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Sending the Children Home: A Dilemma for Early Missionaries

And he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. MATTHEW 10:37

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. PROVERBS 22:6

THE GREATEST TRIAL confronting early Christian missionaries to Hawai‘i was the decision to send their children back to the Mainland. What follows is the story of how they arrived at this decision from the point of view of the missionaries themselves. It tells much about the ideas that motivated them and about their attitudes toward the “heathen” they sought to Christianize. Its implications are both personal, as family members lived with the consequences, and public, as these same ideas and attitudes affected countless other decisions in the Mission.

The story unfolds against a backdrop of ideas about the “family,” the 19th century’s most important social unit and most powerful metaphor. The family was seen as the building block of a new nation, the place where civilized values were nurtured and preserved. Women, who in their roles as wives and mothers were responsible for this portion of the nation’s success, were gaining new status and moral authority. For young missionary couples, who had left biological families behind and now formed a small

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group ready to do the Lord's will in a remote place, the word came naturally to mind. Its roots went back to the gospel of Matthew 12:50 ("for whosoever shall do the will of my father which is in Heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother") and to Puritan covenant theology with its community of believers. By the time the first company of missionaries arrived in Hawai'i in April 1820, the group of strangers who had boarded the *Thaddeus* in Boston five and a half months earlier reflected that they had turned into a "family."¹ As Mercy Whitney wrote on February 2, 1820,

. . . we are happy in the society of each other. We feel the cords of love binding our hearts together, and uniting them as the heart of one man. Few in our native land can look around on a more interesting and happy family, than we daily behold.²

Communal practices during the first years—sharing various thatched houses and then the rooms of the frame house, parceling out the stores from a central location, and setting one "long table" for meals—reinforced this sense of "family." Within two years of their departure from Boston, every missionary wife was also a mother, adding the literal dimension of nuclear families to the metaphoric one. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), administering the Mission from Boston, had expected that wives and children would help convert the "heathen" by verifying the Mission's pacific intent and by presenting an example of Christian domestic life.³ In early encounters with Hawaiians, rapport sometimes did depend on shared familial values. Kaumuali'i, the King of Kaua'i, thought of himself as a "father" to his missionary "children." Sensitive to a parent's anxiety about a child thousands of miles away, his wife Kapule dictated reassuring letters to the mothers of Nancy Ruggles and Mercy Whitney. Looking back, Lucy Thurston thought they would not have received permission to land, much less put up the frame house the next year, without the special arguments provided by women and children. Babies provided an occasion for friendly visits to *ali'i* (chiefs and chiefesses), who, though often indifferent to the missionary mothers, were always delighted to play with the children.⁴

Yet even as the missionaries celebrated their family during the first years, they were withstanding challenges to it. Increasingly, they defined themselves against those who differed or disagreed—the “heathen,” foreign residents like the sailors who attacked them violently during the 1820’s, and rebellious members of their own Mission family. Within a year of landing, both William Kanui, a young Hawaiian helper who had sailed on the *Thaddeus*, and Thomas Holman, the company’s physican, were excommunicated; Thomas’s wife Lucia was “suspended.” Simple geography contributed to division, as different couples settled in Hawai‘i, Kaua‘i, or O‘ahu. Nor was time on the missionaries’ side. By the fall of 1822, the extended “family” had grown so large (to as many as 50 with the addition of helpers, visitors, and Hawaiian children) and had so many members felled by exhaustion or dysentery or preoccupied with nursing duties that the women simply gave up maintaining the “long table” and divided the stores for individual families. Over the years, the family was often depleted by illness, one reason why the Chamberlains left in 1823 and the Loomises in 1827. Though the members of the first company sustained affection for one another over the years, remembering their common trials, and intermittently attending the yearly general meetings, the communal family of the first three years gradually became a collection of nuclear families.⁵

THE PARENTAL DILEMMA

Just as the Mission “family” as an ideal diminished under the impact of everyday experience, so too—with greater trauma—would the nuclear families give way under pressure. From 1826, until Punahou School opened in 1842, young missionary parents began to make a decision seemingly at odds with the idealizing of the family so prevalent in the 19th century. Believing they had discovered one reason after another why their school-age children should not stay in the Islands, they weighed the possibility of sending them back to New England.⁶ The trauma was not lessened for being short-lived, mostly affecting families of the first two companies, and involving only 19 out of 250 Mission children.

The parents in the first company demonstrate the range of options available: going home with all the children—as did the



FIG. 1. Portrait of Sophia Bingham, born in 1820, painted in Boston in 1827 soon after her arrival after the voyage around Cape Horn. (Mission Houses Museum collection.)

Chamberlains and Loomises; keeping all the children to be educated by the mother—the Thurstons' choice; or sending some or all of the children home, not knowing when or if they would be reunited—the course taken by the Ruggleses, Bingham, and Whitneys. Sarah Ruggles left with the Loomises in 1827, Sophia Bingham (fig. 1) with the Elys in 1828, Samuel and Henry Whitney under the care of a ship's captain in 1832, and Emily Whitney

and Lucy Bingham with the Ruggleses in early 1834. Lucy Thurston took her children back herself, the daughters when they were fully grown, but her son Asa when he was twelve. Among parents of the second company, the Richardses, like Lucy Thurston, accompanied their six oldest children on the voyage back in 1836, the parents later returning. The two Bishop children left in 1836 and 1839, when they were young adolescents. But the Chamberlains' two oldest children, like those of the first company, were sent together in 1836, when they were small, Warren aged seven and a half, and Evarts (fig. 2) almost six. Caroline Armstrong, whose parents came with the fifth company, went home with the Binghams and Thurstons in 1840, when she was only eight.⁷

The parents arrived at the decision as carefully as they knew how. "Gain some settled principles and let your plan of conduct arise out of these": this prenuptial advice, Sybil Bingham's to her sister, also describes her own efforts. "One ought to try," she reflected, "to live not at random, guided by present impulse."⁸ Putting two young daughters aboard boats to America, Sybil—and missionary mothers like her—faced perhaps the severest test of those principles.

From the moment the children were born, the mothers had been meditating their parental responsibilities, as Lucy Thurston explained, "to train them up for usefulness and for God." Sometimes they could not resist imagining their offspring as missionaries. But more important than eventual vocation was a parent's responsibility to the child's soul. As Mercy Whitney wrote in 1821, "O what a charge is such a tender offspring, a being possessed of an immortal soul the salvation of which depends in a great measure on our faithfulness." Even if the parents were faithful enough, there was the difficulty posed by "polluted heathen" surroundings and the innate depravity that the child shared with everyone else on earth. Sybil Bingham admitted in 1822 that "many times in the course of a day," the toddler Sophia escaped outside

. . . in our open yard under a burning sun, where are always natives of some kind whose vulgar language cannot escape the ear, or underfoot of one of three domestic establishments where are five



FIG. 2. J. Evarts Chamberlain, sent at the age of five from the Hawaiian Islands to New England, at 15 years of age in 1846 in a daguerreotype made in New York City. (HMCS photo collection.)

more little ones near her own age, all with her, giving evidence of corrupt nature, tho no two dispositions are alike. And the great evil is not to know how to do wisely myself.⁹

At first, the mothers saw no reason why they could not do their duty simultaneously toward their own children and Hawaiians. It might be expected that the time-consuming and appealing demands of child care would diminish “missionary zeal,” but the opposite was true. Sybil Bingham’s reflections about Sophia suggest that missionary attitudes toward their own children—who came into the world with a “corrupt nature” and needed proper training—were not far from their attitudes toward Hawaiians. Drawing the analogy, she wrote:

. . . as a mother the sweetness, the intelligence, the thousand endearments of my little one, much increases my sympathy for a nation of such little immortals surrounding me, who, unless some other than their own parents care for their souls, *must forever die*.

