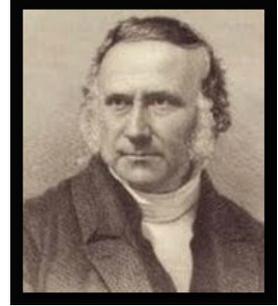


Easy to be a Christian



In conversation with a young woman, who was awakened to a sense of her sin and danger, I was much surprised, at the perfect clearness of her perceptions. She appeared to perceive her guilt as a sinner, her depravity and alienation from God, her opposition of heart to his law, her need of the blood of atonement and of the help of the Holy Spirit. I could make none of these truths more plain to her, or more forcible. In telling me how she felt, she preached more powerfully to herself, than I could preach to her. I was afraid to say much to her, lest my words should diminish her impressions, instead of giving them more depth. But I insisted upon it, that God was willing to save her—that her bondage in sin was her own fault, not his—that she was unwilling to come to Christ, or renounce the world, or give up sin, or be indebted to Christ for pardon, or set her whole heart to seek God, or trust her heart to the power the Divine Spirit,—that there was some such hindrance of her own—that God did not hinder her. Still, she did not think so. She said she had such an awful fear of God’s wrath, and such a desire to be a Christian; that she could think of nothing, which she would not do, in order to be saved. “Yes,” said I, “you would do everything but one;—that is, consent to do nothing, and let Christ save you. You are just ‘going about to establish a righteousness of your own,’ and that is the great reason why you have not ‘submitted yourself to the righteousness of God, for Christ, is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.’”

I left her abruptly, not giving her time for any reply.

I called upon her the next day. The first words she uttered, when she saw me, were; “Oh, how easy it is, to be a Christian! You have only to be willing, and it is all done. How easy, how easy it is!” “Yes,” said I; ‘my people shall be willing in the day of my power.’—“Is that in the Bible?” says she. “Yes; the hundred and tenth Psalm.” “I wish I had known it before,” said she; “then I should have known where to go. But, no matter; I know it now. I found that when I was really willing, it was all done. And when I prayed, God made me willing. It was he. It was all he. I did nothing, I know I did nothing, but come to him humbly. He gives me peace, as I trust in Jesus alone. It is easy to be a Christian, when you are willing.”

Self-denial is indispensable to religion. “If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself.” And whatever difficulties there may be, (and there are certainly many,) in turning to God, it would be no easy thing to show, that anyone of them does not lie very much in the will. A perverse will is the sin, and hindrance of unconverted sinners. They are not willing to be converted sinners. They ought to know it.