

FULLY FURNISHED

or

THE CHRISTIAN WORKER'S EQUIPMENT

by

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CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

THE WORKER'S PRIVILEGE

THE greatest privilege which a child of God possesses is the God-given right of prayer.

The new life has its origin in prayer, its growth is dependent upon it, and the believer's last petition is, "**Receive my spirit.**" Every lack in the life may be traced to the want of prayer, while, on the other hand, he who waits upon God shall not want any good.

Prayer is the sin-killer.

When Josiah began to pray to the Lord, then he put away the abominations which had defiled and damaged the nation (II Kings 23:3-8).

Prayer is the strength-obtainer.

Paul found this out when the Lord assured him, in answer to his thrice-repeated cry, that His grace was sufficient to enable him to glory, in his infirmity (II Corinthians 12:8,9).

Prayer is the help-giver.

Peter experienced its power, when the Church prayed, and brought the angel of deliverance to him while he was in prison (Acts 12:5). We, too, may find help, by coming to the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16).

Prayer is the holiness-promoter.

Paul recognized this when he referred to the fervent prayers of Epaphras, that the saints might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God (Colossians 4:12).

Prayer is the soil in which the plant of holiness ever grows.

Prayer is the power-conductor.

The power of the Holy Spirit came upon the early disciples, while they “**continued with one accord in prayer and supplication**” (Acts 1:14).

When the wood of our earnest plea is placed on the altar of consecration, then the fire of the Holy Spirit ignites it in an effectual blaze to the warmth of others.

Prayer is the love-inspirer.

The “**great grace**” that was upon the early Church, which showed itself in the mutual love the saints had for each other, was the outcome of the earnest pleading which had gone before (Acts 4:33).

Prayer is the supply-receiver.

There is an abundance in the larder of God’s grace for the supply of all, and for the need of each. The only requisite is to bring the key of believing prayer to unlock this larder of love; then the riches of His provision shall meet our every requirement, as Nehemiah found when he made his “**prayer unto God**” (Nehemiah 4:9).

There are two things we shall consider in thinking of the believer’s privilege in prayer, namely, the power of prayer, and the prayer of power.

I - The Power of Prayer.

The best commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself.

This is strikingly illustrated in the subject of prayer. In answer to Abraham’s prayer, God permitted Ishmael to live before Him (Genesis 17:18).

- Prayer *stayed the hand* of God, for a time, from inflicting judgment upon the cities of the plain (Genesis 19).
- Prayer was *the magnet* which drew Eliezer and Rebekah together (Genesis 24:12, &c.).
- Prayer was *the transforming power* that changed the name of Abram to Abraham, and of Jacob to Israel (Genesis 17:3-5; 32:28).
- Prayer was *the messenger* which brought the Lord to the help of Israel in Egypt, delivering them from the tyranny of Pharaoh (Exodus 2:23).
- Prayer was *the hand that grasped the arm of justice*, as it was raining the plagues upon Egypt (Exodus 9:28).
- Prayer was *the magic wand* that caused a way to be opened through the Red Sea, when the enemies of Israel were pursuing them (Exodus 14:10,15).
- Prayer was *the angel of mercy* that brought the antidote to heal the bitter waters of Marah, and to make them sweet (Exodus 15:25).
- Prayer *brought from Heaven the manna*, which sustained the thousands of Israel for forty years in the wilderness (Exodus 16:3, 4; Joshua 5:12; Nehemiah 9:20, 21).
- Prayer was *the conduit pipe* which brought the water to thirsty Israel, and satisfied their need (Exodus 17:4).

