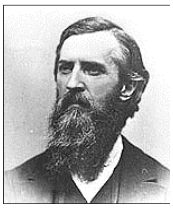
Henry Harris Jessup 1832-1910

Pioneer in Syria and the Near East

[At this time all the Near East was part of the Ottoman Empire. Syria was a province that included part of Turkey, today's Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine and Iraq as well as the North of Saudi Arabia.]



Henry was the sixth of eleven children born to the Honourable William Jessup LLD and Amanda Harris Jessup. His father graduated from Yale in 1815 and emigrated to Montrose in north-eastern Pennsylvania where Henry was born. His father was a schoolteacher until he gained admission to the bar. He was chairman of the platform committee of the Chicago Republican Convention that nominated Abraham Lincoln. The Jessup family originally emigrated from Sheffield, England.

Henry dated his decision to be a missionary to the summer of 1852. It was his turn to present the missionary prayer requests in church. He urged the people to support the work or go in person and then realised how incongruous it was to ask others to do what he was not willing to do. In February 1853 together with his friend Lorenzo Lyons he offered himself for foreign missionary work. He had great support from his parents. He wrote, "**They cheerfully gave me and my brother Samuel to missionary work at a time when a journey to Syria seemed like an act of self-immolation.**"

From the day his choice was made he began preparations. Everything he did was directed towards making himself both available and useful. He attended medical lectures and shadowed his cousin Dr. Mulford for two months to learn first aid. He also studied dentistry. He was involved in tract distribution. On June 16, 1854 at a conference of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), he read a letter signed by Dr. Eli Smith, Dr. William M Thomson and the Rev. D M Wilson pleading for five men to go to Antioch, Homs and Northern Syria. This seemed to him the call he had been waiting for. He agreed to go to Syria.

In August 1854 his brother, Samuel, 20 months his junior, decided to give up his business and study for Gospel ministry. He and his wife went to Syria in February 1863. In December 1854 Henry was engaged to Miss Caroline Bush. He records, "**She was an experienced teacher and in perfect sympathy with my life purpose.**"

Speaking to a Sunday School gathering in Newark, New Jersey in October 1855, he challenged the children that if they felt God had spoken to them they should write 'a resolution' when they got home. He suggested the words, "**If God gives the grace, I will be a missionary**". One little boy – James Dennis – did write and 13 years later Henry officiated at his commissioning service to the work in Syria.

They became great friends and worked together in Syria for 23 years. James made an amazing contribution with his Arabic theological works and his three volumes on Christian missions and social progress. He was an acknowledged authority in this area.

Henry was ordained on November 1, 1855. At the service his father shared that he had consecrated all his children to God and he would never want to take back any part of what he had given. His heart was full of joy at God's call on Henry's life.

On December 12, 1855 he was in Boston about to sail for Syria. Caroline was in poor health so the marriage was postponed. His parents were there to see him off. He travelled on the Sultana (300 tons) with a cargo of New England rum bound for Smyrna. They set sail on December 13 in a storm of snow and sleet. There were eight missionaries on board:

Rev. Daniel Bliss and his wife

Rev. G A Pollard and his wife

Miss Mary E Tenny

Ms Sarah E West

Rev. Tillman C Trowbridge

Rev. Henry Jessup

It was a dreadful voyage. They reached Smyrna January 22, 1856. They sailed for Beirut on the 29th on a French steamer. Henry's brother Samuel was the first in the mission to cross the Atlantic comfortably by steamer.

The Field in 1856

Henry was met on arrival by Lorenzo Lyons who had come out the previous year, Rev. E Aitken (a new worker) and Mr Hurter from Switzerland who was the mission printer. His first challenge was Arabic. He determined he would master it. He soon met the whole group of "workers from various missions".

On April 23 Henry left with Mr and Mrs Lyons and their child to travel to a new home in Tripoli. They arrived February 7 and Henry lost no time in visiting the American Printing Press and the old missionary cemetery – a plot of land bought by Rev. Isaac Bird 200 yards outside the city wall. He was a colleague of Pliny Fisk who is buried there. The inscription on his grave reads: **Pliny Fisk died October 23, 1825 aged 31**. Fisk had lived two years in Syria. He only saw one person come to faith Asaad es Shedak – martyr of Lebanon who followed him to the New Jerusalem in 1829 as a result of starvation and torture.

The task seemed hopeless but God sent men of faith to continue the task: Isaac Bird, William Goodell and Dr. Jonas King. Where should they begin? What should be their strategy? The secretary of the American Board exhorted them to ask the following questions:

What good can be done?
By what means?
What tribes/classes are there?
What is the best approach for each?

They were overwhelmed with questions needing answers. Those most pressing were:

How to give the Bible to people unable to read?
How to open schools with no books or teachers?
How to preach without Arabic?
How to commend the Gospel to Muslims who saw Christianity as a picture-worshipping, saint-worshipping, idolatrous system?

These were the issues facing the early pioneers. Some of these early workers were still in Syria when Henry arrived. They made a powerful impact on his life and ministry. We will look at some of the key workers in the establishment of the work.

Pioneers of the work in Syria



Levi Parsons – explorer 1792-1822

He sailed with Pliny Fisk in 1819. They were commissioned as, "Missionaries to Western Asia with reference to a permanent station in Jerusalem". They arrived in Jerusalem in February 1821 having spent 5 months in Scio studying modern Greek and Italian. Levi stayed there until May and distributed large quantities of Scriptures in many languages. He then spent some time in the Greek islands and arrived back with Fisk in Smyrna in December 1821.

