

A Retrospect

by J. Hudson Taylor

- Chapter 1 [The Power of Prayer](#)
- Chapter 2 [The Call of Service](#)
- Chapter 3 [Preparation for Service](#)
- Chapter 4 [Answers to Prayer](#)
- Chapter 5 [Life in London](#)
- Chapter 6 [Strengthened by Faith](#)
- Chapter 7 [Mighty to Save](#)
- Chapter 8 [Voyage to China](#)
- Chapter 9 [Early Missionary Experience](#)



Chapter 1. The Power of Prayer



The following account of some of the experiences which eventually led to the formation of the China Inland Mission, and to its taking the form in which it has been developed, first appeared in the pages of *China's Millions*. Many of those who read it there asked that it might appear in separate form. Miss Guinness incorporated it in the *Story of the China Inland Mission*, a record which contained the account of God's goodness to the beginning of 1894. But friends still asking for it in pamphlet form, for wider distribution, this edition is brought out.

Much of the material was taken from notes of addresses given in China during a conference of our missionaries; this will account for the direct and narrative form of the papers, which it has not been thought necessary to change.

It is always helpful to us to fix our attention on the God-ward aspect of Christian work; to realise that the work of God does not mean so much man's work for God, as God's own work through man. Furthermore, in our privileged position of fellow-workers with Him, while fully recognising all the benefits and blessings to be bestowed on a sin-stricken world through the proclamation of the Gospel and spread the Truth, we should never lose sight of the higher aspect of our work — that of obedience to God, of bringing glory to His Name, of gladdening the heart of our God and Father by living and serving as His beloved children.

Many circumstances connected with my own early life and service presented this aspect of work vividly to me; and as I think of some of them, I am reminded of how much the cause of missions is indebted to many who are never themselves permitted to see the mission field — many, it may be, who are unable to give largely of their substance, and who will be not a little surprised in the Great Day to see how much the work has been advanced by their love, their sympathy, and their prayers.

For myself, and for the work that I have been permitted to do for God, I owe an unspeakable debt of gratitude to my beloved and honoured parents, who have passed away and entered into rest, but the influence of whose lives will never pass away.

Many years ago, probably about 1830, the heart of my dear father, then himself an earnest and successful evangelist at home, was deeply stirred as to the spiritual state of China by reading several books, and especially an account of the travels of Captain Basil Hall. His circumstances were such as to preclude the hope of his ever going to China for personal service, but he was led to pray that if God should give him a son, he might be called and privileged to labour in the vast needy empire which was then apparently so sealed against the truth. I was not aware of this desire or prayer myself until my return to England, more than seven years after I had sailed for China; but it was very interesting then to know how prayer offered before my birth had been answered in this matter.

All thought of my becoming a missionary was abandoned for many years by my dear parents on account of the feebleness of my health. When the time came, however, God gave increased health, and my life has been spared, and strength has been given for not a little toilsome service both in the mission field and at home, while many stronger men and women have succumbed.

I had many opportunities in early years of learning the value of prayer and of the Word of God; for it was the delight of my dear parents to point out that if there were any such Being as God, to trust Him, to obey Him, and to be fully given up to His service, must of necessity be the best and wisest course both for myself and others. But in spite of these helpful examples and precepts my heart was unchanged. Often I had tried to make myself a Christian; and failing of course in such efforts, I began at last to think that for some reason or other I could not be saved, and that the best I could do was to take my fill of this world, as there was no hope for me beyond the grave.

While in this state of mind I came in contact with persons holding skeptical and infidel views, and accepted their teaching, only too thankful for some hope of escape from the doom which, if my parents were right and the Bible true, awaited the impenitent. It may seem strange to say it, but I have often felt thankful for the experience of this time of skepticism. The inconsistencies of Christian people, who while professing to believe their Bibles were yet content to live just as they would if there were no such book, had been one of the strongest arguments of my skeptical companions; and I frequently felt at that time, and said, that if I pretended to believe the Bible I would at any rate attempt to live by it, putting it fairly to the test, and if it failed to prove true and reliable, would throw it overboard altogether. These views I retained when the Lord was pleased to bring me to Himself; and I think I may say that since then I have put God's Word to the test. Certainly it has never failed me. I have never had reason to regret the confidence I have placed in its promises, or to deplore following the guidance I have found in its directions.

Let me tell you how God answered the prayers of my dear mother and of my beloved sister, now Mrs. Broomhall, for my conversion. On a day which I shall never forget, when I was about fifteen years of age, my dear mother being absent from home, I had a holiday, and in the afternoon looked through my father's library to find some book with which to while away the unoccupied hours. Nothing attracting me, I turned over a little basket of pamphlets, and selected from amongst them a Gospel tract which looked interesting, saying to myself, "There will be a story at the commencement, and a sermon or moral at the close: I will take the former and leave the latter for those who like it."

I sat down to read the little book in an utterly unconcerned state of mind, believing indeed at the time that if there were any salvation it was not for me, and with a distinct intention to put away the tract as soon as it should seem prosy. I may say that it was not uncommon in those days to call conversion "becoming serious"; and judging by the faces of some of its professors, it appeared to be a very serious matter indeed. Would it not be well if the people of God had always tell-tale faces, evincing the blessings and gladness of salvation so clearly that unconverted people might have to call conversion "becoming joyful" instead of "becoming serious"?

Little did I know at the time what was going on in the heart of my dear mother, seventy or eighty miles away. She rose from the dinner table that afternoon with an intense yearning for the conversion of her boy, and feeling that — absent from home, and having more leisure than she could otherwise secure — a special opportunity was afforded her of pleading with God on my behalf. She went to her room and turned the key in the door, resolved not to leave that spot until her prayers were answered. Hour after hour did that dear mother plead for me, until at length she could pray no longer, but was constrained to praise God for that which His spirit taught her had already been accomplished — the conversion of her only son.

I in the meantime had been led in the way I have mentioned to take up this little tract, and while reading it was struck with the sentence, "The finished work of Christ." The thought passed through my mind, "Why does the author use this expression? Why not say the atoning or propitiatory work of Christ?" Immediately the words "It is finished" suggested themselves to my mind. What was finished? And I at once replied, "A full and perfect atonement and satisfaction for sin: the debt was paid by the Substitute; Christ died for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Then came the thought, "If the whole work was finished and the whole debt paid, what is there left for me to do?" And with this dawned the joyful conviction, as light was flashed into my soul by the Holy Spirit, that there was nothing in the world to be done but to fall down on one's knees, and accepting this Saviour and His salvation, to praise him for evermore. Thus while my dear mother was praising God on her knees in her chamber, I was praising Him in the old warehouse to which I had gone alone to read at my leisure this little book.

Several days elapsed ere I ventured to make my beloved sister the confidante of my joy, and then only after she had promised not to tell any one of my soul secret. When our dear mother came home a fortnight later, I was the first to meet her at the door, and to tell her I had such glad news to give. I can almost feel that dear mother's arms around my neck, as she pressed me to her bosom and said, "I know, my boy; I have been rejoicing for a fortnight in the glad tidings you have to tell me." "Why," I asked in surprise, "has Amelia broken her promise? She said she would tell no one." My dear mother assured me that it was not from any human source that she had learned the tidings, and went on to tell the little incident motioned above. You will agree with me that it would be strange indeed if I were not a believer in the power of prayer.

Nor was this all. Some little time after, I picked up a pocket book exactly like one of my own, and thinking that it was mine, opened it. The lines that caught my eye were an entry in the little diary, which belonged to my sister, to the effect that she would give herself daily to prayer until God should answer in the conversion of her brother. Exactly one month later the Lord was pleased to turn me from darkness to light.

