1997

Living Sacrifices : women missionaries' personal writings 1812-1860

Marjorie Shell Wilser
San Jose State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses

Recommended Citation

Wilser, Marjorie Shell, "Living Sacrifices : women missionaries' personal writings 1812-1860" (1997).
Master's Theses. 1614.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.k4uj-yc6g>
https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses/1614

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Master's Theses and Graduate Research at SJSU ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of SJSU ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@sjsu.edu.

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Living Sacrifices
Women Missionaries' Personal Writings 1812—1860

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Marjorie Shell Wilser

December, 1997

UMI Number: 1388232

UMI Microform 1388232
Copyright 1998, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

**This microform edition is protected against unauthorized
copying under Title 17, United States Code.**

UMI
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

© 1997

Marjorie Shell Wilser

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Dr. Billie Jensen

Dr. Elizabeth Van Beek

Dr. Daniel Cornford

APPROVED FOR THE UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

Living Sacrifices:

Women Missionaries' Personal Writings 1812—1860

By Marjorie Shell Wilser

This thesis examines the personal writings of American Protestant women who married missionaries as an avenue to missionary careers of their own. While these women have not been ignored by historians, interpretation of their significance has ranged from adulatory biography to criticism mixed with pity by feminist historians. They have rarely been allowed to speak for themselves.

These well-educated women chose to gain careers serving God and others through marriage to likeminded strangers. By leaving the United States, they effectively lost families and homes. Disease, childbirth, and distance threatened their lives. Although accused of destroying native culture in the process, they brought education and modern civilization, and often died on the mission field. Deserving fresh historical interest, these women in later writings demonstrate that few of them regretted their careers, despite high personal cost.

Acknowledgments

Many people contributed to this thesis. I am rich beyond measure.

My grandmother, Mary Reasoner Shell, fostered both my faith and my love of history. My parents, Leland and Stella Shell, always believed in me. My uncles Kenneth and Elton Shell researched family history.

Ethel Herr and the “Parts of Speech” critique group honed my writing and editing skills with valuable experience. During a memorable interview Dr. Clifford M. Drury encouraged my research and prayed for my success.

Members of the History Department at San Jose State University provided great encouragement: Professor Irma Eichhorn, Dr. Nancy Gray Osterud, Dr. Billie Jensen, Dr. R. Bruce Reynolds, Dr. Elizabeth Van Beek and Dr. Dan Cornford. Their guidance helped immeasurably.

Sympathetic librarians and archivists at school and abroad graciously aided my search. I was too raw a recruit to record their names, but my respect and gratitude are real nonetheless.

Finally, my husband Robert Wilser has alternately supported, put up with, nagged, proofread, encouraged and hugged the author for twenty years. Bless him!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	v
Table of Contents	vi
Preface	vii
Epigraph	ix
Chapter 1 A Most Noble Calling	1
Chapter 2 A Question of Salvation	24
Chapter 3 Career or Divine Opportunity?	39
Chapter 4 ‘Call:’ Mission or Marriage	61
Chapter 5 Dreams, Realities, Disappointments, Hope	74
Chapter 6 Doing the Will of Heaven	91
Appendix 1: Abbreviations of Mission Boards	96
Appendix 2: Missionary Women & Personal Writings	97
Bibliography:	100

Preface

The story of American missions in the period between 1812 and 1860 is the combined story of Protestant churches, para-church voluntary societies, and the Westward movement in the United States. All are interrelated, and women's efforts were caught up in all three. Writers covering the great reform movements—Anti-slavery, Temperance, Nativist, and Suffrage—have all found it necessary to study their roots in the Second Great Awakening and women's participation in it.

The mainstream Protestant churches supplied young women for the mission field, first as missionary wives and later as unmarried missionaries. They kept journals as a kind of spiritual exercise, but also to copy and send home, aware that they were pioneering new roles for the gospel and for women.

This study utilizes a variety of Protestant women's personal writings before 1860, intentionally casting a wide net to include as many as possible. Some were sent to foreign countries, some to "domestic" frontier towns, and some to the "Indian nations" of the North American continent. It was decided early on to exclude women whose denominations, in the first half of

the nineteenth century, would not have been considered orthodox by the majority of Protestants in America.

In previously published collections of missionary letters and journals, each editor has interpreted the women to suit his/her decade's discussion of woman's identity and purpose. The intent here is to allow the women to demonstrate for themselves their motivations, their calling, and who they believed themselves to be. Sources were more limited than originally hoped, although scraps from additional women missionaries were gleaned as quoted in both primary and secondary sources. In all, the personal writings of thirty four remarkable women provided inspiration.

Drawn into the lives of these extraordinary women writers by copied letters of my own grandmother's grandmother, a missionary wife herself, I have been strengthened by their personal fortitude in times of extreme trial. Their example has enabled me to embrace scholarship and walk with God during personal trials.

Epigraph

*. . . I have determined to devote my body as a "living sacrifice" to the Lord.
Indeed I have never regretted it a moment. . . . that I may be so purified by grace
divine, that I may be useful either in life, or in death.*

Louisa A. Wilson Lowrie

Journal entry, September 1832

Chapter 1

The Loftiest, Most Noble Calling

In February, 1812, two newly-married women, Harriet Atwood Newell and Anne Hasseltine Judson, sat in church with their husbands listening to Rev. Jonathan Allen preach a farewell sermon entitled “On the Occasion of Two Young Ladies Being About to Embark to India.” They were the first women to be sent abroad from the young American republic. These women were not designated “missionaries”: that honor was reserved to their husbands, who were both trained ministers.

Before 1820, Harriet Newell’s death would make her a nationally known tragic figure. Babies were named for her. Notwithstanding the fact she had been prevented from actually serving as a missionary by hostilities between England and the United States, her posthumously published letters would be used to encourage little girls to become dedicated Christians, even perhaps to harbor a desire to become missionaries themselves. Newell’s posthumous fame served to attract other young women to their own “calling” on the mission field. Many of the next generation of women missionaries read her “memoir” as they searched for a deeper spiritual life and service for themselves. Some of them mention her in their own writing. “I am reading

Harriet Newell's life too," wrote future missionary Mary Hawes Van Lennep to a close friend thirty years after Newell's death. "So young! only nineteen— . . ." ¹ Newell's was the perfect tragic death of the Romantic era, and required no further dramatization.

Perhaps the miniature portrait frontispiece did as much to sell the memoir as its title: Harriet Newell had been young—just nineteen—and attractive. The book title began with "A Sermon" and was a posthumous book of the kind usually dedicated to the memory of famous men. Newell died from exotic disease and probable complications of childbirth just nine months after leaving Boston in 1812. ²

In a letter to Newell's mother, her bereaved husband Rev. Samuel Newell had requested the book's publication in hopes of sparking missionary interest in other young women:

I now have one request to make, and then I will close. Dr. Woods and Dr. Griffen will both see this letter. I wish one of them to preach a sermon on this occasion,—that it be published,—and that an engraving prepared from Harriet's miniature, be prefixed, and a short account of her sickness and death be added. Do let my request be granted. It will

¹ Mary Hawes Van Lennep to "C. C." 20 February 1843, in Mrs. Joel Hawes, *Memoir of Mrs. Mary E. Van Lennep, Only Daughter of the Rev. Joel Hawes, D. D., and wife of the Rev. Henry J. Van Lennep, Missionary in Turkey* (Hartford, CT: Belknap and Hamersly, 1848), 180.

² Leonard Woods, D. D., *A Sermon, Preached at Haverhill, (Mass.) in Remembrance of Mrs. Harriet Newell, Missionary to India, Who Died at the Isle of France, Nov. 30, 1812, aged 19 years. To Which are Added Memoirs of her Life* (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, Theological Printer and Bookseller, 1815), 211.

do good. It may be the means of converting many of Harriet's dear young friends, and it will I hope, some time or other reach me.³

The book Samuel Newell requested turned into a larger work than he imagined. Evidently compiler Leonard Woods, with an eye to history, printed everything he could find. In an era when proper young women avoided the public forum Harriet Newell entered it in death. Woods edited her letters, leaving enough in her own words to trace her spiritual metamorphosis from child to missionary.

From 1812 to 1900, thousands of young American Protestant women dedicated themselves to "self-sacrifice," missionary activities, and a probable early grave. Martyrdom as well as death from childbirth or disease were common for women who traveled abroad promoting the Gospel. New diseases to which they had no natural resistance awaited in the mission field along with the "benighted souls" they hoped to save. Adoniram Judson buried his first wife, married the widow of another missionary, buried her, and was survived by a third spouse. Missionary letters were published in denominational and missionary magazines to allow the public to share in their adventures. Mission boards were not unmindful that publication of

³ Samuel Newell to Mrs. Atwood, 10 December 1812, in Woods, *Harriet Newell*, 221–22.

such documents could serve not only to enhance interest but to raise money for missions: “The profits arising from the sale of the work will be devoted to the cause of Missions,” wrote the editor of Louisa Wilson Lowrie’s memorial book.⁴ Each life that ended in tragic circumstances was enshrined in the public mind, and often evoked a “memorial” book of its own.⁵

This memorial format began American missionary historiography.⁶ It created a uniquely American Protestant hagiography whose saints were represented by collected letters and journals bound neatly into books sized appropriately for gift-giving. Brief editorial commentary filled gaps in the narrative, supplemented by an elegiac sermon or even sentimental poetry by a celebrated author.

⁴ Ashbel G. Fairchild, Rev., ed., *Memoir of Mrs. Louisa A. Lowrie of the Northern India Mission* (Philadelphia: William S. Martien, 1837), 1.

⁵ So far as this writer is aware, Harriet Newell’s was the first memorial book published with a woman subject. The subsequent influx of women missionaries assured that it would not be the last such book.

⁶It is interesting to hypothesize why the quintessential tragic death—Indian massacre—of Narcissa Whitman with her husband Dr. Marcus Whitman did not inspire such a memorial. She wrote many letters; both mother and mother-in-law had copies of her journals. The answer seems to lie in the fact of a long and sometimes bitter rivalry between Waiilatpu (the Whitman mission to the Cayuse) and Lapwai (the Spalding mission to the Nez Percé) which split the members of the Oregon Mission; and an equally deep controversy over method between Oregon and its parent organization, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions [hereafter, the ABCFM, a joint venture of the Congregational and Presbyterian churches under the 1801 “Plan of Union”]. Another factor may have been that while the Whitmans were murdered, the Spaldings, ostensibly their closest counterparts, were spared and even protected. Clifford M. Drury, *Marcus Whitman, M. D.: Pioneer and Martyr* (Caldwell, ID: The Caxton Printers, 1937), 443–46.

Popular author “Fanny Forrester” [Emily Chubbock], children’s storyteller and poet, was selected personally by Adoniram Judson to write the biography of Sarah Boardman Judson, his second wife. Chubbock’s piety and interest in missions won his heart, and he asked her to become his third wife. She finished the biography in their Rangoon [Burma] Baptist Mission. Emily Chubbock Judson utilized Sarah Judson’s unpublished journal, letters and poetry, adding her own prose and poetry to unify the story.⁷

Later biographers of missionaries were often ministers or members of mission boards, who presumably had contact with the lamented deceased of their families, or had access to their papers. These biographers were likewise adulatory, hoping to inspire young people of the “current generation” to sacrificial living. Women missionaries’ biographies written before 1900 focused on their exemplary lives and dedicated service to their husbands and their God.⁸

⁷ The last two stanzas of “A Tribute. off St. Helena, September 1846,” typify her work and the tone of most memorials: *Angels, rejoice! another string Has caught the strains above; Rejoice, rejoice! a new-fledged wing Around the Throne is hovering, In sweet, glad, wondering love. Blow, blow, ye gales! wild billows roll! Unfurl the canvass [sic] wide! On! where she labored lies our goal;— Weak, timid, frail yet would my soul Fain be to hers allied.* “Fanny Forrester” [Emily Chubbock Judson], *Sarah B. Judson of the American Mission to Burmah* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1850), 250.

⁸ Two such examples are *Ann H. Judson* and *Sarah B. Judson*, by Walter N. Wyeth, D. D.. Wyeth based the biographies on earlier published works which by the time of his publication (1888) were long out of print. Wyeth’s goal was “to increase the missionary spirit and be a timely help in bringing in the missionary era.” He personally subsidized publication to keep book prices affordable. Walter N. Wyeth, D. D., *Ann H. Judson. A Memorial* (Cincinnati,

By the end of the Civil War most of the missionary memorials had gone out of print. Historians who attempted to write about missions, like their secular colleagues, focused on the men. Mission wives were acknowledged for tireless labor and heroic self-sacrifice, but largely remembered in their domestic roles as wives, nurses, mothers, and hostesses rather than mission team members, translators, or teachers. This was hardly a new trend: in editing Henrietta Hall Shuck's letters for her memorial, contemporary J. B. Jeter stated, "in the religious character of Mrs. Shuck . . . [she was] useful, but her usefulness was coupled with humility."⁹

Missionaries were often the first white settlers in a given area which might later be annexed to the United States, as were Hawaii and Oregon. Their experiences were often romanticized by biographers seeking to vindicate the coming of "civilization." Although Clifford M. Drury's "First White Women Over the Rockies" series provided an invaluable collection of primary sources, its title reflects the earlier emphasis on laudatory biography.¹⁰ With three volumes on the women and five on the men, Drury

OH: Published by the Author, 1888), 3–4 passim.

⁹ J. B. Jeter, *A Memoir of Mrs. Henrietta Shuck, the First American Missionary to China* (Boston: Gould, Kendall, & Lincoln, 1853), 250.

¹⁰ Drury's thoroughness in collecting and interpreting the extensive personal writings of all the Oregon missionaries, male and female, made his the definitive treatment of the

presented a sympathetic but balanced interpretation of missionary activities and helped explode the patriotic myth that Marcus Whitman “saved” Oregon.¹¹ Drury delineated the many controversies and squabbles that rent the mission and ultimately doomed the Whitmans to massacre by the Cayuse Indians they tried to serve.

Fictionalized mention of missionaries, male or female, has been unsympathetic at best. Herman Melville’s portrayal in *Typee* and *Omoo* began the genre of which James Michener’s *Hawaii* is the best-known representative. The humorless, inflexible, demanding character of the sort of missionary delineated there has entered popular culture through repeated

ABCFM mission to the Northwest. The eight books he published on the various Oregon missionaries form Drury’s *magnum opus*: *Henry Harmon Spalding, Pioneer of Old Oregon* (Caldwell, ID: The Caxton Printers, Ltd. 1936); *Marcus Whitman, M. D., Pioneer and Martyr* (Caldwell, ID: The Caxton Printers, Ltd. 1937); *Elkanah and Mary Walker, Pioneers Among the Spokanes* (Caldwell, ID: The Caxton Printers, Ltd. 1940); *A Teepee in his Front Yard: a Biography of H. T. Cowley, one of the Four Founders of the City of Spokane, Washington* (Caldwell, ID: The Caxton Printers, Ltd. 1949); *The Diaries and Letters of Henry H. Spalding and Asa Bowen Smith Relating to the Nez Perce Mission, 1838–1842* (Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1958); *The First White Women Over the Rockies: Diaries, Letters, and Biographical Sketches of the Six Women who made the Overland Journey in 1836 and 1838* Vol. I, Vol. II (Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1963); *The First White Women Over the Rockies*, Vol. III (Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1966).

¹¹ In 1842–43, Whitman made an unprecedented solitary ride across the continent to meet with the board of the ABCFM and convince them to reverse certain decisions detrimental to the Oregon mission. The mission crisis which had provoked the decision had been long settled by the time the board’s decree had arrived in Oregon. Years later, statements by Spalding led biographers to believe that Whitman’s goal at the time had been to get Congress to face down the British presence in Oregon territory and “save” it for the United States. Clifford M. Drury, *Henry Harmon Spalding, Pioneer of Old Oregon* (Caldwell, ID: The Caxton Printers, Ltd. 1936, 260–287 *passim*).

adaptation in modern media. Film releases of such classics as *Hawaii* [1966] and *Elmer Gantry*, along with new films like *At Play in the Fields of the Lord* [1991] have cemented this caricature in place.¹²

Scholar Clifford S. Griffen examined the voluntary societies to see how the economics of power shaped Jacksonian society, and argued that the conservative leaders of such groups, wealthy men themselves, were made nervous by the decline of the New England oligarchy in the rise of cities and westward expansion, and rediscovered the power of religion as agent for social control of the working classes. Griffen ably interprets the societies' definition of benevolence as "the idea that certain persons, having received God's sanctifying grace, were obliged to extend to all men the means of obtaining that grace."¹³ Later, he adds, "Benevolence was in infinite concern for other people's souls."¹⁴

The leaders of the five "benevolent societies" Griffen studies had other motives in addition to economics and politics. There is no question that

¹² Although *Elmer Gantry* dealt with an evangelist, and *At Play in the Fields of the Lord* was set in the twentieth century, they have nevertheless helped build the missionary caricature in the popular mind.

