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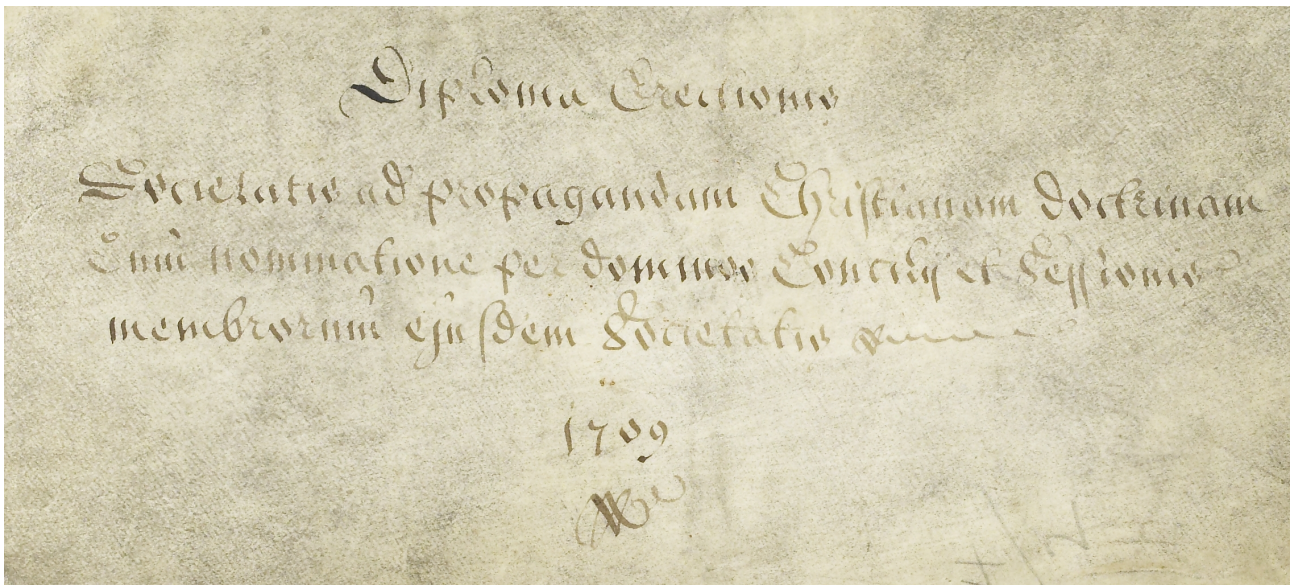
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Bill for establishment and nomination of members for the SSPCK, 1709
(National Records of Scotland)

‘A publick benefite to the nation’:

The Charitable and Religious Origins of the SSPCK,

1690-1715

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Submitted as a requirement for the degree of Ph.D.

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September 2011

Abstract

The stated purpose of the Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge was the establishment of charity schools which were complementary to statutory parochial schools in the Highland parishes of Scotland. The parochial schools were demonstrably unsuited for these parishes due to terrain, weather, infrastructure, the nature of settlement, and their vulnerability to the Catholic mission. Historians and commentators have tended to see the society through a cultural and linguistic lens, imputing to it the weak condition in which Gaelic finds itself today. A ban on teaching Gaelic literacy, which was not lifted until the 1760s, has been considered part of an overall strategy to eliminate Gaelic in the hopes of greater civilization in the Highlands.

This perspective overlooks a broader significance of the society, which, as a corporation, extended charity beyond the landed classes and nobility, to the rising professions and also common labourers and tenants, through its use of the parishes to collect donations. It was also a sustained effort at establishing a joint-stock company in the wake of the Bank of Scotland and the Company of Scotland, and instituted transparent business practices to foster a reputation for financial probity. The moral aspect of its mission required good and pious behaviour from its teachers, for them to serve as an example for the schools' communities and to persuade, rather than coerce, children to attend. The society was also very much of its time, with a role in a completion of the Reformation which was a common theme in contemporary religious and social circles. This completion was structural, with the Church of Scotland trying to secure its presbyterian establishment throughout the country, but also moral, with the Societies for Reformation of Manners in England and Scotland, and the Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge in England, building the legacy of the Reformation and the providential revolution through an encouragement of moral behaviour.

These were private groups, however, and while the SPCK developed a channel for charitable activity for the rising professional and middle classes, the SSPCK worked to produce a national corporate effort to support reformation and education in the Highlands.

This thesis is my own work. No part of it has been submitted for any other degree, at this or another institution.

Nathan P. Gray

September 2011

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Acknowledgements

My thanks must first go to my supervisors, Dr Martin MacGregor and Dr Karin Bowie, who have been generous with their time, suggestions and advice over the past four years. I am very grateful for their assistance. Secondly, to those who offered their time as I was deciding where to go six years ago when I decided to return to academic life. They include Richard Oram, Richard Finlay, Andrew MacKillop, Ted Cowan, and Charles MacKean. Colin Kidd has taken the initiative to suggest very helpful books and ideas, and assisted me in a submission to a competition which resulted in my first pending publication. Tristram Clarke and Thomas Munck have offered valuable guidance on a path through ecclesiastical politics in the late seventeenth century, and Alasdair Raffe has provided insights into the reformation of manners movement which have helped shape my own ideas. Sheila Kidd, Aonghas MacCoinnich and Sìm Innes provided me with my first formal introduction to Gaelic, which was reinforced by time at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig on Skye, under the wings of Murchadh MacLeòid and Alasdair Mac a' Mhaoirn. When researching this subject for an MLitt dissertation in 2006, Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart provided me with useful advice, including directing me to the SPCK archives in Cambridge. *As a' chridhe, mòran taing dhuibh uile!*

Thanks also to my friends and colleagues Nick Evans, Sarah Thomas, Andrew Smith, Iain MacDonald, Sarah Erskine, Matthew Hammond and my colleagues in the more recent past, Ralph MacLean, Valerie Wallace, Ian Isherwood, Alan MacLeod and Mark Freeman, who have helped to make it a very rewarding time at Glasgow. Farther afield, I owe my thanks to the staff at the National Records of Scotland, the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh University Library, Cambridge University Library and New College Library in Edinburgh. Finally, I must express my thanks to my family, especially my mother, Nancy Gray, without whose support this work would have been impossible.

Tha an trachdas seo coisrigte do William D. Gray, Roy MacDonald agus Marion MacDonald Bergman. Fois shiorraidh dhaibh.

Conventions

For the sake of consistency and clarity, I have placed modernized spelling and punctuation into original source quotations in square brackets, unless they come from published versions where the spelling and punctuation have already been edited. Exceptions for any changes are quotations in chapter titles, or titles of contemporary pamphlets or legislative acts. Capitalization, however, remains as in the original, unless the gloss includes a proper name.

In light of a conversation with Paul Jenkins several years ago, in which he used the expression ‘the Williamite Revolution’ to refer to the events of 1688-91, I have done the same here. When referring simply to ‘the revolution’ or ‘the church’, for example, these words have not been capitalized, but ‘the Reformation’ has in order to distinguish the period from the concept supported by the reformation societies. Likewise, the word ‘Bible’ has been capitalized throughout. William III of England is referred to as William II of Scotland.

All dates are British, hence Old Style, and have not been corrected for New Style. Years are determined according to the post-1600 Scottish style: the English 12 February 1701-2 becomes ‘12 February 1702’. Money is always given in sterling where values are necessary. Exact sterling values, down to the fraction of a penny, may seem pedantic, but are given for consistency.

£1 Scots	1 shilling, 8 pence sterling
£12 Scots	
240 pence sterling, 20 shillings sterling	£1
100 merks	£5.11.1 1/3
500 merks	£27.15.6 2/3
1,000 merks	£55.11.1 1/3
5,000 merks	£277.15.6 2/3

Abbreviations

abs.	abstract of correspondence of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (England)
BHO	British History Online, Acts of the General Assembly, 1643-1842 www.british-history.ac.uk/source.aspx?pubid=599
CUL	Cambridge University Library
ECCO	Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, find.galegroup.com/ecco
EEBO	Early English Books Online, eebo.chadwyck.com/home
EUL	Edinburgh University Library
<i>Fasti</i>	H. Scott et al., <i>Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae</i>
Kirkwood MSS	James Kirkwood Collection, New College Library, Edinburgh
NCL	New College Library, Edinburgh
NLS	National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh
NRS	National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh (formerly the National Archives of Scotland)
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2007), www.oxforddnb.com
RCP	Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh
RPS	K.M. Brown et al., eds, <i>The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707</i> (St Andrews, 2007-2010), www.rps.ac.uk
SHR	<i>Scottish Historical Review</i>
SPCK	Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (England)
SSPCK	Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge
VV	virtual volume (document format at the NRS)
Wod Fol	Wodrow Collection Folios (NLS)

Introduction

I. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND THE HIGHLANDS

The Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SSPCK) was, for most of the eighteenth century, the only charity education organization operating in the Highlands and islands of Scotland. Its foundation in 1709 was the result of prolonged campaigns within the Church of Scotland and on the part of private individuals to establish support for presbyterian Christianity in the Highlands. The history of education in seventeenth-century Scotland is notoriously convoluted, with acts of privy council and parliament changing the structure of the system according to the nature of the ecclesiastical and political establishment. All legislation, however, called for the universal provision of parochial education, as was outlined in *The First Book of Discipline*.¹ The act of 1696, restating one passed 50 years earlier but annulled in 1661, brought the framework of Scottish schools back into line with the new presbyterian environment, and by the beginning of the eighteenth century, most, though not all, Lowland parishes were provided for.² The Highlands and islands were in a far different situation. Ministers and ecclesiastical commissions cited storms, hills, sea lochs, impassable rivers, poor or non-existent roads, large parishes, and rough seas as bars not only to northern children attending schools during the week, but also to the general population attending church.³

These obstacles of nature, infrastructure and administration were well-known to ecclesiastical and civil officials in Edinburgh. What worried them most was the fragility of the revolution settlement of 1690, and the possibility that a rising to threaten the government of William II and III and the renewed presbyterianism of the Church of Scotland would emerge from

1 James K. Cameron, ed., *The First Book of Discipline* (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1972), pp. 129-30.

2 M. G. Jones, *The Charity School Movement: A Study of Eighteenth Century Puritanism in Action* (n.l.: Frank Cass and Co Ltd, 1964), p. 166; John Lorne Campbell, *Gaelic in Scottish Education and Life: Past, Present and Future* (Edinburgh: Saltire Society, 1945), p. 52; BHO, 1699 General Assembly, Act XI, date of access, 7 August 2011.

3 See, for example, NRS, CH1/2/24/2/3, f. 149, 'Memorandum of the paroches & bounds of ye Synod of Argyll to be given in to ye Commitie [of the General Assembly] Anent ye highlands & Islands', dated 1705.

the north. The Gaelic-speaking Highlands and islands were a focal region of this concern, and the failure to instruct the population properly in matters of faith would, in the eyes of the Lowland authorities, only allow it to be led astray by Catholic missionaries or even episcopalian ministers who had not pledged loyalty to the new establishments in state and church.⁴ The solution to the issue of church attendance was to send probationary clergy, who had not yet been licensed as full ministers, as missionaries and catechists to travel through the parishes, and conduct prayer meetings and scripture readings with the inhabitants of settlements too far from the central parish church.

The solution for schools was the development of a system of supplementary institutions within the parishes. A variety of voluntary establishments existed in the Highlands before 1709, as in Abertarff, near present-day Fort Augustus, founded by the one of the Edinburgh Societies for Reformation of Manners and the town council.⁵ Individual initiative was not absent in the development of supplementary schools, but the perceived crisis in Highland education was such that Lowland authorities came to realize that a more coordinated effort would be necessary. Taking a cue from the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in England, the idea of a distinct charitable society took shape, rather than a reliance on rents, which funded the statutory parish schools. The SSPCK was a centralized corporation, maintaining donations and determining policy and hiring decisions in Edinburgh. Unlike the English SPCK, the Scottish society had a royal charter, giving it the support of the crown in its operations and protection from some of the social and political shifts which eventually pushed the SPCK out of the development of charity schools.⁶ For its part, the English society twice debated adopting a royal charter, but refused because of concerns over limits on its work which the SSPCK managed to avoid by making the language of its charter flexible enough to allow it to expand beyond Scotland should the funds be available.⁷

4 BHO, 1694 General Assembly, Act XI, provisions 6 and 7; 1690, Act VII; 1695-6, Act IX, date of access 7 August 2011. It should be noted that the SSPCK included the English-speaking northern isles of Orkney and Shetland in its sphere of operations.

5 NLS, MS 1954, 'Journal of the Proposals made to, and the Resolutions taken by, the Society for endeavouring Reformation of Manners, in [Edinburgh]', p. 23 (4 April 1702); Helen Armet, ed., *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1689-1701* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1962), p. 290.

6 Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 130. The society did keep working in the development of Sunday schools, however.

7 W. K. Lowther Clarke, *A History of the S.P.C.K.* (London: S.P.C.K., 1959), pp. 7, 87-8; Edmund McClure, ed., *A Chapter in English Church History* (London: S.P.C.K., 1888), pp. 60-2; NRS, MFilP GD95/1/1, p. 1 [5]. The charter is numbered from p. 1, though a history of the society precedes it on pp. 1-4.

The schools, both statutory and charity, were presbyterian. As indicated in the society's name, its institutions were to provide reformed Christian education, and the texts they used reflected that—although, despite the target age of its pupils, the texts were not geared to children.⁸ Concerns over religion were not limited to the Highlands, but they were a major issue when considering the loyalty of the region's chiefs and inhabitants. In addition to worries over Catholicism, even in Protestant territories, loyalty to presbyterian government was uncertain as episcopalian was still dominant in some parts. A second complication was language. The literary legacy of Gaelic was based in the ornate classical language, common to the Irish and Scottish Gaelic worlds, which had become obsolete by the end of the seventeenth century. The spoken vernacular, however, had no such legacy, so the church and schools faced a dilemma: the need to develop an instructed, reformed Christianity, which required literacy, in a culture which had no tradition of it on a popular basis. English, then, was agreed as the language which literacy would be taught in, though not without ongoing debate. Gaelic was not excluded from parochial or society schools, however, and actively encouraged for use in the churches. Both the church and the schools sought clergy and teachers who could speak Gaelic for the purposes of conducting services and of catechizing the students. For the church, especially, this complicated the task of more securely establishing itself in the Highlands: in the first place, ministers could not be removed easily if they did not subscribe the Westminster Confession of Faith and the required loyalty oaths. Even with the laws on the church's side, if the local people did not consent to a minister's removal or if a parish heritor was protecting him, an episcopalian clergyman could remain in his post. Schoolmasters were more easily replaced, though even then, cooperation of either the heritor or the minister would be necessary for a legally qualified teacher to be installed.

In the second place, the requirement of knowledge of Gaelic added another obstacle to filling both pulpits and schoolmasters' chairs in the Highlands with qualified presbyterians. In the Lowlands, as well, the church had difficulty in settling qualified presbyterian ministers, which was why acts of the General Assembly and decisions by its commission barring Gaelic-speaking ministers from accepting posts in Lowland parishes were so controversial: there was a limited

⁸ Victor Durkacz, *The Decline of the Celtic Languages: A Study of Linguistic and Cultural Conflict in Scotland, Wales and Ireland from the Reformation to the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd., 1983), p. 61.

supply of qualified ministers for the Lowlands in the early eighteenth century, and restricting certain men from serving there limited it even further.⁹ Controversies also arose with Gaelic-speaking probationers sent on Highland missions, especially if a Lowland presbytery had invested time and money in training them with the expectation that they would take positions in that very presbytery.¹⁰ The General Assembly established a rota for ministers and probationers to follow, but it often had to address their failure to follow through on assignments. We will see details on the controversies in chapter 2.

II. 'A SAVAGE AND UNTAMED NATION'

The decision of the society to teach English as the language of literacy in its schools has supported the image of an anti-Gaelic establishment in Scotland after the Williamite Revolution. Such an interpretation is not baseless. The language, as a symbol of Highland culture, had been the target of opprobrium for a long time. John of Fordun, writing in the 1380s, was the first to articulate consciousness of a Highland-Lowland cultural distinction in his *Chronicle of the Scottish Nation*:

The manners and custo[m]s of the Scots vary with the diversity of their speech. For two languages are spoken amongst them, the Scottish and the Teutonic; the latter of which is the language of those who occupy the seaboard and plains, while the race of Scottish speech inhabits the Highlands and out-lying islands. The people of the coast are of domestic and civilised habits, trusty, patient, and urbane, decent in their attire, affable, and peaceful, devout in Divine worship... the Highlanders and people of the Islands, on the other hand, are a savage and untamed nation, rude and independent, given to rapine, ease-loving, of a docile and warm disposition, comely in person, but unsightly in dress, hostile to the English people and language, and owing to diversity of speech, even to their own nation, and exceedingly cruel.¹¹

Fordun here illustrates the binding to the Highlands and islands not merely of a language, but of a way of behaviour completely opposed to the ascendant Anglo-Saxon and 'English' manners of the south and east.¹² He establishes a cultural difference between two parts of the country which underlined the evident contrast in geography and topography, and which paralleled the

⁹ BHO, 1694 General Assembly, Act XXI, date of access, 7 August 2011; for examples of controversies over transportations from Lowland presbyteries, see NRS, CH1/1/12, p. 130 (22 January 1692).

¹⁰ BHO, 1694 General Assembly, Act VI; 1699, Act XI, date of access, 7 August 2011.

¹¹ Quoted in Charles W. J. Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland, 1698-1981: The Geographical History of a Language* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd, 1984), p. 22.

¹² *Ibid.*

developing boundary of governmental control.¹³ Many writers who followed Fordun, such as John Major, George Buchanan and William Dunbar, helped to cement the idea of Highland distinctiveness from the rest of Scotland in the Lowland consciousness, an idea which paralleled a shift in nomenclature: Lowland 'Inglis' was identified as 'Scottis', and Gaelic became 'Yrisch' or 'Ersch'.¹⁴ The cultural split grew wider when religion was added to the mix after the Reformation, though it is noteworthy that even two centuries before, the Highlanders were described as lacking in devotion.¹⁵

Fordun was writing in the aftermath of a series of raids in the mid-fourteenth century by Alexander Stewart, the Wolf of Badenoch—himself a scion of the royal House of Stewart. These raids epitomized Fordun's idea of the 'untamed' Highlands, but they represented more than a threat to civilization. They were also a threat to government authority, as was the Lordship of the Isles, an autonomous territory in the western Highlands and islands which provided a stability the central government could not in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹⁶ The lordship was broken up in 1493 by James IV, who managed to convince clans that their best interests lay with the government than with the MacDonald lordship. This tactic of playing clans off against one another to prevent a particular one from achieving such dominance continued into the early seventeenth century, with the target this time being the Campbells, beneficiaries of the MacDonalds' expropriation.¹⁷

James VI had evidently absorbed ideas on the Highlands from his tutor, George Buchanan. In his guide to his son Henry, *Basilikon Doron*, James advised that the Highlanders of the mainland possessed a mix of barbarity and civility, while those of the islands were completely barbarous.¹⁸ The legacy of relations between the king's family and the Highland clans was fraught with political complications, and James' reign saw many attempts to shore up government power in the region, including one of the most debated documents in Highland history, the Statutes of Iona of

13 T. M. Devine, *Clanship to Crofters' War: The Social Transformation of the Scottish Highlands* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 2; Alison Cathcart, *Kinship and Clientage: Highland Clanship 1451-1609* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2006), pp. 32-3.

14 Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, p. 23. For more on Major, Buchanan and Dunbar, see Cathcart, *Kinship and Clientage*, pp. 36-7.

15 Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 4; Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, p. 22.

16 Devine, *Clanship to Crofters' War*, p. 4; Cathcart, *Kinship and Clientage*, pp. 33-4.

17 Martin MacGregor, 'The Campbells: Lordship, Literature And Liminality' (unpublished), p. [2]. Thanks to Dr MacGregor for access to this article.

18 Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, p. 23; Clotilde Prunier, *Anti-Catholic Strategies in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, 2004), p. 17.

1609. These were produced a year after Highland chiefs and other prominent clansmen were held hostage in various castles around Scotland for the purpose of obtaining their collaboration with central government authority.¹⁹ They addressed religion and obedience to ecclesiastical officials, the economy, the chiefly courts and retinues, and the production and importation of liquor. Significantly, patronage of bards is limited, though one of the issues of debate has been over whether this pertains more to the court poets or itinerant, popular performers of verse.²⁰ The statutes also address education, requiring ‘ever[y] gent[le]man or ye[o]man within the said I[s]land[s]’ to send his eldest son or, failing male issue, his eldest daughter to school in the Lowlands so he or she may become fluent in speaking, reading and writing English.²¹

III. GAELIC IN THE HISTORIOGRAPHY

These two provisions have caused historians to label the statutes as ‘virulently anti-Gaelic’,²² especially in view of two subsequent privy council acts on education. The first act, dated 16 July 1616, required all children of clan chiefs and principal clansmen to attend school in the Lowlands, and barred them from recognition as heirs and as subjects of the king unless they were fully fluent and literate in English, and the second, from the following December, that schools be established in each parish in Scotland to teach English, so that ‘the Irish language, whi[ch] is one of the chief and principa[l] caus[e]s of the contin[u]ance of barbarit[y] and incivilit[y] amon[g] the inhabitant[s] of the I[s]l[e]s and H[igh]land[s], may be abolishe[d] and remov[ed]’.²³ John Lorne Campbell dates the suppression of Gaelic and Highland culture to the Statutes of Iona, while Victor Durkacz identifies one of the threads of Highland education as arising from them, seeking ‘brutally to repress Gaelic in the interests of political and cultural uniformity’.²⁴ Elements of Scottish Lowland society therefore had a very negative view of Gaelic, as an undesirable feature of

19 Martin MacGregor, ‘The Statutes of Iona: Text and Context’, in *The Innes Review*, v. 57, no. 2 (Autumn 2006), p. 114.

20 See *ibid.*, pp. 147-8; Julian Goodare, ‘The Statutes of Iona in Context’, *Scottish Historical Review*, v. 27, part 1 (April 1998), p. 53.

21 Cited in MacGregor, ‘Statutes of Iona’, p. 175.

22 Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 7.

23 MacGregor, ‘Statutes of Iona’, pp. 129-30; David Masson, ed., *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, vol. X, A.D. 1613-1616 (Edinburgh: H.M. Register House, 1891), p. 671.

24 Campbell, *Gaelic in Scottish Education and Life*, p. 9; Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 17.

the nation's culture: after the Reformation, even more than before, Gaelic society was marked by a feudal allegiance of an illiterate population to their chiefs and leadership. Highlanders who adhered to Catholicism, which was assumed to be part of this allegiance, not only put their own liberty at risk, but also that of the nation.

This is the context of many portrayals of the SSPCK as an anti-Gaelic agency. Gaelic had already been targeted by Fordun when, in 1567, Bishop of the Isles John Carswell offered an apologia for publishing Protestant works in the language in the introduction to *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh*, his reworking of John Calvin's *Book of Common Order*.²⁵ Later presentations of a pro-Gaelic argument in reformed publishing were those of James Kirkwood, a former chaplain to Sir John Campbell of Glenorchy and an episcopalian minister in Astwick, Bedfordshire. In the face of hesitation and ambivalence over the distribution of a Gaelic Bible, he maintained that it would be a contradiction of Protestant values to deny Highland worshippers the opportunity for proper instruction by reading scripture in their native language.²⁶ Kirkwood was a linchpin in the connections between Scottish charities and movements within the church, including the SSPCK, and their English supporters. By April 1710, however, Kirkwood had died, and Durkacz maintains that the last hope for the teaching of Gaelic literacy in SSPCK schools died with him.²⁷

Much of the SSPCK's historiography seeks to define how Gaelic arrived in its current state, looking backwards from the time these historians were writing. Perhaps the most uncompromising critic of the society is John Lorne Campbell. For him, Catholicism and Gaelic were intimately connected, and the Protestant crusade of establishment authorities after 1690 targeted both. Campbell attacks the SSPCK as one of the most egregious elements of this suppression. The society was founded in the second of his three phases of official attitudes towards Gaelic after the Reformation (1609-ca 1760), when the language was acceptable for the purpose of religious instruction and gaining conversions from Catholicism and episcopalianism, but its role in education was restricted.²⁸ Campbell seeks to identify solutions to contemporary (in 1945) social

25 Donald Meek, 'Pulpit and the Pen', in Adam Fox and Daniel Woolf, eds., *The Spoken Word: Oral Culture in Britain, 1500-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 88; MacGregor, 'Campbells: Lordship, Literature and Liminality', p. 27.

26 James Kirkwood, 'An answer to the objection against printing the Bible in Irish, as being prejudicial to the design of extirpating the Irish Language out of the Highlands of Scotland [sic]', NRS, CH1/2/24/1/2, ff. 66v, 67v.

27 Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 30.

28 Campbell, *Gaelic in Scottish Education and Life*, p. 41.

problems in the Highlands and islands, which he attributes to ill-founded religious and linguistic bias on the part of the authorities, a historical neglect and indeed mistreatment he sees governments, landowners and the church as having inflicted.²⁹

Campbell also criticizes Scottish historians and historical societies for not tackling the problems of Highland history honestly and effectively, for example, by not publishing the society's committee and general meeting minutes, because 'presumably they are still politically too embarrassing.'³⁰ In the intervening years, however, several historians have answered his general call, even if the society's minutes remain unpublished. Two of the most prominent are Charles Withers and Victor Durkacz. They deal primarily with the issue of language, along with the religious and political connotations the subject involves. As with Campbell, they seek to diagnose how Gaelic arrived in its situation, current as of the 1980s. The perspective they give is that both for Gaelic's sake and for that of Protestantism, the society took a wrong turn in banning the teaching of literacy in the language.

Withers traces Gaelic's decline and movement within Scotland from the late seventeenth century, from its dominance in the northern and central areas of the country to its isolation in the far north and west, while illustrating the contemporaneous development of Gaelic-speaking communities in Lowland cities as a result of Highland migration.³¹ The SSPCK was a significant agent in the withdrawal of Gaelic, as education was an important method for the introduction of the religion desired by the Lowland authorities, but by no means was it the only one. Cultural and economic interaction, as well as simple geographical proximity, had roles to play, perhaps even buttressing the efforts of the society in the parishes in Argyll and bordering the Lowlands.³² For Withers, it was this increasing English-Gaelic interaction over the nineteenth century which extended to all levels of Gaelic society, ultimately wearing away Gaelic's dominance even in the northwestern heartland.³³

A central element for Withers, which is reinforced in Durkacz's work of the previous year,

29 Ibid., pp. 37-8.

30 Ibid., p. 9. John Lorne Campbell, cited in Charles Withers, 'Education and Anglicisation: The Policy of the SSPCK Toward the Education of the Highlander, 1709-1825', www.rfs.scotshome.com/Education_and_Anglicisation.htm (date of access 20 May 2008). As of July 2011, this version of the article appears to have been taken offline, but another article of the same title may be found in *Scottish Studies*, v. 26 (1982), pp. 37-56. The citations of Campbell are missing from this latter article, however.

31 Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, p. 182.

32 Ibid., pp. 125-6.

33 Ibid., pp. 247, 249.

is the split between Gaelic as a language and education as a symbol of progress.³⁴ Durkacz expands on this, where he describes the effect of the society and Scottish and British authorities at the time as ‘alienating’ the two from each other, creating a barrier between a professional, economic and educational sphere, which was reserved for English, and a domestic and spiritual sphere, where Gaelic was preferred.³⁵ His subject is the decline of Welsh, Irish and Gaelic within their respective countries, showing the different responses to the growth of English in each and the uses of education in either preservation or erosion. Durkacz agrees with Campbell that the Reformation was an instigator in forcing each language to assess its position.³⁶ As with Withers, increasing economic and social interaction with English, including in the traditional ‘refuges’ of the Celtic languages, was the ultimate trend which led to the loss of Gaelic as a primary language in Scotland, but in conjunction with the association of English with education and economic and social advancement.³⁷ For all three writers, these associations imposed from the outside also had a negative impact on the psychology of Highlanders, and contributed to the economic and cultural depression which existed in the region by the 1940s.³⁸ Withers and Durkacz focus on lost opportunities, identifying Gaelic as ‘the key to the Highlanders’ loyalty’.³⁹ Withers also posits that, for the General Assembly, literacy in Gaelic would have allowed the language a permanence in opposition to the ideology of the new establishment, which as a result felt the language had to be eliminated.⁴⁰

Another response to Campbell comes from Clotilde Prunier, who offers an instructive look at the Catholic response to legal suppression within Scotland in the eighteenth century. The SSPCK was one weapon in an arsenal of measures which the establishment used to fight Catholic sentiment in the Highlands, and she thus focuses on religion rather than language, though she concurs with Campbell on the fusion of Gaelic culture and Catholicism.⁴¹ Prunier’s outline of the Catholic response shows that it was as divided and as disputatious as the anti-Catholic actions of

34 Ibid., pp. 118, 120.

35 Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, pp. 6, 10.

36 Ibid., p. 1.

37 Ibid., pp. 10, 15, 70.

38 Campbell, *Gaelic in Scottish Education and Life*, p. 60. See also Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, p. 137; and Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 23.

39 Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 62.

40 Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, p. 118; Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 5: ‘Because the times allowed no political or religious compromise, no cultural or linguistic compromise was possible either.’

41 Prunier, *Anti-Catholic Strategies*, pp. 98-101.

the government and Church of Scotland, despite the Protestant parties' fears of a unitary international conspiracy.⁴² Competition between presbyteries for ministers and probationers, and for funding, is reflected in the competition among Jesuits and other missionaries for funding and resources. Mutual suspicion among the Catholic communities of England, Ireland and Scotland further impeded the Catholic church's effectiveness in the face of legal and ecclesiastical proscriptions.⁴³

Still, Prunier holds that the mission was successful due to its simple tenacity, while the establishment—including, apparently, the society—failed because it did not achieve universal religious or educational provision. The higher threshold the establishment had set for itself meant that it was bound for failure at the beginning, especially in a nation as religiously diverse as Scotland, while the Catholic mission just had to survive to maintain a presence.⁴⁴ Greater flexibility on the part of the mission and a willingness to accept cultural aspects of the Highlands the Catholic church had been interacting with for centuries contributed to its survival, and forced a flexibility not only onto the society schoolmasters, but also onto presbyterian ministers its priests would encounter in the remote Highland parishes.⁴⁵

Not all commentators are so critical of the society, though even supportive writers come to a consensus on its failure to achieve its stated objective of assisting parish schools in providing universal education. John MacInnes, like Campbell, identifies contemporary (in 1951) problems in the Highlands, but seeks a solution to the deprivation and slow economy of the region not simply in a commitment to Gaelic culture and a re-assessment of economic management, but in an obligation of Protestant religious bodies to resume their evangelical heritage. In tracing this heritage, he holds the SSPCK to have been an element in the campaign for the Highlands.⁴⁶ He does not view the methods of presbyterian evangelicalism with unquestioning favour, however, acknowledging the cultural harm religious fervour inflicted on what, two and a half centuries later, he is able to describe as innocent and perhaps beneficial aspects of Gaelic society: the arts,

42 Ibid., p. 134.

43 Ibid., pp. 32, 44-6. See also p. 93 for the Catholic mission's own concerns about numbers of available personnel.

44 Prunier, *Anti-Catholic Strategies*, p. 177.

45 Ibid., pp. 115-8.

46 John MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement in the Highlands of Scotland* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1951), p. 238.

especially poetry, music and song.⁴⁷ This may have been a response to Campbell's criticism of the official assault on Gaelic culture, published six years earlier, though MacInnes does not view the language as central to the social and economic status of the region. Fundamentally, MacInnes sees Protestant evangelicalism as having supported the Gaelic population in a time of profound change and dislocation, rather than having contributed to a psychological crisis.⁴⁸ The society itself led to a deeper rooting of Highland Protestantism, but it also paved the way for a future religious toleration: despite having a legal advantage in the form of the anti-Catholic penal laws, the SSPCK exercised it only in exceptional circumstances, and targeted only the mission itself rather than lay Catholics. For them, it relied on persuasion and instruction rather than coercion.⁴⁹

M. G. Jones comes to a similar conclusion to MacInnes, that the society's ultimate impact lay more in the path it established for the future than in any contemporary achievement. The SSPCK produced a form for later charity school organizations to follow in the Highlands, which others really did not take advantage of until the end of the eighteenth century.⁵⁰ The need for charity schools to combat the Catholic mission arose out of the neglect the authorities exercised towards the Highlands following the Reformation, which allowed the mission to develop as strongly as it did while still subject to legal restrictions.⁵¹ The voluntary efforts which tried to fill the gap in education, in light of the mixed response of the authorities and the hostility in some local parishes to the church's missionary efforts in the late seventeenth century, proved insufficient and forced the development of the SSPCK.⁵² The society's impact was minimized by the refusal to teach Gaelic literacy, 'an obstacle of the Society's own making'.⁵³

Despite this refusal, the society's attitude towards Gaelic shifted according to cultural, political and social conditions in the Highlands. It was not nearly as deterministic as writers such as Campbell, Durkacz, Withers and Prunier maintain, with the ultimate aim of elimination always in view. First, the issue of language is not mentioned in the founding documents of the society, either the proclamation issued by Queen Anne in August 1708, announcing royal approbation of

47 Ibid., p. 54.

48 Ibid., p. ix.

49 Ibid., p. 242; Campbell, *Gaelic in Scottish Education and Life*, p. 51.

50 Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 209.

51 Ibid., p. 173.

52 Ibid., pp. 177-8.

53 Ibid., p. 194.

the incipient campaign to raise funds, or the charter, which provided the society's formal framework.⁵⁴ Durkacz appreciates this failure to say anything about Gaelic, though he attributes it to the idea that it was so accepted that elimination was intended that the issue was beyond discussion.⁵⁵ The experience of the SPCK in England, however, had already demonstrated that missionary work in the languages of target countries was more effective than work strictly in English, so the failure to mention language in the charter may have had in view future missionary work in other countries.⁵⁶ This is not to say that the founders of the society had later use of Gaelic in mind when framing the charter, but when questions of the language arose in the course of the society's business, they were able to look back to the document for guidance.

Even more significantly, the presentation of the language in parliamentary legislation is contradicted by how the establishment went about developing the system of parochial schools. In 1633, parliament ratified the privy council act of 1616 which not only called for the supplanting of Gaelic with English, but also outlined the role of bishops, as church representatives, in supervising the maintenance of schools. This act was overturned by new legislation in 1646, which replaced the bishops with a committee of 12 men appointed by the presbytery, if the heritors were unable or unwilling to agree a location and stipend for the school and master of their own accord.⁵⁷ The 1646 act was annulled in the Act Rescissory of 1661, which reset the legislative clock in Scotland to 1633, and reinstated the 1616 and 1633 acts, but this was inappropriate for the post-revolutionary presbyterian establishment of the 1690s. A new law was called for, and supplied in 1696, including the provision 'his majesty, with advice and consent foresaid, ratifies and approves all former laws, customs and constitutions made for establishing and maintaining of schools within the kingdom in so far as the same are not altered nor innovated by this present act.'⁵⁸ While this does indicate selective reinforcement of the 1616 and 1633 acts (provisions on eliminating Gaelic are retained, and those outlining the role of the bishops disregarded by the 1696 act as 'innovated'), employment both by the church and by the society of Gaelic-speaking personnel for Gaelic

54 For the proclamation, NRS MFiP GD95/1/1, pp. [10-1] (paginated as 6 and 7); for the charter, *ibid.*, pp. [5-6] (paginated as 1 and 2).

55 Victor Durkacz, 'The source of the language problem in Scottish education, 1688-1709', *SHR*, v. 57, n. 1 (April 1978), p. 36.

56 Lowther Clarke, *History of the SPCK*, pp. 64, 103-30.

57 RPS, 1645/11/185, date of access 20 January 2010.

58 *Ibid.*, 1696/9/144, date of access 17 September 2009

parishes raises questions about the idea of a unified establishment push to remove the language.⁵⁹

We therefore need to consider that proscription on the use of Gaelic was a practical measure, in light of disputes over dialects—which Fordun identified in his idea of Highlanders’ ‘diversity of speech’⁶⁰—and over what exactly literacy in Gaelic consisted of. Recent research has pointed to a lack of consensus over literacy at least from the sixteenth century, with the historical ties of the eastern and central Highlands to the more Latin- and English-oriented Lowlands implying a different orthography for Gaelic to that used in the Irish-oriented western Highlands and islands, where Classical Common Gaelic was the literary standard. The classical form inspired later Gaelic publications such as *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh* and the work of the seventeenth century produced by the synod of Argyll.⁶¹ The dialect issue came to light during discussions about the Irish- and Gaelic-language Bibles in the 1690s, which had to undergo profound revision before they were deemed usable in Scottish Highland parishes. Still, because the translation had its origins in Ireland, though the typeface changed from Irish font to Roman, the orthography remained that influenced by Classical Common Gaelic.⁶² The flexibility which the charter allowed to the society to adjust its rules on language use according to circumstances, however, did mean it could just as much suppress Gaelic’s use as permit it, an instance which arose after the 1715 Jacobite rising, but even then only briefly.⁶³

IV. CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL REFORMATION

⁵⁹ Ibid., 1633/6/20, date of access 9 January 2010. The General Assembly passed its own act in 1700, and did mention ‘English schoolmasters’ in a 1699 act on ‘Planting of the Highlands’, but that refers more to the type of school than the language of teaching. BHO, 1699 General Assembly, Act IX, and 1700 General Assembly, Act X. Thanks to Dr Karin Bowie for that point on English schools.

⁶⁰ See p. 4 above.

⁶¹ Martin MacGregor, ‘Creation and Compilation: *The Book of the Dean of Lismore* and Literary Culture in Late Medieval Gaelic Scotland’, in Ian Brown, gen. ed., *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 215; Aonghas MacCoinnich, ‘Where and how was Gaelic written in late medieval and early modern Scotland? Orthographic practices and cultural identities’, *Scottish Gaelic Studies* XXIV (2008), pp. 309-56, p. 312. For the activity of the synod of Argyll, see Donald Meek, ‘The Gaelic Bible’ in David F. Wright, ed., *The Bible in Scottish Life and Literature* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1988), pp. 11-2.

⁶² Meek, ‘The Gaelic Bible’, pp. 14-5. Durkacz holds that synods and presbyteries in the Highlands were active in pursuit of their share of the Bibles, despite the General Assembly’s hesitance in distribution, but the question arises here of the origins of the clergy. If they came from the western Highlands, as the synod of Argyll was one of the most productive areas in producing Gaelic-speaking clergy after the revolution, their familiarity with the Irish-influenced orthography would have been greater than clergy from other parts. *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 22.

⁶³ This is cited as evidence of the ‘definitive’ attitude of the society. Campbell, *Gaelic in Scottish Education and Life*, p. 51.

The issue of language, while omnipresent in the historiography, is only one element to the society. Its corporate development as a charity and its place within contemporary reformation movements and organizations have been neglected, with only M. G. Jones of the commentators addressing them in any depth.⁶⁴ As indicated above, connections with the antecedent SPCK in England will be explored, especially in light of the involvement of James Kirkwood, but the SPCK did more than offer a model for the later Scottish society. Its members were active in contributing books for libraries designed for Highland parishes and presbyteries, mostly for divinity students, clergy and other sponsors in these particular parishes. Denominational relationships affected the contacts, however, with concerns on the part of the English that the Scots would seek to divert the books to some other purpose, and a preference on the part of some Scots for schools rather than libraries⁶⁵—a preference the General Assembly quashed to maintain English support.⁶⁶ The SPCK, meanwhile, rejected the idea of applying for a charter, which made it more subject to particular social and political fluctuations than the Scottish society.⁶⁷

Jones attributes the SSPCK's origins to a 'praying society' in Edinburgh, founded in 1700.⁶⁸ Such a description does not quite completely portray the Societies for Reformation of Manners, which took their basic inspiration from English parallels established soon after 1690. The societies were involved in enjoining greater spirituality among their own members, as praying societies did, but also concerned themselves with ensuring the enforcement of laws against immorality and blasphemy, going to the point of conducting patrols to witness and report illegal behaviour—a way to complete the providential deliverance of Scotland from the 'arbitrary' government of James VII's line.⁶⁹ Aside from the direct example of the English societies, there were native antecedents, as

⁶⁴ Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 178.

⁶⁵ Kirkwood MSS 3.5.1; NRS, CH1/2/24/1/1, f. 2.

⁶⁶ NRS, CH1/2/24/1/1, ff. 26-9.

⁶⁷ Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies, 1580-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 216; Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 75.

⁶⁸ Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 176.

⁶⁹ See Craig Rose, *England in the 1690s: Revolution, Religion and War* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 19, for an example of the idea of providence's role in the revolution. We can see a Scottish conception in the 1690 assembly's address to William II (BHO, 1690 General Assembly, item III, date of access 17 September 2009):

It was the sad confusions, that differences as to the government of the Church had caused in this nation, that, according to your Majesty's first declaration for our relief, moved our gracious God to raise up and prosper you to be our glorious deliverer for effectuating the Re-establishment that we now enjoy....

well, such as the house conventicles which had met under the restoration regimes, and pre-revolutionary prayer groups. Several members of the societies had been arrested or under suspicion of participating in illegal religious activities, and their personal troubles may have pushed them to join the societies from 1700.⁷⁰ One such suspect, Lord Crossrig (Sir David Home), was the instigator of the societies, having read about the English groups in an account he found in an Edinburgh bookshop in 1699. The societies did not meet with widespread approval, however, and they often found themselves having to strike a balance between encouraging the establishment to pursue crimes of immorality and blasphemy, and risking accusations of operating outside the hierarchy of church courts, like such groups as the Hebronites.⁷¹

We do see reflected in the reformation societies many features which would later arise in voluntary organizations and clubs: a quest for social reformation focusing on personal moral reformation, through what was essentially a completion of the Williamite Revolution and perhaps even of the Reformation itself; a private, voluntary organization making up for a perceived failure of government and ecclesiastical agencies to address crucial social problems; acquaintances being harvested for new members, but only after investigations of their suitability; and a vulnerability to shifts in status according to 'fashionability' or popular interest in their purpose.⁷² In addition to the usual attrition voluntary organizations faced, the societies' members were often subject to harassment, especially when on patrols. Popular support was tenuous, at best, which could demonstrate Michael F. Graham's idea that by the 1690s, Scotland needs to be considered a multi-denominational nation, one which could not live up to the reformers' ideals.⁷³

Over time, possibly as they saw their urban reformation campaign failing, the societies began to occupy themselves more with the problems of reformation in the Highlands, primarily through privately sponsored charity schools. Their one effort was a failure, however, falling victim to disagreements among the heritors over its location within the parish of Abertarff and a lack of

70 As a boy, Adam Blackadder, the son of the dissenting minister John Blackadder, was forced to assist soldiers ransacking his parents' house in their absence. He was later kept prisoner in the Tolbooth at Stirling for attending conventicles, and was released only after two petitions to the privy council by his elder brother. Two subsequent arrests followed. Adam Blackadder, 'A True Narration', in David George Mullan, ed., *Protestant Piety in Early-Modern Scotland: Letters, Lives and Covenants, 1650-1712* (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 2008), pp. 198, 200-2.

71 BHO, 1704 General Assembly, Act XVIII, date of access 19 August 2010.

72 P. Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, pp. 60, 69, 216-7; Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 75.

73 Michael F. Graham, *The Blasphemies of Thomas Aikenhead: Boundaries of Belief on the Eve of the Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), p. 24.

support for the schoolmaster.⁷⁴ It did manage to provide a precedent for the SSPCK, with charity schools returning to consideration in 1705 at a time when the Church of Scotland was considering how to develop 'Christian knowledge' in the Highlands, after 15 years of attempting to fill vacant parishes by sending probationary clergy and licensed ministers on rotating assignments to the north.⁷⁵ In the context of a General Assembly committee established in 1707, the proposal first of a fund for catechists and then for charity schools developed which evolved into the SSPCK.

The idea of a royal charter establishing the SSPCK as a corporation came up in a meeting of the lords of session in July 1708. The need for a charter may have arisen from awareness of the social and political vulnerabilities of a voluntary society, as experienced by the SPCK in England and the reformation societies in Scotland. A charter would tie the fortunes of the SSPCK to the monarch, giving it a permanence and an inherent expression of support which could override political considerations. After the 1715 Jacobite rising, for example, the SPCK was tagged as riddled with Jacobite sympathizers, while the Scottish society used the rising as an reason to campaign for more support and an expansion of its schools.⁷⁶ Likewise, accepting subscriptions for membership from people throughout the nation, as for the Company of Scotland in the mid-1690s, would establish the society as a national charitable effort for the benefit of the Highlanders.⁷⁷ Its corporate status would require greater transparency than a voluntary society, and proof that it was generating the funds through investment of its donated stock to support the schools, while the SPCK was really responsible only to itself, though the political situation forced it to answer to public and political opinion.⁷⁸ The Scottish society was in practice self-selecting, with leadership and membership coming from the noble, landed and merchant classes,⁷⁹ but still, emphasis on its

74 NRS, MFilP GD95/1/1, p. [9], 'A short narrative'. This page is unnumbered, and is page 13 of this volume.

75 First raised by the General Assembly committee for overtures in 1690. NRS, CH1/1/12, p. 45.

76 Lowther Clarke, *History of the SPCK*, p. 26-7; Jones, *Charity School Movement*, pp. 130, 135; NRS, MFilP GD95/2/2, pp. 134-7 (4 October 1716).

77 Douglas Watt, *The Price of Scotland: Darien, Union and the Wealth of Nations* (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2007), pp. 47-9. The Bank of Scotland similarly pursued subscriptions in 1695 and 1696, but the profile of its subscribers was more limited to the landed and professional classes. Richard Saville, *Bank of Scotland: A History, 1695-1995* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), p. 3.

78 The SPCK removed singing from its curriculum when objections were raised over it being an art of 'vanity'. Jones, *Charity School Movement*, pp. 80-1.

79 Subscribers or donors: people who donated to the society; members or managers: people who formed the body of the society; committee: conducted the bulk of the business and met at least monthly, according to the charter; officers: treasurer, secretary, lord president, clerks and, occasionally, sub-clerks, who all had special duties defined either by the charter or by the committee as it saw fit. These duties will be outlined in chapter 5.

national nature was significant in its expansion of charity beyond these groups. Many donations are recorded from servants and labourers, including, from rural areas, 'tenants' or 'cottars' who lived on larger estates. As a corporation, rather than a private organization, the society did not have to rely solely on the members' acquaintances for donations, but could and did open itself up to anyone of any class who was willing and able to contribute.

The use of personal relationships contributed to the business ethos of the society, since the experience and knowledge of the men managing it determined whether they could do so effectively. The SSPCK's success depended on its corporate and moral reputations. The first arose in the context of the Lowlands, and the society's Edinburgh base. Especially in light of the failure of the Company of Scotland, the society needed to demonstrate financial probity and a sober assessment of risk, both in investing the stock and in establishing schools. Its moral reputation reflected its activities in the Highlands themselves, but here the risk was greater because responsibility for its reputation was more diffuse, in the hands of its individual teachers. The society had oversight, but any failure in the moral requirements it ordered the teachers to follow had to be addressed swiftly in case its mission was jeopardized. As with members of the reformation societies, the teachers were held to be models of reformed behaviour. If they failed, the repercussions for the society could be dire, as ministers, heritors or commoners in the Highlands could turn their backs on the schools.⁸⁰ Despite its legal status and the pleas of several teachers, the society did not avail itself of legal devices such as the penal laws to require pupils to attend the schools.⁸¹ Rather, it relied on persuasion, not even forcing pupils who were acknowledged Catholics to attend presbyterian services against their will. Those teachers who did were subject to censure. One means of controlling the selection of teachers was the mandate that each candidate had to provide a testimonial from his home presbytery proving he had fulfilled all legal requirements for teachers, as required in the charter.⁸² Additionally, prominent ministers, usually university professors of divinity, were asked to recommend candidates, showing the effect personal acquaintance or reputation had in the society's hiring practices, as well as membership recruitment.⁸³

⁸⁰ NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/1, p. 364 (1 March 1714).

⁸¹ J. MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement*, pp. 242-3.

⁸² NRS, MFiLP GD95/1/1, p. [6] (numbered as p. 2).

⁸³ See NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/1, pp. 198-9 (15 June 1711) for an appeal from the society to the university

A high corporate and moral reputation were therefore necessary for the society's work to be effective. Success was by no means a given, with the challenges posed by the Catholic mission and by episcopalian incumbents who threatened the presbyterian establishment, especially under the protection of heritors such as the Earl Marischal prior to the Toleration Act of 1712.⁸⁴ Despite the difficulties many presbyterian ministers faced when being installed in northern parishes, however, little evidence of violence towards society schoolmasters is recorded. If anything, sympathies with the goals of education gave them a measure of protection, even if the Catholic mission in particular enjoined its followers to subvert the schools while using them, taking advantage of the persuasion idea.⁸⁵ Using the results of consultations, both in person and in correspondence, from Highland presbyteries and synods surrounding the 1711 General Assembly, the SSPCK did not shy away from establishing its schools in areas of demonstrated vulnerability to the Catholic mission and Jacobitism.⁸⁶ Twelve schools out of 23 total at the time of the 1715 rising were in areas either divided or Jacobite in allegiance.⁸⁷

V. RESEARCH METHODS AND STRUCTURE

This thesis intends to look beyond the society's relationship to Gaelic, and to understand its incorporation in the context of reformation movements in Scotland and in England after 1690. The SSPCK had a place in a completion of the revolution, or even of the Reformation, envisioned by the church and the reformation societies in the previous two decades, and it is this ideology which had a stronger place in the society's intentions than language. The lack of a mention of Gaelic in the charter shows that its priority in the society's work was not as high as other writers have maintained, but instead shifted according to conditions at any one specific time. After the Jacobite rising of 1715, the SSPCK did express a feeling that the elimination of Gaelic would be desirable, in

principals for nominations of candidates who 'will be probably found in your university or be know[n] to yo[u] and the other masters'.

84 T. N. Clarke, *The Scottish Episcopalians: 1688-1720* (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1987), p. 265.

85 Prunier, *Anti-Catholic Strategies*, pp. 139-42.

86 NRS, MFilP GD95/2/1, pp. 192, 194 (3 and 24 May 1711); GD95/10, f. 60, which lists the schools which had been established by January 1716; and demonstration through areas where schools were located participating in 1715 rising.

87 Allan I. Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart, 1603-1788* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1996) p. 245.

a memorial to the Commission of Police in London and in the more detailed letter to a royal commission for Highland schools in October 1716, outlining the society's immediate future plans for schools with the assistance of the government.⁸⁸ These plans, however, did not arise as part of a policy statement, and did not come to fruition, anyway. Within ten years, moreover, the society began tentatively moving towards the production of a Gaelic grammar.⁸⁹ The question arises whether the ban on teaching Gaelic literacy was ideological, or whether it was enacted simply because the effort to organize the printing of Gaelic books was not worthwhile, especially due to disagreements over orthography and to conflicts over dialects. An outright ban in the charter could have barred the society, when expanding into overseas missions, from using the vernacular of these territories and countries in its missionary work. This reflects the attitude of the English SPCK, which was vocal in its support for the use of local languages in its work in the colonies, especially India, but, interestingly, also within Britain.⁹⁰ The actions of its Scottish counterpart reflect the application of the charter's flexibility to Gaelic—from the more stringent attitude after the 1715 rising, to 1767, when it began to allow the teaching of Gaelic literacy in its schools.⁹¹

The focus on the corporate development of the society means that certain subjects are not addressed: opposition, the extent of the use of Gaelic in the late seventeenth century, and the contents of the libraries distributed in conjunction with the SPCK in England. Little written evidence of opposition to the society has been found, though the 1708 correspondence of Adam Fergusson, minister of Crathie in Braemar, indicates that even presbyterian ministers had doubts about the effectiveness of the proposed fund to support itinerant teachers. Fergusson's reports are anecdotal, but there is no reason to doubt their authenticity: the ministers' doubts appear to lie not in ideology, but whether charity schools would be the best use of the funds committed, especially since the society would be mainly a Scottish effort. Records of opposition from episcopalian

88 Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, p. 122; NRS, MFilP GD95/2/2, p. 96 (5 March 1716); *ibid.*, p. 137 (4 October 1716).

89 Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 64.

90 Lowther Clarke, *History of the SPCK*, p. 64, ch. 8; Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 130.

91 Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 68. Samuel Johnson was a forceful voice for the change in the society's policy. Campbell writes:

Highlanders would do better to remember Dr. Johnson as the man whose intervention was decisive in overruling the worst feature of the repressive anti-Gaelic policy of the Whigs than as the man who in order to refute what had every appearance of being a literary fraud, made too sweeping assertions of the entire non-existence of any ancient Gaelic literature. [*Gaelic in Scottish Education and Life*, p. 56]

ministers is similarly lacking, but locations of the early schools depended on information supplied from the presbyteries themselves, showing that a degree of presbyterian infrastructure was necessary before the society would open a school. Considering evident tensions between episcopalians and presbyterians within the parishes, the former's willingness to cooperate with the presbyteries must have been minimal.⁹² We must conclude, therefore, that many of the SSPCK's earliest efforts were defensive, not offensive—aimed at consolidating the church's gains, not extending them.

Interaction between the Catholic mission and the society did not really begin until after the period covered in this thesis, since the extent of the society's coverage was limited. With the exception of a school in the presbytery of Aberlour in 1714, which was promptly quashed by the authorities partially in response to a plea by the society, no records of direct interaction between the Catholic mission and the SSPCK exist for the period covered by this thesis. This Catholic school, moreover, represents the only time that the society cited the penal laws in pressing its own legal advantages, but significantly the suppression was not directed towards lay Catholics, but towards the mission itself. The society and the church wished to prevent the presentation of a credible alternative to extant Catholics and to Protestants who may have had only intermittent access to presbyterian services—one of the church's dilemmas at the time being a lack of coverage, especially in more remote regions of Scotland. It feared that a failure to establish presbyterian provision would alienate potential followers and force them to find service elsewhere. The clergy of the respective denominations, on the other hand, Catholic, episcopalian or presbyterian, were less indifferent.

While the issue of language is central to an understanding of the SSPCK, it assumes a more peripheral role in this thesis than Campbell, Withers and Durkacz gave it. The extent of Gaelic at the end of the seventeenth century is not addressed, except as it was understood by ecclesiastical and political authorities in the formation of the society. Along with religion, it was the main criterion local correspondents of the society's predecessor, the General Assembly's Committee for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, used to lobby for greater assistance for their parishes.

⁹² NRS, CH1/2/25/3, f. 247, for a 1706 account of the presbytery of Dunblane, that the Highland parishes 'are all plagued with intruders', preventing the ministers from settling libraries or distributing 'Irish' Bibles.

Surveys on language use originated not with the society, however, but with Kirkwood's campaign to distribute Bibles to Highland parishes. Withers credits these surveys with being the first attempt to quantify language use in the Highlands at the time, but cautions that even in the 1690s, the strength of Gaelic was neither absolute nor a fixed quantity: political contacts with the Lowlands had always existed, requiring the use of Latin or English at higher social levels, and trade contacts were increasing throughout society, introducing English at lower levels.⁹³ Gaelic even developed or revived in Lowland and eastern communities in the following centuries as a result of internal migration.⁹⁴ Still, religion and the physical remoteness of the Highlands and Islands appear to have been a greater consideration for charity education than language: two of the first schools the society established, after all, were in the English-speaking islands of Orkney and Shetland.

The contents of the Highland libraries, one of the English charitable projects covered in chapter 4, are explored to some degree, but there is no evidence that particular titles were intended for particular locations in the Highlands.⁹⁵ The composition of the libraries depended mostly on what books were contributed by the English donors, and was determined in London. The destination of each box, however, was determined in Edinburgh, along with the distinction between a presbyterial and parochial library. The major difference between the two in terms of contents is that the parochial libraries appear to have contained more pamphlets, which were cheaper to print and targeted towards common lay worshippers, rather than the clergy, divinity students and wealthier library sponsors. The pamphlets were more didactic than many of the books, which were either works on theology supporting a Protestant viewpoint, or 'controversial' works designed to inform clergy and students of opposing views so they could debate effectively. Not only was it the values of the volumes as compared to the pamphlets, but their contents which argued against their availability to common Highlanders. While the majority of the books were in English, most of the books in other languages were in either French or Latin, with a much smaller number in Greek, Hebrew, Welsh or Gaelic—namely, the Gaelic Bible. Whether common Highland parishioners had the requisite literacy in or knowledge of English to understand the pamphlets is doubtful, but the society schools intended to help in both of these areas.

⁹³ Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, pp. 43, 61.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 183.

⁹⁵ Kirkwood MSS, v. 1.

The thesis is arranged thematically, though within a roughly chronological framework. It will address each of the major antecedent bodies or campaigns before devoting two chapters to the society itself, respectively discussing its development and its early operations. The timeframe has been selected to discuss the post-revolution period from 1690 to the time just after the Jacobite rising of 1715, when the society sought ambitiously to expand its activity with government assistance.⁹⁶ This assistance was not forthcoming, however, and we will see that despite the rhetoric and the political concerns which arose from the Highlands, many potential supporters were ambivalent in their countenance of the society, especially landlords. Chapter 2 will examine the efforts of the church to establish itself in the north of the country, confronting episcopalians who refused to leave their parishes and who had the support to remain in place, more often than the Catholic mission. Chapter 3 will investigate the operations of the Societies for Reformation of Manners in Scotland, focusing on Edinburgh, and their shift from seeking moral reformation on the city's streets to establishing charity schools in the Highlands. The connection with England is the subject of chapter 4, addressing the campaign for Highland libraries, the push for publication and distribution of the Gaelic Bible, and the involvement of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in these charitable efforts. Denominational disputes lay under the surface in relationships between the Church of Scotland and the predominantly Anglican members of the SPCK, and it fell to James Kirkwood to try to suppress the difficulties to allow the work to proceed. Chapter 5 will look at the foundation of the society, evolving from the General Assembly's Committee for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge into a stand-alone corporation, and its efforts to secure funding. The hiring of its first teachers and the establishment of schools form the subject of chapter 6, including the complicated relations the society often had with the proprietors and even the clergy in the parishes where it established schools. Discipline of its teachers was also an issue, especially after the 1715 Jacobite rising, when the activities of some of its employees came into question. First, however, we must address the struggles the Church of Scotland faced immediately after the revolution of 1688-90 in the north.

⁹⁶ NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, pp. 134-7 (4 October 1716).

‘a ffree & lawfull General Assemblie’:

Securing the Ground for the Church of Scotland

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, as the highest governing church court, had some difficulty establishing itself after the Williamite Revolution. Not having met since 1653, when Cromwell’s soldiers dispersed the last previous gathering in Edinburgh, the assembly met in 1690, but not in 1691 or 1693 due to tensions with the crown and the absence of the king on military campaigns abroad. The assembly did not suddenly spring up after all that time, however. Even before the revolution, ministers had been meeting in Edinburgh to determine what the structure of the new established church was going to be.¹ After much discussion, the act defining the structure outlined a presbyterian government for the church, passed by the ministers’ allies in parliament. Despite church rhetoric, a lot of the conflict in the early post-revolution years focused on relations with episcopalians rather than the Catholic mission, and what their role within the church or recognition outside it was to be. The church’s aim was the settlement of parochial vacancies or those still occupied by episcopalian incumbents, ‘conformists’ to the previous regime. Laying a strong foundation for the church would help complete the Reformation, establishing a truly reformed church structure throughout Scotland and bringing providential blessings to the nation. William’s own views were latitudinarian.² Targeting episcopalians for deposition or deprivation threatened his plan for a comprehensive national church, and as much as the government tried to ensure the extension at least of toleration, the assembly and parliament provided strictures against incumbent or deposed ministers, demanding that they recognize William and Mary as rightful monarchs before assumption into the church.³ The presbyterians in the assembly insisted on the kirk’s rights to govern itself and admit whom it considered loyal to its own establishment and that in government. Episcopalian, meanwhile, apart from the Jacobites

1 Jeffrey Stephen, ‘Defending the Revolution: The Church of Scotland and the Scottish Parliament, 1689–95’, *SHR*, v. LXXXIX, 1, No. 227 (April 2010), p. 29.

2 T. Clarke, *Scottish Episcopalianism*, p. 14.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 24–5.

who disparaged William's right to the throne, questioned the legitimacy of the General Assembly, which only represented a minority of the ministers and elders in the kirk.⁴ Diocesan meetings were held in Aberdeen, even under the title of 'synod' without licence by the assembly.⁵

The battleground, therefore, was as much in the eastern areas around Aberdeen and Inverness as in what we would later know as the 'Highlands'. In its early years, except when referring to language, the assembly referred to the 'north', not distinguishing between the east and the Highlands. Engagement with the region for the purpose of settlement fell into three categories: assumption of incumbent or recently deposed clergy who were willing to subscribe to presbyterianism; transportation of ministers from other parishes, especially in the Lowlands, to fill vacancies on a temporary basis, often in the hopes that they would receive a call from the destination parish for longer-term settlement; and generation of a body of Gaelic-speaking divinity students through the schools to serve in the Highlands in the future. Two other projects, which formed the basis for much of the communication between the assembly and the Highland presbyteries, were the unsuccessful distribution of the Gaelic Bible and the establishment of parochial and presbyterial libraries, the latter with charitable donations from England. These projects will be discussed in chapter 4, but we will address here the efforts of the church to lay a parochial foundation for itself in the Highlands. By 1699, it was becoming clear that earlier stopgap measures were not serving the church's needs, and a more concerted effort to ensure presbyterian provision through education was undertaken. Highland presbyteries were asked to provide bursaries to eligible Gaelic-speaking students, but the inability of the presbyteries to give support forced the assembly to ask the same of Lowland synods in 1701.⁶ Reports of difficulty with the topography, climate, and distances involved in settling ministers and, for parishioners, in attending services, led to moves for a settled fund to support itinerant catechists, rather than the occasional missions and 'transportations' the assembly had been using since 1690. This fund would eventually become the SSPCK.

4 Ibid., p. 53. See also William's letter to the 1692 General Assembly, NRS, CH1/1/12, pp. 106-7. The acts for this assembly were never printed, and so are not available at BHO or in *Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1643-1842* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Printing and Publishing, 1843).

