



The Missionary Fellowship of

William
Carey

MICHAEL A.G. HAYKIN



A Long Line of Godly Men Profile

ENDORSEMENTS

“There has been a terrible misreading of modern missions, and it’s this: our heroes on the mission field were lone rangers who pulled themselves up by their spiritual bootstraps to take the gospel to the lost. Finally, that caricature has exploded thanks to Michael A.G. Haykin, who demonstrates that the founder of modern missions himself, William Carey, depended not only on God but on close friendships to bring the good news to unreached peoples. Through the art of biography, Haykin reminds Christians today that fellowship is not only key to the Christian life but is essential to the Christian mission. The devil can take down a solo Christian, but he cannot penetrate a band of Christian brothers who link arms to advance the gospel.”

—DR. MATTHEW BARRETT

Associate Professor of Christian Theology
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.

“Michael Haykin’s *The Missionary Fellowship of William Carey* is among the best I have read on William Carey. Haykin calls our attention to a dimension that ought to be seriously considered, remembered, and fostered in the context of any Christian ministry. And William Carey’s successful but stressful life is an outstanding illustration of it. What would have happened to Carey, the work in India, and his influence worldwide without his friends? This book ought to be read and discussed not only among missionaries, mission agencies, and mission organizations worldwide; it should be studied in any ecclesiastical and ministerial context.”

—DR. ELIAS DOS SANTOS MEDEIROS

Harriet Barbour Professor of Missions
Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Miss.

“Pioneers such as William Carey gave birth to the modern missionary movement. It was Carey’s sense of evangelistic passion, set upon a clear foundation of biblical truth and confidence in the gospel, that compelled him to leave the safe confines of England and go to India. The full harvest of William Carey’s ministry will be known only in eternity. This new biography of Carey is a compelling presentation of the man, his theology, and his deep love for the nations. Haykin’s treatment is compelling, is warm-hearted, and will point beyond Carey to the Savior he loved so deeply.”

—DR. R. ALBERT MOHLER JR.

President and Joseph Emerson Brown

Professor of Christian Theology

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

“Christian fellowship, friendship, and mission are inexorably linked. One cannot claim to be on God’s mission and live in isolation; in fact, any missional effort devoid of a community of friends and coworkers is vanity. I am thankful for Michael Haykin’s work reminding us—as Westerners—of the beauty of friendship with like-minded people and how this principle was visible in the life of William Carey, the father of modern mission. This book will be a blessing to those who are students of history, and there are many lessons to be learned in its pages that will help Christians be multipliers of God’s mission and ministry.”

—DR. ED STETZER

Billy Graham Distinguished Chair of Church,

Mission, and Evangelism

Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill.

The Missionary Fellowship *of*

William Carey

The Long Line of Godly Men Profiles

Series editor, Steven J. Lawson

The Expository Genius of John Calvin

by Steven J. Lawson

The Unwavering Resolve of Jonathan Edwards

by Steven J. Lawson

The Mighty Weakness of John Knox

by Douglas Bond

The Gospel Focus of Charles Spurgeon

by Steven J. Lawson

The Heroic Boldness of Martin Luther

by Steven J. Lawson

The Poetic Wonder of Isaac Watts

by Douglas Bond

The Evangelistic Zeal of George Whitefield

by Steven J. Lawson

The Trinitarian Devotion of John Owen

by Sinclair B. Ferguson

The Daring Mission of William Tyndale

by Steven J. Lawson

The Passionate Preaching of Martyn Lloyd-Jones

by Steven J. Lawson

The Affectionate Theology of Richard Sibbes

by Mark Dever



A Long Line of Godly Men Profile

The Missionary Fellowship *of*

William Carey

MICHAEL A.G. HAYKIN

The Missionary Fellowship of William Carey

© 2018 by Michael A.G. Haykin

Published by Reformation Trust Publishing

A division of Ligonier Ministries

421 Ligonier Court, Sanford, FL 32771

Ligonier.org ReformationTrust.com

Printed in Crawfordsville, Indiana

LSC Communications

October 2018

First edition

ISBN 978-1-64289-008-2 (Hardcover)

ISBN 978-1-64289-009-9 (ePub)

ISBN 978-1-64289-010-5 (Kindle)

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—without the prior written permission of the publisher, Reformation Trust Publishing. The only exception is brief quotations in published reviews.

Cover design: Steven Noble

Interior design and typeset: Katherine Lloyd, The DESK

Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, King James Version. Public domain.

Some material in this book is adapted from Michael A.G. Haykin, “‘A Wretched, Poor, and Helpless Worm’: The Life and Legacy of William Carey (1761–1834),” *Fontes: The Writings of Michael A.G. Haykin* (blog), accessed February 27, 2005, <http://haykin.luxpub.com:80/bb-careybiography.html> (site discontinued).

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Control Number:

018019028 (print)

To three dear friends:

Peter and Anna Pikkert—
“plodders” by grace like Carey—
and Haitham John Issak,
a lover of Christ like Carey

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	Followers Worthy to Be Followed	xi
<i>Preface</i>	Understanding William Carey	1
<i>Chapter 1</i>	The Early Years of William Carey	13
<i>Chapter 2</i>	Good Friendships: A Road to Theological Maturity	29
<i>Chapter 3</i>	The Pathway to Global Mission	49
<i>Chapter 4</i>	Going to India and the Need for Friends	75
<i>Chapter 5</i>	The Serampore Mission	103
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	. . . . .	123
<i>Appendix 1: A Timeline of William Carey's Life</i>	. . . . .	125
<i>Appendix 2: The Leicester Covenant (1790)</i>	. . . . .	131
<i>Appendix 3: The Serampore Form of Agreement (1805)</i>	. . . . .	137
<i>Index</i>	. . . . .	155
<i>About the Author</i>	. . . . .	161

Followers Worthy to Be Followed

Down through the centuries, God has raised up a long line of godly men whom He has mightily used at strategic moments in church history. These valiant individuals have come from all walks of life, from the ivy-covered halls of elite schools to the dusty back rooms of tradesmen's shops. They have arisen from all points of this world, from highly visible venues in densely populated cities to obscure hamlets in remote locations. Yet despite these diverse differences, these pivotal figures have held in common those virtues that remain nonnegotiable.

