

In Disguise.

I met him to-day in the wintry street,
The Christ on the cross who died,
All hungered and cold in the wind and sleet
With bleeding forehead and hands and feet,
And I blindly thrust him aside.

Had he only come with the crown of thorn,
Or the nail-prints ruby-red,
Had the palms that pleaded for alms but
worn
Their wounds, I had not put by in scorn
His piteous plea for bread.

But idly now and all in vain
I grieve for the grace gone by,
And muse, "Might he only come again
I'd pity his plea, and ease his pain,
And hearken unto his cry."

Nay, nay; for the blind distinguisheth
The King with his robe and crown.
But only the humble eye of faith
Beholdeth Jesus of Nazareth
In the beggar's tattered gown.

I saw him not in the mendicant,
And I heeded not his cry;
New Christ, in his infinite mercy, grant
That the prayer I say in my day of want
Be not in scorn put by.

—British Weekly.

Conversion to the Core.

BY THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

An unjust prejudice has been aroused against the word "revival" in certain minds, because they associate the word with a mere spasmodic excitement of the emotions which produces no permanent change in character and conduct. Every good thing has its counterfeits; and that would be a spurious revival which yielded only to spurious conversions; the Holy Spirit would have no part in it. Let us look back to the first great outpouring of the Spirit in the city of Jerusalem, and listen to the words which the first great revival-preacher addressed to an audience of awakened sinners. His short, pithy text was "Repent ye, and be converted." The first step was repentance. There was a logical necessity in this; for no person can cleave to his sins, and lay hold on Jesus Christ with the same hand. Conversion signifies a turning around; and no person can turn to Christ until he has turned his back upon his sinful practices and began to keep Christ's commandments.

Sometimes the attractive and lovable qualities of the divine Saviour are presented before a popular assembly, and a request is made that "all those who believe in Christ should rise"; some persons may respond to this request at the moment, and then go home and drift back into their favorite sins. There is no conversion, because there has been no repentance. Why should any one lay hold of a Saviour (for that is what "faith" means), if he does not realize that he needs a Saviour, and that there is an abominable evil in his own heart and life that he must be saved from? I doubt whether any person ever lays a thorough hold on Christ until he feels the need of one who can save them from their sins—from the guilt of sin in the past, and the dominion of sin in the future. The office of the Holy Spirit is to make a man see himself and his own sinfulness first, and then to see Jesus. The clearer the view of sin the more deep and sincere is likely to be the repentance of it. "Ye must be born anew," said the Master to his anxious inquirer Nicodemus. That new birth or regeneration means the production of a new governing principle in the soul which is an agonistic to sin as well as obedient to Jesus Christ. The one essential evidence of repentance is a change of character and a change of conduct. And that is what I mean by conversion to the core. The number of these measures the power of a revival.

Paul was a king of revival preachers in his day, and here is one of his texts: "The grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men—teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly." I commend this bit of inspired truth to every one of my readers who desires to be a thorough, and effective Christian. Shallow religion brings neither peace nor power; it must go to the core if you would be either happy or useful to others. You desire to be saved, and that must come from the grace of God. In his infinite love he offers you salvation, but it is on certain conditions: The Bible abounds in precious promises, but they are all conditional. In this pithy text the grace of God teacheth you three vital things: First, your duty to yourself—to control sinful passions, appetites and desires. Secondly, your duty to your fellow-men—by dealing with them justly and according to the Golden Rule. Thirdly, your duty to God—by living in obedience to his Word and his will. In your becoming a Christian the divine element and the human element must combine. Without God's work on your soul you cannot be converted. Without your soul's working for God, or in obedience to him, there can be no legible and actual evidence of con-

version. In short, salvation is a combination of grace and good works. The Holy Spirit acts on you inwardly, and you are to work out into practice what that Spirit inspires you to do. The Spirit implants in you the germ; and you are to grow the fruit in your daily life. Christ says that you will be known by your fruits, whether you are his genuine follower or not.

Salvation, as you see, then, is a very simple process; it is denial of self and repentance of sin and a following of Christ in your daily life. But there is a great difference between the word "simple" and the word "easy." Some preachers have been heard to say "it is just the easiest thing in the world to become a Christian." That is spiritual quackery. It is, indeed, very easy to be carried away by eloquent appeals, to weep under pathetic oratory, to drift with a sympathetic current into a revival-meeting or into an inquiry-room. It may be very easy to join in the enthusiastic song:

"Jesus I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow thee."

