

# *Sing Me a Sankey*

The Story of Ira D. Sankey and  
the Rise of Gospel Hymnody

VOLUME I:  
1750–1883

Mel R. Wilhoit

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Sing Me a Sankey:  
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the Rise of Gospel Hymnody  
Volume I: 1750–1883

by Mel R. Wilhoit

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**1750–1883**

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**1883–1908**

**VOLUME III**  
**1908–Present**

## *Introduction*

### **DO WE REALLY NEED ANOTHER BIOGRAPHY?**

TOWERING HIGH ABOVE the oblivious tourists in Trafalgar Square, a fifteen-foot statue of Admiral Horatio Nelson bestrides a giant column, standing faithful watch and gazing down Pall Mall street in central London. Behind him is the city's famous National Gallery of Art, boasting England's proudest collection of masterpieces. And, next to it—in the northeast corner of the square—rises the imposing spire of James Gibbs' neo-classic masterpiece, St. Martin-in-the-Fields Church.

Its lofty portico with eight towering Corinthian pillars provides an imposing entrance to the building, yet it's an inviting niche to duck into, out of those pesky showers that greet any visitor to London. I love St Martin's, providing not only a refuge from the elements but also a warm and cozy atmosphere to sit and meditate or to catch up on my travel diary. The chandelier-lit interior casts a warm glow across the walnut pews and massive organ pipes over the rear balcony. Cascading in through a modern, swirling, glass window high in the chancel, sunlight glints off the white walls and huge columns marching down the outside aisles. This is a place of spiritual refreshment. But I also have to admit—with a little embarrassment—I often stop in during the afternoons to hear a dress rehearsal for an evening concert if I want to experience the fabulous music without paying for admission.

St. Martin's has a long history of ministering to the needy in urban London, and one way they do that is by allowing mission churches to use their facilities. On one particular Sunday afternoon, I was struck by two groups who were meeting in the sanctuary for their church services. In this case it was the Mandarin Chinese service at 3:00PM and a different Cantonese one at 4:30PM. I noted with some fascination how things had come full circle on at least one level, for it was Hudson Taylor, the first English missionary to China, who had gone there in 1854 and founded the China

Inland Mission. Fewer than two-hundred years later, the Chinese church is thriving and finding outposts back in distant London.<sup>1</sup>

But of special interest and no little amazement is what both groups were singing in their services: translations—in Mandarin and Cantonese—of nineteenth-century gospel songs (gospel hymns), which had lost much of their popularity in the United States. I knew Western missionaries had carried their music as well as the gospel to distant lands, where it took deep root and was still a staple of congregational song. You could tell from their singing that these were deeply-treasured spiritual expressions of communities half a world away from home. But these expressions, ironically, had their roots near this very place!



In addition to many of the standard western hymns, gospel songs by poets and composers such as William Bradbury, P.P. Bliss, William Doane, and Fanny Crosby were published, known, loved, and *sung* throughout much of the world. But the story of how that all coalesced around one person—Ira David Sankey (1840–1908)—is not widely known, for an account of this seminal figure has rarely been available on its own. It has sporadically been hinted at in conjunction with his famous colleague Dwight L. Moody, but it has never been fully fleshed out. Sankey has always been treated as a peripheral character. But he wasn't.

Ira Sankey was certainly not the most talented nor highly trained nor prolific of that first generation of gospel song writers, but he was in the right place at the right time, and he possessed the necessary gifts to raise gospel song from a popular but transitory blip in the mists of church history to a genre of religious music that became the core repertory for most non-liturgical English-speaking religious traditions, including African American churches, Wesleyan/Methodists, Pentecostal/Charismatics, some Presbyterians, Independent churches, and countless varieties of Baptists. Over time, the songs even made inroads into such diverse groups as the Anglicans, Disciples of Christ, Mormons, United Church of Christ, Episcopalians, and Mennonites—to name a few.

Added to those were churches on almost every continent of the globe, singing these songs in their own tongue. The music Sankey exemplified also became the template for the music of American (and British) revivalism, which lasted from the days of the Moody-Sankey meetings in the 1870s through the Billy Graham campaigns one hundred years later.

## INTRODUCTION

When the larger landscape is surveyed, Ira David Sankey stands as the model for congregational song leading, gospel music writing/publishing, gospel solo singing, much church choir music, and an approach to performing religious music on the keyboard—specifically the piano—called “gospel hymn playing.”

Ira Sankey was clearly its North Star.



### A WORD TO THE READER

*I'm interested but don't have the stamina for this door-stopper.*

That's a valid point. So I'd suggest you sample various chapters. Unfortunately, Sankey's life doesn't read like a Dan Brown novel (anyone remember *The DaVinci Code?*), where you'd better follow the clues from one chapter to the next. In this work, I suggest you read Chapter 1 to get an overview, then jump to Chapter 9 where Ira joins the army (briefly) and gets married. Then there's the famous meeting with Moody in Chapter 10. If perhaps you find any of this interesting, go back and fill in the blanks.

*Here's what interests me.*

I have basically written the kind of book I want to *read*: a book that fleshes out not only the epic events behind the big headlines, but also the hum-drum details vital to understanding a living/breathing individual with dreams, challenges, successes, doubts, fame, illness, love, and loss—people like us, but ones who also happened to impact the world.

As a practicing musician who has spent many hours in church as a performer and conductor, I know a person doesn't suddenly appear on stage and produce powerful, Spirit-led music without attention to a long list of details, which might involve availability of music, its preparation, rehearsal conditions, nature of performing group (size/strengths/weaknesses/balance), time considerations, accompanists, performance space, acoustics, lighting, ventilation, seating configurations, entrance and egress limitations, music's place in a service, and the congregation's religious background, including familiarity with the music. All these factors—and more—must be accounted for by someone in every service—and it's usually the music director!

But these details usually pose little attraction for the average reader who is more interested in spiritual headlines. However, I've never been

the average reader, for I'm fascinated with the details that make the bigger things work!

By far, the vast amount of reporting about Moody and Sankey tends to flow from a devotional perspective in which the writer attempts to explain the role of the Holy Spirit and the supernatural aspects of God's work. But all those supernatural results required budgets and buildings and benefactors and hymnbooks and timetables and advertising, and a host of important but usually unrecognized people whose recounting would undoubtedly bore the devotional reader. But for the reader—like me—whose interest is in both the hum-drum details as well as the moving of the Holy Spirit, a more well-rounded approach might hold revealing insight into the practical matters that are part of those supernatural outcomes.

So—to repeat myself—I'm writing a biography I would like to read. When I read a biography of someone like Johann Sebastian Bach—who had to deal with the music in four large churches in Leipzig, Germany—I'm always wondering: how many members could Bach rely on in his choir, or how many times did they actually get to practice all that difficult music, or where was that irresponsible kid who was supposed to pump the bellows on the organ for the choir rehearsal (no organ if no one to pump)? While Bach's choral and instrumental religious music is profound and timeless, it's intriguing—and somewhat encouraging—to realize he accomplished this in spite of the normal, everyday challenges of limited resources, difficult colleagues, lack of support, personal financial pressures, the death of one wife and ten children during his career, political and theological uncertainties, etc.

To me, when I begin to unpack these realities as part of any subject's life, I gain a much deeper and more realistic understanding of that person and his or her work.

Most people lead lives involving lots of repetition, doing the same thing over and over throughout much of their existence. The same could be said for Ira Sankey, ostensibly singing for the same religious service over and over again in thousands of practically interchangeable meetings. The challenge for any biographer, in part, is to reveal how those similar and prosaic parts contributed to the larger arc of this man's life and reveal how those repetitive elements captured moments of transformation and significance or just simply present a snapshot of everyday life—hopefully without boring the reader with “another set of meetings.”



## INTRODUCTION

My goal is to provide new and fresh insight into the life, work, and impact of Ira David Sankey and to view him as a flesh-and-blood son of the Victorian Era/Gilded Age, when America was transforming into a world power as well as becoming the engine of religious revivalism and world missions.

*So, what's my angle?*

Biographers ultimately employ some type of perspective or viewpoint for their subjects, referred to as historiography. It's a lens of sorts that influences what information biographers will choose and how they interpret it. Sankey—when written about—generally fell into a number of categories: devotional, polemical (with a moral to inculcate), “great man” approach, or hagiographic (focusing on the life of a saint or ecclesiastical leader).

My approach utilizes a strong dose of social history (emphasizing social structures and the interaction of different groups in society rather than affairs of state). I attempt to view Sankey as a white, middle-class, Protestant child of the frontier, a citizen, a soldier, a husband and father, a religious worker, a mid-western Republican, a very famous personality, a professional musician, a successful businessman, a user of the latest technologies, a friend of both the common person and the rich and famous—and as someone whose heart was filled with God's grace and whose very soul was filled with music.

On that last point, I'm also interested in Sankey—the musician. Because we primarily remember him for his musical contributions. So—how did he perceive, and think, and feel, and react to the world around him as musicians do? For someone who made a spectacular musical impression, that perspective has rarely been explored.



### FOR NERDS ONLY

*Where do you find this stuff?*

Probably the most logical place to start is Sankey's autobiography. It was published in at least two, somewhat different versions: *My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns* (NY: Harper & Brothers, 1906) and *My Life and Sacred Songs* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1906). For this investigation, references to Sankey's autobiography are taken from the Harper & Brothers 1906 edition (at 364 pages).

Sankey's book is apparently based on recollections the author retained of his early life, with less and less coverage as his career matured. There is little about his personal life or family. And there are many mistakes, especially about dates. For instance, he stated on page 16 that he enlisted in the Civil War in 1860, but he's off by a year, as it didn't commence until 1861. Unfortunately, most of the documents he could have depended on for a more accurate accounting were destroyed in a fire in 1902, and his sixty-plus-year-old memory is not fully trustworthy. But it's a start.

Perhaps the earliest volume to ostensibly focus on Sankey alone as its subject was David Williamson's *Ira D. Sankey: The Story of His Life* (London: S.W. Partridge & Co., 1890); there is also Charles Ludwig's slender *Sankey Still Sings* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1947). Perhaps the closest first-hand account of Sankey comes from a co-worker during his early years: Frank S. Reader, *Moody and Sankey: An Authentic Account of Their Lives* (New York: E.J. Hale, 1876). And J.H. Hall, *Biography of Gospel Song and Hymn Writers* (New York: Fleming Revell, 1914), devotes chapter XXXI to Sankey.

During their first big success in Great Britain from 1873 to 1875, and their initial return to America from 1875 to 1877, many volumes covered Moody and Sankey in considerable detail, with Sankey often receiving valuable separate recognition (see titles in Bibliography). But that level of reporting generally subsided by 1880, when the pair ceased most of their large, city-wide revivals—with little new added during the rest of Sankey's lifetime.

While most of the sources devoted to Sankey provide valuable information and insight, they tend to cast him in Moody's shadow, rather than the important figure he was. Typical of this was Will R. Moody's biography of his father: *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1900), which recognized the role of both men in their vast ministry—known as “Moody and Sankey”—with Moody naturally receiving most of the attention and credit.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the most readable work—while focusing on Moody, yet providing some valuable contextual insight on Sankey—is by John Pollack, *Moody: A Biographical Portrait of the Pacesetter in Modern Mass Evangelism* (NY: Macmillan, 1963). I am using the second edition (1983).<sup>3</sup>

While the majority of coverage came from religious writers generally supportive of revivalism, others such as Ian Bradley, Bruce Evensen, James

F. Findley, John Kent, Sandra Sizer, and Robert Stevenson produced more secular, yet valuable perspectives.<sup>4</sup>

Various standard reference works (those big volumes sitting on library shelves that you can't check out) also included notices: John Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology* (1892), *Dictionary of American Biography* (Vol. 16) [1943 edition is quite good], *American National Biography*, *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, *New Grove Dictionary of American Music*, and *Gospel Music Encyclopedia*.

Oddly perhaps, relatively few scholarly articles pertaining specifically to Sankey appeared in books or journals until the 1990s. That resulted in my initial efforts.<sup>5</sup>

When I first began researching the subject, I had to physically travel to libraries, museums, or archives (e.g.: accessing a cardboard box of Sankey's probate records in the dark recesses of Brooklyn City Hall was quite an adventure!) to investigate material. I had to handle these precious resources in person. But much of that has changed. Now we have the internet.

Most of that material is available on sites such as HathiTrust Digital Library, Google Books, and Internet Archive. For a great range of resources, type into your browser "Ira Sankey Hymnology Archive." Up will pop a site with information enough to keep you busy for a lifetime, including a summary of his life, and links to more information than most could ever investigate.

The site Hymnary.org is an extensive resource, providing an amazing level of information, especially about particular songs and hymns. And of course, the *Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology* attempts to provide (for an annual subscription fee) the most widespread and current information on the subject of hymnody. *Grove Music Online* (claiming to be "the authoritative resource for music research") boasts a wide variety of sources (for a fee, although available for free in some libraries), containing valuable reference works like *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*, which, in articles like "Gospel Music," also treat Sankey in the larger context of the genre.

As a person of some public interest, newspapers and especially religious periodicals on both sides of the ocean covered Sankey, helping to keep his name from being completely forgotten. For a fee, newspaper services like Newspapers.com and *The New York Times TimesMachine.com* provide

amazing, first-hand accounts of events as they happened, often providing a level of detail that never made it into the more general sources on the subject.

Scholarly published articles referencing larger worlds related to Sankey are available online at JSTOR, which has digitized thousands of journal articles. With a little effort, you can access much of it for free.

There is more information at places like the Lawrence County, Pennsylvania Historical Society, Archives at the Moody Bible Institute, Wheaton College Archives, Moody Archives in Northfield, Massachusetts, and records at Brooklyn City Hall. I have not found the British Library in London to be particularly helpful.

If you are still seeking more information, you should consider getting out more, developing a hobby, or seeking professional counseling. You need help!

*Term: “Sing a Sankey”*

“Singing the Gospel” was a term growing out of the Moody and Sankey campaign to Britain in 1873. Musical publications that soon followed were called *gospel hymns* or *gospel songs* and provided a title/moniker for this new genre of music, which basically adopted the Sunday School songs of mid-nineteenth-century America—the songs of George F. Root, William B. Bradbury, William Doane, Fanny Crosby, and especially Philip P. Bliss. This genre of music soon came to dominate churches and denominations impacted by nineteenth and twentieth-century revivalism. Even groups who resisted revivalism as their primary approach to worship (mostly liturgical groups, such as Lutherans, Episcopalians, Anglicans, and some Reformed bodies) were still impacted by gospel hymnody to various extents, as reflected by the inclusion of gospel songs in their official and unofficial hymnals.

While in America the terms *gospel hymns* or *gospel songs* became common, British hymnologist Erik Routley explained they were “what we loosely call the ‘Sankey’ style” in Great Britain.<sup>6</sup>

During the late nineteenth and throughout much of the twentieth century, the term *gospel music* referred to music with its roots in mass revivalism—often popularized by the singer/songleader teams of an evangelistic pair: whether D.L. Moody and musician Ira Sankey, evangelist J. Wilbur Chapman and musician Charlie Alexander, evangelist Billy Sunday and Homer Rodeheaver, or Billy Graham with Cliff Barrows, plus a vast host of imitators.<sup>7</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

It was codified in the music of countless non-denominational and independent publishers such as Biglow and Main, John Church, Rodeheaver Hall-Mack, Coleman, Hope, plus a myriad of Southern Gospel publishers like Vaughn, Stamps-Baxter, or R.E. Winsett, which operated on somewhat parallel tracks. Denominational hymnals and songbooks from Baptist, Methodist, African American, and Holiness/Pentecostal bodies were also central to its popularity. Together, these independent and denominational publishers supplied the gospel music sung by a majority of religious folks in America and in much of the world beyond.

Gospel hymnody was given formal instruction in the seasonal Rodeheaver School of Music, southern gospel singing schools or conventions, as well as within the curricula (courses such as Congregational Song Leading, Platform Department, and Gospel Hymn Playing) of religious schools such as Moody Bible Institute, Bob Jones University, and countless Bible colleges.

It was sung all over the world, from thatched huts to store-front assemblies, to modest neighborhood churches, to imposing white-columned sanctuaries, to vast public arenas. It was the familiar musical language for thousands of family-sized gatherings and cavernous non-denominational tabernacles. It was central to most African American churches, where it morphed into Black gospel music between the two world wars. It enjoyed popularity on recordings, radio, TV, and video celebrations (e.g.: Bill and Gloria Gaither's Homecoming series). And missionaries carried the songs (in translations and song collections) to every corner of the globe.

In the tiny nation of Panama, house gatherings of a small sect called the Benjinite Church were led by the likes of Madame Campbell, Mother Lindo, and Mother Wright. They sang from books simply called "The Sankey." The volume became so hallowed that referring to it became, to a great extent, like swearing on the Bible.

"During the vibrant days of Panama's West Indian presence, there was a popular saying whenever someone questioned the veracity of what someone else was saying. Their tart response to the liar's statement was, 'No Sankey Doan Sing So.' This exemplified the veneration attached to Ira D. Sankey's hymnals, which were freely circulated through[out] the U.S., Canada, and the English-speaking Caribbean, as well as Panama amongst the population of West Indian descent. If it didn't appear in Brother Sankey's hymnal, it wasn't Gospel truth."<sup>8</sup>

By the late twentieth century, the term *gospel music* had generally come to mean music of the Black church, with its roots in the plantation spiritual, injected with the blues. The first major application of the term *gospel* in the Black church came with the publication of *Gospel Pearls* in 1921 by the Sunday School Board of the National Baptist Convention of America in Nashville. Gospel music slowly became associated with the work of Thomas A. Dorsey and James Cleveland and the performance-oriented music with freedom for improvisation—rather than the printed page—which developed from the spiritual.

Although current usage of the term *gospel music* usually reflects Black gospel music, my writing deals with the term as it originally developed and became popular: gospel music stemming from the nineteenth-century Sunday School song, which was adopted by late-century revivalism, soon becoming the core musical genre of many denominations, as well as a universal body of popular church music around the world.



God has gifted His various servants with a story that is fascinating and valuable to study as we explore it in more detail. This is a humble attempt to bring to light much of the heritage I have inherited and to share it with you. It might even add a new perspective to your identity. I have written a book I would like to read; I hope you feel the same. ☺

## ENDNOTES

1. In 2021, there were an estimated 83,072 Chinese Christians in Britain, worshipping at 138 churches. By October of 2023, there were some 114,976 Christians at 201 churches—resulting from the United Kingdom’s British Nationals Overseas program, focusing upon those in Hong Kong since the Communists took over. Donna Birrell, “The Chinese Church is now the fastest-growing Church in the UK,” *Christianity Today* online (22 October 2023).
2. Almost inexplicably, a later edition of *D.L. Moody* (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1930), excised almost all mentions of Sankey!
3. 1963 first edition called *Moody*; 1983 second edition called *Moody: The Biography*; 1997 third edition called *Moody: A Biography*, and bizarrely, a 1963 British edition called *Moody Without Sankey*, with the same content!
4. Ian Bradley, *Abide With Me: The World of Victorian Hymnody* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 1997), chapter 7, “‘Hold the fort for I am coming’: American imports and gospel songs,” contains an excellent broader overview of gospel hymnody, including Sankey’s role. John Kent, *Holding the Fort: Studies in Victorian Revivalism* (London: Epworth Press, 1978), chapters 4 (“Moody and Sankey”) and 6 (“Sacred Songs and Sankey”). Sandra Sizer, *Gospel Hymns and Social Religion* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978), provides an extensive analysis of gospel hymnody within a larger cultural context. Robert Stevenson, *Patterns of Protestant Church Music* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1943), chapter XII, “Ira D. Sankey and the Growth of ‘Gospel Hymns,’” makes the observation, “Dan Emmett [of ‘Dixie’ fame] and Stephen Foster only did in secular music what Ira D. Sankey and P.P. Bliss did as validly and effectively in sacred music.”
5. These included my work, especially: “‘Sing me a Sankey’: Ira D. Sankey and congregational song,” *The Hymn*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (January 1991); “Ira Sankey, the Father of Gospel Music,” *Rejoice!: The Gospel Music Magazine*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (June/July 1991); “Sing a Sankey: The rise of gospel hymnody in Great Britain,” ed. Martin V. Clarke, *Music and Theology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Farnham, 2012).
6. Erik Routley, *A Short History of English Church Music* (Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing, 1997), 75.
7. Although Billy Graham preached his final crusade at Flushing Meadows, NY, in June of 2005, that model of extended mass meetings had functionally disappeared, even in the South, decades earlier. The exception to this trend appeared among Charismatic and “prosperity preachers” and overseas mass meetings.

8. “No Sankey don’t sing so,” *The Silver People Heritage Foundation* (2 Jan. 2013), <https://thesilverpeopleheritage.wordpress.com/2013/01/02/no-sankey-dont-sing-so/>





## I. THE PROPER VICTORIAN

# No. 37. *While the Days are going By.*

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."—ECCLES. 9: 10.

GEORGE COOPER, by per.

IRA D. SANKEY.

1. { There are lone - ly hearts to cher - ish, While the days are going by; }  
 { There are wea - ry souls who per - ish, While the days are going by; }  
 2. { There's no time for i - dle scorning, While the days are going by; }  
 { Let your face be like the morning, While the days are going by; }  
 3. { All the lov - ing links that bind us, While the days are going by; }  
 { One by one we leave be - hind us, While the days are going by; }

If a smile we can re - new, As our journey we pur - sue, Oh, the  
 Oh, the world is full of sighs, Full of sad and weeping eyes; Help your  
 But the seeds of good we sow, Both in shade and shine will grow, And will

Copyright, 1881, by Ira D. Sankey.

## REFRAIN.

good we all may do, While the days are going by. Going by, going by,  
 fall - en brother rise, While the days are going by.  
 keep our hearts aglow, While the days are going by.

going by, going by,

Going by, going by, Oh, the good we all may do, While the days are going by.

going by, going by,

# Chapter 1

## The Good Ole Days

1901–1902

*There are lonely hearts to cherish, While the days are going by;  
There are weary souls who perish, While the days are going by;  
If a smile we can renew, As our journey we pursue,  
Oh, the good we all may do, While the days are going by.*

*All the loving links that bind us, While the days are going by;  
One by one we leave behind us, While the days are going by;  
But the seeds of good we sow, Both in shade and shine will grow,  
And will keep our hearts aglow, While the days are going by.<sup>1</sup>*

THE NEW CENTURY had barely dawned when news of her condition began to spread. In London, no one talked of anything else: from milkmaids to members of Parliament, all attention focused on Queen Victoria, lying semi-conscious in Osborne House, her palatial retreat on the Isle of Wight. At almost every public gathering throughout the realm, the English concluded their assemblies with the solemn singing of “God Save the Queen.”

Even in Britain’s once-rebellious colony, Americans seemed to sense the profundity of events simmering half a world away. In Brooklyn’s wealthy Plymouth Church, the organist finished his Sunday prelude by launching off into “My country, ’tis of thee.” Because the tune was also that of “God Save the Queen,” several worshipers rose and began singing the English national anthem. In response, the entire congregation stood, and while many continued the English version, others sang the familiar American lyric.<sup>2</sup>

A few blocks away, in a handsome brownstone at 148 South Oxford Street, an elderly but dignified gentleman pored over the Sunday issue of *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, brandishing a huge headline: “QUEEN PARALYZED; AT DEATH’S DOOR.” A recent photograph of Her Majesty, taken at Balmoral Castle and looking quite rigid with hands folded across her ample girth, helped personalize the story. While the large headlines and some-

THE BROOKLYN DAILY EAGLE.

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THREE CENTS.

QUEEN PARALYZED; AT DEATH'S DOOR.

Prince of Wales Said to Have Been Invested With Authority to Assume Practical Regency.

ROYAL FAMILY IS AT BEDSIDE.

Her Majesty Is Helpless and Almost Speechless and the End Is Expected at Any Moment.

ILLNESS WAS PRECIPITATED BY WORRY.

She Ignored All Appeals to Avail Herself of Medical Aid and for Three Days Kept Strictly to Herself.

SEVERE ILLNESS LAST AUTUMN WAS NOT MADE PUBLIC.

London, January 20.—Queen Victoria has died. Her Majesty has not been ill since the death of Prince Consort.

The complication which would probably be brought about by the retirement of the imperial house from which she is suffering.

A PRACTICAL REGENCY SAID TO HAVE BEEN CREATED.

GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL AT OXBOWE.

WALETS TO MEET KAISER IN LONDON THIS MORNING.

MEMBERS OF ROYAL FAMILY AT BEDSIDE.

Queen, Mrs. Gladstone and the Duke of Devonshire.

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Brooklynite insured.

Coroner investigating.

Succession and probate.

Victoria.

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THE WEAVERS' LABORERS' PROBLEM.

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Frocks and Coats.

Boys' Knee Suits.

Shoes-Reduced.

Furniture-Half Price.

More Men's Shoes.

Girls' Mackintoshes.

Guaranteed Umbrellas.

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earth's lands and peoples. She had, in fact, come to the throne three years before his birth, and Ira couldn't imagine it any other way. Sankey had never met Queen Victoria, but she certainly knew of him. It seemed as though all of Britain knew of him—him and his songs. In fact, during the short span of four months and 285 religious meetings, over two-and-one-half million Londoners heard him sing those contagiously melodic gospel hymns, which came to be called “Sankeys.” “Sing me a Sankey” was a common request—from both the disciple and the doubter and from those in high society to the lowly dock worker—for his music soon spread throughout the world, not just to the English-speaking part, but also to Africa and Asia as well.

But that was all a quarter-century ago. And now the Queen was dying.

Carriages were soon dispatched to bring members of the royal family to Victoria's bedside. Late in the afternoon, solemn onlookers gathered round a small couch supporting the Queen and her favorite Pomeranian, Teri, while the hushed intonations of the Bishop of Winchester offered up earnest intercession. Family members—including a future King Edward VII and Kaiser Wilhelm II—shuffled uneasily or sobbed quietly as the failing monarch lay speechless and apparently insensible. Although the Queen had rallied earlier—the result of liberal amounts of brandy and champagne—there was now little hope. At 6:30PM, Sir James Reid, the Queen's physician, held up his hand and the Bishop pronounced a benediction.

The eighty-one-year-old Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India was dead. It was Tuesday, January 22, 1901—the end of an era—the Victorian era!<sup>4</sup>

For Sankey, the Queen's death painfully reinforced the nagging suspicion that the halcyon age of the past had vanished. Ira vividly recalled the good ole days when

Distinguished ministers recognize him . . . men and women of rank and wealth salute him humbly, and attribute to his agency the greatest comfort and contentment of their lives. The papers feature him. Crowds throng about him wherever he goes, with eager adulation, or with noisy mockery almost as stimulating and delightful. He is a great man and knows he is, cannot help knowing. No triumphant actor, or operatic tenor, or public orator, ever had more enthusiastic audiences or more praise and flattery.<sup>5</sup>

He could still recall the excitement as he sat on the platform with the world's most famous preacher, Dwight Lyman Moody, waiting to sing before London's elite in posh Her Majesty's Theatre, or in cavernous Agricultural Hall, staring out at a sea of expectant faces, hushed to hear his rich baritone voice. As one listener recalled:

Mr. Sankey sings with the conviction that souls are receiving Jesus between one note and the next. The stillness is overawing; some of the lines are more spoken than sung. When you hear "The Ninety and Nine" sung, you know of a truth that down in this corner, up in that gallery, behind that pillar which hides the singer's face from the listener, the hand of Jesus has been finding this and that lost one, to place them in the fold.<sup>6</sup>

Yet another concluded:

Mr. Moody is very fortunate in having such a colleague as Mr. Sankey. He has enriched evangelistic work by something approaching the discovery of a new power. Music in his hands is more than it has yet been, the handmaid of the gospel and the voice of the heart. We have seen many stirred and melted by his singing before a word had been spoken.<sup>7</sup>

But all that seemed long gone, as were a growing list of his intimates, like Mr. Moody (as his friends addressed him). Dwight Lyman Moody, the extroverted, young preacher who had sensed something special in Ira and had challenged him to abandon all and join his work thirty years ago, was also dead. It was almost as though part of Sankey had been buried up there on Round Top at the old Moody homestead in Northfield, Massachusetts. Hadn't they always been known by the singular appellation, "Moody and Sankey"? Without the former, would anyone remember the latter?

Sankey mused about the time a preacher introduced the two to his congregation and began, "Now you all can see that Moody and Sankey are two different people."<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, their names had usually been spoken in the same breath, rather like their contemporaries, Gilbert and Sullivan.

In many respects, Moody and Sankey were two sides of the cultural coin of the era. Moody was clearly a child of the Gilded Age. He was a mover and shaker, making his mark as a builder of institutions—religious rather than financial—in Chicago, America's most dynamic city. And although he didn't accrue personal wealth, he was intimate with those who did. He in-

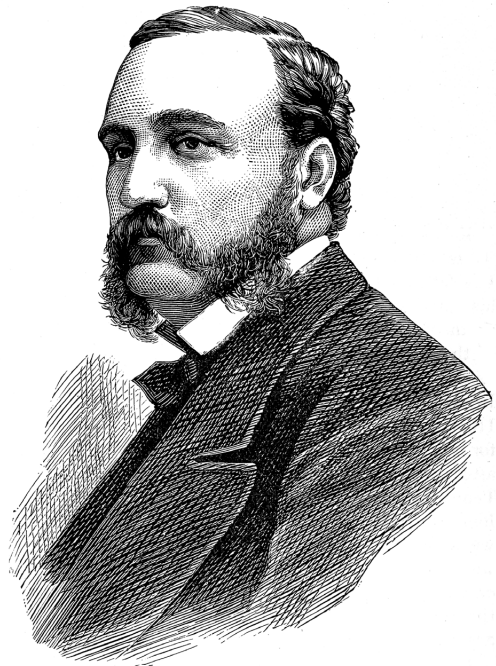


tuitively understood what motivated people to work or to give, and he was a transformative personality; he certainly had ready access to the levers of financial power as they related to his work. Moody's stocky appearance was almost a throwback to earlier times as the years wore on. His solid jaw was covered by the heavier facial hair and beard associated with a pre-war era, rather than the more neatly trimmed and sparser style of whiskers popular towards the end of the Gilded Age.

Sankey, on the other hand, might have been mistaken for one of Charles Dickens' colorful characters, a handsome Victorian from the other side of the pond.<sup>9</sup> In fact, one American reporter observed him to be "Thoroughly English in appearance, and much more like a London or Dublin [merchant] for a cloth or linen house than what we have been taught to think should characterize a modern evangelist."<sup>10</sup> He stood five feet, ten inches tall—slightly taller than Moody—and effortlessly carried his ample two-hundred-plus pounds. These solid features, plus his forty-four-inch chest, reminded one chronicler of a "basso profundo in an opera troupe."<sup>11</sup>

Early photos revealed an animated young man with a striking face, brilliant brown eyes, and a broad forehead. What had been a full head of wavy, brown hair—relatively short on top, combed back, and parted on the left side—had given way to a mature gentleman's gray hair and bald pate. Besides his smooth-shaven chin and neck, he sported "Dundreary whiskers" (called "Piccadilly weepers" in England), a style of facial hair with exaggerated sideburns drooping over the collar, popularized by the character Lord Dundreary in the play *Our American Cousin*—the huge hit President Lincoln was watching the night he was assassinated at Ford's Theater.

For public or formal occasions, Ira donned a white shirt



Ira Sankey, in *D.L. Moody and His Work* (1876).

with detachable high-standing collar, usually gathered in front with a large hand-tied cravat. His short waistcoat was covered by a three-quarter length frock coat—a blessing in Northern climes in the days before central heating. And when outdoors, a handsome Victorian top hat, or “topper”—popular from presidents Lincoln through Wilson—could be seen perched on his head. His gregarious personality, elegant demeanor, and bubbling sense of humor combined with an unaffected temperament to put strangers at ease and endear him to crowds.

As Moody had died a few years earlier, many naturally assumed Sankey was also dead. Always the lover of a good story, even at his own expense, Sankey often recited the account of his train trip from Chicago to New York. The stranger who sat beside him had said nothing for some time, but eventually a conversation developed. After the normal topics of weather and politics had been politely exhausted, talk turned to religion and the subject of Moody and Sankey. The stranger confessed to actually never having heard either of them, whereupon the ever-playful Sankey replied he had heard them often.

“What kind of folks are they?” questioned the unsuspecting traveler.

“Oh, they are just common folks like you and me,” replied Sankey, straining to retain his composure.

Although true he had never heard the famous pair, the stranger was especially sorry he had not heard Sankey sing “The Ninety and Nine” before he died.

And how did he know of the singer’s death, inquired an incredulous Sankey? The newspaper, of course. “It must be true if you have seen it in the papers,” replied Sankey, now relishing the richness of such an irony.

Just then, the train’s shrill whistle signaled the terminus of the journey. “I hardly think it is fair that we should part without telling you that I am one of the men we have been talking about.”

“Why, who are you?”

“I am what is left of Sankey.”

Reaching for his bag, the stranger gave a puzzled look. “You can’t play that on me, old fellow; Sankey is dead.” And he vanished to catch another train.<sup>12</sup>

For a man of Sankey’s irrepressible humor, the incident was highly amusing, but in retrospect, it revealed more than Sankey might care to admit. Perhaps it was time to capture the unlikely account of a poor lad from



Pennsylvania who had risen to international fame and changed the course of church music. Maybe it was time for Sankey to compile all those stories and clippings and memories into something more tangible—and prove he was still alive!

Spring came to Brooklyn that year with its usual freshness and expectations of renewed birth and strength, yet Ira's health was not good. Three decades of constant travel throughout North America, Europe, and the Holy Land had taken its toll. To complicate matters, his widowed mother, now blind and in her ninetieth year, was ill. Mary Sankey still resided in West New Castle, Pennsylvania, in the family homestead on West Washington Street. Although she was surrounded by friends and relatives, Ira and his brother Richard were the only two of her nine children yet living.<sup>13</sup>

On Thursday, May 2, Sankey received the news. His mother had quietly passed away at 1:30 that afternoon. There was no time to lose as the funeral was scheduled for Saturday and four-hundred miles lie between Brooklyn and New Castle. Ira caught the next available New York Central going west, and after riding all night, arrived at his old home at 10:15 in the morning.<sup>14</sup> Powerful memories flooded his thoughts as reality of the loss began to sink in.

Ira was too weak to actively participate in the funeral held in the family home the next day. By 3:00, a large concourse of friends and relatives had gathered to pay their respects to one of the town's oldest and most beloved citizens, now lying in the parlor, surrounded by a wreath of flowers. Everyone commented how Mary had retained her keen mind right up until the end. A bright and intelligent woman with a ready reply always made her a delight to talk to.

