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2

3

4 THE

5 MINISTRY OF INTERCESSION

6

7 A PLEA FOR MORE PRAYER

8

9 BY THE

10

11 REV. ANDREW MURRAY

12

13 WELLINGTON, S. AFRICA

14

15 AUTHOR OF

16 "THE HOLIEST OF ALL" "ABIDE IN CHRIST"

17 "WAITING ON GOD" "THE LORD'S TABLE"

18 ETC. ETC.

19

20 "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor
21 night: ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He
22 establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." ISA. lxii. 6, 7.

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38

39 TO

40 MY BRETHREN IN THE MINISTRY

41 AND

42 OTHER FELLOW-LABOURERS IN THE GOSPEL

43

44 WHOM IT WAS MY PRIVILEGE TO MEET

45 IN THE CONVENTIONS AT

46 LANGLAAGTE, JOHANNESBURG, AND HEILBRON

47 DURBAN AND PIETERMARITZBURG
48 KING WILLIAM'S TOWN, PORT ELIZABETH
49 AND STELLENBOSCH

50
51 THIS VOLUME
52 IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

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110 THE MINISTRY OF INTERCESSION

111

112

113 There is no holy service

114 But hath its secret bliss:

115 Yet, of all blessed ministries,

116 Is one so dear as this?

117 The ministry that cannot be

118 A wondering seraph's dower,

119 Enduing mortal weakness

120 With more than angel-power;

121 The ministry of purest love

122 Uncrossed by any fear,

123 That bids us meet At the Master's feet

124 And keeps us very near.

125

126 God's ministers are many,

127 For this His gracious will,

128 Remembrancers that day and night

129 This holy office fill.

130 While some are hushed in slumber,

131 Some to fresh service wake,

132 And thus the saintly number

133 No change or chance can break.

134 And thus the sacred courses

135 Are evermore fulfilled,

136 The tide of grace By time or place

137 Is never stayed or stilled.

138

139 Oh, if our ears were opened
140 To hear as angels do
141 The Intercession-chorus
142 Arising full and true,
143 We should hear it soft up-welling
144 In morning's pearly light;
145 Through evening's shadows swelling
146 In grandly gathering might;
147 The sultry silence filling
148 Of noontide's thunderous glow,
149 And the solemn starlight thrilling
150 With ever-deepening flow.
151
152 We should hear it through the rushing
153 Of the city's restless roar,
154 And trace its gentle gushing
155 O'er ocean's crystal floor:
156 We should hear it far up-floating
157 Beneath the Orient moon,
158 And catch the golden noting
159 From the busy Western noon;
160 And pine-robed heights would echo
161 As the mystic chant up-floats,
162 And the sunny plain Resound again
163 With the myriad-mingling notes.
164
165 Who are the blessed ministers
166 Of this world-gathering band?
167 All who have learnt one language,
168 Through each far-parted land;
169 All who have learnt the story
170 Of Jesu's love and grace,
171 And are longing for His glory
172 To shine in every face.
173 All who have known the Father
174 In Jesus Christ our Lord,
175 And know the might And love the light
176 Of the Spirit in the Word.
177
178 Yet there are some who see not
179 Their calling high and grand,
180 Who seldom pass the portals,
181 And never boldly stand
182 Before the golden altar
183 On the crimson-stained floor,
184 Who wait afar and falter,

185 And dare not hope for more.
186 Will ye not join the blessd ranks
187 In their beautiful array?
188 Let intercession blend with thanks
189 As ye minister to-day!
190
191 There are little ones among them
192 Child-ministers of prayer,
193 White robes of intercession
194 Those tiny servants wear.
195 First for the near and dear ones
196 Is that fair ministry,
197 Then for the poor black children,
198 So far beyond the sea.
199 The busy hands are folded,
200 As the little heart uplifts
201 In simple love, To God above,
202 Its prayer for all good gifts.
203
204 There are hands too often weary
205 With the business of the day,
206 With God-entrusted duties,
207 Who are toiling while they pray.
208 They bear the golden vials,
209 And the golden harps of praise
210 Through all the daily trials,
211 Through all the dusty ways,
212 These hands, so tired, so faithful,
213 With odours sweet are filled,
214 And in the ministry of prayer
215 Are wonderfully skilled.
216
217 There are ministers unlettered,
218 Not of Earth's great and wise,
219 Yet mighty and unfettered
220 Their eagle-prayers arise.
221 Free of the heavenly storehouse!
222 For they hold the master-key
223 That opens all the fulness
224 Of God's great treasury.
225 They bring the needs of others,
226 And all things are their own,
227 For their one grand claim Is Jesu's name
228 Before their Father's throne.
229
230 There are noble Christian workers,

231 The men of faith and power,
232 The overcoming wrestlers
233 Of many a midnight hour;
234 Prevailing princes with their God,
235 Who will not be denied,
236 Who bring down showers of blessing
237 To swell the rising tide.
238 The Prince of Darkness quailth
239 At their triumphant way,
240 Their fervent prayer availeth
241 To sap his subtle sway.
242
243 But in this temple service
244 Are sealed and set apart
245 Arch-priests of intercession,
246 Of undivided heart.
247 The fulness of anointing
248 On these is doubly shed,
249 The consecration of their God
250 Is on each low-bowed head.
251 They bear the golden vials
252 With white and trembling hand;
253 In quiet room Or wakeful gloom
254 These ministers must stand,—
255
256 To the Intercession-Priesthood
257 Mysteriously ordained,
258 When the strange dark gift of suffering
259 This added gift hath gained.
260 For the holy hands uplifted
261 In suffering's longest hour
262 Are truly Spirit-gifted
263 With intercession-power.
264 The Lord of Blessing fills them
265 With His uncounted gold,
266 An unseen store, Still more and more,
267 Those trembling hands shall hold.
268
269 Not always with rejoicing
270 This ministry is wrought,
271 For many a sigh is mingled
272 With the sweet odours brought.
273 Yet every tear bedewing
274 The faith-fed altar fire
275 May be its bright renewing
276 To purer flame, and higher.

277 But when the oil of gladness
278 God graciously outpours,
279 The heavenward blaze,
280 With blended praise,
281 More mightily upsoars.
282
283 So the incense-cloud ascendeth
284 As through calm, crystal air,
285 A pillar reaching unto heaven
286 Of wreathd faith and prayer.
287 For evermore the Angel
288 Of Intercession stands
289 In His Divine High Priesthood
290 With fragrance-filld hands,
291 To wave the golden censer
292 Before His Father's throne,
293 With Spirit-fire intenser,
294 And incense all His own.
295
296 And evermore the Father
297 Sends radiantly down
298 All-marvellous responses,
299 His ministers to crown;
300 The incense-cloud returning
301 As golden blessing-showers,
302 We in each drop discerning
303 Some feeble prayer of ours,
304 Transmuted into wealth unpriced,
305 By Him who giveth thus
306 The glory all to Jesus Christ,
307 The gladness all to us!

308
309 F. R. HAVERGAL.

310
311 _September_ 1877.

312
313

314
315

316 INTRODUCTION

317
318

319 I have been asked by a friend, who heard of this book being published, what the difference
320 would be between it and the previous one on the same subject, WITH CHRIST IN THE
321 SCHOOL OF PRAYER. An answer to that question may be the best introduction I can give to
322 the present volume.

323
324 Any acceptance the former work has had must be attributed, as far as the contents go, to the
325 prominence given to two great truths. The one was, the certainty that prayer will be answered.
326 There is with some an idea that to ask and expect an answer is not the highest form of prayer.
327 Fellowship with God, apart from any request, is more than supplication. About the petition there
328 is something of selfishness and bargaining—to worship is more than to beg. With others the
329 thought that prayer is so often unanswered is so prominent, that they think more of the spiritual
330 benefit derived from the exercise of prayer than the actual gifts to be obtained by it. While
331 admitting the measure of truth in these views, when kept in their true place, THE SCHOOL OF
332 PRAYER points out how our Lord continually spoke of prayer as a means of obtaining what we
333 desire, and how He seeks in every possible way to waken in us the confident expectation of an
334 answer. I was led to show how prayer, in which a man could enter into the mind of God, could
335 assert the royal power of a renewed will, and bring down to earth what without prayer would not
336 have been given, is the highest proof of his having been made in the likeness of God's Son. He is
337 found worthy of entering into fellowship with Him, not only in adoration and worship, but in
338 having his will actually taken up into the rule of the world, and becoming the intelligent channel
339 through which God can fulfil his eternal purpose. The book sought to reiterate and enforce the
340 precious truths Christ preaches so continually: the blessing of prayer is that you can ask and
341 receive what you will: the highest exercise and the glory of prayer is that persevering
342 importunity can prevail and obtain what God at first could not and would not give.

343
344 With this truth there was a second one that came out very strongly as we studied the Master's
345 words. In answer to the question, But why, if the answer to prayer is so positively promised, why
346 are there such numberless unanswered prayers? We found that Christ taught us that the answer
347 depended upon certain conditions. He spoke of faith, of perseverance, of praying in His Name, of
348 praying in the will of God. But all these conditions were summed up in the one central one: “_If
349 ye abide in Me, ask whatsoever ye will and it shall be done unto you.” It became clear that the
350 power to pray the effectual prayer of faith depended _upon the life_. It is only to a man given up
351 to live as entirely in Christ and for Christ as the branch in the vine and for the vine, that these
352 promises can come true. “_In that day_,” Christ said, the day of Pentecost, “ye shall ask in My
353 Name.” It is only in a life full of the Holy Spirit that the true power to ask in Christ's Name can
354 be known. This led to the emphasising the truth that the ordinary Christian life cannot
355 appropriate these promises. It needs a spiritual life, altogether sound and vigorous, to pray in
356 power. The teaching naturally led to press the need of a life of entire consecration. More than
357 one has told me how it was in the reading of the book that he first saw what the better life was
358 that could be lived, and must be lived, if Christ's wonderful promises are to come true to us.

359
360 In regard to these two truths there is no change in the present volume. One only wishes that one
361 could put them with such clearness and force as to help every beloved fellow-Christian to some
362 right impression of the reality and the glory of our privilege as God's children: “Ask whatsoever
363 ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” The present volume owes its existence to the desire to
364 enforce two truths, of which formerly I had no such impression as now.

365
366 The one is—that Christ actually meant prayer to be the great power by which His Church should
367 do its work, and that the neglect of prayer is the great reason the Church has not greater power
368 over the masses in Christian and in heathen countries. In the first chapter I have stated how my

369 convictions in regard to this have been strengthened, and what gave occasion to the writing of
370 the book. It is meant to be, on behalf of myself and my brethren in the ministry and all God's
371 people, a confession of shortcoming and of sin, and, at the same time, a call to believe that things
372 can be different, and that Christ waits to fit us by His Spirit to pray as He would have us. This
373 call, of course, brings me back to what I spoke of in connection with the former volume: that
374 there is a life in the Spirit, a life of abiding in Christ, within our reach, in which the power of
375 prayer—both the power to pray and the power to obtain the answer—can be realised in a
376 measure which we could not have thought possible before. Any failure in the prayer-life, any
377 desire or hope really to take the place Christ has prepared for us, brings us to the very root of the
378 doctrine of grace as manifested in the Christian life. It is only by a full surrender to the life of
379 abiding, by the yielding to the fulness of the Spirit's leading and quickening, that the prayer-life
380 can be restored to a truly healthy state. I feel deeply how little I have been able to put this in the
381 volume as I could wish. I have prayed and am trusting that God, who chooses the weak things,
382 will use it for His own glory.

383
384 The second truth which I have sought to enforce is that we have far too little conception of the
385 place that intercession, as distinguished from prayer for ourselves, ought to have in the Church
386 and the Christian life. In intercession our King upon the throne finds His highest glory; in it we
387 shall find our highest glory too. Through it He continues His saving work, and can do nothing
388 without it; through it alone we can do our work, and nothing avails without it. In it He ever
389 receives from the Father the Holy Spirit and all spiritual blessings to impart; in it we too are
390 called to receive in ourselves the fulness of God's Spirit, with the power to impart spiritual
391 blessing to others. The power of the Church truly to bless rests on intercession—asking and
392 receiving heavenly gifts to carry to men. Because this is so, it is no wonder that where, owing to
393 lack of teaching or spiritual insight, we trust in our own diligence and effort, to the influence of
394 the world and the flesh, and work more than we pray, the presence and power of God are not
395 seen in our work as we would wish.

396
397 Such thoughts have led me to wonder what could be done to rouse believers to a sense of their
398 high calling in this, and to help and train them to take part in it. And so this book differs from the
399 former one in the attempt to open a practising school, and to invite all who have never taken
400 systematic part in the great work of intercession to begin and give themselves to it. There are
401 tens of thousands of workers who have known and are proving wonderfully what prayer can do.
402 But there are tens of thousands who work with but little prayer, and as many more who do not
403 work because they do not know how or where, who might all be won to swell the host of
404 intercessors who are to bring down the blessings of heaven to earth. For their sakes, and the sake
405 of all who feel the need of help, I have prepared helps and hints for a school of intercession for a
406 month (see the Appendix). I have asked those who would join, to begin by giving at least ten
407 minutes a day definitely to this work. It is in doing that we learn to do; it is as we take hold and
408 begin that the help of God's Spirit will come. It is as we daily hear God's call, and at once put it
409 into practice, that the consciousness will begin to live in us, I too am an intercessor; and that we
410 shall feel the need of living in Christ and being full of the Spirit if we are to do this work aright.
411 Nothing will so test and stimulate the Christian life as the honest attempt to be an intercessor. It
412 is difficult to conceive how much we ourselves and the Church will be the gainers, if with our
413 whole heart we accept the post of honour God is offering us. With regard to the school of
414 intercession, I am confident that the result of the first month's course will be to awake the feeling

415 of how little we know how to intercede. And a second and a third month may only deepen the
416 sense of ignorance and unfitness. This will be an unspeakable blessing. The confession, “We
417 know not how to pray as we ought,” is the introduction to the experience, “The Spirit maketh
418 intercession for us”—our sense of ignorance will lead us to depend upon the Spirit praying in us,
419 to feel the need of living in the Spirit.

420
421 We have heard a great deal of systematic Bible study, and we praise God for thousands on
422 thousands of Bible classes and Bible readings. Let all the leaders of such classes see whether
423 they could not open prayer classes—helping their students to pray in secret, and training them to
424 be, above everything, men of prayer. Let ministers ask what they can do in this. The faith in
425 God’s word can nowhere be so exercised and perfected as in the intercession that asks and
426 expects and looks out for the answer. Throughout Scripture, in the life of every saint, of God’s
427 own Son, throughout the history of God’s Church, God is, first of all, a prayer-hearing God. Let
428 us try and help God’s children to know their God, and encourage all God’s servants to labour
429 with the assurance: the chief and most blessed part of my work is to ask and receive from my
430 Father what I can bring to others.

431
432 It will now easily be understood how what this book contains will be nothing but the
433 confirmation and the call to put into practice the two great lessons of the former one. “_Ask
434 whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done to you_”; “_Whatever ye ask, believe that ye have
435 received_”: these great prayer-promises, as part of the Church’s enduement of power for her
436 work, are to be taken as literally and actually true. “_If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in
437 you_”; “_In that day ye shall ask in My Name_”: these great prayer-conditions are universal and
438 unchangeable. A life abiding in Christ and filled with the Spirit, a life entirely given up as a
439 branch for the work of the vine, has the power to claim these promises and to pray the effectual
440 prayer that availeth much. Lord, teach us to pray.

441
442 ANDREW MURRAY.

443
444 WELLINGTON, _1st September 1897_.

445
446
447
448
449 A PLEA FOR MORE PRAYER

450
451
452
453
454 CHAPTER I

455
456 The Lack of Prayer

457
458 “Ye have not, because ye ask not.”—JAS. iv. 2.

459
460 “And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor.”—ISA. lix. 16.

461
462 “There is none that calleth upon Thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee.”—ISA.
463 lxiv. 7.
464

465
466 At our last Wellington Convention for the Deepening of the Spiritual Life, in April, the forenoon
467 meetings were devoted to prayer and intercession. Great blessing was found, both in listening to
468 what the Word teaches of their need and power, and in joining in continued united supplication.
469 Many felt that we know too little of persevering importunate prayer, and that it is indeed one of
470 the greatest needs of the Church.
471

472 During the past two months I have been attending a number of Conventions. At the first, a Dutch
473 Missionary Conference at Langlaagte, Prayer had been chosen as the subject of the addresses. At
474 the next, at Johannesburg, a brother in business gave expression to his deep conviction that the
475 great want of the Church of our day was, more of the spirit and practice of intercession. A week
476 later we had a Dutch Ministerial Conference in the Free State, where three days were spent, after
477 two days’ services in the congregation on the work of the Holy Spirit, in considering the relation
478 of the Spirit to prayer. At the ministerial meetings held at most of the succeeding conventions,
479 we were led to take up the subject, and everywhere there was the confession: We pray too little!
480 And with this there appeared to be a fear that, with the pressure of duty and the force of habit, it
481 was almost impossible to hope for any great change.
482

483 I cannot say what a deep impression was made upon me by these conversations. Most of all, by
484 the thought that there should be anything like hopelessness on the part of God’s servants as to the
485 prospect of an entire change being effected, and real deliverance found from a failure which
486 cannot but hinder our own joy in God, and our power in His service. And I prayed God to give
487 me words that might not only help to direct attention to the evil, but, specially, that might stir up
488 faith, and waken the assurance that God by His Spirit will enable us to pray as we ought.
489

490 Let me begin, for the sake of those who have never had their attention directed to the matter, by
491 stating some of the facts that prove how universal is the sense of shortcoming in this respect.
492

493 Last year there appeared a report of an address to ministers by Dr. Whyte, of Free St. George’s,
494 Edinburgh. In that he said that, as a young minister, he had thought that, of the time he had over
495 from pastoral visitation, he ought to spend as much as possible with his books in his study. He
496 wanted to feed his people with the very best he could prepare for them. But he had now learned
497 that prayer was of more importance than study. He reminded his brethren of the election of
498 deacons to take charge of the collections, that the twelve might “give themselves to prayer and
499 the ministry of the word,” and said that at times, when the deacons brought him his salary, he
500 had to ask himself whether he had been as faithful in his engagement as the deacons had been to
501 theirs. He felt as if it were almost too late to regain what he had lost, and urged his brethren to
502 pray more. What a solemn confession and warning from one of the high places: We pray too
503 little!
504

505 During the Regent Square Convention two years ago the subject came up in conversation with a
506 well-known London minister. He urged that if so much time must be given to prayer, it would

507 involve the neglect of the imperative calls of duty “There is the morning post, before breakfast,
508 with ten or twelve letters which must be answered. Then there are committee meetings
509 waiting, with numberless other engagements, more than enough to fill up the day. It is difficult to
510 see how it can be done.”

511
512 My answer was, in substance, that it was simply a question of whether the call of God for our
513 time and attention was of more importance than that of man. If God was waiting to meet us, and
514 to give us blessing and power from heaven for His work, it was a short-sighted policy to put
515 other work in the place which God and waiting on Him should have.

516
517 At one of our ministerial meetings, the superintendent of a large district put the case thus: “I rise
518 in the morning and have half an hour with God, in the Word and prayer, in my room before
519 breakfast. I go out, and am occupied all day with a multiplicity of engagements. I do not think
520 many minutes elapse without my breathing a prayer for guidance or help. After my day’s work, I
521 return in my evening devotions and speak to God of the day’s work. But of the intense, definite,
522 importunate prayer of which Scripture speaks one knows little.” What, he asked, must I think of
523 such a life?

524
525 We all know the difference between a man whose profits are just enough to maintain his family
526 and keep up his business, and another whose income enables him to extend the business and to
527 help others. There may be an earnest Christian life in which there is prayer enough to keep us
528 from going back, and just maintain the position we have attained to, without much of growth in
529 spirituality or Christlikeness. The attitude is more defensive, seeking to ward off temptation, than
530 aggressive, reaching out after higher attainment. If there is indeed to be a going from strength to
531 strength, with some large experience of God’s power to sanctify ourselves and to bring down real
532 blessing on others, there must be more definite and persevering prayer. The Scripture teaching
533 about crying day and night, continuing steadfastly in prayer, watching unto prayer, being heard
534 for his importunity, must in some degree become our experience if we are really to be
535 intercessors.

536
537 At the very next Convention the same question was put in somewhat different form. “I am at the
538 head of a station, with a large outlying district to care for. I see the importance of much prayer,
539 and yet my life hardly leaves room for it. Are we to submit? Or tell us how we can attain to what
540 we desire?” I admitted that the difficulty was universal. I recalled the words of one of our most
541 honoured South African missionaries, now gone to his rest: he had the same complaint. “In the
542 morning at five the sick people are at the door waiting for medicine. At six the printers come, and
543 I have to set them to work and teach them. At nine the school calls me, and till late at night I am
544 kept busy with a large correspondence.” In my answer I quoted a Dutch proverb: ‘What is
545 heaviest must weigh heaviest,’—must have the first place. The law of God is unchangeable: as
546 on earth, so in our traffic with heaven, we only get as we give. Unless we are willing to pay the
547 price, and sacrifice time and attention and what appear legitimate or necessary duties, for the
548 sake of the heavenly gifts, we need not look for a large experience of the power of the heavenly
549 world in our work. The whole company present joined in the sad confession; it had been thought
550 over, and mourned over, times without number; and yet, somehow, there they were, all these
551 pressing claims, and all the ineffectual resolves to pray more, barring the way. I need not now

552 say to what further thoughts our conversation led; the substance of them will be found in some of
553 the later chapters in this volume.

554

555 Let me call just one more witness. In the course of my journey I met with one of the Cowley
556 Fathers, who had just been holding Retreats for clergy of the English Church. I was interested to
557 hear from him the line of teaching he follows. In the course of conversation he used the
558 expression—"the distraction of business," and it came out that he found it one of the great
559 difficulties he had to deal with in himself and others. Of himself, he said that by the vows of his
560 Order he was bound to give himself specially to prayer. But he found it exceedingly difficult.
561 Every day he had to be at four different points of the town he lived in; his predecessor had left
562 him the charge of a number of committees where he was expected to do all the work; it was as if
563 everything conspired to keep him from prayer.

564

565 All this testimony surely suffices to make clear that prayer has not the place it ought to have in
566 our ministerial and Christian life; that the shortcoming is one of which all are willing to make
567 confession; and that the difficulties in the way of deliverance are such as to make a return to a
568 true and full prayer-life almost impossible. Blessed be God—"The things that are impossible
569 with men are possible with God"! "God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye,
570 always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to all good work." Do let us believe that
571 God's call to much prayer need not be a burden and cause of continual self-condemnation. He
572 means it to be a joy. He can make it an inspiration, giving us strength for all our work, and
573 bringing down His power to work through us in our fellowmen. Let us not fear to admit to the
574 full the sin that shames us, and then to face it in the name of our Mighty Redeemer. _The light
575 that shows us our sin and condemns us for it, will show us the way out of it, into the life of
576 liberty that is well-pleasing to God._ If we allow this one matter, unfaithfulness in prayer, to
577 convict us of the lack in our Christian life which lies at the root of it, God will use the discovery
578 to bring us not only the power to pray that we long for, but the joy of a new and healthy life, of
579 which prayer is the spontaneous expression.

580

581 And what is now the way by which our sense of the lack of prayer can be made the means of
582 blessing, the entrance on a path in which the evil may be conquered? How can our intercourse
583 with the Father, in continual prayer and intercession, become what it ought to be, if we and the
584 world around us are to be blessed? As it appears to me, we must begin by going back to God's
585 Word, to study what _the place is God means prayer to have_ in the life of His child and His
586 Church. A fresh sight of what prayer is _according to the will of God_, of what our prayers can
587 be, _through the grace of God_, will free us from those feeble defective views, in regard to the
588 absolute necessity of continual prayer, which lie at the root of our failure. As we get an insight
589 into the reasonableness and rightness of this divine appointment, and come under the full
590 conviction of how wonderfully it fits in with God's love and our own happiness, we shall be
591 freed from the false impression of its being an arbitrary demand. We shall with our whole heart
592 and soul consent to it and rejoice in it, as the one only possible way for the blessing of heaven to
593 come to earth. All thought of task and burden, of self-effort and strain, will pass away in the
594 blessed faith that as simple as breathing is in the healthy natural life, will praying be in the
595 Christian life that is led and filled by the Spirit of God.

596

597 As we occupy ourselves with and accept this teaching of God's Word on prayer, we shall be led
598 to see how our failure in the prayer-life was owing to failure in the Spirit-life. Prayer is one of
599 the most heavenly and spiritual of the functions of the Spirit-life. How could we try or expect to
600 fulfil it so as to please God, except as our soul is in perfect health, and our life truly possessed
601 and moved by God's Spirit? The insight into the place God means prayer to take, and which it
602 only can take, in a full Christian life, will show us that we have not been living the true, the
603 abundant life, and that any thought of praying more and effectually will be vain, except as we are
604 brought into a closer relation to our Blessed Lord Jesus. Christ is our life, Christ liveth in us, in
605 such reality that His life of prayer on earth, and of intercession in heaven, is breathed into us in
606 just such measure as our surrender and our faith allow and accept it. Jesus Christ is the Healer of
607 all diseases, the Conqueror of all enemies, the Deliverer from all sin; if our failure teaches us to
608 turn afresh to Him, and find in Him the grace He gives to pray as we ought, this humiliation may
609 become our greatest blessing. Let us all unite in praying God that He would visit our souls and fit
610 us for that work of intercession, which is at this moment the greatest need of the Church and the
611 world. It is only by intercession that that power can be brought down from Heaven which will
612 enable the Church to conquer the world. Let us stir up the slumbering gift that is lying unused,
613 and seek to gather and train and band together as many as we can, to be God's remembrancers,
614 and to give Him no rest till He makes His Church a joy in the earth. Nothing but intense
615 believing prayer can meet the intense spirit of worldliness, of which complaint is everywhere
616 made.

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621 A PLEA FOR MORE PRAYER

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623 CHAPTER II

624

625 The Ministration of the Spirit and Prayer

626

627 "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children; how much more shall your
628 Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"—LUKE xi. 13.

629

630

631 Christ had just said (v. 9), "Ask, and it shall be given": God's giving is inseparably connected
632 with our asking. He applies this especially to the Holy Spirit. As surely as a father on earth gives
633 bread to his child, so God gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. The whole ministration of
634 the Spirit is ruled by the one great law: God must give, we must ask. When the Holy Spirit was
635 poured out at Pentecost with a flow that never ceases, it was in answer to prayer. The inflow into
636 the believer's heart, and His outflow in the rivers of living water, ever still depend upon the law:
637 "Ask, and it shall be given." In connection with our confession of the lack of prayer, we have
638 said that what we need is some due apprehension of the place it occupies in God's plan of
639 redemption; we shall perhaps nowhere see this more clearly than in the first half of the Acts of
640 the Apostles. The story of the birth of the Church in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and of the
641 first freshness of its heavenly life in the power of that Spirit, will teach us how prayer on earth,
642 whether as cause or effect, is the true measure of the presence of the Spirit of heaven .

643
644 We begin with the well-known words (i. 13), “These all continued with one accord in prayer and
645 supplication.” And then there follows: “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they
646 were all with one accord in one place. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. And the
647 same day there were added to them about three thousand souls.” The great work of redemption
648 had been accomplished. The Holy Spirit had been promised by Christ “not many days hence.”
649 He had sat down on His throne and received the Spirit from the Father. But all this was not
650 enough. One thing more was needed: the ten days’ united continued supplication of the disciples.
651 It was intense, continued prayer that prepared the disciples’ hearts, that opened the windows of
652 heaven, that brought down the promised gift. As little as the power of the Spirit could be given
653 without Christ sitting on the throne, _could it descend without the disciples on the footstool of
654 the throne_. For all the ages the law is laid down here, at the birth of the Church, that whatever
655 else may be found on earth, the power of the Spirit must be prayed down from heaven. The
656 measure of believing, continued prayer will be the measure of the Spirit’s working in the Church.
657 Direct, definite, determined prayer is what we need.

658
659 See how this is confirmed in chapter iv. Peter and John had been brought before the Council and
660 threatened with punishment. When they returned to their brethren, and reported what had been
661 said to them, “all lifted up their voice to God with one accord,” and prayed for boldness to speak
662 the word. “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken, and they were all filled with the
663 Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that
664 believed were one heart and one soul. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the
665 resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all.” It is as if the story of
666 Pentecost is repeated a second time over, with the prayer, the shaking of the house, the filling
667 with the Spirit, the speaking God’s word with boldness and power, the great grace upon all, the
668 manifestation of unity and love—to imprint it ineffaceably on the heart of the Church: it is prayer
669 that lies at the root of the spiritual life and power of the Church. The measure of God’s giving the
670 Spirit is our asking. He gives as a father to him who asks as a child.

671
672 Go on to the sixth chapter. There we find that, when murmurings arose as to the neglect of the
673 Grecian Jews in the distribution of alms, the apostles proposed the appointment of deacons to
674 serve the tables. “We,” they said, “will give ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word.” It
675 is often said, and rightly said, that there is nothing in honest business, when it is kept in its place
676 as entirely subordinate to the kingdom, which must ever be first, that need prevent fellowship
677 with God. Least of all ought a work like ministering to the poor hinder the spiritual life. And yet
678 the apostles felt it would hinder them in their giving themselves to the ministry of prayer and the
679 word. What does this teach? That the maintenance of the spirit of prayer, such as is consistent
680 with the claims of much work, is not enough for those who are the leaders of the Church. To
681 keep up the communication with the King on the throne and the heavenly world clear and fresh;
682 to draw down the power and blessing of that world, not only for the maintenance of our own
683 spiritual life, but for those around us; continually to receive instruction and empowerment for the
684 great work to be done—the apostles, as the ministers of the word, felt the need of being free from
685 other duties, that they might give themselves to much prayer. James writes: “Pure religion and
686 undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.”
687 If ever any work were a sacred one, it was that of caring for these Grecian widows. And yet,
688 even such duties might interfere with the special calling to give themselves to prayer and the

689 ministry of the word. As on earth, so in the kingdom of heaven, there is power in the division of
690 labour; and while some, like the deacons, had specially to care for serving the tables and
691 ministering the alms of the Church here on earth, others had to be set free for that steadfast
692 continuance in prayer which would uninterruptedly secure the downflow of the powers of the
693 heavenly world. The minister of Christ is set apart to give himself as much to prayer as to the
694 ministry of the word. In faithful obedience to this law is the secret of the Church's power and
695 success. As before, so _after Pentecost_, the apostles were men given up to prayer.

696
697 In chapter viii. we have the intimate connection between the Pentecostal gift and prayer, from
698 another point of view. At Samaria, Philip had preached with great blessing, and many had
699 believed. But the Holy Ghost was, as yet, fallen on none of them. The apostles sent down Peter
700 and John to pray for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. The power for such prayer
701 was a higher gift than preaching—the work of the men who had been in closest contact with the
702 Lord in glory, the work that was essential to the perfection of the life that preaching and baptism,
703 faith and conversion had only begun. Surely of all the gifts of the early Church for which we
704 should long there is none more needed than the gift of prayer—prayer that brings down the Holy
705 Ghost on believers. This power is given to the men who say: “We will give ourselves to prayer.”

706
707 In the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, in the house of Cornelius at Csarea, we have another
708 testimony to the wondrous interdependence of the action of prayer and the Spirit, and another
709 proof of what will come to a man who has given himself to prayer. Peter went up at midday to
710 pray on the housetop. And what happened? He saw heaven opened, and there came the vision
711 that revealed to him the cleansing of the Gentiles; with that came the message of the three men
712 from Cornelius, a man who “prayed alway,” and had heard from an angel, “Thy prayers are
713 come up before God”; and then the voice of the Spirit was heard saying, “Go with them.” It is
714 Peter praying, to whom the will of God is revealed, to whom guidance is given as to going to
715 Csarea, and who is brought into contact with a praying and prepared company of hearers. No
716 wonder that in answer to all this prayer a blessing comes beyond all expectation, and the Holy
717 Ghost is poured out upon the Gentiles. A much-praying minister will receive an entrance into
718 God's will he would otherwise know nothing of; will be brought to praying people where he
719 does not expect them; will receive blessing above all he asks or thinks. The teaching and the
720 power of the Holy Ghost are alike unalterably linked to prayer.

