



John Love (1757-1825).

John Love in London

– Part III –

Ministry at Crispin Street and Artillery Street, Spitalfields¹

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¹ The writer gratefully acknowledges the help of Helen Weller, the Archivist at Westminster College, Cambridge for access to the MS. *London Scots Presbytery Minutes*.

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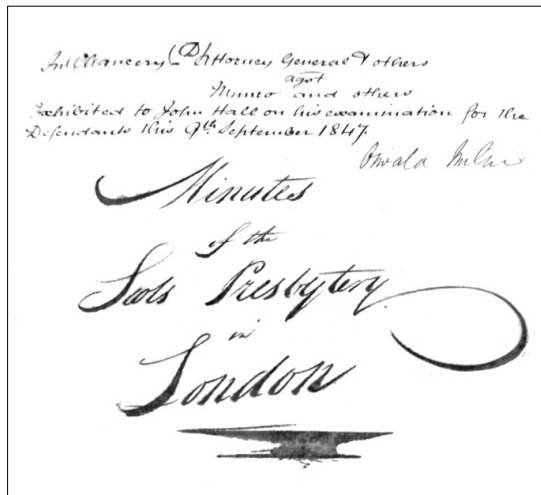
I. Ordination at Crispin Street

It is not clear when exactly John Love left his assistantship in the West Parish in Greenock, or when he went to London, or what he was doing during this fourteen-month period in which there is no record in his correspondence.² Whilst we know that his desire to obtain ordination was the major reason that he went to London, we do not know why he was drawn to the small congregation on Crispin Street, in the Spitalfields area of London, beyond that a vacancy had occurred in 1786 when the previous minister, Alexander Simpson, had accepted a call to a Dissenting congregation at Alnwick, in Northumberland. The first reference of a call to Love appears in the Scots Presbytery minutes of a meeting on 4th July 1787, held in the Crispin Street church, when those in attendance were Charles Lorimer, the Moderator; John Patrick, the minister of Peter Street, Soho; Thomas Rutledge, the minister of Broad Street, Wapping; and Henry Hunter, the minister of the London Wall congregation and the Clerk of the Presbytery.³ It was a *pro re nata* meeting of the Scots Presbytery in order to moderate in a call from the Crispin Street congregation to John Love to become their pastor. The call was produced, and read, and the agreement of the congregation was secured with two dissentient voices. The opposition to him at the time of the call, though initially small, sounded a rather uncertain note with regard to his pastorate in London. Love's letter of acceptance was read and he produced extracts of his licence and certificates in favour of his character and talents signed by 'many reputable ministers in Scotland.'⁴ Before the Presbytery ordained him, Love was

² As noted in the first part of this paper (*Scottish Reformation Society Historical Journal (SRSHJ)*, Vol. 7, p. 144, footnote 10), one suspects that Peter MacBride, the editor of the volume of Love's *Letters*, not only edited sections of the letters that referred to personal matters, but omitted entire letters. At this point, there is a gap of just over a year in the published letters. The contents of *Letters of the Late John Love, D.D.* (Glasgow, 1838), are spiritual and devotional in character. The first two hundred letters are in historical sequence dating from 1779 when he was twenty-two, to 1824 the year before he died. The last letter sent from Greenock is dated 7th March 1786; the next letter in the volume is from London dated 25th April 1787.

³ For biographical sketches of these men, and also one of William Smith, see *SRHSJ*, Vol. 7, pp. 181-191.

⁴ MS. *Minutes of the Scots Presbytery in London*, Vol. 1 (cited afterwards as MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*), minute of 4th July 1787, p. 76. Henry Hunter was the Clerk of the Presbytery until his death in 1802. His successor could not find the Presbytery's Minute book. It appears that in the three years before his death, when Hunter's health was declining, that the Minute book was mislaid. Fortunately, his scroll minutes (the notes he took at the meeting) were discovered. On 4th January 1804 the new Clerk was instructed to purchase a Minute book for 'engrossing the minutes of the Presbytery as far back as the committee can find authentic documents'. Hence, the first volume of the minutes of the Scots Presbytery which covers the period from 5th August 1772 to 14th August 1799 with occasional interruptions, is not the original minutes but a reconstruction based on Hunter's notes of the meetings. The three volumes of the Scots Presbytery Minutes have never been published and



Title page of the first volume of the reconstructed Minutes of the Scots Presbytery in London.

asked to preach before them on two occasions, on 10th and 19th July; at the latter meeting his ordination was fixed for the 22nd August 1787 at Crispin Street.

When the Presbytery met on the 22nd August the four ministers who were there on 4th July along with William Smith, the minister at the Silver Street congregation, formed the Presbytery; there were no elders present. The reconstructed minute is exceedingly brief. After constituting the Presbytery and detailing the members present, the minute reads:

They proceeded to the ordination of Mr Love according to the order prescribed. Mr Lorimer began the service and Mr Smith gave the charge. Mr Love being then solemnly ordained by prayer and the imposition of hands, the right hand of fellowship was then given him (unclear text) by the brethren. The sederunt was closed with prayer.⁵

Whilst the minute correctly details that William Smith gave the charge to both minister and congregation, it omits to record that Thomas Rutledge was the preacher at Love's ordination. Both the elders and the Crispin Street congregation were clearly very pleased that they had secured a minister and were eager that both Rutledge's sermon and Smith's charges be printed as soon as possible. To this proposal the two ministers, somewhat reluctantly, acquiesced, and a small volume was quickly published.⁶ Rutledge preached from 2 Corinthians 4:5, 'For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake.' The printed sermon was Rutledge's first publication. In the light of how unsatisfactorily the Crispin Street congregation would very quickly begin to treat their new minister, the thrust of Rutledge's application section of the sermon is rather poignant. Towards the conclusion of the sermon he said:

Receive him in the Lord, not only as your minister and teacher, but also as your spiritual father and instructor, your friend and counsellor. Love him, cherish him, and 'esteem him very highly for his works sake.' With readiness and cheerfulness act the part of spiritual children, hearkening to his instructions, giving heed to his counsels, and providing liberally for his temporal wants, according to your abilities, knowing it to be a divine injunction, that 'they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel.' By

are kept at Westminster College, Cambridge where the writer had access to them and was able to photograph the minutes relating to John Love's period in London.

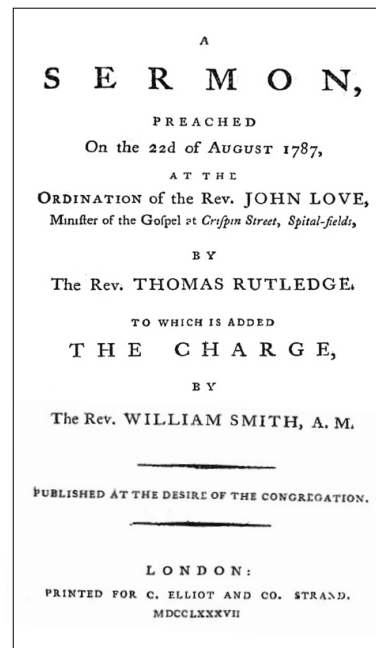
⁵ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, minute of 22nd August 1787, p. 80.

⁶ Thomas Rutledge, *A sermon preached on 22 August 1787, at the ordination of the Rev. John Love, Minister of the Gospel at Crispin Street, Spital-fields to which is added a Charge by the Rev. William Smith* (London, 1787) (cited afterwards as *Ordination Sermons*).

making his external circumstances easy, he will be able to discharge his duty to you with more alacrity, and with greater usefulness; for surely no man, can set both heart and hand to a work by which he can barely live. Indigence is a mighty pressure upon genius; and I need hardly tell you what is known to all, that there are but very few of that class of men, who are here denominated dissenting ministers, who, after supplying their absolute necessities, have to boast of an overplus, arising from their professional income. This I have only hinted at. Your piety and love for your Pastor will render more needless. But what must crown his joy, and prove a source of the most permanent felicity to yourselves, will be his beholding your holy life and godly conversation in the world, and your walking worthy of the Christian character ... Let me also intreat you, my dear auditors, to take heed lest, by your negligence and in-attention, you render abortive all the labours of your ministers for the salvation of your souls. Our sermons, poor as they are, cost us both labour and anxiety; do not then use them as David did the water of Bethlehem, which his valiant men brought him at the hazard of their lives, that is, spill them on the ground, lest from thence, like the blood of Abel, they cry out against you. Whilst your ministers act according to their commission, and ‘declare unto you all the counsel of God,’ you cannot despise their work without fighting your Saviour, and doing despite unto the Spirit of Grace. Shall they importune God for mercy to you, and will you refuse and reject it? Shall your souls be precious in their eyes, and they be vile in your own? Will you, by your iniquities, turn the prayers of your ministers into a curse, and their sermons into ‘the savour of death unto death?’ Shall they open for you the door of life, and will you shut it against yourselves? Shall they in Christ’s stead beseech you to be reconciled to God, and will you not hearken unto their reasonable request? If you will not love your ministers, yet hate not yourselves; and when the herald of the gospel opens his lips, shut not your ears.⁷

William Smith had the task of giving a charge to both the minister and the congregation. In his charge to the Crispin Street congregation he made the following remarks which, like those made by Rutledge, once they were in print must have been a stark reminder to them a few years later of the less than satisfactory way that they had treated John Love so soon after his settlement among them:

Next to your minister’s comfortable subsistence, let me beseech you to watch over and defend his character and good name ... If, therefore, any disadvantageous reports should arise (for we live in an evil-judging and backbiting age), it is your duty to trace them to their source; and if ill-founded,



*Title page of the sermon
preached when John Love was
ordained at Crispin Street.*

⁷ *Ordination Sermons*, pp. 27-28, 29-30.

to repel, with becoming warmth, the injury which is done you, through the wounding and maiming of your Pastor's reputation. But if (which I hope shall never, or seldom, be the case) there should be anything blame-worthy in your minister's conduct, the scripture way, and the best and most Christian way, is, to go in the spirit of meekness and real love, and represent it to himself; and I will venture to add, so far from being ill-received, every conscientious man will take it as an act of the sincerest friendship. Thus only, I am sure, can you preserve his usefulness, at the same time that you afford him an opportunity to reform.⁸

The day on which he was ordained as the minister of the Crispin Street congregation was a Wednesday; his preaching ministry among them began on the following Sabbath – 26th August 1787. As detailed in part 2 of this paper,⁹ Crispin Street had been, prior to Love's arrival, a Congregational church that had associated itself with the London Scots Presbytery. At least two of its previous ministers, Joseph Hussey and William Bentley, had been High-Calvinists. Indeed, Hussey has been identified as the 'Architect of Hyper-Calvinism.'¹⁰ Unbeknown to its new minister, a significant proportion of this small congregation were far from convinced with respect to Presbyterian Church polity. They would later also become dissatisfied with aspects of Love's evangelical Calvinism and his gospel preaching that was after the pattern of Thomas Boston and the great Highland evangelicals.

In little more than six weeks after his induction and ordination at Crispin Street John Love returned briefly to Greenock. The reason for his return was in order to marry Janet McCunn at the Old West Kirk in Greenock. They were married on Saturday 6th October 1787.¹¹ Love was just over thirty years of age and Janet McCunn was two years younger. She was the daughter of Daniel McCunn and his wife Margaret Campbell and was born on 30th April 1759 and baptized on 2nd May 1759.¹² It is quite possible that the McCunns, who lived in Greenock, were a reasonably well-placed family. Although the identity is by no means certain, the Norfolk Shipping Line report for 1787 to 1817 records a ship's master by the name of McCunn who operated a ship called the *Betsy* between Glasgow and Norfolk.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 45, 46.

⁹ See Roy Middleton, 'John Love in London, Part II, A History of the Crispin Street Congregation', *SRSJH*, Vol. 8, pp. 70-184.

¹⁰ Peter Toon, 'Joseph Hussey – Architect of Hyper-Calvinism', *Free Grace Record*, Vol. 4, No. 5 (Winter 1966-67).

¹¹ In Hew Scott (ed.), *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae* (2nd edn., 8 vols., Edinburgh, 1915-50), Vol. 3, p. 389 (cited afterwards as Hew Scott, *Fasti*) it is stated regarding John Love that 'he died unmarried on 17 December 1825'. This is amended in Vol. 8, p. 288 where it is stated that he was married to Janet McKillop. The surname of his bride, however, was not McKillop but McCunn. See 'Record of marriages at the Old West Church, Greenock' on www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk – accessed 1st August 2016. Based on the information in Volume 8 of the *Fasti*, the present writer in his biographical introduction to Love's *Memorials* stated incorrectly that Love's wife was Janet McKillop. See the Free Presbyterian Publications Committee reprint of the *Memorials of John Love, D.D.* (2 vols., Glasgow, 2015), Vol. 1, p. lxxvii.

¹² See www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk, 'Register of Baptisms at the Old West Church, Greenock', May-June 1759 – accessed 1st August 2016.

II. The Scots Presbytery of London

By the middle of the eighteenth century there were five congregations in London that regarded themselves as being in connection with the Church of Scotland. These were the congregations at London Wall, Swallow Street, Crown Court, Peter Street, and Broad Street, Wapping.¹³ Whilst they considered themselves as being in connection with the Church of Scotland, the reality was that, like the English Presbyterians, they conducted their affairs in a manner little different from Independent congregations. They practiced Presbyterian polity merely at the congregational level.

Before the majority of the English Presbyterians decided to oppose Creed subscription at Salters' Hall, relations between the Scots and the English Presbyterian congregations were remarkably fraternal. They exchanged pulpits, associated together for the delivery of lectures, and were both involved in the Salters' Hall Synod of 1719. Ministers of the Scots Presbyterian churches in the Metropolis united with the English Dissenters in their witness regarding historic Protestantism. A marked change in these fraternal relationships occurred when the English Presbyterians began drifting into heterodoxy. This drift forced the London Scots to form themselves into a Presbytery as a matter of self-defence, both to uphold evangelical truth and to maintain reasonable discipline. The moving spirit behind the formation of the Presbytery was Henry Hunter¹⁴ who had been inducted as the minister at London Wall on 11th August 1771. Within twelve months of Hunter coming to London a Presbytery was formed. Under his leadership, the Scots Presbytery became a rallying point for those who were determined to maintain evangelical principles, wholesome discipline, opposition to Arianism, and a commitment to the Westminster Standards.

On 5th August 1772 seven ministers assembled to form the Scots Presbytery in London at Henry Hunter's London Wall church. They were the ministers of the five churches that regarded themselves in connection with the Church of Scotland: John Patrick of the Peter Street congregation who was chosen to be the Moderator; David Muir of Broad Street, Wapping; Dr John Trotter of Swallow Street; Thomas Oswald of Crown Court; and Henry Hunter. The other two ministers at the meeting were George Turnbull of Hammersmith and William Smith of Silver Street. The first action of the newly formed Presbytery was to appoint Hunter as their Clerk. In the preamble of the reconstituted minute book it is said: 'The Scots' Presbytery in London, since their first formation as an ecclesiastical body, have conformed strictly to the worship and government; inviolably maintained the faith and spirit; and legally exercised the powers of the parent Church in the land where

¹³ The history of these congregations can be found in Kenneth M. Black, *The Scots Churches in England* (Edinburgh, 1906); G. C. Cameron, *The Scots Kirk in London* (Oxford, 1979); Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 7, pp. 466-503; and the volumes of Walter Wilson, *The History and Antiquities of the Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses in London, Westminster, and Southwark; including the Lives of their Ministers from the Rise of Nonconformity to the present time* (4 vols., London, 1808) (cited afterwards as Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, with volume and page number).

¹⁴ For a biographical account of Hunter who played such a crucial role in preserving Presbyterian orthodoxy in the Scottish Churches in London, see *SRSJH*, Vol. 7, pp. 184-189.

Providence hath cast their lot.¹⁵ Denominational barriers were low and ministers who would not have been in the same Presbytery in Scotland were members together in the London Scots Presbytery. The ministerial members of the Presbytery came from three types of congregation; the largest group comprised the congregations who regarded themselves as part of the Church of Scotland that was located in England. The second group was comprised of the ministers of English congregations which had chosen to be associated with the Presbytery. The congregation from which John Love had received a call to be their minister was in this category. A third group, who were considered as visitors to the Presbytery but seem to have taken a full part in its proceedings, were the ministers of the London congregations of Seceders, both Burgher and Antiburgher. Although fifteen congregations had a link to the Presbytery, in the 1790s the number of ministers that attended its meetings seldom exceeded six.

The move to form a Presbytery committed to the Westminster Standards was opposed by the English Presbyterians with Arian sympathies as they were against any form of credal subscription. The London ministers with Arian tendencies met at the Dr Williams Library towards the end of 1772 and disowned their Scotch brethren because they deemed them ‘not Dissenters upon principles of liberty’. As Alexander Drysdale observes: ‘and certainly they were not, if by “principles of liberty” were meant that novel notion of a speculative freedom for ministers on matters of doctrinal opinion which was to put congregations entirely at the mercy of their preachers, and was opposed to all the meeting-house trusts, except perhaps a very few that may have been doctrinally open ones.’¹⁶

(a) The practice of the Scots Presbytery

Though the Scots Presbytery in London sought to implement the practice of the Scottish Church, it was in many ways significantly different from the Presbyteries of the Church of Scotland north of the Tweed. The practice of the Established Church in Scotland in the eighteenth century is captured by Walter Steuart of Pardovan in his *Collections & Observations concerning Worship, Discipline and Government of the Church of Scotland*. Steuart explains the practice of the Scottish Presbyteries:

This judicature consists of all the pastors within the bounds, and one ruling elder from each parish therein, who receives a commission from the eldership to be a member of the presbytery, and represent them there till the next synod be over: thus twice a-year there are new elections of the ruling elders. The number of parishes associated in presbyteries for their mutual help, is determined by authority of the national synod ... Where there are collegiate ministers that session may send as many ruling elders. The directory for government saith that to perform any classical act of government or ordination,

¹⁵ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, pp. 3-4. Alexander Drysdale, in citing this preamble, dates it as part of the first minute of 5th August 1772. Alexander H. Drysdale, *History of the Presbyterians in England* (London, 1889), p. 557. This is incorrect: it is a preamble written over thirty years later, when the first minute book was reconstructed after Henry Hunter's death.

¹⁶ Drysdale, *History of the Presbyterians in England*, p. 557.

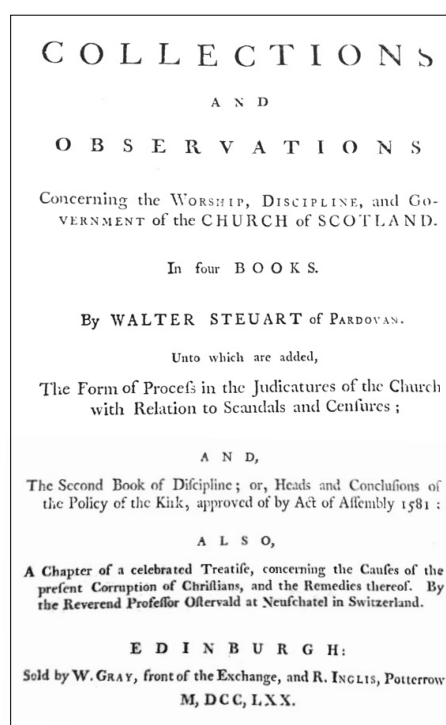
there shall be present at least a major part of the ministers of the whole classis. Presbyteries should meet every third week, and oftener if business require it.

Every meeting of a presbytery is to begin with a sermon by one of the brethren appointed formerly for that effect, upon a text assigned him by them, except when probationers or intrants supply the pulpit in their public trials. The half of the time allowed for this presbyterial exercise is to be taken up in the explicatory and analytic part of the text, and in answering textual and critical questions and difficulties ... The other half of the time allowed is to be taken up in raising of doctrines and observations from the text, and applying them to their several uses; which last part is called adding, and it requires more especially the gift, and necessarily the authority of the pastor.

The presbytery treats of such matters as concern the particular churches within their bounds, as the examination, admission, ordination, and censuring of ministers; the licensing of probationers, rebuking of gross or contumacious sinners; the directing of the censure of excommunication; the cognoscing upon references and appeals from kirk-sessions; the revising and rectifying what hath been ill done or negligently omitted by them, at their approving of the kirk-session books and records; the answering of questions, cases of conscience, and solving of difficulties in doctrine or discipline, with petitions from their own or those in other presbyteries; the examining and censuring, according to the word of God, any erroneous doctrine which hath been publicly or more privately vented within their bounds, and the endeavouring the reducing and conversion of any that remain in error and schism; the appointing of visitation of churches by themselves as occasion offers, or the perambulation of parishes, in order to their uniting or disjoining; all which are either concluded or continued to further consideration, or referred to the synod.¹⁷

Whilst the Scots Presbytery in London followed carefully the provision that each sederunt should commence with a sermon by a member appointed at the previous meeting, there were, however, five significant differences in practice from that of the mother Church. These were as follows:

(i) In Scotland there was a gradation of Church Courts and appeals could be made from the decision of a lower court to a higher one – from Kirk



Title page of Walter Steuart's book detailing the practice of Scottish Church Courts in the late eighteenth century.

¹⁷ Walter Steuart of Pardovan, *Collections & Observations concerning the Worship, Discipline and Government of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1770), pp. 44-46. See also, for the practice of Presbyterial Church government in Scotland in the eighteenth century, Alistair Mutch, *Religion and National Identity: Governing Scottish Presbyterianism in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh University Press, 2015).

Sessions to Presbyteries, from Presbyteries to Synods, and from Synods to the General Assembly. As John Black has observed, ‘the Established Church of Scotland ... by its very constitution was precluded from exercising jurisdiction in England, and never attempted it.’¹⁸ This being the case, any appeal from the Scots Presbytery in London to a higher court in Scotland was impossible. Furthermore, the Scots Presbytery minutes during the ten years of John Love’s ministry in London contain no appeal from a Kirk Session to the Presbytery. This was largely because the congregations associated with the Presbytery conducted their affairs in line with the practice of the English Presbyterian congregations. They operated Presbyterian polity only at congregational level; accordingly there were no appeals, dissents, or references from congregations to the Presbytery. The only issues that came to the Presbytery from congregations, during the decade in which John Love was in London, were related either to a minister or to matters of property. This was quite unlike the position in Scotland where Presbyteries would receive appeals and dissents from congregations. A further difference from the Scottish practice is the absence of any account in the London Presbytery minutes that they reviewed the Kirk Session records of the congregations associated with the Presbytery.

(ii) As Walter Steuart details, the minister of each Scottish congregation automatically had a seat in the Presbytery to which his congregation was associated. In addition, each session elected, at six monthly intervals, one of its ruling elders to be a member of the Presbytery. This was not the case in the London Scots Presbytery. Ministers had to apply individually to become members of the Presbytery. The minute of 5th December 1787 contains the following sentence: ‘It was moved and unanimously agreed that Mr. Love become a member of the Scots Presbytery.’¹⁹ Ministers who applied for membership were not always given a seat on the Presbytery. The minute of 6th June 1792 records the following application: ‘The Rev. Daniel Turner of Woolwich intimated his desire to be received into connection with this Presbytery, which desire being considered it was agreed to defer giving an answer till next meeting of Presbytery.’²⁰ Turner’s application was eventually submitted to a Committee of the whole Presbytery who unanimously decided that ‘it is inexpedient to admit him as a member of Presbytery.’²¹ Although one cannot be certain, it is very probable that his membership was rejected because he was a Freemason and had given a lecture in 1787 on ‘The value of Masonic Secrets’.²² In addition, he had written a novel entitled *The Fashionable Daughter* (London, 1774). A year after Turner’s rejection, an application was made by Daniel Keith, a minister who had been ordained by the Scots Presbytery in June 1785. After going to Canada as a minister, Keith had

¹⁸ John Black, *Presbyterianism in England in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1887), p. 27.

