

**The Life of
Dwight L. Moody
By His Son
William R. Moody**
From The
Official Authorized Edition
(1900 version)

1837-1899
The Autobiography of
DWIGHT L. MOODY

Some day you will read in the papers that D.L. Moody, of East Northfield, is dead. Don't you believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now, I shall have gone up higher, that is all; out of this old clay tenement into a house that is immortal — a body that death cannot touch; that sin cannot taint; a body fashioned like His glorious body.

I was born of the flesh in 1837. I was born of the Spirit in 1856. That which is born of the flesh may die, that which is born of the Spirit will live forever.

INTRODUCTION

THE preparation of my Father's biography has been undertaken as a sacred trust. Early in the spring of 1894 he was asked by an old friend for permission to issue a biography with his approval. This my father declined to do, and, on that occasion, expressed the wish that I should assume the task when his life-work was ended. In reply to my objection that such an undertaking demanded a literary experience that I did not possess, he said: "I don't care anything about that. What I want is that you should correct inaccuracies and misstatements that it would be difficult to straighten out during my life. You are the one to do this. All my friends will unite on you and give you their assistance. There are many who think they know me better than any one else, and would feel themselves best able to interpret my life. If you do not do this work there will be many inaccurate and conflicting 'Lives.'"

Whatever diffidence I have felt in executing this trust, it has been undertaken as a filial duty and esteemed to be a great privilege. It would have been my choice to have had more leisure for accomplishing the work, but the announcement of unauthorized biographies has necessitated the immediate publication of the present volume. Otherwise the desire of my father would have been thwarted. At a later date it is intended that a more studied interpretation of his life should be prepared to meet the expressed desire for a fuller account of his career.

I would gratefully acknowledge the kindness of many friends who have contributed important data and incidents. Special acknowledgment is also due to Rev. John Bancroft Devins, of "The New York Observer," whose valuable assistance has greatly facilitated the early completion of the work. Father lived solely for the glory of God and for the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the earnest prayer of his family that in this record of his career his life's purpose may be conserved.

WILLIAM R. MOODY
EAST NORTHFIELD, MASS.
April 10, 1900.

The Life of Dwight L. Moody

CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE

NEVER mind the ancestry! A man I once heard of was ambitious to trace his family to the Mayflower, and he stumbled over a horse-thief. Never mind a man's ancestry!"

In this democratic spirit Mr. Moody disposed of the history of past generations, taking no credit to himself for their achievements, and feeling in no way responsible for their failings. It is nevertheless of interest that for two hundred years his ancestors lived their quiet lives in the seclusion of their farm homes in the Connecticut Valley. Beyond the limits of local politics they do not seem to have figured much in public affairs. Among the number there were a few professional men, and in the early struggles for independence, representatives of the Moody and Holton families were among those who counted their lives not too dear a price for those rich

privileges of religious and national liberty which they sought to insure to their posterity. But for the most part their careers were bounded by a limited horizon, and they served their day and generation in the simple station to which they were called.

As pioneers they were successful, and the same traits of character which distinguished his ancestors in this respect found expression, under different conditions and in a more remarkable degree, in their descendant. Mr. Moody inherited from that hardy stock an iron constitution capable of great physical endurance and a capacity for hard, continuous work. He early developed those distinguishing traits of his New England forefathers: a strong love of liberty, loyalty to conviction, courage in the face of obstacles, and sound judgment in organization; and these constituted his most valuable legacy from his seven generations of Puritan ancestors. The earliest records of the Moody family in America date from the landing of John Moody in 1633. Settling first in Roxbury, he moved later to the Connecticut Valley, where he became one of the original proprietors of Hartford; from here he moved to Hadley, Massachusetts. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Isaiah Moody and his sons were settled in Northfield; and the eldest of these boys was Edwin, the father of Dwight L. Moody.

Here for years they followed the family trade of masonry, which, in those early days, included the making and burning of bricks as well as the laying of foundations and the building of houses and chimneys. To the conscientious performance of their work many an old farmhouse in and about Northfield still bears silent witness. A member of Mr. Moody's family was introduced a few years ago to a centenarian of Warwick, a neighboring village. The visitor was presented as a son of D. L. Moody, but the old farmer found a far stronger recommendation in the fact that the young man's great-grandfather and grandfather had, three-quarters of a century before, laid the foundation and built the chimney of the house they were in; and, with a slight touch of jealous pride for the former generation, he declared that "the work was well done and had stood the test of time."

From his mother's family, too, Mr. Moody received a goodly heritage of Puritan pluck, the Holtons antedating the Moodys in America by three years. They landed in 1630, and were among the first settlers of Northfield, where for more than two hundred years they have been residents. They

cherish a natural pride in the fact that, from the date of the original grant from the British Crown, no deed of transfer of the old Holton homestead has ever been recorded. This farm, beautiful in its situation, lies on the west bank of the Connecticut River, a mile or two from Northfield Street, adjoining the commanding site, purchased by Mr. Moody, upon which is built the well-known Mount Hermon School. Some idea of the hardships through which the Moody and Holton families passed, in common with their neighbors, is preserved in the early records of the towns of Hadley and Northfield. In the local cemetery, near the Mount Hermon School, lie the remains of many of the Holton family, whose names for more than seven generations are recorded on the old headstones.