721
722 Our next reference will show us faith in the power that the Church's prayer has with its glorified
723 King, as it is found, not only in the apostles, but in the Christian community. In chapter xii. we
724 have the story of Peter in prison on the eve of execution. The death of James had aroused the
725 Church to a sense of real danger, and the thought of losing Peter too, wakened up all its energies.
726 It betook itself to prayer. “Prayer was made of the Church without ceasing to God for him.” That
727 prayer availed much; Peter was delivered. When he came to the house of Mary, he found “many
728 gathered together praying.” Stone walls and double chains, soldiers and keepers, and the iron
729 gate, all gave way before the power from heaven that prayer brought down to his rescue. The
730 whole power of the Roman Empire, as represented by Herod, was impotent in presence of the
731 power the Church of the Holy Spirit wielded in prayer. They stood in such close and living
732 communication with their Lord in heaven; they knew so well that the words, “all power is given
733 unto Me,” and “Lo I am with you alway,” were absolutely true; they had such faith in His
734 promise to hear them whatever they asked—that they prayed in the assurance that the powers of

735 heaven could work on earth, and would work at their request and on their behalf. The Pentecostal
736 Church believed in prayer, and practised it.

737
738 Just one more illustration of the place and the blessing of prayer among men filled with the Holy
739 Spirit. In chapter xiii. we have the names of five men at Antioch who had given themselves
740 specially to ministering to the Lord with prayer and fasting. Their giving themselves to prayer
741 was not in vain: as they ministered to the Lord, the Holy Spirit met them, and gave them new
742 insight into God's plans. He called them to be fellow-workers with Himself; there was a work to
743 which He had called Barnabas and Saul; their part and privilege would be to separate these men
744 with renewed fasting and prayer, and to let them go, "sent forth of the Holy Ghost." God in
745 heaven would not send forth His chosen servants without the co-operation of His Church; men
746 on earth were to have a real partnership in the work of God. It was prayer that fitted and prepared
747 them for this; it was to praying men the Holy Ghost gave authority to do His work and use His
748 name. It was to prayer the Holy Ghost was given. It is still prayer that is the only secret of true
749 Church extension, that is guided from heaven to find and send forth God-called and God-
750 empowered men. To prayer the Holy Spirit will show the men He has selected; to prayer that sets
751 them apart under His guidance He will give the honour of knowing that they are men, "sent forth
752 by the Holy Ghost." It is prayer which is the link between the King on the throne and the Church
753 at His footstool—the human link that has its divine strength in the power of the Holy Ghost, who
754 comes in answer to it.

755
756 As one looks back upon these chapters in the history of the Pentecostal Church, how clear the
757 two great truths stand out: where there is much prayer there will be much of the Spirit; where
758 there is much of the Spirit there will be ever-increasing prayer. So clear is the living connection
759 between the two, that when the Spirit is given in answer to prayer it ever wakens more prayer to
760 prepare for the fuller revelation and communication of His Divine power and grace. If prayer
761 was thus the power by which the Primitive Church flourished and triumphed, is it not the one
762 need of the Church of our days? Let us learn what ought to be counted axioms in our Church
763 work:—

764
765 Heaven is still as full of stores of spiritual blessing as it was then. God still delights to give the
766 Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. Our life and work are still as dependent on the direct
767 impartation of Divine power as they were in Pentecostal times. Prayer is still the appointed
768 means for drawing down these heavenly blessings in power on ourselves and those around us.
769 God still seeks for men and women who will, with all their other work of ministering, specially
770 give themselves to persevering prayer.

771
772 And we—you, my reader, and I—may have the privilege of offering ourselves to God to labour
773 in prayer, and bring down these blessings to this earth. Shall we not beseech God to make all this
774 truth so living in us that we may not rest till it has mastered us, and our whole heart be so filled
775 with it, that the practice of intercession shall be counted by us our highest privilege, and we find
776 in it the sure and only measure for blessing on ourselves, on the Church, and on the world?

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780

781 A PLEA FOR MORE PRAYER

782

783 CHAPTER III

784

785 A Model of Intercession

786

787 “And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight,
788 and shall say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine is come unto me from a
789 journey, and I have nothing to set before him; and he from within shall answer and say, Trouble
790 me not: I cannot rise and give thee? I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him,
791 because he is his friend, yet, because of his importunity, he will arise and give him as many as he
792 needeth.”—LUKE xi. 5-8.

793

794 “I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor
795 night: ye that are the Lord’s remembrancers, keep not silence, and give Him no rest.”—ISA. lxii.
796 6, 7.

797

798

799 We have seen in our previous chapter what power prayer has. It is the one power on earth that
800 commands the power of heaven. The story of the early days of the Church is God’s great object-
801 lesson, to teach His Church what prayer can do, how it alone, but it most surely, can draw down
802 the treasures and powers of heaven into the life of earth.

803

804 Just remember the lessons we learnt of how prayer is at once indispensable and irresistible. Did
805 we not see how unknown and untold power and blessing is stored up for us in heaven?—how
806 that power will make us a blessing to men, and fit us to do any work or face any danger? how it
807 is to be sought in prayer continually and persistently? how they who have the heavenly power
808 can pray it down upon others? how in all the intercourse of ministers and people, in all the
809 ministrations of Christ’s Church, it is the one secret of success? how it can defy all the power of
810 the world, and fit men to conquer that world for Christ? It is the power of the heavenly life, the
811 power of God’s own Spirit, the power of Omnipotence, that waits for prayer to bring it down.

812

813 In all this prayer there was little thought of personal need or happiness. It was the desire to
814 witness for Christ and bring Him and His salvation to others, it was the thought of God’s
815 kingdom and glory, that possessed these disciples. If we would be delivered from the sin of
816 restraining prayer, we must enlarge our hearts for the work of intercession. The attempt to pray
817 constantly for ourselves must be a failure; it is in intercession for others that our faith and love
818 and perseverance will be aroused, and that power of the Spirit be found which can fit us for
819 saving men. We are asking how we may become more faithful and successful in prayer; let us
820 see how the Master teaches us, in the parable of the Friend at Midnight, that intercession for the
821 needy calls forth the highest exercise of our power of believing and prevailing prayer.

822 Intercession is the most perfect form of prayer: it is the prayer Christ ever liveth to pray on His
823 throne. Let us learn what the elements of true intercession are.

824

825 1. Notice the urgent need : here intercession has its origin. The friend came at midnight—an
826 untimely hour. He was hungry, and could not buy bread. If we are to learn to pray aright we must
827 open eye and heart to the need around us.

828
829 We hear continually of the thousand millions of heathen and Mohammedans living in midnight
830 darkness, perishing for lack of the bread of life. We hear of five hundred millions of nominal
831 Christians, the great majority of them almost as ignorant and indifferent as the heathen. We see
832 millions in the Christian Church, not ignorant or indifferent, and yet knowing little of a walk in
833 the light of God or in the power of a life fed by bread from heaven. We have each of us our own
834 circles—congregations, schools, friends, missions—in which the great complaint is that the light
835 and life of God are too little known. Surely, if we believe what we profess, that God alone is able
836 to help, that God certainly will help in answer to prayer,—all this need ought to make
837 intercessors of us, people who give their lives to prayer for those around them.

838
839 Let us take time to consider and realise the need. Each Christless soul going down into outer
840 darkness, perishing of hunger, with bread enough and to spare! Thirty millions a year dying
841 without the knowledge of Christ! Our own neighbours and friends, souls intrusted to us, dying
842 without hope! Christians around us living a sickly, feeble, fruitless life! Surely there is need for
843 prayer. Nothing, nothing but prayer to God for help, will avail.

844
845 2. Note the willing love.—The friend took his weary, hungry friend into his house, and into his
846 heart too. He did not excuse himself by saying he had no bread: he gave himself at midnight to
847 seek it for him. He sacrificed his night's rest, his comfort, to find the needed bread. "Love
848 seeketh not its own." It is the very nature of love to give up and forget itself for the sake of
849 others. It takes their needs and makes them its own, it finds its real joy in living and dying for
850 others as Christ did.

851
852 It is the love of a mother to her prodigal son that makes her pray for him. True love to souls will
853 become in us the spirit of intercession. It is possible to do a great deal of faithful, earnest work
854 for our fellowmen without true love to them. Just as a lawyer or a physician, from a love of his
855 profession and a high sense of faithfulness to duty, may interest himself most thoroughly in
856 clients or patients without any special love to each, so servants of Christ may give themselves to
857 their work with devotion and even self-sacrificing enthusiasm without the Christlike love to souls
858 being strong. It is this lack of love that causes so much shortcoming in prayer. It is as love of our
859 profession and work, delight in thoroughness and diligence, sink away in the tender compassion
860 of Christ, that love will compel us to prayer, because we cannot rest in our work if souls are not
861 saved. True love must pray.

862
863 3. Note the sense of impotence.—We often speak of the power of love. In one sense this is
864 true; and yet the truth has its limitations, which must not be forgotten. The strongest love may be
865 utterly impotent. A mother might be willing to give her life for her dying child, and yet not be
866 able to save it. The friend at midnight was most willing to give his friend bread, but he had none.
867 It was this sense of impotence, of his inability to help, that sent him a-begging: "My friend is
868 come to me, and I have nothing to set before him." It is this sense of impotence with God's
869 servants that is the very strength of the life of intercession.

870

871 “I have nothing to set before them”: as this consciousness takes possession of the minister or
872 missionary, the teacher or worker, intercession will become their only hope and refuge. I may
873 have knowledge and truth, a loving heart, and the readiness to give myself for those under my
874 charge; but the bread of heaven I cannot give them. With all my love and zeal, “I have nothing to
875 set before them.” Blessed the man who has made that “I have nothing,” the motto of his ministry.
876 As he thinks of the judgment day and the danger of souls, as he sees what a supernatural power
877 and life is needed to save men from sin, as he feels how utterly insufficient all he can ever do is
878 to give them life, that “_I have nothing_” urges him to pray. Intercession appears to him, as he
879 thinks of the midnight darkness and the hungry souls, as his only hope, the one thing in which his
880 love can take refuge.

881
882 Let us take the lesson to heart, for a warning to all who are strong and wise to work, for the
883 encouragement of all who are feeble. The sense of our impotence is the soul of intercession. The
884 simplest, feeblest Christian can pray down blessing from an Almighty God.

885
886 4. Note _the faith in prayer_.—What he has not himself, another can supply. He has a rich friend
887 near, who will be both able and willing to give the bread. He is sure that if he only asks, he will
888 receive. This faith makes him leave his home at midnight: if he has not the bread himself to give,
889 he can ask another.

890
891 It is this simple, confident faith that God will give, that we need: where it really exists, there will
892 surely be no mistake about our not praying. And in God’s word we have everything that can stir
893 and strengthen such faith in us. Just as the heaven our natural eye can see is one great ocean of
894 sunshine, with its light and heat, giving beauty and fruitfulness to earth, Scripture shows us
895 God’s true heaven, filled with all spiritual blessings,—divine light and love and life, heavenly
896 joy and peace and power, all shining down upon us. It reveals to us God waiting, delighting to
897 bestow these blessings _in answer to prayer_. By a thousand promises and testimonies it calls
898 and urges us to believe that prayer will be heard, that what we cannot possibly do ourselves for
899 those whom we want to help, _can be got by prayer_. Surely there can be no question as to our
900 believing that prayer will be heard, that through prayer the poorest and feeblest can dispense
901 blessings to the needy, and each of us, though poor, may yet be making many rich.

902
903 5. Note _the importunity that prevails_.—The faith of the friend met a sudden and unexpected
904 check: the rich friend refuses to hear—“I cannot rise and give thee.” How little the loving heart
905 had counted on this disappointment; it cannot consent to accept it. The supplicant presses his
906 threefold plea: here is my needy friend, you have abundance, I am your friend; and refuses to
907 accept a denial. The love that opened his house at midnight, and then left it to seek help, must
908 win.

909
910 This is the central lesson of the parable. In our intercession we may find that there is difficulty
911 and delay with the answer. It may be as if God says, “I cannot give thee.” It is not easy, against
912 all appearances, to hold fast our confidence that He will hear, and to persevere in full assurance
913 that we shall have what we ask. And yet this is what God looks for from us. He so highly prizes
914 our confidence in Him, it is so essentially the highest honour the creature can render the Creator,
915 that He will do anything to train us in the exercise of this trust in Him. Blessed the man who is

916 not staggered by God's delay, or silence, or apparent refusal, but is strong in faith, giving glory
917 to God. Such faith perseveres, importunately, if need be, and cannot fail to inherit the blessing.

918

919 6. Note, last, the certainty of a rich reward.—"I say unto you, because of his importunity, he
920 will give him as many as he needeth." Oh that we might learn to believe in the certainty of an
921 abundant answer. A prophet said of old: "Let not your hands be weak; your work shall be
922 rewarded." Would that all who feel it difficult to pray much, would fix their eye on the
923 recompense of the reward, and in faith learn to count upon the Divine assurance that their prayer
924 cannot be vain. If we will but believe in God and His faithfulness, intercession will become to us
925 the very first thing we take refuge in when we seek blessing for others, and the very last thing for
926 which we cannot find time. And it will become a thing of joy and hope, because, all the time we
927 pray, we know that we are sowing seed that will bring forth fruit an hundredfold.
928 Disappointment is impossible: "I say unto you, He will rise and give him as many as he
929 needeth."

930

931 Let all lovers of souls, and all workers in the service of the gospel, take courage. Time spent in
932 prayer will yield more than that given to work. Prayer alone gives work its worth and its success.
933 Prayer opens the way for God Himself to do His work in us and through us. Let our chief work,
934 as God's messengers, be intercession: in it we secure the presence and power of God to go with
935 us.

936

937 "Which of you shall have a friend at midnight, and shall say to him, Friend, lend me three
938 loaves?" This friend is none other but our God. Do let us learn that in the darkness of midnight,
939 at the most unlikely time, and in the greatest need, when we have to say of those we love and
940 care for, "I have nothing to set before them," we have a rich Friend in heaven, the Everlasting
941 God and Father, who only waits to be asked aright. Let us confess before Him our lack of prayer.
942 Let us admit that the lack of faith, of which it is the proof, is the symptom of a life that is not
943 spiritual, that is yet all too much under the power of self and the flesh and the world. Let us in the
944 faith of the Lord Jesus, who spake this parable, and Himself waits to make every trait of it true in
945 us, give ourselves to be intercessors. Let every sight of souls needing help, let every stirring of
946 the spirit of compassion, let every sense of our own impotence to bless, let every difficulty in the
947 way of our getting an answer, just combine to urge us to do this one thing: with importunity to
948 cry to the God who alone can help, who, in answer to our prayer, will help. And let us, if we
949 indeed feel that we have failed, do our utmost to train a young generation of Christians, who
950 profit by our mistake and avoid it. Moses could not enter the land of Canaan, but there was one
951 thing he could do: he could at God's bidding "charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen
952 him" (Deut. iii. 28). If it is too late for us to make good our failure, let us at least encourage those
953 who come after us to enter into the good land, the blessed life of unceasing prayer.

954

955 The Model Intercessor is the Model Christian Worker. First to get from God, and then to give to
956 men what we ourselves secure from day to day, is the secret of successful work. Between our
957 Impotence and God's Omnipotence intercession is the blessed link.

958

959

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961

962 A PLEA FOR MORE PRAYER

963

964 CHAPTER IV

965

966 Because of His Importunity

967

968 “I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet _because of
969 his importunity_ he will arise and give him as many as he needeth.”—LUKE xi. 8.

970

971 “And He spake a parable unto them, to the end, they ought always to pray and not to faint....
972 Hear what the unrighteous judge saith. And shall not God avenge His own elect, which _cry to
973 Him day and night_, and _He is long-suffering with them_? I tell you that He will avenge them
974 speedily.”—LUKE xviii. 1-8.

975

976

977 Our Lord Jesus thought it of such importance that we should know the need of perseverance and
978 importunity in prayer, that He spake two parables to teach us this. This is proof sufficient that in
979 this aspect of prayer we have at once its greatest difficulty and its highest power. He would have
980 us know that in prayer all will not be easy and smooth; we must expect difficulties, which can
981 only be conquered by persistent, determined perseverance.

982

983 In the parables our Lord represents the difficulty as existing on the side of the persons to whom
984 the petition was addressed, and the importunity as needed to overcome their reluctance to hear.
985 In our intercourse with God the difficulty is not on His side, but on ours. In connection with the
986 first parable He tells us that our Father is more willing to give good things to those who ask Him
987 than any earthly father to give his child bread. In the second, He assures us that God longs to
988 avenge His elect speedily. The need of urgent prayer cannot be because God must be made
989 willing or disposed to bless: the need lies altogether in ourselves. But because it was not possible
990 to find any earthly illustration of a loving father or a willing friend from whom the needed lesson
991 of importunity could be taught, He takes the unwilling friend and the unjust judge to encourage
992 in us the faith, that perseverance can overcome every obstacle.

993

994 The difficulty is not in God’s love or power, but in ourselves and our own incapacity to receive
995 the blessing. And yet, because there is this difficulty with us, this lack of spiritual preparedness,
996 there is a difficulty with God too. His wisdom, His righteousness, yea His love, dare not give us
997 what would do us harm, if we received it too soon or too easily. The sin, or the consequence of
998 sin, that makes it impossible for God to give at once, is a barrier on God’s side as well as ours; to
999 break through this power of sin in ourselves, or those for whom we pray, is what makes the
1000 striving and the conflict of prayer such a reality. And so in all ages men have prayed, and that
1001 rightly too, under a sense that there were difficulties in the heavenly world to overcome. As they
1002 pleaded with God for the removal of the unknown obstacles, and in that persevering supplication
1003 were brought into a state of utter brokenness and helplessness, of entire resignation to Him, of
1004 union with His will, and of faith that could take hold of Him, the hindrances in themselves and in
1005 heaven were together overcome. As God conquered them, they conquered God. As God prevails
1006 over us, we prevail with God.

1007

1008 God has so constituted us that the clearer our insight is into the reasonableness of a demand, the
1009 more hearty will be our surrender to it. One great cause of our remissness in prayer is that there
1010 appears to be something arbitrary, or at least something incomprehensible, in the call to such
1011 continued prayer. If we could be brought to see that this apparent difficulty is a Divine necessity,
1012 and in the very nature of things the source of unspeakable blessing, we should be more ready
1013 with gladness of heart to give ourselves to continue in prayer. Let us see if we cannot understand
1014 how the difficulty that the call to importunity throws in our way is one of our greatest privileges.
1015

1016 I do not know whether you have ever noticed what a part difficulties play in our natural life.
1017 They call out man's powers as nothing else can. They strengthen and ennoble character. We are
1018 told that one reason of the superiority of the Northern nations, like Holland and Scotland, in
1019 strength of will and purpose, over those of the sunny South, as Italy and Spain, is that the climate
1020 of the latter has been too beautiful, and the life it encourages too easy and relaxing—the
1021 difficulties the former had to contend with have been their greatest boon; how all nature has been
1022 so arranged by God that in sowing and reaping, as in seeking coal or gold, nothing is found
1023 without labour and effort. What is education but a daily developing and disciplining of the mind
1024 by new difficulties presented to the pupil to overcome? The moment a lesson has become easy,
1025 the pupil is moved on to one that is higher and more difficult. With the race and the individual, it
1026 is in the meeting and the mastering of difficulties that our highest attainments are found.
1027

1028 It is even so in our intercourse with God. Just imagine what the result would be if the child of
1029 God had only to kneel down and ask, and get, and go away. What unspeakable loss to the
1030 spiritual life would ensue. It is in the difficulty and delay that calls for persevering prayer, that
1031 the true blessing and blessedness of the heavenly life will be found. We there learn how little we
1032 delight in fellowship with God, and how little we have of living faith in Him. We discover how
1033 earthly and unspiritual our heart still is, how little we have of God's Holy Spirit. We there are
1034 brought to know our own weakness and unworthiness, and to yield to God's Spirit to pray in us,
1035 to take our place in Christ Jesus, and abide in Him as our only plea with the Father. There our
1036 own will and strength and goodness are crucified. There we rise in Christ to newness of life, with
1037 our whole will dependent on God and set upon His glory. Do let us begin to praise God for the
1038 need and the difficulty of importunate prayer, as one of His choicest means of grace.
1039

1040 Just think what our Lord Jesus owed to the difficulties in His path. In Gethsemane it was as if the
1041 Father would not hear: He prayed yet more earnestly, until "He was heard." In the way He
1042 opened up for us, He learned obedience by the things He suffered, and so was made perfect; His
1043 will was given up to God; His faith in God was proved and strengthened; the prince of this
1044 world, with all his temptation, was overcome. This is the new and living way He consecrated for
1045 us; it is in persevering prayer we walk with and are made partakers of His very Spirit. Prayer is
1046 one form of crucifixion, of our fellowship with Christ's Cross, of our giving up our flesh to the
1047 death. O Christians! shall we not be ashamed of our reluctance to sacrifice the flesh and our own
1048 will and the world, as it is seen in our reluctance to pray much? Shall we not learn the lesson
1049 which nature and Christ alike teach? The difficulty of importunate prayer is our highest privilege;
1050 the difficulties to be overcome in it bring us our richest blessings.
1051

1052 In importunity there are various elements. Of these the chief are perseverance, determination,
1053 intensity. It begins with the refusal to at once accept a denial. It grows to the determination to

1054 persevere, to spare no time or trouble, till an answer comes. It rises to the intensity in which the
1055 whole being is given to God in supplication, and the boldness comes to lay hold of God's
1056 strength. At one time it is quiet and restful; at another passionate and bold. Now it takes time and
1057 is patient; then again it claims at once what it desires. In whatever different shape, it always
1058 means and knows—God hears prayer: I must be heard.

1059
1060 Remember the wonderful instances we have of it in the Old Testament saints. Think of Abraham,
1061 as he pleads for Sodom. Time after time he renews his prayer until the sixth time he has to say,
1062 "Let not my Lord be angry." He does not cease until he has learnt to know God's condescension
1063 in each time consenting to his petition, until he has learnt how far he can go, has entered into
1064 God's mind, and now rests in God's will. And for his sake Lot was saved. "God remembered
1065 Abraham, and delivered Lot out of the midst of the overthrow." And shall not we, who have a
1066 redemption and promises for the heathen which Abraham never knew, begin to plead more with
1067 God on their behalf.

1068
1069 Think of Jacob, when he feared to meet Esau. The angel of the Lord met him in the dark, and
1070 wrestled with him. And when the angel saw that he prevailed not, he said, "Let me go." And
1071 Jacob said, "I will not let thee go." And he blessed him there. And that boldness that said, "I will
1072 not," and forced from the reluctant angel the blessing, was so pleasing in God's sight, that a new
1073 name was there given to him: "Israel, he who striveth with God, for thou hast striven with God
1074 and with men, and hast prevailed." And through all the ages God's children have understood,
1075 what Christ's two parables teach, that God holds Himself back, and seeks to get away from us,
1076 until what is of flesh and self and sloth in us is overcome, and we so prevail with Him that He
1077 can and must bless us. Oh! why is it that so many of God's children have no desire for this
1078 honour—being princes of God, strivers with God, and prevailing? What our Lord taught us,
1079 "What things soever ye desire, believe that ye have received," is nothing but His putting of
1080 Jacob's words, "I will not let Thee go except thou bless me." This is the importunity He teaches,
1081 and we must learn: to claim and take the blessing.

1082
1083 Think of Moses when Israel had made the golden calf. Moses returned to the Lord and said, "Oh,
1084 this people have sinned a great sin. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me,
1085 I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written." That was importunity, that would rather
1086 die than not have his people given him. Then, when God had heard him, and said He would send
1087 His angel with the people, Moses came again, and would not be content until, in answer to his
1088 prayer that God Himself should go with them (xxxiii. 12, 17, 18), He had said, "I will do this
1089 thing also that thou hast spoken." After that, when in answer to his prayer, "Show me Thy
1090 glory," God made His goodness pass before him, he at once again began pleading, "Let my Lord,
1091 I pray Thee, go among us." And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights (Ex.
1092 xxxiv. 28). Of these days he says, "I fell down before the Lord, as at the first, forty days and
1093 forty nights, I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sin which ye sinned." As
1094 an intercessor Moses used importunity with God, and prevailed. He proves that the man who
1095 truly lives near to God, and with whom God speaks face to face, becomes partaker of that same
1096 power of intercession which there is in Him who is at God's right hand and ever lives to pray.

1097
1098 Think of Elijah in his prayer, first for fire, and then for rain. In the former you have the
1099 importunity that claims and receives an immediate answer. In the latter, bowing himself down to

1100 the earth, his face between his knees, his answer to the servant who had gone to look toward the
1101 sea, and come with the message, “There is nothing,” was “Go again seven times.” Here was the
1102 importunity of perseverance. He had told Ahab there would be rain; he knew it was coming; and
1103 yet he prayed till the seven times were fulfilled. And it is of this Elijah and this prayer we are
1104 taught, “Pray for one another. Elijah was a man of like passions with ourselves. The effectual
1105 fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Will there not be some who feel constrained to
1106 cry out, “Where is the Lord God of Elijah?”—this God who draws forth such effectual prayer,
1107 and hears it so wonderfully. His name be praised: He is still the same. Let His people but believe
1108 that He still waits to be inquired of! Faith in a prayer-hearing God will make a prayer-loving
1109 Christian.

1110
1111 We remember the marks of the true intercessor as the parable taught us them. A sense of the
1112 need of souls; a Christlike love in the heart; a consciousness of personal impotence; faith in the
1113 power of prayer; courage to persevere in spite of refusal; and the assurance of an abundant
1114 reward;—these are the dispositions that constitute a Christian an intercessor, and call forth the
1115 power of prevailing prayer. These are the dispositions that constitute the beauty and the health of
1116 the Christian life, that fit a man for being a blessing in the world, that make him a true Christian
1117 worker, who does indeed get from God the bread of heaven to dispense to the hungry. These are
1118 the dispositions that call forth the highest, the heroic virtues of the life of faith. There is nothing
1119 to which the nobility of natural character owes so much as the spirit of enterprise and daring
1120 which in travel or war, in politics or science, battles with difficulties and conquers. No labour or
1121 expense is grudged for the sake of victory. And shall we who are Christians not be able to face
1122 the difficulties that we meet in prayer? It is as we “labour” and “strive” in prayer that the
1123 renewed will asserts its royal right to claim in the name of Christ what it will, and wields its
1124 God-given power to influence the destinies of men. Shall men of the world sacrifice ease and
1125 pleasure in their pursuits, and shall we be such cowards and sluggards as not to fight our way
1126 through to the place where we can find liberty for the captive and salvation for the perishing? Let
1127 each servant of Christ learn to know his calling. His King ever lives to pray. The Spirit of the
1128 King ever lives in us to pray. It is from heaven the blessings, which the world needs, must be
1129 called down in persevering, importunate, believing prayer. It is from heaven, in answer to prayer,
1130 the Holy Spirit will take complete possession of us to do His work through us. Let us
1131 acknowledge how vain our much work has been owing to our little prayer. Let us change our
1132 method, and let henceforth more prayer, much prayer, unceasing prayer, be the proof that we
1133 look for all to God, and that we believe that He heareth us.

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1138 A PLEA FOR MORE PRAYER

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1141

1140 CHAPTER V

1142 The Life that can Pray

1143
1144
1145

1144 “_If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you_, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done
1145 unto you.”—JOHN xv. 7.

1146
1147 “The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working.”—JAMES v. 16.
1148

1149 “Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have boldness toward God; and whatsoever we ask,
1150 we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do the things that are pleasing
1151 in His sight.”—1 JOHN iii. 21, 22.
1152

1153
1154 Here on earth the influence of one who asks a favour for others depends entirely on his character,
1155 and the relationship he bears to him with whom he is interceding. It is what he is that gives
1156 weight to what he asks. It is no otherwise with God. Our power in prayer depends upon our life.
1157 Where our life is right we shall know how to pray so as to please God, and prayer will secure the
1158 answer. The texts quoted above all point in this direction. “If ye abide in Me,” our Lord says,
1159 ye shall ask, and it shall be done unto you. It is the prayer of a righteous man, according to
1160 James, that availeth much. We receive whatsoever we ask, John says, because we obey and
1161 please God. All lack of power to pray aright and perseveringly, all lack of power in prayer with
1162 God, points to some lack in the Christian life. It is as we learn to live the life that pleases God,
1163 that God will give what we ask. Let us learn from our Lord Jesus, in the parable of the vine, what
1164 the healthy, vigorous life is that may ask and receive what it will. Hear His voice, “If ye abide in
1165 Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” And
1166 again at the close of the parable: “Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that
1167 you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask the
1168 Father in My name, He may give it you.”
1169

1170 And what is now, according to the parable, the life that one must lead to bear fruit, and then ask
1171 and receive what we will? What is it we are to be or do, that will enable us to pray as we should,
1172 and to receive what we ask? The answer is in one word: it is the branch-life that gives power for
1173 prayer. We are branches of Christ, the Living Vine. We must simply live like branches, and
1174 abide in Christ, then we shall ask what we will, and it shall be done unto us.
1175

1176 We all know what a branch is, and what its essential characteristic. It is simply a growth of the
1177 vine, produced by it and appointed to bear fruit. It has only one reason of existence; it is there at
1178 the bidding of the vine, that through it the vine may bear and ripen its precious fruit. Just as the
1179 vine only and solely and wholly lives to produce the sap that makes the grape, so the branch has
1180 no other aim and object but this alone, to receive that sap and bear the grape. Its only work is to
1181 serve the vine, that through it the vine may do its work.
1182

1183 And the believer, the branch of Christ the Heavenly Vine, is it to be understood that he is as
1184 literally, as exclusively, to live only that Christ may bear fruit through him? Is it meant that a true
1185 Christian as a branch is to be just as absorbed in and devoted to the work of bearing fruit to the
1186 glory of God as Christ the Vine was on earth, and is now in heaven? This, and nothing less, is
1187 indeed what is meant. It is to such that the unlimited prayer promises of the parable are given. It
1188 is the branch-life, existing solely for the Vine, that will have the power to pray aright. With our
1189 life abiding in Him, and His words abiding, kept and obeyed, in our heart and life, transmuted
1190 into our very being, there will be the grace to pray aright, and the faith to receive the whatsoever
1191 we will.

1192
1193 Do let us connect the two things, and take them both in their simple, literal truth, and their
1194 infinite, divine grandeur. The promises of our Lord's farewell discourse, with their wonderful
1195 six-fold repetition of the unlimited, anything, whatsoever (John xiv. 13, 14; xv. 7, 16; xvi. 23,
1196 24), appear to us altogether too large to be taken literally, and they are qualified down to meet
1197 our human ideas of what appears seemly. It is because we separate them from that life of
1198 absolute and unlimited devotion to Christ's service to which they were given. God's covenant is
1199 ever: Give all and take all. He that is willing to be wholly branch, and nothing but branch, who is
1200 ready to place himself absolutely at the disposal of Jesus the Vine of God, to bear His fruit
1201 through him, and to live every moment only for Him, will receive a Divine liberty to claim
1202 Christ's whatsoever in all its fulness, and a Divine wisdom and humility to use it aright. He
1203 will live and pray, and claim the Father's promises, even as Christ did, only for God's glory in
1204 the salvation of men. He will use his boldness in prayer only with a view to power in
1205 intercession, and getting men blessed. The unlimited devotion of the branch-life to fruitbearing,
1206 and the unlimited access to the treasures of the Vine life, are inseparable. It is the life abiding
1207 wholly in Christ that can pray the effectual prayer in the name of Christ.

