
Jewish ministers of the nineteenth-century Free Church of Scotland

ROBERT J. DICKIE

The role of the Free Church of Scotland (FCS) in Jewish evangelism is well known, not least because of the preparatory work of Andrew Bonar and Robert Murray McCheyne in the Church of Scotland's mission of inquiry in 1839, four years before the Disruption. Their stirring account was published in 1842¹ and this led to the establishment of a mission to the Jews in Pesth.² In general, 'popular' interest has focused on the successful mission there, with accounts in Principal David Brown's *Memoir of John Duncan* (reprinted in 1986 as *The Life of Rabbi Duncan*).³ The early years of the Church's work in Pesth and elsewhere, with successes and disappointments, have been covered in great depth in John S. Ross's *Time for Favour: The Scottish Mission to the Jews, 1838–1852*,⁴ and Ross refers to several prominent Jewish converts, some of whom went on to serve the Free

¹ Andrew A. Bonar and Robert M. McCheyne, *Mission of Discovery* (Fearn: Christian Focus, 1996); originally published as *Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews from the Church of Scotland in 1839* (Edinburgh, 1842) [henceforth: Bonar & McCheyne].

² Pest is the eastern, mostly flat part of the Hungarian capital, separated from Buda and Óbuda to the west of the River Danube: the three parts were united as Budapest in 1873. The Scottish ministers visited it when it was in the Austrian Empire in which German was the official language. Hence Pesth (pronounced 'pest'), in the nineteenth-century German spelling, was the accepted English name. The Berlin Orthographic Conference of 1901 (*Zweite Orthographische Konferenz*) reformed German spelling, replacing the *th* combination in most words and placenames with a simple *t*. This incidentally conformed the German exonym to the Hungarian spelling.

³ David Brown, *Life of the Late John Duncan, D.D.* (Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1872); repr. as *The Life of Rabbi Duncan* (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1986) [henceforth: Brown].

⁴ The period covered by the book ends in 1852, when the Austrian government expelled the Scottish missionaries from Pesth for alleged involvement in political turmoil in 1848–1849.

Church as ministers of the Gospel. The importance of Pesth is evidenced by recent popular accounts and academic works, which discuss its successes and failures, and authors continue to draw lessons applicable to Jewish missionary work.⁵ The Free Church did not confine its Jewish missionary activities to the Hungarian capital, however, and it undertook work over a wide geographical area for the rest of the century.

The present paper aims to examine in a systematic way a different facet of this interesting part of Scottish Church history, namely the six Jewish men who became ministers of the nineteenth-century FCS. It will consider their personal histories and their many years of extensive missionary labours for the Free Church, evangelising among Jews and Gentiles over a vast area of mainland Europe, from Amsterdam in the west to Constantinople (present-day Istanbul) in the east, and from Berlin in the north to Ancona on the Adriatic coast of Italy. Their labours also involved spreading the Gospel to Jews in Jamaica and Britain, and teaching Hebrew in two of the three Free Church Divinity Halls in Scotland. The individual entries for these ministers in Ewing's *Annals of the Free Church of Scotland* are necessarily brief,⁶ providing mere outlines of the lives of ministers ordained in the denomination between 1843 and 1900. More detailed information about these six Jewish converts, as individuals, is found in various British and foreign-language sources. The present paper furnishes the first account of these men as a group, thus breaking new ground in our understanding of this neglected aspect of Scottish Church history.

⁵ Rolf G. Heitman (General Secretary, Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel), 'Jewish mission to Hungary' at the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism, Århus (Denmark), 2007; John W. Keddie, *Mission of Inquiry to Israel in 1839 and its Consequences* (n.p.: Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) Home and Foreign Missions Committee, 2021); Ábrahám Kovács, *The history of the Free Church of Scotland's mission to the Jews in Budapest and its impact on the Reformed Church of Hungary, 1841–1914*, (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2003) – later published with the same title (Frankfurt am Main and London: Peter Lang, 2006) [henceforth: Kovács], p. 10, fn. 16; Frederick W. Metzger, 'Hungary, the Jews and the Gospel: 150 AD to 1950 AD', in *Mishkan*, Issue no. 14 (1/1991), pp. 15-30; Diana L. Owen, 'The Pesth mission of the Church of Scotland: Its establishment and influence' (MA thesis, Criswell College, Dallas, Texas, 2006); John S. Ross, 'The Legacy of John Duncan', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 29, no. 3 (2015), pp. 150-153; Willem Westerbeke, *Messiasbelijdende Joden in Nederland, Europa en Israël* [Messianic Jews in the Netherlands, Europe and Israel] (Middelburg: Stichting De Gihonbron, 2009), *passim*.

⁶ *AFCS*, Vol. 1, pp. 58, 146, 163, 266, 310, 345. The author gratefully acknowledges the permission of Ronald C. Christie to include material from the valuable Ecclegen website (www.ecclegen.com), which supplements the *AFCS* transcripts with information such as obituaries and links to other publications.

Abbreviations

AFCS	William Ewing (ed.), <i>Annals of the Free Church of Scotland, 1843–1900</i> (2 vols., Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1914)
BSPGJ	The British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews
FCS	Free Church of Scotland
FCSM	<i>Free Church of Scotland Monthly</i> (1886–1900)
FCSMR	<i>Free Church of Scotland Monthly Record</i> (1862–1881)
FES	Hew Scott (ed.), <i>Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanæ</i> (2 nd edn., 8 vols., Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1915–1950)
FUFCS	John A. Lamb, <i>The Fasti of the United Free Church of Scotland, 1900–1929</i> (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1956)
HFMRFCS	<i>The Home and Foreign Missionary Record for the Free Church of Scotland</i> (1843–1850)
LSPCJ	The London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews
NHK	<i>Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk</i> [Dutch Reformed Church]
NP	<i>Nederlands Patriciaat</i> (Den Haag: Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie)
SRSHJ	<i>Scottish Reformation Society Historical Journal</i>
UFC	United Free Church of Scotland

Setting the scene

As this is a paper on a topic which includes unfamiliar locations and terminology, it is appropriate to set the scene by briefly covering some important subjects relevant to the scope of this paper.

1. Scottish involvement with Jewish evangelism

Jews first settled in Scotland as refugees following the expulsion of England's Jewish community in 1290. It has been noted that Jewish lecturers taught Hebrew to seventeenth-century divinity students at the University of Edinburgh and at King's College, Aberdeen. Furthermore, Jewish students studied at three Scottish universities in the eighteenth century and by 1780 there was an established Jewish community, though they were not religiously organised.⁷ Through these centuries of Jewish settlement, there

⁷ John S. Ross, *Time for Favour: The Scottish Mission to the Jews: 1838–1852* (Stoke-on-Trent: Tentmaker Publications, 2011) [henceforth: Ross], pp. 24–25. See also details on the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre website: www.sjac.org.uk/jewish-communities-in-scotland (retrieved 28th April 2022).

is no clear evidence that the Church attempted to evangelise Jews residing in Scotland, however.

Concern for the spiritual welfare of the Jews was expressed in the Westminster Assembly documents,⁸ and exhortations to prayer for Jewish conversion occurred in many Scottish sermons.⁹ Indeed, in 1716 Thomas Boston preached a sermon on Zechariah 12:12 which was printed with the explicit title ‘Encouragements to Pray for the Conversion of the Jews.’¹⁰

The first concerted Scottish efforts to support Jewish evangelism raised funds through local auxiliaries of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews (LSPCJ), which was founded in 1809 by leading evangelical Anglicans, including William Wilberforce (1759–1833) and Charles Simeon (1759–1836).¹¹ However, Scottish Presbyterian support for the LSPCJ was dented by an internal dispute in that society in 1815, when Anglican members contended that baptism of Jews was invalid if it were administered by ministers not episcopally ordained. Interest in Jewish evangelism nevertheless led to the foundation of local associations in Edinburgh and Aberdeen, and in addition to supporting societies like the LSPCJ, they also began reaching out with the Gospel to growing Jewish communities in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Leith.¹²

The deepening interest in Jewish evangelism led to two initiatives of direct relevance to the present paper.

(i) The Church of Scotland’s Mission of Inquiry to the Jews

The first initiative concerns the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland appointing a ‘Committee on the Conversion of the Jews to the Faith

⁸ The Larger Catechism answer to question 191 (‘What do we pray for in the second petition?’) included the obligation to pray for the calling of the Jews, and the *Directory for Public Worship* required ministers to pray every Lord’s Day for the conversion of the Jews: ‘In the second petition, (which is, *Thy kingdom come*,) acknowledging ourselves and all mankind to be by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan, we pray, that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, the Jews called, the fulness of the Gentiles brought in [etc].’

⁹ Ross (pp. 28-30) mentions Samuel Rutherford, Lachlan MacKenzie of Lochcarron, and others.

¹⁰ *The Whole Works of the Late Reverend Thomas Boston of Ettrick* (12 vols., London: William Tegg, 1853), Vol. 3, Sermon XXVI, pp. 354-371.

¹¹ It was commonly known as the London Jews’ Society or simply Jews’ Society. The society changed its name several times over the years, first to Church Missions to Jews, then The Church’s Mission to the Jews, followed by The Church’s Ministry Among the Jews, and finally to the current name of The Church’s Ministry Among Jewish People, which was adopted in 1995.

¹² Ross, pp. 53-56.

of Christ' in 1837. The committee selected two senior ministers to examine openings for missionary work in Palestine and in Eastern and Central Europe: Dr Alexander Keith (1792–1880) of St Cyrus in Kincardineshire,¹³ internationally respected for writing on the fulfilment of prophecy as an evidence of the truth of the Bible,¹⁴ and Dr Alexander Black (1789–1864), Professor of Divinity at Marischal College, Aberdeen, a skilled linguist.¹⁵ At the suggestion of Dr (later Prof.) Robert Candlish, Andrew Bonar (1810–1892) of Collace in Perthshire¹⁶ and Robert Murray McCheyne (1813–1843) of Dundee¹⁷ were added to the party.

Bonar and McCheyne's full narrative report of the mission was published in 1842.¹⁸ References in the present paper are from the 1996 reissue of the book, which was fully re-typeset and retitled as *Mission of Discovery*. A remarkable set of providences, including an injury sustained by Prof. Black in falling from a camel, a life-threatening illness which prostrated Dr Keith in Pesth, and the intervention of Archduchess Maria Dorothea (the Protestant third wife of the Roman Catholic Archduke Joseph, Palatine of Hungary) led to the establishment of a Church of Scotland mission in Pesth,¹⁹ which gave missionaries the opportunity of reaching out to Jews in a Roman Catholic country which barely tolerated Protestantism. Many of the Jews, including the influential Israel Saphir

¹³ *FES*, Vol. 5, p. 483; *AFC*S, Vol. 1, p. 196. For some years before and after the Disruption Dr Keith was convener of the Jewish Mission Committee.

¹⁴ Alexander Keith, *Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion: Derived from the literal fulfillment of prophecy particularly as illustrated by the history of the Jews, and by the discoveries of recent travellers* (Edinburgh: Waugh & Innes, 1828). This highly popular book passed through many editions and was translated into several languages. The Archduchess Maria Dorothea had read his book and this was one factor which kindled her desire to help when Keith was ill in Pesth.

¹⁵ *FES*, Vol. 6, p. 205; Vol. 7, p. 363; *AFC*S, Vol. 1, p. 49; *FCSMR*, 1st March 1864, p. 473. Black could speak nineteen languages and was able to write in twelve. He was profoundly acquainted with Jewish and rabbinical literature. In contrast to Black's linguistic skills, Bonar remarks that 'although Keith could scarcely speak any language he had such a kind and winning way that he never failed to get what he wanted'.

¹⁶ *FES*, Vol. 4, p. 200; *AFC*S, Vol. 1, p. 98; Marjory Bonar (ed.), *Andrew A. Bonar, D.D.: Diary and letters* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1894); Marjory Bonar (ed.), *Reminiscences of Andrew A. Bonar, D.D.* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1894).

¹⁷ *FES*, Vol. 5, pp. 340-341; Andrew A. Bonar, *Memoir and Remains of the Rev. Robert Murray M'Cheyne, Minister of St Peter's Church, Dundee* (Dundee: W. Middleton, 1844).

¹⁸ It is believed that Bonar was the historiographer and McCheyne supplied sketches. See Norman L. Walker, *Chapters from the History of the Free Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh & London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1895), p. 168; 'Introduction', in Bonar & McCheyne, p. 4.

¹⁹ 'A Door Opens: Budapest, Autumn and Winter, 1839/40', in Ross, pp. 171-182.

and his son Adolph, as well as non-Jewish Hungarians, attended services with the less than worthy aim of simply learning English,²⁰ but many were caught in the Gospel net.

(ii) British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Jews

The second initiative of relevance to the present paper was the enthusiastic support of the Scottish ministers and the General Assembly in founding the interdenominational British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Jews (BSPGJ) in 1842 with the full encouragement of the Church's Presbytery of London.²¹

Among the founders of the society was a converted Jew, Ridley Herschell,²² then attending the Islington (Colebrook Row) congregation of the Church of Scotland. In 1835 he had declined a call to a congregation in Scotland in order to work as an evangelist for the Church of Scotland in London, and in 1838 he began work at Founders' Hall Chapel beside the Bank of England.

John Duncan met with Herschell as he passed through London on his way to the Pesth Mission and Duncan impressed on him the great need for evangelisation among the 20,000 Jews in London, many of them recent immigrants from Europe.²³ This led to the formation of the BSPGJ:

²⁰ Brown, p. 315; Gavin Carlyle, *Mighty in the Scriptures: A Memoir of Adolph Saphir*, DD (London: John F. Shaw, 1894) [henceforth: Carlyle (Saphir)], p. 17. Carlyle (c. 1828–1919), a Presbyterian minister in London, was the son-in-law of Alexander Moody Stuart.

²¹ The Society had millenarian expectations and published a periodical called the *Jewish Herald*. Its activities extended beyond Great Britain and so it was renamed the International Society for the Evangelisation of the Jews; in 1976 it merged with the Barbican Mission to the Jews (founded in 1879 to evangelise Jews in the East End of London) to form Christian Witness to Israel, which in turn was renamed the International Mission to Jewish People in 2021. See the entry for 'British Society for the Propagation of the Bible Among the Jews, The' in *The Palgrave Dictionary of Anglo-Jewish History*, ed. William D. Rubinstein *et al.* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 126-7.

²² Ridley Herschell (1807–1864) was born as Haim Herschell in the Prussian town of Strelno (now Strzelno, Poland, about 60 miles north-east of Poznań). He was converted in France and moved to London where he was baptized by the Bishop of London in 1830. He became a missionary among the Jews, and was in charge of schools and missionary work in Essex and Suffolk. He also founded a Home for Jewish Inquirers in London. Herschell was the author of several books and pamphlets, and also edited *The Voice of Israel* from 1845 to 1847. See *The Jewish Encyclopaedia* (12 vols., New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls, 1901–1906) [henceforth: *Jewish Encyclopaedia*], Vol. 6, p. 363. His daughter married an eminent London physician and issued a biography of her father: Ghetal B. Sanderson, *Memoir of Ridley Haim Herschell. By his daughter.* (n.p., printed for private circulation, 1869).

²³ In the 1850s, it is reckoned that there were 35,000 Jews in Britain, of whom 20,000 were in London. 'There was a clear distinction between the wealthier and longer-established

Robert Murray McCheyne opened its inaugural meeting with prayer in the Scottish Church at Regent Square, London.²⁴ Following the Disruption, most of the English congregations of the Church of Scotland joined the Free Church, and hence supported both their own denomination's mission to the Jews and the BSPGJ. In 1846 Herschell became the pastor of Trinity Chapel in West London, and he features at several points in the histories of Jewish ministers of the Free Church.

2. John Duncan's formative influence on the Pesth Mission

Once the General Assembly decided to establish a mission in Pesth, four ministers were sent from Scotland.²⁵ Of these, the best-known is John Duncan,²⁶ and he had the greatest influence on the mission during his short time there. Ross summed this up as follows:

He served only temporarily as a missionary, returning to Scotland to become the very personification of the absent-minded professor. Yet, under God's blessing, the lasting benefits of Duncan's brief missionary career in Hungary left an incalculable legacy, not only to the Jewish community, but also to the wider Hungarian Church.²⁷ [...] He enjoyed a high degree of fluency in many European languages and had an amazing facility to express himself in the most elegant Latin. [...] Within three months of his arrival in Hungary he mastered both the vocabulary and the difficult grammar of the Hungarian language.²⁸

Jews, who were mainly Sephardim, located in the West End of London, and the more recent immigrants, mainly Ashkenazim from Eastern Europe, in the much poorer East End.' See David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840–1914* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994); Rodney Curtis, 'Evangelical Anglican missionaries and the London Jews Society: Palestine Place at Bethnal Green and related developments, 1813–1895,' *Jewish Historical Studies*, Vol. 50 (1), 5 (2018), pp. 69–100.

²⁴ Curiously Bonar's *Memoir* of McCheyne does not mention his involvement with the BSPGJ during his visit to London, when he preached at the Regent Square Church of Scotland. See Ross, p. 289.

²⁵ John Duncan, Robert Smith, William Wingate, and William Owen Allan (a son-in-law of John Duncan).

²⁶ John Duncan (1796–1870). In addition to the definitive biographies, there are succinct accounts in David Scott, *Annals and Statistics of the Original Secession: Till its Disruption and Union with the Free Church of Scotland in 1852* (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1886), pp. 541–542; *FES*, Vol. 7, p. 715; *FES*, Vol. 3, pp. 425–426; *AFCS*, Vol. 1, p. 54.

²⁷ Kovács records that 'all the main Hungarian language studies of modern Hungarian Protestant ecclesiastical history refer to the influence of Scottish Evangelicalism on the Hungarian Reformed Church,' and he supplies several references in Hungarian (p. 10, fn. 16).

²⁸ Ross, pp. 242–243, 247–248, 250. Thomas Guthrie commented about Dr Duncan and Dr Black: 'Together they were so proficient in languages ancient and modern they could talk their way to the Great Wall of China.'

Ross comments on the personal qualities of Duncan, which were so beneficial to the Pesth mission:

It was strategic for the missionaries to cultivate friendly relations with as many people of influence as possible, including Hungarian Reformed, Lutheran and Roman Catholic clergy,²⁹ as well as leaders in the Jewish community. Duncan's personal circle of acquaintances included the Chief Rabbi [...] with whom he had much in common, sharing a scholarly knowledge of the Hebrew language and Judaism, as well as delighting in mathematics and philosophy. Duncan took a great interest in the Jewish schools and offered two Hebrew Bibles and two copies of the Torah as prizes, as well as donating an English Bible, complete with New Testament, to the headmaster.³⁰



Pál Török.

Duncan's friendship with Löw Schwab, the Chief Rabbi, blossomed, and no doubt this facilitated the Mission's work. Furthermore, his cordial relations with one of the few evangelical pastors of the episcopalian Hungarian Reformed Church, Pastor Pál Török,³¹ was essential to the work of the mission as foreigners were not allowed to conduct marriages or baptisms.³²

3 Subgroups and movements of Judaism

(i) *Subgroups of Judaism*

The paper refers to two subgroups of Jews, with their own culture and practices. Most encountered by the Scottish missionaries were Ashkenazic Jews, the Jews of France, Germany, and Eastern Europe. The adjective Ashkenazic and the corresponding nouns, Ashkenazi (singular) and Ashkenazim (plural) are derived from the

²⁹ Brown, pp. 315, 324; Alexander Moody Stuart, *Recollections of the Late John Duncan, LL.D.* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872), pp. 67-70.

³⁰ Ross, pp. 247-248. It should be noted that the Hebrew Bibles consisted of the Old Testament only.

³¹ Pál Török (1808–83). The name is written as Török Pál in the Hungarian naming convention (the so-called 'Eastern name order'), where the surname precedes the forename. See 'Török Pál' in *Az ország tükré* [The Mirror of the Country], 31st August 1865, pp. 391-392.

³² Duncan ran foul of the regulations by consenting to marry two British subjects. The Archduke summoned him and informed him that his actions were illegal. Duncan totally disagreed with what he saw as an infringement of his liberty as a minister of the Church of Scotland. The impasse was solved by Duncan agreeing to conduct marriages, baptisms and other ordinances under the authority of Török as a legally recognised pastor.

Hebrew word for Germany (*Ashkenaz*). Because of their field of mission work the Scots had fewer contacts with the other subgroup, Sephardic Jews, who originated in the Iberian peninsula, North Africa, and the Middle East. The Hebrew word for Spain (*Sepharad*) is the basis for the term and its corresponding nouns Sephardi (singular) and Sephardim (plural).³³

(ii) Movements (sects) of Judaism

The missionaries encountered three sects of Jews, usually denominated within Judaism as ‘movements’: Orthodox, Reform, and Karaites.

Orthodox Judaism is a term first applied in the late eighteenth century as a descriptor for the traditionalist branches of Judaism when the European Enlightenment began to affect rabbinical Judaism. Theologically, it is chiefly defined by its regard for the *Torah* (Pentateuch), as revealed by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. Orthodox Judaism advocates a strict adherence to rabbinical interpretation of Jewish law and its traditional observances.

Just as there was a European Enlightenment, so there was also a Jewish Enlightenment movement – known as the *Haskalah* – among the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe. The *Haskalah* began at the end of the eighteenth century in Berlin, spread to various other Jewish centres, and petered out at the end of the nineteenth century. It opposed the dominance of rabbinic Orthodoxy and the restriction of education to studying the Talmud. In worship, they used the vernacular language alongside Hebrew and Aramaic, and there was a relaxation of the Orthodox dress code and the dietary laws which define kosher food. As the years passed, the Reform group also allowed organs and hymns in synagogues and other changes to worship. The relevance of this to the Free Church work is that almost all their converts came from Reform Judaism, and hardly any from Orthodox Judaism.

