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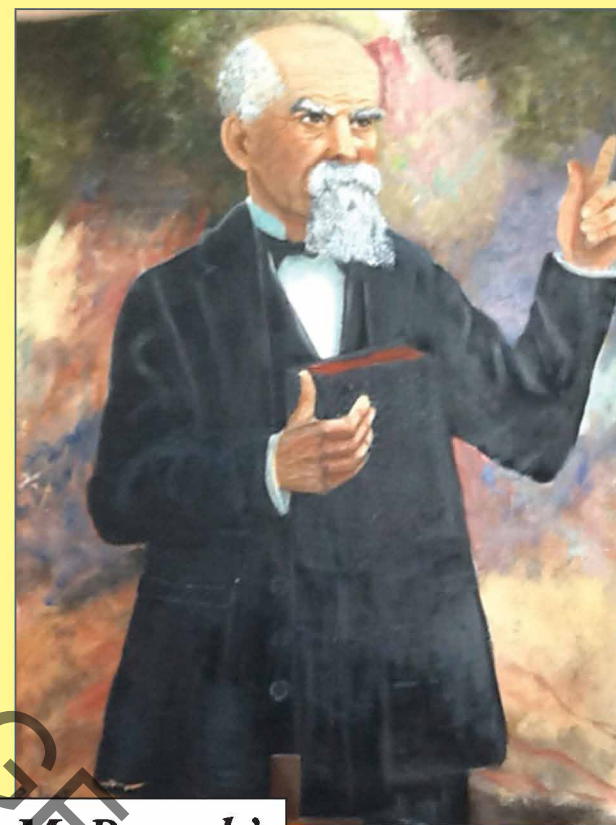
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E. M. Bounds' Preacher and Prayer • Foreword by E. A. Johnston



E. M. Bounds'

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(Unabridged Edition)

Also Included

Never Quit Praying for Your Loved Ones

An Account of the Lord's Working
in the Life of Osborne M. Bounds, Sr.,
Son of E. M. Bounds

by Marion H. Price, Sr.

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Never Quit Praying for Your Loved Ones

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory of Carla Johnston.

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Foreword

The greatest need in our Land today is a prophet. A man sent from God. God's man who will stand in the gap between heaven and earth, between mortal man and Almighty God. A holy man who is so wholly sold out to God, so intoxicated with Christ, and so consumed with eternity that his very footprints leave a smoky trail of the lingering fire of God. A man whose desperate life of prayer has left fingerprints on the horns of the altar in glory. A man whose emboldened faith and Enoch-like walk with God moves mountains of resistance and proves that the God of the Bible is alive and interested in the most minute requests of man.

God will always raise up an Elijah whose prayers impact a sleeping nation. The Church in each generation has had individuals who live upon their knees, whose prayers reach heaven with a holy violence. India had her "praying Hyde"; China her Hudson Taylor; England her Puritans; Scotland her Covenanters; America her fiery E. M. Bounds; voices which gained the attention of the Throne-room, startled angels, and shook the gates of hell making even the demons quake and tremble with their desperate prayers.

As a Sovereign God hears and answers the prayers of His saints on earth, He also orders the steps of His servants by His providence, guiding them along the divine chessboard

of life. Each piece like the pawn, rook, and bishop are strategically placed and arranged by a providential Hand to fulfill the divine purpose; men's lives cross at appointed junctures, eternity is impacted and, through these divinely arranged human relationships, the purposes and plans of the Almighty are carried out.

There is no expiration of a prayer for a prayer once made has wings, a life and a force that reach far into the future and into eternity—all for the glory of God. A man prayed. God listened. God would answer in His perfect time. This was the case in the life of E. M. Bounds. In a small southern town of Washington, Georgia a frail old man prayed. He prayed for the salvation of his offspring. His knees grinded the gray wooden slats of his prayer closet as he anguished in intercessory prayer for his boy Osborne. E. M. Bounds died in 1913 with his son Osborne unsaved. Sixty-three years later in 1976 God moved a strategic piece on His chessboard in the form of Marion Price. Marion Price was used of God to lead the 84-year-old son of E. M. Bounds to Christ. God had finally answered the desperate prayer of E. M. Bounds for his son Osborne. We will let Brother Price relate the story taken from his own account in his booklet entitled *Never Quit Praying For Your Loved Ones*.

It is our great privilege to re-publish in one volume *Never Quit Praying for Your Loved Ones* by Marion Price and the unabridged edition of *Preacher and Prayer* by E. M. Bounds (which was only one of two books published in Bounds' lifetime). Every minister of the gospel should carefully study Bounds' treatise on preaching and prayer as they are vitally connected. We pray that this little volume will bless you immensely and that your own prayer life and preaching ministry will be renewed and revitalized all to the glory of God!