1208
1209 Just think for a moment of the men of prayer in Scripture, and see in them what the life was that
1210 could pray in such power. We spoke of Abraham as intercessor. What gave Him such boldness?
1211 He knew that God had chosen and called him away from his home and people to walk before
1212 Him, that all nations might be blessed in him. He knew that he had obeyed, and forsaken all for
1213 God. Implicit obedience, to the very sacrifice of his son, was the law of his life. He did what God
1214 asked: he dared trust God to do what he asked. We spoke of Moses as intercessor. He too had
1215 forsaken all for God, "counting the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of
1216 Egypt." He lived at God's disposal: "as a servant he was faithful in all His house." How often it
1217 is written of him, "According to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did he." No wonder that
1218 he was very bold: his heart was right with God: he knew God would hear him. No less true is this
1219 of Elijah, the man who stood up to plead for the Lord God of Israel. The man who is ready to
1220 risk all for God can count upon God to do all for him.

1221
1222 It is as men live that they pray. It is the life that prays. It is the life that, with whole-hearted
1223 devotion, gives up all for God and to God, that can claim all from God. Our God longs
1224 exceedingly to prove Himself the Faithful God and Mighty Helper of His people. He only waits
1225 for hearts wholly turned from the world to Himself, and open to receive His gifts. The man who
1226 loses all will find all; he dare ask and take it. The branch that only and truly lives abiding in
1227 Christ, the Heavenly Vine, entirely given up, like Christ, to bear fruit in the salvation of men, and
1228 has His words taken up into and abiding in its life, may and dare ask what it will—it shall be
1229 done. And where we have not yet attained to that full devotion to which our Lord had trained His
1230 disciples, and cannot equal them in their power of prayer, we may, nevertheless, take courage in
1231 remembering that, even in the lower stages of the Christian life, every new onward step in the
1232 striving after the perfect branch-life, and every surrender to live for others in intercession, will be
1233 met from above by a corresponding liberty to draw nigh with greater boldness, and expect larger
1234 answers. The more we pray, and the more conscious we become of our unfitness to pray in
1235 power, the more we shall be urged and helped to press on towards the secret of power in
1236 prayer—a life abiding in Christ entirely at His disposal.

1237

1238 And if any are asking, with somewhat of a despair of attainment, what the reason may be of the
1239 failure in this blessed branch-life, so simple and yet so mighty, and how they can come to it, let
1240 me point them to one of the most precious lessons of the parable of the Vine. It is one that is all
1241 too little noticed. Jesus spake, “I am the true Vine, and my Father is the Husbandman.” We
1242 have not only Himself, the glorified Son of God, in His divine fulness, out of whose fulness of
1243 life and grace we can draw,—this is very wonderful,—but there is something more blessed still.
1244 We have the Father, as the Husbandman, watching over our abiding in the Vine, over our growth
1245 and fruitbearing. It is not left to our faith or our faithfulness to maintain our union with Christ:
1246 the God, who is the Father of Christ, and who united us with Him,—God Himself will see to it
1247 that the branch is what it should be, will enable us to bring forth just the fruit we were appointed
1248 to bear. Hear what Christ said of this, “Every branch that beareth fruit, He cleanseth it, that it
1249 may bear more fruit.” More fruit is what the Father seeks; more fruit is what the Father will
1250 Himself provide. It is for this that He, as the Vinedresser, cleanses the branches.

1251
1252 Just think a moment what this means. It is said that of all fruitbearing plants on earth there is
1253 none that produces fruit so full of spirit, from which spirit can be so abundantly distilled, as the
1254 vine. And of all fruitbearing plants there is none that is so ready to run into wild wood, and for
1255 which pruning and cleansing are so indispensable. The one great work that a vinedresser has to
1256 do for the branch every year is to prune it. Other plants can for a time dispense with it, and yet
1257 bear fruit: the vine must have it. And so the one thing the branch that desires to abide in Christ
1258 and bring forth much fruit, and to be able to ask whatsoever it will, must do, is to trust in and
1259 yield itself to this Divine cleansing. What is it that the vinedresser cuts away with his pruning-
1260 knife? Nothing but the wood that the branch has produced—true, honest wood, with the true vine
1261 nature in it. This must be cut away. And why? Because it draws away the strength and life of the
1262 vine, and hinders the flow of the juice to the grape. The more it is cut down, the less wood there
1263 is in the branch, the more all the sap can go to the grape. The wood of the branch must decrease,
1264 that the fruit for the vine may increase; in obedience to the law of all nature, that death is the way
1265 to life, that gain comes through sacrifice, the rich and luxuriant growth of wood must be cut off
1266 and cast away, that the life more abundant may be seen in the cluster.

1267
1268 Even so, child of God, branch of the Heavenly Vine, there is in thee that which appears perfectly
1269 innocent and legitimate, and which yet so draws out thy interest and thy strength, that it must be
1270 pruned and cleansed away. We saw what power in prayer men like Abraham and Moses and
1271 Elijah had, and we know what fruit they bore. But we also know what it cost them; how God had
1272 to separate them from their surroundings, and ever again to draw them from any trust in
1273 themselves, to seek their life in Him alone. It is only as our own will, and strength and effort and
1274 pleasure, even where these appear perfectly natural and sinless, are cut down, so that the whole
1275 energies of our being are free and open to receive the sap of the Heavenly Vine, the Holy Spirit,
1276 that we shall bear much fruit. It is in the surrender of what nature holds fast, it is in the full and
1277 willing submission to God’s holy pruning-knife, that we shall come to what Christ chose and
1278 appointed us for—to bear fruit, that whatsoever we ask the Father in Christ’s name, He may give
1279 to us.

1280
1281 What the pruning-knife is, Christ tells us in the next verse. “Ye are clean through the word
1282 which I have spoken to you.” As He says later, “Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is
1283 truth.” “The word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of

1284 soul and spirit.” What heart-searching words Christ had spoken to His disciples on love and
1285 humility, on being the least, and, like Himself, the servant of all, on denying self, and taking the
1286 cross, and losing the life. Through His word the Father had cleansed them, cut away all
1287 confidence in themselves or the world, and prepared them for the inflowing and filling of the
1288 Spirit of the Heavenly Vine. It is not we who can cleanse ourselves: God is the Vinedresser: we
1289 may confidently intrust ourselves to His care.

1290
1291 Beloved brethren,—ministers, missionaries, teachers, workers, believers old and young,—are
1292 you mourning your lack of prayer, and, as a consequence, your lack of power in prayer? Oh!
1293 come and listen to your beloved Lord as He tells you, “only be a branch, united to, identified
1294 with, the Heavenly Vine, and your prayers will be effectual and much availing.” Are you
1295 mourning that just this is your trouble—you do not, cannot, live this branch-life, abiding in Him?
1296 Oh! come and listen again. “_More fruit_” is not only your desire, but the Father’s too. He is the
1297 Husbandman who cleanseth the fruitful branch, that it may bear more fruit. Cast yourself upon
1298 God, to do in you what is impossible to man. Count upon a Divine cleansing, to cut down and
1299 take away all that self-confidence and self-effort, that has been the cause of your failure. The
1300 God who gave you His beloved Son to be your Vine, who made you His branch, will He not do
1301 His work of cleansing to make you fruitful in every good work, in the work of prayer and
1302 intercession too?

1303
1304 Here is the life that can pray. A branch entirely given up to the Vine and its aims, with all
1305 responsibility for its cleansing cast on the Vinedresser; a branch abiding in Christ, trusting and
1306 yielding to God for His cleansing, can bear much fruit. In the power of such a life we shall love
1307 prayer, we shall know how to pray, we shall pray, and receive whatsoever we ask.

1308

1309

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1311

1312 A PLEA FOR MORE PRAYER

1313

1314 CHAPTER VI

1315

1316 Restraining Prayer: is it Sin?

1317

1318 “Thou restrainest prayer before God.”—JOB xv. 4.

1319

1320 “What profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?”—JOB xxi. 15.

1321

1322 “God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.”—1 SAM. xii. 23.

1323

1324 “Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.”—JOSH.
1325 vii. 12.

1326

1327

1328 Any deep quickening of the spiritual life of the Church will always be accompanied by a deeper
1329 sense of sin. This will not begin with theology; that can only give expression to what God works

1330 in the life of His people. Nor does it mean that that deeper sense of sin will only be seen in
1331 stronger expressions of self-reproach or penitence: that is sometimes found to consist with a
1332 harbouring of sin, and unbelief as to deliverance. But the true sense of the hatefulness of sin, the
1333 hatred of it, will be proved by the intensity of desire for deliverance, and the struggle to know to
1334 the very utmost what God can do in saving from it—a holy jealousy, in nothing to sin against
1335 God.

1336
1337 If we are to deal effectually with the lack of prayer we must look at it from this point of view and
1338 ask, Restraining prayer, is it sin? And if it be, how is it to be dealt with, to be discovered, and
1339 confessed, and cast out by man, and cleansed away by God? Jesus is a Saviour from sin. It is
1340 only as we know sin truly that we can truly know the power that saves from sin. The life that can
1341 pray effectually is the life of the cleansed branch—the life that knows deliverance from the
1342 power of self. To see that our prayer-sins are indeed sins, is the first step to a true and Divine
1343 deliverance from them.

1344
1345 In the story of Achan we have one of the strongest proofs in Scripture that it is sin that robs
1346 God's people of His blessing, and that God will not tolerate it; and at the same time the clearest
1347 indication of the principles under which God deals with it, and removes it. Let us see in the light
1348 of the story if we can learn how to look at the sin of prayerlessness, and at the sinfulness that lies
1349 at the root of it. The words I have quoted above, "Neither will I be with you any more, except ye
1350 put away the accursed thing from among you," take us into the very heart of the story, and
1351 suggest a series of the most precious lessons around the truth they express, that the presence of
1352 sin makes the presence of God impossible.

1353
1354 1. _The presence of God is the great privilege of God's people, and their only power against the
1355 enemy._—God had promised to Moses, _I will bring you in_ unto the land. Moses proved that
1356 he understood this when God, after the sin of the golden calf, spoke of withdrawing His presence
1357 and sending an angel. He refused to accept anything less than God's presence. "For whereby
1358 shall it be known that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not that _Thou goest
1359 with us_?" It was this gave Caleb and Joshua their confidence: The Lord is with us. It was this
1360 gave Israel their victory over Jericho: the presence of God. This is throughout Scripture the great
1361 central promise: I am with thee. This marks off the whole-hearted believer from the worldling
1362 and worldly Christians around him: he lives consciously hidden in the secret of God's presence.

1363
1364 2. _Defeat and failure are always owing to the loss of God's presence._—It was thus at Ai. God
1365 had brought His people into Canaan with the promise to give them the land. When the defeat at
1366 Ai took place Joshua felt at once that the cause must be in the withdrawal of God's power. He
1367 had not fought for them. His presence had been withheld.

1368
1369 In the Christian life and the work of the Church, defeat is ever a sign of the loss of God's
1370 presence. If we apply this to our failure in the prayer-life, and as a result of that to our failure in
1371 work for God, we are led to see that all is simply owing to our not standing in clear and full
1372 fellowship with God. His nearness, His immediate presence, has not been the chief thing sought
1373 after and trusted in. He could not work in us as He would. Loss of blessing and power is ever
1374 caused by the loss of God's presence.

1375

1376 3. _The loss of God’s presence is always owing to some hidden sin._—Just as pain is ordered in
1377 nature to warn of some hidden evil in the system, defeat is God’s voice telling us there is
1378 something wrong. He has given Himself so wholly to His people, He delights so in being with
1379 them, and would so fain reveal in them His love and power, that He never withdraws Himself
1380 unless they compel Him by sin.

1381
1382 Throughout the Church there is a complaint of defeat. The Church has so little power over the
1383 masses, or the educated classes. Powerful conversions are comparatively rare. The fewness of
1384 holy, consecrated, spiritual Christians, devoted to the service of God and their fellowmen, is felt
1385 everywhere. The power of the Church for the preaching of the gospel to the heathen is paralysed
1386 by the scarcity of money and men; and all owing to the lack of the effectual prayer which brings
1387 the Holy Spirit in power, first on ministers and believers, then on missionaries and the heathen.
1388 Can we deny it that the lack of prayer is the sin on account of which God’s presence and power
1389 are not more manifestly seen among us?

1390
1391 4. _God Himself will discover the hidden sin._—We may think we know what the sin is: it is
1392 only God who can discover its real deep meaning. When He spoke to Joshua, before naming the
1393 sin of Achan, God first said, “They have transgressed My covenant which I commanded them.”
1394 God had commanded (vi. 19) that all the booty of Jericho, gold and silver and all that was in it,
1395 was to be a devoted thing, consecrated unto the Lord, and to come into His treasury. And Israel
1396 had broken this consecration vow: it had not given God His due; it had robbed God.

1397
1398 It is this we need: God must discover to us how the lack of prayer is the indication of
1399 unfaithfulness to our consecration vow, that God should have all our heart and life. We must see
1400 that this restraining prayer, with the excuses we make for it, is greater sin than we have thought;
1401 for what does it mean? That we have little taste or relish for fellowship with God; that our faith
1402 rests more on our own work and efforts than on the power of God; that we have little sense of the
1403 heavenly blessing God waits to shower down; that we are not ready to sacrifice the ease and
1404 confidence of the flesh for persevering waiting on God; that the spirituality of our life, and our
1405 abiding in Christ, is altogether too feeble to make us prevail in prayer. When the pressure of
1406 work for Christ is allowed to be the excuse for our not finding time to seek and secure His own
1407 presence and power in it, as our chief need, it surely proves that there is no right sense of our
1408 absolute dependence upon God; no deep apprehension of the Divine and supernatural work of
1409 God in which we are only His instruments, no true entrance into the heavenly, altogether other-
1410 worldly, character of our mission and aims, no full surrender to and delight in Christ Jesus
1411 Himself.

1412
1413 If we were to yield to God’s Spirit to show us that all this is in very deed the meaning of
1414 remissness in prayer, and of our allowing other things to crowd it out, all our excuses would fall
1415 away, and we should fall down and cry, “We have sinned! we have sinned!” Samuel once said,
1416 “As for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.” Ceasing
1417 from prayer is sin against God. May God discover this to us. (Note A.)

1418
1419 5. _When God discovers sin, it must be confessed and cast out._—When the defeat at Ai came,
1420 Joshua and Israel were ignorant of the cause. God dealt with Israel as a nation, as one body, and
1421 the sin of one member was visited on all. Israel as a whole was ignorant of the sin, and yet

1422 suffered for it. The Church may be ignorant of the greatness of this sin of restraining prayer,
1423 individual ministers or believers may never have looked upon it as actual transgression, none the
1424 less does it bring its punishment. But when the sin is no more hidden, when the Holy Spirit
1425 begins to convince of it, then comes the time of heart-searching. In our story the combination of
1426 individual and united responsibility is very solemn. The individual: as we find it in the
1427 expression, “man for man”; each man felt himself under the eye of God, to be dealt with. And
1428 when Achan had been taken, he had to make confession. The united: as we see it in all Israel first
1429 suffering and dealt with by God, then taking Achan, and his family, and the accursed thing, and
1430 destroying them out of their midst.

1431
1432 If we have reason to think this is the sin that is in the camp, let us begin with personal and united
1433 confession. And then let us come before God to put away and destroy the sin. Here stands at the
1434 very threshold of Israel’s history in Canaan the heap of stones in the valley of Achor, to tell us
1435 that God cannot bear sin, that God will not dwell with sin, and that if we really want God’s
1436 presence in power, sin must be put away. Let us look the solemn fact in the face. There may be
1437 other sins, but here is certainly one that causes the loss of God’s presence—we do not pray as
1438 Christ and Scripture teach us. Let us bring it out before God, and give up this sin to the death.
1439 Let us yield ourselves to God to obey His voice. Let no fear of past failure, let no threatening
1440 array of temptations, or duties, or excuses, keep us back. It is a simple question of obedience.
1441 Are we going to give up ourselves to God and His Spirit to live a life in prayer, well-pleasing to
1442 Him? Surely, if it is God who has been withholding His presence, who has been discovering the
1443 sin, who is calling for its destruction, and a return to obedience, surely we can count upon His
1444 grace to accept and strengthen for the life He asks of us. It is not a question of what you can do;
1445 it is the question of whether you now, with your whole heart, turn to give God His due, and give
1446 yourself to let His will and grace have their way with you.

1447
1448 6. With sin cast out God’s presence is restored.—From this day onwards there is not a word in
1449 Joshua of defeat in battle. The story shows them going on from victory to victory. God’s
1450 presence secured gives power to overcome every enemy.

1451
1452 This truth is so simple that the very ease with which we acquiesce in it robs it of its power. Let us
1453 pause and think what it implies. God’s presence restored means victory secured. Then, we are
1454 responsible for defeat. Then, there must be sin somewhere causing it. Then, we ought at once to
1455 find out and put away the sin. We may confidently expect God’s presence the moment the sin is
1456 put away. Surely each one is under the solemn obligation to search his life and see what part he
1457 may have in this evil.

1458
1459 God never speaks to His people of sin except with a view to saving them from it. The same
1460 light that shows the sin will show the way out of it. The same power that breaks down and
1461 condemns will, if humbly yielded to and waited on in confession and faith, give the power to rise
1462 up and conquer. It is GOD who is speaking to His Church and to us about this sin: “HE
1463 WONDERED that there was no intercessor.” “I WONDERED that there was none to uphold.” “I
1464 SOUGHT for a man that should stand in the gap before Me, and found none.” The God who
1465 speaks thus is He who will work the change for His children who seek His face. He will make
1466 the valley of Achor, of trouble and shame, of sin confessed and cast out, a door of hope. Let us
1467 not fear, let us not cling to the excuses and explanations which circumstances suggest, but simply

1468 confess, "We have sinned; we are sinning; we dare not sin longer." In this matter of prayer we
1469 are sure God does not demand of us impossibilities. He does not weary us with an impracticable
1470 ideal. He asks us to pray no more than He gives grace to enable us to. He will give the grace to
1471 do what He asks, and so to pray that our intercessions shall, day by day, be a pleasure to Him and
1472 to us, a source of strength to our conscience and our work, and a channel of blessing to those for
1473 whom we labour.

1474
1475 God dealt personally with Joshua, with Israel, with Achan. Let each of us allow Him to deal
1476 personally with us concerning this sin, of restraining prayer, and its consequences in our life and
1477 work; concerning the deliverance from sin, its certainty and blessedness. Just bow in stillness and
1478 wait before God, until, as God, He overshadow you with His presence, lead you out of that
1479 region of argument as to human possibilities, where conviction of sin can never be deep, and full
1480 deliverance can never come. Take quiet time, and be still before God, that He may take this
1481 matter in hand. "Sit still, for He will not be in rest until He have finished this thing this day."
1482 Leave yourself in God's hands.

1483
1484
1485
1486

1487 A PLEA FOR MORE PRAYER

1488

1489 CHAPTER VII

1490

1491 Who shall Deliver?

1492

1493 "Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the
1494 daughter of my people recovered?"—JER. viii. 22.

1495

1496 "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto Thee;
1497 for Thou art the Lord our God."—JER. iii. 22.

1498

1499 "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed."—JER. xii. 14.

1500

1501 "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God
1502 through Jesus Christ our Lord. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the
1503 law of sin and death."—ROM. vii. 24, viii. 2.

1504

1505

1506 During one of our conventions a gentleman called upon me to ask advice and help. He was
1507 evidently an earnest and well-instructed Christian man. He had for some years been in most
1508 difficult surroundings, trying to witness for Christ. The result was a sense of failure and
1509 unhappiness. His complaint was that he had no relish for the Word, and that though he prayed, it
1510 was as if his heart was not in it. If he spoke to others, or gave a tract, it was under a sense of
1511 duty: the love and the joy were not present. He longed to be filled with God's Spirit, but the more
1512 he sought it, the farther off it appeared to be. What was he to think of his state, and was there any
1513 way out of it?

1514
1515 My answer was, that the whole matter appeared to me very simple; he was living under the law
1516 and not under grace. As long as he did so, there could be no change. He listened attentively, but
1517 could not exactly see what I meant.
1518
1519 I reminded him of the difference, the utter contrariety, between law and grace. Law demands;
1520 grace bestows. Law commands, but gives no strength to obey; grace promises, and performs,
1521 does all we need to do. Law burdens, and casts down and condemns; grace comforts, and makes
1522 strong and glad. Law appeals to self, to do its utmost; grace points to Christ to do all. Law calls
1523 to effort and strain, and urges us towards a goal we never can reach; grace works in us all God's
1524 blessed will. I pointed out to him how his first step should be, instead of striving against all this
1525 failure, fully to accept of it, and the lesson of his own impotence, as God had been seeking to
1526 teach it him, and, with this confession, to sink down before God in utter helplessness. There
1527 would be the place where he would learn that, unless grace gave him deliverance and strength, he
1528 never could do better than he had done, and that grace would indeed work all for him. He must
1529 come out from under law and self and effort, and take his place under grace, allowing God to do
1530 all.
1531
1532 In later conversations he told me the diagnosis of the disease had been correct. He admitted grace
1533 must do all. And yet, so deep was the thought that we must do something, that we must at least
1534 bring our faithfulness to secure the work of grace, he feared that his life would not be very
1535 different; he would not be equal to the strain of new difficulties into which he was now going.
1536 There was, amid all the intense earnestness, an undertone of despair; he could not live as he
1537 knew he ought to. I have already said, in the opening chapter, that in some of our meetings I had
1538 noticed this tone of hopelessness. And no minister who has come into close contact with souls
1539 seeking to live wholly for God, to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all well pleasing," but knows
1540 that this renders true progress impossible. To speak specially of the lack of prayer, and the desire
1541 of living a fuller prayer-life, how many are the difficulties to be met! We have so often resolved
1542 to pray more and better, and have failed. We have not the strength of will some have, with one
1543 resolve to turn round and change our habits. The press of duty is as great as ever it was; it is so
1544 difficult to find time for more prayer; real enjoyment in prayer, which would enable us to
1545 persevere, is what we do not feel; we do not possess the power to supplicate and to plead, as we
1546 should; our prayers, instead of being a joy and a strength, are a source of continual self-
1547 condemnation and doubt. We have at times mourned and confessed and resolved; but, to tell the
1548 honest truth, we do not expect, for we do not see the way to, any great change.
1549
1550 It is evident that as long as this spirit prevails, there can be very little prospect of improvement.
1551 Discouragement must bring defeat. One of the first objects of a physician is ever to waken hope;
1552 without this he knows his medicines will often profit little. No teaching from God's Word as to
1553 the duty, the urgent need, the blessed privilege of more prayer, of effectual prayer, will avail,
1554 while the secret whisper is heard: There is no hope. Our first care must be to find out the hidden
1555 cause of the failure and despair, and then to show how divinely sure deliverance is. We must,
1556 unless we are to rest content with our state, listen to and join in the question, "Is there no balm in
1557 Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people
1558 restored?" We must listen, and receive into our heart, the Divine promise with the response it
1559 met with: "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come

1560 unto Thee, for Thou art the Lord our God.” We must come with the personal prayer, and the faith
1561 that there will be a personal answer. Shall we not even now begin to claim it in regard to the lack
1562 of prayer, and believe that God will help us: “Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed.”

1563
1564 It is always of consequence to distinguish between the symptoms of a disease and the disease
1565 itself. Feebleness and failure in prayer is a sign of feebleness in the spiritual life. If a patient were
1566 to ask a physician to give him something to stimulate his feeble pulse, he would be told that this
1567 would do him little good. The pulse is the index of the state of the heart and the whole system:
1568 the physician strives to have health restored. What everyone who would fain pray more faithfully
1569 and effectually must learn is this, that his whole spiritual life is in a sickly state, and needs
1570 restoration. It is as he comes to look, not only at his shortcomings in prayer, but at the lack in the
1571 life of faith, of which this is the symptom, that he will become fully alive to the serious nature of
1572 the disease. He will then see the need of a radical change in his whole life and walk, if his
1573 prayer-life, which is simply the pulse of the spiritual system, is to indicate health and vigour.
1574 God has so created us that the exercise of every healthy function causes joy. Prayer is meant to
1575 be as simple and natural as breathing or working to a healthy man. The reluctance we feel, and
1576 the failure we confess, are God’s own voice calling us to acknowledge our disease, and to come
1577 to Him for the healing He has promised.

1578
1579 And what is now the disease of which the lack of prayer is the symptom? We cannot find a better
1580 answer than is pointed out in the words, “Ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

1581
1582 Here we have suggested the possibility of two types of Christian life. There may be a life partly
1583 under the law and partly under grace; or, a life entirely under grace, in the full liberty from self-
1584 effort, and the full experience of the Divine strength which it can give. A true believer may still
1585 be living partly under the law, in the power of self-effort, striving to do what he cannot
1586 accomplish. The continued failure in his Christian life to which he confesses is owing to this one
1587 thing: he trusts in himself, and tries to do his best. He does, indeed, pray and look to God for
1588 help, but still it is he in his strength, helped by God, who is to do the work. In the Epistles to the
1589 Romans, and Corinthians, and Galatians, we know how Paul tells them that they have not
1590 received the spirit of bondage again, that they are free from the law, that they are no more
1591 servants but sons; that they must beware of nothing so much as to be entangled again with the
1592 yoke of bondage. Everywhere it is the contrast between the law and grace, between the flesh,
1593 which is under the law, and the Spirit, who is the gift of grace, and through whom grace does all
1594 its work. In our days, just as in those first ages, the great danger is living under the law, and
1595 serving God in the strength of the flesh. With the great majority of Christians it appears to be the
1596 state in which they remain all their lives. Hence the lack to such a large extent of true holy living
1597 and power in prayer. They do not know that all failure can have but one cause: _Men seek to do
1598 themselves what grace alone can do in them_, what grace most certainly will do.

1599
1600 Many will not be prepared to admit that this is their disease, that they are not living “under
1601 grace.” Impossible, they say. “From the depth of my heart,” a Christian cries, “I believe and
1602 know that there is no good in me, and that I owe everything to grace alone.” “I have spent my
1603 life,” a minister says, “and found my glory in preaching and exalting the doctrines of free grace.”
1604 “And I,” a missionary answers, “how could I ever have thought of seeing the heathen saved, if
1605 my only confidence had not been in the message I brought, and the power I trusted, of God’s

1606 abounding grace.” Surely you cannot say that our failures in prayer, and we sadly confess to
1607 them, are owing to our not living “under grace”? This cannot be our disease.

1608
1609 We know how often a man may be suffering from a disease without knowing it. What he counts
1610 a slight ailment turns out to be a dangerous complaint. Do not let us be too sure that we are not,
1611 to a large extent, still living “under the law,” while considering ourselves to be living wholly
1612 “under grace.” Very frequently the reason of this mistake is the limited meaning attached to the
1613 word “grace.” Just as we limit God Himself, by our little or unbelieving thoughts of Him, so we
1614 limit His grace at the very moment that we are delighting in terms like the “riches of grace,”
1615 “grace exceeding abundant.” Has not the very term, “grace abounding,” from Bunyan’s book
1616 downward, been confined to the one great blessed truth of free justification with ever renewed
1617 pardon and eternal glory for the vilest of sinners, while the other equally blessed truth of “grace
1618 abounding” in sanctification is not fully known. Paul writes: “Much more shall they which
1619 receive the abundance of grace reign in life through Jesus Christ.” That reigning in life, as
1620 conqueror over sin, is even here on earth. “Where sin abounded” in the heart and life, “grace did
1621 abound more exceedingly, that grace might reign through righteousness” in the whole life and
1622 being of the believer. It is of this reign of grace in the soul that Paul asks, “Shall we sin because
1623 we are under grace?” and answers, “God forbid.” Grace is not only pardon of, but power over,
1624 sin; grace takes the place sin had in the life, and undertakes, as sin had reigned within in the
1625 power of death, to reign in the power of Christ’s life. It is of this grace that Christ spoke, “My
1626 grace is sufficient for thee,” and Paul answered, “I will glory in my weakness; for, when I am
1627 weak, then am I strong.” It is of this grace, which, when we are willing to confess ourselves
1628 utterly impotent and helpless, comes in to work all in us, that Paul elsewhere teaches, “God is
1629 able to make all grace abound unto you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all
1630 things, may abound unto all good works.”

1631
1632 It has often happened that a seeker after God and salvation has read his Bible long, and yet never
1633 seen the truth of a free and full and immediate justification by faith. When once his eyes were
1634 opened, and he accepted it, he was amazed to find it everywhere. Even so many believers, who
1635 hold the doctrines of free grace as applied to pardon, have never seen its wondrous meaning as it
1636 undertakes to work our whole life in us, and actually give us strength every moment for
1637 whatever the Father would have us be and do. When God’s light shines into our heart with this
1638 blessed truth, we know what Paul means, “Not I, but the grace of God.” There again you have
1639 the twofold Christian life. The one, in which that “Not I”—I am nothing, I can do nothing—has
1640 not yet become a reality. The other, when the wondrous exchange has been made, and grace has
1641 taken the place of our effort, and we say and know, “I live, yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in
1642 me.” It may then become a lifelong experience: “The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant,
1643 with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

1644
1645 Beloved child of God! what think you, is it not possible that this has been the want in your life,
1646 the cause of your failure in prayer? You knew not how grace would enable you to pray, if once
1647 the whole life were under its power. You sought by earnest effort to conquer your reluctance or
1648 deadness in prayer, but failed. You strove by every motive of shame or love you could think of to
1649 stir yourself to it, but it would not help. Is it not worth while asking the Lord whether the
1650 message I bring you as His servant may not be more true for you than you think? Your lack of
1651 prayer is owing to a diseased state of life, and the disease is nothing but this—you have not

1652 accepted, for daily life and every duty, the full salvation which the word brings: “Ye are not
1653 under the law, but under grace.” As universal and deep-reaching as the demand of the law and
1654 the reign of sin, yea, more exceeding abundant, is the provision of grace and the power by which
1655 it makes us reign in life. (Note B.)

1656
1657 In the chapter that follows that in which Paul wrote, “Ye are not under the law, but under grace,”
1658 he gives us a picture of a believer’s life under law, with the bitter experience in which it ends: “O
1659 wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” His answer to the
1660 question, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord,” shows that there is deliverance from a life
1661 held captive under evil habits that have been struggled against in vain. That deliverance is by the
1662 Holy Spirit giving the full experience of what the life of Christ can work in us: “The law of the
1663 Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” The law of God
1664 could only deliver us into the power of the law of sin and death. The grace of God can bring us
1665 into, and keep us in, the liberty of the Spirit. We can be made free from the sad life under the
1666 power that led us captive, so that we did not what we would. The Spirit of life in Christ can free
1667 us from our continual failure in prayer, and enable us in this, too, to walk worthy of the Lord
1668 unto all well-pleasing.

1669
1670 Oh! be not hopeless, be not despondent; there is a balm in Gilead; there is a Physician there;
1671 there is healing for our sickness. What is impossible with man is possible with God. What you
1672 see no possibility of doing, grace will do. Confess the disease; trust the Physician; claim the
1673 healing; pray the prayer of faith, “Heal me, and I shall be healed.” You too can become a man of
1674 prayer, and pray the effectual prayer that availeth much.[1]

1675
1676 [1] I ought to say, for the encouragement of all, that the gentleman of whom I spoke, at a
1677 Convention a fortnight later, saw and claimed the rest of faith in trusting God for all, and a letter
1678 from England tells that he has found that His grace is sufficient.