5 T. Clarke, *Scottish Episcopalians*, p. 104.

6 BHO, 1699 General Assembly, Act IX, and 1701 General Assembly, Act VIII, date of access 19 August 2010.

I. LEGITIMACY OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Concerns of the church soon after its statutory establishment on a presbyterian basis in June 1690 revolved around consolidation of the authority of the General Assembly, which arose out of meetings of presbyterian ministers in Edinburgh from 1688. Jeffrey Stephen writes that these ministers began a tradition of lobbying parliament which lasted throughout William's reign, and which allowed it not only to guarantee a presbyterian establishment, but also to protect the kirk from erastian encroachments by the crown—though parliament's advocacy of the presbyterian side itself raised accusations of erastianism in more radical quarters.⁷ Doubts over the assembly's legitimacy were related to its composition, which was a minority of the incumbent clergy in Scotland at the time. It has been argued that one of the motives behind the earl of Crawford's deposition campaign as head of the privy council in 1689, which was focused mainly on the southeast, was to reduce the number of episcopalian ministers technically eligible to participate in an assembly.⁸ Prior to the act re-establishing presbyterianism in Scotland, we see urgent petitions to William, mostly from episcopalians in the northeast, for a comprehensive General Assembly to establish a position for themselves within the Church of Scotland.⁹ Their desperation was understandable, since they were essentially locked out of any official engagement with parliament despite the fact that they formed a majority in the kirk, and were forced to turn to William for support.¹⁰

Just as the distinct political situations in Scotland, England and Ireland had caused trouble for kings before the revolution, so William was not immune to similar difficulties, especially in his desire for a comprehensive Scottish church. Indeed, on that side he had concerns over loyalty from the established church in England, which could cause trouble if non-Jacobite Scottish episcopalians had too little support.¹¹ Aiming for comprehension of former conformists to James' regime, he refused to call an assembly in 1691 after commissions established the previous year, to assess the ecclesiastical status of presbyteries and remove 'insufficient, negligent, scandalous, and erroneous

⁷ Stephen, 'Defending the Revolution', pp. 20-1, 25.

⁸ T. Clarke, *Scottish Episcopalians*, p. 53.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹⁰ Stephen, 'Defending the Revolution', p. 53.

¹¹ Rose, *England in the 1690s*, pp. 152-7, 212.

ministers, by due course of ecclesiastical process and censures', ignored his order to disband, though the commission for northern Scotland did not meet as expected due to a riot in March 1691.¹² The commissions expired that November, and an assembly was called for the following January. The atmosphere was still tense, especially considering that William had pushed a comprehension to the top of his agenda.¹³ His letter to the 1692 assembly probably did not help matters when he pointed out the minority status of the presbyterian caucus:

It is represented to us, that yo[u] are not a full General Assembly, there being as great a number of the Ministers in the Church of Scotland as yo[u] are, who are not at all allowed to be represented, Though they were neither purged out upon the heads mentioned in the act of our parliament by the General meeting, or their delegates, nor by the Last General Assembly, during which time, there was no Stop put to your procedure or tr[i]a[l]s....¹⁴

Despite his criticism that the assembly had not called a halt to the commissions' proceedings, as requested, and that it had not made as much 'progress' as he should have expected in assuming episcopalian clergy, its commitment in 1692 to following his agenda was dubious. Instead, it dedicated mainly itself to administrative matters, which have some interest, but the only discussion of episcopalian assumptions came at the insistence of the royal commissioner, the earl of Lothian.¹⁵ This discussion was based in episcopalian petitions to the assembly protesting loyalty to the civil and ecclesiastical establishments of 1689 and 1690, and asking for admission to the kirk. William and Lothian insisted on hearing the petitions in open assembly so that there would be public exposure, but the assembly passed them on, once heard, to a committee for private hearings.¹⁶ Proceedings continued to address administrative issues, mainly transportations within the Lowlands, until 13 February, when Lothian dissolved the assembly while refusing to name a date for the next one. Ironically, considering some of the reasons for not accepting assumption of many episcopalians—illegally filling the roles of a minister by conducting baptisms and marriages—William Crichton, the moderator, himself assumed the authority of the commissioner by naming a date in August 1693.¹⁷ Relations between the crown and the assembly had therefore not improved by the end of the session, and the assembly, as in 1691, did not meet in 1693.

12 BHO, 1690 General Assembly, act XVII, access date 17 September 2009; Stephen, 'Defending the Revolution', pp. 40-1, n. 113.

13 T. Clarke, *Scottish Episcopalians*, pp. 101-2.

14 NRS, CH1/1/12, pp. 106-7; for the parliamentary act, see RPS, 1690/4/43.

15 T. Clarke, *Scottish Episcopalians*, p. 104.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 105.

17 NRS, CH1/1/12, p. 154.

II. THE COMMISSION FOR THE NORTH

The presbyterians did not completely spurn assumptions of episcopalians, but they did try to ensure such assumptions were on their terms. The first step was securing a majority within the General Assembly, despite their minority status, instigated before re-establishment by the Crawford depositions in 1689.¹⁸ The second was founding the commissions for the north and south at the 1690 assembly, which William objected to so strongly. These commissions were assigned to assess the ecclesiastical status of presbyteries within their respective areas, the southern to be based in Edinburgh and the northern in Aberdeen. Reaction in the north was not positive, however, with a riot greeting the commission when it tried to meet in March 1691.¹⁹ No further action as a whole commission was taken in the north that year, though two elders did confront a preaching teacher in Inverness,²⁰ and the 1692 assembly was dissolved before it had the opportunity to renew either commission—if indeed the issue was on the presbyterians' cards at all. In his letter to the 1692 assembly, William outlined his own vision of a commission, one for each side of the Tay, comprised of 24 ministers, 12 pre-restoration presbyterians and 12 loyal episcopalian conformists.²¹ Failure to address the issue of commissions at all may simply have been a stalling tactic in parallel with the rest of the assembly, a refusal to accede to his framework for assumption.

By 1694, the 'Act for taking the oath of allegiance and assurance' had been passed by parliament, a piece of legislation negotiated between the church and the government, the latter chiefly represented by one of the secretaries of state, James Johnston.²² By limiting the oaths to civil affairs, parliament sought to assuage episcopalian concerns of 'conscience' that they would be perjuring themselves if they swore the required oaths, particularly if they had sworn to defend the restoration regime in 1669 and taken the test in 1681. Some conformists still viewed the General Assembly as an illegitimate authority, however, and, when the 1694 assembly appointed new

¹⁸ See n. 7 above.

¹⁹ See n. 12 above.

²⁰ See pp. 30-2 below.

²¹ NRS, CH1/1/12, p. 108.

²² T. Clarke, *Scottish Episcopalians*, pp. 114-8; Stephen, 'Defending the Revolution', pp. 45-8.

committees for the north and south, whose proceedings would be more successful than those of its predecessors, the protesters saw the meetings as another opportunity to submit petitions. The northern committee's first action when it met in Aberdeen was to solicit names of individuals who were suitable for the offices of deacon and elder from magistrates in the synod. The solicitation was successful, but resulted in an unsigned protestation from what the Glasgow minister Robert Langlands, sitting on the committee, referred to as the 'Episcopa[l] session'.²³

The committee summoned James Gordon, the alleged intruding minister in Foveran, and Thomas Crevey, the minister at Newhills and episcopalian clerk of the synod, at the behest of the laird of Udney. Crevey had issued a commission to a group of unassumed ministers to submit inquiries to the committee when it met at Aberdeen.²⁴ The group was questioning the nature of the committee's authority along the lines of William's letter to the 1692 assembly:

Whereas, according to the principles of Presbyterian government, there ought to be no higher degree of pastors in the Church than presbyters, and all presbyters are equal in power and authorit[y], we desire to know by what divine or ecclesiastical right these fifty or sixty surviving Presbyterian ministers, not being in actual charge within this kingdom, did take upon them the exercise of the whole ecclesiastical power of this National Church...²⁵

In addition, the office of the ruling elder was brought into question, a reason perhaps behind the ministers' complaint at the presentation by magistrates of suitable men for that office.²⁶ The committee's response was that a discussion of the nature and legitimacy of the church's government was not within its remit, and that there were more pressing issues for it to address—such as the settlement of licensed ministers in the local parishes.²⁷

In a letter to James Wodrow in Glasgow, Langlands' description of the hearing and its aftermath was more personal. Even if the committee could not discuss the merits of presbyterian government, thereby calling into question something which was beyond question, 'yet the members of this Committee, in their private capacity, would be ready to reason with them, upon the queries proposed, when and where they pleased'.²⁸ Despite the offer of individual debate, Crevey and his supporters declined to recognize the committee's authority to judge them or any of

23 Robert Langlands to James Wodrow, 4 July 1694. *The Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, v. 2 (Aberdeen: n.p., 1842), p. 169.

24 *Ibid.*, pp. 166-7.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 163.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 164.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 165.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 170.

their brethren, and appealed to William and Mary as the final arbiters.²⁹ Otherwise, Langlands maintained that the trip was successful, and that the committee was achieving in part what William had been expecting of the assembly. Early on, it had received John Christison at Liff, Invergowrie, and Logie³⁰ into the church's communion, and followed on with five other receptions in the synod of Aberdeen, with three more pending. In terms of summons, two of the 'many' scandalous ministers had been scheduled to appear, with one offering to demit his post. In addition, several of the people who had included themselves in Crevey's appeal had allegedly expressed their regret at 'shut[ting] the door upon their [reception?]'.³¹ Crevey's appeal was quashed by the assembly in 1696, since, despite having been given the opportunity to present their grievances, none of the signatories had appeared.³² Crevey himself, along with two others who did not disown the appeal, were deposed and ordered to remain south of the Forth in 1695, presumably so the General Assembly could monitor them more closely.³³

Disputes over the oaths, as noted above, were based in episcopalian concerns of perjury, particularly in light of a potential restoration of James or his line. This was not necessarily a Jacobite view, just a practical one—after all, Cromwell's commonwealth had collapsed, Charles II had returned, and numerous ministers had been deprived in 1662 for not having received

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 166, 170.

30 In Angus and the Mearns, later in the Presbytery of Dundee. Christison had been minister since 1673, but was deprived in 1690 in favour of the restored Andrew Wedderburn, the parish minister from 1650 until 1664. Wedderburn had never returned, 'on account of his health, and because the people adhered to John Christison.' Christison was received between 17 May and 11 October 1694, and served until his death in 1703. *Fasti*, v. 7, pp. 347-8.

31 *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, v. 2, pp. 169-71. The questionable words in the square brackets reflect gaps in the Spalding Club's printed version of the manuscripts. James Gordon was not deposed and remained in Foveran until 1696, when he demitted the post: *Fasti*, v. 6, p. 194. This may have been due less to a lack of will in the General Assembly and its committee than a lack of power to enforce the committee's rulings, as Gordon Henderson has pointed out (*Religious Life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1937], p. 234). See also T. Clarke, *Scottish Episcopalians*, pp. 70-1. In 1698, the assembly listed Foveran as one of the parishes where it needed to send a minister on temporary placement (BHO, 1698 General Assembly, Act XXVI, date of access 19 August 2010).

32 BHO, 1695-6 General Assembly, Act XXVI, date of access 19 August 2010.

33 T. Clarke, *Scottish Episcopalians*, pp. 126-7. The reason for Crevey's deposition, which Clarke does not record, was alleged incest and adultery. *Fasti*, v. 6, p. 63; David M. Bertie, *Scottish Episcopal Clergy: 1689-2000* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2000), p. 29. Allegations of immoral behaviour, unbecoming of their position, were another tactic presbyterians used in combating episcopalian clergy. Alasdair J. N. Raffe, *Religious Controversy and Scottish Society c. 1679-1714* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2007), pp. 80-8.

Ministers who signed Crevey's protest, were: James Gordon, Banchory-Devenick (the other James Gordon's father); Thomas Robertson, Clatt; Alexander Lunan, Daviot; Alexander Clark, Methlick; Alexander Mill, Udny; George White, Maryculter; John Dunlop, Skene; George Smith, Kinellar; Gilbert Ramsay, Dyce; George Setoun, Upper Machar; Richard Maitland, Nigg; and Thomas Crevey, Newhills. *Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, v. 2, p. 166. Gordon, Robertson, Clark, Mill, White, Setoun and Maitland all took the oaths of allegiance and assurance in 1695. T. Clarke, *Scottish Episcopalians*, pp. 586-8.

episcopal ordination.³⁴ On a less worldly level, episcopal ordination was considered, ipso facto, a legitimation of a minister's authority. For membership of a church without bishops, however, the validity of episcopal ordination was irrelevant. Concerns of legitimate authority, therefore, were not limited to perceptions of the General Assembly by episcopalians, but perceptions by the assembly itself of the clergy trying to gain assumption—or, in fact, of those who accounted themselves presbyterian.

Another case confronted by the committee for the north in 1694 involved a schoolmaster whom a bishop had ordained, and who thus filled a parochial vacancy by preaching despite lack of a call or a licence, Thomas Jaffray. In February 1691, the death of the incumbent Gilbert Marshall had left the second charge of Inverness vacant. That June, the minister at Cromarty, Hugh Anderson, and two ruling elders, George Cuthbert of Castlehill and Duncan Forbes of Culloden, arrived in Elgin to conduct a visitation of the local parishes as part of the commission for the north. No trial was held for Jaffray, but the tribunal informed the local community that he was no longer to conduct ministerial functions since the machinery of the church had not given its approval. Instead, the probationer William Stuart, who had already been preaching at the Inverness meeting house, would fill the charge until the next General Assembly.³⁵ The magistrates decided that the commission's ruling was irrelevant. First, they had found Jaffray's ability satisfactory for their purposes, so there was no vacancy as far as they were concerned. Second, if there had been a vacancy, the magistrates could themselves have found a suitable and legally qualified candidate—which they were confident the assembly would find Jaffray to be. Jaffray himself was not taking an active role in the affair; instead, he said he would simply do as the magistrates directed. Castlehill and Culloden were not pleased at this reaction. A local threat to the authority of the General Assembly, and themselves as its representatives and as 'the t[w]o most considerable heritors of the par[ish]', had to be quashed. Further, they gave a financial reason for the suppression of the magistrates' will: since the second charge was more a rural than a burgh pulpit, and the rural tenants were responsible for supporting the church and the minister, the magistrates really had no

34 Clare Jackson gives the number as 270. *Restoration Scotland* (Woodridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), p. 109. Considerations of a second restoration arose in 1713, with rumours that the pretender might convert from Catholicism. T. Clarke, *Scottish Episcopalians*, pp. 316-8.

35 NRS, CH1/2/1, f. 89, 'Unlicensed preaching of Mr. Jeffrey, schoolmaster at Inverness. 1691'; *Fasti*, v. 6, p. 461.

say in who was to be settled.³⁶

The issue had not reached its conclusion by the next full General Assembly, which was not held until 1694. Under a new commission, for the committee for the north, Jaffray was cited to appear. Upon receiving his citation on 31 July, he answered the libel point by point. In response to the charge of contempt laid upon him due to his failure to appear before the committee, he wrote that he had never previously been called to appear before any church judicial body, and so had not shown contempt or disrespect by not appearing.³⁷ He maintained he was simply following a command of the gospel rather than trying to usurp the authority of the kirk: 'I am conv[e]ned here on no other head; but preaching the word of God and baptizing in his name, according to our Saviour[']s command[,] Go teach all nations[,] Bapti[s]ing them.'³⁸ He also refused to recognize that he had not been following the letter of the law, maintaining that he had been legitimately licensed, having passed examination before the presbyteries of Turriff and Edinburgh, and been ordained by Bishop Colin Falconer of Moray.³⁹

In addition to contempt for church courts, Jaffray was charged in the libel with intrusion on a vacant parish, obstruction of church officials, and baptizing children who had no knowledge of English.⁴⁰ He dismissed the charges of intrusion and obstruction: 'These were called Intruders, who cam[e] charged with authority [f]rom Church or State or both to preach to a people, who never called them and were o[n]ly compelled by law [to] hea[r] them', for example, William Stuart.⁴¹ This inversion of presbyterian use of the term 'intrusion' from before the revolution was not the last implicit rebuke to the General Assembly and the committee which appeared. He later accused the church of valuing its own structures more than the worship of God, though perhaps tempering it by couching it in a scriptural quotation: 'to use [P]eter & John[']s plea In the [chapter] 4 [of] the Acts [verse] 19, whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto yo[u] more than unto God, judge [you]'.⁴² He accepted the charge of baptizing children in a language unfamiliar to them, but

³⁶ NRS, CH1/2/1, f. 89.

³⁷ NRS, CH1/2/2/2, f. 218. In 1691, he had not been summoned to appear. Castlehill and Culloden merely informed him that he was not to preach any longer.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 217.

³⁹ *Ibid.*; Robert Keith, *An Historical Catalogue of the Scottish Bishops, Down to the Year 1688* (Edinburgh; Bell & Bradfute, 1824), p. 154. Falconer was named bishop of Moray in 1680, and died on 11 November 1686, giving us a timeframe for Jaffray's ordination.

⁴⁰ NRS, CH1/2/2/2, f. 218. Jaffray was not a Gaelic speaker.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.* Jaffray, aware of the potential effectiveness of scriptural precedent—and perhaps hoping to demonstrate his knowledge of the Bible—used three other examples from both testaments, including a

admitted doing so only under two conditions: 'in cases of extreme necessity', as where the child was at risk of dying unbaptised, and where the child had someone to vouch for him.⁴³

Ultimately, Jaffray's demand was for official absolution from all charges, since nothing had been proven. He did promise to cease preaching until his submission to William and Mary and until the resolution of his case, but if the committee was still looking to censure him, he was confident enough to seek a hearing before the full General Assembly.⁴⁴ His name does not appear in the *Fasti*, however, nor in David M. Bertie's dictionary of episcopalian clergy in Scotland between the revolution and 2000, so he was never settled in a parish, as far as we can tell.⁴⁵ Legitimacy of the men occupying the parish manse and discipline of clergy and parishioners, in accepting unlicensed clergy, was at stake in cases such as Jaffray's. Schoolmasters had strictly limited remits, and while, as with the SSPCK, they were allowed and often encouraged to catechize their students, they were barred from conducting full religious services and preaching. Occasionally this would lead to problems, especially in parishes with no ordained minister, as we will see with Alexander Buchan.⁴⁶ Even if Jaffray had passed examination before two presbyteries, the fact remained that he was a schoolmaster, and had not been ordained after an official call from any parish. In another case, Alexander Watt, a schoolmaster from Banff who was also described as a preacher, was the subject of a testimonial from the presbytery of Fordyce in 1692. Perhaps having heard of Jaffray's troubles in Inverness the first time around, in 1691, the presbytery wished to avoid any questions over Watt's qualifications: like Jaffray, he had received his ordination from a bishop, George Haliburton of Aberdeen, in 1687. The writers of Watt's testimonial considered him 'free of all Church Censure or [suchlike] scandal known to us and [that] we know nothing that may be a just and necessar[y] Impediment of his [serv]ing [the] office of a preacher'.⁴⁷ Of the four signatories to the testimonial, however, two do not appear in the *Fasti* under the presbytery of Fordyce, though they may have been ruling elders, and the two who do, James Chalmers and possibly George Buchan, are recorded as having been 'deprived in 1695 for non-jurancy'.⁴⁸

quotation from Jesus himself.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., f. 219.

45 Bertie, *Scottish Episcopal Clergy*. On 4 June 1687, he had been appointed master of the grammar school in Elgin, resigning two years later. See William Cramond, ed., *The Records of Elgin: 1234-1800*, v. 2 (Aberdeen: The New Spalding Club, 1908), pp. 407-8.

46 See p. 189 below.

47 NRS, CH 1/2/2/1, f. 34.

48 *Fasti*, v. 6, pp. 196, 283.

As opposed to William's conception of committees for assumption, as he outlined in his letter to the 1692 assembly, the assembly's committees of 1694 were strictly in a presbyterian framework, with 15 southern ministers and five southern elders, plus all the northern ministers and elders who were serving on the church's executive commission, which in 1694 meant ten ministers and seven elders.⁴⁹ Approval of applications for assumption was therefore bound to come from clergy who knew what was required, with a majority from the south: the quorum of 13, for example, was to include seven southern representatives, at least five of whom were to be ministers.⁵⁰ We see, therefore, a desire of the Lowland presbyterians in the church to keep a majority control on who was being assumed in the north. Criteria for assumptions appear to have been kept strictly: in the first two decades after the revolution, for Argyll, Ross, Sutherland, Orkney, Caithness, Shetland and the burgh of Aberdeen, only 22 ministers were assumed. This compares to 50 who were either deposed, deprived, or permitted to continue despite not submitting, some actively defying the presbytery, especially in Easter Ross.⁵¹ Outside these synods, four ministers in the presbytery of Dunblane maintained their loyalty to episcopalianism but still remained in their charges.⁵² Still, even with depositions due to episcopacy or problems of discipline, many parishes were resettled within a couple of years. At such an unstable time, however, such gaps were seen as undesirable.

Other committees developed with smaller areas under their remit. The synod of Argyll, for example, conducted its own visitations in 1694, receiving two ministers on the Isle of Skye.⁵³ The island still had intruding or unrecognized ministers in the first decade of the eighteenth century,

49 BHO, 1694 General Assembly, Act XI, date of access 19 August 2010. See also p. 27 above. The southern ministers were: William Crichton, Falkirk; David Williamson, West Kirk, Edinburgh; Patrick Cuming, Ormiston; Robert Langlands, Barony Kirk, Glasgow; James Osburn, Second Charge, Kilmarnock; William Dunlop, principal of the University of Glasgow; John Anderson, Leslie (Fife); William Boyd, Dalry; George Turnbull, Alloa; Mungo Watson, Gladsmuir; Charles Gordon, Dalmeny; Archibald Riddell, Wemyss; John Monro, Rothesay; Alexander Douglas, Logie Wallach; William Mackie, Portmoak. The elders were David, Lord Ruthven; Robert, Master of Burleigh; James Pringle of Torwoodlie; Adam Drummond of Meggins; and John Home of Ninewells. The northern ministers were: William Mackay, Dornoch; William Stuart, Kiltearn; Hugh Anderson, Cromarty; Alexander Dunbar, Auldearn; Alexander Forbes, Dyke; Thomas Thomson, Forres; James Urquhart, Kinloss; Francis Melvill, Arbuthnott; John Spalding, Dundee; and Samuel Nairne, Errol. The elders were: Robert, viscount of Arbuthnott; Lodovick Grant of that Ilk; James Brodie of that Ilk; Duncan Forbes of Culloden; David Ross of Balnagowan; Adam Gordon of Dalfolly and Forbes [sic] of Echt. NRS, VV CH1/9/6, p. [53], enumerated 23 (individual years' minutes are bound together in one volume); CH1/2/2/1, f. 12.

50 BHO, 1694 General Assembly, Act XI.

51 Compiled from *Fasti*.

52 *Fasti*, v. 4, pp. 335-54.

53 *Ibid.*, v. 7, pp. 166, 168.

however, including one who had been refused assumption by the synod in 1692.⁵⁴ In 1699, the visitation system developed to the point that smaller committees were assigned smaller regions, ostensibly to make their work more effective. One was given coverage for Angus and the Mearns, Aberdeen, Moray, and Ross, and another for Caithness, Orkney and Shetland—an understandable assignment, given the need for sea travel. It was this latter committee which received a petition for assumption from six ministers in Shetland, four of whom were accepted ‘because of the lack of ministers’.⁵⁵ Even the presbytery of Shetland maintained that one of the rejections was ‘unjust’, however, the minister having served well in his parish for 36 years. It continued to support him with a pension after his deposition.⁵⁶

III. MISSIONS TO THE NORTH

The slow rate of assumptions meant another path had to be taken to support the church’s establishment in the north, a solution which was also raised in 1690 in response to a petition from a group of northern ‘Gentlemen’ asking for ministers and probationers to be sent to supply vacant parishes in their regions, likely Aberdeenshire and Moray. Four ministers and four probationers were sent on mission for between ten and 12 weeks.⁵⁷ As the more experienced in presbyterian government, the visitors would also have a vote in the presbyteries they would help to establish. Most importantly, if the probationers received calls from parishes while they were in the north, they were to be urged to accept and ‘exhorted to endeavour the self den[i]al that is requisite in the case’.⁵⁸ While no hint is offered that this was meant to be a long-term solution, the missions must

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

⁵⁵ This was the petition of Hugh Leigh, assumed minister at Bressay. *Ibid.*, pp. 280, 283, 291, 309, 314 and 317.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

⁵⁷ NRS, CH1/1/12, p. 45. The ministers were Alexander Glass (Auchtermuchty, presbytery of Cupar), William Ker (Monkland, presbytery of Hamilton), James Fraser of Brea (Culross, presbytery of Dunfermline) and Alexander Forbes (Stewarton, presbytery of Irvine). Fraser was assigned to Forres and Forbes to Dyke, Forbes later receiving a call to that parish. The probationers were John Fraser of Pitcalzean, Hugh Anderson, David Fleckfield and Alexander Shields. Shields, a former Cameronian preacher, had just been assumed into the kirk, and would later be sent with the second expedition to Darién. John Fraser would become minister of Glencorse, presbytery of Dalkeith, in 1691, then minister of Aness, presbytery of Dingwall, in 1695. In the latter capacity, he would attend the assembly’s Committee for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge in 1708. Anderson would serve at Rosemarkie, presbytery of Chanonry, from 1694, and Fleckfield at Balfron, presbytery of Dumbarton, from 1691. *Fasti*, v. 1, p. 322; v. 6, p. 383, and v. 7, p. 22; v. 3, p. 329; and v. 5, p. 239.

⁵⁸ NRS, CH1/1/12, p. 45.

have been successful, since three more petitions were received at the 1692 assembly, one each from the burghs of Aberdeen and Montrose, and one from the heritors and elders within the synod of Moray. The committee for bills responded by drawing up a list of eligible candidates to be sent on mission to the northern areas, and was asked by the assembly to arrange a rota of ministers for that purpose.⁵⁹ Despite the tension surrounding the end of the assembly, the mission was at least started, Robert Langlands being one of the ministers sent north.⁶⁰ This was, then, the beginning of a sustained effort to fill vacancies on a temporary basis, in the hopes that some of the ministers or probationers sent on mission would also receive parochial calls, the probationers then being promoted to full ministers. The new petitions meant that the 1690 missions must have been successful, as demonstrated also by the settlement of three of the four probationers in Highland parishes, Alexander Shields becoming chaplain of the Cameronian regiment in 1691. The 1692 mission must have been similarly successful in that it was undertaken as ordered, since in the assignment for the mission in 1694, the assembly included no names from the previous one.⁶¹ Calls for the ministers and probationers were not forthcoming in 1692, however.

The missions rapidly expanded in size and scope. From the seven ministers assigned in 1692, the number rose to 16 in 1694, with the area of coverage expanding to Ross, Sutherland, Caithness, Angus and the Mearns, and Perthshire.⁶² This allocation was continued in 1695-6, and, to make the missions more efficient, particular Lowland presbyteries were assigned to supply the vacancies in particular northern synods and presbyteries. In 1697, a new element was introduced: the assembly began penalizing ministers and probationers who defied instructions to go to northern parishes. The committee for overtures found that five ministers who had not gone on their assigned missions could be excused, but the assembly decided that their missions had to be fulfilled by the ministers themselves or others within their presbyteries.⁶³ The committee for overtures did declare that the excuses of three ministers were unacceptable, two of whom had left their northern posts early and a third, Joseph Drew of New Monkland, in the presbytery of

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 115.

⁶⁰ BHO, 1694 General Assembly, Act XIX, date of access 19 August 2010; NRS, VV CH1/9/6, p. [53], numerated 23.

⁶¹ NRS, CH1/1/12, p. 121, for the names from 1692. See BHO, 1694 General Assembly, Act XIV, date of access 19 August 2010, for the names from that year.

⁶² BHO, 1694 General Assembly, Act XIV.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 1697 General Assembly, Act VI, date of access 19 August 2010.

Hamilton, who had not gone at all. The first two were ordered to return to the north to finish their missions, and Drew to serve for four months rather than the three originally assigned, which was to be completed by 1 August.⁶⁴ This provision was not fulfilled, since Drew sent in another petition in 1698, when his excuse was finally accepted by the assembly, though under the usual conditions that he serve his time or that the presbytery send someone else in his stead.⁶⁵

Few settlements were resulting from the missions, however, forcing the assembly in 1698 to call for 12 permanent transportations, giving northern presbyteries the right to issue calls to southern ministers should the parishes fail to do so.⁶⁶ The act included the caveat that the presbyteries proceed with caution when calling ministers from royal burghs, universities and 'actual residences of noblemen', meaning private chaplains, presumably since these charges had higher priority than the distant north, even if the church's supremacy there was vulnerable to episcopalian sentiment or the Catholic mission. The ministers sending out the calls were asked to consult with the synods of their target candidates to ensure a light touch. In addressing the Lowlands, however, emphasis was placed upon the 'necessitous conditions' of the north, the assembly craving southerners' understanding not to be stingy when it came to clerical provision throughout the country, but the removal of clergy from the south was generating considerable tension within the church.⁶⁷

At the 1690 assembly, the committee of overtures requested that missionary probationers who were called to northern parishes accept, possibly involving a move to a parish far from the centre of ecclesiastical authority, which could be interpreted as a step down for an ambitious future minister.⁶⁸ Even schoolmasters would express an unwillingness to work in the more geographically remote regions of the country, and it would be the job of the General Assembly and its commission to use both carrot and stick to remind men (and, possibly, their families) of the importance of their services to the church and the nation.⁶⁹ Another example is provided in the same list of

64 Ibid. The date of the act was 7 January 1697.

65 Ibid., 1698 General Assembly, Act VII, date of access 19 August 2010.

66 Ibid., Act VIII.

67 Ibid.

68 See p. 34 above.

69 Daniel Cameron, the first schoolmaster at the Societies for Reformation of Manners school in Abertarff, expressed hesitation before going to teach there in 1703. See p. 100, and Armet, ed., *Extracts, 1689-1701*, p. 290. Alexander Buchan, the catechist on St Kilda who was ordained minister in 1710, repeatedly threatened to leave, even though he maintained he did not want to, if he did not get a sufficient stipend. He died there in 1730. *Fasts*, v. 7, p. 193.

recommendations, but this time directed at presbyteries where ‘actua[l] Ministers’ issued with a call were currently settled, that ‘the process be readily managed, and such a self-denying condescendence exercised, as may make the work eas[y] and prevent appeals’.⁷⁰ In other words, if a call from the north was issued to a minister already serving in a parish, the same parish was to agree to the transportation for the greater good of the church. From the beginning, therefore, the committee for overtures foresaw that problems could arise, and urged the presbyteries to resolve them quickly.

IV. WEAKNESS IN THE LOWLANDS

For all of the problems in settlement in the north, however, the Lowlands were not in such a secure state as even the assembly made them out to be. By 1704, the assembly was able to state that ‘through the mercy and goodness of God, most of the Lowland Presbyteries be-South Tay are competently planted’,⁷¹ but several assemblies over the previous decade had indicated that the situation in some parts of the south was tenuous. The southeast was becoming a hub for deposed episcopalians in the early 1690s, despite the deprivations by the privy council in 1689.⁷² Problems also existed in the southwest, with a lingering covenanting presence still lending itself to schismatic tendencies. Efforts at reclamation were made in 1694, but by 1704 ministers like John Hepburn and John M’Millan were being officially deposed.⁷³ Establishment ministers, on the other hand, insisted that although the word of the covenants had not been renewed, they were still following the spirit.⁷⁴ The north, therefore, was not alone in its vulnerability to a ministry outside the established church. The General Assembly recognized this, and gave periodic exemptions from transportation to certain southern presbyteries. As noted above, it demonstrated leniency towards some ministers who had not obeyed an order to go on mission to the north. An assigned minister’s own presbytery would quite often side with him in disputes, not wishing to lose his services. Even so, the presbytery would still be required to send someone on a mission, if not the appointee

⁷⁰ NRS, CH1/1/12, p. 45.

⁷¹ BHO, 1704 General Assembly, Act XIII, date of access 19 August 2010.

⁷² T. Clarke, *Scottish Episcopalians*, p. 68.

⁷³ BHO, 1694 General Assembly, Act XI, and 1704 General Assembly, Act XVIII, date of access 19 August 2010.

⁷⁴ Stephen, ‘Defending the Revolution’, p. 27.

himself.⁷⁵ At the 1695-6 assembly, the presbytery of Irvine was exempted from permanent transportations, probably due to the loss of two ministers in 1692, though not from sending a minister on quarterly supply.⁷⁶ The assembly enlisted the help of the presbyteries of Middlebie and Penpont for the presbytery of Dumfries, ‘because of the particular circumstances they [Dumfries] are in’: the three presbyteries were only obligated to send two ministers between them.⁷⁷ The ‘particular circumstances’ could well have related to lingering covenanter sentiment in Dumfries, as Hepburn was the minister at Urr there, and was notorious for defying the presbytery and the assembly. The assembly also took advantage of what progress in filling northern vacancies it was able to make. In 1698, it allowed a reduction in the number of temporary transportations it was calling for, from 18 to 15, and hence exemptions for the synods of Dumfries and Galloway, and for the presbyteries of Stirling and Dunblane.⁷⁸

In addition to the provision of ministers for temporary missions, southern presbyteries also had to assume responsibility for filling their own vacant pulpits while the ministers were away.⁷⁹ This proved a double pressure for the presbyteries, making any exemption on offer a double relief. Exemptions from transportation would also be granted to parishes whose ministers had just been transported unless the parish agreed ‘and unless he [the new minister] have unsupportable grievances therein’.⁸⁰ In general, however, the tendency was to require parishes and presbyteries whose ministers had received calls from northern parishes to let them go. If a presbytery refused the call, it would automatically be passed up the church structure until the General Assembly or its commission offered a ruling—only a refusal from the highest church court would have an effect.⁸¹ Disputed transportations were the main administrative issue the 1692 assembly discussed at the expense of episcopalian comprehension, contributing to the frustration of the king and the commissioner. The assembly approved the move of George Meldrum from Kilwinning and Dalgarnen, presbytery of Irvine, to the post of professor of divinity at the University of Edinburgh.

75 See p. 35 above.

76 See p. 38. BHO, 1695-6 General Assembly, Act XII, date of access 19 August 2010.

77 BHO, 1695-6 General Assembly, Act XII.

78 *Ibid.*, 1698 General Assembly, Act VIII, date of access 19 August 2010. The 15 ministers were to be sent every four months, making a total of 45 missions until the assembly of 1699.

79 *Ibid.*, 1697 General Assembly, Act XIV, date of access 19 August 2010. The pressure was lessened somewhat by the requirement that each pulpit be filled only two Sundays out of every three, rather than every week.

80 *Ibid.*, 1695-6 General Assembly, Act XII, date of access 19 August 2010.

81 *Ibid.* and 1697 General Assembly, Act XVI.

The synod of Glasgow and Ayr was not amenable to the transfer, however, and issued its own call to Meldrum for the same position at the University of Glasgow. The synod had already lost Alexander Forbes from Stewarton, in the same presbytery, to Forres, in the synod of Moray, but had agreed to that transportation in a rare show of magnanimity, exactly the kind of ‘self-denying condescendence’ the committee for overtures had had in mind in 1690.⁸² Its manoeuvre to retain Meldrum in its territory, however, failed, and Meldrum did move to Edinburgh.

IV. PROBATIONERS’ MISSIONS

Moving ministers from one parish to another was not an ideal solution, and the assembly recognized this. As early as 1694, it urged parishes which needed new ministers that ‘before they design the calling of any minister already fixed in another congregation, they do first seriously essay and follow other means of providing themselves’.⁸³ It was also worried that the process of appeals would not only engender bitterness between different parishes, presbyteries or synods—bitterness the kirk could ill afford—but also tie up the bureaucratic machinery. Ministers or church courts had the right to appeal decisions, but not gratuitously.⁸⁴ The assembly’s plea for calm, however, did not apparently have much effect, or at least not for long. In 1704, ‘to prevent rabbling of messengers by the people, and horrid profanation of the Lord’s Day, which frequently falls out in cases of transportations’, it ruled that ministers themselves were to announce their own impending transportations.⁸⁵ If the parishioners wished to appeal, they would then have to appear before the presbytery to present their disagreement in a civil manner. If, however, the presbytery concerned felt that there was no risk of violence or tension, it would be able to proceed in the usual way, with its officers announcing the transportations.⁸⁶

A solution to this problem was calls to probationers, who would be less of a loss to the sending parish than an ordained, serving minister. The time and resources devoted to training probationers, however, would still be lost, as the time of their missions would frequently be longer,

⁸² NRS, CH1/1/12, p. 45.

⁸³ BHO, 1694 General Assembly, Act VI, date of access 19 August 2010.

⁸⁴ ‘...if any be found unnecessarily to pursue appeals and complaints they shall be severely censured therefor[e].’ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 1704 General Assembly, Act VII, date of access 19 August 2010.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

often up to a year.⁸⁷ Objections to probationers being sent north were rarer than for ministers, but not unknown. In 1698, when the assembly ordered 20 probationers to be sent to northern parishes, four objected to their assignments, though the reasons were not given. Of the four, only one was sent at all, though his assigned location was changed from Ross, Sutherland and Caithness, to the synod of Moray.⁸⁸ Though the assembly addressed the issue fewer times than it did recalcitrant ministers, discipline for probationers who did not obey their orders to go on mission was occasionally exercised. In 1699, despite the voiced objections from the previous year, the assembly still found it necessary to adopt sanctions for probationers who had not gone north or had returned early from their yearlong assignments, requiring them to fulfil their obligations. Parishes could lose a probationer who failed to complete his mission or refused to go, and the probationers themselves could lose their licences until the following General Assembly.⁸⁹

The rigid qualifications which the assembly put in place for its ministers and probationers contributed to a limited pool not only eligible, but capable, of serving in the north. In the first place, throughout Scotland, the church had to contend with 'the many irregularities committed by vagrant unfixed ministers'.⁹⁰ The probationers would probably encounter these preachers while travelling through their assigned presbyteries. Simple knowledge, therefore, was a crucial qualifying point for probationers, knowledge not just in Biblical and ancient languages, for example, but also in contemporary controversies, so they could convincingly debate with their adversaries.⁹¹ Another preference, though not necessarily a requirement, was for northern-born probationers to be sent with the quarterly allotment of ministers. This may have been due to the familiarity with the region such probationers were bound to have, and a greater likelihood that they would accept calls in northern parishes because they knew the region better than probationers from the south.⁹²

87 Ibid., 1699 General Assembly Act XI, date of access 19 August 2010.

88 Ibid., 1698 General Assembly, Acts VIII and XIX, date of access 19 August 2010; NRS, VV CH1/9/6, p. [157]. The probationer who was sent, the Gaelic-speaking Thomas Fraser, had not been appointed to go north for the first time. In 1696, he was recorded as having been 'formerly appointed'. See BHO, 1695-6 General Assembly, Act XIV, date of access 19 August 2010.

89 BHO, 1699 General Assembly, Act XI, date of access 19 August 2010.

90 Ibid., 1695-6 General Assembly, Act XXIII, date of access 19 August 2010.

91 Ibid., Act XXII. Necessary knowledge for a presbyterian probationer was not merely Biblical (e. g., ancient Greek and Hebrew), but also controversial, 'not only in the great controversies of religion, but also in the controversies concerning the government and discipline of the Church.'

92 See p. 34 above.

V. EDUCATION AND BURSARIES FOR GAELIC SPEAKERS

A qualification which became more important over time was knowledge of Gaelic. With ministers, the first specific mention of a Gaelic-speaker being sent in supply was in 1694, with Duncan Campbell at Roseneath, in the presbytery of Dumbarton.⁹³ That same year, an act was passed for the first time banning the settlement of Gaelic-speaking ministers and probationers in Lowland parishes unless they had first served in a Highland parish and had documentation of this from the relevant Highland presbytery.⁹⁴ In terms of probationers, the concern first arose in 1696, with regard to ‘the many vacant churches, and great desolations that are in the bounds of Ross, Sutherland, and Caithness’.⁹⁵ In addition to Robert Duncanson, minister of the first charge at Campbeltown (the Gaelic congregation), the assembly was to send the probationers Thomas and Hector Fraser and Hugh Duff, Duff to undergo his examinations in the presbytery of Ross and so be ordained.⁹⁶ These, along with any other probationers who could go with them, were to travel from the synod of Argyll. In 1699, the assembly began requesting synods and presbyteries to list any Gaelic-speaking probationers they had within their territories to facilitate provision in Gaelic-speaking parishes, though this relied on the honesty of the subordinate courts to comply.⁹⁷ Compliance must have been incomplete, since four years later the assembly had to give its commission authority ‘to take special care to find out and send thither [to the north] probationers having the Irish language, when called for.’⁹⁸

Supply of Gaelic-speaking probationers remained a problem. The assembly was doing its best to secure the present of the presbyterian ministry through transportations, balancing the interests of the church as a whole with those of the local parishes and presbyteries, but just as complex and even more important was its future. Education, from schools to universities, was the

93 BHO, 1694 General Assembly, Act XIV, date of access 19 August 2010.

94 Ibid., Act XXI. The ban on Lowland settlements of Gaelic speakers was reiterated several times, as at the 1699 assembly, Act IX, date of access 19 August 2010.

95 Ibid., 1695-6 General Assembly, Act XIV, date of access 19 August 2010.

96 Hector Fraser, like Thomas, had been appointed to go before. No objection is recorded from Hector to his assigned parish, but no further information appears for either of them in the *Fasti*. Duff had to wait another year to be examined, at the presbytery of Dalkeith. In December 1698, he was ordained for Fearn, in the presbytery of Ross. *Fasti*, v. 7, p. 56, and NRS, VV CH1/9/6, p. 122. For Duncanson, see *Fasti*, v. 5, p. 49, and Duncan C. Mactavish, ed., *Minutes of the Synod of Argyll: 1639-1651* (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1943), p. vii.

97 BHO, 1699 General Assembly, Act XVI, date of access 19 August 2010.

98 Ibid., 1703 General Assembly, Act IX, date of access 19 August 2010.

key, and the synod of Argyll was the Gaelic territory where it was comparatively thriving throughout the seventeenth century.⁹⁹ Where bishopric rents or vacant stipends were used to finance schools, synodal and presbyterial bursaries were solicited for university education. The assembly urged presbyteries in 1694 ‘to keep and maintain bursars of theology, conform to the ancient practice and the acts of former General Assemblies made thereanent.’¹⁰⁰ In 1699, northern and Highland presbyteries were asked to seek Gaelic-speaking students to benefit from their bursaries, but eventually the presbyterial bursaries were proving insufficient. In 1701, the assembly asked the synods to step in and provide further support to prevent worthy students from being deprived of the opportunity to study at university.¹⁰¹

By 1699, the ‘Highlands’ had assumed more prominence in the documentation of the assembly. The word had appeared before, but mostly in the context of the printing of Gaelic reformed texts. Now what had previously been described as the ‘north’ was being divided into a Highland region and a non-Highland region.¹⁰² The Catholic mission was coming under greater discussion as a target of the assembly, as much as episcopalian clergy, and presbyteries with large Gaelic-speaking populations were urged to seek talented candidates for university bursaries, and indeed to offer their own bursaries. In 1699, the names of Gaelic-speaking divinity students were to be kept on a separate list when submitted to the assembly, a method developed in 1697 to keep track of prospective clergy and their progress at university, especially if they were bursars.¹⁰³

Even with the addition of synodal bursaries in 1701, the available funds were not enough to support students or encourage them in their studies. The main problem with the Highland presbyteries was that they were too poor to offer bursaries even to their own students. Responding to a General Assembly committee in 1704, they wrote, ‘It was thought unseasonable to pres[s] the same at this time, in reg[a]rd of the great Scarcity of money, so that any Contributions that may be made at this time would amount But to a very small amount’.¹⁰⁴ The synod of Glasgow and Ayr had taken matters into its own hands in 1703, offering its presbyterial bursaries to Highland students. No presbytery within its bounds—save the presbytery of Dumbarton, which the synod

⁹⁹ Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, p. 117.

¹⁰⁰ BHO, 1694 General Assembly, Act XVII, date of access 19 August 2010.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 1701 General Assembly, Act VIII, date of access 19 August 2010.

¹⁰² A better indicator is possibly the use in the acts of the word ‘Lowlands’, which was rare before 1703.

¹⁰³ BHO, 1697 General Assembly, Act III, and the 1699 assembly, Act XVI, date of access 19 August 2010.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

considered in the Highlands—was to present bursars for the next two years. In addition, ministers in the synod were to give at least 1/200 of their stipends to establishing Highland schools.¹⁰⁵ The assembly duly took its cue, and in 1704 passed an act calling for a ‘voluntary contribution’ in each presbytery for schools in the Highlands.¹⁰⁶ It also took up the dedication of Lowland bursaries, of which one-quarter of the value was to go to Gaelic-speaking students for Highland parishes—mostly outside of Argyll, due to that synod’s favoured status by virtue of its access to the rents of the old diocese.¹⁰⁷ The assembly did hold that most of the Lowland parishes were settled with presbyterians, but if transportations of clergy and probationers were a contentious issue, so the willingness of Lowland presbyteries to give money for the benefit of Highland parishes must have been mixed.¹⁰⁸ Sure enough, later assemblies registered their disappointment at the lax pace the presbyteries and synods were sending in their contributions.¹⁰⁹ This ‘deficiency’ did not stop the assembly from raising the level dedicated to Gaelic-speaking students to one-half of all the bursaries in Scotland. As an illustration of the need for funds to be sent in, the plight of Gaelic-speaking divinity students at Edinburgh was appended to this increase, ‘that some of the said students do want bursaries, and others of them who have recommendations in their favour have been greatly disappointed, and much discouraged in the prosecution of their studies’.¹¹⁰

Securing bursaries for Gaelic-speaking students was not the only problem the church had. Efforts since 1704 to raise charitable contributions for schools in the Highlands had not been successful, and the formation of a Committee for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge in 1707 arose partially out of a desire to ascertain how far the work had gone.¹¹¹ The 1707 assembly also tried to gauge the willingness of individuals to enter local societies for the support of charity schools, similar to the structure of England’s SPCK.¹¹² By the next assembly, however, the momentum for these societies was already behind an established, central fund to support

105 NRS, CH1/2/24/1/1.

106 BHO, 1704 General Assembly, Act XIV, date of access 19 August 2010.

107 *Ibid.*, Act XIII.

108 *Ibid.*

109 *Ibid.*, 1706 General Assembly, Act XIII, and 1709 assembly, Act XIV, date of access 19 August 2010. In the latter act, the assembly required the presbyteries to send in the arrears of their donations, and the commission ‘to think upon and prepare some overtures for the right application and management of the foresaid bursaries for the future’.

110 *Ibid.*, 1710 General Assembly, Act X, date of access 19 August 2010.

111 *Ibid.*, 1704 General Assembly, Act XIV, and 1707 General Assembly, Act XIV, date of access 19 August 2010.

112 *Ibid.*, 1707 General Assembly, Act V.

supplementary education in the Highlands.

VI. CONCLUSION

Much of the concern of the Church of Scotland following the re-establishment of presbyterianism in 1690 was the weakness of its authority, especially in terms of numbers. The minority of presbyterian ministers in the church raised doubts over the legitimacy of the General Assembly as the highest court, and inspired petitions by episcopalians intent on being recognized as legally settled and on representation within the assembly. Presbyterians feared that recognition would lead to their being subsumed, and their new establishment undermined, by an episcopalian majority. Aggressive disenfranchisement, such as that exercised by the earl of Crawford in 1689, soon gave way to less coercive measures, such as the committees for the north and south, with the power to assume former episcopalians into the Church of Scotland. While the programme of assumption had some success, defiance or simple ignorance (i.e. ignoring) of presbyterian authority on the part of episcopalians led to missions as another means of settling establishment ministers in the north of Scotland. The missions raised another set of problems, however, since the missionaries mainly came from Lowland parishes whose own settlements were not secure and which objected to sending their ministers north even on a temporary basis, leading to disputes within the General Assembly and forcing it to take disciplinary measures to ensure the missions would be fulfilled.

Language came to assume a larger role in the settlement of ministers in the Highlands, after an ambivalent campaign to distribute Gaelic-language Bibles.¹¹³ A ban on settling Gaelic-speaking ministers and probationers in Lowland parishes was instituted, and the assembly began to focus more on education to provide a long-term solution to the problems of settlement. The synod of Argyll was the main territory of its support for parochial schools, the synod's network having developed over the course of the seventeenth century, but names of potential divinity bursars were solicited from each synod with Gaelic parishes. Poverty in the Highland parishes forced Lowland synods and presbyteries to cover the slack in bursaries, but slowness of contributions remained a

¹¹³ Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, pp. 18-25; Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, pp. 42-8; Meek, 'The Gaelic Bible', pp. 13-4.

problem. At the same time, the General Assembly appointed a standing committee to address issues in the Highlands and the north, dealing with settlements and education. By the time of its re-appointment in 1707, it was assigned to investigate donations for Highland bursaries from 1704 and discuss the establishment of local charitable societies to support supplemental schools in northern parishes. By now known as the Committee for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, it was the first to recommend a scheme for itinerant catechists throughout the Highlands.

The church's efforts after the revolution consist if anything of an attempt at a structural completion of the Reformation. Presbyterian writers avoided openly adhering to the word of the covenants, but they maintained that the spirit of the covenant still existed within the established church.¹¹⁴ Spiritual reformation, reflected by the acceptance of the church's structure throughout the country and by all clergy, was necessary to fulfil the providential salvation Scotland had received by James VII's removal as king. Expression of loyalty to one's church, however, meant little if it was not accompanied by an internal moral reformation. For several years after the revolution, the thinking seems to have been that the re-establishment of a presbyterian church would be sufficient to achieve such a reformation,¹¹⁵ but a failure perceived by influential presbyterians in Edinburgh led to a new effort to secure it, to assist the establishments both in church and, even more, in state to re-create the covenanted nation Scotland was meant to be. We now turn to the Societies for Reformation of Manners, to assess their support by both elements of the establishment and to trace their involvement in charitable provision in Scotland.

114 Stephen, 'Defending the Revolution', p. 27.

115 Raffe, *Religious Controversy*, p. 99.

‘a societie designedly entered into in opposition to the Kingdom of Darkness’:

The Societies for Reformation of Manners

In 1699, disillusionment had set in among Scottish presbyterians. Nearly a decade after the re-establishment of presbyterian government in the Church of Scotland, the spiritual state of the country was still unsettled. Catholicism had not been removed and, despite the church’s best efforts since 1690, episcopalianism was still thriving in significant parts of the country, with ministers often protected by sympathetic heritors, but just as much with the failure of the church to present presbyterian candidates for the parishes.¹ Schism threatened in the southwest, with the refusal to renew the covenants of the 1630s and 1640s alienating radical presbyterians such as the Cameronians.² Crops had failed in four out of the previous nine years, causing devastating famines, and while enthusiasm was still high for the colonization project at Darién, negative reports had started to come back about the prospects for Scotland’s trading entrepôt at the near meeting point of the Atlantic and the Pacific.³ On top of natural disaster and short-term economic tragedy—though the exact repercussions of the business of the Company of Scotland are under seemingly perpetual debate⁴—urban Scotland in particular was at constant risk of deadly fires, especially the densely populated capital.

The fragile state of the country was seen by many through the lens of providence, the idea of divine reward or punishment for individual or, in this case, national conduct. Almost universally, the view of the 1690s was as a punitive decade, but the question was what lay behind the punishment. Jacobites saw the rejection of the rightful king at its roots, but others saw an incomplete reformation, despite the laws which had been enacted since 1690 to stem immorality, blasphemy and vice, and to demonstrate Scotland’s right to divine favour.⁵ The country’s failure to

1 Kirkwood MSS 3.5.1, pp. [4]; T. Clarke, *Scottish Episcopalians*, pp. 66-72.

2 Stephen, ‘Defending the Revolution’, p. 27; Raffe, *Religious Controversy*, p. 161.

3 Watt, *Price of Scotland*, p. 160.

4 T.M. Devine, ‘Darien: a Scottish disaster revisited’, 2011 Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun lecture, 15 September 2011.

5 For providential fears in Edinburgh at the time, see Graham, *Blasphemies of Thomas Aikenhead*, pp. 54-9.

live up to its promise called for a new response, support for legal and ecclesiastical institutions to guarantee the security of the new establishment. Inspiration came from England for the Societies for Reformation of Manners, a network of organizations which rapidly spread throughout Edinburgh and to other cities to ensure enforcement of immorality laws and popular piety.

Scottish precedents for the societies were cited as well, especially the praying societies under the Reformation, groups of lay individuals who would gather in private houses for mutual religious instruction and encouragement in a time when they felt the established episcopalian church was on the wrong path. Suspicion of such private groups was aimed again at the reformation societies, with the legacy of extramural conventicles leaving traces of threats to the establishment in the minds of some.⁶ Questions arose among ministers almost immediately over the nature of the societies as reflected in their founding documents, and the reformers often found it necessary to disclaim any pretensions to ecclesiastical authority to calm fears over a new form of conventicle.⁷ They did not simply replicate the activities of praying societies, however, extending their reach into lobbying efforts particularly of the Edinburgh town council, but also accompanying civil officers on patrols of city streets to witness and report on occurrences of immorality or 'vicious' behaviour. Despite disclamations by the reformers of any form of civil authority, these patrols contributed to the unpopularity of the societies, and the repeated proclamations and laws produced by parliament and the council did not reflect rooted support for their idea of reformation. By 1710, the only records for Edinburgh societies which still exist had stopped. At least one of the two was still meeting, but the end of their minutes reflect a failure in operations. Their success was by no means stellar, but it is likely that even at the beginning of their work, as would become evident in England, society at large had already passed the reformers by.⁸

The feeling applied in England, as well. See Craig Rose, 'Providence, Protestant Union and Godly Reformation in the 1690s', in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Sixth Series*, v. III (London: RHS, 1993), pp. 152, 155. Thanks to Dr Karin Bowie for this reference.

6 Wod Fol LI ff. 21-4, 'Reasons [against] the erecting of societ[ie]s for reformation of manner[s]', [1701?]. Thanks to Dr Alasdair Raffe for this reference.

7 NLS, MS 1954, p. 3 (6 January 1700).

8 T.C. Curtis, and W.A. Speck, 'The Societies for the Reformation of Manners: A Case Study in the Theory and Practice of Moral Reform', in *Literature and History*, 3 (March 1976), p. 59.

I. ORIGINS

At around 10:30 p.m. on Saturday, 3 February 1700, a fire broke out which devastated the centre of Edinburgh. No lives were lost, but the damages in terms of property were significant. The earl of Marchmont, the earl of Melville, and Sir Robert Berwick, lord president of the court of session, were all burnt out of their homes, as well as others of the 'good & great', up to between 300 and 400 families.⁹ The fire continued to burn throughout the next day 'so as there was no sermon or publi[c] worship in [the] city.'¹⁰ Duncan Forbes of Culloden wrote to his brother in Inverness that the fire stopped around 11:00 on Sunday the fourth, though 'the Exchange, [v]aults, and coa[l] cellars under the Parliament Close, are still bur[n]ing'.¹¹ He cites Sir John Cochran and an unidentified Jordanhill that the value of the properties lost in the fire was more than that of the entire city of Glasgow.¹² The devastation resulted in turmoil in Edinburgh, the people having 'neither heart nor hand left among them for saving from the f[i]re, nor a drop of water in the Cister[n]s: twenty thousand hands flitting the[i]r trash they know not where, & hardly 20 at work.'¹³ Additionally, the first office of the Bank of Scotland was destroyed.¹⁴

The fire was a close shave for Lord Crossrig, the former David Home, who was nearly caught with his family in a close packed with people desperate to escape. It was only through the effort of Alexander Maitland, the earl of Lauderdale's brother, that he was rescued.¹⁵ Crossrig's ability to escape the blaze on his own was hampered by the amputation of his leg 19 years before.¹⁶ The extent of his losses are best enumerated by himself:

I lost all my [clothes], in [...] old furniture, two boxes [with] books, & a great many papers, the whole original rights, wadset & Appr[i]sing of Crossrig [with the] grounds thereof[,] the [Ann?] Cokeburn[']s papers [with] my [account] & Instructions thereof[,] My [Comptbooks?], Diaries & very many Manuscripts of Mine in Divinity & others[,] a

9 David Home of Crossrig, *Domestic Details: April 28, 1697-January 29, 1707* (Edinburgh: Stevenson, 1843) pp. xxiv-xxv. The spelling of Home's surname varies, but to eliminate confusion, this version will be used when necessary.

10 Crossrig's diaries, manuscript volumes held at the library of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh. The relevant volume is numbered 8 on the first page and starts on 17 February 1700, with an account of the fire. The previous seven volumes were probably lost in this very fire.

11 Duncan Forbes the elder of Culloden, cited in Home of Crossrig, *Domestic Details*, p. xxvi.

12 *Ibid.*, p. xxv. Jordanhill was possibly the current laird of Jordanhill, head of the Crawford family. In 1691, this was Laurence Crawford. *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Glasgow, A.D. 1691-1717* (Glasgow: Scottish Burgh Records Society, 1908), p. 1.

13 Home of Crossrig, *Domestic Details*, p. xxv.

14 Saville, *Bank of Scotland*, p. 31.

15 RCP, Crossrig's diaries, v. 8, 17 February 1700.

16 Home of Crossrig, *Domestic Details*, p. 29.

great many papers and [accounts, with] [K]immerghame & many of his & Blackader[']s papers and others. It is Computed that 200. families are laid desolate.¹⁷

The loss of the documentation mattered to more people than just Crossrig himself. Due to his siblings' premature deaths, he had guardianship of Ann and John Cokeburn, and was representative of his nephews George Home of Kimmerghame and Sir John Home of Blackadder.¹⁸ A petition to parliament in October 1700, asking to have his rights preserved and approximate copies of the destroyed documents made and accepted as legally binding originals, was granted.¹⁹

Fire was one of the most serious dangers in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Scotland, especially in the cities. Edinburgh was a densely populated place, with towering tenements over the High Street, and businesses and trades which relied on fires often located at street level.²⁰ As dangerous as they were physically, however, fires were equally threatening by what they signified to many people: either divine judgement for sin, or an attempt by Satan to scare devout Christians into abandoning the faith and efforts to preserve it. Crossrig ascribed both meanings to the blaze of February 1700. Earlier that same evening, he and some friends had signed a document establishing the first Scottish Society for the Reformation of Manners, based on an English network of societies he had read about the previous October. Lamenting the loss of religious fervour on the part of presbyterians once the 'da[y]s of suffering' before the Williamite Revolution were over, Crossrig decided to develop similar societies in Scotland. 'This is the thing I remark as notable', he wrote, reflecting on the conflagration,

which presently was a rebuke to some of us for some fault in our solemn enga[g]ement there, and probably Satan blew that fire to witness his indignation at a societ[y] designedly entered into in opposition to the Kingdom of Darkness, and in hopes that such an occurrence should dash our societ[y] in its infancy, and discourage us to proceed therein.²¹

The society, however, was not discouraged, and there was a rapid proliferation of such groups within the city of Edinburgh over the next few years.²²

¹⁷ RCP, Crossrig's diaries, v. 8, 17 February 1700.

¹⁸ Blackadder's father, John, died in January 1675, making his son an orphan. Robert Home of Kimmerghame died in February 1678, and Isabell and Patrick Cokeburn of Borthwick both died in October 1682. Home of Crossrig, *Domestic Details*, pp. 19, 22, 45.

¹⁹ Home of Crossrig, *Domestic Details*, p. 72. For the text of the relevant act, see *ibid.*, pp. 89-126, or RPS, 1700/10/245, 'Act for proving the tenor of some writs in favour of Sir David Home of Crossrig'.

²⁰ Graham, *Blasphemies of Thomas Aikenhead*, pp. 11-2, provides a good physical description of the city in the 1690s.

²¹ Home of Crossrig, *Domestic Details*, p. 70.

²² EUL, Laing MSS La.iii.339, pp. [15-6] (4 February 1701). At the correspondent meeting on 3 February 1701 (the anniversary of the fire), 11 existing societies were listed, being enumerated according to their constitution, and the time when they first began recording the minutes of their meetings. By 1708, 13 societies were said to have existed in Edinburgh at one time or another, though the likelihood is that

The foundation of the societies adds weight to the idea of an incomplete Reformation. Despite the laws which had been passed to make blasphemy illegal and to ensure proper, godly behaviour—in 1581, 1661, 1695 (one against blasphemy and another against profaneness) and 1696, plus another to be passed later in 1700 and a royal proclamation in 1703—Crossrig saw that immorality and vice were still rife in Scotland. The regret he felt over the state of morality reflects what Michael F. Graham describes as a ‘persecution mentality’ on the part of devout presbyterians, even though they were in the ascendancy after 1690. Any attempt to establish a church on a ‘primitive’, apostolic basis had to result in a sense of persecution because the early Christians were themselves persecuted.²³

There were two significant ideas behind this persecution mentality. The first involved the covenants of 1638 and 1643, and the fact that they were not renewed after the revolution. As noted in chapter 2, the establishment of presbyterian government in 1690 by act of parliament came in for some criticism by radical elements in the church and even outside it, as itself an erastian settlement. Establishment ministers, however, maintained that even if the covenants were not renewed, they were being followed in spirit and in deed.²⁴ The second idea was that of the providential salvation of Scotland by the acceptance of William as king. In this, however, the presbyterians and Williamites had a dilemma: providence seemed to be working against them. Disasters in the 1690s, such as devastating famines and the fire in Edinburgh described above, as well as the imminent failure of the Darién colony, were portrayed as divine punishments, though episcopalians and presbyterians differed as to what they were punishments for: the former as retribution for betrayal of the king, but the latter as a punishment for sin.²⁵ Indeed, having supported William against James, presbyterians could hardly see them otherwise.

These elements contributed to a sense of insecurity on the part of presbyterians. The continuing existence, though marginal, of Catholicism, the preservation and occasional expansion of episcopalianism, and the accusations by radical presbyterians of erastianism, proved that

several had stopped meeting.

23 Michael F. Graham, ‘Kirk in Danger: Presbyterian Political Divinity in Two Eras’, in Bridget Heal and Ole Peter Grell, eds., *The Impact of the European Reformation: Princes, Clergy and People* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2008), p. 167.

24 See p. 37 above, and Stephen, ‘Defending the Revolution’, pp. 20-1, 27.

25 T. Clarke, *Scottish Episcopalians*, p. 41; NRS, GD158/571, Home of Crossrig, ‘A Narrative By Sir David H[o]me of Crossrig[,] one of the Lords of Session, writ[t]en of his own hand’ (1701), p. 1. See p. 46 above.

something was not right. Despite legal sanctions to prevent immorality, Crossrig, in light of his reading, began to think that the establishment needed some help, which his new society would seek to provide.