¹⁹ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, p. 81.

²⁰ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, p. 105. Turner was born in Glasgow, educated at the University of Glasgow, and became a minister of a Presbyterian congregation in Lowestoft and then the minister in Woolwich in 1775, but only applied for Presbytery membership seventeen years later. For biographical details of Turner, see Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 7. p. 502.

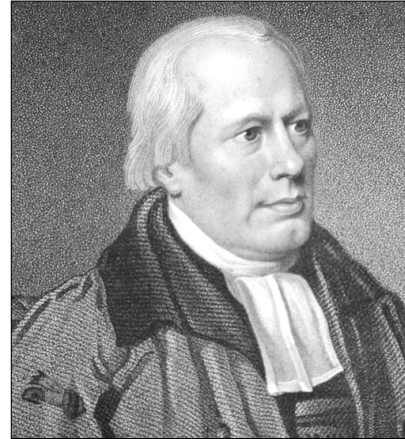
²¹ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, p. 109.

²² Turner’s lecture is printed in G. Oliver, D.D., *The Golden Remains of the Early Masonic Writers* (5 vols., London, 1847-50), Vol. 1, pp. 256-276.

returned to England and desired membership of the Presbytery. In a similar way to Turner's application, the matter was referred to a committee of which Love was a member. The committee's recommendation was to admit him and this was confirmed by a majority decision of the Presbytery. James Steven, the minister at Crown Court and a close friend of John Love, lodged a protest against his admission.²³

(iii) The position of ruling elders was in marked distinction from Scottish practice: they also were elected as individuals, and once elected had a permanent seat on the Presbytery. A Mr. Jacqui was elected as an elder of the Presbytery on 2nd May 1787, just before John Love was called to Crispin Street, and he remained a member during the whole of Love's ministry in London.²⁴

(iv) Though formal membership was restricted to those specifically given a seat on the Presbytery by the existing members, from the late 1780s it was not uncommon for at least three visitors to be present at the meetings of the Court and sometimes as many as nine. Among the more well-known visitors were two men who would become close associates of John Love as 'Founding Fathers' of the London Missionary Society. These were Alexander Waugh,²⁵ the Burgher minister at Wells Street, and David Bogue,²⁶ the Independent minister at Gosport. Another well known



Alexander Waugh, Burgher Seceder minister at Wells Street, London and frequent visitor to the London Scots Presbytery.

²³ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, pp. 115, 118-119

²⁴ See MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, pp. 73, 174. Similar elections are recorded of a Mr. Gray, an elder at the Peter Street congregation, and a William Oswald. See *ibid.*, pp. 159-160, 173.

²⁵ Alexander Waugh (1754-1827) studied under John Brown of Haddington and was licensed at Duns by the Edinburgh Presbytery of the Burgher Secession Church on 28th June 1779. He supplied briefly the Burgher Secession Wells Street congregation in London, vacant following the death of Archibald Hall in 1778. On returning to Scotland he was called by the small congregation of Newtown, Roxburghshire and was ordained there on 30th August 1780. Within a short time he received two calls from the London Wells Street congregation. He accepted their entreaties and became the minister of Wells Street in 1782 where he remained for the next forty-five years until his death in 1827. For biographical information on Waugh, see J. Hay and H. Belfrage, *A Memoir of the Rev. Alexander Waugh D.D.* (London, 1830); John Morison, *Fathers and Founders of the London Missionary Society* (2nd edn., London, undated), pp. 218-253; Robert Small, *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church, 1733-1900* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1904), Vol. 2, p. 464; *Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle*, New Series, Vol. 6 (1828), pp. 27-8, 45-53; D. M. Lewis (ed.), *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography, 1730-1860* (2 vols., Oxford, 1995), Vol. 2, p. 1163; *Dictionary of National Biography* (cited afterwards as *DNB*); *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (cited afterwards as *ODNB*).

²⁶ David Bogue (1750-1825) studied for the ministry of the Church of Scotland at the University of Edinburgh and was regularly licensed as a preacher of the Gospel. Leaving Scotland in 1771 he became a teacher first in an Academy at Edmonton in Hampstead, London and then at a boarding school in Chelsea with William Smith, the Church of Scotland minister at Camberwell, assisting Smith in his ministerial work. In 1777, after six years as a teacher and assistant to Smith, he was ordained as the minister of the

visitor was Dr. Henry Mayo, the Independent Minister at Nightingale, Wapping, who was one of the tutors at Homerton Academy.²⁷ Through these contacts John Love and the other members of the Scots Presbytery were in fellowship with some of the outstanding ministers in London.

(v) Whilst recognizing the possibility of drawing wrong conclusions due to the inadequate record of the re-constructed minutes, it seems that there were many meetings of the Presbytery when the entire business was a sermon by one of the ministers, the approval of the minutes, and the appointing of the next meeting of the court and deciding who would preach on that occasion. Commencing each sederunt in this way was entirely in keeping with the practice outlined by Steuart of Pardovan which required that, 'every meeting of a presbytery is to begin with a sermon by one of the brethren appointed formerly for that effect, upon a text assigned him by them.'²⁸ Out of the first ten meetings of the Presbytery that John Love attended between January 1788 and May 1789, only two had extra business in addition to the sermon and approval of the previous minute.²⁹ The London Scots Presbytery for many of its meetings operated along the lines of a ministers' fraternal, where brethren would meet for mutual encouragement and fellowship in the Gospel.³⁰

(b) John Love and the Scots Presbytery

John Love was held in high regard by his fellow-presbyters in London. This is clear from the place he was given in the Scots Presbytery as soon as he arrived. He was called upon to preach at ordination occasions and many times before the Presbytery. His reputation had gone before him and he was warmly received not only by the Scots Presbytery but by the Dissenters in London. After his preaching at the Scots Presbytery's Crown Court congregation in which his friend James Steven was the minister, the Kirk Session was so impressed with the sermon that they arranged for a thousand copies to be printed.³¹

Independent Church in Gosport. From the time of his settlement at Gosport, David Bogue began to educate students in his home. He developed a three-year course and sought to recruit students to his Gosport Academy. Along with his own biographer, James Bennett, he produced an important history on Nonconformity, David Bogue and James Bennett, *A History of Dissenters, 1689-1808* (4 vols., London, 1808-1812). For biographical information on Bogue, see James Bennett, *Memoirs of the Life of David Bogue* (London, 1827); Morison, *Fathers and Founders of the LMS*, pp. 156-217; D. M. Lewis, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography, 1730-1860*, Vol. 1, p. 115; Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 7, pp. 494-495; Chester Terpstra, 'David Bogue DD, 1750-1825; pioneer and missionary educator' (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1959); *DNB*; *ODNB*.

²⁷ For biographical details of Henry Mayo (1733-1793), see *DNB*; *ODNB*.

²⁸ Steuart of Pardovan, *Collections & Observations*, p. 45.

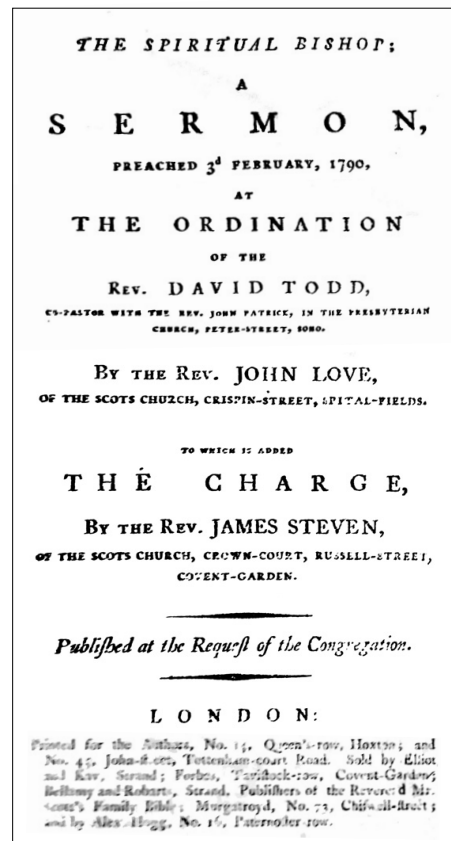
²⁹ See MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, pp. 81-87.

³⁰ A further distinction of a non-ecclesiastical nature between the London Scots Presbytery and its Scottish counterparts was that the London Presbytery had an annual engagement when they took the female friends of the Presbytery for a meal to a local hotel (this was presumably a reference to their wives). The relevant minute of the Presbytery for 4th June 1794 reads: 'The summer meeting with the female friends of the Presbytery to be on the first Wednesday of July at the Green Man, Blackheath.' MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, p. 128. See also pp. 105, 120, 145 for similar minutes.

³¹ Cameron, *The Scots Kirk in London*, p. 94. The sermon was preached at Crown Court on 27th October 1794 from Isaiah 63:10, 'But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.' The printed sermon was

The Crispin Street minister was very diligent in attending the meetings of the Presbytery. This may well have been for the fellowship he had at Presbytery meetings with brethren who esteemed him, in contrast to the difficulty of his situation in the congregation. It is, however, just as likely it was due to his high regard for presbyterial polity. The first meeting Love attended after being accepted as a member of the Presbytery was on 17th January 1787; the last one that he attended before his resignation and his return to Scotland was on 2nd May 1798. In the intervening period the Presbytery met on eighty-five occasions. His diligence is seen in that he was present at eighty of the meetings. In addition, he took his turn in rotation as the Moderator of the Presbytery and acted in that capacity on two occasions in the moderatorial years 1789-1790 and 1795-1796.

On sixty of the eighty-five meetings of the Scots Presbytery whilst Love was in London, the minutes record the name of the minister who preached at the beginning of the sederunt. As might have been expected, due to his seniority, the minister called upon most frequently to preach was Henry Hunter; he preached on twelve occasions. The next two ministers called upon most frequently to preach before the Presbytery were John Love and Thomas Rutledge; both preached on ten occasions. When he arrived in London in 1787 he was just thirty, whilst Hunter was nearly fifty, and Rutledge was in his early forties; both Hunter and Rutledge were well known and respected ministers in the English capital. Whilst still a relatively young man and in his first pastorate, Love was asked to preach frequently before the Presbytery. Clearly, his fellow presbyters appreciated his discourses. Only one of these Presbytery sermons has been preserved; it was the address he gave at the ordination of David Todd to be co-pastor with John Patrick at the Peter Street congregation in Soho on 3rd February 1790. His text was 1 Timothy 3:1, ‘This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.’³² The Peter



*Title page of John Love's sermon
preached at David Todd's ordination.*

entitled *The Radical Cause of National Calamity: An Alarm to the People of Great Britain* (London, 1794). It was reprinted in a volume of Love's sermons published shortly after his death, John Love, *Sermons preached on Public Occasions with fifteen address to the people of Otaheite; and a Serious Call respecting a Mission to the River Indus* (Glasgow, 1826), pp. 77-113 (cited afterwards as *Sermons on Public Occasions*).

³² The sermon was originally printed as pamphlet along with the charge given to Todd by James Steven in John Love, *The Spiritual Bishop: A Sermon preached 3 February, 1790, at the ordination of the Rev. David Todd* (London, 1790). It was reprinted in Love, *Sermons on Public Occasions*, pp. 33-54.

Street congregation urged Love to publish the sermon and in his introduction addressing the elders at Peter Street he writes:

Your approbation of this Sermon, and your desire of its being published, give me a hope that you will practically consider and improve it in your deliberate and retired seasons. The discourse is much in the same state as when you heard it. The brevity requisite in performances of this kind obliged me to content myself with touching slightly at the different heads of meditation on this subject, which I hope your serious thoughts will dwell upon and enlarge. My end will be gained, if, in this way, your sacred attention is farther engaged to those Divine ordinances; which, though despised by many, and trifled with by others, are found, by the wise, serious and humble, to be wells of vital refreshment, and means of anticipating the joys of heaven. I wished particularly to confirm and increase your veneration for that stated ministry of the gospel wherewith God now favours you; in which the seriousness, solidity, and authority of age, and the vigour and industry of youth, unite their influence for your spiritual advantage. It will be a pleasure to me to hear of your harmony and progress in the ways of the Lord; and of the increase of your numbers, by the awakening and conversion of many who hitherto have walked in that broad way which leadeth to destruction ... That you, may, through the ordinances and word of the Son of God, enjoy the felicities of communion with him, more abundantly than I can ask or think.³³

John Love was often called upon by the Scots Presbytery to take a leading part when the business before them would be more efficiently handled by a committee or if it involved the British Missionary movement that was beginning in the 1790s. He was asked to chair Presbytery Committees, to stand in as Clerk when Henry Hunter was absent, and was invariably involved in any communications the Presbytery had to undertake with the Church in Scotland.

(c) Major issues before the Scots Presbytery whilst John Love was in London

Though very many of the meetings of the Presbytery had no more business than approving the minutes of the previous meeting and hearing and discussing the contents of a discourse by one of their number, this was not always the case: during Love's membership of the Presbytery between 1787 and 1798, there were four major items of business the exercised their minds. One was commemorative, whilst the other three were of a more complex nature. The first such matter was the commemorative item of business and John Love took an active part.

1. Centenary of the Glorious Revolution of 1688

The loyalty of the members of the Scots Presbytery to the British Crown and constitution is nowhere more evident than in their zeal to commemorate the centenary of the Revolution of 1688 which brought about the overthrow of the Romanist, James VII and II, and the accession to the British throne of the Protestant monarchs William and Mary. In little more than a year after Love's ordination, the Scots Presbytery resolved at its meeting on 8th October

³³ Love, *Sermons on Public Occasions*, pp. 35-36.

1788 ‘that the anniversary of the centenary of the Revolution be solemnly remembered by the Presbytery, Dr. Hunter to preach when a collection to be taken for the poor.’³⁴ The sermon was preached a month later before the Presbytery in Hunter’s own meeting-house at London Wall on Tuesday 4th November 1788. His text was from Psalm 97:1-2, ‘The Lord reigneth: let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.’ Hunter began the sermon by pointing out the apparent disorder and confusion of the events of history. Yet, he added, though all appears confused, ‘one great and noble purpose of providence is still carried on.’ He then asserted, ‘This doctrine runs through all revelation, and is illustrated and enforced by every page of history; and by none more distinctly than the eventful history we are this day assembled to commemorate.’³⁵ The three divisions of his sermon were:



Henry Hunter, Clerk of the Scots Presbytery.

First, to take a more general view of God’s universal and everlasting dominion, as a source of joy and rejoicing to every rational and intelligent creature.

Secondly, to take a cursory review of the history of this country, as illustrative of the special favour of the Divine Providence to Great Britain, and as an irresistible call on the gratitude of its present inhabitants.

Thirdly, to submit to your consideration a concise representation of the grand Revolution which was brought about, an hundred years ago, by the blessing of Heaven upon the wisdom, virtue, and exertions of our fore-fathers; and the whole, we trust, will serve to evince, that though the great Ruler of the universe be pleased to spread clouds and darkness round about himself nevertheless righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.³⁶

In the first division of the address, Henry Hunter considered at length God’s dominion and government of all creation, and that his works are great and marvellous and his ways just and true; all of which ought to result in a song of praise. Secondly, he went on to demonstrate God’s favour to Great Britain from Roman times to Magna Carta of 1215, at the Reformation, and during the reign of Elizabeth I which witnessed the destruction of the apparently invincible Spanish Armada. Hunter then came to the climax of his message in his third division. He reminded his hearers what occurred a century earlier when James II came to the throne of England following the death of Charles II in 1685:

From the first moment of his reign, he meditated, and attempted to subvert the religion and liberties of his country. With the dreadful catastrophe of his father’s untimely end before his eyes,³⁷ he ventured to tamper with what Englishmen value most highly, and feel most sensibly ... imposts were levied

³⁴ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, p. 85.

³⁵ Henry Hunter, *Sermons preached at different places and on various occasions* (2 vols., London, 1795), Vol. 2, p. 76.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 77-78.

³⁷ This is a reference to the execution of Charles I in 1649.

by royal authority, without deigning to ask or wait for the concurrence of Parliament ... messengers were dispatched to Rome, to prostrate the Majesty of England at the feet of the Pontiff; and means were deliberately devised for the solemn re-admission of this Protestant kingdom into the bosom of the Roman Catholic church ... Three unhappy kingdoms lay bleeding, almost three years, at the feet of a sullen, sanguinary tyrant, whose tender mercies were cruelty. Protestants of every denomination endured all that malice could dictate, or resentment, armed with power, could inflict.³⁸

It would shock humanity, and excite indignation, at the distance of a century, now elapsed, to enter into a particular detail of the enormities which disfigure this period of the British history ... The South and the North together; men of all parties and denominations; the Parliament, the Church, the Army; Conformists, Dissenters; the City, the Country, the Sovereign's own family and dependants, filled with holy indignation, resolved on the rejection of the gloomy and bigoted tyrant, who had dared to trample on the dearest rights, the hereditary privileges of Britons ... the Nation, as one man, looked for succour to a neighbouring Prince, whose consort as the eldest daughter of the reigning Monarch, was considered, by the majority of the nation, as the apparent heiress of the crown, and fondly looked to as the darling object of Britain's hopes and wishes; a Prince who was himself regarded, by all Europe, as the bulwark of the Protestant-interest.³⁹

James, who had rendered himself the object of universal hatred, was universally deserted. With a timidity as contemptible, as his bigotry and violence were odious, he shrunk from the first appearance of danger, fled when no man was pursuing ... From this memorable period, distinguished in British annals by the name of *The Revolution*, the country, possessed of spirit, wisdom, virtue, and power to assert their rights, to form and establish a system of government favourable to general liberty and happiness ... The insolent boasting of Caesar was, I came, I saw, I conquered; the nobler triumph of William was, I heard, I came, and was welcomed. He came on an errand of mercy and peace, and Heaven crowned him with the olive-branch.⁴⁰

Hunter ended his commemorative sermon with the words, 'Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free.'⁴¹ The Presbytery 'highly approved' of their Clerk's address and they urged him to ensure that it was published, as clearly representing the views of the court.

Five days later, on 9th November 1788, John Love also preached a sermon commemorating the Revolution to his Crispin Street congregation. His text was Psalm 76:12, 'He shall cut off the spirit of princes; he is terrible to the kings of the earth.' Like Hunter, Love had three divisions to his address, they were:

1. Inquire into this awful work of God, respecting earthly kings and governments.
2. I shall take a view of the Revolution, particularly in reference to Scotland, as implying in it a Divine work of this kind.
3. I shall show how these magnificent operations of God's holy providence should now be recollected and improved.⁴²

³⁸ Hunter, *Sermons preached at different places*, Vol. 2, pp. 104-105.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 105-107.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 107-109.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 110.

⁴² Love, *Sermons on Public Occasions*, pp. 11-12. The sermon was originally issued as a

By any standard, it was an outstanding address. What is of particular interest for this paper was Love's understanding of the significance of the Revolution for his native Scotland. This becomes clear in his reflections on the persecuting times of the later Stuarts and on the Crown rights of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is how he dealt with the matter as he addressed his Crispin Street congregation:

I am now to speak of things chiefly relative to the kingdom of Scotland, the native country of a good part of my present hearers.⁴³ There, as is too well known to admit of being denied, in consequence of royal ingratitude and perjury, a bloody persecution was fomented, and carried on for almost the third part of a century. Of this persecution the chief avowed ground was a claim of power and authority made by the then reigning kings as wearing one of the pope's titles, that of the head or supreme governor of the church of Jesus Christ. A sinful creature having dared to intrude into the title, dignity, and power, which belong to Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the glorious Trinity, the alone Head and Supreme Governor of his own church, those who were not stupid and impious enough to approve of that sacrilegious usurpation were persecuted to death. On this point, the sufferings of many were expressly stated.

The big and fallacious words of prejudiced bigots, or of infidel scoffers at the majesty of the Son of God, may have influence enough on many in the present dissipated age. Many may be taught to look upon those children of God, who then suffered for the tenderness and zeal of an enlightened conscience, as a race of rebels who made a sacrifice of their lives to their own blind and perverse humours. Stand still thou proud censurer of the upright, thou child of Satan, the accuser of the brethren! Thy calumnious misrepresentations may sound sweetly enough in the ears of an effeminate race of professors, who would soon be scared away from the Redeemer's standard by the first whisper of the trump of persecution. But there is a Judge in heaven whom the opinion of worlds cannot bias, and whom the strength or solicitations of the universe cannot move aside from the path of righteous judgment. In his ears, 'under his altar, the souls of many who were slain' in Scotland 'for his testimony, are yet crying aloud,' Revelation 6: 9-10, and the answer of their cries is likely to alight in part on the heads of those in the present age, who serve themselves heirs to the deeds of their predecessors by justifying their sacrilegious cruelties, and by defaming the memory of those whom in their life and at their death God did glorify with his manifest presence, power, and salvation.⁴⁴

The preacher then went on, citing Bishop Burnet regarding the atrocities of James II's reign that ended with the Revolution:

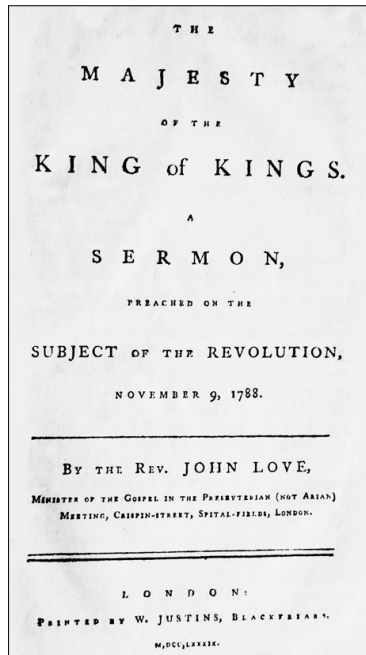
That you may form some idea how much the heart of a savage persecutor was possessed by that king, who was by the Revolution driven from the British throne, I shall recite only one fact recorded by an English bishop who lived in those days, and who had no excessive partiality for the sufferers of that period. But, in order to your understanding the fact I have in view, it is necessary to be observed, that an instrument of torture was then frequently used, called

pamphlet, *The Majesty of the King of Kings: A sermon preached on the Subject of the Revolution* (London 1789).

⁴³ This comment by Love is one of the few indications that exist concerning the composition of his Crispin Street congregation – that it contained a significant number of Scots.

