

# Conversion

by Olin Alfred Curtis

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*The sermon discusses the human side of conversion, focusing on repentance, faith, and justification, highlighting the importance of personal sorrow, confession, and faith in Jesus Christ.*

**Scripture:** John 3:5, Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:5-6, Ephesians 1:5, 1 Peter 1:23

**Topics:** "Christian Conversion", "Saving Faith"

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## Description

Olin Alfred Curtis preaches about the human side of conversion, emphasizing the practical aspects of repentance and faith in the Christian journey. Repentance is described as a personal sorrow for personal sin against the Holy God, involving self-consciousness, moral disturbance, and a realization of being hostile to God. Faith is portrayed as a personal venture where one creates confidence in an ideal necessary for complete satisfaction. The sermon delves into the nature of faith, different kinds of faith, and the faith that saves a sinner, focusing on the importance of surrendering to Jesus Christ as the divine Savior. The divine side of conversion is explored through justification, regeneration, and adoption, highlighting the practical relations of these experiences in the Christian life.

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## Transcript

### The Human Side of Conversion

When we speak of a human side of conversion we are speaking practically and not profoundly. In repentance, as well as in faith, there is a synergism, where God's part is much more important than man's part; but for practical reasons it is man's part that we seek to emphasize.

Repentance. This is another place where we have to do not so much with the Greek words (\*metanoeo -- epistrepho\*) as with the total teaching of the New Testament, and with the total Christian consciousness. We will start with a provisional "working definition." Repentance is a personal sorrow for personal sin against the Holy God. In the first place, we should place the greatest emphasis upon the point that repentance is personal. I mean this in the most earnest sense. Repentance is not merely something done by a person, it is something done by a person when he is self-conscious. It is not a feeling of disturbance in consciousness, but a feeling of moral disturbance in self-consciousness. It involves a clear estimate of self under a moral ideal. No man can repent without real self-decision, and there can be no self-decision without full self-consciousness. In the next place, repentance is a personal sorrow. The sorrow itself is, I believe, the gift of God; but it comes to personal appropriation in self-decision, and expresses at last the personal bearing of the sinner himself. In the next place, this sorrow is over the sinner's personal sin. The

sorrow is not over vice. One may be in distress over" vice and not have the spirit of repentance at all. Our vices may imperil our ambitious plans, and ruin our friendships, and make us outcasts from society, and injure our health, and even limit our pleasures -- and we may be greatly troubled over it all. But such trouble is not sorrow over personal sin. Nor is repentance a man's distressing disturbance at being found out. Many a criminal has been so extremely wretched, when caught in his crime, as to be taken for a penitent; but his penitence proved to be over his misfortune and not over his vileness of heart. In the last place, the sorrow is over the fact that the sinner's personal sin is against the Holy God. The final drop of bitterness in the cup of the repentant sinner is that he is hostile to the Holy God. He looks upon himself as a miserable rebel; and, without one clause of extenuation, his cry is only for mercy.

It is now possible and may be helpful to enter somewhat into the philosophy of repentance. What we really have in Christian repentance is the conviction of sin made hopeful. After the Holy Spirit's invitation the sinner still keeps his vision of sin and the Holy God; but the vision is not alone in self-consciousness, it is there with the invitation. And so the vision is refashioned by being shot through and through with hope. This gives the sinner courage to make such a perfectly compliant response that the Holy Spirit can do more, namely, break the man's hard heart. This is contrition of heart, and it is the very marrow of Christian repentance. But we are going a bit too fast. Contrition of heart is, closely speaking, the broken heart, the work of the Spirit, accepted, personalized, made the sinner's very own act. And the sinner does all this by three personal attitudes: First, confession. I do not mean words, although words are likely to be used, but an attitude of complete acknowledgment of guilt before God. It is the hopeful enlargement of the self-blame in conviction. And, second, a hopeful determination to get right at any cost. This is what Dr. Whedon was wont to call the "purpose of righteousness." The whole feeling is this: "God himself wants me to be right, then I can be right, then J will be right." And, third, personal hatred of his sin as ungodly. The repentant sinner begins to hate all his sin bitterly as a thing in antagonism with the holiness of God.

Final Definition of Repentance. To complete our provisional definition, we would say this: Repentance is a sinner's personal sorrow over his responsible sin, both in deed and in condition of heart; and involves a confession of the guilt of his sin, a purpose to get free from his sin, and an intense hatred of his sin as against the holy God. It is contrition of heart with three distinct notes -confession, determination, and moral hatred.

