

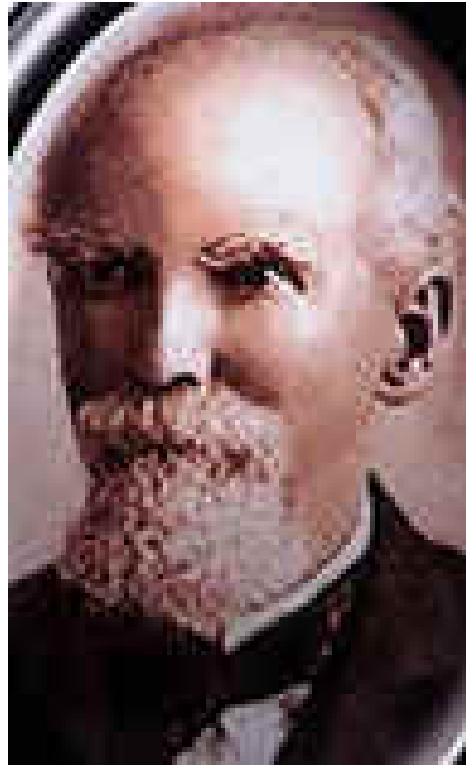
# The Purpose of Prayer

*[Excerpts IV, XI and XII]*

BY

**E. M. Bounds**

*Messages from God's servants  
in former days*



1835 – 1913

**Edward McKendree Bounds** — Born in Missouri on August 15, 1835; and died on August 24, 1913. He was trained and apprenticed as an attorney, but instead of pursuing a legal career, he entered the ministry in his early twenties. In 1859 he was ordained as pastor of the Monticello Methodist Church in Missouri. Bounds was an associate editor of the official Methodist newspaper, *The Christian Advocate*, and is best known for his numerous books on the subject of prayer.

## **TELEIOS – An Equipping Ministry**

Camelback Bible Church

3900 East Stanford

Paradise Valley, AZ 85253

(December, 2007)

Homer W. Hodge, in his “Word Portrait of Dr. E.M. Bounds”, provides us with some powerful glimpses into the heart of this amazing prayer warrior. We can all be challenged and raised to new heights of prayer through his example.

E.M. Bounds was passionately devoted to his beloved Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. His devotion was extraordinary in that he was praying and writing about Him all the time, except when sleeping.

God gave E.M. Bounds an “enlargedness” of heart and an insatiable desire to do service for Him. He is easily the “Betelgeuse” (star) of the devotional sky. Hodge makes a strong declaration that “There is no man that has lived since the days of the Apostles that has surpassed him in the depths of his marvelous research into the Life of Prayer.”

- Bounds was a meek and humble man – never known to retaliate upon his enemies. Instead, he cried over them and wept for them in prayer.
- Bounds wasted no time on frauds in profession.
- While John Wesley was preaching and riding all day, Bounds was praying and writing day and night.
- At the age of 75, Bounds was able to pray for three hours upon his knees.
- Unlike Wesley, Bounds was comparatively unknown outside of his church. His piety, genius and popularity, once dammed up, are now beginning to sweep with resistless force through the devotional world.
- Bounds was the incarnation of unearthliness, humility and self-denial; He will live in the hearts of saints for eternity.

In one of many letters to Homer Hodge, Bounds wrote of dying, “When He is ready, I am ready; I long to taste the joys of the heavenlies.” On August 24, 1913, E.M. Bounds was busily engaged in writing on his manuscripts when the Lord said unto him, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord.”

Referring to John Wesley and E.M. Bounds, Hodge remarks that these two men “held ideals high and clear beyond the reach of other men.” He then leaves us with this thought-provoking question: “Has this race of men entirely gone out of the world now that they (Wesley and Bounds) are dead? Let us pray.”

So be it.



## IV

*The potency of prayer hath subdued the strength of fire; it had bridled the rage of lions, hushed the anarchy to rest, extinguished wars, appeased the elements, expelled demons, burst the chains of death, expanded the gates of heaven, assuaged diseases, repelled frauds, rescued cities from destruction, stayed the sun in its course, and arrested the progress of the thunderbolt. Prayer is an all-efficient panoply, a treasure undiminished, a mine which is never exhausted, a sky unobscured by clouds, a heaven unruffled by the storm. It is the root, the fountain, the mother of a thousand blessings.—Chrysostom*

*The prayers of holy men appease God's wrath, drive away temptations, resist and overcome the devil, procure the ministry and service of angels, rescind the decrees of God. Prayer cures sickness and obtains pardon; it arrests the sun in its course and stays the wheels of the chariot of the moon; it rules over all gods and opens and shuts the storehouses of rain, it unlocks the cabinet of the womb and quenches the violence of fire; it stops the mouths of lions and reconciles our suffering and weak faculties with the violence of torment and violence of persecution; it pleases God and supplies all our need.—Jeremy Taylor*

*More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice rise like a fountain for me night and day. For what are men better than sheep or goats, that nourish a blind life within the brain, if, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer both for themselves and those who call them friend? For so the whole round earth is every way bound by gold chains about the feet of God.—Tennyson*

*Perfect prayer is only another name for love.—Fenelon*

It was said of the late C. H. Spurgeon, that he glided from laughter to prayer with the naturalness of one who lived in both elements. With him the habit of prayer was free and unfettered. His life was not divided into compartments, the one shut off from the other with a rigid exclusiveness that barred all intercommunication. He lived in constant fellowship with his Father in Heaven. He was ever in touch with God, and thus it was as natural for him to pray as it was for him to breathe.

“What a fine time we have had; let us thank God for it,” he said to a friend on one occasion, when, out under the blue sky and wrapped in glorious sunshine, they had enjoyed a holiday with the unfettered enthusiasm of schoolboys. Prayer sprang as spontaneously to his lips as did ordinary speech, and never was there the slightest

incongruity in his approach to the Divine throne straight from any scene in which he might be taking part.

That is the attitude with regard to prayer that ought to mark every child of God. There are, and there ought to be, stated seasons of communication with God when, everything else shut out, we come into His presence to talk to Him and to let Him speak to us; and out of such seasons springs that beautiful habit of prayer that weaves a golden bond between earth and heaven. Without such stated seasons the habit of prayer can never be formed; without them there is no nourishment for the spiritual life. By means of them the soul is lifted into a new atmosphere—the atmosphere of the heavenly city, in which it is easy to open the heart to God and to speak with Him as friend speaks with friend.

Thus, in every circumstance of life, prayer is the most natural out-pouring of the soul, the unhindered turning to God for communion and direction. Whether in sorrow or in joy, in defeat or in victory, in health or in weakness, in calamity or in success, the heart leaps to meet with God just as a child runs to his mother's arms, ever sure that with her is the sympathy that meets every need.

