction of the Board of Directors, Captain James Wilson was to be in charge of the voyage and the first stages of the mission in the South Seas. He was given his detailed terms of reference in a long document entitled 'Letter of Instructions to Captain Wilson from the Directors' dated 5<sup>th</sup> August 1796. In the published edition, it is twelve closely printed pages and signed on behalf of the Directors by John Love

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<sup>90</sup> For an account of the journey to and from the South Seas, see *A Missionary Voyage to the South Pacific performed in the years 1796, 1797, 1798 in the ship Duff commanded by Captain James Wilson* (London, 1799). This 495-page volume is a contemporary and detailed account of the journey to and from the South Seas that was compiled by Haweis from the journals of the ship's officers and of the missionaries themselves. See also Smith, *Journal of a voyage in the Missionary Ship Duff*. The most detailed contemporary account of the LMS mission in Tahiti is John Davis, *The History of the Tahitian Mission, 1799–1830* (Cambridge, 1961). This valuable account edited by C.W. Newbury was published by the Hakluyt Society. In the foreword to the volume, by Professor J.W. Davidson of the School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University, Davidson points out that 'John Davis was acutely aware of the peril of entrusting his manuscript to an editor; and for this reason, he never sent it to England. He wanted it to remain "a faithful record of facts", not a statement in which difficulties, disappointments, and failures were glossed over or in which events were presented in such a way as to lend unjustified support to contemporary theories. It is tribute both to Dr. Newbury and to the London Missionary Society that the *History* is at last to appear in the form which satisfies the austere rigorous standards of the author' (p. vi). John Davis was an outstanding missionary to Tahiti and was one of the nine that arrived in 1801. After many years he married the widow of Henry Bicknell, one of the first artisan missionaries who had died in 1820. Davis translated into Tahitian the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, ten Epistles of Paul, and the Psalms; he also prepared the first Tahitian Dictionary. See also John Williams, *A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands* (London, 1838). Later accounts are Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, pp. 117-237; William Ellis, *The History of the London Missionary Society* (2 vols., London, 1844), Vol. 1, pp. 40-434. A valuable modern account of the mission is Niel Gunson, *Messengers of Grace: Evangelical Missionaries in the South Seas, 1797–1860* (Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1978). Though dealing with wider issues than the South Mission itself, the dissertation by Kirsteen J. Murray, 'Missionary Kingdoms of the South Pacific? The involvement of the missionaries from the London Missionary Society in Law Making at Tahiti, 1795–1847' (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2002) and Alison Twells, *The Civilising Mission of the English Middle Class, 1792–1850: The 'Heathen' at Home and Overseas* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2009) are also most useful.

who, as the LMS secretary, was doubtless the primary author.<sup>91</sup> Whilst Wilson's leadership was clearly outstanding, as Kirsteen Murray has pointed out, it left a vacuum of authority among the missionaries when he eventually returned to London. She observes:

The instructions given to Captain Wilson emphasized that he was responsible for the mission, not only for discipline on board ship in temporal matters, but also: 'with full and complete authority for the management of its concerns in relation to the voyage; but also to commit to your care and superintendence, during the same period, the more important charge of the mission itself, and especially of those faithful brethren who accompany you therein.' The result of this emphasis upon the person of Wilson and the apparent distrust of the missionaries was that there was never a clearly defined authority over the mission from within the missionary group. Wilson's role in decision making went far beyond choice of sites and division of stores. No decision had been made about who was to be a preacher before the *Duff* departed: on December 31, 1796, Wilson asked each of the men to preach in turn before him so that he could decide how to divide the missionaries.<sup>92</sup>

Wilson intended to reach the South Sea Islands in a westward direction by sailing across the Atlantic, going around Cape Horn at the tip of South America into the Pacific Ocean in order eventually to reach Tahiti. The *Duff* was for almost the first week of its voyage part of a convoy protected by the British Fleet. They then, in William Ellis's words, 'committing themselves to the Divine protection, pursued their voyage, and, after touching at the Cape de Verde Islands reached Rio de Janeiro on 12 November.'<sup>93</sup> In Rio de Janeiro, the *Duff* had a refit and took on provisions for the long journey across the Pacific. Lovett graphically describes the startling change of direction Wilson then had to make:

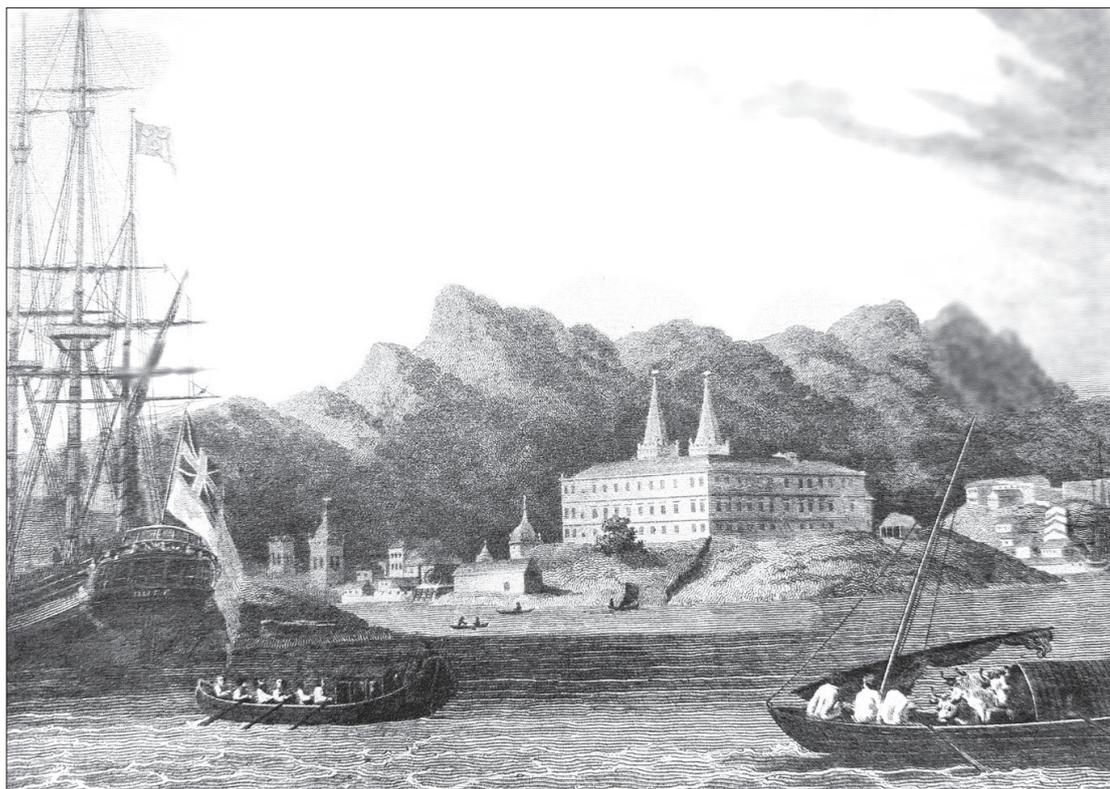
On 20 November the *Duff* started to round Cape Horn, but in less than a fortnight met such severe weather that Captain Wilson, after careful consideration, gave up the attempt to round the Cape, a course which

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<sup>91</sup> *A Missionary Voyage to the South Pacific performed in the years 1796, 1797, 1798 in the ship Duff commanded by Captain James Wilson*, pp. lxxix-c.

<sup>92</sup> Kirsteen Murray, 'In the Shadow of the Missionary Captain: Captain James Wilson and the LMS Mission to the Pacific', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 31:2 (April 2007), p. 74.

<sup>93</sup> Ellis, *The History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, pp. 44-45. They reached Santiago, the largest island of the Cape Verde Islands, a volcanic archipelago off the west coast of North Africa, on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1796.