Brought up in such a circle and saved under such circumstances, it was perhaps natural that from the commencement of my Christian life I was led to feel that the promises were very real, and that prayer was in sober matter of fact transacting business with God, whether on one's own behalf or on behalf of those for whom one sought His blessing.

Chapter 2. The Call to Service

The first joys of conversion passed away after a time, and were succeeded by a period of painful deadness of soul, with much conflict. But this also came to an end, leaving a deepened sense of personal weakness and dependence on the Lord as the only Keeper as well as Saviour of His people. How sweet to the soul, wearied and disappointed in its struggles with sin, is the calm repose of trust in the Shepherd of Israel.

Not many months after my conversion, having a leisure afternoon, I retired to my own chamber to spend it largely in communion with God. Well do I remember that occasion. How in the gladness of my heart I poured out my soul before God; and again and again confessing my grateful love to Him who had done everything for me — who had saved me when I had given up all hope and even desire for salvation — I besought Him to give me some work to do for Him, as an outlet for love and gratitude; some self-denying service, no matter what it might be, however trying or however trivial; something with which He would be pleased, and that I might do for Him who had done so much for me. Well do I remember, as in unreserved

consecration I put myself, my life, my friends, my all, upon the altar, the deep solemnity that came over my soul with the assurance that my offering was accepted. The presence of God became unutterably real and blessed; and though but a child under sixteen, I remember stretching myself on the ground, and lying there silent before Him with unspeakable awe and unspeakable joy.

For what service I was accepted I knew not; but a deep consciousness that I was no longer my own took possession of me, which has never since been effaced. It has been a very practical consciousness. Two or three years later propositions of an unusually favorable nature were made to me with regard to medical study, on the condition of my becoming apprenticed to the medical man who was my friend and teacher. But I felt I dared not accept any binding engagement such as was suggested. I was not my own to give myself away; for I knew not when or how He whose alone I was, and for whose disposal I felt I must ever keep myself free, might call for service.

Within a few months of this time of consecration the impression was wrought into my soul that it was in China the Lord wanted me. It seemed to me highly probable that the work to which I was thus called might cost my life; for China was not then open as it is now. But few missionary societies had at that time workers in China, and but few books on the subject of China missions were accessible to me. I learned, however, that the Congregational minister of my native town possessed a copy of Medhurst's *China*, and I called upon him to ask a loan of the book. This he kindly granted, asking me why I wished to read it. I told him that God had called me to spend my life in missionary service in that land. "And how do you propose to go there?" he inquired. I answered that I did not at all know; that it seemed to me probable that I should need to do as the Twelve and the Seventy had done in Judea — go without purse or script, relying on Him who had called me to supply all my need. Kindly placing his hand upon my shoulder, the minister replied, "Ah, my boy, as you grow older you will get wiser than that. Such an idea would do very well in the days when Christ Himself was on earth, but not now."

I have grown older since then, but not wiser. I am more than ever convinced that if we were to take the directions of our Master and the assurances He gave to His first disciples more fully as our guide, we should find them to be just as suited to our times as to those in which they were originally given.

Medhurst's book on China emphasised the value of medical missions there, and this directed my attention to medical studies as a valuable mode of preparation.

My beloved parents neither discouraged nor encouraged my desire to engage in missionary work. They advised me, with such convictions, to use all the means in my power to develop the resources of body, mind, heart, and soul, and to wait prayerfully upon God, quite willing, should He show me that I was mistaken, to follow His guidance, or to go forward if in due time He should open the way to missionary service. The importance of this advice I have often since had occasion to prove. I began to take more exercise in the open air to strengthen my physique. My feather bed I had taken away, and sought to dispense with as many other home comforts as I could, in order to prepare myself for rougher lines of life. I began also to do what Christian work was in my power, in the way of tract distribution, Sunday-school teaching, and visiting the poor and sick, as opportunity afforded.

After a time of preparatory study at home, I went to Hull for medical and surgical training. There I became assistant to a doctor who was connected with the Hull school of medicine, and was surgeon also to a number of factories, which brought many accident cases to our dispensary, and gave me the opportunity of seeing and practising the minor operations for surgery.

And here an event took place that I must not omit to mention. Before leaving home my attention was drawn to the subject of setting apart the first fruits of all one's increase and a proportionate part of one's possessions to the Lord's service. I thought it well to study the question with my Bible in hand before I went away from home, and was placed in circumstances which might bias my conclusions by the pressure of surrounding wants and cares. I was thus led to the determination to set apart not less than one-tenth of whatever moneys I might earn or become possessed of for the Lord's service. The salary I received as

medical assistant in Hull at the time now referred to would have allowed me with ease to do this. But owing to changes in the family of my kind friend and employer, it was necessary for me to reside out of doors. Comfortable quarters were secured with a relative, and in addition to the sum determined on as remuneration for my services I received the exact amount I had to pay for board and lodging.

Now arose in my mind the question, Ought not this sum also to be tithed? It was surely a part of my income, and I felt that if it had been a question of Government income tax it certainly would not have been excluded. On the other hand, to take a tithe from the whole would not leave me sufficient for other purposes; and for some little time I was much embarrassed to know what to do. After much thought and prayer I was led to leave the comfortable quarters and happy circle in which I was now residing, and to engage a little lodging in the suburbs — a sitting room and bedroom in one — undertaking to board myself. In this way I was able without difficulty to tithe the whole of my income; and while I felt the change a good deal, it was attended with no small blessing.

More time was given in my solitude to the study of the Word of God, to visiting the poor, and to evangelistic work on summer evenings than would otherwise have been the case. Brought into contact in this way with many who were in distress, I soon saw the privilege of still further economising, and found it not difficult to give away much more than the proportion of my income I had at first intended.

About this time a friend drew my attention to the question of the personal and pre-millennial coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and gave me a list of passages bearing upon it, without note or comment, advising me to ponder the subject. For a while I gave much time to studying the Scriptures about it, with the result that I was led to see that this same Jesus who left our earth in His resurrection body was so to come again, that His feet were to stand on the Mount of Olives, and that He was to take possession of the temporal throne of His father David which was promised before His birth. I saw, further, that all through the New Testament the coming of the Lord was the great hope of His people, and was always appealed to as the strongest motive for consecration and service, and as the greatest comfort in trial and affliction. I learned, too, that the period of His return for His people was not revealed, and that it was their privilege, from day to day and from hour to hour, to live as men who wait for the Lord; that thus living it was immaterial, so to speak, whether He should or should not come at any particular hour, the important thing being to be so ready for Him as to be able, whenever He might appear, to give an account of one's stewardship with joy, and not with grief.

The effect of this blessed hope was a thoroughly practical one. It led me to look carefully through my little library to see if there were any books there that were not needed or likely to be of further service, and to examine my small wardrobe, to be quite sure that it contained nothing that I should be sorry to give an account of should the Master come at once. The result was that the library was considerably diminished, to the benefit of some poor neighbors, and to the far greater benefit of my own soul, and that I found I had articles of clothing also which might be put to better advantage in other directions.

It has been very helpful to me from time to time through life, as occasion has served, to act again in a similar way; and I have never gone through my house, from basement to attic, with this object in view, without receiving a great accession of spiritual joy and blessing. I believe we are all in danger of accumulating — it may be from thoughtlessness, or from pressure of occupation — things which would be useful to others, while not needed by ourselves, and the retention of which entails loss of blessing. If the whole resources of the Church of God were well utilized, how much more might be accomplished! How many poor might be fed and naked clothed, and to how many of those as yet unreached the Gospel might be carried! Let me advise this line of things as a constant habit of mind, and a profitable course to be practically adopted whenever circumstances permit.

