

Mountain Rain: A New Biography of James O. Fraser by Eileen Crossman, OMF, Robesonia, PA: 1984. (30 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

1. Proper Focus

When he was later asked if he missed his piano in China, he said that in many ways he missed his math books even more. His mind was vigorous, penetrating and argumentative, and naturally enjoyed the subject. But great and good as these things were, they paled beside his love for Jesus Christ. [page 6]

2. God Can be Trusted

God means just what He says," said Hudson Taylor, "and He will do all that He has promised." [page 8]

3. Tracing God's Hand in Hudson Taylor's Life

In the annals of church history there are few stories of greater faith and courage than that of Hudson Taylor's advance into the interior of China. For the thrills of an adventure story, it makes compelling reading. But the really moving experience is in tracing the hand of a gracious and compassionate God in sending messengers, through suffering and bloodshed, to bring the light of knowledge of Him to a quarter of the world's population. [page 8]

4. Discipline and Contentment

Discipline again became all-important to him in maintaining his walk with God. He had to get up early, before the inn grew lively and distracting. He soon found "prayer-haunts" in places on the hills, different ones for different weather. A habit formed early was to walk up and down, praying aloud, talking as a man talks to his friend. He often used a hymn-book, praying aloud the words of the hymns. Sometimes he would pray for the city as he sat and looked over it from the hills.

James was only 22, and fast learning to school himself against the subtle inroads of apathy and lethargy. He tried hard to be faithful in the seemingly trivial tasks at hand.

"A little thing" said Hudson Taylor, "is a little thing. But faithfulness in a little thing is a great thing."

James wrote at this time:

It has come home to me very forcibly of late that it matters little what the work is in which we are engaged: so long as God has put it into our hands, the faithful doing of

it is of no greater importance in one case than in another... The temptation I have often had to contend with is persistent under many forms: "If only I were in such and such a position," for example, "shouldn't I be able to do a great work! Yes, I am only studying engineering at present, but when I am in training for missionary work, things will be different and more helpful." Or, "I am just in preparation at present, taking Bible courses and so on, but when I get out to China my work will begin. Yes, I have left home now, but I am only on the voyage, you know; when I am really in China, I shall have a splendid chance of service." Or, "Well, here in the Training Home, all my time must be given to language study--how can I do missionary work? But when I am settled down in my station and able to speak freely, opportunities will be unlimited!"etc., etc.

It is all IF and WHEN. I believe the devil is fond of those conjunctions... I have today, to a limited extent, the opportunities to which he has been putting me off (not that I have always yielded to these temptations), but far from helping me to be faithful in the use of them, he now turns quite a different face. The plain truth is that the Scriptures never teach us to wait for opportunities of service, but to serve in just the things that lie next to our hands... The Lord bids us work, watch and pray; but Satan suggests, wait until a good opportunity for working, watching and praying presents itself--and needless to say, this opportunity is always in the future... Since the things that lie in our immediate path have been ordered of God, who shall say that one kind of work is more important and sacred than another? I believe it is no more necessary to be faithful (one said it reverently) in preaching the Gospel than in washing up dishes in the scullery. I am no more doing the Lord's work in giving the Word of God to the Chinese than you are, for example, in wrapping up a parcel to send to the tailor. It is not for us, in any case, to choose our work. And if God has chosen it for us, hadn't we better go straight ahead and do it, without waiting for anything greater, better or "nobler?"

And so, in these early days, James sorted out his tenses. There is no such thing as spiritual victory if it is not in the present tense.

We often say, "I am looking forward to this, that or the other." Have we any right to be so dissatisfied with our present condition which God has ordained for us, that we hanker after something in the future? I can hardly see that we have. There is one great exception--we are to look forward with earnest expectation to the coming of the Lord. But we have to be patient even in this. And to look for our Savior's appearing is a very different thing from hankering after enjoyments of which we hope to partake some time ahead... Why should I, in the hot, close, rainy season at Tengyueh, long for the dry months when things are more pleasant all round? Didn't God intend me to put up with the discomfort of heat and mildew? Why should I look forward to the time when I shall be able to speak Chinese more freely? Didn't God intend me to serve an apprenticeship in learning the language. Why should I look

forward to a little more time for myself, for reading, etc.? Though it is the most natural thing in the world to have such thoughts, I feel they are not at all scriptural. There is more of the flesh about them than the spirit. And they seem to be inconsistent with the peace of God which, it is promised, shall guard our hearts and our thoughts through Jesus Christ... The apostle Paul said that he had 'learned', in whatsoever state he was, "therein to be content," implying that he had reached that attitude through discipline. And I suppose it must be so with all of us; the natural tendency is to be always straining after something in the future. [pages 13-14]

5. Where are the Missionaries?

It does seem a terrible thing that so few are offering for the mission field... I can't help feeling that there is something wrong somewhere. Surely God must be wanting his people to go forward. Does not the Master's last command still hold good?... As one thinks of even our corner of the world here in Yunnan [China], there seems a strange discrepancy between its huge districts, large towns, unreached tribespeople, waiting for the workers who do not come, and the big missionary meetings at home, the collecting and subscribing, the missionary literature published, etc., etc. And the need is the same, if not greater, in other parts of the world. Hundreds of millions of people who have never yet had the Gospel definitely brought before them--a mere handful of missionaries sent out from the home countries to evangelize them. [page 19]

6. Inconvenienced for the Gospel

Endless small items of business cluttered up the time he wanted for language study, and he was having to learn to be 'perpetually inconvenienced' for the sake of the gospel. [page 24]

