

THE TRUE POWER OF CHRISTIANITY

Some of the following lessons were developed from William Arthur's book entitled *The Tongue of Fire; The True Power of Christianity*. It was written in 1856.

Chapter One:

GOD'S KINGDOM WITHIN THE HEART

When John the Baptist was being used mightily by the Spirit to call people to repentance, the Jews began to say, "Surely this must be the Messiah for whom we have waited so long." Of course, he was not the one they were seeking. John was sent to prepare God's people to receive the Lord. He therefore said to them, "I am not the Christ." (John 1:20) "I indeed baptize you with water {as a sign of repentance}; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Luke 3:16)

The Jewish people had long been expecting a Messiah. He was coming to establish a kingdom here on earth where people would live by the will of God. Their last inspired prophet had said, "Behold...the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple." (Mal. 3:1)

The Messiah, according to the general belief of the Jews, would set up His throne in the temple at Jerusalem and begin ruling His kingdom from a physical location. He would establish His government – the kingdom of God – like other kingdoms of this world. He would then make everyone obey the laws of God. His great power and authority would enable Him to rule over all other governments and people. And many Christians still believe this way.

But this is not how God had planned to establish His kingdom. The Lord did not intend to rule over the people of the world by making them conform to written laws. God's thoughts are not like our thoughts. And His ways are far above the ways of man.

It is God's plan to rule His people from a throne within their hearts. The Messiah, once He was resurrected and glorified, would use His Spirit to establish His kingdom-life within the hearts of men. He would manifest Himself within the temple of their bodies so they could share with Him in His life of true righteousness and holiness. (Eph. 4:24)

Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes... I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my

decrees and be careful to keep my laws... I will save you from all your uncleanness. (Ezk. 36:23, 27, 29 NIV)

In other words, the Messiah did not intend to set up a physical kingdom in this world. However, He would enable people to participate with Him in His divine nature if they would surrender the temple of their body to Him so He could set up His throne of power within their heart. (2 Pet. 1:3-4) This has always been God's ultimate plan for redeeming fallen man. Jesus confirmed this interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies when He said, "For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:20)

The Lord would come to immerse God's called-out people into His own spiritual life through a baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire. Through this purification and infilling, He would establish His Kingdom-life of love within their hearts and enable them to fulfill all the righteous requirements of the law. (Rom. 8:3-4)

John the Baptist was a prophet sent by God to prepare the people for the coming of the Lord to His temple. The Messiah, when He came to each of His consecrated disciples in power, would enable them to overcome the flesh, the world and the devil. These people who had been called out by God through repentance, would then be able to "serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of {their} life. (Luke 1:74-75)

God had been sending this message to His people through the prophets for centuries. But when John the Baptist came on the scene, the age of fulfillment was finally at hand.

Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me {by calling the people to repentance}. And {a little later} the Lord, whom you seek {wholeheartedly}, Will suddenly come to His temple... He is like a refiner's fire... He will purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness. (Mal. 3:1-3)

The sons of Levi represent consecrated believers in this age of fulfillment.

This long awaited "Promise of the Father" that purifies the heart and fills the temple of the body with God's life of love – His glory – is only offered to those who have previously repented and have fully consecrated their lives to the Lord. They would become the true priests of God as they "put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." (Eph. 4:24)

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. (1 Pet. 2:9)

John the Baptist, as a minister of the gospel message, served the purpose of preparing people to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit. His function was to

lead people to repentance and to prepare their hearts to receive the Lord and His Kingdom-life from heaven. He said to the people, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 3:2) This kingdom of heaven {a term that Matthew uses when referring to the kingdom of God} would soon be available to them. Once this kingdom was established within their hearts, they would be enabled to serve God with the same undivided devotion that the angels serve God in heaven. While the light of their understanding would not be as great as the angels, their devotedness would be "made complete." (Jam. 1:4)

The Spirit-baptism is only offered to people who are already living in a reconciled state. We are told that "John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." (Mark 1:4) To people who were being reconciled to God through repentance, he said, "Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight... Therefore bear fruit worthy of repentance..." (Luke 3:4, 8) He knew that only a forgiven, yielded, and consecrated heart would be prepared to receive this long awaited Promise of the Father.

God had forgiven people for their sins prior to the New Testament dispensation. He was able to see the Son's shed blood from the foundation of the world. We can therefore find Him calling people back to Himself since the fall of Adam. Crediting people with righteousness was nothing new to God. (Rom. 4:20-22)

This New Testament age of fulfillment has something more to offer than the forgiveness of sins. The Messiah came to establish His Kingdom-life of love within the hearts of God's called-out children so they would be enabled to display His spiritual image and glory in this world. *He came to enable them to serve God with the same kind of selfless love that Jesus displayed when He lived in a mortal body. (1 John 4:17)*

God has provided an Old Testament "type" to help Christians understand this spiritual principle. After God's people in the Old Testament had properly prepared a dwelling place for the Lord {a temple}, had placed the sacrifice on the altar, and had prayed to God for the blessing, the fire then came down to consume the remains of the sacrifice. God demonstrated His approval of their preparations by sending the fire from heaven. Only then was He able to fill the temple, a dwelling place they were required to prepare for Him, with His presence and glory. Scripture says, "When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the temple." (2 Chron. 7:1)

On the day of Pentecost, this Old Testament "type" became a living reality in the lives of the first disciples. After they had prepared the temple of their bodies, had placed the remains of their flesh-life on the altar of sacrifice, and had offered

up prayers to God, He then sent His fire from heaven to purify their hearts. (Acts 2:3)

God, who knows the heart, *showed that he accepted them* {their consecration}...for he purified their hearts by faith. (Acts 15:8-9 Emphasis added NIV)

Blessed is the man who endures temptation, *for when he has been approved*, he will receive the crown of life {the Kingdom-life} which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (Jam. 1:12 Emphasis added)

And the Lord, whom you seek {as the One who will establish His Kingdom within the heart}, will suddenly come to His temple... He will purify the sons of Levi {the fully consecrated believers}...that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness. (Mal. 3:1, 3)

There is still a remains of impurity within the hearts of new believers. It can be recognized by the various forms of self-centeredness that still exist within their lives. The Bible refers to it as "the flesh" or the "sinful nature." The called-out children of God will therefore be tested to see if they are willing to place this old self-centered nature on the altar of sacrifice. Christ will not consume the flesh-life with His fire from heaven and establish His Kingdom-life within their heart until they have made an unreserved {unblemished} offering of themselves to God.

God will not permit the flesh-life to enter into His presence. The Lord therefore needs to do His work of removing the old carnal nature before it is possible for the believer to dwell in His presence within the Holiest of All. In other words, "Without holiness no one will see the Lord." (Heb. 12:14) **Once the flesh-life is removed, the believer is able to enter into the holy nature of God and enjoy His presence. Their spiritual life is no longer a place of dryness and barrenness.**

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary promises of Christ, let us go on to perfection {become complete in the Lord's life of love}... Do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience {steadfastness and perseverance}inherit the promises... This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil. (Heb. 6:1, 12, 19)

Once the heart has been purified and Christ has shown Himself to the inner soul, the believer enters into a real participation with God in His divine nature. The flesh-life is consumed by His indwelling presence and the Spirit provides sufficient power to fulfill all the righteous requirements of the law.

Whoever has My commands and obeys them {does his work of preparing the temple with his regenerate heart}, he is the one who loves Me...and I too will love him and show Myself to him {within the temple of the body}. (John 14:21 NIV)

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, {the law is powerless to change anyone's nature, only God's power can do that} God did by sending His own Son...that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled {fully met – NIV} in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Rom. 8:3-4)

Chapter Two:

THE PROMISE OF A HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

John the Baptist identified Jesus as the One who would establish the Kingdom-life of God within the hearts of men. Two of his disciples began to follow Jesus. They were joined by others. For three years they walked with Him in loyal obedience as they learned of His ways.

These followers of Jesus came to know Him as “the Christ.” As they observed the light coming from His life, they could see how He had a truth that would teach them what they needed to know to enter into God's eternal life – the same life of love He had been displaying through His own mortal body. (1 John 1:1-2) They therefore remained close to Him. (John 6:68) In contrast to the rich young ruler who chose not to follow Jesus into His way of eternal life (Matt. 19:16-29), they became earnest followers who were willing to yield to Christ's teachings with a repentant heart as He prepared them for His baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Then one day Jesus began to speak about leaving them. When He first spoke these words, they did not understand what He meant. He spoke of leaving them, and yet He also said something about coming back to them in a new way. He said, “I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.” (John 16:7)

How could it be to their advantage for Him to leave them? Would they not be losers when the light of His Presence, the blessing of His words, and the influence of His example were all removed? How could that be to their advantage? Wouldn't it be better to have Jesus walking with them than to have this other Helper He promised to send?

