

THE INGREDIENTS OF A TRUE GENUINE CONVERSION

Make no mistake about it, if you are not truly converted you will be in Hell before very many months or years have passed, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" Mark 9:44.

First, there must be conviction and confession of sin.

"In all true conversions there are points of essential agreement: there must be in all a penitent confession of sin." By "penitent" I mean a conscience-stricken sorrow and remorse over sin. By "confession" is meant "admission" and "acknowledgement" of sin. Can you say that you have experienced that? Have you felt the depravity of your own sin-enslaved nature? Have you felt yourself to be such a sinner by nature that you have no hope whatever of reforming yourself? Have you felt that your heart is so sinful that the prophet Jeremiah describes you perfectly when he says?

"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked..." Jeremiah 17:9?

Have you felt remorse and fear when you look at the deceit and trickiness, the abject rottenness of your own heart? Have you felt that your heart is not just "slightly sinful" but, as the prophet says, "Desperately wicked"? Iain H. Murray said, "The common factor is that all true converts are penitent" conscience-stricken by their sin. Conviction of sin leads a man to see he is too poisoned, too depraved, too godless to be saved by any act of his own, too ruined at heart to ever hope to be saved by any decision or rededication he could make, too hopelessly deadened by the fall to ever hope that learning the meaning of depravity could help him, too hard of heart and too self-deceived to think that any prayer could ever help him escape from the wrath of God.

It is a waste of time to preach Christ to you if you are not willing to repent, and if you do not feel the weight and horror of the original sin that rules in your wicked, unconverted heart. If you do not desire and pray for God to change your sinful heart in conversion, you will never, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness" Acts 8:22.

And that is what must occur if you ever hope to be converted and escape the flames of Hell. You must come under conviction of sin, especially the sin that controls your heart, inherited from Adam in the Fall. Aren't you ashamed of the sinfulness of your heart? Doesn't it trouble you? It should, and it must if you ever hope to be converted.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Second, there must be a looking to Jesus or you will not be converted.

One man wrote to me and asked, "How much conviction must one have to be converted?" I said, "Enough to make him come to Jesus." You see, that's the purpose of conviction. God knows how much conviction you need. When you are fed up and sick of your sins, then and only then will the cleansing Blood of Jesus seem important to you. Jesus said,

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" Matthew 11:28.

He said, "Come to me." But to whom does He say that? He does not say it to a person living in sin, one who has no conviction. No! He says, "*Come to me*" to those who are laboring to get rid of their sins, those who are "*heavy laden*" with sin. Only to those under conviction of sin does Jesus say, "*Come unto me*" in Matthew 11:28.

"Come unto me, *all ye that labor and are heavy laden*, and I will give you rest" Matthew 11:28.

Third, there must also be a real change of heart that affects the entire life.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" 2 Cor. 5:17.

The Bible is meant for mankind, and our text refers to "any" man, in any country.

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" 2Cor. 5:17.

The Bible divides all men into two classes, the sheep and the goats; the saved and the lost; and those "dead in trespasses and sins" and those who have been made "a new creature" 2 Cor. 5:17. When a person tells you they are converted and later drops out of church, and goes back to the world, it is certain that they have had a false conversion. Why? Because, there must be a real change of heart such as affects the entire life! When a person tells you they are converted, joins the church and gets baptized, and then comes and takes back all that he said before, and says he is not saved, be wary of him. A man who can tell you one day that his entire life was changed, and a few days later takes it all back, is like Reuben. Jacob said to him, "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel" Genesis 49:4. Such a person should be kept on probation for a long time before he is ever again allowed to be a member of the church. That's what our old-time Baptists did and they were right!

Precisely, real salvation occurs when lost sinners come under conviction for their sin, and hate it; when they come to Christ, under conviction, and are cleansed by His Blood; and when there is a real change in their hearts, produced by God, that changes the direction of the life of the convert forever after.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" 2 Cor. 5:17.

It is my earnest prayer that in Christ's name, the unregenerate will repent, come to Jesus Christ for cleansing through His blood, and forever allow Christ to help him live a changed life!