

Charles Frederick Hogg

by John Bjorlie

Charles Frederick Hogg was a missionary, Bible student, and teacher who spent 60 years in ministry, leaving a lasting legacy through his written works and collaborations with others.

Scripture: Acts 20:24, 1 Corinthians 3:6, 2 Corinthians 4:7, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 2 Timothy 2:15

Topics: "Missionary Work", "Gospel Preaching"

Description

Charles Frederick Hogg, a dedicated Bible student and missionary, raised the standards among the Lord's servants by emphasizing the importance of presenting the true gospel in all its glory and grace. Despite facing challenges and witnessing martyrdoms during the Boxer Rebellion in China, he continued to preach the gospel of love to a very unlovely people. Hogg's ministry extended to various countries, including England, New Zealand, Australia, the U.S., Canada, India, and Central Africa, leaving a lasting impact on many through his careful Bible teachings and writings.

Transcript

Charles Frederick Hogg (1859-1943) used his outstanding gifts to raise the standards among the Lord's servants and the church in general. Born into a godly family in Belfast, Northern Ireland, in the year that revival swept the country, he was converted at the age of nineteen. Soon he was preaching on the streets of that city.

Ever a cautious Bible student, he disparaged a sloppy, nonchalant approach to holy things. How obvious it was to him that cajoling people into a lukewarm profession of Christianity did harm and not good. Preaching the gospel was more than saying, "Come to Jesus or you'll go to hell." He labored to present the scope of the true gospel in its glory and grace.

At the age of 25, he went as a missionary to China under the China Inland Mission to pioneer in various provinces, as far as the borders of Tibet. The severe climate and conditions wore out many strong men. He married a Miss Sarah Muir in 1887. Of their six children, three are buried in China.

In 1893, he moved his family to Shihtao, in Shantung province where he labored in the gospel. That year he also left the China Inland Mission to begin laboring with seven other couples who worked outside any formal mission organization, but had simply been commended by their home assemblies to the work of God. On the shore of the Yellow Sea, Shihtao is at the foot of one of the province's highest peaks, almost 6,000 feet, making it look like scenic Norway. But the picturesque setting had not immediately transferred

to the hearts of the locals. The city was to the missionaries "like Ephesus before the gospel came." There were some 80 opium shops in the community. Charles bemoaned how void of sincerity the citizens were. "Deceit was the rule without exception, both in theory and in practice."

The missionaries' medical help was welcomed by the people, but their spiritual assistance was often ignored or ridiculed. In time they discovered that certain vile, immoral practices leavened the whole city and surrounding villages. It was a hard eight years spent there, but Hogg determined to "go on preaching the gospel of love, in love, to a very unlovely people."

The Boxer Rebellion occurred in the summer of 1900. Most of the martyrdoms of missionaries occurred in Shansi province. In Peking the most brutal mass slaughter of Chinese believers occurred. There are only estimates of how many Chinese were murdered. Of foreigners, 135 missionaries and 53 children died. The word "slaughter" is not used loosely. Severed heads hung in wooden cages from city walls to warn sympathizers of the "foreign devils." As the Christians died, there are numerous reports that their hearts were torn out and examined to discover the secret of the martyr's courage.

How this news affected the missionaries in neighboring provinces. Co-workers, friends and converts, swept away! When Charles and Sarah returned to England in 1901 for health reasons, they must have done so with exhaustion, remorse, and considerable disappointment. It was at such a time that they discovered how real is the saint's undergirding. We in fact do have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed-- always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

For the work in Shantung province, the reaping would be left to national believers, such as the gifted Hsia Ch'en Mu commonly known as "Summertime." Charles called him the "most intelligent preacher of the gospel as well as the most natural" that he had met in China. Summertime became a hugely successful evangelist across the whole province of Shantung till his homecall in 1923. One sowed and another watered, and after all our work is done, it is God who gives the increase. By 1930, an awakening and gospel harvest time swept the province.

Charles had done what he could. He authored several Chinese tracts and contributed articles to magazines, and in collaboration with others, brought out a catechism as well as writing a book, *The Golden Compass*, written in Chinese.

Back in England he was received as a veteran, an acquaintance of legends such as C. T. Studd, the British athlete-turned-missionary, and D. E. Hoste, the successor to Hudson Taylor. From their home at Weston-super-Mare, Bristol, he worked diligently among assemblies, preaching and teaching.

C. F. Hogg's writings are being widely circulated today, thanks to the coattails of a certain schoolmaster named William Edwy Vine (1873-1949). Around the year 1905, Hogg teamed up with Vine to conduct The Exeter Correspondence School of Bible Study. These studies between 1908-1911 were later published in commentaries on 1 & 2 Thessalonians, and Galatians. F. F. Bruce calls these two volumes, "The two outstanding commentaries in which Mr. Vine had a hand." According to Bruce, "These two teachers made an ideal combination. They were basically agreed in their interpretation of the great biblical doctrines, and when Mr. Hogg's theological penetration and command of felicitous and forceful English were united with Mr. Vine's special gifts, the result was hard to match, let alone to surpass. For the student of the English

New Testament these two commentaries will long remain standard works."

Several pieces of C. F. Hogg's written ministry are tucked into Vine's collected writings. Of course W. E. Vine's great contribution to the Church of God is his Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words. English-speaking Bible students are in his debt, and Hogg was there, as a peer, confidant, and encourager for much of Vine's ministry.

Besides work in the United Kingdom, Hogg travelled to New Zealand, Australia, and made several visits to the U.S. and Canada. He also went to India and Central Africa.

Sarah Hogg passed into the presence of the Lord in 1935 at their home in Highgate, London. In early 1936, he married a Miss Amy Burwick of London. The last seven years of his life were in South Africa. He went there to visit, but war conditions detained him there, and the assemblies in the Capetown area then received the blessing. His ministry was fresh and in the Spirit: it was clear cut and definite. He once told a young missionary named T. Ernest Wilson that the three rules of good Bible teaching were, "accuracy, accuracy, accuracy." In 1939, he toured Central Africa and wrote a book, *What We Saw in Africa* which was laced with valuable counsel on missionary principles. One of the missionaries there said, "Few visitors have helped us as Mr. Hogg has done."

As a Bible student and teacher, he shone. His zeal for careful statements and his firm grasp of Bible doctrine came out in conversational Bible readings. Privately he was a fatherly counselor that missionaries, elders, and preachers sought out. What he knew about mission work caused him to strenuously advocate a rigorous inspection of candidates for commendation to the work of evangelism here and abroad. "Possibly there would be fewer workers, but possibly compensation in power, and those who are called and fitted would be better furnished."

Four days before his sudden homecall, he wrote, "Friends in New Zealand urge another visit to them and a week ago a letter from U.S.A. suggested our returning there with the hope of going to China! It is no small mercy from God to have so many loyal friends in many parts."

On November 14, 1943, he was taken suddenly ill. Despite his wife's loving attention, he was soon "absent from the body and present with the Lord." His ministry spanned 60 years and was fresh to the finish line.

Material for this article was taken from:

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