The Karaite movement recognises only the *Torah* as its supreme authority in Jewish religious law and theology, thus rejecting rabbinical law on the basis that it is of human origin and therefore fallible. The missionaries had high hopes for the Gospel prospering among the small Karaite movement but these hopes were not realised.

4. Historic placenames

Finally, it is necessary to refer to some relevant geopolitical matters. The paper considers a period extending from the late 1830s to the 1890s.

³³ Ashkenazim spoke Yiddish, a Germanic language fused with many elements taken from Hebrew and Aramaic. Partly affected by where it was spoken, the vocabulary was also influenced by Slavic and Romance languages. The equivalent language of Sephardim was Ladino, based on Iberian languages, with Romance, Turkish, Arabic, and Semitic influences.

The map of Europe changed considerably during that time, and further changes continued during the twentieth century and down to the present. Not only have the Austrian, Russian, and Ottoman Empires disappeared, but new countries were formed, and even some of these have disappeared off the face of the map. Territorial borders have also changed, sometimes quite considerably. As a result, placenames have altered, sometimes beyond recognition, something particularly noticeable when a present-day state uses a different language from the nineteenth century ruler. As readers tend to be familiar with the placenames used in the nineteenth-century source documents, this paper cites them in that style. Present-day equivalents and nationality are also given at the first occurrence of the placename. A comparative table of historic and current placenames appears as an appendix to the paper.

I. Sándor Tomori (later known as Alexander Tomory), 1818–1895

1.1 Early life

Sándor Tomori³⁴ was born in 1818 in Mährisch Weißkirchen,³⁵ a small town in the east of the Margraviate of Moravia, then a crown land³⁶ of the Austrian Empire (now Hranice, in the Olomouc Region in the east of the Czech Republic). The Jewish population was confined to seventeen houses in one street, effectively a small ghetto for up to over eight hundred Jews.³⁷ The eldest son of a well-to-do family, Sándor Tomori left home at the age of fourteen as his religious views conflicted with those of his family.³⁸ He went to the Moravian city of Brünn (now Brno, the second-largest city of the Czech Republic), where he completed his secondary education in a

³⁴ *AFC*S, Vol. 1, p. 345. A footnote in Kovács (p. 86, fn. 208) states that his original name was Czerkovicz Moricz David, in the ‘Eastern name order’.

³⁵ *Mährisch* (German for ‘Moravian’) was used to distinguish this town from other locations named Weißkirchen (Weisskirchen).

³⁶ From the late eighteenth century onwards, the territories acquired by the Austrian Habsburg Monarchy were called crown lands (German: *Kronländer*). They were ultimately reorganised as administrative divisions of the centralised Austrian Empire established in 1804.

³⁷ The first Jews arrived in Mährisch Weißkirchen in 1611 and in 1637 they received the right for a self-governed Jewish quarter around the street currently named Janáčkova [street] (previously Židovská – Czech for Jewish [street]). Jews were not allowed to purchase houses elsewhere in the town. See *Historie města* [Czech: history of the city] on www.mesto-hranice.cz/clanky/historie-mesta (published 26th July 2017, retrieved 28th April 2022).

³⁸ *FCSM*, September 1895, p. 213.

Gymnasium,³⁹ sustaining himself there by teaching whilst simultaneously studying.⁴⁰ He then attended a university in the city of Kecskemét⁴¹ in central Hungary, completing an Arts course before moving to Pesth to study medicine.⁴²

1.2 Introduction to Christianity, theological training

When he was a young medical student, Sándor Tomori began to show an interest in Christianity. He approached a Roman Catholic bishop from Vienna who felt unable personally to offer any meaningful help, and surprisingly the prelate encouraged him to consult the Protestant missionaries in Pesth instead. Tomori vividly recalled the first occasion he and Duncan met, and it gives an interesting, if slightly amusing, insight into Duncan's eccentricities. John Duncan had rapidly learned Hungarian, but the conversation was in Latin.⁴³ Tomori stated:

I was introduced to the dear man. In a most syllogistic way [that is, by deductive reasoning] and in fluent Latin, he brought out the truth of the Gospel, and urged me to accept Christ as my Saviour. But quite in keeping with the character of the doctor, with the ruling passion, in the same breath he began to teach me in English. While the tears were yet in my eyes and his, he began to conjugate an English verb, and made me repeat it. After that I saw him almost daily till he [Duncan] left for Italy.⁴⁴

During his first or second session of medical studies Sándor Tomori was brought to the knowledge of Christ through the instrumentality of the Rev. William Wingate.⁴⁵ It is reckoned that there were twenty Jewish converts that year.⁴⁶ He abandoned his studies in 1843 and went to Edinburgh along with Alfred Edersheim and Adolph Saphir to study theology in the newly formed Free Church.⁴⁷ There was an immediate

³⁹ In Germany, central Europe and Sweden, this is the name given to schools which prepare pupils for university education.

⁴⁰ Supplementary obituary by his son in *FCSM*, December 1895, p. 295.

⁴¹ The city is currently the eighth largest in Hungary. It lies 53 miles southeast of Budapest and had a thriving Jewish population up to World War II.

⁴² *AFCS*, Vol. 1, p. 345.

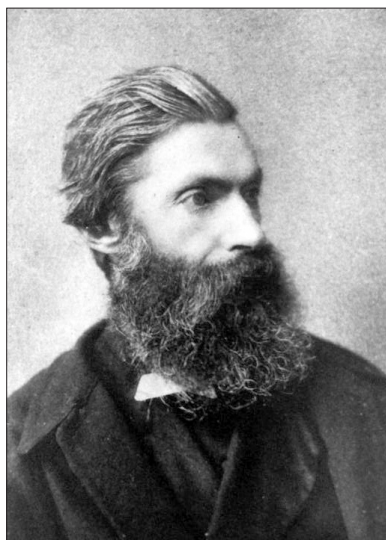
⁴³ Ross observes that 'his natural reticence did not permit him to speak it in public, leading Pál Török to comment on his "wisdom, modesty, and judicious procedure"'. Ross, p. 247.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 248-249.

⁴⁵ *AFCS*, Vol. 1, p. 345.

⁴⁶ Kovács, p. 86. It is noted (fn. 209) that 'this number [...] corresponds to the information gathered from the Baptism, Marriage and Death Register of Kálvin Square church'.

⁴⁷ Adolph Saphir (1831–1891; born Aaron Adolph Saphir) was 12 when he left Pesth. He lodged with the Duncans in Edinburgh for six months, which greatly improved his



Adolph Saphir.

problem for these three individuals, as the Austrian Government only allowed male subjects to leave after completing military service. Saphir's biographer described how this was circumvented for all three of them: 'Fortunately, the well-known Indian missionary, Dr John Wilson of Bombay,⁴⁸ arrived in Pesth at the time on his way to Scotland, accompanied by Dunjaboi, a Parsee convert.⁴⁹ He was regarded by the authorities as a man of distinction, and was therefore permitted to take with him persons in his service. Edersheim was appointed his secretary, Saphir and Tomori to other offices, and thus all three got away without interference.'⁵⁰ For the benefit of English speakers he later anglicised his first name as Alexander, and also modified the spelling of his surname to Tomory: this spelling is used for the remainder of the present paper.

English, and then in Berlin with Carl Schwartz (*q.v.*), who had married his eldest sister. He attended a *Gymnasium* in Berlin, from 1844 to 1848, and during that time became acquainted with Theodore Meyer (*q.v.*). Saphir moved back to Scotland, studying in the universities of Glasgow and Marischal College (Aberdeen) and the Free Church's New College in Edinburgh. Dr Keith recommended him to the Irish Presbyterian Church (a denomination with which the Free Church had close fraternal links) as a missionary to the Jews. After mission work in Hamburg, Saphir then became an influential minister in England (South Shields, Greenwich and London, at both Notting Hill and Halkin Street, off Belgrave Square) and a very able writer. He was awarded the degree of D.D. by the University of Edinburgh in 1878. Carlyle (Saphir), *passim*.

⁴⁸ John Wilson (1804–1875) attended the University of Edinburgh for eight years, studying linguistics, philosophy, and theology, and he mastered Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Urdu, Hindi, Persian, Arabic and Zend (an early Persian language, also known as Avestan). He married in 1828 and the following year he and his wife arrived in Bombay (now Mumbai) as missionaries supported by the Church of Scotland. He joined the FCS in 1843. Wilson was a renowned linguist and educationalist, as well as an expert on the culture and religions of Western India. He founded Wilson College, Mumbai, and the University of Mumbai. *FES*, Vol. 7, pp. 711–712; *AFCs*, Vol. 1, p. 358; George Smith, *The Life of John Wilson, D.D., F.R.S.: For fifty years philanthropist and scholar in the East* (London: John Murray, 1879).

⁴⁹ Parsees (or Parsis) are followers of the Persian pre-Islamic 'prophet' Zoroaster. Historically they emigrated to India, where they formed a distinct religious and ethnic group.

⁵⁰ Carlyle (Saphir), p. 48. However, this meant that it was impossible for them to return to the Austrian Empire for the rest of their lives; even in Germany there was a risk of extradition to Austria.

1.3 FCS missionary in Constantinople

After completion of his theological studies, Tomory was taken on probationary trials in 1845⁵¹ and was licensed in 1847. After working for a few months among the sizeable Jewish community in Jamaica, he proceeded to Constantinople (now Istanbul in Turkey).⁵² The city was both the capital of the Ottoman Empire and a major trading centre on the border of Europe and Asia: in addition to the large resident Jewish population of 80,000 from various sects,⁵³ the city attracted many Jewish traders. Constantinople was a hub of missionary activity: in addition to the FCS with two missionaries, there were missions of the American Board of Missions (operating separate missions to the Jews and Armenians) and the American Episcopalian Missionary Society, totalling twelve expatriate missionaries and eight indigenous missionaries.⁵⁴

The Free Church maintained two stations in Constantinople – one at Galata⁵⁵ (now Karaköy,⁵⁶ on the northern shore of the junction of the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus), where the audience consisted of German and German-speaking Polish Jews, and the other at ‘Haaskioy’⁵⁷ (now Hasköy), three miles along the Golden Horn from Galata, where Sephardic Jews had chiefly resided since their expulsion from the Iberian peninsula in the late fifteenth century, and where mission work was carried on in Spanish. At first Tomory taught at Hasköy,⁵⁸ and eleven years later, in 1858, at a meeting of the

⁵¹ *Proceedings of the Commission of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, 1845–46*, November 1845, p. 72.

⁵² Ross, p. 269.

⁵³ Elijah Hoole, *The Year-Book of Missions: Containing a comprehensive account of missionary societies, British, Continental, and American* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1847) [henceforth: Hoole], p. 51.

⁵⁴ Hoole, pp. 398–402.

⁵⁵ *FCSM*, September 1895, p. 213.

⁵⁶ Until the twentieth century, Turkish was written using the Ottoman Turkish version of the Perso-Arabic script, which was poorly suited to native Turkish words. However, there was no standard for transliteration into English and hence placenames were variably rendered in nineteenth-century accounts. Compulsory transition to Romanised Turkish was introduced by President Kemal Atatürk in 1928 as one component of westernising reforms: toponyms in the present paper use the standard current Romanised spelling. Karaköy is the combination of *Kara* and *köy* (village). *Kara* probably originates in the Turkish word *Karay*, referring to a Turkic-speaking Jewish community of Crimean Karaites: at one time, Karaites were a majority of the people who lived in this district. See: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karaköy> (retrieved 28th April 2022).

⁵⁷ Often transliterated in nineteenth-century documents as Hasskeui, with several variant spellings. This paper uses Hasköy, as it is the only ‘official’ spelling since the Romanization of Turkish.

⁵⁸ *HMFRCFS*, Vol. 3 (1st December 1847), p. 279.

Free Church Presbytery of Edinburgh, Professor George Smeaton (in his role as Convener of the 'Conversion of the Jews' committee) formally ordained him to undertake Jewish missionary work there.⁵⁹ At Hasköy, Tomory preached each Lord's Day morning in Spanish, and in the forenoon in English to Scottish engineers (and their families) employed at the city's imperial arsenal, followed by an afternoon service in German at Galata (Karaköy).⁶⁰ He continued at Hasköy until 1863 and then moved to Galata on the departure of the Rev. Rudolf König who was translated to the Pesth Mission.⁶¹ After moving to Galata, he preached twice every Sabbath in German, and once during the week, besides conducting an evening class for young Jews who wanted to learn the elements of education. He was responsible for fundraising in England and Scotland to erect 'a substantial stone building in a principal thoroughfare of Galata, [...] and was erected at a cost, including the site, of £8000. It was opened in October, 1873, in the presence of the British Ambassador [...] and the principal British and American residents.'⁶²

Tomory was noted for his linguistic gifts. He used these in the service of the Gospel as he could speak and preach in seven languages: in addition

⁵⁹ George Smeaton (1814–1899) served as the Parish Minister of Falkland (Fife) from 1840. At the Disruption he became minister of the Free Church there and later in 1843 was translated to Auchterarder (Perthshire) until his appointment as the Professor of Theology at Aberdeen Free Church College in 1853. He was appointed Professor of New Testament Exegesis at New College in 1857, a post which he held until his death. He was Convener of the 'Conversion of the Jews' committee from 1858 to 1860. See *FES*, Vol. 1, p. 84; Vol. 5, p. 154; *AFCS*, Vol. 1, pp. 58, 64.

⁶⁰ Supplementary obituary, *FCSM*, p. 295.

⁶¹ Rudolf König (also spelled Koenig, 1816–1894) was a native of Dantzig in Prussia (also spelled Danzig; now Gdańsk, Poland). He studied at the Universities of Berlin and Bonn before becoming a licentiate of the Prussian Church, and was employed by the Free Church Jewish Mission Committee at Constantinople in 1845. By special sanction of the General Assembly, the Free Presbytery of Edinburgh ordained him as a missionary to the Jews in 1847. After labouring for a winter at Pesth (1847–1848) in place of the Rev. William Wingate, he returned to Constantinople, and finally went back to Pesth in 1863. He resigned on health grounds in 1890 and moved to Potsdam, Germany, where he died four years later. In both Constantinople and Pesth he acted as an agent of the National Bible Society of Scotland and the London Tract Society. His literary labours included preparing a Yiddish translation of the Old Testament; revising the German translation of the Shorter Catechism (including adding a number of Messianic passages to the proofs); and translating a number of works into languages of the Danubian countries, the contemporary name for the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, which later formed part of the Principality of Romania. See *AFCS*, Vol. 1, p. 202; *FCSM*, November 1894, p. 255; obituary by the Rev. Alexander Tomory (junior) in *FCSM*, December 1894, p. 289.

⁶² *The Jewish Herald*, 1st August 1875, p. 151. The cost equates to over £982,000 in the present day.

to English, German and Spanish, he not infrequently preached in Italian and French. From 1884 he was assisted by the Rev. Robert Hannington, previously a missionary with the Free Church in Central Africa.⁶³ Tomory also founded a home for inquiring Jews at Galata.⁶⁴

Tomory was appointed honorary chaplain to the Dutch Embassy at Constantinople and later conducted the services at the German Embassy chapel when the chaplain was absent on furlough; in addition he often performed marriages, baptisms, and funerals for the Germans. He was highly respected by the expatriate British, German, and Dutch communities in Constantinople and received formal thanks from the Dutch Government and the Foreign Department of the German Imperial Government for services rendered to their citizens. He remained in the city for 48 years until his death in 1895 at the age of 77, and was buried at Protestan Mezarlığı, the Protestant cemetery at Feriköy, along with his wife who predeceased him in 1893.⁶⁵

Alexander Tomory's obituary in the December 1895 issue of *FCSM* was written by his son, Alexander (junior), missionary at Calcutta (now Kolkata). The encomium could be considered partial, coming as it did from a near family member, but in many ways it reflects statements in the notice of his father's death which appeared in the magazine's news section three months earlier. The September news item noted:

The poor and distressed came to him for advice and help. He was earnestly devoted to all the parts of the mission work. His constant and painstaking superintendence of things; his careful book-keeping, which he attended to with almost punctilious zeal; and his concentration of mind on his work till he had hardly time to think of the ordinary interests of life – these are conspicuous in his record. But no part of his work was dearer to his heart or more fully called forth his best powers

⁶³ Robert Hannington (b. 1852) was a medical doctor. He studied at the Free Church College in Glasgow and was ordained in 1881 for Livingstonia. The climate and ill-health forced him to leave Africa and he transferred to the Jewish Mission in Constantinople in 1884, where he remained until he retired in 1915. Hannington (and the other FCS missionary in Constantinople) joined the United Free Church of Scotland (UFC) in 1900. See David Livingstone and Charles Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries; and of the Discovery of the Lakes Shirwa and Nyassa, 1858–1864* (London: John Murray, 1865), p. 368; Jack Thompson, *Ngoni, Xhosa and Scot (Kachere books no. 22)* (Oxford: African Books Collective, 2007), p. 43; *AFCS*, Vol. 1, p. 181; *FUFCS*, p. 533.

⁶⁴ Aaron Bernstein, *Some Jewish Witnesses for Christ* (London: n.p., 1909) [henceforth: Bernstein], p. 505, entry: 'Tomory, Rev. A.'

⁶⁵ Rev. Alexander Tomory (obituary), *FCSM*, September 1895, p. 213.

than that which bore directly on the welfare of Israel⁶⁶ and the winning of the ancient people to the obedience of Christ. The young men who were inquirers in earnest, having learned to love the servant, were in many cases induced to give their hearts to the Master. His wonderful appositeness of reasoning with Jewish inquirers, and his use of the Old Testament as a preparation for Christ, his eloquent preaching, his fervent prayers, and his self-consuming zeal will long be remembered by those who came in contact with him or watched his work; and few Jewish missionaries have had the satisfaction of admitting into the fellowship of the Church of Christ so many converts. After a service of nearly fifty years, this good old man died in harness, leaving the fruit of his labours and the example of his devotion as a heritage to those who shall after him carry on the work of the mission.⁶⁷

1.4 Marriage and family

In 1859 Tomory married Caroline Elliot Kay (1828–1893), a teacher from Aberdeen who had worked in the Hasköy Mission since 1856. They had at least four children, all born in Constantinople. One of their sons was also named Alexander – Alexander (junior) studied in Aberdeen at the University and Free Church College, and then in Leipzig. He was ordained in 1887 as a missionary of the FCS in Calcutta. Two sons were medical doctors: one served for a few years as a doctor in Halkirk, Caithness, but left with the Sutherland Rifle Volunteers to take part in the Second Boer War (1899–1902).⁶⁸

II. Solomon Schwartz (later known as Carl Augustus Ferdinand Schwartz), 1817–1870

Schwartz had no background of connection with Scotland but became the first FCS minister in Constantinople, and hence a predecessor of Tomory. He spent only a brief period there, before working successively in Berlin,

⁶⁶ In nineteenth-century missionary usage, both in English and other languages, ‘Israel’ and ‘Israelites’ were descriptors for the Jewish people and Jews, respectively, and the terms did not denote a political or geographic entity.

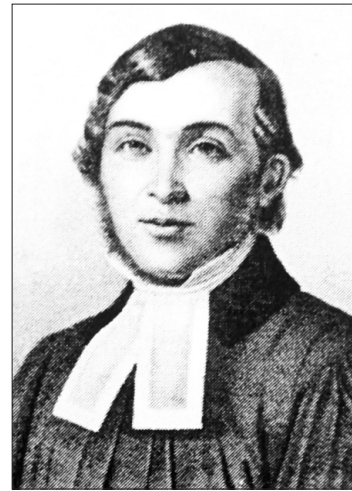
⁶⁷ *Op. cit.*, *FCSM*, September 1895, p. 213.

⁶⁸ A daughter of that doctor, Louise Tomory, graduated in medicine from Aberdeen University in 1919, and went on to have a notable career as a paediatrician in the South African Army and in Cape Town. See *Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir Geneeskunde* [South African Medical Journal], 12th March 1932, p. 169; Alison T. McCall, ‘The Lass o’ Pairts: Social mobility for women through education in Scotland, 1850–1901’ (PhD thesis, University of Dundee, 2013), p. 169. The University of Aberdeen awards the Louise Tomory prize annually to the most distinguished female medical graduate. www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/prizes/?view=available&type=27 (retrieved 28th April 2022).

Amsterdam, and London. The Pesth Mission features briefly in his history, and this serves as a reminder that not all the Jewish ministers of the Free Church were converts of the Pesth Mission.

2.1 Early life

Solomon Schwartz⁶⁹ was born in 1817 in Meseritz (now Międzyrzec Podlaski in Poland, located about forty miles west of the border with Belarus). The town was a major centre of Jewish population in 'Congress Poland' (also known as 'Russian Poland').⁷⁰



Carl Schwartz.

2.2 Introduction to Christianity, theological training

Schwartz intended to become a rabbi and in 1832, aged fifteen, he went to study the Hebrew language and literature in Berlin. However, he came under the power of the Gospel there and in 1837, aged twenty, he publicly professed the name of Christ. He was baptised in the Prussian Lutheran Church and took the forenames Karl (subsequently anglicised as Carl) Augustus Ferdinand instead of Solomon, and retained his surname unchanged.⁷¹ He then went on to study theology in Halle and Berlin.

2.3 Missionary of the London Society in Constantinople

After completing his theological studies, Carl Schwartz felt called to become a missionary to the Jews and he was accepted for service by the LSPCJ. In keeping with the prevailing Anglican orientation of that society, he was made an Anglican deacon⁷² and then he set off for Constantinople to begin work there. On reaching Pressburg (now Bratislava, Slovakia) Schwartz had a providential meeting with the Rev. Robert Smith,⁷³ who

⁶⁹ It appears that his forename was spelled in the English style rather than German (Salomo or Salomon) or Polish (Salomon).

