

that might be cited to the same effect are sufficient to teach us that our plea, if true, must be boldly proclaimed and defended even if it involves us in a *daily debate* for the space of two years. He who is not willing to follow these examples and this teaching of the inspired men of God as best he can is a moral coward and is a traitor to the cause he professes. We want no such soldiers in the ranks of the Lord Jesus Christ.

One of our great needs of the day is more noble hearted and clear headed men and women in our churches who are willing to adopt these grand principles and live by them and die by them. There has never been a time in our history, as a people, in which we are needed to make more prominent our peculiar plea. Many hitherto honest men and women in Christendom are becoming tired of creeds and other unscriptural humanisms, and are beginning to shake off these sectarian fetters and to look for something better. The danger now is, that failing to grasp the New Testament conception of Christianity, these people, having no resting place, will drift into the other extreme of *liberalism*. If, amid this wreck of denominationalism, we wish to save the people, we must spread our sail to the heavenly breeze and boldly launch out on to the troubled ocean and gather the perishing into our life-boat. No time should be lost in this work. Every pulpit in the land should make prominent the difference between our plea for primitive Christianity and that plea presented from the denominational pulpits of the country. Every member should see to it that he or she stands close by the public proclaimer of this noble plea and assists in holding up his hands in the good work. It is a pitiable sight to see good members otherwise, faltering at this point. If God be for us, who can be against us? The waves of disappointment, opposition and even persecution may break over us for a time; but the light house of the divine Truth is in plain sight, throwing its consoling rays far out at sea, and he who will patiently and steadily persevere is sure, sooner or later, to reach in safety the Rock of Ages.

The readiest and surest way to get rid of censure is to correct ourselves.—*Demosthenes*.

#### HOW DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT OPERATE IN THE CONVERSION AND SALVATION OF THE SINNER?

In the discussion of this question we should remember:

1. That the Holy Spirit is a real *person* composing part of the Godhead of the New Testament. Any theory which denies the divine personality of the Holy Spirit is contrary to the teaching of the Bible and is therefore false.

2. That the Holy Spirit not only had a glorious work to perform in the creation of all things, but also in re-vesting and developing the scheme of redemption.

3. That he now has a grand work to do in the conversion and salvation of sinners and in comforting and edifying all saints.

4. That in conversion and salvation the Holy Spirit operates on the mind and hearts of the sinner.

5. That the question then is not about the *fact* that the Holy Spirit operates on the mind and heart of the sinner in converting and saving him from his past sins, but the question is simply, *How* does the Spirit operate in doing this? It is claimed by many that he operates independently of the Word of God and *directly* on the heart of the sinner. This view we deny, and hold that in conversion the Spirit operates *through the Word of Truth*, and that there is no evidence in the Bible that he operates in any other way.

6. That the question has to do solely with the conversion of sinners. What the Spirit may do in other ways and for other purposes does not concern us in this discussion.

7. That the question is not merely one of *power*, but of *fact*. It is not what God can and might do by his Spirit, but what has he promised to do in converting and saving men and women.

8. That it is not a question therefore to be settled by what we may think, or by our feelings, but by what the Scriptures actually teach on the subject. With these facts before us let us briefly examine the question in the light of the Word of God.

Our first argument is based on the fact that living faith in Christ comes by hearing the word of God; and that such a faith precedes godly sorrow and repentance, thus leading to conversion and salvation. While praying for his disciples our Savior said: "Neither pray I for

these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." John 17:20. This shows that he not only desired that people should believe on him, but that they should do so *through the words of the apostle*. Hence these apostles were specially inspired and sent out to preach to every creature in order that the people might hear the gospel, believe and be saved. In this way the Holy Spirit operated in making believers, not independently of the word, nor directly on the heart of the sinner, but *through the truth*. The apostle John also says:

"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." John 20:30, 31. That this is a living, saving faith there can be no question, for it is a faith which gives life through the name of Jesus; yet this faith is to come through the things that have been *written*, that is through the written evidence in the Scriptures concerning the sayings and doings of our Savior. If then the word of God in this way is sufficient to bring us spiritual life through the name of Jesus, what use have we for any *outside or direct* power of the Holy Spirit from heaven to convert and to save sinners? When Paul went to Corinth he "testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ;" and this he did in their own synagogue. Hence Luke says; "And many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." Here the faith and baptism of these Corinthians is attributed directly to their hearing the gospel, for Paul says he was determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and him crucified. Hence the apostle says: "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." Rom. 10:17.

Now as faith comes by hearing the word of God, it follows that it is not the gift of a direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the sinner. Then if the word of God properly presented is sufficient to produce living faith and this faith leads to baptism and into the Kingdom of Christ, what need have we for any thing more? So then we conclude that in the conversion and salvation of sinners, the Holy Spirit operates on the mind and heart through the word of truth, and that the faithful and earnest preaching of the pure

and simple gospel of Christ is the only means and hope of the world. More anon.

#### EXTRAORDINARY ENDOWMENT.

The New York *Independent* holds that all preachers of the gospel nowadays in order to be successful in their ministry, must be inspired with the extraordinary gift of the Holy Spirit like unto the apostles on the Pentecost. When such leading papers of the United States as the *Independent* become so badly muddled on the operation of the Spirit, it will not be thought strange that we take it in hand to write on this subject. Our contemporary in a lengthy editorial on "How to receive power," says:

But dare we say that the method of power by means of which the gospel was introduced and carried forward during the entire apostolic period has been changed or modified? Certainly there was no more need that extraordinary power should be given to the first preachers of the gospel, who were "eye witnesses" to the resurrection, than there is that we should be so endowed, upon "whom the ends of the world are come." Are we so foolish as to suppose that the gospel, having begun in the extraordinary power of the Spirit, should be completed with less power? We might as well suppose that the engineer of a heavy express train, having pulled out of the depot with a wide open throttle valve and steam at full power, would begin at once to bank his fires and lower the pressure of steam. No; we are sure that it is the will of God that the power at first given, and repeatedly re-bestowed, both at Jerusalem and among the Gentiles, whither the the Apostles went preaching, "not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance," should be maintained until the end. But if we have ceased to look for extraordinary power and have ceased to believe that it is for us, we must continue our ministry heavily and with small, feeble and wholly unsatisfactory results.

Now if the "method of power by means of which the gospel was introduced and carried forward during the entire apostolic period" has not been changed or modified, then we must look, now as then, for like results to follow a like endowment of extraordinary power. But as a matter of fact we do not see this. The apostles on Pentecost could speak with tongues, and this was true of the Gentiles on whom the Holy Spirit was bestowed. Can the editors of the *Independent*, or any other living preachers do this