

Is it too much to suggest that there are times when God allows His people to be put under pressure in order that their consequent prayer in His mighty name shall be the key to fresh expressions of His victory? If so, ours is indeed a high and holy calling.

There is no doubt about the provocation to Satan which is provided by the simplest and weakest group of Christians who correspond to a spiritual Zion, and we may at times wonder why there should be such antagonism and why God permits it. We need to recognise that He has a purpose in so doing. He does not gather His people together in church life in order that they may be admired or admire themselves: His purpose is so to dwell among them that He may utter His voice of power from among them. Though weak in themselves, they are mighty when the Lord is in the midst of them (Ps. 46:5). He has entrusted to them the honour of standing in faith for the honour and exaltation of His name.

When I say that God's purpose is to have a people through whom He can utter His voice, I do not only mean the dissemination of the Scriptures. Nor do I only mean preaching and witnessing. I mean an effective spiritual utterance, in the energy of the Holy Spirit, which will express His authority over all the unruly forces of evil. We want to be able to cope with more than trivialities, however important these may be. We are challenged by a problem as big as the world and as mighty as Hell. We all feel most acutely that men cannot handle this. Only God is big enough to cope. 'Ah', we sigh, 'if only He would utter His voice!' Perhaps God, too, is sighing and longing for His Church to take up the challenge in prayer...

The people of God have no justification for their existence unless it can truly be said that God is made known through them.

It would be fatal to our spiritual effectiveness if we should ever think of ourselves as involved in the power of the Name and the throne by reason of any attainment or superiority on our part. It has sometimes been the tragedy of teaching concerning spiritual authority and prayer warfare that those concerned have fallen into the snare of assuming that they were something special. In this way it is possible not only to lose effectiveness in prayer but also to bring the truth of God into disrepute. No, it is the God of Jacob who provides the stronghold for this conflict.

"I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, take ye no rest, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (Isaiah 62:6-7). In the spiritual life of a Christian prayer is a matter of great importance. Every true Christian realizes this and gives himself to prayer. And yet, though some of the Lord's children spend time praying over many matters, they do not seem to get through in prayer. The reason is that they have not discovered the KEY. In prayer words are essential, but we must not be wordy. Our words must be to the point; they should be words that touch the heart of God and so move Him that they leave Him no alternative but to grant our requests. Words that are to the point are the key to prayer. Such words are in perfect keeping with God's will, therefore He cannot but respond to them. ...If our Lord as Man on the earth, possessing the key to prayer, had in this deliberate way to set aside His own will (in the Garden when He said "...Not my will but THINE be done...") and seek the will of God, how dare we at random utter a few words in prayer and conclude that we have discerned God's will? ...Prayer according to the will of God is only possible when we ourselves are in harmony with His will. Unless our affections have been dealt with we shall not readily follow the inner leading in prayer, because we shall be influenced by our own desires and shall be seeking to bring God into line with what we want. ...We must persevere in prayer until the Body of Christ is built up. God needs our prayers. We must have the spirit of prayer; we must have an atmosphere of prayer; we must have the key to prayer. Brothers and Sisters, let us arise and learn to pray. Let us seek the key to prayer so that we may meet God's need today. (ie., God's sovereign purpose)

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Men do not believe that the Almighty means what He says. Nor have they spiritual understanding to comprehend the purpose of the Father to bring those who are redeemed by the precious Blood of His dear Son into living and practical cooperation with that Son in the administration of His kingdom. The people of Christ are revealed as "the fulness of Him who filleth all in all." They bear a vital relationship to Him as members of His body, through whom His purposes are to be wrought out in time and eternity. It is not, consequently, a strange thing that, in the present time, He should make large revelations and offers of His grace in order that He may test and develop those who shall be sharers of the ministry of His throne through the coming ages. ...God delights to delegate His power to men, when He can find believing and obedient servants to accept and exercise it. God is endeavoring to train workers for a future and a mighty ministry of cooperation with His Son. He therefore has conferred on them the privilege of sharing the authority of Christ. The burden of responsibility for its acceptance and its exercise lies with the individual believer. For the greater struggles of our day and the thickening atmosphere into which we are entering, the Church needs intercessors who have learned the secret of taking hold of the power of God and directing it against the strategic advances of the enemy. God is waiting for those whom He can trust and use, who will have the discernment to foresee His steppings and the faith to command His power. Authoritative intercessors are men and women whose eyes have been opened to the full knowledge of their place in Christ. As they speak the Word God works. His delight is in such co-working.