The notion that children needed special protection from “heathen” surroundings had not at first been understood. The first company included Daniel and Jerusha Chamberlain’s five children, aged two to twelve. For the first two years, as Lucy Thurston remembered:

. . . [they] associated with the interesting native youth in our large mission family, in studies, in labors, & in amusements. In native language, I think they were even before the missionaries. Who had ever conceived the idea of separating them from the natives!¹⁰

The debate over where and how to raise their children dramatizes the typical conflict in missionary attitudes toward Hawaiians, vacillating between sympathy and recoil. The crusade had begun in New England with the assumption that the “heathen” were “perishing” for lack of God’s word. This, the missionaries thought, called for “compassion.” Invisible truths—notions of soul and of innate human nature—formed the basis for likenesses and equality among all human beings. But to focus on these

truths was not so easy in practice. Soon after arriving, Nancy Ruggles wrote that though she had heard the name heathen, “half of their real wretchedness was never told me.”¹¹ Now, as they considered their children’s welfare, the differences—those persistent, repugnant, “heathen” habits—began to loom more largely. As the adults acquired the Hawaiian language, they realized how much more freely Hawaiians discussed sexual matters, often “obscene” to the missionaries. When a delegation from the British Mission in the Society Islands (Tahiti) was unexpectedly detoured in Honolulu during the summer of 1822, its members spread cautionary tales about missionary children there. The young parents began to suppose that it was “moral death” for children to be influenced either by foreigners, given to adultery or drink, or by Natives. When the Chamberlains reluctantly left for home in March 1823, citing the Captain’s failing health and the relative uselessness of his agricultural skills, concern for their children’s welfare clinched the decision.

Over the years, the assessment of “moral pollution” diminished little and continued to influence deliberations about the children. In fact, as the Mission began to report successful conversions, the public at home began to wonder why the parents couldn’t keep their children, prompting letters in the 1830’s reaffirming that Hawai‘i really was a land of pollution and that things had been published—as Mercy Whitney protested in 1832—with “quite too high a colouring.” Just before her two boys left in 1836, Maria Chamberlain still felt it her “duty to send them early away from this polluted & but partially enlightened land.” Before the missionaries could accomplish the needed changes in Hawaiian culture, they feared it might change their children.¹²

The Society Islands, the only place where missionaries had tried to raise Christian children in the midst of Polynesian sexual habits, testified to a failed experiment. To add to the initial reports from Reverend William Ellis and the other visitors in 1822, the missionaries eventually had their own eyewitness reports from their own delegation sent in 1832. Samuel Whitney returned with explicit tales of ruined children which Mercy copied verbatim in a letter to her cousin Mrs. Ely, who was caring for the Whitneys’ sons, in part because the shocking details helped convince her

skeptical family and reinforce her own sense that she had done the right thing in sending her children away. The account also glosses what the missionaries meant by “moral death”:

There has been only one instance, where a child of the Missionaries [in Tahiti] has been converted at the Islands. Several have been ruined—one has been seduced from her Father’s house, by a man in the character of a gentleman, & is now a public prostitute in the City of London. One was confined with a bastard child by a native man, not 3 months since. Three daughters of one of the Missionaries were not long since guilty of admitting 3 native men by means of a servant to their bed chamber, & secreting them under the beds till night, when the Mother hearing a noise, lit a candle & went to the room, but on seeing the men, fainted & fell & they made their escape. The daughter of a missionary not long since while on a visit at another Missionaries house, was found in bed with a native man. Two lads, sons of missionaries were lately expelled [from] the [South Seas] Academy, for illicit connection with native girls. One of them on his return to his Fathers house, was guilty of taking property of his Father’s, & giving it to native girls as the hire of prostitution.

Mercy also mentioned in a letter of 1836 the example of “one of the pioneers” who at first saw no harm in the children’s staying in the Sandwich Islands, mingling with the Natives and even marrying them. “This same brother [unnamed] does not name since becoming more acquainted with the habits & character of the people, has been led to see, & I trust *feel deeply* too, the error of [his] opinion.” Lucy Thurston, remarking the impurity of Hawaiian habits, referred to the reports from Tahiti as well as her own shock that children were present at childbirth.¹³

Two kinds of documents verify the thinking of the missionaries on the subject of sending children home. The first, letters going to and from the Board, list reason after reason and attempt to make disinterested thinking triumph over parental affection. (“If this [affection] had got the better judgment,” Mercy wrote just after her first child left, “we should have said, *we cannot let her go.*”) The second kind, usually private letters and journal entries from a mother, show less the finished product of rationality than the

costly struggle to achieve it. In these personal documents, the parents, deeply shaken, do their most moving writing, revealing not simply why they sent the children away, but what it felt like. Somewhere in the back of everyone's mind lurked the sentiment best expressed by Sybil's appeal for her daughter Lucy: "*How can we put her from us?*"¹⁴

The decision, difficult to begin with for emotional reasons, was made more so because the ABCFM did not approve. The members had already reviewed the situation in 1825, at the insistence of parents in Ceylon, so when the members of the Sandwich Islands Mission sent back a report compiled during the general meeting of 1826, respectfully asking for advice but carefully listing reasons why they thought the children should be sent back to America, the Board had its reply ready.

Jeremiah Evarts, the Corresponding Secretary, in a long, thoughtful letter dated October 27, 1827, cautioned that there were many contaminating influences waiting for children at home, that the difference between the two places was not that of safety versus danger, but merely a difference in the degree of danger. He suggested that some difficulties with the children, which the parents might attribute to the Sandwich Islands, were to be expected as part of the normal round of child-rearing anywhere. And parents were so much better suited than anyone else to raise their children that the Board urged great caution before entrusting offspring to anyone else—grandparents being notoriously indulgent and others perhaps promising more care than they could deliver. Without the children, the Board reasoned, the missionaries would not be able to demonstrate good Christian family life and would therefore lose an important aid to converting the Hawaiians.¹⁵

But the situation looked very different from Waimea or Honolulu. Thinking still of the influence of environment, Mercy Whitney wrote:

. . . if those who are brought up in christian lands . . . are so easily led astray by bad example so soon as exposed to its influence, how can we expect those who are familiar with such scenes from childhood, where everything is calculated to convey impure & vulgar ideas to the mind—to be even moral after they come to act for

themselves unless the grace of God interpose & snatch them as brands from the burning.