⁴⁴ Love, *Sermons on Public Occasions*, pp. 22-23.

the boot. This was a piece of iron, (emblematical of the hearts and faces of those who used it,) a piece of iron, having the figure which its name denotes. The leg of the sufferer being put into this machine, wedges of iron were driven



Title page of John Love's sermon preached to commemorate the 'Glorious Revolution'.

between the iron boot and the leg, by repeated strokes, till the marrow was pressed out of the bone. You will now see the importance of the account I am now going to repeat. 'When any', says that historian, 'are to be struck in the boots, it is done in the presence of the council; and upon that occasion almost all offer to run away. The sight is so dreadful, that without an order restraining such a number to stay, the board would be forsaken. But when the duke was in Scotland, he was so far from withdrawing, that he looked on all the while with an unmoved indifference, and with an attention, as if he had been to look on some curious experiment. This gave a terrible idea of him to all that observed it, as of a man that had no bowels nor humanity in him.' This is the testimony of Bishop Burnet ... Such was the man who, having furiously supported the bloody intrusion of prelatial power on the Church of Scotland, at length attempted to stab the political constitution, and to deliver up the whole island into the hands of the blaspheming bishop of Rome. His attempt was blasted. Infatuation, cowardice, and confusion, (blessed be the God of heaven!) attended his counsels and efforts.⁴⁵

Love then ended his address by citing in full the stirring words from Scripture in Psalm 89: 8-18 and concluded with these words, 'Now, to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the King of the ages; immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, forever and ever. Amen.'⁴⁶ Just four years after their zealous commemoration of the Glorious Revolution, the attachment of the members of the Scots Presbytery to the post-Revolution constitution would be questioned by the authorities in England.

2. The Scots Presbytery, Scottish Radicalism and the French Revolution

The reaction of Scottish Churchmen, and especially Scottish Dissenters, to the French Revolution was to become a major issue for the London Scots Presbytery. The final item of business of the Scots Presbytery at its regular meeting at John Love's church in Crispin Street on 5th December 1792 was to appoint the date of the next ordinary meeting. This was set for a Friday during February 1793 in two months time.⁴⁷ However, within a matter of days the Moderator, Henry Hunter, called a *pro re nata* meeting of the Presbytery at his London Wall church; the minute details the reason for this urgent meeting:

The Moderator informed the Presbytery that he was induced to call this meeting of Presbytery at the suggestion of several of its warmest friends who were anxious that they should at this present crisis express their sentiments both

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 24-25.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 31-32.

⁴⁷ The precise date in February is unclear in the minute. MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, p. 107.

religious and political in order to wipe away the aspersions under which they lay as Presbyterians and produce a Declaration to that effect which was publicised.

Resolved: That the Moderator be required to issue a claim expressing the wishes of Presbyterians of a temperate reform – but with perfect confidence in the wisdom of Parliament as to time mode and subject. He was likewise instructed to lay the declaration before the absent members for their consideration of the subject has aforesaid to the meeting of committee on the 2nd January next.⁴⁸

Friends of the Scots Presbytery in London had impressed on Hunter the urgent need to issue a declaration in which the Presbytery would make clear its loyalty to King George III, and to William Pitt's Government. In order to appreciate the significance of the Presbytery being urged to make such a declaration of loyalty it is necessary to consider what had been the reaction of British churchmen to the French Revolution and the radical political sentiments that it had stirred up both in England and Scotland.

The French Revolution ushered in a period of far-reaching social and political upheaval in France and its colonies. It overthrew the monarchy, established a republic, and was the catalyst for a period of extreme violence and political turmoil that culminated in a dictatorship under Napoleon. The Revolution profoundly altered the course of modern history, triggering the global decline of absolute monarchies and replacing them with republics and liberal democracies. In addition it inspired liberal and radical ideas in Britain, especially in Scotland. It began in July 1789 with the storming of the Bastille in Paris, which was regarded as the representation of royal authority, and was followed a month later by the National Assembly publishing the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*.⁴⁹ The Revolution was at first very largely welcomed both in England and Scotland. A recent historian reflecting on the reception of the Revolution in Scotland has noted: 'most observers, including the majority of the Moderates ... viewed it as a belated, but laudable attempt to follow the example of the glorious revolution exactly a century earlier and to transform France into a constitutional monarchy.'⁵⁰ Thomas Hardy, Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Edinburgh University and Moderator of the General Assembly in 1793, wrote of the Assembly's initial response to the Revolution in this way, 'We saw a great people reclaiming the inheritance of men, and boldly aspiring to be free.'⁵¹



William Pitt the younger (1759-1806), British Prime Minister between 1783 and 1801 and again between 1804 and 1806.

⁴⁸ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, p. 108.

⁴⁹ The main author was Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834) in consultation with the American, Thomas Jefferson. Lafayette had fought in the American Revolutionary War commanding American troops in several battles against the British. He was involved in the siege of Yorktown which proved to be the last major land-battle of the American Revolutionary War and which prompted the British government to negotiate an end to the conflict.

⁵⁰ Thomas Ahnert, *The Moral Culture of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Yale University Press, 2014), p. 122; see also John D. Brims, 'The Scottish Democratic Movement in the Age of the French Revolution' (unpublished Edinburgh University Dissertation, 1983), p. 62.

⁵¹ Emma Vincent Macleod, 'The Responses of Scottish Churchmen to the French Revolution, 1789-1802', *Scottish Historical Review*, Vol. 73:2, No. 196 (October 1994), pp. 191-215 (p. 193).

When the Whig politician, Edmund Burke, in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, asserted that the Revolution was destroying the fabric of good society, and condemned the persecution of the Roman Catholic Church by the revolutionaries, the respected former leader of the Moderate party, William Robertson, denounced Burke's *Reflections* as 'Ravings.'⁵² The Popular Party within the Scottish Establishment, who opposed the system of patronage, welcomed the Revolution as possibly heralding a change in the political climate. They hoped that such a change in the political outlook would bring to an end the violent intrusions of unwanted ministers on congregations with the assistance of the state authorities.⁵³ For very many in Scotland, the French Revolution became an all-absorbing question. John Brims has observed: 'Men differed on how to interpret the Revolution and these differences became more pronounced and more bitter as the Revolution developed, but all agreed that they were witnessing events of the utmost importance. The Revolution attracted virtually everyone's attention: newspapers responded to the almost insatiable demands of their readership for news by providing long reports on developments in France as they unfolded.'⁵⁴ As in France, the Revolution produced in Scotland a mushroom growth of journals and periodicals. In 1782, there were only eight Scottish newspapers, but by 1790 there were twenty-seven; and during the years 1791 and 1792 additions were made to their number.⁵⁵

Both the Secession and the Relief Churches in Scotland had come into existence as reactions to the patronage system and the imposition of unwanted ministers on congregations. In England, Dissenters were subject to the Test and Corporation Acts, a series of penal laws that served as a religious test for public office and which imposed various civil disabilities on Nonconformists. Only those who took communion in the established Church of England were eligible for public employment. All the congregations associated with the Scots Presbytery in London, even those who regarded themselves as in connection with the Established Church in Scotland, were deemed as Dissenters for the purposes of the Act. For those outside the Established Churches, the actions of the French gave ground to hope that the dawn of freedom was approaching.

(i) Friends of the People Societies

The desire for freedom and equal representation led to the formation of societies whose rationale was to campaign for these objectives. The first to be organized, in January 1792, was the London Corresponding Society. It was an organisation of radicals whose membership consisted primarily

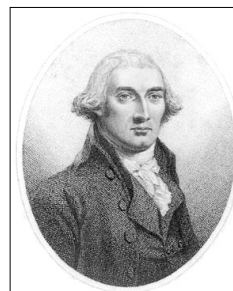
⁵² Brims, 'The Scottish Democratic Movement in the Age of the French Revolution', p. 59, Macleod, 'The Responses of Scottish Churchmen to the French Revolution, 1789-1802', pp. 192-193.

⁵³ Between 1780 and 1815 there were at least twenty-one violent intrusions in Scotland, when a minister was forcibly settled in a congregation in the face of popular hostility. Macleod, 'The Responses of Scottish Churchmen to the French Revolution, 1789-1802', p. 203.

⁵⁴ Brims, 'The Scottish Democratic Movement in the Age of the French Revolution', p. 56.

⁵⁵ Henry W. Meikle, *Scotland and the French Revolution* (Glasgow, 1912), p. 86.

of artisans, tradesmen, and shopkeepers. At its peak, the society boasted roughly 3,000 due-paying members who shared the goal of reforming the political system. The society's key mission was to ensure universal suffrage for British men and annual parliaments. Due to the perceived French revolutionary influence on the society, and its calls for radical political change, the government of William Pitt the Younger, bitterly opposed it, and accused the society on two occasions of plotting to assassinate the king. Its leaders were put on trial for treason in 1794. However, due to the transparent falsity of the charges they were all acquitted. The Society was formed by Thomas Hardy (1752-1832) who was a Scot, born in Larbert, and a shoemaker. In the spring of 1774 he travelled to London where he settled and attended the Crown Court, Covent Garden congregation where James Steven, a close friend of John Love, was the minister.⁵⁶ This was a congregation connected with the Scots Presbytery in London and Hardy's association with it would inevitably raise questions with regard to the Presbytery's loyalty to the Crown.



*Thomas Hardy,
leader in the London
Corresponding
Society and attendee
at Crown Court
Scots Presbyterian
congregation.*

Further societies, that did not regard themselves as radicals, took to themselves the title of the 'Friends of the People'. The first such organisation was formed in London, by the Whig Party in April 1792, and focused on campaigning for parliamentary reform. They advocated that parliamentary representation should more accurately reflect the population of Great Britain, which, they asserted, could only be achieved by making voting more accessible and by allowing more men the right to vote. In addition, they wished to make it possible for a broader variety of men to take part in the government. In order to join the London Society a prospective member had to be proposed by two current members and approved by 90% of the membership. Members then paid two and a half guineas a year as dues, which meant that this London Society was largely an aristocratic organisation.

Friends of the People societies of a rather different complexion were quickly formed in Scotland. The first was founded in Edinburgh in July 1792 with lower subscription rates than the English Society. This meant that it attracted a wider membership and made it more like the London Corresponding Society. It soon had imitators in towns and villages throughout Scotland.⁵⁷ The rank-and-file membership were usually described as 'shopkeepers and artisans', and included most prominently weavers as well as tailors, cobblers, brewers, bakers,

⁵⁶ See the article on Hardy in *ODNB*. Hardy was buried in the Nonconformist burial ground at Bunhill Fields in London.

⁵⁷ Henry Meikle, *Scotland and the French Revolution*, pp. 274-275, lists thirty-five such societies as being represented at their second General Convention held on 3rd May 1793. See also Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (London, 1992), pp. 388-390. Lynch notes, 'virtually every town south of Aberdeen had its parliamentary reform society, as did many villages throughout lowland Scotland' (p. 389). For further information on the Scottish Friends of the People, see John Brims, 'From Reformers to "Jacobins": The Scottish Association of the Friends of the People', in T. M. Devine (ed.), *Conflict and Stability in Scottish Society* (Edinburgh, 1990), pp. 31-50.

tanners, butchers, and hairdressers. The Government in London was concerned that these societies were attracting wide support. When outbreaks of rioting occurred in many Scottish towns during the summer and autumn of 1792, it was officially attributed to an almost universal desire for reform and of opposition to the established government. Radical demonstrations took place not just in the larger towns such as Perth and Dundee but also in smaller towns such as Auchtermuchty where there were cries of 'Liberty and Equality'. This slogan undoubtedly reflected the views expressed by Thomas Paine in his *Rights of Man*.⁵⁸ Henry Dundas, a Scot, who was the Home Secretary in Pitt's Government, in a document sent to an official in the Home Office for the attention of Pitt had written, 'Paine's pamphlet, or "the cream and substance of it", was in the hands of almost every countryman, and could be had for two pence. Medals with inscriptions expressive of liberty and equality had been forwarded in anonymous letters to several of the clergy, and were even in circulation among the commonalty.'⁵⁹

The Friends of the People unhesitatingly condemned these disturbances and threatened to expel from their membership anyone joining the rioters. Between December 1792 and October 1793 they held three General Conventions of the Societies, the last being open to English delegates. Each convention and its aftermath increasingly had the effect of driving the upper and middle classes away from the reform movement. The Friends of the People viewed favourably the early stages of the French Revolution as being the downfall of despotism. On 31st August 1792, a certain Robert Watt wrote to Henry Dundas saying that he had been present at some of the committee meetings of the Societies and had been astonished at the language used by the reformers. He gave to Dundas the following examples: 'government expenses must be retrenched', 'Ministry must be displaced', 'none belonging to the Treasury should have a seat in Parliament'. 'In short,' he added to Dundas, 'France must be imitated.' He further reported that one of their number at a committee meeting in a tavern had said: 'It is a maxim of mine that a king should be sacrificed to the nation once in every hundred years.' Watt concluded, 'They propose to accomplish their ... designs by pretending moderation at first in their demands and proceedings, and by degrees artfully to insinuate their dangerous ideas into the minds of their adherents, and when they suppose themselves sufficiently powerful, then to attack perforce the throne and the friends of the constitution. This they think they can do with more ease and safety than even the French.'⁶⁰

(ii) Scottish Seceders and Radicalism

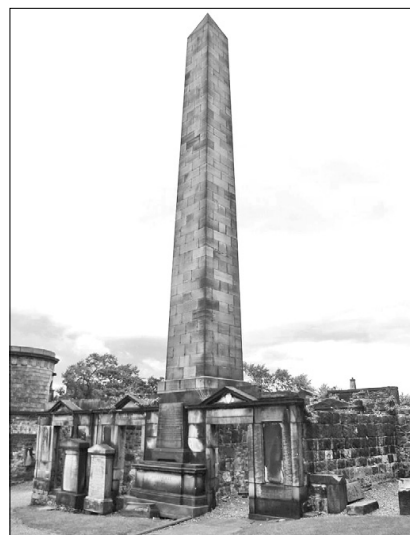
When the Edinburgh Society of the Friends of the People organised its first political convention in December 1792, the man they appointed as their General Secretary was William Skirving. His father, who lived at Liberton near Edinburgh, was a respectable farmer who was interested in agricultural

⁵⁸ Thomas Paine (1737-1809), the author, political theorist, and revolutionary, published his *Rights of Man* in two parts in March 1791 and February 1792. Paine argued that popular political revolution is permissible when a government does not safeguard the natural rights of its people. Using this thesis as his base, he defended the French Revolution against Edmund Burke's attack in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.

⁵⁹ Meikle, *Scotland and the French Revolution*, p. 95.

⁶⁰ Meikle, *Scotland and the French Revolution*, pp. 88-89.

improvements. After a period of study at the University of Edinburgh, Skirving began to train for the ministry at the Burgher Seceder Divinity Hall under John Brown of Haddington. During this time he lived with, and acted as private tutor to, the family of the physician Sir Alexander Dick of Prestonfield. He later abandoned his theological studies and returned to the practice and science of agriculture and wrote a volume entitled *The Husbandman's Assistant*. In order to see this book through the press, the Skirvings came to Edinburgh, which was alight with mounting enthusiasm for political reform inspired by the French Revolution. Whilst in the city, in accordance with his Seceding background, Skirving became involved with the Association for the Abolition of Patronage and the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Statutes. In July 1792 he joined John Clark, a mason, and John Buchanan, a baker, in forming the (Scottish) Society of the Friends of the People to campaign for parliamentary reform. It was not long before he was to suffer for his political activities. He was arrested in August 1793 for distributing copies of a radical pamphlet but was released on bail. Skirving was arrested a second time, on 5th December 1793, when his papers were seized, and again on 12th December. He was then indicted for sedition along with four others and tried before the High Court in Edinburgh on 6th and 7th January 1794. He was found guilty and sentenced to fourteen years' transportation. Skirving arrived at Port Jackson, New South Wales, on 25th October 1794.⁶¹ Homesick for his wife and family, he died from dysentery in Port Jackson on 19th March 1796 and was buried on the same day at St Philip's Church, Sydney.⁶²

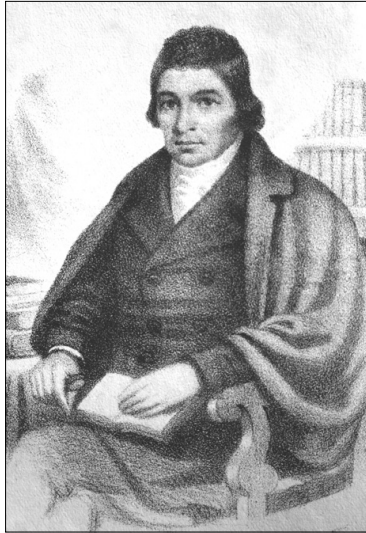


Monument to the five Political Martyrs, one of which was William Skirving, in the Old Calton Burial Ground on Calton Hill, Edinburgh.

⁶¹ William Mackelvie's biographical sketch is as follows: 'William Skirving did not prosecute his theological course, and cultivated the estate of Strathruddie in Fife, acquired by his wife. (He was the) author of a work on agriculture (and) a candidate for the Professorship of Agriculture in the University of Edinburgh. Mr Skirving afterwards became secretary to "The General Association of the Friends of the People," or "Scottish Convention," and an active leader, along with Mr Thomas Muir and others, in the political party which came into existence at the end of last century in imitation of the Confederation in France, for which ... he was transported beyond seas. He died in Botany Bay while undergoing this sentence. A monument has been raised in the burying ground of the Calton, Edinburgh, to the memory of the 'Political Martyrs,' of whom Mr Skirving was one. William Mackelvie, *Annals and Statistics of the United Presbyterian Church* (Edinburgh, 1873), p. 666. (Words in brackets added).

⁶² The most detailed account of Skirving's life is the memoir at the beginning of P. Mackenzie, *The Trial of William Skirving, secretary to the British Convention before the High Court of Justiciary, at Edinburgh on the 6th and 7th January 1794 for sedition, with Original Memoir, and notes* (Glasgow, 1836), pp. 3-28. See also the account in *ODNB* by Emma Vincent Macleod. A monument was erected in 1844 in the Old Calton Burial Ground, in Edinburgh to the five Political Martyrs who were transported to the British colony of New South Wales because they campaigned for parliamentary reform under the influence of the ideals of the French Revolution. Skirving was one of the five men memorialized.

Among Skirving's papers was a correspondence list. Though the specific purpose of the list is not clear, there can be little doubt that it contained the names of his political contacts. On the list were three Burgher ministers: George Lawson (1749-1820) of Selkirk, William Kidston (c.1728-1808), the minister of Stow, and Ebenezer Hyslop (1746-1831), the minister of Shotts.⁶³ Neither Lawson nor Kidston appear to have attended any of the radical conventions, but Hyslop, who was nicknamed 'The Reverend Democrat', was delegated by his local Shotts society to the first convention.⁶⁴



George Lawson, *Theological tutor in the Burgher branch of the Secession Church.*

Of the Burgher ministers listed, the most interesting is George Lawson, if for no other reason than that his views on the political issues of the 1790s are known in more detail than those of his colleagues. Lawson's hostility to the conservatism of his day is clear. Writing at the height of the loyalist reaction in 1793 in what his biographer terms 'a political tractate',⁶⁵ he attacked the persecuting spirit of those in authority, urging forbearance and toleration in political debate, and arguing passionately in support of freedom of speech and of the press. He declared that:

We ought to cultivate friendship with our neighbours who differ from us in political views ... What title have you to assume the province of the great Judge who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men? Consider the effect that different educations, and different turns of mind, and different sets of acquaintance, and different capacities and degrees of attention, and better or worse means of information, have in diversifying men's judgment on the same subject ... Perhaps you are an enemy to all those meetings which have assembled to deliberate on an application to Parliament for a redress of public grievances. Enjoy your own opinion. Act in pursuance of it. But violate not the charity you owe to your neighbours who differ from you. Accuse them not of seditious principles without proof.⁶⁶

John Brims, in citing Lawson observes: 'This was something more than a worthy appeal for Christian charity in political debate: it was a direct and

⁶³ For biographical details of George Lawson, see John Macfarlane, *The Life and Times of Dr. Lawson* (Edinburgh, 1861); Small, *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church*, Vol. 2, pp. 441-442. For William Kidston, see Small, *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church*, Vol. 2, pp. 430-431. For Ebenezer Hyslop, see Small, *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church*, Vol. 2, pp. 231-232.

⁶⁴ This information was based on the report of a spy at the first convention. See SRO Home Office Correspondence (Scotland). RH2/4/66.f.343, cited in John Brims, 'The Covenanting Tradition and Scottish Radicalism in the 1790s', in Terry Brotherstone (ed.), *Covenant, Charter and Party: Traditions of Revolt and Protest in Modern Scottish History* (Aberdeen University Press, 1989), p. 62, note 26.

⁶⁵ Macfarlane, *The Life and Times of Dr. Lawson*, p. 391.

⁶⁶ Macfarlane, *The Life and Times of Dr. Lawson*, pp. 393-394.

unequivocal attack upon both the Loyalist Associations and the Government for attempting to criminalise their opponents. It is not certain whether Lawson ever became a member of the Society of the Friends of the People, but his sympathy for their cause is clear.⁶⁷ Writing during the dark days of 1793, Lawson stated that ‘we ought to concur in every regular and seasonable attempt to improve the advantages, and to obtain redress of the grievances of our country’,⁶⁸ and, when an indiscreet political conversation in the even darker days of 1794 led to his being reported to the Sheriff of Selkirkshire, he wrote to the Sheriff’s wife stating that he was fully convinced of the constitutionalism of the radical reformers’ proceedings and objectives and that he ‘favoured their views’.⁶⁹

In 1792 the town of Stirling had both a large Burgher Seceder⁷⁰ population and a thriving society of the Friends of the People. James Somerville,⁷¹ one of the Church of Scotland ministers in the town, reported in the *Old Statistical Account* concerning the effect that political and dissentient principles were having on the character of the population:

Urbanity and social intercourse are not unfrequent among them. The only thing which interrupts this is political jealousy – a daemon, which at certain seasons, unhappily rages too much in almost every little borough throughout Scotland. Would magistracy uniformly maintain the dignity of the situation, and exert itself with spirit and boldness solely for the public good, without regard to the prolongation of their honour, but just as it results from public suffrage and opinion, this evil would nearly expire. So far as this evil results from dissentient principles in religion it is less susceptible of cure. For this, no remedy can be found, but the restoration of religion itself, which always renders men forgiving.⁷²

In Perth several of the Secession clergy, including most notably the assistant Burgher minister, Jedidiah Aikman,⁷³ took a prominent part in the reform

⁶⁷ Brims, ‘The Covenanting Tradition and Scottish Radicalism in the 1790s’, p. 53.

⁶⁸ Macfarlane, *The Life and Times of Dr. Lawson*, p. 396. This was the final point of what Macfarlane calls Lawson’s political tractate. After the above statement, Macfarlane adds in brackets that, though they are not included in the biography, Lawson then illustrated this point at great length. The words in brackets by Macfarlane are as follows: ‘This is the chief point dwelt upon, the arguments and illustrations extending over eighteen pages.’

⁶⁹ Macfarlane, *The Life and Times of Dr. Lawson*, pp. 384-385.

⁷⁰ Ebenezer Erskine was the first minister of the Burgher Congregation in Stirling and he was succeeded by his nephew, James Erskine, the youngest son of his brother Ralph Erskine.