II. REFORMATION OF MANNERS IN ENGLAND

The reformation societies in England developed soon after the revolution. There was a fear that while providence had granted William of Orange as Protestantism and England's defender against the Papism and arbitrary rule of James II, so could it punish the nation for the failure to live up to its expectations of behaviour.²⁶ The key problem was that morality laws were on the books, but they were not being enforced.²⁷ What was required was an organization to encourage enforcement of the extant provisions, a similarity the English societies had with their Scottish counterparts. Beginning with a locally based reform group in the Tower Hamlets area of London, the reform movement evolved into the proper Societies for Reformation of Manners in the summer of 1691.²⁸ The English societies were arranged in a hierarchical structure, following the chronological order of their founding.²⁹ The first society was composed of the higher social echelons involved in the movement, and set the policy and arranged the financing of the societies. Prominent among its members were the founders, Sir Richard Bulkeley, Edward Stephens, Colonel Maynard Colchester, Bishop Edward Stillingfleet of Worcester, and William Yates.³⁰ The second society, more of a tradesmen's group, did the hands-on operations, 'suppressing lewdness and sexual licence as well as swearing, drunkenness and profanations of the Lord's Day.'³¹ The third society consisted of the constables, who cited the individuals found to be violating laws against profane behaviour, but the most controversial of the societies was the fourth: the informers,

26 Andrew Gordon Craig, *The Movement for the Reformation of Manners, 1688-1715* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1980), p. 11; Rose, 'Providence, Protestant Union and Godly Reformation', pp. 155-6.

27 Craig, *Movement for Reformation of Manners*, p. 27.

28 *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 23.

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 34-5. Similarly, we occasionally find the Scottish societies yielding to the first society in opinions on potentially controversial issues. See, for example, EUL, Laing MSS La.iii.339, p. [92] (5 October 1703). In theory, however, the societies were independent of each other, correspondence meetings existing merely for convenience.

30 Craig, *Movement for Reformation of Manners*, p. 9.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

'reckoned by some reformation of manners apologists to be the linchpin of the whole movement'.³² Concern over their use extended back to before the times of the Toleration Act of 1689, which extended official recognition to denominations outside the Church of England, and their activities against dissenters.³³ Both in England and in Scotland, the reformation societies offered a share of delinquents' fines to informers, a means of encouragement also present in the sixteenth century.³⁴ A lot of ink was expended in the societies' justification of their use, and in the distinction between a 'reformation informer' and a selfish, 'common' informer, who was only in it for the money.³⁵

We see in the English movement greater formality and wider exposure than we do in Scotland, reflected in the societies' more thorough record-keeping. More evidence of activities exists in England, including formal reports on their delations and subsequent prosecutions. Beginning with the 'Black Roll' in 1694, and continuing with annual 'Black Lists' from 1695, the societies published results of their activities over the year and the nature of the crimes which were prosecuted as a result. The majority were for prostitution, though by 1709 the annual accounts reflected a shift in the societies' work to Sunday trading, drunkenness, hosting gambling houses, and cursing and swearing.³⁶ More stable interaction with the authorities, such as the courts and the police,³⁷ allowed for such concrete evidence to be reported, and despite the private membership of the societies, public opinion was a significant factor in their effectiveness. In order for reformation to be achieved, the reformers needed the public on their side. Ideally, every member of the public would be an informer.

Royal and religious support was also forthcoming from the societies' founding. Queen Mary, who in practical terms was in charge while William was away at war, lent her explicit

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid., p. 36. Under William II, dissenters were allowed to hold their own services if, among other requirements, the doors to the meeting-houses remained open 'to meet the charge, frequently made during Charles II's reign, that dissenters met in private to plot sedition against the state'. Tim Harris, *Revolution: The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy, 1685-1720* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), pp. 350-1.

34 Craig, *Movement for Reformation of Manners*, p. 32; James Kirk, *Patterns of Reform: Continuity and Change in the Reformation Kirk* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989), p. 7.

35 Craig, *Movement for Reformation of Manners*, p. 37.

36 Ibid., p. 132. This resulted from a 1709 case in which a constable, John Dent, was murdered while detaining a known prostitute who had, at the time of her detention, not been negotiating or participating in an encounter. A group of drunk soldiers testified that they had thought she was being assaulted, and attacked the two constables detaining her, murdering Dent in the process. Despite the 'martyr's' funeral which the societies gave to Dent, the judge exonerated the soldiers, the trial having become 'a platform from which to berate the activities of men such as John Dent and his associates'. The reformers subsequently refocused their efforts. Ibid., pp. 124-8.

37 Curtis and Speck, 'Societies for the Reformation of Manners: A Case Study', p. 56.

sanction to the movement, as did the post-revolutionary archbishop of Canterbury, John Tillotson. It was a letter which Mary sent to the justices of the peace in Middlesex which instigated the societies' work in 1691, requiring the justices' enforcement of immorality laws. Mary and Tillotson's deaths within weeks of each other in 1694, while also interpreted as providential punishment for English sins, were rather an encouragement for the societies to press on with their labours.³⁸

Support for the societies was not universal, however. Their progress over the first year even approached failure.³⁹ Allegations of bribery and inappropriate delations were rife, and the notion that they were a secret or private police contributed to jealousy and pursuit by courts in England. There was also an economic argument against the reformation movement which led to questions over the reformers' patriotism, that actions to reduce drinking would reduce the amount of excise revenues to fund military campaigns on the continent.⁴⁰ Furthermore, many dissenters sympathized with the reformation movement, but their involvement aroused the ire of High Church officials, who viewed the societies as potential cabals of treason and maintained that crimes of morality should be tried in ecclesiastical, rather than civil, courts.⁴¹ Finally, the movement was caught in a 'dilemma of deference': it relied on the elites for support and for providing examples to the lower orders, and was committed to deference as a social concept, but elite and noble ambivalence, the lack of investment they had in reformation, and the ability to evade punishment for their own immoral behaviour had a negative effect on the movement.⁴² Towards the end of the 1690s, it was coming in for strong criticism for targeting lower- and working-class transgressors while allowing the upper classes to go free, including a prominent booklet attributed to Daniel Defoe.⁴³ In a way, this criticism was unfair, because the reformers sought to suppress public immorality, which by definition was a lower-class phenomenon, the rich being able to commit immoral acts behind closed doors.⁴⁴ The fact remains that such attacks had their effect on

38 Craig, *Movement for Reformation of Manners*, pp. 105-6; Rose, 'Providence, Protestant Union and Godly Reformation in the 1690s', pp. 155, 163, on the negative connotations.

39 Craig, *Movement for Reformation of Manners*, p. 41; Rose, *England in the 1690s*, p. 206.

40 Craig, *Movement for Reformation of Manners*, p. 47.

41 Ibid., pp. 189, 197.

42 Curtis and Speck, 'Societies for the Reformation of Manners: A Case Study', p. 60.

43 EUL, **RR30.5, *The Poor Man's Plea, In Relation to all the Proclamations, Declarations, Acts of Parliament, &c. Which Have been, or shall be made, or publish'd, for a Reformation of Manners* (London, 1698), attributed to Defoe. Also available on EEBO, bibliographic number D841.

44 Curtis and Speck, 'Societies for the Reformation of Manners: A Case Study', p. 56.

public opinion, and inspired a new focus on ‘forming the child’ rather than ‘reforming the man’: on charity education, rather than prosecution.

III. AN ACCOUNT OF THE SOCIETIES

It is unlikely that Crossrig was aware of the contentions surrounding the reformation societies in London. No record of correspondence with English reformers exists, and while there may have been mutual acquaintances with individuals in London, no record of discussions surrounding the reformation movement has been found. Additionally, the text of the account Crossrig found makes no reference to tensions over the movement, serving rather as a justification for its ideas and motivations.

Two accounts of the English societies were produced which could have been the one Crossrig read. Josiah Woodward, the minister of Poplar, Middlesex, was a major propagandist for religious societies and for the reformation movement in the last decade of the seventeenth century.⁴⁵ He wrote one title published in 1697 and in a second edition in 1698, *An Account of the Rise and Progress of the Religious Societies in the City of London, &c., And of the Endeavours for Reformation of Manners Which have been made therein*,⁴⁶ but due to Crossrig’s own description of the account he read, this was probably not the inspiration for the Scottish societies. Instead, it is likely to be, to give it its full title, *An Account of the Societies for Reformation of Manners in London and Westminster, And other Parts of the Kingdom. With a Persuasive to Persons of all Ranks to be Zealous and Diligent in Promoting the Execution of the Laws against Prophaneness and Debauchery, For the Effecting A National Reformation. Published with the Approbation of a Considerable Number of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal*, from 1699.⁴⁷ Woodward’s name does not appear on the title page, and though the author speaks of himself in the first person, Woodward is mentioned in the third person in the text. The book has been attributed to him, however, and there were several reasons why he may have wished to publish the book anonymously, such as the criticism in the book directed towards

⁴⁵ Craig, *Movement for Reformation of Manners*, pp. 78-9

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁴⁷ [Josiah Woodward], *An Account of the Societies for Reformation of Manners, in London and Westminster, And other Parts of the Kingdom* (London: B. Aylmer, 1699). Available on EEBO, bibliographic number W3512.

magistrates.⁴⁸ Alternately, it is possible he wished to give the impression that another writer was praising the reformation movement since he was a known supporter—hence the reference to himself in the third person.

Crossrig described his book as being ‘recommended by many Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Judges of England’.⁴⁹ Elsewhere, in an account presumably written for his peers in Scotland to engage their support for reformation societies, he wrote:

the Book coming afterwards to hand, it was a great Reviving To observe the zeal & Success of that people [the English] against Immoralit[y] & that that Undertaking having had its Rise from the late Queen[']s proclamation, & Letter & an Act of [parliament], did come out [with] the Approbation of a Great many of the Bishops & Judges of that Kingdom as also of [the] Lords Temporal of [the] House of peers, and [which] contains a proclamation By his Majesty [against] profan[e]ness.⁵⁰

The 1699 volume is the one more likely to fit Crossrig’s description. It begins with ‘A Proclamation, for Preventing and Punishing Immorality and Prophaneness’ by William II and III, dated 24 February 1697.⁵¹ Following the proclamation comes the text of the letter from Mary to the justices of the peace in Middlesex, dated 9 July 1691 and also cited by Crossrig in the passage quoted above. After an address of the House of Commons to William, there appears an address to the unnamed author praising the efforts to establish reformation societies and countenancing them, signed by 29 temporal lords, nine bishops and seven judges.

To look at the 1699 *Account* is to discover many of the inspirations behind the societies in Scotland, especially in terms of engaging civil authorities to enforce extant laws against blasphemy. One of the inspirations which did not rub off on the Scottish societies was the ecumenism of their English counterparts.⁵² As Craig points out, one of the reasons why the societies in England experienced such problems with the Church of England was the involvement not just of moderate

48 Ibid., p. 68-9. The author wonders how ‘dishonourable’ magistrates can be entrusted with the nation’s interests since they are unable to look after their own.

49 Home of Crossrig, *Domestic Details*, p. 68.

50 NRS, GD158/571, p. [2]. At one point in this document (p. [1]), Crossrig addressed himself to ‘Your [Lordships]’, indicating that the text was intended for more than one person within his social milieu. The copy at the NRS is in Crossrig’s own hand (verified by a comparison with his diaries at the RCP), and is held as part of the collection of the earls of Marchmont, showing that the former Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth, an acquaintance of Crossrig, had been a recipient.

51 Mary II’s proclamation has not been located. The act of the English parliament is not included in the volume. It may be ‘An Act for the more Effectual Suppressing Prophane Cursing and Swearing’, published in *A help to a national reformation* (London: D. Brown, et al., 1700), available on EEBO, bibliographic number H1404A. Three expanded editions also appear, numbers H1404B-D.

52 [Woodward], *Societies for Reformation of Manners* (1699), p. 9. See EUL, Laing MSS La.iii.339, p. [17] (18 February 1701): ‘Recommended to James [Fuller] to Intimate to the moderator Constable at their meeting on [Monday], That he desire all the Constables to search out the meeting houses where they are and if Episcopa[l] ministers who preach in them and where they dwell, and their names.’

Anglicans, but also dissenters.⁵³ It is this openness which the author of the *Account* praises—Woodward's father was a presbyterian minister in Gloucestershire, though he himself was Anglican.⁵⁴ Despite the sectarian disputes over 'the Power of the Magistrate in Matters of Religion', the author writes, 'it hath never been a Dispute, Whether the Magistrate hath Power to Punish Immoralities'.⁵⁵ The author seeks to address some of the issues Craig outlines with regard to the English societies' relationship with the Church of England, but the openness to other views on church government did not apply in Scotland.⁵⁶

The author of the *Account* next describes the context in which the societies arose, along with, in part, a justification of the methods they have used: 'the Enemy, after a severe Examination, [has] not been able to discover, that any illegal Methods had been used, or that any secular Interest was pursued'.⁵⁷ Despite the societies' success, however, no account has been produced.⁵⁸ Due to the members' desire for privacy, it was left to this 'disinterested party' (the author) to tell the story of the Societies for Reformation of Manners through 1699.⁵⁹ The first four societies were described as Craig outlines them: the founders, the tradesmen, the constables and the informers. Beyond the original four, we see eight other groups which differed slightly in their structures,

but generally agree in the Methods of inspecting the Behaviour of Constables and other Officers, and going along with them, and assisting them in their Searching of Disorderly Houses, in taking up of Offenders, and carrying them before the Magistrate, and also in giving Informations themselves, as there is Occasion.⁶⁰

This passage is as concise a description of the law enforcement activities of the Scottish societies as we are likely to see.

The author also describes other societies within professions, such as justices of the peace and Church of England ministers.⁶¹ He maintains that clergy societies are necessary for reformation and not superfluous by any means, and expresses the hope that other professions and

53 Craig, *Movement for the Reformation of Manners*, p. 261.

54 John Spurr, 'Woodward, Josiah (1657–1712)', ODNB, view/article/55600, date of access 30 June 2010. Bibliographic entries for Woodward's writings on EEBO, attributed and confirmed, give his birthdate as 1660.

55 [Woodward], *Societies for Reformation of Manners* (1699), p. 2.

56 See n. 55 above.

57 [Woodward], *Societies for Reformation of Manners* (1699), p. 9.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 10. Woodward's 1698 volume deals more with the religious societies, which are also addressed here, though more briefly—they were similar to the praying societies in restoration Scotland, though they continued in existence after the revolution.

59 *Ibid.*

60 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

61 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

trades will form societies within their occupations to influence their fellows.⁶² He then outlines two points which may have borne on the Scottish situation. The first is the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697, which closed the Nine Years' War. With the return of peace, he writes, have come 'the Times of Reformation'.⁶³ If the societies have been considered unpatriotic through their discouragement of the liquor trade and the resulting loss of tax revenue to support the armed forces, then with the return of peace, the time has come to demonstrate their loyalty through the restoration of piety and morality.⁶⁴

Secondly, the societies under discussion are working in England and Ireland, and the expansion in both of these countries is described. Almost as a prod to the Scots, we read:

We are likewise assured, That Scotland hath concurred in these Matters, where His Majesty's Proclamation against Prof[an]eness and Debauchery hath been issued out in very strict terms, and His late Gracious Letter to the Parliament of that Kingdom, takes notice of the Progress they have made in the Forming of Methods for the Discouraging of Vice and Irreligion, and assures them, That 'tis a W O R K most acceptable to him.⁶⁵

In light of this summary of Scotland's enforcement of morality as perceived in England, Crossrig must have questioned its accuracy and wondered why, if England and Ireland were capable of establishing such worthy societies, Scotland was not. The nation's legacy of praying societies, which he had firsthand experience of and which will be discussed below, and its political situation, which is succinctly described in another passage, could not have gone unnoticed: 'we have the Laws of GOD, of the Nation, and, as we have reason to hope, the Government on our side'.⁶⁶

The remainder of the book focuses on the duties first of magistrates and of 'Inferior Officers' to fulfil the vows they have taken upon receiving their commissions, then of regular people to take responsibility to foment reformation in the nation, mostly through informing. Justifications of 'informations' appear throughout, moving from biblical precedent and practicalities (i.e., that it was impossible for magistrates to be everywhere and notice every instance of vice which occurred), to charity.⁶⁷ Since the fines derived from convictions of immorality and profanity went to the poor, partly to alleviate the burden on the parish rates, not

62 [Woodward], *Societies for Reformation of Manners* (1699), p. 17.

63 *Ibid.*, p. 20.

64 Craig, *Movement for the Reformation of Manners*, p. 47.

65 [Woodward], *Societies for Reformation of Manners* (1699), p. 25. See p. 60 below for William's letter to the 1698 Scottish parliament.

66 *Ibid.*, p. 28.

67 *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 79.

prosecuting such crimes and enforcing such sentences was tantamount to depriving the destitute of money which was theirs by legal right.⁶⁸ The use of fines must have been a relief to the people charged under immorality statutes, the author writes, as the biblical precedents he cites resulted in stoning of the guilty party.⁶⁹

IV. DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN SCOTTISH AND ENGLISH REFORMERS

In 1706, Archibald Johnston, son to the current lord provost of Edinburgh and a member of the second Scottish reformation society, travelled down to London with copies of accounts of the Scottish societies, including copies of town council acts. He was instructed to remain in contact with his home society to facilitate communication between the London and Edinburgh reformers, and it was in context of his trip that Anglo-Scottish correspondence was raised, for the first time since 1701.⁷⁰ Perhaps due to the unique situation of union between England and Scotland being in negotiation, the proposals were taken more seriously.⁷¹ The final determination on formal correspondence came in May 1707, when it was decided that though 'it may be Convenient to have a publi[c] fixed Correspondence betwixt the societies in England and Scotland as Societies', individual members would be able to communicate as they desired as easily as the societies, so such a relationship would be redundant.⁷² James Kirkwood did raise the issue again that December, but throughout 1708 any communication with the English societies was mostly on an ad hoc basis, as required according to the relevant topic.⁷³ It was not—ostensibly, at least—for dogmatic or political reasons that correspondence was voted down, but rather because it was simply seen as unnecessary.

While the reformers' relationship to the government and the church in Scotland was ambivalent, as it was in England, it experienced less overt hostility from courts or parties in the church. Edinburgh ministers did have some questions for Crossrig's society when, before its

68 *Ibid.*, p. 73. What would happen to the poor once immorality and vice were eradicated, and crimes no longer being committed, we are left to speculate.

69 *Ibid.*, p. 77.

70 EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [118] (26 March 1706). Five years before, the motion had been rejected by the second society and the general meeting of the reformers' Edinburgh correspondents. *Ibid.*, pp. [40-1] (19 and 26 August 1701).

71 Johnston's father, Sir Patrick Johnston, was a Scottish negotiator for union.

72 NLS, MS 1954, p. 82 (31 May 1707).

73 *Ibid.*, p. 91 (27 December 1707).

official constitution in February 1700, it submitted its monitory, the document which outlines duties and expectations of behaviour for members, for consultation and approval. When Gilbert Rule and John Hamilton reported to the members on the ministers' response, they asked what was intended with the monitory, whether to use it 'as a communion or only a directory'. The society opted for the latter, objecting to the term 'communion'

that sav[ou]red more of a church communion [than] of a fellow ship of private Christian friends meeting together for mutua[l] edification and excitation to duty and pretending to [no] authority or Jurisdiction[,] civi[l] or ecclesiasti[c], so that it was conceived they had [the] greater freedom and latitude in [their] choi[c]e of members Both as to number and qualifications th[a]n could be allowed in a church communion, [f]or It cannot be den[i]ed that persons may admi[t] or exclude from thei[r] friend ship and Intimacy whom they please without decla[r]ing all [the] rest of [the] world incapable or immeet to be a[d]mitted [there]into....⁷⁴

Similarly, a second society, established in October 1700, offered an overt denial of a claim to any state or church authority: 'We are not to Act in any Judiciary manner, nor that our proceedings should encroach upon any Judicatory, either Civi[l] or Ecclesiasti[c], but that they should be only subservient ther[e]unto.'⁷⁵

Once these suspicions were allayed, the ecclesiastical establishment was supportive to a degree. Later that year, the commission of the General Assembly issued a proclamation in favour of 'such Societies as are Ent[er]ed into by privat[e] persons in our neighbour Kingdoms'.⁷⁶ With that, the church officially recognized that the societies intended to buttress, not rival, its authority in spiritual matters. More than with the state, the reformers were cautious in their work encouraging implementation of ecclesiastical statutes because of the sacredness of the pulpit. Since they were laymen, and one could only exercise the office of a minister if called by God and licensed by the assembly, they did not want to intrude on the church's sphere or undermine its authority.

Church support was ambivalent, however, perhaps due to the limited effect members could have on it. The assembly and its commission frequently acceded to requests for ministers to read out published abstracts of the immorality laws, but the impact of these readings depended on the attention of parishioners and even whether they were attending church.⁷⁷ The societies discussed

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 3-4 (6 January 1700).

⁷⁵ EUL, Laing MSS, La.III.339, p. [2] (15 October 1700).

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. [1] (15 October 1700, with the rules of the society).

⁷⁷ NLS, MS 1954, p. 24 (23 May 1702). The General Assembly act discussed in this minute is Act VII from 1697, BHO, date of access 19 August 2010.

the problem of non-attendance on Sundays, and even of people loitering in the streets outside the hours of services, and conceived the idea of patrols to enforce attendance. They underlined, however, that any members participating in such patrols must do so as private individuals or, preferably, kirk elders, and not society members—again, that would imply an assumption of religious and civil authority. Individual ministers, unlike the Edinburgh general session, may also not have been convinced by the first society's early statement that its monitory was simply a document for private concerned citizens, and not a religious statement.⁷⁸

Fears over intrusion in the state were less warranted. Many members already had positions in the civil establishment: Crossrig was a lord of session, and others served as deans of guild, lord provosts, or other officials in Edinburgh. Further, the elements of reformation were already on the statute books. They just needed more enforcement. The societies also took heart from royal proclamations, such as William's address to parliament on 19 July 1698: 'It will be most acceptable to us that you fall upon effectua[l] methods for discoura[g]ing vice[,] immorality and irreligion, and we are well satisfied with the progress made in that matter in the last Session.'⁷⁹

Civil support for reformation was as uneven as in the church, however. One of the major actions taken by the societies was an appeal for the establishment of a dedicated immorality court in Edinburgh, conducted by one of the town bailies and intended to pass sentence on those charged with crimes of immorality or blasphemy, often uncovered by society members. The court's sessions were sporadic, however, and the failure to hold them on a constant basis was a cause of worry for the societies that the push for reformation was failing.⁸⁰ Fundamentally, the reformers were not as prominent or as organized as in England. Their publications were limited to the abstracts of the laws mentioned above, though those were the responsibility of parliament, and 'discourses' on the laws, such as that attributed to Sir Francis Grant of Cullen in 1700.⁸¹ They did not produce accounts of their activities, at least none which have survived, as the English societies did in their Black Lists, perhaps relying on the immorality courts to record such matters. No records of the Edinburgh courts have been found, however. Because the ecclesiastical foundation

⁷⁸ NLS, MS 1954, p. 3 (6 January 1700).

⁷⁹ *The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, v. X (1696-1701) (n. l.: n. p., 1823), p. 120. For the act providing for that 'progress', see RPS, 1696/9/150.

⁸⁰ EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, p. 68 (31 March 1702).

⁸¹ [Sir Francis Grant of Cullen], *A discourse, concerning the execution of the laws, made against prophaneness, &c.* (Edinburgh: George Mosman, 1700). Available on EEBO, bibliographic number C7474B.

in Scotland was narrower than in England, popular support for reformation societies was always going to be lower. Toleration in England allowed for support of dissenters, but Scottish episcopalians would not be able to bolster bodies dedicated to the entrenchment of a hostile establishment. Additionally, there were no bishops and no court to lend personal ecclesiastical or royal credibility to the societies, and no noble emerged to serve as patron, as with Mary and Archbishop Tillotson.

V. PRE-REVOLUTIONARY PRECEDENTS IN SCOTLAND

The narrow basis for the Scottish ecclesiastical settlement meant that support for the societies was further complicated by the historical legacy of religious groups outside the establishment. Since before the Reformation, groups of laymen had been meeting for collective prayer and spiritual fulfilment.⁸² There was a tradition, therefore, of religious gatherings not only for the members' own spiritual welfare, but for that of the nation as well. The most formal pre-Reformation structures were the privy kirks, which possessed a level of organization similar to that of later parish churches.⁸³ The structure which they provided played a significant role in the Reformation, as the Reformers were able to exploit it to accomplish what was in essence a revolution. The privy kirks were not alone, however, in fostering Protestant belief in Scotland and giving it a shape and a network for support. Other organizations were operating beneath the authorities' radar. Lay Protestants were holding meetings of discussion and debate on spiritual topics called conventicles,⁸⁴ a word which would earn a loaded meaning in the next century. Despite the efforts at operating underground, the privy kirks, conventicles and other unofficial religious gatherings did not go unanswered. In 1541, parliament passed a battery of legislation which reiterated key Catholic doctrine while seeking to reform the church from within.⁸⁵ One of the main targets was the conventicles, which the government attempted to undermine by encouraging informants and offering those with knowledge of them a share of the participants'

82 Alec Ryrie, 'Congregations, Conventicles and the Nature of Early Scottish Protestantism', *Past & Present* 191 (May 2006), pp. 53-4.

83 *Ibid.*, p. 53; Kirk, *Patterns of Reform*, p. 1.

84 Kirk, *Patterns of Reform*, p. 6.

85 *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

confiscated estates.⁸⁶ While privy kirks were potentially a more serious threat, conventicles were dangerous enough due to the mere fact of discussion, with worshippers availing themselves of the increasing flow of 'devotional literature'.⁸⁷ All of these elements are reflected in later decades, under different forms of ecclesiastical authority: reiteration or reinforcement of established doctrine by legislation, attempts to restrict groups outside the recognized hierarchy of the established church, the use of informers to counteract illegal forms of worship, and attempts to restrict the types of religious literature available to the public.

Conventicles did not disappear after the Reformation. Instead, they were absorbed into the structure of the new Protestant church and given the name the 'exercise'. James Cameron, in his analysis of the structure of *The First Book of Discipline*, identifies the origins of the presbytery in the exercise, meetings of ministers and elders to discuss interpretations of the Bible.⁸⁸ Conventicles revived after institution of the Five Articles of Perth, approved by the General Assembly in 1618 and ratified by parliament in 1621, which sought to re-institute certain pre-Reformation practices, including, most controversially, kneeling to receive communion.⁸⁹ They were in a different form than before, however, led by clergy and thus resembling worship services more than their eponymous counterparts 60 years earlier. Ministers within the establishment saw groups such as the new-style conventicles as a threat to the national church. One of the central issues, David Stevenson argues, was the conflict between the concept of a broad national church and a narrow church of the elect, the latter favoured by the proponents of conventicles.⁹⁰ As much of a threat as praying societies led by laypeople were considered to be, conventicles were all the more threatening to the establishment due to the feeling that they were a truer form of worship service—a similar sentiment earlier directed at privy kirks.⁹¹ During the restoration, conventicles lingered as a potential danger to the state and church. In 1670 and 1672, parliament passed laws against them, and as part of the Test Act of 1681, their illegality was restated.⁹² By contrast, prayer societies, the evidence for which is minimal, did not claim to be replacing establishment church services and

86 Ibid., p. 7.

87 Ibid., pp. 7-8.

88 Cameron, ed., *First Book of Discipline*, pp. 42-4; G. D. Henderson, *The Burning Bush: Studies in Scottish Church History* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1957), p. 53.

89 Gordon Donaldson, ed., *Scottish Historical Documents* (Edinburgh and London: Scottish Academic Press, 1974), pp. 184-5.

90 David Stevenson, 'Conventicles in the Kirk, 1619-37', *RSCHS*, v. XVIII (1974), p. 101.

91 Ibid., p. 99.

92 RPS, 1670/7/11; 1672/6/51; 1681/7/29.

had a more discreet, lay character, though still with participation of ministers when possible. It was this model which the reformation societies desired to follow, for personal enrichment, but accompanied by bringing their values outside the private meetings. Unlike the earlier conventiclars, the reformers agreed with the idea of a national church, and sought the establishment of standards of behaviour in the nation which would reflect a religious life.

Crossrig remarks about the praying societies ‘that notwithstanding the Great persecution of those times, never any was accused or punished for being a Member of, or Meeting in these Societies (that I know of) albeit they were very numerous & frequent[,] at least once a week.’⁹³ His participation must have meant that his associations had been suspect, as one of his acquaintances from his student days—Sir Patrick Hume of Polwarth, later the first earl of Marchmont—had had to flee to the United Provinces in 1684.⁹⁴ Crossrig, then known as Sir David Home of Crossrig, was away from home on business of his nephew’s when rumours arrived about a party being sent to search for him.⁹⁵ Crossrig stayed in Berwick for the remainder of the week, only to find upon his return that the rumours had been false.⁹⁶ Following this, in a dispute over a request for higher taxation of the local heritors in the Borders, Crossrig was named as having actively opposed the privy council’s commissioners seeking the higher rate, ‘which occasioned me to be cited the winter following [1684-5] before the Council, for harbour & recept [reset] conventicles, &c.’⁹⁷ It was the second time he had encountered legal problems in less than a year, and with the uncertainty in the country surrounding the death of Charles II in February 1685, Crossrig was tempted to follow Polwarth. His family and business affairs, however, made him stay.⁹⁸ He was detained again the following summer, in connection with the earl of Argyll’s invasion.⁹⁹ While no sustained negative impact resulted from his own experiences, the stories of others, such as Polwarth, gave him sufficient reason to refer to the period as ‘evil times’¹⁰⁰ and may have spurred him to seek

93 Ibid.

94 No mention is made of a family relationship between Crossrig and Polwarth. See John R. Young, ‘Hume, Patrick, first earl of Marchmont (1641–1724)’, in ODNB, [view/article/14150](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14150), date of access 29 June 2010. Young writes that Crossrig was Polwarth’s ‘fellow student’, but Crossrig studied in Poitiers, while Polwarth studied in Paris. See Hume of Crossrig, *Domestic Details*, pp. 42-3.

95 Hume of Crossrig, *Domestic Details*, p. 34.

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid., p. 36. It is noteworthy that Crossrig linked his indictment with his opposition to the higher taxation. Strictly speaking, hosting conventicles was illegal, but the question does remain whether he had in fact done so; he does not say.

98 Ibid. See p. 49 above.

99 Hume of Crossrig, *Domestic Details*, p. 37.

100 NRS, GD158/571, p. [1].

admission to the Faculty of Advocates in 1687, despite never having pursued a legal career after his studies. His family could very easily require legal protection, and the simplest way of acquiring it would be if he himself, as agent and guardian for his dependent nieces and nephews and as head of the family, undertook it—a common practice for landowning families at the time.¹⁰¹

VI. REFORMERS' ACTIVITIES IN SCOTLAND

Some of the activities of the societies have been hinted at above, especially advocacy of the immorality court. Again, interaction with civil authorities was greater due to the reformers' sense that it was more permissible, as opposed to interaction with ministers and church authorities who had a special role defined by God.¹⁰² Still, the societies were not as organized nor as prominent as those in England, producing few publications about their activities and often struggling to act through institutions of state. The lower level of organization is shown in the quality of sources. The only accounts of minutes which have been located are for two Edinburgh societies, but, fortunately, they are the first two to have been founded, so we can get a sense of the development of the movement. The first part of the first society's volume runs from the end of 1699 to the end of 1708. The minutes do not resume until October 1740, with the following explanation:

The minuting of what was done in this Society since December 1708 having been much neglected and what Scrolls there had been made, fallen by hand by the Death of many worthy Members, and absence of others who reside mostly in the Countr[y], the booking thereof was omitted; But it is resolved that if there is any thing considerable, done or resolved upon, it Shall be co[m]mitted to Writing.¹⁰³

It does stretch credibility that the members could not have started a new book in the interim, had the one we have been lost, and that no one would have been assiduous enough to ensure that at least some records were kept for those 32 years, but as we will see below, the movement was in a fragile state at the end of 1708. We should perhaps be grateful that either of these books has survived at all.

There is very little introductory material in the volume, since another book was intended to include the society's background, its rules and monitory, and records of its membership. This

101 Hume of Crossrig, *Domestic Details*, pp. 43-4. Thanks to Dr Karin Bowie for the point on landowners pursuing law careers.

102 See p. 59-60 above.

103 NLS, MS 1954, p. 100 (5 October 1740, according to dated minutes following this statement).

second book was possibly consumed in the fire of 3 February 1700, it being noted in June 1701 as no longer existing.¹⁰⁴ The second Edinburgh society, by contrast, makes reconstructing its early days and its membership easier, since the book contains introductory material, including the rules of the society and membership lists. It was established in October 1700, and had a distinct membership to the first, not just in terms of individuals, but in terms of professions, as well. Unlike in England, the organization of societies appears to have been spontaneous, without the same sense of a hierarchy, though the first society was often consulted on complex issues, especially involving the law.¹⁰⁵ Landowners and one medical doctor, Alexander Dundas, filled out the membership. The first society's minutes are not specific with regard to identification, but the society may have felt it unnecessary: the minutes were not intended for public consumption, so it is likely that whoever was reading them would, as a member himself, know who these people were already. Also, the society may have assumed that the members were prominent enough not to require identification of occupation or social status. In the middle of 1701, Crossrig produced a 'Narrative' of the societies.¹⁰⁶ Reproducing the monitory and the rules which had been signed in February 1700, he appended the initials of the signatories, who, based on a consultation of the minutes, were David Home (Crossrig himself), Francis Grant, William Brodie, Alexander Dundas, Sir Hugh Cunningham of Craighend or of Bonnington, Robert Alexander, James Gellie, Lieutenant Colonel John Erskine of Carnock, Nicol Spence, James Stewart (the current town clerk), Sir Walter Pringle, and a J. Pringle, possibly James of Buckholm.¹⁰⁷ This is not to say that the second society's members were not prominent in the city. Its members include one writer (the same Nicol Spence), one minister, one doctor, five captains, one stabler (James Fuller, also a constable), one surgeon, one apothecary (both referred to elsewhere as 'surgeon-apothecaries'¹⁰⁸), one glover, seven merchants (one apparently also a captain, and another a constable) and one lieutenant. In addition, we find a 'Dean of Gild' and two bailies. We still see some influence in the city when we look at the second society's membership, but also a greater variety beyond the legal and medical professions, and the

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 15 (7 June 1701).

¹⁰⁵ Three of the lawyers in the society were lords of session. Crossrig himself, had been made a law lord in 1689, Sir Francis Grant of Cullen became Lord Cullen in 1709, and Sir Walter Pringle became Lord Newhall in 1718.

¹⁰⁶ See p. 55 above.

¹⁰⁷ NRS, GD158/571, p. [6]. Cunningham is referred to by both place names in different sources, but this thesis will use Craighend.

¹⁰⁸ Helen Armet, ed., *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1701-1718* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1967), pp. 27, 60.

landholding class.

Differences go beyond the memberships and the likely social status of the two societies. The focus of their operations and their willingness to embrace an overtly religious philosophy also diverged. The original monitory from January 1700 may be missing, since it was amended at the end of that year, before Crossrig's narrative reproduced the text in August 1701. Crossrig does hint, however, that the text he includes is the original.¹⁰⁹ Regardless of that, we have no indication that the second society or others which followed signed the monitory, as opposed to the rules, which were, after all, a guide for operations rather than principles. The second society expressed its hesitance to sign the monitory, preferring instead that it be 'recorded'.¹¹⁰ Two months later, the consensus of the correspondents' meeting, a monthly gathering of delegates from societies across the city, was found to be the same.¹¹¹ It is unclear why the members of the second society and the societies' correspondents would be so hesitant to put their names to the monitory, but the reason may lie in the differences between the rules each society developed and the monitory itself: while it was difficult to argue with the rules, having a more practical element to them, the monitory was more overtly religious, and the significance of putting one's name to such a document may have inspired some trepidation on the part of the later societies' reformers, especially considering the history of extramural religious groups under the restoration.¹¹² They were willing to accept the monitory as an ideological programme for the movement as a whole, but apparently viewed the rules as sufficient for their purposes. The rules themselves were not without religious references, as we see in the set the second society agreed on 15 October 1700, which required that any member of any society must be a member of the 'true Reformed Protestant Religion'. The preface reads:

It is Resolved, that for mutua[l] Aid in promov[ing] the Glory of God, the Good of Others, and our ow[n] Edification, especially by Obtaining in a lawfu[l] manner, confor[m] to our Respective stations, the Law[s] made against Profannes[s] to be Execute[d], we shall Observe the Rules following...¹¹³

The rules' provision that members should work to avoid faults which they 'desire to be Reformed in Others' reflects a passage of the monitory which ordains

That in the Strength of the Lord, & acknowledging our own Insufficienc[y], we will

¹⁰⁹ NRS, GD158/571, p. [2].

¹¹⁰ EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [17] (25 February 1701).

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. [22] (15 April 1701).

¹¹² See pp. 62-3 above.

¹¹³ EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [1] (15 October 1700).

Endeavour to fulfil [our] Righteousness and Set our Selves Sincerely to Guard & Watch against all sin....¹¹⁴

The second society's preference for the law enforcement side of the reformation campaign, however, may also show a discomfort with the overt religiosity of the monitory and the emphasis on 'Self Denial, Mortification, Taking up our Cross and following Christ'.¹¹⁵ The contrast between the societies, therefore, extends even to the development of and reactions to the founding documents.

The religious element for the second society consisted mainly in its attempts to maintain morality through the enforcement of law. Despite its members' hesitation to sign the monitory, it gave the duty of opening and closing prayer at its meetings to a minister if one was present. It assumed first John Hamilton, then, after his death in 1702, James Hart, as members, both ministers at Old Greyfriars.¹¹⁶ In this way, the second society ascertained that its proceedings would be witnessed by a representative of the clergy, and hence be less suspect. The distinction between the memberships of both societies is reflected in the focus of their proceedings. While the first society addressed some practical issues, such as sending petitions to the town council about enforcing morality laws, it was far more interested in theoretical subjects than the second society. Essentially, it was the philosophical powerhouse behind the movement, as reflected in its focus on conferences on various subjects and works of spirituality. Topics ranged from its own monitory to contemporary religious works such as Laurence Charteris' *The Corruption of This Age* and Robert Fleming's *The Confirming Work of Religion*. The second society considered holding similar conferences, but they never got off the ground. The first society even invited members of other societies to its meetings to witness conferences and how they were conducted, so the guests could bring them back to their meetings.¹¹⁷ It is impossible to know how effective this pressure was since no other society has left any records, but the first society considered abandoning conferences itself since they were 'dislik[ed] by most of [the] societies'.¹¹⁸ It may have wished to retain control over the direction of the movement, but it still did not wish to limit intellectual debate over contemporary religious works to itself. The members of other societies, presumably according to

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. [2]; NRS, GD158/571, p. [3].

¹¹⁵ NRS, GD158/571, p. [4].

¹¹⁶ EUL Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [81] (19 [sic] October 1702); *Fasti*, v. 1, pp. 40, 46.

¹¹⁷ NLS, MS 1954, p. 28 (7 November 1702).

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 11 (22 February 1701).

their personal or professional interests, simply were not as enthusiastic about engaging in theoretical discussion. The first society's interest also lay in public relations efforts such as the *Brief Account* attributed to Sir Francis Grant.¹¹⁹ Again, though, the book dealt with the societies themselves, and perhaps would not have had much of an appeal outside the classes or social groups the societies were targeting as potential members.

VII. LAW ENFORCEMENT

The predominance of trades may have led the second society to the more practical emphasis on law enforcement in its proceedings. The first society did not neglect the more practical element, but it was the second society which focused more often on specific cases of immorality and drunkenness after hours. The entire idea of street patrols seems to have been a motion of the second society, made barely two months after its establishment.¹²⁰

The patrols were a principal area of cooperation with the civil authorities. Reformers would be assigned a night to walk the streets of Edinburgh to spot and report immoral behaviour. As private individuals, they were not allowed to confront the delinquents unless they were in the company of commissioned officers, but they still occasionally ran into trouble, especially since many of the offences witnessed involved people who were drunk. To improve the effectiveness of the patrols, the societies lobbied the town council for the nomination of commissioned officers to enforce laws against blasphemy and immorality. During the 1690s, the appointment of constables had lapsed to the point that it happened only twice. In the ten years after the foundation of the societies, however, appointments were made eight times.¹²¹ The constables were officers with powers of arrest, and they often led the nocturnal patrols society members participated in. Their primary responsibility was to the council, but the societies did not hesitate to offer their own ideas on what the duties of the officers were meant to be, beginning with an emphasis on the constables' place in the struggle against immorality:

that orders may be given to Constables, and to the Town officials & so[1]diers to

¹¹⁹ See p. 66 above.

¹²⁰ EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [8] (24 December 1700).

¹²¹ Armet, ed., *Extracts: 1689-1701*, pp. 30, 228, 273; Armet, ed., *Extracts: 1701-1718*, pp. 33, 66, 100, 119, 133, 152, 203.

sei[z]e upon all persons not burges[ses] they shall see Drunk or hear cur[s]ing or swearing or committing any other immorality, and secure [them] while they be brought before a magistrat[e] and punished according to Law.¹²²

To make their position easier, constables were not to be charged with apprehending their own neighbours, lest 'persons of Note & respect' refuse to take the office when appointed.¹²³ The second society's 'Overtures for the more expedite and effectuall Execution of the Laws against profanessse' give an additional picture of the constables' position, proposing that they be allowed to levy and accept on-the-spot fines, requiring them to cite tavern keepers who refuse to send customers home after 10:00 p.m., and asking them to consider who within their jurisdictions might best work as an observer or censor.¹²⁴ A town council act reflecting the overture on tavern closings became law on 13 August 1701, though the societies did not expressly seek an act to that effect.¹²⁵ The last two overtures are recommendations on how to generate a paper trail, to ensure that any delations or prosecutions urged by the societies would be legitimate.¹²⁶

The constables, however, were not just allies or foot soldiers in the war on vice. They were also actively sought for membership of the societies. The first instance of this appears in the second society, when it was proposed on 31 December 1700 that a constable be present at each meeting so that the members would understand their procedures better. James Fuller agreed to attend the meetings, serving as a key go-between for the society to the other constables, a role which was important in its February 1701 campaign to collect the names and locations of episcopalian meeting houses.¹²⁷ The first society, however, perhaps in keeping with its more theoretical and legalistic preoccupations, never saw a constable in its ranks, while the second society had at least two: Fuller and James McGhie, who himself approached a third for membership in 1703, Samuel Dunsmuir.¹²⁸ The second set of rules for the second society included a provision that one constable would attend each meeting.¹²⁹ It is not known whether Fuller, McGhie or both retired in 1707, but the society secured the membership of a third constable, William Tod, in June of that year.¹³⁰

Once the constables were in place, they themselves expressed concern over the effectiveness

122 EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [5] (29 October 1700).

123 Ibid.

124 EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [10] (14 January 1701).

125 Armet, ed., *Extracts: 1689-1701*, p. 285.

126 EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [10] (14 January 1701).

127 Ibid., pp. [8], [17] (31 December 1700 and 18 February 1701).

128 Ibid., p. [88] (23 March 1703). Dunsmuir is not recorded as joining the society.

129 Ibid., p. [12] (14 January 1701).

130 Ibid., p. [127] (10 June 1707).

of the campaign against immorality when they threatened a strike in 1701 'Because of [the] Remissness of [the] magistrates in punishing such as are d[e]lated'.¹³¹ The societies intervened in the hope that the complaint had no foundation, asking the magistrates and the ministers 'to strengthen [the] hands of [the] constables in [their] using Zea[l] & prudence.'¹³² The constables apparently felt a crisis of confidence, out on the streets in the face of a potentially hostile crowd, especially since they had the power of punishing delinquents—a power which could have inspired more resistance when exercised. A minister conferred with the constables, reminding them of their duty and offering them the confidence to fulfil it.¹³³ The societies tried to ensure the security of constables while on patrol, but were not always successful, even on Sundays. Examples of abuse and harrassment will be discussed below.

The familiarity of reformers with the procedures of constables mattered because they often accompanied the officers on patrols. This was later on a voluntary basis, but at first the members secured their appointment as censors for the council, an old position renamed to avoid the connotations of the word 'informer' and perhaps to denote their official capacities. They had no powers of arrest, but were assigned to report any immoralities or offences to the officers who did. Before the members' own appointments, which arose because of a lack of applicants, the societies were aware of a parallel between this position and that of an 'informer', but were hoping that the cloak of official approval would prevent discouragement of potential candidates:

the instructions for the Censors (which may be [preparing] in the mean t[i]me) are to be proposed so, as, at first they may not be deterred from accepting, by laying on them any thing loo[k]ing like [an] informer, But additiona[l] instructions, after once they are in a channe[l] and use, may be accomodat[ed] to the exigenc[y] of the great desig[n] of Curbing immoralit[i]es within the city.¹³⁴

Even this early in the reformation movement, the word 'informer' had a very negative connotation, due almost certainly to the legacy of the concept from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Once the position had been established and the censors had become accustomed to their duties, their instructions could be adjusted to resemble those of traditional informers more closely.

By October, no progress had been reported, and John Duncan was recommended to procure

¹³¹ NLS, MS 1954, p. 12 (8 March 1701).

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid., pp. 12-3 (15 and 22 March 1701).

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 5 (2 March 1700).

an order from the town council to name members of the societies as censors.¹³⁵ The idea was that even if censors were to be appointed independently or from a list of known men submitted by the constables, the societies existed as an already willing body of men available for and capable of the service. To expedite the process, the reformers themselves would be appointed—perhaps contradicting their claims of not seeking civil authority, but they could point out that it was a situation of last resort. Despite the efforts and suggestions of the societies, it was not until December 1701 that censors were appointed by the council in the shape of the constables for the previous year.¹³⁶ With the appointments, naming society members as censors was no longer necessary, but the reformers did not give up their vigilance as ‘observers’, a term which itself was used quite frequently in the minutes as another category of agent of reform, though one which was, again, fully voluntary.¹³⁷

The threatened strike of March 1701 demonstrated the link between thoroughness of the magistrates and the immorality court in their prosecutions, and the idea of ‘encouragement’ of the reformation movement, especially in terms of the safety of people who went on patrols. The second society foresaw the risks in January 1701, when it included in its rules a provision that, should a member or another individual be injured in the prosecution of his duties,

all the Societies in the City and members thereof think themselves in Dut[y] bound, to recko[n] the injur[y] as done to all of them, and to give their Assistance in a Lega[l] way to obtain reparation to the person injured, yet with Such discretion & prudence as is meet....¹³⁸

Despite the active involvement of the reformers in patrols, the emphasis on the courts and the pleading with the magistrates to fulfil their pledges reflected the ‘subserviency’ to the civil establishment articulated by the societies, which were not vigilante organizations: they were not to punish transgressors while on patrols themselves. Such an emphasis was reinforced here, with the provision that the injured party had to have been injured while ‘endeavouring the Suppression of immorality in a Lega[l] way’.¹³⁹ The societies knew they had to conduct themselves within legal constraints, lest they appear to cross the line between a private, voluntary organization, and

¹³⁵ EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, pp. [5], [7] (22 October and 10 December 1700).

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. [50] (9 December 1701).

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. [67] (17 March 1702). For a discussion of ‘private observers’, see *ibid.*, pp. [46-7] (11 November 1701), when the second society also announced its purchase of 150 copies of the paper ‘A Vindication of Informers’.

¹³⁸ Ibid., pp. [12-3] (14 January 1701).

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. [12] (14 January 1701).

representatives of the state.

VIII. SABBATH PATROLS

Apart from the nightly patrols, the society engaged in Sunday patrols to maintain Sabbatarianism, an area of cooperation with the church. This was not merely a project to report truants from church services, but rather an effort to note and individuals who transgressed from the sanctity of the Sabbath. Such transgressions included secular employments, either work or leisure, but could extend to gatherings, such as when the second society reported on problems with 'the giving out of letters from the post office on the Lord[']s day, because of the great abuses occasioned thereby & concourse of people reading the news letters both on streets[,] [i]n taverns & coffee houses'.¹⁴⁰ The issue first appears on 4 March 1701, when the second society urges kirk sessions to note instances of labour being performed on the Sabbath, such as 'car[r]ying of Clo[ths], wicks [etc.]'¹⁴¹ Not only was one of the town guardsmen, who mocked 'Elders, Deacons and Constables' as they were going about their patrols on Sundays, to be dealt with, so were individuals engaged in work or leisure: magistrates were lobbied to pass a law prohibiting the hiring of coaches on the Sabbath, and 'walking on the streets' was also to be discouraged.¹⁴² Criminal citations were to be extended to people entertaining after hours, as on the other days of the week, like in 1701, when 'some persons in Moroc[c]o's clos[e] [who] are to be delated for keeping Company in their house on Sabbath Last about ten hours.'¹⁴³ Certain elements of necessity were acknowledged, however, such as the impracticability of closing the city gates for the entire day. The second society compromised, allowing them to be shut just for the time of 'divine service'.¹⁴⁴ One of the reasons for them to be open was for food supplies to be brought into the city. The first society offered its opinion that milk was such a necessity, that its transportation on Sundays should not be barred, disagreeing with a correspondents' overture to the contrary.¹⁴⁵ Once

¹⁴⁰ EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [127] (6 May 1707).

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. [18].

¹⁴² Ibid., pp. [21] and [106] (1 April 1701 and 20 February 1705). The guardsman in question was not named.

On 5 May 1702, Dreghorn and Baillie John Duncan were asked to 'speak to Ball[i]ndalloch That he restrain his servants, and particularly a son of Ochiltree[']s from wandering the Sabbath after Sermons.'

Ibid., p. [71].

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. [36] (24 June 1701).

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. [27] (29 April 1701).

¹⁴⁵ NLS, MS 1954, p. 92 (24 January 1708).

again, however, the line between kirk authority and the societies was reinforced: though several members of the societies were kirk elders, and were eligible to participate in the Sunday patrols as individuals, they did not do so as members of the societies.¹⁴⁶

Apart from the patrols, witnessing and reporting specific occasions of the commitment of vice and immorality, suppressing them where they could arise, also assumed importance in the societies' proceedings. In 1681, parliament passed a statute 'restraining the exorbitant expense of marriages, baptisms and burials', since the amount of money spent, whether at a brothing, 'lykewake' or 'penny brida[l]' was considered an indicator of the offences which would occur because of the amount of alcohol being purchased and consumed.¹⁴⁷ In April 1704, Sir Walter Pringle and Sir Francis Grant were asked to speak to Sir Hugh Cunningham of Craighend, the lord provost and fellow member of the first society, about 'Making an Act Against Brothing of Town Captai[n]s', brotherings being a form of initiation for new members of particular occupations.¹⁴⁸ The issue had been an annoyance for the societies for a long time already, as the 14 April 1701 correspondent meeting had discussed approaching the magistrates to ask that they stop the practice.¹⁴⁹ It would not necessarily have meant an official crackdown, however: the correspondents had also asked that society members who belonged to incorporations use their influence within the organizations to end brotherings.¹⁵⁰ It was not just the town captains which were a problem. Writers to the signet, the profession of the reformer Nicol Spence, also conducted brotherings, and was cited as another target of the societies in this regard.¹⁵¹ The attempt at suasion did not work, since the first society sought an explicit legislative solution three years later. It did not get one, as Pringle informed the meeting that he had spoken to the moderator of the captains, who had apparently taken action to curb excesses: 'Accordingly at [which?] [the] admitting of 4 or 5 Captains lately there was not spent above 5 [pounds sterling].'¹⁵²

146 On 26 April 1707, the first society 'Recom[m]ended to members who are members of Kirk Sessions or have access to Speak to Ministers within the city and Suburbs, to endeavour to get Kirk sessions to walk in the streets in their parishes on Sabbaths afternoons after the buria[l]s till Six to obli[g]e Standers and Strag[g]lers ther[e]on to go to their houses & Chambers conform to former Laudable custo[m].' *Ibid.*, p. 80.

147 RPS, 1681/7/38, date of access 11 September 2009.

148 *Ibid.*, p. 41 (8 April 1704).

149 EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [27] (29 April 1701). See also pp. [49], [85] and [97] (2 December 1701, 26 January 1703 and 29 February 1704) for other mentions of the issue.

150 *Ibid.*, p. [27].

151 *Ibid.*, p. [29] (13 May 1701).

152 NLS, MS 1954, p. 42 (15 April 1704).

The only laws found to have arisen out of a society proposal were two town council statutes passed in 1704, though one was simply a statement that the council would enforce an act of parliament.¹⁵³ The second society's John Duncan raised them at a meeting in 1703, and following consultation with the first society, it was suggested that the second submit the overtures to the council.¹⁵⁴ The bills were duly passed, one banning card- and dice-playing in public places, 'the occasio[n] of hor[r]id cursing[,] swearing[,] quar[r]elling[,] str[i]fe[,] contentio[n,] covetousnes[s,] tip[p]ling[,] loss of t[i]me[,] neglect of necessary business[,] and many other inconveniences which hath ruined the esta[t]es of many and redu[c]ed them and the[i]r families to povert[y]'.¹⁵⁵ The other, in accordance with the parliamentary act it was reinforcing, stripped burgesses guilty of adultery of their burgess tickets and privileges 'until they produce sufficient evidence of their having removed the scandal according to the practice of the Church and paid the civil penalties.'¹⁵⁶

IX. NEGATIVE RECEPTION

Despite the ambivalence which greeted the societies, few explicit criticisms arose in print. No real worries were voiced over their nature and any conceivable threat they could pose to the establishment. The one document which raised problems with the societies—which, as was common at the time, was anonymous—appeared around 1701, focusing on their existence outside the accepted hierarchy of church courts. If the actions and behaviour of current church elders in the sessions are inappropriate, the writer maintains that the reformers should themselves become elders and replace the incumbents. He expresses concern over 'innovations' which had slowly invaded the practices of the church in the past, and since the societies have no political or ecclesiastical warrant, wonders what their agenda may be.¹⁵⁷ Since ministers—presumably those such as Gilbert Rule and John Hamilton, who had approved the monitory of the first society—were lending their support to the reformers, the General Assembly should address their existence and

¹⁵³ Armet, ed., *Extracts: 1701-1718*, p. 71.

¹⁵⁴ EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, pp. [92] and [94] (5 October and 9 November 1703); NLS, MS 1954, p. 36 (9 October and 6 November 1703).

¹⁵⁵ Armet, ed., *Extracts: 1701-1718*, p. 71.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.* (editor's summary).

¹⁵⁷ NLS, Wod Fol LI, ff. 21-4, 'Reasons [against] the erecting of societ[ie]s for reformation of manner [sic]', f. 21r.

whether such support should be granted without express legislative approval of the church, which, after all, was 's[o] happily and perfectly constitute[d]'.¹⁵⁸ While the writer is not critical of the societies per se, in a nation such as Scotland, where the church has the full support of the civil authorities, their existence and need is questionable.

We can read into this document a concern at the rapid rise of the societies, which by 1703 numbered 13 in Edinburgh alone.¹⁵⁹ Societies are identified in Irvine, Ayr, Glasgow, Perth, Inverkeithing, Linlithgow, and the rural areas of Merse and Teviotdale. Interest was expressed by a man in Inverness, though no mention is made of his success in establishing a society. The second society agreed to pass copies of its documents on to him on 22 November 1700, just over a month after its formal founding in Edinburgh, indicating that information about the societies was spreading quite rapidly.¹⁶⁰ The societies in Canongate and Leith were not included in the count of 13 from Edinburgh, though they were invited to send correspondents to the Edinburgh societies' meetings from time to time.¹⁶¹

Growth in societies reflects concern on the part of other burghs over immorality. In Lanark in 1705, it was made illegal for burgesses to rent houses to 'strangers' visiting the burgh without notifying the magistrates.¹⁶² In Old Aberdeen, the size of marriage parties was limited to four on each side because of problems with drunkenness associated with weddings.¹⁶³ Stirling established a weekly immorality court in 1701, and nominated 'civilisers' to report on infractions to the court, but these measures may have been tenuous due to their renewal in 1708, and Dumbarton established its own court in 1705.¹⁶⁴ Rattray, in the presbytery of Dunkeld, also had an immorality court around this time, though it was held in the church and presided over by a kirk baillie. It appears to have convened when a case needed to be heard, such as of a woman whose harvest fee was to be paid directly to the session as part of her fine for adultery, or of a man discovered fishing

158 Ibid., f. 22r. The writer does approve of the English societies.

159 The minutes at NLS, MS 1954, p. 34 (24 July 1703) refer to a thirteenth society.

160 EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [6] (22 November 1700).

161 Ibid., p. [40] (19 August 1701).

162 *Extracts from the Records of the Royal Burgh of Lanark with Charters and Documents Relating to the Burgh, A.D. 1150-1722* (Glasgow: Carson and Nicol, 1893), p. 271 (1 March 1705).

163 Alexander Macdonald Munro, ed., *Records of Old Aberdeen, MCLVII-MDCCCXCI*, v. I (Aberdeen: New Spalding Club, 1899), p. 166 (3 May 1701).

164 *Extracts from the Records of the Royal Burgh of Stirling, A.D. 1667-1752* (Glasgow: Glasgow Stirlingshire and Sons of the Rock Society, 1889), pp. 95-6, 117 (8 March 1701, 31 January 1702, 16 October 1708); *Dumbarton Burgh Records, 1627-1746* (Dumbarton: n. p., 1860), p. 102 (13 October 1705). Thanks to Dr Karin Bowie for the references on Stirling.

on a Sunday.¹⁶⁵ Finally, Glasgow demonstrated how seriously it took crimes of immoral behaviour when it dismissed one of its town drummers for ‘miscar[ri]ages’ in 1696.¹⁶⁶

Concerns for immorality were evident throughout Scotland, but still the worries of the writer of ‘Reasons’ over the societies’ power to stem such behaviour seem to have been overstated. As noted above, neither civil nor ecclesiastical bodies appeared concerned by the societies’ existence, and their popular appeal was low, anyway. The apathy of civil officials was reflected in the failure to establish constant meetings for the immorality court. As noted above, the ineffectiveness of the courts in prosecuting offenders may have led to the 1701 constables’ strike, demonstrating concern that lack of enforcement might be emboldening those contravening the immorality laws. William Dallas reported to the first society in 1703 ‘That the Constables & their Assistants from the Societ[y], have for some time forborn[e] to go to [the] streets, and other public places, for observing of Immoralities, [which] hath had sad effects of Licen[t]iousness’.¹⁶⁷ Likewise, in 1706, concerns over the constables arose again. The first society ‘recommended to S[i]r Hugh Cunningha[m] To Speak to some of the Magistrat[e]s Concerning the Constables giving their Assistance as formerly for Suppressing of Vice, and endeavour to remove any stop that may have happened thereto.’¹⁶⁸

Progress towards the suppression of immorality was therefore not unimpeded. Aside from apathetic authorities, reformers and patrols were subject to abuse. The most detailed account comes from late April or early May 1704, in the house of one Tennent— possibly Andrew, who had appeared in the second society’s minutes over a year earlier.¹⁶⁹ The victim of the assault, Robert Miller, a clerk of the mint, gave his account to Crossrig, who then passed it along to the first society:

The Constable went to Tennent[']s before [Miller] went and one [with] him[.] [H]earing there was Company there too late That [i.e., the constable] went in to [the] room where the Company was, & they fell upon him and threw glasses at him, and as Mr Mill[e]r went down the clos[e] he heard a noise & having gone up to [the] House he saw no body, but he having gone for [the] Guard[,] when he returned, he saw [Major Ramesay,] brother to [the] L[aird] of Dalhousie standing in [the] door where [the] company was, and he said to the Major, They came not there to use any

165 NRS, VV CH2/525/5, ‘Minutes, Court of Immorality, Parish of Rattray, 1701-3, 1705, 1716’, ff. 5, 7 (31 October 1701, 4 August 1702).

166 *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Glasgow, 1691-1717*, p. 287.

167 NLS, MS 1954, p. 34 (24 July 1703).

168 *Ibid.*, p. 64 (18 May 1706, inserted into minutes for 15 June 1706).

169 *Ibid.*, p. 44 (10 June 1704).

rudeness to Gentlemen, but to acquaint them that it was too late for them to be in the Tavern, and desired they would go their chambers; The Major desired he would gone [sic] to [the] room[.] [H]e declined it, but the Major took hold of him & [hauled] him in, & they who were [in?] there fell on him, [Sir] Th[omas] [Dulsich] took hold of his per[i]wig & threw it on the ground & he was thrown down upon it himself, but not hurt. This he said was all he knew, only he said the So[ldiers] stood still & talk[ed] together & did nothing, That they might have prevented some part of the Abuse, had they done their Duty.¹⁷⁰

The inaction of the soldiers in the tavern shows the ambivalence, or perhaps even antipathy, of those less zealous than the members and constable who were on patrol.

Captain Alexander Stevenson is another example of the societies' frustration with slow immorality prosecutions. Stevenson was a prominent individual in the town, being second-in-command of the town guard.¹⁷¹ Andrew Waddell, a saddler and society member, brought a reputed 'whore' to the guard one night and was himself put in the stocks, allegedly by Stevenson, after telling Stevenson that he was a member of a reformation society.¹⁷² The issue dragged on over the next few months, the second society demanding to know what the result of the affair was and what reparations had been given to Waddell.¹⁷³ The first society was more moderate in its consideration, stating that it would settle for a reprimand, but still desired that the libel be fulfilled.¹⁷⁴ The situation got to the point that Crossrig spoke to the lord provost, Sir Patrick Johnston, 'whose greatest difficult[y] was, that it might endanger [their] Lo[s]ing [the allegiance of the] town Guards, Because the trades have a kindnes[s] for captain stevenso[n] who was [bred] a Goldsmith, and so they might be uneas[y] in consenting to another in his room [i.e., position]'.¹⁷⁵

A prosecution or even a reprimand was politically unpalatable. By November, the second society had accepted the fact that a reprimand was the best they were going to get, though it planned to ask for an assurance that the guards and the soldiers would attend church services on Sundays to encourage them 'to walk more circumspectly'.¹⁷⁶ The next meeting, however, some more 'miscarriages' were attributed to Stevenson, so as before, the second society raised the affair.¹⁷⁷ His status, perhaps, made the issue more crucial than with other figures. Stevenson

170 Ibid., pp. 44-5 (1 July 1704). EUL Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [89] (20 April 1703). Sir George Broun of Colston, one of three men drinking in Tennent's house around midnight the previous Saturday (i.e., approaching the first minutes of the Sabbath), 'did swear & ma[de] treat the Constables'.

