

Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret Study Guide

Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret by Hudson Taylor

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Plot Summary

James Hudson Taylor is the "father of modern missions" and a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, completely sold out to God. He is a man of high energy, who denies self and is known for his humility, organizational skills and even more for his life of prayer. He lives from 1832-1905 and is credited for touching hundreds of thousands of lives for Christ throughout his lifetime and beyond. Today, many missions still emulate the principles Hudson Taylor set forth in his outreach to China, still seeking to follow his successful patterns.

Hudson Taylor studies both theology and medicine before traveling to China as a missionary with the China Evangelization Society in 1854. While raising support for the mission, he only stresses prayer and faith with those whom he shares his vision. Through these kindred hearts, God provides the means he needs to accomplish God's work. Once he arrives in China, he adopts the Chinese way of dress and lives with a Dr. Medhurst for six months. By the providence of God, while Taylor is there, he reads Dr. Medhurst's book, *China*, which stirs his heart to serve in China. From 1854-1860, Taylor works in Shanghai, Swatow and Ningpo and goes on ten missionary journeys during 1854-55. But in 1857, he resigns from the society that sent him out as a missionary because they borrow money to pay his salary, and this goes against Scripture. He continues to work independently among the Chinese people.

Hudson Taylor meets and marries Maria J. Dyer, who is the daughter of a missionary. She serves as a helper in a school for girls along with her sister. A year later in 1859, Hudson takes over as head of a hospital in Ningpo. Over the next five years he translates the Bible into the Ningpo dialect, writes his own book about China and, with much prayer, starts another society for the evangelization of China. This work becomes the China Inland Mission, and Hudson Taylor's life work. He returns to England during some years of illness, but returns to China with his wife, children and sixteen new missionaries. In 1870, Cholera claims the life of his wife and newborn son.

By 1872, he returns to China with a new wife and continues his evangelistic journeys. In 1888, he visits North America for the first time at the invitation of D. L. Moody. He stays for three months and challenges believers to take the "great commission" seriously. As a result fourteen new missionaries follow him back to China.

This book challenges the reader to emulate Hudson Taylor's life without falling prey to worshiping the man himself. His problems, such as illness, the loss of his first child at age seven, and later his wife and newborn son to cholera, an injury in 1874, that leaves him paralyzed for almost a year, all show sides of him, including his struggles with doubts and fears. However, Hudson Taylor pushes on in the Lord's strength and grace, serving God and making a difference on the mission field. He differs from other missionaries in that he puts forth great effort to identify with the nationals. He also believes missions should be directed from the field instead of the home office, and instead of gathering financial support up front, his faith leads him to trust God for all his needs. He retires from the missionary field in 1901 and dies in 1905.



Characters

Hudson Taylor

Hudson Taylor is seventeen-years-old when he comes to understand "the finished work of Christ" and becomes a believer. His former fears and doubts vanish, and in their place, he experiences joy and peace. He can't wait to tell his mother, but as he runs out to meet her, she tells him that she already knows as God revealed to her that her son would be saved as she poured out her heart in prayer on his behalf. This supernatural event, combined with a journal entry he finds that his sister made promising to pray for him daily., ushers in the theme of the importance and reality of prayer. This early experience makes a big impact on his young Christian life, which influences the rest of his life. As a new believer, he steps out in faith and works with his sister for Christ.

Hudson feels called to carry the gospel to China as a missionary with the China Evangelization Society but first studies theology and medicine. As he prepares to go into the mission field, his focus is on prayer and faith, rather than the support money he will need to live. Instead he trusts God to provide through those who share his vision, and at age 21, Hudson arrives in China. His ways are spirit led and instead of following traditional missionary practices, he quickly adopts the Chinese way of dress even getting the front of his head shaved and wearing a queue. This opens opportunities with the Chinese nationals, who start to invite him into their homes. From 1854-1860, he works in Shanghai, Swatow and Ningpo and goes on ten missionary journeys during 1854-55. But in 1857, he resigns from the society that sent him out as a missionary because they borrow money to pay their missionaries. This goes against what Scripture teaches about owing no man anything. However, with God's call still on his life, he continues to work independently among the Chinese people.

After a bit of difficulty at being accepted, Hudson Taylor meets and marries Maria J. Dryer, who is the daughter of a missionary in China. A year later he takes over as head of a hospital in Ningpo, and over the next five years, he also translates the Bible into the Ningpo dialect. Hudson also writes his own book about China and with much prayer starts a society for the evangelization of China. This work later becomes the China Inland Mission and Hudson Taylor's life work.

