

## THE CHURCH'S GREATEST NEED.



**W**HAT is it? *Not Wealth.*—That is needed; for, while many of its members are millionaires, and thousands upon thousands are living in luxury and comfort, it is nevertheless true, that almost every benevolent cause is languishing for lack of funds. Wealth, rightly used, is a mighty power; and the Church needs, in this essentially worldly age, *consecrated* wealth. But her greatest need is something more than the money-power.

*Not Numbers.*—We readily acknowledge the benefit which would be conferred upon the Church by a vast acquisition in membership, provided that the standard of admission be not lowered, and the distinction between the natural and the renewed man be maintained. But want of numbers is not the greatest need of the Church.

*Not Intellect.*—"Knowledge is power." It strengthens the mind, gratifies the taste, refines the manners. In an age of culture like this the Church needs sturdy and gifted minds,—but there is a higher need. What is it? **HOLINESS.** That is the Church's greatest, deepest, most urgent need. Not so much wealth, talent, members, intelligence, as Power from on High. The greatest evil to be overcome is sin,—sin in the world, sin in our own hearts, and the mightiest force to overcome sin is the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost. "I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord."

This is what the Church needs most *in the pulpit*,—men "filled with the Spirit," so that when they speak He may fall as a sacred unction on the hearts of those who hear. There is to-day a call for ministers of learning and culture and power,—men that speak to the intellect, charm the imagination, rouse the passions. There is a higher power than this,—oratory cannot attain unto it, genius cannot reach it,—it is the Apostolic qualification, "full of faith" of the Holy Ghost, and of power—the power which smites the conscience and takes hold of the heart, an influence that is strongly felt, and which makes the Word enlightening, quickening, comforting, "a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

This is what the Church needs most *in the pew*,—the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It is "the promise of the Father," THE promise among all his great and precious promises. It is a family badge, a blessing which may be in the possession of every true believer, for it knows no outward distinctions founded upon color, or language, or pedigree. We live in that holy home upon which the Spirit descended more than 1800 years ago. His was no passing visit here, no sudden but transient illumination, no power fitfully given and suddenly withdrawn. The day of Pentecost is not to be deemed a day apart, but merely the first day of the Christian centuries, and its tongues of fire but symbolize the *inner* baptism. This gift, so peculiar to the Gospel dispensation, is the secret of God with His people. It is the hidden manna. It is the white *tessera* on which a name is written, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it. Mr. Wesley said, "Give me a hundred men who fear nothing but sin, and love nothing but God, and I will conquer the world for Christ!"