- Prayer was *the secret of Israel's victory over Amalek* (Exodus 17:11).
- Prayer was *the advocate* which caused God's anger to abate, when Israel sinned in making the golden calf (Exodus 32:11).
- Prayer was *the glass* which caused Moses to see the glory of God (Exodus 33:13-23).
- Prayer was *the evangelist* that brought healing mercy to the poisoned Israelites (Numbers 21:7, 8).
- Prayer was *the detective* which discovered Achan in his sin (Joshua 7:7).
- Prayer was *the hand* which stayed the sun and moon, while Joshua gained the victory over the Amorites (Joshua 10:12, 13).
- Prayer was *the inspiration* that nerved Gideon to hew down the groves of Baal, and to gain the decided victory over Midian (Judges 6, 7).
- Prayer was *the mantle* of power that gave Samson his lost strength (Judges 16:28).
- Prayer was *the means* of obtaining Samuel, as his name implies, "*Asked of God*" (I Samuel 1:11, 20, margin).
- Prayer *winged the stone* that killed Goliath (I Samuel 17:45, 49).
- Prayer was *the oil* which caused the life of David to run in the lines of truth, as seen in his inner life in the Psalms.
- Prayer was *the obtainer of the wisdom* which graced Solomon (I Kings 3:5-14).
- Prayer was *the healing power* that restored Jeroboam's withered hand (I Kings 13:6).
- Prayer was *the restorer of life* in the hand of Elijah, when he raised the widow's son from the dead (I Kings 17:20, 22).
- Prayer was *the instrument* which stopped the supply of rain for three years and a half, in the days of Ahab (James 5:17).
- Prayer was *the censer*, which brought the consuming fire to the sacrifice on Carmel's mount (I Kings 18:36).
- Prayer *increased the cloud*, no bigger than a man's hand, to one which covered the heavens, and its waters satisfied the thirsty land (I Kings 18:4-2).
- Prayer was *the conductor of life* to the Shunnamite's son (II Kings 4:33).
- Prayer was *the eye-salve* which caused the young man to see the Lord's army, protecting Elisha and himself (II Kings 6:17).
- Prayer was *the dust* which blinded the eyes of Elisha's enemies, when sent to capture the prophet (II Kings 6:18).
- Prayer was *the saviour* of Jehoahaz, bringing deliverance from the king of Syria (II Kings 13:4).
- Prayer was *the angel* that smote Sennacherib, giving Hezekiah signal victory (II Kings 19; Isaiah 37).
- Prayer was *the physician* who added fifteen years to the life of Hezekiah, and caused the shadow to go back ten degrees (II Kings 20:3, 11).
- Prayer was *the power that opened the floodgates* of prosperity to Jabez (I Chronicles 4:10).
- Prayer was *the dynamite which scattered* the forces of the Ethiopian (II Chronicles 14:11, 12).
- Prayer was *the connecting band* which gave Jehoshaphat the power of God to overthrow the combined forces of Ammon and Moab (II Chronicles 20).
- Prayer was *the key that unlocked* the prison-house of Manasseh, and gave him deliverance from Babylon (II Chronicles 33:11-13).
- Prayer was *the stimulant* which nerved Nehemiah to proceed with the building of the wall of Jerusalem, in the face of determined opposition (Nehemiah 4:9).

- Prayer was *the muzzle on the lions' mouths*, when Daniel was in the den; it was also his keeper and deliverer (Daniel 6).
- Prayer was *the key which delivered* Jonah from his three days' and nights' imprisonment (Jonah 2:1, 10).
- Prayer was *the expression of faith* which procured cleansing to the leper, from the Divine cleanser (Matthew 8:2-4).
- Prayer *showed the reality* of Blind Bartimaeus' faith, when sight was given (Mark 10:4-7).
- Prayer *revealed the strong faith* of the Syrophenician woman, in the power of Christ to expel the demon from her daughter (Matthew 15:22).
- Prayer was *the balm* that soothed the bereaved sisters at Bethany (John 11:32).
- Prayer was *the harbor* where Christ, in his weariness, found rest (Matthew 14:23).
- Prayer *brought joy* to the heart-broken father, when he saw his son freed from Satan's power (Matthew 17:15).
- Prayer was *the power* which brought the hand of the Lord to save sinking Peter (Matthew 14:31).
- Prayer was *the carriage* which brought Christ to the ruler's house, to raise his daughter (Matthew 9:15, 19).
- Prayer *brought the earthquake* which caused the prison at Philippi to shake to its foundations (Acts 16:26).
- Prayer was *the heavenly messenger* which brought Peter out of prison (Acts 12:12).
- Prayer was *the opener of the door* at Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out (Acts 1:14-); and
- Prayer was *the means of emboldening the disciples*, so that they fearlessly witnessed of Christ (Acts 4:31).

These are some instances of the power of prayer, or of what God did in answer to prayer, as recorded in His Word. Those who have been men of power in the service of God, have always been men of prayer, as Mary Queen of Scots confessed: - "I fear John Knox's prayers more than an army of ten thousand men."

II - The Prayer of Power.

Would we have the prayer of power? Then we must recognize the following conditions:-

1. The name of Jesus is the Plea in the prayer of power.

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13-14).

To use a person's name, generally means that we are Authorized to do so, and that there is some advantage to be gained.

"Mention my name," says a friend, in writing to another, when he wants to get a certain article for a given purpose.

The signature on the check means that he who signs it is ready to pay the amount stated.

Petitions must not be in our name, for we have no account in the bank of Heaven. But Christ has, and His name holds good for the amount.

Look at the pyramid of blessing in Ephesians 3:20:-

“Ask”
“All that we ask”
“All that we ask or think”
“Above all that we ask or think”
“Abundantly above all that we ask or think”
“Exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think”
“Able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think”

2. A heart not condemning us, marks the state of soul in the prayer of power.

“And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.” (I John 3:19-22).

If there is anything between our souls and God, any enmity or root of bitterness, any malice or uncharitableness - we have no confidence in prayer, for these sins will obscure our vision, and will, like specters, haunt us when we draw near to the throne of grace.