⁷¹ James Somerville (1747-1817) was an Evangelical minister who had been the pastor of the Scottish Church in Rotterdam. He was a friend of John Erskine, the leader of the popular party, and there is no reason to think he was prejudiced against the Seceders. For biographical details, see the sketch by John M’Gachen attached to James Somerville, *Practical Sermons* (Edinburgh, 1827), pp. iii–liii; William Steven, *The History of the Scottish Church in Rotterdam* (Edinburgh, 1833), pp. 204-219; Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 4, pp. 321-322.

⁷² Sir John Sinclair, Bt (ed.), *The Statistical Account of Scotland drawn up from communications of the ministers of the different parishes*, Vol. VIII (Edinburgh, 1793), p. 295.

⁷³ Jedidiah Aikman (1751-1833) is well known in Scottish legal history with regard to Church property. When a division occurred in the Perth Burgher congregation over New Light, the two sides took their case to the courts over who should retain the property. The

movement. George Penny in *Traditions of Perth* details a meeting that took place in 1792 in the Relief Church in the town in which several of the Dissenting (Secession) clergy took a prominent part. He writes:

Public meetings became frequent, and the language employed on these occasions so bold, that the existing Government became alarmed for their consequences; and the motives of the party were therefore narrowly watched. At a meeting in the Relief Church, several of the Dissenting clergy took a prominent part. In the course of the business, an individual happening incidentally to use the word Reform, the cap-out minister exclaimed, 'Reform! Reform, indeed; public opinion was a hundred miles before Reform! That was like pursuing a hare when it was behind. A revolution, and nothing but a revolution, would now satisfy the country, and they were determined to bring it about!' Some of these clerical gentry declaimed strongly against the Government from the pulpit. One of them, of whom better things might have been expected, had constant recurrence to the subject, holding up the career of the French as an example of public virtue and patriotism. Hostilities having commenced between France and Austria,⁷⁴ it was a constant note in his prayer for the success of the former, and that they might drink the blood of their enemies – a metaphor at least sufficiently horrible. A precognition having been taken before the Sheriff, as to the ministerial exhibitions of some of these worthies, a damper was put upon their zeal. They still however, continued warm in the cause in private.⁷⁵

Another prominent Secession minister who was suspected of radical principles was Archibald Bruce, the Antiburgher minister of Whitburn and the Theological Professor of that branch of the Secession. Bruce held similar views to Lawson and when leading men in the two main branches of the Secession Church held such opinions it helps to explain why many Seceders were attracted to the radical reform movement. Bruce's opinions would have been known to the members of the Scots Presbytery in London as George Jerment, the minister of the Antiburgher congregation at Oxenden Street in London, was a friend of the Presbytery and occasionally attended its meetings. David Scott has described the Antiburgher Theological Professor's views of liberty in these terms:

case took twenty years to resolve. The general principle enunciated by Lord Chancellor Eldon in the House of Lords was simple in concept: Church property is held in trust for the principles of that Church ('the original principles test'). The criterion applied in prior cases was that the will of the majority should prevail; this was swept aside in the House of Lords without apparent difficulty. It was one of the most important legal cases in Scottish Church history, known as *Craigdallie v. Aikman*. See Francis Lyall, *Church and State in Scotland* (Abingdon, 2016), pp. 120-123, 127-128; Francis Lyall, *Of Presbyters and Kings* (Aberdeen University Press, 1980), pp. 102-103, 105; Alexander Taylor Innes, *The Law of Creeds in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1867), pp. 327-343.

⁷⁴ The war between France and Austria and Prussia began in the spring of 1792.

⁷⁵ George Penny, *Traditions of Perth* (Perth, 1836), p. 70. Valerie Honeyman has noted: 'It was not just workers that were inspired to join the Friends of the People in Perth, several clergymen became active in its ranks. Amongst this group are included: Reverend John Wilson (Minister of the Antiburgher Church at Methven); Jedidiah Aikman (Assistant New Licht Burgher Minister in the Wilson Church); and, David Sangster (Minister of the Relief Church).' Valerie Honeyman, 'Perth: A Very Dangerous Place? Radicalism in Perth in the 1790s' (dissertation, Perth & Kinross Archives, A.K. Bell Library, Perth, 2003) at <http://madeinperth.org/friends-of-the-people-and-the-united-scotsmen> (accessed 7th November 2018).

Professor Bruce loved liberty with the passionate ardour of an old Roman. But the times were unhappy. Opinions which are now freely uttered and published every day were in those times bringing men to the gallows. Professor Bruce might think as freely as he pleased, but he must be careful what he put in print. For some of his treatises on the subject of political and religious rights he could find no publisher; they were too outspoken and bold. Nevertheless, he determined that his sentiments should reach the public, which needed so much to hear them. He bought a printing-press in Edinburgh, and had it conveyed to Whitburn. He hired an old printer to work it, and in this way some of his books were ushered into the world.⁷⁶

Bruce would later express these opinions in print. However, if his views were in the minds of the several friends of the London Presbytery when they urged Henry Hunter, in December 1792, to ‘express their sentiments both religious and political in order to wipe away the aspersions under which they lay as Presbyterians and produce a Declaration to that effect’,⁷⁷ it was not on the basis of Bruce’s tracts. The ones that deal directly and pointedly to these issues did not begin to appear from the press until 1794.⁷⁸

(iii) David Bogue’s views on political and religious liberty

David Bogue, a Congregational minister in Gosport on the south coast of England, was a close friend of the Scots Presbytery and when he was in London would attend its meetings as a visitor.⁷⁹ His well publicised opinions on liberty and on the French Revolution were undoubtedly a major reason why the Scots Presbytery in London was urged to affirm their loyalty to William Pitt’s Government. Friends of the Presbytery perceived that they were in danger of being considered guilty by association. Bogue had assisted William Smith, Camberwell in his ministerial work in the 1770s; and at his ordination in 1777 as the minister of the Independent Church in Gosport, Henry Hunter, the Clerk of the London Scots Presbytery had offered the ordination prayer

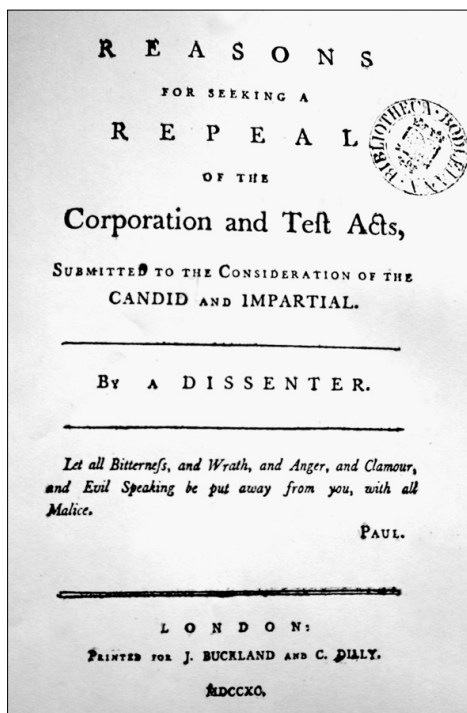
⁷⁶ David Scott, *Annals and Statistics of the Original Secession Church* (Edinburgh, 1886), pp. 520-521.

⁷⁷ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, p. 108.

⁷⁸ Archibald Bruce’s main tracts addressing the issues of liberty and freedom, that could be construed as those of a radical who opposed the Government, are the following: *Reflections on Freedom of Writing, and the Impropriety of Attempting to Suppress it by Penal Laws. Occasioned by a Late Proclamation against Seditious Publications, and the Measures Consequent upon it; Viewed Chiefly in the Aspect they Bear to Religious Liberty and Ecclesiastical Reform* (n.p., 1794); *A Serious View of the Remarkable Providences of the Times; and a warning as to the Public Sins, Dangers, and Duty of British Protestants. First read to an Associate congregation in Scotland at the beginning of the French War; now published with an introduction relating to the present alarming state of Great Britain* (Glasgow, 1795); *A Brief Statement and Declaration of the Genuine Principles of Seceders, respecting Civil Government, the Duty of Subjects, and National Reformation: and a Vindication of their conduct in reference to some late plans and societies of political reform, and the public dissensions of the time* (n.p., 1799); *A Historico-Politico-Ecclesiastical Dissertation on the Supremacy of Civil Powers in Matters of Religion; Particularly the Ecclesiastical Supremacy Annexed to the English Crown* (Edinburgh, 1802).

⁷⁹ On 4th August 1790, Thomas Rutledge had been appointed to preach at the commencement of the Presbytery. In his absence ‘the Presbytery heard a sermon from Mr. Bogue of Gosport loco Mr. Rutledge’, MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, p. 95.

and given the charge to the minister.⁸⁰ In 1787, William Smith had been one of the ministers who had spoken at John Love's ordination at Crispin Street. Through William Smith, therefore, Bogue was directly connected with the London Scots Presbytery. Religious and political liberty was closely associated in David Bogue's thinking. He had said, 'Where there is not political liberty in a country, religious liberty cannot exist', and 'I know that religion cannot flourish where religious liberty is not enjoyed.'⁸¹ Chester Terpstra has noted that 'the first published statement of Bogue's sentiments on the relationship between politics and religion was made in 1790. This was at a time when the dissenters, encouraged by their success in throwing off subscription to the greater part of the thirty-nine articles, were making a renewed effort to be relieved of the disabilities of the Corporation and Test Acts.'⁸²



Title page of David Bogue's anonymous pamphlet *Reasons for seeking the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts*.

Bogue's pen was taken up anonymously, under the title 'A Dissenter' in a forty-two page tract entitled *Reasons for seeking a Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, submitted to the consideration of the candid and impartial*. His argument in this publication was built around the principle that man has certain inalienable rights, whether he is English, French, American, or African. No government should ever demand of its citizens passive obedience and non-resistance when these rights are being jeopardized.⁸³ Governments were established for the good of all their citizens. Then, contrary to the provisions of the Corporation and Test Acts, he asserts that 'every good citizen should have equal access to all civil offices of trust, honour, and profit, in the community of which he is a member.'⁸⁴ Bogue went on to state that he approved and 'admired the saying of a man who according to Bishop Burnet suffered

death in the reign of James II, "That he did not think the bulk of the people were born with saddles on their backs, and bridles in their mouths, and that a few were booted and spurred, with whips in their hands, to ride them."⁸⁵ Yet Bogue goes on to state quite clearly: 'it has been confidently asserted, that we are "Republicans to a man." But he who says so defames. An assertion more destitute of truth, the father of lies himself did never propagate. Were a man

⁸⁰ Bennett, *Memoirs of the Life of David Bogue*, p. 88.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

⁸² Terpstra, 'David Bogue', pp. 326-327.

⁸³ David Bogue, *Reasons for seeking a Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, submitted to the consideration of the candid and impartial* (London, 1790), pp. 4, 10, 14, 42.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

to go from one end of England to the other, he would find none more than one Republican among ten thousand Dissenters.⁸⁶

The suspicion which David Bogue's name aroused in many circles came from his attitude toward despotic governments. He rejoiced in the fall of what he considered to be despotism in France. In his tract *Reasons for seeking a Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts* he cited with approval the sixth article of the French National Assembly's *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*. He regarded the Declaration as an occasion for optimism because in it non-Roman Catholics had no disabilities. Bogue wrote, 'Let England adopt the sixth article of the Declaration of Rights in France which contains the dictates of reason and justice, "That all citizens being equal in the sight of the community are equally eligible to all honours, places, and employments, according to their different abilities, without any other distinction than that which is created by their virtues and their talents."⁸⁷

In this context we must understand Bogue's enthusiastic remarks in 1790 regarding the commencement of the French Revolution:

France used to be considered as the land of slaves. The people felt their bondage: They cried to God for help; and he diffused among them the spirit of liberty. To the joy of every lover of mankind, they have lately asserted their just rights: And it is with a pleasure which cannot be described, that we see our good neighbours pulling down the enchanted castle of despotism, where millions have groaned under the lashes of lawless tyranny, and speedily yet firmly erecting the venerable structure of liberty in its stead. Broad and strong are its foundations: High may it rise: Long as the world lasts, may it securely stand; and may all the people of that extensive kingdom find shelter beneath its roof. We envy you not, but sincerely congratulate you as brethren on your noble acquisition, and cordially rejoice in your success.⁸⁸

As Chester Terpstra observes, 'Those who read these words and immediately cried "Republican" had forgotten all else that Bogue had said. They overlooked that he was a pacifist and how he had concluded his argument. He had written, "We are therefore determined to persevere, and in the use of every peaceable and constitutional method to seek relief."⁸⁹

If Bogue's 1790 pamphlet on the Corporation and Test Acts created suspicion of disloyalty to the authorities, this was compounded by a missionary address he delivered two years later on 30th March 1792 from Matthew 6:10, 'Thy Kingdom Come,' before the Corresponding Board in London of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge in the Highlands and Islands. The Secretary of the organisation was Henry Hunter, the Clerk of the Scots Presbytery in London. The printed version of the address carried a unanimous resolution of the Corresponding Board stating 'that the thanks of

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 11-12.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 27.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 21. Though in the 1790s the French Declaration was regarded as a symbol of Republicanism, and was viewed as revolutionary document, it has since become, along with Magna Carta, the English Bill of Rights, the United States Declaration of Independence, and the United States Bill of Rights, the inspiration for the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

⁸⁹ Terpstra, 'David Bogue', p. 331.

this Board be given to the Rev. David Bogue, for his Sermon preached before them this day; and that he be requested to permit the same to be printed for the use of the Society'.⁹⁰ The printed version of the sermon contained a list of the subscribers and contributors to the Society which included John Love and virtually all the ministerial members of the London Scots Presbytery, many of whom would have been present when Bogue delivered his address. Undoubtedly, an effect of this sermon would have been that the

loyalty to the Crown of the London Scots Presbytery's would have been questioned by the authorities in the capital.

Bogue began the conclusion of his sermon with these words:

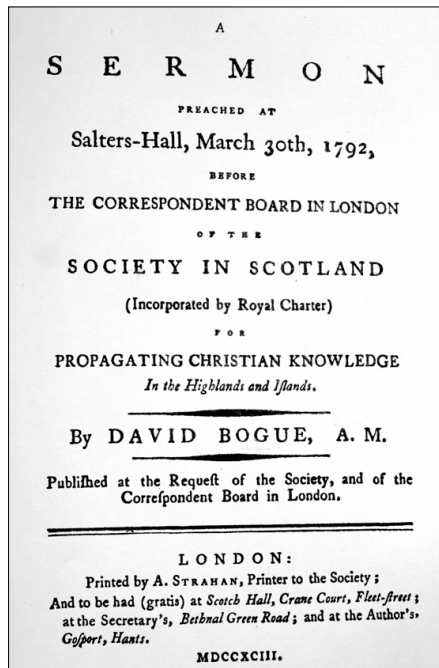
While we are ardently pursuing the grand purpose of the Society, let us, with a benevolent and a Christian spirit; wisely consider, for our encouragement, the aspect of providence. The moral world is big with great events, and is hastening on their accomplishment. Every pious mind looks forward to a more joyful state of things, when religion shall extend her triumph over the face of the earth. God in his adorable providence is fast removing the hindrance of former ages. A more formidable and a more successful engine against the religion of Jesus Christ, Satan, the great adversary of God and man, has not employed, than the tyranny of civil governments. In reading the history of most of the countries in Europe, for a thousand years past, what do we behold? Despots and

their viziers, and all their train of armed executioners, setting themselves against the Lord and his Anointed; and what they called government, as exercised by them, seems little else than a conspiracy, not only against the present happiness of man, but against religion and the cause of God. From the day that Christ was born, when Herod sought his death, to the present hour, when inquisitions exhibit their instruments of torture, has the tyranny of civil government been employed as an instrument of the devil, to bring to ruin the kingdom of the Redeemer.

Bogue then dwelt on France in particular as a sufferer from the tyranny of human governments. He continued:

Wherever there was any arbitrary power, by its sanguinary aid, popery kept its place. In so striking a manner has this been verified, that where the protestant religion gained ground in the days of liberty, tyranny succeeding drove it away. This was the case in a neighbouring country; tyranny, in the person of Louis XIV banished the protestant religion from France; and it was in exile till returning liberty brought it back ... It must be then to the joy of every

⁹⁰ David Bogue, *A Sermon preached at Salters' Hall, March 30th 1792, before the Corresponding Board in London of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge in the Highlands and Islands* (London, 1793), p. ii.



*Title page of David Bogue's
Salter's Hall Sermon.*

friend of human nature, that tyranny has received a mortal wound. It may be enraged, it may struggle, it may threaten, it may aim blows at those who are near; but die it must. And if we may judge from the appearance of things in the moral world, this generation shall not pass away before the expiring groans of arbitrary power are heard through every country in Europe; and the lovers of mankind are called on to rejoice over her, as the murderer of the witnesses of Jesus Christ.⁹¹

The situation in France was, however, rapidly changing and becoming violent. It was now plain what was taking place was not after the example of the Glorious Revolution that had taken place in England. On 10th August 1792, the Tulleries Palace of the French king was stormed. The Swiss Guards assigned for his protection were massacred and the king and his family took refuge in the legislative Assembly, before being imprisoned and the monarchy suspended. A month later there were rumours that the prisoners in Paris were conspiring with the Prussians with whom Revolutionary France was at war. This resulted in Parisians raiding the prisons and murdering between a 1000 and 1500 prisoners.

Against this background in France and the rapid organisation of Societies of Friends of the People in Scotland, a somewhat concerned Henry Hunter wrote to David Bogue in the autumn of 1792:

There is a revolution in the political sentiments of a great multitude of the people of this country. Societies of the friends of the people, as they call themselves, are starting up everywhere. This seems to have happened in consequence of the royal proclamation. It certainly excited a more universal curiosity to inquire into the subject that occasioned that paper, and produced an amazing circulation of Paine's pamphlets. The astonishing success of the French arms has, I doubt not, contributed, likewise, to increase and embolden the reforming 'spirit'. Our rulers, I hear, are greatly alarmed; and I think they have good reason. It is surely a wonderful scene that is exhibited in Europe at present and some awful and amazing events will be the result of it. Have you heard of the conjecture of Mr. Robert Fleming, respecting the French monarchy, in his discourse of the Rise and Fall of Papacy, printed in the year 1701? He concludes the striking paragraph in these words: 'I cannot but hope that some new mortification of the chief supporters of antichrist will then happen (he means at the termination of the fourth vial), and perhaps the French monarchy may begin to be considerably humbled about that time. That whereas the present French king takes the sun for his emblem, and this for his motto, *Nec pluribus impar*, he may at length, or rather his successors and the monarchy itself, at least before the year 1794, be forced to acknowledge that, in respect to the neighbouring potentates, he is even *singulis impar*.⁹²

Though Hunter seems to have had a measure of concern about the unfolding events in France and the organisation of Societies of the Friends of the People, what appears to have been uppermost in his mind in the autumn of 1792 was

⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 46-48.

⁹² Bennett, *Memoirs of the Life of David Bogue*, pp. 142-143. Though the letter in Bennett is undated, the reference to the French monarchy would appear to date the letter after 10th August 1792, whilst the absence of any reference to, or concern for, the issuing of a declaration of loyalty indicates a date of writing prior to December 1792.

what he conceived to be the fulfilment of prophecy in the French monarchy being humbled in consequence of its support of the Papal Antichrist.⁹³ Within a few months his attitude would dramatically change. This could well have been the result of the changing attitude of Establishment ministers in Scotland. At first many were sympathetic to the Revolution but with the abolishing of titles of nobility, the unsuccessful attempt of Louis XVI to flee France, and then the assault on his Tulleries Palace, Church of Scotland ministerial support for the Revolution had evaporated.⁹⁴ This change of attitude led to Scottish Presbyteries of the Church of Scotland making declarations of support for the Government.⁹⁵

(iv) Declaration of the Scots Presbytery

As Moderator that year of the London Scots Presbytery, Hunter called a *pro re nata* meeting on 14th December 1792 informing the Court that he was being urged to produce and publicize a Declaration of Loyalty to the Government in order ‘to wipe away the aspersions under which they lay as Presbyterians’.⁹⁶ From the minutes, it appears that Hunter presented to the meeting a draft of an appropriate Declaration but was asked to adjust it by adding the Presbytery’s desire for the temperate reform of Government while expressing their ‘perfect confidence in the wisdom of Parliament as to time and mode of such reform.’ In addition Hunter was instructed to lay the draft Declaration before the absent members for their consideration of the subject.

The Presbytery met again as a committee on 2nd January 1793 and also the following day at a further *pro re nata* meeting in order finally to approve the Declaration. With what appears to have been a sense of urgency, the committee meeting resolved, ‘that the said Declaration be published in some morning papers, in the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Public Ledger*, *The Times*, *The Times Britain* and likewise in the evening papers, *The Sun* and *The Star*. And that 730 copies thereof be printed on printing paper for the members of Presbytery and the other gentlemen who signed it in order to distribute them among their friends.’⁹⁷ In addition, the Committee meeting appointed seven of their number to meet on 10th January in a hotel to manage and organise the printing and distribution. The group chaired by Hunter included the two secession ministers, the Burgher, Alexander Waugh and the Antiburgher, George Jerment, along with John Love.

The Declaration approved at the *pro re nata* meeting on 3rd January 1793 was in these terms:

It having been taken in to consideration, that the opinions and principles both political and religious of Scots Presbyterians, residing in North Britain, are frequently misunderstood, and consequently misrepresented from their being confounded in a general <text unclear> them, which is applicable to them only

⁹³ The reference to the volume cited in Hunter’s letter is to Robert Fleming, *The Rise and Fall of Papal Rome* (London, 1701), p. 75.

⁹⁴ Brims, ‘The Scottish Democratic Movement in the Age of the French Revolution’, p. 75.

⁹⁵ Macleod, ‘The Responses of Scottish Churchmen to the French Revolution, 1789-1802’, p. 197, note 24.

⁹⁶ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, p. 108.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

in a partial and limited sense. And that they have accordingly been held up as <text unclear> notions of Religion and Government supposed to be in necessary connection with the name Presbyterian. It appeared to be at this interesting crisis a duty which we owe to ourselves, to our congregations to our <text unclear> church and to that part of the United Kingdom in which we live to Declare:

I. That in respect to religious sentiment we firmly adhere to the well known standards of the Church of Scotland, viz. The Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

II. That we are zealously and affectionately attached to the constitution of this country as settled in legislature and Government by King, Lords and Commons at the glorious revolution of 1688.

III. That if from lapse of time and change of circumstances or the imperfection to which all human institutions are liable, any defect or abuse of that constitution may have appeared or shall hereafter appear. We trust that the wisdom of Parliament will discern these and that <text unclear> justice <text unclear> will interpose to supply such defect and to remedy such abuse.

IV. That we are animated with sentiments of unfeigned loyalty to his present Majesty making it our daily and fervent prayer to Almighty God that his life may be long and his government respected and glorious.

V. That we view with concern as we discover with abhorrence open or secret attempts which may have been, or shall be made to shake the constitution, to inflame the minds of the people and to disturb public tranquility. And that we will to the utmost of our power discourage and repress all inflammatory seditious conversation, publications and < text unclear>.