In January 1822 Fisk and Parsons went to Alexandria for medical advice. Parsons died there on February 10, 1822 aged 30. Fisk held his funeral service in the yard of the Greek monastery. The night before he died Fisk sat by his bed and heard him say in his sleep, **"The goodness of God - growth in grace - fulfilment of the promises - so God is all in heaven and all on earth."**



Pliny Fisk – linguist and preacher 1792-1825

His missionary life covered 6 years. He lived in Smyrna, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Aleppo Beirut. He distributed Scripture. He preached in Italian, Greek, French and Arabic. He had completed an Arabic-English dictionary when he died aged 33.

Fisk was the pioneer missionary to Beirut and it is a fitting tribute that one of the largest buildings of the Syrian Protestant College (now the American University of Beirut) should be named after him as the Pliny Fisk Hall.

On hearing of his death a weeping Arab said, **"Who will now present the Gospel to us? I have heard no one explain God's Word like him."**

What of the results of the labours of Parsons and Fisk?

- They did a remarkable work of exploration.
- They brought to light the religious condition of these Bible lands.
- They met the leading men of all sections of the community – Muslim, Christian, and Jewish – and preached Christ openly to them.
- They distributed large numbers of Scriptures and tracts.
- They studied the climate of prevailing diseases and urged sending medical missionaries.
- They had no plan for indigenous churches as only one person came to faith and he was martyred.

Although they were sent to found a permanent base in Jerusalem, this didn't happen because of the early death of both of them.

The Arabic Bible they distributed was printed in London from a translation made by Sarkiser Rizzi, the Maronite Bishop in Damascus in 1620, and printed in Rome in 1671. This version was printed by the British and Foreign Bible Society and was used for many years, but there were so many errors that a new translation was urgently needed.

Fisk decided Beirut was preferable to Jerusalem as a base. Later ministry showed this was a very good decision.

They unmasked oriental hierarchies. At first they were welcomed, but when it was known their goal was Bible distribution these hierarchies stirred up opposition including ex-communication and Bible burning. It was clear that the chief priests and rulers of church, mosque and synagogue in the Bible lands did not want the Bible.



Jonas King – apostle of modern Greece 1792-1869

He worked for 3 years with Fisk and then for another 41 years in Greece. His father had him read through the whole Bible between the ages of 4 and 6 and then once a year until the age of 16. He came from a farming family but was determined on an education. He taught himself English grammar, Greek etc. He graduated from Williams College in 1816 and Andover Seminary in 1819. He went to Paris to study Arabic with the famous De Sacy.

While in Paris he received a pressing invitation from Fisk to go to Syria to replace Parsons. The Paris Evangelical Missionary Society and a certain Mr Wilder guaranteed his finance for 3 years and he joined Fisk and Assad es Shedak.

In 1828 King went to Greece in charge of a shipload of clothing and food for sufferers of Turkish despotism. This opened the way to preach Christ and distribute Scripture. The people crowded around him begging for New Testaments. The President of Greece favoured his work. In 1829 he married a Greek lady of influence who became his efficient helper. He preached, opened schools and distributed the Scriptures. He continued with his work in spite of opposition, imprisonment etc. He was much persecuted due to the jealousy of the Greek hierarchy. Fifty men conspired against his life. In 1847 he was advised to leave as his life was in danger. In 1851 he was appointed United States Consular Agent. Still the persecution continued. In his latter days he drew up plans for a distinctly Protestant Greek Church. It is largely due to Dr. King that the Word of God is not bound in Greece and is used so extensively in schools.



Isaac Bird – historian 1793-1876

The early history of the Syrian mission needed a historian. Syria and Palestine were 'unknown lands'. It was important for the American church to have men of careful observation and ready pens to report what they saw and heard in the Middle East. Bird left on record a history entitled "**Bible work in Bible lands**". He was a man of great powers of observation and a ready and accurate writer with a methodical turn of mind.

In 1829 the whole mission company returned to Malta because of the Greek War in 1829. Bird visited North Africa. He returned to Syria in May 1830. He experienced much persecution from the

Maronites who ruled Lebanon with a rod of iron. Bird and his colleagues saw idolatrous oriental churches as the greatest obstacle to giving the Gospel to Muslims.

In 1825 he had a school with 85 pupils – all Arabs and all boys but two. Three of the boys were Muslims. In 1827 the Bird family moved to Ehden near the Cedars of Lebanon because of the illness of one of their children. This was too much for the Maronite patriarch. He put a formidable curse on them. The result was a riot in the village and an attack on the house. They moved to a Muslim village B'Whyta where they had peace.

On their return from Malta in 1830 Bird and Goodell bought a plot of ground in Beirut. They built a mission house known as 'Burj Bird'. In 1835 the Birds left for Smyrna to return to America due to Mrs Bird's ill health. They reached Boston in October 1836. Their son William was later a missionary in Syria (1853-1902). Two of his children and a granddaughter also entered mission work.

William Goodell – scholarly saint 1792-1867



William spent 5 years and 16 days in Syria. He was appointed to Jerusalem but never saw Jerusalem. He came to an Arabic-speaking land but mainly studied Armenian and Turkish with Armenian ecclesiastics who had become Protestants. This prepared him for his great life work of translating the Bible into Armeno-Turkish (the Turkish language in Armenian characters).

William arrived in Beirut in November 1823 and left for Malta in May 1828. In June 1831 he reached Constantinople the scene of his life's work. As well as his work in Bible translation he also published 48 sermons in Turkish.