Betsy Holton and Edwin Moody were married on January 3, 1828. It had been arranged that the ceremony should take place on New Year's day, but the Connecticut River had little regard for the lovers, and unexpectedly rose above its banks after a sudden thaw. Although the young people's homes were but four miles apart, in those days before bridges spanned the river the swollen stream was an insurmountable obstacle even to so resolute a character as Edwin Moody, and only by making a detour of many miles was the marriage celebrated without a still longer postponement. The bride was 23 years old and her husband 28 when they left the old Holton homestead that January evening to make a new home in Northfield.

It was a true love match between the reckless, dashing, and openhanded young man and his pretty wife, and for twelve and a half years they enjoyed their happiness. God blessed their union with seven children during this time, and by the skill and industry of his trade the father provided amply for his family support.

Dwight Lyman, the sixth child, was born February 5, 1837. The old family record adds the name of Ryther, but this was early discarded. In those days it was customary for one who was complimented by the bestowal of his name upon a child to present a sheep to the baby in recognition of the honor his babyhood was innocently conferring. The feelings of the fond parents were wounded by the omission, in Dwight's case, of the customary gift, and "Ryther " does not seem to appear again after its entry on the record of the births in the large family Bible.

It was foreign to the disposition of Edwin Moody to give much thought to the future, and so it is not strange that he made little or no provision for the contingency of his sudden death. When, therefore, he was stricken down without a moment's warning at the early age of 41, the widow was left with practically no means of support. The homestead itself was encumbered with a mortgage, and but for the merciful provision of the law securing dower rights, the widow would have been left without even a shelter for the family. The creditors took everything which they could secure, to the very kindling wood in the shed, and left the widow with her seven children in the utmost straits. It was at this time that one of Mrs. Moody's brothers ministered most opportunely and generously to the needs of the family. The supply of firewood had been completely exhausted, and the children had been told that they must stay in bed till school time to keep warm. It was then that "Uncle Cyrus" Holton came to the rescue with a load of wood, and, good Samaritan that he was, sawed and split it for immediate use.

"I remember," said Mr. Moody in later years, "just as vividly as if it were yesterday, how I heard the sound of chips flying, and I knew someone was chopping wood in our wood-shed, and that we should soon have a fire. I shall never forget Uncle Cyrus coming with what seemed to me the biggest pile of wood I ever saw in my life." It was such remembrances as these that always made his heart vibrate with peculiar sympathy for those who were in want.

A less determined and courageous heart than the resolute widow's would have been overcome by the dark prospect for the future, but that true soul had inherited the sturdy strength and undaunted courage which had distinguished her early ancestors as pioneers in the new world, and with a strong faith in God she faced the conflict with poverty.

Some of her neighbors urged her to break up the little home and place the children in families where they might be cared for by strangers. Even those from whom more practical help might have been expected strongly advised this course, and because their advice was not accepted seemed to feel that they were absolved from any further duty. The birth of twins after her husband died added greatly to the cares and difficulties of her position, and during the long summer that followed there were many times when it seemed that the burden was too great for human endurance. It was during these days that Mrs. Moody's brother aided her, and at this time, too, the

old minister of the Unitarian Church, the Rev. Mr. Everett, interested himself in the family's behalf.

Shortly after the father's death this good man visited the destitute family and helped them both by counsel and material assistance. The older children were all enrolled in the Sunday school of the church, and from the hands of this minister the entire family received the ordinance of baptism "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." No sooner had the attendance of the Moody children been secured than they were commissioned to bring in other scholars. In a sense, therefore, Mr. Moody's Sunday school mission work began at an earlier date than is commonly supposed, for as a child he and his brother George frequently acted as aggressive home missionaries in securing recruits for the village Sunday school.

With the sole care of so large a family the religious instruction in the home was not so thoroughly doctrinal as in some households of today, but the mother instructed her children in the true religion of the heart that seeks first God and His righteousness, and though Dwight at 17, as a member of a young men's Bible class in Boston, was bewildered by the request to turn to a simple Scriptural reference, it is doubtful if any of his amused companions were more thoroughly established in "pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father" than he. Certainly none was purer and more innocent in heart than the keen, awkward country boy.

It was not till after he left home that his actual personal conversion occurred, but it was to a tender conscience and an open heart that the gospel invitation was given, and a soul already trained to love and honor God readily accepted His offer of salvation. The Christian training of his mother and the faithfulness of her good pastor were a sacred remembrance in all his after experiences, and he ever spoke appreciatively of the debt he owed to the ministry of Mr. Everett.

"Trust in God" was the brief creed of his mother's simple Christian faith, and early in life the children learned to love that God and pray to Him who is the strength of the fatherless and the widow. Many evidences of the thoroughness with which this lesson was taught to Dwight and his brothers are found in their early experiences.

One night in the late fall Dwight's older brother, a boy of 12, and himself,

then only 8 years of age, started to a neighboring farm about four miles away, where they had secured employment in the cutting of broom corn. Boy like, they had not started on their journey until the evening had set in, and long before they reached the old ferry across the Connecticut River it had become very dark.

