

DIFFICULTIES SOLVED.

By Dougan Clark, M. D.

Was not the Baptism of the Holy Spirit
Confined to Apostolic Times?

If the baptism was confined to Apostolic times it cannot now be given to all believers. . . . Peter told the multitude on the day of Pentecost, that the promise (of the Spirit) was to them, and their children, "even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Moreover, there have been and are still, many witnesses to the reception of this baptism, in their own conscious experience, and this—in the very great majority of instances at least—at a period subsequent to their conversion.

It is certain that Christ's baptism—or the filling of the Spirit—was not received by the church of the hundred-and-twenty, nor by the Samaritans who accepted the word of God through Philip's preaching, until after their conversion. As this is the baptism that cleanseth; if all receive it at conversion, then all Christians are sanctified at the time when they are born again, and the Church of Christ on earth must consist, in every age, of wholly sanctified members. But the testimony of tens of thousands, who cannot at all doubt their sonship, who are sure that they have passed from death unto life—through faith in Christ—but are also conscious of the remaining corruption of their hearts, would palpably contradict such an assumption. And, if all Christians are made pure in heart at their conversion, why are these emphatic exhortations addressed to believers, in the Holy Scriptures—"Be ye holy;" "be ye perfect;" "go on to perfection," and "the God of peace sanctify you wholly."

And yet, I must not fail again to mention the fact—however paradoxical and inconsistent I may appear to my readers—that every one does, in some sense, receive the Spirit, and is, in some sense, made holy at the time of his conversion. Whosoever receives the Son, has the Father, and the Spirit also. No man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Spirit. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." And whosoever has been forgiven, or justified—as has been remarked elsewhere—begins to be holy. But, this reception of the Holy Spirit which is in connection with conversion, is not at all that baptism and filling of the Spirit to which believers are called. And this partial cleansing which occurs at conversion, is only the beginning of what is consummated, when—by Christ's baptism—the believer is sanctified wholly.

SPEAK CHEERFUL WORDS.

Why is it that so many people keep all their pleasant thoughts and kind words about a man bottled and sealed until he is dead, when they come and break the bottle over his coffin, and bathe his shroud in fragrance? Many a man goes through life with scarcely one bright, cheerful, encouraging word.

He toils hard and in a lowly obscurity. He gives out his life freely and unstintedly for others. I remember such a man. He was not brilliant; he was not great; but

he was faithful. He had many things to discourage him. Troubles thickened about his life. He was misrepresented and misunderstood. Everybody believed that he was a good man, but no one ever said a kind word or pleasant thing to him. He never heard a compliment, scarcely ever a good wish. No one ever took any pains to encourage him, to strengthen his feeble knees, to lighten his burdens, or to lift up his heart by a gentle deed of love, or by a cheerful word. He was neglected. Unkind things were often said to him. I stood at his coffin, and then there were many tongues to speak his praise. There was not a breath of aspersion in the air. Men spoke of self-denial of his work among the poor, of his quietness, modesty, his humility, his pureness of heart, his faith and prayer.

There were many who spoke indignantly of the charges that falsehood had forged against him in the past years, and of the treatment he had received. There were enough kind things said during the two or three days that he lay in his coffin, and while the company stood around his open grave, to have blessed him and made him happy all his fifty years, and to have thrown sweetness and joy about his soul during all his painful and weary journey. There was enough sunshine wasted about the black coffin, and dark grave to have made his whole life-path bright as the day. But his ears were closed then, and could not hear a word that was spoken. His heart was still then, and could not be thrilled by the grateful sounds. He cared nothing then for the sweet flowers that were piled upon his coffin. The love blossomed out too late.

The kindness came when the life could not receive its blessings.—Sel.

LUKEWARMNESS.

John Wesley, writing to John Smith in 1746, said of himself: "To this day I have abundantly more temptation to lukewarmness than to impetuosity; to be a saunterer inter sylvas academicas (among academic shades), a philosophical slug-gard, than an itinerant preacher. And, in fact, what I now do is so exceedingly little, compared with what I am convinced I ought to do, that I am often ashamed before God, and know not how to lift up mine eyes to the height of heaven."

If John Wesley wrote thus, how ought we to write about ourselves. Wesley never spent an idle hour. He rose at four and spent the hour in prayer. He frequently preached at five in the morning and sometimes five times a day in the open air. He wrote and edited 314 works, embracing prose and poetry, sermons, letters, biographies, devotional manuals, grammars—English, French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, books on logic, medicine, philosophy, commentaries, etc.

"I haven't time" is the quick reply of so many today when asked to do a little extra work. Let us think of Wesley the next time we are tempted to so speak.—Sel.

If you could preach the precious Gospel to an audience of 500 Chinese every hour of the day, it would take about one hundred years for all to hear once.

WHAT OF DOCTRINES?

There is today a widespread hatred of the thing called "doctrine." The objection is voiced from the common walks of life, from many pulpits, from the gigantic "Christian" organizations of the day, and from the chairs in many colleges and theological seminaries. Men have come to hate with a burning hatred what they are pleased to call "a system of theology." They are demanding a religion without a theology, without a body or doctrine or a system of truth. We preachers are forbidden to preach doctrines.

It passes our understanding how any one can have religion of any kind and not have a system of belief. If such a thing is possible, then, truly religion is different from all things else. Every man has his set of doctrines or beliefs about everything to which he commits himself. This is true in politics, in business, in morals, in social relations, in education, in every conceivable thing to which man gives his attention. Man must have his beliefs, his body of doctrines. This is certainly not less important in the things of eternity than in the things of the earth.

Doubtless, the real objection to doctrines is an objection to the Bible as the infallible Word of God, to the deity of Christ, to the belief that man is hopelessly lost in sin, that salvation is all of grace, and that the cross of Christ alone makes it possible for men to be saved. When men begin to rail at doctrines, we may be sure that in their utmost hearts there is a dislike for these great fundamental truths of Christianity. It simply means the abandonment of the doctrines of Christianity and the substitution of the doctrine of the divinity of man. "Ye shall be as gods" is the foundation doctrine of the man who rejects the doctrines of the Bible. Satan gave that doctrine to Eve in the garden, and it has been handed down through the generations to the present time.—W. S. Bradshaw in *The Wesleyan Methodist*.

I want to say very emphatically that I have no sympathy with the doctrine of universal Fatherhood, and universal brotherhood. I don't believe one word of it. If a man lives in the flesh and serves the flesh, he is a child of Satan. This is pretty strong language, but it is what Christ said. It brought down a hornet's nest on His head, and helped to hasten Him to the cross, but nevertheless it is true. Show me a man that will lie and steal and get drunk and ruin a woman—do you tell me he is my brother? Not a bit of it. He must be born into the household of faith before he becomes my brother in Christ. He is an alien, he is a stranger to the grace of God, he is an enemy to God, he is not a friend. Before a man can cry, "Aba, Father," he must be born from above, born of the Spirit.—D. L. Moody.

The greatest name in history is the name of One whose cradle was a manger and His dying bed a cross. He had no worldly wealth, influence or learning. His name outshines all other names as the noonday sun eclipses the stars. "He gave Himself."