Between 1851 and 1853 he was in America. He travelled 25,000 miles. He addressed 400 congregations on the subject of foreign missions as well as making many visits to theological seminaries and student colleges. In 1853 he returned to Constantinople where he stayed until 1865. He returned to America and continued to preach until his death in 1867. He was known for his good humour. A colleague reproved him for his constant mirth with the words, **"Do you expect to enter heaven laughing?"** Goodell replied, **"I don't expect to go there crying!"** His colleague said of him, **"He was rarely gifted, for a genial humour, sanguine, simple, courageous, modest and above all holy. He won hearts and moulded lives."**

On completing the translation in 1863 he wrote to his former teacher, **"Thus I have been permitted to dig a well in this distant land at which millions may drink."**

In 1869 the Earl of Shaftesbury said of him and his colleagues, **"I do not believe that in the whole history of missions, in the history of diplomacy or in the history of any negotiations carried on between man and man, we can find anything to equal the wisdom, the goodness and the pure evangelical truth of the body of men who constitute the mission."**

Eli Smith – linguist and translator 1801-1857



He was born in Northford, Connecticut to a family of Scottish descent. He graduated from Yale in 1821. He taught for two years before graduating from Andover Theological Seminary. He was ordained and then sailed for Malta in 1826 to take charge of the Mission Press. In 1827 he went to Beirut to study Arabic but had to evacuate to Malta with the other mission personnel in 1828 due to the Greco-Turkish war.

In March 1829 he travelled through Greece with Dr. Anderson and then explored Armenia, Persia and Georgia with Rev. H Dwight opening the way for the establishing of the Nestorian Mission at Oroomiah (present day Urmia in NW Iran). Returning to America in 1832 he published Missionary Researches in Armenia.

He returned to Beirut in December 1833 with his first wife Sarah. She was a teacher and had been working among the Mohegan tribe. She was a great help to him in his translation work. By 1834 she had started the first school for girls in Syria in Beirut. She taught in this school until her early death in 1836. This same year Smith got approval from the American Board to move the mission press from Malta to Beirut.

After a visit to America, Smith returned to Beirut in 1841 having married his second wife Maria Chapin. Sadly she died a year later leaving a son, Charles [Charles H Smith later professor of history at Yale University]. After five years preaching and teaching and focusing on Semitic languages Smith returned to America for a year. Then he married his third wife Henrietta. He returned with her to Beirut in 1847. They had two daughters and three sons.

Smith was a 'details' man. For many years he proof-read every work printed at the mission press. His Arabic was of a very high standard but he could also preach in such simple colloquial Arabic so that the women of the villages in Lebanon could understand him. He published a book in Arabic on the office and work of the Holy Spirit. But his all-consuming passion was a faithful translation of the Word of God into Arabic.

He gathered together a team of Arabic language scholars together with two national believers Nasif Al-Yazidi and Butros Al-Bustani. Their top priority was the completion and publication of the Arabic Bible as soon as possible. Smith led the formidable task of preparing the Arabic typeset. English has not more than 100 separate 'types'. Arabic has about 1800! Smith went to Leipzig to oversee the casting of the Arabic type by Tauchnitz. It was described as the most beautiful font of Arabic type the world had ever seen.

Sadly Smith's health began to deteriorate and he died in Beirut in January 1857. His dream of completing the Arabic Bible had not been fully realised. His colleague Dr. Cornelius van Dyke took Smith's place as leader of the translation group. Three years later in 1860 the dream was fulfilled.

The establishment of the Arabic printing press brought about a revolution in knowledge, education, journalism etc. Because the Arabic Bible was the first mass-printed volume in Arabic, it was read by a wide variety of readers and scholars.

William Thomson – explorer and author of The Land and the Book 1806-1894



He was born in December 1806, the son of the Rev. John Thomson a Presbyterian minister. He graduated from Miami University, Oxford, Ohio in 1829 and from Princeton Theological Seminary under Dr. Alexander in 1832. He arrived in Beirut in February 1833 the eighth American missionary in Syria. Two had died and two been removed before his arrival.

In 1834 he went with his wife to Jerusalem to set up their home. He made a trip to Jaffa to see to the forwarding of their goods and while he was away civil war broke out in Palestine. Fellahin from Hebron to Nazareth rebelled against Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt. They besieged Jerusalem. For two months there was a siege, war, several violent earthquakes, plague in Jaffa and pillage and murder in Jerusalem. William didn't know his son had been born!

After two months he managed to get back to his wife. She was almost blind from 'ophthalmia' and was suffering from a high fever. Twelve days later she died. The letters she wrote in her days of agony and suspense are a beautiful example of her sustaining faith.

In 1834 Dr. Thomson and his son went to Beirut. He later married Maria Abbott widow of HMB Consul Abbott. In December 1835 he opened a boys' boarding school in Beirut. In 1836 Rev. Story Hebard joined him in this work and continued until 1841.

On January 1, 1837 there was a huge earthquake in Syria/Palestine. In Tiberias, out of a population of 6000, 700 died. In Safed out of a population of 10,000, 6000 died. Dr. Thomson and an English worker among Jews, Mr Calman, carried relief to the worst affected areas. Their report shocked the Christian world. They built a temporary hospital and did all they could to relieve suffering.

In May 1840 Dr. Thomson made a trip in northern Syria with Mr Beadle and Dr. van Dyke. He was a born traveller. It is said that "**he loved the saddle and the tent**".

