

GREAT RESOLUTIONS

Program Thirty-Six

Faithful to the End Part Six on the Life of Hudson Taylor

A Faithful Steward

In First Corinthians 4:2 we are told that one thing is sought in stewards, that is that one would be found faithful. It was often difficult for Hudson Taylor to exercise his stewardship of dispensing the riches of Christ as the gospel to the people of China. Troubles from without and personal sufferings from within caused him to cast himself frequently upon God in dependence. In matters great and small, he learned to look to the Faithful One within him. “A little thing is a little thing,” he said, but faithfulness in little things is a great thing. China is not to be won for Christ by quiet, ease-loving men and women.”

By 1870, Hudson, now 38, had already suffered the loss of his dear Maria and three of his children. But even in the face of sorrow upon sorrow, he maintained his vision and goal and faithfully pressed on. “We did not come to China because missionary work was either safe or easy,” he reminded his coworkers, “but because He called us.”

The loss of his wife deeply affected Hudson and took a toll on him. And his children, thousands of miles away in England, were of daily concern to him. “May God help you to live Christ before these little ones, and to minister Him to them,” he wrote to their devoted caregiver. Hudson also wrote to supporters back home after Maria’s death, “I have never passed a more anxious or trying month in my life, but I never felt God so present with me.” Hudson’s health, never strong, was beginning to deteriorate. He felt he should not delay any longer, but return to England to recover his health and to be with his children and those at the mission base.

It was on the voyage to England that a love relationship developed between Hudson and a fellow China Inland Mission worker, Jennie

Faulding. They married and Jennie became a new cause of joy to Hudson. She was instrumental in helping him recover his health. Together they had two children. Jennie was a pioneer in bringing the gospel to the women in China’s interior, and opened the door of service to women who wanted to serve in the gospel fields of China.



Prayerful in the Midst of Business

Like the apostle Paul, Hudson Taylor labored abundantly, and his labor issued from the grace of God that was with him. His days began with the Lord, and he endeavored to continue his work while abiding in the Lord. “Do not have your concert first, and then tune your instrument afterwards,” he said, “Begin the day with the Word of God and prayer, and get first of all into harmony with Him.”

“Whatever is your best time in the day, give that to communion with God,” was his advice.

Hudson realized the need of both work and prayer. No matter how busy, he set aside time and strength to pray. He cautioned, “Do not work so hard for Christ that you have no strength to pray, for prayer requires strength.” His son Howard later testified, “He prayed about things as if everything depended upon the praying . . . but he worked also, as if everything depended upon the working.”

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everything depended on his working.” Hudson said, “I have seen many men work without praying, though I have never seen any good come out of it; but I have never seen a man pray without working.”

Hudson learned to bring all things to the Lord in prayer. In praying for China’s millions, he was encouraged to pray Psalm 2:8, “Ask of Me, and I will give the nations as Your inheritance and the limits of the earth as Your possession.”

Perfecting Many

Hudson’s love for the Lord led him to consecrate his all. “If I had a thousand pounds China should have it – if I had a thousand lives, China should have them. No! Not China, but Christ. Can we do too much for Him? Can we do enough for such a precious Saviour?”

Knowing that fields were white for harvest, he prayed to the Lord of the Harvest to thrust forth more workers into the field. “How few are those who live for souls as worldly men live for riches, from year end to year end,” he lamented. But true-hearted ones did come, and gospel seeds began to take root in the interior of that great land.

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It took considerable time for the workers who came to China to become acclimated to their new surroundings, so different were the people and culture. And it took many months of intense study to gain even a rudimentary understanding of the language. Thus, the work sometimes progressed at a slow pace. Sometimes new workers, anxious to reach souls, would preach the “wordless gospel.” This was done by using placards of different colors to illustrate gospel truths: Man was born in sin (black), but Jesus came and shed His blood on the cross to die for our sins (red). Once you believe, you will be washed to be as white as snow (white). Then by receiving the Savior, you will become a child of God and have the eternal

life of God (gold).

