

The Scotch Society in the American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century

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IN the year 1763 a small pamphlet was published in Edinburgh with this advertisement:—

“The following papers will give the public some general view, what appearances there are, that the British conquests in North America may be improved, for the diffusing among the Heathen nations there, the light of the glorious gospel of Christ: These accounts imperfect as they are, it is hoped, will excite the prayers and endeavours of many, that the Redeemer may have the Heathen for a heritage, and the uttermost ends of the earth for a possession.”

The pamphlet was entitled “An Account of some late attempts by the Correspondents of the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge to Christianize the North American Indians”. It seems to have been published to encourage contributions to the work of the Society in North America for the advertisement continues:

“The collection appointed by the last General Assembly, is designed to assist the board of Correspondents at Boston, (who hitherto have had no assistance from Scotland) in carrying on their extensive plans for Christianizing the Indians.

To assist their correspondents at New York, in the same good work, The Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, allow yearly salaries to Mr John Brainerd, Missionary to the Delaware Indians, to Mr Occum, Missionary to the Oneida Indians; and for educating some Indian youths at the College of New Jersey. This is all that the state of their funds and their many demands at home can admit till further pious donations enable them to enlarge their plan. When these are received they shall be faithfully applied to the particular purposes directed by the Donors.

An account by the Rev. Mr Wheelock of his Indian School at Lebanon in Connecticut, and some other papers belonging to the Society, which were intended to have been published, cannot be found.

It is earnestly entreated that if any Gentlemen have borrowed the above, or any other papers belonging to the Society, from Mr Ross their late Clerk, they will be so good as return them to A. Stevenson, now Clerk to the Society, without delay, there being several papers of consequence amissing besides the above mentioned."

The pamphlet which is thus advertised is rather disappointing in its actual contents. The loss of Mr Wheelock's account meant the omission of an interesting facet of the Society's activities and the remaining extracts from letters, an ordination sermon, and the Act of the General Assembly appointing the collection for the Society's work do not fulfil the expectations one has on reading the advertisement.

I have therefore decided to use this advertisement as a preface to my own account of the work of the "Scotch Society", as it was frequently called in North America. When writing a thesis for the S.T.M. degree at Union Theological Seminary, New York, I came across some accounts of the activities of the Reverend Eleazer Wheelock, his pupil the Reverend Samson Occum, and also of the missionary brothers John and David Brainerd, and these findings I now venture to lay before this Society.¹

The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge was incorporated by Royal Letters Patent in 1709 with a two-fold object: "the further promoting Christian Knowledge and increase of piety and virtue within Scotland especially in the Highlands, Islands and remote corners thereof . . . and for propagating the same in Popish and Infidel parts of the World". The Society had originated in 1701 out of the concern about the state of the Highlands and Islands felt by "A few private Gentlemen that did usually meet in Edinburgh for reformation of manners".² A prospectus issued by the Society in 1748 has this description of the Highlands in 1701:—

"When this society was first erected the condition of the inhabitants of the Highlands was very forlorn.

It was in the first place a state of ignorance of the great concern of mankind, religion. At least it was of the true religion for the religion that they had was Popery or Paganism, and betwixt these two the difference is not extremely great. It was in the second place a state of supine idleness and false liberty. And thirdly it was a state of entire disaffection to the Revolution interest and our present happy constitution in Church and State."

¹ This paper is a revised version of Chapter 2 of "Scottish and New England Churchmen in the Eighteenth Century", a thesis submitted for the S.T.M. degree. Grateful acknowledgment is made to my supervisor, Dr Robert T. Handy.

² *An Account of the Rise, Constitution and Management of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge*, Edinburgh, 1720, p. 6.

For the first 20 years of its existence the Society devoted its energies to the further promoting Christian Knowledge and increase of piety and virtue in the remote parts of Scotland. In the opinion of the founders of the Society the method which "seem'd most likely to answer this happy end was that of erecting publick schools". It might not be possible to reform "the then generation" of "wild and barbarous" Highlanders but schools would "pave the way for the reformation of the next".¹

No steps were taken to fulfil the second aim of the Society until 1729. Dr Daniel Williams of London had bequeathed estate worth £56 in annual revenue to the Society for the support of missionaries abroad but had also provided that the Society should not be put in possession of the estate until 12 months after three missionaries had been sent to foreign parts. Despite many representations about the Society's difficulty in complying with the terms of the bequest the Trustees remained adamant.² Accordingly the Society in 1729 wrote to the Reverend Jonathan Dickinson, moderator of the Commission of the Synod of Philadelphia asking his help in carrying out the conditions imposed by Dr Williams's bequest. Dickinson however refused to commit the Synod in this matter and so the Society sought the co-operation of the ministers of Boston because in their view New England came the nearest to the Church of Scotland in religious matters.³