—E. A. Johnston, Ph.D., D.B.S.
Evangelist and author

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Never Quit Praying for Your Loved Ones

*An Account of the Lord's Working
in the Life of Osborne M. Bounds, Sr.,
Son of E. M. Bounds*

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“Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD . . .”
—Psalm 127:3

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Never Quit Praying for Your Loved Ones

Years ago I was introduced to the works of E. M. Bounds through the ministry of an evangelist and dear friend, Leonard Ravenhill. Mr. Ravenhill was ministering in our area and for a week I sat under his preaching. He referred often to “Master Bounds.”

Ravenhill was so well acquainted with the writings of E. M. Bounds that he had used them in compiling the book, *A Treasury of Prayer*. Once I read this book, I was hooked. For several months thereafter I searched for everything I could find that was written by Bounds.

I later discovered that the earthly remains of this dear saint of God were buried in Washington, Georgia, not more than two and one-half hours from where I lived at the time.

In the summer of 1976, I went to Washington in search of the grave. After looking through the city cemetery for some time, I could not find Bounds’ resting place.

As a last resort I searched the telephone directory for any families with the Bounds name. To my surprise, I found an Osborne M. Bounds, Sr. listed.

When I called the number, a young lady answered the phone. I asked if Osborne Bounds might possibly be a distant relative of the old Methodist preacher E. M. Bounds.

“Yes. Osborne is his son,” the lady replied.

“His son?” I responded, in startled amazement.

“Yes. He’s 84 years old and I am his granddaughter, Ann Reynolds,” she said.

I told Ann that I was a Baptist pastor and that I would like to visit with Mr. Bounds if it were at all possible. She said he would be delighted to see me.

When I arrived at the Bounds home, no one was there. At first I thought perhaps I had misunderstood the directions and had ended up at the wrong address. Then a car entered the driveway. A thin, frail, white-haired gentleman exited the car and began walking toward me, taking half steps with the help of a young lady.

It was Osborne Bounds and his granddaughter Ann. They had run an errand before our appointment.

Osborne made his way to a rocking chair on the back porch and sat down. Looking up he smiled and apologized for taking so long to get up the steps. After we had chatted with each other for a few minutes, another car rolled into the driveway. Out bounded an aristocratic and spry Southern lady who seemed to have more energy than I at 37. She was Mary Willis Bounds Armstrong, Osborne’s 81-year-old sister.

As the conversation between the three of us continued, I sat in absolute awe that I was talking with two living children of E. M. Bounds.

I asked question after question about their father and they graciously and patiently answered, telling me everything they could remember about him.

After we talked for a short time, Mary offered to take me to the cemetery and show me where their father was buried. I knew that it was getting late and that I should be leaving, but before I went I had a strong impulse to ask Osborne Bounds about his spiritual condition. All of our conversation to this point had been about their father and what a good man he

was.

“Mr. Bounds, are you a saved man?” I asked.

Osborne dropped his head in momentary silence. Then, as meekly as a man could answer such a question, he said, “Oh, I don’t know. I hope so, but I’m not sure.”

About this time, Mary, with her strong Southern accent, interrupted, “Why Reverend Price, Oz is one of the best men in the county. Why he’s helped more people ... You won’t find a better man anywhere.”

Immediately she rose from her chair and said, “Let me take you to the cemetery.”

On the way she told me that her father would rise at four o’clock each morning and pray until breakfast at seven. In his later years, she said, he would rise at three o’clock.

I asked Mary what time he would go to bed each night.

“Early,” she replied, “before anyone else. If visitors were at the house he would excuse himself by saying something like, ‘I have an early appointment.’”

As we arrived at the gravesite, I again stood in awe. There was the marker at the head of the grave—“Edward McKendree Bounds, D.D., Aug. 15, 1835—Aug. 24, 1913.” Another stood at the foot—“Chaplain E. McK. Bounds, 3 MO INF C.S.A.”

When we left the cemetery, Mrs. Armstrong carried me by the old home place, which is now used by the Washington-Wilkes Historical Society as a museum. As we looked through the home, she showed me the room where Dr. Bounds often resorted for private prayer.

Soon we were back at Osborne’s house where I thanked him and Mrs. Armstrong for their gracious help and said goodbye.

On my drive home, the Spirit of God burdened my heart with the thought that neither of these children of a dear man of God—*though one was 81 and the other 84 years old*—was

saved. Their answers to simple gospel questions revealed their true spiritual standing.

Pondering this terrible thought, I cried like a baby. I was a preacher with seven children. These two older Bounds children reminded me of two of my own who in their early teen years had given me a few anxious moments.

Ann Reynolds, Osborne's granddaughter, had told me that she had been praying for her granddaddy for some time. Knowing his age and frail condition, she was concerned about his soul.

"Brother Price, when you walked up on that porch and I saw a gospel tract in your shirt pocket, I knew the Lord had sent you to talk to my granddaddy," she said.

