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India was among the early fields of missionary activity by Scots Presbyterians, and became a major location for Scottish foreign missions in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Indeed, in terms of numbers of Scottish Presbyterian missionaries India consistently attracted the biggest share, even though in the later decades of the 19th century missionary activities in Central Africa had a higher public profile in Scotland. By the time of the 1857 uprising, Scottish missionaries had several decades of experience of working in India, about which they had been communicating views and information to missionary supporters and church-goers at home on a regular basis. Thus, by 1857 there was a section of Scottish society which might be described as an ‘educated’ public with respect to India, in the sense that they had been receiving regularly first-hand accounts, though of course these were framed by a religious understanding, and therefore had a particular bias. There were also Scottish missionaries in situ in India, who were themselves affected by the uprising in various ways or in a position to give accounts or views about events. This paper focuses on the ways in which events in India were reported and discussed in the Scottish missionary press, and also examines selected evidence of discussion of missionaries and their approaches in the contemporary secular press in Scotland.

Scottish Presbyterian missionary activities in India pre-1857

Organised support for foreign missions first came into existence in Scotland at the end of the 18th century with the formation of the Scottish Missionary Society and Glasgow Missionary Society in 1797, inspired by the example of the London Missionary Society (LMS) established in 1796. The established Church of Scotland did not, however, endorse foreign missions until 1824, sending out their first missionary, Alexander Duff, to India in 1829. By this time the Scottish Missionary Society had already commenced missionary activity in Bombay, and this was subsequently taken over by the Church of Scotland.

The major event in the history of the kirk in Scotland in the 19th century, the Disruption of 1843, had a considerable impact on the organisation of missionary work. The Disruption, where a considerable proportion of the ministers and congregations of the Church of Scotland left it and set up the Free Church of Scotland, as the consequence of a disagreement over the issue of patronage i.e. whether landowners had the right to appoint ministers, created a major division in Scottish religious life which was to last until 1929. At the Disruption all but one of the Church of Scotland missionaries joined the Free Church and the Church of Scotland was obliged to start anew its Indian missions.

There was also a third significant Presbyterian denomination in Scotland in this period, the United Presbyterian Church (UPC), created in 1847 by the union of the Relief and
Secession Churches, and which subsequently united with the Free Church to become the United Free Church of Scotland in 1900. While the three main Presbyterian denominations were not the only churches in Scotland supporting missionary activity, given the numerous smaller dissenting churches that existed, they were the dominant ones. All three supported missionary activity in India, though in the case of the UPC not until after 1857, establishing a mission in Rajputana in 1860 in the wake of the uprising.

By 1857, then, there were a small number of Scottish Presbyterian missionaries active in India, in around half a dozen locations scattered across the subcontinent, three of those at the heart of each British Presidency, with there being missions at the following places: Bombay, Calcutta, Poona, Madras, Nagpur and Sialkot. The overall number of Scottish missionaries, including wives of missionaries, at work in India between the 1820s and 1850s was small, probably around 40 altogether, with there being perhaps half that number in India in 1857. The mission at Sialkot had been established in early 1857, and the Rev Thomas Hunter, his wife, Jane Scott, and their infant son, were to fall victim to the uprising in July of that year. They were to be the only Scottish missionaries to be killed during the uprising. Other Scottish missionaries were less directly affected by the events, and many of the reports sent back to Scotland suggested that as far as possible mission work continued as normal. Though only a small number of missionaries were active in India, a number of the missionaries in service in 1857 had already lived and worked in India for substantial periods of time, most notably Alexander Duff, John Wilson, and Murray Mitchell. Alexander Duff, in particular, was one of the most influential missionaries of his time, both in terms of the approach to missionary work which he had adopted and promoted in India, and in terms of his influence in building up missionary support at home in Scotland. A prolific writer and passionate publicist for missionary activity, Duff was, not surprisingly, the major author among Scots missionaries of writings on the uprising.

Approaches to mission work
For many Protestant missions institution building played an important role, and as well as evangelical work and preaching, many missions ran schools, orphanages, and later in the 19th century, dispensaries and/or hospitals. In the phase of missionary activity prior to 1857, the dominant activities of missionaries were evangelical and educational work. The missions of the three main Scottish Presbyterian denominations all carried out educational work, though the emphasis placed on this differed somewhat. Since the work of the UPC in Rajputana did not begin till after the uprising, it does not concern us here, but it seems to have followed the Free Church in its provision of education in English for boys, and in provision of schools for girls. In the post-Disruption period the Free Church of Scotland’s commitment to education was particularly strong, and in particular to education in the English language, taking forward the approach that had been adopted by Alexander Duff in 1830, when he first took up his post as a Church of Scotland missionary in Calcutta. The Church of Scotland subsequently appears to have become

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1 In general in this paper I have used the place names as they were written in the primary source material from 1857 and 1858, though recognise that many have since been renamed or are written differently.
2 Embree describes Duff as ‘one of the most influential missionaries of the nineteenth century’. Ainslie T Embree, 1857 in India: Mutiny or War of Independence, Lexington: D C Heath and Company, 1968, p. ix
more equivocal about the value of education, and in the 1850s there was an ongoing debate about how best to achieve conversions, the place of education within this, and an apparent preference for education in the vernacular. To what extent this difference in emphasis, and the criticisms advanced of education in English, reflected the bitterness of the Disruption disputes and the loss of their missionaries, is hard to say, since even in the Free Church the question of preaching versus teaching as the best missionary method surfaced sporadically. The doubts, however, were those of the committees and supporters at home, who often tended to count missionary success in number of souls saved, whereas most missionaries appear to have been strongly committed to the value of providing education.

Notwithstanding the emphasis on the importance of education in English among Scots missionaries, it was also seen as crucial to learn vernacular languages. On the one hand some educational work would inevitably be undertaken in vernacular languages, but most significantly such development of linguistic skills was a precursor to the direct communication of Christian beliefs through preaching and through translation of the bible into vernacular languages. Within missionary reports accounts of preaching and disputing in vernacular languages about religious systems and beliefs often feature, as well as announcements about the publication of the bible and/or new testament in various languages. Notably, the success (by their own accounts) of missionaries in acquiring languages and translating the bible or parts thereof was becoming evident in the 1850s.

Educational work with girls was supported by Ladies’ Associations at home, with these being formed in the late 1830s. In this period it is evident that male missionaries played an active role in encouraging support for female education, with again Alexander Duff being prominent in this, for example, as the keynote speaker at the first AGM of the Edinburgh Ladies’ Association. Missionaries’ wives almost invariably undertook work of this nature, while single women missionaries in this period either worked as teachers or ran orphanages, with medical missionary work (whether as nurses or doctors) being a later development. That education of girls was understood to contravene the views of Indians on appropriate roles and behaviours for girls was often commented on, and arguments for its importance in the process of Christianisation were stressed. Alongside the development of female education, regular denunciations of the treatment of girls and women in India were made, especially of sati and treatment of widows, child marriage, and temple prostitution. As might be expected missionaries were advocates of reform in these areas, and praised the government for its action in abolishing sati.

A further approach to missionary work was that of ‘zenana’ visiting, or visiting at home those Indian women who lived in seclusion. Accounts of the work of Scottish missionaries in India have claimed this as a Scottish innovation. Apparently first mooted

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3 There is an analogy here with the work of the Scottish Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge in the Scottish Highlands in the 18th century, where provision of bibles in Gaelic was actively pursued as a tool for both the inculcation of religion and the extension of literacy.

