

THE LIFE

OF

DWIGHT L. MOODY

BY

HIS SON

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This material is taken from William R. Moody's *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1900) that is now Public Domain. "Irish and English Cities," located on pages 207-222, is Chapter XX of the book. The pictures on pages 213 and 214 have been omitted. The picture of Mr. Moody on our website comes from the front piece of the book.

"Irish and English Cities" tells about Mr. Moody's second evangelistic tour to Europe. This describes the spiritual impact and good his Spirit-anointed preaching had upon the people of Great Britain. This chapter may be more understandable and meaningful if you first read Dr. Torrey's "Why God Used Dwight L. Moody."

IRISH AND ENGLISH CITIES

ON the conclusion of the Scotch mission, efforts were made to induce Mr. Moody to visit London. The interest awakened in Scotland had attracted the attention of the Christian public throughout Great Britain, and it was felt that a mission in London would be attended with marked results. When asked to conduct a mission he always insisted upon the necessity for unity among the ministers, and as London at this time was not ready for a "union" movement among the representatives of all denominations, he decided to accept the many urgent invitations to visit Ireland. His first mission was in Belfast, where he began on Sunday, September 6, 1874, with a service at eight A.M. in Dugall's Square Chapel. This meeting was exclusively for Christian workers, and long before the hour named the chapel was crowded. Mr. Moody discussed the necessity of entire devotion to the work and unwearied labor for the Lord. In the evening the third meeting for the day was held the largest church in the city, capable of holding two thousand people, but here again the streets were crowded with those unable to secure admission.

The daily noon prayer-meeting was begun in Dugall's Square Chapel, but the room was so overcrowded that it seemed advisable to adjourn to a building seating fourteen hundred people. Here, as elsewhere, this noon meeting became the centre of the movement and proved a great blessing to the work and workers. Evening meetings began the first day in the Rosemary Street Church, but the crowds were so great and caused so much inconvenience that Mr. Moody changed his plans somewhat and held a meeting at two P.M. exclusively for women, and a meeting in the evening in another church for men.

As the work went on the interest increased rapidly. The audiences consisted mostly of young men, and the number of strangers who visited Belfast from long distances was very large. Within ten days after the first meeting the movement spread to Bangor, ten miles distant, where Henry Moorehouse, Rev. H. M. Williamson, and others preached. Soon after the meetings began Mr. Moody published the following letter, calling upon the Christians throughout Great Britain to hold daily noon prayer-meetings:

"During the revival of God's work in America in 1857 and 1858, in nothing was the power of God's Spirit more manifest than in the gatherings that came together at twelve o'clock in the day for prayer and praise. Many of the meetings commenced at that time are still continued, with an almost constant and visible result attending them.

"In hearing from time to time of the blessings connected with these noon prayer-meetings in America, a strong desire for similar meetings in their own towns has come to the hearts of many, and the thought has occurred to us that if such meetings were started in the different towns of the kingdom, similar to those in Edinburgh and Glasgow, they might be the means of a very great blessing. Could no such meetings be started?—commenced on the 1st of October, and continued until January 1st, making three months of united prayer for a blessing on the country at the noontide hour? May not the results be beyond our estimation? The noon prayer-meetings at Newcastle, Edinburgh, and Glasgow are still kept up, and if God blessed these places, as we believe, in answer to prayer, is He not able and willing to bless others?

"The question may arise, How can these meetings be started? I would suggest that a few Christians, clerical or lay, should get a suitable room which will be comfortable and easy of access. Then select the leader for each day a week in advance, with a request that he open the

meeting at the half-hour, advertising not only the leader for each day, but also the subject for prayer and thought at the meeting.

“If these meetings are thrown open for anyone to speak or pray as he may feel led, with an occasional psalm or hymn, sung from the heart, I believe many would be glad to attend, and, doing so, would go away refreshed.

“After starting the meetings let them be well made known; let the notice of them not only be given from the pulpit and from the weekly church prayer-meetings, but also advertised constantly in the newspapers, with the names of the leaders and the subject for the day.

“There may be occasionally a person who will take up more time than he ought; but if such a thing should occur, or if any one whose character is known to be doubtful should be prominent, let one of the brethren go to such a one privately and in a spirit of love expostulate with him.

