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by D. M. Panton

Brother Moore likened Herald of His Coming to a trumpet 25,000 miles long, encircling the globe. A primary endeavor of the Herald is to call true Christians everywhere—of whatever creed, of whatever nationality—to holy living according to Biblical standards. The Moores did not hesitate to point out sin, not to condemn, but that there might be repentance. God warns over and over before judgment falls. He pleads with His people to turn from sin that judgment might be averted. He warns the sinner of hell that he might not go there.

The Moores envisioned a united Body of Christ, beautiful and glorious in holiness and unity, watching and ready for the coming of her exalted Head. It was not unity of creed and doctrine, but unity of the Spirit for which they called. "All one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28), all loving one another as brothers. The Moores were jealous with the Lord that the love of His people might be centered first of all upon Him. For this they fervently interceded, knowing revival would bring this. This continues to be a major thrust of the ministry today.

It is impossible for the Scriptural observer to watch God's Church today without deepening alarm and even heartbreaking sorrow. Consider the appalling abandonment of belief in the Word of God; the flippant worldliness of method, walk and heart; the church divisions, jealousies, quarrels; the open backslidings over which we seem absolutely powerless; above all, our own failure to meet it all with our faces in the dust. Then we begin faintly to understand, Jeremiah when he said: "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" (Jer. 9:1).

Out of such black disaster arises one of the most exquisite privileges of the Christian. The Holy Ghost has drawn a parallel. "Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured and perished by the destroyer. Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they are written for our admonition" (1 Cor. 10:10).

Ponder the scene to which the Holy Ghost thus draws attention. Moses is the Mediator, the type of Christ (Heb. 3:1,2). Aaron is the priest; and we are priests (Rev. 1:6). Priests sometimes have to intercede for priests. The incense is prayer (Psalm 141:2, Rev. 5:8). We are priests come up white from the laver, with command over the incense, equipped for the intercessions of God.

Nearly all the great prayers of the Bible are intercessions: Abraham for Sodom; Moses for Israel; Solomon for the Temple; Daniel for the Captivity; our Lord and Paul for the Church.

The action opens with God; the Glory appears in the cloud (Num. 16:42). "They continually say unto me, Where is thy God?" God is here. God is in the world; God is in the cloud; God is among His people; God is not far from any one of us; and God does not leave the consciences of His people untroubled. Instinctively they turn their faces to the cloud. God responds with a vision of devouring fire.

This is the purging terror needed by the modern Church. We have forgotten the sword in the mouth of Christ. We have forgotten that even on Jesus rested the fear of the Lord (Isa. 11:2). The awful certainty is that sooner or later, God is bound to deal with His people. The blessed certainty is that God is in the Holy of holies, waiting for intercessions. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. And they fell upon their faces."

**Christ Commands Not Denunciation But Intercession**

Mark the tender marvel of it all. (1) The Mediator directs the Priest to rush in with the incense. "And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun" (Num. 16:46).

Christ commands not denunciation but intercession, for the people of God. The Judge is at the doors, "and Aaron ran" (Num. 16:47). The merely critical spirit ends at last in criticism of Christ. "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door" (James 5:9). (See also Matt. 25:24).

(2) Intercession is the function of a priest. The plague was deserved. The sin of God's people is rightly punished. But it is for a priest to reconcile God and man, not to estrange them. "Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare Thy people, O Lord" (Joel 2:17).

(3) Incense is pounded spice. So heartbroken intercessions are the most odorous on the altars of God. "And they fell upon their faces" (Num. 16:45. See also Psa. 44:24,25).

(4) Intercession demands a forgiving spirit. "Ye have killed the people of the Lord," the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron (Num. 16:41). It was an unjust, cruel, wanton charge. On the contrary, Aaron might have replied: The Lord judge between us. If we be guilty, let the plague strike us. God's priest ran into the plague-laden air, careless of life, and braved the still more dangerous wrath of the Cloud for his wanton accusers. This is the Spirit of Christ (Mark 11:25). We must be great forgivers before we can become great intercessors. If the Heart on the Throne forgives, shall not this heart in the dust?

#### Intercession Reaches The Judgment Seat

Now observe the magnificent results. (1) "The plague was stayed." The people were no worthier, but the prayer was accepted. Two men saved two million. God's judgments are actually stayed by the intercessions of His priests.

(2) Prayer can remove sin, as well as revoke the plague. "Let them pray for him; and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him" (James 5:15). It is an amazing fact that intercession can reach even to the Judgment Seat. "At my first defense no one took my part, but all forsook me: I pray that it may not be laid to their charge" (2 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 1:18).

(3) Plead blessings on others and we invoke blessings on ourselves (James 5:20). In the next chapter Aaron's rod blooms alone: he and his house are made perpetual intercessors before Jehovah (Num. 18:7; 18:1). In one of his last addresses, Dr. Pierson said at Mildmay: "I say to you with the solemnity of a dying man, that no man has ever yet laid hold on the supernatural power of God as it is possible to lay hold on that power."

It is the spirit of intercession which produced, in a closely allied incident, one of the most wonderful occurrences in the history of the world. "I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them," so awful had been the defection of the people of God, "and I will make of thee a nation greater and mightier than they" (Num. 14:12). Never before or since has such an offer been made. It was an offer made directly by God Himself. It involved the destruction of all His people, leaving Moses God's sole representative on the globe. It promised a mightier nation through Moses. It offered him the holiest and most enduring of all dynasties and far the most wonderful throne in the world, and it involved the transmission of Messiah to Moses' line.

Moses was never greater than in this supreme crisis in his life. He who was tried so sorely as to lose the Holy Land through the infidelities of this very people, is as silent as the grave on the offer. He will never raise his house on the ruins of God's people. His one cry is: "Pardon, I pray Thee, the iniquity of this people." Oh, that the very sins of the Church, and the anger of God, may now awake such God-like intercession and such Gethsemane intercessors!

Moses casts everything on the character of God. "If Thou shall kill this people as one man, then the nations" will think it either weakness or malignity. Exactly so today God is so identified with His Church that for the Church to be wiped out would be the death of the very idea of God. We must plead God to God when we pray now for the people of God. Moses loves God and the honor of God too much to accept the offer. God's glory is at stake, God's repute among the nations, God's power and grace and love.

Hear the solemn word of Christ: "I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto each one of you according to your works" (Rev. 2:23).

But meanwhile the door of intercession stands open. God's heart is just one great sob over a lost world. Our hearts are to be one great sob over an errant Church. "O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, because we have sinned against Thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses; O my God, incline Thine ear and hear: for we do not

present our supplications before Thee for our righteousnesses, but for Thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not; for Thine own sake, O my God! (Dan. 9:8,9,18,19).

#### Power Of Intercession

Evan Roberts, God's chosen leader of the great revival in Wales, said this: "Secret intercessors make it possible for public laborers to do their work and win. They do as much for the Lord's cause who intercede like Moses on the mount, as they do who fight like Joshua in the thick of battle. Prayer based on God's Word is the only weapon man can use to day to touch the invisible foe! The individual members of the Church of Christ will not know until they reach eternity what they have been saved from by the ministry of secret intercession."