¹³ Clifford S. Griffen, "Religious Benevolence as Social Control," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 44 (December 1957): 426.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 427.

these leaders, in addition to involvement in benevolent societies, were active in politics and economic concerns. This was hardly new in the nineteenth century: men of education and success were expected to participate fully in society and politics. In the nineteenth century, unlike the twentieth, politicians were not expected to check their spiritual values at the door with their top hats: Christianity in some form was assumed to undergird democracy. Little surprise, then, that managers of these societies dreaded the effects of Andrew Jackson's "despotism" and the (perceived) "godlessness" of his followers.

While Griffen's political implications have a basis in the politics and behavior of the leaders of the benevolent societies, it would seem that his shortcoming lies in discounting the spiritual and religious motivations of the men and the societies they represented. He explained them away as "those who could not accept the changing [and unsettled] America."¹⁵

Griffen did not consider the effect of women on the benevolent societies. In what he does not say, he foreshadows the rediscoveries of feminism that political and economic power lay outside the hands of women, even those who moved heaven and earth to support national reform

¹⁵ Ibid., 423.

movements. Because the voluntary societies had begun as grassroots efforts, they retained a degree of autonomy. They were often led by the women instrumental in beginning them—wives of ministers. Even where these societies were later subsumed by national or denominational efforts, their leadership remained female, at least at the local level. “Despite the modest contributions of many of the first female missionary societies,” writes Page Putnam Miller, “they set an important precedent by which women established the claim that women as well as men had responsibilities and obligations for furthering the cause of Christian missions.”¹⁶

John Andrew, in *Rebuilding the Christian Commonwealth*, identifies the ambitions of the large voluntary societies that grew out of the smaller ones with the dislocations of the “Standing Order” Congregational church in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Increased revival activity under itinerant preachers unsettled congregations and undermined control. The increased popularity of Jeffersonian, and later Jacksonian, antagonism toward an established church made many townsmen resent the taxes they paid to support the church. A new polarity appeared between those who had been converted in revivals and those who would rather be left in their sins.

¹⁶ Page Putnam Miller, “Ann Breese’s ‘Address’ to to the Female Missionary Society of

“Social tensions,” writes Andrew, “both produced revivals and found release in them.”¹⁷ Social tensions in New England following the Revolution were indeed legion. Rocky, played-out soil could support limited families, and the population was growing. Whole families moved to new states; the inevitable result was the disruption of entire communities.

Were social tensions the only reason for increased revivalism? The ministers who wrote histories of the movement emphasized its spiritual dimension: a famine of spirit that was felt as a crisis by people who had left the “settled” areas and left behind the more civilized forms of worship. These spiritual explanations are not alien to the the “social tensions” enumerated by Andrew. Nevertheless, Andrew uses economic and social arguments to explain the unsettled times and the revivals they created.

Feminist scholarship has reinterpreted women’s mission work and accelerated the swing from adulation to criticism. Focus changed from “souls saved”—an emphasis rejected by overwhelmingly secular feminists—to the way mission acculturation had “robbed” natives of their culture. The contributions of such cultural anthropologists as Ruth Benedict, Franz Boas,

the Western District” *American Presbyterians* 65 (Spring 1987): 1.

¹⁷ John A. Andrew, *Rebuilding the Christian Commonwealth: New England Congregationalists and Foreign Missions, 1800–1830* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1976), 7.

Margaret Mead and F. Malinowski made cultural acceptance and preservation more important than saved souls, and the general twentieth century decline in Christian belief led to denigration of the worth of missionaries in general.

Historian Barbara Welter changed the interpretation of nineteenth century women's issues with the publication of her article "The Cult of True Womanhood 1820—1860."¹⁸ This article details her theory that social and religious pressures on women in the early nineteenth century combined with the older "sphere" theory of sexual roles and contributed to a powerful system of social control over women. Changes in the system of family work and economic roles cemented these restraints. Welter examines popular culture in the periodicals and prescriptive literature of the nineteenth century. She generalizes her "Cult" for the entire country and then links the theory to the popular culture of half the century.

In still photography, at a certain optimum focus point, one may image objects clearly in both foreground and background. This is called the *hyperfocal* distance. Perhaps the reason Welter's article was so widely

¹⁸ Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820 – 1860," *American Quarterly* 18 (December 1966): 151–74.

accepted is that she found the hyperfocal distance to explain the female condition for an entire century. Welter's theory was widely accepted by historians as an explanation for the increased isolation and subjugation of women in the nineteenth century. Her subsequent book *Dimity Convictions*¹⁹ expanded her influence.

Feminists, building on Welter's comments, went further and saw a conspiracy by the male-dominated ministry to keep woman from her rightful place as equal. In this they had the support of eminent nineteenth century feminist Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who railed against "the white man's Bible" but rewrote the Bible in her own image. Feminist writers interpreted nineteenth century Protestants as motivated by almost anything *but* religion. Certainly none of them accepted the many statements, journals and letters by their subjects as simple statements: meaning must be deduced and interpreted in the light of current scholarship.

Part of the feminist impatience with missionary women may be interpreted as a reaction to, and rejection of, the missionary values of personal faith, evangelism, self-sacrifice, and domesticity, all seen as enforced

¹⁹ Barbara Welter, *Dimity Convictions: the American Woman in the 19th Century* (Athens: University of Ohio Press, 1976).

values of patriarchy. Feminists were especially critical of those women who accepted the cultural morays and “restraints.” As a result, feminists treated women missionaries with contempt, or simply ignored them. Women who served as missionaries were deemed as archaic and irrelevant as the Christianity they served.

Barbara Leslie Epstein’s *The Politics of Domesticity* attempts to identify male–female tensions in the writings of a group much like that currently under study: young women of Protestant New England and Puritan tradition, raised in comparative comfort if not wealth. Epstein argues that unreconciled tensions and sexual politics between men and women shaped a popular culture for females that tended to exclude men. Isolation of women in the home exacerbated the male–female dichotomy and deepened feelings of resentment between the sexes as everyday lives diverged from the home–farm economy to the producer–wage earner economy of the early nineteenth century. Epstein summarizes: “Popular women’s culture in nineteenth–century America, in my view, expressed a complex amalgam of reactions to male power: protest, resentment, disapproval, fear, accommodation.”²⁰

²⁰ Barbara Leslie Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth–Century America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1981), 9.

In speaking of American popular culture, Epstein refers to the “middling” classes of the New England tradition, the very classes which before the Civil War were such enthusiastic participants in the voluntary societies of reform, revival, religion and education. Epstein locates the growth of women’s so-called resentment in the increasing isolation middle-class women felt as men became wage earners while women and children became confined at home. She concurs with many other feminists that “nineteenth-century middle class women were confined and constrained by domesticity and by the extreme imbalance of power between the sexes that domesticity created.”²¹

Epstein admits that while Protestant women of New England heritage often “thought of themselves as representing womanhood generally,”²² their experience was not necessarily typical for all Protestant women in the United States. In later pages, however, Epstein seems to forget her own injunction, applying the resentment she reads from her sampling to the broader emerging culture of women.

²¹ Ibid., 9.

²² Ibid., 2.

Epstein provides an inestimable service in detailing the differences between the eighteenth and nineteenth century styles of conversion narrative, marred only by her willingness to find conflict and sexual politics in every account. A reader more conversant with the language of the nineteenth century Christian subculture would probably not find as much resentment and rebellion as does Epstein. One account quoted in her book includes the phrase, “. . . accompanied by a sense of being in the hands of a holy sin hating God; and sorely and entirely at his disposal.”²³ Epstein subsequently comments, “The conflict between the desire to rebel against a hated God and the guilt caused by such feelings was for many women the central issues [*sic*] of conversion.”²⁴ But the original phrase clearly does *not* refer to the writer “hating God” but to “a holy sin hating God”—in other words, a God who is holy and hates sin, a theological concept which would have been understood by a person contemporary to the writer. The naive lack of punctuation in the sentence leads to Epstein’s misapprehension of its meaning.

²³ Ibid., 57.

²⁴ Ibid.

Modern writers such as Epstein and Ann Douglas see women, in particular women of New England's Puritan tradition, as engaged in a cultural dialog over their proper role in early nineteenth century society. Both derive their theories from readings in New England popular culture. The missionary and ministers' wives studied here do not reflect this supposed chasm of resentment in their own conversion narratives.

The apparent lack of resentment in the group under study suggests two possible explanations: first, women either already committed to, or esteemed good candidates for, the spread of the Gospel, had already made their peace with God, and presumably with men. They were engaged with Biblical values and saw no dichotomy with the culture. Second, where these women do write about their new career, they see it as a "noble calling" and regard their own service as liberating. Women of this group do not express the deep resentment identified by feminists in conversion accounts from the more general female population.

Ann Douglas' *Feminization of American Culture* portrays a similar group of middle class women whose influence on Unitarian and Universalist ministers in New England may have had much effect in the loosening of the "New England theology." But Douglas' women, influential as they may have become, belonged to a subset so liberal they rejected the theology of the

Puritan Congregationalists and so placed themselves outside the realm of this study.

Epstein deals with a larger set of New England women: those who experienced conversion during revivals and wrote about the experience, or had a pastor write about it for them. No evidence suggests that any of these women went on to dedicate themselves to serving as messengers themselves, as did the women under study here. Epstein's emphasis is popular culture, not missionaries.

The first attempt at a balanced study of women missionaries was Patricia Grimshaw's *Paths of Duty*. She examined the lives and careers of the missionary wives sent to Hawaii and demonstrated that one commonality among them was a desire for a personal ministry among the "heathen," not merely a supporting role as a wife. Grimshaw, however, focused on a group neatly limited by denomination and destination. She leaves the reader with the impression that the Hawaiian missionary women were disappointed in their larger goal of personal mission, while fulfilling their social role of minister's wife, children's mother, and hostess to the many guests and visitors of the mission.

Ascribing motivation to the efforts of people one cannot know personally is difficult. Perhaps the assumption that we cannot know the

writers is itself misleading, for these personal writings are individual and private, even intimate. The fact remains, however, that we cannot know the lady writers as intimately as a close friend. They speak another language—that of early nineteenth century America—with a subdialect even more subtle, that of evangelical Protestantism. It is permeated with assumptions about humankind, daily life, theology, and the nature of God. Sometimes this verbal shorthand is obvious, as when fellow believers call one another “brother” and “sister.” But phrases from the Bible subtly weave themselves into the written record along with snatches of hymns and theological terms. When Sybil Mosely Bingham wrote from Hawaii, “My daily prayer is for a meek and quiet spirit,”²⁵ she was quoting from I Peter 3:4 rather than voicing a struggle with the “cult of domesticity.” Each phrase of a letter or journal may have a meaning which is subtly different from its apparent sense. Fanny Newell, the itinerating evangelist, wrote dramatically, “Cutting reflections caused my bowels of compassion to move, my heart to melt, and my eyes to overflow with many tears.”²⁶ The phrases sound odd enough until

²⁵ Sybil Mosely Bingham, undated letter quoted in Mrs. Titus Coan [Fidelia], *A Brief Sketch of the Missionary Life of Mrs. Sybil Moseley Bingham: by Her Daughter Mrs. Titus Coan*. (Honolulu: “Published by Request,” 1895), 6.

²⁶ Fanny Newell, *Memoirs of Fanny Newell; Written by Herself, and Published at the Desire and Request of Numerous Friends* (Springfield, NY: G. & C. Merriam, Printers, 1833), 127.

one realizes that they echo Biblical writings. One of the ABCFM Hawaiian missionaries wrote of “. . . twenty [Hawaiian students], all hopefully pious.”²⁷ She meant that the students showed signs of diligence in learning about the Bible, and that in her opinion all would soon experience conversion.

Too often scholars quote without analyzing what the words must have meant for the original recipient. Interpretation is necessary to history as each generation ponders the meanings of its antecedents: but some scholars have attempted to interpret historical documents using a twentieth century filter or a political agenda. How then is it possible to write about missionary women from so long ago without infusing the work with misinterpretation? Naturally the scholar must understand the theology that drives statements made by these women. Fortunately the theology of the Second Great Awakening was well-represented in its written debate. Further, the scholar should be able to recognize statements that echo similar Bible passages, in order to correctly interpret the writers' intent.

²⁷ Lucy Goodale Thurston, *Life and Times of Mrs. Lucy G. Thurston, Wife of Rev. Asa Thurston, Pioneer Missionary to the Sandwich Islands, Gathered From Letters and Journals*. (Ann Arbor, Mich.: S. C. Andrews, Bookseller & Publisher, 1882; reprinted in facsimile, as second edition: The Women's Board of Missions for the Pacific Islands, 1921), 98.

Since the language of expression reflects a Christian subculture of faith, it will help if the scholar knows the catchwords and understands the principles that shaped young ladies whose moral education was inculcated in Sabbath Schools and Concerts of Prayer. Should that scholar share the Christian faith, a new stumbling block may rise: that of interpreting the words of past missionaries in the light of twentieth century missiology or theology. This danger might be called interpretation by wishful thinking.

Along with motivation and theology the scholar must consider the backgrounds of the individuals under study. The women here discussed are best described as coming from the Protestant middle classes of New England. Not all of them, however, are so easily pigeonholed.

Fanny Newell, who prepared her own journal for posthumous publication,²⁸ was atypical: not only the wife of a Methodist minister and evangelist, but herself an evangelistic speaker and exhorter who itinerated with her husband. Betsey Stockton, whose letters as a Hawaiian missionary were published in *The Christian Advocate*, was an ex-slave and the only African-American to serve the ABCFM before 1860. Henrietta Hall Shuck,

²⁸ Fanny Newell, *Memoirs of Fanny Newell*, 2.

the first American Baptist missionary to China, was the daughter of a clergyman from Virginia rather than New England.²⁹

The connecting thread seems to be something more than genealogy or place of birth. In Betsey Stockton's case, her upbringing in the home of a Presbyterian minister and college president gave her the background and sensibilities of the family.³⁰ Her letters demonstrate her internalization of Christian values and speak for her education and literate beginnings: writing in one example, ". . . the scene that presented itself was, to me, the most sublime I ever witnessed. How, thought I, can 'those who go down to the sea in ships' deny the existence of God.'" ³¹

Louisa Wilson Lowrie, another young woman eulogized in a memorial book, was raised in Virginia, but her Presbyterian upbringing places her in the Calvinistic theological and cultural tradition of the New England Congregational women: "The Lord has been unspeakably kind to me. My 'peace flows as a river.' I wonder that I am not cast down on account of my

²⁹ Jeter, *Mrs. Henrietta Shuck*, 2.

³⁰ Andrew, *Rebuilding the Christian Commonwealth*, 132. Stockton was raised and educated in the home of Ashbel Green, President of Princeton and at one time Moderator of the Presbyterian Church. She taught a Sunday school class of black students at his church.

³¹ Her observation of nature was likewise acute: "I was much interested in witnessing the harpooning of a large shark The fish (if we may call it one, for it has very little the appearance of a fish). . . ." Betsey Stockton, "Sandwich Islands," *Journal and Letter in The Christian Advocate* 3 (May 1824):232-235; 3 (January 1825): 36-41.

vile nature. But—Jesus is my all.”³² The common thread seems to be that the young women were members of stable families who held traditional values and believed in the God of the Bible; families that were actively engaged in a church congregation.

³² Louisa Wilson Lowrie, Journal entry, 12 July 1831, in Fairchild, *Louisa A. Lowrie*, 80.

Chapter 2

A Question of Salvation

The period between 1800 and 1860 covers some of the most fervent missionary activity of the century. It roughly coincides with many years of theological debate in the Protestant denominations of America. Churches and theologians of nineteenth century America were engaged in a strident discussion throughout the first half of the century over the relative merits of Calvinism and Arminianism. Defenders of the old system, Calvinism, were pitted against those in favor of a more lenient theology. Calvinists called them “Arminians” and considered them heretics.¹ A Protestant who believed in Calvinism rejected the notion that fallen mankind could choose to do anything to save himself from the wrath of God. “Original sin,” inherited from Adam, would prevent anybody from enjoying God’s blessings on earth, or heaven after death. Only God’s sovereign choice, grace, could save a sinner. Christ had died for the “ungodly” but only the “elect” would be saved. Without God, man was utterly without hope of salvation.

¹ Daniel G. Reid, ed., *Dictionary of Christianity in America* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 77–79. Jacob Arminius, Dutch Reformed theologian (1560–1690), led opposition to the more extreme Calvinistic claims for predestination and “limited atonement,” the notion that Christ died not for all men, but only for the elect.

The Second Great Awakening changed Calvinism. Profound changes in Protestant theology during the revivals between the 1780s and the 1860s give the impression that clergy and layman alike abandoned Calvinism for Arminianism. The polarized theology of the period speaks of a great gulf between the two camps, but ministers and theologians of both schools of thought shared much more than they disagreed over. True, Arminianism did stress the ability of man to choose righteousness. It emphasized the power of Man to turn voluntarily from sin and serve God. But in this period, most “Arminians” believed in original sin, even though in practice they refuted it. At the same time, Calvinists were adopting some of the revival methods of the Arminians. The two groups had much in common.