Ann's words humbled my heart. I began to realize that I was involved in spiritual warfare for the souls of two children of a preacher who had already been in Heaven for 63 years!

After arriving home, I contacted twelve preachers in whom I had great confidence and asked them to help me pray for these two people.

Thereafter, each time I went to Washington, I would go by the cemetery, then to Dr. Bounds' prayer room, and then to visit with Osborne. But each time I visited, there were people around and I did not have the liberty to talk with him about the gospel.

Next to the last time I visited him, he was in the hospital. His foot had been amputated. I prayed with him, but I still had no liberty to talk with him about the Lord.

Finally, on what was to be my last visit to Osborne's home, things were different. A dear black lady in a nurse's uniform met me at the door. Recognizing me from previous visits, she ushered me into Osborne's room where he lay in a hospital bed. As she was leaving, she turned and smiled at me as if to say, "Now is the time. I'll see that you're not disturbed."

I felt confident that the dear soul stood in the gap for

Osborne and made a spiritual hedge to protect the two of us.

Talking with Osborne, I lost sight of the fact that he was the son of E. M. Bounds. I saw him simply as a man who seemed to have a hungry heart for the things of God. Indeed, I was a preacher's son talking to a preacher's son.

On the mantle behind me sat a picture of E. M. Bounds who seemingly was overlooking our conversation. More importantly, however, I sensed the presence of the Living Lord actually overshadowing and directing the eternal affairs taking place.

When I asked Osborne if I could read the Scriptures, he replied, "Certainly ... Please do." Then I shared with him the gospel story and the hopelessness of man without the Lord Jesus. I told him that a man must come to God with a repentant heart, confessing sin, and then by faith receive Him as Lord and Savior.

I asked Osborne if he thought much about these matters. He answered, "All the time."

Then with the boldness of a lion and yet with a holy trembling inside, I asked, "Are you ready to call on the Lord and ask Him to save you?"

"Yes sir, I would," Osborne said, as he began to pray without being coaxed. Like a little child he confessed his sinful condition and his doubting heart, asking the Lord to forgive him.

When he finished, I asked, "Mr. Bounds, did you really mean what you just prayed?"

He tried to raise up a little in the bed, looked me straight in the eye, and said, "Well, I guess I did!" Then with a peaceful smile on his face, he slumped onto his pillow.

Before leaving Osborne's room, I read more Scripture, gave him some gospel literature, and prayed with him.

In the days following I questioned whether Osborne Bounds had truly been saved or I had talked him into a false

profession. The Lord reminded me that this man had been bathed in prayer. His father had died praying for his children. His granddaughter, Ann, had been praying for him. Twelve preachers and I had prayed three months for him. Besides these, there might have been countless numbers of people whom we did not know who had prayed for him.

After Osborne's death in 1979, his daughter, Mrs. Rosemary Reynolds, told me, "From the time Daddy talked with you that last time, he had more peace than he had ever had before."

Praise the Lord! That settled my own heart. One of the first evidences of genuine salvation is the peace God gives to the heart.

Hallelujah for the Cross! God answers prayer. He is still faithful to save any who "will come to Him." John 6:37 says, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

The children of E. M. Bounds had the highest regard for their father. They spoke of him in glowing terms. Surely he had drilled them with the Word of God in their youth. But the fact remains that Osborne Bounds was an old man before he came to know Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior.

We are assured that God will accomplish His purposes.

Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost. . . . — John 17:12

God had chosen before the foundation of the world to save Osborne and if I had not obeyed the Holy Spirit's leading in witnessing to him, the Lord would have sent someone else. I am so thankful that He used this servant.

Lest you become weary in praying for your loved ones, remember Osborne Bounds. The Lord surely encouraged my heart with this glorious experience.

The lesson for us is clear. We should NEVER quit praying for our loved ones. We may not see the answer before we die, but we can go to the grave with a prayer on our lips for their salvation. And God is not limited to my lifetime or yours. Sixty-three years after we die, He can send a simple gospel witness to speak to those for whom we have prayed.

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Preacher and Prayer

by E. M. Bounds

Three things make a divine—prayer, meditation, temptation.
—Luther

If you do not pray, God will probably lay you aside from your ministry as he did me, to teach you to pray. Remember Luther's maxim, "To have prayed well is to have studied well." Get your text from God, your thoughts, your words.—McCheyne

Recreation to a minister must be as whetting is with the mower—that is, to be used only so far as is necessary for his work. May a physician in plague-time take any more relaxation or recreation than is necessary for his life, when so many are expecting his help in a case of life and death? Will you stand by and see sinners gasping under the pangs of death and say: "God doth not require me to make myself a drudge to save them?" Is this the voice of ministerial or Christian compassion or rather of sensual laziness and diabolical cruelty?—Richard Baxter

Misemployment of time is injurious to the mind. In illness I have looked back with self-reproach on days spent in my study: I was wading through history and poetry and monthly journals, but I was in my study! Another man's trifling is notorious to all observers, but what am I doing? Nothing, perhaps, that has a reference to the spiritual good of my congregation. Be much in retirement and prayer. Study the honor and glory of your Master.—Richard Cecil

I.