⁷⁰ This was nominally a semi-autonomous Polish state set up by the Congress of Vienna when the French ceded the Duchy of Warsaw to the Russian Empire in 1815 following Napoleon's defeat, but in reality 'Congress Poland' was a puppet state of Russia.

⁷¹ The order of his forenames sometimes appears as Augustus Ferdinand Carl.

⁷² An Anglican ordained office which usually leads to later ordination as a 'priest'. A deacon may baptize but is not allowed to dispense the Eucharist (Lord's Supper).

⁷³ Robert Smith (1816–1894) was appointed missionary to the Jews at Pesth in 1841 and returned to Scotland for ordination in 1842. Along with the other members of the Pesth mission he joined the FCS at the Disruption. 'In addition to all the difficulty of reaching the Jews themselves, he was exposed to the continuous irritation of government interference and police surveillance.' These factors made his time in Pesth 'peculiarly

was returning to Pesth after ordination as a missionary to the Jews, and they went together by Danube steamer to Pesth. Smith wrote that ‘there were no fewer than seven Jewish missionaries⁷⁴ providentially met together in Pesth – an opportunity of which we were glad to avail ourselves for conference, and prayer, and praise. A fortnight was spent in these exercises; the presence of the Lord was sensibly felt, and all hearts seemed to expand under His gracious influence.’⁷⁵

At that time, none of the Scottish missionaries could preach in German or Hungarian. They prevailed on Schwartz to remain with them for three weeks, ‘which, partly from a temporary illness, and partly from the success which attended his German ministrations, was still further deferred’. Schwartz preached on various occasions in the city churches and held a series of meetings for many Jews and Protestants in Dr Duncan’s house.⁷⁶ Schwartz’s preaching was blessed to the prominent Saphir family, and in particular his preaching was instrumental in the conversion of Philipp Saphir.⁷⁷ Schwartz became directly connected to the Saphir family when he married Maria Dorothea Saphir, a sister of Adolph Saphir, the following year.

The success of Schwartz’s meetings drew the unwelcome attention of the authorities due to the number of Jews attending his preaching. The work of the Scottish missionaries had been tolerated only as they enjoyed the protection of the Archduchess. Officially they were suffered to preach to Scottish engineers constructing the Széchenyi Chain Bridge across the Danube linking Buda with Pesth⁷⁸ and they used that opportunity to preach to Hungarian Jews. However, Schwartz was called before the police

arduous and irksome’. He transferred from Pesth to Amsterdam in 1848 and to Frankfort (now Frankfurt am Main) in 1857. Smith was a master of several languages, as well as Hebrew. He resigned his post due to ill health in 1859 and spent some years as a personal chaplain in England. In 1867 his health was so far restored that he accepted a call to the Free Church at Corsock, Dumfriesshire, where he remained minister for twenty-seven years until his death. See *FES*, Vol. 7, p. 716; *AFCs*, Vol. 1, p. 321; obituary by Charles McNeil, ‘Rev. Dr Robert Smith, Corsock’, *FCSM*, 1st September 1894, pp. 215-216.

⁷⁴ These were men from varying backgrounds, serving different missionary organisations and denominations.

⁷⁵ Brown, p. 327.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 327-328. Smith states that ‘a spirit of inquiry [was] extensively awakened, and the impression was deepened by much private intercourse and instruction’.

⁷⁷ Robert Smith, *Early Days of the Mission to the Jews at Pesth* (Edinburgh: n.p., ?1893).

⁷⁸ This was the first permanent stone bridge connecting Pest and Buda, and only the second permanent crossing on the whole length of the River Danube. It was designed by an English engineer: sections were constructed in England and shipped to Hungary for final assembly. Construction lasted ten years and when opened in 1849 its central span was one

court, accused of holding public meetings in the crowded missionaries' room, contrary to law. He was sentenced to leave Pesth the following week. The Archduchess learned of this when she returned to Buda that Saturday, and she arranged for him to preach for her in the palace the following day and every Lord's Day thereafter. Duncan's biographer comments: 'She had a legal right to her own chaplain, and a Jewish missionary took his place. Passing between two Imperial Guards at the outer door, Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, were alike free to enter; and a congregation was there formed, for which a church was built before the Archduke's death – a thing never heard of before.'⁷⁹ Schwartz wished to remain in Pesth but the LSPCJ insisted on his proceeding to Constantinople, where sixty Jews attended his services at first.⁸⁰

2.4 FCS missionary work in Constantinople and Berlin

At the Disruption Schwartz decided to join the FCS and took the Constantinople mission with him, which resulted in the loss of the mission to the LSPCJ. The resignation of Schwartz is noted without adverse comment in the history of that Society, which was unable to resume its work in Constantinople until 1851.⁸¹ It is likely, however, that this unexpected development may have strained relations between the Society and the FCS.

Schwartz travelled to Scotland in 1844. He held a series of public meetings to promote the work of the Free Church's new mission,⁸² and he was also ordained by the Presbytery of Edinburgh as a missionary to the Jews. He was not to return to Constantinople, however. Instead, he was appointed to work in Berlin, a city where over two thousand Jews had already been baptised as Christians. This work was sanctioned by the German government and supported by a local 'Berlin Jewish Committee'.⁸³ There Schwartz ministered to a gathering of over five

of the longest in the world. The bridge was rebuilt in 1913–5 and again (after destruction in World War II) in 1947–9.

⁷⁹ Brown, pp. 311–312.

⁸⁰ Wulfert de Greef, *Carl A.F. Schwartz. Messiasbelijdende Joden: Vergeten eerstelingen* [Messianic Jews: the forgotten firstfruits] (Leiden: J.J. Groen en Zoon, 1990) [henceforth: De Greef], p. 20.

⁸¹ 'The Rev. C. Schwartz [...] succeeded to the charge of the mission in 1842. [...] Schwartz's stay was of very short duration, and the station was not reoccupied till 1851.' William T. Gidney, *The History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews, from 1809 to 1908* (London: LSPCJ, 1908), p. 174.

⁸² He held meetings in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Greenock, Ayr, Rothesay and elsewhere. 'Conversion of the Jews', *HFMRFCS*, Vol. 1, April 1844, p. 130.

⁸³ 'Berlin', *HFMRFCS*, Vol. 2, February 1846, pp. 297–298.

hundred Jews.⁸⁴ However, ‘there was too good reason to fear that they [the Jews who professed conversion] were only Christ’s in name’, despite signs of spiritual growth, hopeful cases,⁸⁵ and Schwartz’s prayer that ‘instead of a barren and empty profession, the life and power of godliness may spread among them’.⁸⁶ However, his four years in Berlin were described as ‘a test of [his] patience, a time of much thought and serious preparation’.

German revolutions began in 1848 and lasted into the following year. The violent political and social upheavals and attendant dangers to Schwartz’s personal safety resulted in permanent closure of the Church’s Berlin mission and his departure from the country.⁸⁷ He desired to work in Prague, where the Jewish ghetto at that time housed over 10,000 people.⁸⁸ However, the revolutionary movement spreading through Central Europe also convulsed Prague, and the Austrian authorities refused him permission to work there.

2.5 FCS missionary work in Amsterdam

As Prague was closed to Schwartz, the FCS sent him instead to Amsterdam to assess whether it would be possible to work among that city’s large Jewish community. This resulted in Schwartz being settled there in 1848.⁸⁹ As a result of the revolutions the Rev. Robert Smith was obliged to leave Pesth and he joined Schwartz in the Netherlands, where they worked together until Smith transferred to Frankfort in 1857.

Amsterdam had hosted a Jewish community since the late sixteenth century – to begin with, largely consisting of Sephardic Jews ejected from Portugal and, to a lesser extent, from Spain. After initial opposition they were eventually welcomed in Amsterdam and the Dutch Church helped to

⁸⁴ ‘Berlin’, *HFMRFCS*, Vol. 2, January 1846, p. 283.

⁸⁵ ‘Berlin’, *HFMRFCS*, Vol. 2, October 1846, pp. 511-512; Vol. 3, February 1847, pp. 29-30; Vol. 3, September 1847, pp. 224-225; Vol. 3, May 1848, pp. 396-397.

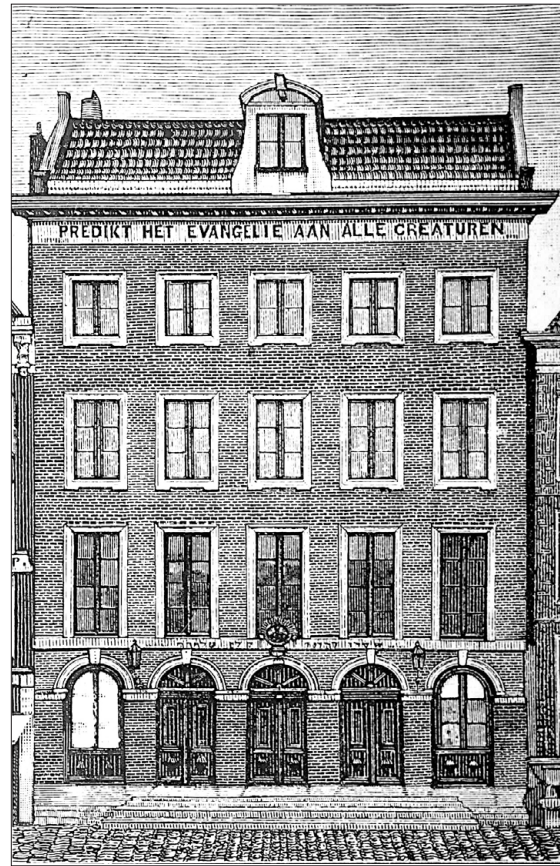
⁸⁶ ‘Berlin’, *HFMRFCS*, Vol. 2, August 1845, p. 186.

⁸⁷ The German revolutions began in March 1848. They were initially part of the widespread revolutions that broke out in many European countries in 1848. A series of loosely coordinated protests and rebellions took place in the states of the German Confederation, including the Austrian Empire. See Mike Rapport, *1848: Year of Revolution* (London: Little, Brown, 2008); ‘Berlin’, *HFMRFCS*, Vol. 4, October 1848, p. 545; *HFMRFCS*, Vol. 4, issue 3, March 1849, p. 41.

⁸⁸ Information from the YIVO [*Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut* – Yiddish Scientific Institute] Encyclopaedia of Jews in Eastern Europe, <https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Prague> (retrieved 28th April 2022).

⁸⁹ ‘Conversion of the Jews: Holland – Amsterdam’, *HFMRFCS*, Vol. 4, issue 14, February 1850, pp. 282-283.

finance building the Portuguese Synagogue (*De Portugees-Israëlietische Synagoge*, also known by its Hebrew name *Esnoga*).⁹⁰ Over the centuries they were assimilated into Dutch society, working as successful merchants and forming a small but significant middle-class group with their own synagogues. During that time a few thousand poorer Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazi Jews sought refuge in Amsterdam from troubles in Central and Eastern Europe.⁹¹ A massive influx of impoverished Ashkenazi Jews took place during the nineteenth century, and the 1849 census returns numbered the Jewish population of the Netherlands



Free Church Mission, Amsterdam.

at nearly 59,000. When Schwartz and Smith went to Amsterdam in 1848, it was reckoned that there were 35,000 Jews in the city, many having gained employment in the diamond, tobacco, and sugar-refining industries.⁹²

Schwartz worked among the Amsterdam Jews for fifteen years, from 1849 to 1864, and his work is covered in depth in Dutch publications.⁹³ From the beginning, the Scottish mission was strongly supported by two influential converted Dutch Sephardic Jews – Abraham Capadose

⁹⁰ Johan H. Grolle, *Israëls roep tot de kerk: dr. Carl Schwartz* [Israel's call to the church: Dr Carl Schwartz] (Hilversum: Raad voor de verhouding van Kerk en Israël, n.d.) [henceforth: Grolle], p. 7.

⁹¹ Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: its rise, greatness and fall, 1477–1806* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 376–377, 644, 648–649, 657–658, 1024–1025.

⁹² Hoole, pp. 386–387.

⁹³ *Gedenkboek uitgegeven bij de herdenking van het 50-jarig bestaan der Nederlandsche Vereeniging voor Israël: Gods groote daden aan Israël* [Commemorative book published on the occasion of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Dutch Society for Israel: God's great deeds to Israel] (comp. by Frederik W.A. Korff and Albregt van Os), (Amsterdam: Van der Land, 1912; repr. 2005) [henceforth: *Gedenkboek*], chap. 5 (pp. 118–133, *et passim*), Westerbeke (*op. cit.*, pp. 50–74), and the 112-page book by De Greef focus primarily on his work in the Netherlands.

(1795–1874),⁹⁴ a physician who practised in Scherpenzeel⁹⁵ and later in The Hague, and Isaïc da Costa (1798–1860), a renowned poet and historian: behind them was the very active Dutch committee of *De Vrienden Israëls* [The Friends of Israel], which had encouraged the Free Church to send Schwartz to work among both Christians and Jews in Amsterdam. Primarily the work of Schwartz was that of a missionary to the Jews, however. As such he was the representative of a foreign denomination without any direct connection to the Dutch churches. Schwartz realised the delicacy of this situation and sent a circular letter to all the Dutch ministers of the city, written in German with accompanying Dutch translation.⁹⁶ The title of the letter [in English: *A word to Jewish and Christian residents of Amsterdam*] indicated that he intended it to have a wider circulation than merely to Amsterdam ministers. He explained that his work had two aspects: as necessary as it was to point the Jews to the Gospel of Christ, so it was also necessary to point Christians to how they were to fulfil their love to the Jews. He emphasised that his work among the Jews would be by preaching the Gospel and would not involve financially rewarding Jewish converts (which was the practice of some missionary organisations). Moreover, he stressed that his aim was not to attract people to the FCS. The circular was accompanied by a covering personal letter in which he hoped that the recipients would agree with the contents of the circular and offered to give further information about the Free Church and his work. None of the Amsterdam ministers responded, however.

Schwartz approached the Dutch Reformed (*NHK*) congregation for permission to use a chapel (the Nieuwe Zijdskapel) but this was unsuccessful⁹⁷ and he secured the use of the former Armenian Apostolic Church⁹⁸ building on the Kromboomssloot canal in the *Jodenbuurt* –

⁹⁴ A short obituary notice appeared as ‘The Late Dr Capadose’ in *FCSMR*, issue 151, 1st February 1875, p. 36. This noted that ‘Dr Capadose has visited Scotland repeatedly, and his voice has been heard in the ecclesiastical Assemblies of this city [Edinburgh]. He was a fervent admirer of the Free Church of Scotland, but in a truly catholic spirit he stood in friendly relations with all Protestant denominations and evangelical movements.’

⁹⁵ A small town in the Dutch province of Gelderland, about sixteen miles east of Utrecht.

⁹⁶ Carl A.F. Schwartz (transl. J.F. Schimsheimer), *Ein Wort an die Jüdischen und christlichen Einwohner von Amsterdam. Een woord aan Joodsche en christelijke ingezetenen van Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 1849).

⁹⁷ De Greef, p. 29.

⁹⁸ The national church of the Armenian people is also known as the Armenian Orthodox Church or the Armenian Gregorian Church. Armenians in Amsterdam converted a warehouse into a church which they used from 1714 to 1806.

the Jewish Quarter of Amsterdam. He began by preaching on Saturday afternoons in German, with a Dutch translator, to around thirty Jews. He soon learned to speak and preach in Dutch, and his congregation grew to nearly two hundred. In order to appeal to the Jews, he explained in each sermon the portion of Scripture which was read that same day in the synagogue. Gradually, and despite the opposition of the Jewish community leaders, the congregation outgrew the capacity of the former Armenian church, and they moved to a building on the Oudezijds Voorburgwal, with the financial help of Mrs Zeelt, a woman who was well known for supporting people who had left the *NHK* in the *Afscheiding* [Secession] of 1834.⁹⁹ Inherently this tended to align Schwartz with an evangelical party that was at odds with the *NHK* ministers and congregations of Amsterdam. Beginning in October 1852, Schwartz gave a series of lectures on Friday evenings on Isaiah chapters 40–66,¹⁰⁰ and this was followed in 1855 by Wednesday evening lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews.¹⁰¹

After a few years, even that building was unable to contain the congregation, and so in 1856 the Free Church bought a former theatre with two rows of galleries,¹⁰² repurposing it as a church which seated 1400. This building was situated on the periphery of the Jewish Quarter, beside a bridge crossing the Amstel river, the *Halvemaansbrug* (also known as *Brug* [bridge] 221) and this served as the mission church until the Free Church closed down its Amsterdam work some thirty years later. The white decorative masonry on the façade below the eaves bore two texts in Dutch, *Predikt het Evangelie aan alle creaturen* [Preach the gospel to every creature] (Mark 16:15) and *Bidt om den vrede van Jeruzalem* [Pray for the peace of Jerusalem] (Psalm 122:6), although artistic licence in a contemporary hand-drawn illustration depicted only the first of those texts. Above the entrance doors were two slightly paraphrased texts in Hebrew script: ‘Say unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!’ (derived from Isaiah

⁹⁹ For relevant information about the *Afscheiding* and its consequences, see pp. 226–230 of Robert J. Dickie, ‘The attempt to unite Scottish, Dutch, and American denominations: The trilateral relationship between the Free Presbyterian Church, the Gereformeerde Gemeenten, and the Netherlands Reformed Congregations in the 1930s’, *SRSJ*, Vol. 11 (2021), pp. 221–265.

¹⁰⁰ *De Heraut*, Vol. 3 (1852), no. 43, p. 4.

¹⁰¹ *De Heraut*, Vol. 7 (1855), no. 45.

¹⁰² The building was commissioned in 1788 and was named *Théâtre Français sur l’Erwtemarkt* [French: French Theatre on the Erwtenmarkt] when performances of French operas and plays began in 1794. It was renamed *Neues Deutsches Theater* [German: New German Theatre] in the nineteenth century, when the taste for entertainment switched from French to German drama.

52:7) and ‘Our Redeemer, the Lord of hosts is His name’ (derived from Jeremiah 50:34).¹⁰³

Whilst some open discussions took place between the Jews and Schwartz (and *De Vrienden Israëls*) between 1850 and 1859, he encountered increasingly strident opposition to his work from the Jewish leaders and Jewish press in Amsterdam,¹⁰⁴ fuelled perhaps by some of his own challenging and controversial articles.¹⁰⁵ Somewhat paradoxically it appeared that the more friendly and open a country was toward the Jews, the more hermetically the Jewish population insulated itself against missionary efforts.¹⁰⁶ Opposition to Schwartz and his work culminated in an attempt to murder him in 1858 when Samuel Abraham Hirsch (1843–1923), the fifteen-year-old son of a renowned Jewish printer, unbolted the pulpit door during a prayer, grabbed Schwartz by the hair, and stabbed him in the chest, arm, and neck. The lad then threw the dagger into the congregation, shouting ‘Jehovah, Jehovah, Thy servant has done his work.’ He was overpowered and imprisoned, and later convicted and sentenced to twelve years’ imprisonment. Schwartz recovered fully from his wounds.¹⁰⁷

Schwartz continued to labour incessantly, with a service on the Lord’s Day morning, and a Bible lecture in the evening (the latter followed by an opportunity for discussion), and he maintained a schedule of evening lectures on other days of the week: on Thursday evenings he lectured to Jewish believers on the Epistle to the Romans, and his Saturday evening lectures were attended by 500 to 700 working men.¹⁰⁸

A further facet of Schwartz’s work was editing and publishing magazines aimed at both a Jewish and Christian readership. The first of these was a four-page weekly magazine, *De Heraut* [The Herald],¹⁰⁹ which

¹⁰³ *Gedenkboek*, p. 121.

¹⁰⁴ Hendrik Wielenga, *De evangelieverkondiging onder de Joden in Nederland in de eerste helft van de 19^e eeuw* [Preaching the Gospel among the Jews in the Netherlands in the first half of the 19th century] (Kampen: Kok, 1981), pp. 23–40.

¹⁰⁵ De Greef, p. 32.

¹⁰⁶ Grolle, p. 12.

¹⁰⁷ ‘A strange attempt at murder’, in *Globe* (London), 13th August 1858, p. 4; ‘The late assault on the Rev. Mr Schwartz’, in *London Evening Standard*, 20th January 1859, p. 6; Jaap Colthof, ‘From juvenile criminal to Jewish scholar’, *Jewish Historical Studies*, vol. 46 (2016), pp. 138–157, *passim*. Samuel Hirsch later became a teacher in the Jewish high school of Frankfurt am Main, and eventually lecturer at Jews’ College, London (then a rabbinical seminary, now known as the London School of Jewish Studies).

¹⁰⁸ Johannes F. A. de le Roi, *Die evangelische Christenheit und die Juden*, Band III [Evangelical Christendom and the Jews, Vol. III] (Berlin, 1892), p. 340.