Nineteenth century Arminianism downplayed the effects of original sin, and declared that it was a man’s personal sins, not Adam’s fall, that made him a sinner. This rejection of original sin must have comforted many a mother whose infant died: an “innocent” infant surely should go to Heaven. “The loss of my little girl has been felt most deeply” wrote Mary Rankin [Porter] Janvier in 1853, “We shall have a happy meeting dear babe in our heavenly home.”²

² Mary Rankin [Porter] Janvier, Journal entry 2 May 1853, AMs, Presbyterian Historical

The clergy of both Congregational and Presbyterian churches insisted they had not abandoned Calvinism. Worshippers concerned for their souls were assured that only God could move their hearts to salvation, and they must cooperate with him. It was a fine point, but splitting hairs was not an unusual theological pastime. Evangelists like Charles G. Finney, however, blithely continued using the “new measures” they adopted from the Methodists, installing “anxious benches” and groups of “praying women” in “promiscuous assemblies” to urge sinners—many of them men—to repentance. Always practical, Finney found this pragmatic approach enticing and used it with incredible success himself. Rochester, New York, church records reveal an increase of almost three thousand converts as a result of three decades of Finney’s revival efforts.³

In 1837, the Presbyterian church was irreparably split over these issues. The traditional “Old School” held to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Calvinism. The “New School” leaned toward Arminianism, abolition of slavery, and reform, with the result that the Schism of 1837 ran along regional lines. “By 1869,” explains historian William W. Sweet, “the causes

Society, Philadelphia, PA

³ William W. Sweet, *The Story of Religion in America*. (New York: Harpers, 1939), 283.

for the division between Old and New School Presbyterians had largely disappeared. . . .”⁴ Slavery had been one of those causes, but the gradual softening of Old School Calvinism had effectively removed the theological issues.

This ferment left missionaries with the theology they had been raised on and could best articulate. At least some threads of Arminianism had crept into the women’s writings. They speak of their native charges as “choosing” to follow Christ, and probably would not themselves have become missionaries had they not somehow believed that mankind could choose salvation, and be accepted by God. Each grieves for her deceased infants with the Arminian hope that they are “waiting in Heaven” for their families. Yet where theology appears in their writing, it is inevitably couched in the terms of their Calvinistic background: “He says, you are good Presbyterians? We told him that we owned the name of Presbyterians but did not call ourselves good.”⁵ The writer, Tryphena Northway Reasoner, was a member of the second generation of women missionaries. Born two years after the first party was sent to India, she grew up on the fringes of the

⁴ Ibid, 259–263 passim.

⁵ Tryphena Northway Reasoner, Letter/journal to Mr. Francis Northway, 22 May 1837. TMs, Author’s personal collection: 3.

“Burned Over District” but gives a properly theological response as the wife of a missionary. Like most women in this group, she came from a Calvinistic background in which both parents were engaged in Bible reading and church work. The main exceptions to this generalized background were Eliza Hart Spalding, whose parents had been schoolteachers but were not church members, and Betsey Stockton, the ex-slave: though Stockton’s upbringing in the home of Ashbel Green, a luminary in the Presbyterian church, gave her more in common with the Calvinistic background of her fellow missionaries.⁶

Many of the women in the group under study came from a solidly Calvinistic background: Mary Hawes Van Lennep was the daughter of well-known Rev. Joel Hawes. Louisa Lowrie’s father was a lawyer; her father-in-law was a United States Senator. Lucy Goodale Thurston, Sarah White Smith, Mary Fairbanks Eells all had fathers who served as deacons in their respective churches. Narcissa Prentiss’s father was a judge and an elder; Tryphena Northway Reasoner’s father had been a Captain in the War of

⁶ Clifford Merrill Drury, *The First White Women Over the Rockies: Diaries, Letters, and Biographical Sketches of the Six Women who made the Overland Journey in 1836 and 1838* (Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1963), Vol. I, 174–5; Re: Stockton, *cf* Chapter I, note 23 & 24.

1812, later an elder⁷. Reasoner's mother was as active in spiritual matters as her husband:

When the weather was too stormy to attend Meeting on the Sabbath, Grandfather Northway would say, 'Well, Mother, you'll have to preach us a sermon today.' And Grandmother Northway would take her Bible and give the family as good a sermon as any preacher.⁸

More important for the missionary women than proper background, however, was salvation, their personal testament of faith. So long as they could articulate the right words on their application to the Board of Missions, and had the other qualifications (piety, education, decent health, household skills, *and* a missionary fiancé), they would pass.

For missionaries the "personal testimony" or conversion narrative was especially important. The few short sentences describing the manner in which a believer became assured of salvation had always been an instrument

⁷ Mrs. Joel Hawes, *Memoir of Mrs. Mary E. Van Lennep, Only Daughter of the Rev. Joel Hawes, D. D., and wife of the Rev. Henry J. Van Lennep, Missionary in Turkey* (Hartford, CT: Belknap and Hamersly, 1848), 1; Michael C. Coleman, *Presbyterian Missionary Attitudes Toward American Indians, 1837-1893* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1985), 14-17 passim; Ashbel G. Fairchild, Rev., ed., *Memoir of Mrs. Louisa A. Lowrie of the Northern India Mission* (Philadelphia: William S. Martien, 1837), 2; Lucy Goodale Thurston, *Life and Times of Mrs. Lucy G. Thurston, Wife of Rev. Asa Thurston, Pioneer Missionary to the Sandwich Islands, Gathered From Letters and Journals* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: S. C. Andrews, Bookseller & Publisher, 1882; reprinted in facsimile, as second edition: The Women's Board of Missions for the Pacific Islands, 1921), 3; Drury, *First White Women*, Vol. III, 33; Vol. II, 47; I, 35; Matthew A. Reasoner Genealogy Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

⁸ Jennie Reasoner, *Father's Stories About his Missionary Parents* TMs in Matthew A. Reasoner Collection, *op cit.*

in judging prospective church members. Such narratives became tools for gauging the fervor of missionaries. Many of these statements survive.

Conversion narratives for the general female population have been skillfully analyzed by Epstein.⁹ Eighteenth century conversion narratives, according to Epstein, did not demonstrate a big gap between male and female accounts. Women more often expressed deep feelings of guilt and greater relief when conversion was realized. Men were more likely to mention personal sin, especially relating to economic pursuits. Women tended to make more of original sin. Epstein explains these relatively mild differences as evidence of the Puritan lack of emphasis on sexual differences that seemed to them both obvious and preordained.

Epstein's interpretation of nineteenth century conversion accounts traces some surprising differences between men and women writers. The women stressed feelings of rebellion against God and resentment of the Bible, often in extravagant prose. The men, according to Epstein, resented both women and religion for limiting their personal freedom.¹⁰

⁹ Barbara Leslie Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1981). While Epstein's conclusions seem exaggerated compared to the statements in her quoted material, her service lies in identifying the differences between eighteenth- and nineteenth-century conversion narratives.

¹⁰ Ibid, 15-19 passim.

The first women sent to the mission field during this early period are Harriet Atwood Newell and Anne Hasseltine Judson. Both were born in Massachusetts, and shared a common New England culture and secular education. Newell was raised in the church. Judson was not. As shall be seen, the conversion accounts of neither express the resentment Epstein finds in her sampling.

Between the ages of thirteen and sixteen, Ann Hasseltine lived what she later termed “a frivolous life.” She neglected her “religious duties,” but was brought to a period of anxiety about her eternal destination and spent at least a year, by her estimation, in soul-searching, “reading and crying for mercy.”¹¹

Protestant Christian theology, based on Calvinist theology, was commonly understood to dictate a destination of eternal punishment–Hell–for those who were not God’s chosen people. Sermons about this evil place, in the New England of the day, clearly frightened many into a better way of life. “The next stage [of Hasseltine’s spiritual journey],” writes biographer Walter Wyeth,

¹¹ Walter N. Wyeth, D. D., *Ann H. Judson. A Memorial* (Cincinnati, OH: Published by the Author, 1888), 45–65 passim.

was the reaching of an understanding of the real condition of her heart, and of how it appeared in the sight of God” [i.e., sinful; without hope of Heaven or the ability to change]. . . . her broken spirit having come down before Him was soon relieved of its distress. . . . casting herself upon Him and leaving all to Him, she soon experienced relief. . . . She went through a series of inquiries as to the evidences of a saved state, and found much reason to believe she was a Christian. Then she began to give very diligent attention to her studies, feeling under a new and solemn obligation to improve her mind and advantages to the glory of God.¹²

Although Wyeth wrote in the 1880s, his rendering of Hasseltine’s experience reflects the written expressions of the salvation experience offered by men and women alike, in the period before 1835 and the rise of evangelist Charles Grandison Finney. For the earlier group of missionaries it may be considered a “normative” exposition of an intensely personal experience. Epstein concurs. The pre-Finney conversion narratives she studied did not express the strong sense of rebellion against God that later narratives do: Hasseltine’s narrative fits firmly with the earlier group.

By contrast, the journal of Harriet Atwood [Newell] reveals a more serene conversion experience. At thirteen she wrote about “. . . great discoveries of the wickedness of my heart.” These fears were somewhat

¹² Wyeth, *Ann H. Judson*, 19. Wyeth had the advantage of access to Hasseltine’s complete journal; unfortunately, to the knowledge of this writer, it has never been published in full.

ameliorated the same day by a passage explaining “. . . God has graciously revealed himself to me in the beauty and glory of his character. The Savior provided for fallen man, is just such a one as I need. He is the one altogether lovely.”¹³ The lack of dramatic resentment in her account may be explained by her religious upbringing, her youth, and her conversion apart from the emotional excesses of revivalism.

The patterns of difference between eighteenth and nineteenth century conversion narratives identified by Epstein as *resentment* seem to be explained better by their position in the continuum of either pre- or post-revival narratives. The later accounts are more oriented toward the feelings of the individual, and may be considered examples of revival-based conversions. Women of this period, maintains Epstein, express a growing rebellion and resentment against God and men which is relieved by the individual's salvation. Perhaps because Epstein was examining popular culture, her findings do not resonate with the writings of women who became missionaries. The salvation accounts of mission-bound women even in the later decades before the Civil War do not express resentment against men,

¹³ Leonard Woods, D. D., *A Sermon, Preached at Haverhill, (Mass.) in Remembrance of Mrs. Harriet Newell, Missionary to India, Who Died at the Isle of France, Nov. 30, 1812, aged 19 years. To Which are Added Memoirs of her Life* (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, Theological Printer and Bookseller, 1815), 35.

even where the writer accuses herself of having been “in rebellion” against God. Since the stock phrase “in rebellion” was so commonly used in sermons, its use by the young women is likely an artifact of churchgoing rather than an expression of resentment.

Pre-salvation despair was as normative as salvation itself. Thirteen-year-old Mary Rankin Porter Janvier wrote in her journal of March 8, 1840, “I fear the Son of Righteousness¹⁴ had not melted my strong heart I said that I hoped the next time I wrote it would be to speak of some decisive change for the better but this is not the case.”¹⁵ The “change for the better” was conversion, evidently desired but not yet experienced by Janvier. Sermons urged, “. . . are you perpared [sic] my hearers for that important day the day of death if not it is highly important we should commence that preperation and be resolved that this day shall be the preperation.”¹⁶

A child’s salvation experience was encouraged, although adults seem to have desired to make sure the child was old enough to be ready to make an important decision for herself. At age ten, Mary Hawes Van Lennep (1821—

¹⁴ Biblical name for Jesus Christ

¹⁵ Mary Rankin Porter Janvier, *Journal*, 1838–1867 (AMs, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA): 1.

¹⁶ Mary Fisher Andrews, *Journal*, 12 April 1835 (AMs, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Boston).

1844) was heard singing in her room, her mother recalled in her memorial biography. On her mother's query, Van Lennep replied, "O mamma, I am so happy, I have found God." Evidently the family of a minister would expect a precocious response to the gospel heard daily at home. Van Lennep added, "While I was speaking, God seemed near. It seemed as though he heard me; and I felt that I was speaking to a dear friend, and that he was as near as when I speak to dear father."¹⁷ In a personal letter written before experiencing the missionary call, Van Lennep later was to exemplify the Biblical instruction to all Christians to "make disciples:"

O my dear friend, when I see so many whom I love, entering on the path of life, I think of one who has ever been dear to me, and I pray that she, too, may come and walk in that path which leads to happiness, and everlasting life. May it not be so, soon, dear S?"¹⁸

Harriet Lathrop Winslow's account, written about five years after her conversion experience, follows the expected eighteenth century pattern in lack of expression of resentment, though it also does not dwell on feelings of guilt or even original sin:

In the month of January, 1809, I received a letter from a dear friend at New London, saying that she had become anxious for her soul, and exhorting me to think of another world. This greatly encouraged me. . . .

¹⁷ Mrs. Joel Hawes, *Mary E. Van Lennep*, 23.

¹⁸ Mary Hawes Van Lennep to "dear S," *Ibid.*, 47.

My earnestness had before been increasing, and I now felt new strength. . . . A sweet peace was shed abroad in my soul. I felt assured that the Lord had heard my cry, and had not despised my prayer. Never can I forget the feelings with which I afterwards joined the family circle, the happiest of the happy. . . . I went in the afternoon to the house of God, where every thing was new, every thing seemed to bid me welcome, and to say, 'The Lord of Hosts is in the midst of us.'¹⁹

Mary Richardson Walker's account seems to fit with Epstein's analysis of a later (post-Finney) description. Walker was born a generation later than Winslow, and wrote to the ABCFM in 1836: "Life and death seemed set before me. . . . Thanks be to God, I trust I was enabled to lay down the weapons of my rebellion, to renounce my idols and find peace in believing."²⁰ Hers is a clear expression of "rebellion" that does not simultaneously suggest resentment of mankind. The theological background of her statement is the New Testament concept of a sinner's reconciliation with God: "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he [God] reconciled."²¹

¹⁹ Harriet Lathrop Winslow, Journal, June 1814, in Miron Winslow, Rev., ed., *Memoir of Mrs. Harriet L. Winslow, Thirteen Years a Member of the American Mission in Ceylon* (New York: American Tract Society, n. d.), 16–17.

²⁰ Mary Richardson Walker to ABCFM, 5 December 1836, in Drury, *First White Women*, Vol. II, Walker-Eels (Glendale CA: Arthur H. Clark, 1963), 29.

²¹ Colossians 1:21.

Louisa Lowrie expressed some resentment, but not until over a month after her conversion. Her expression does not fit Epstein's pattern. She says, "I hate the world, because it separates between me and my best Friend."²² Her conversion account from the preceding month clearly shows the influence of Calvinist theology:

. . . at length, I was induced to say, 'Here, Lord, I give myself away, 'Tis all that I can do.' I have reason to believe that the Lord has accepted me as his own. For a short time I felt absorbed in love to him. I felt his presence around me, pervading all space, and filling my heart with joy unspeakable. I wondered that I had ever sinned against a God of such infinite goodness I now see it more and more, every day. . . . Lord, I believe: help thou my unbelief. . . . I do know the love of God, that it 'passeth knowledge.'²³

The salvation accounts of young women destined for mission fields do not reflect the male-female antagonisms traced by Epstein, nor is there visible as marked a contrast in style between eighteenth and nineteenth century accounts. In the history of ideas, change is usually a gradual process, taking a generation or more. The writings and conversion accounts of

²² Louisa A. Lowrie, Journal, 6 June 1830, in Fairchild, *Louisa A. Lowrie*, 39. Here the capitalized "Friend" refers to Jesus Christ, as in the popular hymn *Jesus, What a Friend for Sinners*.

²³ Louisa A. Lowrie, Journal, 12 May 1830, in Fairchild, *Louisa A. Lowrie*, 35-37. Here she quotes from the hymn, *Alas! and did my Savior Bleed?* by Isaac Watts; quotes one Bible passage [Mark 4:24, "Lord I believe..."]; and paraphrases another [Philippians 4:7]: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

female missionaries demonstrate the gradual paradigm shift from Calvinism to Arminianism for the American faithful of the nineteenth century.

Chapter 3

Career or Divine Opportunity?

The question of motivation is one that makes the lives of missionaries intriguing to secular writers. It is perhaps the least understood aspect, for the interior landscape, or what a missionary would call her “soul,” is intensely private, subjective, and inexplicable to a modern secular historian.

In her article “The Clear Leadings of Providence” historian Joanna Bowen Gillespie comments “students of autobiographical writing have often dismissed religious memoirs as having nothing new to reveal—only a tracing of “old terrain,” and not resonant with a distinctive women’s voice. . . .”¹ Historians seem to have written off women’s religious memoirs as well.

The journal entries of women missionaries are somewhat formulaic. This pattern is often assumed to be formal phrases learned by rote and given out at the appropriate time. But parallel patterns of behavior and even writing among the women missionaries express individual thought. Though predictable, these phrases express desires and ambitions that were considered unusual in their time.

¹ Joanna Bowen Gillespie, “‘The Clear Leadings of Providence’: Pious Memoirs and the Problems of Self-realization for Women in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 5 (Summer 1985): 199.

Why did New England women seem especially fit for revivalism, reform, or missionaries? Historians have proposed numberless theories, but often lack an interior view of Christian spiritual motives. Each theory has a certain external plausibility, yet each seems to be a secular writer's attempt at understanding a Christian subculture that remains singularly opaque.

Women raised in New England had, by virtue of background, an ingrained sense of individualism. Their schools and their churches all gave them a sense that America—especially New England—had a mission to provide the world with a godly example of democracy. Combined with the equally ingrained sense of the mission of the church to spread the Gospel, this sense of mission was a strong motivating factor for the faithful of New England.

