

Personal Testimony

of Charles Thomas (C.T.) Studd



My name is Charles Thomas Studd and I was born into a religious family. My "church" was the Church of England where I was baptized as an infant, and after a time I was confirmed and took communion. BUT, I did not know anything about Jesus Christ personally. There had never been a moment in my life when I ever doubted that there was a God, or that Jesus Christ was the Saviour of the world; but it was intellectual knowledge. We boys went to church regularly, but, although we had religion, it was not a religion that amounted to much. We were always sorry to have Sunday come, and glad when we came to Monday morning. The Sabbath (as Sunday was often called at the time C.T wrote his testimony), was the dullest day of the whole week, for this religion meant nothing to us. We had lots of ministers and churches around us, but to the best of my knowledge we never saw a real converted sinner. Being religious we didn't believe in becoming converted, the peoples of other lands had to be converted. The idea of an Englishman needing to be converted was absurd, because it made him out a heathen before he was converted.

My father made a fortune in India and came back to England spending much of it on horses, they were his passion. When he saw fine horses he would buy them, train them, and then would race them. Having a large place in the country, he made a race course, and won the biggest steeplechase in London three times. At last he got hold of a horse better than anyone he had ever had, and so certain was he of winning the race that he wrote to a friend in London and said, "If you are a wise man you will come to the race tomorrow and put every penny you have on my horse."

Unknown to my father, the man to whom he wrote had been converted during the time D.L. Moody had been in England. At that time very few would put much confidence in a man preaching the Gospel unless he had two things, the title of Reverend, and a white tie round his neck. The papers could not understand such a preacher as Mr. Moody, who had neither, and of course they printed column after column against him. But they could not help seeing that he could get more people to his meetings than half a dozen archbishops, and that more were converted than by twenty ordinary ministers. Of course they did not put the right construction on things. They said that Mr. Sankey had come over to sell organs, and Mr. Moody to sell his hymn books. My father read the papers day after day and these things tickled him immensely. I remember one evening he threw the paper down and said, "Well, anyhow, when this man comes to London I am going to hear him. There must be some good about the man or he would never be abused so much by the papers."

Father went up to London and met his friend who had been over to Ireland when Mr. Moody was there. However, he never attended any of his meetings. Providentially he missed his train to leave Dublin on the Saturday night and had to remain until Sunday. God was moving behind the scenes. As he was looking about the streets that Saturday evening he saw the advertising for Moody and Sankey. God was working for it came into his mind, "I will just go and hear those Americans." He went and God met him, but he was not yet saved. Going again and hearing of God's salvation and accepting Christ as Saviour, he was converted to God. When he and father drove along in a carriage father talked of nothing but horses, and told this man if he were a wise man he would put up every penny he had on that horse. After father had finished his business he came back to this friend and said, "How much money have you put on my horse?" "Nothing." My father said, "You are the biggest fool I ever saw; didn't I tell you what a good horse he was? But though you are a fool, come along with me to dinner." After dinner my father said, "Now, where shall we go to amuse ourselves?" His friend said, "Anywhere." My father said, "Well, you are the guest; you shall choose where we shall go." "Well, we will go and hear Moody." My father said, "Oh, no, this isn't Sunday. We will go to the theater, or concert." But, the man said, "You promised to go wherever I chose." So my father had to go. They found the building was full and there were no seats in the hall except special ones. This man knew he would never get my father there again, so working himself into the crowd he contacted one of the committee. He said, "I have brought a wealthy sporting gentleman here, but I will never

get him here again if we do not get a seat." The man took them in and put them right straight in front of Mr. Moody. My father never took his eyes off Mr. Moody until he finished his address. After the meeting my father said, "I will come and hear this man again. He just told me everything I had ever done." My father kept going until he was converted.

That afternoon my father had been full of a thing that takes possession of a man's heart and head more than anything else — that passion for horse racing; and in the evening he was a changed man. It was the same skin, but a new man altogether inside. When we boys came home from college father kept telling us that he was born again. We did not understand because he was always asking us about our souls, and we didn't like it. He took us to hear Mr. Moody, and we were impressed but were not converted.