Faith. As a matter of fact, there is a certain element of faith necessary toward the Holy Spirit's invitation before there can be any repentance; but the full, culminating personal bearing of saving faith is properly placed here after repentance and in close relation to justification.

The Nature of Faith. The biblical writers do not aim to provide any exhaustive idea of the inherent nature of faith; but there is one suggestive passage, the familiar beginning of the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen." The meaning can be given thus: Faith makes the unseen things for which a person hopes certain to his soul. And I think we can go further and analyze the meaning to some advantage: First, the object of faith must be beyond the seizure of the senses, and beyond the entire field of coercive reality. You cannot have faith in anything which can be so exactly demonstrated as to overwhelm the personal equation. Second, this unseen object of faith must be hoped for. That is, the object of faith is a personal ideal which calls out the heart. Third, this unseen ideal faith turns into a personal conviction. The person is convinced that the ideal is not a vagary, but an object as real as the objects which are seen. Indeed, sometimes to a great saint the invisible world is much more real than is the visible world.

But I want to examine more closely this term hoped for (\*elpizomenon\*). If I mistake not, the underlying idea is the same that we find again and again in the New Testament, and especially in that verse of hot controversy in the fifth chapter of Galatians: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love" (\*di' agapes\*). I will not join in the controversy over this last clause; still I have no doubt whatever but that a sound interpretation requires the love to be regarded as a normal feature of faith. There can be no full faith without love, and no faith at all without some heart-interest. The person's will cannot lay hold of the invisible ideal without motive, and the motive is this heart-yearning which idealizes the object and makes it attractive. Every man of faith is a spiritual idealizer -- a poet, if you will.

But even with this contribution from the heart faith is a personal venture. I would state it in this way: Faith is the personal venture by which we create that confidence in an ideal which is necessary to satisfy our entire being. My heart has turned the object into an ideal; and now I need this ideal, not as a dream, but as a reality; and by the power of my personality I actually make the ideal real to myself. Thus, in faith a man always takes a risk. But he takes this risk in the name of satisfied manhood.

You must not, though, suppose that the mind has no place in faith. In all normal faith the mind is entirely satisfied, only it is never allowed to make any demand contrary to the needs of the whole man. For illustration, take the idea of personal immortality. There is no evidence adequate to satisfy the mind in isolation. But if the mind takes its place in relation to all a man is in conscience -- in heart; if the man, as a moral person, hopes for a world beyond the grave; if he, out of a spiritual life here, now, ventures on into perfect faith as to immortality, then his mind is satisfied completely. Indeed, there is nothing more thoroughly rational in all thinking than a Christian man's faith in personal immortality. He is just as rational as is the rationalist.

I am not quite pleased with what I have written concerning the mind and faith. It is true enough, but too vague. The fact is that in normal faith the person makes his venture with a satisfied mind. He does not, as some have taught, first believe in order that afterward he may satisfy his mind. He never drops his mind; he never lets go of reality for an instant. But the mind is not allowed to work alone, and the reality is lifted into an ideal for the whole man. Come back to immortality. What we have there is not a sheer fancy, but an ideal conception which is rooted in a group of things of which the man is sure now in this life. For this ideal conception there is no coercive evidence to reach the mind alone, but there is enough evidence so that when the man dares to make the personal venture, in the name of his ideal, and out of genuine spiritual need, his mind goes with him, satisfied all the time.

This is just the connection in which we may best grasp the difference between normal faith and that abnormal faith which is presumption. In presumption the mind is never satisfied. The venture is made in the most arbitrary way without any regard to reality. A man of presumption is bound to have his own way even if he has to do violence to every fact in the universe. Thus, the venture is likely at last to violate the moral nature. A man of faith, on the contrary, wants nothing whatever as a willful capture at the expense of reality. But he does believe that reality is vast enough to satisfy thoroughly an entire man, heart as well as intellect. Here in one incident is the difference in spirit between faith and presumption. After trying to control the will of a severely wounded man a certain "faith-healer" impatiently exclaimed: "I cannot help you as long as you keep believing that your head is cut open." The man answered: "But it is cut open. I will not believe a lie even to get well."

Different Kinds of Faith. There are two things which, either separately or in combination, differentiate one kind of faith from another kind. These two things are the relation to conscience and the nature of the ideal object. Perhaps our most useful plan will be to secure two main divisions from the standpoint of moral quality, and then the subdivisions from the standpoint of peculiarity in the ideal.

