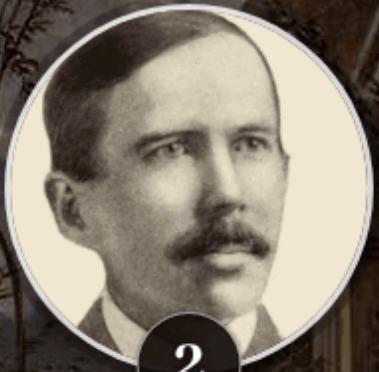
JOHN HYDE



2

Praying Hyde

The Life, Prayers, and Hidden Courage of a Missionary to the Punjab

Ochorus

Portraits of Courage – Praying Hyde

The Life, Prayers, and Hidden Courage of a Missionary to the Punjab

Ochorus Originals

First published 2026.

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Matthew 10:8

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Preface

"What, could ye not watch with me one hour?"
— Matthew 26:40, ASV

The first volume of this series told the story of Watchman Nee, a Chinese church leader whose books travelled the world while he spent his last twenty years in prison. Courage in his case had a public shape. It stood before interrogators and refused to recant, and it paid for faithfulness with freedom.

The man in this second volume was never arrested. He never faced a hostile government. He was not martyred, and he preached no famous sermon that anyone troubled to write down. For most of twenty years he lived in the villages of the Punjab, travelled by ox cart and third-class railway carriage, ate what his Indian fellow workers ate, and spent a quite unreasonable part of his life on his knees, or flat on his face on the floor of a prayer room. The people among whom he worked gave him a name that has outlasted almost everything else about him: "the man who never sleeps." English-speaking Christians gave him another. They called him Praying Hyde.

Why put such a man in a series called *Portraits of Courage*?

Because there is a courage that is harder to see than the courage of the prison cell, and in some ways harder to sustain. It is the courage to keep doing the hidden thing when the visible thing would be praised. It is the courage of a missionary who, with few converts to report and colleagues

who thought him odd, decided that the answer was not to work harder in front of people but to wait longer before God. It is the courage to be misunderstood without defending yourself, to be passed over without resentment, and to be corrected by God in the middle of your own prayers. John Hyde had that courage. He was not born with it. The story of how he came by it is the story of this book.

Why a Book About Prayer Must Be Honest

There is a difficulty at the heart of any life of John Hyde, and it is better to name it on the first page than to hide it in an appendix. Hyde wrote very little. He kept no journal that has come down to us and published no book. Almost everything vivid that Christians know about him comes from two small books printed in 1923, eleven years after his death. One was compiled in India from the memories of two of his closest friends. The other was compiled in Ohio by a minister who had known his family. Both were written by people who loved him, for readers who wanted to pray more. Neither was written to answer a historian's questions.

Since 1923 the story has been retold many times, and each retelling has tended to be a little more certain than the one before. Numbers have hardened. Dates have drifted. A doctor's puzzled remark has become a medical miracle. A great deal of what is now repeated about Hyde as fact is really devotional memory handed from book to book.

This volume does not treat that tradition with contempt. The friends who remembered Hyde were honest people, and many of their memories are precise, local, and entirely believable. But it does treat the tradition as a tradition. Where the historical record is firm, this book says so plainly. Where a story rests on one friend's recollection, it says that too. The record includes the seminary catalogue, the missionary magazines of his church,

his colleagues' reports, and the obituary a fellow missionary wrote in the spring of 1912. Where the popular accounts have simply got things wrong, as they have with the place of his death, this book corrects them without fuss.

This is not only a matter of scholarly tidiness. A book about prayer that exaggerates its evidence teaches readers, without meaning to, that prayer needs exaggerating. It does not. Hyde himself was uneasy with admiration. His friends recalled that he dreaded anyone copying him. He would disappear to pray when he thought people were looking at him rather than at Christ. The most fitting tribute to such a man is to tell the truth about him, and then to look past him to the One he looked at.

Scripture in This Book

As in the first volume, all Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version of 1901. The ASV belongs to the public domain. Its formal, careful English suits extended reflection on the biblical text. And it was published in the middle of Hyde's own years in India, so it is an English Bible of his own generation.

Each chapter opens with a single passage that carries the chapter's theme, and further passages are woven through the narrative. This is not decoration. Hyde's friends remembered him with a Bible almost always open in his hands. When he knelt, his hands rested on it. When he prayed in the prayer room at Sialkot, he would take one promise and repeat it, word by word, until it seemed to fill the room. He took a verse such as "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it" (Psalm 81:10, ASV) and prayed it until the people around him could not forget it. A biography of such a man that did not keep returning to Scripture would miss the thing that shaped him most.

The verse at the head of this preface is the question Jesus asked in Gethsemane, when the three friends he had brought to pray with him had fallen asleep. Hyde's friends believed he had heard that question addressed to himself, and had answered it with his life. Whether or not we are called to pray as he did, and this book will argue that most of us are not called to his particular form, the question is still addressed to us. It is asked gently, by a Lord who knows that "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41, ASV). The purpose of this book is to let John Hyde's life put that question to us again.

Introduction: One Man, Two Little Books, and a Legend

"prove all things; hold fast that which is good"
— 1 Thessalonians 5:21, ASV

A Name Before a Life

Many Christians know the name "Praying Hyde" long before they know anything else about the man. They meet it in a sermon illustration, or a paragraph in a book on prayer, or a quotation shared on a card: *O God, give me souls, or I die!* The name arrives already shining. It belongs, it seems, to a figure half in heaven, a man who prayed all night, who asked God for a soul a day and got them, whose heart was said to have been physically moved by the strain of intercession, and whose prayer turned an English evangelistic campaign from failure to triumph in an afternoon.

Some of that is true. Some of it is probably true. Some of it rests on nothing firmer than a single friend's memory, written down ten years later. A little of it is simply wrong. Before we follow John Nelson Hyde from Illinois to the Punjab and back, it is worth pausing to ask where the name and the stories came from, and how much weight each of them can bear.

Two Little Books

Hyde died in February 1912. His friends in India were slow to write about him, and the most important of them waited almost ten years. He was the Rev. J. Pengwern Jones of the Welsh Presbyterian Mission in Sylhet. He edited a small monthly prayer circular called *The Remembrancer* for the Bengal and Assam Prayer Union. Jones had often meant to set down what he remembered of Hyde, and had always put it off. He believed the church "was not ready for such a record." Then, around 1921, news came of fresh revival on the east coast of England and in the north of Scotland, and he found he could write at last. Month by month he published in *The Remembrancer* his reminiscences of Hyde. He described their first meeting in a prayer room at Ludhiana, the week they shared a tiny room in the hill station of Murree, the conventions at Sialkot, and Hyde's last spring in Wales. A second series came from the Rev. R. McCheyne Paterson of the Punjab, Hyde's closest companion in prayer. The articles were read, passed from hand to hand, and prayed over. In 1923 they were gathered into a small book by Captain E. G. Carré and published in Madras as *A Present-Day Challenge to Prayer*. Carré insisted that he had done nothing but arrange them. The reminiscences, he said, were given "practically word for word as they originally appeared."

In the same year, on the other side of the world, a Presbyterian minister in Akron, Ohio, named Francis McGaw published a shorter book called *Praying Hyde*. McGaw had known the family for years. As a young minister he had eaten at their table in Carthage, Illinois, been with the family when Hyde's mother died, and helped to conduct John's own funeral. He described himself not as the author of his sketch but as "the compiler of material that others have so generously furnished." That material came from Paterson and Jones in India, from Hyde's sisters, from mission

secretaries, and from others. Much of McGaw's account of the Sialkot years comes from a narrator he leaves unnamed, "a brother" or simply "I". Several of those passages match Paterson's own reminiscences almost word for word, so the narrator is almost certainly Paterson, and this book usually calls him that. But it is an inference, and the book marks it where it matters.

These two books are the source of nearly every well-known story about John Hyde. Later biographies drew on them. Later sermons drew on the biographies. Over the following century the stories were retold with growing confidence, and sometimes with growing detail that no one had actually witnessed.

What Kind of Sources Are They?

It would be easy either to trust these books completely or to dismiss them. Both would be mistakes.

They are memoirs by friends. That means they are close to their subject. Jones shared a room with Hyde. Paterson prayed beside him through whole nights. McGaw knew his father well. Many of their details are small and odd in exactly the way real memories are: the heavy overcoat Hyde knelt in at Murree, the teenage servant who cried because his master would not eat, the glass of water he asked for instead of tea. These are not the inventions of a legend-maker.

But memoirs by friends are also shaped by love and by purpose. These books were written to make readers pray, and they say so. They rarely give dates. They sometimes place the same story in different settings. In one telling of the letter Hyde received on his voyage, he throws it "on the deck"; in another, "into a corner of the cabin." They report numbers of converts without saying where the numbers came from. And they were written a decade after the events by people who, by their own account, were deeply

moved by what they had seen. That is not a reason to disbelieve them. It is a reason to read them as what they are.

The Other Record

There is, happily, another record. It is quieter and duller, and it is precious for that very reason. Hyde was a missionary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and his church kept books.

The general catalogue of McCormick Theological Seminary records his birth, his college, his ordination, and his station. The women's missionary magazine of his church, *Woman's Work for Woman*, noted his sailings and his arrivals in its columns of missionary movements. The printed report of the Punjab Mission for 1907 describes the district he superintended and quotes his own summary of how village work should be done. And in April 1912 the church's missionary magazine, *The Assembly Herald*, printed an obituary by his colleague H. D. Griswold. Griswold had shared a crowded convention dormitory with Hyde, and he wrote with an honesty that is a gift to any biographer. Hyde's first ten years in India, Griswold said, were "steady, patient, but not especially fruitful." He was "sometimes criticised by his brethren for the rigorous and ascetic nature of his piety." He "had not the gifts of an organizer." And yet, Griswold went on, "from few others have I ever heard such heart-searching and powerful messages."

That record corrects the legend in places. Hyde did not die at the sanitarium in Clifton Springs, New York, as many books say. He died at his sister's home in Northampton, Massachusetts. Sialkot, the town whose convention made him famous, was never his station. It belonged to a different Presbyterian mission, and he travelled there each year for the gathering. The celebrated figures of a soul a day and four hundred converts in 1908 appear in no mission report that has yet been found. The closest

official figure is a note that 685 people were baptized in the Moga district, where Hyde had been "burying the good seed," in 1910.

At other points the record quietly confirms the memoirs. The people really did call him "the man who never sleeps." He really was slow of speech and for years was thought unlikely ever to speak the language really well. His last words really were spoken in Punjabi. And at Moga he really was, in Griswold's phrase, "marvelously used of God ... in bringing very many to decision and baptism."

How This Book Will Proceed

The chapters that follow tell Hyde's story in order, from his father's pulpit in Illinois to his grave in the same town. Part One traces how an ambitious, awkward young man became an intercessor. Part Two looks closely at the school of prayer he entered in the Punjab: the prayer union, the conventions, the long nights, the hunger for souls, and the lessons in praise and humility that God taught him there. Part Three follows him through the breaking of his health to his death, and asks what his life leaves to the church.

Throughout, the book will try to let you hear which kind of source is speaking. When it says "Jones remembered," or "in Paterson's telling," or "McGaw records," it is not hedging for the sake of it. It is telling you how the story reached us. When it says that something is documented, it means that a record independent of the memoirs confirms it. When a story cannot be checked, it will usually still be told, because a friend's careful memory is real evidence, but it will be told as a memory.

The verse at the head of this chapter is Paul's instruction to a young church excited about spiritual gifts and prophetic words: "prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21, ASV). Paul did not tell

the Thessalonians to despise what they heard. In the verse before, he warned them, "despise not prophesyings" (1 Thessalonians 5:20, ASV). Nor did he tell them to swallow everything. He told them to test, and then to hold on hard to what survived the testing. That is the spirit in which this book approaches the life of John Hyde. What survives the testing is more than enough to humble and stir anyone who reads it.

A Minister's Son from Carthage

"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest."
— Matthew 9:38, ASV

A Prayer Heard in a Parsonage

Long before anyone called John Hyde a man of prayer, he grew up listening to one.

His father, the Rev. Smith Harris Hyde, was a Presbyterian minister in western Illinois. For seventeen years he was pastor of the Presbyterian church in Carthage, the seat of Hancock County, a small prairie town with a courthouse, several churches, and a Lutheran college that had moved there in 1870. The picture of him that survives is warm. Herrick Johnson, a leading Presbyterian preacher and a professor at McCormick Seminary in Chicago, where John would one day study, knew the elder Hyde. Johnson described him as "of rare proportion and balance, a healthful soul, genial and virile, firm of conviction, of good scholarly attainment, of abundant cheer and bent on doing for God to the best of his ability." Francis McGaw, then a young minister in the same presbytery, often ate at the family's table. He remembered a courteous, loving husband and a father who was "firm yet sympathetic," "commanding his household after him."

McGaw remembered something else, and it is the thread from which this whole story hangs. Again and again he heard Dr. Hyde pray one particular prayer. He prayed it at the family altar, with his children around him, and he prayed it from the pulpit. It was the prayer Jesus told his disciples to pray when he looked at the crowds in Galilee: "The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:37-38, ASV). McGaw's older English has Dr. Hyde asking the Lord to "thrust out laborers" into his harvest. The phrase is vigorous, almost violent, as though workers had to be pushed out of comfortable places toward the fields.

It is an extraordinary prayer for a father to pray with his own children listening. Most parents, even devout ones, pray for their children's safety, health, and happiness, and keep a little distance from the prayer that might send those children far away. McGaw once heard a minister say, with some satisfaction, that his son would never follow him into the ministry, because the boy "knows too well the treatment a minister receives at the hands of the people." Smith Hyde was not that kind of father. McGaw says he "magnified his office and rejoiced to give his sons up to a life of hardship and trial." He prayed for labourers without adding the quiet clause, *but not mine*.

God answered the prayer in the parsonage itself. Two of the Hyde sons went into the ministry, and one of the daughters, for a time, into full-time Christian work. The son this book is about went to the other side of the world.

A Household of Six

John Nelson Hyde was born on 9 November 1865 at Carrollton, in Greene County, Illinois. The Civil War had ended that spring. He was one of six

children who grew up in that home, three boys and three girls. The eldest brother, Edmund, was two years older than John. There was a third brother, Will, and there were three sisters: Mary, Gratia, and a sister who married a college professor in Northampton, Massachusetts. Sisters appear again and again at the edges of John's story. He wrote them letters. A card to one of them survives from his last illness. And in the end it was a sister's home in which he died.

Of his mother we know less than we would like, but what we know is consistent. McGaw calls her "sweet-spirited, gentle, music-loving, Christ-like." Years later, walking the hills of north Wales with his friend Pengwern Jones, John talked about her a great deal. He told Jones that she had been the best singer he had ever heard, and "such a holy woman." He also told him she had trained him carefully in the faith. Jones had the impression that the tired missionary, then forty-five and seriously ill, "just longed to go home to her." She had died some years before. She was buried in Moss Ridge Cemetery at Carthage, where he would one day be laid beside her.

It was, in short, an ordinary devout Presbyterian home of the late nineteenth century, with a family altar, a praying father, and a mother who sang. There is nothing unusual in such a home. That is worth saying plainly, because it is easy to imagine that a man like Hyde must have come from somewhere extraordinary. He did not. He came from the kind of home that thousands of readers of this book grew up in, or are trying, with many failures, to build.

Faith That Is Handed Down

When Paul wrote to his young colleague Timothy, he reminded him of the soil his faith had grown in: "having been reminded of the unfeigned faith that is in thee; which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother

Eunice; and, I am persuaded, in thee also" (2 Timothy 1:5, ASV). McGaw reached for the same comparison when he wrote about the Hydes. The point is not that faith is inherited like a family likeness. Paul is careful to say that he is "persuaded" it dwells in Timothy *also*. Each generation must believe for itself. But faith can be modelled, taught, prayed over, and made to look desirable in a home, and that is what the Hydes did.

The Old Testament law pictured this kind of teaching as woven into the ordinary hours of family life: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7, ASV). A father who prays for the harvest every evening teaches his children something before they can explain it. The world has fields in it. The fields are God's. There are not enough workers. And the right response to that is not first to organise, or to worry, but to pray.

John Hyde would spend his life living out that lesson, and he would take it further than his father ever did. But he did not invent it. He learned it on his knees in a parsonage in Illinois, from a man who meant what he prayed.

Carthage College and a Teacher's Desk

John graduated from Carthage College in 1887, at twenty-one. Carthage was a small Lutheran college, and it drew its students mostly from the farms and small towns around. Later accounts say he graduated with honours and was at once offered a teaching post at the college. The seminary catalogue confirms only the essential outline: a Carthage degree in 1887, and then a period of teaching before he went on to study for the ministry.

What the young graduate was like inwardly, we know from an unexpected source: John himself, many years later, describing his younger self to Pengwern Jones with rueful honesty. He had decided as a youth, he said, to be a missionary. But he wanted to be a "good missionary," and by that he meant a great one. "I wanted to shine as a great missionary," he told Jones. He was, he admitted, "a little proud of the 'B.A.' after my name," and determined to master whatever languages he would need, so that nothing should stand in the way of his success. "I loved the Lord and I wanted to serve Him," he said, "but 'self' was at the foundation of my ambition."

It is a disarming confession, and it matters for everything that follows. The man who would one day be remembered as an almost otherworldly intercessor did not begin that way. He began as a gifted, earnest, somewhat awkward young man who wanted to be admired for his devotion. Most people who take up Christian service begin with some mixture of real love for God and a strong wish to be significant. The difference between them is not usually where they start. It is whether they let God deal with the mixture.

A Death in the Family

In the autumn of 1889 John entered McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, the principal seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the Midwest. His elder brother Edmund followed him there a year later. Edmund had graduated from Lake Forest University in 1888, and he too was preparing for the ministry. He had joined the Student Volunteer Movement, the great wave of college students who were signing a pledge to serve overseas if God permitted. The movement's watchword, the

evangelization of the world in this generation, was being repeated on campuses across the country.

During one summer vacation Edmund went west to do Sunday school mission work in Montana. There he caught what McGaw calls "mountain fever." A doctor advised him to go home to Illinois at once. He was too ill to travel safely, so they pinned his railway ticket and instructions for each conductor to the lapel of his coat and put him on the train. He was delirious before he reached home, but he arrived. A few days later he died. The seminary catalogue records the date simply: August 1891. He was about twenty-eight. He was buried at Moss Ridge.

John was at that point between his second and final years at seminary. He was already planning to preach. He had long thought vaguely about foreign missions. Now his brother, who had actually pledged himself to go, was dead before he could sail. McGaw says John "was deeply impressed by his brother's death. There would be a break in the ranks on the foreign field, and he wondered if it were not God's will for him to step into the gap."

It is an old pattern in the history of missions: one worker falls, and another steps forward to take the place. It can be a noble instinct, and it can also be a confused one. A grieving young man may try to finish his brother's story instead of discovering his own. John seems to have sensed that danger, for he did not decide at once. He carried the question for most of a year. The next chapter tells how it was finally settled.

The Prayer Behind the Answer

Before we leave the parsonage at Carthage, it is worth standing back to see what had happened there. A father had prayed for years that God would send labourers into the harvest. One son had offered himself and died.

Another was now wondering whether he should go in his place. Within a year and a half, that second son would be on a ship bound for India, sent by his church, as a direct answer, although no one could yet see it, to a prayer said over and over in a small-town manse.

McGaw draws the obvious lesson with a preacher's vigour. The great need of the church, he says, is not first for more training schools or better organisation. Christ has provided one method for securing labourers, and it is prayer. He puts Jesus' command into a single stark sentence: "Look on the fields ... they are white ... the laborers are few ... PRAY!" McGaw was writing in the 1920s. He was troubled that thousands of American churches were without pastors and millions of people overseas had never heard the gospel. He believed the cause was simple: "prayer closets are deserted, family altars are broken down, and pulpit prayers are formal and dead."

We may think that diagnosis too simple. The reasons why churches lack workers are many and tangled. But McGaw is surely right about the order of things. Jesus did not first tell his disciples to go. He told them to pray, and only in the next chapter did he send them (Matthew 10:5, ASV). Prayer for labourers comes before the sending of labourers. And very often, as the Hyde family found, those who pray the prayer find that God answers it through them, or through their children.

That is worth pondering before we go further. Many Christian parents quietly hope that God will call someone else's children to hard and distant places. Many Christian young people pray for the world while privately assuming that the answer will not involve them. The prayer at the head of this chapter is a dangerous prayer to pray honestly, because the Lord of the harvest may say, as he did in Carthage, *I have heard you, and I will send one of yours.*

For Reflection

John Hyde's story does not begin with John. It begins with a father's faithfulness, a mother's quiet holiness, and a brother's unfinished life. The courage of the later chapters grew from roots that were planted by others, in a home that was not remarkable except for its seriousness about God.

That should encourage anyone who feels that their own faithfulness is small and unseen. A father who prays the same prayer for twenty years may never know what it achieves. Smith Harris Hyde did not live to hear his son called "the Apostle of Prayer." He simply prayed, and believed that the Lord of the harvest was listening. He was right.

“It Is Settled”

“And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me.”
— Isaiah 6:8, ASV

Chicago, 1889

McCormick Theological Seminary stood on the north side of Chicago, in a city that was growing faster than almost any other on earth. When John Hyde arrived in the autumn of 1889 to begin his training for the ministry, Chicago had risen from the ashes of the great fire and was pushing out across the prairie. It was also full of new immigrants and packed with churches. D. L. Moody had opened his Bible institute there that very year, and the city was restless with religious energy. For a serious young man from a small Illinois town, it was a larger world.

The seminary’s course ran for three years. Students read Hebrew and Greek, church history, and systematic theology, and they preached practice sermons before professors who did not always hide their opinions. They also talked a great deal among themselves about where they would go. Some would take quiet country pulpits like the one Smith Hyde had filled in Carthage. Some would go to the growing cities. And a surprising number, in those years, were talking about going abroad.

The Volunteers

To understand why, one has to know a little about the Student Volunteer Movement. In the summer of 1886, at a conference for college students called by D. L. Moody at Mount Hermon, Massachusetts, one hundred young men had declared themselves willing, if God permitted, to become foreign missionaries. The idea spread from campus to campus with astonishing speed. Within a few years thousands of students had signed the volunteer declaration, and the movement's watchword became famous: the evangelization of the world in this generation.

The watchword was bold, and later generations have criticised it for its confidence. But it did one thing very powerfully. It made the question of the mission field personal. A student could no longer think of foreign missions as something the church did through other people. The question pressed on each one: *If God permits, am I willing to go?* Edmund Hyde had faced that question and said yes. His death in the summer of 1891 left the same question lying on his brother's desk.

John was not a stranger to the question. He later told Pengwern Jones that he had determined as a youth to be a missionary. But a youthful intention is not the same as a settled call, and it seems that in his seminary years the matter had become unsettled. Perhaps the pull of a comfortable American pastorate was stronger than he expected. Perhaps he doubted his own fitness, for he was slow of speech and a little hard of hearing, and knew it. Perhaps, having grown up in a minister's home, he simply could not tell his own desires from other people's expectations. Whatever the reason, Edmund's death forced the issue, and John did not rush to settle it.

A Year of Wondering

McGaw says plainly that "the decision was not finally reached till the next year, his last in seminary." That means John lived with the question for most of a year. He went back to classes in the autumn of 1891 grieving his brother and unsure of his road.

There is wisdom in that slowness. Grief can produce sudden vows, and sudden vows are not always from God. A young man who has just buried a brother may promise, in a rush of feeling, to take his brother's place, and later find that he has built his life on an emotion rather than a call. John seems to have sensed this. He did not treat Edmund's death as the answer. He treated it as the question.

Isaiah's call, which stands at the head of this chapter, did not come out of nowhere either. It came "in the year that king Uzziah died" (Isaiah 6:1, ASV), after the death of a king who had reigned for over fifty years. Isaiah went into the temple in a time of loss and uncertainty, and there he saw the Lord "sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up" (Isaiah 6:1, ASV). What moved him to volunteer was not the empty throne in Jerusalem. It was the throne in heaven that was not empty. And before he said "Here am I," he said something else: "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5, ASV). The call to go came to a man who had first been shown his own unfitness, and then cleansed.

That order matters, and we shall see it again and again in Hyde's life. The ones God sends are rarely the ones who feel best qualified. They are the ones who have seen enough of God to stop pretending about themselves.

"Stay There Till the Question Is Settled"

The moment of decision, when it came, was undramatic. McGaw tells it in a few lines, and they have the feel of a story that a classmate told many times afterwards.

Late one Saturday night in his final year, John went to a classmate's room. He asked him for all the arguments he could furnish on the question of the foreign field. He wanted, it seems, a debate. He wanted someone to set out the case for going and the case for staying, so that he could weigh them and reach a sensible conclusion.

His classmate refused. He told John that it was not argument he needed. What he should do, the classmate said, was go to his own room, get on his knees before God, and stay there till the question was settled.

John went. We do not know how long he knelt, or what he prayed, or whether he slept that night at all. We know only what happened the next morning. At chapel he found his classmate and said to him, "It is settled." McGaw adds that "his shining face was enough to show which way the decision had been made."

Later accounts have sometimes named the classmate. One modern reference work credits a fellow student, Burton Alva Konkle, with a decisive influence on Hyde's call. Konkle was indeed in Hyde's class at McCormick. But the early sources do not name the man in the story, and it is better to leave him as McGaw left him: a friend with the sense to refuse a request for arguments, and to send John to his knees instead.

What the Classmate Understood

The classmate's advice is worth pausing over, because it holds in miniature the whole shape of John Hyde's later life.

There is a proper place for arguments in Christian decisions. Scripture tells us to count the cost before we build a tower or go to war (Luke 14:28-31, ASV). It commends the counsel of many advisers. Hyde's friend did not despise thinking. But he saw that John had reached the point where more arguments would not help. He had heard them all. He knew the needs of the world, the claims of his own country, the risks of India, and his own limitations. What he lacked was not information. He lacked a settled word from God, and a willingness to obey it whatever it turned out to be.

There is a kind of decision that can only be made alone before God. Jesus himself, before choosing the twelve apostles, "went out into the mountain to pray; and he continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12, ASV). The psalmist heard God say, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10, ASV). Arguments keep a person busy, and they keep the final decision at arm's length. Kneeling until something is settled means risking an answer one did not want.

That Saturday night in Chicago was, as far as we know, the first time John Hyde prayed his way through to a decision in that way. It would not be the last. Twenty years later his friends would watch him stay on his knees, sometimes for a whole day, sometimes for many nights, until some burden was lifted or some assurance given. The habit that made him famous began with a classmate who would not argue with him.

Mixed Motives, Real Call

It would be pleasant to report that John went to India with a pure heart, having laid aside all ambition on that Saturday night. He did not, and he said so himself. He told Pengwern Jones years later that when he boarded the ship he still wanted to be a "great missionary," still counted on his abilities, and still had "self" at the foundation of his plans. The call was real,

and it would be tested within days of his sailing. But he was not yet the man he would become.

This is a comfort, not a scandal. Very few people answer God's call with entirely clean motives. Paul could even rejoice when some in Rome preached Christ "of envy and strife" rather than of goodwill, because "in every way ... Christ is proclaimed" (Philippians 1:15, 18, ASV). God does not wait for our motives to be perfect before he sends us. He sends us, and then, very often, he purifies our motives on the way. A young man can say "Here am I; send me" with sincerity and a good deal of pride mixed together. What matters is that he means it enough to let God deal with the pride.

Ordination and Sailing

The records from here on are clear and precise. John Hyde graduated from McCormick Theological Seminary in the spring of 1892, having completed the full three-year course. On 26 April 1892 the Presbytery of Schuyler, in western Illinois, ordained him to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church. The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America appointed him to its mission in the Punjab, in the far north-west of British India. It was then still called the Lodiana Mission, after the town of Ludhiana where American Presbyterians had begun their work in 1834.

On his way east that autumn he called at the Chicago rooms of the women's missionary board, which noted in its magazine that he had visited them "on his way to Lodiana." The same issue listed him among the month's departures in a single line: "Rev. John N. Hyde, to North India." He had sailed from New York on 15 October 1892. He was twenty-six.

Behind him were a father who had prayed for labourers, a mother who had sung the faith into him, and a brother buried in Moss Ridge Cemetery. Ahead lay a language he would struggle to learn, a climate that would test his health, a people he would come to love more than his own life, and colleagues who would not understand him for years. Between the two, a few hours out of New York harbour, a letter was waiting for him. He did not know it yet, but it was the most important letter he would ever receive.

For Reflection

Many Christians carry an unsettled question for years: a call they half-believe in, a step they neither take nor abandon, a decision they keep reopening with fresh arguments. John Hyde's classmate would give them the same advice he gave John: not more arguments, but time on their knees until the matter is settled.

This is not a promise that the answer will always be dramatic, or that the face will always shine the next morning. It is simply the recognition that some questions belong to God. They will not be answered until we are willing to hear his answer, and are willing to say, whatever it is, "Here am I."

The Letter on the Ship

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"
— Luke 11:13, ASV

Hours Out of New York

A long sea voyage in the 1890s was a strange suspension of life. For weeks a traveller had nothing to do and nowhere to go. One home had been left and the other not yet reached. McGaw, who had perhaps made such voyages himself, says of it that "the feet lifted up from off the dear homeland and not yet planted on the new homeland" gave "suggestion and opportunity for thoughtful meditation." For John Hyde, in the autumn of 1892, the voyage became something more than that. It was the first great crisis of his spiritual life, and it began with the post.

