



Worldwide Missions

Missionary Biographies

John G. Paton

His Early Days and His Work in New Hebrides: The Story of a Noble Life

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

"Let scoffers laugh and say our work is vain,
And mocking ask, Where is our gain?
Such scoffers die, and are forgot;
Work done for God, it dieth not."



The age in which we live is to a great extent an age of idolatry in the form of hero-worship. True it is, we do not worship images carved out of fragrant wood, or cut out of blocks of marble. We do not worship the sun, moon, or stars; ours is a worship of power, intellect, genius. Unfortunately in this nineteenth century, we fear, too many of the heroes of whom our poets sing, and our historians write, and who receive the world's loudest acclamations, are not the men enshrouded with the spirit of love, gentleness, and peace, but men who go forth with drawn swords, deluging nations with blood, and carrying in their path devastation, misery, and desolation. Do not let us be misunderstood. Wellington may be the hero of a Waterloo; Faraday may carry the palm for science; Milton shall have the honour of his "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained;" Turner shall stand forth in the pages of history as the benefactor to his country by his works of Art; the steam engine carries with its modern appliances and gigantic and stupendous facilities the names of a Watt and a Stephenson; these men nobly and deservedly won the laurels that they wore, and with which their names are embalmed and held in grateful remembrance. But there are heroes "of whom the world was not worthy," and it is of such a one I am wistful to speak in these pages — one who could say with a worthy servant of God of days gone by:

"I live for those that love me,
For those that know me true,
For the heaven that smiles above me,
And waits my coming too...
For the cause that lacks assistance,
For the wrongs that need resistance,
For the future in the distance,
For the good that I can do."

This is the spirit displayed and the example set forth in the life of the hero of these pages. He, by a loving disposition, a holy example, a hallowed influence, an untiring zeal, an indomitable courage, an unwavering perseverance, a strong yet childlike faith in God, really became a hero in his Master's mission field.

Without laying ourselves open to a charge of undue flattery, we can truly say that such a testimony is the heritage of John G. Paton, the self-sacrificing missionary of the New Hebrides.

Before commencing our narrative, we pause here to ask, What is the secret? What is the mainspring of this man's successes, of his triumphs over difficulties, and of the glorious consummation of his most cherished hopes, after more than thirty years of a chequered and perilous career?

We get the answer to these questions, we get the problem solved, and the secret made manifest in the answer given him by his parents, when he consulted them in reference to accepting the proffered post of difficulty and danger. Listen! as this Zechariah and Elizabeth speak: "We have long since given thee away to the Lord, and in this matter also would leave thee to God's disposal."

Surely there comes a voice from these saintly parents echoing the strains of their great Master's declaration, who had spoken long while before them, "I come to seek and to save them which were lost." Love, rich boundless love, constrains J. G. Paton to leave father and mother and friends for His sake.

Here was the motive power that prompted, here was the constraining influence that compelled, here was the mighty lever that was to lift, here was the strength that was to subvert, here was the love that was to win. Yes, round and about his pathway, directing his every step, controlling his every action, there shone as a halo of glory, a power that was divine, a love that was of God, a sympathy begotten of Jesus Christ, a spirit given him by the Holy Ghost. Clothed in this raiment, our hero, laying his sacrifice upon the altar, went forth from that sanctified home, into the wild, uncivilised wastes of the New Hebrides, carrying with him the benediction of his godly parents, seeking "seals for his ministry, souls for his hire." And he found them.

Chapter 2 - Home Influences

"Home's not merely four square walls,
Though with pictures hung and gilded;
Home is where affection calls,
Filled with shrines the heart hath builded.
Home's not merely roof and room,
It needs something to endear it;
Home is where the heart can bloom,
Where there's some kind heart to cheer it."

Not in a spacious mansion, not in a palatial residence, but in a humble, very humble three-roomed cottage near Dumfries, in the South of bonnie Scotland, in the year 1824, John G. Paton first saw the light of day. His parents were poor, hard-working people, but rich in the knowledge and love of God. He was the first-born of eleven children, that had to be provided for by the stocking weaving of the father. In speaking of this hallowed home of his early days,

Paton touches a tender chord in the hearts of many in describing one of the three rooms in that dear old homestead, namely, the closet, the sanctuary of that cottage home. This was the especial Bethel for the head of the family. Here the Ebenezer was raised, here the father held secret communion and hallowed intercourse with his Maker.

Need we wonder at the power given, and the success vouchsafed to faithful prayer, when Paton speaks of his father coming forth from that sanctuary with "a light as from the throne itself " resting upon his countenance. Truly this closet was to this good man the presence chamber of the Most High. Speaking of those never-to-be-forgotten days, and their mellowing influences in after years, Paton writes, with artless simplicity, "Though everything else in religion were by some unthinkable catastrophe to be swept out of my memory, or blotted from my understanding, my soul would wander back to those early scenes, and shut itself up once again in that sanctuary closet, and hearing again the echoes of those cries to God, would hurl back all doubts with the victorious appeal: He walked with God; why may not I?"

Although his father was by some means prevented from entering the ministry himself (for which he had a strong desire), he made a covenant with God, that should sons be given to him, they should be consecrated to the ministry of Christ. As Elkanah and Hannah gave up their Samuel to the Lord, so did these descendants of the Covenanters give, in prospective, their sons for the Master's use and service, should He deign to accept them. This faithful disciple lived to see his heart's desire fulfilled in the case of three of his sons, namely, the hero of this sketch and his brother Walter; and James, the Benjamin of this illustrious family.

Little, perhaps, did James and Janet Paton think that long after they had passed "the way of all flesh," the seed sown by loving prayers and pious exhortations in that dear old Scottish homestead, would bring forth fruit to the Master's glory, not thirty, not sixty, but verily an hundredfold. The moral and religious development in J. G. Paton may undoubtedly be traced to the careful, prayerful, and personal training of these devoted parents. Themselves descendants of pious, Christ-serving disciples, who had fought nobly and served faithfully for the Christ's sake, they inherited traits of character, and possessed religious instincts, which could but have a great influence on the mind, character, and disposition of their children. Few parents have succeeded so well in their difficult task. James and Janet Paton were eminently devoted Christian parents. The spiritual prosperity of their children were dearer to their hearts than their intellectual progress, although the latter was by no means neglected when opportunity offered itself. We thank God to-day for open Bibles, a preached Gospel, ministers, teachers in all forms; but eternity alone will reveal how much of these things we owe to pious, praying, godly parents.

Like Ellis, of Madagascar fame (who worked in the gardens when a lad, in the Fenland town of Wisbech), John G. Paton, before he had attained the age of twelve, had started to learn his father's trade; and a very apt pupil he proved himself. It is a significant fact that the major part of our heroic missionaries have been prepared by a wise and all-seeing Providence for their future conflicts with trial, privation, and fatigue, by an extremely early discipline in fighting the battle of life. For sixteen hours a day had this youthful hero to toil for the bread that perisheth; and yet he had, or rather, made spare moments. The time allowed for meals (which is usually spent in rest or recreation) was eagerly seized upon by this youthful student, not for the rest, which was doubtless so much needed, but for improving the mind; hence we find him diligently studying, and successfully mastering the rudiments of Latin and Greek.

