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### The Power of Prayer\*

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One of the most remarkable illustrations in recent times of the power of prayer, may be found in the experience of Mr. Moody. It explains his unparalleled career of world-wide soul winning. One marvels that more has not been said of it. Its stimulus to faith is great. I suppose the man most concerned did not speak of it much because of his fine modesty. The last year of his life he referred to it more frequently as though impelled to.

The last time I heard Mr. Moody was in his own church in Chicago. It was, I think, in the fall of the last year of his life. One morning in the old church made famous by his early work, in a quiet conversational way he told the story. It was back in the early seventies, when Chicago had been laid in ashes. "This building was not yet up far enough to do much in," he said; "so I thought I would slip across the water, and learn what I could from preachers there, so as to do better work here. I had gone over to London, and was running after men there."

Then he told of going one evening to hear Mr. Spurgeon in the Metropolitan Tabernacle; and understanding that he was to speak a second time that evening to dedicate a chapel, Mr. Moody had slipped out of the building and had run along the street after Mr. Spurgeon's carriage a mile or so, so as to hear the second time. Then he smiled, and said quietly, "I was running around after men like that."

He had not been speaking anywhere, he said, but listening to others. One day, Saturday, at noon, he had gone into the meeting in Exeter Hall on the Strand; felt impelled to speak a little when the meeting was thrown open, and did so.

At the close among others who greeted him, one man, a minister, asked him to come and preach for him the next day, morning and night, and he said he would. Mr. Moody said, "I went to the morning service and found a large church full of people. And when the time came I began to speak to them. But it seemed the hardest talking ever I did. There was no response in their faces. They seemed as though carved out of stone or ice. And I was having a hard time: and wished I wasn't there; and wished I hadn't promised to speak again at night. I had promised, and so I went.

"At night it was the same thing: house full, people outwardly respectful but no interest, no response. And I was having a hard time again. When about half-way through my talk there came a change. It seemed as though the windows of heaven had opened and a bit of breath blew down. The atmosphere of the building seemed to change. The people's faces changed. It impressed me so that when I finished speaking I gave the invitation for those who wanted to be Christians to rise. I thought there might be a few. And to my immense surprise the people got up in groups, by pews. I turned to the minister and

said, 'What does this mean? He said, 'I don't know, I'm sure.' 'Well,' I said, 'they misunderstood me. I'll explain what I meant.'" So he announced an aftermeeting in the room below, explaining who were invited: only those who wanted to be Christians; and putting pretty clearly what he understood that to mean, and dismissed the service.

They went to the lower room. And the people came crowding, jamming in below, filling all available space, seats, aisles and standing room. Mr. Moody talked again a few minutes, and then asked those who would be Christians to rise. This time he knew he had made his meaning clear. They got up in clumps, in groups, by fifties!

Mr. Moody said, "I turned and said to the minister, 'What does this mean?' He said, 'I'm sure I don't know.'"

Then the minister said to Mr. Moody, "What'll I do with these people? I don't know what to do with them; this is something new." Mr. Moody said, "Well, I'd announce a meeting for tomorrow night, and Tuesday night, and see what comes of it; I'm going across the channel to Dublin." He went. He had barely stepped off the boat when a cablegram was handed him from the minister saying, "Come back at once. church packed." So he went back, and stayed ten days. And the result of that ten days, as I recall Mr. Moody's words, was that four hundred were added to that church, and that every church near by felt the impulse of those ten days.

Then Mr. Moody dropped his head, as though thinking back, and said: "I had no plans beyond this church. I supposed my life work was here. But the result with me was that I was given a roving commission and have been working under it ever since."

Now what was the explanation of that marvellous Sunday and days following? It was not Mr. Moody's doing, though he was a leader whom God could and did mightily use. It was not the minister's doing; for he was as greatly surprised as the leader. There was some secret hidden beneath the surface of those ten days. With his usual keenness Mr. Moody set himself to ferret it out.

By and by this incident came to him. A member of the church, a woman, had been taken sick some time before. Then she grew worse. Then the physician told her that she would not recover. That is, she would not die at once, so far as he could judge, but she would be shut in her home for years. She lay there trying to think what that meant: to be shut in for years. She thought of her life, and said, "How little I've done for God—practically nothing—and now what can I do shut in here on my back."

"I can pray," she said, "I will pray!" And she was led to pray for her church. Her sister, also a member of the church, lived with her, and was her link with the

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