¹⁰⁹ Initially it bore the subtitle ‘*Eene stem over Israël en tot Israël*’ [A voice about Israel and to Israel]. In 1855, as the emphasis of the magazine changed, the subtitle became ‘*Eene*

first appeared in October 1850 with support from Da Costa and Capadose, in response to a newly established Jewish newspaper, *Nederlandsch-Israëlitische Nieuws- en Advertentieblad* [Dutch-Jewish Newsletter and Advertiser], which repeatedly attacked *De Vrienden Israëls* and missionary work among the Jews. As well as being for general circulation, copies of *De Heraut* were sent to every rabbi in the Netherlands, with the aim of educating the Jews on matters such as the true meaning of the Scripture portions read on the Sabbath in the synagogue, and the magazine included matter such as character sketches of notable Biblical individuals, reflections on Old Testament prophecies, and the practical influence of the Gospel. The magazine also gave information about Schwartz's work and the work of other Jewish missionaries (of varied affiliations) in various countries. As the years passed, the subject matter of the magazine broadened, since at that time it was one of the few mouthpieces of the Reformed (Dutch: *Gereformeerd*) part of the population that was separate from the *NHK*.¹¹⁰

Schwartz recognised that the character of the magazine had changed over time and so a new monthly magazine was issued in August 1856. Entitled *De Vriend Israëls* [The Friend of Israel] it revived the original ideals of *De Heraut* by giving 'reports about the work and blessing among God's ancient people'. The new magazine was also supported by Da Costa and Capadose and was issued by *De Vrienden Israëls*. With the renaming of that organisation as *Nederlandsche Vereeniging voor Israël* [Dutch Association for Israel] at the beginning of 1862, publication of *De Vriend Israëls* ceased at the end of 1861, and January 1862 saw it replaced by a new monthly paper, *De Hope Israëls* [The Hope of Israel]. Whereas *De Vrienden Israëls* simply collaborated with the FCS through the person of Carl Schwartz, the new Association explicitly stated its collaboration with the Scottish denomination in the first article of its Statutes. Within a few weeks, 32 ministers and 500–600 members had joined the Association, and 1500

stem aan Israëlieten en christenen in Nederland [A voice to Jews and Christians in the Netherlands], and the following year 'Eene Nederlandsche stem voor Israëls Koning, het Hoofd der Gemeente' [A Dutch voice for Israel's King, the Head of the Church].

¹¹⁰ Confusingly, the Dutch words *gereformeerd* and *hervormd* (as in *NHK*) are both translated as 'Reformed' in English but have different ecclesiastical connotations. After Schwartz died in 1870, Abraham Kuyper took over *De Heraut* that year, using it not only for theological subjects, but also as a platform for his political activities. He ceased publication at the end of March 1872 because of his work for the newspaper *De Standaard* [The Standard], which he founded, and which first appeared the following month. *De Heraut* was revived under Kuyper's ownership and editorship in 1877 and became the denominational magazine of the *Nederduitsche Gereformeerde Kerk (Dolerende)* denomination at its formation in 1886.

people attended the first annual meeting.¹¹¹ The work of the *Vereeniging*, with Schwartz as the president of its Amsterdam branch, extended beyond the borders of the Netherlands to Jews in the country's colony in South America (now the Republic of Suriname).¹¹²

The literary work of Schwartz was not confined to these three magazines, however. He issued numerous tracts for distribution to the Jews,¹¹³ and a total of 26 books and pamphlets issued from his pen. These included published sermons, devotional writings and historical essays, but ever alive to the dangers of false doctrine which might ensnare both Jewish Christians, he issued several polemical works opposing doctrinal errors of Dutch ministers and a South African Anglican bishop, as well as defending his own work among the Jews.¹¹⁴

2.6 Theological seminary in Amsterdam

In 1850 and 1851 there were attempts to form a theological seminary with the intention of training theology students from *NHK* and from the groups which had seceded from that body in the *Afscheiding* of 1834. The proposal envisaged that Schwartz would teach Hebrew and Old Testament exegesis, and Da Costa would give instruction in New Testament exegesis. The plan fell through but in 1852 Schwartz revived plans for a seminary to educate colporteurs and evangelists, and in autumn that year the *Theologisch Seminarie voor binnen- en buitenlandse Evangelisatie* [Theological Seminary for domestic and foreign Evangelism] was opened, with Da Costa as one of the teachers. Schwartz tried to obtain the support of the *NHK* in Amsterdam for this project but his approach went unanswered. Twenty men were trained there during its nine years of existence, and the seminary closed in 1861 due to lack of money.¹¹⁵

2.7 Missionary work in London

Schwartz was awarded the honorary degree of D.D. by the Academia Ludoviciana (part of University of Giessen in the German state of Hesse)¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ De Greef, p. 51.

¹¹² The official name of the colony, in both Dutch and English, was Surinam or Suriname, but both unofficially and semi-officially it was often called Dutch Guiana (Dutch: *Nederlands Guiana*) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

¹¹³ Schwartz motivated Dutch Christians to help distribute these. For example, a few Dutch Christian women gave out 30,000 tracts to Jews over two years, and they also distributed significant numbers of *De Heraut* magazines. See De Greef, p. 125.

¹¹⁴ His publications are listed in De Greef, pp. 108-109. The total includes two issued in English during his later work in London, and one posthumously published Dutch work.

¹¹⁵ De Greef, p. 35.

¹¹⁶ The University of Giessen (German: *Gießen*) was founded in 1607 as the Academia Ludoviciana and served as a Lutheran university to educate pastors and civil servants. The

in 1864, and that year he accepted a call to become minister of Trinity Chapel, London, as successor to Ridley Herschell. His formal connection with the FCS did not end, however, as the Free Church appointed him as the agent of their London Mission and hence he exercised a dual role. Towards the end of 1866 the Free Church made a further attempt to engage his services in Amsterdam, but he declined the invitation.¹¹⁷ In 1867 he became a collegiate minister of Harrow Road Presbyterian Church where he remained until his death in 1870, aged 53. While ministering to these London congregations he published an evangelistic magazine for Jews: *The Scattered Nation* appeared monthly from January 1866.

He continued mission work among the Jewish population of London and in 1866 he managed to unite disparate groups of converted Jews into one single body, the Hebrew Christian Alliance of Great Britain.¹¹⁸ Despite residence in Britain, he continued to edit *De Heraut*, in which he detailed some of his work in London for the Dutch readership,¹¹⁹ as well as providing them with an almost weekly exposition of biblical texts. He returned to the Netherlands in August 1870 and preached four sermons on two successive Lord's Days. Rather poignantly, these Amsterdam sermons concluded his life's work, as he died unexpectedly three days later, on his return to London.¹²⁰

2.8 Marriage and family

The first years of Schwartz's sojourn in the Netherlands were darkened by the death of his first wife, Maria (née Saphir), in 1850. The following year he married Cornelia van Vollenhoven, a sister of Amsterdam's Dutch mayor, Jan Messchert van Vollenhoven,¹²¹ scions of the prominent Van Vollenhoven dynasty.¹²² Cornelia was a member of the *Waalse Kerk* – the Walloon Reformed Church, a Dutch Calvinist denomination whose members originated (largely as Huguenot refugees) from the Southern

academy was named in honour of its founder, Louis V (Latin: *Ludovicus V*), Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt, and was established in theological opposition to the nearby Reformed (i.e., Calvinist) University of Marburg (Philipps-Universität Marburg). In 1946 the university was renamed as the Justus Liebig University of Giessen, in honour of a renowned nineteenth-century scientist.

¹¹⁷ *Gedenkboek*, p. 143; De Greef, p. 24.

¹¹⁸ It incorporated the Hebrew Christian Prayer Union, founded by Henry Aaron Stern of the LSPCJ in 1882. The Alliance is known today as the British Messianic Jewish Alliance.

¹¹⁹ *De Heraut*, Vol. 16 (1864), pp. 824-825, 841-843.

¹²⁰ *Gedenkboek*, pp. 143-144.

¹²¹ https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan_Messchert_van_Vollenhoven (retrieved 28th April 2022).

¹²² *NP*, Vol. 53 (1967), pp. 273-331.

Netherlands¹²³ and France. He had one son by his first marriage, and two sons and two daughters by his second wife.

Despite his prolific output to the press over the years, Schwartz gave very few details of his own background or spiritual experience, as he maintained that the work of spreading the Gospel was more important than divulging his own personal details.¹²⁴ The role of Schwartz and his descendants in Dutch society is marked by their inclusion in *Nederlands Patriciaat*, a book series published annually since 1910, containing the genealogies of important Dutch patrician non-noble families.¹²⁵

III. Jonas Meyer (later known as Theodore Jonas Meyer), 1819–1896

The next Jewish minister of the Free Church was influenced by Schwartz and he went on to play a significant role in the Free Church and elsewhere.

3.1 Early life

Jonas Meyer was born in 1819 in Crivitz (then in Prussia, now in the German province of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, anglicised as Mecklenburg-West Pomerania), seventy-five miles east of Hamburg. His parents were not strict Jews and they sent Jonas to the *Gymnasium* in Schwerin at the age of six. In God's providence he received general instruction from a Christian teacher named Krull. Meyer tried to appease God's wrath by ascetic practices and good works. This failed to satisfy his soul, and he resorted to worldly pleasures, but equally was unable to find satisfaction in them. At that juncture he studied the writings of Rabbi Samson Hirsch (1808–1888), the then leader of Orthodox Judaism, and with those of a mystic rabbi, Salomon Plessner (1797–1883), and these works awakened him so that he began to study the Bible (i.e., the Old Testament). He believed that he trusted to God's grace and mercy for the pardon of his sins, yet he found no peace. He then encountered Dr Samuel Holdheim (1806–1860), one of the more extreme leaders of Reform Judaism. Holdheim appointed Meyer to a teaching post in the state capital Schwerin in 1841, and subsequently

¹²³ The Southern Netherlands, also known as the Catholic (or Spanish) Netherlands, was that part of the Low Countries largely controlled by Spain (1556–1714), later by Austria (1714–1794), and occupied (and later annexed) by France (1794–1815).

¹²⁴ Grolle, pp. 5-6.

¹²⁵ *NP*, Vol. 48 (1962), pp. 389-394. To be eligible for an entry, families must have played an active and important role in Dutch society, fulfilling high positions in the government, in prestigious commissions and in other prominent public posts for over six generations or 150 years.

recommended him to be rabbi to a Reform congregation in Butzow, where he remained for three and a half years.

Meyer followed the chief rabbi into the Reform movement. However, he became disenchanted with Reform Judaism when they denied the need for belief in a personal Messiah, which seemed to him the fundamental idea of all Judaism. He then considered aligning with Orthodox Judaism, but their coldness and formality repelled him. In consequence, he did not know where to turn, and virtually abandoned religious belief.¹²⁶



Theodore Meyer.

3.2 Introduction to Christianity, theological training

Some time before this crisis he had again met his old State school teacher, Herr Krull, who had endeavoured to persuade him of the truth of Christianity. Now, by God's providence the two men came into contact yet again. By following Krull's advice to study the New Testament earnestly, Meyer became persuaded of the truth of Christianity. That of necessity prevented his continuing in his post as a rabbi and Jewish teacher. He went to Berlin where he met Carl Schwartz at the Free Church mission, who cleared up many points for Meyer, as did Prof. Hengstenberg of the Lutheran Church.¹²⁷ He was baptized by Schwartz¹²⁸ in Berlin in 1847 and he adopted the name Theodore – which means 'gift of God'¹²⁹ – and so he became Theodore Jonas Meyer. As Meyer wished to preach the Gospel, Schwartz advised him to go to Aberdeen, where Marcus Sachs, another convert from Judaism, was the Hebrew tutor in the Free Church Divinity Hall (*q.v.*).

3.3 Hebrew tutor in New College and evangelism in Edinburgh

Theodore Meyer spent a year at the Aberdeen College, and was licensed by the Presbytery of Edinburgh in 1850. He was appointed as a Hebrew tutor in New College for nine years, acting as an assistant to 'Rabbi' Duncan. Despite Duncan's reputation as a spiritually-minded preacher and profound

¹²⁶ Bernstein, pp. 365-7, entry: 'Meyer, Rev. Jonas Theodor'.

¹²⁷ *Gedenkboek*, p. 152. Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg (1802–1869) was a conservative Lutheran, who was appointed as Professor of Theology at Berlin University from 1826. He was noted for evangelical fervour and his emphatic protests against rationalism, especially in the matter of Old Testament criticism.

¹²⁸ *Gedenkboek*, p. 152.

¹²⁹ The name is derived from two Greek words: θεός (*theós*) 'God' and δῶρον (*dōron*) 'gift'.

theologian, the deficiencies of his teaching were well known. His biographer notes: 'From an early period Dr Duncan's warmest friends could have wished that some arrangement might be made for relieving him of the duties of the Junior Hebrew class, for the teaching of which he was in no way qualified.'¹³⁰ In contrast, Meyer was a 'superior scholar' and all students desiring 'to learn Hebrew grammatically had the best opportunity of doing so under Mr Theodore Meyer'. His duty was to teach Hebrew to students during their literary curriculum, to prepare them for their entrance examination on beginning Divinity studies, and it appears that Meyer's instruction was 'of great value to the students', making up for 'Dr Duncan's lack of service'.¹³¹ In 1856, he was also ordained to minister among the German population in and around Edinburgh, which he undertook in addition to his work at New College. He also translated several very substantial works of some German Lutheran theologians into English, including works by Hengstenberg, who had imparted to him such invaluable instruction in Berlin.¹³²

3.4 FCS missionary work in Galatz

In summer 1857 the Jewish Committee of the Free Church sent Meyer on a tour of inquiry to the Danubian Principalities, the historic name for two present-day provinces of Romania – Moldavia¹³³ and Wallachia – bordering the Black Sea. This resulted in his appointment the following year to be their missionary at Galatz (the German exonym and archaic English name for present-day Galați, Romania), a port city in the Danube delta, about fifty miles inland from the Black Sea. He was ordained to that work by Professor George Smeaton, Convener of the 'Conversion of the Jews' committee. Few details exist about his work in Galatz, however.

3.5 FCS missionary work in Ancona

After three years in Galatz (1858–1861), Meyer's health broke down and he was obliged to leave the city. He then laboured in Austria and Hungary, but in 1862 he was able to resume work for the Committee at Ancona on

¹³⁰ Brown bases this on material he himself supplied in chapter XIV (pp. 355-386).

¹³¹ Brown, pp. 390-391.

¹³² In 1854 he issued translations of *Biblical Commentary on the Gospels* by Hermann Olshausen (1796–1839); Vol. 3 of *The Acts of the Apostles; or, The History of the Church in the Apostolic Age* by Michael Baumgarten (1812–1889); followed over the next two years by Vols. 1 and 2 (out of 4) of *Christology of the Old Testament* by Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg; and *Internal History of German Protestantism since the Middle of Last Century* by Karl Friedrich August Kahnis (1814–1888).

¹³³ The western half of Moldavia is now part of Romania (the Romanian province of Moldova), the eastern side belongs to the Republic of Moldova, and the northern and south-eastern parts are territories of Ukraine.

the Adriatic coast of the Papal States.¹³⁴ He learned Italian in a remarkably short time, being able to preach in that language a few months after arriving. The field of work there was large, as his was the only evangelical Protestant mission station on the east coast of Italy.

Meyer remained in Italy for five years, but little is recorded of his work there. He gained fame following the execution of two Protestants by Roman Catholics at Barletta, a town well over two hundred miles south of Ancona. On 19th March 1866 Roman Catholics burnt two Protestants at the stake in the town of Barletta, an event which became known as the Barletta Massacre. When Meyer heard of it, he went there at once, and a few days later he sent a report to Scotland for publication in *The Bulwark*, the official organ of the Scottish Reformation Society. He had found that the evangelicals did not dare to show themselves in the town, and both the prefect of Bari and local Roman Catholics sought his expulsion from Barletta. After a prolonged and difficult interview with the sub-prefect of the area, he gained the protection of the civil authorities, and restored the confidence of the evangelicals by holding a religious meeting, preaching to around eighty people in a coffee-house, using the counter as his pulpit. He described this meeting as ‘certainly the most extraordinary I ever conducted’.¹³⁵

3.6 FCS missionary work in Amsterdam

Meyer’s time in Italy ended in 1866 when the FCS arranged for him to be transferred to Amsterdam to replace his old friend Carl Schwartz, who had moved to London. Meyer took pains to learn Dutch thoroughly and he continued evangelistic work among Dutch Jews for five years.¹³⁶ A few months after his arrival in Amsterdam Meyer was appointed as a director (Dutch: *bestuurder*) of the *Nederlandsche Vereeniging voor Israël*; at a subsequent meeting of the *Vereeniging* he was appointed its President. It was said that he achieved a great deal through his lectures on biblical prophecies, and that he initiated weekly meetings of baptised Jews, which were greatly blessed by God. Schwartz judged that starting these regular meetings alone had been an evident token that Meyer’s coming to Amsterdam was richly blessed.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ The Papal States is the usual English designation for the State of the Church (Italian: *Stato della Chiesa*), territories in the Italian Peninsula under the direct sovereign rule of the pope from 756 until Italian unification was completed in 1870.

¹³⁵ ‘The Barletta Massacre’, *The Bulwark*, Vol. 15 (1st May 1866), pp. 295-296. Several news reports mistakenly repeated that Meyer was the pastor at Barletta, e.g. ‘The Barletta Massacre’, *London Evening Standard*, Saturday 31st March 1866, p. 4.

¹³⁶ It was said that his Dutch letters were almost faultless. See *Gedenkboek*, p. 153.

¹³⁷ *Gedenkboek*, p. 152.

3.7 Missionary work in London

In 1871 Meyer left both Amsterdam and the FCS, and moved to London. Meyer was inducted to the office of missionary to the Jews in London by one of his former New College pupils, Dr Dykes, then minister of Regent Square Presbyterian Church.¹³⁸ Before leaving Amsterdam Meyer frequently remarked that he was perplexed that the Lord in providence was calling him to London and thereby leaving such an attractive field of labour in Amsterdam after a relatively short time. However, the matter became clear to him when he realised that he could work among the thousands of Dutch Jews who had moved to the British capital. His labour was apparently blessed among these Jews, as hundreds of them came to hear him. The Amsterdam *Vereeniging* concluded that their loss of Meyer was turned to be a blessing to expatriate Dutch Jews.¹³⁹

In 1874, the various Presbyterian Churches in England were amalgamated under the title of the Presbyterian Church of England, and he had the control of the Jewish mission of the denomination till the end of 1894, when his age and poor health obliged him to relinquish the work which he so dearly loved, and to which he had devoted all his energy for 44 years. He retired to the Channel Islands where he died at Croville, Jersey, in 1896, aged 77.¹⁴⁰

3.8 Marriage and family

Little is recorded about his wife, Jane Anne Stevenson, who was born in Ireland about 1825 and died in Jersey in 1900.¹⁴¹ They had at least four children – information exists about two sons and two daughters. One of their sons, Sir William Stevenson Meyer (1860–1922), served as the first High Commissioner to India. One of their daughters, Margaret Theodora Meyer (1862–1924), was a famous mathematician and was one of the first women to be elected to the London Mathematical Society and the Royal Astronomical Society.

IV. Alexander Fürst, 1831–1899

The first three biographical sketches illustrate some aspects of Jewish religion in the nineteenth century and the extent of the Free Church's

¹³⁸ James Oswald Dykes (1835–1912) was educated at New College and the German universities of Heidelberg and Erlangen. He was minister of East Kilbride and then St George's (Edinburgh) before serving the Presbyterian Church in Victoria, Australia. He returned to Britain and was settled at Regent Square, London, in 1869. He was appointed Professor of Divinity and Principal in the Theological College of the English Presbyterian Church in 1888. *AFCS*, Vol. 1, p. 145.

¹³⁹ *Gedenkboek*, pp. 152-153.

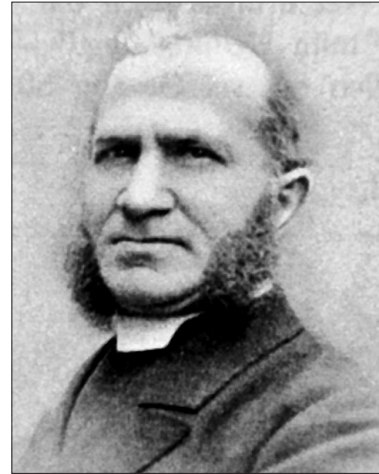
¹⁴⁰ See www.ecclegen.com/ministers-m/#MEYER,%20THEODORE%20JONAS (retrieved 28th April 2022); Max Meyer, 'Rev. Theodore J. Meyer', *FCSM*, August 1896, p. 186.

¹⁴¹ 'Presbyterian Church', *Londonderry Sentinel*, 21st June 1900, p. 6.

commitment to evangelising the Jews. The accounts of the next two ministers are less thoroughly documented.

4.1 Early life

Alexander Fürst was born in 1831 in the town of Zempelburg in West Prussia (now Sępólno Krajeńskie in northern Poland, about 150 miles east of the border with Germany). He was brought up as a strictly observant Jew, but in adolescence he was brought into contact with Christianity, albeit these events were not at that time made effectual to his salvation.



Alexander Fürst.

During the final two years at school, he had been under the influence of a pious Protestant teacher, and this led him to respect Christians and to lay aside his prejudices against them. When he was only fourteen years old, he heard a renowned LSPCJ missionary, Moses Moritz (later known as Johann Christian Moritz),¹⁴² discussing Christianity with Jews in Zempelburg, and Moritz gave him a Bible.¹⁴³

The prayers and ceremonies of Orthodox Judaism became irksome to Fürst, but this is not attributed to anything other than adolescent rebellion. When he left his parental home, he threw off all the fetters of religion, and lived essentially as an infidel. He trained as a teacher and went to work in a Jewish school in the Prussian town of Schneidemühl in the Grand Duchy of Posen (now the town of Piła in northwest Poland).

