

# Alexander Duff

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[ 0 : 00 ] Now folks, I must confess that I've got mixed feelings about this paper. When I got the invitation to speak on the subject, I was very pleased, because the subject was one that attracted me, and I had read something about Duff and realised that this was somebody that I'd like to study more about, and I was pleased because I thought that would give me the opportunity of studying more of his life.

But on the other hand, I feel that I haven't done the reading that ought to have been done. And as you know, I had a heavy burden thrust on me at the assembly that I didn't expect, and I haven't been able to do the reading that I intended to do for this paper.

On the other hand, that hasn't stopped me from writing 16 pages. And I had to go over it and weed out redundant verbiage. I only find a page and a quarter of it.

I hope that you agree at the end that there was no more reading that needed done. I'm afraid, however, you might not agree on that one. I'm not going to say when I'm quoting and ending quotes into a...

You'll hear by the tone of voice, I think, when I am, and if not, you'll recognise the polished style of the quotes as distinct from the rough syntax of my own writing.

[ 1 : 15 ] And when it takes 52 minutes to go through this at a fair gallop, I'll just start. As the title suggests, the story of Duff is closely interwoven with the narrative of the developing Scottish interest in missionary work.

What we therefore intend to do, firstly, is to give a brief factual account of Duff's life, concentrating especially on his work in Scotland. Then we will look at the forces which made Duff what he was, and see how typical he was of the developing interest in foreign missions at that time.

Finally, we will seek to assess what contribution Duff made to the maintenance and extension of that missionary concern. Firstly, we have a brief factual narrative of Duff's life.

Alexander Duff was born in the parish of Newland, Perthshire, on 25th April, 1886, the son of a farmer, James Duff, and of his wife, Jean Rattray.

His formal secular education was presided over first by the parish schoolmaster of his day, then by a Mr MacDougall who kept the school at Kirk Michael, and from the age of 13 by Mr Monker, rector of the then-famous parish grammar school.

[ 2 : 27 ] His progress there in Latin and Greek was such as to make him Dutch of the school. In 1821, Duff went to St Andrews University, where he acquitted himself with distinction, and gained prizes in Greek, Latin, logic, and natural philosophy.

In 1823, Duff was exposed to an influence which was to shape in the most marked way his future outlook, the coming to St Andrews from Glasgow of Dr Thomas Chalmers as professor of moral philosophy.

Duff's young spiritual life, which had been swundering into formalism, was quickened with that burning enthusiasm which glowed the bright earth to his dying day. You have recognised the excuse of quotation.

This renewed spiritual life showed itself in two practical ways. Firstly, with a group of like-minded friends, he founded the Students Missionary Society, which had as its aim to study the spiritual needs of the world.

Duff served as its librarian. This interest in missions was spread by Chalmers, in whose home the students met such missionaries as Dr Marshall of Serenport and Robert Morrison of China.

[ 3 : 32 ] Secondly, his hero found practical expression in Sabbath school work in the town. Duff writes to Chalmers, who by this time had left for Edinburgh, telling how the missionary movement had been no ephemeral effervescence, and he goes on, Sabbath schools have now almost

overtaken the whole population.

Every Christian must rejoice that the doctrine of the cross is now regularly and systematically taught to nearly all children of St Andrews. He himself took a Bible class for boys between 10 and 11 a.m. and another for girls between 4 and 6 p.m. each Lord's Day. In the spring of 1829, Alexander Duff was licensed by the Presbytery of St Andrews. Since 1824, the Church of Scotland had been formulating plans for the founding of an educational institute in Calcutta.

Duff was approached by the committee to undertake the work and after prolonged consideration accepted the offer. Chalmers presided at his ordination in St George's Edinburgh on 12 August 1829, and Duff and his young bride left from Leith on 19 September.

It was not till 27 May 1830 that they reached Calcutta, having been shipwrecked with the loss of all their goods near Cape Town and then again in the mouth of the Hooghly River. On arriving there, he gave himself to a short period of intensive inspection of existing work.

[ 4 : 52 ] The main faults in educational efforts in India prior to this were, in Duff's opinion, twofold. They were either conducted in the vernacular or in a purely secular context. Duff's aim was to lay the foundation of a system of education which might ultimately embrace all the branches ordinarily taught in the higher schools and colleges of Christian Europe with an inseparable combination with the Christian faith and its doctrines, precepts and evidences with a view to the practical regulation of life and conduct.

Instruction was to be based on the English language. The college was opened on 13 July 1830 and, despite some opposition, quickly flourished. Student pupils were being turned away and Duff's approach was becoming the pattern for others to follow.

Additional staff arrived from Scotland and the permanent building was constructed in a prominent place in the north of the city. Public lectures and the evidences of Christianity were also given weekly and this resulted in the conversion and baptism of four prominent Hindus.