VI. That as becomes good subjects – Ministers of the Gospel of Peace and the friends of national liberty, we will in our several stations, exert ourselves to promote the cause of truth, virtue and religion as long <text unclear> supports of loyalty <text unclear> personal and public felicity.

Signed

Henry Hunter D.D. Moderator and Minister of Scots Church at
London Wall

John Trotter D.D. Minister of Swallow Street Church

Thomas Rutledge, Minister of Broad Street, St George's,
Middlesex.

John Love, Minister of Crispin Street, Spitalfields

James Steven, Minister of Crown Court, Covent Gardens

David Tod, Minister of Peter Street, Soho

Robert Crawford, Minister at Deal in Kent

George Gray, Elder

Alexander Waugh, Minister of Wells Street, Oxford Road

George Jerment, Minister of Bows Lane

Alexander Easton, Minister of Red Cross Street, Cripplegate⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 111-114.

Though Henry Hunter, as Moderator, seems to have taken the leading role in the formulation of this Declaration, John Love was present at every meeting and took an active part in the printing of the document. Less than a fortnight after the Declaration was signed, the Convention in Paris found Louis XVI guilty of conspiracy; he was beheaded two days later on 17th January 1793, and Britain then broke off diplomatic relations with France. A fortnight later, on 1st February, the Convention in Paris declared war on both England and the Dutch Republic. Against the background of Revolution in France, which would soon turn into a reign of terror, the atmosphere in Government in both England and Scotland was one of suspicion and espionage, with spies attending the meeting of the Friends of the People. In this feverish climate, Dissenters from the Establishment, which in London included members of the Scots Presbytery, though absolutely attached to the Crown, were viewed as potentially disloyal, and capable even of treachery. William Bull, a friend of John Newton, in a letter to his son, puts on record Newton's opinion both of Dissenters in general and of David Bogue in particular: 'Mr Newton says, all the Dissenters, even the orthodox not excepted, are republicans and enemies to Government, and he thinks it the duty of Government to watch over them all ... In his late journey to Southampton he met with Mr Bogue of Gosport, who he thinks is a very pious man, but he says he is as bitter against Government as any Frenchman or republican in the world!'⁹⁹

Accusations of disloyalty against the Scottish Seceders and the English Dissenters¹⁰⁰ were completely misplaced; whilst a very small number were sympathetic to republicanism they had no wish to overthrow the monarchy. Their desire was for moderate constitutional reform; their main concerns were patronage in Scotland and relief from the Test Acts in England. George Lawson in a letter to Lord Napier, the Lord Lieutenant of Selkirkshire, asserted, 'I can assure your Lordship, that whatever distinctions may be found among either denominations of Seceders, they will all be found loyal subjects.'¹⁰¹

3. The Scots Presbytery and the Arian-Unitarian controversy

As was noted in the first part of this paper, the Scots Presbytery in London began as a witness to orthodox Trinitarian theology in the context of the majority of English Presbyterians abandoning Westminster Calvinism and embracing a rationalistic form of Arminianism which then degenerated into Arianism.¹⁰² As the eighteenth century advanced, congregations holding the Arian theology of the early 1700s departed further from biblical Christianity as they adopted Unitarian and Socinian beliefs.¹⁰³ The Scots Presbytery in

⁹⁹ Josiah Bull, *Memorials of the Rev. William Bull of Newport Pagnell* (London, 1864), p. 221. William Bull seems to have strongly disagreed with Newton. In the above citation the words deleted at the ellipsis are Bull's reflections on Newton. He added, 'Could you think so good a man could be so weak?'

¹⁰⁰ For how radicalism affected the English Dissenters, see Deryck Lovegrove, 'English Evangelical Dissent and the European Conflict, 1789-1815', in W. J. Sheils, *The Church and War, Studies in Church History* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 263-276.

¹⁰¹ Macfarlane, *The Life and Times of Dr. Lawson*, p. 390.

¹⁰² *SRSJH*, Vol. 7, pp. 158-173.

¹⁰³ The classic instance of this abandonment of Westminster orthodoxy is the life and career of Joseph Priestley (1733-1804). He was by birth and education an Independent. Born in

response to these developments believed it to be their duty to continue a vigorous witness for the Westminster Confession in the vital areas of Nicene and Chalcedon orthodoxy. Accordingly in May 1791, the Presbytery resolved ‘that a committee be appointed to consider the substance of a motion in relation to the circumstances of the times’. It was further resolved ‘that a Committee of the whole Presbytery shall sit to consider said motion immediately after the adjournment of the Presbytery’.¹⁰⁴

From the brief minute of the Committee of the whole Presbytery it is clear that the motion they were intending to draw up had respect to ‘The doctrine of Unitarianism and the Divinity of Jesus Christ’. To this end it was resolved in June 1791 to obtain some recent Arian tracts with a view to refuting them in a series of discourses by different members of the Presbytery.¹⁰⁵ At a further Committee of the whole Presbytery, three months later, William Smith the minister of the Camberwell congregation and James Steven of Crown Court along with two elders, Messrs Clason and Jacqui, were appointed to draw up a document that would list in an orderly way the tenets held by Socinians and to distribute it to other members in order for them to interact with it at a future meeting.¹⁰⁶ When the Presbytery next met, at Love’s church at Crispin Street in November, the Presbytery’s witness against Unitarianism was again the major item on the agenda. It was agreed that William Smith, who ran an academy at Camberwell, should purchase all the books on the Unitarian controversy that may be thought necessary for the use of the Presbytery.¹⁰⁷ The Committee of the whole Presbytery meeting in December 1791 received the report of the sub-committee commissioned to draw up a list of the principal tenets of Socinianism. Meanwhile, Smith had proceeded with enthusiasm in his task and gave in an account of the volumes he had acquired for the Presbytery’s use, which put on record that his ‘conduct was highly approved of and the thanks of the Committee given him for the careful judgment he displayed in the selection of the books’.¹⁰⁸

Henry Hunter, as the Clerk of the Presbytery and in many respects its most prominent member being the minister of the historic London Wall congregation, was to have delivered the first lecture in the series of discourses

1733, at the village of Birstall Fieldhead in West Yorkshire, where his father was a woollen manufacturer, and being taught the Assembly’s Shorter Catechism by his mother, he gave early indications of his fluctuating views by becoming an avowed Arminian. Whilst he was at the Daventry Academy, under Caleb Ashworth, Philip Doddridge’s successor, he threw aside both the doctrines of the Trinity and the Atonement and became an Arian. Then, whilst he was the minister of the liberal Mill Hill Presbyterian congregation in Leeds, Priestley finally completed his move to anti-Trinitarianism. This probably occurred in 1769 after he re-read Nathaniel Lardner’s *Letter on the Logos* which he had kept in his desk for twenty years. See Drysdale, *History of the Presbyterians in England*, pp. 523-525; ODNB.

¹⁰⁴ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, p. 98.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 102-103. Smith had obtained the books in November-December 1791. He seems to have been rather relaxed in being re-reimbursed for the purchases he had made. The minute of 3rd May 1797, almost six years after the books were bought contains the following statement, ‘Mr. Smith was directed to produce an account of the books bought on the Socinian Controversy that he may be paid.’ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

against Socinianism. The lecture series was delayed, largely because Hunter was urged in late 1792 to draw up a Declaration of Loyalty to the Crown and to Pitt's Government in the crisis facing the country following the French Revolution and the war with France. As a consequence, in April 1793 the Presbytery formally agreed to adjourn the execution of the plan of discourses on the Arian-Socinian controversy.¹⁰⁹ The adjournment continued until November of that year when John Love, who was zealous to see the project proceed, tabled a scheme of discourses that was approved by the Presbytery.¹¹⁰ He further recommended that 'Dr. Hunter produce the preliminary discourse with all convenient speed.'¹¹¹ Unaccountably, Hunter was rather slow in proceeding with the preparation and delivery of this lecture which regrettably led to the viability of the whole scheme being questioned. The minute of 7th May 1794 records, 'It having become a subject of consideration whether the Committee shall proceed in their plan of a series of Discourses on the Socinian Controversy', it was however resolved to recommend to Dr. Hunter to preach his preliminary discourse and to produce it at the next meeting of the Presbytery.¹¹² The next meeting was in June and Hunter reported to the Presbytery that 'he had made progress in his introductory discourse to this series on the Socinian Controversy and craved indulgence until the next meeting,' which was granted.¹¹³ The Presbytery met again six weeks later towards the end of July and still no progress was made as Hunter was absent. The relevant minute read, 'No progress could be made in the Socinian Controversy till it be known how far Dr. Hunter is in his preparation. The last reference to the project is in the minute of the meeting on 3rd December 1794 where the rather terse minute reads, 'Resolved further to postpone the business of the Socinian Controversy'.¹¹⁴ Why Henry Hunter was so slow in preparing his introductory discourse we do not know; it was not for lack of sympathy for the project. Indeed, it was largely due to Hunter that the Presbytery had been formed as a witness against Arianism. Whether the discourse or the series was ever delivered, we do not know, as the minutes of the next eight months meetings of the Presbytery after that of 3rd December 1794 were never recovered. The reconstructed minute book at this point has the following note: 'five other following minutes are lost.'¹¹⁵

In the heterodox climate in which the Presbytery were witnessing they were very sensitive to any departure from orthodoxy with respect to the Person of Christ. It comes, therefore, as a surprise to read the Scots Presbytery minute of 22nd September 1796, 'A petition was presented to the Presbytery by George

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

¹¹⁰ When Love's sermon, preached at the centenary of the Glorious Revolution, was published, after his name on the title page it gives his ministerial title and that of his congregation as follows: 'Minister of the Gospel in the Presbyterian (not Arian) Meeting, Crispin Street, Spitalfields, London.' It is clear from this wording the strong stand that both Love and the Presbytery were taking against Arianism.

¹¹¹ *MS. Scots Presbytery Minutes*, p. 124.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 127.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 131.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

Gray and a Mr. Raven on behalf of the elders at the Peter Street congregation.¹¹⁶ Regrettably we do not know the precise wording of the petition due to the first minute book of the Presbytery being reconstructed from Henry Hunter's scroll minutes following his death.¹¹⁷ During the Presbytery meetings, Hunter, as the Clerk, merely made notes of the proceedings. A petition was given him in writing on behalf of the Peter Street and all that is in his notes are the words in brackets, 'Here take it in', which meant that when he wrote out the minutes in full he would include the full text of the document. The petition was of such a serious nature that a special meeting of the Presbytery was held a week later. From the minute of that meeting it becomes clear that the Peter Street elders were questioning the orthodoxy of their minister, David Todd,¹¹⁸ with regard to his belief in the Person of Christ. The relevant minute reads as follows:

At a special meeting of the Scots Presbytery. After prayer the minutes of the last sederunt appointing this special meeting were read and confirmed. The elders of Peter Street were fully heard in support of their petition and Mr. Todd in reply – which being deliberately considered. Resolved, that Mr. Todd be requested to state in writing his belief respecting the Person of Christ and the other points charged in the petition – which statement when laid before the Presbytery at a meeting for that purpose to be held in this place (the Crown Court congregation) on Wednesday fortnight and absent members to be summoned.¹¹⁹

At the next sederunt, Todd, in obedience to the Presbytery, produced his written statement which was included in the now lost minute. The reconstructed minute based on Hunter's notes merely says, in a similar way to the elders' petition, 'Here insert it in.'¹²⁰ The Presbytery, having considered in some detail both the elders' petition and their statement regarding David Todd, along his response, arrived at a unanimous decision which, when the parties were called to the bar of the Presbytery, was intimated to them. The

¹¹⁶ The congregation originated in a separation from the Scots congregation in Swallow Street, about the year 1734. The first minister was James Anderson, who had been many years pastor at that place, but left it in consequence of a difference with his people, and removed with a part of them to another meeting-house in Lisle Street, Leicester Square. The lease being due to expire in 1755, the congregation desired to renew it; but the landlord, a strong Anglican, would not allow the Dissenters any longer the use of the property. As a result the Lisle Street congregation was obliged to look for another place of worship. They purchased two houses adjoining each other in Peter Street which they pulled down, erecting a meeting-house on the site. Their minister at the time was Dr John Patrick, one of the ministers who took part in John Love's ordination at Crispin Street.

¹¹⁷ As we have mentioned, these were Hunter's notes of the Presbytery meetings from which he would then write the full minute.

¹¹⁸ David Todd was brought up in Portmoak, the village in which Ebenezer Erskine was a minister from 1703 to 1731. He was educated at the University of St. Andrews and licensed by the Established Presbytery of Kirkcaldy on 24th November 1779. Like many Evangelicals, he was unable to get a charge in Scotland and came to London in 1788 where he was ordained. John Love preached on the occasion of Todd's ordination. He came as colleague and successor to John Patrick at the Peter Street, Soho congregation. For biographical information, see Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 2, p. 7; Vol. 7, p. 498; Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, Vol. 4, pp. 36-37; Black, *The Scots Churches in England*, p. 229.

¹¹⁹ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, p. 147.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 148.

decision was, 'that there was not sufficient evidence before the Presbytery to enable them to come to a decision'.

Having heard the finding, Todd asserted 'that his religious sentiments coincided entirely with those of Pearson, Bull (or possibly Ball, the minute is unclear) and Barrow on the Apostles Creed.'¹²¹ He then added the following, rather less than satisfactory statement for a Presbyterian minister in his early forties: 'that he had lately read Dr. Owen on the Person of Christ and is strongly impressed with his ideas and believes them to be right as far as he has read and understands them.' The Presbytery were clearly unimpressed and resolved, that they delay further discussion of this business 'till it shall please providence to throw further light on it', at the same time recommending to Mr Todd 'the exercise of extreme prudence and discretion in his ministerial functions in order to avoid just cause of offence.'¹²² This took place at a meeting of the Presbytery in October 1796; by the following July Todd had left the Peter Street congregation. At the meeting of Presbytery on 5th July 1797 the Peter Street elders presented a further petition which must have stated that Todd had forsaken the congregation. Henry Hunter was directed by the Presbytery to write to Todd and enquire into the state of the facts and report to the next meeting.¹²³ It does not appear that Hunter received a reply from Todd as George Gray, a Peter Street elder, gave an account of his minister's departure at the succeeding meeting. He asserted that, 'in his hearing Mr Todd expressed in presence of his congregation his resignation of his charge in Peter Street upwards of three months ago and that he has never preached there nor found supply since.' On the basis of this statement the Presbytery declared the congregation vacant.¹²⁴

4. Ordinations

Between March 1785 and August 1787 the Scots Presbytery in London ordained five men, John Love being the fifth. During Love's ministry in the English capital between 1787 and 1798 the Presbytery received nine applications from men either to be ordained or to be taken on trials for the ministry. A profile of the men applying for ordination from 1785 to 1798 reveals some interesting results.

The country of birth of twelve of the fourteen is known. Eleven were born in Scotland and one, though born in Northumberland, was the son of a Scottish minister in an English Presbyterian congregation that was connected

¹²¹ The volumes Todd refers to are: John Pearson (1613-1686), the Bishop of Chester, *An Exposition of the Creed*; Isaac Barrow (1630-1677), *Sermons on the Apostles Creed*, in *The Works of Dr. Isaac Barrow*, Vols. 4, 5 and 6. If the minute reads Bull it is probably a reference to George Bull (1634-1710), the Bishop of St. David's, and his treatise, *A Defence of the Nicene Creed*. If, however, the minute reads Ball it would probably be a reference to the Puritan John Ball (1584-1640) and his treatise, *A Short Catechism containing all the principal grounds of religion*.

¹²² MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, p. 149.

¹²³ As before the reconstructed minute simply states with respect to the petition, 'Here to take it in.' MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, p. 158.

¹²⁴ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, pp. 159-160. David Todd resigned his charge in 1797 and, according to Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 2, p. 7, he was not admitted to the Cranshaws congregation of the Church of Scotland in the Scottish borders until 24th September 1801. If that is an accurate account, then Todd had no charge after he left London for over four years. There is, however, a measure of doubt about the accuracy as the *Fasti* states that he resigned his London charge in 1794 when the actual date was 1797. Todd died on 18th February 1813.

to the Church of Scotland. The place of birth within Scotland is known of just eight of the men. Seven were from south-west Scotland and one from Edinburgh. The university where they had studied prior to applying to the Scots Presbytery for ordination is known for eleven of the applicants. Nine were trained at Glasgow University and two at Edinburgh.

Three out of the fourteen men, though they made an application, seem to have withdrawn, as they disappear from the minutes after an initial meeting.¹²⁵ Out of the remaining eleven applicants, ten were ordained by the London Scots Presbytery and one was licensed by them and then returned to Scotland. The ten ordinations follow a similar pattern: six received calls to Presbyterian congregations connected with the London Scots Presbytery, three were ordained for missionary service, and one went to a congregation in Canada, where he ministered for some time and then returned to a congregation in Somerset and was again connected with the Scots Presbytery. The question arises as to why so many men applied to the Scots Presbytery in London for ordination rather than proceeding in the normal way through their local Presbyteries. The profile of the applicants helps us to provide a tentative answer to that question.

The great majority of the men came from areas of Scotland that were dominated by Moderatism. Though several of the men, like John Love, had been assistants in Church of Scotland congregations, they were unable to obtain ordination due to the system of patronage. Patrons were usually landowners who supported the dominant Moderate party. It seems highly likely that, again like Love, these were Evangelicals who could not obtain ordination in Scotland. They accepted calls in the London area in order to receive ordination by the Scots Presbytery. Three of the six, who accepted calls to English congregations, after a period of service returned to Scotland at a time when the Evangelicals were gaining more influence there.

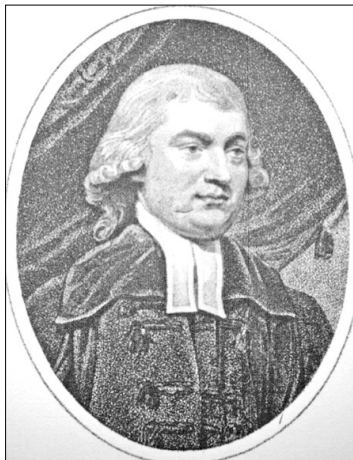
It should not be thought that applying to the London Scots Presbytery was an easier route to ordination than in Scotland. The procedures applied by the Presbytery were the same as in Scotland, except that it was a Presbytery of Evangelicals rather than one controlled by Moderates. James Lawson came to the London Presbytery without having previously being licensed in Scotland and the

¹²⁵ One of the initial applicants who did not proceed to ordination with the London Scots Presbytery was James Graham (1765–1811). He was the son of Thomas Graham, a prominent lawyer and committed Whig. Against his own inclinations to go into the ministry, he was apprenticed to become a Writer to the Signet. This appears to have been due to parental influence, because when his father died he considered a change of profession. It was shortly after this that he made an application through David Todd for ordination by the London Presbytery. He, however, continued his studies and became an advocate two years later in 1795. Having only limited success in the legal profession, he resolved, fourteen years later in 1809, to realize his early ambition of becoming a clergyman. When he was forty-four years of age, he went to London and was ordained by Henry Bathurst, the Bishop of Norwich, and appointed curate of Shipton Mayne, in Gloucestershire. The following year he became sub-curate of St Margaret's, Durham and in May 1811 was transferred to Sedgefield in the same diocese. He was forced to leave soon afterwards because of his declining health, and he died on 14th September 1811. Graham is best known for his poetry which he wrote from his university days until shortly before his death. Kenneth Grahame, author of *The Wind in the Willows*, was his great-grandnephew. See *DNB* and *ODNB*.

way he was dealt with illustrates the procedure of the Presbytery. He had been a student under the Presbytery of Auchterarder and brought certificates of study from Glasgow University and testimonials from ‘a great number of reputable ministers’. In addition there were private letters from members of the Auchterarder Presbytery. Lawson had, however, been rejected by the Auchterarder Presbytery as a candidate for the ministry. An extract minute from the Auchterarder Presbytery on the subject was read. The London minute of 21st November 1786 reads:

All which being considered it was Resolved that the secretary of the Scots Presbytery be directed to write to the Moderator of the Presbytery of Auchterarder informing him of the said application of Mr. Lawson and to request the said Moderator to lay the matter again before the Presbytery of Auchterarder and transmit the reasons why Mr. Lawson was rejected by them and whether he may not be taken on trials by the London Association of Ministers. The secretary was further instructed to correspond with private friends on the same subject in order to assess all the requested information. Meantime in the confidence of receiving satisfactory information ... Mr. Lawson as the subject of an exegesis (unclear) and for a lecture the 23rd Psalm to be received at their next meeting. The sederunt closed with prayer.¹²⁶

It is worthy of note that not only was Henry Hunter instructed to write to the Auchterarder Presbytery but also to private friends ‘in order to assess all the requested information.’ It seems the London Presbytery was not entirely satisfied with the reputation of the Auchterarder Presbytery. Whether they received a



James Steven, the minister of the Scots Presbyterian church at Crown Court and a close friend of John Love.

reply from Auchterarder we do not know; there is no mention of a reply in the minutes. The London Presbytery, with or without a reply from Scotland, proceeded with Lawson’s trials. He was given a topic for an exegesis and instructed to deliver a lecture on Psalm 23. This having been satisfactorily completed at a subsequent meeting, he was then prescribed Matthew 7:1 as a subject of a homily and Hebrews 1:1 as a further exercise. After these were delivered and sustained, he was asked to deliver a popular sermon. The final part of his trials was to read to the Presbytery portions of the Hebrew Bible and the Greek Testament, followed by a series of questions being put to him by members of the Presbytery on aspects of doctrine. After these exercises were satisfactorily concluded, following an exhortation, he was licensed and appointed to

preach in the Peter Street congregation the following Sabbath.¹²⁷ He does not appear to have received a call in London and nine months later in, April 1788, decided to return to Scotland and asked for extracts of his licence.¹²⁸

At this stage there was an interesting request. James Steven, then the newly ordained minister in the Crown Court congregation, at the desire of

¹²⁶ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, pp. 71-72.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 72-77.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

James Lawson, asked that Lawson be ‘ordained at large’ by the Presbytery. Lawson was asked to state his reasons for the request. Although we cannot be sure in the absence of any explanation in the minutes, it is most probable that he desired ordination in London ‘at large’ as it would be easier to obtain a call in Scotland as an ordained minister than have to seek ordination from a Moderate-controlled Presbytery. The London Presbytery refused the request: they considered that the ‘reasons assigned are unsatisfactory and insufficient.’¹²⁹ They would have doubtless been sympathetic to Lawson’s situation; however, the practice of the Reformed Church was clear. With regard to ordination – it must be to a ‘particular flock’ not ‘at large’. Walter Steuart of Pardovan explains the practice of the Scottish Presbyteries:

Ordination is the solemn act of the Presbytery, setting apart a person to some publick church office: For this see the Directory. It is agreeable to the word of God, and very expedient, that such as are to be ordained ministers be designed to some particular church, or other ministerial charge; See the Directory and Heads of the Polity of the Kirk; as also the 10th act, chap. 1 of the French church-discipline; wherein they agree, that ministers shall not be ordained, without assigning them a particular flock.¹³⁰

The Scots Presbytery in London provided an outlet for Evangelicals in Moderate-dominated areas of Scotland to obtain ordination, and in many instances provided a ministerial charge that they could not have obtained in their native Scotland.¹³¹ During John Love’s ministry in London, in addition to ordinations for service in England and Scotland, three men came before the Scots Presbytery seeking ordination for missionary service. Love, with his zeal for missions, was actively involved in the ordination of all three.¹³²

III. John Love’s pastoral ministry in London

(a) Ministry at Crispin Street and Artillery Street, Spitalfields

The political landscape whilst John Love was in London was momentous. The American War of Independence, which ended in 1785, was a still very recent memory. When Love was less than two years into his pastorate, within the space of few weeks in the spring of 1789, three turning points occurred in world history. In severe summary John Wolffe has detailed the unfolding events: ‘On 30 April in New York City George Washington took the oath of office as first President of the United States; on 4 May the gathering of the Estates-General at Versailles near Paris began the train of events that was to lead rapidly to the French Revolution and two decades of European and worldwide warfare; on 12 May, in the House of Commons at

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 85.

