

GREAT RESOLUTIONS

Program Thirty Four

The China Inland Mission Part Four on the Life of Hudson Taylor

Growing Need for More Workers

Soon after the days of their initial marriage bliss, Hudson and Maria both contracted typhoid fever. Once they recuperated, they began to labor in the gospel in the city of Ning-po. Their impact as a couple was now greater than when they were both single. Their spirit of service and love for the people drew many. Men, women, and children whose hearts the Lord had opened experienced the warmth of fellowship in Hudson and Maria's home. Their days were filled with receiving visitors, preaching the gospel, taking care of correspondence, shepherding new believers, and rendering medical care.

The burden was increasing on the few who were serving in that area. Just as in the Lord's day, the harvest was great, but the workers few (Matt. 9:37). Nonetheless, Hudson was growing impatient for the good news to reach the interior of China. The summer after the Taylors were married a new treaty was signed that gave foreigners the right to travel into the interior with a passport. Although the door was opening into the interior, the political atmosphere was producing hostile feelings toward westerners, and the hearts of most of the people remained closed. At times crowds would gather around the homes of the missionaries shouting, "Beat the foreigners! Kill the foreign devils!"

Though the Taylors were eager to take the gospel into the interior, they also could not neglect the newly established group of believers in Ning-po. They felt like parents who could not abandon their children. The need at Ning-po was multiplied when Hudson's coworker, Dr. Parker, lost his wife. Grief stricken, and with four children to care for, Dr. Parker felt he had no choice but to return to his homeland of Scotland. This left more burden on Hudson and Maria, who took over the full responsibility of the hospital at Ning-po. Hudson prayed fervently for the meeting of all the needs. It was

during this time that George Muller of Bristol heard of the young missionary couple and of their work in China. He was moved immediately to donate to their efforts and became a regular and generous supporter of their ministry.

Hudson began to realize that there was a great need for more workers. His hope was that the local believers would be raised up to be evangelists, shepherds and teachers, but time was needed for their growth and development. This caused him to write those back home in England: "And oh, will not the church at home awaken and send us out many more to publish the Glad Tidings?"

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As Hudson continued to release his burdens to the Lord of the Harvest, he was assured that the Lord would do something for His interests even though the number of missionaries in China was declining. He was learning that to gain workers, what was needed was not "elaborate appeals for help, but earnest prayers to God and a deepening of the spiritual life of the church so that men should be unable to stay home."

Health Leave

The added burdens began to take a toll upon Hudson. He wrote home, "People are perishing, and God is so blessing the work. But we are wearing down and must have help." He asked for any "earnest, devoted young men desirous of serving God in China, who, not wishing for more than their actual support, would be willing to come out and labor here." After six years of ceaseless labor, his health began to decline; tuberculosis was suspected. Eventually he could no longer continue in his sick condition. The hospital doors were closed,

and Hudson, with Maria, returned home for a period of time. He hoped the return to England would restore his health and give him opportunity to stir others' interests for China. Doctors told him he would never be strong enough to return to China, but he prayed to labor in China once again.

Although his health was fragile, it was difficult for Hudson to cease from his labors. He resumed his medical studies in the hope of returning to China as a qualified medical physician. He also began to translate the New Testament into Chinese. In addition to long hours spent in translation work and studying medicine, he also spent much time writing and speaking to stir up more interest for the immense need of the work in China.

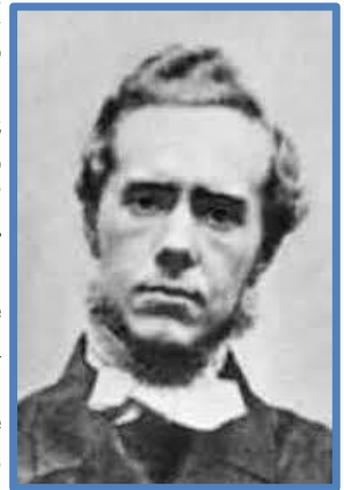
Charge and Commission

China's spiritual needs were always on his heart. There was an urgent need for willing men and women to go to the interior with the gospel to reach the perishing. But it seemed a fearful matter to ask for such workers. Hudson had first-hand experience of the sicknesses, loneliness, dangers and persecutions that would likely await them. How could he call ones to such trials and privations? And, if some were willing to go, how would they be cared for in such a far off, vast land? Hudson's conflict was almost more than he could bear. As he considered these things, he felt he could not bear such a heavy responsibility. He found it difficult to pray. He became so pressed that he could hardly sleep.