On the 14th of August, 1841, the English fleet under Sir Charles Napier arrived in Beirut harbour to drive Ibrahim Pasha out of Syria. The combined English (21 vessels), Austrian (6) and Turkish fleets (24 Turkish transports) anchored off Beirut – 51 ships in all. Captain Latimer of the United States corvette, Cyane, took on board all the missionaries and landed them safely in Larnaca, Cyprus.

The bombardment began and continued while the Cyane was still at anchor and kept on for a month until Pasha left the city. In October the missionaries returned, expecting to find the mission house in ruins. But on the contrary, although the ground on the mission premises was ploughed up by cannon-balls, and 2 bombs had exploded in the yard, the house and printing press were unharmed! The library, the costly apparatus for the boys' seminary, the invaluable manuscripts and books and the large folio volumes of the Christian fathers, remained safe just as they had left them. Soon after, Ibrahim Pasha was driven back to Egypt and Syria and Palestine were restored to Turkish rule.

In 1841 war broke out between the Druze and the Maronites. Many of the refugees were fed and clothed by missionaries. In 1843 Dr. Thomson and Dr. Van Dyck moved to the village of Abeih in Mount Lebanon and carried on the Boys' Seminary that had been transferred from Beirut. They continued teaching and preaching until they were stationed in Sidon in 1851.


USS Cyane

July 18, 1843, William Thomson went to Hasbeiya where 150 men had declared themselves Protestants. August 1st, they all left for Abeih to escape attack by armed men from Zahleh. Later that year the anger had died down and they were able to return.

One day Dr. Thomson and two deacons went up the side of Hermon to the solitary lodge of a poor vine-dresser who was deeply interested in spiritual things. He wrote of this visit, "It was good to be there on that mountainside, in the lodge beneath that olive tree, among those clustering vines, with that old man of humble mien and tearful eye, the voice of prayer ascending from full hearts to the canopy of heaven above our heads. Yes, it was good to be there. I crept forth from this humble lodge with eyes bedimmed with tears."

In April, 1845 civil war broke out again in Lebanon and a battle took place in Abeih. Dr. Thomson bore a white flag to the Druze camp and through his prompt action in securing the interference of the British consul-general in Beirut, a truce was agreed and a general massacre of the unfortunate Maronites was prevented. The Greek and Maronite bishops of Beirut ordered their people to protect the American missionaries.

Dr. Thomson made extended tours in Syria and Palestine. Henry Jessup was privileged to go with him on one tour at the end of his first year in Syria. Thomson felt deeply that the Bible could only be fully and clearly understood by remembering its origins and that it was important to study and record with scrupulous exactness the manners and customs, the language and salutations, the usages and peculiarities of the people of Syria and Palestine before European ideas and habits eclipsed their distinctives that illustrated the language and thoughts of Bible characters. His studious habits, his ready pen, his almost microscopic powers of observation and his habit of recording conscientiously every new discovery and impression, enabled him to accumulate a mass of material. He felt he could do no better service to the Church and the world, than to turn the searchlight of the land on the pages of the Book. He was well fitted for the task and he did it well.

In the war crises of 1841 and 1845 some workers left the mission for America. They urged abandoning the Field. Dr. Thomson with Mr Calhoun, and Drs Van Dyck, Eli Smith, De Forest and Mr Whiting resisted the suggestion. They stayed and saved the work from destruction.


Convent of Mullawiyeh, Tripoli, Lebanon

On June 23, 1859, on his return from a two-year visit to America, Thomson settled in Beirut where he remained for 17 years until his final departure on August 7, 1876.

In autumn 1859, Lebanon was very unsettled fearing a renewal of the old war between the Maronites and the Druze. In the spring of 1860 the war-cloud burst and for 60 days there was civil war. The burning of villages, outrage and massacres

devastated southern Lebanon, the Bekaa, anti-Lebanon and Damascus. Thousands of refugees crowded into Beirut. Dr. Thomson worked with the relief committee in the distribution of nearly £30,000 in money, food and clothing.

When Lord Dufferin and his successor, Colonel Frazier, needed advice, they consulted first of all the two veterans in missionary experience and knowledge, Dr. Thomson and Mr Calhoun. In an official report sent to England at the time, Dufferin said, **"Without their indefatigable exertions, the supplies sent from Christendom could never have been properly distributed, nor the starvation of thousands of the needy been prevented."**

On the April 29, 1873, Maria Thomson, his devoted wife, after more than 40 years of a lovely and consistent Christian life in the community, passed to her heavenly reward. She was loved and respected by people of all nationalities.

Back in America in 1877, Thomson lived in New York for a few years and then moved to Denver, Colorado where he enjoyed the clear skies and the towering mountains that reminded him of his beloved Syria. In the home of his daughter, Mrs Walker, and with the help of his unmarried daughter Emilia, he was able to stay until his death in 1894. His latter days were serene and happy. His mind remained sharp. He was vitally interested in all the progress of the Kingdom of God in the world.

His life and work were a blessing in laying the foundations of the work now going on in all parts of the Arabic-speaking world and beyond. His life is an illustration of the fact that in the work of the Gospel in the world there is scope for every kind of talent and skill. Without the truth of this Eli Smith could not have written '**The Land and the Book**' and William Thomson could not have translated the Bible. In Syria and Palestine Thomson found a vast unexplored field of Scriptural illustration. The Land of the Bible, its topography and customs, were unknown in the Christian nations of the West. He used the talents God had given him in illuminating the Word of God. Others engaged in translating it into Arabic, in establishing schools and seminaries, in preparing Christian literature and in preaching the Gospel from the pulpit or in the homes of the people. While he did what he could in several of these tasks, he gave special attention to that for which God had prepared him by special gifts and graces.

