

Throughout the Scriptures we have many references to Christ's prayerfulness on the behalf of the Church and the world. On the pages of Isaiah we hear him saying, "For Zion's sake will I not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest." In his last discourse He told the disciples that He would pray to the Father for them, that He might give them another comforter. And in the Epistle to the Hebrews He is depicted as the great High Priest who ever lives to make intercession. The high priest in the old dispensation often entered the presence of God with the names of the people on his heart, the seat of love, and on his shoulder, the seat of power, and once a year, with a bowl of blood and sprig of thyme in his hands, pleaded for the entire nation. What more vivid portrayal could there be of the ceaseless intercession of that High Priest, who was once manifested to bear the sin of many, and who now appears in the presence of God for us !

In the days of His flesh He pleaded for *His Church*, as in the sublime intercessory prayer of John 17 ; for *individuals*, as when He said, " Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat ; but I have prayed for thee ;" and for *the world*, as when He first assumed His high-priestly functions, saying from His cross, " Father, forgive them ; they know not what they do." Thus He pleads still. For His Church, for His apostles, whether ministers at home or missionaries abroad, and for the world that lieth in the wicked one He says, " Father, I pray for them." Perpetually from His lips pours forth a stream of tender supplication and entreaty, which makes glad the city of God.

We have been too much accustomed to think that these pleadings of the Divine Master are set in motion by the strong cryings and prayers of His saints on earth, and that He is simply the intermediary and spokesman of His Church, according to the sublime vision of the Apocalypse, where the mighty angel mingles much incense with the prayers of saints, which He offers before the throne. But probably the truth lies deeper. It is quite true that He prays in heaven the prayer we pray on earth, winnowing them of their selfishness, and asking what we would ask had we fuller light ; it is also true that all successful prayer must receive His endorsement and authentication ; but it is a deeper truth that our best prayers are borrowed lights, the echo of His voice, the after-glow of His vision, the reflection of His eager desire. The body of Christ is brought into agreement with the Head by the Holy Spirit, who communicates to it by a quick sympathy and intention the thoughts and desires that are passing through the Savior's being.

We have two Advocates, one with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and one with us. As the one went up the other came down. As the one sat down at the right hand of the Divine Majesty, so the other sat in emblem on the heads of the twelve and in the Upper Room. As the one ever liveth to intercede in heaven, the other makes intercession in us for the saints and for sinners, with groanings that cannot be uttered.