7. A True Missionary Spirit

I feel, somehow, that my best opportunity for Chinese study is gone for ever. Interruptions, visits and attention to details absorb a good deal of my time. Not that I deplore this; on the contrary, I am very glad to be launched into full work as a missionary. It is what we come to China for. But I am finding out that it is a mistake to plan to get through a certain amount of work in a certain time. It ends in disappointment, besides not being the right way to go about it, in my judgment. It makes one impatient of interruption and delay. Just as you are nearly finishing--- somebody comes along to sit with you and have a chat! You might hardly think it possible to be impatient and put out when there is such an opportunity for presenting the Gospel--but it is. It may be just on mealtime or you are writing a letter to catch the mail, or you were just going out for needed exercise before tea. But the visitor has to be welcomed, and I think it is well to cultivate an attitude of mind

which will enable one to welcome him from the heart and at any time. "No admittance except on business" scarcely shows a true missionary spirit. [page 24]

8. What If I'm Not Gifted?

It is interesting that James did not feel his gift was in preaching, either at home or abroad. In Yunnan, however, preaching tended to be somewhat unstructured. He said he had followed the habits of the irregular preacher at home who was accused of wandering off the subject. "He replied," James recalled, "that whether he stuck to his subject or not, he thanked God he stuck to his object, which was to bring men to Christ. I hope I shall never lose sight of that." [page 24-25]

9. Compassion

As Carl and James walked down the centre street one day they heard shouting and angry voices. A little slave girl was being beaten for some misdemeanor. The two young missionaries stopped to investigate and noticed she was seriously ill. The crowd would not let James intervene: it was none of his business.

A few hours later James returned and asked after the child.

"She's dead," said a man sweeping the courtyard. He jerked his chin, "over there, in the mortuary."

James crossed to the mortuary and the caretaker allowed him to see the wooden box where her body lay. James levered the lid off and felt the child's pulse: it was faintly beating. He took the box out into the fresh air and the child opened her eyes.

The caretaker was anxious and angry now. "Your house will be burnt down if they find a foreigner has touched anything here," he remonstrated.

James carried the child home in his arms. They laid her on a bed and he and Carl gave her a little drink. For the next few days they cared for the flickering life with great tenderness, and with bachelor enthusiasm, they planned how they would adopt her, bring her up and pay for her schooling.

But it was not to be. The child died a week later, only one of the hundreds of little unwanted girls in the city. [pages 31-32]

10. Discouragement

I have given way to discouragement, dark discouragement far too much in the past. Now I know rather better, and thoroughly agree with the assertion, "all

discouragement is of the devil." Discouragement is to be resisted just like sin. To give way to the one is just as bad and weakens us as much as to give way to the other. God has wonderfully sustained me through this trial, and to Him be all the praise when I say that not for one instant has it disturbed my peace or radiant faith in the risen and ascended Lord ... God has enabled me to trust Him more than ever before, to rejoice in Him more than ever before, and to believe more than ever before for a work of grace among the Lisu. [page 59]

11. Moh Ting-Chang: A Follower of Christ

Returning to the town, James found a theatrical company setting up their props in the market place. They had not begun their performance, so he struck up on his tiny accordion and began to sing. A crowd soon gathered and he started to explain the message he had come to bring. There were a few jeers and shouts of opposition from the back of the crowd, but about a hundred people stayed to listen until the moon was high. Before finishing, James asked if any wanted to know more about Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

A young man immediately stepped forward. He wanted to follow Jesus Christ, he said. He already believed He was the Son of God. The man's name was Moh Ting-Chang, a pastry cook. He took James back to his little shop, and to his surprise Moh produced a small, well-read copy of Mark's gospel. Moh explained that his son had brought it back five years before after a visit to the Mangshi market, where a foreigner had given booklets out. Moh had read and re-read this little book many times. He was strangely stirred by the story. He had longed to learn more all these years. Wasn't Jesus truly God come into the world?

James and Moh were still talking as dawn filtered over the mountains. Moh wanted a week of questions answered, but James was expected up the valley later that day so he could not stay longer. He promised to be back within a few days. After keeping his promised appointment up the valley, James hurried back to Moh. He was given a royal welcome. A bed was ready for him in a room above the shop; the best food prepared for him; Moh slept on the floor beside his bed to show him honor and respect. Even business was put aside so that Moh could spend every minute with his new friend.

After two days of discussion and going carefully through the catechism, James was convinced of the reality of Moh's conversion. The only thing that puzzled him as he sat in the room behind the shop was the large brass idol with the incense burning in front of it. After a few days he ventured to mention it. Oh, said Moh, he was afraid for his family if he touched that. Gently, James suggested that they should ask God about it. He was greatly moved to hear Moh's broken cry to God for strength to break with these things.

When we rose from our knees he went straight to the stand where there was water and a basin, took a cloth and was about to approach the family altar, when again he hesitated.

"Come over here and let us pray once more," I said, seeing the conflict.

We did so and that settled it. Without a word he removed the strips of red paper with the characters for Heaven, Earth, etc., also the incense, paper-money and the idol. Without a word he burned them. I had never seen it done before in so summary a fashion. Later, Moh said more than once, "If I have done right, I shall have good dreams to-night!"

Needless to say, my first question in the morning was as to how he had slept. "Good dreams, good dreams!" he answered heartily.

And I could see that he was set at liberty.

News spread quickly that Moh had destroyed his idol and symbols of ancestor worship. People came out curiously to see him stand with James as he preached.

"I never knew a braver man in his witness for Christ," James said later. "Persecution assailed him from all sides ... He has had his ups and downs but he has never denied his Lord." [pages 60-61]

12. Needed Rest from Mountain Living

Sometimes he made the long journey on foot to Tengyueh, to make a break after months in the mountains. The Emberys and their children welcomed him as part of the family and shared in everything he had to tell.

They remembered later how James would arrive, dusty from his travels, and, after greeting them, make straight for the organ and pour out his soul in music-Bach, Beethoven, Schumann and Chopin, without a note in front of him, often for some hours. Even a cup of tea or a meal could not be pressed on him; this other hunger had to be satisfied. They remembered, too, how full of laughter the house was when he was with them. He had an infectious sense of the ludicrous, and a fund of anecdotes from his own adventures. To James, it was a much-needed rest from mountain living, and to be allowed to share in the Emberys' family life was almost like coming home. [page 62-63]

My dear Friends,

The Scriptures speak of several kinds of prayer. There is intercession and there is supplication, there is labor in prayer and there is the prayer of faith; all perhaps the same fundamentally, but they present various aspects of this great and wonderful theme. It would not be unprofitable to study the differences between these various scriptural terms.