Dr. Adam Clarke, in his autobiography, records that when Mr. Wesley was returning to England by ship, considerable delay was caused by contrary winds. Wesley was reading, when he became aware of some confusion on board, and asking what was the matter, he was informed that the wind was contrary. "Then," was his reply, "let us go to prayer."

After Dr. Clarke had prayed, Wesley broke out into fervent supplication which seemed to be more the offering of faith than of mere desire. "Almighty and everlasting God," he prayed. "Thou hast sway everywhere, and all things serve the purpose of Thy will, Thou holdest the winds in Thy fists and sittest upon the water floods, and reignest a King for ever. Command these winds and these waves that they obey Thee, and take us speedily and safely to the haven whither we would go."

The power of this petition was felt by all. Wesley rose from his knees, made no remark, but took up his book and continued reading. Dr. Clarke went on deck, and to his surprise found the vessel under sail, standing on her right course. Nor did she change till she was safely at anchor. On the sudden and favourable change of wind, Wesley made no remark; so fully did he *expect to be heard* that he took it for granted that he *was heard*.

That was prayer with a purpose—the definite and direct utterance of one who knew that he had the ear of God, and that God had the willingness as well as the power to grant the petition which he asked of Him.

Major D. W. Whittle, in an introduction to the wonders of prayer, says of George Muller, of Bristol: "I met Mr. Muller in the express, the morning of our sailing from Quebec to Liverpool. About half-an-hour before the tender was to take the passengers to the ship, he asked of the agent if a deck chair had arrived for him from New York. He was answered, 'No,' and told that it could not possibly come in time for the

steamer. I had with me a chair I had just purchased, and told Mr. Muller of the place nearby, and suggested, as but a few moments remained, that he had better buy one at once. His reply was, 'No, my brother. Our Heavenly Father will send the chair from New York. It is one used by Mrs. Muller. I wrote ten days ago to a brother, who promised to see it forwarded here last week. He has not been prompt, as I would have desired, but I am sure our Heavenly Father will send the chair. Mrs. Muller is very sick on the sea, and has particularly desired to have this same chair, and not finding it here yesterday, we have made special prayer that our Heavenly Father would be pleased to provide it for us, and we will trust Him to do so.' As this dear man of God went peacefully on board, running the risk of Mrs. Muller making the trip without a chair, when, for a couple of dollars, she could have been provided for, I confess I feared Mr. Muller was carrying his faith principles too far and not acting wisely. I was kept at the express office ten minutes after Mr. Muller left. Just as I started to hurry to the wharf, a team drove up the street, and on top of a load just arrived front New York was *Mr. Muller's chair*. It was sent at once to the tender and placed in *my hands* to take to Mr. Muller, just as the boat was leaving the dock (the Lord having a lesson for me). Mr. Muller took it with the happy, pleased expression of a child who has just received a kindness deeply appreciated, and reverently removing his hat and folding his hands over it, he thanked the Heavenly Father for sending the chair."

One of Melancthon's correspondents writes of Luther's praying: "I cannot enough admire the extraordinary, cheerfulness, constancy, faith and hope of the man in these trying and vexatious times. He constantly feeds these gracious affections by a very diligent study of the Word of God. *Then not a day passes in which he does not employ in prayer at least three of his very best hours.* Once I happened to hear him at prayer. Gracious God! What spirit and what faith is there in his expressions! He petitions God with as much reverence as if he was in the divine presence, and yet with as firm a hope and confidence as he would address a father or a friend. 'I know,' said he, 'Thou art our Father and our God; and therefore I am sure Thou wilt bring to naught the persecutors of Thy children. For shouldst Thou fail to do this Thine own cause, being connected with ours, would be endangered. It is entirely thine own concern. We, by Thy providence, have been compelled to take a part. Thou therefore wilt be our defense.' Whilst I was listening to Luther praying in this manner, at a distance, my soul seemed on fire within me, to hear the man address God so like a friend, yet with so much gravity and reverence; and also to hear him, in the course of his prayer, insisting on the promises contained in the Psalms, as if he were sure his petitions would be granted."

Of William Bramwell, a noted Methodist preacher in England, wonderful for his zeal and prayer, the following is related by a sergeant major. "In July, 1811, our regiment was ordered for Spain, then the seat of a protracted and sanguinary war. My mind was painfully exercised with the thoughts of leaving my dear wife and four helpless children in a strange country, unprotected and unprovided for. Mr. Bramwell

felt a lively interest in our situation, and his sympathizing spirit seemed to drink in all the agonized feelings of my tender wife. He supplicated the throne of grace day and night in our behalf. My wife and I spent the evening previous to our march at a friend's house, in company with Mr. Bramwell, who sat in a very pensive mood, and appeared to be in a spiritual struggle all the time. After supper, he suddenly pulled his hand out of his bosom, laid it on my knee, and said: 'Brother Riley, mark what I am about to say! You are not to go to Spain. Remember what I tell you, you are not; for I have been wrestling with God on your behalf, and when my Heavenly Father condescends in mercy to bless me with power to lay hold on Himself, I do not easily let Him go; no, not until I am favoured with an answer. Therefore you may depend upon it that the next time I hear from you, you will be settled in quarters.' This came to pass exactly as he said. The next day the order for going to Spain was countermanded."

These men prayed with a purpose. To them God was not far away, in some inaccessible region, but near at hand, ever ready to listen to the call of His children. There was no barrier between. They were on terms of perfect intimacy, if one may use such a phrase in relation to man and his Maker. No cloud obscured the face of the Father from His trusting child, who could look up into the Divine countenance and pour out the longings of his heart. And that is the type of prayer which God never fails to hear. He knows that it comes from a heart at one with His own; from one who is entirely yielded to the heavenly plan, and so He bends His ear and gives to the pleading child the assurance that his petition has been heard and answered.

Have we not all had some such experience when with set and undeviating purpose we have approached the face of our Father? In an agony of soul we have sought refuge from the oppression of the world in the anteroom of heaven; the waves of despair seemed to threaten destruction, and as no way of escape was visible anywhere, we fell back, like the disciples of old, upon the power of our Lord, crying to Him to save us lest we perish. And then in the twinkling of an eye, the thing was done. The billows sank into a calm; the howling wind died down at the Divine command; the agony of the soul passed into a restful peace as over the whole being there crept the consciousness of the Divine presence, bringing with it the assurance of answered prayer and sweet deliverance.