Each man possessed an unwavering faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But more than that, each of these stalwarts of the faith held deep convictions in the God-exalting truths known as the doctrines of grace. Though they differed in secondary matters of theology, they stood shoulder to shoulder in

embracing these biblical teachings that magnify the sovereign grace of God in salvation. These spiritual leaders stood upon and upheld the foundational truth that “salvation is of the Lord” (Ps. 3:8; Jonah 2:9).

Any survey of church history reveals that those who have embraced these biblical Reformed truths have been granted extraordinary confidence in their God. Far from paralyzing these spiritual giants, the doctrines of grace kindled within their hearts a reverential awe for God that humbled their souls before His throne. The truths of divine sovereignty emboldened these men to rise up and advance the cause of Christ on the earth. With an enlarged vision for the expansion of His kingdom upon the earth, they stepped forward boldly to accomplish the work of ten, even twenty men. They arose with wings like eagles and soared over their times. The doctrines of grace ignited them to serve God in their divinely appointed hour of history, leaving a godly inheritance for future generations.

This Long Line of Godly Men Profiles series highlights key figures in the agelong procession of these sovereign-grace men. The purpose of this series is to introduce you to these significant figures and explore how they used their God-given gifts and abilities to impact their times for the work of Christ. Because they were courageous followers of the Lord, their examples are worthy of our emulation today.

This volume focuses on the pioneering missionary William Carey. Celebrated during his own lifetime for his evangelistic efforts on the Indian subcontinent, Carey risked everything to

take the gospel to people who lived in darkness. He also put the lie to the notion that Calvinism and missions don't mix. Far from holding to a view of God's sovereignty that sees no place for missions and evangelism, Carey was consumed with passion for God's power to convert sinners as revealed in the gospel. In his efforts, he was joined by a stalwart group of similarly committed friends, whose cooperation in the mission of God should inspire us all to join hands with our Christian brothers and sisters as we pass through this earthly life.

I want to thank the publishing team at Reformation Trust for their commitment to this Long Line of Godly Men Profiles series. I remain thankful for the ongoing influence of my former professor and revered friend, Dr. R.C. Sproul. I must also express my gratitude to Chris Larson, who is so instrumental in overseeing this series. Finally, I am grateful to Dr. Michael Haykin for authoring this volume and helping to introduce William Carey to a new generation.

May the Lord use this book to energize and embolden a new generation of believers to bring its witness for Jesus Christ upon this world for God. Through this profile of William Carey, may you be strengthened to walk in a manner worthy of your calling. May you be zealous in your study of the written Word of God for the exaltation of Christ and the advance of His kingdom.

Soli Deo gloria!

—Steven J. Lawson
Series editor

Understanding William Carey

For English-speaking people, the eighteenth century was an era of highly significant achievements. Through conquest and exploration, they established themselves as the masters of a far-flung empire that encircled the globe. It was in the middle of this century that British troops under the command of Robert Clive (1725–74) defeated a French army in India at the Battle of Plassey, which paved the way for the British conquest of Bengal and later all of India. Two years later, on September 13, 1759, General James Wolfe (1727–59) defeated the French general Louis Joseph Montcalm (1712–59) at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, then outside the walls of the city of Quebec. Though Wolfe was killed in this engagement, the British victory meant the end of French rule in Canada. Within another decade, the British naval officer Captain James Cook (1728–79) entered upon his world-changing discoveries

in the South Pacific, mapping the coastlines of New Zealand and Australia.¹

Running parallel to this empire building by the British, though distinct from it, came the kingdom building by English-speaking missionaries. Up until the latter part of the eighteenth century, evangelical Christianity was primarily confined to Northern Europe and the Atlantic seaboard of North America. But suddenly, in the last decade of the century, these evangelicals launched out from these two regions and began to establish churches throughout Asia, Africa, and Australasia. At the heart of this missionary movement was William Carey (1761–1834), who has come to be known as “the founder of modern missions,” a description that was especially dear to the Victorians.² To them, he was an iconic missionary pioneer.

“I AM A PLODDER”

This celebrity status accorded to Carey actually began in his lifetime. “Such a man as Carey is more to me than bishop or archbishop: he is an apostle,” the evangelical Anglican John

1 For an excellent overall account of this empire-building by the British, see Kirsten McKenzie, “Britain: Ruling the Waves” in Robert Aldrich, *The Age of Empires* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007), 128–51.

2 See, for example, John Taylor, ed., *Biographical and Literary Notices of William Carey, D.D.* (Northampton, England: Dryden, Taylor & Son/London: Alexander & Shephard, 1886), 86; William Edward Winks, *Lives of Illustrious Shoemakers* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co., 1882), 147; George Smith, *The Life of William Carey: Shoemaker & Missionary* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons/New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1909), 315.