#### I. Non-Moral Faith.

1. Secular Faith. Such faith we find wherever there is an unrealized object which is not a matter of exact knowledge, and yet is in some way an ideal toward which a man goes out in full but unarbitrary aspiration. There may be such aspiration toward such an ideal in national life, or in science, or in invention, or in discovery, or even in the ordinary world of business. In truth, the very great things in secular affairs are usually done by faith; sometimes admittedly by presumption, but more often by such a combination of knowledge and hope and venture as amounts to real faith.

2. Bare Religious Faith. This has already been noticed in our Introduction, and no further word is required in this connection.

#### II. Moral Faith.

3. The Lowest Phase of Moral Faith. A secular faith may (as in the finest patriotism, or in the most noble philanthropy) involve the moral nature, and so become a moral faith, expressing not only mind and heart-interest and personal venture, but also a positive sense of duty.

4. The Lowest Phase of Moral Religious Faith. In the religion of the moral person it is possible to have a moral faith which is not definitely theistic, and so we protect this fact in our classification.

5. Theistic Faith. Here the ideal is either the personal God or the moral law considered as the manifest will of the personal God.

6. Messianic Faith. The Old Testament faith, at its highest, is much more than a theistic faith; for the ideal is saturated with a peculiar redemptional expectancy. The Old Testament prophet, deal with him as critically as the Christian consciousness will permit, is looking on -- on to a coming Redeemer from sin; and this Messianic element gives to the object of faith a moral intensity which is not possible to any form of naked theism.

7. Christian Faith. To the Christian man the Redeemer is no longer an expectation -- He is come! And this one fact lifts every phase of Christian faith into a completeness which is merely suggested by other kinds of faith.

The Faith that Saves a Sinner. In New Testament usage, the word faith has a number of very different meanings. Sometimes it means fidelity; again it means a trust in a divine promise; again it means a man's entire attitude of confidence toward God; and again it means the essential body of Christian teaching. But beyond all this there is, especially in Saint Paul's epistles, a conception of a definite faith which saves a sinner; and this saving faith is the root of every phase of Christian faith. This saving faith is "faith in Jesus Christ "(see the third chapter of Romans). But the Christian meaning does not all appear in the phrase. It is not Jesus as a person, nor Jesus as a teacher, nor Jesus as a Master; but Jesus as the Son of God become our actual Saviour from sm. Bishop Lightfoot, in his commentary on Galatians, says that to understand the force, and to appreciate the leading conception, of Saint Paul's teaching as to faith, "it would be necessary to take into account the atoning death and resurrection of Christ as the central object

on which that faith is fixed." In any normal situation the full object of saving faith is this: Jesus Christ as God in self-sacrifice become man; and having by his death made full atonement for sin. This double emphasis makes the essential ideal, but often it has been enlarged to cover the resurrection and even the present mediation of our Lord. I would not say, however, that in every individual case today the sinner's faith in Christ involves the entirety of this double emphasis, and that without it there is no real conversion. I dare not say so much. But I do say that a sinner who has been convicted of sin, and who has responded in thorough repentance, needs, in his object of faith, both the deity and the death of our Lord; and when either is lacking his Christian experience is likely to be extremely superficial.

#### Definitions

Concise -- Saving faith is the perfect trust of a repentant sinner in Jesus Christ as his divine Saviour from sin.

Enlarged -- Saving faith is the perfect trust of a repentant sinner in Jesus Christ as his divine Saviour from sin; and involves the entire man -- mind and sensibility and will.

Comprehensive -- Saving faith is a personal bearing of the entire man; presupposing that sense of moral need which is completed by repentance; and involving, normally, a conviction that Christ is God, and that his death was an atonement for sin; and further involving a feeling of both duty and love toward Christ; this whole bearing being gathered up in a positive venture out upon Christ as a personal Saviour.

#### The Divine Side of Conversion

Those exact distinctions which are made in systematic theology between justification, regeneration, and adoption are not supported by modern biblical investigation. In presenting the Christian life, not only has every New Testament writer a way of his own, but, what is still more confusing, no writer aims to secure any philosophical consistency in his different statements. Saint Paul comes the nearest to fundamental consistency; but when we apply the modern method to his epistles, the most of his assertions are seen to be practical and literary rather than philosophical. Justification and adoption, for example, are not separate and exclusive things in Saint Paul's mind, as if God, first justified a sinner before the law and then adopted him into his family. The apostle is all the time writing about the same thing, only with two literary forms in mind, and so from two different practical points of emphasis.