The *Duff* being refitted at Rio de Janerio.

required a crew of hardy sailors, unaccompanied by tender women and children, and adopted the resolution of going the Eastern passage: that is, to pass a few degrees south of the Cape of Good Hope, to sail to the southward of the south cape of New Holland and New Zealand, till near the meridian of Otaheite, and then to steer to the northward for that island. This route was double the distance of the other, 14,000 miles instead of 7,000, but the result justified the captain. The *Duff* made a wonderfully quick and safe passage. On February 21 1797, the journal records: ‘Ninety-seven days had now passed since we left Rio Janeiro, and except one vessel which we met with a week after our departure, we had not in all this time seen either ship or shore, and had sailed by our log 13,820 miles, a greater distance than probably was ever before run without touching at any place.’<sup>94</sup>

During the journey from South America back across the South Atlantic in an eastern direction, and round the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa, Wilson and the missionaries engaged in matters both ecclesiastical and theological. In May 1796, just six months before the *Duff* left Portsmouth, the Directors of the LMS had unanimously approved what they called the ‘Fundamental Principle’ of the Society that had been

<sup>94</sup> Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, p. 133.

drafted by Alexander Waugh, the leading Burgher Seceder Minister in London. It stated: ‘To prevent, if possible, any cause of future dissension, it is declared to be a fundamental principle of the Missionary Society, that its design is not to send Presbyterianism, Independency, Episcopacy, or any other form of church order and government, (about which there may be difference of opinion among serious persons,) but the glorious Gospel of the blessed God to the heathen; and that it shall be left (as it ought to be left) to the minds of the persons whom God may call into the fellowship of his Son from among them, to assume for themselves such form of church government as to them shall appear most agreeable to the word of God.’<sup>95</sup> At that same meeting in May 1796, the LMS had rejected a proposal ‘that every missionary accepted by the Society should subscribe a Confession of Faith drawn up for that purpose.’<sup>96</sup> The ‘Fundamental Principle’, as we have noticed, was interpreted in different ways. Some thought that it applied exclusively to the matter of Church government whilst others thought that it gave a degree of theological liberty such that Arminians as well as Calvinists, Baptist as well as Paedobaptists, could be accepted as missionaries.<sup>97</sup>

In the last week of 1796, as they travelled around the tip of Africa, Wilson convened a committee of eight to draw up a code of Church government for the mission in the South Seas. This was quite understandable and was in line with the LMS Fundamental Principle that those going to Tahiti should decide for themselves what type of Church polity they would put in place on the mission. The decision of the LMS not to favour any one form of Church government had precluded any such instructions being given in London. The committee of eight, chaired by Wilson, was comprised of three ordained missionaries, James Cover, John Jefferson, and Thomas Lewis along with four artisan missionaries, William Henry, Daniel Howell, Edward Main, and William Shelley. However, Wilson went further than just drawing up a code of Church government; his committee also drew up what they called ‘Articles of Faith or Principles in Religion’. The Confession drawn up by Wilson’s committee was comprised of twenty-one articles that were distinctly Calvinistic in theology and Congregational in Church polity.

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<sup>95</sup> The text is printed in Ellis, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, pp. 38-39 and Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, pp. 49-50.

<sup>96</sup> Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, p. 48.

<sup>97</sup> See Middleton, ‘The Origins of the London Missionary Society’, pp. 204-207.

The confessional element of the Articles was clearly contrary to the decision of the LMS General Meeting the previous May. Whatever the LMS General Meeting had decided, Wilson had concluded that the Directors were Calvinists: that some held to the doctrinal articles of the Church of England in the sense that they were Calvinistic, and others, especially those from the London Scots Presbytery, had subscribed to the Westminster Confession. He, therefore, concluded that it was appropriate to draw up Articles of Faith that were explicitly Calvinistic and to require subscription to them on the part of the missionaries.<sup>98</sup>

The fifth of the Articles of Faith dealt with ‘Of Christ the Mediator’. After speaking of Christ’s perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself it closes with a statement in which Christ’s death is said to be effectual for those chosen in him. It reads: ‘Not only [has Christ] made reconciliation, but likewise purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father hath given to, or chosen in him.’<sup>99</sup> Article 8 is entitled ‘Of Predestination and Election’ and begins, ‘Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath decreed, by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ (not for anything foreseen in them, but according to his eternal purpose and grace) out of mankind and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour.’<sup>100</sup>

Wilson thought that all the thirty missionaries were Calvinistic in their theology and it was clearly his view that harmony on these matters was essential for their work among the heathen. He was, however, mistaken; in the debates leading up to the finalisation of the Articles it became clear that the ordained missionary, John Jefferson, and the artisan missionary, John Cock, who had both been members of Arminian churches were uneasy about the Calvinism of the Articles. This was especially the case regarding the Articles on particular redemption and final perseverance. Wilson was called in and held a series of meetings, at which the men were examined and finally excommunicated on the basis of his belief that the LMS Directors’ theology was Calvinistic. Here Wilson had settled a matter for the Tahiti Mission on which the Directors had refused to rule. Happily,

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<sup>98</sup> The articles are printed in *A Missionary Voyage to the South Pacific performed in the years 1796, 1797, 1798 in the ship Duff commanded by Captain James Wilson*, pp. 387-395.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 389.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 389.

after a series of conferences, conducted, according to the ship's journal, 'with great calmness' the two were persuaded to revise their views and they were readmitted.<sup>101</sup>

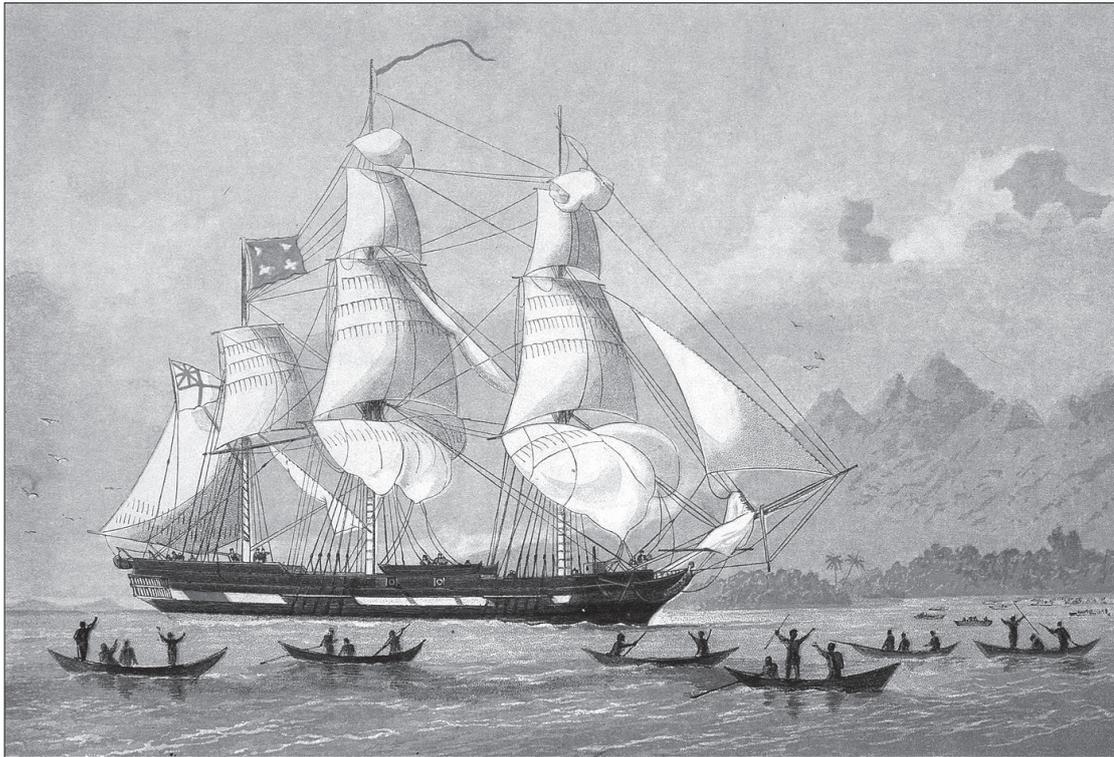
The influence of Wilson was also observable in the matter of the system of Church polity that was embodied in the Articles of Faith. He had been converted under the preaching of John Griffin, the Independent Minister at Portsea, and the Articles of Faith reflect the Congregationalism practiced in Griffin's church.<sup>102</sup> Articles 14 and 15 are entitled respectively, 'Of the Church' and 'Of the officers of the Church.' Article 14, in a similar way to Chapter 26 of the Savoy Declaration, is a Congregational recension of Chapter 25 of the Westminster Confession. It is not, however, merely a repetition of the Savoy text. The Article makes quite plain that the Church, by which is meant those who profess the true religion, are to choose pastors and deacons and if necessary to depose them. The Church also admits members into fellowship, and, if there is cause, excludes them from such fellowship. In addition, the Article also specifically denies the need for the Church being established by the State. Article 15 restricts office-bearers to pastors and deacons. There is no reference made to either the eldership or to any Church Courts. These articles were eventually approved and signed by the entire missionary body on 21<sup>st</sup> February 1797.

Somewhat surprisingly, the acceptance of Congregational polity by the entire missionary body seems to have been accepted with no dissension. On the committee of eight, Wilson would have certainly had support for independency from William Shelley as he had been a member of David Bogue's Congregational church at Gosport. However, at least three members of the committee, of which there is biographical information, were not Independents. James Cover was an Anglican and would later become a minister in that communion, and William Henry also appears to have been an Anglican; he had received theological tuition in Dublin from the then Anglican James Walker. Thomas Lewis was ordained in the

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<sup>101</sup> Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, pp. 48-49; *A Missionary Voyage to the South Pacific performed in the years 1796, 1797, 1798 in the ship Duff commanded by Captain James Wilson*, pp. 46, 48.

