

**Letters to 'Ted' (Joseph Edward Hoare)**  
**Son of Bishop J.C. Hoare**  
**Father of Dr. David Hoare**

In January 1906, Bishop and Mrs. Hoare's second son, and the youngest of six children, Joseph Edward Hoare, left Hong Kong and started boarding school in England. Joseph Edward (called 'Ted' by his parents) was nine years old. 'Ted' was the father of Dr. David Hoare who is with us this morning.

I would like to read to you this morning extracts from letters written by Bishop Hoare and Mrs Hoare in 1906 to their young son overseas. I hope that through these letters we can learn not only the story but also understand the true meaning of the events of the 18<sup>th</sup> September 1906, one hundred years ago today.

**From his father, Bishop Hoare, 10th Feb 1906**

My dear Ted

I suppose that this is the first letter that I have ever written to you. By the time that this reaches you, you will be feeling quite an old school-boy. I wonder whether you are at the top of your class yet. I am glad that we found a school to send you to where we know you will be well looked after & where you have nice boys with you and jolly surroundings. Make good use of your school life. Work well. Play well. Make good friends. And above all try at all times to please God. I am sure that if you try to please God in your work and in your play, you will please everyone at (your school).

Ever your loving father

**From his Father, Bishop Hoare, 1st June 1906, from Bishop's Lodge**

My dear Ted

I suppose that now you are enjoying the Summer Term. I wonder whether you have learned to swim yet, and how you are getting on with the cricket. It was first rate your getting to the top of your class last term, and winning a prize. I wonder how you are getting on in your new class. I suppose that you will not get to the top at once, but I shall hope to see you there before very long.

Ever your loving father

P.S. I am enclosing the "sixpences" for your (10<sup>th</sup>) birthday. Many happy returns.

**From his mother, 12th Sept 1906, from their house at the Peak**

My own darling

I do like to get your letters telling us about all you do. I wonder what games you will be playing in the Xmas term, hockey, I expect.

Last week we caught a green snake in our little chicken-house. He had wriggled himself half through the wire netting & then stuck fast, so fortunately he did not get at the chickens. There were 3 cobras killed at Mrs Turner's house on the Peak this summer; one of them first killed a dog. The third cobra they got was quite a baby one, but it was a black cobra, and Mrs Turner has got him preserved in a bottle. A

cobra was also killed close by Mrs Jones-Hughes house, just above us, at the beginning of the summer. I hope none will come our way!

Father is going off to the mainland for a week's tour with the 4 (St. Paul's) College Students in the "Pioneer", starting tomorrow. I hope he won't be attacked by pirates, or get stranded somewhere!

**From his mother, 17th Sept 1906**

My own darling Ted

Tomorrow we are hoping to have the School treat for St Paul's College Sunday School. There are 42 girls & little boys. We are going to have a special tram at 3.20 p.m. and the children are to assemble at the Lower Tram Station & I shall go and fetch them up. Then when we have conducted them all along the "little path" (Lugard Road) we shall have the tea and games.

We do hope we shall have a fine day, but the weather is rather unsettled just now. Still I am sure we shall have what is best for us. I will tell you about it next time.

Father is still away, but I had a telephone message yesterday (I think from the Police Station at Ping Shan) to say he was quite well and prosperous. I think he will be back on Wednesday.

[On the envelope was written]: Typhoon raging.

**From his mother, 21st Sept 1906.**

My own darling little son

You will be so very, very sorry to hear that dear Father has been taken away from us. I do wish I could be there to help comfort you. But God will comfort you my darling, and Mother will be coming back to England in another month if she can; and we must pray for each other that God may comfort us both.

Father went off on a preaching tour on Friday 14th Sept in our boat the "Pioneer", and I went on board to see him off with 4 students & a "boy" to cook for him. They went off so happily, quite intending to be back on Wednesday 19th Sept. On Sunday he was taking a service at Ping Shan (some distance from the boat) with the Students & there he met Mr Master, Mr Tooker & another man & had lunch with them. They said he looked so well, & told them about his work, and that he was starting home on Tuesday.

Early on Tuesday morning it was rather windy, but it was not till 8 o'clock that the typhoon signals went up here, & then at 9 o'clock the typhoon grew.

We had hardly time to bolt and bar up, & one of the windows on Alice's verandah was blown quite away & smashed. So we had to nail it up with boards, & lots of things had to be bolted & nailed up in the other half of the house. Then blinding rain and mist hid the harbour from our sight, & did not clear till about 2 o'clock. Then we

could see that lots of damage had been done. Even big steamers have some of them been washed ashore, & several have gone down to the bottom here in the harbour, while the Chinese junks and sampans the steam launches, yachts and lighters have hundreds of them been smashed to pieces, & hundreds of people drowned.

