

used in the current religious phraseology 'of the day.' Its general acceptation is the peculiar feelings of the sinner in his conviction of sin; his repentance, and the various struggles, doubts, hopes and fears that alternately agitate the mind until he professes to find pardon and peace with God. You see, it is never so used in the word of the Lord. It is there used to express a faithful trial—rather in the sense of *proof*. Laban had had, for fourteen years, proof of Jacob's faithfulness and was assured that Jehovah had blessed him in the multiplication of his flocks and herds for Jacob's sake. Solomon too uses the word in the same sense. It was not at the commencement of his career that he applies the term to himself but near the close of his life. Then he had "great experience of wisdom and knowledge." And before Paul would allow any one to speak of his experience, he would have him justified by faith—have peace with God and have access to his grace. He would have him rejoicing in hope of the glory of God—he must rejoice, even, in tribulations, and endure them patiently and then he would have a christian's experience! He would then, and not till then, give proof of his devotion to God under all circumstances. Such, my friends, is the Bible use of the term experience. Such, indeed, is its most common use when we speak understandingly. We do not call the agitations and trials of an apprenticeship, the experience of a mechanic. He must have passed through all these and proved himself a competent workman before we call him an "experienced mechanic." So of the professional man. And thus we speak of the seaman and of every art, business or profession known or practised among men. There is, therefore, no reason, human or divine, why the phrase "Christian Experience" should be applied to the embryo and primary life of a child of God. Those who use it have never, probably, examined the word of the Lord to ascertain whether it is proper or improper to use such phraseology.

If what a sinner sees and feels and passes through—if his fears, anxieties, and hopes—if the calm and peace that succeed his trials and distresses were called a "*Sinner's Experience*"—although rather an exceptional phrase—it would be much more expressive and certainly more correct than the one now in use. At present, however, I shall use the word Experience in its perverted acceptation. I shall speak of the conviction and conversion of sinners as experiencing the pardoning love of God. We may then possibly see, that not only have the great mass of religious teachers lost sight of God's word in the use of terms but in their conclusions relative to what constitutes a Christian—a disciple of Jesus Christ.

We are not to suppose that because persons consider themselves christians that this is a proof of the fact. Nor because they have been in trouble and anxiety of mind and then have found peace that it is the peace of God. Many cry peace, peace when God has not spoken peace. He proclaims peace only to those who submit to him—to his throne and government. If a man's own feelings are to be the test of his devotion to God, all the sects and parties in Christendom can prove themselves children of God. Yes, more, Mahomedans and Pagans can give proof of acceptance with God. They feel and