Negotiations were made easier by the presence in London at the time of a wealthy Boston merchant, Jonathan Belcher, who was in England on business for the Massachusetts Assembly. While he was there news arrived of the death of the governor of the colony and Belcher was appointed to succeed him. Before Governor Belcher returned to Boston his interest was secured for the Society's plans. He himself agreed to act as a corresponding member of the Society and he suggested the names of three ministers and three laymen to be his colleagues.⁴ Belcher returned to Boston in the autumn of 1730 but it was not until 1732 that the Board of Correspondents succeeded in securing the services of three missionaries to the Indians, thus enabling the Society to profit from Dr Williams's bequest. The three missionaries, Joseph Secomb, Ebenezer Hinsdale and Stephen Parker were all dismissed in 1737 because of their unwillingness to penetrate further into the Indian country.

After this failure the Society were again in communication with Jonathan Dickinson who represented to the Society "the deplorable perishing state of the Indians on the border of New York, New Jersey and Pensilvania". We

¹ *State of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge in 1748* pp. 51, 53 and 28.

² *S.S.P.C.K. Committee Minutes*, Vol. 4, p. 299.

³ *S.S.P.C.K. Minutes*, Vol. 3, pp. 144 and 198.

⁴ *S.S.P.C.K. Committee Minutes*, Vol. 4, p. 300.

find that "the Society cheerfully resolved to maintain two missionaries among those miserable Pagans and sent their commission to several ministers and gentlemen . . . to act as correspondents and to superintend the affairs of the said mission". Thus a second Board of Correspondents was established at New York and in August 1741 this new board "prevailed with Mr Azariah Horton to relinquish a call to an encouraging parish and to devote himself to the Indian service. He was settled at Long Island . . . and by his journals transmitted to the Society so late as May 1747 appears not to preach in vain, having been the means not only of converting a considerable number of Indians to the bare possession of the Christian Religion but to the saving faith and obedience of the Gospel. Some time after Mr Horton was employed in the Indian service, the correspondents prevailed with Mr David Brainerd to follow the same course and to encounter the fatigue and perils of being a messenger of joy to these poor bewildered savages."¹

David Brainerd was a native of Haddam, Connecticut, and studied at Yale College. An entry in his diary for September 1739 records that he entered college "with some degree of reluctancy fearing lest I should not be able to lead a life of strict religion in the midst of so many temptations". Later he recounts that towards the end of January 1741, "I grew more cold and dull in matters of religion by means of my old temptation, viz., ambition in my studies. But thro' the Divine goodness a great and general awakening spread itself over the College about the latter end of February in which I was much quickened and more abundantly engaged in Religion."

The volumes of the diary which described Brainerd's conversion were destroyed at his own request but his biographer relates how he came to be expelled from the College as a result of it. Brainerd and several other students had been deeply impressed by the events of the evangelical revival known as the Great Awakening, which was then sweeping the colonies and had attended some of the meetings held by itinerant preachers taking part in the revival. The College authorities however did not approve of these religious commotions as is shown by the following incident. "A certain Mr Whittelsey, a tutor in the College, having been unusually pathetic in his prayer, one of Brainerd's friends on this occasion asked him what he thought of Mr Whittelsey: He made answer 'He has no more grace than this chair'." This remark eventually reached the ears of the Rector of the College and, when Brainerd refused to make public confession of what had been said in private conversation, he was expelled from the College.

Brainerd now began to study theology under the supervision of various ministers in Connecticut and in July 1742 he was licensed to preach by the

¹ *State of the Society in 1748*, pp. 68f.

Eastern Association of Fairfield County. The following November he was "asked by his friend Ebenezer Pemberton to go to New York to "consult about the Indian affairs in those parts and to meet certain gentlemen that were intrusted with those affairs".¹

Brainerd's diary reveals an acute sense of his own unfitness for this work and while he was thinking of his spiritual unfitness it is clear that he was very far from robust physically. Dr R. H. Bainton roundly declares that no modern board would ever have commissioned him for already in College he was spitting blood and was plainly tubercular.² But the New York Board of Correspondents were apparently well pleased with Brainerd and after the winter was over he was sent to Kaunaumek in the province of New York to preach to the Indians there.