His family grows as Hudson and Maria have children. Hudson is forced to return to England for health reasons, but when well enough, he returns to China with his wife, children and sixteen new missionaries. Between political unrest and the need for education, the Taylors send their surviving children back to England with much sadness. After their departure, Maria gives birth to another son, but he dies a week later from cholera and Maria never regains her strength and dies as well.

Hudson returns to England but two years later returns to China with a new wife to continue his evangelistic journeys. In 1888, he visits North America at the invitation of D. L. Moody. It's his first visit, and he stays three months. During this time he challenges



believers to take the "great commission" seriously. As a result fourteen new missionaries follow him back to China.

Hudson Taylor's life was spent serving the Lord and making a difference on the mission field. He differed from other missionaries in that he tried in every way to identify with the nationals. Plus, he thought that the mission should be directed from the field instead of the home office. The fact that he let his faith lead him to trust God for all the supplies he would need rather than to collect it up front, joining his ranks was not popular among those looking to go to the mission field. He retired from the missionary field in 1901 and died in 1905.

Maria (Dyer) Taylor

Maria Dyer assists Miss Aldersey in the school for girls. When Hudson meets Maria, he is amazed at her Chinese language skills. However, her young age restricts their relationship to friendship, but he finds her gift of soul winning attractive. A plot by the Cantonese to kill all the foreigners in the area is discovered, and a plan is made to send families and children to the coast. Hudson is asked to escort those fleeing. However, Miss Aldersey decides she is not leaving and talks Maria into staying also. As a result Hudson and Maria's friendship is torn apart. Hudson doesn't want to leave but willingly fills the need.

Though Hudson loves Maria, he doesn't say anything. He feels he has nothing to offer a bride. His financial situation embarrasses him because the Society borrows money to pay his salary. Maria finds him different than other young men and is drawn to his desire to live a holy and useful life. When he leaves, Maria realizes how much she misses him and comes to terms with her feelings. Seven weeks later he returns to live close by in Swatow, but Maria doesn't share how she feels with anyone but the Lord because others within the missionary circles don't care for Hudson because he dresses in Chinese clothing and tries to be one with the Chinese people. Yet Maria finds these very things attractive in Hudson. At times he returns to Shanghai for months. She misses him but doesn't know he feels the same for her. Then one day she receives a letter from him. He tells her he loves her. The news fills her with joy, but when she tells Miss Aldersey, the woman is indignant. She considers Hudson a "nobody" and announces that the proposal of marriage should be refused immediately.

Maria lives by the older woman's wishes but turns the situation over to her God. One day Maria attends the women's prayer meeting at Mrs. Jones' home. This also happens to be where Hudson lives. Hudson and Mr. Jones work at the dispensary until a water spout hits, followed by flooding rain. When Mr. Jones and Hudson return to the house, Maria and a companion are the last two waiting for sedan chairs to go home. Hudson and Maria have a rare chance to see each other. They confirm their feelings and Maria grants him permission to write to her guardian regarding marriage. In November Hudson receives a favorable reply. Two months later, after she turns 21, they marry and start to serve the Lord together.



Their house on Bridge Street becomes a real home with Maria's touch. The people accept and welcome her as Hudson's wife, and soon the family grows. Their first born is a daughter, Gracie, and she is joined by three brothers. Even with a family, Hudson and Maria depend on God to meet their needs.

Amid hardships and satanic attacks, Maria doesn't talk about difficulties, but instead prays. Little did she expect to reap such personal sorrow as when their daughter dies. Even in their sorrow, Maria and Hudson consecrate themselves anew to the work of the mission. People flock to Hudson because of his medical skills, and the women are drawn to Maria's ability to speak Chinese. Hearts open to the Gospel. But trouble comes in the form of anonymous flyers blaming crimes on the foreigners. Riots follow and 48 hours later the missionaries are aboard a boat on its way to Chinkiang. The mob had been miraculously restrained by the unseen hand of God.

Maria expects another baby. On the outside she remains calm, and more than once she averts injury by keeping her head. Her language skills help her communicate while inside she fears that those she loves will die. Eventually they return to their house, which is now in much need of repair. Hudson and Maria determine it best to send their children to England for schooling. Letting their children go is difficult, but Maria's coping secret is that Jesus satisfies the deep thirst of her heart and soul. Maria gives birth to a baby boy, but their joy is cut short. Cholera hits and a week later the baby dies. Maria at age 33 also goes on to be with the Lord. Two days before her death they receive a letter letting them know their children have arrived safely in England.

