

AYERS FAMILY PAPERS

WRITINGS (THOMAS WILLBURN AYERS)

ITEM NUMBER

5



Billy Chu and Family

THE CHU FAMILY

(Chu pronounced as it spelled [ew])

I have often been asked if during my twenty-five years in China I had seen miracles performed. In answer to this question, I have answered, yes. They are being performed so unmistakably in many forms that there is no doubt but the day of miracles has not passed.

One of the most remarkable miracles is to see that the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, as is clearly shown in the changed lives of Chinese men, women and children. I was greatly impressed on reaching China when I was told of the miracle which was wrought in the life of the man who became my personal teacher and helper for twenty-five years, and who was more helpful to me than has any man been. In the early history of our Baptist Mission in North China, Mrs. T. P. Crawford had a Boys School in the old city of Tungchow, the only place where we had Baptist work in North China at that time. One day a young boy, who had come from the Western part of Shantung, came to Mrs. Crawford and asked to be allowed to become a pupil in her school. He was not only unknown to Mrs. Crawford, but was a young stranger in a strange city. When Mrs. Crawford asked his name, his address, and why he was in Tungchow, he answered that his name was Chu Yuan Shuin, that his home was in the Western part of Shantung, and that he had left his home hunting work, as his parents were very poor. While seeking work he said he heard of Mrs. Crawford's school, and it was said that she was teaching a new religion, and that her pupils were different from those in other schools; that they were cleaner in their lives than were the pupils in other schools, and these, with other favorable reports of the school, had led him to wish to become a pupil in this school. In further questioning of the young stranger, Mrs. Crawford asked: "Do you gamble?" "Yes, when I have anything to gamble with." "Do you drink wine?" "Yes, when I can get it." "Do you tell lies?" "Yes, I have been a liar as far back as I can remember." "Do you worship idols?" "Yes, I have never known anything else to worship." "Have you never heard of Jesus?" "Before coming to Tungchow I had never heard His name." "Have you the necessary money to pay for your tuition and board?" "No, I have just a few hundred cash left of what I brought with me when I came here." Mrs. Crawford then looked

into the face of the young stranger, and asked: "Do you think I would take into my school a boy who gambles, drinks wine, tells lies, who worships idols and who has no money?" The boy, with a sad expression on his face, answered: "Teacher, if you will give me a chance I will quit all my bad habits and will gladly do any work needed around the school to pay for my board and tuition." Mrs. Crawford, impressed with the boy's candor, said: "Young man, I believe you are honest and sincere and I am going to give you a chance. You can register as a pupil in my school."

So we now see young Chu a pupil in a Christian school, and later will see the miracle wrought in his life.

The young man lived up to his promise to give up all his bad habits: he was diligent in all his studies, honest and faithful in all the work Mrs. Crawford assigned him. As a pupil, no one in the school made a better record. He not only studied diligently the books taught, but from the beginning of his school life was fascinated by the story of Jesus, and under the leadership of Mrs. Crawford he accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour. Yes, the Gospel proved the power of God unto his salvation, and the transformation which it made in his life is not less than a miracle.

After young Chu had finished school, Rev. A. C. Jones, son-in-law of Dr. and Mrs. Crawford, was visiting them in Tungchow and he wanted a consecrated young Chinese man to go with him to the English Baptist Mission in the Western part of Shantung. Young Chu was the man selected to go with him; and while working there he married an educated, Christian young woman, who was indeed his helpmate as long as he lived. He later returned to Tungchow, bringing his bride with him.

When Dr. and Mrs. Pruitt moved from Tungchow to Hwanghsien two fine young Christian men went with them. One was Chu Yuen Hsueh and the other Tsang Yu T'ing.

Mrs. Pruitt recently in writing of these two says: "When we moved to Hwanghsien they came too, for we needed Mr. Chu as a personal teacher. These two young men were such a help in church and school. When after a whole generation of Baptist

Christians had grown up without the advantage of schools, we decided to open a boys' school in Hwanghsien, and these two brothers, of their own expense, traversed the whole of our territory. What great faith was a Christian family to tell them the good news that schools were opening for the sons and daughters of Christians. Mr. Chu was set as principal of the Boys' School, and Mr. Chu gave a great deal of gratification here."

