

FAITH WORKING BY LOVE

D. T. FISKE



THE CROSS AND THE CROWN;
OR,
FAITH WORKING BY LOVE:
AS EXEMPLIFIED IN
THE LIFE OF
FIDELIA FISKE.

BY
D. T. FISKE.

WRITTEN FOR THE CONGREGATIONAL
SABBATH SCHOOL AND PUBLISHING SOCIETY,
AND APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

Tentmaker Publications
2005



Tentmaker Publications
121 Hartshill Road
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffs. ST4 7LU
www.tentmaker.org.uk

ISBN 1899003 00 2

This edition re-typeset, 2005

Originally published by the
Congregational Sabbath School and Publishing Society,
Boston.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1868,
by the *Sabbath School and Publishing Society,*
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court
for the District of Massachusetts.

PREFACE

THEODORE PARKER, having read Wayland's "Life of Dr. Judson," wrote thus in his journal: "What a man! What a character! Had the whole missionary work resulted in nothing more than the building up of such a man, it would be worth all it has cost."

If such a man could use such language, may not the friends of missions say that the missionary work in Persia would be worth all it has cost, if it had simply furnished to the world such a specimen of true Christian womanhood as is seen in the life and character of FIDELIA FISKE?

In these days, when so many are earnestly discussing the question of "woman's rights" and "woman's sphere," it may be well to turn attention to the example of one, of whom Rev. Dr. Anderson says, "In the structure and working of her whole nature, she seemed to me the nearest approach I ever saw, in man or woman, to my ideal of our blessed Saviour, as he appeared on the earth."

Those contributions to biographical literature, which have been made by foreign missions, during the last half century, are invaluable. They constitute a part of the priceless heritage of the church. They illustrate and augment the power of Christianity in the world, and in many ways help forward the great missionary enterprise.

Soon after the death of Miss Fiske, a strong desire was felt by those who knew her best that some record of her life might be given to the public. I was urged to undertake the work, but could not consent to do so, until, after long delay, it seemed to be providentially laid upon me as a duty. I regret exceedingly that it was not committed to some one who could have given to it immediate and continuous attention. My task has been a humble but laborious one;—that of an editor rather than of an author. I have aimed, as far as possible, to let Miss Fiske tell the story of her own life. From the superabundant materials, I have

endeavoured to select such as would give a just and truthful impression of one whose piety was so suggestive of "The Cross and the Crown," and so illustrative of that Faith that works by Love.

If any of the friends, who have so kindly furnished letters and other materials for this volume, are disappointed at the omission of so much that is valuable, they will readily discover the reason for the omission in the present size of the volume.

In the preparation of these pages, it has been pleasant and profitable to hold intimate communion with so choice a spirit; and in the perusal of them I trust others may find a like pleasure and profit.

If this imperfect record of Miss Fiske's life and labours shall serve to kindle in other hearts the flame of Christian love that burned so brightly and steadily in her own, and shall help advance the cause of missions, to which she so cheerfully gave herself for Jesus' sake, my highest wish in regard to it will be realized.

NEWBURYPORT, December, 1868.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I	
ANCESTORS	
First Emigrants settle in Wenham.—Grandparents.—Parents	Page 13

CHAPTER II	
BIRTHPLACE	
Birthplace and Early Home.—Shelburne.—Character of the People.— Natural Scenery,	18

CHAPTER III	
EARLY DAYS	
Birth—Early Home—First School.—Thoroughness and Self-reliance in Study.—Reads “Mather’s Magnalia” and “Dwight’s Theology.”— Parental Authority.—Filial Obedience.—Confidential Relations between Father and Daughter.—Study of the Bible—Early Religious Impressions.—Conversion.—Unites with the Church.—Miss Webster’s School.—Teaches School.—A Pupil at Franklin Academy and at Conway,	21