Given the assumption that the Natives had a bad moral influence on the children, then what sort of life, the parents asked themselves, was going to be possible for the children and for the missionary mother trying to raise them? The perceived danger created a conviction that the children ought to be isolated to one degree or another from the Natives and created worry when that proved impossible. Lucy Thurston compared the situation to a prison, where one would naturally want to separate children from inmates.¹⁶

In such a benign climate, where children might have spent the bulk of their time outside, exploring the hills, climbing trees, learning to swim, to surf, or to paddle canoes, they stayed inside more than was good for them, distracted by a book, by patchwork (for both boys and girls), by an hour or two of schoolwork when a busy mother could spare the time or was well enough to teach. With inadvertent poignancy, Mercy described Maria's lot:

. . . she will sit at my bed-room window with her book or her work, & see the native children at play but a few rods distant; without manifesting the least desire to join them. She has several times reproved the[m], particularly for playing on the sabbath. I have endeavored to impress her mind with the impropriety of spending her time as these children do.

Her two sons must have been less docile, Mercy admitting it was

impossible to keep them wholly from the influence of the natives. We cannot confine them to the house—they must have exercise & boys especially delight to play out of doors. I sometimes endeavor to amuse them about the house, until I am fearful what effect restraints will have upon them. There is here so little variety to divert their minds that I am frequently at a loss to know what to do with them.

It helped the Binghamms to reconcile themselves to Sophia's departure by remembering how lonely she was in 1828, circumstances in

Honolulu at the time affording her no playmates. The Loomises had left, the other children her age lived on other islands, and her closest sibling was six years younger.¹⁷

Sophia Bingham had also witnessed considerable violence before she left. Her parents could not predict whether the attacks against the Mission would intensify or abate. They did realize that the child had already fled from the insurrection in Kaua'i in 1824; she had watched, screaming, as a mob attacked her father outside the Mission house; she had listened when two men burst into the Bingham's rooms one night to protest a letter of admonition the brethren had written, ranting for two straight hours with what Sybil called "the most impious language I ever heard, too dreadful for memory to recall"; she had hidden with her family in the cellar of the Mission house in Lāhainā in 1827, when the crew of the *John Palmer* narrowly missed the house with two cannon balls. Sophia's safety appeared reason enough to remove her from the Islands.¹⁸

Schooling was another problem. "If we could have kept & educated them as they ought to be," wrote Maria Chamberlain, explaining to her father why her two boys had left, "we would have done it." But the existing schools served adult Hawaiians who were taught from a limited curriculum in their Native tongue, and with whom, in any case, it was not considered safe for the Mission children to associate. The schooling a busy, sometimes frail mother could provide did not compare to that in a good infant school in the United States. The fathers' labors, necessarily conducted in a foreign language, were lost on the children. To build a school for them, apart from the expense involved, seemed impractical because there were so few children scattered among the Islands, and, perhaps more to the point, not many teachers. By 1828, when the third company arrived, three couples out of four in the first company had gone home; the Ellis family had returned to England; of the second company, the Stewarts, Betsy Stockton, the Blatchelys, and the Elys had left, Elizabeth Bishop was dying in Kailua, and Levi Chamberlain was single. That left the Bingham's on O'ahu, the Whitneys on Kaua'i, the Richardses on Maui, and three couples on Hawai'i—the Thurstons in Kailua and the Goodriches and Ruggleses in Hilo. Married women com-

ing with the third company, preoccupied with their own families of infants, and single women who, like everyone else, had come to serve Hawaiians, were unlikely recruits.¹⁹

The more fundamental objection was to parental teaching in the first place: “. . . what parents in America are the teachers of their own children,” they wrote to the Board, “and is it to be supposed that the missionary is of all men the most free from care and labors?” Even if they did build a school, the parents worried how they would train the children for future employment in the Islands. They couldn’t prepare them for business or farming, and the best training ground for missionaries (assuming the children even heard the call) had so far been the United States. And what if the children sank to the level of the Natives or, worse, of the common sailors? Since even in the second and third generations of missionary families, marriages with Hawaiians were rare, it is not surprising that the problem of finding “suitable partners” for the children entered into the discussion.²⁰ The Board counseled (with prescience) that the situation in Honolulu would improve by the time the children grew up, making their potential employment and—more important—their conversions less insecure. “You have dedicated them to God,” wrote Evarts, “‘have faith in God.’ ”

But if the situation as it stood was hard on the children, it was equally hard on the women, in ways that were perhaps difficult for the men of the Board to understand. It dramatized a long simmering tension between the women’s “direct” efforts on behalf on Hawaiians—that might result in their conversion, their literacy, or their general education in American mores—and the domestic duties that seemed to enforce the women’s presence in their own homes. Steeped in 19th century notions of ideal female behavior (summarized by historians as the “cult of true womanhood”), they accepted the emphasis for women on “piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.”²¹ They raised their children with the intensity and seriousness that makes the “cult of true womanhood” seem also a “cult of motherhood.”²² But their lives also present with alarming clarity the contradictions of this “cult.” Historians have pointed out that the idealizing of domesticity did contain the “seeds of its own destruction,” as women saw no rea-

son why they should not expand the civilized virtues bred in the home to a public forum. But that very conflict between prescribed virtues, like “submissiveness,” and those demanded in public efforts to reform society (not only missionary work, but crusades against drinking, prostitution, or slavery), created “guilt and confusion.”²³ In 1826, missionary women were not looking at the “cult’s” aftermath, but living with its inherent tensions. And there was a special ambiguity for missionary women who, even as they took pride in their domestic accomplishments, often devalued them in relation to “direct” missionary labor.

These women, having hoped for a life as missionaries long before they met the men they were to marry, took their vocations seriously. Sybil Bingham was typical in having written in her diary just before meeting Hiram:

. . . should I dare to pen a request for the year following, if life be continued, it is that wholly unfit, unworthy as I am, God would be pleased of his mercy to . . . open a door for me among the heathen.²⁴

Having become missionary, wife, and mother, she wanted to fulfill every role.

But to raise children and to engage in the teaching and visiting that was “real” missionary work now seemed to be mutually exclusive, not complementary activities. The women could not simultaneously protect their children from the culture and engage with the Hawaiians as much as they wished. As Mercy expressed the dilemma:

. . . indeed if we would be useful to the people—we must be familiar with them. We must admit them to our houses & enter into free & cheerful conversation with them, & we must of course have our children with us.

Sybil found herself in 1829 trying to teach a newly formed school for Hawaiian children, which quickly neared 300, and to make systematic visits to mothers’ homes. Her infant Elisabeth she

could “safely” carry along with her, but not the four-year-old Lucy. Sybil remembered:

Sometimes I took Lucy, sometimes left her in her father’s study, where at the translation table the sounds were altogether native—but little choice between the two situations. It was hazardous either way and often I had a conflict in my own mind.²⁵

Very often, for Mercy Whitney, the demands of child care got the upper hand. In 1828, when she had three children at home with her, she wrote with frustration:

. . . for three or four years past, they have seemed to demand what exertion I was able to make, & I have sometimes almost despaired of ever doing very much for the Heathen, except by example.

