CHAPTER SEVEN

CONSECRATION OF MATERIAL POSSESSIONS

What is commonly called "stewardship" in the church today is perhaps the most enduring legacy of the reflex influence of the missionary movement. The idea of stewardship was in the Bible, and it had been preached, as applying to the Christian's use of property, through the ages. However, through most of the Christian era, religious activities received financial supported through law, custom, and habit, rather than conviction. The need for money for missions and other benevolent operations created a need to find new sources of charitable funds. This search led to a movement to transform popular attitudes toward the ownership of property.

In evaluating the consecration of material possessions as a reflex influence of missions, theory cannot be divorced from practice. The fund raising of the Board needs to be examined along with its theology of property. To understand this reflex influence, we will (1) review attitudes towards religion and money before the American Board, (2) examine the initial appeals made by the

Board and its methods for fund raising, including auxiliaries and agents, and (3) describe the theology of the consecration of material possessions, as it developed in the literature of the Board.

I. RELIGION AND MONEY BEFORE THE AMERICAN BOARD

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the financial practices of American churches constituted both a continuation of and a reaction to the practices of the church in medieval Europe. Luther Philip Powell explained in his 1951 dissertation,

> At the time of the Reformation all connection between money and the Church had, for many, become hateful. The rapacious and greedy way in which the Church and the clergy had accumulated money left many to believe that money could have no place in the service of worship.[1]

The offering was removed from the worship service. The giving of alms to the poor was discouraged because of its close association with the Roman Catholic concept of merit. Tithes were anathema in early America, because in rural England they had been extorted from the people by the force of the law.

Financing of American Churches

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[1] Luther Philip Powell, "The Growth and Development of the Motives and Methods of Church Support with Special Emphasis upon the American Churches." (Ph.D. diss., Drew, 1951), 360-61.

The Reformers, and early American Protestants, looked to two traditional sources for funds: taxes and property. In America, several other methods soon came into use, including subscriptions, pew rents, collections, and lotteries.[2]

Taxes. When the ABCFM was organized in 1810, Congregational Churches were still receiving tax support for the payment of pastors in Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts, which then included Maine. However, tax support was gradually becoming a smaller proportion of the total needed, and in the face of the Unitarian controversy, some churches were forced, and others chose, to give up tax support. Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed churches had not received tax support for over a century.

Property. A piece of property, owned by the church, could support the church in either of two ways. The pastor could live on the land, and farm it to support his family, or the land could be rented, with the income being used for support of the church.

Subscriptions. A subscription was a paper, with an appeal for funds, and space for many people to sign and to indicate the amount of their pledge. In the minds of many, the subscription was a voluntary tax.

Pew Rents. The selling and renting of pews became the dominant pattern of church support in the first half of the nineteenth century in America. A family paid for their pew, and then paid an annual rent on it. In this way a family paid

[2] Ibid., 249. The following paragraphs are a summary of his argument.

their share of the church's support, and identified a few square feet of the church building as theirs.

Collections. Collections were taken, but were not allowed to be a prominent part of worship. The seventeenth century Westminster Directory for Worship mentioned a collection only in connection with the Lord's Supper, and stated, "The Collection for the Poor is so to be ordered, that no Part of the Publick Worship be thereby hindered."[3] Later Directories did allow a collection just before the benediction.[4] Collections were for specific purposes, and were not taken every week; a collection for the poor at the time of communion was the most common.

Lotteries. Occasionally churches and religious institutions used lotteries, but they were inefficient as only a small per cent of the receipts went to charity.

Before the rise of the missionary movement, giving for religious purposes was a practical matter. Church people gave, not from a sense of stewardship or with any idea of proportionate giving, but simply to meet clearly understood

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[3] Church of Scotland, The Directory for the Publick Worship of God, Agreed upon by the Divines at Westminster (Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1745; reprint, New York: for Robert Lennox Kennedy, 1880), 29.

[4] Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, A Draught of the Form of Government and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (N.p., [1787]), 76; Presbyterian Church in the United States of America [old school], The Form of Government, the Discipline, and the Directory for Worship of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (1841), 497.

expenses--to pay a pastor and occasionally to build a building. This was not "disinterested benevolence" but carrying one's share of the burden of an organization to which one belonged.

Fund Raising for Missions Before the American Board

The many small missionary societies in America between 1795 and 1810 had been developing creative ways of raising funds for missions. Most of the societies had membership dues. Some circulated subscription papers. Annual collections in churches were received, and some church bodies authorized collections. The most effective collection for missions was received in the churches of Connecticut on the first Sunday of May, and provided the Missionary Society of Connecticut with from $2,000 to $3,000 annually. Most societies had an annual meeting, or "anniversary" at which a sermon was given and a collection taken.

In 1800 Mary Webb organized the Boston Female Society for Missionary Purposes,[5] and dues were received from women. Two years later, Mehetabel Simpkins (1739-1817), wife of the treasurer of the Massachusetts Missionary Society, organized a "Cent Society." This was an organization of women who pledged to give one cent per week for missions. Both kinds of women's societies were reproduced in other communities. In six years, the cent societies had

[5] Vaill, Mary Webb, 18-38; Bascom, "Exertions of Females," SIA, [5]; Beaver, All Loves Excelling, 14.

contributed over $2,000 to the MMS for Bibles, hymnals and catechisms for the new settlements.[6]

The missionary societies were asking for money in ways that caused little pain or sacrifice. Most women could give one cent a week, and the pennies added up. Most evangelical Christians had some available funds they could place in a collection plate once a year.

Beliefs about Giving

The religious beliefs of evangelical Christians pointed to a consecration to God of all that one possessed. Philip Doddridge, in the popular devotional work The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul, urged his readers to make a personal covenant with God, and suggested the following words:

> This day do I, with the utmost solemnity, surrender myself to thee. . . . I consecrate to thee all that I am, and all that I have; the faculties of my mind, the members of my body, my worldly possessions, my time, and my influence over others: to be all used entirely for thy glory, and resolutely employed in obedience to thy commands, as long as thou continuest my life.[7]

Isaac Watts had written in a popular hymn of the love of Christ on the Cross, "Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my Soul, my Life, my All."[8] In A Serious

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[6] "Cent Society," Panoplist n.s., 1 [4] (1808-09): 138.

[7] Philip Doddridge, The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul, in The Works of the Rev. P. Doddridge, D.D. (Leeds, Br.: Edward Baines, 1802), 1:348.

[8] Isaac Watts, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," in Hymns and Spiritual Songs, 1707-1748, Selma L. Bishop, ed. (London: Faith, 1962), 353.

Call to a Devout and Holy Life, which Harriet Newell was reading on her way to India, William Law (1686-1761) explained how a good Christian, "Should look upon every part of his life as a matter of holiness because it is to be offered to God."[9]

If our *all* belongs to God, then our money belongs to God too. How we use it should be part of our service to God. This principle of devotion had been nurtured in the Awakenings. A few people applied it personally to some degree. But the need of the missionary movement for funds made it necessary to preach this particular aspect of devotion to Christ emphatically and consistently.

The Panoplist occasionally carried articles on the use of property prior to in 1810. One Panoplist article, "Well Done, Thou Good and Faithful Servant," interpreted the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:21). It asked the question: "Do I use the talents with which I am entrusted, for the glory of him, who is the rightful proprietor, and with reference to that solemn day, in which he will demand my account of them?"[10] The article called on persons in various different occupations to examine their talents and their use of them.

In another Panoplist article, titled "The Trifler," the author lamented how people spend their money on things that are neither necessary nor important.

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[9] William Law, A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life (New York: Paulist, 1978), 75.

[10] X., pseud., "Well Done, Thou Good and Faithful Servant," Panoplist 1 (1805-06): 203.

> Man was made for another world. He cannot obtain happiness in this, for there is nothing here commensurate to his desires. If his views stop short of that eternal state . . . and his labours are not applied to the means of preparing for that state, he, with all his worldly fore-thought and industry, is but a trifler.[11]

A person could live a life more consistent with one's eternal state, by living for purposes grander than the comforts of this world.

Another Panoplist article explained that God's abundant love for us should be shared with others out of gratitude: "Kindness to our suffering fellow-creatures is a natural and necessary expression of that *gratitude to the Deity*, in which so much of religion consists."[12] Our love to our fellow-creatures will be as "active, vigorous, expensive, generous, beneficent,"[13] as God's love to us.

II. FUND RAISING FOR THE BOARD

Initial Appeals

When the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was created in 1810, it had no money. In its first two years, it presented appeals for support in its "Addresses to the Christian Public," and in Panoplist articles. These appeals were a continuation of the thinking of the small missionary

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[11] "The Trifler," Panoplist 1 (1805-06): 294, 295.

[12] "On the Beneficent Spirit of Christianity," Panoplist n.s.,1 [4] (1808-09): 26.

[13] Ibid., 27.

societies and the Awakenings, and were the beginning of reflection on the consecration of property by the American Board.

The "Address and Form of Subscription" published in 1810, was straightforward:

> In the present state of the world, Christian missions cannot be executed without pecuniary support. Shall this support be wanting? When millions are perishing for lack of knowledge, and young disciples of the Lord are waiting, with ardent desire, to carry the gospel of salvation to them; shall these millions be left to perish, and that ardent desire be disappointed? Is there, then, in those who are favored with the gospel, the same mind that was in Christ, when he freely gave his own blood for the redemption of men?[14]

The argument of this first address was: (1) Believers should be moved with compassion for the heathen who are condemned to hell if they are not sent preachers. (2) The means--willing missionaries--are at hand. (3) Christ gave us the example of self-sacrifice for others. These themes were repeated in the Address of 1811.

From November 1811 to May 1812, around the time of the departure of the first missionaries, the Panoplist ran a number of articles and letters presenting a variety of motivations and methods for giving.

In November, "A Subscriber" sent ten dollars for missions, and wrote,

> Let every Christian who has money or talents, or influence, exert himself, according to his ability, in this glorious work. Let each one remember, that where much cannot be given, a little will be acceptable.

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[14] S. Worcester, "Address [1810]," 14.

> The duty is according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not. . . .
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> And if conscience should so decide, let a certain annual sum be set apart from the income of each individual, and devoted to this object. . . .
>
> If we have no means of giving money, let us retrench our expenses till the means shall be furnished. I would direct your thoughts to a particular source of expense; viz. the use of wine and ardent spirits. There are comparatively few cases in which these articles are of any serious benefit, and many in which they are hurtful; and those who use them aright are in danger of contracting pernicious habits. Therefore let us estimate the probable expense for a year's stock of wine and spirits. . . . Let this sum be paid where most needed, for missionary purposes; and we shall see a fund arise which, with a blessing, will be the means of building up the Church of Christ in both hemispheres.[15]

This brief letter raised several themes that were often repeated. (1) Small gifts are important. (2) Systematic giving, in the sense of giving a certain amount per year, was proposed. (3) The idea of "retrenchment" was presented. That is, reducing one's expenses in order to give to missions. (4) Here retrenchment was combined with self denial--denying oneself something that one enjoyed, in order that others might have something more precious. (5) The expense of some luxury whose social value was questionable at best--in this case wine and ardent spirits--was contrasted with the greater importance of missions.

