
Magnus Anderson, James Haldane, and Revival in Orkney in 1797

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I. A tale of old Orkney

Very little has been written about the history of Presbyterian evangelical faith and life in the Orkney Islands. Few if any names of preachers or prominent Christians in those islands are known to history. In this article we will look merely at one or two events and personalities in Orcadian church-life, for the greater part focusing on a branch of the Secession Church from the late eighteenth century through to the mid-nineteenth century. We will deal particularly with the mission of James Haldane to those islands in 1797 and a local member of the Secession who assisted Haldane in the latter's brief but spiritually fruitful visit that year. By any measure, Haldane's was a momentous visit. The local layman who was a prominent assistant of Haldane was one Magnus Anderson. His story, so interwoven with the Haldane work in 1797, is mentioned by the Rev Alexander Goodfellow, Free Church minister in South Ronaldsay after 1878. Goodfellow wrote of this in his *Birsay Church History*, published in Kirkwall in 1903.

One of the intriguing things mentioned by Goodfellow about Magnus Anderson was his connection with James Haldane (1768–1851), who in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries did so much evangelistic work throughout the length and breadth of the country, often with his worthy brother Robert (1764–1842). Among his peripatetic labours, Captain Haldane undertook a preaching tour to the Orkney Islands in 1797. It was in connection with that visit, Goodfellow tells us, that Magnus Anderson came to prominence. He was to be Haldane's 'right hand man' during his visit to Orkney, 'guiding and directing him in his journey through these islands.'¹

¹ Alexander Goodfellow, *Birsay Church History* (Kirkwall, 1903), p. 140.

In point of fact, it was from Burghead, in Morayshire, that James Haldane set sail on his journey to Orkney in 1797. This is recorded in Haldane's *Journal*:

August 11. – Left Elgin and came to Brughhead [Burghead], where a good many of our friends from Elgin, and the people of the village assembled, to whom we preached. We then embarked for Kirkwall. Several of our brethren accompanied us to the boat, and bade us farewell, most affectionately commending us to the grace and care of the Lord Jesus.²

It was this journey that was to bring rich gospel blessings to the Orkney Islands, and in that connection, to bring to some prominence in the cause of Christ, Magnus Anderson.³

II. Magnus Anderson – early history

All that we know about Magnus Anderson is what we read in a few history books and newspaper articles. There are no surviving personal memorabilia. It is not [yet] known for sure where he was born, but it appears that he was born in 1765, possibly in Shetland. The circumstances that took Magnus to the Orkney Isles are not known, if indeed his early life had been spent in Shetland. We do know, however, that he was married in Kirkwall in July 1790, to a girl from Westry by the name of Christian Seater. They had four children, two boys and two girls. Only the fourth child, a boy they named James Urquhart, seems to have survived infancy. James was born in September 1799. His mother, sadly, died shortly after his birth. Magnus married for a second time, in 1802. By his second wife, Helen Eunson, he had a son and a daughter, but it is not known whether they survived infancy.

By 1799 Magnus had established himself in business in Kirkwall. In the Woodwick area of the old town of Kirkwall, Magnus set up the first printing business in Orkney. That was in 1798. He brought a practical bookbinder from Edinburgh and set up a book-binding shop.⁴ It was said

² [James Alexander Haldane], *Journal of a Tour Through the Northern Counties of Scotland and the Orkney Isles, in Autumn 1797* (Edinburgh, 1798), p. 50. See also, Alexander Haldane, *Memoirs of the lives of Robert Haldane of Airthrey, and of his brother, James Alexander Haldane* (London, 1852), p. 165.

³ It may be of interest for readers to know that the author is a great-great-great grandson of this Magnus Anderson. In addition, by an unusual providence the author was Free Church minister in *Burghead* between 1987 and 1996.

⁴ For the origins and subsequent history of this business, see 'The Orkney and Shetland Press', *The Orcadian*, 19th March 1917; John Mowat, 'The Early Newspaper Press of Orkney and Shetland', *The Orcadian*, 5th February 1931; W.H., 'This is our Own Story', *The Orcadian*, November 1954.