Chapter 3. Preparation for Service

Having now the twofold object in view of accustoming myself to endure hardness, and of economising in order to be able more largely to assist those amongst whom I spent a good deal of time labouring in the Gospel, I soon found that I could live upon very much less than I

had previously thought possible. Butter, milk, and other such luxuries I soon ceased to use; and I found that by living mainly on oatmeal and rice, with occasional variations, a very small sum was sufficient for my needs. In this way I had more than two-thirds of my income available for other purposes; and my experience was that the less I spent on myself and the more I gave away, the fuller of happiness and blessing did my soul become. Unspeakable joy all the day long, and every day, was my happy experience. God, even my God, was a living, bright reality; and all I had to do was joyful service.

It was to me a very grave matter, however, to contemplate going out to China, far away from all human aid, there to depend upon the living God alone for protection, supplies, and help of every kind. I felt that one's spiritual muscles required strengthening for such an undertaking. There was no doubt that if faith did not fail, God would not fail; but, then, what if one's faith should prove insufficient? I had not at that time learned that even "if we believe not, He abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself"; and it was consequently a very serious question to my mind, not whether *He* was faithful, but whether I had strong enough faith to warrant my embarking in the enterprise set before me.

I thought to myself, "When I get to China, I shall have no claim on anyone for anything; my only claim will be on God. How important, therefore, to learn before leaving England to move man, through God, by prayer alone."

At Hull my kind employer, always busily occupied, wished me to remind him whenever my salary became due. This I determined not to do directly, but to ask that God would bring the fact to his recollection, and thus encourage me by answering prayer. At one time, as the day drew near for the payment of a quarter's salary, I was as usual much in prayer about it. The time arrived, but my kind friend made no allusion to the matter. I continued praying, and days passed on, but he did not remember, until at length, on settling up my weekly accounts one Saturday night, I found myself possessed of only a single coin — one half-crown piece. Still I had hitherto had no lack, and I continued in prayer.

That Sunday was a very happy one. As usual my heart was full and brimming over with blessing. After attending Divine service in the morning, my afternoons and evenings were filled with Gospel work in the various lodging houses I was accustomed to visit in the lowest part of the town. At such times it almost seemed to me as if heaven were begun below, and that all that could be looked for was an enlargement of one's capacity for joy, not a truer filling than I possessed. After concluding my last service about ten o'clock that night, a poor man asked me to go and pray with his wife, saying that she was dying. I readily agreed, and on the way to his house asked him why he had not sent for the priest, as his accent told me he was an Irishman. He had done so, he said, but the priest refused to come without a payment of eighteenpence, which the man did not possess, as the family was starving. Immediately it occurred to my mind that all the money I had in the world was the solitary half-crown, and that it was in one coin; moreover, that while the basin of water gruel I usually took for supper was awaiting me, and there was sufficient in the house for breakfast in the morning, I certainly had nothing for dinner on the coming day.

Somehow or other there was at once a stoppage in the flow of joy in my heart; but instead of reproving myself I began to reprove the poor man, telling him that it was very wrong to have allowed matters to get into such a state as he described, and that he ought to have applied to the relieving officer. His answer was that he had done so, and was told to come at eleven o'clock the next morning, but that he feared that his wife might not live through the night. "Ah," thought I, "if only I had two shillings and a sixpence instead of this half-crown, how gladly would I give these poor people one shilling of it!" But to part with the half-crown was far from my thoughts. I little dreamed that the real truth of the matter simply was that I could trust in God plus one-and-sixpence, but was not yet prepared to trust Him only, without any money at all in my pocket.

My conductor led me into a court, down which I followed him with some degree of nervousness. I had found myself there before, and at my last visit had been very roughly handled, while my tracts were torn to pieces, and I received such a warning not to come again that I felt more than a little concerned. Still, it was the path of duty, and I followed on. Up a miserable flight of stairs, into a wretched room, he led me; and oh what a sight there

presented itself to our eyes! Four or five poor children stood about, their sunken cheeks and temples all telling unmistakably the story of slow starvation; and lying on a wretched pallet was a poor exhausted mother, with a tiny infant thirty-six hours old, moaning rather than crying at her side, for it too seemed spent and failing. "Ah!" thought I, "if I had two shillings and a sixpence instead of a half-a-crown, how gladly should they have one-and-sixpence of it!" But still a wretched unbelief prevented me from obeying the impulse to relieve their distress at the cost of all I possessed.

It will scarcely seem strange that I was unable to say much to comfort these poor people. I needed comfort myself. I began to tell them, however, that they must not be cast down, that though their circumstances were very distressing, there was a kind and loving Father in heaven; but something within me said, "You hypocrite! Telling these unconverted people about a kind and loving Father in heaven, and not prepared yourself to trust Him without half-a-crown!" I was nearly choked. How gladly would I have compromised with conscience if I had had a florin and a sixpence! I would have given the florin thankfully and kept the rest; but I was not yet prepared to trust in God alone, without the sixpence.

To talk was impossible under these circumstances; yet, strange to say, I thought I should have no difficulty in praying. Prayer was a delightful occupation to me in those days; time thus spent never seemed wearisome, and I knew nothing of lack of words. I seemed to think that all I should have to do would be to kneel down and engage in prayer, and that relief would come to them and to myself together. "You asked me to come and pray with your wife," I said to the man, "let us pray." And I knelt down. But scarcely had I opened my lips with "Our Father who art in heaven" than conscience said switching, "Dare you mock God? Dare you kneel down and call Him Father with that half-crown in your pocket?" Such a time of conflict came upon me then as I have never experienced before or since. How I got through that form of prayer I know not, and whether the words uttered were connected or disconnected I cannot tell; but I arose from my knees in great distress of mind.

The poor father turned to me and said, "You see what a terrible state we are in, sir; if you can help us, for God's sake do!" Just then the word flashed into my mind, "Give to him that asketh of thee," and in the word of a King there is power. I put my hand into my pocket, and slowly drawing forth the half-crown, gave it to the man, telling him that it might seem a small matter for me to relieve them, seeing that I was comparatively well off, but that in parting with that coin I was giving him my all; what I had been trying to tell him was indeed true — God really was a Father, and might be trusted. The joy all came back in full flood-tide to my heart; I could say anything and feel it then, and the hindrance to blessing was gone — gone, I trust, for ever.

Not only was the poor woman's life saved, but I realised that my life was saved too! It might have been a wreck — would have been a wreck probably, as a Christian life — had not grace at that time conquered, and the striving of God's Spirit been obeyed. I well remember how that night, as I went home to my lodgings, my heart was as light as my pocket. The lonely, deserted streets resounded with a hymn of praise which I could not restrain. When I took my basin of gruel before retiring, I would not have exchanged it for a prince's feast. I reminded the Lord as I knelt at my beside of His own Word, that he who giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord: I asked Him not to let my loan be a long one, or I should have no dinner next day; and with peace within and peace without, I spent a happy, restful night.