“Again I urge, will not God’s children all over the United Kingdom meet at the noon hour and unite their prayers with those of Christians in different towns for the mighty blessing? He says, *‘Call unto Me, and I will answer thee and show thee great and mighty things.’*

“Has not the time come for the church of God to arise and call on our God for a blessing? Thousands of our young men are fast passing to a drunkard’s grave, while many of our young women are being drawn into the whirlpool of worldliness. Will not the fathers and mothers, if there is no one else to meet, come together at the noontide hour and ask for a blessing on their children?

“I trust there may be a united cry going up to God for a blessing all over the land. Surely God will answer the cry of His children. Shall we say, *‘There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest,’* or shall we arise now, and, with prayers, put in the sickle and gather?

“If He is with us, we are able to possess the land, and no giant, however great, can hinder.”

When in response to this letter the central noon meeting was established in Moorgate Street Hall, London, Mr. Moody sent this telegram:

“Daily meeting of Belfast sends greeting to the Christians of London. Our prayer is that the meeting may become a great blessing to many. *‘He must increase, but I must decrease.’*”

Open-air meetings were held on Sunday afternoons, attended by the thousands who could not get into the churches or halls. The first Sunday Mr. Moody spoke upon the text: *“Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature,”* following this by a meeting for inquirers only in the Ulster Hall, the largest public building in the city.

Not the least gratifying feature of the Belfast meetings was the bringing together of all evangelical denominations. Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Methodists, and Baptists mingled without distinction. One night in Rosemary Street Church the Rev. Mr. Dickson, of the Mariners’ Episcopal Church, was one of the busiest among the inquirers, and on another evening an Episcopal clergyman occupied the pulpit of the Eglinton Street Presbyterian Church.

At the close of the Edinburgh mission it was said that fourteen hundred people had professed conversion. People who did not believe in the work, however, asserted that eleven hundred of these were women, hinting that this kind of thing could only make progress among women and weak-minded men. When he arrived in Glasgow, therefore, Mr. Moody made a special prayer

that he might be able to refute this notion by being honored in the conversion of young men, and this wish was so far gratified that when he was about to leave the city, and held a meeting of those who believed they had been brought to Christ since his coming, out of the thirty-two hundred who attended sixteen hundred and thirty were men. Baffled in this matter, the enemies of the work now found a new cause of faultfinding. They could not deny that many men had been blessed, but they suggested that these were not of a class which most needed conversion—the abandoned class of the community. When coming to Belfast, therefore, Moody prayed that he might be specially able to do good to this class. His prayer had so far been answered that the first three converts who rose to tell that they had become changed men were formerly drunkards.

An open-air meeting was held October 8th, one of the largest ever seen in Ireland. Mr. Moody addressed a vast multitude on the words: “I pray thee have me excused.”

The last meeting in Belfast was on the evening of October 16th. It was designed for those who had reason to believe that they had become converted during the meetings. Admission was strictly by ticket received only on personal application, and twenty-one hundred and fifty tickets were given out.

Londonderry was next visited. The meetings were largely attended by young and old of all classes from this and surrounding districts. Excursion trains brought many, while hundreds walked and drove many miles. The attendance steadily increased to the close, while a noticeable feature in connection with the meetings was the large number of clergymen present.

The prevailing characteristic of all the meetings was intense earnestness and solemnity without, however, any undue excitement. The services seemed to awaken the liveliest interest in the public mind and to produce a marked impression. The inquiry meetings after the first night were very well attended—large numbers remaining for conversation and prayer with Mr. Moody and the Christian workers.

The work in Dublin had been preceded by a general prayer-meeting made up largely of members of all evangelical denominations of the city, the clergymen working cordially together without the least shade of envy or party spirit. The Rev. Dr. Marrable, of the Church of Ireland, presided at the first service, supported by Presbyterians, Wesleyans, and others. On the following day the management secured the use of the Exhibition Palace, the largest and most commodious building which had up to that time been placed at Mr. Moody’s disposal, and here, as elsewhere, the same general interest was at once awakened.

