

THE CONSECRATED OFFERING.

"We have become a consecrated offering to God for Christ's sake, we are the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the peculiar people, who once were not a people, but are now the people of God, who, according to John, are not of those who are beneath, but have learned all from Him who came from above, who have come to understand the dispensation of God, who have learned to walk in newness of life."

K. M. F.

CONVERSION OF CHILDREN.

BY REV. ANDREW A. BONAR.

There is a practical error very common among God's people. All of them profess to believe that the Holy Spirit may convert souls at any age, and that conversions cannot be too soon; while yet they do not look for the conversion of children with the same lively faith that they manifest in expecting the Holy Spirit to change those who are of riper years. The same warm-hearted believers who labor for older souls, and are, in the case of such, satisfied with nothing but conversion without delay, do not practically so feel and act in dealing with the young. They are satisfied if the young give attention to the truth, and if they seem not unwilling to retain what they learn in their thoughts; they do not press home *the immediate present acceptance of Christ, on children*, as they would do on grown-up persons. Thus they leave their Sabbath class or their family circle without alarm and without anxiety, though there be therein no symptom of real awakening, and no evidence of these young souls finding the Saviour.

One reason for the difference thus made in the case of the young is, with many, the misunderstanding of certain texts of Scripture—at least so we are strongly inclined to think.

1. One person quotes Prov. xxii. 6: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." The person with whom this text is a favorite probably applies it thus: "Only teach the plan of salvation to a child, and show wisdom's happy ways to a child, and though at the time the child be not converted, yet, when he is old, he will no doubt take the way you have taught him." But is this the sense of the text? Very far from it. The Holy Spirit means to teach us quite another lesson by these words, viz.: "Only be sure that you get the child in the way while still a child, and you need never fear in regard to that child's after-perseverance." It is "Initiate a child in the way" (see the Hebrew,) or, at the beginning of the way: get the truth introduced into his soul while he is a child, and rest assured that he shall go on as he has begun. It is a blessed text to encourage us to seek the *present and immediate conversion* of children.

2. Another person uses a figure, and soothes his conscience under a lack of success, "Well, at any rate I am filling the waterpot with water (John ii. 7,) so that there shall be the greater amount of wine at a future day, when at length the water is turned into wine by the Lord's miraculous power in the hour of conversion." Now this is only a figurative