

The King's Highway.

And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness: . The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. Isaiah

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NO. 1

MY CONVERSION.

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The first deep religious impression I can recall occurred in my boyhood. A protracted-meeting was being conducted in the town where I was raised. Several preachers were in attendance, and I, a lad of eight or ten years, was present a few times. At the close of the services, and on the departure of the ministers, I remember to have gone into a room alone, and, casting myself on the bed, wept a considerable while. At that time I felt a great softness of heart, and realized a decided drawing to, and preference for, the Christian life; but in the course of a few weeks it all passed away.

At the age of nineteen or twenty, on returning from college, I joined a fashionable church of another denomination from that in which I had been raised. This step was brought about mainly through certain social influences, and in connecting myself with that branch of Christ's church there was no change of heart, nor indeed any proper spiritual impression.

At the age of twenty-six, with a young wife and two children, God found me. For years I had not been to church, avoided preachers, laughed at religion, and was on the broad road to ruin. I regarded not the Sabbath, was a great smoker of tobacco, had got to imbibing wine occasionally, and was very profane. My temper at this time had become ungovernable, and the devil undoubtedly had me.

In the place where the Saviour found me there were no churches and no Christians. Instead of this, there was any amount of card-playing, horse-racing, and whisky-drinking. I did not take up with these last three things, but, nevertheless, spiritually I was in a lost condition.

The way my conversion took place has been an unceasing wonder to me, as well as source of endless gratitude.

Let the reader remember that there were no churches in miles of me, and no preachers or Christians around.

The business of the store in which I was employed as clerk and book-keeper fell off greatly during the summer of 1874. I used to walk up and down the lonely building and meditate. Christ had got me at last to a place where I was quiet, and could think. The thought which repeatedly arose to my mind, and with ever-increasing bitterness and sorrow, was that I was a failure; that at twenty-six years of age I had done nothing and was nothing.

I can see now that the Spirit was very busy with me; I could not recognize his work so readily then, but it is all clear now. He had no one to use in that part of the country to teach me, and so worked directly upon my mind and heart. Repeatedly, when alone in the store, I have buried my face in the piles of goods on the counter, and wept the saddest of tears. Then there would come longings to redeem my life, and be a true man. But I was profoundly ignorant as to what steps to take.

At this juncture I wrote two or three lines to my mother, saying, 'I am determined to be a better man, I am going to pray.'

The reply of my mother was all the help of a human character I obtained in my conversion. She wrote a hasty and brief answer, in these words:

MY DEAR SON,—I am delighted to hear of your good resolutions. But you have made a great mistake. Don't wait to be a better man before you pray, but pray, and you will be a better man.

"Affectionately, YOUR MOTHER."

This note brought a perfect flood of light to my mind. I saw I had been putting the cart before the horse. Like the lightning illumines the whole landscape with a sudden flash, so God used the simple words of my mother to clear up the uncertainty and darkness, and I saw in an instant, and that most vividly, what I had to do. I must pray, and keep at it till something happened.

That Thursday night I knelt down to pray at my bedside for the first time since my boyhood. My young wife looked perfectly astounded at act. I do not believe that if a wild animal had leaped through the window into the room, she could have been more amazed than she was at the spectacle of her kneeling husband; but I always possessed a goodly amount of will-power and what is commonly called backbone, and so I prayed on. Still I did not believe God would have mercy on such a sinner as myself; and so He did not, for without faith it is impossible to please Him.

Friday night I was on my knees again before retiring; but it seemed to me that God was far away in heaven, and I was down here on earth, and I did not see how he could save me. And so he did not, for here was unbelief again.

On Saturday night I went again through the melancholy and apparently fruitless struggle. I arose with neither light nor comfort, but full of determination to press on and pray until something happened.

On Sunday the store was closed, and I had the entire Sabbath at home. After breakfast I walked out in a grove near the house, and there, hidden from view, knelt down amid the trees, and with longing eyes looked up through an open space into the blue heaven. I told God that I gave Him myself and all I had, that I wanted salvation and rest, and please to take me. I pleaded with Him in this way for quite a while, and discontinued I knew not why. I walked thoughtfully back to the house, and took my seat by the side of a center-table in the room. I picked up the Bible to read, and had scarcely read a line when suddenly I became converted. Such a peace and rest flooded my soul as I had never felt before in my life, and it was so new, so sweet, so strangely blissful, so melting, that I burst into tears, and cried out to my wife on the opposite side of the table, "O Laura, I am not going to hell after all!"