"I tell the Lord my troubles and difficulties, and wait for Him to give me the answers to them," says one man of God. "And it is wonderful how a matter that looked very dark will in prayer become clear as crystal by the help of God's Spirit. I think Christians fail so often to get answers to their prayers because they do not wait long enough on God. They just drop down and say a few words, and then jump up and forget it and expect God to answer them. Such praying always reminds me of the small boy ringing his neighbor's door-bell, and then running away as fast as he can go."

When we acquire the habit of prayer we enter into a new atmosphere. "Do you expect to go to heaven?" asked someone of a devout Scotsman. "Why, man, I live

there,” was the quaint and unexpected reply. It was a pithy statement of a great truth, for all the way to heaven is heaven begun to the Christian who walks near enough to God to hear the secrets He has to impart.

This attitude is beautifully illustrated in a story of Horace Bushnell, told by Dr. Parkes Cadman. Bushnell was found to be suffering from an incurable disease. One evening the Rev. Joseph Twichell visited him, and, as they sat together under the starry sky, Bushnell said: “One of us ought to pray.” Twichell asked Bushnell to do so, and Bushnell began his prayer; burying his face in the earth, he poured out his heart until, said Twichell, in recalling the incident, “I was afraid to stretch out my hand in the darkness lest I should touch God.”

To have God thus near is to enter the holy of holies—to breathe the fragrance of the heavenly air, to walk in Eden’s delightful gardens. Nothing but prayer can bring God and man into this happy communion. That was the experience of Samuel Rutherford, just as it is the experience of every one who passes through the same gateway. When this saint of God was confined in jail at one time for conscience sake, he enjoyed in a rare degree the Divine companionship, recording in his diary that Jesus entered his cell, and that at His coming “every stone flashed like a ruby.”

Many others have borne witness to the same sweet fellowship, when prayer had become the one habit of life that meant more than anything else to them. David Livingstone lived in the realm of prayer and knew its gracious influence. It was his habit every birthday to write a prayer, and on the next to the last birthday of all, this was his prayer: “O Divine one, I have not loved Thee earnestly, deeply, sincerely enough. Grant, I pray Thee, that before this year is ended I may have finished my task.” It was just on the threshold of the year that followed that his faithful men, as they looked into the hut of Ilala, while the rain dripped from the eaves, saw their master on his knees beside his bed in an attitude of prayer. He had died on his knees in prayer.

Stonewall Jackson was a man of prayer. Said he: “I have so fixed the habit in my mind that I never raise a glass of water to my lips without asking God’s blessing, never seal a letter without putting a word of prayer under the seal, never take a letter from the post without a brief sending of my thoughts heavenward, never change my classes in the lecture-room without a—minute’s petition for the cadets who go out and for those who come in.”

James Gilmour, the pioneer missionary to Mongolia, was a man of prayer. He had a habit in his writing of never using a blotter. He made a rule when he got to the bottom of any page to wait until the ink dried and spend the time in prayer.

In this way their whole being was saturated with the Divine, and they became the reflection of the heavenly fragrance and glory. Walking with God down the avenues of prayer we acquire something of His likeness, and unconsciously we become witnesses to others of His beauty and His grace. Professor James, in his famous work, “Varieties of Religious Experience,” tells of a man of forty-nine who said: “God is more real to

me than any thought or thing or person. I feel His presence positively, and the more as I live in closer harmony with His laws as written in my body and mind. I feel Him in the sunshine or rain; and all mingled with a delicious restfulness most nearly describes my feelings. I talk to Him as to a companion in prayer and praise, and our communion is delightful. He answers me again and again, often in words so clearly spoken that it seems my outer ear must have carried the tone, but generally in strong mental impressions. Usually a text of Scripture, unfolding some new view of Him and His love for me, and care for my safety ...That He is mine and I am His never leaves me; it is an abiding joy. Without it life would be a blank, a desert, a shoreless, trackless waste.”

Equally notable is the testimony of Sir Thomas Browne, the beloved physician who lived at Norwich in 1605, and was the author of a very remarkable book of wide circulation, “Religio Medici.” In spite of the fact that England was passing through a period of national convulsion and political excitement, he found comfort and strength in prayer. “I have resolved,” he wrote in a journal found among his private papers after his death, “to pray more and pray always, to pray in all places where quietness inviteth, in the house, on the highway and on the street; and to know no street or passage in this city that may not witness that I have not forgotten God.” And he adds: “I purpose to take occasion of praying upon the sight of any church which I may pass, that God may be worshipped there in spirit, and that souls may be saved there; to pray daily for my sick patients and for the patients of other physicians; at my entrance into any home to say, ‘May the peace of God abide here’; after hearing a sermon, to pray for a blessing on God’s truth, and upon the messenger; upon the sight of a beautiful person to bless God for His creatures, to pray for the beauty of such an one’s soul, that God may enrich her with inward graces, and that the outward and inward may correspond; upon the sight of a deformed person, to pray God to give them wholeness of soul, and by and by to give them the beauty of the resurrection.”

What an illustration of the praying spirit! Such an attitude represents prayer without ceasing, reveals the habit of prayer in its unceasing supplication, in its uninterrupted communion, in its constant intercession. What an illustration, too, of purpose in prayer! Of how many of us can it be said that as we pass people in the street we pray for them, or that as we enter a home or a church we remember the inmates or the congregation in prayer to God?

The explanation of our thoughtlessness or forgetfulness lies in the fact that prayer with so many of us is simply a form of selfishness; it means asking for something for ourselves t that and nothing more.

And from such an attitude we need to pray to be delivered.

## XI

*The deepest need of the Church today is not for any material or external thing, but the deepest need is spiritual. Prayerless work will never bring in the kingdom. We neglect to pray in the prescribed way. We seldom enter the closet and shut the door for a season of prayer. Kingdom interests are pressing on us thick and fast and we must pray. Prayerless giving will never evangelize the world.—Dr. A. J. Gordon*

The great subject of prayer, that comprehensive need of the Christian's life, is intimately bound up in the personal fullness of the Holy Spirit. It is "by the One Spirit we have access unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18), and by the same Spirit, having entered the audience chamber through the "new and living way," we are enabled to pray in the will of God (Rom. 8:15, 26–27; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 6:18; Jude 20–21).

*Here is the secret of prevailing prayer, to pray under a direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, whose petitions for us and through us are always according to the Divine purpose, and hence certain of answer. "Praying in the Holy Ghost" is but co-operating with the will of God, and such prayer is always victorious. How many Christians there are who cannot pray, and who seek by effort, resolve, joining prayer circles, etc., to cultivate in themselves the "holy art of inter-cession," and all to no purpose. Here for them and for all is the only secret of a real prayer life—"Be filled with the Spirit," who is "the Spirit of grace and supplication."—Rev. J. Stuart Holden, M.A.*

The preceding chapter closed with the statement that prayer can do anything that God can do. It is a tremendous statement to make, but it is a statement borne out by history and experience. If we are abiding in Christ—and if we abide in Him we are living in obedience to His holy will—and approach God in His name, then there lie open before us the infinite resources of the Divine treasurehouse.