William Burns

William Burns is a preacher and evangelist who considers prayer and God's Word his daily food. He knows the Scriptures and uses it masterfully in his preaching. Before coming to China, he had reached thousands of people in Scotland and Canada in the 1839, revival. When he arrives in Shanghai, he mentors Hudson Taylor, and the two become good friends much like Paul and Timothy of the Bible. Hudson Taylor considers Mr. Burns a spiritual father and learns much from his practical love of the Word and his holy life. The man also has a teachable spirit and when he sees Hudson's success in reaching the people by donning Chinese garb, he, too, tries this tactic and writes home to others about what a difference it makes in being accepted by the Chinese people. Hudson enjoys this man's cultured, friendly wit and his readiness to always share his experiences to help another learn.

They work together for seven months and are eventually called to the city of Swatow as the first missionaries there. Within four months, through their medical work, they are able to rent a room. Mr. Burns sends Hudson back to Shanghai for some medical equipment they left there. Hudson doesn't want to leave him but does, and while they are separated, Mr. Burns is arrested by the Chinese authorities and removed from Swatow. As it turns out, England bombards that city and Hudson Taylor sees God's hand even in this, using the arrest of Mr. Burns to remove him from harm's way.



Hudson Taylor's Mother

Hudson's mother is a woman of prayer. One day while she is away from home, her seventeen-year-old son, Hudson, is home alone. She feels burdened to pray for him to such an extent that she departs from her friends and finds a place where she kneels for hours and prays to God for her son's salvation. God grants her a sense of assurance that her prayers have been answered, and when she returns home, Hudson hurries to share his good news with her, but before he utters a word she wraps her arms around him with rejoicing and tells him she already knows. These types of occurrences lay a foundation of prayer which influences Hudson Taylor for the rest of his life.

Dr. Hardey

Hudson Taylor goes to live with Dr. Hardey in Hull and to work as his assistant as he studied for the mission field. When the time came to pay Hudson Taylor for his services, the Dr. would ask for a reminder that his salary was due. Hudson used the circumstances as a spiritual exercise in faith. He decides that instead of reminding Dr. Hardey directly, he prays to God to remind the good doctor and through this process, the answered prayer also encourages Hudson.

God also uses this arrangement to teach Hudson that God does supply all his needs according to his time schedule. For instance, when the day for his quarterly payment comes and Dr. Hardey says nothing and Hudson goes home without his pay. This happens more than once, and God uses each time as a trust building lesson.

Mr. Ni

Mr. Ni is a cotton merchant and good friend of Hudson and Maria Taylor in China after he becomes a believer. He helps however he can. As an ex-Buddhist leader, his hunger for spiritual truth makes him an ardent student of the Bible. His growth in knowledge and grace is astonishing. Hudson Taylor is impressed when he hears Mr. Ni present the gospel with clarity to members of the religious society for which Mr. Ni had formerly served as leader. One of his former followers comes to Christ, and Mr. Ni learns the joy of being a soul winner first hand.

God used Mr. Ni in Hudson's life as well, for when Mr. Ni first hears the gospel he asks Hudson how long he's had this good news in his country. When Hudson tells him it has been hundreds of years, Mr. Ni tells him that though his father sought the truth that he died without it. Hudson Taylor never forgets this moment and the importance of carrying God's good news to those who are perishing.



Mr. and Mrs. Berger

Mr. and Mrs. Berger of Saint Hill, England share the burden of reaching China for Christ with Hudson and Maria Taylor. Mr. Berger is a man of associations, a manufacturer of starch and the head of a prosperous business. He and his wife pray and live for reaching China with the gospel, and in their devotion they use their home to help get things ready for the Mission. Mr. and Mrs. Berger agree to stay behind to run things from the home-side of the Mission. He compared the Mission to the trees on his estate, stating that a live thing will grow—first a stem, a shoot or leaves, followed by twigs, but eventually it grows strong, large limbs. As a living thing, the Mission would do the same. Hudson and the others drew on this wisdom often reminding themselves that the work would take time and patience.

George Duncan

George Duncan is a tall, quiet Highlander, who travels to Nanking as the first resident missionary. He is content to live in the Drum Tower, when he can't find any other lodging. He shares the open loft with rats and the deep, loud bell. He spends his days amid crowds in the street or at the tea shop. When his supply of money runs low, his Chinese cook, and his only companion, asks him what they should do. If they leave, they most likely won't have a place when they return. The cook also uses up his money, and reports that they have one sack of rice left. George Duncan reminds his cook and friend that they will trust God. And when they don't any money left, and the food has run out, George Duncan returns home after a full day of preaching to find the Lord has sent Mr. Rudland as an answer to his prayers.

