

The Pulpit.

REVELATION AND CONVERSION.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul."—Ps. 19: 7.

I. First I am to show how the Word of God converts the soul.

Man's face is turned away from his Maker. Ever since the fatal day when our first parents broke the law of God, we have been, all of us, guilty of the same great crime. We stand as men who have their backs to the light and we are going the downward road, the road which leads to destruction. What we need is to be turned round, for that is the meaning of the word "converted"—turned right about. We need to hear the command, "Right about face," and to march in the opposite direction from any in which we have ever marched before. Our text truly says that the Word of God turns us round. It does not mean that the Word alone does that apart from the Spirit of God, because a man may read the Bible through fifty times, and for fifty years hear sermons that have all come out of the Bible, and yet they will never turn him unless the Spirit of God makes use of the Word of God or the preacher's sermons. But when the Spirit of God goes with the Word, then the Word becomes the instrument of the conversion of the souls of men.

This is how the work of conversion is wrought. First, it is by the Scriptures or truth that men are made to see that they are in error. There are millions upon millions of men in the world who are going the wrong way, yet they do not know it; and there are tens of thousands who believe that they are even doing God's service, when they are utterly opposing Him. Some who, as far as it is in their power, are even slaying Christ, know not what they are doing. One of the pleas that our Saviour used upon the cross was "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." To take my own case, I know that, for years, I was not conscious of having committed any great sin. I had been, by God's restraining grace, kept kept from outward immoralities, and from gross transgressions, and therefore I thought I was all right. Did I not pray? Did I not attend a place of worship? Did I not do what was right toward my fellowmen? Did I not, even as a child, have a tender conscience? It seemed to me, for a time, that all was well; and, perhaps, I am addressing some one else who says, "Well, if I am not right, I wonder who is, and if I have gone wrong, where must my neighbors be going?" Ah, that is often the way we talk! As long as we are blind we see no fault in ourselves; but when the Spirit of God comes to us, and reveals the law of God, then we perceive that we have broken the whole of the ten commandments, in the spirit if not in the letter of them. Even the chastest of men may well tremble when they remember that searching word of Christ, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." When you understand that the commandments of God not only forbid wrong actions, but also the desires and imaginations and thoughts of the heart, and that, consequently, a man may commit murder while he lies in bed—may rob his neighbor without touching a penny of his money or any of his goods—may blaspheme God though he never uttered an

oath, and may break all the commandments of the law, from the first to the last, before he has put on his garments in the morning—when you come to examine your life in that light, you will see you are in a very different condition from that you thought you were in. Think, for instance, of that solemn declaration of our Lord, "I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." It is by bringing home to the heart such truths as these that the Spirit of God, through the Word, makes a man see that he is in error and in danger; and this is the beginning of his conversion. You cannot turn a man round as long as he believes he is going in the right way. While he has that idea in his head, he goes straight on marching, as he supposes, safely; so the very first thing to be done to him is to let him see that there is a terrible precipice right before him, over which he will fall if he goes on as he is going. When he realizes that he stops and considers his position.

Then the Word of God comes in, in the next place, to take the man off from all attempts to get round by wrong ways. When a man knows that he is going wrong his instinct should lead to seek to get right; but, unhappily, many people try to get right by getting wrong in another direction. A good man sent me a volume of poems the other day. As soon as I looked into it, I saw that there was one line of the verse that was too short, and the good brother evidently felt that it was, so he tried to set the matter right by making the next line too long, which, as you see at once, made two faults instead of one. In like manner you will find that men who are wrong in one direction with regard to their fellowmen, often become superstitious, and go a great deal farther in other directions than God asks them to go, and so, practically, make a long line towards God in order to make up for the short line towards men, and thus they commit two errors instead of one. Here is a sheep that has gone far astray; it has wandered so far to the East that, in order to get right, it tries to go just as far to the West; and if convinced that it is in the wrong road, all it does is to stray just as far to the North; and by and by to the South. It is wandering, all the while in a different way, with the intent to get back to the fold; and in this respect sinners are just as silly as the sheep. Now the Word of God tells a man that, by the works of the law, he cannot be justified; is condemned already, that he is shut up under condemnation for having broken God's law, and indicates to him that, whatever he may do, or however much he may struggle, if he does not seek salvation in God's way, he will make only the bad worse, and be like a drowning man who sinks the faster the more he struggles. When the Word of God shows a man that, and makes him feel as though he were hopeless, helpless, shut up in the condemned cell, it has done a great deal towards turning him round.