It is sometimes said, "Truth is stranger than fiction." It was so in the history of the life before us. Certainly it appears to savour, at first sight, more of romance than reality, this intense earnestness, this great thirsting by this youthful aspirant after knowledge; but we have the reason explained, and the truth of the assertion manifested in the utterance: "I had given my soul to God, and was resolved to aim at being a missionary of the Cross, or a minister of the Gospel."

Here was the aim of his youthful aspirations, the ideal of his life. Not to become great, but useful; not to have the wisdom of this world only, but to be made wise unto salvation. Evidently one task had been accomplished, one lesson had been learnt by this early disciple, under the teaching and influence of the Holy Spirit. He had learned to know himself. Consecrated as he was, at this early age, to the service of his Divine Master, need we wonder

that in after years, the "baptism of fire" thus received brought forth goodly fruit in the vineyard of the mission field.

The prayers and aspirations of the boy were but the "droppings before the shower," compared to the solicitous pleadings and intense yearnings of the father. He, also, with mighty and unwavering faith, laid hold upon the Promises, and at the family altar again and again was this first-born given afresh to the Lord, and out of the depths of a full heart, that had been set on flame with a Redeemer's love, was the conversion of the heathen especially made the subject of his strong cries and tears.

Oftentimes as they rose from these family devotions, Paton tells us, "I used to look at the light on my father's face, and wish I was like him in spirit, hoping that in answer to his prayers, I might be privileged and prepared to carry the blessed Gospel to some portion of the heathen world." Everything in this godly family was sanctified to the Master. In after years Paton had no cause to regret those early days of toil and labour, finding all that he had learned in that home to be of immense and invaluable service to him in his missionary labours.

One incident connected with this home life seems especially worthy of our attention, showing as it does the unwavering faith in God of the godly mother of that household. During the absence of the head of the household from home, there appeared a fear lest "the barrel of meal should waste, and the cruse of oil should fail." In the hour of her dire extremity this Christian mother placed her children in their beds, with the assurance that the God in whom they trusted would supply their need. And so it was. The prophecy of this pious, trusting mother was literally fulfilled. In a most unexpected manner, the next day, a plentiful supply of the things just needed was sent them, and so the mother's faith was honoured and the promises of God abundantly glorified. We may rest assured they were not slow in acknowledging the Hand that had so marvellously ministered to their necessities.

Such then was the home in which John G. Paton was nurtured. Such were the holy influences which surrounded his early days. We would fain linger in this abode of peace and righteousness, and tell more of that father's love, and mother's devotion. But space forbids. Sufficient has been said to convey some idea of the hallowedness and sacredness of this Scottish household. Was the "bread cast upon the waters" in this home "found after many days?" Let the chapters that follow answer that question.

Chapter 3 - Early Struggles

"When clouds o'erspread;
When dark night comes on;
When the stars withhold their beams,
And the cold chill of loneliness
Steals over me;
Not alone! I'll say, for
Father, Thou art with me still."

Although not of a penurious nature, yet an economical turn of mind was one of the characteristics that marked the life of Paton, even in those early days to which we have already referred. Whilst assisting his father at the stocking-weaving, he was enabled to save sufficient to enable him to spend six weeks at the Dumfries Academy, This six weeks' insight into the intellectual world awoke in his breast a stronger desire than ever to know more of the things which hitherto had lain beyond his grasp. As the years passed on this desire grew more and more. How was this noble ambition to be gratified? Not by sitting down in listless apathy and brooding over his disappointment. Oh, no! Such a nature was altogether foreign to the youth that was in the future to make his mark in the missionary history of the New Hebrides. Taking *Nil desperandum* for his motto, and asking the blessing of God on his new departure, he resolves upon giving up his trade. This resolution is no sooner taken than a door is opened for him as assistant in connection with the Ordnance Survey of Scotland. Still residing with his parents, his spare time, which was now considerably augmented, was spent in study. Here we get an insight into the character that was to make his future so successful. His one aim — his sole object — was the improvement of his mind; with this commendable determination that it,

with all other gifts entrusted to his keeping, should be consecrated to the service of his Redeemer. Deep down in that heart there lay a loving loyalty for his Lord. When offered a very tempting offer to remain in the service of the Ordnance Company if he would sign an agreement to bind himself to serve them for seven years (with an assurance of speedy promotion), his ready answer was typical of his after life, "My life is given to another Master, so I cannot engage for seven years."

"To whom?" was the sharp interrogation.

"To the Lord Jesus; and I want to prepare as soon as possible for His service in the proclaiming of the Gospel," was the terse and pointed reply.

This course of conduct was not viewed in at all a favourable light by his superiors, the result being the engagement was terminated. At this critical juncture an offer was made him by the kindly Rector of Dumfries, Mr. Maxwell, to allow him to attend all the classes of his academy free of charge. This generous offer was reluctantly declined, on account of the lack of means to support himself meanwhile.

Believing that "nothing succeeds like success," and nothing daunted by the position in which he found himself placed, Paton, like a second Sisyphus, having let slip the great stone of success, when he had pushed it up to the mountain top, had to go down to the deep valley of perseverance and begin all over again. In his dilemma he turns his attention to the harvest field, and although a raw recruit at this kind of service, he soon by his ready tact and willing service won the respect and esteem of his employer and fellow-workmen. Although at the time this incident might have been looked upon as a rebuff to his enterprising spirit, yet long years after he found the lessons learned in his first harvest field was indeed a valuable experience. It is true to-day that:

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform."

Although unseen and unknown to its recipient his father's God had not forgotten His promise to be gracious to His believing child. At the expiration of his harvest service a letter came from the West Campbell Street Reformed Presbyterian Church, Glasgow, requesting his appearance for examination as a district visitor, etc., with the privilege of attending student classes, free of cost, for one year.

Only two days elapsed after the receipt of the letter, and Paton had to say farewell to his beloved mother and to leave his father's house for his new sphere of labour. Obeying almost literally (from sheer necessity) the divine injunction to the early pioneers of Christianity, "to take neither scrip nor purse," he starts upon the road to walk the forty long miles to Glasgow. A Bible and a few other necessaries were the extent of his worldly possessions. Yet although in such deep monetary straits, Paton graphically describes his position and feelings by saying: "I thought on One who says, 'I know thy poverty, but thou art rich.'"

For the first six miles of his toilsome journey his father bore him company, cheering and uplifting the heart of the son by his rich counsel and varied experience in the deep things of God. And yet the natural love of the father made itself observant and keenly felt as the hour for parting drew near. The silence of the latter part of that never-to-be-forgotten six miles' companionship was almost unbroken, save for the sobs which ever and anon broke in upon the stillness of their meditation. At last the parting place was reached. Both knew it might possibly be their last meeting and their last parting this side of the grave. There they stood, making one of the most striking pictures that an artist could portray on canvas — the old man, with his long hair flowing down his shoulders, stirred ever and anon by the gentle ripple of the autumnal breeze. Silently those lips moved in prayer, swiftly the tears rolled down those furrowed cheeks. The young man stood there, with heaving breast and tear-stained countenance, awaiting the benediction of the patriarch — last words, perhaps, for many years to come. At last the painful silence is broken. Listen well to the rich heritage that the father bequeathed to the son in his farewell utterance: "God bless you my son; your father's God prosper you and keep you from evil!" That was all. But, oh, what a *multum in parvo* of grace,

love, and trust is contained in that farewell utterance!

