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THE THEOLOGY OF DWIGHT L. MOODY

**A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary
Systematic Department**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity**

by

Howard W. Kramer

May, 1948

Approved by:

Otto E. John
Thomas Jackson

THE THEOLOGY OF DWIGHT L. MOODY**(Outline)****Introduction****Biography of Moody****Introduction Proper****I. Foundation of His Theology****A. Central Theme****B. Estimation of Holy Scriptures****II. The Heart of the Matter****A. The Malady - Sin and Man's Separation from God****B. The Remedy****1. Grace of God toward Fallen Mankind****2. Christ****3. Saving Faith****4. Conversion****C. The Result****1. Sanctification and Good Works****2. Prayer****III. Other Important Considerations****A. Means of Grace****1. Law and Gospel****2. Holy Baptism****3. Lord's Supper****B. The Christian Church****C. The Public Ministry****D. Eternal Election****E. Eschatology****1. Premillennialism****2. Resurrection****Conclusion**

A Life of Service

Dwight Lyman Moody was born on February 5, 1837, in the little New England village of Northfield, Massachusetts. His father, a bit reckless and improvident, died four years later, leaving his widow and nine children with nothing but a mortgaged farm for support.

Mrs. Moody actually succeeded in keeping her home intact, though it was a desperate struggle. Dwight grew up in this poverty-stricken environment.¹ When six years old, he began to work as a hired hand for a local farmer. In addition to his farm-work, he attended the village school until he was seventeen. At this time he left for the city of Boston where he found employment with his mother's brother, a shoe manufacturer. The boy was employed on several conditions, one of which was that he must regularly attend the Mount Vernon Church and Sunday School. This he did, and after two years he applied for membership in the church.²

In 1856 Moody went to Chicago, where he worked with unusual success as clerk in a shoe store. He joined The Plymouth Congregational Church and hired four pews,

1. Ernest Trice Thompson, Changing Emphases in American Preaching, p. 106.

2. "A Consecrated Life", in Dwight L. Moody, "Thou Fool!" and Eleven Other Sermons Never Before Published, pp. 4-5.

keeping them filled with young men whom he invited to attend services. He also offered his services as a teacher in the Sunday School of a little mission church on North Wells street. Since all the classes were taken care of, he collected eighteen barefooted children with whom he marched into church the next Sunday. Soon he had a complete Sunday School of his own with hundreds of children.³

Moody became so engrossed in this type of work that he decided to give up his five thousand dollar a year position and devote all his time to the Mission. His work prospered greatly, though there were slight interruptions due to the Civil War and the great Chicago fire. Moody made many personal calls and began to hold evangelistic services for adults. In the midst of his constant activity there was little time for spiritual replenishment and intellectual growth. Therefore, his wife persuaded him to go to England, hoping that contact with religious leaders there would be of help. One of those who influenced him considerably was Henry Moorehouse, who later followed him back to Chicago.⁴

It was some time later, in the year 1872, that Dwight L. Moody, filled with new zeal and inspiration, and accompanied by Ira D. Sankey, began the series of evangelistic services that set first England and then America on fire

3. Ibid., p. 5.

4. Thompson, op. cit. pp. 107-116.

with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The two men, upon their return to America, were among the best-known individuals in the world. They were immediately flooded with requests to conduct revival campaigns in all the great American cities. These requests kept Moody busy the remaining twenty years of his life.⁵

In addition to his activities as an evangelist, Moody is remembered for founding the Seminary for Girls at Northfield, the School for Boys at Mount Herman, the famous Bible Institute and Bible Institute Colportage Association in Chicago, the summer Bible conferences, and finally the Northfield student conferences from which grew the World's Student Christian Federation and the Student Volunteers.⁶

It was while he was preaching at Kansas City in the fall of 1899, that Mr. Moody's physician ordered him home for a rest. He died on December 22, at his home in Northfield.⁷

One of the great evangelist's most frequently repeated statements is this one:

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

5. Ibid., pp. 117-118.

6. Ibid., p. 118.

7. William R. Moody, The Life of Dwight L. Moody, pp. 545-551.

taint, a body fashioned like unto 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.⁸

Wright Lyman Moody was a revivalist in the true sense of the word. As a background to religious thought and expression in his day, he reflected a moment in earlier religious history in this country.

During American colonial history, there is nothing to compare with the Great Awakening in which Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield played the principal roles. The Great Awakening, however, lost its force about the time of the Revolutionary War, when less than seven per cent of the American people were members of a church.⁹

Suddenly the Great Revival, which had been smoldering, especially in the South, burst into flame and burned in the Second Great Awakening, or the Great American Revival, as it is known to some. Though the early nineteenth century witnessed the full intensity of this period of growth, important revivals continued to occur every year for several decades. Until about 1850 they were one of the outstanding features of American religion. Since then there has been no great nationwide revival. However, men like Charles C. Finney, Dwight L. Moody, R. A. Torrey, Cyrus Smith, Sam Jones, W. May Mills, J. Wilbur Chapman, and William H. Sundeby have carried on the tradition almost to our own day.¹⁰

⁸. *Ibid.*, pp. 554-555.

Introduction

Dwight Lyman Moody was a revivalist in the true sense of the term. As a background to religious thought and expression in his day, we reflect a moment on earlier religious history in this country.

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9. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

One of the distinguishing features of Moody's work was the fact that he inaugurated evangelistic campaigns in which all the churches of a city united in the series of meetings to win souls for Christ. He also initiated the idea of a singing evangelist. His consecrated co-worker was Ira D. Sankey, who did very much to popularize and make his work effective.¹¹

Later revivalists introduced such businesslike efficiency and high pressure methods, to say nothing of the financial aspects which some of them began to emphasize, that professional evangelism began to fall into disrepute. Since the end of the First World War, old-time revivalism has been practically obsolete.¹²

Dwight L. Moody, with only a district school education, without a church or society behind him to support him, without any of the recognized graces of oratory, spoke to an estimated one hundred million, and converted an estimated one million souls. He established more permanent centers of religious activity than any preacher of his day.¹³ Hence, it is certainly fitting that we examine critically the theology of so influential a man. We intend to determine how closely, and in what fields, he adheres to Scripture teaching, and, on the basis of our observations, place him in the Fundamentalist fold.¹⁴

11. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 103-105.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

14. The Fundamentalists are distinguished by their teaching of the inspiration of the Bible, the deity of Christ, the vicarious atonement, the power of the Holy Ghost in conversion, and the premillennial coming of Christ.

As we study his doctrines, we shall note where the stress lies and thus find it possible to arrive at an evaluation of his work.

THE HERESY OF JOHN L. MOODY

I. Foundations of his Theology

"I have only one message for you of every class. The gospel is fitted for all people. So long as men sin, there will need to be messages of repentance. The rich and the poor, the educated and the ignorant alike need the same truth. In all mankind there is one command: 'Ye must be born again.'¹ These words of John L. Moody present briefly the purpose of preaching and the purpose of theology in the eyes of this son of God.

It was the purpose of preaching and theology to bring to every man and woman the message of God's love through Christ.

On one of the tours through England, a clergyman asked Mr. Moody to preach the next day at a certain place. Mr. Moody readily replied that his heart was already in prayer. When asked where by the anxious crowd, he calmly replied, "In the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah."²

1. John L. Moody, in an interview for the Chicago Times-Herald, October, 1890, was quoted as saying "I have only one message for you of every class. The gospel is fitted for all people. So long as men sin, there will need to be messages of repentance. The rich and the poor, the educated and the ignorant alike need the same truth. In all mankind there is one command: 'Ye must be born again.'"
 2. John L. Moody, op. cit., p. 227.

THE THEOLOGY OF DWIGHT L. MOODY

I. Foundation of His Theology

"I have only one message for men of every class. The gospel is fitted for all people. So long as men sin, there will need to be sermons of repentance. The rich and the poor, the educated and the ignorant alike need the new birth. To all mankind comes the one command: 'Ye must be born again.'¹ These words of Dwight L. Moody present briefly the purpose of preaching and the purpose of theology in the eyes of this man of God.

He saw the sinfulness of mankind and longed to bring to every unrepentant soul the message of God's love through Christ.

On one of the tours through England, a clergyman asked Mr. Moody to print his creed before he came to London. Mr. Moody promptly replied that his creed was already in print. When asked where by the anxious crowd, he calmly replied, "In the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah."²

1. Dwight L. Moody, in an interview for the Chicago Times-Herald, October, 1890, as quoted in "Plain Talk By Moody", Moody Monthly, XXXIII (February, 1933), p. 259.

2. Wm. R. Moody, op. cit., p. 227.

These words again indicate the importance which he placed on Christ's vicarious suffering, and lead us automatically to a consideration of Moody's estimate of the Bible, where the gospel message is found in written form.

