

# MOODY STILL LIVES

WORD PICTURES OF D. L. MOODY

by

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## CHAPTER TWELVE

### HOW SHALL A MAN'S INFLUENCE BE MEASURED AFTER HE IS GONE?

#### THROUGH HIS WRITINGS

We think of men of old who are a powerful influence to-day by reason of their sayings and writings still in circulation.

Such an one is John Bunyan, 1628-88. His *Pilgrim's Progress* is a living book after nearly three centuries, wielding influence perhaps next to the Bible throughout the world as it is translated into more and more languages.

Mr. Moody stands this test of survival. A total of three and a half million copies of 36 volumes of his sermons have been published since 1895 by one firm alone, the Bible Institute Colportage Association, not counting the output of other American and British publishers since the 70s, which would easily run into millions more. Being so vital, they are still in demand throughout the world in at least ten languages that I know of: English, Spanish, Danish-Norwegian, Swedish, German, Chinese, Gaelic, French, Portuguese, Italian, with single sermons translated by missionaries into many heathen tongues. A volume of sermons in Gaelic was distributed in the Highlands of Scotland, 8,000 in 1884 and 5,000 in 1891.

An advertisement in recent issues of the London Christian is worded simply thus:

This is the hymn book Mr. Sankey compiled in 1873 for use in the meetings in England, with other hymns added in subsequent editions. Are there many other books that could be advertised that way after 60 years?

#### THROUGH HIS MOMENTUM

Sometimes by the intangible but effective momentum of his character and convictions: all he was and all he stood for.

Within a generation of his going Mr. Moody has taken an assured place in Church history as an outstanding soulwinner and evangelist. He is still a constructive force in the religious life of English-speaking nations.

Throughout the world wherever Christ is known and preached, he is quoted as the author of pithy sayings and pointed anecdotes that clarify and drive home the teachings and applications of the Bible. Indeed, he is being idealized, and sayings are attributed to him that did not originate with him, but are in his style.

Just as there are “Northfields,” conference centers, in all the continents, so there are “Moody’s.” We hear of individuals being called the “Japanese Moody,” the “Chinese Moody,” and so on. Northfield is a Mecca for Christian people from all over the world when they are visiting America, drawn hither to visit Mr. Moody’s grave and the scenes identified most closely with his life. Of course, they came when he was still alive.

The triennial meeting of the committee of the International Missionary Council was held at Northfield in 1935. This Council represents the common interests of the foreign missionary efforts of the Protestant churches in all the world. Why at Northfield? Because “it is associated so intimately with the entire life of the greatest evangelist of the 19th century.”

At the request of the chairman, Dr. John R. Mott, Mrs. W. R. Moody placed the Homestead (Mr. Moody’s old home) at the convenience of the sixty committee members from over a score of nations, for a session. These missionary statesmen and leaders were deeply moved at the house and at his grave on Round Top nearby. One of them told Mr. Moody’s daughter who was present that he was led to Christ by her father when he was a student at Oxford University. Dr. Mott marked the occasion by speaking of eight tests of greatness, and showed how Mr. Moody was supreme in them all:

- Great in strength and gentleness of character,
- Great in his entire yielding to the will of God,
- Great in human sympathies,
- Great in his power to move vast multitudes to changed lives,
- Great to command the hearing and respect of scholars,
- Great as a unifying force among Christians,
- Great to multiply doers of the Word,
- Great to inspire unselfishly the consecration of wealth to Christian enterprises, especially to Christian education.

And so the momentum of his life is transmitted once again through living media to all nations on earth.

Not long after his father’s death, W. R. Moody called on President McKinley at the White House to invite him to Northfield. He was given preference over other callers and ushered into an inner room. Alone with the president Will sought to extend his invitation as quickly as possible, but the president bade him sit down, saying:

“I want to talk with you, Mr. Moody. Do you realize that your father was a very great man?”

“I am sure he was a good man,” was the guarded reply.

“But he was a great man too,” persisted President McKinley, “and when greatness and goodness are combined you have a rare character.”

## THROUGH IDEAS AND INSTITUTIONS

Sometimes by ideas he promulgated and institutions he founded.

John Wesley, Martin Luther, Mohammed and a hundred others of ancient times live on in the philosophic and religious systems they originated.

Dr. Gaius Glenn Atkins, of Auburn Theological Seminary, says that when he was writing the life of Cardinal Newman and a study of religious movements in America through the last forty years, he found the names of Cardinal Newman and D. L. Moody in the indexes of the biographies and autobiographies of religious leaders in Great Britain and America more often than the names of any other men in the field of religion during the last two generations. “A striking testimony to their wide and persistent influence.”