Next morning for breakfast my plate of porridge remained, and before it was consumed the postman's knock was heard at the door. I was not in the habit of receiving letters on Monday, as my parents and most of my friends refrained from posting on Saturday; so that I was somewhat surprised when the landlady came in holding a letter or packet in her wet hand covered by her apron. I looked at the letter, but could not make out the handwriting. It was either a strange hand or a feigned one, and the postmark was blurred. Where it came from I could not tell. On opening the envelope I found nothing written within; but inside a sheet of blank paper was folded a pair of kid gloves, from which, as I opened them in astonishment, half-a-sovereign fell to the ground. "Praise the Lord!" I exclaimed; "400 per cent for twelve hours' investment; that is good interest. How glad the merchants of Hull would be if they could lend their money at such a rate!" I then and there determined that a bank which could not break should have my savings or earnings as the case might be — a determination I have not yet learned to regret. I cannot tell you how often my mind has recurred to this incident, or

all the help it has been to me in circumstances of difficulty in after-life. If we are faithful to God in little things, we shall gain experience and strength that will be helpful to us in the more serious trials of life.

Chapter 4. Answers to Prayer

The remarkable and gracious deliverance I have spoken of, was a great joy to me, as well as a strong confirmation of faith; but of course ten shillings, however economically used, will not go very far, and it was none the less necessary to continue in prayer, asking that the larger supply which was still due might be remembered and paid. All my petitions, however, appeared to remain unanswered; and before a fortnight had elapsed I found myself pretty much in the same position that I had occupied on the Sunday night already made so memorable. Meanwhile, I continued pleading with God, more and more earnestly, that He would graciously remind my employer that my salary was overdue. Of course it was not the want of the money that distressed me — that could have been had at any time for the asking — but the question uppermost in my mind was this: "Can I go to China? or will my want of faith and power with God prove to be so serious an obstacle as to preclude my entering upon this much-prized service?"

As the week drew to a close I felt exceedingly embarrassed. There was not only myself to consider; on Saturday night a payment would be due to my Christian landlady which I knew she could not well dispense with. Ought I not, for her sake, to speak about the matter of the salary? Yet to do so would be, to myself at any rate, the admission that I was not fitted to undertake a missionary enterprise. I gave nearly the whole of Thursday and Friday — all the time not occupied in my necessary employment — to earnest wrestling with God in prayer. But still on Saturday morning I was in the same position as before. And now my earnest cry was for guidance as to whether it was my duty to break silence and speak to my employer, or whether I should still continue to wait the Father's time. As far as I could judge, I received the assurance that to wait His time was best; and that God in some way or other would interpose on my behalf. So I waited, my heart being now at rest and the burden gone.

Above five o'clock that Saturday afternoon, when the doctor had finished writing his prescriptions, his last circuit for the day being taken, he threw himself back in his arm chair, as he was wont, and began to speak of the things of God. He was a truly Christian man, and many seasons of very happy spiritual fellowship we had together. I was busily watching, at the time, a pan in which a decoction was boiling that required a good deal of attention. It was indeed fortunate for me that it was so, for without any obvious connection with what had been going on, all at once he said, "By-the-bye, Taylor, is not your salary due again?" My emotion may be imagined! I had to swallow two or three times before I could answer. With my eye fixed on the pan and my back to the doctor, I told him as quietly as I could that it was overdue some little time. How thankful I felt at that moment! God surely had heard my prayer, and caused him, in this time of my great need, to remember the salary without any word or suggestion from me. He replied, "Oh, I am so sorry you did not remind me! You know how busy I am; I wish I had thought of it a little sooner, for only this afternoon I sent all the money I had to the bank, otherwise I would pay you at once." It is impossible to describe the revulsion of feeling caused by this unexpected statement. I knew not what to do. Fortunately for me my pan boiled up, and I had a good reason for rushing with it from the room. Glad indeed I was to get away, and keep out of sight until after the doctor had returned to his house, and most thankful that he had not perceived my emotion.

As soon as he was gone I had to seek my little sanctum, and pour out my heart before the Lord for some time, before calmness — and more than calmness — thankfulness, and joy were restored to me. I felt that God had His own way, and was not going to fail me. I had sought to know His will early in the day, and as far as I could judge had received guidance to wait patiently; and now God was going to work for me in some other way.

That evening was spent, as my Saturday evenings usually were, in reading the Word and preparing the subjects on which I expected to speak in the various lodging houses on the morrow. I waited, perhaps, a little longer than usual. At last, about ten o'clock, there being no interruption of any kind, I put on my overcoat, and was preparing to leave for home, rather thankful to know that by that time I should have to let myself in with the latch-key, as my

landlady retired early to rest. There was certainly no help for that night; but perhaps God would interpose for me by Monday, and I might be able to pay my landlady early in the week the money I would have given her before, had it been possible.

Just as I was preparing to turn down the gas, I heard the doctor's step in the garden which lay between the dwelling-house and surgery. He was laughing to himself very heartily, as though greatly amused by something. Entering the surgery, he asked for the ledger, and told me that, strange to say, one of his richest patients had just come to pay his doctor's bill — was it not an odd thing to do? It never struck me that it might have any bearing on my own particular case, or I might have felt embarrassed; but looking at it simply from the position of an uninterested spectator, I also was highly amused that a man who was rolling in wealth should come after ten o'clock at night to pay a doctor's bill, which he could any day have met by a check with the greatest ease. It appeared that somehow or other he could not rest with this on his mind, and had been constrained to come at that unusual hour to discharge his liability.

The account was duly receipted in the ledger, and the doctor was about to leave, when suddenly he turned, and handing me some of the bank notes just received, said, to my surprise and thankfulness, "by the way, Taylor, you might as well take these notes; I have not any change, but can give you the balance next week." Again I was left — my feelings undiscovered — to go back to my own little closet and praise the Lord with a joyful heart that after all I might go to China.

To me this incident was not a trivial one; and to recall it sometimes, in circumstances of great difficulty, in China or elsewhere, has proved no small comfort and strength.

By-and-by the time drew near when it was thought desirable that I should leave Hull to attend the medical course of the London Hospital. A little while spent there, and then I had every reason to believe that my life work in China would commence. But much as I had rejoiced at the willingness of God to hear and answer prayer and to help His half-trusting, half-timid child, I felt that I could not go to China without having still further developed and tested my power to rest upon His faithfulness, and a marked opportunity for doing so was providentially afforded me.

My dear father had offered to bear all the expense of my stay in London. I knew however, that, owing to recent losses, it would mean a considerable sacrifice for him to undertake this just when it seemed necessary for me to go forward. I had recently become acquainted with the Committee of the Chinese Evangelization Society, in connection with which I ultimately left for China, and especially with its secretary, my esteemed and much-loved friend Mr. George Pearse, then of the Stock Exchange, but now and for many years himself a missionary. Not knowing of my father's proposition, the Committee also kindly offered to bear my expenses while in London. When these proposals were first made to me, I was not quite clear as to what I ought to do, and in writing to my father and the secretaries, told them that I would take a few days to pray about the matter before deciding any course of action. I mentioned to my father that I had had this offer from the Society, and told the secretaries also of his proffered aid.

Subsequently, while waiting upon God in prayer for guidance, it became clear to my mind that I could without difficulty decline both offers. The secretaries of the Society would not know that I had cast myself wholly on God for supplies, and my father would conclude that I had accepted the other offer. I therefore wrote declining both propositions, and felt that without any one having either care or anxiety on my account I was simply in the hands of God, and that He, who knew my heart, if He wished to encourage me to go to China, would bless my effort to depend upon Him alone at home.