Such an example of Christian domestic life for Hawaiians to imitate was exactly what the Board wanted to encourage. Maria Chamberlain, mother of seven, answered her own question in 1835:

. . . what good can you do for the natives, now that you have so many children? Something doubtless by way of example. By being sober, loving our husbands, loving our children; being discreet, chaste, helpers at home, obedient to our own husbands; virtues which converts from heathenism would be slow to learn without living examples set before them.

But the cost of presenting this example was the rigid division of public and private duties into male and female categories. Lucy Thurston, seeing no alternative, quoted the motto, “the missionary best serves his generation who serves the public, and his wife best serves her generation who serves her family.” Nor was this a problem for Maria Chamberlain, who confessed, “I was never fond of teaching.”²⁶

But Mercy, speaking for the majority, was sorry to see her “usefulness among the heathen . . . greatly impeded, by having to devote so much of our time to the education & care of our children.” Sybil concurred, explaining:

. . . it is quite impossible to describe the struggle sometimes existing in our breast between the mother's feelings and what appeared to be a special and almost unparalleled call from the people for all the energy of which the poor frame and burdened mind were capable.

Though both parents felt the anguish of parting with the children and shared in the decision, the argument in favor of freeing time for missionary work applied mainly to the mothers. The fathers' work went ahead with or without the children. But the women felt the dilemma in terms of their twin vocations, "laboring directly" for the "heathen" or the children.²⁷

In an imperfect world, where every wish could not be achieved, they were trying to sort through priorities. And the choices were cruel. One reading of the situation is that they did choose between their children and Hawaiians. In the end, they would either have to send their children back to be educated elsewhere—presumably saving their souls and training their minds but at a cost of parental nurturing—or give up missionary work—not only a great personal loss to themselves, but, more important, a betrayal of the Hawaiians, "perishing" in ignorance of God's word. "Had our children remained with us," wrote Mercy in 1834, "in all probability we should ere this, have felt it our duty to leave the Islands."²⁸

Though the line between reasons and rationalizations may be fine, the decision to send the children back was something more complicated than a panicky recoil from "pollution." The parents had to believe that they were acting for the children's own good—an important point because the decision then seemed less like a choice between serving their children or the Hawaiians and more as if they were serving the best interests of both. The most important question on every parent's mind, asked repeatedly in letters to the children in America, was whether or not that child had yet opened his or her heart to Christ. Most parents were not particularly concerned that the children adopt one profession or another, though of course they hoped they might be called as missionaries, but they did emphatically hope they would declare themselves Christians. The children were barraged with letters like Sybil's to

Lucy about a year after her daughter left: “Dear child! and does she love the Saviour now? When I hear this—Oh! it will be beyond everything else.” It would comfort her and Samuel, Mercy wrote to their ten-year-old son Henry:

. . . to hear that all our dear children love the Saviour. This is what we most of all desire—& for this we daily carry you to God in the arms of faith & prayer, & beseech him to give you new hearts.

With no illusions about childhood innocence (“yes, even little children sin,” Mercy told Henry), the parents keenly felt their responsibility to turn the children away from their natural depravity and train them up in the way they should go, as the Bible dictated. Not content with wishful thinking, the parents tried to give their children every practical advantage in attaining salvation, by removing them from bad influences and putting them in the way of salutary ones.²⁹

But the missionaries wanted to act for the good of Hawaiians as well as their own children. “Their souls too,” Samuel Whitney reminded his sons, “have been purchased by the blood of Christ, and in his view are equally precious with yours.” Put to the test, the needs of the Hawaiians often came first. Samuel Whitney tried to explain to his sons that if he were to leave for America, the Hawaiians would be left without a teacher, whereas there were persons other than himself in America who could give young Samuel and Henry their religious educations. On behalf of young Hawaiians, the Mission built a boarding school at Lāhainā in 1831, resolved, during the general meeting of 1836, to build one on every island, and built a school for the next generation of *ali‘i*, the Chiefs’ Children’s School, in 1839—all of this preceeding the opening of the school for Mission children at Punahou in 1842.³⁰

Despite their obvious love for their families and their high regard for the notion of “family,” missionary parents determined that keeping their families together was not the highest priority in their lives. The insight was born of the peculiar, even unique, situation they found themselves in and of their own habits of mind. If forced into choice, what took priority was an abstraction—the soul to be saved—not the life to be lived. Here the young parents

were guided by a tendency to devalue the material world—the here and now—in favor of invisible assets of character and soul. At their fingertips were the many Biblical passages discouraging worldliness—telling them not to lay up treasure on earth but in heaven; reminding them that they cannot serve God and Mammon; or asking what it profits a man to gain the world and lose his soul: “is not the life more than meat, the body than raiment?” Jeremiah Evarts, writing to the missionaries in 1822, spoke to a double focus—on both “external conditions” and “higher objects”—that was a continual source of tension in everyone’s life: “. . . let the external conditions of the natives be as much improved as possible; but let their eyes be directed to higher objects than this world can afford.”

Though with Hawaiians, out of disgust for “heathen” habits, it was too easy for missionaries to lose sight of souls, with their children, it was the opposite. Souls seemed more important than parental affection, the children’s emotional needs, or the day to day experiences of growing up. In the end, as in so many other decisions, God’s work took priority over what seemed merely personal considerations. For these women to break up their families in service of the great cause gives both a measure of their commitment to it and some measure of what that commitment cost them. “Can any sacrifice be too great,” Sybil asked with ingenuous optimism, “if we may help to make the love of this compassionate Saviour known to our wretched fellow-men?”³¹

SEPARATIONS

By August 4, 1826, Maria Whitney was two months shy of six years old. Her mother’s journal for that date reads, “yesterday we parted with her, little expecting to see her again on earth.” Trying to describe how she and Samuel felt, she wrote, “it was a most trying season to us both, but I hope we were enabled to say, ‘the will of the Lord be done.’ ” Maria was on her way to O‘ahu, where Dr. and Mrs. Blatchely would take her back to America with them. To find trustworthy adult supervision and a Captain willing to take a small passenger without compensation, for the Board would not pay, helped Mercy to recognize her “duty.”