It isn't difficult to detect that Moody considered the Bible to be God's Word. He quotes the familiar passage, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God".³ By inspiration of God, he implied verbal inspiration. He was very much disturbed whenever he heard of someone who declared a portion of the Scriptures unauthentic. The following excerpt illustrates this fact:

I believe that there are a good many scholars in these days, as there were when Paul lived, "who, professing themselves to be wise, have become fools"; but I don't think they are those who hold to the inspiration of the Bible. I have said that ministers of the Gospel who are cutting up the Bible..., denying Moses to-day and Isaiah tomorrow, and Daniel the next day and Jonah the next, are doing great injury to the church; and I stand by what I have said.... Do they think they will recommend the Bible to the finite and fallen reason of men by taking the supernatural out of it? They are doing just the opposite. They are emptying the churches and driving the young men of this generation into infidelity.⁴

Regarding one of the most maligned portions of the Scriptures, the story of Jonah, Moody said, "I stand by Jonah".⁵ In one interview, Moody stated emphatically that whether he

3. II Tim. 3:16, as quoted by Moody in The Gospel Awakening, L. T. Remlap, ed., p. 265.

4. Wm. R. Moody, op. cit., p. 495.

5. Ibid., p. 496.

could understand and explain a portion of the Bible or not, he still believed it, just as he believed many other things which he could not understand.⁶ This brought him to make the following statement about the Biblical account of creation: "I never could reason out the Creation. I can see the world: but I can't tell how God made it out of nothing.... There are a great many things that I can't explain and that I can't reason out, that I believe."⁷ Another statement of his, perhaps his only public statement regarding evolution, is the following: "It is a great deal easier to believe that man was made after the image of God than to believe, as some young men and women are being taught now, that he is the offspring of a monkey."⁸

It is interesting to note that in spite of Moody's belief in the Genesis creation account, one of his best friends was a known evolutionist. This friend, Henry Drummond, Moody called the most Christlike man he had ever known. When Drummond died, Moody said that his feelings were akin to those of David on the death of Jonathan. He was sure of meeting Drummond in heaven, and believed that there their differences would be resolved.⁹ The fact remains that Moody himself believed and preached

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 495-496.

7. *Kemlap, op. cit.*, p. 189.

8. Dwight L. Moody, *Heaven*, p. 9, as quoted in Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

9. Thompson, *op. cit.* p. 130.

the Biblical account of creation.

So conscientious was he about following Scripture, that a few days before he himself died, he observed the injunction of James 5:14-15, and was anointed with oil by the elders who prayed for his recovery.¹⁰

To those who called the Bible out-dated and outgrown Moody had this to say, "Why don't men outgrow the light of the sun? They shouldn't let the light of the sun come into their buildings -- should have gas; the sun is old, and gas is a new light. There is just as much sense in this as to take away the Bible."¹¹

At another time he said: "Ministers are abreast of the time if they preach the old gospel faithfully.... The gospel has stood the test of nineteen centuries, and it has never failed once. I know what the gospel will do for sin -- sick souls, for I have seen its power for forty years. Why should I try a new remedy of whose value I know nothing?"¹²

The latter quotation incidentally brings Moody to perhaps his best proof for the acceptance of the Bible, the fact that it works. Moody liked to use the illustration of the colored man who had been converted, and met an infidel who held that the Bible is not true. The

10. Wm. R. Moody, op. cit., p. 551.
11. Remlap, op. cit., p. 429.
12. Moody, Pleasure and Profit in Bible Study, p. 91, as quoted in Thompson, op. cit. p. 128.

colored man confessed that he had once been a drunkard and a blasphemer, and he thought that any book that could make him stop swearing and drinking must be true. Moody commented that he hardly thought a false book could make men good.¹³ He also felt that the difficulties encountered in understanding the Bible were a positive proof for its divine authorship. He said: "...if we could understand it clearly from back to back at first, it would be as a human book; but the very fact that we cannot understand it all at once, is the highest proof that it is the Word of God."¹⁴ At another time he said: "...let us not try to reason out everything by bringing all God's revelations down to our own level."¹⁵

The fact which we must remember in discussing Moody's estimate of the Bible is this that the Bible was important to him because in it he found Christ from beginning to end. "We want to study God's Word in the clear light of Calvary, and if we can read it under the cross, we shall be able to understand all the rest."¹⁶ We note that Moody was very explicit in affirming the truth that the Old and New Testament are one unified book with the story of Christ running through the whole. He mentioned Jesus' references to Jonah, the flood, and other

13. Edward Leigh Pell, Dwight L. Moody, His Life, His Work, His Words, p. 565.

14. Remlap, op. cit., p. 590.

15. Pell, loc. cit.

16. Ibid., p. 567.

Old Testament persons and events to show the unity. To point out that the Old Testament would be unintelligible without Christ, he asked:

What are you going to do with the passover if you take Christ out of the Old Testament? What are you going to do with the atonement - the sacrifices - the brazen serpent - the sin-offering? What do they all mean?

The Old Testament is a sealed book if you take Christ out of it. He is the key of the word, and he unlocks the Old Testament just as he does the New.

Philip found Christ in the Old Testament at the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, (Acts viii, 30-35,) and you may find him in the same place, and in hundreds of other places in the writings of Moses and the prophets.

Study the Book of Genesis. You will find Christ there. "The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head."

Take Exodus. That may be called the book of redemption. Leviticus is the book of sacrifices. They both abound in typical references to Christ.

There is no other way of understanding the entire system of Old Testament worship except as types and prophecies of Christ.¹⁷

Though Moody's attitude toward the Scriptures in general is for the most part very commendable and orthodox, it must be noted that this stand is usually associated with Fundamentalist bodies and preachers. His beliefs regarding the sacraments and Christ's second coming will show that he fits the Fundamentalist category, though he maintains a rather sane attitude toward Scriptures.

17. Pell, op. cit., pp. 320-321.

II. The Heart of the Matter

The Malady

We have said that Moody found Christ and Calvary in the Scriptures. He was an evangelist, and it was his main concern that people turn from their ungodly ways and accept Christ as their Savior from sin. He did not spend time organizing the people he had won into congregations or in indoctrinating them further. His preaching was planned to interest the sinner to such an extent that he would accept an invitation to attend a so-called inquiry meeting after the service and here discover more particulars. It was here that he was invited to join one of the churches in the community. Groups of churches always cooperated to bring Moody to their community to conduct a revival. Naturally they were glad to cooperate since the converts won through Moody's preaching were always prospective members of their respective congregations. The point is that the further indoctrination and guidance was entrusted to the various churches in the community and was not considered part of Moody's task. Therefore the preponderance of evangelistic preaching.

If his message was preponderantly evangelistic we are

sure to learn his attitude toward the central doctrine of Christianity, redemption through Christ. We now propose to trace this doctrine through his sermons and writings.

It is almost superfluous to mention that Moody believed in the triune God. He stated in so many words that "there is but one God; but there are three persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost."¹ Though he seems never to discuss at length the essence of God, there can be no doubt that Moody considered God as possessing the attributes which orthodox circles ascribe to Him. Though he does not mention all by name, his whole theology would be grossly inconsistent if he did not ascribe to God divine unity, simplicity, immutability, infinity, immensity, eternity, omnipresence, life, knowledge, wisdom, will, holiness, justice, veracity, power, and goodness.

Moody rightly begins the story of man in the Garden of Eden. While God had created man to keep a perfect standard, the word disobedience is the cause of all misery in the world and the open door through which it comes. "It was there that Adam fell; God told him that he shouldn't do a certain thing, and he did it."² In this connection Moody explains the meaning of Genesis 2:17: "For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

1. Remlap, op. cit., p. 266.

2. Ibid., p. 678.

He says:

I used to stumble over that verse more than any other verse in the whole Bible. I could not understand how God said Adam should die the day he ate that fruit, and yet he lived a thousand years.

I didn't understand then, as I do now, that the life of the body is not anything in comparison with the death of the soul. Adam died in his soul right there and then. Death is just being banished from God's sight; for God is the author of life, and the moment the communication was cut off between Adam and God that was the end of life.³

Here we find expressed in a most effective manner the main consideration concerning sin, the fact that it is separation from God. No longer was there life with God, but now it was a story of death without Him. Moody had no sympathy with those who referred to transgressions against God as mistakes. "Better call things by their right names. We have all sinned. There is no righteousness; and there is no man that has walked the streets that has not broken the law of God".⁴ In one of his prayer meeting talks, Moody said: "David in the Psalm said: 'There is none that doeth good; no, not one'. He was right. We are all evil in our nature. It is the old Adam. I tell you man without God is a failure, and a tremendous failure. There's nothing good in him."⁵

3. Henry Davenport Northrop, Life and Labors of Dwight L. Moody The Great Evangelist, p. 375.

4. Remlap, op. cit., p. 175.

5. Ibid, p. 682.

Moody never takes time to distinguish in words the difference between original and actual sin. The preaching quotations prove that he preaches both.

