

Prayer Meetings That Made History

By

Basil Miller

*Author of "God's Great
Soul Winners"*

The Warner Press Anderson, Indiana

Copyright, 1938, By Gospel Trumpet

Contents

I.	The Prayer Meeting As A "Concert Of Prayer"	3
II.	Undying Results Of A Cottage Prayer Meeting	5
III.	The Haystack Prayer Meeting.....	7
IV.	George Mueller Won In A Cottage Prayer Meeting	9
V.	The Roof Prayer Meeting In Orphanage History	11
VI.	The Upper-Room Prayer Meeting.....	14
VII.	Moody's Roving Commission.....	16
VIII.	The Prayer Meeting That Shook A Nation	18
IX.	The Birth Of The Christian Endeavor	20
X.	The Family Prayer Meeting In The Log Hut.....	22
XI.	Moody's Student Conference Prayer Meeting.....	24
XII.	The Prayer Meeting Producing A World-Wide Revival	26
XIII.	Prayer and the Holy Club.....	29
XIV.	A Father's Secret Prayer Sanctuary	33

I. The Prayer Meeting As A "Concert Of Prayer"

A Century of United Prayer

Organized prayer meetings on a national scale gave rise to events which shall be measured in their power only by the Judgment Day.

This is the story. A Presbyterian minister, named Robert Miller, wrote a book in 1723 wherein he urged the ministers and churches of England to pray concertedly for the conversion of the heathen. The challenge was taken up on a large scale. Shortly afterward those spiritual influences began to operate which resulted in the formation of the Methodist societies, which came as a culmination of the Holy Club. This organization was formed by young students at Oxford for the express object of prayer and Bible study.

The Methodist movement was the first visible result of this concert of prayer, for it began as a spiritual awakening which was destined to reach the known world.

It was during the year of 1746 that the concert of prayer took hold of the churches throughout England, and everywhere volumes of petitions ascended for the salvation of the heathen world. Some ministers sent a memorial to Boston which invited all Christians in America to enter into a concert of prayer which should last for seven years. It was during the next year that Jonathan Edwards, holding forth in Northampton, issued a plea for intercessory prayer on behalf of the unconverted in their midst, and of the heathen as well.

The years leaped rapidly toward the end of that century, and in 1783 John Sutcliffe introduced Edward's pamphlet to the ministers of England through the Northamptonshire Association of Baptist Ministers. At once the Baptist churches set aside the first Monday of every month for the express purpose of interceding for the heathen nations. The following words were inserted into the record of the presentation of the plan:

"We shall rejoice if any other Christian societies of our own or other denominations will unite with us, and we do now invite them to join most cordially heart and hand in the attempt. *Who can tell what the consequences of such a united effort in prayer may be?*"

The stirring challenge had found a responsive chord in the heart of a shoe cobbler "who served God for a business and cobbled shoes to make a living." A few years later, when this prayer concert had taken hold of the consciences of the churches round about, William Carey was invited to speak before the association of ministers at Nottingham. He preached a memorable message from Isaiah 54:2-3. The heart of his sermon is in these words, "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God."

At the close of the message it is reported that Andrew Fuller arose and said, "Are we not going to do something about it?" Carey had dismissed the congregation, but out of Fuller's question there came further discussion, and on October 7 of that year twelve Baptist ministers met in the parlor of one Widow Wallis, for the purpose of organizing a society for the Christianization of the heathen. Here began modern missions. This group founded the "Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen." The first collection taken up amounted to about \$55.

Notable consequences thus began to appear from the concert of prayer. It is interesting that denominational lines were obliterated in God's dealing through these prayer meetings. Helen

Barrett Montgomery remarks that these Baptists in England were aroused to missionary prayer meetings through a pamphlet written by a Congregational minister in America, Jonathan Edwards; the first treasurer of the society was Samuel Pierce, whose prayerful interest in missions had been awakened through the enthusiasm of a Methodist bishop, Thomas Coke, who had crossed the Atlantic numerous times at his own expense. Coke finally offered himself to the Methodist Church as a missionary, and in 1814 set sail for India, but he died at sea.

It was the same concert of prayer which struck fire to the student body of Yale College under the leadership of President Timothy Dwight, wherein most of the students were converted. This same concert of prayer—organized as private prayer meetings which were held in 1795—was the instrument in the hands of the Lord to cause times of refreshing to reach 150 churches in New England.

The same prayer-meeting concert reached over the Alleghenies into Ohio and Kentucky. Under the leadership of James McGready and Barton Stone, it gave birth to the tremendous soul-stirring Cane Ridge camp meetings where multiplied thousands were converted. McGready's first plan was to get all the people praying, united in prayer meetings for an outpouring of the Spirit in a deluge of Pentecostal power.

Out of this same concert of prayer were produced the spiritual activities of Peter Cartwright, who won multiplied thousands.

This "prayer chain" bridged more than seventy-five years. It began as a germ, written in a book, which stirred the consciences of England until this newborn devotional and spiritual dynamic produced the Methodist Church. Next it leaped the chasm of the ocean and awakened the conscience of Jonathan Edwards, who succeeded in arousing his people to pray. And he wrote a book which carried the spiritual enthusiasm for a concert of prayer—bands of prayer meetings—back to England, which in turn touched the heart of a Baptist minister. From his work came the first modern missionary society, which sent William Carey to India and set the light—blazed the trail—which led other missionaries to sail for the heathen world.

Again it stirred the hearts in America, and when the prayer concert started, in 1895, it touched a college president, and at the same time set fire to the soul of a southern evangelist, who became the prophet of the early camp meetings. Then we find the identical note of concerted prayer awakening the minds of a band of college students at Williams College, in 1805, and under the "haystack prayer meeting" influence came the first American missionary society. This gave the matchless life of Judson to the annals of the church, as well as hundreds of others no less consecrated.

A concert of prayer—that was all. Prayer bands formed in churches—prayer meetings held in homes—prayer circles binding together churches—concerted national prayer activities—and out of such tidal streams of prayer came results of inestimable greatness.

Pray concertedly—the prayer achievements of your life cannot be measured.

II. Undying Results Of A Cottage Prayer Meeting

The Moravian Missionary Movement

On the scroll of achievements of the Moravian missionary movement appears the little-known name of Christian David, the fires of whose devotions have flamed brightly for more than two centuries. He was one of the last of the old Hussites, or Moravians. He came out of Moravia, where he had resolved "faithfully to take charge of poor souls for whom Christ had shed his blood, and especially to collect together and protect those that were oppressed and persecuted." When he breaks into our story he is twenty-one years old, a carpenter by trade, who is journeying with two other friends in search of a "resting place" for the remains of a small Moravian community.

He had heard that Count Zinzendorf had begun to act kindly toward those of persecuted faith by allowing them to live upon his great estate in Upper Lusatia, where he was himself building a house.

Christian David, his two friends, their wives and children, had settled upon the estate and one was building his house when the Count returned to his home on the night of December 22, 1722. Through the forest gleamed a bright light from the newly constructed dwelling. It was the home of David. Coming upon it, Zinzendorf entered the cottage and after saluting it, fell down on his knees, earnestly asking the blessing of God to rest upon the new settlers.

David soon returned to Moravia and brought more settlers with him, until shortly the Moravian colony at "Hernhut" numbered six hundred. The little group became known for their Christian fidelity. They called themselves Unitas Pratorum, or United Brethren. The Count did not live on this estate all the time, but spent many months away at Dresden, where political duties engaged his attention.

From time to time he was struck with the kindly simplicity of the lives of these Brethren. Their devotion and piety began to make an impression upon the mind of Zinzendorf. He had always been disposed toward a mystical element in religion, for he had been trained under the influence of Spener, one of the mystics of that age. It was not long until he was showing favors to the settlers, and a friendship grew up between servant and master.

It was the custom of the Moravians to hold cottage meetings on Sunday afternoons, and soon Christian David gave Zinzendorf an invitation to attend a prayer meeting which was held at his home. It was here that a lasting impression was made upon the character of Zinzendorf, and gradually he determined to do all he was able to revive that church, which had been noted for its piety since the days of Huss. He began to withdraw from the world of politics and pleasure, and to devote his time to preaching and teaching the gospel. At first he did not aim to withdraw from the Lutheran Church, but to form an association of pious souls within it.

He soon assumed the leadership of the group, and in 1727 resigned his office at Dresden and joined the Moravians at Hernhut. On August 13 of that year, at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, the Spirit of God came mightily upon the congregation, and this became the day recognized ever since as the birthday of the renewed Moravian Church. Zinzendorf shaped the discipline, outlined the policies, and in general assumed the guidance of the organization.

The little prayer meeting in Christian David's cottage at last came to fruition. We have only a scant knowledge of what occurred at this prayer meeting—just enough to assure us that the Spirit was present to warm the heart of the Count, and to cast the energies of his soul toward Christ.

What a story this small cottage prayer meeting wrote in the annals of missionary activities! Through a glorious providence in the chain of events, Zinzendorf came in touch with the missionary work of Hans Egede in Greenland, while attending the coronation of the new king of Sweden. In his entourage was a servant who met a Negro in Copenhagen who informed him concerning the religious plight of his race in the West Indies. The same Negro visited Hernhut and aroused the little congregation to the need of that far-away island. Two laymen, Leonard Dober, a potter, and David Nitzschmann, a carpenter, with only \$3.00 each and the clothes they wore, set out for the West Indies.

Later Zinzendorf sailed for the same country. It was not long until another band went to the savages of Guiana. As faithful servants of the King they went to Greenland, to Labrador, Africa, Alaska, to the lepers, to the cannibals, to' the ends of the earth.

There is no parallel to their heroism in the annals of missions; in one station it took the lives of forty-nine missionaries, who died in fifty years, to break through and gain any converts.

A cottage prayer meeting sowed the seeds that sprouted into such missionary magnificence.

The story is not yet completed. The Moravians went to America to labor among the natives, and it was here that a young Anglican clergyman met their leader, Spangenberg, in 1736. Here began the contact of John Wesley with the Moravians, and out of this contact came Wesley's marvelous conversion on May 24, 1738. John had watched a group of Moravian missionaries on board the boat while a storm raged. During this time they remained calm, unafraid, while the passengers and crew were frightened.