We have two accounts of what happened, both claiming to come from Hyde himself. They agree on the essentials and differ in the details, which is roughly what we should expect from two tellings of the same story many years apart. It is worth reading them side by side.

The First Telling

The first comes from Francis McGaw. He says that Hyde afterwards described the incident "in an Indian publication," and he quotes Hyde's words directly:

> *My father had a friend who greatly desired to be a foreign missionary, but was not permitted to go. This man wrote me a letter directed in care of the ship. I received it a few hours out of New York harbor. He urged me to seek for the baptism of the Holy Spirit as the great qualification for mission work. When I had read the letter I crumpled it up in anger and threw it on the deck. Did this friend think that I had not received the baptism of the Spirit, or that I would think of going to India without this equipment? I was angry. But by and by better judgment prevailed and I picked up the letter and read it again. Possibly I did need something which I had not yet received.*

Hyde goes on to say that for the rest of the voyage he "gave himself much to prayer" that he might "indeed be filled with the Spirit." He wanted to know "by an actual experience" what Jesus meant when he said, in the words he quoted from the Revised Version, "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses ... unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). And he says, simply, that "these prayers on shipboard were finally answered in a marvelous way."

The Second Telling

The second account comes from Pengwern Jones. Years later, when the two men had become close friends, Jones asked Hyde how he had come into his life of prayer. It was, Jones says, "very difficult to get him to speak about

himself." But Hyde understood that Jones was not merely curious, and he told him. Jones wrote the story down afterwards, and he was careful to say that he was giving it "as far as I can remember ... in some such words."

In Jones's telling, Hyde began with his ambition, as we saw in the first chapter. He wanted to be a great missionary, and he was a little proud of his degree. Then he described the letter. When he went aboard the steamer at New York, he found in his cabin a letter in the handwriting of his father's friend. "The words were not many," he told Jones, "but the purport of them was this: 'I shall not cease praying for you, dear John, until you are filled with the Holy Spirit.'"

"My pride was touched," Hyde went on, "and I felt exceedingly angry and crushed the letter and threw it into a corner of the cabin and went up on deck in a very angry spirit. The idea of implying that I was not filled with the Spirit! I was going out as a missionary, and I was determined to be a good missionary, and yet this man implied that I was not fitted and equipped for the work!"

He paced the deck, he said, "a battle raging within." He loved the writer and knew the holy life he led, "and down in my heart there was a conviction that he was right and that I was not fit to be a missionary." After a while he went back to his cabin, got down on his knees to hunt for the crumpled letter, smoothed it out, and read it again, and then again. He was still annoyed, but "the conviction was gaining on me that my father's friend was right and I was wrong."

This went on, he said, for two or three days, "until I felt perfectly miserable." At last, "in a kind of despair," he asked the Lord to fill him with the Holy Spirit, "and the moment I did this the whole atmosphere seemed to clear up. I began to see myself, and what a selfish ambition I had." It was "a struggle almost to the end of the voyage." But long before the ship reached port he had made up his mind that, whatever the cost, he would be

filled with the Spirit. Then came what he called the second climax. He was willing, he told the Lord, even to fail his language examinations in India. He was willing to be a missionary "working quietly out of sight." He would do anything and be anything, "but the Holy Spirit I would have at any cost."

Reading the Two Together

The differences between the accounts are small. In one the letter is handed to him a few hours out; in the other he finds it waiting in his cabin. In one he throws it on the deck; in the other he throws it into a corner of the cabin and then goes on deck. McGaw's version is shorter, more restrained, and shaped for a public audience. Jones's is longer and more intimate, the story as a man tells it to a friend in private conversation. Jones's version also carries the most important detail. The letter did not only urge Hyde to seek the Spirit. It promised that the writer would keep praying until he did.

Both tellings agree on what matters. A letter from an older Christian implied that Hyde was not spiritually ready for the work he was going to do. Hyde's first reaction was wounded pride. His second, after a struggle, was to admit that the letter was right. And the voyage became a time of seeking God that changed the direction of his life.

Who Wrote the Letter?

Neither account names the letter-writer, but they give three clues. He was a friend of Hyde's father. He had greatly wanted to be a foreign missionary himself but had been prevented. And, in a small aside in the middle of Jones's reminiscences, Jones adds in brackets: "I understand that this friend

is the one who is preparing a short account of Hyde and especially of his prayer-life."

The short account of Hyde's prayer life that was being prepared in America at the time Jones was writing was Francis McGaw's *Praying Hyde*. McGaw had known Smith Hyde well. His own mother had prayed for labourers for the mission field, and one of his brothers served as a missionary in India. If Jones's information was right, then the friend who wrote the letter, and then kept his promise to pray, was McGaw himself. That would explain why his own account says so little about the letter-writer and so much about what the letter did. A modest man telling a story in which he plays a part will often leave himself out.

We cannot be certain. Jones says only "I understand," and McGaw never claims the letter as his own. But it is a moving possibility. The man who compiled the book that made Hyde famous may have been the man whose prayers, thirty years earlier, set Hyde on his way.

The Wound of a Friend

Whoever wrote it, the letter was a risk. It is not easy to tell a young man on his way to the mission field, a new graduate newly ordained and full of hope, that he is not yet ready. Most of us, if we had such a thought about someone we loved, would keep it to ourselves, or dress it up so heavily that it lost its point. The letter-writer said it plainly and then promised to pray.

The book of Proverbs has a word for this: "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are profuse" (Proverbs 27:6, ASV). A true friend will sometimes say what hurts. A false friend, or a merely polite one, will say only what pleases. Hyde's first response was the natural one: he felt insulted. What makes him remarkable is not that he was angry but that

he went back on his knees and looked for the letter he had thrown away. He let himself be corrected by someone who loved him.

That willingness would mark his whole life. Two decades later he would be corrected in the middle of his own prayer, rebuked by God for criticising a fellow pastor. The capacity to receive correction without defending oneself is one of the least glamorous and most important parts of Christian character. It began, for John Hyde, with a crumpled letter on a ship.

What Was He Asking For?

The letter used language that would be familiar to many Christians in the 1890s and strange to many today. Hyde was urged to seek "the baptism of the Holy Spirit" as the great qualification for missionary work, and to be "filled with the Spirit." Among evangelicals of that generation such language was common. The Keswick Convention in England, the preaching of D. L. Moody and his associates, and a wide stream of writing on the "higher Christian life" all urged believers to seek a deeper experience of the Spirit's power for holiness and service. Christians then, as now, disagreed about exactly how to describe that experience, and how it related to conversion.

This book will not try to settle those debates. What is clear from Scripture is the thing Hyde longed for. The Christian is commanded, "be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18, ASV). Jesus promised his disciples power for witness when the Spirit came upon them. And the verse at the head of this chapter gives the simplest possible instruction for receiving him: ask. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13, ASV).

Hyde asked. He asked in anger at first, then in misery, then "in a kind of despair," and finally with the settled resolve of a man who would rather fail every examination in India than go on without the Spirit's help. It is worth noticing what he did *not* do. He did not demand a particular sensation or sign. He did not decide in advance what the answer should look like. He asked to be filled, confessed the selfish ambition he now saw in himself, and offered to be anything God wanted, even an unnoticed worker "quietly out of sight."

That last phrase is almost a prophecy. John Hyde spent much of the rest of his life out of sight, in prayer rooms, in village huts, and on his face on the floor while others preached. The young man who had wanted to shine was given, instead, the grace to be hidden. It was the answer to his prayer.

Not the End of the Story

It would be tidy to end the chapter here, with the ship coming into harbour and a transformed missionary stepping ashore. But Hyde himself did not tell it that way. In Jones's account, the voyage was only the beginning. Within days of arriving in India, Hyde met a question at an open-air meeting that went deeper than the letter had. It showed him that there was still something in his own life that the gospel he had come to preach had not dealt with.

The letter had humbled his pride. The next test would search his conscience. That is the subject of the next chapter.

For Reflection

Two things in this story deserve attention. The first is the letter-writer's courage: to say a hard thing to someone he loved, and then, most important

of all, to commit himself to pray until it came true. We would all be the poorer if such friends were rare.

The second is Hyde's response. Pride throws the letter away. Grace goes back on its knees to look for it. Most of us have had letters, conversations, sermons, or rebukes that we crumpled up in anger. Some of them were wrong, and deserved to be thrown away. But some of them were from God, and are still lying in the corner of the cabin, waiting to be smoothed out and read again.

The Sin That Had Not Been Taken Away

"Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us"
— Hebrews 12:1, ASV

Arrival

John Hyde reached India at the end of 1892, at the start of the cool season in the north. From the coast he travelled up-country by rail to the Punjab, the land of five rivers in the north-west of British India, where his church had worked for nearly sixty years. It was a land of wheat fields and canal villages, of mud-walled towns and Sikh temples, mosques and Hindu shrines. Along the roads moved bullock carts, camels, and the occasional missionary on a pony. The languages he would need were Urdu, the common tongue of the towns and of educated conversation, and Punjabi, the language of the villages. He knew neither.

For his first days he stayed, as new missionaries usually did, with an older colleague, a man Hyde later described simply as "a brother of some experience." Almost at once, "on one of the first few days" in India, something happened that he never forgot. Years afterwards he told

Pengwern Jones about it, immediately after telling him about the letter on the ship, as though the two belonged together. They did.

A Question at an Open-Air Meeting

The older missionary took him out to an open-air service in the town. In the Punjab of those days this was a common method. The preacher would take his stand in a bazaar or at a crossroads, perhaps with a helper or two to sing, and speak to whoever would stop and listen. Hyde could not understand a word. But someone told him what the subject was: the missionary was speaking about Jesus Christ as the real Saviour from sin.

When the address was over, a respectable-looking man in the crowd stepped forward. He spoke good English, and he asked the missionary a direct question: had he himself been saved from sin in the way he was describing?

We do not know how the older missionary answered. The story is not about him. It is about the young man standing silently beside him, who suddenly found that the question had gone straight into his own heart. "If the question had been asked me," Hyde told Jones, "I would have had to confess that Christ had not fully saved me, because I knew that there was a sin in my life which had not been taken away."

The thought appalled him. Here he was, newly arrived to proclaim to others that Christ was a perfect Saviour, and he could not honestly say that Christ had delivered him. "I realized," he said, "what a dishonour it would be on the Name of Christ to have to confess that I was preaching a Christ that had not delivered me from sin, though I would be proclaiming to others that He was a perfect Saviour."

The Unnamed Sin

Hyde never told Jones what the sin was, and Jones never asked, or if he asked, never recorded the answer. Hyde used the language of the verse that stands at the head of this chapter: it was "the sin that so easily beset me." It was a single, particular, recurring failure that he knew well, and it had followed him, it seems, all the way to the Punjab.

It is natural to want to know what it was, and wise not to guess. Every Christian who reads this story will probably find their own besetting sin coming to mind, and that is the point. Hyde's silence on the matter is itself a kind of mercy to his readers. Had he named it, some would have thought, "Well, that is not my problem." Unnamed, it becomes a mirror.

The writer to the Hebrews assumes that every Christian has such a sin. He does not say "lay aside the sin, if you happen to have one." He speaks of "the sin which doth so easily beset us" (Hebrews 12:1, ASV), as a runner might speak of a heavy cloak that wraps around the legs and trips him every time he tries to run. The sin that besets us is not the dramatic fall we would never contemplate. It is the familiar one. It knows our weak places and our tired hours, and we have half made our peace with it.

"One of Two Things"

Hyde went back from the meeting to his room, shut himself in, and had it out with God. What he told Jones about that hour is uncompromising.

"I told the Lord that it must be one of two things," he said. "Either He must give me victory over all my sins, and especially over the sin that so easily beset me, or I must return to America and seek there for some other work. I said that I could not stand up to preach the Gospel until I could testify of its power in my own life."

It is easy to misread this as a kind of bargaining with God, or an ultimatum. It was not. It was a young man refusing to live a divided life. He had come to India to proclaim a Saviour from sin. If that Saviour could not save *him*, then he had no business preaching. And if the Saviour could save him, then there was no reason to put up with the besetting sin any longer. Either the gospel was true in his own life or he would go home. He would not do the one thing that hypocrisy would have made easy: carry on preaching while quietly keeping the sin.

Paul warned his young colleague Timothy: "Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee" (1 Timothy 4:16, ASV). Notice the order: first thyself, then thy teaching. Paul applied the same discipline to himself: "I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected" (1 Corinthians 9:27, ASV). Hyde had not read these verses for the first time that evening, but for the first time they were addressed to him personally, by a stranger's question in a Punjabi street.

"He Did Deliver Me"

Hyde stayed in his room "for some time," he said, "facing the question, and realized how reasonable it was." And then: "The Lord assured me that He was able and willing to deliver me from all sin, that He had planned work for me in India. He did deliver me and I have not had a doubt of this since. I can now stand up without hesitation to testify that He has given me victory, and I love to witness to this and to tell all of the wonderful faithfulness of Christ my Lord, my Saviour."

Jones never forgot Hyde's face as he told the story. There was, he said, "that inexpressibly sad look when he spoke of his sin, and that wonderful

smile of his when he referred to the faithfulness of Christ." The two expressions together are a good summary of Christian experience. Sin is never a trivial matter, even when it has been forgiven and overcome, and a Christian who can speak of past sin without any sorrow has perhaps not understood it. But the last word belongs to the faithfulness of Christ, and it is spoken with a smile.

Scripture holds out the same promise that Hyde discovered: "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14, ASV). It is not a promise that we will never be tempted, or even that we will never stumble. It is a promise about *dominion*, about who is in charge. The besetting sin need not be master. Paul, crying out "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?", answered his own question at once: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 7:24-25, ASV).

A Caution and a Comfort

Hyde's testimony, as Jones recorded it, is very strong. He said the Lord was able to deliver him "from all sin," and that he had not doubted it since. Readers from different Christian traditions will hear such language differently. Some will hear it as an overstatement of what is possible in this life. Others will hear it as a plain statement of what grace can do. Both should also hear the balancing word of the apostle John. John writes, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us", and then, in the next breath, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:8-9, ASV).

The rest of Hyde's life suggests that his victory in 1892 was a real beginning, not a finished work. McGaw's sources describe him at the first

Sialkot Convention in 1904, twelve years later, still speaking to the men of the convention about "some of the desperate conflicts that he had had with sin and how God had given him victory." One close friend went so far as to say that until that convention Hyde, though truly "born of God," had still been "a babe in Christ." Paterson, who knew him best, said Hyde would regularly search himself in prayer for what was hindering God's work, confess what he found, and ask again for grace. None of that contradicts the story of the open-air meeting. It simply shows that deliverance from a besetting sin is the start of a road, not the end of one.

There is a comfort in that. Many Christians have had some decisive moment of surrender or deliverance, and then have been bewildered to discover that the struggle with sin was not over. They wonder whether the first experience was real. Hyde's life suggests that it can be entirely real and still only a beginning. The writer to the Hebrews, having told us to lay aside the sin that besets us, immediately adds, "and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Laying aside the weight is not the end of the race. It is what makes running possible.

Preacher and Practice

One more thread in this story is worth drawing out. The man who asked the question at the open-air meeting was not hostile. He was, Hyde says, "respectable-looking," educated, and apparently in earnest. He had heard the missionary claim that Christ saves from sin, and he wanted to know whether the claim was true of the man making it. It was a fair question. Indian listeners in the Punjab of the 1890s asked it of missionaries often, sometimes sharply. They saw very clearly the gap between the Christianity preached in the bazaar and the Christianity practised in some European bungalows, clubs, and cantonments.

Hyde spent the next twenty years answering that man's question with his life. Much of what made him influential in India was the plain evidence that he believed what he preached, and lived it. He shared the food and houses of his Indian fellow workers. He gave away his clothes. He prayed through the night. He refused to defend himself against unkind treatment. In his later years an Indian enquirer, who had secretly been sent to watch him and find his faults, went back to the men who sent him and reported that Hyde had none. That story is told later in this book, and like many such stories it probably grew in the telling. But the reputation behind it was earned. And it began here, with a young missionary who could not bear to preach a Saviour he had not yet fully trusted.

For Reflection

There are two ways to deal with a besetting sin in the life of a Christian worker. One is to keep working, keep preaching, and keep the sin, managing the tension as best one can. The other is Hyde's way: to bring the matter to God as a question of integrity, and to refuse to go on until it is dealt with. The first way is common, and it is quietly destructive. The second is costly, and it is the only way to preach with a clear conscience.

Not everyone who reads this is a preacher. But every Christian is a witness, and every witness will one day meet, in some form, the question the stranger asked in the Punjab: *Has this Saviour you speak of saved you?* Hyde's answer, after a hard hour on his knees, was yes. It can be ours.

Slow of Speech and Hearing

"And Jehovah said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh a man dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? is it not I, Jehovah? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak."
— Exodus 4:11-12, ASV

Not a Remarkable Missionary

If the story of John Hyde were a legend, it would move straight from the ship and the open-air meeting to triumph. A young man is filled with the Spirit and set free from sin, and he goes out at once to win the Punjab. That is not what happened, and every early witness is honest about it.

"At the first," McGaw writes, "John Hyde was not a remarkable missionary." His colleague H. D. Griswold, writing the obituary in 1912, was blunter still. Hyde's first ten years in India, he said, "were marked by steady, patient, but not especially fruitful service." Ten years is a long time. It is the whole career of many missionaries, who go out young, serve a single term or two, and come home. If Hyde had been one of them, no one would ever have written a book about him.

The reasons for those slow years were partly outside his control. The work in the villages of the Punjab was hard and slow for everyone. But

some of the reasons lay in Hyde himself, and his friends named them with affection and without pretending.

"He Seemed Not to Hear"

Hyde was slow of speech. McGaw's informants remembered that "when a question or a remark was directed to him he seemed not to hear, or if he heard he seemed a long time in framing a reply." Part of the reason was physical. "His hearing was slightly defective," McGaw says, "and this it was feared would hinder him in acquiring the language." Pengwern Jones, who knew him in his last years, says without qualification that "Mr. Hyde himself was deaf." The deafness seems to have grown worse with time. In his final spring in Britain he told an elderly woman that he could rarely hear anything at all when he went to church.

He was also, by temperament, quiet and withdrawn. Paterson, his closest friend, wrote that Hyde "was not naturally a bright and happy man. On the contrary he was in himself inclined to be morose, retiring, shy and silent." McGaw's sources describe a disposition "gentle and quiet" that seemed "to be lacking in the enthusiasm and zeal which a young missionary should have." Some colleagues, Jones heard, thought him "a morose, melancholy person."

There was one thing about him that everyone noticed. "He had a wonderful pair of blue eyes," McGaw writes. "They seemed to search into the very depth of your inmost being, and they seemed also to shine out of the soul of a prophet." People who could not hear much from him found themselves being looked at, and remembered it.

It is a strange picture of a missionary: a young man who was hard of hearing and slow to answer, shy by nature, and sent to learn two languages

in a hurry and preach in them to crowds. If a mission board today were selecting candidates by aptitude, it might well have turned him down.

"Who Hath Made Man's Mouth?"

Moses made the same objection when God called him. "Oh, Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" (Exodus 4:10, ASV). It was a reasonable complaint. Moses was being sent to argue with Pharaoh and to lead a nation, and his gifts did not seem to fit the task.

God's reply, which stands at the head of this chapter, does not deny the problem. It goes behind it. "Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh a man dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? is it not I, Jehovah?" The limitations Moses was worried about were not accidents that had escaped God's notice. They were part of the man God had made and was now sending. And the promise that followed was not "I will make you eloquent" but "I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak."

Paul, who had his own weakness to carry, learned the same lesson in a different form. When he pleaded for his "thorn in the flesh" to be removed, the answer was, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness." And Paul drew the conclusion: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Corinthians 12:9, ASV). He reminded the Corinthians that he had come to them "not with excellency of speech or of wisdom," but "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling," so that their faith "should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:1, 3, 5, ASV).

Hyde's deafness and slowness of speech were never removed. He was deaf to the end. What changed was not the weakness but what God did

through it.

"First Things First"

New missionaries in the Punjab were expected to give their first years mainly to language study, working with a munshi, a language teacher, and sitting examinations set by the mission. One later reference work says Hyde began his study at Dehra Dun, in the hills north of the plains. Wherever it began, it did not go as the mission expected.

McGaw tells the story with evident relish. Hyde started on the language work, "but later neglected it for Bible study. He was reprimanded by the committee, but he replied: 'First things first.' He argued that he had come to India to teach the Bible, and he needed to know it before he could teach it."

It is easy to admire this story too quickly. From the committee's point of view, a new missionary who was already hard of hearing and slow of speech, and who then neglected his language study, was a real worry. They were right to be concerned. A missionary who cannot speak the language of the people will never reach them, however well he knows his Bible in English. Hyde was not wholly right, and later in life he may well have admitted it.

But he was not wholly wrong either. He had grasped something the committee was in danger of forgetting. The purpose of learning Urdu and Punjabi was to speak about God's word, and a man who knew the words of a language but not the Word of God would have nothing to say in it. "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33, ASV). McGaw adds, and it is an important addition, that Hyde "did not neglect language study" altogether.

He simply refused to let it crowd out the Scriptures. And "God by his Spirit wonderfully opened up the Scriptures to him."

The psalmist prayed, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (Psalm 119:18, ASV). That was the prayer of Hyde's early years in India. He could hardly hear the people around him, and he could not yet speak to them. So he gave himself to listening to God.

A Tongue Loosed

For years the outcome looked doubtful. Griswold remembered that during Hyde's first decade "it was thought that his command of the vernacular of the Punjab would never be of the best." Then something changed. "The baptism of the Spirit and the fire of love," Griswold wrote, "loosed his tongue and gave him free utterance."

By the end of his life Hyde was recognised as an effective speaker in three languages. *The Indian Witness*, a Methodist weekly, called him "an acceptable speaker in Urdu, Punjabi and in English," and added that "it was always the man of holiness and power back of an address which made it indeed a message." McGaw's sources went further, saying that he became "a correct and easy speaker" and could hold audiences of hundreds of Indians spellbound. Jones, who did not know Urdu well himself, reported what Urdu speakers told him: that Hyde "spoke the language well, if anything a little highflown, using the book-language more than the colloquial." That is a lovely detail. It is exactly what one would expect of a man who had learned his Urdu partly through long hours with an Urdu Bible.

Isaiah has a verse that could stand over this part of Hyde's life: "The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I may know how to sustain with words him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught" (Isaiah

50:4, ASV). The tongue of the taught comes from the ear of the taught. Hyde's friends noticed that he rose very early, morning after morning, to pray and read. The words that later reached so many came out of those hours of listening.

Misunderstood

The slow years had another cost. Hyde's way of life puzzled his colleagues, and for a long time many of them did not approve.

Jones first met him around 1906, at a conference of the Punjab Mission in Ludhiana. Afterwards Jones talked with several of the missionaries about him and found "that he had been misunderstood by them." They had not approved of "the way he spent so much of his time in prayer." Griswold confirms that Hyde "was sometimes criticised by his brethren for the rigorous and ascetic nature of his piety, for the way in which he seemed to deny to the flesh even its just claims." Some thought him impractical. It did not help that, as Griswold also said, "he had not the gifts of an organizer." In a mission that depended on schools, accounts, committees, and careful administration, a man who prayed all night and forgot his meals did not always look like an asset.

Years later Jones asked Hyde whether he had realised, in those early years, that his colleagues disapproved of him. Hyde smiled, Jones says, "that sweet smile which one can never forget," and answered: "Oh, yes, I knew it, but they did not understand me, that was all, they never intended to be unkind." Jones added: "There was not one atom of bitterness as far as I could see."

It is a small exchange, and it tells us a great deal. Hyde knew he was criticised. He did not pretend otherwise. But he refused to interpret his colleagues' disapproval as malice. He assumed the best about them: they did

not understand, and they did not mean to hurt him. That habit of charitable interpretation would be tested far more severely before his life was over. Here it already shows its roots.

Home for a Season

In the spring of 1901 Hyde went home to America on his first furlough. The women's missionary magazine of his church recorded his arrival at New York on 15 May 1901, "from Ferozepore," with a forwarding address at Prairie City, Illinois. He had been in India eight and a half years. McGaw saw him that year and did not see him alive again.

The furlough seems to have been partly for his health. When he sailed back from New York on 17 September 1902, the magazine noted that he and another returning missionary had "been doing much visiting," and added the hope that they were "in more vigorous health than when they came home." During that year he had spoken at the annual meeting of the Presbyterian women's board of the Northwest, held in Omaha, stepping in when another missionary could not come.

He sailed back to India in September 1902 as he had left it: a faithful, quiet, somewhat misunderstood missionary with modest results. He was a few weeks short of thirty-seven. Nothing in the mission records of that year would suggest that the next ten years would be any different from the first. Griswold, looking back, dated the change almost exactly to this point: "The last ten years were the time of fruit-bearing."

For Reflection

Many Christians carry some limitation they wish God would remove: a slowness of speech, a weakness of body, a shy temperament, a lack of the

gifts their work seems to need. John Hyde carried several of these at once. They were not removed. He remained deaf and never became an organizer. By nature he remained more inclined to silence than to talk.

What God did instead was to give him the tongue of the taught, a loosened tongue fed by a listening ear. And he gave him the grace to be misunderstood for ten years without bitterness. If your first ten years of faithful service have been "steady, patient, but not especially fruitful," John Hyde's story does not promise that the next ten will be different. But it does show that such years are not wasted. They may be the soil in which everything else is growing.

The Punjab He Entered

"but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are"
— 1 Corinthians 1:27-28, ASV

The Land of Five Rivers

It is impossible to understand John Hyde's life without understanding the place where he spent it, and the people among whom he worked. The devotional books about him say little about either. They move quickly from the prayer room to the next prayer room, and the Punjab appears only as a backdrop of villages and heat. But the Punjab was not a backdrop. It was a real society, going through one of the most remarkable religious movements in the modern history of India, and Hyde's prayers and preaching belonged to that movement.

The Punjab takes its name from five rivers, the tributaries of the Indus, that cross its broad plain from the Himalayas toward the south-west. In Hyde's day it was a province of British India. Most of it now lies in Pakistan, and part in India. It was a land of farming villages, of wheat and

cotton and sugar cane, fed increasingly by great new irrigation canals. Its people were Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs, with a very small number of Christians. And like the rest of Indian society, its villages were ordered by caste.

Two Missions, One Field

Hyde belonged to the Punjab Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. American Presbyterians had arrived in Ludhiana in 1834, and the mission had been known for most of its history as the Lodiana Mission. By Hyde's time it had stations in a string of towns across the eastern Punjab: Ludhiana, Jagraon, Ferozepore, Jullundur, Lahore, Kasur, and others. The seminary catalogue sums up Hyde's entire career in a single line: "miss. Ferozepore, India, '92–'12." Ferozepore, now Firozpur, on the Sutlej river near today's border between India and Pakistan, was his home station. From it, and later from Ludhiana, he worked the villages of the surrounding districts.

Another American Presbyterian body, the United Presbyterian Church of North America, had its own mission farther north and west, centred on the town of Sialkot. It is important to keep the two apart, because many books about Hyde blur them. Sialkot, whose convention would make Hyde famous, was never his station. It was the United Presbyterians' town. Hyde travelled there each year for the convention and was a guest on their ground. The two missions were friendly and cooperated closely, and the Church of Scotland also worked nearby. But they were different churches with different missionaries, and the great movement toward Christ that shaped the region began in the United Presbyterian field.

A Lame Man Named Ditt

That movement began with a man who would never have appeared in any account of India's leaders.

His name was Ditt. He lived in a village near Mirali, some thirty miles from Sialkot, and he earned a meagre living by buying hides in the neighbourhood and selling them on at a small profit. The United Presbyterian missionary Andrew Gordon described him as "a dark little man, lame of one leg, quiet and modest in his manner, with sincerity and earnestness well expressed in his face." He belonged to the community then called the Chuhras. These were landless labourers, sweepers, and scavengers, at the very bottom of the Punjab's caste order and treated as untouchable by those above them. The name itself was used with contempt and is today regarded as a slur. Their descendants make up much of the Christian community of Pakistan and the Indian Punjab.

Ditt heard the gospel from a Christian convert of higher caste, and around 1873 he asked the Rev. Samuel Martin to baptize him. Then he did something the missionaries had rarely seen. He did not ask to stay at the mission compound, as converts often did when their families cast them out. He went home. His relatives were furious. Gordon records his sister-in-law's curse: "One of your legs is broken already; so may it be with the other." Ditt answered, "Very well, my brethren; if it pleases you, you may oppose me and load me with reproaches and abuse; but your opposition will never induce me to deny Christ."

In August 1873, three months after his own public confession, Ditt walked the thirty miles to Sialkot, lame as he was, with his wife, his daughter, and two neighbours, to present them for baptism. The following February he brought four more men. They too went straight home. The gospel began to pass from family to family and village to village along the

lines of kinship, in the ordinary conversations of people whom no one else had ever thought worth converting.

A People Movement

What followed is known to historians as a mass movement or people movement. Over the next fifty years hundreds of thousands of people from the Chuhra community across the Punjab turned to Christ. They came not usually one by one, as missionaries had expected converts to come, but in families and groups. Each group decided together.