He describes his situation in a letter written from Kaunaumek to his brother John soon after his arrival: "I live in the most melancholy desert about eighteen miles from Albany. I board with a poor Scotch-man: his wife can talk scarce any English... My work is exceedingly hard and difficult: I travel on foot a mile and a half the worst of way, almost daily and back again; for I live so far from my Indians". The loneliness of the place tried him sorely: "I live in the most lonesome wilderness; have but one single person to converse with that can speak English. Most of the talk I hear is either Highland Scotch or Indian. I have no fellow Christian to whom I might unbosom myself and lay open my spiritual sorrows." The English speaking person referred to here was not his host but the English-speaking Indian who acted as his interpreter! Brainerd remained dependent on the services of an interpreter in spite of frequent trips to Stockbridge to learn the Indian language from another missionary, John Sargeant. The language handicap was not the only difficulty with which Brainerd had to contend. In his diary he notes: "The Indians' affairs are very difficult; having no land to live on but what the Dutch people lay claim to and threaten to drive them off from; they have no regard for the souls of the poor Indians and, by what I can learn they hate me because I come to preach to 'em". He remained a year at Kaunaumek with "little appearance of success to comfort him". By this time the Indians had decreased in number and he suggested that they move to Stockbridge where Sargeant was working.

Brainerd now received several tempting offers to minister to English-speaking congregations but he declined them all in favour of continued service to the Society. He was sent to preach to the Indians on the Delaware River and was ordained in June 1744 by the Presbytery of New York.

¹ Jonathan Edwards: *An Account of the Life of the Late Reverend Mr David Brainerd*, Boston, 1749, pp. 15, 18 and 51.

² Roland H. Bainton: *Yale and the Ministry*, New York, 1957, p. 26.

Pemberton, who preached at the ordination service, wrote in the most glowing terms to the Society in Scotland about the Presbytery's satisfaction with Mr Brainerd and Brainerd himself wrote a report for the Directors of the Society.¹ At the request of the Society he kept a Journal of his work which was published by the Correspondents under the title "Mirabilia Dei inter Indicos".

The next year was spent at the Forks of Delaware with two journeys to the Susquehanna River but little success attended Brainerd's preaching. Because of the multiplicity of Indian tongues what he had acquired at Stockbridge was no use to him and he came across as many as seven or eight new languages. He was therefore still dependent on an interpreter.

Some encouragement was given him however when in June 1745 he paid his first visit to the Indians at Crosweeksung. He records that these Indians were so interested in his message even on this first visit that they asked him to stay longer than he had originally intended to do. On his return visit later that year Brainerd was able to baptize no fewer than 25 Indians and the following year, in April 1746, the Sacrament of Lord's Supper was dispensed at Crosweeksung to 23 Indian communicants. Perhaps the climax of Brainerd's ministry was the occasion two months later when he and his Indian converts took part in the Communion at the nearest white congregation's Church.²

Brainerd's ministry was almost at an end. The ill-health which had dogged him all his life compelled him to give up his work the following winter. He set out to return to New England but was unable to go further than the home of his friend, Jonathan Dickinson, at Elizabethtown, New Jersey. It was May 1747 before he reached New England where he died later that year at the home of his friend Jonathan Edwards at Northampton.

Brainerd's journal had already been published by the New York Board of Correspondents and in 1748 an abridged version was published in England by Dr Doddridge and by him dedicated to the Society. The journal greatly pleased the Society and the following passage is singled out for quotation in the Society's report for 1748:—

"An Indian woman of whom I had good ground to hope well, enquired of me one morning whether I was not sent to preach to the Indians by some good people a great way off. I replied, Yes, by the good people in Scotland: she answered that her heart loved these

¹ Edwards: *op. cit.*, pp. 261, 71, 105 and 112f.

² Brainerd: *Mirabilia Dei Inter Indicos*, Worcester, 1793, pp. 3, 5, 25 and 26.

good people so, the evening before that she could scarce help praying for them all night, her heart would go to God for them etc.”¹

Brainerd’s private diary (with the exception of the portions destroyed at his own request) was published by Jonathan Edwards in 1749 with editorial notes. Both diary and journal went through numerous editions and Brainerd’s name soon became something of a legend as people read of his heroic struggles, in the face of bodily and spiritual distress, to bring the Gospel to the Indians who were either quite indifferent or actively hostile.

