

has the better of Mr. Horne and Dr. Tregelles. It was stated on the part of Mr. Horne and Dr. Tregelles, that they had, while Dr. Davidson's volume was passing through the press, remonstrated repeatedly against passages which they regarded as objectionable. According to Dr. Davidson's declaration, his connection with the work was unsought on his part, and he agreed not to revise the second volume, but to "re-write, it just as if writing a new work on his own account, while there were only two instances in which Mr. Horne wished certain alterations to be made."

One thing strikes us as showing the practical working of the independent system. Serious fault is found with Dr. Davidson, the confidence of his brethren is shaken, and their fears are excited as to the influence which he may exert upon the Students under his care. A hint was given about resignation, but the hint was not taken, and Dr. Davidson occupies his position, and, we presume, still disseminates his peculiar views among the Students of the Independent Body. This is certainly independence with a vengeance. (Since the above was in type, we have heard that Dr. Davidson has resigned.)

#### THE SPECIAL WORK OF A GOSPEL MINISTRY.

When our Ecclesiastical year has closed, and our Synodical Assembly has passed over comfortably and harmoniously, as has been the case this season, there is a tendency to indulge a spirit self-complacency, as if things were going on smoothly and pleasantly, and as a church, we were enjoying prosperity. But it cannot be too urgently pressed on the hearts both of ministers and people, that the great object to be sought is not the mere prosperity of our Ecclesiastical arrangements, or the mere increase of our numbers, or our growing influence and weight in the community. We are failing in the accomplishment of the first object of a church of Christ, if we are not seeking the conversion of souls, and the advancement in grace and holiness of the members of Christ's Church. Our people must feel this. We fear that some, like the Jews in ancient times, are satisfied with the mere possession of privileges. They are satisfied simply to see and hear their minister in the pulpit on the Sabbath, forgetting that the word which they hear will be to them a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death. Ministers too, may sometimes be so overborne with their round of arduous duties, as to lose sight in a measure of the great object they are to aim at, viz: the salvation of perishing souls. The more that there is on the part of both ministers and people, a simple looking for the power and influence of the Holy Spirit, the more fully will the great object of the church be fulfilled. We undervalue not good organization, and harmonious ecclesiastical action, but the salvation of souls should be our great work, and the best ecclesiastical or congregational organization will not make up for spiritual leanness and barrenness.

The concluding address of the Moderator of

the General Assembly of the Free Church contains so many admirable thoughts on this subject, that we cannot refrain from giving to our readers the following extract:—

"We have not the gift of tongues and the power of working miracles. But it was not by these that men were converted in the times of primitive Christianity. For very many heard the tongues, and witnessed the miracles, and opposed and blasphemed the more, instead of being converted. Everything, through which the triumphs of the gospel were achieved in pentecostal times, remains to the Church, and belongs to her in all ages. The truth of God, which may be briefly summed up in the expression, 'The doctrine of the Cross,' and the Holy Spirit—it was by these that such multitudes of sinners were reconciled to God—the doctrine of the Cross, the instrument—the Holy Spirit, the sole power—working the great change. The doctrine of the Cross then preached is the very same that we now have in the Scriptures; and there is not one word of the Holy Spirit being to be withdrawn, or of His power being to be restrained, as Christianity spread over the world. On the contrary, our Lord, when He promised the Holy Spirit to His disciples and Church, said that He should abide with them for ever. The gift of the Spirit, to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment—to quicken and give spiritual life to sinners, and to sanctify believers, is a permanent gift to the Church.