Hand in hand they crossed the meadow to the landing, and then shouted over the river for the ferryman to bring his skiff. Soon they could hear voices and see a lantern approaching from the opposite bank. Then a voice shouted across the flood that one man would cross the river with the boat, while the other would remain where he was with the lantern to direct their course. In the intense darkness they soon lost sight of the approaching boat, and for a long time they could hear nothing of the ferryman, who had been carried far down the stream by the swift current. After some suspense they heard the boat approaching along the bank of the river, and finally the boatman reached them. When they had taken their places and were pushing out from the bank, the boys found that the old man was intoxicated and in no condition to row them safely across the river. Dwight held tightly to his brother, who, seeing that they were being carried far away from the lantern on the opposite bank, urged to be allowed to take the oars and help. But the old man in his maudlin condition stubbornly refused, and as the current bore them swiftly down the stream they became more and more alarmed. Then Dwight, taking his brother's hand, tried to encourage him by assuring him that God would care for them and guard them even in their present peril. Many a child in similar circumstances would have thought only of human expedients, but at that early age he had been taught an implicit trust in God as the true resource in time of danger.

Mrs. Moody was tender hearted, and the children early learned the privilege of giving from their scanty store. The hungry were never turned away from her door, and on one occasion when the provision for the evening meal was very meager it was put to the vote of the little ones whether they should give of their small supply to a poor beggar who appealed for aid. The children begged that he should be aided and offered to have their own slices cut thinner.

It was also one of the irrevocable laws of her home that no faultfinding or complaining of neighbors or friends would be tolerated. The mother thus implanted in the children a spirit of independence as well as charity; and

even those whose neglect was most inexcusable never heard directly or indirectly one word of complaint from the little family in their want and adversity. Dwight Moody was not the only Yankee boy who could look back on that combination of charity for others with inflexible independence for one's self that has made the New England character what it is. His very limitations taught the poor boy of that day the "sharpness" and "contrivance" that grow into what we call executive ability, just as the almost Spartan simplicity of diet and training developed in a good constitution the wonderful powers of endurance that have marked many New Englanders.

While the mother was truly kind and loving she was withal a strict disciplinarian. Order was enforced by rules, with old-fashioned whippings as a penalty. These events were more or less frequent in the case of Dwight, who was the leader in all kinds of boyish mischief. In later years he described these punishments and his futile attempts to escape them: "Mother would send me out for a stick, and I thought I could fool her and get a dead one. But she would snap the stick and then tell me to get another. She was rarely in a hurry, and certainly never when she was whipping me. Once I told her that the whipping did not hurt at all. I never had occasion to tell her so again, for she put it on so it did hurt."

To these whippings Mr. Moody always referred with great approval, but with delightful inconsistency never adopted the same measures in the government of his own family. In his home grace was the ruling principle and not law, and the sorest punishment of a child was the sense that the father's loving heart had been grieved by waywardness or folly.

Among the principles which this Puritan mother taught her children to observe was the inviolable sanctity of a promise. In later years it was characteristic of Mr. Moody that he hated to commit himself absolutely by promises, and doubtless that aversion was in part the outgrowth of the stern but wholesome teachings of his youth. If the children tried to avoid an obligation the question they had to meet was not, "Can you?" but, "Did you say you would?" If a promise had been made, it must be kept. Once when Dwight went to his older brother to be released from an agreement to work for a neighbor for his board during the winter, while he was also attending school, the case was carried to their mother. Dwight's cause of complaint was that for 19 consecutive meals his only food had been cornmeal and milk. When his mother found that he had had enough

to eat, such as it was, Dwight was sent back to keep his agreement.

But with all the strictness of her discipline the mother was tenderly wise, in a manner not so common at that day as now, when the needs of the child are so carefully studied. Knowing the dangers that awaited her children in the outside world, she determined to guard them as long as she could. To do this it was necessary to make home attractive, and this she proved herself able to do far better than many who have had more means with which to secure the luxuries of life. She discouraged her children from going to the neighbors to find their recreation, but always welcomed their friends to the hospitality of their own little home. They were spirited children and given to wild romps, but she would sit quietly at her mending, though the very roof seemed threatened by the boisterous games of her own and her neighbors' boys and girls.

The advent of a Sabbath's rest, beginning with sundown on Saturday and ending at the same time Sunday evening, must have been to her a most welcome respite. Church attendance was not a debatable question in the family, but was as inevitable as a law of nature. The boys used to go barefoot, carrying their shoes and stockings in their hands, and putting them on when they came in sight of the church. The elder boys, who were out at work during the week, came home on Saturday night to attend church with their brothers and sisters. They carried luncheon and stayed all day, hearing the two sermons and attending the Sunday school which came in between; and then all would troop home again for supper, the older ones returning later to their work, while the younger children, as the sunset announced the end of the day of rest, would release their long pent-up spirits in wild romps and shouts. In spite of the poverty which parted them during the week, the mother thus preserved the home life on the one day in seven.

In later years Mr. Moody looked back with gratitude to this strict requirement of church attendance. Those hours in the village church, tedious as they were, listening as he must to sermons which he could not understand, he came to look upon as a blessing because they fixed upon him the habit of attending God's house.