Because, as Epstein and others have shown, missionary women most often came from the professional or artisan classes, they enjoyed a background in education, not only attending female seminaries but studying advanced subjects with their brothers or fathers.² Of the six women in the Oregon mission, for instance, three were daughters of prosperous deacons or

² Barbara Leslie Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1981), 3–4.

elders [Narcissa Whitman, Myra Eels and Sarah Smith]. Mary Dix Gray belonged to a “musically inclined” family whose members supplied the church choir; and Eliza Spalding was raised on an independent farm.³ These advantages enabled most of them to teach school for a time after their education was complete, thus providing preparation for later service as missionaries. Cultural emphasis on spiritual journals gave them a place to explore their relationship with God while they developed a sense of self, a process called self-realization.⁴ The contrast between their own perceived great advantages of education, spiritual training, and wealth compared to the “heathen” women they heard about began to enter their thoughts as they pondered their own lives in journals. The combination of background, culture, education, and “religious advantages” inculcated a positive self-image in an era where this was becoming increasingly rare among women.

Because each child in New England’s tax-supported Congregational churches was taught that original sin tainted everyone, all grew up “knowing” that they were sinners. The women’s self-image may actually

³ Clifford Merrill Drury, *The First White Women Over the Rockies: Diaries, Letters, and Biographical Sketches of the Six Women who made the Overland Journey in 1836 and 1838* (Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1963), Vol. I-III passim.

⁴ Gillespie, “‘The Clear Leadings of Providence’,” 197.

have benefited by this knowledge, since logically they were thus no *worse* than men, even if thought no better.

Changing cultural morays which described women's values as "responsive and yielding" perhaps better enabled women to "submit" to God during revivals, becoming a self-fulfilling description. Since submitting to God was, even Biblically, preferable to submitting to men,⁵ young women were perhaps more willing to remain single and serve God than to marry and submit to a husband.

This representative woman of education, then, after an individualistic upbringing, good education and self-actualized beginning, yielded enough to experience conversion. As a result, her status as a "saved" sinner gave her a feeling of being the equal of equals, even where the culture around her did not accord with the feeling. Lacking cash to contribute to the cause of Christ, but wanting to play a part in the important work herself, the quandary arose: what should she do? Louisa Wilson Lowrie writes:

At first I knew of no way in which I could benefit them but by my prayers. Afterwards an opportunity was afforded me to contribute to the support of missionaries among them. This I felt to be a great privelege [*sic*]. As I thought more on the subject, my desires for their

⁵ Acts 5:29, "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

salvation became still stronger, and I began to inquire whether I had not some additional duty to perform in relation to them.⁶

The culture was not generous to women who had been raised above the poverty line and denied them secular careers. The expectation was that they would marry and establish their own household. But by 1820, an educated woman might conclude that marriage was not the place to use her knowledge. Prescriptive literature attempted to raise the standards of housekeeping in an effort to promote nurturing homes. Authors like Catharine Beecher and Lydia Maria Child published books on the “domestic arts” that were widely sold.⁷ But women’s traditional tasks did not pay well if attempted as a “career” outside of marriage: neither dressmaking nor millinery paid well; cooking even less well. Women of the poorer classes could take in laundry and ironing, but that was hard physical labor. What place might there be for an educated woman?

She might choose to teach school: that was considered “respectable” and worthy. She might decide to teach Sunday school: an unpaid position considered even more worthy for its spiritual content. If she were very

⁶ Louisa A. Lowrie, Journal, [July] 1832, in Ashbel G. Fairchild, Rev., ed., *Memoir of Mrs. Louisa A. Lowrie of the Northern India Mission* (Philadelphia: William S. Martien, 1837), 93.

⁷ For Beecher, these works included *A Treatise on Domestic Economy* [1841], *Miss Beecher’s Domestic Receipt Book* [1848], and *Principles of Domestic Science* [1869]. Child’s titles include *The*

fortunate and a young woman of “good character” she might teach in an academy, educating girls only a few years younger than herself. Whatever the case, her education and her career would be finished when she married and began to produce children. The home or farm contained entirely too many necessary tasks to include a separate career for the wife.

The result was that in order to control her life, a woman must find a “field of usefulness” in which to labor, or find herself an “old maid,” living in the household of a sibling performing free domestic labor, nursing an invalid sister-in-law, or providing child care for nieces and nephews. In this search for self-direction, most of the women here studied followed a similar course. The first step was teaching. Young women were employed in academies, public schools, and Sunday schools, whether paid or not. Teaching allowed a woman to support herself, should she choose not to continue in her parents’ home. Her wages could also supplement her parents’ income should there be a need. For women from small communities, living in another town also expanded opportunities to meet eligible young men. Unless a woman was “doomed” to spinsterhood, marriage must shortly follow. In each case, the newly-discovered teaching career seemed stable enough that the young

woman to rejected at least one suitor or even the idea of marriage altogether.⁸

Since most of these young women were raised as churchgoers, after conversion each continued attending service with renewed interest. There she learned with horror of the great spiritual “darkness” both at home and abroad. In a sermon or one of the “memorial” books she heard about a young woman who died on the mission field, such as Harriet Newell. Her fresh interest in missions kindled, a spirit of emulation awakened. What could she do to help, with little real income of her own? Harriet Wadsworth Lathrop [Winslow] expressed this frustration:

. . . how basely ungrateful and selfish in me, to sit down quietly in the care of self, without making any exertion for their [the “poor heathen”] salvation. But what can I do? A weak, ignorant female. One thing only do I see. My prayers may be accepted.⁹

In such a frame of mind some young women with an awareness and interest in missions would then, as if for the first time, hear of a recently-ordained young minister, already assigned to a distant mission. Sometimes,

⁸ Narcissa Prentiss Whitman and Mary Richardson Walker, both of whom later became missionaries to Oregon, rejected at least one suitor before finally accepting a missionary suitor and his Oregon destination. Drury, *First White Women Over the Rockies*, Vol. I, 28; Vol. II, 27.

⁹ Harriet Lathrop Winslow, Journal, 21 August 1814, in Miron Winslow, Rev., ed., *Memoir of Mrs. Harriet L. Winslow, Thirteen Years a Member of the American Mission in Ceylon*

indeed often, this young man was then brought to her door and introduced because of a shared interest in missionary activities. The mutual “friend” often failed to warn her that the object of their introduction was matrimony. In their first short visit, however, she found out, for the young minister had no time to waste. If he wanted to go out with his mission, he must find a wife. The young woman was then confronted by a most unexpected, and urgent, proposal of marriage.

Surely she would see these circumstances as “the hand of God” directing her path, presenting her with an opportunity for greater “usefulness” and service as a missionary? Most did, after agonizing a few days. Mary Dix Gray, explaining to her adult daughter, said:

Ever since the day when I gave myself to Jesus, it has been my daily prayer, ‘Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?’ And when the question, ‘Will you go to Oregon as one of a little band of self-denying missionaries and teach those poor Indians of their Saviour?’ was suddenly proposed to me, I felt that it was the call of the Lord and I could not do otherwise.¹⁰

In her parents’ generation, a suitor approached his intended with a proposal carefully phrased in words like these: “I have known you for some

(New York: American Tract Society, n. d.), 29.

¹⁰ Mary Dix Gray, conversation [1881] with daughter Caroline Gray Kamm, in *Transactions of the Oregon Pioneer Association*, 1897, quoted in Drury, *First White Women Over the Rockies*, Vol. II, 242.

time now, and have spoken to your father; he has consented to my asking if you think you could learn to love me?" In the eighteenth century, marriage commonly preceded "love" and was more likely to be a rational contract supervised by parents and concerned relatives. But courtship was changing. The newer model, that of companionate marriage, was beginning to attract the young of the romantic era.¹¹

American missionary brides of the nineteenth century experienced an optimum combination of courtship models. The eighteenth century model allowed her to make a rational choice, one which would assure her of the most respected career available to her. The companionate model, popular among the rising generation of which she was a part, then gave her a satisfying participation in her marriage and her husband's career. In choosing marriage to a minister, women without time for a true courtship must inevitably have considered the career a greater factor in their choice than the young man who proposed marriage. Her quandary had been solved by the hand of God. Small wonder that she accepted.

Grimshaw identifies women's choice of a missionary career as an

¹¹ While the companionate model arose in the last decade of the eighteenth century, it would not become a widespread expectation until after the turn of the century. Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 85–6.

ambitious step, but does not consider the spiritual values that led to their participation in missions: “. . . their presence in foreign mission service was part of a separate female ambition for an important and independent career, the entry for which was marriage to a departing male missionary.”¹² Were Grimshaw’s assumption true, the historian would expect to find many of the young women’s journals discussing a common courtship ploy of the time: “setting one’s cap” for an eligible bachelor. That the departing ministers who sought their hands were a surprise to most of the women seems to speak for the serendipitous nature of their marriages. Harriet Newell confided to her diary, “This was not a long wished for letter,—no; it was a long dreaded one. . . ; How shall I decide this important, this interesting question?”¹³ No matter how prepared for service the women had made themselves, they did not seek a spouse solely for his career. Lois Banner suggests a more reasonable motivation:

To a generation raised on romantic tales of. . . [David Brainerd, “apostle to the Indians”] and [who] eagerly followed the exploits of youthful missionaries to foreign lands, most of whom died tragically after

¹² Patricia Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty: American Missionary Wives in Nineteenth-century Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), xxi.

¹³ Leonard Woods, D. D., *A Sermon, Preached at Haverhill, (Mass.) in Remembrance of Mrs. Harriet Newell, Missionary to India, Who Died at the Isle of France, Nov. 30, 1812, aged 19 years. To Which are Added Memoirs of her Life* (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, Theological Printer and Bookseller, 1815), 33.

a few years of service, the missionary life was the acme of heroic self-sacrifice for society's greater good."¹⁴

Brainerd's memorial book was read for generations after his death: in 1831 Louisa Lowrie read it and commented: "Thanks to God for the privilege of reading the life of David Brainerd! It has increased my faith." Lowrie was clearly personalizing Brainerd's admirable Christian traits when she added, "I feel that, through the grace of God, I may be made as humble as he; though I do not feel as if I ever could be so useful."¹⁵

On the spiritual plane, motivation was based on the theological basis that each must internalize, as had missionaries since the time of the Bible. To express the Gospel meant to announce that Jesus had come to save the world—more particularly the individual sinner—from sin. Missionary activity was the logical consequence of belief: if one believed that (1) humankind was sinful (2) Jesus Christ died to save the world from sin and (3) humankind was destined for eternal punishment unless each believed in Christ, then it became imperative for believers to tell unbelievers the Gospel, or the "good news" that they could escape Hell.

¹⁴ Lois Banner, "Religious Benevolence as Social Control: A Critique of an Interpretation" *Journal of American History* 60 (June 1973): 34.

¹⁵ Louisa Wilson Lowrie, Journal entry, 13 July 1831, in Fairchild, *Louisa A. Lowrie*, 81.

But secular writers, even those who begin to understand the message, often confuse its meaning. In his study of the great reform movements between 1815 and 1860, Ronald Walters states, “that evangelical faith in the heart was extremely significant. Like Finney’s disinterested benevolence and perfectionism, it belonged to the nineteenth century repudiation of Calvinism.”¹⁶ Walters here oversimplifies a complex topic. What made Finney’s *New Measures*, and New School Presbyterian thought, so seductive, was their use of the methods of choice to gain converts, even while they themselves claimed to subscribe to the most orthodox theology. The theology of most Plan of Union ministers (Presbyterian and Congregational), along with their Baptist and Methodist brethren, was far more Calvinistic than any of them would like to acknowledge, despite their adoption of the “new measures” popularized by the revival movement.¹⁷

Even when historians can appreciate, as Gillespie clearly does, the value of early personal writings by women destined for missions or pastors’ wives, they can miss the point: “Religious calling mandated the minding of others’

¹⁶ Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers, 1815—1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 29.

¹⁷ cf note 3, Chapter 2.

welfare as a condition of working out one's own salvation."¹⁸ The actions of missionary women might seem to indicate that functioning as a glorified "busy-body" would earn one's salvation. Missionary boards demanded statements of faith-conversion accounts of each candidate in an effort to evaluate her sincerity. The women do not identify their salvation as dependent on their own efforts. To a woman, they thank God for their personal salvation as believers and go on to work for the salvation of others. Sarah Boardman Judson wrote at conversion, "Oh, my Saviour! I am weak, and the heart of man is deceitful [original sin]; but I do hope in thy mercy." Speaking of her sister, she then continues, "that the Holy Spirit might convince her. . . , of the importance of seeking an interest in the Saviour."¹⁹ Harriet Newell had written at her own conversion only eight years earlier, "I have a hope, a strong, unwavering hope, which I would not renounce for worlds. Bless the Lord, Oh my soul, for this blessed assurance of eternal life."²⁰ Only four months later at a young child's birthday, Newell

¹⁸ Gillespie, "The Clear Leadings," 197-221.

¹⁹ Sarah Boardman Judson, Journal, 4 June 1820, in Fanny Forrester, [Emily Chubbock Judson], *Memoir of Sarah B. Judson of the American Mission to Burmah*. (New York: Lewis Colby, 1850), 19-20.

²⁰ Harriet Atwood Newell, Journal, 11 December 1806, in Woods, *Harriet Newell*, 36.

“ardently wished that this dear child might be sanctified.”²¹ Neither Judson nor Newell linked her desire for another’s salvation to any performance of her own.

The condition of salvation was acceptance of God’s forgiveness for sin, not a string of righteous deeds; nor did deeds determine the state of one’s soul. Deeds did serve as a kind of indicator, however, as they had under Puritan theology. Cornelia Kidder’s diary of months in Brazil spent waiting for her husband’s return would surely sink into agonized self-pity without constant self-reminders that even though her deeds were painfully lacking, and her attitude poor, her own salvation was assured. The journal begins one month after his departure on a steamer upriver, and expresses her worries about being left alone: “I continually seem to be striving against the evil tendency of my mind to despondency. At some times I seem to feel reconciled and submissive to my dear husband’s long absence, but oftener am rebelling in will & feeling against my Father’s will.” The following month, Kidder writes, “. . . how much longer God knows—oh, why should I repine? I think I am becoming more reconciled. . . .” By October things have

²¹ Harriet Atwood Newell, Journal, 25 March 1807, in Woods, *Harriet Newell*, 37.

improved: she is “. . . waiting with all patience to get letters from my husband and friends.”²²

Gillespie maintains that the intimate, immediate tone of the published “memorials” had the attraction of a twentieth century confessional magazine. Considering that nineteenth century daily life had no television, radio, telephone, or photographically illustrated magazines, these published writings of “sainted” young women gave their young readers a broader experience of the world and a dramatized spiritual odyssey to emulate.

In the published “memoirs” and books about deceased missionary wives, motivation is always assumed to be for the good of the Kingdom of God, and convenient quotes are inserted, becoming a part of the early hagiography of Protestant America. Anne B. Judson is quoted as saying, “. . . to count all things but loss, in comparison with the knowledge of him”²³

. . . my native land, my home, my friends, and all my forsaken enjoyments, rushed into my mind; my tears flowed profusely: and I could not be comforted. Soon, however, the consideration of having left all these for the dear cause of Christ, and the hope of being, one day, instrumental of leading some poor degraded females to embrace him as

²² Cornelia Kidder, Journal, 1839–1841, (AMs, Day Collection, Yale University, New Haven, CT): 7 Aug., 30 Sep., and 23 Oct., 1839.

²³ Anne Hasseltine Judson, Journal [bet. 19 & 27] February 1812, in John Dowling, Rev., A. M., *The Judson Offering: Intended as a Token of Christian Sympathy With the Living, and a Memento of Christian Affection for the Dead* (New York: Lewis Colby & Co., 1846), 6. This statement echoes St. Paul almost word-for-word.

their Salvation, soothed my griefs, dried up my tears, and restored tranquillity to my mind.²⁴

Clearly a young woman who would dare to risk life and fortune in foreign lands had a strong sense of altruism and faith. Whatever else she might experience, loss of family was certain. Travel was too slow and dangerous and disease too prevalent for parting to be considered anything but permanent. Mary Richardson Walker put it succinctly: "Getting ready to go on a mission is like preparing to bury all of my friends, to die myself and to live many years."²⁵ Loss of life was to be expected, though whether her own or her families' was unknown. After the death of her first infant Mary Rankin Porter [Janvier] wrote "I have. . . daily [prayed] that I may be prepared for all my Father is preparing for me. . . . perhaps God may see fit to take away husband and child, friends and health. Well if he should I trust I may have grace given to "be still" and learn the lesson."²⁶ Somehow,

²⁴ Ibid, 7.

²⁵ Mary Richardson Walker, Journal, 21 June 1837, in Drury, *First White Women Over the Rockies*, Vol. I, 40.