Newton (1725–1807) once expressed. On another occasion, Newton wrote that he did not look for miracles in his own day on the order of those done in the Apostolic era. Yet, he went on, “if God were to work one in our day, I should not wonder if it were in favor of Dr. Carey.”³ Similarly, in 1826, when two missionaries by the names of George Bennet and Daniel Tyerman happened to visit Carey in India (by that time, he had been laboring there for more than thirty years), they were struck by what they later called his “apostolic appearance.”⁴

But Carey’s opinion of himself was quite different. He once told his nephew Eustace Carey (1791–1855): “I am a plodder, it is true. I have no genius, but I can plod.”⁵ In other words, Carey saw his achievements not as the work of an inspired Apostle but as the product of grit, gumption, and, he would have wanted to add, God’s grace. Carey was quite conscious that he did not merit being decked out with a halo like some medieval saint, something that later evangelical tradition—following Newton’s lead?—has in essence done. Carey was convinced that he had simply done his duty as a servant of Christ.⁶

3 *The Autobiography of William Jay*, eds. George Redford and John Angell James (1854; repr., Edinburgh, Scotland: Banner of Truth, 1974), 275; S. Pearce Carey, *William Carey* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, [1923]), 134.

4 Tom Hiney, *On the Missionary Trail* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2000), 222.

5 Cited in Francis Wayland, “Introductory Essay” to Eustace Carey, *Memoir of William Carey, D.D.* (Boston: Gould, Kendall, and Lincoln, 1836), xiv–xv.

6 A. Christopher Smith, “The Legacy of William Carey,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 16, no. 1 (January 1992): 2.

A SOLITARY PIONEER?

The lionization of Carey has depicted him as something of a solitary pioneer, someone whose remarkable character triumphed over both lackadaisical Christianity in England and various tremendous obstacles on the field in India. Consider for a moment a text written on Carey by Francis Wayland (1796–1865), probably the leading Baptist theologian in the Northern United States during Carey's lifetime. As president of the Baptist school Brown University in Providence, R.I., from 1827 to 1855, Wayland provided hearty support of the modern missionary movement that was an important factor in stimulating a missions-mindedness among Baptist churches in America. As a result of his missionary passion, he was eventually asked to write the authorized biography of the American Baptist missionary Adoniram Judson (1788–1850), who was baptized as a believer by Carey's coworker William Ward (1769–1823). This two-volume work sold an amazing twenty-six thousand copies in 1853, its first year of publication, a total that would make it a best seller even in today's Christian book market.

An earlier missionary tract by Wayland was his "Introductory Essay" to the first American edition of Eustace Carey's *Memoir of William Carey*, the earliest major biography of William Carey, which appeared in 1836.⁷ Wayland's

7 Wayland, "Introductory Essay," ix–xxii. A second American edition appeared in 1837, published in Hartford, Conn., with an introductory essay by Jeremiah Chaplin.

essay occupies fourteen pages in the book. Wayland lists the numerous hurdles that Carey had to overcome to become an ideal missionary, among them the lack of support by fellow Christians in England and the overt opposition of the East India Company, which essentially ruled as a governing body in India. And Carey looked in vain for support from his first wife, Dorothy (1756–1807), for, Wayland says, she was “querulous and unreasonable, capricious and obstinate,” and eventually became insane.⁸ For Wayland, it was the calling of William Carey “to be a pioneer, and to act alone” that dominated his view of the Baptist missionary.⁹ However, Carey was, above all things, a team player, but one never gets this impression from reading Wayland’s essay.

“A LITTLE BAND OF BROTHERS”

Devoted friends in England—Andrew Fuller (1754–1815), John Ryland Jr. (1753–1825), John Sutcliff (1752–1814), and Samuel Pearce (1766–99)—and in India—William Ward and Joshua Marshman (1768–1837)—none of whom are mentioned by Wayland in his essay, were utterly essential to Carey’s achievements as a missionary on the Indian subcontinent. In fact, collegiality is ever central to times of spiritual blessing in the history of the Christian faith. As James Davison Hunter argues in his book *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy,*

⁸ Wayland, “Introductory Essay,” xx.

⁹ Wayland, “Introductory Essay,” xxii.

and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World, the “great man of history” view, namely, that “the history of the world is but the biography of great men,” is wrong.¹⁰ Rather, “the key actor in history is not individual genius but rather the network [of individuals and friends] and the new institutions that are created out of those networks.” Hunter thus maintains that “charisma and genius and their cultural consequences do not exist outside of networks of similarly oriented people and similarly aligned institutions.”¹¹

In the history of the church, there are numerous illustrations of the truth of Hunter’s thesis. For instance, there is the Pauline circle, the group of men, including Timothy and Titus, who gave up whatever ambitions they had for their own lives to join the Apostle Paul in the glorious work of planting churches throughout the ancient Mediterranean world. There are the Cappadocian Fathers—Basil of Caesarea (c. 329–79), his brother Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335–c. 395), and Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 329–89)—who employed their gifts and calling to bring a close to the Arian controversy and give the church a universal grammar for speaking about the triune God. In the mid-sixteenth century, John Calvin and his circle of friends, including such men as William Farel (1489–1565) and Pierre Viret (1511–71), were on the cutting edge in pushing forward the Reformation. And a superb example of Hunter’s