Pastor T.C. Beach, of the Methodist Episcopal Church where Mary had belonged for nearly half a century, conducted the funeral. He remembered her as an earnest and devout Christian who made a profession of faith as a girl of fourteen. She was a serious student of the Bible and could readily respond with an appropriate Scripture and reference when asked; she knew much of her Bible by heart. The example of her godly life would continue long after her passing.<sup>15</sup>

Ira knew these words were no kind platitude, for his mother had profoundly affected his life. Later that day he would write to a friend, "It was from her I received my life influence to serve the church of Jesus Christ and to sing the message of a Savior's love."<sup>16</sup>

A quartet containing two Sankey relatives sang “Rock of Ages,” “Under His Wings,” and “Sleep On, Beloved.” Ira recalled having been handed the words to the poem “Sleep On” while ministering in Bristol, England, many years before.<sup>17</sup> He soon composed a simple but dignified tune, and the song became popular as a funeral hymn.<sup>18</sup> In 1892, Sankey sang it at the funeral of his friend—and Britain’s most renowned preacher—Charles Spurgeon.<sup>19</sup>

*Sleep on, beloved, sleep, and take thy rest;  
Lay down thy head upon thy Saviour’s breast;  
We love thee well, but Jesus loves thee best—  
Good night! Good night! Good night!*

*Until the shadows from this earth are cast,  
Until He gathers in His sheaves at last,  
Until the twilight gloom be overpast—  
Good night! Good night! Good night!*

There was a lump in Ira’s throat; death was never easy, even though he believed the words that prefaced this hymn in one of his own song collections: “The early Christians were accustomed to bid their dying friends good-night, so sure were they of their awakening on the Resurrection Morning.”<sup>20</sup> Ira had no doubt about seeing his mother again in heaven, but fewer and fewer people he loved were left here on this earth.

Various local ministers read Scripture and led prayers, then the casket was carried a short distance to the family grave plot in Greenwood Cemetery, not one hundred feet from the house. There, Mary Sankey was laid to rest, next to her husband and deceased children. An obelisk-like stone marked the family burial place and overlooked more than a dozen simple tablets stretched out in rows on either side. Almost the whole Sankey clan was now buried on that knoll in the gently rolling countryside of western Pennsylvania where the Sankey name was so highly esteemed. But with the death of his mother, Ira had lost the last important connection to his boyhood home. And no wonder, for the last twenty years he had resided in Brooklyn, soon to preside over three generations of Sankeys.<sup>21</sup> Ira knew he would never lie in this Greenwood cemetery with his father, mother, and kin, because he had recently purchased a spacious family plot of his own in Brooklyn’s famous Greenwood Cemetery. The loss seemed all the more final.

The journey back to Brooklyn was filled with memories of friends and loved ones who had died within the last few years. Before his mother’s death,

Ira had hardly recovered from the passing, just two months earlier, of his dear friend Daniel Webster Whittle. The “Major” as he was affectionately known, had been bedridden for the past two years with malarial rheumatism, contracted while ministering to American troops fighting in the Spanish-American War. During those years of painful confinement, he had spent most of his time in prayer. Yet, it was not for himself, but for others.

Sankey was undoubtedly on the Major’s prayer list, as his former home had been close by Whittle’s when they both lived in Northfield, Massachusetts. The drawing force to that little burg was Dwight Lyman Moody, of course. As both the boyhood home and headquarters for the world-famed revivalist, Northfield had become the focal point for a small army of preachers, musicians, and Christian workers under Moody’s direction. Both Sankey and Whittle were central to that contingent.

Ira had spent many an hour with Whittle as they visited in each other’s residences. As the two comrades sat around the dining room table joking or discussing theology, politics, or their children, they would often become so convulsed with laughter they would have to leave the table and adjourn to separate rooms to regain their composure. Then Sankey would return to the little pump organ in the corner parlor and play new hymns for the Major, to get a sense of their usefulness or theological soundness. Ira greatly valued his friend’s opinion, as Whittle—exactly the same age—was not only a knowledgeable student of the Bible but was also a successful author of religious song texts.<sup>22</sup>

But that was all a fading memory; Spurgeon, Moody, Whittle, and now his mother. Would he be next? Time was running out; perhaps he should act before it was too late.

Back in Brooklyn, Sankey resumed a schedule that included singing in various church meetings, composing and editing gospel hymns, watching the stock market, and promoting the Sunday School at his church, just two blocks from his home. Although most Sunday Schools (often called Sabbath Schools) had begun as organizations separate from any local church—often meeting on Sunday afternoons in rented or borrowed halls—most churches were not slow to grasp their potential for reaching non-members with the gospel. Soon, almost every church hosted its own energetic Sunday School.

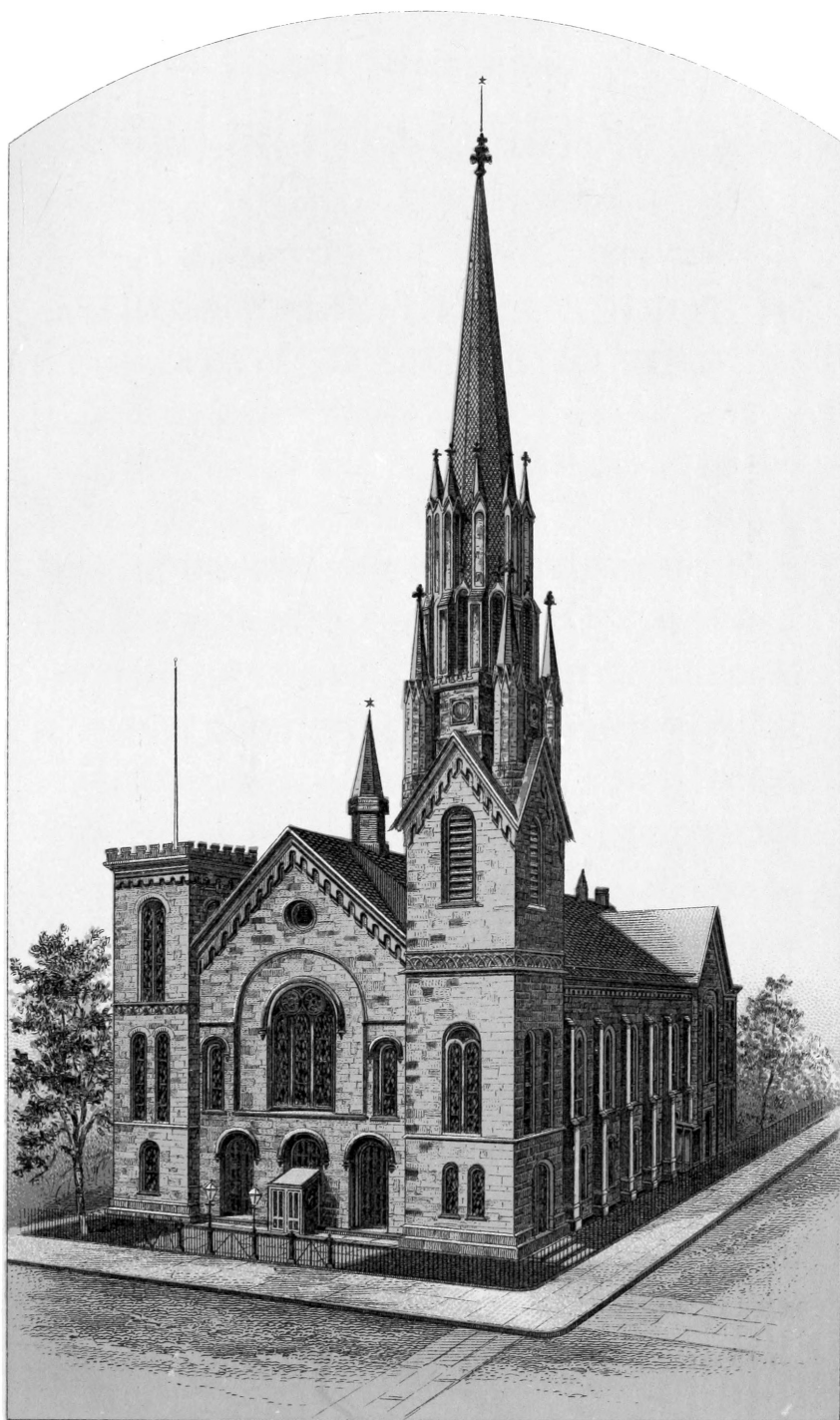
Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, like many other Brooklyn churches, boasted a strong Sunday School. Its most important event was the observance of Anniversary Day, when Sunday School children were

transported in open trolleys to spacious Prospect Park, where a gigantic tent was erected for socializing and eating. Here, the children and workers of the city's Sunday Schools met together for celebration, encouragement, and promotion. In the afternoon, everyone formed a great winding parade, which stretched countless blocks. As they marched up one street and down the next, a deafening chorus of popular Sunday School songs issued from numberless hot and sweaty children and their bedraggled leaders. A few of the oldest could even recall the spring of 1865 as forty thousand children promenaded through the streets of Brooklyn, singing the Reverend Robert Lowry's rousing march, "Shall We Gather at the River?"<sup>23</sup> This June's event definitely didn't rival that memorable occasion, but it still revealed the Sunday School as one of the most dynamic forces in Protestant church life, no matter the denomination.

Sankey certainly didn't possess the energy of those spirited youngsters, but he was thankful to attend this year's activities. As the day came to a close and the trolleys brought Lafayette Presbyterian's frazzled Sunday School scholars back to their final stop, Ira suggested they finish the day by serenading one of the men whose support had made their school such a success. That was the Reverend Theodore Cuyler, beloved retired pastor of Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian and a close friend of Ira Sankey.

Back in 1860, just a couple months after president Lincoln's inauguration, a group of Brooklyn Presbyterians convinced a young abolitionist preacher to shepherd a new work potentially capable of rivaling the famous Plymouth Congregational Church nearby, led by the abolitionist firebrand Henry Ward Beecher. In his typical theatrical style, Beecher had conducted an "auction" at his church to buy back a nine-year-old enslaved girl, Sally Maria Diggs—known as "Pink" or "Pinky" due to her fair complexion—from her Southern owners.<sup>24</sup> Beecher always knew how to draw a crowd.

Within a few years, Cuyler, also an ardent abolitionist and temperance supporter, had built the work to nearly a thousand members. When he retired in 1890, the church boasted over 2100 members, a dynamic Sunday School,<sup>25</sup> and was the largest Presbyterian church in the country. Ira's respect for Cuyler was so great that Sankey, a lifelong Methodist, had switched his membership to the Presbyterian persuasion, joining Cuyler's Presbyterian church.<sup>26</sup> While so many of Ira's companions had departed, his beloved friend Theodore Cuyler was still very much alive; Sankey deeply enjoyed the chance to demonstrate his appreciation by this public outpouring from the Sunday School Cuyler had helped to build.



*Lafayette Avenue Church: Its History and Commemorative Services, 1860-1885*



As summer approached and the weather turned oppressive, the Sankey family prepared to leave Brooklyn for their summer cottage, fifty miles away in Eastport on Long Island. For those who could afford to be absent from their employment for some time, it was not unusual to flee the stifling heat and potentially lethal diseases of a large metropolis during the dog days of summer. In fact, much of New York City closed up during the hottest weeks, with even some churches suspending services.

The Sankey cottage was a modest two-storey farmhouse, fronted by a large porch where Ira could sit and look out over the sound at Morishes Bay. Two nice stands of trees shaded the house with its ample carriage shed, while a mast proudly displaying an American flag flapped in the breeze off the water. Here Ira could relax a bit from the hectic pace of Brooklyn, edit gospel song collections, do a little fishing, continue a lively correspondence with his friends and admirers—and work on his memoir.

On August 28, 1901, Sankey celebrated his sixty-first birthday. Even though he was no longer in the public eye—his greatest days of recognition having been two decades earlier—there were certainly thousands who still revered him as the greatest musical evangelist of his or any other age. And Ira never seemed to tire of responding to those whose lives he had blessed.

W.E. Pankhurst  
Editor, Clinton Daily News

. . . in compliance with your request, I herewith send you this autographed letter.

The 90 and 9.

Then Ira drew a five-line staff on the stationary and notated the soprano and alto parts for the song with which he was most widely associated, “The Ninety and Nine,” and signed “Ira D. Sankey.”<sup>27</sup>

With the return of fall and cooler weather, the Sankey clan returned to their home on the west side of Brooklyn, not far from what would become the famous Brooklyn Navy Yard. The family lived on South Oxford Street in a highly respectable neighborhood of brownstone row houses, spacious individual family dwellings, influential churches, and small businesses. From nearby Fulton Street, Ira could catch the “El,” which efficiently conveyed him to the still-quite-novel wonder of the Brooklyn Bridge, leading him across the East River into Manhattan and to the offices of music publisher

Biglow and Main, where as president, he reigned as the grand old man of gospel hymnody.

That Sankey could enjoy a cottage on Long Island and a well-appor-tioned residence in the heart of the city resulted from both his natural business acumen and the general prosperity of the times. Indeed, William McKinley had just been re-elected president on the promise of “four more years of the full dinner pail,” and there was little reason to believe prosperity would not continue.

On the fifth of September in that year, McKinley gave a speech before the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, advocating a moderation of the traditional high tariffs favored by Republicans. The following day, on the sixth, he held a reception at the exposition’s Temple of Music. As he greeted well-wishers, Leon Czolgosz stepped forward and raised a handkerchief-covered hand; McKinley stretched out his arm, and two shots rang out. The president fell forward gasping, “Am I shot?” Horrified onlookers instinctively began beating the assailant, but the bleeding McKinley implored them, “Let no one hurt him.”

The wounded commander-in-chief was rushed off in an ambulance to a makeshift aid station on the exposition grounds, where emergency surgery was attempted. One bullet fell out in the president’s coat, having simply grazed a rib; the other could not be located. He was quickly transported to a nearby home where his condition seemed to stabilize. However, the missing bullet had done its work, and eight days later, infection had irreversibly taken its toll. Attending physicians pronounced his condition hopeless and counseled prayer. As the dying McKinley rallied slightly, he addressed those hovering around the bed, “Good-bye, good-bye all. It is God’s way. His will, not ours, be done.” He then feebly whispered to his wife, “Nearer, my God, to Thee.”<sup>28</sup>

Sankey had met the president a few years earlier while he and Moody were holding revival meetings in Washington, DC. During that time, Ira had presented a song-lecture on “Sacred Song and Story” for esteemed members of Congress, the Supreme Court, and Secretary of State John Hay at the Church of the Covenant. Because McKinley was not present and Ira had not yet met him, he requested the church’s pastor, the Rev. Dr. Hamlin, to make an appointment if possible. Two days later, Sankey found himself at the White House conversing with the president, who said he had heard Ira sing many times in his home state of Ohio. “I understand that you are quite

a singer yourself," replied an obviously pleased Sankey. "I don't know as to that, but I try to sing with the spirit and with the understanding," responded

New-York Tribune.

THE CAPITAL STUNNED. HOW THE NEWS REACHED THE WHITE HOUSE. THE CABINET WIDELY POSSESSED PROPOSALS OF THE PRESIDENT LAW. WASHINGTON, Sept. 6.—(Special Telegrams.)—The news that the cabinet was to be dissolved and that the president had been elected to a second term was received in Washington with a shock which has not been since surpassed in the history of the city. The news was first received in the White House at 10:30 o'clock, and it was not until 11:30 o'clock that the president had been notified of the news. The news was first received in the White House at 10:30 o'clock, and it was not until 11:30 o'clock that the president had been notified of the news.

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WILLIAM MCKINLEY.

PRESIDENT MCKINLEY SHOT.

Assassination Attempted by an Anarchist at the Pan-American Exposition.

WOUNDS SERIOUS, BUT NOT NECESSARILY FATAL.

President McKinley was shot in the Temple of Music at the Pan-American Exposition yesterday afternoon by Leon Czolgosz, an anarchist, and seriously but not necessarily fatally wounded. At a late hour last night the physicians issued a bulletin saying that the President had rallied and was resting comfortably. The bullet in his abdomen has not been located. The would-be assassin fired two shots, one of which entered the President's abdomen and the other his right breast, lodging against the breastbone. The President was at once removed to the Emergency Hospital in the Exposition grounds, where the bullet in his breast was extracted. Later he was taken to the home of John G. Milburn, where the surgeons pronounced his condition favorable. Czolgosz was attacked by the crowd about the scene of the shooting and narrowly escaped lynching. He was rescued with difficulty by the police and taken to the station house. He said he had been selected to kill the President. He is about twenty-eight years old. The police reserves were called out to guard the station house where he is held. Vice-President Roosevelt was informed of the shooting at Isle La Motte, near Burlington, Vt., and started at once for Buffalo.

CITY APPALLED AT THE NEWS.

FRANCIS LAY PLANS TO PREVENT A BREAK IN THE STOCK MARKET.

SURGEONS DISCUSS CHARACTER OF THE WOUND.

The news of the shooting of President McKinley greatly shocked and startled the people of this city. The crime was so unexpected that it caused general amazement. Expressions of horror and indignation at the attempted assassination and of sympathy for the President were heard on every side among citizens of all classes. Prominent physicians of the city expressed their belief that the President was in good health, and that he would have the benefit of the latest and most advanced methods of surgery. They thought the chances for his recovery were good. Financial men of the city said the country was too prosperous to permit of a panic as a result of the attack upon the President. They are making plans both night to sustain the stock market at the opening of business in Wall Street this morning, believing that some holders of stock might become timid and start a selling movement.

HOPING FOR RECOVERY.

THE PRESIDENT'S CONDITION REPORTED FAVORABLE.

BUFILED Sept. 6.—Just a brief bulletin from the surgeons attending the President McKinley, who was shot at the Pan-American Exposition yesterday afternoon, says that the President's condition is reported favorable. The President is now resting comfortably. The bullet in his abdomen has not been located. The would-be assassin fired two shots, one of which entered the President's abdomen and the other his right breast, lodging against the breastbone. The President was at once removed to the Emergency Hospital in the Exposition grounds, where the bullet in his breast was extracted. Later he was taken to the home of John G. Milburn, where the surgeons pronounced his condition favorable. Czolgosz was attacked by the crowd about the scene of the shooting and narrowly escaped lynching. He was rescued with difficulty by the police and taken to the station house. He said he had been selected to kill the President. He is about twenty-eight years old. The police reserves were called out to guard the station house where he is held. Vice-President Roosevelt was informed of the shooting at Isle La Motte, near Burlington, Vt., and started at once for Buffalo.

AN AVOWED ANARCHIST.

CZOLGOSZ SAYS IRMA GOLDMAN TEACHINGS INDUCED HIM TO SHOOT THE PRESIDENT.

Buffalo, Sept. 6.—Leon Czolgosz, the would-be assassin of President McKinley, has signed a confession concerning his crime of murder, in which he says he is an anarchist, and became an anarchist under the influence of the teachings of Irma Goldman, whose writings he had read, and whose lectures he had attended. He says he was induced to shoot the President by the influence of Goldman's teachings. He says he was induced to shoot the President by the influence of Goldman's teachings. He says he was induced to shoot the President by the influence of Goldman's teachings.

PRESIDENT SHOT TWICE.

THE WOULD-BE ASSASSIN A PALE NAMED CZOLGOSZ.

Buffalo, Sept. 6.—Just a brief bulletin from the surgeons attending the President McKinley, who was shot at the Pan-American Exposition yesterday afternoon, says that the President's condition is reported favorable. The President is now resting comfortably. The bullet in his abdomen has not been located. The would-be assassin fired two shots, one of which entered the President's abdomen and the other his right breast, lodging against the breastbone. The President was at once removed to the Emergency Hospital in the Exposition grounds, where the bullet in his breast was extracted. Later he was taken to the home of John G. Milburn, where the surgeons pronounced his condition favorable. Czolgosz was attacked by the crowd about the scene of the shooting and narrowly escaped lynching. He was rescued with difficulty by the police and taken to the station house. He said he had been selected to kill the President. He is about twenty-eight years old. The police reserves were called out to guard the station house where he is held. Vice-President Roosevelt was informed of the shooting at Isle La Motte, near Burlington, Vt., and started at once for Buffalo.



THE TEMPLE OF MUSIC. Where President McKinley was shot Tuesday.

The news of the shooting of President McKinley was received in Washington with a shock which has not been since surpassed in the history of the city. The news was first received in the White House at 10:30 o'clock, and it was not until 11:30 o'clock that the president had been notified of the news. The news was first received in the White House at 10:30 o'clock, and it was not until 11:30 o'clock that the president had been notified of the news.

Francis Lay, president of the New York Stock Exchange, has announced that he will do everything in his power to prevent a break in the stock market. He says he will do everything in his power to prevent a break in the stock market. He says he will do everything in his power to prevent a break in the stock market.

CHOSEN BY LOT FOR CRIME.

SIX ANARCHISTS IN CHICAGO ARE REPEATED MEMBERS OF SOCIETY TO WHICH MEMBERS BELONGED.

CHICAGO, Sept. 6.—Six men were named today in Chicago as members of the society to which the would-be assassin of President McKinley belonged. The men are all known to the police. The men are all known to the police. The men are all known to the police.

POLICE IMPERISH THE CROWDS.

Buffalo, Sept. 6.—The police have been successful in dispersing the crowds that gathered around the scene of the shooting of President McKinley. The police have been successful in dispersing the crowds that gathered around the scene of the shooting of President McKinley.

FIVE ARRESTS IN BUFFALO.

Buffalo, Sept. 6.—Five persons were arrested today in Buffalo in connection with the shooting of President McKinley. The persons were arrested today in Buffalo in connection with the shooting of President McKinley.

BOARD TRIP SET FOR CALIFORNIA.

Buffalo, Sept. 6.—The board of directors of the Buffalo Chamber of Commerce has decided to go on a trip to California. The board of directors of the Buffalo Chamber of Commerce has decided to go on a trip to California.

RELEASED WITHOUT WARNING.

Buffalo, Sept. 6.—A man who was arrested today in Buffalo in connection with the shooting of President McKinley has been released without warning. The man was arrested today in Buffalo in connection with the shooting of President McKinley.

RECEIVED WITHOUT WARNING.

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the president,<sup>29</sup> alluding to the biblical admonition of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:15. He then gave Ira his autograph.

In truth, the two men's conversation about singing was no mere polite chatter, for McKinley was not above lifting his voice in public praise whenever possible. For the very next day, the president traveled to New York where he attended a service at the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, while during the singing of McKinley's favorite hymn, "Nearer, my God, to Thee," his voice could clearly be heard carrying the tune. Realizing a good human-interest story when he saw one, a local photographer snapped a picture of the president singing and it appeared in the next day's news. On the day of McKinley's funeral in Canton, Ohio, the nation stood silent for five minutes while "Nearer, my God, to Thee" was sung in nearly every church in the land.<sup>30</sup>

It was widely assumed Vice-President Theodore Roosevelt, upon taking the presidential oath of office, would simply continue the pro-business policies that had so dominated American political life for half a century. However, within a short time, Teddy Roosevelt chartered a new direction, which began to moderate the power of big business and usher in an age of reform. Just as Queen Victorian's death—seven months earlier—had marked the end of the English Victorian era, so too did McKinley's death and Roosevelt's new direction signal the end of the American Gilded Age.<sup>31</sup>

Yet, if the history books later perceived a significant change in 1901, Sankey and those closest to him were little affected in their daily lives. Ira continued accepting invitations to present his "Services of Song," consisting of singing gospel solos, recounting his travels to the Holy Land, and challenging his hearers to live godly lives. Typical was Ira's visit to West Brookfield, Massachusetts, where he had been invited by a "bright young Methodist from the backwoods of Vermont" whose "push and pluck" had impressed Sankey with his ability to fill the town hall. Ira was still famous enough that church services in neighboring towns were cancelled so ministers and their people could board trolleys for West Brookfield and hear the renowned singing evangelist. No doubt Ira was pleased when his host informed him that his people "enjoyed the service better than any they had for a long time."<sup>32</sup>

During his visit, Sankey was entertained by a retired Congregational minister who had hosted Ira's colleague D.L. Moody over twenty years earlier. The two men reminisced about the good old days when Moody and Sankey were household names, when tens of thousands turned out to hear

their preaching and singing. The old minister retrieved some precious photos of the evangelist and the two swapped more stories. His host assured him that he and his wife were in “close sympathy” with Ira and his work, leaving him warmed and filled, as there were still many who remembered him and felt blessed by his life. Obviously, not everyone had been influenced by what seemed like a growing chorus of criticism about the value of gospel hymnody. There remained important work to do, and Ira would expend all his energy to that end.

As the year drew to a close, Sankey found himself in both good physical and financial health and anticipating the future. To his brother Richard Watson (“Wat”) he penned, “I am feeling fine. . . . They phoned me today wanting to buy my 100 shares . . . at 70, but I told them I would not sell. You see you should have sent me your check at the first and you could have gotten in at 64. I will send the horse down to Eastport on Monday. We will leave for the West Saturday AM 8:30 January 11th. Will be away a month. DV.”<sup>33</sup>

“The West” was in reference to Battle Creek, Michigan, and while later generations of celebrities would trek to Florida for part of the long northern winter, Ira’s destination was no less than the famed Kellogg Sanitarium—a destination for many successful Victorians near the turn of the century. Ira was only one of a constant procession of famous or powerful figures who visited the Kellogg brothers’ world-renowned institution.

Originating in 1866 as the Western Health Reform Institute under the auspices of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, the young organization consisted of only a modest two-storey farm house and a water-cure treatment. A decade later, the struggling work came under the direction of the brilliant Dr. John Harvey Kellogg (1852–1943), who changed the title to Battle Creek Sanitarium.

The term *sanitarium* was just one of Kellogg’s many creations. While the familiar term *sanitorium* had originally meant a health resort for invalids or an establishment for treating the tubercular, Kellogg envisioned an accommodation where people could not only get well but also learn to stay well. Preventive medicine had always been central to Adventism and was especially prominent in the teachings of its co-founder, Ellen G. White. The San—as it was affectionately called—sought to combine “the comforts of the home and the hotel with the medical advantages of the hospital and the added facilities and equipment requisite for the administration of baths of every description, electricity in its various forms, medical gymnastics, and other rational agencies, with careful regulation of diet.”<sup>34</sup>



*The Battle Creek Sanitarium System: History, Organization, Methods (1908)*

It was from this careful regulation of diet that Kellogg and Battle Creek would later gain fame. Because Adventist dietary practices—*lacto-ovo-vegetarian*—eliminated meats, condiments, spices, alcohol, chocolate, coffee, and tea as detrimental to long-term health, there existed an urgent need for nutritious and appealing substitutes. Working with the natural products of agriculture, Kellogg experimented with endless combinations and processes. As a result, John Kellogg alone invented some eighty new grain and nut products, including peanut butter and what would become cornflakes, Grape-Nuts, and the forerunner of Postum.

The heart of the San's unprecedented success was its application of the Physiologic Method. As elaborated by Dr. Kellogg,

The physiologic method does not undertake to cure disease, but patients. It recognizes the disease process as an effort on the part of the body to recover normal conditions, a struggle on the part of the vital forces to maintain life under normal conditions and to restore vital equilibrium. At the outset of his course of treatment, the patient is instructed that his recovery will depend largely upon himself; that curative power does not reside in the doctor nor in the treatment, but is a vital force operating within the patient himself.<sup>35</sup>

In spite of what might initially appear to have been a “think system” based on positive attitudes aimed at achieving healthful results, the San boast-

ed the most sophisticated traditional medical care available at the turn of the century, including skilled surgeons and operating rooms, ample pharmacies, and leading-edge approaches to physical therapy. In fact, many of the procedures and equipment developed by Kellogg and his staff became standard to future medical practice. In retrospect, the San's philosophy and protocols appear to have exhibited an amazingly modern wholistic discernment.

Patients at the San need not be sick, although many were. The chief patrons seemed to include "persons who are suffering from chronic disease, especially gastric and nervous disorders. Insane persons, epileptics, and persons suffering from tuberculosis or other communicable diseases, are not received."<sup>36</sup>

If Ira's visit to Battle Creek was to be considered a vacation, it was a working one at least. En route from Brooklyn, the singing evangelist laid over at Rochester, New York, where he gave a pair of Sunday concerts at 4:00 and 7:00PM on the twelfth of January. Having too often suffered the failure of incompetent pastors or committees to make proper arrangements for a successful meeting, Ira had earlier voiced his concern about the lack of planning to his brother. "Don't know what large church they have secured. They wired me last evening saying they had one."<sup>37</sup>

From Rochester, it was but a two-day journey by train to Battle Creek, Michigan. Although the Sanitarium was known far and wide, this would be Ira's first visit. It had been recommended by a prominent New York physician<sup>38</sup> who undoubtedly felt the unique regimen of exercise, diet, and prevention could possibly help allay Sankey's chronic physical ailments, which resulted, more than anything else, from being in his seventh decade of life.

In reality, Ira would not have had to travel halfway across the country in the dead of winter for such a program, for there were numerous institutions of a similar nature scattered throughout the country. One of these was the Melrose Sanitarium near Boston. But as Ira confided to his brother, "I could not think of crowding into the little Sanitarium in New England as a free guest where the big place [Kellogg sanitarium] has room for 800."<sup>39</sup>

Crowding was certainly not a problem at the San. While there had been nearly seven hundred patients there during the preceding hot summer months, there were at present fewer than half that many. These were efficiently attended to by a staff of nearly one thousand, including thirty physicians, plus two hundred nurses and bath attendants. The institution's sprawling complex consisted of six large buildings with Old Main as the centerpiece and hub.<sup>40</sup>

As Sankey's carriage approached the covered front entrance, he would have gazed up at five sprawling storeys of Queen Anne architecture housing the institution's guests. Even after the wonders Sankey had encountered in his many travels, this was an impressive sight. The fountain in the park, which separated the complex from the street, was as bare of its sprays as were the trees of their leaves during this cold Michigan January of 1902. But there was nothing cold about the San itself. A warm reception greeted their check-in as a small army of bellhops labored to unload the baggage train. Ira was accompanied by Fanny, his wife of nearly thirty years, who regularly traveled with her husband. After trudging up three flights of well-worn stairs, they were ushered into a modest but ample room on the fourth floor. There, the Sankeys began to unpack a multitude of bags and trunks in anticipation of the rigors awaiting them.

In addition to the diet and exercise that doubtlessly would be prescribed, Ira looked forward to the quiet hours in which he could finish his manuscript, *Story of the Hymns*. For over twenty years, he had been collecting anecdotes and stories related to the songs used in the Moody and Sankey revival meetings. Now with the project of collecting materials having been completed, he needed to shape the experiences of his own life into a compelling narrative to accompany the song stories. Since the death of Moody, just two years earlier, numerous biographies of the great evangelist had appeared in print. In fact, Sankey himself had been asked to write one, but had declined. Unfortunately, some of these new publications were not very accurate or complimentary when it came to describing Ira's contributions to the ministry of his dear friend and colleague.<sup>41</sup> And while hundreds of news articles and scores of books had been written touching on the public career of Sankey at the height of his fame, the complete story had never been told.

From one of his carefully packed trunks, Ira eagerly pulled out a bulging manuscript. It contained a wealth of memories—a lifetime full, brimming with stories of providential encounters, fiery infernos, singing for royalty, an amazing circle of gifted preachers, musicians, and captains of industry, oceanic voyages, including a journey to the land of Jesus, countless hours singing at the little pump organ in front of thousands, individual lives changed, family tragedies, and surprising financial success. How could he ever craft a tale of this rich and varied life? As he sat pondering what he should write, his mind inevitably wandered back to an earlier time and a much different place. ☺



ENDNOTES

1. Words by George Cooper; music by Ira D. Sankey, “While the days are going by,” Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan, George C. Stebbins, eds., *Gospel Hymns No. 1 to 6 Complete* (Cincinnati: John Church Co.; NY: Biglow and Main Co., 1894), No. 578.
2. Charles Morris, *The Life of Queen Victoria and the Story of Her Reign* (London: W.E. Scull, 1901), 483.
3. *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 20 January 1901, 1.
4. Victoria reigned from 1837 (her 18th year) to her death in 1901, the longest rule of any British monarch—except for Queen Elizabeth II.
5. Gamaliel Bradford, *D.L. Moody: A Worker in Souls* (New York: George H. Doran, 1927), 174.
6. Mrs. [Margaret Stewart] Barbour [Simpson], quoted in E.J. Goodspeed, *A Full History of the Wonderful Career of Moody and Sankey in Great Britain and America* (New York: Henry S. Goodspeed Co., 1876), 56. She also authored *Awakings and Butterly Chrysalids* (1892).
7. Goodspeed, *Full History*, 106–07.
8. Ira D. Sankey, *My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns* (NY: Harper and Bros., 1906), 80. Sankey claimed this occurred in a Norfolk meeting.
9. The reporter for *The Morning Post* (London), 10 March 1875, 6, observed: “Mr. Sankey looks and speaks much more like an Englishman than an American.”
10. “Sankey on Sunday,” *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*, 25 August 1875, 4. The writer used the term “dramer” instead of “merchant.” It was probably a misspelling of “draper” (seller of cloth).
11. Goodspeed, *Full History*, 539.
12. Sankey, *My Life*, 80–81.
13. “Mrs. Mary Sankey Has Passed Away,” *New Castle News*, Pennsylvania, 2 May 1901.
14. “Funeral Saturday,” *New Castle News*, 3 or 4 May 1901. Ira was accompanied by his wife.
15. “At Rest,” *New Castle News*, 6 May 1901.
16. Letter, “Dear Brother Hastings,” 6 May 1901, Archives of the Billy Graham Center, formerly at Wheaton College.
17. The text was by English poet and novelist Sarah Doudney (1841–1926). Her

poem “The Lesson of the Water Mill” (1856), became famous in Britain and the U.S.

18. Its popularity eventually took some highly unexpected turns. The hymn, entitled either “Sleep on, Beloved” or “The Christian’s Good-night,” grew in popularity during the second half of the twentieth century until it reached inclusion in 14% of hymnals published in 2015 (according to Hymnary.org). But it also enjoyed a more bizarre popularity. Bob Hudson reported, “This song began as a traditional ‘lowering’ hymn for funerals [in England]. It made its way to the Bahamas and the repertoire of [folksingers] Joseph Spence and the Pinder Family. The Incredible String Band recorded it in the 1960s, and their version caught the attention of the [rock band] The Grateful Dead, who soon made it one of their signature numbers,” laying down their instruments after a string of encores and closing their concerts with a version called “We bid you goodnight.” Sankey as rock music! See “Sleep On Beloved,” <https://mainlynorfolk.info/watersons/songs/sleeponbeloved.html>  
It’s been recorded by countless groups including the Dixie Hummingbirds, Soweto Gospel Choir, various Bahamian singers, and a host of others.
19. Sankey, *My Life*, 260.
20. Words by Sarah Doudney; music by Ira D. Sankey, “The Christian’s Good-Night,” *Gospel Hymns Complete*, No. 526.
21. His first grandchild would be born in November of 1901.
22. See J.H. Hall, *Biography of Gospel Song and Hymn Writers* (New York: F.H. Revell, 1914), chapter XXIX. Whittle (1840–1901) was credited with writing about 200 hymn texts. His most successful collaborator was James McGrannahan, who supplied popular melodies. Forty-two of his contributions were included in *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*. Funeral services were conducted in Northfield by C.I. Scofield (compiler of the famous “Scofield Bible” edition) on March 6. It is uncertain whether Sankey was in attendance.
23. Hubert P. Main, *Christian Herald* (n.d.), cited in John F. Zellner, “Robert Lowry: Early American Hymn Writer,” *The Hymn: A Journal of Congregational Song*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (October 1975), 118.
24. Debby Applegate, *The Most Famous Man in America: The Biography of Henry Ward Beecher* (New York: Three Leaves Press/Doubleday, 2006), 316–17. This was only one of many theatrical and controversial events held at Plymouth Church. It was also the origin of the term, “Pinky Ring,” which resulted from a gift to the young girl to help pay for her freedom.
25. Christopher Gray, “Streetscapes / Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, Fort Greene, Brooklyn; A Shelter for Runaway Slaves, a Bastion of Activism,” *The New York Times*, 24 December, 2000, Section 11, 5.