4 See J Murray Mitchell, Indian Missions: viewed in connexion with The Mutiny and Other Recent Events, London: James Nisbet and Co., 1859

5 Address by Alexander Duff in Scottish Ladies’ Association, Report of Annual General Meeting, 1839
by Dr Thomas Smith, a Church of Scotland missionary in Calcutta, in 1840, it was not put into practice until 1855 by a Miss Toogood. By the 1860s, great things were being claimed for this new area of missionary work, which was ‘like the discovery of a new continent’.

That a number of aspects of missionary work could provoke a reaction or be productive of tensions is apparent in reading missionary reports. While the provision of education in English clearly attracted large numbers of male pupils from specific social groups e.g. high-caste Hindus, who might derive benefit from this in terms of career opportunities in government service, whenever conversions of pupils to Christianity occurred this seems to have invariably caused a furore. Missionary periodicals and reports indicate a number of occasions when there was mass withdrawal of pupils from a mission school after a conversion or conversions (though these were rare, and often a single case at any one time), although after a time pupils tended to return to their classes. This was particularly a feature of the boys’ schools, though sometimes happened also with girls. In some cases conversions gave rise to legal proceedings against missionaries. Missionary reports often pointed out why conversions could cause such upheavals, but showed no sympathy for the position of converts’ families, assured as they were of the superiority of Christianity and the benefit that would come to individuals through conversion no matter the consequences. Self-sacrifice and martyrdom were always deemed to be the supreme acts of faith, and the willingness of individuals to submit to ostracism and suffering only a demonstration of Christianity’s higher truth.

Taken together, the activities of Scottish missionaries, like those of other Protestant missionaries, were aggressive and interventionist. They disrupted family relationships, contravened rules of caste and various religious beliefs of Hindus and Muslims, contravened Indian views of the place of girls and women in society, attempted to carry Christianisation into the homes of women, actively promoted education in the language of the conquering power, and clamoured for the abolition of practices and customs associated with indigenous religions. Furthermore, they took their preaching of Christianity into the streets and villages of India as far as they were able, preaching in public places, itinerating in provincial cities and towns, and establishing rural missions. They also actively organised occasions where disputations on different religious systems might take place, always declaring their victory in such intellectual battles. Thus, between the 1830s and the 1850s missionaries were increasingly making their presence felt, and given the nature of their activities as outlined above, it would not be surprising if these activities caused disquiet. It is striking, however, that, when the uprising of 1857 took place, there was a consistent denial that missionary activities had played any part in provoking this.

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7 Hewat, op. cit. p. 75.
8 See, for example, Stuart Piggin, Making Evangelical Missionaries 1789-1858: the Social Background, Motives and Training of British Protestant Missionaries in India, Sutton Courtney Press, 1984.
Communication of ‘missionary intelligence’ to church-goers and supporters in Scotland

Missionary work had a dual character, and was not simply focussed on what could be achieved in foreign countries in the way of Christianisation, but also entailed as an integral part of the work the communication of ‘missionary intelligence’ to people at home. The provision of information was part of the contract of missionary ‘agents’ and regulated by the committees and boards at home. While this duty proved irksome for some, others were prolific communicators both of the written and spoken word. In the very early days of foreign missions, information was often communicated through the circulation of letters, a practice which appears to have continued for most of the 19th century. However, publication of periodicals containing news of foreign missions, alongside news of home missions, began to appear in Scotland in the 1820s. Following the Disruption of 1843, periodicals were produced on denominational lines, with both the Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland additionally launching periodicals on women’s mission work around the late 1850s and early 1860s. In addition to periodicals, there is also an abundant pamphlet literature from this earlier period, including sermons, addresses to General Assemblies, speeches to AGMs of the Ladies’ Associations, and so on.

Within this literature a number of themes predominated in representations of India, with repetition of stereotypes occurring in a fairly unvarying form for decades. These key themes were: the superiority of Christianity; the civilising mission, with its emphasis on education and European science; and the ‘degradation’ of women in India. As might be expected, the superiority of Christianity was repeatedly affirmed throughout this literature, and was often articulated through a moral horror and revulsion against the beliefs and practices of other peoples, denounced as ‘horrid delusions’ and ‘multifarious idolatries’. The education provided by missionaries had the function not only of teaching literacy, but of affording both moral protection and bringing the ‘fierce light of European thought’ to challenge the ‘terrible power’ of Indian religions.

A further dominant theme in missionary literature on India from the earliest days of missionary activity and throughout the 19th century was that of the ‘degradation’ of women. In his address to the inaugural meeting of the Scottish Ladies’ Association in 1839, Duff argued that India, more than any other country, involved ‘the greater degradation of women and her subjection to the man’. Women missionaries and women supporters at home echoed these sentiments in their writings, with the dominant sentiment being one of pity for the miserable lives of Indian women, who were ‘bound in infancy by indissoluble ties, often to men who might be their fathers and grandfathers, who despise and ill-treat them’.

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10 Mitchell, J Murray, *In Western India: recollections of my early missionary life*, Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1899, p. 120
12 Report from Eliza Ross in Poona, Church of Scotland, *News of Female Missions*, No 43, July, 1873
Such discourses of religion, race and gender, were thus structured around the counterpoint of Scots Christians and their values with the inferior systems and values of the peoples of India and other countries in which missionaries were active. As well as serving to justify missionary interventions in other countries, such discourses framed the self-presentation of missionaries as exemplars of Christian values and the Protestant ethic, with its peculiarly Calvinistic emphasis on hard work, education, self-help, and joyless Puritanism. By the 1850s such stereotypical representations had been in circulation for several decades, and continued to be reproduced with a somewhat relentless tedium in succeeding decades. The post-Disruption period had witnessed a growth in enthusiasm for foreign missions (albeit still a minority interest), and a growth in publications on missionary work. Thus both active supporters and the readership of such literature had been prepared for understanding Indian society in a particular way over a sustained period, with by the 1850s there being a widening circle of readers and active supporters.

By the 1850s, then, on the one hand there were not large numbers of Scottish missionaries in India, but on the other hand their activities, and those of other Protestant missionaries, were producing reactions among the Indians with whom they worked, which would undoubtedly have given rise to talk and rumour. That certain aspects of missionary activity were resented is evident from the reports of missionaries themselves. What the wider impact of such tensions might have been, and what perceptions were formed by Indian of missionaries’ aims and of their relationship to government agents and military personnel formed by Indians is impossible to assess from the evidence and sources scrutinised here, given their one-sidedness, but this is clearly an important question.

With respect to missionaries’ communications to supporters and church-goers at home, a particular vision of India, Indian peoples and Indian religions had been presented over a period of around thirty years, the main thrust of which was to present Indians as idolatrous, superstitious, morally decadent, resistant to what missionaries perceived as more enlightened European thought, and brutal in their treatment of women. At this time the interest of Scots in foreign missions was likely to have been predominantly in missions in India, as the subsequent high profile Scottish missionary enterprise in East and Central Africa, inspired by Livingstone (whose Travels were published in 1857), was not to occur till after his death in 1874. Certainly, the extensive coverage of missionary activities in India in the missionary periodicals of the mid 1850s and early 1860s suggests that India remained the main focus of attention for churches and missionary supporters. As noted, there was a growing interest in missions, and if this remained limited, the composition of committees of active supporters was, significantly, made up of leading members of Scottish elites and the growing middle classes. This then is the context in which to understand how the uprising was reported and debated by missionaries and their supporters.