Chapter 5. Life in London

I must not now attempt to detail the ways in which the Lord was pleased — often to my surprise, as well as to my delight — to help me from time to time. I soon found that it was not possible to live quite as economically in London as in Hull. To lessen expenses I shared a room with a cousin, four miles from the hospital, providing myself with board; and after various

experiments I found that the most economical way was to live almost exclusively on brown bread and water. Thus I was able to make the means that God gave me last as long as possible. Some of my expenses I could not diminish, but my board was largely within my own control. A large two penny loaf of brown bread, purchased daily on my long walk from the hospital, furnished me with supper and breakfast; and on that diet, with a few apples for lunch, I managed to walk eight or nine miles a day, besides being a good deal on foot while attending the practice of the hospital and the medical school.

One incident that occurred just about this time I must refer to. The husband of my former landlady in Hull was chief officer of a ship that sailed from London, and by receiving his half-pay monthly and remitting it to her I was able to save her the cost of a commission. This I had been doing for several months, when she wrote requesting that I would obtain the next payment as early as possible, as her rent was almost due, and she depended upon that sum to meet it. The request came at an inconvenient time. I was working hard for an examination in the hope of obtaining a scholarship which would be of service to me, and felt that I could ill afford the time to go during the busiest part of the day to the city and procure the money. I had, however, sufficient of my own in hand to enable me to send the required sum. I made the remittance therefore purposing, as soon as the examination was over, to go and draw the regular allowance with which to refund myself.

Before the time of examination the medical school was closed for a day, on account of the funeral of the Duke of Wellington, and I had an opportunity of going at once to the office, which was situated in a street off Cheapside, and applying for the due amount. To my surprise and dismay the clerk told me that he could not pay it, as the officer in question had run away from his ship and gone to the gold diggings. "Well," I remarked, "that is very inconvenient for me, as I have already advanced the money, and I know his wife will have no means of repaying it." The clerk said he was sorry, but could of course only act according to orders; so there was no help for me in that direction. A little more time and thought, however, brought the comforting conclusion to my mind, that as I was depending on the Lord for everything, and his means were not limited, it was a small matter to be brought a little sooner or later into the position of needing fresh supplies from Him; and so the joy and the peace were not long interfered with.

Very soon after this, possibly the same evening, while sewing together some sheets of paper on which to take notes of the lectures, I accidentally pricked the first finger of my right hand, and in a few moments forgot all about it. The next day at the hospital I continued dissecting as before. The body was that of a person who had died of fever, and was more than usually disagreeable and dangerous. I need scarcely say that those of us who were at work upon it dissected with special care, knowing that the slightest scratch might cost us our lives. Before the morning was far advanced I began to feel very weary, and while going through the surgical wards at noon was obliged to run out, being suddenly very sick — a most unusual circumstance with me, as I took but little food and nothing that could disagree with me. After feeling faint for some time, a draught of cold water revived me, and I was able to rejoin the students. I became more and more unwell, however, and ere the afternoon lecture on surgery was over found it impossible to hold the pencil and continue taking notes. By the time the next lecture was through, my whole arm and right side were full of severe pain, and I was both looking and feeling very ill.

Finding that I could not resume work, I went into the dissecting room to bind up the portion I was engaged upon and put away my apparatus, and said to the demonstrator, who was a very skilful surgeon, "I cannot think what has come over me," describing the symptoms. "Why," said he, "what has happened is clear enough: you must have cut yourself in dissecting, and you know that this is a case of malignant fever." I assured him that I had been most careful, and was quite certain that I had no cut or scratch. "Well," he replied, "you certainly must have had one;" and he very closely scrutinized my hand to find it, but in vain. All at once it occurred to me that I had pricked my finger the night before, and I asked him if it were possible that a prick from a needle, at that time, could have been still unclosed. His opinion was that this was probably the cause of the trouble, and he advised me to get a hansom, drive home as fast as I could, and arrange my affairs forthwith. "For," he said, "you are a dead man."

My first thought was one of sorrow that I could not go to China; but very soon came the feeling, "Unless I am greatly mistaken, I have work to do in China, and shall not die." I was glad, however, to take the opportunity of speaking to my medical friend, who was a confirmed skeptic as to things spiritual, of the joy that the prospect of perhaps soon being with my Master gave me; telling him at the same time that I did not think I should die, as, unless I were much mistaken, I had work to do in China; and if so, however severe the struggle, I must be brought through. "That is all very well," he answered, "but you get a hansom and drive home as fast as you can. You have no time to lose, for you will soon be incapable of winding up your affairs."

I smiled a little at the idea of my driving home in a hansom, for by this time my means were too exhausted to allow of such a proceeding, and I set out to walk the distance if possible. Before long, however, my strength gave way, and I felt it was no use to attempt to reach home by walking. Availing myself of an omnibus from Whitechapel Church to Farringdon Street, and another from Farringdon Street onwards, I reached, in great suffering, the neighborhood of Soho Square, behind which I lived. On going into the house I got some hot water from the servant, and charging her very earnestly — literally as a dying man — to accept eternal life as the gift of God through Jesus Christ, I bathed my head and lanced my finger, hoping to let out some of the poisoned blood. The pain was very severe; I fainted away, and was for some time unconscious, so long that when I came to myself I found that I had been carried to bed.

An uncle of mine who lived near at hand had come in, and sent for his own medical man, an assistant surgeon at the Westminster Hospital. I assured my uncle that medical help would be of no service to me, and that I did not wish to go to the expense involved. He, however, quieted me on this score, saying that he had sent for his own doctor, and that the bill would be charged to himself. When the surgeon came and learned all the particulars, he said, "Well, if you have been living moderately, you may pull through; but if you have been going in for beer and that sort of thing, there is no manner of chance for you." I thought that if sober living was to do anything, few could have a better chance, as little but bread and water had been my diet for a good while past. I told him I had lived abstemiously, and found that it helped me in study. "But now," he said, "you must keep up your strength, for it will be a pretty hard struggle." And he ordered me a bottle of port wine every day, and as many chops as I could consume. Again I smiled inwardly, having no means for the purchase of such luxuries. This difficulty, however, was also met by my kind uncle, who sent me at once all that was needed.

I was much concerned, notwithstanding the agony I suffered, that my dear parents should not be made acquainted with my state. Thought and prayer had satisfied me that I was not going to die, but that there was indeed a work for me to do in China. If my dear parents should come up and find me in that condition, I must lose the opportunity of seeing how God was going to work for me, now that my money had almost come to an end. So, after prayer for guidance, I obtained a promise from my uncle and cousin not to write to my parents, but to leave me to communicate with them myself. I felt it was a very distinct answer to prayer when they gave me this promise, and I took care to defer all communication with them myself until the crisis was past and the worst of the attack over. At home they knew that I was working hard for an examination, and did not wonder at my silence.

Days and nights of suffering passed slowly by; but at length, after several weeks I was sufficiently restored to leave my room; and then I learned that two men, though not from the London Hospital, who had had dissection wounds at the same time as myself, had both succumbed, while I was spared in answer to prayer to work for God in China.

Chapter 6. Strengthened by Faith

One day the doctor coming in found me on the sofa, and was surprised to learn that with assistance I had walked downstairs. "Now," he said, "the best thing you can do is to get off to the country as soon as you feel equal to the journey. You must rusticate until you have recovered a fair amount of health and strength, for if you begin your work too soon the consequences may still be serious." When he had left, as I lay very exhausted on the sofa, I just told the Lord all about it, and that I was refraining from making my circumstances known

to those who would delight to meet my need, in order that my faith might be strengthened by receiving help from Himself in answer to prayer alone. What was I do to? And I waited for His answer.

