

from: REES HOWELLS, INTERCESSOR.

Chapter Twenty-nine

PRAYER BOOK: EDWARD VIII

DURING THE EARLIER YEARS OF THE COLLEGE, THERE were some outstanding examples of answers to prayer on a national scale. They were the precursors of the strategic praying on a world-wide scale to which the College was to be called in later years; and two of them are worth recording.

The controversy which raged over the proposed introduction of the New Prayer Book in the Church of England in 1928 will be well remembered. Practically all the bishops were in favour of it, despite its Romeward tendencies; and according to the newspapers, it was a foregone conclusion that Parliament would accept it. There must have been very few in the country who could have believed that the House of Commons would reject it. Suddenly, two days before the debate in the House, the Holy Spirit asked Mr. Howells if he believed the Lord could stop it going through. If he did, he was to call a meeting that afternoon for the one definite purpose of "turning down the new Prayer Book". He fought it out alone with God from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and then called the meeting. Lectures for the afternoon were cancelled. The Spirit came down with great power, and the meeting continued until the Lord gave full assurance of victory.

The next morning the newspapers told how the House of Lords had voted and accepted it; but the veto was with the House of Commons, who were to vote that day, and the Holy Spirit said to Mr. Howells, "Go on, nothing

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doubting." The dramatic scenes in the House of Commons will be remembered when, before a crowded audience, one or two members spoke as they had never spoken before on the dangers of allowing any further Romeward tendencies to creep into our national Church. It was reported that the atmosphere of the House was like a religious meeting, and to the amazement of everybody, they voted the new Prayer Book out; but, as Mr. Howells said, "The Lord had given us the victory the previous afternoon."

Some years later, in 1936, there came the serious national crisis over King Edward VIII and his proposed marriage. In this again the Lord led the College to take a stand in prayer. The diaries of the daily meetings give the following account:

December 4. "The News about the king has come to light in the morning papers, and the Director tells us how serious conditions are. We came back in the evening and pleaded with the Lord to guide the king, and give wisdom and discernment to all those concerned in this crisis."

December 5. "Day of prayer in College. Situation in England very grave, because it concerns not only our land, but the British Empire."

December 6. "Day of prayer and fasting in the College. We pray for the Empire in its present crisis. The Lord reveals that it is His will for Edward to abdicate. Mr. Howells was as strong as a lion in the fight, and declared, 'Edward is not to reign, or the Lord has not spoken by me.' There is a wonderful victory as we believe in the evening."

December 7. "There is thanksgiving over the victory of yesterday. The papers reveal that while at the end of last week the king was challenging the position, now he is anxious to do only what will be best for the Empire."

December 9. "Believing for the Lord to help King Edward to make decision according to God's will, and that his soul may be blessed."

December 10. "Came back at 2.30 p.m. to ask the Lord to control the country, now that the news of the abdication of King Edward VIII is known."

December 11. "We are thankful for this believing of the Holy Spirit. The Lord has saved the Empire, and raised the standard of life in our beloved land."

The College had a growing company of friends in South Wales, many of whom were frequent visitors, getting great spiritual refreshment from the meetings and fellowship, and many were faithful supporters of the work. To some also Mr. Howells was able to minister in things practical as well as spiritual.

One man, who had been a friend of the College since its foundation, went through very hard trials in his business. His creditors were pressing him, and one day, in desperation, he asked Mr. Howells to pray that the Lord would take the wheels off their chariots! (Ex. 14 : 25.) Mr. Howells found that his friend was on the point of locking the door and giving up everything. "You will do nothing of the sort," he said. "What about your sons?" He took him to the bank and arranged to clear all he needed. From that day he began to prosper, and has been the means of much blessing to the College for many years.

There was another friend of the College, a deacon in his church, who used to come to the meetings. His business went down, and he came with a very heavy heart to talk things over with Mr. Howells and ask for prayer. One day Mr. Howells went to his home and found that everything was being sold up. The mother

and daughter were crying, but the Lord told His servant to tell them that he was going to meet the demands on them, and the tears became tears of joy!

Another time Mr. Howells was needing the money for the rates, but he knew of a man who was in the same position, and the last day had come for them both. Mr. Howells had not nearly enough for his own need, which was £40, but he had the £8 needed by his friend; so he went to give it to him. When he arrived, he found the man and his wife on their knees praying for the money. "You can get up from your knees," he said. "The Lord has told me to deliver you." He said nothing about his own need; but on his return to the College, he found a gift awaiting him—of £40.

On another occasion Mr. Howells was praying for a certain sum of money, which he needed that very day. There was a woman who always gave him that amount at this particular season, in the middle of the term. She arrived on that day and brought the deliverance, but he could see she was cast down. She told him that her son-in-law was in great trouble, and that there was a case in the assizes over it. If he had committed the crime and was found guilty, he would be imprisoned. The case was coming on in a week, and she couldn't sleep. She wanted Mr. Howells to go to the Lord about it and then tell her whether he would be put in prison or not. "I had prayed for that money and she had brought it," he said, "and that might sway my judgement. Could the Lord tell me whether he was guilty or not? I thought; because if he was guilty, the Lord couldn't make him free. On the other hand, if he was not guilty and was in danger of being committed, could the Lord deliver him? I went upstairs and was there a long time. After much prayer, the Lord told me, 'He is not guilty and he will be freed.' So I asked her, 'Did the Lord send you to-day? Did He

tell you I would give you the result?' 'Yes,' she said. So I said to her, 'If you want to cry, cry all you want to now before I tell you; but you are not to shed one tear after! He is not guilty, and he will be freed.'" To their surprise, the jury could not agree and they had to postpone the case for two days. Then, when the case was resumed, the judge found one of the witnesses telling a somewhat different story from before. The prosecution broke down and the judge at once stopped the case. The man was acquitted, and the news went all through the town.

Chapter Thirty

THE EVERY CREATURE COMMISSION

THE AUTUMN OF 1934 WAS A WONDERFUL TIME IN the College. In the early morning Mr. Howells was spending many hours alone with God, going through the four Gospels, and getting great light from the Holy Spirit on the Life and Person of the Saviour. He seemed to be coming to the morning meetings straight from God's presence, and Mrs. Howells, who knew the Spirit's ways with him, was conscious that the Lord was preparing him for something.

On Boxing Day morning, the Spirit began speaking to him even earlier than usual, before he had arisen, and Mrs. Howells, who was also awake, heard him repeating, "Every creature," "Every creature." At 3 a.m. he was so conscious that God wanted to say something definite to him, that he dressed and went to his room downstairs. There the Lord asked him if he believed the Saviour meant His last command to be obeyed? "I do," he replied. "Then do you believe that I can give the Gospel to every creature?" "Without stretching a point," he answered, "I believe You can. You are God." "I am dwelling in you," the Lord then said. "Can I be responsible for this through you?"

For years Mr. Howells had been praying for the Gospel to go to the world. Before he went to Africa, the Spirit brought before him God's promise to His Son in Psalm 2 : 8, and he did not let a day pass without praying that the Saviour should have "the heathen for His inheritance

and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession," and it was in willingness to be, in some measure, the answer to his own prayers, that he accepted the call to Africa. Then while in Africa, he had been struck by Andrew Murray's comment on the Saviour's word in Matt. 9 : 38, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into His harvest." Andrew Murray had pointed out, on the strength of this verse, that the number of missionaries on the field depends entirely on the extent to which someone obeys that command and prays out the labourers; and the Lord had called Mr. Howells to do this. That, in turn, had been one of God's ways of preparing him for the further commission to start a Bible College. Thus for years he had been a man with a world vision. But this new word from God was to lay direct responsibility on him. It was no mere assent to the general command to preach the Gospel to every creature. It meant, if accepted, that he and all who took it with him would be bond-servants for the rest of their days to this one task—to intercede, to go, to serve others who go—to be responsible for seeing that every creature hears the Gospel.

The way this commission was interpreted to Mr. Howells in concrete terms was that in the next thirty years the Holy Ghost would find 10,000 channels from all over the world—men and women whom He would enter, and who would allow Him to take complete possession of them for this task,¹ even as years before He

¹ The phenomenal outgoing of consecrated Gospel-preaching missionary volunteers by the hundreds since World War II, especially from U.S.A., is significant in this respect. Some 600 have gone out to one field—Japan. American Bible Schools and Colleges have about 40,000 young men, and women students, and some churches give as much as £50,000 and £70,000 annually to the direct support of evangelical foreign missionaries; not to mention the hundreds of others who go out from the British Commonwealth, from Scandinavia, and from other countries.

had taken possession of His servant. Finance would be needed in abundance, but the One who gave millions to David for the temple could give the same to those who were building a far more precious temple, a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens: and He gave His servant that word in Deut. 28 : 12 (R. V. margin): "The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasury... and thou shalt lend unto many nations"; and with the word was the promise of a first gift from the "Treasury", of £10,000, which was to be a confirmation.

Rees Howells came out from his room a man with a vision and a burden which never left him—the "Every Creature Vision". He brought it before the staff and students and New Year's Day 1935 was given to prayer and fasting. The presence of God was felt in a very real way, and, while they did not minimize the enormity of the task, a deep and growing conviction took possession of many that God was going to do a new thing—that as really as the Saviour came down to the world to make an atonement for every creature, so the Holy Ghost had come down to make that atonement known to every creature, and He would complete it in their generation. In a new sense the world began to be their parish. They began to be open for God to lay any prayer on them which would further the reaching of every creature with the Gospel. They became responsible to intercede for countries and nations, as well as for individual missionaries and societies. The College became "a house of prayer for all nations."

One form that this prayer warfare took was intercession on a national and international level concerning anything that affected world evangelization. Every creature must hear; therefore, the doors must be kept open. Their prayers became strategic. They must face and fight the enemy wherever he was opposing freedom

to evangelize. God was preparing an instrument—a company to fight world battles on their knees.

The first battle of prayer on this international scale was in 1936 when Germany sent her soldiers into the Rhineland, and broke the Locarno Treaty. "We knew that France would be on fire in a day," said Mr. Howells, "and it meant nothing less than a European war, and the consequent hindrance to the spread of the Gospel. Only those who were in the College can realize the burden the Holy Spirit put on us. 'Prevail against Hitler', He said to me, and it meant three weeks of prayer and fasting."