10 James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2010), 38.

11 Hunter, *To Change the World*, 38.

thesis is Carey's network of friends, who played a key role in the renewal of the English Baptist community in the late eighteenth century as well as in the launching of the modern missionary movement. Christopher Anderson (1782–1852), a Scottish Baptist leader who became a close friend of a number of those who were centrally involved in these momentous events, reckoned

that in order to much good being done, co-operation, the result of undissembled love, is absolutely necessary; and I think that if God in his tender mercy would take me as one of but a very few whose hearts he will unite as the heart of one man—since all the watchmen cannot see eye to eye—might I be but one of a little band of brothers who should do so, and who should leave behind them a proof of how much may be accomplished in consequence of the union of only a few upon earth in spreading Christianity, oh how should I rejoice and be glad! In order to such a union, however, I am satisfied that the cardinal virtues, and a share of what may be considered as substantial excellence of character, are absolutely necessary, and hence the importance of the religion which we possess being of that stamp which will promote these. Such a union in modern times existed in [Andrew] Fuller, [John] Sutcliff, [Samuel] Pearce, [William] Carey, and [John] Ryland. They were men of self-denying habits, dead

to the world, to fame, and to popular applause, of deep and extensive views of divine truth, and they had such an extended idea of what the Kingdom of Christ ought to have been in the nineteenth century, that they, as it were, vowed and prayed, and gave themselves no rest. You . . . know the result.¹²

For much of the eighteenth century, far too many Particular or Calvinistic Baptist churches in England, Wales, and Ireland were moribund and without vision for the future or passion for the salvation of the lost at home or abroad.¹³ Definite tendencies toward hyper-Calvinism, an introspective piety that was in part a reaction to the Enlightenment of that era, and an inability to discern God's hand at work in the Calvinistic Methodist revivals of their day, as well as various social and political factors, were central in their decline. By the first decade of the next century, however, the low-burning embers in their churches had been fanned into white-hot flame as this Baptist community became a world leader in the foreign missionary enterprise, an enterprise that became identified with one name in particular, that of William Carey. But Carey did not accomplish this alone.

12 Christopher Anderson, letter, September 7, 1822, in Hugh Anderson, *The Life and Letters of Christopher Anderson* (Edinburgh, Scotland: W.P. Kennedy, 1854), 379.

13 They were called "Particular" due to their commitment to particular redemption. The other group of Baptists in England, the General Baptists, were Arminian and so called because of their belief in general redemption. A third, much smaller group of Baptists, the Seventh Day Baptists, were Calvinistic, but worshiped on Saturday, the seventh day.

There is little doubt that Carey's friendship with a number of like-minded Baptist pastors and missionaries was indispensable to the transformative impact of his life. These men took the time to think and reflect together, as well as to encourage one another and pray together. "An aversion to the same errors, a predilection for the same authors, with a concern for the cause of Christ at home and abroad"¹⁴ bound these men together in a friendship that was a significant catalyst for both revival and mission. With no friends in high places and virtually no financial reserves, this small group of men, believing God that their Christian faith was not meant for Westerners alone, committed itself to sending Carey (and later others) to India and Southeast Asia, and then, in the years that followed, yet others to the West Indies and West Africa. And so began in earnest the globalization of the Christian faith.

A FOCUS ON FRIENDSHIP

The chapters that follow examine Carey's network of friends so as to help us better understand some of the roots of Carey's achievements. While this book does follow the course of Carey's life, it is not an exhaustive biography by any means. Certain areas of Carey's life are passed over due to this focus

¹⁴ John Ryland Jr., *The Indwelling and Righteousness of Christ No Security against Corporal Death, but the Source of Spiritual and Eternal Life* (London: W. Button & Son, 1815), 35–36. These words are actually used by John Ryland Jr. of his friendship with Andrew Fuller, but they can also be applied to the friendship among all of these men.

on friendship. In particular, more space is given to the formation of his circle of friends in England than of that in India. This is not because the former is more important but due to the constraints of space and the desire not to be overly repetitive. The goal of this book, then, is to display the way that friendship was central to Carey's life. It is my hope that Carey will also be a model for us in this regard, for our culture is not one that provides great encouragement for the nurture and development of deep, long-lasting, and satisfying friendships. True friendships take time and sacrifice, and Western culture in the early twenty-first century is a busy world that as a rule is far more interested in receiving and possessing than sacrificing and giving.¹⁵

Roger Scruton, a conservative public commentator and philosopher who specializes in aesthetics, has rightly noted that Westerners "are living through . . . a decline in real friendship."¹⁶ What is especially disturbing about this fact is that so much of Western Christianity is little different from its culture. C.S. Lewis wrote an ingenious little book titled *The Screwtape Letters*, a remarkable commentary on spiritual warfare from the point of view of our enemy. In it, there is one letter from the senior devil, Screwtape, to his nephew Wormwood in which Screwtape rejoices over the fact that "in modern Christian writings" there is to be found "few of the

15 Diogenes Allen, *Love: Christian Romance, Marriage, Friendship* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cowley, 1987), 45–46.

16 Roger Scruton, "Staving Off Despair: On the Use and Abuse of Pessimism for Life," *Standpoint* (September 2010), 36, col. 1.

old warnings about Worldly Vanities, the Choice of Friends, and the Value of Time.”¹⁷ Regardless of whether Lewis is right with regard to a scarcity of twentieth-century Christian literature about “Worldly Vanities” and “the Value of Time,” he is undoubtedly correct when it comes to the topic of friendship.

But it has not always been so among Christians. This small study seeks to tell a different story, and so illustrate Proverbs 27:17 as it might literally be rendered: “Iron sharpens iron, and a man sharpens his friend’s face.”

¹⁷ *The Screwtape Letters*, letter 10, in *The Best of C.S. Lewis* (Washington, D.C.: Canon, 1969), 43.