4.2 Introduction to Christianity

Fürst raised the issue of his disaffection with Judaism in conference with the local rabbi. He also conferred with Mr Chertzky, a missionary, which made the Jews suspect he was looking favourably on Christianity. The stricter Jews viewed conversion to Christianity as apostasy, worthy of death. His developing interest in the Christian religion made him fear for his own safety and he fled to London in 1855. He was admitted into Ridley Herschell's

¹⁴² Moses Moritz (1786–1868) was raised in Bernstein (now Pełczyce, northwest Poland). He left home because of religious differences and went first to Berlin and then to London. He obtained a New Testament when living in London, and by comparing it with the Old Testament he came to the knowledge of Christ. He was baptised by a German pastor in London and went to Gothenburg, Sweden, in 1811. He began work with the LSPCJ in 1817 and evangelised Jews in Russia, Sweden, and Germany. His work with that Society continued to the end of his life and was blessed to many.

¹⁴³ Bernstein, pp. 227-228, entry: 'Fuerst, Dr. A.'

Home for Jewish Inquirers where he received instruction in the Christian faith, and was baptized at Trinity Chapel, Edgware Road, in 1856.¹⁴⁴

4.3 Missionary work in London and Stettin

After his baptism, Fürst began work as an assistant missionary in London in Herschell's organisation. He spent nine years in that sphere of labour and it appears that his work among the Jews in London was blessed to the conversion of several of them.¹⁴⁵ In 1867 he was ordained at Coverdale Chapel, Limehouse, London, to be a missionary in the Prussian city of Stettin (now Szczecin, Poland), where he worked for the next five years.

4.4 FCS missionary work in Prague

Whilst working in Stettin, Fürst became known to three FCS ministers. They commended him as being 'a man of learning, faith, zeal, sagacity, and untiring energy in his Master's work. As, in addition to his other qualities, they found him a warm admirer of the history and principles of the Free Church, the thought took possession of their minds that he would form a very valuable addition to our staff of Jewish missionaries.' They noted that he was proficient in Latin, Greek, French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, and Danish, as well as German (his own language) and English. He was also highly commended to the FCS by Prof. Delitzsch of Leipzig, the well-known Biblical commentator,¹⁴⁶ whose letter to the Jewish Committee concluded, 'I can recommend to the Free Church of Scotland my very dearly beloved friend, Mr Fürst, as a missionary after God's own heart; one who combines with the peculiar acquirements necessary to a Jewish missionary right general views and a right frame of mind.'¹⁴⁷ On the basis of this, Fürst transferred to the service of the Jewish Committee of the FCS in 1872 and he was appointed to work among the Jews of Prague – an activity which had been forbidden to Schwartz during the turbulent times of the European revolutions of 1848 and 1849.

As well as being then the largest Jewish community in Europe, Prague had a longstanding reputation as a major centre for training Orthodox rabbis. Fürst faced a curious field of labour, as he noted in a report to the General Assembly:¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ 'Baptism of Mr Furst' [sic], *The Jewish Herald*, November 1856, pp. 174-176.

¹⁴⁵ 'Ordination of Mr Furst' [sic], *The Jewish Herald*, 1st October 1867, pp. 155-156.

¹⁴⁶ Franz Delitzsch (1813–1890) was a German Lutheran theologian and Hebraist, best known for his translation of the New Testament into Hebrew, and his series of commentaries on the Old Testament co-authored with Carl Friedrich Keil (1807–1888).

¹⁴⁷ *FCSMR*, 1st December 1871, pp. 189-190.

¹⁴⁸ 'Report on the Conversion of the Jews: May 1875', pp. 8-12, in *Proceedings and Debates of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, held at Edinburgh, May 1875* (Edinburgh, 1875).

For years each Rabbi has been reforming Judaism after his own pleasure, and now it has ceased to be a novelty to have everything according to the fashion of the Gentiles. [...] Before I came to Prague I entertained the idea that by far the greatest number of Jews must be orthodox in their creed, for in this city for centuries the Jews had famous Talmudical schools and world-famed Rabbis; but how entirely changed have I found all here! There is no Talmudical school of any importance here: the Talmud is studied by so few that one could almost number them on the fingers. Real orthodox Jews are, comparatively speaking, very few. [...] On the whole, infidelity and rationalism have laid hold on the Jews.

Notwithstanding, he found the Prague Jews very receptive to hearing about Christ and the Gospel. ‘Sad as the present religious condition of the Jews may be, the Christian missionary need not despond.’

4.5 FCS missionary work in Strasburg

In 1872 Fürst was awarded a Doctorate in Divinity from the University of Giessen, the same honour as had been accorded to Carl Schwartz seven years previously. Just one year later, in 1873 and at his own suggestion, Fürst moved from Prague to work among the Jews in Strasburg (now Strasbourg), which had become a German city by conquest in the recent Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Little is recorded of his work there. He remained in Strasburg for eleven years, and then in 1884 was transferred to Amsterdam.

4.6 FCS missionary work in Amsterdam

Alexander Fürst spent just over two years as missionary in Amsterdam but, like his work in Strasburg, little of substance is recorded of these years. He worked alongside Adrian van AnDEL, a Dutchman who was FCS minister in Amsterdam from 1871 to 1878.¹⁴⁹

4.7 Missionary work in Stuttgart

After his service in Amsterdam Fürst retired from the Free Church with a small annual pension from the Church’s Jewish Committee. The departure of Fürst and Van AnDEL concluded the work of the FCS mission in that city.

¹⁴⁹ *AFCS*, Vol. 1, p. 348. Van AnDEL was a Dutchman who became a Methodist ‘lay worker’ in Bremen and Hamburg. Afterwards he became superintendent of the Jewish Mission School in Budapest whilst acting as a pastor there. He was ordained on 29th October 1860 at a meeting of the Evangelical Alliance in England. Van AnDEL joined the FCS in 1863 and he moved from Budapest to Prague where he was appointed as an FCS missionary. He transferred to Amsterdam in 1871.



De Kleine Komedie, the former Free Church Mission, Amsterdam.

SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS, CC0 1.0 LICENCE.

Fürst went to live at Stuttgart in southwest Germany for the remaining twelve years of his life,¹⁵⁰ and there he once more entered the service of the BSPGJ, acting first as helper and then successor to Pastor Paul Gottheil¹⁵¹ (a converted Jew) until his own death in 1899, aged sixty-eight. He had worked among the Jews for thirty-eight years, fifteen of these years being in the Free Church. Despite the length of service, the Free Church at large seems to have known very little of him, other than learning of his work through his contributed reports to the General Assembly, which were incorporated in the printed proceedings of the

Assemblies. He was a member of the Committee for the Conversion of the Jews,¹⁵² and he contributed an article to the Church's magazine comprising notes on three topics: 'Intermarriages with Jews', 'Infidelity among the Jews', and 'The Jewish feeling towards St [sic] Paul'.¹⁵³ His only other known publication is a 315-page book in German, consisting largely of biographical sketches of notable converted Jews.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ The departure of Fürst and Van Anandel marked the end of the FCS mission to the Jews in Amsterdam. After several changes of ownership and function, the church building once more became a theatre and cabaret venue in 1947, and is now known as *De Kleine Komedie*.

¹⁵¹ Paul Eduard Gottheil (1818–1893) was born in Fraustadt in the Grand Duchy of Posen (now Wschowa in western Poland). After conversion, he served with the BSPGJ from 1848 until his death. He was for many years minister of the English church at Kannstadt (now Bad Cannstadt), near Stuttgart, and then minister of the *Diakonissenhaus* in Stuttgart – a German Protestant caring institution run by women entitled 'deaconesses'. Gottheil was a successful missionary and some of those whom he instructed and baptized at Nuremberg, Kannstadt, and Stuttgart became ministers of the Gospel or missionaries among the Jews. See *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 6, p. 52.

¹⁵² 'Israel', *FCSMR*, issue 133, 1st August 1873, pp. 164-166.

¹⁵³ 'Notes by Mr Fürst', *FCSMR*, issue 175, 1st August 1874, pp. 170-171.

¹⁵⁴ Alexander Fürst, *Christen und Juden: Licht- und Schattenbilder aus Kirche und Synagoge* [Christians and Jews: Pictures of Light and Shadows from the Church and the Synagogue] (Straßburg: Straßburger Druckerei und Verlagsanstalt, 1892).

4.8 Marriage

He married Maria Vice (c. 1832–1883) in Clerkenwell, London, in 1858. There is no record of family.

V. Marcus Sachs, 1812–1869

The previous four ministers in this paper evangelised the Jews the length and breadth of mainland Europe. In contrast, the ministry of Marcus Sachs was confined to the Free Church within Scotland. Information about his life and labours rarely featured in the popular press or in the pages of Free Church magazines, and details of his life are principally derived from two sources: (i) an obituary written by James Lumsden (Professor of Systematic Theology in Aberdeen Free Church College from 1856, and the College's first Principal from 1864),¹⁵⁵ and (ii) a short *octavo* biography written by Sir William Duguid Geddes, Professor of Ancient Greek at the University of Aberdeen.¹⁵⁶ Alexander Fürst included a biographical sketch of Sachs in Fürst's *Christen und Juden*. In it he attributed the information to Geddes' book issued twenty years earlier, and he provided minimal additional detail.¹⁵⁷

5.1 Early life

Marcus Sachs was born in 1812 in the small Prussian town of Inowratzlav in the semi-autonomous Grand Duchy of Posen (now Inowrocław in the district of Poznań, west-central Poland, about 180 miles east of the present border with Germany),¹⁵⁸ where his father followed the trade of an engraver.¹⁵⁹ He was brought up in an observant Jewish family and, influenced by studious older relatives, he was trained in a firm attachment to the Old Testament, developing an extensive acquaintance with the Talmudical writings.

To prepare him for university education Marcus Sachs was sent to lodge with an uncle in Berlin, the head of a large brewery, and this allowed him to attend a *Gymnasium* in the city.¹⁶⁰ Three factors led to him

¹⁵⁵ James Lumsden, 'Professor Marcus Sachs, Aberdeen', *FCSMR*, 1st April 1870, p. 80.

¹⁵⁶ William D. Geddes, *Marcus Sachs: In memoriam* (Aberdeen: n.p., 1872) [henceforth: Geddes].

¹⁵⁷ *Professor Marcus Sachs*, in Alexander Fürst, *op. cit.*, pp. 303-309.

¹⁵⁸ The town had a significant Jewish presence: in 1816, the population (3,106) included 1,256 Jews, the largest religious grouping after the majority Roman Catholic. See Heinrich Wuttke, *Städtebuch des Landes Posen* (Leipzig: n.p., 1864), pp. 326-331.

¹⁵⁹ Information from the death certificate of Marcus Sachs, National Records of Scotland Statutory registers: Deaths 168/2 532.

¹⁶⁰ Geddes, p. 4.

becoming disenchanted with Judaism: the love of Classical Greek poetry which he developed in the *Gymnasium*, avid study of French literature at university, and exposure to the prevailing French revolutionary philosophy among his fellow students.¹⁶¹ Sachs abandoned the Jewish religion and belief in the Old Testament for atheistical views. It appears that the ultimate step in this process was Sachs' fascination with the works of Voltaire, the French philosopher who was such a pungent critic of both Judaism and Christianity.¹⁶² Sachs excelled as a student and was one of the top four students in his class, one of the others incidentally being Carl Schwartz.¹⁶³

Despite having forsaken all positive religious belief, Sachs' sense of honour and pride of ancestry prevented him from following other German 'freethinkers' who hypocritically professed Christianity in order to advance their careers and social status. His fervent support for revolutionary opinions meant that he was debarred from public office in Germany, and his strict truthfulness prevented him from engaging in a mercantile profession.¹⁶⁴ Eventually he decided to migrate to Great Britain, expecting that he might forge a career either as a teacher or man of letters in a country of comparative liberty and toleration.

5.2 Introduction to Christianity, theological training

About 1842, Sachs sailed from Hamburg to London and then travelled to Edinburgh, where he arrived around the time of the Disruption. He became acquainted with several Christian men and ministers, and was conscious that there was a strong religious earnestness in Scotland, something which he could not understand as a rationalist.¹⁶⁵ That disturbed his mind and he sought to refortify himself in his unbelief by reading an infidel book which he borrowed from a man whose acquaintance he had made – John Brown of Broughton Place Secession Church, Edinburgh.¹⁶⁶ On returning

¹⁶¹ The Poles in general maintained a warm inclination to the French, who professed to be the protectors of Poland. See Geddes, p. 2, 11-12, 22. Sachs' views of British penal laws (such as the death penalty for crimes other than murder) are mentioned in Note B ('Social aspect of French Revolution') in the Appendix of Geddes, pp. 39-40.

¹⁶² The *nom-de-plume* of François-Marie Arouet (1694–1778). See Geddes, p. 6.

¹⁶³ 'The Late Professor Sachs', *The Aberdeen Journal*, Wednesday, 6th October 1869, p. 7.

¹⁶⁴ Geddes, p. 8 (fn.).

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

¹⁶⁶ John Brown (1784–1858) was a grandson of John Brown of Haddington (1722–87), and a son of Brown of Whitburn (1754–1834). He was successively the Secession Church minister of Biggar and the Edinburgh congregations in Rose Street and Broughton Place. He was an able exegete and was appointed to the Chair of Exegetical Theology in the Secession Church in 1834. Brown was deeply involved in the Atonement Controversy of 1840–1845 within his denomination. He taught an Amyraldian view of the extent of the atonement, but in 1845

the book, Brown asked Sachs if he would then read material on the other side of the argument – a work issued by a French Roman Catholic abbot consisting of letters by Portuguese, German, and Polish Jews directed against Sachs’ idol Voltaire.¹⁶⁷ Sachs promised to do this, and this French three-volume work was the means, under the blessing of God, of not only restoring his belief in the Old Testament, but it also prepared the way for his conversion. John Brown also lent him a book by Philippus van Limborch, a Dutch Remonstrant [Arminian] theologian.¹⁶⁸ Sachs’ memorialist says that the French abbot’s book was ‘the means of restoring his belief in the Old Testament’, and the work by Van Limborch ‘prepared him to accept the New’.¹⁶⁹

Up to that time Sachs read Van Limborch, he ‘had no acquaintance with the New Testament, except casually, as what he had been taught to regard as a curious piece of literature. He could read the historical matter contained in it but he said the doctrines were ludicrous and “foolishness” to him. [...] He found candour, where he expected prejudice; charity where he thought he should only hear such names as dog or swine; and in short the whole spirit and tone of the Christian argumentation was entirely different from what he thought a Christian man was capable of.’ He became convinced, ‘not that Christianity was a Divine revelation

the Synod acquitted him of teaching unsound doctrine after a lengthy trial. His expository lectures to students were published, and many remain in print. See John Cairns, *Memoir of John Brown, D.D.* (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1860).

¹⁶⁷ Antoine Guénée, *Lettres de quelques Juifs, Portuguais, Allemands et Polonais, à M. de Voltaire* (Lisbon and Paris: L. Prault, 1769). The volumes were a defence of the Bible, not of Judaism. They were reprinted many times in French and were translated in English with a slightly abbreviated title as *Letters of certain Jews to Monsieur de Voltaire*, trans. Philip Lefanu (2 vols., Dublin: William Watson, 1777). Guénée (1717–1803) had been a rhetorician at the Collège du Plessis in the University of Paris before his appointment as Canon of Amiens. Later he became a Chaplain at Versailles and subsequently was appointed as Abbot of Loroy, near Bourges in central France. Frédéric Godefroy, *Histoire de la littérature française au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Gaume et Cie, 1877), pp. 255-257 [History of French Literature in the 18th century]; www.napoleon-juifs.org/Guenee.htm (retrieved 28th April 2022).

¹⁶⁸ His name is latinized as Philippi a Limborch (1633–1712). *De veritate religionis Christianæ: amica collatio cum erudito Judæo* [On the truth of the Christian religion: a friendly conference with a learned Jew] (Gouda: Justum ab Hoeve, 1687). Van Limborch became a Remonstrant pastor at Gouda in 1657, and in 1667 was transferred to Amsterdam. In 1668, the office of professor of theology in the Remonstrant seminary was added to his pastoral charge. His theology later diverged from Arminius, and he embraced Rationalism and Semi-Pelagianism. See Roger E. Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009), pp. 57, 85.

¹⁶⁹ Geddes, pp. 35-6.



Marcus Sachs.

but that a Christian might be something entirely different from what he had ever yet believed in, heard of, or known.’ As a result, he shut himself away in his spare time, over a period of several weeks, and read the New Testament in Greek very carefully, ‘raising all the objections that might be urged to each part, and finding them dissolve. Thenceforth he was satisfied that there was conclusive evidence, *of its proper kind* [emphasis in the original], for the Divine origin and authority of the Scriptures, both of the Old and of the New Testament.’¹⁷⁰ Sachs was very reticent

about his soul’s experience, but it would seem that the first time he read the words, ‘What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?’ was an occasion which the Lord blessed to him.¹⁷¹

However inappropriate it was for John Brown to lend books by a rationalist and a heretic, Sachs wrote the following to Brown at the time of his baptism:

In order to trace the way in which the Lord has been pleased to lead me to the knowledge of divine truth, I am obliged to go back as far as to the day when I had the honour of making your acquaintance, for this event I consider as the first step towards the salvation of my soul; inasmuch as the kind reception you gave me, disposed my mind to better feelings. I got at once rid of the absurd prejudice I entertained with regard to Christian clergy in general, and Presbyterian clergy in particular. [...] When in the wretched state of infidelity, I busily seized upon every opportunity of disputing with Christians, for having the diabolic pleasure of hurting and ridiculing their most secret feeling, when they on the other hand were most anxiously engaged to save my soul from everlasting perdition.¹⁷²

After this, Sachs publicly professed his faith in Christ and Brown baptised him in the Broughton Place church. Despite being a minister of the Secession, Brown advised Sachs to attend the Free Church and thus he became a communicant member in the Free St George’s congregation where Robert Candlish (1806–1873) was minister. Sachs resolved to study

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., Appendix, Note A: ‘On the Apostolic mode of conducting religious controversy’, pp. 36-8, *passim*.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁷² Ibid., pp. 41-51, ‘Statement by Mr Sachs, at the time of his conversion’, *passim*.

for the ministry and attended the Divinity lectures of Thomas Chalmers at New College.

5.3 Hebrew tutor and professor in Aberdeen

In 1846, after being licensed as a minister, Marcus Sachs was appointed Tutor in Hebrew to the Free Church Divinity classes in Aberdeen.¹⁷³ Within a short time it was reported that his labours had been ‘very successful, both in communicating a knowledge of Hebrew, and in inspiring much zeal in the study of that language’.¹⁷⁴

The Free Church Assembly in Inverness in 1845 had appointed the foundation of a college in Aberdeen for the benefit of students from the North of Scotland and the Free Church College was opened there in 1850.¹⁷⁵ The Aberdeen college was always seen as the ‘poor relation’ of its

¹⁷³ ‘Aberdeen Free Church College was established in 1843, with the appointment of Dr Alexander Black, formerly Professor of Divinity at Marischal College, Aberdeen, as its first Professor of Theology. Dr Black resigned his Chair in the spring of 1844, but the Free Church Commission of Assembly declined to appoint a replacement, believing that training of its clergy should be centralised in the newly established Free Church College in Edinburgh. Commitment to a training college in Aberdeen amongst church members and clergy in the city ensured the resumption of teaching for the following session, the task being shared between three local ministers. In 1845 the Inverness Assembly agreed to appoint Dr MacLagan as Professor of Theology, and the following year Marcus Sachs was appointed teacher of Hebrew. However, the Assembly of 1847 declined to erect any further professorships, and in 1848 declared that the church could not support more than one good college. This decision was opposed by members in Aberdeen, who undertook funding and erecting a college building, which they had hitherto been without. The building, situated at Alford Place, was opened in 1850, though its future was not secured until 1853, when the Assembly finally committed itself to the support of a Professor of Theology and a teaching assistant. The College’s position was strengthened shortly afterwards by an endowment of 4000, which permitted the establishment of a second Chair of Theology and a Chair of Hebrew.’ <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/search/archives/a3316a5f-06cb-3423-9f01-c6044951b31f> (retrieved 28th April 2022).

¹⁷⁴ ‘Report of the College Committee’, *HFMRFCS*, Vol. 3, issue 7, July 1847, pp. 186-187.

¹⁷⁵ The college was erected on Alford Place at a cost of £2025 (equivalent to over £290,000 in present value, but not accounting for inflation of property prices). Ownership passed to the UFC in 1900 and then to the Church of Scotland following the Church union of 1929. The college became known as Christ’s College in 1936, just before its association with the Faculty of Divinity in the University of Aberdeen. The faculty’s facility retained the name when it relocated to King’s College in Old Aberdeen in 1990s, whereupon the old college building was sold in 1995 and repurposed as a bar, restaurant, and nightclub. See Clare Davidson, *College Voices: The story of Christ’s College, Aberdeen, told through its people* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 2018). The Free Church College library contained 17,000 volumes and was located on the opposite (north) side of Alford Place. See <http://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/LB20086> (retrieved 28th April 2022). The building incorporated a museum and the Sacrist’s flat. It remained the library for the UFC, the Church of Scotland, and the University until some of the inventory was transferred to

counterparts in Edinburgh (New College) and Glasgow, and for several years from its opening had only one professor.¹⁷⁶

In 1855, Candlish successfully proposed that Sachs should be appointed as Professor of Hebrew and Exegetical Theology at the Aberdeen College. By then, Sachs had already been Tutor for nine years, and attendance on his classes had been recognised as equivalent to attending those of a professor. Candlish said that Sachs had shown himself eminently qualified for giving instruction in the critical and exegetical study both of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures: ‘As Hebrew tutor at Aberdeen, he had given the highest satisfaction; and altogether he [Candlish] was convinced the Church would lose a most signal advantage if she did not avail herself of the service of Mr Sachs.’¹⁷⁷ That proposal was supported by Professors John (‘Rabbi’) Duncan, Patrick Fairbairn,¹⁷⁸ and Smeaton,¹⁷⁹ who testified wholeheartedly to Sachs’s qualifications for critical and exegetical teaching, reflected in the entry in Ewing’s *Annals*.¹⁸⁰ Nonetheless, Candlish was not entirely fulsome in his praise, tempering it as follows: ‘As might be supposed from his antecedents [a slightly barbed allusion to Sachs’ Jewish forebears], he had a few peculiarities – he was very pugnacious, very dogmatic, very disputative and very outspoken, raising arguments sometimes for arguments’ sake. But

the University Library and surplus books were sold. In 1988 the former library building was sold to the Aberdeen congregation of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland and is named Alford Place Church.

