

## ON EDUCATION AND CONVERSION.

BY THE REV. JOHN SPROTT.

The following remarks, on two important subjects, taken from a journal of the late Rev. John Sprott and hitherto unpublished, will form a memento of one of the fathers of our Church and will interest many who loved to read what came from his pen.

### EDUCATION.

In speaking of his college course he says: "If any man wishes to rise in the world he must have two systems of education, one from his instructors and one from himself, and this is by far the most important. We have a hard and circuitous march to the temple of knowledge. Many years devoted to the study of dead languages which we never speak, and all the impurities of the heathen world spread over the youthful mind when the character of their gods would stamp disgrace on human characters. Is it possible that a handful of savages dancing around the burning oak are to be the intellectual fathers of the human race. Eloquence is not confined to any one country. There is nothing equal to the speech of Logan the Mungo chief in Greek and Roman fame. Addison, Franklin, Washington, Angell, James and Jay all rose to eminence without Latin and Greek. All we get at school is merely an entry on the threshold, the superstructure must be raised by our own industry.

### CONVERSION.

Old age is a kind of recess between a busy life and a long eternity. It should be to us a period of subdued passion, of maturity in knowledge, of heavenly espousal and of calmly waiting for a better world in a higher life. I have sometimes been asked when I was converted, I endeavored to avoid the question by saying there were ninety and nine who needed no conversion. There is no doubt a period in the life of every one when, by the grace of God, he is turned from darkness into life, from the love of the world to the love of the Saviour, and we should be anxious to know that we have the marks of a saving change. When the bent of our dispositions is altered and remaining corruptions are a burden to us. It is remarkable that the Apostles of our Lord say nothing about their conversion except the apostle Paul and he mentioned it in self defence. In reading

the lines of Angell, James and Jay, among the most eminent ministers the world has produced, it is remarkable that in lines written by themselves no allusion is made to their own conversion. John Newton says by the grace of God I am what I am. Oh, how imperfect! I am not what I should be, I am a sinful man. I am not what I wish to be. I wish to hate all sin, I am not what I hope to be. One day with Christ in glory I can heartily join with the Apostle and say by the grace of God I am what I am, and not what I once was for once I was blind now I see. Humility is the low ground where every good principle must grow. Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven."

The above lines were penned when in the 83rd year of his age, nearing the eternal world, and not seen until after his death.

### A THRONE OF GRACE.

Thank God for every errand that takes you to a throne of grace. Whatever that may be that sends you to prayer count it as one of your choicest blessings. It may be a heavy cross, a painful trial, a pressing want; it may be a broken cistern, a cold look, an unkind expression; yet if it leads you to prayer regard it as a mercy sent from God to your soul. Thank God for an errand to Him. Stay not from a throne of grace because of an unfavorable state of mind. If God is ready to receive you just as you are, if no questions are asked, and no examination is instituted, and no exceptions are made on account of the coldness of your state, then count it your mercy to go to God with your worst frames. To linger from a throne of grace because of an unfitness and unpreparedness to approach it is to alter its character to a throne of merit. If the Lord's ears are open only to the cry of the righteous when they seek him in certain good and acceptable frames then he hears them for their frames, and not because he is a God of grace. It is the privilege of a poor soul to go to Jesus in his worst frames. To go in darkness, to go in weak faith, to go when every thing seems to say, "stay away," to go in the face of opposition, to hope against hope, to go in the consciousness of having walked at a distance, to press the crowd to the throne of grace; to take the hard, the cold, the reluctant heart, and lay it before the Lord—O, what a triumph is this of the power and the grace of a blessed Spirit in a poor believer.—*Winslow.*