"I remember blaming my mother for sending me to church on the Sabbath," he once said. "On one occasion the preacher had to send some one into the gallery to wake me up. I thought it was hard to have to work in the

field all the week, and then be obliged to go to church and hear a sermon I didn't understand. I thought I wouldn't go to church any more when I got away from home; but I had got so in the habit of going that I couldn't stay away.

After one or two Sabbaths, back again to the house of God I went. There I first found Christ, and I have often said since: 'Mother, I thank you for making me go to the house of God when I didn't want to go.'"

Sunday evenings, after supper, the mother would gather the children about her before the old-fashioned fireplace, in winter, or under one of the great sugar-maple trees in the front yard, if it were summer, and read to the mount of the books which they brought home from the Sunday school library.

Three books constituted the home library: a large family Bible, in which were written the family records; a catechism, and a book of devotions, comprising contemplations and written prayers. From the latter a portion was read each morning, and also a prayer before the family entered upon the work of the day.

Mr. Moody could never speak of those early days of want and adversity without the most tender references to that brave mother whose self-sacrifice and devotion had sacredly guarded the home entrusted to her care. When, at the age of 90, her life-voyage ended, she entered the Haven of Rest, her children, her children's children, and an entire community rose up to call her blessed. And well she deserved the praise they gave her, for she had wisely and discreetly discharged the duties God had placed upon her, and entering the presence of her Master, could render a faithful account of the stewardship of motherhood. To rule a household of seven sturdy boys and two girls, the eldest 12 years old, required no ordinary tact and sound judgment, but so discreet was this loyal mother that to the very end she made "home" the most loved place on earth to her family, and so trained her children as to make them a blessing to society.

"For nearly fifty years I have been coming back to Northfield," said Mr. Moody long after that little circle had been broken up, "and I have always been glad to get back. When I get within fifty miles of home I grow restless and walk up and down the car. It seems as if the train will never get to Northfield. When I come back after dark I always look to see the light in Mother's window."

CHAPTER II

LEAVING HOME

IT was an early characteristic of Moody that his determination to accomplish his purpose was not easily thwarted. On one occasion he wished to visit his grandmother Holton, who lived about four miles away. The little man was scarce five years of age, and so long a journey seemed even greater than many times that distance to an older child. Someone had given him five cents, but this was only half the required amount for a child's stage fare for this distance. Nothing daunted, however, little Dwight stopped the passing stage and, having stated his case to the driver, asked if he would accept the five cents for his fare. The stage was already full inside, but the stage driver consented to take him as baggage, and for five cents placed him on top of the coach within the rack that guarded the trunks. He reached his grandmother's, the only other home in the world where the Moody children were assured of a welcome, and after spending a day at the old farm was urged by his relatives to make an early start for home, as it was supposed that he intended to walk back to Northfield.

The little fellow had made up his mind, however, that the stage coach was far preferable to a long tramp, and had already made his plans for riding home. Going out into the fields, he picked a bouquet of wild flowers, and another of caraway, and once more hailed the coach, proffering his flowers for his return journey. We can imagine the surprise of his mother at seeing Dwight returning in triumph perched upon the stage box.

It was this spirit which made him a leader among the boys in his native town, and the wild escapades into which he led his companions were the source of amusing reminiscences in later years. "Squire" Alexander, from the fact that his was the nearest residence to the old red schoolhouse of that district, was most frequently the victim of these pranks. Stories are told of how Dwight and his companions would appropriate the Squire's old "pung" to coast down the steep hill below his house, the recklessness of the venture only adding the greater zest to its enjoyment. On another occasion he led his followers to the cattle sheds of the Squire, where they quietly climbed up on the empty rafters, and then of a sudden raised the most awful whoops and yells, at the same time jumping about on the loose

planks. The effect of this tumult upon a lot of young steers may be better imagined than described, and the rush of the animals through the barn-yard fences gave the youngsters occupation suited exactly to their tastes. Of course, no one knew who was to blame for the stampede, for, before the Squire could reach the barn, there were no boys in sight, and in the "round-up" of the cattle young Dwight was the most indignant at the inexcusable vandalism of the act.

The "Closing Exercises" in the district school was an event of great local importance to the younger element, and Dwight was not the boy to let pass such an opportunity for some unusual excitement. On one such occasion he was to give as a recitation Mark Antony's oration over Julius Caesar, and to add, as was supposed, to the dramatic effect introduced a small box to represent the coffin of the illustrious dead. The teacher's desk served as a bier upon which this rested, and as the eloquence of the orator found added expression in extravagant gestures the lid of the box was knocked off, and out jumped a very frightened old tom cat. The scene which followed had just the effect "Mark Antony" seemed to have aimed at, for even simpler tricks delighted him. Once when asked to hand a jug of cider to a farmer in his wagon, Dwight, who was then working on the farm, intending, indeed, to go home in that very wagon, waited only till the jug was at the farmer's lips to startle the horses so that their sudden jump unseated the driver, who fell back into the bottom of the wagon, unable to rise and equally unwilling to relinquish the jug, which would have drenched him had he taken it from his lips.

Dwight's busy hand and brain were always occupied, and he wanted to see others busy too. In those younger days he seemed to love the excitement he decided that "something must be done." This he arranged without conference with any one, not daring to trust his closest friend. Writing out an announcement for a temperance meeting to be addressed by an out-of-town lecturer, he posted it on the district schoolhouse door. On the evening announced there was quite a gathering in the schoolhouse, which was warmed and lighted for the occasion, but no lecturer put in an appearance, and Dwight, with the others, scolded the practical joker, whom no one could discover.