If you have read (and who has not) "Tom Brown's School Days," you have doubtless noticed the advice given to Tom by his father on the morning of his leaving home. Standing at the cross roads, waiting the coming of the stage coach, the father taking the boy by the hand, says: "Tom, never say anything that you would be afraid for your mother to hear you utter; never do anything that would cause your sisters to blush for you." We hear a great deal to-day of purity, but we should have no fear for the future of Britain's men and women if they were sent forth to fight the battle of life with the prayers of parents like James and Janet Paton, or aided by the advice of such honest, out-spoken, God-fearing men as Tom Brown's father.

Paton's stay at Glasgow was of short duration, he being obliged to return home before the close of the first year on account of a breakdown in his health. After a beneficial rest he was enabled to return to Glasgow, when he succeeded in obtaining a position as teacher in the Maryhill Free Church School. Here the patience of the embryo missionary was severely taxed. But being a firm believer in the beneficial effect of moral suasion, he succeeded in not only winning the respect but even the esteem and love of his most boisterous and unruly scholars. Although perhaps not altogether disregarding the maxim of sparing the rod and so spoiling the child, yet Paton had so much faith in ruling by love and gentleness that he declared, "Using the rod shall be my last resource."

In a very short time the attendance grew to such an extent that the School Committee, by what seems a mean-spirited action, decided to dispense with the services of one who had not only been used of God in raising the school numerically, but had also infused into its attendants a moral tone to which they had hitherto been strangers. That his labour of love had been greatly appreciated was evidenced by the testimonial presented to him on leaving by those who at one time were his greatest opponents.

Once again, humanly speaking, is the door closed against his progress, and the future had a dreary outlook indeed. Paton's experience did not differ materially from that of God's children generally in finding that it was sometimes "darkest before the dawn." He that shutteth up one door, openeth another. In these early struggles, again and again did Paton realise the blessedness of the fact that "Man proposes, God disposes." So it was here. Scarcely had the door of the Maryhill School closed against him before a letter was received from the superintendent of the Glasgow City Mission requesting him to appear before the directors for examination as to his qualifications as a City Missionary. Being accepted by the directors, he was appointed to one of the most degraded districts in the city. In this school of sin and suffering, wretchedness, pauperism, crime, and drunkenness, he learnt lessons, and gained an insight into the worst phases of human nature that proved immensely helpful to him in the future. During his nine years' ministry in this modern Babylon, Paton was enabled to see most clearly the gracious Hand that had hitherto led him, and how the various trials through which he had been called to pass had all tended to befit him for this particular sphere of service.

In this work he took the most indefatigable interest. He was often tired and weary in pursuing his labours, but never tired of the blessed and glorious work to which he felt he had been called. Instant in season and out of season, he was ready at all times by any means to:

"Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
And snatch them in pity from sin and the grave,
To weep o' er the erring ones, care for the fallen,
And tell them of Jesus the mighty to save."

The infidel, drunkard, and the wife-beater, were each in their turn won from the error of their ways by this faithful and zealous worker for the Master. He had an intense sympathy for souls. Of him it might be truly said:

"Some are never strangers,
But as soon as seen, the soul, as if by instinct
Springs towards them with resistless force, and owns

Congenial sympathy."

Although at times hatred and persecution were his lot, yet he pursued the even tenor of his way. Like the noble Apostle of old, he could say, "None of these things move me." Faithfully "he laboured on at His command, and offered all his works to Him." And he met with his reward in the conversion of many precious souls. Many years after, on revisiting the scene of his early labours, he was met by many a prodigal and redeemed Magdalene, who ascribed their conversion to God to his instrumentality. When through the grace of God he was thus used to the salvation of men and women, a beginning was made, and a foundation laid, from which should spring forth a power that should be felt, a sympathy that should be appreciated, a love that should carry with it a mighty influence, long, long after the workman should have passed to other scenes of labour. Viewing this nine years' ministry to the outcast of Glasgow, surely we are right in saying that, after the lapse of years, there comes a voice to us from the New Hebrides mission field, "Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not." "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

During these nine years of City Mission life, the one aim, the one object, the one goal he wished to reach, the prize he was most anxious to obtain, had not been lost sight of by Paton. Far from it. Ever and anon there came to that anxious, throbbing heart, the yearning desire to lay himself upon the missionary altar. He had been oft-times taunted with being "a man of one idea." Well he seems to have earned this appellation. Not in scorn or derision should it be applied, but rather as a tribute of righteous praise to a life sacrificed for the sake of those who knew not Christ. Who shall say it was not a sacrifice to give up position, kindred, home, friends, all, to carry the tidings of the Gospel of Peace to that far-off land? With this end in view, in addition to his mission labours, Paton was carrying on, at a painful sacrifice, his theological and medical studies in the Glasgow University, preparing himself in all respects for his work, so that he might labour as "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed."

Chapter 4 - At Last

"Wait! 'tis the key of pleasure,
And to the plan of God;
Oh, tarry thou His leisure,
Thy soul shall bear no load.
Wait! for the day is hasting
When life shall be made clear;
And all that know heart's wasting
Shall feel that God is near."

"All things come to him who waits." After years of anxious waiting, watching, and praying, the cry from the South Seas of "Come over and help us!" found a willing and cheerful response in the heart of J. G. Paton. The Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church having failed, both by advertising and casting lots, to obtain a suitable candidate for the New Hebrides mission field, Paton offered himself and was accepted. Although this long looked for opportunity to enter upon the work which had so long lain upon his heart had at last arrived, it was not without much prayer and self-examination that he came to this decision. Feeling that his medical studies, as well as his literary and divinity training, had in some measure qualified him to labour in the foreign field, he began to turn over the pros and cons of the matter in his mind. In addition to all this, after much meditation and prayer, he felt that deep down in his own heart the voice of the living God was calling him to action. He could not, he durst not longer tarry. "Here am I, send me," was the answer to the divine call.

The next twelve months were spent by Paton in preparing in various ways for his future service. In the language of Job, Paton might well have said: "Save me from my friends;" for, no sooner was it known that he intended entering the missionary field than a hundred and one objections were raised against the undertaking. His health, safety, present usefulness, future trials and dangers, were all hurled at his devoted head (in some cases almost as anathemas) as reasons why he should stay where he was. One of the most amusing objections had better, perhaps, be given in his own words. Says Paton: "Amongst many who sought to deter me was

one dear old Christian gentleman, whose crowning argument always was, 'The cannibals! you will be eaten by cannibals.'"