I went across the room, and poured water into the basin to bathe my tear-stained face. But I found that a fountain was flowing which I could not stop; and a blessed, beautiful love and peace was in me that water could not wash away.

In a few hours the ecstasy was gone; but I was a changed man. Moreover, everybody saw it, at home and abroad.

In going from my house to the store, two miles away, I would pray three times before I got there. I had the places picked out, one in a deep wooded valley, one in a willow thicket in the middle of the field, and one on the top of a hill, protected

from view by a clump of trees.

I was very ignorant in regard to spiritual things; but I kept on praying, read much in a Bible which I carried in my pocket; began family prayer, although it came near choking me to pray before my wife and neighbors who dropped in; and, in addition, talked to everybody who would listen to me about this new strange, wonderful life which had come to me.

Two men drove up to the store one day, and after the exchange of salutations, pulled out a flask of whisky and asked me if I would take a drink with them. I replied: "No, I thank you. Now, as you have offered something to me, let me read something to you out of this Book."

I began drawing my little Bible out of my pocket; but the instant they saw what it was, they gave their horse a sharp cut with the whip, and without a word of farewell dashed down the road. To this day I can recall their astonished look, discomfited faces, and rapid retreat.

Yet with this completely changed life, I could not understand many things about my own experience. I could not see why that delightful joy which had filled me that Sabbath morning had left me. I knew it was from God; but why should it depart? It did not abide, although it left me a changed man. The constant query of my mind was relative to that new sweet emotion that swept over me. Was it salvation, or was it simply encouraging and drawing me on to salvation yet to come? Let the reader remember I had no one to look to or advise with.

One day there came an unutterable longing to experience again the same sweet spiritual sensation which had flooded me for the first time a few days before. In my rummaging over the library for religious books I had found an old work, wherein I read of a devout woman who was so humble that she always prayed to God on her face. It made a deep impression on me. I was standing on the gallery of the store thinking about it with that hungry heart of mine. Looking up and down the long road, I saw no one in sight, whereupon I stretched myself upon the ground, put my face down in the grass, and asked God to please grant me the same blessed joy He had given me in my house that Sabbath morning, that I might know I was His. Instantly I was filled with holy joy, the identical first experience. I arose from the ground all smiles, and with happy tears flowing down my face. But in a few hours it was all gone again.

So passed ten days or two weeks away, when I became hungry for spiritual instruction. There was so much I did not understand, and craved to know.

I determined to go to a Methodist preacher, and lay the whole case before him. So, saddling my horse, I rode twelve miles to Yazoo City, and called on the Rev. R. D. Norsworthy. There were other preachers in the town; but it is significant that I felt drawn to go to a minister of the church of my mother, and in which I had been brought up.

This Methodist pastor said afterwards, that as he saw me walking towards his gate he felt, as he looked at my face, that he had business on his hands. Telling him that I desired to speak with him on spiritual

matters, he dismissed all from the room, asked me to be seated, and to tell him what was on my mind.

Something of my ignorance of religious phrases and terms can be seen in one of the first utterances that fell from my lips. The preacher must have been amused, if not amazed. I said in a broken voice: "Mr. Norsworthy, I am an awakened man; but I do not think I am convicted yet," and promptly burying my face in my hands, burst into a flood of tears.

From this occurrence it can be seen that the heart and head do not always run equally together in the race for heaven. It is possible to be all right in soul, and not understand theology. The spiritual part of a divine blessing can come on the lightning express, while the intellectual part may arrive some hours or days later on the freight.

The preacher saw at once that I was a converted man; but determined that God should tell me, and in his own way and time. He, however, quoted a number of Bible passages to me, which brought floods of light then and afterwards.