Still I was not really very much alarmed about Father, because I thought that it would have been too soon for him have started back, and I hoped he was safe by the shore somewhere in Castle Peak Bay. Still that same afternoon the "Stella" the only launch that was big & strong enough to send out in such rough weather was sent out to scan the coast & pick up any survivors, but they saw nothing of the "Pioneer". By Wednesday it was quiet again, & Mr Bunbury went with me in a launch to look for her, for on Wednesday the head-boatman arrived saying that he had escaped, but that the boat had upset in the gale & the last he saw of Father he was in the water swimming & holding on to the boat. So we searched everywhere and the boatman showed us where the boat upset, out by some islands called the "Brothers".

Father had been preaching with the (4) (St. Paul's College) students on Monday morning, & then they had all been in the boat reading in the afternoon, & after evening prayers at 8.30 they had a quiet night. At 6 o'clock on Tuesday the 18th Sept there was some wind, but no one thought of a typhoon, and Father started to come back to Hong Kong. However by 8 o'clock a tremendous gale came on with high seas & blinding rain & two masts were carried away. Father took the steering himself, but the top of the cabin house was carried away & the boat turned over on her side. The 2 boatmen & the "boy" got away, on the roof, & though the "boy" was washed off; after drifting about 7 miles or so, the two boatmen managed to get ashore. We think that Father tried to help the 4 Chinese Students on the boat; as long as he could, & so he could not save himself. One of the students was found lashed to the mast, which must have been Father's doing, but he was quite dead when found.

So in that short sudden storm, God called Father home.

Oh my darling little Ted, Mother's heart is nearly broken, but she knows that God has done just what is really best for Father & really best for us all, though we cannot see how. You will never forget Father, will you, and how he loved you, and used to be so happy with us all. And you must remember what a dear good, noble Father, God gave you, and ask God to help you to grow up to be a good man like him.

(I) went out in a launch on Wednesday, as soon as it was quiet, with Mr Bunbury, and at last we found the "Pioneer" lying on her side & the dead student lashed to her broken mast, but no signs of anyone else. Only we saw lots of broken things from the boat, and on the beach near (by) we found one of Father's brown boots. We also found his Church Service (the service book) which I gave him, & which he always used a great deal, especially (when) travelling. The cover was washed off & it was massed together with the wet, but as I looked at the uppermost page, the first words my eyes fell on (were from) Psalm (23)- "Yea, though I walk through the valley of

the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me". Does it not seem a message from Father himself to me, and to us all'?

Goodbye my very own darling. May God bless you and comfort us all in this great, great sorrow.

**From his mother, 25th Sept 1906, Bishop's Lodge**

My own darling Ted

You will have got (my) letter written last Saturday telling you all about dear Father. They have tried to find him so that he might be buried in the Happy Valley, but it was not possible, so now we must look forward to seeing him again in the Resurrection Morning. What a joyful time that will be!

We are going to have special sermons preached next Sunday (at St. John's) Cathedral, and I have chosen some of our favourite hymns (including) "For all thy Saints who from their labours rest". We are going to put a white wreath & white flowers on the "throne", where dear Father used to sit.

This morning I went down to (St. Paul's) College, to see about Father's papers. It seems such sad work to go into the deserted rooms where we used to be so very happy all together.

But dear Father is quite happy now

**From his mother, 2nd Oct 1906, Bishop's Lodge**

My own darling Ted

I wish you could have come with us to the Cathedral on Sunday.

In one of the Psalms for the day came the words "Storm & wind fulfilling His word". And it seemed to me that we ought to try and believe that on that sad Tuesday morning it was God's own way, and really the best way, that dear Father was called Home through the storm and wind. You will pray to God, darling, to help you to love and serve him now, so that when God calls you, you may be just as ready as Father was, to go Home.

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We are gathered here today to remember Bishop Hoare and the 4 St. Paul's College students. We have listened to the letters written to Ted and in this service we will hear Psalm 23, look fondly at the white flowers and sing For All the Saints.

But it is also important for us to remember Mrs. Hoare. What a courageous woman she must have been. After finding no trace of her husband's body, one month later she packed her belongings and along with her four daughters returned to England to be with her two sons and draw on the strength of her extended family.

And here the story might have ended. Neither Mrs. Hoare, of any of her six children, ever returned to Hong Kong. Indeed, nobody in the Hoare family has ever been back to Hong Kong since October 1906. But our Lord God moves in wondrous ways. He has given Dr. David Hoare the passion to research his family's history and to bring its story to life. The result is that one hundred years to the day, the Hoare family has indeed returned to Hong Kong and to St. Paul's College. The story has not ended; rather a new chapter has commenced.

Please let us show our appreciation to Dr. Hoare for honouring us with his presence.

Thank you

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