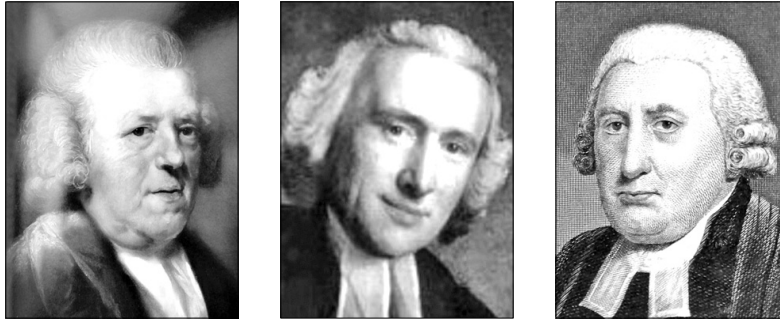
¹³⁰ Steuart of Pardovan, *Collections & Observations*, Book 1, section 15, p. 6.

¹³¹ Appendix 1 to this paper details the nine men who applied for ordination by the Scots Presbytery from 1787 to 1798. This was the period in which John Love was a member of the London Scots Presbytery before his return to Scotland.

¹³² See the separate article in this issue of *SRSJ*, ‘Scottish Missionaries ordained by the London Scots Presbytery in the 1790s’, which gives brief biographical sketches of the three men ordained by the Scots Presbytery for missionary service during Love’s time in London.

Westminster, William Wilberforce rose to propose the abolition of the slave trade.¹³³ London during Love's pastorate was 'the world-city' and would be bustling with news about what was taking place.

The religious situation was equally momentous; the churches were still feeling the effects of the Evangelical revival under George Whitefield and the Wesleys that led to the birth of the Protestant Missionary Movement. Indeed, John Wesley was still alive when John Love came to Crispin Street; he died in London in 1791. Many of the second-generation leaders in the



John Newton, William Romaine and Thomas Scott (left to right). Three eminent ministers still active in London when John Love came to Crispin Street.

revival were still active in London: John Newton was the minister at St Mary Woolnoth; William Romaine was at St. Anne's Blackfriars; and Thomas Scott was a chaplain at the Lock Hospital. It was also a time of revivals in different parts of the world: the Second Great Awakening was beginning in America, and Thomas Charles was witnessing revival in North Wales. In June 1796 Alexander Stewart of Moulin was converted under the ministry of Charles Simeon; his preaching was revolutionized and an outpouring of the Holy Spirit ensued. Among the converts were the parents of Alexander Duff, the great Scottish missionary to India.

In the second part of this paper we observed that William Bentley, one of Love's predecessors as minister, brought the congregation to the meeting-house in Crispin Street that had previously been a Huguenot church. The Spitalfields area of London, where Crispin Street was situated, had witnessed a very large immigrant population of French Protestants. This had been due to a massive influx of Huguenots fleeing from France as a result of the severe persecution following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. It is estimated that 20,000 to 25,000 had settled in Spitalfields where housing was inexpensive and the London Trade Guilds held less economic power. The Huguenots came from all walks of life: many were intellectuals, some were businessmen engaged in providing financial services, others were highly skilled tradesmen with backgrounds in weaving or clock-making. Textile manufacturing was, however, the main occupation of the refugees in Spitalfields. Due to their skill and hard work, their businesses thrived and Spitalfields became known as 'weaver town.' The silk and French styles were popular with the upper classes in London. Many workshops were

¹³³ John Wolffe, *The Expansion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Wilberforce, More, Chalmers and Finney* (Inter Varsity Press, Nottingham, 2006), p. 28.

opened and their owners became wealthy and employed many hundreds of employees.¹³⁴ The Huguenots also began their own French congregations which had the effect of binding the community together and providing a connecting point for new immigrants. In the Spitalfields area alone there were nine French Huguenot churches in the eighteenth century. It was to such a building in Crispin Street, which had been occupied by one of these Huguenot congregations, that William Bentley brought his people in 1740.

By the time Love arrived in 1787 the prosperous years of the silk-weaving trade were past. The industry declined in the late eighteenth century, as new Indian and Chinese fabrics became more readily available and as smuggling of continental silk became more commonplace. This adversely affected the community around Spitalfields. The Spitalfields Acts passed between 1765 and 1801 attempted to regulate wages and working conditions, and to protect the domestic market from overseas competition. Nevertheless, the economic prosperity brought by the trade slowly ebbed away, leading to frequent violent clashes between masters and journeymen over wage-rates and the introduction of new machinery. It was in a troubled area, and in a church that was formerly an Independent congregation, that John Love began his London ministry.

Love appears to have started preaching at Crispin Street in the same way that he had, with such acceptance, both at Rutherglen and at Greenock and in other congregations where he had assisted at sacramental occasions. From the published volume of sermons of his ministry as an assistant in Greenock it seems that his practice was to preach short series of sermons from the same text. The volume contains three series of seven sermons, one of eight, and another of four. The sermons are carefully constructed with clear heads and sub-divisions within the heads and conclude with several points of application. As the preface to the volume points out, they were at the time of their delivery blessed to the conversion of many and the reviving of the Lord's people in the ways of vital godliness.¹³⁵ The first published sermons from his London ministry are four sermons on the same text – Exodus 3:14, 'And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.' There are also short series of sermons on Genesis 1 and 2, Exodus 33:14, John 8:14 (four sermons), and 1 Thessalonians 1.

In the three volumes of his sermons that were published within a few years of his death almost 56 percent are from his London ministry.¹³⁶ In these volumes there are seventy sermons; out of this total thirty-nine are from his

¹³⁴ For the Huguenots in London and Spitalfields, see Robin Gwynn, *The Huguenots of London* (Brighton, 1998); George B. Beeman, 'Notes on the Sites and History of the French Churches in London', *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of London*, Vol. 8 (1905-1908), pp. 13-59. For the wider Huguenot settlements in Britain, see John S. Burn, *The History of the French, Walloon, Dutch and other Foreign Protestant Refugees settled in England* (London, 1846); Samuel Smiles, *The Huguenots; Their Settlements, Churches, and Industries in England and Ireland* (London, 1889).

¹³⁵ *Sermons preached by the late Rev. John Love in the West Church, Greenock, during the years 1784-1785* (Glasgow, 1853), p. iv.

¹³⁶ These were *Sermons on Public Occasions* (1826), and *Sermons and Lectures* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1829).

London ministry. When the dates of the London sermons are analysed we learn that thirty-six of the thirty-nine sermons were preached in the first three years of his ministry at Crispin Street. Posterity knows John Love mainly from his printed sermons and the two volumes of his *Memorials*. His printed sermons and lectures which have been so highly valued are almost entirely the products of his early ministry in Greenock and the first three years of his London ministry. The reader of the sermons will discover that they are fine evangelical discourses which are both doctrinal and experimental. In addition, he will surely regard the congregations that heard them as being highly privileged. The writer of a memoir of Love in the *Christian Instructor* describes his pulpit delivery and his general disposition: 'His manner in the pulpit was slow, but solemn and impressive. As a friend and companion he was affectionate, instructive and cheerful, yet he never forgot his sacred character, and uniformly seemed to have a sense of the presence of his Divine Master, to whose service he was cheerfully and unweariedly devoted. No man perhaps of his time approached more nearly to the ancient Reformers in spirit, manners and character.'¹³⁷

John Love was conscious of God's over-riding providence in guiding our lives. In his first letter to his father after coming to London and before he was ordained he writes in these terms:

London, April 25, 1787

Dear Father,—The whole of this great and terrible wilderness, through which we pass, is formed and – governed by that infallible and unsearchable wisdom, which is to be adored and glorified by all created spirits. Nothing but that marvellous light, which shines from heaven by means of the holy oracles of God, can so guide our path, as that we may escape the fatal gins, pits, and precipices, which lie thick in the way. This light, when obtained, carries in itself demonstrative evidence of its divine origin and saving tendency. It is therefore to be sought after with much earnestness, perseverance, and importunity; to be received, cherished, and entertained, with much gratitude, submission, and watchfulness.¹³⁸

Though late-eighteenth-century London was blessed with many Gospel ministries, John Love's assessment of the spiritual state of the capital is rather bleak. Writing to his parents, just four months after his ordination, he says, 'The state of multitudes here is very deplorable, because they have broken loose from all regard to the means of salvation. It would be mercy with God to drive them to his ordinances, though it were with a raging pestilence.'¹³⁹

To an unnamed correspondent the following year Love reflects on his difficulties in Greenock as a preparation for London, but yet is almost overwhelmed by what he sees in the capital.

Dear Sir,—It was part of the Divine counsel, respecting that course of things through which I passed at Greenock, that thereby I should be prepared for the climate in which I now live. The variety and extent of things which are here presented to view fill the unsanctified with a kind of carnal madness.

¹³⁷ Cited in George Williamson, *Old Greenock, embracing Sketches of its Ecclesiastical, Educational, and Literary History* (Paisley, 1888), p. 97.

¹³⁸ *Letters of John Love*, p. 70.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 76. Letter dated 18th December 1787.

An enlightened soul finds vast materials to enlarge its ideas and to engross attention and concern. This place by itself seems a large enough world to overwhelm and confound the understanding; and the more so the more that the souls and affairs of men are considered as in connection with God and eternity. I therefore found, especially at first, a kind of wildness of thought, and a difficulty to keep hold of the spiritual views and concerns with which I had been formerly familiar; and though I did habitually keep my hold, and through grace trampled on the vanity and false lustre of this place, yet it required time before spiritual strength advanced to such a degree as to make the contest sit easily. If you consider these things with candour, you will see sufficient reason why my concern about my friends at Greenock should not for a season vent itself in such strong and particular expressions as might otherwise be expected.¹⁴⁰

Writing in a long letter to his sister, after apologizing for forgetfulness in writing, he again reflects on the state of religion around him in Spitalfields:

Our situation here at home is very peaceful and comfortable; but the great weight is a crowd of sinners given to iniquity of every kind, and rushing down to everlasting burnings without fear; the languid and unworthy state of religion among the professed friends of Christ; and the delay of those omnipotent influences to attend the word and ordinances of God, by which only the majesty of his cause can be maintained, and his precious work revived. Blessed are they who sigh and cry amidst the jollity of a sinking age!¹⁴¹

At first his ministry seems to have been well received, and in a letter to his parents eighteen months after his ordination he gave grounds for modest encouragement:

Dear Father and Mother

My situation here is gradually becoming more comfortable, by my receiving additional supplies of strength from heaven, and by my finding some more appearance of the word of God by my ministry beginning to take root here. One man became a member of the meeting some months ago, in whom there appears much of the power and unadulterated purity of Divine grace, though he never was taught to read, and continued in total estrangement from God till near, I suppose, the age of fifty. His conversion was introduced by a severe affliction while Dr. Simpson was here. He and his wife are a singular example of the first effectual visitation of grace happening in advanced years, though his wife had more of a sort of liking to religion formerly than he. I have seldom seen more of what corresponds to the important idea of becoming as little children than in this couple.¹⁴²

He began his ministry in the building the congregation had occupied since 1740, a meeting-house at 36A Crispin Street that was situated behind a shop at 36 Crispin Street. Love's congregation continued to occupy the building until the late summer of 1794. They then moved to another meeting-house on Artillery Street. Why this was, we are not certain. The original lease on the Crispin Street property ran out in 1748, hence it must have been renewed,

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 78-79. Letter dated 1788.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 95. Letter dated 30th June 1789.

¹⁴² Ibid., pp. 85-86. Letter dated 4th February 1789.



A contemporary map that shows the relationship between Crispin Street and Artillery Lane. The Crispin Street meeting-house was behind number 36 opposite West Street.

THE MAP IS PRINTED WITH PERMISSION OF MOTCO ENTERPRISES LIMITED, WWW.MOTCO.COM

possibly for fifty years. If that were the case, the lease would have been ending in 1798 and hence the congregation may have needed to find a new place of worship. Artillery Street was very close to Crispin Street.¹⁴³ As we have noticed, the Scots Presbytery met in rotation at the different meeting-houses of the congregations in central London that were associated with the Presbytery. The last meeting at Crispin Street was on 4th December 1793. The concluding minute of the Presbytery meeting at the London Wall congregation on 24th September 1794 stated, 'Next meeting to be held at Artillery Street on first Monday of December.'¹⁴⁴ The property clearly needed some attention as the December 1795 meeting scheduled to be at Artillery Street was held at Henry Hunter's London Wall church, with the minute noting: 'that on Artillery Street being shut for repairs.'¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Contemporary maps of the Spitalfields area of London refer to the street as Artillery Lane. However, the *Survey of London: Volume 27, Spitalfields and Mile End New Town*, originally published by London County Council (London, 1957), helpfully explains: 'In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Artillery Passage was commonly known as Smock Alley and the eastern part of Artillery Lane outside the Old Artillery Ground was usually known as Raven Row, though it was sometimes also known as Smock Alley and sometimes as Artillery Street or Lane.' Artillery Street was to the west at the bottom of Crispin Street.

¹⁴⁴ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, p. 130.

¹⁴⁵ The Minutes of the Scots Presbytery are the only authority I have been able to locate for the date when the congregation moved from Crispin Street. That it was Love's congregation that moved premises is confirmed by the fact that after Love had resigned and returned to Scotland,

(b) Difficulties in his pastoral ministry in London

Any encouragement the young minister may have had with respect to the congregation to which he had been ordained as their pastor was not to last long. Soon a very dark cloud would hang over his ministry in London. John Love's eleven years in the Spitalfields area would become the most miserable of his entire pastoral ministry, preaching to a congregation the majority of which did not seem to have appreciated his labours. His letters from March 1789 abound with the most desolating comments regarding the majority of his congregation.

In order to appreciate the significance of his resignation in 1798, his departure to Scotland with no charge, whilst being heavily involved with the London Missionary Society, it is essential to understand the severe trial through which he passed in his ministry at Crispin Street and Artillery Street. The magnitude of these trials and the ensuing disappointment become clear as we observe his comments in what he regarded as private correspondence with his family and friends. Writing to a correspondent just a month after the letter to his parents detailing the conversion of a man in his fifties, and after expressing his comfort and peace in his married state, he goes on to lament:

It is more difficult for me to give account of the state of things regarding my ministerial work. My prospects of success are very slender to the eye of sense and reason; but they are not so to the eye of faith, which discerns something like that small cloud; I Kings, xviii, which prognosticated great things. I do not think it worthwhile to say much of the opposition which my ministry has met with here. It is no grievous thing for me to comply with such prescriptions as these: 'Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity; for they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb' ... The London religion requires a sharper winnowing, than it generally meets with.¹⁴⁶

In early January 1790, after he had been in his charge for almost three and a half years, he notes with sadness: 'The hindrances which obstruct the saving efficacy of preaching in this place are various, and seem to me to be of an obstinate and increasing nature.'¹⁴⁷ By the end of the year, as the opposition increased, his views are becoming more pronounced. Writing to his father in November 1790, he says, 'As to our affairs here, we enjoy, for the most part, pretty good health, and a correspondent supply of outward things; though, if I were to judge by outward appearances, I would despair of doing much good in this vile and profligate place.'¹⁴⁸ The trials in the congregation were beginning to affect his health and during the summer of 1791 he and Janet Love went to Portsmouth on the south coast both for a break and to seek medical attention. On his return he explains his health problems to his parents:

the elders notified the Presbytery, and the minister who had preached the congregation vacant reported to the Presbytery 'that he had complied with their order in preaching at Artillery Lane and declaring the place vacant.' MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, p. 167.

¹⁴⁶ *Letters of John Love*, pp. 89-90. Letter dated 6th March 1789.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 98. Letter dated 7th January 1790.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 103. Letter dated 12th November 1790.

Our expedition to Portsmouth, where we remained almost five weeks, was upon the whole, agreeable and beneficial, at least so far as to give a check to the disorder, and to prevent its going so far as otherwise it might have done. I had opportunity likewise when there, to be acquainted with a man of reputation in the medical profession, from whom I received some directions and medicines suited to my situation. I cannot yet speak of myself as entirely recovered, being obliged still to abstain in a great measure from reading and writing, and to avoid as much as possible any difficult exertion. I sometimes ride out a few miles on horseback, and am accustomed to rise earlier in the morning than a while ago. In the use of proper means, I wait with much serenity of mind for the gradual restoration of soundness and vigour, having reason to look on my complaints as not of a consumptive kind. What I have written will, I hope, satisfy your minds, and prevent any unnecessary degree of anxiety.¹⁴⁹

A ministerial colleague had written to him whilst he was in Portsmouth, and from Love's reply it is clear that he had enquired both about his health and the state of affairs in the Crispin Street congregation. His response with respect to congregational affairs is one of the most detailed that we possess in the early years of his ministry in London. It is dated 27th August 1791 and the relevant sections of long letter, in which he also details how he has been upheld by the Lord in the midst of his trials, are as follows:

In order fully to satisfy you, I might have recourse to various topics of apology; but all that will be unnecessary when you properly realize, as I doubt not friendship will prompt you to do, the tedious and exhausting course of trial which hath passed over me since my coming to 'this habitation of dragons'. To me it is no easy matter to think of the almost total loss of the labours of above four years. Had I not been upheld by Divine power in the exercise of such faith as is above the reach of mere flesh and blood, I should have hundreds of times broken loose from so distressful and insignificant a servitude as my ministry here has been, to the view of sense and reason, rendered so by hypocritical pretenders to orthodoxy. Are these expressions too harsh? I shall not be much surprised if you should think them to be so; because you have not been, and I hope never will be in my situation.

So much for the dark side of the cloud through which, however black and dreary, I have often found shining forth upon me the glorious beams of Divine majesty, wisdom, purity, love, and faithfulness. God hath found out for me, in a time of general ease and peace, this furnace of lingering persecution. The refining which he has been carrying on by it in this impure soul of mine, shall exhibit its splendour in the holy city of our God to all eternity. It is an accomplishment of such words as these: 'He is as a refiner's fire and as fuller's soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and shall purify the sons of Levi.' Were I to speak methodically of God's gracious, operations in me respecting this course of trial, I should divide them into ordinary and extraordinary. At some times, both in private and in public the gloomy peculiarities of my situation have, as it were, combined their force and horror so as to bring me to something like what these words express, 'I sink in deep mire where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters where the floods overflow me.' In these memorable seasons often have I felt in a moment an instantaneous exertion of celestial power creating day in the midst of night,

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 107-108. Letter dated 20th June 1791.

life in the midst of death. Instances of this kind are more numerous than I can distinctly record. But, in the general course of things I have been borne up and carried forward by a more silent continued communication of grace from on high. How many wonders shall I have to proclaim by and by, among my brethren in the high places above! My present bodily affliction seems to have been introduced by the Great Physician, the blessed Refiner of my soul, to consummate – not, so far as I can at present conjecture, my whole course and preparation for heaven, but this particular class of trials, and my preparation for a season of more manifest consolation and success either in this or in some other place. There is, therefore, at present, on my spirit a solemn calm, and a tranquil but firm expectation of the Lord's appearing to lift me up in a manner worthy of himself, confounding to his hypocritical adversaries, but to the humble expectants of redemption instructing and encouraging. But when, where, how, is not for me fully to know – it is hid in the bosom of my God, with the other secrets of his wise and holy love.

But let my prospects, as to things to be accomplished in time, be ever so much baffled and confounded, yet my mind will retreat with joy through the light of grace to such thoughts as these: – there is an eternity coming – that eternity is near; there is One who sits on the throne, a God of boundless rectitude and fidelity, who is mine through the mediation of his Son, and who hath given me irrevocable pledges of eternal life; there is a day of solemn judgment approaching, when every unrighteous voice shall be silent, when every particle of truth and of righteousness shall be vindicated, when vengeance, in its full power and glory, shall descend on the 'daubers with untempered mortar', and when the faithful Christ Jesus shall appear in his likeness, clothed with light and crowned with gladness, to the terror of the believing world, but to the admiration and joy of holy beings throughout the vast universe. In the view of such things, what manner of persons ought we be, what shape or kind of suffering should affright us!

You see, my dear sir, that my case requires your prayers and your thanksgivings. I shall be glad to receive, when convenient, such remarks in answer this as you may judge proper, and to be informed how matters go on in your congregation and neighbourhood. As to the general aspect of religion in this place, I can see little else around me but shadow of Divine ordinances, trusted in by a secure, worldly, and fluctuating race of professors, many whom, I fear, if they are not taught other lessons than they seem yet to have learned, will, in the hour of temptation, break off from the Son of God and betray him with a kiss. What I write of the general state of religion, as well as of my own particular unsuccessfulness, I wish to be understood in a comparative sense, and in reference to such degrees spiritual prosperity as may warrantably be desired and pursued after, and with allowance for what of the genuine work is going forward in a kind of secret unsearchable way.¹⁵⁰

Whilst acknowledging his own failures and the feebleness and fruitlessness of his ministry at Crispin Street he replies to another correspondent who had written to him with 'expressions of friendship' that 'I have a testimony within

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 109-113. Letter dated 27th August 1791.

and from above that the Judge of the world hath approved my designs and endeavours; and that those who have rejected as well the few who have attended my ministry, will find something to be answered for in that respect, first in their own consciences and finally to him who is greater than conscience.¹⁵¹ Matters were clearly coming to a head, and from a comment in a letter to his parents in February 1792 it seems that the small Crispin Street congregation had been made smaller by a secession of some of Love's main critics, yet at the same time he expresses some mild optimism:

As to my public work here, I am enabled to go on in it with some degree of comfort: and though it has been attended with great discouragements such as indeed would have been too much for mere nature to withstand, yet I have reason to hold to it for a time, in hope that what is now like a grain of mustard seed, or like the appearance of a man's hand, I Kings, xviii, may, by the working of Almighty grace, expand and diffuse itself to the honour of God and to the comfort of those who fear him. For, though much of the chaff is gone, so that our number is comparatively small, yet those who remain are generally more to be depended on than the common, loose, wicked professors of religion here. I know of some instances of persons who appear to have had an effectual work of conviction and conversion begun in them through my ministry, and others who have found considerable improvement and progress. And though there have been several instances of death in the society, yet in almost every one of these some encouraging appearances have been discernible, particularly in the case of one man, who died about the beginning of this year, in the enjoyment of much of that comfort which disarms death of its terror.¹⁵²

Even when his main critics, 'the chaff,' had left, John Love's optimism with regard to matters in his congregation was not to last. During these difficult years he would occasionally return to Scotland, usually to his home town of Paisley to assist at communions at either the Laigh Kirk, where Colin Gillies, the son of Dr John Gillies, Whitefield's first biographer, was the minister, or at the Middle Parish church where John Snodgrass was the pastor; both Gillies and Snodgrass were committed evangelical Calvinists. After such a visit in September 1792, when he returned to London, contrasting in his mind Crispin Street and Paisley, he writes to his father and mother:

Upon returning to this place, I cannot help feeling a kind of solemn horror, when I look around, especially on Sabbath, for there is a look and air of pride and stubbornness and of worldly confidence, which proclaim aloud a total want of the fear of God within, and answer to the language of the hearts of sinners, as described in Scripture, 'Who will show us any good? There is no God. Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?' Yet even these dreary spectacles I find overruled for good, inasmuch as they give occasion for entering more deeply into those ideas of Divine holiness, justice, and sovereignty, which lie at the foundation of real religion.¹⁵³

Yet, trying to retain a measure of optimism, he ends the letter to his parents with both the hope that he may yet see fruit for his ministry in London and

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 113. Letter dated 31st October 1791.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 119. Letter dated 24th February 1792.

