

worldly, indolent ; and instead of experiencing that peace which passeth all understanding, shed abroad in their hearts, are full of doubts and fears, and scarcely know whether they are Christians or not ? Is there not a large amount of pride, unholy ambition and selfishness in the Church ? How many professors are like the Laodiceans, think themselves to be rich, increased in goods, and have need of nothing, and know not that they are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked ; while how many more there are like the Ephesians, who, in the midst of much outward zeal and activity, have left their first love, and are consequently very weak and imperfect before God. Is it not a fact that very many in the Church are foolish, ignorant and blind, and need to be taught what are the first principles of the doctrines of Christ ? They know nothing as they ought to know it ; they are but babes in Christ ; they make no progress, have no spiritual enjoyment themselves, or any power to commend the Gospel to a world lying in wickedness. There is indeed a vast amount of ignorance with regard to the higher doctrines of the Gospel, and a great lack of that self-consecration to Christ which the Apostle refers to when he beseeches Christians, by the mercies of God, to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is their reasonable service. Such phases of Christian life and practice, alas so common, are very imperfect, and far below what it becomes us to exemplify before the world. God wants all his professed people to shine as bright lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, to be living epistles, known and read of all men ; but how can any one do this whose Christian life is like what we have described, and who continue babes instead of going on to perfection ?

The true remedy for all this is to be filled with the Holy Ghost. This is the blessed privilege of all believers. We need not remain far from God, but can walk all day long in the light of his countenance, and be filled to overflowing with divine influences. This, according to the Apostle Paul, is just as easy of attainment as it is to be brought under the influence of intoxicating drinks.

We know how easy this is, and what the terrible consequences are ; but just so easy is it for us to be filled with the Spirit. Listen to the Apostle's words :—" Be not drunk with wine, but be ye filled with the Spirit." Drink in divine influences. Become God-intoxicated men, and so exemplify the true power of the Gospel to purify and elevate our whole nature. Filled with the Holy Ghost !—oh, how earnestly should this be sought by every one of us. We need it not only for ourselves, but also for the sake of a world lying in wickedness. Is there not a crying necessity for more power to descend upon the Church, if she would be true to her mission, and become a faithful witness for Jesus ? The ministry needs power to overcome the fierce opposition of the world, the flesh and the devil, and to commend the truth to the hearts and consciences of the unconverted. The power required for this is not the power of eloquence, genius, learning, or of fiery zeal and activity in the Lord's cause : for we may have all these and yet fail to save a single soul ; but it is the power of the Holy Spirit, coming down from above, dwelling in our hearts, driving out all sin, imparting divine strength, and thus making us valiant soldiers, mighty conquerors over every opposing force. The Apostles possessed this power ; and though unlearned and ignorant men, yet they wielded an almost overpowering influence, and uttered forth words which their adversaries could neither gainsay nor resist. They speak, and their words are like a sharp two-edged sword, which pierces the heart of three thousand souls and causes them to cry out, " Men and brethren, what must we do ? " It is the same now. Let the Spirit of God take possession of a man, and put words in his mouth for the proclamation of the Gospel ; then, though rude in speech and weak in utterance, he shall yet convince and convert sinners from the error of their ways, and bring them to the feet of Jesus.

Moreover, it is in the possession of this divine power that the glory and strength of the Church consists. What avails all our eloquence, learning, zeal, activity, and earnestness without it ? We may build splendid structures ; we may possess the most learned and eloquent ministry the world has ever seen ; we may