Speaking generally, however, there is a distinction we all know; it is the distinction between general prayer and definite prayer. By definite prayer, I mean prayer after the pattern of Matt. 21:21, 22; John 15:7; etc., where a definite petition is offered up and definite faith exercised for its fulfillment. Now faith must be exercised in the other kind of prayer also, when we pray for many and varied things without knowing the will of God in every case. I may pray much in this general way, for instance, about the European War, but I cannot offer much definite prayer, as I do not know the purposes of God sufficiently well to do so.

In general prayer, I am limited by my ignorance. But this kind of prayer is the duty of us all (1 Timothy 2:1,2), however vague it has to be. I may know very little in detail about the object of my prayer, but I can, at any rate, commend it to God and leave it with Him. It is good and right to pray, vaguely, for all people, all lands, all things, at all times. But definite prayer is a very different matter. It is in a special sense "the prayer of faith." A definite request is made in definite faith for a definite answer. Let me pass on to you a few thoughts that have been in my mind the last few days on the subject of the PRAYER OF FAITH.

Take the case of a Canadian emigrant as an illustration. Allured by the prospect of "golden grain" he leaves England for the Canadian West. He has a definite object in his view. He knows very well what he is going for, and that is wheat. He thinks of the good crops he will reap and of the money they will bring him -- much like the child of God who sets out to pray the prayer of faith. He has his definite object too. It may be the conversion of a son or daughter; it may be power in Christian service; it may be guidance in a perplexing situation, or a hundred and one other things -- but it is definite. To consider the points of resemblance between the cases of the prospective Canadian farmer and the believing Christian:

A. The Breadth of Territory

Think of the unlimited scope for the farmer in Canada. There are literally millions of acres waiting to be cultivated. No need, there, to tread on other people's toes! Room for all -- vast tracts of unoccupied land just going to waste and good land too. And so it is with us, surely. There is a vast, vast field for us to go up and claim in faith. There

is enough sin, enough sorrow, enough of the blighting influence of Satan in the world to absorb all our prayers of faith, and a hundred times as many more. "There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed."

B. Government Encouraged Emigration

Think also of the efforts the Canadian Government are making to encourage emigration. All the unoccupied land belongs to it, but settlers are so badly needed that they are offered every inducement-- emigration offices established, sea passages and railway fares reduced and grants of land made free! And God is no less urgently inviting His people to pray the prayer of faith; "ASK, ASK, ASK," He is continually saying to us. He offers his inducement too: "Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." All the unoccupied territory of faith belongs to Him. And He bids us to come and occupy freely. How long are ye slack to go in to possess the land?

C. Fixed Limits

Yet this aspect of the truth must not be over-emphasized. Blessed fact though it be that the land is so broad, it can easily be magnified out of due proportion. The important thing is, not the vastness of the territory, but how much of it is actually assigned to us? The Canadian Government will make a grant of 160 acres to the farmer-emigrant, and no more. Why no more? Because they know very well that he cannot work any more. If they were to give him 160 square miles instead of 160 acres he would not know what to do with it all. So they wisely limit him to an amount of land equal to his resources.

And it is much the same with us when praying the prayer of definite faith. The very word "definite" means "with fixed limits." We are often exhorted and with reason, to ask great things of God. Yet there is a balance in all things, and we may go too far in this direction. It is possible to "bite off," even in prayer, "more than we can chew." There is a principle underlying 2 Cor.10:13 which may apply to this very matter (see R.V. margin). Faith is like muscle which grows stronger and stronger with use rather than indiarubber which can be stretched to most any desired length. Over-strained faith is not pure faith, there is a mixture of the carnal element in it. There is no strain in the "rest of faith." It asks for definite blessing as God may lead; it does not hold back through carnal timidity, nor press ahead too far through carnal eagerness.

In my own case here (at Tantsah) I have definitely asked the Lord for several hundred families of Lisu believers. There are upwards of two thousand Lisu families in the district altogether. It might be said, "Why do you not ask for a thousand?" I answer quite frankly, because I have not faith for a thousand. I have faith -- or I would rather say, I believe the Lord has given me faith -- for more than one hundred families but not for a thousand. So I accept the limits the Lord has, I believe, given me. Perhaps God will give me a thousand; perhaps too, He will lead me to commit myself to this definite prayer of faith later on. Someone has said that the Lord

promises us bread, but He gives us bread and butter. This is in accordance with Eph. 3:20: "Above all that we ask or think." But we must not overload faith. We must be sane and practical. Let us not claim too little in faith, but let us not claim too much either.

Remember the Canadian's 160 acres? Consider too how the Dominion Government exercises authority in the matter of location. The Government has a say as to the "where" as well as the "how much" of the emigrant's claim. He may not wander all over the prairie at his own sweet will, and elect to settle down in anyplace he chooses. Even in regard to the position of his farm, he must consult the Government.

Do we always do this in our prayers and claims? Do we consult the Heavenly Government at the outset, or do we pray "the first thing that comes?" Do we spend much time waiting upon God to know His will, before attempting to embark on His promises? That is a principle upon which God works. He has informed us very plainly, in 1 John 5:14,15. I cannot but feel that this is a cause (not the only cause) of many unanswered prayers. James 4:3 has a broad application, and we need to search our hearts in its light. I read a testimony of Dr. Stuart Holden's, not long ago, in which he said that one of the greatest blessings of his life had been his unanswered prayers. And I can say the same in my measure. Unanswered prayers have taught me to seek the Lord's will instead of my own. I suppose we have had such experiences when we have prayed and prayed and prayed, and no answer has come. The heavens above us have been as brass. Yea, blessed brass, if it has taught us to sink a little more of this ever-present self of ours into the Cross of Christ. Sometimes our petition has been such a good one, to all appearances, but that does not insure it being of God. Many "good desires" proceed from our uncrucified selves. Scripture and experience certainly agree that those who live nearest to God are the most likely to know His will. We are called to be "filled with the knowledge of His will" (Col. 1:9). The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant. We need to know more of the fellowship of Christ's death. We need to feed upon the Word of God more than we do. We need more holiness, more prayer. We shall not, then, be in so much danger of mistaking His will.