¹⁷⁶ James MacLagan who had been minister of Kinfauns since 1821, was appointed Professor of Divinity at the opening of the College in 1846.

¹⁷⁷ ‘General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, Wednesday May 30: Aberdeen College’, *HFMRFCS*, Vol. 5, Issue 11, June 1855, p. 298.

¹⁷⁸ In 1852, ‘Patrick Fairbairn (1805–74) was appointed assistant to Dr MacLagan, Professor of Divinity in the Free Church College, Aberdeen, and in the following year became his successor. In 1856 Fairbairn was transferred to Glasgow as Professor of Theology, and in the year following was installed as Principal. [He was] an erudite Hebraist, and he was among the earliest of Scottish theologians who explored the region of German theology.’ *AFC*, Vol. 1, p. 54.

¹⁷⁹ George Smeaton (1814–89) was appointed Professor of Divinity in the Free Church College, Aberdeen, in 1853. He transferred to New College as Professor of New Testament Exegesis in 1857, and remained in that post until his death. ‘Dr Smeaton was regarded by Chalmers and others as one of the most accomplished Greek scholars of his time, and as early as 1845 he was one of the pioneers in directing attention to German and Dutch theology. [...] Professor Smeaton had a quite exceptional acquaintance with patristic and mediaeval writers.’ *AFC*, Vol. 1, p. 58.

¹⁸⁰ ‘Professor Sachs was a man of enormous erudition in his own subject. Perhaps the noblest tribute paid to him was that by his successor, Dr Robertson Smith, “One who by race as well as scholarship was fitted to teach the subject in a manner such as few can hope to do.”’ *AFC*, Vol. 1, p. 58. Acceptance of that encomium must be tempered by the knowledge that Smith was later prosecuted for heresy.

he [Candlish] was glad to learn that these roughnesses had been softened down by his residence among their friends in Aberdeen.'

Some ministers on the Presbytery opposed Sachs' appointment: one of them asserted there was no proof of Sachs' qualifications for giving instructions in the critical and exegetical exposition of the Scriptures, and ominously stated there were men in the Free



Aberdeen Free Church Divinity Hall.

Church fully qualified. Given that Higher Criticism was starting to affect the FCS, the reflection on his lack of critical abilities need not necessarily be viewed as something exceptionable. The Presbytery voted in favour of Sachs and took him on trial with a view to his being inducted as Professor. Dr Davidson¹⁸¹ ordained and inducted him to the office of Professor in 1855 but inexplicably the salary was below that of other Professors in any of the Colleges: the Free Presbytery of Aberdeen petitioned the General Assembly in 1862, requesting that the salary be adjusted.¹⁸² In addition to teaching Hebrew at the Free Church College and to Arts students,¹⁸³ he stimulated an interest in Arabic¹⁸⁴ and offered tuition in German.¹⁸⁵ In 1862 Professor Sachs was considered as an assistant to Rabbi Duncan at New College but that vacancy was filled by A. B. Davidson, who later became Duncan's successor.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ Alexander Dyce Davidson (1807–1872), minister of the Free West Church, Aberdeen, described as 'one of the best preachers of a day that saw many famous preachers'. Before the Disruption he was successively minister of Aberdeen's South and West congregations. *FES*, Vol. 6, pp. 31, 39; *AFCs*, Vol. 1, p. 133.

¹⁸² 'Free Church Synod of Aberdeen: Salary of the Hebrew Professor', *The Aberdeen Journal*, Wednesday 9th April 1862, p. 8.

¹⁸³ Intimation in *The Aberdeen Journal*, Wednesday 8th October 1851, p. 4.

¹⁸⁴ Geddes, p. 14.

¹⁸⁵ Advertisement in *The Aberdeen Journal*, Wednesday 24th October 1849, p. 4: 'The Rev. M. Sachs intends to take Pupils for Instruction in the German Language, either for Private Lessons or in Classes.'

¹⁸⁶ Andrew Bruce Davidson (1831–1902) studied at New College and the University of Göttingen, Germany. He was licensed in 1857 but never held any charge. He acted as

Unlike the other Jewish ministers in the Free Church, Marcus Sachs is not known to have evangelised, even within the comparatively small Scottish Jewish community.¹⁸⁷ His life was dedicated to teaching Hebrew and other languages to divinity students and his literary output was negligible, consisting solely of two *octavo* pamphlets: both were lectures originally delivered to Free Church students in Aberdeen. The first, *The Prophetic Agency*, was a 16-page pamphlet issued in 1855,¹⁸⁸ at the time when the suitability of his candidature for professorship was challenged. His prefatory note records that allegations against the soundness of his views had been raised at the Presbytery of Glasgow: the lecture was designed to demonstrate his orthodoxy. The second was *The Synagogue*, a longer booklet of 30 pages, issued in 1865, on the interesting topic of the origin and purpose of the synagogue in the Old Testament.¹⁸⁹

Sachs' biographer characterised his teaching as follows:

He was very patient and laborious in laying the foundation. His motto was ever 'Thorough', and the contempt which he felt for anything unreal or not thorough extended itself to this domain. While full of encouragement to, and rejoicing over, humble earnest aspiring after more light and more knowledge on the part of even the slowest student, he administered in the case of ignorant presuming pseudo-students, rebukes little to be envied. The fire of the old Hebrew race for truth and uprightness flashed out, on such occasions, in a way to be remembered.¹⁹⁰

It appears that Sachs did not confine his criticisms to divinity students. His biographer continued:

a 'missioner' at Carstairs and Blairgowrie, before being licensed as a probationer at Gilcomston Free Church, Aberdeen, in 1857. The following year he was appointed as assistant to Professor John ('Rabbi') Duncan in the chair of Old Testament Language and Literature in New College: on Dr Duncan's death he was appointed Professor in 1870. Davidson had adopted German Higher Critical views by 1863 but escaped ecclesiastical censure. *AFC*S, Vol. 1, p. 52; James Strahan, *Andrew Bruce Davidson* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1917); 'Biographical Introduction' by A. Taylor Innes in Davidson's *The Called of God* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1902), pp. 1-58.

¹⁸⁷ Some of the earliest Jews connected with Scotland were medical students who graduated from Aberdeen's two universities in the eighteenth century. The first Aberdeen synagogue was opened in 1893. See www.sjac.org.uk/jewish-communities-in-scotland/aberdeen (retrieved 28th April 2022).

¹⁸⁸ *The Prophetic Agency. An address delivered at the close of the session to the Free Church students of Divinity, Aberdeen* (Aberdeen: George Davidson, 1855).

¹⁸⁹ *The Synagogue: Its Origin and Purpose. A lecture, delivered at the opening of the session of the Free Church Divinity Hall, Aberdeen* (Aberdeen: George Davidson, 1865).

¹⁹⁰ Geddes, pp. 14-15.

He had much to condemn in the so-called Christian world, and he frequently deplored the worldliness and utter materialism of many professing Christians, wearing phylacteries of words like the Jews, and denying them by their lives.¹⁹¹

Although he never formally evangelised the Jews, his biographer noted that, ‘It was very beautiful to behold his affection for his own people, amid all that repelled him in the worldliness and their slavish superstitions.’ Unsurprisingly he had a great and deep knowledge of the Hebrew Bible:

If you commenced at any point, he could go on continuously repeating the original, and the listener would sooner tire than the reciter. Not that he made any boast of this; he was too sensible of the littleness of our knowledge compared with the greatness of our ignorance to make a boast of anything. It was only what he would have regarded as the proper accomplishment of a teacher – entire familiarity with his theme.¹⁹²

In 1867 he developed the onset of an unspecified paralytic condition. He was advised to visit Germany for treatment at its medical spas. He spent a great part of that summer at one in neighbouring Bohemia, ‘but with sad hearts his friends saw him return, not stronger, as they had hoped, but weaker’. During his illness, he requested ‘an accomplished probationer’, the Rev. George G. Cameron,¹⁹³ to lecture in his stead. Marcus Sachs died at Kepplestone Cottage, Aberdeen,¹⁹⁴ in 1869, aged 57, having suffered from painful paralysis of his tongue and larynx for eighteen months.¹⁹⁵ After a notably well-attended funeral, he was buried in Nellfield Cemetery, Aberdeen.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁹³ George Gordon Cameron (1836–1913) studied at the University and the Free Church colleges in Aberdeen and Edinburgh. He was ordained at Free St. John’s, Glasgow, in 1871. He was appointed Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis in the Free Church College, Aberdeen, in 1882. He entered the UFC in 1900 and remained as Professor in Aberdeen until retiring in 1913: he died a month later. *AFC*, Vol. 1, p. 51; *FUFCS*, p. 575.

¹⁹⁴ The Ordnance Survey Name Book of 1865–1871 for Old Machar Parish (vol. 69 – OS1/69/157) describes Kepplestone Cottage as, ‘A very pretty cottage, situated close to Kepplestone Ho., the property of Revd. Marcus Sach’ [*sic*]. The site of the former cottage was later developed as residential properties at the present-day Kepplestone Gardens.

¹⁹⁵ The medical term stated on his death certificate was glosso-laryngeal paralysis. The certificate did not elaborate on the underlying cause.

¹⁹⁶ ‘Funeral of Professor Sachs’, *The Aberdeen Journal*, Wednesday 6th October 1869, p. 5.

Sachs' former student Theodore Jonas Meyer was nominated for the professorial vacancy, but in the event the Higher Critic and heretic, William Robertson Smith, was appointed as Sachs' successor in 1870.¹⁹⁷

Sachs' views on the Free Church controversies over Biblical Criticism were not expressed in explicit terms, and his conduct in this regard mirrored that of 'Rabbi' Duncan. His biographer excuses his reticence on the following grounds:

It was in conversation that he shone, in the hand to hand encounter in the push and thrust of argument, and he seemed averse to the labour, if not of penmanship, at least of composition, in a tongue such as the English, the delicacies of which he felt that he might be unable to employ. Hence he wrote little and published less, and, moreover, he shrank from incurring, even in appearance, the risks of theological controversy, desiring to rest in a simple childlike Theology, which made Christ the corner-stone, and the law of the Spirit of Life in Him, the rule of Christian living.¹⁹⁸

Notwithstanding, it was recognised that he opposed the teachings of German Higher Critics such as Schleiermacher and Strauss.¹⁹⁹ He was

¹⁹⁷ William Robertson Smith (1845–1894) studied at the University of Aberdeen and at New College, and he became an avid follower of German Higher Critics during summer vacation visits to Germany. In 1870, at the age of twenty-three, he was appointed Professor of Old Testament Language and Literature in the Free Church College, Aberdeen. Contributions to the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (of which shortly afterwards he became editor), notably one on 'Bible' and another on 'Hebrew Language and Literature', led to protracted discussions between the Professor and the College Committee, the Aberdeen Presbytery, and the General Assembly of the Free Church. Two disciplinary cases were brought against him, beginning in 1877 and ending in 1881, when the Assembly by a majority decided 'it was no longer safe or advantageous that Professor Smith should continue to teach in one of her colleges', and declared the Professorship of Hebrew in Aberdeen vacant. Shortly afterwards Smith was appointed to the Chair of Arabic at Cambridge and was also elected Librarian of that University. *AFCS*, Vol. 1, p. 232; Bernhard Maier, 'William Robertson Smith. Sein Leben, sein Werk, und seine Zeit' [His life, his work and his times], *Forschungen zum Alten Testament* [Old Testament Research] 67 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

¹⁹⁸ Geddes, pp. 21-22.

¹⁹⁹ 'Opening of the Free Church College Session', *The Aberdeen Journal*, Wednesday 12th November 1862, p. 7. Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768–1834) was a minister of the German Reformed Church, and later Professor of Theology at the Universities of Halle and Berlin. He became very influential in the evolution of Higher Criticism and is known as the 'Father of Modern Liberal Theology'. See Brian A. Gerrish, *A Prince of the Church: Schleiermacher and the Beginnings of Modern Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984). David Friedrich Strauss (1808–1874) was a German liberal Protestant theologian who denied the divine nature of Christ. His notorious work, *Das Leben Jesu*, was first published in English as *The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined* (3 vols., London: Chapman Brothers, 1846).

listed as an ‘annual subscriber’ of the Aberdeen Auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society.²⁰⁰

Principal Lumsden, his obituarist, summed up Sachs as an individual:

The sincerity and cordiality of his friendships were unmistakable. With boldness and fearlessness in stating his opinion when circumstances required it, he combined, in a remarkable degree, great humility and a shrinking sensitive modesty and reserve. So far from being apt to parade his religious experience before others, and ostentatiously to reprobate the errors which he had abandoned, he rarely referred to the fact or circumstances of his conversion. This reticence was not caused by any unwillingness to own his Hebrew origin. For he gloried in his nation. He took evident delight not only in expatiating on the people as they were of old, but in pointing out all that is excellent and honourable in the character and institutions of both modern and medieval Jews; spoke most tenderly of those who yet remain in unbelief, and bitterly scorned only the professed ‘Jewish converts’, who by their unworthiness bring so much discredit on both the Jewish and the Christian name.

He seldom appeared as a preacher. Both his extreme modesty and his utterance somewhat disqualified him for effectiveness in this service. But he devoted himself with conscientious diligence and scrupulous honesty to the work which the Church had assigned him, suffering no personal gratification or extraneous engagement to interrupt the prosecution of his professional duties; whilst in such humble labours as the teaching of a Sabbath school, and private visits of sympathy to the distressed, he sought such opportunities as he could use of serving the Lord Christ.²⁰¹

A short appreciation of Sachs appeared from the pen of Adolph Saphir in Carl Schwartz’s magazine, *The Scattered Nation*.²⁰² His description of Sachs acts as a counterbalance to Candlish’s uncomplimentary comments, but obviously this must be interpreted in the context of a eulogising obituary:

There was something very attractive in the simplicity and almost childlike transparency of his character, the breadth of his views and sympathies, and the genial warmth and enthusiasm of his loving nature. As a student, and before the grace of God touched his heart, he was admired for his singular

²⁰⁰ ‘Aberdeen Auxiliary Bible Society’, *Aberdeen Herald and General Advertiser*, Saturday 5th November 1853, p. 2.

²⁰¹ James Lumsden, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

²⁰² Adolph Saphir, ‘In Memoriam – Professor Sachs, Free Church College, Aberdeen’, *The Scattered Nation*, 1st November 1869, pp. 281-283.

honesty and straightforwardness, his manliness and courage, his genuine love of liberty and his chivalrous spirit, which delighted in the defence of the weak and oppressed. And when he became a Christian, these features of his character shone forth with a purer light. His piety was unostentatious, but deep. His prayers breathed a spirit of childlike reverence and trust in God, and loving obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. He felt deeply, as he knew experimentally, that Christ only was the believer's righteousness and life, and that in Him God had given us what the law could never effect. [...] He spoke with great sorrow, sometimes with indignation, of the worldliness of professing, and even sincere Christians. He expected to find in a Christian a delicate sense of honour, an eminent degree of truthfulness, a broad and liberal humanity; he was pained to see in some of the followers of Jesus, love of money, and an exaggerated importance attached to worldly rank and position.

Saphir concluded by surmising with regret why Sachs had not written more widely: '[...] partly from modesty and a very high standard of literary excellence, partly from other causes.' However, these 'other causes' remained tantalisingly unspecified.

5.4 Marriage

In 1850 Marcus Sachs married Mary Shier (1809–1915) of Aberdeen, the daughter of a land surveyor or manager of the Leith and Clyde Shipping Company: they had no children. She survived him and it appears that she left Kepplestone Cottage in 1873 as the contents were sold by public auction.²⁰³ Eight years after she was widowed, she married Francis Edmond (1805–1892), a prominent advocate from Haddington. Edmond previously lived at Kingswells, Aberdeenshire, and had been heavily involved in the arrangements for constructing the Free Church Divinity Hall in Aberdeen, as well as writing the preface to the published sermons of Dr Alexander Dyce Davidson.²⁰⁴

VI. Alfred Edersheim, 1825–1889

The names of the previous five ministers are relatively obscure nowadays. However, Alfred Edersheim became – and remains – a household name in evangelical Christian circles, thanks to the informative books he wrote,

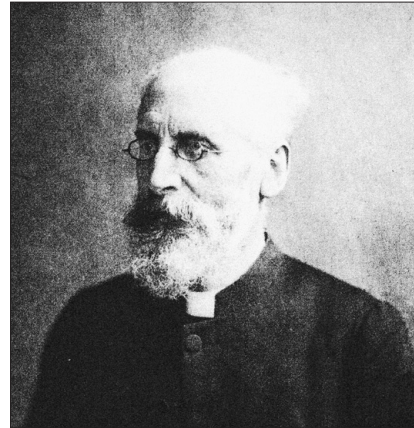
²⁰³ Intimation: 'Sale of Household Furniture, Pianoforte, etc., Kepplestone Cottage, Rubislaw', *The Aberdeen Journal*, 9th April 1873, p. 4.

²⁰⁴ Ewing (*AFCS*, Vol. 1, p. 58) names Sachs' wife as a Miss Clark of Manchester. However, this seems erroneous as newspaper reports of her death in Cardiff in 1915 refer to her as Mary Shier of Aberdeen. She was the oldest woman in the British Empire at the time of her death, aged 105. Her obituary references her marriage to Sachs in 1850 and it appeared in a Cardiff newspaper as 'The King's Oldest Subject', *Western Mail*, 28th April 1915, p. 7.

including *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, and *The Temple and its Ministry*. Due to the prominence of his later ministerial career in the Church of England, it is probably fair to say that his involvement in the FCS is often completely overlooked.

6.1 Early life

Edersheim was born into a wealthy Jewish family in Vienna in 1825. He attended a local *Gymnasium* and also a Jewish school



Dr Alfred Edersheim.

where he learned the Talmud and Hebrew. He was highly educated, and had great skill as a linguist. As well as his mother tongue of German, he could speak Latin, Greek, Hebrew, English, French, Hungarian and Italian. When Isaac Adolphe Crémieux, the Jewish head of the French bar,²⁰⁵ paid a visit to Vienna, the Viennese synagogue deputed the young Edersheim to deliver an address to him. Crémieux was impressed with his eloquence and offered to provide a position for him in Paris, but his parents declined the offer.²⁰⁶

6.2 Introduction to Christianity, theological training

Edersheim enrolled at Vienna University at the age of sixteen, but his father's death impoverished the family and so he did not complete his studies, and instead became a teacher in Hungary. The following year, in 1842, he met John Duncan and the Scottish missionaries who had just begun their work in Pesth. Edersheim attended the meetings of the Scottish missionaries, and they were keen to ensure that the young man's interest in the Gospel was more than mere intellectual curiosity.²⁰⁷ He had been particularly struck by the fulfilment of prophecy as explained in Dr Keith's book,²⁰⁸ and by early 1843 he witnessed of his faith in Christ to one of his friends.²⁰⁹ His knowledge of Christian doctrines increased, to the evident satisfaction of the Scottish missionaries, and they agreed that he 'should be invited for baptism, as soon as time for prayer and for the instruction

²⁰⁵ *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, Vol. 4, pp. 345-348.

²⁰⁶ An account of Edersheim by William Wingate, quoted in Carlyle (Saphir), p. 49.

²⁰⁷ Kovács, pp. 81-83.

²⁰⁸ Gavin Carlyle, *Life and Work of the Rev. William Wingate, Missionary to the Jews* (London: A. Holness, 1900) [henceforth: Carlyle (Wingate)], p. 86. The impact of this on Edersheim became evident in *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*.

²⁰⁹ Carlyle (Wingate), p. 36.

would allow'.²¹⁰ He undertook the final instructions to prepare for baptism together with Philipp and Adolph Saphir, and he was baptised by Pál Török on 11th April that year: this took place in the Hungarian Reformed Church to which the Scottish missionaries were affiliated.²¹¹

Shortly after the Disruption took place in May 1843, John Duncan was recalled to Edinburgh to become the first Professor of Oriental Languages at New College. Along with Adolph Saphir and Tomory, the 18-year-old Alfred Edersheim proceeded to Edinburgh: the account of the subterfuge adopted to allow them to leave the Austrian Empire without undertaking military service was described in an earlier part of this paper.

The three Hungarians lodged with the Duncan family in Edinburgh,²¹² thus allowing Edersheim and Tomory to begin theological studies at New College.²¹³ In 1845 the General Assembly was informed that 'the Presbytery of Edinburgh, having been instructed [...] to report any cases of young men of the seed of Abraham, now Students in the Theological Hall of this Church, whom they may deem ready for the work of the ministry, now reported the case of Mr Alfred Edersheim, as a fit person to be taken on trials with the view of missionary labour among the Jews.' The General Assembly instructed the Presbytery to proceed with Mr Edersheim's trials for licence.²¹⁴

Edersheim concluded his education by spending one year at the University of Berlin, where his professors were a mixture of Evangelicals and rational Higher Critics. That gave him a lifelong hatred of German Higher Critics.²¹⁵

6.3 Assignment to the FCS congregation in Makerstoun

On returning to Edinburgh, the Free Church Presbytery of Edinburgh licensed him to preach the Gospel. For a few months he served the new Free Church congregation at Makerstoun, a parish just to the west of Kelso.²¹⁶ 'The care of no less than four parishes was assigned to him in

²¹⁰ Ibid., p. 88.

