

THE PRAYERS OF CHRIST

We come now to consider the PRESENT prayers of our beloved Lord. HE IS praying for us. The 'New Testament' brings before us our beloved Lord's everyday intercession in a very manifest way. Shall we think first, however, of the way in which He made intercession for the transgressors when dying. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do". Undoubtedly, His prayers were intercessory for us before we were saved, but they have not ceased since. Do you think John 17 gives a little inside picture of the intercession of the Lord, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory" Do you not think that John 17 is being illustrated in the glory? Does it not seem probable that the Lord gives us anticipations of various important things, for example, in John 17 an anticipation of that which followed resurrection, and in Rev. 2 and 3 an anticipation of the Judgment Seat of Christ, to show us the kind of judgment, the kind of testing, the kind of searching that will mark That Day when we shall stand before Him Whom our soul loveth. Christ is now interceding for all His people. Not a single one is forgotten, He has gone into heaven itself, there(as Heb. 9 words it) to appear in the presence of God for us. Shall we look at the passage? Heb. 9.24 - "For not into a Most Holy Place made with hands did Christ enter in, types(or a type, of the type) of the true, but into heaven itself, now to have been manifested to the face of God on our behalf". That presupposes His intercession. There are other passages which clearly pre-suppose it. "These things write I unto you" says 1 John 2, "that ye sin not, and if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous". You will notice the beautiful accuracy of the Scripture wording, "These things write I unto you, that ye may not have sinned", and if any one have sinned"(sins). It is not if anyone keeps on sinning, we have an Advocate. The Lord's people are not to be marked by keeping on sinning. But, what is the Advocate? He represents us in the presence of God. He pleads for us, we have an Advocate toward the Father. While we talk of our Lord, He remembers and prays for us. You remember how Peter

said, "I am ready to do this and that", with energy (apparently), with zeal (apparently), and the Lord says, "I HAVE PRAYED". Why? I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not. Peter thought he would do everything for his Lord, but the Lord was doing everything for Peter, dying for him and praying for him, and thus Peter's pride was shut out. "I have prayed for thee" - is not this our beloved Lord's attitude still? The effect of His intercession is very blessed because through that our faith shall not fail. We little realize how much we depend on His intercession. There is no waste of advocacy, it is a real need. Christ's risen life is "identified" (as I might so put it) with His intercession. You know how in Rom. 5 we read, "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life". By His earthly life? No. By His resurrection life? Yes. How? He is able, says Heb. 7 He is able to keep on saving unto the complete goal those that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. Will you just turn to that passage in Heb. 7, it needs such heart emphasis. Verse 25 "Whence also to keep on saving into the complete goal He is able the ones coming through Him to God, always living with a view to making intercession over them". Always living with a view to this. Here is the object in front. He lives for us, even as He died for us. Living with a view to keeping on making intercession. We tire of our prayers, but He never tires of His prayers for us, to keep on making intercession for us. Christ is ascended with this object in front, and He will never falter.

Again we have the intercession of Christ brought out in Rom. 8. At the end of the chapter we have brought before us our Triune God on our behalf. "What" says verse 31, "shall we say to these things? if God be for us, who against us? He Who spared not His own Son but over us all gave Him aside, how shall He not even together with Him all things give in grace to us? Who shall call in question against elect ones of God? God the Justifier? Who is the condemner? Christ the One That died? But rather having been raised, Who is also on the right hand of God, Who also keeps on making intercession for us. Who shall separate from the love of Christ?" You see the stress. He is on the right hand of God with this object - to keep on making intercession. Who shall separate us from that love that keeps on making intercession? Who, or what, shall separate us from love which did not shrink from an act that