*The answer is no! Jesus stated it would actually be better for them. In the new way, where Christ would show Himself to them as an indwelling life by the power of His Spirit, they would have many advantages over the old way of knowing Him. First, they would be enabled to personally relate to the deeper truths they had heard Him speak about during the previous three years, truths they could not fully understand with their intellect. But even more importantly, because He would be in a glorified state, He would then be in a position to share with them in His divine nature. (John 16:13-14; 2 Pet. 1:3-4) They could then know this divine nature as a love that surpasses knowledge. (Eph. 3:19) **The Holy Spirit would actually reveal God's heavenly life of love within their inner being.***

No mind has conceived what God has prepared {in the heavenly realms} for those who love him – but God has revealed it to us {within our inner being} by his Spirit. (1 Cor. 2:9-10 NIV)

Jesus was unable to share His divine nature with His disciples when He walked with them in the physical realm. *But once He was glorified, He would have both the power and the authority to use His Spirit to manifest His spiritual life through their mortal bodies. In fact, He would live through them in the same way His heavenly Father had lived through Him when He walked in a mortal body. Only in this way could these disciples continue His work of being a "light" of the Father's life of divine love in the world.* (John 8:12)

In this age of fulfillment {the New Testament age}, the Spirit would take of the Son's nature of love, a life He receives from the Father, and then reveal it within the souls of each of His consecrated disciples. This is the glory of the full gospel message and the meaning of salvation.

He {the Spirit} will bring glory to me {the Son} by taking from what is mine {the Kingdom-life} and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father {His life of perfect love} is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. (John 16:14-15 NIV)

I {the Son} have given them {access to} the glory that you {the Father} gave me, that they may be one as we are one {in life and nature}: I in them and you in me...that the {perfect} love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them. (John 17:22-23, 26 NIV)

For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved {from our sinful nature} by His {indwelling} life. (Rom. 5:10)

Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard... How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation...? (Heb. 2:1, 3)

The New Testament plan was for Christ to return to His disciples “in the power of an endless life” from heaven (Heb. 7:16). He would set up His Kingdom-life of love within their hearts. This revelation of His life from within their inner being, which He would show to them in an abundantly full measure (John 10:10), would enable them to manifest His “light of life” in the world. (John 8:12) They would become like Him in His nature of self-sacrificing and self-denying love while living in mortal bodies. (1 John 2:5-6; 4:17)

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness who has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ {His spiritual image}. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels {weak mortal bodies}, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us...that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. (2 Cor. 4:6-7, 10)

On the day of His resurrection from the dead, Jesus appeared to His disciples. He said to them, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” He then breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” (John 20:21-22) The disciples then became New Testament Christians with the indwelling Spirit to help them understand the deeper things of God.

Was this indwelling presence of the Spirit the “baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire” they had been promised? No. They still had to wait to receive the Spirit-baptism. They would still need to wait on the Lord in prayer until He had immersed them into His life of divine love.

These first disciples did, however, move into the New Testament dispensation. Under the old covenant, God’s people lived under law in fear. But now, with the Spirit breathed into them, they could begin living by the Spirit and experience a real sense of peace with God. (Heb. 9:11-13) But even then, though they had come to know the “God of peace,” they still needed to be sanctified “through and through.”

May God Himself, the God of peace {the One you know who has already breathed the Spirit of peace into your hearts}, sanctify you through and through {completely}. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless... The One who calls you {into this Kingdom-life} is faithful and He will do it. (1 Thess. 5:23-24 NIV)

We now need to consider if these devoted Christians, with the Spirit residing within them, were ready to take the gospel message to the world? After all, the

risen Lord had said when He breathed the Spirit into them, "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." But wait! After being taken through forty more days of instruction by their resurrected Lord, where they learned more about the coming Kingdom of God, Christ then said, "I am going to send you what my Father has promised {His Kingdom-life of divine love}; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:49) Christ knew that without a personal knowledge of God's Kingdom-life within their own hearts, they would not be in a condition to lead others into this life from heaven.

This injunction to wait to be clothed with power, which would enable them to display their Lord's Kingdom-life of love here on earth, became a supplement to their other instructions, including His Great Commission. He expected them to wait until they were endued with a much greater power than they had received when the Spirit was breathed into them. They had not yet received the Promise of the Father. They had not yet become living witnesses of His Kingdom-life from heaven.

These Christians, even after the Spirit had taken up residence within their hearts, still needed to wait to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire. The fire had not yet come down from heaven to purify their hearts. (Acts 15:8-9) The Lord had still not come to fill the temple of their bodies with His glory – His Kingdom-life of love. The Lord therefore told them to wait for the Father's promise. "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry...until you are endued with power from on high." (Luke 24:49)

It would not be power to rule over cities; nor would it be power to speculate on the unfulfilled prophecies. They needed power to enable them to walk in the light of Christ's life of love. Without first being empowered to display this light from heaven {God's divine love}, they would be unable to turn others from the self-centered ways of this world and lead them into the Kingdom of light. In other words, without this power from on high, they would remain powerless to advance Christ's Kingdom-life here on earth.

The kingdom of God is not a political system of outward laws we impose on sinful men to keep them morally good. The kingdom of God is a supernatural life of love that must be received by an act of faith. This heavenly life – the long awaited Promise of the Father – must be revealed by our Lord within our eternal soul by a very special work of His Spirit. "According to your faith will it be done to you." (Matt. 9:29)

Everyone who turns to Christ for salvation and becomes reconciled to God through His blood, still needs to be built up in their faith before they will be prepared to die to the self-sufficient ways of this world. This is a prerequisite to being filled with His Kingdom-life from heaven. We therefore need to be "strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, 'We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.'" (Acts 14:22)

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed {His Kingdom-life of love is manifested within your heart}, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. (1 Pet. 4:12-13)

There will be a Day when Christ comes again to the whole world in a full display of His glory. But He is also able to come to individual Christians in this age of fulfillment. He will come to everyone who is willing to pay the price for the heavenly Pearl by dying to their flesh-life. They are required to lose their old Adam-life before they may gain Christ's Kingdom-life. (Matt. 16:24-25) And even though a mortal body lacks the greater capacity of a glorified body, sanctified Christians are enabled to display the "light of life" first displayed by Jesus through His mortal body.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth... And of His fullness we have all received {All of God's "called out" children now have access to His abundantly full spiritual life. But it doesn't happen automatically because I call myself a Christian. It must be appropriated by faith and is only available after there has been a real emptying of all "selfness" including self-sufficiency}, and grace for grace. (John 1:14, 16)

And the glory which You {the Father} gave Me {the Son} I have given them {access to}, that they may be one {in life and nature} just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me...that the love with which You love Me may be in them, and I in them. (John 17:22-23, 26)

Technically, the kingdom of God is not even located on the earth. It exists in the spiritual realm. Christ's disciples are required to come out from the ways of the world so they may enter into the blessings He now holds for them in the heavenly realms. Let us therefore take up our cross and depend on the Lord to use the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit to raise us spiritually, so we may become "one spirit with Him" in His Kingdom-life of divine love. (1 Cor. 6:17) Because once we are made "complete" in love (Jam. 1:4), we will become like stars shining in the universe, as we display God's glory in this world in the way that Jesus did.

For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them..." Therefore, "Come out from among them {the idolatrous and self-sufficient ways of the world} and be separate,

says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you {into the heavenly realms} (2 Cor. 6:16-17)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. (Eph. 1:3 NIV)

You may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life. (Phil. 2:15-16 NIV
Emphasis added

Chapter Three:

WAITING FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF A HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

Even though a believer in Jesus Christ has entered into a reconciled state and is on their way to heaven, they can still be falling short of the Kingdom-life of promise. These carnal Christians will be unable to lead others into the “light of life” from heaven while they remain in this wilderness condition.

We therefore find the Lord leaving behind a company of men and women who began to pray. Even with the Spirit of God already breathed into them, they still felt powerless to fulfill their Lord’s Great Commission. How could they show people what it means to live out the Sermon on the Mount, which explains how people are expected to live in God’s Kingdom, without first being made like their Lord in His nature of love. (John 17:22-26) So they “continued with one accord in prayer and supplication,” waiting to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire.

The Lord had said, “Not many days.” They would therefore wait in prayer. Their Lord had taught them to pray for the kingdom to come. The Kingdom-life would empower them to do God’s will here on earth as it is done in heaven. (Matt. 6:9-10) Since they still needed this Kingdom-life to be established within their hearts, they continued to wait in prayer.

