

scious that their idols are helpless in every direction.

But, returning from this parenthesis, we call increased attention to the fact that when conversion is not to a living personality, it must be to a creed, and then of necessity there is infinite variety in the definition of that conversion.

And this variety in conversions goes even further than the above specimens of creeds indicate. For, on still closer investigation, it will be found that the seeker of conversion is required to clothe the god whom he approaches for converting grace, with a variety of doctrinal garments which in the end may present to his mind a very grotesque caricature of what God really is.

The story of a church member who, frightened during a storm at sea, prayed to God for deliverance, saying, at the same time, that she had never before troubled Him with a prayer, and never would again if He would but answer this one, may be only a manufactured one, and probably is, and yet, all the same it indicates the fact that when one approaches God in prayer, his idea of God has already been formed by what he has already heard about Him. Hence, if ought has been added to the character of God as compared with the representation of Deity given to the world by the man Christ Jesus, then to that extent conversion to-day differs from conversion in apostolic days.

And here we hesitate not to say that, to the candidates for conversion on and immediately after the day of Pentecost, the modern atonement creeds did not help to make up their idea of God, and therefore in this respect there is a marked contrast between these two epochs as to conversion.

Who, we ask, by contemplating the life and character of Jesus only could originate the commercial notion of the atonement? When the guilty woman was brought before Him for judgment, by the Jews, we hear no talk about the necessity of vindicating the laws of Moses, or of God; about the impossibility of mercy till justice was satisfied. He simply intimated that the one who condemned her should be guiltless himself, and when the company was weeded out

of all but the guiltless one and the notoriously guilty one, He, who only, according to this code of laws, had the right, refused to exercise it, and bade her go and sin no more.

There was nothing here about the commercial transactions between the different members of the Godhead, and yet what better surroundings to suggest and make prominent such facts, if they are facts, and not simple theories. None of these atonement theories, we maintain, existed to cumber conversion in the early days of Christianity.

But now see how they have modified the whole subject! For men, through hearing such descriptions of the implacable nature of God, unconsciously dress up a being who must be placated by penances, or strong crying and importunate prayer.

Leaving out of the question for the present the penances exacted at the confessional, notice what a premium is put upon weeping and agony of soul in supplicating prayer, on the part of seekers of pardon, in Protestant gatherings.

It is true that what are approvingly called old-fashioned conversions are almost a thing of the past, and yet everywhere these conversions, which, in so pronounced a form, illustrated the commercial atonement theories, are contrasted with less emotional ones as every way superior. Religionists of all kinds sigh for the good old days when men, steeped to the lips in atonement notions, approached God as if he were a veritable Moloch, and spent many hours, often days, weeks and even years, in trying to propitiate Him and wring from Him the hard-to-be-obtained pardon. And, indeed, even then, they would not have dreamed of asking for such grace if it were not for the fact that they could reason with the implacable one and show Him that He had already satiated His vengeance on guilty man's substitute, Jesus Christ.

Amongst the several thousands who, during the few first Pentecostal days, were converted, if anyone of them became the centre of a meeting's solicitude because of his prolonged weeping and supplication for pardon, the fact has not been recorded. Indeed, the contrary