



MARKERS ALONG THE CONGREGATIONAL WAY

During the season of Lent we have special opportunities to grow in the life of prayer. There are hundreds of devotional books available. A treasure among them is a small volume written at the request of the authorities of the Congregational Union of England and Wales as their Lenten book for 1947.

In the Secret Place of the Most High being Some Studies in Prayer by Arthur John Gossip. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Psalm xci, 1. The nine chapters bear intriguing titles: "Our Real Trouble; and its Cure;" "The First Law of Prayer;" "Some Further Axioms and Postulates of Prayer;" "On the Characteristic Note of Christian Prayer;" "On the Prayer of Confession and the Numbed Sense of Sin;" "On Thinking Magnificently About God; A Study in Adoration;" "On the Priestly Office of a Christian;" "Some Problems Concerning the Prayer of Petition;" "On Some Methods of Prayer."

Within the limitations of this article one chooses to look at the chapter "On the Priestly Office of a Christian," discussing intercessory prayer. For many people the supreme moment of the worship service is the intercessory prayer. In the prayer of intercession, Christians exercise their high calling to the priesthood of believers "to help Christ in His healing and saving of this vast and needy world. Gossip asks, "Why do we go to church? To worship God; that first, that foremost; to bless and praise and magnify His holy name....it is what God does, and not what we do, that is the all important thing. The central words of Christianity are God's free grace."

Gossip observes: "If we make fitting use of our duty of intercession, we shall go far to save ourselves from an ugly malady, from which many, who do not realize it, suffer – the sin of spiritual selfishness."

Serious Christian intercessory prayer calls forth the creative spiritual imagination and empathy. When ministers and parish visitors call upon house-bound older members who lament their inability to work for the church as they once did, these folk should be reminded of intercessory prayer and their opportunity to participate in the priestly office of a Christian.

In every generation the Church needs prayer, "much believing, loving prayer."

ARVEL M. STEECE



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WILLIAM ELEAZER BARTON, (b. Sublette, Illinois, June 28, 1861, d. Brooklyn, New York, December 7, 1930), is remembered for his books on Congregationalism. However, he made many other contributions to the religious life of his generation.

William E. Barton was educated at Berea College, (B.S, 1885; M.S, 1888; M.A. 1890); Oberlin Theological Seminary (B.D., 1890). Ordained to the Congregational ministry in 1885, he served churches in Tennessee and Ohio. He was minister at Shawmut Church, Boston, 1893-99; First Church, Oak Park, Illinois, 1899-1924; and Collegeside, Nashville, Tennessee, 1928-30, which he organized.

He was secretary of the Commission of Nineteen on Polity, for the National Council of Congregational Churches 1910-13, which led a major re-structure of the fellowship agencies in American Congregationalism. He was moderator of the National Council 1921-23.

Barton participated in the programs of the International Congregational Council with addresses. In 1899 (Boston), he spoke at Plymouth Rock concerning Pilgrim history. In 1908 (Edinburgh, Scotland) his subject was "The Person of Christ." In 1920 (Boston) he treated Polity and in 1930 (Bournemouth, England) he considered Church Unity.

He was an associate editor of The Advance (1904-12) and editor-in-chief (1913-17). The Advance and The Congregationalist merged in 1917. He was a corresponding editor, The Congregationalist (1917-1930).

Barton lectured at the Chicago Theological Seminary (applied practical theology, 1905-09, and ecclesiastical law, 1911). At the Atlanta Theological Seminary Foundation his subjects were biographical leadership and practical theology (1928-1930).

He wrote a number of books in addition to A Congregational Manual of Theory and Practice...(1910); Rules of Order for Religious Assemblies...(1910); The Law of Congregational Usage (1915); and Congregational Creeds and Covenants(1917).

Barton was a recognized Lincoln scholar and published a two volume life of Lincoln (1925) as well as other works on that subject.

The Parables of Saged the Sage (1917) was a collection of popular parables he had written for The Advance. They were copied by other papers before appearing in book form. Other Saged volumes appeared (1917-25). Some of the language may be dated but the themes transcend time.

William E. Barton received a number of honorary degrees: Berea College DD (1895); Knox College LLD (1913); Drury College LLD (1923); Carleton College Litt D (1924).

His son, Bruce Barton, was one of the founders of BBD&O, the famous advertising agency and a pioneer in the development of modern advertising in the 20th Century.

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This autumn we celebrate the Bicentennial of the Haystack Prayer Meeting in Williamstown, Massachusetts in August of 1806. A group of Williams College students praying about sharing the Christian gospel with the world sought refuge in a haystack from a sudden thunderstorm. Their commitment to missions sent them after graduation from Williams College to Andover Seminary where they completed their theological education. Then they persuaded a ministerial group to form the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1810. The ABCFM celebrated a Centennial of the Haystack Prayer Meeting in 1906.