Captain James Haldane (1768–1851).

that, ‘He is thought to have laid the foundations of the firm by importing the printed sheets of books, mainly of a religious nature, from Edinburgh, binding them in Kirkwall and then selling them throughout the islands.’ To this is added the comment that, ‘Many a well-thumbed family Bible of nineteenth century Orkney must have had this humble origin.’⁵

Clearly Magnus by this time had come under the power of the gospel, and had come to personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, for much of his business involved the

binding of Bibles and psalm-books from uncut sheets which he brought in from the mainland, as noted above. He would sell these in the Lammas Fair in Kirkwall and around the countryside. Notably, the establishment of his business was a year after a preaching tour of James Haldane to Kirkwall, and one can assume that the sort of business in which Magnus became involved the following year was given its impetus from the spiritual movement which resulted from Haldane’s ministry.

When James Haldane came to Orkney in 1797 he was shocked by what he heard and saw: ‘The Islands of Orkney,’ he was to record in his *Journal*, ‘have been, for a period beyond the memory of any man living...as much in need of the true gospel of Jesus Christ, so far as respects the preaching of it, as any of the islands of the Pacific Ocean... The manners and conduct of the people, as in every other place, are corrupted in a due proportion to their ignorance of the gospel, and to no part of Orkney, as we learn, did this remark more justly apply than it did about five or six years ago to Kirkwall, where, excepting two or three individuals, the great body of the people were utter strangers to the doctrine of justification by faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, without works.’⁶ Of religion in Orkney in the eighteenth century, another writer observed that ‘The complaint made by the Evangelicals that the people generally had grown up “in ignorance of the Gospel,

⁵ ‘This is our Own Story’.

⁶ Haldane, *Journal*, pp. 51-2. See also, Alexander Haldane, op. cit., p. 166.

regardless of the Lord's Day, and destitute of true piety", was certainly true of some Orkney parishes.⁷ With the system of patronage which prevailed after the Patronage Act of 1712, it is perhaps not surprising that 'moderatism', a 'formal' or 'nominal' type of Christianity, was the common characteristic of ministry in the parish churches.

III. Secessions in the eighteenth century

During the course of the century in Scotland there were various secession movements from the Established Church. Perhaps the most significant of these took place in 1733 when four outstanding evangelicals, the Revs. Ebenezer Erskine (Stirling), William Wilson (Perth), Alexander Moncrieff (Abernethy), and James Fisher (Kinclaven, Dunkeld), with the people who attached themselves to them, constituted themselves a Presbytery, subsequently known as the 'Associate Presbytery' or Secession Church. This body of seceders grew so rapidly in the following twelve years that in 1745 it broke up into three Presbyteries and became known as the 'Associate Synod', with 43 charges and thirty ordained ministers. In assessing the impact of the Secession on Scottish religious life at the time, Principal John Macleod suggested that 'the Secession kept alive the witness for the Reformed Faith in many parts of Scotland when the State Church came under the blight of a ministry that had no place in its message for the good news of a gracious salvation.'⁸

A controversy, however, arose in 1747 that was to split the Secession. It had to do with what was known as the 'Burgess Oath'. This, basically, was an oath which was required to be taken by any who wished to exercise a vote, politically, or who wished to carry on a trade or business within the burghs of Edinburgh, Glasgow, or Perth. By this oath, loyalty was affirmed to the 'true [protestant] religion presently professed within this realm'. That seems innocuous enough. But some of these Seceders were sensitive to anything that smacked of giving an assent to the tenets of the Established Church from which they had after all separated. There was a difference within the Synod. Some felt the taking of the oath did not involve compromise, others felt it did. They split into two sections: the *Burghers*, being those who did not disapprove the oath, and the *Anti-Burghers*, those who did. As far as Orkney was to be concerned, the Secession Church which was formally established there in 1795, was aligned to the Anti-Burghers. This section was by then

⁷ Ernest W. Marwick, 'The Story of the Orkney People in the Nineteenth Century', *The Orcadian*, Thursday, 21st October 1954, p. 2.

⁸ John Macleod, *Scottish Theology* (Edinburgh, 1946), p. 183.

known as the General Associate Synod (Anti-Burghers), as distinct from the Associate Synod (Burghers), which, however, was never represented in the Orkney Islands, and was the smaller of the two groups.

