

THE TWO STEPS TO SALVATION.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

God brought Israel *out of Egypt* before He brought them *into Canaan*. So there are two vital steps to be taken by every one who sincerely desires to be saved; the one is a step *from*, and the other is a step *towards*. Peter, the earliest revival preacher in the Christian Church, addressed an assembly of awakened sinners by condensing the first step into the single word "repent." Repentance means far more than shedding tears, or rising for prayer, or being alarmed at the thought of hell. It is taking a right view of sin, and then determining by God's help to quit it. The good old Westminster Catechism describes it as that act by which the sinner, with a true sense of his sin, and with grief and hatred of his sin, doth *turn from it* unto God. Whether it be one specific sin or evil habit, or whether it be a whole life course of ungodliness, the thing to be done is the same. Sin must be loathed, and then left. Many a drunkard loathes himself and his bottle; but he does not leave off. The dishonest railway-contractor, who is only ashamed because he is detected, but would repeat his speculations if he could get another chance, is not a true penitent. A great many people's lives are an alternation of sinning and sorrowing, sorrowing and then sinning again, but yet they become no better. My friend, when you have looked at your own heart as wicked, and your own conduct as utterly wrong; when you have prayed God to change your heart, and to help you change your conduct, you have taken one vital step towards your salvation.

Perhaps you may say "I thought that coming to Christ was the first step, and the only step that I need take." Let me tell you that you are never likely to come to Christ as you ought, until you see yourself as you are, and feel your need of a Saviour. There is a very light way of inviting sinners to Christ, that makes very light work with their souls. They hear a certain kind of invitation that makes them believe that they can come to Jesus, and bring their favorite sins along with them. Christ himself did not ignore repentance; the very first recorded text that He ever preached from, was the short sharp word "Repent." Peter rang out the same text at Pentecost. Paul work-

ed on the same lines, for he tells us that he preached "Repentance towards God, and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ." The step *from* must precede the step *to*. Even the prodigal did not set his face towards his father's house until he had come to himself, and began to loathe himself and his horrible sins.

2 As the first vital step is a penitential step *from* sin, so the second vital step is a step *towards* the crucified Saviour. When an anxious inquirer asked Paul what he must do to be saved, the Apostle gave back the swift reply "Trust on the Lord Jesus Christ." That was not an emotion or an opinion, but an act. I have but little patience with a class of crude but well meaning Christians, who talk to inquiring souls as if faith was a sort of passive resting in the arms of Jesus, as a baby drops to sleep in the arms of its mother. There are times in life when a soul may do this, but not in the decisive step of conversion. If I fall off the ferry boat, and a rope is tossed over to me, my act of faith in that rope must be a pretty sturdy grip of the rope, and a fast holding to it. If it holds me, I must hold on to it. The trust on Christ that saves you, must be an energetic grasping of him and clinging to Him, and uniting your very soul to His loving and all powerful self. Faith is your *doing*. Divine support and upholding grace is Christ's *doing*. In process of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, there is a certain sense in which the soul is passive, just as Bartimeus was passive while Christ was opening his blind eyes for him. Yet Bartimeus was thoroughly active in praying to Christ, trusting Christ, and coming to Christ for healing. "Come unto me" is Christ's invitation to you; but coming implies a step towards Him, and taking steps is an active process, not a passive recipiency.

3. From the moment that you surrender yourself to Jesus, you must let Him have His way with you. Saul of Tarsus had been used to having his own way, and a wretched way it was; as soon as Christ had conquered him, he cried out "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Paul did not bargain to be made "happy," or expect any raptures; neither must you. The great Apostle's joy was to do his Master's will; his crown was the work he nobly wrought, and the souls he won. Search through all the old hero's biography, and you will seldom find him talking about