1679

1680

1681

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1683 A PLEA FOR MORE PRAYER

1684

1685 CHAPTER VIII

1686

1687 Wilt Thou be made Whole?

1688

1689 “Jesus saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no
1690 man to put me into the pool. Jesus saith unto him, Rise and walk. Immediately the man was
1691 made whole, and walked.”—JOHN v. 6-9.

1692

1693 “Peter said, In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.... The faith which is by
1694 Him hath given this man this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.”—ACTS iii. 6, 16.

1695

1696 “Peter said, neas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise. And he arose immediately.”—ACTS ix.
1697 34.

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Feebleness in prayer is the mark of disease. Impotence to walk is, in the Christian, as in the natural life, a terrible proof of some evil in the system that needs a physician. The lack of power to walk joyfully in the new and living way that leads to the Father and the throne of grace is specially grievous. Christ is the great Physician, who comes to every Bethesda where impotent folk are gathered, and speaks out his loving, searching question, Wilt thou be made whole? For all who are still clinging to their hope in the pool, or are looking for some man to put them in, who are hoping, in course of time, somehow to be helped by just continuing in the use of the ordinary means of grace, His question points to a better way. He offers them healing in a way of power they have never understood. And to all who are willing to confess, not only their own impotence, but their failure to find any man to help them, His question brings the sure and certain hope of a near deliverance. We have seen that our weakness in prayer is part of a life smitten with spiritual impotence. Let us listen to our Lord as He offers to restore our spiritual strength, to fit us for walking like healthy, strong men in all the ways of the Lord, and so be fit rightly to fill our place in the great work of intercession. As we see what the wholeness is He offers, how He gives it, and what He asks of us, we shall be prepared for giving a willing answer to His question.

WHAT THE HEALTH THAT JESUS OFFERS.

I might mention many marks of spiritual health. Our text leads us to take one,—walking. Jesus said to the sick man, Rise and walk, and with that restored him to his place among men in full health and vigour, able to take his part in all the work of life. It is a wonderfully suggestive picture of the restoration of spiritual health. To the healthy, walking is a pleasure; to the sick, a burden, if not an impossibility. How many Christians there are to whom, like the maimed and the halt and the lame and the impotent, movement and progress in God’s way is indeed an effort and a weariness. Christ comes to say, and with the word He gives the power, Rise and walk.

Just think of this walk to which He restores and empowers us. It is a life like that of Enoch and Noah, who “walked with God.” A life like that of Abraham, to whom God said, “Walk before Me,” and who himself spake, “The Lord before whom I walk.” A life of which David sings, “They shall walk in the light of Thy countenance,” and Isaiah prophesies, “They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” Even as God the Creator fainteth not nor is weary, shall they who walk with Him, waiting on Him, never be exhausted or feeble. It is a life concerning which it could be said of the last of the Old Testament saints, Zacharias and Elisabeth, “They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.” This is the walk Jesus came to make possible and true to His people in greater power than ever before.

Hear what the New Testament speaks of it: “That like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life.” It is the Risen One who says to us, Rise and walk: He gives the power of the resurrection life. It is a walk in Christ. “As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye also in Him.” It is a walk like Christ. “He that saith he abideth in Him ought so to walk even as He walked.” It is a walk by the Spirit and after the

1744 Spirit. “Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.” “Who walk not after the
1745 flesh, but after the Spirit.” It is a walk worthy of God and well pleasing to Him. “That ye would
1746 walk worthy of the Lord, unto all well pleasing, being fruitful in every good work.” “I beseech
1747 you, that as ye received of us, how ye should walk and please God, _even as ye do walk_, that ye
1748 would abound more and more.” It is a walk in heavenly love. “Walk in love, even as Christ loved
1749 you.” It is a “walk in the light, as He is in the light.” It is a walk of faith, all its power coming
1750 simply from God and Christ and the Holy Spirit, to the soul turned away from the world. “We
1751 walk by faith, and not by sight.”

1752
1753 How many believers there are who regard such a walk as an impossible thing—so impossible
1754 that they do not feel it a sin that they “walk otherwise”; and so they do not long for this walk in
1755 newness of life. They have become so accustomed to the life of impotence, that the life and walk
1756 in God’s strength has little attraction. But some there are with whom it is not thus. They do
1757 wonder if these words really mean what they say, and if the wonderful life each one of them
1758 speaks of is simply an unattainable ideal, or meant to be realised in flesh and blood. The more
1759 they study them, the more they feel that they are spoken as for daily life. And yet they appear too
1760 high. Oh that they would believe that God sent his Almighty Son, and His Holy Spirit, indeed to
1761 bring us and fit us for a life and walk from heaven beyond all that man could dare to think or
1762 hope for.

1763

1764

1765 HOW JESUS MAKES US WHOLE.

1766

1767 When a physician heals a patient, he acts on him from without, and does something which is, if
1768 possible, ever after to render him independent of his aid. He restores him to perfect health, and
1769 leaves him. With the work of our Lord Jesus it is in both respects the very opposite. Jesus works
1770 not from without, but from within, by entering Himself in the power of His Spirit into our very
1771 life. And instead of, as in the bodily healing, being rendered, if possible, independent of a
1772 physician for the future, Christ’s one purpose in healing is, as we said, the exact opposite. His
1773 one condition of success, is to bring us into _such dependence upon Himself as that we shall not
1774 be able one single moment to do without Him_. Christ Jesus Himself is our life, in a sense that
1775 many Christians have no conception of. The prevailing feeble and sickly life is entirely owing to
1776 the lack of the apprehension of the Divine truth, that as long as we expect Christ continually to
1777 do something for us from heaven, in single acts of grace from time to time, and each time trust
1778 Him to give us what will last a little while, we cannot be restored to perfect health. But when
1779 once we see how there is to be nothing of our own for a single moment, and it is to be all Christ
1780 moment by moment, and learn to accept it from Him and trust Him for it, the life of Christ
1781 becomes the health of our soul. Health is nothing but life in its normal, undisturbed action. Christ
1782 gives us health by giving us Himself as our life; so He becomes our strength for our walk.
1783 Isaiah’s words find their New Testament fulfilment: They that wait on the Lord shall walk and
1784 not faint, because Christ is now the strength of their life.

1785

1786 It is strange how believers sometimes think this life of dependence too great a strain, and a loss
1787 of our personal liberty. They admit a need of dependence, of much dependence, but with room
1788 left for our own will and energy. They do not see that even a partial dependence makes us
1789 debtors, and leaves us nothing to boast of. They forget that our relationship to God, and co-

1790 operation with Him, is not that He does the larger part and we the lesser, but that God does all
1791 and we do all—God all in us, we all through God. This dependence upon God secures our true
1792 independence; when our will seeks nothing but the Divine will, we reach a Divine nobility, the
1793 true independence of all that is created. He that has not seen this must remain a sickly Christian,
1794 letting self do part and Christ part. He that accepts the life of unceasing dependence on Christ, as
1795 life and health and strength, is made whole. As God, Christ can enter and become the life of His
1796 creature. As the Glorified One who received the Holy Spirit from the Father to bestow, He can
1797 renew the heart of the sinful creature and make it His home, and by His presence maintain it in
1798 full health and strength.

1799
1800 O ye all who would fain walk and please God, and in your prayer-life not have your heart
1801 condemn you, listen to Christ's words: "Wilt thou be made whole?" He can give soul-health. He
1802 can give a life that can pray, and know that it is well-pleasing to the Father. If you would have
1803 this, come and hear how you can receive it.

1804
1805

1806 WHAT CHRIST ASKS OF US.

1807

1808 The story invites us to notice three things very specially. Christ's question first appeals to the
1809 will, and asks for the expression of its consent. He then listens to man's confession of his utter
1810 helplessness. Then comes the ready obedience to Christ's command, that rises up and walks.

1811

1812 1. Wilt thou be made whole? About the answer of the impotent man there could be no doubt.
1813 Who would not be willing to have his sickness removed? But, alas, in the spiritual life what need
1814 to press the question. Some will not admit that they are so sick. And some will not believe that
1815 Christ can make a man whole. And some will believe it for others, but they are sure it is not for
1816 them. At the root of all lies the fear of the self-denial and the sacrifice which will be needed.
1817 They are not willing to forsake entirely the walk after the course of this world, to give up all self-
1818 will, and self-confidence, and self-pleasing. The walk in Christ and like Christ is too straight and
1819 hard: they do not will it, they do not will to be made whole. My brother, if thou art willing, speak
1820 it out: "Lord! at any price, I will!" From Christ's side the act is one of the will: "I will, be thou
1821 clean." From your side equally: "Be it unto thee as thou wilt." If you would be delivered from
1822 your impotence—oh, fear not to say, "I will, I will!"

1823

1824 Then comes the second step. Christ wants us to look up to him as our only Helper. "I have no
1825 man to put me in," must be our cry. Here on earth there is no help for me. Weakness may grow
1826 into strength in the ordinary use of means, if all the organs and functions are in a sound state.
1827 Sickness needs special measures. Your soul is sick; your impotence to walk joyfully the
1828 Christian walk in God's way is a sign of disease; fear not to confess it, and to admit that there is
1829 no hope for restoration unless by an act of Christ's mercy healing you. Give up the idea of
1830 growing out of your sickly into a healthy state, of growing out from under the law into a life
1831 under grace. A few days ago I heard a student plead the cause of the Volunteer Pledge. "The
1832 pledge calls you," he said, "to a decision. Do not think of growing into a missionary: unless God
1833 forbids you, take the step; the decision will bring joy and strength, will set you free to grow up in
1834 all needed for a missionary, and will be a help to others." It is even so in the Christian life. Delay
1835 and struggle will equally hinder you; do confess that you cannot bring yourself to pray as you

1836 would, because you cannot give yourself the healthy, heavenly life that loves to pray, and that
1837 knows to count upon God's Spirit to pray in us. Come to Christ to heal you. He can in one
1838 moment make you whole. Not in the sense of working a sudden change in your feelings, or in
1839 what you are in yourself, but in the heavenly reality of coming in, in response to your surrender
1840 and faith, and taking charge of your inner life, and filling it with Himself and Spirit.

1841
1842 The third thing Christ asks is this, the surrender of faith. When He spoke to the impotent man His
1843 word of command had to be obeyed. The man believed that there was truth and power in Christ's
1844 word; in that faith he rose and walked. By faith he obeyed. And what Christ said to others was
1845 for him too—"Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole." Of us, too, Christ asks this faith,
1846 that His word changes our impotence into strength, and fits us for that walk in newness of life for
1847 which we have been quickened in Him. If we do not believe this, if we will not take courage and
1848 say, with Paul, "I can do all things in Christ, which strengtheneth me," we cannot obey. But if we
1849 will listen to the word that tells us of the walk that is not only possible, but has been proved and
1850 seen in God's saints from of old, if we will fix our eye on the mighty, living, loving Christ, who
1851 speaks in power, "Rise and walk," we shall take courage and obey. We shall rise and begin to
1852 walk in Him and His strength. In faith, apart from and above all feeling, we shall accept and trust
1853 an unseen Christ as our strength, and go on in the strength of the Lord God. We shall know
1854 Christ as the strength of our life. We shall know, and tell, and prove that Jesus Christ hath made
1855 us whole.

1856
1857 Can it indeed be? Yes, it can. He has done it for many: He will do it for you. Beware of forming
1858 wrong conceptions of what must take place. When the impotent man was made whole he had
1859 still all to learn as to the use of his new-found strength. If he wanted to dig, or build, or learn a
1860 trade, he had to begin at the beginning. Do not expect at once to be a proficient in prayer or any
1861 part of the Christian life. No; but expect and be confident of this one thing, that, as you have
1862 trusted yourself to Christ to be your health and strength, He will lead and teach you. Begin to
1863 pray in a quiet sense of your ignorance and weakness, but in a joyful assurance that He will work
1864 in you what you need. Rise and walk each day in a holy confidence that He is with you and in
1865 you. Just accept Jesus Christ the Living One, and trust Him to do His work.

1866
1867 Will you do it? Have you done it? Even now Jesus speaks, "Rise and walk." "Amen, Lord! at
1868 Thy word I come. I rise to walk with Thee, and in Thee, and like Thee."

1869
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1872
1873 A PLEA FOR MORE PRAYER

1874
1875 CHAPTER IX

1876
1877 The Secret of Effectual Prayer

1878
1879 "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall
1880 have them."—MARK xi. 24.

1881

1882
1883 Here we have a summary of the teaching of our Lord Jesus on prayer. Nothing will so much help
1884 to convince us of the sin of our remissness in prayer, to discover its causes, and to give us
1885 courage to expect entire deliverance, as the careful study and then the believing acceptance of
1886 that teaching. The more heartily we enter into the mind of our blessed Lord, and set ourselves
1887 simply just to think about prayer as He thought, the more surely will His words be as living
1888 seeds. They will grow and produce in us their fruit,—a life and practice exactly corresponding to
1889 the Divine truth they contain. Do let us believe this: Christ, the living Word of God, gives in His
1890 words a Divine quickening power which brings what they say, which works in us what He asks,
1891 which actually fits and enables for all He demands. Learn to look upon His teaching on prayer as
1892 a definite promise of what He, by His Holy Spirit dwelling in you, is going to work into your
1893 very being and character.

1894
1895 Our Lord gives us the five marks, or essential elements, of true prayer. There must be, first, the
1896 heart's desire; then the expression of that desire in prayer; with that, the faith that carries
1897 the prayer to God; in that faith, the acceptance of God's answer; then comes the experience
1898 of the desired blessing. It may help to give definiteness to our thought, if we each take a definite
1899 request in regard to which we would fain learn to pray believingly. Or, perhaps better still, we
1900 might all unite and take the one thing that has been occupying our attention. We have been
1901 speaking of failure in prayer; why should we not take as the object of desire and supplication the
1902 "grace of supplication," and say, I want to ask and receive in faith the power to pray just as, and
1903 as much as, my God expects of me? Let us meditate on our Lord's words, in the confidence that
1904 He will teach us how to pray for this blessing.

1905
1906 1. "What things soever ye desire."—Desire is the secret power that moves the whole world of
1907 living men, and directs the course of each. And so desire is the soul of prayer, and the cause of
1908 insufficient or unsuccessful prayer is very much to be found in the lack or feebleness of desire.
1909 Some may doubt this: they are sure that they have very earnestly desired what they ask. But if
1910 they consider whether their desire has indeed been as whole-hearted as God would have it, as the
1911 heavenly worth of these blessings demands, they may come to see that it was indeed the lack of
1912 desire that was the cause of failure. What is true of God is true of each of his blessings, and is the
1913 more true the more spiritual the blessing: "Ye shall seek Me, and shall find, when ye shall search
1914 for Me with all your heart" (Jer. xxix. 13). Of Judah in the days of Asa it is written, "They sought
1915 Him with their whole desire" (2 Chron. xv. 15). A Christian may often have very earnest
1916 desires for spiritual blessings. But alongside of these there are other desires in his daily life
1917 occupying a large place in his interests and affections. The spiritual desires are not all-absorbing.
1918 He wonders that his prayer is not heard. It is simply that God wants the whole heart. "The Lord
1919 thy God is one Lord, therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." The law
1920 is unchangeable: God offers Himself, gives Himself away, to the whole-hearted who give
1921 themselves wholly away to Him. He always gives us according to our heart's desire. But not as
1922 we think it, but as He sees it. If there be other desires which are more at home with us, which
1923 have our heart more than Himself and His presence, He allows these to be fulfilled, and the
1924 desires that engage us at the hour of prayer cannot be granted.

1925
1926 We desire the gift of intercession, grace and power to pray aright. Our hearts must be drawn
1927 away from other desires: we must give ourselves wholly to this one. We must be willing to live

1928 wholly in intercession for the kingdom. By fixing our eye on the blessedness and the need of this
1929 grace, by thinking of the certainty that God will give it us, by giving ourselves up to it, for the
1930 sake of the perishing world, desire may be strengthened, and the first step taken towards the
1931 possession of the coveted blessing. Let us seek the grace of prayer, as we seek the God with
1932 whom it will link us, “with our whole desire”; we may depend upon the promise, “He will fulfil
1933 the desire of them that fear Him.” Let us not fear to say to Him, “I desire it with my whole
1934 heart.”

1935
1936 2. “What things soever ye desire when ye pray.”—The desire of the heart must become the
1937 expression of the lips. Our Lord Jesus more than once asked those who cried to Him for mercy,
1938 “What wilt thou?” He wanted them to say what they would. To speak it out roused their whole
1939 being into action, brought them into contact with Him, and wakened their expectation. To pray is
1940 to enter into God’s presence, to claim and secure His attention, to have distinct dealing with Him
1941 in regard to some request, to commit our need to His faithfulness and to leave it there: it is in so
1942 doing that we become fully conscious of what we are seeking.

1943
1944 There are some who often carry strong desires in their heart, without bringing them to God in the
1945 clear expression of definite and repeated prayer. There are others who go to the Word and its
1946 promises to strengthen their faith, but do not give sufficient place to that pointed asking of God
1947 which helps the soul to the assurance that the matter has been put into God’s hands. Still others
1948 come in prayer with so many requests and desires, that it is difficult for themselves to say what
1949 they really expect God to do. If you would obtain from God this great gift of faithfulness in
1950 prayer and power to pray aright, begin by exercising yourself in prayer in regard to it. Say of it to
1951 yourself and to God: “Here is something I have asked, and am continuing to ask till I receive. As
1952 plain and pointed as words can make it, I am saying, ‘My Father! I do desire, I do ask of Thee,
1953 and expect of Thee, the grace of prayer and intercession.’”

1954
1955 3. “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe.”—As it is only by faith that we can
1956 know God, or receive Jesus Christ, or live the Christian life, so faith is the life and power of
1957 prayer. If we are to enter upon a life of intercession, in which there is to be joy and power and
1958 blessing, if we are to have our prayer for the grace of prayer answered, we must learn anew what
1959 faith is, and begin to live and pray in faith as never before.

1960
1961 Faith is the opposite of sight, and the two are contrary the one to the other. “We walk by faith,
1962 and not by sight.” If the unseen is to get full possession of us, and heart and life and prayer are to
1963 be full of faith, there must be a withdrawal from, a denial of, the visible. The spirit that seeks to
1964 enjoy as much as possible of what is innocent or legitimate, that gives the first place to the calls
1965 and duties of daily life, is inconsistent with a strong faith and close intercourse with the spiritual
1966 world. “We look not at the things that are seen”—the negative side needs to be emphasised if
1967 the positive, “but at the things which are not seen,” is to become natural to us. In praying, faith
1968 depends upon our living in the invisible world.

1969
1970 This faith has specially to do with God. The great reason of our lack of faith is our lack of
1971 knowledge of God and intercourse with Him. “Have faith in God,” Jesus said when He spoke of
1972 removing mountains. It is as a soul knows God, is occupied with His power, love, and
1973 faithfulness, comes away out of self and the world, and allows the light of God to shine on it, that

1974 unbelief will become impossible. All the mysteries and difficulties connected with answers to
1975 prayer will, however little we may be able to solve them intellectually, be swallowed up in the
1976 adoring assurance: “This God is our God. He will bless us. He does indeed answer prayer. And
1977 the grace to pray I am asking for He will delight to give.” (Note C.)
1978

1979 4. “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye have received,” now as you
1980 pray.— Faith has to accept the answer, as given by God in heaven, before it is found or felt upon
1981 earth. This point causes difficulty, and yet it is of the very essence of believing prayer, its real
1982 secret. Try and take it in. Spiritual things can only be spiritually apprehended or appropriated.
1983 The spiritual heavenly blessing of God’s answer to your prayer must be spiritually recognised
1984 and accepted before you feel anything of it. It is faith does this. A soul that not only seeks an
1985 answer, but seeks first the God who gives the answer, receives the power to know that it has what
1986 it has asked of Him. If it knows that it has asked according to His will and promises, and that it
1987 has come to and found Himself to give it, it does believe that it has received. “We know that He
1988 heareth us.”
1989

1990 There is nothing so heart-searching as this faith, “Believe that ye have received.” As we strive
1991 to believe, and find we cannot, it leads us to discover what there is that hinders. Blessed is the
1992 man who holds nothing back, and lets nothing hold him back, but, with his eye and heart on God
1993 alone, refuses to rest till he has believed what our Lord bids him, “that he has received.” Here is
1994 the place where Jacob becomes Israel, and the power of prevailing prayer is born out of human
1995 weakness and despair. Here comes in the real need for persevering and ever- importunate prayer,
1996 that will not rest, or go away, or give up, till it knows it is heard, and believes that it has received.
1997

1998 You pray for “the Spirit of grace and supplication”? As you ask for it in strong desire, and
1999 believe in God who hears prayer, do not be afraid to press on and believe that your life can
2000 indeed be changed, that the world with its press of duties, whether religious or not, hindering
2001 prayer, can be overcome, and that God gives you your heart’s desire, grace to pray both in
2002 measure and in spirit, just as the Father would have His child do. “Believe that you have
2003 received.”
2004

2005 5. “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye have received, and ye shall have
2006 them.”—The receiving from God in faith, the believing acceptance of the answer with the
2007 perfect, praising assurance that it has been given, is not necessarily the experience or subjective
2008 possession of the gift we have asked for. At times there may be a considerable, or even a long,
2009 interval. In other cases the believing supplicant may at once enter upon the actual enjoyment of
2010 what he has received. It is specially in the former case that we have need of faith and patience:
2011 faith to rejoice in the assurance of the answer bestowed and received, and to begin and act upon
2012 that answer though nothing be felt; patience to wait if there be for the present no sensible proof
2013 of its presence. We can count upon it: Ye shall have, in actual enjoyment.
2014

2015 If we apply this to the prayer for the power of faithful intercession, the grace to pray earnestly
2016 and perseveringly for souls around us, let us learn to hold fast the Divine assurance that, as
2017 surely as we believe we receive, and that faith therefore, apart from all failing, may rejoice in the
2018 certainty of an answered prayer. The more we praise God for it, the sooner will the experience
2019 come. We may begin at once to pray for others, in the confidence that grace will be given us to

2020 pray more perseveringly and more believingly than we have done before. If we do not find any
2021 special enlargement or power in prayer, this must not hinder or discourage us. We have accepted,
2022 apart from feeling, a spiritual Divine gift by faith; in that faith we are to pray, nothing doubting.
2023 The Holy Spirit may for a little time be hiding Himself within us; we may count upon Him, even
2024 though it be with groanings which cannot find expression, to pray in us; in due time we shall
2025 become conscious of His presence and power. As sure as there is desire and prayer and faith, and
2026 faith's acceptance of the gift, there will be, too, the manifestation and experience of the blessing
2027 we sought.

2028
2029 Beloved brother! do you truly desire that God should enable you so to pray that your life may be
2030 free from continual self-condemnation, and that the power of His Spirit may come down in
2031 answer to your petition? Come and _ask it of God_. Kneel down and pray for it in a single
2032 definite sentence. When you have done so, kneel still in faith, believing in God who answers.
2033 Believe that you do now receive what you have prayed: believe that you have received. If you
2034 find it difficult to do this, kneel still, and say that you do it on the strength of His own word. If it
2035 cost time, and struggle, and doubt—fear not; at His feet, looking up into His face, faith will
2036 come. “Believe that you have received”: at His bidding you dare claim the answer. Begin in that
2037 faith, even though it be feeble, a new prayer-life, with this one thought as its strength: “You have
2038 asked and received grace in Christ to prepare you, step by step, to be faithful in prayer and
2039 intercession. The more simply you hold to this, and expect the Holy Spirit to work it in you, the
2040 more surely and fully will the word be made true to you: Ye shall have it. God Himself who gave
2041 the answer will work it in you.”

2042
2043
2044
2045

2046 A PLEA FOR MORE PRAYER

2047

2048 CHAPTER X

2049

2050 The Spirit of Supplication

2051

2052 “I will pour upon the house of David the Spirit of grace and of supplication.”—ZECH. xii. 10.

2053

2054 “The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity; for we know not how to pray as we ought: but the Spirit
2055 Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that
2056 searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for
2057 the saints according to God.”—ROM. viii. 26, 27.

2058

2059 “With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in
2060 all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.”—EPH. vi. 18.

2061

2062 “Praying in the Holy Spirit.”—JUDE 20.

2063

2064

2065 The Holy Spirit has been given to every child of God to be his life. He dwells in him, not as a
2066 separate Being in one part of his nature, but as his very life. He is the Divine power or energy by
2067 which his life is maintained and strengthened. All that a believer is called to be or to do, the Holy
2068 Spirit can and will work in him. If he does not know or yield to the Holy Guest, the Blessed
2069 Spirit cannot work, and his life is a sickly one, full of failure and of sin. As he yields, and waits,
2070 and obeys the leading of the Spirit, God works in him all that is pleasing in His sight.

2071
2072 This Holy Spirit is, in the first place, a Spirit of prayer. He was promised as a “Spirit of grace and
2073 supplication,” the grace for supplication. He was sent forth into our hearts as “the Spirit of
2074 adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” He enables us to say, in true faith and growing
2075 apprehension of its meaning, Our Father which art in heaven. “He maketh intercession for the
2076 saints according to God.” And as we pray in the Spirit, our worship is as God seeks it to be, “in
2077 spirit and in truth.” Prayer is just the breathing of the Spirit in us; power in prayer comes from
2078 the power of the Spirit in us, waited on and trusted in. Failure in prayer comes from feebleness of
2079 the Spirit’s work in us. Our prayer is the index of the measure of the Spirit’s work in us. To pray
2080 aright, the life of the Spirit must be right in us. For praying the effectual, much-availing prayer of
2081 the righteous man everything depends on being full of the Spirit.

2082
2083 There are three very simple lessons that the believer, who would enjoy the blessing of being
2084 taught to pray by the Spirit of prayer, must know. The first is: _Believe that the Spirit dwells in
2085 you_ (Eph. i. 13). Deep in the inmost recesses of his being, hidden and unfelt, every child of God
2086 has the Holy, Mighty Spirit of God dwelling in him. He knows it by faith, the faith that,
2087 accepting God’s word, realises that of which he sees as yet no sign. “We receive the promise of
2088 the Spirit by faith.” As long as we measure our power, for praying aright and perseveringly, by
2089 what we feel, or think we can accomplish, we shall be discouraged when we hear of how much
2090 we ought to pray. But when we quietly believe that, in the midst of all our conscious weakness,
2091 the Holy Spirit as a Spirit of supplication is dwelling within us, _for the very purpose of enabling
2092 us to pray in such manner and measure as God would have us_, our hearts will be filled with
2093 hope. We shall be strengthened in the assurance which lies at the very root of a happy and
2094 fruitful Christian life, that _God has made an abundant provision for our being what He wants us
2095 to be_. We shall begin to lose our sense of burden and fear and discouragement about our ever
2096 praying sufficiently, because we see that the Holy Spirit Himself will pray, is praying, in us.

2097
2098 The second lesson is: _Beware above everything of grieving the Holy Spirit_ (Eph. iv. 30). If
2099 you do, how can He work in you the quiet, trustful, and blessed sense of that union with Christ
2100 which makes your prayers well pleasing to the Father? Beware of grieving Him by sin, by
2101 unbelief, by selfishness, by unfaithfulness to His voice in conscience. Do not think grieving Him
2102 a necessity: that cuts away the very sinews of your strength. Do not consider it impossible to
2103 obey the command, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit.” He Himself is the very power of God to make
2104 you obedient. The sin that comes up in you against your will, the tendency to sloth, or pride, or
2105 self-will, or passion that rises in the flesh, your will can, in the power of the Spirit, at once reject,
2106 and cast upon Christ and His blood, and your communion with God is immediately restored.
2107 Accept each day the Holy Spirit as your Leader and Life and Strength; you can count upon Him
2108 to do in your heart all that ought to be done there. He, the Unseen and Unfelt One, but known by
2109 faith, gives there, unseen and unfelt, the love and the faith and the power of obedience you need,

2110 because He reveals Christ unseen within you, as actually your Life and Strength. Grieve not the
2111 Holy Spirit by distrusting Him, because you do not feel His presence in you.

2112
2113 Especially in the matter of prayer grieve Him not. Do not expect, when you trust Christ to bring
2114 you into a new, healthy prayer-life, that you will be able all at once to pray as easily and
2115 powerfully and joyfully as you fain would. No; it may not come at once. But just bow quietly
2116 before God in your ignorance and weakness. That is the best and truest prayer, to put yourself
2117 before God just as you are, and to count on the hidden Spirit praying in you. “We know not what
2118 to pray as we ought”; ignorance, difficulty, struggle, marks our prayer all along. But, “the Spirit
2119 helpeth our infirmities.” How? “The Spirit Himself,” deeper down than our thoughts or feelings,
2120 “maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” When you cannot find
2121 words, when your words appear cold and feeble, just believe: The Holy Spirit is praying in me.
2122 Be quiet before God, and give Him time and opportunity; in due season you will learn to pray.
2123 Beware of grieving the Spirit of prayer, by not honouring Him in patient, trustful surrender to
2124 His intercession in you.

2125
2126 The third lesson: “_Be filled with the Spirit_” (Eph. v. 18). I think that we have seen the meaning
2127 of the great truth: It is only the healthy spiritual life that can pray aright. The command comes to
2128 each of us: “Be filled with the Spirit.” That implies that while some rest content with the
2129 beginning, with a small measure of the Spirit’s working, it is God’s will that we should be filled
2130 with the Spirit. That means, from our side, that our whole being ought to be entirely yielded up
2131 to the Holy Spirit, to be possessed and controlled by Him alone. And, from God’s side, that we
2132 may count upon and expect the Holy Spirit to take possession and fill us. Has not our failure in
2133 prayer evidently been owing to our not having accepted the Spirit of prayer to be our life; to our
2134 not having yielded wholly to Him, whom the Father gave as the Spirit of His Son, to work the
2135 life of the Son in us? Let us, to say the very least, be willing to receive Him, to yield ourselves to
2136 God and trust Him for it. Let us not again wilfully grieve the Holy Spirit by declining, by
2137 neglecting, by hesitating to seek to have Him as fully as He is willing to give Himself to us. If we
2138 have at all seen that prayer is the great need of our work and of the Church, if we have at all
2139 desired or resolved to pray more, let us turn to the very source of all power and blessing—let us
2140 believe that the Spirit of prayer, even in His fulness, is for us.

2141
2142 We all admit the place the Father and the Son have in our prayer. It is to the Father we pray, and
2143 from whom we expect the answer. It is in the merit, and name, and life of the Son, abiding in
2144 Him and He in us, that we trust to be heard. But have we understood that in the Holy Trinity all
2145 the Three Persons have an equal place in prayer, and that the faith in the Holy Spirit of
2146 intercession as praying in us is as indispensable as the faith in the Father and the Son? How
2147 clearly we have this in the words, “Through Christ we have access by one Spirit to the Father.”
2148 As much as prayer must be _to_ the Father, and _through_ the Son, it must be _by_ the Spirit.
2149 And the Spirit can pray in no other way in us, than as He lives in us. It is only as we give
2150 ourselves to the Spirit living and praying in us, that the glory of the prayer-hearing God, and the
2151 ever-blessed and most effectual mediation of the Son, can be known by us in their power. (Note
2152 D.)