Dr. Parker

The Scottish missionary who joins Hudson Taylor in China along with his entire family. He arrives at a time when Hudson is financially struggling and looking not only for a place for himself but for Dr. Parker and his family. After many hurdles, Hudson learns of a small home but only has meager furnishings with which to furnish it. He rents half of it out to another family and plans to live with Dr. Parker and his family in the other half. But when Dr. Parker arrives, he has no money either, as Parker depends on a letter of credit from the Society, which has not arrived. Plus the family is unaware of the harsh winters and come without proper clothing. Being a medical doctor, other opportunities are available, but Dr. and Mrs. Parker do not turn aside from the Mission to which the Lord has called them. He accompanies Hudson Taylor to the nearby villages to evangelize and distribute 1,800 New Testaments. Eventually, a short visit to Ningpo produces a tempting offer. The missionaries living in this city suggest Dr. Parker come and open a hospital as part of their organization. In the meantime, the house they are sharing must be vacated, and they hear from the Society that the money they hoped to receive to build accommodations will not be coming, so Dr. Parker accepts the opportunity at Ningpo. Once settled, Dr. Parker also opens a dispensary about a mile or two from the hospital. But with the hospital completed, and thousands visiting it each



day, Dr. Parker deals with his own loss when his wife dies. He decides to take his children back home and leaves the hospital in Hudson Taylor's care.

Miss Aldersey

Miss Aldersey is a spinster, who runs a school for girls. Maria Dyer and her sister, who are daughters of the Rev. Samuel Dyer, one of the first Chinese missionaries, work as her helpers. When Maria and Hudson fall in love, Miss Aldersey frowns upon the relationship because she considers Hudson Taylor a "nobody" and dislikes that he dresses like the Chinese. She refuses to let the two young people see each other, but God intervenes and through circumstances following a water spout and flooding rains brings the two together again.

Neng-kuei

Neng-huei is a convert in the city of Ningpo. His is a basket-maker, friend of Mr. Ni and one of the men that devotes as much free time as he can to further the work of Christ. When Dr. Parker must leave the hospital after the death of his wife, Neng-huei steps in as one of the people who donates what time they have to help care for patients.

Mrs. Finch

Mrs. Finch is Hudson Taylor's landlady when he moves into a rented room in one of the cottages in Drainside. She is a true believer and happy to have Hudson Taylor staying with her.

Wang the Grass-Cutter

Wang the Grass-cutter is one of the converts who belongs to the Bridge House Mission and helps in the hospital when the newly-widowed Dr. Parker takes his motherless children back to Scotland.

Wang the Painter

Wang the painter is another convert, who belongs to the Bridge House Mission and helps in the hospital for no pay when Dr. Parker must take his motherless children back to Scotland.

Kwei-hwa

Hudson Taylor's first convert in China.



Chang

Blacksmith in Tsungming and one of Hudson Taylor's first converts there. When Hudson must leave, he tells his friend to still shut his shop on Sundays and to worship in his own home as he reminds him that God will be with him whether Hudson is or not.

Sung

Sung is a believer who lives on the island of Tsungming and is left behind when Hudson Taylor is forced to leave. Before Hudson leaves, Sung tells him that when he reads the Bible, he can't understand it all, and that he is grieved that Hudson must leave.



Objects/Places

Drainside

Drainside is an unattractive neighborhood on the outskirts of Hull, which consists of a double row of cottages that line a narrow canal where residents throw their garbage and wait for the tide to carry it away. Hudson rents a room here in an effort to live with as little creature comforts as possible as he prepares to become a missionary. His room is only twelve feet square.

Hull

Hull is the seaport town where Hudson Taylor lives and works as Dr. Hardey's assistant.

Sedan Chairs

Sedan chairs are enclosed vehicles used in China. They carry one person and are pulled on poles by two people.

London

This the largest city in England where Hudson Taylor lives and works in one of the large hospitals before he leaves for China. On his return to England, he lives in a poorer section of East London, where he spends his time in prayer, revising the Ningpo New Testament and struggling with God's will for his life.

House on Coborn Street

Located in East London. The Taylors move to this larger house at Coborn Street. When Hudson Taylor surrenders his life to God's will regarding evangelizing inland China, the house fills with candidates for China. The spacious parlors fill with friends who gather to pray on Saturdays.