Study universal holiness of life. Your whole usefulness depends on this, for your sermons last but an hour or two; your life preaches all the week. If Satan can only make a covetous minister a lover of praise, of pleasure, of good eating, he has ruined your ministry. Give yourself to prayer, and get your texts, your thoughts, your words from God. Luther spent his best three hours in prayer.—
Robert Murray McCheyne

We are constantly on a stretch, if not on a strain, to devise new methods, new plans, new organizations to advance the Church and secure enlargement and efficiency for the gospel. This trend of the day has a tendency to lose sight of the man or sink the man in the plan or organization. God's plan is to make much of the man, far more of him than of anything else. Men are God's method. The Church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men. "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." The dispensation that heralded and prepared the way for Christ was bound up in that man John. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." The world's salvation comes out of that cradled Son. When Paul appeals to the personal character of the men who rooted the gospel in the world, he solves the mystery of their success. The glory and efficiency of the gospel is staked on the men who proclaim it. When God declares that "the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the

whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him," he declares the necessity of men and his dependence on them as a channel through which to exert his power upon the world. This vital, urgent truth is one that this age of machinery is apt to forget. The forgetting of it is as baneful on the work of God as would be the striking of the sun from his sphere. Darkness, confusion, and death would ensue.

What the Church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use—men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men—men of prayer.

An eminent historian has said that the accidents of personal character have more to do with the revolutions of nations than either philosophic historians or democratic politicians will allow. This truth has its application in full to the gospel of Christ, the character and conduct of the followers of Christ—Christianize the world, transfigure nations and individuals. Of the preachers of the gospel it is eminently true.

The character as well as the fortunes of the gospel is committed to the preacher. He makes or mars the message from God to man. The preacher is the golden pipe through which the divine oil flows. The pipe must not only be golden, but open and flawless, that the oil may have a full, unhindered, unwasted flow.

The man makes the preacher. God must make the man. The messenger is, if possible, more than the message. The preacher is more than the sermon. The preacher makes the sermon. As the life-giving milk from the mother's bosom is but the mother's life, so all the preacher says is tintured,

impregnated by what the preacher is. The treasure is in earthen vessels, and the taste of the vessel impregnates and may discolor. The man, the whole man, lies behind the sermon. Preaching is not the performance of an hour. It is the outflow of a life. It takes twenty years to make a sermon, because it takes twenty years to make the man. The true sermon is a thing of life. The sermon grows because the man grows. The sermon is forceful because the man is forceful. The sermon is holy because the man is holy. The sermon is full of the divine unction because the man is full of the divine unction.

Paul termed it “My gospel”; not that he had degraded it by his personal eccentricities or diverted it by selfish appropriation, but the gospel was put into the heart and lifeblood of the man Paul, as a personal trust to be executed by his Pauline traits, to be set aflame and empowered by the fiery energy of his fiery soul. Paul’s sermons—what were they? Where are they? Skeletons, scattered fragments, afloat on the sea of inspiration! But the man Paul, greater than his sermons, lives forever, in full form, feature and stature, with his molding hand on the Church. The preaching is but a voice. The voice in silence dies, the text is forgotten, the sermon fades from memory; the preacher lives.

The sermon cannot rise in its life-giving forces above the man. Dead men give out dead sermons, and dead sermons kill. Everything depends on the spiritual character of the preacher. Under the Jewish dispensation the high priest had inscribed in jeweled letters on a golden frontlet: “HOLINESS TO THE LORD.” So every preacher in Christ’s ministry must be molded into and mastered by this same holy motto. It is a crying shame for the Christian ministry to fall lower in holiness of character and holiness of aim than the Jewish priesthood. Jonathan Edwards said: “I went on with my eager pursuit after more holiness and conformity to Christ.

The heaven I desired was a heaven of holiness.” The gospel of Christ does not move by popular waves. It has no self-propagating power. It moves as the men who have charge of it move. The preacher must impersonate the gospel. Its divine, most distinctive features must be embodied in him. The constraining power of love must be in the preacher as a projecting, eccentric, an all-commanding, self-oblivious force. The energy of self-denial must be his being, his heart and blood and bones. He must go forth as a man among men, clothed with humility, abiding in meekness, wise as a serpent, harmless as a dove; the bonds of a servant with the spirit of a king, a king in high, royal, independent bearing, with the simplicity and sweetness of a child. The preacher must throw himself, with all the abandon of a perfect, self-emptying faith and a self-consuming zeal, into his work for the salvation of men. Hearty, heroic, compassionate, fearless martyrs must the men be who take hold of and shape a generation for God. If they be timid timeservers, place seekers, if they be men pleasers or men fearers, if their faith has a weak hold on God or his Word, if their denial be broken by any phase of self or the world, they cannot take hold of the Church nor the world for God.