²⁶ Mary Rankin Porter Janvier, Journal, 14 September 1851, AMs in Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA. By mid-May, 1853, She had lost two more infants, and her husband was dying of tuberculosis. Widowed by December 1853, she stayed in India. Two years later she married a second missionary, gave birth to another child and became ill herself. On the trip to the United States for her own health, both her only child and her stepchild died of scarlet fever. She returned to India. By the time she was thirty seven, her second husband had been murdered by a Sikh fanatic. Three years after the event, she wrote

a missionary must somehow reconcile the glorious work ahead of her with real personal loss:

We have been separated for ever, from those whom we loved from infancy. . . , it often costs us many a pang, & the thought that we shall no more see them on earth, is full of bitterness. But there is a rich promise to those, who have forsaken all for the Saviour, & we can look forward to the time, when we shall all meet again, where there shall be no more separation.²⁷

With such personal loss to be faced, how could young women find motivation to even consider becoming a missionary? Sally Walters Fisher, in “They Came to Do Good,” ascribes motivation to empathy for lost souls. Henry Opukahaia, who was educated at a Connecticut “heathen” school founded by the ABCFM, determined to return to Hawaii as a missionary to his own people, only to die before leaving the United States. “[His] eloquent memoirs sparked the imagination of young New Englanders and gave impetus to the Sandwich Islands Mission,” explains Fisher.²⁸

An 1833 letter published in *The Christian Advocate* [Methodist] galvanized Protestants of all denominations to greater activity for Indians in North

the last entry in her journal [23 January 1867]: “. . . during the night of agony after the fatal blows my own fears of a violent death were taken away and I felt that I could joyfully lay down my life for Jesus. Such feelings though have not always prevailed since.”

²⁷ Emma Walsh, Journal, 1 January 1844, AMs in Day Collection, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

²⁸ Sally Walters Fisher, “They Came to Do Good: Vermont Missionaries in Hawaii,” *Vermont History* 57 (Winter 1989): 36.

America. It described the journey of a small group of “Flathead” Indians from the Pacific coast all the way to St. Louis, Missouri, to General William Clark for teachers of the white man’s “Great Spirit.” The Indians, who had evidently had some contact with French–Canadian trappers, asked for “black robes” or priests:

How deeply affecting the circumstances of the four natives traveling on foot 3,000 miles through thick forests and extensive prairies, sincere searchers after truth! The story has scarcely a parallel in history. . . . May we not indulge the hope that the day is not far distant when the missionaries will penetrate into these wilds where the Sabbath bell has never yet tolled since the world began!²⁹

This request, the death of two of the four delegates while staying with Clark, and the engraving of an Indian with his flattened forehead excited great empathy among Protestants. The probable reason for their immediate response was the Indians’ request for Catholic teaching.

The growing influx of European Catholics into the new United States had alarmed many Protestants since the end of the War of 1812. The Flathead Delegation’s request for “black robes” sounded an alarm and raised nativist sentiments. Most Protestants still regarded Catholicism with suspicion. Lyman Beecher’s famous sermon [1834] and book [1835] of the

²⁹ “The Flathead Indians,” *The Christian Advocate and Journal and Zion’s Herald* 10 (March 1, 1833):1.

same title, *A Plea for the West*, were a typical reaction to news of the Flathead Delegation. Protestants everywhere discussed what should be done, and how quickly missionaries might be trained and sent to such receptive tribes. The journey of the Flathead Delegation spurred the establishment of the Methodist Mission in the Willamette Valley of Oregon, and the so-called Whitman Mission (Presbyterian) to the Oregon Territory, now Walla Walla, Washington.

Motivation, then, may be described first as an internalized commission to spread the gospel; an altruistic desire to serve the less fortunate; and a practical response to a perceived need for the spread of civilization. The writings of the women reflect this threefold motivation. One historian adds, “these memoirs provide us with an unexpected angle of vision into some of the educated women of their time, the daughters of civic leaders in the early republic, women reared to see themselves as part of that citizenry responsible for moral guardianship in the new nation.”³⁰

The writer who perhaps best expresses personal motivation, however, is Anna Lewis Wentworth [1828 — 1855]. Her statement clearly shows the

³⁰ Gillespie, “The Clear Leadings,” 199.

wonder, the surprise, and the determination that went hand-in-hand with the great leap of faith and imagination required of women missionaries:

Yesterday morning Dr. W. left us, and I have had two days to review the strange events of the past few weeks. Who could have believed that so short a time could have so changed all my prospects and plans? Judging from the dictates of human wisdom, it seems most rash to allow so short a time to decide matters of so great moment³¹

Most married hurriedly, hardly knowing their spouse, and immediately and irrevocably left family to travel to an unknown land to serve God. The twenty-six-year-old Wentworth entered into marriage with a widower who was sixteen years older than she, already destined for a mission in Foochow, China. She temporized at her sudden opportunity:

But as I try to bring a calm judgment [*sic*] to sit upon my decisions, I cannot find anything to regret. And why should I regret it? Have I not many times asked the Lord to direct all my paths? And shall I not believe that he will do it?³²

Wentworth, whose marriage and travel occurred late in the period under discussion, had clearly read what modern scholars term “pious literature.” Her course had been determined by her deep spiritual development, her singleness, and her teaching career. She was an eminently eligible daughter

³¹ Polly Park, *“To Save Their Heathen Souls”: Voyage to and Life in Foochow, China Based on Wentworth Diaries and Letters, 1854–1858* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1984), xxi.

³² Ibid.

of the church, educated and steady of habit. Yet contrary to Grimshaw's statement about the pre-eminent factor being a woman's ambition, Wentworth's unguarded expression shows surprise, spiritual determination, and faith. She was one of the first college-educated women to serve, and had the benefit of a comfortable upbringing, yet her reaction to the unexpected offer of marriage follows the pattern of Newell and Hasseltine's published writings:

Have I not for years asked, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me do?' And when by his providence he seems to have laid a noble work before me, shall I refuse to enter upon it? Rather I will thankfully acknowledge the goodness that has chosen me for a post of such exalted honor; and while I feel in the depths of my nature my unfitness for the work, I will implicitly confide in the wisdom and grace that are able to ordain praise from the weakest of his creatures.³³

Must the scholar conclude that this formulaic response is only that, a conformist if ambitious move into a career imbued by tradition with romance and adventure? Probably not. The expression is intimate as well as individual, even though it follows the expected phrasing. In a letter to a friend Wentworth notes:

I know it is a great undertaking, and I want to be able rationally to count the cost, and yet not to harass myself with needless fears. There must, of course, be privation and toil. I must leave friends, who have seemed almost as necessary to my life as the air I have breathed; but my

³³ Ibid.

heart goes out in thankfulness to God, that while he has called me to leave much, he has given me a strong arm and a noble heart to lean upon. In this I recognize a pledge of what he will do for me.³⁴

Of the women whose personal writings were surveyed, each clearly expressed her motivation as a desire to assist the cause of spreading the Gospel, and some actually applied as missionaries themselves. Most served as teachers before showing an interest in missions, marrying men assigned to a mission, then leaving their homes for lifetime mission assignments.

³⁴ Ibid.

Chapter 4

The “Call,” Marriage and Mission

The strict Calvinism of the Puritans, forged in the heat of revival, yielded new opportunities for women and men to serve as missionaries. As discussed in Chapters Two and Three, the Arminian assumption that man could choose to be “saved” was the theological basis for the modern mission movement. Its emphasis on the “heart” as the seat of emotions was more closely in harmony with the romanticism of the early nineteenth century.

Most of the young women here surveyed wrote about their feeling “God’s call” on their lives before they ever applied for missionary or teaching positions. Often, it followed fairly soon after conversion, and might be seen as the extension of the process, if not a “requirement” of it, as some secular writers seem to suggest. Gillespie saw “. . . women reared to see themselves as part of that citizenry responsible for moral guardianship in the new nation;”¹ these come to mind as possible missions candidates. Certainly

¹ Joanna Bowen Gillespie, “‘The Clear Leadings of Providence’: Pious Memoirs and the Problems of Self-realization for Women in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 5 (Summer 1985): 200.

they were the kind of convert that later made possible the tremendous reform movements in the United States.

Increasing awareness of the world came with better education for women in this period. The women under study were among the best-educated women in the United States: better educated than many working-class men of their contemporaries. With new awareness came a sense, for many Protestant women, that theirs was a privileged life compared to the “darkness” of other countries. Glendora Paul states some of their concerns about “the degradation of women” in other lands: women were considered property in India, seldom sent to school, usually kept illiterate. The practice of *suttee* [widow cremation] had just been outlawed by the British in 1828, but Indian widows were still shunned, sometimes ejected from their homes. Polygamy was practiced in both Hindu and Moslem homes.² In addition to all this, the people of India had never heard the gospel and were living in spiritual darkness. “Widows consent to be burned with their deceased husbands,” wrote Harriet Newell, “parents sacrifice their infant offspring to appease the anger of their idol gods. . . .”³ These were strong reasons for

² Glendora B. Paul, “Presbyterian Missionaries and the Women of India During the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Presbyterian History* 62 (September 1984): 231–2.

³ Harriet Atwood Newell to “Miss M. S. of Boston,” 11 August 1811, in Leonard

missionary-minded Americans to travel halfway around the world and share their advantages.

Other parts of the world received the same sympathetic treatment. The Chinese practices of foot-binding (in well-to-do families) or even exposing unwanted infant girls to die, horrified Americans. The North American Indians, living in “squalor,” came in for their share of pity. Amanda Ferry describes a New Years’ visit by “an Indian and his squaw, both so drunk they could not stand upright. . . I kept a distance from these filthy creatures, politely supplying them with cakes.” ⁴

Other passages in Ferry’s letters show her trying to socialize and treat neighboring Indians with respect, hampered in much by her sense of cleanliness. White Americans saw Indians as lazy people who made beasts of burden of their women:

The first sincere sorrow I recollect ever to have felt for heathen females, was one day when a company of Indians came here begging. I saw them pass through the yard of the house, the females carrying their children and bending under the weight of other burdens, walked humbly behind the men, who, having nothing to carry, stalked proudly on without any

Woods, D. D., *A Sermon, Preached at Haverhill, (Mass.) in Remembrance of Mrs. Harriet Newell, Missionary to India, Who Died at the Isle of France, Nov. 30, 1812, aged 19 years. To Which are Added Memoirs of her Life* (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, Theological Printer and Bookseller, 1815), 110.

⁴ Amanda Ferry, UDMS missionary wife, letter 1 January 1824, in Maurice W. Armstrong, Lefferts A. Loetscher, & Charles A. Anderson, eds., *The Presbyterian Enterprise; Sources of American Presbyterian History* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), 131.

concern for their miserable wives. I burst into tears, and fell on my knees to thank the Lord for the blessings of the Gospel, and to pray that it might be made known in every land.⁵

Women's empathy with other women swelled the cause of missions and encouraged new women to consider the mission field as a place of honor and "usefulness" beyond that available to them within the confines of American society. The process of choosing and assigning missionaries to the field was not propitious for women. "Missionaries" were supposed to be men: ministers. That their wives might have something to offer came as a surprise to the earlier missionary boards. Harriet Newell's early death did not allow her to prove herself; but Nancy [Ann] Judson more than made up for it. Not only did she survive the climate, food, and disease of Burma, but in spite of Adoniram's imprisonment managed to deal with corrupt officials and keep a home together. She "promised to make them [jailers] all a present" in order to be allowed to feed her husband. Her "unprotected desolate state" notwithstanding, she begged jailers, officials, even the Burmese royal family for her husband's release. The "continual extortions

⁵ Louisa A. Lowrie to "a lady in Wheeling" [] October, 1832, in Ashbel G. Fairchild, Rev., ed., *Memoir of Mrs. Louisa A. Lowrie of the Northern India Mission* (Philadelphia: William S. Martien, 1837), 115.

and oppressions”⁶ were bad enough, but then Adoniram was marched to distant prison. Ann Judson followed, three-month-old infant in arms, fully expecting to die with him. Illness then prostrated both her and the baby. She managed to bribe another guard to allow Adoniram out for the purpose of begging native mothers to nurse his daughter. Ann Judson survived two years of harrowing experiences before illnesses finally took her life, but not before she demonstrated how very much a missionary needed a wife.⁷

The mission boards then decided that any missionary must have a spouse. If single, women would have no “protector” from other men. Single women were sent to the Indians in the new territories of North America, but only when they were safely installed in the homes of other missionaries, to help with child care or schoolteaching. The general dictate was that a missionary must be married. A married man could avoid sexual temptation, and a married woman would be protected.

Since the missionary couple would live isolated from other whites, or at least a day’s journey from any other missionary couple, they would provide

⁶ Ann H. Judson, quoted without citation in John Dowling, Rev., A. M., *The Judson Offering: Intended as a Token of Christian Sympathy With the Living, and a Memento of Christian Affection for the Dead* (New York: Lewis Colby & Co., 1846), 87–130 passim.

⁷ Dowling, *The Judson Offering*, 113–130 passim.

for each other the only medical care, the only English-language company, the only solace, and the only nursing available. It was assumed that the wife would prepare meals and wash clothes. In practice, women whose homes included native domestic servants were the only wives enabled to provide service as missionaries.

When applying for a mission assignment the men had to assure the Board that they would marry in time for their contingent to ship out. When the ship set sail they must be prepared with household goods, clothing, books, *and* a wife. If they were not already engaged, this necessitated some hurried courtships. The wife, once found, must also apply to the Board, convince them of her spiritual qualities and capabilities, and be approved. Weddings awaited the Board's approval.

Perhaps the most precipitous marriage was that of William Gray and his wife Mary Dix. Gray had already been to Oregon as a "mechanic" with the 1834 Oregon Mission and returned to marry his [unnamed] fiancé and take her to Oregon. After her parents refused him, Gray then began the desperate search for another woman. He spent the winter attending medical classes, and continued the search. By spring, he had found no one suitable, though he had met many young women. Finally, an introduction came through the same man who had introduced the Whitmans. Gray wasted no

time in proposing marriage, writing her descriptive letter about Oregon as a reprise.⁸

Gray's letter was dated February 15th; Mary Dix consented less than a week later. Only then did she go through the usual requirements of application to the Board, supplying the usual testimonials to her character. These consisted of letters of recommendation which sometimes included speculation about the candidate's "constitution:" the only mention of a physical examination the Board required. In Mary's case, the salient recommendation was spiritual: "I would say," wrote her pastor, "she is a highly consistent member of my church; a devoted teacher in the S.[unday] School. . . ."⁹ Testimonials for Mary Richardson Walker were even more glowing. They provide a good look at the characteristics which would most please the ABCFM: "vigorous intellect," "physical constitution," "power of persevering," "successful industry," "literary improvement," "moral courage," and "independence of character." "In my opinion," wrote Professor Merritt Caldwell, " she possesses a rare combination of those qualities which would

⁸ Clifford Merrill Drury, *The First White Women Over the Rockies: Diaries, Letters, and Biographical Sketches of the Six Women who made the Overland Journey in 1836 and 1838* (Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1963), Vol. I, 237-40 passim.

⁹ Rev. John F. Hoes to ABCFM, in Drury, *First White Women Over the Rockies*, Vol. I, 241.

be called for in such a station.”¹⁰ Nevertheless, Walker was not assigned to a mission until her engagement with Elkanah Walker was known to the Board.

Hiram Bingham and Sybil Mosely married just before they left for the Sandwich Islands. Other missionary couples followed this pattern. Marcus and Narcissa Whitman; Henry and Eliza Spalding; John and Tryphena Reasoner [though illness prevented their travel]¹¹; Asa and Lucy Thurston, and a host of other couples married rather soon before leaving for a mission station. This practice was the rule rather than the exception, and seems to have begun as an effort to spare the women the inconvenience—and often danger—of childbirth while exposed to the rigors of travel in foreign lands. Many of the women delivered their first child soon after arriving at their station of duty. Harriet Newell was the first, but hardly the last. Her premature infant was born eight months after its parents’ marriage and departure.¹² Harriet Hall Shuck’s first child was born just after her arrival in China;¹³ Mary Richardson Walker’s overland journey had taken less time,

¹⁰ Drury, *First White Women Over the Rockies*, Vol. I, 28.

¹¹ Matthew A. Reasoner, Genealogy collection, TMs in Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.: pages unnumbered.

¹² Woods, *Mrs. Harriet Newell*, 233.

¹³ Henrietta Hall Shuck, Journal, 22 June 1836, in J. B. Jeter, *A Memoir of Mrs. Henrietta Shuck, the First American Missionary to China* (Boston: Gould, Kendall, & Lincoln, 1853), 70.

allowing her infant to be born three months after their arrival at Waiilatpu.¹⁴ Clearly the discomforts of a pregnancy while traveling were to be preferred to an actual birth during a journey.

Of the thirty-four women here surveyed, only two applied to serve as single women, prior to their own engagements. Narcissa Prentiss Whitman, according to Jonathan Howes Webster, “said she had been determined for some ten years to find a religious occupation.”¹⁵ ABCFM records show that she had applied to the Board after graduation from Emma Willard’s Academy, offering herself as a missionary before Whitman heard of her and proposed both marriage and mission. Mary Walker, part of the 1838 “reinforcement” sent to Oregon, likewise applied to the Board without a prospect of marriage. But most of the women were either prospective brides, or sought out by young men already assigned as missionaries. The ABCFM rejected both Narcissa Prentiss and Mary Richardson until they received notice from each young woman of her engagement to an assigned missionary.¹⁶

¹⁴ Mary Richardson Walker, Journal, 7 December 1838, in Drury, *First White Women Over the Rockies*, Vol. I, 136.