During his time in India Duff's influence in all segments of Calcutta society was immense. Through his presentations to the Governor General on educational and moral matters through the Calcutta Christian Observer and later the Calcutta Review of which he was a founder and editor and through his dealings with other Christian agencies at work in the area.

But his health did not stand the strain imposed by these varied labours and in July 1834 he left India so weak as to be, it seemed, on the point of death. Aided by a long sea journey he recovered from his sickness and arrived in the Clyde Estuary on a cold December day in 1834.

[ 6 : 35 ] But it was the coldness of the church's welcome that appalled him. Only when the committee called him to account for addressing meetings privately arranged that his powerful oratory and sincere conviction gained for him what he sought that full discretion should be allowed him to adopt what course might seem best for awakening an interest in the church's mission.

It was an unfruitful field which he found. When the General Assembly in 1825 ordained that a collection be taken for the Indian mission less than 50 congregations responded out of over a thousand.

In 1831 it was regarded a major triumph that Edinburgh Presbytery consented to of an annual collection made. To such a situation Duff devoted himself with vigour despite bodily weakness rousing interest and stimulating giving wherever he went from London to Kirkwall.

Not least was the impact he made with a speech to the 1835 General Assembly which lasted close on three hours. As a result of this a deliverance was carried recommending all Presbytery to initiate a Presbyterial Association to create in each congregation an agency for prayer and the propagation of intelligence regarding the evangelisation of the world.

His work for the moment completed in Scotland left again for India in the autumn of 1839. On his return journey he took the opportunity of visiting the Scottish missions in Bombay and Madras before resuming his college work at Calcutta.

[ 8 : 07 ] There he started classes on Sunday mornings for men who were employed as clerks all week and kept in touch with former pupils through evening lectures. The plight of Hindu women concerned him and he was active both in providing education for them and in pleading for loss for their protection.

Some outstations were opened under his direction and converts were baptised. At the disruption all the male missionaries adhered to the free church but they were deprived of the college building.

Through the liberality of various benefactors a new session was begun in rented property providentially made available until new premises were erected on an adjoining site. On Chalmers' death in 1847 Duff declined the opportunity of becoming principal of new college but he agreed to return temporarily to Scotland to consolidate the work of missionary organisation to which he had formally given himself.

Before doing so he journeyed widely in India and acquired an extensive knowledge of the varied missionary efforts being conducted there. By May 1850 he was once more in Edinburgh eager to begin his new crusade.

[ 9 : 20 ] Once again he travelled constantly throughout the country seeking to organise associations in every congregation. in three and a half years of incessant work he established about 500 congregational missionary associations.

There were other activities as well. He visited other parts of the British Isles made submissions to the government and Indian affairs and occupied the moderator's chair of the 1851 assembly. In response to pressing invitations he visited the United States and Canada where he put the case for foreign missions with his accustomed vigour, oratory and success. No such man has visited us since the days of Whitfield was the popular opinion of him.

However, his strenuous exertions and the cause of missions had shattered his health and for over a year he had to leave his work seeking refreshment in easy travel and warmer climates going afar afield of southern Europe and the Middle East.

It was not till October 1855 that he sailed from Leith on his third and final visit to India. The work there continued along the lines already laid down but there were special incidents too.

[ 10 : 31 ] In 1857 the Kolkata missionaries emerged unscathed from the destruction of the Indian mutiny. A new college building was erected as the fruit of his financial labours while on furlough. He helped to draw up the constitution for the University of Kolkata.

Further attention was directed to the extension of female education to the establishment of outstations and to presentations to the government on pressing moral and social issues. In 1863 illness threatened to take his life and despite a sea voyage to China it was obvious that ill health had brought his days in India to an end.

He left for the last time on Saturday 20th December 1863. His journey took him home via South Africa where he visited and preached in such places as Lugdale Burnsell and King Williamstown. On his return Duff assumed the convenership of the Foreign Missions Committee. This involved him in building up the internal organisation which he had done so much to establish and new work was also instituted in the foreign field.

The establishment of a missionary professorship had long been a hope which he cherished. By 1867 10,000 pounds had been raised for such an object and the assembly of that year appointed him to the post.

[ 11 : 52 ] So in this closing part of his life his duties consisted of a strenuous round of consultations and committees of lecturing on missions and addressing assemblies of preaching for different evangelical agencies and advising governments on Indian affairs.

Some weeks in the summer he would spend in rural retreats or on quiet continental sewers off the beaten track. In church matters he was a unionist but his conciliatory spirit led him to be appointed moderator for the second time in 1873.

In May 1876 he fell and injured himself in his study and though he struggled on this accident left its mark on him. He died on 12th February 1878 at the age of 72 and was laid to rest in Green Cemetery, Edinburgh.

Thus ended the earthly career of one whose supreme aim was the promotion and practice of foreign missions. We now turn to the second section of our study in which we look at some of the factors which gave rise to the developing missionary movement and we ask what relation Duff had to these influentias.