13 For discussion of the character and influence of missionary writing about India, see Anna Johnston, Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800-1860, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, especially chapters 3 and 4.
Reporting of the uprising in missionary literature

As outlined above there were a number of Scottish Presbyterian missionaries working in India at a range of locations at the time of the events of 1857 and 1858. Apart from the Church of Scotland missionary Rev Thomas Hunter, his wife and infant son, who were killed by ‘mutineers’ at Sialkot in the Punjab, none of the Scottish missionaries were caught up in the conflict. Overall, the number of missionaries and members of their families who lost their lives during the uprising was relatively small. Alexander Duff, writing in October, 1857, estimated the number of ‘British Christians’ who had died to be at least 1,300. This number:

- includes four chaplains, and ten male missionaries with their wives. Of the latter ten, two, belonging to the Propagation Society, fell at Cawnpore, and three at Delhi; four, of the American Presbyterian Mission at Futteghur; and one, of the Established Church of Scotland, at Sealkote, in the Punjab.¹⁴

Thus, apart from the unfortunate Hunters, no other Scottish missionaries appeared to be directly in danger as a consequence of the uprising. Among these others, Duff and his colleagues in Calcutta were probably the most affected, given the episodes of panic which afflicted Europeans in Calcutta. Some other Scots missionaries appear to have been affected in some way or had some involvement in events, such as John Wilson in Bombay, who used his linguistic skills to provide intelligence to the British, deciphering intercepted letters (though this involvement did not receive any publicity at the time).¹⁵

Whatever the impact of the uprising on their work, it might be expected that missionaries would have views about the causes and meaning of events, and about possible responses by churches and by government. This section of the paper examines how the events of 1857 and 1858 were represented in the writings of missionaries and in the literature on missionary activities produced by the sponsoring churches at home.¹⁶

Given the time which mail took to travel from India to Scotland, there was some delay between the occurrence of events and public discussion of them, with the first reference to the events of the uprising in the Church of Scotland’s Home and Foreign Missionary Record appearing in September 1857, and with various references and reports then continuing till around October 1858. In the early months of 1857, the Church of Scotland Record was engaged in discussing approaches to missionary work and in particular the issue of strategies on education, and arguing for education provided by missionaries to be

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¹⁵ For an account of Wilson’s role, see George Smith, Life of Rev. John Wilson of Bombay, London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1878

¹⁶ The sources consulted for this section include periodical publications produced by the Church of Scotland and Free Church of Scotland; and published writings by individual missionaries. Unfortunately, no extant copies of the Free Church of Scotland Home and Foreign Missionary Record for the years 1857 and 1858 have been located. To a large extent this gap in sources is compensated for by the voluminous writings of leading Free Church missionary Alexander Duff on the topic of the Indian ‘rebellion’, though in the absence of other sources, it is not possible to tell whether there was any dissension from Duff’s views. It is also probably the case that there is a more extensive pamphlet literature on this topic than I have yet been able to identify.
in vernacular languages rather than in English, in contrast to the approach adopted by Alexander Duff in 1830 and carried forward as a central plank of Free Church missionary activity after the Disruption of 1843.\textsuperscript{17} Indeed, this debate about educational strategies, about the primacy of education over preaching or otherwise, and the implicit digs at the Free Church position, were to continue throughout the period of the uprising. Also published in the early months of 1857 are several letters from Thomas Hunter, giving an account of his journey from Bombay to ‘Sealkote’, accompanied by his wife and child, and ‘Mahomet Ismael, our second mussulman convert’,\textsuperscript{18} and descriptions of the type of work they had commenced there. Hunter’s death was noted in the September issue, and a lengthy obituary appeared in October.

The September issue, in describing the ‘calamities in India’ noted that ‘The Delhi mission has been extinguished in blood’. Despite ‘the diabolical cruelty of many of the rebel sepoys’ the article urged against the spirit of vengeance apparent in some Indian papers. Justice should be done, and ‘the guilty’ should be ‘condemned to die, as far as their cruelty can be proved, and as far as they persist in rebellion’. But ‘our fellow-countrymen in India must see to it that they act as Christians’ and not imitate ‘the barbarities which, even when perpetrated by heathens, are universally condemned’.\textsuperscript{19}

The obituary of Thomas Hunter and his wife, Jane Scott, as well as giving an account of their family background and commitment to Christian work both at home and as missionaries to India, gives an account of their death. Having stayed on at Sealcote when most other Europeans had left for safety in the Fort at Lahore, the Hunters eventually attempted to also make their way there, but were ‘murdered on the road’. The author of the obituary speculates as to the reasons for this:

> It seemed to have been no part of the Sealcote mutineers’ plan to massacre ladies and children, but perhaps Mrs Hunter had offended the fanatic Mohammedans by establishing a small female school, a crime in their eyes deserving death.\textsuperscript{20}

A more detailed account of the Hunters’ death was subsequently published as part of the General Assembly’s report on Foreign missions in July 1858, drawing on a paper of Hunter’s brother, Robert, a Free Church missionary at Nagpur.

Clearly the events in Sialkot put an end to missionary endeavour there for the duration of the uprising, though a new mission was initiated there by the Church of Scotland as soon as they were able to do so. In other missions the widespread unrest accompanying the uprising had some impact on missionary operations. In August 1857 Frances Hebron wrote from Calcutta that ‘mission work is at a standstill at present’ and that recently the missionaries had been ‘in great danger’. The ‘disturbances’ were also preventing new

\textsuperscript{17} See Church of Scotland, \textit{Home and Foreign Missionary Record}, January 1857; March 1857

\textsuperscript{18} Letter from Thomas Hunter, Sealkote, 24\textsuperscript{th} January, 1857, in Church of Scotland, \textit{Home and Foreign Missionary Record}, April, 1857

\textsuperscript{19} Church of Scotland, \textit{Home and Foreign Missionary Record}, September, 1857, p 241

\textsuperscript{20} Church of Scotland, \textit{Home and Foreign Missionary Record}, October, 1857, p 253
work, such as a planned day-school ‘in the heart of a Mohammedan village’. At around the same time, missionaries from Chota Nagpore ‘had been constrained to seek refuge in Calcutta’, while in April 1858, educational work in Calcutta was interrupted as the Institution buildings had to be given up ‘for a good many days for the accommodation of European soldiers’. In Bombay pupil numbers had declined, but this was not to be regarded as ‘a matter either of surprise or disappointment’ when ‘the excitement caused by the reception of converts into the Mission, and the condition of the native mind during the past year, are taken into account’.

In general the emphasis in the Church of Scotland Record was on the ongoing work of missionaries, with very little discussion of the causes of the uprising, an attitude typified by the introduction to the General Assembly’s report on Foreign Missions, which stated that ‘Opportunities of becoming acquainted with the public transactions that have recently taken place in India, have been so abundant, and so universally embraced’ that the Committee ‘abstain from entering on any general details’. They therefore content themselves with a:

> passing allusion to the nature and consequences of a revolt, marked by a spirit of treachery and fierceness perhaps unparalleled in the history of the world, and resisted, in circumstances of peculiar difficulty, with a measure of success at once most honourable to British valour and endurance

for which, as might be expected, gratitude to God was expressed.