Mrs. Pruitt in continuing the story of the Chu family, says: "I dare not say how many children the Chu family had, nor how many times we sorrowed with them in the death of their little ones. Two daughters and three sons lived to grow up, and what fine people they are. The story of the Chu family is the miracle that Christian education has performed."

Mrs. Pruitt introduces another man whose life shows what the Gospel of Christ can do in the life of a man. What it made of this young teacher Tsang is not less than a miracle. It made him first a Christian, then a Christian teacher, and later an ordained Baptist preacher and pastor. He was my pastor for about twenty years, and I have never loved a pastor more than I loved him. He was for years pastor of the Hwanghsien Baptist church, and now in his old age is Pastor Emeritus. Recent news from Hwanghsien says while he is old and feeble, he still finds joy in telling the story of Jesus. His wife is one of the noblest Christians I have known.

Pastor and Mrs. Tsang continued to live on the lot of the Baptist church in the city of Hwanghsien, during the Japanese occupation of Hwanghsien, and continued to live there under the Communist control until recently, when the Communists forced them out. When I heard of this cruel treatment of these two dear old people it grieved my heart deeply. Fortunately they were able to find a place to live, and will continue to witness for Christ as long as they live.

In 1901 when I went to Hwanghsien, China, as a medical missionary, I, like all new missionaries, had to have a teacher of the Chinese language. These teachers were selected by missionaries already on the field, and at this time there was only one male missionary in Hwanghsien, Rev. Peyton Stephens, Rev. and Mrs. C. W. Pruitt, the pioneer missionaries at Hwanghsien, were at home on furlough. After

he had engaged a teacher for me, Mr. Stephens said I have an interesting story to tell you of the teacher I have selected for you. His name is Chu, and he taught some of our early missionaries, and is one of the very best teachers in North China. He gave up teaching several years ago and opened a drug store, and is making much more money than the mission could afford to pay him as a teacher; but he said when he heard you were coming to heal as well as teach and preach he became so interested that he re-read his New Testament to find the authority for a man to be sent to heal. When he found a place where Jesus preached, he marked it down, and when He healed, he marked it down, and when he had finished his Book, to his surprise, he found that there were more records of Jesus healing than of His preaching, and that he is so interested in the coming of the doctor that he volunteers his services to watch him for three or six months to give him a good start on the language.

After having taught his pupil for three months, he said he could not turn him loose. Then at the end of six months, he still was not willing to turn him loose. So the great teacher continued to hold on to his pupil for twenty-five years. He was his teacher, his evangelist, his counselor, his devoted friend. In this personal relationship he was more helpful to me during my twenty-five years in China than has any other man ever been. He was my able helper in every department of my work. He went with me from the very beginning of my tours into new territory in healing and preaching. He sold the drug store and gave all his time to Christian work. He kept me from making many mistakes.

Mr. Chu never ceased to appreciate all that Mrs. Crawford had done for him. Well do I remember when the news reached Hwanghsien of the death of Mrs. Crawford that Mr. Chu came into my office with tears rolling down his face and excitedly said: "Mother Crawford has gone. Mother Crawford has gone. We, her pupils here in Hwanghsien, have just had a meeting in her memory, and they have sent me to get you to tell us what we can do in her memory, and to express our love for her." I told him that they knew better how to do this than I did. After consultation they sent down to Lanchow and bought a beautiful marble slab, and on the face of this slab carved Chinese characters telling something of the wonderful work she had done and of

their love for her memory. They then took the slab to Tungchow and put it in the little Baptist church there where Mrs. Crawford so often worshipped, and I hope it will be there when Jesus comes.