Their faith did not fail as the days passed by. They did their waiting either in the temple “praising and blessing God” or in the upper room with “prayer and supplication.” *These disciples were all living in a reconciled state with God and in one accord with each other. They had offered the temple of their bodies to the Lord. They were now required to wait for the full salvation of the Lord.*

Truly my soul silently waits for God; from Him comes my salvation. (Ps. 62:1)

Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord! (Ps. 27:14)

And now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You. Deliver me from all my transgressions... (Ps. 39:7-8)

But the days wear on, and there was still no blessing. Is not the delay going on too long? The Lord had said, "Not many days!" Does the promise hold true? Is God faithful to His Word? Can they depend on Him to fulfill His promises? **Here is where the greatest trial of faith takes place.** Will their faith fail?

As the days stretch on, eight, nine, ten days, do they start to think it might be better to begin their assigned work? The world surely had a need of hearing the gospel message. Their Lord had already been exalted to the right hand of God and possessed all power and authority in heaven and earth. And, as their own reasoning would have indicated, the people in this perishing world still needed to hear their Lord's message of reconciliation. Were not His instructions, which included His Great Commission, enough? No! They would need to obey their Lord by waiting until they were clothed with power from on high.

We do not know what the prayers may have been like on the morning of the tenth day. We do know, however, they were there in the upper room early in the morning waiting on their Lord. It was only nine in the morning when they eventually came out to the crowds with their Lord's gospel message in the power of His Spirit.

"Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind." They were fully aware of the moment when the long awaited "Promise of the Father" had finally come to them. When God does this mighty work with His power, He always does it "suddenly." "Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple... For he will be like a refiner's fire..." (Mal. 3:1-2 NIV)

Each time God clothes one of His children with power from on high and purifies their hearts, He will do it suddenly. And praise God, He will sanctify them in such a thorough way that they can know when it has been done. "Now may the God of peace Himself *sanctify you completely*... He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it." (1 Thess. 5:23-24 Emphasis added) *Since God does this sudden work within the heart, our focus should not be on outward signs.*

God's work of sanctifying the heart entirely to Himself does not end the growth process. In fact, real growth cannot begin until the heart has been purified. As long as there is a remains of the old self-centered nature in the believer, he will be held back from the life of promise. But once the heart has been purified and the child of God is set free from his carnal nature, he can begin growing into the infinite life of God with ever-increasing glory.

I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin...so if the Son sets you free {from the sinful nature that wants to live for its own will}, you will be free indeed. (John 8:34, 36 NIV)

The first disciples, the men and women who were waiting on the Lord in the upper room, saw what appeared to be tongues of fire coming to rest on each of their heads. And what was this fire? It was the fire from heaven that was needed to consume the sacrifice {the remains of their flesh-life} before the glory of the Lord could fill the temple of their bodies. The fire had come to purify the representative son's of Levi. As consecrated believers in this age of fulfillment, they were the ones who needed to be enabled to serve the Lord in true righteousness. Yes, the Lord suddenly came to His temple to establish His Kingdom-life of love within their hearts so they would be enabled to do His will here on earth as it is done in heaven.

Christianity was to be a Tongue of Fire. "For everyone will be seasoned with fire." (Mark 9:49) The fire was a sign of purity and power. The power of God resting on each of His children and the righteous life of the Son residing in them. "You may become blameless and pure" in your life of sacrificial love. (Phil. 2:15 NIV)

The fire was intended to continually burn within them, as God's fire had flamed in the bush before Moses. The fire would provide them with conquering power. It would be a power that enabled Christ's disciples to stand with boldness before kings, confound synagogues, silence councils, still mobs, confront the learned, illuminate the blind, and inflame cold hearts.

If we can still see a core of self-centeredness within our own hearts, something that remains even in our service to the Lord, we should not be acting as if we have already been filled with God's Spirit. The fire from heaven still needs to consume the carnal remains that prevents God's life of divine love from being displayed through our mortal bodies.

If each member of Christ's body would begin to seek out our Lord's Kingdom-life of love through consecration, prayer, and fasting, the church would become as effective today as she was in the first century. God's power has not changed. Praise our Lord for His willingness to send this long awaited Promise of the Father into the hearts of each of His consecrated disciples.

Let us truly consider how this power from God enabled the first disciples to further our Lord's Kingdom-life here on earth. Once we can see what these uneducated men were enabled to accomplish after the Fire from heaven had come to them, we will begin to wonder why more modern Christians do not seek out this same enduement with power.

So I say to you, ask {in prayer}, and it will be given to you; seek {earnestly}, and you will find; knock {persistently}, and it will be

opened to you... If you then, being evil {still self-centered}, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father {who is perfect in love} give the Holy Spirit {in His Pentecostal power} to those who ask Him! (Luke 11:9, 13)

Chapter Four:

SPIRITUAL EFFECTS OF A HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

Once the first disciples were baptized with the Holy Spirit, we are told, "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit." Even though the Lord had previously breathed the Spirit into them on the day of His resurrection, the Spirit did not yet fully possess them. The fire had not yet purified their hearts. But now, with their hearts purified, the glory of the Lord could "fill" the temple of their bodies. They were enabled to manifest God's life of love in this world. (1 John 4:17)

Christians are actually commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Paul said to the Ephesians, "be filled with the Spirit." (Eph. 5:18) This command was worded in a way that gave Christians a responsibility for both the initial filling and an ongoing filling.

Because every Christian is expected to become filled to overflowing with the spiritual life of the Son, we can know that God has prepared the way and is ready to give the blessing. He seems to be saying, "All things are now ready." (Luke 14:17) The Lord has already made provision; the fountain is open; the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, is now flowing out from the throne of God. This "living water" that flows from Christ's spiritual life in the heavenly realms, can now be poured into the hearts of God's children. (Ezk. 47:1-12)

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given {access to} fullness in Christ... (Col. 2:9-10 NIV)

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ {in His life of love} may dwell in your hearts through {dependent} faith...that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Eph. 3:16-17, 19 NIV)

The difference between receiving the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit is a difference not of kind, but of degree. In the first case, the light of heaven has reached the dark chamber. It begins to distribute light and make the heart tender

and responsive. But there is still much obscurity and many deep shadows. It is only when the temple has been completely filled with the Spirit, filling it with the “light of life” from heaven, that Christ’s nature of love can begin filling the whole chamber.

“Filled with the Holy Spirit!” It declares not only that the Lord has come to dwell in the human soul, but that He has filled the whole house with His glory. He now pervades every chamber, every court, with His manifest presence. **The carnal nature is continually purged out and the whole heart is given over to doing the will of God, here on earth as it is done in heaven.**

“That you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” (Eph. 3:19) Here is a statement that has caused many Christians to “waver at the promise of God through unbelief.” (Rom. 4:20) Aren’t we expecting too much when we look in faith to be filled with “all the fullness” of God’s life of love? Let us note that it does not say, “That you may contain all the fullness of God.” That would be impossible – more impossible than to contain the sun in a house. But the house can be “filled” with the light of the sun. It can be so filled that not a particle of unilluminated space remains within it. This is what it is like when God fills the temple of our body with His Spirit of love.

We can sometimes rise to levels of hope where we are enabled to say, “It may be.” But a shrinking of the heart will generally say, “It cannot be; we can never be filled with all the fullness of God.” It was because Paul was able to foresee these doubts rising from within the human heart that he went on to say, “Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, *according to His power that is at work within us*, to Him be glory.” (Eph. 3:20 NIV Emphasis added) **Let us therefore never limit God with our human thoughts and doubts.**

We should be careful to note that Paul is not speaking about some abstract power that works in the universe, but the “power that is at work within us.” In spite of what our unbelief may say, this inner working of His divine power can enable the temple of our mortal bodies to “be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” His life of love can pervade our whole being and thereby enable us to love as our Lord loves. (1 John 2:5-6)

What a laboring of expression we find whenever Paul tries to convey how God’s power should be working through the lives of Christians. For example, he says, “And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.” (2 Cor. 9:8) *There would never be a moment when God’s sanctified children would not be prepared to pour out their lives in their service to God’s kingdom.*

Look at how many times he uses terms like abundance, all, every, and always. The word “abound” means not only to fill, but to overflow.” We notice there is a double overflow; first there’s grace from God to us, and then the same

grace from us to “every good work.” This is a glorious commentary on our Lord’s words, “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” (John 7:38)

The believer’s heart, in itself incapable of holy living, can be turned into a vessel that overflows with spiritual life from the heavenly realms by the power of God. (Eph. 1:3) The Lord’s Living Water, including His self-sacrificing nature constantly flowing from within, is what purges out the self-centered nature – the source of all sin. As long as this river of love from the life of God is flowing, the soul will remain fully satisfied. It is this condition of “abundance” that enables the believer to continually sacrifice himself for the good of others and thereby fulfill all the righteous requirements of the law.