That Paton had a vein of humour somewhere in that mortal frame of his is evidenced by his characteristic reply to the dear old soul, who seemed so extremely solicitous as to his safety.

"Mr. Dickson, you are advanced in years now, and your own prospect is soon to be laid in the grave, there to be eaten by worms. I confess to you that if I can but live and die serving and honouring the Lord Jesus, it will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by cannibals or by worms; and in the great day, my resurrection body will arise fair as yours, in the likeness of our risen Redeemer."

It is almost needless to add that this gave the old gentleman his quietus.

On encountering so many objections to his plan, it was only natural that Paton should once again consult his beloved parents. Their reply was in keeping with their life of prayer and purpose. No objection was raised by them; on the contrary, not only their cheerful acquiescence to the scheme, but their heart-felt prayers that God would accept, long spare, and abundantly bless the labours of their first-born.

At last his prayers were answered; at last his heart's desire was granted; at last the ambition of his life was to be realised. This is the joy that springs from unshaken confidence and unwavering faith in Jehovah. Go forth thou chosen of the Lord, sanctified to thy work with a parent's prayers and blessing. Baptised with a mighty faith, and enriched with the Holy Ghost, thousands obeying the call of your great Master's voice in yonder mission field, shall be raised up as spiritual children to call you blessed.

One other commendable trait in the character of our hero deserves mention ere closing this short chapter. We refer to his intense thoughtfulness, his large-hearted remembrances for "the old folks at home." No cloud must be left to darken their horizon, as far as human help can avert it; so, loving hearts and willing hands blend in unison to lighten the burden in the old homestead. The family cow is purchased, the house rent paid, the school fees and clothing for the younger ones found. All this, and much more, was done by Paton himself for a time, afterwards the work of beneficence was taken up by the others. One of the greatest joys of Paton's life was experienced in knowing that, through the kindness of their loving children, the dear father and mother would be secured from want for the remainder of their days. Happy parents! Happy children!

Chapter 5 - Dark Days

"When faint and weary, Father, I'll repair
To some green, sheltered nook, where Thou wilt close
With tender hands, my eyes in sleep; and where
Thou'lt keep Thy loving watch o'er my repose,
Patient and trustful. Oh, a murmuring heart
Would be a thankless one! With such a Friend
Privations make me rich—great griefs impart
Great gladness—trials fierce in blessings end.

Yes, all is well! The mysteries of life
And death shall raise my reverence, and revive
My faith. Through all the stern and solemn strife
Awaiting me, great God, to Thee I'll cleave.
Naught from my faith and hope shall sever me,
I'll wend my way to Heaven, my hand in Thine;
My wisdom, comfort, triumph, all from Thee;
Thy will, Thy peace, Thy habitation mine."

On the 23rd of March, 1858, Paton and his coadjutors were solemnly set apart to their great

work. It was a memorable and never-to-be-forgotten service to those who witnessed it. The delivery of the thrilling charge, the breathless multitude, the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit, was to make memorable in after days a scene that would be indelibly stamped upon the minds of all present. On the 16th of April following, this devoted band of workers left the Clyde and set sail for the foreign mission field.

At that time our ocean steamers had not arrived at the model of perfection which they now possess, consequently the voyage was more lengthy and tedious than it would be now, with all our modern and unique steam appliances. Nevertheless, "all is well that ends well;" and so our voyagers gratefully acknowledged when, after many battlings with storms and adverse winds, they all landed safely at Melbourne. A warm greeting and hearty welcome here awaited the godly company from some Reformed Presbyterian friends, who had travelled from Geelong to wish them God-speed.

It is at this juncture that we receive the first intimation that Mr. Paton had found for himself an help-meet. Looking into the future, it is inexpressibly sad and touching the reference he makes to his young wife and himself during a few days' visit to Geelong. After being exposed to many and great dangers, Mr. and Mrs. Paton were safely landed at Aneityum, New Hebrides, on the 30th of August. It was with thankful hearts that they praised the God who had surrounded them with so many mercies, and had at last brought them to their desired haven. Around them lay the islands of the New Hebrides, to which they had looked forward with so great expectancy and so much hope, and into which they now entered with so much joy and gladness. Ah, well was it that the near future was so mercifully hid from the view of these servants of the Most High.

A committee of "ways and means" having been called together, it was unanimously decided that Mr. and Mrs. Paton should take up their residence at Port Resolution, Tanna. With the aid of energetic natives, preparation was speedily made for a mission house and church, likewise a dwelling-house for themselves. The outlook was not a promising one for the young missionary and his wife. They were surrounded by a people who were all savages and cannibals. Speaking of the bad specimen of diplomacy respecting the chiefs affording or guaranteeing any protection to the missionaries, Mr. Paton gives a scathing rebuke to the same tactics as practised by the civilised nations in making and breaking their treaties in peace and in war. We need not wonder at Paton feeling somewhat depressed as he gazes at the work before him. Crafty, cunning, deceitful, cruel, and bloodthirsty were many of the chiefs of these natives of Tanna. Paton says, "The depths of Satan, outlined in the first chapter of the Romans, were uncovered there before our eyes, in the daily life of the people, without veil and without excuse. On beholding these natives in their paint and nakedness and misery, my heart was as full of horror as of pity."

Oh, what a harvest field for him to enter upon! Where shall he begin? Whither shall he direct his steps? Cruelty, oppression, slavery, licentiousness in its most hideous forms, morality, even in its initial stages, unknown, vice and degradation rampant, covering as a plague the hearts of the people. Who is to stem this torrent of iniquity? Who is to raise the backwater to stem this seething current of cruelty in this dark place of the earth? Who is to lock the floodgates, and check the surgings of their human passions and thirst for their brother's blood? Who is to lift up the cry of warning and the voice of mercy to these New Hebrides natives? "Who is sufficient for these things?" The Spirit of the living God! Realising this, depending and leaning upon the arm of Jeshurun's God, Paton goes forth to work, as the "strong man armed," determining by the grace of God to lift these people of Tanna out of their savagery and set them at the feet of Him who died to redeem them from all sin.

A great and, as the sequel proved, a fatal mistake had been made by Paton in the choosing of a site for his dwelling place. They had built their house near the shore, which proved to be a hot-bed for fever and ague. Much misery and untold suffering might have been avoided had Mr. Paton possessed more knowledge of the country. When this great mistake was discovered a resolve was made to build upon higher ground, but this resolution was formed too late to save the life of the one that Paton held so sacred and so dear. Before four months had passed, since taking up their residence in Tanna, the young wife had passed away.

It was a day of joy and gladness in that New Hebrides home when, on the 12th of February,

1859, Mrs. Paton presented her husband with the first pledge of her affection. For a little time mother and child appeared to be doing well, but the attacks of fever and ague, to which she had been previously subjected, returned with increased severity, the result being that the already weakened frame succumbed, and in a very few days Paton was left to his labour and work — alone. Those whom only a few months previously God had joined together, death had now parted asunder. But the cup of sorrow was not yet filled. Scarcely had he felt that the wife of his youth was taken from him, when the baby boy, after a very brief illness, was taken away "from the evil to come."