26. Sankey obituary, *The Emporia Daily Gazette*, 20 August 1908.
27. Letter to W.E. Pankhurst, 13 November 1901, from museum exhibit at Billy Graham Center, formerly at Wheaton College.
28. Margaret Leech, *In the Days of McKinley* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), 594–601.
29. Sankey, *My Life*, 200.
30. Sankey, *My Life*, 200–01.
31. Sean Cashman, *America in the Gilded Age: from the Death of Lincoln to the Rise of Roosevelt* (New York: NY University Press, 1984), 336.
32. Letter to his brother Richard Watson Sankey, 28 December 1901. The term “pluck” was a common Victorian expression meaning “spirit, courage, fortitude,” as found in the title *Luck and Pluck* by Horatio Alger (1869).
33. Letter to Richard Watson Sankey, 28 December 1901. DV = *Deo volente* (God willing).
34. J.H. Kellogg, M.D., *Battle Creek Sanitarium System: History, Organization, Methods* (Battle Creek, MI, 1908), 11–12. The various baths were called “rationale hydrotherapy.”
35. Kellogg, *Battle Creek Sanitarium System*, 17.
36. Kellogg, *Battle Creek Sanitarium System*, 13.
37. Letter of 28 December 1901 to “R.W. and Co.”
38. *Daily Moon* (Battle Creek, MI), 20 February 1902.
39. Letter to Richard Watson Sankey, 28 December 1901. It was previously known as New England Sanitarium and Hospital, and later, New England Memorial Hospital (in both instances a Seventh-day Adventist medical facility); it was located in Stoneham, Massachusetts, until it closed in February 1999 for financial reasons. Today the institution in Stoneham is called Boston Regional Medical Center (abbreviated to “Boston Regional” or “BRMC”).
40. Kellogg, *Battle Creek Sanitarium System*, 13; *Battle Creek Daily Journal*, 19 February 1902; John Buchmeier, *A Tour Through the Past and Present of the Battle Creek Federal Center* (Battle Creek: Battle Creek Federal Center, 1987), 2–5. This source contains an excellent history including brief summaries and numerous photographs of the institution’s history from its inception until 1987, under government ownership as the Hart-Dole-Inouye Federal Center.
41. In particular, Sankey felt the first official biography, Will R. Moody’s *The Life of Dwight L. Moody by His Son* (New York: Fleming Revell, 1900), tended to downplay his role and give credit to Moody for contributions that should

have been more rightly credited to Sankey. It's a good thing Sankey didn't live to see Will Moody's update of his father's biography in 1930. Sankey was conspicuously left out of the entire biography—even the chapter on music. Although decades of revival services held by the two men were called “Moody–Sankey” meetings, Will Moody never used the description, referring to them as Moody's meetings. And when it came to their collaboration together in areas such as producing new song collections, Moody was given all the credit.

No. 132.

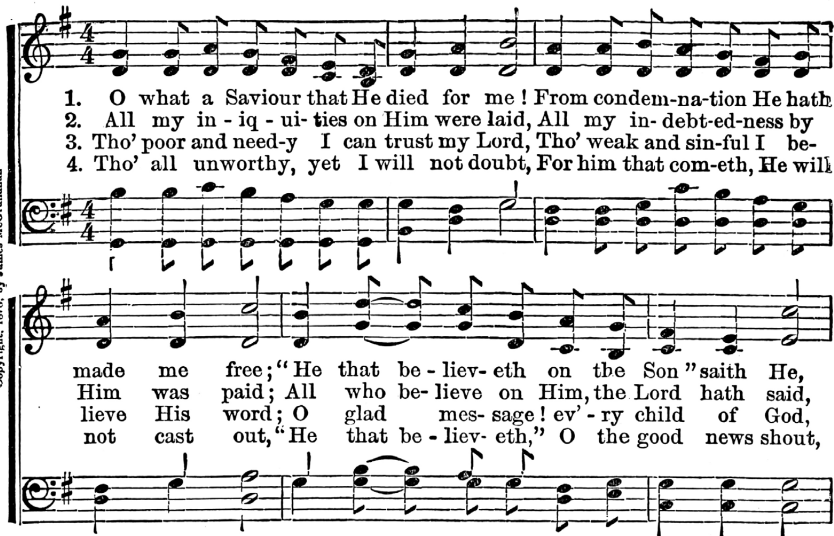
# Verily, Verily.

["He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."—JOHN 6:47.]

JAMES McGRANAHAN.

JAMES McGRANAHAN, by per.

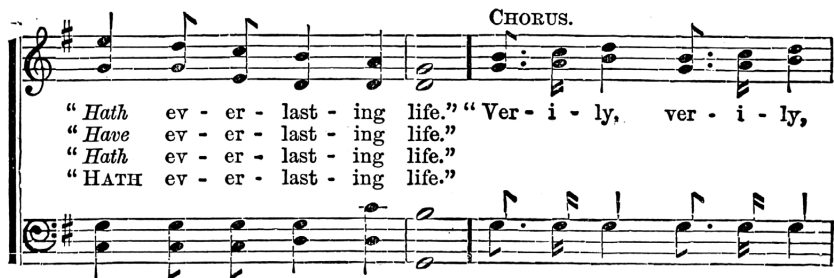
Copyright, 1878, by James McGranahan



1. O what a Saviour that He died for me! From condem-nation He hath  
2. All my in - iq - ui - ties on Him were laid, All my in-debt-ed-ness by  
3. Tho' poor and need-y I can trust my Lord, Tho' weak and sin-ful I be-  
4. Tho' all unworthy, yet I will not doubt, For him that com-eth, He will

made me free; "He that be - liev - eth on the Son" saith He,  
Him was paid; All who be - lieve on Him, the Lord hath said,  
lieve His word; O glad mes - sage! ev' - ry child of God,  
not cast out, "He that be - liev - eth," O the good news shout,

CHORUS.



"Hath ev - er - last - ing life." "Ver - i - ly, ver - i - ly,  
"Have ev - er - last - ing life."  
"Hath ev - er - last - ing life."  
"HATH ev - er - last - ing life."



I say un-to you, Ver - i - ly, ver - i - ly" mes - sage ev - er new;



"He that be - lieveth on the Son" 'tis true, "Hath ev - er - last - ing life."

## Chapter 2

### Snake on a Pole

1750–1857

*O what a Savior, that He died for me!  
From condemnation He hath made me free;  
“He that believeth on the Son,” saith He,  
“Hath everlasting life.”*

*“Verily, verily,” I say unto you,  
“Verily, verily,” message ever new;  
“He that believeth on the Son,” ’tis true,  
“Hath everlasting life.”*

*All my iniquities on Him were laid,  
All my indebtedness by Him was paid;  
All who believe on Him, the Lord hath said,  
“Hath everlasting life.”<sup>1</sup>*

AS IRA PONDERED how to organize his daunting project, he came across a quaint story that had circulated within the Sankey family about a man named John who, returning from the legendary Third Crusade, performed some great service of distinction and was honored by being elected “keeper of the keys” for an important Spanish church. Later, John was beatified as “Saint of the Keys,” and because the word for *saint* in Spanish is *San*, John became known as San Keys which was later shortened to Sankey.<sup>2</sup> No one seemed to know how such a story came about, but it made for interesting conversation when someone asked, “What kind of name is Sankey?” Although Ira suspected the tale was apocryphal, he was in little doubt about how the Sankeys came to settle in and populate western Pennsylvania.

That resulted from a curious admixture of conditions contributing to populate the New World. Wealth—or its promise—was undeniably a constant in the equation, but so was religious freedom, whether for Puritan, Quaker, or Catholic. While both Protestant Moravians and Roman Catho-

lics came to convert the “Red Man,” others came to stake out more earthly claims for crown or corporation. Africans were brought against their will—preceding the Pilgrims as early as 1619—while many a poor European indentured their future for the chance at a new life. Still others came to escape pervasive famine and poverty or to avoid conscription into a warring monarch’s crude tool of statecraft. And some ventured into unknown and inhospitable regions far beyond any notions of civilization because of the feudal law of primogeniture, which gave control of the family inheritance to the firstborn, leaving younger siblings at the mercy of the eldest. To various degrees, all these influences combined to provide a steady influx of newcomers to America’s shores for hundreds of years.

Among this throng of seemingly anonymous aliens was one William Sankey from Lancashire County, England. He was born circa 1750 during the era of King George II into a land boasting itself as Great Britain.<sup>3</sup> Although England would, by 1763, establish dominance over France for the colonial holdings in North America and would give birth to the Industrial Revolution, which would eventually make Britain the “workshop of the world,” there was little hope of a better life for the poor farmer forced to endlessly till someone else’s holdings.

Ira was uncertain exactly when his great-grandfather William left his home near Warrington in Lancashire on the northwest coast, but he arrived in the colonies early enough to become infected with revolutionary ideas, where he took up arms against his native land, serving as a ranger in Captain Robert Samuel’s Company of the 8th Battalion, Cumberland County Militia, from 1778 to 1783.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps his actions resulted from the British Proclamation of October 7, 1763, which, in part, sought to prohibit colonists from settling west of the Appalachian Mountains. That William and his family located on the frontier in the Kishacoquillas Valley of Mifflin County in central Pennsylvania might explain William Sankey’s politics during the American Revolution.

William married Elizabeth (1737–1813) in 1770 and fathered six girls and four boys. When William died in 1794, Elizabeth and the oldest son, Ezekiel, were appointed executors of his will.<sup>5</sup> Ezekiel, then twenty-two, had been born in Lewistown, Mifflin County, in 1772, but by 1800 had moved to Mercer County in the western part of the state, where he farmed for a living. This westward migration had only recently been made possible by the exploits of Major General “Mad” Anthony Wayne, who had soundly de-

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP.

National Number \_\_\_\_\_

State Number \_\_\_\_\_

ISSUED BY AUTHORITY OF THE GENERAL BOARD OF MANAGERS.

April 30, 1907

TO THE BOARD OF MANAGERS OF  
EMPIRE STATE SOCIETY

...OF THE...

SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

I, David Sankey being of the age of twenty-one years  
and upwards, to wit, of the age of \_\_\_\_\_ hereby apply for membership in this  
Society by right of lineal descent in the following line from William Sankey  
who was born in England on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 17\_\_\_\_  
and died in Mifflin Co. on the 17 day of Dec. 1744  
and who assisted in establishing American Independence.

I was born in Edinburgh County of Lawrence  
State of Penn on the 28 day of August 1848

I am the son of David Sankey and  
Mary Laffer his wife, and  
grandson of Jakel Sankey and  
Jane Doc his wife, and  
great-grandson of William Sankey and  
Elizabeth his wife, and  
great-great-grandson of \_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_ his wife, and  
great-great-great-grandson of \_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_, his wife, and  
great-great-great-great-grandson of \_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_ his wife

and he, the said William Sankey is the ancestor who assisted in  
establishing American Independence, while acting in the capacity of private from  
Bedford Co., Pa.

Nominated and recommended by the undersigned members of  
the Society:  
George S. Wearer  
Martin S. Allen

Signature of applicant, (Name in full)  
David Sankey  
Residence,  
148 So. Oxford St. Brooklyn  
Occupation,  
Retired

feated a confederacy of Shawnee, Ottawa, and Chippewa tribes at the Battle of Fallen Timbers near present-day Toledo, Ohio. In the resulting Treaty of Greenville of 1795, the native confederacy relinquished vast tracts of land in southern Ohio, opening the midwest for a new wave of immigration. When Ezekiel arrived in western Pennsylvania as one of the first permanent white settlers in the area, a few native peoples still inhabited the countryside, and abandoned wigwams made of poles and bark dotted the landscape.

Known as a man of sterling character and great influence, Ezekiel became the first elected sheriff of Mercer County. He eventually met Jane Cubison, an immigrant from County Down, Ireland, and they were married; six sons and three daughters blessed their union. Both Ezekiel and Jane were pious members of the community and were active in the life of the fledgling Shenango Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, located near their home. When a call for enlistments to battle the British in 1812 was issued, Ezekiel was one of the few from his area to respond. He was appointed to the commissary department in General Cook's brigade and was sent to what would become the site of Fort Meigs in Ohio. There Ezekiel spent the harrowing winter of 1812–1813. Conditions in the camp were harsh, and by the time the forty-year-old Sankey returned home in the spring, he was broken in health. Ira's grandfather, Ezekiel, died in July of 1813, leaving his widow, Jane, and nine children.<sup>6</sup>

One of them was also named Ezekiel (3 Oct. 1807–21 Nov. 1888). He was the seventh child and fifth son, who at his father's death was only five years of age. Because the countryside was sparsely settled and his mother was left to care for nine children, neither Ezekiel nor his siblings received much formal education. Ezekiel spent his boyhood engaged in farm labor, both on the family homestead and for a neighbor at six dollars a month. As Ezekiel junior matured, it was soon evident he was becoming a man of "more than ordinary talent, of great originality and powers of invention, of unusually clear discernment and remarkable shrewdness . . . combined with an irrepressible will and energy."<sup>7</sup> Such characteristics suited him well for his many business ventures, which included running a canal boat, banking, railroad contracting, and hotel management. He became one of the most active members of the nearby community of New Castle, having settled immediately across the Shenango River in an area he purchased and developed in 1836 known as West New Castle.<sup>8</sup> He was also prominent on numerous directorates and boards of local organizations, diverse as the New Castle Fe-



male Seminary, the New Castle Gas Light Company, the New Castle Opera House Company, and Greenwood Cemetery, where the Sankey clan would eventually come to rest.

Although Ezekiel apparently did not hold public office, he played an important role in one of the area's most significant developments. For many years, the people of the region had been agitating for the formation of a new county to better represent their concerns. After decades of opposition, a bill was finally introduced into the Pennsylvania legislature, calling for the formation of a new county to be called Lawrence. In March 1849, Ezekiel traveled to the state capital to apply his powers as a lobbyist on behalf of the bill. His genial and warm-hearted personality served him well in trying to convince wary legislators to diminish the power base of their political cronies, and the bill ultimately passed. Ezekiel had more than just a civic interest in promoting the bill, however, because his brother David was the legislator chiefly responsible for the bill.

David Sankey, who was less than two years younger than his brother Ezekiel, was also a prominent citizen of the community. Born January 10, 1809, David had also been denied all but the most rudimentary education. At fifteen, he became apprenticed to the tanner Thomas Falls, and he remained in that trade for six years. In 1829, David made a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. A year later, on September 2, 1830, he married a local girl, Mary Leeper (b. July 17, 1811), the daughter of one of the region's early pioneer couples, John and Mary Cracroft Leeper, and they set up housekeeping in the tiny village of Edinburg on the Mahoning River.<sup>9</sup>

These were still the days when large families were a normal part of married life, and it was not uncommon to marry in late teens and begin raising a family immediately. Children could be expected to come along every twelve months or so. Not all were expected to live. By those standards, David, at twenty-one, and Mary, at nineteen, had gotten off to a slow start, yet they lost no time in establishing a family. Just ten months after their marriage vows, Mary gave birth to an infant son. However, what should have been a joyous occasion for the young couple quickly turned to sorrow and weeping as they buried their unnamed child of seven days there in Edinburg.<sup>10</sup>

Eleven months later, in 1832, Mary again gave birth, this time to a healthy baby girl, and they named her Rosanna Amelia.<sup>11</sup> Although the presence of new life brought joy to the Sankey household, there was growing

cause for alarm. David's health experienced a serious decline, and he was forced to discontinue strenuous labor. He turned to teaching, a formidable task for one with little education, but his situation worsened. His condition became so weakened that he could do no work for a year; only the generosity of family and friends and the couple's abiding faith in a gracious God sustained them during those lean days.

By 1835, David Sankey's health had returned, and he began work as a commissioning agent for the "Greenville line" on the area's expanding system of canals. Only ten years earlier, New York's Erie Canal had opened, ushering in the hope of a national waterway transportation system, with the promise of cheaper and more plentiful goods for those far inland from important ports or large eastern cities. David was located at Western Reserve Harbor, near the terminus of the Beaver Division of a canal system originating farther south in Pittsburgh. From the harbor, immense quantities of everything from silk to salt to sandstone were offloaded from flat-bottom boats, which were consequently hauled along a towpath by mules or huge draught horses. The materials would then be transferred onto wagons for the trek west to the "interior" of eastern Ohio and beyond. At times, hundreds of wagons and their teams of patient beasts clogged the small port at Western Reserve, waiting for their precious cargos.<sup>12</sup>

The position proved a happy one for David, and he soon found himself the sole representative for both competing shipping companies at the port.<sup>13</sup> The financial stability the Sankeys began to experience was much needed, for two more children had been added to the family—Antha Adaline in 1834 and Richard Watson in 1837.<sup>14</sup> By 1840, David Sankey was recognized as a valuable member of the community, and he was elected Justice of the Peace. In this capacity, he became well known for the amicable resolution of legal disputes within his jurisdiction. It is said that during his tenure of many years, only two suits were brought to civil court.<sup>15</sup>

As David's reputation increased, so did the size of his family. On August 28, 1840, a fifth child blessed the Sankey clan: Ira David. The middle name, David, was obviously in honor of his father. The name Ira apparently came from Ira Eddy, a circuit-riding preacher who traversed the countryside by horse. When he visited the Sankeys, he left a lasting impression on David.<sup>16</sup> Little could his parents have realized, the name Ira Sankey would someday be known around the world and come to represent a style of church music loved and sung by generations. Their primary concern at that moment, however, was just for a healthy child who could outlive the perils of infancy.

In the fall of 1843, David was elected to the House of Representatives, representing Mercer and Beaver counties in the Pennsylvania legislature. He had not sought the position but was implored by the local leadership of his party to allow his name to be put up for election. His political persuasion was that of the Whigs—a party arising from earlier opposition to president Andrew Jackson and his concentration of power in the Executive branch. They supported high protective tariffs and a national bank. It seems David Sankey’s being drafted by his party came not so much from his popularity or political acumen as from the fact that no one else in his party wanted to run for office in a district with only 250 potential Whig voters.

Nevertheless, David won handily and soon found himself addressed as the Honorable Mr. Sankey. After a number of successful terms in the House, he was elected to the State Senate in 1847 and served three years. While David was strongly opinionated, he was viewed as a man of high ideals and moral courage, at times opposing his own party and incurring political enemies. David’s typical constituent was a Protestant, middle-class, white male, representing entrepreneurs, planters, or reformers. The Whig party took no official stand on abolition, but northern Whigs—at their demise—joined the Republican party wholesale.

A high point for the party was 1848, when their candidate, Zachary Taylor—who professed no interest in politics—was elected president of the United States, the first one to possess no prior political experience. It’s not recorded what President Taylor felt about his visit to New Castle the following year to inspect the Sophia blast furnace or the ladies’ tea at New Castle Presbyterian Church, but it’s certain the old military man was more impressed with the artillery fusillade from nearby Shaw’s Hill. The year 1849 marked a banner event for David Sankey, as he was central to the passage of the bill carving Lawrence County out of the previous counties of Beaver and Mercer. For that deed, he was often known as the “father” of Lawrence County.<sup>17</sup>

Although David’s political career required considerable time and attention in the state’s capital at Harrisburg, some 225 grueling miles away, he was no distant father. In fact, his participation in politics was often the discussion at family gatherings, with a four-year-old Ira trying to understand its implications. When the outcome of the contentious election for James K. Polk became public, little Ira queried, “Pap, is Polk elected?” Upon confirmation, he responded, “Well I think there must be a great many Polk people around,” making the connection between “enough people around” and getting elected.<sup>18</sup>

Often on long winter evenings when Mary and the children had gathered to sing hymns around the crackling fire in the great hearth, David would sit down and add a splendid bass while the others supplied melody and parts. In addition to hymns, Mary loved “The Cradle Song,” with words by Isaac Watts, published in his ubiquitous *Divine and Moral Songs for Children*.<sup>19</sup> Second only in popularity to *The New England Primer* in early America, this didactic volume of poetry for children “in easy language” had passed from generation to generation and supplied lyrics for countless hymnbooks. This song was one of Ira’s earliest recollections:<sup>20</sup>

*Hush, my dear, lie still and slumber,  
Holy angels guard thy bed,  
Heavenly blessings without number,  
Gently falling on thy head.*

*May’st thou live to know and fear him,  
Trust and love him all thy days;  
Then go dwell for ever near him,  
See his face and sing his praise.*

There was no way Mary could have imagined how prophetic that last phrase, “and sing his praise,” would become for her little son. As Ira later explained to a friend, “I was always fond of singing—it came naturally to me. I sang from childhood, and was literally full and running over with music. As far as I can discover, none of my ancestors were particularly musical . . . nor were my four brothers and four sisters. But I seem to have been endowed at birth with a musical spirit.”<sup>21</sup>

That spirit seemed attracted to music wherever it could be found, and in the rolling farm country near Edinburg, the best place to hear music was in church. Although the little Methodist meeting house the family attended was some miles from their home—a distance made more consequential when attempted on foot or in foul weather—Ira rarely missed a chance to experience the singing that characterized this community of believers. Methodists had a rich history in congregational song, as Charles Wesley, one of their founders, wrote over six thousand hymns for the purpose of instructing converts in the Christian life. His brother John often acted as editor, compiling *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists* (1780), containing the hymns of Charles and others. As Methodism spread from England to the colonies, so did its reputation for exuberant singing.

Even non-Methodists, such as the popular Congregationalist preacher Henry Ward Beecher, passionately recalled, “How I long for the good old Methodist thunder. One good burst of old-fashioned music would have blown this modern singing out the window like wadding from a gun.”<sup>22</sup>

The “Methodist thunder” Beecher so longed for likely resulted from his own exposure to the boisterous camp meetings that characterized Methodist music on the frontier. Beecher spent the early part of his career in Ohio and Indiana, where influence from the Second Great Awakening would have been evident. Camp meetings, where both denominational and non-denominational groups gathered informally—often outside—were common. There, the faithful would listen to fiery preaching, often experience mass communion, and sing hymns reflecting elements of folk music. They contained simple melodies, sometimes pentatonic, with lots of word repetition and refrains on which everyone could easily join. The singing was exuberant and often unrestrained.

Because most rural churches were small in size, they often shared the pastoral duties of a circuit-riding minister with other churches in the area. This meant services were held only when the peripatetic preacher was in town, which might be once a month. It also meant families would often visit neighboring churches of other persuasions on the “off-weeks” so as to have a place to worship and fellowship. In this way, a young Sankey learned a wider variety of hymns than he might have by singing only those popular within the pale of Wesleyan Methodism.

Another activity where music might be heard was the Sunday School. Music was, in fact, one of the major attractions for children in the growing Sunday School movement. Early Sunday Schools were usually conducted apart from church sponsorship or even church premises. Spiritual conversion was central to the focus of instruction, and music clearly reinforced this goal. While the tunes of Sunday School music imbibed a lighter style of faster-moving eighth-notes and memorable melodies, some of its poetry retained the darker elements of an earlier hymnody. Waugh and Mason’s *Selection of Hymns for the Sunday School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church* included poet Anne Steele’s popular warning:<sup>23</sup>

*When blooming youth is snatch'd away  
By death's resistless hand,  
Our hearts the mournful tribute pay,  
Which pity must demand.*

*Let this vain world engage no more:  
Behold the gaping tomb!  
It bids us seize the present hour;  
Tomorrow, death may come.*

Such warnings were no grotesque effort to scare impressionable young minds, but were reminders of a daily reality in which almost every child had lost a brother or sister—or perhaps both. For Ira, it was his older brother Richard, who was nine. The family said he had congestion of the brain, but for five-year-old Ira, he could only comprehend that his brother was gone.<sup>24</sup>

The young Sankey's recollections of this time were anything but gloom and dread, however, but were filled with warm memories of a Mr. Frazer who came to the house and led Ira by the hand along with his own children to the old school house where Sunday School was held. "The very first recollection I have of anything pertaining to a holy life was in connection with . . . Mr. Frazer. I shall remember this to my dying day. He had a warm heart and the children all loved him. It was not until some years after that I was converted . . . but my first impressions were received from that man when I was very young."<sup>25</sup>

Other vivid memories involved the family.<sup>26</sup> The Whigs, of which David Sankey was the most prominent local politician, held a regional nominating convention in August of 1850. Coming soon after the formation of Lawrence County, for which Sankey had been largely responsible, the family home was abuzz with excitement amid special preparations for entertaining important guests.

Most of the excitement during Ira's boyhood seems to have centered upon nearby New Castle, where Ira's uncle Ezekiel was a leading business figure and property owner.<sup>27</sup> Because New Castle had been selected as the county seat for the newly created Lawrence County, the foundation for a handsome new courthouse, costing \$32,000, was laid in the fall of 1850, soon after Ira's tenth birthday. The city also got new bells—one for the market, and one weighing six hundred pounds for the Baptist church.

In January the following year, Frederick Haley opened a new line of daily stage coaches between New Castle and Beaver, that county's seat nearly thirty miles to the south. Haley boasted he could make the round trip in five hours. And during the next fall, residents were intrigued when a solitary Native American, his wife, and two children passed through the area on their

journey west. Such people, who had once inhabited these very lands, were by now something of a novelty.

One of the most memorable tales among Ira's neighbors was of Frank Jackson, a free black man living in the area, who had been induced by a drover named Charles May to accompany him to Richmond, Virginia. Upon arrival, May sold Jackson into slavery. Jackson ran off but was recaptured and sold again. Word finally reached New Castle that Jackson was being held in a southern jail and could be released upon proof of his free status. To that end, a white resident, George Morgan, was sent to secure Jackson's freedom, but upon arriving at the jail, found he had been taken farther south and sold a third time. Morgan then returned to New Castle with no hope of retrieving his fellow citizen. Nevertheless, a few months later, a letter arrived from a North Carolina lawyer who had talked with Jackson and was writing to inquire about his status. Again, Morgan was dispatched to retrieve the kidnapped Pennsylvanian.

On his way south, Morgan noted how nearly every person of respectability had some type of honorary title, mostly military, and rarely below the rank of captain. So when he arrived at a planter's where Jackson was being held, he introduced himself as Colonel Morgan from Pennsylvania. That evening at dusk, when the enslaved came in from the field, the planter asked Jackson if he recognized Morgan, but in the dim twilight he answered he did not. Then Morgan called him by name and Jackson instantly cried, "It's George Morgan, the tailor, from New Castle." Suddenly the planter realized he had been duped twice: Jackson was indeed a free man but Morgan was no colonel. He advised a hasty departure and both men returned safely to Pennsylvania, where Jackson lived until the Civil War erupted, when he promptly joined the Union Army.<sup>28</sup>

Ira had not yet turned twelve when he left the family farm to visit a neighbor's house, but on forgetting something, he returned to find smoke and flames billowing from one of the rooms. As both parents were gone, he organized his younger brothers and sister to fetch water while he rushed into the room, tearing down the blazing curtains and stamping out the burning contents just before the flames got out of control. When his parents later returned, they discovered that their courageous and quick-thinking child had saved the family home from destruction.<sup>29</sup> This self-assuredness and clear thinking seemed to characterize Ira during his teen years, garnering the admiration of his peers.



January 1852 began with a meeting of the Protestant ministers in the area for the purpose of petitioning Congress to prohibit carrying the mail on Sunday. Congress was apparently unresponsive, and more than one of the petitioning clergy must have interpreted the earthquake that rocked the area some months later as a sign of judgment. It certainly made for an interesting sermon topic the next Sunday! Perhaps the most memorable sight that year was the herd of five hundred turkeys being driven over fifty miles from New Castle to Erie, where they were promptly transported to New York and the awaiting tables of hungry Christmas diners.

Ira's schooling was typical for children in an agricultural community. Many grade levels often crowded into the same one-room structure. Teachers were dedicated but not always highly trained in either their subjects or pedagogy. Pupil attendance could be sporadic, depending on the needs of the family farm on any one day, and the school year was exceedingly short so as not to interfere with either fall harvest or spring planting. Yet, in spite of such seemingly insurmountable limitations, many a farm boy turned out to be remarkably well-read as evidenced by his ready knowledge of Greek mythology or his ability to apply an apt Latin phrase as circumstance demanded. Ira was certainly fond of boasting such minor erudition later in life, as he often penned Latin abbreviations in his letters. Many a student also spent tedious hours practicing elegant penmanship, which was the mark of an educated Victorian. Ira's own correspondence reveals him to have been a diligent student of this discipline.<sup>30</sup>

For a boy growing up in the country, time passed slowly, and one day seemed much like the next. So when, in the spring of 1853, another earthquake occurred—this one lasted a full thirty seconds and gave all the buildings a stiff shaking—talk of an apocalypse seemed more than imminent. While some might have ignored this as a sign of pending judgment, it was difficult to dismiss the prolonged drought the following summer, with its hellish temperatures of 106 degrees in the shade, as anything less than biblical. The situation became so acute, most fish in the Shenango River died and few crops survived in the field. Many farmers were forced to fatten their animals with acorns, which fortunately were in abundance. As if to atone for the previous scarcity of rain, the heavens would not cease their deluge the following year, and in June the streams were so swollen that navigation ceased on the canals, resulting in a critical shortage of basic food stuffs.

Fortunately, none of these hardships curtailed the area's most important annual event, the celebration of the nation's independence on July 4.

Typical were the events of 1855 when, at an early hour, the New Castle Light Artillery demonstrated its skills and was answered by all the town bells. At ten o'clock a grand procession began winding through the town for the pleasure of anyone not in the parade. First came the New Castle Band, playing with spirit (if not good intonation), then the Eagle Fire Company, followed by students and teachers from the Union schools. Next were the Lawrence Guards, the Ringgold Guards, and the Harlansburg Infantry—all doing their best to march in step.

At the appointed hour, everyone adjourned to a nearby grove, where appropriate dignitaries delivered appropriate sentiments while children played tag. There was plenty of picnicking, patriotic toasts, and the deafening crack of rifle salutes. And central to such events was the public reading of the nation's Declaration of Independence, an honor the young Ira Sankey orated on one occasion.<sup>31</sup>

After these exercises, everyone more-or-less attached to the military marched to Cochran House, where two hundred men, including some wizened veterans of 1812, enjoyed a sumptuous meal courtesy of the patriotic citizenry. Had Ezekiel Sankey Sr., lived, he doubtlessly would have enjoyed one of the chief seats of honor. Completing the day's festivities, a lavish ball was given by the Eagle Fire Company at the sprawling, new, ninety-room Leslie House.<sup>32</sup> Conspicuously absent, however, was the Sankey family, for a ball—with dancing, no less—was no place for a pious Methodist family. David Sankey and his clan took seriously the Biblical admonitions about abstaining from all appearance of evil, resulting in the rumor that he forbade whistling on the Sabbath.<sup>33</sup>

By 1855, the Sankey household had nearly enough voices for a full choir. Theresa Mehalia had been born in 1843; Richard Watson Jr. in 1845;<sup>34</sup> Horace Greeley (named after the famous Whig journalist) in 1847; Leathy Jane Mary in 1849; and after a gap of six years, baby Edwin in 1855.

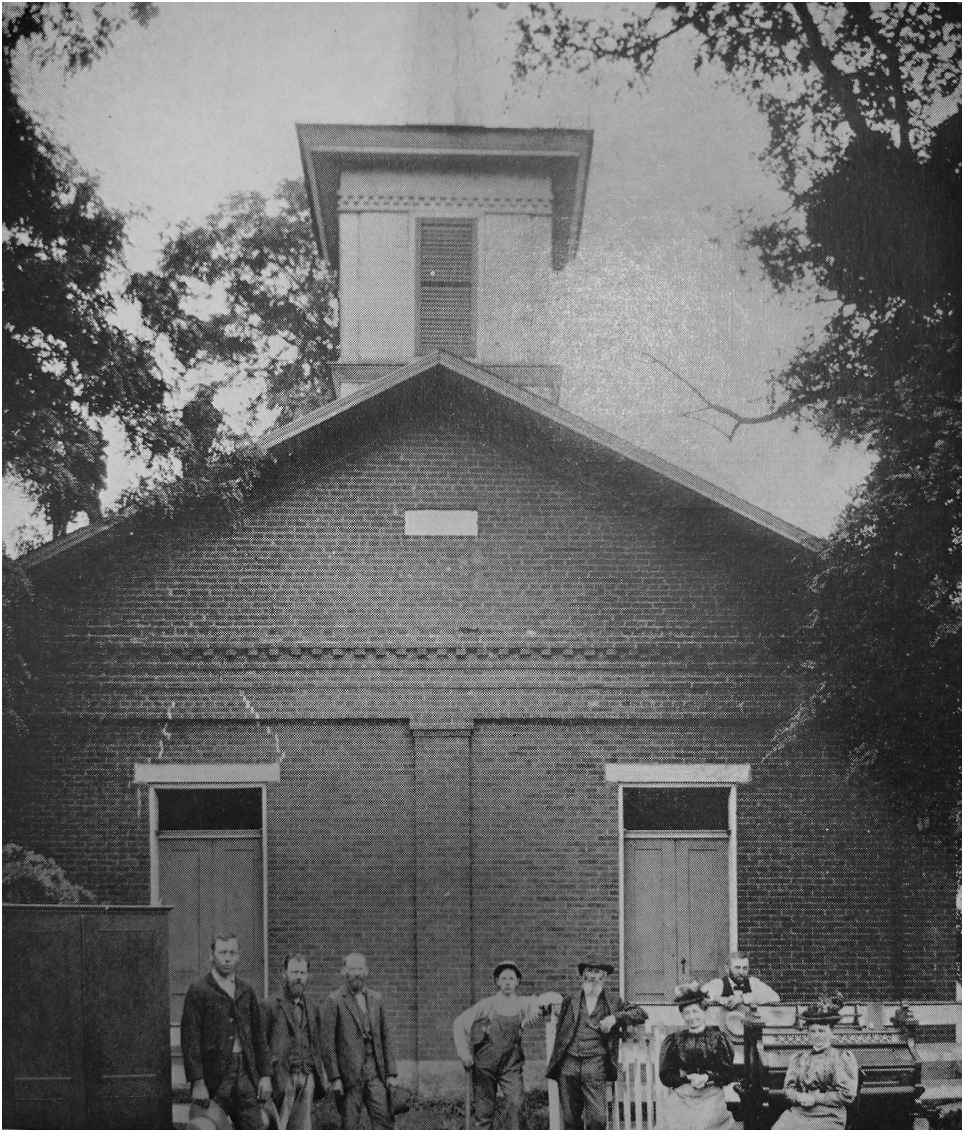
Although the Sankeys and their fellow residents were a hardy lot, few could forget winter that next year. On January 12, 1856, twenty inches of snow brought everything to a halt, and within days, the thermometer had dropped to 25 degrees below zero. February registered 32 below, and March, which some had hoped would bring an early thaw, saw 20 below. There was also considerable discussion about whether seven Baptist converts the Rev. Kirk immersed in the river that March should be candidates for sainthood or insanity. The same winter did see the formation of the New Castle Gas-

light Company. Ira's uncle Ezekiel Sankey Jr. was on the board of the company empowered to supply gas for illuminating the city for the next twenty years. Although the company was not able to fulfill its longterm goal, it did light up part of the city's business district by the year's end. The vast majority of citizens, however, still conducted any nocturnal business by oil lamp.

Clearly the most important and memorable event during Ira's adolescence was his experience at King's Chapel in Neshannock Township, a mile from home. King's Chapel held the honor of being the first regular meeting place for Methodists soon after the territory was settled in the late 1700s. Although Scotch-Irish Presbyterians had already laid spiritual claim to much of the area, Methodist beliefs and practices proved to be especially well suited to the American frontier, and soon they became a dominant force in western Pennsylvania as well.