When he returned to London he met another Moravian, Peter Bohler, who began to instruct him and his brother Charles in the way of the Lord "more perfectly." The spiritual instruction and guidance of Bohler gave fruit in the lives of these young men, and soon both of them had received the witness of their conversion. This was the event which sired the Methodist movement, wherein multitudes of millions have been gathered into the kingdom of God. Methodism gave spiritual birth to Whitefield who lighted the torch of spiritual evangelism in America, out of which came "The Great Awakening," under which multitudes were swept into the kingdom.

Later, from the cradle of Methodism came William Booth, who took salvation to the street corners and brought new hope to millions.

From the same inspiration came the sweet songs of Charles Wesley, and later of John Newton, and on the waves of these songs thousands have been lifted nearer to the gates of gold.

It was a small seed planted in a tiny cottage prayer meeting in a humble home with a few simple-hearted Brethren gathering—but out of it sprouted a tree whose roots had gone deep into the heart of the Count, and from its branches came far-flung movements in the lives of nations. Now under the shadow of this tree, sprouted from a cottage prayer meeting, millions are come to dwell.

A word of invitation to attend a cottage prayer meeting has resounded with such power that its echoes roll from century to century.

III. The Haystack Prayer Meeting

The American Missionary Movement

God is no respecter of places (nor of persons). Under a haystack he heard the voices of a group of young men praying, talking, declaring, "We can do it; and we will."

Here, out of that prayer meeting, the American missionary movement had its birth.

Go back to the conception of that praying group. Five young men were students at Williams College, located in Williamstown, Mass. It was their habit to engage in prayer meetings in their rooms, and also out under the trees. One afternoon in the spring of 1806 they walked across a field to the tree where they were to have their meeting. The clouds drifted together and before the students realized it, a rain squall came up. In a near-by field was a haystack, and the five young men raced to it for shelter.

Under this haystack they continued their prayer, calling upon God to enable them to do something for the heathen. At length they discussed the seriousness of the situation. "What could they do toward sending the gospel to the heathen world?" This was the question which they faced. Their numbers were few, and they had no means. At the conclusion Samuel Mills, the head of the band, cried out in those noble words, "We can do it; and we will."

The die was cast. There was no turning back. They must go. Five young men, that was all; immortal names they stand, Samuel Mills, James Richards, Francis Robbins, Harvey Loomis, and Byran Green.

Under that haystack they solemnly bowed and dedicated themselves in prayer to the work of foreign missions. There was not a missionary society in America, so their plan was not encouraging; nor was there any missionary interest among the churches. These students formed a missionary society and met frequently to study the needs of the fields. Two years later they signed a pledge binding themselves to foreign work, if it were possible for them to go,

In 1810 these students went to Andover Theological Seminary where three others of like spirit joined with them—Samuel Nott, Samuel Newell, and Adoniram Judson. For some time all these had been considering the necessity of going to the foreign field. Early in February of that year Judson made an irrevocable decision to become a missionary. He had been reading a book entitled, *The Star in the East*, by Buchanan, which burned the missionary message upon his soul.

Upon the advice of Moses Stuart, professor in the seminary, they laid their case before the ministers of Massachusetts, and told them of their desire to go to foreign lands. On June 29, 1810, the General Association of the Congregational Churches of that State formed a missionary society, and on September 5 of the same year the American Board of Foreign Missions was formally constituted.

Thus far the haystack prayer meeting had prevailed.

The following year, on September 11, the Board plucked up spirit enough to appoint Judson, Nott, and Hall as missionaries, and a newcomer in the band as well, Samuel Newell. There were no funds available for their support, and finally the Board decided if God had ordained that these young men should go, he would send the needed support. Contributions began to come in at once.

A memorable day was February 12, 1812, for on it was held the ordination service of the five

young men, and on the nineteenth of the month Judson and Newell sailed from Salem for Calcutta, and on the twenty-second Hall, Rice, and Nott sailed from Philadelphia for the same port.

In July of the following year Judson located in Burma, because the East India Company would not permit him to work in his chosen field. Here began a life which for thirty-seven years was devoted to the fostering of the work of the kingdom of that darkened land. His greatest work was not to be accomplished in the field of preaching, but in that of translating.

Among the wild tribes of Burma he lived, and suffered untold misery. "When he died hundreds of Christian Burmans were sleeping in Jesus, and some 7,000 survived in 63 churches, under the leadership of 163 missionaries and native workers.

Go back to the first six years and you find Judson laboring on without a single convert in that time. He lived long enough, however, to baptize thousands of Burmese converts, and to see his Burmese Bible brought from the press. He also formed a dictionary of the language and translated several books into Burmese.

Whence came the source of this first American missionary work? Five young men banded themselves together to pray for missions, and out yonder while the rain fell they carried their prayer to the throne under a haystack. God answered, and soon missionaries were sent to the foreign lands.

A noble trail of men who have gone forth from that time until today—the most brilliant of the nation, the most faithful of the land, have through the example of these early leaders devoted themselves to spreading the kingdom tidings to the heathen.

There have been no problems that these men have not dared face. They have died as martyrs that Christ's cross might be uplifted. They have constructed their hospitals, builded their schools, established their printing presses, reduced the languages to writing, and established civilization side by side with the cross.

Noble bands they have been. No sacrifice has been too great, even to the laying down of their lives, like Doctor Shedd, the medical missionary who lost his life trying to save the Armenians during the awful Turkish drive. They have buried their hearts in foreign soils, and laughing, they have conquered even in their death.

Samuel Mills's mother sounded their battle call and challenge when she wrote to him, "It seems the die is cast. You think that God Almighty is able to support your parents. While we are supported by sympathetic friends in our peaceful dwelling, you may be tossing on the billows of the ocean or surrounded by blood-thirsty savages. May the God of heaven be the everlasting portion."

Find the markers of their graves, some yonder under the hottest sands of the equator, some on the hillsides of the highest mountains, some in the depths of the briny ocean—they paid the supreme price, yet the cross marches on. Judson himself died while at sea seeking for health, and was buried on April 12, 1850. His frail remains, wrapped in canvas, were gently let down into the ocean. The ocean became his sepulcher.

Name them over again—burn those noble titles into your memory—call to vision the marker, made of granite, which commemorates the historic haystack—listen to the patter of the raindrops as they strike upon the hay—hear the triumphant words, after prayer had availed, "We can do it; and we will."

IV. George Mueller Won In A Cottage Prayer Meeting

The World's Greatest Man of Prayer

Out of a humble cottage prayer meeting, of all the means of grace the most lowly, came the marvelous, wide-reaching work of George Mueller. A cottage prayer meeting gave the world its greatest example of prayer. The man who prayed in more things, more money, than any other of all the centuries was reached through the instrumentality of a prayer meeting.

A wondrous chain of circumstances was set in movement through an unknown friend, Beta. Hitherto Mueller was a young man of the world, disdainful of religion, attending church but twice a year. He possessed no Bible, loved no Christ, and had never heard the true gospel preached until November, 1825. Then Beta marched under the hand of Providence into his life.

Beta said, "Let's take a walk." Out into the woods one Sunday afternoon they went, George and Beta, with all the world shut out. During the course of the conversation Beta told him about a cottage prayer meeting which he had been attending each week in the house of a Christian tradesman by the name of Wagner. He explained how they read the Bible, sang a gospel hymn, prayed, and someone read a printed sermon.

Mueller wrote long afterwards, "No sooner had I heard this than it was to me as if I had found something after which I had been seeking all my life long. I immediately wished to go with my friend, who was not at once willing to take me, for knowing me as a gay young man he thought I would not like this meeting."

Together they attended the next cottage prayer meeting, and George was welcomed in a manner he could not forget. "Come as often as you please; house and heart are opened to you," said the host.

The friends sat down and sang a hymn; and one of their number, who afterward became a missionary in Africa for the London Missionary Society, fell on his knees and asked the Lord's richest blessings to rest upon the meeting. The simplicity of the scene touched Mueller, and the doors to a heavenly prospect began to open to his view. The hour of his destiny had struck, and Mueller was on the verge of the kingdom of heaven.

Referring to the event Mueller said, "This kneeling down made a deep impression upon me, for I had never before seen anyone on his knees, nor had I ever myself prayed on my knees." A chapter was read, and a sermon also. Then a hymn was sung, and the master of the house dismissed the meeting with prayer.

That was all—another cottage prayer meeting was completed. Yet all eternity will ring with the glad tidings of that meeting held in a humble cottage, for George Mueller was brought to the Lord through this meeting. The light of an eternal sunrise broke into his sin-dimmed soul, and he entered upon a life of prayer.

A call to the missionary field seemed to be God's will for Mueller, but each time he was ready to go he was providentially hindered. Finally we find him in Bristol, England, where God miraculously opened a plain course to him—that of operating an orphanage on the faith line.

At the very beginning Mueller laid down certain rules for the financial structure of the work. It was to be a work of faith. He would not tell anyone of their needs. Help should never be solicited, and all buildings, food, and clothing must come through the avenue of prayer to God. This was his money policy, and it worked through prayer.

The investment of the prayer meeting began to pay large dividends. Orphans by the hundreds flocked to the home. Soon a plant and the grounds had been "prayed down." In forty-six years Mueller and his aides had prayed into existence five orphanages, with all the necessary equipment and all the needs for the caring of the children. On an average two thousand children were cared for annually.

A broad program was carried on under the supervision of this prophet of prayer. He gave aid liberally to schools and assisted in Sunday schools where more than 150,000 children had been trained. He circulated 2,000,000 Bibles, in whole or in part, at the cost of \$200,000, and also 3,000,000 books and tracts at a like expense. Another project dear to his heart was the missionary enterprise, and he gave about \$1,300,000 for this cause alone. In all Mueller prayed down through private prayer \$7,500,000.

Yet this came out of the divine work started in a cottage prayer meeting.

Mueller stated in his dairy that he had received answers to twenty-five thousand specific prayers, and five thousand of them had been answered on the day they had been made. Fifty thousand times he had laid his needs before the Lord, and he was sustained in them all by faith alone.

The incidents of answered prayers read more like fiction than truth. Many times there was not a thing to feed the children for the noon meal, and after morning prayers someone would send in the money, or a dray wagon would back up to the kitchen door and unload the food for the meal. Not once would he tell his needs. Once a wealthy man came and asked in what way he might help. Mueller refused to answer his questions, for he would not break his principle of telling God alone all his needs. The man became somewhat angry; but when he left God spoke to him, and he sent back the exact amount of money necessary, and for which this saintly man had been praying.