However, there was some limited discussion in the pages of the Church of Scotland Record about the ‘revolt’ and about the government of India. The main thrust of this was to emphasise how the events in India had drawn attention to the need for its more effective Christianisation, and about the best methods for doing this. These events had influenced the nation’s character, since ‘by their disasters in India, the British have become a more serious, a more God-fearing people’. This had increased the conviction ‘among all classes’ that the true plan for Christianizing India was ‘THE PREACHING OF CHRIST, (emphasis in the original) in season and out of season, early and late’ and not the ‘English language’, ‘English literature’, ‘English politeness’ – which, in a rare positive comment about Indian people was described as ‘very far inferior to that of the Hindoos’ – or ‘English science’.

A further article on ‘The Government in India, in the October 1858 issue, was similarly concerned with the best means of promoting Christianisation in India. This suggested that government had been responsible for mismanagement, yet refused to explore possible causes of the ‘revolution’ other than that of God’s displeasure:

> But even if we could discern enough in the Indian revolt to warrant us in giving an opinion of its causes, that opinion would neither be so profitable nor so indisputable as the inevitable reflection that God must have had a

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21 Church of Scotland, Home and Foreign Missionary Record, November, 1857, p 283
22 Church of Scotland, Home and Foreign Missionary Record, July, 1858, p 154
23 Ibid. p 155
24 Church of Scotland, Home and Foreign Missionary Record, July, 1858, p 154
25 Church of Scotland, Home and Foreign Missionary Record, February 1858, p 26-27
controversy – that He has a controversy – with the British people, in reference to their management of India.\(^{26}\)

This view that the hand of Providence was to be seen at work in visiting judgment on the British for failing to carry out properly the Christian duty entrusted to them was widely shared by missionaries, missionary societies and churches, and also found expression in the secular press. The aspect of government administration that particularly rankled for evangelicals was their ‘obstruction to Christianity and Christian missions’ and their giving of aid to ‘heathen shrines’. The events in India had, however, aroused the Christian public who would demand that government would cease to discriminate against ‘native Christians’ and allow missionaries to operate without interference. Such popular demand would ensure a change in government practice, as well as in name, as:

> No theorising utilitarian, no mission-hating secularist, no British heathen, will be suffered by the Christian public at home or abroad, to act as such men have done in days now happily gone by.\(^{27}\)

Supporters of missionary activity within the Church of Scotland, as in other denominations, reacted to the events in India with a renewed lobbying of government over the issue of how Christian proselytizing should be handled in India, as well as spurring on the church-going public to make greater efforts to support foreign missions. This propagandizing appeared to meet with a greater enthusiasm for missions at least in the short term.

As noted, there appear to be no extant copies of the *Free Church Record* for the years 1857 and 1858. Consultation of issues of the *Free Church Record* from 1861 to 1863 reveal only a few passing remarks relating to the uprising. In an article on ‘The Sects of India’ Muslims in particular were singled out for their role in the ‘mutiny’: ‘none of all the mutineers of 1857 were more remorseless of blood-thirsty than the devotees of Islam. Some of their Maulvis, or priests, presided at the most atrocious of the barbarities that were then so rife’.\(^{28}\) In a subsequent issue, it was noted with approval that Sir James Outram, ‘the hero of Lucknow – the chivalrous soldier and devoted friend’ had donated his Scinde prize money among six missionary societies, and that this had funded the building at a Free Church mission station at Bansberia-Tribeni, on the right bank of the Hoogly.\(^ {29}\)

In the early 1860s the *Free Church Record* continued to provide extensive coverage of missions in India, with this coverage predominating over that of missions in other countries. For the most part this reporting focuses on the relatively prosaic and dull details of everyday missionary work, along with the comings and goings of missionary personnel, amongst which, for example, it was noted that a Miss Laing, who had worked in Calcutta since 1840 ‘resigned and returned to Scotland during the mutiny’ – but no

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\(^{26}\) Church of Scotland, *Home and Foreign Missionary Record*, October 1858, p 245

\(^{27}\) Ibid., p 245

\(^{28}\) *Free Church of Scotland Record*, No XIX, April 20, 1862, p 226

\(^{29}\) *Free Church of Scotland Record*, No XXXIII, May 18, 1862, p 257
further hint is given as to whether her decision was directly related to these events or not.\footnote{Free Church of Scotland Record, February 2, 1863, p 149}

The key publication by a Free Church missionary was the series of letters written by Alexander Duff to the Rev Dr Tweedie, Convenor of the Free Church of Scotland Foreign Missions Board, and published in the Edinburgh newspaper, the \textit{Witness}. These letters commenced on 16\textsuperscript{th} May, 1857 and continued until 22\textsuperscript{nd} March, 1858. They were subsequently published in a single volume later in 1858. The context of their publication needs to be understood as one in which wide public circulation of the letters was expected, and indeed occurred. The publication of the letters in book form was by popular demand, as the publishers’ note makes clear. It also offers an endorsement of Duff as a man of judgment and experience. Although ‘It was first believed by some that Dr Duff had exaggerated the nature of the Indian crisis’ subsequent reports had borne out Duff’s views, which were ‘the ripe result of thirty years’ and would be valued ‘as the deliberate judgment of one who has possessed opportunities of observation almost unequalled’.\footnote{Alexander Duff, \textit{The Indian Rebellion: its causes and results. In a series of letters from the Rev. Alexander Duff, D.D. LL.D, Calcutta}, London: James Nisbet and Co., 1858, p iv}

The context of an ordained missionary writing to the church leadership and addressing church members and missionary supporters and a wider Christian public is also important in understanding the character of these writings. They are throughout imbued with religious rhetoric and had a religious purpose – primarily that of arousing greater enthusiasm for the task of Christianising India and encouraging greater support for foreign missions. Intermingled with such religious rhetoric, there are a number of strands to these writings: reporting of events based on news and eye-witness accounts reaching Duff in Calcutta; an analysis of attitudes towards British rule in India; explanations for the causes of the ‘rebellion’ and debates with the views of others on this; suggestions about appropriate government responses; and criticisms of the ‘old traditional’ policies of the East India Company and Board of Control for their treatment of Christianity and of indigenous religions in India. While these strands may be treated separately for analytic purposes, it is important to remember that all topics were invariably accompanied by a religious coda, and that the two essential points that underlay Duff’s understanding of the existence of British rule in India were that India was a gift of God’s Providence to Britain for the purpose of Christianising it, and that the ‘rebellion’ was a sign of God’s displeasure for Britain’s failure to rise adequately to this duty.