involved judgment, that involved agony, love that many waters could not quench, but love that is equally victorious amid the other test - continuance. There was a crisis of love when He died for us, there is a continual love when He lives for us, the twofold test finds this love perfect. He ever liveth with the object of keeping on making intercession. He is on the right hand of God that He may do this, and every Joshua may rejoice in filthy rags removed because of the application of atonement and the prevailing intercession of Him Who when on earth said "Father, I WILL". There are no uncertainties in the prayers of Christ in John 17. We find no wavering. He knows His people, He pleads for them. He desires their preservation now, and their presentation then, and speaks of both as absolutely unalterable. "Those that Thou gavest Me" and I have lost nothing, He said, for He spake in that connection. There are no 'ifs' with Christ's prayers, He is heard always, ever living to make intercession for His own blood-bought people. This is His present Priestly work. He does not need to make another sacrifice, it has been finished; but there are two works going on - prayer for us, and the work of the Spirit of God in us. Both shall be continued. Do we not read "He Who hath begun a good work in you shall perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ"? God is able to present us faultless before His own glorious throne. Our beloved Lord will present to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or ANY SUCH THING, There are many SUCH THINGS now, but there shall not be any such thing then. It is well that our hearts should realize and rejoice in His intercession. A fact, it is also an encouragement, for if we believe in an interceding Christ with any true idea of what that means, we must believe in the final preservation of all the redeemed. If we believe in an Interceding Christ, we must feel a wonderful refreshing thought as to the power of true prayer. If He intercedes, shall not we pray? Christ is praying for us, let us draw near and pray in His Name.

You recollect in the book of Revelation, we have brought before us a view of the glory. In Rev. 8.2 we read "And I saw the seven angels who in sight of God had taken a stand, and there were given to them seven trumpets and another angel came and stood on the altar of incense having a golden censer of frankincense, and there was given to him many kinds, or parts, of incense in order that he should give to the prayers of the saints, all on the gold-

en altar in sight of the throne, and there went up the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the angel in sight of God". Do we not think of the incense of that acceptable prayer, the saints' petitions mingled with it, or rather, just as in the tabernacle the incense was altogether emphasized, so here we find Christ's prayer emphasized as that which encircles and lifts up as well as goes up with the prayers of the saints. Incense did not drop down, and Christ's prayers do not fall to the ground. Our prayers are wrapped up in His and they are presented in His Name. Do we ask for growth in grace? He intercedes. Do we ask for spiritual reviving? He intercedes for the same on our behalf. Do we pray to be kept from wandering? He is not unmindful of our prayer, but is it on our behalf and in our name? Yea, on our behalf, but more than in our name, in HIS Name for us. Oh, how blessed to realize that our beloved Lord ever lives to make intercession, and that all our prayers are entwined with His (if they are right) and thus we may anticipate they will be answered, because He is never unanswered.

In this connection we find a stress upon the present position of our beloved Lord. To the one that overcomes, He says in Rev. 3, "I will give to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am sat down with My Father in His throne". Christ is sitting on the Father's throne. Oh how wonderfully near for intercession! The accuser may accuse day and night, but Christ sits on the throne. He does not stand there as a weak suppliant, but He sits there as One acknowledged in the glory. Thus there is a security and a certainty with regard to His prayers. I suppose there is nothing which will more cheer a tried believer than the realization that Christ is praying for him. We know the fact of His death, we know our sins are covered, blotted out and removed, but we have a terrible warfare, and though it is our privilege to overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony, yet the warfare is fierce and our faith has many a strain, though it can never be broken. But amid it all we can look up and realize that at this very moment Christ is praying for us, that when troubles surround which seem ready to engulf us and when the power of the enemy seems to crowd in upon us through his myriads of demons, then it is that our hearts may rest upon an interceding Lord,

The words of Isa. 53 that we saw first may come before us

once more, "He was numbered with the transgressors and He bare the sin of many, and MADE A MEETING PLACE for the transgressors. The word "made intercession" is "made a meeting place". Believers were, by nature, transgressors. Christ's wonderful work in bearing their sins and making intercession for them has indeed brought about a meeting place, but now it is sadly true, if they wander at all, though they are not transgressors by character their actions bring them in measure into the position into which they were before they were saved. The more a believer wanders, the more he becomes like an unsaved one, and consequently he becomes like a transgressor, but the Lord makes a meeting-place. His wonderful intercession is that His dear people may be brought to the consciousness of nearness. A meeting-place, a fellowship. Truly He, the Daysman in His mediatorial work on Calvary, is still the Meeting Place. God said with regard to the Mercy Seat, There will I meet with you. The Mercy Seat betokens Christ risen and thus suggests Christ's interceding, and were it not for this intercession of our beloved Lord, oh how dark and distant our hope would oft-times become, but He lives to intercede and to bring us thereby into the enjoyment of that fellowship which is ours by blood-bought right, though we sometimes lose its enjoyment because of 'other' things(1 John 1.7).

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