The president was Samuel Billings Capen (1842-1914) a native of Boston whose ancestors were in the Puritan migration of the 1630s. He was graduated at Boston English High School in 1858 and entered the carpet business. He became a partner in 1864 and continued in business until 1909. A successful merchant he was active in church and civic affairs. He began with Sunday School work in Central Congregational Church, Jamaica Plain, where he lived after his marriage in 1869.

In 1882 Capen became president of the Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society when it faced an uncertain future. His devotion and keen business sense led to a re-organization of the board of directors that included other similarly motivated business men. The Society increased its capital and became a profitable ancestor of the Pilgrim Press.

In 1899 he became president of the ABCFM, stabilized its finances and served with the same energy and competence which had marked his earlier career. Capen played an active role in the Centennial of the Haystack Prayer Meeting in 1906 when the ABCFM held its meeting in North Adams, Massachusetts. In September 1913 he journeyed to the Orient as president of the ABCFM and a representative of the World Peace Foundation. After an active itinerary in Ceylon and India, he died of pneumonia in Shanghai, China, in January 1914.

Despite his lack of extended formal schooling he had a lifelong interest in education. At a turbulent time in the history of the Boston Public Schools, he was elected to the Boston School Committee and served from 1888 to 1893 the last year as chairman. Higher education for women enlisted his support. In 1900 he became a trustee of Wellesley College and served as president of the board of trustees from 1905 until his death. Other interests such as the Municipal League, the Indian Association, temperance reform, and world peace also claimed his talents.

Samuel Billings Capen was a member of the American Congregational Association board of directors and also served as a vice-president. When the Second International Congregational Council was held in Boston in 1899, he was a participant in the program. His published work aside from contributions to religious journals consisted chiefly of addresses. Foreign Missions and World Peace (1912) A World Peace Foundation Pamphlet was probably most widely known.

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A century ago a remarkable Congregationalist died in Waterloo, Iowa. EPHRAIM ADAMS (1818-1907) was a member of the Iowa Band. That was not a musical organization. In the nineteenth century groups of theological students occasionally covenanted to go to the west. Each man pledged to gather a church and together the group or band would seek to establish a college. They received their names from the school whence they came and/or the state whither they went.

The Illinois Band (the Yale Band) was a group who went to Illinois and founded Illinois College at Jacksonville in 1829. Their success encouraged other similar ventures. Hence the Iowa Band (the Andover Band) from Andover Theological Seminary went to Iowa and founded Iowa College at Davenport in 1846.

Ephraim Adams was born in New Ipswich, New Hampshire, and graduated Dartmouth College (1839) and Andover Theological Seminary (1843). He was ordained by the Denmark Association, Denmark, Iowa, November 5, 1843. He was a home missionary at Mount Pleasant, Iowa 1843-44. He served the church at Davenport 1844-1855; was agent for Iowa College 1855-56; agent for the Western College Society 1856-57; was minister at Decorah, Iowa 1857-71. He became home missionary superintendent 1872-81 and continued to reside in Decorah. He was pastor at Eldora 1883-89 and at Hudson 1891.

Adams was a trustee for Iowa College which gave him a D.D. He related Congregational History in his book, *The Iowa Band* (1880), *The Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society*. A new and revised edition was published by the Pilgrim Press (1902).

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JOSIAH BUSHNELL GRINNELL (1821-1891) a native of New Haven, Vermont, graduated at Oneida Institute (1843) and Auburn (New York) Theological Seminary (1847). Ordained in Union Village/Greenwich, New York 1848, he served the church there 1847-50. He assisted in founding a short-lived church in Washington D.C. A sermon he preached against slavery resulted in his removal. Grinnell went west to Iowa where in 1854 he founded the town that bears his name. He made his home there for the rest of his life and served as mayor in 1880.

A prominent abolitionist, he aided fugitive slaves and at one time slave-holders offered a reward for his capture.

He was one of the founders of the Republican Party in Iowa and a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1860. He was a State Senator 1856-60 and a member of the United States House of Representatives 1862-66.

He was acting pastor at Grinnell 1854-56. For thirty years, he was a trustee of Iowa College (now Grinnell College). He was a Regent of Iowa State University.

Grinnell's career is exemplary of the interests and contributions of Congregational clergy in the settlement of the United States. They participated in the life of their times beyond their theological and intellectual concerns. Grinnell was a director of railroads. In 1884 he was commissioner of the United State Bureau of Animal Industry. In 1885 he was president of the American Agricultural Association. He was the first to bring Devon cattle and Clydesdale horses to Iowa.

Josiah Bushnell Grinnell's publications included sermons, historical addresses, and numerous Congregational speeches. Middlebury College gave him an honorary A.M. Grinnell's autobiography, Men and Events of Forty Years (1891), was published near the time of his death.

Among Iowa institutions of higher education there was some confusion of nomenclature. There was The University of Iowa (1847) Iowa City; Iowa State Teachers College (1876) Cedar Falls; Iowa College (1846), Davenport removed in 1859 to Grinnell and was renamed Grinnell College in 1909.

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