

# GREAT RESOLUTIONS

Program Thirty Three

## **Serving with Companions** **Part Three on the Life of Hudson Taylor**

### **Like-souled Companions**

Hudson was happy to serve together with others. Just as the Lord called and sent the disciples forth two by two (Mark 6:7), so also Hudson longed to go forth with others. During his first journeys into the interior of China, he co-labored with Dr. Parker, but circumstances led Dr. Parker to move on to serve at a medical clinic in the city of Ning-po. Hudson felt the lack of his spiritual companion, but accepted the Lord's arranging and felt he was not totally alone. Writing to his sister Amelia he said, "I have such a sensible presence of God with me as I never before experienced and such drawings to prayer and watchfulness as are very blessed and necessary." Yet, he still prayed for someone to labor with.

His prayers were answered as the Lord brought him into contact with a Scottish evangelist, William Burns. Burns, who had been serving in China since 1847, met Hudson in 1855. Both men had the same spirit and heart to reach people in the interior of China. Burns was considerably older than Taylor; they were a "Paul and Timothy" and served harmoniously together. Hudson received much help from Burns' example, as he observed his daily life in prayer and in the Word. And William Burns also received help from Hudson. After seeing how much more open the people were to Hudson because he did not dress as a foreigner, Burns also adapted Chinese dress.

William Burns and Hudson Taylor worked together for seven months, going from place to place in a happy fellowship. Although they felt few and feeble, the Lord was with them. Burns said, "The harvest here is indeed great, and the laborers are few and imperfectly fitted. . . Yet grace can make a few feeble instruments the means of accomplishing great things."

They often felt inadequate and depended on the empowering of the Spirit to confront the darkness, ignorance, and indifference of the people. Once they came to Swatow, a city where

sin reigned through the opium and slave trade. They felt that place truly needed the blessing of the gospel. As they went about, Burns exercised his favorite verse, "But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, being always ready for a defense to everyone who asks of you an account concerning the hope which is in you." (1 Pet.3:15)

They also had some happy experiences of seeing ones brought to Christ. One such man was a businessman named Nyi who heard Hudson Taylor preach the gospel. Although he was a devout Buddhist, he was concerned about his sins. The account of the brass serpent in John 3 touched him and caused him to repent and believe in Christ. He testified, "I have long sought the truth, as did my father before me, but without finding it. In Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, I have found no rest, but I do rest in what I have heard tonight. Henceforth I am a believer in Jesus." After he came to salvation, Nyi asked Hudson, "How long have you had the glad tidings in England?" Hudson told him that the gospel had been there for several hundred years.

Mr. Nyi continued, "Is it possible that you have known about Jesus for so long and only now have come to tell us? My father sought the truth for more than twenty years and died without finding it. Oh, why did you not come sooner?" These words stirred and convicted Hudson and confirmed and strengthened within him his purpose in coming to China.

Eventually Hudson Taylor and William Burns were separated. Later Hudson testified regarding his time with William Burns, "Those happy months were an unspeakable joy and comfort to me. Never had I such a spiritual

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father as Mr. Burns; never did I know such holy, happy [friendship]. His love for the Word was delightful, and his holy, reverential life and constant communing with God made fellowship with him satisfy the deep cravings of my heart.” Hudson surely had a taste of pursuing with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart (2 Tim. 2:22)

### Finding a Wife

Hudson pressed on and through his visitations came to the city of Ning-po where Dr. and Mrs. Parker were serving. It was there he met his future wife, Maria Dyer, one of two orphaned daughters teaching at a school for girls. Hudson took note of her and her heart for evangelism.

They soon became friends, and over time, their hearts were knit together in love. Even as Hudson travelled on from that city, his heart was always thoughtful of Maria in Ning-po.



Their courtship was not without difficulties. On his side, he was aware that he had no security to offer a wife. This was especially true since he had cut his ties with his missionary organization.

Maria passed through a trial also. No one else seemed to see what she did in Hudson. She was aware of the criticism he encountered from the others since he did not belong to any missionary society and dressed as a Chinese. His accusers said, “He was called by no one, connected with no one, and recognized by no one as a minister of the

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Gospel.” But Maria respected his vision to take the gospel to the interior; and it was becoming her vision as well. After a period of months, she eventually received her uncle’s blessing on their engagement. Although happy, Hudson still felt that he could not hold her to a promise of marriage knowing his financial situation. Maria, of like spirit, told Hudson, “Have you forgotten, I was left an orphan in a far off land. God has been my Father all these years; do you think I shall be afraid to trust Him now?” Hudson rejoiced and humbly thanked the Lord for so faithfully answering his prayers in leading him to such a sister to be his wife. They were married and began to serve together in 1858; Hudson was 28 and Maria had just turned 21.

### Conclusion

From this short record of the beginning of Hudson Taylor’s work in China, we can realize that it was the person and not some methods that began to have impact in China. In his book *Union and Communion*, Taylor said that “what we are is more important than what we do.” This saying left a deep impression on Witness Lee who later noted, “The person is God’s method. In the New Testament it is very difficult to find out what is the method or way to serve. Some places seem to speak about the method or the way, but actually the emphasis is still the person himself. The person is the way, and the person is the Lord’s work. If God does not gain a person, He will have no work, and He will have no way.” Surely the Lord was in the process of gaining such a person in the days of the mission work in China. And as we see, He was also beginning to have a way in that vast land. Praise Him!

**What we are is more important than what we do.**

Marty Robert and Bill Lawson

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