IV. Magnus Anderson associates with the Seceders

Whilst Magnus Anderson would have been brought up in the Established Church, he subsequently allied himself with the Secession movement. As to how this came about, we have no specific information. Although no Secession Church was planted in Orkney until 1793, it appears that for several years before then, in response to the deadness of the national Church, religious, or praying, societies had been on the go. There was such a society in Kirkwall as early as 1790, and we may have no doubt that Magnus Anderson was associated with it. B.H. Hossack, in his *Kirkwall in the Orkneys*, published in 1900, points out that the first seceders in Orkney were laymen. One John Russel (or Russland as the name is sometimes spelt), a tailor by trade, had come under the influence of an Anti-Burgher minister, the Rev. William Graham, in Newcastle. 'On his return to Kirkwall,' says Hossack, 'he organised a small band of about a dozen persons for the purpose of holding regular prayer meetings.'⁹ Magnus Anderson would doubtless have been one of that group.

It appears that the first Secession congregation emerged in 1793 largely from the praying society organised by John Russel and other like-minded souls. Two years later, the General Associate (Anti-Burgher) Presbytery of Edinburgh granted the congregation the status of a calling charge, and in 1796 a building was opened capable of seating about 700 people. This church is referred to by James Haldane in his *Journal* during his tour in 1797: 'Had the happiness to hear the gospel preached in the afternoon in the Antiburgher meeting. The house is unfortunately too small: it cannot accommodate all the hearers. It may hold about 700 people.'¹⁰

The growth of the congregation may be gauged by observing that at the first Communion service in the congregation in July 1797, there was a membership of 196.¹¹ Such was the impact of the mission work of James Haldane that year that in August 1798, 256 souls were added to the communion roll, and nine months later another 202. By then the original

⁹ B.H. Hossack, *Kirkwall in the Orkneys* (Kirkwall, 1900), p. 445.

¹⁰ Haldane, *Journal*, pp. 54-5; Hossack, op. cit., p. 446.

¹¹ David Webster, *The History of the Kirkwall United Presbyterian Congregation* (Kirkwall, 1910), p. 9.

building was clearly inadequate and it was enlarged, effectively rebuilt, in 1798 so that it could accommodate 1,200 souls. One contemporary report stated that: ‘Among the public buildings of Kirkwall we must not forget to rank the New Church – a large meeting-house so called, belonging to the class of Anti-Burgher Seceders. It is a spacious church, and the preacher being popular, the audience seldom fails short of a thousand.’¹²

V. Revival comes to Orkney

Almost contemporaneous with the planting of the Secession Church in Kirkwall was the tour of James Haldane, accompanied by John Aikman and Joseph Rate, by whose instrumentality under God there was a great religious revival in Orkney. Their mission lasted eighteen days, and apparently ‘left great and lasting results.’¹³ Haldane particularly refers to the work of the Anti-Burgher congregation, as a congregation on which the true gospel was being maintained:

Many who were living altogether careless of divine things, since the gospel was preached in the New Church, as it is called, have been brought under serious concern, and give good evidence by their conduct, that they have passed from death to life; and some who were avowed enemies have become the friends of the cause. The Lord appears evidently to have been preparing a people in this place for himself; and it is remarked, that since the time that this uncommon concern has been excited, a very considerable external reformation has taken place, even amongst those who do not appear to be under the influence of the truth. That the Lord’s arm hath been made bare in behalf of these destitute isles, in no common way, will appear from the fact, that two hundred persons were admitted to the Lord’s Supper, upon the first celebration of that ordinance in July last, after a strict and individual examination, in which the ministers enjoyed, as we are informed, much satisfaction. Several also were kept back, of whom good hopes are entertained.¹⁴

This referred to the Communion of July 1797, just one month before Haldane first stepped ashore at Kirkwall.

Haldane’s visit that August coincided, and was intended to coincide, with the annual ‘Lammas Fair’, which meant that during their first week of preaching services in Kirkwall there were an unusual number of people in the town and as a consequence the congregations from day to day were

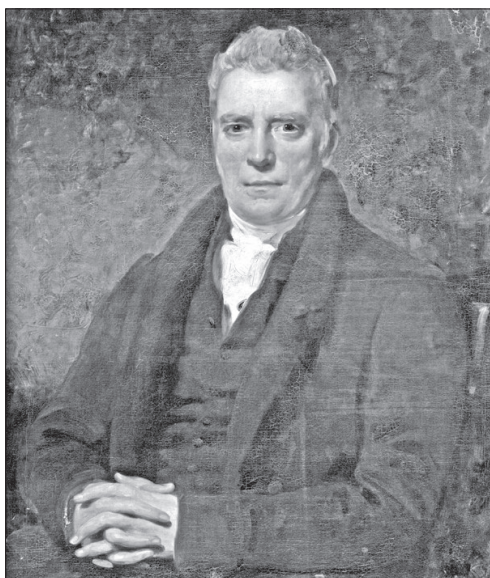
¹² Hossack, *op. cit.*, p. 446.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 451.