On another occasion Mueller was traveling the ocean to the New World for a speaking engagement. It was necessary for his boat to make a certain connection in order that he might not be late. A heavy fog covered the waters and the captain dropped anchor, being afraid to proceed in the face of the storm. Mueller went to the old seaman and asked if they might pray about continuing the journey. Of course the captain could not refuse such a simple request as this. So they dropped on their knees and George "took hold of God" and asked that the fog might be lifted. When he said "Amen," the captain began to pray. Mueller said, "There is no use for you to pray, for you do not believe God will lift the fog; and if you did believe it, it would not be necessary for God has already lifted it in answer to my prayer."

When the captain went on deck he found the fog was gone, and the boat proceeded on its journey.

What manner of man was this? Just the same kind that may be lurking in the background of some of your cottage prayer meetings, provided you become the unknown Beta who will invite him to attend.

You say, "Just a cottage prayer meeting and I will not attend." But should there never again be any visible results accruing from another cottage meeting, this one has paid the debt of them all, for out of it was born the prophet of prayer.

"Let us kneel and pray"—words which struck an arrow of the Spirit to the soul of young George.

V. The Roof Prayer Meeting In Orphanage History

Doctor Barnardo's Orphanage

It was more than seventy years ago that a young medical student stood on a roof in the destitute section of London. Gazing down below he saw huddled forms of little destitute waifs, hungry, cold, homeless. Eleven in all, they were outcasts, no mothers to love them, no fathers to provide for them.

Out of that scene came a distinct call to devote his life to caring for such little ones. The student knelt where he stood, lifted up his voice to his tender heavenly Father, and in prayer consecrated his life to this work. He asked God's help in beginning, and soon twenty-five orphans were housed.

Thus began the Barnardo Homes, where more than a hundred thousand orphan children have been cared for during the past seven decades. They originated in a roof prayer meeting, and they have been maintained through the noblest of arts, that of prayer. In all this time only one child has ever been refused admittance. It was the story of "Little Carrots" which wrote into the charter of the work, "No destitute child ever refused admission."

Shortly after the beginning of the work, when the house was crowded, jammed, with no room remaining, "Carrots" asked for admission, but there seemed to be no more room. He was told to come back in two weeks. A week later his little body was found frozen to death. From that time on Thomas Barnardo asked God literally to make him the father of the fatherless, and through prayer he determined never again to refuse anyone entrance. "Carrots" was the first and only child ever refused an entrance. Prayer housed, clothed, fed them all.

The vision of this servant of God leaped the Atlantic and now in both the United States and Canada his homes are found, with more than fifteen thousand children and young people under their roofs.

It was a *roof* prayer meeting which put *roofs* over these thousands of children's heads.

Years ago when the struggles of the home were many, Doctor Barnardo was forced to place a mortgage upon one of the largest homes in order to care for the growing family of orphans. When the money came due, it was impossible for him to raise it. He prayed, as he had never prayed before. He prayed every day for three weeks, and then he prayed most of the nights through. In the mornings when he opened his mail the sought after check never arrived. At last he went to his lawyer, determined to turn the building over to him for sale. On his way to the office, he passed a clubhouse on Picadilly when a man *came running* down the steps and bumped right into him. The stranger offered apologies, and then glancing into his face, asked, "Are you Doctor Barnardo?"

"Yes," came the reply, "have we met before?" "No, but I know you because my wife showed me your photo many months ago. Do you know, Doctor Barnardo, I have just this moment arrived from India, and my wife made me promise before I sailed that I would see you immediately on arrival and give you this. I was just on my way to find you, and it is strange that we should meet like this. Come into the club and open this." He handed him an ordinary little envelope.

When opened, it was found to contain the exact sum needed to pay the mortgage. The sainted man of prayer often used this example of how God would answer one's prayer even before it had been expressed.

The gifts which have come through prayer have run into the millions. The first gift was

twenty-seven farthings, about fourteen cents in our money. Since that time Doctor Barnardo has received fifteen million dollars in offerings, all of which arrived through faith and prayer. This is twice the sum which George Mueller prayed in for his orphanage and missionary work. This came about because a medical student knelt in prayer on a roof in London.

When George Mueller's story was circulated so widely, it came to the ears of Mr. Ishii in Japan, who at once opened an orphanage on the identical principle, and has prayed in all the necessities for his work. In Cairo, Egypt, is an orphanage which is run upon the *prayer principle*, and its needs are always supplied. In China is the "Door of Hope," an independent mission for girls, that is operated on the same lines of prayer and trusting God for its needs.

It is interesting to note that during the war days in England there were no unsupplied needs in the orphanages which Mueller had started and which are still run on the same method on which the founder started them. In fact, shortly before the war broke out there was a marked increase in the offerings, until a sufficient surplus had been accumulated to carry on during the times of trouble. This sum was enough to run the homes for a year in advance. It came in from all over the world. The heavenly Father, feeding the birds, thus made preparation for the answering of the prayer even during the day of national distress.

George Mueller was twenty-one years old before he ever saw a man on his knees praying, but the impression was so great that he made this art the rule of his life. In 1832 he read the biography of the German, Francke, who through trust in God had cared for two thousand orphans, and he determined to begin, in 1835, a hundred years after Francke's death to carry on a similar experiment in England.

Thus the faith work of one jumped a hundred years and inspired another successful man of prayer.

While Mueller's work was being so successfully conducted in England, God was reaching the heart of a young German pastor in Hamburg, and at the time Mueller was reading of the faith activities of Francke, Immanuel Wichern inspired a small group with the desire to rescue the under-children of the city. They said, "We have only one treasure, the promise of our gracious Lord." Little did they talk to anyone, but greatly did they bombard the skies with their prayers. Their daily greeting was, "Are you praying earnestly?"

Small contributions began to come in until Wichern and his mother took shelter under a low-thatched roof of the *Raukes Halts*, the "Rough House." "Jesus Christ," said this noble young minister, "is the founder of the Rough House." At last twelve boys came to the doors asking for admission, eight were illegitimate, four came from criminal and drunken homes, one was an escaped criminal, and one was an imbecile because of his sins. The home grew until soon there were twenty such shelters for these boys and girls. The principle of love that was found in the homes began to work, and fine, sturdy Christian characters were sent out into the world.

The experience, occurring in 1843, when their lease expired is a sample of their faith. Many thousand marks were needed to renew the lease. No money was in sight. Finally they prayed, prayed diligently, and then placed a short notice in the *Fliegende Blatter*, and soon from all over Germany the needed funds came in.

Mueller's prayers, friendly greetings of Wichern's group, "Are you praying earnestly?" and a roof prayer meeting attended by only one, and God through faith and prayer made orphanage history.

Find a roof, as Barnardo did, go under a haystack as did the college students, get out in a

grove as Mott and Moody did, and prevail. God is still on the throne and will answer.

VI. The Upper-Room Prayer Meeting

George Williams and the Y. M. C. A.

Pentecost came about through a prayer meeting in an "upper room." Francis E. Clark gave birth to the constitution of the Christian Endeavor Society in an "upper room"—the third story of his parsonage. The Young Men's Christian Association was born in an upper room.

Count them out—Room No. 1, Room No. 2, and Room No. 13—three rooms and three prayer meetings—and the Y. M. C. A. was born.

Without telling the story of George Williams it would be impossible to write the history of this movement—for Williams is the Y. M. and the Y. M. is Williams. George Williams was a farmer lad, who seemed too awkward to make a success of driving a team in the hayfield so that the load would not upset. So he was sent to the city that he might become a drapery clerk. From the start he was a successful business man. We find him working with the Hitchcock and Rogers Company, with more than 140 assistants. At once his heart warmed toward these young men.

Off of his bedroom in the dormitory where he stayed was another room where five young men slept. He obtained permission from them to conduct a prayer meeting. Three young Christians, George himself and two of the young men sleeping in the neighboring room, would meet and pray. George summarizes these early beginnings thus, "We met, our numbers grew and the room was crammed. In answer to prayer the Spirit of God was present, and we had conversion after conversion."

"In Room No. 14," he writes, "the Lord having closed me in, I was enabled to plead, and I believe the Lord has given me—" (here he named two of his assistants). On December 23, 1844, he mentioned a number of the men for whom he was praying, and on January 1 of the next year he mentioned six of these as being "under conviction and give evidence of the work of grace."

The meetings grew in number and influence. On Friday, June 30, 1843, a prayer meeting had been held from half-past six until half-past seven in bedroom No. 1, and a month later there were twenty present at an early morning prayer meeting, and on September 25, Room No. 2 saw another meeting conducted therein.

Later, in No. 13, twenty-seven young men were present at the prayer meeting.

A year or so before this time Williams and some more friends had formed a Mutual Improvement Society and a Young Men's Missionary Society, with many meetings for study and prayer.

Throughout all this time the Spirit of God seemed to be working.

Up until this time these meetings had been conducted in one establishment, but these young colleagues felt that the work should be enlarged to take in the workers in other factories and business houses as well. "If God has so blessed us in this house, why should he not give such a blessing in every house in London?" asked George. When this question was answered it came in the form of the Young Men's Christian Association.

The actual place where this movement came into being was an upper room, the bedroom where the young men had been gathering for prayer. The first meeting was conducted in George's own bedroom. While going to the Surrey Chapel one Sunday evening late in May, 1844, George and his friends discussed the possibility of taking in other young men in the

neighboring establishments and of forming a society for this purpose. On June 6 of that year the meeting was called which saw the dream realized. On that night, in George's upper room, twelve young men determined to form a society, the object of which was to influence "religious young men to spread the Redeemer's kingdom amongst those by whom they are surrounded." Later, a second meeting was conducted, and soon there were established religious services throughout the various factories of London.

It was not long until the society rented a cheap room, paying half a crown a week for it—this seems a small beginning for the enterprise which now owns millions upon millions of dollars worth of property throughout the world.

A paper was started which carried the news of the society. In the course of time a secretary was elected, and finally through the process of gradual growth the movement reached to other nations, and then its great career on the mission field began.

It is impossible to estimate the good which this organization has accomplished. It must be called to mind that John R. Mott was the secretary of the Cornell University Y. M. C. A. when he accepted the invitation of Moody to attend the Mount Hermon Conference, which resulted in Mott's world-wide activities.

In his later life Williams could never get away from those prayer experiences in the upper rooms, where this movement came into being through vital contact with God. He was always urging the members of the association to pray, prevail in prayer. Those first members of the organization, in its formative days, were motivated by a spirit of prayer. Speaking to a group of workers toward the end of his life Williams said, "In prayer is our strength if we will only pray we may be as strong as the omnipotent strength of God can make us."