Of course, if we do something to cut off this abundant flow of Living Water, the self-centered nature will become active again, along with its selfish tendencies. We are therefore commanded to keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 5:18)

Happy the heart that is thus filled and has begun to overflow with the fruit of Christ’s Holy Spirit! Where do these living waters originate? “He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.” (Rev. 22:1) There is a river, the Spirit of life, proceeding from the Father through the Son. Jesus’ promise is thereby fulfilled:

He {the Spirit} will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine {the life of perfect love} and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father {His life of love} is mine. (John 16:14-15 NIV)

At that day you will know {when the Kingdom-life of love has been established within your heart} that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. (John 14:20)

Never seek only a scant supply. You are to be a fountain of this never ending river of life. If you believe, not only will a well “spring up within” you, but “rivers” (John 7:38) shall flow out from you. Jesus therefore said, “Whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to {a manifestation of God’s} eternal life.” (John 4:14 NIV Emphasis added) The eternal life is God’s heavenly life of love.

When the Christian becomes filled with the Holy Spirit, he is restored to his original and highest fellowship with God in the heavenly realms. “As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk in them.” (2 Cor. 6:16 KJV) So it is with the soul of man when he has become filled with God’s Spirit. The Son fulfills His promise: “My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.” (John 14:23)

This is more than merely knowing that God is always with us. In that state we may not feel His Presence, and therefore it is easily forgotten. But this is

His presence revealed within the soul as a living reality. “I will love him and manifest Myself to him.” (John 14:21)

Our Lord enables sanctified Christians to keep their eyes on the ways of His Kingdom by continually displaying His presence of love, joy and peace within their soul. “For the Kingdom of God is...righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” (Rom. 14:17) The reality of His indwelling presence is what keeps their heart holy.

The carnal man has his mind on this world. This is only natural. Without an inner manifestation of the Lord’s presence to keep the soul satisfied, there will be a natural inclination to look to the temporal things of this world as he tries to improve his spiritual life. The thoughts of this man, including the impulses of his heart, are moved by motives which have their desires on earthly things. Both the body and the mind are continually drawn away from the spiritual things of God by personal desires. These selfish motives are what naturally produce a self-centered nature.

The Lord begins to reverse this process when the Holy Spirit is breathed into the man. He quickens the man’s spirit so he can receive light and truth from God. The renewed man has the Spirit to soften his heart and to turn him away from the selfish ways of fallen man. Instead of the body being wholly subject to the flesh, the body can now be brought under a subjection to the Spirit of God. “For if you live according to the flesh you will die {have a dying spiritual life}; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” (Rom. 8:13)

Everyone who presses forward in their faith can expect God to establish His Kingdom-life within their heart. If the believer will persevere in this course of putting off the fleshly desires of the body until he has put away all his earthly idols, he will be provided with an abundant entrance into God’s kingdom.

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Pet. 1:10-11)

When the Son’s spiritual life fills our soul, we are enabled to walk as Jesus did. As His “dear children,” we become “imitators of God.” (Eph. 5:1) No longer having any desire to live for ourselves, we “walk in love as Christ also has loved us.” (v. 2) It is this sacrificial life of love that rises up to God as “a sweet smelling aroma.” (v. 2)

Oh for high examples of God’s workmanship! We need children of God who will die to the self-centered ways of the world and enter into the abundantly full spiritual life of the Son. Our lives need to shine with a purer,

truer light than anything that human nature has ever known. As children of light, we have been called by God to expend our lives in furthering His kingdom-life and glory in this world.

But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God. (John 3:21 NIV)

But we have this treasure in jars of clay {weak mortal bodies} to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. (2 Cor. 4:7 NIV)

Chapter Five:

EFFECTS ON HUMAN NATURE OF A HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

Deeper than the judgment, deeper than the feelings, lies the seat of human character. This is where the nature of the person is to be found. We can often use cultivation to affect its quality, and training to change its form. **But to transform nature into something entirely different is beyond man's ability. This work belongs to the One who originally fixed the nature in its present state.** "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Matt. 19:26)

It is the nature of fallen man to follow his own will as he looks to the temporal things of this present world to find his spiritual fulfillment. The carnal {self-centered} man prefers the favor of the world to the favor of the Almighty. He would rather love and obey himself than love and obey his Creator. In general, he directs his life as he pleases.

In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes. (Judges 21:25)

You are not to do as we do here today, everyone as he sees fit, since you have not yet reached the resting place and the inheritance the Lord your God is giving you. (Deut. 12:8-9 NIV)

You will remember all the commands of the Lord, that you may obey them and not prostitute yourselves by going after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes. (Num. 15:39 NIV)

The spiritual man has overcome the world and lives only for the kingdom of God and His glory. His Spiritual food {the source of his spiritual sustenance}, is to do the will of God. (John 4:34) As he walks in the will of God, he receives a supernatural life from heaven.

*The salvation of the Lord is designed to transform the carnal man into a spiritual man. Although believers can be reconciled to God by the blood of Jesus while they are still in a carnal state, they are to seek to be saved from their fallen and self-centered nature by depending on the Lord to establish His Kingdom-life within their heart. "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." (Rom. 5:10 Emphasis added) **The Son saves us from our fallen nature by establishing His Kingdom-life of love within our hearts. He enables us to participate with Him in His divine nature.***

Human nature is said by many to be basically good. And we know that people will generally try to be good for personal reasons. But as long as individuals still have their personal wills and selfish motives, we can expect to find them periodically displaying sinful acts. "For where envy and *self-seeking* exist, confusion and every evil thing are there." (Jam. 3:16 Emphasis added)

It is this self-centeredness in the fallen human nature that corrupts. The self-seeking nature has become the seedbed of all the evil and unrest that is now taking place in this world.

We therefore cannot expect to truly correct the troubles in society without changing the very nature of man. And the only way to correct the fallen nature is through a participation with Christ in His divine nature. The old self-seeking nature needs to be replaced with God's nature of heavenly love so that "you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires." (2 Pet. 1:4 NIV)

Our most destructive enemy is our fallen human nature. Even when we have become Christians and we want to do right, we find that our selfishness is constantly corrupting our actions. We find ourselves continually falling by our own hands. Eventually we will discover that we are our own worst enemy. This is when we begin to cry out with David, "Create in me a clean heart, O God. And renew a steadfast spirit within me." (Ps. 51:10)

After reading our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, it becomes quite clear that God expects His children to stop giving way to their selfish desires. We know that self-centeredness is the cause of all strife and unrest in this world. And how often we have resolved to correct our behavior! But how are we to always respond with a loving heart as our Lord requires? And how are we to "escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires" when our old nature wants to keep living for itself?

If our heart could be healed, if our inner nature could be corrected, if we could participate with Christ in His divine nature, then we would have the power to overcome all the temptations of the world! If God would use His creative power to make us sound within, perfecting our hearts in love for Him and others, we would be ready to stand in the most difficult of circumstances, as Jesus our forerunner and example did.

As sincere but carnal Christians, we will find our conscience speaking the following message to our heart over and over again: "Every selfish inclination and sinful tendency needs to be brought under the control of the will. As God's children, we must stop responding to our fleshly desires. We must continually resist our inner nature." **But in spite of all our renewed resolutions and efforts, we find that our most earnest strivings only bring a deeper sense of our inner corruption.**

If this is the way that God has chosen for His children to live, He has surely left us in an appalling condition. Does He really expect His sons and daughters to go through life always fighting against a corrupt inner nature that continually leaves them in spiritual defeat?

This is not Thy handiwork, Oh Eternal Parent and Loving Father. We know You are the Author of order, beauty and love. As the Creator of all good things, you have provided in all other living things a harmonious inner nature that does what it has been created to do. Nothing needs to fight against its own nature except for man. What has happened to man since he first left Thy hand? Surely you have provided your children with a means for being delivered from this inner corruption! Surely we have access to a nature that is able to stand under all the temptations of the devil as Jesus did!

Praise God, He has the power to create in us a new heart and enable us to participate with Him in His divine nature. He can make the inner nature pure and bring it into complete harmony with His life of divine love. Our nature and His nature can become "as one." We can become "one spirit with Him." (1 Cor. 6:17) Yes, as a spiritual Christian, we can become a whole new creation with a divine nature. This is the glorious Promise of the Father and the heart and soul of the New Testament gospel message.

