

supernatural is denounced as gross superstition. Even creation is denied, and under the reign of Law, God Himself is bowed out of His own universe. Men hardly know what to believe, and what not to believe, and hence the feeble faith, the shallow conviction, and the extreme worldliness that characterize even the Church of God in these days. "Mr. John," said one of our ablest ministers to me when I was at home, "the spirit of scepticism is carrying everything before it. It is everywhere in our churches, and actually creeping up our pulpit stairs. We have broken off from our old moorings, and God only knows whether we are drifting." Brethren, how are we to keep ourselves untainted by this noxious element with which the intellectual atmosphere of our age is so thoroughly impregnated? And how are we to obtain that clear vision of Divine things that shall absolutely exclude all doubt as to their reality, enlarge the faculties of our minds in respect to their deep significance, and intensify our sense of their overwhelming importance? Moreover, we have to repeat these truths day after day in their most elementary forms, and that to a people who seem almost incapable of apprehending and assimilating non-materialistic ideas. And hence there is a constant danger of these momentous realities losing their freshness and interest to our own minds, and their power over our own hearts. How is this danger to be averted?

Again I ask, how are we to attain to, or abide in, the region of full assurance and clear vision in regard to "the things freely given us of God," and how are our converts to be led into the enjoyment of the same unspeakable blessing? There can be but one answer to this question: We must all be filled with the Spirit. Before the Pentecost the apostles themselves were mere babes in this respect. Their apprehensions of truth were extremely dull, their vision limited, and their convictions feeble. When filled, however, with the Holy Ghost all this was completely reversed. In a moment their souls were bathed in the light of Heaven; all doubts passed away; and they themselves were so transformed that they became "a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men." The Spirit that guided holy men of old in recording Divine truth, is the Spirit that reveals them to the mind of the reader in their intrinsic reality, deep significance, and matchless beauty. The natural and normal condition of the human soul is that of one filled with the Spirit of God, and consequently full of light; and it is only in so far as the soul enjoys this fulness that it can apprehend spiritual realities as they are. The fully divinely illumined soul is beyond the reach of doubt in regard to these things; for the Spirit takes of the things of Christ, and so shows them to such a soul that the inward eye shall behold them with direct and open vision. Under this blessed illumination the eternal verities of the Gospel become clear Divine revelations to the mind, faith becomes a spiritual vision, and preaching becomes a description of what is seen and felt. The distant is brought near, the vague becomes distinct, and truths lying cold and dead in the intellect become instinct with quickening, vitalizing, invigorating power. And, above all, Jesus Christ Himself, in whom all spiritual truth is centred, is fully revealed to the inmost soul as a living, personal, ever present Saviour. "He shall not speak of himself; he shall glorify Me." Let us all be full of the Spirit, and our converts will be full of Divine light and power, and our little churches will become at once, what they ought to be, the lights of Heaven in this dark land.

Consider, again, *our dependence on the Holy Ghost* as

THE IMMEDIATE SOURCE OF ALL HOLINESS.

As missionaries we are in China, not only to preach truths and teach doctrines, but to represent Christ, and to build up a holy spiritual church, and for this purpose we need the power of holiness. Holiness is a mighty power; and the missionary cannot dispense with it. In this land, especially, is this power required in an eminent degree. Our every movement, our whole spirit and temper, our entire life are narrowly watched and criticised by this people; and our influence for good or for evil depends more upon our lives than upon our words. The ideal teacher of the Chinese is a holy man. "He is entirely sincere, and perfect in love. He is magnanimous, generous, benign, and full of forbearance. He is pure in heart, free from selfishness, and never swerves from the path of duty in his conduct. He is deep and active like a fountain, sending forth his virtues in due season. He is seen and

men revere him; he speaks and men believe him; he acts and men are gladdened by him. He possesses all heavenly virtues. He is one with heaven." This is a lofty ideal, but the Chinese do not look upon it as existing in fancy or imagination only. They believe that it has been realized in some instances at least, and I am convinced that no Christian teacher can be a *great spiritual* power in China in whom this ideal is not embodied and manifested in an eminent degree. He must be more than a good man; he must be a holy man, exhibiting "the vigor of every right purpose, and the intensity of every devout affection." He must be a man full of the Holy Ghost, and divinity within must energize mightily through him. He must be a man who will take time, not only to master the language and literature of this people, but to be holy. It is not ourselves—our poor selves—the Chinese want to see, but God in us.

The ideal Christian of the New Testament is a "saint," that is, a holy man, entirely consecrated to God, and devoted to righteousness and truth, and the ideal church of the New Testament is a spiritual temple built up of such living stones. Now, it is perfectly clear to my mind that as long as this ideal is not fairly embodied in the character of the church in this land, our progress must be slow and unsatisfactory. The question of thoughtful men in China is similar to that put by the Jews to Christ—"Who art thou? What sign showest thou then, that we may see and believe thee?" "Thou claimest to be from God, and the power of God unto salvation. But how are we to know that thou art not an impostor? Where are the proofs of thy celestial birth?" Brethren, what shall we give them as a reply? The Bible? Books on the evidences of Christianity? The probability is they would never read them—it is certain that few would be convinced by them. There is an argument, however, that would command their serious attention and profound respect, if it could only be presented with clearness and force, and that argument is the *blameless, holy* lives of our converts. It would be useless to supply them with books recording the lives of the saints of other days and other lands. We must be able to point to the saints of our own churches, and say, "Behold a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation." But how long are we to wait for this unanswerable argument for the Divine origin and power of Christianity? Looking down it appears as if we might have to wait many a generation. Looking up, however, there is no reason why we should wait at all. The Holy Spirit is the Author of all holiness. Every holy thought, every holy emotion, and every holy act are inspired by Him. He is both able and willing to make these babes in Christ, as well as ourselves, "holy and without blame before Him in love." Let us believe that a baptism of the Spirit is possible for them, and let us seek it on their behalf, and teach them to seek it, with intense and persistent earnestness. Let us do this, and ere long the heavens will open; and the Heavenly Dove, as a spirit of purity, will descend upon them, and consecrate them as a "holy temple for an habitation of God." Then the Church will become an embodiment of the mighty power, and an incarnation of the Divine genius of our blessed religion.