When the Jubilee of the founding of the Association was held in London in 1894, delegates gathered from all nations of the world where Christian work had been undertaken. Figures showed that the membership in those fifty years had grown from the original twelve to more than a half million, and that the number of separate units was above five thousand. It was at this time that England knighted "the grand old man" whose prayers had given the world such a charitable and philanthropic society.

The missionary slogan which Mott had originated in America became the cry of the movement at this time. Everywhere men were saying, "The evangelization of the world in this generation." This represents the greatest battle cry since the days of Pentecost. It was a vision of missionary evangelization which gripped the conscience of the churches.

In 1901 was held the Jubilee of the founding of the first Association in America, which occurred fifty years before in the Central Congregational Church of Boston.

It was after the World Conference of the Association in 1905 that we see this man of God, now nearing the end of a long career of service, speaking with an American friend. He says that before parting they should have a season of prayer. Williams and this friend knelt together, and in a feeble voice Sir George prayed for the young men of America, for the young men of Russia and Japan, and for all the world. His parting words were a blessing and a benediction upon the young men of our land. He said, "We shall never meet on earth again. I am just waiting, waiting for his call." He dreamed of heaven, and was there.

After eighty-four years of life his bones found a resting place in St. Paul's Cathedral—but his greatest battles were fought and his victories won in an "upper room"—a room of prayer.

VII. Moody's Roving Commission

An Invalid's Prayer

Some prayer meetings are famous because of the large congregations attending, such as those that broke from the mighty revivals in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Others find their fame in the fact that a few prayed mighty results into being. But the story of Moody's "roving commission" is of a prayer meeting which was attended by only one, and that one was an invalid. Few prayer meetings have brought about the salvation of so many thousands of souls.

The narrative is given by S. D. Gordon, as he heard Moody relate it in the Chicago Tabernacle.

Early in the seventies of last century, just after the fire in Chicago, Moody's new tabernacle was not yet completed, so he decided to go to England and hear the great preachers over there. This, as far as he thought, was his reason for going—but God had a far greater one. For in that land an invalid had been praying for Moody to come to their church—these prayer meetings had been going on for two years. All this invalid could do, so she told herself, was to pray, pray for Moody to come. One day, two years previous to Moody's sailing for England, she found a copy of the *Watchman*, in which a talk which Moody had given was reported. It was a sermon he had given in one of his Farwell Hall meetings in Chicago. The talk made the invalid's heart burn, so she began to pray that Moody might come to their London church two years of a prayer meeting which was attended by one person two years of a secret, private prayer meeting two years of a prayer meeting about which no notices had been given out.

Finally God's hour struck—the prayer meeting broke through the "gates of pearl." The answer came.

Moody felt a stirring to go to London "to hear the great preachers," as he supposed; but God ordained a far higher purpose—that of answering the petitions of a prayer meeting. After hearing Spurgeon and other great masters of the pulpit, Moody said, "I was running around after men like that."

He had not been speaking anywhere. One Saturday at noon he had gone to Exeter Hall on the Strand. In order that he might speak he had been asked to make a motion, which would give him the floor to say whatever he might like. At the close of the talk a minister came to him and asked if he would preach for him the next day. When the hour came the building was full. As he spoke Moody sensed a hardness among the listeners. "They seemed as though carved out of stone or ice," he said.

That night the house was again filled. And when he was half way through his sermon the atmosphere changed, a cool heavenly zephyr blew across the congregation. A change marked the faces of the people. At the close of the service Moody gave the invitation, and the entire audience indicated a desire to become Christians. Thinking they might have misunderstood his proposition, he asked them to stay for a meeting in the lower room. Much to the glad surprise of everyone the entire audience again remained to seek God. The aisles were filled. The seats were taken. Then Moody recognized what had occurred—a miracle wrought by the Spirit was upon them.

Moody left word when he went the next day to Dublin that if he was needed to send a telegram.

When he arrived he received a message saying, "Come back at once. Church packed." He

returned, and in ten days 400 were converted. And then Moody testified:

"I had no plans beyond this church [speaking in his own tabernacle]. I supposed my lifework was here. But the result with me was that I was given a roving commission and have been working under it ever since."

The prayer meeting—yes, it continued.

When the sister of the invalid returned home from "their church" that morning she asked the invalid, "Who do you think preached today? A stranger from America, a man called Moody, I think was the name."

Then the sick lady replied, "I know what that means. There is something coming to the old church. Don't bring me any dinner. I must spend this afternoon in prayer."

A sick-bed prayer meeting, which was attended by one, that ran on for two years, yet out of it multiplied hundreds of thousands were converted.

Moody's roving commission, as he so aptly called his evangelistic command, took him around the world. With Sankey he went to the largest cities of the world, held his revivals, and gave his altar calls. He won a million souls, all because of a prayer meeting between a sick lady and her Lord.

Follow Moody's footsteps and note the history making results coming out of that prayer meeting.

He found the golden-voiced Sankey at a six o'clock prayer meeting at a Y. M. C. A. convention held in Indianapolis. When he asked for someone to start a hymn a young man in the rear of the hall arose and sang in a beautiful voice, "There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood." Here is another prayer meeting which made musical and soul-winning history.

Moody founded the Mount Hermon Schools for boys and girls at Northfield where those soul-elevating and time-moving conferences were conducted. At one of these student conferences in 1886 both the Student Volunteer Movement and the World's Christian Student Federation were born, and they, also, came out of a prayer meeting.

This invalid's prayer meeting, giving Moody his roving commission, sent him and Sankey into a gypsy camp in Epping Forest, England, where the soul of Cornelius Smith was touched, and where one of these notable workers laid his hand on the head of little Rodney Smith and said, "The Lord make a preacher out of you." And the career of Gypsy Smith was begun, resulting in the conversion of thousands.

The same roving commission sent Moody to London for a meeting into which a young medical student came, to be converted. Out of this was born the noble medical missionary career of Grenfell of Labrador fame.

A prayer meeting where only one was present sent Moody around the world personally to pray with more than 750,000 hungry souls, and to see a million born into the kingdom of God, three-fourths of whom felt the spirit of Moody's own prayer ascending in their behalf. It filled the largest halls with listeners to his messages, such as the old Hippodrome in New York, where it took five hundred ushers to handle the million and a half people who heard him through a ten weeks' meeting.

Here was an invalid's prayer meeting which moved the world, shook the kingdom of hell, brought joy to heaven.

Pray, if there be only one, for God hears and answers.

VIII. The Prayer Meeting That Shook A Nation

The Results of Joseph Lanphier's Prayer

Joseph Lanphier knelt alone. He prayed for days alone in an upper room of the Old North Dutch Church in Fulton Street, New York City, praying for a revival. Each day he would broadcast an invitation for others to meet with him, but because none came he was not to be deterred in his purpose of praying a revival upon the nation. This was an ambitious request, and an adventure that would task the faith of even the greatest. Yet he prayed on.

Out of his soul came this request, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Finally one man joined him, and the next day there were six lifting their voices in unison for the long-delayed revival of holy fervency. Then the number jumped to twenty, again to a hundred, all beseeching the Lord for flood tides of glory to sweep the land. And soon the meetinghouse would not hold the vast groups of suppliants. These prayer meetings took hold of the imagination of the city, and from all ranks of life people came to pray. A second and third room in the same building were filled; the entrances were choked with persons, and hundreds, so a report declares, went away from this "one man" prayer meeting disappointed because they could not get in.

The meeting overflowed to the John Street Methodist Church, and the lecture room was filled. Old Burton's Theater in Chambers Street was thrown open to the midday prayers, and this was overcrowded. From New York the prayer meeting leaped to Philadelphia, where the celebrated Jayne's Hall prayer meeting was started, and this hall was filled to overflowing.

Oh, how those groups sang straight from the heart. Lanphier, the city missionary in that church where the meetings started, taught them to sing old gospel hymns, and soon on the streets, down at the wharfs, these hymns rang out. Prayer meetings started on board the ships at dock, and aboard one of them two hundred seafaring men were converted.

The meetings leaped again, and we find the church of Henry Ward Beecher thronged until Beecher himself had to attend and preach, and at the end of every sermon people were invited to come forward and accept Christ. The famous Theodore Cuyler, a noted preacher, and author of more than five thousand religious articles, took a hand in the work, and ten thousand converts accepted Christ in less than six months under his spiritual ministry.

Over in Philadelphia more than three thousand people a day crowded the Jayne's Hall over a period of several months. They lifted that song, "Stand Up for Jesus," until it became the battle cry of the city.

Back in New York it was estimated that six thousand people attended the twenty daily prayer meetings. Boston, cold intellectual center that it has always been, caught fire, and in the staid old churches hoary with age, prayer meetings ran into revivals and thousands flocked to these new centers of spiritual light. Over to Pittsburgh, and into Cleveland, and on to Chicago, and even to Omaha, these prayer meetings spread until a traveler said that in coming from Omaha there was one continuous prayer meeting for two thousand miles. One man from a lumber camp attended a meeting in Philadelphia, and when he returned to the camp all alone he started the fire blazing, and several thousand were converted.

The prayer meeting became more than a season of praying; happy seekers after God were found everywhere.

Newspapers devoted full pages, front columns, and large headlines to the delineating of the story of these prayer meetings. Telegraph companies sent at certain hours of the day telegrams of salvation and prayerful messages free of charge. The awakening outran the churches. In St. Louis churches filled, and these prayer meetings burst out as natural conflagrations in the homes and business houses. God seemed to have broken in upon the souls of the people everywhere.

Most business houses at the noon hour closed up that the owners and clerks, as well as the customers, might attend the prayer meetings. In Chicago, in one church, more than two thousand would meet each noonday for prayer. One author, writing a few years after these scenes, said that reports came in from all the western states, as far as Washington, that the prayer meetings flamed out into revivals and the Holy Spirit swept thousands into the kingdom.

Finney preached up in New England during that winter, and powerful revivals followed his ministry. Elder Jacob Knapp joined in with the hosts of triumphant evangelists. Over on the prairies of Kansas these concerts of prayer awakened many young men to the kingdom.

One writer refers to this spiritual outburst of evangelism as being "essentially a deep, rational movement, based upon prayer rather than preaching, that restored the spiritual balance of thousands of American people." In an editorial the New York Times said, "It is most impressive to think that over this great land tens and fifties of thousands of men and women are putting to themselves at this time, in a simple, serious way, the greatest question that can ever come before the human mind."