Other forms of retrenchment were also advanced. In the February 1812 Panoplist a self-styled poor man pledged to save for missions by having fewer treats on the tea table. He wrote:

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15 A Subscriber, pseud., "Foreign Missions," Panoplist n.s., 4 [7] (1811-12): 269-70. This idea of not using ardent spirits and giving the money to missions was seconded in Elihu, pseud., "Foreign Missions," Panoplist n.s., 4 [7] (1811-12): 393.

> Truly, Sir, we find we can spare half the dainties, commonly set upon the table, to the benefit of our health; and at the same time avoid much of the labor and inconvenience of preparing for company. . . .
>
> First; we shall have better health. . . . Secondly; we shall have the happiness of doing good; which is infinitely above the pleasure of a feast. Thirdly; we shall have joy in remembering what we have done at the judgment day.[16]

In December 1811, another article estimated that the money spent on the theatre in one season in Boston could support sixty missionary families in Asia.[17]

In January 1812, the Panoplist carried a review of a sermon that Edward D. Griffin had given to two women's charitable societies. Griffin had said,

> But it is not enough to give, now and then, in a paroxysm of passion; you must do it *habitually*. . . .
>
> Your liberality must be as habitual as love, and as systematic as a well regulated conscience. As far as possible it should be reduced to a permanent system, extending through every month in the year, and through every year of your lives. It would promote such regularity to devote, as some have done, a fixed proportion of your income to God.[18]

The reviewer lamented the ignorance of Christians, saying, "they seem to have just begun to learn the best and noblest use of money."[19] Griffin, an evangelical, was preaching at the height of the Second Great Awakening, when emotional

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[16] M. A., pseud., "On Saving for the Missionary Cause," Panoplist n.s., 4 [7] (1811-12): 414-15.

[17] Beta, pseud., "Foreign Missions," Panoplist n.s., 4 [7] (1811-12): 313.

[18] Edward D. Griffin, A Sermon Preached August 11, 1811 for the Benefit of the Portsmouth Female Asylum, Also, With Some Omissions, for the Roxbury Charitable Society, Sep. 18, 1811 (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1812), 15; quoted in Review, Panoplist n.s., 4 [7] (1811-12): 372.

[19] Review of Sermon for Benefit of Portsmouth Female Asylum, by E. Griffin, Panoplist n.s., 4 [7]: 373.

responses were normative, yet in this sermon he advocated habitual and systematic giving. Two important ideas in Griffin's sermon were: (1) the idea of giving as a "habit;" (2) the principle of proportionate giving.

In March 1812, Panoplist editor Jeremiah Evarts wrote as "A.B." that the person who contributed to missions was, "hastening the approach of the glorious day when Christ shall reign in the hearts of penitent sinners from the rising of the sun to his going down."[20]

In a short period of less than two years, the ABCFM and its voice, the Panoplist, had presented a barrage of different motives for giving to missions. There was clearly not one operative philosophy. The importance of the missionary task, and the need for funds for that task, were the priority. Motives included: (1) gratitude to God expressed in love for the heathen who stand in danger of eternal damnation without the Word; (2) imitation of Christ, who gave of himself for the salvation of others; (3) if we have the means--the missionary recruits--we should use them; (4) the "happiness of doing good;" (5) joy on the judgment day; (6) better health (if we give up alcohol or sweets); and (7) hastening the millennium. Possible disciplines for giving included: (1) retrenchment, which could involve self denial and/or life improvement; (2) setting aside an annual sum; (3) developing a habit of giving; (4) proportionate giving.

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[20] [Jeremiah Evarts], "Foreign Missions," Panoplist n.s., 4 [7] (1811-12): 448.

Ultimately, the motives for giving were the same as the motives of the missionaries for going: obedience to God's word; gratitude for salvation; love of one's fellow human beings.

Strategies for Fund Raising

The American Board adopted and adapted the fund raising methods of other voluntary societies in England and in the United States. At the beginning of 1818, Samuel Worcester, in an "Address," outlined the fund raising organization of the Board. (1) About 50 regional foreign missionary societies, and about 250 local associations were soliciting subscriptions for the Board. (2) Some churches took collections for missions at the monthly concert. (3) Others advocated an annual "public *Congregational Contribution"* in each church for the Board. Worcester encouraged more extensive use of all three methods of acquiring funds.[21]

Under this pattern of appeals, the individual supporter contributed in three different ways. The subscription through the auxiliary societies was the most substantial gift. The collection at the monthly concert capitalized on the emotion of the occasion and gave regularity to giving. The congregational offering gathered small amounts from the largest number of people. Worcester concluded, "Beloved friends, we must not be afraid, we must not be ashamed to

[21] S. Worcester, "Address [Jan. 1818]," 28-30.

beg--to beg with importunate and persevering earnestness, for this cause. There is none better on earth."[22] Besides these three basic strategies, the American Board also employed others including (4) sales, (5) missionary fields, (6) special objects, and (7) dues.

Subscriptions. The American Board at first appealed to existing Cent Societies and Women's Missionary Societies for support; many new gentlemen's, ladies, and mixed associations were organized at the initiative of the Board, supporting only the ABCFM.

In May 1812, a Panoplist article advocated the establishment of more Cent Societies, as a way of increasing interest in missions, as well as funds:

> The smallness of the donations in Cent Societies, so far from being an objection to them, is an argument in their favor. The greater the number of Christians who are personally interested in the cause of missions the greater will be the prospect of success. Those who give money to support a mission will pray for its prosperity, and will anxiously inquire as to its effects. Thus the mind will become enlarged, and accustomed to regard all mankind with animated wishes for their happiness. These wishes will prompt to beneficent exertions, and the individuals will find their happiness where it ought to be found, and where, indeed, it can alone be found, *in doing good.*[23]

Cent Societies gradually gave way to the more conventional associations.

Some churches chose to by-pass missionary associations, and subscribe as congregations. A church in Goshen, Connecticut, in 1819 set a goal for

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[22] Ibid., 31.

[23] S. N., pseud., "Cent Societies," Panoplist n.s., 4 [7] (1811-12): 560.

mission giving as a church.[24] Another congregation in 1821 voted, "that we would hereafter consider ourselves as auxiliary to the American Board,"[25] and conducted a subscription within the church. In 1821 the Brookfield Association of Congregational Churches, in Massachusetts, began to collect subscriptions for the ABCFM through the churches rather than through missionary associations.[26]

"Habits of Systematic Charity" were the objectives of a resolution approved by a Presbyterian Church session in North Carolina in 1827. The church organized itself as "an auxiliary to all benevolent institutions, *in general."* Each church member was given a list of authorized benevolences. This list had a column for each month. The member entered after each charity, in the appropriate column, what he or she would give.

The session listed as advantages of systematic charity:

> 1. That it would have a tendency to counteract our natural worldly-mindedness.
> 2. To make us economical and industrious.
> 3. To keep up our acquaintance, and increase our interest in the benevolent enterprises of the day, and thus prevent our falling behind the spirit of the age.
> 4. To help us in prayer, and promote our religious *growth,* and our religious *enjoyment*. . . .

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[24] "Proposal to the Churches of Christ, on the Subject of Sending the Gospel Throughout the World," Panoplist 15 (1819): 89-90; A. D. C., pseud., "To the Editor," Christian Spectator 1 (1819): 22-24.

[25] "Miscellaneous Notices," MH 17 (1821): 62.

[26] PC 1:138-39.

> 5. The Head of the Church, required from the Jews, not only of their substance, but a definite and fixed portion of it. . . . And the same systematic charity . . . is by Paul inculcated on Gentiles.[27]

This church session saw a direct relationship between subscribing to missions and growth in piety. It believed that systematic giving counteracted "worldly-mindedness," helped the subscribers to pray, and promoted their religions growth and enjoyment.

Monthly Concert Collections. Jeremiah Evarts had written in the Panoplist, the month after the first missionaries were ordained and had embarked, "Prayer always implies a corresponding duty, when it relates to anything in which our agency can be of use."[28] It was natural and consistent, that whenever possible, prayers would be accompanied by action. The action which most friends of mission could take, was to contribute. In his Address in January, 1818, Samuel Worcester suggested collections at the monthly concert,

> The practice need only be mentioned, to commend itself to every Christian's heart. What more suitable--what more pleasant--after unitedly offering prayers to the God of all grace for the salvation of the Heathen--than unitedly to contribute towards the accomplishment of the holy desires thus solemnly offered![29]

In June of that year, an article in the Religious Intelligencer suggested the "propriety" of taking a collection for missions at the monthly concert. The writer

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[27] "Advantages of Systematic Charity," Evangelical and Literary Magazine 10 (1827): 664.

[28] [Evarts], "Foreign Missions," 446.

[29] S. Worcester, "Address [Jan. 1818]," 29.

observed, "This practice has been adopted in some places; but I believe by no means generally."[30] The collection did become a general custom at the monthly concert.

Congregational Collections. Panoplist articles in April 1812, and December 1816, advocated an annual special collection in congregations to support the American Board.[31] This method, proven effective in the life of the Missionary Society of Connecticut, gave persons of modest means an opportunity to give with some anonymity. Some complained about "the unseasonable interruption of Divine worship in taking up collections,"[32] and insisted that, when a collection was necessary, worshipers should, "deposit their contribution in boxes, or plates, as they depart from church."[33] As voluntary societies increased, special collections increased. Some congregations, like that of Artemas Bullard in St. Louis, took the initiative by assigning certain months to certain societies.[34] Toward the end of the period under study, a few voices were

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30 Philanthropos, "Missionary Collections" 77-78.

31 A Friend to the Heathen, pseud., "Foreign Missions," Panoplist n.s., 4 [7] (1811-12): 490-91; Christianus, pseud., "Proposal for a Stated Annual Contribution in Our Churches, to Promote the Cause of Missions; Addressed to Ministers and Christians," Panoplist 12 (1816): 544-45.

32 Justin, pseud. "On the Practice and Mode of Collections in Churches," Christian Advocate 1 (1823): 164.

33 Ibid., 165.

34 Artemas Bullard to William J. Armstrong, 18 June 1838, ABC, ser. 12.1, vol. 7. Each society was given a two month period, in which they were allowed to schedule one special collection.

raised in American Protestantism to advocate an offering in worship every Sunday. However, the occasional special collection at the close of the service continued to be the pattern.

Sales. One way to contribute to missions was to make something, sell it, and give the proceeds to missions. This was a particularly important form of contribution for many women and children who did not otherwise have money to give. The supporter was giving time, talent, and money to the Lord's work all at the same time. In Anne Bullard's Sabbath School book, Louisa Ralston, a Juvenile Missionary Society was described as a beehive of activity:

> In one corner was a group of the larger girls . . . who were completely absorbed in painting screens and card-racks. One was painting a watch-paper, and another a velvet pin-cushion. . . . The next group were working lace-caps, ruffles, insertions, capes and collars, and one a very elegant veil. . . . Then there was a table around which were a number busily engaged with beads--they had bags, and needle-books, wristbands, money-purses, belts, and necklaces, partly finished. At a little distance from these, was a group of pincushion-makers. They had pincushions and needle-books, of all sorts and sizes--hearts and rounds, oblongs and squares. There were some needle-books in the shape of a pair of bellows, with a tape needle for the nose, and others of shapes indescribable. There was one in a corner, by herself, making feather fans; another was finishing an emery bag, in the shape of a strawberry; two or three were braiding straw; several were knitting suspenders and garters; others stockings, and one was hemming a pocket handkerchief. There was a small number of patch-work makers, and three or four, who . . . were threading needles. . . . Two were making shirts, and some little ones were holding yarn to be wound.[35]

All this activity was to produce products to sell for the benefit of missions.