171 Armet, ed., *Extracts: 1689-1701*, p. 265.

172 EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [17] (25 February 1701); NLS MS 1954, p. 12 (8 March 1701).

173 EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [26] (29 April 1701).

174 NLS, MS 1954, p. 15 (31 May and 7 June 1701).

175 Ibid., p. 15 (7 June 1701).

176 EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [47] (18 November 1701).

177 Ibid., p. [48] (25 November 1701).

apparently did not bother the societies for much longer, as he is last mentioned in the minutes on 7 February 1702, when the first society disagreed with a public petition for his prosecution and urged instead a more private effort to correct his behaviour.¹⁷⁸ His death in 1704 prevented any further tension.¹⁷⁹

X. ELITES

In addition to abuse from some targets, constables had to contend with mixed signals sent even by the societies. The most significant related to their behaviour to elites. During the strike threat in 1701, the minister who spoke to the constables was to exhort them not merely to 'Zea[l]', but to 'prudence'.¹⁸⁰ The reformation societies urged their patrols to be politic while on duty, discussing special means of tackling immoralities witnessed among 'persons of Quality'.¹⁸¹ On the one hand, this may have reflected the awareness that the society members on patrols were not law enforcement officers themselves, but simply volunteers or civilian censors working out of a concern for morality and godliness in the city. On the other hand, it reinforced to the constables that they should handle certain situations with delicacy. One of the clearest examples is that of the patrols in time of parliamentary sessions. The societies enjoined constables to use 'discretion' in visiting taverns while parliament was sitting, despite the second society's instructions in 1701 clearly stating 'That each Constable after 10 hours at night go through the Taver[n]s within his bounds and require the Master to dismiss his guests and upon refusa[l] that he be Legally prosecute[d]'.¹⁸² Even with the town council's August 1701 statute on closing taverns at 10:00 in the evening, discretion was urged upon constables and society members while on patrol.¹⁸³

The first society did not discuss the issue of 'discretion', but the second society, with its focus on law enforcement, demonstrated a desire to avoid alienating the more powerful members of Edinburgh's elite, since that could have disrupted the campaign, as well. The issue first emerges in March 1701, when the suggested remedy is 'that the Minister of the bounds where the person of

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. [58] (3 February 1702); NLS MS 1954, p. 22 (7 February 1702); see above, p. 42-3.

¹⁷⁹ Armet, ed., *Extracts: 1701-1718*, p. 71, n. 3.

¹⁸⁰ See p. 70 above.

¹⁸¹ EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [18] (11 March 1701).

¹⁸² Ibid., p. [10] (14 January 1701).

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. [5] (29 October 1700); see p. 69, n. 125 above.

qualit[y] Lives may be appl[i]ed to, that he may speak to and admonish him.’¹⁸⁴ Only if the accused persists in immoral behaviour, should he be prosecuted.¹⁸⁵ The issue was of such delicacy that the societies consulted with ministers, who decided that the societies could address it as they deemed appropriate, referring cases to ministers as needed.¹⁸⁶ The term ‘person of quality’ is vague, however, and could apply to a wide range of people, from military officers to nobility. While on patrol, it could have been difficult to recognize who in fact belonged to such a class and were therefore entitled to discreet treatment, particularly if they had been drinking.

In December 1701, not long after the societies had concluded they should consult the higher-class miscreant’s minister to deal with his wayward parishioner, Francis Newton reported to the second society that he had attended the city’s immorality court, ‘where persons of quality were fined for drinking at unseasonable hours and afterwards bound to the peace for some rough words to Constables.’¹⁸⁷ Evidently, discretion was not having much of an effect, and public crimes of immorality were more flagrant among the upper classes than had originally been suspected. In a remarkable motion the next month, the ninth society submitted to the others that:

In respect it frequently falls out That members of societies in their passing through the streets, Do hear persons of good fashion and Quality cursing and swearing when they have none to bear witnes[s] against such, Therefor[e] it is proposed, That the person thus hearing others transgressing as said is, and wanting another witnes[s] may Seriously and gravely send them a short l[i]ne by way of Epistle or Letter, Signif[y]ing That they were observed to be guilty of such or such a vice publi[c]ly, to the great dishonour of God, reproach of religion, and scanda[l] of their profession, And Therefor[e] Exhort and Intreat them to be more watchfu[l] in time co[m]ing, Certif[y]ing if such tender metho[d]s as this does not prevail with them, They may be proceeded against in a Lega[l] way, And that Inconveniencies may be shunned, such Letters are not to be subscribed.¹⁸⁸

The idea of sending an anonymous letter informing a person that he was observed committing a particular act, and had better mend his ways lest he be prosecuted if he continue in this behaviour, is perhaps fitting, considering the societies’ self-image as a private organization of men interested in moral reformation, but such a letter would not be any less disturbing because of it. Considering the notoriety the societies were coming to earn on the streets of Edinburgh, it is questionable whether the letters’ anonymity would have prevented a recipient from deducing their source.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. [18] (11 March 1701).

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. [22] (15 April 1701).

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. [41] (26 August 1701).

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. [51] (16 December 1701).

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. [57] (27 January 1702).

There is a contrast, however, between the ‘cursing and swearing’ cited here, and the late drunkenness and abuse committed by the accused in the hearing Newton witnessed in 1701. The latter cases, presumably as long as they were not committed by members of parliament during a sitting session, were more blatant than an instance of idle swearing, and as such may have been perceived as more harmful to the city’s morals. The next time the phrase ‘persons of quality’ arises in the second society’s minutes is in 1706, and the people in question were indeed handled with discretion: ‘The Societ[y] went through the streets last Saturday night confor[m] to appointment where several delinquents were summoned & on [Mo]nday some compearing were prosecut[ed] & f[i]ned, persons of quality and members of parts in taverns overlooked.’¹⁸⁹

In general, while the language presents an awareness of social distinctions and an attempt to treat offenders of higher social standing with greater delicacy than others, the practice does not show that a blind eye was turned to the delinquency of the upper classes when it was witnessed. Still, part of the dilemma of the Scottish societies was reflected in that of the English reformers, being caught in a culture of deference, where the reformers sought to admonish the elites while still expressing respect due to social position. The elite classes, however, simply did not have the investment in the cause which the reformers did.¹⁹⁰ No nobles were members of societies, the one with the highest status at the time of their height being Crossrig. Support of the establishment was articulated in statutes and proclamations, by town councils as much as by parliament, but maintenance of the institutions provided for in these statutes was inconsistent. Perhaps the greatest threat to the societies’ continued operations, however, was apathy of the members themselves. As private organizations, the societies relied on enthusiasm and motivation of the membership to keep the momentum of reformation.¹⁹¹ This enthusiasm varied, however, as is perhaps demonstrated in the fact that it is only for the first two societies that we have detailed records today.

XI. DECLINE

¹⁸⁹ EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [123] (22 October 1706).

¹⁹⁰ Curtis and Speck, ‘Societies for Reformation of Manners: A Case Study’, pp. 60-1.

¹⁹¹ P. Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, pp. 237-44.

Crossrig bemoaned the loss of presbyterian zealotry in postrevolutionary Scotland, which had transformed by 1699 into spiritual 'lukewarmness'.¹⁹² Membership of the Societies for Reformation of Manners did not make one immune to such accusations, as failure to participate in their activities also demonstrated a lack of commitment. The second society instituted fines for not attending meetings, but also for not attending patrols.¹⁹³ It recorded some desperation over the state of the patrols and even attendance towards the end of the period covered, as in May and October 1705:

It is likewise seriousl[y] desired that members make more conscience of their weekly meetings peremptor[i]ll[y] a[t] the hour appointed and of their weekly going through the streets as is frequently enjo[i]ned and each present is to intimat[e] the above recommendations to members now absent in order to revive so good a work, which is like to drop among our hands by our negligence.¹⁹⁴

The project did not completely fail, at least within the following year and a half, as in July 1707, the society reported that the correspondent meeting had had to consider poor attendance on patrols again.¹⁹⁵ In August, it did manage to send out a complement of members to delate performers of immoral activity.¹⁹⁶ The next year, however, the first society solicited from members 'thoughts on what might [engage] members of other Societies who do not meet to retur[n] to their dut[y]'.¹⁹⁷ The problem of low attendance in general, not merely on patrols, afflicted the societies throughout their existence. As early as 1703, we see accounts of societies not meeting due to lack of attendance.¹⁹⁸ The cooperative nature of the societies' activities made this a bad prospect for such projects as the patrols, as well as a bad reflection of their strength in the eyes of the authorities whose assistance they were eager to gain. More importantly, the possible failure of the reformation campaign would not look well in the eyes of God, considering how Crossrig perceived the blaze which tore through the city the very evening the first society formally constituted itself, as an attempt by Satan to discourage the reformers.¹⁹⁹

The fifth, eighth and thirteenth societies had hiatuses in meetings during the years covered by the minutes, as did the Canongate and West Port societies.²⁰⁰ By April 1705, Sir Francis Grant

192 Home of Crossrig, *Domestic Details*, p. 67.

193 EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [20] (26 [sic] March 1701).

194 Ibid., pp. [108], [110-1] (8 May and 9 October 1705).

195 Ibid., pp. [127-8] (1 July 1707).

196 Ibid., p. [128] (19 August 1707).

197 NLS, MS 1954, p. 96 (18 September 1708).

198 Ibid., p. 34 (24 July 1703).

199 See p. 49 above.

200 NLS, MS 1954, pp. 34, 41 (24 July 1703, 8 April 1704); EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, pp. [111], [118-9] (9

was deputed to write out ideas on how to keep societies from failing.²⁰¹ He duly submitted his overtures on 12 May 1705, but beyond discussing their printing and distribution ‘to Such Members of these Societies as Lament the disease, to make what use they think fit of it of the proposed end [sic]’, the first society did not pursue the issue very far, absorbing themselves in conferences, preparations for communion, quarterly meetings for prayer and for reading of the rules and monitory, and a missed meeting of its own.²⁰²

The most serious concern over a potential failure of a society is reflected in the first society’s minutes about itself in early 1707, when Crossrig was so ill as to prevent his attendance and even the meetings of the society between 14 December 1706 and 18 January 1707.²⁰³ In April, the month of his death, the society reflected a worry that it might not even survive him, ‘the great Spring and Life of it’.²⁰⁴ The emotional aspects of the loss of a close colleague and friend would themselves have been serious enough, but the society still had to consider the practical elements such as its own operations and the loss of such an influential and powerful advocate not only in the city, but also in the country as a whole.

XII. CHARITY SCHOOLS

The Highland charity school project, first raised in 1701, may have given the societies a new sense of purpose by 1707, since they were not in a good condition as they approached the end of their first decade. Membership had declined, four societies in the city were at least in danger of failing, and efforts such as the night patrols were about to collapse.²⁰⁵ Both societies discussed in this chapter did survive Crossrig’s death, though the extent of the second society’s survival is uncertain, due to the abrupt end to its records in December 1707. During that period, they came to achieve their greatest success, helping to lay the foundation for the SSPCK. One of the ironies of the Scottish societies is that they were founded so late, at a time when their English predecessors had started to fall out of favour amidst concerns that the southern societies were addressing the

October 1705, 5 March and 9 April 1706).

201 NLS, MS 1954, p. 52 (28 April 1705).

202 Ibid., pp. 53-4 (12, 19 and 26 May 1705, 2 and 16 June 1705, 7 July 1705, and 9 June 1705).

203 Ibid., p. 68 (18 January 1707).

204 Ibid., p. 70 (12 April 1707).

205 EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [130] (21 October 1707).

symptoms, rather than the causes, of immorality.²⁰⁶ *The Poor Man's Plea*, published in 1698, articulated this concern. Suspicion of magistrates, nobles and other officials pervades the text, criticizing social leaders for not leading by example, thus diminishing the achievements of the revolution:

We the poor Commons, who have always been easy to be guided by the Example of our Landlords and Gentlemen, have really been debauch[e]d into Vice by their Examples: And it must be the Example of You the Nobility and Gentry of the Kingdom, that must put a Stop to the Flood of Vice and Pro[f]aneness which is broken in upon the country, or it will never be done.²⁰⁷

Defoe himself joined the second society in 1707, and was a conduit for information between the societies in London and in Edinburgh.²⁰⁸ Once societies had been established in Scotland, it is likely that the contacts between reformers in each country had developed, as noted in discussions over cross-border correspondence in 1706.

The Scottish societies lent their support to other charitable and even punitive ventures for or against the poor of Edinburgh. In 1702, the societies addressed the issue of the poor, the first society recommending schooling for poor children and the entry of adults on catechism rolls, with the concurrence of the second.²⁰⁹ The second society went further, urging employment of 'vagrant boys'.²¹⁰ It may not be related to the societies' efforts, but the following February, the town council increased the number of the boys employed at the manufactory Paul's Work from 25 to 30.²¹¹ In terms of punitive measures, the first society moved that the people responsible for customs at the town gates be fined if unlicensed beggars be found within the city, giving a financial inducement to the tacksmen not to allow the unlicensed poor to pass through the gates. The beggars themselves were to be monitored by a patrol of cadets, boys who sold newspapers on the streets, who would be compensated three pence out of the fine charged to each unlicensed beggar they turned in to the magistrates.²¹²

The second society, in the context of its own patrols, found street boys to be a menace in 1701:

²⁰⁶ Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 37.

²⁰⁷ EUL, **RR30.5, *Poor Man's Plea*, p. 9. See pp. 46-7, 53-4 above. Underlining in the original.

²⁰⁸ EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, pp. [125-7] (3 and 29 April 1707).

²⁰⁹ NLS, MS 1954, p. 26 (20 June 1702); EUL Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [75] (23 June 1702).

²¹⁰ EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [75] (29 [sic] June 1702).

²¹¹ Armet, ed., *Extracts: 1701-1718*, pp. 40-1.

²¹² NLS, MS 1954, p. 26 (11 July 1702).

some did complain of the great abuse by the Little bo[y]s in the streets, and it was resolved that the magistrat[e]s should be spoken to anent them ... That some course may be taken, That none such be allowed, but such as are [known] to have caution for th[ei]r honest[y], many of them being given to swearing, th[ie]ving, and the occasion of much wi[c]kedness.²¹³

In keeping with their focus on crime and punishment, the second society rarely discussed the issue of education, although it was the focus of the societies' charitable ventures. Most of the deliberations were left to the first society, as far as we know from the records we have. The Highland school which the members subscribed for was established with unwonted efficiency for an effort by the societies, since the first report of its 'wonderfu[l] success' came less than six months after the subscriptions were paid.²¹⁴ The school was under the direction of Daniel Cameron, a preacher at Greyfriars Kirk, though no record appears of him in the *Fasti*.²¹⁵ It is not certain what the language of instruction was at the school. At one meeting, the society suggested it was 'Irish', or Gaelic.²¹⁶ At the next meeting, however, Cameron was reported to be teaching the students in English.²¹⁷ He was apparently not thrilled with the idea of moving up to Abertarff to teach, since he was approached by the 'many honourable and worthy perso[n]s' who were in charge of the venture to do so after an extensive search 'both south and north'.²¹⁸ The extent of the search demonstrates a need to find a Gaelic-speaking master, with the knowledge that even if English were to be taught, the teacher would be required to explain in a language the students were likely to understand more readily. Cameron's origins are unknown, but it is probable that he was a Gaelic-speaker. An account of the SSPCK, a preface to the first volume of the society's minutes, says that the organizers of the school sent 'one ha[v]ing the Irish Language from Edinburgh' to establish it.²¹⁹

Cameron accepted the post on condition that it be only for six months, 'that a foundatio[n] may be laid to so profitable and des[ir]able [a] superstructure designed for the glory of God', and that his place at Greyfriars be kept for him while he was away, conditions the council agreed to.²²⁰ He apparently did return after six months, a new, unidentified teacher going to Abertarff, but

²¹³ EUL, Laing MSS La.III.339, p. [44] (7 October 1701).

²¹⁴ NLS, MS 1954, p. 23 (4 April 1702).

²¹⁵ Ibid.; Armet, ed., *Extracts: 1689-1701*, p. 290.

²¹⁶ NLS, MS 1954, p. 23 (28 March 1702).

²¹⁷ Ibid., 4 April 1702.

²¹⁸ Armet, ed., *Extracts: 1689-1701*, p. 290.

²¹⁹ NRS, GD 95/1/1, *A short narrative*, p. [9].

²²⁰ Armet, ed., *Extracts: 1689-1701*, p. 290.

nearly a year after the first positive reports of the school came to the first society, the school was on the verge of closing down for no other reason than disputes 'among principal persons in the Countr[y] ... about the Situation of the School house'.²²¹ As a foreshadowing of later disagreements between Highland landowners and the SSPCK, the school seems to have been a victim of lairds not wanting to be responsible for building a schoolhouse. Instead of being discouraged, the society discussed ideas 'for Set[t]ling it in a fitter place'.²²²

As will be seen in chapter 5, education in the Highlands and the failure of parish schools to serve the entirety of the region's vast parishes had long occupied both the civil and ecclesiastical authorities in Scotland. The commission for the north and its successors within the General Assembly took an active role in assessing the state of the established church in Highland and low-lying northeastern parishes. Parliament and the privy council had also made attempts to improve education in the Highlands, as witnessed by the laws passed in 1494, 1616, 1633, 1646 and 1696.²²³ Members of the reformation societies pursued a parliamentary statute to establish a fund for Highland charity schools.²²⁴ In neither of the extant minute books does a record of these efforts appear, so they may have been simply an example of a private interest on the part of a few members. While discussions of education in general, not specific to the Highlands, continued in the first society's conferences in 1705, efforts to establish a constant fund for Highland charity schools began in earnest in December of that year.²²⁵ The model, as with the foundations of the reformation societies themselves, was an English network, the SPCK, and in February 1706, members of the first society visited James Kirkwood, the SPCK's Scottish correspondent, in Tranent to discuss the 'Memoria[l]' attributed to him 'about Erecting a Society for propagating christian knowle[d]ge after the Example of England'.²²⁶ Despite the solid presbyterianism of the reformation societies, episcopalian cooperation was sought when it came to charity schools.²²⁷

221 NLS, MS 1954, p. 31 (27 February 1703).

222 Ibid.

223 Kirkwood MSS 3.15, *An Account of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, From Its Commencement, in 1709. In Which Is Included, The Present State of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland With Regard to Religion* (Edinburgh: A. Murray and J. Cochrane, 1774), p. 2.

224 NRS, GD 95/1/1, *A short narrative*, p. [9].

225 NLS, MS 1954, p. 60 (8 December 1705). Alexander Buchan had already travelled to St Kilda by this time, starting work on his arrival in June 1706.

226 Ibid., p. 62 (2 February 1706).

227 Ibid., p. 60 (8 December 1705).

XIII. CONCLUSION

The Societies for Reformation of Manners in Scotland had a significant role in the completion of the Reformation which their founders thought necessary nearly a decade after the Williamite Revolution. Enforcement of blasphemy and immorality laws, both from before and after 1690, appeared to have lapsed, fostering an environment of irreligion which the natural and economic disasters of the 1690s—famines, droughts, crop failures and fires—were indications of punishment for. While the direct inspiration for their foundation came from England, with the account of the societies uncovered by Crossrig in 1699, they had a longer native pedigree, which was both beneficial and detrimental to the cause of reformation. Private prayer and worship groups had existed in Scotland since before the Reformation of 1560, but with mixed reception on the part of the varied church establishments. To avoid suppression or suspicion of treasonous intent, either on a civil or ecclesiastical level, and to avoid associations with earlier conventicles, the societies explicitly denied claims of authority in church or state. They maintained they were simply private groups, to encourage spiritual values among their members and throughout Scotland.

Despite the distinct ecclesiastical and political structures of Scotland and England, however, the societies shared some of the problems of the English societies. Overt criticism from within the church was absent, though some questions over the founding documents did arise in the early days of the movement, but one anonymous critic asked at a time of rapid expansion what the point of the societies was, since the Church of Scotland was established securely and with the support of the civil government. The issue of deference also posed a problem in both countries, since the societies adhered to the idea, but the elites were not as committed to reformation as the society members, and were hence unwilling to serve as the example their nations expected of them. Efforts of the members themselves to set examples in their behaviour often met with ridicule, and occasionally violence, on the streets. Support of the civil authorities was often ambivalent, even if they occasionally responded to the movement by enacting statutes against blasphemy, profaneness and immorality.

The weakness of the Scottish movement is shown in the failure to publish regular reports of

their activities, possibly a result of inconsistent cooperation of secular authorities, as in the immorality courts. Apathy among the reformers themselves was also a factor, as the initial enthusiasm waned and major projects came close to failing or stopped altogether. As with many other private, voluntary societies which were increasing in Britain at the time, the reformation societies were susceptible to fashionability and variations in the interest of their own members. By the end of the first decade of the eighteenth century, extant records for one of the societies stop altogether, while a 31-year gap arises in the other's minutes. The state of organization throughout the decade was very low, and while the increasing interest in Highland charity schools seemed to give the societies a new energy by 1707, the focus on this project gradually shifted to the Committee for Propagation of Christian Knowledge within the General Assembly. Many reformers were active on the committee, though, and would later be involved in the SSPCK, so the societies' contribution lasted beyond their virtual collapse around 1709. The development of charity schools in the Highlands was not the only project in the region in the early eighteenth century, however, and an English connection extended beyond theory into actual participation in the collection and distribution of libraries for poor Highland clergy, as well as a push for distribution of the Gaelic Bible. We will now look at the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in England, the genesis of its activities in the Highlands, and tensions over its programmes with the Church of Scotland.

‘yt ye sending of good Books amongst them may be of considerable advantage towards the rectyfing their mistakes and prejudices’:

The English Connection

The reformation societies in England experienced marginally better success than in Scotland, or at least success that can be quantified. They were organized to the point that they produced reports of prosecutions for morality crimes up until 1738, though the nature of the crimes became narrower as the years passed. This was partly due to changing legal attitudes towards crimes of disorder and the expansion of civil authority over offences of drunkenness, but also to a sense of surrender, that the societies were redefining the offences which would concern them, such as profanation of the Sabbath through drunkenness or labour.¹ Dissatisfaction with the societies’ direction and evidence of their failure to address problems of moral reformation forced a new channel for efforts at reform, in organization of charity education. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge provided a home for these efforts, but it did not originate with charity schools. Thomas Bray, the society’s instigator, began his work with the establishment of a fund for libraries for poor clergy in the colonies, Anglican ministers who tended to be younger men and who could not afford the books necessary for their work. Returning to England, the need for reformation through education in religious principles became evident to him, and he and several friends formed the core of the SPCK in 1699.²

The society contrasted with the later Scottish corporation in several ways, the most significant being that it was not a corporation. Despite debating a corporate charter twice in its first decade, it decided not to go to the expense of pursuing one because of the freedom its nature as a private, member-funded society allowed it. Other differences included the existence of a large network of charity schools in England before the society’s foundation, which meant that the society itself did not establish its own schools, but rather coordinated the work of those which

1 Curtis and Speck, ‘Societies for the Reformation of Manners: A Case Study’, pp. 56-8.

2 Lord Guilford, Sir Humphrey Mackworth, the judge John Hooke and Colonel Maynard Colchester, this last being a charter member of the reformation societies in London and the founder of several charity schools on his own property prior to the SPCK’s creation. Lowther Clarke, *History of the S.P.C.K.*, pp. 9, 54.

already existed, developed teaching standards, and helped forge contacts between governors of new schools and teaching candidates.³ Additionally, the purpose of the English schools was not to foster a broader pool of divinity students which future ministers would come from—part of the reason behind the Scottish schools—but rather to instruct their students in moral behaviour within their social role: deference, not advancement. The SPCK also had a broader field of activities outside of charity education, including moral reformation, overseas and colonial missionary work, and publication of religious texts and commentaries, the last of which continues to this day. As with the reformation societies in England and in Scotland, however, the SPCK's status as a private organization presented some challenges as well as benefits.

Support for religious publishing extended to languages other than English, such as Irish, Welsh and Gaelic. The society had a mixed relationship with the Church of Scotland, however. Its greatest involvement in the Highlands lay in the foundation of libraries for the clergy and divinity students, a reflection of Bray's earlier interest in the American colonies. Members of the SPCK donated books and some, though not much, money towards the project, and a lot of time was spent negotiating between the overwhelmingly Anglican society and the Church of Scotland about regulations governing the libraries and their management. Mutual prejudices and suspicions were evident in these negotiations, but the society, mainly through the intervention of James Kirkwood and its own more open attitude to religious dissenters, was able to maintain its focus on the larger goal of reformation and religious instruction regardless of denomination. This did not mean that the society was tolerant of all dissenting views: even with the Highlanders, it occasionally expressed a wish to convert them or maintain them in episcopalianism, but its greatest intolerance was directed at Catholics, Anabaptists and Quakers.

I. DEFERENCE AND CHARTERS

The origins of the SPCK go back to discontent with the campaigns and activities of the English reformation societies, not merely with officials jealous of their alleged pretensions to authority and churchmen suspicious of these private organizations, but even with supporters. *The*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

Poor Man's Plea, the work attributed to Daniel Defoe, criticized social leaders for not following the encouragement of the reformation societies to amend their behaviour and the societies themselves for not censuring these leaders at the expense of less powerful delinquents.⁴ The accuracy of this claim has come into question, but the fact remains that the deference dilemma—reformers needing to admonish elites, but also to yield to them socially—was hampering the societies' work.⁵ Religious education was marked out as a means of suppressing vice from childhood even at the start of the reformation of manners movement in 1691. Free schools were one of the institutions Sir Richard Bulkeley, one of the instigators of the reformation societies in London, encouraged Mary II to establish,⁶ but it took Bray and the SPCK to give the schools the organizational support they needed.⁷

The original vision was a chartered company to establish parochial libraries in the American colonies and plantations for the benefit of ministers who could not afford their own books. Discussions over the need for a charter would arise several times in the society's early years, not just at its founding in 1699. Following the incorporation of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in 1701, and in 1709, upon the establishment of the SSPCK, the English society rejected the idea of applying for a charter on the basis that incorporation would limit its activities.⁸ As a private society, the members were able to direct its work where they thought it was most necessary. The experience of the gospel society was cited as a factor in the decision: because the charter limited it to work in the American colonies, when it wished to expand to India, it discovered it had to apply for a second charter—an expensive proposition. In fact, the SPCK abandoned most of its plans to work in America, including on the libraries, upon the incorporation of the gospel society because of fears over duplication of efforts, though it continued to appoint corresponding members for each colony.⁹ In 1709, the SPCK considered that it had already been in operation successfully for ten years, so a charter was superfluous to its requirements.¹⁰

The voluntary structure of the society would produce some challenges, similar to those

4 See pp. 53-4, 88 above.

5 Curtis and Speck, 'Societies for the Reformation of Manners: A Case Study', pp. 56, 58.

6 Craig, *Movement for the Reformation of Manners*, p. 10.

7 Lowther Clarke, *History of the S.P.C.K.*, pp. 3, 6. Bulkeley became a corresponding member of the SPCK for Dublin in the society's first year. See Craig, *Movement for the Reformation of Manners*, p. 1, and Lowther Clarke, *History of the S.P.C.K.*, p. 9.

8 Lowther Clarke, *History of the S.P.C.K.*, pp. 14, 87.

9 McClure, ed., *Chapter in English Church History*, pp. 135-6; Lowther Clarke, *History of the S.P.C.K.*, p. 59.

10 McClure, ed., *Chapter in English Church History*, pp. 60-2; Lowther Clarke, *History of the S.P.C.K.*, p. 87.

faced by the reformation societies, but they also provided it with a certain cachet. Voluntary organizations were coming to have a social significance in eighteenth-century Britain, with the emerging middle and professional classes being able to engage in charitable activities which had earlier been limited to the landed and noble classes. The SPCK, with its broader yet less nebulous remit than the reformation societies, was well placed to take advantage of this interest.¹¹ Additionally, where the culture of deference came to harm the work of the reformation societies, it provided an environment where the work of the SPCK could thrive. As we will see with the SSPCK, the emphasis on the Highland schools was improvement of the population: instruction in literacy in English, and instruction in reformed religion in Gaelic and English, were meant to increase individual knowledge of true religion. While social advancement was not intended, for more able male students the path to a career as a minister or a teacher was open, especially due to the need for Gaelic speakers in both professions.¹² In England, however, charity education was to be a reminder of status and of the deference due to one's social superiors.¹³ This idea existed before the society's foundation, since charity schools were spread widely in England by that time, established mostly by local clergy and independent governors.

II. THOMAS BRAY

The original idea for the society arose out of Bray's early work in the American colonies. He had been rector of Sheldon, near Birmingham, until 1695, when he left for a new assignment as the commissary in Maryland for Henry Compton, the bishop of London. An error in the law establishing the Church of England in the colony prevented his departure until 1699, after the SPCK's foundation. Still, upon arrival in Maryland, he intended to stay, but the church's establishment in the colony was under threat, especially from Quakers. Bray was persuaded to return to London to ensure the royal assent to the colonial legislature's act guaranteeing the church's status.¹⁴ He was then able to take an active role in the SPCK, and coordinate the society's

¹¹ P. Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, p. 60.

¹² Michael Robson, *St Kilda: Church, Visitors and 'Natives'* (Port of Ness: The Islands Book Trust, 2005), p. 104. When Alexander Buchan visited Edinburgh in 1710, he brought two boys with him, one of whom he was planning would be his successor.

¹³ Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 4.

¹⁴ Leonard W. Cowie, 'Bray, Thomas (bap. 1658, d. 1730)', ODNB, view/article/3296, date of access 19

efforts to support the ‘plantation libraries’. The libraries were emblematic of his broader commitment to religious development, however, beyond mere reformation of manners, and soon extended to poorer parishes in England itself.¹⁵ Education of parishioners through the clergy was his primary goal, but it was not too long a step to take to get to charity schools, which will be discussed below.

III. INTERDENOMINATIONAL RELATIONS

Apart from the libraries and the schools, the other major category of SPCK activity was publication of religious and theological works. These were seen especially in a missionary context, with the latter also destined for the clerical libraries. As such, religious publications went beyond the British Isles, and were not limited to English. The main target languages in the society’s early days were Welsh, Irish, and also Portuguese, because of the proximity of Portuguese colonies in India, where the society developed a partnership with the East India Company.¹⁶ The missionaries were, however, making an effort to learn local Indian vernaculars to spread their message beyond the more educated native classes.¹⁷ The society also did not have the qualms present in the Church of Scotland or the Church of Ireland about publishing in each country’s respective Celtic languages. Because there was an extant print run of Gaelic texts which had not yet been exhausted, it did not insist on another printing of the Bibles, New Testaments and catechisms, but it did not hesitate to urge the production of Irish and Welsh texts for use of the population.¹⁸

Publications were also directed to communities within England and in Europe. Anabaptists and Quakers, as well as Catholics, were targets of society missions as much as Welsh- or Irish-speakers or native Indians. Still, the society was conscious of its status as a private organization, and while it occasionally adopted a militant stance in its missions—such as its sponsorship of George Keith’s work among the Quakers—it focused on distribution of mainstream Protestant works as an effort to persuade these communities to convert. Keith, a Scottish convert from

September 2010.

¹⁵ Lowther Clarke, *History of the S.P.C.K.*, pp. 6, 79.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 103-6.

Quakerism, travelled through England 'in order to redeem that misguided people to the knowledge and belief of Christ'.¹⁹ In addition, it was able to support him as a group, particularly giving him security in potentially dangerous situations.²⁰ Consolidation of his work once he had moved on was a problem, but relationships between the society and the Quakers were not completely hostile. The Quakers demonstrated openness to relations with Anglicans in the willingness on the part of some to contribute to a second society-sponsored charity school in St Andrew's parish, Holborn, London.²¹ The society, rather than looking exclusively to punish Quakers, Catholics and Anabaptists, demonstrated a desire to persuade them of their errors, a theme which would appear in the SSPCK in its relations with Highland Catholics. Allowing the participation of 'some eminent Quakers' in supporting its charity schools was one means of doing this.²² If the society could enlist 'receptive' members of the sect in support of a charity venture, a connection was established by which they could be converted. The Quakers, meanwhile, may have seen their contributions as a way of earning credibility in the political and social establishment.

On 26 October 1699, the society agreed 'to inform themselves of the practices of the Priests to pervert his Majesty's subjects to Popery.' A note following this item records that a penal act directed at Catholics was passed by parliament soon afterwards, apparently causing the SPCK to set aside its plan and leave such investigations to government bodies.²³ This resignation by the society did not stop clergy from writing for advice, such as Archdeacon Robert Booth in Easington, County Durham, who in May 1700 wrote that he 'Endeavours to gain [the] Dissenters, & particularly the late Converts to Popery.'²⁴ As with the Quakers, the distribution of establishment Protestant texts was the main strategy at regaining Catholic converts into the church, in conjunction with discussions with the ministers. One key text was identified in the SPCK minutes as 'an Address to those of the Romish Communion, &c.'²⁵ The society ordered on 12 September 1700 that the book in question be sent to a Mr Taylor in Wigan, to be distributed to Catholics in

19 McClure, ed., *Chapter in English Church History*, p. 18. Keith's efforts at conversion were in fact the first item to appear in the minutes of the SPCK's first meeting.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid., pp. 55-6.

22 Ibid., p. 56.

23 Ibid., p. 34.

24 Ibid., p. 290, abs. 96.

25 Ibid., p. 79. McClure appears to misidentify this text. He gives the exact title as *A Charitable Address to all who are of the Communion of the Church of Rome*, by Edward, the bishop of Tuam, with no date. Edward Synge became bishop of Tuam in 1716, however, and while he did write a book of that title, it was not published until 1727.

Lancashire.²⁶ Taylor responded at the beginning of October, recording that he had received a whole packet of books and papers, and sent a letter he had written to Catholic gentry in the county along with the copies of the address sent by the SPCK.²⁷ Not all of these engagements were successful. A series of letters from James Talbot, minister at Spofforth, Yorkshire, described ongoing problems with Catholics in his parish. In December 1705, he reported that six Protestant catechetical schools either had been or were being established within 12 miles of Spofforth, and he had written and distributed his own 'Exposition of the Church catechism' for the use of children.²⁸ Talbot had further enlisted local support in repairing and maintaining a schoolhouse, and mentioned two specific individuals whom he had reclaimed for Protestantism.²⁹

The society evidently valued Talbot's writing ability, as Henry Newman, the secretary from 1705, requested that he next address 'a very good, tho[ugh] uncommon Subject (vizt. Great Duty of School-Masters to Promote a Christian Education of Children)'.³⁰ This book would eventually be published in 1707, under the title *The Christian School-master*.³¹ By the time that Talbot began claiming that laws governing Catholics were defective, lacking a provision to ban the lodging of orphaned or abandoned children with Catholic families, which they could accomplish 'without any Colo[u]r of Persecution or Severity', the society seemed to be showing signs of correspondence fatigue.³² It thanked him for the suggestions of a law to be enacted in parliament 'for stopping the great Growth of Popery in divers[e] parts of this Kingdom', but declined to pursue that matter further because, as a matter for the civil authorities to address, it lay outside the society's remit.³³ As with Quakers, therefore, we see a reluctance to act coercively towards Catholics and Anabaptists, even with the enactment of penal laws. A minister in Colchester received a packet of books including an abridgement of a larger work against Anabaptism, which he felt would be 'very useful there, where the Anabaptists swarm, & have lately forged a Miracle in behalf of their Pers[u]asion'.³⁴

Concern about Catholic activities and attempts to dominate Protestants extended even

26 Ibid., p. 79.

27 Ibid., p. 304, abs. 176.

28 CUL, SPCK.MS A1/1, p. 359.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid., p. 364.

31 Lowther Clarke, *History of the S.P.C.K.*, p. 42, n. 1; Jones, *Charity School Movement*, pp. 76-8.

32 CUL, SPCK.MS A1/2-4, p. 5.

33 Ibid., p. 9.

34 CUL, SPCK.MS A1/1, p. 386.

beyond Western Christianity. In 1706, the society discussed Catholic attempts to convince Orthodox Christians of the similarities between their faiths as a means of establishing an anti-Protestant bulwark in the east.³⁵ Even in 1700, William Henry Ludolf, chaplain and secretary to the future Queen Anne's husband, Prince George of Denmark, submitted proposals for a catechism to target 'Greek Christians'.³⁶ The bishop of Chichester, John Williams, agreed to revise it and then have it translated 'by some Greeks at Oxford'.³⁷

IV. LINKS WITH REFORMATION MOVEMENT

Like the reformation societies, and in connection with the charity schools, the society would organize annual sermons as fundraisers, which were accompanied by processions of the schoolchildren through the streets to the hall or church. The sermons were themselves opportunities for instruction, but would also offer to the wider public a look at the work the schools were performing, and were crucial efforts for public relations. They followed on from the reformation societies, with the addition of the processions to demonstrate in a physical sense the impact the SPCK was having.³⁸

The connection with the reformation societies went beyond the sermons and the precedent the reformers provided for the more focused activities of the SPCK, because the society also concerned itself with issues of moral reformation. Instead of encouraging enforcement of laws, however, it wished to encourage moral behaviour by restricting events which could inspire immorality or blasphemy, such as plays. In October 1705, the society distributed a sermon of Arthur Bedford, a minister in Bristol, which excoriated the theatre.³⁹ Upon information that the players addressed in the sermon had left Bristol with the intention of returning to their home city of Norwich, the society organized a committee to visit the bishop of Norwich to enlist his assistance in preventing the company's setting up shop again.⁴⁰ Despite securing his support and calling on the efforts of the city's chancellor and archdeacon, they did not succeed at barring the

³⁵ Ibid., p. 399.

³⁶ McClure, ed., *Chapter in English Church History*, p. 99.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 124.

³⁸ Craig, *Movement for Reformation of Manners*, p. 178; Jones, *Charity School Movement*, pp. 13-4.

³⁹ CUL, SPCK.MS A1/1, p. 347.

⁴⁰ McClure, ed., *Chapter in English Church History*, p. 351.

players from settling that winter.⁴¹ London itself was not immune to the hazards of the stage: the SPCK, sounding much like a reformation society, complained of 'Lewd & Profane Expressions as... particularly appears from a Collection of such like Expressions which were heard to be pronounced Publi[c]ly upon the stage, in the Play-house in the Hay-market Jan. 31 & Feb. 2 [1706].'⁴² Concern for the moral environment of the country was related to that of the students in the charity schools, especially in their homes. Support for boarding schools arose out of worries that moral and religious qualities taught in the day schools would be undermined by their domestic environments. The expense of boarding schools and the inability of the society to inspect them for proper management, however, were prohibitive to its involvement in their development. To resolve this problem, the SPCK sought to develop apprenticeships, to expose children to healthier, more industrious environments and to help them develop knowledge of a trade.⁴³ Contrary to the opinion of Bernard Mandeville, a prominent critic of the society, the apprenticeships were a successful venture due to the demand for charity students to fill them.⁴⁴

V. CRITICISM AND CONTROVERSIES

Like the reformation societies, the SPCK was not free from criticism of its work. Instead of a dilemma of deference, however, it was caught in a dilemma of politics, between the High Church and Low Church. Participation of dissenters marked it out for attacks, with the tory election victory in 1710 forcing dissenters to withdraw from participation in the society and in the schools.⁴⁵ This withdrawal had repercussions following the whig victory in 1713 and the Jacobite rising of 1715, when suspicion increased of Jacobite sympathies in society schools. The removal of dissenter and moderate influence after 1710 resulted in increased tory staffing in the schools, raising accusations of Jacobite mob activity on the part of students.⁴⁶ A battle over the schools occurred in the decade following the rising. Criticism of the society itself was perhaps misdirected: in the first place, government policy after 1710 was directed against dissenters, but it also had limited control

41 Ibid., pp. 352, 355, 362, 414.

42 Ibid., p. 368.

43 Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 47.

44 Ibid., p. 49.

45 Ibid., p. 112.

46 Ibid., pp. 112-3; Lowther Clarke, *History of the S.P.C.K.*, pp. 26-7.

over who was teaching at the schools, or indeed who the school governors were. The SPCK managed as best it could, but when tensions came to a head over a disputed benefit lecture at a reputedly disaffected church in the parish of Chislehurst in 1717 and the discovery of a Jacobite plot in 1722, the society decided to abandon charity day schools as an overly political distraction from religious education, moral reformation, and publishing and missionary work.⁴⁷

Other controversies return to the issue of deference vs advancement, and to the objections of local landowners and nobility to the schools because education could give tenants notions above their station, inspiring them to move off the land. Again, the society emphasized that its schools were intended to instruct the poor in religion in order to confirm them in their place in society, but in response, encouraged modifications in the curriculum to minimize ‘unnecessary’ subjects, such as music.⁴⁸ In a letter to James Talbot in 1705, referring to the eventual *Christian School-master*, Newman suggested a topic he might wish to address:

that the Poor Children taught in the Charity Schools, are sometimes apt to value themselves too much upon their good Education: the Secretary [Newman] was Order[ed] to make Dr Talbot acquainted with it, and desire him in his Intended Treatise to inculcate the Duties of Humility, Obedience, [et]c.⁴⁹

Despite being an organization which allowed charitable impulses of the professional and middle classes to be channeled, removing patronage and charity from the monopoly of the landed classes and nobility, the SPCK schools were seeking to reinforce social deference on the part of its students.

VI. THE GAELIC BIBLE AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

In looking at the involvement of the SPCK in Scotland, we need to return to before the revolution, to the campaign to print and distribute an Irish or Gaelic Bible. Scottish ecclesiastical bodies did not follow through on the momentum in Gaelic Protestant publishing started by the work of John Carswell in 1567.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, Irish clergy went ahead with translations of the Bible—William O’Donnell, archbishop of Tuam, of the New Testament in the 1600s, and William Bedell,

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 120-2.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 80-1.

⁴⁹ CUL, SPCK.MS A1/1, p. 390.

⁵⁰ See p. 6 above.

bishop of Kilmore and Ardagh, of the Old in the 1620s.⁵¹ The philanthropist Robert Boyle arranged for a reprint of these translations in the 1680s, which led to James Kirkwood asking for any remaining volumes to be sent to the Highlands as the best alternative to a lack of any Gaelic scripture at all.⁵² Few New Testaments were available, so the 207 volumes eventually shipped were Old Testaments.⁵³ Beyond the ‘indifference and hostility’⁵⁴ of Lowland Protestants which obstructed distribution of the Irish Old Testaments, however, lay another obstacle, far more integrated into Highland culture: the language of the text itself. Unlike Carswell’s *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh*, whose target audience was the educated clerical classes of Gaelic Scotland and Ireland, the target audience of the Boyle volume was the common Highland Protestant, who was unlikely to be able to read the Classical Common Gaelic both of Carswell’s work and Bedell’s Old Testament. The Classical Gaelic/Old Irish typeface used in the printing of Bedell’s translation also impeded widespread understanding, since even among the educated classes it had fallen out of use by the end of the seventeenth century.⁵⁵ Even Highlanders literate in Gaelic would be unable to read it themselves, defeating Kirkwood’s purpose in pursuing the text’s distribution in the Highlands.

Kirkwood therefore enlisted the help of the Gaelic-speaking Robert Kirk, the episcopalian minister of Aberfoyle, to rewrite the text in a more popular Roman typeface, adapting words and including glosses where necessary to help common readers to understand the book.⁵⁶ Kirk completed this job in 1687, and by 1690, 3,000 Gaelic Bibles had been printed in London and were

51 Meek, ‘Gaelic Bible’, p. 10. Withers gives O’Donnell’s name as Nehemiah Donellan. *Gaelic in Scotland*, p. 33.

52 Boyle also supported Bible publishing in other languages, such as Welsh, Malay and Turkish. Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 18.

53 Whether the translations were printed separately, with Old and New testaments in separate volumes, or in one volume, is ambiguous. The sources alternate between referring to ‘Bibles’ and ‘Old Testaments’, which could be put down to lack of certainty as to what exactly the volumes contained, but Durkacz refers to the ‘Bedell Bible’ and makes no mention of O’Donnell or Donellan. Meek provides clarity, writing that Boyle had reprinted each translation at different times: the New Testament of O’Donnell in 1681, Bedell’s Old Testament in 1685. Kirkwood himself also helps us when he tells how Boyle

bestowed 200 Bibles in the Irish character containing only the Old Testament (most of the New Testaments which he caused to be printed being before send into Ir[e]land) for the use of the Highland Churches to be read publi[c]ly when the people were assembled. He bestowed l[i]kewise about a [dozen] New Testaments in the Irish character upon the Same desig[n].

See Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 19; Meek, ‘Gaelic Bible’, p. 14; and NCL, Kirkwood MSS 3.2.2, ‘A Memoriall About the Irish Bibles &c.’, p. 3.

54 Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 16.

55 Meek, ‘Gaelic Bible’, p. 14.

56 Ibid.

ready to ship to Edinburgh.⁵⁷ During the seventeenth century, however, Scottish Highlanders were not inactive in producing Gaelic versions of religious texts. The synod of Argyll produced translations of the catechisms, the Psalms and the Bible itself, to accompany Carswell's earlier work.⁵⁸ The earliest recorded publication was in 1630, a translation of John Calvin's *Catechism of the Church of Geneva*, printed in Classical Common Gaelic as *Adtimchiol an Chreidimh*.⁵⁹ Vernacular Gaelic eventually made its way into the synod's translations, as in its second edition of the Shorter Catechism, published in 1659.⁶⁰ Despite the suspension of the governing structure of the Church of Scotland during the Cromwellian occupation, the 1650s were a high point for the synod's work in producing Protestant Gaelic texts. The first edition of the Shorter Catechism, in Classical Gaelic, appeared in 1653, and an edition of the first 50 psalms appeared in 1659.⁶¹ The synod also called for a translation of the Old Testament in 1657, though this reflected work which was already ongoing, and progress continued following the restoration, despite the ejection of many of the ministers working on it.⁶² By 1673, it is likely that an Old Testament was available, though the text has now been lost. The synod's efforts were not entirely fruitless, but in terms of publishing an actual Bible, they appear to have been the victim of 'a lack of finance and of the religious and political turmoil of the times'.⁶³ With the publication of Boyle's edition in London the following decade, despite its linguistic and typographical differences with Scottish vernacular Gaelic, any momentum towards completing the synod's edition was lost.⁶⁴ For Durkacz, since Kirkwood had to pursue the only option available for immediate distribution in the Highlands, the Bedell Old Testament, he committed 'a tactical error which set back the cause of Gaelic literacy by more than half a century.'⁶⁵

57 Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 20.

58 Meek, 'Gaelic Bible', pp. 11-2.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

60 *Ibid.*

61 Kirk's first effort at translation, a warm-up for his later revision of the Bible, was a complete Psalter in 1684, including his own version of the first 50 Psalms. When the complete synod of Argyll edition was published in 1694, however, it became the standard. *Ibid.*

62 *Ibid.*; Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 16; Mactavish, ed., *Minutes of the Synod of Argyll, 1639-1651*, p. xix.

63 Meek, 'Gaelic Bible', p. 12; Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 16.

64 Meek, 'Gaelic Bible', p. 12.

65 Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 18. In a letter of uncertain date to an early biographer of Robert Boyle, Dr William Hatton, Kirkwood wrote that 'endeavours were used in Scotland to procure another impression; but in this attempt we met not with success. The first encouragement that was given me to go on with it in this Kingdom [England], was by the worthy Mr Boyle, who told me he would subscribe for printing one hundred bibles.' NLS, MS 821, p. 266.

Both versions of scripture distributed in the Highlands were printed in London. The earlier edition, in the Old Irish typeface, arrived in Edinburgh in 1688, but was slow to be distributed—ten years later, only 109 of the 207 copies had been sent to the Highlands.⁶⁶ Durkacz writes that the delay may have been due to a ‘distrust’ on the part of the ascendant, then ruling presbyterian party of an episcopalian translation.⁶⁷ Kirk produced 3,000 copies of his amended Bible, 3,000 copies of a catechism by Laurence Charteris, and 1,000 copies of a New Testament, not long after the Bedell Old Testaments had arrived in Scotland.⁶⁸ Kirkwood and Kirk experienced even more difficulty getting them distributed according to Boyle and Kirkwood’s original designs than they did with the earlier impression. Even the shipment from London to Edinburgh took about four years to complete.⁶⁹ When the books finally arrived, the distribution was not only slower than the instigators of the scheme had hoped, but also directed to areas which they did not intend: the universities and the synod of Argyll.⁷⁰ The General Assembly was making it less likely that ordinary worshippers would have access to them, and allowing ministers and divinity students to have priority. The use of Gaelic in church services would therefore remain oral and aural, ministers preaching and congregations praying in the language, but reading discouraged.⁷¹ Kirkwood was not helped by the fact that Boyle had died in 1690 and Kirk in 1692, leaving him as the sole voice consistently pushing for a vernacular Bible, or as close as he could get to one, in the Highlands.⁷²

The church’s focus in the distribution of the Bible was therefore on the education of the

66 Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 19.

67 Ibid. Note, however, that the Synod of Argyll’s translation of ca 1673 was not pursued—perhaps the momentum had simply been lost, and the renascent General Assembly unwilling to push for completion of the synod’s work, even in a presbyterian context. Funding may also have been unavailable. Meek, ‘Gaelic Bible’, p. 12.

68 Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 20; Meek, ‘Gaelic Bible’, p. 14; Kirkwood MSS 3.2.2, p. 3. In this same document, Kirkwood writes that 6,000 Gaelic catechisms had been printed, though this may simply have been a mistake.

69 Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 21.

70 Ibid.; Kirkwood MSS 3.2.1, p. [2]. The MSS accounts of deliveries date either from 1696 or 1698, and indicate that 1,770 Kirk bibles had been sent out: 1,000 to the synod of Argyll; 300 to parishes in Perthshire, Dumbartonshire and Caithness; 150 to the presbytery of Ross; 100 to Lord Murray [sic]; 100 to the presbytery of Tain; 60 to Culloden, possibly Duncan Forbes of Culloden the elder, for six parishes near Inverness; and 60 to the presbytery of Dumbarton.

71 In 1660, the synod of Argyll pushed ministers and schoolmasters to teach their pupils to read its own translation of the Psalter and the Shorter Catechism. Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 17. After its re-establishment in 1690, the General Assembly encouraged the synod to produce further editions of its translations, but the eventual use of these texts is questionable—especially for the catechism, whose contents were more suited for oral communication. BHO, 1690 General Assembly, Act XI, date of access 30 June 2010.

72 Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 23: ‘To Kirkwood must go the credit for pressing on Scottish Presbyterianism the concept, fully supported by the scriptures, that all peoples have a right to the Word of God in their mother tongues....’

clergy, advancing their literacy in Gaelic and their retention of the language as divinity students to facilitate preaching in the Highland vernacular. With a limited target audience for Gaelic-language education, the church would need to exert less effort and less time in instructing people in Gaelic literacy, especially since Highland commoners were unaccustomed to reading in Gaelic to begin with. However unconsciously, Bible distribution in the Highlands ended up a parallel with the colonial parochial libraries scheme the SPCK had in view at its foundation: religious education for the people, through the filter of the clergy.

VII. JAMES KIRKWOOD

Several of the varied interests of the SPCK—vernacular religious publications, parish and clerical libraries, and charity schools—were reflected in Kirkwood himself, who became for Scotland essentially a one-man SPCK. He had served in the 1670s as chaplain to Sir John Campbell of Glenorchy, later earl of Caithness and of Breadalbane. A native of the Dunbar area, Kirkwood was ordained to Minto, in the Scottish Borders, in 1679. In November 1681, he was deprived for refusing to take the Test, and by 1685, was rector in Astwick, Bedfordshire. He was removed as a nonjuror in 1702, and never served in a parish again. The SPCK selected him as a corresponding member for Scotland on 4 March 1703, and by the end of 1704, he had returned to Scotland, to the presbytery of Haddington.⁷³ This was in Tranent, where the first Edinburgh reformation society visited him in 1705.⁷⁴ He was in line to be a founding member of the SSPCK, but possibly died before the society had its first meeting in November 1709, and certainly by April 1710.⁷⁵ His scrupulous cataloguing of his correspondence with the society in England and with Scottish figures such as George Meldrum and William Carstares are invaluable for the research of this subject, and includes summaries of some of his own letters in addition to the ones he received.

Kirkwood had long been concerned for his health. In a letter dated 28 July, probably 1701, he wrote to the Scottish-born Gilbert Burnet, bishop of Salisbury, that ‘I have Reason to have

⁷³ Murray C. T. Simpson, ‘Kirkwood, James (*b. c.*1650, *d.* in or after 1709)’, ODNB, view/article/15682, date of access 8 February 2010.

⁷⁴ See p. 85 above.

⁷⁵ Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 30. Kirkwood was not present at the SSPCK’s first meeting, and was not named to the committee.

another world more in my thoughts than this and therefore I am willing so long as I can do a little for the honour of my great Master not to be wanting to such opportunit[ie]s as present themselves.⁷⁶ It is in this letter that Kirkwood first mentions the establishment of libraries in Highland parishes, though he writes that his plan is ‘no hasty and rash project’, having discussed it with Kirk as far back as ten years before.⁷⁷ One main reason for his delay in pursuing the project was, again, what must have been an ongoing illness through the 1690s, from which he was still suffering when he wrote to Burnet.⁷⁸ He had earlier feared a lack of encouragement, but the formation of the SPCK and the success of its first two years, especially of its activities in the colonies, convinced him that the time was right to broach the issue seriously—even if his recovery was not complete:

the great examples of zeal and Charity which this time affords together with the great success which I have always observ[e]d to attend the pious Endeavours of good men have not a little animated and disposed me once more to try what may be done for the real Interest and advantage of those of our native Country who have most need of our help.⁷⁹

Kirkwood applied Thomas Bray’s ideas behind the colonial parochial libraries to the Scottish Highlands, that the livings in the region were so small and the willingness of lairds and landowners to support the clergy so tenuous, that external intervention was necessary. A plan for the establishment of parochial libraries in the Highlands was printed, likely written by Kirkwood in 1701, though no name is attached to it and the only time the year is mentioned is in an archival entry for a manuscript draft.⁸⁰ For the Quaker threat in Maryland, the author substitutes ‘[t]he great industry of the *Romish* Missionaries’, which ‘makes [it] necessary for [Highland clergy] to be tolerably provided with such Books, as may enable them to encounter their Adversaries.’⁸¹ He also cites the ‘Impostor’, and his ‘late endeavours to reduce the Inhabitants of the Isle of *Hirta*, or *St.*

⁷⁶ The year is missing, but a second letter from Kirkwood to Burnet, dated 22 August 1701, also refers to an account about to be printed or recently printed which was mentioned in the July letter. Kirkwood MSS 3.6.2; Kirkwood MSS 3.6.1, p. [2].

⁷⁷ Kirkwood MSS 3.6.1, p. [1].

⁷⁸ Ibid. His poor health was evidently still in mind when George Meldrum wrote to him in 1706, ‘I am glad for the account I have of your health in your last.’ Kirkwood MSS 3.6.3.

⁷⁹ Kirkwood MSS 3.6.1, p. [2].

⁸⁰ Kirkwood MSS 3.9, ‘An Account Of a Design to erect Libraries In the Highlands of Scotland: As Also, in *Orkney* and *Schetland*, For the Use chiefly of Ministers, Probationers, and Schoolmasters.’

⁸¹ NRS, CH1/2/24/1/1, f. 1, *An account of a Design about erecting some Libraries in each Presbytery of the Highlands of Scotland (being in all about twenty) for the use chiefly of Ministers, Probationers, and Schoolmasters.* Shetland and Orkney, while included in the plan as outlined in the manuscript, were given less priority in the printed version, ‘if it shall please God to bless our endeavours with success’. Italics appear in the original.

Kilda, into a state of Heathenism'.⁸² The justifications for the campaign, however, were not solely negative. Rather, the author recognizes the abilities of the ministers, especially in raising support for charitable efforts among wealthier laymen in their parishes. Additionally, the libraries would benefit the future of the ministry, since probationers or students intending to pursue a career in the church 'cannot acquire any tolerable measure of necessary and useful knowledge, unless they are furnish[e]d with a sufficient number of good Books.'⁸³

To generate support for the scheme, the author expresses hopes that both Scottish and English donors for the Irish and Gaelic scriptures will help to realize it. Oddly, despite the numerous problems which Bible distribution was encountering—supplies were still not depleted⁸⁴—he maintains that 'the success of [that] Charitable work, through God's Blessing, hath been very great, even beyond our hopes'.⁸⁵ It is likely the author prevaricates because he wishes to avoid any concern on the part of the English donors about the ability or willingness of the Scots to follow through on the stated designs of a charitable scheme, concern which led later to considerable tension over the libraries. In the SPCK minutes, we see no reference to worries over the delays and obstacles to efficient distribution of the Bibles, even though it had not been completed by the time the society was founded. The SPCK, though, was directly responsible for supplying the libraries and devising the rules to ensure the collections would be maintained and cared for, to the point that many of its own publications and its members' books comprised the catalogues. The 1701 document stated that collections had already begun, and invited potential donors to send books or money to Isaac Ewer, Thomas Bromfield or Vigerus Edwards, the latter two both active members of the SPCK.⁸⁶

VIII. THE HIGHLAND LIBRARIES

Kirkwood's active direct involvement with the SPCK, however, dates to his nomination as a

82 Ibid. See pp. 191-2.

83 NRS, CH1/2/24/1/1, f. 1.

84 Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 21.

85 NRS, CH1/2/24/1/1, f. 1.

86 Ibid. The manuscript draft invites prospective donors to visit Edwards and another SPCK member, Samuel Brewster, to view the books which have already been donated. Kirkwood MSS 3.9, p. 2.

corresponding member for Scotland.⁸⁷ The Highland libraries campaign was beginning to move into high gear, and a formal proposal had been read the previous month. In March, the General Assembly in Scotland appointed a committee to consider the scheme, which included George Meldrum, the moderator of the assembly and a frequent correspondent with Kirkwood about the libraries. Despite the fact that most of the books and funding for the libraries were to come from England, support was still sought from Scots 'of a publi[c] spirit' to contribute books which had been printed in Scotland.⁸⁸

Two possible reasons existed for this desire to include domestically produced books in the library catalogues. The first was the extensive rules for the libraries, which, as Kirkwood informed Meldrum in August 1703, had to be agreed with the SPCK before the society would send any of its volumes north.⁸⁹ The assembly accepted the rules on 29 March 1704, the same day it passed an act officially approving the scheme.⁹⁰ A resentment over the rules, which were forced upon the church because of the SPCK's donations, may have pushed it into seeking a way to have more control over the libraries and their catalogues. The second was the fears over the contents of the books being donated, similar to those over the Gaelic version of the Bible which Boyle, Kirk and Kirkwood, three episcopalians, sought to have distributed in the Highlands. One rule limited the circulation of certain books, since some were bound to be in such high demand 'That to lend them abroad were the ready way to frustrat[e] the design.'⁹¹ The synod or presbytery where the library was located was able to decide what books should be restricted, showing that there was some flexibility with regard to the rules. The flexibility likely extended to the second category of books with limited circulation, 'erroneous books' which were not 'to be lent to Gentlemen [i.e., non-clergy], without a particular License or Commission from the Presb[y]tery.'⁹² To a certain degree, the presbyterian Church of Scotland and the predominantly Anglican SPCK could agree on what an 'erroneous' book would be, and the subjective interpretation of the word may have allowed the SPCK to approve the rules despite its awareness of the differences which could arise.

The church had reasons for including books in the libraries which could pose a challenge to

87 McClure, ed., *Chapter in English Church History*, p. 217.

88 NRS, CH 1/2/23/1, f. 81.

89 NRS, CH1/2/23/4, f. 289.

90 NRS, CH1/2/24/1/1, f. 4; BHO, 1704 General Assembly, Act XVII, date of access 19 August 2010.

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid.

presbyterian orthodoxy, other than avoiding a demonstration of ingratitude for the donations. It intended these books to ensure clergy and divinity students had a knowledge of theological ‘controversy’ and thus counter their adversaries, relying on their previous education to prevent them from falling victim to non-presbyterian, or even non-Protestant, ideas.⁹³ Lay worshippers, however, did not have clerical education in theology and divinity, and hence did not have the background to resist such ideas. Their access to controversial books was therefore restricted, if not forbidden, but even their overall access to the libraries was limited. The libraries were not ‘public’ in the modern sense of the word, and differed from the Irish/Gaelic scriptures and the charity schools later established by the SSPCK in one key way: they were not directed at the average worshipper. Instead, their influence had a filter of the clergy, probationers and divinity students, and the lay sponsors who had the status to serve as ruling elders. Rule 6 of the presbyterial libraries said that the only laypeople to have borrowing privileges were ‘such Gentlemen and others as shall be benefactors to the value of T[w]enty S[h]illing St[e]rling [£1]’.⁹⁴ The circle of exposure to controversial opinions, therefore, was to be kept as small as possible, but the inclusion of pamphlets in many of the libraries argues for common worshippers being allowed to borrow more cheaply produced texts.⁹⁵

Support for the scheme within the SPCK was not universal. Kirkwood was forced to provide answers to various ‘objections’. Three of these answers remain, and, as was common for other movements at the time, serve as a source for the nature of the objections themselves. Kirkwood is described as ‘giving the Society satisfaction about the Librar[ie]s for the Highlands in Scotland’ in November 1703, though this ‘satisfaction’ may have been Kirkwood’s approval of descriptions of the scheme which the society was directing to correspondents around England.⁹⁶ Six months later, he was confronting explicit SPCK objections to the scheme, likely one of the three included in the Kirkwood Collection at New College Library in Edinburgh, which Edmund McClure dates to 25 May 1704.⁹⁷ Kirkwood’s own description of the manuscript gives a reason for

93 BHO, 1695-6 General Assembly, Act XXII, date of access 19 August 2010: ‘that they be tried not only in the great controversies of religion, but also in the controversies concerning the government and discipline of the Church.’

94 NRS, CH1/2/24/1/1, f. 4.

95 Catalogues of the libraries are available in Kirkwood MSS. 1.

96 McClure, ed., *Chapter in English Church History*, p. 247.

97 *Ibid.*, p. 274. The manuscript is not dated other than the year, but no other mention of objections is made for the remainder of 1704.

his submission, 'Several of [the] Society both Residing & Corresponding Members being very much prejudiced against [the] design'.⁹⁸ His refutation of objections to the plan parallels his earlier answers to objections against printing the Irish Bible, from 1699, and, significantly, came two months after the General Assembly accepted the rules for the Highland libraries and gave official thanks to the SPCK for its support. The assembly's act established the libraries and made possible their transportation to Scotland, but it also provided Kirkwood a means of showing the SPCK that the assembly was not as hostile as the society had feared to the prospect of English and episcopalian interference in Scottish religious opinion. Of the six major objections Kirkwood answers in his paper, the passage of the act and the General Assembly's expression of gratitude provides a reply to the first, that 'they who are in [the] Government will sell or bur[n] or change [the] Books, [the] ruling party there being presbyterians[,] enemies to [the] Church of England.'⁹⁹ For Kirkwood, this official recognition and acceptance of the society's charity will prevent any such alteration to the scheme. He goes so far as to accuse members of the society of an ingrained prejudice, since the church's acceptance of the rules and the SPCK's ultimate oversight should be 'sufficient to satisfy those who are unbiased.... As for others it is in vai[n] to make any answer to them.'¹⁰⁰

A second objection was that English support for Highland libraries would encourage rebellion, but Kirkwood dismisses this. Persistent rumours of a plot to restore 'the prince of Wales' (the son of James VII and II) are not a reason not to proceed with the scheme, a negative impulsion, but indeed are a positive reason to press ahead with it: 'Books of Good and Solid divinity' will be a means to suppress any potential rebellion and 'to prevent faction and Sc[h]is[m]'.¹⁰¹ Thirdly, the SPCK objectors felt that schools would be a more worthwhile way of combating religious ignorance in the Highlands, but Kirkwood responds that not only is there too much work for the society in establishing schools in England, any efforts will be redundant since both the Scottish parliament and the General Assembly have passed acts providing for universal parochial education throughout the country.¹⁰² The SPCK needs not to lose sight of one of its fundamental

⁹⁸ Kirkwood MSS 3.5.1, p. [15v.]; BHO, 1704 General Assembly, Act XVII, date of access 19 August 2010.

