

sure word of prophecy." What is it? Why, this spirit that is like a light shining in a dark place—the light of the Lord, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, the spirit of truth, which guides into all truth, and which takes of the things of the Father and shows them unto His children. That is the more sure word of prophecy. That is the spirit which giveth life, while this book is the dead letter that killeth, if we have nothing else, because we contend over its meaning and do not comprehend its teachings. That is what the Apostle Peter referred to, and what a people on the face of the earth need. If they want to understand the things of God they must have the Spirit of God, the light of God, and therein discover the things of God clearly. The Bible is all right. We venerate it. The Lord has told us that we should do so, and remember the former holy scriptures, as well as the latter day scriptures that He has given to us.

We believe in the writings of the Apostles; but we look upon them in the light in which they exist. They have been handed down to us through men that were not inspired. They have been translated by men according to their best wisdom. We have not a single document containing the original scriptures. We have not one of the Hebrew writings of the old prophets. We have not one of the New Testament writings of the Apostles. They are not in existence, or, if they are, nobody knows where they are. The books which were used in the translation of the Bible were not the original writings; they were copies, and there were a great number of different copies, and they conflicted one with another in a great many important particulars. We want to look at these things as they are, and not have our eyes blinded. We do not want to worship books, but we want to believe in them so far as they are true. I believe the Bible to be the most valuable book in the world. I do not think there is any book more valuable to the nations than the Bible; and I cordially endorse the efforts that have been made by the British and Foreign Bible societies, which have printed books by the million and sent them abroad in different languages among the nations of the earth. It is a grand book. It is beautiful in its composition, the most of it. There are mistakes in it. There are some things that are childish; some things that there is no need for us to pin our faith to at all; but these things that relate to God, to Jesus Christ, to our salvation, to our moral conduct, and that are guides to us in this life and unto eternal life are invaluable. There are a great many of them in the Bible, and if we can only get the same spirit in our hearts that the Prophets and Apostles had who wrote these things, then we can comprehend these sayings in the spirit of them and get their full value.

This is the great need of the people in this century. That is what these men need who meet in their synods and conventions, when they excommunicate men for standing up for that which they believe to be right. I do not know but they are perfectly justified in it, though. When a man professes to be a minister of any religious deno-

mination and voluntarily takes its articles, thirty-nine or any other number, and with uplifted hand to heaven, or by writing his name, subscribes to that creed and says he believes it, and promises to be a true and faithful minister of that creed, if he then preaches something contrary to it, he should either go out of that church and preach as an independent preacher, or in some denomination with which his ideas harmonize, or he should be out of that church, unless the church likes to remodel its creed in harmony with that which he believes. But while that creed remains as the doctrine of the church, he has no business in that church as its minister and he should go out of it like a man. So I have no respect for men who act as some of them have acted, and I have no sympathy for them as martyrs. People are not burned at the stake nowadays; people are not tied to the wheel; they are not stretched on the rack; they do not have thumb screws applied to them; nor are they thrust into dungeons if they dissent from the creeds of the times. So these gentlemen who contend over what they believe to be right about the Bible have a perfect right to do so, but not as representatives of a religion that they do not believe. Let them go out like men and preach their doctrines where they can get people to hear them.

But it would be a good thing if all these creeds could be revised in harmony with these scriptures; for, strange to say, though these people tie themselves right down to the written word, and say that the Bible contains the very word of God, yet you read it to them and they will not hearken to your words and they will not order their lives in accordance with the book. Let us refer to a little scripture. There was a man by the name of Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night. He was afraid to come in the daytime, because the religion of Christ was unpopular. Here was a man that had the old scriptures and he came to Jesus to be instructed. What did Jesus say to him?

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

They will believe that. What else did He say? Nicodemus was startled. He took the words of Christ literally, and he said, "How can a man be born when he is old?" Jesus said:

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." John, 3rd c., 5th v.

That is Jesus Christ's statement, and it is in the New Testament. It is what they call the word of God. We tell them that this is one of the doctrines of Christ, that a man must be born of water as well as of the spirit. Well, there are millions of them that will turn away at once. They do not believe there is any need of the birth of the water; they say it is the mere form, a mere ceremony, an old, antiquated custom; and another thing, it is good enough, if you believe in baptism, to have a little water sprinkled on you. That is what they say. These very ministers who have been suspending men from the ministry because they say the Bible does not contain in every respect the very word of God say you may take a little infant and sprinkle a little

water upon it and that is baptism! Can they find that in the New Testament? No, they cannot. In the first place, this has to be a birth of water. Is there any similitude of birth in sprinkling a little water or pouring a little on the head of a baby, or making the sign of the cross? Not a bit. But you take a person down into the water, as Jesus was taken into Jordan, and immerse that person; bury him in the water and raise him up from the water into the air, there is a likeness of a new birth. That person is buried from the old life, and comes out of the womb of the waters to the air and breathes a new life.

The Spirit of God is then given, and the blood of Christ is applied. As in the first birth we come into the world by water, by blood, and by spirit, and are made a living soul, so by the second birth—the birth of water and spirit and the blood of Christ—we are regenerated and started on a new life, to be new creatures in Jesus Christ, born again; born of the water and of the Spirit, that we may inherit eternal life. Jesus commanded His apostles:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. Matt. xxviii, 19.

And they went out and preached and baptized, and in the Acts of the Apostles we have a history of what they did. We find that whenever they baptized people they immersed them. Paul says:

We are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Rom. vi, 4, 5.

Buried first from the old life, born afterwards to a new life, buried by water, and born by coming forth out of the water. You go and teach that to some of these reverend gentlemen who put their faith to the Bible and bow down to it as if it were a deity, and they will not believe it.

We read also that Christ told His disciples to lay hands upon people to confer upon them the Holy Ghost, and they did so. We read about it in the Acts of the Apostles. On the day of Pentecost, in the very first sermon preached after the apostles were endowed and inspired by the Holy Ghost, they said:

Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Acts ii, 37-38.

They baptized the people, and laid their hands upon them for the imparting of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost was a revelator to them; it was light, it was life; it brought them into communion with the Father, and made them one. They were all baptized into one body, whether they were Jew or Gentile, bond or free, and all were made to drink into one spirit. They were joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, because they had the same spirit. They did not have to quarrel over the letter of what was in the books.