

C.T. STUDD

"A Soldier of the Cross to
Three Continents"

by Mack Tomlinson

*"If Jesus Christ be God and
died for me, then no sacrifice
can be too great for me to
make for Him."*

This statement became the driving force in the life of C. T. Studd of 19th century England. Charles Studd was nurtured in the lap of luxury among British higher society, but in his early twenties he forsook it for the foreign mission field, ultimately becoming one of the most exemplary missionaries in evangelical history.

By the time of his 16th birthday, C.T. had become an expert cricket player. By the time he was converted in 1878 at the age of 18, he had a Cambridge career in cricket and had already become the most famous cricket player in Britain. But the fame and notoriety did not satisfy, and C. T. was stirred to seek something higher, something more eternal, as he had seen his own father do at the end of his life.

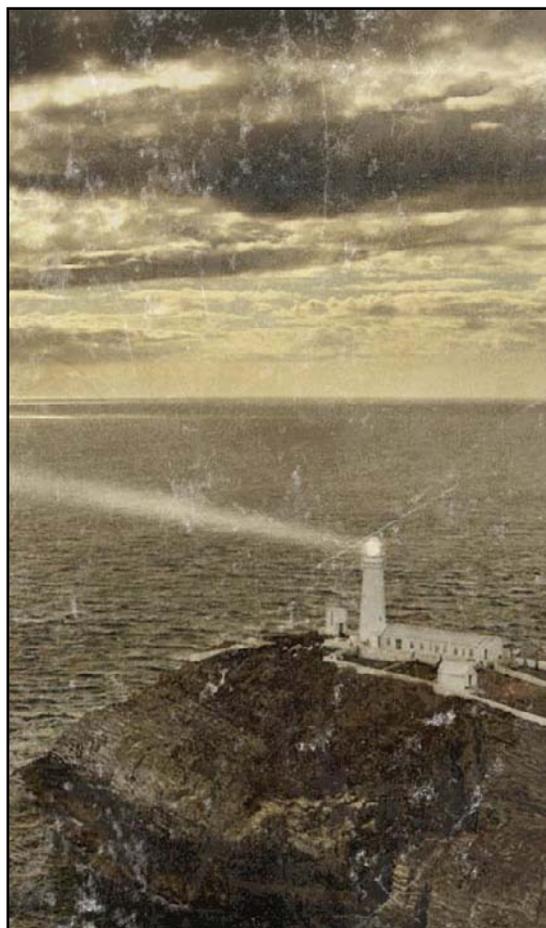
It was during this time that he came across a tract written by a professing atheist which read as follows:

“If I firmly believed, as millions say they do, that the knowledge and practice of religion in this life influences the eternal destiny of others, then religion would mean everything to me. I would cast away earthly enjoyments as dross, earthly cares as folly, and earthly thoughts and feelings as vanity. Religion would be my first waking thought and my last image before sleep sank me into unconsciousness. I would labor in its cause alone. I would take thought for the morrow of eternity alone. I would esteem one soul gained for heaven worth a life of suffering. Earthly consequences would never stay my hand nor seal my lips. Earth, its joys and its griefs, would occupy no moments of my thoughts. I would strive to look upon eternity alone and on the immortal souls around me, soon to be everlastingly happy or everlastingly miserable. I would go forth to the world and preach in season and out of season, and my text would be, “What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?””

Upon reading these words, C. T. suddenly saw that this was the truly consistent Christian life. He determined from that time on that his life would be consistent and fixed with one purpose in view—being obedient to God’s will. He soon set himself to seek the empowering of the Holy Spirit and before long, was visited with an outpouring of the Spirit with power and much assurance.

Within a few months, C.T. had a very definite burden and leading to make himself available for work in China. When he made this direction known, he began to receive strong opposition from family, friends, and even other Christians. But he came to the point, by God’s grace, that he never looked back. His guiding principle he stated in simple words: “How could I spend the best years of my life living for the honors of this world, when thousands of souls are perishing every day?” C. T. soon wrote to his mother: “Mother dear, I do pray God to show you that it is such a privilege to give up a child to be used of God in saving poor sinners who have never even heard of the name of Jesus.” Immediately he met with Hudson Taylor, who was home from China to meet

with and enlist any Christian workers who felt called to go to China. It wasn’t long before Studd was accepted by Taylor as a member of the China Inland Mission, along with six other young men: M. Beauchamp, A. T. Pohill-Turner, D. E. Hoste, C. H. Pohill-Turner, W.W. Cassels, and Stanley P. Smith. These seven made up The Cambridge Seven, and they set sail for China in February of 1885.



