

Conversion and Consecration

Both are Supernatural Experiences;

Conversion by Harry A. Ironside. *And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself.....he called for a light and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.....and he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized.... and when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God..... (Acts 16:26-34)*

Every conversion is a miracle. I've heard people say, "I do not believe in sudden conversions." To be perfectly frank, there is no other kind. I do not mean that everyone has as marked an experience as Saul of Tarsus had. But I do mean that in the life of every person who is ever saved there comes a definite moment when one trusts the Lord Jesus Christ, turning from all confidence in self. And that is conversion. It may take place after long years of exercise, or, as in the case of the Philippian jailor, it may take place in a moment by a mighty convicting work in the soul, bringing one to an end of himself who has never before been very much concerned about the message of the gospel.

We see both kinds all about us - those who are brought up, for instance, in Christian homes and all their lives hear the gospel story and perhaps grow to young manhood or womanhood without definitely closing with Christ. And yet many could say that they have never known a time in their conscious lives when they did not have some exercise about spiritual things.

But there had to come a definite moment when they trusted Christ for themselves. That is conversion.

And then so many other people, who have lived wild, reckless, careless lives, having no interest whatever in the things of God, brought suddenly to a recognition of their lost, sinful condition and led to definite faith in the Lord Jesus, in a moment become new creatures in Christ.

I cannot too often stress the importance of that second birth. It is being forgotten in so many places today. People imagine they may become Christians by outward reformation, or by joining a church, or even by what they call sometimes "religious education". They think that you can take a child and educate him along religious lines and he will grow up a Christian. But that is all a delusion. Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (**Jn. 3:3**).

Consecration by Andrew Murray. *But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him.....(Phil. 3:7-9)*

There are Christians who look on the blessedness of spiritual life as consisting in the privilege of ever receiving; they know not how the capacity for receiving is only kept up and enlarged by continual giving up and giving out - how it is only in the emptiness that comes from the parting with what we have, that the Divine fulness can flow in. It was a truth our Savior continually insisted on. When He spoke of selling all to secure the treasure, of losing our life to find it, of the hundredfold to lose who forsake all, He was expounding the need of self-sacrifice as the law of the kingdom for Himself as well as for His disciples.

It is not enough that, when once you are truly converted, you have the earnest desire to have your life devoted to the service of the Lord. The desire is good, but can neither teach the way nor give the strength to do it acceptably. Incalculable harm has been done to the deeper spirituality of the Church, by the idea that when once we are God's children the using of our gifts in His service follows as a matter of course. No; for this there is indeed needed very special grace. And the way in which the grace comes is again that of sacrifice and surrender.

And such surrender of all for Christ, is it a single step, the act and experience of a moment, or is it a course of daily renewed and progressive attainment? IT IS BOTH. There may be a moment in the life of a believer when he gets a first sight, or a deeper insight, of this most blessed truth, and when, made willing in the day of God's power, he does indeed, in an act of the will, gather up the whole of life yet before him into the decision of a moment, and lay himself on the altar a living and an acceptable sacrifice (**Rom. 12:1**). Such moments have often been the blessed transition from a life of wandering and failure to a life of abiding and power Divine. But even then his daily life becomes the unceasing prayer for more light on the meaning of entire surrender, the ever-renewed offering up of all he has to God.

Nature shrinks back from such self-denial and crucifixion in its rigid application to our life in its whole extent. But what nature does not love and cannot perform, grace will accomplish, and make to thee a life of joy and glory. Do thou but yield up thyself to Christ thy Lord; the conquering power of His incoming presence will make a joy to cast out all that before was most precious. And the secret of a life of close abiding will be seen to be simply this: As I give Him wholly for myself; and as I lose myself and all I have for Him, He takes me wholly for Himself and gives Himself wholly to me.

The almighty power of God in the conversion of a sinner is the most mysterious of all the works of God. Thomas Hooker

The body has two eyes, but the soul must have but one. William Secker