The Early Years of William Carey

Carey was born to poor parents, Edmund Carey (d. 1816) and Elizabeth Wells (d. 1787), in 1761 in a tiny village called Paulerspury in the county of Northamptonshire, England. Edmund Carey was a weaver who worked at a handloom in his own cottage to produce a type of woolen cloth known in the district as “tammy.” When Carey was six years of age, his father was appointed the parish clerk of Paulerspury as well as the schoolmaster of the village. According to William Cowper (1731–1800), the evangelical hymn writer, the parish clerk had to “pronounce the Amen to prayers and announce the sermon”; lead the chants and responses during the service; keep the church register of baptisms, marriages, and burials; chase “dogs out of church”; and force “unwilling youngsters

in.”¹ Thus, young William was regularly taken to church. Of this early acquaintance with the Church of England, Carey later wrote:

Having been accustomed from my infancy to read the Scriptures, I had a considerable acquaintance therewith, especially with the historical parts. I . . . have no doubt but the constant reading of the Psalms, Lessons, etc. in the parish church, which I was obliged to attend regularly, tended to furnish my mind with a general Scripture knowledge. [But] of real experimental religion I scarcely heard anything till I was fourteen years of age.²

A PASSION FOR FLOWERS

Also living in Paulerspury was William’s uncle, Peter Carey. Peter had served with General James Wolfe in Canada during the French and Indian War (part of the Seven Years’ War) and had seen action at the British capture of the citadel of Quebec in 1759, two years before William was born. Peter subsequently returned to England and worked in Paulerspury as a gardener. His tales of Canada and his experiences there almost

1 Mary Drewery, *William Carey: A Biography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1978), 10.

2 Eustace Carey, *Memoir of William Carey, D.D.* (London: Jackson and Walford, 1836), 7.

certainly awakened in young William an unquenchable interest in far-off lands.

Peter also implanted in young William a love of gardens and flowers that remained with him all of his life. William's younger sister Mary (1767–1842) later recalled: "He often took me over the dirtiest roads to get at a plant or an insect. He never walked out, I think, . . . without observation on the hedges as he passed; and when he took up a plant of any kind he always observed it with care."³ Years later, when Carey was established in India, he had five acres of garden under cultivation. Cultivating this garden served as a welcome means of relaxation amid the stresses and strains of ministry in India. It was of this garden that his son Jonathan later remarked that "here he [i.e., his father] enjoyed his most pleasant moments of secret meditation and devotion."⁴

THE WITNESS OF A FRIEND: JOHN WARR

So much did young Carey love gardening that he wanted to become a gardener like his uncle Peter. At this point in his life, however, Carey suffered from a skin disease that made it very painful for him to spend large amounts of time in the full sun. It is interesting to note that when Carey went to India, he would spend a considerable amount of time in the sun, but with no recurrence of this skin disease. And so, in his mid-teens, his

³ Carey, *Memoir of William Carey*, 25.

⁴ Carey, *Memoir of William Carey*, 398.

father apprenticed him to a shoemaker by the name of Clarke Nichols, who lived in Piddington, about seven miles away from his home. In time, Carey became quite good at making shoes, as he himself once noted in a letter to John Ryland.⁵

A number of Carey's biographers have maintained, however, that Carey was not a very good shoemaker. An incident when he was in his forties may have given rise to this perception. He happened to be dining with the British governor-general of India in Calcutta when an officer at the table made an impertinent inquiry of one of the aides-de-camp whether it was true that Carey had once been a shoemaker. Carey happened to overhear the question, and he immediately piped up and said, "No, sir; only a cobbler!"⁶ While a shoemaker makes shoes, which obviously requires skilled craftsmanship, a cobbler merely repairs them. Though they are often regarded as synonymous, it is a mistake to confuse the two designations. Of course, a shoemaker can repair shoes when necessity demands it. But Carey's remark reveals the meekness and humility that were dominant aspects of his life as he matured in Christ.

This apprenticeship was to have very significant consequences for William, for one of his fellow apprentices was a Christian. His name was John Warr.⁷ He was a Congregationalist and was used of God to bring Carey to Christ. It was

5 Carey, *Memoir of William Carey*, 8–9. See also William Edward Winks, *Lives of Illustrious Shoemakers* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co., 1882), 147.

6 Winks, *Lives of Illustrious Shoemakers*, 151.

7 On Warr, see S. Pearce Carey, *William Carey*, 8th ed. (London: Carey, 1934), 28–32.

known for a long time that Carey's salvation had come partly as the result of the witness of one of his fellow apprentices. Until the First World War, however, the name of this apprentice had been completely lost. During the war, Warr's name was found in one of Carey's letters that had only then come to light.⁸ It is a powerful illustration of how the faithful witness of one believer can have immense consequences.

At first, when Warr spoke with Carey about Christ, Carey resisted the force of his arguments. Carey was the product of a staunch Anglican home and had come to despise anyone who was not a member of this denomination. As Thomas Scott (1747–1821), an evangelical Anglican minister whose preaching was a great help to Carey at one point in his life, commented concerning the Anglican disdain for Dissenters (that is, Baptists and Congregationalists): “We imbibe this prejudice with the first rudiments of instruction, and are taught by our whole education to consider it as meritorious.”⁹ But as Warr continued to witness to Carey, the latter felt “a growing uneasiness and stings of conscience gradually increasing.” Warr lent him books that began to effect a change in his thinking but which also increased his “inward uneasiness.” Warr also persuaded him to attend a prayer meeting with him in the nearby village of Hackleton, where a number of Congregationalists gathered midweek for prayer and Bible study. Carey subsequently tried to reform his life—to give up

8 Pearce Carey, *William Carey*, x.

9 Thomas Scott, *The Force of Truth* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Banner of Truth, 1984), 85.

lying and swearing and to take up prayer. But, he later said, he had no idea that “nothing but a complete change of heart” could do him any real and lasting good.¹⁰