One incident in connection with this dear friend I can never forget. When Mrs. Ayers' health failed in 1932 and I had to give up my work and leave our home, the last morning we were in the house I had built, the house which had been our home for more than twenty years, missionaries and Chinese friends in large numbers came to say their last farewells, but my old friend and teacher did not come. I was disappointed and grieved. But after we started out to go to the bus station, there at the front gate of our home stood my dear friend. He took both my hands in his, and, looking into my face, he said: "Teacher, I did not go in the house with the other friends to bid you farewell, for I wanted to wait here and be the last to say God bless you as you go out from this home which you love so dearly." Then, with tears in his eyes, he said: "We have loved each other for twenty-five years, but we are now looking each other face to face for the last time on earth, and while we are about the same age, I have a premonition that I am going up to the Heavenly Home first, and I want you to know that I will be up there at the heavenly gate looking for you, just as I have been here at this gate this morning."

After having been in America for only a few years letters came saying that my old teacher had gone to his Heavenly Home.

Before I went to China Mr. Chu had been a teacher and evangelist for Dr. C. W. Pruitt, and had a large part in opening work in Hwanghsien and Pingtu. They had much to do in bringing a young man by the name of Lee to Christ in Pingtu, who became a great Baptist pastor and soul winner. During his life he baptized more than five thousand men, women and children. Here in the life of this man is another miracle.

DR. P. C. CHU

When I reached China Mr. Chu's oldest son, Chu Pao Ch'in, was a pupil in Dr. J. B. Neel's medical class in Tsinan, and finished his course a few months after my arrival, and came directly to me, to help

in the medical work in Hwanghsien, and remained with me for twenty-five years. After I came home he continued with the Warren Memorial Hospital up to the time of his death.

I knew Chu Pao Ch'in as intimately as I have known a man, and I say, without reservation, that he was the finest Christian character I have ever known. He was a frail little man physically, but had a bright mind and a big, loving soul. He was a capable physician, and was always faithful in his work in the hospital. During all the years we worked together there never was a time when I could say to him you have done something you ought not to have done.

Dr. Chu was a man who lived his religion. He was a deacon in the Baptist church, and was for years superintendent of the Sunday School in the Hwanghsien Baptist church.

At the time of Dr. Chu's death it was truly said that he was more beloved by missionaries and Chinese Christians than was any man in the territory of the North China Mission. I loved him dearly, and am glad of the opportunity to pay this tribute to his memory.

DR. P. T. CHU

Teacher Chu's second son was named Pao T'ien. He was a most attractive little boy in Mrs. C. W. Pruitt's Boy School when I first knew him, where he studied both Chinese and English. He and I soon became good friends, and there was an amusing incident in his life as a little boy that I will never forget. One night while the Chu family sat together in their living room Pao T'ien left the room. His father grew anxious and went on a search for him. He found him in an adjoining room with scissors cutting off his cue, and his father excitedly asked why he was doing that. Pao T'ien answered, "You know Dr. Ayers is soon going to America, and I am getting ready to go with him." This was when it was not lawful for a Chinese man or boy to cut off his cue. But Pao T'ien's was off, and he never grew another.

Pao T'ien was a good pupil, and advanced from one grade to another until he graduated from High

School. When he entered a medical class he was teaching in the Warren Memorial Hospital. After the course of two years he finished at the head of his class. But instead of continuing medicine he decided that he wanted to be a dentist. The Methodist Hospital in Peking was the only place where a course in dentistry was given at that time. So I went to Peking and arranged for him to enter as a dental pupil in that hospital. After finishing his two years term he graduated as the honor student in the class, having been the No. 1 man in his examinations.

After Pao T'ien's graduation, the American dentist who was the president of the dental department, wrote me and said he knew Pao T'ien was obligated to return to Hwanghsien and work in the Warren Memorial Hospital, but he urged that I advise for him to remain in Peking, where he would have a much greater opportunity for success in his profession than he could have in Hwanghsien. While we had no dentist in the city of Hwanghsien and needed him, yet I willingly agreed for him to remain in Peking. He opened an office there, and not only has succeeded financially, but has become the outstanding dentist in that great city.