Shanghai

When Hudson Taylor arrives in Shanghai, it is in the grips of Civil War. Rebels called the "Red Turbans" are in control. This city is close to the Foreign Settlement. Forty to fifty-thousand national forces encamp round it, and the fighting almost never stops. Taylor returns to Shanghai as an escort to families and women later when the Cantonese threaten to kill all the foreigners in Ningpo.



Foreign Settlement

Located on the outskirts of Shanghai, the settlement houses the missionaries and other foreigners in the area.

Tsungming

A great island visited by Hudson Taylor. It has a population of more than a million people and not one Protestant missionary until Hudson Taylor's arrival.

House on Bridge Street

Dr. Parker opens a dispensary in this house, as it is only a couple miles from the hospital. It's located in the southern part of the city on quiet Bridge Street. At first, Hudson lives here as a temporary residence in the upper loft room where snow blows in with the cold, but Hudson finds it perfect for working among the people.

House on Pyrland Road

This is the house where Hudson Taylor lives when he is forced to return to England when the Bergers sell their home and move for health reasons. It not only serves as his home but it also becomes the headquarters for the Mission and gathering place for prayer.



Themes

Drawing On God's Wealth for Every Need

When Hudson Taylor first accepts Christ's "finished work," he hungers for God's best. He realizes that there is nothing he can do to add to the work, but hungers to know what his part of Christ's work is. It is this hunger and leaving behind of self that leads him to draw on God's wealth for every need. This theme runs throughout the book as Hudson sets the personal spiritual challenge to learn how to depend on God's resources in everyday life circumstances in a practical way. When he moves to Hull to assist Dr. Hardey, he decides to move to the less-desirable neighborhood of Drainside, where he lives in a twelve-square-foot, rented room without amenities, as he prepares to go into the mission field. His focus is on prayer and faith rather than the money needed for mission work, and he trusts God to provide what is needed for him to go to China through those who share his vision. He does not ask for money or support, but takes the matter to God. While in Drainside he practices this aspect of his faith by trusting the Lord to remind Dr. Hardey when his pay is due. This spiritual lesson is not without its struggles. When Hudson fears the responsibility of leadership, he realizes that the problem is that he is focused on himself rather than God's provision. For a time, he forgets that God can meet the needs. When twenty-four missionaries join the work, they are offered no salary other than what God provides. This foundational principle sifts out potential missionaries that do not have the faith to trust God in everything. Only those who are sure that God has called them for this purpose join the Mission. Hudson practices this step of faith throughout his life. This faith sees him through times when there is no food or money left, and God intervenes in ways beyond anything he can dream or ask. Not only does this strengthen Hudson's faith but the faith of all whose life he touches.

Spiritual Secrets

The theme of spiritual secrets threads throughout this book. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the man Hudson Taylor along with the overall theme of the book: his spiritual secret of drawing on God's wealth for every need. The first chapter sets forth the challenge to learn how he accomplishes this and then to learn how to apply it to our own lives by following his practical attitude in our spiritual walk.

Another spiritual secret Hudson discovers along with his sister is to do all they can to bring others to faith in Christ—this he finds is the secret for rapid spiritual growth for them as individuals. They long to see others come to know Christ, but along with this longing, they grow to understand that it requires more than just doing good deeds. It requires a deep, abiding relationship with Jesus, and a real caring for the spiritual welfare of others.



The big secret revealed later in the book has to do with the secret that leads to Hudson Taylor's radiant life. The secret of soul rest. This requires complete self-abandonment. "I am no longer anxious about anything [he had written, as we have seen] . . . for He, I know, is able to carry out His will, and His will is mine" (P. 165). This understanding leads to a change in Hudson Taylor that others can see when he speaks and teaches. A new power emanates from him, and the inner peace he enjoys is evident in his everyday life. He shares this secret with everyone who has the desire to understand, because he longs for everyone to know the same freedom he has come to know firsthand. This secret sustains him throughout the rest of his life. He never again feels the lack of the fullness of Christ. He trusts Jesus no matter what his circumstances because the secret is more than yielding to Christ, but it is learning to surrender in every way in every circumstance.

Moving Man through God by Prayer Alone

Hudson's faith is reflected in his prayer life. He first learns the importance of moving man through God by prayer alone at his own conversion. His mother is burdened to pray for him for hours until God gives her a sense that her prayers have been answered. When she returns home, Hudson rushes out to meet her to give her the good news, but she tells him she already knows. Even at this young age, Hudson takes leisurely walks and uses the time as opportunities to pray. Plus he disappears to his room to spend time alone with God to pray. There behind closed doors he pours out his soul and asks for God to put him to work. "For what service I was accepted I knew not, but a deep consciousness that I was not my own took possession of me which has never since been effaced" (P. 20).

