

HOW CAN I BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Introduction

1. It is a thing most wonderful, Almost too wonderful to be, That God's own Son should come from heaven, And die to save a child like me. 2. And yet I know that it is true; He chose a poor and humble lot, And wept, and toiled and mourned and died, For love of those who loved Him not. (To these lovely words by William How, 1823 to 1897. I add the following verse.) 3. It is too wonderful for words, Almost too wonderful to be; That God should send the Holy Ghost, To comfort, help, and dwell in me.

In 2Cor.12v4., Paul says the words and things he experienced on a visit to heaven were indescribable and unspeakable, "anekdiegetos," too wonderful for words. In 1Pet.1v8., Peter tells us that our faith, and love for Jesus, causes us to "rejoice with joy unspeakable ("arrhetos," inexpressible) and full of glory." In 2Cor9v15., Paul thanks God for Jesus, His indescribable and unspeakable, "anekdiegetos," gift to us. God the Father gave the promise of the Holy Spirit, and sent Him to us, "another Helper" like Jesus, another unspeakable gift, too wonderful for words. The Holy Spirit comes to help us in worship, and enables us to express the inexpressible and unspeakable.

The baptism in the Spirit was the secret both of the worship and the power of the early Church. Unfortunately many today are like the Ephesians in Acts.19v1-6., we read in Acts.19v1,2., "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, v2. He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.." Many who say "I believe in the Holy Spirit<" have not experienced His power or gifts, but they are there for us all, if we seek and claim them.

1. WHY OUR HEAVENLY FATHER DESIRES TO GIVE US THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

1. Our heavenly Father loves to give.

God is love, He is perfectly unselfish and wholeheartedly generous. 1Jn.4v8-10. Our Father is the most bountiful giver, even to the ungrateful and selfish; He is full of mercy and kindness. Lk.6v35,36. Ps.103. all. 107v8,15,21,31,43. Our God of love even gave His own dear Son for our salvation, and with Him He freely gives us all things. Jn.3v16. Rom.8v31-39.

2. Our heavenly Father loves us so much.

We are so very precious to God, and He makes us the objects of His wondrous love and affection. Jn.16v24,27. Our heavenly Father is much more loving and kind than the very best earthly father. Mt.7v7-11. Lk.11v9-13. It is an amazing fact that God loves us with the same tender love that He loves His only begotten Son, Jn.17v23,26., and Jesus loves us on this same incredible level of love. Jn.15v9. cf. 13v34. God's love is always a "much more" love, it "surpasses human understanding" and longs to do "immeasurably more than all our highest prayers or thoughts, or hopes and dreams." Lk.11v13. Eph.3v14-21. Rejoice in His wonderful love, and claim and receive His "exceeding great and precious promises" to you. 2Pet.1v1-4.

3. Our heavenly Father desires us to know Himself and the Lord Jesus in a deeper way.

The Holy Spirit has come to reveal Jesus and the Father to us. Jn.15v26. 16v12-15. Eph.1v15-23. 3v14-21. The disciples were full of joy and praise before Pentecost, because of a glorious fellowship with their risen Lord; however, Jesus promised, and they experienced, a new and greater revelation of their Lord and spiritual realities, at their baptism in the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Beset as we are by the world, the flesh and the Devil, earthly armour fails us, we can only overcome by God's help, the baptism in the Spirit is His answer to our needs and the wickedness around us. The revelation of God to the inner depths our souls, is the only thing that can bring spiritual victory and satisfy our deepest longings for God. 2Cor.3v12-18.

4. Our heavenly Father wants to manifest Himself to the Church and the World.

Though the disciples had the Lord Jesus with them, and many of them had experienced His ministry through them to a remarkable degree, He told them plainly that the baptism in the Spirit would give them a more powerful ministry for Him. Acts.1v1-8. Paul said, in 1Cor.12v7., "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for the common good;" "manifestation" is "phanerosis," which means "a making visible, a shining forth, an appearing, a making known in a definite and tangible manner." Mk.4v22. 16v14. 1Cor.2v9,10. 2Cor.4v2. The baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit are intended to bring an overwhelming sense of the presence of God. God does not intend us to apprehend spiritual things or the Holy Spirit's presence by blind faith alone, the healing of the sick, the release of Satan's captives, make it plain that God is in the midst of His people. 1Cor.14v23-25. Acts.8v5-14. Jesus said that people needed the evidence of signs and wonders to help them believe, He, therefore, did many signs and wonders, for the very purpose of creating faith and saving the souls of His hearers, and sent out many preachers with miraculous ministries to do the same. Jn.4v48. 5v19-25. 10v37,38. 11v15. Lk.9v1,2. 10v1-9. Mk.16v17,20. 1Cor.2v4. 2Cor.12v12. Rom.15v18,19. Even the greatest miracles will fail to win some people, Jesus said that many of Israel's religious leaders had seen and hated Himself and the Father, they rejected His gracious words and mighty acts. Jn.15v22-26. Mt.11v20-24. Rejection of God when He is manifested in great signs and wonders, is the final act of spiritual suicide. Mk.3v22-30. This was why Jesus refused to give a sensational sign to the sceptics of Mt.12v38-42.; they did not need a sign, they already had a multitude of them, they needed to genuinely repent of their sins and accept Christ.

Spiritual decadence is due to a lack of a vision of God and His gifts and ministries. Judges.2v7-11. Prov.29v18. History shows that when we get away from God, we rely more and more upon what we can do, and are less able to trust God for the miraculous manifestations of His presence. When we do this, we shall find, as Israel did, that our enemies are always stronger than we are.

God does not glorify unholy human endeavour, but He does delight to show His power to those who trust Him, particularly if the odds are stacked against us, and we are in great need; so He used Jonathan and his armour bearer, Gideon and his 300, to defeat great armies, and David the shepherd boy to defeat giant Goliath, and Christ's despised apostolic band to lay the foundation of His Church. 1Cor.1v26-31. Eph.2v19,20.

2. THE SCRIPTURES SHOW THAT THE BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT TAKES PLACE AFTER THE NEW BIRTH.

The apostles were born again years before their baptism in the Spirit.

The apostles were converted before Pentecost; their names, like those of the 70, were "written in heaven," Lk.10v20.; they were "clean," Jn.15v2,3.; they were not of the world, and belonged to God, Jn.17v6,9-16,23.; they had received Jesus and believed in Him, and He said they were His friends and brethren. Jn.1v12. 15v15. 17v8. Mt.12v48-50. At Pentecost these believers received the baptism in the Spirit that had been promised to them. Acts.2v1-4. We know from Jn.7v37-39., that the Holy Spirit was not given until Jesus was glorified, and that the baptism in the Holy Spirit was not available to the Church until the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The following records in Acts show that Christians received the baptism in the Spirit after their conversion, not at conversion.

The Samaritans were baptised in the Spirit a considerable time after their conversion.

At Samaria many accepted Philip's sign-attested ministry and became joyful believers in Jesus; it was several, even many days later, that Peter and John came to Samaria to lay hands on these born-again, and water-baptised converts, that they might receive the baptism in the Spirit. Acts.8v5-19. The Samaritans were full of faith and joy; but they were not baptised in the Spirit until Peter and John prayed for them. Joy, peace, sanctification, or love, cannot be looked upon as a claim for being baptised in the Spirit; these are the even more important "fruit of the Spirit," which are the result of abiding in Christ and being led of the Spirit. Gal.5v16-25. To be a balanced Christian we need both gifts and fruit, both "great grace and great power." Acts.4v33.

Paul experienced his baptism in the Spirit a few days after his conversion.

Paul became a Christian when he met the Lord Jesus on the Damascus road. He owned Christ as Lord, saying, "Lord, what will thou have me to do"? Ananias was able to call him "brother Saul," and was sent that Paul might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. This was three days after Paul's conversion. Acts.9v6,9,17.

The remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius and his friends.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the house of Cornelius proves that Christians can receive the baptism in the Spirit a few seconds or minutes after believing in Jesus as Saviour, and without having previously been baptised in water, and without having the laying on of hands. Acts.10v34-48. God gave Cornelius and his devout friends the sign of the gift of tongues, to prove to bigoted Jews at Jerusalem, and elsewhere, that God desired to save and forgive the despised Gentiles, and had welcomed them into His Church. Acts.11v1-18.

The Ephesians received their baptism in the Spirit some time after their conversion.