Two contrasting Scottish comments on Brainerd may be given. A minister in Dundee, John Willison, in a letter to Jonathan Edwards shortly after Brainerd’s death remarks: “Indeed Mr Brainerd was one among a thousand for carrying the Gospel among the heathen as appears by the account you give of him in your Sermon and by his Journals which have been published here”.²

A minister in Edinburgh, Robert Wallace, whom I have brought to the notice of this Society on a previous occasion,³ also read the journal but his comment is very different: “Its a strange whim to think of going and preaching among the Indians yet if any man is so disposed he may sometimes do service”. Wallace is very critical of Brainerd’s methods of preaching. He thinks that Brainerd is mistaken in asserting that a missionary “ought not to preach morals or such Doctrines concerning Religion and a future state as are founded in nature or to which men may be most easily led by the convictions of reason but the pure Doctrines of the fall and our redemption”. Brainerd’s aim in fact was to spread the Great Awakening among the children of the forest. Wallace asks what reason a poor Indian has to take the missionary’s word when he is told about the miraculous story of Christ. Wallace would prefer to begin where the Indian or other unbeliever is:

“As men have naturally some notions of superior power and in future life and of virtue and vice is it not better to begin with the easiest things of which men have naturally some notion and give them just notions of morals, the Divine perfections, a future life and its rewards and punishments and by degrees endeavour to gain upon men laying a natural and rational foundation of piety and goodness . . . if it is said why should an Indian believe these fine rationally speculations about a heaven and a hell I answer he has at least more reason and a greater evidence for them than the miraculous story of Christ.”

Wallace’s comments on Brainerd and his methods are more interesting

¹ *State of the Society in 1748*, p. 70. Brainerd: *op. cit.*, p. 41.

² Quoted in S. E. Dwight: *Life of President Edwards*, New York, 1830, p. 271.

³ *Records*, Vol. XVI, pp. 1-22.

than influential for with typical prudence he committed them to writing but did not publish them.¹

Over a hundred years later another minister in Edinburgh published a volume on *Great Missionaries* and had this to say of Brainerd: "His journal is a most extraordinary instance of a spirit panting earnestly after angelic perfection and reaching at times much of what it sought; and is one of the most precious fragments in all Christian biography . . . it is scarcely possible for us to imagine pictures of greater moral sublimity than those of Brainerd".²

In our own century Yale has given the name of David Brainerd to one of the houses in its new Divinity School and Roland H. Bainton, the historian of Yale, sums up Brainerd in this way: "Brainerd was never equal to Luther's lusty paradox that man can be at the same time a sinner and saved. Yet for all his debility and despondency Brainerd never faltered . . . His labors among the Indians were not ineffectual but their chief impact was upon subsequent missions".³

During David Brainerd's illness his brother John had acted for him in the summer of 1747. The following year John was asked to succeed David and was ordained by the Presbytery of New York in February 1748. The work of the Scotch Society inspired the Synod of New York to make efforts on their own and in 1751 they enjoined a collection in all churches under their jurisdiction for the Indian missionary enterprise. This may be regarded as the first foreign mission work of American Presbyterianism.

Difficulties now came upon the Indian missions. The language barrier had always been a serious problem. David Brainerd, as we have seen, was never able to dispense with an interpreter in spite of strenuous efforts to learn the language. The other problem was the retreat of the Indian before the advancing tide of civilisation which had already caused David Brainerd to abandon his work at Kaunaumeeek. Azariah Horton gave up his work in Long Island in 1754 and John Brainerd was dismissed the following year. It was obvious that nothing permanent would be achieved unless the converted Indians were settled on lands of their own. Accordingly the New York Board of Correspondents resolved in 1757 to purchase 3,000 acres of land where the Indians might settle and the following year the Scotch Society voted £300 for this purpose, provided the land was conveyed to the Society in Scotland.⁴ After some delays, John Brainerd resumed his work among the Indians in the new settlement at Brotherton, New Jersey.

¹ They are contained in a manuscript preserved in Edinburgh University Library: "Some thoughts on the conversion of the Indians. On Whitfield and irregular methods of converting and reforming the world." Laing mss. II 620, 23.

² A. Thomson: *Great Missionaries*, Edinburgh, 1862, pp. 42f and 33.

³ R. H. Bainton: *op. cit.*, p. 26f.

⁴ C. A. Briggs: *American Presbyterianism*, Edinburgh, 1885, p. 303.