The next thing the Word of God does is to show the man how he may get right. And, oh, how perfectly it shows him this. It comes to the man and says to him, "Your sin deserves punishment. God has laid that punishment upon His only begotten Son, and, therefore, he is ready to forgive you freely for Christ's

sake, not because of anything good you ever can do, but entirely of his free mercy. He bids you trust yourself in the hands of Jesus that he may save you." Come, then, and rely upon what Christ has done, and is still doing for you, and believe in the mercy of God, in Christ Jesus, to all who trust Him. Oh, how clearly the Word of God sets Christ before us! It is a sort of mirror in which he is revealed. Christ himself is up in heaven, and a poor sinner down on earth, cannot see him however long he looks; but this Word of the Lord is like a huge looking glass, better even than Solomon's molten sea; and Jesus Christ looks down into this mirror, and then, if you and I come and look into it, we can see the reflection of his face. Blessed be His holy name, it is true, as Dr. Watts sings—

"Here I behold my Saviour's face
Almost in every page."

But the Word of the Lord does more than that. In the power of the Holy Spirit, it helps the man to believe; for, at the first, he is quite staggered at the idea of free salvation—instantaneous pardon—the blotting out of sin for nothing—pardon for the worst and vilest freely given, and given now. The man says, "Surely, it is too good to be true." He is filled with amazement, for God's thoughts are as high above him, and as far out of his reach, as the heavens are above the earth. Then the Word comes to him, and says, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." The Word also says to him, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." The Word says, "The mercy of the Lord endureth forever." "He delighteth in mercy." "I have blotted out as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins." I need not go on repeating the text with which I hope many of you have long been familiar. There is a great number of these precious promises, gracious invitations and comforting doctrines; and as the sinner reads them, with trembling gaze, the Spirit of God applies them to his soul, and he says, "I can and I do believe in Jesus. Lord, I do gladly accept thy pardoning mercy. I look to him who was nailed to the cross, and I find in him the cure for the serpent-bites of sin. I do and I will believe in Jesus, and venture my soul upon Him." It is thus that the Word of God converts the soul, by helping the man to believe in Jesus.

And when it has done that, the man is converted; for when a man looks to Christ alone, he has turned his face towards God. Now, he has confidence in God, and out of this grows love to God, and now he desires to please God because God has been so very gracious in providing such a Saviour for him. The man is turned right round; from rebelling against God, he has come to feel intense gratitude to his Redeemer, and he seeks to live to God's glory as he would never have thought of doing before.

I ask you, who are the people of God, whether you have not felt, since your conversion, the power of the Word of God in sustaining you in your converted condition. If you ever get dull in the things of God, it is not the Bible that has made you so. If ever your heart grows cold, it is not the promises of God that have made you cold. If ever you cannot sing, and cannot pray, it is not the searching of the Scriptures that has brought you into that condition. But

when you hear the Gospel fully and faithfully preached, if your heart is at all capable of feeling its power, it stirs your spirit, it wakes you up, it produces holy emotions—love to God, love to your fellowmen, heart-searching, deep humiliation, ardent zeal, and all the Christian graces in full exercise. The Word of the Lord is perfect, and its effect is continually to restore and revive the soul of the Christian.

The Word of God is perfect, converting the soul. You will find it to be so the longer you live, and the more you test and try it.

Impurities in the Blood.—When the action of the kidneys becomes impaired, impurities in the blood are almost sure to follow, and general derangement of the system ensues. *Parmelee's Vegetable Pills* will regulate the kidneys, so that they will maintain healthy action and prevent the complications which certainly come when there is derangement of these delicate organs. As a restorative these Pills are in the first rank.

"Look at the little twigs," Luther said, "so sweet and full; pregnant with new life. There we have a beautiful image of the resurrection of the dead. The winter is death; spring is the resurrection from the dead, when everything springs into new life and living green."

Pain is a Punishment.—Pain is a protest of nature against neglect of the bodily health, against carelessness regarding the physical condition. It steals in at the first opportunity and takes up its abode in a man and it is sometimes difficult to eject it. Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil will drive it out in short order. Pain cannot stay where it is used, but immediately flees away.

Victory over trial, that is man's only glory. Christ had to suffer before it was possible for Him to reign. The law of life is this: No man can be good, or great, or happy, except through inward efforts of his own, sustained by faith and strengthened by the inward grace of God.

Why will you allow a cough to lacerate your throat or lungs and run the risk of filling a consumptive's grave, when, by the timely use of Bickle's Anti-Consumptive Syrup the pain can be allayed and the danger avoided. This Syrup is pleasant to the taste, and unsurpassed for relieving, healing and curing all affections of the throat and lungs, coughs, colds, bronchitis, etc., etc.

Anything which makes religion its second object makes religion no object. God will put up with a great many things in the human heart, but there is one thing he will not put up with in it—a second place. He who offers God a second place offers him no place.—*Ruskin*.

Great Medicine.—Tonti, one of the pioneers of French Canada, had no hand and wore an iron hook as substitute. He was in the habit of boxing the ears of refractory Indians with this iron hand; and they have remarked that it was "great medicine." Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil is great medicine, it takes hold of pain with an iron hand and knocks it out of the system.

"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."