For such mischief he frequently received a double chastisement, first at the hands of the school teacher and afterward from his mother; for, according to the strange reasoning of that day, it was thought that if the boy was so

naughty in school as to be punished, the same offense called loudly upon the mother also not to "spare the rod and spoil the child." But evidently Dwight thought the fun was worth the whipping, for his love of practical jokes never grew less. It should be said, however, that when the joke was at his own expense he enjoyed it just as much. For, as he expressed it, "No man has a right to play a joke unless he's willing to take one."

A new teacher came at last to the little school, and another order of things appeared. To begin with, she opened the exercises with prayer, which greatly impressed the boys, and when later she announced that she proposed to rule the school without the old-fashioned whippings, their astonishment was increased. It was not long before young Dwight had broken a rule, and with the summons to "remain after school," he expected the customary punishment and immediately assumed the attitude of injured innocence. To his surprise, when they were alone, the teacher began to talk kindly to him and to tell him how sorry she was to have him disobey. This treatment was worse than the rattan cane, and Dwight did not like it. After telling him how it grieved her to find that he could not be trusted, the teacher said:

"I have made up my mind that if I cannot rule the school by love, I will give it up. I will have no punishment. If you love me, try to keep the rules and help me in the school."

This was too much for Dwight and, where law had failed, grace had a complete victory. "You will never have any more trouble with me," he answered, capitulating, "and I will whack the first boy that makes you any trouble!"

And "whack" him he did the very next day, to the surprise of his companions and to the consternation of the teacher.

"Swapping" is a Yankee weakness, and in common with other boys Dwight was keen on a bargain. Sentiment in those youthful days was less pronounced than the love of a trade, for he bought off with a broken slate pencil the affections of a rival suitor for a little companion. But it was more especially to shrewdness in horse trading that Dwight aspired, and at the earliest opportunity he earned his title for it. The older brother, George, who had fathered the younger children and conducted the farm, was away from home one day, when a party of gypsies came along. As

usual, they had a number of horses to trade, and Dwight, who was only 10 years old at the time, was alive to business.

The farm horse in the possession of the family at this time was old and lazy enough, and Dwight reasoned that in an exchange he couldn't get a worse animal, so he challenged the gypsies to a trade. Before any of the family knew it he had made what actually proved to be a good bargain, though the new horse was a lank, raw-boned animal with a docked tail. The consciousness of his success filled him with pride. On the first occasion after the new horse had been duly tested, Dwight harnessed him into a wagon, and taking an empty barrel for a seat, started to mill for the weekly supply of meal. The new horse seemed to rise to the occasion. He started briskly down the hill and all too swiftly around the corner, leaving the barrel and its occupant by the roadside.

When Dwight grew older he found employment, like his brothers, in neighboring towns. His first experience was never forgotten, and the homesickness that came with the first separation from his family left a lasting impression.

"There were nine of us children," he said in describing this, "and my widowed mother had very great difficulty in keeping the wolf from the door. My next older brother had found a place for me to work during the winter months in a neighboring village about thirteen miles away, and early one November morning we started out together on our dismal journey. Do you know, November has been a dreary month to me ever since? As we passed over the river and up the opposite side of the valley we turned to look back for a last view of home. It was to be my last for weeks, for months, perhaps forever, and my heart well-nigh broke at the thought. That was the longest journey I ever took, for thirteen miles was more to me at ten than the world's circumference has ever been since.

"When at last we arrived in the town I had hard work to keep back my tears, and my brother had to do his best to cheer me. Suddenly he pointed to some one and said:

"'There's a man that'll give you a cent; he gives one to every new boy that comes to town.' He was a feeble, old, white-haired man, and I was so afraid that he would pass me by that I planted myself directly in his path. As he came up to us my brother spoke to him, and he stopped and looked at me. 'Why, I have never seen you before. You must be a new boy,' he

said. He asked me about my home, and then, laying his trembling hand upon my head, he told me that, although I had no earthly father, my Heavenly Father loved me, and then he gave me a bright new cent. I do not remember what became of that cent, but that old man's blessing has followed me for over fifty years, and to my dying day I shall feel the kindly pressure of that hand upon my head. A loving deed costs very little, but done in the name of Christ it will be eternal."

A few years later he tried to get employment in Clinton, Massachusetts, and found an engagement in a printing establishment. His first task was to address by hand, from the mailing list, the wrappers of a local paper. To the country lad who knew nothing of crowded streets or houses containing several tenements the half-numbers of some of the addresses had no meaning, and such a street address he set down to the next number beyond.

This naturally caused confusion, and when the mistake was traced to young Moody he was discharged. Again he went home, and for a time worked on the neighboring farms. But his ambition had been roused, and he realized the greater possibilities and opportunities of a larger sphere. While cutting and hauling logs on the mountain side with his brother Edwin one day in the early spring of 1854, he exclaimed, in his characteristically abrupt manner:

"I'm tired of this! I'm not going to stay around here any longer. I'm going to the city."