In Acts.19v2. Paul asks the question, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost **since** ye believed?" However, some have translated this as, "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit **when** ye believed?" The first translation states that the baptism of the Spirit takes place after conversion, the second states that the baptism of the Spirit is at conversion. Which translation is correct? The words translated "since ye believed" and "when ye believed," are the translation of the Greek word "pisteusantes," the aorist participle of "pisteuo," which means "to believe."

Machen writes in his "New Testament Greek for Beginners," "The aorist participle denotes action prior to the action denoted by the leading verb, whether the action denoted by the verb is present, past, or future." The leading verb in Acts.19v2., is "elabete," which is translated in the A.V. as "Have ye received," and in the R.V. as, "Did ye receive," R.V.. The literal translation of "pisteusantes," is having believed." Therefore, according to the Machan's rule, the literal translation of Acts.19v2., is, "Having believed, did ye receive the Holy Spirit." The aorist participle, "having believed" speaking of an action which took place **before** the action of the leading verb, "did ye receive?" So the believing took place before the receiving of the Spirit. The Scriptures nowhere look upon salvation and the baptism of the Spirit as identical events, so the aorist participle of identical action cannot apply here, the more usual aorist participle of antecedent action applies here.

F.F. Bruce states that the term "disciples" is a term that was commonly used for Christians, and that if these disciples had been disciples of John, Luke would have said so explicitly. It does not say that they were disciples of John, who Paul had to lead to Jesus, it says they only knew the baptism of John. The disciples at Ephesus were undoubtedly Christians whose knowledge of Christianity was in a similar faulty condition to the knowledge of the "fervent" Apollos; before he was more accurately instructed by Priscilla and Aquila. Acts18v24-28. Apollos was a Christian who was "mighty in the Scriptures," "and was instructed in the way of the Lord;" and "spake and taught diligently the way of the Lord;" but he too only knew the baptism of John. It seems that these Christians were converted through the ministry of Apollos. This is confirmed by the fact that these two events are recorded together. Acts.18v24 to 19v6. It was, then, a considerable time after their conversion, that these Ephesian Christians received their baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Even if, as some say, these were disciples of John, who became Christians when Paul spoke to them, it still follows that they were baptised in the Spirit some time after their conversion; for some time must also have elapsed before and after their baptism in water, and the laying on of the apostle's hands for the baptism in the Spirit, even if it were only a matter of minutes or hours. Their baptism in the Spirit occurred, therefore, some time after their conversion, when the apostle Paul laid hands on them, a

point that Paul reminds the Ephesians of in Eph.1v13., “after that ye had believed (again “pisteuosantes”), ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.”

3. THE GIFT OF TONGUES AND THE BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT.

In Acts2v4. 10v45,46. 11v17. and 19v6., when Christians received the baptism in the Spirit, they all spoke with tongues. With the exception of the outpouring at Ephesus, we do not read of any other manifestations of the gifts, and at Ephesus they prophesied in addition to speaking in tongues. From humble housewives to mighty apostles, the initial conclusive evidence of their baptism in the Spirit was speaking in tongues. The Holy Spirit did not give various gifts as the evidence of the baptism, He gave the gifts of tongues to all. Peter did not say that the household of Cornelius had received the Holy Spirit because they had believed the Gospel, and had accepted Christ, or were filled with joy, or were living sanctified lives, desirable and essential as all these are. Peter said that they were unmistakably filled with the Holy Spirit, because they had spoken with tongues, like the 120 on the day of Pentecost. Acts.11v17,18.

There are two more instances in the book of Acts, where it states that Christians received the baptism in the Spirit. In the case of the Samaritans in Acts.8v14-20.; even commentators who are not Pentecostal agree that what Simon saw was the Samaritans speaking in tongues. We read of Paul's baptism in the Spirit in Acts.9v17.; we know from 1Cor.14v5,18., that Paul spoke in tongues, and esteemed the gift of tongues very highly in private prayer, for he thanked God that he spoke in tongues even more than the Corinthians, and desired every Christian to speak in tongues. This must have been the will of God, or Paul would not have dared to say such a thing.

The baptism in the Spirit is an overwhelming experience to the prepared heart; indeed, the Holy Spirit's gift of tongues is the only thing that enables us to express what Charles Finney called the “unutterable gushings” of praise, adoration, and worship of God, that fill the soul when we receives a mighty baptism in the Spirit. The apostolic band did not quibble about the gift of tongues, or God's choice of it as the initial evidence of their baptism in the Spirit, they joyfully accepted it and rejoiced that the Holy Spirit had lifted them above the limitations of their own vocabulary and spiritual perception, and had given them the ability to pray and worship as they ought. Let us take these New Testament Christians as the pattern of our baptism in the Spirit, others, even the good and the best, may lead us far astray.

Always seek an encounter with God, more than His gifts.

Here I want to give a very necessary warning! Remember, that though the gift of tongues is a wonderful and lovely gift from God, when you are seeking the baptism in the Spirit, you are seeking an encounter with Jesus, not just seeking tongues. The gift of tongues is the outflow of an encounter with Jesus our baptising Lord, it is the effect of the baptism in the Spirit, not the cause. We should not try to get Christians to speak in tongues at any cost, so that they can be told, “You have received your baptism.” Our whole emphasis should be on an encounter with Jesus. In the New Testament the filling of the Spirit preceded the speaking with tongues. The baptism in the Spirit does not come through physical or soulish techniques, it comes through a living communion with Christ. We should not be satisfied by how many “tongue statistics” we can quote, but in how many Christians have received a new revelation of Christ, which has come with transforming power at their baptism in the Spirit. It does not satisfy the soul of the seeker, if they speak in tongues without feeling a fullness of the Spirit, and a heightened perception of the closeness and preciousness of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

If there is an absence of soul-searching, consecration, and a thirsting after God in His Word and in prayer, Christians may well have an experience that does not reach or satisfy the deep yearnings of the inner depths of the soul, even though they may have spoken with tongues. This can cause Christians to doubt their baptism and gifts, when Satan comes to attack their experience. We should not be satisfied until Christians have received a soul-satisfying baptism in the Spirit, that brings an overwhelming experience of the nearness and preciousness of our dear Lord Jesus and our heavenly Father.

God desires the baptism in the Spirit to be the gateway to the regular manifestations of His gifts; He wants us to be the channels of Christ's life, love, knowledge and power. It is only possible to convey this life, love and power to others, when we have a deep personal experience of God through the Holy Spirit's ministrations. Even our Lord, who was “full of grace and truth,” did no public signs or miracles until He was empowered by the Holy Spirit at Jordan. Jn.1v14. 2v11. 3v34,35. 5v19,20. Lk.3v21,22. 4v1,14-23. God desires to give the baptism in the Spirit to all Christians; “the promise is unto you, and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call;” and again, “how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.” Acts.2v39. Lk.11v13.

If we are seeking the baptism in the Spirit, and are finding difficulty in receiving it, we should remember that we are God's dear children, and that He loves us with a love that passeth knowledge. We must leave our anxiety, perplexity, struggles and disappointment, in our Father's tender care, and not allow ourselves to listen to the lies of Satan and get dejected and depressed. We are safe in the arms of Jesus, and in our heavenly Father's tender care; take heart struggling Christian, God tenderly loves you. The Father, Son and Spirit are wholly on your side. Jn.16v26,27. N.B. v12-15.

WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS FOR RECEIVING THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Jesus said that the unconverted cannot receive the baptism in the Spirit, for He is “the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive.” Jn.14v16,17. While it is true that Peter in Acts.2., used the promise of the Holy Spirit as part of his Gospel message; we must remember that the majority of his hearers were “devout men from every nation under heaven;” we have to be careful not to cast our heavenly pearls before those who cannot appreciate them. Mt.7v6. Acts.2v5,38,39. **Peter told these**

devout Jews, that repentance and faith in Jesus, were the pre-requisites for receiving the baptism in the Spirit. These simple conditions make it possible for all true Christians to receive the baptism in the Spirit. However, we have to walk with God to **keep** a real fullness of the Spirit and a God-glorifying life. Ps.24v1-6. 1Cor.9v24 to 10v15. The promises for retaining blessing in the Old Testament were always conditional. Gen.17v1-8. and Deut.28v1-68.. The New Testament promises also carry a strong conditional "if." Jn.15v6,7,10,14. Acts.8v37. Rom.8v17. 1Cor.15v1,2. 2Tim.2v11,12. Heb.3v6,14. 4v1,7. 10v26,38. Repentance starts, and carries us along the path of spiritual safety and blessing. The careless, prayerless, and unconsecrated Christian is in grave spiritual danger. In the final reckoning, the attitudes of heart and mind that bring spiritual victory and safety, will also bring joy and blessing, for they are sustained by exactly the same means of grace. Though we can never earn or merit blessing from God, there are attitudes of mind and heart that will preserve us from spiritual danger, and will open our hearts and lives to God, so that He can bless us more freely.