The daily diary of the College meetings at that time records:

March 21. "Things are very black on the Continent. We pray on until 11 a.m., and come back at 2.30, 6 and 9 p.m. We ask the Lord to deal with Germany."

March 23. "Very grave on Continent and in London. Meetings at 9 and 11 a.m., and 6 and 9 p.m. We plead with God to deal with Hitler and the German nation, and to bring them to book."

March 24. "Situation re European crisis very black, all the countries are disagreeing with each other, burden is coming on very heavy, but the Lord is allowing us to plead the Every Creature Vision in His presence. The Lord turns our eyes off the countries to Himself. Meetings at 9 a.m., 6 and 9 p.m."

It continued like that for another five days. Then on March 29 Mr. Howells came into the meeting and said, "Prayer has failed. We are on slippery ground. Only intercession will avail. God is calling for intercessors—men and women who will lay their lives on the altar to fight the devil, as really as they would have to fight the enemy on the western front." It was made clear that a soldier at the front has no say in where he goes and what

he does; he cannot take holidays or attend to the claims of home and loved ones, as other people can; and the Lord was telling them that if, as really as that, some would become bondslaves to the Holy Spirit for every creature, and would throw their lives into the gap (Ezek. 22 : 30), He would give the victory and avert war. A large number of the staff and students made the surrender. "We came right through," said Mr. Howells, "and I knew from that time on Hitler was no more than a rod in the hands of the Holy Spirit." The diary recorded:

March 29. "The most wonderful day in the College so far. Big day of surrenders, and many take up the challenge of martyrdom."

March 30. "Fire fell on sacrifice. Holy Ghost descended on evening meeting. Went on knees and someone started the chorus, 'Welcome, welcome, welcome! Holy Ghost, we welcome Thee.' Liberty and power so great we continued singing this one chorus for a full hour."

April 1. "Another day of worshipping and praising the Lord. He has come down on the College, and it is a new place; there is singing from Derwen Fawr to Glyn-derwen."

From that Sunday onwards, the crisis of war in Europe changed into a search for peace; when the proposal was made for a twenty-five years Peace Pact. The College also had the assurance that they could prevail on God to keep His hand on Hitler and the Nazi menace. Every time he made a new swoop, such as on Austria, days were set aside for prayer.

The greatest test came in the summer of 1938, when the dispute arose with Hitler over Czechoslovakia, resulting in what became known as the Munich crisis. We now know that the Voice Hitler followed, which coin-

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cided with the advice of some of his trusted advisors, was urging him to attack while Britain was still totally unprepared. War seemed inescapable, and the leaders of the nation called for a day of prayer. God made the challenge very real to the College, and for days the conflict was bitter. It was essentially a clash of spiritual forces—a test of strength between the devil in Hitler and the Holy Ghost in His army of intercessors.

At the height of the battle the one prayer that the Holy Ghost gave to the College through His servant was, "Lord, bend Hitler." A point came when that cry of travail changed into a shout of victory. The devil had to give way. It was just before the commencement of the new session in the College, and the victory was so certain that Mr. Howells turned the opening day into a day of praise. An announcement appeared in the *South Wales Evening Post* on Saturday, September 17, stating that "The Meetings (of the following Thursday) will take the form of Praise and Thanksgiving because God has again averted a European War." Hundreds gathered in the Conference Hall in that dark hour to join in praising God. In the days that followed the test ran higher and higher, but faith was steadfast, and on Thursday, September 29, the College and School were given a general holiday, to celebrate the coming victory. The next day, September 30, the Munich Pact was signed. War had been averted.

What *did* happen to Hitler? The one person who was in a position to know was Sir Neville Henderson, the British Ambassador to Germany at that fateful time. In his book *Failure of a Mission*, in describing the remarkable reaction in Hitler after signing the Munich Pact, he makes the following significant statements: "Hitler felt irritated with himself. A section of his followers were always egging him on to fight England while the latter

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was still militarily unprepared. They reproached him for having accepted the Munich settlement, and thus having missed the most favourable opportunity. An uneasy feeling lest they might have been right contributed to Hitler's ill-humour. . . His Voice had told him that. . . there could be no more propitious moment for it [war] than that October; and for once he had been obliged to disregard that Voice and to listen to counsels of prudence. . . for the first time he had failed to obey his Voice. . . He had acted on several occasions in direct defiance of the advice of his stoutest followers and of his army, yet the event had always proved him to be right. Until Munich. There, for the first time, he had been compelled to listen to contrary opinion, and his own faith in his Voice and his people's confidence in his judgment were for the first time shaken. . . 'You are the only man,' he said somewhat bitterly to Mr. Chamberlain, 'to whom I have ever made a concession.'¹ The Lord had "bent Hitler".

It was certainty of this victory, and the knowledge that the Holy Ghost was stronger than the devil in Hitler, that enabled the College to take the assurance a year later, when war did come, that that was not the triumph of Satan, but it was "God's war on the Beast".

One thing that also strengthened Mr. Howells and his followers very much in their challenge of faith at that time was the fact that in July 1938, shortly before this crisis, God had given His promised seal on the Every Creature Vision—the gift of £10,000.

¹ Neville Henderson, *Failure of a Mission*, pp. 175-6, 179, 157; Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd. Quoted by permission of the author's executors.

Chapter Thirty-one

ETHIOPIA

SOON AFTER THE CRISIS OF MARCH 1936, CAME THE fight for Ethiopia. It was hard and long, and seemed to end in dismal failure. As soon as it was apparent that Mussolini intended to invade the country, Mr. Howells and the College saw what lay behind it. Ethiopia, through the influence of the Emperor, was opening in a new way to evangelical missions and there was a prospect of widespread evangelization in many areas. Mr. Howells realized that once again it was a campaign against the enemy in the Church of Rome; for if Italy captured the country, it would be the end of the Protestant witness there. The battle of intercession lasted for three weeks. "It was as if we were fighting in the country itself," said Mr. Howells. "We believed that God would not give Ethiopia to the Fascist dictator." The fight became fiercest when the Italian army began to get near the capital, Addis Ababa. The College journal for those days in 1936 reported:

April 24. "Day of prayer and fasting (except for breakfast). Great burden as we pray for the Ethiopians. It gets really hard towards the evening and news in the paper is very serious. We are believing the Italians will not enter Addis Ababa."

April 25. "Four meetings of prayer. There is a big burden to be carried. We are believing that the Lord will intervene and give the Italians a set-back."

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April 28. "The burden is great. Many feel assured that the Italians will not enter Addis Ababa and the whole College is coming up to believe this big thing."

April 29. "We are coming up in solid faith to take hold of the Lord to stop the Italians."

May 1. "The fight still very fierce. We had three wonderful hours with the Lord pleading for the hundred missionaries in the capital. *The Lord tells the Director that he is to go back from public life for the next ten years and intercede for the nations.* Oh, the joy of being in this life and taking part in the battle of intercession!"

May 4. "Day of prayer and fasting; there is a big burden for Addis Ababa, as we read of the rioting which started when the Emperor left the palace. Hard day, but we are believing the Lord is going to intervene, although He is allowing the test to run very high."

May 5. "Still big burden for Addis Ababa. Italians march in at 4 p.m. this afternoon."

It was the first lesson for many in the College of what we have seen a number of times in Mr. Howells's life, namely, the death in an intercession which has to precede the resurrection, and the test on the intercessors as to whether they can walk through their valley of humiliation, of apparent failure, with an unmoved faith. The very thing they believed for did not come to pass. The Italians were not to occupy the capital, but they did so, and the Emperor was a fugitive. Rome had triumphed. It seemed the end of Gospel work in the country. But Mr. Howells explained to the College the principle that has already been referred to (p. 211): that apparent failure may only be a stepping-stone to greater victory. The College record continues:

May 6. "The Director has more light on intercession to

show us—that unless we had interceded for those men in Ethiopia, we should never have suffered with them; and if our prayers were of faith, we have only had a set-back, and not a failure as the result of unbelief. Great public meeting at 7.30 p.m., when the Holy Ghost revealed to us Joseph 'the dreamer', who stood to what God had shown him, and went through tremendous testings, but finally saw what he had believed come to pass."

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In order to keep the story of God's dealings with the College concerning Ethiopia as one whole, we will rapidly review the happenings of the next few years, although it takes us well beyond the date we have at present reached.

Although the day had come when Mussolini had captured the country, the College never lost faith. The Emperor came to England, and then, of all the unlikely things, came to the College. Who but God could have directed his steps to the company of people who had probably prayed in more concentrated fashion than any others for him and his people? Alfred Buxton, C. T. Studd's son-in-law, who was leader of the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society in Ethiopia, knew that the College had a home and school for missionaries' children, and wrote to Mr. Howells to ask if he would take into the school Lidj Asrate Kassa, the son of Ras Kassa and a relative of the Emperor. (Now Dejazmach Asrate Kassa, and Governor-General of one of the large provinces of Ethiopia.)

A year later, the Emperor himself asked if he could come and visit the College, and see Asrate. He was given a civic welcome in Swansea by the Mayor and Mayoress, Councillor David Richards and his daughter, and taken to the Guildhall, where he signed the Visitors' Book.

The Mayor, in addressing him, said that he was still "Your Majesty" to him, and he believed to the people of Swansea, and they hoped that some day he would be restored to his country. Only God could do that, he added. The Emperor then visited the College and School, where he had tea.

Mr. Howells had just bought the mansion in Penllergaer, and he offered it to the Emperor for his residence in England, until their prayer was answered and he was back on his throne. As they drove up the avenue of over a mile, ablaze with rhododendrons and azaleas, tears were in the Emperor's eyes, and he remarked to Mrs. Howells, "If heaven is a more beautiful place than this, it must be very wonderful. What your husband has done reminds me of an Ethiopian proverb: The man who has only God to look to can do all things and never fail." The Emperor was also much moved to hear how Mr. Howells had been called to help the Jewish refugees because, as he said, "I am a refugee myself." A few days later he wrote:

Haile Selassie I

Elect of God, Emperor of Ethiopia

To Rev. and Mrs. Rees Howells,

It is with profound gratitude that I want to write to you to-day to thank you most heartily for all the kindness you have shown me during my visit to your Bible College last week. It is an inspiration to me to have seen all the wonderful things that the Lord has been leading you to do among those of your own people and those who have found a refuge in your country. I do pray that God in His grace will continue to bless this great work of His very richly.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed personally by the Emperor).