¹⁵ Webster, Jonathan Howes, “The ABCFM and the First Presbyterian Missions in the Northwest,” *American Presbyterians*, 65:3 (Fall 1987): 177.

¹⁶ Drury, *First White Women Over the Rockies*, Vol. I, 28.

Tryphena Northway Reasoner [1814–1905], whose writings are only available for the post-marriage missionary travels and family letters, left an oral tradition in her family that upon meeting the new minister, John Stout Reasoner, she “knew” in her heart that they were destined to marry. Family tradition also has the pair applying to go with the first missionaries to Oregon, though the records of the ABCFM reflect only unnamed applicants whose “health” prevented travel. Both Rev. John Stout Reasoner and Tryphena Northway Reasoner were known to be ill in the period between their marriage in 1834 and travel to their first mission assignment in 1836. For Tryphena, the “illness” consisted of two pregnancies, which effectively canceled the Reasoners’ foreign missionary plans. The Oregon Mission delegates left without them in 1834, about the same time as the first Reasoner child was born.¹⁷

The Reasoners were finally sent on a “domestic” missionary assignment to the Mississippi River town of Kaskaskia, Illinois. Although the Whitman band proved that women could indeed travel across the overland route to the Pacific, it was commonly believed that very young children would not

¹⁷ Yolo County, California, Death certificate [21 Oct 1920], Francis Northway Reasoner, author’s personal collection.

survive the conditions of the rugged journey. Nevertheless, the Reasoners with two children under three years of age, and fellow missionaries the Blakeslees, with one infant, traveled together by homemade raft and commercial steamer to their frontier posts. Ironically, in 1852 the Reasoners finally did go to Oregon, making the arduous journey so long anticipated. Their youngest children survived the trip that had been denied the family in 1836 because of the “tender years” of the two oldest.

For men who hoped to serve as either ministers or missionaries, a wife was not a luxury but a necessity. Early mission boards found out that single men on the mission field were subject to temptations that the presence of a wife would help allay. Further, a missionary needed a companion. In an era when moving into a foreign community meant encountering both new ways of life and new microorganisms without benefit of antibiotics, this companion frequently became nurse, cook, laundress, and linguist.

Early on, prescriptive literature tried to help. In a typical example, a potential wife was advised to constantly remember “the importance and responsibility of the station she occupies.” She should also be “. . . far more devoted and holy . . . in Christian profession [conviction and practice], and far better informed on divine subjects—fitted to reprove and

able to instruct.”¹⁸ In other words, the wife must be far more than a wife. She must be well-educated, decisive, influential, and skilled to meet these high standards. The missionary and ministerial wives in the group surveyed, though many are represented only by journals or letters, seem to fall under this prescription. The writer of these “hints” concludes,

. . . that she will be an able, faithful, and impartial counselor to her husband, who with all others must carry through life the remains of a corrupt nature. Who can with more propriety watch with him, and affectionately remind him of his faults, than his best-loved friend? She may also greatly increase his influence, and alleviate his cares, by administering consolation to the sick and afflicted – attending the pillow of the dying – warning those in danger – and directing the inquiring soul.¹⁹

When Louisa Wilson Lowrie was considering her marriage to a minister already destined for a mission field, she explained to a friend, “All my concern is to be prepared for usefulness.”²⁰ Lowrie seemed ready for a career as a missionary wife. Raised in a well-educated family, socially able and popular, this young woman wrote literate letters from her home in Virginia to friends around the state. At twenty she became a “professor of religion,” nineteenth century evangelical jargon for one who had experienced

¹⁸ “Hints Addressed to the Wife of a Clergyman,” *The Christian Advocate* 3 (January 1825): 14–15.

¹⁹ “Hints,” *The Christian Advocate* 3 (February 1825): 78.

²⁰ Louisa A. Lowrie, Journal, 20 October 1832, in Fairchild, *Louisa A. Lowrie*, 117.

salvation. A year later she involved herself in teaching Sunday School to “twelve immortal souls,” children whose families were not church members. The following year, Lowrie expressed “strong desires to spend and be spent for God,” and got her wish through marriage to Rev. John C. Lowrie.²¹

As young missionary couples sent back reports from the field, their experiences offered many lessons for the mission boards at home. They realized that a wife could be an intrinsic part of the missionary contribution, and that wives could reach native women that might never even be seen by the minister sent to preach to them. The dangers of disease, foreign travel, and loneliness were acknowledged in the boards’ refusal to send solitary missionaries of either sex. As the decades advanced, more and more young women offered to serve as missionaries, and would not be put off by mission boards’ requirement of marriage. By 1861, the first woman-sponsored missionary association, the Women’s Union Missionary Society, was founded on the premise that single women should have the freedom to become missionaries in their own right.

²¹ Louisa A. Lowrie, *Journal*, 1 May 1830–26 August 1832, in Fairchild, *Louisa A. Lowrie*, 29–97 passim.

Chapter 5

Mission Field: Dreams, Realities, Disappointments, Hope

Distinction between foreign and domestic mission destinations seems to be a twentieth century convenience. Modern writers assume that the term “missionary” means one who evangelizes in foreign lands, but use the term “minister” for an evangelist who preaches in his own country. In the early Federal era, a foreign mission could be either abroad or among North American Indians.¹ A domestic mission was a frontier location, among people modern churchmen would label unchurched. Nineteenth century “mission fields” were considered to be areas of desperate spiritual need, little moral guidance, little if any culture, and primitive physical conditions.

While the purpose of a mission was primarily spiritual, other goals were promulgated, and rarely differentiated from the goal of spiritual salvation. Converts must learn to read in order to understand the Bible. To that end, the missionary must learn the native language well enough to translate the Scripture, then print primers and Bibles, and finally organize classes and teach the natives from these primers. The agonizing slowness of this process

¹ Each tribe was considered a nation, a concept reflected only in modern Indian gambling casinos, built upon “sovereign” tribal lands.

meant that in the meantime, other goals would take precedence.

Missionaries made little distinction between teaching the Bible and teaching New England agriculture or laundry practices. They described their activities as “elevating” the people to whom they had been sent.

The Sandwich Islands missionaries brought clothing as well as the Bible to their mission; schools as well as prayer. Other missionaries taught agriculture to tribes whose lifestyle had not included a sedentary residence; literature and singing-schools to those whose language had never been written. Webster’s “Blue-back” Speller went hand-in-hand with catechism and conversion.

Education included a new way of life for converts. The missionary agencies, in their desire to retain converts, decided the best way to do so was to remove them from all their old friends and “bad influences.” The old culture was permeated with the old religious system, so a new culture—the most advanced, beneficial, Christian and scientific in the world—must be introduced.

Missionaries to the North American Indians, even though single-mindedly ethnocentric, knew about the United States government’s tragic Indian relocations, and worked feverishly to give their charges enough

“civilization” to be able to resist the onslaught of white settlers that was always just a few years away. In Oregon, Mary Dix Gray wrote:

They [whites] are very anxious to settle here and the Indians are quite as anxious to have them. Husband and Dr. W[hitman] do not feel at liberty to encourage them. Poor creatures, they know not that they are inviting in, those who will, doubtless, eventually drive them from their lands. O that they would turn unto the Lord & arise from their degradation & sin, that they may be saved and their name may not be blotted out.²

Henry Harmon Spalding of the Oregon Mission, writing to Levi Chamberlain in Hawaii (another ABCFM missionary), spoke of the necessity of “civilizing” the Indians while teaching them the Bible:

If a benighted people grown up in ignorance & superstition are to be evangelized, in my opinion, it can not be done while they are upon the wing, hearing a sermon only once in 3 or 12 months . . . Surely no one will think of attempting to introduce a system of education among a people who are in one place only a week at a time. No, I am fully convinced, if this people are to be permanently benefited by the gospel they must be settled. Efforts to civilize must go hand in hand with efforts to evangelize.³

Spalding’s comments reflect the attitudes of most missions boards. Not all missionaries agreed. Another member of the Oregon mission, Sarah

² Mary Dix Gray, Journal, 30 July 1842, in Clifford Merrill Drury, *The First White Women Over the Rockies: Diaries, Letters, and Biographical Sketches of the Six Women who made the Overland Journey in 1836 and 1838* (Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1963), Vol. I, 258.

³ Henry H. Spalding to Levi Chamberlain, 17 December 1838, in Drury, *First White Women Over the Rockies*, Vol. I, 212, note 4.

White Smith, expressed opposite views:

We do not believe the saying, Civilize the heathen first & then make them Christians if you can. Fruitless indeed would be the attempt to reclaim these savage tribes to habits of industry, virtue, or to heaven, unless the truths of the Gospel are brought to bear upon their hearts, making them feel in some measure the dignity of their nature & the relation they sustain to God & eternity.⁴

This was written when Sarah and Asa Smith had just arrived, however.

Later, her truculent husband was to become a major source of contention in the Oregon mission, and again caused trouble when both were transferred to Hawaii. Many years after both these views were penned, however, it was Spalding who found, on his return to Lapwai, that the Nez Percé remembered his and Eliza's teachings, and asked him to form a church for their use.

Women as teachers and caregivers were assumed to be the "carriers" of civilization,⁵ and often gained an introduction into native society that their husbands could not. Their babies charmed the native women, who were

⁴ Sarah White Smith, Journal, 1 January 1839, in Drury, *First White Women Over the Rockies*, Vol. III, 116.

⁵ "It was not a large step, and it had been taken by 1830, from seeing women as savers of souls to seeing them as savers of society; the agents of moral transformation became the agents of cultural transformation." Leonard I. Sweet, *The Minister's Wife* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), 32.

often not allowed any contact with foreign men. Women dealt with the servants; women took care of orphans and helped mothers with childbirth.

Most American women on the mission field, whether officially “missionaries” or the wives of missionaries, either taught school or ran an orphanage combined with a residential school in their own home. They also helped greatly with the work of translation or copying the lexicons their husbands struggled to produce. Their husbands preached, explored the area, translated, and contacted other men, but the women entered the daily lives of their neighbors.

Some missionary women were more willing to share their lives with “natives” than others. The first encounter of the “Third Reinforcement” sent from Philadelphia to Hawaii was an awkward beginning for unsuspecting new missionaries. Betsey Stockton, the only recorded African-American to serve as an ABCFM missionary in this period, describes the scene as Hawaiians board the ship to greet them:

. . . naked — except a narrow strip of *tapa* round their loins. When they first came on board, the sight chilled our very hearts. The ladies retired to the cabin, and burst into tears; some of the gentlemen turned pale: my own soul sickened within me, and every nerve trembled.⁶

⁶ Betsey Stockton, “Sandwich Islands,” Letter in *The Christian Advocate* 3 (January 1825): 39.

How much of Betsey's reaction had to do with her upbringing in the home of a church official, and how much with what must have been a shocking encounter with men of color in a "state of nature" is subject to interpretation. The scant records that remain describe Betsey's founding a school for Hawaiians "of the meaner sort." Her fellow missionaries in Hawaii considered her school a great success, probably because she learned the Hawaiian language quickly and got right to teaching, but also because they themselves were frustrated trying to please and educate Hawaiian royalty.⁷ Stockton comments, "I now have a fine school of the *Makeainana*, or lower class of people, the first I believe that has ever been established."⁸

Even women who were members of the same mission assignment varied in their acceptance of the "natives." The evidence suggests that one reason the Whitmans were massacred while co-workers the Spaldings were not had to do with Eliza Spalding's inclusion of the Indians into her life and work. Although at first Narcissa Whitman allowed her infant daughter to be called

⁷ The white missionaries' attentions had been pre-empted by members of Hawaiian royalty from the first; the men decided as a result that they could best reach the people through their rulers. Lucy Goodale Thurston, *Life and Times of Mrs. Lucy G. Thurston, Wife of Rev. Asa Thurston, Pioneer Missionary to the Sandwich Islands, Gathered From Letters and Journals* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: S. C. Andrews, Bookseller & Publisher, 1882.), 65.

⁸ Betsey Stockton, "Sandwich Islands," Letter in *The Christian Advocate* 3 (April 1825): 188-9.

a “Cayuse child,” she later made sure there was a special and separate “Indian room” in her mission home, even after the child’s death.⁹

Missionary women could accept needy children more easily than native adults. Most of them had once taught school, and felt great pity for orphaned native children. They took them into their homes and treated them as part of the family. Often orphans were considered a detriment to society, so having the burden taken on by missionaries was seen in a positive light by the foreign government. Henrietta Hall Shuck added Chinese children to her own growing family:

We now have in our family one little boy, ten years old, supported by Bro. Hume . . . who is to stay with us till he is twenty-one years old. He improves fast. ‘Jane Maria,’ of whom I have previously told you, still goes on well. She reads and speaks English and Chinese.¹⁰

A mission wife took her duties seriously, training the children in household skills and literacy as a method of assisting their later ability to earn a living. They learned English as they enabled their teacher to learn

⁹ Other missionaries went to even more drastic means to separate their children from the natives. While most missionaries to Hawaii sent their school-age children back to the United States to protect them from the “filthy” moral habits of the natives, Lucy Thurston had a separate classroom built for her brood, and forbade their learning the Hawaiian language until they were older and a “pure” teacher could be found. Her oldest child was fourteen before this happened.

¹⁰Henrietta Hall Shuck to Addison Hall, 10 January 1838, in J. B. Jeter, *A Memoir of Mrs. Henrietta Shuck, the First American Missionary to China* (Boston: Gould, Kendall, & Lincoln, 1853), 130.

their language. Bible stories were learned with housekeeping, and usually the children thus raised expressed great love for their adopted families.

Not all missionaries worked to westernize their converts. Unless the native dress was so revealing it could be regarded as “sinful” it was not proscribed. In Ceylon, Harriet Winslow explained,

The native christians do not change their dress on joining us, nor do we by any means wish it. It is altogether better for them than ours would be. . . . a female with a cloth round her waist and thrown over her shoulders, as she has when she attends meetings, appears quite as modestly dressed as ladies generally are in America.¹¹

Missionaries sent to North American Indians had another model: that of complete acculturation. They took urgent warning from the “Trail of Tears” that other missionaries had tried, without success, to stop. Missionary couples filled “boarding houses” and schools with Indian children who were sheltered and taught at the same time. They saw the Indians as threatened by white “civilization’s” drunken, gambling frontiersmen, and their goal of acculturation was so urgent that the missionary reports could only count the men who learned to plow and plant, the women and children learning to live in houses and read. These were the “saved” in a dual sense of the word:

¹¹ Harriet Lathrop Winslow to “sister Elizabeth,” 13 January 1830, in Miron Winslow, Rev., ed., *Memoir of Mrs. Harriet L. Winslow, Thirteen Years a Member of the American Mission in Ceylon* (New York: American Tract Society, n. d.), 390.

saved from the dangers of encroaching white civilization; and saved from Hell by accepting the white man's Christ. The goal was complete United States citizenship. According to historian Michael Coleman, "If Indians were to become American citizens, indeed if they were to survive at all, they also needed immediate training in the practical skills useful in the new society growing up around them."¹² Missionary women worked toward this goal in home and school.

Nineteenth century society as a whole was deeply prejudiced against people of other races. Yet the missionaries and their wives repeatedly expressed, and showed, acceptance of the Asians, Africans and Indians to whom they were sent.¹³ Missionaries unanimously described the spiritual "darkness" they saw among the natives; the "superstition" of their religious practices; and "filth" of their living conditions: yet firmly believed they could be "raised" to be the social equals of whites — certainly an idea ahead of its time. Coleman points out that the ethnocentrism inherent in the missionaries' calling was not based on racist assumptions, but on their

¹² Michael C. Coleman, *Presbyterian Missionary Attitudes Toward American Indians, 1837–1893* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1985), 16–17.

¹³ Coleman describes this surprising facet as "Not Race, but Grace," his title for Chapter Seven.

association of “heathenism” with sin and evil. In essence, missionaries’ ethnocentrism was intrinsically related to the dualities inherent in Christian doctrine.

Mary Hawes Van Lennep’s views illustrate her religious faith while showing her rejection of American ethnocentrism:

I believe it is a general fact that Orientals are regarded by us Americans as semi-barbarians, or at best as grown up children. Nothing is more erroneous. The more we associate with them, the more we feel that they are entitled to respect and friendship, as much so as any polite, agreeable people in our own land, who are without true religion. . . . They have the same hopes, fears, affections that we have, but their views of religious truth are dark and cheerless. . . .¹⁴

Juana Knight McCartee, likewise, wrote, “We don’t wish to make Americans of our pupils, but intelligent well-behaved Chinese Christians.”¹⁵

Even though the women deplored the conditions in which their potential converts lived, they learned to live with them. Mary Richardson Walker exhibited no particular revulsion at her two-year-old son’s mimicry of a common Nez Percé Indian custom:

He seems to admire his sister [a newborn] . . . the other day he put his fingers in her hair & then in his mouth in imitation, no doubt, of an

¹⁴ Mary Hawes Van Lennep to her sister, 22 February 1844, in Mrs. Joel Hawes, *Memoir of Mrs. Mary E. Van Lennep, Only Daughter of the Rev. Joel Hawes, D. D., and wife of the Rev. Henry J. Van Lennep, Missionary in Turkey* (Hartford, CT: Belknap and Hamersly, 1848), 266.