The numbers are striking. The census of the Punjab counted 3,912 Indian Christians in 1881. By 1901 there were 38,513. By 1911, the year Hyde left India for the last time, there were 163,994. The membership of the United Presbyterian mission alone grew from a few hundred in the late 1870s to over 24,000 by 1911, and its whole Christian community to more than 46,000. Hyde's own mission shared in the movement. In the year he died its magazine reported two thousand baptisms "among low caste converts" in a single year.

The missionaries did not all welcome this. Some worried that people were coming for the wrong reasons: for the dignity and protection the church seemed to offer, or in hope of help, land, or education. The Punjab's census superintendent in 1911, Pandit Harikishan Kaul, thought the movement was driven mainly by the converts' desire for "enhanced dignity and social status." Some missionaries worried that converts were baptized with too little instruction. A later study noted that Ditt himself "was baptized without instruction." Others worried that a church made up almost entirely of the poorest and least educated people could never support itself or lead itself. These were serious questions, and serious people argued about them.

But others, and John Hyde was among them, saw in the movement something the apostle Paul would have recognised at once. The verse at the head of this chapter was written to a church in Corinth that had few prominent members: "not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (1 Corinthians 1:26, ASV). God, Paul says, deliberately chose "the base things of the world, and the things that are despised," to shame the proud. The gospel had always gone first to the poor. Jesus announced his ministry with the words, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor" (Luke 4:18, ASV). James asked his readers, "Did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him?" (James 2:5, ASV).

Hyde's District

We have, unusually, an official picture of the work Hyde was doing in the middle of this movement. It comes from the printed report of the Punjab Mission for 1907.

Until the spring of that year or the one before (the report says "until April last"), the village work of the Ludhiana station "was solely in the hands of Rev. J. N. Hyde." The district was then reorganised into four circles, each under a missionary with an Indian evangelist or pastor living in the central town. Hyde was made superintendent of the Moga circle, a district of 275 villages. The resident evangelist was an Indian worker named Jalal Masih. Missionaries travelled by rail where they could and by horse or two-wheeled cart in the remoter places. Luggage went by village ox cart. The aim was to visit every village at least once a year.

The same report summarises Hyde's own observations on the people he was reaching, and they are among the few independent records we have of

his views. Practical interest in religion, the report gives his testimony, was "limited almost entirely to the low castes. Only one convert came from another class. He was a Sikh." The work among the low castes "advances generally along the lines of relationship," from family to family, as it had in Ditt's village. The farmers who employed the low-caste labourers often opposed the work, from fear "that if the low castes become Christians, they will refuse to serve them as they have done." Yet Hyde also saw something hopeful among the higher castes. According to the report, he testified that "the better classes are drawn toward Christianity, being convinced that the religion which can elevate the lower classes must be the true religion. They see in Christians love not seen in their own."

The report also records his testimony about what the gospel did in the lives of converts: "an immediate change in their conduct. They are more truthful, more patient, cease to worship idols, some of them become prayerful in their homes and endure persecution for Christ's sake."

Finally, the report quotes Hyde directly on how village work should be done. It is short enough to memorise, and it is worth doing so:

> *Begin the day in prayer and praise with your helpers. Then divide and go to the various parts of the town. Follow up inquirers and Christian converts in their places of work. Preach and baptize on the spot. Every time we visit a convert, we try to leave some lesson or some influence on his life.*

There is nothing mystical in these sentences. They are practical instructions from a working evangelist. But the first sentence holds the key to everything else: *begin the day in prayer and praise.*

Among the Despised

The devotional sources add warmth to this official outline. One of McGaw's informants, who once attended one of Hyde's conventions for Christians, remembered how Hyde would meet his village converts as they arrived and embrace them "in Oriental style, laying his hand first on one shoulder and then on the other." He did the same to Christians "of the lowest caste," and he persuaded others to do likewise. The same witness thought it Hyde's "strong point. Love won him victories."

To understand why this mattered, we need to remember what caste meant in the Punjab of 1900. Members of the higher castes would not eat with Chuhras, touch them, or take water from their hands. Some missionaries unconsciously carried their own racial and social distances into their relations with converts. A European missionary publicly embracing a low-caste village Christian was making a statement that everyone present understood. Jones remembered that at the conventions it was often "Gulla, the sweeper" who carried a plate of curry and rice to Hyde in the prayer room. One of his Indian evangelists remembered sharing a village mud house with him, and Jones heard that Hyde "lived with them, he ate and slept with them."

Paul told the Galatians, "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28, ASV). In the Punjab that verse had a sharp edge. The church that grew from Ditt's village was a church of the despised. And the missionaries who served it well were those who did not merely preach to them but lived among them as brothers. Griswold, writing Hyde's obituary, singled this out: he would be greatly missed "by humble village preachers with whom he lived as a brother."

Opposition

The movement also provoked resistance. In the same years, reforming Hindu organisations were growing in the Punjab. The most active was the Arya Samaj, founded in 1875. It worked hard to win low-caste communities back from Christianity and Islam, and sometimes it saw particular missionaries as threats. Jones later heard from an Indian doctor that the Arya Samaj had been troubled by Hyde's influence and by the number of people baptized under his preaching. It had tried to find a fault in his life that it could publish. That story belongs to a later chapter. It is mentioned here only to show that Hyde's work was not carried on in a vacuum. It was part of a contest for the souls, and the loyalties, of the poorest people in the Punjab.

For Reflection

The prayers of John Hyde, which this book will now begin to follow closely, were not prayers for an abstraction called "India." They were prayers for particular villages full of particular people, most of them poor, many of them despised by their neighbours, and all of them precious to God. When he later cried, "Father, give me these souls, or I die," he was thinking of faces he knew.

That is worth remembering whenever we are tempted to think of prayer as a spiritual exercise detached from the real world. Hyde's prayer life grew up in the middle of one of the great people movements in Christian history. Its fruit was counted in baptisms in the villages of the Moga district, among people whom the world thought least likely to matter. God still chooses such people. Our prayers should follow his choosing.

Preparing the Messenger

"And it came to pass in these days, that he went out into the mountain to pray; and he continued all night in prayer to God."
— Luke 6:12, ASV

The Man Who Never Sleeps

Somewhere in the Punjab, at some point in his middle years, the people began to call John Hyde by a new name. Griswold recorded it in the obituary: "He was mystical in temperament, and used to give himself day and night to prayer. So much so that he was called, by the people, 'the man who never sleeps.'"

It was not a literal description. Hyde did sleep, though his friends agreed that he slept remarkably little and often in odd places. Jones once watched him, in a crowded prayer room, go aside into a corner and throw himself on the floor to sleep, and then spring up again when the prayer began to flag. But the name captured something the people around him had noticed. At whatever hour of the night they passed his room, there seemed to be a light burning, and a man on his knees or on his face.

How did this begin? The later legend tends to present Hyde as a man of prayer from the start, as though he stepped off the boat already praying through the night. His friends knew otherwise. The whole nights of prayer

came later, and they began, as far as we can tell, in the most ordinary way imaginable: with a talk he had not finished preparing.

A Sleepless Night of Preparation

Jones asked Hyde once how the Lord had taught him to spend whole nights in prayer. Hyde told him a story that has a pleasing lack of drama.

Some time before, he said, he was due to give a Bible reading at a Bible school one morning. He had not had enough time to prepare it, so he stayed up the whole night working on it. The message was ready by morning, and the talk went well enough. But afterwards a thought came to him. He had spent a night getting the message ready. Was there not a need to get himself ready too? "Would not a night of prayer and praise be a good preparation for a real blessing the following day?"

Jones was sure it was "the Holy Spirit's suggestion." That night Hyde remained in prayer the whole night. He "enjoyed it so much that he repeated it the following night." Others heard of it and joined him, some for part of the time and some for the whole night. The practice that would make him famous had begun.

Hyde did not stop preparing his talks. Jones insists that he "was always careful in his preparation for his Bible readings, sermons or Convention addresses." But from then on he often said something that Jones never forgot: "the preparation of the Messenger was quite as important as the preparation of the message."

Two Kinds of Preparation

That sentence deserves to be written over the desk of every preacher, teacher, and Christian worker. Most of us who speak about God put

almost all our effort into the message: its structure, its illustrations, its accuracy, its application. That work matters, and Hyde did not despise it. But the message is only half of what happens when someone speaks for God. The other half is the messenger, the state of the heart that the words come through.

Paul expressed the same double concern when he told Timothy, "Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching" (1 Timothy 4:16, ASV). And the apostles in Jerusalem, when they were being pulled into administration, protected both halves: "But we will continue stedfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4, ASV). Notice the order. Prayer comes first, and then the ministry of the word.

Jesus himself is the supreme example. The verse at the head of this chapter describes the night before he chose the twelve apostles: "he went out into the mountain to pray; and he continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12, ASV). The next morning he called his disciples and chose the twelve. Mark records another morning, after a crowded day of healing: "in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed" (Mark 1:35, ASV). If the Son of God prepared himself in prayer for the work of the next day, it is hard to see how his servants can do without it.

"Morning by Morning"

Hyde's nights of prayer attracted attention, and later writers have tended to make them the whole story. But his friends describe something more steady and more imitable: a daily discipline of early rising, Scripture, and prayer.

Griswold, describing Hyde's last years at Moga, wrote that "the early morning would be given up to prayer and Bible study, and then being armed with the whole armour of God, Mr. Hyde and his fellow workers

would go forth to do valiant battle for the Lord." Jones, who shared a room with him for a week, noticed that Hyde was "on his knees long before I was up in the morning, though I was up with the dawn." He also saw that Hyde "would also light the lamp several times in the night and feast on some passage of the word and then have a little talk with the Master." A friend in Calcutta, lying awake with an illness in a room across the passage, watched Hyde's electric light flash on at twelve, at two, at four, and at five. From five o'clock it stayed on until sunrise.

This was not a technique. It was a relationship with a God who, as Isaiah says, "wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught" (Isaiah 50:4, ASV). The Calcutta friend was so struck by what he saw that he began to ask God to wake him too. At first he woke at two in the morning, and later at four, "with striking regularity." He had always claimed exemption from night watches because he was too tired. Now he found it a joy.

The Bible Always Open

Jones noticed one more thing about the way Hyde prayed, and it may be the most important of all. "His Bible was always in his hand," Jones wrote, "even when we had our morning cup of tea, he regaled me with manna from the Word. When he knelt to pray, the dear old Book was always open before him and his hands rested on it. Face to face with the Lord and resting on the promises."

Hyde's prayer was not a flight into vague spiritual feeling. It was anchored in Scripture. He prayed God's promises back to God, as the psalmists and prophets did. When he prayed at the conventions he would take a single phrase of Scripture and repeat it slowly, with long pauses, until

those around him felt that God had heard. The long nights were full of Bible reading. The lamp he lit several times a night was lit to read by.

Here Hyde was in line with every great intercessor of Scripture. Daniel, before his great prayer of confession, had been reading Jeremiah: "I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years ... for the accomplishing of the desolations of Jerusalem" (Daniel 9:2, ASV). Then he "set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications" (Daniel 9:3, ASV). The Word showed him what to pray for. Prayer that is fed by Scripture has somewhere to stand.

A Voice from 1896

We are fortunate to have a few paragraphs from a talk Hyde gave in these middle years, and it lets us hear how he spoke to others about the life he was learning. In 1896 the Student Volunteer Movement held a series of conferences for students in India, at Jaffna, Bombay, Lahore, Lucknow, Calcutta, and Madras. The American missions leader John R. Mott was present at Lahore, and Hyde gave an address there titled "The Life on Wings." It was printed that year in Madras in a small volume of conference addresses. More than twenty-five years later an Indian Christian found a stained copy in a Calcutta second-hand bookshop. The bookseller would not take payment for it because it was spoiled, and part of the address was reprinted in the memoirs of 1923.

The surviving extract is about discouragement. There are times in Christian work, Hyde told the students, when "Satan seems to have struck a hard blow at the work, and one is fighting against discouragement." At such times he found strength in a passage from the story of King Asa, which he quoted in the older wording, "The Lord is with you while ye be with him", and which the ASV renders, "Jehovah is with you, while ye are

with him" (2 Chronicles 15:2, ASV). The worker who knows he has not forsaken the Lord knows that the Lord has not forsaken him, and "with this promise he can say to Satan: 'Wait and see who will have the victory.'" Hyde then quoted Asa's prayer before battle, which the ASV renders: "Jehovah, there is none besides thee to help, between the mighty and him that hath no strength: help us, O Jehovah our God; for we rely on thee, and in thy name are we come against this multitude" (2 Chronicles 14:11, ASV).

Out of such prayer, Hyde went on, "when strength comes and one rests in the word 'Father,' there comes to one an experience in which he feels as it were on wings." He took his title from Isaiah: "but they that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles" (Isaiah 40:31, ASV). And then he asked the students a direct question: "My friend, can you say that word 'Father'?"

He ended with the problem of fruitlessness, a problem he knew from the inside after four years of slow work. He told an old sermon story about a Scottish minister whose elders complained that only one person had joined the church in a whole year, and that one a boy. The boy, the story goes, became the great missionary Robert Moffat. It is the kind of anecdote whose details no one has ever been able to trace, and Hyde probably told it as he had heard it. The lesson he drew from it was his own. "The harvest of faithful work is sure. It may be, however, we have wanted results instead of wishing that needy souls might have life, and that Christ might see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Have we ever wept for souls? Have you? Have I?"

That last question, *Have I?*, is the voice of a man who was still learning what he taught. Within a decade he would be weeping for souls in a way that his friends found almost frightening. In 1896 he was only beginning to ask.

Not a Method but a Master

It would be easy to turn this chapter into a programme: rise early, read your Bible with your hands on it, pray through the night before important days. Hyde's friends were anxious to prevent exactly that. Jones remembered how often Hyde told him "that he was afraid of following the example of men, and he dreaded lest any one should try to follow his example." Jones begged his own readers to follow Hyde's prayer life and prayer spirit, "but not necessarily in the 'form' that he manifested it." Many Christians, he pointed out, could not physically do what Hyde did. But every Christian can make prayer "their very breath."

That warning will matter more and more as this book goes on, because Hyde's body paid a heavy price for his way of praying. For now it is enough to notice where it began. It did not begin with a heroic resolution to pray all night. It began with a man who noticed that he had spent a whole night preparing a message and none preparing himself, and who decided that this was the wrong way round.

For Reflection

Most of us are more comfortable preparing messages than preparing ourselves. Messages can be finished, and they can be checked and improved. Preparing the messenger is slower and less visible. It means time before God, with the Word open and the heart exposed.

John Hyde did not stop preparing his talks. He simply refused to believe that a well-prepared talk was enough. "The preparation of the Messenger is quite as important as the preparation of the message." Whatever work God has given us, whether preaching, teaching, parenting,

nursing, managing, or writing, the principle holds. The one who does the work needs preparing too, and only God can do it.

The Half-Hour Rule

"I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that are Jehovah's remembrancers, take ye no rest, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."
— Isaiah 62:6-7, ASV

Before the Fire

Revivals are usually remembered for their public moments: crowded meetings, weeping congregations, confessions, conversions, songs that go on past midnight. Those moments are real, and later chapters will describe several of them. But the people who were closest to the awakening that came to the Punjab in the years after 1904 were insistent that its public moments were not its beginning. The United Presbyterian mission's own history, first published in 1909, said that the revival "had its springs in hidden resources of prayer that reached back several years."

McGaw put it more vividly. "In every revival," he wrote, "there is a divine side and a human side." In the Welsh revival of 1904, which was then being reported across the Christian world, the divine side seemed to dominate. There was "no organization and very little preaching." The Sialkot revival was different. It was, McGaw insisted, "just as certainly sent down from heaven," but it came through human means: "organization ... a

certain amount of definite planning, and ... seasons of long continued prayer." He quoted the American evangelist Charles Finney, who had famously argued that revival is no more a miracle than a crop of wheat. It comes, that is, when people use the means that God has appointed.

The chief of those means, in the Punjab, was a small and very ordinary organisation called the Punjab Prayer Union.

A Union of the Willing

Carré's book dates the beginning of the Prayer Union to "about April, 1904." It was begun, the memoir says, by "a few souls" on whom "the burden of united prayer for Revival had been heavily laid." Hyde was "one of the moving spirits." Later books have sometimes called him its founder, but the early sources do not claim that, and it is fairer to say what they say. He was one of a small group of missionaries in the Punjab who, in the spring of 1904, agreed to pray together for an awakening, and who invited others to join them.

The Union was not an institution in any grand sense. It had no buildings and, as far as we know, no staff. It was a covenant among individuals, held together by a simple pledge and an annual meeting each spring. The sources do not list its members. They seem to have come from more than one mission, and to have included Indian workers as well as missionaries. What united them was a shared conviction that the church in the Punjab needed a fresh work of God, and that the first thing to do about it was to ask him.

Five Questions

The only surviving text of the Union's pledge is the one McGaw printed in 1923. He says its principles were "stated in the form of questions which were signed by those becoming members." There were five:

> *1. Are you praying for quickening in your own life, in the life of your fellow-workers, and in the Church?*
> *2. Are you longing for greater power of the Holy Spirit in your own life and work, and are you convinced that you cannot go on without this power?*
> *3. Will you pray that you may not be ashamed of Jesus?*
> *4. Do you believe that prayer is the great means for securing this spiritual awakening?*
> *5. Will you set apart one-half hour each day as soon after noon as possible to pray for this awakening, and are you willing to pray till the awakening comes?*

It is worth reading these slowly, because their order is carefully thought out.

The first question begins with the member's own life before it turns to anyone else's. The prayer is for quickening "in your own life," then in "your fellow-workers," and only then "in the Church." No one could join the Union in order to pray for other people's revival while exempting themselves.

The second question asks about longing and about helplessness. It is not enough to think that more of the Holy Spirit's power would be a good thing. The member is asked whether he is "convinced that you cannot go on without this power." That is the language of desperation, not of improvement. Jesus said, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after

righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6, ASV). The Union was for the hungry.

The third question is the most surprising. After asking members to pray for power, it asks them to pray "that you may not be ashamed of Jesus." It is a humbling prayer for missionaries to pray, people who had crossed the world for the sake of Christ. But the authors of the pledge knew their own hearts. It is quite possible to work for Jesus for years and still flinch from naming him plainly before those who despise him. Jesus warned that "whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38, ASV). Paul could say, "I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16, ASV). The Prayer Union asked its members to pray for that boldness.

The fourth question is about conviction: "Do you believe that prayer is the great means for securing this spiritual awakening?" It does not say the only means. The members went on preaching, teaching, and organising. But it says the great means. Prayer is not the thing one does when all else has failed. It is the first thing.

And the fifth question is the practical heart of the whole covenant: half an hour each day, as soon after noon as possible, "till the awakening comes."

Why Half an Hour, and Why Noon?

It is striking how modest this commitment was. The Union did not ask its members to pray all night, or to fast for weeks, or to give up their work. It asked for thirty minutes a day. A busy missionary with schools to run and

villages to visit could keep it. So could a village pastor or a schoolteacher. So, today, could almost anyone reading this book.

The choice of noon was probably practical too. In the Punjab the heat of the day brought most outdoor work to a halt. In many households the middle of the day was already a time to withdraw indoors. But the choice also had a deeper logic. A fixed hour meant that members all over the province would be praying at roughly the same time, each in his own place, but together. The psalmist wrote, "Evening, and morning, and at noonday, will I complain, and moan; and he will hear my voice" (Psalm 55:17, ASV). Daniel, even under threat of death, "kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime" (Daniel 6:10, ASV). Peter went up on the housetop to pray "about the sixth hour," that is, at noon, and there received the vision that opened the church to the Gentiles (Acts 10:9, ASV).

Set times of prayer are not a substitute for praying at all times. But they are a scaffold. They protect prayer from being crowded out by the urgent. The half-hour at noon was a promise kept daily, and a small promise kept daily can outlast a great resolution made once.

"Till the Awakening Comes"

The most demanding part of the fifth question is its last clause. The member did not promise to pray for a season, or until the next annual meeting, or until he felt he had done his share. He promised to pray "till the awakening comes."

That is the language of Isaiah's watchmen, the verse at the head of this chapter. God sets watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem who "shall never hold their peace day nor night." And he tells them something astonishing: "ye that are Jehovah's remembrancers, take ye no rest, and give him no rest,

till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." God commands his people not to let him rest. He invites persistence. He wants to be reminded of his promises until he keeps them.

Jesus taught the same thing in a parable: "And he spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1, ASV). The widow in the parable kept coming to the unjust judge until he gave in. If even an unjust judge yields to persistence, Jesus asks, "shall not God avenge his elect, that cry to him day and night?" (Luke 18:7, ASV).

Isaiah 62 became something like the motto of Hyde's circle. McGaw says that at the 1905 convention the words of that passage "were burned into his brain as a command from God." The circular that Pengwern Jones edited for the Bengal and Assam Prayer Union was called *The Remembrancer*, evidently after the same verse. The intercessors in the prayer rooms at Sialkot spoke of themselves as "watchmen" and "the Lord's remembrancers." They took the passage literally. Their business was to keep reminding God, day and night, of what he had promised to do.

A Season of Prayer Across India

The Punjab Prayer Union was not alone. In the same years, groups of Christians in many parts of India began to pray together for revival, often stirred by news from Wales. In January 1905 Pandita Ramabai called the young women of her Mukti mission near Poona to pray for an outpouring of the Spirit. By June hundreds were meeting twice a day, and at the end of that month revival broke out among them. In the Khasi Hills of Assam, where Welsh Presbyterian missionaries worked, an awakening was already spreading from village to village by the middle of 1905. It was the Khasi

revival that Pengwern Jones had come to describe at Ludhiana when he first met Hyde.

In January 1906 *The Missionary Review of the World* surveyed what was happening. It listed Sialkot alongside Mukti, Assam, and other places where "God is mightily working." It also noticed something they had in common: the revivals "followed closely upon the formation of Prayer Circles." There is no record that Hyde had any direct link with Mukti or the Khasi Hills. They were parallel movements of the same season. But they tell the same story. Before the fire came, people had been gathering the wood.

The Spring Meetings

Each spring the members of the Punjab Prayer Union held an annual meeting. According to McGaw's informant, the leaders prepared for it with "much time in prayers and fastings and all night watching." At the meeting itself they looked to God "for guidance during the coming year."

The spring meeting of 1905 left a deep mark on those who attended. "God laid on our hearts," one of them wrote, "the burden of a world plunged in sin. We were permitted to share to some extent in the sufferings of Christ." Carré's account describes the same meeting: "all felt the great burden of the Indian Church, and her need of Revival, so very keenly as to be inexpressible in words." The leaders attributed that burden largely to Hyde's teaching about "the fellowship of Christ's sufferings", the idea that intercessors are invited to share, in some small measure, in the grief of Christ over sin. We will return to that theme, and to its dangers, in a later chapter. Here it is enough to notice that the Prayer Union was not only a scheme for organised prayer. It became a school in which a handful of

missionaries and Indian workers learned to feel what God feels about the church and the world.

And its members were convinced that it was the spring meeting of 1905 that prepared the way for the great convention that autumn.

For Reflection

The Punjab Prayer Union asked very little: five honest questions and half an hour a day. It is easy to overlook, because it was so ordinary. But its members believed it was the hidden root of everything that followed.

That should hearten anyone who longs for revival in their own church or town and feels powerless to bring it about. Few of us can pray as John Hyde prayed. Almost any of us could answer those five questions honestly and keep a half-hour at noon. The Union's pledge could be signed today, in any church, by any small group of Christians who are willing to begin with their own lives, to admit that they cannot go on without the Spirit's power, to pray not to be ashamed of Jesus, and to keep praying till the awakening comes.

Sialkot: "Is the Holy Spirit First?"

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me: and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."
— John 15:26-27, ASV

A Convention for the Deepening of the Spiritual Life

In the late summer of 1904, a few months after the Punjab Prayer Union began, missionaries and Indian Christian workers gathered at Sialkot for a new kind of meeting. It was not a business conference, of which the missions had many. It was a "convention for the deepening of the spiritual life," in the spirit of the great Keswick Convention in England. For several days the participants would study the Bible, pray, and seek a fresh experience of God for themselves. The host was the United Presbyterian mission, whose headquarters were in Sialkot. The organiser who made everything run, as Jones later recalled, was a Dr. Gordon, who fed and housed hundreds of people with such calm that the accounts "balanced to a pice." For a time its chairman was the Rev. John Forman. The sources differ over who first proposed the gathering. McGaw names Hyde, R. McCheyne Paterson, and George Turner as the three on whose hearts God "laid a great burden of prayer" for it. The United Presbyterian missionary W. B.

Anderson, according to McGaw, chaired the committee that established it. No independent record settles the matter. Griswold's careful phrase is the safest: Hyde was "very closely associated with that great annual gathering" from its beginning in 1904.

The Sialkot Convention continues to this day, more than a century later, in Pakistan. It began as a small gathering, mostly of missionaries. Carré's book remembers that the blessing came in stages. In 1904 it was the missionaries who were most deeply affected. In 1905 it reached "our Pastors and elders." By 1906 it had spread "to Christians generally and reached outside congregations all over Northern India."

1904: "I Must Not Lose This Vision"

Hyde came to the first convention to lead Bible studies. One missionary remembered that he spoke on "the length and breadth and height and depth of the love of God," an echo of Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:18. But the most remembered moment of that first convention was not one of Hyde's Bible readings. It was an evening when he arrived late.

McGaw's source, a fellow missionary, told the story. The night before, Hyde had come to his study at about half past nine and started a conversation about "the value of public testimony," that is, about whether Christians should speak openly of what God had done for them. They argued until after one in the morning. The next evening Hyde was due to lead a meeting for men in the tent on the mission compound. The men gathered on the mats and began to sing. Hyde did not come. They sang several hymns more. At last he came in, very late, sat down on the mat in front of them, and was silent for a long time. Then he stood up and said quietly:

Brothers, I did not sleep any last night and I have not eaten anything to-day. I have been having a great controversy with God. I feel that he has wanted me to come here and testify to you concerning some things that he has done for me, and I have been arguing with him that I should not do this. Only this evening a little while ago have I got peace concerning the matter and have I agreed to obey him, and now I have come to tell you just some things that he has done for me.

He spoke for fifteen or twenty minutes, "very quietly and simply," about "some of the desperate conflicts that he had had with sin and how God had given him victory." Then he sat down, bowed his head, and said, "Let us have a season of prayer." The men lay on their faces on the mats in the Indian manner of prayer. For a long time, the witness remembered, "man after man rose to his feet to pray," and there was "such confession of sin as most of us had never heard before and such crying out to God for mercy and help." Several lives, he said, were "wholly transformed through the influence of that meeting."

It is worth noticing what the controversy with God had been about. It was not whether to preach, or what to preach. It was whether Hyde would be honest in public about his own struggles. He had argued against it all night, as many Christian leaders would, for reasons that sound very respectable: it might seem self-centred, or unseemly, or might damage his authority. God won the argument. And the confession of the leader opened the way for the confession of others.

Something also happened within Hyde himself at that convention. One of his dearest friends wrote that until then, although Hyde was a child of God, he had never been "compelled to tarry at his Jerusalem till he was endued with power from on high." At Sialkot in 1904, while he was speaking to his fellow missionaries about the work of the Holy Spirit, "God

spoke to his own soul." Griswold, who was there, remembered what Hyde said at the close of the convention: "Oh, I must not lose this blessing." McGaw's source remembered it as, "I must not lose this vision." Whichever words he used, Griswold adds the verdict of the next eight years: "he never did lose it, but went on from strength to strength, and from glory to glory."

Carré's book preserves one more remark from that first convention, spoken by a leader whom it does not name: "Either we missionaries receive Power from on high now, or let us all take the first steamer home, for we are otherwise unfit for this task." It is the same logic as Hyde's hour in his room in 1892, now spoken by a whole group. They would have the gospel's power in their own lives, or they would stop pretending.

1905: The Second Convention

The convention of 1905 is the one that everyone remembered. We have an unusually full record of it, including an official report written by the United Presbyterian mission within a few years and published in its history in 1909. That report is precious, because it is independent of the devotional books about Hyde. It does not mention him by name at all. It gives all the glory to the Holy Spirit, which is exactly what Hyde would have wanted.

The convention ran from 25 August to 3 September 1905. Nearly three hundred people attended. Most were Indian workers, men and women, and there were missionaries from the United Presbyterian, Scottish, and American Presbyterian missions. It lasted ten days. "Many prayers had been going up for this convention," the report says. "In the Home land some had been praying for it, while in India very definite prayer had been made."

A programme had been carefully prepared, and it included a series of morning Bible readings about the Holy Spirit. According to the memoirs, Hyde was the one appointed to give them.

"Is the Holy Spirit First?"

Hyde's subject for those morning readings was the passage at the head of this chapter: "when the Comforter is come ... he shall bear witness of me: and ye also bear witness" (John 15:26-27, ASV). The memoirs preserve the heart of what he said. The Holy Spirit, he insisted, is the true witness to Christ. He alone was present at every event of Jesus' life: his birth, his baptism, his preaching, his miracles, his death, and his resurrection. So he alone can testify to them with full authority. Human witnesses are secondary. Our part is to bear witness in his strength and behind him, never in his place.