Studd ultimately had three different missionary careers, first in China, then India, and finally in Africa. But China was the first place of service for this amazing man. A fuller account of Studd’s life and work can be read in Norman Grubb’s biography, entitled C.T. Studd: Cricketer and Pioneer. It was while in China at the age of 25 that C. T.’s full future inheritance was to come to him according to his father’s will. Studd decided, through much prayer and searching the Scriptures, that it was his Heavenly Father’s will for him to give it away. As far as C. T. could judge, his inheritance would be approximately £29,000. Before knowing what the exact full amount would be, on a memorable day, January 13, 1887, he gave away £25,000 in one day, mailing four checks of £5000 each, and five checks of £1000 each. Those included in his support were the ministries of D. L. Moody and George Muller, to whom he sent £5,000 each. In addition, he sent £5,000 to be used for the poor of London, another £5,000 to Booth Tucker for the Salvation Army in India, and several £1000 gifts to various Christian workers in Ireland and England.

When C. T. later found out the exact inheritance, he sent several thousand more pounds to the China Inland Mission, leaving him with another £3400 in his own possession. It was like giving away millions in inheritance by today’s standards. Three years after arriving in China, C. T. married a young Irish missionary from Ulster, Priscilla Livingston Stewart. Just before the wedding, he presented his new bride-to-be with the remaining money. Not to be outdone, Priscilla said, “Charlie, what did the Lord tell the rich young ruler to do?” “Sell all.” “Well, then, we will start clear with the Lord at our wedding.” And they gave the rest of the money away for the Lord’s work. The theme of their wedding was, “United to Fight for Jesus.” One of the main works the Studds did in China was the opening of an Opium Refuge for those suffering wretchedly from the drug. Addicts would stay about a month and go away cured. They saw a number of individuals come to know the Lord Jesus in that difficult ministry, with a total of 800 people coming through the work over a seven-year period.

After being in China for 10 years, the Studds returned to England in 1894. C.T. had almost died the previous year, and it became obvious this return was the Lord’s will. As their furlough unfolded, D. L. Moody invited Studd to come to the U. S. to have a tour of speaking in American universities, which he did with much divine blessing attending that time of several months. Then in 1900, the Studds answered God’s call to go to India.



C.T.'s father had expressed on his death bed that he hoped somehow his son would one day go to India. From 1900 until 1906, C. T. pastored the Union Church in Ootacamund, South India. A remark was made about this church during that time which best describes what the atmosphere must have been like: "That church is a place to be avoided unless a man means to get converted!" There were consistent and at times remarkable conversions, including military officers and individuals in places of high honor. When the time came in 1906 for them to leave India, all four of the Studd's daughters had become believers and wanted to be baptized in India before leaving. C. T. baptized the girls himself in a tank fitted into a freshly dug pit. Among those present for the service were an old missionary and his wife who deeply loved the girls, a Baptist missionary and his wife, as well as Miss Amy Carmichael.

In 1906, the Studds returned to England, with C. T. now at the age of fifty and facing health challenges. It had been 18 years since their marriage and mutual utter surrender to God's purpose. But the greatest venture of all was yet still to come, the greatest work of his life - the interior of Africa. C. T. had no money, and facing some health issues, how could he face tropical Africa? Before long, his doctor declined giving his permission for Africa. Then his own mission committee rejected his request. His answer before long to the committee was: "Gentlemen, God has called me to go, and I will go." God's will and Studd's determination won in the end, as C. T. labored in the heart of Africa

for the next twenty years, establishing the Africa Interior Mission, which later became the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade (WEC). C. T. sailed for Africa on December 15, 1910. He wrote on his first day in the Belgian Congo: "I know I am God's; I know I only want His glory and the salvation of others and I know He knows it. I never was better nor stronger for years and years, but best of all, I know God is with us. He talks to me and His blessed Word means more than ever before, and makes me burn to dare and do for Him." It was in Africa that God became even more a God of wonders to C. T. There were powerful outpourings of the Spirit in the years while he was there, with revival and awakening spreading to many mission stations. In a letter written home not long before his death, he gave a last backward look at his life from his perspective: "As I believe I am now nearing my departure from this world, I have but a few things to rejoice in:

--that God called me to China and I went in spite of opposition from all my loved ones.

--that I joyfully acted as Christ told that rich young ruler to act.

-- that, at the call of God, I deliberately, when alone on the Bibby liner in 1910, gave up my life for this work in Africa, which was to be henceforth not for the Sudan only, but for the whole unevangelized world.

--my only joys therefore are that when God has given me a work to do, I have not refused it."

C. T. bore much fruit in Africa, even while enduring weakness, sickness, and suffering several heart attacks. It was on July 16th, 1931, around 10:30 a.m. that C.T. Studd died in the heart of Africa, and was buried there. His last spoken words were, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" His evident, God-given strengths as a missionary were as follows: courage in any emergency, determination never to sound the retreat, his conviction that he was in God's will, real faith that God would see him through any situation, his contempt for the arm of the flesh, and his willingness to risk all for Christ. As his own son-in-law and biographer, Norman Grubb said, "His life will be an eternal rebuke to easy-going Christianity."