He carries this lesson with him as he awaits God's timing to go to China, and not only is it a personal lesson for him, but a life-changing principle that carries over to the Inland China Mission, where he becomes known as a man of prayer. Instead of raising money, he raises awareness of the need and only stresses prayer and the need for faith with those whom he shares his vision. Through prayer God provides the means through them.

Prayer sees patients through in his medical practice and saves the situation in many extreme circumstances. Hudson lives in China while it experiences Civil War, War with England during the Boxer Rebellion and more. Whether dealing with no food, bitter cold winters, sweltering summers, riots, being homeless or having little to no money, prayer and faith see Hudson and his family through many dire circumstances with answers that are clearly only from the Lord. His prayer life does not consist of ritualistic murmuring, but a life that sets aside time devoted to prayer—time uninterrupted, often found before the dawn of day as he reads God's word under a flickering candle. Through this life of prayer, Hudson Taylor trusts God to move man to accomplish His purposes.



Style

Perspective

This non-fiction biography is written in the third person limited point of view by Hudson Taylor's son and the son's wife. It is a short account of Hudson Taylor's life and told in a documentary fashion with facts and important turning points propelling the story forward so other believers may know how God worked through this man. However, because it's a record of Taylor's spiritual journey and the secret he learned to reach inner joy and the power he discovered, the author does not include names of many individuals that most people would think important. For instance, Hudson's children are never mentioned by name other than their daughter, Gracie who dies at a young age. Instead facts are shared in a sterile manner letting us know the first born is a daughter and the remaining children are sons. Nameless children diminish the emotional impact and connection that normally occurs between the reader and the people within the pages.

Through the writing of this story, the reader sees the writers' desire to provide details of the life and experiences of a beloved father, who sacrificed everything to live for Christ. While the author experienced life in China as a child, he uses journals, letters and firsthand accounts from others, along with his own experience to put together the story's time line. The author draws from the extensive journals Hudson Taylor kept and letters that Maria penned to stay in touch with those back home as sources. The use of extensive quotes throughout the book include firsthand accounts from a variety of individuals. However, because the story is Hudson Taylor's life story, most of the quotes are from him lending undeniable credibility to the missionary's struggles and spiritual triumphs in a way that others can grow from his experience.

Tone

Hudson Taylor's *Spiritual Secret* is written in a neutral and factual documentary-like tone with very little of the author's personal views included. Even though Howard Taylor is Hudson Taylor's son, he writes in an objective tone using the thoughts and reflections of others to tie together the historical facts that include Hudson Taylor's spiritual journey from the age of seventeen and throughout his life as an evangelical missionary to China. The writer's objective wording creates an unbiased and unemotional telling of an extraordinary life, but in the long run perhaps hurts the telling of the story.

This formal tone deliberately avoids the nominative "I" and instead carries the reader on a sometimes wearying journey as the objective tone establishes a detached mood even though the facts are often of a most personal and even supernatural nature. Consider the first two sentences of chapter 1: "Hudson Taylor was no recluse. He was a man of affairs, the father of a family, and one who bore large responsibilities." (P. 13) These first words set the formal, objective tone, which tends to be tedious at times as the story moves in a plodding style connecting facts and quotations to unfold God's supernatural



hand on Hudson Taylor's life. This restrained style leaves no room for liveliness and wit, so while this story includes elements of faith, love, physical and emotional trials, and even the supernatural workings of a God who provides for every need, it is told in a detached way that allows the reader to stay disconnected on an emotional or spiritual level.

Structure

Hudson Taylor's *Spiritual Secret* is written in a neutral and factual chronological structure. The story is told with no central incident as a climax, while dates and places are offered in history-text style, augmented with details gleaned from personal journals, letters and first hand accounts. However, sensory details are lacking as the story follows the time line of Hudson Taylor's life in a linear fashion. This approach makes for dry reading and difficult to naturally connect to the story on a personal or even spiritual level. Even with this neutral, factual structure, however, the story brims with enough personal difficulties and trails that the reader continues reading to learn how God worked amid such personal tribulation to change Hudson Taylor from the inside out and transforming him into the spiritual giant people remember today.