We do not have to be perfect before we can experience the baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

In Ps.68v18. and Eph.4v8., we are told that God gives gifts and ministries to rebellious imperfect people, so that we might be improved by them, and "that the Lord God might dwell among them." This is why even some very faulty Corinthians "came behind in no gift." 1Cor.1v7. No one would receive either baptism or gifts of the Holy Spirit, if we were to be perfect before we received them. However, if a church lacks Christian love, it can, like the Corinthian church, be anything but a happy place, or a good testimony for the Lord. 1Cor.13. all. We should always seek the fruit of the Spirit as well as the gifts of the Spirit, and the giver more than His gifts. The balanced Christian is one who manifests both fruit and gifts of the Spirit.

HOW TO RECEIVE AND RETAIN A PENTECOSTAL FULLNESS.

The following attitudes of heart and means of grace will help us to receive and retain a fullness of the Holy Spirit.

1. WE MUST SEEK OUT JESUS AND THE FATHER IN FAITH.

When we seek the baptism in the Spirit and His gifts, we must "ask in faith with no doubting," we must believe that God is "a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." We have every reason to trust our unchangeable, good and gracious "Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change," from whom, "every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift" proceeds. The Trinity love us with a love that surpasses knowledge. James.1v5-7,16,17. Eph.3v19. Heb.11v6. 6v13-20.

The risen Christ restored the shattered faith of His apostles, and though He chided them for their ignorance of the prophetic Scriptures, and their consequent unbelief, He was very gracious to them, and encouraged them with a benediction of peace. Jesus also restored their faith by "showing Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs;" He "appeared to them repeatedly over a period of 40 days talking with them about the affairs of the kingdom of God." Acts.1v3. Lk.24v25-29,44,45. Jn.20v1-31. 1Cor.15v3-8. We too can experience the strengthening grace of our Lord in our times of trial and "faith distress."

The Christian's fight of faith. All Christians experience some kind of "fight of faith," and these trials of life and conflicts with the powers of darkness, can be particularly expected when we are seeking a deeper walk with God and a more effective ministry for God. We cannot avoid having battles of faith, and the pressures on our faith and the gloomy doubts that rise, are often caused by the demanding pressures of life that we cannot avoid, such as financial and health problems, difficulties in our home and work circumstances, and the opposition and unbelief of the world. 1Tim.6v12. Pressure and problems can be exacerbated through false teaching and unscriptural tradition, and the lack of a Spirit-anointed fellowship, for this leaves Christians without the essential spiritual support they need, when they are attacked by the insinuations and lies of the powers of darkness. However, God understands and sympathises with us in all these pressures and difficulties, and our Saviour's intercession and ministry are totally dedicated to us. He is the author of our faith, and He will perfect and finish it; so let us cling to Him and seek Him with all our hearts. Heb.12v2. Rom.8v26-39. We can surely believe that the God who gave His Son for us, will with Him also freely give us all things. Rom.8v32. Mt.11v27. 19v26. 21v22. 1Cor.3v21,22. Rev.21v5,7.

2. WE MUST DETERMINE TO OBEY GOD AND LIVE A HOLY LIFE.

Obedience, purity and holiness are essential companions of faith.

Wilful sin will not only hinder faith, it can end in apostasy. 1Cor.10v1-13. Lk.8v13-15. Heb.3v6 to 4v16. 6v1-12. 10v26-29. 1Tim.1v19. 1Sam15v22,23. Fellowship with God and other Christians is conditional upon us walking in love and purity; spiritual darkness envelops those who are sinful, disobedient and worldly. 1Jn.1v3-7. 2v3-17. 5v1-5,18,20. Careless worldly living fills our lives with injurious thorns and briars instead of the fruit of the Spirit, this injurious thorny ground is "nigh unto cursing." Heb.6v6-9. Those who live loosely without moral effort, love, and obedience to God, are walking down the broad way to destruction. Mt.7v12-29. Rom.6v1-23. 8v1-9. Lk.6v43-48. Jesus warned us that we must "dig deep," and have solid foundations, or our spiritual house will collapse in ruins, and we will "fall away" from grace. Lk.6v46-49. 8v13. However, as we yield to God, a glorious harvest will grow in our lives, that will bring blessing to all who meet us. Gal.5v22,23.

God will never despise a broken and contrite heart. Ps.51v17. Is.66v2.

A feeling of need, a brokenness of spirit and heart examination, will always precede and accompany a genuine revival; however, these Christian qualities should not be confused with a state of morbid introspection, unbelieving anxious despair, or Satan inspired depression and dejection. We should remember, that though our need is great, God is immeasurably greater than our need, and He is wholly on our side. We should be honest with ourselves and God, about any deficiencies of character that we find in ourselves, but these should not drive us to despair, but to the throne of grace, where our great Saviour and High Priest has a plenitude of mercy and grace to meet our every need. Is.66v2. Mt.5v2-4. Heb.4v12-16. True holiness is beautiful and

attractive and must not be confused with a negative morbid introspection, or a "holier than thou" attitude, which God abhors. Is.65v5. An affected devotion, or outward veneer of sanctity; is an empty and loathsome imitation of true holiness; which is a warm, tender and sacrificial quality of character.

Holiness does not merely mean, "to free from sin or evil;" nor does it just mean purity, which means, "to love righteousness and hate evil;" for though purity of life is an essential constituent of true holiness, holiness goes even further than purity, it carries the thought of service and devotion to God, as well as separation from sin. The words "holiness" and "sanctification" are translations of the same noun "hagiasmos," which occurs ten times in the New Testament. Rom.6v19,22. 1Cor.1v30. 1Thes.4v3,4,7. 2Thes.2v13 Heb.12v14. 1Pet.1v2.. The verb "hagiazō," "to sanctify," and the adjective "hagios," "holy," occur many times in the New Testament. "Hagiazō" is used twice, in Jn.10v36. and 17v9., of our Lord being sanctified; this does not mean that Jesus needed to be purified, for He had always lived a perfect life. In Jn.10v36., we read the Father dedicated Jesus and sent Him into the world to be our Saviour, regardless of the pain that this would bring to His Father's heart. In Jn.17v19., Jesus states that He sanctified Himself, so that we might be sanctified. He is speaking of His amazing sacrificial dedication to the task of being our Saviour and High Priest. For our salvation, His great love for us drove Him, to depths of physical, emotional and spiritual suffering that we cannot conceive. This is true holiness.

Before any angels or men were created, the Trinity counted the enormous cost of our creation and salvation and were willing to pay it out of pure love for us. They have always been totally dedicated to their creation. 2Cor.8v9. Titus.1v2. Rev.13v8. The Seraphim, "Burning Ones," in Is.6v2,3., are probably the "Living Beings" of Rev.4v6-8.; for both groups radiate Divine energy and life, have six wings, and sing the same words. For untold millenniums they have been ceaselessly crying "holy, holy, holy," they are astonished by God's dedicated love for His creation. They do not rest, "anapausin," from "anapauo," "to relax," as in Mt.11v29., from praising God. They express amazed ceaseless adoration at the totally selfless and sacrificial nature of God. Their continual, "holy, holy, holy," does not just state the fact of the purity of God, marvellous as this may be; but the even more amazing total sacrificial devotion of God to His creation. Is.6v3. Rev.4v8.

Sanctification starts at the Cross-; and the Trinity sanctifies us.

The Trinity work together for our sanctification. The Holy Spirit regenerates us and cleans us up at the new birth, and endeavours to sanctify us. Titus.3v5. 2Thes.2v13. 1Pet.1v2. All Christians are "called to be saints," that is, "holy ones. Rom.1v7. 15v25,26,31. 16v2,15,16. 6v1,2. 2Cor.1v1. Eph.1v1. 3v8,18. Rev.5v8. 8v3,4. 15v3. etc. They are saints in the respect that their faith in Christ has "set them apart" from the world, and this should result in a very practical and real holiness. Sanctification begins at the cross of Jesus, when we repent of our sin and believe in Him as our Saviour. Holiness develops and deepens as the believer grows in grace and is more and more drawn into the ways and service of God. Eph.4v15. 1Pet.1v2,14-25. 2v2. 2Pet.3v18.