As noted above, missionary writings on India had already propagated negatively stereotypical views of Indian religions in the decades preceding the uprising. Accounts of specific incidents, of killings, of Indian leaders, and of other aspects of the uprising thus provided plentiful opportunities for reinforcing these stereotypes, and of adding to or elaborating these in ways which intensified their negativity. Thus, characterisations of Indians as ‘superstitious’ and ‘fanatical’ were much in evidence. For example, the ‘superstitious’ nature of the sepoys allowed them to be manipulated over the greased
cartridges affair by ‘some deep designing men’, while the conviction that British rule would end on the centenary day of the battle of Plassey came to be a certainty ‘in the minds of an ignorant, superstitious, fanatical people’. To these characteristics were added the further, and more damning ones, of disloyalty, faithlessness and ‘Asiatic treachery’, while accounts of British fatalities at the hands of Indians were invariably accompanied by epithets such as ‘ruthless savages’, ‘savage butchery’, and ‘brutal mutineers’ aided by ‘fiendish associates’, who constituted ‘myriads scouring the country […] ravenous for blood and plunder’.34

Duff did not stint himself in giving details of ‘atrocities’, and of the killing of women and children in particular, accounts peppered with exclamation marks and sensationalist in tone, though he also notes that many details ‘of the most loathsome and revolting kind had been purposely suppressed, to spare the agonised feelings of distant mourning friends’. He hints that European women were raped, for example at Allahabad, where the rebels’ ‘treatment of any European females that have fallen into their hands has been to horrible to be expressed by me’.36 To point out that Duff’s descriptions of such events were sensationalist in tone is not to deny that the killings were genuinely shocking, but rather to emphasise that the intemperate sensationalism with which they were reported encouraged vengefulness and intensified the racism of missionary representations of Indian peoples and society, and it is notable, and somewhat surprising for a Christian minister, that Duff explicitly came to the support of General Neill, criticised for the severity and character of his reprisals against rebels in Cawnpore. The extent to which Duff’s accounts were factually accurate has been contested, though Duff himself was at pains to assure readers that he had access to many witnesses and reliable sources.

Whatever their accuracy, he was not alone in providing accounts of this nature, and, indeed, extensive coverage of this nature, drawing on many eye-witness accounts, appeared in English and Scottish newspapers for months, as Duff was well aware, judging by the several allusions to his readers’ familiarity with the coverage of the ‘public journals’. In general these denunciations of Indian ‘atrocities, Indian society and religions, served to justify British rule and a robust military response to the uprising.

A striking characteristic of Duff’s account is the extent of the hostility towards British rule that he imputes to Indians, a view in line with his assertion that the ‘rebellion’ was not merely a military revolt. In his view there was never ‘anything like affection or loyal attachment’ (emphasis in original) to British rule, and although British rule had often been welcomed at first by ‘the labouring classes’, after a while they were ‘apt to

32 Ibid., p 18
33 Ibid., p 26
34 Duff, op.cit., passim.
35 Ibid., p 19
36 Ibid., p 20
37 Ibid., p 245-246
39 Duff’s position is described by Embree thus: ‘His special contribution to the historiography of the period is his insistence on the deep-seated hostility of most Indians to British rule’. Ainslie T Embree, 1857 in India: Mutiny or War of Independence, Lexington: D C Heath and Company, 1968, p 13
40 Duff, op.cit., p 98
settle down into a state of necessitated acquiescence or sullen indifference, or latent disaffection and discontent'. For this reason, the ‘fair-weather representations of men in high office’ that there was no disaffection or ill-will towards the British Government among the ‘general rural or civic population’ was seriously mistaken. However, there were differences among different groups in India in their attitudes to British rule, with the haters of it ‘to be found chiefly among the Mohammedans, Brahmins, Rajputs, and other armed and turbulent classes of Northern and Central India’. To ‘genuine Mohammedans and Hindus […] our rule, merely as the rule of Christian foreigners, […] would be a standing grievance and unforgiveable offence’. Duff argued strongly against both the view that the ‘the present revolt is a purely military one and nothing more’ and the view that ‘the rebellion is a national one’ (emphasis in the original).

In his earlier letters in 1857, Duff repeatedly declared that the ‘revolt’ was a ‘Mohammedan conspiracy’ that had been ‘long-concocted’, and also made reference to the theory that ‘Russian spies’ had ‘been successfully at work in inflaming the bigotry of the Mussulman and the prejudices of the high-caste Hindu’, with Persia too, having a hand in this. By December 1857, however, he has moved to the view that the ‘long and deliberately concocted’ rebellion had ‘been able to array the Hindu and Mohammedan in an unnatural confederacy’. Notwithstanding this recognition of Hindu involvement, it is Muslims who were particularly the object of Duff’s vituperation – the ‘Mohammedans to a man’ were regarded as being against the British government, while not all ‘Hindustanis’ were. ‘Mohammedans’ stood out from other Indian ‘races, […] in their sullen and gloomy isolation’, and ‘their faith, not less than their descent, has tended to confer on them a character of sternness and intractability’. The greased cartridges, and other ‘alleged causes connected with caste and religion’ were ‘the flimsiest pretexts’. In essence the ‘mutiny and rebellion’ resulted from a ‘political conspiracy’ between Mohammedan chiefs and Brahmins and other high-caste Hindus.

Though Duff clearly takes the view that government officials had not grasped the potential danger that might arise from disaffection among Indian people as well as among the army, he in general applauded the effects of British rule, seeing it as having brought order, social advancement for the people, and social reforms. However, he inveighed against the ‘old “traditional policy” of the Home and Foreign Indian Government’ with its ‘shrinking dread, if not actual repudiation, of Christianity, and its co-relative
pandering to heathenish prejudices'. This is the issue that rankled most with missionaries, and which led them to declare that God was visiting punishment on Britain:

It is the Lord who, in a strange way, and for the accomplishment of one of the noblest of ends, even that of the evangelisation of its people, gave India to Britain. It is the Lord who, on account of our culpable misimprovement of the awful trust, in His sore displeasure, suffered India to be nearly lost to us.

Stressing the benefits of Christianity for India and for British rule, Duff pointed out that ‘native Christians’ were the only Indians who demonstrated true loyalty to the British government. He also asserted (as did other missionaries) that during the uprising there was no hostility manifested towards missionaries as such:

To prevent all misconceptions with reference to missionaries, it ought to be emphatically noted, that nowhere has any special enmity or hostility been manifested towards them by the mutineers. Such of them as fell in the way of the rebels were simply dealt with precisely in the same way as all other Europeans were dealt with. They belonged to the governing class [...]. (emphasis in the original)

Nor was there ‘exhibited towards missionaries or their doings’ any ‘special animosity’ by the ‘natives generally’ (emphasis in the original). The same comment was made of Thomas Hunter in the context of a Church of Scotland debate as to whether a memorial should be erected to him as a martyr. Opposition was expressed to such a memorial, as Hunter was killed not as a missionary, but as a European, though this objection to the creation of a memorial was overruled.

For Duff, as for his co-religionists, the ferocity of the condemnation of Indian actions during the uprising only served to strengthen the argument for Christianisation of India. The widespread disaffection and resentment towards British rule described by Duff, probably with considerable accuracy, never gave rise to a questioning of the rightness of British rule in India, nor to many aspects of its administration, with the notable exception of the East India Company’s reluctance to give free rein to missionary activity. While there is also no doubt considerable accuracy in attributing the aim of overthrow of British rule to those groups whose power had been or was most likely to be eroded by that rule, it is interesting that Duff stresses the political dimensions of this, and downplays the religious. This is of a piece with the view that no hostility was exhibited towards missionaries as such, and these points together effectively amount to a denial that missionary activity could have played any role in provoking the uprising, implicit though this denial may be rather than explicit. Thus, while Duff’s experience and knowledge of India led him to put forward an analysis that viewed the causes of the uprising as complex, and with some depth and persuasiveness on certain points, his overall presentation of the situation was shaped by his position as a committed Christian, and

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52 Ibid., p 238
53 Ibid., p 263
54 Ibid., p 132
55 Ibid., p 133
56 This debate was reported in the Edinburgh Courant, May 28, 1858
served the goal of extending Christian proselytisation in India. To a modern reader, this representation of events in India appears distorted, blind to key components of the situation such as the religious tensions that missionaries had themselves helped to create, and racist in its stereotyping of Indian peoples and in its elaboration of racialising categories. Yet, at the time, Duff’s vision was shared by many of his fellow missionaries, and also by many committed Christians and the wider Christian public at home.