Letters and journal entries offer unique, historical insight from a firsthand perspective of those tumultuous times. Wars in China, war in Europe, and even war between China and England provide rich tidbits of insight into history and how it affected life on a personal level in China. But the textbook approach portrays the physical trials, Taylor's personal struggles with the traditional practices of mission organizations and people's opinions of his methods as just another event on the time line of his life's journey. Even though the objective structure doesn't connect many of the facts with the feelings evoked by them, it provides a powerful testimony of a man sold out for God throughout his life in an extraordinary effort to follow New Testament practice in his desire to live according to God's Word and trust God for everything Taylor needed. This thread does runs through the entire book, but while this biography contains Hudson Taylor's theology as one of the first evangelical Christians to work in inland China, it lacks personal details which would help readers to remember the book when it is finished.



Quotes

"Inland China opened to the Gospel largely as an outcome of this life, tens of thousands of souls won to Christ in previously unreached provinces, twelve hundred missionaries depending upon God for the supply of all their needs without promise of salary, a mission which has never made an appeal for financial help, yet has never been in debt, that never asks man or woman to join its ranks, yet has sent to China recently two hundred new workers given in answer to prayer—such is the challenge that calls us to emulate Hudson Taylor's faith and devotion." (P. 14)

"Hudson Taylor had many secrets, for he was always going on with God, yet they were but one—the simple, profound secret of drawing for every need, temporal or spiritual, upon "the fathomless wealth of Christ." (P. 14)

"But the outstanding thing about Hudson Taylor's early experience was that he could not be satisfied with anything less than the best, God's best—the real and constant enjoyment of His presence." (P. 19)

"He had come to an end of himself, to a place where God only could deliver, where he must have His succor, His saving strength. If God would but work on his behalf, would break the power of sin, giving him inward victory in Christ, he would renounce all earthly prospects, he would go anywhere, do anything, suffer whatever His cause might demand and be wholly at His disposal." (P. 22)

"Having now the twofold object in view [he recalled] of accustoming myself to endure hardness, and of economizing in order to help those among whom I was laboring in the Gospel, I soon found that I could live upon very much less than I had previously thought possible." (P. 26)

"The question uppermost in my mind was, 'Can I go to China, or will my want of faith and power with God prove so serious an obstacle as to preclude my entering upon this much-prized service?'" (P. 39)

"No situation has turned up in London that will suit me, but I am not concerned about it, as He is "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." His love is un failing, His Word unchangeable, His power ever the same; therefore the heart that trusts Him is kept in 'perfect peace.'" (P. 44)

"His own heart, meanwhile, was entering more deeply into what it means to live and die 'without Christ,' and his outlook was enlarging. From temple-crowned hilltops and the height of ancient pagodas he would look down upon cities, towns and villages where the homes of millions of people were in sight—men, women and children who had never heard the one, the only Name 'whereby we must be saved.'" (P. 61)



"Yet but for this great and unexpected trial Hudson Taylor might never have been led into the life-work that was awaiting him; might never have known the love beyond all other human love which was to be his crowning joy and blessing." (P. 76)

"So, already, the circumstance that had seemed a great calamity was being recognized as among the 'all things that work together for good' to them that love God" (P. 78).

"To satisfy my conscience I was therefore compelled to resign my connection with the Society. . . . It was a great satisfaction to me that my friend and colleague, Mr. Jones, . . . was led to take the same step, and we were both profoundly thankful that the separation took place without the least breach of friendly feeling on either side. . . ." (P. 82).

"In Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, I have found no rest. But I do find rest in what we have heard tonight. Henceforth, I am a believer in Jesus." (P. 93)

"For he was doing not a little medical work in addition to preaching on the streets and in the chapel, receiving visitors, attending to correspondence and accounts, and keeping up evangelistic excursions. But nothing was allowed to interfere with the main business in hand—that of daily helpful intercourse with the Christians and inquirers." (P. 95)

"The secret of faith that is ready for emergencies is the quiet, practical dependence upon God day by day which makes Him real to the believing heart." (P. 100)

"There is the gradual strengthening here, of a man called to walk by faith not by sight; the unutterable confidence of a heart cleaving to God and God alone, which pleases Him as nothing else can." (P. 106)

"I had a growing conviction [he wrote] that God would have me seek from Him the needed workers and go forth with them. But for a long time unbelief hindered my taking the first step. . . ." (P. 110).

"I told Him that all the responsibility as to the issues and consequences must rest with Him; that as His servant it was mine to obey and to follow Him, His to direct, care for and guide me and those who might labor with me. Need I say that at once peace flowed into my burdened heart?" (P. 114).