Then Hyde turned the point on his hearers. McGaw's source preserved the questions he asked:

> *Is the Holy Spirit first in your pulpits, pastors? Do you consciously put him in front and keep yourselves behind him, when preaching? Teachers, when you are asked hard questions do you ask his aid as a witness of all Christ's life? He alone was a witness of the incarnation, the miracles, the death and the resurrection of Christ. So he is the only witness!*

Carré's account adds that when Hyde asked the pastors "who was first and foremost in their pulpits, they themselves, or the Divine Teacher and Guide into all the truth," there was not, in the writer's judgement, "a single preacher who was not convicted of this sin."

The teaching was not new with Hyde. Carré says that on this point he was following one of his own teachers, the Rev. D. Lytle of the United Presbyterian mission. Lytle had insisted that Indian churches would become self-supporting and self-propagating in the apostolic way only when "the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and then the constant infilling of the

Holy Spirit, received its true place in the heart and life of the Christian community." The apostolic churches, Lytle used to say, "put first things first." Hyde had said the same thing to his mission committee a decade earlier, when they scolded him for studying his Bible instead of his grammar.

"He Has Given Me No Message"

What happened next is told in three sources, and they agree in substance, though McGaw's order of events differs slightly from the mission report's.

The official mission report says simply: "A series of morning addresses were to have been given about the Holy Ghost. Only one was delivered. After that, He came Himself in great power, and all learned from Him." It continues: "When the one who had been appointed to give the addresses came in, the second morning, and said quietly, 'I thank God, He has given me no message for you to-day,' surprise was written on some faces. The chairman moved aside and said, 'The Holy Ghost is leader of this meeting.' Each morning meeting was left in this way and the liberty was not abused."

McGaw's account, from his unnamed informant (almost certainly Paterson), tells the same scene from Hyde's side: "The next morning Mr. Hyde was not allowed to give any further teaching. The chairman came down from his seat and declared the meeting to be in the hands of God's Spirit." The next morning again, Hyde said that he had no fresh message from God. And Carré's book adds: "when John Hyde intimated that he had no other message to give, the Chairman was led to leave each meeting to the guidance of the Holy Spirit — surely that was the direct result of this teaching!"

The unnamed speaker in the official report was, all but certainly, John Hyde. And the story fits his teaching with an almost uncomfortable

neatness. He had spent one morning urging the pastors to put the Holy Spirit first in their pulpits and themselves behind. The next morning he did it himself. He had nothing to say, and he said so, and he sat down. A man who needed to be seen as a great speaker could not have done that. The young missionary who had wanted to shine could not have done it. The man who had prayed on the ship to be willing to work "quietly out of sight" now did it gladly, in front of three hundred people.

The Days That Followed

The official report describes what came next. The morning meetings "usually continued two and three hours." There was deep conviction of sin from the start: "It was a time of intense mental agony." One day was remembered as "the day of great confession," when people "with trembling in every limb, stood obedient to His voice, confessing openly as He bade." After that, the report says, "the cloud seemed to lift and the sunshine came and flooded the place, and joy was depicted on many countenances." A room was set aside for prayer, and "after the first or second day this place was not empty, day or night." An aged Indian minister, bitterly opposed to the public confessions, fell on his face in the prayer room and cried, "Oh, how I have sinned! O God, have mercy on me!" On the last Sunday there was no sermon and no leader. Someone announced the thirtieth Psalm, and it was sung three times over, the old minister himself calling for it again. The 148th Psalm, "Praise ye Jehovah," became the song of the convention, sung day and night.

McGaw's sources add scenes from inside the prayer room. They remember Hyde there day and night. At one point he was told by God to do something, and he went and obeyed, but he came back weeping and confessed that he had obeyed unwillingly: "Pray for me, brethren, that I

may do this joyfully." When he returned from obeying a second time, he entered the hall and repeated three words in Urdu and three in English, three times over: "Ai Asmani Bap," "O Heavenly Father." The writer struggled for a way to describe what followed. It was, he said, "as if a great ocean came sweeping into that assembly."

One of the most moving memories comes from a missionary who went to comfort a Punjabi Christian sobbing in the prayer room. The man had seen, he said, a vision of "thousands of souls in this land of India being carried away by the dark river of sin." The missionary put his arms around him and said, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." The man's face lit up: "Thank God, Sahib." The words the missionary quoted are from John: "the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7, ASV). The grief of that convention was real, but it was never allowed to end in grief.

For Reflection

The heart of the 1905 convention was not a great sermon. It was a speaker who stepped back. The official report and the devotional memoirs, written for different purposes, agree that the turning point came when the appointed teacher had nothing to say, and the chairman gave the meeting to the Holy Spirit.

Most Christian gatherings today are carefully planned, and there is nothing wrong with planning. The 1905 programme was carefully prepared too. But Hyde's question still presses: *Is the Holy Spirit first?* Do we consciously put him in front and keep ourselves behind him? It is easy to agree with that in theory. It is quite another thing to stand before a waiting crowd and say, "I thank God, He has given me no message for you to-day."

The Prayer Room

"I am Jehovah thy God, Who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt: Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."
— Psalm 81:10, ASV

"Come With Me to the Prayer Room"

Pengwern Jones never forgot the first time he met John Hyde.

It was at Ludhiana, probably in 1906, at the annual meeting of the American Presbyterian mission in the Punjab. Jones, a Welsh missionary from Sylhet in Assam, had been invited to speak about the revival in the Khasi Hills. He travelled all night by train from Allahabad and arrived early in the morning, tired, and anxious about the address he was to give at four o'clock that afternoon. Someone took him to have tea with the delegates, and across the table he was introduced to a quiet American missionary. Hyde's only words were, "I want to see you, I shall wait for you at the door."

He was waiting at the door. "Come with me to the Prayer Room," he said, "we want you there." Jones was not sure whether it was a request or a command, but he felt he had to go. He protested that he had travelled all night, that he was tired, and that he had to speak at four. He went anyway.

There were half a dozen people in the room. Hyde went down on his face on the floor. Jones knelt, and "a strange feeling crept over me." Several

people prayed, and then Hyde prayed, and Jones remembered very little after that except the sense that "I was in the presence of God Himself and had no desire to leave the place." People came and went. Meals were forgotten. His tiredness disappeared, and so did his anxiety about the talk. They had gone into the room at about eight in the morning. At half past three Hyde got up, and Jones found that they were the only two left.

"You are to speak at 4 o'clock," Hyde said. "I shall take you to have a cup of tea." Jones said Hyde must need some refreshment too. "No," Hyde answered, "I do not want any, but you must have some." They washed hastily, had a cup of tea each, and Hyde walked Jones to the door of the hall. There he took his hand and said: "Go in and speak, that is your work. I shall go back to the Prayer Room to pray for you, that is my work. When the service is over, come into the Prayer Room again and we shall praise God together."

Jones spoke through an interpreter, and afterwards could not remember what he had said. But before the meeting ended the Indian interpreter was so overcome that he could not go on, and another had to take his place. "I know the Lord spoke that night," Jones wrote. "He spoke to me, and spoke to many." When it was over he went back to the prayer room. Hyde asked no questions about how the service had gone. "He seemed to know it all," Jones wrote, "and how he praised the Lord."

"That is your work ... that is my work." Those two sentences explain the prayer room better than any description of it. Hyde did not think prayer was more important than preaching, or that preachers were less spiritual than intercessors. He thought they were two parts of one work, and he had come to believe that his own part was the hidden one.

How the Prayer Room Began

At the Sialkot Conventions there were two prayer rooms, one for men and one for women. Prayer went on in them, Jones says, "day and night, without intermission," from the first day of the convention until two or three days after it ended. Two or three experienced Christians were always present to help anyone who needed it. Sometimes someone led in prayer as at an ordinary meeting. Sometimes there was silence. Sometimes little groups formed around a particular need. Missionaries brought anxious enquirers there to be prayed for and helped.

Jones believed that the prayer room "was the work of the Holy Spirit through Hyde." It was Hyde, he said, "that spent the first nights on the watch-tower," joined almost from the start by McCheyne Paterson. We have seen that the official report of 1905 describes the same room, "not empty, day or night" after the first day or two. Whatever the precise origins, the prayer room became the heart of the convention. Jones remembered a missionary attending for the first time who came to him on the third day to complain. The convention was on the wrong lines, he said. The leaders ought to be on the platform, not hiding in the prayer room all day. Two days later the same man came back with a beaming face. "Do you know," he said, "I have found out the secret of this Convention — it is that Prayer Room. I never saw anything like it."

Thirty Days

The most famous claim about the prayer room concerns the preparation for one of the early conventions. McGaw, following Paterson, says that before one of the first conventions "Hyde and Paterson waited and tarried one whole month before the opening day. For thirty days and thirty nights

these godly men waited before God in prayer." George Turner joined them after nine days, "so that for twenty-one days and twenty-one nights these three men prayed and praised God for a mighty outpouring of his power."

A friend in Calcutta, quoted by McGaw, dated this vigil to 1906, "when the Convention was opened for the first time to all Christians." He had heard of it from Turner. When the two men were alone, he pressed Turner for details. Turner was very reluctant to say anything. "I cannot go into details," he said, "but it was a time in the Mount with God."

We should read this story carefully. It comes from people who loved the three men and were not present for the whole month. It should not be pictured as thirty days of unbroken kneeling. The prayer probably went on alongside the ordinary needs of life, and it may have included times of rest and work. But there is no reason to doubt its substance. Three missionaries set apart a month before the convention to wait on God together, and Turner's refusal to talk about it is itself a mark of authenticity. People who have truly been "in the Mount with God" are usually slow to describe it.

"Wide, Lord, Wide"

What did Hyde actually do in the prayer room? Jones and McGaw both describe it, and their pictures match.

The prayer room at Sialkot was in the Scottish church. Some of the seats were moved aside and a carpet was laid over the open space. Sometimes there were hundreds of people in it, sometimes only two or three. "Right on his face on the ground is Praying Hyde," Jones wrote, "this was his favourite attitude for prayer." Hyde would utter a petition, then wait. After a little time he would repeat it, and wait again, "and this many times until we all feel that that petition has penetrated into every fibre of our nature, and we feel assured that God has heard."

Jones remembered one prayer above all. Hyde was praying the verse at the head of this chapter: "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it" (Psalm 81:10, ASV). "I think he repeated the word 'wide' scores of times with long pauses between," Jones wrote. "'Wide, Lord.' 'Wide.' 'Open wide.' 'Wide.'"

It is worth reading the verse in its setting. God speaks through the psalmist to Israel, reminding them that he brought them out of Egypt and offering them more than they have dared to ask. And then he mourns: "But my people hearkened not to my voice; and Israel would none of me" (Psalm 81:11, ASV). The tragedy of the psalm is not that God was unwilling to fill his people but that they would not open their mouths. Hyde's long repetition of the word "wide" was a prayer that the church in the Punjab would not make that mistake. He was asking God to enlarge their expectation, so that they might receive what he was ready to give.

Another way Hyde prayed struck people just as deeply. He would simply address God by name, over and over. Jones heard him say, "Oh, Father! Father!" and felt that "even before he asked anything ... the Father knew what he was going to ask for." A missionary woman who knelt near him at a convention in Jubbulpore never forgot hearing him plead, "Jesus — Jesus — Jesus!" It seemed to her, she said, "as if a baptism of love and power came over me."

Dancing for Joy

It would be a mistake to imagine the prayer room as a place of unbroken gloom. Jones describes what often happened when Hyde finished praying. Perhaps half a dozen people would be sobbing. Hyde would go to one of them and others to the rest. With his arm around the man's neck, he "speaks but little but his well-worn Bible is used," and before long the two men would stand up together with smiles. Then Hyde would begin to sing

the old hymn, "'Tis done, the great transaction's done." And "he is so full of joy that his whole body begins to move, he claps his hands and then his feet begin to move, and look, he begins to dance for joy and others join him until the whole place rings with God's praises."

That picture of a shy, deaf, formerly morose Presbyterian missionary dancing for joy on a carpet in a Scottish church in the Punjab does more than any argument to correct the idea that Hyde was a gloomy ascetic. His prayer was often agonised. But it ended in praise, and it was full of joy.

Hidden Places and Unused Beds

Sometimes Hyde wanted to be alone even at the convention. Jones heard of him climbing into the church belfry. There, in the dark, high above the others, he prayed aloud, and people below heard the echo of his voice and knew he must not be disturbed.

His bed was a small tragedy of the convention. Hyde's "boy," as Jones calls him, was a lad of about sixteen whom Hyde had taken into his home and his heart. He brought his master's bedding to Sialkot and made his bed carefully. It was never used during the convention. More than once Jones saw Hyde, when the prayer room was full, go aside into a corner and throw himself on the floor to sleep. Yet if the room began to empty and the prayer began to flag, "he somehow seemed to know it and was up immediately." He rarely came to meals. Sometimes the boy, or a friend, or Gulla the sweeper would carry a plate of curry and rice to the prayer room, and Hyde would eat it in a corner. "How his 'boy' used to cry," Jones remembered, "because he would not eat properly and would not go to bed to sleep." It is a tender detail. It is also, as later chapters will show, a warning.

A friend in the prayer room noticed a small exchange during the 1905 convention. The lunch bell rang, and Hyde whispered, "Father, is it thy will

that I go?" There was a pause. Then he said, "Thank you, Father," rose with a smile, and went to lunch. It is easy to smile at such a story, but it shows that Hyde's abstinence was not a rule. He did not stay in the prayer room because he despised food. He went to lunch when he believed he should.

Every Tent a Bethel

Jones noticed that Hyde prayed not only for the meetings but for everything connected with them. While the organisers were putting up the tents, arranging the cooking, and laying on the water supply, Hyde and his companions were already on the ground in prayer. As soon as the great marquee was erected, Hyde and his party entered it to dedicate it to the Lord, "to make the spot a real Bethel where God would meet with His people." When the dining tent went up, they went there too, so that God could use even the mealtimes for blessing. Jacob, waking at Bethel, said, "Surely Jehovah is in this place; and I knew it not" (Genesis 28:16, ASV). Hyde wanted every corner of the convention ground to be a place where people could say that.

Jones believed the prayers were answered even at the tables. He never heard gossip in the dining tent at Sialkot. Indians and Europeans ate together, often sitting on the floor. People in spiritual trouble would go to a meal together to talk it over. When someone found peace with God, a hymn or an Indian *bhajan* would break out, and "in an instant the whole place is full of praise," with the servers, the waiters, and the diners all singing.

And when the convention ended, the praying did not. While others pulled down the tents, the prayer room parties stayed behind to pray that the fruit would last. Paterson always said that the time for the most earnest

prayer is immediately after a meeting. As Jones put it, it is then that the birds come to devour the seed.

"Let Us Meet Together to Pray"

The prayer room was also where the convention's hardest disagreements were settled.

At the first convention Jones attended, there was a crisis over public confession of sin. At the previous convention, some shocking confessions had been made by missionaries and Indian workers. Some people were outraged and wanted the committee to forbid public confession, or at least to separate men and women so that such things were not said in mixed meetings. They demanded a meeting to debate the question. The committee's reply was, "Let us meet together to pray over the matter." The objectors refused. It was useless, they said, to pray until the question had been decided. One young man thumped the table in rage and shouted, "I'll smash the whole Convention."

Jones talked quietly with Hyde, who was on the committee. He was struck by how "tender, loving" and "sane" Hyde was through it all. Hyde said that the committee had never called for confessions, and that it was the Holy Spirit who had moved people to confess. To make rules about it, he thought, even to set apart special meetings for confession, would be "taking the matter out of the Holy Spirit's hand." He believed the sin behind many of the confessions was far more common among Christians than anyone had imagined, and he said gently, "Some men, I fear, are guilty and are afraid that the Holy Spirit will compel them to confess." Yet he spoke of the objectors with tenderness, and his face, Jones said, "was full of joy for he knew that victory was assured."

Victory came in the prayer room. The objectors went there, meaning to argue. They found Hyde and other committee members praying, and were welcomed so warmly that they knelt and prayed too. After a while Paterson spoke quietly, showing that no one on the committee had ever urged public confession: "All that the Committee desired was implicit obedience to the Holy Spirit." The objectors agreed that they wanted the same. Someone began to praise God, all joined in singing, "and the Prayer Room became once more a Praise Room." Jones said he learned that day that the best way through a church quarrel is often to "keep quiet in a corner, praying that the Holy Spirit might come and reveal His Will." He tried it many times afterwards, and found that it worked.

For Reflection

The early church met in an upper room, and the Acts of the Apostles says they "with one accord continued stedfastly in prayer" (Acts 1:14, ASV). When they prayed again after their first persecution, "the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31, ASV). Hyde's friends believed they had seen something of that in the prayer room at Sialkot.

Very few churches have a prayer room that is never empty. But any church can decide that preaching and praying are two parts of one work, and that someone should always be doing the hidden part. "Go in and speak, that is your work. I shall go back to the Prayer Room to pray for you, that is my work." Who is doing that work for your church, or for you? And is there someone for whom you could do it?

"Give Me Souls, or I Die"

"My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you—"
— Galatians 4:19, ASV

A Week at Murree

In the summer of 1907 a group of missionaries went up to Murree, a hill station in the foothills of the Himalayas on the road to Kashmir. They went to escape the heat of the plains, which in June can make work nearly impossible. Several of them had been leaders in the Sialkot prayer room, and as the weeks passed they arranged to set aside a week or ten days for waiting on God together. Others heard of it and came. Pengwern Jones was among them. He called it "the most wonderful week of my life."

They stayed with the Rev. and Mrs. McCheyne Paterson. Jones shared a tiny room with Hyde, and he recorded what he saw with the eye of an affectionate roommate. Hyde, he says, was "very full of humour which was under perfect control." In the company of people who shared his prayer life, "the sad burdened features relaxed ... and his face was lit up with joy." The conversation at meals was lively and uplifting. But Hyde's place at the table was often empty. "We knew where he was," Jones wrote. "No one enjoyed the company of men and women more than he did, but Jesus came first." When Jones went to bed, Hyde was on his knees, wrapped in a heavy

overcoat against the mountain cold. When Jones woke at dawn, Hyde was on his knees again. Sometimes he stayed there the whole day.

Then, at some point in that week, a particular burden came upon him. It was not for the Punjab villages but for the English visitors in the hill station, the officials, officers, and their families who crowded Murree in the hot season. For two or three days Hyde did not go to bed or come down to meals. The food sent up to his room came back untouched. Several times he came and knelt by Jones's bed, asking him to help him carry the burden in prayer. On the Saturday night he was "in great agony," and Paterson and Jones stayed up with him. Jones thought of Jacob wrestling at the ford of the Jabbok, saying, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" (Genesis 32:26, ASV). Yet in Hyde's determination, he said, "there was such deep humility, such loving pleading."

At two o'clock in the morning there was a knock at the door. Paterson whispered to Jones that it was probably his wife, reminding them to go to bed. It was not. It was a servant with a letter from a woman staying at the largest hotel in Murree, asking whether the missionaries would hold a service for Europeans in the hotel drawing room. The servant had been sent miles in the wrong direction and had struggled to find anyone at night who could direct him. That was why he came at two in the morning. Hyde heard them reading the letter, jumped up from his knees, and said, "That is the answer to my prayers, I know now that the Lord has heard me."

The service was held. It was not large, and "from a human standpoint" it was not a success. Hyde, who had stayed in his room to pray, or rather, Jones says, to praise, was not at all disappointed. "He said that it was all in the Lord's Hand and He knew how to carry on His work." At least one person from the hotel came to the evening service in the Scottish church, and Hyde was there, his face so full of joy "that it was contagious."

The story has none of the grand numbers that later books love. A burden, a night of agony, a knock at two in the morning, a small and unimpressive service, one person who came back. But it shows the pattern of Hyde's intercession in these years very clearly. It began with a burden he did not choose. It continued in prayer that was costly to his body. It ended in an assurance that God had heard, and in a joy that did not depend on visible results.

"Souls or I Die"

The cry for which Hyde is best known belongs to the following summer. McGaw's account, from the friend who was Hyde's host that summer (very probably Paterson, though McGaw does not name him), describes Hyde's stay in the hills in 1908. He had a separate room on the hillside, a little apart from the house. He came, they said, "for a very real intercession with his Master." It was evident to everyone that he was "bowed down with sore travail of soul." He missed many meals. When Paterson went to his room he would find him "lying as in great agony, or walking up and down as if an inward fire were burning in his bones."

When Paterson begged him to come and eat, Hyde would look at him, smile, and say, "I am not hungry." Paterson understood: "there was a far greater hunger eating up his very soul, and prayer alone could satisfy that." And in the room on the hill, day after day, his hosts heard him pleading for the people of his district, "with sobs — dry choking sobs, that showed how the depths of his soul were being stirred." The burden of his prayers was always the same: "Father, give me these souls or I die!"

That is the form in which McGaw records it. Later writers have varied the words. "O God, give me souls or I die!" appears in McGaw's own preface, and other versions have spread from book to book. The exact

wording cannot be fixed. What matters is the shape of the cry, and that is not in doubt.

It is worth noticing where the shape comes from. The words echo, perhaps deliberately, an ancient cry of longing in Genesis. When Rachel saw that she had no children, "she said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die" (Genesis 30:1, ASV). Hyde's village converts were his children in the faith. The fruitlessness of his early years had taught him what it meant to long for them. And the language of spiritual birth runs all through the New Testament. The verse at the head of this chapter is Paul's cry to the churches of Galatia: "My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you" (Galatians 4:19, ASV). Isaiah had promised that "as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children" (Isaiah 66:8, ASV).

What Is Travail in Prayer?

The word "travail" means the labour of childbirth. Applied to prayer, it describes a kind of intercession that is not calm or detached. It involves the whole person, body included. The one who prays feels the need of others as though it were his own pain, and cannot rest until it is relieved.

Scripture gives many examples. Moses pleaded for Israel after the golden calf and offered to be blotted out of God's book in their place. Jeremiah wished his head were waters and his eyes a fountain of tears, so that he could weep day and night for his people. Paul wrote to the Romans, "I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake" (Romans 9:2-3, ASV). That passage was on Hyde's mind throughout these summers. McGaw's informant, apparently Hyde's host in the hills in 1907, remembered that

Hyde's last message before he left was on those very verses. When he finished, "how we all broke down!"

Above all there is Gethsemane. Jesus said to his three friends, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: abide ye here, and watch with me" (Matthew 26:38, ASV). Paterson believed that in those summers Hyde had heard the Lord say to him, "Abide ye here and watch with Me," and had stayed.

The Fellowship of His Sufferings

Paterson and Hyde spoke often, in these years, of "the fellowship of Christ's sufferings," a phrase from Paul: "that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings" (Philippians 3:10, ASV). Hyde would quote another verse that puzzles many readers: "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church" (Colossians 1:24, ASV). And Paterson remembered his preoccupation with the thought "that our Lord still agonizes for souls," that the risen Christ, who "ever liveth to make intercession" for his people (Hebrews 7:25, ASV), still bears their burdens with them.

This theme needs careful handling, and Hyde's friends did not always handle it carefully. Scripture is clear that Christ's sacrifice for sin was once for all, complete, and unrepeatable. He cried, "It is finished" (John 19:30, ASV). No intercessor adds anything to the atonement, and nothing is "lacking" in Christ's work of redemption. When Paul speaks of filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions, he is not talking about the cross as payment for sin. He means the sufferings that Christ's body, the church, must still undergo as it carries the gospel to the world. Those sufferings Christ counts as his own: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4,

ASV). The intercessor is invited to share, in a small way, in the Lord's grief over the world and his longing for its salvation. He is not invited to share in the Lord's work of paying for it.

Some of the language in the memoirs goes further than this. It speaks of Hyde being given "the privilege of drinking of the Master's cup," and of a friend of his who seemed to tread "the winepress of the wrath of God against sin all alone." Such phrases are the overflow of devotion and should not be pressed into theology. But at its heart the idea is sound and deeply biblical. When we pray for others, we are not persuading a reluctant God to care about them. We are being drawn into a care he already has. The Spirit himself, Paul says, "maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26, ASV). Hyde's groans in the room on the hillside were, in his friends' understanding, a small echo of those.

"It Is Not Our Broken Heart"

There is a danger here, and Paterson saw it. If intercession is measured by how much the intercessor suffers, then prayer becomes a kind of spiritual athletics. Those who can stay up longest and weep most will be counted the best at it, and ordinary Christians will despair.

McGaw preserves a conversation from the end of one of the conventions that addresses this directly. A Christian was praying aloud, asking God for "Thy heart of love for sinners, Thy broken heart for their sins, Thy tears with which to admonish night and day." Then he went on, "But, O Lord, I feel so cold. My heart is so hard and dead. I am so lukewarm!" A friend interrupted him. "Why are you looking down at your poor self, brother? Of course your heart is cold and dead. But you have asked for the broken heart of Jesus, his love, his burden for sin, his tears. Is

he a liar? Has he not given what you asked for? Then why look away from his heart to your own?"

Paterson drew the lesson clearly: "It is not our broken heart, it is God's we need. It is not our sufferings, it is Christ's we are partakers of. It is not our tears with which we should admonish night and day — it is all Christ's. The fellowship of his sufferings is his free gift — free for the taking in simple faith, never minding our feelings."

This is an important corrective. The burden that Hyde carried was not something he manufactured. It was given. And the secret of his prayer life, Paterson insisted, was not his own effort but Christ's intercession: "I confess my ever failing prayers ... and plead his never failing intercession."

Not a Hermit

One more detail from the summer of 1908 deserves to be remembered. For all the intensity of those weeks, Hyde did not become a recluse. His host's children loved "Uncle John," who had often played with them, and they greeted him with smiles. They seemed to understand that this was "no time for play," and were hushed and gentle in his presence. Yet "there was nothing of the hermit about him," Paterson wrote. "People were more than ever attracted to him, and freely asked for his prayers. He always had leisure to speak to them of spiritual things, and entered even more patiently than ever into their trials and disappointments."

That is the test of genuine intercession. Prayer that makes a person impatient with the people he prays for, or too spiritual to be interrupted, has gone wrong somewhere. Hyde's prayer made him more available, not less.

For Reflection

Few of us will pray as Hyde prayed in the hills in 1907 and 1908, and later chapters will ask honestly whether he himself should have prayed quite so hard. But all of us can ask whether we have ever longed for the salvation of others as Rachel longed for children, or as Paul longed for his people. We can ask whether we have ever prayed for them until it cost us something.

And if our hearts feel cold, Paterson's word is for us. We are not asked to produce a broken heart. We are invited to ask for Christ's, and to trust that he gives it, "never minding our feelings."

A Soul a Day, and "What About That One?"

"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?"
— Luke 15:4, ASV

The Most Famous Claim

If people know one thing about Praying Hyde besides his name, it is usually this. In 1908 he asked God for one soul a day, and by the end of the year more than four hundred had been won. The next year he asked for two a day, and got them. The year after that he asked for four a day, and on any day when four did not come, he could neither eat nor sleep until he found out why.

It is a stirring story. It has been preached in countless sermons and printed in countless books. And because it is so famous, it is worth taking more care over it than over almost anything else in Hyde's life: what exactly the sources say, where they got it, and what we can confirm.

What McGaw Records

The story comes from McGaw's book, in a section from his unnamed informant, almost certainly Paterson. The key passage describes what followed the burden of the summer of 1908:

> *It was about this time that John Hyde laid hold of God in a very definite covenant. This was for one soul a day — not less, not enquirers simply but a soul saved — ready to confess Christ in public and be baptized in his name. Then the stress and strain was relieved. His heart was filled with the peace of full assurance.*

Hyde returned to his district with this confidence, the account says. It meant long journeys, nights of prayer, and cold dews and exhausting heat, "yet victory always crowning this." And then comes the figure: "By the end of that year more than four hundred were gathered in." The account for 1909 says that he asked for two souls a day. The next section speaks of "the eight hundred souls gathered in since last year's convention," that is, between the conventions of 1909 and 1910. For 1910 it says that he "at length got the assurance of four souls a day."

Notice two things about this account. First, the definition of a "soul" is strict: not an enquirer, not someone who had shown interest, but a person ready to confess Christ publicly and be baptized. Second, the numbers come without any source. The memoir does not say who counted, or whether the figures are Hyde's own estimate, a mission return, or a friend's impression.

What the Records Show

No mission report yet found gives Hyde's personal baptisms for 1908, 1909, or 1910. That does not mean the figures are wrong. The Presbyterian mission reported by station and district, not by individual missionary. But it means that the famous numbers rest, as far as we know, on this one memoir.

What the records do show is that something remarkable was happening in Hyde's district. The women's missionary magazine of his church

reported in October 1911 that the Ferozepore training school had moved to Moga, and added: "Moga is where Rev. J. N. Hyde has been burying the good seed, and baptisms have steadily increased for five years past. They numbered 685 in 1910." Griswold's obituary says that Hyde "was marvelously used of God during his last few years at Moga in bringing very many to decision and baptism," and that "rarely a day passed without the winning of trophies of grace."

Most valuable of all is a line from Hyde himself. McGaw quotes a letter Hyde wrote to his old seminary classmates near the end of his time in India:

> *For three full years now God has given us decisions and baptisms every day when we have been out in our district — over a thousand the past two years ... never a day if we were right with God without souls.*

This is the closest we come to Hyde's own account of the soul-a-day years, and it is worth reading carefully. He says "us," not "me." The baptisms belonged to the whole team of missionary and Indian evangelists working the district together. He says "when we have been out in our district", meaning on the days of touring, not every calendar day of the year. And he gives a round figure, over a thousand in two years, which fits well with the 685 baptisms the mission recorded at Moga in 1910. His emphasis falls not on the arithmetic but on the condition: "never a day if we were right with God without souls."

