

DON'T RESIST THE HOLY SPIRIT.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

That eminently successful physician of souls, Dr. Spencer of Brooklyn, tells us in his "Pastor's Sketches" that once when passing through a village, he was invited into an inquiry-meeting and requested to say a word to each inquirer. One lady, a perfect stranger, told him with tears in her eyes that she had not come to Christ; she could not tell why; her heart was hard, and she feared that she never would be saved. "How long madam, have you been in such a deep trouble of mind?" "For three weeks, sir," she said, sobbing aloud. "Then," replied Dr. Spencer very tenderly, "then for three weeks you have done nothing but resist the Holy Spirit."

He left her, and passed out of the room. Several days afterwards, as he was driving near that village, he met the same lady riding with a friend in a carriage. She recognized him seized the reins, and stopped the horse. "That was true, sir, that was true," said the lady. "What was true, madam?" "What you told me in that inquiry-meeting, that I had done nothing but resist God's Spirit. That sentence pierced my heart. I thought I was yielding to the Spirit by being anxious, by coming to meetings, by beginning to seek the Lord. If you had made any explanation of your remark, I might never have come to Christ. That expression about 'resisting the Holy Spirit' opened my eyes, and I could not let you pass without thanking you for the plain, honest words which revealed to me my real guilt, and the hindrance in my heart." The lady soon allied herself to the Church of Christ, and good Dr. Spencer got a new proof that nothing short of the naked truth will ever teach a sinner the subtle sinfulness of his heart, or send him to the Saviour.

That same truth, uttered in love, may be the very truth needed by the parson now reading this article. You are thinking seriously, my friend, about your spiritual condition and character. You are not satisfied with yourself; your sins trouble your conscience; you want to be better: you may honestly say "Yes, I want to be a Christian." Perhaps you have been reading your Bible for light, have been praying, or may have gone into an inquiry-meeting, yet you do not become a Chris-

tian? Why not? Where is the hitch and the hindrance?

Let me say to you that "becoming a Christian" simply means becoming *Christ's*. The Holy Spirit leads in only one direction, and to only one Person. It is not to a meeting, or a book, or to a doctrine, however good all of these may be; it is to, a living, loving almighty *Person* that the Spirit is directing you and drawing you. Don't resist the Spirit! You stand outside the door, or rather, you keep Jesus Christ outside the door of your heart. You say prayers, but do not confess your sins, and break off from them. Repentance means action, not mere emotion. You imagine that you are on the road to becoming a Christian. Yet you do not obey and follow Christ. That means action, not merely serious feelings. What the Holy Spirit is pressing upon you, is the whole heart for Jesus Christ! A few sins you may have abandoned; a few prayers you may have made; but there is a fortress in your heart that has never surrendered. Satan still "holds the fort"; it is garrisoned with self-righteousness, and there are plenty of sand-bags in the form of excuses and good promises. While your innermost heart holds out against Christ, you are resisting the Holy Spirit. You may be willing to go to church, go to your Bible, and go to a prayer-service; but you do not go straight to the one atoning Saviour, yield yourself all up to Him, and cry "O be merciful to me a sinner!" Saving faith is an act. It is the forsaking of sin to follow Christ, it is the letting go of self-help and trusting Christ; it is the grasp and grip of your soul on Jesus Christ. Everything short of this is a quenching of the blessed Spirit. Then, my dear friend submit yourself to the Spirit's guidance, and do what the inner voice in your conscience bids you. An honest hour with Jesus is worth more than months of sermons or prayer-meetings. Settle it with Him. Whatever Jesus bids you do, as He speaks by His pleading Spirit to your conscience, do it. No soul ever went to hell while obeying the Spirit; millions, we fear, have gone there by resisting Him.

Dr. Oliver Wendall Holmes says that "smoking is liable to injure the sight, to render the nerves unsteady, to enfeeble the will and to enslave the nature to an imperious habit likely to stand in the way of a duty to be performed."