²¹¹ The Hungarian reference to this is given in Kovács, p. 84, fn. 192.

²¹² Ross, p. 263.

²¹³ Carlyle (Saphir), p. 48.

²¹⁴ *Acts of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, 1845* (Edinburgh, 1845), p. 95.

²¹⁵ Alfred Edersheim (ed. Ella Edersheim), *Tohu-va-vohu* ('Without form and void'): A collection of fragmentary thoughts and criticisms (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1890) [henceforth: *Tohu-va-vohu*], pp. 29, 33-34.

²¹⁶ The congregation became a sanctioned charge in 1847 and its first minister (Rev. David Dobbie) was inducted in 1848. *AFCS*, Vol. 2, p. 34.

the neighbourhood of Kelso in the Scottish Borders. Days and months of hard work ensued. On the Lord's Day he would preach in three or four different places—barn, smithy, hay-loft, road, hillside serving for church as the exigency of the case might demand. His earnest ministry was greatly blessed. In six months' time a regular congregation had gathered round him, and shortly a pretty church and manse were built.²¹⁷

6.4 FCS missionary work in Jassy

With these tokens of success Edersheim felt that his task in that part of Scotland was accomplished and he had a great longing for work among the Jews. Accordingly he resigned his Scottish post.²¹⁸ The Jewish Committee then instructed him to sail to Constantinople and from there to travel overland to Jassy (the German exonym [pronounced 'yassy'] for Iași [pronounced 'yash'], Romania, near the border with the Republic of Moldova). There the Free Church missionary minister Daniel Edward ordained Edersheim as a missionary to the Jews in 1846. That city of 50,000 included about 20,000 Jews, who attended 200 different synagogues,²¹⁹ and Edersheim entered the work with his accustomed vigour.

Bonar and McCheyne had held out strong hopes for Jassy as a potential mission station.²²⁰ For many reasons, including hostility from both the Orthodox Church and from the ultra-Orthodox Chabad Jews,²²¹ experience soon showed that it was very unpromising territory, and only small numbers of Jews professed Christianity, some of them insincerely. The missionaries had to endure bitter attacks from the rabbis, one of whom pronounced the ultimate censure of excommunication and exclusion from the Jewish community (Hebrew: *herem*) on any convert to Christianity.²²² These discouragements even led to Mr Edwards' wife expressing bitter and antisemitic sentiments in correspondence.²²³ To add to the problems in Jassy, a troublesome Scottish mission worker also greatly hindered the work there.²²⁴ Notwithstanding, it seems that there was some fruit, including

²¹⁷ Ella Edersheim, *Memoir*, in *Tohu-va-vohu* [henceforth: *Memoir*], pp. xv-xvi.

²¹⁸ *Memoir*, p. xvi.

²¹⁹ Bonar & McCheyne, pp. 346-347.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 344-356.

²²¹ Chabad is formed from three Hebrew words which convey the intellectual underpinnings of the movement – *Chochmah*, *Binah*, *Da'at* (חכמה, בינה, דעת): Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge. Bonar & McCheyne transliterated the word as *Habad* (p. 350).

²²² Ross, pp. 208, 213, 221-224.

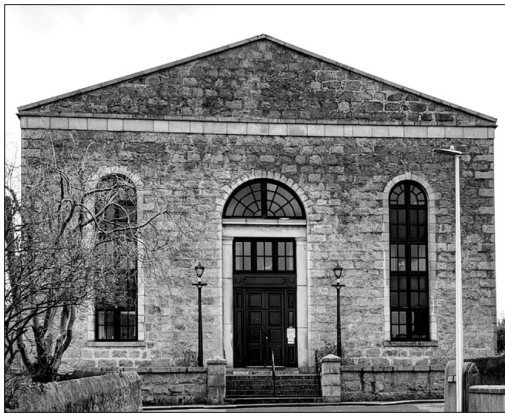
²²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 220-225.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 214-215.

among non-Jewish Germans,²²⁵ and Edersheim wrote regular articles to update on the progress of the work. A year later, in 1847, Edersheim was recalled to Scotland as a result of Jewish disturbances directed against the work of the mission,²²⁶ and it was concluded that it was not expedient for him to return to Jassy. Despite these discouragements, when Theodore Meyer visited the city over a decade later, he found Jewish Christians who had continued in a consistent profession.²²⁷

6.5 Assistant minister at Woodside FCS

Following his return to Scotland, Edersheim was appointed as the assistant minister to Robert Forbes²²⁸ at the sizeable Free Church congregation²²⁹ at Woodside, in those days a group of three small villages (Woodside,



Free Church, Woodside.

Tanfield, and Nether Cottown) outside the bounds of Aberdeen: in 1891 Woodside was formally incorporated into the city. He was also an ‘evening lecturer’ in what was described as ‘the largest church in Aberdeen’.²³⁰ His success as a preacher was remarkable. ‘The town-church was filled to overflowing – pews, aisles, and even pulpit steps were densely packed.’²³¹

²²⁵ ‘Jassy’, *HFMRFCS*, Vol. 2, issue 22, October 1846, pp. 510-511.

²²⁶ ‘Conversion of the Jews’, *HFMRFCS*, Vol. 3, issue 8, August 1847, pp. 200-203.

²²⁷ Ross, pp. 227-228.

²²⁸ Robert Forbes (1812–59) was ordained as ‘Evening Lecturer’ at John Knox’s Church, Aberdeen, in 1834. He was translated to Woodside Chapel of Ease in 1836 and joined the Free Church at the Disruption, along with almost the entire congregation. See *FES*, Vol. 6, p. 42; Vol. 8, p. 535; *AFCS*, Vol. 1, p. 157; Vol. 2, p. 176. Among other works, he wrote the authoritative *Digest of Rules and Procedure in the Inferior Courts of the Free Church of Scotland: With an appendix embracing a ministerial manual, and also containing forms and documents*. The 3rd edition (Edinburgh: Johnstone, Hunter & Co., 1869) is online at www.archive.org (retrieved 28th April 2022).

²²⁹ Membership was 813 in 1848 (*AFCS*, Vol. 2, p. 176). The church was at the top of King Street (present Church Street) in 1836. Following legal skirmishes, the Free Church took possession of the building after the Disruption. It became Hilton UFC in 1900 and eventually Woodside North Church of Scotland. It was converted to flatted residential use in the 1980s and is now known as Clifton Manor.

²³⁰ It is not clear which FCS congregation was indicated, as several of the large Aberdeen city congregations had a roughly equal membership, exceeding a thousand. Statistics of Aberdeen churches appear in the accounts of the congregations: *AFCS*, Vol. 2, pp. 172-176.

²³¹ *Memoir*, pp. xvi-xvii.

6.6 Calls to Edersheim

Edersheim's reputation as a popular and able preacher resulted in calls, but these resulted in dissension within the congregations. Three-quarters of the Dysart Free Church congregation supported a call to him, but the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy refused to grant the request as Presbytery members called in question the suitability of Edersheim to be a minister, largely on the basis that he was a Jew, and also that he was 'a stranger and a foreigner'. Objections were also raised that he had courted two ladies (one of whom he had married²³²), although there were no allegations of improper behaviour.²³³ The majority decision of the Presbytery was met with indignation and the case was appealed to the Synod, where it was concluded that the smallness of the congregation (170 members in 1848) and division within it precluded the call from proceeding. The case was appealed to the General Assembly.²³⁴

Congregational disunity, with undertones of antisemitism and xenophobia, also appeared in Old Aberdeen when a minority of the Free Church congregation 'appealed and protested' against a call to Edersheim. The Free Presbytery of Aberdeen had 'animated and lengthy' debate, which occupied several hours of an afternoon and evening. The Presbytery eventually voted to appoint Edersheim, but dissents resulted in the case being transmitted to the Synod.²³⁵ Popular feeling was on the side of Edersheim, however, and the Woodside congregation met on a Saturday evening to present him with 'a testimonial, as a mark of respect for him, and to show the high estimation in which they held his services during the absence of their own pastor [...] as also to testify their deep sympathy with him, under the peculiar and disagreeable circumstances in which he has been placed. The testimonial consisted of a very beautifully wrought purse – the work of a lady belonging to the congregation – and contained between thirty and forty sovereigns in gold,²³⁶ which was subscribed by members of the Free Church at Woodside and by other parties.'²³⁷

²³² He married an Argyllshire lady, Mary Elizabeth Broomfield, in Edinburgh on 28th February 1848.

²³³ 'Dysart Free Church', *The Aberdeen Journal*, Wednesday 17th January 1849, p. 6; 'The Free Church Synod of Fife: Dysart Case', *The Fife Herald, and Kinross, Strathearn and Clackmannan Advertiser*, Thursday 12th April 1849, p. 685.

²³⁴ *AFCs*, Vol. 2, p. 144.

²³⁵ 'Free Presbytery of Aberdeen: Old Aberdeen Free Church', *The Aberdeen Journal*, Wednesday 7th February 1849, p. 5.

²³⁶ From the Bank of England inflation calculator, this approximates to £4,000–£5,400 in 2021 value.

²³⁷ 'Presentation to the Rev. Mr Edersheim', *The Aberdeen Journal*, Wednesday 28th March 1849, p. 4.

6.7 Minister of Old Machar FCS

The Synod upheld the right of independent popular election²³⁸ and accordingly on 16th October 1849 Edersheim was inducted to the charge of the Old Machar Free Church in Old Aberdeen,²³⁹ where he served for twelve years, from 1849 to 1861. Old Aberdeen was very different territory from Woodside, however. It centred around the University, which was under the dead hand of Moderatism, rationalism, and atheism. The congregation, with a membership of 259 in 1848, remained small,²⁴⁰ and the membership seems to have declined with passing years, as the call to his successor in 1863 was signed by 196 members and 17 adherents.²⁴¹ Edersheim also preached for the City Mission, and in company with the Rev. Robert Forbes he preached in the open air to navvies employed in building the railway at Woodside. The relative smallness of Edersheim's congregation allowed him to devote time to translating German books – mostly theological and philosophical works – into English.²⁴² The German University of Kiel acknowledged Edersheim's contributions to promoting the knowledge of German philosophy in Britain by conferring on him the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, not least for his work in translating a *Historical Development of Speculative Philosophy* by Heinrich

²³⁸ 'Free Church Synod: The Old Machar Case', *The Aberdeen Journal*, Wednesday 18th April 1849, p. 4.

²³⁹ The aim of the Disruption Free Church was to erect a congregation in each parish of the Established Church, retaining the parochial nomenclature. The Parish of Old Aberdeen became known as the Parish of Old Machar in the seventeenth century, and St Machar's Cathedral is commonly known as Old Machar Church. *FES*, Vol. 6, pp. 16-18. The burghs of 'Old Aberdeen' and 'New Aberdeen' were formally united in 1891.

²⁴⁰ *AFCS*, Vol. 2, p. 174. The church on High Street (at the junction with Church Walk) had been erected in 1846: the inscription on the Ordnance Survey map for 1866 indicates that the building could accommodate 800 (OS Map, sheet LXXV.7.8), a huge overprovision common in constructing new churches in the nineteenth century. The building became St Mary's Church (Church of Scotland) and was used until the congregation moved to a new church building on King Street in 1939: the original High Street church building now houses the Department of Geography of the University of Aberdeen. The manse was nearby, at 98 High Street.

²⁴¹ Supplementary information from www.ecclegen.com/ministers-g/#GARDINER,%20THOMAS.

²⁴² *The Jubilee Rhythm of St. Bernard of Clairvaux on the Name of Jesus, and Other Hymns* (London: James Nisbet, 1847); *Historical development of speculative philosophy, from Kant to Hegel: Translated from the German of Dr H.M. Chalybäus* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1854); *History of the Old Covenant, from the German of J. H. Kurtz, D.D.*, vol. I (trans. and annotated by Edersheim) (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1859); *Theological and Homiletical Commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew and St. Mark, Specially Designed for the Use of Ministers and Students, Translated from the German of J.P. Lange* (1861); *History of the Christian Church to the Reformation, Johann Heinrich Kurtz, translated with emendations and additions by Alfred Edersheim* (2 vols., Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1860–64).

Chalybäus, *decanus* [dean] of the university's philosophical faculty.²⁴³

Edersheim also began publishing original works, both as books²⁴⁴ and as articles contributed regularly to the *Eclectic Review*, the *Athenæum*, the *North British Review* and the *British and Foreign Review*, as well as occasional contributions to many other periodicals and magazines.²⁴⁵ In addition,



Free Church, Old Machar.

over the years the local newspapers contained short news reports of his addresses on a wide range of topics to meetings of the Temperance Association, the Young Men's Christian Association, and the Evangelical Alliance, as well as public lectures on topics such as the history of Protestantism and the characteristic features of Roman Catholicism, both to Free Church audiences and more widely to the gatherings of the non-denominational Aberdeen Reformation Society. He also played a prominent part in meetings of the Aberdeen Presbytery and Synod, notably in discussions regarding education and Sabbath observance.

It is intriguing to consider that Edersheim and Sachs were contemporaries in Aberdeen during the period from 1849 to 1861. Furthermore, Meyer was also present from 1849 to 1850, albeit as a student rather than a minister.

6.8 Ministry at Torquay

Despite being able to undertake regular preaching and speaking engagements, as reported in the local press, Edersheim became unable to preach for a year due to 'inflammation' in one lung.²⁴⁶ The nature of the illness

²⁴³ *Memoir*, p. xvii.

²⁴⁴ *Whose is thine heart? An affectionate address to young people* (London: Partridge and Oakey, 1851); *History of the Jewish Nation after the Destruction of Jerusalem under Titus* (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable, 1856); 'Bohemian Reformers and German Politicians: A contribution to the history of Protestantism,' in *Essays by ministers of the Free Church of Scotland*, ed. William Hanna (Edinburgh: T. Constable, 1858).

²⁴⁵ *Memoir*, p. xviii.

²⁴⁶ Thomas Gardiner, recently returned from the Free Church's Calcutta mission, supplied the pulpit during this time, and became Edersheim's successor. Obituary: 'Rev. Thomas Gardiner, Old Aberdeen,' *FCSMR*, 1st January 1878, p. 16.

was not specified, but is likely to have been tuberculosis. Eventually in 1861 this health issue forced Edersheim to resign from Old Machar Free Church. On the recommendation of Thomas Chalmers and William Wingate, he moved to Torquay, a town popular with many Scots,



St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Torquay.

PHOTO COURTESY OF J. MACINTYRE.

particularly those with chest complaints, who went to enjoy the benefits of the warm Devon climate.²⁴⁷ He took up residence in 'the best hotel' and the landlord, 'an earnest Christian', declined payment. Edersheim's fame preceded him, and he was induced to preach in a room in the hotel, where people 'flocked to him'. Subscriptions by Scottish

residents and visitors soon allowed for the Scots Presbyterian Church of St. Andrew to be built for him in Torwood Gardens in Torquay,²⁴⁸ and Wingate inducted him there eighteen months later.²⁴⁹ Among his congregation were Jessie Thain and her mother: Jessie was erroneously described as the fiancée of Robert Murray McCheyne, a romanticised misinterpretation which first appeared in 1913 from the pen of Alexander Smellie and was perpetuated, largely uncritically, by later writers.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁷ During the nineteenth century Torquay promoted itself as a place where the chronically ill could recuperate, initially as summer visitors but then as long-term residents. See: C.R. Hall, *Torquay in its Medical Aspect as a Resort for Pulmonary Invalids* (London: John Churchill, 1857); J.T. White, *The History of Torquay* (Torquay: n.p., 1874), pp. 201-3.

²⁴⁸ Robert J. Dickie, 'Jessie Thain (1821–1889) and her family', *SRSJHJ*, Vol. 7 (2017), pp. 215-250; *Memoir*, p. xx.

²⁴⁹ An account of Edersheim by William Wingate, quoted in Carlyle (Saphir), pp. 50-51.

²⁵⁰ Alexander Smellie, *Robert Murray M'Cheyne* (London: National Council of Evangelical Free Churches, 1913), pp. 195-202; Murdoch Campbell, *Diary of Jessie Thain (The Friend of Robert Murray McCheyne)* (Dingwall, 1955), pp. 10-11. In recent years, the story has

To begin with, Edersheim's health improved in Torquay, and in 1864 a Free Church 'invalid' wrote with evident satisfaction about the ministrations of Dr Edersheim, both among the growing congregation and visitors from Scotland, England, and the Continent. The anonymous writer commented: 'Coming here himself, in a very weak state, little more than two years ago, the climate, with God's blessing, has wrought wonders on him [...] and he is now able for an amount of preaching and visiting which would wear out many strong men in Scotland.'²⁵¹

6.9 Illness and temporary retirement

However, illness returned to afflict Edersheim. He spent two winters on the Riviera at the French resort of Menton²⁵² on the border with Italy and at Sanremo (Italy). 'The impatience of some of the members of his congregation followed and continually harassed him, and it was thought best that he should retire from active work to a rest which might be used to God's service in literature.' Accordingly in 1872 he retired from the Torquay charge on health grounds, and for nearly four years he lived quietly in a villa which he built in Lynton Road, Bournemouth, naming it *Heniach*, a Hebrew word signifying '[God] hath given rest' (e.g. in Joshua 22:4).²⁵³ No books had been published during his years in Torquay, but it appears that in Bournemouth he took up his pen once more, issuing his well-known book on the Temple and preparing his work on the Exodus.²⁵⁴

6.10 Ministry in the Church of England

Of the six Jewish ministers, only two (Tomory and Sachs) remained in the FCS. Schwartz, Meyer, and Fürst left to continue Jewish missionary work under the auspices of non-denominational organisations. Edersheim was the only one who remained a minister of a denomination, albeit one radically different in doctrine and practice from that in which he had taken ordination vows. It is appropriate to consider the reasons

critically examined by several writers and confirmed as a romanticised interpretation. See Robert J. Dickie, 'Robert Murray McCheyne – was he twice engaged to be married?', *SRSJH*, Vol. 7 (2017), pp. 193-213.

²⁵¹ 'The Invalid at Torquay', *FCSMR*, 2nd May 1864, pp. 517-518.

²⁵² English-language books often used the Italian spelling: Mentone.

²⁵³ *Memoir*, p. xxi. Lynton Court Hotel was developed on the site, considerably obscuring the original appearances of the villa and its grounds.

²⁵⁴ *The Temple: its ministry and services as they were at the time of Jesus Christ* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1874); *The Exodus, and the Wanderings in the Wilderness* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1876).

underlying his decision to switch from a Presbyterian denomination to an Episcopalian one.

When Edersheim languished in Old Aberdeen, he had begun to question his attachment to the Free Church, not least as he experienced persecution for his views.²⁵⁵ Later in life he reflected on his early days as a Christian:

Of ‘Church questions’ I knew absolutely nothing. They did not as yet arise. I had only learned the doctrines of Christianity from the New Testament, and the only outward church which I really knew (i.e. in the sense of being practically acquainted with it) was that of my teachers, the Scottish ministers. ... Just at that time Dr Duncan was called to occupy the Chair of Oriental Languages in the newly formed ‘New College’ of Edinburgh; and thither I accompanied him, to study theology in Edinburgh. It was thus naturally and unconsciously (so far as Church questions are concerned) that I became identified with the Presbyterian Church.²⁵⁶

Edersheim spoke approvingly of Scottish theology, but was perplexed by some aspects of its Federal Theology.²⁵⁷ However, it appears that his denominational attachment was primarily attributable to Dr Duncan and only secondarily to the witness of the FCS. Despite the honour given to him by provision of the Torquay church, he eventually followed the sympathies which first formed during his time in Old Machar²⁵⁸ and transferred his allegiance from the evangelical FCS and the English Presbyterian Church to the Church of England. He described his thinking as follows (emphasis in the original):

For a long time I was a negative Presbyterian – that is, I remained such because I did not see anything absolutely perfect. I wished to have the life of Brethrenism, the form of Episcopacy, and the constitutional rights and liberties of Presbyterianism.²⁵⁹

Edersheim fully understood the complex make-up of the Church of England and the inherent problems of accommodating its broad theology.²⁶⁰ Nevertheless, he followed his inclinations and in 1875, three

²⁵⁵ *Memoir*, pp. xviii-xix.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

²⁵⁷ *Tohu-va-vohu*, pp. 9, 12, 44.

²⁵⁸ *Memoir*, p. xviii.

²⁵⁹ *Tohu-va-vohu*, p. 6. He took great issue with the theology and tenets of ‘Plymouth Brethrenism’, however. See *Tohu-va-vohu*, pp. 6 (incl. fn. 2), 22, 41, 48.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

years after retiring to Bournemouth, he joined the Church of England and was ordained as curate of the Abbey Church, Christchurch, Hampshire. He reflected on the move:

I have passed from the Scotch to the English Church, and have not for one moment regretted the change. The *changing* was, and is most unpleasant, but not the *change*; that has placed me where all my sympathies find most ample scope. I am convinced of the historical Church; I believe in a national Church; I prefer a liturgical Church – and on these grounds I have joined the Church of England.²⁶¹

The following year he was appointed as the vicar of Loders, a small rural parish just outside Bridport, Dorset, and he remained there from 1876 to 1882. During those six year he published several books;²⁶² he contributed to the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*,²⁶³ the *Bible Educator*, and the *Edinburgh Review*; and also issued many other minor writings.²⁶⁴ He was also responsible for editing *Israel's Watchman: A Hebrew-Christian Magazine* (1877–1878) and he began to write his *magnum opus* entitled *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*.

