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American Minute with Bill Federer

Layman's Prayer Revival, Evangelist D.L. Moody,
P.T. Barnum's Greatest Show on Earth, & the Third
Great Awakening

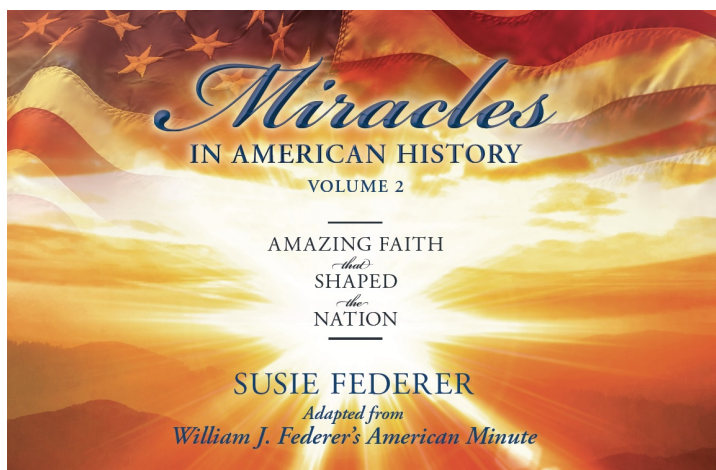
In 1844, a New England farmer **William Miller** sparked national attention by predicting Christ would return on October 22, 1844.



The Millerite's Great Disappointment caused many to abandon their faith ...

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[Miracles in American History- Vol. TWO: Amazing Faith that Shaped the Nation](#)

The Mexican-America War began in 1846, and ended in 1848.

In 1849, in addition to **gold being discovered in California**, a **cholera epidemic swept the nation**, killing 150,000.

President Zachary Taylor proclaimed a **National Day of Fasting**, after which the pandemic soon ended.

In 1850, the **Fugitive Slave Law** and the **Compromise of 1850** were passed, which instead of defusing the conflict of **slavery**, intensified it.

In 1851, **Herman Melville** published *Moby Dick*, and **Harriet Beecher Stowe** published the **anti-slavery** novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

In 1853, **U.S. Minister to Mexico James Gadsden** had the U.S. give **\$10 million** to **General Antonio López de Santa Anna** for the **Gadsden Purchase**.

This allowed **railroads** from the east to connect to the **Pacific coast**, forever changing the old wild west.

In 1854, Democrat Senator from Illinois **Stephen Douglas** pushed through the **Kansas–Nebraska Act**, after which a flood of **pro-slavery Democrats** went **west**, causing the conflict called "**bleeding Kansas**."

Escaped slave **Joshua Glover** was captured and put in **jail** in **Milwaukee** as a result of the **Democrat sponsored Fugitive Slave Law**.

On March 18, 1854, **5,000 white Wisconsin men** stormed the jail and **freed Joshua Glover**. Two days later, **they form a party dedicated to ending slavery -- The Republican Party**.

In 1855, **Frederick Douglass** published his autobiography *My Bondage-My Freedom*.

In 1856, Wesleyan Methodist minister **William Arthur** printed a soul-stirring book of sermons, *The Tongue of Fire, or true Power of Christianity*.

William Arthur's *The Tongue of Fire, or true Power of Christianity*, was endorsed by the renown preacher

Charles Spurgeon.

It ended with a plea that God would:

"... crown this nineteenth century with **a revival of pure and undefiled religion** ... greater than any demonstration of the Spirit ever vouchsafed to man."

Arthur's book had an impact similar to **Charles Finney's** 1835 book *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, which inspired **William Booth** to start the **Salvation Army** and **George Williams** to start the **Y.M.C.A. (Young Men's Christian Association)**.

The next year, 1857, a **financial panic** occurred in America, the third major panic since the nation's founding.

Banks failed, railroad went bankrupt, **factories closed**, and over 900 mercantile firms in New York went **out of business**.