2153
2154 Our last lesson: _Pray in the Spirit for all saints_ (Eph. vi. 18). The Spirit, who is called “the
2155 Spirit of supplication,” is also and very specially the Spirit of intercession. It is said of Him, “the

2156 Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.” “He maketh
2157 intercession for the saints.” It is the same word as is used of Christ, “who also maketh
2158 intercession for us.” The thought is essentially that of mediation—one pleading for another.
2159 When the Spirit of intercession takes full possession of us, all selfishness, as if we wanted Him
2160 separate from His intercession for others, and have Him for ourselves alone, is banished, and we
2161 begin to avail ourselves of our wonderful privilege to plead for men. We long to live the Christ-
2162 life of self-consuming sacrifice for others, as our heart unceasingly yields itself to God to obtain
2163 His blessing for those around us. Intercession then becomes, not an incident or an occasional part
2164 of our prayers, but their one great object. Prayer for ourselves then takes its true place, simply as
2165 a means for fitting us better for exercising our ministry of intercession more effectually.
2166

2167 May I be allowed to speak a very personal word to each of my readers? I have humbly besought
2168 God to give me what I may give them—Divine light and help truly to forsake the life of failure
2169 in prayer, and to enter, even now, and at once, upon the life of intercession which the Holy Spirit
2170 can enable them to lead. It can be done by a simple act of faith, claiming the fulness of the Spirit,
2171 that is, the full measure of the Spirit which you are capable in God’s sight of receiving, and He is
2172 therefore willing to bestow. Will you not, even now, accept of this by faith?
2173

2174 Let me remind you of what takes place at conversion. Most of us, you probably too, for a time
2175 sought peace in efforts and struggles to give up sin and please God. But you did not find it thus.
2176 The peace of God’s pardon came by faith, trusting God’s word concerning Christ and His
2177 salvation. You had heard of Christ as the gift of His love, you knew that He was for you too, you
2178 had felt the movings and drawings of His grace; but never till in faith in God’s word you
2179 accepted Him as God’s gift to you, did you know the peace and joy that He can give. Believing
2180 in Him and His saving love made all the difference, and changed your relation from one who had
2181 ever grieved Him, to one who loved and served Him. And yet, after a time, you have a thousand
2182 times wondered you love and serve Him so ill.
2183

2184 At the time of your conversion you knew little about the Holy Spirit. Later on you heard of His
2185 dwelling in you, and His being the power of God in you for all the Father intends you to be, and
2186 yet His indwelling and inworking have been something vague and indefinite, and hardly a source
2187 of joy or strength. At conversion you did not yet know your need of Him, and still less what you
2188 might expect of Him. But your failures have taught it you. And now you begin to see how you
2189 have been grieving Him, by not trusting and not following Him, by not allowing Him to work in
2190 you all God’s pleasure.
2191

2192 All this can be changed. Just as you, after seeking Christ, and praying to Him, and trying without
2193 success to serve Him, found rest in accepting Him by faith, just so you may even now yield
2194 yourself to the full guidance of the Holy Spirit, and claim and accept Him to work in you what
2195 God would have. Will you not do it? Just accept Him in faith as Christ’s gift, to be the Spirit of
2196 your whole life, of your prayer-life too, and you can count upon Him to take charge. You can
2197 then begin, however feeble you feel, and unable to pray aright, to bow before God in silence,
2198 with the assurance that He will teach you to pray.
2199

2200 My dear brother, as you consciously by faith accepted Christ, to pardon, you can consciously
2201 now in the like faith accept of Christ who gives the Holy Spirit to do His work in you. “Christ

2202 redeemed us that we might receive the promise of the Spirit by faith.” Kneel down, and simply
2203 believe that the Lord Christ, who baptizeth with the Holy Spirit, does now, in response to your
2204 faith, begin in you the blessed life of a full experience of the power of the indwelling Spirit.
2205 Depend most confidently upon Him, apart from all feeling or experience, as the Spirit of
2206 supplication and intercession to do His work. Renew that act of faith each morning, each time
2207 you pray; trust Him, against all appearances, to work in you,—be sure He is working,—and He
2208 will give you to know what the joy of the Holy Spirit is as the power of your life.

2209
2210 “I will pour out the Spirit of supplication.” Do you not begin to see that the mystery of prayer is
2211 the mystery of the Divine indwelling. God in heaven gives His Spirit in our hearts to be there the
2212 Divine power praying in us, and drawing us upward to our God. God is a Spirit, and nothing but
2213 a like life and Spirit within us can hold communion with Him. It was for this man was created,
2214 that God might dwell and work in Him, and be the life of his life. It was this Divine indwelling
2215 that sin lost. It was this that Christ came to exhibit in His life, to win back for us in His death,
2216 and then to impart to us by coming again from heaven in the Spirit to live in His disciples. It is
2217 this, the indwelling of God through the Spirit, that alone can explain and enable us to appropriate
2218 the wonderful promises given to prayer. God gives the Spirit as a Spirit of Supplication, too, to
2219 maintain His Divine life within us as a life out of which prayer ever rises upward.

2220
2221 Without the Holy Spirit no man can call Jesus Lord, or cry, Abba, Father; no man can worship in
2222 spirit and truth, or pray without ceasing. The Holy Spirit is given the believer to be and do in him
2223 all that God wants him to be or do. He is given him especially as the Spirit of prayer and
2224 supplication. Is it not clear that everything in prayer depends upon our trusting the Holy Spirit to
2225 do His work in us; yielding ourselves to His leading, depending only and wholly on Him?

2226
2227 We read, “Stephen was a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit.” The two ever go together, in
2228 exact proportion to each other. As our faith sees and trusts the Spirit in us to pray, and waits on
2229 Him, He will do His work; and it is the longing desire, and the earnest supplication, and the
2230 definite faith the Father seeks. Do let us know Him, and in the faith of Christ who unceasingly
2231 gives Him, cultivate the assured confidence, we can learn to pray as the Father would have us.

2232
2233
2234
2235

2236 A PLEA FOR MORE PRAYER

2237
2238 CHAPTER XI

2239
2240 In the Name of Christ

2241
2242 “Whatsoever ye shall ask _in My Name_, that will I do. If ye shall ask anything _in My Name_,
2243 I will do it. I have appointed you, that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father _in My Name_, He
2244 may give it you. Verily, verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father _in My Name_,
2245 He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing _in My Name_; ask, and ye shall receive,
2246 that your joy may be full. At that day ye shall ask _in My Name_.”—JOHN xiv. 13, 14, xv. 16,
2247 xvi. 23, 24, 26.

2248

2249

2250 In my name—repeated six times over. Our Lord knew how slow our hearts would be to take it in,
2251 and He so longed that we should really believe that His Name is the power in which every knee
2252 should bow, and in which every prayer could be heard, that He did not weary of saying it over
2253 and over: In My Name! Between the wonderful whatsoever ye shall ask, and the Divine I
2254 will do it, the Father will give it, this one word is the simple link: In My Name. Our asking
2255 and the Father's giving are to be equally in the Name of Christ. Everything in prayer depends
2256 upon our apprehending this—In My Name.

2257

2258 We know what a name is: a word by which we call up to our mind the whole being and nature of
2259 an object. When I speak of a lamb or a lion, the name at once suggests the different nature
2260 peculiar to each. The Name of God is meant to express His whole Divine nature and glory. And
2261 so the Name of Christ means His whole nature, His person and work, His disposition and Spirit.
2262 To ask in the Name of Christ is to pray in union with Him. When first a sinner believes in Christ,
2263 he only knows and thinks of His merit and intercession. And to the very end that is the one
2264 foundation of our confidence. And yet, as the believer grows in grace and enters more deeply and
2265 truly into union with Christ—that is, as he abides in Him—he learns that to pray in the Name of
2266 Christ also means in His Spirit, and in the possession of His nature, as the Holy Spirit imparts it
2267 to us. As we grasp the meaning of the words, “At that day ye shall ask in My Name”—the day
2268 when in the Holy Spirit Christ came to live in His disciples—we shall no longer be staggered at
2269 the greatness of the promise: “Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, I will do it.” We shall get
2270 some insight into the unchangeable necessity and certainty of the law: what is asked in the Name
2271 of Christ, in union with Him, out of His nature and Spirit, must be given. As Christ's prayer-
2272 nature lives in us, His prayer-power becomes ours too. Not that the measure of our attainment or
2273 experience is the ground of our confidence, but the honesty and whole-heartedness of our
2274 surrender to all that we see that Christ seeks to be in us, will be the measure of our spiritual
2275 fitness and power to pray in His Name. “If ye abide in Me,” He says, “ye shall ask what ye will.”
2276 As we live in Him, we get the spiritual power to avail ourselves of His Name. As the branch
2277 wholly given up to the life and service of the Vine can count upon all its sap and strength for its
2278 fruit, so the believer, who in faith has accepted the fulness of the Spirit to possess his whole life,
2279 can indeed avail himself of all the power of Christ's Name.

2280

2281 Here on earth Christ as man came to reveal what prayer is. To pray in the Name of Christ we
2282 must pray as He prayed on earth; as He taught us to pray; in union with Him, as He now prays in
2283 heaven. We must in love study, and in faith accept, Him as our Example, our Teacher, our
2284 Intercessor.

2285

2286

2287 CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE.

2288

2289 Prayer in Christ on earth and in us cannot be two different things. Just as there is but one God,
2290 who is a Spirit, who hears prayer, there is but one spirit of acceptable prayer. When we realise
2291 what time Christ spent in prayer, and how the great events of His life were all connected with
2292 special prayer, we learn the necessity of absolute dependence on and unceasing direct
2293 communication with the heavenly world, if we are to live a heavenly life, or to exercise heavenly

2294 power around us. We see how foolish and fruitless the attempt must be to do work for God and
2295 heaven, without in the first place in prayer getting the life and the power of heaven to possess us.
2296 Unless this truth lives in us, we cannot avail ourselves aright of the mighty power of the Name of
2297 Christ. His example must teach us the meaning of His Name.

2298
2299 Of His baptism we read, “Jesus having been baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened.” It
2300 was in prayer heaven was opened to Him, that heaven came down to Him with the Spirit and the
2301 voice of the Father. In the power of these He was led into the wilderness, in fasting and prayer to
2302 have them tested and fully appropriated. Early in His ministry Mark records (i. 35), “And in the
2303 morning, a great while before day, He rose and departed into a desert place, and there prayed.”
2304 And somewhat later Luke tells (v. 16), “Multitudes came together to hear and to be healed. But
2305 He withdrew Himself into the desert, and prayed.” He knew how the holiest service, preaching
2306 and healing, can exhaust the spirit; how too much intercourse with men could cloud the
2307 fellowship with God; how time, time, full time, is needed if the spirit is to rest and root in Him;
2308 how no pressure of duty among men can free from the absolute need of much prayer. If anyone
2309 could have been satisfied with always living and working in the spirit of prayer, it would have
2310 been our Master. But He could not; He needed to have His supplies replenished by continual and
2311 long-continued seasons of prayer. To use Christ’s Name in prayer surely includes this, to follow
2312 His example and to pray as He did.

2313
2314 Of the night before choosing His apostles we read (Luke vi. 12), “He went out into the mountain
2315 to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.” The first step towards the constitution of the
2316 Church, and the separation of men to be His witnesses and successors, called Him to special
2317 long-continued prayer. All had to be done according to the pattern on the mount. “The Son can
2318 do nothing of Himself: the Father showeth Him all things that Himself doeth.” It was in the night
2319 of prayer it was shown Him.

2320
2321 In the night between the feeding of the five thousand, when Jesus knew that they wanted to take
2322 Him by force and make Him King, and the walking on the sea, “He withdrew again into the
2323 mountain, Himself alone, to pray” (Matt. xiv. 23; Mark vi. 46; John vi. 15). It was God’s will
2324 He was come to do, and God’s power He was to show forth. He had it not as a possession of His
2325 own; it had to be prayed for and received from above. The first announcement of His
2326 approaching death, after He had elicited from Peter the confession that He was the Christ, is
2327 introduced by the words (Luke ix. 15), “And it came to pass that He was praying alone.” The
2328 introduction to the story of the Transfiguration is (Luke ix. 28), “He went up into the mountain
2329 to pray.” The request of the disciples, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke xi. 1), follows on, “It
2330 came to pass as He was praying in a certain place.” In His own personal life, in His intercourse
2331 with the Father, in all He is and does for men, the Christ whose name we are to use is a Man of
2332 prayer. It is prayer gives Him His power of blessing, and transfigures His very body with the
2333 glory of heaven. It is His own prayer-life makes Him the teacher of others how to pray. How
2334 much more must it be prayer, prayer alone, much prayer, that can fit us to share His glory of a
2335 transfigured life, or make us the channel of heavenly blessing and teaching to others. To pray in
2336 the Name of Christ is to pray as He prays.

2337
2338 As the end approaches, it is still more prayer. When the Greeks asked to see Him, and He spoke
2339 of His approaching death, He prayed. At Lazarus’ grave He prayed. In the last night He prayed

2340 His prayer as our High-Priest, that we might know what His sacrifice would win, and what His
2341 everlasting intercession on the throne would be. In Gethsemane He prayed His prayer as Victim,
2342 the Lamb giving itself to the slaughter. On the Cross it is still all prayer—the prayer of
2343 compassion for His murderers; the prayer of atoning suffering in the thick darkness; the prayer in
2344 death of confiding resignation of His spirit to the Father. (Note E.)

2345
2346 Christ's life and work, His suffering and death—it was all prayer, all dependence on God, trust
2347 in God, receiving from God, surrender to God. Thy redemption, O believer, is a redemption
2348 wrought out by prayer and intercession: thy Christ is a praying Christ: the life He lived for thee,
2349 the life He lives in thee, is a praying life, that delights to wait on God and receive all from Him.
2350 To pray in His Name is to pray as He prayed. Christ is only our example because He is our Head,
2351 our Saviour, and our Life. In virtue of His Deity and of His Spirit He can live in us: we can pray
2352 in His Name, because we abide in Him and He in us.

2353

2354

2355 CHRIST OUR TEACHER.

2356

2357 Christ was what He taught. All His teaching was just the revelation of how He lived, and—praise
2358 God—of the life He was to live in us. His teaching of the disciples was first to awaken desire,
2359 and so prepare them for what He would by the Holy Spirit be and work in them. Let us believe
2360 very confidently: all He was in prayer, and all He taught, He Himself will give. He came to fulfil
2361 the law; much more will He fulfil the gospel in all He taught us, as to what to pray, and how.

2362

2363 _What to pray._—It has sometimes been said that direct petitions, as compared with the exercise
2364 of fellowship with God, are but a subordinate part of prayer, and that “in the prayer of those who
2365 pray best and most, they occupy but an inconsiderable place.” If we carefully study all that our
2366 Lord spoke of prayer, we shall see that this is not His teaching. In the Lord's Prayer, in the
2367 parables on prayer, in the illustration of a child asking bread, of our seeking and knocking, in the
2368 central thought of the prayer of faith, “Whatsoever ye pray, believe that ye have received,” in the
2369 oft-repeated “_whatsoever_” of the last evening—everywhere our Lord urges and encourages us
2370 to offer definite petitions, and to expect definite answers. It is only because we have too much
2371 confined prayer to our own needs, that it has been thought needful to free it from the appearance
2372 of selfishness, by giving the petitions a subordinate place. If once believers were to awake to the
2373 glory of the work of intercession, and to see that in it, and the definite pleading for definite gifts
2374 on definite spheres and persons, lie our highest fellowship with our glorified Lord, and our only
2375 real power to bless men, it would be seen that there can be no truer fellowship with God than
2376 these definite petitions and their answers, by which we become the channel of His grace and life
2377 to men. Then our fellowship with the Father is even such as the Son has in His intercession.

2378

2379 _How to pray._—Our Lord taught us to pray in secret, in simplicity, with the eye on God alone,
2380 in humility, in the spirit of forgiving love. But the chief truth He reiterated was ever this: to pray
2381 in faith. And He defined that faith, not only as a trust in God's goodness or power, but as the
2382 definite assurance that we have received the very thing we ask. And then, in view of the delay in
2383 the answer, He insisted on perseverance and urgency. We must be followers of those “who
2384 through faith and patience inherit the promises”—the faith that accepts the promise, and knows it
2385 has what it has asked—the patience that obtains the promise and inherits the blessing. We shall

2386 then learn to understand why God, who promises to avenge His elect speedily, bears with them
2387 in seeming delay. It is that their faith may be purified from all that is of the flesh, and tested and
2388 strengthened to become that spiritual power that can do all things—can even cast mountains into
2389 the heart of the sea.

2390
2391

2392 CHRIST AS OUR INTERCESSOR.

2393

2394 We have gazed on Christ in His prayers; we have listened to His teaching as to how we must
2395 pray; to know fully what it is to pray in His Name, we must know Him too in His heavenly
2396 intercession.

2397

2398 Just think what it means: that all His saving work wrought from heaven is still carried on, just as
2399 on earth, in unceasing communication with, and direct intercession to the Father, who worketh
2400 all in all, who is All in All. Every act of grace in Christ has been preceded by, and owes its
2401 power to, intercession. God has been honoured and acknowledged as its Author. On the throne of
2402 God, Christ's highest fellowship with the Father, and His partnership in His rule of the world, is
2403 in intercession. Every blessing that comes down to us from above bears upon it the stamp from
2404 God: through Christ's intercession. His intercession is nothing but the fruit and the glory of His
2405 atonement. When He gave Himself a sacrifice to God for men, He proved that His whole heart
2406 had the one object: the glory of God, in the salvation of men. In His intercession this great
2407 purpose is realised: He glorifies the Father by asking and receiving all of Him; He saves men by
2408 bestowing what He has obtained from the Father. Christ's intercession is the Father's glory, His
2409 own glory, our glory.

2410

2411 And now, this Christ, the Intercessor, is our life; He is our Head, and we are His body; His Spirit
2412 and life breathe in us. As in heaven so on earth, intercession is God's chosen, God's only channel
2413 of blessing. Let us learn from Christ what glory there is in it; what the way to exercise this
2414 wondrous power; what the part it is to take in work for God.

2415

2416 The glory of it.—By it, beyond anything, we glorify God. By it we glorify Christ. By it we
2417 bring blessing to the Church and the world. By it we obtain our highest nobility—the Godlike
2418 power of saving men.

2419

2420 The way to it.—Paul writes, “Walk in love, even as Christ loved us, and gave Himself a
2421 sacrifice to God for us.” If we live as Christ lived, we will, as He did, give ourselves, for our
2422 whole life, to God, to be used by Him for men. When once we have done this, given ourselves,
2423 no more to seek anything for ourselves, but for men, and that to God, for Him to use us, and to
2424 impart to us what we can bestow on others, intercession will become to us, as it is in Christ in
2425 heaven, the great work of our life. And if ever the thought comes that the call is too high, or the
2426 work too great, the faith in Christ, the Interceding Christ, who lives in us, will give us the
2427 victory. We will listen to Him who said, “The works that I do, shall ye do; and greater works
2428 shall ye do.” We shall remember that we are not under the law, with its impotence, but under
2429 grace with its omnipotence, working all in us. We shall believe again in Him who said to us, Rise
2430 and walk, and gave us—and we received it—His life as our strength. We shall claim afresh the
2431 fulness of God's Spirit as His sufficient provision for our need, and count Him to be in us the

2432 Spirit of Intercession, who makes us one with Christ in His. Oh! let us only keep our place—
2433 giving up ourselves, like Him, in Him, to God for men.

2434
2435 Then we shall understand the part intercession is to take in God’s work through us. We shall no
2436 longer try to work for God, and ask Him to follow it with His blessing. We shall do what the
2437 friend at midnight did, what Christ did on earth, and ever does in heaven—we shall first get from
2438 God, and then turn to men to give what He gave us. As with Christ, we shall make our chief
2439 work, we shall count no time or trouble too great, to receive from the Father; giving to men will
2440 then be in power.

2441
2442 Servants of Christ! children of God! be of good courage. Let no fear of feebleness or poverty
2443 make you afraid—ask in the Name of Christ. His Name is Himself, in all His perfection and
2444 power. He is the living Christ, and will Himself make His Name a power in you. Fear not to
2445 plead the Name; His promise is a threefold cord that cannot be broken: _Whatsoever ye ask—in
2446 My Name_—IT SHALL BE DONE UNTO YOU.

2447
2448
2449

2450
2451 A PLEA FOR MORE PRAYER

2452
2453 CHAPTER XII

2454
2455 My God will hear Me

2456
2457 “Therefore will the Lord wait, that He may be gracious unto you. Blessed are all they that wait
2458 for Him. He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when He shall hear it, He will
2459 answer thee.”—ISA. xxx. 18, 19.

2460
2461 “The Lord will hear when _I call_ upon Him.”—PS. iv. 3.

2462
2463 “I have called upon Thee, for Thou _wilt hear me_, O God!”—PS. xvii. 6.

2464
2465 “I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God _will hear me_.”—
2466 MIC. vii. 7.

2467
2468
2469 The power of prayer rests in the faith that God hears it. In more than one sense this is true. It is
2470 this faith that gives a man courage to pray. It is this faith that gives him power to prevail with
2471 God. The moment I am assured that God hears _me_ too, I feel drawn to pray and to persevere in
2472 prayer. I feel strong to claim and to take in faith the answer God gives. One great reason of lack
2473 of prayer is the want of the living, joyous assurance: “My God will hear me.” If once God’s
2474 servants got a vision of the living God waiting to grant their request, and to bestow all the
2475 heavenly gifts of the Spirit they are in need of, for themselves or those they are serving, how
2476 everything would be set aside to make time and room for this one only power that can ensure
2477 heavenly blessing—the prayer of faith!

2478
2479 When a man can, and does say, in living faith, “My God will hear me!” surely nothing can keep
2480 him from prayer. He knows that what he cannot do or get done on earth, can and will be done for
2481 him from heaven. Let each one of us bow in stillness before God, and wait on Him to reveal
2482 Himself as the prayer-hearing God. In His presence the wondrous thoughts gathering round the
2483 central truth will unfold themselves to us.

2484
2485 1. “_My God will hear me._”—_What a blessed certainty!_—We have God’s word for it in
2486 numberless promises. We have thousands of witnesses to the fact that they have found it true.
2487 We have had experience of it in our lives. We have had the Son of God come from heaven with
2488 the message that if we ask, the Father will give. We have had Himself praying on earth, and
2489 being heard. And we have Him in heaven now, sitting at the right hand of God and making
2490 intercession for us. God hears prayer—God delights to hear prayer. He has allowed His people a
2491 thousand times over to be tried, that they might be compelled to cry to Him, and learn to know
2492 Him as the Hearer of Prayer.

2493
2494 Let us confess with shame how little we have believed this wondrous truth, in the sense of
2495 receiving it into our heart, and allowing it to possess and control our whole being. That we
2496 accept a truth is not enough; the living God, of whom the truth speaks, must in its light so be
2497 revealed, that our whole life is spent in His presence, with the consciousness as clear as in a little
2498 child towards its earthly parent—I know for certain my father hears me.

2499
2500 Beloved child of God! you know by experience how little an intellectual apprehension of truth
2501 has profited you. Beseech God to reveal Himself to you. If you want to live a different prayer-
2502 life, bow each time ere you pray in silence to worship this God; to wait till there rests on you
2503 some right sense of His nearness and readiness to answer. So will you begin to pray with the
2504 words, “My God will hear me!”

2505
2506 2. “_My God will hear me._”—_What a wondrous grace!_—Think of God in His infinite majesty,
2507 His altogether incomprehensible glory, His unapproachable holiness, sitting on a throne of grace,
2508 waiting to be gracious, inviting, encouraging you to pray with His promise: “Call upon Me, and I
2509 will answer thee.” Think of yourself, in your nothingness and helplessness as a creature; in your
2510 wretchedness and transgressions as a sinner; in your feebleness and unworthiness as a saint; and
2511 praise the glory of that grace which allows you to say boldly of your prayer for yourself and
2512 others, “My God will hear me.” Think of how you are not left to yourself, and what you can
2513 accomplish, in this wonderful intercourse with God. God has united you with Christ; in Him and
2514 His Name you have your confidence; on the throne He prays with you and for you; on the
2515 footstool of the throne you pray with Him and in Him. His worth, and the Father’s delight in
2516 hearing Him, are the measure of your confidence, your assurance of being heard. There is more.
2517 Think of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God’s own Son, sent into your heart to cry, Abba, Father,
2518 and to be in you a Spirit of Supplication, when you know not what to pray as you ought.
2519 Think, in all your insignificance and unworthiness, of your being as acceptable as Christ
2520 Himself. Think in all your ignorance and feebleness, of the Spirit making intercession according
2521 to God within you, and cry out, “What wondrous grace! Through Christ I have access to the
2522 Father, by the Spirit. I can, I do believe it: ‘My God will hear me.’”

2523

2524 3. “_My God will hear me._”—_What a deep mystery!_—There are difficulties that cannot but
2525 at times arise and perplex even the honest heart. There is the question as to God’s sovereign, all-
2526 wise, all-disposing will. How can our wishes, often so foolish, and our will, often so selfish,
2527 overrule or change that perfect will? Were it not better to leave all to His disposal, who knows
2528 what is best, and loves to give us the very best? Or how can our prayer change what He has
2529 ordained before? Then there is the question as to the need of persevering prayer, and long
2530 waiting for the answer. If God be Infinite Love, and delighting more to give than we to receive,
2531 where the need for the pleading and wrestling, the urgency, and the long delay of which
2532 Scripture and experience speak? Arising out of this there is still another question—that of the
2533 multitude of apparently vain and unanswered prayers. How many have pleaded for loved ones,
2534 and they die unsaved. How many cry for years for spiritual blessing, and no answer comes. To
2535 think of all this tries our faith, and makes us hesitate as we say, “My God will hear me.”
2536

2537 Beloved! prayer, in its power with God, and His faithfulness to His promise to hear it, is a deep
2538 spiritual mystery. To the questions put above answers can be given that remove some of the
2539 difficulty. But, after all, the first and the last that must be said is this: As little as we can
2540 comprehend God can we comprehend this, one of the most blessed of His attributes, that He
2541 hears prayer. It is a spiritual mystery—nothing less than the mystery of the Holy Trinity. God
2542 hears because we pray in His Son, because the Holy Spirit prays in us. If we have believed and
2543 claimed the life of Christ as our health, and the fulness of the Spirit as our strength, let us not
2544 hesitate to believe in the power of our prayer too. The Holy Spirit can enable us to believe and
2545 rejoice in it, even where every question is not yet answered. He will do this, as we lay our
2546 questionings in God’s bosom, trust His faithfulness, and give ourselves humbly to obey His
2547 command to pray without ceasing. Every art unfolds its secrets and its beauty only to the man
2548 who practises it. To the humble soul who prays in the obedience of faith, who practises prayer
2549 and intercession diligently, because God asks it, the secret of the Lord will be revealed, and the
2550 thought of the deep mystery of prayer, instead of being a weary problem, will be a source of
2551 rejoicing, adoration, and faith, in which the unceasing refrain is ever heard: “_My God will hear
2552 me!_”
2553

2554 4. “_My God will hear me._”—_What a solemn responsibility!_—How often we complain of
2555 darkness, of feebleness, of failure, as if there was no help for it. And God has promised in answer
2556 to our prayer to supply our every need, and give us His light and strength and peace. Would that
2557 we realised the responsibility of having such a God, and such promises, with the sin and shame
2558 of not availing ourselves of them to the utmost. How confident we should feel that the grace,
2559 which we have accepted and trusted to enable us to pray as we should, will be given.
2560

2561 There is more. This access to a prayer-hearing God is specially meant to make us intercessors for
2562 our fellowmen. Even as Christ obtained His right of prevailing intercession by His giving
2563 Himself a sacrifice to God for men, and through it receives the blessings He dispenses, so, if we
2564 have truly with Christ given ourselves to God for men, we share His right of intercession, and are
2565 able to obtain the powers of the heavenly world for them too. The power of life and death is in
2566 our hands (1 John v. 16). In answer to prayer the Spirit can be poured out, souls can be
2567 converted, believers can be established. In prayer the kingdom of darkness can be conquered,
2568 souls brought out of prison into the liberty of Christ, and the glory of God be revealed. Through

2569 prayer, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, can be wielded in power, and, in
2570 public preaching as in private speaking, the most rebellious made to bow at Jesus' feet.

2571
2572 What a responsibility on the Church to give herself to the work of intercession! What a
2573 responsibility on every minister, missionary, worker, set apart for the saving of souls, to yield
2574 himself wholly to act out and prove his faith: "My God will hear me!" And what a call on every
2575 believer, instead of burying and losing this talent, to seek to the very utmost to use it in prayer
2576 and supplication for all saints and for all men. My God will hear me: The deeper our entrance
2577 into the truth of this wondrous power God hath given to men, the more whole-hearted will be our
2578 surrender to the work of intercession.

2579
2580 5. "My God will hear me." What a blessed prospect!—I see it—all the failures of my past
2581 life have been owing to the lack of this faith. My failure, especially in the work of intercession,
2582 has had its deepest root in this—I did not live in the full faith of the blessed assurance, "My
2583 God will hear me!" Praise God! I begin to see it—I believe it. All can be different. Or, rather, I
2584 see Him, I believe Him. "My God will hear me!" Yes, me, even me! Commonplace and
2585 insignificant though I be, filling but a very little place, so that I will scarce be missed when I
2586 go—even I have access to this Infinite God, with the confidence that He heareth me. One with
2587 Christ, led by the Holy Spirit, I dare to say: "I will pray for others, for I am sure my God will
2588 listen to me: 'My God will hear me.'" What a blessed prospect before me—every earthly and
2589 spiritual anxiety exchanged for the peace of God, who cares for all and hears prayer. What a
2590 blessed prospect in my work—to know that even when the answer is long delayed, and there is a
2591 call for much patient, persevering prayer, the truth remains infallibly sure—"My God will hear
2592 me!"

2593
2594 And what a blessed prospect for Christ's Church if we could but all give prayer its place, give
2595 faith in God its place, or, rather, give the prayer-hearing God His place! Is not this the one
2596 great thing, those, who in some little measure begin to see the urgent need of prayer, ought in the
2597 first place to pray for. When God, at the first, time after time, poured forth the Spirit on His
2598 praying people, He laid down the law for all time: as much of prayer, so much of the Spirit. Let
2599 each one who can say, "My God will hear me," join in the fervent supplication, that
2600 throughout the Church that truth may be restored to its true place, and the blessed prospect will
2601 be realised: a praying Church endued with the power of the Holy Ghost.

2602
2603 6. "My God will hear me." What a need of Divine teaching!—We need this, both to enable
2604 us to hold this word in living faith, and to make full use of it in intercession. It has been said, and
2605 it cannot be said too often or too earnestly, that the one thing needful for the Church of our day
2606 is, the power of the Holy Spirit. It is just because this is so, from the Divine side, that we may
2607 also say as truly that, from the human side, the one thing needful is, more prayer, more believing,
2608 persevering prayer. In speaking of lack of the Spirit's power, and the condition for receiving it,
2609 someone used the expression—the block is not on the perpendicular, but on the horizontal line. It
2610 is to be feared that it is on both. There is much to be confessed and taken away in us if the Spirit
2611 is to work freely. But it is specially on the perpendicular line that the block is—the upward look,
2612 and the deep dependence, and the strong crying to God, and the effectual prayer of faith that
2613 avails—all this is sadly lacking. And just this is the one thing needful.

2614

2615 Shall we not all set ourselves to learn the lesson which will make prevailing prayer possible—the
2616 lesson of a faith that always sings, “_My God will hear me_”? Simple and elementary as it is, it
2617 needs practice and patience, it needs time and heavenly teaching, to learn it aright. Under the
2618 impression of a bright thought, or a blessed experience, it may look as if we knew the lesson
2619 perfectly. But ever again the need will recur of making this our first prayer—that God who hears
2620 prayer would teach us to believe it, and so to pray aright. If we desire it we can count upon Him
2621 He who delights in hearing prayer and answering it, He who gave His Son that He might ever
2622 pray for us and with us, and His Holy Spirit to pray in us, we can be sure there is not a prayer
2623 that He will hear more certainly than this: that He so reveal Himself as the prayer-hearing God,
2624 that our whole being may respond, “_My God will hear me_.”

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2629 A PLEA FOR MORE PRAYER

2630

2631 CHAPTER XIII

2632

2633 Paul a Pattern of Prayer

2634

2635 “Go and inquire for one called Saul of Tarsus: for, _behold, he prayeth_.”—ACTS ix. 11.