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[35] [Anne Bullard], Louisa Ralston, 95-96.

In 1824 the Missionary Herald carried a description of an auction for missions in Britain.[36] An 1830 article in the Religious Intelligencer described a fair in New Haven, at which women sold items they had made, for the benefit of a mission. The article pointed out that the preparation for the fair had a social value for the women, stimulated interest in its benevolent object, and added, "Many also can aid a charitable object by their personal industry, who could give in no other way."[37] There were very few references to fairs or sales in the American Board's literature. However, the support of women's and juvenile societies was regularly praised, and this kind of fund raising activity by those groups was common place. It was a way for the poorest to give something, and it combined missions, activity, and fellowship.

Missionary Fields. "Missionary Fields" were promoted as a way farmers could most easily give to missions.[38] A group cultivated 6½ acres of land to benefit the Board in 1821 in Northampton, Massachusetts, giving their labor when they had little money.[39] Sheep were raised in Wiscasset, Maine for

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[36] "Missionary Sales" MH 20 (1824): 62.

[37] "Fairs" RI 15 (1830-31): 330.

[38] Agricola, pseud., "Missionary Fields" Utica Christian Repository 1 (1822): 92-93; X., pseud., "It Will Be Done" Utica Christian Repository 1 (1822): 142-45; S. R. S., pseud., "Missionary Fields" Utica Christian Repository 2 (1823): 115-16.

[39] Enos Clark, Thomas Wright, and E. S. Phelps, "Letter to the Treasurer," MH 17 (1821): 85-86.

missions.[40] For many farmers, still practicing a semi-subsistence agriculture, "in-kind" was the only way they could give.

The "Missionary Storehouse" was established in some communities. A notice in the Auburn, New York, Evangelical Recorder announced,

> The Christian public are informed that the Dea[con] Abijah Thomas has been appointed an agent in this village for the purpose of receiving articles of Produce . . . for the benefit of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions; and the benevolent of this district are invited to make annual and large appropriations for aiding the Board, either from their flock, their field, their manufacture, [or] their merchandise; . . . and, when they have occasion to purchase any of those articles, they are requested to give this missionary storehouse a preference.[41]

The missionary field was the most common kind of in-kind giving to the Board.

Special Objects. Supporters were always allowed to give their money to a specific project of the Board if they wished. This had been encouraged when in 1815 the Prudential Committee established a Fund for Educating Heathen Children and Youth.[42] At that time, individuals and organizations were encouraged to support a particular child in boarding school in Sri Lanka, and the contributor often named the child. In 1819 a church in Farmington, Connecticut, decided to support one missionary, using their collections taken at the time of

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[40] "The Wiscasset Foreign Missionary Society" Panoplist 12 (1816): 138-39; "Foreign Missionary Society of Wiscasset" Panoplist 15 (1819): 172-73.

[41] "Missionary Department" Evangelical Recorder 2 (1819-21): 207. See also: "Missionary Depository" Utica Christian Repository 1 (1822): 63.

[42] PC 1:53; Samuel Worcester, "Second Quarterly Circular of the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions [March, 1816]" Panoplist 12 (1816): 189.

communion,[43] and from time to time a local association proposed support of an individual missionary.

However, this kind of project was difficult to administer, and contributors often became discouraged. When William J. Armstrong became a permanent agent in 1834, Secretary Wisner advised him,

> The Selection of Specific objects has an advantage in Starting in people or individuals an interest in benevolent operations: but has So many disadvantages attending it, that it Should not be advised except when necessary for that purpose, + then Should be discontinued as Soon as practicable. Yet on this, as on any other part of the Subject, the wishes of the people must be gratified. The case Should be fairly Stated to them, and then they Should be left to their own decision, and that decision, when practicable, cheerfully acquiesced in full.[44]

Dues. In 1821 the American Board created "honorary membership." A minister paying $50 or a lay person paying $100 could be an honorary member, with voice but not vote at meetings of the Board.[45] The Prudential Committee voted, on 14 June 1823, that a letter "be addressed to active individuals of both sexes, to induce them to make their ministers Honorary Members of the Board."[46] It became a common practice for women's associations to give $50 to have their pastor made an honorary member. This was a way for parishioners to express

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[43] "Report of a Committee of the Church in Farmington, and the Votes of that Church," Christian Spectator 1 (1819): 211-15.

[44] Benjamin B. Wisner to William J. Armstrong, 11 June 1834, CBFM Papers, box 1, folder 21. Copy: ABC, ser. 7, vol. 1, p. 217.

[45] AR 1821:5.

[46] PC 1:240.

their appreciation of a pastor and help missions. Many lay persons also became honorary members. By 1850, the Board had almost 7,300 honorary members.

Summary. Most of the methods of fund raising were designed to broaden the base of support--to make it possible for more persons to support missions. Congregational collections, sales, and mission fields were all ways that person of limited resources could participate. But the basic and most substantial form of support was the subscription. When approached seriously, it required self examination and a commitment.

Several ways by which this variety of fund raising approaches influenced the piety of supporters, were through *activity, information,* and *community.*

The first half of the nineteenth century in America was decidedly an age of *action*. The fund raising procedures just described involved hundred of thousands of people--perhaps millions of people--in activity for the advancement of Christ's kingdom. Whether calling on one's neighbors for a donation, knitting suspenders or hoeing potatoes, the friend of mission was actively involved in doing something that would bring support to the missionary cause, which was the cause of Christ. When engaged in this activity, a person reflected on its purposes. While one's hands were grasping a hoe or a knitting needle or knocking on a door, one's mind was with God. This bore a close resemblance to the "spirit of prayer" described by some religious leaders. Placing a coin in an offering plate--or even offering a prayer--might not cause as much reflection on

holy things as *action* for a holy cause. Fund raising for missions in the early nineteenth century was an active piety--a participation in Christ's saving work by doing common ordinary things.

Participation in activity for missions was usually accompanied by the sharing of *information* on missions. Both increased a person's interest and identification with the cause. As this cause became a larger part of a person's life, God became a larger part of the person's life.

The many fund raising activities all required organization, which meant voluntary associations. In this *community* of activity the believer was not an isolated individual. The friend of mission found support and encouragement from others in the pursuit of active piety.

Auxiliaries and Associations

The organization of auxiliaries and associations was efficient, and for a while effective, in supporting the American Board and in giving inspiration to its supporters. The plan was simple. Two missionary associations in each parish, one for men and one for women, canvassed the community annually, calling on each person to make a subscription--a pledge--to the American Board. These "collectors" later picked up the money, and turned it over to the association treasurer. The money was then sent to the treasurer of the auxiliary, a regional

organization with oversight of all of the associations within its bounds. Then the money was sent to the treasurer of the American Board.

The London Missionary Society began organizing auxiliaries in 1807.[47] The British and Foreign Bible Society provided the most effective model of the use of auxiliaries, beginning about 1809.[48] The American Board began promoting auxiliaries in 1811. The Foreign Missionary Society of Boston and the Vicinity, and the Foreign Missionary Society of the North Association of Hartford County, were organized in 1811 and 1812 respectively, auxiliary to the ABCFM, and their constitutions were printed in The Panoplist and The Connecticut Evangelical Magazine and Religious Intelligencer, respectively,[49] as models for others. In a circular letter dated 3 January 1812, which served as a letter of introduction to agent John Frost, the Prudential Committee stated:

> After much deliberation, we have thought, that Foreign Missionary Societies, formed in large towns and their vicinities, afford the most promising methods of collecting money for Foreign Missions. These Societies will somewhat resemble the Auxiliary Bible Societies in Great-

[47] "Missionary Union" EM 15 (1807): 42-43.

[48] Their method was described in: Charles Stokes Dudley, An Analysis of the System of the Bible Society Throughout Its Various Parts (London: R. Watts, 1821).

[49] "The Foreign Missionary Society of Boston and Vicinity," Panoplist n.s., 4 [7] (1811-12): 332-34; Henry A. Rowland and Andrew Yates, scribes, "To the Christian Public Within the Limits of the North Association of Hartford County," CEMRI 5 (1812): 319-20, 346-47.

> Britain, which experience has proved to be excellent vehicles for the transmission of money to the parent Society.[50]

In the "Quarterly Circular of the Prudential Committee," issued 1 December 1815, Samuel Worcester strongly encouraged the establishment and use of auxiliary societies, to encourage generosity and use socializing for religious ends.[51]

An 1823 Missionary Herald article laid out a plan for more systematic organization of auxiliaries and associations, and called for discipline in the church militant:

> There seems to be an increasing conviction, in the religious community, that there must be more system in the method of raising funds for charitable objects. . . . As the case now is, the portion of the church militant, which is stationed in this country, is very badly disciplined.[52]

The American Board was soon busy reorganizing its existing societies along the lines described in the 1823 article. The September 1825 Missionary Herald reported that 30 auxiliaries and about 600 parochial associations had been so organized or reorganized.[53]

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[50] William Bartlett, Samuel Spring, and Samuel Worcester, "To All Whom it May Concern [3 Jan. 1812]," in John Frost to Society of Inquiry, 12 June 1812, SIA, ser. 2, box 2.

[51] Samuel Worcester, "Quarterly Circular of the Prudential Committee [Dec. 1815]," Panoplist 12 (1816): 39-42. See also: S. Worcester, "Address [Jan. 1818], " 28.

[52] "Systematic Charity," MH 19:365.

[53] "Auxiliary Missionary Societies," MH 21 (1825): 297.

The January, 1827, Missionary Herald reported over 1,000 parochial associations, with over 4,000 collectors, mostly in New England[54] One year later, the Board reported 58 auxiliaries, with 1,317 associations (592 specifically ladies associations), and 5,000 collectors calling on 100,000 people.[55] By January 1830, there were 1,603 associations in 74 auxiliaries.[56] By the end of 1832 there were 1,655 associations. About 1,200 of these associations were in New England, with most of the rest in the middle states.[57]

Local associations of women and children did more than an annual subscription. In his published advice to his younger sister, Harvey Newcomb (1803-1863) suggested she organize a ladies' missionary society, along the lines described in the Sabbath School book Louisa Ralston. He described a typical association's workings and benefits:

> Let such an association employ their needles half a day in every week, and apply the avails of their labor to the missionary cause. . . . Some member of the association should be appointed to read missionary intelligence, while the rest labor with their hands. This will be the means of exciting a missionary spirit, which may result in a much greater benefit than the

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[54] ABCFM, "Brief View of the Missions Under the Direction of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," MH 23 (1827): 6.

[55] ABCFM, "Summary View of Protestant Missions," MH 24 (1828): 5.

[56] ABCFM, "Brief View of the American Board of Foreign Missions and Its Operations," MH 26 (1830): 5.