But actually to take up a cross and to become a self-denying, devoted and conscientious follower of Jesus Christ is no holiday business. The atmosphere of a fervent meeting is a very different thing from the atmosphere of the outside world. To sing sweetly about Christ is a very different thing from following the Master, keeping step with his commandments against headwinds and through all weathers. Paul's text tells us that salvation means "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts." Lusts signify the things that human nature loves to have and loves to do. Is denying them easy? To "deny ungodliness" is to break off from sins and to put the knife to them, with a determined purpose to obey Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord; is that easy? For a proud, skeptical spirit to come down into a lowly temper and take Christ at his word; for the possessor of strong animal passions to become clean and continent; for an ambitious soul greedy of applause to risk unpopularity in order to be right before God; for a covetous man to give Christ the key of his purse; for a lover of ease to deny self-indulgence by hard work for those who may not even thank him—are all these things easy? Faith is a very simple process; but when it requires a man to forswear his own self righteousness and confess his sins and to trust an unseen Saviour, it goes against the grain. Naaman's going down to wash in the river Jordan seemed a simple process; but it cut the comb of his pride and his bigotry. There is, indeed, a cheap and shallow religion that will bear no pinch and endure no self-denials; that is willing, as stout old Rutherford used to say, "to ride to Heaven in a close-covered chariot"; but it is as worthless as chaff and barren as the east wind. To trust to it for salvation may be only a swinging out into eternity on a spider's web!

I do not say these plain things to a sincere inquirer in order to discourage all effort to become a Christian, but rather to assist you by throwing the clear light of Bible truth on your pathway. When Peter preached repentance at Jerusalem he knew that conversion of sin was the only way to conversion to Christ. After conversion came "gladness of heart and steadfast continuance in well doing." The more thoroughly sick of sin you become, the more that you can get the bad stuff out of you by deep repentance, the more unreservedly you can yield up self to Jesus Christ, the healthier, stronger, happier Christian you will be afterwards. When sin is salved over, then, like a cancer, it breaks out again. Jesus Christ loves you too well to offer bribes. He will help you to bear a cross for him, and then to wear a crown with him. The most subtle devil in your heart or in any heart is self; and that must be cast out before Jesus will come in and fill your soul with peace and joy and power. Chaffer not with your conscience for a half-way religion. Attempt no compromise with a favorite sin. Accept Christ with a whole heart; enthrone him in the core of it; be satisfied with nothing less than a full salvation; open your soul to a great baptism of love; saved yourself, be at work at once to save others. Your back will get stronger for every load, and every cross you bear will be the first installment of your crown.

"What more have You than I?" Two friends, one a Christian, the other not, were conversing about religion, when suddenly the second exclaimed, "Stop your preaching, and tell me what you have that is worth talking about more than I." The first promptly met the challenge, and said: "I am free from a sense of condemnation, and can think of my sins and of God without pain. It was not so with me once; I knew that I

was guilty, now I know that I am forgiven. You know that I am more cheerful than I used to be. You have spoken of it. This is the cause; the bitterness, the sting, is gone.

"Besides, I have little perplexity about how I should live. Christ's words are my rule, and His example my model. Almost all questions are settled on the instant by this. Christ's will is my will; and I am like a soldier who concentrates his energies on the struggle just when he is leaving the plan of battle to the commander in chief.

"I have a double motive for every good action, and a twofold reason for doing nothing wrong. Besides the reasons that we both have to be honest, manly, and true, the love of Christ draws me and sustains me. I can now do one thing that you have said that you could never do;—forgive my enemies. I have an object in life that carries everything else in its train—to grow like Christ, to please Him, and to recommend Him to others. This helps me to bear any pain or disappointment. A current of pure and noble thoughts that I dare to weigh and analyze is constantly running through my mind. I actually believe that God is interested in me, that His providence is working for me, and that He places a real value on what I try to do. I feel that I am helping forward every good cause in the world—even those in which I take no active part—and am companion of every one who fears God.

