J. Hudson Taylor (1832 – 1905): In China For God (Part 4)

In 1874 J. Hudson Taylor penciled in his Bible a little note that showed how his love for the Chinese and his faith in the Lord were prodding him ever onward. He wrote: “Asked God for fifty or a hundred additional native evangelists, and as many foreign superintendents as may be needed, to open up the four Fus and forty-eight Hsiens [administrative districts] still unoccupied in Chekiang [province]; also for the men to break into the nine unoccupied provinces. Asked in the Name of Jesus. I thank Thee, Lord Jesus, for the promise whereon Thou hast given me to rest. Give me all needed strength of body, wisdom of mind, grace of soul to do this Thy so great work. Amen.”

Fuller Blessing Through Deeper Suffering

Later that same year, Mr. Taylor was called home to England. Miss Blatchley, who had been caring for the Taylors’ children, had passed on to her heavenly reward. She was also a co-worker and Secretary for the China Inland Mission taking care of a great deal of the home office affairs. Her passing therefore necessitated the need of some reorganization. Shortly before leaving China for England, Mr. Taylor suffered a fall. As a result, not long after reaching his homeland, he found himself confined to bed, suffering considerably. For months he lay an invalid. How difficult this was when he had expected to accomplish so much when he arrived in England!

His bedroom became a prayer chamber. A map of China was hung between the posts at the foot of his bed. When not in prayer alone or with others gathered with him, he was busy with interviews and correspondence. At the end of five months, when he was able to be up and around once again, he wrote: “I believe God has enabled me to do more for China during this long illness than I might have done had I been well. Much thought, much prayer, and some effort in the way of writing by dictation have brought my intense desire for the evangelization of all the unreached [Chinese] provinces visibly nearer.”

Another party of 18 missionaries was sent forth. Mr. Taylor believed that had he been active – speaking and moving hearts through his appeals – people would have acclaimed his ability and would have credited him as the sender of the new missionaries. As it was, the missionaries came and were provided for through prayer while he was laid aside. The glory was given to God.

Stirred by the realization of how God had worked, Mr. Taylor wrote to the missionaries on the field: “Shall we not each one of us determine to labour more in prayer; to cultivate more intimate communion with God by His help; thinking less of our working and more of His working, that He may in very deed be glorified in and through us?”

During this time of recuperation, one who visited Mr. Taylor in his home was amazed at the simplicity and humbleness of his abode. Mr. Taylor lived sacrificially because he felt that the only way China could be evangelized was if the people at home would put into practice much

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self-denial, and he would not ask them to do something he was unwilling to do himself.

We Can Do a Little – God Can Do Much!

"How many estimate difficulties in the light of their own resources, and thus attempt little and often fail in the little they attempt! All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on His being with them…" (Hudson Taylor, November 1875, *China's Millions*).

In 1876 when Mr. Taylor was ready to return to China, relations between China and England were strained. War seemed imminent. He was advised against returning. War could close the door to all missionary activity. Fervent prayer was made and at the last moment a change came and doors to the western provinces were opened. Missionaries had liberty to travel to any part of China.

The China Inland missionaries took advantage of this liberty to travel about 30,000 miles in the next eighteen months. Scriptures were distributed everywhere, and the Gospel was preached all along the way. Travel was by foot and wheelbarrow over rough roads. Accommodations were poor. Food was simple and sometimes coarse. But for Jesus' sake, it was all borne willingly.

The next time the Taylors were in England word came of famine in the western provinces. There was urgent need of a woman leader who could accompany the pioneering women missionaries into the west to help care for the famine orphan children. The Taylors agreed that while he remained to care for matters in England, Mrs. Taylor would return to China to assume the leadership. She was one with her husband in the belief that they must never let the pressures of the work rob them of their communion with the Lord. She saw the most important part of their work as intercession, battling through in prayer for their fellow workers.

Soon Mr. Taylor had also returned to China and thrown himself into the work again. He, however, became quite seriously ill. In order that his life might be spared, the Taylors journeyed together to a northern province where the climate was more agreeable.

A New Step of Faith

When Mr. Taylor was able, he set out for the western frontier to take on a new responsibility. It had become apparent that the Chinese women of the western provinces could be reached only be women missionaries. But it would require a giant step of faith to send young, unmarried women "into all the dangers and privations, the hardship and loneliness of life in the far interior of China." It would require journeys of weeks and months at a time, to live in "isolation in crowded cities, hundreds of miles from any other foreigner." But if there were those willing to go, and if the Lord was sending them, Mr. Taylor, after much thought and prayer, was willing to accept the responsibility even for that. As he journeyed into this area, his accommodations were so poor that at times he had to share them with the mules, which occasionally disturbed his sleep by eating the straw from his pillow!

Eventually there grew up a string of thirty ladies' mission stations with churches and schools

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and hundreds of baptized believers. One woman was the only foreign lady in all the province of twenty-one million people, the first Christian woman who had lived and worked among the Chinese women of the area. How gladly she was welcomed among rich and poor women alike. But it must be told, too, that along the trail of these pioneer stations were found lonely graves. "Others will come after us…," said one of the women as she neared the end of her hard and seemingly fruitless toil. She was right. Years later there were thousands of baptized believers in the area.

Mr. Taylor, after prayerful consideration, felt led to ask God for seventy more missionaries in three years' time. After the seventy were given, he began to pray for one hundred fresh laborers…and that year ended with one hundred on their way to China. Then once again burdened by the Lord's command to preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:5), he began to ask the Lord for 1,000 missionaries within the next five years. By the close of that period, 1,153 had come forward, but few of these went to inland China.

Gradually Mr. Taylor turned over the leadership of the mission to other reliable hands. At times things were full of stress and trouble. Days of prayer and fasting helped wonderfully to clear up matters. At times the antiforeigner feeling was high. Riots ensued. Mr. Taylor's chief concern was that the missionaries should exhibit true faith at such a time, "setting an example of quietness and confidence in God to the Chinese Christians." Although many stations were threatened, none was actually attacked.

Yielded to the Will of God

Within thirty years of that memorable morning on the beach when Mr. Taylor had yielded himself to the will of God to evangelize inland China, there were 552 missionaries working with him, mostly in the interior. Most of these had gone out with no means of their own. Their only promise of support was from the One of whom it is written: *"My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 4:19). God had proved Himself faithful and true to His Word.

It was the sad duty of loving hands in 1905 to lower the body of Hudson Taylor into the soil of the China he loved alongside his wife and three of his children. Overlooking one of China's great rivers that had carried him on many missions of love, his body awaits that resurrection morning, when amidst thousands of his spiritual children, it will rise at the shout of the Lord Jesus Christ!

– Arranged from the book, *"Hudson Taylor And The China Inland Mission, The Growth Of A Work of God"* by Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor.

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