We have seen that the work of the Society within Scotland was largely the erection of schools. It is clear from a letter written by John Brainerd to Ebenezer Pemberton, the chairman of the New York Board, that this formed part of his mission too.

“The next thing I shall mention is the school which consists of fifty-three children who properly belong to it and generally attend upon it: twenty-seven of these read in the Testament and most of them can say the Assembly’s Shorter Catechism throughout by heart. Others read in Psalters, spelling-books and primers and many of them can say the Catechism half thro’.”¹

The Society did not confine its interest in education in the colonies to the support of Indian schools. Its members were also keenly interested in the College of New Jersey which had been founded in 1746 largely through the efforts of Pemberton and Dickinson, who acted as President until his death in 1747. Jonathan Belcher, now Governor of New Jersey, granted a charter and took a lively, and frequently embarrassing, interest in the affairs of the new foundation. Pemberton asked the Society to assist the College and in 1748 the Society authorized the education of one young man at the College at their expense. The following year £30 was granted towards the cost of books for the library and in 1750 the Society granted an appropriation for the education of two young Indians.

When the trustees sent Gilbert Tennent and Samuel Davies to solicit funds for the College in Britain, the Society cordially supported their cause in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and over £1,000 was raised in Scotland. In 1769 the trustees of the College were appointed, along with two additional ministers, to act as commissioners for the Society in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.²

It is clear, therefore, that the Society’s most fruitful work in the first half of the century was done through the New York Board. The Boston Board, however, seems to have remained in being, despite its lack of success, and comes to prominence again in 1760. In that year a certain Eleazar Wheelock applied to the Board of Correspondents in Boston for aid in his work for the Indians.³

Wheelock, a native of Windham, Connecticut, and a graduate of the class of 1733 at Yale had been ordained as pastor of the Second Society at Lebanon, Connecticut, in 1735. In order to eke out his inadequate stipend he had opened a school, apparently for boys preparing for admission to College.

¹ *State of the Society in 1748*, p. 74.

² Briggs: *op. cit.*, pp. 307 and 326.

³ J. D. McCallum: *Eleazar Wheelock* Hanover N.H., 1939, p. 150.

An Indian boy, Samson Occum by name, who had been converted during the Great Awakening, asked admission and Wheelock accepted him as a private pupil in 1743. Occum proved an excellent pupil and himself became a schoolmaster among the Indians on Long Island. He received a licence to preach from the Windham Association in 1756 and three years later was ordained by the Presbytery of Suffolk, Long Island.

The success he had enjoyed with Occum encouraged Wheelock to attempt the establishment of an Indian school. John Brainerd, at Wheelock's request, sent him two Delaware Indians in 1754 and the following year "Mr Joshua Moor, late of Mansfield, deceased, appeared to give a small Tenement in this place for the foundation, use and support of a Charity-school for the education of Indian Youth". Wheelock, writing in 1763 thus describes the growth of the school: "I have had two upon my hands since December 14th 1754 and four since April 1757 and five since April 1759 and seven since November 1760 and eleven since August 1st 1761".

The purpose of the school was principally to train Indians for missionary work among their own tribes. We have seen under how great disadvantages David Brainerd suffered by his dependence on interpreters. Wheelock suggests that "in this school children of different Nations may and easily will learn one another's language and English youth may learn of them; and so save the vast expence and trouble of interpreters; and their ministry be much more acceptable and edifying to the Indians". Wheelock is of the opinion that little good can come of sending English-speaking missionaries because of the present hostility of the tribes but suggests that schools "may possible be set up with success among the Mohawks where Mr Ogilvie¹ and other Episcopal missionaries have bestowed much labour to good purpose" and at Onohoquagee where missionaries had also laboured faithfully.

It was with all this in mind that he applied for help to the Boston Board of the Scotch Society. He asked money for the support of Samson Occum's work and for the maintenance of the charity student Isaiah Uncas, son of the sachem of the Mohegans. The following May (1761) the Board voted £20 to fit out David Fowler, an Indian youth, to accompany Occum on a mission to the Oneidas. Fowler was to remain not more than four months among the Oneidas and was to bring back "a number of Indian boys not exceeding three to be put under Mr Wheelock's care and instruction".² Three Indian boys duly appeared at Lebanon three months later but two

¹ John Ogilvie, of Scottish descent, was agent of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 1749. He was granted a D.D. by King's College, Aberdeen, in 1770. W. B. Sprague: *Annals of the American Pulpit*, New York, 1857, Vol. p. 136.