Even a struggling St. Louis farmer and former army captain, **Ulysses S. Grant**, had to pawn his gold watch.

Over **30,000 were out of work** in New York City.

In New York City, **Jeremiah Lanphier** had been converted in 1842 at **Charles Finney's Broadway Tabernacle**.

He became a businessman in New York and took a position as a lay missionary with the Dutch Reformed North Church near Fulton and William Streets.

Lamphier began inviting merchants, clerks, mechanics and others to join him for noonday prayer for one hour on Wednesdays.

The first Wednesday, September 23, 1857, **six people**

showed up.

The next week 40.

They decided to pray daily, and within six months, there were **ten thousand** participating in the **Layman's Prayer Revival**.

Spreading across the nation, there were **over a million converts** praying day and night in the next two years.

Vice and crime decreased, criminals returned stolen money, wealthy helped the poor, sailors openly prayed, and when ungodly shipmates mocked them, the presence of God caused them to kneel in repentance.

A religious journal reported in March of 1858:

"The large cities and towns from Maine to California are sharing in this **great and glorious work**. There is hardly a village or town to be found where '**a special divine power**' does not appear displayed."

Run by lay leadership, the revival spread:

- **New York City** - 50,000 of the city's 800,000 population became new converts;
- **Utica, New York** - daily prayer meetings filled the First Presbyterian Church, overflowing the balconies;
- **Albany, New York** - the New York State Capitol had prayer in the halls every morning beginning at 8:30am;
- **Newark, New Jersey** - 3,000 came to Christ, with nearby towns seeing almost their entire populations converted;
- **Boston, Massachusetts** - leading businessmen and

commoners attended, as a witness recorded, "Publicans and sinners' are awakened, and are entering the prayer meetings of their own accord. Some of them manifest signs of sincere repentance";

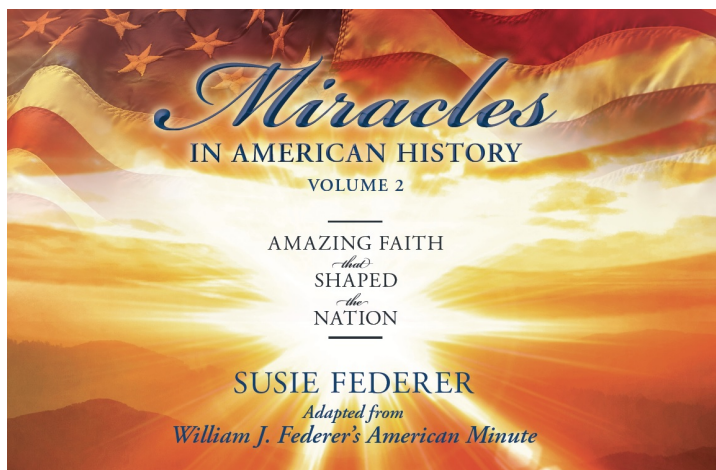
- **Haverhill, Massachusetts** - crowds came to the daily, weeping in repentance. Every family had someone seeking God;
- **Washington, DC** - prayer meetings were held five times a day to accommodate the scores of seekers;
- **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania** - 4,000 met in Jayne's Hall, as witnessed by philanthropist John Price Crozer, "I have never, I think, been present at a more stirring and edifying prayer meeting, the room quite full, and a divine influence seemed manifest. Many hearts melted, many souls devoutly engaged";
- **Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania** - 6,000 attended prayer meetings;
- **Kalamazoo, Michigan** - a woman wrote a prayer request to be read publicly at the meeting for her husband's salvation. When it was read, a man shouted, "Pray for me. I'm that man";
- **Charleston, South Carolina** - 2,000 prayed at Anson Street Presbyterian Church for over 8 weeks. One night, Dr. John L. Girardeaux dismissed the meeting, but no one left, staying till past midnight.
- **Waco, Texas** - as reported in *The New York Observer*, "Day and night the church has been crowded during the meeting... Never before in Texas have we seen a whole community so effectually under a religious influence ... thoroughly regenerated";
- **Louisville, Kentucky** - 1,000 attended the daily

union prayer, as one witness wrote, "The Spirit of God seems to be brooding over our city, and to have produced an unusual degree of tenderness and solemnity in all classes";

- **Chicago, Illinois** - 2,000 met for noon prayer in Metropolitan Hall, with a common business sign reading, "Will reopen at the close of the prayer meeting."

