

# Prayer and the Ministry

By E.M. Bounds

Apostolic men knew well the worth of prayer and were jealous of the most sacred offices which infringed on their time and strength and hindered them from "giving themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." They put prayer first. The Word depends on prayer that it "may have free course and be glorified." Praying apostles make preaching apostles. Prayer gives edge, entrance, and weight to the Word. Sermons conceived by prayer and saturated with prayer are weighty sermons. Sermons may be ponderous with thought, sparkle with the gems of genius and taste, pleasing and popular, but unless they have their birth and life in prayer, for God's uses, they are trifles, dull and dead.

What the church needs today is not more machinery or better, -not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Spirit can use - men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Spirit 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.

The gospel cannot be executed but by the Holy Spirit. He only has the regal authority to do this royal work. Intellect cannot execute it, neither can learning, nor eloquence, not truth, not even the revealed truth can execute the gospel. The marvelous facts of Christ's life told by hearts unannointed by the Holy Spirit will be dry and sterile, or "like a story told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Not any, nor all of these, though spoken with angelic wisdom, angelic eloquence, can execute the gospel with saving power. Only tongues set on fire by the Holy Spirit can witness the saving power of Christ with power to save others.

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