

<From HUDSON TAYLOR'S SPIRITUAL SECRET.>

One of their warmest friends and helpers was the <92> ex-Buddhist leader, who was a cotton merchant in the city. This Mr. Ni, though long resident in Ningpo, had never come in contact with the Gospel. He was deeply earnest, and as president of an idolatrous society spent much time and money in the service of "the gods." But his heart was not at rest, and the more he followed his round of religious observances the more empty he found them to be.

Passing an open door on the street one evening, he noticed that something was going on. A bell was being rung and people were assembling as if for a meeting. Learning that it was a hall for the discussion of religious matters he too went in, for there was nothing about which he was more concerned than the penalties due to sin and the transmigration of the soul on its unknown way. A young foreigner in Chinese dress was preaching from his Sacred Classics. He was at home in the Ningpo dialect and Mr. Ni could understand every word of the passage he read. But what could be its meaning?

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up. ... For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Saved, not condemned; a way to find everlasting life; a God who LOVED the world; a serpent, no a <93> "Son of man" lifted up -- what could it all be about? To say that Ni was interested scarcely begins to express what went on in his mind. The story of the brazen serpent in the wilderness, illustrating the divine remedy for sin and its deadly consequences; the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; the bearing of all this upon his own needs, brought home to him in the power of the Spirit -- well, it is the miracle of the ages, and thank God, we see it still! "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

But the meeting was coming to a close. The foreign teacher had ceased speaking. With the instinct of one accustomed to lead in such matters, Ni rose in his place, and looking round on the audience said with simple directness:

"I have long sought the Truth, but without finding it. I have traveled far and near, but have never searched it out. In Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, I have found no rest. But I do find rest in what we have heard tonight. Henceforth, I am a believer in Jesus."

He became an ardent student of the Bible and his growth in knowledge and grace was wonderful. Not long after his conversion, he obtained permission to address a meeting of the society over which he had formerly presided, and Mr. Taylor who accompanied him was deeply impressed by the clearness and fullness with which he set forth the Gospel. One of his former followers was led to Christ <94> through his testimony, and Ni began to know the joy of the soulwinner.

He it was who, talking with his missionary friend, unexpectedly raised the question: "How long have you had the Glad Tidings in your country?"

"Some hundreds of years," was the reluctant reply.

"What! hundreds of years?"

"My father sought the Truth," he continued sadly, "and died without finding it. Oh, why did you not come sooner?"

It was a moment, the pain of which Hudson Taylor could never forget, and which deepened his earnestness in seeking to bring Christ to those who might still be reached. <End of quote.>

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