Duff’s writings have been discussed at some length, both because of the fact that they provide a more in-depth account than any other Scottish missionary writings on this topic, and because of the wider audience they reached. Duff was not, however, the only missionary who communicated his views on the uprising to the Scottish public, as occasional references to public meetings in the press suggest. Evidence of what might have been said at such meetings is, however, hard to come by, with there only appearing to be a small number of texts of such speeches extant, such as that, for example, by J Murray Mitchell, also a Free Church missionary like Duff.

Mitchell, who saw long service as a missionary in Bombay, had delivered a lecture on the uprising on a number of occasions, with this being published in 1859. His emphasis in this pamphlet, *Indian Missions: viewed in connexion with The Mutiny and Other Recent Events*, is not so much about the events of the ‘mutiny’ or its causes, as about the lessons to be learned. As with Duff’s writings, Mitchell’s case serves to encourage support for the missionary cause. For Mitchell, the events in India had revealed the true character of ‘Heathenism’ which was to be contrasted with Christianity:

> On a wide and lofty stage the heathen religions have been suffered to enact a most gloomy tragedy, to reveal their genuine character in the sight of nations. [……]. It is a lesson for all time; for although, in the sad history of earth, deeds of equal atrocity have been committed, yet never was the spirit of Paganism so clearly and sharply defined against the spirit of Christianity.\(^{57}\)

In line with the views of Duff and other missionaries, Mitchell declared that no-one could deny the connection between British shortcomings and God’s punishment, which had resulted from the government having banned missionaries from contact with the army. The events had shown up the character of Indians, who are prone to ‘Childish superstition, grossest credulity, liability to panic, and ungovernable excitement – a character combining many of the attributes of the child and the savage’.\(^{58}\) Mitchell, like Duff, stressed that the ‘natives’ had no quarrel with missionaries, and argues that the loyalty of ‘native Christians’ to the British government was a riposte to the criticism of missionaries that they had made few converts, with the expectation that now there would be greater support for missions from British Christians for the urgent task of the evangelisation of India. Mitchell listed the increase in missionary activities occurring prior to the uprising, including translations of the key texts of other religions, which allowed such religions to be exposed to comparison with Christianity, and translation and circulation of Christian scriptures in vernacular languages. He also listed the many

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\(^{58}\) Ibid., p 10
‘positive blessings’ of material progress that had resulted from British rule, such as railways, the telegraph, mines, irrigation, social reform, and education, including to females.\textsuperscript{59} Despite these benefits, British rule is criticised, as in the case of Duff, for the ‘traditional system’ of governance in India, and particularly for the endowment of ‘heathen’ temples.\textsuperscript{60} Consequently he welcomed the end of the system of government of the East India Company and the Board of Control.

Examination of the sources discussed above suggests that the ‘official’ missionary literature by or about missionaries in this period, with the exception of Duff’s writings, mostly concentrated on giving reports of the continuing missionary work in India, with limited references to the uprising. Where the uprising was referred to, on the one hand Indians were denounced for their disloyalty and for their actions during the uprising, while on the other hand the British government was criticised for failing to adequately support the Christianisation of India, positions on which the Church of Scotland and Free Church of Scotland were at one, even if they differed over approaches to educational work in India. Mitchell’s pamphlet, like the periodicals, had no discussion of causes, but was confined to using the events of the uprising as a means of yet again emphasising the superiority of Christianity, the benefits of British rule, and the need for further evangelisation. It is perhaps surprising that there was no more extensive discussion of the possible causes of the uprising in missionary literature, although Duff, was of course, the exception to the rule, and a very significant exception, as a leading and well-known missionary in Scottish church circles and more widely in Britain and America.\textsuperscript{61}

Duff’s writings have been characterised by modern historians as both ‘bigoted’ and ‘sensationalist’. Cox, in the context of discussion of the evangelical tradition in India, cites the approach of Duff ‘as being in some respects the most defamatory of all’ in its attitudes to Indians,\textsuperscript{62} with much of the religious discourse of Duff and his fellow missionaries being ‘painful reading, transparently awful in its ethnocentric bigotry’.\textsuperscript{63} Taylor has commented more generally of accounts of the uprising, that it was ‘men of the cloth’ who spread the most sensationalist accounts, without attempting to verify their accuracy, and particularly singles out Duff for criticism: ‘Dr Duff was a clergyman but his account is bereft of Christian forgiveness – indeed contains uncorroborated sensationalist propaganda’.\textsuperscript{64} Indeed, Taylor implies that this was not merely a matter of journalistic style, but that perhaps had a more ‘sinister’ aim of ‘preparing the public for a more intense effort to convert India to Christianity’.\textsuperscript{65} These are judgments from which I would not necessarily dissent, but there is a case to be made that there is more to Duff’s account than ‘sensationalist’ reporting of ‘atrocities’, and that while biased in particular against Muslims, it does offer some insights into conditions in India at the time. What is

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{59} Ibid., p 24
\item \textsuperscript{60} Ibid., p 28
\item \textsuperscript{61} See Embree, op.cit. p. 13
\item \textsuperscript{63} Ibid., p. 25
\item \textsuperscript{64} P J O Taylor (ed) \textit{A companion to the ’Indian mutiny’ of 1857}, Delhi : Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 380
\item \textsuperscript{65} Ibid., p. 22
\end{itemize}
most striking, however, is that Duff’s view of the widespread hostility and resistance to British rule did not lead him to question the justifiability of its existence, but rather to a renewed evangelical fervour for Christianisation as the means of generating loyal Indian subjects of the British crown. Furthermore, however we might judge Duff’s opinions and rhetoric now, he articulated a position to which many British Christians were sympathetic, and there was thus a receptive audience for his views.

Coverage in Edinburgh newspapers
As might be expected coverage of the events of the uprising in the leading Edinburgh newspapers of the day was extensive, including reports of events with many detailed eye-witness accounts, and reporting of parliamentary debates and government action. References to missionaries or debates on the issue of the government’s treatment of religions in India were not central to this coverage, though such material did appear in the press. This section examines selected examples of this latter type of coverage only, with a view to assessing the influence of missionary and church opinion on the wider public.