2636

2637 “For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering,
2638 for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.”—1 TIM. i. 16.

2639

2640

2641 God took His own Son, and made Him our Example and our Pattern. It sometimes is as if the
2642 power of Christ’s example is lost in the thought that He, in whom is no sin, is not man as we are.
2643 Our Lord took Paul, a man of like passions with ourselves, and made him a pattern of what he
2644 could do for one who was the chief of sinners. And Paul, the man who, more than any other, has
2645 set his mark on the Church, has ever been appealed to as a pattern man. In his mastery of Divine
2646 truth, and his teaching of it; in his devotion to his Lord, and his self-consuming zeal in His
2647 service; in his deep experience of the power of the indwelling Christ and the fellowship of his
2648 cross; in the sincerity of his humility, and the simplicity and boldness of his faith; in his
2649 missionary enthusiasm and endurance—in all this, and so much more, “the grace of our Lord
2650 Jesus was exceeding abundant in him.” Christ gave him, and the Church has accepted him, as a
2651 pattern of what Christ would have, of what Christ would work. Seven times Paul speaks of
2652 believers following him: (1 Cor. iv. 16), “Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me”; (xi.
2653 1), “Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ”; Phil, iii. 17, iv. 9; 1 Thess. i. 6; 2 Thess. iii.
2654 7-9.

2655

2656 If Paul, as a pattern of prayer, is not as much studied or appealed to as he is in other respects, it is
2657 not because he is not in this too as remarkable a proof of what grace can do, or because we do
2658 not, in this respect, as much stand in need of the help of his example. A study of Paul as a pattern
2659 of prayer will bring a rich reward of instruction and encouragement. The words our Lord used of
2660 him at his conversion, “Behold he prayeth,” may be taken as the keynote of his life. The

2661 heavenly vision which brought him to his knees ever after ruled his life. Christ at the right hand
2662 of God, in whom we are blessed with all spiritual blessings, was everything to him; to pray and
2663 expect the heavenly power in his work and on his work, from heaven direct by prayer, was the
2664 simple outcome of his faith in the Glorified One. In this, too, Christ meant him to be a pattern,
2665 that we might learn that, just in the measure in which the heavenliness of Christ and His gifts, the
2666 unworldliness of the powers that work for salvation, are known and believed, will prayer become
2667 the spontaneous rising of the heart to the only source of its life. Let us see what we know of Paul.
2668

2669

2670 PAUL'S HABITS OF PRAYER.

2671

2672 These are revealed almost unconsciously. He writes (Rom. i. 9), "God is my witness, that
2673 without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers. For I long to see you, that I may
2674 impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established." Rom. x. 1, ix. 2, 3: "My
2675 heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved"; "I have great heaviness
2676 and continual sorrow of heart; for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my
2677 brethren." 1 Cor. i. 4: "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is
2678 given you by Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. vi. 4, 6: "Approving ourselves as the ministers of Christ, in
2679 watchings, in fastings." Gal. iv. 19: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again till
2680 Christ be formed in you." Eph. i. 16: "I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of
2681 you in my prayers." Eph. iii. 14: "I bow my knees to the Father, that He would grant you to
2682 be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." Phil. i. 3, 4, 8, 9: "I thank my God
2683 upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all
2684 with joy. For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.
2685 And this I pray"—Col. i. 3, 9: "We give thanks to God, praying always for you. For this
2686 cause also, since the day we heard it, we do not cease to pray for you, and to desire"—Col. ii.
2687 1: "I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for as many as have not seen
2688 my face in the flesh." 1 Thess. i. 2: "We give thanks to God always for you all, making
2689 mention of you in our prayers." iii. 9: "We joy for your sakes before God; night and day
2690 praying exceedingly that we might perfect that which is lacking in your faith." 2 Thess. i. 3:
2691 "We are bound to thank God always for you. Wherefore also we always pray for you." 2
2692 Tim. i. 3: "I thank God, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee night and day."
2693 Philem. 4: "I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers."

2694

2695 These passages taken together give us the picture of a man whose words, "Pray without ceasing,"
2696 were simply the expression of his daily life. He had such a sense of the insufficiency of simple
2697 conversion; of the need of the grace and the power of heaven being brought down for the young
2698 converts in prayer; of the need of much and unceasing prayer, day and night, to bring it down; of
2699 the certainty that prayer would bring it down—that his life was continual and most definite
2700 prayer. He had such a sense that everything must come from above, and such a faith that it would
2701 come in answer to prayer, that prayer was neither a duty nor a burden, but the natural turning of
2702 the heart to the only place whence it could possibly obtain what it sought for others.

2703

2704

2705 THE CONTENTS OF PAUL'S PRAYERS.

2706

2707 It is of as much importance to know _what_ Paul prayed, as how frequently and earnestly he did
2708 so. Intercession is a spiritual work. Our confidence in it will depend much on our knowing that
2709 we ask according to the will of God. The more distinctly we ask heavenly things, which we feel
2710 at once God alone can bestow, which we are sure He will bestow, the more direct and urgent will
2711 our appeal be to God alone. The more impossible the things are that we seek, the more we will
2712 turn from all human work to prayer and to God alone.

2713
2714 In the Epistles, in addition to expressions in which he speaks of his praying, we have a number of
2715 distinct prayers in which Paul gives utterance to his heart's desire for those to whom he writes. In
2716 these we see that his first desire was always that they might be "established" in the Christian life.
2717 Much as he praised God when he heard of conversion, he knew how feeble the young converts
2718 were, and how for their establishing nothing would avail without the grace of the Spirit prayed
2719 down. If we notice some of the principal of these prayers we shall see what he asked and
2720 obtained.

2721
2722 Take the two prayers in Ephesians—the one for light, the other for strength. In the former (i. 15),
2723 he prays for the Spirit of wisdom to enlighten them to know what their calling was, what their
2724 inheritance, what the mighty power of God working in them. Spiritual enlightenment and
2725 knowledge was their great need, to be obtained for them by prayer. In the latter (iii. 15) he asks
2726 that the power they had been led to see in Christ might work in them, and they be strengthened
2727 with Divine might, so as to have the indwelling Christ, and the love that passeth knowledge, and
2728 the fulness of God actually come on them. These were things that could only come direct from
2729 heaven; these were things he asked and expected. If we want to learn Paul's art of intercession,
2730 we must ask nothing less for believers in our days.

2731
2732 Look at the prayer in Philippians (i. 9-11). There, too, it is first for spiritual knowledge; then
2733 comes a blameless life, and then a fruitful life to the glory of God. So also in the beautiful prayer
2734 in Colossians (i. 9-11). First, spiritual knowledge and understanding of God's will, then the
2735 strengthening with all might to all patience and joy.

2736
2737 Or take the two prayers in 1 Thessalonians (iii. 12, 13, and v. 23). The one: "God so increase
2738 your love to one another, that He may stablish your _hearts unblameable in holiness_." The
2739 other: "God _sanctify you wholly_, and preserve you blameless." The very words are so high
2740 that we hardly understand, still less believe, still less experience what they mean. Paul so lived in
2741 the heavenly world, he was so at home in the holiness and omnipotence of God and His love, that
2742 such prayers were the natural expression of what he knew God could and would do. "God
2743 stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness," "God sanctify you wholly"—the man who
2744 believes in these things and desires them, will pray for them for others. The prayers are all a
2745 proof that he seeks for them the very life of heaven upon earth. No wonder that he is not tempted
2746 to trust in any human means, but looks for it from heaven alone. Again, I say, the more we take
2747 Paul's prayers as our pattern, and make his desires our own for believers for whom we pray, the
2748 more will prayer to the God of heaven become as our daily breath.

2749
2750

2751 PAUL'S REQUESTS FOR PRAYER.

2752

2753 These are no less instructive than his own prayers for the saints. They prove that he does not
2754 count prayer any special prerogative of an apostle; he calls the humblest and simplest believer to
2755 claim his right. They prove that he does not think that only the new converts or feeble Christians
2756 need prayer; he himself is, as a member of the body, dependent upon his brethren and their
2757 prayers. After he had preached the gospel for twenty years, he still asks for prayer that he may
2758 speak as he ought to speak. Not once for all, not for a time, but day by day, and that without
2759 ceasing, must grace be sought and brought down from heaven for his work. United, continued
2760 waiting on God is to Paul the only hope of the Church. With the Holy Spirit a heavenly life, the
2761 life of the Lord in heaven, entered the world; nothing but unbroken communication with heaven
2762 can keep it up.

2763
2764 Listen how he asks for prayer, and with what earnestness—Rom. xv. 30: “_I beseech you_,
2765 brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye _strive together
2766 with me in your prayers_ to God for me; that I may be delivered from them which do not believe
2767 in Juda; and may come unto you with joy by the will of God.” How remarkably both prayers
2768 were answered: Rom. xv. 5, 6, 13. The remarkable fact that the Roman world-power, which in
2769 Pilate with Christ, in Herod with Peter, at Philippi, had proved its antagonism to God’s kingdom,
2770 all at once becomes Paul’s protector, and secures him a safe convey to Rome, can only be
2771 accounted for by these prayers.

2772
2773 2 Cor. i. 10, 11: “In whom we trust that He will yet deliver us, _ye also helping together by
2774 prayer_ for us.” Eph. vi. 18, 19: “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit,
2775 for all saints; _and for me_ that I may open my mouth boldly, that therein I may speak boldly as
2776 I ought to speak.” Phil. i. 19: “I know that this (trouble) shall turn to my salvation, _through your
2777 prayer_, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.” Col. iv. 2, 3, 4: “Continue in prayer; withal
2778 also _praying for us_, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of
2779 Christ: that I may make it manifest as I ought to speak.” 1 Thess. v. 25: “Brethren, pray for us.”
2780 Philem. 22: “I trust that through your prayers I shall be given to you.”

2781
2782 We saw how Christ prayed, and taught His disciples to pray. We see how Paul prayed, and
2783 taught the churches to pray. As the Master, so the servant calls us to believe and to prove that
2784 prayer is the power alike of the ministry and the Church. Of his faith we have a summary in these
2785 remarkable words concerning something that caused him grief: “This shall turn to my salvation
2786 through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.” As much as he looked to his
2787 Lord in heaven did he look to his brethren on earth, to secure the supply of that Spirit for him.
2788 The Spirit from heaven and prayer on earth were to him, as to the twelve after Pentecost,
2789 inseparably linked. We speak often of apostolic zeal and devotion and power—may God give us
2790 a revival of apostolic prayer.

2791
2792 Let me once again ask the question: Does the work of intercession take the place in the Church it
2793 ought to have? Is it a thing commonly understood in the Lord’s work, that everything depends
2794 upon getting from God that “supply of the Spirit of Christ” for and in ourselves that can give our
2795 work its real power to bless. This is Christ’s Divine order for all work, His own and that of His
2796 servants; this is the order Paul followed: first come every day, as having nothing, and receive
2797 from God “the supply of the Spirit” in intercession—then go and impart what has come to thee
2798 from heaven.

2799
2800 In all His instructions, our Lord Jesus spake much oftener to His disciples about their praying
2801 than their preaching. In the farewell discourse, He said little about preaching, but much about the
2802 Holy Spirit, and their asking whatsoever they would in His Name. If we are to return to this life
2803 of the first apostles and of Paul, and really accept the truth every day—my first work, my only
2804 strength is intercession, to secure the power of God on the souls entrusted to me—we must have
2805 the courage to confess past sin, and to believe that there is deliverance. To break through old
2806 habits, to resist the clamour of pressing duties that have always had their way, to make every
2807 other call subordinate to this one, whether others approve or not, will not be easy at first. But the
2808 men or women who are faithful will not only have a reward themselves, but become benefactors
2809 to their brethren. “Thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell
2810 in.”

2811
2812 But is it really possible? Can it indeed be that those who have never been able to face, much less
2813 to overcome the difficulty, can yet become mighty in prayer? Tell me, was it really possible for
2814 Jacob to become Israel—a prince who prevailed with God? It was. The things that are impossible
2815 with men are possible with God. Have you not in very deed received from the Father, as the great
2816 fruit of Christ’s redemption, the Spirit of supplication, the Spirit of intercession? Just pause and
2817 think what that means. And will you still doubt whether God is able to make you “strivers with
2818 God,” princes who prevail with Him? Oh, let us banish all fear, and in faith claim the grace for
2819 which we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, the grace of supplication, the grace of intercession.
2820 Let us quietly, perseveringly believe that He lives in us, and will enable us to do our work. Let us
2821 in faith not fear to accept and yield to the great truth that intercession, as it is the great work of
2822 the King on the throne, is the great work of His servants on earth. We have the Holy Spirit,
2823 who brings the Christ-life into our hearts, to fit us for this work. Let us at once begin and stir up
2824 the gift within us. As we set aside each day our time for intercession, and count upon the Spirit’s
2825 enabling power, the confidence will grow that we can, in our measure, follow Paul even as he
2826 followed Christ.

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2831 A PLEA FOR MORE PRAYER

2832

2833 CHAPTER XIV

2834

2835 God seeks Intercessors

2836

2837 “I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor
2838 night. Ye that are the Lord’s remembrancers, keep not silence, and give Him no rest till He make
2839 Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”—ISA. lxii. 6, 7.

2840

2841 “And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor.”—ISA.
2842 lix. 16.

2843

2844 “And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered, and there was none to
2845 uphold.”—ISA. lxiii. 5.

2846

2847 “There is none that calleth upon Thy name, that stirreth himself to take hold of Thee.”—ISA.
2848 lxiv. 7.

2849

2850 “And I sought for a man that should stand in the gap before Me for the land, that I should not
2851 destroy it; but I found none.”—EZEK. xxii. 30.

2852

2853 “I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit: that whatsoever ye shall ask of
2854 the Father in My name, He may give it you.”—JOHN xv. 16.

2855

2856

2857 In the study of the starry heavens, how much depends upon a due apprehension of magnitudes.
2858 Without some sense of the size of the heavenly bodies, that appear so small to the eye, and yet
2859 are so great, and of the almost illimitable extent of the regions in which they move, though they
2860 appear so near and so familiar, there can be no true knowledge of the heavenly world or its
2861 relation to this earth. It is even so with the spiritual heavens, and the heavenly life in which we
2862 are called to live. It is specially so in the life of intercession, that most wondrous intercourse
2863 between heaven and earth. Everything depends upon the due apprehension of magnitudes.

2864

2865 Just think of the three that come first: There is a world, with its needs entirely dependent on and
2866 waiting to be helped by intercession; there is a God in heaven, with His all-sufficient supply for
2867 all those needs, waiting to be asked; there is a Church, with its wondrous calling and its sure
2868 promises, waiting to be roused to a sense of its wondrous responsibility and power.

2869

2870 God seeks intercessors.—There is a world with its perishing millions, with intercession as its
2871 only hope. How much of love and work is comparatively vain, because there is so little
2872 intercession. A thousand millions living as if there never had been a Son of God to die for them.
2873 Thirty millions every year passing into the outer darkness without hope. Fifty millions bearing
2874 the Christian name, and the great majority living in utter ignorance or indifference. Millions of
2875 feeble, sickly Christians; thousands of wearied workers, who could be blessed by intercession,
2876 could help themselves to become mighty in intercession. Churches and missions sacrificing life
2877 and labour often with little result, for lack of intercession. Souls, each one worth more than
2878 worlds, worth nothing less than the price paid for them in Christ’s blood, and within reach of the
2879 power that can be won by intercession. We surely have no conception of the magnitude of the
2880 work to be done by God’s intercessors, or we should cry to God above everything to give from
2881 heaven the spirit of intercession.

2882

2883 God seeks intercessors.—There is a God of glory able to meet all these needs. We are told that
2884 He delights in mercy, that He waits to be gracious, that He longs to pour out His blessing; that
2885 the love that gave the Son to death is the measure of the love that each moment hovers over
2886 every human being. And yet He does not help. And there they perish, a million a month in China
2887 alone, and it is as if God does not move. If He does so love and long to bless, there must be some
2888 inscrutable reason for His holding back. What can it be? Scripture says, because of your unbelief.
2889 It is the faithlessness and consequent unfaithfulness of God’s people. He has taken them up into

2890 partnership with Himself; He has honoured them, and bound Himself, by making their prayers
2891 one of the standard measures of the working of His power. Lack of intercession is one of the
2892 chief causes of lack of blessing. Oh, that we would turn eye and heart from everything else and
2893 fix them upon this God who hears prayer, until the magnificence of His promises, and His power,
2894 and His purpose of love overwhelmed us! How our whole life and heart would become
2895 intercession.

2896
2897 God seeks intercessors. —There is a third magnitude to which our eyes must be opened: the
2898 wondrous privilege and power of the intercessors. There is a false humility, which makes a great
2899 virtue of self-depreciation, because it has never seen its utter nothingness. If it knew that, it
2900 would never apologise for its feebleness, but glory in its utter weakness, as the one condition of
2901 Christ's power resting on it. It would judge of itself, its power and influence before God in
2902 prayer, as little by what it sees or feels, as we judge of the size of the sun or stars by what the eye
2903 can see. Faith sees man created in God's image and likeness to be God's representative in this
2904 world and have dominion over it. Faith sees man redeemed and lifted into union with Christ,
2905 abiding in Him, identified with Him, and clothed with His power in intercession. Faith sees the
2906 Holy Spirit dwelling and praying in the heart, making, in our sighings, intercession according to
2907 God. Faith sees the intercession of the saints to be part of the life of the Holy Trinity—the
2908 believer as God's child asking of the Father, in the Son, through the Spirit. Faith sees something
2909 of the Divine fitness and beauty of this scheme of salvation through intercession, wakens the soul
2910 to a consciousness of its wondrous destiny, and girds it with strength for the blessed self-sacrifice
2911 it calls to.

2912
2913 God seeks intercessors. —When He called His people out of Egypt, He separated the priestly
2914 tribe, to draw nigh to Him, and stand before Him, and bless the people in His name. From time to
2915 time He sought and found and honoured intercessors, for whose sake He spared or blessed His
2916 people. When our Lord left the earth He said to the inner circle He had gathered around Him—an
2917 inner circle of special devotion to His service, to which access is still free to every disciple: "I
2918 chose you, and appointed you, that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My Name, He may
2919 give it you." We have already noticed the six times repeated three wonderful words—
2920 Whatsoever — In My Name — It shall be done. In them Christ placed the powers of the
2921 heavenly world at their disposal—not for their own selfish use, but in the interests of His
2922 kingdom. How wondrously they used it we know. And since that time, down through the ages,
2923 these men have had their successors, men who have proved how surely God works in answer to
2924 prayer. And we may praise God that, in our days too, there is an ever-increasing number who
2925 begin to see and prove that in church and mission, in large societies and little circles and
2926 individual effort, intercession is the chief thing, the power that moves God and opens heaven.
2927 They are learning, and long to learn better, and that all may learn, that in all work for souls
2928 intercession must take the first place, and that those who in it have received from heaven, in the
2929 power of the Holy Ghost, what they are to communicate to others, will be best able to do the
2930 Lord's work.

2931
2932 God seeks intercessors. —Though God had His appointed servants in Israel, watchmen set by
2933 Himself to cry to Him day and night and give Him no rest, He often had to wonder and complain
2934 that there was no intercessor, none to stir himself up to take hold of His strength. And He still
2935 waits and wonders in our day, that there are not more intercessors, that all His children do not

2936 give themselves to this highest and holiest work, that many of them who do so, do not engage in
2937 it more intensely and perseveringly. He wonders to find ministers of His gospel complaining that
2938 their duties do not allow them to find time for this, which He counts their first, their highest, their
2939 most delightful, their alone effective work. He wonders to find His sons and daughters, who have
2940 forsaken home and friends for His sake and the gospel's, come so short in what He meant to be
2941 their abiding strength—receiving day by day all they needed to impart to the dark heathen. He
2942 wonders to find multitudes of His children who have hardly any conception of what intercession
2943 is. He wonders to find multitudes more who have learned that it is their duty, and seek to obey it,
2944 but confess that they know but little of taking hold upon God or prevailing with Him.

2945
2946 God seeks intercessors.—He longs to dispense larger blessings. He longs to reveal His power
2947 and glory as God, His saving love, more abundantly. He seeks intercessors in larger number, in
2948 greater power, to prepare the way of the Lord. He seeks them. Where could He seek them but in
2949 His Church? And how does He expect to find them? He intrusted to His Church the task of
2950 telling of their Lord's need, the task of encouraging and training, and preparing them for His
2951 holy service. And He ever comes again, seeking fruit, seeking intercessors. In His Word He has
2952 spoken of the “widows indeed, who trust in God, and continue in supplication night and day.” He
2953 looks if the Church is training the great army of aged men and women, whose time of outward
2954 work is past, but who can strengthen the army of the “elect, who cry to Him day and night.” He
2955 looks to the great host of the Christian Endeavour, the three or four million of young lives that
2956 have given themselves away in the solemn pledge, “I promise the Lord Jesus Christ that I will
2957 strive to do whatever He would like to have me do,” and wonders how many are being trained to
2958 pass from the brightness of the weekly prayer-meeting and its confession of loyalty, to swell the
2959 secret intercession that is to save souls. He looks to the thousands of young men and young
2960 women in training for the work of ministry and mission, and gazes longingly to see if the Church
2961 is teaching them that intercession, power with God, must be their first care, and in seeking to
2962 train and help them to it. He looks to see whether ministers and missionaries are understanding
2963 their opportunity, and labouring to train the believers of their congregation into those who can
2964 “help together” by their prayer, and can “strive with them in their prayers.” As Christ seeks the
2965 lost sheep until He find it, Gods seeks intercessors. (Note F.)

2966
2967 God seeks intercessors.—He will not, He cannot, take the work out of the hands of His
2968 Church. And so He comes, calling and pleading in many ways. Now by a man whom He raises
2969 up to live a life of faith in His service, and to prove how actually and abundantly He answers
2970 prayer. Then by the story of a church which makes prayer for souls its starting-point, and bears
2971 testimony to God's faithfulness. Sometimes in a mission which proves how special prayer can
2972 meet special need, and bring down the power of the Spirit. And sometimes again by a season of
2973 revival coming in answer to united urgent supplication. In these and many other ways God is
2974 showing us what intercession can do, and beseeching us to waken up and train His great host to
2975 be, every one, a people of intercessors.

2976
2977 God seeks intercessors.—He sends His servants out to call them. Let ministers make this a
2978 part of their duty. Let them make their church a training school of intercession. Give the people
2979 definite objects for prayer. Encourage them to take a definite time to it, if it were only ten
2980 minutes every day. Help them to understand the boldness they may use with God. Teach them to
2981 expect and look out for answers. Show them what it is first to pray and get an answer in secret,

2982 and then carry the answer and impart the blessing. Tell everyone who is master of his own time
2983 that he is as the angels, free to tarry before the throne and then go out and minister to the heirs of
2984 salvation. Sound out the blessed tidings that this honour is for all God's people. There is no
2985 difference. That servant girl, this day labourer, that bedridden invalid, this daughter in her
2986 mother's home, these men and young men in business—all are called, all, all are needed. God
2987 seeks intercessors.

2988
2989 God seeks intercessors.—As ministers take up the work of finding and training them it will
2990 urge themselves to pray more. Christ gave Paul to be a pattern of His grace before He made him
2991 a preacher of it. It has been well said, "The first duty of a clergyman is humbly to beg of God
2992 that all he would have done in his people may be first truly and fully done in himself." The effort
2993 to bring this message of God may cause much heart-searching and humiliation. All the better.
2994 The best practice in doing a thing is helping others to do it. O ye servants of Christ, set as
2995 watchmen to cry to God day and night, let us awake to our holy calling. Let us believe in the
2996 power of intercession. Let us practise it. Let us seek on behalf of our people to get from God
2997 Himself the Spirit and the Life we preach. With our spirit and life given up to God in
2998 intercession, the Spirit and Life that God gives them through us cannot fail to be the Life of
2999 Intercession too.

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3001

3002

3003

3004 A PLEA FOR MORE PRAYER

3005

3006 CHAPTER XV

3007

3008 The Coming Revival

3009

3010 "Wilt Thou not revive us again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?"—PS. lxxxv. 6.

3011

3012 "O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years."—HAB. iii. 2.

3013

3014 "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt revive me: Thy right hand shall save me."—
3015 PS. cxxxviii. 7.

3016

3017 "I dwell with him that is of a humble and contrite heart, to revive the heart of the contrite
3018 ones."—ISA. lvii. 15.

3019

3020 "Come, and let us return to the Lord: for He hath torn, and He will heal us. He will revive us."—
3021 HOS. vi. 1, 2.

3022

3023

3024 The Coming Revival—one frequently hears the word. There are teachers not a few who see
3025 the tokens of its approach, and confidently herald its speedy appearance. In the increase of
3026 mission interest, in the tidings of revivals in places where all were dead or cold, in the hosts of
3027 our young gathered into Students' and other Associations or Christian Endeavour Societies, in

3028 doors everywhere opened in the Christian and the heathen world, in victories already secured in
3029 the fields white unto the harvest, wherever believing, hopeful workers enter, they find the
3030 assurance of a time of power and blessing such as we have not known. The Church is about to
3031 enter on a new era of increasing spirituality and larger extension.

3032
3033 There are others who, while admitting the truth of some of these facts, yet fear that the
3034 conclusions drawn from them are one-sided and premature. They see the interest in missions
3035 increased, but point out to how small a circle it is confined, and how utterly out of proportion it is
3036 to what it ought to be. To the great majority of Church members, to the greater part of the
3037 Church, it is as yet anything but a life question. They remind us of the power of worldliness and
3038 formality, of the increase of the money-making and pleasure-loving spirit among professing
3039 Christians, to the lack of spirituality in so many, many of our churches, and the continuing and
3040 apparently increasing estrangement of multitudes from God's Day and Word, as proof that the
3041 great revival has certainly not begun, and is hardly thought of by the most. They say that they do
3042 not see the deep humiliation, the intense desire, the fervent prayer which appear as the
3043 forerunners of every true revival.

3044
3045 There are right-hand and left-hand errors which are equally dangerous. We must seek as much to
3046 be kept from the superficial Optimism, which never is able to gauge the extent of the evil, as
3047 from the hopeless Pessimism which can neither praise God for what He has done, nor trust Him
3048 for what He is ready to do. The former will lose itself in a happy self-congratulation, as it
3049 rejoices in its zeal and diligence and apparent success, and never see the need of confession and
3050 great striving in prayer, ere we are prepared to meet and conquer the hosts of darkness. The latter
3051 virtually gives over the world to Satan, and almost prays and rejoices to see things get worse, to
3052 hasten the coming of Him who is to put all right. May God keep us from either error, and fulfil
3053 the promise, "Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it,
3054 when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." Let us listen to the lessons
3055 suggested by the passages we have quoted; they may help us to pray the prayer aright: "Revive
3056 Thy work, O Lord!"

3057
3058 1. "Revive Thy work, O Lord!"—Read again the passages of Scripture, and see how they all
3059 contain the one thought: Revival is God's work; He alone can give it; it must come from above.
3060 We are frequently in danger of looking to what God has done and is doing, and to count on that
3061 as the pledge that He will at once do more. And all the time it may be true that He is blessing us
3062 up to the measure of our faith or self-sacrifice, and cannot give larger measure, until there has
3063 been a new discovery and confession of what is hindering Him. Or we may be looking to all the
3064 signs of life and good around us, and congratulating ourselves on all the organizations and
3065 agencies that are being created, while the need of God's mighty and direct interposition is not
3066 rightly felt, and the entire dependence upon Him not cultivated. Regeneration, the giving of
3067 Divine life, we all acknowledge to be God's act, a miracle of His power. The restoring or
3068 reviving of the Divine life, in a soul or a Church, is as much a supernatural work. To have the
3069 spiritual discernment that can understand the signs of the heavens, and prognosticate the coming
3070 revival, we need to enter deep into God's mind and will as to its conditions, and the preparedness
3071 of those who pray for it or are to be used to bring it about. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing,
3072 but He revealeth His secret unto his servants the prophets." It is God who is to give the revival; it

3073 is God who reveals His secret; it is the spirit of absolute dependence upon God, giving Him the
3074 honour and the glory, that will prepare for it.

3075
3076 2. “_Revive Thy work, O Lord!_”—A second lesson suggested is, that the revival God is to give
3077 will be given in answer to prayer. It must be asked and received direct from God Himself. Those
3078 who know anything of the history of revivals will remember how often this has been proved—
3079 both larger and more local revivals have been distinctly traced to special prayer. In our own day
3080 there are numbers of congregations and missions where special or permanent revivals are—all
3081 glory be to God—connected with systematic, believing prayer. The coming revival will be no
3082 exception. An extraordinary spirit of prayer, urging believers to much secret and united prayer,
3083 pressing them to “labour fervently” in their supplications, will be one of the surest signs of
3084 approaching showers and floods of blessing.

3085
3086 Let all who are burdened with the lack of spirituality, with the low state of the life of God in
3087 believers, listen to the call that comes to all. If there is to be revival,—a mighty, Divine
3088 revival,—it will need, on our part, corresponding whole-heartedness in prayer and faith. Let not
3089 one believer think himself too weak to help, or imagine that he will not be missed. If he first
3090 begin, the gift that is in him may be so stirred that, for his circle or neighbourhood, he shall be
3091 God’s chosen intercessor. Let us think of the need of souls, of all the sins and failings among
3092 God’s people, of the little power there is in so much of the preaching, and begin to cry every day,
3093 “Wilt Thou not revive us again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?” And let us have the truth
3094 graven deep in our hearts: every revival comes, as Pentecost came, as the fruit of united,
3095 continued prayer. The coming revival must begin with a great prayer revival. It is in the closet,
3096 with the door shut, that the sound of abundance of rain will be first heard. An increase of secret
3097 prayer with ministers and members, will be the sure harbinger of blessing.

3098
3099 3. “_Revive Thy work, O Lord!_”—A third lesson our texts teach is that it is to the humble and
3100 contrite that the revival is promised. We want the revival to come upon the proud and the self-
3101 satisfied, to break them down and save them. God will give this, but only on the condition that
3102 those who see and feel the sin of others take their burden of confession and bear it, and that all
3103 who pray for and claim in faith God’s reviving power for His Church, shall humble themselves
3104 with the confession of its sins. The need of revival always points to previous decline; and decline
3105 was always caused by sin. Humiliation and contrition have ever been the conditions of revival. In
3106 all intercession confession of man’s sin and God’s righteous judgment is ever an essential
3107 element.

3108
3109 Throughout the history of Israel we continually see this. It comes out in the reformations under
3110 the pious Kings of Judah. We hear it in the prayer of men like Ezra and Nehemiah and Daniel. In
3111 Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel, as well as in the minor prophets, it is the keynote of all the
3112 warning as of all the promise. If there be no humiliation and forsaking of sin there can be no
3113 revival or deliverance: “These men have set up their idols in their hearts. Shall I at all be inquired
3114 of by them?” “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that
3115 trembleth at My word.” Amid the most gracious promises of Divine visitation there is ever this
3116 note: “Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O House of Israel.”

3117

3118 We find the same in the New Testament. The Sermon on the Mount promises the kingdom to the
3119 poor and them that mourn. In the Epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians the religion of man, of
3120 worldly wisdom and confidence in the flesh, is exposed and denounced; without its being
3121 confessed and forsaken, all the promises of grace and the Spirit will be vain. In the Epistles to the
3122 seven churches we find five of which He, out of whose mouth goes the sharp, two-edged sword,
3123 says, that He has something against them. In each of these the keyword of His message is—not
3124 to the unconverted, but to the Church—Repent! All the glorious promises which each of these
3125 Epistles contain, down to the last one, with its “Open the door and I will come in”; “He that
3126 overcometh shall sit with Me on My throne,” are dependent on that one word—Repent!