The following excerpts reveal a proper understanding of the purpose of the law to reveal sin:

The law isn't to save men, but the law is brought in just to show man that he is lost and ruined under the law. These people that are trying to save themselves by the law are making the worst mistake of their lives. Some people say, if they try to do right, they think that is all that is required of them. They say, "I try to keep the law". Well, did you ever know a man keep the law [sic], except the Son of God himself? The law was never given to save men by.... It was given to show man his lost and ruined condition.... Before God saves a man, he first stops his mouth.... A perfect God couldn't give an imperfect standard; a perfect God sees that the law is pure and good; but we are not good if we don't come up to the standard.... And so the law is a looking glass, just to show a man how foul he is in the sight of God.⁶

Moody goes on to show that a man who breaks the least of the commandments has broken all. He does not consider the Ten Commandments to be ten different laws. When we break one commandment, we have broken the law of God.⁷ Incidentally, he considers the Sermon on the Mount an infinitely higher standard than the Ten Commandments.⁸ In a famous sermon titled "Tekel", Moody proceeds to discuss each of the Ten Commandments and shows how man is found wanting in regard to every one, including the overall commandment of love.⁹

6. Ibid., p. 180.

7. Ibid., p. 181.

8. Pell, op. cit., p. 456.

9. Ibid., pp. 455-462.

It follows naturally that after having shown the sinner his wrong doing, Moody mentions the result. We have already noted that he liked to refer to sin as a separation from God or death. That already indicates the consequences. In one sermon Moody asked: "If God threw Adam out of Eden on account of one sin, how can you expect to get into the heavenly paradise with ten thousand?"¹⁰ Man's hopeless plight on account of sin is described in no uncertain terms when he pictures man as being in a coal-pit, fifteen hundred or two thousand feet deep. He says it would be easier to climb or leap up the sheer sides of the shaft than get out of the pit of sin.¹¹

Moody, incidentally, places a very odd interpretation on the sin against the Holy Ghost. He quotes the passage in Mark 3, which reads: "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation. Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit." On the basis of this passage, Moody concludes that the sin against the Holy Ghost consists in calling Christ an agent of hell. Moody probably correctly claims that this is a rather rare sin.¹²

In Moody's development of man's wretched condition, we note that there is no emotional preaching "down into

10. Remlap, op. cit., p. 420.

11. Pell, op. cit., p. 452.

12. Ibid., pp. 448-450.

hell." Everything is developed logically and, above all, Biblically. In this respect Moody was different from many revivalists. He was opposed to undue emotionalism in a service. As it happens, he was probably not skilled enough as an orator to produce such an effect. His winning point was his sincerity.

Surely he exhibits a genuine interest in the souls of the people before him when he speaks of the world as one vast hospital in which everybody is sick with sin.¹³ Calling sin a sickness with which mortals are afflicted shows his genuine sympathy. He is eager to help the patient find a remedy. Here lies the secret of effective law preaching. Moody knew it.

The Remedy

In pointing the sinner to the remedy for sin, Moody immediately directs him away from anything he might do. He shows that the sinner is bound to Satan. "Have you not some sins that trouble you? and have you not said 'I will try and break off that sin?' and have you not tried and tried, and failed every time? And could not you, if you were honest tonight, write 'failure' over every attempt you have made to reform yourself? Satan binds us - every one of us."¹⁴

13. Ibid., p. 454.
 14. Remlaf, op. cit., p. 118.

One evening Moody told the story of a man who came to him with the statement that he was not fit to be saved. The man claimed that there was no hope for him, because he had sinned all his life, and there was nothing good in him. Moody commented that he was much gratified to hear him say that. When a man had learned that lesson, the great evangelist was sure there was hope for him, as there is hope for any man who thinks there is nothing good in him.¹⁵

The reason for Moody's hope for one who considered himself hopeless is the nature of God's grace. Said Moody: "I tell you, if you want to get any grace, you must know God. He is the God of all grace. He wants to deal in grace; he wants to deal with that unmerited mercy, undeserved favor, unmerited love."¹⁶ When speaking of God's grace, Moody always means God's grace through Christ. However, he correctly interprets this grace or love of God as not merely Christ's love in His substitutionary life and death, but the Father's love as well. He recalls:

For the first few years after I was converted, I had a good deal more love for Christ than for God the Father, whom I looked upon as the stern Judge; while I regarded Christ as the Mediator who had come between me and that stern Judge, and had appeased his wrath.... After I became a father and woke up to the realization of what it cost God to have His Son die, I began to see that God was to be loved just as much as His Son was. Why, it took more love for God to give His Son to

15. Ibid., p. 207.

16. Ibid., p. 208.

die than it would to die himself.¹⁷

For this love of the Father, as well as the love of the Son, Moody could give no reason. He simply answers, "God is love." He supposes that a being whose nature is love can no more keep from loving than the sun, whose nature is light, can keep from shining, and this in spite of God's aversion for the sin of man. God's love he calls unchangeable, unfailing, and everlasting.¹⁸

That this grace of God is free, universal, and efficacious, is indicated by the following excerpts:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God:" - [sic] "Not of works, lest any man should boast." Salvation is a gift from God.... It is not then for men to work, or they will boast of it; and when a man boasts, you may be sure there is no conversion.... We do not work to get salvation; but we work after we get it. If we are ever saved, it must be by grace alone. If you pay anything for salvation, it ceases to be a gift. But God isn't down here selling salvation. And what would you have to give him, if he was?... That grace is free to all - free to every policeman here, every fireman, every usher, every singer, every man, woman and child, every reporter, all of you.... If you are lost, there is one thing you must do; and that is, trample the grace of God under your feet. It won't be because you can't be saved, but because you won't.¹⁹

Moody thus holds both the gratia universalis and the sola gratia and avoids the errors of both the Calvinists, and the Synergists, Arminians, and Semi-Pelagians.

17. Ibid., p. 287.

18. Pell, op. cit., p. 313.

19. Remlap, op. cit., pp. 212-213.

If the grace of God can be considered only in the light of Christ and His work, we pause with Moody to investigate the person, states, and office, of the second Person in the Trinity.

We find Moody standing firm with Fundamentalist teaching in regard to the deity of Christ. He stated that he thought the Gospel of John full proof of the divinity of Christ. He believed also that anyone wrong on the divinity of our Lord would be wrong on every doctrine. To prove that the Scriptures call Him God, Moody quoted the testimony of the man possessed with a devil, Jesus' answer to the high priest when asked under oath whether He was the Son of God, the first verse of John I ("In the beginning was the Word...and the Word was God"), and many other passages which state this truth.²⁰ He referred also to passages which show the divine attributes and works of Christ. The following excerpt shows Christ's omniscience and His ability to perform the divine works of forgiving sins and healing the sick:

I tell you, the Jews to a man didn't believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ. They began to reason among themselves; but Christ knew what they were thinking about. He could read their thoughts. Christ said to them:..."Now that you may know that the Son of man hath power to forgive sins, I say, 'Rise up and walk.'"²¹

To indicate that divine honor and glory is His, Moody speaks of Christ as now once more a full partaker of the

20. Fell, op. cit., pp. 322-324.

21. Remlap, op. cit., p. 140.

glory which He had with the Father before the world was.²²

That Christ possessed a human nature is also strongly asserted by Moody. He holds that Christ was actually born of a woman, as He certainly was. He affirms that if Christ wanted to be a mediator between God and man he had to take upon Himself our nature.²³ He makes mention of the human nature occasionally in sermons. Here is an example: "Oh, come and tell him your sins and misery. He knows what human nature is; he knows what poor, weak, frail mortals we are."²⁴ Though Moody does not often mention the theological terms in regard to any doctrine, it is evident that he understood correctly the part played by the human nature also in the temptation of Christ, and in His whole suffering.

Moody left it simply as a mystery that Christ was God and man, but preached it faithfully nonetheless.²⁵ His theological acumen, not too often in evidence, shows through in one of his so-called Bible Readings where he says: "Some people accuse us of teaching that God died; but Christ died as a man. God never died, and never can die; it was the man that died. Men die; the Divinity never dies."²⁶ Here he leaves the mystery. He attempts no explanations as to the communion of natures or the communication of attributes and, therefore, leaves us no

22. Pell, op. cit., p. 402.

23. Ibid., p. 322.

24. Remlap, op. cit., p. 240.

25. Ibid., p. 215.

26. Ibid., p. 715.

opportunity to criticize his explanations.

There can be no doubt that Moody also correctly understood Christ's humiliation as the state in which He did not always and fully use the divine attributes communicated to His human nature. This is implied in the statement: "Luke...brings Him from the bosom of the Father, and takes Him back to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was."²⁷ He views the miracles as evidences of this glory which was not always used.