Professor J. Edwin Orr of Fuller Theological Seminary estimated that the **1858-59 Layman's Prayer Revival** resulted in a sustained increase in church attendance, significant moral reform in society, and **over a million Americans converting to faith in Christ.**

Sometimes referred to as the **Third Great Awakening**, the prayer revival fueled the abolitionist movement and gave birth to the **Protestant social gospel movement** to "**civilize and Christianize**" the world through **charitable activities.**



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During this **revival of 1858**, a traveling shoe salesman arrived in **Chicago** named **Dwight Lyman Moody**, working for the Wiswall Brothers.

His father had died when he was four, so he began working early, never finishing his education.

Though raised a unitarian, he was **converted to evangelical Christianity** in 1855 by a Sunday school

teacher.

During the Layman's Prayer Revival in Chicago, **D.L. Moody** began a **Sunday School mission** for underprivileged and immigrant children in the inner city, teaching in an abandoned saloon.

William Reynolds wrote of visiting **Moody's class**:

"The first meeting I ever saw him at was in a little old shanty that had been abandoned by a saloon-keeper. **Mr. Moody** had got the place to hold the meetings in at night.

I went there a little late; and the first thing I saw was a man standing up with a few tallow candles around him, holding a negro boy, and trying to read to him the story of the Prodigal Son and a great many words he could not read out, and had to skip.

I thought, '**If the Lord can ever use such an instrument as that for His honor and glory, it will astonish me.**'

After that meeting was over, **Mr. Moody** said to me, 'Reynolds, I have got only one talent: I have no education, but I love the Lord Jesus Christ, and I want to do something for him, and I want you to pray for me.'

Moody stated:

"It is a masterpiece of the devil to make us believe that children cannot understand religion. Would Christ have made a child the standard of faith if He had known that it was not capable of understanding His words?"

By 1860, **D.L. Moody's Chicago Bible class** had grown to over 1,000 attendees, with even **President-elect Abraham Lincoln** visiting on his way to Washington, DC., November 25, 1860.

At **Moody's** prompting, **Lincoln** addressed the students:

"I was once as poor as any boy in this school, but I am now President of the United States, and if you attend to what is taught you here, some of you may yet be President of the United States."

When the **Civil War** began in 1861, **D.L. Moody** joined the **United States Christian Commission** of the **Y.M.C.A.** to minister to the soldiers on the battlefields.

Nine different times he was at the battlefield, including the **Battle of Shiloh**, **Battle of Stones River**, and was with **General Grant's troops** when they entered **Richmond, Virginia**.

After the war, he served as president of the **Y.M.C.A.** from 1865-1870.

At the time, **Chicago** was the **second biggest city in America**, after New York City.

D.L. Moody built the Illinois Street Church in **Chicago**, but it was destroyed in **The Great Chicago Fire of 1871**.

The Great Chicago Fire destroyed an area four miles wide and a mile across. With tornadoes of fire, it killed over 300 people, destroyed 17,000 buildings, and left 100,000 homeless.

Tons of soot, ash and embers were carried by hurricane force winds across Lake Michigan, **setting fires all across Michigan**.

D.L. Moody said:

"We can stand affliction better than we can prosperity, for in prosperity we forget God."

After the fire, **Moody** raised money and rebuilt the **Y.M.C.A.**, and rebuilt the church, renaming it the **Chicago Avenue Church**.

