

**MRS. CYRUS STONE: A
MISSIONARY; ABROAD
AND AT HOME**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649315208

Mrs. Cyrus Stone: A Missionary; Abroad and at Home by A Former Pastor

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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A FORMER PASTOR

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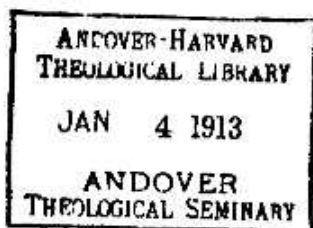
BY

A FORMER PASTOR.

ANDOVER:

PRINTED AND FOR SALE BY W. F. DRAPER.

1876.



33519

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MRS. STONE.

IN the year 1873, Mrs. Cyrus Stone came to Andover, Mass., to reside, and, as it proved, to die there. In 1834, then Miss Kimball, she came to Andover, a stranger, to find there, as it proved, a starting-point for her life labors. And as in 1834 her life-labors began in her going out as a missionary, so in 1873 she had come for the advantages of the Theological Seminary to her son, whom she desired to send as a missionary. Moreover, her diary in India supplies you with certain links in her home-life in America which her first journal here does not.

Miss ABIGAIL HOLT KIMBALL was born in Waterford, Maine, August 28, 1812. From childhood she was alive to religious impressions. "In the autumn of 1820," as her journal has it, "when I was eight years old, the sudden death of my beloved father aroused me to serious concern for my soul. Before my mother and Christian friends I was rather proud of my seriousness, but before my young companions, brothers, and sisters I was inclined to hide my feelings. It was evidently a mock religion." But in 1826, at the age of fourteen, she did come to the Saviour, and ever after faithfully followed him. She says: "I wanted to tell my friends the joy

I felt. My dear mother very soon discovered the change, and gave me much good, comforting advice. My feelings were changed from a love of sin to a love of holiness; from a desire to serve the world to a desire to serve Christ." Of her early life, we have this glimpse from her diary, away on ship-board, toward India. "My mother being left a widow when I was only eight years of age, with five children older and two younger than myself, — one born a few months after the death of my father, — my earliest recollections have been associated with pecuniary necessities, and suffering from straitened circumstances." And then she draws a conclusion: "Had I had in those days the means which I so earnestly desired for the cultivation of talent, I might have been qualified for usefulness in the world."

She went to the academy at Bridgeton, Maine; lived in the family of her minister, Rev. Mr. Douglass; attended the district school when her mother could spare her; engaged herself to Mrs. Chamberlain in Portland, in order to obtain money for tuition and books, and was treated there very kindly; went again to the academy, hiring a room, and boarding herself; took a district school for a first and second time, in her native town.

In 1833 there was a missionary meeting in Waterford. A speaker held up the wants of the West, and showed how much female teachers might do there. "When the contribution-box was reached to me by my minister, I told him I had no money, but would cheerfully and joyfully give myself." This she made a subject of prayer, and also asked, by a note to the meeting,

the prayers of the people of God that the way might be made plain to her.

Before we take her from Waterford, let it be noted that "a settlement for life" was proffered her. On her voyage to India she thus reviews the matter: "It was a long and most severe struggle; in one direction, a bright prospect, and friends urging me; in the other, a missionary life, but perfectly hedged up; no means to consummate my wishes. After many days of prayers and fastings, hope against hope, in a wonderful and unexpected manner the providences of the Lord directed the abandonment of the subject," — that is, of the offered marriage. "But whither was I directed to go? To the heathen! How astonished was I. 'Can it be? can it be?' I exclaimed."

She went from Waterford to her uncle in Rowley, Mass., "to better prepare herself for any part of the vineyard whither the Lord should direct." A number of persons became interested in her; and for the first time she was directly asked, by the wife of the minister, if she would like to engage in the cause of foreign missions.

She now goes to Ipswich to live in the family of Mr. Conant, teacher of a boys' school, to obtain means to go to the West. But her way seemed very dark before her. "Again and again, when laboring hard with my hands, as I have seen the young ladies of the Seminary pass my window, or heard them singing, or in their exercises—their school-room being very near to Mr. Conant's—have the tears flowed thick and fast. They

treated me kindly, and spoke of me to Miss Lyon and Miss Grant. Miss Lyon spoke to me very kindly, said she was going to Andover, and would see Mr. Hall to consult what would be best for me to do."

Mr. Conant receives a letter from Rev. S. R. Hall, to have Miss Kimball come there immediately, and remain awhile in his family, to see what might be the ordering of Providence.

She next had a prospect of getting a school in Harwich, on Cape Cod,—the name of Harwich will re-appear in her later life,—but she was greatly disappointed. She "knew not which way to turn, or what to do," as her journal, much at length, and very sadly tells you. She breaks out: "I am a stranger, in a strange land, friendless and alone in this wide, cold, unfeeling world. O my God, thou art here and near me! Be thou my all in all." Howbeit, there were good friends close at hand for the lone young woman, so sensitive and so aspiring.

"One evening," she relates, "Mr. Hall began to question me as to my *motives* in leaving my friends, and startled me by asking, "What would be your feelings should the going to a foreign country, as a missionary, be proposed to you? And he then requested that I should think seriously and prayerfully on the matter." Before this time she had it in her diary: "For what purpose have I come here? I sometimes look upon myself as visionary and carried away by fancy. Oh, that my way could be made clear. I am overwhelmed; I am perfectly astonished at myself that I have gone so far."

Now, in the retirement of her chamber, she says: "O my God, I come before thy throne to cry unto thee that thou wilt assist me in this examination. Have I left all my cherished early associations, and my friends, and come here, not knowing whither I was to go, *purely* out of love to Christ and the souls of men? But why now hesitate? I would not; but rather let me say, here, Lord, am I, send me whithersoever thou wilt." The next day Mr. Hall explains. He had mentioned her name to Rev. Mr. Bardwell, who was authorized by the American Board of Missions to engage an unmarried female to go out to India as a teacher.

And now, under the date of Monday, April 15, 1834, Miss Kimball makes this record: "To-day I have been called from the wash-tub into the parlor to be introduced to Rev. Mr. Bardwell. How wonderful the dealings of God's providence to me, that have brought this about by thwarting my plans and disappointing my hopes. Surely, the Lord has led me by a way that I knew not. But oh, how momentous the work proposed to me! The separation from friends would be nothing, if I felt *qualified*, by nature and grace, for the work. It is necessary for me to count the cost—to try to realize what it will be to be there among the heathen without a friend to lean upon. O Lord, wilt thou in tenderness appear for my dear mother, brothers, and sisters, and other friends, and prepare them to part with me. May they do it willingly and cheerfully. May we not suffer our minds to be distracted by anxieties and perplexities. May our hearts be stayed on God."