

ARTICLE IV.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CONVERSION.

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IN our day when all phenomena are subjected to the most searching scientific investigation, it is not strange that the scientists have turned their attention to the phenomena of religious experience. Modern scientific psychology is, therefore, delving into the depths of religious experiences, and, as many think, is "destined to render great service to Christianity when it thinks its problems through a little more thoroughly." On the other hand, there is grave apprehension on the part of others, due to the fact that among a certain class of representative psychologists there has been a disposition to so explain the phenomena as to reduce it to a natural, normal, necessary experience which takes place in every life, independent of any divine operation; thus eliminating all need of external aid in the way of the presentation of the objective facts of the gospel, or the subjective work of the Holy Spirit. That there is ground for this apprehension cannot be doubted when the statements of some of the representative psychologists of the day are considered.

Before examining the scientific psychological explanation of conversion, it will help us if we get their definition of conversion. The term "conversion" has a broader meaning with the psychologist than it has with the theologian. To be exact, the psychology of conversion has to do only with the act of

turning from sin to Christ. It is unbiblical to use the word "conversion" in the sense of salvation, regeneration, etc. In the doctrinal use of the word, conversion is: (1) The act of a sinner in turning from his sin to Christ; (2) The act of a backsliding saint in turning from his backsliding again to Christ. The term is not used in this limited sense by psychologists. "To be converted, to be regenerated, to receive grace, to experience religion, to gain an assurance, are so many phrases which denote the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right superior and happy in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities. This at heart is what conversion signifies in general, whether or not we believe that a direct divine operation is needed to bring such a moral change about." This definition of the subject by Professor James gives a clear conception of what the psychology of conversion is: i.e., the process which the mind goes through in the experience of the spiritual change. The term "conversion" is used in this paper with this broader meaning.

From the above definition it will be seen that, if there is what may be called a psychology of conversion consistent with the teaching of Scripture, a distinction must be made between the religious psychology of conversion and the Christian psychology of conversion. Such a distinction is necessary for three reasons at least: (1) To warn us against the acceptance of every psychological explanation of conversion; (2) To save us from the rejection of all scientific psychological explanations of the phenomena of conversion; and (3) To be fair to that body of men whose psychological explanation may be both scientific and Christian.

That there is an agreement and a disagreement here is

recognized by Professor James in the following statement: "Psychology and religion are thus in perfect harmony up to this point, since both admit that there are forces seemingly outside of the conscious individual that bring redemption to his life. Nevertheless psychology, defining these forces as 'subconscious,' and speaking of their effects as due to 'incubation,' or 'cerebration,' implies that they do not transcend the individual personality; and herein she diverges from Christian theology, which insists that they are direct supernatural operations of the Deity."¹ This is the fundamental difference between the non-Christian and the Christian psychological explanation of conversion.

Conversion, to such men as Professors James, Leuba, Starbuck, Hall, and others, is a natural, normal, universal, necessary phenomenon, a normal phase of adolescent life incidental to the passage from the child's small universe to the wider intellectual and spiritual life of maturity. G. Stanley Hall says, "In its most fundamental sense conversion is a natural, normal, universal and necessary process at the stage when life pivots over from an auto-centric to a hetero-centric basis."

Professor James refers with approval to the recent work of Professor Starbuck on the Psychology of Religion, in which he shows by a statistical inquiry how closely parallel in its manifestations the ordinary "conversion" which occurs in young people brought up in evangelical circles is to that growth into a larger spiritual life which is a normal phase of adolescence in every class of human beings. The age is the same, the symptoms are the the same, the result is the same. Continuing, he says, "In spontaneous religious awakening, apart from revivalistic examples, and in the ordinary storm and stress and moulting-time of adolescence, we also may

¹ Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 211.

meet with mystical experiences, astonishing the subjects by their suddenness, just as in revivalistic conversion. The analogy, in fact, is complete; and Starbuck's conclusion as to these ordinary youthful conversions would seem to be the only sound one"; i.e., that conversion is "a normal adolescent phenomenon, incidental to the passage from the child's small universe to the wider intellectual and spiritual life of maturity."