The line we wish to follow is to show that Duff was an outstanding example of what this rising missionary interest produced. In his early life the forces which affected Scotland as a whole can be seen in miniature in him.

[ 13 : 23 ] In tracing these influences I'd like to look at two main areas the secular and the spiritual. First of all we look at the secular influences which contributed to the missionary movement.

Scotland in the 18th century and especially in the latter part of it underwent a transformation in its social and economic life through the agrarian revolution and the developing industrial revolution. The agrarian revolution or the improving movement had various aspects. It involved the abolishing of the run rig system and of the division between infield and outfield.

New crops such as artificial grasses or clover potatoes and turnips were introduced. A scientific rotation of crops was initiated. The quality of the stock was raised and new implements were employed.

The whole system of land tenure was overhauled. These changes took place over a period of time and advanced more quickly in some parts of the country than in others.

[14:33] A comparison of the statistical accounts of 1791 and 1839 suggests that Duff would be intimately acquainted with the spirit of improvement in the parish of Moulin.

According to the 1791 account for example the run rig system had not yet been fully abolished and the ploughs were small clumsy four horse ones.

Turnips had not yet been introduced and enclosures were few there was considerable poverty. The minister of the time Alexander Stuart analyses the expenses of a typical family and he goes into all the intimate and pathetic details of their poverty.

Here's one item man's clothing coat at five and ninepence vest at two and fourpence the lining of the coat and vest and the back of the latter made out of the wife's old clothes.

The total estimated expenditure annually was £17.01 and threepence that's for a family of two parents and four children £17.01 while the maximum annual income envisaged was only £15.11 so that was a measure of their poverty so the minister couldn't see how the families actually lived because their income did not come up to the expected rate of expenditure.

[15:55] That was in 1791. The picture of 1839 however is of buoyant optimism. Two horse ploughs and iron drill harrows are used a four or five crop rotation system is employed turnips are grown for feeding sheep there is experimentation in types of seed and in stock raising leases are from 11 to 15 years and generally renewed.

Arable land has increased by 37% and the planted woodland has been increased too. The account concludes as matters now are everything bears the mark of intelligence industry and prosperity.

The aspect of the parish is completely altered. Trade of every kind is keeping pace with the other improvements. It is true that they were bothered by ill-clad beggars from the manufacturing towns which was also a sign of the times.

But even the element of exaggeration in this analysis points to the sense of prosperity and optimism which was prevailing. Duff when he was growing up breathed the atmosphere of improvement.

This spirit of improvement found expression overseas in the building of the empire. The empire being built by the East India Company seems to have captured people's imaginations.

[17:10] The way in which the spread of civilisation and enlightenment by the soldiers and administrators of the empire is described great on the modern ear but it is clear that already the white man's burden is being carried.

The improvement of the natives was a prominent feature of the East India Company charter of 1813. In that year the court of directors ordained that annually at least 10,000 pounds should be set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences amongst the inhabitants of the British territories of India.

Education was felt to be a significant improving instrument in the establishing of Western civilisation. There was progress too in educational method.

In 1813 Dr. John Ingalls, Minister of Old Grey Friars Church Edinburgh, suggested the establishment of a Sabbath school in each parish in Edinburgh. But it was then discovered that many of the boys could not read.

This resulted in the setting up of the Edinburgh Sessional School in which some of the principals of Lancaster and Bell were adopted. About 1820 this came under the supervision of John Wood whose aim was to interest no less than to task, to make the pupils understand what he is doing no less than to exact from him its performance, to speak to him and by all means to encourage him to speak in a natural language which he understands, rather than in irksome technicalities which the pedant might approve.

[18:52] Thus he was pleased when a boy described an ox as a muckle coo, instead of as a ruminant quadruped, as some teachers would have wished. This system was in marked contrast to

the method of rote learning enforced by corporal punishment, which was the basic routine of many schools of that time.

Such educational influences Duff imbibed. The first act of his rector at Perth grammar school was to call the whole of the school together and publicly throw his predecessors' pauses into the tea, asking why the generous youths entrusted to him should be treated as savages.

That event had a lasting impression on Duff's mind. Moreover, he spent some time prior to his leaving for India, inspecting the best conducted schools in Edinburgh, including Wood's Sessional School.

Undoubtedly, the impact of this more enlightened approach to education showed itself in the way in which the Calcutta Institute was organised. It would be not too much to say that Duff saw this type of education as an enlightening and elevating medium.

And this belief led to the establishing of the Indian mission in the particular form which it bore. The question now is, to what extent did these secular influences of improvement and enlightenment contribute to the rise of missionary interest?

[ 20 : 19 ] The answer is that undoubtedly economic, social and political factors created a climate in which, quite apart from evangelical fervour, a sense of responsibility for the enlightenment of the heathen grew.