It is interesting that Carey mentioned swearing as one of the major sins that dogged his life before his conversion. Other Europeans in the eighteenth century often noted that the English in general were addicted to swearing. Even cultured, upper-class women habitually swore. When John Newton, for example, was converted in 1748, he observed that he was “freed from the habit of swearing which seems to have been deeply rooted in me as a second nature.”¹¹

THE IMPACT OF SIN

Coupled with Warr’s testimony was an important lesson that young Carey learned from a traumatic incident that took place at Christmas 1777. It was the custom for apprentices at that time of the year to be given small amounts of money from the tradespeople with whom their masters had business. Carey had to go to Northampton to make some purchases for his master as well as for himself. He visited one particular shop, that of a man named Hall, who was an ironmonger—that is, a hardware dealer. Hall jokingly gave young Carey a counterfeit shilling for his personal gift. Hall intended to make it up to

¹⁰ Pearce Carey, *William Carey*, 30.

¹¹ John Newton, *Out of the Depths: The Autobiography of John Newton* (New Canaan, Conn.: Keats, 1981), 68.

him after Christmas, but this was his idea of Christmas merriment. When Carey discovered the worthless coin, he decided, not without some qualms of conscience, to pass it off to his employer. Appropriating a good shilling from the money that Nichols had given him, he included the counterfeit shilling among the change for his master. On the way back to Piddington, he even prayed that if God enabled his dishonesty to go undetected, he would break with sin from that time forth.

But, Carey commented in a letter written to Andrew Fuller many years later, "a gracious God did not get me through."¹² Carey's dishonesty was discovered, and he was covered with shame and disgrace, afraid to even go abroad in the village for fear of what others were thinking. By this means, Carey was led, he subsequently said, "to see much more of myself than I had ever done before, and to seek for mercy with greater earnestness."¹³ That mercy he found, as over the next two years he came to "depend on a crucified Saviour for pardon and salvation, and to seek a system of doctrines in the Word of God."¹⁴

BEFRIENDED BY CHATER AND SCOTT, AND MARRIAGE TO DOROTHY

William Carey continued to go with John Warr to the prayer meetings in Hackleton, but it was not until February 10,

¹² Carey, *Memoir of William Carey*, 12.

¹³ Carey, *Memoir of William Carey*, 12.

¹⁴ Carey, *Memoir of William Carey*, 14.

1779, that he actually attended a worship service. On that day, a man named Thomas Chater (d. 1811), a resident of Olney, was preaching. The text on which Chater was preaching has not been recorded, but in his sermon he did quote that powerful exhortation in Hebrews 13:13: "Let us go forth therefore unto him [i.e., Jesus] without the camp, bearing his reproach." On the basis of this verse, Chater urged upon his hearers "the necessity of following Christ entirely." As Carey listened to Chater's exhortation, the interpretation that he made of this text and Chater's words was one that he would later describe as "very crude." He distinctly felt that God was calling him to leave the Church of England, where, in his particular parish church, he was sitting under "a lifeless, carnal ministry," and to unite with a Dissenting congregation. Since the Church of England was established by the law of the land, he reasoned, its members were "protected from the scandal of the cross."¹⁵ So Carey became what he had long despised—a Dissenter.

When the Congregationalists in Hackleton decided to form themselves into a church on May 19, 1781, Carey was among the founders of what would eventually become Hackleton Baptist Church. Three weeks later, on Saturday, June 10, he married Dorothy Plackett (1756–1807), the illiterate daughter of a key member of the Hackleton congregation and a woman whose life has more often than not been misunderstood in the telling of Carey's story.¹⁶ For the first four years of their married

¹⁵ Carey, *Memoir of William Carey*, 12.

¹⁶ By far, the best book on Dorothy Carey is that by James R. Beck, *Dorothy Carey: The*

life, William and Dorothy lived in Hackleton, where Carey had begun to preach in the Hackleton church.

During the summer of 1782, Chater befriended Carey by encouraging the Baptists in Earls Barton, a village six miles' walk from Hackleton, to ask Carey to preach in their meetinghouse, which has been described as "a paltry thatched cottage." Though the believers there could not pay him enough even to replace the shoes that he wore out in walking back and forth between Hackleton and Earls Barton, this one visit led to his preaching there once every fortnight for the next three and a half years.¹⁷

In this early period of his Christian life, Carey was also deeply helped by the preaching and friendship of the Anglican minister Thomas Scott, who had succeeded Newton as the minister in Olney. Though Carey heard Scott preach but a few times, he wrote to Ryland many years later, "If there be anything of the work of God in my soul, I owe much of it to Mr. Scott's preaching." Scott had a relative living in Hackleton, whom he often used to visit when he undertook itinerant preaching excursions. Somehow, he and Carey were introduced, and the latter took every opportunity to meet with him and ply him with questions. Carey never forgot the enormous help Scott was to him during these days. As he wrote in 1823, "I had frequent opportunities of conversation with him on subjects which to me were at that time of very great

Tragic and Untold Story of Mrs. William Carey (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1992).