One Lord's Day morning he had a very particular crisis experience. While sitting in a large meeting among many who regularly heard the gospel, his thoughts were of the millions in China who never had the opportunity to hear the gospel. Too bothered to stay in the service, he left to walk on the beach. Casting his burden on the Lord, he sensed the Lord was speaking to him to trust Him with the responsibility of the workers. At last he had peace concerning the matter. He told the Lord, "Thou, Lord. Thou shall have all the burden! At Thy bidding, as Thy servant I go forward, leaving results to Thee." He later testified of this moment, "There the Lord conquered my

unbelief, and I surrendered myself to God for this service. . . . Need I say that at once peace flowed into my burdened heart." He asked the Lord for twenty-four workers, with the assurance that the Lord would bless His own work.

Witness Lee recounts Hudson's experience as follows.



"While he was back in England on furlough, he went to the seashore one day to spend some time alone with the Lord. As he gazed at the ocean, he felt that his eyes were brought across the seas to catch a glimpse of the interior parts of China, and he saw four hundred million dying souls. He felt that the Lord was calling him to consecrate himself entirely to those people and to send the gospel to the interior of China. Right there he accepted this charge and commission. Such a charge and commission became Mr. Taylor's "vision." Immediately he shared what he saw with the Christians whom he was acquainted with. Many responded to his word, and the China Inland Mission was formed. In the following forty to fifty years, hundreds and thousands of people were sent to the interior parts of China to preach the gospel."

This is the record of the birth of the China Inland Mission. Hudson began by prayer and by publishing the pamphlet, *China's Spiritual Need and Claims*. Besides enlightening his readers to the needs in China, he also reminded them of their responsibility to go into all the world with the gospel. He called for those who would go forth without any guarantee of salary, but relying upon God alone to meet their needs. The new mission would not go into debt and would not solicit funds but would rely upon the Lord's supply. The publication of the booklet had two results – some inquired about going to China to serve; others gave financially for the work. Hudson claimed the promise that 'no good thing would be withheld to those who walk uprightly.'

In one of Hudson's speaking engagements at a conference of ministers and Christian leaders, he told a story of how some Chinese fishermen let a man drown because it was not convenient for them to rescue him in a timely manner. The conference attendees were appalled that the fishermen could be so indifferent to the needs of a dying man. Hudson then asked how they could condemn the fishermen who could have easily rescued this one, if they also neglected the perishing by ignoring the Lord's command to "go into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature." In light of the fact that there was less than one missionary for every four million people in China, Hudson suggested that they should not consider whether they had a special call to go, but ought to "ascertain whether they had a special call to stay home." Then he left the matter to the Lord to prompt those who should volunteer to go. Soon the twenty-four laborers were selected and the funds were in hand. To many the endeavor seemed "foolhardy." They warned Hudson that without a mission board and organization back home, they would be lost and forgotten about in a foreign land. But Hudson replied that as a father, he never forgets he has children who need meals. He said, "I could not forget them if I tried. And I find it impossible to think that our heavenly Father is less tender and mindful of His children than I, a poor earthly father, am of mine. No, He will not forget us!"

The new band of missionaries began to prepare for their new life. With the same spirit and heart as Hudson, and constrained by the Lord's love, they were willing to sacrifice their all to bring the saving knowledge of Christ to the interior of China. Their message was simple: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believed into Him

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would not perish, but would have eternal life (John 3:16)."

Thus, five years after leaving, Hudson set sail again for China on a ship called the Lammermuir. The Taylors and their team became known as the "Lammermuir Party." After a tumultuous journey in which they survived a couple of typhoons, they eventually landed in Shanghai to face new challenges. Their arrival at the foreign settlement caused immediate criticism among some. They were surprised that there were single women among them who were willing to go into the interior. Some were bothered that the new arrivals followed Hudson's example of wearing the Chinese garb. Hudson looked away unto Jesus in these circumstances. He encouraged the newly arrived, "We have and may expect to have some trials. . . but the Lord is with us." In just three weeks, they began to board houseboats to begin their journeys into the interior.

This was the beginning of a work that would eventually send over 800 missionaries into the eighteen provinces of China resulting in many being brought to faith in Christ.

Marty Robert and Bill Lawson

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