It grew to an attendance of over 10,000, with 6,000 waiting outside.

D.L. Moody preached to hundreds of thousands across America, holding evangelistic meetings from **Boston** to **New York**, to **San Francisco** and **Vancouver**.

Even **President U.S. Grant** and his cabinet attended one of his meetings on January 19, 1876.

Moody began preaching to crowds in **New York**.

Needing a large building, **P.T. Barnum** let **Moody** use his **Great Roman Hippodrome**, as his **circus** was not open on Sundays.

When **P.T. Barnum's show** began traveling, **D.L. Moody**, with help from banker **J.P. Morgan** and railroad industrialist **Cornelius Vanderbilt**, transformed the **Great Roman Hippodrome** into a **revival tabernacle**.

Services began February 7, 1876, with 7,000 people in the main hall, 4,000 in overflow, thousands outside, 500 ushers and 1,200 singers directed by Ira Sankey.

Sunday attendance hit 25,000.

It was perhaps **Moody's** most important campaign, for in impacting **New York**, he impacted the world.

Moody recorded an account:

"I remember when preaching in **New York City**, at the **Hippodrome**, a man coming up to me and telling me a story that thrilled my soul.

One night, he said he had been gambling; had gambled all the money away he had. When he went home to the hotel that night he did not sleep much.

The next morning happened to be Sunday. He got up, felt bad, couldn't eat anything, didn't touch his breakfast, was miserable, and thought about putting an end to his existence.

... That afternoon he took a walk up **Broadway**, and when he came to the **Hippodrome** he saw great crowds going in and thought of entering too ...

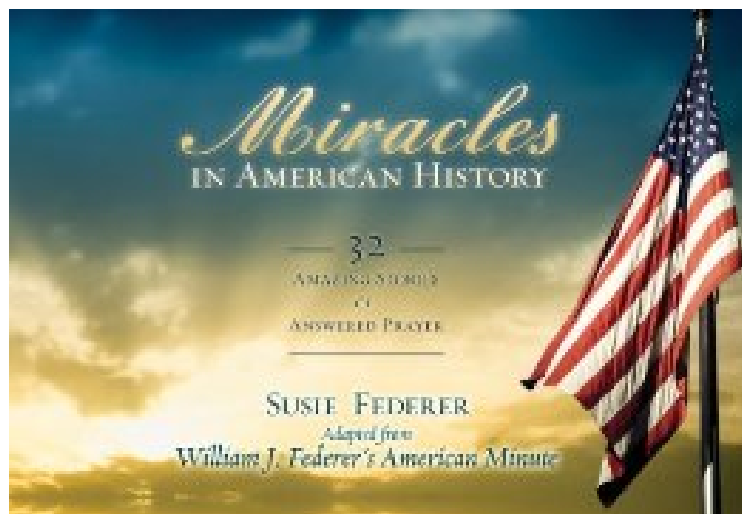
When inside he listened to the singing and heard the text, 'Where art thou?' and he thought he would go out. He rose to go, and the text came upon his ears again, 'Where art thou?'

This was too personal, he thought, it was disagreeable, and he made for the door, but as he got to the third row from the entrance, the words came to him again. 'Where art thou?'

He stood still, for the question had come to him with irresistible force, and **God** had found him right there. He went to his hotel and prayed all that night, and now he is a bright and shining light.

And this young man, who was a commercial traveler, went back to the village in which he had been reared ... and went around among his friends and acquaintances and testified for **Christ**, as earnestly and beneficially for him as his conduct had (before) been against Him."

[Miracles in American History- 32 Amazing Stories of Answered Prayers](#)



P.T. Barnum was considered the **world's greatest promoter and showman**,

He had a **circus museum** and a "**Traveling World's Fair - Great Roman Hippodrome and Greatest Show On Earth**," which was visited by an estimated 38 million people.

In 1881, his circus merged with **James Bailey's** circus, and in 1919, it merged again with the **Ringling Brothers**.