<sup>102</sup> John Griffin (1769-1834) had been trained in the Academy of Cornelius Winter who had been a missionary catechist with George Whitefield in Georgia. He was minister of Portsea Tabernacle in Orange Street, Portsea from 1792. The congregation moved to King Street in Portsea in 1812 where Griffin ministered until his death in 1834. One of his sons married a daughter of James Wilson. For biographical information, see John and James Griffin, *Memoirs and Remains of the Rev. John Griffin of Portsea* (London, 1840); *Evangelical Magazine*, New Series, Vol. 12 (1834), pp. 397-401.



The *Duff* arriving at Tahiti.

Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion which at that time had a form of presbyterial polity.<sup>103</sup>

The *Duff* arrived at Matavai Bay at the north of the island of Tahiti on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1797, which was a Sabbath. Worship was conducted on quarter-deck which was attended by some of the native Tahitians. James Cover officiated preaching from 1 John 3:23, 'God is love'. Lovett adds, 'he perhaps was the first that ever mentioned the Saviour's name to these poor heathens.'<sup>104</sup> Eighteen of the missionaries took up residence on the island of Tahiti; this included all four of the ordained missionaries, two of whom were married and had their wives with them. Among the fourteen artisan missionaries were the other three married men with their wives.

<sup>103</sup> For biographical information on William Shelley, see Sibree, *London Missionary Society, A Register of Missionaries, Deputations, Etc. From 1796 to 1923*, p. 2. For James Cover and William Henry, see *Australian Dictionary of Biography* and also, for Cover, see the Surman Index at the Dr Williams Library, London. For Lewis, see Nuttall, 'The Students of Trevecca College, 1768–1791', p. 274.

<sup>104</sup> Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, p. 136. The text, 1 John 3:23, is cited in *A Missionary Voyage to the South Pacific performed in the years 1796, 1797, 1798 in the ship Duff commanded by Captain James Wilson*, p. 57 and repeated by later writers. If Cover's text was 'God is love' the reference should probably have been 1 John 4:8. However, the love of God may have been the substance of the sermon rather than the text from which he preached.

Wilson then intended first to sail west to Tonga, where ten of the remaining missionaries would be landed, and then to journey north-east past Tahiti to leave the remaining two missionaries on the Marquesas Islands. As all four ordained missionaries had determined to work on Tahiti, on 19<sup>th</sup> March 1797 two of the artisan missionaries were ordained to oversee the other locations. The ten destined for Tonga selected Seth Kelso to be their pastor and John Harris was ordained as one of the two to go to the Marquesas Islands. James Cover preached the ordination sermon and John Jefferson questioned both Kelso and Harris regarding their call to the ministry. The other two ordained missionaries prayed one at the beginning and the other at the end of the service which was concluded by a celebration of the Lord's Supper.<sup>105</sup>

Wilson arrived at Tonga on 10<sup>th</sup> April and left five days later, arriving at the Marquesas Islands on 5<sup>th</sup> June where John Harris and William Crook were to be stationed. Harris's determination failed; though professing a call and being ordained to the ministry, he returned with Wilson back to Tahiti leaving Crook alone on the Marquesas Islands. The *Duff's* log recorded of Crook: 'His manly behavior did him great credit, the tears glistened in his eyes, but none fell, nor did he betray the least sign of fear to enter upon his work alone.'<sup>106</sup>

Whilst the *Duff* was sailing from Tonga past Tahiti and on to the Marquesas Islands, John Love wrote to Wilson on behalf of the LMS Directors. Indicative of the time it took to get letters in the 1790s from overseas, Love's letter, dated 24<sup>th</sup> April 1797, was in response to one sent by Wilson from South America in November 1796. Displaying both his own enthusiasm and that of the LMS Directors he writes:

Honoured and beloved Sir, It is our desire that, on your arrival in China, something may meet your eyes to remind you of the continued affection, esteem, and concern of your friends at home, the Directors of the Missionary Society. The love of Christ hath carried you by this time round more than half the circumference of this great globe, and hath been, we doubt not, your inexhaustible solace and delight, amidst all the cares, exertions, and dangers of such an enterprise. Blessed be you abundantly of the Lord of heaven and earth, whom generous zeal roused to make this

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<sup>105</sup> *A Missionary Voyage to the South Pacific performed in the years 1796, 1797, 1798 in the ship Duff commanded by Captain James Wilson*, pp. 79-80; Ellis, *The History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, p. 49.

<sup>106</sup> *A Missionary Voyage to the South Pacific performed in the years 1796, 1797, 1798 in the ship Duff commanded by Captain James Wilson*, p. 142.



When the missionaries arrived at Matavai Bay on Tahiti King Pomare gave the missionaries some land. This is an engraving from a rather stylised painting, by R.A. Smirke, of the granting to Wilson of the territory.

glorious sacrifice of yourself to the cause of immortal souls! We write not as though you stood in need of counsel or consolation from us. In Him whom you love you have been made wise and mighty. But we cannot refrain from expressing the cordial gratification we derived from your letter, from the east coast of South America. In the unassuming representation you gave of your procedure so far on, you impressed us deeply with the idea of your unremitting diligence and activity, your paternal wisdom and compassion in conducting the mission. The events you recorded raise our thoughts on high and melt our hearts, while we perceive the overshadowing power, kindness, faithfulness, and tender mercy of the God of heaven, encompassing and embracing the consecrated vessel and its inhabitants.

The subsequent series of things is, at the time of writing this, unknown to us in the way of historical narration; but we read it, and strongly presage it, as shining in the great and precious promises of the everlasting covenant. Looking with earnest and believing eyes into the opened ark of God's covenant, sealed with the blood of the Lamb; we venture to predict that you have quenched every hostile attempt of the adversary; that you been the hallowed instrument to preserve the sacred bond of peace and union among the missionaries; that you have placed them in promising and advantageous situations; that in the reception of them you witnessed, you have seen the fall of Satan as lightning from heaven, and that the sweetness of the parting

tears and supplications has perfumed those depths over which you have since been passing. If any painful and solemn dispensations should have been mingled with those of a hopeful aspect, these will have brought you still nearer to your God, and have given you further experience of the invincible power of Him who is the rock of your salvation.

And now, beloved father of our missionary family, touching on another heathenish coast, you cast a wishful eye towards those populous regions, where Satan triumphs over so many millions of miserable souls; and, with us, you long for the time when it may be permitted to carry the sacred lamp to the shores of China. In all your present intercourse with these pagans, may the protection, guidance, and, light of Heaven attend you! Blessed be God, you are now approaching homeward! The hope of seeing you again among us inspires us with an unusual and transporting pleasure. The supplications of many thousands accompany all your progress. We will welcome you 'as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus', Galatians 4:14.<sup>107</sup>

From the Marquesas, Wilson returned to Tahiti arriving on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1797 and divided the remaining cargo between the missionaries there and what he intended to leave in Tonga in his journey westward.<sup>108</sup> The *Duff* left Tahiti on 4<sup>th</sup> August, taking back David Gillham, the surgeon among the artisan missionaries, whose heart seems to have failed at an early stage. They arrived in Tonga on 18<sup>th</sup> August at which point all the missionaries were well except Isaac Nobbs who boarded the *Duff* to return home due to ill health. Wilson remained on the island until 7<sup>th</sup> September when they set out for Canton in China in order to bring back a cargo of tea to reduce to cost of the missionary journey. After a dangerous passage, in the course of which they struck a reef, providentially without causing serious damage, Wilson and his crew arrived at Macao on the coast of China on 21<sup>st</sup> November and then sailed up the Pearl River delta to Canton in order to load up the ship with its return cargo.

At Canton Wilson received Love's letter and wrote back to the Society giving an account of his progress. The Captain's letter announcing the safe arrival of the *Duff* in Canton reached London during the last day of the LMS annual meetings on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> May 1798.<sup>109</sup> A large assembly was

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<sup>107</sup> *Letters of John Love*, pp. 202-204.

<sup>108</sup> Interestingly, Wilson sailed round Tahiti in order to get some estimate of the population. James Cook had thought it to be around 200,000. Wilson's researches viewed that as grossly overestimated. He thought the population no more than 16,000. Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, p. 143.