⁹⁹ Kirkwood MSS 3.5.1, p. [2].

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. [3].

¹⁰¹ Kirkwood MSS 3.5.2, p. [2]; Kirkwood MSS 3.5.1, p. [4].

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. [5]. This rebuttal was repeated by the society itself in 1712 to James Greenshields after his victory against the Church of Scotland in his trial before the House of Lords, that it should not seek to establish

tasks, the establishment of charity schools in England, which the donation of books and money to Scotland will not interfere with. This also served as a reply to the argument about libraries encouraging rebellion: books are not guns, after all, and the money which had been donated was so low (approximately £100 sterling) that any hypothetical rebels would not be able to get far.¹⁰³ Society opponents to the scheme also voiced the opinion that the times were too unsettled to involve themselves in such a volatile region. Kirkwood takes almost an existential outlook here, that the uncertainty of life did not allow 'good and wise men' to avoid doing what good they could.¹⁰⁴ His sense of mortality may also have influenced his argument: 'we know not what one day may bring forth, our time being shor[t], and uncertain'.¹⁰⁵ He cites the examples of the religious and reformation societies as examples of charitably minded men not waiting for 'settled' times to pursue their projects.¹⁰⁶

A fifth argument suggests that the Scots did not require assistance from others for libraries, a point Kirkwood dismisses with the evidence that the General Assembly itself had already accepted the society's help. Only 'such as are ignorant of [the] state and condition of Scotland in General and of [the] Highlands and Is[lan]ds in particular' could make that objection.¹⁰⁷ He does not hold the situation to be universal, of course: those who were able to help 'desire not to be excused' from offering their support, but the limited ability of Scots to support the libraries themselves required the aid of the English society.¹⁰⁸ The final major objection Kirkwood addresses is the concern that donations would be ignored, especially since so many of the books contributed were those of episcopalian authors. The presbyterian prejudice of many Scots meant they would not avail themselves of the libraries, and the evidence cited by the objectors demonstrated a lack of interest in libraries which were already running. Kirkwood's response to the first part of this objection is that he has promised Meldrum that the Scots would be informed of the titles to be sent, and again, that the General Assembly had officially accepted the scheme. As for the second, the current libraries may simply not have been organized properly or not put in areas where they were

its own charity schools in the Scottish Highlands because it would intrude on the SSPCK. Tristram Clarke, 'Politics and Prayer Books: The Book of Common Prayer in Scotland, c. 1705-1714', *Edinburgh Bibliographical Society Transactions*, v. VI (sessions 1987-2005), pp. 65-6.

103 Kirkwood MSS 3.5.1, pp. [6-7].

104 *Ibid.*, p. [9].

105 *Ibid.*

106 *Ibid.*

107 *Ibid.*, p. [10].

108 *Ibid.*

truly needed, liabilities which the SPCK-sponsored plan would avoid.¹⁰⁹ Regardless of the undeniable lack of willingness of some Highland clergy to use the libraries, it was still the duty of the SPCK to support the scheme, as a minister's refusal to maintain his knowledge of reformed religion was not a reason to deny him the ability to do so:

Now were it not a very mad and wicked thing to infer from hence, because too many will not use or perhaps [do] abuse [the] means of grace therefore it is to no purpose at all to use any [endeavours] towards [the] instructing and directing men what they ought to [do] to be saved?¹¹⁰

The libraries were, therefore a necessary means of maintaining religious knowledge in the Highlands, but some points in Kirkwood's argument are missing from the correspondence with Meldrum, points which served as additional justifications in the eyes of the English society. The donations of books would 'be of considerable advantage towards the rect[i]fying their mistakes and prejudices'.¹¹¹ The sentiment of gratitude on the part of the Scots would not simply make them receptive to further charity, but also to English ideas on ecclesiastical government. Significantly, apart from the conversion of Scots from presbyterianism, the libraries would also benefit extant episcopalians, 'of whom Several are continued in their stations by [the] favour and power of their patrons, [which] is very great and considerable in [the] Highlands.'¹¹²

Kirkwood presented two other 'answers to objections', possibly at the same meeting of the SPCK—no other references to objections appear in the minutes. Both deal with specific issues, rather than with the campaign as a whole, namely the succession to the throne and to the list of books. The context for the second answer was concern among the English of the Scottish Act of Security in 1703, which maintained that the Scots had the right to select their own monarch upon the death of Queen Anne. English fears of the reinstatement of the Catholic line of the late James VII and II, embodied in his son James, aroused concerns that the investment in libraries would be forfeited should such a restoration happen in Scotland. The objection, Kirkwood writes, was not without reason, but those who subscribed to it had not thought the matter through. While the succession was a worldly matter, the libraries were spiritual, and concerns over who was

109 Ibid., pp. [11-2].

110 Ibid., pp. [12-3].

111 Ibid., pp. [3]. In his 'Answer to the Objec[tion ag[ains]t our list of Books', Kirkwood described the restraint in sending books to Scotland which dealt with church government. The organizers of the campaign were instead operating more subtly, sending along older works as 'the most probable way to rectif[y] [presbyterians'] Mistakes.' Kirkwood MSS 3.5.3, p. [2].

112 Kirkwood MSS 3.5.1, pp. [4].

occupying the throne were irrelevant. Similarly, Scottish disputants over the succession were only seeking liberty of trade, itself a worldly matter. Again, the libraries campaign was completely separate, an ecclesiastical issue. Kirkwood reiterates his argument from the longer answer, that if the libraries were a Jacobite plot, in terms of content they would be even more necessary if James 'VIII' returned, due to the 'grea[t] danger of popery'.¹¹³

The third answer came out of concerns Meldrum cited in the early days, that presbyterians would suspect a bias towards episcopalian writers in the books making up the donations. Meldrum promised he would inform Kirkwood of any suspicions being voiced, but as yet had mentioned none. Objectors' fears may have arisen from a perception of sending too many episcopalian works to be put in the libraries, hence alienating Scottish presbyterians. Kirkwood replies by emphasizing that books explicitly addressing church government were only being sent to 'genera[l] Librar[i]es', possibly the one destined for Inverness.¹¹⁴ Besides, he suggests that charity would be a better way to persuade presbyterians than disputation, and that the Scots would not look disparagingly upon the donations because 'They do mind this Affair in good Earnest; So it is very evident [that] they look upon it as absolut[e]ly necessary for Ministers, to have Books of all parties, even of such as they Esteem to be heretica[l]'.¹¹⁵

The arguments sufficed to convince the scheme's detractors, or at least to marginalize them within the society, so that collections of books and funds continued throughout 1704. In the meantime, debates were ongoing within Scotland about the libraries and the extent to which Scottish bodies and individuals could contribute to their maintenance. As noted above, the libraries committee of the 1703 General Assembly issued the recommendation that presbyteries seek support from heritors and other potential lay donors, especially for buying books printed in Scotland.¹¹⁶ Letters sent from the assembly's commission in the summer of 1703 included this request, and the replies which came in varied from the enthusiastic to the negative. The ministers of the synod of Argyll, meeting in Inveraray in October, each agreed to contribute ten merks per year starting from Martinmas (11 November), and hoped that 520 merks [£28] would be the total

113 Kirkwood MSS 3.5.2, p. [2].

114 See p. 111.

115 Kirkwood MSS 3.5.3, p. [1].

116 See p. 104.

annual contribution throughout the synod once all of its parishes were settled.¹¹⁷ Hector Munro, in Caithness, replied to Meldrum in August that no donations were forthcoming from the gentry or the clergy, since the parish livings for the latter did not even meet the legally required minimum.¹¹⁸

As with one of the SPCK's objections to the scheme, the synod of Glasgow and Ayr held the opinion that schools and catechists should take priority over libraries. It therefore chose to dedicate the bursaries over the following two years to the benefit of students from the Highlands, an idea included in the letter sent from the committee.¹¹⁹ No donations for the support of the libraries were recorded, and Robert Wylie, the minister of Hamilton and member of the libraries committee, appears to give the impression that the committee shared the opinion about priority for schools.¹²⁰ The synod hoped the commission would pass along its suggestion to the sponsors in England, since its ultimate intention was similar to theirs:

As [you] see it needfu[l] It's hoped [you] will inform these in England that there are with us some [endeavours] to keep forward at Le[a]st their design tho[ugh] for present the [methods] proposed be not altogether the same And it[']s not unlike[ly] upon a representa[ti]on from [you] they may not whol[l]y dislike them.¹²¹

The synod was not alone in its doubt of the effectiveness of libraries. William Miller, moderator of the presbytery of Meigle, cited the synod's decision in his letter to Meldrum in January 1704 to the same effect, that schools and ecclesiastical personnel—ministers, catechists and masters—were more important than libraries. Unlike the synod, however, the presbytery pledged 100 merks (£5.11.1 1/3 sterling), each attending minister contributing £8 Scots (13s. 4d. sterling). Despite their misgivings over libraries, the presbytery felt that whichever project the commission chose to pursue would be worth supporting. Lay contributions were not likely, though, since many of the local heritors were episcopalian, and presbyterian involvement in the scheme had tainted it.¹²²

Kirkwood, however, was disconcerted by the suggestion that the society's scheme should be abandoned, even for schools. In a letter to Meldrum four days after Miller's, Kirkwood writes that while he recognized the need for schools in the Highlands, he would not even approach the

¹¹⁷ NRS, CH1/2/24/1/1, f. 8.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 12.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 2. See p. 42 above.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*, f. 17.

SPCK with the idea that libraries should be put on hold in their favour.¹²³ He was already having to contend with misgivings about the scheme, which, though not detailed until Kirkwood's response to the society of May 1704, must have been serious enough to warn Meldrum about the risks to the scheme posed by suggestions of its postponement or alteration.¹²⁴ Kirkwood specifically mentions the problems of selling books to fund schools, but no such suggestion was made by the synod of Glasgow and Ayr or even by the presbytery of Meigle. Having an eye on the success of the scheme and potential future charitable ventures, he recommends the maintenance of good relations with the SPCK, 'to prevent objec[tions] & Jealousies'.¹²⁵

In the same letter, Kirkwood informs Meldrum that 31 libraries were ready to be shipped, though he also gave the number of 25. This was far from the 100 libraries he had earlier described to Meldrum,¹²⁶ but the scheme was ongoing, and others could be added as it continued. Four different types of libraries would eventually be established, one general, 'in [the] Center of [the] Highlands[,] [which] we Judge to be Inverness',¹²⁷ and others at the levels of synods, presbyteries, and ultimately parishes. Due to the small number of libraries which were ready, Kirkwood proposed an equal distribution among the various regions of the Highlands, which he called 'dioceses': Argyll, Lorn, 'the Isles',¹²⁸ Dunkeld, Moray, Ross and Caithness would each have four, and Dunblane would have three, since it already had a functioning library for the clergy, the Leighton Library.¹²⁹ The largest would be based at the centre of the jurisdiction, and the three smaller at locations which the presbytery or synod would consider most convenient.

Act XVII of the 1704 General Assembly mandated an alternative distribution of the libraries, but due to the different geographical terms used to those of Kirkwood, it is less distinct than at first glance. The 'Province' of Moray and 'Presbytery' of Dunkeld each would get four, as in Kirkwood's plan. The synod of Argyll would have 12, but presumably that included Kirkwood's regions of Lorn and the Isles. The presbytery of Sutherland, distinct from Ross and Caithness,

123 NRS, CH1/2/24/1/2, ff. 117-9.

124 See pp. 106-8 above.

125 NRS, CH1/2/24/1/2, ff. 117-9.

126 NRS, CH1/2/23/4, f. 289.

127 NRS, CH1/2/24/1/2, ff. 117-9.

128 This most likely refers to the Western Isles, since Orkney and Shetland are specifically described as in line for a subsequent shipment of books. *Ibid.* Orkney may have been less of a priority anyway, as John Gibson, a minister there, understood, 'considering we have the foundation of a Lib[rary] here ahead[y]'. The presbytery was willing to contribute to expand it, but would accept any assistance the scheme could offer. NRS, CH1/2/24/1/1, f. 11.

129 NRS, CH1/2/24/1/2, ff. 117-9.

would get one, as would the presbytery of Dumbarton, but most significantly, Orkney and Shetland were each to receive a library as well, the assembly evidently considering they were more important regions than Kirkwood thought, and worthy of libraries from the first.¹³⁰ Kirkwood presented the act to the SPCK in June 1704, and recorded no complaint with the alterations.¹³¹

Some differences in the rules which focus on access exist between presbyterial and parochial libraries. Parochial libraries were still not public in the modern sense of the word, but they would be more open to borrowers who were neither of the clergy (or intending to join that profession), nor gentry sponsors. According to the final rule, the church desired 'That Each library be provided in some Small practical pi[e]ces and short treatises against pop[e]ry and other dangerous Errors, fit for the vulgar, they be lent out to them upon occasion according to the above written Rules.'¹³² Since the previous rules included a deposit of the value of the book plus an additional one-quarter of the value, borrowing could be quite an expensive proposition, but the inclusion of 'pamphlets' in the catalogues was designed to make borrowing them as cheap as possible. At the parish level, there was a consideration that the libraries should be accessible to borrowers at a lower social rank than the presbyterial rules would allow. The synod of Argyll may have contributed to this idea, as it had expressed a preference 'That if libraries be erected in the Highlands, they must be parochial, otherwise the Design is [lost] as to the most necessitous places.'¹³³ Not only would they be more accessible to common borrowers, if necessary, but heritors and gentry would be more likely to contribute to an establishment which could have a more direct effect on the population.¹³⁴

By 1705, when the funds had been secured from the treasury for shipment, the amount of books available had grown to comprise 77 libraries. The assembly and the SPCK took the push for parochial libraries to heart, and broke up the shipment into 19 presbyterial and 58 parochial libraries. On 18 January 1705, Vigerus Edwards informed the society that Kirkwood, Meldrum, and Thomas Wilkie, the moderator of the 1704 General Assembly, had asked him to send the libraries north.¹³⁵ The assembly and its commission were not planning on immediate deliveries, of course,

¹³⁰ BHO, 1704 General Assembly, Act XVII, date of access 19 August 2010.

¹³¹ CUL, SPCK.MS A1/1, p. 295.

¹³² NRS, CH1/2/24/1/1, f. 27.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, f. 8

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ CUL, SPCK.MS A1/1, p. 317.

since the boxes needed to be organized, packed and placed on a ship for Leith, and when the assembly met in 1705, it appointed a special committee to receive the boxes and organize their distribution through the Highlands.¹³⁶

Table 4.1, Distribution of Libraries According to the 1705 Assembly¹³⁷

Jurisdiction	Presbyterial	Parochial
Synod of Argyll	6 ^a	23
Synod of Moray	3 or 4 ^b	6
Caithness and Strathnaver ^c	2	4
Presbytery of Dunkeld	1	4
Presbytery of Orkney ^d	1	3
Presbytery of Dunbarton	1	2
Presbytery of Shetland	1	2
Synod of Aberdeen	0 or 1 ^b	3
Synod of Angus and Mearns ^e	0	3
Presbytery of Auchterarder	0	2

a The synod was originally assigned 5, but one spare library was given to it with the advice that it have 'a special respect to their remote and large islands, such as Lewis'.¹³⁸

b One of the presbyterial libraries was assigned to Strathbogie and Fordyce, each of which was a presbytery in its own right, but in two different synods: Strathbogie was in Moray, while Fordyce was in Aberdeen.

c There was no presbytery or synod of this name, but since the report sent in to the committee was labelled this way, the one presbyterial and two parochial libraries assigned to Sutherland have been counted here.

d How Orkney's plea for help for its clergy, based on its distance 'from any supply of books or [h]elp[e]rs of Knowledg[e], than many other parishes in respect of [the] great seas interjected betwixt [the said] Isles of Orkney & [the] cont[i]nent', squared with John Gibson's letter of 1703, which told of a library foundation in the islands already, is unknown.¹³⁹

e The synod did not send in a common report, but the presbyteries of Brechin and of Meigle and Forfar submitted separate ones. All three were located in the synod, however. Meigle and Forfar had been united, but Meigle had become its own presbytery in 1703, so cooperation between the two might still have been close. Forfar remained a united presbytery with Dundee until 1717.¹⁴⁰

The distribution depended on reports sent to the General Assembly in response to a request from the previous year's 'Committee for considering the state of the Church in the North, the Islands and Highlands', whose remit included 'concerting the Affair anent Libraries to these places'.¹⁴¹ Considering the extent of the regions the committee was expected to cover, the response to the committee's request was impressive, with only Shetland not responding.¹⁴² The number of libraries assigned to each presybtery or synod reflect an attempt to match the descriptions provided of their parishes. As with the Irish and Gaelic scriptures, the synod of Argyll ended up with the majority of the libraries in the first shipment, but the sheer size of the territory and the

136 BHO, 1705 General Assembly, Act XII, date of access 19 August 2010.

137 Ibid.

138 Ibid.

139 NRS, CH1/2/24/2/3, f. 158.

140 *Fasti*, v. 5, pp. 246, 276.

141 BHO, 1704 General Assembly, Act XIX for abridged text of new commission; NRS, VV CH1/9/6, p.

[337]/21 for full text.

142 NRS, CH1/2/24/3, ff. 148-59.

physical features of the land, which would obstruct people travelling for instruction or worship to their parish or presbytery centres, argued, in presbyterian eyes, for libraries being settled in many locations to facilitate access.

IX. RESPONSE OF HIGHLAND BODIES

As with the Gaelic scriptures, distribution of the libraries did not proceed without a hitch. In 1706, the General Assembly ordered that the libraries committee established the previous year submit a report to the commission on distribution, and that the commission itself ask the Highland and northern presbyteries to report on receipt and placement.¹⁴³ Four of the responses have survived. The synod of Argyll did not give a full answer, since not all the presbyteries had received their libraries. Those which had, however, received boxes which had been opened. Some books were damaged, and the catalogues were absent, so the presbyteries were unsure whether any volumes were missing. The orders of the assembly also mandated reports on shipments and receipt of the Gaelic Bibles and other scriptures, and the synod was still unable to give a full response, since the most recent package was still at Glasgow.¹⁴⁴ John Shepherd, writing on 7 August 1706 for the presbytery of Kincardine O'Neil, told the commission that it had waited until distribution was complete before replying. He records the presbytery's opinion that more funds should be committed to the libraries than to reprinting the Bibles, since language differences, even with Robert Kirk's adaptations, limited parishioners' willingness to keep them.¹⁴⁵ The presbytery noted it had not received a presbyterial library, contrary to its expectations, even though the General Assembly act of 1705 had only allocated two parochial libraries. What perplexed the presbytery more was the cancellation of some of the titles from the catalogues, requiring it to re-sort the volumes on its own. No record is noted of the new contents of each library, but it sent the original catalogues back to the commission to allow it to determine why the titles had been cancelled.¹⁴⁶

More criticism came from Hugh Corse, from the synod of Caithness, Orkney and Shetland.

¹⁴³ BHO, 1706 General Assembly, Act XVIII, date of access 19 August 2010.

¹⁴⁴ NRS, CH1/2/25/2, ff. 223-4.

¹⁴⁵ NRS, CH 1/2/5/3, f. 191.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Despite having seven Gaelic-speaking parishes—conflating the territories of Caithness and Strathnaver, which an earlier account had kept separate¹⁴⁷—he reported the synod had received no Gaelic scriptures. In addition, the libraries had arrived in a disorganized state, ‘So sorted that we can hardly distinguish which is [sic] parochial or which is [sic] presb[y]terial Librar[ie]s’.¹⁴⁸ The synod may have been confused by three boxes, evidently the presbyterial library, having a common catalogue, and the other four boxes having an individual catalogue in each. Corse does not indicate that any of the books in the catalogues were missing or damaged, as had happened in Argyll, but the synod still took umbrage at the perceived state of the boxes, and demanded that the assembly satisfy ‘the suspicions we have that we are serv[e]d with none of [the] best of them’. The books were still with William Innes, minister of Thurso, as the synod awaited clarification from neighbouring presbyteries as to which books were intended for which libraries. Additionally, it was concerned about the security of the books, since few parishes were suitable locations, and one of the most prominent, Wick, had not been settled with a minister. As a result, the synod was delaying placing the libraries until it could guarantee the integrity of the collections.¹⁴⁹

Another body which had to retain its libraries at the house of the minister of the presbytery seat was the presbytery of Dunblane, which had received two parochial libraries. Similar to Caithness, the presbytery’s access to four of its parishes, Aberfoyle, Balquhidder, Callander and Kincardine-in-Menteith, was limited if not impossible, and it reported receiving no Gaelic Bibles or catechisms.¹⁵⁰ It did not, however, rule out the possibility that texts had been sent into these parishes, ‘though the exact number[,] notwithstanding of the pains w[e] have been at to inform [ourselves], w[e] have not as ye[t] Learned’.¹⁵¹ The settlement of libraries in the parishes where they were needed, despite Kirkwood’s insistence to the SPCK that they would also be of service to episcopalian clergy, was deemed too difficult by the presbytery. One party which seems to have been left out of the negotiations over the scheme are the Scottish episcopalians themselves.

X. LIBRARIES OUTSIDE THE HIGHLANDS

¹⁴⁷ See table 4.1, p. 113.

¹⁴⁸ NRS, CH1/2/25/2, f. 221.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Fasti*, v. 4, pp. 335-64.

¹⁵¹ NRS, CH1/2/25/3, f. 247.

The Highland scheme was not the only campaign for parochial and presbyterial libraries, even within Scotland. Once the momentum had started building for the Highland scheme, the SPCK decided in 1705 to establish a separate trust, managed by several of its members and, in light of its operations in the American and Caribbean colonies, supported by the society, to establish libraries in English parishes.¹⁵² Like the Highland parishes which were targets in Scotland, these English parishes were poorer than others, yielding less remuneration to their clergy. The libraries were therefore intended to eliminate the clergy's need to purchase books themselves, and had strict rules for their management and transmission to the ministers' successors. The rules followed colonial lines, not Scottish, and barred their use by anyone except the ministers.¹⁵³ The three types of libraries, however, colonial, Highland and English, had the common purpose of providing ministers with an intellectual arsenal to defend against, especially, Quakers and Catholics—though, as we have seen, the General Assembly had in the back of its mind defence against episcopalians, as the SPCK was mildly hoping for conversions of presbyterians.

In Scotland, the campaign was extended to the Lowlands. The criticisms and problems in the Highlands did not dissuade Kirkwood and the church from pursuing libraries in the south, which were first mentioned in a letter from Meldrum to Kirkwood in May 1706.¹⁵⁴ Eleven additional boxes had been shipped from London, but were not assigned for particular libraries. Kirkwood, in a letter which has not been found, had suggested a means of sorting them for shipment to the parishes, but Meldrum hit upon another method which consisted of simply reviewing the catalogues and organizing the books 'according to their different matter that so each part may have some of each sort[,] and that where popery encreaseth, they may be well prov[i]ded of usefu[l] boo[k]s for opposing them.'¹⁵⁵ Meldrum then identified six locations in the north to receive books, and nine in the south—a 1709 letter from Kirkwood to William Carstares describes 'presbyt[er]ies in the South of Scotland as had not received any of the books sent from London', so Meldrum must have meant that the nine locations were indeed Lowland, though he did not

¹⁵² Lowther Clarke, *History of the S.P.C.K.*, p. 6.

¹⁵³ CUL, SPCK.MS A8/1, 'The Proceedings of the Trustees for Erecting Parochial Librar[ie]s: and Promoting Other Charitable Designs', between pp. 86-7, especially rule 7.

¹⁵⁴ Kirkwood MSS, 3.6.3

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

identify them.¹⁵⁶

In 1707, Meldrum again discussed libraries in a reply to a lost letter from Kirkwood. He described some Lowland presbyteries as having received libraries already, and having been informed of the necessary rules. He did communicate some bad news to Kirkwood, in terms of funding: for the Gaelic Bible, there was no money for an additional printing, something which Kirkwood had been pushing. For libraries, Meldrum was not expecting the establishment of a fund.¹⁵⁷ In the same letter to Carstares cited above, written about a month after Meldrum's death in 1709, Kirkwood described his proposal for a library fund: he had asked Meldrum to raise at the 1707 General Assembly that Lowland presbyteries which had yet to receive any books from London 'try to lay a foundation of a lit[t]le Library in each presbyt[e]ry, which might be done, if every Minister one [with] another contributed [20] Shill[ing]s; and procured in their severa[l] parishes more or less, according to the ability and Charity of their parishoners.'¹⁵⁸ Meldrum seemed to think that 'perhaps there are other things [s]o necessary, if we could ge[t] f[u]nds for them'.¹⁵⁹ Meldrum was not specific that he was thinking about schools, but considering the earlier concerns of the presbytery of Meigle and the synod of Glasgow and Ayr, it is not an unreasonable interpretation.

Despite the shift in focus from libraries to schools by 1709, a development which would not have been completely unwelcome to him, Kirkwood kept pushing for reports on Highland libraries and the foundation of Lowland libraries. As an alternative to Lowland parochial donations, he continued soliciting books from SPCK members such as Samuel Woodcock, Robert Nelson, Thomas Bray and Cornelius Yeate. English books had already been sent to the presbyteries of Dunbar and Chirnside, and the southwestern regions of Annandale, Nithsdale and the synod of Galloway, and Kirkwood had hopes for expansion into other Lowland synods, including, 'if success answered my wishe[s]', Fife and Angus and the Mearns.¹⁶⁰ There is no information as to whether the new donations had been sent to Scotland already, but considering his outline of the intended distribution and his request that any box going spare be sent to the presbytery of

¹⁵⁶ NRS, CH1/2/28/5, f. 501.

¹⁵⁷ Kirkwood MSS, 3.6.4.

¹⁵⁸ NRS, CH1/2/28/5, f. 501. The 20 shillings were likely sterling.

¹⁵⁹ Kirkwood MSS, 3.6.4.

¹⁶⁰ NRS, CH1/2/28/5, f. 501.

Haddington, there was at least an expectation that they soon would be.¹⁶¹

XI. CONCLUSION

Connections between the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge and the Church of Scotland reflected the society's original vision, of developing a network of parochial libraries for poorer ministers in the American colonies. Because of a decision not to pursue a corporate charter, the society's activities were able to expand into the support of new and existing charity schools in England, missionary activities in other colonies, especially in India, and into publishing of religious texts and commentaries. Moral reformation was not left out of the equation, but its other interests and a less confrontational practice in dealing with transgressors against immorality statutes made the society's efforts more sustainable than those of the earlier reformation societies. Political and religious tensions in England did not make for an easy time for the SPCK, however. It tried to assist in the conversion of Anabaptists, Quakers and Catholics to mainstream Protestantism, but with mixed success. An early openness to cooperation with dissenters was quashed after the tory political triumph in England in 1710, which forced dissenters to end their relationship with the society and paved the way for suspicions of Jacobite domination of the schools after the '15, under a whig government. Resulting controversies pushed the SPCK to abandon the support of charity schools, but it redirected its focus to overseas missions, publishing and, eventually, later in the eighteenth century, Sunday schools.¹⁶²

The libraries campaign in the Scottish Highlands was similarly controversial, with some justified suspicions on both sides. Communications between the society and James Kirkwood, its Scottish correspondent, included suggestions that the SPCK was hoping for some conversions to episcopalianism in Highland parishes with the donation of books justifying that form of government, exactly one of the fears of the General Assembly. Similarly, the society had concerns that the church would seek to sell some of the donated books and use the funds for other purposes. As it turned out, presbyterians did not justify their fears by suggesting the purchase of guns, but

¹⁶¹ Kirkwood must have had a personal fondness for Haddington, as the presbytery had licensed him as a probationer in 1676 and he had been living there since returning to Scotland. Simpson, 'Kirkwood, James', ODNB, [view/article/15682](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15682), date of access 8 February 2010.

¹⁶² Jones, *Charity School Movement*, pp. 142-61.

the synod of Glasgow and Ayr, for example, did recommend that schools might be a more useful charitable venture for the Highlands than libraries. The assembly managed to establish a secure enough system to guarantee that the society's intentions would not be obstructed, but it was a very careful process of negotiation. Even after deliveries of the libraries had begun, conflict continued, with some synods and presbyteries complaining about the conditions of the books which had been received, if indeed they had received any.

A major influence of the English society was in serving as one model for an establishment to support charity schools in the Scottish Highlands. Such schools, as has been seen, had been attempted on a private basis by the reformation societies in Edinburgh. Though a suggestion was made along the lines of the English society, of decentralized groups throughout Scotland supporting local ventures, the feeling emerged by 1708 that such a structure would not succeed, mostly because of the poverty of the parishes where the schools would be needed. The opportunity for the English society itself to operate its own schools in the Highlands did not go unnoticed, particularly by those objectors to the libraries scheme which Kirkwood had to contradict in 1704. His reason, however, was that an effort in the Highlands, which already had provision through statutes of the Scottish parliament and the General Assembly, would be a distraction from the primary purpose of filling the continuing need for charity schools in England. In 1712, James Greenshields proposed the same idea to the society, that schools in the Highlands would be a worthwhile venture and would offer relief to episcopalians, but this time the society disagreed. Circumstances were different to 1704, certainly, with the Scottish society already having started work, and tensions affecting the SPCK's operations in England. To avoid aggravating the situation north and south of the border, the society refused to expand in Scotland, leaving the field open to the new SSPCK.

‘the further promoting christian Knowledge and the Exercise of Piety and
Vertue within Scotland, especially in the Highlands, Islands and remote
corners thereof’:

The Corporation

The issue of language has overshadowed historical discussions of the SSPCK, with John Lorne Campbell, Victor Durkacz and Charles Withers focusing on the society’s role in the withdrawal of Gaelic since the late seventeenth century. This perspective, however, is problematic, since it seeks to look backwards from the modern period to argue that the society had the elimination of Gaelic in view from the beginning. Contemporary documents illustrate the desire of parts of the civil and ecclesiastical establishment to see the language removed, including the 1696 Education Act, which restated the provisions of 1616 and 1633 calling for parish schools in the Highlands partly to replace Gaelic with English.¹ We still need to contend with the fact that the society did not necessarily adhere to this goal. The language is not mentioned in the founding documents, which Durkacz notes, while stating that this is no reason to assume the society did not want to see it eliminated.² Ability in Gaelic was still sought as a qualification for its teachers, however, and while in 1716, the society explicitly said its schools were intended to remove Gaelic, the document was not a policy statement but a proposal to the government for an expansion of school establishment throughout the Highlands. We will see below that the proposal was not accepted, and soon thereafter, work began on a Gaelic-English grammar for use in the SSPCK schools.³

Apart from the problems with this historical hindsight, the corporate development, structure and operations have been ignored despite the fact that these, and not an anti-Gaelic ideology, are the focus of the founding documents and most of the proceedings of the society’s early years. Of the writers who have discussed the SSPCK, only Jones really addresses the issues of the corporation and the social ethos which it sought to develop in the Lowlands, as well as the

1 See pp. 1, 12-3.

2 Durkacz, ‘Source of the language problem’, p. 36.

3 See p. 213.

cultural and religious ethos which it sought to develop in the Highlands. Religion assumes the greater importance in the society's founding documents than language, and its attitude towards Gaelic was more ambiguous than other writers have maintained, reflecting the ambivalence Durkacz identifies on the part of the church.⁴

Developing the society's identity as a corporation meant defining itself and its structure through the charter, but also forging a good public image of financial probity and 'excellent business management'.⁵ This it tried to do through convincing the public not only that they would be serving the greater good of religion through contributing to its efforts, but also promising that their donations would be handled responsibly. When agents it was relying on to collect donations failed to follow through on this promise, as with certain kirk sessions, the society feared the impact on its public image, and reiterated the sessions' responsibility to report accurately on the contributions they were collecting.⁶

Most fundamentally, the significance of the society's incorporation by royal charter lay in its expansion of charity beyond the middle and landed classes, as reflected by the English SPCK. The Scottish society was a public corporation, which was emphasized in much of the rhetoric in Scotland, mirroring that of the Company of Scotland in its repetition of the idea of the society being a national effort.⁷ As a charitable organization, however, the society assumed the religious and missionary aspect of the company's charter as its sole purpose rather than delivering profits to the subscribers.⁸ It married the corporate ethos of entities such as the Company of Scotland and the Bank of Scotland to the social reform ethos of the reformation societies, a common strain in the development of voluntary societies in Britain at the time, responding to particular social conditions.⁹

Despite the appeal to national support, the society had difficulty generating contributions outside the Lowlands, most coming from the area around Edinburgh. This affected the desired

4 Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, 10.

5 Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 178.

6 John Flint, minister of the New North parish in Edinburgh, reported that his kirk session had submitted all the funds contributed, but had not kept a record of the donations as required. The committee urged the presbytery to order its sessions to ensure an accurate record was maintained. NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/1, p. 202 (13 July 1711).

7 Watt, *Price of Scotland*, p. 86.

8 NRS, MFiLP GD95/1/1, p. [5]. This page is numbered as p. 1, but is the fifth in the volume which has been filmed.

9 P. Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, p. 13.

representation of a broad selection of Scots from throughout the country in the society's membership, the selection of company shareholders who would meet quarterly to discuss the business. As a result, the lords of session, who would select the founding membership of the society, had a limited geographical area from which to do so. The method of selection meant, of course, that social and professional connections in Edinburgh and elsewhere had an influence on membership and on borrowing from the society's stock. Vacancies in the membership, through departures or deaths, would be filled through elections by the remaining members, reinforcing the idea of self-selection by a limited body even though the society was a public corporation, with membership theoretically open to any donor. These connections ultimately extended beyond Scotland, though with less success than the society had hoped. Its efforts to generate a formal correspondent body in London, for example, failed, though it did receive financial support through the agency of former members and other Scots resident there.¹⁰

Broadening charity beyond the landed and professional classes therefore did not mean unlimited involvement of the labouring classes. For the most part, their contribution would be monetary, because of limited leisure time as well as class status. Additionally, contemporary notions of the society's success must not merely be seen in terms of its operations in the Highlands, but also in the conduct of its business in Edinburgh. On these two levels, corporate image as much as missionary efforts contributed to its progress, each feeding the other. The impact of the society in the Highlands, which has been the focus of much of the discussion, is only part of the story. This chapter will focus on the growth of the corporation and its business activities in the Lowlands, and how they reflected the cultural and economic environments in early eighteenth-century Scotland.

I. DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIETY

The SSPCK evolved from the General Assembly's Committee for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, which was established in 1707. The synod of Argyll submitted a petition to the assembly that year which not only focused on the lack of reformation in several of the Highland parishes, especially in the islands, but also on the contributing factors of the size of the

¹⁰ See p. 143.

parishes and an insufficient presbyterian presence. An additional threat to the church in the region was the risk that incumbent presbyterian clergy would leave. The 'Minister of Lochaber', for example, not only had a large area to cover, but had lost the assistance of the minister of Fort William, Neil McVicar, the previous month.¹¹ If the assembly did nothing to assist him, he would be forced to resign, leaving Lochaber with no presbyterian provision.

In response to the synod's petition, the assembly ordered more diligent pursuit of parishes in order to establish parochial schools, and another survey of the presbyteries both with regards to where additional schools would be required and where the funds ordered to be collected in 1704 had gone.¹² The Christian knowledge committee was formed to handle the responses to a 1706 survey of Highland presbyteries and synods, renewed in 1707, addressing the distribution of libraries, the presence or increase of Catholics, and lingering 'paganish' customs within their bounds.¹³ Its remit included addressing the risk Catholicism posed to the church, but also generating ideas to improve the knowledge of reformed Christianity, 'not only at home but also abroad'.¹⁴ It was this body which first conceived of a fund to support catechists in the Highlands, though the assembly itself had suggested ideas for an organization of supporters in the 1706 survey, once more along the lines of the English SPCK.¹⁵ By 1708, the committee's portfolio had expanded into all issues dealing with Christian education in the Highlands, including distribution of any libraries which had not been established.¹⁶

Schools themselves were not explicitly on the committee's agenda, but the topic was appears to have been in members' minds, since the minutes of 24 May 1708 contain an account of

11 NRS, VV CH1/1/18, p. 454; *Fasti*, v. 4, pp. 134, 136. The minister of 'Lochaber', which was not a parish in its own right, must have been Neil Campbell, the minister of Kilmallie until 1709.

12 BHO, 1707 General Assembly, Act V, date of access 19 August 2010. See pp. 42-3 for information on the 1704 collection.

13 BHO, 1706 General Assembly, Act XVIII,; 1707 General Assembly, Act V, date of access 19 August 2010; NRS, CH1/2/25/3, ff. 284-7. See p. 43.

14 NRS, VV CH1/1/18, p. 454; GD95/10, f. 7.

15 BHO, 1706 General Assembly, Act XVIII, date of access 19 August 2010.

16 *Ibid.*, 1708 General Assembly, unnumbered act (inserted in records after numbered acts), date of access 19 August 2010. The members of the committee were the ministers William Carstares, George Meldrum, George Hamilton, William Wishart, John Stirling, James Ramsay (Kelso), James Haddo, John Bonar, John Moncrief, Thomas Wilkie (Canongate), William Mitchell (Canongate), Neil McVicar, John Anderson (St Andrews), George Barclay, David Blair, Patrick Cuming, James Hart, Robert Horsburgh, George Turnbull, William Moncrieff (Largo) and John Brown, and the ruling elders Sir Hugh Dalrymple of North Berwick, Adam Cockburn of Ormiston, Lord Pollock, Lord Tillicoultry, Lord Minto, Lord Forglen, Lord Bowhill, Sir James Stewart of Goodtrees the elder, Sir Samuel Maclellan, Sir James Campbell of Aberuchill, Lieutenant Colonel John Erskine of Carnock, Sir Walter Pringle, William Brodie, Walter Stewart, James Gellie, Sir James Smollet of Bonhill, Sir George Home of Kello, Sir Hugh Cunningham of Craighend, Walter Stewart of Pardovan, and John Alexander of Blackhouse.

discussions with the earl of Cromarty, who expresses willingness to contribute to a catechist scheme on his lands. While it is easy to see the catechists, presumably itinerant, evolving into the more settled teachers of the SSPCK, there was no focus on schools at the expense of keeping the committee's options open. The lords of session sitting on the committee were asked to form a subcommittee to discuss proposals for funds 'for propagating Christian Knowledge and... Erecting Charity Schools', but not for schools alone.¹⁷ Details of the scheme as agreed by the lords of session at a meeting in July are not recorded in extant documents, but their agreement to support it outlines three conditions: that the managers of the fund be named out of the total body of subscribers, and that the lords themselves appoint the managers; that a royal charter be granted for the managing body, forming it into a corporation; and that the lords' subscriptions would not become payable until £1,000 sterling were subscribed in total.¹⁸

Again, as with the reformation societies, the evidence for opposition to a fund came from the proponents themselves, in the minutes of the committee. The context was over management of donations, which had been a contested issue for the establishment of schools since 1704.¹⁹ A letter dated 27 May 1708, possibly from George Meldrum, blasted ministers for raising objections to the plan for a fund for Highland catechists and schools, and demanded 'an account of Your diligence in this affair' and a copy of subscriptions for the commission of the General Assembly.²⁰ The copy at the NRS includes a list of presbyteries at the bottom, likely outlining where it was sent: seven to the synod of Lothian (one for each presbytery), and one each to Kelso, Jedburgh, Selkirk, Dumfries, and Kirkcaldy.²¹ The attitude of many ministers to the plan seems to have been at best dubious and

¹⁷ NRS, GD95/10, f. 10, committee minutes, 24 May 1708. Another version of the minutes dates the meeting 27 May.

¹⁸ NRS, CH1/2/27/2, f. 154. The first of these issues had earlier been discussed by four ministers on the committee, including Meldrum. NRS, GD95/10, f. 11 (13 June 1708—the year 1707 is an error).

¹⁹ See pp. 43, 123.

²⁰ NRS, GD95/10, f. 22:

[W]e were sorry to hear [that] some with yo[u] do propose objections against this Laudable project, and when so many Charitable persons in this land, and else where, have sh[o]wing [their] read[i]ness to Contribute [their] money, & other wa[y]s, for carrying on this Desig[n]; It will be a reflection on our Church if the same shall stop at the Ministers thereof. [You] know It is very eas[y] to muster up Difficulties....

This copy was unsigned.

²¹ Ibid. Three other names are crossed out, though they have numbers beside them: Ayr and possibly Irvine, which appear to have been sent seven copies together, and possibly Lanark, with four. The named presbyteries bear out that this letter was the one ordered to be written to 'N[e]ighbouring' (i.e., Lowland) presbyteries.

at worst hostile.

Adam Fergusson, the minister at Crathie in Aberdeenshire, sent Meldrum an account of the reception the proposals for the fund had had in his presbytery (Kincardine O'Neil) and synod (Aberdeen)—the letter was dated 4 June, so it possibly did not arrive in Edinburgh in time for the meeting on 13 June, but it offers a look at some other objections raised.²² While Fergusson reports that

I fear some [presbyteries] never laid it to heart, many seek [their] own advantage[s?] and have no inclination to forward a publi[c] work: And in some [presbyteries] where [the] affair was seriously considered, I know [the] half of [the ministers] did not subscrib[e] for any thing, pretending they never saw Scotch projects frame well....²³

he outlines a different situation in his own parish:

even here, where [the] commons are illiterate, I found, that, after I had preached once & again on that subject, many in presence of [the] Kirk session promised to give some less[,] some More according to [their] ability: so [that] I could promise to obtain out of this poor parish [£15 sterling] among [the] Gentr[y] & their ten[a]nts.²⁴

He suggests to Meldrum that the commission urge ministers to push the scheme in their parishes since it would not be difficult to raise the necessary funds.²⁵ The problem, which the society would encounter many times, would be to get ministers to publicize the scheme. Despite Fergusson's report of objections among unnamed presbyteries, the city of Aberdeen is on record as having had extensive subscriptions before the SSPCK's incorporation, and Kincardine O'Neil is recorded as making numerous subscriptions as well, though no specific ones are noted.²⁶ Meldrum's strict language may have had some effect, but by the time the subscriptions were reported, a royal proclamation in favour of efforts to organize the society had been issued and was more likely to have produced such positive results. The proclamation, issued by the queen in August, was simply a formal declaration of royal approval of the scheme, but ordered that the application for a charter be signed by two-thirds of the subscribers 'in Number and value', and concurred with the lords that they should select the initial membership, if for no other reason than for convenience's sake:

in regard it is very probable that the persons who shall be subscribers to that underta[k]ing may be diffused in several Counties and remote places so as it may not be eas[y] for them to

²² NRS, GD95/10, f. 23. The timing of Fergusson's reply and the fact that the May letter explicitly reiterated former correspondence shows that he may have been responding to an earlier inquiry.

²³ Ibid. See pp. 170-1.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ NRS, GD95/10, f. 10 (28 September 1708).

meet to nominat[e] and Elect the members which such a Corporation ought to consist of....²⁷

In the proclamation, the expectation was that subscriptions would come from throughout the country. By the time of nomination, however, the geographical range of the subscribers was considerably narrower than the committee had hoped, most of them coming from the area around Edinburgh. Wavering individuals in 'Countrey' presbyteries demanded to hear of progress towards establishment of the fund in the presbytery of Edinburgh itself before making efforts to generate their own donations.²⁸ The sooner these presbyteries began raising subscriptions, the sooner the committee would receive lists of their subscribers to add to the pool of potential members for selection by the lords of session: 'the subscriptions being Dif[f]used it may be in the Societ[y's] power to make their further Nominations as equa[l] and Extensive as they shall find needfu[l] which they cannot do till the subscriptions or names of the subscribers or Contributors be brought in'.²⁹ The only information about subscriptions outside the area of Edinburgh, however, came from the presbyteries of Aberdeen and Kincardine O'Neil. The committee regretted that it had not achieved as wide a spread as it had hoped for, but settled for a subsequent nomination after the incorporation of the society to accept members from other regions.³⁰ The SSPCK was to be a truly national organization with the support of 'all the people of this National Church', not isolated in the political and ecclesiastical centre of Edinburgh.³¹ By the time of the society's incorporation, however, with few exceptions, the membership was focused there.

The committee had adopted the lords' stated amount of £1,000 as a threshold before application would be made for the society's charter, and as the level from which the two-thirds outlined in the proclamation would be defined. Within four months, the committee had gathered enough subscriptions to fulfil this requirement, and was able to proceed to the issuance of the charter. Full records of the exact 1708 subscriptions are missing: no list from the presbytery of Kincardine O'Neil, for example, has been found, and no mention of Aberdeen subscriptions

²⁷ NRS, MFiLP GD 95/1/1, pp. 10-1 [numbered pp. 6-7].

²⁸ NRS, GD95/10, f. 10 (28 September 1708).

²⁹ 'The Queens Proclamation encouraging the designe', NRS, MFiLP GD95/1/1, p. [10] (numbered as p. 6); GD95/10, f. 17 (28 July 1709).

³⁰ NRS, GD95/10, f. 17 (28 July 1709).

³¹ BHO, General Assembly 1709, Act VI, date of access 19 August 2010. The fact that so many subscribers ended up concentrated around Edinburgh seems to have obviated the provision that the lords of session nominate the members, but there was still the issue of nominating fund managers the subscribers could trust.

appears in the committee minutes between September 1708 and its suspension in November 1709.³² This silence on Aberdeen comes despite the comprehensive list sent by the minister Thomas Blackwell, one of the three founding members who came from Aberdeen, dated 5 November 1708.³³ Blackwell enclosed a letter with the list, explaining that he did not send the principal along 'because we expect (upon good grounds) some considerable addition: but i[t] will require some little time.'³⁴ This was around 15 months, the funds arriving in February 1710.³⁵ The impatience with the delay felt in Edinburgh, though, may have been offset by the indeed 'considerable addition' recorded in the society's accounts: the 1708 list records pledges of £97.9.7 from donors in Aberdeen, while the 1709 accounts report donations of £166.13.4.³⁶ Regardless of the ultimate amount which came from Aberdeen, the names on the list were not added to the total number of subscriptions out of which two-thirds had to sign the petition for the charter, so it is likely that by the time the list arrived, the petition had already been filed.

Using the petition, along with the list of Aberdeen subscribers and another, less comprehensive, list from Edinburgh, we can get a sense of who was among the early subscribers to the SSPCK. Eighty-seven names appear on the copy of the petition held at the NRS, meaning that the total number of subscribers the committee was aware of could have been no more than 129.³⁷ Determining the amount of cash pledged to the society by each subscriber is difficult because, although the lists record pledges, the petition does not. The accounts of the SSPCK itself can give

32 The lack of a list from Kincardine O'Neil foreshadows one of the society's concerns after incorporation, that certain kirk sessions were not keeping exact records of subscriptions. This affected the intake of funds, since the society would not know whom to pursue if the record-keeping was incomplete.

33 NRS, GD95/10, ff. 8-9, respectively, 'A Note of [Edinburgh] subscribers towards the designe of propagating Christian knowledge' and 'Subscriptions by the Inhabitants of Aberdeen'. In its focus on good and transparent management, the committee was demonstrating an awareness of the people it was relying on to subscribe for the scheme's support. James Milne, an Aberdeen merchant, is recorded as having subscribed £30 Scots (£2.10.0 sterling), 'and if it be well managed th[i]rty pounds Scots more'. Apparently Milne was known for his cautious generosity, as Blackwell wrote to Meldrum with not a little hint of apology: 'Yow Know James Miln merchant, and I hope will not be surpris]ed with the manner of his subscription.' The Edinburgh list was undated, but references to listed donations, such as that of 1,000 merks by the dowager countess of Sutherland, place it in late 1708.

34 NRS, MFilP GD95/1/1, p. 3, 'Extract of the Act of the Lords of Council and Session, Nominat[ing?] the Members of the Society in Scotland, for Propagating Christian Knowledge'; NRS, CH1/2/28/3, f. 289.

35 NRS, GD95/6/1, p. 9 (10 February 1710). The donations were said to be ready at the SSPCK committee's first meeting, 7 November 1709, but they still did not arrive for another three months. NRS, MFilP GD95/2/1, p. 15.

36 NRS, GD95/10, f. 9, and *ibid.* For these calculations, equivalent figures such as those found in the accounts of £55.11.1 1/3 sterling for donors of 1,000 merks and £5.11.1 1/3 for donors of 100 merks have been used to ascertain sterling figures for amounts given only in merks in the 1708 lists. See pp. v, 140.

37 This petition was not original, as most of the names (apart from those of the lords of session) are written in one hand. Taking the number of subscribers on the Edinburgh list, the number on the Aberdeen list, and the names on the petition which do not appear on either list gives the number of total recorded subscribers before incorporation as 155.

an idea, but there is no guarantee that what was actually donated was the amount originally pledged. Sir James Stewart of Goodtrees the elder, for example, is recorded on the list as having pledged £10, which he donated in 1709, but he contributed £30 more in total in 1711 and 1712.³⁸ The first donation recorded in the accounts from a petitioner who was not on the lists, therefore, was not necessarily the amount of the original pledge. Other individuals who made multiple donations over the years may have split their pledges, such as Patrick Cuming, the minister in Ormiston, who donated £1 in 1710 and £4 in 1712 as the 'rest of his subscription'.³⁹ He is the only example of a petitioner not on the lists with a definite pledge indicated in the accounts. If, however, we do take the first donations of the signatories as an indication of their pledges, we get the figure of £694.5.8 2/3, and that is without the donations of Agnes Campbell, George Vallance, and possibly Sir William Douglas of Cavers, whose identification is uncertain—not far at all from the required two-thirds of the subscribed sum.⁴⁰

The professional breakdown of petitioners (see table 5.1) demonstrates a predictable emphasis on the clergy, the legal profession, and merchants. The members of the trades involved were themselves quite prominent in the city, William Wardrop, John Knox and Robert Eliot all being members of the reformation societies and frequently serving their trades (bonnet making for Wardrop, and surgery for the others) as deacon conveners in the town council.

A major principle which was at the forefront of the founders' minds from the beginning was transparency of corporate governance. In generating public trust, the society would be able to maintain a steady flow of donations to the stock, which would then be invested to generate interest to found and support schools. The debacle of the Company of Scotland must have been fresh in people's minds, and several of the men involved in the society's management had themselves been directors of the company.⁴¹ Much of the rhetoric about the society was similar, emphasizing the national nature of each respective entity, though there was less of an element of patriotism in

38 NRS, GD95/6/1, pp. 36, 45. Note that 'Goodtrees' is pronounced 'gutters'.

39 *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 47.

40 The thirty-eighth name on the Edinburgh list was a communal donation from a group of Haddington presbyterians, but there is no record of a £30 donation from Haddington, though it may have been the sum of individual contributions. Three subscribers from Aberdeen who appear on that city's list are likewise absent from the society's accounts, Robert Cumming the younger (who had pledged 10 shillings), George Forbes Jr (£1), and Charles Owen (£1). See NRS, GD95/8/2 and GD95/10, f. 9.

41 See Watt, *Price of Scotland*, ch. 6. Watt describes Hugh Cunningham, the first treasurer of the SSPCK, and James MacLurg of Vogrie as being among the most active of the company directors, with the Glasgow merchant Hugh Montgomery, Sir John Maxwell of Pollock, Francis Montgomery of Giffen, Sir Hugh Dalrymple of North Berwick and Adam Cockburn of Ormiston also on the rolls.

Table 5.1: Occupations of petitioners for SSPCK's Letters Patent, January 1709

Ministers	19
Advocates, Clerks and Writers	10
Judges	14 ^a
Merchants	12
Trades	7 ^b
Government (Lord Provosts, bailies, etc., otherwise unclassified)	7
Women	4 ^c
Nobles	3 ^d
Other Church Officers	1 ^e
Doctors	1
Soldiers	1
Unclassified	2
Unidentified	6 ^f
Total	87

a Includes Robert Stewart of Tillicoultry, who was no longer a law lord in 1709.

b Includes Agnes Campbell, who does not appear in the accounts of charge or discharge. She was the official town and royal printer in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and as such would have a lot of business with the SSPCK over the next several years. John Knox, Robert Eliot, William Wardrop, a brewer, an apothecary and a wigmaker are the others.

c Includes all petitioners confirmed to be women except for Agnes Campbell and Jean Weem, the dowager countess of Sutherland.

d Includes Jean Weem.

e George Buchan, clerk to the committee for plantation of kirks. Buchan's contribution was not recorded in the SSPCK's books until 1728, but it is possibly the same George Buchan who waited so long. Due to the loss of the second and third cash books, which covered 20 April 1723 to 31 December 1737, it is impossible to verify when exactly this contribution was received.

f Includes one individual whose identity is unclear: John Russell, an Edinburgh merchant, or John Russell, a writer to the signet, both of whom were contributors to the SSPCK. Another obscure name, W. Cavers, may have been Sir William Douglas of Cavers. A third name, D.B. Cair, likely refers to a dean of the baxters (bakers)—possibly John Keir, a baxter who donated £ 1 in 1710 and may have subscribed prior to the petition. This may have been a misidentification, however, as his only town office was trades councillor, in 1714 and 1715. Adam Keir had earlier served as dean of the baxters and trades councillor, but the last time he had served in any office was apparently in 1706-7. Office titles often remained connected to names even after the holder's service had ended, which points to Adam Keir, but no record of his donation appears.

Sources: NRS, GD95/6/1; GD95/10, f. 1.

discussions of the society. If anything, as with the language question, religion took a larger role, with patriotism and images of a national identity being reserved for accounts of the campaign published in England and focusing on the new idea of a 'Briton'.⁴² The company and the society were also operating in significantly different contexts: Scotland was no longer sovereign in 1709, and was instead part of a larger British entity; the SSPCK was not intended to be a profit-making enterprise, though this did not diminish the importance of transparency and open records; and the society did not threaten the trade hegemony of an English corporation, as the Company of

⁴² See pp. 143-4.

Scotland did with the East India Company.⁴³ The distinct context and the support of the church gave the society influence in collecting donations. As with any corporation, the reputations of the managers were at stake, and this risk helped to ensure a legacy of good administration.⁴⁴

II. THE CHARTER

The society's charter, issued two months before the first nomination, not only reiterated the proclamation's requirements for the membership, it functioned as a constitution, setting a timeframe for the election of officers and a framework for the committee. This was to comprise 15 members out of the nominees, and was to meet at least monthly. The general meetings were scheduled for four times each year, the first Thursdays of January, March, June and November though the society frequently met at the end of July, as well.⁴⁵ The society had nearly three months after the first nomination to wait before its first general meeting, though in days of slow travel and uncertain communications, such a delay would have given the Christian knowledge committee time to inform the members of their selection. Beyond the structure of the society, the charter laid out its financial and legal rights. The SSPCK was not limited to receiving donations of funds, but also 'Lands, Goods and Gear' in order

to Erect and Maintain Schools, to Teach to Read, especially the Holy Scriptures, and other good and pious Books; As also to Teach Writing, Arithmeti[c], and such like Degrees of Knowle[d]ge in the Highlands, Islands and remote Corners of Scotland, and In other Parts [of the world]....⁴⁶

The charter additionally gave the society the rights of any 'Society, Corporation, or Body Politi[c]' to use income deriving from property for the purposes cited above, and the rights to represent itself in court.⁴⁷ The general meetings of the society were given power to arrange for correspondents in other parts of the world to collect subscriptions and contributions, and to adjust the society's rules as they saw fit.⁴⁸ Punishments for negligent officers (removal from office or fines 'not exceeding Ten Pounds Sterling for Malversation, beside Damages to the Society and others

⁴³ Watt, *Price of Scotland*, pp. 37, 39.

⁴⁴ Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 178.

⁴⁵ In 1710, the committee met more or less weekly, sometimes more than once if a particular issue needed to be addressed immediately. The general meetings agreed to assemble monthly until the finances of the society were settled.

⁴⁶ NRS, MFilP GD95/1/1, p. [5] (numbered as p. 1).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. [6] (numbered as p. 2).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

concerned, and Ten Shillings Sterling for each Absence from their Stations without a relevant Excuse') and the requirement that the society's records be available for subscribers to ascertain how their money had been applied reinforced the importance of corporate transparency.⁴⁹ Officers and members could also be replaced by the general meetings upon their deaths, a procedure which would be tested barely a year after the first meeting with the death of the treasurer, Sir Hugh Cunningham of Craigend.⁵⁰

III. FIRST NOMINATION

The first nomination included all of the lords, reflecting their concern that they as a body have a voice in the society's governance. In all, 81 names appeared in the act of nomination, the majority of them belonging either to clergy (23), lords of council and session (14), various landowners (12, not including those who are described with other occupations or statuses) and the nobility (9). The society later decided to limit their membership to 100 total, raising that to 110 in 1715.⁵¹ Again, as the Committee for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge had feared, the geographical spread of membership was not as extensive as it had had in mind when it began to organize the society. The first nomination of members was heavily weighted in favour of the synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, where the presbytery of Edinburgh was located. Looking at the ministers themselves, the weighting is even more significant: 18 were from parishes in Lothian and Tweeddale, two from Glasgow and Ayr, and one each from Aberdeen, Dumfries and Moray. The only known Gaelic speaker was Neil McVicar, who had been transferred from Fort William in 1707 to the West Kirk, or St Cuthbert's, to serve Highlanders living in Edinburgh.⁵² Still, the committee hoped the geographical spread would expand with subsequent nominations.⁵³ A contributor from Kirkcudbrightshire was admitted in November 1710, and five correspondents from Glasgow in November 1711, boosting the numbers from outside the immediate vicinity of Edinburgh.⁵⁴

From the beginning, the society had a hybrid identity, both as a public corporation and as a

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

51 NRS, MFiLP GD95/1/1, pp. 90 (5 January 1711), 277 (2 June 1715).

52 *Fasti*, v. 1, p. 101. See p. 123.

53 NRS, GD95/10, f. 17 (28 July 1709).

54 NRS, MFiLP GD95/1/1, pp. 85 (2 November 1710), 125 (1 November 1711).

Table 5.2: Home Synods of Early Members of the SSPCK, 1709

Lothian and Tweeddale	44
Aberdeen	7
Glasgow and Ayr	6
Fife	3
Merse and Teviotdale	2
Moray	2
Dumfries	2
Perth	2
Argyll	1
undetermined	12

Sources: NRS, GD95/6/1, the *Fasti* entries for the ministers involved in the society, and the ODNB entries for the lords of session.

self-selecting charitable association, similar to the reformation societies and the SPCK in England. Despite the corporate element, therefore, the society did display some of the attributes illustrated by Peter Clark in his recent work on clubs and societies in eighteenth-century Britain, such as the social connections fostering memberships, either in the initial nomination by the lords of session or in subsequent elections by the general meetings.⁵⁵ M. G. Jones illustrates similar attributes in English charity school societies, such as the SPCK,⁵⁶ but the corporate aspect to the Scottish society gave it a strength which its English antecedent did not have. For Clark, a voluntary society's social position could move up or down at different times.⁵⁷ Bernard Mandeville, a critic of the SPCK in the 1720s, voiced concern that similar charity societies would too often be subject to fashion, with the middle classes readily abandoning the cause when its time had passed.⁵⁸ The English society was also susceptible to political shifts, especially reaching a nadir in 1714, with the death of Anne and the renewed ascendancy of the whigs, which suspected SPCK institutions of Jacobitism and toryism despite the fact that it in reality had little control over the individual schools.⁵⁹

While not immune to politics, especially evident in declining contributions immediately following the 1715 rising, the SSPCK's charter gave it a political stability by linking it to the crown. The charter also shielded it from the curse of fashion by giving it a permanence which voluntary groups such as the SPCK and the reformation societies did not have, and allowed it not to be

⁵⁵ Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, p. 215.

⁵⁶ Jones, *Charity School Movement*, pp. 6-7, emphasizes the involvement of the 'middling classes'.

⁵⁷ Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, p. 216.

⁵⁸ Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 52.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 115, 118. See pp. 96-7.

diverted from charity schools throughout its existence. Jones' focus is on the stratified nature of British society in the eighteenth century, and how charity school societies allowed the emerging middle classes to become involved in benevolence which had formerly been the realm of the landed classes—Mandeville's concerns over charity education's fashionability relates to this.⁶⁰ The SSPCK's corporate structure reflects two key differences to the English society, apart from the legal definition of the activities it was entitled to undertake. First is the extension of charity to all classes, even if membership itself was granted by a limited segment of the social world, and was to all practical purposes restricted to the professional and landed classes. The rhetoric allowed it to express itself as an organization of the nation for the benefit of every Scot's fellow citizens. Second was the disdain the Scottish society had at the end of the eighteenth century for landowners' wishes to keep the poor in their place by refusing them education, which had its parallel in the English society.⁶¹ An idea which is often overlooked in historians' emphasis on religious and cultural prejudice on the part of the SSPCK is that of providing for social advancement, in however limited a context. Part of the ethos of the society was fostering an educated population not just for attending and understanding religious services, but leading them. The records are full of encouragements to teachers to look out for capable students who would either be able to follow the teachers into a society position, or even into the clergy.⁶² The SPCK, on the other hand, wished to strengthen social stratification by maintaining discipline.⁶³

IV. FUNDING THE SOCIETY

Once members had been appointed, the society had to bring in the money pledged. The efficiency in collecting funds is difficult to gauge with any accuracy, but we can return to the Aberdeen and Edinburgh lists and the petition to get a sense of it. Apart from scattered references in the minutes, these lists are the only indications of subscriptions for the period under consideration, since the subscription papers signed by donors were meant to return to them once

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 52. See p. 91.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

⁶² The rules and orders for the schools included a provision that qualified pupils would get some stipend to encourage them to assist the schoolmaster. NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/1, p. 205 (20 July 1711).

⁶³ Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 73.

the money had changed hands.⁶⁴ With donations outside Edinburgh, it is unclear whether subscription papers even existed: when a minister was walking through a parish soliciting for the society, the person donating would likely give whatever spare money he might have with him, making a subscription paper superfluous. It is to the ministers' credit that so many parish donations recorded the individual names of the donors and the amounts contributed. At least once a year, the treasurer and a subcommittee would generate lists of subscribers who had not donated, based on which subscribers were recorded in the cash book.⁶⁵ The subscribers whose names did not appear would then be engaged to send in their contributions, but if a subscriber had paid in his subscription without his kirk session having recorded it and was then notified that he had not paid, it would reflect badly on the society. Despite the centralized management, some aspects of the society's business were outside its direct control.