This can be seen in the measure of moderate support, that's moderate with a capital M of course, of moderate support which there was for the start of mission which was established in Calcutta. The view that education was an instrument of improvement had deep roots.

As far back as 6 January 1755, Principal Robertson, the leader of the moderates, preached a sermon on behalf of the SSPCK and spoke of how the attainments and knowledge of the Christian nations might become noble instruments in the hand of God for preparing the world to receive the gospel.

When in 1796 the Assembly considered three overtures on the subject of foreign missions, particularly seeking support for the Scottish and Glasgow missionary societies which had been formed earlier that year, the same view of educational influences was also advanced.

George Hamilton, the minister of Gladsmuir said, philosophy and learning must in the nature of things take precedence over the preaching of the gospel. At that stage Hamilton was on the side of those who opposed missions and his viewpoint won the day.

[ 21 : 39 ] Duff could never have agreed with him, but it is not impossible to see how Duff's educational outlook could have met with the support of those who accepted Hamilton's victim.

When the mission in Bengal did start, there were two who were particularly concerned with its origin and nature. First of all there was Dr John Ingalls, whose educational interest we have already mentioned.

Preaching at the annual meeting of the SSPCK in 1818, he expressed the view that non-Christians were comparatively unenlightened in respect of human science and all the arts of civilised life.

A man of an understanding mind, habituated to thought and reflection, has an advantage over others for estimating both the evidence of Christian doctrine and its accommodation to human wants and necessities.

Schools are calculated to lay a foundation for the success of all other means which may be employed for the universal diffusion of the gospel. Written inside the front cover of the Missions Committee Minute Book by Alexander Brunton was the statement that this sermon by Dr Ingalls was the first germ of the mission and he trusted that no ungenerous attempt will ever be made to deny that he alone was the author.

[ 22 : 58 ] The second influence we mention here was Dr James Bryce. When the charter of the East India Company was renewed in 1813, provision was made for presbyterial chaplaincies to serve Scottish people in India.

Bryce was the first presbyterian chaplain in Calcutta. When he was slighted by the Anglican bishop there, he vindicated the name of presbyterianism by erecting a spire on St Andrew's Church, Calcutta, higher than the one on the Anglican Cathedral.

Some years later, in the form of a memorial to the General Assembly from St Andrew's Kirk Session, he proposed the establishment of a Scottish college in Calcutta. It was this idea, refined and amplified by Dr Ingalls, which resulted in the establishment of the Calcutta Institute.

What is striking then is the measure of moderate influence in the mission project. Some ideas of the moderates, Robertson and Hamilton, were taken up, modified and applied. Dr Ingalls himself, the chief mover of the scheme and the convener of the committee until his death in 1834, is described as sometime leader of the moderate party. His statement that little could be expected from mere preaching to an uneducated barbarous people would surely not be found on the lips of an evangelical. Alexander Brunton, who served as convener from 1834 to 1847, did not espouse the free church cause of the disruption, and that must say at least something about his ecclesiastical outlook.

James Bryce, who had a measure of influence in the matter, was a moderate, who did not think that the heathen were necessarily lost anyway. One writer says, like high church Anglicans, moderate Presbyterians attached great importance to the creation of the Christian establishment in India, as providing a suitable means for the prosecution of a mission. Educational work clearly fitted in with such an outlook. It is this which makes us conclude that secular influences played some part in the rise of the missionary movement, especially in the form in which it took. Yet, though the formulation, and to some extent the direction of this work, was participated in by moderates, the practice of missions was left to evangelicals. For that reason, we must say that secular forces do not explain the movement. Spiritual forces were predominant. Missionary work was on the fringe of modern thinking. Evangelical fervour was required to make it a reality. In the outlook of evangelicals, it occupied a central place. Hence, we look now at the rising tide of evangelicalism, which made missionary interest effective. These are the spiritual influences then, as we've looked already at the secular influences.

[ 25 : 54 ] And once again, we can see these spiritual influences illustrated in the life and circumstances of Duff himself. Here we have to retell the well-known story of Charles Simeon's visit to the parish of Moulin.

The minister there at the time was Alexander Stuart. One Sabbath prior to preaching, he said to his congregation, My brethren, I am bound in truth and faithfulness to tell you that I feel myself to be in great ignorance and much blindness on the subject of vital religion. I feel like one groping in the dark for light, and as yet I have found none. But I think it right to tell you that if God in mercy will give me any measure of the true light, shall I impart the same to you. Simeon's visit provided that light. On Friday 24th June 1796, he was at Dunkeld, intending to visit the Pass of Killikankie and return that same day to Dunkeld. However, feeling unwell, he did not leave to the following day. Calling at the manse in Moulin, he was prevailed upon to pass the weekend there and to take part in their communion services. His time there included a personal talk with the minister on the Sabbath night. Later, Stuart wrote to Simeon, I found from your conversation, your prayers, preaching, and particularly from our short interview in your bedroom, more of religious impression and more of spiritual life and ardour infused into my soul than ever I was conscious of before. Simeon's own comment about Stuart is, from this moment, he changed the strain of his preaching, determining to know nothing among his people but Jesus Christ and him crucified.

