

2 KINGS 2:14

"And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he (Elijah) said, Thou hast asked a hard thing" (II Kings 2:9, 10).

It was a hard thing; it was an exceedingly difficult thing. In fact, Elisha was asking for a humanly impossible thing, a supernatural thing. Yet there was no consciousness of presumption on the part of Elisha as he voiced the request. His prayer was born of desperation and terrible need, for this hard thing was a necessary thing.

Out beyond was a nation sunk in the low levels of idolatry and moral degradation, abandoned to the worship of lust and licentiousness, fallen from the high heritage of their fathers into the degenerate perversion of self-indulgence. No human argument, however logical, could convince their sin-dulled minds. No human tongue, however eloquent, could persuade their stubborn wills. No human power, no energy or organization or program of enlightenment could blast their granite hearts.

The young prophet, confronted by the abysmal depths of sin and the grip of ingrained iniquity holding sway over the nation, knew that his own efforts to call them to God and righteousness would be like the voice of a child in a roaring hurricane—the hammering of baby fists upon stone battlements. Certainly he asked for a difficult thing!

Prayer Born of Desperation

These are days when the servants of God must ask for the hard things, nothing less than a double portion of the Holy Spirit. If Elisha in his generation must demand a mantle of divine boldness and power to fall upon him, how much greater is our need!

In this grim and terrible hour of humanity's last chance, when we stand at the crossroads of destiny confronted by a chaotic, half-savage world on the brink of self-destruction, our weapons and equipment must be adequate to the demands. An awful urgency drives us. We cannot count on successive centuries in which to complete our mission, nor even a normal life span. We dare not depend on the accepted procedures and plans for evangelizing the world or combating the forces of uprightness. We must meet the issue now, matching this atomic age with the super-atomic energy of God.

PRAYER BRINGS THE SPIRIT

By A. T. Pierson

The modern type of evangelism retains few if any features of the older school. Some of the old evangelists laid more stress on praying than on preaching. Such men of prayer were the old Welsh revivalists that the people stood in awe of them as men who wore a halo of sanctity and lived on a mountain-top alone with God, like Elijah on Carmel.

It was so in Mr. Moody's campaigns in Britain. Whoever had part in them will forget.

The Mysterious Hush

of the presence of God, the awful sense of Divine dealing with the conscience, or the startling answers to definite prayer in multitudes of cases? Sometimes the barriers to souls fell suddenly away, like the falling of Jericho's walls.

How seldom, in these days, do we find such

emphasis laid on the power of intercession! When, at old Meldrum, Reginald Radcliffe had failed by his sermon to hold one anxious soul to the after-meeting, he calmly knelt on the platform and prayed that audience back from the street, till there was

A Roomful of Inquirers

Gilbert Tennent used to pray till he fell into a trance and Heaven opened as to Peter on the housetop. Andrew Murray said that nothing more shocked him, even in religious conventions, than the practical elimination of prayer.

We have seen a confidential pamphlet, sent in advance by a modern evangelist to those inviting his labour, giving instructions how to placard his coming, secure newspaper notices of

His Past Success

and excite popular expectation of great results. It is a bold and unblushing self-advertisement, bordering on effrontery. "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.

Modern evangelism is costly. Sometimes it has a fixed price, and does not hesitate to announce it, and it runs into high figures. To invite a campaign, with all its aids and accessories, may involve an expenditure of \$550 a week, in some cases \$2,750 a month. Single Churches cannot assume such a burden, and a whole city must marshal its forces to lift the load. The worth of one soul outweighs millions of money; but

When Avarice Bait

the hook, the fisher may get caught rather than the fish, and whenever money gets hold of an evangelist, his spiritual power is gone.

In the Welsh revival, in which the writer was permitted to have a share, little if any aid was sought from without; there were neither hired preachers nor singers, advertisements nor committees; and in some Churches meetings were held daily for eighteen months, with no cost but for fuel and lights. Yet, amid conditions so primitive,

The Fire of God

swept through the Rhondda Valley, burning up drink and tobacco, transforming the profane and obscene tongues of these colliers and subduing their quarrelsome tempers until even the mules they drove in the mines did not recognize the new dialect of their drivers!

Modern evangelism makes much of numbers, parading statistics, and often with a reckless mode of reckoning. The more spiritual a man's methods are and the more exalted his conception of his work, the less will he rely upon apparent results or make a display of numerical success.

ONLY THE HUMBLE DO EXPLICIT

J. B. Chapman

This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting (Mark 9:29).

Success is often a greater strain on fidelity than is failure. Many a person who served God faithfully while he was poor and weak and unknown, became vain, and self-sufficient when riches and strength and popularity came his way. It was thus with Saul, Israel's first king. While he was little in his own eyes he was the channel through which God wrought

deliverance for His people. But when he became aware of his greatness he was not great any more.

The disciples of our Lord had gone forth under the commission of their Master to preach and to heal, and they had been so universally successful that it seems highly probable they had commenced to think of themselves as instruments eminently fitted to their task. And then the Lord left them in the valley and Himself went to the Mount of Transfiguration. Here in the valley an unusually difficult case was brought to their attention, and in the crisis, the disciples failed. The Master came and healed the afflicted lad with little more than the usual show of effort. "Why could not we cast him out?" inquired the discredited disciples. Gently the Master mentioned "prayer and fasting." But prayer and fasting are both ministers of humility. It was as though the Master had said, You could not cast out the evil spirit because you have come to rate yourselves too highly—you have come to think too much of yourselves. Only the weak are really strong for God and only the meek can ever inherit the earth.

Napoleon, the proud, said, "God fights on the side of the heaviest battalions." But the light, flaky snow of the early Russian winter, coming in inexhaustible supply, proved to be heavier than shields and guns of iron. The soldierless prophet in Dothan, taking God by faith, testified, "They that be for us are more than they that be against us," and he was able to lead the whole band of his opposers as captives to his king.

Earthly advantages can help us only so long as we are able to disregard them. Education is a force until it becomes a dependence—after that it is a hindrance. Position, like fire, is a splendid servant, but a destroying master. Riches rightly used may become the means for reward in heaven—but trusted riches are the trap-door to hell. Prayer and fasting are symbols and reminders of our human insufficiency, and it is when they have brought us to the full sense of the fact that "our insufficiency is of God," and that to Him all power and glory belong that we are able to cast out dumb and deaf spirits, and do the exploits that the success of our part of His kingdom's promotion requires.—Herald of Holiness.

**STAND AS BULWARKS BEHIND WHICH
GOD ENTRENCHES HIMSELF**

Do you know, beloved, that Christ's greatest victories were alone with God and the devil? No human eye saw that victory in the wilderness, but God saw it and was glorified. Shall we stand for Him, and so stand that He can count us, as He did His ancient prophet, His very towers and fortresses behind which He can entrench Himself and His cause? . . .

God wants men and women today on whom He can depend, to stand as bulwarks and battlements against the shocks of hell's artillery. Men and women of whom He can say, "Upon this rock have I built my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Shall we, beloved, be not only conquerors, but trusted soldiers whom God can use as His battle-axes and His weapons of war, as His mighty iron-clads, to carry the battle to the very ships of the enemy, not fearing their hardest blows, and hurling against them the thunderbolts of His victorious power.—A. B. Simpson.