In Mal.3v1-3., we see Christ likened to a refiner of silver, these refiners used to sit over a pot of molten silver and draw the scum off until their faces were clearly mirrored in the silver, Christ desires to clean us up until we reflect His beauty, love, and holiness to others. If we do not let the Lord Jesus refine and beautify us now with His sacred fire, then the fire will try and burn up our works at the judgement seat of Christ. 1Cor.3v12-17. 2Cor.5v8-11. Failure to yield our lives to the purifying presence of Christ and the Holy Spirit, can result in a painful chastening from our loving heavenly Father, the aim of which is to make us partakers of His holiness, and to save us from being ashamed at Christ's coming. Heb.12v10. 1Cor.11v27-34. 1Jn.2v28. Under the New Covenant there is a definite emphasis upon purity of life, and a heart cleansed by the fire of God, and devotion to God. Lk.3v8,16,17. Jn.1v33. Acts.2v3,4,38,39. 2Cor.3v18. 1Pet.1v13-18.

Jesus is our example, we see Him at Jordan "full of grace and truth," completely consecrated to ourselves and His Father, perfectly loving and pure. He not only received the Father's "well done," but an immeasurable fullness of the Spirit as well. When we compare Christ's matchless sinless beauty, love and dedication, with our own great need, we can only feel unworthy, pitiful and beggarly, and quite undeserving of receiving any blessing from Him. But what is this that I hear from His lips? He tells me that He so loved me, that He died for me, and that my feeling of great need is a vital condition for receiving His blessing. Jesus declares that because I recognise my complete spiritual poverty without Him, I can claim heaven's riches with Him, and that because I hunger and thirst after righteousness, I shall be filled. Mt.5v3,6. As I abide in Christ and seek Him in prayer, I imbibe His beauty and grace, He is my wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. 1Cor.1v30. We have the victory over sin, failure and circumstances, through Jesus Christ our Lord. He is full of love and grace towards us, He never condemns the penitent seeker, it is the proud "arrived Pharisee" that He knows afar off. Rom.8v31-39. 1Cor.15v57. Rev.3v20-22. We can be greatly encouraged by the truth expressed in the following hymn.

"Oh, how shall I, whose native sphere
Is dark, whose mind is dim,
Before the Ineffable appear,
And on my naked spirit bear
The uncreated beam"?

"There is a way for man to rise
To that sublime abode:
An offering and a sacrifice,
A Holy Spirit's energies,
An advocate with God."

3. WE MUST THIRST AFTER JESUS AND OUR HEAVENLY FATHER.

A. Thirsting for God's Word. Ps.119v97,103.

The "exceeding great and precious promises" of God are the foundation of every true revival, they give us the faith to ask for and receive our Father's "good gifts." 2Pet1v4-11. Lk.11v13. The Word of God is the food of faith, and faith will increase as we read

it and believe it. Jn.20v30,31. Acts.20v32. Rom.10v17. 1Pet.2v2. 2Tim.3v14-17. Meditation upon the promises of God will give us the faith to receive God's promises. If we desire a revival, we must get our pattern from God's Word, for others, even "the good and best," may lead us far astray. We should test our experience by the Scriptures, not correct or interpret the Scriptures in the light of our experience. Those who say, "Our practice is not found in the Scriptures, but we believe it is right because we experience it," are supplanting God's Word with their tradition. We can limit both God and our experience of God, by making the standards of others our guide instead of the Scriptures. Mt.22v29.

The first sign of a cold heart and spiritual backsliding, is not a lack of prayer, important as this is, but a lack of love and respect for the Word of God, and a neglect of its study. If we desire to receive a real fullness of the Spirit we must cast off critical unbelieving attitudes to the Scriptures, and humbly and earnestly seek God in His Word. If we do not believe what God has said regarding the miraculous and other vital Christian truths, how can we expect to receive anything from Him? An evil heart of unbelief kept Israel out of Canaan, and it will keep us from experiencing God's power and gifts. Ps.95v1-11. Heb.3v12,19. 4v1-13. Jn.5v46,47. Without faith we cannot please God, faith is our capacity for God. Heb.11v5,6. Jn.10v26,27. 8v46,47. Those who have experienced the miracle of the new birth, can believe the miracles in the Bible, it is the unconverted who look upon the things of God as "foolishness." 1Cor.1v18-25. 2v14. Failure to accept and believe the things that Jesus taught and believed, will mean that we have little or no spiritual progress. Jn.8v28-36. 17v8,13,14,17. Those who feed in faith on the Scriptures, will find that they receive an experience of God that is "exceedingly above all that we can ask or think."

B. Thirsting for God's presence in prayer.

We should not say, "If the Lord wants to give me the baptism in the Spirit, He will do so, in His own good time; I am not going to seek this blessing, God will give it to me when I am ready for it," for it is still true that, "ye have not, because ye ask not." James.4v2,3. Jesus told us to "ask, seek and knock," to receive our Father's good gifts and the Holy Spirit. Mt.7v7-11. Lk.11v5-13. The New Testament does not teach that there has to be a long period of waiting before we can expect to receive the baptism in the Spirit, but it does say that we have to thirst after Christ and the Father. Lk.11v9-13. Jn.7v37-39. From Acts.19v2., we see that Paul believed that a Christian should receive the baptism in the Spirit as soon as possible after their conversion. However, Christians who have been taught for years that spiritual gifts are "not for today," often have a lot to unlearn, and it may take some time to clear away the theological rubbish that they have been taught, before they can receive the baptism and gifts of the Spirit. We should never underestimate the satanic opposition that we will receive if we are seeking to be the channels of God's power and love. Satan will use every strategy to turn us away from the promise and purpose of God. Mt.4v1-12. Eph.6v10-20. The initial Pentecostal outpouring had a background of fervent resolute prayer, and we shall have to imitate them if we are to defeat Satan's crafty and malicious attacks. Acts.1v14.

It is a tragedy when Christians, who have received the baptism in the Spirit, stop seeking God, because they feel, or have been taught, that they have reached the goal of Christian experience. The baptism in the Spirit should not be looked upon as a goal, but rather as a gateway into the exciting possibilities of a Spirit-filled life, mighty experiences of the Holy Spirit's power and love, should follow the baptism in the Spirit. It is, in fact, essential to seek God even more after we have received the baptism in the Spirit, to keep and expand the experience that we have received, for Satan will try to rob us of the precious holy experience that God has given to us, just as he tried with the Lord Jesus. Mt.3v16. 4v1. Indeed, the greater manifestations of the gifts of power and revelation demand a close and humble walk with God, a very definite prayer life, and some Christian maturity. It is a mistake to try and lead prayerless people and immature spiritual babes into the greater manifestations of the gifts of power and revelation, for it will only result in carnal impersonations.

C. Thirsting for Christ and the Father in love and unity with other Christians.

Lack of a prayerful, loving, Spirit-anointed fellowship is almost certainly the major reason why many Christians experience difficulty in receiving the baptism in the Spirit. Even our Lord Jesus needed and desired the help of others in prayer, the twelve were appointed "to be with Him," as well as to preach and heal the sick. Mk.3v14. In times of exceptional spiritual pressure, Peter, James and John, were asked by Christ to be His special close companions. Mk.5v35-43. 13v2-4. 14v32-42. Lk.5v5-11. 9v28-36,51. If Christ needed companions who were spiritually minded in times of spiritual conflict, we certainly do. A constant day-to-day fellowship with other like-minded, spiritual Christians, puts a protective spiritual umbrella over us. The Scripture states that co-operation of faith, in the will of God, can multiply our spiritual effectiveness tenfold. Deut.32v30. Christ believed in both private and public prayer, and the early Church followed His example. Lk.3v21. 5v16. 6v12. 9v18,28. 11v1.22v39-46. Acts.1v14. 2v1,41,42. 3v1. 4v23-33. etc. The early Church sought God with one accord, for long periods of time, and this is the reason for their spiritual effectiveness; we will not experience a revival unless we imitate them.

Before the Pentecostal outpouring, the disciples "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication;" and after it, "the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul, -- they had all things in common." Acts.1v14. 4v32. God richly blesses those who "dwell together in unity." Ps.133v1-3. Churches that lack this unity and love can be discouraging places, and the faith and spiritual progress of the Christians in them certainly suffers. Gal.5v13-26. 1Cor.1v5-11. 1Jn.4v7-16. This love and unity is the acid test of a genuine revival. Jn.13v34,35. The love and unity of the early Church at Jerusalem puts denominational pride, bigotry, and competition in its true light.