Eventually, Hudson began to place more emphasis on raising up and perfecting local Chinese believers. He knew the missionaries must reproduce themselves in the local believers. Hudson wrote to his parents in 1873, “. . . the work . . . is steadily growing and spreading – especially in that most important department, native help. . . The future hope of China doubtless lies in them. I look on all us foreign missionaries as platform work around a rising building; the sooner it can be dispensed with the better; or rather, the sooner it can be transferred to other places, to serve the same temporary purpose, the better for the places yet to be evangelized.”

Hudson’s understanding was according to Paul’s exposition in Ephesians 4:11-12: Christ, the Head of the Body, gave gifts to the church – these are the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and shepherds and teachers. The gifts are for the perfecting of the saints. When the saints are perfected by these gifts, they will do the work of ministry, which will result in the building up of the Body of Christ. Hudson encouraged and trained the CIM workers to labor in this way of perfecting others. As time went on, local Chinese believers were raised up to become the needed co-workers. Hallelujah! This enabled Hudson and his coworkers to continually enlarge the work. Eventually over 500 local workers were raised up and served in all eighteen provinces.

Boxer Rebellion

But Satan was not idle. In 1900 an uprising of Chinese peasants who held strong nationalistic views attempted to drive all foreigners out of China. Hundreds of Christians, including Chinese Christians, were murdered in the Boxer Rebellion. The China Inland Mission suffered greatly by losing 58 missionaries and 21 children. When the sad and tragic tidings of their deaths began to reach Hudson Taylor, grief threatened to overwhelm. He could do nothing but cast all on the Man of Sorrows. The work was severely disrupted. But the victorious Christ was and still is on the

throne. The attacks purified His testimony and resulted in a further propagation of the resurrected Christ in China. After the rebellion was quelled, many Chinese were deeply touched by the attitude of the CIM missionaries, who refused to accept reparation payments for loss of life and property. This led to a greater interest in the gospel among the people. "All he could do the foe, was just release the flow."

A Rich Heritage

In the space of 51 years, more than 800 men and women left their homelands and joined the China Inland Mission to bring the gospel to China. It is estimated that over 18,000 Chinese were brought to a saving knowledge of Christ during those years. Hudson Taylor's life and work have left a great spiritual heritage to the Lord's church. His living in full dependence upon the Lord, resolving "to learn to move man, through God, by prayer alone," has been a testimony and inspiration to many of God's children throughout the years.

Serving in Oneness with the Lord

Hudson Taylor received a definite commission from the Lord. This became a major reason of his usefulness. Once he received the burden to preach the gospel, he diligently went forth with an enlarged heart to the unsaved masses in China. He was not a great evangelist; he was simply burdened to labor. By taking this way he became one of the most useful servants of the Lord in the 19th century. As he labored throughout China he took the lead to practice to live and serve in the Lord's presence. This was how he became so clear regarding the deep meaning and essence of fruit-bearing as recorded in John 15.

Apparently his relationship with the Lord was sometimes misunderstood. His own daughter-in-law, author of one of his biographies, mistakenly observed his living as an example of an exchanged life. But Witness Lee notes that this understanding is incorrect, because it implies that "Christ replaces and

discards our poor human life with His superior divine life. According to Galatians 2:20 however, Christ lives in us and we live in Christ (John 15:4-5). We were not thrown away or discarded, but we were put into the Triune God (Matt. 28:19). Christ is now within us, and we are in Christ."

Hudson Taylor's life of living and working in oneness with the Lord shows us that service does not depend on methods, but rather on the person. He, like Paul, became all things to all men in order that he might by all means save some. (1 Cor. 9:22) Yes, he did adopt Chinese dress, ate Chinese food and wore a "pigtail." He was very human and learned to live and act in a manner that was attractive and pleasing to those he sought to reach. These practices, however, were not methods; they were simply the living out of a person in union with the Lord.

Witness Lee stated that, "according to the New Testament, the person is the way, and the person is the Lord's work. If God does not gain a person, He will have no work, and He will have no way. If God does not gain man, He will have no course to take. Man thinks that the most important thing to do is to find a good way. However, God's work does not involve giving us the ways but is a matter of gaining the persons." Hudson Taylor also made this point in his book *Union and Communion*, "What we are is more important than what we do." By living in union with the Lord, Hudson Taylor became a person that the Lord could flow through and use for His work.