The man who truly prays gets from God many things denied to the prayerless man. The aim of all real praying is to get the thing prayed for, as the child's cry for bread has for its end the getting of bread. This view removes prayer clean out of the sphere of religious performances. Prayer is not acting a part or going through religious motions. Prayer is neither official nor formal nor ceremonial, but direct, hearty, intense. Prayer is not religious work which must be gone through, and avails because well done. Prayer is the helpless and needy child crying to the compassion of the Father's heart and the bounty and power of a Father's hand. The answer is as sure to come as the Father's heart can be touched and the Father's hand moved.

The object of asking is to receive. The aim of seeking is to find. The purpose of knocking is to arouse attention and get in, and this is Christ's iterated and reiterated asseveration that the prayer without doubt will be answered, its end without doubt secured. Not by some round-about way, but by getting the very thing asked for.

The value of prayer does not lie in the number of prayers, or the length of prayers, but its value is found in the great truth that we are privileged by our relations to God to unburden our desires and make our requests known to God, and He will relieve by granting our petitions. The child asks because the parent is in the habit of granting the child's requests. As the children of God we need something and we need it badly, and we go to God for it. Neither the Bible nor the child of God knows anything of that half-infidel declaration, that we are to answer our own prayers. God answers prayer. The true Christian does not pray to stir himself up, but his prayer is the stirring up of himself to take hold of God. The heart of faith knows nothing of that specious skepticism which stays the steps of prayer and chills its ardor by whispering that prayer does not affect God.

D. L. Moody used to tell a story of a little child whose father and mother had died, and who was taken into another family. The first night she asked whether she could pray as she used to do. They said: "Oh, yes!" So she knelt down and prayed as her mother had taught her; and when that was ended, she added a little prayer of her own: "O God, make these people as kind to me as father and mother were." Then she paused and looked up, as if expecting the answer, and then added: "Of course you will." How sweetly simple was that little one's faith! She expected God to answer and "do," and "of course" she got her request, and that is the spirit in which God invites us to approach Him.

In contrast to that incident is the story told of the quaint Yorkshire class leader, Daniel Quorm, who was visiting a friend. One forenoon he came to the friend and said, "I am sorry you have met with such a great disappointment."

"Why, no," said the man, "I have not met with any disappointment."

"Yes," said Daniel, "you were expecting something remarkable today."

"What do you mean?" said the friend.

"Why you prayed that you might be kept sweet and gentle all day long. And, by the way things have been going, I see you have been greatly disappointed."

"Oh," said the man, "I thought you meant something particular."

Prayer is mighty in its operations, and God never disappoints those who put their trust and confidence in Him. They may have to wait long for the answer, and they may not live to see it, but the prayer of faith never misses its object.

"A friend of mine in Cincinnati had preached his sermon and sank back in his chair, when he felt impelled to make another appeal," says Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman. "A boy at the back of the church lifted his hand. My friend left the pulpit and went down to him, and said, 'Tell me about yourself.' The boy said, 'I live in New York. I am a prodigal. I have disgraced my father's name and broken my mother's heart. I ran

away and told them I would never come back until I became a Christian or they brought me home dead.’ That night there went from Cincinnati a letter telling his father and mother that their boy had turned to God.

“Seven days later, in a black-bordered envelope, a reply came which read: ‘My dear boy, when I got the news that you had received Jesus Christ the sky was overcast; your father was dead.’ Then the letter went on to tell how the father had prayed for his prodigal boy with his last breath, and concluded, ‘You are a Christian tonight because your old father would not let you go.’ ”

A fourteen-year-old boy was given a task by his father. It so happened that a group of boys came along just then and wiled the boy away with them, and so the work went undone. But the father came home that evening and said, “Frank, did you do the work that I gave you?” “Yes, sir,” said Frank. He told an untruth, and his father knew it, but said nothing. It troubled the boy, but he went to bed as usual. Next morning his mother said to him, “Your father did not sleep all last night.”

“Why didn’t he sleep?” asked Frank.

His mother said, “He spent the whole night praying for you.”

This sent the arrow into his heart. He was deeply convicted of his sin, and knew no rest until he had got right with God. Long afterward, when the boy became Bishop Warne, he said that his decision for Christ came from his father’s prayer that night. He saw his father keeping his lonely and sorrowful vigil praying for his boy, and it broke his heart. Said he, “I can never be sufficiently grateful to him for that prayer.”

An evangelist, much used of God, has put on record that he commenced a series of meetings in a little church of about twenty members who were very cold and dead, and much divided. A little prayer-meeting was kept up by two or three women. “I preached, and closed at eight o’clock,” he says. “There was no one to speak or pray. The next evening one man spoke.

“The next morning I rode six miles to a minister’s study, and kneeled in prayer. I went back, and said to the little church:

‘If you can make out enough to board me, I will stay until God opens the windows of heaven. God has promised to bless these means, and I believe He will.’

“Within ten days there were so many anxious souls that I met one hundred and fifty of them at a time in an inquiry meeting, while Christians were praying in another house of worship. Several hundred, I think, were converted. It is safe to believe God.”

A mother asked the late John B. Gough to visit her son to win him to Christ. Gough found the young man’s mind full of skeptical notions, and impervious to argument. Finally, the young man was asked to pray, just once, for light. He replied: “I do not know anything perfect to whom or to which I could pray.” “How about your mother’s love?” said the orator. “Isn’t that perfect? Hasn’t she always stood by you, and been ready to take you in, and care for you, when even your father had really kicked you out?”

The young man choked with emotion, and said, “Y-e-s, sir; that is so.”

“Then pray to Love—it will help you. Will you promise?” He promised.

That night the young man prayed in the privacy of his room. He kneeled down, closed his eyes, and struggling a moment uttered the words: “O Love.” Instantly as by a flash of lightning, the old Bible text came to him: “God is love,” and he said, brokenly, “O God!” Then another flash of Divine truth, and a voice said, “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son,”—and there, instantly, he exclaimed, “O Christ, Thou incarnation of Divinest love, show me light and truth.” It was all over. He was in the light of the most perfect peace. He ran downstairs, adds the narrator of this incident, and told his mother that he was saved. That young man is today an eloquent minister of Jesus Christ.