¹⁴ Haldane, *Journal*, pp. 53-4; see also, Alexander Haldane, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

huge, with many thousands hearing the word preached. The following statistics are given in Haldane's *Journal*:

- ◆ Lord's day, 13th August. 'Preached in the morning to between 1200 and 1300 persons.'¹⁵
- ◆ August 14th. 'The fair began this day. Preached in the Palace-close in the morning to about 1200 and in the evening to about 2300 hearers.'¹⁶
- ◆ August 17th. '2000 in the morning and 4000 in the evening.'¹⁷
- ◆ August 18th. 'Upwards of 3000' in the morning, and 'upwards of 4000' in the evening.'¹⁸
- ◆ Lord's day, 20th August. 'Preached in the morning, again at one o'clock, and at four and at six in the evening. The hearers of the two last sermons were supposed to be near 6000!'¹⁹



Rev. Thomas M'Crie (1772–1835).

In a space of ten days on Orkney these evangelists preached 55 times. Wrote Haldane: 'Many of the people appeared much affected, and in tears.'²⁰

VI. Testimony to the impact of the mission of 1797

The first minister of the Secession Church on Kirkwall, was the Rev. William Broadfoot (1775–1837). He was a strong evangelical who ministered there between 1798 and 1817. Magnus Anderson was a ruling elder in the congregation throughout Broadfoot's

ministry. In connection with a visit to Kirkwall in 1798 for the ordination and induction of Broadfoot to the Secession congregation there, Thomas M'Crie (1772–1835) was clearly deeply impressed by what he witnessed in Orkney, arising from the reviving work begun the previous year.²¹ He

¹⁵ Haldane, *Journal*, p. 54.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 56.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 56; see also, Hossack, *op. cit.*, p. 451.

²¹ For some details of the service of ordination and induction of William Broadfoot, see Webster, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

was to say this to his own congregation (in Edinburgh), contrasting the eagerness with which the Gospel was listened to in Orkney and the striking effects it produced, with the apathy and carelessness too often evident in more favoured parts of the country:

There, you will see persons hearing the Word as those who have souls which must be saved or lost. *There*, you may see the most lively concern depicted on every face, and hear the important question put from one to another, 'What must I do to be saved?' *Here*, it is a miracle to see one in tears when hearing the Gospel, and if at any time we witness the solitary instance, we are tempted to think the person weak or hypocritical. *There*, it is no uncommon thing to see hundreds in tears, not from the relation of a pathetic story, nor by an address to the passions, but by the simple declaration of a few plain facts respecting sin and salvation. *Here*, it is with difficulty that we can fix your attention on the sublimist truths during a short discourse; we must continue to amuse you with some striking form of address; we must keep you awake by mingling amusement with instruction. *There*, in order to be heard with the most eager attention, one has only to open his mouth and speak of Christ; and after he is done, they will follow him to his house, and beseech him to tell them more about Christ. *Here*, it is only certain preachers that can be patiently heard; *there*, so far as we know, there has not been one from whom they have not received the word gladly, nor one sermon preached which has not brought tears from the eyes of some.²²

What a moving testimony this is to the impact of the mission work in Orkney of the previous year.

By 1814 it was 'estimated that the regular Sabbath attendance was 1250' in the Secession Church, towards the end of William Broadfoot's ministry in Kirkwall.²³ Subsequently, Broadfoot became minister of Oxendon Chapel in London and a tutor in the theologically conservative Cheshunt College of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion. After his passing in 1837, Broadfoot's mortal remains were laid to rest at Bunhill Fields burial ground in London. In 1874 Orcadians erected an obelisk over his grave there. Among other things it stated: 'Apostle of the Orkneys'.²⁴