These were indeed "dark days." No tongue can ever tell, no pen can depict, the anguish and sorrow which flooded Paton's heart in those sad, lonely, bereaved days. "Persecuted but not forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed," was the experience of the sorrowing disciple in those dark days. Despite his breaking heart and agonised soul, the strength so much needed was given to the bereaved husband and father. Necessity itself laid upon him the sad task of burying his dead from his sight. It was his hands that prepared the last receptacle for her who had so short time before been adorned as a bride. There, close by the ill-fated homestead, he laid the precious dust of his beloved ones in the same quiet grave, not sorrowing as those without hope. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even they also which sleep in Jesus will He bring with Him." That lonely grave in the future months and years became a "sacred and much frequented shrine to him who had been left to carry on his work alone." At this time, in the severest trial of his life, looking forward to the harvest he yet hoped to reap in that mission field, Paton says: "Whosoever Tanna turns to the Lord, and is won for Christ, men in after days will find the memory of that spot still green — where, with ceaseless prayers and tears I claimed that land for God in which I had 'buried my dead' with faith and hope. But for Jesus, and the fellowship He vouch-safed me there, I must have gone mad and died beside that lonely grave."

And so another life had been given for the Master's sake in this heathen land. It was here that those heroic pioneers, Williams and Harris, of missionary enterprise, were murdered for Jesus' sake. "Thus were the New Hebrides baptised with the blood of martyrs. Surely the blood of these noble martyrs teaches the whole of Christendom that 'He shall have the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession.'"

Chapter 6 - Hard Work on Tanna

After twelve months' persevering work and labour, a stepping stone was raised, to meet in some feeble sense this long neglected race in New Hebrides. Some faint idea was given of the observance of the Lord's day in the institution of a morning public service, which was attended by about twenty persons. Even in this matter Paton was grateful, thanked God and took courage, for the day of small things was not by any means to be lightly esteemed. One of the greatest difficulties he had to contend with was the language; as in each island, and sometimes in different parts of the same island a different language would be used; hence, this fact will give us some slight idea of one of the many difficulties with which the teacher of the New Hebrides had to contend.

The stillness and holy quietude of the Sabbath day was sometimes interrupted by the shrieks of women who were being offered as sacrifices; but neither Paton nor his co-workers durst help them, knowing that if they attempted to do so they would themselves be probably murdered. In fact, just at this time, it was only owing to the friendliness of two of the leading chiefs, under the providence of God, that the lives of Paton and his company were not sacrificed, so bitter was the persecution raging against them. That some good was accomplished and that God was in some degree blessing the labours of His servants was evidenced by the fact that several of the men came secretly by night to know more about this new religion and its laws. Thus it was, says Paton, "that the waves of hope and fear swept alternately across our lives; but we embraced every possible opportunity of telling them the story of the life and death of Jesus, in strong hope that God would spare us yet to bring the benighted heathen to the knowledge of the true salvation, and to live and serve the only Saviour."

It was, however, terribly trying and uphill work. The beating of the women, the strangling of

the widows, their terrible dishonesty, their cannibalistic propensities, were sins that were being daily committed in the most open and unblushing manner. The monotony of Paton's life was somewhat cheered by visits from Captain Vernon, the sainted Bishop Selwyn, and others, and although pressed by them to take a short cruise, as a much needed rest, yet such was Paton's real love for his work that he felt himself obliged to decline their kind invitation.

Realising the importance of following the advice already given him "to sleep on higher ground," Paton made all necessary arrangements to shift his present quarters as speedily as possible. But ere his design could be carried into effect the fever smote him with unusual severity, and had it not been for the faithful and devoted service of his Aneityumese teacher, Abraham, and his wife, there is no doubt the attack would have proved fatal. At last, after much labour and severe toil, aided by Abraham, the task was accomplished, the building erected. The interest that Paton took in his faithful friend Abraham had better be given in his own words. He says, "That man (Abraham) had been a cannibal in his heathen days, but by the grace of God there he stood verily a new creature in Christ Jesus. Any trust, however sacred or valuable, could be absolutely reposed in him; and in trial or danger I was often refreshed by that old teacher's prayers, as I used to be by the prayers of my saintly father in my childhood's home. When I have read or heard the shallow objections of irreligious scribblers and talkers, hinting that there was no reality in these conversions, and that mission effort was but waste, oh, how my heart has yearned to plant them just one week on Tanna, with the 'natural' man all around in the person of cannibal and heathen, and only the one 'spiritual man' in the person of the converted Abraham, nursing them, feeding them, saving them, 'for the love of Jesus,' that I might just learn how many hours it took to convince them that Christ in man was a reality after all! All the scepticism of Europe would hide its head in foolish shame, and all its doubts would dissolve under one glance of the new light that Jesus, and Jesus alone, pours from the converted cannibal's eye."

Notwithstanding wars and rumours of wars, the worshipping of the gods, the strangling of widows, and the other deeds of bloodshed and violence, the work of God prospered. More than once during his stay amongst them had Paton's life been in imminent danger, but the God whom he served had in a wonderfully miraculous manner preserved him from the hand of the assassins. After a trying and anxious time a house of prayer was erected; the wood used in its erection was bought for fifty pairs of trousers, these said trousers being the gift of that loved Bible class in far-off Glasgow. Another success achieved at this time was the printing of his first book in Tannese. It was indeed a difficult task, but British pluck and perseverance conquered all obstacles. Words cannot describe the joy of Paton's heart when he saw that first sheet of God's Word printed in the Tannese language. It is one of those scenes better imagined than described. Having now his church built and his printing press erected, Paton would doubtless at least feel himself on the borders of civilisation. How the house of prayer and the press would be to him memorials of the loved Scotland, to leave which he had sacrificed so much and lost that which he had held so dear.

One of the greatest hindrances to his work was the scandalous conduct of those engaged in the sandal wood trade and the Kanaka traffic. We cannot here stay to point out all the terrible wrongs inflicted upon these benighted islanders by these traders; suffice it to say, that it was a trade steeped in human blood and indescribable vice. Slavery in its worst form was practised by these sandal wooders and Kanaka labour collectors. Not only did their inhuman conduct prevent these islanders from receiving Christianity as taught by Paton, but it was eventually the cause of breaking up and almost ruining the Mission. It was such conduct as this that made the islanders suspect all foreigners, and hate the white man, and seek revenge in robbery and murder.

Paton's work had grown, although slowly. He had now six stations opened in and around Tanna, and ministered to by native teachers. When we remember that these teachers had all once been cannibals themselves, there is great reason for praising God. Other villages were waiting for instructors in the Christian faith, so it might well be said, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore that He send forth more labourers into His harvest."

In opening up and continuing the supplies of these stations the native teachers had to suffer much indignity, hardship, and persecution. Paton says, "Nothing known to men under Heaven

could have produced their new character and disposition except only the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Though still marred by many of the faults of heathenism, they were at the roots of their being really new creatures, trying, according to their best light, to live for and to please their new Master, Jesus Christ. This shone out very conspicuously in those two apostolic souls, Abraham and his wife, as leaders among all the devoted band."