The preacher’s sharpest and strongest preaching should be to himself. His most difficult, delicate, laborious, and thorough work must be with himself. The training of the twelve was the great, difficult, and enduring work of Christ. Preachers are not sermon makers, but men makers and saint makers, and he only is well-trained for this business who has made himself a man and a saint. It is not great talents nor great learning nor great preachers that God needs, but men great in holiness, great in faith, great in love, great in fidelity, great for God—men always preaching by holy sermons in the pulpit, by holy lives out of it. These can mold a generation for God.

After this order, the early Christians were formed. Men they were of solid mold, preachers after the heavenly type—heroic, stalwart, soldierly, saintly. Preaching with them meant self-denying, self-crucifying, serious, toilsome, martyr business. They applied themselves to it in a way that told on their generation, and formed in its womb a generation yet unborn for God. The preaching man is to be the praying man. Prayer is the preacher's mightiest weapon. An almighty force in itself, it gives life and force to all.

The real sermon is made in the closet. The man—God's man—is made in the closet. His life and his profoundest convictions were born in his secret communion with God. The burdened and tearful agony of his spirit, his weightiest and sweetest messages were got when alone with God. Prayer makes the man; prayer makes the preacher; prayer makes the pastor.

The pulpit of this day is weak in praying. The pride of learning is against the dependent humility of prayer. Prayer is with the pulpit too often official—a performance for the routine of service. Prayer is not to the modern pulpit the mighty force it was in Paul's life or Paul's ministry. Every preacher who does not make prayer a mighty factor in his own life and ministry is weak as a factor in God's work and is powerless to project God's cause in this world.

II.

But above all he excelled in prayer. The inwardness and weight of his spirit, the reverence and solemnity of his address and behavior, and the fewness and fullness of his words have often struck even strangers with admiration as they used to reach others with consolation. The most awful, living, reverend frame I ever felt or beheld, I must say, was his prayer. And truly it was a testimony. He knew and lived nearer to the Lord than other men, for they that know him most will see most reason to approach him with reverence and fear.—William Penn of George Fox

The sweetest graces by a slight perversion may bear the bitterest fruit. The sun gives life, but sunstrokes are death. Preaching is to give life; it may kill. The preacher holds the keys; he may lock as well as unlock. Preaching is God's great institution for the planting and maturing of spiritual life. When properly executed, its benefits are untold; when wrongly executed, no evil can exceed its damaging results. It is an easy matter to destroy the flock if the shepherd be unwary or the pasture be destroyed, easy to capture the citadel if the watchmen be asleep or the food and water be poisoned. Invested with such gracious prerogatives, exposed to so great evils, involving so many grave responsibilities, it would be a parody on the shrewdness of the devil and a libel on his character and reputation if he did not bring his master influences to adulterate the preacher and the preaching. In face of all this, the exclamatory interrogatory of Paul, "Who is sufficient for these things?" is never out of order.

Paul says: "Our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The true ministry is God-touched, God-enabled, and God-made. The Spirit of God is on the preacher in anointing power, the fruit of the Spirit is in his heart, the Spirit of God has vitalized the man and the word; his preaching gives life,

gives life as the spring gives life; gives life as the resurrection gives life; gives ardent life as the summer gives ardent life; gives fruitful life as the autumn gives fruitful life. The life-giving preacher is a man of God, whose heart is ever athirst for God, whose soul is ever following hard after God, whose eye is single to God, and in whom by the power of God's Spirit the flesh and the world have been crucified and his ministry is like the generous flood of a life-giving river.

The preaching that kills is nonspiritual preaching. The ability of the preaching is not from God. Lower sources than God have given to it energy and stimulant. The Spirit is not evident in the preacher nor his preaching. Many kinds of forces may be projected and stimulated by preaching that kills, but they are not spiritual forces. They may resemble spiritual forces, but are only the shadow, the counterfeit; life they may seem to have, but the life is magnetized. The preaching that kills is the letter; shapely and orderly it may be, but it is the letter still, the dry, husky letter, the empty, bald shell. The letter may have the germ of life in it, but it has no breath of spring to evoke it; winter seeds they are, as hard as the winter's soil, as icy as the winter's air, no thawing nor germinating by them. This letter-preaching has the truth. But even divine truth has no life-giving energy alone; it must be energized by the Spirit, with all God's forces at its back. Truth unquickened by God's Spirit deadens as much as, or more than, error. It may be the truth without admixture; but without the Spirit its shade and touch are deadly, its truth error, its light darkness. The letter-preaching is ununctionless, neither mellowed nor oiled by the Spirit. There may be tears, but tears cannot run God's machinery; tears may be but summer's breath on a snow-covered iceberg, nothing but surface slush. Feelings and earnestness there may be, but it is the emotion of the actor and the earnestness of the attorney. The preacher may feel from the kindling of his own sparks,