With just ten days to prepare Maria's belongings, Mercy needed help from Keaweamahi, the wife of Kaua'i's Governor, who sent several of her attendants to help with sewing, and from the missionary wives in Honolulu, who finished the packing. But the physical preparations were the easy part. In early November, the ship *Connecticut*, bound for America, touched unexpectedly at Kaua'i for a day, and the Whitneys saw Maria once again. "Dear child," Mercy wrote, "she plead hard to stay one day longer with Ma'a." The next day, the ship out of sight and Mercy's latest journal bound up and sent back with it, she began a new one, still preoccupied with her daughter: "O the anxiety we feel on her account, & the love we bear her! None but a parent knows the anguish of a parent's heart."³²

When Sybil got back to the United States in the 1840's, she went through her letters, which her sister had saved, compiling an account that would help her daughters understand what had happened to them. She had written that in the early years of the Mission, whenever the subject came up for discussion, "I had to leave table or company to resume my composure." She described her tearful, sleepless night when the need to decide about Sophia pressed upon her: "I wept. I tried to pray. I sought my pillow and thought I would be composed. But it was in vain." When, in December of 1833, Sybil prepared to send Lucy, the agitation began again. "I have been strengthened to the work once," she wrote, "but I cannot remember that I suffered so much in it." Not only did Lucy—this "giddy, affectionate thing"—have a different personality from her older sister, but she was being put on a ship that, despite repairs, "*still leaks*." Sybil wrote to her sister at one o'clock in the morning:

. . . you cannot blame me that I cannot sleep. It is hard to gaze upon the sleeping features of a darling, cherished child—feel in your heart that it is the last night you shall be allowed to watch its slumbers, then turn quietly to your own pillow. . . .

As she readied her sons' things for the voyage, Mercy thought of "how they have entwined themselves about every fibre of my heart. . . . I am sure I feel it much more now, than when our

dear daughter left." Emily, Mercy's fourth and last child, asked to sleep in her parents' room the night before sailing. "She lay awake for some time weeping," remembered Mercy, "to think the parting hour was at hand; & during this time called me several times to her bed-side, clasped her arms around my neck, & kissed me."³³

The actual moment of leave-taking brought the most difficult memories. Samuel Whitney, who traveled to Honolulu to put his two sons on the boat, admitted to them in later years that he could never forget the sound of their wails. Laura Judd, stationed in Honolulu, must have witnessed many departures, but one in particular stayed in her mind—a little girl (unnamed) who stood on the deck as the boat left, stretching out her arms and shrieking "with all her strength, 'Oh, father, dear father, do take me back!'" The two Chamberlain boys, regarding the voyage as an adventure, boarded the ship "cheerfully" until their father settled them in their berths and the fact of separation registered itself in weeping. "Poor Caroline [Armstrong] sobbed as though her heart would break," observed Persis Thurston, adding that the child's mother and father were equally "overwhelmed with grief."³⁴

Nor did the sadness stop with the decision to put the children on the boat. After her boys left, Mercy Whitney wrote, "I did not anticipate what a season of trial it would be, or how lonely everything would appear, after their departure," concluding, "it is well that our Heavenly Father conceals from us the future." The Bishops, who traveled from Kailua to Honolulu to put their daughter Jane, age 11, aboard ship in 1836, "bore up very well" until they returned home. "But when we got back," her father admitted, "& missed her from every department of business in which she had joined us, it was then that the sorrow pent up before, burst forth. For several days, we felt as if we had been at her funeral." Mail was so slow that Sybil Bingham waited a year and a half for her first letter from Sophia. "This poor, waiting, anxious heart," she confessed, "has been made so glad by your long, crowded pages, that it would not be easy to tell you all its joy." Sybil at least knew that her sisters were both willing to take in her children; Mercy had no assurance of a family for Maria when she sent her

off, merely the trust that her relatives, the Hoadly family of Worcester, Massachusetts, would find a suitable family if they could not care for her themselves. When Samuel and Henry left a few years later, Mercy knew that the Ely family (other relations) would take them in, but did not have a Mission adult, merely a trusted ship's captain—who must have had plenty of other duties—to see them through a six months' voyage. In a letter written just before the boys left, Mercy appealed to them with helpless solicitude to stay with the Captain and officers instead of the ordinary sailors, not to neglect their Bibles, and not to climb the ropes on the ship.³⁵

As the years passed, remarks about the children crept into letters and journals as if any subject were enough to call up an association. When Sybil's third daughter, Elisabeth, reached her tenth birthday in 1839, Sybil noted with pleasure that she had never before had with her on a birthday a child who had reached that age. Mercy wrote to her absent children, describing her house inside and out, trying to jog their faded memories. Worse, since daguerrotypes were not invented until 1839, she had no way of knowing what they looked like. Seeing Maria again as an adult, Mercy was surprised at her plumpness. A daguerrotype that Samuel sent her in 1848, calling it a "correct likeness," did not resemble Mercy's imagined picture of her grown-up son. Sybil did receive a large portrait of Sophia (fig. 1, now hanging in the Mission House in Honolulu), but it arrived so spoiled by sea air after long storage aboard ship that the heartbroken parents could not make out her features. (Hiram was able to clean it later with alcohol.)³⁶

AFTERMATH

Judged strictly in terms of the children's conversions, the experiment was successful. Whatever combination it took—the religious atmosphere of New England, the pious family life of adopted homes, the exhortations to examine their hearts that kept coming from far-off parents—the desired effect was achieved. What the experiment cost the children in tears and confusion and loneliness is harder to assess. Laura Judd, without going into particulars,

summarized, “they have sometimes fallen into the hands of selfish, exacting guardians, and have been unkindly dealt with or sadly neglected.” The Whitneys soon realized that some members of their family disapproved of Maria’s arrival, and that the child had done much “wandering about” by 1830. The experience of taking care of the homesick nine-year-old daughter of fellow missionaries for two months in 1841 gave Mercy Whitney a searing insight into her own children’s feelings. Often she found the child—who was older than the Whitney children when they left—weeping for her mother. “At such moments,” Mercy wrote to Henry:

. . . your departure would rush into my mind, & I would say to myself, well, I suppose my own dear children felt very much so, after they were gone from us; & then my bosom would swell with anguish, at the thought of what you must have suffered.

The children of missionaries were under a constant strain to be “good,” reminded incessantly in letters of the virtues of obedience, humility, and kindness. They were to nurture a sense of gratitude to guardians who were pointing out faults for the children’s own improvement. That the children might be subjected to unjust reprimands the parents never even dared to consider.³⁷

Because both Sybil Bingham and Nancy Ruggles eventually returned home, they did not have to endure the separations for a lifetime and they did not have to part from their younger children. These women, like those who remained in the Islands, but sent only one or two children, represent a kind of middle ground. At either extreme were the courses taken by Lucy Thurston, who taught her children herself until she decided they were mature enough to leave, and Mercy Whitney, the only woman to send all her children home when they were no more than eight. (The two Bishop children were much older when they left.) Mercy was probably the woman most sorely tested by her decision, who in sending her children home risked the possibility of lifelong loss.