A water famine was threatened in Hakodate, Japan. Miss Dickerson, of the Methodist Episcopal Girls’ School, saw the water supply growing less daily, and in one of the fall months appealed to the Board in New York for help. There was no money on hand, and nothing was done. Miss Dickerson inquired the cost of putting down an artesian well, but found the expense too great to be undertaken. On the evening of December 31st, when the water was almost exhausted, the teachers and the older pupils met to pray for water, though they had no idea how their prayer was to be answered. A couple of days later a letter was received in the New York office which ran something like this: “Philadelphia, January 1st. It is six o’clock in the morning of New Year’s Day. All the other members of the family are asleep, but I was awakened with a strange impression that some one, somewhere, is in need of money which the Lord wants me to supply.” Enclosed was a cheque for an amount which just covered the cost of the artesian well and the piping of the water into the school buildings.

“I have seen God’s hand stretched out to heal among the heathen in as mighty wonder-working power as in apostolic times,” once said a well-known minister to the writer. “I was preaching to two thousand famine-orphaned girls, at Kedgaum, India, at Ramabai’s Mukti (salvation) Mission. A swarm of serpents as venomous and deadly as the reptile that smote Paul, suddenly raided the walled grounds, ‘sent of Satan,’ Ramabai said, and several of her most beautiful and faithful Christian girls were smitten by them, two of them bitten twice. I saw four of the very flower of her flock in convulsions at once, unconscious and apparently in the agonies of death.

“Ramabai believes the Bible with an implicit and obedient faith. There were three of us missionaries there. She said: ‘We will do just what the Bible says, I want you to minister for their healing according to James 1:14–18.’ She led the way into the dormitory where her girls were lying in spasms, and we laid our hands upon their heads and prayed, and anointed them with oil in the name of the Lord. Each of them was healed as soon as anointed and sat up and sang with faces shining. That miracle and marvel among the heathen mightily confirmed the word of the Lord, and was a profound and overpowering proclamation of God.”

Some years ago, the record of a wonderful work of grace in connection with one of the stations of the China Inland Mission attracted a good deal of attention. Both the number and spiritual character of the converts had been far greater than at other stations where the consecration of the missionaries had been just as great at the more fruitful place.

This rich harvest of souls remained a mystery until Hudson Taylor on a visit to England discovered the secret. At the close of one of his addresses a gentleman came forward to make his acquaintance. In the conversation which followed, Mr. Taylor was surprised at the accurate knowledge the man possessed concerning this inland China station. "But how is it," Mr. Taylor asked, "that you are so conversant with the conditions of that work?" "Oh!" he replied, "the missionary there and I are old college-mates; for years we have regularly corresponded; he has sent me names of enquirers and converts, and these I have daily taken to God in prayer."

At last the secret was found! A praying man at home, praying definitely, praying daily, for specific cases among the heathen. That is the real intercessory missionary.

Hudson Taylor himself, as all the world knows, was a man who knew how to pray and whose praying was blessed with fruitful answers. In the story of his life, told by Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor, we find page after page aglow with answered prayer. On his way out to China for the first time, in 1853, when he was only twenty-one years of age, he had a definite answer to prayer that was a great encouragement to his faith. "They had just come through the Dampier Strait, but were not yet out of sight of the islands. Usually a breeze would spring up after sunset and last until about dawn. The utmost use was made of it, but during the day they lay still with flapping sails, often drifting back and losing a good deal of the advantage gained at night." The story continues in Hudson Taylor's own words:

"This happened notably on one occasion when we were in dangerous proximity to the north of New Guinea. Saturday night had brought us to a point some thirty miles off the land, and during the Sunday morning service, which was held on deck, I could not fail to see that the Captain looked troubled and frequently went over to the side of the ship. When the service was ended I learnt from him the cause. A four-knot current was carrying us toward some sunken reefs, and we were already so near that it seemed improbable that we should get through the afternoon in safety. After dinner, the long boat was put out and all hands endeavored, without success, to turn the ship's head from the shore.

"After standing together on the deck for some time in silence, the Captain said to me:

'Well, we have done everything that can be done. We can only await the result.'

A thought occurred to me, and I replied: 'No, there is one thing we have not done yet.'

'What is that?' he queried.

‘Four of us on board are Christians. Let us each retire to his own cabin, and in agreed prayer ask the Lord to give us immediately a breeze. He can as easily send it now as at sunset.’

The Captain complied with this proposal. I went and spoke to the other two men, and after prayer with the carpenter, we all four retired to wait upon God. I had a good but very brief season in prayer, and then felt so satisfied that our request was granted that I could not continue asking, and very soon went up again on deck. The first officer, a godless man, was in charge. I went over and asked him to let down the clews or corners of the mainsail, which had been drawn up in order to lessen the useless flapping of the sail against the rigging.

‘What would be the good of that?’ he answered roughly.

I told him we had been asking a wind from God; that it was coming immediately; and we were so near the reef by this time that there was not a minute to lose.

With an oath and a look of contempt, he said he would rather see a wind than hear of it.

But while he was speaking I watched his eye, following it up to the royal, and there, sure enough, the corner of the topmost sail was beginning to tremble in the breeze.

‘Don’t you see the wind is coming? Look at the royal!’ I exclaimed.

‘No, it is only a cat’s paw,’ he rejoined (a mere puff of wind).

‘Cat’s paw or not,’ I cried, ‘pray let down the mainsail and give us the benefit.’

This he was not slow to do. In another minute the heavy tread of the men on deck brought up the Captain from his cabin to see what was the matter. The breeze had indeed come! In a few minutes we were ploughing our way at six or seven knots an hour through the water ... and though the wind was sometimes unsteady, we did not altogether lose it until after passing the Pelew Islands.

Thus God encouraged me,” adds this praying saint, “ere landing on China’s shores to bring every variety of need to Him in prayer, and to expect that He would honour the name of the Lord Jesus and give the help each emergency required.”

In an address at Cambridge some time ago (reported in “The Life of Faith,” April 3rd, 1912), Mr. S. D. Gordon told in his own inimitable way the story of a man in his own country, to illustrate from real life the fact of the reality of prayer, and that it is not mere talking.

“This man,” said Mr. Gordon, “came of an old New England family, a bit farther back an English family. He was a giant in size, and a keen man mentally, and a university-trained man. He had gone out West to live, and represented a prominent district in our House of Congress, answering to your House of Commons. He was a prominent leader there. He was reared in a Christian family, but he was a skeptic, and used to lecture against Christianity. He told me he was fond, in his lectures, of proving, as he thought, conclusively, that there was no God. That was the type of his infidelity.

