

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Intercession is the greatest department of the Prayer-Life. "Intercessor—media, middleman," a third party bringing two parties together. Intercession gives a mighty emphasis to the Commonwealth of God, and to the enlargement of His Kingdom. Says H. MacGregor: "With the single exception of adoration, in which God alone is the object, there is nothing higher than intercession; but we are given the glory of adding our spirit of desire and faith to the desire of Christ's Infinite Spirit. We have herein a direct and personal interest in the business and affairs of three worlds. The "paper we handle" is put into the great "clearing house" of the skies. No wonder, then, that we are named "kings and priests unto God;" for as kings our faith is omnipotent, and as priests we stand between the needs of humanity and the Living Source of supply. Most of the victories of the cross are obtained by interceding for them; and we are the chosen intercessors. When we come to the Father of Lights in the attitude of intercession, He rejoices over us as the promoters of His glory, and leaps in upon us with His free Spirit.

Intercession, in its highest dignity, comprehends and anticipates the Divine provisions and certainties. It experiences the prophetic impulses which are like those which at the first were sponsoirs for the promises of God. These are not mere quickenings of the intellect, but throbbings of the heart; those which announce the fact of forthcoming answers to the very petitions which human lips are uttering.

Intercession stands upon the high table-land of an imperious necessity. All saved souls were saved through human instrumentality. Says George Bowen, of Bombay: "The celestial theory of this dispensation—gainsay it who will—is set forth in these indestructible words of Christ: 'He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to my Father; and whatsoever I do, that the Father may be glorified in me.'" John 14:13, 14. Says Andrew Murray: "So wonderful is the surrender of God's work into the hands of the church; so dependent has He made Himself on it as His Body, through which his work can be done; so real is the power which the Lord has given to His people to exercise in Heaven and on earth, that the number of the laborers and the measure of the harvest do actually depend upon our prayers." Again: "In intercession, our King upon the throne finds His highest glory too." Said William Bramwell, (1759-1816) of the work at Sheffield: "I have seen nearly twenty souls set at liberty; but I believe that I should have seen many more, but I cannot find one pleading man." "One hundred thousand persons were reported as having connected themselves with churches," beginning with the first great revival 1830, which was engaged in by Charles G. Finney in Rochester, New York, and branching out from it. This was all brought about and carried forward by intercession.

It is a pleasure to quote this from Adams. On fitness for the Intercessory Life, he says: "It is an awfully solemn thing to really pray for souls." "At the last analysis, it will be found that the present flabbiness of the spiritual life in the Church is mainly caused by a forceless ministry and weak pulpits; behind these, an unvictorious closet." "He who, in

answer to the prayer of faith, received the baptism of the Holy Ghost is a man at his best; he has 'entered the holiest by the blood of Jesus,' and is not a possessor merely, but a partaker of the divine nature; 'a temple of the Holy Ghost,' 'a habitation of God,' 'a building of God,' a furnished man.'

! Fitness for lofty intercession is brought out further by an unknown writer, as follows: "The soul must form the daily, hourly habit of walking with God; of constant, conscious, personal communion with Him; of finding the delight and comfort of its life in His presence and approval ere disinterested love fills the heart to such an extent that, in strong cries and tears, and heart-breaking groans, it pours out its very life for the disinterested object it loves, and refuses to be comforted till its petition is granted. These love-filled and Divinely-controlled persons alone are the ones whom the angel with the ink-horn marks in the forehead, because they sigh and cry for the abominations that are wrought in the land." This is absorption into the intercessory life. How many of us are of this degree? Yet God calls for unnumbered millions of them. John Oxtoby, "Praying Johnny" (1762-1830), with his very moderate talent, was exceedingly in advance of most of those who are strong in intellect, in his disturbance of the devil, and in bringing salvation to precious souls.

Fasting is often a great element of success in intercession. It lays up no merit, but it is an act of obedience with which the Lord is well pleased. Self-denial is usually calculated to please the Lord. It is still true that "this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." The two go well together. Fasting, as a natural means, diverts the available vitality, temporarily, from the digestion of food, so that it may be used in the necessary work of prayer and faith. Jehovah found fault with Israel, because, as He said, "In the day of your fast, ye find your own pleasure, and exact all your labors."—Isa. 58:3.—Sel.

ALTERNATIVES TO HOLINESS

By Rev. Joseph H. Smith

Going back a piece in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ch. 4:11) we read, "Let us labor therefore to enter into this rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

Purity is Essential to Security

"The word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword; and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The admonitions against failure to go all the way unto holiness are just as earnest and urgent as are the promises and exhortations which incite unto it. "Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost said, Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptations in the wilderness." "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

Paul here is reasoning from wilderness happenings and consequences, like Jude is in his wonderful epistle on the only sure route to eternal security, who reminds us, "How that the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not."

Our dangers of being lost forever though having come to the very threshold of "that rest" that remaineth to the people of God, to the upper room cleansing as by the refining fire of baptism, and to a life-way with the

abiding presence of the Holy Ghost are three-fold:

1. Neglect—"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Hebrews 2:3). There were a full tribe and a half that never crossed the river Jordan to enter Canaan, though God had kept leading them towards that goal ever since He had saved them out of Egyptian bondage.

2. Delay. The foolish virgins never intended to be without the oil of the Spirit fullness at the coming again of Christ, but at the midnight cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," their lamps went out, and as they went to buy, "the door was shut." Christ has a chosen and a suited time for our entire sanctification.

3. Absorption in our own matters, as the Rich Young Ruler, who had come two-thirds of the way, when he proffered any philanthropy that the Lord would accept or approve, and when he bore unchallenged testimony to morality. Then "Jesus loved him." But when called to make an entire consecration of himself he went away sorrowing. None have ever seen or heard of him with Jesus since. Many have lost their justification by failing to go on unto perfection.

And that "guest" had doubtless fancied that his good church-going clothes were good enough (and they might have been to be buried in), for the preacher could have said some very nice things about his attendance, his contributions to support of the church, and his service on the official board, etc. But it will take more than that to be fitted for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. We read, you will remember, that "His wife had made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7).

And we cannot fail to see that all of these cases were regarded by the Lord as representative rather than exceptional cases. For it was of such He said: "Many are called, and few are chosen." And we must tremblingly call attention to the fact that the most terrific and comprehensive account of the eternal doom of a lost soul anywhere given in the Bible is that in His sentencing of the guest without a wedding garment. (Please read softly and prayerfully His words).

So while we could never get consent of our mind to caption our present serious subject with the glib saying that it is holiness or hell, we will humbly and softly remind ourselves and others with this that it will take all that the Son of God has become and done for our salvation to get us to heaven. "And the Son of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption."—Free Methodist.

WESLEY ON INSPIRATION

"I beg leave to give a short, clear, strong argument for the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. The Bible must be the invention of good men or angels, bad men or devils, or of God.

1. It could not be the invention of good men or angels, for they neither would nor could make a book tell lies all the time they were writing it, saying, "Thus saith the Lord," when it was their own invention.

2. It could not be the invention of bad men or devils, for they could not make a book, which commands all duty, forbids all sins, and condemns their own souls to hell for all eternity.

3. Therefore, I draw the conclusion that the Bible must be given by divine inspiration."—John Wesley.