CHAPTER IV	
LIFE AT MT. HOLYOKE SEMINARY	
Enters the Middle Class.—Early Love for Miss Lyon.—Scholarship.— Revival of Religion.—Letters to Parents and Sister—Sickness.— Supposed Death.—Death of her Father and Sister.—Teaches.—Visits Miss Lyon.—Returns to the Seminary.—Graduation.—Appointed Teacher in the Seminary,	31

CHAPTER V	
DECISION TO BE A MISSIONARY	
Early Missionary Interest.—Dr. King.—Missionaries Visit the Seminary.—Miss Lyon’s Missionary Prayer-Meeting at Norwich.—Dr. Perkins’ Application for Missionary Teachers.—Miss Fiske offers to	

go.—Friends Object.—Visits Shelburne with Miss Lyon.—Decides to go to Persia.—Farewell Meetings.—Missionary Instruction given at Andover.—Letter.—A Mother's Consecration of Children to the Missionary Cause, 41

CHAPTER VI

EMBARKATION, VOYAGE, LAND JOURNEY, ARRIVAL

Company.—Farewell Note to her Mother.—Life on Shipboard.—Studies.—Care of Judith.—Storm at sea.—Gibraltar.—Letter to her "Section."—Smyrna.—Children of Missionaries.—Donkey Ride.—Constantinople.—Visits Schools.—Mosque of St. Sophia.—Trebizond.—Erzroom.—Arrival at Oroomiah.—Welcome.—Letters of Dr. Perkins and Miss Lyon, 54

CHAPTER VII

STATE OF THE NESTORIAN MISSION IN 1843.—FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND FIRST LABOURS

First Missionaries.—Reinforcements.—Mountain Nestorians and Dr. Grant.—Residence at Seir.—Letters.—Study of the Language.—Good News from Holyoke.—Governor of Oroomiah.—Call on his Wives.—Preparations for the School.—Hymns Translated.—Removes to the City.—Girls come to Read.—Chamber upon the Wall.—Sympathy for her Mother, 75

CHAPTER VIII

OCTOBER, 1843, TO JUNE, 1844

THE FEMALE SEMINARY.—Condition of Nestorian Women.—Houses and Beds.—Lying, Profanity, Ignorance.—Mrs. Grant's School.—A Boarding-school Desired; Appropriation for one.—School Opened.—First Pupils.—School-room.—Duties of Teacher.—Six Black Pins.—First Convert among the Women.—Walks with Pupils.—Sabbath School.—Meeting for Women—First Bible Lessons.—Visits to Villages.—Sympathy for the Sick, 90

CHAPTER IX

JUNE, 1844, TO JUNE, 1845

Visit to Ardishai.—Miss Fiske "Preaches."—Pupils taken to Seir in Vacation.—Persecution.—Schools Disbanded by the Patriarch.—

Payment of Money to Day Scholars Discontinued.—Mothers of the Pupils Convened.—Miss Fiske's Narrow Escape.—Entertainment for Friends at Close of School, 107

CHAPTER X

JUNE, 1845, TO JUNE, 1846

A Sabbath at Geog Tapa.—School-rooms Enlarged.—Visit to Ada and Gavalan.—First Revival.—Prayerfulness of the Converts.—Interest in the Monthly Concert.—The Woman who could not Pray.—Interest in Geog Tapa.—Influence of the Revival on the Minds and Manners of the Girls.—Sketches of Sarah, Hannah, and Dea. Gewergis, 118

CHAPTER XI

JUNE, 1846, TO JUNE, 1847

Visit to Tergawar.—Cholera.—A Revival.—Copies of the New Testament in Syriac given to the Pupils.—Presents Inexpedient, 138

CHAPTER XII

JUNE, 1847, TO SEPTEMBER, 1848

Cholera.—Visit to Marsheboo.—“Settling it.”—Arrival of Miss Rice.—Journey to Erzroom.—Departure of Mr. and Mrs. Stoddard. Death of Mrs. Stoddard.—Persecutions of Mar. Shimon.—Death of the King, 144