be eloquent over his own exegesis, earnest in delivering the product of his own brain; the professor may usurp the place and imitate the fire of the apostle; brains and nerves may serve the place and feign the work of God's Spirit, and by these forces the letter may glow and sparkle like an illumined text, but the glow and sparkle will be as barren of life as the field sown with pearls. The death-dealing element lies back of the words, back of the sermon, back of the occasion, back of the manner, back of the action. The great hindrance is in the preacher himself. He has not in himself the mighty life-creating forces. There may be no discount on his orthodoxy, honesty, cleanness, or earnestness; but somehow the man, the inner man, in its secret places has never broken down and surrendered to God, his inner life is not a great highway for the transmission of God's message, God's power. Somehow self and not God rules in the holy of holies. Somewhere, all unconscious to himself, some spiritual nonconductor has touched his inner being, and the divine current has been arrested. His inner being has never felt its thorough spiritual bankruptcy, its utter powerlessness; he has never learned to cry out with an ineffable cry of self-despair and self-helplessness till God's power and God's fire comes in and fills, purifies, empowers. Self-esteem, self-ability in some pernicious shape has defamed and violated the temple which should be held sacred for God. Life-giving preaching costs the preacher much—death to self, crucifixion to the world, the travail of his own soul. Crucified preaching only can give life. Crucified preaching can come only from a crucified man.

III.

During this affliction I was brought to examine my life in relation to eternity closer than I had done when in the enjoyment of health. In this examination relative to the discharge of my duties toward my fellow-creatures as a man, a Christian minister, and an officer of the Church, I stood approved by my own conscience; but in relation to my Redeemer and Saviour the result was different. My returns of gratitude and loving obedience bear no proportion to my obligations for redeeming, preserving, and supporting me through the vicissitudes of life from infancy to old age. The coldness of my love to Him who first loved me and has done so much for me overwhelmed and confused me; and to complete my unworthy character, I had not only neglected to improve the grace given to the extent of my duty and privilege, but for want of that improvement had, while abounding in perplexing care and labor, declined from first zeal and love. I was confounded, humbled myself, implored mercy, and renewed my covenant to strive and devote myself unreservedly to the Lord.—Bishop McKendree

The preaching that kills may be, and often is, orthodox—dogmatically, inviolably orthodox. We love orthodoxy. It is good. It is the best. It is the clean, clear-cut teaching of God's Word, the trophies won by truth in its conflict with error, the levees which faith has raised against the desolating floods of honest or reckless misbelief or unbelief; but orthodoxy, clear and hard as crystal, suspicious and militant, may be but the letter well-shaped, well-named, and well-learned, the letter which kills. Nothing is so dead as a dead orthodoxy, too dead to speculate, too dead to think, to study, or to pray.

The preaching that kills may have insight and grasp of principles, may be scholarly and critical in taste, may have every minutiae of the derivation and grammar of the letter, may be able to trim the letter into its perfect pattern, and illumine it as Plato and Cicero may be illumined, may study it as a lawyer studies his text-books to form his brief or to defend his case, and yet be like a frost, a killing frost. Letter-preaching may be eloquent, enameled with poetry

and rhetoric, sprinkled with prayer, spiced with sensation, illumined by genius, and yet these be but the massive or chaste, costly mountings, the rare and beautiful flowers which coffin the corpse. The preaching which kills may be without scholarship, unmarked by any freshness of thought or feeling, clothed in tasteless generalities or vapid specialties, with style irregular, slovenly, savoring neither of closet nor of study, graced neither by thought, expression, or prayer. Under such preaching how wide and utter the desolation! how profound the spiritual death!

This letter-preaching deals with the surface and shadow of things, and not the things themselves. It does not penetrate the inner part. It has no deep insight into, no strong grasp of the hidden life of God's Word. It is true to the outside, but the outside is the hull which must be broken and penetrated for the kernel. The letter may be dressed so as to attract and be fashionable, but the attraction is not toward God nor is the fashion for heaven. The failure is in the preacher. God has not made him. He has never been in the hands of God like clay in the hands of the potter. He has been busy about the sermon, its thought and finish, its drawing and impressive forces; but the deep things of God have never been sought, studied, fathomed, experienced by him. He has never stood before the "throne, high and lifted up," never heard the seraphim song, never seen the vision nor felt the rush of that awful holiness, and cried out in utter abandon and despair under the sense of weakness and guilt, and had his life renewed, his heart touched, purged, inflamed by the live coal from God's altar. His ministry may draw people to him, to the Church, to the form and ceremony; but no true drawings to God, no sweet, holy, divine communion induced. The Church has been frescoed but not edified, pleased but not sanctified. Life is suppressed; a chill is on the summer air; the soil is baked. The city of our God becomes the city of the

dead; the Church a graveyard, not an embattled army. Praise and prayer are stifled; worship is dead. The preacher and the preaching have helped sin, not holiness; peopled hell, not heaven.