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The Emperor's private chaplain, and his son-in-law, Abye Abebe, now Brigadier-General and Minister of War, came to the College for a period as students. In the summer of 1939 the Emperor himself spent a fortnight in camp in the Penllergaer grounds, and came down each night to the meeting in the College. By the end of his stay, the outbreak of war was imminent and he went straight back from the camp to London, and later from London to his own country. In June 1941, when the Emperor re-entered his capital, he sent Mr. Howells this cable:

You will I know share in my joy at entering my capital. I send you this telegram in remembrance of past sympathy and help.

Emperor Haile Selassie.

To which Mr. Howells replied:

Thank you for telegram. Praising God daily for restoring Ethiopia and giving back your throne. The Lord bless and keep you and give you peace.

Rees Howells, Bible College, Swansea.

God's answer was perfect. The expansion of missionary work in the country since the expulsion of the Italians has been by far the greatest in its history. Just as it was to be later in the World War, so now, the answer to the intercession could not have been complete until the aggressor had been so dealt with that he could not rise up and menace the country again; and when the missionaries returned, it was reported in the Walamo district that they could not account for the revival which had been going on actually during the Italian occupation, when some 500 converts had increased to 20,000.

Chapter Thirty-two

VISITATION OF THE SPIRIT

FROM THE TIME OF SPECIAL DEDICATION ON MARCH 29, 1936, when so many of the College, both staff and students, laid their lives on the altar as intercessors, the Spirit was at work in the College. The climax and consummation came in the New Year of 1937. It was the "Pentecost" of the College, from which they emerged, not a loosely-linked company of consecrated individuals, but a body in the full sense of the term, a living integrated organism, instinct with one life and one purpose. Dr. Kingsley C. Priddy, M.B., B.S., D.T.M. & H., a member of the staff and now Headmaster of the School, gives the following account of those days:

"In the Christmas vacation of 1936 much time was given to prayer. As we approached the New Year of 1937 there was an increasing consciousness of God's presence. The first outward sign that He was working in a new way was when one of the staff broke down in prayer, confessing her sense of need and crying to the Holy Spirit to meet her. Then we heard how the Holy Ghost had so manifested Himself in the glory of His Divine Person to some of the girl students, that they wept before Him for hours—broken at the corruption of their own hearts revealed in the light of His holiness.

"An awful sense of God's nearness began to steal over the whole College. There was a solemn expectancy. We were reminded of the 120 in the Upper Room before the day of Pentecost. Like them, we only wanted to spend

our time 'in prayer and supplication'—conscious that God's hand was upon us—conscious that He was about to do something. God was there; yet we felt we were still waiting for Him to come. And in the days that followed, He came.

"He did not come like a rushing mighty wind. But gradually the Person of the Holy Ghost filled all our thoughts, His Presence filled all the place, and His light seemed to penetrate all the hidden recesses of our hearts. He was speaking through the Director in every meeting, but it was in the quiet of our own rooms that He revealed Himself to many of us. We felt the Holy Spirit had been a real Person to us before; as far as we knew we had received Him; and some of us had known much of His operations in and through our lives. But now the revelation of His Person was so tremendous that all our previous experiences seemed as nothing. There was no visible apparition, but He made Himself so real to our spiritual eyes that it was a 'face to face' experience. And when we saw Him, we knew we had never really seen Him before. We said like Job, 'I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee'; and like him we cried, 'Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.'

"In the light of His purity, it was not so much *sin* we saw as *self*. We saw pride and self-motives underlying everything we had ever done. Lust and self-pity were discovered in places where we had never suspected them. And we had to confess we knew nothing of the Holy Ghost as an indwelling Person. That our bodies were meant to be the temples of the Holy Ghost we knew, but when He pressed the question, 'Who is living in *your* body?' we could not say that HE was. We would have done so once, but now we had seen Him. In His nature He was just like Jesus—He would never live for self, but

always for others. We were people who had left all to follow the Saviour, and had forsaken all we had of this world's goods to enter a life of faith, and as far as we knew we had surrendered our lives entirely to the One who died for us. But He showed us, 'There is all the difference in the world between *your* surrendered life in my hands, and I living *My* life in your body.' We read the Acts afresh, and found we were reading, not the acts of the apostles, but the acts of the Holy Ghost. The bodies of Peter and the others had become His temples. The Holy Ghost as a divine Person lived in the bodies of the apostles, even as the Saviour had lived His earthly life in the body that was born in Bethlehem. And all that the Holy Spirit asked of us was our wills and our bodies. 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice. . . ' (Rom. 12 : 1). It seemed as though we had never seen that Scripture before. He made it clear that He was not asking for service but for a sacrifice. 'Our God is a consuming fire', and if God the Holy Ghost took possession of these bodies, then *His* life was going to consume all that there was of *ours*. We had often sung 'I want to be like Jesus', but when we had the offer from a Person who is just like the Saviour to come and live that life daily and hourly in us, we found how unreal we had been. How much there was in us that still wanted to live our own lives—that shrank from this 'sentence of death'! We now began to see the meaning of the Saviour's words in Luke 9 : 24, 'For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it.'

"Why had He manifested Himself to us in this way? He made that quite clear. It was because there was a work to be done in the world to-day that only He could do (John 16 : 8). No wonder the Master told His

disciples not to move from Jerusalem until they had received 'the promise of the Father'. But when He had come, they would be His witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

"Many of us on the previous March 29 had put our all on the altar for the sake of giving the Gospel to every creature. We had become willing to be any cog in the machinery that God needed to put that through in our generation. But now the Holy Ghost said, as Jehovah had said to Moses, 'I am come down to do it.' And we knew that He was as almighty as He was holy.

"As those days of visitation went on, we were just prostrate at His feet. We had thought that there was some virtue in our surrender, that we, with thousands of others, would be the people to evangelize the world in this generation. But now HE had come, and we were out of it—except in so far as our bodies would become the temples in which He would dwell and through which He would work. He said, 'I have not come to give you joy, or peace, or victory. I have not come to give you any blessing at all. You will find all that you need in Jesus. But I have come to put *you* to the cross, so that I may live in your body for the sake of a lost world' (Col. 3 : 3; 2 Cor. 4 : 10; Gal. 2 : 20).

"He warned us that the trials before this task was through would be so great, and the attacks of Satan so fierce, that 'flesh and blood' would never be able to hold out. He showed us that on the eve of the Crucifixion, when the real clash came with the powers of darkness, it was only the Saviour who stood. We saw every one of the disciples fail in that hour—in spite of all their surrenders, their vows and their devotion to the Master. And looking into the future years—the darkness of the last days of this age, the final contest between heaven and

hell for the kingdoms of this world—we could see only One Person who was 'sufficient for these things', and He was the glorious Third Person of the Godhead in those whom He was able to indwell.

"One by one He met us. One by one we broke in tears and contrition before Him. From one after another rose the cry as it did from Isaiah, when he too 'saw the Lord', 'Woe is me for I am undone. . . unclean. . .' One by one our wills were broken; we yielded on His own unconditional terms. To one by one there came the glorious realization—He had entered; and the wonder of our privilege just overwhelmed us.

"The personal experience was great—we were new people. His word became new. So often we had had to water down the Word to the level of our experience. But now the Person in us would insist on bringing our experience up to the level of His Word. We understood that crucifixion was a slow death, and that He would have much to deal with in us before He would really be free to do His work through us. But one thing we knew—He had come and He could never fail.

"But far greater than anything His visitation could mean to us personally, was what it was going to mean to the world. We saw Him as the One to whom 'the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance.' On our faces before Him we could only say from awed hearts, 'Holy Ghost, You have come to rock the world.' There was no excitement or enthusiasm of the flesh in those days. When His power had come upon us after March 29 we had been carried away, and were singing and shouting our praises. But in these days we were so awed by the holy majesty of His Person that we hardly dared raise our voices in the meetings. Even the grounds outside seemed filled with His presence. Walking around together we would sud-

denly be conscious that we were speaking in whispers. The late hours came, but no one thought of bed—for God was there. It seemed to be a foretaste of the Holy City—“There shall be no night there.” 2.0 and 3.0 a.m. often seemed just like midday as we communed together, prayed with some who were ‘coming through’, or waited before God in the quietness of our hearts.

“His visitation lasted for some three weeks in this special sense, although, praise God, He came to ‘abide’, and has continued with us ever since. But no one has a monopoly of the Holy Ghost. He is God, and whatever our experience of Him, He is far greater than all we can know of Him. Whatever we know of His gifts, His manifestations and His anointings, He is greater than all those. In whatever way He has manifested Himself to us, we also recognize His mighty working in and through others. Increasingly we look to the Holy Ghost Himself, poured out on all flesh, as Joel prophesied, as the only One by whom the Vision He has shown us can be fulfilled, through His prepared channels in all parts of the world.”

Through this falling of the fire upon the sacrifice, the Spirit had sealed to Himself a company of intercessors for every creature. Tutors and school teachers, doctors and nurses, domestic and office workers, gardeners and mechanics, their duties were varied, but their commission one. Many of the students themselves remained on as part of this praying and working company. There are times in God’s dealings with His servants when He sets apart for Himself, not just individuals, but companies, baptized, as it were, by one Spirit into one body for one God-appointed purpose, and this was now one of them.

Chapter Thirty-three

FOURTH ESTATE, AND THE JEWS

THE NEXT BURDEN WHICH CAME ON MR. HOWELLS was for the Jews. As we follow him and the College through their months and years of intercession for Israel, it is remarkable now to see the fulfilment of the first stage of their prayer in the actual return of the Jews and the establishment of the State of Israel. How little there seemed any outward sign that this would come to pass, when the burden first came on His servant! It reminds us that no great event in history, even though prophesied beforehand in the Scriptures, comes to pass unless God finds His human channels of faith and obedience. Prophecies must be believed into manifestation, as well as foretold.

The burden first came on Mr. Howells when he read of the proclamation by Italy, on September 3, 1938, that all Jews must clear out of Italy in six months. This, coupled with the anti-Semitism then so fierce in Germany, turned his thoughts towards the return of God’s people to their own land. He said at the meetings:

September 3. “I have a great burden for these people, and I want God to lay their burden on me. The devil, through Hitler and Mussolini, is being used to send them back to their own land; it is the fulfilment of prophecy; it is another sign that this is the closing of the age. I am longing to help God’s people to return to their land.”