The results seem impossible in terms of the humble beginning of the movement, a lonely praying man. It is estimated that one hundred thousand conversions occurred within the space of the first four months of these prayer meetings, and that during the first year which followed the beginning of the work more than four hundred thousand had been brought to Jesus. Before this great revival ended more than a million souls had been won.

It was in Chicago that a young man was selling shoes, and when the noonday prayer times arrived he took his customers with him to the meetings. Dwight L. Moody wrote home to his mother about these wonderful prayer seasons. He said, "I go to meeting every night. Oh, how I enjoy it! It seems as if God were here himself. O Mother, pray for me! Pray that this work may go on until every knee is bowed." Out of these prayer meetings and through the far-reaching influence of these revivals, the work of the famous soul winner, Moody, was born.

This alone—the setting of the pace which Moody was to follow in his revivals—was worth all the effort that the lone missionary in the slums of lower New York City had put into the arousing of the consciences of the city to pray, pray, until the entire land was awakened.

The next year we find the effects of this prayer meeting breathing forth in England, and the soul-inflaming revival of Wales was in full force.

The availing power of prayer meetings turned the tide of millions back to God. The lone wailing voice of Lanphier heard in that upper room, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" broke into the corridors of Wall Street, rang out to the dens of pleasure, until it was magnified a thousandfold, and as the sound of mighty thunder, the rolling of tremendous volumes of water, it quickened the conscience of millions.

IX. The Birth Of The Christian Endeavor

The Prayer Life of Francis E. Clark

"The Week of Prayer" in January, 1881, gripped a little congregation in Portland, Me. This prayer week had been an annual feature for many years, spasmodically it had been remembered and fostered for almost a century. Its meaning had been lost in the fog of the passing years, and perfunctorily it was performed in most churches. It was after this annual feast of prayer, "Week of Prayer," that Torrey was seized with his vehement passion to belt the globe with a revival, culminating after three years of prayer meetings. The same "Week of Prayer" had been remembered at the close of the century previous, just before the dawn of 1800, and the "Great Awakening" swept America.

From it the third benefit accrued. A little congregation, led by a faithful pastor, prayed during this week. A new spiritual glory awoke within the church circles. Young people were stimulated to devotional activities. Lagging older members were aroused. The pastor organized Sunday-school prayer meetings, which followed the usual teaching and preaching sessions. The pastor's wife, faithful soul that she was, formed a "Mizpah Circle" composed of boys and girls of the community. This circle met each week for a session of study, and a prayer for the extension of the kingdom, as well as to sew and work in various ways for the cause of missions.

Through the "Week of Prayer" some twenty or thirty young people had been converted. The devotional tone of the young people's prayer circles increased.

A famous night arrived, circled in gold in the annals of the Christian youth movement, February 2, 1881. Snow covered the ground, and the icy air cut like a scimitar. A group of some forty young persons had gathered at the parsonage. The address was 62 Neal Street, Portland. The pastor was serving the Williston Congregational Church of that city, not a famous church by any means up to that time. The preacher was upstairs writing a famous document while his wife and the young people were enjoying themselves—they sewed, discussed current issues, tried to deepen their spiritual life, and prepared for the final season of prayer.

Out of his study the young minister came with his famous document, written in a large scrawling hand. It had been well thought out, and bathed in prayer. On one side of the sheet of paper stood out boldly the word "Name." By it were these words, "This society shall be called the Williston Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor." Under the heading, "The Prayer Meeting," these sentences appear: "It is expected that all the members of the society will be present at every meeting. Once each month an experience meeting shall be held, at which each member shall speak concerning his or her progress in the Christian life. . . ."

This was to be "an out and out Christian society," as its founder wrote. On this account the activities of the new organization were to center around the weekly young people's prayer meeting. The heart of the movement was the expansion of the prayer circle which had begun in the "Week of Prayer." Fifty-seven young people signed this notable document as "charter members."

Throughout the Journal of this first Endeavor Society we find such entries as these: "February 11, 1811.—Young people's prayer meeting held. A very good one." "February 25.—An experience meeting, and a good one." Founded upon the prayer idea, this thought was always held uppermost in the organization.

Soon Francis E. Clark, "Christian Endeavor" Clark, as he is known, received calls to speak about this great movement which his mind had originated, and to which his church prayer meetings had given birth. An article was written about the work for a church magazine. A national organization sprang into being. States held their conventions. A magazine, *The Golden Rule*, was published; it later became the *Christian Endeavor World*.

The United Society of Christian Endeavor occupied its first small quarters at 8 Beacon Street, Boston, and later moved to its own fine headquarters building in the same city. Other nations called for this fine Christian leader to come and organize their Christian young people. From 1888 the life of Clark reads like a continuous travelogue. He is constantly trailing the highways of the world, speaking at national and international conventions, leading delegations, forming new groups, and "generalizing" the movement to which his prayers gave birth.

At the first national convention, in 1892, twenty-five thousand delegates gathered in New York City. Three years later fifty thousand gathered in Boston. And the next year more than seventy-five thousand came for the convention at the nation's capital. At the world's convention, held in London in 1900, fifty thousand gathered from the nations of the world.

World conventions and traveling throughout the nations could not exhaust the active mind of this leader. His pen was always busy writing for the group whose spokesman he had become. More than thirty-five books came from his fertile mind. These are on all types of subjects: travel, inspiration, leadership, and Endeavor technique. Through his writings he was able to pay his own salary and expenses around the world on his numerous trips. He never received a cent from the society for his labors.

Nor was the history making work of these prayer meetings to cease after Clark had fostered the Endeavor Society, which today numbers in its ranks, under the leadership of Daniel A. Poling, more than four million members. From the idea of this society there sprang up numerous denominational young people's societies, unions, organizations. Early in 1884 the Baptist Young People's Union was formed in Virginia. Three or four Methodist groups, such as the Young People's Methodist Alliance, formed in 1883, and the Oxford League in 1884, united and the Epworth League was the result.

This glad story has gone on until all Christian groups either cooperate with the Christian Endeavor Society, through having separate societies, or they have their own society.

Back of each of these organizations where Christian young people assemble for prayer, training, or experience meetings stands Francis E. Clark who emblazoned the young people's movement upon the conscience of the Christian church. Behind Clark's noble idea the constitution of the first Christian Endeavor Society looms largely on the horizon of his soul, a "Week of Prayer." This was enforced and enlarged through Sunday-school prayer meetings.

A wondrous chain of events, world stirring and history making, was thus born through a prayer meeting.

X. The Family Prayer Meeting In The Log Hut

Charles Sheldon's Immortal Classic

A winds-wept Dakota prairie and a log house furnish the setting for this immortal family prayer meeting "that made history." Visualize it. A family, the father a broken-down minister from New York, tries to wrest a living from a pioneer land. A log house is built by their own hands. Water is carried for miles, until our story opens with a tragedy which marked the digging of a well, and we are introduced into the sacred surroundings of a prayer meeting. Father is down some sixty feet, and calls for the bucket to be raised with more dirt to be hauled up. The bail breaks, and downward upon that frightened father bucket, dirt, and all drive for sixty feet. The guiding hand of Providence marks the fall, and the father is missed.

"It knocked my hat off," Father said. "We will stop work for a while." The family went into the log house to the end called the "parlor," and in one corner they came to the "sacred spot." Father thought he would like to thank his heavenly Father. The entire group turned to their chairs, and another session of that family prayer meeting was held. Father prayed, Mother took her turn, and through their tears the group thanked God for sparing a loved one. This is our introduction to a history making prayer meeting.

Out of it came the work of Charles M. Sheldon, author of *In His Steps*. Let him tell the story, weave in the historical with the spiritual.

"I cannot remember the words," so he says, "but I do remember now, and perhaps I shall always remember in the world to come, that scene in that log house on the prairie, the house we built with our own hands, in one end of which every morning of my boyhood we had family prayers right after breakfast, before going out to work."

These prayer circles included the reading of the Bible. Every member of the family would read two verses of the chapter for the day, and from the oldest on down they had read the Bible through six times before Charles went away to school.

This is the type of prayer meeting around the family circle: two verses read by each member; then a song was sung, with Mother starting it; this was followed by Father's morning prayer, which oft-times went to great length. After the prayer each child would walk up to Father and repeat the Lord's prayer aloud and return to his chair. Then "after a decent pause," with every eye fixed on the father, they arose slowly and went to work.

That parlor where family prayers were held became the holy of holies to the soul of young Sheldon. Throughout his long life it always remained so —those messages from the Bible—those prayers— the ascending hymns—the benedictions—from them all he was never able to drift away. The passage of the years did not lessen his faith in the power of the family altar, and it was for him "the source for divine and mysterious inspiration."

As young Charles started out into the world, he did so with the guiding hand of that prayer meeting leading him safely onward. As in a vision he said he went again and again into that parlor and saw Father and Mother kneeling there at prayer, praying for the lad who was absent.

This was a family prayer meeting, with no outsiders present, that molded spiritual events and made religious history.

The story of Sheldon reads like inspired fiction, and is almost unbelievable. He worked his way through Phillips Academy, and then turned to Brown University, where he also made his own way. Then he was trained for the ministry at Andover Seminary, where again he worked

his way.

During those years at Brown he began to write, thus laying the foundation for the work of an almost inspired pen. Two years were spent in a Vermont pastorate, and in 1889 he accepted the pastorate of a small, struggling congregation in Topeka, Kan. Early in this ministry he conceived the idea of writing stories with a religious motif, which he read to his evening congregation.

The fall of 1896 found him writing another story to be read on Sunday evenings. When he had finished reading it the congregation thought it ought to be printed. Three publishers refused to bring it out, thinking it would not sell because of its religious sentiment. Finally a small church paper in Chicago, the *Advance*, bought it for \$75, and began to publish it serially. A part of the serial articles were sent to the Copyright Bureau at Washington, but not all of them as the law declares necessary, and hence the copyright was not legal.

At once this story took hold of the imagination of the nation. Publisher after publisher, finding the book not copyrighted, printed it in all types of editions. Fifty publishers, in England and America, have sold more than twenty-five million copies of this book, *In His Steps*. It became the "best seller" of all recent books. Sheldon never received any money for the book; where he might have made millions, he possibly received from friendly publishers two or three thousand dollars as gifts.

But he thought the fact that the book was free for every publisher to print gave it a large audience, which it would not have had if it had been properly copyrighted.