It was vain for Joshua to pour out his complaint, regarding the defeat at Ai, while Achan lay undiscovered, but as soon as the sin was judged, God was ready to work with his people. The heart, must be right with God, before He can regard our petitions, and reward our plea.

3. The prayer of faith is the repose of the soul in the God of power.

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” Hebrews 11:6).

We do not attach any merit to prayer, as some seem to do when they say, “Pray for me,” as if there was special merit in the person whose prayers are asked. But we do need the prayer of faith.

Very often we pray, and do not expect an answer. Like the gathered disciples praying for the release of Peter, who were much astonished when he, in person, sought admission to their company. Like many to-day, too often ask and ask, and expect no answer; and when the Lord graciously answers, we are taken by surprise. We need to learn from the Psalmist, who says, **“In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up”** (Psalm 5:3); as much as to say, “I shall be on the look-out for the answer, and wait until it arrives.”

4. The Holy Spirit is the effectual cause of the prayer of power.

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Romans 8:26-27)

“Praying in the Holy Ghost” (Jude 20).

The following quotation from Andrew Murray’s *Spirit of Christ*, is a fitting summary of the chapter on “The Spirit of Prayer,” where these Scriptures are dealt with:

“Now we can understand how the Lord, in the last night, could give us those wonderful prayer-promises, with their oft-repeated **‘What ye will.’**”

He meant us to have the Holy Spirit praying in us, guiding our desires, and strengthening our faith. He expected us to give our whole being to the indwelling of the Spirit, that He might have free scope to pray in us, according to God. Let us take up the holy calling, and give ourselves to the Holy Spirit to pray in us. **‘We know not how to pray as we ought:’** how often this has been a burden and a sorrow! Let it henceforth be a comfort. Because we do not know, we may stand aside, and give place to One who does know. We may believe that in our stammerings, or even sighs, the mighty Intercessor is pleading.

Let us not be afraid to believe, that within our ignorance and feebleness, the Holy Spirit is hidden, doing His work. **‘As we ought.’** The great ought of prayer is faith. The Spirit is the Spirit of faith, deeper than thought. Let us be of good courage, our faith is in the keeping of the Spirit. Here, as elsewhere, all leads up to one point: the Holy Spirit’s indwelling must be our one care. In faith that holds the promise, in tender watchfulness that waits for and follows His leading, in the entire surrender of the flesh to the death, that He alone may rule and lead, let us yield ourselves to our beloved Lord to fill us with His Spirit: the Spirit will do His work.”

5. Abiding in Christ is the secret of the prayer of power.

“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7).

What does it mean to **“abide in Christ?”**

There are at least seven evidences given to us, which prove our abiding in Christ.

First. *Abiding in Christ brings freedom from the power of sin, and from the love of it.*

“Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him” (I John 3:6).

To be kept from consciously sinning, is true Christian experience; as Dr. Saphir says,

“Why is it that, when we possess a Saviour whose love and power are infinite, we are so often filled with fear and despondency? We are wearied and faint in our minds, because we do not look steadfastly unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith, who is set down at the right hand of God - unto Him whose Omnipotence embraces both Heaven and earth, who is strong and mighty in His feeble saints.

“While we remember our weakness, we forget His all-sufficient power. While we acknowledge that apart from Christ we can do nothing, we do not rise to the height or depth of Christian humility, **‘I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.’** While we trust in the power of the death of Jesus, to cancel the guilt of sin, we do not exercise a reliant and appropriating faith in the Omnipotence of the living Saviour, to deliver us from the bondage and power of sin in our daily life. We forget that Christ worketh in us mightily, and that, one with Him, we possess strength sufficient to overcome every temptation.

We are apt either to forget our nothingness, and imagine that in our daily path we can live without sin, that the duties and trials of our everyday life can be performed and borne in our own strength; or we do not avail ourselves of the Omnipotence of Jesus, who is able to subdue all things to Himself, and to keep us from the daily infirmities and falls, which we are apt to imagine an inevitable necessity.

If we really depended in all things, and at all times, on Christ, we should in all things, and at all times, gain the victory, through Him whose power is infinite, and who is appointed by the Father to be the Captain of our salvation. Then all our deeds would be wrought, not merely before, but in God. We should then do all things to the glory of the Father, in the all-powerful name of Jesus, who is our Sanctification. Remember, that unto Him all power is given in Heaven and on earth, and live by the constant exercise of faith in His power. Let us most fully believe, that we have, and are nothing, that with man it is impossible, that in ourselves we have no life which can bring forth fruit; but that Christ is all, that abiding in Him, and His Word dwelling in us, we can bring forth fruit to the glory of the Father.”

Second. Abiding in Christ means the keeping of the Lord's commands.

“And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him.” (I John 3:24).

There is one word which sums up the Christian life, and that word is obedience.