Barnum & Bailey's big draws included oddities, such as:

- **General Tom Thumb**, a man only 25 inches tall;
- **Feejee Mermaid**;
- **Chang and Eng, Siamese twins**; and
- An **enormous elephant named "Jumbo"**, which became a household word and entered into the dictionary.

Barnum was received by **President Lincoln** and gave a command performance for **Queen Victoria**.

He stated:

- "Most persons, on the whole, are humbugged by believing too little, than by believing too much."
- "Politeness and civility are the best capital ever invested in business."
- "The truth is, the more kind and liberal a man is, the more generous will be the patronage bestowed upon him."
- "The best kind of charity is to help those who are willing to help themselves."

- “Fortune always favors the brave, and never helps a man who does not help himself.”
- “Your success depends on what you do yourself, with your own means.”
- “Unless a man enters upon the vocation intended for him by nature, and best suited to his peculiar genius, he cannot succeed. I am glad to believe that the majority of persons do find their right vocation.”
- “Constant hammering on one nail will generally drive it home at last, so that it can be clinched. When a man’s undivided attention is centered on one object, his mind will constantly be suggesting improvements of value, which would escape him if his brain was occupied by a dozen different subjects at once.”
- “Whatever you do, do it with all your might. Work at it early and late, in season and out of season, not leaving a stone unturned, and never deferring for a single hour that which can be done just as well as now.”
- “No man has a right to expect to succeed in life unless he understands his business, and nobody can understand his business thoroughly unless he learns it by personal application and experience.”
- "The desire for wealth is nearly universal, and none can say it is not laudable, provided the possessor of it accepts its responsibilities, and uses it as a friend to humanity."
- “Without promotion, something terrible happens ... nothing!”
- “The noblest art is that of making others happy.”

Barnum was a Republican and from 1865 to 1869 served in the **Connecticut House of Representatives**.

In 1875, he became the **mayor of Bridgeport, Connecticut**, where he championed the **temperance movement** outlawing alcohol.

He **drove out prostitution**, and **fought union discrimination against blacks**.

He was visited by notable individuals, including **Mark Twain** and **Horace Greeley**.

P.T. Barnum gave generously to many causes, most notably **Bridgeport Hospital** and **Tufts University**.

His life story was portrayed in the movie *The Greatest Showman* (2017) starring Hugh Jackman.

Barnum, who died April 7, 1891, was unorthodox in his faith, being attracted to universalist writings. He nevertheless believed in a Creator, stating in an interview with the *New York Sun*, 1864:

"I believe there is a great **Creator**, infinite in his attributes of wisdom, power, and mercy: that **His name is Love**. I believe He is a **God of all justice**, and that He will chasten every person whom He ever created sufficiently to reform him, in this world, or some other."

Barnum wrote:

"This is a trading world, and men, women, and children, who cannot live on gravity alone, need something to satisfy their gayer, lighter moods and hours, and he who ministers to this want is in a business established by **the Author of our nature**."

In 1889, two years before he died, **Barnum** compiled a

notebook life principles:

"The noblest art is that of making others happy, honesty, sobriety, industry, economy, education, good habits, perseverance, cheerfulness, **love to God** and **good will toward men**.

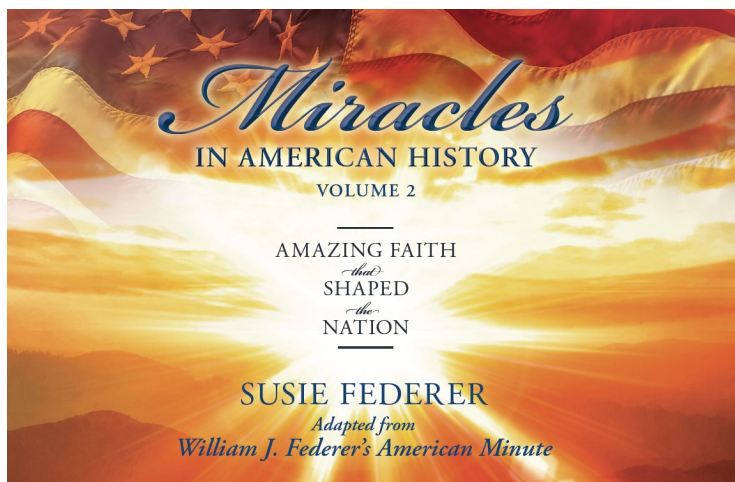
These are the preeminent requisites for securing Health, Independence, or a Happy Life, the **respect of Mankind** and the special favor of **our Father in Heaven.**"