“One day he told me he was sitting in the Lower House of Congress. It was at the time of a Presidential Election, and when party feeling ran high. One would have thought that was the last place where a man would be likely to think about spiritual things. He said: ‘I was sitting in my seat in that crowded House and that heated atmosphere, when a feeling came to me that the God, whose existence I thought I could successfully disprove, was just there above me, looking down on me, and that He was displeased with me, and with the way I was doing. I said to myself, “This is ridiculous, I guess I’ve been working too hard. I’ll go and get a good meal and take a long walk and shake myself, and see if that will take this feeling away.”’ He got his extra meal, took a walk, and came back to his seat, but the impression would not be shaken off that God was there and was displeased with him. He went for a walk, day after day, but could never shake the feeling off. Then he went back to his constituency in his State, he said, to arrange matters there. He had the ambition to be the Governor of his State, and his party was the dominant party in the State, and, as far as such things could be judged, he was in the line to become Governor there, in one of the most dominant States our Central West. He said: ‘I went home to fix that thing up as far as I could, and to get ready for it. But I had hardly reached home and exchanged greetings, when my wife, who was an earnest Christian woman, said to me that a few of them had made a little covenant of prayer that I might become a Christian.’ He did not want her to know the experience that he had just been going through, and so he said as carelessly as he could, ‘When did this thing begin, this praying of yours?’ She named the date. Then he did some very quick thinking, and he knew, as he thought back, that it was the day on the calendar when that strange impression came to him for the first time.

“He said to me: ‘I was tremendously shaken. I wanted to be honest. I was perfectly honest in not believing in God, and I thought I was right. But if what she said was true, then merely as a lawyer sifting his evidence in a case, it would be good evidence that there was really something in their prayer. I was terrifically shaken, and wanted to be honest, and did not know what to do. That same night I went to a little Methodist chapel, and if somebody had known how to talk with me, I think I should have accepted Christ that night.’ Then he said that the next night he went back again to that chapel, where meetings were being held each night, and there he kneeled at the altar, and yielded his great strong will to the will of God. Then he said, ‘I knew I was to preach,’ and he is preaching still in a Western State. That is half of the story. I also talked with his wife—I wanted to put the two halves together, so as to get the bit of teaching in it all—and she told me this. She had been a Christian—what you call a nominal Christian—a strange confusion of terms. Then there came a time when she was led into a full surrender of her life to the Lord Jesus Christ. Then she said, ‘At once there came a great intensifying of desire that my husband might be a Christian, and we made that little compact to pray for him—each day until he became a Christian. That night I was kneeling at my bedside before going to rest, praying for my

husband, praying very earnestly and then a voice said to me, “Are you willing for the results that will come if your husband is converted?” ’ The little message was so very distinct that she said she was frightened; she had never had such an experience. But she went on praying still more earnestly, and again there came the quiet voice, ‘Are you willing for the consequences?’ And again there was a sense of being startled, frightened. But she still went on praying, and wondering what this meant, and a third time the quiet voice came more quietly than ever as she described it, ‘Are you willing for the consequences?’

“Then she told me she said with great earnestness, ‘O God, I am willing for anything Thou dost think good, if only my husband may know Thee, and become a true Christian man.’ She said that instantly, when that prayer came from her lips, there came into her heart a wonderful sense of peace, a great peace that she could not explain, a ‘peace that passeth understanding,’ and from that moment—it was the very night of the covenant, the night when her husband had that first strange experience—the assurance never left her that he would accept Christ. But all those weeks she prayed with the firm assurance that the result was coming. What were the consequences? They were of a kind that I think no one would think small. She was the wife of a man in a very prominent political position; she was the wife of a man who was in the line of becoming the first official of his State, and she officially the first lady socially’ of that State, with all the honour that that social standing would imply. Now she is the wife of a Methodist preacher, with her home changed every two or three years, she going from this place to that, a very different social position, and having a very different income that she would otherwise have had. Yet I never met a woman who had more of the wonderful peace of God in her heart and of the light of God in her face, than that woman.”

And Mr. Gordon’s comment on that incident is this: “Now, you can see at once that there was no change in the purpose of God through that prayer. The prayer worked out His purpose; it did not change it. But the woman’s surrender gave the opportunity of working out the will that God wanted to work out. If we might give ourselves to Him and learn His will, and use all our strength in learning His will and bending to His will, then we would begin to pray, and there is simply nothing that could resist the tremendous power of the prayer. Oh for more men who will be simple enough to get in touch with God, and give Him the mastery of the whole life, and learn His will, and then give themselves, as Jesus gave Himself, to the sacred service of intercession!”

To the man or woman who is acquainted with God and who knows how to pray, there is nothing remarkable in the answers that come. They are sure of being heard, since they ask in accordance with what they know to be the mind and the will of God. Dr. William Burr, Bishop of Europe in the Methodist Episcopal Church, tells that a few years ago, when he visited their Boys’ School in Vienna, he found that although the year was not up, all available funds had been spent. He hesitated to make a special

appeal to his friends in America. He counseled with the teachers. They took the matter to God in earnest and continued prayer, believing that He would grant their request. Ten days later Bishop Burt was in Rome, and there came to him a letter from a friend in New York, which read substantially thus: "As I went to my office on Broadway one morning (and the date was the very one on which the teachers were praying), a voice seemed to tell me that you were in need of funds for the Boys' School in Vienna. I very gladly enclose a cheque for the work." The cheque was for the amount needed. There had been no human communication between Vienna and New York. But while they were yet speaking God answered them.

Some time ago there appeared in an English religious weekly the report of an incident narrated by a well-known preacher in the course of an address to children. For the truth of the story he was able to vouch. A child lay sick in a country cottage, and her younger sister heard the doctor say, as he left the house, "Nothing but a miracle can save her." The little girl went to her money-box, took out the few coins it contained, and in perfect simplicity of heart went to shop after shop in the village street, asking, "Please, I want to buy a miracle."

From each she came away disappointed. Even the local chemist had to say, "My dear, we don't sell miracles here." But outside his door two men were talking, and had overheard the child's request. One was a great doctor from a London hospital, and he asked her to explain what she wanted. When he understood the need, he hurried with her to the cottage, examined the sick girl and said to the mother: "It is true—only a miracle can save her, and it must be performed at once." He got his instruments, performed the operation, and the patient's life was saved.

D. L. Moody gives this illustration of the power of prayer: "While in Edinburgh, a man was pointed out to me by a friend, who said: 'That man is chairman of the Edinburgh Infidel Club.' I went and sat beside him and said, 'My friend, I am glad to see you in our meeting. Are you concerned about your welfare?'

'I do not believe in any hereafter.'

'Well, just get down on your knees and let me pray for you.'

'No, I do not believe in prayer.'

I knelt beside him as he sat, and prayed. He made a great deal of sport of it. A year after I met him again. I took him by the hand and said: 'Hasn't God answered my prayer yet?'

'There is no God. If you believe in one who answers prayers, try your hand on me.'

'Well, a great many are now praying for you, and God's time will. Come, and I believe you will be saved yet.'