Mr. Moody preached and propagated Bible truth, and only that. He invented no new “ism,” he indulged in no novel speculation, he started no new denomination. Examine the origin of the organizations he founded, and it will be seen that he never duplicated or rivaled existing organizations; but ever since his voice was silenced, his power and influence have been perpetuated, his ideas and words have been reproduced in these foundations.

In previous chapters we have identified his schools and other agencies, and have seen how these grew up to the time of his going. What is their status to-day?

A general observation will first be in order here, reflecting credit upon him as an organizer, and explaining the smooth continuance of his power.

When he died there was a man or woman in every key position who loved him and had worked long enough under him to be familiar with his wishes and convictions, and who was imbued with his spirit of reliance on God. The trustees in every case were solid in sympathy and support. The working staffs all knew him, and were loyal and faithful in their respective positions. So there was no breakdown when his impressive personality was withdrawn, no stoppage, no friction or rivalry.

A marvellous spirit of unity prevailed. Everyone concerned recognized his son Will as his father’s successor, and gave him allegiance. It was a remarkable tribute to his father. “What would Mr. Moody do?” was the decisive question in any plans under consideration, so long as those who had worked under him remained in administrative posts. To-day there are still three men in active service who were connected with the institutions in Mr. Moody’s lifetime, and they have not wavered in their loyalty. They are Stephen Stark, head of the Latin Department in Mount Hermon School since 1896; Aymer Gaylord, business manager of the Moody Bible Institute since 1891; and William Norton, manager of the Bible Institute Colportage Association since 1897.

None of the trustees of Mr. Moody's day are living, except A. G. Moody and myself, but on the board of the Northfield Schools there are several trustees who knew him as students or otherwise. This is also true of some on the teaching and administrative staffs. A. G. Moody is clerk of the corporation of the Northfield Schools.

Advantage was taken of the attendance of many trustees at his funeral, to hold a meeting that evening at Hotel Northfield to reconsider an intended enlargement of the hotel in view of the founder's death. The hotel is a separate corporation, whose organization was financed by several trustees as an auxiliary of the schools and conferences. All the directors were trustees. The meeting decided unanimously to go forward with the projected plans, feeling assured that the reasons therefore were still sound because we believed the work would go forward successfully under Will's leadership, vitalized and given endurance by the spirit that created it.

It was a great heritage that Will entered upon at Northfield. There were over 600 students in the two schools, with plants valued at \$800,000 and endowment of half a million. He took up the task with high vision, as well as with efficient business judgment and ability. His father's trustees and fellow workers stood by him, and he enlisted the continued support of the many donors his father had secured in aid of the work. As the years passed he added new friends and supporters. Soon new buildings began to rise to meet the needs of increasing numbers of students. When he laid down the presidency he was succeeded by Elliott Speer, under whose administration the progress of the schools continued.

To-day the roster of the two schools is over 1,100, the plants are valued at over three and a quarter millions, and the endowment has grown to three millions. There are over 20,000 living alumni, many of them prominent in the life of the nation, and many showing their loyalty to the schools by personal and financial support.

As with the schools, so with the conferences, Will maintained the high level of usefulness set by his father. America gradually became conference-minded, every group in the fields of education, industry, recreation, religion and the professions holding its own conventions, but Northfield retained its distinctive character and its front-rank standing. The speakers are eminent and experienced preachers, teachers, and workers in the varied avenues of Christian service.

The conferences are centers of interdenominational fraternity. Will organized every year and presided at the General Conference for Christian Workers, which is in direct succession to the unique parent conference originated by his father in 1880. Since his death in 1933 his brother, Paul Dwight Moody, president of Middlebury College (Vermont), has been organizer and presiding officer. This is the only conference under Northfield management and responsibility, but the school facilities are placed at the disposal of other summer conference committees in the interest of home and foreign missions, religious education, and allied objects.

Hotel Northfield is also a favorite place for conferences throughout the year. Will carried the spirit and teachings of Northfield further afield by two other branches of work under his personal direction.

One was the monthly magazine, *Record of Christian Work*, which gave world-wide circulation to the leading addresses delivered on the Northfield platform. The other effort was called *Northfield Extension*. Men mightily used of God, like Dr. F. B. Meyer of London, were secured and sent on extended itineraries in this country and Canada, holding miniature conferences in the large centers for Bible study and deepening of Christian experience. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, prince of expository preachers and teachers, devoted his whole time for several years to this fruitful work under Northfield auspices.