Other popular traveling fairs and expositions included:

- **The Great Pawnee Bill's Show;**
- **Bee Ho Gray's Wild West;** and
- **Texas Jack's Wild West**, which gave **Will Rogers** his start.

One of the most famous was **Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show**, featuring real cowboys and Indians, such as **Chief Sitting Bull** and **Geronimo**, and sharpshooters **Annie Oakley** and **Calamity Jane**.

Public interest in such shows increased, building up to the **World's Fair**.



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D.L. Moody sailed to England where he preached to tens of thousands.

While there he met the famous preacher **Charles Spurgeon** and missionary to China, **Hudson Taylor**.

In 1892, **Moody** finished preaching revival meetings in **Charles Spurgeon's London Metropolitan Tabernacle**, and boarded the **ocean liner Spree** with his son, Will, headed for **New York**.

With his health weak, he was questioning if he should preach at the **1893 Chicago World's Fair**.

On the third day of the voyage, there was a **loud crash and a shock reverberated through the ship**.

The **main shaft had broken** and the ship began to sink.

Drifting out of the sea lanes, any hope of being spotted by passing vessels faded. The ship was taking on so much water the pumps were useless. Lifeboats would capsize in the rough seas.

Passengers gathered on the slanted floor of the main saloon and waited for two days. Moody preached a message of faith to the crowd, and shortly afterwards, a ship was spotted coming to their rescue.

After landing back in America, he met with Bible students, saying:

"If you have any regard for me, if you love me, pray for me that God may anoint me for the work in **Chicago**;

I want to be filled with the Spirit that I may preach the Gospel as I never preached it before; **we want to see the salvation of God** as we have never seen it before."

He later wrote:

"**As I was preparing to leave London** after my last visit there, I called upon a famous physician.

He told me that my heart was weakening and that I would have to ease up on my work, that I would have to be more careful of myself; and I was going home with an idea that I would ease up a little.

During the voyage, the announcement came that our vessel, **the Spree, was sinking, and we rolled there for two days helplessly.**

No one on earth knows what I passed through at the thought that probably my work was finished, and that I would never again have the privilege of **preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ;**

and on that first dark night after the accident, I made a vow that if God would let me live and bring me back to America, I would go back to Chicago, and at this World's Fair, preach the Gospel with all the power He would give me.

And God has made it possible for me to keep that vow during the past five months.

It seems as if I went to the very **gates of Heaven** during that two days on the **sinking ship**, and **God** permitted me to come back and preach **His Son** a little longer."

Moody's preaching at the **1893 Chicago World's Fair** was the capstone of his ministry, as he wrote:

"We have to-day everything to encourage us, and nothing to discourage us. This has been by far the best week we have had.

The **Gospel** has through this agency been brought to **150,000 people during the week.** I have never seen greater eagerness to hear **the word of God.**

The largest halls are too small for the crowds that come to many of the services.

One night, for instance, on my way to the Fair Grounds, I beheld one of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen on earth. It was **a wonderful display of fireworks and illuminations,** tens of thousands of people gazing on the scene.

It seemed useless to expect any one to come away from that scene and sit down in a tabernacle to hear the **Gospel;** but the house was filled, and we had a blessed meeting.