So, on returning home, when this beautiful joy swept again into my heart, I knew it was the Spirit's witness to my salvation and sonship. I poured over the Bible, devoured every good book I could find, prayed on my knees six or seven times a day, talked religion to everybody, stirred up the whole country, saw my wife and sister both converted in less than a month, and became blessedly established in a few weeks.

HOW TO OBTAIN HOLINESS.

LIEUT. COLONEL S. L. BRENGLE.

We must first see our need of this great blessing and to see our need, we must be clearly justified. No sinner has his spiritual eyes open to see the need of a clean heart; he is blind to these things. He may have dreadful hatred in his heart, but so long as he restrains himself, and does the person he hates no harm, he thinks he is a very good sort of a fellow. He cannot see that in the eyes of God he is a murderer, for does not God say, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer?" (1 John 3:15.) He may have lust in his heart, but so long as does not commit open sin he flatters himself that he is quite respectable in God's sight.

The first thing, then, is to be well saved, and so fully in the light of God's smile that we can see our need of cleansing.

In the second place we must not try to hide the need, but frankly confess it. Let me ask you, do you know that you are saved? You say, "Oh, yes, I know that I have given my heart to God, and I feel that my sins have been forgiven and my life has been changed, and I feel that I am saved just now."

Good, but do you know that your heart is clean? Are all the roots of bitterness gone? Do you bear patiently the faults of others? Do you bear meekly, and with a forgiving spirit, the unkindness of others? Do you love God with all your heart and soul and mind, and your neighbor as yourself? Do you feel that all malice and pride, and jealousy and envy, and evil desire, and unholy ambition and unbelief, and all foolish things have been taken out of your heart, and that the Holy Spirit has his own way in you all the while?

Remember that holiness has to do with the heart, and that, as Solomon says, "Out of the heart are the issues of life." It is at the heart that Jesus looks, and he says, "Blessed are the pure in heart."

Now, if your heart is not clean, do not be afraid or ashamed to say so, but frankly tell your Heavenly Father the whole truth about the matter.

The next thing is to believe that the blessing is for you. Of course, if you do not believe that you can be cleansed from envy and jealousy, and quick temper and all sin, and be kept pure and good all the time, you will not seek for it.

Satan will surely do all he can to discourage you, and make you doubt the possibility of holiness for yourself. He will tell you that it is for other people, but not for you. Our heavenly Father "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." He is no respecter of persons. And he offers his full salvation to all who will take it.

Satan will tell you that your circumstances at home, or in the shop, or mine, or mill, are so disagreeable that you cannot hope to be holy.

Your disposition may be peculiar, but God will take all the sin out of it, so that where it is now peculiarly impatient and jealous, and envious and lustful and bad, it will be peculiarly good and patient, and loving and generous, and humble and chaste. A highly-stung, quick-tempered girl got sanctified, and it made her gentle like Jesus. A proud, ambitious young fellow whom I know got a clean heart, and he was made humble and self-sacrificing, until his friends hardly knew him.

As for circumstances, holiness will make you their master instead of their servant. The other day I wanted a hole in the hard rubber cap of the fountain-pen with which I am writing these words, so I heated a pin, and burned the hole right through. If the pin had been cold, I should probably have broken either the pin or the cap, and should certainly have failed to make that hole. Holiness will make you hot enough to burn your way through your circumstances.

Satan may tell you that you have failed so often that God will not now give you the blessing. That is untrue. Don't believe it. "God is love." He knows all about your failures, and pities you, and loves you still, and wants to give you the blessing far more than you want to receive it.

Peter failed again and again during the three years he was with Jesus and finally there was an awful failure during that sad hour when he cursed and swore that he did not know Jesus; but in spite of it all, Jesus loved him, and within a few weeks of that time, Peter got the blessing, and we find him helping to win three thousand souls in a single day.

Again, Satan may tell you that if you do get the blessing, people will not believe that you have it. Well, suppose they do not, what then? Will you refuse to believe God because people will not believe you? If you get the blessing, and live in the joy and sweetness, and power and glory of it, they will have to believe you sooner or later, just as people have to believe there is fire in the stove when they feel it.

To get the blessing, you must resist (CONTINUED ON FOURTH PAGE).