In regard to the stages of humiliation, Moody follows the second article. The virgin birth also is accepted without further discussion.²⁸ Should anyone question his teaching of these stages of humiliation and their relation to the atonement, let him read Moody's sermon on "The Blood Atonement in the Old Testament."²⁹

Christ's exaltation follows naturally. "Up, up, up, He goes, and takes His place upon the mercy seat. O! I had a great deal rather have Him there than anywhere else. Where else could He be of so much help to us as at the right hand of the Father?"³⁰ So Moody speaks of the exalted Savior, once more full partaker in the glory of the Father.³¹ Of all the stages of exaltation, no direct mention of the descent into hell is found, though He almost

27. Pell, op. cit., p. 402.

28. Ibid., p. 329.

29. Ibid., pp. 338-345.

30. Ibid., p. 369.

31. Ibid., p. 402.

certainly accepted it. The resurrection, on the other hand, is made much of. He firmly believes that Christ, in His body, left the tomb according to the sign of the prophet Jonah, and that since Christ rose, we, too, can be sure of our resurrection.³² This resurrected Savior, Moody expected to return in such a day and hour as we think not.³³

In regard to the three offices of Christ, Moody taught correctly that the important thing about Christ's own preaching as a Prophet, was what He said about the truth of salvation through His vicarious death. This teaching is now carried on by the ministers of the Word. Says Moody: "If Christ did not teach, and if the apostles and the early Church did not believe the doctrine of the vicarious atonement of Christ, then I haven't got the key to this book at all."³⁴

The Priestly office of Christ is the one stressed throughout Moody's sermons. He correctly thinks of Christ as the substitutionary sacrifice and our Intercessor. The vicarious atonement is the scarlet thread running through all his sermons. Here are some excerpts:

Christ is more than our Savior. He is our Redeemer. He has redeemed us with His blood. Redemption is to buy back. When Christ came, he bought us back. He says, "You have sold yourselves for naught; but you shall be redeemed without money." Though salvation is free to us, and it is without money and without price; yet it cost

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 353-355.

33. *Remlap, op. cit.*, p. 648.

34. *Pell, op. cit.*, p. 346.

God all that He had to do it. It was the blood of Christ, His only Son, that redeemed us. It cost Him His precious blood to buy us back.... You are redeemed by the precious blood of the Son of God, as of a lamb without a spot or blemish. ...We are not only redeemed by blood, but we are justified. This is more than pardon. If a man is washed in the blood, he is as just as if he had never sinned.... "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." So, if a man has been redeemed by the blood of Christ, he is justified.

Or in other words, God says, "I have nothing in My heart against you."...In reality, no sinner is forgiven. Sin has to be atoned for, and the Son of God has made atonement.... And so, my friends, what you want is to have the blood applied to you, applied to your sins.... "It covers all my sins".... Your time will come, and then it will be grand to die with those words upon your lips - "I am sweeping through the gates, washed in the blood of the Lamb."³⁵

These excerpts show forth clearly also the distinction between objective and subjective reconciliation.

Moody preaches the passive obedience as just presented almost to the exclusion of the active obedience. There is no doubt that he believed that Christ perfectly fulfilled the law, but it must have appeared less important to him. Here is one of the few references to Christ's fulfilling the Law:

Well, my friends, I am ready any time to step into the scales and be weighed. Haven't I broken the law? Yes. But when God tells me to step into the scales I shall take Christ with me. He never broke the law, and his righteousness will be enough for me....if I am in the scale with Him I shall not be found wanting. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.[sic]

35. Remlap, op. cit., pp. 256-264.

Also less pronounced, but in evidence, is the doctrine of Christ, the Intercessor. He states on at least one occasion that Christ is interceding for us before the Father.³⁶ However, the sections in which he speaks of Christ, the Mediator, also testify to his acceptance of Christ, the Intercessor.³⁷

Turning now to Christ's Kingly function, we find Moody stressing Christ, the King, after the exaltation. Here this office is more evident than during the state of humiliation. He certainly regards Him as a King sitting at the right hand of God and ruling and guiding the company of believers and the world in which they live today. His sermons on "Christ The Keeper" or "Christ The Good Shepherd" illustrate this point.³⁸

Dwight L. Moody was undoubtedly a Christian, yet when he preached the meaning of saving faith, he began to express himself in such odd ways that one finds it difficult to determine exactly what he meant. He says some very fine things. Faith is a very important subject, he affirms, because it is faith that brings the blessing. He agrees that faith may be defined as knowledge, assent, and laying hold, it being the last clause that really brings the soul and Christ together. He considers the phrase "the dependence upon the veracity of another" a

36. Pell, op. cit. p. 413.

37. Ibid., p. 322.

38. Pell, op. cit., pp. 375-378.

good definition of faith. And then he quotes Hebrews 11:1, where we read "Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen." This he explains as meaning that "faith says Amen to everything that God says. Faith takes God without any if's. If God says it, faith says, I believe it...."³⁹ Then he speaks of faith as just the hand that reaches out and gets the blessing. The blessing that it reaches for is Christ. In answer to the question as to how one should get this faith, he replies, "Know who God is."⁴⁰ He explains further that to know God one must not neglect His Word. Up to this point one must admit that his statements and ideas are correct. Difficulties appear, however, in another section of the same sermon (titled "Faith") where he states:

But this faith in Christ is the same kind of faith that men have in one another.... Now sinner, do you want to be saved tonight? Have faith in God! Take him at His word! Believe what He says! Believe the record God has given in His Son? [sic] I can imagine some of you saying: "I want to; but I have not got the right kind of faith." What kind of faith do you want? Now, the idea that you want a different kind of faith is all wrong. Use the faith you have got. Just believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.⁴¹

There are two difficulties in interpreting these excerpts. The phrase, "Use the faith you have got", seems very ambiguous. Is this something in man, or is the phrase to mean that one should use the same sort of faith which one

39. Remlap, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-220.

40. *Ibid.*, pp. 222-223.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 223.

has toward one's fellowman? It seems a bit odd to compare saving faith, in any way, with the faith between fellowmen. The second difficulty arises from his distinction between wanting faith and having faith. If he realized that wanting faith is having it already, he would probably have avoided this whole confusing discussion.

The bestowal of faith in the promise of salvation for Christ's sake upon a sinner who knows and laments his sin is conversion. Moody, the evangelist, was greatly interested in bringing about conversions, and had a good deal to say on the subject.

In a little book titled The Overcoming Life, Moody^x sets forth the marks of true repentance, which includes conversion. He says a man must first be convicted of sin. He feared that if a man professed to be converted without realizing the heinousness of his sins, the first breath of opposition or ridicule would draw him back into the world again. He believed that no one can find the Savior until he is brought down on his knees, completely humbled, with no hope left in himself. Moody mentioned three things which God uses to lead men to this conviction: (1) Conscience; (2) the Word of God; (3) the Holy Spirit.⁴²

Moody felt that a person cannot violate his conscience without being self-condemned. Yet he could not accept

42. Dwight L. Moody, The Overcoming Life, pp. 39-41.

conscience as a safe guide because often it does not tell us a thing is wrong until the deed is done. God must illuminate it, since it partakes of our fallen nature. A second factor against conscience as a safe guide is this, that it gets to be like an alarm-clock which arouses us at first, but loses its effect when we become used to it.⁴³

In our time, says Moody, our Bibles are the means by which God produces convictions. It tells us what is right and wrong before we commit sin, and is an infinitely more effective means for producing conviction than conscience.⁴⁴

Moody believed that the conviction worked by the Holy Ghost is not a legal conviction, but an evangelical conviction. The Holy Ghost convinces men of sin because they have not believed on Jesus Christ, not for some sin against the law of God. According to Moody this is also what Peter preached on Pentecost when he told the Jews that they had not believed on the Christ whom they crucified. People who do not believe today, are convicted of this same sin by the Holy Ghost.⁴⁵ This then is first evidence for the fact that Moody taught that the Holy Ghost works directly, outside the Word, in converting a man. We shall hear more of this later. But whether Moody understood correctly how a man is convinced of sin, he was correct in stating that a man must be con-

43. Ibid., pp. 41-42.

44. Ibid., p. 42.

45. Ibid., pp. 43-44.

vinced of sin before conversion can take place. In a discussion of the thief on the cross, Moody states:

The great trouble is, people are trying to make out they are not sinners; and therefore there is no chance of reaching them. But this thief said, "Our sentence is just"; and he took his place among sinners. There is no hope for a sinner until he sees the condemnation is a just condemnation; because he has sinned, and come short of the glory of God.⁴⁶

After conviction of sin, Moody calls the next step contrition, deep godly sorrow and humiliation of heart because of sin. He claims that if there is not true contrition, a man will turn right back into the sin. There is no repentance without contrition. Moody repeats after the Psalmist, "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." He says that many sinners are sorry that they cannot continue in sin; but their hearts are not broken.⁴⁷

After conviction and contrition comes the confession of sin. On the basis of the Bible warning, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper," Moody urges sins to be confessed, and this in one of three ways. All sins are sins against God, therefore they must be confessed to Him. No mortal ear need hear sins which are only between oneself and God. But if some person has been wronged, then the sin must be confessed not only to God, but also to that person. If there is too much pride

46. Remlap, op. cit., p. 126.

47. Dwight L. Moody, The Overcoming Life, pp. 44-45.

to confess a sin to a fellowman, Moody warns that there will be no need to come to God. "First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." The third class of sins must be confessed publicly. He felt that a blasphemer, a drunkard, or a reprobate, should make the confession as public as the transgression. In summing up his remarks on confession, Moody quotes the familiar passage, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."⁴⁸

Now says Moody, the next step is conversion. Conversion can mean the new birth. He, however, here explains the term as being a turning to God. Since sin is an aversion from God and conversion to the world, true repentance should be conversion to God and aversion from the world. It is a translation out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.⁴⁹

In order to present Moody's beliefs in order, we take up the next and final step. Comments on the preceding will follow at the close of this discussion.

