

I should commence embarrassed me for a moment. But I soon came to the conclusion that I owed it to honesty and truth, to my own reputation for frankness, and to my young friend herself, to tell her plainly what was my intention in then calling to see her. I did so in the most direct manner possible.

'I am very glad to see you,' said she. 'I have wanted to see you for quite a good while; for I want to tell you of my feelings. I thank you for thinking of me, and being so kind as to come and see me. I should have gone to your house many a time, when you have so often invited persons like me; but when the hour came my courage always failed me, for I did not know what to say to you. I am in trouble, and know not what to do; I am very glad of this opportunity.' She opened to me her whole heart in the most frank and confiding manner. Among other things she said—

'I know I have been a thoughtless girl' (while her voice trembled and tears dimmed her eyes) 'I have been gay, and have done many things you would condemn, I suppose; but, my dear minister, I have been urged into gaiety when my heart was not there. I do not believe I am such a girl as they think I am—may I say, as you think I am? I know I have a wicked heart, and have too much forgotten God; but I have often wondered what there is about me that makes my religious friends think that I care for nothing but—' She sprang from her seat, clasped her hands upon her face, and hurried out of the room, sobbing aloud.

In a few moments she returned. 'I know you will pardon me for this,' said she, the tears still coursing down her cheeks. 'I do not wish to make any excuse for my sins, nor do I wish to blame anyone for supposing me thoughtless; but I am sure I want to be led in the right way. I am ready to do all you tell me. I hope I can yet be saved.'

'Certainly you can be, my child.'

'Then tell me, sir, what to do.'

I did tell her, and left her one of the most grateful and affectionate creatures that ever lived.

I took my leave of her and found myself again in the street. My first emotion was gladness, the second, shame, for I was ashamed of myself that I had just been thinking of that young girl so differently, from what she deserved, and that I should have gone into her presence and opened my lips to her with no more faith in God. The next reflection was how much more common than we are apt to think are the influences of the Holy Spirit. God does often what we never give him credit for doing. The influences of the Holy Spirit are more common than our unbelief allows us to think.

The inquiry then came into my mind, may there not be others of my congregation who would welcome me also? I stopped in my tracks, and looked around me for another house to enter. I saw one; I rang the bell, and asked for the elder of two sisters, a girl of about nineteen, I suppose, and reputed to be very fond of gaiety. She soon met me, and I immediately told her why I had come.

'And I thank you for coming,' said she. 'I am glad you have spoken to me about religion. Why did you not do it before?

I could not go to your house. I know it is my duty to seek Christ, and I do want to be a Christian.'

After some conversation with her, in the whole of which she was very frank, and in the course of which she became very solemn, I asked for her sister.

'Yes, sir, I will call her. I was going to ask you to see her; but don't tell her anything about me.'

Her sister came; and as the elder one was about to leave the room, I begged the younger one's permission for her to remain, stating to her at the same time why I had asked to see her. She consented, and the elder sister remained, I thought, gladly.

I then stated to the younger my message, and having explained her condition to her as a sinner, and explained the great mercy of God through Jesus Christ, I was urging her to accept the proffered salvation, when she became much affected; she turned pale, covered her face with her hands. 'I will try to seek God,' she said, sobbing aloud. The elder sister, who had delicately taken her seat behind her, so as not to be seen by her, clasped her hands together, overcome with her emotions, and lifted her eyes to heaven, while the tears of gladness coursed down her beautiful cheeks as she sat in silence and listened to us.

I prayed with them and soon found myself again in the street.

I immediately entered another house in like manner and for the same reason as before, and another unconverted sinner met me with the same mingled gladness and anxiety, manifesting the same readiness to seek the Lord.

By this time I had given up all thought of finishing a sermon which was to have been completed that day; for if I could find among my unconverted parishioners such instances of readiness and desire to see me, I thought my duty called me to leave my study and my sermons to take care of themselves, and to trust in God for the preparation I should be able to make for the pulpit on the coming Lord's day. I therefore went to another house, and inquired for another acquaintance, who was not a member of the church. I did not find her. But in the next house after that, which I entered, I found another of my young friends, who told me she never had paid any particular attention to the demands and offers of the Gospel, but that she would 'neglect it no longer.' 'I will, sir, attend to my salvation,' said she, 'as well as I know how.'

Here, then, I had found five young persons, in the course of a few hours, all of whom were 'almost persuaded to be Christians.' They all afterwards became the hopeful subjects of grace, and within six months of that morning were received as members of that church. I knew them all intimately for years, prayerful, happy Christians.

The strivings of the Holy Spirit are more common than we think. If unconverted sinners would improve these secret calls, none of them would be lost. These persons had been awakened before. Probably at this time, as formerly, they would have gone back again to indifference, had not their seriousness been discovered and confirmed. It is important to 'watch for souls.'—From 'A Pastor's Sketches.'

## The Living Water.

MR. HUDSON TAYLOR'S EXPERIENCE.

I should like to give a few words of personal testimony. It was in a time of deep spiritual need when alone in inland China, that I was painfully conscious that I was not living all that I was trying to teach the Chinese. Struggling for victory, too often I found myself defeated, until I asked myself whether I ought not to cease to preach, and retire from missionary work. Fasting, prayer, meditation on the Word, all I could think of seemed powerless to help me, when one afternoon I came, in the usual course of my reading, to John iv. This chapter had always been ancient history to me, and as such was loved and appreciated, but that afternoon for the first time it became a present message to my soul. No one could have been more thirsty, and I there and then accepted the gracious invitation, and asked and received the Living Water, believing, not from any present feeling, but because for his promise, the testimony of his own Word, that my thirsty days were all passed. That same evening I took, without reluctance, my usual Bible-reading with the Chinese, and spoke freely, but without being specially conscious of power. At breakfast the next morning, however, I learned that one of my hearers had been brought into such deep conviction of sin as to pass the night without sleep; and from that day my ministry was owned of God as it had not been for some time before.

Some months later I passed through a time of great sorrow and trial—the death of a beloved child, the sending home of three others, and the most trying time in China through which our beloved Mission had ever passed, bringing innumerable difficulties and perplexities—but it was also a time of deepened spiritual joy and rest, and of experience that my Saviour was sufficient for every emergency. In Tien-tsin the Sisters of Mercy, and the French priests and consul had been massacred, and in all our inland stations there was excitement and peril. Almost daily I had letters from some group of workers asking for guidance, and wondering whether to stay or leave the station, as work, for the time being, was impossible. I knew not what to advise, but in each case, like Hezekiah, I spread the letters before the Lord and trusted him to teach me how to reply to them. There was no conscious revelation, but in every instance I was guided to reply in the way that led to the best results, and I sent each letter off in the joyful peace of knowing that I had asked and he had granted the wisdom that is profitable to direct. Just at this crisis my dear wife had an attack of cholera, from which she rallied with difficulty; a little one was born and only lived a fortnight, a wet-nurse not being procurable in that time of excitement. But again the Living Water proved sufficient for her and me. The very evening after the funeral of the baby my precious wife had an attack of syncope, from which she did not fully recover, and early the next morning she too was taken. Then I understood why the Lord had made this passage so real to me. An illness of some weeks followed, and, oh! how lonesome at times were the weary hours when confined to my bed; how I missed my dear wife, and the little patter-