The petition does not record the amounts subscribed by the signatories, but we can include it with the lists because we know that the individuals on it had to have pledged a subscription. Of the 155 initial subscribers who are on record, 121 contributed at least part of the money they had pledged by the end of 1710.⁶⁶ Six subscribers who have been identified are not found in the general accounts, nor are the 'presbyterians in the parish of Haddington' who collectively subscribed £30.⁶⁷ Only five subscribers submitted their contributions in 1720 or later. The society was therefore quite successful in gathering in the pledged amounts from before incorporation, but the enthusiastic response during the first year may not reflect its success overall. Unfortunately, we have no way of quantitatively assessing response rates for subsequent years due to the lack of subscription records, but we can see a steep decline from the first year's subscriptions.

Prompt payment of contributions was proving to be a big problem in early 1711, since the

⁶⁴ In 1712, the presbyteries of Irvine and Dunfermline were singled out for not having sent their contributions to the society in a timely manner (NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 266 [2 June 1712]). Similarly, Nicol Edgar, the minister at Hopkirk, told members of the committee that the subscribers from the presbytery of Jedburgh—mostly nobility and landowners—were not at their local homes, so it would be difficult for him to secure their payment. In July 1711, the committee contacted him to urge the presbytery to move forward with it, 'while their nobility and Gentry are at home' (Ibid., p. 202 [13 July 1711]). No records of noble or landowning donations appear from the presbytery. Even as part of communal donations, such as one sent in from Hopkirk soon afterwards, landowners usually accepted attribution, so any donations from local nobles or lairds must have been personal. See NRS, GD95/6/1, p. 36.

⁶⁵ See, for example, NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 188 (9 March 1711).

⁶⁶ This information has been collated from different volumes and documents at the NRS: GD95/6/1 (the accounts), GD95/8/2 (the general donations book) and GD95/10, ff. 1, 8-9 (the petition for the charter and the Edinburgh and Aberdeen subscriber lists).

⁶⁷ See p. 128, n. 40.

Table 5.3: Donations to SSPCK by year, 1709-17

Years	#	£	£	d
1709-10	1019	3211	5	8 1/6
1711	159	964	14	6 1/6
1712	79	446	1	5 1/2
1713	89	390	5	5 1/3
1714	79	621	0	6 1/2
1715	51	327	17	11 1/2
1716	51	128	18	10
1717	93	339	9	5 1/3

Source: NRS, GD95/6/1.

rate of subscriptions had slowed precipitously over 1710, from a high of nearly £800 in May to just over £10 in October. The committee was even forced to ask the General Assembly for assistance, which the assembly provided through what came to be an annual act in the society's favour.⁶⁸ The committee saw the advantage of the occasion of the assembly each year, eventually inviting ministers and ruling elders from around Scotland to attend its meetings and peruse its records while in Edinburgh.⁶⁹ This and the society's annual report to the assembly were not only a means of presenting its activities, but also convincing ministers who were slow to advertise the society in their parishes that it was a worthwhile venture.

There was a risk in using ministers as agents, however. The concern the society had over ministers not publicizing it was based in suspicions both within its own membership and from the presbyteries. In its first petition to the General Assembly as a corporation, in April 1710, it noted that 'though Some Reverend Presbyteries and Ministers have Sh[o]w[n] a commendable concern in this matter yet there is no account of any diligence from others which It[']s l[i]ke may have fallen out through forgetfu[l]ness or Some Mistakes'.⁷⁰ It is possible that episcopalian ministers may have been hostile to an organization they saw as an arm of the presbyterian General Assembly. Some presbyterians may still have adhered to the ideas that Adam Fergusson outlined in 1708, that the society was bound to fail. Another reason is the tenuous situation many ministers in the parishes, especially in the north, felt themselves to be in. The presbytery of Aberlour is a good example.

As an inversion of the rabblings which occurred in the south shortly after the revolution,

⁶⁸ The item passed in 1711 was part of the charge given to that year's commission, and a renewal of the 1710 assembly's act in favour of the society: BHO, 1710 General Assembly, Act XI, date of access 19 August 2010.

⁶⁹ NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, pp. 193-4 (23-4 May 1711) and pp. 263-4 (12 May 1712).

⁷⁰ NRS, MFiP GD95/1/1, p. 66 (13 April 1710).

both officially (with the earl of Crawford's deposition of episcopalian ministers) and unofficially (with covenanting 'mobs' forcibly removing ministers and their families from manse and churches in the southwest),⁷¹ the settlement of presbyterian ministers was often disrupted in the north. The presbytery of Aberlour was a centre of SSPCK operations in the early years, as the location of the schools at Inveraven from 1713. David Strang, the schoolmaster at the new school there, expressed surprise at his reception in the parish, implying the reputation of the area as a dubiously friendly one for presbyterians.⁷² This reputation was borne out in the spring of 1714, when George Lindsay was settled as the minister in Aberlour. Two ministers and a probationer who were coming to attend the ceremony were going to the inn when they 'were furious[y] assaulted[,] beat[en,] bruised & shot at to the effusion of the blood of some of these brethren'.⁷³ Charles Primrose, the minister at Forres and one of the society's correspondents for that presbytery, who was coming from another direction,

not knowing what the [foresaid] Ministers had met with was furious[y] assaulted & taken by the horses brid[le] & threat[e]ned to be shot at, if he did not return, the way he came & assaulted [with] a Draw[n] Sword by Mr William Stewart in Easter Kirktown of aberlour & James Kynnach[,] Smith in Soccach of Carron; & when got rid of them, The Said Mr William Stewart & James Kynnac[h] Discharged their guns after him.⁷⁴

The unrest appears not to have solely been inspired by episcopalians, but also by the involvement of an 'Apostate to Popery', John Gordon, who 'Did report That he had a Mandate from Bracco to Protest [against] the Presby[tery]'s admitting of Mr Lindsay at Aberlour'.⁷⁵ Fears of similar actions may have caused ministers to shy away from promoting the society or collecting through the parish, though there is no record of such assaults arising in that context. It was in the presbytery of Aberlour, however, where the Catholic mission attempted to establish a school in 1714, one of the few times the society took legal action to protect its interests, and where unrest was still feared even after the Jacobite rising of 1715.⁷⁶

In the society's 1714 representation to the General Assembly, it gave several reasons why it considered that ministers were not contributing or engaging in efforts to allow others to contribute. First were the most egregious offenders, those who had made no indication they had ever

⁷¹ T. Clarke, *Scottish Episcopalians*, pp. 49-52.

⁷² NRS, MFilP GD95/2/1, pp. 328-9 (27 July 1713).

⁷³ NRS, CH1/2/34/3, f. 278v., item 4.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, item 5.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 279v., item 7.

⁷⁶ See pp. 187-8.

communicated the assembly acts in favour of the society, ‘So that in some places, the pious desig[n] of the said Society is wholly concealed and unknow[n], & people have not had an opportunity to contribute towards so Christian & excellent a work, who would cordially do it’. Others felt that after they had contributed themselves, the parishioners would not be willing to, so they made no effort to promote the enterprise—even though once they had, according to the society, they found that their parishioners supported the venture. A third group had collected at the doors of the church, but had gathered in only a small amount. Finally, those who had collected—even if they obeyed the assembly acts, and went from house to house raising money for the SSPCK—delayed sending in the donations to the treasurer.⁷⁷ In some instances, such as in Aberlady, the presbytery of Haddington, in 1712, subscribed funds had been used for other purposes. The parish minister, Andrew Dickson, confessed to the society that the money had been diverted to the benefit of the parish’s own poor. The committee granted a temporary leniency, but after three years of letters to the kirk session, the society was still waiting. On 17 August 1715, Dickson finally delivered the £3.10.0 owed to the society.⁷⁸

Other corporations, professions and classes were targeted for contributions, especially nobility, but also the boards of customs and excise, the College of Justice and the Faculty of Advocates.⁷⁹ The social and professional make-up of the society helped, since when necessary, the committee was able to recruit its own members to raise funds within their respective professional bodies. It was the wealthier lairds who were often recruited to approach the nobility, taking to heart Sir David Nairn’s idea from 1707, in a letter to William Carstares, that socially prominent donors would inspire the lower orders to contribute:

It is a wor[k] that all who profess Christianity should be assisting in, but I am a[f]ra[i]d such a wor[k] will not meet with such [e]nc[o]uragement as it ought unless some person of weight make a begin[n]ing with th[eir] purse as well as di[l]igent in using th[eir] interest with others.⁸⁰

At one point, committee members were asked to carry subscription papers with them in case they were able to engage personally with people they met during their daily business.⁸¹ Subscription

⁷⁷ NRS, MFilP GD95/1/1, p. 231 (3 June 1714).

⁷⁸ NRS, GD95/6/1, p. 74.

⁷⁹ NRS, MFilP GD95/1/1, p. 293 (16 January 1713).

⁸⁰ Historical Manuscripts Commission, eds., *Report on the Laing Manuscripts Preserved in the University of Edinburgh*, v. II (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1925), p. 144. Found in A. Ian Dunlop, *William Carstares and the Kirk by Law Established* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1967), p. 126, n. 2.

⁸¹ NRS, MFilP GD95/1/1, p. 228 (3 June 1714).

Table 5.4: Parochial donations by presbytery, 1709-17

Presbytery	1709-10	1711	1712	1713	1714	1715	1716	1717	Totals by presbytery
Aberdeen	36.4.4 2/3	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	36.4.4 2/3
Abernethy	7.3.4	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	7.3.4
Auchterarder	---	---	2.15.0	---	---	---	---	1.8.4	4.3.4
Ayr	22.13.6	11.10.6	8.12.0	---	---	1.1.6	2.3.0	31.5.9	77.6.3
Biggar	23.3.4	---	---	2.11.2	---	5.9.2 1/2	---	---	31.3.8 1/2
Brechin	---	3.16.8	---	9.4.5 1/3	2.4.3 2/3	---	---	---	15.5.5
Chirnside	16.5.8	---	1.17.6	---	5.0.0	---	---	---	23.3.2
Cupar	83.19.3 1/3	18.8.10	---	2.15.0	27.10.0	15.0.8	---	---	147.13.9 1/3
Dalkeith	43.4.10 2/3	15.0.0	47.18.2	1.0.0	25.6.0 1/3	---	2.16.8	---	135.5.9
Dornoch	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	1.0.0	1.0.0
Dumbarton	---	---	---	---	---	---	9.3.4	3.14.10	12.18.2
Dumfries	120.13.7	2.3.0	1.1.6	---	---	---	---	---	123.18.1
Dunbar	105.4.5 1/6	12.8.3	---	3.13.7	---	---	8.12.0	1.1.0	130.19.3 1/6
Dunblane	15.0.0	7.0.6	10.0.0	9.5.6 2/3	---	---	11.4.4 1/3	8.7.0	60.17.5
Dundee and Forfar	1.1.6	---	---	---	---	---	---	8.9.9 1/2	9.11.3 1/2
Dunfermline	100.4.4	17.8.4	28.6.0 1/2	---	7.4.0 2/3	---	---	---	153.2.9 1/6
Dunkeld	1.9.11	1.1.6	---	---	---	---	---	---	2.11.5
Duns	8.18.8	4.10.0	6.0.0	3.0.0	2.10.0	---	1.0.0	1.1.6	27.0.2
Earlston	---	---	---	---	---	2.0.0	1.12.3	4.16.11	8.9.2
Edinburgh	429.11.7 1/3	223.6.2	13.16.11	12.6.11	22.17.5	15.1.6	15.15.0	---	732.15.6 1/3
Ellon	3.0.0	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	3.0.0
Fordoun	2.15.6	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	2.15.6
Forres	---	32.12.2	---	---	---	---	---	---	32.12.2
Garioch	---	---	---	1.8.4	---	---	---	---	1.8.4
Glasgow	50.15.0 2/3	8.1.0	---	---	---	28.19.6	---	32.9.11 1/3	120.5.6
Greenock/Paisley	6.10.0	1.0.0	---	---	---	---	---	---	7.10.0
Haddington	78.0.9 1/6	51.12.0	1.0.0	---	---	10.7.0	20.1.8	---	161.1.5 1/6
Hamilton	17.18.4	---	---	---	17.13.6	3.17.11	---	---	39.9.9
Inverness	5.0.0	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	5.0.0
Irvine	16.0.0	---	26.0.0	---	5.0.0	4.0.0	---	---	51.0.0
Jedburgh	---	59.0.10	3.16.8	---	---	1.1.6	---	3.1.6	67.0.6
Kelso	---	---	---	---	63.1.10	12.2.8	---	---	75.4.6
Kincardine O'Neil	---	---	---	16.10.7	---	6.0.0	---	---	22.10.7
Kirkcaldy	---	17.18.2	---	9.10.10	11.16.1 1/3	---	---	---	39.5.1 1/3
Kirkcudbright	---	---	2.0.0	3.17.8	5.4.10	3.2.6	1.1.6	3.9.10	18.16.4
Lanark	21.4.9 1/3	---	1.17.6	---	1.17.6	---	---	4.8.10 2/3	29.8.8
Linlithgow	62.6.7 1/2	5.0.0	---	6.0.10	27.6.3 1/2	---	---	5.0.0	105.13.9
Lorn/Kilmore	61.10.0	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	61.10.0
Meikle	---	---	---	4.0.0	---	---	---	---	4.0.0
North Isles	2.10.0	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	2.10.0
Orkney	5.2.0	---	---	---	---	---	---	1.12.3	6.14.3
Paisley	20.0.0	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	20.0.0
Peebles	---	---	6.3.4	14.9.10	---	1.2.1	14.5.6 1/2	---	36.0.9 1/2
Penpont	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	1.2.2 2/3	1.2.2 2/3
Perth	42.10.2 1/6	12.12.3 1/2	1.10.0	---	---	38.0.11	---	1.18.4	96.11.8 2/3
Selkirk	29.10.9	0.11.6	---	---	---	---	---	30.5.5 2/3	60.7.8 2/3
St Andrews	35.11.0	51.6.6 2/3	10.10.0	7.0.0	23.7.4 2/3	---	---	---	127.14.11 1/3
Stirling	86.19.4 1/3	2.0.0	---	---	---	---	5.6.8	---	94.6.0 1/3
Stranraer	---	---	---	12.1.8	12.11.0	---	4.6.0	---	28.18.8
Tain	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	13.6.0	13.6.0
Turriff	---	2.0.0	---	---	---	---	---	---	2.0.0
Wigtown	---	---	---	7.5.10	---	0.11.0	1.7.10	12.16.6	22.1.2
Totals by year	1562.2.9 1/3	560.8.3 1/6	160.4.7 1/2	126.2.3	260.10.2 1/6	147.18.11 1/2	98.15.9 5/6	170.16.0 5/6	

Source: NRS, GD95/6/1. Note that these include only donations explicitly identified as being from a particular parish or transmitted to the society by ministers on behalf of their parishes.

papers were also left at the headquarters of the customs and excise boards, though very few contributions came from these sources in the early years. Those that did, however, were from the highest levels.⁸² Committee members' social acquaintances were also used, especially when the

⁸² NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, p. 5 (2 April 1714).

acquaintances were 'deficient' subscribers: the members were expected to sign up to encourage their friends to pay what had been pledged.⁸³

Earlier concerns over the limited geographical area covered by pre-charter subscriptions continued after the society began its work, but related less to membership than to a demonstration of widespread popular support. This second aspect of the society's public image, after sober financial management, was important because it was thought to be self-generating: the more support the society had, the more it was likely to get. The Christian knowledge committee showed this in 1708, when presbyteries outside of Edinburgh demanded to see evidence of subscriptions from the capital and surrounding area before working on raising their own.⁸⁴ Direct financial support was mostly limited to the Lowlands, however, especially around Edinburgh. Scottish donations came in four forms: parochial, individual, corporate and estate. The largest number were parochial and individual, reflecting the importance of the church and ministers in raising money for the society. Some parochial donations were even broken down to show the individual donors, but most, especially those sent in through the presbyteries, only indicated the parish and the ministers who collected them. They were often accompanied by personal donations from the ministers. Corporate donations were based in trades and professions, either sent in by guilds or occupational organizations in the burghs; the customs and excise boards fall within this category. Estate donations were usually raised by ministers of the relevant parishes, or even by the heritors, and rarely identified the individual donors except as 'cottars', 'servants' or 'tenants'.

In Glasgow and Aberdeen, which each comprised many parishes, the donations tended not to be recorded parochially, but rather city-wide, though there were some exceptions.⁸⁵ This may have been because the cities had so many donations that they were simply sent all in one go. Parochial records of donations were more often kept in Edinburgh, where advertisements for collections would be placed in newspapers, announcing that the treasurer, Sir Hugh Cunningham of Craigend, and the secretary, John Dundas of Philpston, would be at a particular coffee house or

⁸³ See, for example, NRS, MFilP GD95/2/1, pp. 240-1 (21 Dec 1711). Successful instances included William Brown of Dalgourie speaking to Major James Aikman, *ibid.*, pp. 258, 263 (28 April and 5 May 1712) and the committee writing to Sir Patrick Johnston, MFilP GD95/2/2, p. 33 (28 September 1714) and GD95/6/1, p. 78.

⁸⁴ See p. 126.

⁸⁵ NRS, GD95/6/1, pp. 8-11 (Aberdeen), pp. 16-23 (Glasgow).

office at a particular time.⁸⁶ In Aberdeen, the minister Thomas Blackwell was the chief figure, having been the city's main correspondent with the Christian knowledge committee. Glasgow's chief organizer appears to have been John Stirling, principal of the University of Glasgow. No parallel figure emerges for Cupar, and little discussion appears in the minutes about key individuals from the town, but in 1710 it still generated 66 separate donations amounting to £35.9.6 1/2 in total.⁸⁷ This was not even the fourth-highest amount, but the town did have the fourth-highest number of donors listed. Aberdeen presented nearly double what the society had expected from 96 contributions, and Glasgow submitted £549.15.7 2/3 from 291 contributions, the highest number by far. Edinburgh, as usual, proves to be a special case. Personal presentation of individual donations was more likely, since officers of the society were able to accept them, rather than correspondents such as Blackwell or Stirling. Parochial contributions are more identifiable than in Glasgow or Aberdeen, but the parishes were not as important for generating contributions as they were in other cities and towns. Direct solicitations of members of bodies such as the court of session, the faculty of advocates and the boards of customs and excise were possible, especially due to the social and professional connections of the society's members—not only were all of the lords of session members, but the lord president, Sir Hugh Dalrymple of North Berwick, held that position for the society, too.

Using the *Fasti* as a guide, 67 presbyteries have been identified in Scotland in the early eighteenth century. In looking at the parochial donations, we can see that 32 presbyteries had donations in 1709-10, but that, parallel with the total amounts donated, the number then declined to 18 by 1717.

V. CORRESPONDENT COMMITTEES

The society relied mostly on ministers in procuring donations from the parishes, but did make an effort independent of the church to secure contributions: correspondent committees in each shire. A full complement was appointed, but the contact between the society and the committees was tenuous at best—there is little evidence of contributions sent from correspondents,

⁸⁶ NRS, MFiIP GD95/1/1, p. 25 (5 June 1710).

⁸⁷ NRS, GD95/6/1, p. 23-5.

and once the committees were established, they rarely appeared in the minutes.⁸⁸ As early as December 1709, the society's committee proposed naming correspondents to serve as local agents in the burghs, including three which could be considered as Highland burghs: Elgin, Inverness and Tain.⁸⁹ John Stirling in Glasgow raised the issue of trust in a letter to the committee which was read on 16 December. Unless certain individuals, 'in whom [the committee] would confide in that place [Glasgow] to grant Rece[i]pts for the money and Discharges of the Subscriptions', were named, Stirling feared it would be difficult to raise funds in Glasgow and the surrounding area.⁹⁰ The committee replied that ministers and elders in Glasgow could do as in Edinburgh and other places, discharging the subscription when the money was given in, and recording the donation in the kirk session's books, before Craighend gave the subscribers receipts for their payments.⁹¹ The society recognized, however, that if such an interim solution did not relieve people's reluctance to donate, it would have found itself in difficulty: failure to find subscribers from Glasgow, due to a lack of trust in the society's management of their donations, would have prevented it from assuming members there who could then go on to be official representatives or correspondents of the society. In January 1710, therefore, the committee solicited nominations for correspondents in the Scottish burghs.⁹² Glasgow saw the first, which included Stirling himself, with correspondents also being named for Forres and Aberdeen that year. The official establishment of the Glasgow committee must have had the intended effect of raising subscriptions, as nearly £550 was donated from Glasgow three months after the general meeting accepted the correspondents.⁹³ Up through 1717, however, the city never matched the level of donations it had reached the first year. The subscribers in Aberdeen appear to have been more confident than those in Glasgow, since the eventual correspondents were able to raise funds without official commissions from the society. The committee approved their commissions on 2 February 1710, but by 14 February, barely enough time for the commissions to arrive, Thomas Blackwell had sent along the donations.

Other efforts to found correspondent bodies in the first year failed. Lieutenant General James Maitland, based in Fort William, was approached about serving as a correspondent, and was

⁸⁸ The nominations for the committee appear in NRS, MFiP GD95/1/1, pp. 130-5, 147-51.

⁸⁹ NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 46 (16 December 1709).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 60 (13 January 1710).

⁹³ NRS, MFiP GD95/1/1, p. 48 (7 February 1710). See p. 140.

asked to nominate other suitable and trustworthy people who could serve in that position.⁹⁴ Maitland was well known to the society, his regiment having consented to the relocation of Neil McVicar from Lochaber to Edinburgh, and he himself having solicited for payment of salaries due to former and current schoolmasters in Fort William. The regiment made a donation of £61.10.0 in December 1709, showing his and his soldiers' commitment to the society.⁹⁵ Their location in Lochaber, and their potential exposure to the dangers posed by regional political and religious insecurity, may have deepened their support, but Maitland neither joined the society nor engaged in a correspondence.⁹⁶ The society had better success with Lieutenant Colonel William Maxwell of Cardoness, who was based in Kirkcudbrightshire. While not accepting a correspondence, he did become a member in November 1710, being a 'Considerable Contribut[o]r' and 'very usefu[l] to the Societ[y] In their affai[r]s'.⁹⁷ The next year, he was appointed a correspondent for his shire as part of the nationwide expansion of the correspondence system.⁹⁸ Committees arose in consideration of 'deficient' subscribers who had failed to contribute, and as the society's own collection organizations, since many ministers were delinquent in raising money in the provincial parishes. The nominations for mainly southern and Lowland committees were presented at the general meeting in November 1711, with the remainder being presented in January 1712, amounting to a total of 29 committees. Prominent members appeared among the nominees, such as Philpston for Linlithgowshire, Lord Cullen (formerly Sir Francis Grant) for Banffshire, Gilbert Eliot of Stobs for Roxburghshire (prior to his election as an MP in 1713), Duncan Forbes of Culloden for Inverness-shire, and Alexander Campbell of Fonab, the 'hero of Darién', for Perthshire.⁹⁹

These correspondence committees were of minimal use. Despite the concerns over parochial, presbyterial and synodal support for the SSPCK which gave further impetus for their creation, the society and its committee interacted more with the church bodies than with its own correspondents. In the case of Nairnshire, for example, the society and committee kept more in direct contact with the presbytery of Forres, though this may have related to discussions over the

94 NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/1, p. 61 (13 January 1710).

95 NRS, GD95/6/1, p. 3.

96 See p. 123.

97 *Ibid.*, p. 161-2 (12 October 1710).

98 NRS, MFiLP GD95/1/1, p. 133 (1 November 1711).

99 *Ibid.*, pp. 130-5.

schools in Edinkillie the society came to establish in the presbytery.¹⁰⁰ Little evidence exists of the correspondents offering input on the locations of schools or intervening where problems in school establishment arose, as opposed to ministers or heritors. Nomination of correspondents appears not to have required them to be subscribers to the society, as membership did, and little correspondence between the society and the committees has been recorded, the network apparently failing in the face of the more established one between the society and the church.

VI. SUPPORT OUTSIDE SCOTLAND

Efforts at generating contributions were not limited to Scotland, as outlined in the charter.¹⁰¹ Correspondents were named in Bristol and Dublin, and informal links were attempted with men in the United Provinces. The most sustained effort focused on London, where the society tried repeatedly to establish a correspondence committee. The existence of the SPCK and English participation in the Highland libraries scheme provided precedents and channels for support from south of the border, but despite the consciousness of English and Scots being ‘countrymen’ after 1707, the religious issue was still a potential stumbling block.¹⁰² The early attempts at establishing correspondence with Londoners, therefore, relied on dissenters and presbyterians, though Anglican clergy were not ignored. In August 1708, when William Carstares, John Stirling and Robert Baillie were in London to present the proclamation for the queen’s signature, they had another assignment: to drum up support among the English establishment for the cause ‘of raising a f[u]nd for erecting Charity Schools and promo[t]ing the knowledge of Christ in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland’.¹⁰³ This involved the publication of reasons why English donors should

100 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 305 (20 March 1713), The committee consulted with Charles Primrose, the minister at Forres, on the need of Edinkillie for a charity school and on the conduct of the teachers of Edinkillie during the 1715 rising, rather than with the correspondents. NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 305 (20 March 1713) and GD95/2/2, p. 105 (26 April 1716).

101 NRS, MFiP GD95/1/1, p. [6] (numbered as p. 2):

the General Meetings are hereby Impowered, as they shall see Cause, to Nominate fit Persons in any Places of Our Dominions, or elsewhere, for receiving Subscri[p]tions, Money, or other Things Contributed toward the foresaid Design, and to transmit Accounts thereof to the Committee at Edinburgh or the General Meeting[.]

102 See the *Considerations* outlined below, which glossed over religious differences between Scotland and England.

103 NRS, GD95/10, f. 10 (8 November 1708).

support the SSPCK, a document attributed to the English society's Henry Shute.¹⁰⁴ Religion is only mentioned in terms of Catholicism, and the presbyterian orientation of most of the SSPCK's early members is notable through its absence. Instead, the focus is on the new United Kingdom, and the obligation which 'Englishmen' had to support such a venture, for the 'temporal Int[e]rest' as much as for the spiritual benefits to both donors and recipients. These recipients, 'a Race of useless and Disaffected people tend[ing] to the Impoverishing and Expo[s]ing the best Settled Government in the world to the Greatest Danger', would enhance 'the Security of the Government by the prosecution of this desig[n]', as well as being instructed in reformed Christianity.¹⁰⁵ The proclamation and the pamphlet were given a sharper context by the abortive French invasion the previous March in support of the pretender, the putative James VIII.¹⁰⁶

The English obligation appeals not simply to a new 'British' patriotism, but the idea of the United Kingdom as a Protestant bastion of liberty, for if it sought to defend 'Religion & Liberty' in all parts of the world, surely it would 'never neglect the greatest they Can possibly make in point of wealth[,] peace or Security' by failing to strengthen the Protestant bonds between the Scottish Highlands and the rest of the nation.¹⁰⁷ The English SPCK's support of the libraries was cited, but contributions and support of a similar society in Scotland would be the culmination of English charity, generosity and piety.¹⁰⁸ An additional selling point is the potential expansion of the SSPCK to other parts of the world, but the expansion was contingent upon sufficient funds coming to the society to ensure further development of security in Ireland, 'where the disaffected to the Government and protestant Religion are thought to be nine to one', and in the nascent British

104 NRS, GD95/10, f. 57, *Some Considerations to induce the people of South Brittain to Contribute to the Designe of Propagating Christian Knowledge in the Highlands and Isles of north Brittain and of Civilizeing the Barbarous inhabitants of these parts of the Kingdome* (four pages, unpaginated). A contemporary archivist named Shute as the author of the document, and placed its production in September 1708. It does mention the queen's proclamation of that August, and refers to the English SPCK as having been establishing and managing schools for ten years. The writing does not match a personal letter from Shute in the same volume (f. 30), but the use of an amanuensis for the *Considerations* was likely.

105 *Ibid.*, p. [1].

106 At April's General Assembly, the church's address to the queen mentioned the rising:

we should be enemies to ourselves, and regardless of all that ought to be dear to us, as men and as Christians... if we had not the utmost abhorrence of the late no less bold than mischievous attempt that was made by the French monarch to invade this kingdom with an armed force, on design to assist a Popish Pretender in usurping the sovereignty of your Majesty's kingdoms, which you govern by a most unquestionable title.... (BHO, 1708 General Assembly, Act V)

107 NRS, GD95/10, f. 57, p. [3].

108 *Ibid.*

empire.¹⁰⁹

Another document outlining a scheme to raise subscriptions outside Scotland is not dated, but it refers to William Carstares and John Stirling being ‘now at London’ and to the society as ‘in the first beginning’, so it probably comes from the same time.¹¹⁰ It is addressed to Sir James Stewart of Goodtrees, the lord advocate, asking him to induce others, namely ‘the Towns of [Edinburgh] Glasgow [etc.] & some of the Nobility’ to contribute, since his instigation of these contributions ‘will be very Encouraging to what may follow.’¹¹¹ Demonstrating the involvement of the country’s social and political elites was necessary to build support not only in Scotland, but also outside. The document suggests dividing Scotland up into spheres of influence for the individuals involved with the project, but goes on to outline how the society could drum up support in England and overseas, in Dublin, Danzig, Königsberg and the United Provinces, as well as in the army.¹¹² The list of English-based contacts included temporary visitors, such as Carstares and Stirling, but prominent individuals such as William Nicolson, bishop of Carlisle, Henry Shute, the secretary of the SPCK, and the Scots Sir Patrick Johnston, former provost of Edinburgh, Sir David Nairn, and Gilbert Burnet, bishop of Salisbury.¹¹³ Potential contacts were not limited to those on the list, but would extend to MPs at Westminster, ‘who are to be well Informed of the Design which tends to the Common int[e]rest of the United Kingdo[m]’. In the society’s early years, Gilbert Eliot of Stobs, elected in 1713, would be the most fruitful connection the society had in the House of Commons. Since he was in Scotland until after his election, however, the ‘Mr Eliot’ identified on the list must have been the merchant William Eliot.¹¹⁴ The list of Edinburgh-based correspondents, however, is incomplete, with only five of the 17 English-based entries having contacts given. Sir Walter Pringle, Daniel Defoe and the advocate Gilbert Burnet were among them.

The society’s official relationship with the SPCK was abortive from the beginning. James

109 Ibid.

110 NRS, GD95/10, f. 3, n.d.

111 Ibid.

112 A possibly related document appears in the GD95/10 volume, at f. 4, listing the presbyteries, suggested representatives, and the Edinburgh-based individuals who should correspond with them. It only lists representatives from 23 presbyteries, so was apparently never completed, and was dated 1707.

113 NRS, GD95/10, f. 3, p. [2r]. First names are not supplied in the document, but considering these men’s previous or subsequent involvement in the development of charity schools, the identities given here are likely. Burnet had demonstrated a deep interest in moral reform and a commitment to the revolution. See Tony Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 49–50.

114 William Eliot was identified as a potential correspondent only after Stobs’ arrival in London. See NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, p. 3 (11 March 1714).

Kirkwood's death in 1709 or early 1710 removed a key agent for communication between the two, but the incorporation of the Scottish society was another obstacle. The English considered incorporation for the second time upon establishment of the SSPCK, but rejected it, and held it to be the Scots' responsibility to initiate a formal correspondence between the two, lest it appear that the English were in support of a corporate establishment rather than a private organization.¹¹⁵ Informal contacts continued, however, along the lines of the Scottish reformation societies, which considered an official correspondence with the SPCK superfluous when personal correspondence between members sufficed. The SSPCK did not hesitate to seek information and guidance from the older society, mostly in the form of a library of accounts. In 1713, when the SPCK published a list of charity schools in Britain and Ireland, the Scottish society was quick to amend it, since it was missing some of the more recent additions in the Highlands.¹¹⁶ Still, the SSPCK was treading a fine line, with its emphasis on developing loyalty to the established Church of Scotland while simultaneously fostering support in an episcopalian, though broadly more tolerant, England. A possible concern of the Scottish society was that the English could extend their missionary interest to Scotland, thus taking over the society's remit, hence its focus on establishing an independent support base in London.¹¹⁷ Such a concern proved to be too defensive, as the SPCK explicitly rejected the idea of expanding its charity school programme to Scotland precisely because of the SSPCK.¹¹⁸ At the time, the English society was moving from charity schools into publishing missionary materials, anyway, so problems of competition between the two were becoming moot.¹¹⁹

The Scottish society also sought the SPCK committee's opinion on the proposed charter, which Nicol Spence, one of the clerks of the Christian knowledge committee and later of the SSPCK, sent to Henry Shute in London. A question arose from the SPCK over the Scottish society's right to pursue legal cases, as the charter put it, 'in as full and ample Form and Manner as any others Our Subjects of Our Realm of Great Britain or any other Society, Corporation, or Body

115 NRS, GD95/10, f. 21.

116 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 321 (13 June 1713).

117 See pp. 149-50.

118 In addition to his plan for distributing Gaelic books in the Highlands, James Greenshields tried to interest the society in developing its own charity schools there. Clarke, 'Politics and Prayer Books', pp. 65-6. See p. 106, n. 102.

119 Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 130.

Politi[c] within the said Realm can do in any sort'.¹²⁰ Since the SSPCK's charter was to be passed under the Scottish seal, the English committee was questioning what the society's rights would be in an English court. The committee sought the advice of a solicitor, one Howe, who, in looking over the text of the charter, concluded that since the SSPCK would be considered a Scottish corporation, it 'is not a Body Politi[c], by [the] Law of England capable of p[ur]chasing Lands, or other Hereditam[en]ts in England.'¹²¹ In other words, it could not invest in land in England, or receive bequests from residents of England, unless the land investments or legacies were to be placed in trust of other English residents, and the rents and bequests passed on to the society from them. Howe was confident that, should the legality of such trusts be questioned, it would be confirmed through a Court of Chancery decree 'in regard [the] Charity hath [the] Sanction of [the] Crown.'¹²² Shute, however, took a more negative view of the SSPCK's situation. His response to Spence, sent along with Howe's opinion, was that there was no likelihood that the English trustees would honour their trust, and that even if the society took them to court, there was no assurance that the court would rule in its favour. The only sure solution, Shute writes, was an act of parliament suspending the English acts of mortmain (proscribing possession of property by religious organizations) when it came to the SSPCK, and the passage of the charter under the seal of Great Britain:

However for the present I will speak to my friends as my leisure will at all allow me to give some thing in present when I know whom You have appointed your Receivers or Collectors here. Since People can't so easily bequea[th] You what they would, they ought to be the more ready to give at present. But People are more willing to make such dispositions at their death than in their life time. Especially considering [the] difficult[ie]s all People labour under in this long & expensive war. I shall wait to know what Resolutions you will come to in order to get the difficult[ie]s remov[e]d [that] will attend the bequests of well disposed Persons to your Corporation on [the] foo[t?] of the present Charter.¹²³

Shute appears not to want to discourage the SSPCK outright, but rather to offer an honest assessment of how far the English courts would support the society's efforts to raise funds and invest in land in England. Since the society had not even received the charter yet, we do not know the process which went into making the final decision, but through its subsequent actions, we can

120 NRS, MFiP GD95/1/1, p. [6] (numbered 2).

121 NRS, GD95/10, f. 31. Howe's first name was likely James, but the note is signed only signed 'Ja: Howe'.

Another London-based man of the same surname made a bequest to the society after his death a few years later.

122 Ibid. A similar provision was enforced by the SSPCK some years later, when debating making a loan to a party of men not resident in Scotland. It required that at least one of the party, or its cautioner, be a Scottish resident, for the society's own security.

123 Ibid., f. 30.

see that the society decided to proceed with the charter as drafted and focus on donations in cash or in kind (e.g., books) from England, and leave the property investments to Scotland. In October 1710, a proposal was made that the society explore lending to individuals in London to overcome the evident slowness of finding suitable borrowers in Scotland, but it was not followed through.¹²⁴ Despite Howe's misgivings, the middlemen for the bequests the society did receive from residents of England proved trustworthy. Lady Henly of York's early bequest of £40 passed from Richard Straiton, a minister in London, to Sir Patrick Johnston, and from him to the society with no loss. The only mishap was a letter of gratitude to Henly, which was withdrawn when it was discovered that she had already died.¹²⁵ Similarly, John Campbell, a Scottish goldsmith in London who was an agent for the SSPCK, bequeathed £20, which arrived in the society's hands only a month after it had learned about his death.¹²⁶

In light of Howe and Shute's counsels for the society, we can place the desire to establish a distinct correspondence committee in London in its proper context. The society would have a commissioned body of representatives in London, obviating Shute's concerns about the trustworthiness of managers of properties or bequests on the society's behalf, and overcoming fears of the SPCK edging in on the its turf. By 1716, however, it still had not developed a committee despite repeated letters and efforts of members of the society and other agents, during business trips to London, to engage with those who had indicated an earlier interest. In the first quarter of 1710, Philpston was in London in his capacity as procurator of the church, and was expected to work as secretary of the society to raise awareness and generate support.¹²⁷ London-based contacts included Scots resident in the city, such as the John Campbell mentioned above, who at one point held a lottery ticket on the society's behalf—he had been considered for treasurer of the committee to be established in London.¹²⁸

124 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 160 (5 October 1710). The war cited was the War of Spanish Succession.

125 Ibid., pp. 157-8 (25 September 1710) and p. 160 (5 October 1710).

126 Ibid., p. 316 (22 May 1713) and p. 322 (14 June 1713); GD95/6/1, p. 55. Between 1734 and 1760, the SSPCK would have access to the rents of the Catworth farm in Huntingdonshire, bequeathed by Daniel Williams. NRS, GD95/8/2, p. [i]. See pp. 221-30 for the accounts. The minister Daniel Williams died in 1716, but some provisions of his will were challenged and unable to be implemented for several years. Not until 1729, for example, was a library established in his name for dissenting Protestantism. David L. Wykes, 'Williams, Daniel (c.1643–1716)', ODNB, view/article/29491, date of access 30 Aug 2011.

127 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 67 (27 January 1710).

128 Ibid., p. 180 (3 January 1711). The society considered the £20 sterling investment in the ticket not worth the effort, and ordered Campbell to sell it at a loss. The value returned was £6.17.0 sterling. See *ibid.*, p. 186 (29 January 1711).

The society did not just rely on national—in the sense of British—but also religious, connections in developing links with London, such as dissenting and presbyterian ministers. These ministers included Daniel Williams, who described a meeting on 13 December 1709, at which were present, ‘Seven presbyterian Ministers[,] two anabaptists and three other Gentlemen whom I had invited’.¹²⁹ While expressing support for the society’s overall goals, Williams and his fellow dissenters offered some criticism of the SSPCK’s proposed methods of raising subscriptions in England. The society risked alienating potential contacts by repeated letters asking for names of others who might be willing to correspond or contribute: ‘had the Letters been fewer a Societ[y] of well-qualified ma[n]agers might have been Set[t]led to more advantage and Less offence’.¹³⁰ Instead, a committee based in London would be preferable to organize English support, ‘Influen[c]ing men of each Denomination well reputed for integrity and prudence[,] more Lay men than Ministers and more English than Scots men (tho[ugh] Some of both)[.]’¹³¹ Such a body would have more credibility in England, since it would have more of a native tint, compared to one composed overwhelmingly of Scots or dissenting clergy. Williams understood the corporate nature of the society, though, and recognized that authority over the committee’s operations would lie in Edinburgh. He requested ‘measures[,] rules[,] [sums], Subscribed among Yo[u] and how applied’ so that it could conduct its affairs properly.¹³² Williams ended on an apologetic note:

I would need your pardon for being thus particular[,] unless a zeal for the Lasting Success of a work of this nature with a Sense of present obstacles Did excuse, tho[ugh] I hope one of the greatest besides growing poverty (a noise of your persecuting Spirit) will be removed when warm men are better informed of the true reason of your proceedings and the Differences bet[w]een your Circumstances and those of South Bri[t]ain[.]

We see in these lines hints of the prejudices many English Anglicans bore towards the Scots, that they were both impoverished and, at least for the presbyterians, fanatical.¹³³ The problems lying

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 55 (30 December 1709).

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid., pp. 55-6. The suggestion of recruiting more Englishmen may have been based in simple practicalities rather than in possible racialism, since potential English donors may have felt more comfortable dealing with someone from a similar geographical and cultural background. Williams was just being honest, as he himself was Welsh.

¹³² Ibid., p. 56. The information on sums were necessary to ‘furnish [the subcommittee] with arguments to pers[u]ade’, since, as in Scotland, the popularity of a cause would help boost the number of subscriptions for it.

¹³³ Such accusations had been circulating since the disestablishment of episcopalianism in 1689, and the pursuit of ministers which resulted. The execution of Thomas Aikenhead for blasphemy in January 1697 did nothing to dispel them. See Graham, *Blasphemies of Thomas Aikenhead*, pp. 134-42, and Raffe, *Religious Controversy*, pp. 51-4.

under the surface of cooperation in the libraries scheme, therefore, had not gone away. A cool-headed explanation of Scotland's, and hence Britain's, true situation, subject to an entire population of dubious loyalty to the political and ecclesiastical settlements within its own borders, and of the means the society intended to use to relieve it, would be more beneficial.

The presence of Philpston in London between January and April would, it was hoped, help generate an active response from Londoners, not only in Williams' group of acquaintances, but also among other groups who had not yet been contacted.¹³⁴ One advantage of Philpston in particular being in London was that he, as secretary, was the one who originally wrote the letters sent in early December 1709. The committee, therefore, asked him to be in touch with some of the people he had written to, and who had given 'favourable returns' to the society about their support for its work.¹³⁵ It would appear that Philpston and Williams were to work at cross-purposes, almost developing two separate correspondent bodies,¹³⁶ but Philpston came to serve as an intermediary between the society and its London supporters during his time there, trying to expand the group Williams was fostering. The committee's hope was that he would bring a list of people 'fi[t] to be Correspondents' back to Edinburgh when he returned, along with a list of proposals they might have to raise money effectively in England.¹³⁷ Whatever the nature of Williams and Philpston's efforts, they appeared to be working: Philpston reported to Nicol Spence in February that 60 men had met before his arrival to agree on plans to support the society, and that a list of potential correspondents had arisen from that meeting. The list would soon be on its way.¹³⁸

By the time Philpston returned in late April, the list had not arrived, despite reminders

134 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 64 (20 January 1710). Philpston's commission called on him to speak to the lord high treasurer about former (pre-Union) allowances by the king to the church to meet its expenses. Since 1690, despite the royal allowances continuing, they were not statutory, so had not been consistent. As a result, the church had had to incur debts. Philpston's job for the commission was 'to procure [a] Certain and fixed establishment upon Some good and Sure fund for a Su[it]able yearly allowance for defra[y]ing the abovementioned publi[c] expen[s]es [of the church]'. See NRS, CH1/1/20, pp. 741-9, for Philpston's commission, the petition to the Lord High Treasurer, and Philpston's report after his return to Edinburgh.

135 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 67 (27 January 1710). Only Daniel Williams' response is recorded in the committee minutes, so it is questionable how many 'favourable returns' the committee received.

136 *Ibid.*, pp. 67-8. Philpston was asked 'to obtain a mee[t]ing of these worth[y] and pious Persons', though such a meeting had already been held. See p. 149.

137 *Ibid.*

138 *Ibid.*, pp. 81 (17 February 1710), 106-7 (24 April 1710). Williams had not been in contact with the committee since the end of December, so news of this second meeting had not reached Edinburgh.

from the committee to send it.¹³⁹ He was not even able to bring it with him, due to civil unrest in London surrounding the trial of Henry Sacheverell for seditious preaching.¹⁴⁰ Despite the rioting, the 60-odd supporters of the SSPCK had selected a proto-committee of 13 men who were meeting each week to take in reports of 'Charitable people of their respective Congregations or acquaintances' who would be suitable correspondents for the society.¹⁴¹ Additionally, Philpston had taken the pre-emptive step of printing 500 copies of the charter and first nomination, and of the proposed management scheme,¹⁴² distributing some among those who were favourable to the society and storing the rest with the bookseller Andrew Bell.¹⁴³ As with many of the presbyteries in Scotland, however, the London body was dilatory about sending its list of ideas for correspondents. Williams' own contact with the society was sporadic, despite the efforts of Philpston to write to him, and of people acquainted with the society who were present in England to see him, such as James McEwen at the end of May or Carstares himself in September.¹⁴⁴ Settlement of a correspondence committee in London was not bound to proceed definitively even after the '15, though part of the reason may have been Williams' ill health.¹⁴⁵ Even though focus on the issue fluctuated over the years, it was never off the society's agenda for long. Little was done in 1712, the society paying more attention to the establishment of schools and the hiring of schoolmasters, but in 1713, with the election of Eliot of Stobs as an MP, the putative London committee resumed a central place. Stobs was particularly assiduous in getting current accounts of the society sent to him for distribution among potential correspondents in London, the job of updating these accounts usually falling to Spence.

Though Stobs was unsuccessful at establishing, or 'reviving', the correspondence at London,¹⁴⁶ he did gather a significant amount of money: under his auspices, Sir Peter King, the recorder of London, donated 10 guineas (£10.15.0) in 1713 and 5 guineas in 1714. The latter

139 *Ibid.*, p. 91 (20 March 1710). Nicol Spence wrote to Philpston to remind him, and was instructed to mention the fact that the issue was of such importance that the general meeting was now meeting every fortnight in anticipation of being able to nominate correspondents in London.

140 *Ibid.*, p. 107 (24 April 1710); W. A. Speck, 'Sacheverell, Henry (*bap.* 1674, *d.* 1724)', ODNB, view/article/24440, date of access 26 August 2011.

141 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 107 (24 April 1710).

142 See pp. 169-73 below.

143 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, pp. 107-8.

144 McEwen does not appear in any of the membership lists of the time, nor even as a subscriber, though someone of that name does appear as a co-borrower, identified as a divinity student (NRS, GD95/8/3, p. 23). MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 116 (25 May 1710). For Carstares, see *ibid.*, p. 153 (7 September 1710).

145 Wykes, 'Williams, Daniel (c.1643-1716)', ODNB, view/article/29491, date of access 30 Aug 2011.

146 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, p. 31 (28 September 1714).

donation was part of a package which included £10 from Sir Joseph Jekyll, 5 guineas from Admiral Sir Charles Wager, and £5 from Stobs himself. Daniel Williams made a pledge of £100 for its support in 1710 and arranged for the payment of interest on the pledge about a year after making it, interest which continued being received up until the original subscription was recorded in the accounts in November 1714.¹⁴⁷ James Fraser—secretary of the Chelsea hospital and brother of Hugh Fraser, the deceased minister of Kiltarlity, in the presbytery of Inverness—had originally arranged for a £5 per annum donation until his death.¹⁴⁸ Only one donation of £5 appears in the accounts, but in 1713, Fraser superseded his annual donation with a lump sum of £100 to be directed especially towards the establishment of schools in the Aird, Inverness-shire, near where his brother served ‘and where many of his name may have the benefi[t] and advantage of it’.¹⁴⁹ While fewer in number, the contributions and bequests from England tended to be larger than those from Scotland. Correspondence with London, however, never reached the levels the society had hoped it would.

Efforts at establishing correspondent bodies outside London were far less formal, and relied even more on personal contacts of society members, especially family contacts. The most notable were the Cumings, with their connection in Ireland. Patrick, the minister of Ormiston, served as the axis for donations coming from Dublin, where his brother Duncan, a physician, collected for the society on the basis of an official commission. In 1714, Duncan Cuming submitted £261.13.7, or £280 Irish. These donations are not attributed to specific individual contributors except for a £100 bequest (£107 Irish) from a Mr Brodie, a deceased teacher in Dublin. An additional donation of £4.11.8 (£5 Irish) was submitted from a Dublin surgeon, Henry Osburn, via John Cuming, Patrick’s nephew and the minister of Humbie, in 1715. Similar commissions were sent to the London residents Stobs, Williams, James Fraser, William Eliot, and Sir David Dalrymple of Hailes, brother of the society’s president, Sir Hugh of North Berwick, to demonstrate their credibility in the eyes of the contributors and establish their status as official representatives of the society. No commissions were issued to correspondents in the United Provinces, but William Carstares was deputed to use his contacts since he had served as minister at Campvere, and had spent so much time in William

147 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 195 (6 June 1711); GD95/1/1, p. 204 (31 July 1713); GD95/2/2, p. 62 (25 February 1715).

148 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 225 (28 September 1711).

149 NRS, MFiP GD95/1/1, p. 204 (31 July 1713).

II and III's company before the revolution. His brother Alexander was a merchant in Rotterdam, and Carstares was asked to contact him about the possibility of donations from the community there.¹⁵⁰ The greatest success in Holland came via the army, through the efforts of regimental chaplains. Daniel Bain, the chaplain for Lieutenant General Murray's regiment in Flanders, raised £47 from the higher-ranking officers, including Murray himself, in September and October 1715.¹⁵¹ The society met with little success in other regiments, but in Ireland and the United Provinces, both family connections and the pan-Protestant rhetoric used in its communications produced some contributions to the stock.

VII. INVESTMENTS

As was common with joint-stock companies, the society sought to raise interest on the stock through investments, either in property or individual or group loans. Property was preferred, because it would enable to society to put more of its money into one deal and have something physical and guaranteed to raise funds as security. Most of the deals involved mortgages, whereby the landowner would borrow money from the society in exchange for giving it responsibilities and benefits derived from property ownership, or for paying it interest on the funds. This revenue and interest would then be used for the establishment and maintenance of schools and for schoolmasters' salaries. Little success was achieved in finding appropriate property investments, however, since many of the estates on offer were encumbered with too many debts and would put the society at too great a risk of losing their investments, or not earning enough revenue to make the deal worthwhile.

The society had 12 different property investments under consideration in 1710, none of which came to a successful conclusion. Not looking to invest its stock lightly, it gave potential contracts thorough scrutiny. With the estate of Woolmet, the key issue was the coal being mined on the land, and whether the rent to be paid to the society would be covered without coal income should the supply fail.¹⁵² In exchange for borrowing 100,000 merks (£5,555.11.1 1/3 sterling), the

¹⁵⁰ NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 63 (20 January 1710).

¹⁵¹ NRS, GD95/6/1, p. 66; MFiP GD95/2/2, p. 28 (26 August 1714). The solicitor Lillie, based in the Hague and deputed to send the money to Edinburgh, added £5 of his own to the collection.

¹⁵² NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 143 (31 July 1710).

laird offered to the society a heritable security of 6,000 merks per year (£333.6.8), with a sworn rental of £6,257.6.4 Scots, not counting coal profits (£521.8.10 1/3).¹⁵³ The prospects for the deal were initially positive, with Nicol Spence's review of tenant depositions agreeing with the stated rent provided by the laird of Woolmet.¹⁵⁴ At the end of August, the deal was suspended because of Woolmet's prevarication over what would happen if the coal supply ran out. The current creditors on the estate had performed due diligence, and had valued the annual sworn rental not including coal revenue at 7,000 merks (£388.17.9 1/3), considerably below what Woolmet had reported. In addition, one Patrick Falconer had rights to 1,200 merks of the rental, leaving a mere £322.4.5 1/3 available to the society should it lend the money to Woolmet.¹⁵⁵

A second transaction which had more than a whiff of success about it was the purchase of the lands of Rosyth from the earl of Rosebery. Negotiations ran for longer than for Woolmet, but also ultimately failed. A dispute over the price lay at the deal's centre, Rosebery asking initially for 115,000 merks (£6,938.17.9 1/3) and the society offering 106,000 (£5,860.11.1 1/3), the latter being what Rosebery had paid for the property.¹⁵⁶ The society was unwilling to pay what Rosebery was demanding, though shortly after the deal came under discussion, he began to show flexibility by bringing his price down by 1,000 merks, to £6,333.6.8.¹⁵⁷ The price was still considered too high, and there was uncertainty over a claim on the estate by one John Trotter of Mortonhall.¹⁵⁸ By the end of May, therefore, the deal had been put to one side in favour of two others which were under negotiation. Neither of these others proved suitable, the estate of Barns Seaton having too high a price which was only likely to rise due to demand for the property, and the other being held by the earl of Winton, who himself held Barns Seaton in blench. The society, if it took on the lease on Barns Seaton, would then be his tenant, a situation which raised some legal concerns among the committee.¹⁵⁹ This was not the only difficulty with the purchase of a lease on Barns Seaton: the

153 Ibid., p. 147 (21 August 1710). As an indication of how tied in the economy was with agricultural productivity, Woolmet had come up with this figure by valuing the estate's production at 10 merks per boll of victual.

154 Ibid., p. 148 (23 August 1710).

155 Ibid., pp. 149-50 (31 August 1710).

156 Ibid., p. 113 (22 May 1710). Adding the stock donations up until May 1710 yields £2749.0.1 1/2. The only reason why £5,860.11.1 1/3 could have been thought a feasible price for the society was that it expected more funds to keep coming in. Since they did not, another reason for the failure of the society to seal any land deal would have been the lack of money to lend out. By the end of 1710, Cunningham recorded roughly £3,000 as the society's stock.

157 Ibid., p. 114 (25 May 1710).

158 First name given in NRS, GD1/576/610.

159 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 110 (8 May 1710). Committee members were asked to speak to Sir Hugh

current holder concurred with the society in offering part of the estate, but it was the western part, which the society considered would be too difficult to collect the rents for.¹⁶⁰ For Winton's estate, too few creditors offered to assign their stakes to the society, so the deal ultimately collapsed.¹⁶¹

Sir Hugh Dalrymple was engaged as a negotiator with Rosebery to try to bring the earl's price down. He was moderately successful, as Rosebery agreed to 110,500 merks (£6,138.17.9 1/3), close to Dalrymple's personal feeling of what would be a fair price (110,000 merks).¹⁶² Two other complications arose, however. Lady Rosyth's liferent of 40,000 merks (£2,222.4.5 1/3) would be retained by the society in exchange for providing her with 20 chalders of agricultural produce annually.¹⁶³ The committee was not pleased at the prospect, and considered the amount the SSPCK would retain to be too low: 48,000 merks would have been more appropriate.¹⁶⁴ The other issue was a house and lands in Inverkeithing which the committee understood to be linked to the Rosyth estate. Dalrymple was of the opinion that if Rosebery wished to keep the Inverkeithing property separate from the deal, then its value should be deducted from the principal the society would lend.¹⁶⁵ Similarly, the society proposed to Rosebery that, in addition to 40,000 merks, any cost of Lady Rosyth's liferent over that amount would be retained. In the event of his not agreeing, 46,000 merks would have to be the minimum retention.¹⁶⁶ As with Woolmet, however, a more thorough examination of the legal and financial entanglements of the estate showed other debts and obligations than Lady Rosyth's liferent and Mortonhall's claim, to the amount of £4,821.13.4 Scots (£401.16.1 1/3).¹⁶⁷ Other properties in Fife, Inverkeithing and Pitreavie were offered as security, but now the society needed to ascertain the solvency of both of these properties, as well as

Dalrymple or the elder Goodtrees 'about the Difficulties that Ordinar[i]ly occu[r] in purcha[s]ing of Lands holden of Subjects as to their being obliged to rece[i]ve the Societ[y] vas[s]a[l]s'. *Ibid.*, p. 115 (25 May 1710).

160 *Ibid.*, p. 125 (6 June 1710). The laird refused to sell the eastern half alone, which caused the deal to fall through. *Ibid.*, p. 126 (9 July 1710).

161 The final mention of a Winton deal appears in the committee minutes for 28 July 1710, when Sir Robert Dickson is described as willing to make over his stake to the society, but Dickson's own creditors are not willing to accept any security other than the Winton stake itself or the full repayment of £1,000 sterling. The committee authorized Craigend to pay the money if necessary, but no further statement on the deal appears in the minutes, or in an inventory of investments and obligations given to George Watson upon his assumption of the office of treasurer in January 1711. *Ibid.*, p. 142, and GD95/14/3.

162 NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/1, p. 131, 23 June 1710.

163 *Ibid.*

164 *Ibid.*

165 *Ibid.*

166 *Ibid.*, p. 136 (11 July 1711).

167 *Ibid.*, p. 140 (14 July 1710). Whether sterling or Scots is not specified, but £4,821.13.4 sterling would have been astronomical for the time.

of Rosyth itself.¹⁶⁸ Additionally, Sir Alexander Anstruther had a claim on the estate, the amount of which is not specified, but was willing to 'renounce his annuity' so long as Mortonhall was paid for his own claim.¹⁶⁹ The society's frustration must have been building, however, at the back-and-forth dealings on the estate. The final straw appears to have come on 21 August, when yet another claim on Rosyth was reported: one of John Law of Lauriston, for approximately £1,400 Scots (about £116.14.0).¹⁷⁰ Lauriston was not in Scotland at the time, however, so the affair was not likely to be resolved quickly. The committee decided that the deal should be set aside, since 'it will not be proper or Safe for the Societ[y] to make a purchase of Land under Such [e]ncumbrances as Rosyth is.'¹⁷¹

VIII. LOANS

An argument in favour of the purchase of Rosyth was the possible resolution of many of the society's difficulties all at once—it would not have to continue seeking deals to lend out its stock because everything would be together in one place, and interest would start coming in. Moreover, mulling over a decision for too long was unacceptable, 'S[e]eing that the not [e]mploying of the money Stops all business'.¹⁷² The society was not, of course, the only business entity seeking to invest funds in Scotland in the early eighteenth century. Potential stockholders were looking to take advantage of the stable business environment which commentators consider to be one of the chief economic benefits of the revolution of 1688-90.¹⁷³ The crisis of the 1690s forced many new companies to shut down, possibly reflecting the weakness of the closed firms, but in the following decade, the Bank of Scotland's management of an expansion in paper currency and the confidence of Scottish businessmen, landowners and consumers in the ability of the bank to back up the currency with coin, allowed for growth in investment.¹⁷⁴ The union of 1707 is sometimes

168 Ibid.

169 Ibid., p. 144 (9 August 1710).

170 John Philip Wood, *Memoirs of the Life of Mr John Law of Lauriston* (Edinburgh: Adam Black, 1824), p. 17, note. Rosebery sold the estate to Sir Robert Blackwood in 1711.

171 Ibid., p. 147 (21 August 1710). Lauriston was at this point in exile in France after murdering a man in a duel in 1694. Saville, *Bank of Scotland*, p. 54.

172 Ibid., p. 71.

173 Saville, *Bank of Scotland*, p. xxvii; Andrew William Kerr, *History of Banking in Scotland* (London: A & C Black, 1918), p. 3.

174 Saville, *Bank of Scotland*, pp. 40, 48, 51.

held to be the cornerstone of this growth, with the Equivalent cited as a main factor in revitalizing the Scottish economy, but the effectiveness of the Equivalent was far more attenuated, with final payments having to be made by the government in 1719 in the shape of investment in the Equivalent Company, a corporation which formed the nucleus of the Royal Bank of Scotland in 1727.¹⁷⁵

The involvement of the society in banking operations—lending and funding mortgages—seems not to have contradicted the 21-year monopoly granted to the Bank of Scotland upon its foundation in 1695. The main difference between the society and the bank, as between the society and the Company of Scotland, was that the society was not a profit-seeking entity, so competition was not as much of a concern on the bank's part. The bank's fragility in its early years is reflected in its refusal to pursue the company for breach of the monopoly when, in the previous decade, the Company of Scotland sought to enter the banking sector. The bank maintained that it was too weak to insist on its rights. The company was forced to withdraw due to overreach, though there is disagreement about the bank's ability to withstand a sustained threat.¹⁷⁶ The society, on the other hand, was not in the business of offering credit, but of supporting charitable institutions. As such, its activities in lending were strictly limited by the charter, and thus was no danger to the bank's business. Unlike with the company, several directors and staff of the bank were involved with the society, including the bank's accountant, George Watson, who succeeded Craigend as treasurer in early 1711.¹⁷⁷

The society was a desirable target for investment in terms of charity, but as a charity was not going to pay dividends, and did not have the resources of the bank either to cover debts on estates or to pursue delinquent borrowers. In the first of these cases, as we have seen, the diligence of the SSPCK was quite solid, and able to avoid pitfalls of bad property investments: it did not invest until 1714, in two estates. One of these investments was perhaps the most lucrative in the first half-century of the society's existence, lasting until November 1755, more than 40 years after the stake was purchased, with 31 regular, mostly annual payments of interest.¹⁷⁸ Whether the

¹⁷⁵ Kerr, *History of Banking in Scotland*, p. 39.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 24. Saville believes that the company posed a larger threat to the bank than Kerr makes out, leading to retaliatory, self-defensive measures from the bank. *Bank of Scotland*, pp. 32-4.

¹⁷⁷ Saville, *Bank of Scotland*, p. xxxiii.

¹⁷⁸ NRS, GD95/8/3, pp. 58, 366.

society was seen as an easier lender than the bank, exactly because of the difficulties it found in investing its stock, is questionable, but when it began investing in loans rather than mortgages and property, it found problems in securing the repayment of interest. Exercising caution in the use of resources, though, it sought to persuade its borrowers to pay in promptly rather than pursue legal action. Collection of interest did appear fairly steady, but the society understandably wished to avoid a precedent of laxity, especially for the sake of its corporate reputation.

The advantage of investing in loans was the spreading of risk, but the disadvantage was in acting more as a bank than it perhaps had intended to, not only in performing diligence on many individual or group borrowers, but also in pursuing the interest from delinquent debtors. The first push was to ask burghs to borrow from the stock. Craigend himself was the first to mention lending, after he had announced expected donations of £500 by the last week of November 1709 and the committee had given him permission to invest as he saw fit.¹⁷⁹ The committee began a targeted push to get society funds invested, beginning with the burghs of Glasgow and Aberdeen.¹⁸⁰ The general meeting on 5 January 1710 also encouraged Edinburgh to consider borrowing from the society's stock, nominating member Adam Brown, a bailie, to discuss the issue with the town council.¹⁸¹ The likelihood of the magistrates being willing to borrow, though, was not high.¹⁸² The previous month, the council was forced to borrow £2,000 from the bailie William Jaffrey to help it cover expenses, so it may have been hesitant to borrow more.¹⁸³ Brown himself illustrated this when he informed the committee that the Edinburgh magistrates had decided they were unable to take on any of the society's stock.¹⁸⁴ For Glasgow and Aberdeen, Craigend suggested a temporary loan of between £700 and £800 each from Candlemas (2 February) 1710, just until a more permanent investment deal could be secured.¹⁸⁵ No response from either burgh is recorded, but the amounts suggested proved to be optimistic anyway, only £1,160 having been entered into the society's accounts by that date. The Aberdeen donations, recorded two weeks later, did bring the society closer (£1,358), but then one enters the scenario where the money

179 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, pp. 33 (18 November 1709), 43 (9 December 1709). The committee deemed it beyond their power under the charter to advise him on investment.

180 *Ibid.*, p. 43 (9 December 1709).

181 NRS, MFiP GD95/1/1, pp. 34-5 (5 January 1710).

182 Armet, ed., *Extracts: 1689-1701*, p. xxxviii.

183 NRS, MFiP GD95/1/1, p. 181 (14 December 1709).

184 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, pp. 64-5 (27 January 1710).