"For more than eight years he had proved His faithfulness in supplying the needs of his family and work in answer to prayer, unforeseen as many of those needs had been. How could he but encourage others to put their trust in the love that cannot forget, the faithfulness that cannot fail?" (P. 118).

"There was the urgency of love to the Lord Jesus Christ that made them glory in their privilege of knowing Him in the fellowship of His sufferings in a new and deeper way, and there was in them the urgency of His constraining love for the souls of the perishing by whom they were surrounded" (P. 125)



"But we heed these things very little. Around us are poor, dark heathen—large cities without any missionary, populous towns without any missionary, villages without number, all without the means of grace" (P. 132).

"I think of him as I ever knew him [Mr. McCarthy wrote from western China thirty-eight years later], kind, loving, thoughtful of everyone but himself, a blessing wherever he went and a strength and comfort to all with whom he came in contact . . . a constant example of all that a missionary ought to be" (P. 133).

"Based upon misunderstandings, the public press was bitter in its attack upon missionaries who had brought the country to the verge of war with China, it was stated, demanding the protection of British gunboats in their campaign to induce the Chinese to change their religion "at the mouth of the cannon and point of the bayonet." (P. 145)

"Pray the Lord ever to give me the single eye, the clear judgment, the wisdom and gentleness, the patient spirit, the unwavering purpose, the unshaken faith, the Christlike love needed for the efficient discharge of my duties. And ask Him to send us sufficient means and suitable helpers for the great work which we have as yet barely commenced" (P. 147).

"Envied by some, despised by many, hated by others, often blamed for things I never heard of or had nothing to do with, an innovator on what have become established rules of missionary practice, an opponent of mighty systems of heathen error and superstition, working without precedent in many respects and with few experienced helpers, often sick in body as well as perplexed in mind and embarrassed by circumstances—had not the Lord been specially gracious to me, had not my mind been sustained by the conviction that the work is His and that He is with me in what it is no empty figure to call 'the thick of the conflict,' I must have fainted or broken down" (P. 152)

"At the time you were speaking to me about it, it was the subject of all others occupying my thoughts, not from anything I had read . . . so much as from a consciousness of failure—a constant falling short of that which I felt should be aimed at; an unrest; a perpetual striving to find some way by which one might continually enjoy that communion, that fellowship, at times so real but more often so visionary, so far off! . . ." (P. 155)

"Abiding, not striving nor struggling; looking off unto Him; trusting Him for present power; . . . resting in the love of an almighty Savior, in the joy of a complete salvation, 'from all sin"—this is not new, and yet 'tis new to me'" (P. 156).

"Only by thinking of all that Jesus is and all He is for us: His life, His death, His work, He Himself as revealed to us in the Word, to be the subject of our constant thoughts. Not a striving to have faith . . . but a looking off to the Faithful One seems all we need; a resting in the Loved One entirely, for time and for eternity" (P. 156).



"And yet, never did Christ seem more precious; a Savior who could and would save such a sinner! . . . And sometimes there were seasons not only of peace but of joy in the Lord; but they were transitory, and at best there was a sad lack of power" (P. 160).

"For Hudson Taylor had found the secret of soul-rest. In this experience there had come to him not only a fuller apprehension of the Lord Jesus Himself and all He is for us, but a fuller surrender—yes, indeed, a self-abandonment to Him" (P. 165).

"It is His work, not mine or yours; and yet it is ours—not because we are engaged in it, but because we are His, and one with Him whose work it is" (P. 168).

Topics for Discussion

1. What role did Hudson Taylor's mother play in his salvation and spiritual foundation?
2. Name three spiritual lessons Hudson Taylor learned while living at Drainside and details of what God used to teach them.
3. Why did Hudson Taylor resign from the missionary Society which he served under, and how did he support himself after he made the break?
4. Miss Aldersey not only rejected Hudson Taylor's marriage proposal on Maria Dyer's behalf but did not allow them to see each other. Why did Miss Aldersey dislike Hudson Taylor, and what did God use to bring the Hudson and Maria together without violating Maria's obedience to the woman who was her overseer?
5. What practices did Hudson Taylor follow that made him different from other missionaries? List at least two and explain in detail.
6. Mr. Burns was a well-known preacher and evangelist before he came to China. What role did he play in Hudson Taylor's life and for how long? What separated them?
7. What did Hudson Taylor do when he and Maria returned to England? How long did he stay and what made him return to China?
8. List the reasons Hudson was attracted to Maria Dyer and the reasons Maria Dyer was attracted to Hudson Taylor.