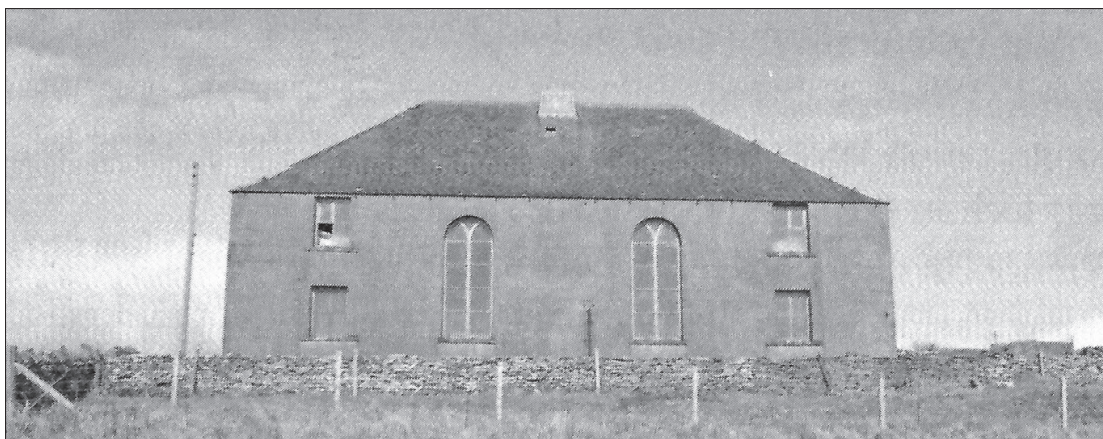
VII. Catechist

Magnus Anderson threw himself wholeheartedly into the mission work of James Haldane. Goodfellow tells us that 'so much was Haldane impressed

²² Thomas M'Crie [the younger], *Life of Thomas M'Crie, D.D.* (Philadelphia, 1842), pp. 35-6.

²³ J. Smith, *The Church in Orkney* (Kirkwall, 1907), p. 317.

²⁴ See Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 33.



Birsay Original Secession church.

with his intelligence, piety, and activity that he engaged him as a catechist to visit the different islands and parishes, to look after the new converts, and to keep alive the religious interest which had been awakened.²⁵ In his *Journal*, in a clear reference to Magnus, James Haldane was to write:

We here parted with our two friends who had accompanied us in our expedition through the isles. One of them, who had been employed for some time on the Sabbath in catechising children, and whose endeavours God had been pleased in some measure to countenance, expressed a strong desire of being more extensively employed in the work. After examining him respecting his knowledge, and particularly enquiring into his character, it appeared to us that he might be very useful in visiting the islands as a catechist. He is accordingly now engaged in that work.²⁶

In point of fact, Haldane encouraged Magnus to become a catechist on a formal basis, and in 1799 Magnus went down to Edinburgh to attend the Presbytery of the General Associate Synod, to express his desire to be appointed by that body as a catechist, 'if they should find him so qualified'. John McKerrow, in his *History of the Secession Church*, tells the story:

The presbytery, having examined him as to his acquaintance with the principles and power of religion, agreed that he should act as a catechist under their inspection; and gave him instructions as to his plan of operation. They also agreed to give him, for the first year, a salary of twenty pounds; and afterwards to increase it, if it should be thought necessary.²⁷

As a catechist Magnus was involved in going around instructing the people in Christian truth. This he did hand in hand with his new venture as

²⁵ Goodfellow, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

²⁶ Haldane, *Journal*, p. 64.

²⁷ John McKerrow, *History of the Secession Church* (Glasgow, 1841), p. 392.

a bookbinder and publisher, distributing or selling Bibles, psalm-books, catechisms, and Scripture tracts as he went along.²⁸

Besides his work as catechist, Magnus was employed as a church planter, especially in Birsay to the north-west on the main island, and on Stronsay, an island to the north-east of the main island. *The Original Secession Magazine* of September 1854 indicates how this came about:

Not being in a position to call a minister [i.e., the Anti-Burgher meeting in Birsay], the Kirkwall congregation resolved to send one of their elders to act as a missionary or catechist among their brethren at Birsay. Magnus Anderson was the party chosen for this important mission; and his labours in that capacity were attended with the happiest results. Being a man of undoubted piety, extensively acquainted with the Scriptures, and gifted in no ordinary degree with an aptitude to teach, with an amiable and winning disposition, he soon attracted the attention, and won the affections of old and young. His practice was to hold meetings in various parts of the country area, on Sabbaths and week-days – intimating at the close of each meeting where the next would be convened.²⁹