Pao T'ien, while a student in the medical class in Hwanghsien, married an educated Christian young woman, who, after he was established in his work, joined him in Peking. They bought a beautiful Chinese home, which is a gathering place for Christian people, regardless of nationality. They have been exceedingly generous in helping the younger members of their families and also in providing the comforts for his mother, who was living with them at the time of her death.

Dr. and Mrs. Chu have a daughter, Lillian, who is an accomplished musician, and all her friends look to her with pride. After finishing at the Shanghai Musical College she came to America to further study music, and is now in Philadelphia, living with an uncle, and studying under some of the great teachers in that city.

Mrs. Pruitt in writing me from St. Davids, Pa., on September 22, says: "I have just returned from a visit to Robert. He told me what I am sure should go into the Chu Family Chronicle. Pao T'ien's daughter,

Lillian, has just come out top in a piano contest that is an annual project of the Curtis Publishing Co.'s musical branch. There were forty contestants and our Chinese friend came out first. The pieces on which she was graded were entirely new to her. Her victory entitles her to have piano lessons from the most outstanding piano teachers in Philadelphia or New York."

Lillian is a full graduate of the Shanghai Musical College. She is to play some of Robert's musical composition at the coming Musical Alumni of the Penn. University."

"I like to think what Christian education has done for this one family. Both of Lillian's grand parents were pupils in Mrs. Crawford's Boys School in Tungchow."

MR. CHU PAO JIN (Billy)

Billy is the youngest of the Chu Children. As a little fellow he was naturally the pet of the family, but he was not spoiled. He, having the advantages of a Christian home and Christian schools, grew into a fine Christian man.

Billy in his early life decided on a business career, and prepared himself by taking courses in business administration. After a thorough preparation it was not difficult for him to secure lucrative positions.

In the early days of mission work in Hwanghsien the Chus were close neighbors of Dr. and Mrs. Pruitt, and Mrs. Pruitt in writing me recently of Billy has this to say:

"All our life in China we were blessed with the close friendship of the Chu family, and we have worked with and for them in three generations. Even here in Philadelphia in 1947 we have the great pleasure of companionship with members of the family. Billy, the youngest of all the children, has a home here with his charming wife and two little boys. He is in business here for several Chinese firms that pays him well. He has bought a home and a car, and has joined the Baptist Church where Robert has his membership. He and his family are

well liked, and there is no racial barrier to their pleasure and usefulness.

"Pao T'ien, the dentist, has his oldest daughter here in Philadelphia completing her musical education. It is a real treat to be at Robert's when the Chus are also there. Not long ago I went with Mac's family for an evening meal at Robert's. We found the kitchen and dining room with every body helping to prepare a Chinese meal. Billy Chu was rolling out the little balls of dough to make good-zee, and our Jack and his wife were filling them. Our Johnny took hold too, and there was great rivalry to see whose dumplings would hold their shape in the boiling. Mrs. Chu and her niece, Lillian, were in the kitchen preparing several dishes of delicious ts'ai. Ida was there too, and enjoyed it just as we all did. Mrs. Chu was one of her social service workers in Peking before her marriage. Our Chinese feast wound up with a delicious Georgia watermelon.

"After dinner we had music. Miss Lillian Chu played skillfully on the piano. Then her uncle Billy produced his violin and gave us several selections. He plays skillfully. What a gifted family they are.

"Pao Jin's business has taken him to various places. They lived for a time in Calcutta. Then in Kuming, China, and at Chungking, when that was the capital of China. He showed me snap shots of his home and young American soldiers enjoying themselves there. He said his place was headquarters for the Christian soldiers who came to the Chu home for religious services.

"Praise God for the Chu family, and their work for the Lord."

Billy Chu after graduating from the High School in Hwanghsien, went to Peking and attended the Peking Academy where he graduated in 1929. He studied at the National Tsing Hua University from 1929 to 1933. He then came to the United States and took his postgraduate work at Wharton School and University of Pennsylvania from 1935 to 1937.

Mrs. Chu after graduating from the Ginling Woman's College in Nanking was with the Peking Union Medical College doing social work from 1935 to 1938. She was married in Honkow in 1938.