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Shortage of Hudson Taylor's Work

No doubt, Hudson Taylor's work originated from God and was blessed by God. Watchman Nee and Witness Lee, who were later saved in China, never said or did anything to discredit the China Inland Mission. Witness Lee said he appreciated the work of Hudson Taylor and the China Inland mission in bringing the gospel to

the interior of China, and considered it a marvelous work that he appreciated and treasured. Yet, according to his honest assessment, he could not deny that “even with this wonderful work there was an element of deviation which still remained.”

“This element of deviation can be seen in the practice of the China Inland Mission concerning the matter of the church. The China Inland Mission collected many devoted believers to pick up the burden to go to the interior of China to preach the gospel of Jesus there, yet all these believers came from different denominations. Some were Episcopalian, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and some even came from the Brethren. Hudson Taylor was very general. The decision was made that if you joined the China Inland Mission to bring the gospel to the interior of China, you could establish a church according to the denomination you came from. Therefore, under the name of the China Inland Mission, the divisive forms of denominations still remained.” Therefore, although one might be encouraged by such a great work of establishing more than 300 stations of work, most of these were a testimony of division among Christians through denominationalism.

Conclusion

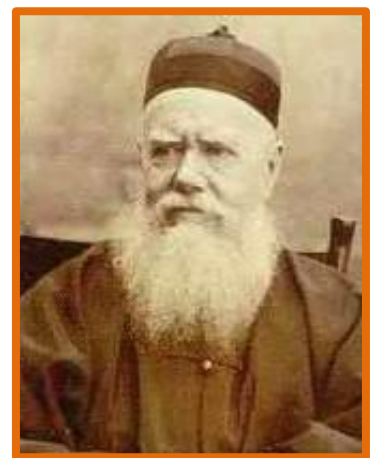
The work of Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission had a great impact on China. It also profoundly affected many saints in other countries who consecrated to the Lord to bring the gospel to China. The wealthy Studd family, whose sons were famous English cricket players, was influenced by Hudson Taylor’s call for workers. Charles Studd, in particular, was stirred to the extent that he forsook his wealth and fame, leaving all to bring the gospel to China. He and six of his Cambridge University student companions,



who became known as The Cambridge Seven, responded to the Lord of the Harvest in self-denial and self-sacrifice. These young men in turn inspired other men and women to consider the call to gospel service. Many persons of faith who responded to that call were diligent and fervent to labor to open the door of the gospel in the great land of China. They sacrificed much in order that others could hear the truth. How beautiful are the feet of those who announce the news of good things (Rom. 10:15).

Also, behind the scenes back in the home countries of these workers, many saints’ prayers were ascending to God on behalf of the Chinese people. Some fasted and prayed that salvation would reach the Chinese people, and many sent money to support the Lord’s work in the field. A few key brothers were befriended by Hudson, including Cyrus Scofield and D. L. Moody. They also became supporters of the work. It became evident then, and remains still today, that the prayers and offerings of so many were acceptable to God. Their prayers were heard and are still being answered today. Light did penetrate the darkness of idolatry, tradition, and superstition. To be sure, much fruit has been borne and the Lord’s testimony is still being raised up and furthered throughout China. The saints of Taylor’s generation held forth the word of life and will have a boast in the day of Christ that they did not labor in vain.

Hudson labored faithfully to the end. Near the last of his days he said, “It is difficult to realize that I cannot run about as I once did . . . but the weakness that prevents overwork may be the greatest blessing to me.” Although he still bore many responsibilities, he began to spend more of his time resting in the Lord though praying and the singing of hymns. He died in June of 1905 at the age of 73. On his



tombstone in China is written that Hudson Taylor was "A Man in Christ." His heart and days were focused with great zeal to bring the gospel to the unreached. Surely, Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Missionary saints were constrained by the Lord's great love as they obeyed the Lord's command to preach the gospel to every creature. May this spirit of the gospel still vibrate in our hearts today.

Marty Robert and Bill Lawson

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