¹⁵³ Ibid., pp. 121-122. Letter dated 3rd September 1792.

that he will receive a call to another congregation. He concludes: ‘though the air of this place is unfriendly to my complaints, and the general spirit of the people quite hostile to pure religion, I hope to be enabled so to labour here for a little, as to gather some fruit unto everlasting life; until the irresistible power of God burst open the door to a more satisfying situation.’¹⁵⁴

Love had to labour on for six more years; no calls to other congregations came, and the situation at Artillery Street did not improve. In the midst of this period he speaks of his time at Crispin Street/Artillery Street as ‘a kind of martyrdom of more than seven years’ and that he had ‘very slender hopes of ever seeing much of the substantial work of God in this city.’¹⁵⁵ From an occasional comment in his letters it seems very probable that he was actively seeking an opening back in Scotland but was being opposed by the patrons and the Moderate clergy. In the same letter that speaks of his slender hope of seeing a substantial work of God in London is this comment: ‘I die to the opinions of all men, good and bad; nor does it appear a very grievous matter to be, in their estimation, as a broken vessel or as a dead man out of mind. Nevertheless, I apprehend the light professors of the gospel in Scotland are not yet quite done with me. He whom they know not, can exhibit me among them, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear.’¹⁵⁶

In March 1797, as his troubles at Artillery Street were coming to breaking point, John Love’s mother died. He had been long concerned over his parents’ readiness to face eternity, and his letters to them from the time of his own conversion abound with exhortations to look to the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of sinners. Writing to them in June 1784 from Greenock during his assistantship, twenty-three years previously, he had urged them to seek the Saviour in these terms:

It would greatly unburden me from anxiety, and animate me in seeking the salvation of others, if I were assured, as to each of you, of your being got into the true path of seeking and serving God. Nothing less than being born of the Spirit can give any more than a far off report of what it is to see and to feel the infinite glory and love of God; and this report of his excellency, where it is not believed so as to awaken the utmost earnestness about obtaining the experience of the joy of the Lord, must hereafter become a source of endless mourning. Therefore, I beseech you, by all the mercies and terrors of God, make haste to obey that invitation, ‘O taste and see that the Lord is good’, and to have it beyond doubt that you are among those who are sealed, by the Holy Spirit of God, to the day of redemption, and for whom he is preparing such things as eye hath not seen nor ear heard. One of the chief hindrances of saving illumination is, believing the deceitful testimony of carnal sense and reason against the truth, both as to the justice and the love of God, and resting in common knowledge and seriousness, instead of that knowledge and soundness of heart which come from regenerating grace.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 123. Letter dated 3rd September 1792.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 144, 150. Letters dated 10th February and 7th May 1795.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 151, Letter dated 7th May 1795.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 55, Letter dated 9th June 1784.

He was in London when his mother died; and his father wrote to him giving an account of her death from which it is clear that in the intervening years she had found Christ as her Saviour. Responding to his father's letter, the son writes:

The account of my mother's death, which I received this day week, took hold of me with great sorrow, But I was immediately visited with such an opening of heaven as lifted me at once above the body, and gave me an inexpressibly delightful view of the glory and love of God, in her victory over death, and in her admission into his holy presence. And, in the last seven days, I have been led almost continually into such views of his work, carried on in her in this world in a very secret and silent manner, and of the glorious surprise of her entrance into the light and joy of heaven, and of her present employment there, as have wonderfully sweetened this bereavement ... My mind being fully set at rest, and God having granted me all that I could desire, yea more than I could have imagined, concerning her who is gone.

The anxious son then goes on to give words of advice to the bereaved father concerning his own soul's state for eternity:

I am now more at liberty to enter into the circumstances of your situation which require light and consolation from on high in a peculiar degree. I have some reason to think that God has in reserve for you some nearer and more powerful discovery of himself and of his truth and ways, than you have ever yet met with and that, in this solemn interval, before you are called to launch forth into the great ocean of eternity, some things will be unfolded to your mind which will give a new clearness and lustre to your prospect of a disembodied state. And, in this view, I can only request you to keep off as much as possible from worldly care, to be much in reading the Scriptures, meditation, and prayer; and to attend closely to what the word of God testifies respecting the character and exercises of those who are represented as enjoying much of his special presence. All that you need is summed up in these two passages Isaiah 57:15 and 66:2; and in the beatitudes, Matthew 5. It is mercy to be kept afar from gross evils. But stronger light is necessary to bring us unfeignedly to repent of the secret pride and stoutness of the heart, its self-righteous idolatry, its unbelieving rejection of the voice and testimony of God in his word, its degrading the glory of the person and work of Emmanuel, its undervaluing the work and influences of the Holy Spirit of grace.¹⁵⁸

On a visit to Paisley to assist at communion season, he called on his father three months after his mother's death. Writing from near Paisley to a correspondent he explains, 'I now write within sight of the ancient building, near which the remains of my mother are deposited, and in view of the mountains near Greenock, where I have visited the burying places of some of my most intimate friends.' He also informs his correspondent that, 'since I left London, I have delivered eleven sermons, most of them of considerable length, besides six sacramental exhortations at the dispensation of the Lord's Supper in this town last Lord's day.'¹⁵⁹

In the midst of his congregational trials Love involved himself in seeking to minister to the Jews. Though the references in his published letters

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 200-201. Letter dated 27th March 1797.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 215. Letter dated 26th July 1797.

are few, it is apparent that he held evening services for them for a period of time at the Artillery Street church. In the volume of sermons published in 1826, the year after his death, there is a sermon, regrettably undated, that Love delivered at the Bury Street meeting-house for the instruction of the Jews. The title of the printed sermon is *Christianity and Modern Judaism Discriminated; or A view of the leading Differences of Sentiment between Jews and Christians*. The text from which Love dealt with this topic was Genesis 1:4, ‘And God divided the light from the darkness.’¹⁶⁰ The congregation which eventually met at Bury Street, St. Mary Axe meeting-house was an Independent cause started soon after the Black Bartholomew Act of 1662. The first pastor was Joseph Caryl and in the impressive line of its ministers were John Owen, David Clarkson, and Isaac Watts. When John Love preached there, the pastor was Thomas Beck.¹⁶¹ It was one of the historic Nonconformist meeting-houses of London and there can be little doubt that by preaching there John Love would have become well known among the Nonconformist community of the capital.

Though Love was preaching at sacramental occasions in his native Scotland, though he was ministering to the Jews, though he was preaching in the ancient Nonconformist meeting-houses of London, and though – as we intend to consider in a separate article – he was taking a significant part in establishing the leading missionary society of nineteenth century Britain, matters in his congregation at Artillery Street were not showing any sign of improvement. John Love himself yearned for it to be different. In the letter that he had written to one of his correspondents from Paisley, he said, ‘I habitually look towards London with concern and affection ... I wish that all who have adhered to my ministry in London may experience the power and sweetness of the truth and ways of the Lord, and may walk so as to please his searching and ever watchful eyes.’¹⁶²

Once back in London, and writing very probably to the same person that he communicated with from Paisley, he informs him about the situation in his Spitalfields congregation:

Since we parted I have had much experience of light and darkness, though the light has prevailed, as it must at length expel the whole mass of darkness. I find (the name of a person in his congregation has been deleted) here looking forth as formerly, in his lofty Laodicean stubbornness, and setting words of defiance, while power is withheld. You would sometimes wonder if you were here; to think that so much of God’s light and majesty should be let out to answer apparently such insignificant purposes. I am here like a lamp kept burning in a sepulchre, observed only by a visitant now and then: but I am proclaiming those, things which at the Day of Judgment will stop the mouths of myriads who never heard them in this world. And while I keep that day in view, I see reason to go on without any indulged depression.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ The sermon is printed in John Love, *Sermons on Public Occasions*, pp. 117-143.

¹⁶¹ For the history of Bury Street meeting-house, see Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, Vol. 1, pp. 251-328; Godfrey Holden Pike, *Ancient Meeting Houses or, Memorial Pictures of Non-conformity in Old* (London, 1870), pp. 208-264.

¹⁶² *Letters of John Love*, pp. 216, 217. Letter dated 26th July 1797.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 224, 225. Letter dated 30th November 1797.

His relationship with Artillery Street was now reaching breaking point; in January 1798 he writes what was possibly his most devastating critique of the small congregation in London:

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 ... This sort of profession, so far as it prevails, and I fear it does prevail extensively indeed in this place, is understood in heaven as a call for the kindling of such a furnace as none of the reprobate silver shall be able to endure. And when I consider the profane on one side, and professors on the other, bearing the same image in presumption and stubborn loftiness and stoutness of spirit, and think what kind of terrors those must be, which shall be sufficient to alarm and subdue such a generation, I tremble for myself; not because I fear the Judge of the world will mistake me for one of them (the separation has been well kept up outwardly, and still more inwardly between us); but because I feel the want of that highly tempered faith, and courage, which shall be found necessary in being near such desolations, and in bearing the shock of necessary trial and chastisement ... I perceive, indeed, the wisdom and kindness of the Lord in keeping me more than ten years in a furnace, while, others were rolling at their ease; and I would be chargeable with belying his faithfulness and power, were I to say that no good effect has taken place through such a course of singular discipline, or that I feel no heart preparation for a stroke of calamity ... but as to any real, extensive good, being done here, by preaching or otherwise, it is like looking for life amidst the rottenness and putrid dust of the grave. 'Twice dead, plucked up by the roots', appears almost the universal inscription. I have therefore nothing to lean upon but that Omnipotence which controls death and subdues hell, and raises its fairest works out of the vilest and most desperate materials ... But I fear those terrible things in righteousness, which must be the accompaniment of divine power, working in the face of inveterate stubborn opposition, and under the impulse of long suppressed jealousy. Even the indulgence of the idea, for which, however, I wish there were firmer evidence, that many true converts are hid amidst the polluting smothering rubbish, even this removes not the necessity of solemn visitations, but rather demands that judgment should begin at the house of God; that the true work of God in regenerate souls may be delivered from depravity and contamination, and may appear manifest in its native lustre. There are few, however, with whom I choose to converse very freely on these subjects. Blessed be God! His throne is accessible, and we are permitted to tell him all!¹⁶⁴

John Love was a highly esteemed assistant in both Rutherglen and Greenock and would later have an outstanding ministry in Glasgow; what then was the difficulty in London? Answers to that question have been suggested in both the biography of a close colleague in the London Missionary Society and a frequent visitor to the Scots Presbytery, the Burgher seceder, Alexander Waugh, and in the first sketch of Love's career by John Morison.

James Hay and Henry Belfrage, the biographers of Waugh, provide the following explanation: 'John Love was a man of deep and various learning – of eminently exalted piety. With a dove-like simplicity, he possessed one of the kindest hearts that ever warmed a human bosom. But his habits of thinking

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 228-230. Letter dated 23rd January 1798.

rendered his style deficient in perspicuity; and his address as a preacher was slow, and not attractive to a London audience. Hence the man, who was qualified by his learning, wisdom, and piety, to enlighten the metropolis, was restricted to a small congregation in an obscure chapel.¹⁶⁵ Whilst we do not think that this explanation is adequate, it should not be dismissed as it may have been a contributing factor. As noted earlier, a similar point is made in the Memoir of Love in the *Christian Instructor*. The writer states: ‘his manner in the pulpit was slow, but solemn and impressive.’¹⁶⁶ Further, he seems in response to the opposition he was facing to have kept aloof from very many in his congregation. We have noticed that he stated explicitly to a correspondent that ‘the separation has been well kept up outwardly, and still more inwardly between us’ and that, ‘there are few, however, with whom I choose to converse very freely.’¹⁶⁷ This stance by Love could have only worsened the situation between him and his people.

John Morison, though deliberately vague, is probably more accurate in his assessment; this is his explanation: ‘It does not appear that, so far as his pastoral labours were concerned, his sphere in the metropolis was at any time eminently congenial to his enlarged and devoted heart. He had, indeed, an attached few around him, who knew how to value his rare excellencies of mind and character, and to whom he gave himself with an unsuspecting confidence and love; but the general tone and habits of his flock were such as rather to foster anxious solicitude than to draw forth the warm sympathies of such a mind as Dr. Love’s. There was a democratic spirit in the Artillery Street congregation, combined with a portion of the Antinomian leaven, which often oppressed the heart of the pastor, and which ultimately led to the disruption of the society.’¹⁶⁸ When Morison says the problem was ‘a democratic spirit in the congregation combined with a portion of the congregation being affected with the leaven of Antinomianism’ what he was really asserting behind this rather vague statement is that Crispin Street-Artillery Street was not a Presbyterian congregation at all but an Independent congregation and that, in addition, a significant and influential portion of its membership held hyper-Calvinist views. The second part of this paper was the first attempt that has been made to write the history of the Crispin Street congregation, particularly in its relation to John Love’s pastorate. It is, however, only when this history is understood that an explanation can be found of Love’s discomfort as their minister.¹⁶⁹

The Crispin Street congregation seems to have had great difficulty in securing a minister. Alexander Simpson had left them after just a few years and prior to that there had been a long vacancy. As far as one can ascertain from such documents as are available, this was why an Independent church became a congregation of the Scots Presbytery in London. They did so in order to get a minister. It is almost certain that John Love knew little of the history detailed in Part II of this paper when he accepted the call to Crispin

¹⁶⁵ James Hay and Henry Belfrage, *A Memoir of the Reverend Alexander Waugh* (London, 1830), p. 211.

¹⁶⁶ Cited in Williamson, *Old Greenock*, p. 97.

¹⁶⁷ *Letters of John Love*, pp. 229-230. Letter dated 23rd January 1798.

¹⁶⁸ Morison, *Fathers and Founders*, p. 259.

¹⁶⁹ See *SRSJ*, Vol. 8, pp. 70-184.

Street. One can only conjecture that Love's troubles started when, to this small Independent congregation with a High-Calvinist background, who found his preaching style difficult, he began to introduce Presbyterian principles and to preach the free offer of the Gospel as he had done in Rutherglen and Greenock. The result was the alienation of a majority of the congregation from their pastor. For John Love, as far as his pastoral ministry was concerned, it resulted in a decade of sadness and one of very great trial. After coming to London in order to obtain ordination it is not difficult to imagine how he felt regarding what had happened and the questionings that must have arisen in his mind. John Morison notes: 'There would be extreme mystery connected with Dr. Love's sojourn in London, were we compelled to view him only as the pastor of an obscure and by no means flourishing congregation of Presbyterian Dissenters.'¹⁷⁰ It would seem, as Morrison observes, and as Love himself believed, that in His providence, God had brought him to London in order to take a leading part in the formation of the London Missionary Society, the first inter-denomination missionary society in the United Kingdom.

(c) Resignation

In late June or very early July 1798, John Love resigned his charge in London and, without a call to any congregation, returned to Scotland.¹⁷¹ The reason was not any disagreement or difficulty with his London Missionary Society 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 from, or 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.¹⁷² Several of the short accounts of Love's life give the impression that he went straight from London into the charge in Glasgow where he served as the minister of the Chapel of Ease at Anderston.¹⁷³ This is incorrect; he left London with no charge to go to in Scotland and returned to Greenock. Though we cannot be certain it seems highly probable that he and his wife went to stay with her parents at their home in Greenock.

In the reconstructed minute book of the London Scots Presbytery, after the minute of 2nd May 1798, is a copy of a letter from the elders at

¹⁷⁰ Morison, *Fathers and Founders*, p. 260. John Love was awarded a doctorate by the University of Aberdeen 1816. In 1815 he was a candidate for the chair of divinity at Aberdeen University and, though unsuccessful he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity at Marischal College the following year. See the *ODNB* entry on John Love.

¹⁷¹ John Love had been present at a Presbytery meeting on 2nd May 1798 and had made no mention of an impending resignation. There are no personal letters in the printed volume of letters between 1st March and 7th 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.

¹⁷² Morison, *Fathers and Founders*, p. 259; Cameron, *The Scots Kirk in London*, p. 94.

¹⁷³ See the John R. Macintosh entry on 'John Love' in Nigel M. de S. Cameron, *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology (DSCHT)* (Edinburgh, 1993), p. 498 which asserts that Love was in London until 1800, and *ODNB*.

Artillery Street with no explanation. This was presumably all the memory-aid that Henry Hunter needed to construct the full minute. The letter, dated 8th July 1798, reads as follows:

To the Divines composing the Presbytery of London

Rev. Sirs

We the Elders of the Church lately under the pastorage of the Rev. Mr. Love delegated by the Church at a Church meeting assembled are desired to inform you of the resignation of Mr. Love and beg your Christian advice and protection in supplying us with ministers to declare the place vacant and also to beg your kind attention in supplying ministers until providence pleases to fill the place.

Signed

Mr. Tait

Hugh Mair

Mr. Thompson

Mr. Peden¹⁷⁴

The letter is interesting for several reasons. As far as the writer is aware, this is the only source of knowing the names of anyone in the Crispin Street/ Artillery Street congregation. None of the signatories were members of the Scots Presbytery and the language used reveals a lack of familiarity with the way to address a Presbytery on such an occasion. The practical Independency of the congregation is also evident – the elders have been delegated by a church-meeting to fulfill a task.

Although it is not recorded in the minute book, it seems that at the meeting when the letter was considered by the Presbytery, John Blythe, the minister at Woolwich, had been instructed to preach the Artillery Street church vacant. The minute of 3rd September 1798 contains the following: ‘Mr. Blythe informed the Presbytery that he had complied with their order in preaching at Artillery Lane and declaring the place vacant.’¹⁷⁵ The closing minute of the same sederunt of the Presbytery reads: ‘Resolved that the Rev. Mr. Jas. Young a Minister from Scotland be requested to supply the congregation at Artillery Street as often as he can until the next meeting of Presbytery when their case will be taken into consideration.’¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, pp. 165-166.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 167. Although the identity is not certain, the Mr James Young referred to in the minute could well be the person referred to in Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 2. p. 157 and Vol. 7, pp. 510, 512, who was licensed by the Northumberland Presbyterian Classis on 14th May 1782 and ordained minister of Kirkley, near Morpeth, on 28th August 1782. After a further pastorate at Glanton he was presented by George Ker of Morrison to the Legerwood congregation and admitted on 6th December 1797. His settlement was rescinded by the General Assembly on 25th May 1798, according to the law of the Church, owing to his not being qualified. This decision so affected his spirits that he died at Coldstream on 23rd January 1799. He was forty-three. See Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 2, p. 157. He could well, therefore, have been in London in September 1798. Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 7, p. 492 appears to confuse the Artillery Street congregation, of which John Love had been the pastor, with a separation from the London Wall congregation in 1803. Kenneth Black and George Cameron repeat the mistake of the *Fasti*. See Black, *The Scots Churches in England*, pp. 59, 223; Cameron, *The Scots Kirk in London*, p. 113.

The first letter we have of John Love after he left London reflects only marginally on the causes. It seems to have been written to a man in the Artillery Street congregation who appreciated his ministry. It was written from Greenock and dated 7th December 1798.

Dear Sir,—The goods have arrived safe, through the kindness of Providence, excepting the box with papers, which was designed to go by the waggon; of it I have not yet heard, though it may perhaps come to Glasgow. We reckon ourselves much obliged to you for your diligent and faithful attention respecting these matters.

Though I have no reason to repent of having given up London, yet I retain a concern for the abiding effect of my ministry among the few whose minds and consciences were accessible to its influence; and I wish to entertain solemn and tender compassion towards them, as living in the midst of such a deformed chaos of iniquity, of filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, against which God will one day appear in the glory of his sin-avenging power, and clad with zeal as with a cloak. They who pass through such a crowd of base hypocrites and profane rebels against the Most High, without being dragged with them to their hell, must be wonderfully kept, guarded, and fortified by the wonderful grace of God, and will have much need of Christ's praying for them that their faith fail not. That the number of such in London is comparatively small indeed, will, I am persuaded, be made fully known to men and angels in that day when the dreadful Judge of the earth shall cause his fire to rend the bowels of this vast globe, dry up its seas, and consume its detestable idols. It is your concern, my dear sir, to seek to have it made very sure in your own conscience, that you shall be among the few who shall be seen undismayed at the coming of the Lord.

I have no need to write to you any new doctrine or to alter my manner of address to you on the subjects of eternity, excepting as to the degree of earnestness, vehemence, and power, though I were sure that the solemnities of judgment would commence the next morning after your receiving this letter. I have only to call you to remember and to follow up the clear aim and tendency of my ministry, with respect to a deep conviction of sin and wrath, the consuming purity of the living God, the high demands of his glorious and eternal justice, the precious virtue of the blood and obedience of Him who is God, the supernatural quality of that faith which truly receives the atonement, the riches of the love and truth of Jehovah towards those whom he draws to himself in Christ, the greatness and universality of their renewing by his power, the glory of their character and prospects in time and to all eternity. If you practically preserve and entertain the impression of the instructions and warnings you have heard on these and similar subjects, I do not hesitate to say that it shall be well with you. Following this course, and obeying in all points the dictates of an enlightened and lively conscience, you will find marvellous light, bursting in from above and shining on your path, and every needful providential supply and deliverance shall assuredly be imparted.

