

THE BULLETIN

—OF THE—

Western Theological Seminary

A Review Devoted to the Interests of
Theological Education

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The Bulletin

of the

WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

VOL. XXIII

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No. 1

A Brief History of the Western Foreign Missionary Society

Organized in 1831 by the Synod of Pittsburgh

By Thomas C. Pears, Jr., Secretary of Centennial Committee

FOREWORD

“‘Always the most forward and active Synod of the Presbyterian Church in missionary enterprise and effort,’ the Synod of Pittsburgh kept alive and cherished the missionary spirit until it diffused its power into an organization embracing the whole Presbyterian Church, and having for its object the conversion of the world. And, under this new form of organization—which may properly be said to have had its commencement in the Synod of Pittsburgh in 1831, when the Western Foreign Missionary Society was constituted—in the persons of her heroic sons, educated within the walls of her own institutions, she promptly led the way, in preaching the Gospel to the crowded millions of Northern India, China (and Africa), and the scattered tribes of the aboriginal inhabitants of our own continent. Nor has she been lacking since in furnishing her proportion of missionary laborers.’”

Elliott, ‘Life of Macurdy.’

Western Foreign Missionary Society

**Bibliography of the Western Foreign
Mission Society** *tr*

*A most all these volumes are to be found in the Library
of the Western Theological Seminary.*

I—BACKGROUND—SOCIAL, MISSIONARY AND
RELIGIOUS

1. Old Redstone, by Joseph Smith, D.D., 1854

The fascinating story of the founding of Presbyterianism in Western Pennsylvania, with sketches of the fathers, pictures of the times, and the records of the first Presbytery west of the Alleghenies, from its organization in 1781 to its division in 1793. A rare book in a two-fold sense, with several quaint illustrations.

2. Minutes of The Presbytery of Redstone, 1889

Official history of the present Presbytery, from 1781 to 1889. Includes historical notes of the early churches, and roll of ministers from the beginning. In it occurs the famous phrase, "bounded on the west by the setting sun."

3. Centenary Memorial Volume, 1876

A symposium of historical addresses commemorating the planting of Presbyterianism in Western Pennsylvania, dealing with the religious, educational, missionary, ecclesiastical and secular history, and including an account of the Western Theological Seminary. An invaluable volume.

4. Centennial Volume of the First Presbyterian Church, 1884

The history of the old First Church of Pittsburgh is indissolubly bound up with every movement of importance in the early religious life of this region. An inspiring book. Contains many interesting anecdotes.

5. Minutes, in manuscript, of the Board of Trust, 1804-1826

"The Synod of Pittsburgh transacted much of its mission work by means of a Board of Trust. This was nothing else than what is styled in modern times an executive committee." These are the Minutes of the Western Missionary Society, into which the Synod of Pittsburgh resolved itself at its first meeting, in 1802. The Library of the Western Theological Seminary is their custodian.

6. Western Missionary Magazine, 1803-1804

The organ of the Western Missionary Society.

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7. *The Life of the Rev. Elisha Macurdy*, by David Elliott, 1848

Elisha Macurdy was one of the "fathers." He was the first Treasurer of the Western Foreign Missionary Society. This interesting biography distills the missionary spirit of those early days. An appendix contains brief notices of a number of the pioneers.

II—THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND FOREIGN MISSIONS

Early missionary efforts of the Church; relation of the General Assembly to the American Board; the vexed question of voluntary agency vs. ecclesiastical responsibility; relation of the Western Foreign Missionary Society to the division into the Old and New Schools, and Reunion.

8. *Baird's Digest of General Assembly*, 1855 (pp. 363-374)
9. *Moore's Digest of General Assembly*, 1861
10. *Minutes of General Assembly from 1789-1820* (single volume)
11. *Minutes of General Assembly from 1821-1835* (single volume)
12. *Annual Minutes of General Assembly*, 1836, 1837, 1838

Baird's Digest "contains a very full account of the various steps taken by the Church in the interests of Foreign Missions." The official deliverances of the Assembly, however, should be supplemented by relevant material in the "Foreign Missionary Chronicle," vols. i-v, and discussion in the several standard histories of the Presbyterian Church.

13. *History of the Presbyterian Church*, 2 volumes, E. H. Gillett, 1864

Vol. ii., chs. xxxix-xlii, give the fullest account of the part played by the debate over Foreign Missions in the division of 1837.

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14. *Presbyterians*, Geo. P. Hays, 1892

A short and clear account of the Foreign Missionary history of the Presbyterian Church, with particular reference to the relation of the General Assembly to the American Board and to the W. F. M. S.

15. *Presbyterian Re-Union*, A Memorial Volume, 1870

Should be familiar to every Presbyterian minister. Appendix gives succinct account of relations between General Assembly and American Board, and discusses Foreign Missionary activity of the New School branch.