Read this way, the story is both more modest and more believable than the legend. Hyde did not personally lead four people a day to Christ for a year. What happened was this. In the middle of a great movement toward Christ among the poorest people of the Punjab, Hyde and his Indian fellow workers prayed specifically and expectantly for daily fruit, and for three years they saw it. That is extraordinary enough.

A Covenant, Not a Quota

There is a danger in the soul-a-day story, and it is not only the danger of exaggeration. Numbers can take over. A missionary who has asked God for a certain number of converts every day may be tempted to count people rather than love them. He may baptize too quickly, or treat a day without results as a personal failure. The critics of the Punjab mass movements worried about exactly this: converts baptized with little teaching, and churches full of people whom no one had time to instruct.

Hyde was not immune to the pressure. Paterson remembered him saying that "if on any day four souls were not brought into the fold, at night there would be such a weight on his heart that it was positively painful, and he could not eat nor sleep." There is something admirable in that, and something troubling.

But the sources also show what kept Hyde's covenant from becoming a quota. First, its motive was love, not success. Paterson insists that no number satisfied him: "No matter if he won the one a day or two a day or four a day, he had an unsatisfied longing, an undying passion for lost souls." He seemed always to be hearing the Good Shepherd's words, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring" (John 10:16, ASV). Second, when a day passed without fruit, he looked first at himself, not at the people. As we will see in a later chapter, what he usually found was that he had lost the spirit of praise. Third, his definition of a convert was demanding. He was not counting hands raised or cards signed, but people willing to confess Christ publicly and be baptized. In the villages of the Punjab that often meant persecution from employers and family.

And the numbers did not make him hurry. The most famous story of those years is about a day when Hyde refused to leave a village because one person was missing.

"What About That One?"

Paterson heard this story from one of Hyde's Indian evangelists, who told it "with shame." It is the most vivid scene in all the memoirs, and it has the ring of a true story partly because it makes the storyteller look bad.

One morning, after prayer, Hyde and two Indian evangelists felt assured that God would give them ten souls that day. They set out in a country cart to a distant village. The road ran along a river bank and was dangerous after dark. They reached the village. They sang, and preached, and sang again, and preached again. The day wore on. Not one person showed the slightest interest. The evangelists grew hungry and thirsty. As Paterson put it, echoing the parable of the prodigal son, "No man gave unto them." They began to want to go home. Hyde would not move. He was waiting for the ten.

At last, near a humble cottage, they asked for a drink. The man offered them milk as well as water, and invited them in. As they talked, he showed a surprising knowledge of Jesus Christ. Yes, he said, the family had been thinking about following him. Then why not now? He called his wife and children. They understood what they were doing, and they decided together, there and then, to take their stand on the Lord's side. Hyde baptized them all, nine people in all.

By now it was getting dark. The short winter day was ending, and the dangerous road lay ahead. Surely now they could go. The father of the family urged it too. Hyde left the house reluctantly. One of the evangelists went for the cart. The other took Hyde by the arm and hurried him toward it. When it came, they tried to lift him in. He would not get in. He looked pleadingly at the evangelist and asked, "What about that one?"

The evangelist lost his temper. It was all very well for the Sahib, he thought, if he broke his neck on the road in the dark. He had no wife or

family to think of. It was a different matter for them. He said something sharp about their wives and children waiting anxiously at home. The two of them almost used force to get Hyde into the cart. And each time, "the same cry" came from him: "What about that one?"

After a while the father of the family came up, wondering why the Padri Sahib was still standing in the road. Hyde told him that one soul was still missing. "Why, there he is!" said the man. "My nephew, whom I have adopted. He has been living with the rest of us, but has been out playing." He brought the boy forward, a bright and intelligent lad. Hyde asked him about his faith, and the boy answered clearly. There could be no doubt about him, and he too was baptized.

"That is the ten," said Hyde, with what the evangelist called "a weary sigh of heart's ease," and climbed into the cart. They reached home safely in the dark, tired but content.

The Shepherd's Arithmetic

It is possible to read this story as a lesson in stubborn faith: Hyde asked for ten, and would not settle for nine. That is part of it. But the heart of the story is not the number. It is the one.

The verse at the head of this chapter describes a shepherd who has ninety-nine sheep safe and goes after the one that is lost, "until he find it" (Luke 15:4, ASV). By any sensible reckoning, ninety-nine is a good day's result. But the shepherd does not reckon sensibly. He reckons by love, and love counts differently. Jesus concludes, "I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance" (Luke 15:7, ASV).

Paterson saw the same thing. Hyde, he wrote, "knew that the good Shepherd was Himself searching for that one still outside the Fold." Hyde's

stubbornness in the road was not the obstinacy of a man chasing a target. It was the stubbornness of a man who believed he was standing beside the Good Shepherd, who had not stopped searching.

And the story ends with rest. Paterson wrote that the "rest of soul" the Lord gives his faithful under-shepherds is also the rest they give him, "for in their passion and longing for the lost He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied." The phrase is from Isaiah's great prophecy of the suffering servant: "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied" (Isaiah 53:11, ASV). The joy of the village road in the dark was not finally Hyde's. It belonged to Christ.

Preach and Baptize on the Spot

One more feature of these years deserves notice, because it troubles some readers today. Hyde baptized quickly. He told his mission in 1907 that the ideal was to "preach and baptize on the spot." McGaw's sources remember him baptizing people "in the village, by the roadside, or anywhere."

This can look reckless. But it was not unbiblical. When Philip explained the gospel to the Ethiopian official on the road to Gaza, the man said, "Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip baptized him at once (Acts 8:36, 38, ASV). On the day of Pentecost about three thousand were baptized (Acts 2:41, ASV). The New Testament knows nothing of years-long waiting periods for people who have confessed Christ.

What made quick baptism responsible in the Punjab was what came after it. Hyde's own method insisted on following up converts in their places of work, and trying "every time we visit a convert ... to leave some lesson or some influence on his life." He founded the Ferozepore training school, later moved to Moga, to prepare village preachers and teachers.

Baptism was the beginning of discipleship, not the end of evangelism. Whether the mission always managed that follow-up well is another question. It was stretched very thin by the sheer size of the movement. But Hyde did not treat baptism as a finishing line.

For Reflection

The soul-a-day story is often told to make Christians feel that they pray too little and expect too little. It may do that. But its real challenge lies in the question Hyde asked in the dark: "What about that one?"

Most churches are content with the ninety-nine. Most of us, if we have seen nine people come to faith, would call it a remarkable day and head home before dark. Hyde's question will not let us settle so easily. Somewhere near us, playing in the lane or sitting at the back or living in the next house, there is probably one person no one has yet thought to ask about. The Good Shepherd has not stopped searching for them. We might pray, like Hyde, to be standing where he is searching.

The Accuser of the Brethren

"For thus saith Jehovah of hosts: After glory hath he sent me unto the nations which plundered you; for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye."
— Zechariah 2:8, ASV

A Rebuke in the Middle of a Prayer

Of all the stories told about John Hyde, the one that has done the most good may be the one that shows him at his worst.

It comes from McCheyne Paterson, whose reminiscences in Carré's book tell it, and it appears again, in almost the same words, in the account McGaw compiled. Carré's version places it when Hyde was "up in the hills resting for a short time," praying in his "inner chamber." McGaw's leaves out the hills and dates it about 1910. They agree on everything else, and Paterson said Hyde himself used to speak of it "as one of the most direct and solemn lessons God had ever taught him."

Hyde had been burdened about an Indian pastor. The man's spiritual life seemed to have gone cold, and his congregation had become as lifeless as their minister. Hyde resolved to give time to definite intercession for him. He went into his room, knelt, and began to pour out his heart to God about the pastor. In Carré's version his first words were something like, "O

God! Thou knowest that brother how —" In McGaw's they were, "O Father, thou knowest how cold —"

He never finished the sentence. "Cold" was the word he was about to say. But, as McGaw's version has it, "a finger seemed to be laid on his lips, so that the word was not uttered", a "Hand," in Paterson's telling, and a voice said to him in stern reproach: "He that toucheth him, toucheth the apple of mine eye."

A great horror came over Hyde. He cried out, "Forgive me, Father, in that I have been an accuser of the brethren before thee!"

The Apple of His Eye

The words that stopped Hyde are adapted from the verse at the head of this chapter. In Zechariah, God speaks of the nations that have plundered his people: "he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye" (Zechariah 2:8, ASV). The "apple of the eye" is the pupil, the most sensitive and carefully guarded part of the body. The phrase occurs elsewhere too. Moses sang of how God found Israel in the wilderness and "kept him as the apple of his eye" (Deuteronomy 32:10, ASV). David prayed, "Keep me as the apple of the eye; hide me under the shadow of thy wings" (Psalm 17:8, ASV).

In Zechariah the warning is addressed to Israel's enemies. What shook Hyde was that it had been turned on him. He was not an enemy of the pastor. He was praying for him. He meant well. But in the very act of intercession he had begun to list the man's faults to God, and God had treated it as an attack on someone he held precious.

The phrase Hyde used in his confession, "an accuser of the brethren," makes the point even more sharply. It comes from the book of Revelation, and it is a name for Satan: "the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who

accuseth them before our God day and night" (Revelation 12:10, ASV). Hyde had come to God to do the work of an intercessor. He found that he had been doing the work of the accuser.

The Oldest Sin of the Praying Person

This is a sin that belongs especially to people who pray. It is easy to criticise others in conversation, and most of us know it is wrong. It is much harder to notice when we are doing it in prayer, because prayer feels like a holy activity. We bring someone before God "in concern," and before we know it we are telling God what is wrong with them. We describe their coldness, their failures, their bad influence, and we ask him to deal with it. The prayer has a spiritual shape. Its content is accusation.

Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector shows the same danger. The Pharisee stood and "prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men" (Luke 18:11, ASV). His prayer was full of comparison and quietly full of contempt. James warns, "Speak not one against another, brethren. He that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law" (James 4:11, ASV). Jesus himself warns against seeing the speck in a brother's eye while ignoring the beam in one's own (Matthew 7:3-5, ASV).

Hyde was one of the most prayerful men of his generation. That did not protect him from this sin. If anything it exposed him to it, because intercessors spend so much time thinking about the spiritual condition of others. Yet his friends were unanimous that criticism of people was not in his character. Jones wrote that he "never heard him criticizing any persons, though he could vehemently denounce sin." This story is the key to that. The gentleness his friends admired was not natural to him. He had been taught it, abruptly, in the middle of a prayer.

"Show Me What Things Are Lovely"

What Hyde did next is the most important part of the story.

He confessed his sin and claimed, in Paterson's phrase, "the precious blood of Christ that cleanseth from all sin." Then he remembered a verse from Philippians: "whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8, ASV). And he prayed a new prayer: "Father, show me what things are lovely and of good report in my brother's life."

The answer came, Paterson says, "like a flash." Hyde remembered that the pastor had given up everything for Christ, and had endured much suffering from relatives he had left behind for the gospel. He remembered the man's years of hard work, the tact with which he managed a difficult congregation, the many quarrels he had healed, and what a good husband he was. One thing after another rose up in his mind. And Hyde spent the whole of his time of prayer, which he had set apart for intercession, in thanksgiving for his brother instead. "He could not recall a single petition," Paterson wrote, "nothing but thanksgiving!"

McGaw's version adds a further lesson that Hyde drew. He had wanted, he said, to keep the rule of Philippians 4:8 by looking at whatever was *lovely* in his brother, without giving up his commitment to whatever was *true*. Surely, he thought, the pastor's coldness was true? What he came to see was that the sins of God's children, though real, are passing. They are not their true nature. The true thing about a believer is what he is in Christ, and what he will be when God has finished the work he has begun. Paul wrote to the same Philippians, "he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ: even as it is right for me to be thus minded on behalf of you all, because I have you in my heart" (Philippians 1:6-7, ASV).

To see a fellow believer truly is to see him as God sees him, in the light of what grace will make him.

The Pastor Revived

The story has an epilogue. When Hyde went down from the hills, he heard that the pastor had just then received a great spiritual uplift. According to McGaw's version, the pastor was preaching again "with fire." Paterson believed it had happened at the very time Hyde was praising God for him. "While he was praising, God was blessing."

Paterson made this into a general principle: "While we bless God for any child of His, He delights to bless that one!" We should be careful not to turn that into a mechanism, as though praise were a lever that forces God's hand. The Bible gives no such formula, and Hyde would not have claimed one. But there is a deep truth here. Criticism, even criticism offered to God in prayer, tends to see people as problems. Thanksgiving sees them as God's work in progress. And the attitude we take toward people in private prayer shapes, sooner or later, the way we treat them in public.

The Carpenter's Shop

Paterson told a small parable to explain what Hyde had learned, and it is worth passing on.

Suppose, he said, you walk into a carpenter's workshop and start pointing out faults in the half-made furniture. "How rough this is! What an ugly corner that is!" The carpenter will be annoyed, and rightly. "Bear in mind," he will say, "that I am still making these things. They are not yet finished. Come and see the Pattern after which they are being fashioned." And he will show you finished chairs and tables, perfectly shaped and

polished. Who is right, the critic or the carpenter? The critic looks at what is rough and passing. The carpenter looks at what will be.

"Let us remember above all else," Paterson wrote, "that God's people on this earth are in the making. This is His workshop and souls are being fashioned and formed in it." He pointed to the Carpenter of Nazareth, of whom Isaiah prophesied, "A bruised reed will he not break, and a dimly burning wick will he not quench" (Isaiah 42:3, ASV). Jesus, Paterson said, looked at the faint light in his erring disciples rather than at the smoke, and by doing so blew them into flame until they became the light of the world.

Does This Mean Never Correcting Anyone?

Paterson anticipated an objection. "Then should we shut our eyes to the faults of all? Should we never reprove sin?" He answered that our Lord did reprove sin at times, and so must we. The New Testament is full of correction. Paul rebuked Peter to his face. Jesus spoke sternly to the Pharisees and to his own disciples. The church is told to "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Timothy 4:2, ASV). Hyde himself, Jones says, "could vehemently denounce sin." And in private, during the dispute over public confession at Sialkot, he told Jones plainly that hidden immorality among Christians was more common than anyone imagined.

The lesson Hyde learned was not that sin should be ignored. It was about where correction begins and in what spirit. It begins with honest confession of our own sin. It proceeds with thankfulness for what God is doing in the other person. And any rebuke that follows comes from someone who has first seen his brother as the apple of God's eye. Galatians gives the order: "Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to

thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1, ASV). Criticism that has not passed through thanksgiving is usually just accusation.

For Reflection

Most of us pray for people whose faults we know well: a difficult colleague, a disappointing pastor, a wayward relative, a church member who irritates us. It is worth listening, next time, to what we actually say about them to God. Do our prayers sound more like intercession or more like a charge sheet?

Hyde's remedy is simple enough to try today. Stop in the middle of the complaint. Confess it. Then pray his prayer: "Father, show me what things are lovely and of good report in my brother's life." Stay with that prayer until something comes to mind, and then give thanks for it. It may be that, as Hyde found, the whole time of prayer turns into praise. And it may be that, while we are praising, God is blessing.

The Garment of Praise

"to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he may be glorified."
— Isaiah 61:3, ASV

A Man Not Naturally Happy

The popular image of Praying Hyde is a sorrowful one: a gaunt figure on his face in the dark, sobbing for souls. There is truth in that image, and earlier chapters have not hidden it. But it is only half the truth, and the friends who knew him best were anxious that it should not be taken for the whole.

McCheyne Paterson began his chapter on Hyde's joy with an admission that he thought would comfort many readers. "Mr. John Hyde was not naturally a bright and happy man. On the contrary he was in himself inclined to be morose, retiring, shy and silent. Yet he became one of the most joyous souls I have ever met."

That sentence holds a whole gospel. Temperament is real, and Hyde's was gloomy. Grace did not erase his temperament. He remained shy, and in public he often looked burdened. But grace gave him a joy that his temperament could never have produced. Jones noticed the same thing.

People who did not know Hyde well thought him "a morose, melancholy person," but in the company of those who understood him "how bright and cheerful he was." Jones said he had what some called "sanctified humour," kept "under perfect control."

The Great Exchange

Paterson says Hyde was "very fond" of the verse at the head of this chapter. In Isaiah 61, the anointed servant of the Lord announces good news to the afflicted. Among other things, he comes "to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" (Isaiah 61:3, ASV). Hyde read this as an exchange. We hand over to Christ what we have: ashes, mourning, and a spirit of heaviness. He hands us what he has: his beauty, his oil of joy, his garment of praise. Paterson added a pointed remark about the ashes: "what is our past life but 'ashes'?"

The joy, in other words, is not produced by the one who receives it. It is Christ's own joy, given. Jesus said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full" (John 15:11, ASV). Hyde, Paterson wrote, received "our Lord's Double Gift of Joy ... freely from his Master's Hand, and then would burst out into joyful praise. For no one can be filled with the Divine Joy and not sing His Praise!"

This is why the image of a garment matters. A garment is put on. It does not grow from within. A man with a heavy spirit does not wait until he feels praise before he praises. He accepts the garment Christ offers and puts it on, and the feeling follows.

"Praising God Through Shut Teeth"

Paterson says that no one he ever knew obeyed Paul's command more faithfully than Hyde: "giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father" (Ephesians 5:20, ASV). It was, he said, "one great source of his joy and therefore of his attractive power."

Hyde would say again and again that if we want to know why trials are sent to us, we should begin by thanking God for them, and we will soon see why. His circle of friends had a private phrase for this: "Praising God through shut teeth." It meant praising God in the face of the worst troubles and darkest hours, not because the troubles felt good but because God was still Father. "We can never doubt that He is our Father in Heaven," Paterson wrote, "and so all must be well for us at all times and in all circumstances."

Hyde had a story he liked to tell about how he learned this. He and his catechists were touring the villages in the hot weather, when preaching had to begin very early. One morning he woke with one of his worst headaches, so painful that he could not lift his head from the pillow. He could not preach. But he could look up to his Father and thank him "for the love that had permitted that headache." At his insistence, the evangelists carried his bed out to a shady place and went off to preach without him.

In that village, work among the women had been at a standstill. Some of the men had been baptized, but their wives had never come forward. Whenever anyone spoke to them about it, they said they had never talked it over among themselves. Now the women heard that the Padri Sahib was ill, and they came in a body to sympathise with him. As he lay there, he spoke to them of the claims of Christ. Yes, they said, they believed he had died for them. Then why had they not confessed him? They had never discussed it among themselves, they said. There was no time like the present, said Hyde,

so why not discuss it now? They agreed, and after some talk among themselves they told him it was plain to them that they ought to be baptized. To the great joy of their husbands and the evangelists, it was done. "And John Hyde saw why the headache had been sent," Paterson wrote. He always said afterwards that it had taught him to give thanks for all things at all times.

Singing Villages

Two more stories, both from Paterson, show how often praise went before fruit in Hyde's work.

Once Hyde was travelling in a country cart to a distant village with one of his Punjabi evangelists and two of the evangelist's small children. The men were talking gloomily about their destination. The gospel had been preached there for a long time, and hardly anyone had shown any interest. The children had no such worries. They were happy, and they sang, psalm after psalm and hymn after hymn. Their singing was infectious. Soon the two men were singing too, and they sang all the way to the village. When they arrived they found the people unexpectedly interested and eager. Before they left, more than a dozen had shown such living faith that Hyde "felt he dared not refuse them baptism then and there." It was the first gospel breakthrough in that village, and Hyde was convinced it had been "heralded and brought about ... by the spirit of praise which the children had evinced." The psalm says, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou established strength" (Psalm 8:2, ASV).

Another time Hyde and a party of evangelists were camped in a village where the mission had worked for thirty years. The farm labourers there had for years been putting off a decision for Christ. Their excuse never changed: "Not now during the harvest, but afterwards when it is over." But

every year ended the same way, and Paterson could not help quoting Jeremiah: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved" (Jeremiah 8:20, ASV). The mission party was so discouraged that they decided to leave the next morning. That night someone suggested they go into the village and sing the gospel. They did, and they were so carried away that they sang on until after midnight.

Next morning, as they were packing up, a young man came running from the village. He begged them not to go. The *panchayat*, the village council, had been called and was meeting at that moment. No one had gone to work. They were considering whether to decide for Christ at once. The missionaries waited. Soon the young man came running back: they had all decided to serve Christ. Hyde found some fifteen men, mostly heads of families, ready for baptism, and baptized them before everyone. Afterwards the young man, himself a new convert, said to Hyde, "This is the result of your singing last night." He reminded them of one of the songs: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates ... And the King of glory will come in" (Psalm 24:7, ASV). "Has he not entered in this morning?"

No one in the missionary party had noticed the connection until the new convert pointed it out.

Praise Before the Answer

The Bible is full of this pattern. When King Jehoshaphat faced an invading army, he "appointed them that should sing unto Jehovah, and give praise in holy array, as they went out before the army." And "when they began to sing and to praise, Jehovah set liers-in-wait" against the enemy (2 Chronicles 20:21-22, ASV). Paul and Silas, beaten and chained in the prison at Philippi, did not wait for release before they praised God. "But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God,

and the prisoners were listening to them" (Acts 16:25, ASV). The earthquake came after the singing.

Paterson believed this was one of the deepest secrets of Hyde's work. He remembered Hyde telling him that on the days when fewer souls were brought in than he had asked for, he would ask the Lord to show him what obstacle in himself was hindering the blessing. "He invariably found that it was the want of praise in his life." Then he would confess it as sin, accept forgiveness, and ask for the spirit of praise "as for any other gift of God." He would exchange "his ashes for Christ's garland, his mourning for Christ's oil of joy, his spirit of heaviness for Christ's garment of praise," praising God "beforehand for what he was going to do." And, Paterson says, "as he praised God souls would come to him."

Paterson offered a simple explanation. "No fisher can possibly throw his line lightly when he is dull and sad. It is only the bright and joyous soul that can win souls to Christ." He noted how Paul, in the chapter of Philippians where he speaks of his fellow workers, immediately adds, "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice" (Philippians 4:4, ASV).

Holy Laughter

One more memory of Hyde's joy comes from a friend who spent a holiday with him in the hills in the summer of 1907. There had been "seasons of great conflict" in prayer, and at times the friend feared Hyde would break down completely. But after whole nights of prayer and praise he would appear "fresh and smiling in the morning."

The friend credited much of this joy to a poor Punjabi Christian of low-caste origin, whom he calls only "G—." This brother, he said, had "been used of God to teach us all how to make such times of prayer a very heaven upon earth." After most awful crying in prayer, G— would seem to

break through into the presence of the Father. "You could see the smile of God reflected in his face. Then he would laugh aloud in the midst of his prayer. It was the joy of a son revelling in the delight of his Father's smile."

It is fitting that the lesson came from him. The missionaries had come to teach the villagers of the Punjab, and here a villager whose name we do not even know taught the missionaries how to laugh before God. The friend connected it with a verse from Proverbs about divine Wisdom at the creation: "I was daily his delight, Rejoicing always before him" (Proverbs 8:30, ASV). God, he said, had been teaching Hyde and him that he is "the God of Isaac," a name that means laughter. Such laughter, he thought, "seemed to relieve the tension and give heaven's own refreshment to wrestling spirits."

The same friend quoted Nehemiah's words to the weeping people of Jerusalem: "neither be ye grieved; for the joy of Jehovah is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10, ASV). He also recorded a claim that Hyde himself seems to have believed at the time: that since he had learned to draw on God's strength, he had scarcely ever felt tired, though he had had little sleep for weeks. "No man need ever break down," the friend added, "through overstrain in this ministry of intercession." Hyde's later history would not bear that confident claim out. We will come back to it honestly in a later chapter. But the joy was real, and it was the true secret of how he kept going as long as he did.

For Reflection

In his last weeks, in his sister's home in Massachusetts in the winter of 1912, Hyde did not lament. A colleague later reported that after his worst spasms of pain he would say, "Praise the Lord," or quote Paul's words, "In every thing give thanks" (1 Thessalonians 5:18, in the older wording he

knew). He had been learning that lesson for twenty years, from headaches in village huts, from singing children in a cart, and from a low-caste brother laughing in prayer. At the end it had become his native language.

Many of us, like Hyde, are not naturally joyful. The garment of praise is still offered. We do not have to feel like praising before we put it on. We can hand over our ashes and our heaviness, thank God through shut teeth if we must, and begin to sing. And we may find, as Hyde did, that the King of glory comes in.

Tears at a Train Window

"Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears."
— Acts 20:31, ASV

A Boy from the Mission School

Most of the people John Hyde led to Christ are nameless in the records. They appear only as numbers in a mission report, or as "souls" in a friend's memoir. One of them is known by his initials, and his story, told by McCheyne Paterson, is the most human in all the accounts of Hyde's life. It does not end neatly. That is one reason to trust it.

Paterson calls him "J. N." He was a young Brahman, from the highest Hindu caste, who had attended the mission school in Paterson's town. As he grew up the teaching of Christ drew him, and he also attended the Sunday school of one of the women missionaries. When he left school and began to earn his living, he publicly confessed Christ as his Saviour, in the face of what Paterson calls "the bitterest opposition" of his widowed mother and his relatives.

His family then changed tactics. Instead of opposing him, they began to please him. Their kindness won his heart, and he went back home. There he fell in with young men who led him into drink. Paterson thought the weakness might have run in the family. He fell, and he denied his Lord.

But he was miserable. He went to Mr. Hyde, "who received him as did the father his prodigal son." The young man came to live with Hyde. Once again he was won from his old ways and confessed his faith. And once again the drink would take hold of him. More than once he stole Hyde's clothes and sold them to buy liquor.

Paterson met Hyde around that time. With a smile Hyde told him, "I may not get up to you to the hills this summer, the Father evidently desires me to spend my hot weather in the plains, for I have no warm clothes left!" He took the loss, Paterson says, cheerfully, and thought his clothes "a small price to pay in exchange for an immortal soul." The letter to the Hebrews commends believers who "took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one" (Hebrews 10:34, ASV). Hyde would point out how the Lord had borne with Judas, and how he never sent away anyone who wanted to stay with him. So Hyde bore with the young man.

The Train to Lahore

Paterson heard the next part of the story from a stranger. He was travelling by train when a Christian woman who worked as a ticket collector at a station told him about a remarkable man she had just seen.

A missionary had been talking to a young man sitting in a train bound for Lahore. The young man was loud and almost abusive. "I am tired of this sort of thing," he said. "I am going to my boon companions and shall have a good time." The missionary leaned forward and, in a low voice, begged him not to go away from him. He got only a rude answer. The ticket collector, disgusted, walked away. When she came back, the missionary was leaning into the carriage window, still pleading. He was imploring the young man in Christ's name, and she saw tears running

down his cheeks as he reasoned with him. The young man would not listen. The train pulled out. The missionary, Paterson later learned, went on alone and sad to stay with friends at Gujrat.

The next day the ticket collector saw the same young man coming back from Lahore. "You have come back very soon again," she said. He looked up at her with a pale face. "I am going back to him," he said. "I have not been able to sleep all night — I could not forget his tears."

The missionary was John Hyde, and the young man was J. N.

Years later J. N. told Paterson what happened when he got back. He went to the mission house where Hyde was staying and found him in his room, praying. Hyde opened his eyes, saw him, took him in his arms, and said, "I have just been praying that God would send you back to me, and see, He has answered me!"

"I Could Not Forget His Tears"

The verse at the head of this chapter comes from Paul's farewell to the elders of the church at Ephesus. Looking back on three years among them, Paul reminded them that "I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31, ASV). Tears were not a sign of weakness in Paul's ministry. They were one of its instruments. He told the Corinthians, "I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls" (2 Corinthians 12:15, ASV).

Paterson drew the obvious lesson. "I often feel that if souls could say the same of us, that we wept over them — our tears would bring them to a proper frame of mind." He reminded his readers that Jesus himself wept at the grave of Lazarus, and that those who saw him said, "Behold how he loved him!" (John 11:36, ASV).

There is no technique in this. Tears cannot be produced to order, and tears produced to manipulate someone are a kind of lie. What moved J. N. was not the tears themselves but what they revealed: that this man really loved him, cared more for his soul than for his own dignity, and would lean out of a train window in front of strangers to plead with him. Many people have heard the gospel explained correctly. Fewer have seen someone weep for them.

A Waiting Shed at Moga

J. N. also told Paterson how he had first come to know Hyde, and his account shows Hyde's way with people very clearly.

He had seen Hyde on the platform of the railway station at Moga. He went up to him, mentioned the name of another missionary, and said that he himself had been baptized but had fallen away. "Why did you deny Christ?" Hyde asked him. The young man began to make excuses. Hyde did not argue. He took him into the third-class waiting shed, and there, with two other Christians, knelt down and prayed with him. A crowd gathered to stare. The young man's own relatives came and saw him kneeling with the Christians. Then the train came in. Hyde said goodbye and added, "We will meet again in a week's time or so, God will arrange it."

