

God's Grace Transforms the Life, January 15

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. [John 3:7](#).

The great truth of the conversion of the heart by the Holy Spirit is presented in Christ's words to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born from above [margin], he cannot see the kingdom of God... That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" ([John 3:3-6](#)).

It is by the renewing of the heart that the grace of God works to transform the life. No mere external change is sufficient to bring us into harmony with God. There are many who try to reform by correcting this bad habit or that bad habit, and they hope in this way to become Christians, but they are beginning in the wrong place. Our first work is with the heart....

The leaven of truth works secretly, silently, steadily, to transform the soul. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. A new standard of character is set up—the life of Christ. The mind is changed; the faculties are aroused to action in new lines. Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified. The conscience is awakened.

The Scriptures are the great agency in this transformation of character. Christ prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" ([John 17:17](#)). If studied and obeyed, the Word of God works in the heart, subduing every unholy attribute. The Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin, and the faith that springs up in the heart works by love to Christ, conforming us, body, soul, and spirit, to His will.

A man sees his danger. He sees that he needs a change of character, a change of heart. He is stirred; his fears are aroused. The Spirit of God is working in him, and with fear and trembling he works for himself, seeking to find out his defects of character and to see what he can do to bring about the needed change in his

life.... He confesses his sins to God, and if he has injured anyone, he confesses the wrong to the one he has injured.... He acts in harmony with the Spirit's working, and his conversion is genuine.