In the early phases of Methodist frontier work, classes and societies were established in various homes and continued to meet until a church or chapel could be supported. A combination of local lay exhorters and circuit-riding preachers supplied leadership to various Methodist groups. The local exhorter attempted to visit every family under his care once a month to share in prayer and Bible reading. While the exhorter ministered in a lay or voluntary capacity and was supported by a regular job, the circuit rider fell into the category of professional clergyman whose full time was spent traveling and tending to the needs of those on his circuit. In a day when circuit riding translated into traveling on horseback for countless hours or even days over unimproved roads through often desolate countryside, Methodist preachers were famed for their physical as well as spiritual stamina. Most were young and full of fire with a desire to see souls saved and lives sanctified. They were not encouraged to marry, as most of their time was spent traveling, and without the distraction of a wife or family, all one's time and energy could be dedicated to the work of the ministry. During the 1800s, a circuit rider's annual salary in the Shenango Circuit encompassing King's Chapel was eighty dollars. It was doubled if he were blessed with a wife.<sup>35</sup>

In 1856, the congregation of King's Chapel moved into a newly completed brick building topped with a traditional pointed spire intended to direct the worshiper's gaze to loftier things above. By rural standards, the new edifice was quite impressive. It measured forty by fifty feet and cost \$3000 to construct. Its facade was strikingly plain, its most notable feature being two doors—one on the right for men and one on the left for women. The new



**King's Chapel**, where Ira Sankey was converted, from *The Ira Sankey Centenary* (1941).

building was actually the third to consecrate the spot. The first had been a crude log structure erected by Marinus King in 1806; the second, a small frame building replacing the original in 1835. Two years later, King and his wife deeded the ground on which the building stood to the congregation, and in their honor, the chapel became known as King's Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>36</sup>



The need for enlarged facilities after mid-century resulted from the church's strong growth over a period of more than twenty years. These were undeniably some of the most important decades for the growth of Methodism throughout the United States. The Second Great Awakening, which had ignited in the South around 1800 and spread to the North through the efforts of revivalists such as Asahel Nettleton and Charles Finney, had been particularly advantageous to the Methodists. By the eve of the Civil War, Methodists—in their various theological manifestations—were clearly the dominant religious persuasion numerically, with over one-and-a-half million members. Baptists registered a little over a million, with Presbyterians at half that total.<sup>37</sup> Compared to Europe, with its state-church system of religion, Victorian America, with its lack of official support for any single church body, was a surprisingly religious land. By 1860, Americans could choose to worship at any of 38,183 churches (worth a total of eighty-seven million dollars)—one church for every 608 persons—all built and sustained by the voluntary support of individual church members.<sup>38</sup>

The immediate cause of sustained growth at King's Chapel seems to have been its annual season of spiritual awakening, which came almost without exception with the arrival of the revival preacher. In most Methodist churches, a revival consisted of a series of protracted or nightly meetings in which a guest preacher powerfully exhorted his hearers to repent of the sins that had condemned their lives to eternal damnation and turn to Christ. The message was certainly not new to the faithful, but there was always a heightened spiritual awareness of eternal truths under the sermonizing of a novel or eloquent preacher.

It was during this season of spiritual quickening that sixteen-year-old Ira attended the annual series of nightly meetings. There he heard again the familiar gospel of man's sin and God's love, preached with power and urgency. The young Sankey had certainly not been callous to this message in the past. In fact, for some time he had been desperately trying to respond to the gospel message as he comprehended it, but all his efforts seemed to no avail.<sup>39</sup> His was no unique experience, however, for countless weary seekers had traveled the rocky path before him in similar agony of soul. No less than spiritual giants Martin Luther, John Bunyan, Jonathan Edwards, Methodist's founder John Wesley, and a nameless host of others had long struggled to find the way of salvation, which seemed hidden until finally illuminated by the Spirit of God.

The pastor was H.H. Moore; the revivalist was the Reverend J.T. Boyles.<sup>40</sup> Ira attended the first few nights as a matter of habit, as well as to participate in the Spirit-filled singing that always characterized such services. Of special delight were the hymns of Charles Wesley, sprinkled with effervescent favorites from the camp meeting tradition that weren't deemed worthy of inclusion in the official hymnals. Ira sat with friends, sometimes listening intently, sometimes daydreaming or whispering surreptitiously. One evening, at the conclusion of the exhortation to repent and turn to Jesus, an invitation to respond was extended. By this point in frontier life, the altar call had become a standard feature of Methodist revivals. It was an opportunity for those who experienced a strong concern for their souls to move to the front of the church and kneel at the communion rail or sit on a bench reserved for those seeking additional council. While a lay "exhorter" summarized the previous appeal for the seated congregation, the revivalist and perhaps the local preacher might provide council for those who came forward. The motivation for this very public response to the message was "to strike while the iron was hot." Instead of waiting for those struggling with sin to follow up at some later date, the idea was to make a decision and public acclamation for Christ before the moment passed.

At this point of intense spiritual and emotional intensity, a godly gentleman who had always taken an interest in Ira's spiritual condition encouraged him to respond. At first he refused, but on successive evenings as he was again urged to go forward, he began to ponder the words of John's gospel, chapter 3, verses 14 and 15: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Ira certainly understood the gospel writer's reference to Moses and that weird story in the Old Testament book of Numbers. There, during the forty years of wilderness wanderings, disobedient Israelites were bitten by poisonous snakes and were saved from death only by looking upon the image of a "brazen serpent" displayed on a pole.<sup>41</sup> But it had never quite made sense before now. Finally, Ira realized he must not look inward to find a spiritual solution, or to resolve one more time to do better; he must look outward to the One who had the power to save. And where the Israelites were required to look at that strange symbol of a snake on a pole, so too was the young farm lad required to look to Christ on the cross for salvation from sin and the promise of eternal life.<sup>42</sup>

As Ira joined others at the "anxious bench,"<sup>43</sup> he knelt asking God to be merciful to a sinner and to enter his life and make him a child of God. At the

conclusion of the services, he was, along with other new converts, accepted as a probationer into the membership of King's Chapel. As the emotion and fire of the nightly revival services abated and young Sankey was confronted with his daily routine, he realized something life-changing had taken place. While it was common for some revival converts to revert to their old ways after the powerful singing and preaching of the sanctified community had subsided, Ira had no such tendencies. He was troubled at times by various moods and feelings he didn't understand and by the lack of instruction for new converts, but his experience there in that little chapel in the rural countryside of western Pennsylvania would ultimately carry him around the world as he sought to share the same good news with millions of others.<sup>44</sup>

Sankey was unable to complete his probation period and become a full member, however, because a strange event in nearby New Castle affected the entire family. On March 26, 1857, J.N. Wagonseller, a well-known citizen of that city, returned after a brief stay in Philadelphia. Although his homecoming was accompanied by a certain degree of fanfare and civic interest, Wagonseller was undoubtedly less excited about greeting his fellow New Castleans than they were in welcoming him. For Wagonseller, who had been cashier at the Bank of New Castle, had absconded with the corporation's capital and was busy enjoying the fruits of his ill-gotten gain when he was captured with \$21,500 of banknotes in his carpetbag. Once returned, he was promptly incarcerated in the city jail—even though it sustained a much-deserved reputation for its lack of security. Wagonseller did not need to escape his confinement, however, for within a few weeks, the city's most notorious citizen was able to make bail—and promptly fled the county.<sup>45</sup>

Although that was the end of Wagonseller, the Bank of New Castle was in considerable disarray. On the first day of May, a meeting of the institution's stockholders deemed reorganization to be necessary. The Wagonseller embezzlement had apparently been the straw that broke the corporation's financial back, for the two-year-old bank had been enjoying only mixed success. Thus, the time seemed propitious to put its house in a different order. The Honorable David Sankey, one of the county's most respected citizens, was elected president of the newly constituted Bank of Lawrence County. It's unclear whether David was elected solely because of his position in the community—which would obviously lend needed credibility to the new venture—or partly because his brother Ezekiel was one of the bank's original incorporators, exerting influence to elect his sibling. Whatever the reasons were behind David Sankey's new occupation, the result was a change of res-



idence for the family and for the sixteen-year-old country lad who found himself packing the family belongings onto wagons bound for a new home in the city. Although New Castle was only a few miles distant, it was a long way socially for Ira, going from the son of a commissioning agent and sometime farmer to that of bank president. ☞



## ENDNOTES

1. Words and music by Sankey's co-editor, James McGranahan, "Verily, Verily" (also called "O What a Saviour"), *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan, and George C. Stebbins, eds. (Cincinnati: John Church Co.; New York: Biglow and Main, 1894), No. 132.
2. Herman S. Sankey, "Sankey: the Origin of the Name," undated transcript in New Castle Public Library Historical Collection, 1. Mark Antony Lower, *Patronymica Britannica* (1860), 160, says, "The Sankeys descend from a Lancashire family of considerable antiquity. The first upon record is Galfridus de Sankey, who held the lands of Sankey Magna and Sankey Parva in Lancashire, in the reign of King John."
3. When Ira Sankey filed an application on 30 April 1907 to be a member of the Sons of the American Revolution, Empire State chapter, he indicated he did not know his great-grandfather William's birthdate. Entries on Ancestry.com generally place William's birthdate as 1745 or 1750, but with no evidentiary basis. See also Nellie M. Simonton, "Some Early Families of Lawrence County, PA," a typescript in the Lawrence County Public Library Historical Collection, n.d., 41, which puts William's birth at 1750.
4. *The Ira D. Sankey Centenary: Proceedings of the Centenary Celebration of the Birth of Ira D. Sankey, Together with Some Hitherto Unpublished Sankey Correspondence* (New Castle, PA: Lawrence County Historical Society, 1943), 14; see also Ira David Sankey's SAR application (1907), available via Ancestry.
5. Dan McClenahan, *Wills of Mifflin County, 1789-1860*, Vol. 1 (1983), 3; the children being Ezekiel, William, James, John, Jane, Rachel, Elizabeth, Mary, Mary Ann, and Esther; written 13 Apr. 1790, probated 13 Dec. 1794. In the 1790 U.S. census, Mifflin County, household of William Sankey, there were three males 16 or older (including himself), no males under 16, and four females of any age, suggesting some of the older children had already left the house. In 1790, there was also an Elizabeth Sankey, head of household, with one male 16 or older, three males under 16, and six females of any age. This is possibly his daughter, and potentially some of the siblings. On Ira D. Sankey's SAR application, he did not know his great-grandmother's maiden name. Trees on Ancestry.com refer to her as Elizabeth Young or Jung, although supporting documentation for this is lacking.
6. Simonton, "Some Early Families of Lawrence County, PA," 41; Aaron L. Hazen, *20th Century History of New Castle and Lawrence County, Pennsylvania, and Representative Citizens* (Chicago: Richmond-Arnold Pub. Co., 1908), 348; S.W. and P.A. Durant, *History of Lawrence County, Pennsylvania, 1770-1877* (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts and Co., 1877), 165. Although Ezekiel left a large family at his death in 1813, there was not another death in the family

until 1857, a period of 44 years.

7. Durant, *History*, 7. This Ezekiel is usually called Ezekiel Jr. in most accounts.
8. The area was previously known as Mullentown or Mulleintown.
9. The town is often spelled Edenburg, although the current designation seems to be Edinburg.
10. The family burial plot in New Castle's Greenwood Cemetery lists an unnamed son buried in Edinburg, PA: July 7–14, 1831.
11. Born 29 August 1832, she married her cousin Joseph D. Sankey and died 5 April 1859, leaving one daughter, Eva May. She is buried in the Sankey plot in New Castle.
12. Durant, *History*, 125–26. At some point, the Sankey family apparently moved to Western Reserve Harbor. It seems from various descriptions in Durant that it was during a period preceding 1840; however, Ira Sankey states in the Sunday School Times edition of his autobiography, *My Life*, 3, that his family moved to Western Reserve when he was six (in 1846). Sankey Run Road runs south into Edinburg Harbor Road; there's a Harbor, PA, which is probably the old Western Reserve Harbor location where the family moved when Ira was 6. They later moved to a "farm nearby" where Ira worked.
13. David Sankey began work for the "Greenville line" but was soon asked to also work as the agent for the competing G.M. Horton & Co. When the two businesses merged about 1840, he was put in charge of the new company. Durant, *History*, 126.  

The Beaver and Erie Canal, also known as the Erie Extension Canal, was part of the Pennsylvania Canal system and consisted of three sections: the Beaver Division, the Shenango Division, and the Conneaut Division. David also possibly represented the Pennsylvania and Ohio canal, which began at New Castle and traveled 90-some miles west into Ohio.
14. Durant, *History*, 167.
15. Durant, *History*, 167.
16. *Christian World* (London), 20 March 1884, 7. Sankey shared this information with a reporter during their London mission of 1884.
17. Durant, *History*, 167.
18. Frank S. Reader, *Moody and Sankey: An Authentic Account of their Lives and Services* (New York: E.J. Hale and Son, 1876), 46.
19. First published as *Divine Songs Attempted in Easy Language for the Use of Children to Which Are Added Prayers for Children* (1715). The "Cradle Song" was often the final selection in various editions, of which there were over 1000.
20. Sankey, *My Life*, 13.

21. David Williamson, *Ira D. Sankey: The Story of His Life* (London: S.W. Partridge and Co., n.d.), 12. In commenting that none of his relatives were particularly musical, Ira must have forgotten his uncle Ezekiel, who was widely known for having a wonderful singing voice. See Durant, *History*, 166.
22. E.S. Bucke, ed., *The History of American Methodism*, Vol. 2 (NY: Abington, 1964), 341.
23. B. Waugh and T. Mason, eds., *Selection of Hymns for the Sunday School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Waugh and T. Mason for the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1832), No. 154 (p. 128). This hymn, often published under the heading “At the funeral of a young person,” was included in an extraordinary number and variety of hymnals from 1760 well into the twentieth century.
24. Durant, *History*, 167.
25. Sankey, *My Life*, 14.
26. None of these activities was specifically mentioned by Sankey in his autobiography, but describe the world of his youth in Lawrence County. Primarily from the account of Durant’s *History*, 31–34.
27. His occupation was listed in the *New Castle City Directory* as “gentleman” in 1841.
28. Durant, *History*, 33. Although this narrative is recorded as fact in the county history book, there seems to be a great deal of imagination in this account.
29. Reader, *Moody and Sankey*, 47–48.
30. See his letter of 28 December 1901 to his brother “Watt” in chapter 1, where he concludes it with *Deo volente* (God willing).
31. That was in 1858 at the July 5th meeting of the Methodist Episcopal Sunday School. Typescript in Lawrence County Historical Society entitled “Excerpts from History of Lawrence County, 1770–1877.”
32. In 1863–1864, Ezekiel Sankey would become proprietor of Leslie House.
33. W.H. Daniels, *D.L. Moody and His Work: with Portraits and Illustrations* (Hartford: American Pub. Co., 1876), 230. While acquaintance Daniels seems to report the issue of whistling as fact, Ira’s workplace friend, Frank Reader, claims the story, “A great mistake this,” reporting that David Sankey was “not harsh or severe in [such] matters.” Reader, *Moody and Sankey*, 46.
34. Richard Watson Jr. was a twin boy whose brother (unnamed) died in childbirth and was buried at Edenburg (now spelled Edinburg). It seems most unusual for the living twin to be named Richard Watson, as he already had an older brother (born 1837) with exactly the same name. Since the older Richard died sixteen months after the birth of Richard Jr., it seems possible that the first child by that name had become terminally ill and the parents wanted

to continue his memory by giving the name to another child. It seems less possible that David and Mary liked the name enough to give the same first and middle name to two of their children at once—talk about confusion.

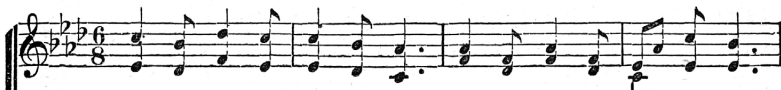
35. *150 Years of Methodism on the Shenango Circuit, 1803–1953* (Lawrence County, PA, 1953), 12; Durant, *History*, 152; Robert Baird, *State and Prospects of Religion in America* (London, 1855), 25–26, reports extensive and fascinating statistics related to American Methodism.
36. *150 Years of Methodism*, 1; Hazen, *20th Century History*, 266.
37. Timothy L. Swan, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestants on the Eve of the Civil War* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1976), 20–21.
38. Swan, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 17.
39. “Mr. Sankey in Switzerland,” *The Christian Herald*, 17 August 1875. This report of Sankey’s visit to Berne in July of 1875 contains one of the few, if not only, accounts of his pre-conversion spiritual struggles.
40. M. Laird Simons, “*The Gospel Awakening*,” *Comprising the Sermons and Addresses, Prayer-Meeting Talks, and Bible Readings of the Great Revival Meetings Conducted by Moody and Sankey* (Chicago: L.T. Palmer, 1877), 21. Hazen, *20th Century History*, 226. The pastor was Rev. H.H. Moore; see Reader, *Moody and Sankey*, 50.
41. The term “brazen serpent” found in Numbers 21:4–9 refers to the bronze serpent Moses had made in obedience to God’s command.
42. *Christian Herald*, 17 August 1875.
43. “Anxious bench” was the term for a specific place near the front of the church where people under conviction of sin could come forward at the conclusion of a sermon and be counseled about their spiritual condition. It became a standard feature of revivalism across denominational lines and is often used in conjunction with the term “altar call,” when hearers were invited to come to the altar (which was probably the communion rail in many churches) and kneel for prayer or counsel.
44. Daniels, *Moody and His Work*, 230–31. In Sankey’s *My Life*, he simply mentioned his conversion at sixteen at King’s Chapel. Daniels, on the other hand, provides numerous details of the revival meetings, which don’t seem to be published elsewhere. Charles Ludwig’s *Sankey Still Sings* (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 1947; reprinted by Baker Book House, 1974) obviously built on Daniel’s account, adding a few imaginative touches of his own. Either Daniels invented a plausible account of Sankey’s conversion or he must have talked with the subject himself or another eyewitness. Considering the early date of Daniel’s writing and the presence of numerous details that prove accurate, it seems reasonable to trust his telling as generally more reliable.
45. Durant, *History*, 34; Hazen, *20th Century History*, 136.

# No. 33. Trusting Jesus, That is All.

"Though he slay me, yet will I trust him."—JOB 13: 15.

ANON.

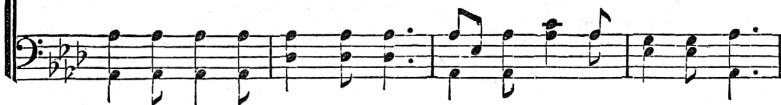
IRA D. SANKEY, by per.



1. Simply trusting ev - ery day, Trusting thro' a stormy way;
2. Brightly doth His Spir - it shine In - to this poor heart of mine;
3. Singing, if my way is clear; Praying, if the path is drear;
4. Trusting Him while life shall last, Trusting Him till earth is past;



E - ven when my faith is small, Trusting Je - sus, that is all.  
 While He leads I can - not fall, Trusting Je - sus, that is all.  
 If in dan - ger, for Him call; Trusting Je - sus, that is all.  
 Till within the jas - per wall, Trusting Je - sus, that is all.



## CHORUS.



Trusting as the moments fly, Trusting as the days go by;



Trusting Him whate'er be - fall, Trusting Je - sus, that is all.



## *Chapter 3*

### Man with a Repetitious Name

1857–1862

*Simply trusting every day, Trusting thro' a stormy way;  
Even when my faith is small, Trusting Jesus, that is all.*

*Trusting as the moments fly, Trusting as the days go by;  
Trusting him whate'er befall, Trusting Jesus, that is all.*

*Singing if my way is clear; Praying if the path is drear;  
If in danger, on him call; Trusting Jesus, that is all.<sup>1</sup>*

THE MOVE TO NEW CASTLE in 1857 required some adjustment. By the standards of the countryside where he had grown up, New Castle was a bustling metropolis of seven thousand souls. It certainly impressed the visitor from sophisticated Philadelphia who described it as

. . . a city of broad streets, large brick buildings, noble school-houses, comfortable residences, and immense manufactories. It is beautifully located, reminding one of Pittsburgh in its abundance of coal and iron and in its swarthy complexion. Yet it is fresher than its dusty neighbor. There is an air of health in all natural surroundings. In its romantic streams and the lovely valley in which it lies embosomed, it possesses advantages of which Pittsburgh cannot boast.<sup>2</sup>

Technically, the Sankey family did not live within the city proper but in the community of West New Castle, directly across the Shenango River. West New Castle was perched on the side of a hill, rising gently but steadily from the river, overlooking the city proper on the opposite shore. The Sankeys had located there because the area had been laid out earlier by Ira's uncle Ezekiel. In almost every respect, however, the Sankeys were full-fledged citizens of the larger community.<sup>3</sup>

New Castle's chief business was the manufacture of iron products and its related processes in which iron ore, coal, and limestone were extracted



from the surrounding hills and processed in furnaces, rolling mills, and factories to produce everything from railroad iron to three-penny nails. The town also boasted several new flour mills, two large foundries, machine and engine shops, as well as small businesses. Rich agricultural lands surrounded the town and more than supplied the needs of its populace. A system of canals criss-crossing much of the northeast linked New Castle to the larger world of commerce and travel, flowing directly through the town, connecting to the Ohio River twenty miles to the south and Lake Erie fifty miles to the north. When the Sankey family moved to New Castle, it was eagerly awaiting the completion of railroad connections, a development that would eventually make the canals obsolete but almost magically link the town with the rest of the country.<sup>4</sup>

With the faster pace of city life, Ira enjoyed a virtual whirlwind of activities and new interests. Every day his horizons seemed to stretch a bit, especially in school. Unlike his rural education, New Castle's high school resided in a handsome three-storey brick structure, which accommodated six hundred scholars and shared its space with the city's main elementary grades. Just before Ira's eighteenth birthday, a few aspiring citizens initiated a new Festival Glee Club, with Ira playing an active role, reflecting the growing interest in choral music throughout the land. Ira also assisted his father at the bank and developed new friendships with neighborhood boys, like John Knox.<sup>5</sup> As one of his friends later recalled:

[Ira] was full of life and energy. Nothing could daunt him or dismay him. He had a strong will, was self-reliant, and possessed of a determination to do whatever he undertook. . . . For this reason he was readily accepted by the other boys as a leader in their sports and schemes. One of his most admirable traits was his truthfulness and sense of humor. He could always be trusted in everything. He would play pranks, but not at the expense of honor. His frankness and courage, with his truthfulness, made him a pleasant and welcome visitor wherever he went. People . . . trusted him at once.<sup>6</sup>

That could be a very important trait, as life was fraught with both common and unexpected dangers. Deadly diseases and crippling illnesses could strike at any time. And being thrown from a horse or even trampled by a cow was a familiar experience. Shocking to the family was the death of Patterson Sankey in the nearby community of Plain Grove when he was killed

by falling timbers from an old barn he was demolishing.<sup>7</sup> Community-wide tragedies—such as the seventy-foot span of tow-path bridge, which collapsed into Nashannock Creek—marked shared trauma. Fortunately, none of the three persons or horses pitched into the abyss were seriously injured, but it made for some great local excitement.

One of the most noticeable differences between city and country was how close the neighbors lived. In the country, Ira could sometimes go for days without seeing anyone other than his own family, but here in the city, he practically lived right on top of the McCusicks, Sullivans, Fulkersons, and Edwardses. The Edwards family in particular seemed most delightful. They had much in common with the Sankeys, for they were godly Methodists, were well respected in the community, and made their living from farming. Of great interest to Ira were John and Mary Edwards' five daughters: three in their teens, one a bit older, and the youngest at eleven. At nineteen, Sarah was just one year younger than Ira; her older sister, Frances, two years Ira's senior, was quite attractive.

David Sankey was apparently not cut out for banking, as he returned to farming in 1860, although he remained in West New Castle. Yet, by local standards, David was noticeably better off than his neighbors—his real estate being valued at \$4000 and his personal goods at \$1500.<sup>8</sup> Just a few years later, David and Mary sat patiently for a photo of themselves, looking quite prosperous and dignified.<sup>9</sup> By now, David had become a good businessman and expected his son to follow suit. At twenty, Ira, now the oldest child in the Sankey household,<sup>10</sup> was considered grown enough to settle down, get a steady job, and start a family. But it often seemed to his industrious father that Ira's interests were on everything but business. The main distraction, of course, was music.

Especially vexing for David was his son's desire to run off to Farmington, Ohio, to attend a musical convention. Lowell Mason (1792–1872) was the man chiefly responsible for this new form of musical attraction. In 1834, Mason, the country's most influential musician, and his partner, George Webb, had offered a class for twelve music teachers at the Boston Academy of Music. The response to the ten-day session on choral music was so strong, the concept was expanded and became an annual event, eventually becoming the National Music Convention. The classes' primary instruction involved music teaching methods and practices in group singing. The majority of attendees were church choir directors, and the repertoire was

mostly sacred.<sup>11</sup> Mason and a growing circle of assistants were soon taking these popular music conventions to cities throughout the north.



**Lowell Mason (L)**, engraved by H. Wright Smith, Boston Public Library, reprinted in Carol A. Pemberton, *Lowell Mason: His Life and Work* (1985). **William Bradbury (R)**, engraved by F. Halpin, printed in *The Victory* (1869).

The concept seemed too good to pass up, and other musicians formed their own organizations, offering their unique brand of musical instruction, often in truncated form. One of these was William Bradbury (1816–1868), who, along with Thomas Hastings (1784–1872)—the conservative old patriarch of American church music and the composer of the tune for “Rock of Ages”—formed the American Music Convention in 1846. By 1860, when Bradbury held one of his last musical assemblies in Farmington, he was quite the musical celebrity. Over a decade earlier, he had made a much-publicized tour of Europe, where he met the charismatic Svengali of the piano, Franz Liszt, heard Robert and Clara Schumann, and resided within three doors of the acclaimed composer Felix Mendelssohn. At that time, Mendelssohn was nearing the end of his brief career and lived for only another month. Impressed by the composer and his music, Bradbury attended his funeral, then purchased his piano and shipped it back to the United States. After returning in 1849, Bradbury continued to produce religious music for children, becoming the country’s leading composer and publisher of Sunday School songs. Ira was no little excited about meeting this famous man and learning what he had to impart.

Up to this point, Ira's musical education had been hit or miss. He had learned to read music during long winter evenings, seated around the family hearth, singing hymns. By eight, he could intone favorites such as ST. MARTINS, BELMONT, and CORONATION, three tunes meant for "common meter" hymns; that is, hymns in iambic pentameter with eight syllables in the first and third lines and six syllables in the second and fourth (8.6.8.6). Popular texts designed to match such tunes included Isaac Watts' paraphrase of Psalm 90, "Our God, our help in ages past" and Edward Perronet's "All hail the power of Jesus' name." In fact, the majority of hymn texts sung during Ira's time could be fitted to hymn tunes constructed in three different meters, known as Common, Long, or Short.<sup>12</sup> It's possible Ira received some rudimentary keyboard instruction, perhaps at home on the family piano. He seems to have been naturally gifted at music, learning to play any instrument he came across, including those of his neighbors, whom he often serenaded in their own homes. He remembered every song he encountered, eventually improvising on them to avoid monotony.<sup>13</sup>

What Sankey learned in the tiny crossroads of Farmington—just sixty miles to the northwest—was an approach to teaching music based on the principles of one Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827), a Swiss educator. His ideas had been adopted—some claim stolen—by Lowell Mason and his followers and applied to all aspects of music education. Originally directed towards children, the approach was also happily found applicable to adults. It stressed the concept of gradual learning, going from the known to the unknown and from the simple to the complex, as opposed to the previous practice of unthinking rote memorization of musical rules. It also emphasized teaching the person rather than the subject matter. Although these principles would later appear to be the most obvious pedagogical axioms, such ideas were quite revolutionary in their day.<sup>14</sup>

In many ways, the musical convention was a typical product of the Victorian era. Its emphasis upon the orderly and supposedly scientific principles of Pestalozzi augured well with the growing reverence for applying the scientific method to the classroom as well as the laboratory. Of course, music itself was widely believed to "civilize" the roughest denizen of frontier life, or those only a generation removed—embodied in William Congreve's famous dictum from *The Mourning Bride*, which boasted, "Music hath charms to sooth the savage breast."<sup>15</sup>

For Ira, the exciting things he learned at the convention, including how to teach a piece of choral music more effectively, were lessons he could

readily apply as the choir director at his church. Two years earlier, when the Sankey family moved to West New Castle, David and Mary transferred their membership from King's Chapel to the Jefferson Street Methodist Episcopal Church in town; Ira joined as a new communicant. Before long, however, church members noticed his unusual gift for music and selected him as their choir director. Now it was time to get back home and try out the new ideas and techniques he had learned.

Bubbling over with excitement, young Sankey returned to New Castle. Unfortunately, his father did not share his enthusiasm and loudly lamented to Ira's mother, "I am afraid that boy will never amount to anything; all he does is to run about the country with a hymn book under his arm." Whereupon the quick-witted and perceptive Mary shot back, "I would rather see him with a hymn book under his arm than a whiskey bottle in his pocket."<sup>16</sup>

By attending the musical convention, Ira undoubtedly hoped to acquire some much-needed wisdom for improving the musical traditions at his church. Many in his congregation were convinced—with the exception of thumping a tuning fork on the back of a hymnal to gain the starting pitch—musical instruments were not proper in God's house. Now that Ira had learned a novel and more "scientific" way to approach singing from the music convention, he tried to grit his teeth and bear the old traditions in Christian love; he knew these were good people, but ones seemingly mired in the past. If they had been Presbyterians, who had inherited the Puritan prohibition against musical instruments in worship, that would be one thing. But these were simply Methodists stuck in their ways.

While some in the congregation opposed instrumental music as worldly and wicked, most folks couldn't tell why instruments in worship were wrong; they just knew they were "uh-gin 'em." They had gotten along all those years without instruments and they could see no good reason to begin now. And perhaps, most importantly of all, the old singing schools where they learned about music didn't use instruments. So the question seemed settled.

That singing school tradition stretched back to early colonial times when church music—which meant congregational singing—was in dire straits. There seemed to be widespread agreement as early as the 1720s that something had to be done. In describing his experience with congregational singing, the influential Puritan divine Cotton Mather bemoaned, "It has been found . . . in some of our Congregations, that in length of Time, their

singing has degenerated into an Odd Noise.”<sup>17</sup> Others found “the tunes are now miserably tortured and twisted . . . it sounds in the ear of a good judge like five hundred different tunes roared out at the same time . . .” while one gullible James Franklin wrote in a local paper how he was “credibly informed that a certain gentle-woman miscarried at the ungrateful and yelling noise of the deacon [who led the singing].”<sup>18</sup>

The basic cause of that dreadful manner of congregational singing resulted from musical illiteracy among worshipers and an overall lack of musical leadership. Puritan religious scruples did not allow the use of musical instruments to assist singing the often lengthy and sometimes complex Psalm tunes. The responsibility for leading a congregation devolved to a precentor who stood in front of the congregation and provided various levels of musical leadership, ranging from clearly-intoned melodies the congregation could echo back, to enigmatic grunts that perplexed parishioners were expected to decode and transform into glorious praise. More often than not, the precentor simply announced the name of a tune he assumed the congregation could manage, then simply read out the Psalm—one line at a time, stopping for the congregation to sing it back before proceeding to the next.

Puritan hymn books—called Psalters—contained only words; it was expected for congregants to be capable of matching a familiar tune to the words without reliance on printed music, which few would have been able to read. However, with no instruments to guide the singers, and with uncertain leadership from precentors, a tradition developed in which everyone sang the tune as they had learned it or presently recalled it. There was no standard of musical right or wrong, and the results were fearfully and wonderfully various. The situation became so bad, some churches despaired of even retaining congregational singing in their services.

The solution seemed obvious to many who couldn’t even entertain the possibility of employing an organ to assist the singing. It was simply to instruct the religious populace in the rules and art of reading music and providing them with the needed materials to restore congregational singing to an earlier state when Puritans had been renowned for their lively and vital church music. Thus the development of the singing school and its teachers.

Singing masters were generally itinerant and often self-taught. Armed with a strong voice, some rudiments of music theory, and a tunebook, they solicited patronage in towns, villages, and



countryside. When they had obtained a significant number of pupils, they would set up their “school” in any available locale, such as a tavern or church, and remain there for a designated period that might last several weeks, holding sessions on specified days and at specified hours.<sup>19</sup>

Instruction focused upon learning the fundamentals of rhythm and pitch. Ample time was given to the role of memorization of musical rules and the rehearsing of various illustrative exercises. A small number of musical selections were usually mastered to some degree of satisfaction and were performed for adoring relatives and supportive friends. The proud graduates of the schools often returned to their churches and promptly demonstrated how a little learning could be a dangerous thing. More than one church experienced a subsequent rift when these new musical elites, whose zeal often outshone their common sense, sat together in worship, forming their own *ad hoc* choir and clearly attempting to hijack the musical practices of those less enlightened.

Fortunately for Ira, when he returned home, he refrained from flaunting his superior knowledge with a haughty attitude or unbridled impatience. Over the next few years, hard-liners who opposed the use of instruments either died off or were won over, and the Methodists acquired an organ. Decades later, Ira recalled,

I shall never forget the day on which the organ was first introduced. I had the honor of presiding at the instrument, and I remember well how carefully I played the opening piece. Only one or two of the old members left the church during the singing. It was reported that an old man, who left the church on account of the introduction of the organ, was seen on his dray the next day, driving through the main street of the town, seated on the top of a large casket of rum, singing at the top of his voice: “A charge to keep I have.”<sup>20</sup>

After that incident, there was apparently no more trouble about the organ. The instrument in question was not a highly visible pipe organ, which would eventually dominate the sanctuary of any self-respecting church; it was a little pump organ, which its operator played with both hands on the keyboard while pumping two pedals with the feet. The pedals were attached to a bellows, which forced air across reeds of various lengths inside the in-



strument, supplying a rather wheezy sound to assist congregational singing. Organs came in various sizes and options. Some were modest of design and could be quite portable; larger models offered a selection of reed sounds to vary the sonic possibilities. Before the piano became nearly omnipresent in



*My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns* (1906)

most upwardly mobile American homes during the post-Civil War period, a reed or pump organ anchored the position of honor in many a parlor and a growing number of churches. Pianos wouldn't become a fixture in church sanctuaries until the early twentieth century.<sup>21</sup>

Although there were plenty of frustrations connected with his church music, Ira was gaining valuable experience by working with people and learning how to overcome deeply seated opinions and prejudices about worship styles and religious music—an ability that, in later years, would be crucial to his success. In reality, it wasn't all that hard for young Sankey to influence peo-

ple's hearts and minds, for Ira loved people and they loved him. He owned a sunny disposition and friendly, winning ways. People seemed drawn to him. Presently, one of his female choir members seemed a little more drawn than the others, but for the time being said nothing. She just watched and prayed.

As if Ira weren't busy enough directing the church choir and cultivating his social life, he was selected superintendent of the church's booming Sunday School. It was a volunteer position of almost staggering proportions for a young lad of twenty, as there were eventually 350 scholars in the Sabbath School.<sup>22</sup> In some churches, the position of Sunday School superintendent almost rivaled the pastor in popularity and influence. It required procuring teachers for the various classes, instructing them in proper methods and procedures, providing a curriculum, coordinating facilities and equipment, keeping records, and presiding at combined class meetings and rallies. It

went without saying, the leader of the Sunday School must be an energetic and enthusiastic promoter of the work, both within and without the church. In Ira D. Sankey, the church found precisely such a man.

On the eve of the Civil War, the Sunday School was one of the most dynamic institutions in American religious life. It had long outgrown its original purpose of educating poor children who were only free from their factory or mill work on Sunday. As America's system of public education slowly spread, it relieved the Sunday School of literacy instruction and allowed it to concentrate on religious matters.

