

mach poison enough to kill two or three. That kind of prophecy requires no omniscient foresight.

Years ago I talked with an infidel in Plymouth, Massachusetts, and he wanted me to give him some evidence that the Bible was true. After some conversation, I loaned him a little volume, an abridgement of *Keith on Prophecy*. Some ten years after, as I took my seat in a railway train, he came and sat down beside me and began to talk, and he said:—"If you want that book you can have it; but no one else can have it at any price." It had knocked his infidelity into atoms, and he was a believer in Christ, and a member of the church.

The revelations of prophecy are facts which exhibit the divine omniscience. So long as Babylon is in heaps! so long as Neneveh lies empty, void, and waste; so long as Egypt is the basest of kingdoms; so long as Tyre is a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; so long as Israel is scattered among all nations; so long as Jerusalem is trodden under foot of the Gentiles; so long as the great empires of the world march on in their predicted course,—so long we have proof that one Omniscient Mind dictated the predictions of that book, and "prophecy came not in old time by the will of man."

We call this Bible a book; but here are sixty six different books, written by thirty or forty different men. A man may say, "I do not believe in the book of Esther." Well, what of that? We have sixty-five others left. What will you do with them? A man says, "I find fault with this chapter, or with that." Suppose you do? If you were on trial for murder, and had sixty-six witnesses against you, suppose you impeach one of them, there are sixty-five left; impeach another, and you still have sixty-four; impeach another, and you have sixty-three—surely enough to hang you if you are guilty. Do you not see that you cannot impeach this book unless you do it in detail? Each book bears its own witness, and stands by itself on its own merits: and yet each book is linked with all the rest. Blot out one, if you can. I am inclined to think it would be difficult to do this. This book seems built to stay together; it is inspired by one Spirit.

The authorship of this book is wonderful. Here are words written by kings, by emperors, by princes, by poets, by sages, by philosophers, by fishermen, by statesmen; by men learned in the wisdom of Egypt, educated in the schools of Babylon, trained up at the feet of rabbis in Jerusalem. It was written by men in exile, in the desert, in shepherd's tents, in "green pastures" and beside "still waters." Among its authors we find the tax-gatherer, the herdsman, the gatherer of sycamore fruit; we find poor men, rich men, statesmen, preachers, exiles, captains, legislators, judges; men of every grade and class are represented in this wonderful volume, which is in reality a library, filled with history, genealogy, ethnology, law, ethics, prophecy, poetry, eloquence, medicine, sanitary science, political economy, and perfect rules for the conduct of personal and social life. It contains all kinds of writing; but what a jumble it would be if sixty-six books were written in this way by ordinary men. Suppose, for instance, that we get sixty-six medical books written by thirty or forty different doctors of various schools, believers in allopathy, homoeopathy, hydropathy, and all the other "pathies," bind them all together, and then undertake to doctor a man according to that book! [Laughter.] What man would be fool enough to risk the results of practicing such a system of medicine? Or suppose you get thirty-five editors at work writing treatises on politics, or thirty-five ministers writing books on theology, and then see if you can find any leather strong enough to hold the books together when they are done.

But again, it required fifteen hundred years to write this book, and the man who wrote the closing pages of it had no communication with the man who commenced it. How did these men, writing independently, produce such a book? Other books get out of date when they are ten or

twenty years old; but this book lives on through the ages, and keeps abreast of the mightiest thought and intellect of every age.

Suppose that thirty or forty men should walk in through that door. One man comes from Maine another from New Hampshire, another from Massachusetts, and so on from each state, each bearing a block of marble of peculiar shape. Suppose I pile up these blocks in order, until I have the figure of a man, perfectly symmetrical and beautifully chiseled, and I say, "How did these men, who have never seen each other, chisel out that beautiful statue?" You say, "That is easily explained. One man planned that whole statue, made the patterns, gave the directions, and distributed them around; and so, each man working by the pattern, the work fits accurately when completed." Very well. Here is a book coming from all quarters, written by men of all classes, scattered through a period of fifteen hundred years; and yet this book is fitted together as a wondrous and harmonious whole. How was it done? "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." One mind inspires the whole book, one voice speaks in it all, and it is the voice of God speaking with resurrection power.

