

CHARLES THOMAS STUDD

C. T. Studd was born in England in 1860. His father was a wealthy, retired, planter. By the age of 16, he was an expert cricket player, and at 19, captain of his team at Eton College. He became a Christian at the age of 18, but that commitment never really changed his life. Then, a series of events put him on the mission field. The following words had a great impact on his life:

"If I firmly believed, as millions say they do, that the knowledge and practice of religion in this life influences destiny in another, then religion would mean everything to me. I would cast away earthly feelings as vanity. Religion would be my first waking thought, and my last image before sleep sank me into unconsciousness. I should 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, or seal my lips. Earth, its joys and its griefs, would occupy no moment 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 to it in season and out of season, and my text would be: What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

These words, I am told, were written by an Atheist. He didn't believe in God, heaven, or hell, and his life was consistent with his belief. When this Atheist, however, looked at Christians, he saw a glaring inconsistency. The Christians "claimed" to believe in God, heaven, and hell, but they basically lived the same way he did. That's why the Atheist began his remarks by saying "If I firmly believed, as millions say they do".

Ashamed of his own lack of commitment, C. T. Studd went to China as a missionary in February, 1885. He chose to eat, dress, and work like the Chinese peasants that he might have a better chance of winning them to Christ. At the age of 25 his father died, and he inherited a large sum of money. He immediately gave away 30,000 pounds to Christian causes. When he came to realize the full value of his inheritance he gave away thousands more until he had only 3,400 pounds left. He saved this as a wedding present for his bride.

After three years on the mission field he married a young Irish missionary named Priscilla Livingstone Stewart. When he presented her the remainder of his inheritance, she followed his example and promptly gave it away.

In 1900 the family moved to India, and in 1910 he went alone to central Africa. When a Committee of businessmen failed to follow through with financial support they had promised, C.T. said: Gentlemen, God has called me to go, and I will go. I will blaze the trail, though my grave may only be a stepping stone that younger men may follow".

In Africa, C.T. endured hardship like a good soldier. He lost most of his teeth, suffered several heart attacks, and was sick much of the time. As death approached he wrote home reflecting upon the outstanding events of his life. # 1 He praised God that he went to China in spite of opposition from his family. # 2 He joyfully gave away his inheritance. # 3 In 1910 he recommitted his life, not only to Africa, but to the whole unevangelized world. Finally, he was thankful that every time God had given him a work to do, he had not refused it. Here is the first stanza of a famous poem he wrote: *"Two little lines I heard one day, Traveling along life's busy way; Bringing conviction to my heart, And from my mind would not depart; Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.*

Shortly after 10:30 p.m. in July of 1931, C. T. Studd went home to be with Jesus. The last word he spoke was "Hallelujah". His legacy is briefly summarized by these poignant words: *"Forward ever, Backward never! Some wish to live within the sound of Church or Chapel bell; I want to run a Rescue Shop Within a yard of hell"*

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord for now on." "Yes" says the Spirit, 'they will rest from the labor, for their deeds will follow them" (Rev. 14:123).