A family prayer meeting, lasting for nineteen years, made the man who gave the world this book.

Sheldon made history with his life as well as with his book. For twenty-nine years he was officially connected with his Topeka church as minister. He saw it rise to become a power in the state. He edited the *Topeka Daily Capital* as a Christian newspaper for one week, and sent its circulation to a third of a million copies, thus proving that a Christian daily would be read.

In 1912 he became minister at large to his congregation, that he might devote time to conventions, and we find him touring America and the world with the message of hope. He became a member of the "Flying Squadron" which did so much to create prohibition sentiment, crystallizing in the Eighteenth Amendment later on.

He became editor-in-chief of the *Christian Herald*, and for years he held some type of an official connection with that religious magazine. Along with these varied duties he found time to write more than thirty books on various themes, which have found a happy audience around the world. He built the fabric of that home prayer meeting into his works, wrote it into his books, preached it through his sermons, and blessed the world with it in his personality.

Can one measure the history which a log cabin family prayer meeting made? It is impossible. The rolling tide of influence thus set in motion will go until the Judgment Day.

XI. Moody's Student Conference Prayer Meeting

The Student Volunteer Movement

The work of Moody was born in the revival of 1857, which grew out of Lanphier's prayer meeting. His "roving commission," wherein a million souls were converted, came from a prayer meeting attended by one person, and that person was an invalid.

These history making prayer meetings he was destined to pass on. The year was 1886, when Moody issued a call for Christian students from the various universities and seminaries to meet at Mount Herman for a special conference. More than two hundred and fifty met the call. They gathered for a season of spiritual uplift under the direction of the nation's outstanding gospel leader.

In the course of the convention students from various nations were asked to make a speech about the needs and opportunities of their land. Men were moved to the depths of their souls as new visions of possibilities opened up to the minds of these students. Everybody was quiet after the speeches. Nights of prayer were spent by many of them out in the near-by groves.

Grace Wilder, whose brother Robert had been invited to attend the convention, prayed that one hundred students would volunteer for service on the mission fields. Her brother joined in this prayer, and soon the concern spread to others. A small group of the men who had decided to give themselves to such service met each day at a given time for concerted prayer. This meeting began under a tree, and as it grew in size it adjourned to a classroom in Recitation Hall.

When the convention began there were not more than a dozen students who were expecting to be missionaries. The last day of that notable season of spiritual benedictions arrived. The hearts of those young people were strangely moved by divine realities. At last these volunteers met for their final prayer meeting. On taking a record of the volunteers there were ninety-nine who had signed the pledge to go to mission fields. This paper read thus, "We are willing and desirous, God permitting, to become foreign missionaries." The prayer season began, the Spirit's gentle influence moved upon lives, and before the meeting broke up the hundredth one came in and signed the paper.

The prayer of Grace Wilder was answered. Far more events than that came out of this meeting. In the group was a young man, a student leader at Cornell University, one whose name was to ring through the nation in the coming decades. John R. Mott was among those first volunteers for foreign service. He participated in those stirring events.

Note the results: There is in existence a tiny, olive-green pamphlet in which the names of the one hundred volunteers are printed. It is a document of historic significance, for two years later out of this came the organization of the Student Volunteer Movement, which Robert Wilder brought about through his efforts. From this thirteen thousand members have been thrust forth into all the mission fields of the world. The influence of this group of loyal college men and women is a vital element in fostering Christian missions. Names of many of the greatest servants of the cross in foreign lands are enrolled among the band of Volunteers. Through this the Y. M. C. A. and its sister organization, the Y. W. C. A., foster their missionary work.

Four young men were then chosen for missionary deputation work among the colleges of the states, and within a short while a thousand students had consecrated their lives for missionary service. This was but the beginning of the noble efforts.

Mott's story has yet to be reckoned with. Mott felt it his concern in traveling among the students of America that the work should reach the students of the entire world. It was but a few years after intense student Christian activities among colleges that he was called to England, Europe, and India for similar conferences.

This was but the starting of the work. After a whole night of prayer during a national students' conference in Germany, held in August of 1895, Mott reached the conclusion that a world federation of all Christian students should be organized. The actual work of this was perfected shortly afterward in the ancient town of Vadstena, Sweden, during a national conference of students. After the conclusion of that meeting six students met and the World's Student Christian Federation was formed. The purpose of the union was to unite the various Christian student movements of the world and to lead students to become disciples of Christ.

During the next two years Mott traveled 60,000 miles, visiting 144 universities and colleges in 21 nations, and organized 70 definite Christian student unions. His accomplishments from that time on were astounding. His name was connected with every outstanding philanthropic organization of his age; he became the chairman of the International Missionary Council, and president of the World's Alliance of the Y. M. C. A. And during all these momentous tasks he found time to raise more than a third of a billion dollars for philanthropic activities.

The power of John R. Mott's life is to be discovered in his prayers. He is a man who advocates prayer and above all else, who practices it.

He prayed at Mount Hermon, and then starting out his student work he said, "I go by myself one hour each day for meditation and prayer." In the schedule for his life he put a definite time for improving himself in the art of prayer. When making a life decision as to whether he would teach or become a student missionary, he went aside and prayed. When he was touring the universities of America before going abroad, he made prayer the keynote of his personal preparation. During his tour of Australia in 1903, he wrote out a schedule for the day, and on this he put time for "observing the Morning Watch."

When he started around the world to organize the Christian Student Federation, the trip was financed by prayer, and he wrote thus about it: "The tour has been one continuous series of definite answers to prayer. In at least thirty-two lands the tour was being definitely remembered in prayer." Traveling as a world evangelist to students, he was always expanding the list of personal friends "who believe in prayer."

It was during the days when he was conducting the Continuation Committee of the Edinburgh Conference (missionary) work in foreign lands in a series of conventions that he literally builded a "world-wide train of prayer." The same was true of his Christian Student Federation activities around the world. He wrote of them, "I have laid a mine of prayer through the cooperation of intercessors."

Go back to the "grove prayer meetings," hear those groans of "all nights of prayer," meet with the ninety-nine in the last Recitation Hall prayer meetings, and you will discover those spiritual forces which "made history for God and man."

Build a prayer chain—lay a prayer mine—and thus reach the world.

XII. The Prayer Meeting Producing A World-Wide Revival

R. A. Torrey's Evangelism

The path that prayer has hewn in the kingdom of God is a wide one indeed. Men have prayed alone, in secret, and immediately, on the other side of the globe, God has given the answer. Humble cottages have seen prayer meetings which resulted in shaking the foundations of the kingdom of evil. Some small groups have prayed, and God ordained the upraising of missionary movements.

Here, however, is a prayer meeting which belted the globe with a revival. It began in the consecrated heart of one man, R. A. Torrey. Its answer was felt around the world, and by more than one hundred thousand people who were converted through its God-inspired ministry. From it came a revival that reached the yellow races in China and Japan, the mixed populations of Australia, and the dark-skinned natives of India, as well as the people of America and England.

This revival was born in a prayer meeting conducted by a group of students and teachers of the Moody Bible Institute. In the year 1898, just after the famous "Week of Prayer," the Lord burdened the hearts of a few people in the famous church in Chicago which Moody had founded. The group was led by R. A. Torrey, and included his associates in the church and institute. A call was issued for a weekly prayer meeting to be held at the Institute each Saturday night from nine until ten o'clock.

The sole object of these prayer meetings was for a revival of religion which would be felt around the world. The attendance grew rapidly, and soon three hundred people were present, pleading with God. The meetings continued month after month, and yet no indications were seen of the awakening.

At the conclusion of one of these meetings Doctor Torrey and a few of his associates felt led to continue the prayer circle until later. They went into a small room and prayed until two o'clock on Sunday morning. This became a regular custom, and for three years the prayer meetings continued. Finally, one night God seemed to lead Doctor Torrey to pray that he would send him (Torrey) around the world preaching the gospel.

In speaking of this Torrey said, "This was a prayer that I had not dreamed of offering when we entered that hallowed place that night. The prayer was this, that God would send me around the world preaching the gospel; and when I had ceased praying I knew I was going around the world to preach the gospel. How, I did not know. I knew the call had come from God, and that God would open the way."

The motto of Torrey, since those early days when he had read *Mueller's Life of Trust*, had been, "Pray Through." And here in this concluding meeting he had prevailed, and prayed through.

The marvelous answer was soon coming. Within a week two men came to Doctor Torrey at the close of a church prayer meeting and asked him in the name of the churches of Melbourne, Australia, to conduct a similar campaign in that city. He could not refuse, for he felt that this was the answer to his prayer circle which had beseeched the throne for three years for this very purpose.

Arrangements were soon made whereby he and Charles Alexander were to set sail on this trip which resulted in circling the globe with a revival. At first they met in Japan where hundreds

were converted by the way. At length they arrived in Australia, and during the four weeks' campaign, in which fifty evangelists were engaged, more than eight thousand converts were noted. The revival fires burst out everywhere in the land. The total number of conversions in Australia reached the number of twenty thousand.

An unusual plan was hit upon in these campaigns whereby prayer circles were conducted in different parts of the city. There were more than two thousand of these going on each day during the meeting. They were organized by a woman who had read a book on prayer by Doctor Torrey in which she was struck with the sentence, "Pray through." This became such a powerful motive in her soul that she gathered her friends in these prayer bands, whose desire was to reach the throne of grace by "praying through."

The idea was taken to England, and soon in that land and all over Scotland, Wales, and Ireland these bands were praying for a world-wide revival. As a result the Spirit of God was poured out.

By 1904 there were thirty thousand people in these circles praying for God to send a mighty revival. A definite prayer for a definite answer produced a revival belting the globe.

Note the unbreakable chain of prayer. First a small group prayed each Sunday night in Chicago. Then two thousand prayer circles were organized in Melbourne, and finally thousands more sprang up in Great Britain. Wherever these circles were there the Spirit of God gave a revival.

The results? In two and a half years there had been converted more than a hundred thousand people. Such records of meetings as these mark the entire campaign: In Birmingham 7,700 were converted in about four weeks; about 35,000 people tried to get into the closing meeting held at the Tournament Hall in Liverpool; nothing was witnessed like the crowds, the praying, and the singing since the days of Moody and Sankey.

