



**The One Hundredth Anniversary of the Haystack
Prayer Meeting: Celebrated at the Ninety-Seventh
Annual Meeting of the American Board in North
Adams (Classic Reprint)**

American Board of Commissioner Missions

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Excerpt from *The One Hundredth Anniversary of the Haystack Prayer Meeting: Celebrated at the Ninety-Seventh Annual Meeting of the American Board in North Adams*

The great missionary advance of the past century began with several simultaneous movements, so far as New England is concerned. The old "Societies for the Propagation of the Gospel" were moribund in the last decades of the eighteenth century. The churches, with all their religious activities, had suffered from the blight of post-revolutionary skepticism. Their awakening came at the end of the century through the renewal of the missionary impulse at Yale and other colleges, in the Connecticut Ministerial Association, and in similar bodies of other states.

Probably the most important of these new centers of missionary growth was that created in Williamstown, by the intense conviction and unflinching purpose inspired by God's Spirit in the heart of Samuel J. Mills. The Haystack Prayer Meeting of 1806 was not the origin, but rather furnished the occasion for his true missionary purpose to express itself and to make deep and abiding impressions upon the life and purposes of other men.

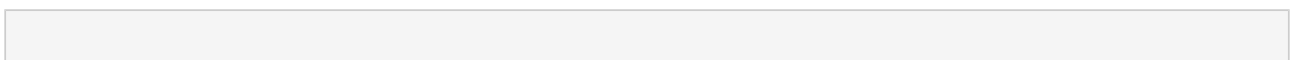
If John R. Mott is right in defining a leader as "one who knows the way, can keep ahead, and can get others to follow him," then the Providence of God has given conspicuous place among church leaders to this modest, self-effacing, inconspicuous youth who never thought of himself as a pioneer. He was intent upon persuading Christians to do their whole duty, that was all. He would have been in hearty accord with the thought uttered one hundred years after the thunderstorm meeting in a missionary assembly at Silver Bay, - "When Christianity possesses Christians, it will possess the world."

It is singularly fitting that the most powerful annual meeting of our great missionary organization should have been held where it could bear witness to the correctness of Mill's position.

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