In 1880 he was appointed to the post of Warburtonian Lecturer at Lincoln's Inn, an office tenable for four years. The Warburton Lectures (often called Warburtonian Lectures until the end of the nineteenth century) were a series of theology lectures established in 1768 with money given by Bishop William Warburton,²⁶⁵ and were intended to bring Anglican clergymen to the notice of London audiences.²⁶⁶ The set topic for lecturers was the proof of Christianity through prophecies: Edersheim lectured from 1880 to 1884 on 'Prophecy and History in Relation to the

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

²⁶² All the following were printed in London by the Religious Tract Society: *The Golden Diary of Heart Converse with Jesus in the Book of Psalms* (1877); *Israel in Canaan under Joshua and the Judges* (1877); *Israel under Samuel, Saul, and David, to the birth of Solomon* (1878); *History of Judah and Israel from the Reign of Ahab to the Decline of the Two Kingdoms* (1880).

²⁶³ William Smith and Henry Wace, *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects and Doctrines* (London: John Murray, 1877–1887).

²⁶⁴ *Memoir*, p. xxiv.

²⁶⁵ William Warburton (1698–1779) held many positions in the Church of England, and was Bishop of Gloucester from 1759 until his death.

²⁶⁶ The lectures were suspended in 1940 because of the outbreak of war. They were reinstated in 1947 but lapsed again in 1970 due to depletion of funds. The Inn revived the lectures in 1985, but broadened the scope of the subject matter and the affiliations of speakers. See: www.lincolnsinn.org.uk/library-archives/tales-from-the-archive/june-2019-william-warburton-1698-1779-and-the-warburton-lectures (retrieved 28th April 2022).

Messiah' and his lectures were published under that title.²⁶⁷ Through these lectures he achieved public prominence and 'from this time forward he preached and lectured often in London and elsewhere, and maintained a large and learned correspondence in almost all quarters of the globe.'²⁶⁸

6.11 Ministry at Oxford University

In 1882 Edersheim resigned from Loders and relocated to Oxford where he officiated as Select Preacher to the University in 1884–1885 and Grinfield Lecturer²⁶⁹ on the Septuagint 1886–1888 and 1888–1889. It is during this time that he completed *Jesus the Messiah* and other works.²⁷⁰ Ill health continued to dog him, however: a recurrence of his lung problems hindered his research for a projected large book on the life and writings of Paul.²⁷¹ His medical adviser suggested spending the winter on the Riviera, together with complete rest and quiet. He made a reasonable recovery after spending five months at Menton and made plans for returning to Britain via the Italian Lakes. However, he died unexpectedly on 16th March 1889 at the age of 64 and was buried at Menton.²⁷²

6.12 Marriage and family

Edersheim's first wife, Mary Broomfield, died in Newton Abbey, Devon, in 1866. They had at least six daughters and one son, all of whom were born in Aberdeen and all married in England.²⁷³ A year after Mary's death, he married Sophia Hancock at Ryde, Isle of Wight:²⁷⁴ it appears that there were

²⁶⁷ *Prophecy and History in Relation to the Messiah* (London: Longmans, 1885).

²⁶⁸ *Memoir*, p. xxv.

²⁶⁹ Edward William Grinfield (1785–1864) was a biblical scholar. After studying law at Lincoln's Inn and the Inner Temple, he became minister of Laura Chapel, Bath. Later he moved to London, where he occasionally preached at Kensington. He founded and endowed a lectureship at Oxford on the Septuagint. See Sinéad Agnew, 'Grinfield, Edward William' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (online ed.).

²⁷⁰ *Elisha the Prophet* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1882); *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (2 vols., London: Longmans, 1883); *The History of Israel and Judah from the Decline of the Two Kingdoms to the Assyrian and Babylonian Captivity* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1887).

²⁷¹ *Memoir*, p. xxvii.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. xxvii–xxviii.

²⁷³ See www.ecclegen.com/ministers-e/#EDERSHEIM,%20ALFRED (retrieved 23rd April 2022). Their only son (also named Alfred) became a Church of England clergyman but later attracted notoriety by deserting his wife and eloping with one of his parishioners to live as a couple under assumed names in New Zealand and subsequently in Brighton: his wronged wife was granted a decree nisi divorce. See 'Rector's Elopement', *Dundee Advertiser*, 19th February 1907, p. 2.

²⁷⁴ *Pall Mall Gazette*, 3rd August 1867, p. 6. Sophia was the youngest daughter of Rear-Admiral Hancock, CB.

no children from the second marriage. After his death, Sophia received a Civil List pension of £75 *per annum*, ‘in recognition of the merits of her late husband, Dr Edersheim, as a writer on theology and Biblical criticism’.²⁷⁵

Concluding remarks

The nineteenth century was a time when much Protestant missionary activity took place. Hoole’s *Year-Book of Missions*, published in 1848, covered known missionary activity across the world: it ran to 423 pages, and included an index of mission locations occupying three columns of small print over nearly nine pages. The FCS participated in this world-wide evangelising activity from the time it was founded. Ewing’s *Annals* covers the period from 1843 to 1900 and lists the Church’s missions in the following locations, with present-day names supplied in brackets: India (Bengal,²⁷⁶ including Santalia [Pachamba]; Bombay [Mumbai] and Poona [Pune]; Madras [Chennai]; Central Provinces²⁷⁷), Arabia (the Aden Governorate), Syria (Shweir [now in Lebanon: Dhour El Choueir or Dhour Shweir]), Africa (Kaffraria [the southeast part of Eastern Cape Province] and Natal [KwaZulu-Natal Province]; Central Africa [Malawi]²⁷⁸), and Melanesia (New Hebrides [Vanuatu]).²⁷⁹ The prime function of these missions was to carry the Gospel to indigenous peoples, but they also addressed the spiritual needs of expatriate Britons, particularly Scots: it is notable that most of these mission stations were in the British Empire.

The Church of Scotland’s denominational approach to Jewish evangelism was innovative as previous initiatives had been undertaken by voluntary, non-denominational societies. At the Disruption all the Jewish missionaries transferred allegiance to the Free Church.²⁸⁰ Ewing’s *Annals* names twenty-four missionaries to the Jews between 1843 and 1900.²⁸¹

²⁷⁵ ‘Civil List pensions’ in *St James’s Gazette*, 4th July 1894, p. 12. The sum is equivalent to around £10,400 *p.a.* in the present day.

²⁷⁶ Principally at Calcutta, Chakai, Chinsurah [Hugli-Chuchura or Hooghly-Chinsurah], Kalna, and Sylhet.

²⁷⁷ The mission was at Nagpur in the present-day state of Maharashtra.

²⁷⁸ The Livingstonia mission was initially located at Cape Maclear or Chembe, a town on the southern shore of Lake Malawi. Due to the climate and endemic malaria the mission moved to Bandawe in 1882.

²⁷⁹ ‘List of the Missionaries: Foreign missionaries, 1843–1900’, *AFCS*, Vol. 1, pp. 67–72.

²⁸⁰ The Church of Scotland maintained a mission to Jews in London, but its seven missionaries were provided by the LSPCJ. See Hoole, p. 385.

²⁸¹ In 1900, all the Free Church missionaries, including those in Budapest, joined the UFC. Ross, p. 280.

mission stations were established at Amsterdam, Ancona, Breslau (Wrocław), Constantinople, Damascus, Galatz, Jassy, Lemberg (Lviv), Pesth, Safed, Strassburg, and Tiberias, none of which was in the British Empire.²⁸² Despite being located in the hostile religious environment of Austrian Empire, the Pesth mission had the greatest impact, particularly during the first phase of its existence – i.e., until the expulsion of the Scottish missionaries in 1852.²⁸³

The present paper has focused on the Jews who became ministers in the FCS. Given the centrality of the Pesth mission to the Free Church's work with the Jews, it is not surprising that it features strongly in the religious histories of three of the six men. Edersheim and Tomory were converted there in 1842, the latter specifically under the teaching of William Wingate;²⁸⁴ Schwartz visited the city on his way to Constantinople in 1842 and preached in German with much success, and he married the eldest sister of Adolph Saphir there in 1843.²⁸⁵ However, the other three men had no direct connection with the work in Pesth: Meyer and Sachs were from Prussia and 'Congress Poland', and Fürst was not only from West Prussia but was a much later convert to Christianity.

²⁸² 'Missionaries to the Jews', *AFCS*, Vol. 1, p. 72.

²⁸³ The Saphir family maintained the work of the mission until the Free Church was permitted to resume missionary activity there in 1863.

²⁸⁴ William Wingate (1808–1898) was a Glasgow merchant who relinquished his business career to devote himself to mission work among the Jews. After preparatory studies in Glasgow and Edinburgh he was appointed to the Pesth mission and ordained there by a specially constituted Presbytery in 1843, his ordination being afterwards recognised by the Free Church General Assembly. He married a stepdaughter of John Duncan in 1843. Along with the other missionaries, Wingate was expelled from Budapest by the Austrian authorities in 1852. He went to London to start missionary work there. However, the FCS opposed that on the grounds that it might result in unhelpful competition with the BSPGJ. Thereafter he undertook successful independent missionary work among the Jews for forty years. *FES*, Vol. 7, p. 717; *AFCS*, Vol. 1, p. 360; Carlyle (Wingate) *passim*; Ross, pp. 257-258.

²⁸⁵ The Saphir family were among the earliest converts of the Pesth mission and were integral to the success of the work, not least during the years 1852 to 1863 when Scottish missionaries were banned from the Austrian Empire. During the reign of the Habsburg Emperor Joseph II, all Jews were obliged to take a family name: the Saphirs were so called on account of a ring containing a sapphire (German: *Saphir*). Ross notes (p. 259): 'At the 1889 Jubilee celebration of the founding of Jewish mission, a letter of congratulation was received from the celebrated scholar Professor Franz Delitzsch, in which he alluded to the conversion of the Saphir family by way of a pun on Isaiah 54:11, observing that "Sion's Restorer" had laid the foundation of the Scottish mission in Budapest "with sapphires".' (Ross mistakenly called Delitzsch a 'celebrated Jewish Christian scholar': Delitzsch was Lutheran but his unusual breadth of rabbinical learning often led to the misapprehension that he was Jewish.)

Perhaps unsurprisingly, an even stronger link can be made with John Duncan, however. Not only did Tomory and Edersheim meet him when he was a missionary in Pesth, they travelled to Scotland to study at New College when Duncan was appointed the first Professor of Oriental Languages. Along with the very young Adolph Saphir, they lodged with the Duncans in Edinburgh.²⁸⁶ Tomory wrote of Duncan:

While the Church at home made preparation for her work among the children of Israel, and fixed on Pesth as her first central mission, the Lord prepared some souls in that dark land to be the first recipients of these bounties, the first fruits of the great gathering, the trophies of his redeeming love. If my time permitted I would gladly prepare a full statement as a tribute of filial love and affection towards him who, in the providence of God, was to me as a father, at whose feet I gladly sat, and whose teaching and godly example were so much blessed to me.²⁸⁷

Sachs also attended New College (and hence Duncan) as a student at the same time, and much later was considered as a possible assistant to Duncan at New College. Schwartz had met Duncan in Pesth and likely resumed the acquaintance on visiting Scotland in 1844 to promote the work of the Pesth mission. Meyer had the most direct and prolonged contact with Duncan, being appointed as his assistant in New College from 1850 to 1859. Hence Fürst, who joined the Free Church in 1872, was the only Jewish minister to have no direct contact with Duncan, who had died the previous year.

Turning now to consider the service these six ministers rendered to the Christian church, they all spent the rest of their lives as ministers of the Gospel until retirement or death. In the case of Tomory and Sachs, they devoted the rest of their lives to ministry in the FCS. The other four men spent a considerable part of their ministerial careers in the service of the Free Church. The following table summarises their periods of ordained ministry, with all figures rounded to the nearest year:

²⁸⁶ John Duncan married Janet Towers of Aberdeen in 1837 and she died two years later, just after the birth of their second daughter (who herself died within hours of being born). He remarried in 1840: his second wife, Janet Torrance (née Douglas), was the widow of a Kilmarnock military surgeon, whose two daughters from her first marriage both married Scottish ministers from the Pesth mission – William Allan and William Wingate. The sole daughter from John Duncan's second marriage was born in 1842 and became the wife of Adolph Spaeth, a distinguished evangelical Lutheran minister in Philadelphia.

²⁸⁷ Moody Stuart, pp. 71-72.

	Profession of faith	Free Church	Ministry outside Free Church
Alexander Tomory b. 1818 – Mährisch Weißkirchen d. 1895 – Constantinople	1842 – Pesth (age 24)	48 years 1847 Jamaica 1847–1895 Constantinople	—
Carl A. F. Schwartz b. 1817 – Meseritz d. 1870 – London	1837 – Berlin (age 20)	24 years (3 years with dual role) 1843–1844 Constantinople 1844–1848 Berlin 1848–1864 Amsterdam 1864–1867 London (dual role)	7 years (3 years with dual role) 1842–1843 Constantinople 1864–1870 London (incl. dual role)
Theodore J. Meyer b. 1819 – Crivitz d. 1896 – Jersey	1847 – Berlin (age 28)	21 years 1850–1858 New College, Edinburgh 1859–1860 Galatz 1860–1862 Austria and Hungary 1862–1866 Ancona 1866–1871 Amsterdam	23 years 1871–1894 London
Alexander Fürst b. 1831 – Zempelburg d. 1899 – Stuttgart	1856 – London (age 25)	15 years 1872–1873 Prague 1873–1874 Strasburg 1884–1887 Amsterdam	17 years 1867–1872 Stettin 1887–1899 Stuttgart
Marcus Sachs b. 1812 – Inovratzlav d. 1869 – Aberdeen	1843 – Edinburgh (age 31)	23 years 1846–1869 Free Church College, Aberdeen	—
Alfred Edersheim b. 1825 – Vienna d. 1899 – Menton	1842 – Pesth (age 17)	16 years 1845 Makerstoun (assistant minister) 1846–1847 Jassy 1847–1849 Woodside (assistant minister) 1849–1861 Old Machar (Old Aberdeen)	28 years (3 years inactive) 1861–1872 Torquay (1872–1875 retired) 1875–1876 Christchurch 1876–1872 Loders 1884–1889 Oxford

In total, these six ministers laboured as ministers of the Gospel for 219 years, 147 of which were in the Free Church – two of them (Tomory and Sachs) exclusively within the denomination. The geographical spread of their work was vast, and collectively they were able to access many Jews of varying backgrounds, as well as influencing the education of theology students in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, and Amsterdam. Their work among Jews incurred opposition and hatred because of their message as well as the added opprobrium of having forsaken Judaism, the most

shocking manifestation of that being an attempt on the life of Schwartz in Amsterdam. Added to the 'shame' of having forsaken their Jewish roots was a specific difficulty for the two ministers born within the Austrian Empire, namely inability to return to Pesh: Tomory and Edersheim would have been punished for having left the empire in 1843 before undertaking compulsory military service. This effectively cut them off from visiting the family members and friends they had left behind and, as noted in the case of Adolph Saphir, even travelling to German or Prussian territory risked arrest and extradition to Austria.

It is difficult to assess the impact of these ministers on the Jewish communities. The nineteenth century witnessed a profusion of Protestant missions to the Jews, and worldwide it is reckoned that 72,000 Jews were baptised as Protestants,²⁸⁸ a figure corroborated from various sources including those of the presumably antagonistic Jewish community.²⁸⁹ Jews had various motives to be baptised, some of which were purely related to temporal advantage, and furthermore missionaries tended to embellish numbers from the base motive of maintaining income for their work.²⁹⁰ Unlike other organisations, the Scottish missionaries kept no detailed statistical records of professed converts, however. As Ross has noted, 'For Scottish Calvinists, keeping a head count of converts was distasteful and contradicted their fundamental belief that, as the work was God's not theirs, its reality was often hidden from human sight,²⁹¹ and this applies equally to their non-Jewish converts. Duncan's reserved comments are appropriate, when he spoke vaguely of the 'happy state of things' and 'so many heart-cheering tokens of our Divine Master's presence' in addressing the General Assembly in 1864.²⁹² It is clear that 'the brilliant epoch of 1843-4' in Pesh was never repeated either there or at any of the other FCS stations, although the same author (Blaikie) could comment, 'At most of our stations there has been a certain measure of success. Conversions have taken place, baptisms have followed, a little group of worshippers has been gathered; but no community of Hebrew

²⁸⁸ Albert E. Thomson, *A Century of Jewish Missions* (Chicago: Fleming H Revell Co., 1902), p. 273. (Additionally, 132,000 were baptised as Roman Catholics or [Eastern] Orthodox.)

²⁸⁹ William O. McCagg, 'Jewish Conversion in Hungary in Modern Times', *Jewish Apostasy in the Modern World*, ed. Todd M. Endelman (New York: Lynne Rienner, 1987), pp. 142-165.

²⁹⁰ Ross, pp. 275-284; Gidney, *op. cit.*, pp. 623-628.

²⁹¹ Ross, pp. 276-277.

²⁹² 'Assembly Addresses, V' in James S. Sinclair (ed.), *Rich Gleanings after the Vintage from 'Rabbi' Duncan* (London: Chas. J. Thynne & Jarvis, 1925), p. 378.

Christians has been formed able to stand on its own feet, and to be a centre of light for the country around.’²⁹³

It is equally difficult to assess the impact of the two ministers who taught Hebrew in Aberdeen and Edinburgh. Whilst both Sachs and Meyer were enthusiastic teachers of the language, neither of them contributed any didactic work on Hebrew, and both remained in relative obscurity. Further, neither of them was involved in any of the rising controversies on Hebrew scholarship and textual criticism which eventually burst forth when the chairs of Hebrew in New College and Aberdeen passed respectively to the notorious Andrew Bruce Davidson and William Robertson Smith.

If the Hebrew professor and tutor were reluctant to go into print, the same cannot be said for Schwartz and Edersheim. Both were prolific writers – one largely in Dutch, and the other in English. The output of each covered a wide field, Schwartz taking responsibility for producing regular magazines, pamphlets, and tracts, and Edersheim writing authoritatively on subjects which often contained an academic slant, but which were well suited to a ‘popular’ readership. Much of Schwartz’s output dealt with the exigencies and issues of his time, and are all but forgotten. In contrast, a large proportion of the voluminous output from Edersheim’s pen has been of lasting value, giving light from a Jewish perspective on biblical history and culture in works which continue to edify the Church in the twenty-first century.

In concluding this paper, it is apposite to note that a fall in the Egyptian desert would seem an unlikely providence to result in the Scottish Church’s establishing a mission and directly or indirectly gaining six European Jews as ministers of the Gospel. Yet Andrew Bonar observed:

But for that fall, our fathers in the deputation would not have sailed up the Danube on their way to Vienna, and Pesth would not have been visited. This accident [...] was the occasion of directing the steps of our two fathers to that station, where a severe stroke of sickness was made the means of detaining Dr Keith till they had learned that there was an open door among the Jews. [...] There is nothing but truth in the remark made by one of our number: ‘Dr Black’s fall from the camel was the first step towards Pesth.’²⁹⁴

Just as that accident was ultimately responsible for unexpectedly initiating missionary work in the unpromising environment of Pesth, the observation

²⁹³ William G. Blaikie, *After Fifty Years: or Letters of a Grandfather on occasion of the Jubilee of The Free Church of Scotland in 1893* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1893), pp. 110-111.

²⁹⁴ Andrew A. Bonar, *Memoir and Remains of the Rev. Robert Murray M’Cheyne*, p. 110.

may be fairly extended to include another consequence: Dr Black's fall from the camel was the first step towards six converted Jews becoming ministers of the Free Church of Scotland. In answer to centuries of prayer and as a result of these men's untiring labours, many Jews in Europe and Britain came to profess faith in Christ during six decades in the nineteenth century, a generation of divinity students profited from their instruction in the Hebrew language, and to this day the Church is edified.

Appendix – table of historical and present-day placenames

Official historic name	Historic state	Present name (if changed)	Present state	Alternative names
Ancona	Papal States		Italy	
Berlin	Prussia		Germany	
Bernstein	Prussia	Pełczyce	Poland	
Breslau	Prussia	Wrocław	Poland	
Constantinople	Ottoman Empire	Istanbul	Turkey	İstanbul
Crivitz	Prussia		Germany	
Damascus	Ottoman Empire		Syria	Dimaşq, Darmsuk
Frankfort	German Confederation	Frankfurt	Germany	Frankfurt am Main
Fraustadt	Grand Duchy of Posen	Wschowa	Poland	
Galatz	Principality of Moldavia	Galați	Romania	
Inovratzlav	Prussia	Inowrocław	Poland	Inowrazław, Hohensalza
Jassy	Principality of Moldavia	Iași	Romania	
Lemberg	Austrian Empire	Lviv	Ukraine	Lvov, Lwów
Leghorn	Grand Duchy of Tuscany	Livorno	Italy	

Official historic name	Historic state	Present name (if changed)	Present state	Alternative names
Meseritz	Congress Poland	Międzyrzec Podlaski	Poland	
Pesth	Austrian Empire	Budapest	Hungary	Pest
Posen	Prussia	Poznań	Poland	
Prague	Austrian Empire	Praha (Prague)	Czech Republic	Prag
Pressburg	Austrian Empire	Bratislava	Slovakia	
Safed	Ottoman Empire	Safed	Israel	Tsfat, Tzfas, Şafad
Schneidemühl	Grand Duchy of Posen	Piła	Poland	
Strassburg	France	Strasbourg	France	Strasburg, Straßburg
Tiberias	Ottoman Empire		Israel	
Strelno	Prussia	Strzelno	Poland	
Zempelburg	Prussia	Sępólno Krajeńskie	Poland	