16. *Christian Unity*, G. J. Slosser, 1929

p. 120. The reference in this work involves another angle of the discussion of interdenominational co-operation in Foreign Missionary activity. Does not militate against the principle of definite ecclesiastical responsibility to fulfil the Great Commission, which has been so gloriously justified by the events.

17. *Minutes of the General Assembly*, 1930

Part II, The Reports of the Boards, p. 203 f. "Union and Co-operative Foreign Missionary Work of the Presbyterian Church." The extent of interdenominational co-operation indicated in this report is evidence that ecclesiastical responsibility is not a deterrent to the cause of Church Unity. It is interesting to note that the missionaries of the W. F. M. S. were among the first to encourage coöperation on the foreign field.

III—THE WESTERN FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY

18. *Presbyterian Missions*, by Ashbel Green, Lowrie's notes, 1893

First published in 1838, by order of the Board of Foreign Missions at their first meeting. This is the official history of the Western Foreign Missionary Society. Includes a sketch of Presbyterian Missions from the beginning. Indispensable.

19. *Foreign Missionary Chronicle*, vols. i-v, 1833-1837

The organ of the W. F. M. S., and later of the Board of Foreign Missions. A veritable gold mine of missionary information for the period which it covers. Contains the Annual Reports of the W. F. M. S., lists of contributions, missionary correspondence, full accounts of the operations of the Society, extended references to the work of other missionary agencies, etc. This is the source book of all subsequent historians. It is a perfect treasure

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trove. A number of missionary addresses are reported in full. Would that we might emulate their earnestness and grasp of fundamental principles.

20. Minutes of the Synod of Pittsburgh, 1802-1832, printed in 1852

These minutes begin with the organization of the Synod, and include minutes of the meeting at which the W. F. M. S. was organized. They contain the Preamble, Adopting Resolution, and Constitution of the Society. On the inside of front cover, in the handwriting of Addison Jones, is noted the following:—"This is a rare and very scarce work, and consequently is very valuable. It should be very carefully preserved." And on the inside of back cover, in another handwriting, it is noted:—"A very rare work, and to be carefully preserved. I never saw any copy but this, that I know of."

21. Minutes, in manuscript, of the Western Foreign Missionary Society, 1831-1837

22. Minutes, in manuscript, of the Board of Foreign Missions, 1837-1838

The above manuscript minutes (Nos. 21-22) are in the possession of the Board of Foreign Missions, 156 Fifth Avenue, N. Y., where they may be consulted, although too valuable, of course, to be loaned.

23. Presbyterian Foreign Missions, by R. E. Speer, 1901

A brief but excellent sketch of the history of Presbyterian Foreign Missions from the beginning. Dr. Speer has the ability of distinguishing the salient points, and a keen sense of dramatic values.

24. A brief Sketch of the History of the W.F.M.S., by T. C. Pears, Jr., 1930

This sketch, by the Secretary of the Centennial Committee, will be published in the October (1930) issue of the Seminary "Bulletin." Its purpose, like that of this Bibliography, is to furnish information to pastors preparing sermons and addresses for the Centennial.

25. The Missionary History, by Dr. E. E. Swift, 1876

This is one of the addresses in the "Presbyterian Centennial Memorial Volume," referred to above. It is by the son of Dr. Elisha P. Swift, and discusses the missionary activity of Western Pennsylvania, both domestic and foreign. Over half of the address deals with the history

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of the Western Foreign Missionary Society. An appendix contains biographies of the missionaries appointed by the Society, from its organization, until the Transfer, 1831-1837.

26. *The Centennial of the Western Foreign Missionary Society*, T. C. Pears, Jr., 1930

A leaflet issued by the Centennial Committee of the Presbytery of Pittsburgh, recounting the proposal of the celebration, the organization of the Committee, the program proposed, and stressing the hope that it may be the occasion for "a great spiritual, evangelistic, and missionary awakening throughout the bounds of the old Society."

IV—MISSION TO NORTHERN INDIA

This particular Mission is singled out, because it was the first permanent work of the Presbyterian Church on the foreign field, and because it is the richest in historical material.

27. *Historical Sketches of India Missions*, Semi-centennial, 1884, Allahabad Press, 1886

Contains the program of the Semi-Centennial of the founding of the American Presbyterian Mission in India, held at Lodiiana, and comprehensive sketches of the Lodiiana, Farrukhabad and Kolhapur Missions by Dr. John Newton, Mrs. H. H. Holcomb and Rev. G. W. Seiler. Interesting reference to Call to World Week of Prayer, p. 72.

28. *Historical Sketch of the Lodiiana Mission*, Newton
Included in No. 27, above,
29. *Missions in Hindustan*, by Rev. J. R. Campbell, 1852
30. *Missionary Life in North India*, by Dr. J. Warren, 1862

These three preceding works, and the next following, are accounts by some of the earliest missionaries on the field. All but Dr. Warren, were sent out by the Society, and he was a member of the "fifth reinforcement," sent out two years after the Transfer.

