

adopted a State constitution with an article prohibiting slavery. Soon after came that large migration from the Southern States that would have determined its future for slavery, had they not come too late. This is simply one example from thousands of the way in which God remembers His praying people, even in the turning of the scale of national history and destiny, and no philosophy can account for such cases which denies a divine providence ruling in human affairs.

The power of prayer is the perpetual sign of the supernatural. Without doubt much of the benefit and blessing received by prayerful souls might be accounted for by natural and secondary causes. But in hundreds of other instances we must either deny the facts or admit a supernatural factor. They can no more be accounted for without a divine interposition than can the deliverance of the three holy children from the furnace, or of Daniel from the den.

Jonathan Edwards may be taken as an example of thousands. From the age of ten years, his prayers were astonishing both for the faith they exhibited and the results they secured. With the intellect of a cherub and the heart of a seraph, we can neither distrust his self-knowledge nor his absolute candor. His communion with God was so rapt and rapturous, that the extraordinary view of the glory of the Son of God, His pure, sweet love and grace, would overcome him so that for an hour he would be flooded with tears, weeping aloud. Prayer brought him such power as Peter at Pentecost scarcely illustrates more wonderfully. For instance, his sermon at Enfield, on "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," which, delivered without a gesture, nevertheless produced such effect that the audience leaped to their feet and clasped the pillars of the meeting-house lest they should slide into perdition.

That one man, in the midst of an apostasy from God that well-nigh wrecked religious life in England and America, pealed out his trumpet-call, summoning the whole Christian world to

prayer in 1747. In that tract, in which he pleads for a "visible union of God's people in extraordinary prayer," he refers to the day of fasting and prayer kept at Northampton the year before, which was followed that same night by the utter dispersion and defeat of the French Armada under the Duke d'Anville. And Edwards adds: "This is the nearest parallel with God's wonderful works of old in times of Moses, Joshua and Hezekiah, of any that have been in these latter ages of the world."

That trumpet peal to universal prayer in 1747 marked a turning point in modern history.

This is one of those instances in which the subject can be understood only from a high point of prospect that sweeps a wide horizon. We can understand the need of God's interposition, and the desperate necessity that drove His disciples to prayer, only by a knowledge of the condition of the world at that time. And that at least one example may be given in full, let us stop to take in, if possible, the whole range of this awful spiritual desolation.

The opening part of the last century presented a prospect as dreary and hopeless as has been seen, perhaps, since the dark ages. The leaders of English society were Hume, Gibbon, and Bolingbroke, giants of infidelity; in France, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Madame de Pompadour; in Germany, Frederick the Great, the friend and companion of Voltaire, and, like him, a deist. "Flippancy and frivolity in the church, deism in theology, lasciviousness in the novel and the drama"—such was the state of things in England, which Isaac Taylor said was in a condition of "virtual heathenism," while in America Samuel Blair declared that religion "lay a-dying."

But what was the pulpit doing in those days? Nothing. "Natural theology, without a simple distinctive doctrine of Christianity, cold morality, or barren orthodoxy, formed the staple teaching both in established church and dissenting chapel." The best sermons were only moral essays, a thousand of