² Eleazar Wheelock: *Nine Tracts* (1), pp. 31, 32f, 18, 19 and 39.

had to be sent back because of illness and were replaced by another two in November. The Board however decided that these were not the three first decided on and refused payment of expenses.¹

This ridiculous hair-splitting on the part of the Board was perhaps due to ecclesiastical differences. Wheelock had been an enthusiastic supporter of the Great Awakening for which he receives disapproving mention in "Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England", a polemical work written by the leading opponent of the Revival, Charles Chauncy, who was also chairman of the Board. Quite apart from any dislike he may have entertained for Wheelock however, Chauncy was very critical of the educational programme of the school:

"And as to their education we would have it intirely confined to their learning English. To be more explicit we would have none of their time taken up in learning so much as the rudiments of Latin or Greek. We imagine it will turn to much better account if they are taught to speak, read and write English as those who have a thorow understanding of the language. So far as the knowledge of Latin or Greek or Hebrew may be proper for a missionary to the Indians we should chuse to have it in the mind of one that is not himself an Indian."²

There is no doubt that Chauncy's criticisms were justified. Not realising that Occum's ability was exceptional, Wheelock had over estimated the receptivity of the Indian and had devised a curriculum which was not only beyond his powers but was quite valueless in fitting missionaries to deal with the problems of drunken, roving savages or in helping them to assist their unconverted brothers to gain a living by a craft. "Husbandry" admittedly was taught in Moor's³ Charity School but in practice it was only a dignified name for farm chores.

Wheelock's relations with the Edinburgh Board of the Society appear to have been much happier than his dealings with the Boston Board. One of the members, John Erskine, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, was extremely interested in missions to the Indians and warmly supported Wheelock's work. He sent him a personal gift of books for the school and in 1764 secured for him a commission from the Society to set up a new Board of Correspondents in Connecticut.⁴ This Board was also to be the Board of Governors for the school. The membership of the Board consisted of Wheelock's friends and relatives so it naturally proved much more helpful than the Boston Board.

¹ McCallum: op. cit., p. 150.

² Quoted in McCallum, p. 85.

³ Wheelock's school was so called after its first benefactor, Joshua Moor.

⁴ Letter from Erskine to Wheelock quoted in D. McClure: *Memoirs of the Rev. Eleazar Wheelock*, Newburyport, 1811, p. 242.

During this same year an interesting suggestion for raising money for the school was made by Charles Jeffrey Smith, a former assistant to Wheelock. Writing to Wheelock in March 1764 he asks: "When the Indian War is a little abated would it not be best to send Mr Occum with another person home a begging? an Indian minister in England might get a bushel of money for the school". Wheelock seems to have welcomed the idea from the beginning but the other members of the Connecticut Board were doubtful of the advisability of sending Occum on such a mission. They cordially approved however of a proposal that John Brainerd should lead a begging delegation and it was agreed to ask the permission of the New York Board for sending him. This permission was, apparently, not forthcoming, for John Rodgers and Smith himself were asked to go. When both these gentlemen declined to undertake the mission Wheelock decided that Nathaniel Whitaker, minister of Chelsea Parish, Norwich, Connecticut, should accompany Occum. The Board had by this time agreed to the sending of Occum but they were most unwilling to send Whitaker and urged Wheelock to go himself. This Wheelock refused to consider, pleading that his absence would not be good for the school, so the Board reluctantly agreed to sponsor Whitaker. This provoked vigorous protests from Smith and Rodgers but Wheelock stood firm and Whitaker and Occum set sail in December 1765.

George Whitefield, the famous evangelist who had worked with Wheelock during the Great Awakening, took charge of Whitaker and Occum when they arrived in England the following February. He introduced them to his aristocratic friends and the Americans became something of a nine-days wonder. They travelled extensively in England for over a year before going to Scotland in time for the General Assembly of the Church in May 1767. There they were most cordially received and a very large sum of money was raised. £2,529 was contributed by Scotland which compares most favourably with the subscriptions of £9,427 made by the much larger England. The University of St Andrews conferred a Doctorate in Divinity on Whitaker and the University of Edinburgh granted a similar degree to Wheelock.

