

Why the Converts of the Great Revivals Have Not Grown More in Grace # 2

by Charles Finney

Converts do not grow in grace due to various reasons, including being swept away by public opinion, neglecting the Bible, and insufficient dependence on the Spirit.

Scripture: Psalm 119:11, Isaiah 40:31, Matthew 11:28, John 14:26, Romans 12:2, Philippians 4:6-7, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12, James 1:5

Topics: "Dependence On God", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Charles Finney addresses the reasons why converts from the Great Revivals have not grown more in grace, emphasizing the dangers of succumbing to popular sins, neglecting the Bible, and failing to depend on the Holy Spirit for understanding. He highlights the importance of personal engagement with Scripture, secret prayer, and the need for believers to recognize their own spiritual state and return to God. Finney urges Christians to clear out their spiritual lives and seek renewal from the Lord, reminding them of Christ's compassionate call to rest and restoration.

Transcript

TO THE CHRISTIAN READERS OF THE OBERLIN EVANGELIST.

Beloved--Another reason why converts have not grown more in grace, is they have suffered themselves, to a greater or less extent, to be swept away by the current of public opinion in the church into the popular sins of the day. One of these sins (viz.) "Carefulness a sin" is the subject of my lecture in the present number. Were I guided by my feelings, I should exhibit to you almost exclusively the grace, and promises, and fulness of the gospel. But I am persuaded that the circumstances of most of you demand a different course; and that it is necessary both in my preaching, and in my letters to call your attention to those sins which are eating up your piety. Until these sins are pointed out, and seen, and felt, and a remedy sought, it is of very little use, and would even have an antinomian tendency to press upon you the freeness and fulness of gospel salvation.

2. Another reason why converts have not grown more in grace is they have greatly neglected the Bible. I am persuaded that real spirituality never exceeds the amount of spiritual knowledge. If the Bible be neglected there may be a growth in fanaticism, and bustle, and noise; but never in true holiness.

3. Another reason is they have not had a sufficient dependence upon the Spirit to teach them the meaning of the Bible when they have read it. They have read the Bible, but have not searched it. And if they have searched the Bible, it has not been with sufficient dependence upon the illumination of him who indited it.
4. They have not read the Bible for themselves, i.e. they have not understood the commands and promises as addressed individually and particularly to themselves. We ought, as it were, when reading these things to insert our own names, in the commands and promises, as if God addressed us by name.
5. They have not read, and searched, and prayed, and given themselves no rest until they have come to a right apprehension, and understanding of the things taught in the Bible; but on the contrary have read loosely, inattentively, unconcernedly, and of course unprofitably, and with all dishonorably to God. The Scriptures have had a hardening, instead of a softening, and divinely transforming influence upon them.
6. They have too much neglected secret prayer. Prayer rightly understood is the hearts direct communion with God. If this exercise is neglected, the soul will soon find that there is some mist--some cloudy medium between it and the sun of righteousness. At first it may be but as a mist, that merely dims rather than shuts wholly out of view the sun of righteousness. But one neglect begets another; and as the medium between the soul and God becomes misty and obscure, the soul will relish praying less and less, until a thick cloud shuts out the rays of truth and light which will so far cut off the communication between the soul and God, that a thick dark night will come over the whole spiritual horizon; and the soul is left to wander on, it knows not whither. Doubts and perplexities are a consequence of course. Ever and anon flashes of lightning from Mount Sinai; and peals of dreadful thunder disturb the alarmed conscience, and give admonition of coming wrath; but "darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people" who are in this state. They have wandered away from Calvary, and have gone into the wilderness of Sinai; and continue to wander up and down till spent and wasted--almost helpless and despairing, they find, at last, that it was the neglect of their closet--the abuse of their closet--the sin--the shame--the abomination of their closet exercises, which was at the foundation of all their wanderings, distress, and sin.

Beloved ones: Do any of you recognize in this picture your own likeness? Is this your own history? Are these your sins? Are you wandering from God? Have you gone astray like a lost sheep? Are you stumbling upon the dark and desolate mountains of unbelief? My dear precious souls: Do you know how Christ's precious heart, and bowels of mercy yearn over you? The good shepherd is in pursuit of you. Hark! Do you not hear his voice? He calls--he says "come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Beloved Brother, Sister, seek your closet again. Clear it out. Let it be swept and garnished.--And there wait upon the Lord until he come and revive you--until he renew your strength so that "you can mount up on wings, as eagles--that you can run and not be weary--and walk and not faint."

C.G. FINNEY,

A servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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