At the end of his life he wrote, "I take no credit to myself for anything God has helped me to do or rather has done through me. How often I have felt humiliated by the fulsome praise of foreign missionaries by friends in the homeland and I have longed for the time when all Christian workers at home and abroad shall stand on a level as disciples of a common master and equally engaged in his service. A soldier sent to the Philippines deserves no more credit than one on guard in the Fort on Governor's Island."

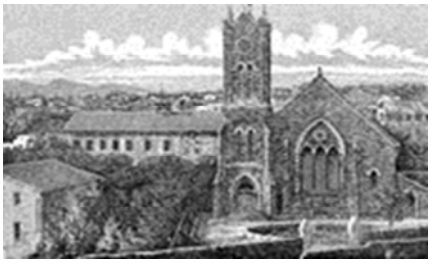
We have looked at some of the early pioneers of the work in Syria. Now we return to the story of Henry himself.

On his arrival in Beirut in February 1856 he made the study of Arabic his top priority. For 4 years he lived in Tripoli with the Lyons family. Tripoli is on the coast 50 miles from Beirut. He then moved to Beirut where he was based until his death in 1910. While in Tripoli, Henry studied Arabic 6 hours a day with 3 teachers. There were no good dictionaries. He said, **"We had to blunder on the best we could."**

In those days the only roads were caravan tracks and bridle paths. The first wheeled vehicle known in Syria was in 1861. In July 1856 the Lyons family leased a house in Duma, a Greek village in the northern Lebanon Mountains 2600 feet above sea. Henry went with them for the summer. He wrote to his father, **"We set out this morning from our mountain home in Duma for the Cedars of Lebanon and the ruins of Baalbek. When one has been applying himself constantly to books and study for a long time in this climate a kind of nervous weakness comes upon the system bringing with it an indifference to mental pursuits. This proves most effectively relieved by a change of air and occupation."**

Henry preached his first sermon in Arabic in Tripoli in January 1857. It took weeks to prepare and he read it from a manuscript. He didn't preach again for three months. He read sermons from a manuscript for a year. After he had been in Syria 49 years he said it was his choice to preach in Arabic. It was now easier to preach in Arabic than in English. He aimed at simplicity rather than beautiful 'high' Arabic so that the common people could easily understand.

In 1856 his marriage had to be postponed due to Caroline's ill health. In June 1857 he sailed for America. On October 7 he married Caroline Bush in Branchport, New York. They sailed for Syria on February 23, 1858. The voyage was long as they were frequently becalmed. They reached Smyrna on April 13 and stayed with Mr Dodd. They left Tripoli on April 20 arriving in Beirut April 27.



Church and Girls' School in 1871
Printing Press is next to the school

In May Henry took out a 17 year lease on a vaulted room to be used as a chapel. He found they had to put up a curtain to shield the women so they were also able to attend.

1858 was a year of much unrest, rebellions north of Tripoli, highway robbery and an uprising in Jeddah where Muslims massacred foreign consuls and nearly all the Christian population. There was unrest and misrule right across southern Lebanon.

By January 1859 Cornelius van Dyke had the new translation of the four Gospels in type. The mission now had seven stations – Beirut, Abeih, Deir el Komr, Bhamdoon, Sidon, Tripoli and Homs. In March Henry and Caroline attended the Annual Mission Meetings. There they learned that the Civil War in America had crippled missionary resources. The proposal was to disband the schools and reduce work in the press. Because of the unrest there were many refugees in Beirut. About 250 were sleeping in the printing press – later there were thousands – just as the new translation of the New Testament was ready to be printed.

In May 1860 the Druze/Maronite massacre began – the culmination of a peasant uprising and the rebellion of Maronite priests against their Druze overlords. As it spread south the Druze turned against the Maronite Christians and around 20,000 Christians were killed. In all 380 Christian villages and 560 churches were destroyed. Jews and Muslims also suffered heavy losses. This dispute that began in Deir el Komr sparked a torrent of violence. From May to July 1860 the violence continued. The final estimate of Christians killed was 25,000 including the Dutch and American consuls.

When this war broke out Henry was staying in the Calhouns' house in Abeih. The Greek Catholic, Maronite and Protestant men all fled to Beirut. The women and children stayed and brought all their valuables to the Calhouns' humble, unprotected house for safekeeping! After the massacre the only men left alive were 30 Protestants of Ain Zehalteh who had taken refuge in William Bird's house as he was in Abeih with the Calhouns. Bird and Calhoun went with the Druze commander and rescued them. The next day Calhoun took the 30 to Beirut. He arrived at Henry's house weary and in pain. He said, **"Brother Jessup, what does all this mean? Surely God is speaking to us!"**

One of the leaders of the Deir el Komr attack was Ali Beg Hamady. Henry called on him 25 years later in his home. He asked Henry if he knew why Mr Bird's house was spared in 1860. He told him it was because of the character of Calhoun and Bird.

Many years later a Druze called at Henry's house with a message from Ali Beg asking Henry to go to his house. He was dying. He asked Henry to read the passages from the Injeel that Mr Calhoun loved. Then Al Beg asked, **"Is there pardon for a great sinner like me?"** He prayed and asked for forgiveness through Jesus. The next day he died. Calhoun had died 15 years previously but would certainly rejoice to welcome Ali Beg.