[57] Rufus Anderson, "Historical View of the Organization for Raising Funds," AR 1860:21.

> amount of money contributed by the society. Another advantage of this plan is, that it furnishes an opportunity of social intercourse.[58]

The local women's association, organized for fund raising, also gave missionary education, and socialized the women into a community of friends of mission.

A fifteen year old girl, Catherine Elliott, in 1804 in Britain organized the first juvenile benevolent society.[59] In the United States, the Sunday Schools sometimes created juvenile missionary societies for their students. More often, the Sunday School carried out the function of collecting funds and providing education for all of the benevolent societies of the day.[60]

When regional auxiliaries of the American Board were first being organized in 1812 and 1813, most of them adopted the custom of the "anniversary" or annual meeting, which was usually a public worship service, highlighted by a sermon, with hymns, prayers, and a collection.[61] During the following decade there was a trend away from annual sermons. A Missionary Herald article in September 1825 reviewed the reports of five auxiliaries in Massachusetts, all of which were commended as exemplary, only one of which

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58 Harvey Newcomb, A Practical Directory for Young Christian Females: Being a Series of Letters from a Brother to a Younger Sister (Boston: MSSS, 1833), 190-91.

59 Dudley, Analysis of the System, 277.

60 MSSU. Annual Report 1832:13.

61 Rowland and Yates, "To the Christian Public," 320; "Foreign Mission Society of Boston and the Vicinity," Panoplist n.s., 5 [8] (1812-13): 377-78; James Morris, secretary, "Foreign Mission Society of Litchfield County," CEMRI 6 (1813): 156.

had an annual sermon. That auxiliary was not criticized, but the alternative practice was recommended,

> We are strongly inclined, however, to believe that five or six addresses--*short,* comprehensive, abounding in fact and animated illustration--will, with the Report, and the prayers, and select pieces of music, and a collection at the close, send the people home abundantly repaid for their attendance.[62]

These anniversaries, the article advised, "should be rendered as interesting and attractive, as the services of an ordination usually are,"[63] which would require some effort in planning.

The system of auxiliaries and associations deteriorated in the late 1830s. Rufus Anderson later explained why:

> Some other Benevolent Societies, seeing the efficacy of the system of collectors, adopted it, and to such an extent that, in several places, the whole soon broke down. In portions of New England, pastors interposed and insisted that only the more expensive departments of benevolence should be thus sustained by their parishes; and there, under their fostering care, the system still exists, substantially, and works to general satisfaction.[64]

That the system broke down is evident. After 1831 the Missionary Herald did not report any more numbers of auxiliaries and associations. In 1841, Domestic Secretary William J. Armstrong was re-proposing the same plan. Armstrong's 1841 version was slightly more church related. He spoke of collectors in each congregation, but made no mention of associations. Regarding the auxiliary, he

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[62] "Auxiliary Missionary Societies," 298.

[63] Ibid

[64] Anderson, "Historical View of Raising Funds," 21-22.

said, "It may coincide, as to its limits and the time of its annual meeting, with the association, presbytery, or other ecclesiastical body to which the churches belong."[65]

In a paper presented to the American Board in 1844, Armstrong described auxiliary anniversaries that were sloppily done, and contrasted with them well planned anniversaries. He caricatured the anniversaries:

> A missionary association, comprising perhaps fifteen or twenty contiguous churches and many hundreds of the professed followers of Christ, is to hold its anniversary. . . . Yet little preparation is made for the meeting, and very few look forward to it with prayerful expectation. . . . And now the presiding officer is not present, or the secretary, or treasurer, or both are absent; or, if present, they are not prepared to make any reports, nor have they formed any plan or made any arrangements, to render the meeting interesting or impressive. . . . In such circumstances it is difficult for the few who are present, to rise above the disheartening influences that surround them. If a returned missionary, or other delegate from the Board, has come to address the meeting, the array of empty seats that meet his eye, as he rises to speak, sends a chill to his heart; perhaps the evident restlessness of the few who are present, admonishes him that his closing sentence is the one they are most anxious to hear.[66]

William Armstrong had probably attended too many meetings like that. He went on to describe a well conducted anniversary:

> All are not so. Some of the auxiliary societies do magnify their anniversaries. One might be named where a whole day is devoted to the meeting. . . . The meeting in the morning is one for the transaction of business. . . .
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> In the afternoon, and again in the evening, public meetings are held. . . . Reports, carefully prepared, are read by the secretary and treasurer, and

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[65] William J. Armstrong, "The Importance of Systematic Organization in Raising Funds," AR 1841:53.

[66] William J. Armstrong, "Efficiency of Auxiliary Societies," AR 1844:59.

> heard with attention by a large assembly. The delegates from the Board, whose attendance the officers of the society had taken care to secure, make statements illustrating the situation and prospects of the missions, and the corresponding obligation and privilege of the churches by whom they have been planted, and to whom they look for support; members of the society than make remarks, and offer resolutions suggested by the facts that have come before the meeting. A melting, subduing influence often attends these discussions, and when the resolutions are adopted by the meeting, it is not a mere formal vote, entered in the minutes of the society, but the holy purpose of hearts that love the Savior, recorded in heaven, and remembered in the closet and when the annual collection is made.[67]

Armstrong's point was clear. Careful preparation created a more interesting anniversary. There was a different spirit, a "melting, subduing influence" which would stay with people when they left, to be maintained in the "closet" and applied at the annual collection.

The plan presented in the Missionary Herald of November 1823 mobilized the Board's supporters into a volunteer fund raising army of thousands. Although the discipline broke down after a decade, something like it continued long afterwards in places. Sensitive to criticism, the Board encouraged the associations to seek the counsel of their pastors. The Board was seeking close ties with its supporting denominations by paralleling its fund raising process to the denominational structures.

Agents

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[67] Ibid., 59-60.

The American Board found it necessary to hire agents to present its case to the public, collect funds, and establish and maintain an organization of auxiliaries and associations to continue to collect funds. The first agent, John Frost, a recent graduate of Andover Seminary, solicited funds and organized auxiliaries across New England and New York state in 1811-1812. For twenty years the Board functioned with such "temporary agents," employed for a limited period of time or on a part time basis. Often they were "appointed missionaries, who had completed their studies, but could not be immediately sent out."[68] Also, local pastors were asked to be agents to other churches in their area. Even after the appointment of "permanent agents," pastors were still used to supplement and extend their work.

The instructions given to William J. Armstrong as a temporary agent in 1833, reveal the nature of this work. He was simply to preach on missions as he was able.

> Our wish is that you prepare a good sermon on Foreign Missions, preach it to your own people, get from them a contribution to the object; then preach it when convenient, to all concerned, to the other Presbyterian congregations in your city + obtain a contribution from them, exchanging with their ministers that day or half day, or getting a supply for your own pulpit, while you go to the others, + that you do the same, as you can, at Petersburg, Norfolk, + other places as may be consistent with your other responsibility.[69]

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[68] William J. Armstrong, "Agencies," AR 1839:36.

[69] Benjamin B. Wisner to William J. Armstrong, 11 Jan. 1833, ABC, ser. 7, vol. 1, pp. 32-33.

Secretary Benjamin B. Wisner in these instructions directed Armstrong to keep his priorities in order:

> The first thing in prosecuting an agency for the Board is to promote a missionary spirit, the second, to get funds; + the way to accomplish both, + that continuously, is to take pains to get Christians informed on the subject of missions.[70]

Armstrong was urged in this letter to always promote the Missionary Herald, "+ the importance + gratification of the missionary intelligence it gives."[71] He was urged to not take collections, but to circulate subscriptions, wherever possible:

> It is better not to take collections when another method can be taken, but to get the people to stop after the sermon, + send round papers + for them to put down their names with what they are willing to give annexed + let the collectors call on them afterwards for the money, + on others who were not present.[72]

This process encouraged thoughtful and substantial giving.

As the labors of these temporary agents were not adequate for the financial needs of the Board, the Prudential Committee resolved on 31 January 1831, "to obtain permanent agents for different parts of the country."[73] Because of the illness and death of Jeremiah Evarts, the plan was not implemented immediately. However, during 1832 the Prudential Committee began appointing

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[70] Ibid., 34.

[71] Ibid., 33.

[72] Ibid.

[73] PC 2:334.

"general agents." These agents were employed full-time by the Board, with an indefinite tenure, and specific geographic territories in which to work.

Elnathan Gridley, who served as an agent in 1824 before departing to be a missionary in Turkey, recommended to Jeremiah Evarts that permanent agents be appointed to limited territories, and listed as qualifications of an agent: (1) piety, (2) sociability, (3) common sense, (4) a firm constitution, (5) active habits, (6) a deep interest in missions, and (7) a thorough classical and theological education.[74] A person should prepare for being an agent as follows: (1) becoming extensively acquainted with the subject of missions; (2) "Let him prepare three missionary sermons;" (3) prepare five other, shorter sermons, for use at meetings to organize Associations; (4) have the sermons committed to memory; (5) "Let him provide himself with a fleet horse."[75]

In August, 1833, the Board issued a Monthly Paper explaining the new strategy. More information needed to reach more people, because the Board needed money immediately.[76] The agents were to generate interest in missions

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[74] Elnathan Gridley to Jeremiah Evarts, 5 Oct. 1824, ABC, ser. 12.1, vol. 8.

[75] Ibid. Gridley believed agents should ride horseback, and had a great deal to say about the proper care of an agent's horse. For example: "Were he to go on wheels or runners, 'Here comes a lazy agent' people would say." "Let him take care of his own horse. For if he does not, no one will. In most cases indeed a boy will stand ready to take him, and politeness seems to demand that the horse will be resigned to his care. But the Minister's boy, nine chances out of ten, is a lazy fellow, and will not take any proper care of the horse."

[76] ABCFM, Prudential Committee, Agencies: The Necessity and Utility of Employing Agents to Solicit Funds for the Support of Missions, Quarterly Papers,

where none existed, and keep up interest where it did exist. In addition, "While agents are aiming to collect funds for the support of missions, they are also laboring to promote the spiritual good of the people where they preach, and with whom they have intercourse."[77]

From 1832 to 1848, when the plan was modified, nineteen different persons were employed by the Board as full-time agents for at least one year.[78] These agents were the products of the same evangelical piety that had produced the first missionaries and the ABCFM. For the most part, they were men who were committed to foreign missions, who for some reason were not in a foreign field, and who saw their agency work as the next best way to work for the conversion of the world. A look at the life of one of the first agents reveals the piety from which they came.

Horatio Bardwell was a twenty year old school teacher in Goshen, Massachusetts, when a revival swept through in January 1808. Horatio was

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[77] ABCFM, no. 14, pp. 53-54.

[78] Ibid., 56.