The wonderful promise of John 15:7 is prefixed by a far-reaching "if." I wonder if that verse might not be paraphrased: "If ye abide NOT in Me and My words abide NOT in you, DO NOT ask whatsoever ye will for it shall NOT be done unto you." Perhaps if we examined ourselves more thoroughly before God, we might even discover, in some cases, that the whole course of our life was not in accordance with His will. What right would a man have, in such a case, to expect his prayers to be answered? But is not this the fact with regard to much good Christian work? "Get your work from God" is a needed injunction. How often Christian leaders make their own plans, work hard at them, and then earnestly ask God's blessing on them. How much better, as Hudson Taylor felt, to wait on God to know His plans before

commencing! Much Christian work seems to have the stamp of the carnal upon it. It may be "good," it may be successful outwardly -- but the Shekinah Glory is not there.

Now all this applies to the prayer of faith. We must have the assurance that we are in the right place, doing the right work. We must be sure that God is leading us, when we enter upon specific prayer. It does not follow that because a thing is the will of God, He will necessarily lead you to pray for it. He may have other burdens for you. We must get our prayers from God, and pray to know His will. It may take time. God was dealing with Hudson Taylor for fifteen years before He laid upon him the burden of definite prayer for the foundation of the China Inland Mission. God is not in a hurry. He cannot do things with us until we are trained and ready for them. Let us "press on" then (Phil. 3:12). We may be certain He has further service, further burdens of faith and prayer to give us when we are ready for them. And He will lead. Abraham would have never been a pattern of faith, if he had remained in Ur of the Chaldees. Nor will we ever have a faith worth calling faith unless we press forward in the footsteps of Him who said, "Follow Me."

D. The Claim Endorsed

Turn to the emigrant again. He has come to an agreement with the Canadian Government. He falls in with their terms; he accepts their conditions; he agrees to take over the land allotted to him. So he presents his claim at the proper quarter, and it is at once endorsed. Could anything be simpler? No need our claim in the presence of God be any less simple. When we once have the deep, calm assurance of His will in the matter, we put our claim, just as a child before his father. A simple request and nothing more. No cringing, no beseeching, no tears, no wrestling. No second asking either. The parable of the unjust judge was never meant to teach that we are to wring an answer by main force from an unwilling God. One real asking is enough for a life time.

In my case, I prayed continually for the Tengyueh Lisu for over four years, asking many times that several hundreds of families might be turned to God. This was only general prayer, however. God was dealing with me in the meantime. (Of course I do not mean to suggest that anyone else would necessarily be led along just the same line. Does God ever deal with two different people in exactly the same way?) Then near the end of November last year (1914), when staying with Mr. and Mrs. Gels down at Myitkyina in Burma, this same petition came to me as a definite burden. You know how a child is sometimes rebuked by his parents for asking something in the wrong way -- perhaps in the case of a child, for asking rudely. The parent will say, "Ask me properly." That is just what God seemed to be saying to me then: "Ask Me properly." As much as to say, "You have been asking Me to do this for the last four years without ever really believing that I would do it: now ask in FAITH."

I recognized the burden clearly. And it was an actual burden: it burdened me. I went to my room alone one afternoon and knelt in prayer. I knew that the time had come for the prayer of faith. And then, fully knowing what I was doing and what it might cost me. I definitely committed myself to this petition in faith. I "cast my burden upon the Lord." I rose from my knees with the deep restful conviction that I had already received an answer. The transaction was done. And since then (nearly a year ago now) I have never had anything but peace and joy (when in touch with God) in holding to the ground already claimed and taken. I have never repeated the request and never will: there is no need. The asking, the taking and the receiving, occupy but a few moments (Mark 11:24). The past can never be undone, never need be redone. It is a solemn thing to enter into a faith-covenant with God. It is binding on both parties. You lift up your hand to God, perhaps even literally; you definitely ask for and definitely receive His proffered gift; then do not go back on your faith, even if you live to be a hundred.

E. Get to Work

To return once more to the Canadian farmer. He has put in his claim; the land has been granted; the deed made out and sealed with the Official seal. Is that the end then? No! only the beginning!

He has not attained his object yet. His object is a harvest of wheat, not a patch of waste land; and there is a vast difference between the two. The Government never promised him sacks of flour all ready for exportation -- only the land which could be made to yield them. Now is the time for him to roll up his sleeves and get to work. He must build his homestead, get his live stock, call in laborers, clear the ground, plough it and sow his seed. The Government says to him in effect, "We have granted your claim: now go and work it."

And this distinction is no less clear in the spiritual realm. God gives us the ground in answer to the prayer of faith, but not the harvest. That must be worked for in co-operation with Him. Faith must be followed up by works, prayer-works. Salvation is of grace but it must be worked out (Phil. 2:12) if it is to become ours. And the prayer of faith is just the same. It is given to us by free grace, but it will never be ours till we follow it up, work it out. "Faith and Works" again. They must never be divorced; for indolence will reap no harvest in the spiritual world. I think the principle will be found to hold in any case where the prayer of faith is offered, but there is no doubt that it always holds good in cases where the strongholds of Satan are attacked, where the prey is to be wrested from the strong.