God sent His Son into the world for the very purpose of reuniting our nature with His divine nature so there could be true harmony between us. These are His words: "And the glory {the life of love} which You {the Father} gave Me {the Son} I have given them {access to}, that they may be one {in life and nature} just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me." (John 17:22-23)

When the world sees sanctified Christians reflecting the Son's sacrificial nature of love, and enjoying it, they will know that Jesus Christ has been sent by God as the true Savior of the world. Yes, fallen man can be saved from the corruption of his self-centered nature. God has the power to unite His whole family together into a single divine nature, making them "perfect in one" by filling them with His own life of heavenly love.

It was truly strange to see three thousand religious Jews, after hearing Peter speak on the day of Pentecost, accept the Christian faith. In spite of what their peers may have thought, they publicly enrolled themselves as disciples of Jesus

Christ. Being naturally selfish, as everyone is, they would have come with many personal desires and goals. And yet, in due time, we find them all living together with “one heart and one mind.”

We might have expected, considering man’s fallen nature, that in a few months, after the early emotions had died down, these people would have divided over how they should be living as Christians. But as the months go by and we watch that throng of Christians, more and more marvels come into view. Quite in contrast to human nature, we find thousands of holy men and women living in harmony with each other and in full devotion to God. **These members of Christ’s body began to display the highest wonder of the true Christian life – God’s power to change human nature.**

Even though the nature of man is basically self-centered and therefore sinful at its core, we find a multitude of Christians {the ones who had become spiritual} living as pure, gentle and self-denying servants of Jesus Christ. “The multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul.” (Acts 4:32)

People drawn from every walk of life, sinful men with every variety of character, were becoming like the Son in His nature of love. With the Son’s self-giving life of love flooding through their souls and enabling them to live “as one,” there was a sense in which heaven had come down to earth.

Is not our fallen nature our greatest enemy, the real source of all our troubles, and the one condition where deliverance is needed the most? Well, praise God, the Messiah has come “to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies {including the sinful nature}, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.” (Luke 1:74-75) Let us therefore not neglect so great a salvation!

This new life from heaven is what every man needs. He needs a new nature that will permit him to harmoniously live in true righteousness and holiness all the days of his life. A work, then, wrought upon the heart – the very nature of man – by the power of God, is the salvation we all need.

Christianity certainly provides access to a salvation that no other religion would ever think of offering. We offer the one salvation that is able to transform the corrupt human nature from one that is self-centered and self-seeking to one that is self-sacrificing and self-denying, just like our Lord’s. People in this fallen world can now be transformed into the nature of God’s Son so they may live in true harmony with God and with each other.

Christians are not expected to change their own nature. The problem with our nature is that it is corrupt to the bottom. Man is powerless to do anything about it. How can something that is basically bad become completely well? How can nature be changed? By natural power, it is absolutely impossible. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also

do good who are accustomed to do evil.” (Jer. 13:23) The answer must always be “No,” if we leave out the true gospel message of salvation. “With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.” (Mark 10:27)

It is a grand and memorable thing to see the sea dried up, or a person physically healed, or the human mind illuminated with God’s word; but the highest manifestation of a power above nature, of a power acting against and contrary to nature, is when the corrupt heart is suddenly made pure and holy in love. The most glorious work that God can do in this world is to make the impure become pure; to make the earthly become heavenly; to make the sensual become spiritual; to make the selfish become like God in divine love.

So that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe... (Phil. 2:15 NIV)

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had... There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them {as needed}, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostle’s feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need. (Acts 4:32, 34-35 NIV)

Chapter Six:

THE TRUE GOSPEL

The gospel message offers selfish people {sinners} an opportunity to be transformed into the nature of the Son of God. We are not offering mere words to be believed, but a real source of power to be totally transformed. “For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.” (1 Cor. 4:20) *Offering anything less than the Son’s life of divine love is not the true gospel.*

This is the singular glory of the full gospel message. The Son of God has come to recover a bad nature from her awful fall and to remake man into His spiritual image. Our Lord has given everyone an opportunity to “put on the new man, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” (Eph. 4:24) Yes, we can now become like Him in His nature of love. “Love has been perfected among us in this...because as He is, so are we in this world.” (1 John 4:17)

When Christians become living witnesses to our Lord's Kingdom-life of love and begin displaying the light of this salvation message, the world begins to see not only that there is a King in heaven, not only that there is a loving Father in heaven who will care for them, but more significantly, that there is a Savior who can save men from their fallen nature.

Each one of us therefore needs to become a living witness of our Lord's Kingdom-life. We all need to become ambassadors who have been enabled to show forth the light of His life from heaven.

Is this not the testimony that the world needs to hear? There are few things in religion which men doubt more than whether it is possible for them, as individuals, to escape from their sinful nature. It is not apologetics that men need the most. Nothing can more effectively convince an unbelieving heart that Jesus Christ is the one true Savior of the world than to see weak and self-centered men being changed into the Son's spiritual nature and walking "just as He walked." (1 John 2:6)

Seeing a completely transformed nature says to them, "There is a Savior who has power on earth to save from sin." Of all the Christian evidences, this transformation into the Son's life of love is the one real proof that our Savior is indeed risen from the grave and that He now has all power and authority in heaven and on earth. There is no greater evidence than to see Christ's prophetic words fulfilled: "...they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me..." (John 17:23)

While there will always be false converts and tares among the wheat, along with Christians still seeking to be delivered from their carnal nature, the transformation that took place in the lives of these early believers, outshines everything else. A large multitude of people had truly lost their old life and was walking in the Son's life of love. They gave of themselves with a sacrificial love that is not normal in this fallen and self-centered world. They were leading such lives that "Both the One who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers." (Heb. 2:11 NIV)

When people have their emotions worked up by human motivational techniques, they can display a self-giving life for a while. But a close examination of their works will show how their nature has basically remained selfish. The church still has people like Ananias and Sapphira in her midst. They want to make everyone think they are generous in their giving, but their heart is still centered on their own personal lives. They will not have the capacity to maintain an unbroken life of sacrificial giving for long. *Their natural tendency to both fall into selfish sins and to look for happiness in this world will inevitably expose the remains of their self-centered nature.*

Our Lord's first disciples, however, once they were baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire, were continually united with our Lord's life of self-sacrificing and self-denying love. While their knowledge of God's purposes was not always complete, *they were enabled to continually lay down their lives for their Lord. The deep transformation that took place in their lives shows that it reached the bottom of their heart and changed their very nature.* As Peter himself later explained, the power from on high had "purified their hearts." (Acts 15:8-9)

It is not a natural change that turns a man from his own ways, turns him against his own interests, and leads him to place all that he holds dear in continual jeopardy, purely for the sake of goodness. It is a life that would be too laborious to maintain for long if the heart was not first united "as one" with God's life of love. **There is simply insufficient strength in human effort to fight against the self-centered nature for long.**

To make the heart pure requires an act of God's creative power. When David said, "Create in me a pure heart" (Ps. 51:10 NIV), the word he used for "create" is one that suggests the same creative power that God used to make the heavens and the earth. David did not merely want some help in being good. He knew there was only one thing that would enable him to be delivered from his self-centered condition. He needed to have a heart that was newly created in God's image. And, of course, he knew that God possesses this kind of power. "For with God nothing will be impossible." (Luke 1:37) Unfortunately for David, people in his age were not permitted to enter into a real participation with God in His divine nature. (Heb. 11:39-40) The promise was not available until this New Testament age of fulfillment.

The most dangerous perversion ever introduced to the church was the idea that man could not be saved from his sinful nature until after the soul leaves the body. While our mortal bodies will remain weak and subject to the curse, God can just as easily give His children a holy and loving heart in this world as He can do it in the world to come. Nothing in this cursed world prevents God from using His power to create pure hearts in His children of faith, except for the sin of unbelief.

God has predestined His children to be conformed to the Son's spiritual image in this world. (Rom. 8:29; 1 John 4:17) This is the message of the true gospel. Let us turn from the perversion that teaches people they cannot become a holy community of saints who are perfected in love until they physically die and go to heaven.

*The church is made up of individual members. Each individual will therefore be responsible for entering into the Lord's Kingdom-life of divine love. **The spotless church that Jesus Christ will one day present to Himself will be made up of***

those who have either permitted Him to establish His Kingdom-life within their hearts in this world, or are seeking it with their whole heart.

Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her...that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing but that she should be holy and without blemish. (Eph. 5:25, 27)

Pursue...holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God... (Heb. 12:14-15)

Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless. (2 Pet. 3:14)

Satan is not concerned about a religion that keeps turning over the sub-soil but never produces the fruit of pure love. The "evil one" loves to use the tilled soil that self-centered Christians keep turning over. He knows that those who go on living by the flesh will die. (Rom. 8:13) He also takes their self-produced righteousness and turns it into thorns and briars. He knows that his kingdom of darkness, a place where people still basically live for themselves, will not be disturbed by carnal Christians.