[ 27 : 44 ] Some years later, a time of spiritual awakening came over the parish and numbers of families, including Dove's parents, were influenced by the movement. The significance of this event is twofold. Firstly, it shows a typical case of the quickening of spiritual life which was going on at the time. Individuals brought from darkness to light and made instrumental in bringing others to that experience. The cold formalism of moderatism, with its attachment to deism, is reteetering before the advancing tide of evangelical words, with its fervent advocacy of the doctrines of grace.

That may have sounded like a quotation, but it wasn't. Secondly, it indicates that the intertwining of Scottish and English religious life, which was typical of the developing missionary movement. South of the border, the Baptist Missionary Society had been formed, and the London Missionary Society too. Of the latter, W.L. Matheson says, an enterprise which united men of all denominations for so novel and laudable a purpose, had a most electrifying effect on the Christians of the North. And I take it that North here means Scotland. Such efforts had a two-way influence. Undoubtedly, the founding of the LMS, the London Missionary Society, encouraged the founding of the Scottish Missionary Society and the Glasgow Missionary Society in the following year, which in turn stimulated interest throughout the country and led to the matter being discussed at the 1796 Assembly.

On the other hand, many Scots were closely associated with the English societies. David Bogues, who trained missionaries at his Gosport Seminary, was the son of a Berwickshire Laird.

[ 29 : 41 ] Nathaniel Forsyth, an LMS missionary to Bengal, was from Dumfriesshire. John Mack and John Leachman of Seram Foer College were Scottish. This is what is exemplified in the conversion of a Scottish Presbyterian through the agency of an Anglican Evangelical.

This blossoming force of spiritual life in Scotland, aided and abetted by its contacts with English Evangelicalism, was the main force which shaped and developed the missionary movement in its earliest stages.

Now, I'm going to miss out the part here. There was this other influence that we mentioned on Duff. When he went to St Andrew's University, his spiritual life was slumbering into mere formalism. It was here that he came in touch with the second great spiritual force which contributed so markedly to the rise and development of the missionary movement. Thomas Chalmers, who had himself known the same transformation that characterised Dr Stuart of Moulin, was appointed Professor of Moral Philosophy there in 1823.

His impact on missions is also exemplified in Duff's own experience. Chalmers' advocacy of foreign missions in St Andrews, where he became President of the Town Missionary Association, had three results.

[ 31 : 02 ] Firstly, there was the impact on the town. The attendances at the missionary society greatly increased. Many of the most influential townspeople attended.

Old prejudice was softened, and a new respect for and attachment to Evangelical Christianity in many cases created. Secondly, in the university, the status of missions in the students' thinking was greatly enhanced.

In 1823-24, the Divinity Students Missionary Association had been formed. This was followed in the ensuing year by one among the students of the Arts Faculty, the knowledge of Chalmers' approval for such a venture being a significant factor in its inception.

These two societies were then united, and about a third of all the students became active in its support. Nevertheless, at first, the use of college property for their meetings was denied them, because their meetings were considered as thoroughly unacademical, or too puritanical and methodistical.

By 1825-26, Chalmers' powerful advocacy of missions had changed the climate of opinion, and a fair measure of support was given to the society by the professors themselves.

[ 32 : 13 ] Thirdly, there was the recruitment of personnel. Several students were led, under the influence of Chalmers and of each other, to dedicate themselves to missionary service.

Robert Nisbet, John Adam, W.S. Mackay, David Ewart, and Alexander Duff, all devoted themselves to Indian missions. John Erkert, who appeared to be the most jealous of them all, would also have gone to the mission field had his life been spared.

This blossoming evangelical life in general, and the advocacy of the mission caused by Chalmers in particular, made their impact on Duff, and produced the first missionary of the Church of Scotland. The forces which made their impact on him were the same as made the movement in general. Whatever links the mission had with moderatism, in its origin, formulation, or direction, in its operation, the missionary movement owed nothing to moderatism.

The spirit which pervaded it was the fervour of the rising tide of evangelicalism. When the disruption came, it was with the free church that all the ordained missionaries cited, thus giving proof of the warmly evangelical faith which motivated their labours.

[ 33 : 30 ] The third and final section, which we deal with, asks, what stimulus did Duff contribute to the ongoing development of missionary interest in Scotland?

Here there are various aspects of his work in Scotland of which we must give some kind of assessment. When we look at the various positions which he occupied, we see him as the organiser of support, as the convener of the missions committee, and as professor of evangelistic theology.