As noted above, coverage of the uprising in missionary periodicals was in fact relatively limited, with the exception of Duff’s writings, and focussed more on the day to day work of missions than on any extended discussion of causes of the uprising. As also noted, Duff was, however, a very significant exception. The publication of his letters, written to the convenor of the Free Church Foreign Mission Committee, was sanctioned by the Free Church, and publication in the Witness enabled them to reach a much wider public than active missionary supporters. The Witness was one of the three main newspapers published in Edinburgh in the 1850s. It had been launched in 1840, under the editorship of Hugh Miller, and did much to generate support for the 1843 secession which led to the formation of the Free Church. While the paper was not officially under the control of the Free Church, it remained loyal to it. It was consequently the natural vehicle for the publication of Duff’s letters, and this also represented the most significant missionary input into a wider public debate.

Within the Scotsman the major coverage given to the attitudes of the churches towards the uprising was occasioned by the national day of ‘Humiliation and Prayer’. In reaction to the events in India, Queen Victoria issued a proclamation, ‘For a Day of Solemn Fast, Humiliation, and Prayer, in Scotland’, on account of the ‘grievous mutiny and disturbances which have broken out in India’. The object of the day was that people might humble themselves before God, ‘in order to obtain pardon of our sins’, and to implore ‘His Blessing and Assistance on our Arms for the Restoration of Tranquillity’.

While the lengthy sermons and addresses given on the Day of Fast, and published in the Scotsman, generally supported the view that events in India were a sign of God’s wrath

66 Hugh Miller (1802-1856) rose from humble origins as a stone-mason to become a leading journalist, a popular writer on the science of geology, a social commentator and campaigner, and a leader in church affairs.
67 The Scotsman, Monday, 28 September, 1857. Separate proclamations were issued for England and Ireland.
68 Ibid.
for the failure of the government to promote Christianity, there were a small number of dissenting voices. The proclaiming of the Fast had not been greeted with universal approval, since it meant the sacrifice of a day’s wage for ‘the working man’ who could ill afford it, nor was it obvious how this would offer succour to the British in India:

It does then seem hopelessly inscrutable how by mulcting the artless artificer and drudging day-labourer in the penalty of a day’s pay and provision for his family any effect in mitigating the mutiny could be gained, or helping Havelock to relieve Lucknow, and march a victorious army to the siege of Delhi. 69

Furthermore, the experience of events in India should have ‘taught those in authority that forced prayers are no devotion’, since it was evident that the ‘attempt to force religion down the throats of the Hindoo and Mussulman’ was ‘inimical to their tastes and prejudices’. 70

That the notion that the sins of the people of Britain were being punished by God in the form of the Indian uprising had wide currency but was not accepted by all. The Rev Dr Robert Lee, preaching a sermon at Greyfriars Church, noted that though ‘their gracious sovereign’ had called on people ‘to humble themselves and confess their sins in connection with the disasters in India’, it was ‘not a matter quite plain what were the particular transgressions which they ought to acknowledge’. 71 It was ‘arbitrary and presumptuous’ to imagine ‘some connection between the calamities in question and the private and public sins (real or supposed) of persons in Great Britain’. 72 Though ‘Some religious persons thought that these misfortunes were designed to punish us for not having used our public authority more absolutely and forcibly in promoting the Christian religion’, 73 he ‘Denied that a foreign nation was justified in using the taxes of a people to propagate a religion which the population almost universally rejected’. 74 However, although religious neutrality was a sound policy, suppression of certain practices was for the good of the people, and therefore justifiable:

Such customs as the suttee, or burning of widows, the prohibition of widows marrying, the forfeiture of his inheritance by a person who changed his religion, and the like, were examples of Hindoo intolerance from which the British Government was bound to release its Hindoo subjects.. 75

Despite the justice of such acts of British rule:

Perhaps the sin which would be least thought of this day was our being rulers in India at all. It was not evident that we had any call to ‘garrison the world’, or any peculiar qualification for the task. 76

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69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 The Scotsman, Thursday, 8 October, 1857.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
Lee appears to have been in a tiny minority in questioning the imperial project in itself, but even he ended up defending British rule. Since Britain was now in this position, ‘we must maintain it if we can’.77

In the *Edinburgh Courant* there was similarly extensive coverage of the events of the Indian uprising. The *Courant* did not provide editorial comment, and many of the articles printed in it were reprinted from other newspapers, such as the *Times*, and also occasionally the *Witness*. For example, some of Duff’s letters published in the *Witness* were reprinted in the *Courant*. As might be expected the death of the Rev Thomas Hunter and his wife and child was reported. Unlike the *Scotsman* the *Courant* did not publish the sermons delivered on the ‘Day of National Humiliation and Prayer’, though the proclamation announcing the day was published. References to missionaries were relatively few. However, where this occurred it tended to give voice to the evangelical view. For example, in an article on ‘The Bengal Army and the Missionaries’ it was pointed out that missionaries had been banned from contact with the army, an indication of ‘The wretched worldly spirit that has guided our Indian Government’, adding that if fear of proselytism had been the real cause of the uprising, ‘the property and lives of the missionaries would have been selected for special vengeance’.78 Similarly on a number of occasions the issue of government policy on religion was referred to, mostly in reporting church meetings, resolutions or reports. Thus it was noted in October, 1857, that the Synod of Fife had put a resolution to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland that there should be repudiation of any government dispatches that did not ‘offer their avowal and unequivocal protection and countenance to our using every legitimate effort to promulgate and advance the whole truths of the Bible, freely and fully, to every subject of British India’.79 The following month, a public meeting of the Edinburgh Auxiliary of the London Missionary Society, addressed by the Rev Cotton Mather, missionary from India, was reported, where he had declared that ‘the system of countenancing and paying for the support of heathen religions ought immediately to be abolished’.80 Again, in April 1858, there are further reports of Church of Scotland Presbyteries putting forward resolutions that the government should ‘openly assert its Christian character’, give encouragement to missions, and abolish regulations prohibiting the introduction of ‘Scriptures’ into government supported seminaries.81

The *Edinburgh Courant* also provided some coverage of the views of missionaries and their supporters on the causes of the uprising. One of the letters from Duff that was reprinted was that giving his view that the ‘rebellion’ was neither purely a military revolt or a national one.82 In reporting a debate that took place at the City Council in September 1857, it was noted that a resolution critical of the government had been moved, asserting that it was not a military mutiny, ‘but a revolt of race, religion, and colour against a dominant Power alien in all these respects’.83 A public meeting in Glasgow had heard

77 Ibid.
78 *Edinburgh Courant*, August 5, 1857; article reprinted from *News of the Churches*.
79 *Edinburgh Courant*, October 16, 1857
80 *Edinburgh Courant*, November 4, 1857
81 *Edinburgh Courant*, April 2, 1858
82 *Edinburgh Courant*, January 4, 1858
83 *Edinburgh Courant*, September 23, 1857
from Sir Archibald Alison that ‘It is in vain to speak of the greased cartridges; the revolt was organised by the Mohammedans years before the greased cartridges were heard of’. Alison, like Duff, took the view that it was not a national movement, contrasting the acts of Indians with national heroes such as William Tell, William Wallace, and Robert the Bruce.