In contrast, the true Christian faith will produce the "light of life" from heaven. When the real gospel message is preached, and the children of perfect love are being raised up by the power of God, this heavenly fruit will begin to renew the face of an earth that was made desolate by the introduction of Satan's self-seeking and self-serving nature.

What kind of fruit is displayed in a Spirit-filled life? Paul says, "The fruit of the Spirit is {divine} love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." (Gal. 5:22-23 NIV) **This fruit forms a single nature that flows like an endless river from the lives of Christians who are currently filled with the Holy Spirit.**

The character of the Christian church as a whole, must always be ruled by the character of individual Christians. When individual Christians are not displaying the spiritual nature of Jesus Christ, then the church cannot manifest the light of His life in this world.

Since everything depends on the relationship that each individual soul has with God, everyone will be individually accountable to God for not entering into a relationship with Christ that permits Him to display His "light of life" in this world. In other words, no one should be waiting for a church-wide revival in order to be perfected in love. If you are waiting for the church as a whole to enter into the Lord's Kingdom-life of love, you may never have an opportunity to stand with boldness before your Maker on the Day of Judgment.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*; (Phil. 2:12 Emphasis added)

God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. Love has been perfected among us in this: *that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world*. (1 John 4:16-17 Emphasis added)

Chapter Seven:

THE MINISTERIAL EFFECTS OF A HOLY SPRIT BAPTISM

You can teach a man the holiest truths and yet leave him a wretched man. There are many people who know they are expected to become Christ-like “in love” in this world. They also know that Jesus Christ has come to give them His life to the full. (John 10:10) **And yet we find them continuing to neglect this great salvation. While they may go to their church services and read their Bibles regularly, the truth never leads them to enter into the new life and nature offered to them by the Son of God.**

The belief that “truth” is mighty and that it must prevail when spoken to men with carnal hearts is a great error. A token look at human history, and even at much of the church, will show how truth by itself does very little to change the basic nature of people. The only place where truth will always prevail is in a community of sanctified saints and holy angels. Yes, where the New Jerusalem prevails within the heart, we can expect God’s truth to lead His people into ever-increasing light. *These holy {set apart for God’s exclusive use} people will be found growing from glory to glory. But the same truth will not necessarily have an effectual working in an unsanctified heart.*

The human heart cannot respond to truth by itself. Jesus said, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws them.” (John 6:44 NIV) **Fallen man is simply too selfish to be drawn into the Son’s life of divine love without a great deal of assistance from the Holy Spirit.** “It is the Spirit who gives life {the Kingdom-life of love}; the flesh profits nothing.” (John 6:63)

Passions, habits, self-interest, that is, nature itself will prevent people from responding to the truth they have already learned. Christians, unless they have already been clothed with power from on high, will therefore find they do not always respond to all revealed light.

The true gospel message continually points us beyond the truth to the One who is the Source and Giver of His Kingdom-life. **Our Lord did not say, “Without Me you can do little” (Emphasis added). He said, “Without Me you can do nothing” (Emphasis added). Therefore, the question is not – Of what are we capable of doing ourselves? Rather, we should be asking – How can we put the mighty power of Christ’s Spirit to work in our lives so we will have a nature that willingly responds to all the requirements found in His laws? What we need to learn is how Christ plans to manifest His life and work through our mortal bodies by the power of His Spirit.**

This is why Paul did not come to preach with words of truth alone. He knew his hearers would need to understand how the Christian life, including their ability to respond to truth, had to be received through the power of God. They would remain too weak to fully respond to the truth he revealed to them if the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit was not working within their inner being. (Eph. 1:15-20) He therefore said to the Corinthians, “My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power.” (1 Cor. 2:4-5 NIV)

If the gospel message about the saving life of Jesus Christ is to exercise a great power over mankind, it will need men who are living by the power of the Holy Spirit. They will need to be walking in the light of life from heaven and continually depending on God to speak through them. Others will need to see something supernatural in the way they live so they too will recognize the necessity of living by God’s power.

But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God. (John 3:21 NIV)

Deep and lasting impressions about Christ’s saving life cannot be produced in the hearts of men by “the persuasive words of human wisdom.” *Apologetics will never lead anyone into the life of God. Words may be used to help someone understand certain facts and also help them remove specific doubts, but this knowledge will not give them the power to respond to all truth.* **The Kingdom-life of God cannot be advanced with words alone. It will require a real faith in God and a powerful work of the Holy Spirit to produce the light of Christ’s life through a believer.**

Paul said he came in a “demonstration of the Spirit’s power.” In one sense, Paul was referring to an “unction” he had received from the Spirit. Coming before his hearers in a sense of weakness in himself and in a complete dependence on the Spirit, he spoke with a power that penetrated deep into their hearts. **It is this “unction” from the Spirit that will determine the effectiveness of a man’s ministry.**

When people hear a man speaking with a “demonstration of the Spirit’s power,” they will often ask, “What is there in this man to account for such effects? We hear other Christians who appear more able, more profound, better theologians, more eloquent, more persuasive; yet when this man speaks, people’s hearts are greatly touched and drawn toward the holiness of God.”

When these observers make an evaluation based on their human thought processes, they are unable to discover how these simple men {and women} can be so effective in touching the hearts of others. It is in cases like these that we begin to understand what it means to speak in a “demonstration of the Spirit’s power.”

When Christianity first presented the world with a whole new system of beliefs on the day of Pentecost, the first disciples did not have much going for them. Not only were they a poor people without temporal resources, they were without any personal eloquence, without a history, without a priesthood, without a Christian school, and without a large body of like-minded believers. All the religions of the world rose up in solid opposition against this new church. None of the passions of society, or the theories of the learned, or the interests of the politicians was standing ready to help these Christians further their work. Neither do we find these Christians trying to pacify their opponents with flattering words. However, with the power of the Holy Spirit and the fire from heaven working through their lives, this small band of men and women began to melt the hearts of great multitudes of people.

Each in his own sphere and style, the Christians of those early days were distinguished from others by a strange power that enabled them to declare the deep things of God. While they did not always succeed in converting people to their Lord’s Kingdom-life, the powerful effect of their words touched many hearts and turned the world upside down. It is only when men and women have been endowed with this divine power, and have been enabled to speak words that go out by the Spirit of the Lord, that we find the Lord’s Kingdom-life of love truly advancing.

Whenever this empowerment from on high has waned during periods of church history, every natural advantage has come to replace it. We inevitably find more learning, more methods to employ apologetics, more profoundness of the intellect, more systems and programs, and everything else that is attached to the ordinary rules of human wisdom. Yet, in spite of all these improvements, the church has remained in a carnal state whenever these means were not accompanied with a “demonstration of the Spirit’s power.”

The elaborate methods developed over the years may have drawn the crowds, but they have never possessed the power needed to transform carnal people into God’s Kingdom-life of love. It requires the power of the Spirit to lead someone into a life that reflects the nature of God.

There are various parts of the soul that must be reached. Some methods reach the intellect, but they leave the emotions untouched. Other methods operate on the emotions, but they leave the intellect unsatisfied. And even when human methods have been developed in a way to reach both the intellect and the emotions, they cannot produce lasting changes within the heart. The crowning work of those who speak with “a demonstration of the Spirit’s power” is their ability to touch the heart in a way that leads to a deep desire for change.

True Christian power causes the people of this world to sense a need for a real change deep within their own hearts. This is the sphere where God does His work. When a power goes out from the Spirit, it goes much deeper than the intellect and the emotions. Touching only the mind or the emotions will never produce the lasting fruit of holiness.

The power that produces holy living must come from the Holy Spirit. In proportion as this instrument from heaven is overlooked, and other means are used to replace it, the Kingdom-life of God will not advance.

“You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.” God’s appointed spokesmen must be clothed with power. This invisible garment of power provides the holy man with a moral dignity that enables others to recognize him as a representative of God’s kingdom. While his own nature will remain meek and humble, he will also speak as one with an authority from God because of the anointing of the Spirit on him. He will convey to the conscience of his hearers the distinct impression that he knows how to deal with the impurity found in human hearts.

The power of God cannot be released except through the cross. Each disciple of Jesus Christ is expected to take up their own cross and follow Him into His risen life. When the cross does its work of ending the flesh-life with all of its self-sufficiency, there will be a new kind of dependence on God that activates the power of His Spirit. We perfect God’s power within our lives through a weakness in self. (2 Cor. 12:9)

These principles of the cross will sound foolish to people who are wise in this world. But it was Paul’s willingness to come in weakness and in dependence on the Spirit that enabled him to effectively reach the hearts of men. He came “to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. *For the message of the cross is...the power of God.*” (1 Cor. 1:17-18 Emphasis added)

The cross teaches us that we can only have the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit working through our lives as we die to self and self-sufficiency. We perfect God’s power in our lives through a weakness that depends wholly on God. The more we have died to the ways of human wisdom and human effort, the more God is able to use His power through our lives.