3127
3128 And if there is to be a revival, not among the unsaved, but in our churches, to give a holy,
3129 spiritual membership, will not that trumpet sound need to be heard—Repent? Was it only in
3130 Israel, in the ministry of kings and prophets, that there was so much evil in God’s people to be
3131 cleansed away? Was it only in the Church of the first century, that Paul and James and our Lord
3132 Himself had to speak such sharp words? Or is there not in the Church of our days an idolatry of
3133 money and talent and culture, a worldly spirit, making it unfaithful to its one only Husband and
3134 Lord, a confidence in the flesh which grieves and resists God’s Holy Spirit? Is there not almost
3135 everywhere a confession of the lack of spirituality and spiritual power? Let all who long for the
3136 coming revival, and seek to hasten it by their prayers, pray this above everything, that the Lord
3137 may prepare His prophets to go before Him at His bidding: “Cry aloud and spare not, lift up thy
3138 voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression.” Every deep revival among God’s
3139 people must have its roots in a deep sense and confession of sin. Until those who would lead the
3140 Church in the path of revival bear faithful testimony against the sins of the Church, it is to be feared
3141 that it will find people unprepared. Men would fain have a revival as the outgrowth of their
3142 agencies and progress. God’s way is the opposite: it is out of death, acknowledged as the desert
3143 of sin, confessed as utter helplessness, that He revives. He revives the heart of the contrite one.

3144
3145 4. “_Revive Thy work, O Lord!_”—There is a last thought, suggested by the text from Hosea. It
3146 is as we return to _the Lord_ that revival will come; for if we had not wandered from Him, His
3147 life would be among us in power. “Come and let us return to the Lord: for He hath torn, He will
3148 heal us: He hath smitten; He will bind us up: _He will revive us_, and we shall live in His sight.”
3149 As we have said, there can be no return to the Lord, where there is no sense or confession of
3150 wandering. _Let us return to the Lord_ must be the keynote of the revival. Let us return,
3151 acknowledging and forsaking whatever there has been in the Church that is not entirely
3152 according to His mind and spirit. Let us return, yielding up and casting out whatever there has
3153 been in our religion or along with it of the power of God’s two great enemies—confidence in the
3154 flesh or the spirit of the world. Let us return, in the acknowledgment of how undividedly God
3155 must have us, to fill us with His Spirit, and use us for the kingdom of His Son. Oh, let us return,
3156 in the surrender of a dependence and a devotion which has no measure but the absolute claim of
3157 Him who is the Lord! Let us return to the Lord with our whole heart, that He may make and keep
3158 us wholly His. He will revive us, and we shall live in His sight. Let us turn to the God of
3159 Pentecost, as Christ led his disciples to turn to Him, and the God of Pentecost will turn to us.

3160
3161 It is for this returning to the Lord that the great work of intercession is needed. It is here the
3162 coming revival must find its strength. Let us begin as individuals in secret to plead with God,
3163 confessing whatever we see of sin or hindrance, in ourselves or others. If there were not one

3164 other sin, surely in the lack of prayer there is matter enough for repentance and confession and
3165 returning to the Lord. Let us seek to foster the spirit of confession and supplication and
3166 intercession in those around us. Let us help to encourage and to train those who think themselves
3167 too feeble. Let us lift up our voice to proclaim the great truths. The revival must come from
3168 above; the revival must be received in faith from above and brought down by prayer; the revival
3169 comes to the humble and contrite, for them to carry to others; if we return to the Lord with our
3170 whole heart, He will revive us. On those who see these truths, rests the solemn responsibility of
3171 giving themselves up to witness for them and to act them out.

3172
3173 And as each of us pleads for the revival throughout the Church, let us specially, at the same time,
3174 cry to God for our own neighbourhood or sphere of work. Let, with every minister and worker,
3175 there be “great searchings of heart,” as to whether they are ready to give such proportion of time
3176 and strength to prayer as God would have. Let them, even as in public they are leaders of their
3177 larger or smaller circles, give themselves in secret to take their places in the front rank of the
3178 great intercession host, that must prevail with God, ere the great revival, the floods of blessing
3179 can come. Of all who speak or think of, or long for, revival, let not one hold back in this great
3180 work of honest, earnest, definite pleading: Revive Thy work, O Lord! Wilt Thou not revive us
3181 again?

3182
3183 Come and let us return to the Lord: He will revive us! And let us know, let us follow on to know
3184 the Lord. “_His going forth_ is sure as the morning; and _He shall come unto us_ as the rain, as
3185 the latter rain that watereth the earth.” Amen. So be it.

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3187
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3189

3190 NOTES

3191
3192

3193 NOTE A, Chap. VI. p. 73

3194

3195 Just this day I have been meeting a very earnest lady missionary from India. She confesses and
3196 mourns the lack of prayer. But—in India at least—it can hardly be otherwise. You have only the
3197 morning hours, from six to eleven, for your work. Some have attempted to rise at four, and get
3198 the time they think they need, and have suffered, and had to give it up. Some have tried to take
3199 time after lunch, and been found asleep on their knees. You are not your own master, and must
3200 act with others. No one who has not been in India can understand the difficulty; sufficient time
3201 for much intercession cannot be secured.

3202

3203 Were it only in the heat of India the difficulty existed, one might be silent. But, alas! in the
3204 coldest winter in London, and in the moderate climate of South Africa, there is the same trouble
3205 everywhere. If once we really felt—_intercession is the most important part of our work_, the
3206 securing of God’s presence and power in full measure is the essential thing, this is our first
3207 duty—our hours of work would all be made subordinate to this one thing.

3208

3209 May God show us all whether there indeed be an insuperable difficulty for which we are not
3210 responsible, whether it be only a mistake we are making, or a sin by which we are grieving Him
3211 and hindering His Spirit!

3212
3213 If we ask the question George Muller once asked of a Christian, who complained that he could
3214 not find time sufficient for the study of the Word and prayer, whether an hour less work, say four
3215 hours, with the soul dwelling in the full light of God, would not be more prosperous and
3216 effective than five hours with the depressing consciousness of unfaithfulness, and the loss of the
3217 power that could be obtained in prayer, the answer will not be difficult. The more we think of it
3218 the more we feel that when earnest, godly workers allow, against their better will, the spiritual to
3219 be crowded out by incessant occupation and the fatigue it brings, it must be because the spiritual
3220 life is not sufficiently strong in them to bid the lever stand aside till the presence of God in Christ
3221 and the power of the Spirit have been fully secured.

3222
3223 Let us listen to Christ saying, “_Render unto Csar the things that are Csar’s_”—let duty and
3224 work have their place—”and unto God the things that are God’s.” Let the worship in the Spirit,
3225 the entire dependence and continued waiting upon God for the full experience of His presence
3226 and power every day, and the strength of Christ working in us, ever have the first place. The
3227 whole question is simply this, Is God to have the place, the love, the trust, the time for personal
3228 fellowship He claims, so that all our working shall be God working in us?

3229
3230
3231 NOTE B, Chap. VII. p. 89

3232
3233 Let me tell here a story that occurs in one of Dr. Boardman’s works. He had been invited by a
3234 lady of good position, well known as a successful worker among her husband’s dependents, to
3235 come and address them. “And then,” she added, “I want to speak to you about a bit of bondage of
3236 my own.” When he had addressed her meeting, and found many brought to Christ through her,
3237 he wondered what her trouble might be. She soon told him. God had blessed her work, but, alas,
3238 the enjoyment she once had had in God’s word and secret prayer had been lost. And she had
3239 tried her utmost to get it back, and had failed. “Ah! that is just your mistake,” he said. “How
3240 that? Ought I not to do my best to have the coldness removed?” “Tell me,” he said, “were you
3241 saved by doing your best?” “Oh, no! I tried long to do that, but only found rest when I ceased
3242 trying, and trusted Christ.” “And that is what you need to do now. Enter your closet at the
3243 appointed time, however dull you feel, and place yourself before your Lord. Do not try to rouse
3244 an earnestness you do not feel; but quietly say to Him that He sees how all is wrong, how
3245 helpless you are, and trust Him to bless you. He will do it; as you trust quietly, His Spirit will
3246 work.”

3247
3248 The simple story may teach many a Christian a most blessed lesson in the life of prayer. You
3249 have accepted of Christ Jesus to make you whole, and give you strength to walk in newness of
3250 life; you have claimed the Holy Spirit to be in you the Spirit of Supplication and Intercession;
3251 but do not wonder if your feelings are not all at once changed, or if your power of prayer does
3252 not come in the way you would like. It is a life of faith. By faith we receive the Holy Spirit and
3253 all His workings. Faith regards neither sight nor feeling, but rests, even when there appears to be
3254 no power to pray, in the assurance that the Spirit is praying in us as we bow quietly before God.

3255 He that thus waits in faith, and honours the Holy Spirit, and yields himself to Him, will soon find
3256 that prayer will begin to come. And he that perseveres in the faith that through Christ and by the
3257 Spirit each prayer, however feeble, is acceptable to God, will learn the lesson that it is possible to
3258 be taught by the Spirit, and led to walk worthy of the Lord to all well pleasing.

3259
3260

3261 NOTE C, Chap. IX. p. 111

3262

3263 Just yesterday again—three days after the conversation mentioned in the note to chap. vii.—I
3264 met a devoted young missionary lady from the interior. As a conversation on prayer was
3265 proceeding, she interposed unasked with the remark, “But it is really impossible to find the time
3266 to pray as we wish to.” I could only answer, “Time is a quantity that accommodates itself to our
3267 will; what our hearts really consider of first importance in the day, we will soon succeed in
3268 finding time for.” It must surely be that the ministry of intercession has never been put before our
3269 students in Theological Halls and Missionary Training Homes as the most important part of their
3270 life-work. We have thought of our work in preaching or visiting as our real duty, and of prayer as
3271 a subordinate means to do this work successfully. Would not the whole position be changed if
3272 we regarded the ministry of intercession as the chief thing—getting the blessing and power of
3273 God for the souls entrusted to us? Then our work would take its right place, and become the
3274 subordinate one of really dispensing blessings which we had received from God. It was when the
3275 friend at midnight, in answer to his prayer, had received from Another as much as he needed,
3276 that he could supply his hungry friend. It was the intercession, going out and importuning, that
3277 was the difficult work; returning home with his rich supply to impart was easy, joyful work. This
3278 is Christ’s divine order for all thy work, my brother: First come, in utter poverty, every day, and
3279 get from God the blessing in intercession, go then rejoicingly to impart it.

3280

3281

3282 NOTE D, Chap. X. p. 123

3283

3284 Let me once again refer my readers to William Law, and repeat what I have said before, that no
3285 book has so helped me to an insight into the place and work of the Holy Spirit in the economy of
3286 redemption as his ADDRESS TO THE CLERGY.[2]

3287

3288 The way in which he opens up how God’s one object was to dwell in man, making him partaker
3289 of His goodness and glory, other way than by himself living and working in him, gives one the
3290 key to what Pentecost and the sending forth of the Spirit of God’s Son into our hearts really
3291 means. It is Christ in God’s name really regaining and retaking possession of the home He had
3292 created for Himself. It is God entering into the secret depths of our nature there to “work to will
3293 and to do,” to “work that which is pleasing in His sight in Christ Jesus.” It is as this truth enters
3294 into us, and we see that there is and can be no good in us but what God works, that we shall see
3295 light on the Divine mystery of prayer, and believe in the Holy Spirit as breathing within us
3296 desires which God will fulfil when we yield to them, and believingly present them in the name of
3297 Christ. We shall then see that just as wonderful and prevailing as the intercession and prayer
3298 passing from the Incarnate Son to the Father in heaven is our intercourse with God; the Spirit,
3299 who is God, breathing and praying in us amid all our feebleness His heaven-born Divine
3300 petitions: what a heavenly thing prayer becomes.

3301
3302 The latter part of the above-mentioned book consists of extracts from Law's letters. These have
3303 been published separately as a little shilling volume.[3] No one who will take the time quietly to
3304 read and master the so simple but deep teaching they contain, without being wonderfully
3305 strengthened in the confidence which is needed, if we are to pray much and boldly. As we learn
3306 that the Holy Spirit is within us to reveal Christ there, to make us in living reality partakers of
3307 His death, His life, His merit, His disposition, so that He is formed within us, we will begin to
3308 see how Divinely right and sure it is that our intercessions in His name must be heard; his own
3309 Spirit maintains the living union with Himself, in whom we are brought nigh to God, and gives
3310 us boldness of access; what I have so feebly said in the chapter on the Spirit of Supplication will
3311 get new meaning; and, what is more, the exercise of prayer a new attractiveness; its solemn
3312 Divine mystery will humble us, its unspeakable privilege lift us up in faith and adoration.

3313
3314 [2] *The Power of the Spirit: An Address to the Clergy.* By WILLIAM LAW. With additional
3315 Extracts and an Introduction by Rev. A. M. James Nisbet & Co. 2s. 6d.

3316
3317 [3] *The Divine Indwelling.* Selections from the Letters of William Law. With Introduction by
3318 A. M. James Nisbet & Co.

3319
3320
3321 NOTE E, Chap. XI. p. 136

3322
3323 There is a question, the deepest of all, on which I have not entered in this book. I have spoken of
3324 the lack of prayer in the individual Christian as a symptom of a disease. But what shall we say of
3325 it, that there is such a widespread prevalence of this failure to give a due proportion of time and
3326 strength to prayer? Do we not need to inquire, How comes it that the Church of Christ, endued
3327 with the Holy Ghost, cannot train its ministers and workers and members to place first what is
3328 first? How comes it that the confession of too little prayer, and the call for more prayer, is so
3329 frequently heard, and yet the evil continues? The Spirit of God, the Spirit of Supplication and
3330 Intercession, is in the Church and in every believer. There must surely be some other spirit of
3331 great power resisting and hindering this Spirit of God. It is indeed so. The spirit of the world,
3332 which under all its beautiful and even religious activities is the spirit of the god of this world, is
3333 the great hindrance. Everything that is done on earth, whether within or without the Church, is
3334 done by either of these two spirits. What is in the individual the flesh, is in mankind as a whole
3335 the spirit of the world; and all the power the flesh has in the individual is owing to the place
3336 given to the spirit of this world in the Church and in Christian life. It is the spirit of the world is
3337 the great hindrance to the spirit of prayer. All our most earnest calls to men to pray more will be
3338 vain except this evil be acknowledged and combated and overcome. The believer and the Church
3339 must be entirely freed from the spirit of the world.

3340
3341 And how is this to be done? There is but one way—the Cross of Christ, “by which,” as Paul says,
3342 “the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” It is only through death to the world that
3343 we can be freed from its spirit. The separation must be vital and entire. It is only through the
3344 acceptance of our crucifixion with Christ that we can live out this confession, and, as crucified to
3345 the world, maintain the position of irreconcilable hostility to whatever is of its spirit and not of
3346 the Spirit of God; and it is only God Himself who, by His Divine power, can lead us into and

3347 keep us daily dead to sin, and alive unto God in Christ Jesus. The cross, with its shame and its
3348 separation from the world, and its death to all that is of flesh and of self, is the only power that
3349 can conquer the spirit of the world.

3350
3351 I have felt so strongly that the truth needs to be anew asserted, that I hope, if it please God, to
3352 publish a volume, *“The Cross of Christ”*, with the inquiry into what God’s word teaches as to
3353 our actual participation with Christ in His crucifixion. Christ prayed on the way to the cross. He
3354 prayed Himself to the cross. He prayed on the cross. He prays ever as the fruit of the cross. As
3355 the Church lives on the cross, and the cross lives in the Church, the spirit of prayer will be given.
3356 In Christ it was the crucifixion spirit and death that was the source of the Intercession Spirit and
3357 Power. With us it can be no otherwise.

3358
3359
3360 NOTE F, Chap. XIV. p. 177

3361
3362 I have more than once spoken of the need of training Christians to the work of intercession. In a
3363 previous note I have asked the question whether, in the teaching of our Theological Halls and
3364 Mission Training Houses, sufficient attention is given to prayer as the most important, and in
3365 some senses the most difficult part of the work for which the students are being prepared. I have
3366 wondered whether it might not be possible to offer those who are willing, during their student
3367 life, to put themselves under a course of training, some help in the way of hints and suggestions
3368 as to what is needed to give prayer the place and the power in our ministry it ought to have.

3369
3370 As a rule, it is in the student life that the character must be formed for future years, and it is in
3371 the present student world that the Church of the future must be influenced. If God allows me to
3372 carry out a plan that is hardly quite mature yet, I would wish to publish a volume, *THE*
3373 *STUDENT’S PRAYER MANUAL*, combining the teaching of Scripture as to what is most
3374 needed to make men of prayer of us, with such practical directions as may help a young
3375 Christian, preparing to devote his life to God’s service successfully, to cultivate such a spirit and
3376 habit of prayer as shall abide with him through all his coming life and labours.

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3382 PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

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3384 HELPS TO INTERCESSION

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3387 PRAYING ALWAYS
3388 WITH ALL PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION
3389 IN THE SPIRIT
3390 AND WATCHING THEREUNTO WITH ALL PERSEVERANCE AND SUPPLICATION
3391 FOR ALL SAINTS
3392 AND FOR ME

3393
3394 I EXHORT THAT FIRST OF ALL
3395 SUPPLICATIONS, PRAYERS, INTERCESSIONS
3396 GIVING OF THANKS
3397 BE MADE FOR ALL MEN
3398 FOR KINGS, AND ALL THAT ARE IN AUTHORITY

3399
3400 PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER

3401
3402

3403 _These “Helps” are issued as a separate Tract by Messrs. Nisbet & Co., price 2d._

3404

3405 _Anyone is at liberty to have the Tract reprinted, with such modifications as may be desired._

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3410 PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

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3412 Helps to Intercession

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3414

3415 =Pray without Ceasing.=—Who can do this? How can one do it who is surrounded by the cares
3416 of daily life?—How can a mother love her child without ceasing? How can the eyelid without
3417 ceasing hold itself ready to protect the eye? How can I breathe and feel and hear without
3418 ceasing? Because all these are the functions of a healthy, natural life. And so, if the spiritual life
3419 be healthy, under the full power of the Holy Spirit, praying without ceasing will be natural.

3420

3421 =Pray without Ceasing.=—Does it refer to continual acts of prayer, in which we are to persevere
3422 till we obtain, or to the spirit of prayerfulness that should animate us all the day? It includes both.
3423 The example of our Lord Jesus shows us this. We have to enter our closet for special seasons of
3424 prayer; we are at times to persevere there in importunate prayer. We are also all the day to walk
3425 in God’s presence, with the whole heart set upon heavenly things. Without set times of prayer the
3426 spirit of prayer will be dull and feeble. Without the continual prayerfulness the set times will not
3427 avail.

3428

3429 =Pray without Ceasing.=—Does that refer to prayer for ourselves or others? To both. It is
3430 because many confine it to themselves that they fail so in practising it. It is only when the branch
3431 gives itself to bear fruit, more fruit, much fruit, that it can live a healthy life, and expect a rich
3432 inflow of sap. The death of Christ brought Him to the place of everlasting intercession. Your
3433 death with Him to sin and self sets you free from the care of self, and elevates you to the dignity
3434 of intercessor—one who can get life and blessing from God for others. Know your calling; begin
3435 this your work. Give yourself wholly to it, and ere you know you will be finding something of
3436 this “_Praying always_” within you.

3437

3438 =Pray without Ceasing.=—How can I learn it? The best way of learning to do a thing—in fact
3439 the only way—is _to do it_. Begin by setting apart some time every day, say ten or fifteen
3440 minutes, in which you say to God and to yourself, that you come to Him now as intercessor for
3441 others. Let it be after your morning or evening prayer, or any other time. If you cannot secure the
3442 same time every day, be not troubled. Only see that you do your work. Christ chose you and
3443 appointed you to pray for others.

3444
3445 If at first you do not feel any special urgency or faith or power in your prayers, let not that hinder
3446 you. Quietly tell your Lord Jesus of your feebleness; believe that the Holy Spirit is in you to
3447 teach you to pray, and be assured that if you begin, God will help you. God cannot help you
3448 unless you begin and keep on.

3449
3450 =Pray without Ceasing.=—How do I know what to pray for? If once you begin, and think of all
3451 the needs around you, you will soon find enough. But to help you this little tract is issued, with
3452 subjects and hints for prayer for a month. It is meant that we should use it month by month, until
3453 we know more fully to follow the Spirit's leading, and have learnt, if need be, to make our own
3454 list of subjects, and can dispense with it. In regard to the use of these helps a few words may be
3455 needed.

3456
3457 =1. How to Pray.=—You notice for every day two headings—the one =What to Pray=; the other,
3458 =How to Pray=. If the subjects were only given, one might fall into the routine of mentioning
3459 names and things before God, and the work become a burden. The hints under the heading =How
3460 to Pray= are meant to remind of the spiritual nature of the work, of the need of Divine help, and
3461 to encourage faith in the certainty that God, through the Spirit, will give us grace to pray aright,
3462 and will also hear our prayer. One does not at once learn to take his place boldly, and to dare to
3463 believe that he will be heard. Therefore take a few moments each day to listen to God's voice
3464 reminding you of how certainly even you will be heard, and calling on you to pray in that faith in
3465 your Father, to claim and take the blessing you plead for. And let these words about =How to
3466 Pray= enter your hearts and occupy your thoughts at other times too. The work of intercession is
3467 Christ's great work on earth, intrusted to Him because He gave Himself a sacrifice to God for
3468 men. The work of intercession is the greatest work a Christian can do. Give yourself a sacrifice
3469 to God for men, and the work will become your glory and your joy too.

3470
3471 =2. What to Pray.=—Scripture calls us to pray for many things: for all saints; for all men; for
3472 kings and all rulers; for all who are in adversity; for the sending forth of labourers; for those who
3473 labour in the gospel; for all converts; for believers who have fallen into sin; for one another in
3474 our own immediate circles. The Church is now so much larger than when the New Testament
3475 was written; the number of forms of work and workers is so much greater; the needs of the
3476 Church and the world are so much better known, that we need to take time and thought to see
3477 where prayer is needed, and to what our heart is most drawn out. The Scripture calls to prayer
3478 demand a large heart, taking in all saints, and all men, and all needs. An attempt has been made
3479 in these helps to indicate what the chief subjects are that need prayer, and that ought to interest
3480 every Christian.

3481
3482 It will be felt difficult by many to pray for such large spheres as are sometimes mentioned. Let it
3483 be understood that in each case we may make special intercession for our own circle of interest

3484 coming under that heading. And it is hardly needful to say, further, that where one subject
3485 appears of more special interest or urgency than another we are free for a time day after day to
3486 take up that subject. If only time be really given to intercession, and the spirit of believing
3487 intercession be cultivated, the object is attained. While, on the one hand, the heart must be
3488 enlarged at times to take in all, the more pointed and definite our prayer can be the better. With
3489 this view paper is left blank in which we can write down special petitions we desire to urge
3490 before God.

3491
3492 =3. Answers to Prayer.—More than one little book has been published in which Christians may
3493 keep a register of their petitions, and note when they were answered. Room has been left on
3494 every page for this, so that more definite petitions with regard to individual souls or special
3495 spheres of work may be recorded, and the answer looked for. When we pray for all saints, or for
3496 missions in general, it is difficult to know when or how our prayer is answered, or whether our
3497 prayer has had any part in bringing the answer. It is of extreme importance that we should prove
3498 that God hears us, and to this end take note of what answers we look for, and when they come.
3499 On the day of praying for all saints, take the saints in your congregation, or in your prayer-
3500 meeting, and ask for a revival among them. Take, in connection with missions, some special
3501 station or missionary you are interested in, or more than one, and plead for blessing. And expect
3502 and look for its coming, that you may praise God.

3503
3504 =4. Prayer Circles.—There is no desire in publishing this invitation to intercession to add
3505 another to the many existing prayer unions or praying bands. The first object is to stir the many
3506 Christians who practically, through ignorance of their calling, or unbelief as to their prayer
3507 availing much, take but very little part in the work of intercession; and then to help those who do
3508 pray to some fuller apprehension of the greatness of the work, and the need of giving their whole
3509 strength to it. There is a circle of prayer which asks for prayer on the first day of every month for
3510 the fuller manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit throughout the Church. I have given the
3511 words of that invitation as subject for the first day, and taken the same thought as keynote all
3512 through. The more one thinks of the need and the promise, and the greatness of the obstacles to
3513 be overcome in prayer, the more one feels it must become our life-work day by day, that to
3514 which every other interest is subordinated.

3515
3516 But while not forming a large prayer union, it is suggested that it may be found helpful to have
3517 small prayer circles to unite in prayer, either for one month, with some special object introduced
3518 daily along with the others, or through a year or longer, with the view of strengthening each
3519 other in the grace of intercession. If a minister were to invite some of his neighbouring brethren
3520 to join for some special requests along with the printed subjects for supplication, or a number of
3521 the more earnest members of his congregation to unite in prayer for revival, some might be
3522 trained to take their place in the great work of intercession, who now stand idle because no man
3523 hath hired them.

3524
3525 =5. Who is sufficient for these things?—The more we study and try to practise this grace of
3526 intercession, the more we become overwhelmed by its greatness and our feebleness. Let every
3527 such impression lead us to listen: =My grace is sufficient for thee=, and to answer truthfully:
3528 =Our sufficiency is of God=. Take courage; it is in the intercession of Christ you are called to
3529 take part. The burden and the agony, the triumph and the victory are all His. Learn from Him,

3530 yield to His Spirit in you, to know how to pray. He gave Himself a sacrifice to God for men, that
3531 He might have the right and power of intercession. "He bare the sin of many, and made
3532 intercession for the transgressors." Let your faith rest boldly on His finished work. Let your heart
3533 wholly identify itself with Him in His death and His life. =Like Him=, give yourself =to God= a
3534 sacrifice for men: it is your highest nobility, it is your true and full union to Him; it will be to
3535 you, as to Him, your power of intercession. Beloved Christian! come and give your whole heart
3536 and life to intercession, and you will know its blessedness and its power. God asks nothing less;
3537 the world needs nothing less; Christ asks nothing less; let nothing less be what we offer to God.

3538

3539

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3541

3542 FIRST DAY

3543

3544

3545 WHAT TO PRAY.—For the Power of the Holy Spirit

3546

3547 ="I bow my knees unto the Father, that He would grant you that ye may be strengthened with
3548 power through His Spirit."—EPH. iii. 16.

3549

3550 ="Wait for the promise of the Father."—ACTS i. 4.

3551

3552

3553 "The fuller manifestation of the grace and energy of the Blessed Spirit of God, in the removal of
3554 all that is contrary to God's revealed will, so that we grieve not the Holy Spirit, but that He may
3555 work in mightier power in the Church, for the exaltation of Christ and the blessing of souls."

3556

3557 God has one promise to and through His exalted Son; our Lord has one gift to His Church; the
3558 Church has one need; all prayer unites in the one petition—the power of the Holy Spirit. Make it
3559 your one prayer.

3560

3561

3562 HOW TO PRAY.—As a Child asks a Father

3563

3564 ="If a son ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? How much more
3565 shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"—LUKE xi. 11, 13.

3566

3567 Ask as simply and trustfully as a child asks bread. You can do this because ="God hath sent forth
3568 the Spirit of His Son into your heart, crying, Abba, Father."= This Spirit is in you to give you
3569 childlike confidence. In the faith of His praying in you, ask for the power of that holy Spirit
3570 everywhere. Mention places or circles where you specially ask it to be seen.

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3573 SPECIAL PETITIONS

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3637 THIRD DAY

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3639 WHAT TO PRAY.—For all Saints

3640 _____

3641 =”With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons, and watching thereunto in all
3642 perseverance and supplication for all saints.”—EPH. vi. 18.

3643 _____

3644 Every member of a body is interested in the welfare of the whole, and exists to help and
3645 complete the others. Believers are one body, and ought to pray, not so much for the welfare of
3646 their own church or society, but, first of all, for all saints. This large, unselfish love is the proof
3647 that Christ’s Spirit and Love is teaching them to pray. Pray first for all and then for the believers
3648 around you.

3649 _____

3650 _____

3651 HOW TO PRAY.—In the Love of the Spirit

3652 _____

3653 =”By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.”—JOHN
3654 xiii. 35.

3655 _____

3656 =”I pray that they all may be one, that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me.”—
3657 JOHN xvii. 21.

3658 _____

3659 =”I beseech you, brethren, by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your
3660 prayers to God for me.”—ROM. xv. 30.

3661 _____

3662 =”Above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves.”—1 PET. iv. 8.

3663 _____

3664 If we are to pray we must love. Let us say to God we do love all His saints; let us say we love
3665 specially every child of His we know. Let us pray with fervent love, in the love of the Spirit.

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SPECIAL PETITIONS

FOURTH DAY

WHAT TO PRAY,—For the Spirit of Holiness

God is the Holy One. His people is a holy people. He speaks: I am holy: I am the Lord which make you holy. Christ prayed: Sanctify them. Make them holy through =Thy Truth=. Paul prayed: “God establish your hearts unblamable in holiness.” “God sanctify you wholly!”

Pray for all saints—God’s holy ones—throughout the Church, that the Spirit of holiness may rule them. Specially for new converts. For the saints in your own neighbourhood or congregation. For any you are specially interested in. Think of their special need, weakness, or sin, and pray that God may make them holy.

HOW TO PRAY.—Trusting in God’s Omnipotence

The things that are impossible with men are possible with God. When we think of the great things we ask for, of how little likelihood there is of their coming, of our own insignificance. Prayer is not only wishing, or asking, but believing and accepting. Be still before God and ask Him to give you to know Him as the Almighty One, and leave your petitions with Him who doeth wonders.

SPECIAL PETITIONS

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3727 FIFTH DAY

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3729 _____

3730 WHAT TO PRAY.—That God’s People may be kept from the World

3731 _____
3732 =”Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me. I pray not that
3733 Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.
3734 They are not of the world, as I am not of the world.”—JOHN xvii. 11, 15, 16.
3735 _____

3736 In the last night Christ asked three things for His disciples: that they might be kept as those who
3737 are not of the world; that they might be sanctified; that they might be one in love. You cannot do
3738 better than pray as Jesus prayed. Ask for God’s people that they may be kept separate from the
3739 world and its spirit; that they, by the Holy Spirit, may live as those who are not of the world.
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3741 _____
3742 _____

3742 HOW TO PRAY.—Having Confidence before God

3743 _____
3744 =”Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever
3745 we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are
3746 pleasing in His sight.”—1 JOHN iii. 21, 22.
3747 _____

3748 Learn these words by heart. Get them into your heart. Join the ranks of those who, with John,
3749 draw nigh to God with =an assured heart=, that =does not condemn= them, =having confidence
3750 toward God=. In this spirit pray for your brother who sins (1 John v. 16). In the quiet confidence
3751 of an obedient child plead for those of your brethren who may be giving way to sin. Pray for all
3752 to be kept from the evil. And say often, =”What we ask, we receive, because we keep and do.”=
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3755 SPECIAL PETITIONS

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SIXTH DAY

WHAT TO PRAY.—For the Spirit of Love in the Church

="I pray that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them and Thou in Me; that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me ... that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them."—JOHN xvii. 23.

="The fruit of the Spirit is love."—GAL. v. 22.

Believers are one in Christ, as He is one with the Father. The love of God rests on them, and can dwell in them. Pray that the power of the Holy Ghost may so work this love in believers, that the world may see and know God's love in them. Pray much for this.

HOW TO PRAY.—As one of God's Remembrancers

="I have set watchmen on thy walls, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, keep not silence, and give Him no rest."—ISA. lxii. 6.

Study these words until your whole soul be filled with the consciousness, I am appointed intercessor. Enter God's presence in that faith. Study the world's need with that thought—it is my work to intercede; the Holy Spirit will teach me for what and how. Let it be an abiding consciousness: My great life-work, like Christ's, is intercession—to pray for believers and those who do not yet know God.