September 5. “In Isaiah’s prophecies about the second

return of God's people, he says in Chapters 11 and 12 that God will draw them from the four corners of the earth. That is just what is happening to-day. The Holy Spirit is longing to help them through someone. I want God to touch me deeper still with the feelings of what these people are suffering."

September 7. "Daniel was able to prevail with God in a wonderful way for the return of God's people, after he had seen that the seventy years of captivity were ended. We must have faith and believe God's covenant with Abraham that they are to dwell in the land, and not merely have sympathetic feelings for the Jews. God moved Cyrus, the one who had held them in captivity, to supply the money to take them back! He will do this again, if someone will believe Him. I firmly believe the times of the Gentiles are drawing to a close, and the Jews must be back in their own land when the Master returns."

September 11. "I think of the places of intercession gained for the tramps, in the village, as a Nazarite, for the widows of India, for a consumptive, for the missionaries' children. Now God is calling us to be responsible for the Jews."

He then began to describe how God had definitely told him to be responsible for a gift of £100,000 for the Jews, and to believe for it. Days were spent in believing prayer for this sum.

A few weeks later, however, news came of Hitler "throwing out" several thousand Jewish children on the Polish border, and the burden on Mr. Howells increased. "The moment I read this in the paper," he told the College, "a great anguish came over me. Nobody knows what this must mean to their parents. The Holy Ghost is just like a father, and if I were a father of children whose

home had been destroyed, wouldn't I seek a shelter for them straight away? The Holy Ghost suffers like that for all those parents on the Continent. Unless He in you makes the suffering your own, you can't intercede for them. You will never touch the Throne, unless you send up that real cry; words don't count at all."

As usual, when he had a burden like that, he felt sure that God would have him do something, and as he asked what he could do, the answer came, "Make a home for them." Mr. Howells had already bought three estates by faith, but the Lord was now going to call him to a new and greater venture in finance. He tried to rent the home of Sir Percy Molyneux, a friend of his who had lately passed away. He calculated that he could house fifty children in it, but the owners were not willing to let him have it. He then tried for a larger one, which would hold 250. Again he was turned down. Then one night God "whispered" to him "Penllergaer", the name of an estate he had heard of, but never seen; he knew that it was one of the largest in the Swansea area, and that the owner was Sir Charles Llewelyn. On inquiry, he found that it consisted of 270 acres, and that the Roman Catholics had made a former offer of £14,000 for the mansion and two fields only; so he realized that it would cost him nothing less than £20,000.

The records of the meetings for the next week or two speak of constant prayer about it, until on November 26 he came right out with the statement: "I shall buy the new estate, probably next week, and I am willing to risk my all in order to help the Jews."

When he went to the agent, he found that he had no time to lose, because some others were preparing to make an offer for it. He had to make a decision in twenty-four hours. That day he said at the meeting, "These others are forming a company to buy Penllergaer, and I must

look to the Trinity to be my Company." And on the next "To-day I was told would be the last for buying Penllergaer, so I made an offer greater than that of the Syndicate. The agent told me it would be ours, and he is writing to the owner this evening."

The matter was settled. With some alterations that would be needed, it was going to cost £20,000, and there was nothing in hand. This dwarfed the previous purchases of faith, but God had so led him on through the years that, where we might think the test would be tremendous, and it actually was, yet, as one of the students said, he bought Penllergaer with less fuss than many a man makes in buying a suit of clothes! He was encouraged a few days later by a phone call from a very close friend of the College, who said that if Mr. Howells was staking his all on Penllergaer, he would do the same, and that a freehold house given him by his father was to be sold for that purpose.

It was a marvellous estate, far exceeding any of the other three. There was a large mansion with many out-buildings, seven other dwelling houses, a home farm and market gardens, where the late Sir John Llewelyn used to employ fifteen gardeners. The estate was famous for its collection of trees and shrubs, and had been used by the Swansea University for student classes in Botany. The river and lake of eighteen acres were popular among fishermen for their trout. The beautiful drive up to the mansion, of a mile and a quarter in length, was through masses of rhododendrons and azaleas.

Here Mr. Howells had the vision of "the persecuted little ones" being driven up through these banks of rhododendrons, ablaze with bloom, and feeling they were more than half-way already to their home of destiny, the land of Palestine, which is yet to flow with milk and honey.

The papers referred to this "City of Refuge in Wales for Jewish Refugee Children", and the London papers gave it headlines also. Negotiations were opened with the Home Secretary for permission for several hundred Jewish children to be brought over. All this would mean much heavier financial liability and a guarantee of £50 would have to be paid down for each child.

God then called them to one more costly step, most costly of all. It concerned the £100,000 gift for which the College was praying. As Mr. Howells said, "There is a golden rule in the life of faith, that the Christian can never prevail upon God to move others to give larger sums of money towards God's work than he himself has either given, or proved that he is willing to give, if it were in his power to do so." On this basis God had been speaking to him for several days, and there was a great sensation in the College when, in a Sunday morning meeting, he told them what God was asking, and that he had made his decision. It was that they would sell all the three present estates, Glynderwen, Derwen Fawr and Sketty Isaf, which had been valued at close on £100,000, and give that as the first £100,000 for the Jews. The College and School would move to Penllergaer, and occupy it together with the Jewish children. Mrs. Howells had also been facing up to the sacrifice of all these estates with their hallowed associations, and the cost of having to build the work afresh in Penllergaer. It seemed unthinkable that God could really mean this, but when she heard Mr. Howells commit himself in public, she knew well that it was final. Can we imagine her feelings as she left that meeting, her eyes blinded with tears? Alone with God she fought her battle. She missed the next meeting and also took no lunch, but by three o'clock God brought her right through, as she saw Abraham walking up the mount with his son Isaac and

offering him there as a whole burnt-offering to God. Without knowing how his wife had come through, Mr. Howells preached on that very passage of Scripture in the afternoon meeting. He asked her to close the meeting in prayer, and there were very few dry eyes in the congregation.

Negotiations then began for the sale of the estates. The army had already requisitioned some fields next to Derwen Fawr for training purposes, and were making inquiries about the College properties. So Mr. Howells began to negotiate with the War Office about this sale. It was only after several months that the Western Command finally decided not to extend any further in this district, and the Lord did not test His servant more on that point.

At this same time there was a series of meetings in the College when the Lord spoke to many about laying their missionary calls on the altar, and allowing the Holy Ghost through them to take the place of fathers and mothers to the Jewish refugee children. It was a real surrender on the part of many, and although that ministry has not yet materialized, it was God's strange way of wisdom; for it meant that this company of about 120 were set apart by the Holy Ghost during those unexpected war years, for the life of intercession. Once again it was God using one apparent call to prepare His servants for another and higher. By this means He had His army of the Spirit who were going to fight the war through on their knees, to free the world again for every creature to have the Gospel.

While they were preparing to receive the children, war was declared with Germany and their plans had to be changed; although twelve Jewish children did arrive and became part of the College family. It was another testing time for Mr. Howells. "When you try to do something

for God, everything comes against you," he said. "Could anything be more against me than this—that, after I bought Penllergaer for the children, the war came, and I couldn't take them? But when God speaks to you, you can never doubt it. If what God has told you leads you into great trials, then you go back to God and turn the burden of it on Him. Nothing could have looked more like a mistake than this, for I had a great liability at that time, but I did not question it once. I knew it wasn't a mistake, although the devil told me it was. Although we could not get the children, yet we obeyed God in buying that property. He told us we were to have thousands of pounds out of it to use for the Kingdom."

How wonderful God is! First, the possession of that great property gave work to the young men called of God to remain in the College for intercession. They were occupied all those years in felling timber on the estate, and as a consequence were exempted from other service. Then while the war was still in progress, Mr. Howells was led to have plans drawn out for the building of houses on the estate. It was a providential guidance, because some time later the Government introduced a law whereby all land is made subject to charges in the event of development. A clause, however, was inserted in the Bill exempting any land for which plans had been passed before a certain date; very few could take advantage of this, but the Penllergaer estate was one, and when the houses are built, thousands of pounds will be saved for God's Treasury. The Penllergaer mansion was then offered to Dr. Barnardo's as a free gift to house war orphans. After long deliberations, however, the Council decided that the conversion, repairs and maintenance of the mansion would prove too expensive. Now the Glamorgan County Council has taken it over as a school for backward children. But the estate around remains in

the hands of the College, to bring back in due course the sum of money God promised His servant it would produce for the Kingdom.

Through the years of the war, the Jews were never forgotten, although prayer to God was mainly for affairs of the nations; for, as Mr. Howells said, 'When the war came, He changed us from the Jews to the Beast (a name he commonly gave to the devil in the Nazi system), and said, 'Get victory over him'.' But it was after the war again, in October and November 1947, that whole days were given to praying through for the Jews' return to Palestine. Mr. Howells said, "We pleaded that because of His covenant with Abraham 4,000 years ago, God would take His people back to their Land, and Palestine should again become a Jewish State."

The challenge that came before the College was: if the Jewish people did not go back after the 1914-18 war, would they go back after this one? They saw the hand of God in the setting up of a United Nations Committee to consider the question of Palestine. There was thanksgiving when the news was published that Britain was going to evacuate the country. On eleven different days during those two months, prayer was concentrated on the coming United Nations vote. It was touch and go. On the day of voting, November 27, 1947, there was much prayer, but the news came that the partitioning of Palestine had not been carried. The College went back to yet more intense prayer, during which they saw in faith "God's angels influencing those men in the United Nations Conference in New York to work on behalf of God's people", and had full assurance of victory. When, next day, the news came that the United Nations had passed the partitioning of Palestine by 33 votes to 13, and that the State of Israel was a fact, the College acclaimed it with rejoicing as "one of the greatest days for

the Holy Ghost in the history of these 2,000 years. During all those centuries there wasn't a single sign that the country was to be given back to the Jews, who were scattered all over the earth, but now, 4,000 years after His covenant with Abraham, He has gathered all the nations together and made them give much of the land of Palestine back to them."