Chauncey Eddy 1832-1843, Horatio Bardwell 1832-1837 Artemas Bullard 1832-1838, Richard C. Hand 1834-1840, William J. Armstrong 1834-1835, Harvey Coe 1835-1851, Jacob D. Mitchell 1835-1837, Frederick E. Cannon 1837-1861, William M. Hall 1837-1841, Erastus N. Nichols 1838-1840, William Clark 1840-1856, Orson Cowles 1841-1851, David Malin 1841-1856, Harvey Curtis 1841-1843, Charles L. Mills 1845-1847, A. S. Wells 1844-1850, Isaac R. Worcester 1847-1860, Ira M. Weed 1847-1856, and James P. Fisher 1847-1852. This dissertation makes extensive use of the correspondence of three agents, as representative of the whole group. The three agents are: Horatio Bardwell, Artemas Bullard, and William J. Armstrong.

inclined to shun his friends who were getting serious about religion, but took a new look at the revival and himself when his students were affected:

> When on returning to my school, in the afternoon, I found all my scholars in tears from the greatest to the least. I knew, without asking, the cause of those tears. I was indeed astonished! The language of their countenances + sighs, was directed to me as their instructor, 'What shall we do to be saved?'--I knew not what to do, or say--I was forced to acknowledge, in my heart, this is the work of God. And I began to feel myself a wretched undone sinner.
>
> I walked the room for an hour, in perfect silence--At length I sent for one of the Deacons of the ch[urc]h. who was near. He spent the afternoon with us, in prayer + religious conversation.[79]

Thus began Horatio Bardwell's struggle with the character and government of God, a struggle which affected him spiritually, intellectually, and physically, until grace came:

> One evening as I sat alone with my Bible in hand, reading + meditating, a ray of light burst in upon my mind, to my great, though sweet astonishment.--God appeared in everything. Never shall I forget the appearance of the moon + stars--I gazed, admired, + wept!--The justice, the wisdom + goodness of God seemed gloriously united, + demanded, what I was sweetly constrained to give, adoration + praise. The thought that God should condescend to give me, an unworthy, guilty sinner such pleasing views of himself, melted my soul with gratitude.[80]

Horatio Bardwell professed his faith and became a member of the Congregational Church of Goshen in February 1808. He recalled:

> Soon after I had made a profession of religion, my mind was inclined to the work of the gospel ministry. Though many obstacles lay in the way, yet I

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[79] Bardwell, Diary, [2].

[80] Ibid., [5].

could not rest easy. I longed to be employed as a missionary among the heathen.[81]

Bardwell worked his way through preparatory studies and Andover Seminary, joined the Brethren in 1812, and embarked as an ABCFM missionary to Sri Lanka in 1815. He was transferred to Bombay, where he became seriously ill with a tropical liver disease. After nearly dying several times, the members of the mission, with a physician's advice, decided that he should return. In 1821 the Bardwells sailed for America.

When Horatio became well enough, he worked for the Board as a temporary agent, raising funds through the winter of 1822-23. In the Spring he gave up hope of resuming his mission, and on 23 October 1823 he was installed as pastor of the Congregational Church in Holden, Massachusetts.

Bardwell's health continued to improve, and in November of 1826 the ABCFM invited him to resume his mission in Bombay. This posed a dilemma for Bardwell. As a member of the Brethren he had committed his life to foreign missions, and he had offered himself to the American Board for life. But now he was pastor of a church, which was also a lifetime commitment. He had been able to do more good as a reasonably healthy pastor in a small town, than he had as a sick missionary on a sub-continent. At Bardwell's request, a church council was called, with the clergy and lay representatives of the neighboring

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[81] Ibid., [10]-[11].

churches, and they advised him to stay. Bardwell continued to perform short fund raising tours for the Board.

In January 1832 the Prudential Committee appointed Horatio Bardwell as permanent agent for the New England states. His territory was later reduced to southern New England. After four years of almost constant travel, and irregular health, Bardwell resigned as a full-time agent, expressing the view that the missionary organization was well enough established in his district that it could function with part-time supervision, which he was willing to give. He became pastor of the Congregational Church in Oxford, Massachusetts, continuing as part-time agent for the Board until March of 1839. In 1864 he retired from his parish, and he died on 5 May 1866 from injuries he received when his house burned down.

Another agent, Artemas Bullard, who had been corresponding secretary of the MSSU, took a significant cut in salary[82] to become ABCFM agent for the Valley of the Mississippi in 1832. But as a member of the Andover Brethren he was committed to missions, and could not refuse a call from the Board to fulfil this mission. For six years, Bullard represented the interests of the ABCFM over this vast area, traveling from Detroit to New Orleans, and from Saint Louis to western Pennsylvania. Artemas Bullard left the service of the Board to become

[82] From $1,100 to $800 annually--"Dr. Bullard," Presbyterian Quarterly Review 5 (1856-57): 31 n.

pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Saint Louis in 1838, and served that church until his death in a railroad accident in 1855.

The agent's life was one of constant travel, meetings, and speaking. One can get a feel for this work from new agent Bullard's report of his journey from Kentucky Synod to Illinois Synod in 1832:

> On Monday morn, at 9 o'clock, I started in the stage for Vandalia + rode all the next night over the roughest stage road I was ever on. When I reached Vincennes, I was nearer being pounded to jelly than I have ever been. As there was no stage to Vandalia till Saturday, I left the St. Louis route 96 miles from V[andalia] + walked 16 miles in the rain + mud, took lodging in a log cabin, + rode into V[andalia] next morn[ing] on horseback.
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> As Mr. Turner was absent, who was appointed to preach a missionary sermon before the Synod, I was officially requested to preach. . . . The Lord has never more abundantly blessed my feeble efforts. The hearts of the pastors + elders seemed to be touched by the Holy Spirit. All with one consent said in this new Western country, we must give to send the gospel to the heathen if we are able to give to no other object. The collection was the largest . . . that has ever been taken up in Vandalia. . . .
>
> The next day after the sermon, I . . . inquired whether that body was willing to pass a resolution requesting every pastor to preach to the ch[urc]h[e]s under his care on F[oreign] Missions before the 1st of Dec.; + take a collection where practicable. Rev. Mr. Fraser, the hottest old school man in the Synod, rose + offered a resolution to that effect, which was unanimously adopted.[83]

It should not be surprising that such labors created stress on the mental and physical health of the agents, and relatively few continued in their positions for a long time. The agents had little time for reflection and study. While Bullard

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[83] Artemas Bullard to Rufus Anderson, 6 Nov. 1832. ABC, ser. 12.1, vol. 5.

was an agent in the West, with an endless round of meeting and preaching, he wrote only two new sermons in four years![84]

Horatio Bardwell did not have to create an organization as Bullard did, but rather to maintain an extensive organization. In southern New England he had oversight of thirty-three auxiliaries and over 630 local missionary associations.[85] When he finally retired from part-time agency work, Bardwell's major activity was providing leadership for fourteen auxiliary anniversaries in Connecticut in one month's time, and seven anniversaries in Massachusetts in a similar period of time.[86]

People who go about asking for money are not always appreciated. Armstrong reported on a tour of the Shenandoah Valley,

> In some instances, where the people were disposed to look upon me at first, very much as if I had been the sheriff, come to collect the taxes; after preaching to them a few times, + distributing Tracts, they have felt it to be a privilege to contribute to the object.[87]

The agents had a difficult task, but with meekness and persistence they succeeded.

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[84] Artemas Bullard to David Greene, 1 June 1837. ABC, ser. 12.1, vol. 5.

[85] Horatio Bardwell to William J. Armstrong, 21 Dec. 1835. ABC, ser. 12.1, vol. 4.

[86] Horatio Bardwell to William J. Armstrong, 28 Aug. 1839. ABC, ser. 10, vol. 25, no. 154.

[87] William J. Armstrong to Benjamin B. Wisner, 7 August 1834, ABC, ser. 12.1, vol. 5.

The agents could be bold when they wanted to be, and would even appeal to mission-minded lay people to over-rule their pastor. When Artemas Bullard did agency work in the New York City area before going west, he reported to Rufus Anderson on his confrontation with one reluctant Pastor:

> Not being able to see any of Dr. Cox's elders first, I called on him Monday A.M. + gave him your letter. He said he was not aware that he or his people were under any covenant to make an effort for the Board every year, + as they were going to build a ch[urc]h within a year or two he thought it was not expedient to make an effort for us this year at least. I told him we could not send out missionaries one year + call them back the next, + that we must have steady permanent aid. He said he would lay the subject before his Session. . . . I left, + called on Holbrook who said at once that they should not be cheated out of their subscriptions in that way + promised to put all right. As it was Concert evening, I dropped into Dr. C's Session room +, at his request, addressed his people. . . . They have concluded to have me preach at their regular lecture this next week. Mr Holbrook, with whom I stay while in the City, says I shall accomplish all that could be done by preaching on the Sab[bath] + probably more as the subscriptions will follow the sermon.[88]

Anderson commended Bullard for his "meekness + forbearance."[89]

The agents cultivated positive relations with denominational bodies, and tried to give them a missionary spirit. Secretary Benjamin B. Wisner had urged William J. Armstrong, when he became a permanent agent,

> It is very important to have all ecclesiastical bodies and proceedings imbued as much as possible with the Missionary Spirit. Nothing will So effectually keep down the Spirit of litigation and contention, and keep out heresy, and make Such meetings promotions of true religion.[90]

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[88] Artemas Bullard to Rufus Anderson, 7 June 1832, ABC, ser. 12.1, vol. 5.

[89] Rufus Anderson to Artemas Bullard, 9 June 1832, Bullard Papers, ser. 1, folder 13.

[90] Benjamin B. Wisner to William J. Armstrong, 11 June 1834, CBFM Papers, box 1, folder 21. Copy: ABC, ser. 7, vol. 1, p. 223.

Armstrong heeded Wisner's advise. When the Central Board of Foreign Missions met at the time of the Virginia Synod in 1835, Armstrong described the event and its spirit,

> After the sermon + reading of the report, addresses were made by Dr. Alexander of Princeton + Dr. Carroll, + upon my stating that no collection would be taken up, but that I would cheerfully receive the contributions of any friends of the cause present who might wish to embrace that opportunity of contributing, a gentleman rose + requested me, to put him down as a contributor of $100 to make him an Hon[orary] Member. This opened the sluices, + the pent up feeling began to flow. One followed another with similar requests, until 34 ministers + laymen had given their names + an aggregate of $2800, . . . + the impression made, on the most numerous meeting of our synod ever held . . . of the most desirable kind.[91]

The sermon and addresses helped to produce a *missionary spirit.* It was that *spirit* that caused the spontaneous contributions. It was that *spirit* that produced "the impression . . . of the most desirable kind," on the large number in attendance.

In the instructions received by William J. Armstrong when he became a permanent agent of the Board, Benjamin B. Wisner again cautioned him that promoting a missionary spirit was more important than raising funds:

> The principle means of accomplishing the great ends Sought to be accomplished will be the promotion of a true missionary Spirit. This should be the first thing at which you aim any where. Obtaining funds the Second. If you accomplish the latter without the former, there will be danger of unpleasant reaction, + there will be no Security that there the good work will be continued. But if you Succeed in producing a true missionary Spirit, funds will come of course. The interest and efforts begun will continue +

[91] William J. Armstrong to Rufus Anderson, 1 Nov. 1835, ABC, ser. 11, vol. 4, no. 34.