A New Testament church consisted of all the Christians in an area or locality, there was no external visible organisation in the form of buildings, this was forbidden by the Roman State until Constantine's "Edict of Toleration," in A.D. 313. Christians gathered

for fellowship at any place or hour that was suitable, there was liberty as to when and where they could worship, as long as they were under mature godly guidance. Mt.18v20. Jn.4v19-24. 1Tim.3v1-7. Titus.1v5-16. Compare v6 and 10.

True religion is love in action, anything less is a mere pretence.

We read in 1Jn.2v7-11. and 3v10-19., that if we do not positively and practically manifest a genuine love to our brothers and sisters in Christ, we are deceiving ourselves. Jam.2v1-26. We must recognise that feelings of superior spirituality or superior doctrinal enlightenment, are manifestations of a loathsome spiritual pride. Is.65v5. If we are not careful we can strenuously affirm that we are defending the truth while we are viciously attacking our fellow Christians. Bad temper and bigotry are often called by the names of "righteous indignation" and "zeal for the truth;" when they are really excuses for party spirit and loveless prejudices and bigotry. True Christianity does not consist only of a correct doctrinal outline, for we can have knowledge of all sacred secrets, and without love be nothing. 1Cor.13v1-3. Fellowship between Christians of different traditions demands love and forbearance. In Eph.4v13., Paul makes it clear that the unity of faith takes time to achieve; but he also tells us that until we reach it, we are to keep a unity of the Spirit. Eph.4v3. 1Cor.1v10. to 3v23. We greatly rejoice that God is burning up the barriers that have existed between Christians in different denominations, and is bringing a true oneness in Christ. Col.3v11. Eph.2v11-22. No Christian group has a monopoly of God, and the fellowship that I have enjoyed with Christians from various traditions has been a veritable foretaste of Heaven, because Christ's love has reigned in our hearts.

Christ's love withheld truth from His disciples that they could not bear. Jn.16v12.

Christ's love forgave His faithless disciples, and patiently sustained them when they were slow to understand the truths of the New Covenant, and held on to the Old Covenant and their false man-made traditions. Lk.24v1-53. Acts.18v18. 21v23-27. 1Cor.9v19-23. Gal.2v11-21. Christ did not "shoot down" His doctrinally lacking disciples, His love and grace sustained them until they could receive and bear the truth. Jn.1v14. 16v12. Jesus veiled some of the implications of the New Covenant from His apostles, even after His forty days resurrection ministry, because they were so bound by the tradition of a restored Israel. Acts.1v6-8. It took Jesus many years to get the Church to realise that it was separate from Judaism, and this was probably the biggest internal problem that the early Church faced. Acts.15v1-31. 21v23-27. 2Cor.11v1-15. Gal.5v1-12. etc.

How we love to cling to false, but cherished traditions! We should imitate Jesus and exercise patience and kindness towards Christians whose traditions and practices are strange to us, just as they need to manifest patience and kindness towards us. Long patience and kindness are the first essential qualities of love that Paul mentions in 1Cor.13v4-7.. We should never sacrifice our personal convictions for the sake of a superficial unity, but we should be big enough in God, to recognise and have fellowship with Christians whose background and traditions are different from our own. Love is the basis of fellowship, and it is only as the world sees genuine love and unity between Christians, that it will know that we are Christ's disciples and believe the Gospel message. Jn.13v34,35. 15v10-14. 17v23. Jesus said that if we hold bitter unforgiveness in our hearts, God will not listen to our prayers. Mk.11v26.

SOME PRACTICAL ADVICE ON PRIVATE PRAYER.

1). Use your Bible, hymnbook, and recorded sacred music in your times of prayer. 2). Like Paul use the gift of tongues. 1Cor.14v18. 3). Don't be tied to one posture, or one time of prayer. 4). Follow the attitudes of heart, and priorities that Jesus gave us in, "The Lord's prayer." They will bring a knowledge of God, a fullness of the Spirit and answered prayer. Lk.11v1-13.

4. WE MUST COME TO GOD WITH PRAISING HEARTS AND PRAISING LIPS. 2Chron.5v13,14.

A Pentecostal fullness is sustained by praise and worship.

Heartfelt praise to God has a very important place in receiving and keeping a Pentecostal fullness. Praise and victory are very closely linked in the Scriptures, indeed, praise is a vital part of victorious praying. Ps.61v8. 69v30,31. 40v3. 34v1-3. Phil.4v6,7. Before Pentecost the disciples "were continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God," Lk.24v53., after Pentecost the Church excelled in praise. Acts.2v47. 1Thes.5v18. Jn.4v23,24. We too should follow the advice and command of Heb.13v15., "Through Christ, then, let us offer a continual sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks and praise to His name." This "sacrifice of praise" is said to be an essential companion to paid vows, honouring God, and spiritual victory in Ps.50v14,23.; this praise is said to be more acceptable to God than any sacrifice. Ps.69v30,31. Hosea.14v2. Jesus told us that the Father is seeking for those who will worship Him "in spirit and in truth." Jn.4v23,24. It is very sad that many devout children of God have been taught that it is wrong to express emotion and praise in Christian worship, the "sacrifice of praise," is an essential partner of contemplative worship, prayer and waiting upon God.

Praise and worship bring us into our heavenly Canaan.

We read in Heb.3v7-19. and 4v1-11., that our hearts can be hardened, and we can fail to enter our heavenly Canaan if we fail to listen to God's voice. The quotation is from Psalm 95, which says that joyful praise and worship is the way to enter Canaan. The failure to express with our lips, the love that we feel in our hearts for God, is a real cause of spiritual bondage, and why many Christians experience difficulty in receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Our reserve may guard us from the dangers of fanaticism, exhibitionism, and emotionalism; but it can also cause us to quench genuine moves of the Holy Spirit. We need to break free from the traditions and reserves that hinder the free workings of the Holy Spirit, and take heed to David, who said in Ps.103v1., "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and ALL that is within me, bless His holy name." Joyful praise is a necessary prerequisite to receiving the baptism in the Spirit, however, this must not be confused with excessive noise and emotionalism. Loud praise is often best expressed in heartfelt congregational singing. Ps.95v1-7. 23v2. 46v10. Lk.19v37-40. We should endeavour to edify

others, and act decently and in order. 1Cor.14v12,19,39,40. Let us also learn to hear Gods voice of gentle stillness. 1Kings.19v11-13.

The beauty and value of holy emotion in praise and worship.

It is inspiring to see the devotion of loving hearts being poured out to God in praise and worship. The best things in the natural world bring emotion, and the best things in God's kingdom bring a holy emotion to the soul. Indeed, an experience of God that does not touch our emotions, cannot satisfy our longings for God, or affect us very much. The apostles did not spend the fifty days before Pentecost in introspection and mourning, because they had failed Jesus in His hour of need, and had not believed in His resurrection. Their repentance was real and deep, but it was not drawn-out, or despairing; they rejoiced in a loving, forgiving, and risen Christ. Mt.28v9. Mk.16v11-14. Lk.24v25-53. Jn.20v1-31. This gracious, forgiving Jesus is our friend and Saviour, He is with us to strengthen and sustain us, and to lift us up when we have fallen. Meditation on the great and tender mercies of God, should continually fill our hearts with joy and praise.

5. WE MUST HAVE WISE SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP.

a. We need Christian leaders who are anointed by God.

Even great truth can fail to inspire us if the anointing of the Holy Spirit is lacking. God makes us able ministers of the New Covenant, not oratory, rhetoric, or eloquence. 2Cor.3v5,6. There is too much "word only" preaching today; we need to preach "with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven." 1Thes.1v5. Eph.3v7. 1Pet.1v12. Prevailing prayer is needed to bring and keep God's presence in our Churches. 1Sam.12v23. A true ministry does not scramble for position and power; it is satisfied with a ministry of Christ's love, power and truth. God condemns the leaders who do not properly care for His flocks, and fail to lead them into His green pastures. Jer.23v1-6. Ezek.34v1-31. Mt.23v1-39. James.3v1. To avoid spiritual declension, we need leaders who have a real experience of God's power and majesty, and can inspire others to seek and receive the same experience. Exod.24v9-11,18. Judges.2v7-17. Eph.4v7-13.

