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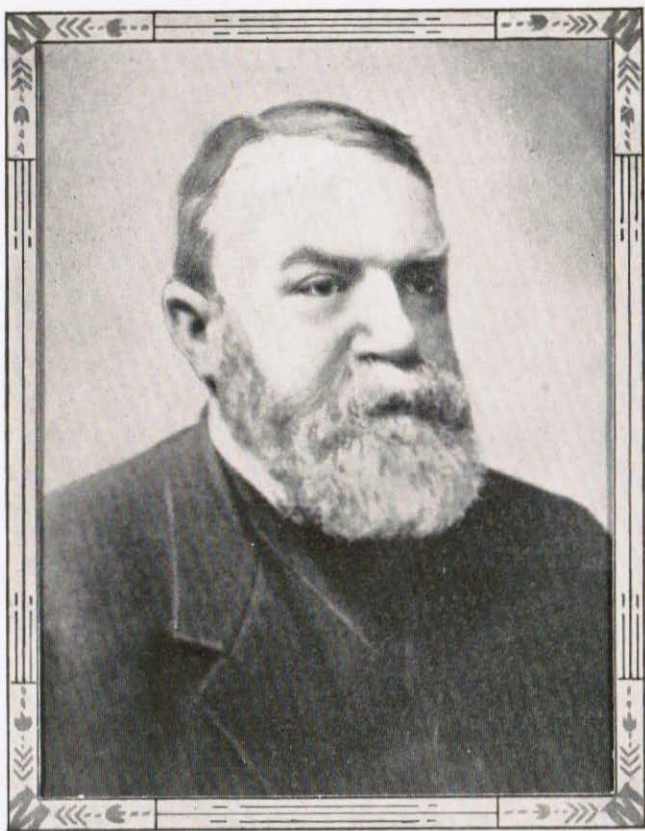
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DWIGHT L. MOODY  
THE SOUL-WINNER

CHRISTIAN HEROES

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THE SOUL-WINNER

By  
A. T. ROWE

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## INTRODUCTION

The name of Dwight L. Moody stands at the head of the list of "lay" preachers of all time. His son, William R. Moody, says of him, "Father lived solely for the glory of God and for the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ." No man could be paid a greater tribute than this. His entire ministry was devoted to soul-saving.

Soul-winning demands Christian heroism of the highest order. May the reading of this biography inspire the reader, be he young or old, with a deep desire to become a soul-winner. And may it especially call forth a hearty response from our wealth of young people, to the call of the Master: "Go work today in my vineyard."

THE PUBLISHERS



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# D. L. MOODY

## CHAPTER I

### ANCESTRY AND EARLY LIFE

When asked concerning his ancestry Mr. Moody replied: "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!" Of his birth he said: "I was born of the flesh in 1837. I was born of the Spirit in 1856." Mr. Moody was born in Northfield, Mass., on Feb. 5, 1837; was converted in Boston, Mass., in 1856; and died in Northfield, Mass., on Dec. 22, 1899. He was the sixth child of a family of nine, coming of hardy, conscientious Puritan stock.

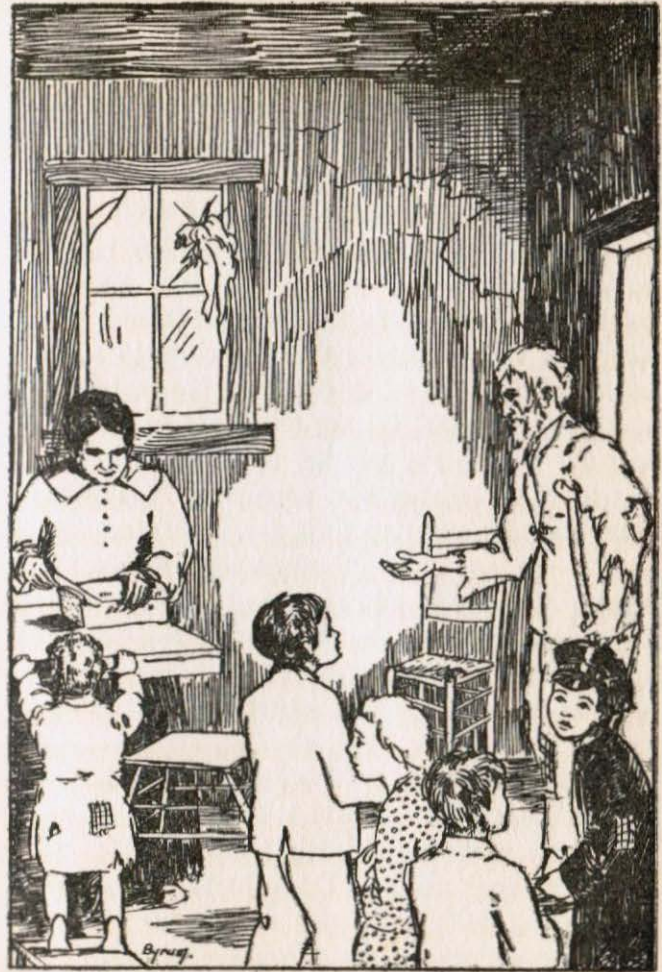
Mr. Moody, like many of our Christian heroes, was born and reared in poverty. His father died at forty-one, leaving the widow with practically no means of support and with the homestead encumbered with a mortgage. The creditors took everything that they could secure, even to the kindling wood in the shed, and left the widow with her seven children in hard straits. The firewood became exhausted; the children remained in bed until school-