It seemed to me as if He were directing my mind to the conclusion to go again to the shipping office, and inquire about the wages I had been unable to draw. I reminded the Lord that I could not afford to take a conveyance, and that it did not seem at all likely that I should succeed in getting the money, and asked whether this impulse was not a mere clutching at a straw, some mental process of my own, rather than His guidance and teaching. After prayer, however, and renewed waiting upon God, I was confirmed in my belief that He Himself was teaching me to go to the office.

The next question was, "How am I to go?" I had had to seek help in coming downstairs, and the place was at least two miles away. The assurance was brought vividly home to me that whatever I asked of God in the name of Christ would be done, that the Father might be glorified in the Son; that what I had to do was to seek strength for the long walk, to receive it by faith, and to set out upon it. Unhesitatingly I told the Lord that I was quite willing to take the walk if He would give me the strength. I asked in the name of Christ that the strength might be immediately given; and sending the servant up to my room for my hat and stick, I set out, not to *attempt* to walk, but to *walk* to Cheapside.

Although undoubtedly strengthened by faith, I never took so much interest in shop windows as I did upon that journey. At every second or third step I was glad to lean a little against the plate glass, and take time to examine the contents of the windows before passing on. It needed a special effort of faith when I got to the bottom of Farringdon Street to attempt the toilsome ascent of Snow Hill: there was no Holborn Viaduct in those days, and it had to be done. God did wonderfully help me, and in due time I reached Cheapside, turned into the by-street in which the office was found, and sat down much exhausted on the steps leading to the first floor, which was my destination. I felt my position to be a little peculiar — sitting there on the steps, so evidently spent — and the gentlemen who rushed up and downstairs looked at me with an inquiring gaze. After a little rest, however, and a further season of prayer, I succeeded in climbing the staircase, and to my comfort found in the office the clerk with whom I had hitherto dealt in the matter. Seeing me looking pale and exhausted, he kindly inquired as to my health, and I told him that I had had a serious illness, and was ordered to the country, but thought it well to call first, and make further inquiry, lest there should have been any mistake about the mate having run off to the gold diggings. "Oh," he said, "I am so glad you have come, for it turns out that it was an able seaman of the same name that ran away. The mate is still on board; the ship has just reached Gravesend, and will be up very soon. I shall be glad to give you the half-pay up to date, for doubtless it will reach his wife more safely through you. We all know what temptations beset the men when they arrive at home after a voyage."

Before, however, giving me the sum of money, he insisted upon my coming inside and sharing his lunch. I felt it was the Lord indeed who was providing for me, and accepted his offer with thankfulness. When I was refreshed and rested, he gave me a sheet of paper to write a few lines to the wife, telling her of the circumstances. On my way back I procured in Cheapside a money order for the balance due to her, and posted it; and returning home again, felt myself now quite justified in taking an omnibus as far as it would serve me.

Very much better the next morning, after seeing to some little matters that I had to settle, I made my way to the surgery of the doctor who had attended me, feeling that, although my uncle was prepared to pay the bill, it was right for me, now that I had some money in hand, to ask for the account myself. The kind surgeon refused to allow me, as a medical student, to pay anything for his attendance; but he had supplied me with quinine, which he allowed me to pay for to the extent of eight shillings. When that was settled, I saw that the sum left was just sufficient to take me home; and to my mind the whole thing seemed a wonderful interposition of God on my behalf.

I knew that the surgeon was skeptical, and told him that I should very much like to speak to him freely, if I might do so without offence; that I felt that under God I owed my life to his kind care, and wished very earnestly that he himself might become a partaker of the same

precious faith that I possessed. So I told him my reason for being in London, and about my circumstances, and why I had declined the help of both my father and the officers of the Society in connection with which it was probable that I should go to China. I told him of the recent providential dealings of God with me, and how apparently hopeless my position had been the day before, when he had ordered me to go to the country, unless I would reveal my need, which I had determined not to do. I described to him the mental exercises I had gone through; but when I added that I had actually got up from the sofa and walked to Cheapside, he looked at me incredulously, and said, "Impossible! Why, I left you lying there more like a ghost than a man." And I had to assure him again and again that, strengthened by faith, the walk had really been taken. I told him also what money was left to me, and what payments there had been to make, and showed him that just sufficient remained to take me home to Yorkshire, providing for needful refreshment by the way and the omnibus journey at the end.

My kind friend was completely broken down, and said with tears in his eyes, "I would give all the world for a faith like yours." I, on the other hand, had the joy of telling him that it was to be obtained without money and without price. We never met again. When I came back to town, restored to health and strength, I found that he had had a stroke, and left for the country; and I subsequently learned that he never rallied. I was able to gain no information as to his state of mind when taken away; but I have always felt very thankful that I had the opportunity and embraced it, of bearing that testimony for God. I cannot but entertain the hope that the Master Himself was speaking to him through His dealings with me, and that I shall meet him again in the Better Land. It would be no small joy to be welcomed by him, when my own service is over.

The next day found me in my dear parents' home. My joy in the Lord's help and deliverance was so great that I was unable to keep it to myself, and before my return to London my dear mother knew the secret of my life for some time past. I need scarcely say that when I went up again to town I was not allowed to live — as, indeed, I was not fit to live — on the same economical lines as before my illness. I needed more now, and the Lord did provide.

Chapter 7. Mighty to Save

Returning to London when sufficiently recovered to resume my studies, the busy life of hospital and lecture hall was resumed; often relieved by happy Sundays of fellowship with Christian friends, especially in London or Tottenham. Opportunities for service are to be found in every sphere, and mine was no exception. I shall only mention one case now that gave me great encouragement in seeking conversion even when it seemed apparently hopeless.

God had given me the joy of winning souls before, but not in surroundings of such special difficulty. With God all things are possible, and no conversion ever takes place save by the almighty power of the Holy Ghost. The great need, therefore, of every Christian worker is to know God. Indeed, this is the purpose for which He has given us eternal life, as our Saviour Himself says, in the oft misquoted verse, John 17:3: "This is [the object of] life eternal, [not to know but] that they *might* know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." I was now to prove the willingness of God to answer prayer for spiritual blessing under most unpromising circumstances, and thus to gain an increased acquaintance with the prayer answering God as One "mighty to save."

A short time before leaving for China, it became my duty daily to dress the foot of a patient suffering from senile gangrene. The disease commenced, as usual, insidiously, and the patient had little idea that he was a doomed man, and probably had not long to live. I was not the first to attend to him, but when the case was transferred to me, I naturally became very anxious about his soul. The family with whom he lived were Christians, and from them I learned that he was an avowed atheist, and very antagonistic to anything religious. They had, without asking his consent, invited a Scripture reader to visit him, but in great passion he had ordered him from the room. The vicar of the district had also called, hoping to help him; but he had spit in his face, and refused to allow him to speak to him. His passionate temper was described to me as very violent, and altogether the case seemed to be as hopeless as could well be imagined.

Upon first commencing to attend him I prayed much about it; but for two or three days said

nothing to him of a religious nature. By special care in dressing his diseased limb I was able considerably to lessen his sufferings, and he soon began to manifest grateful appreciation of my services. One day, with a trembling heart, I took advantage of his warm acknowledgments to tell him what was the spring of my action, and to speak of his own solemn position and need of God's mercy through Christ. It was evidently only by a powerful effort of self-restraint that he kept his lips closed. He turned over in bed with his back to me, and uttered no word.