Think of the children of Israel under Joshua: God had given them the land of Canaan -- given it to them (notice) by free grace-- but see how they had to fight when once they commenced actually to take possession! Then again, think of Daniel (Daniel 10:12,13): his prayer was answered the very first day he offered it; but that was only a

signal for a twenty days' battle in the aerial heavens! Satan's tactics seem to be as follows. He will first of all oppose our breaking through to the place of real, living faith, by all means in his power. He detests the prayer of faith, for it is authoritative 'notice to quit.' He does not so much mind rambling, carnal prayers, for they do not hurt him much. This is why it is so difficult to attain to a definite faith in God for a definite object. We often have to strive and wrestle in prayer (Eph. 6:10 etc.) before we attain this quiet, restful faith. And until we break right through and join hands with God; we have not attained to real faith at all. Faith is a gift of God (Rom. 12:3); if we stop short of it we are using mere fleshly energy or will-power, weapons of no value in this warfare. However, once we attain to a real faith, all the forces of hell are impotent to annul it. What then? They retire and muster their forces on this plot of ground which God has pledged Himself to give us, and contest every inch of it. The real battle begins when the prayer of faith has been offered. But, praise the Lord! We are on the winning side. Let us read and re-read the tenth chapter of Joshua, and never talk about defeat again. Defeat, indeed! No, Victory! Victory! Victory!

2 Samuel 23:8-23 is a passage along this line which has been meat and drink to me the last day or two. Verses 11 and 12 contain all I have been saying in a nutshell. Please read them. Let Shammah represent the Christian warrior. Let David represent the crucified and risen Christ -- and note that Shammah was "one of the mighty men whom David had." Let the "plot of ground" represent the prayer of faith. Let the lentils, if you will, represent the poor lost souls of men. Let the Philistines represent the aerial hosts of wickedness. Let "the people" represent Christians (maybe good people) afflicted with spiritual anemia. I can imagine what these people were saying as they saw the Philistines approaching and ran away:'

Perhaps it was not the Lord's will to grant us that plot of ground. We must submit to the will of God.

Yes, we must indeed submit ourselves to the will of God, but we must "resist the devil" too James 4:7) The fact that the enemy comes upon us in force is no proof that we are out of the line of God's will. The constant prefixing of "if it be thy will" to our prayers is often a mere subterfuge of unbelief. True submission to God is not inconsistent with virility and boldness. Notice what Shammah did--simply held his ground. He was not seeking more worlds to conquer at that moment! He just stood where he was and hit out, right and left. Notice also the result of his action and to whom the glory is ascribed!

F. Praying Through Victory

I repeat that this does not necessarily apply to every kind of prayer. A young Lisu Christian here is fond of telling an experience of his a few months ago. He was walking through the fields in the evening when his inside began to unaccountably pain him. He dropped on his knees and, bowing his head down to the ground, asked

Jesus to cure him. At once the stomachache left him. Praise the Lord! And there are no doubt multitudes of such cases -- simple faith and simple answers. But we must not rest content with such prayer. We must get beyond stomachache or any other ache, and enter into the deeper fellowship of God's purposes. "That ye be no longer children" (Eph. 4:14). We must press on to maturity. We must attain to "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," and not remain in God's kindergarten indefinitely. If we grow into manhood in the spiritual life, we shall not escape conflict. As long as Eph. 6:10-18 remains in the Bible, we must be prepared for serious warfare -- "And having done all, to stand." We must fight through, and then stand victorious on the battlefield.

Is not this the secret of many unanswered prayers -- that they are not fought through? If the result is not seen as soon as expected, Christians are apt to lose heart, and if it is still longer delayed, to abandon it altogether. You know the name they give to places in England when the building (or whatever it is) is abandoned when only half completed -- So and so's "Folly." I wonder whether some of our prayers do not deserve the same stigma. Think of Wembley Tower: I have never examined it closely, but from a distance it looks as if a good beginning had been made. Luke 14:28-30 applies to prayers as well as towers. We must count the cost before praying the prayer of faith. We must be willing to pay the price. We must mean business. We must set ourselves to "see things through" (Eph. 6:18, "In all perseverance"). Our natural strength will fail: and herein lies the necessity for a divinely-given faith. We can then rest back in the Everlasting Arms and renew our strength continually. We can then rest as well as wrestle. In this conflict-prayer, after the definite exercise of faith, there is no need to ask the same thing again and again. It seems to me inconsistent to do so. Under these circumstances, I would say let prayer take the following forms:

A firm standing on God-given ground, and a constant assertion of faith and claiming of victory. It is helpful, I find, to repeat passages of Scripture applicable to the subject. Let faith be continually strengthened and fed from its proper source -- the Word of God.

A definite fighting and resisting of Satan 's host in the Name of Christ. I like to read passages of Scripture, such as 1 John 3.8, or Rev. 12.11 in prayer, as direct weapons against Satan. I often find it a means of much added strength and liberty in prayer to fight this way. Nothing cuts like the Word of the Living God. (Eph. 6:17, Heb. 4:12).

Praying through every aspect of the matter in detail. In the case of my Lisu work here, I continually pray to God to give me fresh knowledge of His will, more wisdom in dealing with the people, knowledge of how to pray, how to maintain victory, how to instruct people in the gospel, or in singing or in prayer, help in studying the language, help in ordinary conversation, help in preaching, guidance as to settling

down somewhere as a centre, guidance about building a house (if necessary), guidance as regards my own arrangements (servants, money, food, clothes, etc.) help and blessing in my correspondence, opening for the Word and blessing in other villages, for leaders and helpers to be raised up for me, for each of the Christians by name, also for every one of my prayer helpers by name. Such detailed prayer is exhausting, but I believe effectual in regard to ascertaining the will of God and obtaining His highest blessing.

I would not ask anyone to join me in the definite prayer for the turning to God of several hundred Lisu families, unless God gives individual guidance to do so. Better offer prayer in a more general way than make a definite petition apart from His leading. I should, however, value highly the prayer co-operation of any who felt led to join me in it. What I want too, is not just an occasional mention of my work and its needs before the Lord, during the morning or evening devotions, but a definite time (say half an hour or so?) set apart for the purpose every day, either during the day-time or in the evening. Can you give that time to me – or rather to the Lord?