A correspondent of “The Christian,” of London, writing at this time says:

“The inhabitants of Dublin are becoming alive to the fact that we are now in the enjoyment of a great time of refreshing, and that our gracious God is working powerfully among us by the instrumentality of these, His honored servants. Such a sight has never been witnessed here as may now be seen every day—thousands flocking to the prayer-meeting and to the Bible reading, and, most of all, to the evening services in the great Exhibition Palace. It fills the heart of a child of God with deepest emotion to stand upon the platform from which Mr. Moody preaches, and to cast one’s eye over the vast concourse of people hanging on the speaker’s lips as in burning words he discourses of life and death, and ‘Jesus and His love.’ One cannot but ask the question, ‘What is the magic power which draws together these mighty multitudes and holds them spellbound?’ Is it the worldly rank or wealth of learning or oratory of the preacher? No, for he is

possessed of little of these. It is the simple lifting up of the cross of Christ—the holding forth the Lord Jesus before the eyes of the people in all the glory of His Godhead, in all the simplicity of His manhood, in all the perfection of His nature, for their admiration, for their adoration, for their acceptance.

“As an Episcopal minister I am most thankful to see so many of the dear brethren in my own church, as well as of the other evangelical churches, attending and taking part in these happy services. May each of us receive a blessing, and in turn be made a blessing to our flocks. An able and godly minister stated a day or two ago that by attendance at these services he seemed to have returned to the ‘freshness of his spiritual youth’, a sentiment worthy of a noble man and a generous heart.”

The active cooperation of the Episcopalians and the respect and tacit sympathy manifested by some of the Roman Catholics were notable features of Mr. Moody’s work in Ireland at this time. The leading Roman Catholic paper of the city gave full information respecting the work, and was extremely friendly toward it. In “The Nation” an article appeared entitled “Fair Play,” in which the editor informed his constituents that “the deadly danger of the age comes upon us from the direction of Huxley and Darwin and Tyndall, rather than from Moody and Sankey. Irish Catholics desire to see Protestants deeply imbued with religious feeling rather than tinged with rationalism and infidelity, and so long as the religious services of our Protestant neighbors are honestly directed to quickening religious thought in their own body without offering aggressive or intentional insult to us, it is our duty to pay the homage of our respect to their conscientious convictions; in a word, to do as we would be done by.”

Mr. Moody now returned to England, and visited Manchester, Sheffield, Birmingham, and Liverpool with marked success. In Manchester particularly he did much for the Young Men’s Christian Association. After a stirring appeal for a building fund he took up a collection of £1,800 for the purpose.

In speaking of the definite results of the meetings in Manchester, the Rev. W. Rigby Murray wrote to “The Christian”:

“If one class has been blessed more than another during these past weeks, it has been the regular Christian ministers. I am sure I voice the sentiment of all my brethren who have thrown themselves heart and soul into the movement, when I say that we have received nothing less than a fresh baptism of the Holy Ghost. Our souls have been quickened; our faith in the adaptation of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God to the wants and longings of the human spirit has been deepened; our sense of the magnitude and responsibility of our offices as Heaven’s ambassadors, charged with a message of reconciliation, and love for the guiltiest of the guilty and the vilest of the vile, has been greatly increased. Mr. Moody has demonstrated to us in a way at once startling and delightful that, after all, the grand levers for raising souls out of the fearful pit and the miry clay are just the doctrines which our so-called advanced thinkers are trying to persuade the Christian world to discard as antiquated and impotent. These are, the doctrine of the atoning death of Jesus Christ, the doctrine of a living, loving, personal Saviour, and the doctrine of the new birth by the Spirit and the Word of Almighty God.

“One of the ablest ministers at the noon prayer-meeting on the last day of the year solemnly declared that, whereas the first of these cardinal verities had not been fully realized by him before these, services commenced, he now felt it to be a spring of joy and satisfaction to his soul

such as language could hardly express. And then how shall I speak of the gladness which filled our hearts as we heard almost from day to day, of conversions in our congregations, parents rejoicing over sons and daughters brought to Jesus, of young men consecrating their manhood and strength to God, and of converts offering themselves for all departments of Christian service? If our dear friend Mr. Moody had accomplished nothing more than the quickening of the ministers of this great centre of population and the stirring us up to greater devotion to our glorious calling as laborers together with God, his visit would not have been in vain. Give us a revived ministry and we shall soon see a revived church.”