Preaching which kills is prayerless preaching. Without prayer the preacher creates death, and not life. The preacher who is feeble in prayer is feeble in life-giving forces. The preacher who has retired prayer as a conspicuous and largely prevailing element in his own character has shorn his preaching of its distinctive life-giving power. Professional praying there is and will be, but professional praying helps the preaching to its deadly work. Professional praying chills and kills both preaching and praying. Much of the lax devotion and lazy, irreverent attitudes in congregational praying are attributable to professional praying in the pulpit. Long, discursive, dry, and inane are the prayers in many pulpits. Without unction or heart, they fall like a killing frost on all the graces of worship. Death-dealing prayers they are. Every vestige of devotion has perished under their breath. The deader they are the longer they grow. A plea for short praying, live praying, real heart praying, praying by the Holy Spirit—direct, specific, ardent, simple, unctuous in the pulpit is in order. A school to teach preachers how to pray, as God counts praying, would be more beneficial to true piety, true worship, and true preaching than all theological schools.

Stop! Pause! Consider! Where are we? What are we doing? Preaching to kill? Praying to kill? Praying to God! the great God, the Maker of all worlds, the Judge of all men! What reverence! what simplicity! what sincerity! what truth in the inward parts is demanded! How real we must be! How hearty! Prayer to God the noblest exercise, the loftiest effort of man, the most real thing! Shall we not discard forever accursed preaching that kills and prayer that kills, and do the real thing, the mightiest thing—prayerful praying, life-creating

preaching, bring the mightiest force to bear on heaven and earth and draw on God's exhaustless and open treasure for the need and beggary of man?

SAMPLE

PAGES

IV.

Let us often look at Brainerd in the woods of America pouring out his very soul before God for the perishing heathen without whose salvation nothing could make him happy. Prayer—secret, fervent, believing prayer—lies at the root of all personal godliness. A competent knowledge of the language where a missionary lives, a mild and winning temper, a heart given up to God in closet religion—these, these are the attainments which, more than all knowledge, or all other gifts, will fit us to become the instruments of God in the great work of human redemption.—Carey's Brotherhood, Serampore

There are two extreme tendencies in the ministry. The one is to shut itself out from intercourse with the people. The monk, the hermit were illustrations of this; they shut themselves out from men to be more with God. They failed, of course. Our being with God is of use only as we expend its priceless benefits on men. This age, neither with preacher nor with people, is much intent on God. Our hankering is not that way. We shut ourselves to our study, we become students, bookworms, Bible worms, sermon makers, noted for literature, thought, and sermons; but the people and God, where are they? Out of heart, out of mind. Preachers who are great thinkers, great students must be the greatest of prayers, or else they will be the greatest of backsliders, heartless professionals, rationalistic, less than the least of preachers in God's estimate.

The other tendency is to thoroughly popularize the ministry. He is no longer God's man, but a man of affairs, of the people. He prays not, because his mission is to the people. If he can move the people, create an interest, a sensation in favor of religion, an interest in Church work—he is satisfied. His personal relation to God is no factor in his work. Prayer has little or no place in his plans. The disaster and ruin of such a ministry cannot be computed by earthly arithmetic. What the preacher is in prayer to God, for himself, for his

people, so is his power for real good to men, so is his true fruitfulness, his true fidelity to God, to man, for time, for eternity.

It is impossible for the preacher to keep his spirit in harmony with the divine nature of his high calling without much prayer. That the preacher by dint of duty and laborious fidelity to the work and routine of the ministry can keep himself in trim and fitness is a serious mistake. Even sermon-making, incessant and taxing as an art, as a duty, as a work, or as a pleasure, will engross and harden, will estrange the heart, by neglect of prayer, from God. The scientist loses God in nature. The preacher may lose God in his sermon.

Prayer freshens the heart of the preacher, keeps it in tune with God and in sympathy with the people, lifts his ministry out of the chilly air of a profession, fructifies routine and moves every wheel with the facility and power of a divine unction.

Mr. Spurgeon says: "Of course the preacher is above all others distinguished as a man of prayer. He prays as an ordinary Christian, else he were a hypocrite. He prays more than ordinary Christians, else he were disqualified for the office he has undertaken. If you as ministers are not very prayerful, you are to be pitied. If you become lax in sacred devotion, not only will you need to be pitied but your people also, and the day cometh in which you shall be ashamed and confounded. All our libraries and studies are mere emptiness compared with our closets. Our seasons of fasting and prayer at the Tabernacle have been high days indeed; never has heaven's gate stood wider; never have our hearts been nearer the central Glory."