1860 was a crisis in the history of Syria and also a crisis in protestant missionary work. From that time the tide turned. The ploughshare of God's judgement had upturned this world and overturned many of the mightiest obstacles to the Gospel. Up to 1860 the mission had established 33 schools with 967 pupils (176 of them girls), 4 organised churches with 75 members. The press had printed about 4,000,000 pages annually. The New Testament had been translated and two editions printed. Protestants had been sanctioned and were legally recognised and entitled to official protection.

In the wake of 1860 only 9 protestants had been killed out of a community of several hundred. One worker was killed – Mr Graham of the Irish Presbyterian Mission in Damascus. But there was great gain for the Gospel as a result of all the pain and upheaval. Here are just 8 results:

1. The power of old feudal families and tribes was broken for ever. Each district had a local council.

2. The political power of the local hierarchy was broken and the priesthood was deprived of political power.
3. A stable, free and virtually independent government was established in Lebanon. This was a great boon politically and socially.
4. The domineering pride of Damascus Muslims was broken. Military conscription was now obligatory for all. (Previously they had been exempt on the grounds of Damascus being a Muslim holy city.)
5. Tens of thousands were forced out of the isolation of their villages and came in contact with "foreign Christian benevolence". In some remote stricken villages flourishing evangelical churches came into being.
6. There was a great demand for education. There were now more than 20 Protestant boarding schools in Syria and Palestine and their influence for good is incalculable.
7. There was a demand for Arabic Scriptures and other Christian books. Van Dyke completed the translation of the Old Testament in August 1864. Up to 1909 more than 900,000 copies of Arabic Scriptures were printed at the Beirut press. The press had the capacity to print 50,000 Bibles year.
8. There was an intellectual and educational awakening throughout the whole Turkish Empire.

In August 1861 Henry visited Zahleh. Mr Dodds and Mr Benton had been expelled in 1859. Just 5 Protestants remained. People were very antagonistic. Henry wrote, **"The scenery about Zahleh is charming. Around you are the ranges of Lebanon and the splendid plains of the Bekaa half covered at this season in myriads of sheaves of wheat and barley and other grains. A small river of cold crystal water – the Bardouni – runs down through the narrow valley which divides the town into two distinct quarters. The people are a hearty, vigorous and superior looking race and someday the Lord will bring them into the light."**

In September 1861 they had to cut expenses by one third because of the situation in America. The mission was reduced to 7 men. The Jessup family moved from Beirut to Beit Jebaili where there were many refugees. They started a Sunday school and a weekly Bible class for men and women. In 1862 they opened a school for girls and 90 girls came. That school was later transferred over to Mrs Bowen Thompson founder of the British Syrian Schools.

In December 1861 Mr Ford from Sidon sailed for England at the expense of the Turkish Missions Aid Society for 3 months to plead the cause of Christian education and evangelisation in Syria. They had thought of sending a learned Syrian with him, but they decided against this. Henry remarked, **"It was wisely given up. Dual control in an institution will end in disaster. A native school founded and supported by natives should be under native control. A foreign school founded by foreign funds should be under foreign control."**

Early in 1862 it was decided to ask Dr. Daniel Bliss to establish a college in Beirut that would include medical training. In August he left with his family for America to raise funds.

In July 1862 a voweled edition of the Arabic New Testament came off the press. Soon after an Arabic children's hymnal was produced. Henry wrote, **"There is a tide and power in children singing that carries onward older people and actually sweeps away prejudice and discordant feeling from older hearts."**

In October 1862 Dengue fever hit Beirut. From a population of 60,000, about 25,000 fell ill. This was a very hard time. Reflecting on the situation in the country Henry wrote, **"The great bane of Syria is the multitude and virulence of the conflicting sects. There can be no true peace until these hostile elements are reconciled and nothing can reconcile them but a common faith in Jesus Christ."**

Henry's brother, Samuel, left for Beirut in October 1862. He was the first American missionary to travel from America by steamer. By the close of the year the mission had 6 stations Beirut – Abeih – Suk el Gharb – Sidon and Hasbeyiah – Homs – Tripoli and two outstations. They had 9 workers as well as the printer, 5 national preachers and 16 teachers. The outlook was more encouraging than ever before. Samuel arrived in January 1863 and was stationed in Sidon. As 1864 dawned there were 750 children in Protestant schools in Beirut and 2,000 in all Syria.



First class of 16 at the Protestant College, Beirut opened in 1866

The Jessup family was growing. Their first child, Anna, was born in 1860. William was born in 1862 and in January 1864 Henry was born. Caroline was very sick and Dr. van Dyke suggested that a sea

voyage would do her good. The family sailed for England on the English merchant ship **Isis**. Henry stayed behind with his nurse. Conditions on the Isis were terrible as it was full of sheep. It took 44 hours to arrive at Alexandria. The next day Caroline died. She is buried in the English cemetery in Alexandria. Henry continued his journey with his two children arriving in New York on August 8.

Henry wondered what could be God's purpose in him being in America just now. Before long he understood. He wrote, **"Beirut School for Girls was the apple of my eye. I felt the future of Syria depended on the education of its girls and women."** The Mission Board had not been willing to put up a building for the school due to lack of funds. Now they approved Henry raising $10,000 for a building as long as it didn't affect their regular income.

By mid-November most of the money had been raised. Henry returned to Syria leaving William with his grandparents and Anna with her aunt. On arrival in Liverpool, he stayed for a month with Dr. Bliss who was raising funds for Beirut College. He arrived back in Beirut January 11 and stayed with the van Dyke family. The translation and printing of the Old Testament was completed March 10. Dr. van Dyke had to go to New York to oversee the electro-typing of the Arabic Scriptures.