Some time afterwards I got a letter from a leading barrister in Edinburgh telling me that my infidel friend had come to Christ, and that seventeen of his club men had followed his example.

I did not know how God would answer prayer, but I knew He would answer. Let us come boldly to God.”

Robert Louis Stevenson tells a vivid story of a storm at sea. The passengers below were greatly alarmed, as the waves dashed over the vessel. At last one of them, against orders, crept to the deck, and came to the pilot, who was lashed to the wheel which he was turning without flinching. The pilot caught sight of the terror-stricken man, and gave him a reassuring smile. Below went the passenger, and comforted the others by saying, “I have seen the face of the pilot, and he smiled. All is well.”

That is how we feel when through the gateway of prayer we find our way into the Father’s presence. We see His face, and we know that all is well, since His hand is on the helm of events, and “even the winds and the waves obey Him.” When we live in fellowship with Him, we come with confidence into His presence, asking in the full confidence of receiving and meeting with the justification of our faith.

## XII

*Let your hearts be much set on revivals of religion. Never forget that the churches have hitherto existed and prospered by revivals; and that if they are to exist and prosper in time to come, it must be by the same cause which has from the first been their glory and defence.—Joel Hawes*

*If any minister can be satisfied without conversions, he shall have no conversions.—C. H. Spurgeon*

*I do not believe that my desires for a revival were ever half so strong as they ought to be; nor do I see how a minister can help being in a “constant fever” when his Master is dishonoured and souls are destroyed in so many ways.—Edward Payson*

*An aged saint once came to the pastor at night and said: “We are about to have a revival.” He was asked why he knew so. His answer was, “I went into the stable to take care of my cattle two hours ago, and there the Lord has kept me in prayer until just now. And I feel that we are going to be revived.” It was the commencement of a revival.—H. C. Fish*

It has been said that the history of revivals is the history of religion, and no one can study their history without being impressed with their mighty influence upon the destiny of the race. To look back over the progress of the Divine Kingdom upon earth is to review revival periods which have come like refreshing showers upon dry and thirsty ground, making the desert to blossom as the rose, and bringing new eras of spiritual life and activity just when the Church had fallen under the influence of the apathy of the times, and needed to be aroused to a new sense of her duty and responsibility. “From one point of view, and that not the least important,” writes Principal Lindsay, in “The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries,” “the history of the Church flows on from one time of revival to another, and whether we take the awakenings in the old Catholic, the mediaeval, or the modern Church, these have always been the work of men specially gifted with the power of seeing and declaring the secrets of the deepest Christian life, and the effect of their work has always been proportionate to the spiritual receptivity of the generation they have spoken to.”

As God, from the beginning, has wrought prominently through revivals, there can be no denial of the fact that revivals are a part of the Divine plan. The Kingdom of our Lord has been advanced in large measure by special seasons of gracious and rapid accomplishment of the work of conversion, and it may be inferred, therefore, that the means through which God has worked in other times will be employed in our time to

produce similar results. “The quiet conversion of one sinner after another, under the ordinary ministry of the Gospel,” says one writer on the subject, “must always be regarded with feelings of satisfaction and gratitude by the ministers and disciples of Christ; but a periodical manifestation of the simultaneous conversion of thousands is also to be desired, because of its adaptation to afford a visible and impressive demonstration that God has made that same Jesus, Who was rejected and crucified, both Lord and Christ; and that, in virtue of His Divine Mediatorship, He has assumed the royal sceptre of universal supremacy, and ‘must reign till all His enemies be made His footstool.’ It is, therefore, reasonable to expect that, from time to time, He will repeat that which on the day of Pentecost formed the conclusive and crowning evidence of His Messiahship and Sovereignty; and, by so doing, startle the slumbering souls of careless worldlings, gain the attentive ear of the unconverted, and, in a remarkable way, break in upon those brilliant dreams of earthly glory, grandeur, wealth, power and happiness, which the rebellious and God-forgetting multitude so fondly cherish. Such an outpouring of the Holy Spirit forms at once a demonstrative proof of the completeness and acceptance of His once offering of Himself as a sacrifice for sin, and a prophetic ‘earnest’ of the certainty that He ‘shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation,’ to judge the world in righteousness.”

And that revivals are to be expected, proceeding, as they do, from the right use of the appropriate means, is a fact which needs not a little emphasis in these days, when the material is exalted at the expense of the spiritual, and when ethical standards are supposed to be supreme. That a revival is not a miracle was powerfully taught by Charles G. Finney. There might, he said, be a miracle among its antecedent causes, or there might not. The Apostles employed miracles simply as a means by which they arrested attention to their message, and established its Divine authority. “But the miracle was not the revival. The miracle was one thing; the revival that followed it was quite another thing. The revivals in the Apostles’ days were connected with miracles, but they were not miracles.” All revivals are dependent upon God, but in revivals, as in other things, He invites and requires the assistance of man, and the full result is obtained when there is co-operation between the Divine and the human. In other words, to employ a familiar phrase, God alone can save the world, but God cannot save the world alone. God and man unite for the task, the response of the Divine being invariably in proportion to the desire and the effort of the human.

This co-operation, then, being necessary, what is the duty which we, as co-workers with God, require to undertake? First of all, and most important of all—the point which we desire particularly to emphasise—we must give ourselves to prayer. “Revivals,” as Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman reminds us, “are born in prayer. When Wesley prayed, England was revived; when Knox prayed, Scotland was refreshed; when the Sunday School teachers of Tannybrook prayed, 11,000 young people were added to the Church in a year. Whole nights of prayer have always been succeeded by whole days of soul-winning.”

When D. L. Moody's Church in Chicago lay in ashes, he went over to England, in 1872, not to preach, but to listen to others preach while his new church was being built. One Sunday morning he was prevailed upon to preach in a London pulpit. But somehow the spiritual atmosphere was lacking. He confessed afterwards that he never had such a hard time preaching in his life. Everything was perfectly dead, and, as he vainly tried to preach, he said to himself, "What a fool I was to consent to preach! I came here to listen, and here I am preaching." Then the awful thought came to him that he had to preach again at night, and only the fact that he had given the promise to do so kept him faithful to the engagement. But when Mr. Moody entered the pulpit at night, and faced the crowded congregation, he was conscious of a new atmosphere. "The powers of an unseen world seemed to have fallen upon the audience." As he drew towards the close of his sermon he became emboldened to give out an invitation, and as he concluded he said, "If there is a man or woman here who will tonight accept Jesus Christ, please stand up." At once about 500 people rose to their feet. Thinking that there must be some mistake, he asked the people to be seated, and then, in order that there might be no possible misunderstanding, he repeated the invitation, couching it in even more definite and difficult terms. Again the same number rose. Still thinking that something must be wrong, Mr. Moody, for the second time, asked the standing men and women to be seated, and then he invited all who really meant to accept Christ to pass into the vestry. Fully 500 people did as requested, and that was the beginning of a revival in that church and neighbourhood, which brought Mr. Moody back from Dublin, a few days later, that he might assist the wonderful work of God.