We'll look at each of these in turn. To see the influence of Duff as organiser, we focus attention on his second furlough when, from 1850 to 1854, he gave himself to the extension of the system of congregational associations which he had formed during his first furlough.

Since the disruption, the total home giving for foreign missions had fluctuated greatly. Here we'll skip the figures. For the moment, firstly, there were two problems that confronted Duff.

Firstly, the low level of givings, about 9,000 per year. Duff wanted 30,000 as the annual minimum. Secondly, there was the irregular nature of the giving.

[ 34 : 45 ] It was based on a one-off annual collection. Before coming from India, Duff had a clear idea of what ought to be done. He wanted to substitute regular weekly subscriptions for the annual collections as the only stable and productive and becoming source of supply for a great and permanent undertaking.

Cut me off, he said, a county or a synod in which to give fair trial to the new experiment. Occasional addresses and appeals go for nothing. I should like to see a living machinery established as a specimen somewhere.

In the event, the assembly did not permit a weekly collection as he desired, but conceded a quarterly association in every congregation. What success did Duff's efforts have?

Well, basically, they didn't raise all that much more money, but the givings became much more stable than they had in former years, and the majority of the givings were done through these congregational associations.

However, the real contribution that Duff's organising policy made to missionary work is not to be seen in financial terms. The association was a means of disseminating information as well as gathering finance, and in the area of spreading information about the work, this organisation made a significant impact.

[ 36 : 05 ] Next, we look at Duff as convener of the missions committee. Thomas Smith, who had been a fellow missionary of Duff in Calcutta, served on the committee as his assistant.

He speaks of the zeal and breadth of vision with which Duff approached his task. Duff's aim was to superintend the operations of the mission, to cheer and sustain the missionaries themselves, and to arouse and regulate the missionary spirit in the church at home.

Many who attended the monthly meetings felt refreshed and revived by his missionary enthusiasm. At the same time, he did not always carry everyone with him, nor could he appreciate that others could see matters from a different point of view.

It stands to reason that such a dominant character as Duff would not understand the nature of committee rule and would have grave failings as a convener. Some developments took place during Duff's convenership.

A missionary society working in Lebanon came under the direction of the free church, and similarly the RP mission work in the New Hebrides, passed to the free church at the Union of 1876. In no way can these happenings be attributed to the influence of Duff himself.

[ 37 : 15 ] But there were two developments in which Duff's personal relationships with the parties involved played a significant part. In one case, the new work came through a contact which Duff had made in the course of his visit to South Africa in 1864.

His contact was a Mr. Allison who had left the Wesleyans because of his change to Triinal views. The fruit of this contact was the transfer of Mr. Allison's Mipolweni mission in Natal to the free church.

The roots of the second case went further back. In 1854, when Duff was at Malvern, recovering from illness after his American visit, he made the acquaintance of the Earl and Countess of Aberdeen.

In 1864, Lord Aberdeen died and his second son was killed shortly thereafter by the accidental discharge of a rifle. This boy had, as his ambition, to head a missionary settlement in Africa.

The bereaved family, in memory of the deceased, contributed £6,000 to endow the Gordon mission in Natal, which, because of their contact with Duff, came under free church supervision.

[ 38 : 20 ] Now we'll skip another bit. Overall, what Duff contributed through his convenership was firstly, no little organising ability, and secondly, and most importantly, an immense stimulating force which overflowed to others and encouraged them to action.

But I think it's better to say that it was not Duff the convener who made the impact, but Duff the man. Now thirdly, we look at Duff, the professor of evangelistic theology.

Duff's desire for college teaching on missionary endeavour goes back to his own experience as a student. When passing through the theological curriculum of St Andrews, I was struck markedly with the circumstances that throughout the whole course of the curriculum of four years, not one single allusion was ever made to the subject of the world's evangelisation, the subject which constitutes the chief end of the Christian church on earth.

Duff first expressed his desire for a missionary professorship in 1844, and he made several references to this in his second furlough, both in Scotland and in the United States.

But it was not till 1867 when £10,000 had been donated to endow the chair, and when 54 out of 72 presbyters had approved the matter, that Duff was finally appointed.

[ 39 : 42 ] Besides the establishment of a chair in missions, Duff wished to see also a missionary institute for giving detailed instruction in specifically missionary subjects, such as the geography, history, ethnology, mythology, languages, etc., of the non-Christian world.

He wished also to see a scholarly review of missions, but in this too, Duff could not repeat in Scotland his successes in India. As professor, Duff taught each year in Edinburgh in November and December, in Glasgow in January and February, and in Aberdeen in March.

From a statement made by him for a quinquennial visit of New College in 1871, we get some idea of what he intended to cover in his courses. In November and December, the first year students met three times a week for one hour, and the fourth year students met twice a week also for an hour.