CHAPTER XIII

SEPTEMBER, 1848, TO JUNE, 1849

Saturday Duties.—Monthly Concert.—First Collection.—John “studying Backsliding.”—Revival.—Interest in Degala.—“Praying Sarah.”—Conversion of the Malek of Geog Tapa.—The Tiary Girls.—Death of Miss Lyon, 153

CHAPTER XIV

JUNE, 1849, TO JUNE, 1850

Women of Degala.—Changes in the School Building.—Moressa praying at her Betrothal.—Arrival of new Missionaries.—Revival.—First Public Examination of the School, 167

CHAPTER XV

JUNE, 1850, TO JULY, 1851

Women learn to Read.—Dismal Night-ride.—Moressa's Marriage.—Exegesis.—Study of English.—Religious Interest.—Sickness of Miss Rice.—Sister's Death.—Mr. Stoddard's Return.—Examination, 176

CHAPTER XVI

JULY, 1851, TO JUNE, 1852

Vacation in Gawar.—Visit to Ishtazan.—Mar. Shimon's Visit.—Gawar Occupied.—Letters to Mrs. Coan.—Condition of the School, 183

CHAPTER XVII

JUNE, 1852, TO JUNE, 1853

Vacation at Gavalan.—Entertainment of English, Russian, and Persian Commissioners.—Cholera.—Death of Gozel, of John's Parents, and of Judith Perkins.—Question of Return to America considered.—Domestic Department of the School.—Religious Interest.—Ophthalmia, 192

CHAPTER XVIII

JUNE, 1853, TO JUNE, 1854

Report of the State of the Seminary.—Religious Interest.—Examination of School at Geog Tapa.—Sabbath School.—Counsel to a Young Convert, 199

CHAPTER XIX

JUNE, 1854, TO JULY, 1855

Making Maps.—Visits to Ada and Supurghan.—Death of Mr. Stocking.—Political Disturbances.—Askar Kahn.—Account of School, for Mr. Stevens.—Letter to Holyoke Seminary 205

CHAPTER XX

JULY, 1855, TO JUNE, 1856

At Gavalan.—The Girls as Missionaries in the Mountains.—Native Converts at the Lord's Supper.—Domestic Labours.—“If you love me, lean hard.”—Revival.—Sanum's Children Poisoned.—Baptism at a “Fair,” 211

CHAPTER XXI

JUNE, 1856, TO JUNE, 1857

Maternal Association.—Repair of Seminary Building.—Health Impaired.—Tour in the Mountains of Koordistan.—Wedding of a Pupil in the Mountains.—Mission Schools.—Hostility of the Government.—Assassination of Askar Kahn.—Sickness and Death of Mr. Stoddard and Harriet.—Religious Interest in the School.—Thoughts of Heaven, 219

CHAPTER XXII

LAST YEAR IN PERSIA

Counsel to a Young Christian.—Death of Mrs. Rhea —Revival.—Sanctified Sorrow.—Decides to Return to America.—Last Communion Season in Persia.—Last Prayer-Meeting.—Farewell.—Journey.—Voyage.—At Home Again, 229

CHAPTER XXIII

JANUARY, 1859, TO DECEMBER, 1860

Letters from Nestorian Pupils.—Letters to her Nestorian Pupils.—Visit to Mount Holyoke Seminary.—Visit to Oxford and Painesville Seminaries.—Invited to give Religious Instruction at South Hadley.—Revival.—Visit to Montreal 242

CHAPTER XXIV

JANUARY, 1861, TO DECEMBER, 1862

Visit to New York.—Parlor Meetings.—Letters of Sympathy.—Missionary Meetings in Maine.—The War.—Commemorative Anniversary at Mount Holyoke Seminary.—Memorial Volume.—“Woman and her Saviour in Persia.”—“Recollections of Mary Lyon,” 251

CHAPTER XXV

1863

Invited to be Principal of Mount Holyoke Seminary.—Invited to assist at McLean Asylum.—Letter to Miss Jessup, 259

CHAPTER XXVI.

