

The Error Of "Meansism"

Written by Sylvester Hassell
Tuesday, 18 May 2010 23:33 -

Is regeneration (the new birth) by the synergistic effort of God and man? Or, is it solely by the monergistic effort of God? Sylvester Hassell considers the question.

The Gospel Messenger-September, 1894

It has long been a leading unscriptural idea, not only of heathens, but also of both Catholics and Protestants, that something that man can do is required by God as a means by which He may quicken dead sinners into Divine life and save souls from hell; and, sad to relate, two or three thousand Primitive Baptists, in Missouri and a few other States, have, during the last ten years, been inveigled into this gross heresy. Some of these so-called means of salvation are reading the Scriptures, prayer, baptism, communion, and, most of all, the preaching of the gospel (these are commandments of the Lord, and are, when obeyed in the Spirit, of great benefit to His Children during their earthly pilgrimage, but it is nowhere said in the Scriptures that God through these things gives eternal life and salvation to His people); to these the Arminians would add protracted meetings, mourner's benches, fabulous stories, affecting tunes, Sabbath Schools, Theological Seminaries, money-based Religious Societies, human boards, fairs, festivals, rafflings, concerts, theatricals, picnics, excursions, Christmas and Easter celebrations, etc.--all for the avowed purpose of saving souls and peopling Heaven. The most experienced and best informed Arminians, especially if they have any spiritual life, are losing all confidence in these human idols; and no true Primitive Baptist believes that any instrumentality of man has ever sent, or will ever send, a single soul to glory. As no means can be used to give natural life to one literally dead, so no means can be used to give eternal life to those who are dead in sin. God may by His Spirit, in His sovereign pleasure, give Divine life to a poor sinner during the literal preaching of the gospel, or at any other time; but he needs and uses no other being and no other thing to impart His own life to the soul. As all temporal means are used to feed, strengthen, relieve, warn, and guide living subjects, and not dead ones, so reading, preaching, prayer, baptism, and communion may be used of the Lord to instruct, edify, comfort, warn, and direct His renewed children, and to save them in this life from false doctrines and sinful practices. {Isa 40:1-2; Eze 34:1-31; Joh 21:15-17; Ac 20:28; 1Pe 5:1-4; Ro 1:16; 1Co 1:18-24} Ezekiel did not quicken the dry bones, but preached what the Lord would do for His people; and Paul was the father of Timothy, Titus, Onesimus, the Corinthians, and others, and the planter of many churches, only in the sense that he was the first man who preached the gospel to them, and through God's regenerating and illumination Spirit, they believed it, and he gathered them into churches; he could not and did not help the Lord give them His life (Eze 37:1-14; Isa 26:19;

The Error Of "Meansism"

Written by Sylvester Hassell
Tuesday, 18 May 2010 23:33 -

Joh 1:12; 3:3-8; 5:25; 10:28-30; 17:2-3; 2Co 4:6; Eph 1:15-23; 2:1; Jas 1:18--the word of truth is the Living Word, Christ by His Spirit, Isa 55:10-11; Heb 4:12; Joh 1:1; 6:63; 1Jo 1:1; 5:1,11-12; 1Pe 1:3,21,23; 1Co 1:30; 2:14; Re 21:6). The cases of Jeremiah and John the Baptist and the penitent thief on the cross demonstrate the utter independence of the Omnipotent God upon human means of any kind in imparting spiritual life and salvation to His people, and His perfect ability, independently of all human instrumentalities, to save the babe that dies before or after birth, and the idiot, and the lunatic, and the heathen, and any poor sinner, though previously unquickened, even in the agonies of death. {Jer 1:5; Lu 1:15,41; 23:39-43}