Still there is great advantage, for some minds at least, in so lifting out of all vagueness the different practical points of emphasis as to separate them into distinct momenta of the divine side of conversion. Such separation gives us a clearer view of the magnificent total of Christian experience, and need not mislead anyone, if he only keep in mind that we are dealing not with several basal things, but with one basal thing in its several practical relations.

Justification. The Greek word here is *\*dikaioo\**. Whether we hold, with some commentators, that the word means to make righteous, or hold, with other commentators, that the word means to pronounce righteous, is really of no great concern. In either case, the meaning is merely forensic. The sinner's new condition is a legal condition. The use of this term does not indicate in the least the present subjective state of the sinner, but only that the law has no further claim against him.

In a most characteristic passage Cardinal Newman admits that *\*dikaioun\** means only to declare righteous, but adds that the divine declaration is creative. "It is not like some idle sound, or a vague rumor

coming at random and tending no whither; but it is 'the word which goeth forth out of his mouth'; it has a sacramental power, being the instrument as well as the sign of his will. It never can 'return unto him void, but it accomplishes that which he pleases, and prospers in the thing whereto he sends it.' Imputed righteousness is the coming in of actual righteousness. They whom God's sovereign voice pronounces just, forthwith become in their measure just." How like Newman all this sounds! So original, so uplifting, and yet so empty of reality and so distant from Saint Paul! Through Newman's discussion one can seldom catch even the faintest and most flashing glimpse of the apostle.

What, then, does Saint Paul mean by the justification of a sinner? He does not mean that God actually wills the condition of subjective righteousness into the soul of a sinner. Nor do I think that Saint Paul means that God forgives a sinner, or pardons a sinner. Those words, forgiveness and pardon, answer well enough in ordinary speech; but neither one of them is quite large enough to express all the apostle means by justification. Perhaps I can best bring out the Pauline view by a paraphrase: "I am thinking of those who are in Christ Jesus, in him by faith and the work of the Holy Spirit. How are they now related to God? They are to him as righteous men. The past is blotted out, and they are in a class now fully under his favor, to be treated as men saved by the death of Christ. In one word, they are justified, for no longer are they under the condemnation of the law."

#### Definitions

Dr. Latimer's Definition -- "We therefore define justification to be that gracious act of God, as Moral Governor, whereby, on the ground of the atonement, and on condition of faith in Christ, he pardons the penitent, and treats him as though he had not sinned, and receives him into positive favor."

Popular Definition -- Justification is God's acceptance of a sinner who joins himself by moral faith to Jesus Christ.

Descriptive Definition -- When a repentant sinner has faith in Jesus Christ as his divine Saviour, God forgives the man's sin, and receives the man himself into full favor, because Christ died for him. Thus, the sinner is justified.

Final Definition -- Justification is that change in personal bearing, whereby God, because of the death of Christ, and on condition of a repentant sinner's faith in Christ as his divine Saviour, receives him into full favor.

Regeneration -- I cannot agree with Professor Sanday when he says that "the Christian life is made to have its beginning in a fiction." Such an idea of fiction in justification comes from failing to remember that justification is but a phase, one relative aspect, of a fundamental experience. That fundamental experience is union with Christ. And, while one phase of this union is a new relation to God's favor, another phase is a new spiritual life in the sinner himself, a new life which is obtained by a new relation to the Holy Ghost. To use John Wesley's words, "There is a real as well as a relative change." "No man is justified without being regenerated."

The Scripture Data. In coming to the New Testament we are to seek only data, and not any philosophy of regeneration; and such data we find in great abundance. First, we have Saint Peter's phrase, "having been begotten again" (1 Pet. 1.23). Then, we have Saint John's words: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is begotten of God" (1 John 5.1; also see 1 John 2.29; 3.9; 4.7; and compare with Saint John's gospel 1.12, 13). Then, although Saint Paul is peculiarly the teacher of justification, still he now and

again seems to have in mind the change which takes place in the sinner himself. In Galatians (4.19) he writes, "until Christ be formed in you." In 2 Corinthians (5.17) he writes, "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature" (\*kaine ktisis\*); and in Ephesians (4.23, 24), "And that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth."