time to keep warm. A brother of Mrs. Moody then came to their rescue with what Dwight thought was the biggest load of wood he had ever seen. The uncle split it, and soon they had a good fire. The birth of twins after the father's death added to the heavy burden of the mother, and she was advised to break up the home and put the children out among different families for keeping. But "Trust in God" was the simple creed of this mother. Early in life the children learned to love that God and to pray to him who is the strength of the fatherless and the widow.

With the sole care of a large family there was little of religious doctrine taught in the home, but the children were instructed in the true heart religion, "Seek God first and his righteousness." Dwight, at seventeen, as a member of a young men's Bible class in Boston, was bewildered and embarrassed by the request to find a simple Scriptural reference, yet few if any of his amused companions were more thoroughly established in the "pure religion" than he. He was not converted until he was eighteen, but it was to a tender conscience and an open heart that the gospel invitation was given, and Dwight was ready to honor God and accept his salvation.

Mrs. Moody was tender-hearted. She taught the



Dividing with the Beggar



children the privilege of giving from their scanty store. The hungry were never turned away, and once when the provision for the evening meal was very meager, it was put to vote of the children whether they should share their food with a poor beggar who had appealed for aid. They voted to aid him and offered to have their own slices cut thinner. No fault-finding or complaining about neighbors was tolerated; thus the children learned independence as well as charity. No matter how inexcusable the neglect not one word of complaint was heard from any member of the family.

Church attendance was compulsory. The boys went barefoot, carrying their shoes and stockings in their hands, and putting them on when they came in sight of the church. They carried luncheon and remained all day, at church, hearing two long sermons, and attending Sunday-school in between. In spite of the poverty that parted the children and mother through the week, they all came home for Sunday, and thus the mother preserved the homelife and religious training one day in seven.

In later years Mr. Moody looked back to these days with gratitude, even tho he had been compelled to attend church and listen to sermons which he could not understand, for it fixed upon him the habit

of attending God's house. Of these times Mr. Moody said: "I remember blaming my mother for sending me to church on the Sabbath. 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!'"

Three books constituted the home library—a large family Bible, a catechism, and a book of devotions. From the latter a portion was read each morning, also a prayer was made before the family entered upon the work of the day. Mr. Moody could never speak of those early days without the most tender reference to that brave mother whose self-sacrifice and devotion had sacredly guarded the home entrusted to her care. When at the age of ninety, her life-voyage ended, she entered the "Haven of Rest," her children, her children's children, and the entire



community rose up to call her blessed. To rule a household of seven sturdy boys and two girls, the eldest twelve years old, required much more than ordinary tact and judgment, but this loyal mother was so discreet that 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 the 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."

Thus the noble blood that coursed through his veins, the careful discipline, the early, persistent religious training, the influence of a godly mother, the hardships and privation which he endured uncomplainingly, laid the foundation for D. L. Moody, doubtless the greatest "lay" preacher of all time. It is conservatively estimated that during his ministry he preached the gospel to more than fifty million people in England, America, Scotland, Ireland, and the Holy Land. It has been said that his life and word glorified the ministry.

## CHAPTER II

## HOME AND SCHOOL LIFE

The mother of Moody was kind and loving, but she was a strict disciplinarian and order was enforced with old-fashioned whippings. These were frequent in the case of Dwight, for he was the leader in all sorts of boyish mischief. He said: "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 in on so it did hurt." Mr. Moody in later life always seemed to approve of this method of enforcing discipline, but he never adopted the same measures in his own family. In his home grace was the ruling principle, and the sorest punishment of a child was the sense that the father's loving heart had been grieved by waywardness or folly.

Mr. Moody's early book learning was limited. School life was not all that could be desired in those days. Discipline was severe, whippings in school were frequent, and each whipping in school required a similar treatment at home. But evidently Dwight