It is clear that the success of the mission was due largely to Occum's novelty value. Few people in either England or Scotland had ever seen an American Indian and so Occum aroused wide interest in both countries. The fact that he was to all appearances a typical New England divine spoke eloquently of the worth of the work being done by Wheelock. In addition, Occum seems to have been a thoroughly likeable person who was held in high esteem by all whom he met. This was in marked contrast to the impression made by his fellow-traveller, who aroused antagonism and suspicion wherever he went. Whitaker's appointment, as we have seen, had aroused strong opposition in New England and it seems that in Britain too he was regarded with suspicion because of his "side-lines". Shortly

after their arrival in England he successfully inoculated Occum against small-pox and, thus encouraged, he proposed to administer inoculations all over the country as he travelled seeking subscriptions. Half of the income derived from this source was to be devoted to the Indian school. This however provoked a strong protest from an apothecary.

The trust which was set up to administer the funds subscribed in England were greatly disturbed when they discovered that Whitaker was using the money for trading purposes and were not at all satisfied with the explanation that this was being done in order to increase the amount which would be available for the benefit of the school.¹

Perhaps this suspicion of Whitaker had something to do with the fact that the subscriptions raised in Scotland were never handed over to Wheelock. The Society administered the capital and made grants from time to time as they saw fit. In particular they refused to pay the expenses of white students who were to be sent out to teach the Indians and it appears that, out of the total sum raised in Scotland, Wheelock himself received only £190. However, after his death, £1,200 was paid to the school and later an annuity of £90 was granted which continued into the nineteenth century.²

This indicates that the Revolution did not end the Society's interest in America. On the contrary, the Society's report for 1780 states:

"None of their four missionaries, Mr Kirkland, Mr Brainerd, Mr Butler and Mr Occum, have been regularly dismissed from the service; and the society have resolved that, if it shall be made clear that all or any of them have faithfully executed their office or offices during the interruption between the mother country and the colonies, when the communication is again opened they will pay their salaries. The accompts of that part of their funds allotted for the support of their missionaries in America are kept separate and not applied to any other purpose."³

Enough has been said to show that during the eighteenth century the Scotch Society played an important part in the ecclesiastical affairs of New England and the Middle Colonies and, more especially, in the missionary enterprises undertaken there. The Society of course did not initiate the missions to the Indians—the Gospel had been preached to them before ever the Society was founded—but the interest and financial support of the Society

¹ L. B. Richardson: *An Indian Preacher in England*, Hanover N.H., 1933, pp. 27f, 31f, 49, 50f, 143, 145, 282f.

² McCallum: *op. cit.*, p. 164f. This annuity was the subject of Report by Lord Kinross in November 1923.

³ *An Account of the Proceedings of the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge in Scotland from June 1777 to June 1780*, p. 85.

enabled the work to continue and expand. The members of the Society seem to have regarded the Indian mission as an integral part of their work and considerable prominence is given to it in the reports of the Society and in sermons preached at their annual meetings. It is clear that they took seriously the clause in their patent which provided for the propagation of Christian knowledge in the Popish and infidel parts of the world, as well as in the Highlands, Islands and remote corners of Scotland.

Indeed it may be argued that in the eyes of the Society these were not two tasks but one, the conversion of barbarians both in Scotland and in North America. At first sight any comparison between the Highlanders of Scotland and the Indians of North America may seem ridiculous and even gratuitously insulting. But if one compares the two peoples not in terms of what they were but rather in terms of how they appeared to others, the matter takes on a different complexion. It seems probable that the attitude of Lowlanders to Highlanders in Scotland was not greatly different from the attitude of New Englanders to Indians in North America.

We have seen how Jonathan Dickinson represented the Indians as being in a "deplorable perishing state". In the view of the pious gentlemen who met at Edinburgh for the reformation of manners the Highlanders of Scotland were "miserably sunk in error, ignorance and vice". There seemed little difference between the "poor savages" in America and the "wild and barbarous" Highlanders at home. After all, both spoke uncouth and unintelligible languages and were organised on a primitive tribal basis. Neither seemed to be capable of sustained labour. The Highlanders are described as being in "a state of supine idleness" and the Indians greatly disliked Wheelock's interpretation of "husbandry".¹

The religion of the Highlanders was either "Popery or Paganism" and although the difference between the two is said to be "not extremely great" one has the impression that, on the whole, paganism is preferable to the other alternative! The Report of the Society for 1748 devotes several pages to the quotation of documents which prove "how active the Church of Rome still is to propagate and maintain her pernicious errors in the Highlands". The menace of Rome was also present in the New World. In a sermon preached before the Society in 1756, John Erskine seeks to rouse his hearers to contribute liberally by asking them, "Shall Jesuites compass sea and land and spare neither money nor labour to proselytise men to idolatry and superstition: and shall the zeal, the activity, the liberality of those who profess the pure gospel of Christ fall short of theirs?"²

¹ McCallum quotes indignant letters on this subject.