Consider again *our dependence on the Holy Spirit* as

THE SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL UNITY.

Unity is an element of power which we cannot dispense with. I am not speaking of uniformity, but of "the unity of the Spirit." Uniformity is not possible to us; and I am not at all sure that it would be desirable even if it were possible. The unity which we seek is that which we behold in all the works of God—unity in variety, the unity of life clothing itself in manifold forms. Humanity is one, but the races are many. The human body is one, but every member is not an eye. The landscape is one, but its beauty consists in a mixture of colors and forms. So it is in the spiritual world. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but the same God which worketh all in all." With regard to our education, religious training, and mental powers and idiosyncrasies, we differ widely. We cannot be brought to see things precisely in the same light, adopt the same methods, and prosecute the same line of work. Neither is it necessary that we should. The right principle is for every man to make up his mind as to what is right and best for him, and throw all the soul that he has into it.

Then we are connected with different sections of

the Christian Church, and are representatives of different societies. This is an inevitable source of a certain amount of diversity in the outward aspect of our work. Again, men are often thrown together in the same mission, and compelled to work in association with each other, between whom there exists the least possible natural affinity. This is a real source of danger.

To enable us to dwell together in unity in our personal intercourse one with another, and to present an unbroken front to the common enemy in our work, the very God of peace and love must dwell in our hearts, and consecrate our entire nature as His everlasting temple. Being all in Christ, we are one in spiritual life, and we are so whether we recognize and acknowledge the fact or not. But what is necessary is that this element of oneness should become so full in each heart, and so clearly recognized and powerfully expressed by all, that our differences would be completely overshadowed by it. The unity we need, then, is the unity which is induced and perpetuated by the fullness of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and is productive of peace, mutual love, and, as far as practicable, hearty co-operation in work. We need the unity that would make it impossible for the demons of envy, jealousy, and unholy rivalry to show their heads between the different missions; and that would put a perpetual end to all uncharitable speaking and unbrotherly acting among the missionaries themselves. Where the Holy Ghost dwells and reigns, such things cannot exist. Before the descent of the Spirit upon the disciples, they had their rivalries, and their petty jealousies, and their unseemly disputations as to who should be the greatest in the kingdom; but the baptism of fire burned all that out of them, and they became *one* in Christ, and simply anxious to serve Him. Their mutual fellowship became unbroken; and all men knew that they were the disciples of Jesus by the love which they had one toward another. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also that shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be *one*; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me."

Consider again *our dependence on the Holy Ghost* as

THE SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL JOY.

"The joy of the Lord is your strength." This is the joy of the Holy Ghost—a joy which differs entirely from all other joys, and surpasses them infinitely. It is the joy of conscious pardon, assured by the witness of the Spirit in the soul. It is the joy of adoption, which is the Spirit in the heart crying Abba, Father. It is the joy of deliverance from the power and dominion of sin. It is the joy which flows from soul-health and a fulness of spiritual life. It is the joy which springs from an inward realization of the fact that the Father and the Son have come to abide for ever in the breast. It is joy in God—gladness in Jesus.

The Apostle contrasts the fulness of the Spirit with the fulness of wine. "Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit." On the day of Pentecost the people seeing the effect of the out-pouring of the Spirit on the disciples, said, "They are filled with new wine." The Apostolic Church enjoyed a wonderful fulness of the Holy Spirit; and as a consequence the element of joy was a very powerful one in it. The Christians rejoiced with joy *unspeakable*, and took *joyfully* the spoiling of their goods. And thus inspired with holy joy, they spoke the truth with boldness, and the word of the Lord sounded out from them.

We need the fulness of this joy. Without it our work will be a burden to us; and we shall toil on with the hearts of slaves, and the hearts of slaves are never strong. But especially do our native brethren need it. They had their pleasures in their heathen condition, both religious and sensuous. We have taken these away from them. How are they to be kept from falling a lust for the flesh-pots of Egypt—for the leeks, and onions, and garlic of their pagan life? There can be only one way. The new religion must be made a joy to them. It is said of the sirens that their tenure of life was dependent on the successful exercise of their charms. They sang with bewitching sweetness, and so entranced anyone who heard them that he died in an ecstasy of delight. It is fabled that Ulysses, when he approached these enchantresses, stuffed the ears of his companions with wax, and lashed himself to the mast and thus escaped. When the Argonauts, however, passed the sirens, it is said that Jason ordered Orpheus to strike his lyre. The enchantment of his singing surpassed theirs, and the Argonauts sailed