The encounter so affected the young man that he set out to find Hyde. He heard that Hyde was holding meetings in a Christian village some distance inland. With a Christian friend he walked for two days to get there, and arrived exhausted. He was told Hyde was in his room praying. Hyde looked up, saw the Brahman lad, and took him in his arms "in good Punjabi style." Then, seeing how tired he was, he made him lie down and began to rub and press his swollen feet. The young man protested. A Brahman did not expect a European missionary to touch his feet. Hyde

insisted on serving him with his own hands. Years later, J. N. told Paterson about it with tears in his eyes, and said, "I often see him in my dreams before me as of old."

Jesus, having washed his disciples' feet, told them: "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14, ASV). Hyde had never needed to be told twice.

An Island in a Pool

In the same Christian village J. N. saw something he never forgot. One day he missed Hyde and went looking for him. He found him on a small island in a pool, surrounded by Christian children, all of them praying. The young man waded across to join them. Hyde was praying aloud, a phrase at a time, and the children were repeating what he said. They were praying that God's Holy Spirit might fill all their hearts. Afterwards Hyde crossed back through the water with them all, and said to J. N. that God had told him from his Word to go into the valley and pray. He saw that this place was the valley, and as he went, the children had followed him.

That evening, while they were eating dinner, news came that the village's Indian pastor had suddenly fallen ill and that his house was on fire. Everyone ran to help. While the others fought the flames, Hyde went to the pastor and found him crying out in pain and fear of death, with some unconfessed sin evidently weighing on his conscience. Hyde talked and prayed with him. Then he said, "I think it is God's will that you confess your sin in church before your congregation." The pastor agreed, and he was carried to the church on his bed. Lying on it, weeping, he confessed that he had committed a great sin against God in that very church, and prayed for forgiveness. According to the story, a great peace came over him and his pain left him. About twenty members of the congregation,

conscience-stricken, confessed their own sins too. The firefighters joined them, and the service went on for an hour and a half. Then everyone went back to their half-eaten dinner.

From that village Hyde and his companions went on to a hill station where he had been urgently asked to hold meetings. They travelled third class in the heat, with only enough money for one pony and one porter between them, so they took turns riding. One night the Indian preacher, riding ahead, felt his pony freeze. A tiger had sprung from the roadside and landed just behind him. The terrified pony bolted and leapt a ditch, and the tiger was left on the road. When Hyde came up later there was no sign of it. He made them go back by moonlight to see the paw marks in the dust. They stayed a week in the hill station, and J. N., who was with them, was convicted of having denied his Lord, confessed, and was received back into fellowship. "So they went like beggars and returned like kings!" Paterson remarked, and the young man laughed and agreed. A missionary, he said, had lent him his own pony for the journey home.

An Unfinished Story

It would be pleasant to end J. N.'s story there. Paterson did not. When he wrote his reminiscences, about ten years after Hyde's death, J. N. was still coming to see him. He was "much chastened," but he had still not given up drink, and he admitted he had not kept his promise. He was working for a lawyer in a job Paterson disliked. His aged mother was still alive, and the old Brahman friend who came with him whispered that the young man would come back to the Christians "whenever his mother dies." The young man smiled and did not deny it. He spoke of Hyde, pointing upward, as the one "Up there." Paterson reminded him that Hyde was praying for him, and

asked his readers to pray too. “It is not for nothing,” he wrote, “that God has sent the lad back to me and he is sitting by my side as I write.”

That is where the record ends. We do not know what became of J. N. His story is a reminder that even the most loving intercession does not guarantee a tidy result, and that Hyde’s tears did not end his friend’s struggle. They kept him coming back. Love, Paul says, “beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things” (1 Corinthians 13:7, ASV). Sometimes that is all it can do, and it is not nothing.

Blankets and a Stick

J. N. was not the only one who took advantage of Hyde. Jones heard repeatedly that people stole Hyde’s belongings. He saw men wearing clothes they had taken from him, and would not call them to account “lest the men should be driven further away from Christ.” Some of his fellow missionaries blamed him for it.

One of Hyde’s Indian evangelists, who shared a village mud house with him for a time, told Paterson a story against himself. One cold winter night Hyde knocked at his door, late. The evangelist did not want to open it. Hyde called his name and asked, “Can you lend me a sheet for the night?” “Where are your own blankets?” the evangelist snapped through the closed door. Then he answered his own question: “Oh yes! that drunken sot that was with you has gone off with them. He will sell them, get drink and make a beast of himself. Do you know that you put us all about by doing things like this and then shivering yourself in the cold?”

The evangelist asked Paterson, with tears, whether he could imagine Hyde’s answer. Hyde called him by name and said: “If the prodigal had come back to you, you would have taken a stick to him!”

It is the gentlest possible rebuke, and it goes to the heart of the parable. In Jesus' story, the father sees his son "while he was yet afar off" and "was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (Luke 15:20, ASV). It is the elder brother who stands outside, angry, counting the cost. Hyde knew which character he wanted to be.

"He Has No Fault"

Jones heard another story from an Indian doctor in the Punjab shortly after Hyde's death. The Arya Samaj, the Hindu reform movement that was working hard against Christian conversions, had been troubled by Hyde's influence and by the number of people baptized under his preaching. Its members decided to send a man to live near Hyde, watch for his faults, and publish them, so as to break his influence.

Their man went to Hyde pretending to be an enquirer who wanted to know all about Christianity. Hyde welcomed him kindly and invited him to stay. He stayed for three or four days, watching Hyde day and night. Then he ran away, went back to the men who had sent him, and said: "He has no fault, the man has no fault, he is a God and not man."

McGaw records a similar remark by a young Hindu: "Mr. Hyde seems to me like God." Hyde would have been appalled by such words. He was painfully aware of his own sins, and he hid when he thought people were admiring him rather than Christ. We should read these stories as the tribute of people who had never seen anything like the Christ-like love they saw in him, and who reached for the only word they had. But the stories point to something real. Jesus told his disciples, "Give to every one that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again" (Luke 6:30, ASV). Very few Christians take that literally. Hyde seems to have done so, and it made even his enemies wonder.

Given Altogether

One more fact about Hyde belongs here. He never married. Jones once asked him why, pointing out that a wife could look after his comforts. Hyde smiled, paused, and then answered "just as if he were betraying a secret":

> *Years ago I felt that I wanted to give something to Jesus Christ who loved me so, and I gave myself to Him absolutely and promised Him that no one should come into my life and share my affection for Him. I told the Lord that I would not marry but be His altogether.*

Scripture honours such a choice without requiring it. Jesus spoke of some who make themselves celibate "for the kingdom of heaven's sake," and added, "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it" (Matthew 19:12, ASV). Paul wrote that "he that is unmarried is careful for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:32, ASV), while insisting that marriage is good and that each person has "his own gift from God" (1 Corinthians 7:7, ASV). Hyde's vow was his own gift and calling, not a pattern for others. But it explains a good deal. He had no household to protect, no family to worry about on a dark road, and no children to feed. He could give away his blankets and wait in a village until dark for one more soul. His angry evangelist, on the dark road, had thought that the Sahib had no wife or family to think of. He meant it as a complaint. Hyde would have heard it as a description of what he had freely given.

For Reflection

Hyde's love for people was not sentimental. It cost him his clothes, his blankets, his sleep, his dignity at a railway window, and, as we will see, his

health. And it did not always succeed. J. N. was still struggling ten years after Hyde's death.

But it made the gospel visible. A drunken Brahman could not forget his tears. An enemy sent to spy on him could find no fault. An evangelist who slammed the door on him remembered his answer for the rest of his life. Most of us will never be asked to love as extravagantly as Hyde did. But each of us can ask whether anyone has ever been unable to forget our love for them, and whether there is someone we should be leaning out of a window to plead with today.

The Cross He Could Not Stop Preaching

"but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross."
— Philippians 2:7-8, ASV

A Whole Day on His Knees

At one of the Sialkot Conventions, the European visitors slept in the dormitory of the mission boarding school, a long, narrow building crowded with beds. Pengwern Jones found that his bed had been placed between Hyde's and Dr. Griswold's. He also noticed that Hyde's bed was never slept in. Hyde spent his nights in the prayer room.

One morning, soon after dawn, Hyde rushed into the dormitory, went down on his knees beside his bed, and began to pray. Jones went to have an early breakfast, came back, and found him still praying. He went out to the prayer meeting and the morning service and came back at eleven. Hyde was still on his knees. Jones went to lunch, returned at half past twelve, lay down on his cot to rest, and watched him. The dormitory was noisy all day. People came in and out between the services, talking, looking for things, and resting. Jones went to the afternoon service, then to tea, then to the five

o'clock meeting, coming back each time. At six o'clock Hyde was still kneeling. He had been there all day.

Jones decided to wait. If Hyde rose, he would ask him how he could pray all day amid such noise. Half an hour later Hyde looked up and smiled. Jones sat on his bed and asked him the secret. He offered to fetch him a cup of tea. Hyde refused the tea and asked only for a glass of water. Then he said, "Let me tell you what a vision I had — a new vision of Christ!"

Lower and Lower

Jones wrote down what Hyde said that evening as best he could remember it. He confessed that he could not do it justice. His account falls into three stages. It is a meditation on the verse at the head of this chapter, Paul's great hymn about the self-emptying of Christ.

First, Hyde spoke of what it cost Christ to become a man. Jones had never seen it this way. Christ left his glory to live in a sinful world, and breathed its air every day. No wonder, Hyde said, that he often escaped from the crowds to the mountains, as though for a breath of the fresh air of heaven. Hyde described the holy Son of God living surrounded by sin until Jones felt that "even the Incarnation was an Infinite Sacrifice, even if the Death on Calvary had never taken place." Then Hyde stopped, and said quietly, "and He took this place — became man — for me."

After a while he went on. Second, Christ became a slave. He washed his disciples' feet, which was the work of a slave. He did not merely act like a servant. He, the King of kings, whom the hosts of heaven worshipped, "became a bond-servant, a slave." Paul's word in Philippians 2:7 means exactly that. Hyde wept as he spoke, and Jones wept with him.

Then Hyde said something that shocked Jones so much that he hesitated, years later, to write it down. "I saw more," Hyde said. "I saw that my Jesus became a dog."

"My Jesus Became a Dog"

It is a startling phrase, and it needs careful reading. Hyde explained what he meant. He had been thinking about the Syrophoenician woman who begged Jesus to heal her daughter. Jesus answered her, "it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs," and she replied, "Yea, Lord; even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs" (Mark 7:27-28, ASV). Jesus used the contemptuous word of his day for Gentiles, and the woman accepted it. But Christ died for the Gentiles, for the "dogs." It must be, Hyde reasoned, that to save them he took the dog's place.

"At first," he told Jones, "this was too awful to think of." But when he thought of Christ's life, he saw how much of it resembled the life of the pariah dogs that roamed every Indian town. Those dogs had no home. Christ said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20, ASV). Those dogs were constantly kicked and beaten. Christ was driven away, mocked, struck, and at last killed. "And that is what I have been doing," Hyde said, "worshipping Him and praising Him for this."

Hyde was not saying that Christ became less than human, or that he ceased to be God. He was reaching, in the language of the Indian streets, for a way to express how low Christ stooped. His Punjabi listeners knew exactly what it meant to be treated like a dog. Many of the village Christians he served had been treated that way all their lives by their higher-caste neighbours. Psalm 22, which Christ quoted on the cross, says, "For dogs have compassed me" (Psalm 22:16, ASV). Hyde saw the Saviour not only

surrounded by dogs but numbered among the despised. It was his way of saying what Paul says in Philippians: Christ "humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross."

Jones never forgot that evening. "I remember nothing of dinner that night," he wrote. "My impression is that we both sat on that bed for hours speaking of Christ ... I shall never forget the vision I had of the love of Christ going lower and lower, suffering more and more and all for me."

A Sermon on the Cross

At another convention Hyde gave an address to the European visitors, most of them missionaries, on the Cross. Jones called it "one of the most inspiring messages I ever heard."

Hyde began by saying that from whatever side we look at Christ on the cross, we see wounds. From above we see the marks of the crown of thorns, and from behind, the furrows of the scourging. He went on to show that in the crucified Christ there is sufficiency for every need. Jones felt, as he listened, that he had enough "for time and for eternity." But the climax came when Hyde spoke of Christ's cry, "It is finished" (John 19:30, ASV).

To the disciples, Hyde said, it seemed that Jesus had failed. To his enemies it seemed they had finally overcome him. To all appearances the struggle was over and his life had ended in tragedy. And at that moment he cried out in triumph. "It is finished" was not a groan of defeat but a shout of victory, raised in the darkest hour.

Then Hyde applied it. United to Christ, he said, we too can shout in triumph when everything points to despair. Our work may seem to have failed and the enemy to have won. All our friends may blame us and our colleagues pity us. Even then we can take our stand with Christ on the cross

and shout, "Victory, Victory, Victory!" "This," Hyde said, "is real Victory: to shout triumphantly though all around is dense darkness."

Jones said that from that day he never despaired about his work. Whenever he felt discouraged, he seemed to hear Hyde's voice shouting "Victory," and it took him straight to Calvary. Among the listeners was the Hon. M. Waldegrave, son of the English evangelical peer Lord Radstock. Waldegrave told Jones afterwards that he usually went to his tent after each meeting to write the message down for his wife, "but Mr. Hyde's message just delivered seems so sacred and appealing that I dare not try to write it."

When Jones talked with Hyde afterwards, Hyde told him that for a whole year he had been "fascinated by the Cross." "I cannot speak on any other subject now," he said. Paul had written the same thing: "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2, ASV).

Silence Instead of a Sermon

Paterson remembered an evening at Sialkot that shows Hyde's devotion to the cross in a different way. The committee had decided not to announce the names of speakers, so that people would attend to the message rather than the messenger. But word had got out that Hyde was to speak, and the hall was full and expectant. A close friend of Hyde's was in the chair that evening. The subject of Christ's sufferings was heavy on his heart, and when he was asked what psalm should be sung, he suggested Psalm 22. To his surprise, the song leader announced that they would sing Psalm 22 "at Mr. Hyde's request." The two men had not spoken about it.

Hyde sat on the platform behind the pulpit, deep in prayer. When he did not move, the chairman read from Zechariah 13, where the prophet asks, "What are these wounds between thine arms?" and the answer comes,

"Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends" (Zechariah 13:6, ASV). He spoke about the loneliness of Christ in his sufferings. Then, during another hymn, he laid his hand on Hyde's shoulder and said, "If God has a message for you to give, will you give it now?" Hyde did not move. The convention's chairman, the Rev. John Forman, leaned over to ask whether Hyde was going to speak, and was told that he had been asked. When the singing stopped, the chairman asked whether he might give two messages that God had laid on his own heart, and did so. The meeting went on to its close, and Hyde slipped away to the prayer room without saying a word.

Later Paterson asked him about it. Hyde said he had been full of a subject, "The Glory of Christ's Kingdom." But when the chairman laid a hand on his shoulder, the gesture seemed to press him down. The words "If God has a message" made him doubt whether God wanted him to speak just then. So he waited in prayer, and received no clear leading to speak. He kept silent. Paterson thought it took both a man closely in touch with his Father and a man who cared more for God's approval than for other people's to keep silent in front of a crowd that had come to hear him.

A Letter About Psalm 22

Psalm 22 seems to have been especially dear to Hyde, and we have a rare piece of his own writing about it. In a letter to his sister Mary he wrote a set of notes on the psalm, verse by verse. McGaw printed them in 1923. He added the text of the psalm and slightly rearranged the notes, but he insisted that "the notes are from the hand of dear John himself."

The psalm begins with the cry Jesus uttered on the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Psalm 22:1, ASV). Hyde saw David "praying in some deep and terrible trial," an agony "so real and awful as to

reveal to David Christ's prayer." He described the opening cry as "the cry, the voice of the sufferings of hell, but by a person with the praise of heaven in his heart." And he noticed how quickly the psalm turns from forsakenness to worship: "But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel" (Psalm 22:3, ASV).

On the verse "But I am a worm, and no man; A reproach of men, and despised of the people" (Psalm 22:6, ASV), Hyde wrote that the speaker is "taking the sinner's place and enduring what came to him on the Cross of Calvary. The sinner's place and reproach, yet himself without sin." On the verses about trust from birth, he noticed that there is "no cry for mercy — just help which is his by right — the sinless Christ. Yet in his greatest sufferings, 'There is none to help.'"

His longest note is on a line from verse 17: "I may count all my bones. They look and stare upon me" (Psalm 22:17, ASV). Hyde saw in the first half a picture of Christ worn thin: "How this tells of three years — yes, a lifetime, but especially of three years of sorrow over our, my, sin, of prayer and fasting and watching, sometimes whole nights; and then days and nights of work — teaching, healing, preaching, and of grief as he saw sin and its hold and havoc." And on the second half: "How this tells of a human soul, sensitive and shrinking from the gaze of men. This tells of the indignities heaped upon him which only the most refined and holy can feel in all their power!"

Finally, on the psalm's great turn, "Yea, from the horns of the wild-oxen thou hast answered me" (Psalm 22:21, ASV), Hyde wrote: "Here again is a cry for help unheard, yet in faith heard. Thou hast 'answered me.'" The rest of the psalm, he noted, reveals "the glory that shall follow."

McGaw, reading these notes, said something that anyone who has read this far will understand. "It has seemed to me that in no other writings have I seen such a likeness of the dear brother himself. I have said, 'John Hyde

has here unconsciously given us a portrait of John Hyde.'" The man who prayed whole nights, grew thin with grief over sin, shrank from people's gaze, and cried for help "unheard, yet in faith heard", and who would die with a shout of victory, was describing his Lord. In the process, without meaning to, he described what his Lord had made of him.

"Dead and Buried"

McGaw's informant (almost certainly Paterson) preserved one of Hyde's sayings that sums up what the cross meant for his daily life. "When we keep near to Jesus," Hyde used to say, "it is he who draws souls to himself through us, but he must be lifted up in our lives; that is, we must be crucified with him." It is "self," he said, that comes between us and him. So self must be dealt with as Christ was dealt with: "crucified, dead and buried with Christ." And he added a sentence that his friends never forgot: if self is not buried, "the stench of the old man will frighten souls away." But if those three steps downward are taken, then the new man will be "revived, raised, and seated," the corresponding steps upward.

This is the language of Paul: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20, ASV), and, "far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14, ASV). For Hyde, the cross was not only the place where his sins were forgiven. It was the pattern of the life he was called to live, lower and lower, and always, in the end, lifted up.

For Reflection

Hyde's friends remembered many things about his prayers: their length, their intensity, their tears. But what they remembered most about his preaching was that he could not stop talking about the cross. "I cannot speak on any other subject now."

That is the right order. The prayer came from the cross, not the other way round. A man who has seen Christ go "lower and lower ... all for me" will pray, and weep, and give away his blankets, not in order to earn anything but because he has seen what he has been given. If our own prayer is thin, the remedy may not be more effort at praying. It may be more time at the foot of the cross, looking, until we too can say, "and He took this place — for me."

A Heart on the Wrong Side

"And he saith unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while. For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat."
— Mark 6:31, ASV

The Last Convention

The Sialkot Convention of 1910 was John Hyde's last. McGaw's sources remember it as the climax of his ministry there. The burden he had carried for five years, they said, pressed heavier each year. Before the convention he spent long nights in prayer, and "the long sleepless nights and weary days of watching with prayer" were "written on every feature of his face." Yet when he stood up to speak, "his figure was almost transformed," and he spoke "with such fire and such force that many hardly recognized the changed man."

That year, the memoirs say, Hyde was called to help at revival meetings and conferences far beyond the Punjab, in Calcutta, Bombay, and other large cities. In the same year, the same sources add, he "was never more misjudged and misunderstood." They do not say by whom. It may have been fellow missionaries who thought his piety extreme, or churches that found his preaching on sin uncomfortable. Hyde was now forty-four, and

he had been in India for eighteen years. He did not know it, but he had little more than a year of health left.

A Fortnight in Calcutta

After the convention Hyde went to Calcutta to hold meetings. He stayed nearly a fortnight with a friend there, and McGaw printed the friend's account. The friend was probably the Mr. F. Kehl of Calcutta whom McGaw thanks in his acknowledgements.

Hyde had fever the whole time. "Yet he took the meetings regularly, and how God spoke to us, though he was bodily unfit to do any work!" The host was himself unwell with a pain in his chest that kept him awake at night. From his dark room he could see the flash of Hyde's electric light across the passage whenever Hyde got up and switched it on. He watched it come on at twelve, at two, at four, and at five. From five it stayed on until sunrise.

Hyde grew worse, and the annual meeting of his mission was calling him back to the Punjab. The friend grew anxious and persuaded Hyde to see a doctor. The next morning, the friend wrote, the doctor gave his verdict:

> *The heart is in an awful condition. I have never come across such a bad case as this. It has been shifted out of its natural position on the left side to a place over on the right side. Through stress and strain it is in such a bad condition that it will require months and months of strictly quiet life to bring it back again to anything like its normal state. What have you been doing with yourself?*

"Dear Hyde said nothing," the friend wrote. "He only smiled. But we who knew him knew the cause; his life of incessant prayer day and night, praying

exceedingly with many tears for his converts, for his fellow-laborers, for his friends, and for the church in India!"

What Was Wrong with His Heart?

This is the origin of one of the most famous claims about Praying Hyde: that prayer physically moved his heart from one side of his chest to the other. The story has been retold countless times, and it usually loses its source along the way. It deserves careful handling, because it is precisely the kind of story that devotion embroiders.

First, what we actually have is a friend's report, written down years later, of what a Calcutta doctor said after one examination. We do not have the doctor's name or his notes. We do not know what instruments he used or what he meant by "shifted." The friend then added his own interpretation of the cause. The doctor, according to the friend's own account, did not know the cause. He asked Hyde, "What have you been doing with yourself?"

Second, a heart found on the right side of the chest has well-known medical explanations. Some people are born with the heart on the right side, a condition called dextrocardia. It often causes no trouble and may go unnoticed for years until a doctor listens in the right place. In other cases a heart in the normal position is pushed or pulled to the right by disease in the chest, such as fluid around the lungs, a collapsed or scarred lung, or a growth. Doctors call that dextroposition. Either might explain what the Calcutta doctor found. A man who had lived for eighteen years in the Punjab, often in poor village conditions, and who was feverish at the time of the examination, could easily have had some such illness.

Third, Hyde's final illness gives us another clue. Within a year and a half he would die of a malignant tumour. For years before that he had suffered

from severe headaches. The memoirs mention them several times, and the headache that sent him to Clifton Springs was, McGaw says, one he had "suffered much before leaving India." We cannot diagnose a man a century after his death. But it is at least possible that the illness that killed him had been at work in his body for some time. Serious illness can affect the heart and lungs in ways that a doctor of 1910 might describe as a heart "shifted" and "in an awful condition."

None of this means that Hyde's way of life did him no harm. It almost certainly did. A man who slept very little for years, often missed meals, and kept long vigils while carrying fever would wear his body down. But the notion that prayer itself moved a healthy heart across the chest is a devotional interpretation laid on top of a medical report we do not fully have. The honest course is to tell the story as Hyde's friends told it, and to leave the miracle unclaimed.

"The Man Who Never Sleeps" Pays the Price

There is a harder question behind the medical one, and Hyde's friends did not avoid it. Was it right for him to live as he did?

The Calcutta friend put the question sharply: "We have heard of martyrs who were kept in prison, and in the end were put to death. But have we ever heard of one who was so given up to the ministry of prayer that the strain of a daily burden brought him to a premature grave?" Another missionary in India answered: "No, friend, not a premature grave; it was the grave of Jesus Christ. John Hyde laid down his life calmly and deliberately for the Church of God in India."

That is a moving answer, and there is truth in it. Paul described his own ministry as one of "labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" (2 Corinthians 11:27,

ASV). He did not treat his body's decline as failure: "though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16, ASV). Christians are called to "present your bodies a living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1, ASV). Some are called to spend themselves in ways that shorten their lives, and the church rightly honours them.

But other voices in the story should also be heard. Griswold, who admired Hyde, noted that he "was sometimes criticised by his brethren for the rigorous and ascetic nature of his piety, for the way in which he seemed to deny to the flesh even its just claims." The phrase "its just claims" matters. The body has claims that are just. It needs food and sleep, and it has limits. The teenage servant who cried because his master would not eat or sleep at the conventions was not lacking in spirituality. He was seeing clearly. And the confident claim a friend made in 1907, that since Hyde had learned to draw on God's strength he scarcely felt tired, and that "no man need ever break down through overstrain in this ministry of intercession", did not survive the events of 1910 and 1911.

The Lord Who Said "Rest a While"

The verse at the head of this chapter is easy to overlook in a book about a man of prayer. The apostles had returned from a mission. They were so busy that "they had no leisure so much as to eat." And Jesus did not tell them to pray harder or work longer. He told them to "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while" (Mark 6:31, ASV).

The Bible has a great deal to say about the body's limits, and it says it without embarrassment. When Elijah collapsed in exhaustion and despair under a juniper tree, God did not rebuke him or send him to pray. An angel woke him and said, "Arise and eat." He ate, and slept again. Then the angel came a second time: "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for

thee" (1 Kings 19:5-7, ASV). The psalmist says that rising early, staying up late, and eating the bread of anxious toil is vain, "For so he giveth unto his beloved sleep" (Psalm 127:2, ASV). Jesus himself, in the middle of a storm, was "asleep on the cushion" (Mark 4:38, ASV). And Paul, who fasted often, also warned against practices that have "a show of wisdom ... and severity to the body" but are "not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh" (Colossians 2:23, ASV).

None of this condemns Hyde. His long nights were not a technique for earning God's favour or displaying piety. By every account they were a response to burdens he believed God had laid on him. His friends say he regularly asked God whether he should eat or sleep, and obeyed when he was told to. The story of the lunch bell shows that. And a man should be judged by the light he had. Many devout Christians of Hyde's era, formed by the holiness teaching of the time, saw the neglect of the body as a sign of devotion. Hyde's Indian neighbours, many of whom revered their own ascetic holy men, may have been especially moved by it. Griswold noted that his "simple, mystical and ascetic type of piety powerfully impressed the Indian people."

But it does mean that Hyde's way of praying should not be copied as a pattern. His closest friends were clear about this. Jones remembered how Hyde himself dreaded that anyone should try to imitate him, and he urged readers to follow Hyde's spirit of prayer, "but not necessarily in the 'form' that he manifested it." Many Christians, Jones said, "cannot spend weeks in prayer and fasting as he did, they are physically unfit for it." But everyone can make prayer "their very breath." Hyde's form of prayer was his calling, and it cost him his life. The spirit of that prayer is for everyone, and it need not cost anyone their health.

Leaving India

Hyde did not follow the Calcutta doctor's advice to live quietly for months. The mission's annual meeting was calling him back to the Punjab, and he seems to have gone. He had founded the Ferozepore training school for village preachers and teachers, and it was about to move to Moga. Moga itself was the district where the baptisms had been increasing for five years. There was much to hold him.

But his health was failing. In March 1911 he left India for the last time. McGaw wrote that he started home "as the physicians would say, a 'dying man.'" He had arrived in India in the autumn of 1892, "less than twenty years before." McGaw added: "But surely they were nineteen beautiful years!"

For Reflection

It is right to honour John Hyde's sacrifice, and right to be moved by a man who loved the church in India so much that he would not spare himself. It is also right to say that God does not usually ask his servants to destroy their health in prayer, and that rest, food, and sleep are gifts from him, not concessions to weakness.

Hyde's life does not settle that tension, and we should not pretend it does. But it gives us a question worth asking. Are we more at risk of sparing ourselves too much in God's service, or too little? Most of us, if we are honest, know the answer to that. Those who are the exception, who are already spending themselves beyond their strength, should hear the Lord who said, "Come ye yourselves apart ... and rest a while."

Wales, Shrewsbury, and a Hymn That Sang Him Down

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."
— Galatians 6:2, ASV

A Guest on Good Friday

Pengwern Jones had gone home to Wales on furlough in December 1910. Before he left India he had seen Hyde, who told him he expected to take his own furlough early in 1911. Jones gave Hyde his address and begged him to visit on his way through Britain. Hyde answered, as he usually did, that he would come if the Lord opened the way. Then he lost the address.

Jones later pieced together how Hyde found him anyway, and he told the story as a small chain of providences. The day before Hyde's steamer reached Liverpool, Hyde asked a missionary of the Church Missionary Society on board whether he had any idea what part of Wales Jones came from. Jones barely knew the man and had never met his wife. But the man said his wife had Jones's address, went down to her cabin, and brought it up. Jones never discovered how she came to have it.

The ship docked on Good Friday, 14 April 1911. Hyde crossed the Mersey to Birkenhead to catch a train for Llangollen, in north Wales, where Jones's family lived. At the station he was told that only one train ran on Good Friday, and it had gone. A bystander overheard and told him that a

cheap excursion train was going direct to Llangollen. But excursion passengers could not take luggage, and Hyde had all his belongings in a large American trunk. He stood there, Jones was sure, and prayed. Then the guard came up and said, "Go and secure your seat and leave your trunk with me, I shall bring it in my van."

Meanwhile, in Llangollen, Jones had been surprised to find himself free. A deputation tour he had been booked for had been cancelled at the last minute because the district was busy preparing for the investiture of the Prince of Wales at Caernarfon. He wondered what the free fortnight was for. On Good Friday morning he walked round the little town as he had as a boy. When he got home his wife met him at the door, greatly excited. "Guess who has come," she said. "Go to the bedroom and see who is there having a wash." Jones rushed upstairs, and there was Hyde, "with his face beaming with joy."