Again, I conclude that this book has in it the very breath of God, from the effect that it produces upon men. There are men who study philosophy, astronomy, geology, geography, and mathematics; but did you ever hear a man say, "I was an out-cast, a wretched inebriate, a disgrace to my race, and a nuisance in the world, until I began to study mathematics, and learned the multiplication table, and then turned my attention to geology, got me a little hammer, and knocked off the corners of the rocks and studied the formation of the earth, and since that time I have been happy as the day is long; I feel like singing all the time; my soul is full of triumph and peace; and health and blessing have come to my desolate home once more?" Did you ever hear a man ascribe his redemption and salvation from intemperance and sin and vice to the multiplication table, or the science of mathematics or geology? But I can bring you, not one man, or two, or ten, but men by the thousand who will tell you, "I was wretched; I was lost; I broke my poor old mother's heart; I beggared my family; my wife was heart-stricken and dejected; my children fled from the sound of their father's footsteps; I was ruined, reckless, helpless, homeless, hopeless, until I heard the words of that book!" And he will tell you the very word which fastened on his soul. It may be it was, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" perhaps it was, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;" it may have been, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He can tell you the very word that saved his soul. And since that word entered his heart, he will tell that hope has dawned upon his vision; that joy has inspired his heart; and that his mouth is filled with grateful song. He will tell you that the blush of health has come back to his poor wife's faded cheek; that the old hats have vanished from the windows of his desolate home; that his rags have been exchanged for good clothes; that his children run to meet him when he comes; that there is bread on his table, fire on his hearth, and comfort in his dwelling. He will tell you all that, and he will tell you that this book has wrought the change. [Amens.]

Now this book is working just such miracles, and is doing it every day. If you have any other book that will do such work as this, bring it along. The work needs to be done; if you have any other book that will do it, for Heaven's sake bring it out. But for the present, while we are waiting for you, as we know this book will do the work, we mean to use it until we can get something better.

(To be Continued.)

CONVERSION.

'Are you a converted man?' that is a question often asked by people who don't really know what conversion means. The fact is they have invented a meaning of their own for the word, and then, be-

cause the Church's meaning is very different from theirs, they think that nobody is ever converted in church, and that Church-people don't believe in it.

Now there is a good deal in the Bible about conversion, and there is no mistake about what it means there. The Revised Version of the New Testament makes it quite plain. It simply means a *turning*; not a state of excitement or a certainty about being saved, but just a turning. To be converted is to be turned, and a converted man is a man who has been turned.

If, while bound for town ten miles due north, you are by mistake walking along the road due south, you must stop and turn round if you ever mean to reach the place you started for. But the turning round is only the beginning, after all. It puts you in the right way, but if you want to reach your journey's end, you will have to walk on—all the faster, too, to make up for the time lost while you were going wrong.

Now the man who is leading a bad life, breaking God's laws or neglecting Him altogether, is certainly going the wrong road for heaven. Unless he stops and makes up his mind to turn from the Devil's way to God's way—in other words unless he is converted—he will be lost. This making up his mind may be quite sudden, or it may be gradual, but whichever it is, it is only the first step. It does not make the man good, it only makes him begin to try to be good. It puts him on the race-course, with his face towards the winning-post, but there is still the course to be run before the prize can be his. He is all right so far, he is in a state of salvation, but it is a mistake to call this 'full salvation,' for he may go astray again as he was doing before. And if he does he will have to repent—to turn once more as he turned at first.

Now we all believe in this sort of conversion. We all know that a sinner—say a drunkard or a cheat—must resolve to give up his bad ways and change his life. But we are not all drunkards or cheats, and we don't all want the same sort of medicine for our souls, any more than we do for our bodies.

There are, we should hope, many who have never turned away from God, and so do not need to be turned to Him. I don't say they have never sinned, for that would not be true of anybody. But they have been always *trying* to be God's servants and to do His will, though they have not always succeeded. From the time of their baptism they have grown up in His faith and fear, and have never wilfully deserted Him and gone over to the Devil's side.

They may have stopped in their progress in the right way, and perhaps have stumbled in it, but they have not given up trying, and turned their backs upon it. And, therefore, never having wilfully turned away from God, they cannot need turning, or converting, as the openly wicked or the careless do.

This is how God would have us be. He does not want His children to go away from him first, so that He may turn them and bring them home again. It is no part of His plan that we should learn wickedness so as to have something to repent of and give up. It is certainly not needful to be a great sinner first in order to be a saint at last.

If we have wandered away into a far country, like the Prodigal Son, it is good to return, and our Father will joyfully receive us if we do; but He would much rather we never became prodigals at all. It is good to be converted, but it is better still not to need conversion.

So the conversion which is necessary for some men is not necessary and cannot take place with others, who have not sinned as these have. But there is another sort of conversion spoken of in the Bible, which nobody can do without. Our heart has to be changed, our character to be raised, our whole nature to be made like Christ's. Our face may never have been turned away from God, but we are still far away from Him, and we have to draw near. We have to become perfect as He is perfect. All this is not to be done in a moment. A moment, perhaps, is long enough to decide in to begin the work, but to do what we have undertaken will take all the days of our life.

This sort of conversion is slow, like the growth of a tree, and it is not always possible to fix the

*Jer. li. 37; Nahum ii. 10; Ezek. xxix. 15; Ezek. xvi. 5; Deut. xxviii. 64; Luke xxi. 24; Daniel ii. 7; 2 Peter i. 21.