But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. (1 Cor. 1:27-29 NIV)

There are many ministers of the gospel who have never learned this principle. They remain powerless in the spiritual realm because they still have too much confidence in themselves and their education. They still trust too much in their own wisdom and efforts in their Christian service. This fleshly wisdom, however, will never produce the lasting fruit that comes from God's Kingdom-life.

The anointing oil of the Spirit cannot be poured out on anyone who is still living in the strength of the flesh. "It shall not be poured on man's flesh." (Ex. 30:32) Until the minister has lost all hope in his own sufficiency, dies to all fleshly pride, and begins waiting on God to clothe Him with power from on high, he will find that he is unable to advance the Lord's Kingdom-life here on earth.

Paul said he had more reasons than most to have confidence in the flesh. Citing his education, his heritage, his zeal, and his legalistic form of righteousness, he knew his abilities exceeded the capacity of most men. But he learned the importance of treating it all "as dung." Only then was he enabled to know the resurrection life and power of Christ's Spirit. (Phil. 3:4-10) He said, "For it is we who are the circumcision {those whose flesh-life has been cut off}, we who worship {serve the Lord} by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus {depending on Him for everything}, and *who put no confidence in the flesh.*" (Phil. 3:3 NIV Emphasis added)

Of course, the power from God can be combined with both talent and style of composition. For the man who knows how to depend on the power of the Spirit, God will make use of the abilities He has given to the man.

On the other hand, we do not need special oratory skills or the ability to present emotional stories to be mightily used by God. Who has not seen a tranquil man of a few words, whose tones seldom rose to passion, and who never went beyond the most simple presentation of truth, greatly touching the lives of those who have heard his words? His thoughts, demeanor, and phrases may have all come from a gentle and quiet spirit, but his instructions went out with a heavenly influence that silently enveloped the hearts of his hearers. With his holy and sacred glow, people naturally sense a nearness to God that has drawn them toward the same "light of life."

Chapter Eight:

THE GREATER WORKS

Our Lord said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father." (John 14:12) By "greater works," He could not mean more wonderful miracles; for the wonders wrought by His own hands included miracles that were as great as anyone could ever expect to do. Greater miracles than raising the dead or making the winds and the seas obey Him were not what He was expecting from His disciples.

The "greater works" were directly connected to His "going to the Father." Once the Son was glorified, He would then be in a position to begin manifesting His river of life from within the hearts of men. (John 7:38-39) As the glorified Lord, He would then be able to purge out everything from the self-centered nature, establish His Kingdom-life within the heart, and "save His people from their sins." (Matt. 1:21)

While Jesus was in this world, He often *forgave* people for their sins. But something He could not do, because He had not yet been glorified, was to *save* people "from their sins." He had to return to the Father and enter into His glorified state before He would be in a position to baptize His consecrated disciples with His Holy Spirit and fire, purifying their hearts through their dependent faith, and save them from their sin. (Acts 15:8-9)

The "greater works" of the spiritual Christian in this age of fulfillment is directly linked to the baptism with the Holy Spirit. **The disciples of Jesus, after leading people to a repentance that results in the forgiveness of sins, are then expected to lead all members of Christ's body into His Kingdom-life of love so they may be delivered "from their sins." The "greater works" would take place as the prayers of the saints put God's power to work making a holy and righteous family out of Adam's fallen sons.**

Spiritual Christians are to be raised into such a heavenly life that they can look back on the best and most honored of God's Old Testament servants and feel that, in comparison with them, they have truly entered into a more blessed place of service. They do not need to envy Moses his rod, or Elijah his mantle, or Solomon his wisdom; for the indwelling life of the Son and the mighty power of His Spirit working through them is the highest glory to which man can aspire.

When we speak of divine power working through the words of a holy man, we do not imply that this power will always subdue his hearers. Even Paul was not able to draw everyone into our Lord's Kingdom-life. But there will be a power from the Spirit working through the anointed Christian's life. And the

words he speaks will cause his hearers to feel like they are grappling with a spiritual power from heaven.

It is pitiable to see people working in the harvest field who have never had the power of the Holy Spirit working through them. They speak many words, but their words fall to the ground without piercing the heart. They shoot their arrows at many targets, but the Kingdom-life of God is not advanced.

Something even more heartbreaking is to see people who have lost the power of the Spirit after being drawn back into a life of self-sufficiency and pride. How often we have seen powerless ministers who are unable to touch the hearts of men as they once did. They have permitted the self-life to reassert itself. Consequently, they have tried to serve the Lord without an unction from the Spirit. This is why they have been unable to bear fruit unto holiness.

Perhaps in an attempt to make themselves more efficient, these men have begun to heap up knowledge to improve their skills. But this way of the flesh naturally develops self-sufficiency. And everyone who follows this path will naturally develop a sense of pride in their abilities. It is their pride that ends up cutting them off from God's enabling grace. (1 Pet. 5:5)

As these men rely more and more on their own sufficiency and abilities, they begin to present their knowledge in a way that is intended to receive honor from men. It was to men like these that Jesus said, "How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?" (John 5:44) They stop honoring God when they begin trusting in themselves and expect recognition for what they have done. And we can know that God's anointing oil "shall not be poured on man's flesh." (Ex. 30:32)

The Father will only honor the followers of His Son when they have become like a seed of corn planted in the ground. They must die to self and self-sufficiency and begin living wholly by faith in His power before they can become fruitful.

Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain... If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me {through the cross}; and where I am {in the Kingdom-life}, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me {in this position of death to self-sufficiency}, *him My Father will honor.* (John 12:24, 26 Emphasis added)

A minister is never held accountable for being successful, but he is responsible for working in the power of the Holy Spirit. Neither will God hold him accountable for his inability to put forth a refined message; but he

will be held accountable for speaking a dry message without the Spirit's anointing.

When the Spirit is with the man as he speaks, shining on his soul with a heavenly light, there will be a holy fire {not necessarily a loud noise} attached to his words. **It is a sin to be a teacher of God's word without this power that causes men to search their hearts.** Without God's light of life shining on the words being spoken, their hearers are left with nothing more than the dead letter of the law.

This power from God is something that cannot be feigned. A carnal man may possess the truth, may clearly explain what he means, and even passionately apply it to his hearers, but it does not reveal the heavenly Pearl in a way that causes people to sell everything in order to buy it. He may feign tenderness, feign ardor, feign all the passions, but he cannot feign the light and power that searches the conscience and causes men to think of him that—"God is in you of a truth."

We often find people teaching messages from the Scriptures. They leave the impression that all that is needed is a better grasp of truth. But we find their hearers are forever learning without ever entering into the reality of truth.

Ministers of the word who depend on the sufficiency of human wisdom will find their messages do not cause people to turn to the silence of their own closets and spend time seeking out the life of God. In other words, if the speaker comes with human wisdom rather than in the power of God, the hearer will not recognize the necessity of seeking out the life of the Lord through a dependence on God's power.

I came to you in weakness {in self}... My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. (1 Cor. 2:3-5 NIV)

We do not require the gift of tongues or of miracles, because these are not essential to the true work of furthering our Lord's Kingdom-life of love. But we must not rest with ministers who do not have the power that is needed to impact unholy hearts with deep conviction. Light must be separated from darkness before the church will be enabled to reflect the glory of God. Each of our ministers will therefore need to come "into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God." (John 3:21 NIV)

In other words, the true work of God makes very little progress without an unction from the Holy Spirit resting on the lives of Christ's ministers. One such man with this power is better than a thousand Christians working in their own strength.

The objective of the Christian ministry is to restore the image of God here on earth. The proof that a minister has begun to do his work of furthering the kingdom of God will be displayed by people who are loving those who hate them, blessing those who curse them, praying for those who spitefully use them and persecute them. These vessels of God's life of love will also return good feelings for bad feelings, good words for bad words, good deeds for bad deeds, showing themselves to be true children of God. If this is not how the church of God is living, or the members of Christ's body are not under a deep conviction to enter into this life of divine love, it means the leaders are not working in the power of Christ's Spirit.