¹⁵ Juana Knight McCartee to Franklin Knight, 14 March 1859, ALS in Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

Indian looking [for lice in] another's head. He probably sees them doing thus & supposes them discharging to each other an act of kindness.¹⁶

Of course, the difference between eating head lice and early sexual experimentation, for the missionaries, was that while the first was somewhat objectionable, it was not the moral misconduct they associated with the second practice.

The two biggest problems for women missionaries were personal illness and childrearing. Both posed major interruptions to missionary activities, limiting interaction with natives, travel, translation, and schoolroom teaching. The two were intimately connected: birth was seen as an illness in this period, and small wonder, since complications of childbirth often led to the mother's death. A husband's illness was every bit as disruptive as the wife's: it halted work and provoked the wife's deepest fears for her protector and her future.

Missionary letters are full of the stories of severe illness and death. In an age when colds could worsen into pneumonia, and the germ theory was barely accepted, one really *could* "catch a deathly cold." Foreign diseases for

¹⁶ Mary Richardson Walker, Journal, 9 June 1840, in Drury, *First White Women Over the Rockies*, Vol. II, 193.

which the missionaries had no immunities claimed many, just as European diseases decimated the North American Indians at first contact.

Children caused the deepest frustrations in the field. Their births, illnesses, and education preoccupied their parents almost as much as did the people they came to save. Like any other parents, missionary wives loved their children. But their joy at welcoming infants into their homes was tempered by the fear of losing them to illness and death. Even in the United States, no infant was considered a safely permanent family member until the age of two. Infant mortality was so high¹⁷ that parents tried to steel themselves for their infant's possible death. By the end of the 1830s, Arminian theology helped: parents could comfort themselves, believing the child returned immediately to Heaven. Tryphena Reasoner wrote of her infant's death,

When they came to bury my babe I wished them to sing, "Why Should We Mourn Departed Friends?" etc. I was almost overcome with the thought that it was but the voice that Jesus sent to call him to his arms.¹⁸

¹⁷ Historian Jack Larkin, writing of infant mortality in the "civilized" parts of the United States, says: "One white infant in six or seven did not survive to age one—approximately ten times the risk for a child born in the United States today." Mortality was tragically higher on the mission field. Jack Larkin, *The Reshaping of Everyday Life 1790–1840* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 75.

¹⁸ Tryphena Northway Reasoner, Letter to Mr. Francis Northway, 18 December 1841. TMs, Author's personal collection. Here she paraphrases the first verse of a popular hymn, "China:" *Why do we mourn departing friends, Or shake at death's alarms? 'Tis but the voice that*

Reasoner's husband gave a more graphic description of their shared illnesses, which lasted from July to November of 1841. Their older three children became ill with malaria, the "common" complaint of the Mississippi River valley. After Tryphena gave birth to a fourth child she fell ill herself. Her husband took all his time caring for the sick children, his wife, the new baby, and the hired girl (who also had malaria) in addition to his preaching and farming responsibilities. Then he fell ill, and for several nights was not expected to live. That the family survived at all was remarkable. Tryphena Reasoner, always theological, credited "God's grace" as the reason, and commented,

You may think what my feelings were when my babe lay dead and Mr. Reasoner to the point of death and the rest of the children sick, myself confined to my bed and so far from my dear parents and friends I love so dearly. But I had a friend—Jesus was my comfort in all my troubles.¹⁹

Malaria was so common in that area of Illinois that most people simply put up with its chills and fever, but it could prove deadly to young children, as it did for the Reasoner infant. In a family already debilitated by malaria,

Jesus sends, To call them to his arms. Jones, Darius E., ed, *Temple Melodies: a Collection of About Two Hundred Popular Tunes, Adapted to Nearly Five Hundred Favorite Hymns, Selected With Special Reference to: Public, Social, and Private Worship* (New York: Mason Brothers, 1860), 72.

¹⁹ Ibid.

other illnesses could get a strong foothold: death seemed ever imminent. Needless to say, very little in the way of missionary work or schoolteaching went on in the Reasoner household for most of 1841. Finally, Tryphena Reasoner's father-in-law came to live with them. By fall she wrote, "Mr. Reasoner's father came here the 13th of November and if it was not for him I know not what we should have done."²⁰

The Reasoners suffered from diseases still common in the continental United States; foreign missionaries had to battle diseases even more deadly. Chronic diarrhea, now called amebic dysentery, was one such killer. It could cause dehydration and kill an otherwise healthy infant. If left unchecked, could kill parents as well. As in the United States, missionaries often lingered for years with tuberculosis. Any disease they contracted when already weakened could easily kill them, even without the "benefit" of a doctor's treatment: bleeding. Cholera was another killer. Due to the vicissitudes of disease and childbirth, few of the early missionary women lived to old age. Those who did typically outlived their husbands.

Childbirth mortality was high enough even in the United States that women routinely set their affairs in order in anticipation of a birth. They

²⁰ Ibid.

wrote letters to friends, spoke with husbands about who should care for their older children if they died, and saved locks of their own hair for loved ones. But at least in the “States,” a woman could be assured of a close relative, a neighbor, or at the least a midwife who could attend her.

On the mission field a woman was lucky indeed to have the help of another woman: often, in remote areas, her husband delivered the child. In Oregon until 1847, mission women depended on Dr. Whitman to attend them. In Hawaii, Dr. Judd was on call, though the separation of missionary families by a sea voyage often meant he was unable to arrive on time. In the sources studied, however few women mention childbirth in any detail.²¹

For women in this group who survived the hazards of childbirth in the field, their shared hardships in a common goal cemented the bond of marriage with their husband. Mary Richardson Walker, who had doubted her own ability even to “love” her surprise husband before they left on their missionary travels, even planned how she might spend a widowhood. Surely she could not have designed to stay in the field were there not some satisfaction for her in the work:

²¹ Evidently Patricia Grimshaw had better luck with sources in the Hawaiian Mission Children’s Society archives. She includes quotes mentioning childbirth from many of the women who served in Hawaii.

Have wept many times to think how soon & easily my husband may be taken & I left a widow. . . . If I were left a widow, I think I should not return home. I would devote myself to the language, to making book [sic] and teaching & to the education of son till he was old enough to send home.²²

The Walkers spent ten years at Tshimakain before evacuation after the Whitman massacre at Waiilatpu. They moved into the Willamette Valley, where Elkanah Walker's death evoked this response from his wife: "I feel so lonely. Think of so many things I want to tell Mr. Walker. I realize more and more how much more I loved him than any one else."²³ The women in this study who lived out their lives with their husbands invariably remark in later years how loving and kind their husbands were.

Since . . . he was introduced to me as a missionary. . . , so much have I found of every excellence that deserved my highest approbation, that he has secured my tenderest love. God did indeed choose for me. Had he left me to choose for myself, I could not have made myself so happy.²⁴

Although these statements must be weighed against their life circumstances of relative isolation amid an alien culture, they seem to reflect the women's genuine feelings.

²² Mary Richardson Walker, Journal, 26 July 1839, in Drury, *First White Women Over the Rockies*, Vol. II, 165.

²³ Mary Richardson Walker, Journal, 18 December 1877, in *First White Women Over the Rockies*, Vol. II, 355.

²⁴ Sybil Mosely Bingham, undated letter in Mrs. Titus Coan [Fidelia], *Mrs. Sybil Mosely Bingham*, 6.

Women whose marriages remained unbroken by death often shared in their husband's work after their children no longer required constant care. But as Grimshaw discovered, the women had more trouble with other missionary men than they experienced with their own husbands. Clarissa Armstrong, after her husband Richard's death, found conflict with her fellow (male) missionaries' insistence that women should not be employed teaching Bible classes to men:

Poor natives! Sin holds them back. Wicked men hold them back. . . because their prejudices say, women should not lead men to Christ. Better let them stay away, than that a woman should tell [a] poor ignorant native how to get a passport to heaven. . . : let women keep silent—they may teach women, but never tell men, however ignorant, hungry or thirsty men may be, never a woman point them to Christ...!²⁵

Clarissa Armstrong was evidently used to more egalitarian treatment. Scattered comments throughout the women's private writings combined with comments of some of the husbands hint at true partnerships among the missionary couples. Such working harmony in a marriage would make a widow's collision with the more restrictive attitudes of fellow male missionaries all the more painful.

²⁵ Clarissa Armstrong to Lucia Lyons, 26 April 1862; in Patricia Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty: American Missionary Wives in Nineteenth-century Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), 187.

Chapter 6

Doing the Will of Heaven

Before 1860, young single women of churchgoing middle class background and good education usually taught school before marrying and entering the ranks of domesticity. Their careers were described by Barbara Welter as the “Cult of True Womanhood.” After the childbearing years, their energies were often poured into the benevolent societies.

Educated women who desired a career in missionary work found that marriage to an outgoing minister was the quickest path to acceptance by their missions’ board. The women here discussed did not make active plans to marry a missionary, but quickly saw “the hand of God” in the sudden marriage proposals they received. No evidence in their personal writings suggests that these women had “set their caps” to marry a minister for the career his calling could provide them. Of those who married hastily in order to ship out with their team, the women express surprise, wonder, and a sense of duty toward their spouse and their mutual calling. Their later writings express satisfaction in their life’s choice.

Historians have detailed apparent disappointment over childrearing duties and domestic chores taking the place of evangelism in the routines of Hawaiian missionary women. This trend seems to be exaggerated, possibly

by what the historians expected to find. Of the other missionary women whose personal writings were available to this writer, few lived past early adulthood. These women, predominantly young mothers who knew they were “in a decline,” confronted their own mortality with surprising calm. They expressed in journals and letters their willingness to die before realizing their goal of evangelistic work: “I feel willing, yea, anxious, if it be the will of Heaven, to live and die without ever again beholding the land of my nativity and the friends of my childhood. It is sufficient to know that I do it for Christ.”¹

By 1860, women were no longer unusual entrants into the field of evangelism or reform societies. They had greatly influenced the nation at home, and continued to influence those nations to which they were sent as missionary wives. Virginia Penney’s 1863 book *The Employments of Women* listed *missionary* as one of many career choices for women, though the book itself may must be understood as a work of combined truth and wishful thinking. Penney was promoting opportunities for women to enter careers as yet untried as well as those in which women already participated. *The*

¹ Henrietta Hall Shuck to Addison Hall, 6 October 1835, in Jeter, *Mrs. Henrietta Shuck*, 44.

Employments of Women is helpful, though, in listing statistics from the mission boards of various denominations. In 1860, the combined boards of Baptist, Old School Presbyterians, Methodist, and Dutch Reformed churches were supporting 451 women, both married and single. Some boards still required marriage of their candidates, the ABCFM being the prime example. Its women missionaries by 1860 numbered 226. Penney notes, "They [the Methodist Board] have many more applicants than they have places for."² A count of the complete number of women sent between 1812 and 1860 has not yet been accomplished, but the numbers would surely illustrate the vitality of women's efforts in evangelism before 1860.

There is room for a great deal more study of women in mission careers before 1860. While many of their personal writings have survived, most are held at widely disparate archives, and have not yet been published, making research difficult.

With a better list of missionaries in the early decades, it should be possible to trace the relationships between the missionaries who went abroad and the families who stayed home; many of the missionaries came

² Virginia Penney, *The Employments of Women: A Cyclopaedia of Women's Work* (Boston: Walker, Wise, & Company, 1863; reprint, Ohio, Mrs. Martin's Mercantile and Millinery, 1996), 22-23.

from families which sent more than one missionary or minister. Many missionaries had parents who were church officials: ministers, bishops, or heads of mission boards. Since most came from New England, a limited genealogical study might throw light on the phenomenon of church leadership, family inter-relatedness, and the reform movements' earliest roots. The same surnames appear over and over in family lineages, where these are given in the sources.³

With family relationships better understood, it should be possible to determine more fully what social and familial environments produced a widespread movement so precipitously. Recurring family surnames suggest that networks heretofore unidentified played a significant role in revivalism, reform, *and* the missions movements. Missionary roots in the Second Great Awakening have been traced, but what role did family structure play? Did the apparent inter-related family links play an unidentified part in fostering the movement? How did this heritage encourage so many women to find a calling with no apparent intellectual precedent? How did their home churches view the women's enterprise? How did their experiences on the

³ A good example of the surname repetition appears in the lineage of Tryphena Northway Reasoner, which includes ancestry shared with Samuel Newell, husband of Harriet; Eliza Hart Spalding and famed preacher Jonathan Edwards [author's personal research collection].

mission field, and their communications with the “home front,” affect the activities of their female friends’ participation in the voluntary societies at home?

Missionary women have been undervalued for the work they performed with their husbands. They served as translators, evangelizers for women, teacher/mothers for orphans, and representatives to the government of the host country. Their letters provided public relations text for their mission boards. In spite of the hazards of exotic disease, childbirth and widowhood; in spite of the limitations their culture tried to impose; and in spite of their life’s work being devalued by modern secular culture, they participated in the efforts of nineteenth century Protestantism to reshape the world. In this, they succeeded.

Appendix 1:

Mission Board Abbreviations

This list does not pretend to be complete, but to serve as a source of board affiliation for the missionaries listed below. Where board is not known, denomination is supplied.

- ABBFM:** American Baptist Board of Foreign Missions.
- ABCFM:** 1810. American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The joint venture of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches under the Plan of Union, 1801.
- AHMS:** 1826. American Home Mission Society. Another joint venture as above, this time to serve churches within the United States (“domestic”) who could not afford a minister.
- BFM:** Board of Foreign Missions. Associated Reformed Church board.
- BFM:** Board of Foreign Missions. Presbyterian, Old School, 1837–69.
- GBMS:** 1814. General Baptist Missionary Society, later ABBFM.
- MMS:** Methodist Missionary Society
- PCUSA:** Presbyterian Church, USA. Acronym used after the schism of 1837 by the Old School board. The New School often sent under the ABCFM as before.
- UDMS:** United Domestic Mission Society [Presbyterian]: supplanted by the AHMS at the formation of the ABCFM.
- WMS:** Western Mission Society. Presbyterian, Old School. 1837–69.

Appendix 2:
Missionary Women & Writings:

Name:	Dates:	Station & Board:	Writings: Dates:
Andrews, Abby Fisher.	(ca.1818)	Sunday School, Boston.	Journal, 1835–1843.
Bingham, Sybil Moseley.	(ca.1800–1850)	Hawaii, ABCFM.	Excerpts from Journal and letters, 1819–1850.
Clift, Harriet A. Peters.	(ca. 1825)	Minister's wife.	Notebook, 1837–44.
Conde, Andalusia S.	(1810–40)	Hawaii, ABCFM.	Letters; 1840.
Dutton, Dorcas Southmayd.	(b. ca. 1787, d. after 1849)	Minister's wife, Congregational.	Letters to daughter Mary, 1833–1836.
Eels, Myra Fairbanks.	(1805–78)	Oregon, ABCFM.	Journal, letters, 1838–47.
Ferry, Amanda.	(ca.1810–)	UDMS, Michigan.	Letters, 1824–25.
Gray, Mary Dix.	(1810–81)	Oregon, ABCFM.	Journal and letters, 1838–42.
Janvier, Mary Rankin Porter.	(1826–c.70)	India, ABCFM.	Journal, 1812–67.
Judson, Ann Hasseltine.	(1789–1826)	Burma, GBMS.	Memorial, 1810–26.
Judson, Sarah Boardman.	(1803–1845)	Burma, GBMS.	Memorial. 1812–45.
Judson, Emily Chubbock.	(1817–1854)	Burma, GBMS.	Poetry in Memorial for Sarah Judson.
Kidder, Cornelia.	(ca. 1819–41)	Brazil, [Methodist]	Journal, 1830s.
Laird, Harriet Myer.	(1803–1834)	Africa, ABCFM.	1822–33.

- Lowrie, Louisa A. Wilson (1809–1833) India, WFMS [Presbyterian].
Memorial book 1833.
- McCague, Henrietta Mathilda Lowes. (1832–) BFM [Associated Reformed Church] Journal, 1854–61.
- McCartee, Juana Knight. (ca.1820–1906) China, BFM [Presbyterian].
- Newell, Fanny. (1793–1824) Minister's wife & evangelist. Baptist; US.
Personal writings prepared by author for publication after her own death: unusual.
- Ogden, Maria. (ca. 1808–) Hawaii, ABCFM. Letter from shipboard, 1829.
- Parker, Mary Elizabeth Barker. (ca.1808–) Hawaii, ABCFM. Letter, 1832–33.
- Reasoner, Tryphena Tryphosa Northway. (1814–1905) Minister's wife,
Presbyterian. AHMS. Letters, 1836–58.
- Reed, Mrs. William. (ca.1808) Northern India, ABCFM. Letter, 1833.
- Shuck, Henrietta. (1817–1844) China, ABBFM [Baptist]. Memorial book,
1836–44.
- Smith, Sarah Gilbert White. (1813–1855) Oregon, ABCFM. Journal and
letters, 1838–39.
- Spalding, Eliza Hart. (1807–1851) Oregon, ABCFM. Journal and letters,
1834–51.
- Stockton, Betsey. (ca. 1795–1865) Hawaii, ABCFM. Letters, 1823–4.
- Thurston, Lucy Goodale. (1795–1876) Hawaii, ABCFM. Journal and letters,
1819–. Self-edited, published during lifetime.
- Van Lennep, Mary E. Hawes. (1821–1844) Turkey, ABCFM. Memorial book,
1831–44.
- Walker, Mary Richardson. (1811–1897) Oregon, ABCFM. Journal and
letters, 1836–50.