If one is converted, says Moody, the next step is to confess it openly. He quotes, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth

48. Ibid., pp. 45-47.

49. Ibid., pp. 47-49.

unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." He calls confession of Christ the culmination of the work of true repentance. "He died to redeem us, and shall we be ashamed or afraid to confess Him?"⁵⁰

In following through Moody's steps as above, we notice immediately the absence of the mention of faith as the reason for turning to God. It is very odd that the first mention of Christ comes actually after conversion, and is mentioned only as a result of conversion. On the basis of other sermons and writings it seems that Mr. Moody here simply took a great deal for granted. He supposed that the reader understood that the turning to God really meant a turning to God through faith in Christ. To justify this charitable observation we note the following excerpts:

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." To them that received him. Cannot you receive him to-night? ...Is it not a wonderful thing that the Prince of Glory should come from heaven and offer himself to poor sinners like us? Will you not have him in your heart?...

Christ is the life-boat; he comes to every perishing soul, He says: "Trust me; I will carry you in my arms to the kingdom of God." Cannot you trust him to-night, sinner?...

Jesus is in our assembly to-night; and now while he is here, while he is calling you to himself, will you not come to the ark?... "I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my

50. Ibid., pp. 49-52.

voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Will you let him in to-night, dear friends? Will you unlock the door of your heart? Pull back those rusty bolts and say, "Welcome, thrice welcome into this heart." May God help you this night to be wise for eternity, and receive Jesus Christ as your Savior.⁵¹

The following leaves no doubt as to Moody's real meaning of conversion, "...if you are not converted you will be worse and worse, and not better and better. You must have a new birth. We start life at the Cross. When you are converted, that is the time you are born. ...Christ coming into this heart is a new birth; and if I have Christ's life, I can challenge death."⁵²

Moody in no way credits man's conversion to anything he has done. It is entirely the work of God, or more specifically, the work of the Holy Ghost. The following quotations indicate that Moody believed even the conviction of sin to be the work of the Spirit. "There is no preacher that can convince men of sin;... that is the work of the Holy Ghost."⁵³ "You can't reach a man that the Holy Ghost hasn't entered. The Holy Ghost must convince him of sin."⁵⁴

Other beautiful expressions of the Holy Spirit's work are these: "When a man preaches Christ, then the Holy Ghost has got something to do - to carry home the message to the hearts of the people...then the Holy Ghost is at work carrying those truths down into the

51. Remlap, op. cit., pp. 108-110.
 52. Ibid., pp. 88-89.
 53. Ibid., p. 701.
 54. Fell. op. cit., p. 410.

hearts of people and making the word fruitful."⁵⁵

Now if this being born again is a matter of birth, it must be the work of God and not our work; it must be something from above. It is not natural but supernatural. It is the Spirit of God turning the whole current of our life... I don't believe any man or woman is ever saved until they get done trying to save themselves and let the Lord save them.⁵⁶

Moody correctly regarded conversion by the power of the Holy Ghost a miracle. He cites conversion as a miracle which the Lord is performing even today.⁵⁷

In his preaching Moody had to deal with many people who believed that they had to feel something in conversion. To such he spoke as in the following, "Now, there is no promise in the Word of God where you will get feeling. There is no verse, from Genesis to Revelation, where feeling is attached to salvation.... Trust him, and let your feelings take care of themselves."⁵⁸ This, incidentally is another proof for the fact that Dwight L. Moody was not the type of revivalist whose object it was to arouse his hearers to a pitch of excitement and high emotion. In keeping with this fact is also this, that he was not interested in knowing the exact time at which one was converted. He comforted those who were troubled because they could not point to the day and hour when they were converted. He pointed out that it was not necessary to be able to tell when or where the new

55. Ibid., p. 422.
56. Ibid., p. 428.
57. Remlap, op. cit., p. 681.
58. Ibid., p. 83.

birth took place; but it was important that they should be able to say that they were new creatures in Christ Jesus.⁵⁹

Moody did also believe in instantaneous conversion. To illustrate this fact he used the example of the Israelites in Egypt the night of the Passover. He said in part: "There was one moment when there was no blood on the door-post. It was the blood that sheltered them that memorable night... It was not anything they could say or do that would save them, except to be sheltered behind the blood."⁶⁰ Whether this aspect of the Passover is applicable in this way or not, it illustrates the fact that, as the blood was not there one moment and there the next, so faith in the blood of Christ may be absent one moment, but present the next. The moment it is there, conversion or salvation is there, too.

As we have indicated, Moody also taught that the Holy Ghost works immediately or directly, without means, in conversion. Here is proof from a sermon.

Let us go out and bring all our friends here, and if there is poor preaching, we can bring down from heaven the necessary blessings without good preaching. One evening a skeptic came in just out of curiosity. He wanted to see the crowd, and he hadn't more than crossed the threshold of the door before the spirit of God met him, and I asked him if there was anything in the sermon that influenced him, in hopes that I was going to get something to

59. Ibid., p. 655.

60. Ibid., p. 105.

encourage me; but he could not tell what the text was. I asked him if it was the singing, but he didn't know what Mr. Sankey had sung. It was the power of God alone that converted him, and that is what we want in these meetings.⁶¹

Perhaps it was this conviction that led Moody to speak in such concrete terms of the nearness of the Lord in seeking the sinner. Note again in these excerpts that Moody considers wanting the kingdom of God as something separate from having it:

...seek the kingdom of God with all your heart; and you shall find it to-night. It will be the night of your salvation. It is a good time to seek the Lord while the Spirit of God is abroad in the community. I contend that this is proof that the Lord can be found here to-night, because I don't believe there has been a night but that some have found him.⁶²

In this connection we mention Moody's final aberration regarding the doctrine of conversion. Moody, in spite of the fact that he preached that natural man has no power to come to Christ, nevertheless believed that an unconverted man could pray for conversion. This is a paradox in his theology. He stated that a person could pray to God the Father without knowing Christ.⁶³ Though he certainly showed many people to their Savior, his difficulty may have been due to the fact that he was such an unskilled theologian as to unwittingly preach an obvious contradiction. To take a more charitable view, we

61. Northrop, op. cit., p. 269.

62. Remlap, op. cit., p. 202.

63. Ibid., pp. 89-90.

might say that probably the difficulty lay in his distinction between wanting and having faith. Actually, the so-called unconverted person who prayed for faith, already had it.

From the preceding discussions, there can be no doubt that Moody did teach justification by faith. Nevertheless, we find it expressed again in a sermon titled "The Thief on the Cross." Here he states that in the conversion of the thief, salvation is distinct and separate from works. The thief simply took the Lord at His word and believed. "All that is necessary for a man to be saved is, to believe with his heart."⁶⁴

As one of the effects of justification, Moody notes the liberty of the Christian. "As long as a man is living in sin", he says, "there is no liberty; but the moment you come to Jesus Christ and confess to him, he will sweep your sins out of the way...."⁶⁵ He speaks of this also as victory over every enemy, meaning especially the world, the flesh, and the devil. Through Christ we can always conquer.⁶⁶ Also mentioned as an effect of justification is the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Once a person has accepted his Savior by the power of the Holy Ghost, this Comforter makes his abode in the heart of the man.⁶⁷

64. Ibid., p. 128

65. Ibid., pp. 1201-122.

66. Dwight L. Moody, The Overcoming Life, pp. 6-7.

67. Pell. op. cit., p. 426.

The Result

This brings us directly to the doctrine of sanctification and good works. Happily, we find Moody expressing himself clearly and correctly on this subject.