"Better even than this, I am conscious of a sympathizing Friend always with me, that Christ is with me. I speak to Him and am sure that He answers, and is never so near as when my need is most felt. I feel sure, too, that all my decision will be wise and right, or that if not, He will take care of the outcome. You know that I used to be afraid that, like some of our comrades, I might break down and die before ever we are through college, but I have no such fears now; that is all to be ordered by Christ, and since I found Him I have had no misgiving about anything.

"My business, my health, my exposures, my children, and my very life, after doing what seems to be wise and right, I leave to Him who doeth all things well. This is as much a business with me as you say getting ahead in the world is with you."

Surely this man knew how to give a reason for his hope. Certainly his friend was without these special supports, and if he believed in God and the Bible he must have had a constant sense of guilt an unrest which only work or absorbing dissipation could obscure. Who can originate heart-peace without an assurance that his iniquity is purged, or without a chief object which on reflection can command his own soul's respect, or without a sure trust that whatever may come all will be well with him?

If he believed in God but not in the Bible, God must be to him an incomprehensible principle—cold, distant, impersonal or a phantom; neither helpful nor harmful, neither peace nor pain producing; not to be reached by prayer, not melting the heart by His love, nor directing the life by the touch of a tender hand. If he believed neither in God nor the Bible, he is but a traveler through a wilderness for a longer or shorter day, calm or tempestuous, but certain to end in a formless, starless night, with no assurance of another sunrise.

What more, then, had the first than the second? All that can raise the life of man above that of the beast; all that can sustain the battle against the evil that is within and without the heart; all that can ally the spirit of man with that of his Creator.—Chris Advocate.

Christ's Method of Healing.

We do not know the reason of the peculiar means employed by our Lord Jesus in working the miracle recorded in Mark 8:22-26. We see a blind man miraculously healed. We know that a word from our Lord or a touch of His hand would have been sufficient to have effected a cure. But we see Jesus taking this blind man by the hand, leading him out of the town, spitting on his eyes, putting his hands on him, and then, and not till then, restoring his sight. It is well to remember, in reading passages of this kind, that the Lord is not tied to the use of any one means. In the conversion of men's souls there are diversities of operations, but it is the same Spirit that converts. So also in the healing of men's bodies there were varieties of agencies employed by our Lord, but it was the same divine power that effected the cure. In all His works God is a sovereign. He giveth not account of any of His matters.

One thing demands our special observation. That which is the gradual nature of the cure which our Lord performed on the blind man. He did not

deliver him at once from his blindness, but by degrees. He might have done it in a moment, but he chose to do it step by step. First the blind man said that he only saw men as trees walking. Afterward his eyesight was restored perfectly, and he saw every man clearly.

We need hardly doubt that this gradual cure was meant to be an emblem of spiritual things. We may be sure that there was a deep meaning in every word and work of our Lord's earthly ministry, and here, as in other places, we shall find a useful lesson. We see in this gradual restoration to sight a vivid illustration of the manner in which the Spirit frequently works in the conversion of souls. We are all naturally blind in the matters which concern our souls. Conversion is an illumination, a change from darkness to light, from blindness to seeing the kingdom of God. Yet few converted people see things distinctly at first. The nature and proportion of doctrines, practices, and ordinances of the Gospel are dimly seen by them and imperfectly understood. They are like the man who at first saw men as trees walking. Their vision is dazzled and unaccustomed to the new world into which they have been introduced. It is not until the work of the Spirit has become deeper and their experience somewhat matured, that they see all things clearly and give to each part of religion its proper place. This is the history of thousands of God's children. They begin with seeing men as trees walking; they end with seeing all clearly.—The Rev. J. C. Ryle.

"After Many Days."

A faithful minister, now numbered among the supernumeraries, but working for Christ on a hard field, has just passed through a remarkable experience, communicated to us privately, but so full of encouragement that the substance of it is given here. Twenty-nine years ago he was pastor of a small church where there was a marked religious awakening, in which more than one hundred and twenty were converted. In that town was a very rough, profane, and wicked man, with whom the young minister dealt faithfully, and was ridiculed and abused by him in return. On arriving at his present place of abode he heard that an old man was sick, and on calling upon him found him to be the same person who, twenty-nine years before, had abused him in return for his kindness. As the minister entered the room the old man rose up in his bed and said, "I am very glad that you have come. I wish to take back all that I said years ago, and to hear you say that you forgive me for it." He was soon led into the enjoyment of religion, has been received as a candidate for membership in the Church, and baptized. He declared to our friend that the conviction that had seized him upon him twenty-nine years before, when he ridiculed the minister, had never left him for a single day.