In March 1866 the Bliss family returned to Beirut. They had secured $20,000 for the college. The fundraising was made easier by the widespread knowledge of the massacres of 1860. The college opened in the autumn of 1866 with 16 students. During the early years of the college the language of instruction in all departments was Arabic. Later this changed to English for two main reasons:

1. The students' desire to be fluent in a language other than Arabic
2. The lack of textbooks in Arabic

Henry went to America in the autumn of 1867 in need of some rest and also to find an American teacher to head up the Syrian Girls School. Miss Eliza Everett was found and returned to Beirut with him in October 1868.

Also in 1868 Henry was engaged to Harriet Elizabeth Dodge the daughter of Dr. David Stuart Dodge. They married on October 1 and sailed for Syria on October 17 taking with them Henry's daughter Anna. Henry was glad he was in America in September as his father died peacefully aged 96.

In May 1869 a theological class for men was started in Abeih. It continued until November and began again the following May.

1870 was a year of struggle and crisis in the Jessups' lives and in the history of the Syrian Mission. It was the year of the transfer of the entire mission from the American Board (ABCFM) to the new Presbyterian Board of Foreign Mission. Jessup was nominated/elected as secretary to the new Board but he declined. The Franco-German war was raging and there was great political excitement throughout the East. Henry wrote to those electing him, **"I cannot give up my work in Syria. However feeble and unworthy my labours, my heart is here. I came for life and I pray that I may be permitted to end my days among this people."**



GROUP OF SYRIAN TEACHERS AND PREACHERS AND AMERICAN MISSIONARIES
Taken April, 1904, at the Syrian Protestant College. (President Bliss in the centre of front row.)

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In 1873 the Syrian Protestant College had 84 students. By 1907 they had 878. In December 1874 there were 61 schools with 1,753 boys and 510 girls. By November 1874 Henry had been acting pastor of the Beirut church for 14 years. Most of this time they had been searching for a national pastor, but had found no suitable candidate. In July 1890 Henry's old pupil Yusef Bedr was made pastor.

In 1875 cholera raged again. By 1877 Russia had declared war on Turkey and the whole Empire was in distress. The army conscripted 60,000 men from Syria leaving their families unprovided for. This war ended in January of the following year.

In April 1883 once again Henry had to endure the death of his wife, Harriet, leaving him with the five small children from their marriage. He reluctantly agreed to go to the USA. In July 1884 he married Theodosia Davenport Lockwood. In October they sailed for Liverpool arriving in Beirut November 21.

In June 1888 Thomas Valpy French visited Beirut. After his time as Bishop of Lahore, he determined to give the remaining years of his life to Arabia – Muscat.

An event occurred in 1890 which Henry regarded as perhaps the highlight of his 53 years in Syria. It was the coming to faith of Kamil el Aretany. He was about 20 years old. He came to ask Henry about the Christian faith. He had already talked to a Maronite priest and a Jesuit father. He then went to Dr. van Dyke who sent him to Henry. Henry said of him, **"His whole history, his profound spiritual experience, his delight in the Scriptures, his loyal, enthusiastic love for Jesus Christ as his Saviour, his zeal and fearlessness in preaching the Gospel, his blameless life and delight in prayer, his wise and winning way of dealing with both Mohammedans and oriental Christians, his filial devotion to his father and his remarkable correspondence with him and his fidelity to Christ even to death, make his life one of profound interest as showing what the grace of God can effect in the mind and character of a Mohammedan youth trained for 7 years in Mohammedan school."**

In the autumn of 1890, after his baptism, Kamil joined Cantine and Zwemer in Aden. On June 24, 1892 he died in suspicious circumstances in El Buran at the head of the Persian Gulf. Turkish soldiers buried him secretly.

In 1891 pupils in Syrian Mission schools totalled 7,117. Adding those in other mission schools, the total was around 15,000 children.

In April 1894 Henry left for the USA with his daughters Anna and Amy for a rest. He arrived in May and by December 31 he had preached is a 24 times and travelled many hundreds of miles. By early 1895 he was receiving many requests for lectures on the Armenian Question. He needed to be wise as a serpent so that he would be harmless as a dove. He said, **"It would not have been wise for me to tell all I knew or all I felt. I had lived 38 years in the Turkish Empire and expected to return."**

In August he returned to Beirut. In October there was a cloud burst and floods leading to an outbreak of typhoid. On November 13 Dr. van Dyck died of typhoid aged 77. As the outbreak continued more workers and their children died of typhoid and cholera.

Rumours of Armenian massacres multiplied. In 1896 there were new massacres in Oorfa and in Eastern Turkey. The Mission Board cut $15,000 at one stroke from the annual allowance of the mission. Hard as this was, this experience help to forward the cause of self-support.

In April an independent worker, Mr A Forder, tried to penetrate Arabia from the North by way of Bashan and Moab. He took 700 New Testaments from the press and had them specially bound in red morocco binding. He had to abort his journey as he fell from his camel broke his leg. On a previous trip he had been robbed. Henry said, **"No one can doubt his courage and pluck and someday men may get into central Arabia."**

In 1898 five great forces contended for religious supremacy in Syria and Palestine:

- Jewish (The Rothschild colonisation scheme buying and erecting buildings etc.)
- Mohammedan (1/2 the population of Syria and Palestine)
- Papal (numerous-organised-aggressive)
- Orthodox Greek (divided in 3 parties Syrian Greeks who were the rank and file of the church, the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre a Hellenic foreign group enjoying the special favour of the Turks and the Russian party backed by Russia.)
- Protestant (American, English, Scottish, Irish and German missions as well as a national evangelical community of about 10,000)

In 1899 the Home Board asked Henry a very important question:

Are you not sacrificing evangelistic work for institutional work?