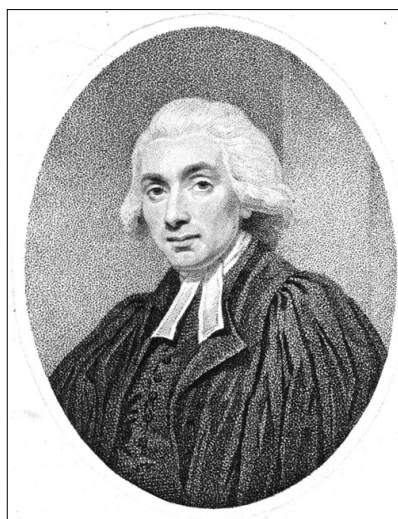
I find it necessary to rise every day with new ardour to the Christian race, work, and warfare and to assault heaven with fresh violence, and to press into the realizing sight of the Ancient of days, and of his bright throne and tribunal, and of that high paradise where he walks, shedding abroad the sweet odours of his love and glory; that I may be ready to contend for Him in this ill-smelling world, and to stand among his saints and angels when the

vapour of life shall vanish. I request the Christian remembrance and prayers of those who have loved me ‘for the truth’s sake, which dwelleth with us, and shall be with us forever’.¹⁷⁷

(d) Artillery Street after John Love

Following John Love’s departure, the Artillery Street congregation seems to have moved rather quickly in giving a call to Robert Simpson, an eminent, and highly respected, resident theological tutor in the Evangelical Congregational College at Hoxton.¹⁷⁸ The College was situated little more than a mile from Artillery Street. The minute of the Scots Presbytery for 6th March 1799 details the congregation’s call to Simpson:

Messrs Tait and Thomson Elders of the Congregation in Artillery Street appeared as delegates from that society and produced a call from them to the Rev. Mr. Simpson of Hoxton to be their pastor in the Lord together with his acceptance of that call. The Presbytery taking these into consideration that they could take no step in that business until Mr. Simpson laid before them an extract of his license to preach the Gospel from some Presbytery of the Church of Scotland – with other such certificates of his having gone through a regular course of academical education.¹⁷⁹



Robert Simpson, tutor at Hoxton Academy.

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It seems clear that once John Love had returned to Scotland, the congregation desired to revert back to Independency: the elders appear as delegates of the congregational meeting. The procedure adopted by the congregation in their call to Simpson was based on Independent, not Presbyterian principles. When John Love was called to Crispin Street, the Presbytery moderated in a call. In Robert Simpson’s case the Presbytery were not involved in either the call or in placing it in the theological tutor’s hands for his acceptance. Rather this was all undertaken by the congregation themselves, including approaching Simpson and his acceptance of the call. All this was done without any involvement by the Scots Presbytery. They then desired the Presbytery to induct Simpson as their minister. Understandably, the Presbytery were unwilling to do this: they wanted first to be assured that Simpson had been licensed regularly by a Scottish Presbytery, and that he was a Presbyterian,

¹⁷⁷ *Letters of John Love*, pp. 249-251. Letter dated 7th December 1798.

¹⁷⁸ The Crispin Street congregation appears to have approached Robert Simpson prior to calling John Love. In 1786, just after Alexander Simpson had left to become the minister of a congregation in Alnwick and whilst Robert Simpson was still a minister of a Congregational church in Bolton, he had been sent to London by his Lancashire congregation to solicit funds, and whilst in the capital he was invited to become the minister at Crispin Street. See the account of Robert Simpson in the *Congregational Magazine*, Vol. 2 (London, 1819), pp. 1-7, 66-73, 129-137.

¹⁷⁹ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, p. 171.

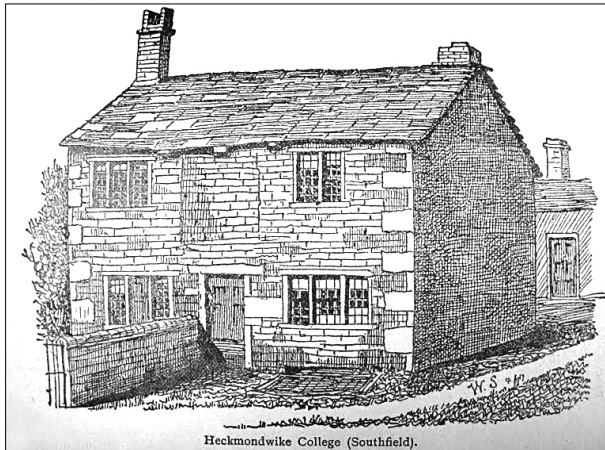
and had been through a regular course of training that the Scots Presbytery regarded as appropriate.

Undeterred by the decision of the Presbytery, Simpson was inducted as pastor of the congregation. The *Evangelical Magazine* for March 1799 under its section on 'Religious Intelligence – London' contains the following:

Rev. Robert Simpson, Sen. Tutor at the Hoxton Academy, is appointed to the pastoral office of the Presbyterian Church, Artillery Street, London late under the care of the Rev. John Love, foreign Secretary of the Missionary Society, who has resigned and accepted of a charge at Greenock in Scotland.¹⁸⁰

There is no record of the Scots Presbytery being involved in Simpson's induction and it appears that at this point the congregation ceased its connection with the London Scots Presbytery and reverted back explicitly to being a Congregational church.

Robert Simpson (1746-1817) was born on a farm at Orwell in the county of Kinross. Though his father had intended him for the Christian ministry he showed no initial predilection for such a calling. Whilst he was still a young



Heckmondwike Academy, in Yorkshire,
where Simpson was trained.

man, his grandfather died and left some landed property to his widow, who expressed a wish that her grandson might be permitted to assist her in the management of the farm. Her request was yielded to, and the young Simpson was for several years engaged in farming until his grandmother retired from the farm, when it became necessary to seek for other employment. He was then apprenticed to a clothier, near Dunfermline,¹⁸¹ where he

remained until the expiration of his articles; after which he removed to the north of England, for the purpose of perfecting himself in the knowledge of his business, and gaining an acquaintance with the new machinery that was being employed in the clothing industry.

The move to England was for Simpson the day of salvation. He settled at Cotherstone, near Barnard Castle, in the county of Durham. Here he began to attend on the evangelical ministry of Luke Prattman (d. 1811), of Barnard Castle¹⁸² where divine light and real conviction broke in upon his

¹⁸⁰ *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 7 (1799), p. 130. The notice is in error with regard to Love's accepting a charge in Greenock. He returned to Greenock where his wife's parents lived and was without a charge until July 1800 when he was admitted to the pastorate of the Chapel of Ease in Anderston.

¹⁸¹ The record on Simpson on the Dissenting Academies database (<http://dissacad.english.qmul.ac.uk/>) states that whilst he was in Scotland he had been associated with both the Burgher and Antiburgher Seceders. No authority is provided for this; it is, however, highly likely as this was an area of Scotland where the Secession Church was very strong.

¹⁸² The churches at Cotherstone and Barnard Castle were closely linked. At first they were Presbyterian, but with the blight of Arianism affecting the churches they had become

mind. Prattman, who was an Independent, had been trained at James Scott's Academy at Heckmondwike and encouraged Simpson to become a minister and seek training under Scott.¹⁸³ There he distinguished himself by his close attention to classical and theological studies, and particularly by his proficiency in the acquirement of Hebrew literature. After leaving Heckmondwike he was for the next decade the minister in three Congregational churches in Lancashire: at Haslingden, Elswick, and Bolton. Whilst his ministry in the first two congregations was very short, eight years were spent at Duke's Alley church in Bolton.¹⁸⁴ Duke's Alley in Bolton owed its origin to the Methodist movement of the eighteenth century and particularly to the labours of John Bennet, initially one of John Wesley's itinerants, who having embraced Calvinism left Wesley's movement. George Whitefield preached in Bolton in 1750 amidst considerable opposition. At the end of the sermon he prayed 'with great fervour that on the very spot on which he stood a temple might be raised to the honour of the Lord.' The Duke's Alley Church was raised on that spot.¹⁸⁵

In the beginning of 1791 Simpson received a pressing invitation to become the resident and theological tutor of the Dissenting Academy at Hoxton.¹⁸⁶ He continued, without interruption, to discharge the important duties devolving upon him, for nearly twenty-seven years. He died on 21st December 1817. Simpson had been involved in the commencement of the *Evangelical Magazine* and, along with John Love, was actively involved in the London Missionary Society.¹⁸⁷

For the congregation to have acquired such an eminent man as Robert Simpson to succeed John Love was quite surprising. It should be noted,

congregational. R. S. Robson, 'Early Nonconformity in Weardale and Teesdale', *Transactions of the Congregation Historical Society*, Vol. 5:1 (February 1911), pp. 28-29.

¹⁸³ James Scott (1710-1783) was born near Lauder in Berwickshire and educated at Edinburgh University. He was an Independent and a committed Evangelical in touch with the leaders of the Evangelical revival of the eighteenth century. He set up his Academy to 'combat the spread of Socinian darkness into the north'. Henry Rack says of him, 'Scott's doctrine and preaching style was reminiscent of the old Puritan divines.' See article by Rack on James Scott in *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography, 1730-1860*, Vol. 2, p. 987. For Scott and his academy, see Kenneth W. Wadsworth, *Yorkshire United Independent College* (London, 1954), pp. 34-59; James G. Miall, *Congregationalism in Yorkshire* (London, 1868), pp. 146-152, 273-275; and the Dissenting Academies database.

¹⁸⁴ For Simpson's ministry in the three Lancashire congregations, see Benjamin Nightingale, *Lancashire Nonconformity* (3 vols., Manchester, 1890-1892), Vol. 1, p. 89; Vol. 2, p. 142; Vol. 3, pp. 20-22.

¹⁸⁵ W. H. Davison, *Centenary Memorials of Duke's Alley Chapel*, p. 55, cited in Nightingale, *Lancashire Nonconformity*, Vol. 3, p. 19.

¹⁸⁶ For an account of the Hoxton Independent Academy, see H. McLachlan, *English Education under the Test Acts being the History of the Nonconformist Academies, 1662-1820* (Manchester University Press, 1931), pp. 236-241. It is asserted by McLachlan that 'Evangelical doctrine, known as the three "R's," "Ruin, Redemption and Regeneration" was taught to the students, and by them preached with great success in a mode characterised by "Animation, Affection and Application"' (p. 238). For the history of Hoxton, see also the Dissenting Academies database.

¹⁸⁷ For biographical details of Simpson, see *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 26 (1818), pp. 413-415, 458-463; Morison, *Fathers and Founders of the London Missionary Society*, pp. 355-363; J. A. Jones, *Bunhill Memorials* (London, 1849), pp. 254-256; *Congregational Magazine*, Vol. 2 (London, 1819), pp. 1-7, 66-73, 129-137.

however, that Simpson continued as the resident tutor at Hoxton when he accepted the Artillery Street pastorate. There had been a chapel adjoining the Academy at Hoxton in which he ministered. It was after the chapel had been taken down to make room for a larger one that he accepted the call to Artillery Street. He was not, however, their minister for very long. In less than two years he had resigned. John Morison's account appears to give the impression that Simpson was pleased to leave the congregation. He writes, 'After this he became pastor of a congregation in Artillery Street which however, he soon left, and never afterwards accepted any regular charge.'¹⁸⁸ We do not know why Simpson left Artillery Street after such a very short time. He was Congregational in his ecclesiology and this would have removed one of the objections the Artillery Street people seemed to have had to John Love. Though there are no published sermons of Simpson, their content cannot have been significantly different from that of his predecessor. Indeed, his style of preaching may have been rather more lively than that of the ponderous and stately John Love, as Hoxton encouraged the preaching style of the three 'A's': 'Animation, Affection and Application'. One suspects that he met an attitude in the congregation with which he was not entirely satisfied, and resigned. If the record in Charles Surman's index at the Dr. William's Library in London regarding the Artillery Street congregation after Simpson resigned is correct, then Artillery Street did not have another minister for twenty-four years.¹⁸⁹

IV. Greenock and the call to Glasgow

From the elders' letter contained in the London Scots Presbytery minutes it seems that John Love resigned and returned to Greenock in June 1798. He was now forty-one years of age and it would be just over two years before he would have another charge. These must have been very difficult years for Love. Writing just days after his settlement he says:

With regard to the long, and, in a merely rational view, perplexing interval of an unsettled situation, I now look backward, as I looked forward, to it as a period designed to be particularly marked with the trial and victory of faith, and bearing a peculiar impression of the Supreme wisdom, truth, love, and power. That this is not the unfounded assumption of arrogance, will, I trust, be manifest to the universe in the day when the all-comprehensive books shall be opened, and the whole mystery of God disclosed.¹⁹⁰

He had begun the letter by apologising to his correspondent for his delay in responding as his outward affairs had been so variable and had a shifting aspect. It also seems from a veiled reference in the letter that he was indebted

¹⁸⁸ Morison, *Fathers and Founders of the London Missionary Society*, p. 362.

¹⁸⁹ There is reason to question the accuracy of Surman. As noted earlier, Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 7, p. 492 appears to confuse the Artillery Street congregation, of which John Love had been the pastor, with a separation from the London Wall congregation in 1803. This error in the *Fasti* was followed by Kenneth Black, George Cameron, and also by Charles Surman in his invaluable index. He views the Artillery Street congregation to which Simpson ministered briefly as different to the one of which Love was the minister. This we know to be incorrect from the contemporary notice referred to above in the *Evangelical Magazine* of March 1799 which explicitly states that Simpson became the successor to Love.

¹⁹⁰ *Letters of John Love*, p. 278. Letter dated 18th July 1800.

to his correspondent for temporal support and possibly for helping him to obtain a fixed charge in Scotland.¹⁹¹

In opening his mind to his correspondent, Love reflected on God's goodness to him at a difficult time, his being made useful though without a charge, and on the help he had received:

I have been all along sustained and guided, comforted and made useful, I hope, in ministerial labour, beyond the more ordinary measure of settled service. And, as this singular season of trial and seeming humiliation has been brightened with the splendours of mercy, truth, and power, shining from the eternal throne in the heavens, so it has brought to view the sincerity and faithful kindness of many saints, by such fruits as shall hereafter 'abound to their account.' At length the design of my friends, relative to my fixed pastoral connection here, after suffering various agitations and shocks of hostile opposition, in the midst of which (blessed be the God of all grace!) I have enjoyed a serenity never disturbed, a confidence never depressed, has obtained its accomplishment.¹⁹²

Six months earlier he had noted in a letter that his name was being mentioned with respect to a call to the newly built Anderston Chapel of Ease. He writes:

With respect to the chapel at Anderston, I find that the delay has been merely incidental. An application was made last Wednesday to the Presbytery, for leave to have it opened the 23rd instant (February 1800). There is at present every prospect of a speedy and harmonious election. I remain free from anxiety, leaving this and other matters in the hands of Him who is worthy to be trusted to the uttermost, and with whom those concerns are securely deposited, the weight and magnitude whereof far surpass the most comprehensive thoughts of angels.¹⁹³

Anderston Chapel was built on Clyde Street, within the Barony Parish in Glasgow, and had been completed in 1799. It was able to seat 1250 people. The minister of the Barony Parish of which it was a chapel of ease was John Burns (1744-1839).¹⁹⁴ As Love noted in his letter of 18th July, there had been opposition to his settlement as the minister. This had not proven successful and Love received a letter from the Managers of the Chapel inviting him to the pastorate. To this he replied on 6th May 1800.

To the Managers of the Chapel of Ease, Clyde Street, Anderston

Glasgow, May 6, 1800.

Gentlemen – Having considered my election to be minister of the chapel under your care, I judge it to be the will of God that I should exercise my ministry, with approbation of the Presbytery of Glasgow, in that chapel. I do therefore hereby express to you my willingness to engage in this important spiritual service. I look forward to this charge with fear and trembling, because of

¹⁹¹ Ibid. pp. 277-278. Letter dated 18th July 1800.

¹⁹² Ibid. pp. 278-279. Letter dated 18th July 1800.

¹⁹³ Ibid., p. 270. Letter dated 8th February 1800.

¹⁹⁴ Previous ministers of the Barony parish included Zachary Boyd (c. 1585-1653), Vice Chancellor of Glasgow University, who had been present at the important Glasgow Assembly of 1638. Boyd was succeeded as pastor by Donald Cargill, the martyr for Christ's Crown and Covenant.

my insufficiency and unworthiness; yet with confidence and hope, while I remember the grace and love of that Almighty Lord and Saviour, who hath promised to be with his true ministers always, even to the end of the world. Trusting that my connection with you, the proprietors and people in the chapel, shall be productive of the happiest fruits; and earnestly wishing that your endeavours to promote true religion may be crowned with success by the blessing of the Most High, I am. J. L.¹⁹⁵

Prior to writing this letter of acceptance, Love had written to Henry Hunter, the Moderator that year of the London Presbytery, requesting an extract of his ordination at Crispin Street. The minute of 2nd April 1800 reflects the warmth that his fellow presbyters in London felt towards him and the pleasure they had that he had, at last, received a call to a congregation. It reads:

The Moderator informed the Presbytery that he had received a letter from Mr. John Love, lately a member of this Presbytery, acquainting him that he had a near prospect of being settled in Scotland and requesting the Presbytery to send him an extract of his ordination, which letter being approved it was Resolved unanimously, That the Moderator and Secretary do meet and prepare the same so that it may be sent in due time.¹⁹⁶

On Friday 11th July 1800, he was inducted by the Presbytery of Glasgow into the charge at Anderston, in which he would serve for twenty-five years until his death on 17th December 1825. John Burns, the parish minister, presided at the induction. On the following Sabbath, Love was introduced to his charge by Robert Balfour (1748-1818), the minister of St. Paul's in Glasgow.¹⁹⁷ Both these men were old-school experimental Calvinists in the Church of Scotland. They were both enthusiastic to see Love settled within the bounds of their Presbytery. Speaking of them, with regard to his admittance to Anderston, Love writes, 'I cannot mention either of these ministers without remarking the firmness and activity of their generous friendship through the whole progress of this business.'¹⁹⁸

Towards the conclusion of the letter, written just a week after his induction to Anderston, he sums up his attitude to the ministry that was in front of him in these words: 'It now remains that I endeavour "to occupy" and "to make full proof of my ministry."' For this purpose I hope to make further trial of that unexhausted grace and power, to the importance and efficacy whereof my experience has borne such diversified testimony.¹⁹⁹

John Love's years in London were both years of sadness and years of joy: sadness as far as his pastoral ministry was concerned and joy in playing a leading part in the formation of one of the largest missionary enterprises of the nineteenth century.²⁰⁰ In the crucible of London in the last decade of

¹⁹⁵ *Letters of John Love*, p. 274. Letter dated 6th May 1800.

¹⁹⁶ MS. *Scots Presbytery Minutes*, pp. 175-176.

¹⁹⁷ Robert Balfour (1748-1818) was awarded a D.D. from Princeton College, New Jersey in 1802. For further information, see Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 3, p. 463; *DSCHT*, p. 54.

¹⁹⁸ *Letters of John Love*, p. 279. Letter dated 18th July 1800.

¹⁹⁹ *Letters of John Love*, p. 279. Letter dated 18th July 1800.

²⁰⁰ It is intended that the fourth and final part of this account of 'John Love in London' will detail his major involvement, along with that of some of his co-presbyters in the London Scots Presbytery, in the formation of the London Missionary Society.

the eighteenth century he was being prepared for that for which he is best known, his outstanding ministry at Anderston in Glasgow where, according to Principal John Macleod, ‘he had a great congregation that rallied round about his ministry, and there he became the recognised centre of the Old School Gospel folk in the West of Scotland.’²⁰¹ His zeal for foreign missions also remained unabated. He made a massive contribution to the fledgling Glasgow Missionary Society and became the secretary of the organisation. The Glasgow Society’s mission station in South Africa was named after him – it was called ‘Lovedale’.

Appendix 1

Scots Presbytery of London – Applicants for ordination, 1787-1797

David Todd (d. 1813)

University attended – St. Andrews.

Date and Nature of application – 24th June 1789. Request by Peter Street congregation. that he be ordained as colleague and successor to John Patrick.

Date and Place of licensing – Presbytery of Kirkaldy, 24th November 1779.

Date of ordination – 3rd February 1790.

Ministry after ordination – Peter Street in London 1790-1794, Cranshaws 1801-1813.

Biographical information - Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 2, p. 7; Vol. 7, p. 498; Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, Vol. 4, pp. 36-37; Black, *The Scots Churches in England*, p. 229; Surman Index.

Robert Crawford

University attended – Not known.

Date and Nature of application – Unknown due to loss of minute.

Place of licensing – Presbytery of St. Andrews.

Date of ordination – 9th June 1790.

Ministry after ordination – Deal in Kent. 5th June 1793, requests minute of ordination and certificate of his character in prospect of moving to greater situation.

Biographical information – None known.

James Graham, W.S. (1765-1811)

University attended – Glasgow and Writer to the Signet, Edinburgh.

Date and Nature of application – 7th August 1793, David Todd, having information about Graham, had been requested by him to lay before the Presbytery his desire that they would consider his usefulness in becoming a minister of the Gospel according to the forms of the Church of Scotland.

Date and Place of licensing – Not licensed.

²⁰¹ John Macleod, *Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History since the Reformation* (Edinburgh, 1943), p. 221.

Date of ordination – Not ordained by the Scots Presbytery. Graham instructed to come to the next Presbytery. David Todd requested to give information to him. He was ordained in 1809 by the Henry Bathurst, the Bishop of Norwich, into the ministry of the Church of England and had appointments in Gloucestershire and Durham.

Biographical information – DNB and ODNB.

Nathaniel Forsyth

University attended – Glasgow.

Date and Nature of application – 23rd July 1794, as a divinity student to be licensed.

Date and Place of licensing – London Scots Presbytery – minute lost.

Date of ordination – Not known – minute lost.

Ministry after ordination – First London Missionary Society missionary to India.

Biographical information – See subsequent article for biographical account and literature.

Dr William Tennant

University attended – Glasgow.

Date and Nature of application – 5th August 1795. Trials for ordination.

Date and Place of licensing – Certificate provided by the Presbytery – place not known.

Date of ordination – 20th August 1795.

Ministry after ordination – Chaplain to a British regiment in India.

Biographical information – See subsequent article for biographical account and literature.

Mr Rule of Ware in Hertfordshire

University attended – Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Date and Nature of application – 12th August 1795. To study theology with a view to the Christian ministry.

Date and Place of licensing – Application did not appear to proceed.

Biographical information – None known.

John Clark

University attended – Divinity student Edinburgh.

Date and Nature of application – 14th January 1796. Seeking ordination.

Date and Place of licensing – 14th February 1796. London Scots Presbytery.

Date of ordination – 14th February 1796.

Ministry after ordination – Chaplain to the Sierra Leone Company.

Biographical information – See subsequent article for biographical account and literature.

William Nicol

University attended – Glasgow.

Date and Nature of application – 4th November 1796. Seeking ordination as colleague and successor to Dr John Trotter at Swallow Street.

Previously assistant at Laigh Church, Paisley, Middle Church, Greenock, and College Church, Glasgow.

Date and Place of licensing – Date not known. Presbytery of Hamilton.

Date of ordination – 23rd November 1796.

Ministry after ordination – Swallow Street congregation, London.

Biographical information – Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 7, p. 500; J. A. Jones, *Bunhill Memorials*, pp. 190-194; Wilson, *Dissenting Churches*, Vol. 4, pp. 50-51; *Evangelical Magazine*, Vol. 21 (London, 1821), p. 106.

John Blythe

University attended – Glasgow.

Date and Nature of application – 23rd November 1796 (though no minute). Seeking ordination to Woolwich congregation.

Date and Place of licensing – Not known.

Date of ordination – 8th February 1797.

Ministry after ordination – Woolwich congregation, London.

Biographical information – Hew Scott, *Fasti*, Vol. 7, p. 502.