About a fortnight ago I baptized two Lisu women at the little village of Six Family Hollow – the wives of the two young Lisu men I baptized last January. I have now baptized six Christian Lisu altogether, all from that one family. It was my painful duty only the next day, however, to exclude one of these, a man named Ahdo, from church fellowship, for an indefinite period. He is the man who first introduced me to the Lisu in his home and in many of the surrounding villages, and until the end of last year, he acted as my preacher and 'helper' when with me. It appears that he has been continually, during the past few years and until now, not only in his own village but in other places where he has been with me, breaking the seventh commandment. The Lisu are a very immoral race in any case, but in spite of his Christian profession, he has been even more sinful than most of them. Such things will go on sometimes almost indefinitely, no one but the foreign missionary being ignorant to them. I had baptized him with his younger brother and both parents last January, but he had not been with me since then. I am glad to say, however, that he seems quite penitent and never attempted to deny it. We must pray for his restoration. I have no other special news of the work, just now. I am thinking of visiting that village (Six Family Hollow) again in a few days, as well as other villages.

Hoping to write again next month and with earnest prayers for you all,

Yours in the Lord's service,
J. O. Fraser. [page 64-73]

14. Battles Within

Waiting week after week for the turning to God he had prayed for, and seeing nothing, James found the battle was not only against the prince of the mountains. It was in himself.

"What was your biggest surprise when you went to China?" asked a student, eagerly looking at a veteran missionary.

"Myself," he replied. [page 75]

15. Prayer: The Lifeblood of the Work

Hoste was quick to point out that his time and energy was always saved by prayer and wasted without it; it was the lifeblood of the whole work of God in China. James was much influenced by the older man and joined him every day to pray--often for hours--for all aspects of the work. (On more than one occasion as they prayed; James would find Hoste pouring a cup of tea for himself at the far end of the room while praying aloud. [page 96]

16. Patiently Waiting on God

Preparation, delay and growth (he wrote) are characteristics of God's working both in history and in nature. Scripture and the facts of nature meet, when James, exhorting us to patience says: "The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it." The same principle applies to our own spiritual lives, and to our labor in the Lord. A mature Christian is not the product of a day or a month or a year either. "It takes time" said the late Dr. Andrew Murray, "to grow into Christ." We must strike our roots down deep in the soil of the Word and be strengthened by long experience. It is a slow process, and it is right that it should be so: God does not want us to be spiritual mushrooms. It is true that in the Lord's work there is a place for haste-- the King's business requires it (there is a right and a wrong haste), and there is assuredly a place for diligence, for earnestness. James Gilmour said he "did not think we could be too earnest in a matter for which Christ was so much in earnest that He laid down His life." You know it was said of Alleine that he was "insatiably greedy for souls." While it is day we cannot but be up and doing to the limit of the strength which God supplies. But the element of corroding care will enter into Christian work if we let it, and it will not help, but hinder. We cannot fret souls into the Kingdom of Heaven; neither, when they are once converted, can we worry them into maturity; we cannot by taking thought, add a cubit to our own spiritual stature or to anyone else's either. The plants of our Heavenly Father's planting will grow better under His open sky than under the hothouses of our feverish effort: it is for us to water, and to water diligently, but we

cannot give the increase however we try. An abnormally rapid growth is often unnatural and unhealthy: the quick growth spoken of in Matt. 13:5 is actually said to be a sign of its being ephemeral.

In the biography of our Lord nothing is more noticeable than the quiet, even poise of His life. Never 'flustered' whatever happened, never taken off His guard, however assailed by men or demons: in the midst of fickle people, hostile rulers, faithless disciples -- always calm, always collected. Christ, the hard Worker indeed -- but doing no more, and no less, than God had appointed Him; and with no restlessness, no hurry, no worry. Was ever such a peaceful life lived -- under conditions so perturbing?

But we also, as He, are working for eternity and in eternity (eternity has already commenced for us): we can afford then to work in the atmosphere of eternity. The rush and bustle of carnal activity breathes a spirit of restlessness: the Holy Spirit breathes a deep calm. This is the atmosphere in which we may expect a lasting work of God to grow. Let us take care first of all that it is a work of God -- begun and continued in God -- and then let us cast our anxieties, our fears and our impatience to the winds. Let us shake off "dull sloth" on the one hand and feverishness on the other. A gourd may spring up in a night, but not an oak. The current maybe flowing deep and strong in spite of ripples and counter-currents on the surface. And even when it receives a temporary set-back from the incoming tide of evil, we may yet learn to say -- as Jeremiah once said under the most distressing circumstances -- "It is good that a man should hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD." [page 103-104]

17. Sacrificial Life

Thinking much of Stuart Holden's saying: "I do not believe that any man is made victor save by blood of his own," -- "resisting unto blood striving against sin" (Heb. 12:4).

So often, as today, I have been unwilling to shed my own blood, so to speak, and have trusted in Christ alone -- arm-chair trust, which has failed. [page 109]

18. No Power

Hudson Taylor observed that there is no possibility of power in a life which is easy-going and which shrinks from the Cross. [page 109]

19. Holiness Desired?

"Everyone," says A. W. Tozer, "is just as holy as he wants to be." [page 109]

20. Bleeding Hearts

Extracts from Jowett's *Passion for Souls*; "The Gospel of a broken heart begins the ministry of bleeding hearts."

"As soon as we cease to bleed we cease to bless."

"We must bleed, if we would be ministers of the Saving Blood."

"St. Catherine's prayers were red with sacrifice, and she felt the touch of the Pierced Hands." [page 110]

21. James Fraser, According to Allyn Cooke

It was when he had parted with Ting at Tali that James met a young American who was to become one of the best-loved men God ever sent to the tribes, Allyn Cooke. James took to him at once, and Allyn described his first impressions of James as they traveled together to Tengyueh:

Fraser seemed young and strong physically. He was very sociable, for an Englishman. He spoke Chinese fluently, just like the people, though when occasion required he would use scholarly language. In his traveling outfit -- home-made and kept for the road -- he was sometimes taken for a coolie or even "a foreign beggar!" But he always had the dress of a teacher with him, and at his destination would soon appear, to the surprise of strangers, as "a perfect gentleman."