The encouraging feature in this experience is most valuable.—Chris Advocate.

Focus Your Prayer.

Do not pray for everything. Be specific. Get somebody upon your heart. Plead for the salvation of that somebody. Ask God definitely for definite things. Much of our praying does not count. It is too general. Elijah on Carmel prayed for rain and nothing else. He prayed until the sky was overcast with the rainclouds which poured the refreshing deluge upon the earth. The Syro-Phoenician woman cried: "Lord, help me!" She cried until her soul was in an agony of desire. She cried for nothing else. And her child was healed. Get your desire and faith centered upon some one object—some lukewarm Christian, some careless sinner, a brother, sister, friend—and hold on till the answer comes.

THE SUBSTITUTE.—Years ago in the war between Austria and Germany, in order to fill the German regiments a draft was ordered. Among those thus impressed was the only son of a widowed mother who depended upon this son for support. The neighbors, learning the sad news, combined and raised a purse for the purpose of procuring a substitute. They found one who agreed to go as representative of the boy. When he appeared before the recruiting officer he declined to take him. "I want Frederick, and your name is not that." "No, but I am a substitute for Frederick." "The law does not know any substitutes; I cannot take you." "And is there no way," the young man asked, "by which I can be accepted?" "I know of no way," said the officer, "unless you take Frederick's name." He did so, and on the register of the regiment the name of the drafted boy appeared. The regiment went to the front, and one day in a sharp battle the substitute

fell. The army became decimated and a new draft was ordered; and it so chanced that again in this little German village Frederick was drafted. He was summoned to appear before the officer and take the obligation. He went, but when told to sign the paper refused. "Why no?" said the officer, "I am dead." Look in your report of such a battle and you will find my name as having fallen on the field." And turning to the record found his name among the dead.

THE PHILADELPHIA PRESBYTERIAN says:—He who tenaciously holds on with a tightening hand to his money when the Lord solicits his help has been compared to a sponge, which greedily drinks in water, but makes very little return until it is squeezed. A gentleman once called upon another for a subscription to a benevolent object, and received a liberal contribution. Before leaving he inquired how much he might expect to get from an individual of their acquaintance. The reply was, "I don't know, but could you hear him pray you would think he would give all he is worth." When, however, he was called upon, he refused to give a single cent. Grieved at his refusal, the solicitor ventured to remark, as he was departing from his presence: "As I came to your house, I asked an individual what he thought you would probably give. I don't know," was the answer, "but if you heard him pray you would think he would give all he is worth." This had the desired effect. The man dropped his head, tears came to his eyes, and taking out his pocket-book, he gave seventy dollars.

ANSWERING PRAYER.—Mr. Moody, speaking in Toronto, said:—"Some people say they can't. Perhaps you cannot make an eloquent prayer. I hope you can't. I have heard about all the eloquent prayers I ever want to. But you can—every one of you—pray 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' You can say that. What! Can't you? You can every one of you. I will answer His call." You ask Him. I know it; the Bible teaches it, and, thank God, I know it from experience. Don't you know that He not only hears, but answers your prayer? What an army I would have standing here if I were to ask everybody that has had answers to prayers to rise. If I did so, and, an infidel were here he would run and hide his head with shame. You might as well tell me I do not exist as to tell me that God does not answer prayer."

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The man that strives to make the most and best of himself, to cultivate his nature on all sides, put himself in as many useful relations with others as he can,—he is the religious man.—C. P. Woolley.

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Queer Heart Feeling.

Queer feelings in the heart are daily complained of by multitudes of people—don't know the cause, but it makes them nervous, irritable and unfit for either work or pleasure. Mr. B. A. Ross, Ailsa Craig, Ont., explains it. He says: "I came down with the grippe. I was irritable, worried, dizzy, short of breath and had such a queer feeling in my heart that I thought I would give up the ghost. Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills changed all this, and I am free to-day from all these troubles."

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