Walsh, Emma. (ca.1822–1877) Northern India, PCUSA. Diary, 1843–44.

Wentworth, Anna Lewis. (ca.1830–1854) China, [Methodist]. Letter, 1854.

Winslow, Harriet Wadsworth Lathrop. (ca.1795–1830) Ceylon, ABCFM.
Memorial book 1815–30.

Whitman, Narcissa Prentis. (1807–1847) Oregon, ABCFM. Journal and
letters, 1834–47.

Wooley, Miss. (ca.1800–) Great Osage Mission [Presbyterian]. Letter, 1822.

Bibliography

Personal writings of missionary wives, ministers'
wives, and single or widowed women missionaries:

- Andrews, Abby Fisher. Journal, 1835–1843. AMs, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Boston.
- Clift, Harriet A. Peters. Notebook, 1837–40; AMs, Day Collection, Yale University, New Haven, CT.
- Janvier, Mary Rankin Porter. Journal, 1838–1844. From childhood (two entries) to middle age: missionary voyage and both husbands' deaths mentioned. AMs, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.
- Kidder, Cornelia. Journal, 1839–1841. AMs, Day Collection, Yale University, New Haven, CT.
- Laird, Harriet. Diary. AMs, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Boston.
- McCague, Henrietta Mathilda Lowes. Journal, 1854. TMs, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.
- Ogden, Maria. "A Missionary Sea Journal." *The Christian Advocate* 7 (February 1829): 68–72; 7 (March 1829): 119–23.
- Parker, Mary Elizabeth Barker. Journal, 23 November 1832–18 August 1833, aboard ship bound for the Sandwich Islands. AMs, Day Collection, Yale University, New Haven, CT.
- Thurston, Lucy Goodale. *Life and Times of Mrs. Lucy G. Thurston, Wife of Rev. Asa Thurston, Pioneer Missionary to the Sandwich Islands, Gathered From Letters and Journals*. (Ann Arbor, Mich.: S. C. Andrews, Bookseller & Publisher, 1882; reprinted in facsimile, as second edition: The Women's Board of Missions for the Pacific Islands, 1921.)
- Walsh, Emma. Diary, 1843–1844, of sea voyage and early ministry in Calcutta. AMs, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

Private Correspondence:

Conde, Andalusia S., to Mrs. Pauline Wright, 31 October 1841. ALS, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Boston.

Dutton, Dorcas Southmayd, to daughter Mary Dutton. 20 July 1833 to 2 November 1836. ALS, Day Collection, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

McCartee, Juana Knight to Franklin Knight. 14 March 1859. ALS, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

Reasoner, Tryphena Northway, and Rev. John Stout Reasoner, to various recipients. 1834–1874. TMs, Author's personal collection.

Reed, Mrs. William. "Letter of Mrs. Reed to Mr. and Mrs. Newcomb." *The Christian Advocate* 12 (May 1834): 238–39.

Spalding, Eliza Hart, to Fanny B. Allen, 31 March 1846. ALS, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Boston.

Stockton, Betsey. "Letter from Aboard the *Thames*." *The Christian Advocate* 1 (September 1823): 423–25.

_____. "Sandwich Islands." (journal and letter). *The Christian Advocate* 11 (May 1824): 232–235; 3 (January 1825): 36–41.

Woolley, Miss. "Extract of a Letter From Miss Wooley to her Mother.—Sept. 23, 1822." *The Christian Advocate* 1 (February 1823): 91.

Collected, Posthumously Published Personal Writings:

Drury, Clifford Merrill, ed. *First White Women Over the Rockies: Diaries, Letters, and Biographical Sketches of the Six White Women of the Oregon Mission Who Made the Overland Journey in 1836 and 1838*. Glendale CA: Arthur H. Clark, 1963. Vol. I–III. The six women are: Narcissa Prentiss Whitman, Eliza Hart Spalding, Myra Fairbanks Eels, Mary Dix Gray, Sarah Gilbert White Smith and Mary Richardson Walker.

- Fairchild, Ashbel G., Rev., ed. *Memoir of Mrs. Louisa A. Lowrie of the Northern India Mission*. Philadelphia: William S. Martien, 1837.
- Forrester, Fanny. [Emily Chubbock Judson]. *Memoir of Sarah B. Judson of the American Mission to Burmah*. New York: Lewis Colby, 1850.
- Hawes, Mrs. Joel. *Memoir of Mrs. Mary E. Van Lennep, Only Daughter of the Rev. Joel Hawes, D. D., and wife of the Rev. Henry J. Van Lennep, Missionary in Turkey*. Hartford, CT: Belknap and Hamersly, 1848.
- Jeter, J. B., ed. *A Memoir of Mrs. Henrietta Shuck, the First American Missionary to China*. Boston: Gould, Kendall, & Lincoln, 1853.
- Newell, Fanny. *Memoirs of Fanny Newell; Written by Herself, and Published at the Desire and Request of Numerous Friends*. Springfield, NY: G. & C. Merriam, Printers, 1833.
- Winslow, Miron, Rev., ed. *Memoir of Mrs. Harriet L. Winslow, Thirteen Years a Member of the American Mission in Ceylon*. New York: American Tract Society, n. d.
- Contemporary Publications Relating to Churches,
Missionaries, Theology and Voluntary Organizations:**
- Beecher, Lyman. *A Plea for the West*. Cincinnati: Truman & Smith, 1835.
- Chessman, Lewis, Rev. *The Differences Between Old School and New School Presbyterians*. Rochester, N.Y.: Erastus Darrow, 1848.
- Crocker, Zebulon. *The Catastrophe of the Presbyterian Church in 1837, Including a Full View of the Recent Theological Controversies in New England*. New Haven: B. & W. Noyes, 1838.
- Dowling, John, Rev., A. M. *The Judson Offering: Intended as a Token of Christian Sympathy With the Living, and a Memento of Christian Affection for the Dead*. New York: Lewis Colby & Co., 1846.
- “The Flathead Indians.” *The Christian Advocate and Journal and Zion’s Herald* 10 (March 1, 1833): 1.

Green, Ashbel. *Historical Sketch of Domestic and Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States*. Philadelphia, William S. Martien, 1838.

"Hints Addressed to the Wife of a Clergyman." *The Christian Advocate* 3 (January 1825): 14–19; 3 (February 1825): 77–79.

Jones, Darius E., ed. *Temple Melodies: a Collection of About Two Hundred Popular Tunes, Adapted to Nearly Five Hundred Favorite Hymns, Selected With Special Reference to: Public, Social, and Private Worship*. New York: Mason Brothers, 1860.

"Letter From a Minister of the Gospel to a Young Lady, in an Anxious State of Mind in Regard to her Eternal Interests." *The Christian Advocate* 3 (June 1823): 20–23.

"Letter From a Mother to a Daughter, on the Subject of Early Education." *The Christian Advocate* 3 (November 1825): 493–97; 3 (December 1825): 543–47; 4 (January 1826): 16–21; 4 (February 1826): 64–68; 4 (March 1826): 107–11; 4 (April 1826): 154–58; 4 (June 1826): 260–64.

Miller, Samuel, DD. *An Essay on the Warrant, Nature and Duties of The Office of the Ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Church*. New York: Jonathan Leavitt, 1831.

Peck, John Mason. *Guide for Emigrants: Containing Sketches of Illinois, Missouri, and the Adjacent Parts*. Boston: Lincoln & Edwards, 1831. Reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1975.

Penney, Virginia. *The Employments of Women: A Cyclopedia of Women's Work*. Boston: Walker, Wise, & Company, 1863; reprint, Ohio, Mrs. Martin's Mercantile and Millinery, 1996.

Presbyterian Church. *A Book of Public Prayer, Compiled From the Authorized Formularies of Worship of the Presbyterian Church, as Prepared by the Reformers*. New York: Charles Scribner, 1857.

_____. *The Church Psalmist; or Psalms and Hymns Designed for the Public, Social, and Private Use of Evangelical Christians, With Supplement*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Publication Committee, 1853.

_____. *History of American Missions to the Heathen*. n.d. [1838].

Strong, Nathan, Rev. *The Character of a Virtuous and Good Woman: A Discourse, Delivered by the Desire and in the Presence of the Female Beneficent Society, in Hartford, October 4th, A. D. 1809*. Hartford, CT: Hudson and Goodwin, 1809.

Woods, Leonard, D. D.. *A Sermon, Preached at Haverhill, (Mass.) in Remembrance of Mrs. Harriet Newell, Missionary to India, Who Died at the Isle of France, Nov. 30, 1812, aged 19 years. To Which are Added Memoirs of her Life*. Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, Theological Printer and Bookseller, 1815.

Biographical or Interpretive Works:

Andrew, John A. *Rebuilding the Christian Commonwealth: New England Congregationalists and Foreign Missions, 1800–1830*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1976.

Armstrong, Maurice W., Lefforts A. Loetscher, & Charles A. Anderson, eds. *The Presbyterian Enterprise: Sources of American Presbyterian History*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956.

Banner, Lois W. "Religious Benevolence as Social Control: A Critique of an Interpretation." *Journal of American History* 60 (June 1973): 23–41.

Barker, Charles Albro. *American Convictions: Cycles of Public Thought, 1600–1850*. Philadelphia: Lippincot, 1970.

Bartlett, Irving H. *The American Mind in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1967.

Beaver, R. Pierce. *All Loves Excelling: American Protestant Women in World Mission*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968.

Beecher, Willis J. *Index of Presbyterian Ministers. . . With References to the Names as They are Found in its Records and Minutes, From AD 1706 to 1883*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board Of Education, 1883.

- Billington, Ray Allen. *The Protestant Crusade 1800–1860*. Gloucester, MA: Smith, 1963.
- Bode, Carl. *American Life in the 1840's*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1967.
- Bode, Carl. *The Anatomy of American Popular Culture, 1840–1861* (later title, *Antebellum Culture*). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1959.
- Branch, E. Douglas. *The Sentimental Years, 1836–1860*. New York, London: D. Appleton–Century Co., 1934.
- Bunkle, Phillida. "Sentimental Womanhood & Domestic Education, 1830–1870." *History of Education Quarterly* 14 (Spring 1974): 13–30.
- Coan, Mrs. Titus [Fidelia]. *A Brief Sketch of the Missionary Life of Mrs. Sybil Moseley Bingham: by Her Daughter Mrs. Titus Coan*. Honolulu: "Published by Request," 1895.
- Cole, Charles Chester. *The Social Ideas of the Northern Evangelists, 1826–1860*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1954.
- Coleman, Michael C. *Presbyterian Missionary Attitudes Toward American Indians, 1837–1893*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, c 1985.
- Doyle, Sherman H, DD. *Presbyterian Home Missions*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication & Sabbath-School Work, 1902.
- Drury, Clifford Merrill. *Marcus Whitman, M. D.: Pioneer and Martyr*. Caldwell, ID: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1937.
- Epstein, Barbara Leslie. *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1981.
- Farnham, Eliza Woodson. *Life In Prairie Land*. New York, Harper & Bro., 1846.
- Faust, Harold S. *The American Indian in Triumph and Tragedy*. Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1945.

- Fisher, Sally Walters. "They Came to Do Good: Vermont Missionaries in Hawaii." *Vermont History* 57 (Winter 1989): 35–49.
- Gillespie, Joanna Bowen. "'The Clear Leadings of Providence': Pious Memoirs and the Problems of Self-realization for Women in the Early Nineteenth Century." *Journal of the Early Republic* 5 (Summer 1985): 197–221.
- Goodykoontz, Colin B. *Home Missions on the American Frontier*. Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton, 1939.
- Griffen, Clifford S.. "Religious Benevolence as Social Control." *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 44 (December 1957): 423–44.
- Grimshaw, Patricia. "'Christian Women, Pious Wife, Faithful Mother, Devoted Missionary': Conflicts in Roles of American Missionary Women in Nineteenth-century Hawaii." *Feminist Studies* 9 (September 1983): 489–521.
- _____. *Paths of Duty: American Missionary Wives in Nineteenth-century Hawaii*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989.
- Handy, Robert. *A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities*. London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- Hayes, Florence Sooy. *Daughters of Dorcas: the Story of the Work of Women for Home Missions Since 1802*. New York: Board of National Missions, Presbyterian Church, 1952.
- Horvath, David G., ed. *A Guide to the Microfilm Edition of the Papers of the AHMS*. Glen Rock, N.J.: Microfilm Corporation of America, 1975.
- _____. *American Home Missionary Society: Papers, 1816–1894*. Glen Rock, N.J.: Microfilm Corporation of America, 1975.
- Jones, Nard. *The Great Command*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1959.
- Lacour-Gayet, Robert. *Everyday Life in the United States Before the Civil War, 1830–1860*. New York: Frederick Unger Publishing Co, 1969.

Larkin, Jack. *The Reshaping of Everyday Life 1790–1840*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988.

Laver, James. *The Age of Illusion: Manners and Morals 1750–1848*. New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1972.

McAlexander, Patricia Jewell. "The Creation of the American Eve." *Early American Literature* 9 (Winter 1975): 252–66.

Macleod, Anne Hamden. *A Moral Tale: Children's Fiction and American Culture, 1820–1860*. Hamden, CT: Archon, 1975.

Marsden, George, & Frank Roberts, ed. *A Christian View of History?* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975.

Marsden, George M. *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1970.

Marty, Martin E. *Righteous Empire: the Protestant Experience in America*. New York: The Dial Press, 1970.

Melton, Julius. *Presbyterian Worship in America: Changing Patterns Since 1787*. Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1967.

Milburn, William Henry. *The Pioneer Preacher: Or Rifle, Axe and Saddlebags*. New York: Derby & Jackson, 1860.

_____. *The Pioneers, Preachers, and Peoples of the Mississippi Valley*. New York: Derby & Jackson, 1860.

Miller, Howard. *The Revolutionary College: American Presbyterian Higher Education, 1707–1837*. New York: University Press, 1976.

Miller, Page Putnam. "Ann Breese's "Address" to the Female Missionary Society of the Western District." *American Presbyterians*, 65 (Spring 1987): 1–6.

Nichols, Robert. *Presbyterianism in New York State*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963.

- Norton, Agustus Theodore. *History of the Presbyterian Church in the State of Illinois*. St. Louis, MO: W. S. Bryan, 1879.
- Paul, Glendora B. "Presbyterian Missionaries and the Women of India During the Nineteenth Century." *Journal of Presbyterian History* 62 (September 1984): 230–36.
- Park, Polly. *"To Save Their Heathen Souls": Voyage to and Life in Foochow, China Based on Wentworth Diaries and Letters, 1854–1858*. Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1984.
- Phares, Russ. *Bible in Pocket, Gun in Hand: the Story of Frontier Religion*. New York: Doubleday, 1964.
- Reasoner, Jennie. *Father's Stories About his Missionary Parents*. TMs, Matthew A. Reasoner Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
- Reasoner, Matthew A. Genealogy collection, TMs in Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.: pages unnumbered. Two feet of shelf space for 14 boxes of material. Major source for typescripts of private letters of Tryphena Northway Reasoner, as well as family biographical material and memoirs written by her grandchildren.
- Reid, Daniel G., ed. *Dictionary of Christianity in America*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990.
- Ruiter, Joan Swallow. *The Women*. Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1978.
- Ryan, Mary P. "A Women's Awakening: Evangelical Religion and the Families of Utica, New York, 1800–1840" *American Quarterly* 30 (December 1978): 602–23.
- Smith, Elwyn Allen. *The Presbyterian Ministry in American Culture*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962.
- Sweet, Leonard I. *The Minister's Wife*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983.

Sweet, William W. *Religion in the Development of American Culture, 1765–1840*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1936.

_____. *Religion on the American Frontier, 1783–1840*. Vol. 2. *The Presbyterians*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1936.

_____. *The Story of Religion in America*. New York: Harpers, 1939.

Trollope, Frances. *Domestic Manners of the Americans*. London: Whittaker, 1832; reprint, New York: Howard Wilford Bell, 1904.

Walters, Ronald G. *American Reformers 1815–1860*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1978.

Webster, Jonathan Howes. "The ABCFM and the First Presbyterian Missions in the Northwest." *American Presbyterians* 65 (Fall 1987): 173–85.

Welter, Barbara. "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820–1860." *American Quarterly* 18 (December 1966): 151–74.

_____. "Anti-Intellectualism and the American Woman, 1800–1860." In *Dimity Convictions: the American Woman in the 19th Century*. Athens: University of Ohio Press, 1976.

_____. "The Feminization of American Religion: 1800–1860." In *Dimity Convictions: the American Woman in the 19th Century*. Athens: University of Ohio Press, 1976.

_____. "She Hath Done What She Could: Protestant Women's Missionary Careers in Nineteenth-century America." *American Quarterly* 30 (December 1978): 624–48.

Wyeth, Walter N., D. D. *Ann H. Judson. A Memorial*. Cincinnati, OH: Published by the Author, 1888.

_____. *Sarah B. Judson. A Memorial*. Cincinnati, OH: Published by the Author, 1889.