

which we hold service at present is unsuitable for the wants of the Church, often on Sunday evenings, it is unpleasantly crowded, and as this place is growing larger, we may naturally expect an increase in our congregations. There is every prospect of the Church taking a firm hold here if she only has a fair chance, although she is only five months old, there are signs of vigorous growth. Our trouble is this, we want to put up a plain mission chapel, capable of holding one hundred and fifty or two hundred persons; this building can be erected for about \$1,000, but it is impossible to raise more than \$500 here in Manitou, and I earnestly ask your readers to assist us. Surely, some of those whom God has blessed with this world's goods, who have, and value the means of grace, will open their hearts to help us. Our people are not by any means rich, and they have as much as they can do to find their clergyman's stipend and pay the necessary expenses of the church. It is most important that we should start the building of the mission chapel as soon as possible. The Presbyterians and Methodists, each have a church of their own. In kindly words, you have now and again noticed our work here, and I trust you will extend your favor by inserting this appeal. The smallest donations will be thankfully received, either by myself or the people's warden, Alfred Fowler, Esq., Manitou, Manitoba. I will gladly give any further particulars to any of your readers who desire to know more of the pressing wants of this place. Faithfully yours,

February 23, 1885. HERBERT E. JEPHSON.  
Incumbent of Manitou, MANITOBA.

#### POPULAR MODERN CONVERSION VS. HOLY SCRIPTURE.

SIR.—We have seen that our blessed Lord, just immediately before his crucifixion, spoke to St. Peter as being then unconverted, and even according to the popular modern view of the subject, it will hardly be contended, that his conduct soon afterwards indicated any other or better state of grace. Nor can it with any truth be said that the rest of the apostles at that time were any more advanced in the spiritual life. The mind, of the very best of all Christ's disciples and followers, was then very dark indeed, very much too dark to have even any faint realization or conception of either the nature or object of their blessed Master's fast approaching "Agony, His cross and passion," and far too little spiritual knowledge, to comprehend in the very slightest degree the great importance of "His glorious resurrection and ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost." Is not this borne out, by what took place between the risen Saviour and the two disciples, as they journeyed to the village of Emmaus, when to them his words of just rebuke were: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken," St. Luke xxiv. 13-25. And still more fully and completely borne out by the statement of St. Mark, chap. xvi. 14, that, "Afterward, he appeared unto the eleven, as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart." An unbelief and hardness of heart, which there can be little doubt, remained in them in some sense and measure, at least until the great day of Pentecost, when to the seeing eye and the hearing ear was added the understanding heart, and so a conversion and entrance into "the kingdom of heaven" on earth.

And what after all, was this unbelief and hardness of heart, on the part of Christ's disciples? Was it that of those who love "the world and the things of the world; who are lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God?" By no means. It was simply, the natural result of a complete misapprehension as to the spiritual nature of "the kingdom of heaven" on earth. Christ's kingdom on earth. Christ's holy church on earth. A complete misapprehension of the first "principles of the doctrine of Christ." A misapprehension, which was largely the result of religious prejudice and pre-conceived opinion long entertained and firmly held, or in other words, the result of a false but very popular presentment of the Jewish religion, which they had long regarded as the very perfect truth of God, and which all the teaching of our blessed Lord, did not eradicate. And yet it would be a very grave mistake indeed, to suppose that his teaching was in their case fruitless. If at the very beginning of his holy ministry, he could say of his apostle Bartholomew, otherwise known as Nathanael, when he saw him coming to him for his first introduction, by the kindly and generous Philip, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile!" Surely, we may well believe, that after three long years of holy teaching, he could still say, at least, the same thing not only to the same apostle, but to every one of the eleven, and still in perfect harmony with this, say also, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." Surely, too, we may well believe that on the same occasion that the apostle Peter, three times, in all sincerity and truth,

made confession of his love for Christ, each one of the eleven could with like sincerity and truth have said the same thing "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." Yea, might have said it even while their loving Lord and Master very justly and consistently with their mutual love "Upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart."

From these considerations, I think it must be very evident, that the conversion of the apostles, embraces within itself, no more than I have in this and previous letters, represented New Testament conversion as comprehending. At any rate, I think it is even now made pretty clear, that it is indeed, most absurd and erroneous to suppose for a single moment that popular modern conversion, bears the slightest resemblance whatever to the New Testament presentment of conversion. And I further very respectfully submit, that those in the present day who have been thoroughly and often-times converted according to the popular and modern invention, are of all others most in need of the conversion set forth in the New Testament, are of all others most in need of eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to understand in order that they may obtain such conversion as being but one step only in that spiritual healing of which they at present very truly stand in great and special want.

In my next letter, I hope to establish still more fully, the soundness of the position which I have taken on this subject.

LAYMAN.