As has just been mentioned, Moody taught that the Spirit of God dwells in the soul of the man who has accepted Christ in faith. This is essential to his whole concept of sanctification and good works. He states: "You might as well tell a man to leap to the moon, as to tell a man to serve God with the old nature. If we are made partakers of the heavenly nature, it will last as long as God lasts, for it comes from God. In other words, it is the love of God planted in us."⁶⁸ Again he tells his hearers: "The Holy Ghost comes and dwells with that soul that is washed in the blood of redemption, and it becomes a temple for the Holy Ghost to dwell in...."⁶⁹ At a convention at Boston in 1877, Mr. Moody pointed out how to preach so as to keep people away from worldly amusements. He said, "It is much better to preach the people so full of the Holy Spirit that they will not want anything else."⁷⁰ On another occasion he called himself one of those old-fashioned people who believe that "any man or woman, filled with the Spirit, rivers of spirit will flow from them. [sic] There'll be a tree full of

68. Remlap, op. cit., p. 91.
69. Ibid., p. 259.
70. Ibid., p. 745.

sap, with fruit; there'll be blossoms and fruit. And if it is a shade tree, there'll be leaves. And when a man is filled with the Spirit of God, he will be filled with fruit."⁷¹

Moody cautioned, however, that no man can be filled with the Spirit or do good works until he has faith. He was violently opposed to making ungodly men trustees in the church, or allowing an unconverted person to sing in the choir of a church. He said: "No man can do anything to please God until he is first sheltered behind the blood. I don't care who he is; I don't care what his life has been; God cannot accept it; he can't walk with God.... A man will have no desire to walk with God until he is sheltered behind the blood, and brought into communion with God."⁷²

Moody believed that the Spirit of God in a regenerate soul motivates that individual to a life of love. Love is the sine qua non of the sanctified life of good works.

He states that if love doesn't prompt all work, all work is for naught. Love, he says, is to be the badge of the Christian. A person without love shows that he has not really been converted. True conversion includes a resulting love for all things and all men.⁷³ In another

71. Dwight L. Moody, "Thou Fool!" and Eleven Other Sermons Never Before Published.

72. Remlap, op. cit., p. 253.

73. Ibid., p. 160.

place he says, "When a man turns to God, he is made a new creature - a new man. His impulses all the time are guided by love.... This is a true sign of conversion. If this sign is not apparent, his conversion has never got from his head to his heart."⁷⁴

Moody is very explicit in explaining this love as something to be sharply contrasted with duty. The following excerpt illustrates this point:

I am getting sick and tired of hearing the word duty, duty. You hear so many talk about it being their duty to do this and do that. My experience is that such Christians have very little success. Is there not a much higher platform than that of mere duty? Can we not engage in the service of Christ because we love Him? When that is the constraining power it is so easy to work. It is not hard for a mother to watch over a sick child. She does not look upon it as any hardship. You never hear Paul talking about what a hard time he had in his Master's service. He was constrained by love to Christ, and by the love of Christ to him. He counted it a joy to labor, and even to suffer, for his blessed Master.⁷⁵

Moody makes a beautiful observation on King James usage in pointing out that our love is to be a reflection of the Savior's love, the evidence of the Spirit within us. He says: "The Bible does not say, 'Make your light shine before all men;' but, 'Let your light shine.'⁷⁶

And so Moody considered the sanctified life or good works as the evidence for true faith. "Let us show our faith by our works," is a familiar phrase of his. Then

74. Ibid., p. 421.

75. Dwight L. Moody, To the Work, p. 30.

76. Remlap, op. cit., p. 433.

again he says, "We work because we are saved; we don't work to be saved. We work from the cross but not towards it. Now it is written, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.' Why you must have your salvation before you can work it out."⁷⁷ And in another place: "If a man tells me he has faith in Jesus Christ, and hasn't any impulse to work for God, I doubt his word. I wouldn't give much for his faith; because, if a man has really true faith in Christ and believes the word of the Lord Jesus Christ, he cannot help but work. If a man says he is converted, and doesn't work for his fellowmen, I doubt his conversion."⁷⁸

To indicate how Christians are to be active in love and good works, Moody used the example of the Dead Sea which is dead because, although it always receives, it never gives anything in return. Many so-called Christians are like the Dead Sea, according to Moody. They think they can drink in the gifts of Christ's work without letting it flow on through.⁷⁹

Although the new man shows himself after regeneration, Moody realizes that the old man struggles with him constantly. Moody warned the people who thought that after conversion there could be no battles with the old nature. He complained that they had the idea that they

77. Ibid., p. 188.

78. Ibid., p. 615.

79. Ibid., pp. 153-154.

could put the oars in the bottom of the boat, and let the current drift them into the ocean of God's eternal love. Moody said that rather it is a crossing of the current. Christians must learn to watch and fight and overcome. The battle is only begun. Christian life is a conflict and warfare.⁸⁰ In a sermon on "Christ and Adam", Moody speaks of people who seem to think that they have gotten away from the flesh, and go soaring away into a sort of seventh heaven. He warns that flesh will always be flesh, and if we do not put it off, crucify it, and keep it in the place of death, it will hold us in captivity.⁸¹ Moody once said:

If a man says he is not at war with himself, it is a pretty good sign he has not a heavenly nature. When you find a man with a bad nature, a mean, contemptible disposition, a mean temper, and he is praying to Christ to overcome it, you may know that he has become a partaker of the Divine nature, and he can get strength from God to get victory. I have more respect for a woman with a mean, contemptible nature, who is trying to overcome it, than I have for those who are naturally pretty good and do not want to become any better.⁸²

There are a number of amusements which Moody seemed to feel caused special trouble for the child of God. He liked to mention, not infrequently, such things as smoking, chewing, drinking, horse-racing, dancing, and card-playing as sins of the world from which Christians must steer away.⁸³ The opera and the theater were also men-

80. Dwight L. Moody, The Overcoming Life, p. 7.

81. Remlap, op. cit., p. 349.

82. Ibid., p. 656.

83. Ibid., p. 277.

tioned as amusements which could hardly be enjoyed to the glory of God. Occasional remarks about traveling on Sunday seem to indicate that he was probably in favor of some sort of "blue laws". However, of the amusements and practices mentioned above, the most frequently mentioned was drinking. Perhaps this was the sin of his day and he was entirely justified in stressing it as much as he did. The fact remains, and the point of this discussion is, that Moody did not pound away at drunkenness continually as most revivalists do. His message was still preponderantly the message of salvation, and drunkenness was placed in the proper category in the presentation. He himself said that though he had no use for liquor, he did not consider the pulpit the place for preaching against drunkenness. "Only when you get a chance for a word slip it in", said Moody.⁸⁴

Moody believed that Christians no longer have enough crosses to bear because of their faith in Christ. He did speak of the ridicule which Christians must suffer because they do not follow the ways of the world, and he spoke of other disadvantages, but he thought a little old-fashioned persecution would be a rather invigorating experience for the Church. To comfort his hearers he quoted Jesus' words: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: be of good cheer: I have overcome the world." He spoke at length of the handsome rewards

84. Wm. R. Moody, op. cit., p. 449.

promised in the book of Revelation for those who overcome the world and tribulation.⁸⁵

Moody considered prayer an expression of the new life. He affirms the fact that a person with the new nature cannot help communing with God in prayer.⁸⁶ One of his main fears in regard to prayer was that it would become a mere formality. If one has been educated to say prayers, and has no rest unless he says his prayers, doing it out of habit, Moody felt the petition went no higher than his head.⁸⁷ The odd thing is that Moody preached some very fine truths in regard to prayer which he himself seems not to have practiced. He stated that if one is not in communion with God, any prayers will be mere forms.⁸⁸ And again he states that the prayer of an unrepentant person is not answered.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, he advocated that an unregenerate person should pray for conversion. This was already discussed under the doctrine of conversion where it was surmised that the difficulty arises from his distinction between wanting and having faith. Whenever he has someone pray for conversion, it is a person who seriously desires faith, and, therefore, actually possesses it already.

He was very correct in maintaining that if a person is not reconciled with his brother, the prayers of the

85. Dwight L. Moody, The Overcoming Life, pp. 33-38.

86. Remlap, op. cit., pp. 91-92.

87. Ibid., p. 503.

88. Ibid., p. 503.

89. Ibid., p. 113.

unforgiving individual cannot reach God's throne.⁹⁰

Moody could get quite enthusiastic about the power of prayer, especially the prayer of a group of believers. Moody was always happy to pray special prayers for individuals who requested it in the meetings. Especially anxious was he to have the group pray for the success of the meetings, that is, that many souls should be won for Christ. He also believed in having a large group pray for the conversion of certain specific individuals.⁹¹

Moody tried to teach his hearers that God the Father, looking upon the believers as His children, loves them too much to give them things which He, in His omniscience, knows would be harmful for them. He often made the remark that if anyone wanted to be sure of praying for something which was pleasing to the Lord, he should pray for the conversion of his friends.⁹²

This last suggestion indicates Moody's first love, the work of his Savior. He wanted Christians like that, too, Christians whose hearts were set, not on the things of this world, but on the things which are of God. He closed one sermon with such a petition. "Give me the Christian whose heart is above the world, whose sails are filled with the gales of grace, and who, by the

90. Ibid., p. 694.

91. Ibid., pp. 599-600.

92. Ibid., pp. 601-602.

power of the Holy Spirit, sweeps through the stormy waters of this life right up to the port of heaven.⁹³

III. Other Important Considerations

From our discussion of Moody's theology up to this point, we can safely say that he fits into the fundamentalist category. He teaches the inspiration of the Bible, the deity of Christ, the vicarious atonement, the power of the Holy Ghost in conversion, and as we shall see later, the premillennial coming of Christ. Another general characteristic of fundamentalists is their disregard for the means of grace. We shall see that Moody, in some ways, is also guilty of this perversion.