A very unusual method of advertising was used in many of the revivals. In America an evangelist had passed out cards with the words, "Get Right with God," printed on them. Torrey decided to print fourteen thousand of these for his meeting in Ballarat, Australia, and soon he discovered that God was employing them to reach hundreds of people. In Belfast, Ireland, fifteen thousand were printed and distributed among the population, and in Liverpool two hundred thousand were used as a means of spreading the tidings of salvation, and in a later campaign in the same city a quarter million of them were distributed. Many hundreds testified to the fact that it was this little card with the message on it that awakened them to their spiritual plight and led them to God.

"Second Timothy Two Fifteen" became the watch cry of the movement in the revivals from city to city. Thousands of letters were mailed with this verse on both the outside and the inside. Men sang it out everywhere.

The greatest single campaign of this world-wide revival was held in London. It lasted five months, and more than fifteen thousand people professed to be converted in this time.

Marvelous results indeed! The source of it is not far to seek: Torrey in his early ministry read a book, *The Life of Trust*, wherein George Mueller, prophet of prayer, outlined what God did for him through faith. Torrey was led to live a life of faith, and to depend upon God for all his needs. Ah, yes, many were the times when it looked as if God had forgotten this simple-hearted truster, but ere long the answer would come.

This life culminated in a three-year prayer meeting with the sole object that of a spiritual awakening in the world. Then a book on Prayer, written by Torrey, found an entrance into the

heart of a woman in Australia, who in turn sponsored prayer circles which soon reached the number of two thousand in her city, and thousands more in other nations.

A prayer meeting, from nine until ten on Saturday nights, and later until two on Sunday morning, and the world was reached with a revival

XIII. Prayer and the Holy Club

John Wesley and the Evangelical Revival

Few movements have meant more to the world than the Holy Club. Though insignificant in origin, its results cannot be measured. One young man gathered two other college students to pray with him, and under the shadow of that first prayer meeting millions have come to find spiritual uplift and warmth.

Charles Wesley had been a light-minded youth at Oxford University. During the spring of 1729, while John was serving as his father's curate at Epworth, Charles became interested in his own spiritual condition. He wrote his brother that he had been awakened to a most serious and earnest desire of being devoted to God, and wished that John would pray for him.

Finding another student in the university who was in need of soul aid, Charles influenced him for righteousness by pointing him to Christ. They met each evening in Charles's room for religious exercises. When John returned to the university in May of that year, he was attracted to the growing band, or club, which was centered around his brother.

John's stronger personality made him leader of the group which his brother had brought into being. At once the club began to hold its meetings in John's room, who then was a fellow at Lincoln College.

This room was destined to become famous as the place where Methodism really had its beginning. Tradition points it out at present as being on the first floor, on the south or right side of the college quadrangle. It is shaded by the famous Lincoln vine, and is opposite the clock tower.

Early in the following November, there were four who regularly met for religious devotions, John and Charles Wesley, and two other students named Morgan and Kirkham. The gatherings were simple in order. At the beginning their interest was intellectual and the young students read the classics, after a brief period of prayer. Soon the spiritual side became dominant, and the Greek Testament took the place of the classics. John was usually the reader.

The meetings were held on Sunday evenings. But the group was not long in discovering that one session a week was not sufficient for their growing interests, so two evenings a week were spent together. Finally, every evening from six until nine the band convened.

They began their sessions with prayer, and then passed to the Greek Testament. After discussing the text which John selected for their uplift, each one reviewed the events of the day in the light of their common problem of building spiritual personalities. This became the foundation for the closed prayer meeting of Methodism, where the class leader seriously questioned each member as to his private life, secret thoughts, and daily practices.

The following year at one of their sessions, Morgan suggested that they give attention to good works. During the day he had visited a poor fellow in prison, and asked the Wesleys to go with him on the morrow to pray for him. They went, and soon the club was actively engaged in charitable services.

On Sunday evenings their special topic was divinity. John would read a book on the subject and the others would center their conversation around the text. The order for Wednesdays and Fridays became first a general fast when each one refrained from taking any food, then dressed in a very frugal manner, the band marched together to one of the colleges where they received the Sacrament. It was these methodical procedures which gave birth to the derisive

term which was to mark them Methodists.

Their self-examination took on a serious cast and certain evenings were set apart to review their sins, this usually being Saturday's order. Sunday was the day to examine their lives as to the "Love of God and Simplicity," and Monday's topic was "Love to Man." They studied carefully to do the will of God in all things.

Every meeting was opened and closed with prayer. But this was not enough. They determined to pray secretly an hour each morning, usually from five to six, and sometimes two hours were spent in these morning closet sessions with God. They added two more prayer times, and then morning, noon, and night found the band in secret prayer. Still they felt they could be more prayer-zealous and determined to offer ejaculatory prayers each hour of the waking day. Being good churchmen they repeated a collect at nine, twelve, and three, interspersed with stated times for meditations.

Their discussions on "Love to Man" caused them to inquire whether they had been as active in doing good as they should have been, whether they had invited others to attend the means of grace, and prayed diligently for those around them. This led them to give time each week to visiting the sick in the parishes.

During 1730, John Gambold joined their number, making five in all. Two years later four other students became members. In '33 James Hervey cast his lot with them. He was to become one of the most popular authors of the eighteenth century, writing *Meditations among the Tombs*, which went through seventeen editions and was sold by the hundreds of thousands.

The club was always small, never numbering more than twenty-five.

A few years later a young man entered the university who was to become an outstanding preacher of the Christian centuries. Though he had served liquors in his parents' tavern, still God had bright achievements ahead for him. He was always desirous of joining in with the club, which by this time had gained the name of the Holy Club, but no openings seemed to present themselves.

One morning, at a near-by workhouse where he was engaged, a poor woman cut her throat, and he rushed word to Charles Wesley to come at once. The next morning Charles invited his informer to breakfast with him. This began a famous friendship and George Whitefield became a member of the club, and soon had won a convert of his own.

The students heaped persecutions upon the group, whom they called Bible Moths, Godly Club, Holy Club. One young fellow had earlier said of Charles and his companion that they were a new form of *Methodists*, referring to an old Roman order so named because of the methodical plan by which their lives were regulated. It was thus that Charles Wesley and not John was the first Methodist. The regularity of their behavior gave occasion for others to take up the ridicule and call them Methodists.

The severity of their rules became so tense that they directed every hour of the day. They abstained from all pleasures of a worldly type, gave away all they possessed, save barely enough to exist upon, even permitting their hair to grow long that the money might be devoted to charity. John formulated a set of rules or questions which were used to keep their souls pure in God's sight. At the end of each week they reviewed their sins, or break-overs, in the light of these questions.

This regularity caused them to be so hated that Whitefield confessed that when he first joined the club he was ashamed to be seen knocking on John's door.

Wesley's only answer was, "You must be singular, or be damned." His consecration to the rules of the Holy Club was so intense that all his energies were consumed by putting them into practice.

Three times each day the praying voices of those young men stirred the flames of hatred among the students.

When John and Charles went to Georgia as missionaries, the Holy Club meetings continued regularly under the direction of the members who remained at the university. Crossing the Atlantic the two brothers practiced their prayer rules with the same precision as at Oxford. From four to five each morning they held their private prayers. The next-two hours were devoted to reading the Bible together. At eight they had public prayers with the other passengers. At noon they gave account to each other of what they had done during the day. Again at four they were engaged in prayers. From five until six they held their private devotions once more, and at eight in the evening they joined with the German Moravians in their service.

Returning from America, John was in serious doubts as to his spiritual condition. Early in the evening of May 24, 1738, while Charles was sick, a group gathered in a secluded room in Aldersgate Street to conduct a prayer meeting. Someone invited John to attend. This prayer meeting was to take up the prayer-strain where the Holy Club had left off.

For three months before the famous meeting John had been struggling with his soul. At five on the memorable day he held his morning hour of prayer as usual, and while reading the New Testament these words came to him, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." Then another verse literally leaped to his eyes, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

During the day he was in spiritual heaviness, but in the meeting this was to be consumed with a burst of overpowering joy. This prayer meeting was to change the religious tide of his nation.

There is no record of what songs were sung, if any, nor of what prayers were said, nor who the leader was. But about a quarter to nine, someone was reading from *Luther's Preface to the Galatians*. Let Wesley be the narrator of those stirring events:

"While he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. Then I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner despitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart."

This Aldersgate Street prayer meeting moved on to Charles's sickroom. The little group knelt around the bed and prayed with him. Then Charles lifted his voice in a song which he had written a few days previously. These were the beginning words,

*Where shall my wondering soul begin,
How shall I all to heaven aspire?*

Lecky, the historian, wrote about the incident, "It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the scene which took place at that humble meeting in Aldersgate Street forms an epoch in English history."

Wesley's prayer-practices, first established in the Holy Club, were to become regulating

influences throughout his long life. The source of his victories in the inner and outer world is to be seen plainly written over the face of his journals. It was prayer, continual prayer and communion with God. Among his early resolves were these, "To dedicate an hour, morning and evening; no excuse, reason or pretense; to pray, every hour, seriously, deliberately, fervently."

Throughout Wesley's Journal, alike in years as far apart as 1738 and 1782, day after day, appears the simple item marking the record, "Prayed." In the account of a busy day's work, this recurs four, six, and even more times. Another frequent item is "Singing." On some days he sang as many as eight times.

Thus the Holy Club prayer meeting and its prayer-offsprings made world history. It began with two college students in a prayer meeting, asking God for spiritual aid and sustenance. Soon the number increased to four, and those prayer seasons were held three times daily, and hourly prayer ejaculations were added. These Holy Club meetings culminated spiritually in Wesley's Aldersgate Street experience, when his heart was warmed so strangely. Those Holy Club prayer rules marked John's daily concourse with God for more than half a century.

Out of the Holy Club and its convocations came John Wesley's magnificent life which has touched all phases of religion since his day until the present —the Methodist Church, and all it has accomplished for God. The Holy Club was the inspiration of Charles Wesley and his more than eight thousand gospel songs, which are more dearly loved today than ever before. From the same band came George Whitefield, doubtless one of the greatest preachers since Paul.

The Holy Club gave the world John, the organizer, Charles, the sweet singer, and Whitefield, the popular preacher—a combination of talent which the nation could not resist.

The three brought forth the "Evangelical Revival" which saved England from a social upheaval similar to the French Revolution. They gave the world Methodism and its salvation appeal.

