

apostles had no occasion to write to them describing such things as what might be or what ought to be. If we were required to produce a detailed direct statement of the process of what we call conversion from the writings of Paul, John or Peter, we must fail in the attempt to do so; not because such things never took place, but because they were so common that they needed no description. The only descriptions of this initial process of the new life are a few historical examples in the Acts of the Apostles. But the Acts of the Apostles deals everywhere with evangelism, the founding of the Christian Churches. The higher forms of advanced experience are not matters of direct record. As to the question, then, of the manner of attainment of this higher experience so distinctly described by John as perfect love, the Church in every age is left to the testimony and living fruits of God's present work. It may come gradually, as a growth. It may come like Pentecost, as a mighty, rushing wind. As God sends it, so let us seek it. We have the evident tests, infallible marks, by which we may know it as genuine from all spurious imitations. These are sufficient for our guidance. Because a man has told me that in the course of a few weeks God has led him up into a region of Christian ecstasy or experience, before unknown, and which I may scarcely have reached by years of slow growth, I have no right, therefore, to discredit him; but I am called to examine the Spirit which he professes to have received, and, by St. John's marks, see whether it be of God.

On the other hand, we must beware of making the mystic experience supersede all else. God has given it a high place, the highest place, in our spiritual life. But it is not to supersede our ordinary intelligence. Reason, common-sense, conscience, moral law, the lessons of experience, history, science, the wisdom of the past, and science of the present—all retain their place. Mystic experience is no substitute for these things; but through them all it infuses a spirit of heavenly glory. It helps them all into a clearer light, and it makes them all a living temple, resplendent with the ever-abiding and conscious presence of God. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in Him."