The family had been strongly opposed to his going to Boston, as no one believed that he had any special qualification for a successful career in the city. The cities, they understood, were full of young men looking for positions, while at Northfield he was at least assured of steady work on the farms. But young Moody had made up his mind that the one thing for him to do was to go to Boston and, in spite of all obstacles, make a career for himself.

Saying good-bye to his mother and the rest of the family, he started from home without any very definite plans as to how he should get to Boston, but determined to go even if he had to walk every step of the hundred miles. Half way between his home and the depot he met his older brother George, who inquired where he was going. Dwight said he was on his way

to Boston to make his living in whatever business he found he was best suited for. Seeing that it was useless to try to discourage him, his brother gave him five dollars, which was just enough to carry him to the city, where he arrived with nothing to live on while he was looking for work. For several days young Moody experienced the same bitter disappointment that so many other young men have known in like circumstances. Although he had two uncles in the retail boot and shoe business in the city, they made no offer to give him work. When asked by these uncles how he thought he could get a start, Dwight replied that he wanted to work, and he "guessed" he could find a position. It is quite possible that a consciousness of his awkwardness may have given the country boy that appearance of a false independence which prejudiced his relatives against him.

Long afterward, when preaching in Boston, he described with deep feeling those days of suffering. "I remember how I walked up and down the streets trying to find a situation," he said, "and I recollect how, when they answered me roughly, their treatment would chill my soul. But when some one would say: 'I feel for you; I would like to help you, but I can't; but you'll be all right soon!' I went away happy and light hearted. That man's sympathy did me good.

"It seemed as if there was room for every one else in the world, but none for me. For about two days I had the feeling that no one wanted me. I never have had it since, and I never want it again. It is an awful feeling. It seems to me that must have been the feeling of the Son of God when He was down here. They did not want Him. He had come to save men, and they did not want to be saved. He had come to lift men up, and they did not want to be lifted up. There was no room for Him in this world, and there is no room for Him yet.

"I went to the post office two or three times a day to see if there was a letter for me. I knew there was not, as there was but one mail a day from Northfield. I had no employment and was very home-sick, and so I went constantly to the post office, thinking perhaps that when the mail had come in my letter had been mislaid. At last, however, I got a letter. It was from my youngest sister — the first letter she ever wrote me. I opened it with a light heart, thinking there was some good news from home, but the burden of the whole letter was that she had heard there were pickpockets in Boston, and warned me to beware of them. I thought that I had better get some money in hand first, and then I might look out for pickpockets!"

At the end of a week he was utterly discouraged. There seemed nothing for him in Boston, and he announced his purpose of trying what he could do in New York.

At first his attitude toward his uncles had been the independent one of waiting for them to offer him work, and when advised to ask them for employment himself he said: "They know I am looking for work and they may help me or not as they please." But at length his pride gave way under the dreadful sense of being adrift in a world that seemed to care nothing for him. Learning of his changed state of mind, one of his uncles ventured to offer him a little advice, telling him that his self-will was greatly in his way, that modesty was sometimes as needful as courage, and suggesting that his uncle Samuel Holton would no doubt be glad to do something for him if he would show himself a little more willing to be governed by people who were older and wiser than himself. Dwight demurred, saying his uncle Samuel knew perfectly well what he wanted. But the uncle insisted, so that at last the boy asked for a place in the shoe shop.

"Dwight, I am afraid if you come in here you will want to run the store yourself," said Mr. Holton. "Now, my men here want to do their work as I want it done. If you want to come in here and do the best you can and do it right, and if you'll be willing to ask whenever you don't know, and if you promise to go to church and Sunday school, and if you will not go anywhere that you wouldn't want your mother to know about, we'll see how we can get along. You can have till Monday to think it over." "I don't want till Monday," was the prompt response. "I'll promise now."

Young Moody had little acquaintance with city ways and city manners, but it soon became evident that he was by natural wit and brightness one of the best of salesmen. With his keen perception and irrepressible energy he made an unusual success of the work.

He was not satisfied with the ordinary methods of the salesman, and, like the merchants of old, he cried his wares before the door, and actually went out into the street to persuade uninterested passers that they wanted to buy. Nothing delighted him so much as a success of this kind, and that he had many is not surprising.

His new occupation, far from lessening his love of practical joking, seemed to make it keener. Always on the lookout for some one whom he could tease, he found a tempting victim in a cobbler who worked in the store. One day in his absence young Moody, with a sharp knife, made a clean slit in the leather seat of the cobbler's box. Then taking a pan of water, he set it under the box so that the cobbler's weight would bring the seat in contact with the water, which, of course, would rise through the cut. Having set his trap, the joker awaited the result. Presently the cobbler came in and sat down. The effect may be imagined. The victim took his seat only to jump up hurriedly, but as soon as the leather was relieved of his weight the hole closed, and after wiping the seat dry he again seated himself to begin his work. It was not till the third or fourth time that he discovered the trouble, and Moody had to make a hurried escape. This was the nonsense of a lively boy of 17, but from that harmless love of fooling the happy geniality of the mature man was to result. This sense of humor, this healthy appreciation of the ridiculous, is the very salt of a great temperament. Such a man, however intense, can never be a fanatic, and the people — the men in the street — feel this instantly.