¹⁷ Carey, *William Carey*, 40–41.

importance, and frequently received hints or observations from him, which I remember with gratitude until to-day.”¹⁸

JOHN SUTCLIFF AND ANDREW FULLER

It was in the summer of 1782 when Carey first preached in Earls Barton that he also first set eyes on John Sutcliff and Andrew Fuller. The annual assembly of the Northamptonshire Baptist Association, a group of sixteen or so Particular Baptist churches that spanned a number of English counties, was at Olney in Buckinghamshire in 1782, a market town where Sutcliff had been the pastor since 1775.¹⁹ Sutcliff had come to faith in Christ in West Yorkshire, where he had sat under the preaching of John Fawcett (1740–1817), minister of Wainsgate Particular Baptist Church, who had been deeply affected by George Whitefield (1714–70) and William Grimshaw (1708–63).²⁰ After two years under Fawcett’s mentorship, Sutcliff was driven by a hunger for further academic study to Bristol Baptist Academy in January 1772. Under the tutelage of Hugh Evans (1713–81), the principal of the

18 Carey, *William Carey*, 36; John Scott, *The Life of the Rev. Thomas Scott*, 8th ed. (London: L.B. Seeley and Son, 1825), 178–79.

19 For the life of Sutcliff, see Michael A. G. Haykin, *One Heart and One Soul: John Sutcliff of Olney, His Friends, and His Times* (Darlington, England: Evangelical, 1994). On the Northamptonshire Association, see Haykin, *One Heart and One Soul*, 110–13.

20 On Fawcett, see Michael A.G. Haykin, “Blest Be the Tie That Binds”: *Remembering John Fawcett—His Times, His Life, His Hymn* (Louisville, Ky.: The Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies, 2017).

academy, and his son Caleb (1737–91), Sutcliff had an outstanding academic record. He finished his studies at Bristol in May 1774, and, after brief preaching stints in Shrewsbury and Birmingham, he entered upon what would be his life's ministry in July 1775 at the Particular Baptist church in Olney. This market town was a veritable gospel center: John Newton had been the Anglican curate in the town from 1764 to 1779, when he had moved to London, and many in the town and surrounding countryside had come to faith under his preaching. Moreover, the great evangelical poet and hymn writer William Cowper (1731–1800), who had been a close friend of Newton, still resided in the town in his three-story red-brick house in the southeast corner of the marketplace, right across from the Baptist church.²¹ Sutcliff pastored in Olney for thirty-nine years. This lengthy ministry built up the Baptist work there and encouraged other churches in neighboring towns and villages, and Sutcliff came to acquire a justly deserved reputation for “sound judgment and warm affection” for Christ, His cause, and His people.²²

Andrew Fuller, unlike Sutcliff, had no formal theological education, but, like Carey, his social background was that of the lower classes. In fact, the evangelical statesman William Wilberforce (1759–1833), who deeply appreciated Fuller's

21 Cowper's home is now the Cowper & Newton Museum (<http://www.cowperand-newtonmuseum.org.uk>).

22 The quote comes from Christopher Anderson, letter to Andrew Fuller, July 7, 1814, in Hugh Anderson, *The Life and Letters of Christopher Anderson* (Edinburgh, Scotland: William P. Kennedy, 1854), 224.

theological acumen, once told his sons that Fuller was “the very picture of a blacksmith.”²³ Fuller was born in Wicken, a small agricultural village in Cambridgeshire, in 1754.²⁴ His parents, Robert Fuller (1723–81) and Philippa Gunton (1726–1816), were farmers who rented a succession of dairy farms. In 1761, his parents moved a short distance to Soham, where he and his family began to regularly attend the local Particular Baptist church, and where Fuller was converted in November 1769. After being baptized the following spring, he became a member of the Soham church. In 1774, Fuller was called to the pastorate of this work. He stayed until 1782, when he became the pastor of the Particular Baptist congregation at Kettering.

Fuller’s time as a pastor in Soham was a decisive period for the shaping of Fuller’s theological perspective. It was during this period that he began a lifelong study of the works of the American divine Jonathan Edwards (1703–58), whom Miklós Vető has described rightly as “the greatest Christian theologian of the eighteenth century.”²⁵ Fuller’s close reading of Edwards’ writings, along with his commitment to live under the authority of

23 Robert Isaac Wilberforce and Samuel Wilberforce, *The Life of William Wilberforce* (London: John Murray, 1839), III:388–89.

24 For Fuller’s life, the classic study is that of John Ryland, *The Work of Faith, the Labour of Love, and the Patience of Hope Illustrated; in the Life and Death of the Reverend Andrew Fuller* (London: Button & Son, 1816). A second edition of this biography appeared in 1818. For more recent studies, see Paul Brewster, *Andrew Fuller: Model Pastor-Theologian*, Studies in Baptist Life and Thought (Nashville, Tenn.: B&H, 2010), and Peter J. Morden, *The Life and Thought of Andrew Fuller (1754–1815)*, Studies in Evangelical History and Thought (Milton Keynes, England: Paternoster, 2015).

25 Miklós Vető, “Book Reviews: *America’s Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards*. By Robert W. Jenson,” *Church History* 58 (1989): 522.

the infallible Scriptures, enabled him to become what his close friend John Ryland Jr. described as “perhaps the most judicious and able theological writer that ever belonged to our denomination.”²⁶ Succeeding generations have confirmed Ryland’s estimation of his friend. C.H. Spurgeon (1834–92), for instance, once described Fuller as the “greatest theologian” of his century, while A.C. Underwood, a twentieth-century Baptist historian, said of Fuller—in a statement that clearly echoes Ryland’s estimation—that “he was the soundest and most creatively useful theologian the Particular Baptists have ever had.”²⁷

The friendship of Fuller was particularly important to Carey: Fuller was his chief supporter in England, and Fuller’s theology lay at the heart of Carey’s missionary vision.