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Oh, how we need spiritual steel - steel tempered in the fires of radical self-denial, steel transformed into a two-edged sword, the mighty sword of God! Lives stripped of everything but Him! Knowing that "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force", let us enter the battle. When the battle is set in array the first phase of the conflict begins with SELF, then on to Satan, then on and on to take the kingdom by violence, tearing down the strongholds of Satan, the usurping prince, daily overcoming him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony.

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What we are seeking to press home is that this is so different from having a local prayer meeting, in the usually accepted meaning of that term. Suppose that where such an outlook obtains the announcement is made: 'We will have a prayer meeting on Monday night.' Who will come to that prayer meeting? People will say among themselves: 'Shall we go to the prayer meeting?' or perhaps: 'Well, it is only a prayer meeting!' That is one way to look at it, as a local thing in a certain place at a certain time. But if I were to say: 'Will you come and minister to the whole Church of Christ universally in such-and-such a place, and your business is to go and minister in that range to the whole Church!' that puts another point of view. It gives an altogether new conception of what we are called to. Let your imagination take flight, if you like, and see the whole Church from the ends of the earth literally gathered together, needing to be ministered to, and the Lord saying to you: 'Now you come and minister to the whole Church! Thousands of thousands, and tens of thousands gathered together, and I want you to minister to them. I have placed the resource at your disposal and will enable you to do it!' Perhaps you might shrink, and be fearful, but you would see the tremendous significance. You would not stay away because you were unimpressed with the importance of it. When two or three are gathered together in any place and they pray in the Holy Spirit, that is what is possible and it happens. They represent the whole Church, and become the House of Prayer, functioning for all peoples, a universal ministry. We need to lift the prayer business on to a higher level. When we see the range, the significance, the value of a time of prayer together in the Name of the Lord, we shall stop our trivialities and take things seriously. We shall come together saying: 'Now, here are nations to be entered into tonight, and things which are world-wide and of tremendous significance to the Lord Jesus, and we are called to deal with them in this place!' There is no greater ministry. It is a tremendous thing to have a ministry like that.

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It is necessary to get away from the earth to explain this. And if you get off the earth and see that where two or three are gathered together into the Name all the rest are represented, and because the one Spirit is there the whole is therefore touched through that one Spirit, as well as involved, then the possibilities are tremendous. "A house of prayer for all peoples" is God's ordained way of ministry.

I feel that we have to take this matter of the prayer ministry even more seriously, to regard it as our supreme ministry. The order is everything by prayer; not everything and then prayer, but everything by prayer. Prayer comes first. Everything comes by prayer. Prayer is the basis of everything, and nothing else must be attempted or touched except on the ground of prayer. We have to gather into our prayer the universal interests of the Name of the Lord. "Because of thy Name!" The Name is in view, and is involved. It is the interests of the Name which govern the functioning of the House, and all the interests of the Name of the Lord have to become the definite and solid prayer business of the Lord's people. Oh, the Lord cut clean across that thing which makes us so casual, and which makes corporate prayer times so optional, and bring into our hearts, with a strong, deep, set conviction, the witness that prayer is universal business, and that we are called to it!

We must see to it that it is our first, our primary business to pray. It is strange that so many more will come to conference meetings than to prayer meetings! Is the mentality behind that, that it is far more important to hear teaching than it is to pray? Would it not be a great day and represent some tremendous advance spiritually, something unique, if the prayer gatherings were bigger than the biggest conference gatherings, or at least as big as the biggest?

There seems to be weakness and failure along this line: that we are not functioning in prayer to the point of seeing things through. We pray about many things, and we preach many things, but we do not see them through in prayer, and the Lord's Name is involved in that. You will know whether the Lord is speaking to your own heart. I believe this is a fresh call to the primary ministry which is so very, very much needed. All those who go out into the nations need very strong prayer support. If we fail them we do not know what may happen. They may be in all kinds of difficulties which they need not get into if we were wholly faithful in this prayer ministry. The Lord lay it upon our hearts as a burden!

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How are we going to end? What are you praying? I will tell you what I am praying! After all these years I am praying with all my heart: 'Lord, reveal Thy Son in me more than ever. Give me yet a larger apprehension and comprehension of the meaning of Jesus Christ!' Will you go and pray that? Will you seek the Lord continually that He will enlarge and strengthen your apprehension of Jesus Christ so that, figurative language or not, this is what it is in actuality: 'Looking off unto Jesus, all that He means, all that He contains, all that He represents of God concerning us, the File-leader, the Perfecter, the Completer, the Beginning and the End.' Pray that Christ seen in the heart becomes this dominating power in our lives which saves us from all that would bring us into despair.

"I have seen the face of Jesus,  
Tell me not of aught beside!"