Mercy, who was widowed in 1845, spent the rest of her life in Waimea, Kaua‘i, mothering her children as she could by letter and memory. She kept track with relief as one by one her children

professed Christianity. But the distance took its toll. She was essentially helpless when problems arose. Her parental reprimands when a child had been disobedient or lax in schoolwork must have arrived over a year after the fact. Much worse was Samuel's disappearance from Amherst College in 1842, he apparently having felt pressure from his guardians to become a missionary, but not himself desiring it. No one knew where he was. Three years later—when he had evidently returned—Mercy wrote to her “Dearly beloved *tho erring* Son,” reassuring him that she “sincerely and heartily” forgave him, reminding him that though his crimes were great, God's mercy was greater. It distressed her that her children should not feel “*free*” to choose their professions. As the years went on, Samuel seems to have become the son that Mercy “lost.” He wrote rarely, communicating information—including his engagement—through his siblings. When Emily married a minister who contemplated missionary work, Mercy's hopes were raised for a reunion, but the couple stayed in America. Only once, from 1860 to 1862, did Mercy return to the United States to visit her children.³⁸

When grown-up children returned to the Islands, the long separation put a strain on rapport. Warren Chamberlain stayed up late, slammed doors, and was unpunctual at meals, disappointing his mother, who couldn't help observing “what a different character he would have had if he had only spent the first 14 years of his life with his parents.”³⁹ Maria Whitney, returning to the Islands in 1844 as a grown woman of 23 and a missionary, stayed in Waimea with her mother. Teaching school at first, she married a fellow missionary, Reverend John Pogue, and moved to Lāhainā. The difficulties were never made explicit, but Mercy's phrasing as she informed her son Samuel of the marriage gives the suggestion of desertion: “Maria has left me, and under circumstances exceedingly trying to my feelings.” Mercy's prediction at the time of the wedding came true: “we shall probably not see each other very often in future.” Mercy had a better relationship with Henry, who returned to Honolulu in 1849, settled down with his family, and became successful as a printer and editor. But since Mercy declined offers to move from Kaua'i, she saw her family rarely, perhaps once a year if she went to general meeting.⁴⁰

Such incidents of anxiety and loss, accumulating over a lifetime for both parents and children, make it difficult to determine whether, in the long run, the experiment was worth it. It did not assuage the women's frustration by releasing them for more "direct labor" for the Hawaiians, since most of them had other children to raise, and some, like Sybil Bingham, had chronic illnesses to keep them on the sidelines. Mercy Whitney's story is overlaid with irony. With her fourth child gone in 1834, she could give all her strength to the work for which she had come. A month after Emily left, Mercy wrote to Nancy Ruggles:

I feel at present quite *kaawale* [free] for missionary work—hope I shall have strength to do something more directly for the poor heathen around me, than I have ever yet done.

The irony was that she didn't have much strength to give. Her letter books and journals for the rest of her life tell in meticulous detail, approaching hypochondria, a story of chronic debility. Here is the source of another irony—that Mercy one by one loosened her ties to the physical world represented by her children, only to find herself intensely preoccupied with the physical details of her health. "I long to be crucified to the world and alive to God," the young Mercy had written on board the *Thaddeus* in 1819. One reading of her story is that in one of those terrible twists of fate, she got exactly what she wished for.⁴¹

Lucy Thurston's seems the dissenting voice in this debate. Unique among the first two companies, she and her husband Asa kept their five children in Kailua, teaching them at home until their teen years, when Lucy herself made two voyages to accompany the children home. Lucy wrote that every feeling of her heart revolted against sending children away so young. And she seems not to have been as concerned as others were about skirting moral dangers. "I have not felt like some of our mothers," she explained, "that children *must* be sent away or be ruined. I harp upon another string, and say, make better provision for them, or that will likely be the result." But like everyone else, Lucy had no intention of having her children mingle with Hawaiians and for-

bade them to learn the language; she simply effected their isolation in a different way from sending them back to New England.⁴²

Dividing her domestic world into three groups of persons—children, household Natives, and Native company—she designed a house (actually a group of thatched buildings and fenced yards) that would allow separate spheres of activity in daily life. If Jewish parents, she thought, had always been able to raise their children as Jews in a Gentile culture, she ought to be able to do the same with Christian children among the “heathen.” The children had their own room for instruction and a *kapu* (tabu) yard—accessible only from the schoolroom—where they would retreat when their parents were speaking to Hawaiians.⁴³

In the morning, the Mission area was forbidden to Hawaiian visitors. But by afternoon, Lucy was ready to attend to them, mostly as the master teacher of the best Hawaiian students, who were then responsible for their own classes. At various times she taught Sunday School, a Bible class, and an “arithmetical school,” while her husband cared for the children. She began a “Friday Female Meeting” in 1827, which in two years grew from 70 to 1,500 members, then by 1830 to 2,600. While Lucy may be seen as successfully combining her duties as a mother, a teacher, and a missionary, she did so with a clear sense that her duty to her family came first. Asa’s most important work was public, she wrote, hers private.⁴⁴

Like the other mothers, Lucy felt rewarded when her children gave evidence of piety. Her daughters joined the Mission church in 1836. Little evidence tells whether or not the other women resented or disagreed with Lucy’s solution, or whether or not she thought the others ought to have followed her lead. Hinting at discord between herself and Lucy—understandable in two women who had made vastly different decisions about their children’s upbringing—Mercy Whitney wrote in 1857 of Asa as a “poor reckless lad, causing his Parent and sister much trouble.” She continued:

I do not see that Mrs. [T]hurston’s children with all her care & anxiety for them, prove in the end to be better than those of her

neighbors, who never felt it their duty to leave their Missry [sic] work, to accompany them to the States. If she has erred in this matter, the Lord forgive her.⁴⁵

EVALUATION

From the perspective of another century, it is easy to ask “what if”—the missionaries had been less condemnatory of “heathenism,” or less fearful of its effects on their children, more willing to organize a school like Punahou much sooner, or to demand a teacher be sent? “If only” they had not been so quick to assume “pollution,” or had thought more about the effects of departures on Hawaiian self-esteem. Was the “sacrifice” inevitable? Preoccupied with notions of soul, of innate depravity, of duty, and with the importance of securing a proper education for their children, many of the early missionary parents thought it was. Working with assumptions very different from today’s—not cultural relativism (which they had never heard of), but Christian absolutism—they moved away from “heathen” customs they thought dangerous and toward values they thought unassailable. But on such an emotionally charged subject there could be no clear consensus. As Laura Judd wrote, “whether such separations were really necessary, was a question upon which different opinions were held.” And even those parents who sent children back seemed unsure. Artemas Bishop considered the practice “at best an unnatural business.” One thought that reconciled the Bingham to leaving in 1840 was that they would not then have to wrench themselves away from yet another child. In 1851, Maria Chamberlain wrote to her two daughters (who attended Mt. Holyoke Seminary in Massachusetts as young women):

. . . this I will say, if my life were to be lived once again, with my experience I would never part with a child again so young as your brothers were.

Perhaps the clearest assessment of the practice is implied by the actions of parents from the later companies who, once Punahou was built, never considered the alternatives.⁴⁶

NOTES

Unless otherwise noted, all sources cited are held in the HMCS Library in Honolulu. I wish to thank the Library staff and especially head librarian Mary Jane Knight for their assistance.