It is not more systems for presenting truth, or even words of wisdom that we need to prove the reality of the Christian life. In fact, if our religious teachings only discuss the words of truth and we do not also show people how to become clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit and overcome sin, we are only adding to their guilt by increasing their light. No miracles, no prophecies, no system of apologetics or other persuasive words can demonstrate to our neighbors that Jesus Christ has come to give His Kingdom-life of love to men here on earth. We will need to be empowered by the Spirit and clothed with the "light of life" from heaven before we can carry on this work.

You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me {by dying to self} to have life {the Kingdom-life}. (John 5:39-40 NIV and Emphasis added)

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. (Matt. 23:15)

Chapter Nine:

SEEKING POWER FROM GOD

We must again call to mind that most wonderful silence of ten days – that long pause when the Commissioned Church was waiting in the upper room within sight of a perishing world. Never should the reality and significance of that silence pass from the thoughts of God's people. It stands in the very forefront of our church history.

The Lord was trying to make it clear to the whole church that no authority under heaven, no training, and no ordination by men would qualify someone to propagate the true gospel message. The only ordination that God accepts is the baptism with the Holy Spirit. His disciples would need His Kingdom-life of love established within their own hearts before they would have the power to further His kingdom here on earth.

During each successive moment of those solemn and silent days, we might have expected to find the perishing world knocking at the door of the church, and asking, "Why do you wait, O bride of Christ? Why do you not say, 'Come'? Why do you leave us sleeping in both an unwarmed and unblessed state while you wait in prayer in this upper room? Don't you know that your Savior has risen from the grave and is now sitting on His throne of power? What are you waiting for?" And, of course, these obedient disciples of Jesus Christ would have said, "We are waiting to be 'clothed with power from on high.' We will not have the needed power to carry out the high calling of the gospel message until we have been 'baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire.' "

Every individual Christian will need the power that enables them to display the Son's Kingdom-life of love before they can truly stir people's thoughts, impel their emotions and move their hearts toward holy living. This is the one and only source of power for ministry.

The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory.... You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, And a royal diadem in the hand of your God. (Isa. 62:2-3)

Above all, we must be willing to persevere in prayer until we have received this power from on high. If we have truly consecrated our entire life to God without holding anything back and our prayers for the Spirit's anointing have remained unanswered, it is simply another evidence that the answer is just that much closer. The Lord will be faithful to empower with His Spirit, those who perseveringly seek this endowment with a God-centered motive.

Faith is also needed to appropriate the gift. Continue to wait on God until your faith enables you to stand up and walk in a life of sacrificial love. When Christ's Spirit speaks to your heart telling you to go forward, you will need to trust in Him. Begin walking in the life of your Lord. The power from His refreshing river of life, sometimes coming days later, will supply the needed strength to continually manifest His sacrificial life of love.

Even though you will sense a real weakness within yourself, which is the essence of a crucified life, God will be using His power through you to touch the lives of others. **His power will be made perfect in your weakness.** As the living water begins to well up from within your soul to eternal life, you will be enabled to say with Paul, "To this end I also labor, struggling with all *His* energy, which so powerfully works in me." (Col. 1:29 NIV and Emphasis added)

To recognize our ineffectiveness without this anointing from the Spirit is as important as recognizing that without sunshine and rain, all our labors and skills would fail to produce a harvest for one season. But the sunshine and the rain are precisely the things that are freely given to us by God and on which we may constantly depend. *Let us therefore depend on our loving and faithful Father to clothe us with the power of His Spirit as He has promised.*

Giving in to unbelief will always separate us from the power of God. Trust, firm and childlike trust, is the everlasting condition of all cooperation with God. “According to your faith will it be done to you.” (Matt. 9:29 NIV) **And it must also be clearly understood that for trust to be real and effective, it must spring from a faith that obeys.** “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” (John 14:15)

Among the hindrances that tend to prevent Christians from being clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit, none acts more directly than a misuse of the tongue. The Spirit will not work with divine power through someone if the door of their lips be not guarded, if uncharitable or “idle” speech be indulged, if a political or party spirit be permitted to excite heated discussions, or if “foolish talking” or “jesting” be a chosen method of self-display. Who has ever had a reputation for being powerfully used by God to search the conscience of unholy hearts while they were also known for having loose lips or for being a trifler {frivolous, shallow}?

Another fatal hindrance is any kind of sensual indulgence. Whatever gives the least ascendancy to the flesh over the Holy Spirit will prevent the Spirit from manifesting the Son's life within the soul. This applies to all sloth, every comfortable habit, every artificial appetite, entertainment of all kind and even over-indulging at the table. Christ's Spirit cannot work in power through anyone who permits the flesh to direct their activities. “If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” (Rom. 8:13) **The old flesh-life must die before the Kingdom-life of God can be fully established within the eternal soul. But always keep in mind that you are only trading trash for real treasure, a flesh-driven life which is empty and void for the Life of God in your soul!**

This matter of overeating has caused many to lose their spiritual power. Every Christian who wishes to retain the life of God in his soul must eat in moderation, being primarily concerned with maintaining health and strength to serve the Lord. The dinner table is not the place we should be looking to for our spiritual life. **For spiritual strength and mental elevation, God's children must look alone to the life and power that comes from on high. Spiritual men and women find their strength and comfort from being filled with the Holy Spirit.** Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (1 Cor. 10:31)

Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Matt. 22:37)

Another hindrance is what we might call "putting our abilities on display." Whenever we become concerned about expressing our talents, which becomes a natural expression of pride, we should expect God to be opposed to our works. "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." (1 Pet. 5:5)

We should, however, discover a method for presenting the gospel message that is in harmony with our God-given abilities. **The Spirit will gift and equip everyone with unique talents. We should never submit to the theories of others, which they proudly insist are the best approach. The Holy Spirit must be permitted to equip as He sees fit.**

We also recommend being clear and to the point. **The pride that causes people to enjoy hearing themselves talk will keep them separated from the power of God.** We should, like John Bunyan, seek to have "picked and packed words." And, like Jesus, we should only speak as we are being led by the Spirit.

He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him. (John 7:18 Emphasis added)

For I did not speak of My own accord... So whatever I say is just what the Father has told Me to say. (John 12:49-50 NIV)

Whenever we are tempted to think that our fruitfulness is dependent upon having superior skills and attainments from the schools, we should think back to the unlearned men like Peter and some of his companions in the early church. The spectacle of Peter preaching in the streets of Jerusalem will answer ten thousand debates about what kind of skills we should develop in order to preach effectively. Who is that Galilean peasant and fisherman, and who are those other unsophisticated people with him? These men had less training than most of us. But they accomplished mighty things for the Kingdom of God as they walked in the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is our intimate union with the life of God, which results in a life of intimate communion with Him that will release the power of the Spirit through our lives. As we hear from God and pray for Him to use the power of His Spirit to accomplish the work He has planned for our lives, we can expect to find the kingdom of God being advanced.

In closing, let us consider the thoughts of J. M. Hames as he speaks to us from his book, *Deeper Things*. He explains how easy it is to be sidetracked and become focused on things other than the Kingdom-life we need to receive from God. Furthermore, if we hope to be effective in this work of advancing the kingdom of God, we will need to learn how to move God's mighty hand through the prayer of faith.

There is a veil, which is the flesh, that keeps the believer out of the holy of holies and the life of deep intercession. As long as we pamper the flesh-life and yield to its soft pleadings, we will live on this side of the veil. Self-indulgence and a life of prayer never go together.

The Holy Ghost is seeking for vessels of prayer to pour His life current through... These spices [which were placed on the altar of incense] had to be set on fire before they could rise in the cloud of sweet perfume. Thus it is that our prayers must be set on fire by the Holy Ghost if they are to prevail with God...

This incense was not to be counterfeited... Whenever the church loses the supernatural and the old-time power, it always tries to substitute something for that loss of power. What is culture and human learning without the Holy Ghost?

Popular evangelism, with its great union meetings, a mammoth choir, a handshake and a card-signing is being substituted for the mourner's bench and the cry and sob of a broken-hearted penitent. ["Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."] **Thus it is that our churches are loaded down with dead, unsaved material.**

Dr. A. B. Simpson, in his book, *Holy Spirit, or Power from on High*, says, **"The sublime oratorio may lift your soul to raptures of delight, the perfect harmonies of the classic hymn may charm your cultivated taste, but this is not religious feeling. Nay, you may even bow beneath the magnificent arch of yonder cathedral, and in its religious light you may feel a kind of awe that you think is worship, but it is pure sentiment, and you can go down from all this to live for self and sin. It is mere psychology. It is only the kindling of the human mind... It is but human feeling after all, and has nothing to do with the work of the Holy Ghost."...**

Prayer makes the preacher and puts life into his message... If prayer will move God to do things He would not have done had we not prayed, then prayer is the most powerful thing in the world. It makes a holy character. It changes things.