One unusual ray of light was also given to Mr. Howells at that time concerning the Arabs. He said: "God put me aside for some days to reveal the position of the Arabs. In Genesis 16 : 12, God says of Ishmael that 'he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.' This is the problem. Does God mean the Arabs to dwell with the Jews? Abraham loved Ishmael and wanted him to have the inheritance; and God, who means what He says, declared: 'I have blessed him.' The Arabs only worship the One God. Did God mean them to be blessed as well as the Jews? They will afford shelter to the Jews (Isaiah 21 : 13-15), and will be the first to come to Jerusalem to pay homage to the King (Isaiah 60 : 7). Just as we were only burdened for the Jews when we had to make intercession for them, so the Lord wanted us to have a concern for the Arabs also. They also are the sons of Abraham. Can the Holy Ghost bring in something which will break down the barrier between the Jews and Arabs that there may be a home and a blessing for both? Certainly the Arabs are the people of God, if they are to shield the Jews and live in those countries which are to escape out of the hand of the Beast."

Chapter Thirty-four

INTERCESSION FOR DUNKIRK

DURING THE FOUR YEARS PREVIOUS TO THE OUTBREAK of World War II, as we have already seen, the Lord was changing the burden on Mr. Howells from local concerns, centring on the development of the College, to national and international affairs. As he said, "The world became our parish and we were led to be responsible to intercede for countries and nations." We have also seen how the Lord was preparing in the company at the College a special instrument of intercession for the coming world crisis.

It was in March, 1936, that Mr. Howells began to see clearly that Hitler was Satan's agent for preventing the Gospel going to every creature. As he said later, "In fighting Hitler we have always said that we were not up against man, but the devil. Mussolini is a man, but Hitler is different. He can tell the day this 'spirit' came into him." For several years Mr. Howells stressed the fact that God must destroy him, if the vision of the Gospel to every creature was to be fulfilled.

At first, he believed that God would prevent war altogether. We have seen how the College fought through on their knees during the Munich crisis and how they believed for peace.

As the clouds over Europe grew darker, Mr. Howells still believed that God would intervene and prevent war. He stood to his prediction right up to the day of the declaration of war between Britain and Germany on

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September 3, 1939. Even then he was not moved. Although people said that the prediction was wrong, he thanked God he had made it. "If I had a choice again about making this prediction," he said, "I would make it to-night, although it has gone much farther than we thought it would. Hitler must be put out of the way, because if he isn't, he will come up again in another two years. I want to know that the Holy Spirit is stronger than the devil in the Nazi system. This is the battle of the ages, and victory here means victory for millions of people."

On the day of the declaration of war, he published the following statement: "The Lord has made known to us that He is going to destroy Hitler and the Nazi régime, that the world may know that it was God and God alone who has scattered the dictators. Three and a half years ago, the College prayed this prayer for weeks and months, and we firmly believe He will now answer it. He has isolated Germany so that He may get at this evil system, which is the Antichrist, and release Germany, the land of the Reformation. He will deal with the Nazis as He dealt with the Egyptian army in the time of Moses. God will cause Hitler to fall on the battlefield or by a mutiny or a great rising in Germany against the Nazis."

So far from the declaration of war shaking him and those with him, it only sent them more determined than ever to their knees. They were now called in a new way to pay the vow they had made three years before—to give their lives over "to fight the battles of the Kingdom, as really as if called to fight on the Western Front." This stand of faith against war in order that the Gospel might not be hindered, was proved to be God's way of placing upon that company a responsibility from which they could never come free, until the enemy that God was dealing with should be destroyed.

When, after a month of hostilities, an offer of peace was made by Hitler, the College stood with the Prime Minister in stating that war must be continued, "until Hitlerism is overthrown," even though, like so many more, the College had much to lose by its continuance. The conviction of the College was expressed in the title of a book which Mr. Howells wrote in the opening weeks of the war, and which was published in December, 1939, called: *God Challenges the Dictators—Doom of Nazis Predicted*. In it he said, "The God of Daniel will deliver Pastor Niemöller, and the hundreds of other German Evangelicals, who have followed him to the concentration camps. . . their places will one day be occupied by the fanatical Nazi leaders, if any of them escape a speedy death."

After an indictment of Mussolini, he stated, "When victory over Germany comes. . . Ethiopia should also be given back to the Ethiopians, and this may also be in God's divine plan to evangelize Ethiopia." He also declared that "Bolshevism and Soviet Russia are being used in the plan of God to break the evil Nazi régime"; but of Stalin he said, "The devil has used and may yet use this man to be the greatest foe to the Church that the world has ever known."

Although his confidence was that God would intervene to deal with the enemy, he wrote, "We may have many a set-back before He does so. . . it may be that we, like the Israelites (referring to Judges 20), will have to cry out to God in our extremity for the help which will certainly come."

It is truly remarkable to look back now and realize that these things were in print before the end of 1939.

Shortly after this, Mr. Howells made a further prediction, which was published by *The Western Mail* on January 8, 1940, under a headline of "Welsh Bible

College Director Urges Prayer to Stop War". It quoted him as saying: "If all the righteous in the country will send up effectual prayer, we feel sure that we shall prevail and open Penllergaer on Whit-Monday without war or blackout. . . what a relief to millions of people if God will intervene and bring the war to an end by Whitsuntide." Little did he imagine when that prediction was made, that the days around that Whit-Sunday, May 12, were to be the blackest in the history of our nation, and the nearest we had come in nearly 400 years to the invasion of our shores; for on May 10 Hitler's armoured columns broke in on Holland and Belgium, and May 29 was that never-to-be-forgotten date in our history, the Dunkirk evacuation, to be followed shortly after by Mr. Churchill's memorable call to "blood and sweat and toil and tears."

In spite of this apparent set-back, as we read the diaries of the daily College meetings, three meetings on most days, we find ourselves among certainly not a fearful, not even chiefly a praying company, but rather among those who are already on victory ground, when all around men's hearts are failing them for fear; and what gave them such clarity and assurance that theirs was the victory, was the outward "death" of the prediction! If we say God was not with them, we may well ask ourselves this question: "Was there anywhere else in the whole of Britain or America or elsewhere among God's people another such company, maybe a hundred strong, who were on their knees day by day, holding fast the victory by faith, while our soldiers across the water were retreating mile by mile, whole countries surrendering, and the enemy within sight of their goal?" From this time on, through all the years of the war, the whole College was in prayer every evening from seven o'clock to midnight, with only a brief interval for supper. They never

missed a day. This was in addition to an hour's prayer meeting every morning, and very often at midday. There were many special periods when every day was given up wholly to prayer and fasting.

In the meetings just before Whit-Sunday, Mr. Howells said: "Through God we made the prediction, through God we stand to it, and through God we are going against the enemy. He tells me to-night, 'Don't you fear because of that prediction you have sent out, don't you fear the Nazis.' I think what a glory it is that we don't need to change our prayers one bit, in spite of the present developments. I am so glad that it has been the Kingdom we have had before us all the time in the last nine months, and I haven't a single regret. The Lord has said, 'I am going to deal with the Nazis.' It has been a battle between the Holy Spirit and the devil which we have been fighting for four years."

On Whit-Sunday, when, instead of peace being declared, only two days before, Hitler had invaded Holland and Belgium, Mr. Howells said in the College meeting: "We shall never defend the prediction. The point is, can God put a doubt in us who have really believed? If the Lord tells you that this delay is for His glory, then you must take victory in it. There is no glory in delay, unless there was faith to put it through. I would be a different man to-day if there was failure, but the Holy Spirit is not a failure. I can really thank Him for the delay. I wouldn't be without this experience for the world. Very strange that what is death in the eyes of the world, is victory to the Holy Spirit."

The next day he said, "We could never have had a greater death than in this prediction being delayed. But we are not going to have resurrection on one point more than has gone to the cross. I preached victory yesterday without a visible victory. There is a death in every

grade, but as really as you die, there will be fruit to a hundred-fold.

"We are going up to the battle, and I am as sure of victory as of the dawn. If you know you have faith for something, would you not go on until you got it? I would like this to ring out to the world: 'The Lord, He is the God!'"

As the Nazis poured through Europe, the College stood daily before God: We quote from notes taken of Mr. Howells's messages in the meetings:

May 16, 9.30 a.m. The day after Holland had surrendered: "To-day is probably the greatest battle in history. Can God do something to-day? Now when the Germans say, 'We have got the Allies on the run', can God do it? Keep your eyes on God to-day and get this victory. 2 p.m. The Lord has made very plain that the victory is from Him and no one else, and He is to have all the glory. God gets at the enemy visibly and invisibly, through the army and through us. 5.30 p.m. The position is most serious in France, but even if the French and British are fighting against such great odds, the Lord is well able to help them."

May 17, 9.30 a.m. "God will not do a bit more through you than you have faith for. The victory last night was in seeing that no matter how near the enemy came, the Holy Ghost is stronger than he. You are more responsible for this victory to-day than those men on the battlefield. You must be dead to everything else but this fight. 1 p.m. Because you have committed yourselves, you are responsible. You will never have peace again, until the world has peace, but you have a place in the cleft of the Rock. 3.30 p.m. We are here until these Nazis are put out. 7 p.m. If the Lord finds us quite willing in this death-life, and that we have got victory in the

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test, will He allow us to prevail upon Him now to finish it? If we believed last Saturday, we are believing to-night. I am not willing that thousands of our boys should be lost, because there has to be the 'doom of the Nazis', and it will come now if we can prevail. If this had been a failure, God would have been against us, but He shows He is pleased with us."

May 18, 9.30 a.m. "Unless God intervenes to-day in a miraculous way, I believe we have lost. I would be willing to die, but I cannot afford to die, neither can we afford that Hitler should live. *2.30 p.m.* I want to fight with this enemy again this week-end, as if it were the end of civilization. You don't leave anything to chance in this. Don't allow those young men at the Front to do more than you do here. I do ask Him to bring a real disaster on the Nazis this week-end. *6.30 p.m.* As the Lord gave us the prediction, and we have had victory in it, and the delay has not changed our faith a bit, then we must come back and ask Him when He is going to do it. I feel to-night that whatever these Nazis do, they cannot escape the Holy Spirit. Christianity is quite safe. If you have faith, you can leave it in His hands, and He will intervene in the right time. We can't inquire when He is going to do it, if we haven't got faith for Him to do it. *9.30 p.m.* It is not you struggling, but God doing, and you coming to know what God is doing. Is it God Who has drawn Hitler across that line with his 2,500 armoured cars? I want the Lord to discomfit this man and those armoured cars."