- ¹ The first company included Sybil and Hiram Bingham, Jerusha and Daniel Chamberlain (and their five children), Lucia and Thomas Holman, Maria and Elisha Loomis, Nancy and Samuel Ruggles, Lucy and Asa Thurston, Mercy and Samuel Whitney, and three Hawaiian youths: Thomas Hopu, William Kanui, and John Honoli'i. George Kaumuali'i, son of the King of Kaua'i, was on the *Thaddeus*, too, returning home, but he was not a professed Christian.
- ² Mercy Whitney, Journal, 2 Feb. 1820; Nancy Ruggles, Journal, 28 Dec. 1819. For the notion of "family," see Carl Degler, *At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present* (New York: Oxford, 1980), Nancy Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: 'Women's Sphere' in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale, 1977), and John Faragher, *Women and Men on the Overland Trail* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1979) 158 and 144-78.
- ³ Rufus Anderson, *Memorial Volume of the First Fifty Years of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions*, 3rd ed. (Boston: ABCFM, 1863) 262; Rufus Anderson, "Introductory Essay on the Marriage of Missionaries," in William Ellis, *Memoir of Mrs. Mary Ellis* (Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1836) vii-xv; Samuel Worcester, "'Instructions' to the Beloved Females of the Mission'," in *The Promised Land* (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1819) xii-xiii.
- ⁴ Samuel Ruggles, Journal, 4 Mar. 1820; Nancy Ruggles, Journal, 25-26 July 1820; Mercy Whitney, Journal, 21 and 25-26 July 1820; letters from Kapule and Kaumuali'i copied in Maria Loomis, Journal, 23 Aug. 1820, and Hiram Bingham, *A Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Sandwich Islands* (1847, rpt. Rutland, VT: C. H. Tuttle, 1981) 113; Lucy Thurston, *Life and Times of Mrs. Lucy G. Thurston* (Ann Arbor: S. C. Andrews, 1882) 57-8 and 69.
- ⁵ Long table: Sybil Bingham, Journal fragment, 6, 8, and 9 Nov. 1822, Bingham Papers, box 2. For a narrative history of the Mission, see Hiram Bingham, *Residence of Twenty-one Years*, and Bradford Smith, *Yankees in Paradise: the New England Impact on Hawaii* (New York: Lippincott, 1956). For further study of missionary wives, see the works of Patricia Grimshaw: "Christian Woman, Pious Wife, Faithful Mother, Devoted Missionary: Conflicts in Roles of American Missionary Women in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii," *Feminist Studies* 9, no. 3 (Fall 1983): 490-521; "New England Missionary Wives, Hawaiian Women, and 'The Cult of True Womanhood'," *HJH* 19 (1985): 71-100; and *Paths of Duty: American Missionary Wives in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii* (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1989).
- ⁶ sending children home: see Minutes of the General Meeting of 1826: Report of sending children to their native land, Sept. 1826: hereafter, Minutes, 1826; Hiram Bingham, *Residence of Twenty-one Years* 331-33; Patricia Grimshaw, *Paths*

- of *Duty* 452–57; Char Miller, “Domesticity Abroad: Work and Family in the Sandwich Islands Mission 1820–1840,” in *Missions and Missionaries in the Pacific* (New York: Edwin Mellon Press, 1985) 77–86.
- ⁷ statistics: Hiram Bingham, *Residence of Twenty-one Years* 333; Lucy Thurston, *Life and Times* 148. Hiram Bingham cites “18 other” besides his two, but his list makes a total of 19; Lucy Thurston counts 18 but excludes her child (Asa went home at 12), while Bingham includes “1 Thurston”; 250 children: Patricia Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty* 89.
- ⁸ Sybil Bingham, draft of letter to sister Sophia (n.d.), continued 29 July 1821, Bingham Papers, box 3.
- ⁹ Lucy Thurston, letter to Dea. Abner Goodale, 20 Mar. 1823; Lucy Thurston, “Journal Cont.,” 9 Nov. 1821, in Missionary Letters collection; Mercy Whitney, Journal, 28 Apr. 1821; Sybil Bingham, letter to “Beloved Sisters,” 27 Dec. 1822, Bingham Papers, box 2.
- ¹⁰ zeal: Sybil Bingham, Journal, 22 July 1820; Sybil Bingham, letter to Sister [Margaret], 10 Sept. 1821, pp. 3–4 of draft that begins “to Mrs. Johns,” Bingham Papers, box 3; Lucy Thurston, letter to Cousin William Goodell, 24 Oct. 1834, ABCFM Hawaii Papers.
- ¹¹ Nancy Ruggles, Journal, 1 Apr. 1820.
- ¹² sexual explicitness: Maria Whitney, Journal, 22 May 1823, 26 June 1826, and 16 June 1827; Sybil Bingham, Journal, 19 May 1822; Lucy Thurston, *Life and Times* 126–27 and 276; reasons for the Chamberlains’ departure: H. Bingham, A. Thurston, & E. Loomis, letter to J. Evarts, 20 Mar. 1823, ABCFM, vol. 1; too high a colouring: Mercy Whitney, letter to Mrs. C. A. Ely, 13 Nov. 1832; Maria Chamberlain, letter to sister Jane, 5 Dec. 1836. See, also, Patricia Grimshaw, “Conflicts in Roles” 489–90 and 503–08, and *Paths of Duty* 45–8.
- ¹³ Mercy Whitney, letter to Mrs. Ely, 24 Nov. 1832; error of . . . opinion: Mercy Whitney, letter to Mrs. Ely, 30 Apr. 1836; Sybil Bingham, letter to Mrs. Howell, 14 Nov. 1832, Bingham Papers, box 2; Lucy Thurston, *Life and Times* 90 and 275–76; Lucy Thurston, letter to Cousin William Goodell, 24 Oct. 1843, ABCFM Hawaii Papers.
- ¹⁴ first kind: Hiram Bingham, letter to Jeremiah Evarts, 15 Oct. 1828, Missionary Letters, vol. 2; Minutes, 1826; let her go: Mercy Whitney, Journal, insert opposite 11 Nov. 1826; from us: *Extracts from Letters of Mrs. S. M. Bingham, Relative to Sending her Children from the Sandwich Islands to America* (New York: [privately printed] 1882) 11.
- ¹⁵ Jeremiah Evarts, letter to the Missionaries at the Sandwich Islands, 27 Oct. 1827, ABCFM-HEA; the Board relaxed its position by the 1830s: Mercy Whitney, letter to Mrs. Ely, 25 Mar. 1835; Rufus Anderson, *Memorial Volume* 78–80; see also report of the 21st annual meeting of the ABCFM in *Missionary Herald*, 22, no. 11 (Nov. 1830).
- ¹⁶ Mercy Whitney, Journal, 17 Mar. 1829; Lucy Thurston, *Life and Times* 127.
- ¹⁷ Mercy Whitney, Journal, 17 Sept. 1823 and 17 Mar. 1829.
- ¹⁸ Sybil Bingham, Journal, 3 Apr. 1827, Bingham Papers, box 2; Sybil Bingham, letter to Beloved Bros. & Sisters, 30 Dec. 1825, Bingham Papers, box 2; Hiram

Bingham, Extracts from a letter to Mr. Evarts, 15 Oct. 1828, Missionary Letters.