Church congregations should not expect their leaders to have all the answers to their problems, for no one has a complete ministry, we are part of the body of Christ, and we all need the help of other ministries in the body of Christ. We read in 2Cor.2v12,13., that even the apostle Paul "had no rest in his spirit," and could not accomplish the work that God desired him to do at Troas, because Titus was not with him. The elders at Joppa knew that raising Dorcas from the dead was beyond their ministries, so they sent for Peter. Acts.9v36-43.

c. We need leaders who are examples, not Lords.

Ecclesiastical tyranny and denominational prejudice should have no place in Christ's Church. Mt.23v8-12. Lk.22v24-27. Jesus warned His apostles that they must not dominate their charges, they had the authority to exhort Christians to observe Scripture truths, but no authority to act as lords over God's heritage. 2Cor.1v24. 1Pet.5v3. Mt.20v20-28. Paul appealed in love rather than commanded 2Thes.3v4,6,11,12. 1Tim.4v11. 1Cor.13. all. 14v34. Rom.12v1. Gal.4v12. etc. It is the constraint of love that unites Christians together, not the pressure of authority. When Jesus is truly Lord, Christians from different churches can experience a true unity and fellowship of the Spirit. The only thing that can hinder a sweet fellowship between truly converted Christians, is a denominational and doctrinal bigotry and pride. If we only use the Scriptures to shoot people down, we have become "as sounding brass and clashing cymbal." 1Cor.13v1.

N.B. What we must do if we are members of a spiritually cold church.

Earnest Christians should not leave a cold church unless God tells them to, or forced to leave through circumstances; they should try to create a praying group within the church. Love, patience, humility, wisdom and prayer will produce a sweet fellowship, which can change the spiritual atmosphere of a church and attract other hungry hearts. The best antidote for spiritual coldness in a church is found in informal house meetings, as long as they are under mature Christian leadership. In these meetings, time is given to worship, prayer, testimony and Bible study, and problems are talked about and prayed over, all on an informal level. 1Cor.13v1. Churches of all denominations have been transformed by the radiant witness of truly Spirit-filled Christians, and have become centres of evangelism, revival, healing, and blessing.

6. WE MUST COME TO GOD WITH HUMILITY OF MIND AND SINCERITY OF HEART.**a. Pride in past achievement is the enemy of further progress.**

We should not let pride in past achievement and past blessing from God, make us think that there is nothing more to receive from God. A feeling of arrival and attainment is the most deadly foe of spiritual progress. The unsearchable riches of Christ were hidden from many of those who Jesus preached to, because of their false feeling of spiritual attainment, and their determination not to embrace anything outside of their tradition or experience. Mt.13v15,16. Lk.19v42. Jn.9v39-41. Eph.3v8. Arrogant self-sufficiency, not only brings blindness to further revelation, it often means the death of the things that we have attained. We shall never, not even during the endless ages in heaven, come to the end of what God is, or what He has for us. There will always be a sense of amazement, overwhelming gratitude and love, as we continually and eternally learn of the greatness of our God of love, and His wonderful plans for us. When we consider the everlasting riches of our almighty unlimited Lord, we can never say that we have reached the limits of our Christian experience.

b. Pride in our religious traditions can cause us to resist God. Acts.7v51-53.

It is a fact that pride in our traditional beliefs and habits of worship die very hard, we can be bound by our traditions, and they can keep us from receiving what God has for us. It took a vision of Jesus to persuade Paul that a superior New Covenant had replaced his traditional worship. Let us learn, therefore, to not only treasure the precious truths and experiences that God-inspired revivals of the past have given us; but we must also be willing to be led by God into what may be new ways to us, but which are in reality, rediscoveries of neglected truth. It is a great tragedy when devout souls miss the answer to their prayers for revival, through preconceived ideas as to how God should work. We all need to watch that we do not limit God. Ps.78v41. It takes a genuine humility of mind for a Christian of long standing, to admit that they have been without some vital part of God's armoury and provision for His children. Jesus said that it is only the penniless beggar, who receives the riches of heaven, those who feel that they have "arrived," miss His blessing. Mt.5v3.

N.B. Opposition is inevitable when revival comes.

Many people love their formal church services, and like things to remain as they are, so the formation of earnest praying groups in their churches disturbs and convicts them, and can produce problems. The usual excuses for criticism of these praying groups, are "The Church is the place to pray;" "These meetings cause division;" "These Christians think that they are better than us;" or even "They are heretical." The experience of Spirit-filled Christians is sometimes resented and rejected, no matter how humbly, sincerely and graciously it is presented. In such circumstances let us remember that love is still kind after it has suffered long; and let us rejoice in those churches, which do not resent, but rather encourage, the earnest seeking of God, and the spiritual progress of fellow Christians.

c. Seeking honour from men, is a great spiritual danger. Jn.5v44.

Seeking honour from men stops many people from seeking God for His gifts.; Jesus said, "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" Jn.5v44. Prov.29v25. Compromising truth in order to seek honour from men, destroys faith and spiritual experience. We can sell our soul to the denomination we serve, as well as to "the company store." A fear of being thought unorthodox, eccentric, fanatical, or heretical, can deter God's dear children from seeking God's gifts, or from testifying of what God has done for them. Many today still "love the praise of men, more than the praise of God." Jn.2v23-25. 5v41. 12v42,43. Acts.5v29,32. We should obey God rather than men, we should say like Paul, "what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them all to be mere rubbish, that I may win Christ." Phil.3v7,8,9-14. We thank God for Christians of all persuasions and denominations, who have stood true to, and even died for, their convictions about Christian truth and experience.

d. The danger of an evil heart of unbelief over spiritual gifts. Heb.3v12,19.**7. THE DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF CHRIST'S CHURCH AT JERUSALEM.**

The church at Jerusalem manifested the essential characteristics and distinguishing features that God desires in His Church.

a. They have a vital encounter with their risen Saviour.**b. They are of one accord, of one heart and mind, and manifest God's character and love in their lives.**

In Acts.2v1., the Majority Text reads, "homothumadon," 3661, "one accord, or one mind" not "homou," together. " Thayer says that "homothumadon" is a compound of two words meaning to "rush along" and "in unison." He writes, "The image is almost musical; a number of notes are sounded which, while different, harmonise in pitch and tone. As the instruments of a great concert under the direction of a concert master, so the Holy Spirit blends together the lives of members of the "ekklesia" of Christ."

“Homothumadon,” occurs in Acts.1v14. 2v1,46. 4v24. 5v12. 15v25. and Rom.15v6., to describe the Church being of one accord, in Acts.8v6., how people responded to the ministry of Philip, and in Acts.7v57. 18v12. and 19v29. of the one accord opposition of the enemies of the Church., and in Acts.12v20., how people gave heed to Herod, before God executed him.

c. They earnestly seek God in prayer, and with fervent praise. Seek bread for others, knock and keep on knocking. Lk.11v5-13.

d. They believe Christ's teaching and doctrine.

e. They have an evangelistic fervour. They were prepared to suffer for their Saviour, and their faith.

f. They answer Satan's lying wonders with God's miracles.

g. They act as a body under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus. In Eph.5v18., Paul writes, “Be not drunken with wine,” “me methuskesthe oinoi,” the present passive imperative of “methusko,” to intoxicate. “But be filled with (lit. “in”) the Spirit,” “alla plerousthe en pneumatii,” the present passive imperative of “pleroo,” to fill. The present passive speaks of a habitual continuing action, always being filled with, and under the control of, the Holy Spirit..

THE VALUE AND USE OF THE GIFT OF TONGUES.

1. DILIGENTLY USED THE GIFT OF TONGUES TRANSFORMS OUR ABILITY TO WORSHIP.

Speaking in tongues brings into play the highest faculty of the Christian, the spirit that God has given to each child of God. Our born-again spirit is the means of communion with God, and when we speak in tongues we give to God the worship that He desires. Speaking with tongues enables us to have direct communion with God, and to give Him acceptable worship. Christ said that we must worship God with our spirit if we are to worship Him acceptably, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” Jn.4v23,24. The most elaborate and highly organised worship is only a dead form if this spiritual worship that Christ spoke of is missing. However, when the Holy Spirit enables us to speak with tongues, we worship God on the very highest level, it is truly acceptable worship if we let love for God and others direct our lives.