And what a fellow-traveler he was! Well do I remember his thoughtfulness and unselfish care of others. He was never in a hurry, and would stop and talk with people on the road, always ready to do a good turn. He was kind to the animals, the coolies, the inn-keepers. And he was so practical! The pack-saddle was too heavy; he designed another. The new chum was unused to riding on the top of the load; Fraser insisted on his using the only foreign saddle. It was always the same -- he was used to local conditions, he would explain, and did not mind them.

When we reached Tengyueh, I came to know more of his spiritual life and was much impressed by his talks from the Word. He took me to some of his prayer-resorts outside the city, and I found that he fasted often, in a quiet way, before preaching. The influence of his life only deepened as time went on. Indeed, everything that I have as a missionary, I owe to Fraser. [pages 115-116]

22. Big Tiger's Village

The elders of Big Tiger's village held a discussion soon after Allyn's arrival.

"We can't become Christians just now," they came and told him.. "It would be a waste of good whisky. When we've finished the whisky we'll talk it over with you again. Stay till it's all finished and see what our people feel then."

So the drinking began.

The drinking and dancing were soon followed by scenes of appalling drunkenness and debauchery. Every evil influence seemed to be let loose; the very atmosphere was sinister. The people's faces in the firelight were darkened and haunted; their every act degrading and bestial.

Allyn felt emotion building up inside him as he watched the proceedings. He and his two Lisu companions sat alone, unable to convey to the people that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

Finally the main feast day came. Allyn was given a special chair in the headman's room.

One after another the tribes people staggered in, much the worse for their drunkenness, to prostrate themselves before the spirits of their ancestors. They knocked their heads several times on the earth floor before the tablets, in worship of Satan. Allyn was obliged to watch.

Suddenly a deep-seated emotion welled up inside him. He fought to control it for a minute but at last broke down in tears, shaking with sobs as he sat in the chair.

Big Tiger was astonished.

"What's the matter? Is something wrong?" he asked in Chinese.

"I am weeping because you are lost. You are on your way to darkness for all eternity without Jesus Christ, and I can't do anything to save you," Allyn replied in broken Chinese.

A powerful sense of the Presence of God came over them.

"If you feel so bad about it," said the headman, trembling, "we'll stop right now. We'll throw away the whisky. Tell us about God and pray to Him to save us."

Allyn and his companions did their best to explain to the headman and his family what it meant to become a child of God. It was not easy to convey fully the meaning of the Cross, of deliverance from sin and of eternal life in the few words of Chinese they both understood. But the Holy Spirit opened the mind of this man and his family.

There and then Big Tiger and his family destroyed all the objects of demon-worship from the house.

Then Big Tiger led the way to the Spirit Tree (Allyn remembers). It was just an old stump, too big to cut down. Incense and bowls for food stood on the shelf attached to it. Big Tiger broke the bowls and tore out the shelf, burning everything that could be burned. A little hut stood nearby with incense for spirit-worship. They tore it down and carried it all to the bonfire.

Villagers who had watched and overheard came under the same conviction. All the whisky was poured out to the pigs. Voices kept calling to Allyn from house after house to come and help pull down spirit-shelves and tell the people how to be saved.

Before nightfall (Allyn writes) the whole village had professed to believe. Within a few days the people of Rock Cave River, the next hamlet, had followed suit, and then of Big Nitre River, though these were slower in making the break.

When I had to return to Tenayueh to continue my language study my two Lisu companions remained to instruct the people and carry on the work. [pages 119-121]

23. They Want to be Christians

They just want to be Christians, when they hear all about it, and just turn Christian, missionary or no missionary. Who put that 'want-to' into their hearts? If they are not God's chosen, God's elect, what are they? [page 140]

24. James, The Preacher

... when James had been traveling on a promised visit, a woman had called out and asked him where he was off to.

"Just going up the mountain."

"What for?"

"To tell them about Jesus Christ. I am a preacher."

"Well, stay and tell us about Him."

"I haven't time just now."

"What's the use of being a preacher if you've no time to preach?" [page 140]

25. Prayer Companionship

In contrast to his visits to his prayer-band and sympathetic friends, James had some disappointing meetings.

China seemed a long way off to some of his listeners: remote and mildly interested but hardly related to their lives in any way. His story of the remarkable turning to God among the tribes was not of much importance, they seemed to say. No doubt he enjoyed traveling around helping these people.

Maybe James wasn't an exciting speaker. Perhaps he didn't convey his story well. At any rate, the lack of interest in his work during his furlough in England left a scar on his heart. He felt he had waited so long to share the news, but few people wanted to hear.

There were others, of course, who understood. They tried so hard to imagine the terrain and its people and were able at least dimly to imagine it. But they grasped at once that God was at work among these tribespeople and they wanted to be co-workers with Him. Many of these James helped draft into the Prayer Companionship: ten soldiers in prayer standing behind each man on the field. This grew to be an army of thousands in the following years; intimate partners in the whole work of the mission. [page 146]

26. Administration

"There is a flame of a burning bush in everything that is a work of God," James said.

He felt this about office work in a special sense. When he arrived back in at headquarters he found himself detained there again. For many months James was typing letters in Shanghai.

The fact that he did not agree to stay permanently in any position there was because he did not feel this was God's will for him. It seems likely he was right.

He had some pretty independent views on mission. Isobel Kuhn generously states that he was simply '50 years ahead of his time'. But not everyone thought so. He tended to upset traditional applecarts, however gently he pressed his opinion. He had a good deal of criticism from some quarters, amounting to mild rebellion in one or two areas of Yunnan.

James never minded criticism. "They are entitled to their opinion and I am entitled to mine," he said. The problem came, of course, when he felt indigenous methods -- for example -- must be adopted. This caused strong reaction sometimes.

Another of his views was on woman-power. He observed that women workers outnumbered the men yet a large proportion occupied themselves in housekeeping and secondary affairs, each in her home. Why not have communal meals, Kibbutz-style, and free all these women to preach and teach? People used to complain that the CIM got more than its fair share of gifted women. Were they really used as God had planned?

