

## ***The Way to Power and Poise (1949)***

### **Foreword by Bud Reeves**

As to my personal acquaintance with E. Stanley Jones, I am (with apologies to the Apostle) “as one untimely born.” Brother Stanley had joined the Church Triumphant before I began my theological education or ministry. But I was not far into either before I began to read snippets, quotes and stories about E. Stanley Jones that found their way into my sermons and lessons. In fact, the story of the apple tree on the last page of *The Way to Power and Poise (WPP)* was early in my homiletical repertoire.

My deeper acquaintance with the works of E. Stanley Jones came through a seminar at Hendrix College in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century sponsored by the Miller Center for Vocations. Through lectures by Dr. Billy Abraham, and personal introductions to Bob and Nadine Miller (Bob’s life having been ignited and re-directed by E. Stanley Jones and Anne Mathews-Younes (Jones’ granddaughter), I became acquainted with his larger body of work and his significance to Christianity and Methodism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

As I began to read more and listen to recordings of his preaching, I began to get a glimpse of a truly monumental mind and heart for Christ and the church. Jones’ contributions are many, but among them are:

- A robust pneumatology that is often lacking in Christian churches. E. Stanley Jones was truly Trinitarian, and his emphasis on the Holy Spirit both profound and energizing.
- Demonstrated success with interfaith dialogue. His years in India and his friendships among the leaders of that country exemplify relationships that we should be fostering in today’s increasingly diverse culture.
- Practical pastoral advice. “Brother Stanley” was always concerned about the one lost sheep needing rescue, the one disciple needing growth, and especially his devotional books are down-to-earth and accessible to anyone.

- Engagement with culture. Jones was well-educated and a man of broad interests, and this broad-mindedness is reflected in his books, with references to science, psychology, and the politics of his time.

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When I was first asked (and honored!) to write a foreword for *The Way to Power and Poise*, I was not acquainted with this work. I picked it up and asked, “What is this? A self-help book? A prototype of *The Power of Positive Thinking*?” What I soon found out was that this was not a self-help book at all. It is a Spirit-help book. Jones is not out of the introduction before he gives away his thesis: “This book is really a study and practice of the Spirit. For the Holy Spirit is the secret of both power and poise.”

“Power” we understand, especially in connection with the Spirit of God. Jones admits that the word “poise” may be a little awkward (perhaps even more so now than then), but it is a word that expresses an important combination of inner serenity and outward power. And he has the whole book to parse the meanings, connotations, and nuances of that word.

The key to finding this balance of poise and power should be familiar to even the casual reader of Jones’ body of work. It is the surrender of the self. Self-surrender is the way to the true knowledge of self: “You cannot find yourself in yourself—you find yourself in God. The process by which the change is made is self-surrender.” (Saturday, Week 10) This is, in the words of Jesus, the “one thing necessary.” “There is nothing that is necessary except the surrendered heart and the appropriating faith.” (Saturday, Week 14) The lack of power and poise can almost always be traced to the failure to surrender the self: “For almost all of our problems are rooted in an un-surrendered self.” (Sunday, Week 39) The theme is pervasive in the book.

*The Way to Power and Poise* is written in the style of Jones’ other devotional works—Scripture, devotional thoughts, and prayers for each day. It is not exhaustive; it could be read in a week or two. But I think the book is more properly enjoyed bit by bit, day by day, an experience of thoughtfulness and prayer to be savored, not devoured. In reading it, there will be several smiles at realities that are more tied to the times in which Jones wrote some X years ago. Such is the case with all literature. But inside

the timely message is the eternal truth of the Gospel, which transcends the connections to a time or place.

I am also thrilled that this volume is dedicated to my friend and church member Mrs. Dede Hutcheson. She is a true example of the inner serenity and outward spiritual power that Jones describes in this book. Dede and her late husband Bill, along with Bob and Nadine Miller (who helped introduce me to E. Stanley Jones) have been a tremendous blessing through their generosity to the E. Stanley Jones Foundation, A Foundation for Theological Education, and many other Christian causes. They have also many times over been a blessing to me as their pastor.

Jones always wrote with a great humility. As he closes the book, he writes, “This open door into power and poise is promised to those of ‘little power.’ They have taken that little power and have surrendered it into the hands of Almighty Love.” (Saturday, Week 52—it’s OK if you want to skip ahead and read it!) Then he tells one of my favorite stories about the effortless fruitfulness of the apple tree, a power that is open to anyone who keeps the channels of the Holy Spirit open in his or her life. Grasping this truth, and saying to God, “Here am I, Lord,” Jones says that “A Calm possessed me. Life was centrally simplified. A door was open to me which no man could shut.” This is the Way to Poise and Power. I recommend you seek it with all your heart, because it is already there for you.

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