

## HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

Perhaps some of our readers who are dissatisfied with their present lives, may be honestly asking the question, How shall I lead a better life? become a Christian? "But *how* shall I become a Christian?" Don't wait for a revival, or depend upon any strong, religious currents around you to help you forward. Salvation is a matter to be settled between your conscience and the Lord Jesus Christ, and He is nigh to you at all times, nay, He is at your heart's door knocking for admission. To be saved, too, is something more than escaping from hell and getting to heaven; it is being saved from a sinful heart and a wasted existence, into a true, noble life conformed to the pattern of Christ.

One mistake you may have made, was in trying to become better by lopping off this fault or that other besetting sin. That was like poulticing a boil while the blood was out of order; cure one boil, and another will break out until the blood is purified. You have been working at conduct; what you need is a change of character. As long as your heart remains unrenewed, sins will keep sprouting out faster than you can cut them off.

Perhaps you have set about practicing some one virtue, and so tried to come gradually into a better life. But this was tinkering at conduct again, instead of going down deeper into character, and a radical change of heart. If a drought was parching up a big corn-field, the farmer would effect but little by carrying his water-pot to a single hill of corn; a copious rain from heaven would revolutionize the whole field. Dear friend, you cannot learn too soon that character is not self-reforming; your heart is not self-regenerating. As soon attempt to lift yourself out of a pit by grasping hold of your own clothes. "Make the tree good," said the Great Teacher, if you would have good fruit. Except ye be born again, i. e., get a new character, ye cannot see the kingdom of God. How can this radical change of character be secured?

Jesus answers it in three words: "Come unto Me." "He that believeth on Me hath eternal life." You reply perhaps that you do believe, and have believed in Jesus Christ as divine, and believe all that the Bible tells you about Him. Suppose you were sick, and should say "I believe entirely in Dr. A—as the most skilful

physician in the town." Of what avail would that good opinion be, unless you sent for Dr. A—, and when he came took the remedies which he prescribed. That would put you into *connection* with the skilful healer, and you might be restored.

Now just what you need is a *connection* with the divine Saviour, whose blood can atone for your sins and cleanse your heart, and whose healing power can change your character. Faith is good for nothing, until it brings you into actual *fellowship* with Christ. Faith cannot save you, unless it unites you to Jesus, your weakness to his might, your unworthiness to His merit, yourself to Himself.

This fellowship will produce resemblance. Put yourself into connection with Christ, and you "will be *changed* into the same image—as by the Spirit of the Lord." Seek Christ's companionship, pray for it, study to imitate Him, and He will grant Himself to you. He will make you over again to look like Himself. The Bible idea of salvation is not merely an escape from a "wrath to come", it is a *new life*; it is to make out of such a deformed sinner as you are, a man or a woman resembling Jesus Christ. Paul distinctly declares that it is "to be *conformed* to the image of the Son of God." Bring yourself directly to this divine Saviour, and pray to Him fervently to make you like Himself. Study His Commandments, and strive to obey them. *Obedience to Christ* is salvation; that is what you want. It is not a flood of tears over sin, or a burst of emotion of any kind, but the imitation of Christ. A cleansed fountain will send out sweet streams; go back my friend to the heart-fountain, and admit the purifying, life-giving Saviour *there*.

Fellowship with Jesus brings you under His Almighty influence. I started for Liverpool once in a packet-ship, which was becalmed at Sandy Hook; but as soon as a stiff west wind struck our canvas, the ship ploughed the waves merrily. She was in *fellowship with the wind*. You know what is right, you know the path to heaven; what you want is *power* to resist evil, *power* to do right. Connection with Christ gives you that power. He says that "My strength is made perfect in your weakness." The only way to be strong, is to "be strong with the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

Your blunder has been that you have tried to save yourself, and to reconstruct