

one doubts, with the Bible in his hand, surely the rashlight of any other proof in the face of this noon-day blaze, would go for nothing!

Neither does this fact need explanation any more than it needs proof. It is simply the result of the gospel received in its fulness. Christ is set forth as all in all for the sinner's salvation, and the sinner who receives Him as such, and abides in Him, has full salvation. But there is another fact which should be explained; the fact that in the instances given, as in others not referred to, there is a *second experience* distinct from the first—sometimes years after the first—and as distinctly marked, both as to time, and circumstances, and character, as the first—a *second conversion*, as it is often called. Baxter speaks of this in his case as quite as important as the first. So does James Brainard, Taylor, and many others also; while in such cases as Luther's and D'Aubigne's, both the experience and its importance are so marked as to speak for themselves. Some have tried to account for this fact by denying the reality of the first experience. "These people were deceived," say they, "and not converted at all, as they suppose, in the first instance."

But if Luther was not converted, who then is? If D'Aubigne was deceived in the first instance, who then is not? If to have been convinced of the deep depravity of the heart by nature, and led to accept Jesus as the Son of God and Saviour of sinners, and to have experienced the joys of the new birth, is not to have been really converted, but deceived, tell us, then, what conversion is? No, no: this supposition does violence to truth and common sense. It will not do. We must have a better solution, or none.

Others have thought to solve the problem by calling the second experience simply a return from backsliding. But in each of the cases given, we have the testimony of the witnesses themselves, that it was more than this, a *deeper work of grace*, a fuller apprehension of Christ, a more complete and abiding union with Him than at the first. The witnesses themselves being judges in their own case, this solution is not the true one. We must go deeper for it. Thousands in every age since the primitive have backslidden and returned again without any such great and permanent advancement in the divine life as that set forth in the examples before us. In Luther's experience, as he describes it, there was that which made the Bible a new book to him. Already, in his conversion, a key had been put into his hand to unlock vast treasures of truth in the Word of God, but it was only after his final and full apprehension of Christ as his sanctification, superadded to his knowledge of Christ in the forgiveness of sins, that the abundance and wealth of the Bible became the reformer's. And D'Aubigne tells us that after that scene in the inn-room at Kiel, he went through and through the Bible anew, gathering up innumerable passages full of new significance to him. His description recalls another very like it, under like circumstances. One who had but just then passed through a similar "second conversion," compared himself to a child sent on an errand, but finding by the wayside so many beautiful flowers and luscious fruits, now on this side, now on that, inviting the hand to pluck them, as to keep the child busy all day long, forgetful of the errand. "So," said he, "has it happened to me with my Bible. I have set out to find some desired passage, and so many things beautiful and new have caught my eye in passing along, as to tempt me to dally, and pick, and eat, and drink in their sweet fragrance all the day long, forgetful of my errand. And then, too," he went on to say, "when I kneel down to pray, praise only swells my heart for all the glorious things of Christ." Ah, there is vastly more in such an experience than mere return from backsliding! Then, too, above and beyond all this, it is never the returning backslider who comes into the fulness of this experience. Indeed, if backsliding and returning would really bring men into this gospel fulness, pity but the whole Church would backslide and