Many students have difficulty in understanding our Lord's words to Nicodemus: "Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Our Saviour's meaning becomes quickly evident when we note that the word water makes connection with the peculiar mission of John the Baptist, which Christ was eager to recognize. John's baptism was one of water with the most tremendous emphasis upon repentance. Our Lord said to Nicodemus in substance this: "To enter the kingdom of God you must have a new birth, a birth which begins with repentance on your part, and is accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit. You must start with John's teaching, but go away beyond that, and rely upon the Spirit of God, who can make you all over again."

A Psychology of Regeneration. Can we, though, get this fact of regeneration into any terms of psychological clarity? I think so. When a repentant sinner, through moral faith, comes into union with Jesus Christ, Christ as his Saviour, in the very nature of the case, has some place in the affection and in the conscience of the sinner. There is some heart-interest in Christ and some sense of obligation toward Christ. Were this not so, there could be no moral faith in Christ. Now think your way back to our discussion of motives, and you will see that this introduction of Christ into the motive life is an event of large psychological possibility. My conception of regeneration is simply this: The Holy Spirit takes this new motive and vitalizes it, and organizes the sinner's entire motivity, his entire range of interest, about it to this extent, namely, that in every full mood of self-consciousness the regenerate man cares more for his Lord than for all other things. Not yet can we say that the man is altogether organized, but the whole new plan of manhood is established, and the center of this plan is loyalty to Jesus Christ.

Nor is this all of regeneration. There is something much more glorious. This new plan of organization in motivity is kept vital by the actual indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Recall Saint Paul's words (Rom. 8. 9): "if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (\*oikei en hymin\*). The apostle does not mean here any ordinary residence of the Holy Spirit in a man; but a residence of peculiar Christian efficiency. When a sinner is really united to Jesus Christ by moral faith, the Spirit of God makes his own home in that man, and it is the Holy Spirit who completes the union with Christ, and vitalizes the new motive, and grounds the new plan of spiritual manhood, and remains in the man, sending pulses of power through his whole being. Regeneration is not merely a new motive of loyalty to Christ, and not merely this motive vitalized and placed by the Holy Spirit; regeneration is loyalty to Jesus Christ vitalized as a motive, made supreme as a motive, and kept vital and kept supreme by the actual indwelling of the Spirit of God.

#### Definition

Regeneration is the primary reorganization of a person's entire motive- life by the vital action and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit so that the ultimate motive is loyalty to Jesus Christ.

Adoption. In the fourth chapter of Galatians (verse 5) Saint Paul says, "that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (\*hina ten huiotesian apolabomen\*). This term \*huiotesia\* is peculiarly Pauline, and is used in at least three of his epistles. By this term the apostle never means sonship, but always and exactly sonship by adoption. Unrelated to the work of Christ, men

are sons of God potentially, are sons by plan; but actually they are slaves and can realize sonship only by divine adoption.

More deeply, though, what is meant by adoption? Saint Paul did not get the idea from the Old Testament; but, as Dr. Ball has convincingly shown, from the Roman law, under which a stranger by blood could become a member of a family as really as though he had been born into it. "He became identified with the family in a higher sense than some who had the family blood in their veins, than emancipated sons, or descendants through females. He assumed the family name, partook in its mystical sacrificial rites, and became, not on sufferance, or at will, but to all intents and purposes, a member of the house of his adoption." The question now arises, Have we in this adoption nothing but Saint Paul's doctrine of justification, given in a second forensic setting? I think not. As stated before, the underlying Christian fact of union with Christ is the same in all these relative phases of experience; but adoption is a phase, and is just as distinct from justification as justification is distinct from regeneration. In the doctrine of justification the practical meaning is this: "When a sinner is in Christ Jesus the attitude of the Holy God toward him is a new attitude of positive favor." In the doctrine of regeneration the practical meaning is this: "When a sinner is in Christ Jesus he has a new motive of loyalty to Christ, about which his personal life is reorganized by the indwelling Holy Spirit." In the doctrine of adoption the practical meaning is this: "When a sinner is in Christ Jesus he has a new family, God is actually his Father, Christ is his Elder Brother, all the redeemed are his own brethren; and there is provided for him a great inheritance and an everlasting home."

#### Definition

Adoption is a legal term which Saint Paul borrowed from the Roman law to express the social phase of conversion, namely, that a saved sinner is not only justified and regenerated, but actually incorporated into the family of God to enjoy its fellowship and to share its destiny.