"With such a warrant to expect a large and glorious work of the Holy Spirit in every age and period for the conversion of sinners, corresponds many a bright page of the Church's history. There are dark leaves upon leaves in the volume of that history, but there are bright pages intermingled. I go not very far away for them. Follow George Whitefield, John Wesley, Howell Harris, Charles of Bala, Rowland Hill (I might mention a host of others), in their preaching salvation by Christ crucified to perishing sinners. Did they expect no more fruit from their preaching than we expect from ours? Would they have thought that it was all right if they had had as few conversions following their preaching as we have? Or go back to the earlier times of our own Church—for I speak not, though I might, of our own Church in later years. How was it with her, under the preaching of Livingston at the Kirk of Shotts, or under the ministry of McCulloch at Cambuslang, of William Guthrie at Fenwick, of David Dickson at Irvine, and of John Welsh at Ayr? Of Dickson it is recorded that under his ministry multitudes were convinced and converted; that people under exercise and soul-concern came from every place about Irvine; that he had sermon every market-day for the country people resorting to the market, who crowded to hear him, and filled his church as on a Sabbath-day; that in a large hall in his house in Irvine there were often numbers of serious Christians waiting to converse with him. And yet, with all this life among his people, and fruit from his ministry, Dickson was wont to say that the vintage at Irvine was not equal to the gleanings at Ayr in John Welsh's time. And if these things be so, then why so little of all this among us now? Ah! we may well ask why. What was the power that converted men in pentecostal times;—or when Welsh, or Dickson, or Livingston, or Whitefield preached? Was it the eloquence or reasoning of the men who spoke? Was it the truths which they declared? It was neither the one nor the other. Eloquence never made a dead soul become a living soul. Truth, even God's own truth, never wrought that great change; for though that truth be good seed, it must needs be quickened. The Holy Spirit was that power; all God's children are born of the Spirit.

"It is not to be thought that I estimate lightly intellectual power, or the fruits of laborious study, in those who minister in the gospel of Jesus

Christ. I utterly repudiate the idea of having the pulpit occupied by intellectual freeness or uneducated ignorance. Talent, and learning, and eloquence, are most desirable, and to be highly prized, provided they do not constitute the whole of the preacher's equipment. It is well to consider what is power and what is weakness in the pulpit. Your magnificently intellectual, closely-reasoned discourse, and your glowing eloquent oration, have riveted attention, and furnished an intellectual treat; but if they have not convinced one sinner of sin, nor converted one soul to God, of all you eager, listening, admiring crowd of immortal beings, they were but mere trifling afar off, and can only be looked upon as utterly feeble and inefficient in regard to the great and glorious end that preaching is intended to serve. Thomas Chalmers, with all his mighty intellect and fervid eloquence, was a feeble minister of the gospel till he was born of the Spirit, and endowed with power from on high. It is the large manifestation of that which is fitted to do the work that is to be done by him who speaks from the pulpit, that is to be called power in the pulpit; as it is just the absence of it that is to be called weakness. Sometimes we have common truths and stale remarks addressed to congregations with all propriety of manner, Sabbath after Sabbath, and the people dead, uninterested, wearied exceedingly under the infliction. Sometimes we have unspiritual, but ingenious, active intellectualism, or eloquent declamation, interesting the intellect, or pleasing the taste of the hearers. Let the speaker, in such instances, but receive the Holy Spirit, so as to speak in the demonstration of the Spirit and with power, and what a change you would witness in the man, in the manner, and in the effects produced!

"If these things be so, Fathers and Brethren, thence comes the vastly important question, Whence or how is this spiritual power—this endowment of the Holy Spirit—to be obtained? It comes not by nature. Education cannot give it. These may fill our pulpits with cultivated, clear, powerful, bold intellect, or with glowing eloquence, but with nothing greater or better. The Holy Ghost is the gift of God. But, though the free gift of God, given according to his sovereign will, there is an important sense in which they who receive this precious gift have to do with the abundant obtaining of it. First, there must be belief that it is according to the will of God that His ministers be abundantly endowed with the Holy Spirit. There must be a clear, deep, solemn conviction and feeling of this. Then there must be a waiting for this gift, as the little Church at Jerusalem waited after the ascension of the Lord. Having received the promise of the Spirit and the command to tarry at Jerusalem till they should be endued with power from on High, they all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication. Ten days they thus waited, prayed, expected, believed. It was a waiting with minds earnestly exercised, longing, entreating, believing that the promise would be fulfilled—not a waiting that lays aside all earnest care about the thing waited for—not a praying for it with more than half a doubt whether the prayer will be answered. You do not doubt that the first preachers of Christianity were men of faith and prayer, and that their preaching converted multitudes. All the ministers whose preaching has turned many to righteousness have been men of faith and prayer. John Welsh prayed the third part of his time, and was unwearied in study. He would often spend whole nights in prayer. It is through such faith and prayer that men are filled with the Holy Ghost—they are endued with power from on High. If we have not received this power, then the question is worthy of consideration, Why have we not received it? Have we searched out, and with a strong and lively faith believed what the Word of God teaches regarding ministers being filled with the Spirit? Have we prayed for the gift of the Spirit as those ministers prayed whose preaching has been so powerful in