A Little Heaven in Llangollen

Jones called the following weeks "a little Heaven on earth." A doctor and his wife who lived nearby begged to have Hyde to stay, and Jones, knowing Hyde needed medical care, gladly agreed. But Hyde came to Jones's house for most of his meals. He and Mrs. Jones understood each other "from the very first hour." Grace before meals often turned into a long prayer, and the food went cold.

They walked together on the hills around the town. They sat on the rustic benches set out for visitors, or lay in the shade of the trees, and prayed. On these walks, Jones says, Hyde gave him "some of his early history" and spoke often of his mother. It may have been on these walks, too, that he told Jones the stories of the letter on the ship and the open-air meeting recorded in the early chapters of this book.

One visit that spring became a small classic. Jones took Hyde to see an elderly Christian woman who was very deaf. She told them loudly that she missed the church services terribly, "for I cannot hear anything when I go." To her astonishment, Hyde answered, "You ought to praise God for that." She thought he had misheard, and repeated, "I cannot hear, I tell you." "That is why I tell you that you should praise the Lord," he said. Then he explained. He himself could rarely hear anything at services. But it was a wonderful opportunity to pray. He would look at the preacher and pray for him. Then he would look at the people one by one and pray for each of them as he looked, until he found himself praising God for his deafness because it gave him such an opportunity for prayer and worship. The old woman laughed heartily and said she would try it. Two or three years later she wrote to Jones that Hyde's advice had made a wonderful difference to her life.

The deafness that had troubled him as a young missionary, and that he had carried for twenty years, had become a gift he could pass on to someone else.

Shrewsbury

Jones heard that the American evangelist J. Wilbur Chapman and his song leader Charles M. Alexander were about to hold a mission at Shrewsbury, just over the border in England. Chapman and Alexander were near the end of a long evangelistic tour around the world. Hyde had never met Chapman, but they were both Presbyterians, and he wanted to. So he and Jones took small rooms in a quiet hotel in Shrewsbury for three days. They were joined for the first afternoon by a couple who had been deeply blessed in the revival of 1904 and 1905.

The mission opened in the Music Hall on Thursday, 20 April 1911. Jones was disappointed to find the streets almost empty as they walked to the first service. Near the hall they met Chapman and his party, and Hyde introduced himself. Very few people came. The evening meeting was larger, but there was no enthusiasm. Chapman and his team were clearly discouraged. That night an elder of one of the local churches, an old friend of Jones's, joined them for supper. He was surprised that they had come all the way to attend a mission. He had heard of it but had not bothered to go.

The next day Chapman called the ministers and church leaders of the town together to discuss how to rouse the people. Hyde and Jones were invited. Chapman spoke with intensity. But some of the ministers treated the whole mission "as some little side-show," and their remarks showed "a state of appalling indifference." At last Chapman, with a sad face, said that if that was the spirit in which the town's leaders faced the mission, he had nothing more to say, and he left the room. That sobered the most flippant, and the few earnest people carried the meeting.

Jones watched Hyde. "I noticed Hyde's head getting lower and lower, and his face wore that burdened look he always had when the burden of prayer was coming on him." Hyde said little to anyone that night. Both men had preaching engagements elsewhere on the Sunday, and they left the next afternoon. But Hyde asked Jones to book his hotel room for the following week, because he meant to come back early on Monday morning. "I cannot leave a brother minister to bear this burden alone," he said.

The verse at the head of this chapter was the whole of Hyde's reasoning. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2, ASV). Chapman was a stranger, and a famous one. Hyde owed him nothing and was himself seriously ill. But a brother was carrying a heavy load, and the law of Christ said to help carry it.

"Here Is a Minister Who Sorely Needs Thy Help"

Jones was worried about Hyde's health. Without telling him, he wrote to Chapman asking whether someone could be found to help Hyde in his intercession. Chapman arranged for a Mr. Davis of the Pocket Testament League (probably George T. B. Davis), a man of like spirit, to be with him, and the two became friends. Hyde went back on Monday, 24 April, and stayed the rest of the week.

What happened next has been told in two quite different ways, and it is worth setting them side by side.

The famous version is a letter printed in both memoirs of 1923, without a date or an addressee. In Carré's copy Chapman says he had received "a letter from a missionary", which fits the note Jones had quietly sent him. In it Chapman describes a mission in England where the audience was extremely small, until he received a note saying that an American missionary known as "the Praying Hyde" was coming to pray. "Almost instantly the tide turned. The hall was packed, and my first invitation meant fifty men for Jesus Christ." Then Chapman asked Hyde to pray for him. Hyde, in this version, came to Chapman's room, "turned the key in the door, dropped on his knees, waited five minutes without a single syllable coming from his lips." Chapman could hear both their hearts beating, and felt hot tears running down his face. Then Hyde said, "Oh God!", was silent for at least five more minutes, and then prayed for men as Chapman had never heard anyone pray. "I rose from my knees," Chapman says, "to know what real prayer was."

But Chapman himself published an account of the same prayer in 1917, in a book of his own called *When Home Is Heaven*, and it reads differently. He names the town: "We were in Shrewsbury, England, and our work was not going well, when a message came to me that an American missionary

had heard of our difficulties and was coming over to pray for us." He was told not to provide for the missionary's entertainment or give him any consideration at all. He was told that the missionary might not even attend the meetings, "but he would pray." The missionary came, and "instantly the tide turned in our work, and the victory was remarkable." Then, as Chapman was leaving Shrewsbury, he sent for Hyde and asked him to pray for him:

> *He knelt beside me, he was still for several moments, I was tempted to open my eyes, and I saw his face lighted up with the light of heaven, his lips trembling, and his tears starting, and then he said something like this: "My Father, here is a minister who sorely needs Thy help, do bless him, I beseech Thee, may his life be precious in Thy sight. May he be girded anew with strength for service; may Jesus Christ become more real to him," and then he was still again for a little while, and when the closing words of the prayer were said we arose from our knees and I had learned a never-to-be-forgotten lesson concerning intercession.*

Chapman's authorised biographer, writing in 1920 with Chapman's papers in front of him, printed the 1917 version and recorded that on the very day the missionary arrived "at least fifty people" responded to the invitation.

The two versions agree on the essentials. The mission was struggling. Word came that Hyde was coming to pray. The tide turned, and fifty people responded. And when Hyde prayed for Chapman personally, Chapman learned something about intercession that he never forgot. They differ in the drama. The locked door, the five-minute silences, and the single cry of "Oh God!" are found only in the undated letter. The printed account, which Chapman himself put his name to, has a stillness of "several moments" and a simple, tender prayer. Perhaps Chapman told the story

differently on different occasions, as preachers do. Perhaps the letter was embellished by someone who copied it. We cannot know. But the version Chapman published is quieter, and it may be the more moving of the two. What struck him was not a spectacular silence but a man who knelt beside him, with trembling lips, and asked God to make Jesus Christ more real to a tired evangelist.

"My Dear Saviour's Burden"

Jones heard afterwards that the mission had been a great success, that the churches were revived and many were converted. The elder who had not bothered to go to the first meetings attended later, was "gloriously blessed," and a few weeks afterwards stirred his whole presbytery with an account of what he had seen.

But the week had cost Hyde dearly. He returned to Jones's home, as Jones put it, "crawled back to us." The next day he was so weak he could hardly speak. As Jones bent over him, Hyde smiled and whispered: "The burden was very heavy, but my dear Saviour's burden for me took Him down to the grave."

Jones was struck most by what Hyde did not say. "Not one word of criticism did I hear." Hyde did not blame the indifferent ministers or mention his own part. He spoke only of "the glory of Christ manifested," of Chapman's and Alexander's powerful messages, and of the gift of intercession his companion Davis had received. "Instead of criticizing and blaming the men," Jones wrote, "he took their burden and carried it to the Lord."

A Hymn That Sang Him Down

Two more episodes from that spring show the same spirit, and Jones found them harder to bear than Hyde did.

Hyde and Jones were invited to a two-day prayer meeting at the home of the Rev. Evan Hopkins, one of the founders of the Keswick Convention, held about a month before Keswick each year for its speakers and friends. About forty people were there. Toward the middle of the second day a discussion began about whether Keswick should have a prayer room like Sialkot's, and the two Indian missionaries were asked to describe their experience. Jones spoke briefly, wanting to leave Hyde as much time as possible. Hyde began to speak, slowly and quietly, and Jones could tell that he was carrying a heavy message. After three or four minutes one of the women present began to sing a popular hymn. Others joined in. The message was never delivered.

Hyde closed his eyes and prayed. Jones was afraid he would be hurt, "but there was not a word of resentment or even displeasure." The burden of the undelivered message was so great that Hyde was prostrated with a violent headache and could not leave with the others that evening. He stayed on as Hopkins's guest, and told Jones afterwards what blessed fellowship they had had. He never mentioned being sung down.

On another occasion that spring Hyde went to a meeting of a presbytery in north Wales. He had spoken with great power in many of its churches, and people there had urged him to come. He made a long journey early in the morning, suffering from headache and from the illness that would kill him within a year. The presbytery was unusually large because word had got round that he would be there. Messages were sent up to the moderator more than once. But the meeting closed without anyone welcoming him. It was conducted in Welsh, which he did not understand.

He was too deaf to have heard it anyway, so he sat through it with his eyes closed, praying for everyone there. Afterwards many people crowded round to say how sorry they were that he had not been asked to speak. He smiled on them all. When Jones, alone with him, expressed his indignation, Hyde gently rebuked him. The Lord knew everything, he said, and "it was not our place to criticize the Lord's people."

Jones remembered him saying something similar when urged to defend himself against a bitter and unjust attack: "They do not understand. I know they do not want to be unkind." When a friend offered to write and explain the situation for him, Hyde answered, "This is my cross which He wants me to take up and carry for Him." Peter wrote of Christ, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Peter 2:23, ASV). Hyde had been learning that for twenty years. In the spring of 1911, in the land of his friend's birth, it was very visible.

For Reflection

Hyde's last season in Britain gathered up all the lessons of his life. The deafness he had carried was turned to praise. A struggling evangelist he did not know was carried in prayer, at great cost. And an interrupted message, a slight from a presbytery, and an unjust attack were all met without resentment.

Burden-bearing is not only for people who can pray all week in a hotel room. It is the ordinary law of Christ, and it is open to anyone who notices that someone else is struggling and says, as Hyde did, "I cannot leave a brother to bear this burden alone." And the meekness that refuses to criticise the Lord's people, even when they have been thoughtless or unkind, is within reach of anyone who has looked long enough at the cross.

"Victory, Victory, Victory"

"but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
— 1 Corinthians 15:57, ASV

A Summer of Doctors

Hyde had hoped to stay in Britain through the summer of 1911 and attend the Keswick Convention in July. He had a plan for it. He and McCheyne Paterson, who was also in Britain, would join Pengwern Jones to form a trio and hold a prayer room at Keswick, praying day and night through the convention, as they had at Sialkot. It never happened. When Keswick week came, both Hyde and Paterson were ill. Jones went alone. He suggested a prayer room to the organisers, but nothing came of it. Years later he still wondered what might have happened if his two friends had been well enough to come.

Charles Alexander, Chapman's song leader, had not forgotten the missionary who had prayed for Shrewsbury. He took Hyde to his own doctor in England, and a consultation with two other physicians followed. The doctors tried to make Hyde understand how serious his condition was. Alexander, listening, was sure Hyde understood that he was dying. Both Alexander and the doctor were amazed at his composure. He had long ago

ceased to fear death, McGaw writes. For him, as for Paul, "to depart and be with Christ ... is very far better" (Philippians 1:23, ASV).

Clifton Springs

Hyde sailed for America in the summer. The missionary magazine of his church recorded his arrival among the month's missionary movements: "Rev. J. N. Hyde, from Lodiana, India," landing at New York on 8 August 1911, with a forwarding address at Clifton Springs, New York. Clifton Springs, in western New York, was the site of a large sanitarium much used by returning missionaries, many of whom arrived home exhausted and ill. Hyde went there at once, McGaw says, hoping to find relief from "a severe headache from which he had suffered much before leaving India."

The doctors found a tumour. It was operated on and proved malignant. McGaw calls it a sarcoma. Later accounts say it was in the brain. The records do not allow us to be more precise than that. Hyde rallied after the operation, and for some weeks he was able to sit up.

From Clifton Springs he sent a postcard to one of his sisters, dated 27 October 1911. McGaw quoted it. It is one of the very few pieces of Hyde's own writing to survive from his last months, and it is characteristic:

> *Am still in bed or wheel chair getting a fine rest and doing a lot of the ministry of intercession, and having not a few opportunities of personal work. How the radiance of holiness shone out in Jesus' every word and deed!*

Even in a wheelchair in a sanitarium, he was praying for others and talking to the people around him about Christ. And his thoughts were not on his own suffering but on the holiness of Jesus.

Northampton

On 19 December 1911 Hyde left Clifton Springs to stay with his sister in Northampton, Massachusetts. She was married to a professor there, E. H. Mensel. Soon after the New Year he began to have pains in his back and side. He thought it was rheumatism. His doctor knew that the tumour had returned.

The weeks that followed were, as the missionary magazine of his church put it, "days of unutterable suffering." But the same magazine recorded what his friends remembered most: "the remembrance of his heroic, uncomplaining endurance, his splendid Christian fortitude." In the midst of his agony, it reported, he said: "Thank God for pain, thank God for everything!"

H. D. Griswold, writing the obituary for the Presbyterian mission magazine, added more. "After his worst paroxysms of pain he would say: 'Praise the Lord,' or 'In every thing give thanks.'" And, Griswold wrote, "to his sister he said shortly before his death: 'It's just victory, victory, victory.'"

John Nelson Hyde died at his sister's home in Northampton on 17 February 1912. He was forty-six years old. Griswold's obituary says forty-seven, and so does McGaw, but he was born in November 1865 and had turned forty-six only three months before.

This correction is worth making plainly, because popular accounts of Hyde's life have repeated a mistake about his death for a century. Many say he died at Clifton Springs. That is not true. The mission magazine of his church, the obituary in its foreign missions journal, and the catalogue of his seminary all agree: he died on 17 February 1912, at Northampton, Massachusetts, in his sister's home. Clifton Springs was where he had gone for treatment, not where he died.

"Shout the Victory of Jesus Christ!"

Griswold wrote that Hyde's "last words were uttered in the Punjabi tongue, thereby indicating that his heart was in the Punjab." He added, in a phrase that echoes Paul, that Hyde "was led in triumph even unto the end." Paul wrote, "thanks be unto God, who always leadeth us in triumph in Christ" (2 Corinthians 2:14, ASV).

What were those last Punjabi words? The answer comes from W. B. Anderson, the United Presbyterian missionary who had helped to found the Sialkot Convention. He wrote a tribute to Hyde in his church's magazine, and McGaw closed his book with it. When the news of Hyde's death reached India, Anderson wrote, it seemed to him that he could hear "something of an echo of the shout of victory as he entered into the King's presence. Then the next word that came was that he had died with the words upon his lips: 'Bol, Yisu Masih, ki jai!' "

The words mean, roughly, "Shout the victory of Jesus Christ!" or "Say, Victory to Jesus the Messiah!" Anderson explained why they mattered. After hours of agonising prayer for people in bondage to sin, Hyde would often rise with those around him and shout that cry. It had, Anderson said, "become the great war cry of the Punjab Church." The spelling varies from source to source, and later writers have translated it in different ways. Griswold does not give the exact words, only that they were in Punjabi. But the two accounts fit together. And they fit with the words to his sister, "It's just victory, victory, victory." The man who had preached at a convention that Christ's cry "It is finished" was a shout of triumph in the darkest hour died in the same spirit.

A Vision of the Whole Field

Anderson's tribute preserved one more memory, and it helps explain that shout. About four years before Hyde's death, Anderson said, Hyde had spoken to a few close friends about something that happened to him on a day of prayer for India:

> *On the day of prayer God gave me a new experience. I seemed to be away above our conflict here in the Punjab and I saw God's great battle in all India, and then away out beyond in China, Japan, and Africa. I saw how we had been thinking in narrow circles of our own countries and in our own denominations, and how God was now rapidly joining force to force and line to line and all was beginning to be one great struggle. That, to me, means the great triumph of Christ.*

And Hyde had drawn a practical conclusion: "We must exercise the greatest care to be utterly obedient to Him who sees all the battle field all the time. It is only He who can put each man in the place where his life can count for the most."

That was how Hyde saw his own life, and his death. He was one soldier in a great campaign whose outcome was certain, placed by a Commander who could see the whole field. His own place had been a few hundred villages in the Punjab, a prayer room at Sialkot, a hotel room in Shrewsbury, and now a sickbed in Massachusetts. It was not for him to choose the place, only to be obedient in it. Anderson recalled Jesus' words on the night before his death, as his enemies closed in: "In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33, ASV).

Carthage, 20 February 1912

Hyde's brother Will and his sister Mary brought his body home to Carthage, Illinois. The funeral was held on 20 February in the Presbyterian church where their father had been pastor for seventeen years. The minister was the Rev. J. F. Young, Hyde's seminary classmate, now pastor of the church in Carthage, and he preached. Francis McGaw assisted.

McGaw stood on the platform and looked down into the coffin. The face was "greatly emaciated," he wrote, "but it was the same sweet, peaceful, gentle yet strong, resolute face that I had known in 1901 — the last time I saw him alive." The day was "cloudy and chill and gloomy." In Moss Ridge Cemetery they laid him beside his father, his mother, and his brother Edmund.

McGaw ended his account of the burial with the Christian hope. The clouds and shadows would flee away, "the chill and gloom of the grave be dispelled, and that man of prayer and praise come forth in the likeness of the Risen Son of God!" At the front of his little book he printed Paul's words from the end of his own life: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7-8, ASV).

For Reflection

Hyde's death was not easy. The records do not soften that, and neither should we. It was weeks of "unutterable suffering," far from the Punjab he loved, from an illness no one could cure. Yet everyone who was near him

remembered the same things: thanksgiving in the middle of pain, a shout of victory in Punjabi, and the words "It's just victory, victory, victory."

That is the fruit of a whole life. A man does not learn to say "Thank God for pain" on his deathbed. He learns it through twenty years of headaches in village huts, thanks offered through shut teeth, and seeing the cross as a victory. John Hyde had been practising that shout of triumph for a long time. At the end it came naturally. "But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57, ASV).

The Legacy of Praying Hyde

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts: and through it he being dead yet speaketh."
— Hebrews 11:4, ASV

A Stone in a Pond

Near the end of his book, Francis McGaw recalled a scene from his boyhood. There was a pond near his father's house. He would stand on the bank and throw a stone into the middle, then watch the ripples spread in widening circles, until every part of the surface was moving and the little waves lapped at the bank by his feet. "Sialkot started circles and waves of blessing," he wrote, "that are even now beating in the secret recesses and inlets of many human hearts."

It is a good image, and a modest one. A stone thrown into a pond disappears at once. Its effect is seen only in the ripples, and the farther they travel, the harder it is to say which ripple came from which stone. That is how it is with the influence of a life like John Hyde's. He wrote no books, founded no great institution, held no office of importance, and died at forty-six. What he left was a disturbance in the water that is still spreading.

This last chapter asks what that legacy is. It asks what is truly his, and what is ours to take up.

What He Left in the Punjab

Hyde's first legacy belongs to the church he served, and it is the one the devotional books say least about.

In the villages of the Moga district there were hundreds of Christian families who had been baptized in the years when Hyde was "burying the good seed," as the missionary magazine put it. The Ferozepore training school, later moved to Moga, which Griswold says Hyde founded, went on training village preachers and teachers. The humble village evangelists with whom he had lived "as a brother" carried on his work, and something of his zeal went with them. Griswold closed his obituary with a sentence that was, in its way, a prophecy: "His memory will constitute a precious heritage for the Punjab Church."

The Sialkot Convention continues to this day. It is now a gathering of the churches of Pakistan, long since led by Pakistani Christians. The descendants of the villagers who came to Christ in the mass movements of Hyde's time make up much of the Christian community of Pakistan and the Indian Punjab. They are often poor, and they have often been persecuted. Their faith has been tested in ways that Hyde's generation could not have imagined. W. B. Anderson wrote that the Punjabi cry of victory Hyde loved, "Bol, Yisu Masih, ki jai!", had become "the great war cry of the Punjab Church." Hyde would have wanted to be remembered, if at all, as one voice in that shout.

What He Left in His Friends

Hyde's second legacy is in the people who knew him, and here the memoirs are eloquent.

Pengwern Jones wrote, ten years after Hyde's death: "I owe to him more than I owe to any man, for showing me what a 'prayer-life' is, and what a real consecrated life is." Jones said that after every visit with Hyde he vowed to pray more than ever before, "and Christ always seemed more real to me." He believed that Hyde, in his last years, "created a new era of prayer in the Punjab," and that he had been "given to India to teach men how to pray."

Paterson went on praying and preaching at Sialkot, and others carried on the prayer rooms Hyde had helped to begin. The Calcutta friend who watched Hyde's light go on through the night began asking God to wake him for prayer too, and found that he woke at two, then at four, "with striking regularity." J. Wilbur Chapman, who knew Hyde for only a week, wrote years afterwards that he had learned from him "a never-to-be-forgotten lesson concerning intercession." An old deaf woman in Llangollen learned to praise God for her deafness. A drunken Brahman boy could not forget his tears.

McGaw collected other testimonies. A pastor in Illinois wrote that Hyde's example had moved at least one member of his congregation to go to China as a missionary. A woman missionary in India read an account of Hyde's prayer life and was so convicted by it that she resolved to give the best hours of every day to prayer and Bible study. She found it very hard. She had always been busy, and "to hear others going around hard at work while I stayed quietly in my room, as it were inactive" was a constant struggle. But in her district, where years of work had produced little, fifteen people were baptized in the first months, then more than a hundred. Two years later she reported that the Christians there numbered six hundred,

where before there had been a hundred. "The stress and the strain have gone out of my life," she wrote. "I could not go back to the old life, and God grant that it may always be impossible."

That is the kind of legacy Hyde would have wanted. It is not admiration for him, but people praying.

What He Left in Print

Hyde's third legacy is the one that has travelled farthest, and it is a strange one for a man who wrote almost nothing. It is the story of his life.

The two small books of 1923 were printed and reprinted. Later biographers built on them, and later preachers built on the biographers. A century on, the name "Praying Hyde" is known to many who could not say what country he worked in or what church sent him. That fame has done real good. Countless Christians have been stirred to pray by it. It has also, as this book has tried to show, carried a good deal of legend along with it.

Some readers may feel that the careful sorting in these chapters, between the documented, the remembered, and the legendary, takes something away from Hyde. It does not. The man who comes through the testing is more believable than the legend, and more helpful. The legendary Hyde, with his heart moved by prayer and his four converts every day, is a figure few of us can relate to. The real Hyde was a shy, deaf, slow-speaking, ambitious young man. He threw away a letter in anger, struggled with a besetting sin, and spent ten years in unfruitful work. His colleagues thought him odd, and God had to correct him in the middle of a prayer. He is a man we can recognise. And what God did through him is therefore something God might do through us.

What Is Not Ours to Take

Before we ask what to take from Hyde's life, it is worth saying clearly what we should leave.

We should not copy his neglect of his body. His closest friends said so, and he said so himself. His form of prayer, the sleepless nights, the missed meals, the weeks of fasting, was his particular calling, and it cost him his life. Most of us are not called to it, and we would be wrong to make it a standard.

We should not turn his story into a formula. The soul-a-day covenant, the long repetitions of a single word in prayer, the dancing in the prayer room: these belonged to a particular man, time, and place. They are not techniques that produce revival if they are used correctly.

And we should not make him a hero to be admired from a distance. He hated that. When he thought people were looking at him rather than at Christ, Jones said, "he would run away and remain away in some hiding place praying for them."

What Is Ours

What remains, when all that is set aside, is still a great deal. Each of the chapters of this book has drawn out one lesson. Together they make a short summary of what John Hyde has to teach.

Faithfulness in small and hidden things matters, because God answers a father's prayers for labourers. Honesty before God matters more than reputation, and a settled call comes from time on one's knees, not from more arguments. A wounding letter from a friend may be the voice of God. A besetting sin is not something to live with. Slow years are not wasted years. The despised are those God chooses. The messenger needs preparing

as much as the message. A small daily discipline of prayer, kept "till the awakening comes," can prepare the way for revival. The Holy Spirit must be first. A prayer room behind a meeting is as important as a pulpit in front of it. Travail in prayer is Christ's burden shared, not a burden we manufacture. The one who is missing matters as much as the ninety-nine. Accusing a brother, even in prayer, is the work of the accuser, and thanksgiving is its cure. Praise is a garment we can put on before we feel it. Love may cost us our blankets. The cross is victory even in the darkness. Rest is a gift, not a failure. Other people's burdens are ours to bear. And death, for a Christian, is not defeat but a shout of triumph.

None of these lessons is new. Every one is in Scripture. What Hyde's life adds is a picture of them being lived, imperfectly, by a real man.

He Being Dead Yet Speaketh

The verse at the head of this chapter speaks of Abel, the first person in the Bible to die. The writer to the Hebrews says of him that "through it he being dead yet speaketh" (Hebrews 11:4, ASV). Abel left no words at all. What speaks is his faith, and the sacrifice it offered.

Carré applied the phrase to Hyde in the foreword of his book in 1923. Jones used it again: "'He being dead yet speaketh' is true of him. It is now ten years since he was called Home, but he is not forgotten, he is speaking to us to-day, and throwing light on the Prayer-Life of Christ."

That last phrase is the key. Hyde's friends did not think that his life pointed to himself. They thought it threw light on Christ, and in particular on the prayer life of Christ, who "ever liveth to make intercession" for his people (Hebrews 7:25, ASV). The deepest thing Hyde's life teaches is not about Hyde at all. It is that the risen Lord is still praying. He still longs for

the lost, still carries his people's burdens, and still invites his friends to watch with him. In the Punjab, one of those friends said yes.

The writer to the Hebrews, having listed the faithful who had died, turns to his readers: "Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:1-2, ASV). John Hyde is one of that cloud now. He is not watching us to be admired, but cheering us on toward the One he looked at all his life.

For Reflection

The man the Punjab called "the man who never sleeps" has been at rest for more than a century. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them" (Revelation 14:13, ASV).

The question his life puts to us is the one Jesus asked his sleeping friends in Gethsemane, the question at the head of this book's preface: "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" It is not asked in anger. It is asked by a Lord who knows our weakness, who is still praying for us, and who still, in his kindness, wants our company. Hyde answered it with his life. We are invited to answer it in ours, not in his form, but in his spirit. Perhaps that means half an hour at noon. Perhaps it means a thanksgiving instead of an accusation, or a person no one has thought to ask about. But in some way it means watching with Christ, and praying "till the awakening comes."

Appendix A: Twenty-Five Lessons from Hyde's Prayer Life

The lessons below are not a system of prayer, and John Hyde would not have wanted them to become one. They gather the themes woven through this book so that readers can return to them. Each is drawn from his life as the sources record it, and each rests on Scripture, not on his example alone.

1. Prayer Begins at Home

Hyde's life of prayer grew from a father who prayed daily for labourers in the harvest. Faithful, repeated prayer in an ordinary home is never wasted. Jesus' instruction comes before any sending: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:38, ASV). Those who pray it honestly should be ready for God to answer through their own children, or through themselves.

2. Some Questions Are Settled Only on Our Knees

When Hyde asked a classmate for arguments about the mission field, the classmate sent him to pray until the question was settled. There is a place for counsel. But some decisions wait on our willingness to hear God, not on more information. "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10, ASV).

3. Receive Correction From Those Who Love You

Hyde crumpled the letter that told him he was not yet filled with the Spirit, then went back on his knees to find it. Pride throws away a hard word. Grace reads it again. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend" (Proverbs 27:6, ASV).

4. Ask for the Holy Spirit

The remedy for Hyde's spiritual unreadiness was not a technique but a request. "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13, ASV). He asked in anger, in misery, and at last in surrender. He was answered.

5. Do Not Preach a Saviour You Have Not Trusted

A stranger's question at an open-air meeting exposed a besetting sin in Hyde's life. He would not go on preaching until it was dealt with. "Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching" (1 Timothy 4:16, ASV). The promise is not freedom from temptation but freedom from sin's rule: "For sin shall not have dominion over you" (Romans 6:14, ASV).

6. Weakness Is Not a Disqualification

Hyde was deaf, slow of speech, and shy. God did not remove these things. He worked through them. "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9, ASV).

7. Unfruitful Years Are Not Wasted Years

Griswold described Hyde's first decade in India as "steady, patient, but not especially fruitful." The years of listening, Bible study, and hidden faithfulness were the soil of everything that followed. "Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9, ASV).

8. God Chooses the Despised

Hyde served in a movement that brought the poorest and most despised people of the Punjab to Christ. He embraced them, lived among them, and baptized them. "God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise" (1 Corinthians 1:27, ASV).

9. Prepare the Messenger as Well as the Message

Hyde's nights of prayer began when he realised he had spent a night preparing a talk and none preparing himself. "The preparation of the Messenger is quite as important as the preparation of the message." The apostles guarded both: "we will continue stedfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4, ASV).