The sequel, however, must be given, or our purpose in relating the incident will be defeated. When Mr. Moody preached at the morning service there was a woman in the congregation who had an invalid sister. On her return home she told the invalid that the preacher had been a Mr. Moody from Chicago, and on hearing this she turned pale. "What," she said, "Mr. Moody from Chicago? I read about him some time ago in an American paper, and I have been praying God to send him to London, and to our church. If I had known he was going to preach this morning I would have eaten no breakfast. I would have spent the whole time in prayer. Now, sister, go out of the room, lock the door, send me no dinner; no matter who comes, don't let them see me. I am going to spend the whole afternoon in prayer." And so while Mr. Moody stood in the pulpit that had been like an ice-chamber in the morning, the bedridden saint was holding him up before God, and God, who ever delights to answer prayer, poured out His Spirit in mighty power.

The God of revivals who answered the prayer of His child for Mr. Moody, is willing to hear and to answer the faithful, believing prayers of His people today. Wherever God's conditions are met, there the revival is sure to fall. Professor Thos. Nicholson, of Cornell College, U.S.A., relates an experience on his first circuit that impresses anew the old lesson of the place of prayer in the work of God.

There had not been a revival on that circuit in years, and things were not spiritually hopeful. During more than four weeks the pastor had preached faithfully, visited from house to house, in stores, shops, and out-of-the-way places, and had done everything he could. The fifth Monday night saw many of the official members at lodges, but only a corporal's guard at the church.

From that meeting the pastor went home, cast down, but not in despair. He resolved to spend that night in prayer. "Locking the door, he took Bible and hymn book and began to inquire more diligently of the Lord, though the meetings had been the subject of hours of earnest prayer. Only God knows the anxiety and the faithful, prayerful study of that night. Near the dawn a great peace and a full assurance came that God would surely bless the plan which had been decided upon, and a text was chosen which he felt sure was of the Lord. Dropping upon the bed, the pastor slept about two hours, then rose, hastily breakfasted, and went nine miles to the far side of the circuit to visit some sick people. All day the assurance increased.

"Toward night a pouring rain set in, the roads were heavy and we reached home, wet, supperless, and a little late, only to find no fire in the church, the lights unlit, and no signs of service. The janitor had concluded that the rain would prevent the service. We changed the order, rang the bell, and prepared for war. Three young men formed the congregation, but in that 'full assurance' the pastor delivered the message which had been prayed out on the preceding night, as earnestly and as fully as if the house had been crowded, then made a personal appeal to each young man in turn. Two yielded, and testified before the meeting closed.

"The tired pastor went to a sweet rest, and next morning, rising a little later than usual, learned that one of the young men was going from store to store throughout the town telling of his wonderful deliverance, and exhorting the people to salvation. Night after night conversions occurred, until in two weeks we heard 144 people testify in forty-five minutes. All three points of that circuit saw a blaze of revival that winter, and family after family came into the church, unto the membership was more than trebled.

"Out of that meeting one convert is a successful pastor in the Michigan Conference, another is the wife of one of the choicest of our pastors, and a third was in the ministry for a number of years, and then went to another denomination, where he is faithful unto this day. Probably none of the members ever knew of the pastor's night of prayer, but he verily believes that God somehow does for the man who thus prays, what He does not do for the man who does not pray, and he is certain that 'more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.' "

All the true revivals have been born in prayer. When God's people become so concerned about the state of religion that they lie on their faces day and night in earnest supplication, the blessing will be sure to fail.

It is the same all down the ages. Every revival of which we have any record has been bathed in prayer. Take, for example, the wonderful revival in Shotts (Scotland) in

1630. The fact that several of the then persecuted ministers would take a part in solemn convocation having become generally known, a vast concourse of godly persons assembled on this occasion from all quarters of the country, and *several days were spent in social prayer*, preparatory to the service. In the evening, instead of retiring to rest, the multitude divided themselves into little bands and *spent the whole night in supplication and praise*. The Monday was consecrated to thanksgiving, a practice not then common, and proved the great days of the feast. After much entreaty, John Livingston, chaplain to the Countess of Wigtown, a young man and not ordained, agreed to preach. He *had spent the night in prayer and conference*—but as the hour of assembling approached his heart quailed at the thought of addressing so many aged and experienced saints, and he actually fled from the duty he had undertaken. But just as the kirk of Shotts was vanishing from his view, those words, “Was I ever a barren wilderness or a land of darkness?” were borne in upon his mind with such force as compelled him to return to the work.

He took for his text Ezekiel 36:25, 26, and discoursed with great power for about two hours. *Five hundred conversions* were believed to have occurred under that one sermon, thus prefaced by prayer. “It was the sowing of a seed through Clydesdale, so that many of the most eminent Christians of that country could date their conversion, or some remarkable confirmation of their case, from that day.”

Of Richard Baxter it has been said that, “he stained his study walls with praying breath; and after becoming thus anointed with the unction of the Holy Ghost he sent a river of living water over Kidderminster.” Whitfield once thus prayed, “O Lord, give me souls or take my soul.” After much closet pleading, “he once went to the Devil’s fair and took more than a thousand souls out of the paw of the lion in a single day.”

Mr. Finney says: “I once knew a minister who had a revival fourteen winters in succession. I did not know how to account for it till I saw one of his members get up in a prayer meeting and make a confession. ‘Brethren,’ he said, ‘I have been long in the habit of praying every Saturday night till after midnight for the descent of the Holy Ghost among us. And now, brethren (and he began to weep), I confess that I have neglected it for two or three weeks.’ The secret was out. That minister had a praying church.”

And so we might go on multiplying illustration upon illustration to show the place of prayer in revival and to demonstrate that every mighty movement of the Spirit of God had its source in the prayer-chamber. The lesson of it all is this, that as workers together with God we must regard ourselves as in not a little measure responsible for the conditions which prevail around us today. Are we concerned about the coldness of the Church? Do we grieve over the lack of conversions? Does our soul go out to God in midnight cries for the outpouring of His Spirit?

If not, part of the blame lies at our door. If we do our part, God will do His. Around us is a world lost in sin, above us is a God willing and able to save; it is ours to build the bridge that links heaven and earth, and prayer is the mighty instrument that does the work.

And so the old cry comes to us with insistent voice, "Pray, brethren, pray."