Among the various religious denominations, Methodists were among the most prominent and successful in Sunday School work. This generally resulted from a two-pronged emphasis. The national Methodist Sunday School Union gave structure and direction to the movement from the lay side, helping to train teachers, develop literature, and promote a consistency of approach. The General Conference of the Methodist Church gave official sanction and support by requiring the Presiding Elder in each congregation to regularly inquire as to the school's proper operation, and it charged the preacher to "visit the schools as often as practicable, to preach on the subject of Sunday-schools and religious instruction in each congregation at least once in six months," and to organize Bible classes for adult members.<sup>23</sup>

For many Methodists, the Sunday School became the primary means of both salvation and sanctification.<sup>24</sup> A means of salvation because the Bible could be regularly and systematically taught to receptive hearers, and a means of sanctification because it offered instruction in daily Christian living. One enthusiastic account of the school's sanctifying influence boasted,

Among other schools there was . . . one for the little chimney sweeps . . . and the effect of the Sunday schools on this previously-neglected class of children was really astonishing—they had formerly been among the most debased and ignorant of persons in the whole city . . . ; but now such an alternation has taken place that the Song of Solomon might be heard from their lips as they passed along in their morning work.<sup>25</sup>

From a Victorian perspective, sanctification was often synonymous with the broader civilizing influences that supposedly characterized the middle class as well as mediated the wickedness of both the frontier and inner city. When the American Sunday School Union stated its purposes were

“to promote the intellectual and moral culture of our nation, to perpetuate our republican and religious institutions, and to reconcile eminent national prosperity with moral purity and future blessedness,”<sup>26</sup> it was only reflecting a popular Victorian consensus. That this lofty goal for the Sunday School was no idle dream but rather a potentially attainable ideal is evident in Mark Twain’s sarcastic account of the corrupt Senator Dilsworthy, who hypocritically addresses a Sunday School class:

So this poor little boy [who had been faithful in Sunday School] grew up to be a man. . . . And by and by the people made him governor—and he said it was all owing to the Sunday School. After a while the people elected him a Representative to the Congress of the United States, and he grew very famous. Now temptation assailed him on every hand. People tried to get him to drink wine, to dance, to go to the theaters; they even tried to buy his vote; but no, the memory of his Sunday-school saved him from all harm; he remembered the fate of the bad little boy who used to get him to play on Sunday, and who grew up and became a drunkard and was hanged. He remembered that, and was glad he never yielded and played on Sunday. . . . That man stands before you! All that he is, he owes to the Sunday-school.<sup>27</sup>

Although Dilsworthy represented a scoundrel in Twain’s story, he was espousing the exalted cultural values it was hoped the Sunday School could inculcate into young people.

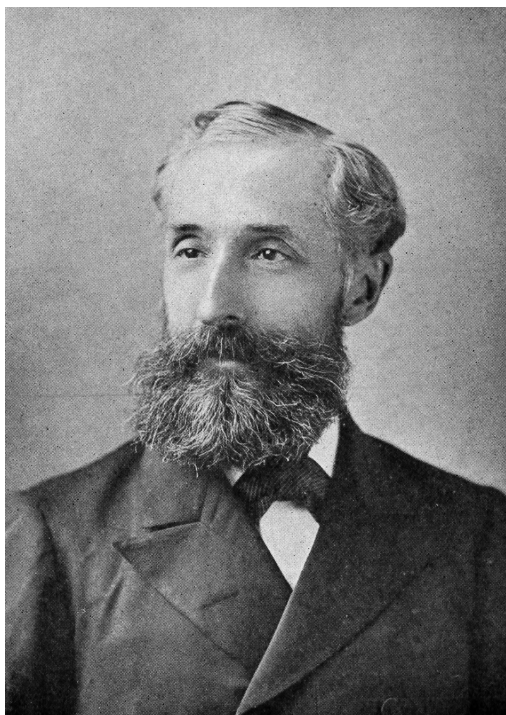
While the Sunday School was a fairly recent development in church life, the Class Meeting was central to Methodism from its earliest days. The Class Meeting was designed such that every Methodist was connected to other Methodists, often in different stages of their Christian lives. And they relentlessly focused on the current state of their relationship with God with the question, “How is it with your soul?” In many churches, attendance at Class Meetings was mandatory, and there you received a ticket admitting entrance to the larger Methodist gathering.

It’s hard to imagine how, in addition to his responsibilities with the music and the Sunday School, Ira would also consent to lead a Class Meeting. But he did. It met one night per week and boasted a large membership. This methodology to grow young believers into mature disciples was one of the contributing factors in the rapid spread of Methodism on both sides of

the Atlantic. It also challenged Ira to study the Bible more seriously, and as he did, he realized how gauging his spiritual status by his emotions alone was not biblical but needed a scriptural basis. Therefore, when quizzing his class, he would ask, "Tell us your condition in Bible language. The Scriptures abound with accounts of religious feelings of all descriptions. There is no state of grace which may not be described by a text."<sup>28</sup>



Until Philip Phillips came along, Ira Sankey was really nothing more than a small-town lad blessed with certain natural talents and a future pointing toward following in his father's footsteps. But after meeting the man with the repetitious name, all that changed. Phillips was a little-known music teacher from New York state whose *modus operandi* was to drive his horse and buggy through the countryside, stopping at the most prosperous-looking houses. He would then park his buckboard fitted with a melodeon or pump organ, take out his music, and begin to serenade the surrounding farm folk, thereby advertising his services and wares in an entertaining manner. The same pattern was also employed in the surrounding towns with good success. When business was particularly brisk and interest high, he would return the following winter to teach a singing school and provide other private instruction.



**Philip Phillips**, in George C. Stebbins, *Reminiscences and Gospel Hymn Stories* (1924).

In addition to selling materials necessary for proper musical advancement, he also doubled as an agent for a melodeon or pump organ company—singing schools by now having lost any prohibition against instruments. For many families seeking to graduate from the social stigma of the frontier to the Victorian respectability of a properly equipped domestic parlor, the purchase of a melodeon was more than simply a musical acquisition. As the growing consensus among an upwardly

mobile middle class perceived it, music was “an enlightener of homes, a protector of society, and a promoter of civilization, and all who labor to magnify its influence are public benefactors.”<sup>29</sup> A melodeon in the parlor left little doubt about one’s values. Every proper Victorian home must have one.

For a period of several months prior to visiting New Castle, Phillips’ musical itinerancy had been interrupted by events taking place in the Baptist church to which he belonged. During a series of revival meetings common to such churches, Phillips was asked to direct the music. Prior to the Civil War, this generally meant presiding over congregational singing from the keyboard—usually a pump organ—by providing a steady tempo and a strong voice. Revival music consisted of hymns appropriately chosen to emphasize the need of conversion. But for some reason, Phillips departed from the regular practice of leading a congregational song after the sermon, instead substituting a vocal solo right before the public invitation to respond for spiritual counsel or repentance. In each instance, he was careful to sing something suitable for mirroring or intensifying the spiritual message just delivered. Because the emphasis on conversion in a revivalist setting was always directed toward the individual, the personal nature of a religious solo—which reinforced the need to turn from sin and toward Christ—was found to be a powerful influence on its hearers.

By the time Phillips appeared in New Castle, he had apparently realized both the novelty and perhaps the potential that lay in the application of solo song to religious meetings. This new discovery was not lost on his listeners, for Phillips clearly demonstrated his ideas during both musical instruction and the concerts he presented. To Ira, Phillips’ approach was an epiphany:

I was thrilled with the possibilities which his singing revealed to me. For the first time I really understood the power which there is in solo singing, especially when the words are enunciated clearly and the full meaning of the song is brought out.<sup>30</sup>

Phillips’ solo singing was certainly not unique to the performance of sacred music. The ancient Jewish cantorial tradition boasted gifted solo singers, and the same could also be found in the verse anthems of the Anglican choral tradition of William Byrd, Thomas Weelkes, and Henry Purcell, or the later cantatas of the Lutheran Johann Sebastian Bach. Oratorios such as Handel’s *Messiah* also contained sacred solos—although intended for the concert hall, not the church.<sup>31</sup>



For most non-liturgical Protestant denominations, music in church meant congregational singing and not much more. Even the use of an organ to accompany congregational song was suspect for a long time. Solo singing seemed like an inappropriate, or worse, a theatrical intrusion into the solemn worship of God.

However hazy at the time, Ira was gradually beginning to formulate a vision of using his gifts in a manner capable of propelling him in a novel—and controversial—direction. Sankey was blessed with a baritone voice of unusual purity and sympathy. Although technically untrained, it was expressive and powerful and rarely failed to capture people's attention and interest. Ira had always enjoyed singing, but this new possibility of using his own voice to further the gospel was thrilling, and Philip Phillips had just shown him how to do it.

Little by little, as he felt appropriate, Ira began singing solos in the regular worship services of his Methodist church. Because he was already the church's beloved music director, it made the novelty of solo singing seem almost normal. And because he was also a church leader via his role as Sunday School superintendent, some of his potential critics held their tongues. Indeed, there is no record of the sort of trouble that accompanied the first appearance of the organ. Ira seemed relatively free to experiment and refine his musical ideas and find what worked and what didn't. When the novice singer's wonderful voice was coupled with his winning personality, the results were quite striking.

Yet most personal achievements crumbled into insignificance on April 12, 1861, when the nation found itself thrust into a bloody conflict amongst its own citizens. By the onset of the Civil War, the national Whig party, which David Sankey represented in the Pennsylvania legislature, had practically disappeared. For some years it had been experiencing a fracture over the issue of slavery until, in 1854, it split over the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which repealed the Missouri Compromise and allowed the new territories to decide for themselves whether to permit slavery. Most northern Whigs joined the fledgling Republican Party and became strong supporters of its first president, Abraham Lincoln. When he called for an army to restore the Union, Lawrence Countians were quick to respond.

David Sankey was too old, but Ira and his cousins Charles and Joseph D. were among the first to enlist. All three volunteered, and within less than two weeks found themselves assigned to Company H of the 12th Pennsyl-



vania Infantry as privates.<sup>32</sup> Reflecting the expectations for a short conflict, their enrollments required only three months of service. Ira was especially grateful that he and Joe could stay together, as the two men were more than cousins, they were also brothers-in-law; Joe had married Ira's oldest sister (and Joe's cousin), Rosanna Amelia some nine years earlier. Their union had been blessed with a daughter, Eva May, making Ira a proud uncle. But tragedy struck and Rosanna died, leaving Joe a widower to care for their daughter. The responsibility quickly proved too great, and five-year-old Eva was sent to live with her grandparents—David and Mary—and her aunts and uncles—Ira, Theresa, Richard Watson Jr., Horace Greeley, Leathy May, and Edwin, who was only a year older than his niece. Rosanna's death had occurred just two years earlier, so the grief over her loss and the mutual love for a sister and wife reflected the strong bond between the two soldiers as they set off for an uncertain future.<sup>33</sup>

On April 25, Company H arrived in Harrisburg, the capital, where the men were officially mustered into service by Governor Curtin and almost immediately shipped over two hundred miles via the Northern Central rail line to Camp Scott near York, Pennsylvania. It was one of many camps that had been hastily formed to help organize an onslaught of new volunteers clamoring to aid the North's call for assistance. It took over the York Agricultural Society's fairgrounds, where spring rains made endless drilling in the mud a source of constant complaint with men eager for action. Finally, on May 25, after what seemed like an eternity of soggy strutting around, the regiment was sent south to Maryland.

Although it was a slave state, it was also one of the original thirteen colonies, and many citizens of the Old Line State were divided in their loyalties between the North and the South. After Virginia seceded on April 17, Maryland's fate became critical, because if it left the Union, the capital of Washington, DC, would have been surrounded by the Confederacy. To stave off possible disaster, Union troops were rushed to Maryland to protect the capital. Maryland eventually decided to remain loyal to the federal government, but many of its citizens joined the Confederate army or harbored strong southern sympathies.

Ira's company was attached to the 3rd Brigade, 1st Division, Patterson's Army, to guard the North Central Railroad connecting the Pennsylvania line into Baltimore. But rather than assault a fabled enemy with exhilarating skirmishes, their assignment turned into countless hours of mind-numbing

guard duty. However, just as at New Castle, Ira's musical gifts could not be hid under a bushel, so he located a few other men apparently more interested in music than soldiering, and they formed a small musical ensemble. These "boys in blue" often sang for the military chaplain, assisting in frequent religious services where Ira led the singing. While off duty, Ira and his musical companions were invited into local homes to provide entertainment.

On at least one occasion, it produced some awkward moments. As they were ushered into the elegant parlor of one wealthy home, they were surprised to find it filled with a party of young ladies, who quickly began laughing at their guests. Whether it was at their coarse manners or humble military rank was unclear, but the lads soon began to feel out of place and unsure of their purpose there. Spying a piano, one of the soldiers approached it and struck a chord, whereupon Sankey launched into a hymn and was quickly joined by his fellows. Within minutes, the atmosphere changed and the young ladies fell under the spell of the young men in uniform. In fact, all present were so pleased with their musical efforts that they were kept well past the daylight hours. Not wishing them to return to their tents over three miles of unfamiliar and rugged territory in the dark, one of their hosts and his servant returned them safely to their post.<sup>34</sup>

The rapid transformation of their listeners from polite skeptics to enthusiastic supporters was not limited to that one occasion, however. As Ira later recalled:

I remember with what astonishment the Southern people heard some of our soldier boys play the piano in their beautiful homes. The singing of some of the old-time "home-songs" seemed to dispel all feeling of enmity. We were always treated with the utmost hospitality and kindness, and many friendships were formed that lasted until long after the war ended.<sup>35</sup>

The "home-songs" that so captivated their listeners included the popular parlor songs of the day, designed for solo voice with easy piano accompaniment and circulated in sheet music form. Henry Bishop's setting of "Home, Sweet Home" ("Mid pleasures and palaces") from the 1823 opera *Clari, or Maid of Milan* was the classic example, concluding with the domestic utterance, "there's no place like home." The most popular composer of this genre was Stephen Foster (1826–1864) whose sentimental songs often featured longing for a nostalgic past, with titles such as "Old Folks at Home" ("Way

down upon the Swanee River”), “My Old Kentucky Home,” and “Old Black Joe.” Other titles both captured and defined a Victorian sentimentalism that wallowed in feelings. “Hard Times Come Again No More,” “Beautiful Dreamer,” and “I Dream of Jeanie (with the Light Brown Hair)” sold thousands of copies and graced the keyboard of many a parlor. Even composers of successful Sunday School songs such as William Bradbury produced heart-wrenching, maudlin ballads like “The Lament of the Blind Orphan Girl.”<sup>36</sup>

On a more animated level were songs from the minstrel shows. Originating in the 1830s, minstrelsy developed into a three-scene drama, usually presented by four white performers in makeup—usually burnt cork—called “blackface,” employing exaggerated dialogue, manners, and actions that portrayed black people as lazy, dim-witted, superstitious, and happy-go-lucky. Although some abolitionists criticized the entertainment for portraying enslaved people as happy “darkies” while making fun of them, many southerners believed the shows threatened their own social norms by portraying runaway slaves with undeserved sympathy. Despite these negative appraisals, minstrelsy was the most popular form of entertainment for “all walks of life and every ethnic group” during the Civil War—on both sides of the conflict.<sup>37</sup>

One reason for the shows’ amazing popularity resulted from their creative and lively music, which became the popular songs of the day. Foster produced “Oh, Susanna” and “Camptown Races,” but the most popular number turned out to be “Dixie’s Land” (“I wish I was in the land of cotton”),<sup>38</sup> credited to Daniel Decatur Emmett, a song beloved on both sides of the conflict and a favorite of Abraham Lincoln’s. Unknown to Ira, the example of these popular songs with their catchy tunes, lively rhythms, and verse-chorus format would become an influence on his famous gospel songs in later years.

Ira was eager to maintain a steady correspondence with home, even if that meant rising before dawn to write a few lines.

N.[orth] C.[entral] Rail Road  
 July 10th, '61  
 Wednesday Morn 5 o'c.

Dear Father,

I have not heard a word from you or our families for a long while is there anything the matter? I want you to please drop a letter

as soon as you find time. I am quite well this morning. . . . The Captain went up to York last night on the 10 o'clock train to see about our pants and shirts. We are about to make a stroke on some secessionists and guns in their possession. We do not know when we will start. . . . All we know is that we will go soon. . . . It is about 25 miles to go where they (the guns) are. We will have to go on foot.

I want to go see the Capital in Washington if I can get a furlough. It will cost but about \$2.50 and I will never get to see the Capital for that sum.

We leave this place in about one week . . . to be mustered out. We have no pay yet. It may be that they will pay all in one payment . . . at the end of our time. I have not had to break the \$10 you sent me. . . .

Tell Eddie [Ira's youngest brother] I will be coming up the lane some of these days, very soon. I would like to see the dear little fellow.

Hope to hear from you very soon. I conclude by signing myself your aft. [affectionate] son.

Ira D.<sup>39</sup>

That "stroke on some secessionists and guns" never transpired, and on August 5, the three Sankey cousins who had enlisted together were mustered out at Pittsburgh—without a shot ever having been fired. Although they had served a little more than three months, their short term was typical of the military situation during the early part of the war. Both North and South tried to raise armies by appealing to volunteers, with individual states, rather than the Union or Confederate governments, recruiting and supplying volunteers. Almost anyone who wanted to organize a company or regiment could do so, and Ira's letter to his father inquired about just such a possibility. "I guess this regt [regiment] will be broken up. We will go home as Companies. There is some talk of raising a regt at Home of which Leasure is to be Col. Is there any show for it?"<sup>40</sup>

Apparently there was insufficient "show" for the plan, and Ira returned to civilian life to assist his family and resume his musical and Sunday School activities at church. To these he added some formal instruction with "Professor" W. Milton Clarke, a music teacher and vocalist of some regional no-

tice. Clarke lived in Akron, Ohio, over seventy miles to the east, and he often traveled to New Castle to provide music instruction to Ira and others in the family. Known as a “celebrated vocalist and pianist” who also composed music, he was involved with directing the Akron Brass Band and the Akron Union Glee Club. Clarke was a frequent and popular soloist at Republican gatherings, Sunday School conventions, and Masonic festivals. But his greatest acclaim derived from sharing a billing with the famed Hutchison family—perhaps the best-known performing group in the nation.<sup>41</sup>

In a description of Clarke that sounds strikingly like those later applied to Ira’s singing, Clarke was pictured as “possessing a full, clear, rich voice, and, withal, an inexhaustible fund of wit and generous good humor, . . . his more sentimental and plaintive ballads [being] rendered with a depth of true musical feeling and pathos.” “His voice . . . has enunciation remarkably clear and correct.”<sup>42</sup> The fact that Sankey’s singing would be consistently recognized for his deep emotion and singular ability to empower a text with clear articulation suggests he had learned something from Clarke that would prove of great value.

On April 25, Ira joined Milton Clarke, one of his relatives, George Clarke, and George Woodworth to form a quartet; it entertained at the Grand Old Folks’ Concert in White’s Hall for the benefit of soldiers’ families, singing, “We’ll Laugh, Ha! Ha!” Clarke praised Ira, who “possessed a good voice, as well as a great love for music.”<sup>43</sup>

Sankey also began to expand the scope of his singing by traveling to nearby towns to assist other churches. No one looked forward to Ira’s visits more than pastor Alexander Clark at the little Methodist church in New Brighton, twelve miles south of New Castle.

He always brought sunshine in his face and made music in the souls of all with whom he mingled. He sang like a Christian, and he seemed entirely free from the petty envies which too commonly crop out in choirs, and thrust discord over into the communion of the church. There is a frankness in this young man’s countenance, and a zeal in his tones and manner which enlisted the confidence of all with whom he associated. Our choir was always glad when he dropped in among them.<sup>44</sup>

As the war continued with no sign of a quick resolution, regular calls for more volunteers were issued from Republican governor Andrew G. Cur-

tin. By September of 1862, New Castle was able to raise another contingent of soldiers, now under the command of a Colonel Wickersham. Ira was given the rank of first sergeant and his cousin Charles was promoted to the brigade's second lieutenant. Cousin Joseph did not enlist in this group, but Ira's seventeen-year-old brother Richard Watson Jr., joined as a corporal. Harvey McCoun enlisted as the regiment's musician, likely the result of him owning a drum. The outfit was known as Company B in the 22nd Regiment (Brigade) of the Pennsylvania volunteers. Although the men were eager to defend the Union, problems arose which prohibited the company from becoming operational, and Ira was discharged a scant two weeks after enlisting. His career as a soldier was finished.<sup>45</sup>

Although David Sankey seems to have fared well at farming after leaving his position at the bank back in 1860, he never lost his keen interest in or opinions about politics. As a staunch supporter of the Republican Party (after the Whig collapse) and an important local political figure, he was constantly urged to return to public service. No less than the state's governor, A.C. Curtin, wrote to Lincoln on April 12, 1862, asking the president to appoint Sankey to a government position.<sup>46</sup>

To His Excellency  
Abraham Lincoln  
President

The undersigned take pleasure in recommending to your favorable notice David Sankey Esq of this place. Mr. Sankey is one of our best citizens, has filled several important offices in our state with such ability and with credit to himself and those whom he represented. His business qualifications are superior and his character . . . unblemished, his appointment to any position of public trust would be creditable to your administration.

The letter was co-signed by Cyrus Clark, cashier at the Bank of Lawrence County where Sankey had been president, and by five other notable citizens, including the Reverend D.C. Osborne, pastor of the Methodist Church to which David belonged.

These glowing encomiums were no mere hollow praises, however, for the Honorable David Sankey had earlier proved his fiscal effectiveness while serving on the Senate Committee on Claims during his previous term in the state legislature. Resulting from the construction of numerous public works



throughout Pennsylvania, the state found itself flooded with bills for payment. By unusually diligent and careful examination of the claims, Sankey discovered many had already been settled, and the Quaker State was by no means immune to graft and corruption. In an era when widespread bribery of political officials to overlook such bogus claims was common, David Sankey stood out as either a fool or an unusually honest man.<sup>47</sup> Yet nothing came of the recommendation.

With the outbreak of the Civil War and the massive costs of conducting the conflict, Congress began to look for additional sources of revenue. It had been nearly forty years since the Federal government had resorted to widespread taxation—during the War of 1812—but times were now critical. Congress began by reinstating a direct tax on the states based on population. Twenty million dollars was anticipated, with three-quarters of it coming from Union loyalists and the rest from the South. If states collected the money themselves, without benefit of federal revenueurs, they received a 15% rebate. Western states strongly resented the tax and Southern states paid only half of what was required.<sup>48</sup>

Unfortunately, this system of revenue proved inadequate. After extensive debate, Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase proposed a sweeping tax package “to provide internal revenue to support the Government and to pay interest on the public debt.” It was passed by Congress and signed by president Lincoln on July 2, 1862.

It was one of the most searching, comprehensive systems of taxation ever devised by any government. Spiritous and malt liquors were relied upon for a very large share of revenue, a considerable sum was expected from stamps, and three percent was exacted from annual incomes over six hundred dollars. . . . Every profession and every calling, except the ministry of religion, was included within the far-reaching provisions of the law. . . . Bankers and pawnbrokers, lawyers and horse-dealers, physicians and confectioners, commercial brokers and peddlers, proprietors of theatres and jugglers on the street, were indiscriminately summoned to aid the National Treasury.<sup>49</sup>

It quickly became obvious to both the politically experienced and the fiscally naive that a whole new class of government bureaucrats would be required to render this massive system of taxation effective. David’s friends again set to work with visits and correspondence.

New Castle Aug 9/62  
Hon. S.P. Chase  
Secretary of the Treasury

Dear Sir: Before I left Washington I made application for the appointment of David Sankey Esq for collector of taxes . . . for the 23rd Congressional district composed of Mercer, Lawrence and Beaver counties, and placed on file recommendations of the leading men in the district and the endorsement of the members of Congress from Western Pennsylvania.

I understand that a certain Wm. F. Clark of Mercer has been at Washington appealing for collectorship, and I wish to say that his appointment will not give satisfaction to the district and must not be made.

Yours respectfully,

John Wallace  
23 Cong Dist PA<sup>50</sup>

This time, the lobbying efforts proved successful, and in the fall of 1862, David Sankey was appointed as Collector of Internal Revenue for the 24th District of Pennsylvania.<sup>51</sup>

The new taxes not only encompassed higher tariffs, direct taxes on the states, ad valorem taxes (assessed-value taxes such as on property), and a general interest revenue, but also a graduated or progressive income tax. Much to the delight of the federal government, the new system was immensely effective. It was soon producing over a million dollars a day from general revenues, and in one year generated over seventy-three million dollars from personal income taxes. One New York merchant alone, in the higher 10% bracket, wrote a check for four hundred thousand dollars on his income of four million.<sup>52</sup> Although many of the wartime taxes were eventually suspended, one of the government's biggest problems in later years was how to manage the mushrooming budget surplus!

The American citizenry responded to the new financial burden with the expected complaining, but with surprisingly little opposition. Senator James G. Blaine, who later became Secretary of State under president James Garfield and Henry Harrison, sunnily recorded how "taxes of fabulous amounts were paid promptly and with apparent cheerfulness by the people."

Yet he also admitted Congress was taxing

. . . every article which enters the mouth or covers the back or is placed under the foot; taxes on every thing which it is pleased to see, hear, feel, smell, or taste; taxes upon warmth, light, and locomotion; taxes on every thing on earth and the waters under the earth; taxes on every thing that comes from abroad or is grown at home; on the sauce which pampers man's appetite and on the drug that restores him to health; on the ermine which decorates the judge and the rope which hangs the criminal; on the poor man's salt and the rich man's spice; on the brass nails of the coffin and the ribbons of the bride.<sup>53</sup>

With the need to build a new national tax collection apparatus covering everything from coffin nails to bridal ribbons, David Sankey needed to find qualified workers in his district for this critical effort to fund the war. Of course, he needed to look no farther than the young man living under his own roof, fresh from serving in the army. Although Ira tried to re-enlist after his first short tour in 1861, the new effort was fruitless. Thus, no sooner had he been discharged in August of 1862 than he was inducted into the United States Civil Service, working as a “Gauger”—an “inspector of tobacco, snuff, and cigarettes, . . . oils and other commodities”—at an annual salary of \$1500—far better than army pay.<sup>54</sup> ☺

## ENDNOTES

1. Words by Edgar Stites Page, music by Ira Sankey, “Trusting Jesus, That is All,” *Gospel Hymns No. 2*, P.P. Bliss and Ira D. Sankey, eds. (Cincinnati: John Church & Co.; New York: Biglow and Main, 1876), No. 33.
2. Aaron L. Hazen, *20th Century History of New Castle and Lawrence County, Pennsylvania and Representative Citizens* (Chicago: Richmond-Arnold Publishing Co., 1908), 81, quoting John W. Forney’s observations in the *Philadelphia Press*, June 1858.
3. One of the exceptions to this was in the area of voting and holding public office, which probably explains why the Sankey name is conspicuous by its absence on the rolls of elected officials. While West New Castle was established as a borough in 1825, it wasn’t annexed as part of New Castle until 1896/7.
4. Hazen, *20th Century History*, 81.
5. In a letter of 5 September 1950 from Lakewood, Ohio, John D. Knox claimed his father—John H. Knox—was a childhood friend of Ira Sankey. Moody Bible Institute File Drawer, CBS227.
6. Frank S. Reader, *Moody and Sankey: An Authentic Account of their Lives and Services* (New York: E.J. Hale and Son, 1876), 47.
7. *Warren Reserve Chronicle* (Warren, OH), 12 September 1860, 2. Plain Grove is about twelve miles from New Castle.
8. United States Census for 1869, Union Township, Pennsylvania.
9. The year was 1866. This was one of those formal, commercial photos.
10. Ira’s older sister, Rosanna, had died a year earlier.
11. Carol A. Pemberton, *Lowell Mason: His Life and Work* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1971), 87.
12. Common Meter is 8.6.8.6; Long Meter is 8.8.8.8; Short Meter is 6.6.8.6.
13. Reader, *Moody and Sankey*, 48.
14. Pemberton, *Mason*, 66–69.
15. Sometimes quoted as “the savage beast.” William Congreve, *The Mourning Bride* (1697), Act 1, Scene 1.
16. Ira D. Sankey, *My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1906), 15–16. However, Reader, *An Authentic Account*, 48, claimed that Ira’s parents encouraged his musical proclivities.
17. Cotton Mather, *The Accomplished Singer* (Boston: 1721), 22, quoted in Gil-

bert Chase, *America's Music from the Pilgrims to the Present*, 3rd ed. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois, 1987), 21.

18. Quoted in Bruce C. Daniels, *Puritans at Play: Leisure and Recreation in Colonial New England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 52–66.
19. Chase, *America's Music*, 33–34.
20. Sankey, *My Life*, 15. The readers of Sankey's account would have clearly caught the humor and irony of the supposed situation as "A charge to keep I have" is a famous hymn by Charles Wesley, and it would have been familiar to those who saw the hypocritical inebriate, as Methodists were not supposed to drink. It is unclear where Ira learned to play the keyboard; there is simply no reference by him or anyone else to his having received that type of musical instruction. It's possible he was self-taught, which would imply he had access to a pump organ or piano at home.
21. This resulted primarily from the role of the piano in the revival services led by songleader Charlie Alexander and his pianist Robert Harkness in the early twentieth century. See Mel R. Wilhoit, "Alexander the Great: or, just plain Charlie," *The Hymn: A Journal of Congregational Song*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (April 1995), 20–28.
22. David Williamson, *Ira D. Sankey: The Story of His Life* (London: S.W. Partridge and Co., n.d.), 12, 15. Williamson, in quoting a "fragment of autobiography," which is obviously not in Sankey's *My Life*, records, "They made me the leader of the choir, and by the time I was twenty I became superintendent of the Sunday School." Sankey's account in *My Life*, 14, seems to suggest the two positions were simultaneous: "On arriving in Newcastle I joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. Soon I was elected superintendent of the Sunday-school and leader of the choir." Perhaps Sankey was simply compressing the chronology.
23. Marianna C. Brown, *Sunday-School Movements in America*, 2nd ed. (NY: Fleming H. Revell, 1901), 137.
24. For Methodists, as defined in their Articles of Religion, the term *sanctification* meant "that renewal of our fallen nature by the Holy Ghost, received through faith in Jesus Christ, whose blood of atonement cleanseth from all sin; whereby we are not only delivered from the guilt of sin, but are washed from its pollution, saved from its power, and are enabled, through grace, to love God with all our hearts and to walk in his holy commandments blameless." Although rarely attained, it was a goal sought for and sung about by many a believer, especially in the Holiness/Charismatic tradition, which grew out of Methodism.

25. Sunday School London *Proceedings*, Annual Meeting, 13 May 1828, quoted in Robert W. Lyon and Elliott Wright, *The Big Little School: Two Hundred Years of the Sunday School* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), 37–38.
26. Ellen Jane Porter, “The Sunday School Movement,” *The Hymn: A Journal of Congregational Song*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (Oct. 1984), 209, quoting Wright, *The Big Little School*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), xiii.
27. Mark Twain and Charles D. Warner, *Authorized Edition: The Works of Mark Twain: The Gilded Age—A Tale of Today in Two Volumes* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1873), 2:219–20.
28. W.H. Daniels, *D.L. Moody and His Work* (Hartford: American Pub. Co., 1876), 232–33.
29. Philip Phillips, *Song Pilgrimage Around and Throughout the World* (Chicago: Fairbanks, Palmer and Co., 1880), from the biographical introduction by Alexander Clark, 50–52.
30. Williamson, *Sankey*, 15.
31. There were some in Revivalist circles, such as Richard Weaver in Great Britain (see chapter 9), who practiced solo singing within their meetings, but these were rare instances and unknown to Sankey.
32. The data surrounding Ira’s Civil War service is conflicting at times. Sankey recorded in *My Life*, 16, he enlisted “In the spring of 1860,” but it was 1861. Decades later, in his application for Sons of the Revolution, Ira wrote he was “the first to be enrolled from his native town.”
33. Rosanna Amelia Sankey: 20 August 1832–4 April 1859. She is buried in the Sankey family gravesite at New Castle. The marriage of cousins, even first cousins, was a common occurrence before the Civil War. The 1860 census for Union Township (which included West New Castle) in Lawrence County recorded Eva May as being six years old and residing in the Sankey household. That would place her birth around 1854 and would assume her parents had been married a year or two prior to that. Joseph was not a member of the household, and his place of residence is unknown at that time.
34. Reader, *Moody and Sankey*, 53.
35. Sankey, *My Life*, 16.
36. Text by Ailenroc, music by William B. Bradbury, “The Lament of the Blind Orphan Girl” (New York: Atwill, 1847).
37. See “Minstrel Show” on *Wikipedia* for an especially thorough and well-documented summary of this subject.
38. There were many versions of the lyrics, with some of the earliest containing



- supposedly black dialect: “I wish I was in de land ob cotton; old times dar are not forgotten,” etc. (Library of Congress, “Dixie’s Land,” M1638).
39. Complete letter included in *The Ira D. Sankey Centenary* (New Castle: Lawrence County Historical Society, 1941), 43–45.
  40. *The Ira D. Sankey Centenary* (1941), 43–45.
  41. *The Summit County Beacon* (Akron, Ohio), 8 September 1875, 3; 13 April 1865, 3. *The True Democrat* (York, PA), 20 February 1868, 3.
  42. *Western Reserve Chronicle*, 21 September 1864, 3; *The Summit County Beacon*, 15 December 1864, 3. It’s possible Clarke resided in or near New Castle at this time but there seems to be no evidence for that.
  43. *The Summit County Beacon*, 8 September 1875, 3. This faint praise might not reflect Clarke’s fuller evaluation of Ira.
  44. “Who is Mr. Sankey?” *Herald of Gospel Liberty* (Dayton, OH), 8 May 1875. This is possibly one of the first descriptions about Sankey’s singing—although recorded after he had come to fame.
  45. The National Archives has no record of this tour of military service. Records in the Pennsylvania State Archives reveal Sankey’s enrolling in Company B, regiment I, as a sergeant on 15 Sept. 1862 and being discharged on 29 Sept. 1862. The information is taken from Samuel F. Bates, *History of Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861–1865*, 5 vols., (Harrisburg, 1869–1871). A typescript of the original roster in the New Castle Public Library Historical Room contains this notation: “Copied this list of names from the original Muster Roll loaned me by Herb McCoun, to whom it was given by a son [of] Capt. James R. Shaw. May 19, 1938. F.B. Sankey.” The May/June 1863 U.S. Civil War Draft Registrations Records, 1863–1865 for Pennsylvania 24th [District], Vol. 2 of 3, 169, lists Ira Sankey as single, a clerk, with 3 months [previous] military service.
  46. Letter of 12 April 1862; National Archives.
  47. S.W. and P.A. Durant, *History of Lawrence County, Pennsylvania, 1770–1877* (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts and Co., 1877), 167.
  48. Margaret G. Myers, *A Financial History of the United States* (New York: Columbia University, 1970), 158.
  49. James G. Blaine, *Twenty Years of Congress: From Lincoln to Garfield*, Vol. 1 (Norwich, CT: Henry Bull Publishing Co., 1884), 433.
  50. Letter of 8 August 1862; National Archives.
  51. By the time of David Sankey’s appointment, the district was numbered #24 (not as it had been earlier as #23). It included the counties of Lawrence, Beaver, Washington, and Green. David Sankey’s name was listed in the September

1863 and 1865 records of Assessors and Collectors for the Treasury Department, 39, 59. Although no compensation is recorded for David Sankey, the range of salaries in other districts varied from \$2100 to \$7000, with \$4500 being the average. Also see, George S. Boutwell, *A Manual of the Direct and Excise Tax System of the United States* [for 1863] (Washington, DC: Office of Internal Revenue, 1864), 244, listing “David Sankey, Dist 24—Newcastle.” For the tax year ending in June of 1866, David Sankey’s 24th Congressional District collected \$531,087.16 (*An Account of Receipts and Expenditures of the United States for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1866*, Ex. Doc. No. 315, xviii).