> increase, all the blessed reflex influences of engaging in Such a work will be experienced. An inference is, that congregations that can give but little Should not be passed by, for to them the missionary Spirit is as important, in Some respects more So.[92]

The Board was sustained by a *missionary spirit* which provided the funds needed for missions. That missionary spirit also provided "all the blessed reflex influences" to renew the local churches in America. In this light, the agent was conducting a movement of spiritual renewal in the churches in his territory. It was therefore important to go, not just to the rich, but to the small struggling churches. They were the ones who needed an injection of the missionary spirit for their own sakes.

Judging from repeated defenses of the practice of employing agents, there must have always been criticism. When William Armstrong defended the practice in 1839, he noted that Board revenues had risen since the institution of permanent agents from $130,000 in 1832 to $252,000 in 1837. He also noted that the cost of maintaining the agents was less than 4% of the Board's revenues.[93] In short, the agents more than paid for themselves.

The common perception was that an agent was someone who preached on missions and asked for money. But the permanent agents became much more. Their frequent contacts with colleges, female seminaries, and seminaries,

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[92] Benjamin B. Wisner to William J. Armstrong, 11 June 1834, CBFM Papers, box 1, folder 21. Copy: ABC, ser. 7, vol. 1, pp. 217-18.

[93] Armstrong, "Agencies," 37.

promoted an interest in the missionary vocation. Candidates for missionary service who were far removed from Boston were interviewed by agents like Artemas Bullard. When Assistant Missionaries were needed, the agents recruited them. They distributed enormous amounts of literature, recruited book stores to carry American Board materials, in some cases had oversight of the reprinting of literature, and sometimes wrote for the Board. They planned events, such as anniversaries of auxiliaries and missionary conferences. They were diplomats in relations with denominational bodies. Occasionally, an agent might call on the parents of a missionary and listen to their concerns, or prepare a package of supplies for the widow of a missionary living in the area. They were the ears of the Secretaries in Boston, advising them of problems; they were trouble shooters, seeking to resolve problems as quickly as possible. They traveled everywhere, and they spoke everywhere.

After the death of William Armstrong, the Prudential Committee evaluated its system of agency, and in 1848 made some changes. Their title was changed from "general agent" to "district secretary." This was in recognition of the fact that they did more than preach and circulate subscriptions. The report, adopted by the Prudential Committee on 19 September 1848, stated, "The responsibilities + the appropriate labors of the General Agents have been gradually changing until they have become similar, in nature, for the most part, to those of the Home

Secretary."[94] The district secretaries were in fact the home secretaries for a specific territory, having oversight of all of the Board's domestic operations in that district--a change that had already come about.

III. A THEOLOGY FOR CONSECRATING MATERIAL POSSESSIONS

A theology of property and giving developed along with the missionary movement. The leaders of the foreign missionary movement encouraged the development of this theology, which in turn supported foreign missions. This theology of property and giving can be broken down into a number of elements. The theology of property consisted of (1) devotion to Christ, (2) stewardship, (3) disinterested benevolence, (4) the holy cause of missions, and (5) self-denial. A theology of giving consisted of (6) proportion, and (7) regularity. The piety of the consecration of material possessions was expressed in all of these elements of theology, and also in (8) the battle against covetousness. The concept of vocation, discussed in the previous chapter, was also an element in the theology of property.

This theology of property and giving was developing in printed sermons, tracts, and periodical articles, produced by persons with some relationship to the American Board, or by the co-operating Tract and Sunday School societies. Two

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[94] "Reorganization of the Agencies," 6. ABC, ser. 12.1, vol. 8, no. 13.

contests produced popular prize essays on the consecration of property. In 1835, in Britain, John Trickey Conquest (1789-1862) offered a prize of one hundred guineas for whoever could write the best essay on the sin of covetousness, the love of money, or selfishness. After 143 essays had been submitted, the award was presented to John Harris (1802-1856), for Mammon: or, Covetousness the Sin of the Christian Church.[95] John Harris' essay was widely read in both Britain and America; over 100,000 copies were sold. The American edition contained an endorsement signed by several American ministers; the first two names being R. Anderson and D. Greene.

In 1850 the American Tract Society conducted a contest, offering $250 for the best essay on "the importance of Systematic Beneficence." After 172 essays were submitted, the Society selected four as being of equal value, and awarded the author of each $100.[96] They were: The Divine Law of Beneficence, by Parsons Cooke (1800-1864), pastor of First Congregational Church of Lynn, Massachusetts; Zaccheus; or, the Scriptural Plan of Benevolence, by Samuel Harris (1814-1899), pastor of a Congregational Church in Conway,

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95 John Harris, Mammon; or, Covetousness the Sin of the Christian Church, 2nd American ed., (Boston: Gould, Kendall & Lincoln, 1837), vii-viii. Mammon was also published by the ATS in 1840, and by 1850, 29,974 copies had been produced. The last chapter was also published as Christian Liberality Explained and Enforced, Publications of ATS, no. 394, and 12,000 copies were produced by 1850.

96 Sereno D. Clark, The Faithful Steward; or Systematic Beneficence an Essential of Christian Character (New York: M. W. Dodd, 1850), [3].

Massachusetts; The Mission of the Church; or, Systematic Beneficence, by Edward A. Lawrence (1808-1883), of Marblehead, Massachusetts; and The Faithful Steward; or, Systematic Beneficence an Essential of Christian Character, by Sereno D. Clark (1809-1887), of Ashfield, Massachusetts. By selecting "prize essays," the American Tract Society was, in effect, adopting a statement of its position on a subject. These four prize essays therefore state the views not only of their authors, but the consensus views of American co-operative Protestantism at the time. They are also a summing up and gathering together of the thinking on charitable giving that had

been evolving over the previous forty years.

Devotion to Christ.

The life of the believer in the Second Great Awakening was Christ-centered. Christ had given His all for the believer. The believer responded by giving all for Christ. All of life was lived for Christ. Sereno D. Clark in The Faithful Steward presented his readers with fourteen resolutions for a faithful steward to make, beginning with, "I solemnly consecrate myself, soul and body, to God in an everlasting covenant."[97] Samuel Nott, Jr., in an 1843 sermon called for entire surrender to Christ, and total devotion to his cause. How

[97] Ibid., 115.

can one be a "half-disciple" or "half-devoted" to the conversion of the world?[98] The inference was, that anyone who truly loved Jesus, would give to the proclamation of his gospel, willingly and generously. This was not an option in the Christian life, but at its heart.

A person's financial resources were part of one's "all" with which one gave honor to Christ. One of the monthly concert hymns expressed this:

> With my substance I will honour
> My Redeemer and my Lord;
> Were ten thousand worlds my manor,
> All were nothing to his word.
>
> While the heralds of salvation
> His abounding grace proclaim;
> Let his friends of every station,
> Gladly join to spread his fame.
>
> May his kingdom be promoted,
> May the world the Saviour know;
> Be my all to him devoted,
> To my Lord my all I owe.[99]

Reuben Puffer (1756-1829), Congregational pastor at Berlin, Massachusetts, preached in 1816 to a female missionary society on The Widow's Mite (Mark 12:41-44). For Puffer, the sacrifice of Christ called those who loved Christ to make sacrifices in his cause:

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[98] Nott, "Heavenly Vision," 266. See also: "Remarkable Example of Liberality," MH 21 (1825): 258; [B. Green], Review of Letters on Mission, by Swan, 632-33.

[99] Francis(?), "With my substance I will honour," in Chr Ps, 195 (no. 188, vv. 1-3); in Ch Ps, 482 (no. 582, vv. 1-3). Other hymns for charitable collections include, "Yes, there are joys which cannot die," in Hymns for the Monthly Concert, no. 90; also Chr Ps, 195-96 (nos. 189-193); Ch Ps, 536-39 (nos. 658-663).

> Do any still ask, if it be a duty for us to aid the cause of missions? Go to the garden of *Gethsemane*, go to the summit of *Calvary,* go to the *cross* of Christ for the answer. See what Jesus has done for us. Witness his bitter agonies, his death for our sakes. And with this amazing scene in view . . . let the question be asked and answered, if there be any thing for us to do, that he may see the travail of his soul in the salvation of a numerous spiritual seed.[100]

Love to Christ was the reason for giving money, that Christ's love might be made known in the proclamation of the Gospel.

Those who preached in support of missions called on their listeners to give not just their money, but their hearts. Unless people gave their hearts to Christ, the gift of money did them no good. Sylvester Burt, in his 1822 sermon at the annual exhibition at the Cornwall Foreign Mission School, explained, "There is no personal advantage to be derived, at last, from the highest earthly attainments, unless the heart is supremely fixed on God."[101] Nehemiah Adams (1806-1878), a Congregational pastor in Boston and member of the ABCFM Prudential Committee, preached a missionary sermon in 1842 on Matthew 6:21: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." He explained, "Inasmuch as our hearts follow our treasure, our treasure should be stowed where it is most desirable that we should fix our hearts."[102] He explained,

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[100] Puffer, Widow's Mite, 14-15.

[101] Sylvester Burt, The Importance of True Charity. A Sermon, Delivered at Cornwall, Connecticut, at the Exhibition of the Foreign Mission School, May 15, 1822 (Hartford: George Goodwin & Sons, 1822), 12.

[102] Nehemiah Adams, "Christian Union of the Heart and Treasure" NP 16 (1842): 97.

> How may we become supremely interested in the cause of Christ? . . . The answer is, Put your treasure there. Take something which is valuable to you, and give it to the cause. . . . If you do it with prayer, and as an act of pious service, God will bless you for it. It will be a bond between your soul and God, to have given him an offering.[103]

An offering to God, as an act of piety, increased one's piety. It bound one to God and made one even more interested in the cause of God.

In "Answer to a Letter from the Secretary of a Female Cent Society," in 1816, the Panoplist replied that the amount of the gift was not important:

> If the mites which you have collected for the most important object in the world, be a pledge of your love to the blessed Redeemer, and his cause, it will be as acceptable as a mountain of gold, and receive as great a reward.[104]

Not only was this an affirmation of the importance of small gifts, but it described monetary gifts as "a pledge of your love."

In an anniversary sermon to the Boston auxiliary of the ABCFM in 1825, Warren Fay preached on Mark 14:8,9: The Woman who Anointed Jesus with Oil. Fay observed that today, those who love Jesus cannot anoint his physical body with oil, but they can show devotion in other ways:

> They may still make efforts and sacrifices in honor of his name, and to supply the spiritual wants of those, for whom he died. . . .
> They may still bring their most valuable offerings, and cast them into his Treasury, and become instrumental of spreading the savor of his name,

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[103] Ibid., 103.

[104] [Jeremiah Evarts], "Answer to a Letter from the Secretary of a Female Cent Society," Panoplist 12 (1816): 256-57.

> more precious than the most precious ointment, over a race of dying men.[105]

John Harris declared in Mammon that more important than proportion or plan in giving was the Christian's motivation:

> The gospel rejects alike the tax which is reluctantly paid by fear, the bribe which is given to silence importunity, the sacrifice which is offered to a vain ostentation, and the price which is intended to purchase a place in the divine favor, or as a ground of justification before God. The only offering which it accepts is that which originates in a principle of love and obedience to Christ.[106]

Missionaries crossed the seas to proclaim the gospel, out of love and obedience to Christ. People back home gave money to missions for the same reason. The person who was consecrated to Christ strove to treat Christ as the ultimate owner of all that one possessed, and to dispose of one's property in a way that expressed devotion to Christ.