I could not get the poor man out of my mind, and very often through each day I pleaded with God, by His Spirit, to save him ere He took him hence. After dressing the wound and relieving his pain, I never failed to say a few words to him, which I hoped the Lord would bless. He always turned his back to me, looking annoyed, but never spoke a word in reply.

After continuing this for some time, my heart sank. It seemed to me that I was not only doing no good, but perhaps really hardening him and increasing his guilt. One day, after dressing his limb and washing my hands, instead of returning to the bedside to speak to him, I went to the door, and stood hesitating for a few moments with the thought in my mind, "Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone." I looked at the man and saw his surprise, as it was the first time since speaking to him that I had attempted to leave without going up to his bedside to say a few words for my Master. I could bear it no longer. Bursting into tears, I crossed the room and said, "My friend, whether you will hear or whether you will forbear, I *must* deliver *my* soul," and went on to speak very earnestly to him, telling him with many tears how much I wished that he would let me pray with him. To my unspeakable joy he did not turn away, but replied, "If it will be a relief to you, do." I need scarcely say that I fell on my knees and poured out my whole soul to God on his behalf. I believe the Lord then and there wrought a change in his soul.

He was never afterwards unwilling to be spoken to and prayed with, and within a few days he definitely accepted Christ as Saviour. Oh the joy it was to me to see that dear man rejoicing in hope of the glory of God! He told me that for forty years he had never darkened the door of church or chapel, and that then — forty years ago — he had only entered a place of worship to be married, and could not be persuaded to go inside when his wife was buried. Now, thank God, his sin-stained soul, I had every reason to believe, was washed, was sanctified, was justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. Oftentimes, when in my early work in China circumstances rendered me almost hopeless of success, I have thought of this man's conversion, and have been encouraged to persevere in speaking the Word, whether men would hear or whether they would forbear.

The now happy sufferer lived for some time after this change, and was never tired of bearing testimony to the grace of God. Though his condition was most distressing, the alteration in his character and behavior made the previously painful duty of attending him one of real pleasure. I have often thought since, in connection with this case and the work of God generally, of the words, "He that goeth forth *weeping*, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Perhaps if there were more of that intense distress for souls that leads to tears, we should more frequently see the results we desire. Sometimes it may be that while we are complaining of the hardness of the hearts of those we are seeking to benefit, the hardness of our own hearts and our own feeble apprehension of the solemn reality of eternal things, may be the true cause of our want of success.

Chapter 8. Voyage to China

Soon after this the time so long looked forward to arrived — the time that I was to leave England for China. After being set apart with many prayers for the ministry of God's Word among the heathen Chinese I left London for Liverpool; and on the 19th of September 1853 a little service was held in the stern cabin of the *Dumfries*, which had been secured for me by the Committee of the Chinese Evangelisation Society, under whose auspices I was going to China.

My beloved, now sainted, mother had come to see me off from Liverpool. Never shall I forget that day, nor how she went with me into the little cabin that was to be my home for nearly six long months. With a mother's loving hand she smoothed the little bed. She sat by my side,

and joined me in the last hymn that we should sing together before the long parting. We knelt down, and she prayed — the last mother's prayer I was to hear before starting for China. Then notice was given that we must separate, and we had to say good-bye, never expecting to meet on earth again.

For my sake she restrained her feelings as much as possible. We parted; and she went on shore, giving me her blessing! I stood alone on deck, and she followed the ship as we moved towards the dock gates. As we passed through the gates, and the separation really commenced, I shall never forget the cry of anguish wrung from that mother's heart. It went through me like a knife. I never knew so fully, until then, what "God so loved the world" meant. And I am quite sure that my precious mother learned more of the love of God to the perishing in that hour than in all her life before.

Oh, how it must grieve the heart of God when He sees His children indifferent to the needs of that wide world for which His beloved, His only begotten Son died!

"Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear;
Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;
So shall the King desire thy beauty:
For he is thy Lord; and worship thou him."

Praise God, the number is increasing who are finding out the exceeding joys, the wondrous revelations of His mercies, vouchsafed to those who "follow Him," and emptying themselves, leave all in obedience to His great commission.

It was on 19th September 1853 that the *Dumfries* sailed for China; and not until 1st March, in the spring of the following year, did I arrive in Shanghai.

Our voyage had a rough beginning, but many had promised to remember us in constant prayer. No small comfort was this; for we had scarcely left the Mersey when a violent equinoctial gale caught us, and for twelve days we were beating backwards and forwards in the Irish Channel, unable to get out to sea. The gale steadily increased, and after almost a week we lay to for a time; but drifting on a lee coast, we were compelled again to make sail, and endeavoured to beat off to windward. The utmost efforts of the captain and crew, however, were unavailing; and Sunday night, 25th September, found us drifting into Carnarvon Bay, each tack becoming shorter, until at last we were within a stone's-throw of the rocks. About this time, as the ship, which had refused to stay, was put round in the other direction, the Christian captain said to me, "We cannot live half an hour now: what of your call to labour for the Lord in China?" I had previously passed through a time of much conflict, but that was over, and it was a great joy to feel and to tell him that I would not for any consideration be in any other position; that I strongly expected to reach China; but that, if otherwise, at any rate the Master would say it was well that I was found seeking to obey His command!

Within a few minutes after wearing ship the captain walked up to the compass, and said to me, "The wind has freed two points; we shall be able to beat out of the bay." And so we did. The bowsprit was sprung and the vessel seriously strained; but in a few days we got out to sea, and the necessary repairs were so thoroughly effected on board that our journey to China was in due time satisfactorily accomplished.

One thing was a great trouble to me that night. I was a very young believer, and had not sufficient faith in God to see Him in and through the use of means. I had felt it a duty to comply with the earnest wish of my beloved and honoured mother, and for her sake to procure a swimming-belt. But in my own soul I felt as if I could not simply trust in God while I had this swimming-belt; and my heart had no rest until on that night, after all hope of being saved was gone, I had given it away. Then I had perfect peace; and, strange to say, put several light things together, likely to float at the time we struck, without any thought of inconsistency or scruple. Ever since, I have seen clearly the mistake I made — a mistake that is very common in these days, when erroneous teaching on faith-healing does much harm, misleading some as to the purposes of God, shaking the faith of others, and distressing the minds of many. The use of means ought not to lessen our faith in God; and our faith in God

ought not to hinder our using whatever means He has given us for the accomplishment of His own purposes.

For years after this I always took a swimming-belt with me, and never had any trouble about it; for after the storm was over, the question was settled for me, through the prayerful study of the Scriptures. God gave me then to see my mistake, probably to deliver me from a great deal of trouble on similar questions now so constantly raised. When in medical or surgical charge of any case, I have never thought of neglecting to ask God's guidance and blessing in the use of appropriate means, nor yet of omitting to give Him thanks for answered prayer and restored health. But to me it would appear as presumptuous and wrong to neglect the use of those measures which He Himself has put within our reach, as to neglect to take daily food, and suppose that life and health might be maintained by prayer alone.

The voyage was a very tedious one. We lost a good deal of time on the equator from calms; and when we finally reached the Eastern Archipelago, were again detained from the same cause. Usually a breeze would spring up soon after sunset, and last until about dawn. The utmost use was made of it, but during the day we lay still with flapping sails, often drifting back and losing a good deal of the advantage we had gained during the night.

This happened notably on one occasion, when we were in dangerous proximity to the north of New Guinea. Saturday night had brought us to a point some thirty miles off the land; but during the Sunday morning service, which was held on deck, I could not fail to notice that the captain looked troubled, and frequently went over to the side of the ship. When the service was ended, I learnt from him the cause — a four-knot current was carrying us rapidly towards some sunken reefs, and we were already so near that it seemed improbable that we should get through the afternoon in safety. After dinner the long boat was put out, and all hands endeavoured, without success, to turn the ship's head from the shore.