52. Blaine, *Twenty Years*, 434.

53. Blaine, *Twenty Years*, 434.

54. It’s possible Ira didn’t begin as a “Gauger” (as defined in the *Report of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1881*, xvi, as an “inspector of tobacco, snuff, and cigarettes”), but at some other level such as a “Storekeeper.” However, by 1868 he had been appointed a “Gauger” for the 24th Congressional District, as reported in *The Detroit Free Press* for 20 October 1868, 4, and the *Philadelphia Daily Evening Telegraph* for 22 October 1868, 3. The U.S. Census for 1870 listed his occupation as “US Ganger” which is evidently a misspelling of the correct term.

Sankey’s tenure at the IRS is also testified to by Reader, *Moody and Sankey*, 54, where Reader—who worked with Sankey for a year and shared a desk—reported: “In September 1862, Mr. Sankey was appointed to a position in the Internal Revenue Service by the Secretary of the Treasury, which he held under three successive administrations, and resigned on the 4th of February, 1871.”

Sankey also reported in *My Life*, 17, after the war he “returned to Newcastle to assist my father, who had been appointed by Abraham Lincoln as a collector of internal revenue.” His friend George Stebbins, in *Reminiscences*, said Ira “became assistant to his father, who had been appointed by Mr. Lincoln as a collector of Internal Revenue,” 201. *Signs of Our Times*, 15 September 1875, 578, recorded him as a “Government inspector of oils and other commodities”; see also *Pittsburgh Post*, 28 August 1875, 6.



# No. 156.

# Singing all the Time.

"Then was our mouth filled with singing,"—Ps. 126 : 2.

REV. E. P. HAMMOND.

GEO. C. STEBBINS.

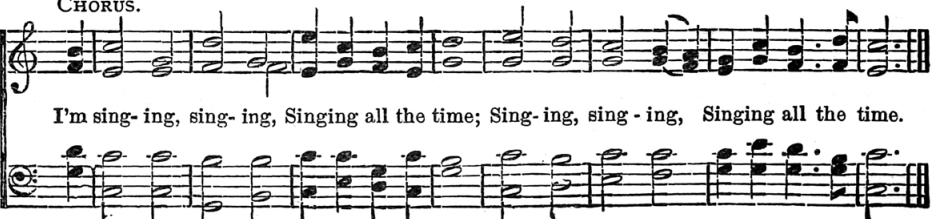


1. I feel like sing - ing all the time, My tears are wiped a - way;  
2. When on the cross my Lord I saw, Nail'd there by sins of mine;  
3. When fierce temp - ta - tions try my heart, I sing, Je - sus is mine;  
4. The won - drous sto - ry of the Lamb, Tell with that voice of thine,



For Je - sus is a friend of mine, I'll serve Him ev - 'ry day.  
Fast fell the burn - ing tears; but now, I'm sing - ing all the time.  
And so, though tears at times may start, I'm sing - ing all the time.  
Till oth - ers, with the glad new song Go sing - ing all the time.

## CHORUS.



I'm sing - ing, sing - ing, Singing all the time; Sing - ing, sing - ing, Singing all the time.

I'll praise Him, &c.

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## Chapter 4

### The Girl Next Door

1863–1870

*I feel like singing all the time, My tears are wiped away;  
For Jesus is a friend of mine, I'll serve Him every day.*

*I'm singing, singing, singing all the time;  
Singing, singing, singing all the time.*

*When fierce temptations try my heart, I sing, Jesus is mine;  
And so, though tears at times may start, I'm singing all the time.<sup>1</sup>*

ONE COULD SAY Fanny Edwards was the “girl next door.” Named Frances Victoria, she resided about a mile from the Sankey family outside of West New Castle and attended the same Methodist Episcopal Church where she sang in Ira’s choir, “lending a decided charm to the excellent singing.”<sup>2</sup> She also attended his Sunday School class. By 1860, she was teaching at the Martin Ganz school in New Castle, where her annual salary was almost fifteen dollars.<sup>3</sup> Her young pupils undoubtedly viewed her as the stereotypical “school marm.” At twenty-two years of age, she was an attractive brunette of medium height. She carried herself in an upright manner, fitting for a proper Victorian lady and local school teacher. Her long hair was parted in the middle and combed down toward her ears, where it was drawn into a chignon or bun. In spite of a strong brow, her deep-set eyes and full lips conveyed a kindly countenance. A friend remembered her as

. . . a lady of a high order of intelligence. She is a good conversationalist, instructive and pleasing, . . . possessed of an element of cheerfulness and mirthfulness that give a charm and piquancy to her conversation. Added to this, she is a patient, Christian woman with sufficient heroism to admirably fit her for the position to which she is placed.<sup>4</sup>

Her friends were not the only ones to notice Fanny’s good looks and sweet spirit, for over the next two years, Ira experienced a growing interest

in this attractive young woman who shared his love of music. While going to church and working in the Sunday School had always been the high point of Sankey's week, church attendance took on a new excitement, knowing Fanny would be there watching him with those dark, admiring eyes. As attraction slowly blossomed into love, Sankey began to think seriously about exchanging his busy bachelorhood for the increased responsibilities of marriage and family. With his military service behind him and his new job in the civil service, the idea of wedded bliss with Fanny began to gain momentum.

Ira pondered both the pros and cons of such a drastic change of status. On the plus side, there was Fanny's personality and background. She was quiet and demure but could be firm when necessary. She shared with Ira a deep interest in music and spiritual matters; she was also a young woman of noble character. Her family was certainly one of the most respected in the community. Her father, John Edwards, had migrated from Swansea, Wales, while but a youth. He was, almost like the entire community, only a couple of generations away from their Old World roots—like the Sankeys.

Three years after marrying Elizabeth McFarland in 1837, John Edwards and family relocated to New Castle. There John began as a puddler in a rolling mill, but within a few short years, he had risen to the rank of manager of the Cosalo Iron Works, a position he currently enjoyed. New Castle was proud of its burgeoning industry, even though the growing number of smokestacks belching a murky miasma saddled the city with a reputation for a hazy atmosphere. John Edwards was recognized as a lay preacher who held appointments as a deacon and an elder in the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>5</sup> He was also a member of Ira's Sunday School class.

On the negative side, neither Ira neither nor Fanny had much money saved up, and if married would undoubtedly have to live with one of their parents for awhile. To make matters worse, the times were most uncertain. After the opening months of the Civil War, it became evident the conflict would not be quickly resolved in the Union's favor. The war had clearly not gone well for the North during the first two years. And now some of Lincoln's critics were claiming his Emancipation Proclamation was nothing more than an attempt to bolster a failing military effort. Perhaps Grant's recent victory at Vicksburg on the 4th of July, 1863, would signal a change in direction, as the Confederacy had also suffered a stunning defeat a few days earlier at Gettysburg.

But it was hard to know what individual battles meant in the larger war effort; the glorious victory of one day could easily become a miserable



defeat the next. Ira had only to think back two years to his short stint in the army, where uncertainty seemed the only constant. And there was his brother Richard Watson Jr., who had just gone off to war at the end of June.<sup>6</sup>

The day finally dawned when Ira's love for Fanny overcame his doubts—and he proposed. Fanny didn't have to think long about the question, for in the eyes of most young ladies in that community, Ira was quite a catch. He was strikingly handsome and solidly built. He loved to laugh and to make others laugh with a joke or humorous story he always had ready. Ira never failed to impress others as wholesome and unaffected.<sup>7</sup> He enjoyed the company of male friends and, undoubtedly, many female admirers. His family was certainly well-respected, and Ira seemed bound for the same level of leadership and honor his father presently enjoyed. The young Sankey was a pious, upright citizen with a solid government job and a promising future. It that weren't enough, Fanny also deeply loved this "boy next door." When Ira finally proposed, she said yes.

On October 9th of 1863, Ira David Sankey and Frances Victoria Edwards were united in holy matrimony at the Methodist Church, with her father proudly officiating,<sup>8</sup> and took up life as newlyweds. Fanny moved her hope chest and other belongings from her childhood home to the Sankey residence on West Washington Street. There she joined the household of David and Mary Sankey, Richard Watson Jr. (who had returned home from two months of military service), Horace, Leathy Jane, Edwin, and Eva, the daughter of Ira's deceased sister Rosanna Amelia. The Sankey household actually remained the same in number, because Theresa, who was younger than Ira by three years, married William Book and went to live with her new husband.

Nine folks was a lot to live under the same roof, even for the spacious two-storey red brick house David Sankey owned up on the knoll in West New Castle, with a view across the Shenango River to nearby New Castle. While the downstairs boasted high ceilings and a commodious dining room, capable of including the entire clan around its welcoming table, there were only four bedrooms up the circular stairs to the second floor. When the weather made it uncomfortable inside, members could retire to one of the two verandas gracing either side of the house.<sup>9</sup>

Extended families, covering several generations, were often the case in an era when child bearing might stretch over a period of two or three decades and married children might come to reside with their parents—or

even grandparents. Somehow everyone seemed to adjust to a constant coming and going. More difficult to reconcile was the mortality of the age, made up disproportionately of infants and children.

For David and Mary Sankey, that reality had struck early in their married life with the death of their firstborn child, a son who lived only seven days. Then, fourteen years later in 1845, a twin was stillborn and was buried near the firstborn at the former family homestead in Edinburg. Both parents probably realized how little good it did to protract mourning for the unnamed stillborn twin when his brother obviously needed attention. David and Mary gave the surviving twin the name Richard Watson Jr., the same name as their fourth and living child, Richard Watson, who would have been eight at the time. Although having two children of the same name was relatively rare in the U.S., the practice was not unheard of and is thought to stem from naming each child after a different relative or godparent; the namesakes in this case are unknown. The elder Richard lived for only one more year after the junior Richard was born.

How to grieve the deaths of grown children would have been another matter. Rosanna Amelia died in 1859 at age 26. Although she had married and moved out of the Sankey home, the loss was no less devastating. Hers was followed by nine-year-old Edwin in 1864 and, less than four years later, by his older sister Theresa Mehalia.

While the death of a child was always a tragic incident in the life of any family, diaries from mid-nineteenth-century women reveal how raising children was perceived more as a collective experience. Women “did not blame themselves when children got sick, even though epidemics of diphtheria, smallpox, scarlet fever, measles, whooping cough, and many other infectious diseases swept through communities without warning.”<sup>10</sup> The household structure of earlier times was often perceived as “permeable” with neighbors, friends, and relatives all participating in caregiving. And that was certainly the case in the Sankey household, with its ever-changing roster of parents, children, in-laws, and adopted relatives. “Watching over children was not seen as an individual mother’s job. And though the child mortality rate was high, mothers did not feel a sense of personal responsibility for their children’s death. They felt it was God’s hand.”<sup>11</sup>

But that understanding began to change by mid-century. “Individual mothers slowly came to replace God as the most important guarantors of their children’s welfare.” As economic production moved from an agrarian

to a more urban setting, the home became the woman's sphere while the man labored outside it. Women were tasked with making the home a sanctuary—spiritually, intellectually, and physically. The welfare of infants and children was now their responsibility.<sup>12</sup>

David and Mary Sankey were staunch Methodists which would have grounded their understanding about the death of children squarely within the realm of God's Providence. They would have also been aware on some level that infant mortality was simply a fact of life; since the beginning of recorded time, families did not expect all their children to live and thrive. But as Methodists, they were also in touch with their feelings. On a spiritual level this was much encouraged and practiced in a denomination strongly impacted by the Second Great Awakening, characterized by the manifestation of strong emotion. How much one recalled and dwelt upon the memories of deceased children depended on larger community and family traditions and upon one's own personality.

During the Victorian era, the bereaved were given many tools to cope. The most famous example resulted from the death of Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, in December of 1861. To an extent, the queen spent the rest of her life in mourning. By some measure, Victorian society became obsessed with death. There appeared to be a lengthy set of written and unwritten rules regarding death, burial, and mourning. Even if following the rules imposed a financial hardship, it seemed somehow dishonoring to the deceased not to follow cultural expectations. Most adults knew what type of coffin and burial attire they wanted; some began saving for these "necessities" early on.

Growing populations required the establishment of large and attractive municipal or private cemeteries—complete with fancy names such as Greenwood, Forest-Lawn, or Mount Hope—to relieve crowded church burial grounds. There were also rules about how one should act at a funeral or during the prolonged period of mourning. One would never think of telling a Victorian mourner they had grieved long enough and it was time to move on.

All of these conventions fit into the Victorian character, which valued sentimentality—variously described as excessive tenderness, sadness, or nostalgia. The novels of Charles Dickens, with their mawkish deathbed scenes of children—Paul Dombey in *Dombey and Son*, Jo the crossing sweeper in *Bleak House*, and most notoriously, Little Nell in *The Old Curiosity Shop*—

reinforced the picture. Much closer to home—in nearby Pittsburgh—the American popular songwriter Stephen Foster was supplying the country with a growing body of sentimental songs. While many of them dwelt on the subject of an idyllic past—“Old Folks at Home”—others focused on recalling feelings in graphic detail. “I dream of Jeanie with the light brown hair” was published in 1854. And although it was not one of Foster’s immediate hits, like “O Susanna,” it reflected how Victorians were dealing with the past, especially someone’s absence. The genius of sentimental songs like “Jeanie” is in the way they were open-ended enough so the singer or listener could easily apply the words to their own sense of longing. Stanza two recalls:

*I long for Jeanie with the day dawn smile,  
Radiant in gladness, warm winning guile;  
I hear her melodies, like joys gone by,  
Sighing round my heart o’er the fond hopes that die:  
Sighing like the night wind and sobbing like the rain,  
Wailing for the lost one that comes not again:  
Oh! I long for Jeanie and my heart bows low,  
Nevermore to find her where the bright waters flow.*

It wasn’t death but new life that greeted Ira and Fanny on August 29, 1864<sup>13</sup>—one day after Ira’s twenty-fourth birthday—as the happy couple of less than a year welcomed the birth of their first child, Henry (Harry) Lower Sankey. His middle name was in honor of the Lower family into which Ira’s sister, Sarah, had married. Infant Harry now audibly swelled the ranks living under David and Mary’s roof in West New Castle, making a total of ten Sankeys!

More welcome news arrived on April 9th of 1865, as General Robert E. Lee surrendered the Confederate Army to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia. Although neither Ira nor his kin who had briefly served in the army had been directly involved in combat, they still felt pride in having contributed to the successful outcome of this epic struggle. Finally, the dreadful conflict, which had so engulfed the nation, was at an end. Or so it seemed—until the devastating news of President Lincoln having been brazenly assassinated at Ford’s Theater in the very capital itself.

The funeral train to his final resting place in Springfield, Illinois, was designed to allow the nation to grieve, making a circuitous journey from Washington to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, then east to Philadelphia, north to

New York City, and on to Albany, where it began heading west across northern New York state. One of its major stops in the midwest was Cleveland, Ohio, the only city where the commander-in-chief's viewing was held outdoors. Within fifteen hours, 150,000 mourners shuffled through Monument Square to pay their respects. Although few folks from New Castle could make the two-hundred-mile round trip to view the late president, interest in Lincoln's demise was strong among the Sankey clan, who, after the Whig party's demise, had become Lincoln supporters. His death was a stunning blow to them personally and politically.

On the domestic side, something needed to be done to address the cramped living quarters, now housing three generations of Sankeys on West Washington Street. To ameliorate the overcrowding, patriarch David Sankey asked his relative and business colleague, Cyrus Clark, to consider selling the house he owned next door. Clark agreed on \$1000<sup>14</sup> and—just three days after Christmas on December 28, 1865—Ira, Fanny, and little Harry moved into their first home. They also brought along their eleven-year-old niece, Eva, who had been living with Mary and David.<sup>15</sup>

Far from peaceful New Castle, the tumult in the nation's capital was continuing to accelerate. Since Lincoln's death on Good Friday and Andrew Johnson's assuming the presidency, the federal government had been in an uproar. Former slaveholder Johnson, who sought to limit the role of Reconstruction in the defeated southern states, found himself at loggerheads with a Congress seeking to give fuller representation to the former enslaved. As the conflict between the President and Congress escalated, attitudes hardened into concrete political positions; it seemed nearly impossible to remain moderate, and most of those in government service were forced to take one side or the other.

On March 27, 1866, President Johnson vetoed—for a second time—the Civil Rights Act, which gave formerly-enslaved people greater protection under the law. By April 9, both the House and Senate had overridden the veto and it became law. But the damage to Johnson was mounting, especially after he vetoed another related bill on July 16, the Freedmen's Bureau bill, intended to aid African Americans after the war. It was also overridden and became law.

Johnson, who was a southern Democrat before joining the Lincoln ticket, clearly reflected racial ideas of the antebellum South. In 1865, he told commissioner of public buildings, Benjamin B. French, "Everyone would

and *must* admit that the white race was superior to the black.” And according to the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, he told Missouri governor Thomas C. Fletcher, “This is a country for white men, and by God, as long as I am President, it shall be a government for white men.”<sup>16</sup> By July, three members of Johnson’s cabinet had resigned.<sup>17</sup> Then, in an attempt to salvage the upcoming mid-term elections, Johnson sought to repair much of the political damage by making an unprecedented speaking tour of more than two dozen cities in a “Swing around the circle,” encompassing Baltimore in the East, Albany, New York, in the North, and St. Louis in the West. Although it began well, Johnson injudiciously compared himself to Jesus Christ, who liked to pardon people (i.e. Confederate leaders). He also claimed certain Republicans were planning to assassinate him. By September, Johnson made one of his final stops in Pittsburgh, just fifty-five miles from New Castle.

David Sankey, who usually voiced strong opinions based on stronger convictions, found himself in disagreement with Johnson’s pro-Southern position—called “My Policy”—and, unwilling to support the President, he was forced to resign his post as collector of revenue for the 24th Congressional District. In September of 1866, David issued his letter of resignation and returned to farming.<sup>18</sup>

Ira, as a low-level, non-political appointee, wasn’t required to make any public declarations of support for upper-level policies and stayed in his position. Even without David Sankey’s administrative presence, young Ira made a strong impression.

He was noted for conscientiousness, and patient, faithful attention to duty. In his rank, he stood first in the district and had the entire confidence of all the officers and tax-payers with whom he had official dealings. His superiors in office regarded him as one of the most prompt, correct, and reliable officers they had, and they were always ready to record him the honor of a faithful public servant. He never took advantage of his office to his own gain or preferment, but faithfully and honestly cared for the interests of the Government.<sup>19</sup>

His friend and colleague, Frank S. Reader, later recalled, “He also found favor with the people of the district, whose business demanded his official supervision.”<sup>20</sup>

David Sankey’s absence from politics and public life was short-lived, however, for within a few months he had purchased the *Lawrence Journal*



and become its publisher and editor. The paper had long reflected David's political sentiments, because it promoted conservative Republican views, opposed to most concepts of Jeffersonian democracy. The paper's masthead read, "Published every Saturday morning in the rooms over Patterson's bank at Washington and Diamond. David Sankey and Co., Proprietors." The paper contained a blend of both local news and items of national interest. Of course, opinions of a strong political nature were expected, as rival papers often vigorously supported their favorite candidates.

For most Lawrence countians, such newspapers were their link with the community and their window on the larger world. They also furnished entertainment when they reported the gruesome details of theatrical stories, such as the January 1866 execution by hanging of Mrs. Martha Grindar, dubbed by the press the "American Borgia" for poisoning two acquaintances. As only the third woman to be hanged in Pennsylvania, details of the bizarre crime, court trial, and execution in nearby Pittsburgh were a must-read.

David was more than happy to report that the old House seat he had held in the state legislature twenty years earlier had been filled in 1867 by John Edwards, Ira's father-in-law. Edwards was re-elected the next year, also becoming chaplain of the State House in Harrisburg.<sup>21</sup> The Sankey-Edwards connection clearly reflected two closely intertwined families, whose bond was only strengthened by the birth of a second grandchild, John Edward (Eddie), to Ira and Fanny on August 28, 1868—this time on Ira's birthday, his twenty-eighth.<sup>22</sup>

Ira had never been busier—especially on Sunday. He was still superintendent of the 350-member Sunday School, with over a dozen classes. The first one began at 9:00AM before the morning church service at 11:00AM, in which Ira led the music and directed the choir. When that was over at noon, he taught Class No. 6 in Sunday School room No. 6. His class was popular and listed over sixty members, including his wife, her parents, both Ira's parents, and his brother Richard Watson Jr.<sup>23</sup> Other classes met throughout the day until the evening church service at 7:00PM, which also demanded Ira's musical attention.

In addition to Sunday's challenging demands, Ira was an indefatigable promoter of the Sunday School as an organization. Within the church, that meant recruiting and training new teachers and their assistants, keeping church members apprised of various activities, and keeping voluminous records. The organizational penchant of Americans during the Victorian

era was nowhere more evident than in the Sunday School, and in an age when the concept of order and efficiency was fast becoming an accepted prerequisite to any successful undertaking, thorough record-keeping and reporting seemed to be expected, as normally as one accepted the necessity to eat or to rest.

Each week, Ira signed scores of certificates. When class members brought visitors to Sunday School, they received a handsome certificate of appreciation for their faithfulness; the visitor also received an impressive “Certificate of Admission,” fit for framing. This official-looking document was dominated by an engraving of John Wesley, striking a Mosaic-like pose and holding a tablet of stone reading, “The best of all is God is with us.” The father of Methodism was surrounded by two angels and a dove (symbol of the Holy Spirit) festooned with a banner bearing Wesley’s name; in the middle of the certificate was the name Asbury, the father of American Methodism. One of many he signed in December of 1869 read, “Edward Cook is a scholar in the New Castle Sunday School of the Methodist Church, and is entitled to all the privileges of the school during punctual attendance and good behavior.” Signed, “Ira D. Sankey, sup’t.”<sup>24</sup>

But this was only a fraction of what was required in promoting a successful Sabbath School, for there were countless local, regional, and national conventions to attend. The Lawrence County Sabbath School Convention met semi-annually for one or two-day sessions, and there was always great fellowship and feasting. Ira often led the music. Of the meeting on Tuesday, May 17, 1870, the *Lawrence Journal* reported:

The convention was well-attended, spirited, and effective . . . and all the exercises were conducted with a liveliness that held the large audience interested till a late hour at night. The Little Beaver [Presbyterian Church] people prepared a sumptuous repast for the convention, which was spread upon a very long table—several rods long, if not more—everybody seemed to enjoy [the] feast, both of reason and religion, and of bodily condiments.<sup>25</sup>

In these conventions, Ira filled the double role of successful Sunday School supporter/organizer and popular singer/musician. At the fall meeting of the Lawrence County Association, Ira became a member of the Executive Committee for the coming year; his father David was elected one of the vice-presidents, which represented the various townships, with the elder

Sankey representing the township in which West New Castle was located. The October meetings were filled with prayer, praise, and preaching. Plenty of solid hymn singing also characterized the meetings as the delegates lifted their voices in ringing tones, “From every stormy wind that blows,” “Salvation, O the joyful sound,” “Up to the hills I lift my eyes,” and “Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly dove.”<sup>26</sup>

The most interesting feature of these meetings was the question box. Before the appointed session, individuals were encouraged to submit questions of any nature regarding the work of the Sunday School. These would be read aloud during the meeting with answers being provided by those presiding.

Q: “If the proper officer is absent, should a lady, not a church member, superintend the school?”

A: “Yes.”

Q: “Should a pastor take charge of the Sunday School?”

A: “No. He has too many other duties to do.”

Q: “What is the best method of opening and closing Sunday School sessions?”

A: “Open with singing three verses of a psalm or hymn; prayer; read the lesson in concert. Close with a brief summary of lesson on blackboard, and singing.”

Q: “How can I become a good teacher?”

A: “You must come to Jesus and give your whole heart to him. You must have the indwelling and presence of the Holy Spirit assisting you in your labors; and having got this personal preparation and presence of the Holy Spirit, you must get some of the ‘helps’ of which you have heard, and by their use get the intellectual perception of the lessons to be taught.”

The convention closed with a demonstration of how to teach a successful Sunday School class, presented by about thirty members of the Neshannock Presbyterian Church. As the demonstration progressed, convention attendees became so engrossed, they requested to extend the time of the simulated class in order to learn just how and what was being modeled.<sup>27</sup>

Only a month later, the New Castle District Sabbath School Institute met for two days in nearby West Middlesex. Advance notice in *The Sharon Herald*, a newspaper from a neighboring town, gave the particulars. “The

exercises will be conducted by Rev. W.W. Wythe of the M.E. church. The singing exercises throughout will be conducted by Ira D. Sankey, of New Castle, a singer well known for his excellent voice and success in conducting exercises of this kind.”<sup>28</sup>

Most such conventions were standard in their formats with variation coming in the specific addresses or questions considered. Two highlights of these meetings were addresses by the Rev. W.F. Wilson on “The Sunday School, its relation to the family, the church, the community,” and an essay by Mrs. Cyrus Clark on “Women in the Sunday School.” *The Sharon Herald*, in following up on the meetings, concluded that the addresses made a fine impression on their hearers, and “the entire singing exercises was conducted in the best manner by Mr. Ira D. Sankey of New Castle, who has few equals in this section of the country as a vocalist.”<sup>29</sup>

Indeed, Ira was becoming known for his vocal ability, which was not limited to the Sunday School or church. He was a fervent supporter of the Republican party to which Ira owed his position as tax collector, becoming an avid campaigner for party members running for office. As various elections approached, he traveled widely throughout western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio, stumping for fellow Republicans. In the days before sophisticated political campaigns, successful candidates needed to get their names before the public in every possible fashion. One of the most popular methods was to affix new words to popular songs. Thus, in 1868 when Ulysses S. Grant and Schyler Colfax ran for the presidency and vice-presidency, Ira was busy singing their political platform to the tune of the popular “Bonnie Blue Flag.”

*Come every patriot in the land, Come all ye sons of Mars,  
And rally round the flag again, That bear the stripes and stars;  
Then joined I freedom's glorious cause, The battle we'll begin;  
With Grant to lead us on again, Our cause is sure to win.*

*Hurrah! for Grant, For Colfax boys, Hurrah,  
For Congress and for equal rights, Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!*

*The time to choose a president, Its coming 'round once more;  
We as our candidate present The hero of the war.  
He led our glorious army through Four years of fearful strife,  
With skill to plan and will to do, He saved a nation's life.*

Ira continued for another three verses, never failing to rouse his hearers with the final chorus of “Hurrah, Hurrah, Hurrah!”<sup>30</sup>

As if family, job, church, and politics weren’t enough to exhaust every ounce of Ira’s energy, he also became active in a new and exciting religious organization—the YMCA. First organized in London, 1844, by a store clerk named George Williams for the purpose of prayer and Bible study, the Young Men’s Christian Association grew rapidly and soon spread to the United States. In its early years, the “Y” was more of a movement without a well-defined structure, but after the Civil War it came under the influence of men such as merchant/philanthropist William E. Dodge Jr. and financier J.P. Morgan, who applied their entrepreneurial skills to forge the movement into a cohesive institution. At first taking root in the larger American cities such as New York and Chicago, the concept of local associations in smaller towns quickly caught on.

The Y’s stated purpose was “the improvement of the spiritual, mental, social, and physical condition of young men.”<sup>31</sup> It was one of a myriad Victorian organizations such as Bible and Tract Societies, orphanages, the Sanitary Commission, homes for “wayward girls,” mission agencies, the Sunday School, and Temperance societies, which have been corporately called the Benevolent Empire.<sup>32</sup> In an era before the progressive reforms of government in the late 19th century were even dreamed of, “self-help” or benevolence was the common consensus for addressing the needs of the impoverished or unfortunate masses. The YMCA was one of the era’s most felicitous examples.

In 1867, H.K. Porter and some friends from the Pittsburgh YMCA had come to New Castle and instituted a local branch of the association.<sup>33</sup> It first met in a rented room; Ira Sankey was elected secretary. Although the ideal YMCA would seek to meet the four-fold needs of spiritual, mental, social, and physical health, all but a few of the larger urban Y’s were limited to meeting the needs their meager facilities could support. For most fledgling associations like New Castle, this meant providing spiritual, mental, and possibly some social opportunities.

By 1869, when Ira was elected president of the New Castle Y, the organization could boast one hundred fifty members and a reading room containing the “leading secular and religious newspapers of the day” as well as the best monthly magazines and periodicals.<sup>34</sup> Well before Carnegie and other Gilded Age philanthropists endowed public libraries, institutions such

as the YMCA offered one of the few opportunities for the lower classes to encounter such a wealth of literary richness. Part of the impetus in providing such holdings, of course, was to attract young men who could be presented with the claims of the gospel message.

Such evangelism was not without its sacrifices and perils, however. On February 21, the local YMCA Board of Directors met to discuss the need for funds to keep the “free for all” public reading rooms open. It was the board’s consensus that the rooms, located in Merchant’s Block and open from 8AM to 9PM, were well used and much needed but would cost at least \$800 to operate in the coming year. Because it was felt the rooms were such a benefit to the community, they decided the public should be apprised of the need for funding. Committees were then formed to canvas the city and seek pledges.<sup>35</sup>

Part of the Y’s attempt to address the intellectual needs of men in the community involved exposure to important social and political issues. In addition to the regular Monday evening prayer meetings scheduled at 7:00, there was often a time of lively debate.

After the issue of slavery was legally settled with the war’s conclusion, Temperance became the biggest social issue of the day. The term Temperance Movement was applied to both independent and highly organized attempts to limit the consumption and effects of alcohol—especially distilled spirits—in the United States and abroad. Although not a religious movement *per se*, Methodists were at the forefront of its leadership and support from its earliest days. Their founder, John Wesley, had railed against alcohol and its trade, and Francis Asbury, the father of American Methodism, had forced Methodists to renounce liquor long before the Temperance movement got organized. The goal of the early movement was to promote “temperance” or moderation of use in relation to alcohol. This meant different approaches to different wings of the movement, and it wasn’t until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that the movement coalesced into prohibitionism. There was certainly no question of the New Castle religious community’s stand on the subject. The Rev W.W. Wythe, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was chairman of the local Temperance society. And when the Y decided to publicly debate the legal prohibition of intoxicating liquor as a beverage, David Sankey was not unsurprisingly appointed to the affirmative.<sup>36</sup>

An equally heated issue—at least locally—was the subject of Bible reading in the public schools. Until that time, the practice had generally been



unquestioned in American public education. Just a few years earlier, the Lawrence County School Board had issued an annual report with a lengthy section on moral instruction. Part of it duly recorded, “the Scriptures were read at the opening of the school in the morning in every school. . . . Many of the schools in addition . . . opened with prayer. A majority of the teachers are persons of excellent moral character and many professors of religion.”<sup>37</sup>

The problem arose when Roman Catholics protested the sole use of the Protestant version of the Scriptures in the public schools. This concern was not unique to western Pennsylvania, however. Wherever Catholics had been present in American public schools, there had always been a tension about Bible reading, sometimes rising to the level of violence, as in the Philadelphia Bible Riot of 1844, resulting in cannon fire, widespread burning, and numerous deaths.<sup>38</sup>

Then in 1869, a bombshell decision by the Cincinnati Ohio Board of Education removed Bible reading from their public schools to placate Catholics who were leaving the schools and setting up their own parochial education. Most Ohioans had interpreted the state constitution as almost demanding Bible reading in the way it declared, “Religion, morality, and knowledge . . . being essential to good government, it shall be the duty of the general assembly to pass suitable laws, to protect every religious denomination . . . and to encourage schools and the means of instruction.”

In Pennsylvania, the question eventually ballooned into the legality of Bible reading in the schools. The New Castle Y discussed the matter, realizing a proposed law prohibiting Bible reading could possibly come before the public, and they wanted to be informed. While the local YMCA discussed the issue, it also received lengthy debate in the community Lyceum and in local papers. Ultimately, nothing came of the proposed legislation to restrict Bible reading in Pennsylvania, but the stage had been set for later earth-shaking developments.<sup>39</sup>

Although there were many pressing social and political issues to address, the Y also sought to provide the community with an expanded degree of culture and entertainment. Typical was the organization’s sponsorship of a Friday evening concert featuring the Allagheny [*sic*] Quartet Club of local music enthusiasts. Its repertoire consisted mostly of sentimental songs of the era, such as “Gaffer Green,” “The Old Sexton,” and the popular abolitionist ballad “Kingdom Comin’” by Henry Clay Work, which remained a favorite long after the war.

The performance was undoubtedly a dim imitation of the era's most famous performing ensemble, the Hutchison Family, who had risen to international fame two decades earlier, singing in close four-part harmony, which had been introduced to the United States by touring Austrian singers. The Hutchinson's concerts were a mix of hymns, anthems, and tear-jerkers, such as "The Maniac" or "The Gambler's Wife," plus controversial protest songs focusing on abolitionist or Temperance sentiments.<sup>40</sup> Unlike some Hutchinson concerts, the Allaghenny [*sic*] Quartet provoked no riots and was enthusiastically acclaimed by all in attendance, with one reviewer exclaiming, "We need more musical food in this community and the young men should take the hint from [this] experience."<sup>41</sup>

Ira had no way of knowing the regular Monday evening meeting on June 6th, 1870, would change his life forever. The main business was the election of three delegates from the New Castle Y to represent the local association at the International Convention of the YMCA to be held in Indianapolis in just two weeks.<sup>42</sup> Under the present rules, each local association of fewer than one hundred members could send three delegates.<sup>43</sup> To no one's surprise, Ira was elected, along with James S. Caroth and the Rev. Robert McMillan, a Presbyterian minister and local leader in the Sunday School movement.<sup>44</sup> Ira undoubtedly assumed he would be asked to provide music in some capacity, as he was accustomed to being drafted at the last minute, on account of his growing reputation, into some type of musical leadership. But there was no way to prepare him for what was about to happen. ∞

## ENDNOTES

1. Words by E.P. Hammond, music by George C. Stebbins, “Singing All the Time,” *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan and Geo. C. Stebbins, eds. (Cincinnati: John Church Co.; New York: Biglow and Main, 1894), No. 156. This was written primarily as a children’s hymn.
2. Frank S. Reader, *Moody and Sankey: An Authentic Account of their Work and Services* (New York: E.P. Hale and Sons, 1876), 55.
3. The average salary for female teachers in New Castle in 1860 was \$14.25. S.W. and P.A. Durant, *History of Lawrence County, 1770–1877* (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts & Co., 1877), 140.
4. Reader, *Moody and Sankey*, 55–56.
5. John Edwards’ obituary, *The Guardian* (New Castle), 31 July 1890.
6. Richard Watson Jr., enlisted 28 June 1863, and was discharged 26 August from Company A of the 55th Pennsylvania Infantry; his rank was corporal. Durant, *History*, 222. Richard had signed up a year earlier with Ira in the company that was apparently disbanded before being activated.
7. This description of his personality is from his friend and colleague George C. Stebbins, in *Reminiscences and Gospel Hymn Stories* (New York: George H. Doran, 1924), 212.
8. *New Castle Herald*, 26 September 1910, 1.
9. Copy of extensive and detailed handwritten description of “The David Sankey home on West Washington Street” by unidentified author, from Vault Box at Lawrence County Historical Society. The writer was clearly speaking from first-hand experience.
10. Jessica Grose, “How Coronavirus exposes the great lie of modern motherhood,” *The New York Times*, online, 25 March 2020, summarizing Nancy Schroom Dye and Daniel Blake Smith, “Mother love and infant death, 1750–1920,” Chapter 5 of *Women and Health in American Historical Readings*, Judith Walzer, ed., (Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 91–110.
11. Grose, “Coronavirus,” 25 Mar. 2020.
12. Grose, “Coronavirus,” 25 Mar. 2020.
13. This author searched—to no avail—for decades to find his birth and death dates. They are not available in any Sankey history or at the Lawrence County Historical Society. In many cases, he is simply ignored in references to Sankey’s children. It wasn’t until I located Trevor Davis at Westminster Cemeteries Burial Service of formerly Marleybone Cemetery in London that I was sent a picture of his tombstone with the dates of his birth and death. Moody

biographer John Pollack did refer to Harry Sankey in passing, when talking about Ira in the London campaign of Winter/Spring of 1884: “his eldest son lay buried in Marylebone cemetery”—but Pollack was wrong by a year, as Harry didn’t die until November of 1885. John Pollock, *Moody: The Biography* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 271.