The psychologists' explanation as to how this is brought about may be summarized as follows: Man is possessed of a subconscious mind in which all our thoughts are registered or stored and the vestiges of sensible experiences accumulated. With this subconscious mind the conscious mind is always in communication. During the years preceding the adolescent life that which is instinctive and that which has been acquired by experience are undergoing a process of incubation. When these are ripe they hatch out or burst into flower. Spontaneous awakenings are, in short, the fructification of that which has been ripening in the subliminal consciousness. Says Professor James, "To say that a man is converted means in these terms that religious ideas previously peripheral in his consciousness now take a central place and that religious aims form the habitual center of his energy."

Dr. E. Y. Mullins, President of the Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, sets forth this view in the following simple and popular way:—

"Psychology connects all mind states with brain states.

"Every thought reaches the brain through the sense organ—that is, a nerve—and registers itself just as a bird flitting past might alight for a moment and leave its track in the sand. As our thoughts come and go they all leave their tracks in our brain substance through the nerve."

“One set of thoughts crowd the preceding set into the back ground and the first drop out of consciousness. But these vanishing thoughts are not annihilated. They are simply stored away in the subconscious mind; that is, they are registered on the brain ready to be excited into activity again by the proper stimulus. The subconscious mind then is a sort of back room of the intellect where we keep all our stores of knowledge. But the conscious is always in communication with the subconscious mind. The intellectual front room opens into the back room. When religious influences stir our emotional, mental, moral or volitional nature and the struggle ensues there is an agitation in the subconscious region of the mind, and past thoughts, aspirations, hopes and fears form a sort of new combination resulting in a new moral purpose. When the feelings become strong enough there is an explosion from the back room into the front room of the mind, resulting in conversion, with its new peace and joy.

“This, I say, is the way many psychologists explain conversion.”

“Psychologists of conversion do not necessarily deny the supernatural in conversion; indeed, some of them admit it,” but that this supernatural power is either external or personal many of them deny. “The power *seems* to come from without because it rushes from the subconscious. Some psychologists leave the matter open or assert that only natural causes in our past experiences produce the result. Nothing came from without. Everything, they assert, came from the subconscious mind.”¹

Professor James says, “But if you, being orthodox Christians, ask me as a psychologist whether the reference of a phe-

¹ *Why is Christianity True*, p. 276.

nomenon to a subliminal self does not exclude the notion of the direct presence of the Deity altogether, I have to say frankly that as a psychologist I do not see why it should. The lower manifestations of the Subliminal, indeed, fall within the resources of the personal subject; his ordinary sense-material, inattentively taken in and subconsciously remembered and combined, will account for all his usual automatisms. But just as our primary wide-awake consciousness throws open our senses to the touch of things material, so it is logically conceivable that *if there be* higher spiritual agencies that can directly touch us, the psychological condition of their doing so *might be* our possession of a subconscious region which alone should yield access to them. If there be higher powers able to impress us, they may get access to us only through the subliminal door."

From this quotation, it will be seen that while the psychologists do not deny the supernatural in conversion, yet some of them at least are in doubt as to whether there be any higher powers which can be justly termed supernatural, in the sense of the divine, to affect us.

The imminent danger as well as the evident tendency is so to explain conversion that the gospel is minimized, if not completely disposed of as a factor in producing the change.

If, however, we consider the fact that, given the most exalted ethical principles to influence them at the time when life pivots over these do not bring the followers thereof into conscious fellowship with God, we can see that the normal natural process fell short of the conversion presented in the Scriptures. For these same people who had passed through this natural, normal process incident to the adolescent life and have been influenced by moral principles, are conscious of a new inflow of life amounting to a regeneration, when

brought face to face with the objective facts of the gospel. That which is natural cannot produce the spiritual. The capability is there; what is needed is the introduction of the gospel, the subjective work of the Holy Spirit in convincing and constraining, through the presentation of the objective facts of the gospel, the soul to surrender to God.

The fact that the adherents of other systems of religion receive a new and altogether distinct experience, unlike that which accompanied their entrance into their non-Christian faith, proves that the experiences are not identical, and that the reason is in the nature of the objective truths presented.

Any theory or explanation of what conversion is, is necessarily conditioned on the view held concerning man's natural state. If conversion is explained as an evolutionary process, a step in the ordered development of the race, it may be so explained as to eliminate the gospel, in which case it becomes the old doctrine of the survival of the fittest.