31. *Travels in North India*, by John C. Lowrie, 1842

The same under title, "Two Years in Upper India," 1850. Also anything else from his pen. "Travel in North India," however, is the book that, above all others, should be read. If it does not fire you with a missionary ardor, I know of nothing that will. It is, moreover, the story by the founder himself, of the first mission of the Presbyterian Church on the foreign field.

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32. A Memorial of the Futtehgurh Mission and Her Martyred Missionaries, 1859

A graphic account of the Indian Mutiny of 1857, and the martyrdom of Campbell and Johnston, sons of Western, by the "cruel and dastardly" Nana Sahib. This carries us beyond the period of the W. F. M. S.; but those who have followed Lowrie on his lonely journey up the Ganges to Cawnpore, will be struck by the contrast with that other river journey to the same destination.

33. History of Our Missions in India, by E. M. Wherry, 1926

V—ADDITIONAL HISTORICAL AND
BIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL

34. Historical Sketches of Presbyterian Missions, 3rd Edition, 1891

These are historical sketches of each of the Presbyterian Missions, as the name implies. They may still be purchased separately in pamphlet form, except for one or two that are out of print, for the price of ten cents.

35. Missionary Memorials, by William Rankin, 1895

Brief biographical sketches of all the missionaries of the Presbyterian Church, who died prior to 1895, while in the service of the Board. This is really the Necrological Record of the Board of Foreign Missions, and may be supplemented by the "Memoirs" printed annually in the Board Reports. Dr. Rankin's volume incorporates the memoirs of the 100 missionaries of the Board and of the W. F. M. S., which first appeared in Lowrie's "Manual of the Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church," published in 1868.

36. Handbook of Incidents of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, by Wm. Rankin, 1893

37. Memoir of Walter Lowrie, by J. C. Lowrie

38. Memoir of the Rev. Walter M. Lowrie

The three preceding works (Nos. 36-38), were suggested by Dr. Speer, in addition to the above, as of great interest and value.*

*Dr. Speer has kindly checked over this list, and has made some valuable suggestions.

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39. *Studies in Missionary Leadership*, by R. E. Speer, 1914

These are the Smyth Lectures for 1913. The first lecture is on "Walter Lowrie and the Foundation of the Missionary Enterprise." The second is an appreciation of the American Board.

40. *Memoir of Mrs. Louisa A. Lowrie*, by A. G. Fairchild, Pittsburgh, 1836

A precious little volume. Mrs. Lowrie was the first to lay down her life on the foreign field. The frontispiece is a steel engraving of the sweet-faced bride of twenty-four. On the fly leaf is printed,—“The profits of this work will be devoted to the support of Foreign Missions.” It bears the imprimature of the W. F. M. S.

41. *Memoir of Mrs. Anna M. Morrison*, by Rev. E. J. Richards, 1839

Memorial of the wife of one of the missionaries of the "third reinforcement." "The Christian Church will remember her husband as the man who after the great Sepoy rebellion of 1857, moved the Lodiana Mission to call upon all Christendom to observe an annual week of prayer for the conversion of the world."

42. *George Paull, A Memoir*, by Rev. Samuel Wilson, D.D., 1872

A Protestant saint. See the Resolutions passed by his own Presbytery of Redstone, October 19, 1865. Paull laid down his life on far off Corisco Island, Africa—not in India, but I simply cannot pass him by.

43. *Western Africa*, by J. L. Wilson

This book was suggested by Dr. W. C. Johnston. The period it covers is contemporary with the efforts of the W. F. M. S. in Africa. A chapter on the slave trade introduces one of the motives of the fathers in undertaking this Mission.

VI—WESTERN AND FOREIGN MISSIONS

"Our loftiest joy is derived from the connection of our Seminary with Foreign Missions."—Dr. James I. Brownson

44. *General Biographical Catalogue of Western Theological Seminary, 1827-1927*

Contains complete list of missionaries from the Western Seminary, from the beginning to the time of the Centennial.

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45. The Bulletin of the Western Theological Seminary, April 1928

Centennial Number. Includes Dr. Speer's Centennial Address:—"The Western on the Mission Field."

46. A History of the Western Theological Seminary, by J. I. Brownson, 1876

One of the addresses in the "Presbyterian Centennial Convention Volume." The concluding section of the address is devoted to the record of Western on the mission field up to 1876.

47. Files of the Western Echo, vols. i-ii., 1927-1929

Numerous items, including letters from missionaries now on the field, under the caption, "News from the Front."

N. B. There are, in addition to these, a number of works in the Seminary Library, by and about her missionary sons. There is need of a Bibliography to cover this special field.

The above is in no sense an exhaustive list. But almost all of these works have been consulted by the Secretary of the Centennial Committee, who suggests them in answer to the question which he is frequently asked,—“Where can I find something about this Western Foreign Missionary Society?”