

SPECIAL

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THE GOOD REPORT

THE OLD BAPTIST UNION YEAR BOOK



Diary of a Missionary

The following are extracts from the diary of an Old Baptist Union missionary, Pastor George Cousins, from the time he left England, until a few hours before his death.

8th February, 1899 The crew on the vessel ("Sado Maru") is composed mainly of Japanese, who understand but very few words in English.

The colour of the sea is beautiful: of a deep blue; so different from the muddy Thames! How grand is the sea! How gloriously grand is the One Who made it and holds it in the hollow of His hand! It is good to feel as safe on sea as on land. We now feel it to be God's will to go forward to Shanghai. There is no recognition of God on Sunday on this ship. The crew do a part of their washing on that day. There is one baptized believer among the second class passengers. We have our services to ourselves, and we bring our instrument into the saloon and sing some Sankey's hymns. The Lord has enabled me to speak to individual unsaved ones. The Lord brings us through very trying experiences at times, to teach us needful lessons and we are tempted to feel we shall never get through; but, bless God, we do. "We came through fire and water, but Thou broughtest us into a wealthy place." Such is our loving Father's method of dealing.

At Hong Kong we took a third-class on a German boat. On going into the cabin we saw cockroaches running about the sides of our berths. Felt very down — the words of Bunyan coming to my mind: "I lighted on a certain place where was a den". Prayed to God to undertake, and we had some sleep, notwithstanding the cockroaches.

11th March, 1899 Feeling of loneliness. Gave ten cents to the rickshaw man. He took hold of my coat and umbrella and demanded more.

13th March, 1899 Lying in bed pondering over the difficulties of the future. Precious words came to my mind: "Casting all your care upon Him for He careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7). "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee saying, This is the way: walk ye in it" (Isaiah 30:21).

14th March, 1899 Heard of difficulty of renting a house in the interior — needing more money than I possess.

16th March, 1899 At Shanghai. The Lord has opened up every step of the way beautifully. A home was found for us, while we were staying at Shanghai, adopting the Chinese costumes and waiting upon the Lord for guidance, and a home in a strange land is a great boon. You land among a people to whom you can say nothing of what you want them to do. Here you are upon the Chinese quay, with all your boxes and no home to go

to. Then the Lord steps in and provides you with a home where you only pay 2s. a day for the two of you, including lodging, and where friends make all necessary negotiations with the Chinese tailor and take tickets for your journey, and give you in addition a letter of introduction to a person in the place you are to arrive next. How good the Lord is! The friends of the China Inland Mission did all that I have stated. I feel grateful to these friends in a strange land, and to the Lord who inspired the love.

Faith assailed. I find when put to the test I have little faith — Lord increase my faith and forgive my unbelief, for Jesus' sake. Preached at the Masonic Hall. Unexpectedly received six dollars for the same. Took it from God as a rebuke to my unbelief.

Put on Chinese dress, passing also through the hands of the Chinese barber.

23rd March, 1899 Little money. Arrive at Ching Kiang about one o'clock in the morning. How good to have someone to meet us. And the Lord overruled that we should have a home to go to until we had obtained one of our own. When looking at one which was not at all inviting, God's words to me were: "I will show you greater things than these". Mr. Walker came and offered us some rooms, cheap. Disappointed about not receiving any letters by the English mail. Asked out to meals. Miss W. of the C.I.M. brought 10 dollars. The Lord can provide for us in China as well as anywhere else.

"It may not be my way, it may not be thy way. And yet in His own way the Lord will provide."

3rd April, 1899 The Lord has sent in furniture, and in three cases or more, money has come from people in China whom I knew nothing about until arriving here, and to whom I said nothing about our circumstances. There is much in the condition of the Chinese to make one sad; the wretchedness, the filth, the superstition and the idolatry. How dense is the darkness with which Satan has enveloped them! Man apart from the Holy Spirit would be absolutely useless in contending with these hoary superstitions, these long-retained forts of evil. But, glory to God, these are but chaff before the whirlwind when the Lord's power is put forth.

Quite a hubbub here in connection with the eclipse of the moon. Gongs of all sizes were beaten, and guns fired off to frighten away the "dragon" who was trying to swallow the moon. This was kept up from 9 p.m. till midnight. At first I wondered what it was all about. The scholars (who understand astronomy) do not believe in the dragon theory, but evidently the majority of the people do.