The Witness of the Holy Spirit to Our Adoption as Sons. In the Epistle to the Romans (8.15, I 6) we find another passage in relation to adoption: "For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God "(compare with Gal. 4.6,7). I am fully convinced that this passage has been misunderstood by a number of our greatest interpreters of Christian experience; but, in such matters, their judgments, and even their intuitions, are usually so reliable that it is only with very great hesitation that I undertake to give my own view of what Saint Paul means by the witness of the Spirit that we are the children of God. Perhaps, though, the most economical way to reach a clear result will be to outline my entire view of the Christian assurance of conversion:

1. We may be assured by inference. When Saint John says that "we know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren," he indicates an assurance which is by pure inference. Almost endless are the combinations of this sort of assurance, but the inner movement is ever the same: "I was that kind of a man; I am this kind of a man -- therefore." Naturally this assurance by inference increases as the Christian life matures by taking on the "fruits of the Spirit."

2. We may be assured by conscience. When we have what Saint Paul calls "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ "it is the end of a struggle in conscience, and for the first time the sinner can face his moral ideal without any sense of condemnation. Thus, there is an intuitive element of assurance in the fundamental operation of conscience itself in moral settlement. But with my conception of conscience, even this peace with God is not a mechanical thing, but truly the work of the Holy Spirit.

3. The assurance by conscience may be augmented and transformed. As we read the lives of typical Christians, we soon perceive that sometimes, at conversion or later, this peace in conscience becomes so intense and penetrating that it really amounts to a new intuition that God has forgiven the sinner and taken him into his rich favor. This is what many mean by "the immediate witness of the Holy Spirit." And while the language about the fact unusually popular and inexact, nearly always the language is essentially true to the fact. Indeed, it is impossible to exaggerate the wonder and potency of this experience.

4. We may have yet another assurance. But no one of these three is what Saint Paul means when he says: "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God." The standpoint from which Saint Paul is now speaking is neither that of justification, nor that of regeneration, but definitely that of adoption. The assurance, therefore, is not that the saved sinner has the forgiveness and favor of God, but that he is in the family of God. If it be said that to be sure of God's favor is also to be sure that he is our Father, I answer that such is not inevitably the case.

You must remember that we are dealing with spontaneous personal seizure. A man may come to full self-consciousness, may lay hold of every item in the vision, may have the profoundest peace under his moral ideal, and yet may have no filial sense whatever. It is one thing to think "God is my Father!" and quite another thing to feel it within. Many a man has for years preached about the Fatherhood of God, and never once intuited it in personal experience, never once burst like the breaking day into the quick and inevitable intuition, "Abba, Father!"

The exegetes make much of Saint Paul's use of the verb \*summartyreō\*, but to me the synergistic nature of the witness is more convincingly evident from a large study of all the operations of grace, in connection with a close study of human personality itself. What takes place is essentially this: The moment the Holy Spirit begins the reorganization of a man he begins to help the person to recover the filial sense which man had lost in depravity. The person, now loyal to Christ, struggles toward the realization, but cannot fully achieve it, no, not even in his loftiest mood.

Then, there comes a crisis (not necessarily an external crisis) when with a deeper sense of need, or with a more thorough consecration, or with a greater purpose to serve men, the man opens himself entirely to the wish of the Holy Spirit. Into this new opportunity the Spirit rushes eagerly and completes the broken intuition; and now the self-conscious person has the glorious filial sense, and his home-life in the family of God is as real to him as his peace in conscience. I myself deem this intuitive grasping of the fact of adoption as the crowning experience in this world.

I deem it so because it lifts the saved sinner out of that extreme emphasis upon his single self, upon his salvation, upon his life with God, and makes him actually live in the fellowship of the whole family of God. You cannot misunderstand me if I say that sainthood has often shown an inclination to isolate its life of rapture, and to forget that we are one organic brotherhood in Christ Jesus, with one Father, one social relation, and one final home. Surely there should be the most tremendous emphasis upon the one moral person, upon what he is, upon what he ought to do, and upon what he may become; but that exaltation of the person is not all of the Christian life, is not the Christian finality.

The finality is where the Christian man finds himself all over again in the large experience of the mighty family of God. And one important step toward this Christian finality is that experience where the whole vision of self-consciousness is luminous with the spontaneous assurance that we have been adopted as sons, and now belong in title and privilege and service to the household of God the Father Almighty.

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