Northfield became a great religious center not alone because Mr. Moody himself was a great man, but also because he drew great religious leaders to his side. A year ago I went through the files of the several magazines and books and other literature connected with Northfield, and compiled a list of nearly a thousand names of men and women prominent in Christian circles in this and other lands, who had been speakers on the Northfield platform. What an inspiring roll it is! The names of a large number are imperishably inscribed in the annals of the Church Universal. Taking the list as a whole, one may wonder if any other conference platform anywhere has offered such a varied and illustrious grouping of ministers and evangelists, Bible teachers and theological professors, foreign missionaries and home workers, leaders in gospel singing and lay activities.

Turning to Chicago, I gave in a previous chapter some data from the last annual report of the Moody Memorial Church, showing Mr. Moody's surviving power in its expansion in spiritual activities and in material things.

The Moody Bible Institute also exhibits marvelous growth in recent years. The trustees met within a month of the founder's going, with full confidence in the structure he had built. We took action to honor his memory by changing the corporate name of the Chicago Evangelization Society to "The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago."

When he passed away the student enrollment was about 300, with separate buildings for men and women students. In the annual report for 1935 the corresponding enrollment was 1,079, with a plant embracing 38 buildings, and two others rented. The challenge of one express need after another had led to changes and additions in the Day school curriculum, which now offers seven courses in all; but the English Bible is still central and basic throughout. In 1903 an Evening school was launched, offering to men and women who could attend evening classes the same courses as studied in the Day school, only spread over a longer period. In the 1935 report 1,570 Evening students were enrolled. In 1901 came a Correspondence department, which enrolled 14,854 students in 1935, with an average of about 10,000 at any one time. They live all over this continent and in 27 foreign lands. Fifteen courses are offered, from which each person chooses for himself.

Nine years ago a Radio School of the Bible was started by the Correspondence department, thus bringing 1,443 more students under Bible instruction in several courses. In these four schools or departments of the Moody Bible Institute a gross total of 112,222 persons have been enrolled. It has become perhaps the richest source of foreign mission recruits in the world. Some 1,936 students have gone into foreign service under various boards in 43 countries, with over 1,400 still on the field. Twelve have suffered martyrdom.

All these departments conduct examinations and grant diplomas or certificates upon the completion of stated requirements. The Institute does not confer degrees.

Still other activities include a 5,000-watt radio station, W.M.B.I.; an Extension department, whose staff conducts evangelistic meetings and Bible conferences throughout the United States and Canada; and a monthly magazine, *Moody Bible Institute Monthly*, with average circulation of 31,125.

The Institute had not been long in operation before its ideas attracted attention. On the one hand, theological seminaries began to establish parallel courses in the English Bible and in methods of Christian work, separate from the regular course for ministerial candidates, thus training classes of students for whom they had no provision before. On the other hand, similar Bible Institutes or training schools were opened in other cities and other lands, until to-day there are over 75 Bible Institutes, large and small.

The Moody Bible Institute has not swerved from the doctrinal basis and the governing purpose of the founder. It stands foursquare on the integrity of the Scriptures as a divine revelation. It has a teaching force of 40 instructors. When Dr. Torrey resigned in 1904 to enter the evangelistic field, Dr. James M. Gray of Boston became dean, and latter president. During his brilliant administration the Institute enjoyed great expansion. Upon his retirement in 1935 Dr. Will H. Houghton of New York became president.

While missing the tremendous aid of Mr. Moody himself the Colportage Association has gone forward, largely under the same management, and has branched out in other avenues of usefulness. A resume of 41 years shows a total publication of over ten million copies of the Colportage Library in six languages and 161 titles. The total of Testaments, Gospel portions, hymn books, tracts and all else reaches a grand total of over seventy million units.

### **THROUGH CHANGED LIVES**

Once again, a man's influence can be measured after he is gone by changes wrought in other lives who live on for many years and pass on the torch of truth to succeeding generations.

Mr. Moody's influence through this channel may be proved by myriad examples. There are multitudes yet living in America and throughout the world, who were converted to God under his personal ministry or through his printed sermons, or who were led into deeper Christian experience, or stimulated to enter into active Christian service. Spiritual forces released under his ministry are still in action, fructifying all the churches.

The 50th anniversary of his phenomenal campaign of 1873-5 in the British Isles was joyously celebrated in numerous centers by large numbers who recalled their own experiences. These converts were then prominent Christian workers at home or abroad, or leading laymen and women in church and philanthropic activities. Their testimony and thanksgiving were definite and spontaneous —and had stood the test of 50 years.

One would have thought it hardly likely that he should influence the classes he did. The compactness of Britain has made it easier to conserve results over there.

When Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman was holding meetings in Glasgow in 1914, a gentleman recalled that when Mr. Moody was there in 1874 there were 54 boys converted in a boys' meeting. Their names were taken. Twenty years later the list was examined, and 42 of the 54 could be traced. Of the 42 only five had backslidden; 27 were Christian workers, some of them quite prominent. Other statistics of this kind are available.

On Tuesday, March 3, 1874 Mr. Moody concluded the day's services in the Glasgow campaign by meeting a large number of young men in a church. Seventy responded to his appeal for public confession of Christ. Among them was David J. Findlay, aged 16. Last March he observed the 62d anniversary of his conversion. During all these years he has been active in evangelical service in Glasgow, for over 50 years as pastor of St. George's Tabernacle, an aggressive independent church. He has also been a leader in the Quarrier Orphan Homes of Scotland. Mrs. Findlay is a daughter of the founder, William Quarrier.

Similarly Mr. Moody's campaign in the British Isles in 1881-4 is recalled by men like Sir J. E. Kynaston Studd, president of the London Polytechnic and a recent Lord Mayor of London; Sir Wilfred T. Grenfell of the Labrador; Mr. D. E. Hoste, late director of the China Inland Mission; and numbers of others in both prominent and humble walks of life.

In 1932 I asked Sir Wilfred to autograph a copy of his new book, *Forty Years for Labrador*, for a Christmas present to my granddaughter. On the blank flyleaf he deftly drew a pen and ink sketch of a snowy Labrador hillside, with a white hare scurrying to cover toward a patch of evergreens. This was his inscription:

"My best wishes to Virginia Powell. I'm an unredeemed debtor to the Moody family.

Wilfred T. Grenfell."

In October 1933 a meeting was held in the Central Baptist Church of Hartford, Connecticut, in honor of all those who had been members of the church for fifty years or more. Some 38 such were present. It was observed that 16 of these became members in 1878. Inquiry revealed that Moody and Sankey meetings were held in the Hartford Rink in 1878. Here, after 55 years, was fruitage of 16 people still faithful in the service of one of the city churches. Think of that record! Most of them are still living.

After Gamaliel Bradford had written his study of Mr. Moody he wrote in his Journal, under date of July 25, 1926, that "the religion of Moody stirred such enormous and profound depths" in his spiritual experience, that it gave him the trick and habit of self-revelation which pushed him forward to write his *Darwin and Life and I*.

I am often struck by hearing or reading in print the testimony of prominent people to Mr. Moody's influence in their life and service for Christ.

Dr. Albert D. Belden of London has testified on Round Top at Northfield to his abiding influence in the religious and church life of England He said it reached undimmed to the second and third generations, so that to-day the pillars in the churches look back in many cases to Mr. Moody as their spiritual forefather.

How explain the fact that so many to-day say they knew Mr. Moody well and worked with him, persons of whom the family and associates never heard? Perhaps, the explanation is that their association with him on his tours, though brief and local, was so real, the impression he made on them was so vital, that he remains a living force to them until now.

Of these several streams of influence Mr. Moody s printed sermons are the most permanent.

A man's ideas are too often discarded and the institutions he founded diverted by new administrators. The momentum of his character and convictions slows down as those who knew him die off.

Other lives influenced Godward by him likewise pass away with the years. But printed matter abides unchanged. We may expect Mr. Moody's influence to be permanently saved to the Church and the world in the last resort through his writings and biographies. His voice will not be silent as long as his sermons are published.

In the peroration of a Founder's Day address, Dr. Robert E. Speer recalled a sermon once given at a Student Conference by Henry Clay Trumbull entitled "Our Duty to Make the Past A Success." Referring to Mr. Moody he said:

"Great as his life and work and character were, even he, like the rest of the great roll in the 11th of Hebrews, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Let us listen to the summons of it to-day as we take up anew the-tasks which he began and has bequeathed to us!"

Let us hope and pray that the centennial celebrations of his birth will invigorate those influences toward conversion to God, full surrender to Him, intelligent belief in the Bible as the revelation of God, and obedience to its teachings, aggressive soul-winning effort, and every element of Christlike character, that flowed from his life and ministry! And he would have all praise and thanksgiving be to God!

Toward the close of his life he uttered this prophetic statement:

"Someday you will read in the papers that D. L. Moody is dead. Don't you believe a word of it! . . .

I do not, Mr. Moody. "I shall be more alive than ever . . .

I believe it. Mr. Moody.



“Someday you will read in the papers that D. L. Moody 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; gone out of this old clay tenement, into a house that is immortal a body that death cannot touch, that sin cannot taint, a body, like unto His own glorious body. I was born of the flesh in 1837. I was born of the Spirit in 1855. That which is born the flesh may die. That which is born of the Spirit, will live forever.”

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