... The following nights though cold and rainy, with a damp, uncomfortable room, the people crowded in until every inch of space was occupied.

I thank God that I am living in **Chicago** to-day; **these have been the happiest moments of my life;** what a work He has given us to-day; what encouragements He has given us; how He has blessed us.

Perhaps never in your life will some of you have an opportunity to do as much for **Christ** as now."

D.L. Moody supported the **Israeli** settlement of their homeland.

Having preached to an **estimated 100 million** during his lifetime, a few of **Moody's** memorable quotes are:

- "There are many of us that are willing to do great things for the **Lord,** but few of us are willing to do little things."
- "**God** doesn't seek for golden vessels ... but He must have clean ones."
- "The **Bible** will keep you from sin, or sin will keep

you from the **Bible.**"

- "A ship lives in the water; but if the water gets into the ship, she goes to the bottom. So **Christians** may live in the world, but if the world gets into them, they sink."
- "Treat the **Lord Jesus Christ** as a personal friend. His is not a creed, a mere doctrine, but it is He Himself we have."
- "I know the **Bible** is inspired because it inspires me."
- "**Faith** makes all things possible ... **Love** makes all things easy."
- "Preparation for old age should begin not later than one's teens. A life which is empty of purpose until 65 will not suddenly become filled on retirement."
- "Death may be the King of terrors ... but **Jesus is the King of kings!**"

D.L. Moody started the **Chicago Bible Institute** which was renamed the **Moody Bible Institute** after his death.

R.A. Torrey succeeded **Moody** as president of the **Moody Bible Institute.**

The **Chicago Avenue Church** was renamed **The Moody Church** in 1906 and continues its international impact with notable leaders such as pastor emeritus **Dr. Erwin W. Lutzer. He stated:**

"There is more grace in God's heart than there is sin in your past."

"You become stronger only when you become weaker. When you surrender your will to God, you discover the resources to do what God requires."

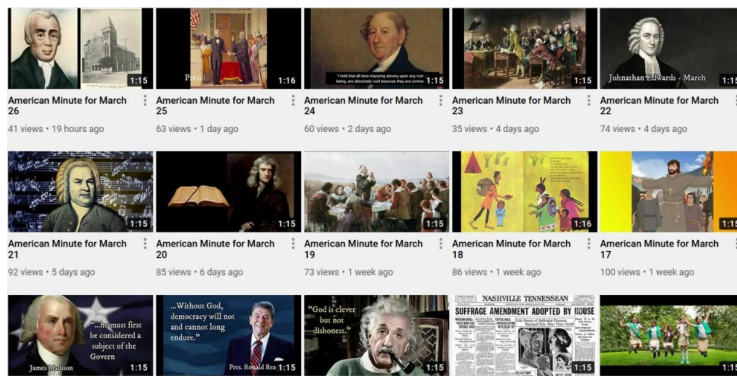
D.L. Moody stated:

"Moses spent 40 years thinking he was somebody; 40 years learning he was nobody; and 40 years discovering what **God** can do with a nobody."

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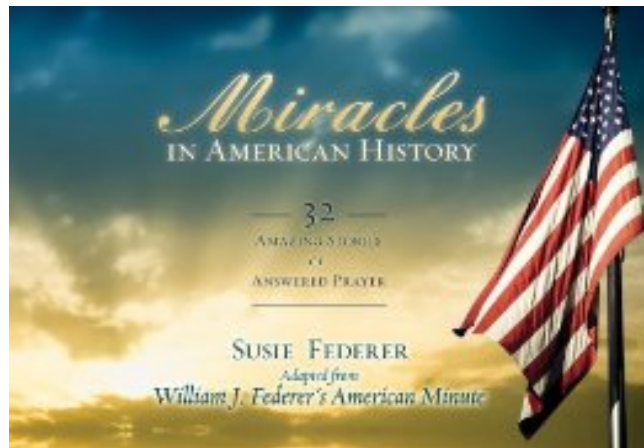
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