LAST LABOURS AT SOUTH HADLEY.

Health Failing.—Revival.—Right Hand.—Parting Prayer-meetings, 264

CHAPTER XXVII.

LAST SICKNESS.

At Shelburne.—Nature of her Disease.—Death.—Funeral, 270

CHAPTER XXVIII.

TESTIMONIALS.

From Hoshebo.—Sarrah.—Sanum.—Dea. Yonan.—Miss Rice.—Rev. Mr. Rhea.—Rev. Dr. Perkins.—Rev. Dr. Kirk.—Rev. Dr. Laurie.—Rev. Dr. Anderson, 281

CHAPTER I

ANCESTORS

TO be either proud or ashamed of our lineage is a sign of weakness and folly. To be grateful for a worthy ancestry is both reasonable and Christian. To recognize a close connection between the piety of parents and the piety of children, and of children's children, is what none will refuse to do who believe in the reality and perpetuity of the covenant which God of old established between himself and his chosen people and their seed after them in their generations.

FIDELIA FISKE¹ was a child of the covenant. She could look back through many generations along an unbroken line of godly ancestors. This fact belongs to the record of her life; nor will it seem out of place in this opening chapter to glance at those hereditary influences under which that life began.

In 1637 WILLIAM FISKE with his elder brother Rev. John Fiske, emigrated from the County of Suffolk, England, to this country, settling first in Salem, Massachusetts, and subsequently in the adjoining town of Wenham. According to the testimony of Cotton Mather,—who places the name of “Mr. John Fiske” on his list of “reverend, learned, and holy divines by whose Evangelical ministry the churches of New England have been illuminated,”—they were children of pious and worthy parents, yea, of grandparents, and great-grandparents, eminent for zeal in the true religion.”

¹ The branch of the family to which Miss Fiske belonged have generally omitted the final *e* from the name. It is retained in this volume because it was adopted universally by the early settlers in this country; and because Miss Fiske, during the latter part of her life, returned to the more ancient orthography, and expressed her decided preference for it.

William Fiske was a man of intelligence, energy, and Christian integrity. He took a leading part in public affairs; enjoyed the confidence and esteem of his townsmen, holding at different times all the important offices of trust which were at their disposal, being their Representative to the General Court for six successive years. From him the subject of this memoir was descended. The intervening genealogical links were five in number.

WILLIAM FISKE, JR., was the eldest son of the above William; was born, lived, and died in Wenham. He inherited largely his father's abilities and virtues, was deacon of the church, and, like his father held various offices of public trust and honour, representing his town for six years in the General Court.

EBENEZER FISKE son of William, Jr., was born in 1679; resided in Wenham, was deacon of the church, and died at the age of ninety-two.

EBENEZER FISKE, JR., son of Ebenezer, was born at Wenham July 2, 1716. Leaving his early home, he resided in different places, removing at length to Shelburne in 1761, where he was one of the earliest settlers. He was a man who had great influence in shaping the civil and ecclesiastical affairs of this new town. Athletic, resolute, fearless, and spirited, with a high sense of personal honour and independence, and of inflexible religious principles, he exerted great influence in the growing community.

His wife, Dorcas Tyler, of Upton, was a woman well fitted, by her native good sense, tact, energy, and eminent piety to be the companion of the sturdy pioneer. Burdened with the cares of a numerous family, she yet walked with God; and through her daily life there breathed a serene, cheerful, saintly spirit.

She was accustomed to spend much time in prayer, and frequently set apart whole days for this purpose. Her last days were days of almost continuous praying; and the burden of her prayers then was, as it had previously been, that her posterity might be a godly seed even to the latest generation. The family traditions of this godly woman were familiar to Fidelia in her early years, and inspired her with a profound and tender veneration for her memory.

She makes this touching allusion to her in a letter to a cousin, in 1858:—