His own idea of married life was of an equal yoke, both partners in the work together. He wanted Roxie to travel with him and preach with him. He would happily go down to the river and wash the clothes or carry the baby on his back. It was a companion and co-worker he had always longed for, not a housekeeper. But he had to accept that this view was not shared by everyone.

Unfortunately, while James enjoyed discussion on all these things he found some peoples' "hurtability" level very low, and they could nurse a grievance for a very long time. And this, he was quick to see, was a serious situation. Unity of spirit was vital to the work. Over and over again James made long journeys of several days, not to preach or teach, but to restore fellowship with a worker who was in dissent. No principle, he felt, was more important than that one. Perfect love among Christian workers was more vital than evangelism, if the two could be separated at all.

The dependence of mission on the spiritual state of the missionaries was borne home to James early in his superintendency of Yunnan. As personnel increased, varieties of background and outlook multiplied. Endless opportunities for the clash of personalities presented themselves, especially in work at such close quarters. Unless there was victory here, there would be no victory anywhere else. [pages 161-162]

27. Dr. Lloyd Jones

Dr. Lloyd-Jones says in his book *Authority*, "Men have testified that they have learned more of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ in an hour in a meeting during a revival than they had learned in a lifetime of Bible study and reading theology." [page 164]

28. Lisu New Testament

It was a great day when news came that Allyn and Leila Cooke had finished translating the Lisu New Testament. It had been a mammoth work and completed at great cost to themselves. James was asked to come up to Luda and help with its

revision. It was then to be typed (largely by Hoday, a Lisu girl whom the Cookes had taught) and photo-printed in Burma. Leila Cooke wrote of James:

He spent several weeks with us at Luda, and we covered every verse as far as Hebrews, working with him daily. But his help with the translation was not the only help we received. His daily messages for morning prayers were an inspiration ... His capacity for work was astonishing -- but with it all he always seemed fresh and full of life, always of an even temper, always considerate of others, and a perfect gentleman.

Our home life was greatly enriched through his coming. He had read widely, and his conversation was rich and varied. He would sit, between whiles, and play on our little organ -- Chopin's Polonaise and treasures from Beethoven -- bringing such glorious music out of it! The Lisu would crowd in to listen.

And one thing that impressed me as the months went on -- he had such wonderful control over every part of his life. He was completely master of himself. He not only wanted to live a self-denying life, enduring hardness for Christ's sake, he could do so. To bring his life up to his highest thought seemed to be quite natural with him. And he was so practical about it.

His correspondence, for example, was very heavy. I have known him to sit up all night, answering letters. He would not let it interfere with regular hours of revision work during the day. When the mail came in, he would put the letters to be answered into envelopes addressed to the senders, and keep them on his table ready for attention.

He was very sociable. When he wanted to write letters or study, he would come down and do it with us, rather than stay up in his room alone.

No matter how busy he was he never cut short the morning time of family worship. He would often continue with us in prayer and Bible study until nine or ten o'clock. Mr. Cooke and I were alone with him for a while, before Peterson and Carlson joined us, but Mr. Fraser was just as willing to impart his precious messages to us as to a large company. How we did enjoy them, for we had been long away from such ministry in our own tongue.

Hymn-singing was always part of these times of worship. Mr. Fraser always chose the grand old-time hymns, and seemed so in his element -- playing the little organ and leading us in song. His favorite hymn was: "The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want," and he would announce it by saying "Let us sing a hymn written three thousand years ago."

There were already over a thousand Christians at Luda. There had been some bitter persecution of them in earlier years, but the church had matured and expanded.

James loved the translation work. "What fascinating work it is," he wrote to his mother. "How I love Bible Translation and Bible teaching -- and how both seem to water my own soul!" [pages 166-167]

29. James Fraser-A Gentleman

Mr. Fraser was a gentleman to his fingertips. There was nothing of lightness or flippancy. Wisdom governed him and every propriety was observed. I remember how often these things struck me when we journeyed together with Miss Christiansen. He was the perfect gentleman in the dirtiest and dingiest Chinese inns. Ask Miss Christiansen. She marveled at the man. So did I. Every courtesy was observed. Every kindness was done. The depth of his inward life in Christ was never more manifested than in his attention to those hundred and one little things which make comfort for others. [page 171]

30. Naked Faith

Isobel Kuhn wrote to her three days later:

"The very thought of you makes my hand tremble so and the tears come so that I do not know how I can write. The Lisu have just walked in with their unbelievable message... Times like this are when we just have to bare our face to the tempest and go on without seeing clearly, without understanding, without any thing but naked faith." [page 176]

Eileen Crossman: *Mountain Rain, A New Biography of James O. Fraser* (Robesonia, PA, OMF Books, 1982).

**Index to
Mountain of Rain**
by
Eileen Crossman

A

A True Missionary Spirit.. 3
Administration18

B

Battles Within.....13
Big Tiger's Village16
Bleeding Hearts..... 15

C

Compassion 4

D

**Discipline and
Contentment1**
Discouragement 4
Dr. Lloyd Jones19

G

God Can be Trusted1

H

Holiness Desired?15

I

**Inconvenienced for the
Gospel 3**

J

**James Fraser, According to
Allyn Cooke 15**
**James Fraser-A Gentleman
..... 20**
James, The Preacher.....17

L

Lisu New Testament19

M

**Moh Ting-Chang: A
Follower of Christ..... 4**

N

Naked Faith21
**Needed Rest from
Mountain Living..... 6**
No Power.....15

P

Patiently Waiting on God 14
Prayer Companionship....18
**Prayer: The Lifeblood of
the Work13**
Proper Focus1

S

Sacrificial Life15

T

The Prayer of Faith 6
**They Want to be Christians
..... 17**
**Tracing God's Hand in
Hudson Taylor's Life.....1**

W

What If I'm Not Gifted? 3
**Where are the
Missionaries?..... 3**