

## Sailing With Paul

### Simple Papers for Young Christians

by Harry A. Ironside, Litt. D.

Author of *"The Mysteries of GOD; Holiness: The False and the True; Lectures on Daniel the Prophet; The Only Two Religions; Notes on the Book of Proverbs; etc. etc.*

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## Chapter 1

### Conversion to GOD

He who sails with Paul has been truly and definitely converted to GOD. Paul's conversion occupies a larger place in the New Testament than any particular doctrine that Paul preached. About this, GOD would have no uncertainty. He lets us know clearly how Paul began the voyage to an eternity of bliss.

Three full chapters in the Acts are devoted to this important subject. In chapter 9 we have Luke's historical account of this model conversion. In chapter 22 Paul himself gives what has been called the "Hebrew narrative" of this blessed event. He relates his conversion to Jewish auditors in a manner especially calculated to appeal to them. In chapter 26 we have his "Gentile narrative," where, being "**made all things to all men,**" he again tells of his conversion, but in such style as to be clear to Agrippa the Edomite and Festus the Roman.

Then in the first chapter of the letter to the Galatians he once more dwells on this wonderful theme, particularly emphasizing the sovereignty of GOD in it all:

**"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, To reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood"** (Galatians 1:15, 16).

The third chapter of Philippians is a fifth account, where his special object is to disclaim all human merit; and he once more refers to it in I Timothy, where he declares that in him as chief of sinners, CHRIST JESUS had shown all long-suffering, "**for a pattern (or model) to them**

**which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting"** (I Timothy 1:12-17).

With such an array of Scriptures before us, which I hope each reader will carefully peruse, it is surely manifest that no one sails with Paul who did not begin with conversion.

I know it is unpopular to press this in some quarters to-day. "Don't trouble people about the how, where or when of conversion. The only thing of importance is to determine how they stand now." Such is the unscriptural and misleading instruction often given. And because of this, souls are harmed by an easy-going ministry that does not arouse the conscience, which lets people complacently drift on to a lost eternity who are not sailing with Paul, though they fancy all is well. The words of the LORD JESUS may surely rebuke all such folly: "**except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven**" (Matthew 18:3).

Conversion then is a very real experience, and not something that may take place unconsciously. I do not mean by this that all know the day, the hour, the moment, when they were converted. Paul did, undoubtedly; but often young persons go through a prolonged period of exercise, in which, little by little, they learn the folly of self-confidence and the simplicity of faith in CHRIST alone for salvation. When He is trusted in, conversion has taken place; but, for lack of sound teaching, many do not realize this, and so have more or less perplexity in answering the question, "When, or where, were you converted?"

But there should certainly be no difficulty in regard to the *how*. All people are converted in exactly the same way, however experiences may vary. **Conversion is a turning from self to CHRIST; it is ceasing to rely on one's own fancied merits and trusting in the LORD JESUS alone.** Has this great change occurred in your life, my reader? If so, you have been converted, and are sailing with Paul.

Let no doubts or fears distress your soul if you do not seem to see things just as others do. Do not allow Satan to torment you with thoughts of your unworthiness, or questions as to whether your faith is the right kind. It has never been GOD's way to put all souls through some stereotyped experience. No two Bible conversions are alike as to the means of awakening or the way in which the soul was led to trust in CHRIST. And, on the other hand, it is important to remember that if you *were* worthy, you would not need a SAVIOUR. It is because of your unworthiness you came to Him, the worthy One. Let your soul then be occupied with Him, and not with your own frames and feelings.

And as to "the right kind of faith" - a difficulty felt by vast numbers of young believers - remember it is not the right faith that saved, but faith in the right Person. You might have the strongest possible faith in yourself, in the priest, in the church, in the sacraments, in visions or dreams, and be lost forever. But, on the other hand, the feeblest faith in CHRIST JESUS, GOD's LAMB, saves for all eternity, and puts you forever in Paul's company - sailing with Paul.

In each account given of his conversion we see how GOD showed him the futility of self-righteousness and human religiousness as a means of salvation, and the absolute certainty of eternal salvation when the LORD JESUS is trusted in and confessed. When He becomes the soul's object, conversion is an accomplished fact.

So when we ask, "How, when, or where, were you converted?" we really mean, "How were you led to trust in CHRIST?" When did you find out that He *alone* must be your SAVIOUR? Where did you get that sweet rest in Him. And your answer to that question is what we call your "*testimony*."

And if, perchance, your exercises covered a number of weeks or months, out of which you emerged at last resting on His mighty arm and trusting His finished work, do not be distressed that you cannot particularize, but boldly confess Him as SAVIOUR and own Him as LORD; for all who have turned from self to CHRIST are in the fullest, clearest, Scriptural sense - converted.

You may be troubled and perplexed about many things; your knowledge of many subjects may be very vague; your conflicts with yourself may be most trying, and at times thoroughly discouraging; but let nothing make you doubt that you are converted, and therefore eternally saved, if CHRIST is the One to whom you have turned for deliverance. Count on GOD to make all else clear as you go on, and fear not as to the final issue; for all who sail with Paul shall come out right in the end.

The devil knows this, and therefore seeks to rob you of the good of it; but it is written, "**Resist the devil, and he will flee from you**" (James 4:7).

~ end of chapter 1 ~

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