May 19, 9.30 a.m. "These Nazis will not destroy civilization. When they get near enough, God will deal with them. When the Holy Spirit has gone to the victory side, you could never convince the man or woman who has gone to the victory side with Him, that He is a failure.

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9.15 p.m. Now is the best time to test the Bible in wars, because we are in one ourselves."

May 20, 9 a.m. "The next 24 hours will be the crisis in this great battle. They are ready to take our country at any moment. Even before lunch-time the history of the world may be changed. Such a thing as this has not happened to us before, and you do not know how much faith is needed. We are coming to the Lord this morning, and telling Him our eyes are on Him to-day. Unless He intervenes, we are lost. I don't doubt the Lord for one second, but I must be very careful. *2.30 p.m.* I think to-night of sending the book, *God Challenges the Dictators*, to Mr. Churchill to encourage him at this moment. The army is losing ground every day, but in the book it has been said that man would not be able to end this; but that God has said, 'Don't expect Me to do it, until you get to your extremity.' The only thing we want the Lord to make plain to us is, are we up to the place He wants us to be at this moment? The only thing I want is not to doubt in the time of crisis, and it is going to be a real crisis. *7 p.m.* To-day I have sent the book to Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Halifax and Mr. Churchill—in the darkest hour."

May 21, 9 a.m. Fear of Invasion. "Yesterday was the darkest day in the history of this country, especially after the Prime Minister's speech. Everyone in town is expecting the enemy to invade this country. We have told the Lord, 'Our lives for victory'. We ought to pray now for the Lord to stop them coming over to this country. *2.30 p.m.* We must pray for the Lord to keep the enemy in check. He is like a roaring lion. *7 p.m.* The French Premier says to-night, 'It is only a miracle that will save us.' The test is, whether the Bible is true. I am willing to risk my life to prove it, and I want to tell you to-night

that it is quite true. See that your believing is right, and if it is, you don't need to have any fear."

May 22, 9 a.m. "The world is in a panic to-day, and certainly we would be too, unless we were quite sure the Lord had spoken to us. The destiny of England will be at stake to-day and to-morrow. *2.30 p.m.* In a battle such as we are in to-day, you cannot trust in a meeting or in feelings. We must go back to what God has told us. There is an enemy that we must keep in check, until God does the big thing."

From the night of May 22 to 25 Mr. Howells no longer came to the meetings; other members of the staff took them. He went away alone with God to battle through, and, as others have testified, the crushing burden of those days broke his body. He literally laid down his life.

May 26 was the day of public prayer in Britain. As Mr. Churchill said of the May 26 Service of Intercession in Westminster Abbey: "The English are loath to expose their feelings, but in my stall in the choir I could feel the pent-up passionate emotion, and also the fear of the congregation, not of death or wounds or national loss, but of defeat and the final ruin of Britain." Mr. Howells returned to the College meetings and said: *9.30 a.m.* "All you can do to-day when a cry will go up from the country is to be in a position to take the answer from God. The question this morning is, Can we take the answer? If you ever cried, you ought to cry to-day.

11.15 a.m. How can you be sure that the Nazis will not take our country? All the leading people know to-day that unless God intervenes, we will be slaves. We prayed for Ethiopia and other countries, so our cry is not a selfish one. *2.30 p.m.* We are going against this Beast, as David went against Goliath."

May 27, 9 a.m. "There is intercession and faith, so the Lord can do a mighty deed. Our people will see God answering their prayers, and they will have all the joy of it. *2.45 p.m.* It is as much as I can do to believe to-day. The news between the two meetings was awful—hell upon earth."

On *May 28* Mr. Howells again was alone with God. In the meetings the prayer was for God to intervene at Dunkirk and save our men; and as the Spirit came upon them in prayer and supplication, what one prayed at the end expressed the assurance given to all: "I feel sure something has happened."

May 29 was the day of the evacuation of Dunkirk. Mr. Howells said, "Let us be clear in our prayer that the intercession is gained. The battle is the Holy Spirit's. See Him outside of yourselves to-night. He is there on the battle-field with His drawn sword."

May 30, 7.30 p.m. "From a worldly standpoint there is no hope of victory; but God has said it. I could not come to-night and ask Him to intervene, because we have already said that He is going to intervene. Instead of bad news about our soldiers, if He is on the field of battle, He can change that and make it very good news. Oh, for God to lift us up to-night! We are not to run into any panic thinking the Nazis are going to win: Germany must be delivered as well as England and France. We may have to go through far greater sufferings yet, but I am not going to doubt the final issue. We state in plainest terms: *The enemy will not invade Christian England.*"

When we look back now after these years, many of us in Britain recall the terror of those days. Remembering the miracle of Dunkirk, acknowledged by our leaders to be an intervention from God, the calm sea allowing the smallest boats to cross, the almost complete evacuation

REES HOWELLS INTERCESSOR

of our troops, and then the lead Mr. Churchill gave to the nation, how thankful we are that God had this company of hidden intercessors, whose lives were on the altar day after day as they stood in the gap for the deliverance of Britain.

Chapter Thirty-five

BATTLE OF BRITAIN

THE NEXT BATTLE OF INTERCESSION WAS OVER THE air-raids, and the crisis of the "Battle of Britain", when Goering made his great attempt to gain mastery of the air in preparation for the invasion of England. In each of these vital matters, nothing was left to chance or a shot-in-the-dark type of praying. Everything was examined in God's presence and motives were sifted, until the Holy Spirit could show His servant intelligently that there was an undeniable claim for prayer to be answered. Then faith would stand to the claim and lay hold of the victory; and there would be no rest until he had God's own assurance that faith had prevailed and victory was certain. It was not just praying and then hoping for the answer. We quote from notes taken in the meetings at that time:

On *September 2, 1940*, Mr. Howells said: "I want to see if we have a claim to be free from care when these planes are around. We ran to stand in the breach to save the Jewish children from Hitler, when he was throwing them out. Can we now claim protection for all the missionaries' children? Unless my faith is equal to the occasion for protection, I should bring every one of the children up to the shelter to-night, and I would be there with them. Must we have fear because others have fear? If I trusted God to bring these properties into being, I am going to trust God to protect them. I want you to get

a foundation for this trust. We need a real foundation for our faith, in case the raids will last for months. Can we trust Him in the impossible in this, the same as in finance?

"The only thing I am afraid of is that I should miss God's will; many people are afraid of consequences. I must be clear on this point, for God says, 'If it is the consequences you are afraid of, don't come to Me for protection.' There is a great difference between a selfish fear of consequences, and wanting God's protection because you have a work to carry out for Him. Have we really got victory?"

Mr. Howells's mention of the shelter to which he said he could take the children, referred to his obligation to provide a shelter for the day scholars, then numbering about 300. But for the scholars and the missionaries' children, numbering about sixty, who were part of the College family, the Lord had told him to provide neither shelters nor gas masks (although any individual was perfectly free to have one if he should wish). God fully vindicated his stand throughout the war, by not allowing a bomb to fall on any College property, although the town with its strategic docks had some very heavy raids. But to continue from the journals:

September 3 (After a heavy raid in the night). "I am sure the Lord took me up town to see about £2,000,000 worth of property on the ground. I thought, 'Was it worth taking Penllergaer, if this is what happens? Is it worth carrying a burden and agonizing for the sake of the Kingdom?' I saw what these properties will be like, unless God protects them. I found myself praying for the town, as much as I had prayed for the College the night before."

September 4. "The situation in the country because of air

raids may become very serious. We have never walked this way before. The important thing is to find out where God is in this. When you are in danger every night, it takes you a long time to be sure that you are under God's protection. Can you say you are safe in the air raids? Has God told you? You may try to use the Word of God without having His power behind it. If God is going to deliver from this hell, there will have to be some power released. Unless you are sure of your own victory, you will never be able to pray for the deliverance of the country. We have bound the devil over and over again, and I hope we shall do it again when God's time comes in this war."

September 7. "How many people have been moved by the affliction of these air raids? If you can believe that you have been delivered from hell, why can't you believe that you have been delivered from air raids? I have always found something that has given me joy all day long and my joy to-day is that we have God's protection. But unless we are really trusting Him, where does the praise come in? This peace the Saviour gives is not an artificial one. It is so deep that even the devil can't disturb it. You can't hear things in the Spirit, while you have any turmoil or fear in you. You can't take a shade of fear into the presence of God."

September 8. National Day of Prayer. 9 a.m. "Our country has only the outward form of religion, neither cold nor hot, like the church at Laodicea. May God bring the nation back. Our one cause for praise is that the enemy has not been able to invade our country."

At the midday service, just as Mr. Howells began to speak, the Nazi planes passed overhead; the guns in the field below crashed out and the siren sounded; but he went on with his message, and "the congregation was

held spellbound." It was at this point that the burden of prayer for protection and the questionings of the past few days changed into praise and certainty. Full assurance of victory was given, and it rings out in Mr. Howells's words: "What victory! Those who are in the Spirit see it is victory, because He has found believing in us. What joy! What praise! God would probably not give faith for victory in the war, until personal victory was first gained." The all-clear sounded as the service finished. They sang in closing: "Death is vanquished, tell it with joy, ye faithful."

In the afternoon meeting of the same day, he said: "I could now put it in print that no devil can touch anyone here. There is no need to pray any more. When you believe, you finish with prayer. We have never been in such victory before, carrying on exactly as if there was no war. How could we get victory for the world, unless we had first believed it for ourselves? You can't trust in anything except believing prayer. How the Holy Ghost came down this morning in the communion service and told us of His victory!"

September 9. "The Holy Ghost has found faith equal to what He wants to do. Take care you are believing. Believing is the most delicate thing you can think of. It is like a vapour. You might easily miss it. The victory happened yesterday morning, and if you didn't see it, you may never see it. From this time on He can guide this battle, but He couldn't do it before without faith."