Ever and anon, here a little and there a little, were there signs that the seed sown had taken root, and was bringing forth fruit. Here it was two of their sacred men who had come to inquire respecting the Unknown God; again it was some young people who were wistful to forsake their heathen gods. At another time, a few had met together to worship the one and true God; and so it was, line upon line, precept upon precept came back again to the heart of Paton, cheering him on in his labour, and assuring him that "his labour was not in vain in the Lord." So far had some of these men become christianised, that before going forth to war these heathen warriors bowed the head, whilst Paton engaged with them in prayer. Eternity alone will reveal to how many hearts the words of that devoted missionary were made "the savour of life unto life."

In September, 1860, the heart of Paton was greatly cheered and uplifted by the timely arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, missionaries from Nova Scotia. Of course they were warmly welcomed as fellow-labourers to the New Hebrides, by the resident missionary. In a very short time, assisted by Paton. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson picked up the language of the people, and became of great service in the mission work. Their cheerful company and untiring zeal in the cause of their common Master made them indeed a valuable acquisition. No man could have wished for better companions, or more able coadjutors in the ministry of their mission.

It was just at this time, owing to the cruel actions of the traders already referred to, that the measles were introduced into the island. A most fearful and deadly plague it proved itself, inasmuch that the living were afraid to bury the dead. No less than thirteen of the mission party fell victims to this dreadful prey. All fled in terror and dismay (leaving the missionaries to their own resources), with the exception of the true and loyal Abraham. He elected of his own free will, and out of the love of a full and grateful heart, to stay; and he remained with Paton a constant friend and faithful companion and sufferer until the mission life in Tanna closed.

Once again is Paton reminded of the transitory nature of all earthly objects. He had just begun to know enough of his fellow-labourer to love and honour him for his work's sake, when death again steps in, and "one is taken and the other left." On the first day of the year they had consecrated themselves anew to their Master and His service, little thinking that the service of one was to be so soon closed, and that even now the message was drawing very close, "It is enough, come up higher." Yet so it was. At two o'clock in the afternoon of 21st January, he (Mr. Johnson) fell asleep in Jesus, another martyr for the truth of the Gospel; another gem to deck the Saviour's crown. At sunset the same day another grave was dug by the side of that which contained all that had been so dear to Paton's heart; and there the widower and widowed stood side by side, and laid the friend and husband in his last resting-place. "He rests from his labours, and his works do follow him."

Truly this was a testing and trying time for God's servant. Deaths, hurricanes, and tempests followed each other in quick succession; and this to the poor heathen mind was a manifest token that the gods were angry, and that the Christians were the cause. Following upon the heels of this came the news of the martyrdom of the Gordons, at Erromanga. We cannot forbear adding that never more self-sacrificing and faithful missionaries lived and died in a heathen field than they. All these disastrous events furnished the heathens on Tanna with the argument that the worship of the Christians was the cause of all their misfortune, the consequence being that the lives of Paton and his faithful follower, Abraham, were in the greatest jeopardy. Some idea of the position in which Paton was placed may be found from the following extract, taken from a letter written by the late A. Clark, Esq., J. P. He says:

"In addition, Bishop Selwyn told us that he had seen the Commodore (Seymour) who told him that at Tanna the natives were in a very insulting and hostile state of mind, so much so that he felt it his duty to offer Mr. Paton a passage in his ship to Auckland, or some other place of safety." He adds: "Talk of bravery! talk of heroism! The man who leads a forlorn hope is a

coward in comparison with him who, on Tanna thus alone, without a sustaining look or cheering word from one of his own race, regards it as a duty to hold on in the face of such dangers. He chose to remain, and God knows whether at this moment he is in the land of the living. When the Bishop told us that he declined leaving Tanna, he (The Bishop) added, 'And I like him all the better for so doing.'"

Much as we should like to do so, our space forbids us giving, in detail, the further persecutions Paton endured for Christ and the Gospel's sake on Tanna. After the death of Mr. and Mrs. Mathieson, which occurred in 1862; Paton was the only one left alive to tell the story of those pioneer years, during which were sown the seeds of what is now fast becoming a glorious harvest.

It was a great trial for Paton to leave the scene of his much-loved labours; but no other course was open to him, and although the action he took in leaving Tanna was in many cases criticised in an unfair and unchristlike spirit, yet he possessed the witness within of a "conscience void of offence, both toward God and toward his fellow-men." For four years he had laboured amidst the greatest danger, suffering, and peril, forgetful and too often neglectful of self-interest, if, by any means, "he might win some." And, we doubt not, that many shall rise from their graves, in that once heathen island in the last great day, and shall be his "joy and crown of rejoicing."

During this year of 1862, Paton went through the length and breadth of Australia to collect money for providing a mission ship, to be called the "Dayspring." Above and beyond his most sanguine expectations did God bless his labours. Having obtained the ship, he next visits Scotland to obtain more missionaries; with what success, we hope to show in the following chapter.

Chapter 7 - Back to Scotland

Of the several committees who had worked with Paton on his tour to raise funds for the purchase of a mission steamer, all were unanimous in their expressed wish that he should visit Scotland, chiefly to secure, if possible, a fresh contingent of missionaries for the New Hebrides. But there was something beyond all this. There was that lying under the surface of which they were not cognisant. It was this. Soon after Paton started upon His Australian tour, the funds rolled in so rapidly that a resolution was formed to build a ship three times the size of the one originally proposed. The sum raised up to this time was £3000. So full of thankfulness and gratitude to Almighty God for the abundant manner in which He had blessed his labours, he vowed in secret, if the Lord in His great goodness would send him an additional £800 within a given time, that should warrant him in revisiting Scotland to secure more missionaries for the islands. Paton says, "I alone, north of Aneityum, was now left to tell the story of the planting of the standard on Tanna. Our mission numbered then only four agents in the field, and the thought arose, Why keep a mission vessel for so few? The resolution was therefore taken in God's Name to get more missionaries too. But this as yet was betwixt my own soul and the Lord." And yet, notwithstanding the request of his committees and his own resolve, Paton had some doubts respecting the steps he should take. He was in a strait betwixt two — the wail of the perishing heathen of the islands on one hand, and the desire to augment the missionary forces on the other.

At last, after much anxious thought and agonised prayer, he felt that the Lord's leading was that he should "go home." Accordingly, due preparations were made, and he took ship for London, May 16, 1863, arriving in Glasgow on the evening of the 26th of August following. The meeting with his saintly parents may be conceived, but cannot be described. Only five years since he left that dear old home, but how much had occurred in the interim! What suffering, trial, and hardship had fallen to the lot of that first-born son! Only five years since he had presented to those dear old folks his bonnie bride, and now the lonely grave on Tanna was the receptacle of her whom they had all loved.