The praying which makes a prayerful ministry is not a little praying put in as we put flavor to give it a pleasant smack, but the praying must be in the body, and form the blood and bones. Prayer is no petty duty, put into a corner; no piecemeal

performance made out of the fragments of time which have been snatched from business and other engagements of life; but it means that the best of our time, the heart of our time and strength must be given. It does not mean the closet absorbed in the study or swallowed up in the activities of ministerial duties; but it means the closet first, the study and activities second, both study and activities freshened and made efficient by the closet. Prayer that affects one's ministry must give tone to one's life. The praying which gives color and bent to character is no pleasant, hurried pastime. It must enter as strongly into the heart and life as Christ's "strong crying and tears" did; must draw out the soul into an agony of desire as Paul's did; must be an inwrought fire and force like the "effectual fervent prayer" of James; must be of that quality which, when put into the golden censer and incensed before God, works mighty spiritual throes and revolutions.

Prayer is not a little habit pinned on to us while we were tied to our mother's apron strings; neither is it a little decent quarter of a minute's grace said over an hour's dinner, but it is a most serious work of our most serious years. It engages more of time and appetite than our longest dinings or richest feasts. The prayer that makes much of our preaching must be made much of. The character of our praying will determine the character of our preaching. Light praying will make light preaching. Prayer makes preaching strong, gives it unction, and makes it stick. In every ministry weighty for good, prayer has always been a serious business.

The preacher must be preeminently a man of prayer. His heart must graduate in the school of prayer. In the school of prayer only can the heart learn to preach. No learning can make up for the failure to pray. No earnestness, no diligence, no study, no gifts will supply its lack.

Talking to men for God is a great thing, but talking to God for men is greater still. He will never talk well and with

real success to men for God who has not learned well how to talk to God for men. More than this, prayerless words in the pulpit and out of it are deadening words.

SAMPLE

PAGES

V.

You know the value of prayer: it is precious beyond all price. Never, never neglect it.—Sir Thomas Buxton

Prayer is the first thing, the second thing, the third thing necessary to a minister. Pray, then, my dear brother; pray, pray, pray.—Edward Payson

Prayer, in the preacher's life, in the preacher's study, in the preacher's pulpit, must be a conspicuous and an all-impregnating force and an all-coloring ingredient. It must play no secondary part, be no mere coating. To him it is given to be with his Lord "all night in prayer." The preacher, to train himself in self-denying prayer, is charged to look to his Master, who, "rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." The preacher's study ought to be a closet, a Bethel, an altar, a vision, and a ladder, that every thought might ascend heavenward ere it went manward; that every part of the sermon might be scented by the air of heaven and made serious, because God was in the study.

As the engine never moves until the fire is kindled, so preaching, with all its machinery, perfection, and polish, is at a dead standstill, as far as spiritual results are concerned, till prayer has kindled and created the steam. The texture, fineness, and strength of the sermon is as so much rubbish unless the mighty impulse of prayer is in it, through it, and behind it. The preacher must, by prayer, put God in the sermon. The preacher must, by prayer, move God toward the people before he can move the people to God by his words. The preacher must have had audience and ready access to God before he can have access to the people. An open way to God for the preacher is the surest pledge of an open way to the people.

It is necessary to iterate and reiterate that prayer, as a mere habit, as a performance gone through by routine or in a professional way, is a dead and rotten thing. Such praying has no connection with the praying for which we plead. We are stressing true praying, which engages and sets on fire every high element of the preacher's being—prayer which is born of vital oneness with Christ and the fullness of the Holy Ghost, which springs from the deep, overflowing fountains of tender compassion, deathless solicitude for man's eternal good; a consuming zeal for the glory of God; a thorough conviction of the preacher's difficult and delicate work and of the imperative need of God's mightiest help. Praying grounded on these solemn and profound convictions is the only true praying. Preaching backed by such praying is the only preaching which sows the seeds of eternal life in human hearts and builds men up for heaven.

It is true that there may be popular preaching, pleasant preaching, taking preaching, preaching of much intellectual, literary, and brainy force, with its measure and form of good, with little or no praying; but the preaching which secures God's end in preaching must be born of prayer from text to exordium, delivered with the energy and spirit of prayer, followed and made to germinate, and kept in vital force in the hearts of the hearers by the preacher's prayers, long after the occasion has past.

We may excuse the spiritual poverty of our preaching in many ways, but the true secret will be found in the lack of urgent prayer for God's presence in the power of the Holy Spirit. There are preachers innumerable who can deliver masterful sermons after their order; but the effects are short-lived and do not enter as a factor at all into the regions of the spirit where the fearful war between God and Satan, heaven and hell, is being waged because they are not made powerfully militant and spiritually victorious by prayer.