185 *Ibid.*, p. 43 (9 December 1709).

received would be sent back to where it came from—this, after such a long wait for the donations in the first place.¹⁸⁶

Unlike burgh and government lending, private lending proved to be more successful for the SSPCK, though it did not really begin in earnest until the end of 1710. The more straightforward progress may have related to the desperation the society felt to get some money coming in which could be used to establish and maintain its schools. The committee first introduced private loans at the general meeting on 5 January 1710.¹⁸⁷ An early loan came on 27 January, when Sir Henry Rollo of Woodside and John Watson, a merchant and former bailie in Leith, offered to borrow £200.¹⁸⁸ Despite the society's efforts to find opportunities for loans, none arose until June, when the committee allowed Craigend to lend 4,000 merks (£222.4.5 1/3) to Sir Alexander Menzies of that ilk, Colonel Alexander Campbell of Fonab and Captain James Menzies of Comrie.¹⁸⁹ Upon its report to the general meeting of its progress, the membership approved of the scrutiny and the caution the committee had exercised, but even more so, of its having made a successful loan. Still, private loans were seen as a temporary measure until a suitable property deal should be made.¹⁹⁰

The most significant financial deal from 1710 was the assignation of a 5,000-merk stake in the estate of Jean Weem, the dowager countess of Sutherland (already a generous subscriber to the society, even before its official establishment). She had offered to transfer the bond, worth £277.15.6 2/3, to the society with the conditions that she have the first right to any interest earned on the money and that 1,000 merks be reserved for legacies after her death, though the right to the interest would only be exercised if necessary. Otherwise, she would allow the society to retain it.¹⁹¹ The

¹⁸⁶ NRS, GD95/6/1, pp. 8-11. See pp. 127, 140.

¹⁸⁷ NRS, MFiP GD95/1/1, p. 35 (5 January 1710). The committee also sought the ability to direct Craigend in investing the society's funds, which was granted.

¹⁸⁸ NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 65, (27 January 1710).

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 124 (2 June 1710). Comrie is given as 'Cambrie' in the minutes.

¹⁹⁰ NRS, MFiP GD95/1/1, pp. 73-4 (6 July 1710).

¹⁹¹ The bond in question dated back to October 1705, and was a pension owed by the countess' son, the current earl of Sutherland, and her grandson, Lord Strathnaver. As a result of their names being on the original bond, they were responsible for the transmission of interest after the countess' death. At one point, the general meeting minutes refer to the mortification as amounting to 2,000 merks, but this appears to be an error, as the 5,000-merk figure appears in both sets of minutes and in the general ledger. See NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, pp. 134-5, 137-41, 145-6, 153 (5-21 July, 14 August and 7 September 1710) and GD95/1/1, pp. 75-9 (6 July, 10 August and 14 September 1710). Upon the countess' death in 1715, the legacies deducted were: £27.15.6 2/3 to the kirk session of Golspie; £2.15.6 2/3 to Margaret Cheisholme; £8.6.8 to Jean Crawford, the wife of a Commissary Gray; and £16.13.4 to a Mrs Robertson, leaving £222.4.5 1/3 for the society's use. See GD95/8/2, pp. 2-3, and GD84/1/32/2 for a marriage contract between Strathnaver and Katharine Morison, dated 4 October 1705, which allows for a pension to the dowager

society agreed, and it received the assignation on 21 July 1710. In October 1711, having handed over the interest to the society the previous month, she assigned the interest earned on the 5,000 merks in the past—up to and including the current Martinmas (11 November) term—for the special use of any charity schools established in Sutherland or Strathnaver, while still retaining the right to call for the interest if necessary.¹⁹² In the accounts, the bond was kept separate from the stock due to the specific conditions with which it was transferred to the society, and the fact that it was essentially an interest-bearing deposit, even if the interest was going to the ‘bank’ rather than the depositor. A similar separation was maintained for a 2,500-merk mortification in March 1715 by John Farquharson of Invercauld, for the board of five poor boys at the SSPCK school in Braemar or the nearest charity school.¹⁹³ The mortification was retained despite the ejection of Invercauld from the society following the rising of later that year for Jacobite activities.¹⁹⁴

The slow rate of investment in Scotland, either in loans or property, caused the society to explore lending to individuals in London, even though Spence had been informed in 1709 that loans and investment in England would be difficult.¹⁹⁵ The society was not ignoring the solicitor Howe’s advice, however, since it landed on the requirement of a Scottish resident as a co-borrower for its own protection when faced with the prospect of making a loan to London residents. John Montgomery of Wrae, William Graham and Thomas Coutts, all London residents, William Gordon, a merchant in Campvere, and a soldier of unknown location, Major Patrick Gordon, were named as potential borrowers of £1,000. The society accepted the proposal, but subject to the above requirement of a Scottish co-borrower, naming George Montgomerie the Younger of Wrae in particular, ‘to whom the Societ[y] may have read[y] access for due payment of their annua[l]rents or Speed[y] raising of their principal Su[m] in case their affairs do call for the Same’.¹⁹⁶ The loan was never made, however, since the stock was not available, and the society took this as a spur to chase down subscribed funds which had not been submitted, such as the subscriptions of William Wishart and of the Tron parish in Edinburgh, totalling £70. By the time the money was paid, in

countess.

192 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 227 (19 October 1711).

193 NRS, MFiP GD95/1/1, p. 268 (3 March 1715).

194 *Ibid.*, p. 290 (1 March 1716). See pp. 192, 212.

195 NRS, MFiP GD95/1/1, p. 160 (5 October 1710). See pp. 147-8 for the lawyer Howe’s reply to the SPCK’s inquiry in London.

196 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 167 (9 November 1710).

February 1711, the opportunity for the loan had already passed.¹⁹⁷

In November 1710, due to Craigend's severe illness, the management of loans had fallen to Robert Hepburn, though John Campbell, Craigend's cautioner, assumed responsibility for the extant bonds, which had been signed over to him by Craigend.¹⁹⁸ Hepburn was not a member when his service began, but was taken up soon enough afterwards, at the general meeting that November, and essentially served as a treasurer pro tempore during Craigend's illness and after his death, and before Watson's appointment. An alternative solution to making loans to Londoners was advertising for borrowers, which Hepburn assumed responsibility for. As with the subscribers, the identification of borrowers is important in uncovering who was engaging with the society, but there is one key difference: the society could afford to be, and perhaps should have been, more selective with borrowers than with subscribers. There was some element in personal engagement and encouragement of people to borrow, but the society was looking at a far narrower base due to the need for security and collateral. Most importantly, the borrowers had to be able to pay the society the interest required, and as such, personal or professional acquaintance and knowledge of borrowers' business affairs were necessary. Such knowledge was not always flawless. Despite the success at putting loans out, the society was only moderately successful at getting the interest in. It still found itself having to pursue many of its borrowers for delinquency in payments. Interest was frequently paid at the borrowers' convenience, forcing the society to record in its accounts the period the interest covered. This could be as short as 1 1/3 months, or as long as 12 years.

The problem with overdue interest reached a crisis point as soon as 1713, with the first list generated of borrowers who should be approached about repayment. Two loans were recalled, and in August, the committee included them in a list of loans whose status was questionable.¹⁹⁹ Looking at the hard numbers, by that August the society had lent around £6,640 in stock, gaining just over £350 in interest.²⁰⁰ Assuming a 5 percent rate for each loan, the society was not doing badly, but, concerned with maintaining momentum and establishing as many schools as the

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 171-2 (30 November 1710); GD95/6/1, p. 35.

¹⁹⁸ NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 160 (5 October 1710).

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 299, 334 (2 March and 27 August 1713).

²⁰⁰ NRS, GD95/6/1 and GD95/8/3. Note that the society did not necessarily have £6,640 in stock, but that several loans had been repaid and the stock lent out again. This figure is used to illustrate the total interest which would have been available.

interest coming in would allow, it needed to address the issue of delinquent borrowers. John Hutcheson of Harlaw was the borrower named in one of the recalled loans, possibly the only one of four co-borrowers still to have a stake in their £300 loan out—£133.16.0 remained outstanding as of May 1713, and only £16.10.0, one year's worth of interest, had been paid in over the 2 1/2 years since the loan was granted. The principal continued to be paid off in small pieces until 1715, however, and the society managed to earn nearly £56 in interest over 4 1/2 years.²⁰¹ Another team of four borrowers headed by the advocate Thomas Boyd, a brother of the earl of Kilmarnock, borrowed £83.6.8 at the end of November 1711, but had still paid no interest when the committee considered recalling the loan in March 1713. Even when Boyd and another co-borrower, James Graham the younger of Braco, submitted a new bond for the loan amount in December 1715, paying up the overdue interest, they only paid two years' worth. When they paid up the interest on the new bond in November 1721, they did pay the interest owed, but all at the one time.²⁰² The rest of the borrowers on the August 1713 list were under scrutiny for similar reasons. Lady Jerviswood, Lord Polwarth (the son of the earl of Marchmont) and Sir Andrew Home of Kimmerghame borrowed £222 in December 1710, but paid no interest until May 1716. Sir Hugh Paterson of Bannockburn had two loans out, one from November 1711 and the other from December 1712, on which no interest had been paid, though it is likely the committee had the first loan in view. This loan was paid up in full the next July, but the second loan saw no interest being paid until it was paid off in January 1725.²⁰³ A complicating factor, of course, was that Bannockburn was attainted after the '15 Jacobite rising, so the repayment had to progress through the Committee for Forfeited Estates.²⁰⁴

Patrick Alexander of Corsclays and Archibald Campbell of Rachain had paid no interest on their loan of August 1711. In January 1715, their affairs were described as being 'in some disorder', news of which must have reached the society by 1713.²⁰⁵ The significance of the society's pursuit of these borrowers is underlined by the fact that their grandmother was Agnes Campbell, the royal printer and a key business partner of the society. Several times over 1715, the society considered

²⁰¹ NRS, GD95/8/3, p. 14.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 26.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

²⁰⁴ The claims on Bannockburn and Braco were both sent to unspecified commissioners of enquiry, 'per late act of parliament'. NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, p. 140 (4 October 1716).

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 49 (13 January 1715).

prevailing upon her to pay up the men's debts. Eventually, in June 1716, it used her failure to donate to the society, despite her pre-incorporation subscription, as leverage in their negotiations to get Rachain and Corsclays' debts repaid and to get reduced prices for printing.²⁰⁶ In October 1716, there is a reference to the men's debts being cleared. No details are offered, but it is possible that the discussions with Campbell may have borne some fruit.²⁰⁷

One of the results of the interest crisis was that the committee now found it necessary to convene meetings specifically to address delinquent loan payments and the conditions of borrowers' financial states. The failure to ascertain solvency prior to making the loans earned a reproof from the January 1714 general meeting, though that may have resulted from the committee's reluctance to assume a power it did not feel it had. The society resolved this issue when it 'Recommend[ed] to their Committee from time to time to enquire into the Solvenc[y] of their debtors, and the payment of the [annual]rents, And Impower[ed] them as need require[d] to do diligence for preser[v]ing and bringing in the Societ[y's] money.'²⁰⁸ As a result of the crisis, the committee had to cancel an expansion of its charitable activities in late 1714, donations of books to the poor in Scotland, to be distributed by the presbyteries. The general meeting had left it to the committee's discretion to pursue the plan, but Watson informed the committee 'that he was very quickly like to find difficulty in answering the exigencies of the Society By reason that their debtors did not pay their [annual]rents so du[l]ly as might be expected'.²⁰⁹

In light of this failure, the committee instituted a policy of quarterly meetings to examine the state of its loans and its borrowers' solvency.²¹⁰ A topic of discussion shortly after the meeting where the policy was adopted was the mortification of the dowager countess of Sutherland, who had died since the beginning of the year. Due to the society's agreement with her from July 1710 to allow for her legacies, the stock value of the mortification fell to 4,000 merks (£222.4.5 1/3).²¹¹ In light of the death of someone who had been so supportive of the society, the committee felt that it needed to establish an understanding with the earl of Sutherland and Lord Strathnaver—her son

206 NRS, MFiP GD95/1/1, p. 291 (7 June 1716).

207 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, p. 141 (25 October 1716).

208 Ibid., p. 217 (7 January 1714).

209 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, p. 42 (9 December 1714).

210 Ibid., p. 57 (8 February 1715).

211 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 138 (11 July 1710): 'that the Legacies with which her Gift is burdened are only to be pa[i]d out of the principal Su[m] and annua[l]rents that Shall fall Due after her Decease as the Same Shall be recovered'.

and grandson, respectively—about the terms of the agreement: since the countess was no longer alive, they owed the interest on the 4,000 merks which would have gone to her, directly to the society.²¹² The committee also had an additional claim on Strathnaver, in that there were three schools established on his lands. Prompt payment of the interest, therefore, would allow the society to maintain them more readily.²¹³ There are gaps in the committee minutes where the amount of overdue interest and the last time a payment was made are indicated, and it is difficult to get a quantitative sense of how often interest had been paid on the Sutherland mortification, since the original 5,000 merks were considered separate from the main body of the stock.²¹⁴ Repeated requests were sent to Strathnaver, Sutherland and, eventually, Strathnaver's wife for payment of interest, but no reply appears to have come until the end of 1716. From late 1715, however, the lack of response is understandable, not only geographically, with the disruptions of the '15 affecting communications between the north and south of the country, but also with Sutherland and Strathnaver's own involvement in the conflict, leading their regiments on the Hanoverian side.²¹⁵ Strathnaver, at least, was not hostile to the society, having been more cooperative in the establishment of schools on his lands than many other heritors and landlords, so the failure to respond to pleas for the interest may simply have been down to absentmindedness or absence on manoeuvres. Still, by October 1716, the committee was obliged to warn the earl's agent, Alexander Ross, that legal steps could be taken if payment of overdue interest was not made. Payment was still due from before the countess's death, and the last date interest had been due was Lammas 1716 (1 August), so at least two years' worth of interest had yet to be paid.²¹⁶

The management of the society's money was complicated by Craigend's death in November 1710, with Hepburn filling in as temporary treasurer and any loans being issued in John Campbell's name. George Watson, the merchant and Craigend's successor, at first demurred from accepting the position, but a vote of the first general meeting of 1711 convinced him to change his mind.²¹⁷ Despite the vote of confidence from the society's members, Watson needed to be

²¹² NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, p. 58 (18 February 1715).

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ At every report to the committee or the general meeting of the stock, the Sutherland mortification was always mentioned separately, and never included in the total amount. See the summation of Craigend's accounts, NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 179 (3 January 1711).

²¹⁵ Henry Paton, 'Sutherland, John, sixteenth earl of Sutherland (*bap.* 1661, *d.* 1733)', rev. Jonathan Spain, ODNB, view/article/11066, date of access 19 May 2011.

²¹⁶ NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, p. 139 (4 October 1716).

²¹⁷ NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 178 (28 December 1710); MFiP GD95/1/1, p. 99 (5 January 1711).

convinced to accept possession of the financial documents such as the account books and the bonds, and to be permitted to give notice to leave office after six months. He was eventually persuaded on the first point, and on the second, any doubts he may have had were evidently allayed with experience, since he remained in the position until 1722.²¹⁸

IX. CONCLUSION

The financial and corporate foundations of the SSPCK show how social and professional networks between England, Scotland, Ireland and the continent were exploited to gain support for the new charitable venture. Its identity as a corporation made it distinct from its English predecessor, opening and operating schools in its own right and accepting subscriptions from the public, rather than limiting participation to a select group. It also granted the society some protection from the vagaries of the social and political worlds which affected voluntary societies. The management of the society, however, included an element of self-selection, carving out a place within the business world of Edinburgh. Its development of its corporate identity had as great an importance as its ideology, but this identity has been mostly ignored in the society's historiography. The conception of the society in the General Assembly's Christian knowledge committee, and the ideas on how to organize it, showed an understanding of the need for a chartered corporation to implement its religious ideology in the Highlands.

As a corporation, a positive public image was possibly more necessary than for the English SPCK, though in an era when public opinion was starting to count for more than it had in the past, even the latter organization could not ignore it. In a Scottish context, with the failure of the Company of Scotland earlier in the decade and the fitful growth of the Bank of Scotland, financial transparency and good management were as important as good administration of the schools. Contributions needed to be generated and to continue to come in, and interest needed to be raised through public borrowing, in order for schools to operate at all. Loans and investment were difficult to come by, especially in property, however, and the society found itself distracted from schools in assessing investment opportunities or pursuing delinquent borrowers. Contributions

²¹⁸ NRS, MFilP GD95/2/1, pp. 183-4 (13 and 15 January 1711); GD95/8/3, p. 2.

had been slowing prior to the '15 anyway, but there was still a risk for the society as income to the stock in 1716 was less than half what it had been the previous year and what it would be the following year.²¹⁹

The society sought to take advantage of the rising's aftermath, demonstrating to the government the need for charity schools and government investment to expand its scheme within the Highlands. Its public image extended beyond its corporate identity into the Highlands, and in its relations with the heritors and with the pupils and their families. We will now explore the society's activities in the Highlands, both in its hiring processes, and its engagement with heritors and the common Highlanders, and the extent to which the language issue informed its management of the schools.

219 NRS, GD95/8/3, p. 5.

‘Men of Piety, Loyalty, Prudence, Gravity, competent Knowledge and Literature, and other christian and Necessary Qualifications suited to their respective Stations’:

The Early Schools

The focus on the establishment of the society meant that most of the first year of operations was spent developing its corporate structure. The establishment of schools was put on hold until the middle of 1711, when the society was sure it had sufficient investments of the stock to apply to them, with the exception of St Kilda. Rules developed for the conduct of teachers demonstrate the concern the society had for the behaviour of its representatives, and for its public image in the Highlands. While the corporate image was the responsibility of the managers in Edinburgh, ensuring that funds were managed transparently and properly, responsibility for the moral image of the society—for the benefit of Highland commoners, heritors and clergy—was diffuse, in the hands of the teachers. Moral behaviour was necessary in efforts to persuade Catholic families to send their children to the schools themselves, efforts which were preferable to coercion and use of legal proscriptions.¹ Moral and religious qualifications were therefore as important as educational ones, and assessments of candidates’ characters were conducted before a person was hired. Jones writes that educational qualifications were even overlooked, the focus in the schools being placed on religion rather than learning.² For those teachers who looked to move on from the society, more became ministers than parochial school teachers, so it is possible that the men who were drawn to the society posts may have felt that the position would lead to one in the church. Hence with the society, we can see a continuity between the earlier Gaelic-speaking probationers sent as catechists into the Highlands and the society schoolmasters. Greater interests and skills in theology than in the broader curriculum offered in a parochial school would have directed a man ultimately interested in the church to the society, while perhaps offering a more secure financial position than one of a probationer.

1 J. Macinnes, *Evangelical Movement*, pp. 242-3; Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 189.

2 Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 186. Prunier, however, holds that the levels of consideration were more even. Prunier, *Anti-Catholic Strategies*, p. 125.

The salaries offered to society masters, however, were by no means luxurious.³ The posts varied in terms of living situation, often according to the heritors' reception of the society and the masters. Reception by the community was another aspect of the posts which would have a bearing on a teacher's comfort. No records of threats to personal safety on the part of Highland communities exist, at least in peacetime, respect for schoolmasters perhaps overriding religious differences,⁴ but living conditions for the masters varied. The society did not hesitate to establish schools in what it considered to be areas of need, which meant that enthusiasm for presbyterianism may have been lukewarm when the teachers arrived. Physical conditions, such as parish size and a lack of infrastructure, were key determinants of where schools should go, and were communicated to the society by ministers or the presbytery, but no less important was a region's perceived disaffection and vulnerability to Catholicism.

Interaction with heritors affected not only the reception of the masters, but also the facilities available to them, such as schools and shelter. As a charity, the society sought to limit its expenditure to materials for pupils and salaries for teachers, engaging the heritors to provide buildings and other improvements to the parish infrastructure necessary for the schools' proper operation—bridges, for example, allowing students to travel to the schools more easily. In addition, masters would often plead with the heritors to exercise their influence to encourage families to send their children to the schools, or to exert punitive measures against those who failed to do so. The support of heritors could be patchy, however, and negligence, either intentional or not, frequently appears in the minutes. The most important instance occurred in the 1720s, when the society was for the first time forced to pass a resolution that no school would be established in a parish which did not already have a parochial school, funded by the heritor: society schools were meant to be supplementary, not substitutes, and heritors were not to be allowed to get away with passing on their responsibilities for parish schools to the society. Such resolutions, however, proved to be unenforceable.⁵

3 J. Macinnes, *Evangelical Movement*, p. 244; Jones. *Charity School Movement*, p. 190. Jones writes that by the 1760s, as with ministers, more masters were absenting themselves from schools to tend to more lucrative activities, such as farming, which lay behind a decline in the quality of teaching both note at the end of the eighteenth century. *Ibid.*, p. 191.

4 David Strang expressed surprise at his positive reception in Glenlivet, by contrast with the reception of minister in same presbytery. See pp. 135-6.

5 Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, pp. 47-8.

I. SCHEME OF MANAGEMENT

Parish-based schools were not the only option the society could have pursued. Charity institutions in the cities, either early workhouses or schools, tended to be larger, residential establishments, such as the Merchant Maiden Hospital in Edinburgh or Hutcheson's Hospital in Glasgow.⁶ The dense urban communities of the Lowlands, however, were more amenable to such institutions than the scattered Highland population. Additionally, the pre-Reformation presence of cathedral chapters in the cities meant that these institutions had a legacy which they did not in the Highlands.⁷ The suitability of hospital schools was not really in question for the Christian knowledge committee and the society, but rather their suitability for the society's goal of popular education—whether they would be effective in reaching a larger proportion of the population than supplementary parochial schools.

The first debates over the shape of the schools came in the Christian knowledge committee meetings in 1708 in the communications of Adam Fergusson, the minister of Crathie we encountered above. Converse to the impression he gave of hostility or indifference on the part of ministers, he did report constructive thoughts on the scheme which some had offered: they felt that parochial charity schools would be inappropriate because of the 'debauched & car[e]less' schoolmasters who often appeared in charge. As a remedy to this problem, Fergusson recommended 'hospitals' which would be placed in select locations: Inveraray, Inverlochy, Inverness, Dunkeld, and Tarland, presbytery of Kincardine O'Neil. They would allow closer supervision, since a minister would be in charge of overseeing each school, and would himself catechize the pupils for two hours daily as a means of overcoming the failure of parochial schoolmasters to 'teach any thing of [the] fundamentals of Christianity'.⁸ The minister would therefore be at the head of local 'societies' which would manage the schools.⁹

While discussed in earlier meetings, the form of the schools came to have less precedence in the Christian knowledge committee than the organization, structure and financing of the eventual

⁶ Armet, ed., *Extracts, 1689-1701*, p. xxvi; *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Glasgow, 1663-1690*, p. 449.

⁷ Martin MacGregor, 'Church and Culture in the Late Medieval Highlands', in James Kirk, ed., *Church in the Highlands* (Edinburgh: Scottish Church History Society), pp. 5, 20.

⁸ NRS, GD95/10, f. 23

⁹ *Ibid.*

SSPCK. It was not until after the society began meeting that the issue was taken up again, in a scheme of management. For this reason, Fergusson discussed ways of raising contributions as much as the type of schools the eventual society would support. The scheme, published as an inducement for potential donors, resulted from ideas from James Robertson, the minister of Glenmuick, which were discussed at the first committee meeting. Robertson's ideas reflected Fergusson's thoughts and were outlined more thoroughly, but the context of his plan was different, since the society had already been constituted and its executive committee appointed. Robertson could therefore focus more on how the schools should be structured than Fergusson. As such, the obstacles he outlined differed from those which Fergusson discussed.¹⁰

The most obvious obstacle was vacant churches, which made basic presbyterian presence in Highland parishes tenuous. Robertson mentioned this issue, but preferred to focus on some finer points: the enforcement of education laws mandating parish schools, the employment of catechists and probationary ministers in the Highlands and islands, and the establishment of 'houses or hospita[l] schools' in certain select locations.¹¹ Apart from the size of Highland parishes and the inability of ministers to cover the distances in order to perform their jobs, the distance of the people from the legal authorities and the accompanying spotty enforcement of education laws prevented universal schooling. The people responsible for providing the parish schools—the heritors and their tenants—were often unwilling to pay the charges necessary for compliance with the education act.¹² This sheds some light on Fergusson's illustration of the ministers' and presbyteries' hesitance to support the earlier plan for a fund for catechists. If the heritors and tenants did not begin carrying their weight, ministers feared that the establishment of parish schools would fall on their own shoulders:

It is therefor[e] humbly entreated the honourable Societ[y] may be pleased to use Some effectual means to oblige the persons concerned to erect and [endow] Schools in their respective parishes without Leaving the burden of prosecuting the same [e]ntirely on Ministers who have more ad[o] besides than they are well able to go about and Labour under manifold Discouragements unknow[n] in other places [of] the Land.¹³

The ministers' hostility to the catechist scheme described by Fergusson may have been because they felt they would have to take responsibility for it, as they feared they would have for parish

¹⁰ NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/1, pp. 15-24 (7 November 1709).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

schools.

Robertson's illustration of the possible locations of charity schools, like Fergusson's, came from consultation not just with ministers, but with local 'Gentlemen' who had already subscribed to the SSPCK: Fort William, Inverness, Tarland, and either Logierait, presbytery of Dunkeld, or Dunkeld itself, taking into consideration the surrounding areas and the perceived need each had for charity schools.¹⁴ Each of these locations, the subscribers felt, would allow for easy access both to the Highland regions and to the Lowlands, the necessity for the latter explained due to 'the Convenienc[y] of provisions [and] The Children[']s Learning of the English Tongue and other Laudible fashions of the World', such as, presumably, the rule of law.¹⁵ Earlier, failed charity schools also pointed to the greater efficiency of hospital schools compared to parochial ones. By centralizing the society's efforts in the four locations mentioned above, rather than dispersing them into the individual parishes, the efficiency of the schools could be better maintained: attendance at parish schools had been low, according to Robertson, judging from the evidence of Abertarff and 'Some other places'.¹⁶ Not only would the schools themselves be run better, but the society, by getting demonstrable results, would derive further subscribers and donations.¹⁷ Stronger enforcement of the extant laws on the establishment of parish schools also fell into this category, as Robertson wrote that if the heritors and tenants of individual parishes fulfilled their duties in that respect, not only would the ministers be saved this extra duty in addition to their already onerous tasks, but the society's funds would not be 'unnecessar[i]ly Bestowed'.¹⁸

Hospital schools, therefore, would mean higher attendance rates, since parents would not be paying for boarding their children near enough to the closest school to allow the children to study. More effective supervision of teaching staff would allow for a better quality of teachers, rather than 'the very weakest and meanest of persons' whom Fergusson described as working in the parishes.¹⁹ It would also be easier to fulfil the provisions of the parliamentary act of 1700 by which Catholic children might be taken away from their homes and educated 'free from their

14 Ibid. He acknowledged leaving out Argyll, which 'is to[l]erabl[y] provided for, already ha[v]ing the use of the Bishop[']s rents for that purpose'.

15 Ibid., p. 18. For the necessity of proximity to English-speaking parishes to bolster knowledge of the language, see Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, p. 133.

16 NRS, MFilP GD95/2/1, p. 18.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., p. 19.

19 Ibid.

parents['] influence', and, when instructed, return to pass their knowledge on to their families—a similar effect potentially able to help distant Protestant regions, as well.²⁰ This benefit would offset the negative of hospital schools, in that fewer students in total would be able to attend because of limited spaces. Finally, in relation to the Highland economy, hospital schools would make sense because pupils would be able to focus on their studies without being caught up in the rhythms of Highland agriculture, interrupting their work to tend fields or flocks.²¹

The committee concurred with Robertson's thoughts of waiting until the society's financial situation had been ascertained before going ahead with the establishment of schools, but put on hold the consideration of proposals until that time.²² In March 1711, the society finally entered into discussion of what type of schools it would establish. It determined that enough funds would come in to found two hospital schools along Fergusson and Robertson's lines. These facilities would house no more than ten students at first, mostly Catholic children since 'there can be no good done to Papists, unless they be removed from their parents and popish fr[ie]nds'.²³ Building the schools would be a problem, however, since all the money available for expenses would be laid out on salaries, but the society hit on the solution that since the schools' growth would be small, the teachers would not receive a full salary of 500 merks (£27.15.6 2/3) for the first year. Instead, they would receive £20,

and the remainder of the [f]ive hund[r]ed merks, with what else the Societ[y] can Spare, Should be [e]mployed for building a house, which needs only consist of three rooms, and which in the Highlands where timber is plentiful may be built at lit[t]le Charge, and any of the well affected Gentry in these parts, may be So Kind as to help them to Such a house for a Small yearly rent unti[l] the Societ[y]'s Stock be So large as to allow them to build a better.²⁴

The alternative proposal was for parochial schools, as many as the expected interest would allow 'in the most proper places up and down the highlands'.²⁵ A drawback to this system was the inability to reach Catholic students, since 'it[']s not to be thought, That they will part with their children to have them bred protestants, unless they be allured to it, by ta[k]ing the whole burden of cl[o]thing and maint[e]nance of them.'²⁶ Despite this, the general meeting determined that the

²⁰ Ibid., p. 20; 'Act for preventing the growth of popery', RPS, 1700/10/73, date of access, 7 September 2011.

²¹ NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/1, pp. 21-2.

²² Ibid., pp. 29-30 (11 November 1709).

²³ NRS, MFiLP GD95/1/1, p. 112 (7 June 1711).

²⁴ Ibid., p. 113.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid. This was something Alexander Buchan was already finding on St Kilda. Robson, *St Kilda*, pp. 96, 105. George Meldrum advised John MacLeod of Contullich, the young chief's tutor, that the inhabitants were not to feel that Buchan was under obligation to them if they sent their children to be taught.

second course would be the better to follow, as it would enable the society to have a broader geographical reach than the two larger facilities, so it ordered the committee to determine all necessary points, including—to obviate the obstacle to Catholic attendance—‘What encourag[e]ments ought to be given to the masters and Scho[ll]ars or otherw[ise] to be bestowed for Supporting of the Same’.²⁷

II. ALEXANDER BUCHAN

Now that the form of the schools had been agreed, the society was able to determine where they should go. Included on the list of schools was Buchan’s school, on the island of Hirta in St Kilda. Buchan, a former schoolmaster on Jura and in Thurso, had been appointed by the commission of the General Assembly to serve as a catechist there in 1705. In 1710, on a trip to Edinburgh to plead for more financial support from the General Assembly, he was ordained as a minister to remove him from an ambiguous status on the island of Hirta: the inhabitants, especially the steward, found it difficult to obey his instructions because he was not an ordained member of the clergy.²⁸ At the same time, the society employed him as its first teacher, allowing him to continue with his previous duties. He was presented with a specific set of rules which were based on those he was given in 1705, when the General Assembly had engaged him as a catechist.

The reason behind Buchan’s appointment to St Kilda is unclear, other than the islands’ remoteness from political and ecclesiastical authorities. Their location and the conditions of the waters surrounding them made them an unlikely staging point for a Jacobite invasion, though there were still fears that isolated areas like St Kilda could be used as refuges for Catholics.²⁹ It was partly to resolve this ignorance that Martin Martin—a native of Skye, a physician, and the former tutor to the heir of the MacLeods of Dunvegan, the landlords of St Kilda in the early eighteenth century—accompanied John Campbell, the minister of Harris, on Campbell’s annual trip in the summer of 1696. Martin wrote an account of his journey in which he describes various cultural

²⁷ NRS, MFilP GD95/1/1, p. 114. John Lorne Campbell considers such an ‘inducement’ nothing more than bribery. *Gaelic in Scottish Education and Life*, p. 51.

²⁸ Robson, *St Kilda*, p. 105.

²⁹ John Lorne Campbell, ‘Hiorta or St Kilda’ in Campbell, *A Very Civil People: Hebridean Folk, History and Tradition*, ed. by Hugh Cheape (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2000), p. 12; Robson, *St Kilda*, p. 69.

traditions of the St Kildans, as well as natural features of the islands and the islanders' economy. A significant part of his account discusses the 'Impostor', also known as Ruairidh Mór, a man who had set himself up as a religious leader on Hirta and who had established rituals and ceremonies Campbell and Martin were expected to suppress.³⁰ Judging from Martin's account, Ruairidh's ministry had, for all practical purposes, come to an end thanks to the intervention of the steward of MacLeod, whose young son had reported irregularities which the steward himself then verified, and to Ruairidh's own overreaching.³¹ Ruairidh had already appeared before MacLeod and, far from impressing the chief with his piety and spiritual gifts, as Martin records he had hoped, he was barred from preaching on the island anymore. He was still present, as were traces of his ministry, but Martin and Campbell ensured that these were removed and took him away when they left.³²

Michael Robson writes that the islanders' willingness to follow Ruairidh's directions demonstrated their need for an expression of spirituality, which lay in a centuries-long connection to Catholic Christianity. Even the hymns or 'rhapsodies' which Ruairidh taught the islanders had a cultural basis in spiritual poems.³³ For the Church of Scotland, however, such celebrations were demonstrations of error, and needed to be corrected. All the same, even with the publication of Martin's book in 1698, it took the church seven years to appoint a catechist for the islands. It is therefore unlikely that Buchan's appointment was a response to Martin's account, instead being an expression of concern for a lack of the constant presence of a catechist or minister.³⁴ Buchan's zeal for presbyterian reformed Christianity prompted him to accept the post, though John Lorne Campbell repeatedly impugns his abilities, attributing the church's desire to send him to such a far-removed outpost as an interest in assigning him to a region of little consequence to its authority. Campbell overlooks some aspects of the islands' condition before and during Buchan's time: while there is no evidence that Ruairidh's ministry was connected with the Catholic mission in Scotland, the fact that it had been so successful showed the church that the islanders were

30 Robson, *St Kilda*, p. 59.

31 Martin Martin, *A Late Voyage to St Kilda* (London: D. Brown and T. Goodwin, 1698), pp. 151-2. Available on EEBO, bibliographic number M847.

32 Ibid., pp. 154-8.

33 Robson, *St Kilda*, p. 59.

34 Campbell, 'Hiorta or St Kilda', p. 12. The General Assembly commission's instructions to Buchan, presented in August 1704, emphasize the importance of Buchan serving as an example of reformed religion in his conduct, the people of St Kilda being 'deprived of the means of Christian knowledge'. Robson, *St Kilda*, p. 80, and NRS, CH1/2/4/2, f. 166.

vulnerable.³⁵ Campbell also accuses Buchan of being not only incompetent, but greedy, making repeated demands for money from first the General Assembly's commission, and then the society, while failing to send required reports of his progress to the society.³⁶ He fails to appreciate, however, that Buchan and his sizeable family were living precariously in St Kilda, and their experience during his service as a catechist made them apprehensive of any delays in payments of salary.³⁷ Communications were also difficult, with the islands being mostly inaccessible in winter. A trip to the mainland, especially the Lowland cities, could take as long as six months, which would have interrupted the progress of the students.³⁸ Katherine Campbell, Buchan's wife, comes in for particular opprobrium for her obsession with money, but besides returning to mainland Scotland to give birth to at least two of their children during the family's time in St Kilda, she was deputed to ask the church and society to expedite payment of Buchan's salary because of the disruption Buchan's absence would have caused.³⁹ She also may not have had her husband's commitment to the work of the church, making life in St Kilda difficult psychologically, as well as physically.

III. LOCATIONS OF SCHOOLS

The establishment of a school in St Kilda can therefore only mean that the church, and the society, had a concern for regions of the Highlands which were vulnerable to religious error and the Catholic mission. The society reflected this concern in the areas which it listed as intended locations for schools in the spring of 1711, finalizing its list in June. Resulting from consultations with ministers from the target areas, especially during the General Assembly in May, the list shows that the schools were intended to go on the front line of the Reformation, making its masters

35 A meeting of the visitation party of the synod of Argyll in 1696 described 'curious and worrying events' in St Kilda. Robson, *St Kilda*, p. 51.

36 Campbell, 'Hiorta or St Kilda', pp. 13, 23-4.

37 Robson, *St Kilda*, p. 87.

38 When Buchan and two of his more promising students left for Edinburgh in September 1709, plans were not made for them to return until March 1710. *Ibid.*, pp. 101, 106.

39 Campbell, 'Hiorta or St Kilda', p. 13; Robson, *St Kilda*, pp. 92, 122. This is evidence for Campbell's criticism of her as grasping and obsessed by money, though he neglects the context for Buchan and his wife's financial worries, their struggles in the early years on Hirta with high prices charged them for essentials and little money coming from the assembly. *Ibid.*, p. 87. Robson does point out that Katherine Campbell was 'a strong personality'.

indeed 'the shocktroops of Presbyterianism'.⁴⁰ In addition to St Kilda, the committee judged that it could support nine schools, to be located in Abertarff, Braemar, Durness or Farr in Sutherland, Snizort on Skye, the lands of the duke of Atholl, and Glenelg, with three in Shetland.⁴¹ A letter from Lord Grange, the lord justice clerk and brother of the earl of Mar, caused the committee to revise its proposed list in July, adding a second school in the earl's Aberdeenshire lands and another school in Sutherland. Shetland's allotment was reduced to one, with two schools to go to Orkney. The changes were allowed by a reduction in the salary for the schools outside of St Kilda, Shetland and Orkney, from 400 merks (£22.4.5 sterling) to 300 (£16.13.4), and again show the society's responsiveness to local conditions as communicated by authorities in the parishes.⁴² As we see from the table below, the stock on loan at the beginning of 1711, just over £3,161 sterling, would have brought in just under £190 of revenue at 6 percent interest. At the original salary rate for the proposed mainland and Skye schools, this would have allowed the society to employ nine teachers, but the lower rate allowed for expansion and greater coverage of parishes in need of the society's attention while still providing a reasonable salary. The general meeting agreed the same day, and urged the committee to get a commitment from the duke of Atholl as to where on his lands the school should go, but added a provision

That these Schools Should continue t[w]o years at Least together in one place without prejudice to the Society to determine their abode in Some particular places for longer or shorter time as they Shall hereafter find the circumstances of the Several places to require it.⁴³

The committee was still intending that the schools should be itinerant, but it is questionable how itinerant they could be considered if they were to remain in one location for two years at a time. The society was asserting its control over locations of the schools, which would be tested several times in its early years and which would cause headaches in relations with heritors and even masters. It was also demonstrating that the main factor in determining when a school should be moved was the progress of the pupils, not how long a school had been based in one particular location.

⁴⁰ A. Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce, and the House of Stuart*, p. 178.

⁴¹ NRS, MFilP GD95/2/1, p. 197 (8 June 1711).

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 208 (31 July 1711). The general meeting agreed the same day, and urged the committee to get a commitment from the duke of Atholl as to where on his lands the school should go. NRS, MFilP GD95/1/1, p. 120 (31 July 1711).

⁴³ *Ibid.*

Table 6.1: Teachers' salaries vs annual stock and revenue, 1709-16

	Stock			Lent stock			Revenue			Liabilities for salaries		
	£	ß	d	£	ß	d	£	ß	d	£	ß	d
1709-10	3211	5	8 1/6	3161	1	8	1	15	0	16	13	4
1711	1013	16	10 1/3	861	2	2 2/3	49	9	5 2/3	33	6	8
1712	1065	19	2 5/6	1044	8	10 2/3	115	7	5	127	15	6 2/3
1713	1340	11	4 5/6	1216	13	4	251	0	5 2/3	192	2	2 2/3
1714	1812	16	7	1500	0	0	149	8	2 1/3	258	15	6 2/3
1715	1224	12	7	1080	11	1 1/3	256	7	2	294	17	9 1/3
1716	725	1	1 5/6	694	8	10 2/3	628	12	9 1/6	397	33	3 1/3

Sources: NRS, GD95/8/3, pp. 4-5; GD95/10, f. 60.

The different salary rates for Orkney, Shetland and St Kilda must be ascribed to the distinct situations of the teachers in each place. For St Kilda, Buchan was not only the schoolmaster, but also the minister, so he was entitled not simply to a society salary, but also to the parish stipend. His problems in procuring payment of either were probably a result of the simple distance of Hirta and the difficulty in sending the money. He was not alone, however: Robson records that even the Harris minister John Campbell's widow had trouble securing an overdue payment from the General Assembly, which finally arrived two years after his death in 1707.⁴⁴ For Orkney and Shetland, the teachers had one less required qualification: fluency in Gaelic. Contrary to the society's reputation as an organization targeting the language, a considerable amount of activity was conducted in regions where it was not in use. Far from being peripheral to its work, the northern isles were among the first areas to see schools established even though they were not Gaelic-speaking. This did not stop the society from hiring a Gaelic-speaking teacher, Alexander Moncrieff, for its school at Harray, Orkney, with the plan to find a post in the Gaelic Highlands as soon as one became available for him. He remained in Orkney, however, the society acceding to his request not to move him to the new school at Gairloch in 1714.⁴⁵ Unlike for the other teachers in the northern isles, it raised his salary to match what it would have been had he been working in a Gaelic parish. In general, though, the Anglophone environment of Orkney and Shetland required less knowledge and skill than the Highlands, so teachers were paid half the salary of the other schools.

⁴⁴ Robson, *St Kilda*, p. 93.

⁴⁵ NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/2, p. [6] (5 April 1714). This page is numbered 4 in error.

Table 6.2: Schools and Schoolmasters, 1709-16

1705	Hirta	Alexander Buchan
1711	Blair Atholl ^a	John Clow James Murray
1712	Lairg Auchintoul Harray Earlish Durness Glenelg ^b Abertarff	William Gordon John Clow Alexander Moncrieff John Mcpherson Kenneth Bethune William Mackay Donald MacLeod Patrick Nicolson John Frazer James Johnston ^c
1713	Walls and Sandness Braemar (Castleton) Tomnavillan Shapinsay	Adam Marjorybanks ^d Charles Ross Alexander Glass ^e John Clow David Strang James Murray John Nicolson
1714	Tombelly Snizort Gairloch Kildonan Comrie ^f Balquhidder ^g Strathyre ^g	James Jamison Kenneth Bethune John McIver John Robertson George Henderson Robert Coventry and James Stewart James McCallum John Buchanan
1715	Edinkillie ^h	John Calder, William Gowie, John Sangster and James Mackay ⁱ
1716	South Ronaldsay Monaltrie Kilmaillie Pennymore	George Charles John Young Robert Stewart John Bethune

a Did not open until 1716 after Clow {scrupled at serving under episcopalian supervi

b Moved to Pennymore, Mull, in 1716.

c Taught without a commission until an accusation of slander was cleared up.

d Died in August 1713.

e Fired for committing fornication and violating rules of moral behaviour.

f The stipend, shared with a benefactor, was originally split three ways, but later redu

g The stipend for Balquhidder was split for these schools.

h The stipend for Edinkillie was split four ways.

i Dismissed in aftermath of '15.

(Sources: NRS, GD95/10, f. 60; names and dates compiled from MFiLP GD95/1/1 and GD95/2/1-2; A.S. Cowper, *SSPCK Schoolmasters, 1709-1872* [Scottish Record Society, 1997]).

Schools did not necessarily open without any obstacles. The school in Shetland was nearly cancelled and the funds directed to another location, when a reply from the presbytery about where the society school should be located finally arrived in December 1712. By early 1713, the

school in Walls and Sandness was up and running. The first school to begin operations under the society's auspices ought to have been in Blair Atholl, in November 1711, but John Clow, the appointed schoolmaster, did not want to be under the supervision of an episcopalian minister, Duncan Stewart.⁴⁶ He agreed to go if directed by the society, but the SSPCK put a hold on the school until it had a better idea of the situation in the parish, and did not open it until 1716. Clow was receiving a salary in the meantime, though not officially beginning work until March 1712 at Auchintoul, one of the Braemar schools, in the parish of Glenmuick.⁴⁷ The other school, at Castleton, the main settlement of Braemar, saw a delay due to three candidates either declining the post or being rejected by Lord Grange, the earl of Mar's brother. The fourth, David Strang, ultimately had to turn the position down due to a commitment to serve as chaplain to a family in Galloway until May 1713. The school opened in April 1713, under the teacher Alexander Glass. The problems in opening schools were relieved slightly in 1712, seven schools beginning work in that year alone, giving the society bases in distinct areas of the country: Braemar, Orkney, Skye, Glenelg, Inverness-shire, and Sutherland.

While most of the schools on the initial list were established by the summer of 1713, applications continued to come in for additional schools, from Glenlivet, Gairloch and Assynt. A lack of response from Assynt, however, caused Kildonan to take its place on the list, a school opening there in 1714. Pressure from outside the society also contributed to decisions on where to settle schools. The commission of the General Assembly urged the society in 1714 to consider Mull, Castle Tioram in Moidart, and Lochaber.⁴⁸ The committee replied that it was unable to establish other schools until ones on its list had opened, but it raised another question about these locations: they were all within the synod of Argyll, which had access to bishops' rents to establish its own schools and yet was seeking support from a society whose resources were limited.⁴⁹ The society provided the synod with a gentle reminder about its relatively comfortable situation, though by the end of 1716 it had established schools in the three regions suggested by the commission.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Described as having intruded on Blair Atholl before 9 October 1709, Stewart had been deprived of the parish of Dunoon in April 1690, by the parliamentary act restoring presbyterian ministers. See *Fasti*, v. 4, p. 144.

⁴⁷ NRS, MFilP GD95/2/1, p. 254 (31 March 1712).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 358 (28 January 1714), 360 (18 February 1714).

⁴⁹ See p. 42.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 360. The synod included a parish called Abertarff, which the *Fasti* place in the synod of Moray, but either it could have been a different parish altogether, or there could have been confusion over the exact location, as Abertarff was near the boundary between the synods.

Additionally, the society's objections appear disingenuous, considering that two of its first schools were within the synod, in Earlish, on the isle of Skye, and in Glenelg. Again, though, considering the initial plans for itinerant schools, it was possibly hoped that the Earlish school would move along to the Outer Hebrides when its work was finished, and that the Glenelg school would serve as an outpost near the Catholic region of Moidart and Arisaig. Its later development of schools within the synod, especially after the rising of 1715, may have been part of the effort to capitalize on the rising's aftermath, which will be discussed further below.

Bequests for particular parishes or regions were another way school settlements would be imposed on the society from outside. The bequest of the Dublin schoolmaster Brodie, sent to the society by Duncan Cuming, was originally intended for the parishes of Auldearn and Dyke, the area where Brodie was born.⁵¹ According to Cuming, however, Brodie's will did not specify Auldearn and Dyke as the locations for schools his legacy was to fund, however, so when the society's assessment of the parishes showed that they were too small and concentrated to require a charity school, the funds were added to the society's general stock for investment.⁵² Four smaller charity schools were later established in the nearby parish of Edinkillie, the teachers assuming more the roles of part-time catechists rather than full-time schoolmasters. The donation of James Fraser, secretary of the hospital in Chelsea, London, was intended to support a school in or near Kiltarlity, where his brother had been a minister and where many of their surname lived. No record of a school establishment in the Aird of Inverness at the time exists, however.⁵³

IV. EMPLOYMENT

Teaching positions were in high demand from the early days. The committee solicited nominations for teachers from university principals, as well as presbyteries, synods, and heritors of Highland parishes. The ministers who visited the committee in 1711 after the close of the General Assembly were also asked to consider suitable candidates. As a guide, it included the qualifications it was looking for, which were not simply educational.⁵⁴ As outlined in the charter,

⁵¹ NRS, MFiIP GD95/2/2, pp. 33 (7 October 1714), 43 (9 December 1714).

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 78 (7 July 1715).

⁵³ See p. 152.

⁵⁴ See p. 167.

the teachers were to be

men of piety, loyalty[,] prudence and gravity, and of competent knowledge and Literature, and that they have other necessary qualifications suitable to their respective Stations, and whose life and conversation, and other qualifications above written, Shall after a Strict [trial] and Examination be approven and attested by the presbyteries in whose bounds they have for the most part had their ordinary residence[.]⁵⁵

Only after the religious and moral qualifications were outlined did the committee indicate its professional requirements. Since reading, writing and arithmetic were to be the three foundations of the schools, the teachers had to be able ‘to write a fair hand’, to know their arithmetic, and to be able to speak and read English and Gaelic.⁵⁶

One of the most generous contacts for candidates was William Hamilton, professor of divinity at the University of Edinburgh and himself a society member from January 1712, also serving on its committee. He considered appointments at least ten times over the years for the schools in Shapinsay (Orkney), Gairloch, Kildonan, Tombelly (Braemar) and Snizort (Skye), recommending Patrick Nicolson, who was hired for Abertarff in October 1712.⁵⁷ Many candidates also applied to the society directly, word having spread from their presbyteries about the opportunities available. John Clow, later schoolmaster at Auchintoul and Castleton, had his documentation all in order and was accepted for a post on the spot, though his scruples at serving in the same parish as an episcopalian minister prevented him from taking the post in Blair Atholl. Alexander Moncrieff—who, unlike Clow, was to have a long career with the society—presented a recommendation from a presbytery where he was not resident, so he was told to apply again. George Watson also noted Moncrieff’s weakness in arithmetic, so the delay allowed the candidate to develop his knowledge and be accepted at his second application.⁵⁸

On balance, it is more likely that the society had the upper hand in negotiations for salaries and positions, in the sense that any employer decides when it has the resources and the need to hire more staff. It was never a given, however, that a prospective teacher would accept a post with the society. Remuneration, location and a candidate’s personal situation all played a role in whether he would accept a post or not. William Drummond, having been rejected for the post at Castleton, was offered a position at Lairg, Strathnaver, but never responded. The post went to

⁵⁵ NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/1, p. 198 (15 June 1711).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 230 (30 October 1711), 281 (25 October 1712).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 239 (7 December 1711).

William Gordon, instead.⁵⁹ In some cases, to encourage acceptance of a post, the society would raise the offered salary, as with James Fretter, a candidate for the school at Shapinsay. The society raised its offer to just over £11 sterling from £8.6.8, but Fretter still refused.⁶⁰

The likelihood of a greater availability of society positions may have contributed to the demand for them, especially since the society was ambitious in the establishment and funding of its schools. Heritors, on the other hand, were often ambivalent about their legal obligations to support parish schools and frequently did not provide them, so candidates seeking a job teaching must have been pleased with the prospect of a society post. The society schools, like the primary parish schools, had fewer requirements for the teachers: it was only in grammar schools that instruction in Latin or Greek was offered or even allowed, so lack of experience in either language was no impediment. Some teachers did remain with the society for the bulk of their careers, such as Alexander Moncrieff, and were quite successful. Others viewed the society as a stepping stone to future careers, particularly in the ministry. Once a master entered the trial period for the ministry, however, the society bet on his success and had to dismiss him from service. This was at the society's initiative, and as a result it was more likely that a replacement would be available than if the society waited until the church offered the master a parish. The society feared interruptions in the pupils' education if there were no ready replacement. This was one benefit of having a stable of candidates waiting for posts, but the constantly expanding service of the society was another. The society did have to warn candidates, such as Alexander Moncrieff and William Drummond, that there was no certainty of a position, so they should not decline other opportunities which arose in the meantime. For Moncrieff, this proved not to be a problem, but Drummond, who apparently ignored this warning, claimed a salary from the society while waiting for a position, citing Clow as a precedent.⁶¹ The society, however, rejected his claim to be in a similar situation.

V. OPERATIONS OF SCHOOLS

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 282 (31 October 1712).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 308 (17 April 1713), 316 (22 May 1713).

⁶¹ See p. 179.

While candidates were presenting themselves to the society and its committee in the autumn of 1711, rules for the schools' operations were also being drafted. They reflect as much concern for teachers' and pupils' behaviour as for the conduct of the schools, especially since example was to be a key part of establishing and maintaining discipline and since model behaviour on the part of teachers was necessary for maintaining the society's reputation. Based on the instructions provided to Alexander Buchan in 1704, the masters were 'to discourage and Correct the begin[n]ings of vice, and particularly lying, swearing cursing, profa[n]ing the Lord['s] day, Stealing, [et]c:'.⁶² They were also to pray with students in the schools twice each day, watching over the students in church on Sundays, and, in case weather and distance prevented students from attending services at the parish church, to lead prayers and to read from the Bible 'so that holy day may not be pro[f]aned, but may be Spent as usefully as can be in such circumstances.'⁶³ Again, this echoes the role of the earlier catechists. The rules also provide a deeper look at the charitable nature of the schools. Teachers were forbidden to ask for payment from students, but 'if Gentlemen or others that are in plentifu[l] circumstances think fit to Send their children to these charity Schools and do freely offer to pay for their education, Then the masters are not forbidden to accept of what they give.'⁶⁴ There was, therefore, a distinction between paying and non-paying, 'charity' pupils. Alexander Moncrieff, however, refused whatever 'gratuities' the students' families offered him, regardless of status.⁶⁵

Further, as encouragement for non-paying students, upon demonstrating an ability to read the Bible, they were to receive a Bible and a pair of shoes at the society's expense.⁶⁶ A possible increase in compensation would come to the masters with the availability of more funds, and qualified students could receive an allowance in exchange for assisting the master, which happened not just with Moncrieff, but also with William Mckay in Durness and James Jamison in Tombelly.⁶⁷ The masters often determined their schools' unique needs in requesting an amendment to the rules or redirection of the compensation offered by the society. In April 1713, Moncrieff

62 Ibid., p. 203 (20 July 1711).

63 Ibid., p. 204.

64 Ibid., p. 205.

65 Ibid., p. 365 (1 March 1714).

66 Ibid., p. 205.

67 Ibid., p. 365; GD95/2/2, pp. 8 (8 April 1714), 44 (9 December 1714). See p. 133 on advancement for students.

asked the committee for permission to use the money granted for shoes for extra books, items which schools were frequently short on, and the committee agreed.⁶⁸ William Mackay, the master in Durness, notified the society that two of his daughters had begun a school under his supervision at Eriboll, about ten miles from his own. The committee, perhaps unexpectedly, considering the amount of control it wished to maintain on the establishment of schools and hiring of teachers, approved of this initiative, as it did with the supplementary charity schools advanced students of Moncrieff began not far from Harray.⁶⁹

Another provision of the rules granted inspection rights to the ministers and other representatives of the presbyteries, since society members were unable to appear in person to inspect the schools.⁷⁰ Miscreant students were subject to suspension or expulsion, but inspection also included the teachers' behaviour. Not only did a failure to live up to the position's requirements offer a poor example to the students, it also reflected badly on the society, and in regions where the society was working to establish its credibility in the eyes both of the population and of its supporters, a negative reputation was unacceptable. Even in its early years, however, the society had several occasions to enforce discipline on its staff. For all of the 'diligent' teachers it was employing, men like Moncrieff, William Gordon and Patrick Nicolson, there were teachers who did not follow the standard.

John Hunter was rejected for the post at Castleton because he would not sign the Confession of Faith, and hence could not receive a testimony from his presbytery. It later emerged that Alexander Glass, the first teacher at that school, had also demurred from signing at the request of the synod of Aberdeen, though he still received a positive testimony from the presbytery of Dunoon. How this was possible is unclear, unless it were through a failure of communication between the synod and the presbytery. His refusal to sign came to light only in the context of a more evident moral crime. Adam Fergusson wrote to the committee in February 1714, nearly a year after Glass's engagement, with the news that 'Mr Glass having fallen into the Scanda[l] of fornication, had rend[e]red himself unfit for doing any more service in that place'.⁷¹ The presbytery of Kincardine O'Neil, confronting Glass—who neither admitted nor denied his misdeed, but was

68 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 308 (17 April 1713); MFiP GD95/1/1, p. 188 (4 June 1713).

69 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 8 (8 April 1714); MFiP GD95/1/1, pp. 265, 267 (3 March 1715).

70 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, pp. 205-6 (20 July 1711).

71 Ibid., p. 364 (1 March 1714).

willing to undergo public repentance—agreed with Fergusson,

Se[e]ing his behaviour gives adversaries too much ground to Speak wickedly of the Societ[y]'s desig[n], and that it will be fit to suppl[y] that place with a fit person of know[n] ability[,] piety and discr[e]tion, L[e]st another imprudent perso[n] being Set[t]led there, wholly rui[n] the Schoo[l], and confirm people in their inclinations after poper[y.]⁷²

The committee asked the general meeting for an amendment to the rules allowing it to dismiss masters without further consultation.⁷³ These rights were granted for the sake of the society's reputation: if a master was found guilty of an offence but could not be removed until the following general meeting, which could be as much as four months later, it would not reflect well on the SSPCK. The irony of the Glass case is that he was not identified as the cause of the committee seeking powers to withdraw teachers' commissions. Earlier at that same general meeting, a letter from the presbytery of Kincardine O'Neil was read which gave a positive review of Glass' situation, both his reception by the earl of Mar and his performance at the school:

They found the Scho[l]ars, thirty in number, wher[e]of about ten were reading the Bible, and are pretty well advanced in writing and Arithmeti[c] and reading of write[.] [sic] They have the Shorter Catechis[m] by heart, They can without book show the Letters, and Spell any ordinary English word, Others of the Scho[l]ars are in the New Testament, and begin to write, and can give an account of a great part of the Catechis[m]s, Some are in the Psalm book, Others in the Proverbs and Catechis[m]s[.]⁷⁴

The date of this letter is not given, but it is hard to believe that the presbytery would praise Glass in one section and then, in the same letter, urge his dismissal. Instead of being informed of the particular situation, the general meeting voted to grant the committee its new rights, but not until June was it informed that Glass was the cause of the committee seeking the power to dismiss masters.⁷⁵

VI. REACTIONS TO CATHOLIC MISSION

The dismissal of Glass coincided with the impending move of John Clow's school, at Auchintoul, to Tombelly, also in Braemar. Fergusson proposed, therefore, that Clow be moved to Castleton to help the school recover from the damage which Glass had caused to its reputation.⁷⁶

⁷² NRS, MFilP GD95/2/2, pp. 1-2 (11 March 1714).

⁷³ NRS, MFilP GD95/2/1, p. 364 (1 March 1714).

⁷⁴ NRS, MFilP GD95/1/1, p. 224 (11 March 1714).

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 227 (3 June 1714).

⁷⁶ NRS, MFilP GD95/2/1, p. 364 (1 March 1714).

Clow took a confrontational approach to Catholics, which contradicted the society's own policy: to be welcoming to Catholics in order to educate them from the errors of their ways.⁷⁷ Fergusson and James Robertson each reported on the vulnerability of Braemar to the Catholic mission, reports which were validated by subsequent events. In May 1713, Clow wrote to the society with an account of his students' progress, and with recommendations about the removal of schools. He also complained about mistreatment by Catholics, not only from constant 'traffi[ck]ing' and performance of the mass, but also from a particular 'Insult' he had suffered at the priests' hands.⁷⁸ A letter from James Grierson to Lord Grange illuminates some of the details not present in Clow's own letter. A Catholic gentleman in Braemar had entrusted Clow with his children for their education, but later discovered that Clow was taking them to Protestant services.⁷⁹ Clow was accused of refusing to teach Catholic students unless they attended church and his prayer sessions. In addition, after a series of 'Most harsh & pro[v]o[k]ing Expressions [against] the p[a]pists such as to term Them Idolat[o]rs and their p[a]rt of the Countr[y] the Cursed Corner', in October 1712, Clow tried to find the place where Catholics were allegedly planning to attend an illegal mass.⁸⁰ He stayed in a house in the area on Saturday night, and the host encouraged him to return to the schoolhouse and not cause any trouble, going so far as to escort him part of the way back. Clow returned to the area, though, following groups of people he thought would lead him to the mass, but when he encountered a group of children, they 'fell in Discord that his wi[g] fell off & his Hat being [torn] it being tender among the hands and he ha[v]eing Left it Behind him went to his former Quarters [without] h[a]rm or further pre[j]udice that Can be all[i]e[g]ed [with] a[n]y Colo[u]r of real presumption[.]'⁸¹ At the subsequent hearing, Robertson reports, Clow tried to intimidate the witnesses, who numbered up to 18. The results of the case are not known, but Clow later credited Mar and Grange with offering him 'redress', which may have been money to

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 342 (15 October 1713). The minutes themselves describe how Grange was going to consult with the earl of Mar on how to 'require' parents to send their children, and masters such as William Gordon often asked for legal or ecclesiastical recourse to boost their attendance rates, but the society itself urged persuasion rather than coercion. See the advice to James Jamison in Tombelly on requiring Catholic pupils to attend services, MFiP GD95/2/2, p. 44 (9 December 1714).

⁷⁸ NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 313 (11 May 1713); MFiP GD95/1/1, p. 191 (4 June 1713).

⁷⁹ NRS, GD124/15/1094/2, James Grierson to Lord Grange, 23 January 1713. A Catholic strategy for educating children in the face of the restrictive penal laws was to send them to Protestant schools, but rely on the home environment to counteract any heretical religious ideas introduced. See Prunier, *Anti-Catholic Strategies*, pp. 135-6.

⁸⁰ NRS, GD124/15/1094/2.

⁸¹ Ibid.

compensate him for his lost wig and torn hat, plus warrants taken out against priests.⁸² There is no evidence of a connection between Clow's actions in 1712 and his removal to Castleton in 1714, however. More than anything, it appears to have been a coincidence, since the Auchintoul school was due to move anyway, Clow along with it. It is unlikely, due to the proximity of Castleton and Auchintoul, that news of his actions would not have reached Castleton, but it is possible that the society had managed to rein in Clow's zeal, or at least direct it into an acceptable channel, such as a summary of Biblical stories illustrating the Shorter Catechism for the benefit of the pupils, or the compilation of an account of 'Idolatrous and Superstitious Custo[m]s' practised in his region.⁸³ Opposition to the presbyterian presence in Braemar and Glenlivet was organized to the point of opening a Catholic school by July 1714.⁸⁴ The society's own efforts at organization, however, proved successful at suppressing it. A warrant was produced by Lord Grange in August, but the school had shut by November and the female teacher had left Glenlivet.⁸⁵ The society was uncertain about why it had disappeared so abruptly, but some members suspected that news of the impending legal pursuit had come to the attention of the Catholic mission and its supporters.⁸⁶ Regardless of the threat such a school may have posed to the society, now that it had been closed, the presbytery submitted some accounts of the mistress's accomplices but did not think it worth bothering the society with further details.⁸⁷

Meanwhile, other problems arose which discouraged Highland parents from sending their children, mostly in connection with the society's attempts to keep better records of attendance. When Catholics in Glenlivet and Braemar heard about them, they assumed that the lists of pupils were meant as a way to create a register for military recruitment, with the funds the society was raising intended to pay for weapons. Adam Fergusson, who reported these suspicions, agreed that they were ill-founded, but asked the society to excuse schoolmasters for not submitting the lists.⁸⁸ Clow repeated this concern in December, his difficulties being compounded by the removal of Fergusson, a valuable ally, from Crathie to Logierait. The society responded, however, that with a

82 NRS, MFiLP GD95/1/1, pp. 172 (6 November 1712), 191 (4 June 1713).

83 NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/1, p. 341 (15 October 1713), p. 352 (14 January 1714).

84 NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/2, p. 24 (1 July 1714).

85 NRS, MFiLP GD95/1/1, p. 247 (4 November 1714).

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid.