Paton's reception in his mother country was of a most gratifying and enthusiastic character. The Reformed Presbyterian Church showed their appreciation of his arduous service to the cause of missions by unanimously electing him to the position of Moderator of their Supreme

Court. The honour thus conferred upon Paton was the highest that they could bestow; hence it significantly shows how high he stood in their esteem. And what did Paton think about and say of all this unexpected and generous kindness? He accepted with great humility the position to which he had been so courteously elected. But what was the object, what the motive power that constrained him to accept this high office at the hands of his brethren? That the heathen might be benefited by the position he would temporarily occupy. Here we have the one idea of the man brought prominently to the front. Honour or dishonour, success or defeat, affluence or poverty, anything subject to God's will, in order that the cause of his beloved heathen should be espoused.

In relation to various resolutions that were passed relative to Paton and his work, the one most pleasing to himself was that wherein the Church "legally and formally bound itself to maintain the New Hebrides Mission staff, and also the mission ship 'Dayspring.' " The "Dayspring" scheme was so heartily taken up by the Sabbath Schools throughout the country that the returns from that source alone have been ever since that time £250 per annum. Another marked success of this Scottish tour was the volunteering of four new missionaries, so that the posts that had for lack of help necessarily been abandoned were reclaimed, and other stations in the New Hebrides opened up.

It was during this remarkable tour that Paton met with one, who became the partner of his joys and sorrows. The finding of this wife was evidently directed by the Lord, as prior to their being brought together they were comparative strangers to each other. Mrs. Paton herself not only took a deep interest in missionary work, but belonging to a missionary family she was peculiarly fitted for her future work in the New Hebrides. In 1864 Mr. Paton was united in marriage to Margaret Whitecross (the daughter of the popular author of "Whitecross's Anecdotes"), and the family with which God has blessed that union have been dedicated to the Master's use and service.

One more scene in this Scottish tour must be noticed ere we leave it for other matter— the last visit to the home. We prefer, for various reasons, to give an account of that farewell visit in Paton's own words. He says: "My last scene in Scotland was kneeling at the family altar in the old sanctuary cottage at Torthorwald, while my venerable father, with his high-priestly locks of snow-white hair streaming over his shoulders, commended us once again to 'the care and keeping of the Lord God of the families of Israel.' It was the last time that ever on this earth those accents of intercession, loaded with a pathos of deathless love, would fall upon my ears. I knew to a certainty that when we rose from our knees and said farewell, our eyes would never meet again till they were flooded with the lights of the resurrection day. But he and my darling mother gave us away once again with a free heart, not unpierced with the sword of human anguish, to the service of our common Lord, and to the salvation of the heathen. And we went forth, praying that a double portion of their spirit, along with their precious blessing, might rest upon us in all the way that we had to go... Here, in passing, I may mention that my mother, ever beloved, 'fell on sleep,' after a short agony of affliction, in 1865, and my 'priest-like father' passed peacefully and joyfully into the presence of his Lord in 1868, both cradled and cherished to the last in the arms of their own affectionate children, and both in the assured hope of a blessed immortality, where all their sons and daughters firmly expect to meet them again in the home prepared by their blessed Saviour."

Comment on such a testimony, and from such a source, would indeed be out of place. We can only thank God for such Christ-like parents, and praise Him for such God-given sons and daughters. May their numbers be multiplied yet more and more.

Chapter 8 - Work at Aniwa

Mr. and Mrs. Paton returned to Australia late in the year of 1864, arriving at Sydney early in the new year of 1865, after what was at that time considered a fast passage of ninety-five days. From this time till August, 1866, Mr. Paton was engaged in making, and bringing to a successful issue, arrangements for the permanent working of the mission ship. Mr. Paton would fain have gone back to his former scenes of labour on Tanna, but it was felt by those deeply interested in the welfare of the mission that it would not be safe, at least at present, for him to do so. Eventually it was decided that Aniwa should be the future mission field of Mr.

and Mrs. Paton. Aniwa was perhaps less savage than Tanna, but certainly not one whit less heathen. While staying at Aneityum, as they were *en route* for Aniwa, they heard that old Abraham (referred to in previous chapters), the brave participator in the dangers and trials of the Tannese Mission, had been called to his reward in the Father's house above — another trophy from this heathen mission field of the Saviour's power and willingness to save to the uttermost.

God never guided Paton back to Tanna; but for the next fifteen years he laboured earnestly, lovingly, and, praise God, successfully, for the souls of the Aniwans. Yet, in the good providence of God, Tanna was not lost sight of. Paton laboured, and others to-day are reaping the fruits of his labours. No time was lost in erecting their dwelling-house, mission house, and other needed buildings. Infanticide and wife murder were crimes that were practised and indulged in by the heathens of Aniwa; and yet, such has been the power of the Spirit of Him who has declared Himself the "mighty to save," that Paton had not only the joy of seeing these poor benighted heathen forsake their detestable and cruel practices, but had the gratification of receiving them as humble communicants at the Lord's Table.

One of the greatest blows given to heathenism in Aniwa was accomplished by an over-ruling Providence. Owing to the scarcity and the difficulty experienced in obtaining pure water, independent of the rainy season, the water used by the natives was of a very unwholesome nature. Sympathising with them most fully upon this question, Paton resolved upon devising some method whereby fresh water could be obtained. At last he hit upon the expedient of sinking a well, much to the astonishment of the incredulous natives, who could quite understand water coming in the rainy season from above, but viewed with much prejudice and great incredulity the idea of fresh water coming up from below. After great opposition and no little fear on the part of the natives, Paton brought his enterprise to a successful issue. When at last the living water was seen bubbling up from the bottom of the well, the astonishment displayed by the excited natives passes comprehension. Although for the time being they were greatly mystified as to the appearance of the water, yet eventually none more than themselves rejoiced in this Heaven-sent boon.

But the consequences arising from the sinking of this well were blessed not only to the physical benefit, but also spiritual edification of the natives. God spoke to them through this interposition of His providence, with a voice that awoke in their slumbering hearts a desire to know more and more of the Giver of this water. In a very few days a practical manifestation of this desire was manifested in their gathering together their gods of wood and stone, amid tears and sobs and shouts. The number of idols was so great that a difficulty arose as to how they should be disposed of. Some were burned, some buried, some cast into the sea, till eventually none were left to tell the tale of what had so long held these people in the bonds of error and superstition. From that day heathenism in Aniwa was practically extinguished, heathen worship abolished and forsaken. Now it was that they listened with an ever-increasing interest to the old, old story of Jesus and His love. This change was manifested by their conduct. No longer naked, but clothed, always ready to seek counsel of those who were instructing them in the divine life, asking God's blessing ere partaking of their food — a form (although a crude and rude one), of family worship. These things were indeed evidences that the Holy Spirit was indeed applying His teaching with power to their hearts. In a very short time (so great was this marvellous spread of gracious influences) it could be truthfully asserted that every person on Aniwa had become an avowed worshipper of the true and living God.

One can well imagine how all this must have cheered the heart and uplifted the soul of noble Paton. His faith in his Lord and Master was indeed being honoured. Here, surely, the prayers of those godly parents in the far-away Scottish home are being answered in full measure—pressed down and running over. But looking away from man's work, and all human agency, we would say with sincere earnestness and heartfelt devoutness, "Not unto us, O Lord; not unto us, but unto Thy Name be all the praise."