Or if, in the theory of evolution, provision be made for divine interposition in introducing new forces and principles to aid life toward its final goal, and such interposition called conversion, it may be explained apart from the principles of sin and redemption.

But if man's sinful condition be taken into consideration and the moral government of God be given its rightful place, conversion cannot be explained apart from the redemptive provisions of the gospel.

In view of the foregoing statements the question naturally arise, Is there a Christian psychology of conversion? If so, it may be discovered best by the examination of a concrete example. Since this is the method the psychologists employ, it is the method we will pursue.

The classical passage on conversion (using the word "con-

version" in the sense of regeneration), according to Dr. James Orr, is Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus. Of this passage, he says, "If this conversation reveals the nature generally of regeneration, then it has what may be termed a psychology; that is, there is a process which the mind goes through in the experience of the spiritual change."

1. In this conversation Nicodemus is told that he must be born from above, which shows *the vastness of the spiritual change*. The expression does not admit of this change being construed as an evolution, the unfolding of inherent forces within him. Objections might be made to this statement, that birth does not mean conception; that the latter has already taken place and that the soul is pregnant with divine life from the date of its natural conception and has only to be brought forth to be born. But a study of the use of the word "born" by the same writer in parallel passages makes it clearly evident that he uses it in the sense of begotten, — man must be begotten of God. According to John, the natural man does not possess the life of God even in germ. Professor Drummond, in his book "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," shows, in his chapter on "Regeneration," how each kingdom is destitute of the life of the kingdom next above it, and by this analogy shows man destitute of the life of God. That Jesus meant that man did not possess the life and nature of God is shown further in the conversation.

The age of Nicodemus also proves that this is something more than the natural, normal, experience of adolescent life. Nicodemus had passed that period and had experienced that natural change. He is an old man. He had been appealed to by, and had responded to the highest ethical code — was a believer in God, and his faith had vitally affected his life; so much so that he was able to pass the cultural and character

test for admission to the teaching staff of the Jewish Sanhedrin. Yet, in the face of all that, Jesus declares the necessity of his being begotten of God. The entire Gospel of John may be interpreted as the unfolding of the first passages of the first chapter, particularly that referring to sonship, in which the writer declares that "But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 12, 13, R. V.). Man must "receive" Christ, must "drink" of Christ, must "eat" of Christ, must "come" to Christ, are expressions used, all of which indicate and prove that man naturally has not the life of God dwelling in him. We must "become partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4). Eternal life is given—not evolved. The sonship, upon which the New Testament dwells so constantly, is based absolutely and solely on the experience of the new birth. The word "again," when pressed back to its deepest significance, is instructive in this connection. *Anothen* has the meaning "above," and the expression would read, "born from above"; which indicates that our Lord's meaning was that regeneration is not our natural life carried up to its highest point of attainment, but the process whereby the divine life is brought down to man. Says the late Dr. A. J. Gordon: "It has been the constant dream and delusion of men that they could rise to heaven by the development and improvement of their natural life. Jesus, by one stroke of revelation, destroys this hope, telling his hearer that unless he has been begotten of God who is above as truly as he has been begotten of his father on earth, he cannot see the kingdom of God."¹

John's statement as to his purpose in writing the Gospel

¹The Ministry of the Spirit, p. 101.

should not be overlooked in using this incident, — “ But these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life through his name ” (John xx. 31). “ His theme is the Messiahship and Deity of Jesus to the end that *belief* might be produced and eternal life received; consequently we find the fact of his Christhood and Deity repeatedly demonstrated; faith, the characteristic word, occurring over one hundred times, while it occurs less than forty times in the other three Gospels; and we find that, being written to the end that through belief in a divine Christ eternal life may be received, that ‘ life ’ is the prominent subject. The three Synoptists altogether have the word ‘ life ’ about twelve times, and that in repetition of the same teaching; whereas in John alone it occurs about forty-five times without repetition.”¹ There can be no question but what John represents Jesus as teaching that man has not the life of God in him naturally, and that that life can be received only through faith in himself.