Father knew that if he got converted it would mean a radical change of life. His conscience told him he could not go to balls, card parties, and all that sort of thing. Seeking an audience with Mr. Moody he said, "I want to be straight with you. If I become a Christian will I have to give up racing, and shooting, and hunting, and theaters, and balls?" "Well," Mr. Moody said, "Mr. Studd, you have been straight with me; I will be straight with you. Racing means betting, and betting means gambling, and I don't see how a gambler is going to be a Christian. My father asked again about the theater and cards, and Mr. Moody said, "Mr. Studd, you have children and people you love; and as a saved man yourself, and you want to get them saved. God will give you some souls and as soon as ever you have won a soul you won't care about any of the other things." Father got saved and sure enough, he didn't care for any of those things any longer; he only cared about one thing, and that was saving souls.

He took us to hear Mr. Moody and other men, and when Mr. Moody left England my father held meetings in his country house in the evenings. He asked ministers and business men from London to come down and speak to the people about their souls. The people would come for miles to attend the meetings, and many were converted. One of these gentlemen came down to preach one day and as I was going out to play cricket he caught me unawares and said, "Are you a Christian?" I said, "I am not what you call a Christian. I have believed on Jesus Christ since I was knee high. Of course I believe in the church, too." I thought by answering him pretty close I would get rid of him, but he stuck tight as wax and said, "Look here, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. You believe Jesus Christ died?" "Yes." "You believe He died for you?" "Yes." "Do you believe the other half of the verse — 'shall have everlasting life?'" "No," I said, "I don't believe that." He said, "Don't you think you are a bit inconsistent, believing one half of the verse and not the other half?" "I suppose I am." "Well," he said, "are you always going to be inconsistent?" "No," I said, "I suppose not always." He said, "Will you be consistent now?" I saw that I was cornered and I began to think, "If I go out of this room inconsistent, I won't carry very much self-respect." I said, "Yes, I will be consistent." "Well, don't you see that eternal life is a gift? When somebody gives you a present at Christmas, what do you do?" "I take it and say, 'Thank you.'" He said, "Will you say 'Thank you' to God for this gift?" Then I got down on my knees and I did say 'thank you' to God. Immediately joy and peace came into my soul. I knew then what it was to be 'born again,' and the Bible which had been so dry to me before, became everything."

One day when I was in London, a friend (who was a christian) asked me to come for tea with him and his wife. After, when we were talking about the Bible, this friend said, "Have you heard of the wonderful blessing Mrs. Watson has got lately?" I said, "Why, she has been a Christian a long time." He said, "Yes, but she is quite different now." I had heard people talking about getting other blessings besides conversion, but I would not believe it. Then my friend opened his Bible and showed plainly enough from the Scriptures that there were other blessings besides conversion. Paraphrasing, he asked me if I had really entered into the blessings of God, that is, had I ever started to think through the richness and practicality of the blessings of God? To a degree I was like the children of Israel when God said to Moses that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not know God as Jehovah (Ex. 6:3). They did speak of Him as Jehovah, but they had never in heart appreciated what that Name meant. I was the same. I knew Christ had died for me, but having asked the Lord to open my eyes to see the fulness of His purchasing of me, graciously He did this. I meant business and the old truths became real as they gripped me. I had known about Jesus Christ's dying for me, but I had never understood that if he had died for me, then I didn't belong to myself. Redemption means "buying back" so that if I belonged to Him, either I had to be a thief and keep what wasn't mine, or else I had to give up everything to God. When I came to see that Jesus Christ had died for me, it didn't seem hard to give up all to Him. It seemed just common, ordinary honesty. I read in a book called "The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life" in which it said, "When you have surrendered all to God, you have given him all the responsibility, as well as everything else. It is God who is responsible to look after you and

all you have to do is to trust. Put your hand in His and the Lord will lead you. It seemed quite a different thing after that and in a very short time God made real to me what I had to do and where to go. God doesn't tell a person first by his head; He tells him first by the heart. God put it in my heart and made me long to go to China.

