

GLOSSARY

Because the meanings of many English words have changed over the years, it is helpful for the reader to become familiar with some common meanings in the sources quoted in this text. The following is a glossary of early nineteenth century evangelical American English.

Agent: Most commonly used of a person who preached and spoke to promote and raise funds for a voluntary society, such as a mission board. A mission board had three kinds of employees: (1) missionaries and their assistants carried out the mission; (2) secretaries administered the organization; (3) agents promoted the cause and gathered funds for the missions.

Anniversary: The annual meeting of a voluntary society. This title indicated an emphasis on celebration rather than a business meeting.

Aw[e]ful: something that inspires a feeling of awe.

Ceylon: Sri Lanka.

Closet: any place where one frequently retired for private prayer. (See Matthew 6:6). The word can also refer to the exercises of private prayer.

Friends of Mission: The supporters of missions. As the American Board was not a general membership organization, like a church, it used this term for its constituency.

Heathen: This word had two uses. In common usage it meant someone who was not a Christian, as in, "We have plenty of heathen in our own country." However, spokespersons for the American Board tried to give it a more specific

meaning. In their official statements, the word "heathen" referred to the worshippers of idols--whom we might call polytheists and animists. For example, they might say, "The American Board has missions among four groups of people, the heathen, Muslims, Jews, and nominal Christians." Spokespersons for the American Board were never successful at getting people to use this more specific definition, and even they occasionally slipped into the common usage.

Hopefully: Adjective in the Calvinist tradition to describe someone who has apparently experienced conversion. A believer was described as "hopefully pious" or "hopefully converted" because in the Calvinist view no one could be fully confident of their salvation.

Infidel: Someone raised in a Christian country, who openly rejected the basic teachings of the Christian religion. Evangelical Christians used this term in a broad sense to include atheists, skeptics, deists, Unitarians, Universalists, common scoffers at religion, and assorted admirers of the ideology of the French Revolution and Thomas Paine's Age of Reason.

Liberal: This word had two uses. The most common use was "generous," as "He made a liberal contribution to missions." It would follow that a person who was liberal (generous), was compassionate, concerned for others, and involved in the many voluntary societies and their causes. A second usage implied willingness to have fellowship with persons of other (unorthodox) views. The term liberal was used by the Unitarians in Massachusetts before they acknowledged that they were Unitarian.

Magdalens: Reformed prostitutes.

Memorial: A written statement or request. This word is often used in the sense in which we would use the word "petition" today.

Missionary: In common usage a missionary was any person sent to another area for the advancement of the Gospel. However, the American Board, in its official publications, used the word "missionary" for ordained persons only, in the period under study. All others--teachers, printers, bookbinders, farmers, blacksmiths, etc., and all the wives,--were called "Assistant Missionaries."

Owhyhee: The island of Hawaii.

Professor: This word was sometimes used as it is today, to mean someone who is a teacher in an institution of higher education. However, it more commonly meant: someone who had professed faith in Jesus Christ, and was therefore outwardly a Christian.

Saint: any regenerate believer in Christ, seeking to live a holy life.

Sandwich Islands: Hawaiian Islands.

Throne of Grace: To "approach the Throne of Grace" was to approach God in prayer. As a result, any reference to the "Throne of Grace" became a reference to prayer.

Want: To want something was to lack it. In early nineteenth century usage this word did not imply desire, as it does today. To say that someone "wants common sense" was simply to say that they don't have any.