The first set of lectures dealt with the biblical basis of missions, mission field in general, and in India in particular, and topics such as the training of missionaries and modes of missionary labour.

The second set of lectures covered the successive developments of the scheme of redemption, the inauguration of the kingdom of heaven, the propagation of the gospel in apostolic times, modern missionaries, missions and government in India, the preeminent privilege of Britain in regard to missionary enterprise, and so on.

[ 41 : 05 ] Reaction to his lectures varied. Dr. Wilson of Abernethy says, many of us felt the need of something to counteract the tendency to make our theological training an affair of the intellect exclusively, and the lectures of the famous missionary seemed exactly to meet that need.

Here were intellect, heart and imagination, all fused by a spirit of red-hot missionary zeal. William Roberts and Nicol, on the other hand, found Duff curiously uninspiring, and Henry Drummond used to occupy himself with some modern novel while old man was pouring out his soul over the heathen.

A Norwegian scholar has written a lengthy scholarly account of missionary education in theological faculties, and gives full and sympathetic recognition of Duff or to Duff.

He concludes that the high hopes entertained by the friends of the missionary professorship were not fulfilled. The following are the reasons he gives for this non-success. Firstly, Duff had passed the prime of life and was in broken health.

The student saw a man in extreme old age, which takes me back to my old student days. There was a couple of them then. He was given to excessive lengthiness of speech.

[ 42 : 27 ] Duff, even those who enjoyed his lectures speak of a somewhat redundant verbiage, which some folks who write and speak about Duff follow something as well. It is doubtful if his scheme of lectures was ever actually delivered.

Drummond tells of him beginning his course with the eternal decrees of God and having to break it off with the early church. He was out of touch with his students. To them, biblical criticism was a central issue.

To Duff, it was the mischievous questionings of carnal reason. Again, the burden laid on Duff was excessive. He was still convener of the committee and his work in the three colleges required his being away from home for three months each year.

He was, as he said himself, a peripatetic of a somewhat novel and nondescript school. Practical arrangements were unsatisfactory. Although he did achieve a measure of acceptance for his new subject, he was not given the hours that he felt he required, nor, although his classes were compulsory, were they made the subject of examination as he wished.

Finally, the chair was acknowledged as very much a personal one and an experiment. And so, from the start, it did not imply any recognition of the subject of missions as an integral part of theological education.

[ 43 : 46 ] Now, that was the criticism of this Norwegian school. To me, this criticism places a little too much emphasis on the opinion of his students who are not always in the best position to judge a professor's work.

But he seems, in the whole, to be sympathetic, accurate, and fair. To put this assessment briefly and in perspective, non-success came from serious. Firstly, Duff's own feelings.

The deficiency that came from his peculiar turn of mind and from his advanced stage in life.

Secondly, the failure to initiate all that Duff wished. Such a professorship given to another missionary with Duff as head of a missionary institute and editor of a missionary review might have

had a significant and lasting impact.

And certainly, the tide was turning against Duff's vigorous evangelicalism. The fact that a student read a novel in the face of Duff's oracle says more about the student than about the professor. Once again, I think we have to conclude that his professorship did not make the contribution to missionary interest that was desired. Moreover, what impact was made came through his own passionate commitment to his subject.

[ 45 : 01 ] It was Duff, the man, not Duff, the professor, who was influential. Hence, we move away from the positions which Duff occupied and we look, you'll be glad to know, in conclusion, at the man himself.

Duff had enormous gifts of mind and heart. Of his intellectual standing, there can be no doubt. The prizes which he carried off at university, his ability to master subjects and see their essential features at a glance, his repetitive memory, these leave us in no doubt as to his intellectual ability. But wedded to this was his strongly emotional nature. He was a Highland Scot. His passions and imagination were nurtured by the vivid poetry of Dougal Baccan, the catechist in Rannoch. As a boy, the romantic streakingum was fed by the stories of the cloud of witnesses and his imagination stimulated by pictures of Jagannath.

[ 46 : 03 ] Is that right? Do you recognize the name? No, it's an Indian name. Anyway, no matter. By Jagannath or other seethon idols. He was a visionary. When he left home for the first time, he was terrified by a vivid dream of the great white throne and of the human race passing before it for judgment.

The following year as he lay in the banks of a stream, he had a vision of something shining in the distance, a brightness surpassing the light of the sun.

By and by from the great light there seemed to approach him a magnificent chariot of gold studded with gems drawn by fiery horses. The glory overawed him.

At last the heavenly chariot reached his side and from its open window the almighty God looked out and addressed him in the mildest tones the words Come up hither I have work for thee to do.

This incident remained vividly in his mind and shortly before his death he repeated it to his grandson. It was little wonder that such a man was by nature passionate, enthusiastic and vigorous in all he did or that when he espoused the cause his heart was entirely yielded to it.