Of the three means of grace, the Word, baptism, and the Lord's Supper, Moody regarded only the Word as a means of grace. We have already discussed the fact that Moody believed that the Holy Ghost can and does work independently, without means, in conversion. It seems, however, that he was of the opinion that the more common way of converting people was with the power of the Holy Spirit's working through the Word of God. We may assume that the following quotation implies this belief: "It is a question if any man on the face of the earth has ever been converted,

93. Pell, op. cit., p. 498.

without the Word of God. It is a question if any man on the face of the earth has ever been converted, without the Word of God. It is a question if any man on the face of the earth has ever been converted, without the Word of God. It is a question if any man on the face of the earth has ever been converted, without the Word of God.

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way."¹ This statement seems to conflict with his teaching of the immediate working of the Holy Ghost, but he seems not to have been too concerned with an overstatement or a contradiction here or there.

He does state definitely on one occasion that a person can learn about God and get faith by using the Word of God.² Then again as we have also pointed out, he says that in our Christian land, where men have the Bible, it is the agency by which God produces conviction. We are to learn and appropriate its teachings, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.³ It seems extremely incongruous to suppose that Moody, with his beautiful preaching of the atonement, bringing it down to his listeners in a very effective way, should not have supposed that the Holy Spirit would work through the message which he proclaimed.

Regarding his preaching of the Law and Gospel, we may say that Moody preached both, and as a rule preached them properly. His sermons do seem, however, to contain a preponderance of Gospel. He took pride in regarding himself as a preacher of love. Many revivalists have, no doubt, fallen into the opposite category.

He said that the Law is not given to save men, but is given to show that man is lost and ruined. He pointed out the mistake of people who try to save themselves by

1. Dwight L. Moody, To the Work, p. 7.

2. Remlap, op. cit., p. 222.

3. Dwight L. Moody, The Overcoming Life, p. 42.

the Law. These are the individuals who feel that if they try to do right, all will be well with them. Moody then asked whether anyone but the Son of God had ever kept the law. "No", repeats Moody, "the law was never given to save men by."⁴ In a sermon titled "True Repentance", Moody pointed out that men are not saved by being scared into heaven. He knew that the terrors of conscience at the realization of sin do prepare one for the Gospel, but he never hoped to win a man's soul with the Law alone.⁵ He agreed, however, that after conversion the Law can still be useful as a guide for the true Christian life.⁶

The Gospel was for Moody what it is for any Christian; "the good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, 'for unto us is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior.'"⁷ The real meaning of Christ's coming into the world is set forth in this excerpt from a sermon on "Christ The Deliverer".

Barabbas was the man that ought to die; his hand was trickling with the blood of his fellow men. Jesus came to set the captive free. Every man that has committed sin is a lawful captive. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Here is Christ dying in the place of Barabbas; he has gone up on high; he loves and intercedes for you; he has power to proclaim liberty to every poor bondman upon the earth.⁸

So much for the first means of grace. We next consider Moody's estimation of the sacraments. It is quite

4. Remlap, op. cit., p. 180.

5. Ibid., p. 420.

6. Ibid., p. 181.

7. Ibid., p. 167.

8. Ibid., p. 123.

evident that he in no way regards them as offering forgiveness of sins. He speaks of them as ordinances which God has commanded. Therefore, it is our duty to obey. Often he appears to be attempting a defense against someone who would claim that we are saved by these sacraments without having faith. Here is an example:

See how salvation is separate and distinct from all ordinances - not but[sic] ordinances are right in their place. Some people say you cannot be saved if you are not baptized.... Baptism is right in its place; but when you put it in the place of salvation, you put a snare in the way. You cannot baptize men into the kingdom of God. The last conversion before Christ perished on the cross ought to forever settle that question. If you tell me a man cannot get into Paradise without being baptized, I answer, the thief was not baptized.... Some people tell us a man cannot be saved until he has partaken of the sacrament. The thief did not.... The moment he asked for life he got it. Salvation is distinct from ordinances. Baptism is one thing; the Lord's Supper is another thing; and salvation through Christ is another. The only way for us to be saved is to come straight to Christ for life, and to own, as this man, that we have sinned, and that our condemnation is just.⁹

It is obvious that in this excerpt Moody is trying to prove that faith is the important thing, and that faith has nothing to do with the sacraments. Here is another example directed toward those who feel that since they have been baptized, they are baptized into the kingdom of God:

Baptism is all right in its place. God forbid that I should say anything against it. But if you put that in the place of regeneration - in the

9. Ibid., pp. 128-129.

place of a new birth - it is a terrible mistake. You cannot be baptized into the kingdom of God. If I thought I could baptize men into the kingdom of God, it would be a good deal better for me to do that than to preach. I should get a bucket of water, and go up and down the streets, and save men that way.¹⁰

Here again he speaks of baptism as a formality, perhaps something like folding one's hands, in which faith plays no part. Of course, he never states just what he means by the statement, "Baptism is all right in its place." Incidentally, at one convention he gave his reason for not preaching more about baptism. He, of course, did not baptize on his evangelistic tours. That was for the local pastors. When asked outright why he didn't teach baptism Moody replied that it was a controversial subject which he had to avoid if he intended to continue his work. He believed that he should teach general truths which all could accept, and then allow the local ministers to indoctrinate the converts as they pleased.¹¹

Regarding the Lord's Supper, we have already showed that Moody thought of it, too, as an ordinance. He, therefore considered the celebration and distribution of the Lord's Supper a sacrificial act, an act of worship.¹² Naturally, he did not accept the presence of Christ's true body and blood in the elements. He speaks only of

10. Ibid., p. 186.

11. Ibid., p. 743.

12. Ibid., p. 748.

bread and wine.¹³

In spite of these false teachings he did regard the sacrament rather highly. He complained that so few people partook of the sacrament to remember their Lord. He called it despising Christ's death and all that the Son of God has done for man.¹⁴ To Moody this evidently was the prime purpose of the Lord's Supper, to remember Christ and His death. When young converts asked him whether they should attend the communion table, Moody replied that they "need not go unless they want to, but if that was the dying request of any friend they had they would be willing to do it all their lives; why then, should they not desire to do it in remembrance of their Savior?"¹⁵ He also felt that no blessing could come to a church as long as its members attended the Lord's Supper in spite of an open quarrel.¹⁶ This statement probably has no special significance for this discussion since he probably meant it as part of an argument for more love among church members. In conclusion, we may say that the Lord's Supper was to Moody merely a memorial meal. He did not look upon either Baptism or the Lord's Supper as means of grace.

Dwight Moody had very little to say on the subject

13. Ibid., p. 129.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., p. 686

16. Wm. R. Moody, op. cit., p. 458.

of the Christian Church. Though he never explained the difference in so many words, he leaves no doubt in our minds that he distinguished in his thinking between the Church Universal and local churches. It must be remembered that Moody belonged to no church denomination. He was out to win souls only for the Church Universal. Denominational lines meant little or nothing to him.

To illustrate his preaching regarding denominations we quote this example:

Now, before I go on, I want to ask you a question - not what you think of this church or that church; not what you think of this minister or that minister; not what you think of this creed or that creed; not what you think of this denomination or that denomination. The question is not what do you think of this belief or that belief; but, "What think ye of Christ?"¹⁷

On another occasion he said: "The Catholic church, or any other, never saved a soul. The Son of God is the Savior of the world."¹⁸ These then were his very correct views on the membership in the Church Universal. More need not be said.

Though faith is the only thing necessary for membership in the Church Universal, Moody nevertheless suggested membership also in local churches. "If a man is born of God, he should take shelter in the church, that it may be to him a nursing mother." He takes for granted that in local churches the frailties of the human family will

17. Hemlap, op. cit., p. 214.
 18. Ibid., p. 429.

be in evidence. He pointed out that he had no sympathy with people who stay out of the church and simply criticize. He suggests that they go in and try to make it better.¹⁹ He censures the habit of some churches in electing unconverted men as trustees or choir directors in churches.²⁰ Seemingly, he was not too concerned at the thought of having non-Christians as members.

In his evangelistic campaigns Moody tried to erase denominational lines completely. In the large cities dozens of churches got together to support the revival. As has been pointed out he avoided controversial subjects which might offend any group which participated. His work could never have been so successful had he worked otherwise. "The Spirit of God can bring unity where there is faith",²¹ he said. He was once asked what he would do if he were a pastor in a town where there are five churches and room for only one. He replied that he would leave immediately. He did not believe it to be God's will that a Methodist, Baptist, Congregational, Presbyterian, and Episcopal church should attempt to exist in a town with room for only one or two. He stated that the slight difference in their creeds caused him to believe that sort of thing a work of the devil.²²

19. Ibid., p. 550.

20. Ibid., pp. 751-752.

21. Ibid., p. 743.

22. Wm. R. Moody, op. cit., p. 456.

In spite of his liberal views on denominations Moody saw the evils in secret societies and lodges. He felt that if God will walk with us we must be separate from unbelievers. So he calls the members of lodges and secret societies unbelievers with whom Christians can have no fellowship.²³ It is unnecessary to state that he participated publicly in prayer fellowship with any denomination present at his meetings. To him there was evidently no such thing as a heterodox body. It was either Christian or non-Christian to Moody.