CHAPTER III

CONVERSION

IN accordance with the agreement by which he entered his uncle's employment, Moody became a regular attendant of the Mount Vernon Congregational Church, of which the well-known Dr. Edward N. Kirk was the pastor. He was also enrolled as a member of the Sunday school, where he was assigned to a young men's Bible class conducted by Mr. Edward Kimball.

The Bible was not a familiar book to the new student, for in his home, though he had always lived in a truly Christian atmosphere, there was only one copy of God's Word, and that a ponderous family Bible, too sacred for the inquisitiveness of the little children, and too uninviting in its massive appearance for the older ones. So when some reference was made to a chapter in the Gospel of John, the young man began to search the Old Testament industriously, and but for the kindness of the teacher, who quickly perceived the difficulty and offered him his Bible, the boy's embarrassment would have been painful.

By giving close attention, however, he soon began to take that deep interest in Bible study which, increasing with his years, soon developed into a reverential love. Many years later, wishing to give a token of special value to his first grandchild, he sent a beautiful copy of the Bible with this inscription:

"The Bible for the last forty years has been the dearest thing on earth to me, and now I give a copy as my first gift to my first grandchild, Irene Moody, with a prayer that it may be her companion through life and guide her to those mansions that Christ has gone to prepare for those who love and serve Him on earth. D. L. Moody."

Realizing his disadvantage in not having a greater familiarity with the Bible text, he seldom took an active part in the class at first. But at times his interest would betray him, and he would ask a question that showed his clear grasp of the subject. On one occasion the teacher was depicting Moses as a man of great natural ability, self-control, and statesmanlike foresight and wisdom. There was just one word in the young clerk's mind that was sufficiently comprehensive for such a character, and with a naive

earnestness he exclaimed:

"Say, Mr. Kimball, that man Moses must have been smart." In that one word "smart" was included the New England lad's conception of all that was comprehended by native ability and intellectual endowment without the sense of a discreditable shrewdness.

There is a vast difference between what may be termed a religious man and an earnest Christian; just such a difference, in fact, as distinguished Saul of Tarsus and the Apostle Paul. In the former the life is regulated to a degree by external authority — "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not"; in the latter a new bias is given to the life itself, bringing it into harmony with God's will, and the precepts of the external law are merged in the greater law of love to God and man. The former is cold, cheerless, and intolerant, only too often unavailing in severe temptation, and frequently expressing itself in formalism and pharisaism. The latter is a vital force making the soul stronger through temptation, and by unselfish service to others radiating love and joy throughout society.

By his early training Mr. Moody was religious, but he had never experienced the regenerating work of God's Spirit by a definite acceptance of Christ. In theory he knew that giving way to a violent temper was wrong, but in his self-will he found it hard to yield to restraint. "It was not more ethics he needed, but greater dynamics." But in the Mount Vernon Sunday school his Bible-class teacher had been gradually leading the young man to a fuller knowledge of God's plan of salvation, until it needed only an additional personal interview to bring him to that decision of the will which should determine whether he would accept or reject God's provision for overcoming sin and entering into harmony with Himself. The opportunity for this interview was not a chance event, but one carefully and prayerfully sought by Mr. Kimball, who thus relates the story of Dwight L. Moody's conversion:

"I determined to speak to him about Christ and about his soul, and started down to Holton's shoe store. When I was nearly there I began to wonder whether I ought to go in just then during business hours. I thought that possibly my call might embarrass the boy, and that when I went away the other clerks would ask who I was, and taunt him with my efforts in trying to make him a good boy. In the meantime I had passed the store, and, discovering this, I determined to make a dash for it and have it over at

once. I found Moody in the back part of the building wrapping up shoes. I went up to him at once, and putting my hand on his shoulder, I made what I afterwards felt was a very weak plea for Christ. I don't know just what words I used, nor could Mr. Moody tell. I simply told him of Christ's love for him and the love Christ wanted in return. That was all there was. It seemed the young man was just ready for the light that then broke upon him, and there, in the back of that store in Boston, he gave himself and his life to Christ."

From the moment that Moody accepted Christ his whole life changed. The merely passive religious life that suffered the restrictions of the moral law suddenly became a life of joyful service. Whereas church attendance had been observed simply because it was a duty, from this time forth for nearly 50 years he found his greatest joy in the service of his God. "Before my conversion," as he himself used to express it, "I worked towards the Cross, but since then I have worked from the Cross; then I worked to be saved, now I work because I am saved."

Forty years afterward, preaching in Boston, he thus described the effect of his conversion upon his life:

"I can almost throw a stone from Tremont Temple to the spot where I found God over forty years ago. I wish I could do something to lead some of you young men to that same God. He has been a million times better to me than I have been to Him.

"I remember the morning on which I came out of my room after I had first trusted Christ. I thought the old sun shone a good deal brighter than it ever had before — I thought that it was just smiling upon me; and as I walked out upon Boston Common and heard the birds singing in the trees I thought they were all singing a song to me. Do you know, I fell in love with the birds. I had never cared for them before. It seemed to me that I was in love with all creation. I had not a bitter feeling against any man, and I was ready to take all men to my heart. If a man has not the love of God shed abroad in his heart, he has never been regenerated. If you hear a person get up in the prayer meeting and he begins to find fault with everybody, you may doubt whether his is a genuine conversion; it may be counterfeit. It has not the right ring, because the impulse of a converted soul is to love, and not to be getting up and complaining of every one else and finding fault."