2. The second thing which this conversation reveals is the *need of a supernatural agency to effect the change*, — “ Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God ” (John iii. 5). Without going into the discussion as to the meaning of “ water,” the writer holds that water is a symbol of the Word, just as wind is used as a symbol of the Spirit. The two great forces operative in the regeneration of the soul are the Word of God and the Spirit of God. Jesus ascribed regenerating power to his words. To the disciples, staggered by his words that “ He that eateth me, even he shall live by me,” he emphasizes the contrariety between the two natures, the human and the divine, by saying, “ It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh

¹Scofield Bible.

profiteth nothing," and then adds, "the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life" (John vi. 63). The word is the medium through which the Holy Spirit conveys the knowledge of God's will, God's purpose, and God's love to man. The Spirit begets men through the truth, but it is not the word apart from the Spirit.

Psychology teaches that every mind-state was preceded by or attended by a brain-state, and on that principle either rules out the supernatural altogether by asserting that only natural causes in our past experience produce the result, or else leaves the matter open. But, in conversion, things absolutely new enter consciousness. Says President Mullins, in speaking on this point, "We can, indeed, analyze all *ordinary* mind-states into the results of present or past sense impressions, tracks left on the sands of memory by the birds of sensation and of thought. In remembered dreams even we can discover always the elements in past experience. The combination may be new, but the elements are old. In conversion, on the contrary, factors enter experience which were never there before. The personal presence of the Other is one of these. The moral direction of the life is also reversed. It is in many cases in the teeth of the whole past tendency of the life. A moral elevation and motive are attained unlike any faintest imagining of the past; indeed, sometimes nullifying and reversing distinct life-principles previously held. No combinations of past tendencies" can work this mighty revolution. "The stream of consciousness flowing down-hill morally for life is not suddenly set to flowing uphill by a chance combination of memories. . . . The point here is not a denial of all connection between the new element which enters experience and previous mental states, or the assertion that this new element breaks in with violence and over-rides the will. The point

is rather this, that however it may enter and whatever previous factor of experience it may employ in so doing, this new factor in itself is recognized as new to experience. It is this irreducible difference between conversion and other experiences which is leading psychologists to modify the general theory sufficiently at least to admit a supernatural element in conversion."¹ That supernatural element, Jesus says, is the Spirit of God.

3. The third thing this conversation reveals, therefore, is that this supernatural power is *personal*.

Recent psychology says that Christ is one of the many possible explanations of conversion. There is a power from above which regenerates man. But we do not know, and it may be cannot know, what it is. We must think of it in the lowest terms possible. It is an over-soul, or impersonal abstract principle, perhaps. But to assert anything definite about this supernatural power which enters the soul is, Professor James contends, "simply an over-belief. The Buddhist calls it one thing, the Pantheist another, and so on to the end. The Christian says it is God or Christ or the Holy Spirit, but there is no proof of this." In his description of the uniform deliverance in which religions all appear to meet, Professor James gives us his view as to what, in his judgment, this is. I quote at length his statement, "There is a certain uniform deliverance in which religions all appear to meet. It consists of two parts: (1) An uneasiness; and (2) Its solution. The uneasiness, reduced to its simplest terms, is a sense that there is *something wrong about us* as we naturally stand. The solution is a sense that *we are saved from the wrongness* by making proper connection with the higher powers. In those more developed minds which alone we are studying, the

¹ *Why Is Christianity True*, p. 278.

wrongness takes a moral character, and the solution a mystical tinge. I think we shall keep well within the limits of what is common to all such minds if we formulate the essence of their religious experience in terms like these:—

“The individual, so far as he suffers from his wrongness and criticises it, is to that extent consciously beyond it, and in at least possible touch with something higher, if anything higher exist. Along with the wrong part there is thus a better part of him, even though it may be but a helpless germ. With which part he should identify his real being is by no means obvious at this stage; but when stage 2 (the stage of solution or salvation) arrives the man identifies his real being with the germinal higher part of himself; and does so in the following way. *He becomes conscious that this higher part is conterminous and continuous with a MORE of the same quality which is operative in the universe outside of him, and which he can keep in working touch with, and in a fashion get on board of and save himself when all his lower being has gone to pieces in the wreck.* It seems to me that all the phenomena are accurately describable in these very simple general terms.”

