

religion, or the attainment of the Holy Spirit, I was constantly informed that this was fanaticism inculcated by the enthusiasts of the day. That a mere belief of the Saviour and of the scriptures, and to practise virtue, were all that were necessary to please God. I not only was taught this system, but I imbibed it and acted upon it above many. I could, in sincerity, repeat the Creed, (called the Apostles' Creed,) and thinkingly say I adopted it as my real belief. The preaching which I heard regularly was also distinctly of this kind. Neither you, nor I, nor any other preacher of the present time, could more plainly inculcate the necessity of believing and reading the scriptures, than the preacher whose ministry I first attended.

Well, sir, I was quite satisfied with my religious attainments, and lived satisfied until I was 20 years old. My present views were the effect of subsequent convictions; and as you admit that you and I can discuss matters without any uncourteous feelings, I will now relate to you how the change took place in my thoughts and feelings. As I said above, I was taught to look upon every expression which claimed the influence of the Holy Spirit, as being enthusiasm, and I acted upon it; I failed not to make light of any thing of that sort advanced where I was. It is worthy of observation that this was really the very subject on which the conversation turned on the day of my conviction. An old disciple was talking very ardently about his conversion. I said to him, What do you mean by *conversion*? Do you think that men can feel the influence of the Holy Spirit now as in ancient times? He paused and solemnly answered, "I do, and that there is no saving faith without the influence of the Holy Spirit." He went on to quote text after text to prove it, until I became astonished. My first thought was (for I said nothing) a determination to read the New Testament again, with a view to ascertain this point. I did so, and made use of the blank leaves at the beginning and end of the book to note down such texts as seemed to maintain the real operation of the Holy Spirit upon the human heart, &c. This I did that I might turn to them again and examine them closely. The result was a firm belief, that without the influence of God's Spirit directly on my heart, I could not be saved. Well, sir, I sought it—I sought as a sinner, a justly condemned sinner; and I have found it, thanks to sovereign grace! More than forty years have passed off since, during which time I have laboured to correct my errors and to search for truth. The effect of this forty years' examination is a conviction, amounting to assurance, that the Holy Spirit begins, and carries on, and finally completes the work of salvation. Indeed, how can I believe otherwise? It is the sheet-anchor of my tempest-toss'd soul. It is the light of my eye, and the strength of my heart. My own spirit groans and grapples in the dark until God's Spirit helpeth my infirmities and beareth witness with my spirit that I am a child of God. This, my friend, is no matter of speculation. It is a foundation truth that must stand sure. If this could be destroyed, I know not what the righteous would do.