² *The Influence of Religion on National Happiness*, p. 31.

The fear of a Roman restoration in Scotland continued long after the justification for it was gone, as is shown by the foregoing quotations, but we can hardly blame Churchmen of the early eighteenth century for their alarm on this score.

The activity of the Romanist agents must have seemed very alarming to them. Certainly they were right in supposing that many of the Highlanders were "in an interest absolutely inconsistent with the safety of the Government".¹ The interests of the Church of Scotland in their view were the interests of the government for only thus could the Revolution settlement be maintained. Protestantism in North America was in similar danger for "the French in Canada spare neither cost nor pains to gain over to their interest the neutral Indians and to seduce even those Indians who are yet in alliance with us".² These fears of Romanist and hostile activity did not prove to be groundless either in Scotland or America. The Jacobites' main support in the Rebellions of 1715 and 1745 came from the Highlands of Scotland and Indian raids were a very common feature of New England life.

The work of the Society was conceived, in part, as countering these political and religious threats to the "present happy constitution in Church and State". The Report of the Society for 1748 seems designed to show that their work in the Highlands has proved and will prove a successful way of making the Highlands civilised and safe. Certainly the Government realised that something was needed besides roads and forts and made liberal grants to the Society. With regard to the Indian mission John Erskine has this to say to those who regard concern for the interests of religion in foreign parts as mere bigotry:³

"Let me further enquire would it be contrary to sound politics to expend a few thousand pounds in proper endeavours to propagate genuine Christianity among the five Indian nations and other numerous and powerful tribes if this expence might save to the nation as many millions in armies and navies for protecting our colonies from their ambitious and treacherous neighbours . . ."

This is corroborated by Eleazar Wheelock who states that in his opinion much devastation could have been prevented "if one half which has been, for so many years past expended in building Forts, manning and supporting them, had been prudently laid out in supporting faithful missionaries and school-masters among them".

¹ *Account of the Rise of the Society*, 1720, p. 6.

² Erskine: *op. cit.*, p. 28.

³ Erskine is here addressing himself especially to "our new British Historian", David Hume.

The method employed in Scotland was the establishment of schools and the maintenance of schoolmasters and it was not long before the preaching of evangelists was supplemented by the teaching of schoolmasters in America. Evangelisation and education however were really inseparable in the view of the Society. Its schoolmasters frequently acted as lay missionaries and the curriculum in both Highland and Indian schools included the study of Scripture and the Westminster Shorter Catechism. Academic instruction was the main concern of the Society in both countries but in Scotland some effort was made to improve standards of agriculture in the Highlands by the setting up of a school "to teach some boys that happy art"¹ and we have noted the attempt to provide land where converted Indians could settle.

While it would be foolish to deny that the motives of the Society in doing all this were far from being entirely disinterested, it would be wrong to ascribe to them only prudential motives. John Erskine brings forward arguments from expediency only to convince the sceptical. He is quite convinced in his own mind that the main justification for the Society's work is a desire "to rescue mankind from the bondage of sin and Satan". These motives were certainly uppermost in the minds of devoted missionaries like David Brainerd and others employed by the Society. David Brainerd became a legend during his own short life and his selfless example was an inspiration to many on both sides of the Atlantic.

The fact that the Highlands of Scotland were for long regarded as a stronghold of conservative Presbyterianism is an eloquent tribute to the success of the Society's efforts there. The Indian missions were not a success. The advancement of the United States across the continent has not meant the integration of the Indian into American society. The distinction between Highlander and Lowlander in Scotland today cannot be compared to the gulf between the Indian and the other inhabitants of America. But the Indian mission cannot be written off as a complete failure. Much worthwhile work was done in the eighteenth century—Samson Occum should not be forgotten—and it had also a deeper significance.

In the eighteenth century the Church of Scotland did no missionary work other than that performed by its members through this Society. It was this Society which turned the Church's attention for the first time to the problem of evangelism overseas, a problem which had not occurred to the Reformers. By providing the challenge which awakened the Church in Scotland (and in America) to its Missionary responsibilities the Indian mission in some measure prepared the way for the great missionary enterprises of the nineteenth century.

¹ *State of the Society in 1748*, p. 65.