“What is to be done for the unsaved masses?” Mr. Moody asked while in Sheffield. In answering his own inquiry he said that he had found a spiritual famine in England such as he had never dreamed of. “Here, for instance, in this town of Sheffield,” he said, “I am told that there are one hundred and fifty thousand people who not only never go near a place of worship, but for whom there is actually no church accommodation provided, even if they were willing to take advantage of it. It seems to me if there be upon God’s earth one blacker sight than these thousands of Christless and graceless souls, it is the thousands of dead and slumbering Christians living in their very midst, rubbing shoulders with them every day upon the streets, and never so much as lifting up a little finger to warn them of death and eternity and judgment to come. Talk of being sickened at the sight of the world’s degradation, ah! let those of us who are Christians hide our faces because of our own, and pray God to deliver us from the guilt of the world’s blood. I believe that if there is one thing which pierces the Master’s heart with unutterable grief, it is not the world’s iniquity, but the Church’s indifference.”

He then argued that every Christian man and woman should feel that the question was not one for ministers and elders and deacons alone, but for them as well. “It is not enough,” he said, “to give alms; personal service is necessary. I may hire a man to do some work, but I can never hire a man to do *my* work. Alone before God I must answer for that, and so must we all.”

On the last day of the old year—1874—the meetings at Sheffield were begun. The first meeting was held in the Temperance Hall at nine P.M., beginning with the new hymn, afterward so famous, written by Dr. Horatius Bonar:

“Rejoice and be glad, the Redeemer has come.”

Just before the hour of midnight Mr. Moody asked all those who desired the prayers of Christians to rise. For a time none were willing to do so, but soon a few stood up, and the Christians were asked to pray for them. Just then the bells began to ring in the new year, and with a prayer by Mr. Moody one of the most solemn meetings of the series was closed.

Following the Sheffield mission Mr. Moody held a two weeks’ series of meetings in Birmingham. The Town Hall, Carr’s Lane Chapel, and Bingley Hall were found none too large for the audiences which attended. During the first eight days of their stay in that city the total attendance at the three halls was estimated at one hundred and six thousand. Dr. W. R. Dale was at first inclined to look with disfavor on the movement and stood aloof. As the interest continued, however, he became more impressed and attended the meetings regularly.

“Of Mr. Moody’s own power,” he said, “I find it difficult to speak. It is so real and yet so unlike the power of ordinary preachers, that I hardly know how to analyze it. Its reality is indisputable. Any man who can interest and impress an audience of from three to six thousand

people for half an hour in the morning and for three-quarters of an hour in the afternoon, and who can interest a third audience of thirteen or fifteen thousand people for three-quarters of an hour again, in the evening, must have power of some kind. Of course, some people listened without caring much for what he said, but though I generally sat in a position which enabled me to see the kind of impression he produced, I rarely saw many faces which did not indicate the most active and earnest interest.

“The people were of all sorts, old and young, rich and poor, tradesmen, manufacturers, and merchants, young ladies who had just left school, cultivated women, and rough boys who knew more about dogs and pigeons than about books. For a time I could not understand it—I am not sure that I understand it now. At the first meeting Mr. Moody’s address was simple, direct, kindly, and hopeful; it had a touch of humor and a touch of pathos; it was lit up with a story or two that filled most eyes with tears, but there seemed nothing in it very remarkable. Yet it told. A prayer-meeting with an address at eight o’clock on a damp, cold January morning was hardly the kind of thing—let me say it frankly—that I should generally regard as attractive, but I enjoyed it heartily; it seemed one of the happiest meetings I had ever attended: there was warmth and there was sunlight in it. At the evening meeting the same day, at Bingley Hall, I was still unable to make out how it was that he had done so much in other parts of the Kingdom.

“I listened with interest, and I was again conscious of a certain warmth and brightness that made the service very pleasant, but I could not see that there was much to impress those who were careless about religious duty. The next morning at the prayer-meeting the address was more incisive and striking, and at the evening service I began to see that the stranger had a faculty for making the elementary truths of the Gospel intensely clear and vivid. But it still seemed most remarkable that he should have done so much, and on Tuesday I told Mr. Moody that the work was most plainly of God, for I could see no real relation between him and what he had done. He laughed cheerily, and said he should be very sorry if it were otherwise.

“Scores of us could preach as effectively as Mr. Moody, I felt, and might, therefore, with God’s good help be equally successful. In the course of a day or two, however, my mistake was corrected. His preaching had all the effect of Luther’s; he exulted in the free grace of God. His joy was contagious. Men leaped out of darkness into light and lived a Christian life afterward.” Dr. Dale did not believe much in evangelists, but he had a profound respect for Mr. Moody, and considered that he had a right to preach the Gospel, “because he could never speak of a lost soul without tears in his eyes.”