Stewardship

Sereno D. Clark summarized in one of his resolutions in Faithful Steward, "I will regard my health, strength, life, and property, as valuable only as instruments of advancing the kingdom of Christ; and therefore hold them all without reserve at the call of God."[107]

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[105] Fay, Obligations, 5.

[106] J. Harris, Mammon, 205-06.

[107] S. Clark, Faithful Steward, 116.

Leonard Woods spoke of holding one's property as a trust from God in an 1827 funeral sermon for philanthropist Moses Brown. Woods explained,

> Perhaps you may say, this property is *your own.* So far as the institution and laws of civil society are concerned, it is so indeed. And no man on earth can interfere with the right you have to use it according to your own pleasure. But the God who made us, who has given us our souls and our bodies, our time and our property, comes forward with an authority which no being in the universe can question, and commands us to devote ourselves, and all that we possess, to *him.* In these circumstances, the proper inquiry is,--*what use of the various gifts which God has bestowed upon us, will be most pleasing to him?*[108]

The Parable of the Talents was the model. Everything the believer possessed was a trust from God, including the believer's wealth. The believer was accountable to God on the Judgment Day for how that wealth was used. The Board's "Address to the Christian Public" in 1813 called on everyone to do their part by prayer and practice:

> None, who have read their Bibles, ought to be ignorant, that they are stewards of whatever they possess; that all their means and opportunities of doing good are recorded in the book of God's remembrance; and that an account must be rendered of the manner in which this stewardship has been exercised. Who, in this favored land, can say, that he has not been entrusted with at least *one* talent? Who can be willing to hide that talent in a napkin? How many are there, who have their five, their ten, their fifty, their hundred talents? And how unhappy will be their case, if all this liberality of Providence shall be found at last to have been wasted upon them; to have produced none of the good to which it ought to have been

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108 Woods, "Duties of the Rich," 165. See also: Auxiliary of Hartford County, Conn., "Extracts from the Report of an Auxiliary," MH 26 (1830): 198; "Letters to an Opulent Professor on the Application of Property," MH 29 (1833): 75.

applied; and to have proved its earthly possessors guilty of unfaithfulness to the rightful Proprietor?[109]

In 1832, William G. Schauffler (1798-1883) and Leonard Bacon both published important sermons on stewardship. William G. Schauffler, born in Germany, raised in a German community in the Ukraine, and educated at Andover Seminary, became a missionary of the American Board to the Jews of the Ottoman Empire in 1831, and continued to serve the American Board in Turkey until 1874. His sermon and tract, On the Right Use of Property was published at his departure. Leonard Bacon, pastor of First Church in New Haven, former member of the Society of Inquiry at Andover, and a corporate member of the Board from 1842, in 1832 preached The Christian Doctrine of Stewardship in Respect of Property.

In his sermon and tract, On the Right Use of Property, Schauffler preached on The Parable of the Talents (Luke 19:12,13). He summarized:

> Let every man, then, remember that he is a steward only, and not a lord over his property. Whatever he possesses, whether houses, lands, ships, merchandise, or money, all belongs to Christ, all is a sacred trust; and he is bound to do with it the greatest possible amount of good. The promotion of universal holiness, by disseminating the gospel through the

[109] Evarts, "Address, 1813," 75; The Parable of the Rich Farmer, Luke 12:15-21, was used to contrast stewardship of material possessions with self-centeredness in [Jeremiah Evarts], "On Covetousness, or a Reliance Upon Riches for Happiness," Panoplist 9 (1813): 261. See also [Jeremiah Evarts], "On Being Stewards of God," Panoplist 15 (1819): 539.

earth, is the grand object, to which he is to apply all property, after providing for his necessities.[110]

Leonard Bacon' s basic argument in The Christian Doctrine of Stewardship in Respect of Property, was:

> Every man is bound to regard all his property, and all the avails of his industry and enterprise, as belonging to God; he is to hold it all, and manage it, as a sacred trust for which he must give account to the Supreme Proprietor; he is to apply it and dispose of it exclusively as the Lord's servant, and in the work of the Lord.[111]

In 1832 Schauffler and Bacon proclaimed the Christian doctrine of Stewardship, much as we know it today. God is the true owner of all of the believer's property, and it is the believer's responsibility to use it in ways that are consistent with the will of God and that give glory to God.

Disinterested Benevolence

The love of Christ for the believer was a wondrous, undeserved miracle. The love which the believer received from Christ was to be joyfully and gratefully shared with others. One way to share Christ's love was to give help to the needy. Disinterested benevolence was love based on gratitude to God for spiritual blessings. It was love-in-action that could not be repaid by the receiver. George W. Bethune (1805-1862), Dutch Reformed pastor in Philadelphia, in an

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[110] William G. Schauffler, On the Right Use of Property ([Boston: The Board, 1832]), 11.

[111] quoted in: Review of The Christian Doctrine of Stewardship, by Leonard Bacon, AQR (1832-33): 76-77. See also: J. Harris, Mammon, 204.

1844 sermon proclaimed Christian charity to be, "Love to Christ manifest in love to those whom Christ loves." [112] Edward Lawrence in The Mission of the Church, explained that Christian beneficence was different from human kindness, pity, or generosity; it was founded on the love of God.[113] Pity, by contrast, arose when a person was presented with a pathetic scene, and faded when that scene faded from view. But true Christian beneficence persisted as long as the love of Christ dwelled in one's heart. Sereno D. Clark resolved in The Faithful Steward,

> I will make the benevolence of Jesus Christ, in its spirit and design, the pattern of my own, constantly carrying about the conviction, that I must practice great self-denial, and make continued sacrifices in imitation of my dying-Lord.[114]

Holy Cause of Missions

Nothing in this world was as important as a person's eternal salvation. No cause was greater than the preaching of the gospel to those who had not heard it. No price could be set on a human soul. In setting priorities for the use of one's money, no earthly need could compete with the claims of missions. The good steward who loved the Lord would give abundantly and joyfully for the

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[112] George W. Bethune, The Strength of Christian Charity. A Sermon Preached Before the Foreign Evangelical Society, New York, May 5, 1844 (Philadelphia: John C. Clark, 1844), 6.

[113] Edward A. Lawrence, The Mission of the Church; or, Systematic Beneficence (New York: ATS, [1850]), 6.

[114] S. Clark, Faithful Steward, 115.

conversion of the world. The ABCFM's "Address to the Christian Public," in 1812 clearly articulated the great object of the enterprise as Salvation:

> These objects are *great.* Every thing which has a direct tendency to promote the salvation of immortal souls is great beyond the power of language to express, or imagination to conceive. Who shall describe the happiness to be enjoyed by a single redeemed sinner during a blessed eternity? or the miseries, the unutterable and never ending horrors, escaped in consequence of being made wise unto salvation? Who shall adequately declare the magnitude of an attempt to evangelize whole nations, and ultimately to renovate a world; an attempt to disenthrall the slaves of satan, and bring them into the glorious liberty of the sons of God?[115]

An 1819 Panoplist article stated the basis for setting the size of a gift,

> Each person, in fixing the amount of his subscription, should be guided, not by what others have done or are doing; not by what he himself has done hitherto; but by a solemn consideration of the value of the soul, and of what he is able to do in the work of furnishing the means of salvation.[116]

In the "Address" in March, 1820, Samuel Worcester described the excitement of being involved in the missionary enterprise. He sensed a "community of feeling and of action," which would continue into eternity, when mission senders and mission receivers would rejoice together in their common salvation around the throne of the Lamb:

> Does this thought delight your hearts now? What then will be your joy a hundred or a thousand years hence--when you shall have seen many of the sons and daughters of these missions *clothed in white*, and shall have united with them and with the countless millions before the throne of God and the Lamb in celestial songs of thanksgiving and praise for the divine

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[115] Evarts, "Address, 1812," 48.

[116] "Proposal on Sending the Gospel," 90.

> grace and the Christian beneficence by which they were brought to their exalted bliss?[117]

Here is an image of ecstacy, equality, and community. If money was a measure of value, then it had to be given to missions, for what else could compare to the importance of the great object of missions?

Self-Denial

Jesus said that those who would follow him must deny themselves. Protestants rejected many ancient and medieval practices, taking the position that asceticism was not an end in itself. But to deny one's self in order to give more to missions, was to deny one's self for Jesus and the Gospel. It was to deny one's self for one's fellow human being, who was loved by Jesus, and therefore loved by the believer. An 1816 Panoplist article on Luke 9:23, said that the self-denial Christ wanted was not a disregard of the material world or health or family, or abuse of our bodies. But, "It consists in renouncing, and foregoing, all our interests, profits, relations, pleasures and enjoyments which are incompatible with the will of God, from the love of Christ."[118]

Self-denial for support of missions was also a judgment on the worldliness of early nineteenth century America. It was a declaration of independence from

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[117] Samuel Worcester, "Address of the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions [March 1820]," Panoplist 16 (1820): 136.

[118] E. S., pseud., "On Self Denial," Panoplist 12 (1816): 346.

the materialism, the desire for the new and different, and the veneration of "fashion," that seemed to govern the lives of so many. In the opening Panoplist article for 1815, Jeremiah Evarts challenged the materialism and acquisitiveness of his readers:

> What! Shall a man, a patriot, a Christian, . . . do little or nothing for his species, his country, and the church of God? Shall his years be occupied in pursuit of wealth, or in lamenting its departure;--in the scramble for political distinction and influence, or in mourning over the uncertainty of popular favor; and shall he forget his immortal interests, and the deliverance of a fallen world from sin and error? Shall he sink himself into a mere actor in this temporary bustle, unmindful of his better part, his eternal destiny? Shall his example encourage others to engage in the struggle for toys and gewgaws, and to despise the pearl of great price?[119]

The Board's "Address to the Christian Public" of 1813 encouraged persons to give to the point of self-denial, inspired by the gift of the widow's mite in Mark 12:42:

> However difficult it might be to determine the exact amount which each one should give, there can be no hesitation in declaring, that it should, in all circumstances, and at all times, be so great as to be really valued by him who gives it, and thus be a real sacrifice in his estimation.[120]

John Harris explained in Mammon that there was no set proportion that one should give, but it was most honorable to give a proportion that would require self denial.[121]

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[119] [Jeremiah Evarts], "Address to the Public at the Commencement of a New Year," Panoplist 11 (1815): 3-4. See also: J. T. C., pseud., "To a Professing Christian," Panoplist 15 (1819): 22.

[120] Evarts, "Address, 1813," 75-76.

[121] J. Harris, Mammon, 210-19.

At the beginning of 1817, Jeremiah Evarts proposed in the Panoplist,

> Let each one, then ask himself, if he cannot spare property for the benefit of his fellow men? By strict economy in expenses, and industrious attention to his business, can he not spare more than he at first supposed? By a rigorous self denial can he not spare a great deal more than he had ever imagined.[122]

Evarts had defined two stages of "retrenchment." First, one can economize; second, one can give up something (self denial) in order to support missions. "Retrenchment"--reducing one's expenses-- was the way of the cross, in small ways, in a person's life. Although Protestants did not practice self denial for its personal spiritual advantages, they acknowledged them. Retrenchment was a constant reminder of the work of Christ, and of one's belonging to Christ, and brought with it spiritual blessings.