There were many difficulties on the way for the christian life is a conflict. There was not one of my relatives who did not think that I had gone mad. My elder brother, who was a true Christian, said to me one evening, "Charlie, I think you are making a great mistake." I said, "There is no mistake about it." He said: "You are away every night at the meetings and you do not see mother. I see her, and this is just breaking her heart. I think you are wrong." I said, "Let us ask God. I do not want to be pigheaded and go out there of my own accord, I just want to do God's will." It was hard to have this brother, who had been such a help, think it was a mistake. We got down on our knees and put the whole matter in God's hands. That night I could not get to sleep, but it seemed as though I heard someone say this verse over and over, "Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." I knew it was God's voice speaking to me. When I got to China I knew why He said that verse so often. Winning souls out there is the same thing as here, only more difficult. The devil comes to one and says, "Why don't you go home? You can save more souls there than here." However, I had received marching orders to go to China and if I was to go back I had to wait for God to give that command. Not only did God make it right with the brother, but the night I was leaving home God made my mother willing that I should go to China.

I was twenty-three when I went to China; and for several years it seemed as if I was just walking up and down that country. Finally I was sent to a station where there had been a riot. Every missionary's house had been knocked down, and they had been sent away; but the British consul was there, although he had been nearly killed. When a friend and myself got into that town we meant to hold the fort. When the consul saw us it was as though he had seen a couple of ghosts. He said, "However did you get here? There are guards in every gate of the city to prevent any foreign devil from coming in." We said that God had brought us in and told him what we had come for. He said, "No; you cannot stay here; I can give you a passport up or down the river, but no foreigners are allowed here except myself." After a little he said, "If you would like to stay in that hovel there you can; but there is not room for more than one." Then we began to discuss which should stay. My friend was going to be married and I was not, but he wanted to stay. Finally the consul asked us to dinner, and in the midst of dinner he turned to me and said, "Studd, will you stay with me?" That settled the matter. I didn't know why God had sent me to that place until some time afterwards.

One day when I was reading the harmony of the Gospels I came to where Christ talked with the rich young man. While reading that narrative the Holy Spirit seemed to bring all the vows I had made back to me. A few days later the post, which came only every half-month, brought letters from the solicitor and banker informing me that I had become heir to 29,000 pounds my father had left. Then I learned why I had been sent to that particular place. I needed to draw up papers giving the "Power of Attorney" to another individual and giving up my portion for the greater glory of God. To have this notarized I had to have the signature of one of Her Majesty's officers. I went to this consul and when he saw the paper he said, "I won't sign it. You don't know what you are doing." Finally, he said that he would give me two weeks to think it over and then if I wished he would sign it. I took it back at the end of two weeks and he signed it off. God plans our every move.

“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.

Only one life, yes only one, soon will its fleeting hours be done;
Then, in 'that day' my Lord to meet, and stand before His Judgement seat;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, the still small voice, gently pleads for a better choice
Bidding me selfish aims to leave, and to God's holy will to cleave;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, a few brief years, each with its burdens, hopes, and fears;
Each with its clays I must fulfill, living for self or in His will;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last.

When this bright world would tempt me sore, when Satan would a victory score;
When self would seek to have its way, then help me Lord with joy to say;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last.

Give me Father, a purpose deep, in joy or sorrow Thy word to keep;
Faithful and true whate'er the strife, pleasing Thee in my daily life;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last.

Oh let my love with fervor burn, and from the world now let me turn;
Living for Thee, and Thee alone, bringing Thee pleasure on Thy throne;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes only one, now let me say, "Thy will be done";
And when at last I'll hear the call, I know I'll say, "twas worth it all";
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.
And when I am dying, how happy I'll be,
If the lamp of my life has been burned out for Thee."

. . . C.T. Studd

EDITOR'S NOTE:

As a cricketer, C.T., as he was affectionally known, played for England in the 1882 match won by Australia. However, playing cricket was not to be God's plan for his life. In 1884 after his brother George was taken seriously ill Charles was confronted by the question, "What is all the fame and flattery worth when a man comes to face eternity?" He had to admit that since his conversion six years earlier he had been in "an unhappy backslidden state". As a result of the experience he said, "I know that cricket would not last, and honour would not last, and nothing in this world would last, but it was worthwhile living for the world to come". It is surmised that it was during this time he wrote those immortal words: "Only One Life, 'Twill Soon Be Past". It is the line of a poem he wrote.

. . . . Edited and compiled from various sources