<sup>109</sup> Wilson's long letter addressed to Joseph Hardcastle, the LMS treasurer is printed in *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 6 (1798), pp. 249-253. In order to ensure speedy arrival of the

convened in the Christ Church, Spitalfields; this was a spacious Anglican church that the Society had requested to use. The letter was brought to one of the Directors at the beginning of the morning meeting for worship and when its contents were communicated to the congregation the result was ‘indescribable sensations of gratitude and joy.’<sup>110</sup> The report in the *Evangelical Magazine* describes the scene:

It was during this service, a moment that will not soon be forgotten, a letter was brought to one of the Directors, with the important and delightful intelligence that the *Duff* – that vessel in which so many thousands of Christian had embarked their hopes with their Missionaries, and which they had incessantly followed with their wishes and prayers – that the *Duff* had safely arrived at Canton, in China. This welcome news could not be secreted, but was speedily circulated, especially among the Ministers, who sat, as usual, around the galleries; but that the whole congregation, which was very numerous, might partake of the joy, Dr. Haweis ascended the pulpit, and publicly announced the happy event. It is easier to conceive than express the emotion of the grateful assembly. It was a moment of uncommon joy. Many an ejaculation was silently offered up to the Father of Mercies; and perhaps few lines have ever been sung with greater sincerity or fervour than those with which the psalm, which was soon after sung, commenced:

*The Lord is good; fresh acts of grace  
His pity still supplies;  
His anger moves with slowest pace,  
His willing mercy flies.*<sup>111</sup>

It is a testimony to the morality observed on board the *Duff* in comparison with other ships in Canton that it secured the designation of ‘The Ten Commandments’. Wilson left China on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1798 and after calling briefly at the Cape of Good Hope and at St Helena in the South Atlantic reached Cork on 24<sup>th</sup> June. After waiting a few days for a convoy, it anchored at the Thames on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1798. For the 1790s, the *Duff*’s missionary voyage had been an outstanding achievement. Lovett describes it in these terms:

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letter which Wilson sent from Canton it had been forwarded to Sir Charles Middleton, one of the Lords of the Admiralty.

<sup>110</sup> Ellis, *The History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, p. 53.

<sup>111</sup> *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 6 (1798), p. 247.

Thus ended one of the most remarkable voyages in the history of England. It has not excited the romantic interest of such enterprises as Drake's voyage round the World...But the man who believes in God's overruling providence, who holds that the chief need of the world is the fulfilment of Christ's last great command, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature', places this first voyage of the *Duff* in the front rank of England's achievements for the world. The blessing which it has conferred upon Polynesia is beyond all power of accurate estimate, and as the first achievement of one of the greatest of modern missionary societies it will ever hold a unique position.<sup>112</sup>

### (c) *The Tahiti Mission*

Some later writers have described the first LMS mission to these three locations as a failure. Ian M. Randall has written recently:

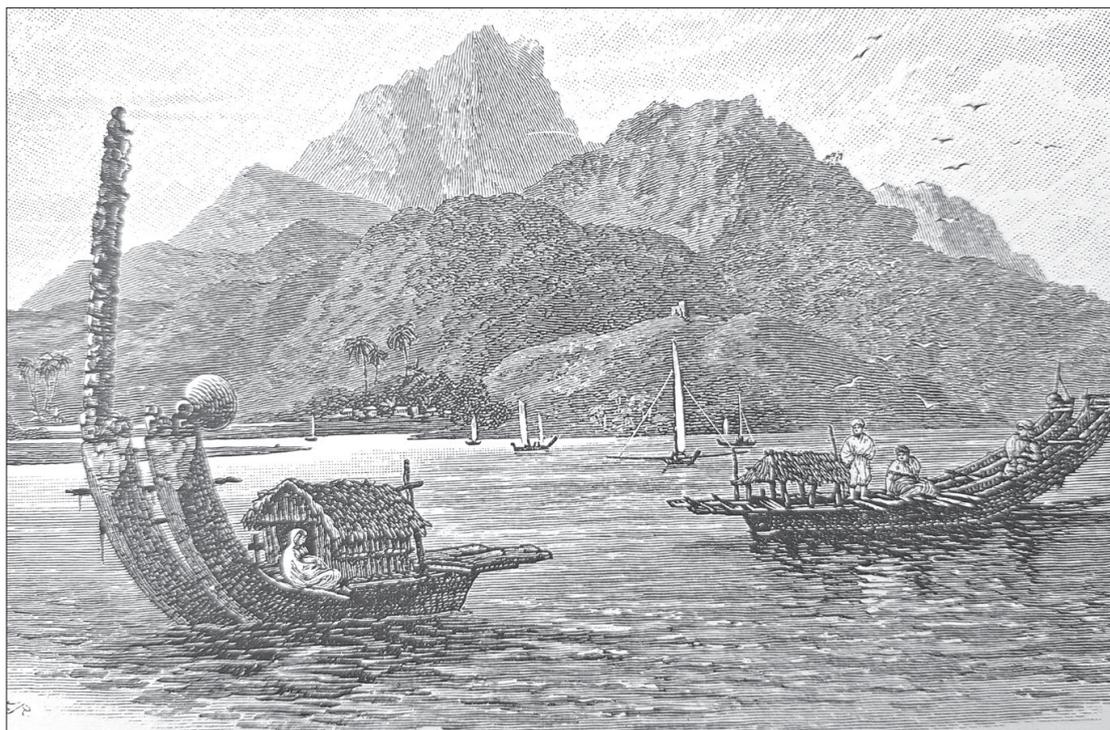
But over the succeeding years there was a series of setbacks and the first phase of the enterprise in Tahiti ended, as Horne put it, in 'blank defeat and absolute failure'. If anything the situation was more disastrous on the island of Tonga. The *Duff* left nine men there, of whom three were killed – the first martyrs of the LMS – and one abandoned Christianity to indulge in what was described as 'a life of immorality'. The remaining five became destitute. It was painfully evident that resources were being wasted.<sup>113</sup>

Whilst it is undoubtedly true that the first missions to Tonga and the Marquesas ended in failure, it is hardly correct to say this of the Tahiti Mission. It is correct, however, to state that there were several major setbacks at Tahiti. The first occurred just over a year after the missionaries landed on Tahiti. Towards the end of March 1798 four missionaries, John Jefferson, Edward Main, Benjamin Broomhall, and William Puckey were surrounded by a crowd of natives who assaulted them and stripped them naked and finally maltreated them. This caused alarm amongst the missionary body, who had been led to believe the Tahitians were gentle. A meeting was held and a majority agreed that, due to what had happened, 'a removal of the society off the island was necessary.' James Cover, one of the ordained men was the moving spirit and eleven of the eighteen missionaries went back to Port Jackson, in Australia. This included all the married missionaries with

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<sup>112</sup> Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, p. 144.

<sup>113</sup> Ian M. Randall, 'Nonconformists and Overseas Missions', in Robert Pope (ed.), *T&T Clark Companion to Nonconformity* (London, 2013), p. 386. Randall cites as sources, C. Silvester Horne, *The Story of the L.M.S., 1795–1895* (London, 1894), pp. 27, 35 and Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant missionaries and overseas expansion, 1700–1914* (Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 55–56.



The Island of Tahiti – an engraving from Captain James Cook’s travels.

exception of John Eyre whose wife, a woman in her sixties, was the only female remaining in the missionary party.<sup>114</sup>

Another setback resulted from the composition of the missionary band. The LMS had sent out mainly young single men with the rather surprising hope that young women in higher stations of Tahitian society would soon be converted who they would then be able to marry. This hope was not realised. Within six months of arriving at Tahiti the question was raised, ‘was it improper for a missionary to marry a native woman?’ After a full discussion

<sup>114</sup> Robert Lovett, the historian of the LMS, writing a century after its formation, details the lessons the organisation had learned in the intervening years: ‘Their experience, confirmed all through the century, indicates that committees cannot be too careful in this matter. Enormous waste, both of money and of time, is caused when unfit persons are accepted for this service. It is, of course, not given to man to read the heart of his fellow-men perfectly. Those who from time to time appear at a disadvantage before committees occasionally render splendid service in the field. Yet never was there greater need than now for laying it down almost as an axiom in the case of both men and women, that if there is any doubt, either as to health or moral fibre, or intellectual and spiritual quality, the verdict should go against the candidate. Better far, after exercising to the best of their ability the faculty of insight, for a committee to lose one suitable candidate now and then, than to allow others who appear somewhat doubtful even to begin the work. The old minute books of the Examination Committee are evidence that our fathers took pains in sifting and searching the men who came before them. But the story of Tahiti and the events that happened there did not confirm, with regard to many of the men sent out, the accuracy of their judgment. *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, pp. 126-127.