When the heart throbs with love to Christ, it shows itself in ready response to His directions. “Obedience is the key to every door,” the solution to every difficulty, the killer of every doubt, the lifter to every good, the obtainer of every blessing, the measure of all power, and the proof positive that we are abiding in the Lord.

Third. Abiding in Christ shows itself in fruit borne.

“He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit “ (John 15:5).

Bringing forth fruit to God, is far more than working for Him.

There are many who are busy about the Lord's work, who are not bearing fruit to His glory. Fruit-bearing has to do with the personal character. We are told in Galatians 5:22, 23, what the **"fruit of the Spirit"** is.

- The **"love, joy, and peace"** are the God-ward features of the fruit-bearing. Love to Him, joy in Him, and peace with Him.
- The **"long-suffering, gentleness, and goodness,"** are the things which should characterize the child of God in his dealings with others: enduring under trial, gentle under provocation, and helping those who are in need.
- The **"faith, meekness, and temperance,"** are what the believer is to have in his personal life: personal confidence in the Lord, personal likeness to the Lord, and personal control through the Lord.

These are the fruits the Lord loves to come and gather in His garden (Song of Solomon 4:16), and which demonstrate we are in living union with Himself.

Fourth. *Abiding in Christ manifests itself in love.*

"God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (I John 4:16).
"He that loveth his brother abideth in the light" (I John 2:10).
"If we love one another . . . hereby know we that we dwell in Him" (I John 4:12, 13).

God plainly tells us that we can only show our love to Him, by the sympathy we have for each other. Carlyle was not far out when he defined love as "a discerning of the Infinite in the finite, of the Ideal made real."

Love is like the sun, it paints the flowers of earth with the glories of Heaven, and they in turn throw off their fragrance on all around: The language of love is one that needs no interpreter. It tells out itself in its actions.

Fifth, *Abiding in Christ, means walking as Christ walked.*

"He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk, even as He walked" (I John 2:6).

He walked:

- submissive to truth,
- dependent on the Spirit,
- humble in heart,
- prayerful in life,
- loving God's will,
- doing His work, and
- living for the glory of His Father.

Following Him, we shall in some measure be like Him, even as the child seeks to imitate the parent it loves.

Sixth. *Abiding in Christ, we shall continue in His Word.*

“If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed” (John 8:31).

Ruskin says,

“He only is advancing in life whose heart is growing softer, whose blood is warmer, whose brain is quicker, whose spirit is entering into living peace.”

Advancement is the very soul of continuance.

If we are not going forward, we are going back. A Christian is like one on a bicycle - if he does not go on he will go off. How can we continue in Christ's Word? By believing it fully, by obeying it unhesitatingly, and by loving it supremely.

Seventh. *Abiding in Christ, we shall be faithful to God's truth.*

- **“If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father”** (I John 2:24).

- **“He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son”** (II John 9)

The above Scriptures have one thought in them, namely, the remaining in the truth of God. The truth is the mould in which the character is formed; and the magnet by which people are attracted from the haunts of sin to the heart of God. Let anyone go “onward” past the truth, then he will place himself beyond the influence of truth, and thus lose the formative power which makes like Christ; and he will cease also to ply the instrument which the Holy Spirit uses to bring men to the Saviour.

6. The prayer of power runs along the lines of the Word of God.

“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him” (I John 5:14-15)

Christ did not merely say, **“If ye abide in Me . . . ye shall ask what ye will;”** He said also, **“and My words abide in you”** (John 15:7).

It is by the Word of God that we know the will of God.

Watson has well said, “The tree of promise will not drop its fruit, unless shaken by the hand of prayer.” This is true: only let us take care that we shake the tree of promise, and not the tree of our own fancies.

Prayer according to the Word is, as Charnock remarks, “Nothing else but a presenting God with His own promises, desiring Him to work that in us and for us, which He hath promised to us.”

If the promises of God are dwelling in us, we shall have matter enough to pray about, and we shall pray aright, for the prayer will be according to the words of Jesus, and thus shall it be in us as a bubbling spring, manifesting itself in earnest supplication.

7. The glory of God is the only aim in the prayer of power.

“**Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts** “
(James 4:3)

Many prayers are for selfish ends.

We look on our own plans, and want them blessed. We have an eye to our interests, and ask God to bless us. But will God answer our prayers for this end? We trow not.

The one thought in Christ’s promising to answer prayer is, “**That the Father may be glorified in the Son**” (John 14:13).

Let us not ask amiss, that is, crave our own petitions for our desire’s sake, but for the Lord’s glory alone. Then we shall find, that what is for the Lord’s glory, must be for our good.

As we thus pray the prayer of power, we shall prove the power of prayer; and shall say with Tennyson:-

“More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of, Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish blind life within the brain;
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God,”

~ end of chapter 21 ~

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