After standing together on the deck for some time in silence, the captain said to me, "Well, we have done everything that can be done; we can only await the result." A thought occurred to me, and I replied, "No, there is one thing we have not done yet." "What is it?" he queried. "Four of us on board are Christians," I answered (the Swedish carpenter and our coloured steward, with the captain and myself) ; "let us each retire to his own cabin, and in agreed prayer ask the Lord to give us immediately a breeze. He can as easily send it now as at sunset."

The captain complied with this proposal. I went and spoke to the other two men, and after prayer with the carpenter we all four retired to wait upon God. I had a good but very brief season in prayer, and then felt so satisfied that our request was granted that I could not continue asking, and very soon went up again on deck. The first officer, a godless man, was in charge. I went over and asked him to let down the clews or corners of the mainsail, which had been drawn up in order to lessen the useless flapping of the sail against the rigging. He answered, "What would be the good of that?" I told him we had been asking a wind from God, that it was coming immediately, and we were so near the reef by this time that there was not a minute to lose. With a look of incredulity and contempt, he said with an oath that he would rather see a wind than hear of it! But while he was speaking I watched his eye, and followed it up to the royal (the topmost sail), and there, sure enough, the corner of the sail was beginning to tremble in the coming breeze. "Don't you see the wind is coming? Look at the royal!" I exclaimed. "No, it is only a cat's-paw," he rejoined (mere puff of wind). "Cat's-paw or not," I cried, "pray let down the mainsail, and let us have the benefit!"

This he was not slow to do. In another minute the heavy tread of the men on the deck brought up the captain from his cabin to see what was the matter; and he saw that the breeze had indeed come. In a few minutes we were ploughing our way at six or seven knots an hour through the water. We were soon out of danger; and though the wind was sometimes unsteady, we did not altogether lose it until after passing the Pelew Islands.

Thus God encouraged me, ere landing on China's shores, to bring every variety of need to Him in prayer, and to expect that He would honour the Name of the Lord Jesus, and give the help which each emergency required.

Chapter 9. Early Missionary Experiences

On landing in Shanghai on 1st March 1854, I found myself surrounded with difficulties that were wholly unexpected. A band of rebels, known as the "Red Turbans," had taken possession of the native city, against which was encamped an Imperial army of from forty to fifty thousand men, who were a much greater source of discomfort and danger to the little European community than were the rebels themselves. Upon landing, I was told that to live outside the Settlement was impossible, while within the foreign concession apartments were scarcely obtainable at any price. The dollar, now worth about three shillings, had risen to a value of eight and nine pence, and the prospect for one with only a small income of English money was dark indeed. However, I had three letters of introduction, and counted on counsel and help, especially from one of those to whom I had been commended, whose friends I well knew and highly valued. Of course I sought him out at once, but only to learn that he had been buried a month or two before, having died from fever during the time of my voyage.

Saddened by these tidings, I inquired for a missionary to whom another of my letters of introduction was addressed; but a further disappointment awaited me — he had left for America. The third letter remained; but as it had been given by a comparative stranger, I had expected less from it than from the other two. It proved, however, to be God's channel of help. The Rev. Dr. Medhurst, of the London Mission, to whom it was addressed, introduced me to Dr. Lockhart, who kindly allowed me to live with him for six months. Dr. Medhurst procured my first Chinese teacher; and he, Dr. Edkins, and the late Mr. Alexander Wylie gave me considerable help with the language.

Those were indeed troublous times, and times of danger. Coming out of the city one day with Mr. Wylie, he entered into conversation with two coolies, while we waited a little while at the East Gate for a companion who was behind us. Before our companion came up an attack upon the city from the batteries on the opposite side of the river commenced, which caused us to hurry away to a place of less danger, the whiz of the balls being unpleasantly near. The coolies, unfortunately, stayed too long, and were wounded. On reaching the Settlement we stopped a few minutes to make a purchase, and then proceeded at once to the London Mission compound, where, at the door of the hospital, we found the two poor coolies with whom Mr. Wylie had conversed, their four ankles terribly shattered by a cannon ball. The poor fellows declined amputation, and both died. We felt how narrow had been our escape.

At another time, early in the morning, I had joined one of the missionaries on his verandah to watch the battle proceeding, at a distance of perhaps three-quarters of a mile, when suddenly a spent ball passed between us and buried itself in the verandah wall. Another day my friend Mr. Wylie left a book on the table after luncheon, and returning for it about five minutes later, found the arm of the chair on which he had been sitting shot clean away. But in the midst of these and many other dangers God protected us.

After six months' stay with Dr. Lockhart, I rented a native house outside the Settlement, and commenced a little missionary work amongst my Chinese neighbours, which for a few months continued practicable. When the French joined the Imperialists in attacking the city, the position of my house became so dangerous that during the last few weeks, in consequence of nightly recurring skirmishes, I gave up attempting to sleep except in the daytime. One night a fire appeared very near, and I climbed up to a little observatory I had arranged on the roof of the house, to see whether it was necessary to attempt escape. While there a ball struck the ridge of the roof on the opposite side of the quadrangle, showering pieces of broken tile all around me, while the ball itself rolled down into the court below. It weighed four or five pounds; and had it come a few inches higher, would probably have spent its force on me instead of on the building. My dear mother kept the ball for many years. Shortly after this I had to abandon the house and return to the Foreign Settlement — a step that was taken none too soon, for before the last of my belongings were removed, the house was burnt to the ground.

Of the trials of this early period it is scarcely possible to convey any adequate idea. To one of a sensitive nature, the horrors, atrocities, and misery connected with war were a terrible ordeal. The embarrassment also of the times was considerable. With an income of only eighty pounds a year, I was compelled, upon moving into the Settlement, to give one hundred and

twenty for rent, and sublet half the house; and though the Committee of the Chinese Evangelisation Society increased my income when, after the arrival of Dr. Parker, they learned more of our circumstances, many painful experiences had necessarily been passed through. Few can realise how distressing to so young and untried a worker these difficulties seemed, or the intense loneliness of the position of a pioneer who could not even hint at many of his circumstances, as to do so would have been a tacit appeal for help.

The great enemy is always ready with his oft-repeated suggestion, "All these things are against me." But oh, how false the word! The cold, and even the hunger, the watchings and sleeplessness of nights of danger, and the feeling at times of utter isolation and helplessness, were well and wisely chosen, and tenderly and lovingly meted out. What circumstances could have rendered the Word of God more sweet, the presence of God more real, the help of God more precious? They were times, indeed, of emptying and humbling, but were experiences that made not ashamed, and that strengthened purpose to go forward as God might direct, with His *proved* promise, "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." One can see, even now, that "as for God, His way is perfect," and yet can rejoice that the missionary path of today is comparatively a smooth and an easy one.

Journeying inland was contrary to treaty arrangements and attended with much difficulty, especially for some time after the battle of Muddy Flat, in which an Anglo-American contingent of about three hundred marines and seamen, with a volunteer corps of less than a hundred residents, attacked the Imperial camp, and drove away from thirty to fifty thousand Chinese soldiers, the range of our shot and shell making the native artillery useless. Still, in the autumn of 1854 a journey of perhaps a week's duration was safely accomplished with Dr. Edkins, who of course did the speaking and preaching, while I was able to help in the distribution of books.