- ¹⁹ Maria Chamberlain, letter to her father Mr. Patton, 14 Oct. 1837; father's labors: Sybil Bingham, letter to Mrs. Howell, 14 Nov. 1832, Bingham Papers, box 2; not many teachers: William Richards, letter to Rufus Anderson, 7 Dec. 1832, ABCFM Hawaii papers.
- ²⁰ Minutes, 1826.
- ²¹ Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18 (Summer 1966): 151-75; virtues quoted, 151; Nancy Cott, "Introduction" and "Domesticity" in *Bonds of Womanhood* 63-100; Patricia Grimshaw, "New England Missionary Wives"; for an annotated bibliography, see Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience* (New York: Knopf, 1984) 148-49.
- ²² cult of motherhood: Mary Ryan, *Womanhood in America* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1975) 145 and 164-91; Nancy Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood* 46 and 84-94; Carl Degler, *At Odds* 72 and 66-85; Barbara Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century New England* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan U P, 1981) 76-7.
- ²³ Barbara Welter, "Cult of True Womanhood" 174; Patricia Grimshaw makes the same point in "Conflicts in Roles" 513.
- ²⁴ Sybil Bingham, Journal, 14 Sept. 1819: "Journal April, 1811-Aug. 12, 1839," Yale U Library, mf. at HMCS Library; women's background and expectations: Patricia Grimshaw, "Conflicts in Roles" 491-98 and *Paths of Duty* 1-23.
- ²⁵ Mercy Whitney, Journal, 16 June 1827; Sybil Bingham, Extracts 16.
- ²⁶ Mercy Whitney, letter to Sister Thurston, 27 Jan. 1828; Maria Chamberlain, letters to sister Jane, 27 Dec. 1835 and 13 June 1851; Lucy Thurston, *Life and Times* 120.
- ²⁷ Mercy Whitney, Journal, 16 June 1827; Sybil Bingham, Extracts 19; direct and indirect or domestic labor: see, for example, Sybil Bingham, letter to Mr. and Mrs. Chamberlain, 7 July 1824, Bingham Papers, box 2; Sybil Bingham, letter to Dearly beloved friends, (n.d.) 1821, Bingham Papers, box 3; Journal, 16 Feb. and 9 Mar. 1823.
- ²⁸ Mercy Whitney, letter to Nancy Ruggles, 7 Feb. 1834.
- ²⁹ Sybil Bingham, Extracts 14; Mercy Whitney, letter to Henry Whitney, 26 Aug. 1834; see, also, Nancy Ruggles, letter to Rev. Ebenezer Brown, 5 June 1830; argument about practical advantage: Mercy Whitney, letter to Mrs. Ely, 30 Apr. 1836.
- ³⁰ Samuel Whitney, letter to Henry Whitney, 10 Aug. 1836; boarding schools: Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom, vol. 1, 1788-1854: Foundation and Transformation* (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1938) 111-13.
- ³¹ Jeremiah Evarts, letter to Rev. Hirman Bingham & others, 3 Jan. 1822, ABCFM-HEA; Sybil Bingham, Extracts 9.
- ³² Mercy Whitney, Journal, 4 Aug. and 10-11 Nov. 1826.
- ³³ Sybil Bingham, Extracts 2, 4, 8, and 10; Mercy Whitney, letter to Nancy Ruggles, 4 Nov. 1831; Mercy Whitney, letter to daughter Maria, 8 Feb. 1834.
- ³⁴ Samuel Whitney, letter to Henry Whitney, 10 Aug. 1836; Laura Judd, *Honolulu*

- (1880; rpt. Honolulu: HSB, 1963) 53; Maria Chamberlain, letter to father [Mr. Patton], 14 Oct. 1837; Levi Chamberlain, Journal, 17 Dec. 1836. vol. 21; Persis Thurston, Journal, 8 Aug. 1840.
- ³⁵ Mercy Whitney, letter to Maria Chamberlain, 10 Dec. 1831; Artemas Bishop, letter to Levi Chamberlain, 21 Dec. 1836; Sybil Bingham, Extracts 7; Mercy Whitney, letter to Samuel & Henry Whitney, 28 Nov. 1831. The Chamberlains were also uncertain about guardians: see Levi Chamberlain, letter to father-in-law, 14 Oct. 1837.
- ³⁶ Sybil Bingham, Journal, 8 Mar. 1839; Yale U Library, mf. HMCS Library; Mercy Whitney, letter to son Samuel, 10 Oct. 1848; for Sophia's portrait, see Laura Judd, 22 Mar. 22, 1831, Judd Fragments IV.
- ³⁷ Laura Judd, *Honolulu* 53; Maria's "wandering": Mercy Whitney, letter to Mrs. Hoadley, 20 May 1830; Mercy Whitney, Journal, 10 Apr. 1828 and 17 Mar. 1829; homesick child: Mercy Whitney, letter to Henry Whitney, 18 Oct. 1841.
- ³⁸ parental reprimand: see, for example, Mercy Whitney, letter to son Henry, 27 Aug. 1838; Samuel's disappearance: Mercy Whitney, letters to Mrs. Ely, 25 Apr. 1844, to Mrs. Walker, 28 Jan. 1845, to "Dearly beloved tho erring Son," 28 June 1845; to Hattie Whitney [Mrs. Samuel], 15 Mar. 1870; Mercy visited both children in the U. S.: see letters to "My dear children Sam'l & Hattie," 22 July 1862, and "Dear Bro. & Sister Ruggles," 29 Apr. 1864.
- ³⁹ Maria Chamberlain, letter to daughters, 12 Nov. 1851: see, also, letter of [n.d.] Aug. 1851.
- ⁴⁰ Mercy's difficulties with Maria: see Mercy Whitney, letter to son Samuel, 10 Oct. 1848; Journal, 6 Sept. 1848, 19 Mar. 1849, 28 May 1851; see, also, Levi Chamberlain, Journal, 28 May 1848, vol. 25.
- ⁴¹ Mercy Whitney, letter to Nancy Ruggles, 7 Feb. 1834; Mercy Whitney, Journal, 12 Dec. 1819; "feeble" health: see, for example, Mercy Whitney, Journal, 23 Sept. 1848, and letter to sister [Maria], 1 Dec. 1841.
- ⁴² For confirmation that five (not four) Thurston children left in 1840, see Persis Thurston, Journal, 30 July 1840, and Maria Chamberlain, Journal, 1 Aug. 1840; Lucy's ideas: Lucy Thurston, *Life and Times* 101, 123, and 84-5.
- ⁴³ Lucy Thurston, *Life and Times* 78, 84-5, and 127.
- ⁴⁴ Lucy Thurston, *Life and Times* 122, 98, and 103.
- ⁴⁵ Mercy Whitney, Journal, 3 June 1857; see, also, Lucy Thurston, letter to Dea. David & Millicent Goodale, 7 July 1845.
- ⁴⁶ Laura Judd, *Honolulu* 53; Artemas Bishop, letter to Levi Chamberlain, 21 Dec. 1836; Sybil Bingham, letter to "My dear Esther," 23 Nov. 1837, Bingham Papers, box 3; Maria Chamberlain, letter to daughters, 12 Nov. 1851.