

virtually represented the Holy Ghost, but because Ananias' public acceptance of Christianity meant that he was converted to the Holy Ghost, and that all his transactions were henceforth to be with Him. Therefore, it was that Ananias virtually implied that he, in all his statements about his money matters, was speaking as the oracle of God, as led by the Spirit. Hence the crushing charge of the apostle, "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." The only other explanation of this incident possible is that which makes Peter the first pope or vicegerent of God on earth.

We therefore maintain that the idea of conversion to Christianity, on and after the day of Pentecost, took in this thought of conversion, not only to Christ but also to the Holy Ghost as the ever-present virtual Christ, to teach and guide into all truth.

But to-day all this is changed, and so conversion is essentially different, as if this was an entirely different dispensation. Indeed it will be found that there are as many varieties of conversion as there are varieties of *presumedly* essential doctrines and religious practices. These varieties we will discuss in another article, and close this one by calling attention again to the fact, that primarily this difference noted is caused by the different ways the Holy Ghost is treated

MODERN VARIETIES OF CONVERSION.

It is a truism that whilst conversion is simply turning from one thing to another, that the act of conversion is modified by the object to which one is converted. In politics conversion to one party or to its opposite are two very dissimilar acts, although the act of turning in either case is absolutely the same. The outcome of one act is a Tory, Conservative or Democrat, according to the country in which the act is performed, and in the other case is a Whig, Reformer or Republican. So in religion the act of conversion may be the same and yet the result be a Catholic, Episcopalian, Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Quaker, or any other of an almost infinite variety of possibilities.

A Salvationist does not consider conversion to be the *Simon pure* article if it stops short of blood and fire garments and street parades. A Methodistic conversion which does not take in class meetings and all the other distinctive features of Methodism is pronounced on as faulty. What contempt a Free Methodist or Mennonite pours upon a professed conversion which does not strip from off the convert all ornamentation and don the plainest of garments!

But stay, do not many evangelists profess indifference as to what Church their converts should join? This is true, but then it must be *some* Church and an *evangelistic* one at that. That is, the convert is allowed some latitude in his choice, but must, in this idea of conversion, take in a sect, which, although it has several varieties, nevertheless is distinctive and iron clad when compared with some others, such as the Unitarian, Catholic or Universalist.

But even after the matter of Church relations is settled there are numerous other presumed essential qualities which must enter into this conversion to make it pass muster as orthodox. It must include, for example, the fact of accepting the Bible as the sole rule of faith and practice, after the pattern set by the Pharisees in their attitude to the institutes of Moses. It must include private prayer and Scripture reading, and many other religious duties, according to the creed of the evangelist. So that after all, any modern conversion is conversion to a creed rather than to God.

Of course this creed is presumed to represent or stand for God; but, we maintain, just as an idol in a heathen temple represents God. It is the image of God which we set up. And to carry out the parallel here instituted, just as the heathen priest will himself punish the man who pours contempt on his idol, and will not leave it to his god to punish the offender, so will the Christian idolator act, even when he professes to believe that his God is almighty. Like his heathen brother he will undertake to vindicate the sacred character of his fetish by anathemas and other pains and penalties, for both alike are secretly con-