After the work in Birmingham came a mission in Liverpool, where the blessed experiences of the preceding weeks were repeated. In this case no suitable auditorium could be secured, and a wooden structure one hundred and seventy-four feet long and one hundred and twenty-four feet wide, capable of accommodating ten thousand people, was erected at great expense. This was called Victoria Hall. The building was erected in forty days.

At the close of the mission a convention was held, where the rousing addresses of Dr. Chown, of Bradford, Newman Hall, of London, Dr. Dale, of Birmingham, Mr. Fletcher, of Dublin, and other men of large experience produced a profound impression. An important feature of the convention was Mr. Moody’s hour with the “Question Drawer.”

One little observed but important part of the meetings was the gathering of children every Saturday at noon in nearly every town and city visited. This was usually organized into a

permanent institution. While they were still in Great Britain many of these meetings were held every week, and after a time the Edinburgh children conceived the idea of opening a friendly Christian correspondence between the various meetings and set the example by sending a letter to the children of Dublin.

One of the most interesting meetings at Liverpool was the children's service, where Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey were both present. Some of the papers put down the number in Victoria Hall at twelve thousand, with an overflow meeting of about two thousand in the Henglers Circus. Mr. Moody gave an address founded on a book with four leaves, black, red, white, and gold, a sort of running interchange of simple yet searching questions and answers. Responses were very promptly given, Mr. Sankey's singing was especially enjoyed by the young people, who joined in the choruses with great heartiness.

Mr. Moody made an impressive appeal in Victoria Hall to merchants, employers, and friends of young men, the meeting being in connection with the special appeal for funds in behalf of the new Young Men's Christian Association building. The audience was one seldom seen even in Liverpool. There were men of very different beliefs and nationalities: High Churchmen, Broad Churchmen, Low Churchmen, Orangemen, Wesleyans, Unitarians, Baptists, Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Jews, Greeks, Spiritualists, and others. Different phases of commercial life were represented. There were present also clergymen; town councillors, Liberal and Tory; leading members of the Dock Board and the Select Vestry, millionaire ship owners, dealers in every kind of produce, timber merchants, sugar merchants, tea merchants, corn merchants, provision merchants, brokers, shopkeepers, and many women.

When Mr. Moody rose to speak he said that he was often asked whether he believed in the Young Men's Christian Association. He wanted to say that he did with all his heart. Because they did not have Associations in the days of the fathers, he said, a great many churches now thought they were not needed, but that was no fair criterion.

"Fifty or one hundred years ago young men lived at home. They lived in a country home, and did not come to these large cities and centres of commerce as they do now. If they did come, their employers took a personal interest in them. I contend that they do not do so now!" and at this sturdy utterance of opinion there was a subdued but perceptible "Hear, hear!" from various parts of the hall.

"Since I have come to Liverpool," he added, "there is hardly a night that in walking from this hall to my hotel I do not meet a number of young men reeling through the streets. They may not be *your* sons, but bear in mind, my friend, they are *somebody's* sons." They are worth saving. These young men who come to large cities want somebody to take an interest in them. I contend that no one can do this so well as the Christian Association. Some ministers claim that Associations are doing the church harm they draw young men away from the church. That is a mistake. They feed the church; they are the handmaids of the church. They are not tearing down the church; they are drawing men into it. I know no institution which helps to draw churches so much together as these Young Men's Christian Associations."

Later, on the completion of the building for which Mr. Moody had made so strong a plea, he was requested by Alexander Balfour, the president of the Young Men's Christian Association of Liverpool, to place the memorial tablet of the new structure, which bears the inscription: "This memorial stone was laid by D. L. Moody, of Chicago, March 2, 1875."

One who was present at the Liverpool meetings thus describes the deep impression made upon the public:

“Men who wrote and spoke against the movement, men who laughed at it, went to hear and came away with changed thoughts—six thousand people at the midday prayer-meeting, six thousand at the afternoon Bible lecture, and ten thousand at the evening meeting, with the inquiry-rooms full, is something that even ‘The Exchange’, has to admit. But beyond this there is the mighty power of God’s spirit, working and acting, which no tables can register, no numbers record.”

Following Mr. Moody, Henry Drummond held meetings for young men in Liverpool, with an average attendance of fourteen hundred nightly. Of Mr. Drummond it was said: “His gentleness is only surpassed by the earnestness with which he carries out and controls this most successful service.”