But what is the “more of the same quality” with which our higher self appears in the experience to come into harmonious relations? He says, “It would not do to place ourselves offhand at the position of a particular theology (the Christian theology, for example), and proceed immediately to define the ‘more’ as Jehovah, and the ‘union’ as his impartation to us of the righteousness of Christ. That would be unfair to other religions, and, from our present point of view, an over-belief.” Further on he says, “Let me then propose, as an hypothesis, that whatever it may be on its farther side, the ‘more’ with which in religious experience we feel

ourselves connected is on the *hither* side, the subconscious continuation of our conscious life." Professor James, therefore, does not concede the evangelical claim that Christ is the author of personal experience.

But Jesus, in the most convincing manner here and elsewhere, says that he alone is the author and the finisher of it. President Mullins shows that the results produced in the Christian by adjustment with the higher powers are all personal, that the response of these higher powers takes the form of personal relationships. Forgiveness involves personal relationship, the operations of conscience imply personal relationships, as does also the plan which the Christian recognizes in his life. These all argue for the personal character of the higher powers. Professor James admits the personal form which religious experience takes, and says: "That religious thought is carried on in terms of personality, this being in the world of religion the one fundamental fact."

4. The fourth thing which this conversation reveals is the *necessity of Christ's death* to effect the change. The necessity of regeneration is no more emphasized than the necessity of Christ's death to effect it. Both are made necessary by the fact of sin. Man is dead in sin; therefore Christ must die for sin.

(1) That death was necessary to bring man to a full consciousness of sin; therefore of repentance. A true repentance is impossible apart from it. Says Dr. Mabie: "A special reason why repentance alone in the non-evangelical sense of that term is not adequate is that there is in all men the haunting sense of guilt, which, as Dean Freemantle says, 'cannot be pacified by any merely subjective process.' The reason why repentance alone except as evangelical is not adequate is that the very repentance admitted to be necessary is itself

chiefly conditioned on the realization of the mediating work of Christ as objective. Man cannot repent as he needs apart from the cross, nor can he repent when he wills apart from adequate motive.”¹

This some psychologists reject. Professor James says, “Prof. Leuba is undoubtedly right in contending that the conceptual belief about Christ’s work, although so often efficacious and antecedent, is really accessory and non-essential, and that the joyous ‘conviction’ can also come by far other channels than this conception. It is to the joyous conviction itself, the assurance that all is well with one, that he would give the name of faith *par excellence*.” But, as Dr. Marcus Dods says, ‘Mere forgiveness would not make men penitent nor impel to righteousness. In order to this a *perception* of God’s righteousness is necessary. The cross *exhibits* both God’s love and righteousness and hence is the *supreme* and *perfect instrument* for producing repentance.’” In commenting on this, Dr. Mabie says, “Thus we see that the objective death of Christ is itself the *means of removing the most radical subjective obstacle* to that very repentance conceded to be necessary.”

(2) That death was necessary to exhibit God’s love, in order to beget love in man. Says Dr. Clark, “In those who, under love’s invitation and pressure, allow themselves to experience a true sonship is born the otherwise impossible response of moral qualities in man to moral qualities in God; for they themselves are born again.” But how does man discover the love of God? If Jesus is to be believed, it is in the gift of His son to die, to be lifted up, that whosoever believes in him may not perish but have everlasting life. The answer to Nicodemus’ question is clear and emphatic, — “As Moses

¹The Meaning and Message of the Cross, p. 98.

lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so *must* the Son of man be lifted up: that whoever believeth in him may have everlasting life" — life when through the Spirit's presentation of the message of the cross the soul believes.

President Mullins again, in speaking of the fact that the permanency of the moral results attests the reality of the moral transformation effected in conversion, says, "Now it is a fact beyond question of a doubt that from Pentecost to the present moment the evangelical apparatus of Christianity has worked successfully. Not only so. The striking fact in all that evangelism has been that where the idea of personal relation to Christ as Lord and Redeemer has been omitted from it evangelism has failed. The moral transformation does not take place."