Proportion

In addition to a theology of property, there was a theology of giving. The theology of giving had two elements: proportion and regularity. Most important was system in giving. A responsible steward carefully planned how to carry out the Master's work. It was not a matter of responding to emotional appeals. One should have a "habit" of giving. There were actually two different ideas being advanced. One was proportional giving: people should set aside for God's work

122 [Jeremiah Evarts], "Address to the Public at the Commencement of a New Year," Panoplist 13 (1817): 5. See also: L. G., pseud., "On the Duty of Christians to Make Sacrifices for the Spread of the Gospel," Panoplist 15 (1819): 61-63.

a certain per cent of all income. The second idea was that everything belonged to God after the believer's and the believer's family's needs were met. The concept of proportion had the advantage of putting God first. The other option, most clearly expressed by Schauffler in On the Right Use of Property, probably corresponded more closely with how stewards of earthly masters actually functioned. Both ideas were finding expression in the mid-nineteenth century, but the idea of proportion predominated.

In January 1823 a person who had recently gone into business wrote to the Missionary Herald:

> It occurred to me, that I had a *right,* if it were not clearly my *duty,* to set apart a certain portion of the Lord's gift for his cause on earth. I have, therefore, taken a certain part of every gain, small or great, and devoted it to the service of God.[123]

An 1835 article in the American Quarterly Register presented a more detailed description of determination of duty regarding charitable giving:

> It is certainly easier for an individual to form at the beginning of a year, a general estimate of his property; of his probable income and expenditure; of the demands which his own family may properly make on him. He can bring distinctly before his mind his obligations to Christ and to his fellow men. He can determine the relative importance of the different methods of doing good; and then, as an intelligent, accountable, conscientious man, he can come to such a decision . . . as will give him calm pleasure in the silent hour of midnight, and on the bed of death.[124]

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[123] "Systematic Charity," MH 19 (1823): 21.

[124] "Hindrances to Benevolent Effort," AQR 8 (1835-36): 241.

The practice of "budgeting" gave an individual a sense of peace, to know that one had done one's duty both to one's family and to Christ.

The ABCFM annual report of 1828 also advocated system:

> Every well instructed Christian, who thinks he knows experientially the value of the Gospel, cannot consistently do less than devote a worthy portion of his time and property to promoting the spiritual good of mankind. And this portion should be appropriated as a matter of system and of fixed principle.[125]

The 1835 American Quarterly Register article quoted above went on to explain,

> There is such a thing as a *habit* of doing good. There are men, who are beneficent *uniformly and on principle.* They have become *accustomed* to do good. Philanthropy in them is not so much a feeling, an emotion, as it is a permanent state of the soul. It has become a part of their being.[126]

In Zaccheus, Samuel Harris explained the advantages of systematic and proportionate giving:

> It transfers the control of charity from the capriciousness of sensibility and the parsimony of convenience, to the decisions of reason and conscience. It regulates impulse by principle. It brings the whole subject into the closet, to be determined by prayer and deliberation, according to the rules of the Bible, in the fear of God, and the spirit of consecration to him.[127]

Giving was not to be done by impulse or at random. It was a holy responsibility. The whole matter belonged in the closet. Only by prayer and deliberation should

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[125] ABCFM, "Brief View of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and Its Operations," MH 25 (1829): 2.

[126] "Hindrances," 242.

[127] Samuel Harris, Zaccheus; or, The Scriptural Plan of Benevolence (New York: ATS, [1850]), 6-7. The ATS Annual Report for 1850 indicated that 5,000 copies of this work had already been produced.

a person determine's one gift to missions. Giving was becoming a steady *habit*--a way of life.

The Spirit of the Pilgrims advocated proportionate giving in 1830, and also noted, "Numbers now living, bestow a tenth of all their income, for objects connected with a general diffusion of the gospel."[128] Parsons Cooke argued that a guideline for benevolence must have two features. First, it must be "specific enough to guide us to a course of habitual and generous giving." Second, it must be "indefinite enough to allow us to show our heart, and give exercise to our love to God and man."[129] Edward A. Lawrence advocated proportionate giving in The Mission of the Church. Giving was to be proportionate to three factors: (1) the importance of the cause; (2) the effectiveness of the Society in pursuing that cause; (3) the financial resources of the contributor.[130]

A person's gift to missions should not be simply the loose change one had when the agent came to speak. Nor should it be a subscription based simply

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[128] "The Benefits of System in Our Religious Charities," Spirit of the Pilgrims 3 (1830): 567. Many evangelical Protestants practiced tithing as a personal discipline, but did not promote it as a rule for all. These included Isabella Graham (Joanna Graham Bethune and Divie Bethune, eds., The Power of Faith: Exemplified in the Life and Writings of the Late Mrs. Isabella Graham, of New York (Edinburgh: William Whyte, 1832), 43), Samuel Worcester (S. M. Worcester, Samuel Worcester, 2:280); and Divie Bethune ("Divie Bethune, Esq.," American Missionary Register 5 (1824): 324).

[129] Parsons Cooke, The Divine Law of Beneficence (New York: ATS, [1850]), 15. The 1850 Annual Report of the ATS indicated that 9,000 copies of this essay had already been produced.

[130] Lawrence, Mission of the Church, 25-55.

on an emotional appeal. A person should prayerfully make a commitment of the portion of one's wealth to be given to charity. If a portion of every gain was given to the Lord, then the Lord was remembered with every gain, and the work for every gain was felt to be a service to the Lord.

Regularity

William Armstrong explained the need for regularity in contributions in a paper presented to the Board in 1840. Each mission prepared an estimate of expenditures, which then was approved by the officers in Boston, and returned. Because of distance and poor communications, expenditures were being approved twelve to eighteen months ahead of the event. Such an organization necessitated a steady and reliable income.

> The funds to be collected during the coming year, have been already appropriated. . . . If the contributions of their patrons are unsteady and impulsive, if they vary, like the price of stocks, with every fluctuation of the business or currency of the country, by what principles shall the Committee be guided in this responsible work?[131]

In order to carry out its mission, the American Board needed steady income, which required a regular pattern of giving by contributors. Neither the fluctuations of emotion nor the fluctuations of the market could maintain the steady course required for missions.

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[131] William J. Armstrong, "The Importance of Systematic Contribution to the Missionary Cause," AR 1840:53.

In Mammon, John Harris complained that Christian charity was too dependent on emotional appeals, and lacked system.[132] The system he advocated was that of the Apostle Paul: to set aside on the first day of each week a proportion of one's wealth for the work of God (1 Corinthians 16:2). This simple plan had numerous advantages:

> We are under less temptation to withhold our charity; our duty is made more *convenient* by rendering it thus in easy installments; our love to Christ is more gratified by being able to present him in the end with a larger offering; the hand of God is regularly recognized in our worldly affairs; his presence is invited, so to speak, into the very heart of our prosperity; . . . our offerings are presented with cheerfulness, because they come from a fund designated expressly to no other end than charity.[133]

Sereno D. Clark advised in The Faithful Steward, that system was much preferable to the fickleness of feeling:

> When objects of suffering are presented before us, our sensibilities are moved, tears flow, and the hand is extended in relief. But these emotions are short lived. The exciting object being removed, they soon expire. And though thousands have flowed into the treasuries of charity from this source, when an accomplished agent, with a soul heated to a glow with his theme, has stirred the sensibilities of his hearers . . . yet it is a source of too little depth and durability to give vitality to the persevering work of beneficence, in a world cankered to its center with corruption.[134]

Thomas Smyth (1808-1873), pastor of Second Presbyterian Church in Charleston, South Carolina, argued for the offering every Sunday in the church worship service. Although critics would speak of the church as "begging and

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[132] J. Harris, Mammon, 58.

[133] Ibid., 209-10.

[134] S. Clark, Faithful Steward, 17-18.

scolding," a study of the use of the word koinwnia in Acts 2:42 and elsewhere, and the example of the early church, supported the practice.[135] Parsons Cooke went to some length to answer criticisms of handling money on the Sabbath, which indicates that he may have been promoting an offering in worship. However, the weekly offering would not become commonplace until late in the nineteenth century. For the consistent supporter of missions at mid-century, the monthly concert collection was the occasion for regularity in giving to missions.

Battle Against Covetousness

Nineteenth century evangelicals were concerned, above all, with the attitude of the heart. Feelings of the heart that subverted a love to God and humanity were of great concern. The greatest of these demons, which tormented many a pious Christian, was covetousness. The gift to charity did no good if this demon resided in one's heart, causing one to give grudgingly, rather than cheerfully. Sereno D. Clark resolved in Faithful Steward, "I will make unremitting war on the selfishness of my heart."[136] Samuel Worcester, in his sermon at the first anniversary of the AES, explained that a person who had won

[135] Thomas Smyth, Collections for Charitable Religious Purposes, a Part of the Service of God, a Means of Grace, and Therefore an Essential Part of Christianity (Charleston: Walker and James, 1850), 6-33.

[136] S. Clark, Faithful Steward, 115.

the battle over covetousness was free to give to benevolent objects without resentment of bitterness: "To be liberal is to be free."[137]

George Shepard (1801-1868), professor at Bangor Seminary, preached in 1842 on covetousness, the "disease of the heart." He warned, "Nothing on earth, perhaps, so stands in the way of man's salvation."[138] Shepard advised that the battle against covetousness could not be won without the Holy Spirit. He suggested some subjects for meditation, to help in the battle against the evil. He then concluded, "Benevolence in the heart . . . is the single, simple instrument which will assuredly kill the reptile, Covetousness."[139] Benevolence in the heart was nurtured by frequent active involvement in doing good. So one could wage war against this demon with a combination of meditation and activity, always relying on the help of the Holy Spirit. The pious Christian strove not only to give, but to give with the right attitude.

Summary

When the missionary movement began, no pattern of gathering funds was then in existence to adequately provide the amounts needed. Promoters of missions increasingly emphasized systematic giving, nurtured by devotion to

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137 Samuel Worcester, True Liberality. A Sermon Preached in Boston on the First Anniversary of the American Society for Educating Pious Youth for the Gospel Ministry, Oct. 23, 1816 (Andover: Flagg and Gould, 1816), 4.

138 George Shepard, "The Evils and Remedy of Covetousness" NP 16 (1842): 139.

139 Ibid., 143.

Christ. Devotion to Christ was not just an argument for a contribution to missions, but an argument for bringing one's total economic life under the Lordship of Christ.

In the first half of the nineteenth century a theology of property and giving developed, in close association with the missionary movement. These developing beliefs were intimately related to the practice of piety. A person's giving was to be determined in the closet--in the privacy of one's own relationship with God. The practice of giving was a systematic religious observance, which expressed and nurtured a person's relationship with God. The regularity of giving was a regular reminder of the Christ for whom one gave. Giving to benevolent causes was one of the ways a person could actively apply one's faith. Thus the theology of the consecration of material possessions, developed in part because of the needs of the missionary movement, became much bigger than missions. In a money culture, stewardship as it developed in the United States was a central act of devotion.