

application of a text, and no argument at all. But, even using their own figure, how is it that they do not expect that the turning of the water into wine should be immediate? What is there in the passage to which they allude to warrant their waiting on till a distant time? Was not the water changed into wine in their waterpots in a single hour? Indeed, it seems that the change took place in the very act of filling the vessels.

3. A third person has much to say, in a doctrinal form, on the text in Phil. i. 6, "He that has begun the good work will perform it," applying the passage to feelings, impressions, interest awakened among the young in the course of common weekly teaching. There is no conversion in such cases: but then it is alleged, "There is real interest felt, there is impression made, and so the good work is begun, and if begun, shall go on." We reply, "There is a serious mistake here, for 'the good work begun' means *conversion* has taken place; *conversion* is the *good work* that begins the Christian life." Read the context and see this beyond doubt or dispute. The Apostle says, "He that has converted you, placing you on Christ the Foundation, will not forsake you, but will carry on the building to completeness in the day of Christ's appearing." So that this text is really an argument in favor of our not being content with anything in the form of mere impressions, hopeful interest, convictions. We must see conversion work, we must see the Christian life really begun; and this applies to the case alike of old and young.

There is, however, apart from and besides all this, a secret feeling on the part of many Christians that it is not so important for them to be the means of converting children as it is to be the means of converting adults. But they forget that these young souls, brought to Christ in very infancy, will be exercising an influence, year by year, all life long, in all the different stages of their growth, and at length, on reaching manhood, will, by God's grace, mightily move for good their circle of society—over and above the consideration of the evils escaped, and the ill that was never done.

There is, however, a more serious misapprehension lying at the root of this undervaluing of early conversion. In reality, many godly people do look upon the conversion of children as 'a thing to be stood in doubt of.' They scarcely believe that any child's conversion is so deep and genuine as is that of an adult; and yet they admit that all conversion alike is the work of the Holy Ghost, and that He does, when it pleases Him, convert children as well as adults. Still they habitually ignore apparent conversion in children; they have a theory that children imitate old people, and that therefore these appearances are to be put down to imitation only. In dealing with such persons, we say—

1. There must be cases of real conversion among children, if the Word of God is to be our standard; for surely Psalms viii. 2, is written for all ages, and our Lord has commented upon it thus, in Matt. xxi. 16: "Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou has perfected praise?" Thus a little girl's reply to the question, "When should children come to Christ?" was excellent. One scholar answered, "At thirteen." Another, "At ten." Another, "At six." But her reply was, "Whenever they understand who God is."

2. There is a most peculiar fitness in the Gospel being blessed to the