5. The fifth thing which this conversation reveals, and the last, is that *conversion is conditioned on faith.*

Belief in this passage is used with a larger meaning than mere assent. Belief is mental. Faith adds the volitional. You can have belief without will; you never have faith without will. In all faith there is the march of the will. Belief is non-committal; faith is venturesome. Therefore there must be a surrender — a coming to Christ. Psychology, according to Professor Starbuck, shows that there are two essential aspects of conversion; that in which there is self-surrender and forgiveness accompanied by the sense of harmony with God, and that in which the new life bursts forth spontaneously as the result of a previous act of the will in striving toward righteousness. The sense of sin and the sense of God's love and righteousness and the judgment produced by the conviction of the Spirit of God result in the persuasion and potentiation of the will and lead to a surrender to God. Says

Dr. Clark, "A life given in one personality can only be received into another personality through the real surrender of the personality which is to receive into the personality that is to give; and faith in the life-giving Christ, therefore, must be more than an intellectual assent to certain alleged facts and doctrines concerning Christ and His work, more than a reliance upon the efficacy of any ministries which He may have performed or be performing on man's behalf (though these things must of course be present, laid down as the first stepping-stone over which faith passes to its goal): faith must be the *actual movement of man's whole personality to identify itself with, and to lose itself in, the personality of Christ.*"¹ It is only thus that a man receives eternal life and is as a result saved from perishing.

The concrete example, therefore, gives sufficient and satisfactory proof that our Lord taught that the new birth, which psychologists call conversion, is something more than the natural, normal change experienced in all adolescent life, and that such profound change does not occur apart from the supernatural agency of the Spirit of God in his presentation of the objective facts of the gospel and the believing acceptance of these on the part of the individual.

The psychological study of conversion has given us some very practical hints which will be of value in our work. Among others, the following seem most important:—

1. We have another proof of God's design. That the profound changes involved in conversion occur with such amazing regularity at the time they do, compels us to believe that God has designed that the soul should come into relationship with Himself at the earliest possible moment, and that the most favorable time is in the adolescent period. Man was de-

¹ *Philosophy of Christian Experience*, p. 159.

signed for this. Jesus was God's pattern man, the realization of this design,—showing what God designed we should be and the way we are to realize it.

2. Psychology has shown us that the teaching of Scripture is in harmony with all true science; that the teaching of Jesus is based on eternal principles, so much so that the late Professor James is reported as saying that Jesus was the greatest psychologist that ever lived. In so doing, psychology has added another proof of the authenticity and authority of Scripture. These men, unlearned and unfitted, could never have discovered that which they gave. Moreover, they were incapable of reasoning upon such subjects that they could tell what they thought Jesus *meant* to convey to his disciples and through them to the world. What we have, then, in the scripture is not what they *thought* Jesus *meant* to say, but what he *actually did say*.

3. Again, Psychology teaches us that the difference in conversion, whether instantaneous or gradual, is due to the constitutional make-up of the subjects.

4. Psychology also teaches us the power of testimony. Suggestion proceeding from testimony inspires faith; reassertion reassures faith. In the multitude of witnesses there is power. The church should be brought to realize the power of witnessing and be brought back to it.

5. Psychology has given us a tremendous lesson on the danger of delay. "Some persons," says Professor James, "for instance, never are, and possibly never under any circumstances could be, converted. Religious ideas cannot become the centre of their spiritual energy. They may be excellent persons, servants of God in practical ways, but they are not children of the kingdom. They are either incapable of imagining the invisible; or else, in the language of devotion, they

are life-long subjects of 'barrenness' and 'dryness.' Such inaptitude for religious faith may in some cases be intellectual in its origin. Their religious faculties may be checked in their natural tendency to expand, by beliefs about the world that are inhibitive, the pessimistic and materialistic beliefs, for example, within which so many good souls, who in former times would have freely indulged their religious propensities, find themselves nowadays, as it were, frozen; or the agnostic vetoes upon faith as something weak and shameful, under which so many of us to-day lie cowering, afraid to act our instincts. . . . To the end of their days they refuse to believe, their personal energy never gets to its religious centre, and the latter remains inactive in perpetuity."

In this day when materialistic beliefs and agnostic vetoes upon faith are encouraged, if not actually created by so much of the teaching of the time, particularly among the young, there is need that the alarm be sounded by all Christians, and evangelical teachers, of the great danger of delay and the peril of trifling with the important matter of "being born from above."