September 10. "What if millions of prayers went up on the Day of Prayer, and no one had believed? After the victory of Sunday there is great liberty to pray that God will really deal with the devil in the Nazis and put an end to this wicked system. Our prayer for London is that God will turn the tide now and save life. No doubt

the enemy is pouring scorn on last Sunday's National Day of prayer." 1940

September 11, with the Battle of Britain over London and the south of England at its fiercest: "There have been so many places bombed in London, even Buckingham Palace has been touched. I was burdened to pray for the King and Queen, and I believe our prayer will be answered. I am just watching how God will take hold of the enemy."

September 12. "We prayed last night that London would be defended and that the enemy would fail to break through, and God answered prayer. Unless God can get hold of this devil and bind him, no man is safe. If we have protection for our properties, why not get protection for the country? What wonderful days these are."

September 14. "Because we have believed, God has made known to us what is to come to pass. Every creature is to hear the Gospel; Palestine is to be regained by the Jews; and the Saviour is to return."

Mr. Churchill, in his *War Memoirs*, gives *September 15* as "the culminating date" in that Battle of the Air. He tells how he visited the Operations Room of the R.A.F. that day and watched as the enemy squadrons poured over and ours went up to meet them, until the moment came when he asked the Air Marshal, "What other reserves have we?" "There are none," he answered, and reported afterwards how grave Mr. Churchill looked, "and well I might," added Mr. Churchill. Then another five minutes passed, and "it appeared that the enemy were going home. The shifting of the discs on the table showed a continuous eastward movement of German bombers and fighters. No new attack appeared. In another ten minutes the action was ended." There seemed no reason why the *Luftwaffe* should have turned for

home, just at the moment when victory was in their grasp. But we know why.

After the war, Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding, Commander-in-Chief of Fighter Command in the Battle of Britain, made this significant comment: "Even during the battle one realized from day to day how much external support was coming in. At the end of the battle one had the sort of feeling that there had been some special Divine intervention to alter some sequence of events which would otherwise have occurred."

Chapter Thirty-six

RUSSIA, NORTH AFRICA, ITALY, "D" DAY

VICTORY IN THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN SAVED THE country from invasion, but the enemy sought to recompense himself by heavier, indiscriminate night-bombing, which continued into 1941. In January of that year, this constant bombing of Britain became a prayer burden at the College, until it reached a crisis.

"I feel much more strongly to-day," said Mr. Howells in the *January 20* meeting, "that God has stopped me praying more for this town than for the country. He tells me, 'If these air raids are going to be repeated, I cannot guarantee you will be safe, so come and pray them out of the country'; and I said to Him, 'You protect us now, until we get a chance to come up and believe You.'"

Ten days were spent in prayer, and then on *January 28*, the journal stated, "Believed for the protection of the country." This was followed by the remarkable petition: "Lord, turn the enemy down to the Mediterranean", and thus relieve the pressure on Britain, by turning Hitler's attention in another direction. Just over two months later, on *April 6*, war was declared by Hitler on Yugoslavia and Greece, and this was followed by the invasion of Crete and North Africa. With these new commitments the enemy was obliged to turn from the destruction of Britain, and so the immediate crisis for this country passed over.

The next prayer was greater still. We suppose nothing gave the world a bigger shock through the whole course

of the war than when, without a word of warning, Hitler swung round and invaded Russia. If anything was seen to be an intervention of God to help the Allies, it was that. The secular papers spoke of it in the words of the pagan proverb, "Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad." That decision of Hitler was reckoned as one of the great acts of divine intervention which spelt the "doom of the Nazis". The invasion of Russia started at 4 a.m. on *June 22, 1941*. But seven weeks previously, on *May 2*, God had begun to speak to Mr. Howells about Russia, and he said that day: "Much as we long to see the war finished, it seems that God is saying, 'There is one country more I want to bring judgment on, and that is Communist Russia'." And again on the next day: "Russia comes before me. Is it right for Stalin and his followers to escape? If God gives us the choice, would we tell Him to prolong the war, although we are losing on every point?" And again: "We ask the Lord to weaken Russia and Japan, even if it means prolonging the war for five years. Can't the Lord turn the enemy's drive into Russia? If God does not deal with Russia now, He will have to make another war to do so. I say He ought to bring Russia into it, no matter how long it will take, unless He has another way to get at these communists." From that time this became the main prayer of the College: "Lord, bring Russia into the war and deal with Communism." Six weeks later Russia had come in!

But very soon the danger was of another kind. Russia was in, but after a few short weeks was facing imminent collapse. As the German hordes poured into that country, how well we remember the anxiety with which the free world watched the gradual disintegration of the Russian armies, and the constantly closer approach of the Nazis to Moscow. It was a race with winter. It was a repetition of the famous invasion of Napoleon. Hitler proclaimed

that he would succeed where Napoleon had failed, and winter in an intact Moscow. Would he? Did anybody in those tense days believe he would not? His armies were almost at the gates of the city. On Sunday, October 19, 1941, Mrs. Howells relates that very early that morning Mr. Howells told her he would go down and hear the seven o'clock news to see if Moscow had fallen. When he came back he said it had not fallen, but that they were expecting bad news any time. A few minutes after that, the Lord began to speak to him: "Is there any need for Moscow to fall? Why don't you pray and believe for Me to save Moscow and give a set-back to the Nazis?"

Dr. Kenneth G. Symonds, F.R.C.S., who has been a member of the College staff for twelve years, tells us of the meeting that Sunday morning. "The Director opened his message by saying that the first thing the Lord had told him that morning was, 'Pray that Moscow will not fall!' It seemed ridiculously impossible for we had heard that its fall was inevitable; but although the prayer was so far beyond us, yet the Spirit laid it on us. It seemed that He prayed in spite of us, so we travailed all day, until in the late meeting that night, He so inspired us through His servant that we had the assurance that God was answering. The Lord gave liberty to pray that the Nazis might be utterly overthrown in a Russian winter. We shall never forget the joy of victory He gave us as faith mounted up during those days." The second day the news was that the Russians had taken fresh courage and the snow was falling heavily in some parts. Four days later in the meeting Mr. Howells said, "I say now, 'Thus saith the Lord: he (Hitler) is wintering in the Russian snows'." We all know the end of the story; Moscow never fell, and Goering, recounting later the misfortunes of that winter, stated that three millions

of the flower of the Nazi army perished in the snow. Victor Kravchenko in his book, *I Chose Freedom*, said: "The Germans could have taken Moscow those days virtually without a struggle. . . Why they turned back is a mystery only the Germans themselves can solve for history."

God now began to turn the prayers of the College into yet another direction. With the Nazis marching through Yugoslavia and Greece and capturing Crete, and with the menace of Rommel and the Italians growing in North Africa, prayer began to be centred on the Bible Lands. This was really one of the main burdens of prayer on the College, because long before, God had revealed to them that this was not just a European war, but that through it, "in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," the Jews would return to Palestine, the Gospel go out to every creature, and the Saviour be able to return. Thus as soon as the Bible Lands seemed in danger of invasion, God turned their prayer in that direction. "I am sure," said Mr. Howells, "the enemy will never touch Palestine, Syria and Iraq."

The area of greatest immediate danger was North Africa. With the appearance of Rommel and the German armoured divisions there, the menace to Egypt became grave; and if Egypt fell, the door was wide open to Palestine. Again we remember those dark days when Rommel had driven back our armies and was almost knocking on the gates of Alexandria.

"Unless God will intervene on behalf of Palestine," said Mr. Howells on *July 4, 1942*, "there will be no safety there for the Jews. These Bible Lands must be protected, because it is to these lands the Saviour will come back. If I had the choice to-day, I would say to God, 'Take all I have, but preserve Palestine.' We want to say to God to-day, 'unless there is a special reason for Egypt to fall,

don't let Alexandria be taken, but give Rommel a setback.' Can I carry the same burden to-day for Alexandria, as I would if Swansea were being attacked?" It was a Saturday and there were not usually prayer meetings on Saturday afternoons; but that day the College was called to spend the afternoon in prayer for God to save Alexandria and turn the tide in North Africa. There was a heavy burden, but very great liberty in prayer. In the meeting that evening, Mr. Howells said, "Is this prayer we prayed this afternoon of the Holy Ghost, that the enemy is *not* to take Alexandria? I am speaking to all of you who took a real part in the prayers against the enemy, praying him down to the Mediterranean, praying him to Russia, keeping him out of Moscow! Is this prayer of the Holy Spirit? If it is, we can be as sure of the enemy not taking Alexandria as the people will be when they hear it." Then on *July 5*, "All I want to know is, Has the intercession been gained for the Bible Lands? If it has, we have the right to prevail on God that the enemy is not to take Alexandria. The first test point since Moscow is Alexandria."

That evening Mr. Howells and the College came through to victory. "I thought he might be allowed to take Egypt," he said, "but I know now he will never take Egypt—neither Alexandria nor Cairo will fall." And at the end of the meeting he declared, "I have been stirred to my depths to-day. I have been like a man ploughing his way through sand. But now I am on top of it, now I am gripping it; I am handling it. I can shake it."

The following week they read in the news how grave things had been in North Africa on that very Saturday when the extra prayer meeting was called, and it was over that week-end that the tide turned at El Alamein, and Alexandria was saved. Major P. W. Rainer, who was

responsible for supplying the Eighth Army with water, tells this story of a remarkable and possibly deciding incident in the battle for Alexandria, in his book, *Pipe Line to Battle*, as quoted in the Magazine of the Merchant Service Officers' Christian Association of April 1944.

Between Rommel's men and Alexandria were the remnants of a British army—fifty tanks, a few score field guns, and about 5,000 soldiers. The sides were equally matched, with the Germans holding the advantage, because of their superior 88 mm. guns. Both armies were near exhaustion from heat, dust and lack of water. The battle was grim. In the words of Major Rainer: "The sun was almost overhead, and our men were fast reaching the end of their endurance, when the Nazis broke. Ten minutes more and it might have been us. Slowly, sullenly the Mark IV tanks lumbered back from their battle smoke. And then an incredible thing happened: 1,100 men of the 90th Light Panzer Division, the élite of the Afrika Korps, came stumbling across the barren sand with their hands in the air. Cracked and black with coagulated blood, their swollen tongues were protruding from their mouths. Crazily they tore water bottles from the necks of our men and poured life-giving swallows between their parched lips." Major Rainer then goes on to give this reason for their surrender. The Germans had been twenty-four hours without water, when they overran the British defences and found a 6-inch water pipe. They shot holes in it and drank deeply. Only when they had taken great gulps, did they realize that it was sea water. The pipe had only just been laid, and Major Rainer had started to test it. Fresh water was never used for tests on pipes—it was too precious. "The day before, it would have been empty," he writes. "Two days later it would have been full of fresh water... The Nazis didn't detect the salt at once, because their sense

of taste had already been anaesthetised by the brackish water they had been used to, and by thirst." The surrender of those 1,100 crack soldiers may have been the deciding incident in the battle for Alexandria. The Editor's comment is: "Such an incredible happening as this cannot be treated as a mere coincidence. Assuredly the Hand of Almighty God is in evidence once more, coming to our aid when weighty issues are in the balance."