14. Bill of sale for property, Lawrence County Courthouse, Deed Book No. 12, 490.
15. United States Census, 1870.
16. Hans L. Trefousse, *Andrew Johnson: A Biography* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989), 236. According to Trefousse, there is no way to know whether the *Enquirer* accurately quoted Johnson.
17. They were Attorney General James Speed, Post-Master General William Dennison Jr., and Secretary of the Interior James Harlan.
18. Durant, *History*, 167–68. For a more detailed discussion of Johnson’s tour, see Gregg Phifer, “Andrew Johnson argues a case,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (June 1952), 148–170.
19. Reader, *Moody and Sankey*, 54.
20. Reader, *Moody and Sankey*, 54.
21. John Edwards’ obituary, *The Guardian*, 31 July 1890.
22. Department of Health of The City of New York, Bureau of Records, Standard Certificate of Death, No. 28979, sometime after 13 October 1912.
23. New Castle, Pennsylvania, United Methodist Church Archives, Sunday School records for March 1868.
24. New Castle, Pennsylvania, United Methodist Church Archives. Three original certificates he signed in 1869 and 1871 are in the archives. It’s possible the 1871 certificate was signed by someone else, as Sankey was assisting Moody in Chicago during most of that time. It was probably signed by Cyrus Clark, Sunday School secretary.
25. *Lawrence Journal*, 28 May 1870.
26. *Lawrence Journal*, 6 August 1870.
27. The meetings were held on October 12 and 13, 1870.
28. *The Sharon Herald*, as quoted in *Lawrence Journal*, 19 November 1870.
29. *The Sharon Herald*, 3 December 1870.
30. C.B. Tower, *We Rode with Little Phil* (Washington, DC: Gibson Bros., 189?), 71–72.
31. C. Howard Hopkins, *History of the Y.M.C.A. in North America* (New York:

Association Press, 1951), 107.

32. While its history is often cited as 1815–1861, the movements and organizations it sponsored continued well into the 20th century. It undoubtedly shared some aspects of the late-nineteenth-century Social Gospel movement, which placed less emphasis on eternity than addressing the needs of this life. The classic text on the early movement is Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957; reprint: Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1976).
33. *Proceedings of the Second Annual Convention, Young Men's Christian Associations of the State of Pennsylvania Held at Williamsport* (State Executive Committee, 1869), 28, 30.
34. *Lawrence Journal*, 4 June 1870.
35. *Lawrence Journal*, 6 August 1870.
36. *Lawrence Journal*, 5 February, 1870
37. *Lawrence Journal*, 14 October 1865
38. Amanda Beyer-Purvis, "The Philadelphia Bible Riots of 1844: Contest over the rights of citizens," *Pennsylvania History*, Vol. 83, No. 3 (Summer 2016), 366–93, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/pennhistory.83.3.0366>
39. In 1959, Pennsylvania instituted a law (24 Pa. Stat. 15–1516, as amended, Pub. Law 1928 [Supp. 1960] 17 Dec. 1959) that required "[a]t least ten verses from the Holy Bible shall be read, without comment, at the opening of each public school on each school day." It was overturned by the United States Supreme Court in 1963 as being unconstitutional in *Abington vs. Schempp*.
40. Gilbert Chase, *America's Music: From the Pilgrims to the Present*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 161–63.
41. *Lawrence Journal* [no date on photocopy], probably 1870.
42. *Lawrence Journal*, 4 June 1870.
43. Hopkins, *History of the Y.M.C.A.*, 115.
44. *The Lawrence Journal* for June 18 reported only the election of Sankey and Caroth, but Sankey's *My Life* recorded, McMillan was "a delegate from my own county," 18.



## II. THE POPULAR REVIVALIST



**No. 733.****There is a Fountain.**

Rev. WILLIAM COWPER.

(COWPER. C. M.)

Dr. LOWELL MASON.

1. There is a fount-ain filled with blood, Drawn from Im-man-uel's veins;

And sin-ners plunged be-neath that flood, Lose all their guilt-y stains. FIN.

Lose all their guilt-y stains, Lose all their guilt-y stains. D.S.

- 2 The dying thief rejoiced to see  
That fountain in his day,  
And there may I, though vile as he,  
Wash all my sins away.
- 3 Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood  
Shall never lose its power,  
Till all the ransomed church of God  
Be saved to sin no more.

- 4 E'er since, by faith I saw the stream  
Thy flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme,  
And shall be, till I die.
- 5 Then in a nobler, sweeter song,  
I'll sing Thy power to save,  
When this poor lispng, stammering tongue  
Lies silent in the grave.

*Chapter 5*  
Climb on the Box and Sing Something  
1870–1871

*There is a fountain filled with blood, Drawn from Immanuel's veins;  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains.  
Lose all their guilty stains, Lose all their guilty stains.  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains.*

*E'er since by faith I saw the stream Thy flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme, And shall be till I die.  
And shall be till I die, And shall be till I die.  
Redeeming love has been my theme, And shall be till I die.*

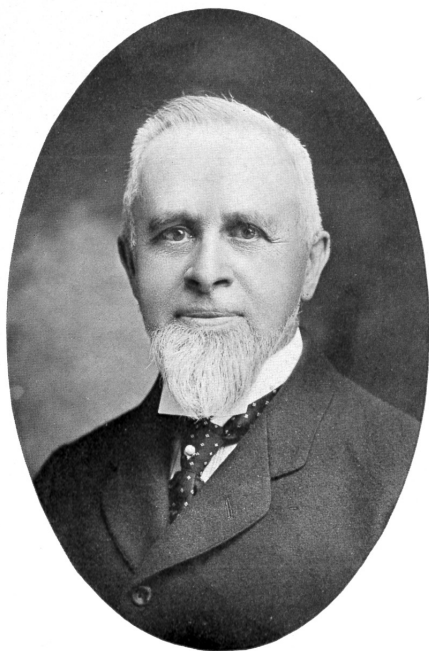
*Then in a nobler, sweeter song, I'll sing Thy power to save,  
When this poor lisping stammering tongue Lies silent in the grave.  
Lies silent in the grave, Lies silent in the grave.  
When this poor lisping stammering tongue Lies silent in the grave.<sup>1</sup>*

THE “HOOSIER STATE” of Indiana was nothing like western Pennsylvania or even eastern Ohio. It was flat, very flat. And in the middle of all that Indiana flatness was the city of Indianapolis. It had been selected in the 1820s as the site for the state’s new capital by a ten-man commission that mistakenly believed the nearby White River to be navigable. It wasn’t, and the city grew slowly until connected with the rest of the country by railroads in the 1840s. By the time the New Castle YMCA delegation arrived in town to join thousands of others from all over the world, the city boasted nearly fifty thousand inhabitants, one hundred industries, a dozen rail lines, and it was on its way to becoming the “crossroads of America.” It was a fitting location for the eighth International Convention of the Young Men’s Christian Association in June 1870.<sup>2</sup>

Upon their arrival at Union Railway Depot, Ira and his companions attached white ribbons to their lapels as requested by the Committee on Arrangements so they could be identified as delegates to the convention. They

had been given a choice of boarding in local homes or staying in the massive Bates House Hotel for \$2.50 per night,<sup>3</sup> the site from which president-elect Lincoln had given a speech to an enthusiastic crowd on his way to Washington in 1861. Once settled, Ira and his companions struggled to remove a layer of soot accumulated on their journey behind the Fort Wayne and Chicago Railroad's wheezing steam engine; then it was off to discover the wonders of the convention.

The opening meeting convened on Wednesday, June 22, at 10:00AM in the Academy of Music on the corner of Ohio and Illinois Streets. After an initial "invocatory prayer," the delegates raised their voices in four stanzas of "We meet again in gladness,"<sup>4</sup> to the rousing tune of "Stand up, stand up for Jesus," followed by a reading from John 15 and another prayer. Then the chairman read a letter from William E. Dodge Jr., president of the convention. "I greatly regret that the results of a painful railroad accident will deprive me of the great pleasures of being present in Indianapolis."<sup>5</sup> The bulk of the session was taken up with the making of many motions, one of which was to unanimously elect William Howard Doane to lead the convention's singing.



**William Howard Doane**, in *My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns* (1906).

Doane was typical of YMCA leadership. At thirty-eight, he was already a successful businessman. By twenty-one years of age, he had worked his way up to the presidency of J.A. Fay & Co. of Cincinnati, makers of woodworking machinery. Under his leadership, the business thrived, a result of over seventy patents he developed for the company.<sup>6</sup> The financial success he enjoyed as president of another firm, the Central Safe and Deposit Company, and his position on numerous boards enabled him to direct generous amounts of philanthropy toward institutions such as the YMCA.

His greatest love was music, however. In Doane's early years, he received formal musical training while living

in New England, where he conducted the Norwich Harmonic Society. He amassed an extensive collection of musical instruments from all over the world, and his music library boasted autographed manuscripts by Handel, Mozart, and Beethoven. Doane's personal contributions to music included composing tunes and editing collections of Sunday School songs. He began with the publication *Sabbath School Gems* in 1861<sup>7</sup> and enjoyed his most successful collection, *Silver Spray*, in 1868, selling 300,000 copies.

One of those quick to value Doane's success in music publishing was the YMCA. At its previous annual convention in Portland (July 1869), Doane was requested to prepare a song collection for the Indianapolis meetings. The result was *Songs of Devotion: A Collection of Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs with Music for Young Men's Christian Associations, Church Service, Prayer and Conference Meetings, Religious Conventions and Family Worship*, published by Biglow & Main. As the title suggests, it promised something for nearly everyone, as Doane boasted in the preface, brimming with uninhibited marketing confidence: "Those grand old tunes used by the fathers have a prominent place. . . . Beside there will be found those of modern date . . . which will come to be regarded, at no distant date, as among the classical compositions of the Church."

That Doane could put together a collection tailored especially for the Y's ambitious goals, and do so within a year, speaks to both his musical facility and his entrepreneurial skills. It also reflected great marketing acumen, as delegates from the convention would return to their respective churches, local Y's, and Sunday Schools, enthusiastic about the great singing that had accompanied the collection. In fact, the convention passed a resolution during its meetings to "recommend and urge [the hymn book's] adoption for general use." Part of this official enthusiasm undoubtedly reflected the fact of the Y receiving a significant portion of the royalties from the book's sales.<sup>8</sup>

Doane's unanimous election to lead the music in Indianapolis was no surprise, for he had done so at previous meetings and embodied the kind of dynamic mover-and-shaker characteristic of the growing YMCA phenomenon. When he stood in front of the mighty assembly, drawing powerful waves of music from its ranks, Ira Sankey took note.

At 2:30PM, delegates assembled at the First Baptist Church for devotional exercises led by K.A. Burnell from Aurora, Illinois—someone with whom Sankey would soon be spending time. Then the regular afternoon session began at 3:00PM. These were more business-like in nature and reflected

the leadership's penchant for organization with the appointment of standing committees on Executive Reports, Devotional and Open-Air Meetings, Business, and Resolutions. Congregational singing—"Come Thou fount of every blessing" and "O for a closer walk with God"—and prayers alternated with various resolutions, one by leading light George H. Stuart of Philadelphia, who warned delegates about being more excited with the rapid growth of the Y than the leading of the Holy Spirit. The remainder of the meeting addressed the topic, "Have any of the Associations declined, and if so, why?" Various respondents with strict time limitations provided insight. William Doane then sang a duet, "Come Home," with H. Thane Miller, three-time past president of the Association. Additional resolutions—some about making resolutions—were offered, and the assembly closed with singing and prayer.

Festive might best describe the atmosphere for the evening session in the Academy of Music, decorated with bunting and boasting a 75-voice choir seated on stage to greet appropriate dignitaries from the state of Indiana. Shortly after 8:00PM, Governor Baker mounted the podium and delivered a mercifully short welcome, concluding, "I do not come here to detain you by remarks of my own, but simply to pronounce those few words of welcome, and to announce the program." Then the choir offered Isaac Watts' epic hymn "Before Jehovah's awful throne," followed by prayer and a reading from Luke 15 about the Prodigal Son, a particularly apt picture of what the YMCA felt it was attempting to do with young men in the cities. The choir, led by one Professor Black, presented "The Heavens Are Telling" from Haydn's oratorio *The Creation*.

While the performance of an oratorio chorus might seem like unexpectedly high art emanating from the cornfields of central Indiana, it actually mirrored the unprecedented growth of amateur choral music in England and the United States at this time. Indianapolis took every chance it could to imitate the culture of its sophisticated urban cousins back east or the Windy City to its west. Just three years earlier, in 1867, Professor James S. Black had relocated from Boston—the epicenter of choral activity in the U.S.—to Indianapolis.

In Boston, he would have come under the influence of America's third oldest musical organization, The Boston Handel and Haydn Society, founded in 1815, which provided the earliest performances of European classical music in America. The Indianapolis version of the Handel and Haydn Society had been organized in 1851, performing the *de rigueur* music literature for

any self-respecting musical group. It boasted one hundred members, mostly from area church choirs, and performed (parts of) Haydn's *Creation* the year following the YMCA convention. By 1870, Professor Black had founded the competing Choral Union, which sang for the Y convention, displaying its musical prowess.<sup>9</sup>

Even if not particularly appreciated by all the convention delegates, most would have realized how this sort of music represented the respectable arm of culture these *nouveau riche* leaders of business and industry were aspiring to reach. While Ira had been attentive to the kind of choral music he couldn't even dream of performing with his little band of choristers back home, his full scrutiny fell on correctly deciphering a concluding bit of session business, reminding delegates how, the next morning, K.A. Burnell would lead a 6:00AM prayer meeting at First Baptist Church; D.L. Moody would lead a similar one at Third Presbyterian Church.<sup>10</sup>

Now, that was someone Sankey had been waiting to hear. Dwight Lyman Moody was a name writ large in both YMCA and Sunday School circles, and Ira was determined to meet him. As the moving force behind the dynamic Chicago Y and a regular attendant at the last four international conventions, Moody had twice been elected vice-president and often occupied a prominent place on the convention platform as its chairman.<sup>11</sup>



**D.L. Moody**, in *A Full History of the Wonderful Career of Moody and Sankey* (1876).

Moody resembled other YMCA and Sunday School leaders in having no formal theological training. He was certainly not ordained. Yet his credentials were impeccable in the world of religious revivalism, which required only a definite spiritual conversion and a strong desire to share the good news or “gospel” with others. At seventeen, he had been converted in the back of his uncle’s Boston shoe store when a Sunday School



worker, Edward Kimball, confronted him with the claims of Christ. Moody planned to strike it rich, but Boston seemed too provincial. Everyone said Chicago was the place for a man with drive and energy and a desire to make a fortune. Moody heeded the advice, descended upon the Windy City<sup>12</sup> in September of 1856, and immediately immersed himself in the lucrative shoe and boot trade.<sup>13</sup>

It turned out to have been a wise move. The city was booming. In less than twenty-five years, it had grown from an incorporated village of 150 residents to a buzzing metropolis of 150,000. As the world's busiest rail center, it boasted ten main lines, with one hundred trains arriving or departing daily. It was also well on its way to becoming the nation's leading butcher and grain dealer. Industry thrived and an unending wave of immigrants poured in to meet the demand for cheap labor. Moody's goal was to make \$100,000, and within two years he had already saved \$7000—not an inconsiderable sum for a single young man.<sup>14</sup>

The zeal and boundless energy Moody poured into his quest for wealth was also evident in his religious work. On Sunday mornings, he regularly commandeered other young men to fill four pews he had rented at Plymouth Congregational Church.<sup>15</sup> Moody sought to occupy his afternoons by teaching a Sunday School class, only to be informed there were already too many teachers and not enough students. In typical can-do fashion, he went out and gathered eighteen street urchins and formed his own class. He soon realized, however, that his lack of Bible knowledge limited his effectiveness as a teacher, but as a promoter, he knew no limitations. He started other classes, with one Sunday School eventually growing to over one thousand scholars.<sup>16</sup> During the coming years, Moody sought out noted Bible teachers and preachers such as Henry Moorehouse and Charles Haddon Spurgeon to pick their brains about how to study the Bible. As he followed their advice and methods, he soon became an enthusiastic and knowledgeable student of God's Word.

Although the Scriptures clearly warned against trying to serve both God and mammon,<sup>17</sup> many a Victorian entrepreneur had managed to wed the two in ways that seemed advantageous to both. As one religious publication explained it:

A Christian merchant . . . who is overwhelmed with his own business, surrounded by the din and clatter of gigantic enterprise, jostled in his patience and in his integrity by the tricks of the trade, . . .



yet in all this maintaining the simplicity of his piety, keeping the flame of devotion alive in his closet, in his family and in his church, opening his heart and his hand to the worthy objects of benevolence and everywhere sustaining the deportment of a humble disciple, is developing a strength and beauty of piety which nothing but these very circumstances could have produced.<sup>18</sup>

At this point in his life, Moody certainly had no scruples about combining his beliefs and his business. As he felt God had blessed him with health and a growing wealth, he sought to assist the less fortunate by sharing his savings or helping others to find work. Sometimes his beliefs altered his business practices, such as the time his conviction against taking the train on Sundays—which would force others to work on the Sabbath, thereby missing church—meant he had to work harder than his competitors during the other six days.

The story was often told how, in his early Chicago work, he found himself traveling with a competing collection agent to a nearby town. It was late on Saturday and Moody was planning to find a hotel and resume his journey early Monday morning. When he realized his competitor was planning to take a Sunday train and be waiting on the prospect's doorstep early Monday, Moody engaged the man in a lively conversation, causing him to miss the last available connection for his Sunday train. The result was that on Monday, they both started out on an equal footing!

While Moody and his fellow Evangelical business acquaintances directed the bulk of their religious efforts toward the poorer classes, a few New York businessmen were attempting a bold new experiment in their city's financial district. They began holding noon prayer meetings in a space at the Dutch Reformed Church on Fulton and William Streets. Their method was far from traditional, for attendees were encouraged to “come and go as you like, and stay no longer than suits your convenience.”<sup>19</sup> This new consumer-oriented piety made little impact at first. But then, on August 24, 1857, the New York office of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company suddenly closed its doors; its agent had unsuccessfully speculated in railroad securities using company capital, and the institution was now insolvent. As most New York banks held Ohio Life drafts, panic set in. Horrified businessmen filled the streets trying to make sense of the wild rumors flying from bank to bank.<sup>20</sup> It was Black Friday.

Before the crisis, there had been but six persons in attendance at the prayer meetings; the week after there were twenty; a week later, forty. By October, when New York banks had watched their deposits fall from sixty-four to forty-three million dollars, the prayer meetings had become a daily occurrence, and attendance overflowed classrooms into the hallways and stairs of the church. An additional meeting was initiated at nearby Old John Street Church, then another and another. Soon, one hundred fifty similar meetings were reported, including those at Burton's Theater and the Music Hall.<sup>21</sup>

Although originally motivated by the financial panic, the noon prayer meetings quickly took on a life of their own as they spread to other cities. In Philadelphia, Boston, Milwaukee, Cleveland, San Francisco, and throughout the land, the results were much the same. Individual churches proved too small to hold the crowds, and large public buildings were procured.

The mode of worship was the same in all the meetings. There was no ritual or prepared plan. Any person might pray, exhort, lead in song, or give testimony as he felt "led," only keeping within the five-minute time limit and avoiding controversial subjects like water baptism or slavery. Distinctions between the sects and between minister and laymen were ignored. The joyous liberty of the camp meeting "love feast" was thus transferred to an urban setting. The sound of the leader's bell provided a business-like touch appropriate to the new environment.<sup>22</sup>

Unperceived at the time, these traits of informality, business-like efficiency, non-sectarian cooperation, and lay leadership would come to characterize the urban revivalism of the next one hundred years.

News of the growing revival was boosted by extensive national press coverage, resulting from competition between James Gordon Bennett's *New York Herald* and Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*, which both prominently carried a steady stream of editorials and stories on the subject. By the spring of 1858, public interest in religion was unprecedented. In April, Greeley devoted an entire issue of his weekly edition to the phenomenon,<sup>23</sup> and many concluded, "the entire nation seemed to be the scene of one vast revival."<sup>24</sup>

Moody had apparently concluded the same thing as Chicago felt the impact of the awakening.<sup>25</sup> He regularly frequented the prayer meetings, watching as they overflowed modest church facilities and moved downtown

to larger and more convenient locations, including the Metropolitan Theater, which hosted two thousand daily attendants. At the height of this increased religious fervor, several men formed a Chicago branch of the YMCA to provide “a common place of resort, to which to invite the idle and thoughtless young men of the city, where they may pass their time pleasantly and profitably in reading and in intercourse with Christian young men, and be brought under religious influence.”<sup>26</sup> It was a perfect outlet for Moody’s zeal.

By 1860, he felt God’s direction to give up business completely, live on his savings, and devote his full time and energies to preaching the gospel of God’s saving grace, ministering to the poor, and working with the Sunday School and YMCA. Although strongly patriotic, Moody felt he could not kill another human being and spent the Civil War working with soldiers in the United States Christian Commission. He steadily climbed the ranks of the Chicago YMCA from the position of Librarian/City Missionary to its presidency in 1866.<sup>27</sup> The leadership he provided for both the Y and the Sunday School movement slowly but surely launched Moody into an orbit of national prominence. By 1870, he had become a highly effective leader, noted for his unlimited energy, concern for lost souls, rapid-fire conversational manner of preaching, sanctified common sense, and successful fund-raising abilities. He was scheduled to make a principal address at one of the closing meetings of the Indianapolis convention, but Ira couldn’t wait that long to make his acquaintance.

It was still dark when Ira rolled out of bed and readied himself to hear Mr. Moody at the 6:00AM prayer meeting. Third Presbyterian Church was just three short blocks away, but Ira was taking no chances. He arrived as the sun was lighting the horizon and settled in. But as time for the meeting drew near, something didn’t seem right. It was nearly starting time when he realized Moody was not at this church as announced, but two blocks away at First Baptist.

He made a hasty retreat and rushed the short distance. Breathlessly, he hurried up the steps to the church,<sup>28</sup> but the meeting was already well under way. He hesitated to make a late entrance, but this might be his last chance to get near the illusive Moody. Ira slipped in during prayer and sat by his friend and fellow-delegate Robert McMillan, who leaned over and whispered, “Mr. Sankey, the singing here has been abominable; I wish you would start up something when that man stops praying, if he ever does.” Ira nodded, and at the first opportunity thundered out, “There is a fountain filled with blood.”

Surprised, the gathering responded with a hearty rendition, which almost magically changed the whole complexion of the meeting.<sup>29</sup>

Moody, a careful student of human dynamics and crowd psychology, was impressed. Here was a man who could reverse the atmosphere of a drowsy meeting with just his singing. After the service, a procession of friends and well-wishers lined up to meet the speaker. Ira took his place with McMillan and waited excitedly as the line slowly dwindled; he was finally going to meet one of the most influential Christian leaders of his day.

“Mr. Moody,” began McMillan, “I’d like you to meet Ira Sankey.”

Instead of the normal pleasantries, the evangelist began to pepper the expectant young man with a battery of questions.

“Where are you from? Are you married? What is your business?”

Ira tried to collect his thoughts and mumbled something about living in Pennsylvania, being married with a family, and working for the government.

“You will have to give that up,” shot back Moody.

“What for?” queried a stunned Sankey, his mind reeling at the rapidity of events.

“To come to Chicago and help me in my work.”

Impossible, Ira protested; he had a job and family.

Moody would hear none of it. “You must; I have been looking for you for the last eight years.”<sup>30</sup>

The evangelist’s initial salvo momentarily stunned Ira, but he was always mentally quick on his feet and immediately began to recover his bearings. He politely replied that he would consider the matter. That should put Moody off long enough to make a dignified retreat; besides, he had no intention of giving up his position in New Castle.

Moody continued to explain how the greatest trouble with his religious meetings was with the music. He couldn’t sing and had to rely on others. Unfortunately, few of his musical assistants revealed much spiritual or musical sensitivity, for just as the preacher was ready to “pull the net” and seek spiritual decisions, the precentor would choose a wholly inappropriate song and destroy the spirit of the meeting. Moody had long since despaired of finding someone who sensed the Spirit of the Lord working in a meeting and knew how to integrate it with appropriate music.

Ira certainly understood and even sympathized with Moody's plight. He was all too aware of how important the right type of music was in a religious meeting, but that was Moody's problem, and he couldn't do much about it.

Moody, who hadn't gotten where he was by taking no for an answer, asked Ira to pray with him about the matter. There was little choice, and Ira consented—out of politeness. After a brief prayer, the two men parted and Sankey returned to his room. He couldn't put his finger on it, but there was something about Moody's prayer. Yet his suggestion to forsake all and follow him seemed ludicrous.

The next day, Ira received a mysterious card from Moody asking him to meet on a certain street corner at six o'clock that evening. Out of either curiosity or respect, he complied. Just for support, he took along a few friends; he was not going to get broadsided again. Within a few minutes, Moody appeared, and without speaking asked permission at a nearby store to borrow a large box. He then dragged it out into the street and requested Sankey to climb on the box and sing something. A surprised but obedient Ira mounted the makeshift podium and rang out, "Am I a soldier of the cross?" attracting a large crowd of workmen on their way home from the mills.

It was then Moody's turn. He climbed atop the rudimentary pulpit and from his curious perch spoke rapidly and directly to the men; there was no religious jargon or theological disputation. He addressed the men as one working man to another; and for twenty-five minutes they stood spellbound. On completion, he announced an impromptu meeting would continue at the nearby Opera House and invited all to attend. Ira was again pressed into service, this time to lead the parade to its announced location. With the assistance of his friends, Ira quickly formed an *ad hoc* choir and led off singing "Shall we gather at the river?" followed closely by a crowd of spiritually curious men carrying empty dinner pails.

Moody waited until all were seated before ascending the platform, addressing the men a second time. He continued to tell them how, although they were sinners and were eternally separated from God by their sin, Jesus Christ had come to pay the penalty for their transgressions, and by accepting Christ's gift on their behalf, they could be made right with God. As Moody was preaching, he spied a delegate from the next scheduled convention session enter the hall. "Now we must close, as the brethren of the convention wish to discuss the question, 'How to reach the masses.'"

Sankey was stunned. Here was a man who was actually reaching the masses while others simply talked about it. The next time Moody raised the question of Ira joining him, he promised to give it prayerful consideration.<sup>31</sup>

Convention sessions were packed—despite the stifling heat—and continued through Sunday, June 24, with stirring addresses, discussion of relevant issues, powerful prayers, and moving congregational singing. Vocal solos by H. Thane Miller and others were instructive to Ira, who was still developing his own approach. But the main concern weighing heavily on his mind was how to respond to Moody. That was all the more reinforced on the final day of the conference, when Moody gave the closing address at the afternoon meeting on June 26.

[I believe] that the prayer meeting should be the most interesting service that is held by our Associations or churches. A great many meetings are ruined by the leader . . . reading the longest chapter he can find, and then making a prayer to correspond, until the people become weary. . . . Another mistake is, the singing of the same old, old hymns, over and over . . . ; we want more cheerfulness. In the Chicago Association they have on every chair a Bible and a hymn-book. Another obstacle is the want of ventilation. See that the room is well lighted and ventilated, cheerful and pleasant. We have a bell, and we strike it at the third minute [of someone speaking]. That bell has saved us, and we have the largest prayer meeting on the continent, in the wicked city of Chicago. Get a bell. . . . Lift up Christ, and then the meeting cannot fail to be interesting, because He is altogether lovely.<sup>32</sup>

There was a closing prayer with delegates joining in The Lord's Prayer. Nothing was left but the Farewell Meeting at 7:30PM, opening with the great assembly intoning "All hail the power of Jesus' name." A bevy of speakers provided exhortations, and a surprisingly varied roster of soloists, including a Mrs. Halford and a Miss Chester who sang before this mostly-male audience. It was time to think about home and how to respond.

Should Ira tell Fanny and his parents about Moody's offer, or just try to forget it? It was certainly a decision that would affect all of their lives. How could he even begin to think about giving up his thriving church and Sunday School, not to mention his government salary, for an indefinite position as Moody's assistant? True, Moody was a famous and successful Christian worker, but how much did Ira really know about the man and his work? To

complicate the situation, Ira and Fanny now had two children. And to make matters worse, Ira had just spent \$2,000 for the old Fulkerson property.<sup>33</sup> Suddenly, all his future plans seemed muddled.

On their return to New Castle, Sankey and his friends received a warm reception—too warm, in fact—for the temperature was 98 degrees with no sign of cooling off. Ira hardly had time to worry about the weather or to think about Moody’s offer, as he found himself deluged with work. One of his immediate goals was to introduce the New Castle YMCA to some of the ideas he had encountered in Indianapolis. Not surprisingly, a businessman’s daily prayer meeting was one of these. It would meet from 11:30 to noon; prayers and remarks would be limited to three minutes each. Should he get a bell?

Fortunately for Ira, he had ready access to the local paper—his father being editor—and could easily publicize the new meeting. During July of 1870, the “Local News” column faithfully informed its readers of the meetings with the assurance, “It will be considered in order to come and go at any time.”<sup>34</sup> Of course, David Sankey was also eager to report on his son’s trip to Indianapolis.

We met, on his return, one of our delegates to the International Convention of the Y.M.C.A. . . . He reports that they had a rousing time, and that the States were all well represented. There were present, in turn, some of the most able representatives of the cause in the country. Four thousand persons were present at the Academy of Music on Sunday night last to engage in the farewell exchange. The social effect of these meetings will be beneficial to all who are interested . . . and creat[e] sympathy between all denominations.<sup>35</sup>

At the same time Ira was trying to boost momentum at the Y, his church had pitched a giant tent in Pearson’s Grove for summer services. Regular preaching was scheduled for 10:30AM and 5:30PM, with Sabbath School squeezed in between. In addition, the big Fourth-of-July picnic and celebrations were coming up, and pastor W.W. Wythe was going to be away at the National Camp Meeting convention in Halifax.<sup>36</sup>

This was a big deal for Methodists. Growing out of the Second Great Awakening around 1800, outdoor religious meetings of an informal nature, lasting many days and encompassing an inter-denominational emphasis,



began to crop up. Worshipers often traveled a great distance on foot or by horse and wagon and pitched a tent or camped out. Preaching tended toward the hellfire-and-damnation variety, warning the unconverted to flee the eternal flames of perdition by turning to Christ.

Methodists, who had their origin in the First Great Awakening of revivals in the 1740s, were particularly disposed to this form of getting-back-to-roots brand of religion. By 1820, Methodists had organized around five hundred camp meetings a year. Eventually, what had begun as an informal and decentralized approach to expressing one's relationship to God grew so popular that it needed some organization. In 1867, The National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness was founded, providing both structure for the movement and reflecting the growing rift between the mainline churches and the growing Holiness movement, which had its roots in British Methodism but was developing a particularly American brand.<sup>37</sup> Camp meetings were part of a burgeoning non-denominational revivalistic culture represented by leaders from the Sunday School, YMCA, Temperance, and Holiness movements. Ira and his world were squarely in that camp.

The tent at Pearson's Grove actually served a dual purpose, because the New Castle Methodist Episcopal Church was undergoing a facelift, and regular services were held under the tent. But there were more than just external changes going on. Pastor Wythe was being transferred to Cleveland, Ohio—his two years in New Castle being completed. One of both the banes and blessings of the Methodist system was the practice of assigning a man to pastor a church for only two or three years, then moving him on. If his pastorate had proved successful and he hadn't offended his supervising bishop or some other powerful figure, he could generally expect to relocate to a larger, more desirable appointment. If his pastorate had not prospered or if he made too many denominational waves, he would likely find himself in a less desirable pulpit farther out in the boondocks. It was certainly the local consensus that Pastor Wythe fit the first category, and undoubtedly his presiding bishop took note of the public praise he often received in the *Lawrence Journal*.

We dropped in at the Methodist Church during this week in passing, and find that it has a good deal of the "First of April" appearance. The present minister, Rev. W.W. Wythe, has exhibited not only a good deal of taste, but has put forth much personal effort in carrying out the new arrangement. We are sorry to learn

that he is not to remain long in our city to enjoy the fruits of his enterprise.<sup>38</sup>

The Reverend A.S. Dobbs was sent to replace Wythe,<sup>39</sup> and the New Castle Jefferson Street Methodist Episcopal Church continued its busy schedule, with Sankey remaining as music director and Sunday School superintendent. At the same time, another church musician and Sunday School superintendent was holding meetings in Greenville, just forty miles from New Castle in Mercer County. His name was Philip P. Bliss, and unknown to either Bliss or Sankey, their combined contributions to the music of revivalism would, within five years, radically alter the world of religious music. Although Sankey hadn't encountered Bliss at any of the YMCA or Sunday School conventions, he was certainly aware of his fellow laborer, as testified to in his father's newspaper:

Professor P.P. Bliss, of Chicago, is to conduct a musical convention in Greenville commencing October 17th. We have pleasure of acquaintance with the Professor, and can recommend to the musical public as a gentleman of ability in musical matters.<sup>40</sup>

Ira was just too busy that autumn to attend Bliss's music school, as he was encumbered with family matters and Sunday School conventions.

Yet, occupied as he was, he couldn't put off Moody's repeated and urgent invitations indefinitely, and he finally broached the subject with Fanny and a few close friends. Although it seemed like a foolish step to take from a human standpoint, Ira felt a strong leading to give the proposal an honest hearing. The best course of action seemed to be a trial run, and Sankey offered Moody his services for a week after the Christmas holidays.<sup>41</sup> As Sankey later explained concerning Moody's request to pray about the matter, "I presume I prayed one way and he prayed the other; however, it took him only six months to pray me out of business."<sup>42</sup>

Sleep was difficult, if not all but impossible, as the train lumbered through the black farmlands of northern Ohio and Indiana, belching its choking effluence onto countless acres of barren fields. Ira's mind was bursting with questions trying to imagine what was ahead. Then, just as the sun began to lighten the eastern horizon, the skyline of Chicago signaled Sankey's four-hundred-mile journey was at an end. He quickly grabbed breakfast, and shivering from the icy breeze off Lake Michigan, trudged toward the north side of the metropolis where Moody resided.