After much labour and anxiety, Paton succeeded in producing the first Aniwan hymn book. Although the press used was in many respects sadly deficient, yet it was designed by God to be used as an instrument in doing a goodly work amongst this hitherto neglected people. When the object of its production was explained to the natives it was hailed by them with

unbounded delight, and in course of time it was utilised to their instruction and edification. Next to the Bible itself, music was greatly blessed by God in aiding the efforts of Paton to instil the truths of the Gospel into the minds of the natives. One writer has said: "Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast." Aye, true; but in the case before us much more than this was accomplished. By the aid of music and the singing of the Gospel by Mrs. Paton, many of these natives were led to trust Jesus as their Saviour. In the public service, in the family, in the church, Mrs. Paton was enabled to use the gift given her by God to the well-being of the souls by whom she was surrounded. Many, we doubt not, who are now joining in the song of the redeemed in the Better Land, learnt their first note of praise in that little heathen island of Aniwa.

So greatly had the work increased that it now became not only essential, but really necessary that a new place of worship should be erected. The chiefs and great men, the women and children, all contributed their quota by labour and otherwise, in building their house of prayer. At last, after weeks of toil and united labour, the top-stone was brought on with rejoicing, even the bell (the gift of a dear friend of Paton) not being forgotten. One of the most interesting and affecting incidents connected with this new house of prayer is their first communion. We will give a few extracts of Paton's eloquent and touching description of this solemn service. He says: "It was Sabbath, 24th October, 1869, and surely the angels of God, and the Church of the redeemed in glory, were amongst 'the great cloud of witnesses,' who eagerly 'peered' down upon the scene... The whole service occupied nearly three hours. The islanders looked on with a wonder, whose unwonted silence was almost painful to bear. For the first time the Dorcas Street Sabbath School Teachers' gift from the South Melbourne Presbyterian Church was put to use — a new communion service of silver. They gave it in faith that we would require it, and in such we received it; and now the day had come and gone. For three years we had toiled and prayed and taught for this. At the moment when I had put the bread and wine into those dark hands, once stained with the blood of cannibalism, but now stretched out to receive and partake the emblems and seals of a Redeemer's love, I had the foretaste of the joy of glory that well-nigh broke my heart in pieces. I shall never taste a deeper bliss till I gaze on the glorified face of Jesus Himself."

The school scheme grew apace, and in an incredibly short space of time every village on the island had its own school, which on the Lord's day was utilised for public worship, Mrs. Paton having under her own tuition a class of fifty women and girls; and it was an unbroken rule that the schools should be always opened and closed with prayer. How wonderfully the Gospel of Christ had transformed these natives! Only three years previously and they delighted in their nakedness and savagery; now they were happily engaged in making various garments wherein they might be clothed. As their knowledge of divine things increased their heathen abominations disappeared, and a new order of things was brought into being around them.

Thus day by day and year by year is the renewed life of these converted Islanders promoted and sanctified. On every hand is seen the results of the sacrificing labours of these missionaries of the Cross. Aniwa was now won for Christ. The workers had sown in tears; now they were enabled to reap with rejoicing and thanksgiving. "The little one had become a thousand, and the small one a great nation."

Chapter 9 - Visit to England

The reader will readily understand that it was impossible for us to give more than a very brief sketch (and that of a most meagre and imperfect character) in such a small work as this, of the labours and triumphs of this well-known and beloved missionary. To those who are wishful to know more of his devoted work in the mission field, we would refer them to that excellent work published by Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton — a work to which we express our great indebtedness for many facts and incidents herein recorded.

In consequence of a new mission ship being required, it was deemed necessary, for the furtherance of that object, that Paton should visit the churches of Great Britain. The sum of £6000 was to be the aim of this undertaking. An enterprise of such stupendous magnitude would have staggered the faith and cooled the ardour of any other man. But remembering the mercies of the past, the successful work he had accomplished, under God, on his last visit to

Scotland, how the hand of the Lord had been with him to strengthen and uphold in his mission labours at Aniwa, Paton accepted the commission. Possessing a faith "that laughs at impossibilities, and cries, 'It shall be done,' " Paton enters upon this never-to-be-forgotten mission. He comes to our "happy England" to plead his cause. That his reception was all that could be desired by this honoured servant of God is evidenced by the fact that amongst his most cordial supporters and most willing helpers were to be found the names of Dr. Oswald Dykes, C. H. Spurgeon, George Muller, the Hon. Ion Keith Falconer, Earl and Countess of Aberdeen, Lord Radstock, Rev. F. B. Meyer, T. W. Houghton, Lord and Lady Polwarth, Rev. Sholto Douglas, etc., etc.

One incident in connection with this memorable visit we must not omit. On visiting the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon at Norwood he was welcomed by that famous preacher with that humour and ready wit that only he could use, as "The king of the cannibals," at the same time being presented by Mrs. Spurgeon with that valued "Treasury of David" and a donation from the "cow fund." One values even such a small incident as this, when it is remembered that the hearts of all Christendom were at the time watching with intense anxiety the progress being made towards recovery by that gifted and God-blessed preacher.

As we have already stated, the mission to Britain was to raise £6000. After spending a year and a half in our midst, God so prospered the work of his servants, so inclined the hearts of the givers, that when Paton returned to Australia he was enabled to hand over to the Church that had given him the authority for his work no less a sum than £9000.

Perusing this godly life, witnessing his triumphs and successes, can we not say he has indeed been used of God? Shall not the records of this life teach us that the influence of good men lives after them — it is part of their immortality? God will not let good seed be lost. The harvest in the end will astonish the reapers.

And now, with the outlines of this sanctified life lying fresh upon our memories, does not the question come with forcible appeal to us individually:

What can I do? What can I do?

As I stood upon the seashore the other day, gazing across the world of waters, a little tiny wave came rippling at my feet, and I thought, "Ah! it is ever so. If God sends into the world His beautiful singers who will sing us songs the world will never let die — if God sends into the world His great musicians, who trill out to us sweet music — if He sends into the world His great artists, who, with their divine and immortal fingers light up the dull canvas with rare and unspeakable beauty — if He sends His orators, who, with silver tongues from pulpit, platform, and desk, nerve the hearts of the people to nobler deeds of daring, He also sends humbler children like you and me, to live nobly, act righteously, and glorify Him with all the marvellous powers with which He hath endowed us."

Let this simple story of the life-work of a wonderful man of God speak to your heart, my reader, and if it should be that till now you have never really owned Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, confess His holy Name at this moment of privilege and opportunity. Remember you cannot serve the Saviour until you really know Him, but when you do, then all the mighty possibilities of a John G. Paton's life may be yours also, and you may have the joy of serving the same Master.

Copied by Stephen Ross for WholesomeWords.org from *By Sea and Land: The Life Story of Mighty Men of Faith Who Moved the World by Their Labours of Love*. London: Pickering & Inglis, [19--?]

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