

The Missionary
Fellowship of

Michael A.G. Haykin

**WILLIAM
CAREY**

A LONG LINE of GODLY MEN



“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

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

Professor of missions emeritus

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 Centennial
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

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The Missionary Fellowship of William Carey

MICHAEL A.G. HAYKIN



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To three dear friends:

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

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Foreword

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 age-long 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.

FOLLOWERS WORTHY TO BE FOLLOWED

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

Preface

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

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.

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 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

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.

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.

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

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

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.

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 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.

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

8 Wayland, “Introductory Essay,” xx.

9 *Ibid.*, xxii.

“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 (1769–1823) 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, 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),

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.

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 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.

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

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.

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 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,

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.

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 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.”

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.

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:

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

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 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

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

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

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 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

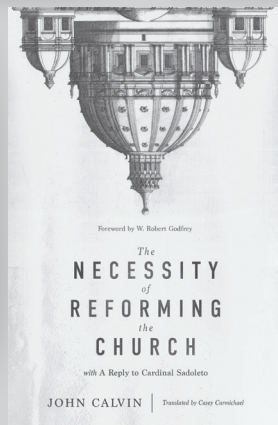
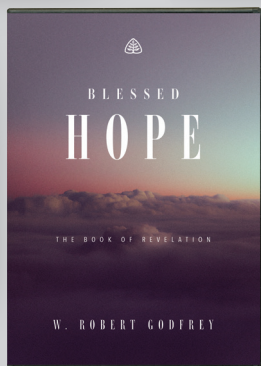
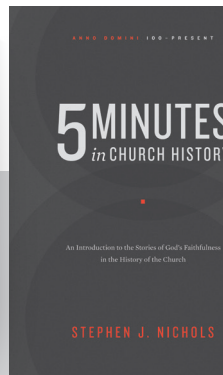
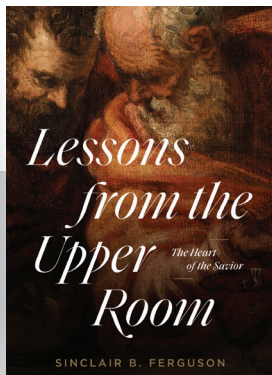
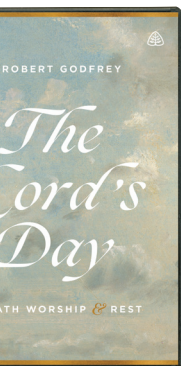
A number of Carey’s biographers have maintained, however, that Carey was not a very good shoemaker. An incident when he was in his forties may have given rise to this perception. He happened to be dining with the British governor-general of India in Calcutta when an officer at the table made an impertinent 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

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

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.

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