SEEING GUY AND FULLER

Carey, used to walking considerable distances, tramped over to Olney from his home in the early hours of Wednesday, June 5. A huge crowd had turned up to the Baptist meetinghouse in Olney that morning—so large, in fact, there were not enough seats in the building. The weather being nice, seats were set up in the yard behind the church, and the preachers stood in one of the windowsills, the window having been removed, so those

26 John Ryland, *The Indwelling and Righteousness of Christ No Security against Corporal Death, but the Source of Spiritual and Eternal Life* (London, 1815), 2–3.

27 The Spurgeon remark is taken from Gilbert Laws, *Andrew Fuller: Pastor, Theologian, Ropeholder* (London: Carey, 1942), 127; A.C. Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists* (London: The Baptist Union Publication Dept. [Kingsgate Press], 1947), 166.

inside the church building as well as those in the churchyard could hear them. We do not know where Carey was seated that evening as he listened to Fuller's robust sermon on 1 Corinthians 14:20 ("Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men"). But it had been a spiritual feast all day, for in the morning he had heard William Guy (1739–83) preach a powerful sermon on 2 Peter 3:18.²⁸ John Ryland Jr. once described Guy as "the plainest rough-hewed you ever saw or heard," but God had powerfully employed his preaching in a significant revival in his church in Shepshed, Leicestershire, in the mid-1770s, when some worship services had gone on for up to eight hours.

With regard to Fuller's preaching, we are told that he was not "the exact model of an orator" and had "none of that eloquence which consists in a felicitous selection of terms." Nonetheless, his presence in the pulpit was imposing and solemn, "tending to inspire awe," and his delivery was marked by boldness and a "great force of expression." He would be "deeply impressed with his subject, and anxious to produce a similar impression on his hearers." Few who heard him did so without satisfaction—"if the heart were not at all times affected, yet the judgment would be informed."²⁹ Carey long

28 "Breviates" in Andrew Fuller, *The Excellence and Utility of the Grace of Hope* (Northampton, England: T. Dicey and Co., 1782), 13.

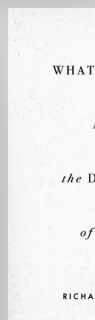
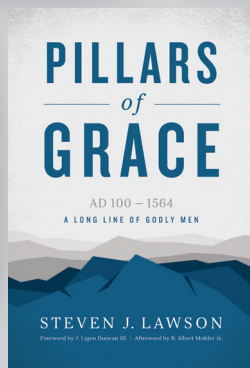
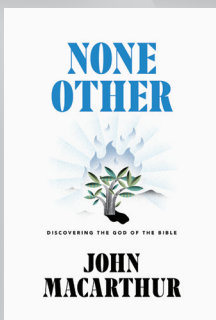
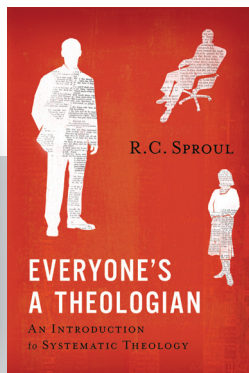
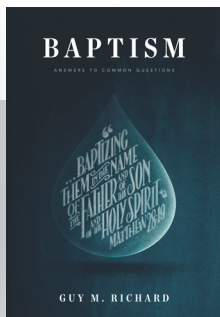
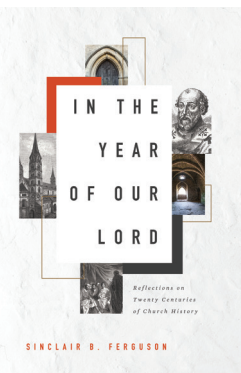
29 J.W. Morris, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Rev. Andrew Fuller* (London, 1816), 66–68. See also the helpful essay by Keith S. Grant, "Plain, Evangelical, and Affectionate: The Preaching of Andrew Fuller (1754–1815)," *Crux* 48, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 12–22.

remembered the sermons of Guy and Fuller, as well as the fact that he fasted the entire day because he had no money to purchase a noonday meal. All through his years at Hackleton, Carey labored at the trade for which he had been trained, but his shoemaking provided only the slenderest of incomes, and certainly left nothing for eating out.³⁰

Carey had been helped in his early Christian life by the friendship of strong Christians including John Warr, Thomas Chater, and Thomas Scott. Carey's relationships with these men were relatively short lived. But, by his own testimony, the impact they had on him was long lasting. Warr's witness was vitally used by God to bring him to Christ. Chater helped him see that he had to follow Christ wholeheartedly, which, to Carey's mind at the time, meant leaving the Anglican state church and joining a small Dissenting village cause. Obviously, this did not prejudice Carey against Anglicans, since he later enjoyed the friendship of the Anglican rector Thomas Scott. These small friendships are a good reminder that God uses seemingly minor relationships to accomplish great things. But, as we shall see in the next chapter, it was especially his lifelong friendships with Sutcliff, Fuller, and Ryland that would be decisive for the transformative nature of his Christian pilgrimage.

30 Carey, *Memoir of William Carey*, 15–16.

We publish books that proclaim the historic Christian faith to new generations. *These are books you can trust.*



Order your copy of this title, download the ebook version, or browse our entire collection at **ReformationTrust.com**.



WILLIAM CAREY IS WELL KNOWN as the pioneering missionary who carried the gospel to the Indian subcontinent. What is less well known is how much he relied on his friends for his missionary successes, a truth that can inform the church's efforts today.

“Carey was, above all things, a team player.”

—MICHAEL A.G. HAYKIN

The Long Line of Godly Men Profiles, conceived by Series Editor Steven J. Lawson, are designed to introduce readers to significant Christian figures and to show how they used their particular spiritual gifts, personality traits, or ministry abilities in serving God. The goal of the series is to set forth followers of Christ who are themselves worthy to be followed.



Reformation Trust



RELIGION / Christian Ministry / Missions