SPECIAL PETITIONS

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SEVENTH DAY

WHAT TO PRAY.—For the Power of the Holy Spirit on Ministers

="I beseech you that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me."—ROM. xv. 30.

="He will deliver us; ye also helping together by your supplication on our behalf."—2 COR. i. 10, 11.

What a great host of ministers there are in Christ's Church. What need they have of prayer. What a power they might be, if they were all clothed with the power of the Holy Ghost. Pray definitely for this; long for it. Think of your own minister, and ask it very specially for him. Connect every thought of the ministry, in your town or neighbourhood or the world, with the prayer that all may be filled with the Spirit. Plead for them the promise, ="Tarry till ye be clothed with power from on high." "Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you."=

HOW TO PRAY.—In Secret

="But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy inner chamber, and having shut to thy door, pray to the Father which is in secret."—MATT. vi. 6.

="He withdrew again into the mountain to pray, _Himself alone_."—MATT. xiv. 23; JOHN vi. 15.

Take time and realise, when you are alone with God: Here am I now, face to face with God, to intercede for His servants. Do not think you have no influence, or that your prayer will not be missed. Your prayer and faith will make a difference. Cry in secret to God for His ministers.

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3865 EIGHTH DAY

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3868 WHAT TO PRAY.—For the Spirit on all Christian Workers

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3870 =”Ye also helping together on our behalf; that for the gift bestowed upon us by means of many,
3871 thanks may be given by many on our behalf.”—2 COR. i. 11.
3872 _____

3873 What multitudes of workers in connection with our churches and missions, our railways and
3874 postmen, our soldiers and sailors, our young men and young women, our fallen men and women,
3875 our poor and sick. God be praised for this! What could they accomplish if each were living in the
3876 fulness of the Holy Spirit? Pray for them; it makes you a partner in their work, and you will
3877 praise God each time you hear of blessing anywhere.
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3880 HOW TO PRAY.—With definite Petitions

3881 _____
3882 =”What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?”—LUKE xviii. 41.
3883 _____

3884 The Lord knew what the man wanted, and yet He asked him. The utterance of our wish gives
3885 point to the transaction in which we are engaged with God, and so awakens faith and
3886 expectation. Be very definite in your petitions, so as to know what answer you may look for. Just
3887 think of the great host of workers, and ask and expect God definitely to bless them in answer to
3888 the prayers of His people. Then ask still more definitely for workers around you. Intercession is
3889 not the breathing out of pious wishes; its aim is, in believing, persevering prayer, to receive and
3890 bring down blessing.
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3893 SPECIAL PETITIONS

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NINTH DAY

WHAT TO PRAY.—For God’s Spirit on our Mission Work

“The evangelisation of the world depends first of all upon a revival of prayer. Deeper than the need for men—ay, deep down at the bottom of our spiritless life, is the need for the forgotten secret of prevailing, world-wide prayer.”

=”As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul. Then when they had fasted and prayed, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed.”—ACTS xiii. 2, 3, 4.

Pray that our mission work may all be done in this spirit—waiting on God, hearing the voice of the Spirit, sending forth men with fasting and prayer. Pray that in our churches our mission interest and mission work may be in the power of the Holy Spirit and of prayer. It is a Spirit-filled, praying Church will send out Spirit-filled missionaries, mighty in prayer.

HOW TO PRAY.—Take Time

=”I give myself unto prayer.”—PS. cix. 4.

=”We will give ourselves continually to prayer.”—ACTS vi. 4.

=”Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God.”—ECCLES. v. 2.

=”And He continued all night in prayer to God.”—LUKE vi. 12.

Time is one of the chief standards of value. The time we give is a proof of the interest we feel.

We need time with God—to realise His presence; to wait for Him to make Himself known; to consider and feel the needs we plead for; to take our place in Christ; to pray till we can believe

3944 that we have received. Take time in prayer, and pray down blessing on the mission work of the
3945 Church.

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3948 SPECIAL PETITIONS

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3965 TENTH DAY

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3968 WHAT TO PRAY.—For God’s Spirit on our Missionaries

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3970 “What the world needs to-day is, not only more missionaries, but the outpouring of God’s Spirit
3971 on everyone whom He has sent out to work for Him in the foreign field.”

3972

3973 =”Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be My witnesses
3974 unto the uttermost parts of the earth.”—ACTS i. 8.

3975

3976 God always gives His servants power equal to the work He asks of them. Think of the greatness
3977 and difficulty of this work,—casting out Satan out of his strongholds,—and pray that everyone
3978 who takes part in it may receive and do all his work in the power of the Holy Ghost. Think of the
3979 difficulties of your missionaries, and pray for them.

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3982 HOW TO PRAY.—Trusting God’s Faithfulness

3983

3984 =”He is faithful that promised.” “She counted Him faithful who promised.”—HEB. x. 23, xi.
3985 11.

3986

3987 Just think of God’s promises to His Son, concerning His kingdom; to the Church, concerning the
3988 heathen; to His servants, concerning their work; to yourself, concerning your prayer; and pray in

3989 the assurance that He is faithful, and only waits for prayer and faith to fulfil them. =”Faithful is
3990 He that calleth you”= (to pray), “who also will do it” (what He has promised).

3991
3992 Take up individual missionaries, make yourself one with them, and pray till you know that you
3993 are heard. Oh, begin to live for Christ’s kingdom as the one thing worth living for!

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3996 SPECIAL PETITIONS

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4013 ELEVENTH DAY

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4016 WHAT TO PRAY.—For more Labourers

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4018 =”Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth labourers into His harvest.”=—MATT. ix.
4019 38.

4020
4021 What a remarkable call of the =Lord Jesus= for help from His disciples in getting the need
4022 supplied. What an honour put upon prayer. What a proof that God wants prayer and will hear it.

4023
4024 Pray for labourers, for all students in theological seminaries, training homes, Bible institutes, that
4025 they may not go, unless He fits them and sends them forth; that our churches may train their
4026 students to seek for the sending forth of the Holy Spirit; that all believers may hold themselves
4027 ready to be sent forth, or to pray for those who can go.

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4030 HOW TO PRAY.—In Faith, nothing Doubting

4031
4032 =”Jesus saith unto them, Have faith in God. Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou
4033 removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that
4034 what he saith shall come to pass, he shall have it.”=—MARK xi. 22, 23.

4035
4036 =Have faith in God!= Ask Him to make Himself known to you as the faithful, mighty God, who
4037 worketh all in all; and you will be encouraged to believe that He can give suitable and sufficient
4038 labourers, however impossible this appears. But, remember, in answer to prayer and faith.

4039
4040 Apply this to every opening where a good worker is needed. The work is God's. He can give the
4041 right workman. =But He must be asked and waited on.=

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4044 SPECIAL PETITIONS
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4061 TWELFTH DAY

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4064 WHAT TO PRAY.—For the Spirit to convince the World of Sin

4065
4066 =”I will send the Comforter to you. And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect
4067 of sin.”=—JOHN xvi. 7, 8.

4068
4069 God's one desire, the one object of Christ's being manifested, is to take away sin. The first work
4070 of the Spirit on the world is conviction of sin. Without that, no deep or abiding revival, no
4071 powerful conversion. Pray for it, that the gospel may be preached in such power of the Spirit,
4072 that men may see that they have rejected and crucified Christ, and cry out, What shall we do?

4073
4074 Pray most earnestly for a mighty power of conviction of sin wherever the gospel is preached.

4075
4076
4077 HOW TO PRAY.—Stir up yourself to take hold of God's Strength

4078
4079 =”Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me.”=—ISA. xxvii. 5.

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4127
4128 HOW TO PRAY.—In the Name of Christ

4129
4130 =”Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do. If ye shall ask Me anything in My name,
4131 that will I do.”—JOHN xiv. 13, 14.

4132
4133 Ask in the name of your Redeemer God, who sits upon the throne. Ask what He has promised,
4134 what He gave His blood for, that sin may be put away from among His people. Ask—the prayer
4135 is after His own heart—for the spirit of deep conviction of sin to come among His people. Ask
4136 for the spirit of burning. Ask in the faith of His name—the faith of what He wills, of what He can
4137 do—and look for the answer. Pray that the Church may be blessed, to be made a blessing in the
4138 world.

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4141 SPECIAL PETITIONS

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4158 FOURTEENTH DAY

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4161 WHAT TO PRAY.—For the Church of the Future

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4163 =”That the children might not be as their fathers, a generation that set not their heart aright, and
4164 whose spirit was not steadfast with God.”—PS. lxxviii. 8.

4165
4166 =”I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thy offspring.”—ISA. xlv. 3.

4167
4168 Pray for the rising generation, who are to come after us. Think of the young men and young
4169 women and children of this age, and pray for all the agencies at work among them; that in
4170 association and societies and unions, in homes and schools, Christ may be honoured, and the
4171 Holy Spirit get possession of them. Pray for the young of your own neighbourhood.

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4174 HOW TO PRAY.—With the Whole Heart

4175
4176 =”The Lord grant thee according to thine own heart.”—PS. xx. 4.

4177
4178 =”Thou hast given him his heart’s desire.”—PS. xxi. 2.

4179
4180 =”I cried with my whole heart; hear me, O Lord.”—PS. cxix. 145.

4181
4182 God lives, and listens to every petition with His whole heart. Each time we pray the whole
4183 Infinite God is there to hear. He asks that in each prayer the whole man shall be there too; that
4184 we shall cry with our whole heart. Christ gave Himself to God for men; and so He takes up every
4185 need into His intercession. If once we seek God with our whole heart, the whole heart will be in
4186 every prayer with which we come to this God. Pray with your whole heart for the young.

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4189 SPECIAL PETITIONS

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4206 FIFTEENTH DAY

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4209 WHAT TO PRAY.—For Schools and Colleges

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4211 =”As for Me, this is My covenant with them, saith the Lord: My Spirit that is upon thee, and My
4212 words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of
4213 thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for
4214 ever.”—ISA. lix. 21.

4215
4216 The future of the Church and the world depends, to an extent we little conceive, on the education
4217 of the day. The Church may be seeking to evangelise the heathen, and be giving up her own
4218 children to secular and materialistic influences. Pray for schools and colleges, and that the

4219 Church may realise and fulfil its momentous duty of caring for its children. Pray for godly
4220 teachers.

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4223 HOW TO PRAY.—Not Limiting God

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4225 =”They limited the Holy One of Israel.”=—PS. lxxviii. 41.

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4227 =”He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.”=—MATT. xiii. 58.

4228

4229 =”Is anything too hard for the Lord?”=—GEN. xviii. 14.

4230

4231 =”Ah, Lord God! Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power; there is nothing
4232 too hard for Thee. Behold, I am the Lord: is there anything too hard for Me?”=—JER. xxxii. 17,
4233 27.

4234

4235 Beware, in your prayer, above everything, of limiting God, not only by unbelief, but by fancying
4236 that you know what He can do. Expect unexpected things, above all that we ask or think. Each
4237 time you intercede, be quiet first and worship God in his glory. Think of what He can do, of how
4238 He delights to hear Christ, of your place in Christ, and expect great things.

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4241 SPECIAL PETITIONS

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4258 SIXTEENTH DAY

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4261 WHAT TO PRAY.—For the Power of the Holy Spirit in our Sabbath Schools

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4263 =”Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the
4264 terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save
4265 thy children.”—ISA. xlix. 25.

4266
4267 Every part of the work of God’s Church is His work. He must do it. Prayer is the confession that
4268 He will, the surrender of ourselves into His hands to let Him, work in us and through us. Pray for
4269 the hundreds of thousands of Sunday-school teachers, that those who know God may be filled
4270 with His Spirit. Pray for your own Sunday school. Pray for the salvation of the children.

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4273 HOW TO PRAY.—Boldly

4274
4275 =”We have a great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God. Let us therefore come boldly unto the
4276 throne of grace.”—HEB. iv. 14, 16.

4277
4278 These hints to help us in our work of intercession—what are they doing for us? Making us
4279 conscious of our feebleness in prayer? Thank God for this. It is the very first lesson we need on
4280 the way to pray the effectual prayer that availeth much. Let us persevere, taking each subject
4281 boldly to the throne of grace. As we pray we shall learn to pray, and to believe, and to expect
4282 with increasing boldness. Hold fast your assurance: it is at God’s command you come as an
4283 intercessor. Christ will give you grace to pray aright.

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4286 SPECIAL PETITIONS

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4303 SEVENTEENTH DAY

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4306 WHAT TO PRAY.—For Kings and Rulers

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4308 =”I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgiving, be made
4309 for all men; for kings, and all that are in high places; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in
4310 all godliness and gravity.”=—1 TIM. ii. 1, 2.

4311
4312 What a faith in the power of prayer! A few feeble and despised Christians are to influence the
4313 mighty Roman emperors, and help in securing peace and quietness. Let us believe that prayer is a
4314 power that is taken up by God in His rule of the world. Let us pray for our country and its rulers;
4315 for all the rulers of the world; for rulers in cities or districts in which we are interested. When
4316 God’s people unite in this, they may count upon their prayer effecting in the unseen world more
4317 than they know. Let faith hold this fast.

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4320 HOW TO PRAY.—The Prayer before God as Incense

4321
4322 =”And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given
4323 unto him much incense, that he should add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden
4324 altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints,
4325 went up before God out of the angel’s hand. And the angel taketh the censer; and he filled it with
4326 the fire upon the altar, and cast it upon the earth: and there followed thunder, and voices, and
4327 lightning, and an earthquake.”=—REV. viii. 3-5.

4328
4329 The same censer brings the prayer of the saints before God and casts fire upon the earth. The
4330 prayers that go up to heaven have their share in the history of this earth. Be sure that thy prayers
4331 enter God’s presence.

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4334 SPECIAL PETITIONS

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4350 EIGHTEENTH DAY

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4354 WHAT TO PRAY.—For Peace

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4356 =”I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplication be made for kings and all that are in high
4357 places; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity. For this is good and
4358 acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.”—1 TIM. ii. 1-3.

4359
4360 =”He maketh wars to cease to the end of the earth.”—PS. xlvi. 9.

4361
4362 What a terrible sight!—the military armaments in which the nations find their pride. What a
4363 terrible thought!—the evil passions that may at any moment bring on war. And what a prospect
4364 the suffering and desolation that must come. God can, in answer to the prayer of His people, give
4365 peace. Let us pray for it, and for the rule of righteousness on which alone it can be stablished.

4366
4367
4368 HOW TO PRAY.—With the Understanding

4369
4370 =”What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding.”—1 COR.
4371 xiv. 15.

4372
4373 We need to pray with the spirit, as the vehicle of the intercession of God’s Spirit, if we are to
4374 take hold of God in faith and power. We need to pray with the understanding, if we are really to
4375 enter deeply into the needs we bring before Him. Take time to apprehend intelligently, in each
4376 subject, the nature, the extent, the urgency of the request, the ground and way and certainty of
4377 God’s promise as revealed in His Word. Let the mind affect the heart. Pray with the
4378 understanding and with the spirit.

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4381 SPECIAL PETITIONS

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4398 NINETEENTH DAY

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4401 WHAT TO PRAY.—For the Holy Spirit on Christendom

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4403 =”Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.”—2 TIM. iii. 5.

4404
4405 =”Thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead.”—REV. iii. 1.

4406
4407 There are five hundred millions of nominal Christians. The state of the majority is unspeakably
4408 awful. Formality, worldliness, ungodliness, rejection of Christ’s service, ignorance, and
4409 indifference—to what an extent does all this prevail. We pray for the heathen—oh! do let us pray
4410 for those bearing Christ’s name, many in worse than heathen darkness.

4411
4412 Does not one feel as if one ought to begin to give up his life, and to cry day and night to God for
4413 souls! In answer to prayer God gives the power of the Holy Ghost.

4414
4415
4416 HOW TO PRAY.—In deep Stillness of Soul

4417
4418 =”My soul is silent unto God: from Him cometh my salvation.”—PS. lxii. 1.

4419
4420 Prayer has its power in God alone. The nearer a man comes to God Himself, the deeper he enters
4421 into God’s will; the more he takes hold of God, the more power in prayer.

4422
4423 God must reveal Himself. If it please Him to make Himself known, He can make the heart
4424 conscious of His presence. Our posture must be that of holy reverence, of quiet waiting and
4425 adoration.

4426
4427 As your month of intercession passes on, and you feel the greatness of your work, be still before
4428 God. Thus you will get power to pray.

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4431 SPECIAL PETITIONS

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TWENTIETH DAY

WHAT TO PRAY.—For God’s Spirit on the Heathen

=”Behold, these shall come from far; and these from the land of Sinim.”—ISA. xlix. 12.

=”Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall haste to stretch out her hands to God.”—PS. lxxviii. 31.

=”I the Lord will hasten it in His time.”—ISA. lx. 22.

Pray for the heathen, who are yet without the word. Think of China, with her three hundred millions—a million a month dying without Christ. Think of Dark Africa, with its two hundred millions. Think of thirty millions a year going down into the thick darkness. If Christ gave His life for them, will you not do so? You can give yourself up to intercede for them. Just begin, if you have never yet begun, with this simple monthly school of intercession. The ten minutes you give will make you feel this is not enough. God’s Spirit will draw you on. Persevere, however feeble you are. Ask God to give you some country or tribe to pray for. Can anything be nobler than to do as Christ did? Give your life for the heathen.

HOW TO PRAY.—With Confident Expectation of an Answer

=”Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and will shew thee great things and difficult, which thou knowest not.”—JER. xxxiii. 3.

=”Thus saith the Lord God: I will yet be inquired of, that I do it.”—EZEK. xxxvi. 37.

Both texts refer to promises definitely made, but their fulfilment would depend upon prayer: God would be inquired of to do it.

Pray for God’s fulfilment of His promises to His Son and His Church, and expect the answer. Plead for the heathen: plead God’s Promises.

SPECIAL PETITIONS

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TWENTY-FIRST DAY

WHAT TO PRAY.—For God’s Spirit on the Jews

=”I will pour out upon the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and Supplication; and they shall look unto Me whom they pierced.”—ZECH. xii. 10.

=”Brethren, my heart’s desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved.”—ROM. x. 1.

Pray for the Jews. Their return to the God of their fathers stands connected, in a way we cannot tell, with wonderful blessing to the Church, and with the coming of our Lord Jesus. Let us not think that God has foreordained all this, and that we cannot hasten it. In a divine and mysterious way God has connected His fulfilment of His promise with our prayer. His Spirit’s intercession in us is God’s forerunner of blessing. Pray for Israel and the work done among them. And pray too: Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

HOW TO PRAY.—With the Intercession of the Holy Spirit

=”We know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”—ROM. viii. 26.

In your ignorance and feebleness believe in the secret indwelling and intercession of the Holy Spirit within you. Yield yourself to His life and leading habitually. He will help your infirmities in prayer. Plead the promises of God even where you do not see how they are to be fulfilled. God knows the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. Pray with the simplicity of a little child; pray with the holy awe and reverence of one in whom God’s Spirit dwells and prays.

SPECIAL PETITIONS

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TWENTY-SECOND DAY

WHAT TO PRAY.—For all who are in Suffering

="Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; them that are evil entreated, as being yourselves in the body."—HEB. xiii. 3.

What a world of suffering we live in! How Jesus sacrificed all and identified Himself with it! Let us in our measure do so too. The persecuted Stundists and Armenians and Jews, the famine-stricken millions of India, the hidden slavery of Africa, the poverty and wretchedness of our great cities—and so much more: what suffering among those who know God and who know Him not. And then in smaller circles, in ten thousand homes and hearts, what sorrow. In our own neighbourhood, how many needing help or comfort. Let us have a heart for, let us think of the suffering. It will stir us to pray, to work, to hope, to love more. And in a way and time we know not God will hear our prayer.

HOW TO PRAY.—Praying always, and not fainting

="He spake unto them a parable to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint."—LUKE xviii. 1.

Do you not begin to feel prayer is really the help for this sinful world? What a need there is of unceasing prayer? The very greatness of the task makes us despair! What can our ten minutes of intercession avail? It is right we feel this: this is the way in which God is calling and preparing us to give our life to prayer. Give yourself wholly to God for men, and amid all your work, your heart will be drawn out to men in love, and drawn up to God in dependence and expectation. To a heart thus led by the Holy Spirit, it is possible to pray always and not to faint.

SPECIAL PETITIONS

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SPECIAL PETITIONS

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY

WHAT TO PRAY.—For the Spirit on your own Congregation

=”Beginning at Jerusalem.”—LUKE xxiv. 47.

Each one of us is connected with some congregation or circle of believers, who are to us the part of Christ’s body with which we come into most direct contact. They have a special claim on our intercession. Let it be a settled matter between God and you that you are to labour in prayer on its behalf. Pray for the minister and all leaders or workers in it. Pray for the believers according to their needs. Pray for conversions. Pray for the power of the Spirit to manifest itself. Band yourself with others to join in secret in definite petitions. Let intercession be a definite work, carried on as systematically as preaching or Sunday school. And pray, expecting an answer.

HOW TO PRAY.—Continually

=”Watchmen, that shall never hold their peace day nor night.”—ISA. lxii. 6.

=”His own elect, that cry to Him day and night.”—LUKE xviii. 7.

=”Night and day praying exceedingly, that we may perfect that which is lacking in your faith.”—1 THESS. iii. 10.

=”A widow indeed, hath her hope set in God, and continueth in supplications night and day.”—1 TIM. v. 5.

4675 When the glory of God, and the love of Christ, and the need of souls are revealed to us, the fire
4676 of this unceasing intercession will begin to burn in us for those who are near and those who are
4677 far off.

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4680 SPECIAL PETITIONS

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4697 TWENTY-FIFTH DAY

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4700 WHAT TO PRAY.—For more Conversions

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4702 =”He is able to save completely, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession.”—HEB. vii. 25.

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4704 =”We will give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word.... And the word of
4705 God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied exceedingly.”—ACTS vi. 4, 7.

4706
4707 Christ’s power to save, and save completely, depends on His unceasing intercession. The
4708 apostles withdrawing themselves from other work to give themselves continually to prayer was
4709 followed by the number of the disciples multiplying exceedingly. As we, in our day, give
4710 ourselves to intercession, we shall have more and mightier conversions. Let us plead for this.
4711 Christ is exalted to give repentance. The Church exists with the Divine purpose and promise of
4712 having conversions. Let us not be ashamed to confess our sin and feebleness, and cry to God for
4713 more conversions in Christian and heathen lands, of those too whom you know and love. Plead
4714 for the salvation of sinners.

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4717 HOW TO PRAY.—In deep Humility

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4719 =”Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs.... O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even
4720 as thou wilt.”—MATT. xv. 27, 28.

4721
4722 You feel unworthy and unable to pray aright. To accept this heartily, and to be content still to
4723 come and be blest in your unworthiness, is true humility. It proves its integrity by not seeking for
4724 anything, but simply trusting His grace. And so it is the very strength of a great faith, and gets a
4725 full answer. "Yet the dogs"—let that be your plea as you persevere for someone possibly
4726 possessed of the devil. Let not your littleness hinder you for a moment.

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4729 SPECIAL PETITIONS

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4746 TWENTY-SIXTH DAY

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4749 WHAT TO PRAY.—For the Holy Spirit on Young Converts

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4751 ="Peter and John prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost; for as yet He was
4752 fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus."—
4753 ACTS viii. 15, 16.

4754

4755 ="Now He which establisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also gave us
4756 the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."—2 COR. i. 21, 22.

4757

4758 How many new converts who remain feeble; how many who fall into sin; how many who
4759 backslide entirely. If we pray for the Church, its growth in holiness and devotion to God's
4760 service, pray specially for the young converts. How many stand alone, surrounded by temptation;
4761 how many have no teaching on the Spirit in them, and the power of God to establish them; how
4762 many in heathen lands, surrounded by Satan's power. If you pray for the power of the Spirit in
4763 the Church, pray specially that every young convert may know that he may claim and receive the
4764 fulness of the Spirit.

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4767 HOW TO PRAY.—Without Ceasing

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4769 =”As for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.”=—1

4770 SAM. xii. 23.

4771

4772 It is sin against the Lord to cease praying for others. When once we begin to see how absolutely
4773 indispensable intercession is, just as much a duty as loving God or believing in Christ, and how
4774 we are called and bound to it as believers, we shall feel that to cease intercession is grievous sin.
4775 Let us ask for grace to take up our place as priests with joy, and give our life to bring down the
4776 blessing of heaven.

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4779 SPECIAL PETITIONS

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TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY

WHAT TO PRAY.—That God’s People may Realise their Calling

=”I will bless thee; and be thou a blessing: _in thee_ shall _all the families of the earth_ be
blessed.”=—GEN. xii. 2, 3.

=”God be merciful _unto us_, and bless _us_; and cause His face to shine _upon us_. That Thy
way may be known _upon earth_, Thy saving health _among all nations_.”=—PS. lxvii. 1, 2.

Abraham was only blessed that he might be a blessing to all the earth. Israel prays for blessing,
that God may be known among all nations. Every believer, just as much as Abraham, is only
blessed that he may carry God’s blessing to the world.

Cry to God that His people may know this, that every believer is only to live for the interests of
God and His kingdom. If this truth were preached and believed and practised, what a revolution

4813 it would bring in our mission work. What a host of willing intercessors we should have. Plead
4814 with God to work it by the Holy Spirit.

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4817 HOW TO PRAY.—As One who has Accepted for Himself what he Asks for Others

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4819 =”Peter said, What I have, I give unto thee.... The Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the
4820 beginning.... God gave them the like gift, as He gave unto us.”—ACTS iii. 6, xi. 15, 17.

4821

4822 As you pray for this great blessing on God’s people, the Holy Spirit taking entire possession of
4823 them for God’s service, yield yourself to God, and claim the gift anew in faith. Let each thought
4824 of feebleness or shortcoming only make you the more urgent in prayer for others; as the blessing
4825 comes to them, you too will be helped. With every prayer for conversions or mission work, pray
4826 that God’s people may know how wholly they belong to Him.

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4829 SPECIAL PETITIONS

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TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY

WHAT TO PRAY.—That all God’s People may know the Holy Spirit

=”The Spirit of truth, whom the world knoweth not; but ye know Him; for He abideth with you,
and shall be in you.”—JOHN xiv. 17.

=”Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost?”—1 COR. vi. 19.

The Holy Spirit is the power of God for the salvation of men. He only works as He dwells in the
Church. He is given to enable believers to live wholly as God would have them live, in the full
experience and witness of Him who saves completely. Pray God that every one of His people

4859 may know the Holy Spirit!—That He, in all His fulness, is given to them! that they cannot expect
4860 to live as their Father would have, without having Him in His fulness, without being filled with
4861 Him! Pray that all God’s people, even away in churches gathered out of heathendom, may learn
4862 to say: I believe in the Holy Ghost.

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4865 HOW TO PRAY.—Labouring fervently in Prayer

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=”Epaphras, who is one of you, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that
ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.”—COL. iv. 12.

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To a healthy man labour is a delight; in what interests him he labours fervently. The believer
who is in full health, whose heart is filled with God’s Spirit, labours fervently in prayer. For
what? That his brethren may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God; that they may
know what God wills for them, how He calls them to live, and be led and walk by the Holy
Ghost. Labour fervently in prayer that all God’s children may know this, as possible, as divinely
sure.

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4878 SPECIAL PETITIONS

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4895 TWENTY-NINTH DAY

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4898 WHAT TO PRAY.—For the Spirit of Intercession

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=”I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit; that whatsoever ye shall ask
of the Father in My name, He may give it you.”—JOHN xv. 16.

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=”Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My name. In that day ye shall ask in My name.”—JOHN
xvi. 24, 26.

4905
4906 Has not our school of intercession taught us how little we have prayed in the name of Jesus? He
4907 promised His disciples: In that day, when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, ye shall ask in My
4908 name. Are there not tens of thousands with us mourning the lack of the power of intercession?
4909 Let our intercession to-day be for them and all God's children, that Christ may teach us that the
4910 Holy Spirit is in us; and what it is to live in His fulness, and to yield ourselves to His intercession
4911 work within us. The Church and the world need nothing so much as a mighty Spirit of
4912 Intercession to bring down the power of God on earth. Pray for the descent from heaven of the
4913 Spirit of Intercession for a great prayer revival.

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4916 HOW TO PRAY.—Abiding in Christ

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4918 =”If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done to
4919 you.”—JOHN xv. 7.

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4921 Our acceptance with God, our access to Him, is all in Christ. As we consciously abide in Him we
4922 have the liberty, not a liberty to our old nature or our self-will, but the Divine liberty from all
4923 self-will, to ask what we will, in the power of the new nature, and it shall be done. Let us keep
4924 this place, and believe even now that our intercession is heard, and that the Spirit of Supplication
4925 will be given all around us.

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4928 SPECIAL PETITIONS

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4945 THIRTIETH DAY

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4948 WHAT TO PRAY.—For the Holy Spirit with the Word of God
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4950 =”Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in
4951 much assurance.”—1 THESS. i. 5.

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4953 =”Those who preached unto you the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent forth from heaven.”—1
4954 PET. i. 12.

4955
4956 What numbers of Bibles are being circulated. What numbers of sermons on the Bible are being
4957 preached. What numbers of Bibles are being read in home and school. How little blessing when
4958 it comes “in word” only; what Divine blessing and power when it comes “in the Holy Ghost,”
4959 when it is preached “with the Holy Ghost sent forth from heaven.” Pray for Bible circulation, and
4960 preaching and teaching and reading, that it may all be in the Holy Ghost, with much prayer. Pray
4961 for the power of the Spirit with the word in your own neighbourhood, wherever it is being read
4962 or heard. Let every mention of “The Word of God” waken intercession.

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4965 HOW TO PRAY.—Watching and Praying

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4967 =”Continue steadfastly in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving; withal praying for us also,
4968 that God may open for us a door for the word.”—COL. iv. 2, 3.

4969
4970 Do you not see how all depends upon God and prayer? As long as He lives and loves, and hears
4971 and works, as long as there are souls with hearts closed to the word, as long as there is work to
4972 be done in carrying the word—=Pray without ceasing. Continue steadfastly in prayer, watching
4973 therein with thanksgiving. These words are for every Christian.=

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4976 SPECIAL PETITIONS

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4993 THIRTY-FIRST DAY

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4996 WHAT TO PRAY.—For the Spirit of Christ in His People

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4998 ="I am the Vine, ye are the branches."=—JOHN xv. 5.

4999

5000 ="That ye should do as I have done to you."=—JOHN xiii. 15.

5001

5002 As branches we are to be so like the Vine, so entirely identified with it, that all may see that we
5003 have the same nature, and life, and spirit. When we pray for the Spirit, let us not only think of a
5004 Spirit of power, but the very disposition and temper of Christ Jesus. Ask and expect nothing less:
5005 for yourself, and all God's children, cry for it.

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5008 HOW TO PRAY.—Striving in Prayer

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5010 ="That ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me."=—ROM. xv. 30.

5011

5012 ="I would ye knew what great conflict I have for you."=—COL. ii. 1.

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5014 All the powers of evil seek to hinder us in prayer. Prayer is a conflict with opposing forces. It
5015 needs the whole heart and all our strength. May God give us grace to strive in prayer till we
5016 prevail.

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5019 SPECIAL PETITIONS

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TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES

=Bold= and italic words in the original text have been marked in this version with equals signs and underscores respectively.

5042
5043 Minor errors and inconsistencies in punctuation and hyphenation have been silently corrected.
5044
5045 On page 6, the original text had “we the trust in our own diligence”.
5046
5047 On page 93, “WHAT THE HEALTH THAT JESUS OFFERS.” is as in the original.
5048
5049 As explained in the section on “Answers to Prayer”, on each daily page in the tract “Pray
5050 Without Ceasing”, several lines are ruled to leave room for the reader’s “SPECIAL
5051 PETITIONS”. In this version, these are represented by six lines of underscores.
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