In his discussion of the reaction to the Indian uprising of the Scottish press in general, R M W Cowan notes that Disraeli’s view of the causes of the ‘Mutiny’ was that ‘Hindus did not resent independent missionary enterprise’ but they “dreaded the union of missionary enterprise with the political powers of the Government” He comments that though the charge was not made against evangelism as such, the Church press ‘responded most briskly’, and ‘repudiated it as a slander, quoting reports from missionaries and showing small respect for the native susceptibilities which were supposed to have been outraged’. And although The Scotsman urged respect for Indian institutions, in joining in the call for the day of ‘national humiliation and prayer’ it supported the view that the calamity arose from neglect of the duty to Christianise. As noted, the extensive coverage in The Scotsman of the ‘Day of Solemn Fast, Humiliation and Prayer’, (7 October, 1857), and of sermons preached, indicated a degree of agonising about the interpretation of events from a religious perspective, namely whether or not the ‘Mutiny’ was a punishment for the sins of people in Britain. While views expressed in the press were not unmixed, it was the demand for enhanced efforts at Christianisation that was to garner more support, since ‘public reaction to the horrors of the struggle was predominantly against the view that India had a culture worthy of being preserved, or that its people had substantial grievances against our commercial, administrative, and religious purposes’.

This evidence indicates that, while newspaper coverage of events in India consisted predominantly of accounts of ‘atrocities’ and British military retaliation against Indians, the missionary presence in India was also recognised in the press, and the views of the Presbyterian churches had a hearing. Indeed, the complaints of missionaries and their supporters that the government had been wanting in its attitude to Christianity were widely supported, though there were also some dissenting voices. Missionaries and their supporters were thus clearly able to communicate their views to the wider Scottish public. How wide this readership was in Edinburgh is suggested by figures cited by Cowan on circulation and the development of the Scottish newspaper press in the 1850s. In 1850, the Witness had a circulation of 2460, compared to 2900 for the Scotsman and 1630 for the Edinburgh Courant, with the two former papers being Liberal in their politics, while the Courant was Conservative. By 1858, the Scotsman had achieved a circulation of 10,000. This increased newspaper circulation was due in part to the lower price of newspapers which resulted from the removal of the Advertisement Duty in 1853 and of the compulsory newspaper Stamp in 1855, and partly due to ‘the adventitious aid of

84 Sir Archibald Alison (1792-1867), born in Shropshire, was a lawyer and historian, and played a prominent role in academic institutions in Scotland in the mid 19th century.
85 Edinburgh Courant, September 25, 1857
87 Ibid., p 406.
89 See R M W Cowan, The Newspaper in Scotland, 1946, Glasgow: Outram
sensational news, as from the Crimea and India’, which did much to boost circulation in the short term.\textsuperscript{90}

While the focus here is on coverage in the leading Edinburgh newspapers of the time, it can also be assumed that similarly wide coverage of events in India was provided by Glasgow newspapers and those of other cities such as Dundee (particularly given its connection to Calcutta through the jute industry), though it is not possible to say without further research how likely they were to have provided coverage of the position and role of missionaries. Within the Edinburgh context there was an important overlap between publication of writings in missionary literature as such and in the Edinburgh press, in the form of the \textit{Witness}, in which Duff’s letters were published, and this suggests that missionary and church opinion was likely to have received more extensive circulation in Edinburgh than in other Scottish cities.

**Conclusions**

The purpose of this paper has been to investigate the perspectives of Scottish Presbyterian missionaries on the Indian uprising of 1857, and to ask what impact these had on the Scottish public. The Scottish missionary presence in India had been established for around thirty years at the time of the uprising, and though numbers of missionaries were small, they had access to the apparatus of missionary support at home through which to broadcast their views. Through the regular publication of missionary periodicals, and through preaching and addressing public meetings while on furlough, they had through their ‘missionary intelligence’ prepared the groundwork for sensationalist, denunciatory, and antagonistic representations of Indian actions during the events of the uprising. This is not to say that the killings that occurred were not shocking, but rather to argue that people were predisposed to represent and understand events in particular ways, and that this appeared to blind people to any more considered reflection on the causes of the uprising.

Given the religious nature of Scottish society at this time (25.6\% of the population were church-goers in 1851, rising to 505\% in 1905),\textsuperscript{91} and the fact that the leadership of missionary organisations and boards at home were composed of middle class professional elites and their families, missionary literature in itself already had the capacity to reach a sizeable audience. During 1857 and 1858 this capacity was enhanced by press coverage relevant to missionary concerns and of debates about what government attitudes to the promotion of Christianity ought to be. In this sense, 1857 represented a new phase in the profile of missions and missionaries in Scotland, which at least in the short-term generated greater support.\textsuperscript{92} Thus, while Scottish missionaries were for the most part neither at the centre of events in India, nor at the centre of public discussion of these

\textsuperscript{90} Cowan, 1946, p. 276
\textsuperscript{92} The missionary periodicals suggest that there was an immediate upsurge in support in Scotland, including very generous donations from individual benefactors, though this does not appear to have been sustained through the 1860s, with the big expansion in missionary activity occurring later in the century, in particular when the supply of qualified personnel was expanded through women’s access to higher education and the professions.
events in Scotland, they were able to influence public opinion, and with the change in the nature of government in India following the uprising, missionaries effectively achieved their objectives of greater freedom of action to proselytize.

Missionaries demonstrated the capacity to get their case aired in the press and supported at home, and to influence government decisions, which suggests that they were relatively integrated into the apparatus of temporal power and able to operate its levers in their interest. But at the same time, the extent to which they were (or perceived themselves to be) separate from the state and to which they were peripheral to state action, allowed them to persuade themselves that they played no role in provoking the uprising. The distinction missionaries made between church and state, and their emphasis on the prohibition from approaching sepoys as absolving them from any provocative role, were distinctions that were probably not apparent to Indian observers, especially given the penchant of missionaries for seeking support of governors and other civil service dignitaries e.g. at annual examinations in mission schools, and given their links with army officers. That there was apparently regular contact between army officers, soldiers and missionaries in various places in India, and that some military men were known to be committed Christians and that some actively supported missions through financial donations, rather undercuts the argument that the army had been free from Christian influence. While it seems to have been largely true that army officers did not attempt to preach Christianity to Indian soldiers, (although there were exceptions to this, such as Colonel Wheler, whose case was covered in the newspapers at the time) the social interaction between some officers and missionaries must have none the less been apparent.

In their representations of the uprising, missionaries used events to reinforce and deepen negative stereotypes of Hindus and Muslims, with the latter in particular being the object of hostile comment, and to bolster their arguments for the need for Christianisation. In this, missionaries can be said to have manipulated events to further their own cause, just as some Indians were said to have manipulated religious sensitivities in relation to the greased cartridges. The increasingly virulent racism of missionary discourses at this time also perhaps represents a definitive shift towards the dominance of theories of ‘scientific’ racism as a key component of imperialist discourses. Furthermore, the missionary commitment to global Christianisation manifested itself in unquestioning commitment to the British empire and British rule, even if in specific aspects the latter was found wanting. Such moral justifications for empire and imperialism played a significant role in encouraging imperialist sentiment in Scotland, and, indeed, as the 19th century advanced, fostered the view that foreign missions represented a specific Scottish contribution to empire. Scottish missionaries had not yet reached the peak of their public support, acclaim and mythologisation in 1857, but their enhanced public profile at this time represented a shift from a relatively marginal position towards one of enhanced influence and status in Scottish society.

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93 See Edinburgh Courant, August 14, 1857
94 Susan Thorne has noted a ‘hardening of racial attitudes’ at this time, citing as evidence Dickens reaction to the events of the Indian uprising. See Susan Thorne, Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in 19th-Century England, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, Chapter 4.