



Helps to Holiness

Chapter 9 – THE LEAKAGE OF SPIRITUAL POWER

That man of God and lover of souls, James Caughey, tells in one of his books how he was invited out to tea one evening; and though there was nothing harmful in the talk of the hour, yet when he went into the meeting at night his soul was like a loosely strung bow. He couldn't shoot the King's arrows into the hearts of the King's enemies, for he had no power. It had been lost at the tea-table.

I knew an officer once who let all his spiritual power leak out, until he was as dry as an old bone when he got into the meeting. It was in this way. We had to ride three miles in a street car to get to the hall, and all the way there he was talking about things that had no bearing upon the coming meeting. There was nothing wrong or trifling said, but it was not to the point; it turned his mind from God and the souls he was so soon to face and plead with to be reconciled to Him; and the result was that, instead of going before the people clothed with power, he went stripped of power. I remember the meeting well. His prayer was good, but there was no power in it. It was words, words, words! The Bible reading and talk were good. He said many true and excellent things, but there was no power in them. The soldiers looked indifferent, the sinners looked careless and sleepy, and altogether the meeting was a dull affair.

Now, the officer was not a backslider; he had a good experience. Nor was he a dull stupid officer; on the contrary, he was one of the brightest, keenest officers I know. The trouble was that, instead of keeping quiet and communing with God in his own heart on that car, until his soul was ablaze with faith and hope and love and holy expectation, he had wasted his power in useless talk.

God says: "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth" (Jer. xv. 59). Think of it! That officer might have gone into that meeting filled with power, and his mouth should have been to those people as the mouth of God, and his words should have been "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of



soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow," and proving to be "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv. 12). But instead of that, he was like Samson after his locks were shorn by Delilah – he was powerless as other men.

There are many ways of letting power leak away. I knew a soldier who came to the hall very early every evening, and instead of getting his soul keyed up to a high pitch of faith and love, spent the time playing soft, dreamy music on his violin, and though faithfully, lovingly warned, continued that practice till he openly backslid.

I have known men whose power leaked out through a joke. They believed in having things go with a swing, and so they told funny stories and played the clown to make things lively. And things were lively, but it was not with Divine life. It was the liveliness of mere animal spirits, and not of the Holy Spirit. I do not mean by this that a man who is filled with the power of the Spirit will never make men laugh. He will. He may say tremendously funny things. But he will not be doing it just to have a good time. It will come naturally. It will not be dragged in "on all fours," and it will be done in the fear of God, and not in a spirit of lightness and jesting.

He who wants a meeting of life and power should remember that there is no substitute for the Holy Ghost. He is life. He is power. And if He is sought in earnest, faithful prayer, He will come, and when He comes the little meeting will be mighty in its results.

The Holy Spirit should be earnestly sought, in earnest, secret prayer. Jesus said, "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matt. vi. 6). He will do it; bless His holy name!

I know of a man who, if possible, gets alone with God for an hour before every meeting, and when he speaks it is with the power and demonstration of the Spirit.

The man who wants power, just when it is most needed, must walk with God. He must be a friend



of God. He must keep the way always open between his heart and God. God will be the friend of such a man, and will bless him and honor him. God will tell him His secrets; He will show him how to get at the hearts of men. God will make dark things light and crooked places straight and rough places smooth for that man. God will be on his side and help him.

Such a man must keep a constant watch over his mouth and his heart. David prayed: "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Ps. cxli. 3); and Solomon said: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. iv. 23). He must walk in unbroken communion with God. He must cultivate a spirit of joyful recollection by which he will be always conscious that he is in the presence of God.

"Delight thyself also in the Lord" (Ps. xxxvii. 4), said the Psalmist. Oh, how happy is that man who finds God to be his delight; who is never lonely, because He knows God, talks with God, delights in God; who feels how lovable God is, and gives himself up to loving, serving, trusting God with all his heart!

Comrade, "Quench not the Spirit" (I Thess. v.59), and He will lead you thus to know and love God, and God will make you the instrument of His own power.