Here is his answer:

1. The institutions consist of the press, the seminary, literature (translation of Scriptures and good books, commentaries etc.), boys and girls boarding schools and hospital work.
2. Evangelistic work – preaching in churches – itinerating around the villages – distributing tracts – holding meetings and personal work with individuals.
3. In Syria there are four stations: Beirut, Lebanon Bekaa, Sidon and Tripoli. There are 12 ordained workers, one doctor, one lay teacher, one lay press manager and one teacher/doctor from the Free Church of Scotland.
4. Theological education is evangelistic as it is training nationals for the Syrian church. They will do the real work in the future.
5. Boarding schools are the 'nurseries' of the church, moulding character for the future.
6. Teaching the Bible is evangelistic work.

Let us not say, **"Institutions versus evangelism but institutions for the sake of evangelism"**.

In 1900 the Beirut Press printed 24,000,000 pages. 17,884,000 were Arabic Scriptures – 58,000 copies. In August 1901 the second conference of Christian workers in the Turkish Empire was held in Brumanna. It was led by F.B. Meyer of London. Of that time and the preaching Henry wrote, **"He has left seed thought that will germinate and bring forth blessed fruit."**

Howard Bliss succeeded his father Daniel Bliss as president of the Syrian Protestant College in May 1902. In 1903 the Jessups went for their last furlough in America. They returned to Beirut in April 1904 in time for the third conference of workers in the Turkish Empire. This time the speakers were all 'workers' in the Turkish Empire. The topic was: The Missionary Gospel and the Missionary: the Message and the Messenger and the things that affect his daily life and service for The Master.

There were 200 delegates – 19 British, 58 American, 37 Syrian, 6 German, 3 Danish, 3 Swedish, 2 Armenian and 1 of Hindu background. They were from 18 denominations and represented 26 societies. In all 32 papers were presented – each followed by discussion.

Between 1905 and 1907 there was unprecedented demand from Egypt for Arabic Scriptures. In May 1905 a conference for workers was held in Constantinople. Henry couldn't go so he was asked to write a paper on Hindrances to the Christian life among missionaries. Here is some of what he wrote:

1. We are apt to feel we have already attained, deeming that we are in a higher spiritual plane than those around us. We compare ourselves with others and are led to self-satisfaction and indolence.
2. Officialism – because we are preachers/teachers we are in danger of thinking we only need to give out and not to take in.
3. Extreme liberalism inclining us to believe that the lifeless systems around us are good enough and we need not seek the conversion of their adherents. Unless Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of sinners, we have absolutely no vocation in Western Asia and European Turkey.
4. Yielding to spiritual stagnation around us
5. Neglect of personal religious duties

In December 1905 lack of funding in the USA caused a cut of finance to the printing press. Henry remarked, **"Are we to tell the Muslims asking for God's Word that they cannot have it? Will the Christian church not give the $9,000 a year that is needed to keep up the work?"**

1906 was Jubilee Year and Henry's 50th year in Syria. In April a conference was held in the CMS house in Cairo for 'workers' in Muslim lands. Delegates came from the Turkish Empire, Egypt, Arabia, Persia, India, East Indies, Sudan and North and West Africa. The papers presented showed great similarity in the difficulties, encouragements and the magnitude of the task. There was no note of retreat or pessimism. Reports of 32,000 conversions in India and the East Indies were seen as the 'first fruits' of what was yet to come.

In December 1907 Henry's third wife Theodosia was suddenly taken ill with a cold that developed into pneumonia. She died on December 19.

Aged 77 Henry wrote, **"I confess myself unable to predict what will come next. Time alone will reveal the future of this hapless Empire. The hand of God is however so manifest in recent events that we may firmly believe that a higher and better future is in store."**

Henry never wavered from his early commitment to see God's truth proclaimed and His Kingdom come in Syria. In 1857 he was offered a professorship at Union Seminary. In 1870 he was elected as secretary of the new Presbyterian Mission Board and in 1883 he was asked to be a United States Minister to Persia. All these he declined knowing his commitment to Syria was his first priority.

During his time on the field he fulfilled many roles as the need arose:

- Acting pastor of the Syrian church of Beirut
- Superintendent of the Syrian Mission School
- Secretary of the Ashrafiyeh Hospital for the Insane from its inception
- Editor of the Arabic Journal El Nesrah
- He helped to found the Syrian Protestant College in 1866. By 1910 this college had a faculty of 28 and a student body of 500.

When Henry was 69 he wrote, **"How can a missionary resign at 70? We ought to work right on up to the gates of glory."** God granted him his wish. He died in harness in Beirut in 1910. The New York Times in its obituary of April 29, 1910 wrote, **"To Dr. Jessup more than to any other man is due the remarkable spread of missionary and educational work in Syria in the last half century."**

Henry, along with most of his fellow 'workers', endured long separations from his children. In this too he experienced the faithfulness of God. Up until 1906, from this small band of 'workers' 6 sons and 13 daughters had returned to work in Syria after completing studies elsewhere. Others went as 'workers' to Turkey, Persia and China.



The righteous will flourish like a palm tree. They will grow like a cedar in Lebanon; planted in the house of the Lord. They will flourish in the courts of our God.
Psalm 92:12-13