When the Holy Spirit enables us to magnify and bless God, and give Him the worship and love of our hearts through the gift of speaking with tongues, He enables us to perform the greatest act a Christian can do, for worship of God is the greatest act of the creature. Acts.10v46. Mt.22v35-40. Mk.12v28-34. The use of the gift of tongues lifts the Christian into a new realm of worship, it enables us to worship God to the limit of our capacity, and beyond our capacity, by the help of the Holy Spirit. Eph.4v18. Rom.8v26,27. The Holy Spirit can inspire us to pray with our spirit, “If I pray in an unknown tongue my spirit prays.” 1Cor.14v14. He can cause us to sing with the spirit, “I will sing with the spirit”. 1Cor.14v15. He can enable us to bless with the spirit, “Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit”. 1Cor.14v16. The gift of tongues enables the Christian to reach the highest levels of spiritual worship, it enables us to worship God in spirit and truth, the most important act of the Christian life; how, then, can some despise it and call it, “The least of the gifts?” Jn.4v23,24.

In 1Cor.13v1. Paul implies that the Holy Spirit may cause us to speak in the tongues of angels. If an angelic tongue can express the praise of a great angelic being living in the eternal and uncreated glory and splendour of Gods majestic presence, it can surely express the praise of the redeemed children of God living in this dark and sinful world. How wonderful it is to be freed from the limits of our own small vocabulary and limited eloquence, into the excellence and eloquence of earthly and even heavenly languages, by the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The gift of tongues does for us what no other gift can do, it enables us to exalt, worship and praise God, in a way that we cannot without it, this is one reason why the apostle Paul used it so much. 1Cor.14v18. It is one of God's great and precious gifts.

2. DILIGENTLY USED THE GIFT OF TONGUES TRANSFORMS OUR ABILITY TO PRAY.

The gift of tongues brings into the personal prayer life, the ability of the Holy Spirit. When you speak in tongues you are not limited by your own ability, God the Holy Spirit takes our needs, prayer, praise and desires, and the needs of other people and brings them to God the Father. The gift of tongues enables Christians to utter and fully express the otherwise indescribable longings of their soul and their great and unspeakable feelings of love for God. It gives the Christian the ability to pray to God and worship Him as we ought, it frees us from the limits of human speech and knowledge, for the Holy Spirit Himself gives us the vocabulary and blessing to fully express the needs, feelings and desires of the soul. The gift of tongues enables the Christian to pray on a new level of prayer, for it is God praying through us to perform things exceeding more abundantly than we can ask or think. Eph.3v18-20. In Rom.8v26,27., Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit is always available to take hold with us against our limitations and problems; he uses “sunantilambanetai,” the present indicative middle of “sunantilambanomai,” “to lend a hand together with, at the same time with one;” only here and in Lk.10v40., of Martha's request for help. When we pray in tongues we release the power gifts, and pray for the saints according to the will of God.

A diligent use of the gift of tongues in the private prayer life will result in a very blessed and fluent use of this gift. On occasions a completely new language will be given by the Holy Spirit, which possesses all the phonetics and rhythm of a perfect and complete language. However, whether the Holy Spirit gives us many or few words to express our praise or prayer, the exercise of the gift of tongues will bring great blessing and mighty power in prayer. When we use the gift of tongues in our devotional life, we pray or praise as the Holy Spirit directs and in the way that He thinks best; whereas in our own tongue we can pray selfishly, ignorantly, incorrectly, and even with unsanctified ambition and denominational pride. When a Christian prays in tongues, it is prayer and worship on the very highest level, it is God directing the devotional life. The balanced prayer life demands praying and singing in tongues, as well as prayer and singing in one's own language; this was Paul's practice, and we would do well to

3. DILIGENTLY USED THE GIFT OF TONGUES TRANSFORMS OUR CHARACTER.

The gift of tongues is given to build faith and love in the soul, and edify, bless and transform the personality, character and life of the believer, as Paul writes in 1Cor.14v4., the Christian who speaks in tongues "edifies himself." It has the same effect in the prayer life and devotional life, that prophecy has in the Church. It can also have the most beneficial effect on the body, and can calm conscious and subconscious worries. It can relax and refresh a tired body and mind as well as bless the soul. Is.28v11,12. with 1Cor.14v21. and Rom.8v11. The gift of tongues gives us a defence against spiritual foes, and gives us the victory over them, for through this gift the Holy Spirit Himself operates in power against the powers of darkness. A gift that edifies the soul in love and makes it strong should never be described as "little," "least," or be despised and neglected.

4. DILIGENTLY USED THE GIFT OF TONGUES TRANSFORMS OUR SPIRITUAL MINISTRY.

The Holy Spirit's ministrations through this gift in the secret place of prayer will result in a blessing upon one's public ministry. Mt.6v5,6. with 1Cor.14v2,4,18. and 2Cor.12v12. Prayer and praise in tongues build up the spiritual life of the Christian to the place where they are able to manifest the other gifts of the Holy Spirit. The greater a Christian's ministry is, the more they need to speak in other tongues. One evangelist found that miracles were ceasing in his services because he had been neglecting speaking in tongues. Another said he did not expect much to happen in his services unless he prayed for several hours in tongues before them. Diligently used the gift of tongues can greatly increase our spiritual power, and our effectiveness for God.

5. AN UTTERANCE IN TONGUES CAN TRANSFORM A CHRISTIAN MEETING.

A powerful, love-laden tongue can greatly bless the church even before it is interpreted, and if the interpretation carries the same benediction, it can bring a veritable shower of blessing. An interpretation of tongues can bring great comfort, solace and needful instruction. God has set the gift of tongues in the church as a valuable means of public as well as private edification, and when it is interpreted it can carry the same ability to bless and edify as prophecy. 1Cor.14v5.

6. DILIGENTLY USED THE GIFT OF TONGUES TRANSFORMS OUR EXPERIENCE OF GOD.

The diligent use of the gift of tongues brings a new revelation of God and His Word, the Bible becomes a new book and living food for the soul. Those who use the gift of tongues diligently in the secret place can testify that it really brings one very close to our heavenly Father and Lord Jesus, and it really deepens our love for them. What a precious gift this is! If we gave no other reason for desiring to speak in tongues, this alone would be reason enough for desiring this gift. Jn.16v13-15. A gift that makes God our Father and the Lord Jesus more real and precious to the Christian, should never be disparaged or belittled. The baptism in the Spirit brings a new insight into the meaning of the Scriptures, indeed, it is only the spirit-filled Christian, who can really understand much of the experience of the early Church.

7. THE GIFT OF TONGUES CAN EVEN EXTEND A MATURE CHRISTIAN'S EXPERIENCE.

The mature believer, as well as the young convert, can build themselves up spiritually through diligent use of the gift of tongues, God's gave this gift to develop love, spiritual sensitivity, and spiritual capacity. The diligent use of the gift of tongues enlarges even a mature Christian's experience. Some say that the gift of tongues is "infant prattling," and not for mature Christians. This is nonsense, for the Paul said that he spoke in tongues more than the verbose Corinthians. When Paul said this in 1Cor.14v18., he had been a Christian for about 24 years, he could certainly not be called "an immature infant prattler." In 1Cor.13v11,12., Paul speaks of our present limited intellectual knowledge of the future heavenly "mysteries" as "infant prattling," but he never refers to speaking in tongues in this way. Indeed Paul tells us in 1Cor.14v2., that when we speak in tongues we speak "mysteries," that is, God's deep counsels and secrets, which were once hidden, but are now revealed in the Gospel to the children of God. Our minds may not comprehend these mighty spiritual realities, but through the Holy Spirit's ministrations our spirits can enjoy and glory in God's mysteries. Mt.13v11. Lk.8v10. Rom.11v25. 16v25. 1Cor.2v1,7. 4v1. 14v2. 15v51. Eph.1v9. 3v3,4,9. 5v32. 6v19. Col.1v26,27. 4v3. 2Thes.2v7. 1Tim.3v9. Rev.10v7. Ps.25v14.

When Christians speak in tongues, they speak Divine truths, it is an exalted sphere of utterance, not "infant prattling." The hearers on the day of Pentecost certainly did not call speaking in tongues "infant prattlings;" those who understood the languages said they spoke of "the wonderful works of God;" and they were so awed and moved by the sublime words that they heard, that they became Christians. In Rom.8v26,27., Paul said that even after being a Christian for over 25 years he did not know how to pray for the saints as was necessary, but said that Holy Spirit directed praying through the gift of tongues enabled him to pray for the saints according to the will of God. It is an insult to Holy Spirit to describe His Divine intercessions through us with His gift of tongues with the belittling term of "infant prattlings."