Wesley sent America young Asbury, who was to blaze a trail through our trackless wilderness and mark our history for God. Whitefield touched early America by his preaching, influenced Jonathan Edwards, who became the sire of the "Great Awakening," wherein thousands entered the kingdom and hundreds of churches were organized. And Charles's songs swept with waves of glory through rude churches open-air camp meetings stately cathedrals and lifted multitudes nearer the gates of pearl.

These are results, eternal in value, produced by one student, a seeker after God, father of the Holy Club, the first Methodist—Charles Wesley.

XIV. A Father's Secret Prayer Sanctuary

The Source of John G. Paton's Missionary Work

The Paton home in Scotland was small and simple, yet it was marked with God's presence. Few homes, however, have laid the scenes for mightier missionary triumphs than this one. There were only three rooms. In the first the mother held forth. This served as dining-room, kitchen, parlor, and bedroom for the family. On the other end of the building was the father's workroom, where he carried on his trade as a stocking weaver for the village of Torthorwald.

A small in-between room was the father's secret sanctuary from which issued volumes of prayer. This was tiny, with barely space for a bed, a table, and a chair. The window in it was small. But this was destined to become an anteroom to heaven.

Thrice daily Father Paton retired to the closet and "shut the door," that the world might be closed out. The children, as the famous son later wrote in his *Autobiography*, understood as by spiritual insight that prayers were being poured forth for them, as by the High Priest within the veil in the Most Holy Place.

"Never, in temple or cathedral," writes John G. Paton, "can I hope to feel that the Lord God is more near, more visibly walking and talking with men, than under that humble cottage roof of thatch and oaken wattles. Though everything else in religion were to be swept out of memory my soul would wander back to those early scenes and shut itself up once again in that Sanctuary Closet, and hearing still the echoes of those cries God would hurl back all doubt with the victorious appeal, 'He walked with God, and why may not I ?' "

Nor was this all the prayer in which the Paton family engaged. Twice daily the father gathered the group around him for Bible reading, holy singing, as John expressed it, and a season of worship. Not a day, from the father's seventeenth until his seventy-seventh year, when he lay on his deathbed, was there an omission of these religious exercises.

Even on the last day of his life a portion of the Bible was read, and his feeble voice joined in the Psalm singing, and his lips breathed a prayer. Throughout sixty years his voice uttered "the morning and evening prayer, falling in sweet benediction on the heads of all his children, far away many of them over all the earth, but all meeting him there at the Throne of Grace," as John tells it.

"None of us can remember that any day ever passed unhallowed thus, no hurry for market, no rush to business, no arrival of friends or guests, no trouble or sorrow, no joy or excitement, ever prevented at least our kneeling around the family altar, while the High Priest led our prayers to God, and offered himself and his children there."

Early this father himself felt a strong desire to be a minister, but God's will led him otherwise. He reconciled himself to this lot by entering into his soul the solemn vow that if God gave him sons, he would consecrate them unreservedly to his work. He lived to see two of them actively engaged as ministers, and John, his eldest, go as a missionary to the New Hebrides.

The events of John's home life were blessed with the sacred memories of his father's prayers. When he determined to enter the ministry, he was appointed to serve a congregation in Glasgow. He started off from home with "a small bundle tied up in a pocket handkerchief, containing my Bible, and all my personal belongings." For the first six of the forty miles his saintly father walked with him, happy in the fact that the Lord had accepted this sacrifice for his work.

Paton, writing years later, said that his father's counsel, tears, and heavenly conversation on

that journey remained as fresh in his heart as though it had been yesterday. They walked most of the way without speaking, but the father's lips kept moving in silent prayer for God's blessings on his son. His tears fell fast when their eyes would meet, so that conversation was almost impossible.

When parting time came the father embraced John and said, "God bless you, my son! Your father's God prosper you, and keep you from all evil."

He could say no more, but his lips moved in silent prayer. John rushed from him with that picture imprinted upon his memory, a hallowed recollection to inspire him throughout life.

From that time on John G. Paton's life-decisions were made after seasons of prayer. He served several years in Glasgow in a city mission, where he was greatly blessed in his work. The Reformed Presbyterian Church, of which he was a member, advertised for a missionary to join forces with John Inglis laboring in the New Hebrides. No volunteer came forth for the task. Finally, after much prayer, the Synod decided to cast lots by writing the names of several people upon ballots. The results were very indecisive. Once again the cause was laid before the Lord in prayer, and a "cloud of sadness appeared to fall over all the Synod."

The Lord kept saying to Paton, "Since none better qualified than you can be got, rise and offer yourself." An almost overpowering impulse seemed to surge upon him and compel him to say, "Here am I, send me." But he wanted to be sure, so he took the matter to heart for deliberation and prayer for a few days longer.

During this time the wailing of the heathen constantly sounded in his ears. He saw them perishing without God and the Bible. His medical studies, his literary and divinity training, fitted him for this peculiar service, and he felt that "the voice in me sounded like a voice from God."

Shortly he offered himself to the Synod for the New Hebrides work. An old minister of the group said, "The cannibals! you will be eaten by the cannibals." To which young John replied, "I confess to you that if I can but live and die serving and honoring the Lord Jesus, it will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by cannibals or by worms. . . ."

It was a happy father who received the news that his son was going as a missionary. He confessed that early in his life he, too, had longed thus to serve his Master.

Paton's work is too well known to demand much re-telling. In all he did he carried this prayer spirit which his father had builded into his mind during those years when out of the Sanctuary his voice floated up to the throne with petitions for the family. Those many days of secret devotion and family worship marked his life, and he could not erase them from his memory.

John G. Paton and his wife set sail in April, 1857, to take up work in the New Hebrides, small islands in the Pacific, which had a bad reputation—the people on these islands had clubbed to death and eaten John Williams and his companion, who landed there for missionary work eighteen years earlier.

It was decided that the Patons were to labor on Tanna, near where John Inglis was serving on Aneityum. Their first impressions were terrible; the natives went practically naked, and most of their time was spent in ferocious fights and cannibal feasts, when victors ate their captives.

The language had to be learned and buildings had to be erected. Through much prayer and labor John diligently mastered these difficulties. Whenever a calamity occurred or rain did not come, the sacred men of the island blamed the missionaries and enraged the savages

against them. On one occasion the chiefs decided that if it did not rain they would kill and eat the Patons.

John prayed, as he always did in such circumstances. Late one night the natives rushed to the house to set it on fire. Paton cried out, "Dare to strike me, and my Jehovah God will punish you. He protects me. . . ." Suddenly, as the flames began to lick at the rush fence around the home and church, a mighty wind swept out of the south to bear the fire away from the buildings.

Every savage eye was turned toward the on-coming clouds which were heavy with rain, and soon the heavens were opened in a torrential downpour. The natives began to cry out as they lowered their weapons, "This is Jehovah's rain. . . ."

The missionary's companion said, "If ever, in the time of need, God sent help and protection in answer to prayer, he has done so tonight."

This busy soul could not rest content with so much to be done until he had made his contribution to the Master's work. He struggled with the language, reducing it to writing. When he had progressed far enough with the language, he started printing passages of the Bible in the Tannese. On the red-letter day when he succeeded in turning out his first page, he threw his hat into the air and shouted for sheer joy, like the lad David dancing before the Lord.

He wrote of the occasion, "Nor think that I did not, over that first sheet of God's Word ever printed in the Tannese tongue, go on my knees, too, and then, and every day since, plead with the mighty Lord to carry the light and joy of his own Holy Bible into every dark heart and benighted home on Tanna."

After four years it seemed best that Paton move to the near-by island of Aniwa. Here he gained his first convert in the person of an old chief named Namakei, who was changed from a cannibal to a docile Christian, who forgave his enemies and was gentle and loving with his friends. At the end of three years twelve natives had been converted, and the first church at Aniwa was organized. Soon the good seed bore fruit and other churches sprang up.

Digging the first well on Aniwa was a prayer-directed event. Water on the island was scarce, and the natives greatly suffered because of this. One day Paton told the people that he was going to get water from below, but they thought he was crazy. After asking God to guide him to a spring, he proceeded to dig. When many days had passed he had reached a depth of thirty feet where he found damp earth, and one morning fresh water had filled the bowl at the bottom of the well. When the natives tasted the sweet water they said it was Jehovah's water sent to bless them, but they wondered if it would continue.

Paton's career even to the end was a busy one. He reduced the language of Aniwa to writing as he had done that of Tanna. He labored diligently upon printing the New Testament in the tongue of Aniwa. He finished the task in the homeland, and when he returned to the island in 1899—forty-two years after his first voyage—he brought with him the completed New Testament. This was a gift, so he said, more precious to the natives than though it had been jewels.

Shortly after this five native Aniwa teachers and their wives volunteered for service on Tanna, which island he had been forced to abandon years before.

Paton prayed into existence two missionary ships, both called "Dayspring." The first came in 1862, and served well the missionaries until 1884, when a larger one was demanded. This was furnished through the generosity of friends and the little children of many nations, who

helped with their small gifts. Thirteen years later the wrecking of this vessel came as a blow to the aged missionary, who could not understand the providence, yet who accepted it as best. This vessel was never replaced.

His kingdom work spread through the years and many natives became Christians. Two of Paton's sons followed their father and served as missionaries to the islands. Time and again the venerable missionary made trips to the homeland, to Australia, and around the world on tours in the interest of his work.

When he was forced to retire from active service because of age, he spent his time fostering the cause so dear to his heart, and raising money to sustain its activities.

In 1904, when he was eighty, he returned for the last time to his beloved Aniwa, where many thousands of native Christians received him with joy. At that time there were twenty-five of the thirty islands occupied for the Master, churches, schools, and hospitals had been constructed, 17,000 natives were Christians, of which number 330 were consecrated teachers and evangelists.

Three years later the aged missionary prophet received his home-call. On January 25, 1907, thinking that he was dying, he called his doctor-son to his bedside and then poured out his heart in prayer for his children, pleading that all might be gathered home to glory. He breathed a patriarchal blessing, and after three days' lingering he entered into his eternal possessions.

He died as he had lived—a man of prayer. Oft-times he said, "I feel immortal until my work is finished." God protected him from savage spears, from tropical pestilences, from cannibals and dangers in abundance, because he had builded around his life a wall of prayer.

His strength was in his Master's promise, "Lo, I am with you, even unto the end." Spending a memorable night in a tree when he was hunted by the Tanna savages, he expressed a sentiment which characterized his long life, "Never did I so realize the immediate presence and joy of my Savior as in that lonely tree; my heart was supported by him, and I regard those hours as the most precious I have spent on earth."