it was decided, ‘That to marry a heathen woman was contrary to the Word of God, and resolved in the Lord’s strength to abide as they were.’ The first to break rank on this decision was one of the ministers, Thomas Lewis, who had been ordained by the Countess of Huntingdon’s Connexion. He married a native woman knowing that if he did so he would be excommunicated. Lewis justified his actions and went to live at a distance from the other missionaries. Chastity was unknown among the native women and Lewis seems to have quarrelled with the woman’s relatives who coveted his property. He was murdered, very probably by one of her relatives. The brethren immediately went to his residence and brought his body back for burial. Assisted by some natives, Henry Bicknell and Henry Nott dug his grave. A year after Lewis’s death another artisan missionary, Benjamin Broomhall, ceased to believe in the immortality of the soul and also took a native woman as his wife. The remaining missionaries immediately severed his connection with the mission.<sup>115</sup>

The years that followed are called by Richard Lovett, the LMS historian, ‘The Night of Toil’.<sup>116</sup> Several of the original missionaries, along with later reinforcements, would labour on amidst much discouragement and little sign of change until 1812 – fifteen years after they had first arrived in Tahiti. Eventually blessing came on their faithful labours and extensive conversions occurred on the island among the native population.<sup>117</sup>

As it entered its twenty-fifth year in 1820, the LMS had missionaries posted across the world. The Society’s difficulties in monitoring the state of its operations was in many ways hindering the Board’s work. It was becoming a handicap in decision-making. They had in reality little contact with the missionaries. Their reports were sent back to England, were studied and published, but these took months and sometimes years to arrive. Dialogue between London and the mission stations was difficult and could sadly lead to misunderstanding. Accordingly, the LMS Directors decided in 1821 to send two men as a delegation to report back on a number of its operations with a particularly emphasis on the South Seas.

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<sup>115</sup> The marriage problem was resolved by the LMS sending out young women to Port Jackson-Sydney and for the single missionaries to go there to find a wife either from among those women sent out or from the local population. See John Garrett, *To Live among the Stars: Christian Origins in Oceania* (Geneva, 1982), p. 17; Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, pp. 149, 164, 167; William Ellis, *Polynesian Researches during a residence of nearly six years in the South Sea Islands* (2 vols., London, 1829), Vol. 1, pp. 95-96.

<sup>116</sup> Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, p. 146. It is the title of chapter 4.

<sup>117</sup> For an account of the victory of the Gospel in Tahiti, see chapter 5 of Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, pp. 194-237. The chapter is entitled, ‘The first great victory’.

After some difficulty in finding suitable men willing to undertake such a deputation, the Directors were able to appoint Daniel Tyerman of the Isle of Wight, and George Bennet of Sheffield to visit the selected mission stations. Tyerman (1773–1828) was born near Osmotherly in Yorkshire and was trained for the Congregational ministry at Hoxton Academy. After two short pastorates, he became the minister of Node Hill Congregational Church in Newport on the Isle of Wight where he was minister for sixteen years from 1805 to 1821. Tyerman was also an able artist and made sketches of the locations where the LMS had mission stations, which as a modern historian has observed, ‘meant in an age before photography the Board might finally be able to see what the missions look like.’<sup>118</sup> Tyerman was a widower. His health finally gave way under the climate of Southern India and he died in Madagascar on their return journey on 30<sup>th</sup> July 1828.<sup>119</sup> Bennet (1774–1841) was a Sheffield Congregationalist and a philanthropist. Whilst in his thirties he inherited a fortune on the death of his uncle. He then devoted himself to charitable activities; among those with which he was intimately involved were the committee of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, the Aged Female Society, and the Yorkshire Branch of the LMS. He was also involved in setting up and running a number of Sunday Schools around Sheffield and Rotherham.<sup>120</sup>

The purpose of the deputation was firstly, to cheer the hearts and strengthen the hands of the missionaries, and secondly, as representatives of the Christian community at home, to witness and report what the Lord had done among the heathen. The following quotation from a circular, issued by the Directors in 1820, shows their intentions in making the appointment of Tyerman and Bennett which, at first, embraced only the South Sea Islands, though, in the sequel, it included the LMS stations in Java, East Indies, and Madagascar.

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<sup>118</sup> Thomas Hiney, *On the Missionary Trail: The Classic Georgian Adventure of Two Englishmen, Sent on a Journey Around the World* (Random House, London, 2001), p. 36.

<sup>119</sup> For biographical information on Tyerman see *ODND, DNB*. Due to the difficulty of communication, it was only in the January 1829 issue of the *Evangelical Magazine* that his death was reported. The funeral sermon preached on the occasion of his death at Antananarivo by John Joseph Freeman, a thirty-four-year-old LMS missionary in Madagascar and later to become the LMS Foreign Secretary, was printed in the May issue of the *Evangelical Magazine*, New Series, Vol. 7 (1829), pp. 29-30, 199-202.

<sup>120</sup> For biographical details of Bennet, see Alison Twells, ‘“A Christian and Civilised Land”: The British Middle Class and the Civilising Mission, 1820–1840’, in Alan Kidd and David Nicholls (eds.), *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism: Middle Class Identity in Britain, 1800–1940* (Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 47-64; Hiney, *On the Missionary Trail*, pp. 34-36.

The great objects of the deputation will be, to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the state of the missions, and of the islands; and to suggest, and, if possible, carry into effect, such plans as shall appear to be requisite for the furtherance of the gospel, and for introducing among the natives the occupations and habits of civilized life. In order to the attainment of these objects, it is proposed to form such arrangements as shall tend to the introduction of Christian churches; the establishment and improvements of schools for the children of the missionaries and of the natives, and, eventually, of trades; and a proper and constant attention to the cultivation of the ground.<sup>121</sup>

This major undertaking which would take eight years to complete began when the deputation after a valedictory service at Surrey Chapel boarded a



Daniel Tyerman (left) and George Bennet (right). The LMS two-man delegation to the South Seas mission in 1821.

vessel named *Tuscan* in London on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1821. Three days later they set sail from Gravesend for the South Seas.<sup>122</sup> They arrived at Tahiti in September 1821 and in the next three years visited all the stations in the South Seas. After making a detailed examination of the mission they were convinced of the genuineness of the spiritual change that had occurred. Both Tyerman and Bennet were familiar with superficial evangelism, but everywhere they were struck by a sense of real and long-lasting transformation. Lives had been changed dramatically as they were being constantly reminded by accounts of the Tahitians before the missionaries arrived.<sup>123</sup> When they were

<sup>121</sup> James Montgomery (ed.), *Journal of Voyages and Travels by the Rev. Daniel Tyerman and George Bennet deputed from the London Missionary Society to visit their various stations in the South Sea Islands, China, India, etc.* (3 vols., London, 1831), Vol. 1, pp. x-xi.

<sup>122</sup> Hiney, *On the Missionary Trail*, p. 39.

<sup>123</sup> A detailed account of the deputation is given in the three volumes edited by James Montgomery, *Journal of Voyages and Travels by the Rev. Daniel Tyerman and George*

leaving in April 1824, they addressed a farewell letter to the missionaries, in which they wrote with both rejoicing and caution. The letter is important as it provides an independent contemporary assessment of the work of grace that took place at Tahiti in the second decade on the nineteenth century.

It is true that though wonders have been wrought by the preaching of the Gospel, and the power of the Spirit of God, everything has not been achieved that Christian philanthropy is anxious to behold. Though all name the name of Jesus, all do not depart from iniquity: while the appearance of religion is seen in the mass of the people, there are many individuals who disregard its solemn sanctions. Where but a few years ago nothing but crime was to be seen, and that of the foulest nature that men in their worst state could commit, you are not to be surprised at the few crimes which are still committed: where all trifled with religion, be not surprised that some treat it with neglect: where all were cruel idolaters in practice, be not astonished that there are those who retain the world as an idol in their hearts: where all were led captive by Satan, be not disheartened because some are still willing to bear his yoke.<sup>124</sup>

The letter further urges the maintenance of a high standard for admission to the Church, and the careful and persistent instruction of the young. It rejoices over the success of the natives themselves in carrying the Gospel to islands that are yet heathen, and it looks on to the time when European missionaries will be no longer needed. To this end they urge the opening of a college for native teachers. They rejoice in the systems of law gradually coming into force, and the progress of civilization.

While we see, with great satisfaction, all these islands living under just and humane laws, and blessed with all the institutions of the Gospel in full operation, we rejoice in the progress which civilization has made in islands so lately in the depths of barbarism and the grossest superstition. That, in so short a period since the downfall of idolatry, so many of the people should have become acquainted with the arts of reading, writing, and arithmetic—so many excellent places of worship and comfortable

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*Bennet deputed from the London Missionary Society to visit their various stations in the South Sea Islands, China, India, etc.* James Montgomery (1771–1854), the editor of the volumes, was a well-known hymnwriter and the editor of a Sheffield newspaper. He was Moravian and a close friend of Bennet. A detailed list of the places that the deputation visited is in Sibree, *London Missionary Society, A Register of Missionaries, Deputations, Etc. From 1796 to 1923*, p. 207.