10. Keep the Bible Open When You Pray

Jones remembered Hyde kneeling with his hands resting on an open Bible, "face to face with the Lord and resting on the promises." Prayer fed by Scripture has somewhere to stand. Daniel prayed after reading Jeremiah (Daniel 9:2-3).

11. A Small Promise Kept Daily

The Punjab Prayer Union asked for half an hour a day, as soon after noon as possible, "till the awakening comes." A modest discipline kept faithfully can outlast great resolutions. "Evening, and morning, and at noonday, will I complain, and moan; and he will hear my voice" (Psalm 55:17, ASV).

12. Pray Until

The prayer union's pledge and Isaiah's watchmen share one word: *till*. "Take ye no rest, and give him no rest, till he establish" (Isaiah 62:6-7, ASV). Jesus taught "that they ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1, ASV).

13. Put the Holy Spirit First

Hyde asked pastors whether the Holy Spirit was first in their pulpits, and then showed what he meant by having "no message" and giving the meeting to the Spirit. "He shall bear witness of me: and ye also bear witness" (John 15:26-27, ASV).

14. Someone Must Do the Hidden Work

"Go in and speak, that is your work. I shall go back to the Prayer Room to pray for you, that is my work." Preaching and praying are two parts of one work. Every ministry needs someone doing the hidden part. "Thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee" (Matthew 6:6, ASV).

15. Enlarge Your Expectation

Hyde prayed "Wide, Lord, wide" over one verse, because God's complaint in the psalm is that his people would not open their mouths. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it" (Psalm 81:10, ASV).

16. The Burden Is Given, Not Manufactured

Hyde's travail for souls was real and costly. But his friends insisted that the broken heart we need is Christ's, not our own, "free for the taking in simple faith, never minding our feelings." "The Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26, ASV).

17. The One Still Matters

Nine people had been baptized, the road was dangerous, and the evangelists were angry. Hyde still asked, "What about that one?" The Good Shepherd goes after the lost one "until he find it" (Luke 15:4, ASV).

18. Numbers Serve Love, Not the Reverse

Hyde asked God for a definite number of souls a day. What kept this from becoming a quota was love for people, a strict definition of conversion, and the habit of searching his own heart when fruit was lacking. Joy in heaven is over "one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:7, ASV).

19. Do Not Accuse the Brethren, Even in Prayer

God stopped Hyde in the middle of a prayer that listed a pastor's faults. Hyde confessed that he had been "an accuser of the brethren" and spent the

rest of the time giving thanks. "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye" (Zechariah 2:8, ASV).

20. Look for What Is Lovely

"Father, show me what things are lovely and of good report in my brother's life." God's people are in the workshop, not yet finished. "Whatsoever things are lovely ... think on these things" (Philippians 4:8, ASV).

21. Put On the Garment of Praise

Hyde was not naturally joyful. He found that the obstacle to fruitfulness was usually "the want of praise" and learned to put on praise before he felt it. "The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" (Isaiah 61:3, ASV). "In everything give thanks" (1 Thessalonians 5:18, ASV).

22. Love Will Cost Something

Hyde gave away his clothes and blankets, wept at a train window, and rubbed a tired convert's feet. He answered an angry fellow worker: "If the prodigal had come back to you, you would have taken a stick to him!" "I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls" (2 Corinthians 12:15, ASV).

23. The Cross Is Victory

Hyde was "fascinated by the Cross" and could speak of nothing else. He taught that Christ's cry "It is finished" was a shout of triumph in the darkest hour, and that those united to Christ can shout it too. "For I

determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2, ASV).

24. Honour the Body's Just Claims

Hyde's way of praying cost him his health. His friends urged others to follow his spirit, not his form. The Lord who called his disciples to watch also told them, "Come ye yourselves apart ... and rest a while" (Mark 6:31, ASV). God "giveth unto his beloved sleep" (Psalm 127:2, ASV).

25. Bear Burdens, Refuse Resentment, and Die Giving Thanks

Hyde carried a stranger's burden at Shrewsbury. He was sung down and ignored without complaint. He said of unkindness, "This is my cross which He wants me to take up and carry for Him." And he died saying, "Thank God for pain," and, "It's just victory, victory, victory." "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2, ASV). "But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57, ASV).

Appendix B: Chapter-by-Chapter Study and Reflection Guide

"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves."
— James 1:22, ASV

This guide is for personal reflection, small groups, or a twenty-week reading course. Its purpose is not to make John Hyde an object of admiration, but to let his life hold up a mirror in which readers can examine their own prayer and discipleship under Scripture. Groups may find it helpful to begin each session with the chapter's opening verse, and to end with a few minutes of actual prayer, not only talk about prayer.

Chapter 1 - A Minister's Son from Carthage

Central idea

Hyde's life of prayer grew from a father who prayed daily for labourers in the harvest, a mother's quiet holiness, and a brother's unfinished life. Faith can be modelled and prayed over in an ordinary home.

Scriptures to revisit

Matthew 9:36-38; 2 Timothy 1:5; Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Matthew 10:5.

Reflection

1. Who prayed for you before you could pray for yourself? 2. Is there a prayer you have prayed faithfully for years without seeing the answer? 3. Are you willing for God to answer your prayers for labourers through your own family?

Chapter 2 - “It Is Settled”

Central idea

Hyde did not settle his call by collecting arguments but by staying on his knees until the question was settled. Mixed motives do not disqualify a real call.

Scriptures to revisit

Isaiah 6:1-8; Luke 6:12; Psalm 46:10; Philippians 1:15-18.

Reflection

1. Is there a question in your life that you keep reopening with fresh arguments? 2. What would it mean to bring it to God and wait until it is settled? 3. Where is “self” mixed into your service for God, and are you willing for him to purify it?

Chapter 3 - The Letter on the Ship

Central idea

A friend's letter wounded Hyde's pride and led him to seek the filling of the Holy Spirit, and to become willing to work "quietly out of sight."

Scriptures to revisit

Luke 11:9-13; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:18; Proverbs 27:6.

Reflection

1. Have you ever thrown away a hard word that was actually from God? 2. What does it mean to you to be filled with the Spirit? 3. Are you willing to be useful without being seen?

Chapter 4 - The Sin That Had Not Been Taken Away

Central idea

A stranger's question exposed a besetting sin, and Hyde refused to preach a Saviour whose power he had not experienced. Deliverance was real, and it was also a beginning.

Scriptures to revisit

Hebrews 12:1-2; Romans 6:14; Romans 7:24-25; 1 John 1:8-9; 1 Timothy 4:16.

Reflection

1. What sin "so easily besets" you? 2. Have you made a kind of peace with it? 3. How would you answer the stranger's question: has the Saviour you

speak of saved you?

Chapter 5 - Slow of Speech and Hearing

Central idea

Hyde's deafness, slowness, and shy temperament were never removed. God gave him "the tongue of them that are taught" through a listening ear, and grace to be misunderstood without bitterness.

Scriptures to revisit

Exodus 4:10-12; 2 Corinthians 12:9; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5; Isaiah 50:4; Matthew 6:33.

Reflection

1. What limitation do you wish God would remove? 2. How might he be working through it instead? 3. How do you respond when colleagues misunderstand you?

Chapter 6 - The Punjab He Entered

Central idea

Hyde's prayers belonged to a great movement of the poor and despised toward Christ. He lived among them as a brother.

Scriptures to revisit

1 Corinthians 1:26-29; Luke 4:18; James 2:5; Galatians 3:28.

Reflection

1. Who are the despised people in your community? 2. Does your church resemble the church in Corinth, or does it avoid them? 3. How specific are your prayers for real people and places?

Chapter 7 - Preparing the Messenger

Central idea

"The preparation of the Messenger is quite as important as the preparation of the message." Hyde's nights of prayer grew from that conviction, and his daily prayer was anchored in Scripture.

Scriptures to revisit

Luke 6:12; Mark 1:35; Acts 6:4; Isaiah 40:31; 2 Chronicles 14:11.

Reflection

1. How do you prepare yourself, not just your work? 2. Do you pray with your Bible open? 3. Hyde asked, "Have we ever wept for souls? Have you? Have I?" How would you answer?

Chapter 8 - The Half-Hour Rule

Central idea

The Punjab Prayer Union's five questions and daily half-hour prepared the way for revival. A small promise kept daily is powerful.

Scriptures to revisit

Isaiah 62:6-7; Luke 18:1-8; Mark 8:38; Romans 1:16; Psalm 55:17; Daniel 6:10.

Reflection

1. Answer the five questions of the Punjab Prayer Union honestly. 2. Could you keep a half-hour of prayer each day, "till the awakening comes"? 3. With whom could you make such a covenant?

Chapter 9 - Sialkot: "Is the Holy Spirit First?"

Central idea

Hyde urged pastors to put the Holy Spirit first and themselves behind, then did it himself by having "no message" and giving the meeting to the Spirit.

Scriptures to revisit

John 15:26-27; John 16:13-14; 1 John 1:7; Ephesians 3:14-19.

Reflection

1. Is the Holy Spirit first in your ministry, conversations, and plans? 2. What would it cost you to step back publicly? 3. What kept Hyde from testifying about his struggles, and what keeps you?

Chapter 10 - The Prayer Room

Central idea

At Sialkot the prayer room was the secret of the convention. “Go in and speak, that is your work. I shall go back to the Prayer Room to pray for you, that is my work.”

Scriptures to revisit

Psalm 81:10-16; Acts 1:14; Acts 4:31; Genesis 28:16-17.

Reflection

1. Who is doing the hidden work of prayer for your church? 2. Is your expectation of God “wide” or narrow? 3. How do you handle disagreements in your church, and have you tried meeting to pray first?

Chapter 11 - “Give Me Souls, or I Die”

Central idea

Hyde’s travail in prayer echoed Rachel’s longing and Paul’s labour. It was a sharing in Christ’s grief, not an addition to his work, and the broken heart it needs is Christ’s own.

Scriptures to revisit

Galatians 4:19; Genesis 30:1; Romans 9:1-3; Philippians 3:10; Colossians 1:24; Romans 8:26.

Reflection

1. Have you ever longed for someone's salvation enough to lose sleep? 2. How do you understand "the fellowship of his sufferings"? 3. When your heart feels cold, do you look at it, or at Christ's?

Chapter 12 - A Soul a Day, and "What About That One?"

Central idea

The famous numbers are less certain than the legend, but the reality was remarkable, and its heart was the one person still missing.

Scriptures to revisit

Luke 15:1-7; John 10:16; Isaiah 53:11; Acts 8:26-40.

Reflection

1. Is there "one" near you whom no one has asked about Christ? 2. How do you keep evangelism from becoming a numbers game? 3. What does it mean to stand where the Good Shepherd is searching?

Chapter 13 - The Accuser of the Brethren

Central idea

God stopped Hyde mid-prayer for accusing a pastor. Confession and thanksgiving turned the prayer into praise, and the pastor was revived.

Scriptures to revisit

Zechariah 2:8; Revelation 12:10; Philippians 4:8; Philippians 1:6-7; Isaiah 42:3; Galatians 6:1.

Reflection

1. Listen to your prayers for difficult people. Are they intercession or accusation? 2. Pray Hyde's prayer about someone: "Father, show me what things are lovely and of good report in my brother's life." 3. How can correction pass through thanksgiving first?

Chapter 14 - The Garment of Praise

Central idea

A naturally gloomy man learned to put on praise before he felt it. Praise so often went before fruit that he treated its absence as sin.

Scriptures to revisit

Isaiah 61:1-3; Ephesians 5:20; 2 Chronicles 20:21-22; Acts 16:25; Nehemiah 8:10; Psalm 24:7-10.

Reflection

1. What would "praising God through shut teeth" look like in your present troubles? 2. Is there a trial you could begin to thank God for? 3. Where has your spirit of heaviness become a habit?

Chapter 15 - Tears at a Train Window

Central idea

Hyde's love for people cost him his possessions, dignity, and sleep. It did not always succeed, but it made the gospel visible.

Scriptures to revisit

Acts 20:31; 2 Corinthians 12:15; Luke 15:11-32; John 13:14; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Matthew 19:12.

Reflection

1. Has anyone ever been unable to forget your love for them? 2. Are you more like the father or the elder brother toward those who fail repeatedly? 3. What would it cost you to love someone as Hyde loved J. N.?

Chapter 16 - The Cross He Could Not Stop Preaching

Central idea

Hyde's prayer flowed from a long gaze at the cross: Christ becoming man, slave, and despised "for me," and "It is finished" as a shout of victory.

Scriptures to revisit

Philippians 2:5-11; Psalm 22; Mark 7:24-30; John 19:30; 1 Corinthians 2:2; Galatians 2:20.

Reflection

1. Spend time with Hyde's three steps: Christ became man, slave, despised, "for me." 2. Where do you need to shout "Victory" in apparent defeat? 3. Is self in your life "crucified, dead and buried"?

Chapter 17 - A Heart on the Wrong Side

Central idea

Hyde's health broke under his way of life. His sacrifice is to be honoured, but his form is not a pattern, and rest is God's gift.

Scriptures to revisit

Mark 6:30-32; 1 Kings 19:4-8; Psalm 127:2; 2 Corinthians 4:16; Romans 12:1.

Reflection

1. Are you more likely to spare yourself too much in God's service, or too little? 2. How do you tell a burden given by God from a burden you have taken up yourself? 3. What would obedience to "rest a while" look like for you?

Chapter 18 - Wales, Shrewsbury, and a Hymn That Sang Him Down

Central idea

Hyde carried a stranger's burden at great cost and met slights without resentment. The two versions of Chapman's story agree on what matters.

Scriptures to revisit

Galatians 6:2; 1 Peter 2:21-23; Romans 12:10; Philippians 2:3-4.

Reflection

1. Whose burden could you help carry in prayer this week? 2. How do you respond when you are overlooked or interrupted? 3. What does "This is my cross" mean in your situation?

Chapter 19 - "Victory, Victory, Victory"

Central idea

Hyde died in pain, giving thanks and shouting the victory of Christ in Punjabi. Twenty years of praise had become his native language.

Scriptures to revisit

1 Corinthians 15:54-58; 2 Corinthians 2:14; Philippians 1:21-23; John 16:33; 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

Reflection

1. What habits of thanksgiving are you building now for your own last days? 2. How does the certainty of Christ's victory change how you face suffering? 3. What "place" has Christ given you in the great battle?

Chapter 20 - The Legacy of Praying Hyde

Central idea

Hyde's legacy is in the Punjab church, in the people he taught to pray, and in a story that, told honestly, throws light on the prayer life of Christ.

Scriptures to revisit

Hebrews 11:4; Hebrews 12:1-2; Hebrews 7:25; Revelation 14:13; Matthew 26:40-41.

Reflection

1. Which lesson from Hyde's life is most needed in yours? 2. What would it mean to follow his spirit and not his form? 3. How will you answer Jesus' question, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?"

Appendix C: Chronology of the Life and Times of John Hyde

"So teach us to number our days, That we may get us a heart of wisdom."
— Psalm 90:12, ASV

The dates below are meant as orientation. Where a date comes from an independent record, such as the seminary catalogue, the missionary magazines of Hyde's church, a mission report, or a contemporary obituary, it is given plainly. Where it rests on the devotional memoirs of 1923, it is marked as such. Events in the wider history of the Punjab and of revival are included for context.

1834 - The Lodiana Mission

American Presbyterian missionaries begin work at Ludhiana in the Punjab. The mission, later called the Punjab Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., becomes Hyde's mission.

1855-1857 - The Sialkot Mission

The United Presbyterian Church of North America opens a mission centred on Sialkot. It will host the Sialkot Convention from 1904.

1863 - Edmund Hyde Born

John's elder brother, Edmund Harris Hyde, is born.

1865 - Birth

John Nelson Hyde is born on 9 November 1865 at Carrollton, Greene County, Illinois, to the Rev. Smith Harris Hyde, a Presbyterian minister, and his wife. He is one of six children who grow to adulthood. His father later serves seventeen years as pastor of the Presbyterian church at Carthage, Illinois.

1873 - Ditt and the Beginning of the Mass Movement

Ditt, a lame hide-dealer of the Chuhra community near Sialkot, is baptized and returns to his village. In August he brings his wife, daughter, and two neighbours for baptism. From this beginning, the people movement among the Punjab's lowest castes gradually spreads.

1881 - Census

The Punjab census counts 3,912 Indian Christians.

1886 - Mount Hermon

At a student conference called by D. L. Moody, one hundred students volunteer for foreign missions. The Student Volunteer Movement follows.

1887 - College

Hyde graduates from Carthage College, Illinois. He then teaches for a time.

1888 - Edmund Graduates

Edmund Hyde graduates from Lake Forest University. He later spends a year at McCormick Seminary. McGaw says he was a Student Volunteer.

1889 - Seminary

Hyde enters McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago.

1891 - Edmund's Death

Edmund dies in August 1891 after contracting fever during summer mission work in Montana (the place and illness per McGaw). John is between his second and final years of seminary.

1891-1892 - The Decision

During his final year, after a night on his knees, Hyde tells a classmate, "It is settled" (McGaw).

1892 - Ordination and Sailing

Hyde graduates from McCormick. He is ordained by the Presbytery of Schuyler on 26 April 1892 and appointed to the Punjab (Lodiana) Mission. He sails from New York on 15 October 1892. On the voyage he receives the letter urging him to seek the filling of the Spirit (McGaw; Carré). Soon after arriving in India he faces the question at the open-air meeting (Carré).

1892-1901 - Early Years

Language study and village work in the Ferozepore and Ludhiana districts. Griswold later calls these years "steady, patient, but not especially fruitful." Hyde neglects language study for Bible study and is reprimanded (McGaw). His colleagues begin to notice, and some to criticise, his long hours of prayer.

1896 - "The Life on Wings"

Hyde speaks on "The Life on Wings" at a Student Volunteer conference in Lahore, with John R. Mott present. The address is printed in Madras the same year.

1901 - Census; First Furlough

The Punjab census counts 38,513 Indian Christians. Hyde arrives in New York on 15 May 1901 "from Ferozepore."

1902 - Return to India

Hyde speaks at the Presbyterian women's board meeting in Omaha in the spring. He sails from New York on 17 September 1902.

1904 - The Prayer Union and the First Convention

The Punjab Prayer Union is begun, "about April" (Carré), with Hyde "one of the moving spirits." The first Sialkot Convention "for the deepening of the spiritual life" is held. Hyde leads Bible studies, testifies to his own struggles at a men's meeting (McGaw), and says at its close, "Oh, I must not lose this blessing" (Griswold). The Welsh revival begins in the autumn.

1905 - The Second Convention

Revival at Pandita Ramabai's Mukti mission and in the Khasi Hills. The Prayer Union's spring meeting feels "the burden of a world plunged in sin." The Sialkot Convention of 25 August to 3 September, with nearly 300 attending, sees deep conviction and confession. The appointed speaker on the Holy Spirit, identified by the memoirs as Hyde, has "no message," and the chairman declares, "The Holy Ghost is leader of this meeting" (official mission report).

1906 - The Convention Opened to All

The convention is opened to Christians generally. Hyde, Paterson, and Turner are said to have prayed for weeks beforehand (McGaw). Pengwern Jones first meets Hyde, probably this year, at the Punjab Mission's meeting in Ludhiana.

1907 - Moga; Murree

By 1907 the Ludhiana district has been reorganised. Hyde becomes superintendent of the Moga circle of 275 villages. The mission report quotes his method: "Begin the day in prayer and praise with your helpers." In the summer he spends a week of prayer at Murree with Paterson and Jones (Carré). A letter he writes on 9 May about political unrest is quoted in *Woman's Work*.

1908 - One Soul a Day

After a summer of travail in the hills with friends (very probably the Patersons), Hyde asks God for one soul a day. The memoirs report more

than four hundred won that year (McGaw; no independent record found).

1909 - Two a Day

The memoirs report a request for two souls a day, and eight hundred "gathered in" between the 1909 and 1910 conventions (McGaw; no independent record found).

1910 - Four a Day; The Last Convention; Calcutta

The memoirs report four souls a day (McGaw). The Moga district records 685 baptisms in 1910 (*Woman's Work*, 1911). Hyde's last Sialkot Convention. Meetings in Calcutta and elsewhere. A Calcutta doctor reports his heart displaced to the right side (McGaw). The Ferozepore training school for village preachers and teachers, founded by Hyde, is in operation (Griswold).

1911 - Leaving India; Britain

Hyde leaves India in March 1911. He lands at Liverpool on Good Friday, 14 April, and stays with Pengwern Jones at Llangollen (Carré). He prays for the Chapman-Alexander mission at Shrewsbury, 20-28 April. He is at Evan Hopkins's pre-Keswick prayer meeting, but illness keeps him from Keswick in July. The Punjab census counts 163,994 Indian Christians. That summer the training school moves from Ferozepore to Moga.

1911 - Clifton Springs

Hyde arrives in New York on 8 August 1911 and goes to Clifton Springs, New York, for treatment. A tumour is found and operated on. He writes a

postcard to his sister on 27 October. On 19 December he moves to his sister's home in Northampton, Massachusetts.

1912 - Death

John Nelson Hyde dies on 17 February 1912 at the home of his sister, Mrs. E. H. Mensel, in Northampton, Massachusetts, aged forty-six. His last words are spoken in Punjabi (Griswold), remembered as "Bol, Yisu Masih, ki jai!" (W. B. Anderson). He is buried on 20 February 1912 in Moss Ridge Cemetery, Carthage, Illinois, beside his parents and his brother Edmund. Griswold's obituary, "The Man Who Never Sleeps," appears in *The Assembly Herald* in April.

1921-1923 - The Memoirs

Pengwern Jones publishes his reminiscences month by month in *The Remembrancer*, with a further series by McCheyne Paterson. In 1923 they are gathered by E. G. Carré as *A Present-Day Challenge to Prayer* (Madras). In the same year Francis McGaw publishes *Praying Hyde* (Philadelphia).

Appendix D: Notes on Sources and Method

"it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order ... that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed."
— Luke 1:3-4, ASV

This appendix explains where the story told in this book comes from, how the sources were weighed, and which popular claims about John Hyde have been corrected. It is written for readers who want to check the story for themselves, and for anyone who will retell it.

The Two Memoirs of 1923

Nearly everything vivid about Hyde's inner life comes from two books published in 1923, eleven years after his death.

A Present-Day Challenge to Prayer, edited by Captain E. G. Carré, was published by the S.P.C.K. Depository in Madras. A London edition titled *Praying Hyde* was later published by Pickering & Inglis (1931). It gathers two series of reminiscences that first appeared month by month in *The Remembrancer*, the prayer circular of the Bengal and Assam Prayer Union. Part One is by the Rev. J. Pengwern Jones of the Welsh Presbyterian Mission, the circular's editor. Part Two, "A Master Fisher for Souls," is by the Rev. R. McCheyne Paterson of the Punjab. Carré insists that he only

arranged the articles into chapters and gave them "practically word for word." Jones wrote from close friendship. He shared rooms with Hyde at Sialkot and Murree, and Hyde stayed with him in Wales in 1911. Paterson was Hyde's closest companion in prayer.

Praying Hyde, by Francis A. McGaw, was published by the Sunday School Times Company in Philadelphia. McGaw, a Presbyterian minister in Akron, Ohio, had known the Hyde family in Carthage. He describes himself as a compiler, not an author. His acknowledgements thank Paterson, Jones, W. B. Anderson, F. Kehl of Calcutta, officials of the Presbyterian Board, Hyde's sisters, and others. Much of his account of the Sialkot years is Paterson's testimony, sometimes in the first person. McGaw does not name the narrator of most of his Sialkot passages, "a brother" or "I". Some of those passages match Paterson's chapters in Carré almost word for word, so this book treats the narrator as almost certainly Paterson. Some stories appear in both books in almost identical words.

Both books are sincere and in many details precise. Both were written to inspire prayer rather than to record history. They rarely give dates. They sometimes place the same event differently. They report numbers without saying where they come from. They sometimes interpret events in ways that go beyond what their witnesses could know. This book has used them throughout, and has tried in the text to say which of them each story comes from.

Independent Records

The following sources are independent of the memoirs and were written close to the events:

General Catalogue of the McCormick Theological Seminary (Chicago, 1912). This gives Hyde's birth date and place, college, seminary course,

ordination, station ("Ferozepore, India, '92-'12"), and date and place of death. It also records his brother Edmund.

Woman's Work for Woman, later *Woman's Work*, the magazine of the Presbyterian women's boards of foreign missions. Its monthly columns record Hyde's sailings and arrivals (1892, 1901, 1902, 1911), his death, a brief tribute noting his words "Thank God for pain, thank God for everything!", and the report of 685 baptisms at Moga in 1910.

H. D. Griswold, "Obituary: The Man Who Never Sleeps," *The Assembly Herald*, April 1912. This is the single most valuable document for an honest biography. It was written by a colleague who admired Hyde but did not idealise him.

The President's Report on the Work of the Punjab Mission (Ludhiana Mission Press, 1907). It records Hyde's superintendence of the Moga circle and quotes his observations and his method of village work.

W. B. Anderson and C. R. Watson, *Far North in India* (1909). The history of the United Presbyterian mission includes Andrew Gordon's account of Ditt and the mission's official report of the 1905 Sialkot Convention. That report independently confirms the scene in which the appointed speaker had "no message" and the chairman gave the meeting to the Holy Spirit.

J. Wilbur Chapman, *When Home Is Heaven* (1917), and Ford C. Ottman, *J. Wilbur Chapman: A Biography* (1920). These give Chapman's own printed account of Hyde's prayer at Shrewsbury and the dates of the mission.

J. Waskom Pickett, *Christian Mass Movements in India* (1933), and the published Punjab census figures, as analysed by later historians of Punjabi Christianity. They supply the context of the mass movement.

Hyde's Own Words

Hyde wrote very little that survives. The following are the passages in which we come closest to his own voice:

His account of the letter on the voyage, quoted by McGaw from "an Indian publication," and a fuller version told to Pengwern Jones in conversation.

His account of the open-air meeting and his besetting sin, as told to Jones.

An extract from his 1896 address "The Life on Wings," reprinted by Carré.

His observations on village work and his method ("Begin the day in prayer and praise with your helpers ..."), quoted in the mission report of 1907.

A sentence from a letter of 9 May 1907 about political unrest, quoted in *Woman's Work*.

A passage from his last class letter to his seminary classmates ("over a thousand the past two years ..."), quoted by McGaw.

His notes on Psalm 22, from a letter to his sister Mary, printed by McGaw with some rearrangement.

A postcard to his sister dated 27 October 1911, quoted by McGaw.

Many sayings reported by friends, such as "First things first," "What about that one?", "That is your work ... that is my work," and "It's just victory, victory, victory." These are memories of speech, not transcripts.

Corrections to the Popular Story

The following popular claims have been corrected or qualified in this book:

Place and date of death. Hyde died on 17 February 1912 at his sister's home in Northampton, Massachusetts. He did not die at Clifton Springs, New York, where he had been treated. Three independent Presbyterian sources agree.

Age at death. He was forty-six, not forty-seven as Griswold and McGaw say.

His station. Sialkot was the United Presbyterian mission's town, not Hyde's. His station was Ferozepore, and from 1907 he superintended the Moga circle of the Ludhiana district.

Founding the convention and the prayer union. The early sources call Hyde one of the "moving spirits" of the Punjab Prayer Union and name him among the leaders of the Sialkot Convention. No independent record names him as the founder of either. Griswold says he was closely associated with the convention from its beginning.

The soul-a-day figures. The figures of four hundred in 1908 and eight hundred between the 1909 and 1910 conventions appear only in McGaw. The independent record shows steadily increasing baptisms in the Moga district, 685 in 1910, and Hyde's own report of "over a thousand the past two years" for his team.

The displaced heart. The report comes from a friend's memory of one doctor's examination. The claim that prayer moved Hyde's heart is an interpretation. A heart on the right side may be congenital (dextrocardia) or the result of chest disease (dextroposition).

Chapman at Shrewsbury. The dramatic version, with the locked door and the five-minute silences, comes from an undated letter printed in both memoirs. Chapman's own published account (1917) is quieter. Both agree on the turning of the mission and on Chapman's lesson in intercession.

Last words. Griswold records that Hyde's last words were in Punjabi. W. B. Anderson gives them as "Bol, Yisu Masih, ki jai!", a phrase whose

spelling and translation vary. Griswold also records that he said to his sister, "It's just victory, victory, victory."

Inferences Offered With Caution

Two suggestions in this book go slightly beyond the sources and are offered as probable, not proven. First, Jones states in passing that the friend who wrote the letter on the ship was the man "preparing a short account of Hyde," which suggests that the letter-writer was Francis McGaw himself. Second, the unnamed speaker in the official report of the 1905 convention is identified with Hyde because the memoirs tell the same story about him.

Later Books

Many later books about Hyde exist, including popular biographies from the 1940s onward and modern compilations of his supposed letters. This book has not relied on them. Where they add details not found in the 1923 memoirs or the contemporary records, those details could not be verified.

Where More May Be Found

The records of the Punjab Mission and of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, held at the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, may contain letters and reports by Hyde that have not been published. Local newspapers in Illinois and Massachusetts from February 1912 may contain further obituaries. A future biographer with access to those archives may be able to answer questions this book has had to leave open.

Scripture

All Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version of 1901, checked against its published text. Where Hyde or his friends quoted another version, such as the King James or the Revised Version, their wording has been kept and marked, and the ASV has been used for the book's own quotations.

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