In his catechising he used a book commonly called ‘Fisher’s Catechism’, ‘an admirable body of divinity – by which he was enabled at once to impart instruction, and ascertain what impressions he was making on the minds of his hearers...His labours in this way were eminently successful.’³⁰ This was essentially a commentary on the Westminster Shorter Catechism. It had begun as a co-operative effort on the part of two leaders of the Secession of 1733, Ebenezer Erskine and James Fisher, though it seems that Fisher compiled most of it, thus giving rise to the name by which it was most commonly known, ‘Fisher’s Catechism’. As far as its influence is concerned, Principal John Macleod maintained that ‘Fisher’s Catechism, exercised more of a formative influence in the moulding of thoughts of religious homes and in making so many of the people of Scotland skilled in theological matters than did any other single catechetical work expository of the Shorter Catechism.’³¹ As far as Magnus’s efforts were concerned, we read that: ‘Many of the people were awakened under his instructions and brought to feel the power and the value of religious ordinances, and the duty of seeking a more full dispensation of them in their own place.’³²

²⁸ Hossack, op. cit., p. 330.

²⁹ *The Original Secession Magazine*, September 1854, p. 2.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ John Macleod, op. cit., p. 179.

³² *The Original Secession Magazine*, September 1854, p. 2.

Among the few subsequent references to Magnus in official records is an entry in the minutes of the Kirkwall Kirk Session dated 18th March 1816. It reads:

M. Anderson and J. Eunson petitioned to have the use of the meeting-house on the evening of the Lord's day for a school, and it was agreed to give them it after Sabbath first until the sun cross the line in September, excepting, however, all such evenings on which it may be thought necessary or proper to occupy it for public worship.³³

There is a story told of Magnus Anderson. It was said that one day he was anxious to cross to a neighbouring island for his gospel work, but no boat could be found. He attempted instead to walk across through the water. According to the fashion of those days he wore a swallow-tail coat. 'When Magnus made his heroic effort and was feeling rather uncomfortable in the watery element,' the story goes, 'thinking himself sinking, instead of swimming he gave a glance behind to see how things were going, and beholding his "swallow-tails" floating in the water, he cried out – "O, Mansie, Mansie, there's mair faith in your coat-tails than in yersel!"'³⁴

Many years after Magnus's death, men from around the island would declare to his son, James Urquhart Anderson, with tears of joy in their eyes, how that it was his father who first taught them the way of salvation.³⁵

VIII. Movements in the Secession Churches

The history of the Secession in Orkney after the turn of the century was not an untroubled one. In 1820 the majority of the General Associate Synod, of which the Kirkwall congregation was a part, joined with the majority of the Associate Synod to form what became known as 'The United Associate Synod of the Secession Church'. One of the leading principles of this United Synod was what became known as 'Voluntarism', which asserted that a Church based on the New Testament pattern should be maintained solely by voluntary contributions of the supporting members and adherents. This became a 'plank' of the United Secession and afterwards the United Presbyterian Church (1847).

Over against this, there were those in the Secession who maintained the 'establishment' principle, which asserted that it was right and proper for

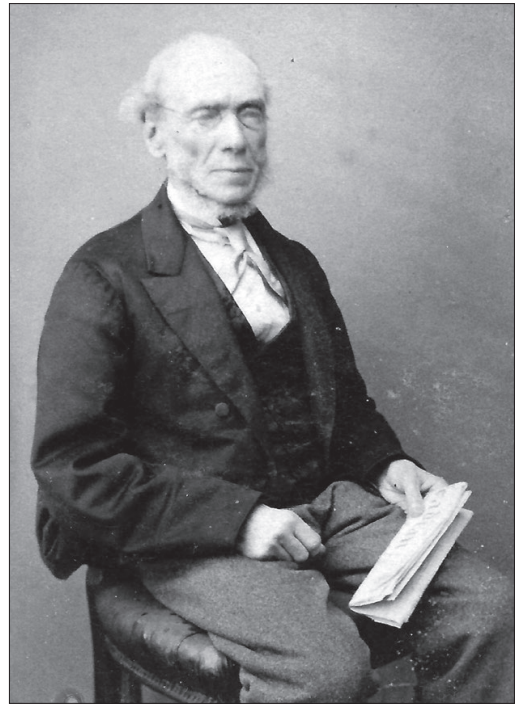
³³ Webster, op. cit., pp.25-26. In those days, morning and afternoon services were the norm. This petition amounts to the initiation of Sabbath school work. We have no information as to how this worked out practically.