<sup>124</sup> Montgomery, *Journal of Voyages and Travels by the Rev. Daniel Tyerman and George Bennet*, Vol. 2, pp. 102-103.



Opoa on the Island of Raiatea which is north west of Tahiti – painted by Daniel Tyerman in 1822.

dwelling-houses built—such a complete change effected in the manners of the people, from gross sensuality to the greatest decency and good behaviour,—these are facts so singular that we are at a loss to express our gratitude to God, while we would encourage you, dear brethren, to aim at still greater things —the entire extirpation of every remaining evil.<sup>125</sup>

*(d) Two Outstanding missionaries*

Amongst the first group of missionaries that went to Tahiti two stand out as exceptional witnesses to Christ. John Clark Jefferson (1760–1807) had been charged with Arminianism on the journey to the South Seas and was briefly excommunicated; then after discussion with Wilson and the other missionaries he changed his position. Once in Tahiti, Jefferson became the acknowledged leader of the mission. He laboured faithfully until his death in 1807 without seeing the blessing that came five years later. He was one of the few men on board the *Duff* in 1796 that had enjoyed the benefits of a good training. Richard Lovett writes of him, ‘Many letters from his pen are preserved in the Society’s archives, and they are written in a beautiful hand, and are correct in style and spelling, in these respects a great contrast to many others sent from Tahiti at the same time. He was an ordained minister

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 110-111.

and a man of independent thought... Such, however, was his quiet power that at Tahiti he became the Chairman of Committee, and, so far as one man could be, was the responsible head of the mission. He never showed the least irresolution or sign of faltering in March 1798;<sup>126</sup> he never succumbed to any of the many temptations to which he was daily exposed, and which proved so fatal to some of his co-workers; he, next to Henry Nott, obtained the greatest mastery over the language; he retained his office of Chairman until ill-health compelled him to resign; and to his guiding hand, and holy influence, much of the ultimate success of the mission was due. “Death was not to him”, his colleagues wrote home, “the king of terrors; he had been for a long time past waiting for and desiring his dismissal from a sinful and diseased body, yet often expressed a thankful acquiescence in the will of God; and though he did not experience any extraordinary raptures of joy, he in general, for a considerable time past, enjoyed a settled peace of conscience, and a firm persuasion of his interest in Christ. Some of his last words were, Comfortable, comfortable! Sweet, sweet! Glory, glory be to Him”.<sup>127</sup>



This is section of the picture of Wilson receiving a part of Tahiti. John Jefferson is at the very far right. To our knowledge it is the only likeness of Jefferson. The couple in front of him are the artisan missionary William Henry and his wife. James Wilson is to the left of the centre of the picture holding his hat.

<sup>126</sup> This was when, after several of the missionaries had been mistreated, James Cover, one of the ordained men, led eleven of the eighteen missionaries on Tahiti back to Port Jackson in Australia. What is also significant is that, whilst Cover was not one of the men that was stripped naked and assaulted by the Tahitians, Jefferson was.

<sup>127</sup> Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, pp. 190-191. As we have mentioned, Jefferson is included in Anderson, *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, pp. 330-331.

William Ellis, one of the first historians of the LMS, was sent as a missionary to the South Seas in 1817. He writes concerning Jefferson: ‘Though he fell upon the field before he heard or uttered the shout of victory, his end was peaceful, and his hopes were firm. On a visit to Matavai, in the early part of 1821, conducted by Mr. Nott, I made a pilgrimage to his grave. I stood beside the rustic hillock on which the tall grass waved in the breeze, and gazed upon the plain stone that marks the spot where his



Henry Nott.

head reposes, with feelings of veneration for his character. I felt, also, in connexion with the change that has since taken place, that he had indeed desired to see the things that I beheld, but he had died without witnessing, on earth, the gladdening sight; and that, in reference to his unremitting exertions, I and my junior companions had entered into his labours, and were reaping the harvest for which he had toiled.<sup>128</sup>

Another exceptional witness to the Saviour was the artisan missionary Henry Nott (1774–1844). He was fourteen years younger than Jefferson, and had been a bricklayer in Bromsgrove, near Birmingham before going to the South

Seas. After Jefferson’s death he was at times almost alone, but persevered. Assisted by others, he took the major role in translating the whole Bible into the Tahitian language. He then came along with his wife to England in order to oversee the typesetting and then the printing of the Tahitian Bible. Whilst in England he revised the entire manuscript prior to its being printed. He then took the Bibles back to the mission. Lovett comments regarding him, ‘in almost every incident of note in the history of the mission Henry Nott had a share.’<sup>129</sup> He was a persistent survivor, he endured the trials of the group – defections, deaths, dispersal, and long isolation in a period of wars both in Europe and between chiefs in the Society Islands of which Tahiti was a part. John Garrett in his account of Nott writes:

<sup>128</sup> Ellis, *Polynesian Researches during a residence of nearly six years in the South Sea Islands*, Vol. 1, p. 134.

<sup>129</sup> Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, p. 206.

He attached himself to the wayward future King Pomare II of Tahiti, accompanied him in exile to Moorea and the Windward Islands, and after 1816 returned with a few dogged colleagues to share in Pomare's victory, his conversion, his coronation, his dispiriting lapses—and his patronage. Pomare helped him to acquire a stylish 'royal' oral Tahitian. Subsequently, as the king became literate, Nott played a major part with Pomare in translating the Bible. In 1812, on a visit to Port Jackson, Sydney, he married Anne Turner. Between 1825 and 1827 he went to England. By then, though largely self-taught, he had supplemented his ability as a preacher in other ways, helping to frame a code of laws for Christian Tahiti. In 1836 he again visited London, this time in ill health, to see the completed manuscript of the Bible through publication. In September 1840, his return to Tahiti with the Bible helped to consolidate mass conversions and literacy. Both before and during his final retirement at Papeete, his achievements were underestimated by more highly educated incoming missionaries, who viewed the pioneers with a touch of critical disdain. He died and was buried at Papeete, where his modest and long disregarded grave is scant testimony to his exceptional life's work.<sup>130</sup>

#### **IV. The return of the *Duff* and John Love's absence**

When Captain James Wilson arrived in London, he was invited to a meeting of the LMS Directors where Thomas Haweis delivered a long address expressing their appreciation of his services of the Society and of the Lord's goodness in blessing their endeavours. They then appointed Monday 6<sup>th</sup> August 1798 as a day of thanksgiving to be followed on the Tuesday evening with a general meeting of the Society. The morning service on the day of thanksgiving was held in Rowland Hill's Surrey Chapel. The preacher was Wilson's pastor, John Griffin of Portsea with a whole array of Directors of the LMS engaging in either prayer or the giving out of hymns. Griffin's text was Ephesians 3:20-21, 'Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.' The evening service was in the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion's Sion Chapel where Thomas Haweis, the father of the South Seas mission, was the preacher. His text

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<sup>130</sup> Anderson, *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, pp. 500-501. For a recent short account of Nott, appreciative of his importance to the Tahiti Mission, see the entry, 'Henry Nott and the *Duff* Missionaries', in Ruth A. Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A biographical History of Christian Missions* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn., Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2004), pp. 211-214.

was Psalm 126:3, ‘The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.’ Another seven ministers took part, either praying or giving out hymns, one of whom was Thomas Charles of Bala.<sup>131</sup> The following day a general meeting was held in Haberdashers’ Hall where Alexander Waugh



John Griffin, the preacher at the thanksgiving service on the return of the *Duff*.

chaired the proceedings when it was the unanimous opinion that the Directors should prepare for another voyage to the Pacific for the purposes of visiting and assisting the brethren already there and of adding to their number and of planting the gospel in other lands.

Captain Thomas Robson and the *Duff* began a second voyage to the South Pacific four months later, on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1798, carrying a second group of thirty missionaries with the intention of reinforcing the missionaries at the three locations in the South Seas. On 19<sup>th</sup> February 1799, off Cape Frio near Rio de Janeiro, the French privateer *Grande Buonaparte* captured the *Duff*. Her captors took the *Duff* to Montevideo, Uruguay, where they released her crew and passengers. The missionaries finally arrived back at London in October 1799. Her captors sold the *Duff*. Subsequently, Portuguese privateers captured the ship, only to lose her to French privateers. The subsequent fate of the missionary ship is not known. Some of the missionaries eventually reached Tahiti in 1801.<sup>132</sup>

A notable absentee from the meeting of the Directors, from the services on the day of thanksgiving, and at the general meeting was the LMS Secretary, John Love. As Wilson and the *Duff* were reaching Cork to

<sup>131</sup> An account of the two days of meeting is in the *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 6 (1798), pp. 378-379.