Moody's view of the public ministry is probably the common one among sectarians. We must keep in mind that Moody was not an ordained minister. He did his preaching as a layman. He could very unashamedly preach that he didn't believe that the great cities would be evangelized until the laymen take up the work of the ministry.²⁴ This sounds like a defense of his own work. Actually, it needs no defense. No one can deny that if all laymen would exert themselves even a fraction as much as Moody, Christianity would experience a phenomenal growth.

Moody often expressed the idea that ministers are not a special essential group in the church which make it possible for men to reach Christ. He stated, for ex-

23. Remlap, op. cit., pp. 334- 638.

24. Dwight L. Moody, "Thou Fool!" and Eleven Other Sermons Never Before Published, pp. 115-116.

ample, that the sinner needs no bishop, priest, or potentate to pray for him. All can approach Christ directly.²⁵ This indicates his belief in the universal priesthood of all believers. He feared man-worship. Quoting the words of the wilderness preacher who said, "I must decrease, but he must increase", Moody urged the submersion of personalities in the Lord's work. He also carried this into practice by discouraging, wherever possible, the sale of pictures of himself and his co-worker, Mr. Sankey.²⁶ In keeping with his principles, and as is common, Moody believed that to keep the people interested in prayer meetings they, too, should be permitted to speak and pray. His only reason for curtailing this privilege was that among very large groups it became unfeasible. He had to discuss the problem of the individual who insisted on praying all the time. One of his interesting solutions was the ringing of a bell as a signal for him to stop.²⁷ Though he usually preferred not to discuss the subject, Moody seemed to be opposed to women preaching in the pulpit. At least he mentioned that he didn't want his wife "going around and preaching."²⁸ Regarding the salary of the minister, we may glean a few thoughts from his own case. He was occasionally accused

25. Remlap, op. cit., p. 138.

26. Ibid., pp. 132-133.

27. Ibid., pp. 756-767.

28. Ibid., p. 753.

of making excessive amounts in his work. As a matter of fact, he could have become very wealthy on the royalty from a hymn book which he and Mr. Sankey had published. All this money went instead, without touching his hands, into some charity. Though he could have demanded large fees, and though he was offered generous amounts for his sermons and lectures, he accepted only what he needed to live modestly. He advised young men not to go into the work of the Lord for money, and yet he stated the truth that the Lord cares for those who love Him and do His work.²⁹

Moody's beliefs regarding the divine call of a minister were revealed at a conference at the close of a revival meeting. He explained that he would never advise a young man to go into the ministry. He believed that God should call a man. If a man is sent by man, Moody felt sure that he would fail. Of course, he wanted every man to engage in Christian work, but he warned against giving up all other occupations and living by the pulpit. He felt that there must be a special call to be an "apostle".³⁰ He explained this further on another occasion when he said that this divine call evidences itself in its constraining influence. The individual simply cannot help himself. He must go into the ministry. He

29. Ibid., p. 671-672.

30. Wm. R. Moody, op. cit., p. 455.

quotes his own experience, explaining that he was "driven into it". As evidence for a man's call into the ministry, Moody suggests that the person investigate the consequences of his efforts. "A man should see souls saved as the fruit of his work before he concludes that his entire time ought to be given to that kind of work."³¹

An example of a simple and effective explanation for a doctrine which sometimes proves a stumbling-block for theologians and Christians in general, is Moody's teaching regarding election. He said that many people make the doctrine of election an excuse for not accepting salvation. He believed, on the other hand, that the world, or the unbeliever, had nothing to do with the word election; it was intended for the believer, not for the unconverted. The only word which applied to the unconverted in his estimation, was the word "whosoever". He points out how Christ settles the question by telling John to write, "Whosoever will, let him come and drink of the water of life freely". He considers it inconceivable that God would offer the cup of salvation to all men, and then, just as a man gets ready to drink, snatch the cup away saying that he is not one of the elect.³² Moody pointed out that the word "come" occurs nineteen hundred times

31. Herbert Lockyer, "Moody and Preaching", Moody Monthly, XXXIX (January, 1939), p. 250.

32. E. J. Goodspeed, A Full History of the Wonderful Career of Moody and Sankey, in Great Britain and America, p. 331.

in the Bible, and, therefore, he, too, invited all to come. If a man or woman refused the gracious offer, Moody laid the blame altogether on the individual.³³ God has provided salvation for all unworthy sinners. Unbelief is the fault of the unbeliever. Therefore, though Moody believed that believers are elected to eternal salvation, he correctly and strenuously opposed anyone who might claim that the unbelieving are elected to eternal damnation.

Turning to the last important topic of this discussion, eschatology, we find Moody wandering from correct Biblical teaching. Moody was a premillennialist. Let us trace his line of thought. He believed, and rightly so, that Christ would return in His body at a time unknown to anyone. He criticized those who would determine the day and hour of Christ's return. He was also careful to distinguish the coming of the Lord from death. Death is in no sense of the term the coming of the Lord. He errs seriously in stating that when Christ returns unexpectedly, He will first take His Church out of the world. The believers who have died will come with Christ on this return to join the believers on earth in their journey to the place which Christ has prepared for the

33. Dwight L. Moody, "Thou Fool!" and Eleven Other Sermons Never Before Published, pp. 177-179.

Church. This then will be the millennium. After the millennium Christ will return to judge the world at the last day. Moody also tends to believe in the restoration of the Jews at Christ's first return. They will then take up the glorious news of the Messiah and spread it to the world before His return to judgment. In closing his discussion Moody repeats that we are to expect Satan to be bound when Christ returns. Then Christ will take the throne of David. The prayer of every believer is to be that Christ will come quickly.³⁴

There is no question as to Moody's teaching the resurrection of the dead. This must be evident from the immediately preceding discussion. It was for him the greatest comfort that though we place a lifeless body in the grave, it shall rise again even as Christ rose from the grave.³⁵ And for those who rise again there will be retribution. If the Bible does not teach that, said Moody, it does not teach anything. For those who have not believed there are the torments of hell as described in the account of the rich man and Lazarus. He speaks of the worm which dieth not as a man's memory, which will simply not forget the wrongs which have been done. This will be a self-condemnation and plague to all eternity. Here there will no longer be a chance for salvation. Here

34. Pell, op. cit., pp. 508-519.

35. Remlap, op. cit., p. 393.

all hope is gone.³⁶

On the other hand, Moody spoke in glowing terms of the heaven which is to be the home of all the faithful in Christ. Neither did he regard it wrong to speculate somewhat about this home of the saved. He felt sure that heaven was somewhere above us since Scriptures speak of it in this way. Also, he knew that heaven was not so far away but that God could hear the prayers of believers from its realms. In fact, it is so close that God could allow Stephen a glance at its glories before he died. Moody believed that the most wonderful thing about heaven will be the opportunity to view the Redeemer face to face. As to the occupants of heaven now, Moody speaks of the angels, and the departed believers. He closes his remarks on the place of bliss with the hope that all his hearers see to it that their names and the names of their children are registered in the Lamb's book of life.³⁷

36. Ibid., pp. 292-298.

37. Ibid., pp. 264-273.

Conclusion

Very little needs to be said in conclusion. The major deviations from Scripture teaching have been pointed out in the course of the discussion. The facts leave no doubt as to Moody's proper classification in the Fundamentalist fold. He teaches the inspiration of the Bible, the deity of Christ, the vicarious atonement, the converting power of the Holy Spirit, and the premillennial coming of Christ. These are the earmarks of a Fundamentalist. In addition, his low regard for the visible means of grace, and his teaching of the immediate working of the Holy Spirit, are common errors of this persuasion. We have noted, too, the difficulty caused in his teaching of faith and prayer, because of his distinction between wanting and having faith

Far more important than these errors is the fact that he preached the glorious Gospel of Christ, the Savior, in all its beauty. In his sincere and unaffected way, he touched the hearts of the unregenerate, showed them their Savior, and with the help of the Holy Spirit caused them to leave the service of Satan and turn to the Good Shepherd. In this he was eminently successful, and for this we owe him respect and gratitude. The Lord needs many laymen like Dwight L. Moody.

That Moody was held in high esteem also by members of the Lutheran Church is evidenced by an account of Dr. Walther's reaction to the evangelist's preaching. We are told that while Moody was preaching the Gospel of grace in St. Louis at the end of the seventies, Walther, in his classroom lectures, acknowledged Moody's presence in the city in a friendly manner. Neither did he weaken his praise by making some modifying remark about Moody's error's. One could notice that Walther personally loved Moody.³⁸ Christians of any denomination must recognize Moody as a man of God.

38. J. P. Koehler, "Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns," Theologische Quartalschrift, XII (January, 1915), 24ff.

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