Our minds are limited in their ability to absorb and appreciate spiritual realities, our spirit is not limited in the same way, indeed, it is given to us for the express purpose of enabling us to communicate with God and spiritual realities. Our souls and spirits feed and grow on the anointing and spiritual truths and Divine "mysteries," that come into our being through speaking with tongues. The gift of tongues bypasses and rests the mind; so that even when we are too tired to think upon truth with the mind, our spirits can be nourished and refreshed through this gift. However, we do need truth for the mind, for Peter exhorts us, "As new-born babes, for the pure milk that is for the mind eagerly crave, that thereby ye may grow unto salvation." 1Pet.2v2. Rotheram.

N.B. SOME REMARKABLE INSTANCES OF DIVINE MYSTERIES BEING SPOKEN IN TONGUES.

We will now give some instances where languages spoken in tongues have been understood.

H. Horton writes on page 160 of his fine book, "The Gifts of the Spirit," what a missionary in the Congo heard when he was present at the baptism in the Spirit of a young coloured man. The missionary was amazed to hear the young man repeating Old

Testament instances of creation and history in perfect English. The young man did not know a word of English and what is more, nothing of the accounts of Scripture that he was repeating. The missionary left the hut to search for his wife so that she could witness this remarkable manifestation of the Spirit. When he returned with his wife the young man was still speaking in English, of the second coming of Christ.

On pages 30, 31 of his book, "Signs Following," W. Burton tells of an inspiring incident that occurred at Mwanza in the Congo. When churches were getting spiritually cold it was their practice to gather the believers together for several days of prayer, ministry of the Word, and waiting on God. On one such occasion Mr. Burton was keeping "a quiet eye" on the meeting to make sure that there was no "undue" excitement or extravagance, when he was struck by the earnest expression of a young man named Ziba, who was obviously being deeply affected by the power of the Holy Spirit, which was moving upon the men gathered there. Mr. Burton quietly moved around to where Ziba sat and was surprised and moved to hear him speaking in absolutely perfect English of Christ's second coming to earth to reign and the glories of His millennial kingdom. Ziba was a simple village lad without any knowledge of the English language, but he was speaking in English without any ungrammatical expressions or any trace of foreign accent, and what he said was absolutely true to the Scriptures.

8. SPEAKING IN TONGUES IS A SIGN WHEN PEOPLE UNDERSTAND THE LANGUAGE.

Though the gift of tongues is predominantly devotional, it can produce remarkable results when God manifests this gift as a sign as he did on the day of Pentecost. It can convict and convert the sinner, and be a great encouragement to the believer. 1Cor.14v22. Acts.2v4-12. Mk.16v17-20. The disciples on the day of Pentecost spoke in tongues that were unknown to them, but many listeners were amazed and captivated at hearing the rapturous praise of God and His wonderful works in their own languages and dialects. They knew that these disciples did not know their languages, and so when Peter explained what had happened, they were instantly willing to accept the Gospel. The gift of tongues prepared the people for the preaching of Peter, it is not intended to replace the preaching of the Gospel. We will now give some modern instances where God has used the gift of tongues as a sign to convert unbelievers, and encourage believers.

W.F.P. Burton tells on page 28 and 29 of "Signs Following" and elsewhere, how during an open-air service on a Sunday evening beside Lytham lifeboat house, a dear uneducated Christian woman named Mrs. Whitehouse began to speak in tongues, and Mr. Burton interpreted it, the interpretation was about Christ and His death upon the cross. A man, a prominent tailor, who had lost almost everything through drink, fell on his knees and implored God to save his soul; he was more often than not under the influence of drink, but on this occasion he was quite sober, he told how both the message in tongues and the interpretation had gone straight to his heart. In the crowd was a young Japanese man, who was studying shipbuilding in Lytham's shipbuilding yard. When he went to his lodging place, he asked his landlady who the people in the open-air service were, she replied that they were fanatical, religious enthusiasts, who some said were religion mad. The young man replied, "well, they may be mad, but I heard a most remarkable thing. One spoke in perfect Japanese, while the other gave the exact equivalent in English". The tongue and interpretation acted as a sign to the one who understood the language, and to those who did not, the result was a soul won for Christ, and the Christians were greatly encouraged in their God.

Mr. Burton goes on to tell on page 29 and 30 of his book, of a highly respected Methodist minister who heard the Pentecostal Christians speaking in praise and adoration to God in seven languages which he knew, they were speaking about the death, resurrection and second coming of Christ, and extolling Christ's blood and His risen power. This so moved the minister that on his way home in the train he longed for the same experience, so he threw his pipe and tobacco out of the train window, and earnestly sought and received the baptism in the Spirit, and spoke with tongues before the train reached his station.

In his book "Grace Gifts," I Rosser tells on pages 105 and 106, how the Holy Spirit brought about the conversion of a Frenchman in 1934 through the use of the gift of tongues. While he was at his sister's house, a French onion seller came to the door, and Mr. Rosser felt led of God to speak to him in tongues. The Frenchman was amazed that a person who had never been to France and never learned French, could speak French so fluently. They asked the Frenchman what Mr. Rosser had said, he said in broken English that Mr. Rosser was a good man and a minister of Jesus Christ, and that Mr. Rosser had been telling him that Christ is to return and set up His kingdom on earth; but before He returns, things on earth will get worse, and that repentance is the only way back to God and forgiveness. The Frenchman was broken by this remarkable manifestation of the Holy Spirit and accepted Christ as Saviour.

A minister of the Gospel, who the writer knows personally, testifies that he heard a comparatively uneducated person speaking perfect Latin in other tongues; He had no knowledge of Latin, and yet he was speaking Latin even more perfectly than the minister, who had an Oxford degree, and had spent years studying and teaching Latin. The theme of the utterance was the power of the blood of Jesus.

On page 60 of Dennis and Rita Bennet's book, "The Holy Spirit and You." Bennet records how deaf-mute Christians, who had never heard or spoken a word, spoke fluently in tongues under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

There are many other instances, which could be quoted to show the use of the gift of tongues as a sign, but I feel the instances I have given are quite sufficient to prove this fact to the sincere heart and mind.

9. SPEAKING WITH TONGUES IS THE PROOF OF THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT.

At the outpouring of the Holy Spirit mentioned in Acts.2v4. 10v45,46. 11v17. and 19v6., when the Christians received the baptism in the Spirit, they spoke with tongues. The common evidence that they had been baptised in the Spirit, was speaking with tongues

as the Spirit gave them utterance. With the exception of the outpouring at Ephesus, we do not read of any other manifestations of the gifts, and there they not only spoke in tongues, but prophesied as well. From humble housewives to mighty apostles, the initial evidence of the baptism in the Spirit was speaking in tongues. At the baptism in the Spirit of these believers, the Holy Spirit did not give various gifts as the evidence of the baptism in the Spirit, He gave the gift of tongues to all.

I am not trying to be contentious when I say that the gift of tongues is the initial evidence of the baptism in the Spirit. I desire Christians to receive the blessing that their heavenly Father has for them. Dennis Bennet tells on page 61 of his book, "The Holy Spirit and You," tells how a neuro-surgeon friend of his said that he understood why God used speaking in tongues; he said that as the speech centres dominate the brain, he did not see how God could do much about the physical brain, unless he got hold of these speech centres. When God takes over the body's most unruly member, the tongue, James.3v2-12., and controls it and infuses it to speak in praise and worship in other tongues, it is a truly wonderful miracle, and the evidence of the baptism in the Spirit.

I would not be so concerned if people who do not agree that speaking with tongues is the initial evidence of the Holy Spirit, taught that Christians need and should earnestly seek God for the gift of tongues for their prayer life; however, unfortunately, they usually deride, despise and neglect this lovely gift of God. God has given the gift of tongues to His Church, because He considers it to be absolutely indispensable and necessary for the spiritual welfare of His Church, it is one of God's good, valuable and perfect gifts. None of God's spiritual gifts are mean or paltry; they are all priceless, magnificent, good, beautiful and precious, and we should bow the knee to His wisdom, love and authority. Who are we to criticise the "good and perfect" gifts that our heavenly Father has given to us? He is the Lord, let us recognise the value and importance of what He has given. How dare Christians criticise His gifts, or neglect to seek them, when He has commanded us not only to pursue after love, but earnestly seek spiritual gifts as well? 1Cor.14v1. The gift of tongues is one of HIS gifts, let us recognise its value and use.