<sup>132</sup> For accounts of the sailing and capture of the *Duff*, see Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, pp. 58-66; Ellis, *The History of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. 1, pp. 61-66. John Love, then a newly ordained minister in Glasgow, in a letter to a correspondent in July 1800 reflected on the *Duff*'s capture, ‘The late severe visitations of Providence will, I trust, refine and purify, and ultimately strengthen and exalt the zeal of Missionary Societies. They will proceed with greater humility, caution, spirituality, and faith, in consequence of such rebukes. The foundation of God stands unshaken,’ *Letters of John Love*, p. 280.

await a convoy to London, John Love was leaving his pastorate in London and returning to Greenock in Scotland without a charge. The man who had taken a leading part in the formation of the Society, the one who was its first Secretary, the man who along with David Bogue had trained the missionaries, had drafted the messages they were to take to the heathen, the one who had given Wilson his instructions on behalf of the Board of Directors, the one who had communicated with Wilson on his travels, was absent to welcome him home and to join in the thanksgiving. In April 1797, as noted above, he had concluded a letter to him in these terms, ‘Blessed be God, you are now approaching homeward! The hope of seeing you again among us inspires us with an unusual and transporting pleasure. The supplications of many thousands accompany all your progress. We will welcome you “as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus”, Galatians 4:14.’<sup>133</sup> Then, whilst Wilson was in Canton, Love had again written to him and concluded his letter in these terms:

Hasten, hasten, dearly beloved sir, to bless the eyes of those who long after you in the bowels of Jesus Christ. May his angels guide and defend you! May winds and waves further your progress, and rejoice around you! And may some solid influences of the blessed Spirit of grace be shed on you and on us to mark with a pleasure never to be forgotten the period of your return to the British shores! These are the unfeigned desires of the Directors and other friends of the Society, and of your affectionate brother and servant, John Love.<sup>134</sup>

What is even more surprising, he had written again to Wilson on behalf of the Directors in April 1798, a month before the LMS annual meetings, expressing not only the Directors esteem for Wilson but that of Love himself:

Beloved Sir, and longed for in Christ. Wherever you move, you are in the centre of much concern and many prayers; and, we trust, encircled with the tender mercies of our God. When this comes before your eyes, you are coming near the conclusion of your long benevolent circuit, and approaching those seas, which, through the depravity of mankind and their inveterate rejection of the power of the gospel, are still mingled with fire. The Directors eagerly embrace this opportunity of hailing your approach at the Cape, and of expressing their unceasing affection and solicitude for your safety; a solicitude that rises to more pressing anxiety; in proportion as the prospect of its termination in your happy arrival appears just at

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<sup>133</sup> *Letters of John Love*, pp. 203-204. Letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> April 1797.

<sup>134</sup> *Letters of John Love*, p. 224. Letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> November 1797.

hand. May no rebuke, connected with unworthiness and guilt on our part, fall on you...Your return, and the tidings you bring, whether more or less decidedly comfortable, will give a new impulse to the concern and activity of those who love the kingdom and work of the great Redeemer. All progress and comfort is in the hands of the Lord. His Spirit alone can create and preserve pure zeal. By the influences of that promised Comforter, your return to Britain shall, we strongly hope, be fraught with sweetness, joy, and triumph to yourself; your people, and the wearying multitude of the righteous at home. The Lord bless you, keep you, and cause his face to shine upon you! The Lord recompense your work, and a full reward be given you of the Lord God of Israel, for whose glory you have been so signally zealous. These ardent wishes I express, in name of the Directors.<sup>135</sup>

What then was the explanation for Love's departure back to Scotland just two months after he wrote that letter? As we have seen the main reason was that John Love was very unhappy in his charge at Artillery Street.<sup>136</sup> In late June or very early July 1798 John Love resigned his charge in London, without a call to any congregation, and returned to Scotland.<sup>137</sup> The reason was not any disagreement or difficulty with his LMS colleagues; the explanation was quite simply that the situation at Artillery Street had become too much for him. His farewell sermon appears to have been either from, or he made reference to, Luke 9 verse 5, 'And whosoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them.' As a testimony against those in the Artillery Street congregation who had resisted the appeals of his faithful ministry, he left his shoes in the pulpit.<sup>138</sup>

What is more extraordinary was the speed with which Love's final decision to leave London was made. He had been present at a London Scots Presbytery meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1798 and had made no mention of an impending resignation. But even more surprising is that at the annual meetings of the LMS on May 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>. John Love had been re-elected as one of the Secretaries of the Society and had signified his willingness to

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<sup>135</sup> *Letters of John Love*, pp. 246-247. Letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> April 1798.

<sup>136</sup> See Roy Middleton, 'John Love in London, Part III: Ministry at Crispin Street and Artillery Street, Spitalfields', *SRSJH*, Vol. 9 (2019), pp. 99-117.

<sup>137</sup> There are no personal letters in the printed volume of letters between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 7<sup>th</sup> December 1798 to give any indication of his thinking immediately prior to his resignation. This is further evidence that Peter MacBride not only edited Love's letters but, in all probability, omitted entirely some which dealt with difficult issues in his life.

<sup>138</sup> Morison, *Fathers and Founders of the London Missionary Society*, p. 259; G.C. Cameron, *The Scots Kirk in London* (Oxford, 1979), p. 94.

continue in office. William Shrubsole, the other secretary had resigned and been replaced by John Eyre.<sup>139</sup> Within less than six weeks of being re-elected he had returned to Scotland. His published letters provide us with at least two additional reasons of his unease in London in addition to his difficulties at Artillery Street. There are several indications that he viewed the religion of the English capital as rather shallow.<sup>140</sup> In addition, his own health had been a concern; six years earlier, in 1791, he had gone to Portsmouth to seek medical attention. Neither of these matters would, however, have been the explanation for such a hurried departure.

There is, however, another reason that may have contributed significantly to his hasty return to Scotland in addition to the way he was regarded in his congregation. John Morison in his account of his life has written of the trial he had in his home. He writes:

One of the heaviest calamities of his life, and which he bore with becoming fortitude and submission to the will of God, was the great mental depression endured for many years by his beloved wife, of whom he was wont to say, that ‘the arrows of the Almighty had drunk up her spirit.’ She had been for many a long year the cheerful and devoted companion of his private hours, had sympathized in all the objects connected with his ministry, had aided him by her prayers and gentle counsels; and in the evening of his days, it bore heavily upon his sensitive mind to see her ‘walking in darkness, and having no light’ at all; but the God in whom he trusted did not suffer his spirit to be overwhelmed; and with her, too, it was ‘light at even-tide’; for but a few years after the decease of her revered husband, she passed into the joy of her Lord, in the full assurance of a glorious immortality.<sup>141</sup>

It may be that in late May and early June of 1798 Janet Love was having a bout of the depression that would cast such a cloud over her husband’s home life. This added to the problems at Artillery Street could very well have been the reason for their hasty return to Scotland and his absence from the meetings welcoming back James Wilson. Though there is no

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<sup>139</sup> *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 6 (1798), p. 245.

<sup>140</sup> Love had written to a correspondent in late January 1798 in these terms, ‘Ten years’ experience of London has deeply confirmed my sentiments relative to the vast disproportion, between appearances and reality, in the religious profession which blazes forth hence. The mere presence and satisfaction of a multitude, attracted by a blustering, petulant vivacity in the preachers, is in my view, no infallible evidence of the presence of God, otherwise than as a God of judgment, choosing the delusions of them whose object is to find a place of refuge from the true power of unaffected godliness.’ *Letters of John Love*, p. 228, Letter date 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1798.

<sup>141</sup> Morison, *Fathers and Founders of the London Missionary Society*, p. 265.

documentary evidence that this was the case it is supported by the fact that they returned to Greenock, the town where her parents lived and, very probably, to her parents' home.

## V. Missionary Statesman

After John Love's return to Scotland and following his induction as the minister of the Anderston Chapel of Ease in Glasgow, his zeal for missions remained unabated. Although the precise date of the appointment is not clear, he was chosen to be the Secretary of the Glasgow Missionary Society, a position he held until his death in 1825.<sup>142</sup> His interest in the LMS also continued, and six months after he had returned to Scotland he wrote to an official of the Society from Greenock with a donation and words of encouragement and concern for the South Seas mission:

I enclose for the London Missionary Society, the sum of £—, filled up agreeably to the statement on the preceding leaf. The exertions belonging to the exterior part of the important mission to the South Sea islands seem now abundantly accomplished; it remains that these be followed up by proportionate concern and wrestling at the throne of grace, for bringing the power of the Almighty into this great work. Behind the curtain, many, I trust, in different parts of the earth, are deeply engaged in those supplications of faith working by love, which, so far as earth can go, constitute the main strength of missions. In the meanwhile, I hope the Society will now turn an impartial and vigilant eye towards the hundreds of millions in the Asiatic continent, where the blood of immortal souls is flowing in torrents and floods. Oh that the quickening breath of Jehovah may soon go forth over multitudes, 'who are drawn unto death, and ready to be eternally slain'.<sup>143</sup>

He wrote in April 1802 to the Directors of the LMS in his capacity as the Secretary of the Glasgow Missionary Society, desiring to co-operate with the London Society. The letter abundantly demonstrates his continued zeal for missions, his concern for the salvation of the heathen, and his continued concern for the organisation in the formation of which he took such a prominent part:

Respected and dear Brethren,

It will accord with your sentiment, we presume, that we remark with humble concern the painful delay or withholding of such signal and

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<sup>142</sup> It was very probably shortly after his induction at Anderston in July 1800.