³⁴ Goodfellow, op. cit., pp. 141-2.

³⁵ 'Death of Mr James Urquhart Anderson,' *The Orcadian*, 10th October 1874.

the State to maintain the true religion within its boundaries (without being sectarian of course); thus the idea of a nationally established Church. In the Kirkwall congregation there were several of this persuasion, including Magnus Anderson and his son James Urquhart Anderson. Hossack provides the detail:

The leaders of this movement were: Magnus Anderson, late merchant in Kirkwall, presently residing in Edinburgh; Alexander Walls, wright in Kirkwall; John Foubister, watchmaker there; Thomas Cursater, grieve at Warbister; Henry Corrigan, merchant in Kirkwall; John Thomson, blacksmith there; George Peace, shoemaker there; John Taylor, merchant there; Thomas Wards, grieve at Pabdale; William Smith, tailor in Kirkwall; Thomas Heddle, wright there; and James Anderson, bookbinder there.³⁶



James Urquhart Anderson, c. 1870.

These men attached themselves to the General Associate Synod of the Protestors which seven years later in a linkage with other such groups became known as the Original Secession Church. A congregation was maintained in Kirkwall, a church was built, and a minister called. This group maintained principles very much in line with the Free Church, which came into existence in 1843 after the 'Disruption' in May that year. A Free Church congregation was formed in Kirkwall. Most of the Original Secession congregations went in to the Free Church in 1852. This happened in Kirkwall the following year.

IX. Later history

It appears that in 1820 Magnus Anderson was already living as a widower in Edinburgh and it is likely that he remained resident there for the rest of his life. There is a reference in the 1841 Edinburgh Census to Magnus Anderson, a printer, living in Milne's Court in the Lawnmarket, near the top of the Royal Mile. It is noted that at that point he was 75 years of age. It may be surmised that he would have attached himself to the congregation of

³⁶ Hossack, *op. cit.*, p. 453.

Thomas M'Crie. This became an Original Secession Church after 1827 and was located in Davie Street, off West Richmond Street in the Southside.³⁷ However that may have been, Magnus's earthly course came to a close on 12th November 1843. He was 78 and was buried in the St Cuthbert's graveyard in the West End of Princes Street. 'The memory of the just is blessed' (Proverbs 10:7).

Magnus's son, James was also a man of convinced biblical and evangelical principles, who, after spells in Edinburgh and Newcastle in the printing trade, returned to Orkney. He took over his father's bookbinding business, added a printing facility, and expanded it, until in 1854 he was able to print the first newspaper in Orkney, *The Orcadian*, which remains as the predominant newspaper for the Orkney Islands.³⁸

James Urquhart Anderson served as an elder in the Original Secession congregation until its linkage with the Free Church congregation, whereupon he became an elder in the Free Church and apparently acted as precentor (leader of sung praise [metrical psalms], there being no instrumental accompaniment then) for many years.³⁹ He died in October 1874 in Kirkwall. It was said of him at his passing: 'He was a kind and considerate husband, a patient and loving father, a close and lasting friend, and a conscientious Christian. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace."' ⁴⁰

The work of James Haldane and his 'right-hand man' is, however, sadly now a 'distant memory' in the Orkney Islands, then so powerfully affected by the gospel through the mission in 1797. It reminds us that the gospel of Christ is 'the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth' (Romans 1:16). These men believed the Scripture that the Lord Jesus Christ, is 'the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever' (Hebrews 13:8); and has 'all power' given to him 'in heaven and in earth' (Matthew 28:18). The Church has learned nothing from such gospel work if it does not believe that what the Sovereign Lord did then, he has power to do in any generation, through the same gospel and with the same quickening work of the Holy Spirit.

³⁷ The building still stands and is used by the Independent 'Life Church' (see <https://scotlandschurcheTrust.org.uk/church/life-church-edinburgh/>).

³⁸ For details of this, see footnote 4 above. See also, Hossack, op. cit., p. 330.

³⁹ Goodfellow, op. cit., p. 141.

⁴⁰ 'Death of Mr James Urquhart Anderson'. The Bible text is from Psalm 37, verse 37.