88 NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/1, p. 353 (14 January 1714).

little discretion, avoiding detection by the priests and their adherents would be easy.⁸⁹ Many masters managed to follow this recommendation, seeing in it not only a way to account for the progress of students, but also of themselves—evidence to justify increases in stipends, perhaps, or to give themselves a good reputation in the eyes of the church, in case they were ultimately seeking ordination. In Glenlivet, the schoolmaster David Strang told the society in May 1714 that Catholics there had submitted a petition to the presbytery of Aberlour claiming that he brought their children to Protestant services. This accusation he attributed to jealousy, that his success had caused his Catholic students to refuse to attend mass.⁹⁰ No mention of this complaint appears in the minutes of the presbytery, but it does reflect the high tensions surrounding the missionary activities of the Church of Scotland and its allied organizations in this part of the Highlands in the early eighteenth century.

Religion was not the only issue which prevented pupils from attending schools, though even Catholics were not entirely dismissive of the society.⁹¹ The economy was also an obstacle, specifically its seasonal nature, and the obligation of children to help their families by attending livestock at long distances from their homes. Teachers in Sutherland particularly raised this issue, with William Gordon in Lairg asking Lord Strathnaver for his assistance in requiring his tenants' children to attend the school. Clow raised the issue with Lord Grange, asking him to intervene with the earl of Mar to direct the tenants of whatever denomination to send their children to the schools on his lands. Though Strathnaver was otherwise supportive of the society's efforts, the indifference of both was evident in their failure to respond to the teachers' requests. The heritors did, of course, have the society's support in its other statements on legal compulsion, that it was undesirable and not to the pupils' benefit.

Suspicion of the schools was not limited to Catholics in Braemar and Glenlivet. In Lairg, William Gordon reported a belief that they were intended 'as a Seminary for the plantations'. This rumour, which may have derived from a misinterpretation of the charter's statement of the society's intention to conduct missions outside Scotland, resulted in many parents preventing their children from attending.⁹² Disease and 'a general disesteem for Christian education' combined

⁸⁹ NRS, MFilP GD95/2/2, p. 45 (9 December 1714).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 16 (21 May 1714).

⁹¹ Prunier, *Anti-Catholic Strategies*, pp. 138-42.

⁹² NRS, MFilP GD95/2/2, p. 51 (13 January 1715).

with poverty to force parents to keep their children at home, mostly in order to work. It was the society's opinion, however, that Gordon's job was in part to convince people that it was in their interest to allow their children to attend the schools, rather than the heritor or the minister's job to force them.⁹³

VII. RELATIONS WITH HERITORS

Support among the heritors was not, therefore, as readily offered as the society had hoped. They could not afford to alienate the society, because they were being offered a discounted improvement to their parishes, but they still made an effort to avoid laying out too much expenditure in the society's favour. The most flagrant example came in the 1720s, when the society formally called for the removal of schools from parishes without parochial schools, but even earlier, the society threatened to remove schools where insufficient assistance was coming from the local lords. Still, in Lairg, William Gordon received accommodation from Lord Strathnaver soon after his arrival in the parish, and Alexander Glass was sheltered in the earl of Mar's courthouse during the winter of 1713-4, courtesy of arrangements by Lord Grange. Heavy rains the preceding summer had prevented the construction of a schoolhouse until the spring, though Glass' dismissal meant he never had the chance to use the new facility.⁹⁴ Ministers also had a role in securing housing or salaries for schoolmasters, such as in South Ronaldsay, Orkney, from 1716.⁹⁵

In Abertarff, the story was different. Lord Prestonhall, the heritor when Patrick Nicolson was named to the post in 1712, was a member of the society, but after his death, his son Lord Frazerdale took responsibility for the parish.⁹⁶ Prestonhall had promised to build not just a house, but a bridge to allow easier access to the school by children in one half of the parish—Nicolson, after his arrival, described the 'harm' that the lack of a bridge was causing the school, especially by preventing Catholic children from attending.⁹⁷ The society refused to send a teacher until both structures had been built, and after Frazerdale reported in June 1712 that the bridge was in place,

⁹³ *Ibid.*; MFiLP GD95/2/1, p. 335 (3 September 1713).

⁹⁴ NRS, MFiLP GD95/1/1, p. 223 (11 March 1714).

⁹⁵ NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/2, p. 97, (22 March 1716). See p. 191.

⁹⁶ NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/1, p. 254 (18 March 1712).

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 229 (30 October 1711); MFiLP GD95/1/1, p. 127 (1 November 1711).

Nicolson was appointed. In January 1713, however, Nicolson informed the society that neither house nor bridge had been built.⁹⁸ Frazerdale pledged to use vacant stipends from within the parish to pay for the bridge, but it was not until March 1714 that he presented copies of his orders to an agent at Inverness to get it built, after the society threatened to move the school.⁹⁹ It is uncertain how often Frazerdale visited the parish, possibly trusting in his agents there to execute his orders, so simple negligence rather than avoidance may have been the reason for the delay. As an outsider, paid by Frazerdale to get the bridge built, the agent from Inverness may have had a stronger incentive to see the task accomplished than the tacksmen on the estate who would have had to build it. Nicolson's time in Abertarff appears not to have been very comfortable, with no lodgings and the half-hearted support of the heritor. Several times during his tenure, he threatened to leave, and the society was obligated to send 'encouraging letters' to him and reminders to Frazerdale to support him, since additional remuneration was out of the question.¹⁰⁰ These efforts managed to convince him to stay, despite all of the obstacles he faced, until entering trials for the ministry in November 1715 and his assignment to Kiltarlity upon ordination.¹⁰¹

Locations of schools within the parishes were also a cause of tension between heritors and the society, the former claiming authority within their lands to settle the schools where they wished, the latter claiming the right to determine where its facilities should go. In Inveraven, where David Strang was hired to serve in 1713, the expectation was that the school would be established at Ballknockan, 'the place pitched upon by the presbytery [of Aberlour] as most Centrica[l]'.¹⁰² The heritor, the marquess of Huntly, had already ordered wood for construction of the roof. Despite the decision of the committee, Huntly informed it that the school would be established at Tomnavillan instead. This, according to the presbytery, was due to the influence of Huntly's chamberlain, 'a man disaffected to the desig[n]'.¹⁰³ The issue was soon rendered moot, when a group of men demolished the Ballknockan schoolhouse in the middle of the night and carried the timber used in its construction to Tomnavillan. The presbytery, therefore, advised the

98 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, pp. 269 (19 June 1712), 296 (30 January 1713); MFiP GD95/1/1, p. 167 (7 August 1712).

99 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, pp. 299 (27 February 1713), 363 (1 March 1714).

100 NRS, MFiP GD95/1/1, p. 219 (11 March 1714).

101 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, pp. 64 (4 March 1715), 104 (11 April 1716).

102 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, pp. 328-9 (27 July 1713).

103 Ibid., p. 346 (27 November 1713).

society that the school be retained there on a trial basis, to see whether it could succeed.¹⁰⁴ Despite the misgivings of Strang and of the presbytery, the school did prosper, Strang informing the society that 60 students were attending in May 1714 and that the numbers were growing daily. The society tried its best to maintain good relations with the local authorities, both ecclesiastical and secular, while retaining its own power to place its schools where it deemed most appropriate.¹⁰⁵ However, if a school had had proven success in one location, it may have been counterproductive to move it to a new area. Such a problem arose in relation to Alexander Moncrieff's school at Harray in Orkney, which the parish of South Ronaldsay, noting the school's long establishment, requested be moved to its own area. The presbytery supported this request, but Harray emphasized the school's success since its establishment, and the society negotiated a special deal with the minister and parishioners of South Ronaldsay, that it would assent to a new school if they paid half the master's salary. The Harray school would therefore be able to remain where it had been so successful, and the society would extend its activities to South Ronaldsay. The minister and parishioners agreed, and by 1716, the school was in operation.

VIII. THE '15

More serious obstacles were on the horizon for the society than merely disputes over locations of schools or over infrastructure to improve access. When the standard of James Francis Edward Stuart, 'the Auld Pretender', was raised in September 1715, 23 schools had been established in 13 different parishes, counting multiple schools in Comrie, Balquhiddy and Edinkillie as individual.¹⁰⁶ The society was still finding a basic level of organization, and teachers were shifting between schools quite frequently, especially in Aberdeenshire and Skye. Several of the schools retained stability and were able to keep functioning, and a disruption which occurred in Glenelg related more to the abrupt departure of Donald Macleod in November than the rising.¹⁰⁷ In Edinburgh, the general meeting the same month was cancelled.¹⁰⁸ The committee met while the

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, pp. 27-8 (12 August 1714).

¹⁰⁶ NRS, GD95/10, f. 60.

¹⁰⁷ NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, p. 81 (5 October 1715).

¹⁰⁸ NRS, MFiP GD95/1/1, p. 280 (3 November 1715).

rising was active, but no statement about it appears in the minutes until the beginning of January 1716, when a collection at the doors of parish churches over the course of 1715, for the purchase of books for the schools, was delayed since it was unlikely any parish which had held a collection would be able to send the money to Edinburgh safely.¹⁰⁹ Finally, the society reviewed all debts owed and issued a list of current schools and salaries being paid to its masters.¹¹⁰ These constituted an effort to understand where the society stood as the rising was fading, especially in terms of its debtors, and whether any had participated on the Jacobite side. One notoriously delinquent borrower had, Sir Hugh Paterson of Bannockburn, which forced the society into dealings with the Committee for Forfeited Estates to ensure the principal it had lent would be repaid.¹¹¹ Additionally, the earl of Mar and John Farquharson of Invercauld were expelled from the society for their participation in the rising. Invercauld never rejoined the society, but after nine months in prison, he was pardoned by George I and not forfeited, after a determination that he had been coerced into housing Mar, his landlord, prior to the rebellion.¹¹²

The most significant effects on schools came in the border parishes. In November 1715, James Murray was assigned to move from Shapinsay to Abertarff, which Patrick Nicolson was leaving to begin his trials for the ministry. Even by February 1716, Murray was unable to begin work, so was reappointed to the school in Blair Atholl—which finally opened nearly five years after the dispute between John Clow and the parish minister, Duncan Stewart, though even there there was a delay of a week while the situation was ascertained.¹¹³ Operations in Abertarff were suspended until April 1716, but they were still uneven afterwards. John Frazer, a former candidate who had earlier failed examination, filled the post from April until October 1716—poorly, in the committee’s judgement.¹¹⁴ The society then thought it had found a long-term replacement, James Johnston, but in the light of a negative report on his character in September 1716, it barred him from teaching until the matter was cleared up.¹¹⁵ He further lost credibility in the eyes of the society when he continued to teach despite the ban, though ultimately the entire controversy,

109 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, pp. 83-4 (2 January 1716).

110 Ibid., pp. 84-5 (4 January 1716); GD95/10, f. 60.

111 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, p. 140 (4 October 1716). See p. 162.

112 NRS, MFiP GD95/1/1, pp. 271 (2 June 1715), 290 (1 March 1716).

113 Ibid., p. 282 (5 January 1716); MFiP GD95/2/2, p. 92 (3 February 1716).

114 NRS, MFiP GD95/1/1, p. 304 (31 July 1716); John Grant Michie, ed., *The Records of Invercauld, MDXLVII-MDCCCXXVIII* (Aberdeen: New Spalding Club, 1901), pp. 295-6, 307-10

115 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, pp. 126, 132 (6 September 1716).

which was unrelated to the rising, ended up amounting to little.¹¹⁶ It dated back to 1713, when he had been under consideration as parish schoolmaster for Kirkmichael, in the presbytery of Abernethy, and suspected of Catholic sympathies.¹¹⁷ However, such positive reports had come in and Johnston had agreed to sign the Confession of Faith, that he had been accepted for the post in Kirkmichael.¹¹⁸ Then, a dispute between Johnston and the minister, Duncan McLea, had caused Johnston to say negative things about McLea 'which tended to Great Misunderstanding between him and his People.'¹¹⁹ In 1716, under consideration for the society post, Johnston confessed and expressed his regret for his actions, which the presbytery accepted, giving him a warning and passing its favourable recommendation to the society.¹²⁰ The SSPCK committee was not completely satisfied, however, and kept the ban in place until it received a more detailed explanation.¹²¹ In the end, McLea himself reported to the presbytery in April 1717 that Johnston had been fully reinstated.¹²² The interruption in Abertarff, however, was still a situation the society preferred to avoid.

The society prepared to survey each school to determine its situation. Comrie was one of the first parishes to contact the committee, even before the survey was sent out, and informed it that people in the parish were unable to support the schools as they had before the rising.¹²³ For Glenelg, a school which had been minimally effective before and which now had no master, the society decided to shut it down and use the money for a teacher on Mull, whose people had promised to support him as much as it could.¹²⁴ John Robertson, the teacher at Gairloch, was complaining about the post-rising conditions, that he had been prevented from doing his job and wished to be transferred, even at the risk of a lower salary.¹²⁵ Meanwhile, James Bannerman, the minister at Inveraven, told of renewed problems with Catholics in the region of Glenlivet even after the rising, with the missionary priest John Gordon exacerbating the problems of the society

116 *Ibid.*, p. 143 (1 November 1716).

117 NRS, CH2/6/2, p. 96 (3 February, 3 March 1713). Aberlour and Abernethy having recently been one presbytery, contemporary sources, as with Abertarff's synod, seem to have made them interchangeable.

118 *Ibid.*, p. 105 (30 September 1713).

119 *Ibid.*

120 *Ibid.*

121 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, p. 154 (3 January 1717).

122 NRS, CH2/6/2, p. 191 (11 April 1717).

123 NRS, MFiP GD95/1/1, p. 289 (1 March 1716).

124 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, p. 116 (31 May 1716); MFiP GD95/1/1, p. 299 (7 June 1716).

125 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, p. 113 (17 May 1716).

school. Still, Bannerman was confident that the school would revive despite its current weakness.¹²⁶

One can see a correlation between the problematic schools and Jacobite allegiances. Gairloch, Balquhidder, Braemar, Comrie, Abertarff, Glenelg and Snizort were all in areas which were either Jacobite or of mixed allegiance during the rising, while schools which did not report negative effects—Durness, Kildonan, Lairg, and the schools in Orkney and Shetland—were in either neutral or Hanoverian regions.¹²⁷ Masters' reactions, of course, varied according to the pressures they felt themselves under. Some remained in their positions and dealt as best they could with the reduced enrolments. Others, after serving on a particular side, were obligated to flee from the opposition, and some at least made a show of bending with the prevailing winds, only later to offer an apology for their stand with the ultimately losing side. In the rising's aftermath, the society had to judge the conduct of its teachers.

John Clow was again the most notable character, as he had stood up during a church service in Castleton and demanded that the minister, John M'Innes, read out one of the pretender's proclamations. When M'Innes refused, Clow himself read the text 'and thereby [raised] prejudice in the minds of some people against their Minister for his not doing of it, as well as he thereby Countenanced the Rebellion and helped to confirm the people in their inclinations thereto'.¹²⁸ Ironically, for someone who had been so fervently anti-Catholic in Auchintoul, and who had refused to serve in Blair Atholl under the supervision of the episcopalian Duncan Stewart, Clow had 'contracted too great [an] Intimacy with papists in that Countr[y] [Braemar]'.¹²⁹ Clow gave an apology to the society for his behaviour, which may have been influenced by the pressures in Braemar, where the rising began. Nevertheless, the society fired him, and he never worked in an SSPCK school again.¹³⁰

In Balquhidder, both John Buchanan, at Strathyre, and James MacCallum, at the Braes of Balquhidder, had fled, but Buchanan had returned when the situation was safe. He was allowed to remain in post without question, but MacCallum remained suspended pending an inquiry into his loyalty, even though he had returned once the rising had ended.¹³¹ A hearing before the presbytery

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 154 (3 January 1717).

¹²⁷ A. Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce, and the House of Stuart*, p. 245.

¹²⁸ NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, p. 100 (5 April 1716).

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ NRS, MFiP GD95/1/1, pp. 298-9 (7 June 1716).

¹³¹ NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, p. 100 (5 April 1716).

of Dunblane exculpated him: having been drafted into service for the Hanoverians by the duke of Atholl, MacCallum had been permitted to return to Balquhidder after a month. After his arrival, a group of 'McGregors' kidnapped him and held him hostage in Argyll for five days, before he escaped and remained in hiding throughout the winter.¹³² It was for his personal safety that he stayed away from his post. Jamison in Tombelly, Strang in Tomnavillan and John McIver in Snizort all received good reports from their ministers and presbyteries, though the schools in Tomnavillan and Snizort were weakened by the rising. Tomnavillan, according to James Bannerman, had seen its enrolment decline to no more than 27 pupils, not only because of the rising but also because of its location, 'it being placed where it is contrary to the presbyter[y]'s inclination at the [earl] of Huntl[y]'s desire', thus contradicting the progress which Strang had reported prior to the rising.¹³³ Archibald MacQueen, the minister at Snizort, reported that the school 'was in a very flourishing condition before the Rebellion broke out, but is decreased Since matters turned in disorder'. He was confident, however, that the students who had left the school would soon return, and saw no need to move it again.¹³⁴ The decline, however, may not have been a sign of local disaffection or support for the Jacobites, since the 'disorder' may also have pushed parents to keep children at home for their personal safety.

IX. AFTER THE RISING

In addition to challenges, the rising and its aftermath also presented opportunities for the society, though its ability to exploit them depended upon the cooperation of its subscribers and borrowers, as well as government officials. It renewed solicitations for payments of subscriptions and collections of interest due. The upheavals, as we have seen in Comrie, harmed the ability of many to support charitable ventures even within their own parishes and presbyteries, increasing the demand on the society's own funding to maintain schools where special arrangements had been made.¹³⁵ The Convention of Royal Burghs, meeting in early 1716, told the society that due to

¹³² Ibid., p. 122 (7 July 1716).

¹³³ Ibid., p. 106 (3 May 1716). See p. 211.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ See p. 193.

damages lingering from the rebellion, no corporate contribution would be made.¹³⁶ Economic harm was reflected in the total contributions made to the society in 1716: £128.18.9 5/6, £200 less than either the preceding or following year.¹³⁷ It is difficult to say that the society's use of the rising as an advertising point was more successful than its earlier efforts, since the focus of the very people likely to contribute seems to have been on re-establishing their own security. An interesting contrast to the low amount of donations made to the society in that year is the high amount of interest paid in, though perhaps that in itself is emblematic of the instability following the rising, with borrowers wishing to square their debts as best they could.¹³⁸

Better opportunities came in the possibility of support from the government. The society presented the fact that so many schools were located in Jacobite regions as an indicator that more schools were needed, not that the ones which were there had been failures. In this light, the limited funds and inconstant contributions and payments from subscribers and borrowers served it well, allowing it with some justification to apply for support from the royal bounty as an agent of loyalty in the Highlands.¹³⁹ Representatives in London established a relationship with the Commission of Police or 'Court de Police', which later met in Edinburgh, allowing the society to engage with it directly.¹⁴⁰ The society, even more than the church, was an organization dealing directly with the Highlands, and thus saw itself perfectly placed to act as a middleman between the region and the government, represented by the commission.

Another aspect of the society's chance to become a royal agent for establishing charity schools in the Highlands came through parliament's 'act for the more effectually Securing the peace of the Highlands of Scotland', including a clause requiring the generation of a list of suitable locations for effective schools.¹⁴¹ The society seized its chance to submit a list of its own, again soliciting information from the presbyteries, as a means of lobbying for this clause and the act to be fully enforced. Fearing 'that through the multitude of other weighty affairs at the Court, the same may come to be forgotten', it was seeking to protect its own business interests and prove its

136 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, p. 120 (7 July 1716).

137 NRS, GD95/8/3, p. 5.

138 See p. 135, table 5.3.

139 NRS, MFiP GD95/1/1, pp. 304-5 (31 July 1716).

140 'Police' perhaps should be defined here more in the sense of 'policy' or 'administration', rather than the modern meaning. The body was intended to improve government in Scotland.

141 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, pp. 124-5 (25 July 1716).

necessity to the regime.¹⁴² Robert Pringle, the brother of Sir Walter Pringle and an undersecretary of state, was engaged to obtain a warrant from the king, which was duly presented in September 1716, summoning a meeting of the commission named in the act.¹⁴³ The society moved to prepare a list of parishes for charity schools, naming Nicol Spence to look through its records for information, in case the presbyteries did not reply in time.¹⁴⁴ The presentation to the commission, which was meeting in Edinburgh, emphasized the nature of the rebellion as one of Highlanders' having been manipulated by their 'popish Chi[e]ftains, and other Jacobite Land Lords' into standing against the king.¹⁴⁵ The first point, after the introduction, is that legal parish schools must be introduced, with salaries paid by the heritors according to the assessed rates. The second point raises the need for charity schools, listing 93 possible schools in 65 different locations, but the society rounds it off to 100 for establishment by the government, with the society itself capable of supporting 30, including the 25 currently in operation. The society requests to be the recipient and dispenser of funds from the royal bounty, not only to manage the schools but to support poor children at its own schools and, for boys 'of Excellent Spirits, having a genius for learning', at grammar schools in the larger towns.¹⁴⁶ The former suggestion of hospital schools is presented again as an alternative, though on a larger scale: 150 students to be taught at each establishment, under management of the society and under inspection of the government. A proposal to enforce the 1700 parliamentary act allowing the removal of Catholic boys from their families is repeated, hinting also at the future 'industrial' schools of the society which would begin work in the 1730s, 'Instructing them in v[i]rtuous [e]mployments[,] [so that] Both they & these Spacious Countr[ie]s, may be made usefu[l] to the Common wealth'.¹⁴⁷

X. CONCLUSION

These ideas would bear no immediate fruit, however, the society not receiving funding

142 Ibid., p. 125.

143 Ibid., p. 126 (6 September 1716).

144 Ibid., p. 131 (13 September 1716).

145 Ibid., p. 134 (4 October 1716).

146 Ibid., p. 136.

147 Ibid., p. 137.

from the royal bounty until 1727.¹⁴⁸ Still, they offer a look at where the society saw itself after the rising, and where it saw its future. Eight years of fundraising, lending and investing for the establishment of schools had laid a solid foundation for the future, much of the first two years being occupied with financial and organizational issues. Both before and during the development of schools, a major concern of the society was its corporate image, which involved both financial propriety, especially for the benefit of the contributors, and moral propriety, for the benefit of Highland clergy, heritors and commoners. For the second of these, the society would need to regulate the behaviour of its teachers. Ministers in the Highlands seemed mostly supportive, though the society had a false start when the opening of the school at Blair Atholl, which was to be the first established completely by the society, was delayed.

The support of heritors was more dubious, with much lip service paid to the society's purposes and with the presentation of several candidates, but some landowners asserted their own authority over their lands by moving the schools without the society's or the presbyteries' approval. Reluctant to lay out too many funds for the schools' benefit, several heritors proved slow to improve parish infrastructure which would have housed the school and the master, or which would have allowed pupils to travel to the school more easily. Still, heritors must not have been willing to alienate the society too much, since a society school could often provide them with an excuse not to pay for a statutory parochial school.¹⁴⁹ No less important to the society was the support of the commoners, whose children were the schools' intended pupils. It looked to provide quality education in literacy, especially to Catholics, going as far as it could to provide extra charity to convince the children to attend the schools. The Catholic mission, meanwhile, acknowledged the usefulness of the schools, though not in a spiritual context. It advised its followers to use the schools as best they could, hoping that the domestic and community influence would counteract any heretical ideas the pupils would have heard about while in the classes.¹⁵⁰ This was the inverse of what the society had hoped, even for Protestant pupils, that they would take their lessons home and communicate them to their families, serving in essence as unlicensed—and unpaid—catechists.¹⁵¹ It feared, however, that the Catholic family and community influences would be the

¹⁴⁸ Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 56.

¹⁴⁹ See p. 189.

¹⁵⁰ Prunier, *Anti-Catholic Strategies*, pp. 135-6.

¹⁵¹ NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, p. 329 (27 July 1713): 'they [the committee] hope that in a Short time, the

stronger.

In addition to the better supervision of students which the hospital schools would provide, they would also contribute to supervision of teachers, which both Adam Fergusson and George Robertson cited in their support of the proposal in the society's early days. The proposal was raised again in 1716 communications to the government, hoping for the funds necessary to develop the hospital schools.¹⁵² Interaction with fewer heritors than parish schools required was another benefit the larger institutions could offer, but the greater expense ruled them out in 1709, and lack of government support did the same in 1716, though they were later adopted in some form under the second patent, for the industrial and working schools.¹⁵³

Despite tensions over the presence of the Catholic mission, the byword for the society with regard to the commoners was persuasion, not coercion. It did not seek to use legal remedies available against the commoners, but only against Catholic clergy or missionaries. Even ambivalent supporters such as Lord Grange pursued Catholic establishments, such as the Glenlivet school uncovered in 1714, but the onus was placed on the teachers and on the society itself to convince Catholics to send their children to schools. Historians give credit to the society for not exercising intolerance in furthering its goals, despite the criticisms of John Lorne Campbell, and where teachers sought to use punitive or coercive measures to expose students to Protestant doctrine, as with John Clow in Auchintoul, they were themselves censured.¹⁵⁴

Clow was perhaps the most notorious example for maintaining discipline among the teachers, not just in his actions towards Catholics in his area, but also for his actions during the 1715 rising. He was not the only teacher investigated for his behaviour in 1715 and 1716, but all the others who expressed dubious loyalty through their actions were later exonerated due to extenuating circumstances. Beside politically loyal behaviour, however, came moral behaviour, which Alexander Glass, Clow's predecessor at Castleton of Braemar, violated in his case of fornication. Public repentance was not good enough for the society, which was concerned his actions would give both Catholic and Protestant critics weapons in their arguments against it, so he had to be dismissed to preserve the society's moral probity, which was no less important than

example of these young ones may be Instructive to some of riper years.'

152 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/2, pp. 136-7 (4 October 1716).

153 Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 200.

154 Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 189; J. Macinnes, *Evangelical Movement*, pp. 242-3. See pp. 185-7.

financial transparency in developing its corporate image.¹⁵⁵

Following the rising, the society sought to put its charter to use by presenting itself as the ideal agent for charity education in the Highlands, essential to develop loyalty on the part of Highlanders. While many of its schools were located in regions which had been Jacobite in the '15, the society had to argue that this did not show failure, but rather that more schools were necessary to root support for the establishment more deeply. Expansion into the synod of Argyll, where the society had hesitated to involve itself earlier, was also a means of burnishing its reputation with the government, especially since the territories where these Argyll schools were established had all been Jacobite. The society continued to put its schools in areas on the periphery of establishment support, emphasizing value for its investment.

The dominance of the language question in discussions of the SSPCK has clouded over some of the finer points of structure and operations. When looking at the society's attitude towards Gaelic, we see less of a deterministic push to eliminate the language than a simple acknowledgement of its realities, that dialects were too controversial to allow the Bible to be universally understood, even with the revision of Robert Kirk in the early 1690s. The vernacular language had no tradition of literacy, and, with the demise of the written classical language, there was even no agreement on what literacy in Gaelic would actually mean. Despite the rhetoric used by writers from John of Fordun to James VI and beyond, the language does not appear in the society's founding documents, so we cannot dismiss the argument that the withdrawal of Gaelic was as much a side effect of the society's policies as a predetermined target. The association of English with education and economic progress must therefore be seen as itself a side effect of the growth of popular literacy, which, due to complex cultural reasons, English was more amenable to than Gaelic. Among these was the lack of popular literacy in Gaelic, but also the importance of literacy to reformed Christianity, and the more sustained ties the Reformation had to English.

155 NRS, MFiP GD95/2/1, pp. 203-6 (20 July 1711)

Conclusion

I. BACKGROUND AND ANTECEDENTS

Links between education and religion remained strong in Scotland after 1690, with the parochial structure of the presbyterian church extending into a system of schools as envisioned in *The First Book of Discipline*.¹ Schools were viewed as so integral to the church's ecclesiastical authority that they became the theoretical 'handmaid' to the parish churches.² Despite the revolutionary establishment of presbyterian government and the new impetus a system of universal education received, however, many parishes were without schools even into the eighteenth century. A lack of qualified personnel and complications in relationships with heritors, who were often unwilling to support parochial schools out of parish rents, contributed to this dilemma, which reflected the trouble the church faced in settling presbyterian ministers in parishes: churches were either vacant, or occupied by episcopalian ministers who did not recognize the authority of the General Assembly and who were protected by heritors. This problem existed throughout Scotland, but was exacerbated in the Highlands by problems of climate, terrain, infrastructure, parish size, disparate settlements, and language. As early as 1692, the church tried to institute a network of Gaelic-speaking probationary clergy and licensed ministers sent on temporary assignments to the Highlands, in the hope that some would be called to or agree to accept parochial posts in the region. The church went so far as to ban Gaelic-speakers from accepting posts in the Lowlands until they had served some time in a Highland parish.³ The probationers, though they could not conduct services themselves, were licensed as catechists, and were thus able to conduct prayer meetings and directed readings with parishioners. They were sent in the company of ministers, but having arrived in the north, they were often encouraged to set out on their own—some to receive ordination in the northern presbyteries, and others to

1 Cameron, ed., *First Book of Discipline*, pp. 129-30.

2 J. MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement*, p. 231.

3 BHO, 1694 General Assembly, Act XXI, date of access 19 August 2010.

catechise people who rarely had the opportunity to attend services and were thus at risk of losing touch with reformed religion.⁴

As disparate settlements and other features of the region affected the ability of Highlanders to attend services, so they affected the attendance of Highland children at statutory parish schools. Established in 1707, the General Assembly's Committee for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge devised a plan to establish a permanent fund to support catechists in the Highlands. This soon evolved into the SSPCK, the teachers' remit extending beyond instruction in religious principles and practices, into literacy and arithmetic. Like the probationary clergy, the society teachers would be based in the smaller settlements in the parishes, in schools which were supplementary to the parochial schools, not substitutes for them.

The society was based, therefore, in a campaign of the church to establish Protestantism and, further, presbyterian government of a national Protestant church more securely in the Highlands, where religious practice was notoriously fluid and less controlled from the centre than in the Lowlands. The Church of Scotland was not the only organization to set the stage for the SSPCK, however. In Edinburgh and other Lowland cities and towns, Societies for the Reformation of Manners sought to instil moral and sober behaviour on the part of inhabitants, themselves taking as models eponymous English societies and Scotland's pre-revolutionary house conventicles. As time went on and the urban reformation campaign came to a standstill, the societies shifted their focus to the establishment of private charity schools in the Highlands.

The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge in England also served as an example for the SSPCK, though interaction with English bodies was always contentious.⁵ The English society supported a campaign, instigated by the Scottish episcopalian James Kirkwood, to provide libraries for the benefit of clergy, divinity students, and lay sponsors in Highland parishes and presbytery seats. This campaign deepened connections between the SPCK and the Scottish ecclesiastical establishment, connections which the SSPCK sought to exploit in seeking financial support from London.⁶ The structure of the two organizations were very different, however, the SPCK maintaining a private status without a royal charter, which allowed it to operate a variety of

⁴ Ibid., 1696 General Assembly, Act XIV.

⁵ See pp. 104-11, for discussions of the libraries.

⁶ See pp. 145-50.

charitable schemes without having to amend a founding document. Due to the greater extent of charity schools in England prior to its founding, it did not establish or run schools on its own, but rather coordinated existing efforts and encouraged new schools by, for example, connecting candidate teachers and governors of schools. The voluntary nature of the reformation societies and the SPCK meant that their activities and vitality depended on their popularity and, some critics charged, fashionability.⁷ In Scotland, the reformation societies seemed to die out by the end of the first decade of the eighteenth century, or at least to have survived in such a weak state as to prevent organized records from being kept.⁸ While the SPCK did not suffer from social liabilities, with prominent men retaining their interest in its operations, its involvement in charity schools fell victim to political squabbles. Disputes over the loyalties of SPCK teachers grew worse around the 1715 Jacobite rising and were so bitter that in the 1720s, the society abandoned schools altogether in favour of establishing libraries for clergy in poor English parishes and publishing religious works, especially in local and native languages in the developing British empire.⁹ These disputes could have prevented the SSPCK from establishing a formal correspondence with the English society upon its incorporation, the latter organization expressing reluctance about such a relationship.¹⁰

Both the reformation societies and the SPCK represent efforts on the part of prominent men in Edinburgh and London, respectively, to fill a gap in government provision for the welfare of the poor.¹¹ Members of reformation societies, especially, saw themselves as role models for the working and lower classes, to the extent that those terms apply to early modern Scotland, demonstrating moral and appropriately religious behaviour.¹² Pressure on the government and town council to enforce blasphemy laws led to a focus on establishing an immorality court, which met only irregularly and which mostly, though not exclusively, tried less wealthy citizens. It was more the ambivalence of the authorities which let pass immoral behaviour among the more prominent, but we must not rule out reformers' hesitance to alienate their peers by direct confrontation and legal processes—business relationships could have been at stake, after all. Instead, they encouraged

⁷ Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 52.

⁸ See p. 87.

⁹ Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 130.

¹⁰ NRS, GD95/10, f. 21.

¹¹ P. Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, pp. 6, 69.

¹² See pp. 66-7.

anonymous notes to wealthier transgressors witnessed to have sworn openly on the streets, not that the notes' sources would be unknown.¹³ Even the reformation societies' charity schools had minimal success, with only one school in Abertarff being recorded. Its rapid failure was an argument used for the creation of an incorporated society to manage similar efforts.¹⁴

While the campaign to distribute Irish and Gaelic Bibles to Highland presbyteries and parishes pre-dated the SPCK's founding, the motivations behind it reflected the ideas of the English society in later pushing for publication of religious books in local languages, including Welsh and Irish. The significance of the Bible campaign for the Scottish society—apart from the involvement of Kirkwood, who was left in charge after the early deaths of Robert Boyle and Robert Kirk—was its reflection of the diverse nature of Gaelic. The first versions, brought over from Ireland, were printed in a Classical Gaelic orthography which had never had any relevance for common Highlanders, and by the late 1680s had ceased to be used even among the former scholarly elite in Gaelic society.¹⁵ Kirk's revision, into a more contemporary and vernacular language presented in Roman lettering, was successfully printed, but the Church of Scotland demonstrated a lack of commitment to its distribution. The failure to distribute the Bibles and catechisms reflect a commitment to Gaelic's removal, according to historians such as Withers and Durkacz, since literacy in the language would have given it an unacceptable longevity in the face of English.¹⁶ The Bible campaign was also the first time an attempt was made to quantify the Gaelic-speaking population in Scotland, and to define which areas were mostly Gaelic.¹⁷ The church would later use similar surveys to help determine where Gaelic-speaking catechists and clergy were needed, providing a model for the SSPCK to assess parishes and presbyteries in seeking to establish schools with its limited income.

Recent research on the nature of early modern Gaelic communication, however, has shown that not only was there not a single vernacular Gaelic—diversity of dialects having been noted as far back as the fourteenth century, in the writings of John of Fordun¹⁸—there was no agreement within Gaeldom as to what literacy entailed, with the eastern and central territories following a

13 See pp. 79-80.

14 See pp. 43-4, 85-6, 123-4.

15 Meek, 'The Gaelic Bible', p. 14.

16 Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, p. 118.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 43.

18 See p. 4.

Latin-based orthography when it was found necessary to write Gaelic, and the Irish-oriented western and island territories basing their writing on Classical Gaelic.¹⁹ It was partly to address these complications that Kirk revised the Bible, retaining the classical orthography in a Roman typeface and including a gloss for unfamiliar phrases. The parties responsible for distribution, however, may simply have come to the conclusion that dealing with the complications in Gaelic literacy was not worth the effort, when a single language for communication within the church and government would make ecclesiastical unity more effective. The Bibles, therefore, were directed to universities, rather than to parishes.²⁰

II. FUNDING AND MEMBERSHIP

The SSPCK would take all of these interests described—the church’s security in the Highlands, the moral and religious reformation of the Highlanders, and religious education—and combine them in a campaign to support the work of the statutory parochial schools with a network of charity schools in the remote regions of the parishes. The society’s royal charter established it as a corporation and opened membership to, theoretically, all who wished to subscribe. Practically, however, membership was still limited to men in the social and political elites, and one can argue that subscription to the society became a status symbol. Still, the charter was able to protect it from the problems which had had such stark effects on the reformation societies and the SPCK, putting it beyond politics by tying its fortunes to the crown.

The charter reflected from the beginning a need for the society to have representation from around Scotland, not just Edinburgh. Much of its business was directed first at obtaining donations from outside the city to broaden the initial membership, but it did not have much success, since only three of the original 89 members did not come from there. The society was able to conduct its business in Edinburgh more easily, with the greater familiarity officers had with it and the connections they had in their professional lives. People wishing to subscribe were able to see the secretary, John Dundas of Philpston, and the treasurer, Sir Hugh Cunningham of Craigend or

¹⁹ MacCoinnich, ‘Where and how was Gaelic written?’, p. 312; MacGregor, ‘Creation and Compilation’, p. 215.

²⁰ Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 19.

George Watson, in person to sign their subscription papers or pay in their donations. Similarly, the society was able to conduct appeals among government and legal bodies within the city, such as the Faculty of Advocates or the court of session. Donations by parishes in Edinburgh are easier to discern, since, unlike with other parts of the country, they were not sent in on a city-wide basis, as with Glasgow, or on a presbyterial basis, as with rural districts.²¹

Donations from the city outnumbered, both in quantity and value, those from other parts of Scotland, and proved more consistent. Outside Edinburgh, the ability of the society to monitor and encourage donations was limited, and relied on the commitment of residents without the constant personal contact with more enthusiastic members. Methods of raising money in more distant presbyteries focused on the ministers, who were asked to advertise for the society from the pulpit on Sundays, and then walk through the parish the following week asking for donations. Collections at the doors of parish churches were also suggested as a means of raising funds. Doubts over the campaign's efficacy were raised by ministers in the synod of Aberdeen even before the society's incorporation, however, and ministers also expressed concern that the development of charity schools would add more work to their already onerous duties.²² The SSPCK frequently had to ask the General Assembly for support in establishing itself, and the assembly obliged by passing annual acts for the society's benefit. In 1714, however, the society had to address the issue of weak support on the part of parish ministers, illustrating four categories of problematic clerical efforts for its benefit, ranging from dilatory to non-existent.²³ Commitment of local residents to presbyterianism could have affected levels of donations, as could the safety ministers felt in engaging with their parishioners.²⁴ To minimize the risk to its finances from ambivalent or hesitant clergy, the society attempted to establish its own local bodies, in the form of correspondence committees. These committees would not only facilitate fundraising, but also other operations, like investment of stock and supervision of the schools. Hundreds of names were submitted for the different provinces within Scotland, but links were never firmly established. Despite doubts over the ministers' commitment to supporting the SSPCK, church bodies remained

²¹ Some donations from Glasgow did indicate the parish, however, and cumulative donations sent in by the presbyteries were often divided according to the individual parishes.

²² NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/1, p. 17 (7 November 1709).

²³ NRS, MFiLP GD95/1/1, p. 231 (3 June 1714).

²⁴ See pp. 136-7.

the most effective agents of communication. In terms of parochial donations, those facilitated by clergy, out of the ten top presbyteries—all of which donated more than £100 through 1717—five were in the synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, and three in Fife. This demonstrated not just where much of the wealth was, but where ministers were most assertive in promoting the society.²⁵

Correspondence outside Scotland had better results than within, though they were still mixed. Attempts were made to exploit members' family connections, including the ministers Patrick and John Cuming for Dublin, and William Carstares, principal of the University of Edinburgh, for the United Provinces. The Dublin connection was somewhat successful, but donations from the United Provinces came mainly from regiments through the agency of army chaplains.²⁶ The strongest focus outside Scotland, however, was on London. Daniel Williams, a dissenting minister, was the main correspondent for the society there, and chastised the committee at the end of 1709 for being too assiduous in seeking assistance from prominent Londoners, inundating them with pleas when their work could have been more effective had they tried to go through him first.²⁷ Despite the interest documented both by Williams and by Philpston, who had travelled to London on church business but was asked to make inquiries on the society's behalf, early donations from London were sporadic and often individual in nature, such as by James Fraser, secretary of the Chelsea Hospital, who subscribed £100 for the benefit of his family's home region in the Aird of Inverness.²⁸

Securing a steady stream of donations was only part of the financial concern of the society, since, as the charter required, only interest generated on the stock was to be used to pay teachers' salaries, building costs and for student supplies. Another major discussion topic during 1710 focused on investment in property, since the SSPCK would have preferred to invest as much of its stock as possible in one place. Its business was education, not banking, and it wanted to proceed with the former as quickly as possible.²⁹ Unfortunately, it was unable to find a suitable property investment, since conditions of the property owners were unacceptable, the price was too high, or the properties under consideration were encumbered with too much debt or for the society to risk

²⁵ See p. 138, table 5.4.

²⁶ See p. 153.

²⁷ NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/1, p. 55 (30 December 1709).

²⁸ NRS, MFiLP GD95/1/1, p. 204 (31 July 1713).

²⁹ See pp. 157-9.

investing in them. A look at the proposed deals is an illustration of the precarious situation of many landowners in Scotland at the time, and it was not until 1715 that the SSPCK was able to invest in a property, comfortable that its investment would bear fruit. This deal remained in effect until 1755, so the interest it generated proved that it was, in fact, a wise and lucrative investment.³⁰

In the meantime, the society had to turn to a less desirable alternative: loans, which would force it to act more as a bank than it had wished to. It was able to overcome the Bank of Scotland's monopoly on banking, perhaps due to its chartered status and its charitable, rather than profit-making, focus.³¹ Here, as with donations, it relied on personal and business connections of its members, many of whom would themselves become borrowers of the society's stock, and lending grew rapidly among Edinburgh's business community. Diligence was still thorough, but prompt payment of interest was rare, causing the society no end of concern that funding for schools, and hence their operation, would be disrupted. Despite irregular payments of interest, the society hesitated to pursue its borrowers in court, perhaps because of a desire to avoid negative developments in its commercial relationships, and a hesitance to go to the expense of a legal process. The notable instance of Corsclayes and Rachein, grandsons of Agnes Campbell, the royal printer and a frequent business contact of the society, was the closest the society came to taking borrowers to court, but the affair was soon dropped, possibly through negotiation with Campbell to cover their debts.³²

The crux of the society's concerns in terms of its corporate governance was to establish transparency, especially in light of the controversial management of the Company of Scotland, still fresh in people's memories. Its reputation as a corporation was seen as a way to maintain its credibility as a charity, and as a manager of its subscribers' money and its borrowers' debts. It allowed subscribers the opportunity to look over its books should they wish, and invited representatives of the General Assembly, especially ministers, to attend committee meetings while the assembly was sitting each spring.³³ Lying behind the desire for corporate probity, however, lay the schools.

³⁰ NRS, GD95/8/3, pp. 58, 366.

³¹ See p. 157.

³² NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/2, p. 141 (25 October 1716).

³³ See p. 135.

III. ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF THE SCHOOLS

By early 1711, the society forecast having enough revenue by the end of the year to begin opening schools, since most of the stock collected the previous year had been lent. It had already assumed operation of Alexander Buchan's school in St Kilda, but its first efforts to establish its own came as a result of surveys of Highland parishes and presbyteries since 1706.³⁴ The involvement of the kirk in ascertaining the need of parishes for, first, Gaelic Bibles and catechisms in the 1690s, and, second, Gaelic-speaking ministers and catechists in the 1700s, implies the necessary existence of a presbyterian structure in the respondent regions, whatever the religious inclinations of the population. While this may make the society schools appear redundant, the very reason why catechists and charity schools were required was because of the limited reach the church had even in parishes where a presbyterian minister was settled. Attempts of the Catholic mission to establish its own school in the presbytery of Aberlour in 1714—possibly to counteract the numerous schools the society had opened nearby—and hostile reactions to the settlement of George Lindsay as a minister there that same year,³⁵ show that a presbyterian structure in a given area did not mean complete allegiance on the part of the public, and that the church and society were rightly concerned for their own sakes about the security of the ecclesiastical establishment.

Parish-based schools were not the only option for the society, and twice, with the recommendations of the ministers Adam Fergusson and James Robertson, it considered extending the concept of hospitals from Lowland cities to a few central locations in the Highlands, arguing that they would provide greater supervision of teachers' conduct and remove students from the traditional and less productive (from a Lowland perspective) rhythms of Highland life.³⁶ A disadvantage of hospital schools was their limited geographical reach, so the decision was made to pursue parish-based schools according to the results of the surveys, hoping in part that the students themselves would extend their lessons to their home communities outside of teaching hours.

The early schools tended to cluster along what is considered the 'Highland line', with

³⁴ BHO, 1706 General Assembly, Act XVIII.

³⁵ NRS, CH1/2/34/3 ff. 278-84.

³⁶ See pp. 171-3.

outposts also on Skye and in Sutherland, St Kilda, Glenelg, Orkney and Shetland, reflecting an effort of the society to establish a presence outside the Lowland/Highland border area represented by the proposed hospital schools.³⁷ Expansion responded to the assessments of parishes and presbyteries as to the needs of the regions, so soon as the society determined it had the money to support a master. Requests for schools were so numerous, that it established a waiting list of both locations and masters, so a new place could be supplied with as little delay as possible. Schools in these secondary locations, such as Gairloch and Kildonan, started from 1714. The synod of Argyll, with the exception of Skye and St Kilda, were avoided due to the benefits schools in its territory received from the bishops' rents since 1690³⁸—only after the 1715 rising would the society begin to establish schools elsewhere within it. Apart from supporting extant efforts by presbyterian ministers and catechists in the areas where they were established, the schools provided a strong foundation for future expansion, a feature noted by the society following the rising in communications with the government.³⁹

Teachers could become fixtures in their communities, with Alexander Moncrieff, in Harray, Orkney, being a particular example. When an opportunity for removal to Gairloch arose in 1714, the Gaelic-speaking Moncrieff expressed a desire to remain in his English-language post, the society approving due to the availability of John Robertson.⁴⁰ The community connection must have been appreciated by the society, which required of the teachers that they not only instruct and catechise the students, but also serve as models of reformed behaviour. The moral reputation of the society, by contrast with its corporate reputation, was diffused throughout the country and put into the hands of the teachers, hence the thorough investigation of moral and religious qualifications before decisions on hiring were made. If the teachers failed to live up to this reformed ideal, they could have affected the society's reputation in the eyes of heritors, ministers and commoners in the Highlands, and detracted from the progress of the schools. Any violation was therefore taken very seriously, as with the fornication case of Alexander Glass in 1713.⁴¹

The schools' reception was mixed. The heritors welcomed the opportunity to show concern

³⁷ See Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, p. 56, for its approximate location at the time.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

³⁹ NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/2, p. 134 (4 October 1716).

⁴⁰ See p. 177.

⁴¹ NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/2, pp. 1-2 (11 March 1714); see Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 186, on moral qualifications assuming greater importance than academic qualifications.

for their tenants' welfare (and loyalties) by supporting schools, though some may have been motivated by the chance to evade legal requirements to establish parish schools—opportunism not addressed by the society until the 1720s, and even then with minimal effectiveness.⁴² At the same time, they tried to get away with investing as little as possible. Patrick Nicolson in Abertarff had an uncomfortable tenure due to poor accommodation, and a prolonged dispute with Lord Frazerdale over a bridge in the parish was not resolved until two years after his introduction there, finally allowing easier access to the school by the parish's children.⁴³ William Gordon reported that Lord Strathnaver had not required his tenants to attend the school at Lairg, but this request ran against the society's policy of convincing students to attend by virtue of the strength of the masters' faith and skills, rather than legal prescription.⁴⁴ Generally, the burden of attracting children to the school fell on the masters themselves, through their skill in teaching and their conduct as examples of moral behaviour in the parishes.

Highland commoners seem to have welcomed the schools as opportunities to educate their children, except when instruction conflicted with the traditional work calendar. No violence against masters simply as a result of their positions as representatives of the SSPCK was recorded, at least in peacetime, with the exception of John Clow. His assault by a group of alleged Catholics in Auchintoul, Braemar, in 1712 was due to his uncommon assertiveness in pursuit of them, which was so strong that even the society had to rein him in. His zeal may have been one reason for his removal to Castleton after Glass's dismissal, also to help rehabilitate the society's reputation there.⁴⁵ At Tomnavillan, the site which the presbytery of Aberlour and the master David Strang had considered unsuitable but which had been insisted on by the marquess of Huntly, the popularity was such that the school had 60 pupils within six months, defying the society and the presbytery's expectations.⁴⁶ Still, when knowledge spread of a society scheme to keep records of attendance, Catholics near Glenlivet expressed fears—possibly fostered by priests on the mission—that the lists could be used as future muster sheets for the army. In response to the same scheme, Protestant

⁴² Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, pp. 47-8.

⁴³ Cowper records James Johnston, the teacher after 1716, complaining about the lack of a bridge in 1718, as a reason for a lack of students, but the minister and the society demurred, ascribing it to his poor skills. Cowper, ed., *SSPCK Schoolmasters*, p. 41; NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/1, pp. 299 (27 February 1713), 363 (1 March 1714).

⁴⁴ See p. 188.

⁴⁵ NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/1, p. 364 (1 March 1714).

⁴⁶ NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/2, p. 16 (21 May 1714).

inhabitants of Strathnaver were concerned that the lists could be used for transportation to the colonies of North America. The society dismissed the concerns of both, and simply advised its teachers to maintain lists discreetly.

Support for the schools was not unquestioning, though reactions of communities to the 1715 rising are matters for debate. Reports of drops in attendance may not have meant support for the Jacobites in a given region, simply fears of parents about potential military action, especially in schools along the Highland line. In Durness, at least, absences were reported due to parents serving with Lord Reay on the Hanoverian side.⁴⁷ The rising was the major event in the first years of the SSPCK, and a serious threat to its further development: slow growth could at least be countered by efforts on the part of members or the committee, but disruption by a rebellion was beyond its control. The '15 required the society to assess its overall position and that of the individual schools, whether they were in suitable locations and how effective they were proving. Part of this was an assessment of the teachers' conduct during the rising, and how strongly they had adhered to their pledges of loyalty to the Hanoverian establishment. Only two came in for any censure, James MacCallum in Balquhidder and, again, John Clow in Castleton of Braemar. MacCallum was later exonerated, but Clow, ironically for someone who had been so fervently presbyterian at the beginning of his tenure, read out a proclamation of the pretender in the middle of a church service. His plea that he was under pressure because he was serving in the rising's epicentre was rejected, and he was summarily dismissed.⁴⁸ The conduct of society members was also investigated, with the earl of Mar and his tenant, John Farquharson of Invercauld, being ejected from the society for their leadership and participation in the rising, respectively. Invercauld was not accepted back, even after his pardon, but the society retained his mortification of 2,500 merks from earlier in 1715.⁴⁹

The aftermath of the rising allowed the society to present it not as a sign of the schools' failure, but as a sign of lingering need in the Highlands to warrant further government support. Many of the schools whose service had been disrupted rapidly resumed operations, and those which had shut down had done so due to factors independent of the rising, the money being soon

⁴⁷ NRS, MFiLP GD95/2/2, p. 109 (3 May 1716).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 122 (7 July 1716); NRS, MFiLP GD95/1/1, pp. 298-9 (7 June 1716).

⁴⁹ NRS, MFiLP GD95/1/1, p. 290 (1 March 1716).

shifted to other establishments, from Glenelg to Mull, for example. The rising also pushed the society to undertake more work in the synod of Argyll, and to propose to the government that it was an ideal organization to enhance church and state security in the Highlands through expansion of its network. It produced a list of 100 locations for schools, including the ones currently established, and proposed larger hospital schools for the benefit of the poorest students than were discussed earlier, but its immediate ambitions were in vain as no support would be coming from the royal bounty until 1727.

IV. GAELIC

It is in this document that the society first explicitly outlined the interest in eradicating Gaelic which John Lorne Campbell, Withers and Durkacz attribute to it. The historiographical focus on the language, however, fails to appreciate the society fully as it developed at the time of its foundation, in a broader context of campaigns for moral and social reformation. This thesis has sought to shift the focus away from the language, and redirect it towards the society's corporate establishment in the hopes of tracing its development in the context of its time, and not in hindsight from the current position of Gaelic.

The way the society conceived of Gaelic did not remain static, its attitude instead shifting according to contemporary social and cultural conditions. Even with the stronger opinion presented after the rising, though not as a matter of official policy, the language never went away as an issue. A grammar proposed in the 1720s finally made its appearance in 1741, with further publications in the 1750s and a new translation of the New Testament in 1767, along with the adoption of Gaelic literacy as a subject in the schools a year earlier.⁵⁰ Lack of discussion of language in the charter allowed this flexibility, though that was perhaps an unintended side effect, the real point being to support eventual society work in foreign or colonial missions, compensating for the limitation which the SPCK in England feared from a charter of its own.⁵¹

The continued existence of Gaelic and its growth as an evangelical medium in the nineteenth century have produced among commentators a consensus of the society's failure.

⁵⁰ Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, pp. 64-8; Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, pp. 126-7.

⁵¹ Lowther Clarke, *History of the S.P.C.K.*, pp. 14, 87.

Despite the perception of a centralized attack on the language,⁵² the SSPCK still failed not only to eliminate it, but also to remove Catholicism from Scotland. For Withers and Durkacz, this was due to its ban on teaching Gaelic literacy from the outset, which, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, had already engrained the idea of a division between education and Gaelic and even fostered a disdain for Gaelic schooling.⁵³ For John Lorne Campbell, the continued existence of the language despite the assault of agencies like the SSPCK was proof enough of a Gaelic victory.⁵⁴ Prunier agrees with Campbell, adding that the presbyterians may simply have been aiming too high to fulfil their alleged objectives: all the Catholic mission had to do was to continue to maintain schools with some degree of vitality to claim victory on the educational front.⁵⁵ The number of recorded Catholic schools grew, in fact, with even a seminary functioning at Scalan, in the presbytery of Aberlour, after 1717. Prunier makes the point that Catholics and Protestants fundamentally had the same view of the necessity of education for the sake of religion, just that Catholics at first had found literacy unnecessary for worship, and were willing to accept strictly oral education. Another impact of the presbyterian pursuit of universal education may have been the development of Catholic interest in literacy education, even if for secular rather than sacred purposes.⁵⁶

John MacInnes, who offers a positive view of the society's activities if not of its achievement, admits that the teachers' success was more attenuated than its founders had hoped, lying not in the elimination of Catholicism through conversion but in the deepening of Protestantism among those who were already Protestant.⁵⁷ He also gives credit to the society for developing an interest in the Highlands in education and laying the foundation for religious tolerance—as opposed to toleration, which has a legal meaning—though in claiming it never took advantage of the penal laws, he ignores the request in 1714 to suppress the Catholic school at Glenlivet. Of the commentators, only M. G. Jones offers a look at the society's corporate structure, investigating the society more as representative of the charity school movement and not in terms of

52 Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, p. 120.

53 *Ibid.*, pp. 135-7; Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, pp. 23, 221-6; Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 197.

54 Campbell, *Gaelic in Scottish Education and Life*, p. 60.

55 Prunier, *Anti-Catholic Strategies*, p. 177.

56 *Ibid.*, pp. 138-9, 144.

57 J. MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement*, p. 244.

Gaelic or Catholicism. She agrees with MacInnes that the real impact of the society came in the long term, producing a model for future charity school organizations such as the Gaelic Schools societies, which were less hesitant to teach Gaelic literacy, though they emerged after nearly four decades of the language being taught by the SSPCK.⁵⁸

V. DEVELOPMENT BEYOND 1715

The society's true growth would have to wait until greater cooperation with the government, such as the collaboration with the committee for the royal bounty, which paid teachers extra to serve as parish catechists and assisted with the establishment of industrial schools under the second charter, of 1738, though these schools were not known to be a success.⁵⁹ The quality of the teachers was certainly mixed, but by no means was there a universal lack of commitment to the positions. David Strang, Patrick Nicolson and Alexander Moncrieff were singled out for praise, as much as John Frazer, an interim teacher at Abertarff, was criticized for his poor abilities. A. S. Cowper notes, however, that Strang fell out of favour after leaving the society's employment to preach: the presbytery of Edinburgh excommunicated him in 1736 for conducting illegal marriages, and he died in prison eight years later, though she does not specify why he was there.⁶⁰ The salaries and the expectations laid upon the teachers meant the jobs were by no means sinecures, so individual success required considerable effort.⁶¹

Despite John Lorne Campbell's insistence that the schools undermined the cultural foundations of Gaeldom, part of the society's foundation for later use of Gaelic in Protestantism was that Highlanders were eventually able to accommodate the new religious realities within traditional culture.⁶² John MacInnes concurs with Campbell's point of a cultural invasion to a degree, expressing regret for the role the society and the church played in eroding and even

58 Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 209; Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 98.

59 Jones, *Charity School Movement*, pp. 200-9; Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, pp. 69-71; Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, p. 126.

60 Cowper, ed., *SSPCK Schoolmasters*, p. 100.

61 J. MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement*, p. 241; Jones, *Charity School Movement*, p. 190.

62 See J. MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement*, especially ch. 8 on the Gaelic religious poets. Durkacz writes that a failure of the society and the church in the early eighteenth century was that it left the development of Gaelic as a gospel medium to the nineteenth-century evangelicals, but these same evangelicals were able to adjust Gaelic traditions to fit the Protestant message. *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, p. 6.

destroying elements of Highland poetry, music and celebrations which, in the twentieth century, he could see as harmless.⁶³ Buchan, in St Kilda, wrote with pride of his re-education of the natives away from tradition, and even Ruairidh Mór's 'impieties' had roots in Gaelic culture.⁶⁴ By the nineteenth century, however, the Gaels had established a bond between religion and Gaelic which defied the conception of the founders of the SSPCK. Indeed, it would be exploited by the evangelicals, a party in the church many of the founders would have condemned as schismatics. Ironically, when Gaelic literacy was finally accepted as a legitimate subject in the society's schools in the 1760s, English had become associated with economic advancement and education, and Gaelic with religion and spirituality. Furthermore, orality in the nineteenth century still assumed an importance even after Gaelic ecclesiastical works, including the Bible and sermons, began being produced on a regular basis.⁶⁵

The absolute numerical decline in Gaelic speakers in Scotland can be associated with the decline in the importance of religion. As members of the reformation societies insisted that Sunday was to be preserved from the performance of trade and business, so Gaelic was held to be the language of religion and the home, and English the language of commerce and worldly employments.⁶⁶ The use of Gaelic amongst migrant communities mirrors this dichotomy, with the language being able to generate a sense of a community in a new destination, but with English in use outside the community, in professional or school environments. The withdrawal of Gaelic, as illustrated by Charles Withers, not only came and went according to geographical regions, but also according to social situations: speakers used a different language in different encounters.⁶⁷ Even if Highlanders were unable to generate Protestant belief in their own cultural context, a development which John Carswell was hoping for, they eventually were able to accomplish the reverse, an accommodation of Gaelic within Protestantism. It is noteworthy that James Kirkwood, himself sympathetic to the use of Gaelic in a Protestant context, was in favour of the external imposition of society schools precisely in order to develop it.

63 J. MacInnes, *Evangelical Movement*, p. 54.

64 Robson, *St Kilda*, p. 59.

65 Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, pp. 126-33, on Gaelic evangelicalism in the nineteenth century.

66 Curtis and Speck, 'Societies for the Reformation of Manners: A Case Study', pp. 57-8; Durkacz, *Decline of the Celtic Languages*, pp. 6, 10.

67 Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, p. 7.

VI. CONCLUSION

Beyond its development of a future identity for Gaelic as a Protestant-orientated language, the society had an additional social role, the incorporation of charity and its expansion beyond the elites. It sought to use the authority of the establishment to stage a mission to the Highlands, most of whose content was presbyterian even if its founding documents said any Protestant could serve as a member. It represented an attempt to appeal to Scottish sentiment by expanding the ability to support a charitable venture beyond the professional and landowning classes to the nation, and, especially in marketing materials directed towards England, emphasized the idea of Britain as a Protestant stronghold. While Britain was maintaining the colonies founded earlier by England and converting native populations to Christianity, it could not risk leaving inhabitants of its own home islands as adherents to ‘popery’ for the sake of its national soul, not to mention its security from French invasion.⁶⁸

The society’s development of charity into a corporate phenomenon, not dependent on class, was only one of two parallel expansions, the second having roughly contemporaneous origins with the SSPCK. Within medieval Gaelic society, we see a limited group able to move between languages as circumstances required, both in speech and in literacy. The presence of other languages in Gaeldom, such as Latin and Scots or English, increased not just with the rise in centralized political sovereignty, but also in trade connections.⁶⁹ As the need for literacy expanded beyond the medieval learned orders, so economic links grew and began to involve more than the merchants, the clerks and, geographically, residents of the Highland border areas, meaning that communication in English became necessary for a larger segment of the Highland population.

The ultimate isolation of Gaelic within religion and community life meant that when society became more integrated and secularized, it was the final stage in the language’s overall withdrawal.⁷⁰ The physical dislocation of Gaelic-speakers since the eighteenth century has not helped, despite the development of communities in Lowland and eastern cities and towns. It is here where John Lorne Campbell’s argument has relevance, that alienation of Gaelic from the

⁶⁸ NRS, GD95/10, f. 57, p. [2].

⁶⁹ Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland*, pp. 108, 111.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 246, 249.

economy was the reason behind contemporary (in the 1940s) economic and cultural problems in the Highlands—that greater native focus on religion, with economic development directed from the outside, hampered the ability of Gaelic society to dictate its own growth.⁷¹ Where today's efforts to resolve these historical problems of language, culture and economy are headed lies outside the remit of this paper, but where, three centuries ago, Gaelic found difficulty in engaging with the increasingly popular technology of printing, modern technologies are allowing it to achieve more genuine and direct exposure to more people than could have been achieved in the nineteenth century.

The legacy of the society lies in the idea of the moral and religious responsibility of Lowland agencies for the well-being of Highlanders. As the reformation societies had their Scottish antecedents, and so were operating in a specifically Scottish context, so the SSPCK, in its own advocacy of reformation, presaged the Enlightenment and the concept of improvement. The society had at its heart the idea of the Highlanders' improvability, provided they were given the right tools. It assumed the task of giving them these tools, which included English literacy, but did not necessarily preclude the use of Gaelic. It was the extension of the society's policies which resulted in Gaelic's separation from education, and hence its subsequent withdrawal in tandem with religion, but for a period in the nineteenth century, Gaelic paradoxically experienced a new period of vitality through its religious and domestic orientation.

⁷¹ Campbell, *Gaelic in Scottish Education and Life*, pp. 58-60.

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