[ 47 : 19 ] This vigor and enthusiasm come out in small things. It is running up the stairs in the Kolkata Institute three at a time. It is vice-like handshake. It is saying to the convener of the foreign missions committee I need at least two or three hours to present my case in the assembly.

He saw the cause as a battle to be engaged in. Gallantry and heroism are in the forefront of his thoughts. He sees himself as a soldier in the battle.

Here is a sample of a speech he made to the assembly when ill health had caused him to retire from the field. If this assembly will not help in getting the men who shall go forth to work if the supplies are exhausted if they are not to be found if the church is obliged to confess to the foreign missions committee that they are not to be had and that therefore one or more of our mission stations must be abandoned if this is to be formally acknowledged and the proclamation is to be that if we can no longer get men to go forth to work we must be satisfied to get men to go forth as witnesses or martyrs ready to die and then dying to bear testimony to the grandeur of the missionary enterprise.

If such is to be the announcement issued this night and if I know my own heart I will be the first to offer my services ready to start and without delay ready like a celebrated countryman of our own who when told by the Secretary of State that his services were wanted by the Queen in a desperate crisis of affairs in India and was asked when he could be ready to go was the promptness of a loyal soldier answered tomorrow and on the morrow he was off.

So turning to the moderator let it be authoritatively announced by you sir from that chair this night that workers are not to be found and that martyrs henceforth will suffice and then God helping me I am ready to make the same reply as the noble soldier who now sleeps with his fathers and to say I will be off tomorrow.

[ 49 : 24 ] It was this unique combination of heart and mind possessed by the great captain and refined by his spirit which made his oratory what it was impassioned vivid captivating here's another abbreviated example in the days of yore though unable to sing myself I was wont to listen to the poems of Ossian and to make and to many of those melodies that were called Jacobite songs roving in the days of my youth over the heathery heights or climbing the craggy steeps of my native

land or lying down to enjoy the music of the roaring waterfalls I was wont to admire the heroic spirit which they breathed and they became so astamped in memory that I have carried them with me over more than half the world.

Then he goes on to cite a Jacobite ballad and he asks are these the visions of romance the dreams of Pointean song O let that rush of youthful warriors from Bracken Bush and Glen that rallied round the standard of Glenfinnan let the gory beds and cold grassy winding sheets of bleak Culloden Muir bear testimony to the reality and the intensity of loyalty to an earthly prince and shall a highland father and mother give up all their children as a homage to an earthly loyalty and shall I be told that in the churches of Christ in the free church of Scotland fathers and mothers will begrudge their children to him who is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

There we have thus oratory verbose but at the same time vivid with the fire and imagination of the Celtic temperament and a naked emotion which tugs even at a lowlander's heart but all of it dedicated to his Lord and Master it is little wonder that such passion should be the influence in public and in private which contributed so much to the rise of the missionary movement in Scotland. We give one or two examples of this influence. In regard to missionary personnel Kenneth S. MacDonald and hearing Duff in Aberdeen resolved to dedicate himself to mission work and finally became a colleague of Duff in the Calcutta Institute.

Stephen Hislop of Nagpur entered missionary service under the influence of Duff's book *Missions the Chief End of the Christian Church*. Thomas Smith states that beside himself the following were led to missionary service under Duff's influence.

[ 51 : 56 ] MacDonald of Calcutta that is the son of Dr. MacDonald Ferrantosh Anderson Johnson and Braidwood of Madras and Mitchell of Bombay. George Smith records the reaction of Dr.

William Stimmington to Duff's speaking. Had this day the unspeakable satisfaction and delight of hearing Dr. Duff advocate the General Assembly's scheme for Christianising India.

His statements are clear, his reasoning sound, and his eloquence are passing anything I ever heard. Notwithstanding a weak frame and a bad voice, his appeals are most impassioned and thrilling.

He touches the springs of emotion, lays down the path of duty with unceremonious fidelity, and rebukes the apathy and niggardliness of professing Christians with fearless independence.

Thus stimulated, three months later, Dr. Simington laid the basis for the Reformed Presbyterian mission work in the New Hebrides. Wherever he went throughout Scotland, south of the border or across the sea, people were roused the missionary concern by Duff's impassioned presentation of the missionary cause.

[ 53 : 08 ] That's the unique contribution he made to the development of the missionary movement in Scotland. His voice is now silent. His ornate style and verbosity in writing have meant that the few works that he actually did write and his speeches have not been republished to any great extent.

The main biography of his life by Dr. George Smith is not currently available. Thus it may seem as if he will be silent forever. Yet his life and thought should not be allowed to slip forever from the church's memory.

A new historical biography of his life, a fresh analysis of his educational approach to missions, an assessment of his method of congregational missionary associations, and not least, a recapturing of the importance which he attached to a missionary professorship might result in him, though dead, speaking anew and thus contributing further to the development of missionary interest in Scotland.