<sup>143</sup> *Letters of John Love*, p. 265. Letter dated 21<sup>st</sup> December 1798.

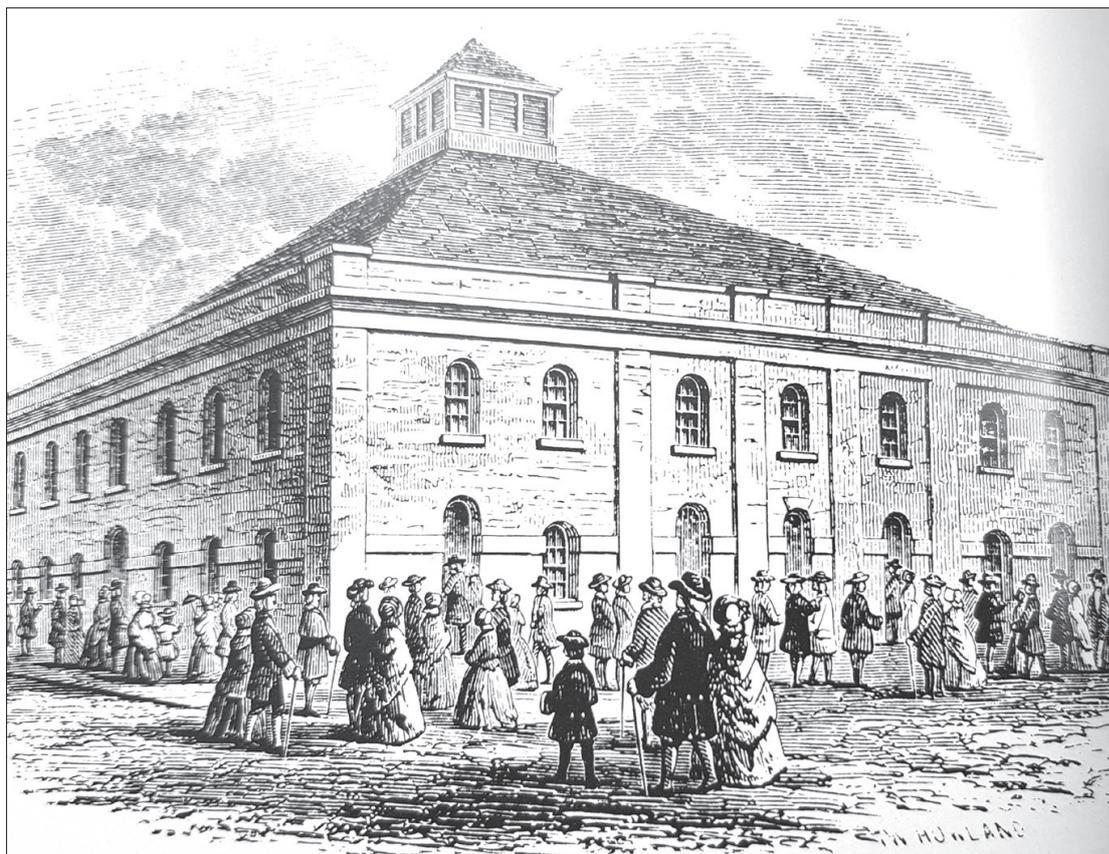
extensive success, as might have been hoped to attend the late attempts to introduce the light of salvation into some of the darkest places of the earth. We, as a Society, have felt in a singular degree the solemnity and bitterness of such disappointment and trial; while we have suffered the entire failure of those missionary undertakings wherein we have been distinctly, or in connection with you, specially concerned.<sup>144</sup> While, humbled under the rebukes of the Holy One, we desire to adore His awful sovereignty, and to enter into sentiments of the deepest humiliation before Him, it is our concern to hold fast our views of the immense importance of such undertakings, our zeal and longing for the displays of the Saviour's glory in their being rendered conspicuously successful, and our readiness to mark and follow every new opening of the door of opportunity for renewed endeavours of this kind. We have therefore thought it expedient, and calculated for cherishing the affection and disposition to activity in this great cause which still remain with us, that we present ourselves to your fraternal notice and sympathy in a communication of this kind, and that we should request from you, from time to time, a more free and minute explication of your prospect and designs, than could with propriety be exhibited to the public at large.

Although our hopes of being gratified by being happily instrumental in the salvation of some of the miserable heathens have been severely checked, we are by no means willing to resign them...We have noticed, with unfeigned pleasure, the appearances of opening success, which have sometimes attended the exertions of the London, and other Societies; and have affectionately sympathised with their disappointments and calamities. In these views we earnestly solicit from you an early and confidential communication of such plan and prospects in the Missionary work, as may either interest our most vigorous co-operation, or suggest to us hints of new undertakings to be attempted separately by ourselves. Such informations will be regarded by us as valuable pledges of a fraternal union which we wish to cultivate, and will be attended to with the greatest candour, while we shall readily impart whatever may occur here worthy of notice. We look up, with earnest desire, to the exalted Lord and Saviour, that He may display his wisdom, grace, and power, in directing and prospering your generous endeavours to honour Him in heathen countries.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> This is reference to the failed mission to the Foulah people in Sierra Leone in which both the Glasgow and Edinburgh Missionary Societies engaged in a joint mission with the LMS. For details see Middleton, 'Scottish Missionaries ordained by the London Scots Presbytery in the 1790s', pp. 151-153.

<sup>145</sup> *Letters of John Love*, pp. 295-297. Letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> April 1802.



George Whitefield's Moorfields Tabernacle in London where John Love preached on the opening day of the 1812 LMS annual meetings.

John Love was asked to preach the sermon at the evening service on the opening day of the LMS annual meetings on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 1812. At those annual meetings he was elected as a Director of the LMS, a position he held except for a short break until 1820.<sup>146</sup> It must have a great joy to him to renew fellowship with men like David Bogue, George Burder, Matthew Wilks, Alexander Waugh, and Rowland Hill. Among the men who, along with Love had commenced the Society, several had died. These included John Eyre, Edward Williams, and Sir Egerton Leigh. There would also be missing faces from LMS supporters in the London Scots Presbytery: James Steven who had gone back to Scotland, and Henry Hunter and George Jerment who had died. Love preached to a large gathering in George Whitefield's Moorfields Tabernacle. His text was, 'For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they

<sup>146</sup> See W.J. Roxborough, 'Thomas Chalmers and the Mission of the Church with Special Reference to the Rise of the Missionary Movement in Scotland' (PhD thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1979), p. 411, Appendix 4.7. The Appendix details the London Missionary Society's Scottish Directors between 1797 and 1842. Roxborough's valuable thesis was published in 1999 by Paternoster Press in the series Rutherford House Studies in Historical Theology under the title, *Thomas Chalmers: Enthusiast for Missions*.

call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!’ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God’ (Romans 10:13-17). This is how he began the sermon:

My Brethren, I take the liberty to premise, that seventeen years have elapsed since it was my happiness to write the first small letter, which called together a few ministers to consult respecting the formation of this Society. From that moment, various and surprising events have taken place; some of them of a very joyful kind, others of a dark and distressing nature. Amidst this diversity of events, my ideas of the importance and excellency of this Institution have remained unaltered; and I rejoice in the proof which this vast assembly exhibits of the vigour and persevering zeal of the Society. The service in which I now engage, requires no exertions to create and kindle a flame of zeal which does not exist: I have only to attempt to fan, to brighten, and to guide the sacred fire. Lord Jesus, my sure, my omnipotent Friend, draw nigh and assist me in this service! Help me to annihilate from my mind this great assembly, by the superior view of thy presence; and by the view of the countless myriads of the perishing heathen. Lord Jesus, teach this great assembly to annihilate and look far above me; and to expect all from thy fullness of light, power, and grace.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Love, *Sermons preached on Public Occasions with fifteen address to the people of Otaheite*, p. 233. An account of the missionary meetings at which Love preached is in the *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 20 (1812), pp. 332-340.