

CONVERTING POWER.

Power, is a word which is used in two senses in the Scriptures. It is used in the sense of strength, and also in the sense of authority. In the first sense, it may be defined, *That invisible agent by which all the changes in this vast universe are produced.* When the word is used for authority, it is used figuratively.

In order to render matters more definite and clear, power has been divided into physical and moral. And again physical power has been divided into muscular and mechanical. We have also perceptive and reflective powers, comprehended under the general head of intellectual powers; and in the greatly diversified field of science, we find the powers of figures and letters.—Whatever is to be done muscularly, mechanically, intellectually, or mathematically, must be accomplished by its corresponding power. No man can propel a steamboat at the rate of twenty miles in an hour by the combined intellectual powers of all ages and all nations. This requires mechanical power. The reason is, God has not adapted such means to such an end.

The same may be said, with equal propriety, of physical and moral power. Physical power is that agent by which the Almighty brought into existence the temple of the universe, with all its vast variety of furniture, and by which the whole is sustained in being. All irrational beings are subject exclusively to that kind of power. But there are two orders of beings, called angels and men, who are elevated to higher seats in this fair temple. All the irrational animals are either in the basement story, or on the ground floor, while men occupy the third story, and angels the fourth. Although man was “created a little lower than the angels,” yet he was “crowned with glory and honor,” and “placed over the works of God’s hands.” As a physical being, he was subject to physical power, and as a moral being, to moral power. Whenever he has arrayed himself against nature, he has found his strength, weakness; his success, defeat; his triumph, despair; and his consolation the cup of affliction. And in every instance, in which he has opposed the moral power of God, he has acted the unwise and dangerous part of the man who “kicks against the goads.” This has been, and is done, by the human family. Men have become “enemies to God by wicked works.” To convert them from enemies, into friends, God has ordained many and powerful means.

But what kind of power does He require us to use for such a change? Let us approach this question by proposing another, namely, What kind of a change is contemplated? If a physical change, it requires physical power—if a moral change, moral power.

Physical power is that agent by which all the changes in matter are effected; and moral power is the agent by which all the