Bread cast upon the waters returns again, and the Bible-class teacher received a blessing in his own household, 17 years later, in the conversion of his own son. Mr. Kimball's eldest son was visiting an uncle in Worcester, Massachusetts, while Mr. Moody was conducting a mission in that city. After one of the services young Kimball introduced himself to Mr. Moody as the son of his old Bible-class teacher.

"What! are you the son of Mr. Edward Kimball, of Boston? What is your name?"

"Henry."

"I am glad to see you. Henry, are you a Christian?"

"No, sir, I do not think I am."

"How old are you?"

"I am seventeen."

"Henry, when I was just seventeen, and you were a little baby in the crib, your father came to me and put his hand on my shoulder and asked me to be a Christian, and he was the only man that ever came to me and talked to me, because he loved my soul; and now I want you, my boy, to be a Christian. Henry, don't you want to be a Christian?"

"Yes, sir; I think I do," said the boy.

They sat down together, and Mr. Moody opened his Bible, the boy listening attentively to the words that impressed him more and more, till at length they brought him to where their speaker had been himself led so long ago.

After his conversion young Moody was no less energetic and ambitious in the interests of the Kingdom of God than he had been in business. His vigorous and irrepressible spirit was looked upon with misgivings by some of the elder members of the church. In the first glad joy of his Christian experience he longed for some channel into which he might direct his energies and share in the forwarding of the Kingdom. It was, perhaps, a

mistake that the young convert was not set to work and directed how to serve the cause most efficiently, in his own particular way. But the conservative deacons could not know that the zeal so unnecessarily directed toward them could have been turned with practical results in other directions, undreamed of by them, and their attitude was one of a somewhat natural repression.

In May, 1855, young Moody presented himself for membership in the Mount Vernon Church, from the records of which the following minute is taken:

"No. 1,079. Dwight L. Moody. Boards, 43 Court Street. Has been baptized. First awakened on the 16th of May. Became anxious about himself. Saw himself a sinner, and sin now seems hateful and holiness desirable. Thinks he has repented; has purposed to give up sin; feels dependent upon Christ for forgiveness. Loves the Scriptures. Prays. Desires to be useful. Religiously educated. Been in the city a year. From Northfield, this state. Is not ashamed to be known as a Christian. Eighteen years old."

At this examination, however, it was felt that the applicant was not sufficiently instructed in Christian doctrine to be taken into membership. In answer to the question: "What has Christ done for you, and for us all, that especially entitles Him to our love and obedience?" Young Moody replied: "I think He has done a great deal for us all, but I don't know of anything He has done in particular."

Nothing, therefore, was elicited at this examination that was in those days considered satisfactory evidence of conversion. Under the circumstances the committee deferred recommending him for admission to the church, but three of their number were appointed to take care of his case, and to explain to him more perfectly the way of God.

The action of the examining committee in refusing admission to young Moody on this occasion has been criticized by others, but the wisdom of the decision was always felt by Mr. Moody himself, who in later years laid great emphasis upon a young convert's being ready to give a reason for the hope that was in him. Upon his second examination he was recommended for membership, and the following minute was recorded:

"No. 1,131. March 12, 1856. Mr. Moody thinks he has made some progress since he was here before — at least in knowledge. Has maintained his habits of prayer and reading the Bible. Believes God will hear his prayers, and reads the Bible. Is fully determined to adhere to the cause of Christ always. Feels that it would be very bad if he should join the church and then turn. Must repent and ask forgiveness, for Christ's sake. Will never give up his hope, or love Christ less, whether admitted to the church or not. His prevailing intention is to give up his will to God."

"In a few days Moody was among the inquirers after the way of life," writes Dr. Kirk with reference to Moody's conversion. "He soon avowed himself as a candidate for church membership; he displayed nothing but his earnestness and want of acquaintance with the Scriptural views of Christian character and life; or, more probably, his case was an instance showing that we, his examiners, were too far bound by routine and wanting in sympathy with Him who was then laying the foundation of the temple of God in that human soul. We could not conscientiously propose him to the church. Disappointed, but not discouraged, he awaited through one or two terms. At last we saw some faint evidences of conversion which justified us in recommending him to the church."

At first Mr. Moody questioned the result his new life would have upon his business prospects. From the very beginning he had entered upon his duties with characteristic energy, and in three months' time he had sold more goods than any one of his fellow clerks. He had thought that truthfulness might be a hindrance to his success. But he soon found that Christian principles were an aid rather than an obstacle in a successful business career. Customers, finding that they could implicitly rely on his word, preferred to deal with him, and his popularity with them steadily increased.

Thus for two years he continued to work in Boston, when he began to feel that greater opportunities might await him in a larger sphere. His position in his uncle's store seemed to offer little promise for the future; for, with extremely conservative methods, his uncle did not feel the same enthusiasm that fired the young man. Just at that time Chicago, the new city of the Western prairies, was attracting the young men of the Eastern States. Moody, with others, felt the attraction of its appeal, and without telling any one of his purpose, he decided to cast in his lot with the new West.