The attention of the College then had to be turned back again to the Russian campaign, if the Bible Lands were to be safe. The danger from the south was now over, but as the Germans, having failed in their attempt on Moscow, pressed eastward through southern Russia and approached Stalingrad, they were coming near the Caucasus Mountains. Once across that range, the door would be wide open to the Bible Lands from the north. Dr. Symonds tells us that "The Nazis had already penetrated the defences of Stalingrad, and were fighting in the suburbs of the town, when quite unexpectedly the Director announced that the Holy Spirit was urging him to pray that Stalingrad should not fall. The reason was that Stalingrad is the gateway to the Caucasus, and the Caucasus to the Bible Lands. The enemy had made two attempts to occupy these lands, the first via Crete, which brought the prayer from the Spirit that the Nazi hordes should be turned against Russia; and the second via North Africa, which had resulted in the divine intervention in answer to believing prayer at El Alamein. But this prayer for Stalingrad seemed the hardest of all to take hold of. For a whole fortnight we wrestled, the Spirit through His servant insisting that, the prayer having come from Him, we were to be responsible to see it through to a successful issue, as with Moscow.

"In spite of our cries the enemy continued to advance

until half of the city was in his hands. The fighting there from house to house was some of the most desperate in the whole war; but the conflict in the Spirit was correspondingly desperate. Contrary to all human reason, as the news got darker, faith rose higher, until we found the enemy was giving way before us. At the same time the tide turned in the visible battle and, to the wonder of the world, the Nazi army was driven out again utterly broken and demoralized. It was another mighty triumph of the Holy Spirit."

Some months later, with these four great prayer battles behind them—the invasion of Britain, Alexandria, Moscow and Stalingrad, the College were much interested to see an article published in the press by the military commentator, General J. R. C. Fuller, in which he gave four reasons for the impending doom of the Nazis. Hitler's four blunders, he called them. Blunder No. 1 was missing the chance to invade Britain. Blunder No. 2, his failure to attack Egypt and gain Alexandria. Blunder No. 3, "Everything in the Russian campaign depended on the fall of Moscow. Yet Hitler turned away to other objectives." Blunder No. 4, "Hitler's final mistake—the great attack on Stalingrad."

X On two further occasions there were times of special concentration in prayer, one in the invasion of Italy, and the other for "D" Day. In the battle for Italy, the danger spot was Salerno, where our troops landed in September, 1943, to capture some strategic heights and open the way for the invading forces from the south to reach Rome. "The day of the landing at Salerno and its sequel will always be outstanding in my memory," says Dr. Symonds. "We had the first evening prayer meeting as usual in the Conference Hall, and gathered again at 9.45 p.m. for the late meeting in Derwen Fawr. It had a solemn tone from the outset, the Director's voice trembling with the burden

of his message, and scarcely audible, as he said, "The Lord has burdened me between the meetings with the invasion at Salerno. I believe our men are in great difficulties, and the Lord has told me that unless we can pray through, they are in danger of losing their hold." The awe of God settled down upon us, for this came as a complete surprise, there having been no official news to this effect on the wireless, and we ourselves having previously had some rejoicing that Italy was at last on the point of being delivered from the Fascist and Nazi tyranny. Before long we were on our knees crying to God for Him to intervene. The Spirit took hold of us and suddenly broke right through in the prayers, and we found ourselves praising and rejoicing, believing that God had heard and answered. We could not go on praying any longer, so we rose from our knees and began to sing praises, the Spirit witnessing in all our hearts that God had wrought some miraculous intervention in Italy. The victory was so outstanding that I looked at the clock as we rose to sing. *It was on the stroke of 11 p.m.*

"We waited to hear the midnight news. The announcer gravely told us in effect exactly what the Director had told us from the Lord—that unless some miracle happened, our troops were in grave danger of losing the beachhead before the morning. This only served to confirm to us the guidance of the Spirit, and we felt more confident than ever that the victory was certain. The news next morning was more hopeful, but we eagerly awaited newspaper reports from the Front. We were not disappointed. On Thursday morning one of the daily newspapers displayed a front page headline in large print, "The Miracle of Salerno". The account of the reporter personally at the Front ran somewhat as follows: 'I was with our advanced troops in the invasion of Salerno on Monday. The enemy artillery was advancing

rapidly and with ceaseless firing. The noise was terrible, and it was obvious that unless a miracle happened, our troops could never hold up the advance long enough for the beach-head to be established. Suddenly, for no accountable reason the firing ceased and the Nazi artillery stopped its advance. A deathly stillness settled on the scene. We waited in breathless anticipation, but nothing happened. I looked at my watch—*it was eleven o'clock at night*. Still we waited, but still nothing happened; and nothing happened all that night, but those hours made all the difference to the invasion. By the morning the beach-head was established."

In the last great prayer-battle of the war—for the opening of the Second Front—we will quote again some of Mr. Howells's own words. On *April 6, 1944* just two months before "D" Day, he was saying in the meetings: "We are concerned for the young people who are about to enter the Second Front. Can we believe that our young men can go through with the minimum of loss? If God intervened in Moscow, Stalingrad, Alexandria and our own country, can't He intervene in the Second Front and stop us from having a set-back? We have a perfect right to ask God to come and fight with our young men, because our leaders only want the Atlantic Charter and its Four Freedoms, as the result of this war. If we got victory at Stalingrad, we can get it here. We know that He is on the side of our men, and I see nothing to-night but victory."

A month later (*May 7*), he said: "I am speaking at a time when 5,000,000 men are facing the Second Front. These young men from America are in our country waiting for the invasion, and many thousands may be lost. In Verdun the French lost 1,000,000. If I am not called up to fight, and I know another way to help them and I don't do it, I ought to be killed instead of them.

They are facing death, and anyone who has faced death knows it is a serious thing, and they are facing it for you and me. If they suffer more than we suffer for them, it will be our lifelong shame. If there is a Second Front next week, is there a God in heaven who can intervene? When it starts, Governor Dewey of New York is calling all his State to prayer. The worst of it is that Germany is a Protestant country, and so are we, but it is not the German nation we are fighting; it is the Nazi régime. We believe God is on our side and He says, 'I will not sheathe the sword until the Charter is established and the world set free.'

In another meeting God gave the assurance to the College that on "D" Day "He was going over before our troops, and they would not have a set-back." "The believing was so strong that we were able to take it," wrote one who was present. "After the burden we had been carrying, the relief was so great that I went to my room, fell on my knees and burst into tears. They were tears of joy and sheer relief from a tremendous tension. It was just as real to me then as if the whole Second Front had been established and the victory actually won."

On *June 6*, the day of the opening of the Second Front, Mr. Howells read with great approval General Eisenhower's Order of the Day to the assault troops, in which he said, "The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you... let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking"; and still more, the wonderful speech of the King, which he broadcast to the country, solemnly calling his people to prayer and dedication, when he said, "Surely not one of us is too busy to play our part in a nation-wide, perchance a world-wide, vigil of prayer as the great crusade sets forth." In the meeting Mr. Howells said: "If there is going to be a Day of Prayer, it ought to

be a day of victory and moving God." And in his own prayer at the end of that meeting, thinking of the assault troops already landing in Normandy, he prayed, "If You hadn't intervened at Dunkirk, not one of us would be here to-day. So lay a burden on us, don't allow us to be slack. If Hitler had won, Christianity, civilization and freedom would have gone. Oh Lord, protect and keep our men! Don't allow us to pray any differently from what we would if we were on the front line. We do believe the end of this will be victory."

Finally, on *July 8*, he said: "I don't think there is anything to compare with the night we invaded Normandy. We said that God was going before our men, and it wasn't going to be like Dunkirk. The *Daily Telegraph* reported that it was only that night the U-Boats did not patrol the channel. The way we went over to Normandy was beyond imagination—4,000 ships and 11,000 planes—and they never met a single ship or plane of the enemy! God said, 'I am going over and there won't be a set-back'; and although, while I am preaching, there is a big battle on, I go back to His word that there will be no reverses."

The consummation of these six years of prayer came in June, 1945, with the establishment of the United Nations at San Francisco. No vain hopes of final world peace were based on that, for the prayer in the College for the Gospel to go to every creature, and for the Jews to return to Palestine, has always been with the one great anticipation of the return of the Saviour in glory, and the setting up of the Millennial Kingdom, when at last there will be "peace on earth"; but it was the answer to these years of prayer for the reopening of the world to the Gospel, so that every creature might hear in this generation.

Chapter Thirty-seven

HOME CALL

THIS PERIOD OF INTERCESSION WAS NOW ENDED. During the war years God had called the College apart to intercede for the world, as years before He had shut in Mr. Howells alone with Himself to intercede for one soul. Now that the war was over, links of fellowship were renewed with the foreign field. The College has always stood for fellowship with all faithful servants of Christ throughout the world; through the years students have gone out with various organizations, and numbers of Societies have been helped financially. Leaders and members of many missions have been visitors at the College, and from the time it was founded, God told His servant never to let a missionary visit the place without sending him away with a gift—even if it was the last he had in his possession. Now that the College was freed from the burden of prayer for the war, the Lord began to lay upon them afresh the needs of the mission field. The annual Every Creature Conference was started in 1947, and the training of students for all fields.

The special burden on Mr. Howells's own heart was finance for getting the Gospel to every creature, finance which could be expended freely in the support of God's servants in all lands. This burden never left him till Sunday, January 15, 1950. In the nine o'clock meeting that night he read the songs of Moses and David, then he said, "Everything in me is praising God because the Holy Ghost can say, 'I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do.' Every creature will hear the Gospel, the finance for the Vision is safe, and the King will come