Received letters from home. Who can tell how joyful we felt. Money from Bro. R. came just nicely to pay our month's rent and settle the grocery bill.

I do not forget the loving efforts of so many brethren who helped to get the means together for us to come out, and who have so nobly and with much self-denial, ministered to our needs since landing here. I find the instrument given me by the dear friends at Lewisham a source of much pleasure. It has been a comfort to me several times on coming in from off the streets and from contact with the Chinese, to sit down and play some hymns whereby my soul has been lifted above the clouds of discouragement. Thanks be to God first of all, and then to the dear friends who gave me the instrument.

15th April, 1899 No home letters. How disappointed we feel. Maybe, we think too much of such, and look to them for joy and draw from them what we should draw from our Heavenly Treasure.

Looking to God for still needed supplies.

Out on a tour. Stayed at a native tea-shop. I partook of a Chinese dumpling which looked like dirty cooked dough. The place very unclean. Our rice was in good sized basins, each having a basin full to be eaten with chopsticks. I felt very clumsy and to add to my confusion, a number of Chinese had crowded the door of the room to see the foreigners, and were busy criticising us, noticing my lack of acquaintance with chopsticks. There was no light in the inn but that which came through a little bit of glass in the roof.

A Chinaman told me I look like a native!

16th June, 1899 Home letters arrived; needed supplies, glory be to God! He has kept us through the needy time and now He has sent along means to meet necessary expenditure. He never faileth.

How precious is the loving, practical, prayerful sympathy of our dear brethren in the homeland. How helpful and delightful to receive letters full of the breath of love and encouragement. How unworthy I am of so much affection from others.

The Lord Himself, I pray to richly bless the dear ones who continually help us.

Oh, the sloughs of despond one wades through in learning the Chinese language! I long for the time when I shall be able to grasp it.

Did not go to native service as I felt exhausted — oppressed by the climate.

Visited Golden Island, and dispensed a little relief sent by some of the Lord's people, a little at each door, with a Gospel, speaking to several as the Lord helped me in Chinese.

Having been troubled with rats and having to chase two from our bedroom door on Sunday night, we made it a matter of special prayer, and so we were enabled to sleep.

1st August, 1889 Another night free from rats. He answers prayer. Felt very unready for the language. Headache and weakness, yet got on better than expected. Re house belonging to the C.I.M., have received permission to live in it until purchaser is found; but this house was sold soon after.

How the Lord cares for us. Received 35 dollars from Miss Murray. This was to get anything necessary when moving into house.

Had a message from Dr. Williams to go and see him about a house. Saw a Chinaman to whom the house is sold and engaged with him for a six-month tenancy, at six-and-half dollars per month. Able to pay three months' rent. To the Lord be unceasing thanks. Visited by three German sisters (missionaries (C.I.M.)). Had a nice time of prayer and singing together. Placed three dollars in Mrs. Cousins' hand saying, the Lord had told them to do so. We were just at the end of our money. Whenever the Lord impresses, there is always a need.

Why should financial matters worry us while our Heavenly Father lives? Shall He fail? Verily not.

16th September, 1899 The washer-man has had our laundry clothes for two weeks, and we cannot get him to return them. This matter was unduly troubling us until we rolled the care upon the Lord. We know not whether the clothes are lost, stolen or spoiled. However, we have asked the Lord to undertake, and believe He will.

On Thursday, we heard that the Chinaman had taken the clothes to the C.I.M. from whence we received them on Friday.

I am able to follow the Chinese fairly well when they speak on Scriptural subjects. It is in ordinary characters where I find the difficulty. Our sufficiency is of God.

I have been encouraged lately by hearing that the Chinese man and his wife who have lived with us have decided henceforth to serve the Lord.

On another journey. Many wanting Gospels. At first an inn-keeper where we wanted to put up, did not want to receive us.

In the morning, pigs and fowl were running about the room before we were up.

At home. Mrs. Cousins' arm and finger bad with blood-poisoning; she was anointed and prayed for according to James 5:14. After severe testing she was healed. "The Lord's deliverance".

Had step taken. Prayed about it. It was brought back. Tired and wet. Walked a long way through snow, rain and mud.

Very soon after this last entry, our brother was called Home. Mrs. Cousins wrote telling of his short illness and passing away. The letter was full of the grace of resignation, and she was enabled to add to her signature the words: "Sorrowful, yet rejoicing".