#### CONVERSION.

SIR.—As long as a man remains short of perfection, as long as sin remains in the world, and men turn from it, conversion will remain one of the grand realities of religion. We are at one with any man who insists on the fact, that conversion has always been, is still, and ever will be a grand reality in the Church Militant. Conversion, is from convertere, to turn, and the word is used in the Holy Scriptures, not in the technical sense of modern religionism, (for we must ever bear in mind that Romanism has not a monopoly of the power of encrusting spiritual truth with human tradition), but in its broad, honest, straightforward meaning, of a mental, a spiritual, an actual turning from imperfection towards perfection. This change of attitude, i.e., conversion, is often needed by the regenerate, and as often as the two wills, within the regenerate conflict and the spiritual man gains a victory over the fleshly, it will occur. Our Lord foreseeing the denial and fall of St. Peter, calls the recovery of that penitent apostle a conversion, and it is no less a conversion than the turning of a Heathen from his idols to the faith of Christ. Conversion is, and always has been considered a real thing, even in the Roman Church, (see Fenelon's letters to men, i. "To one seeking conversion," ii. "To a gentleman, concerning a real conversion," iii. "To one irresolute in his conversion, etc.") of course conversion is a distinct thing from regeneration, the former is change of aim in life, a turning around and walking in another direction, a moral change, the latter a change of state, the latter is a change analogous to that of Moses, who as an infant was a child of wrath, for every male Israelitish infant was condemned to death. Little Moses, then, when taken out of the ark of bull-rushes and adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, underwent no moral change, but a real and very important change of state, from a child of wrath, to a royal infant, and the former conversion is what happens when a child of God, like St. Peter, went out and wept bitterly, or when David cried, "I have sinned against the Lord," and was absolved by God's minister, or when a heathen turned to Christ, in faith and penitence. Regeneration can occur but once in the life of a Christian, conversion, again and again. The word conversion, is used in the Gospel and epistles, but it is pre-eminently characteristic of the Acts, in which it is used eleven times, once in its lower, and ten times in its higher meaning. The "Turn ye, turn ye" of the prophets is literally a call to conversion, and in Acts iii. 19 verse, we have St. Peter preaching the same truth, "Repent ye and be converted," the latter verb being in the middle voice, has exactly the same force as the "Turn ye" of the Old Testament. We cannot do better than turn to the miracle in Cana of Galilee for a simile, our Saviour there turned instantaneously the water into wine; this was exceptional, miraculous, but he is Lord of Nature, and is continually turning water into wine by means of the grape vine, and the law of nature, and so in the world of grace, the kingdom of God, he sometimes works a miracle and instantaneously turns a man to the right about, out of the path of evil, into the path towards perfection, but as in the world of nature, so in the world of grace, this is not the usual process. The vulgar error of modern religionism, that it would have us believe that the extraordinary is the ordinary, and as the majority of men wish to be Christians or to be considered such, many whose honesty is borne down

by something else, persuade themselves or others around them, that they have undergone the extraordinary change, and immediately prove their error to thinking Christians, by asserting that all who do not undergo the same experience as they have gone through, which they call "conversion," are not in a state of salvation. The natural result of this kind of thing is that the great mass of people having no critical knowledge of Holy Scripture, stake their hope of salvation on the capacity for experiencing a high state of mental excitement and agitation followed by a mental tranquillity, the result of satisfaction at having arrived at, or having been wrought into, what they deem a state of salvation. But these experiences are by no means peculiar to this style of Christian, they are very closely akin to the manifestations during the great revivals in the temples all over China and Japan, about six or eight years ago; in fact, on looking in on an assembly in this state, about four months ago, we were strongly reminded of the interior of a Buddhist temple at Yedo, during this excitement half a dozen years ago. We could not help thinking of the shrieks of the Pythons, the ecstatic announcements of the heathen oracles, and ravings of the Sibyl, rather than the heart worship of our divine loving Saviour Jesus Christ. God forbid that we should be misunderstood, we are far indeed from thinking that God does not instantly "convert," but what we say is that it is exceptional, and that the endeavour to teach that the exceptional is the ordinary is producing a great amount of fanaticism on the one hand, and infidelity on the other. We are not surprised at the extravagance of the salvationists, on the one hand, or the infidelity of a growing number of men, especially in the cities on the other, when this is the popular idea of "conversion." We were perfectly astonished to hear of what we considered a good, religious woman, that she never taught her children to pray or in any way to approach the throne of grace, because, she said, God would teach them when they were made His children by "conversion." We came to the conclusion that she was honestly carrying this vulgar error to its logical and just conclusion, and the marked gulf between this modern caricature of religion and the doctrine of the Church catechism became so marked to us, that we have wondered ever since how an honest Churchman could ever be caught in the toils of this ignorant perversion of the sacred Scripture. This idea also leads men to tempt God, when Satan tempted our Lord, to throw Himself from the temple, the sin was denounced in one sentence, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," our Lord quoted from the Old Testament, when the Israelites tempted God at Massah, they wanted a miracle to be performed at once and what they demanded provided thereby, Jews were always the same and afterwards demanded a "sign" instead of taking God at His word, and so now many people failing to deal with the devil as Christ did go, on throwing themselves from the temple, the temple of the baptismal inheritance, sinning, waiting for God to work a miracle, a modern conversion, and they are certified they are children of God, not by his Holy Scriptures, but by their own deceptive feelings and signs. Alas! that modern conversions are often but the turning from some sins to fall into that which is the worse of all, that by which Satan fell like lightning from Heaven, "Spiritual Pride." The sin of the Pharisees, which our Lord heaps His most awful curses upon, was not their religious formality; nay, He commends them for that. "Ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin," a mere form, for it was not worth the collecting, "but have omitted the weightier matters of the law judgment, mercy, and faith, these ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone," it was their spiritual pride, praying on the corners of the streets, thinking they were better, and had a better chance of salvation than the ordinary members of the Jewish National Church, for being Pharisees, (which word means schismatics, separatists, for imagining they were holier than their fellow country-men, and dividing not because they disagreed with them in doctrine, but because they vainly thought they were holier in life, i.e., "converted" after the modern popular idea of conversion.

W. B.

February 27th, 1885.

The missions of the Russian Church in Japan are prospering. There are 110 Greek churches and 217 prayer houses, presided over by one bishop, one abbe, and eight Russian and eleven native priests.

It is estimated that there are, the world over, sixty-seven deaths in a minute, 97,790 a day, and 85,693,835 a year; and that the births are seventy a minute, 100,000 a day, and 86,792,000 a year.

Out of a population of 1,000,000 in Berlin only 20,000, two per cent., attend religious services.