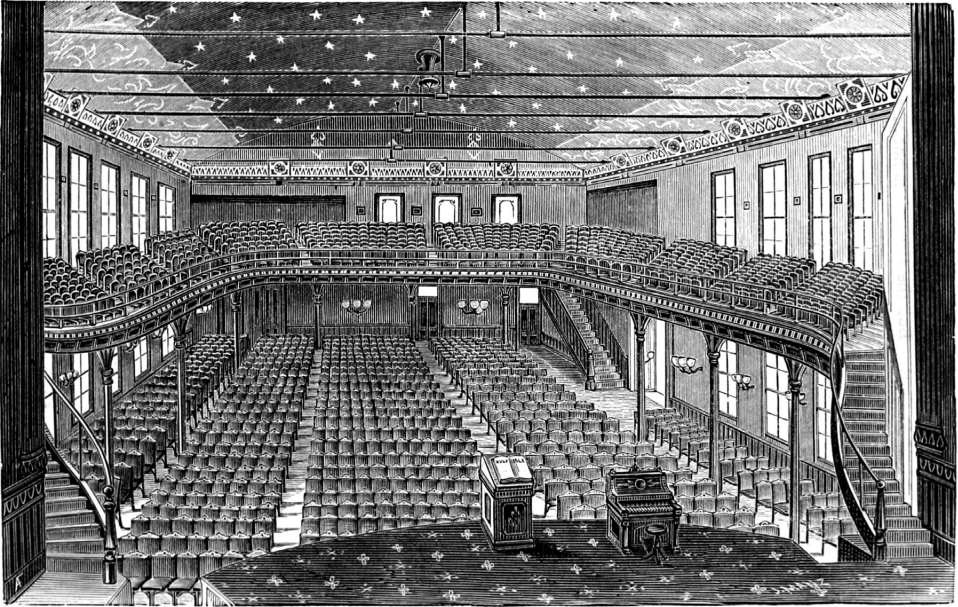
Upon arrival, he found himself in the middle of the family's morning devotions. Without a word of instruction, Moody simply directed Ira to the parlor organ and requested him to lead the singing. After devotions, Sankey was accorded proper introductions, which Moody concluded with "I am going to spend the day in visiting a lot of sick people, and I want you to go with me and sing for them."<sup>43</sup> With this surprisingly brief orientation, Moody bounded out the door with Ira in tow.

"Mr. Moody" as he was called—even by his wife—was gladly welcomed as a guest in every home, for he often came bringing food, coal for heating, or money, as well as spiritual encouragement. The first home was that of a large family where the mother lay sick. Moody sat beside the bed. "I am going to read a few words from the Bible, but first I want my friend, Sankey, to sing a little hymn for you." Ira responded with the popular "Scatter Seeds of Kindness," a song that would become a staple among his solos. Little could either man have imagined how this popular Sunday School song—the first sung by Sankey while assisting Moody—would be the last, sung at the final public meeting of the pair twenty-eight years later.

After a few days in Chicago, Ira was certain of at least one thing: Moody was a man who never seemed to stop. He apparently didn't comprehend the concept of rest, ceaselessly moving from one task to another, encompassing scores of daily visits to the sick, noon prayer meetings with businessmen, preaching services in various locales around the city, and constant attention to the Illinois Street Church Moody had recently founded. In spite of the hectic pace, Ira survived, and the week closed with a mass meeting at the YMCA's Farwell Hall; naturally Moody was in charge.

Although he couldn't sing a note, Moody announced the first hymn and set the crowd a buzzing. During that brief span, he leaned over to Ira and whispered, "I am going to speak on The Prodigal Son and I want you to sing one of the songs I heard you sing at Indianapolis, 'Come home, O prodigal child!'"<sup>44</sup> Sankey remonstrated that he had no organ to accompany himself, whereupon Moody proudly pointed back over their shoulders to a large, shining pipe organ with the query, "Isn't that enough for you?"

Ira tried to explain how it would not do, as it was too large, too far away, and would require him to sing with his back to the audience. In addition, he doubted the German gentleman who had been playing for the hymns had any idea how to accompany his solo. "Give him a book, and tell him how



Farwell Hall, YMCA, in *A Full History of the Wonderful Career of Moody and Sankey* (1876).

you want it played,” was the terse reply as the congregation concluded its final stanza. Sankey was skeptical but seemed to have no choice.

Little did Ira realize that Moody, at great pains to himself and with little encouragement from those he pursued, had personally raised the money for the musical monster. Typical of Moody’s unction, scope of ministry, circle of supporters, and command of detail was the letter to one of his generous benefactors, Cyrus McCormick, just a couple months before this meeting:

Dear Brother,

I have an audience in the Hall of about 1200 to 1800 every Sunday night. I need the organ very much more than I can tell you. The singing is horrible without it. Most of the people that come to the Hall are young men who are not Christians and who cannot sing. Now if I can have a good organ to lead them it helped wonderfully. I cannot raise it in this city. We have to raise \$12,000 every year to pay the many expenses of the Association, and now we are moving into our new library, and it will take \$10,000 to give that a start, and besides that I have a mission of 1200 [Sunday School] scholars and that takes \$2500, and I have all of that

to raise beside preaching three times on the Sabbath and two meetings every day to attend to, so you see I am drove [*sic*] for-time, and if I had the time I do not know where to go to get the money for this organ. I have been to everyone that I know to get money to carry on the rest of my work. Now Mr. McCormick can't you give me \$2000 toward it if you think I can get the rest? Mr. Farwell, who has always helped me in all my work, had spent \$5000 on the new Library Building and he does not feel as if he could help me any on this organ. I am quite shure [*sic*] you would help me if you could see my congregation every Sabbath evening. I know it would sturr [*sic*] your soul. The matter has got to be decided next week whether we take it or not. The work goes well. We have about 1500 different young men coming in to our rooms [probably the reading rooms at the library] every week. We got employment for over 5000 men last year. God is with us in the work. I hope you will pray for us.

Your brother in Christ,

D.L. Moody<sup>45</sup>

Moody was well into his sermon, although it wasn't a sermon in the normal pastoral sense. He had a way of making biblical characters come alive and seem like people his listeners might meet on the street. For many a country lad in the audience who had come to the swirling metropolis for excitement or to find a job, Moody's description of the lonely and struggling boy in Luke 15 must have seemed like the preacher was talking directly to him; but how could he have known? Although Moody usually illustrated his points with emotionally powerful anecdotes, his preaching was often considered more business-like than oratorical. There was little attempt to sway his hearers based solely on an emotional appeal the Victorians of his day loved to indulge. As a successful businessman, Moody was a master of keeping to the point. Unlike many a clergyman whose congregations, as *de facto* captive listeners, were forced to bear with the speaker until he had exhausted either his topic or them, Moody often quit preaching when others were just getting started.

As the evangelist pictured the prodigal son returning to a loving father, Ira sat captivated by the message and forgot about his song. Then suddenly Moody turned in his direction and announced, "Mr. Sankey will now sing a solo for us, and let it be perfectly still while he sings." Quickly gathering his



composure, Ira stood and turned to signal the organist to begin. To his horror, he realized the organist was still in the back room where he usually retreated for a smoke during the sermon. This was Ira's first chance to sing for Moody before a large crowd, and now disaster seemed imminent. Nervously, he stepped to the front of the platform as a sea of faces gazed expectantly in his direction.

*Come home! come home! You are weary at heart,  
For the way has been dark, And so lonely and wild;  
O prodigal child! Come home! come home!*<sup>46</sup>

Sankey's voice was at once pleading and reassuring. He focused on the words and let the rhythm fall subordinate to the text. Without accompaniment, it was more like an intreating prayer than a song, and his voice—filled with sweetness, sympathy, and clarity—seemed to be singing to individuals rather than the huge crowd. As he concluded the final stanza,

*Come home! come home! There is bread and to spare,  
And a warm welcome there;  
Then, to friends reconciled, O prodigal child!  
Come home, oh, come home!*

Moody stepped forward, "If there are any here tonight who have a desire to turn away from sin and come home to the Father's house, if they will rise to their feet I will be glad to pray for them." Slowly, a few men began to stand, until over one hundred modern-day prodigal sons had struggled to their feet to request prayer and spiritual counsel.

These were attended to in the Inquiry Meeting that followed the larger assembly. Here, those who had risen to request counsel were dealt with individually. As the last inquirer finally left, the evangelist turned to his singer and exclaimed, "You see that I was right; your singing has been very helpful in all the meetings, and I am sure you ought to come to Chicago at once, and give up your business."<sup>47</sup>

The next morning, as Ira boarded the east-bound train for home, he was haunted by a set of powerfully charged emotions. While he had never experienced such a glorious week in his life, how could he even consider a move that might jeopardize their close-knit family? What would Fanny think—and his parents? And there was his job and the church work and the YMCA. And what did Moody really have to offer? He was known to accept

no salary, supported only by the generosity of wealthy Chicago philanthropists. Since completing his term as president of the Chicago Y earlier the preceding year, he had been traveling more and more, speaking at various Sunday School conventions.<sup>48</sup> And wasn't there talk about Moody running off to California and holding extended meetings? What was there to prevent Moody from pulling up stakes at a moment's notice and leaving the Windy City for greener pastures!

Despite all of these very logical objections, deep down in his heart and soul Ira knew what he should do. Yet it seemed so selfish in a way—to leave his responsibilities in little New Castle for the chance to work with and sing to literally thousands in the midwest's most important urban center. What could possibly be more exciting and fulfilling than to labor in the very place where God was pouring out his blessing day after day? But wasn't this very desire to be where the spiritual action was, in itself, reflective of wrong motives?

Ira's pastor seemed like the logical choice. He was a godly man attuned to spiritual concerns and often spoke about God's will in his sermons. It was, of course, only coincidental that he would also have the most to lose if Sankey, as Sunday School superintendent and music director, left the church. Yes, he would be a good choice. The Reverend Dobbs was excited to hear of Ira's week in Chicago and his work with the famous Moody. He listened intently as Sankey shared stories of visiting the sick and singing for the large assemblies. He rejoiced as Ira related impressions about the work in Moody's huge Illinois Street Sunday School. Finally Ira told him of the evangelist's renewed plea to join him; it was obviously a wild and impracticable idea, wasn't it? Not at all, Dobbs assured his shocked friend; in fact, it was almost his duty to go.<sup>49</sup>

Perhaps, Ira tried to rationalize, Pastor Dobbs was only able to comprehend the spiritual side of this dilemma; he needed better counsel. Sankey tried his friends but received the same advice. He consulted H.K. Porter of Pittsburgh, who had helped set up the New Castle YMCA. Surely he would advise Ira to get the stars out of his eyes and stick with the local Y he was so ably leading. But Porter had already spoken to Moody about the matter.<sup>50</sup> All opinions were unanimous—Ira should go to Chicago.

This all happened so quickly, Fanny was caught off guard when it came to uprooting the family and traipsing off to some distant location where she had neither friend nor family. Although Ira was clearly enthusiastic, she had



never even met Mr. Moody. In fact, she had rarely been outside of sleepy little West New Castle. And now Ira was proposing a move to the rough and rowdy metropolis some called Mud City. So it came as little surprise when the idea initially “decomposed her.” Yet, as she and her excited husband discussed the matter at greater length, pondering their options, she “gave her cordial assent,”<sup>51</sup> the first of many such decisions.

That meant resigning his position with Internal Revenue. On February 14, 1871, Sankey directed his letter to the Secretary of the Treasury and requested his position be filled by a local Civil War hero who had made a heroic escape from the notorious Confederate Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia. But that was the only bridge Ira burned. It was the middle of winter and he decided not to move his family to a strange and distant land; how could he at this point—he didn’t even know where he would be staying. Besides, if he went hungry, at least Fanny and the children wouldn’t suffer, living near both their parents. Perhaps after he got more settled they could join him.

Both excitement and anxiety battled for Ira’s emotions as he kissed Fanny, hugged Harry and Eddie, and bid good-bye to parents and well-wishers. He must have wondered how Matthew from the New Testament—another tax collector—felt when Jesus saw him at work one day and simply commanded, “Follow me.”<sup>52</sup> Moody’s promptings had seemed no less divinely ordained, and Ira had responded to what he interpreted as being a call from God. Yet, unlike Matthew, who “left all, rose up, and followed,” Ira was keeping one foot in both worlds, for only time would reveal whether this decision was one of faith or folly. ☞

## ENDNOTES

1. Words by William Cowper; music adapted from a tune by Lowell Mason, "There is a fountain filled with blood," *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan, and George C. Stebbins, eds. (Cincinnati: John Church Co.; New York: Biglow and Main, 1894), No. 733.
2. The first International Convention was held in Chicago in 1863 and annually thereafter; Charles Howard Hopkins, *History of the Y.M.C.A. in North America* (New York: Association Press, 1951), 794. The *Proceedings* of the meeting lists it as the *Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Young Men's Christian Association of the United States and British Provinces, Held at Indianapolis, Ind., June 1870*.
3. *Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States and British Provinces, Held at Indianapolis, Ind., June 1870* (New York: Executive Committee, 1870), 11. It's uncertain where the delegates actually stayed. The level of detailed organization and pre-planning (including coordination with the price of special tickets for each railroad line) by the organizing committees is impressive, indeed.
4. W.H. Doane, ed., *Songs of Devotion: A Collection of Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs, with Music, for Young Men's Christian Associations Church Service, Prayer and Conference Meetings, Religious Conventions and Family Worship* (New York: Biglow and Main, 1870), No. 264.
5. *Proceedings*, 17.
6. "William Howard Doane," *The National Cyclopedia of American Biography*, XLI, (1893), 95. His patents received international recognition at the Paris Exposition of 1889 when he was awarded the Legion of Honor. For best coverage of Doane, see <https://www.hymnologyarchive.com/william-h-doane>.
7. Henry S. Burrage, *Baptist Hymn Writers and Their Hymns* (Portland, ME: Brown Turston & Co., 1888), 457, and J.H. Hall, *Biography of Gospel Song and Hymn Writers* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1914), 78, reported Doane's first collection as *Sabbath [School] Gems* (1861/2), but this collection could not be located, and it seems from the preface to *Silver Spray* (1868) that Doane's first collection was *The Little Sunbeam* (1867); the preface of *Sunny-side Songs* (1893) reported Doane had been "actively engaged with the Song Service in the Sunday School . . . for more than 25 years," which puts the genesis of his publishing career at 1867/8, so Burrage and Hall are possibly in error, although such an error is strange, considering Doane was still alive when Burrage wrote his bio.
8. *Proceedings*, 86.

9. Martha F. Belinger, "Music in Indianapolis, 1821–1900," *Indiana Magazine of History*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (December 1945), 349, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27787525>. The Choral Union gave the first performance of Handel's *Messiah* in Indiana in 1874.
10. In Sankey, *My Life*, 18, he mistook the day and stated, "late on a Saturday afternoon, it was announced that Mr. Moody of Chicago would lead a six o'clock morning prayer meeting," but Saturday was the final day of the conference. Records in the *Proceedings* place the day of the announcement as Wednesday, June 22, 1870.
11. Hopkins, *YMCA*, 187; Sankey, *My Life*, 18.
12. At this point in the city's history, the term Windy City was not in use. The origin and meaning is much disputed, but by the twentieth century, it was common. Some claim the term was coined to describe the city's bloviating politicians, rather than the frigid blasts from off Lake Michigan.
13. Biography on Moody abounds. The most comprehensive and scholarly account is *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist 1837–1899* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1969) by James F. Findlay Jr. Stanley N. Gundry, *Love Them In: The Life and Theology of D.L. Moody* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1982) is best on his theology. Bruce J. Evensen's *God's Man for the Gilded Age: D.L. Moody and the Rise of Mass Evangelism* (Oxford: University Press, 2003) focuses on his relationship with the media. Another excellent work, although a bit more popular in style, is *Moody* by John C. Pollock. In Britain, this publication was titled *Moody Without Sankey* (1963). The edition used in this work is *Moody: The Biography* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983). Other accounts such as *They Called Him Mister Moody* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1962) by Richard K. Curtis and *Bush Aglow* (Boston: The Judson Press, 1936) by Richard S. Day provide additional perspectives on the leading figure of nineteenth-century revivalism. Many of these accounts rely heavily on the seminal *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (New York: Fleming Revell, 1900) by the evangelist's son, Will R. Moody. Indispensable to any serious investigation is *An Annotated Bibliography of Dwight Lyman Moody* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1948) by Wilbur M. Smith.
14. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 48.
15. Until the early twentieth century, it was common practice in many Catholic and Protestant churches to rent pews to families or individuals as a principal means of raising income. This was especially common in the United States where churches lacked government support.
16. Moody slowly overcame his biblical illiteracy, becoming a diligent student of

Bible commentaries to learn about themes and topics of Scripture.

17. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5–7), Jesus taught the necessity of undivided loyalties. In 6:24 he warned his listeners, “No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” (meaning material wealth in KJV translation).
18. Findlay, *Moody*, quoting *Congregational Herald*, 14 May 1857; Findlay also discussed the relationship of business and piety at some length, 81–87. For an in-depth account of Moody’s later relationships with the media (an aspect of his business abilities), see Evensen, *God’s Man*.
19. Hopkins, *YMCA*, 81–82. The meetings actually began in September of 1856 as weekly evening gatherings but soon switched to noon meetings as the time was found to be more appealing.
20. Margaret Myers, *A Financial History of the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 126–27. Page 139 contains a reproduction of a painting or lithograph (highly idealized) entitled “Wall Street in the panic of 1857.”
21. Hopkins, *YMCA*, provides a brief summary of the meetings in connection with the role of the YMCA. Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith [Abingdon], 1976) devoted an entire chapter (IV, “Annus Mirabilis—1858”) to the meetings within the larger focus of his work. He also included important primary source data on the meetings.
22. Smith, *Revivalism*, 64.
23. Smith, *Revivalism*, 63.
24. Hopkins, *YMCA*, 82.
25. Moody had written his mother as early as January of 1857 concerning the “great revival of Religion in this city.” Those sentiments might reflect his own heightened interest in religious work at the time, or very possibly reflect a widespread national spiritual interest already present in 1857, which was simply intensified by the Panic during the latter part of the year.
26. Edwin B. Smith, John C. Grant, and Horace Starkey, *Historical Sketch of the Chicago Young Men’s Christian Association, 1858–1898* (Chicago: The Association, 1898), 16.
27. Findlay, *Moody*, traces the details of this process in chapter 3, “The 1860s: Apprentice Evangelist.”
28. The details of the morning are speculative, based on other verifiable factors. The *YMCA Proceedings* report about the convention’s opening meeting stat-

ed, Moody “would conduct [a meeting] in the Third Presbyterian Church” (p. 32), but either the report was incorrect or there was a change of venue after the announcement. It seems unlikely Sankey would have confused the location of such a seminal moment in his life. His late arrival might reflect confusion relating to the meeting’s location.

29. Sankey, *My Life*, 18–19. This is one of many famous anecdotes that seem to have an element of the creative about them.
30. Sankey, *My Life*, 19–21. It is curious that Moody would state he had been looking for a music partner for eight years, as he had already made the acquaintance and had occasionally been assisted by Philip P. Bliss, an outstanding gospel musician, as well as other capable folks. Perhaps Moody’s statement, if Ira reported it accurately years later, was simply a bit of hyperbole. However, the report about Moody searching “for eight years” cropped up by 1875 in W.H. Daniels, *D.L. Moody and His Work* (Hartford: American Publishing, 1875), 235–6. Daniels reported the classic conversation with the same formatting, and it seems to be the model for later printings from other authors.

Sankey, in his 1906 autobiography, quoted the Daniels account almost verbatim, suggesting he was relying on that earlier model. Sankey’s recollection thirty years after the event seems generally trustworthy, although he erred in certain details. “How Sankey Met Moody,” in the *Marion Star* (Marion, OH), 8 January 1880, 3, is one of many interviews Sankey gave over the decades. It provides a considerably different perspective on the encounter, along with some incorrect statements.

31. Sankey, *My Life*, 21.
32. *Proceedings*, 107–08.
33. On 18 April 1870, Ira Sankey paid \$2,000 to the estate of Richard Fulkerson in Wayne Township and took ownership of Lot #11, covering about six acres. As Ira later purchased adjacent Lot #6 (measuring the same size) for \$100, the large price for Lot #11 suggests it probably included a house, if not barn and other dwellings. David Sankey was the executor for the Fulkerson estate. Lawrence County property Deed Book No. 19, p. 503.
34. *Lawrence Journal*, 23 July 1870.
35. *Lawrence Journal*, 2 July 1870. Although the delegate being interviewed was not identified, one strongly suspects it to have been Ira Sankey.
36. *Lawrence Journal*, 25 June 1870.
37. A. Gregory Schneider, “A Conflict of Associations: The National Camp-Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness versus the Methodist Episcopal Church” *Church History*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (June 1997), 268–83, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3170658>. See also Mel R. Wilhoit, “Holiness Hymnody:

- Some Questions—A Methodology,” *Wesleyan Holiness Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Fall 1990).
38. *Lawrence Journal*, 20 August 1870.
  39. S.W. and P.A. Durant, *History of Lawrence County, Pennsylvania, 1770–1877* (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts and Co., 1877), 153. For some unknown reason, Dobbs remained in the New Castle pulpit for only one year. After that, pastors were assigned to the church on a three-year basis, rather than the two-year term in practice since 1854 when the church employed its first full-time, resident pastor.
  40. *Lawrence Journal*, 15 October 1870. It is difficult to ascertain from the statement “We have pleasure of acquaintance” whether this means anything more than a passing knowledge of Bliss’ reputation for the purpose of advertising. Bliss was, no doubt, in the employ of Root and Cady Publishers for those musical conventions. Evidence seems to suggest that Ira Sankey and Bliss did not meet until they were both in Chicago around 1870 or 1871.
  41. The exact date of Sankey’s trial run with Moody is uncertain. Sankey reported in *My Life*, “After a delay of over six months . . . , I consented to spend a week with [Moody],” 21–22. If his recollection is correct, that would make it early 1871, as the Indianapolis meeting was toward the end of June. Sankey also later referred to an experience during the trial run (p. 22) as 1871.
  42. J. Wilbur Chapman, *The Life and Work of Dwight L. Moody* (Chicago: International Publishing Co., 1900), 124.
  43. Sankey, *My Life*, 22.
  44. Sankey, *My Life*, 23. There is no record in the YMCA proceedings of Sankey singing this song. Perhaps Moody had heard him sing it informally (on that box when seeking to draw a crowd), or perhaps he had now conflated someone else’s performance at the convention with that of Sankey. However, this song—with its more intimate nature—hardly seems like the type Sankey would have chosen to draw attention while standing on a box.
  45. Typescript of letter of 1 Dec. 1870, headed “Y.M.C.A. Business Department,” in Moody archives, Northfield, MA. It is uncertain if McCormick supplied the needed funds, but Moody obviously raised the money, as he had the instrument up and working within a few months when Sankey visited Chicago in early 1871.
  46. Words by Ellen H. Gates, music by William H. Doane, “The Prodigal Son,” *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, No. 627. For some unknown reason, the song is not included in Sankey’s song stories in *My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns*.
  47. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 127; David Williamson, *Ira D. Sankey*:

*the Story of His Life* (London: S.W. Partridge and Co., 190?), 31. Both attribute this quote to the evening service. Sankey, *My Life*, 24, attributes it to his farewell conversation with Moody the following morning.

48. Findlay, *Moody*, 129.
49. Sankey, *My Life*, 24.
50. Ira Sankey, "How Mr. Sankey joined Mr. Moody," *Association Men* magazine (Calcutta, Feb. 1900), 149.
51. Reader, *Moody and Sankey*, 56.
52. Matthew 9:9; Luke 6:27–28.



No. 181.

He Knows.

MARY G. BRAINARD.

Words arranged by P. P. BLISS.

P. P. BLISS.

1. I know not what a - waits me, God kind - ly veils mine eyes,  
 2. One step I see be - fore me, 'Tis all I need to see,  
 3. O bliss - ful lack - of wis - dom, 'Tis bless - ed not to know;  
 4. So on I go notknowing, I would not if I might;

And o'er each step of my on - ward way He makes new scenes to rise;  
 The light of heav'n more bright - ly shines, When earth's il - lu - sions flee;  
 He holds me with His own right hand, And will not let me go,  
 I'd rath - er walk in the dark with God Than go a - lone in the light;

And ev - 'ry joy He sends me, comes A sweet and glad sur - prise.  
 And sweet - ly through the si - lence, came His lov - ing "Fol - low me."  
 And lulls my troub - led soul to rest In Him who loves me so.  
 I'd rath - er walk by faith with Him Than go a - lone by sight.

CHORUS.

Where He may lead I'll fol - low, My trust in Him re - pose; And ev - 'ry hour in

per - fect peace I'll sing, He knows, He knows; And ev - 'ry hour in per - fect peace I'll

After last verse only.

sing, He knows, He knows. He knows, He knows, He knows.....  
 He knows.

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## Chapter 6

### Up in Smoke

1871

*I know not what awaits me; God kindly veils my eyes,  
And o'er each step of my onward way He makes new scenes to rise;  
And ev'ry joy He sends me, Comes a sweet and glad surprise.*

*Where He may lead I'll follow, My trust in Him repose;  
And ev'ry hour in perfect peace I'll sing, He knows, He knows.*

*One step I see before me, 'Tis all I need to see.  
The light of heav'n more brilliantly shines, When earth's illusions flee;  
And sweetly through the silence, came His loving "Follow me."<sup>1</sup>*

“Now the Lord had said: ‘Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee . . . and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.’”<sup>2</sup>

ALTHOUGH GOD HAD originally addressed this strange command to Abraham some thirty-five hundred years earlier, Ira must have felt a close kinship with the patriarch as he boarded the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne, and Chicago Railway headed back to Chicago, all alone that February of 1871. Moody lived with his family at 124 North State Street in a new home furnished by John Farwell, proprietor at one of the city’s most successful merchandise stores. On January 1 of that year, Moody and his family had been whisked off to a handsomely furnished residence filled with friends for what he thought was a meeting of some kind—only to be handed the deed to the house and all its contents.<sup>3</sup>

Ira’s quarters were more spartan, being assigned a room and office space in Farwell Hall, the Chicago YMCA headquarters on Madison Street. That building, between LaSalle and Clark, was actually the second by that name on the site. The first had been an impressive facility, dedicated in Sep-

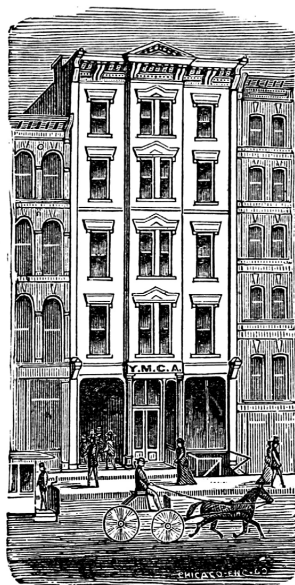
tember of 1867; it stood five storeys tall, contained an auditorium seating 3500, a library, reading rooms, offices, forty-two dormitory rooms, and a gymnasium—at a staggering cost of \$200,000. It burned to the ground three months later. This second iteration, where Ira was to live, was considerably scaled down.<sup>4</sup>

Farwell Hall was both Sankey's new home and the southern base for Moody's operation in that city. From there, Ira led prayer meetings, assisted the peripatetic evangelist in praying with and singing for the sick, and visited inmates—some as young as seven—at Bridewell Prison on Polk and Wells Streets near the vice district.<sup>5</sup> In addition, he led the music in an exhausting round of preaching services, which Moody thrived on.

Eight blocks due north up LaSalle Street was the northern sphere of the evangelist's work, the Illinois Street Independent Church. Its roots lay in the Sunday School Moody had organized in an abandoned saloon in 1858 near the notoriously crime-ridden Sands neighborhood.

One important qualification for his work was an intense . . . love for children. He never seemed happier than when in the midst of a crowd of boys and girls, with whom he romped in the wildest fashion, beating them at their own sports and games, until he won their fullest confidence and came to be regarded by them as the biggest and jolliest boy of them all.<sup>6</sup>

Moody was assisted by a Mr. Trudeau and a Mr. Stillson, who spent much of their time quelling scuffles among the scores of young ruffians.<sup>7</sup> He was later joined by John Farwell and the teenage Emma Charlotte Revell, whom Moody would marry in 1862 when she was 19 and he 25.<sup>8</sup> At that point, 425 children populated the growing work, and Moody also began holding prayer meetings for their parents. As many of the children grew into young adults, they didn't feel comfortable in area churches, so Moody and his associates formed the Illinois Street Church on December 30, 1864. It met in the Sunday School's new facilities on Wells and Illinois in a 1500-



**Chicago YMCA**, in Elias Nason, *Lives of the Eminent American Evangelists* (1877).



**D.L. Moody & J.V. Farwell's First Sunday School Class.** North Market Hall, Chicago, Ill. Published by G.H. Flood & Co., Lithography by Jackson, Ruehlow & Co. (Chicago). Image from Library of Congress.

seat auditorium. Within a year, the Sunday School boasted 750 scholars, and the church hired J.H. Harwood as its full-time pastor. Because Moody was not ordained, he was not qualified to hold the pastorate, yet no one doubted who was in charge. Ira now assisted with the music.

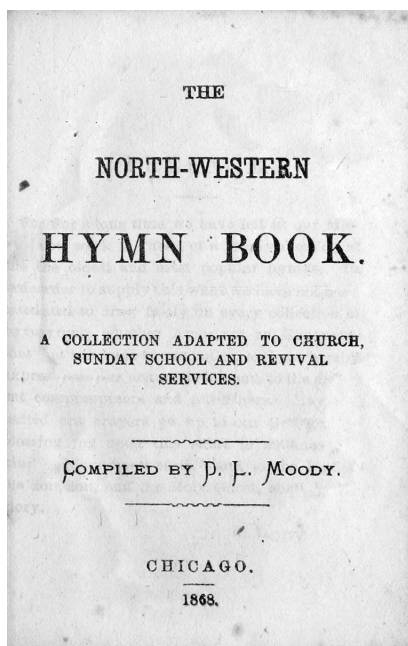
It didn't take the musically sensitive Ira long to discover Moody's legendary tone-deafness, for he enthusiastically exercised his atonal version of singing in the services. Of his father, Will R. Moody recalled, ". . . he had absolutely no musical ear, being unable to distinguish one tune from another. Paradoxical as it may appear, no one more readily detected any difficulty in the singing or appreciated more highly a well-trained chorus,"<sup>9</sup> and his daughter-in-law, May Whittle Moody, an accomplished musician, recounted that she could tell Moody she was playing his favorite hymn, and if she

played it with the proper feeling, could substitute “Yankee Doodle” and he couldn’t tell the difference.<sup>10</sup>

Typical of Moody’s response to a perceived problem—such as poor music in his meetings—was to develop an action plan to solve it, and that meant launching off in any direction that seemed promising. His first recorded attempt was to produce *The North-Western Hymn Book* in 1868.<sup>11</sup> Sub-titled, “A Collection Adapted to Church, Sunday School and Revival Services,” it listed Moody as its sole compiler on the title page. The preface he penned records:

For a long time we have felt in our Mission work the need of a larger collection of the oldest and most popular hymns. In order to supply this want we have not hesitated to draw freely on every collection of hymns, whether American or European, that has come to our notice, and we hereby express our acknowledgements to the different composers and publishers. May our united prayers go up to God for His blessing upon this effort to advance His kingdom upon earth—and to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, shall be the glory.

At first, it seems almost inconceivable to think the tone-deaf Moody could single-handedly compile this words-only collection of 325 hymns and four doxologies; yet, if he had assistance, it went unrecorded. The collection begins with a respectable section of standard hymnody by Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley, John Newton, William Cowper, John Mason, and H.R. Palmer. But it also contains a sprinkling of folk hymns and a healthy component of texts with choruses. In many cases, this latter type of song, lighter both textually and musically, originated in the Sunday School melodies of William B. Bradbury and would have been familiar to Moody, one of the nation’s most innovative Sunday School leaders. In addition to Sunday School songs, numerous traditional hymns proved themselves ready





vehicles for a supplemental chorus. The opening selection is typical. It is John Newton's beloved "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds," to which a rather *non sequitur* chorus had been appended:

*I do believe, I now believe,  
That Jesus died for me;  
And through his blood, his precious blood,  
I shall from sin be free.*

It seems at least possible that Moody could have personally made the selections for this rather catholic collection. First, the fact of no publisher being listed suggests Moody footed the bill himself and self-published this volume. Second, he was never tied doctrinally or liturgically to any one denomination; in fact, his Illinois Street Church boasted the qualifier "Independent" in its name, reflecting Moody's non-sectarian, lay approach to ministry—a central characteristic of later revivalism. In addition, his widespread travels had exposed him to a broad range of religious music, which he was quick to absorb if he thought it was effective.

If Moody—the Sunday School leader, YMCA builder, and church administrator—did spend his precious time and limited resources on such a tangential project, he must have felt he was producing something critical to addressing the musical shortcomings of his meetings. It's all the more surprising to consider this volume was produced about the same time as William Doane's *Songs of Devotion* (1870), compiled at the request of the YMCA. There was apparently a widespread desire for the right musical collection to facilitate the work of these organizations, and more than one leader of mid-nineteenth-century evangelicalism was trying to address it. This was also likely one of the collections Sankey would have been expected to use in his work with Moody in Chicago.<sup>12</sup>

Ira was also blessed—or saddled—with other efforts Moody had made to address the musical problem. One—described earlier—was the organ in Farwell Hall. In an effort to procure the large instrument, Moody had displayed his gifts at raising significant capital outlays from his wealthy supporters to purchase and install the desired organ—only to find that the instrument itself was unable to produce Moody's desired outcome, being dependent upon the gifts of an effective musical leader.

Ever the pragmatist, Moody was not averse to using music for purely functional ends, and crowd control fell under that heading. Only a few

weeks before his meeting with Sankey in Indianapolis, Moody had personally employed the power of music to accomplish what the spoken word could not. While he was presiding over a Sunday School convention downstate in Quincy, Illinois, a sharp controversy arose among the brethren. Tempers flared, with the situation threatening to escalate out of control. Moody leaped to his feet, attempting to restore order, but to no avail. He then summoned the organist and songleader to his aid, resulting in the rather ironic choice of “Blest be the tie that binds” being floated—a shock that either shamed or arrested the quarreling delegates’ attention long enough for Moody to pray what was no doubt an uncharacteristically long prayer—restoring order.<sup>13</sup>

He also found the public singing of a hymn attracted attention among the masses and could function as a sort of Pied Piper. It had worked almost miraculously earlier at the Indianapolis YMCA convention when he asked Ira to lead that group of men in the street to hear him preach. And he recommended the technique to fellow workers, along with some other tips about how music works when answering the question “What is the best way to commence Christian work in saloons” at the YMCA “Question Drawer” session in Indianapolis:

Our experience has been to get a good singer. Music has a wonderful influence on them. Get a good singer and lead off by singing the “Star Spangled Banner,” or some such song. That will gain their attention, and then, after a time, ask them shall we not sing “There is a fountain filled with blood.” It will not be long till the tears begin to flow down their cheeks. Then take out your Bible, and read the story of the prodigal son. Then talk to them of Jesus. When you get ready to leave, ask them to come to the meetings with you.<sup>14</sup>

Here was Moody, proposing that a key element to reaching working men was the employment of not just music in general, but a certain method and even certain songs. He had obviously been observing and analyzing this for some time in order to develop an approach he felt would be effective. On another level, the need for competent musical leadership had been percolating in his mind for a long period when he blurted out to Sankey at their first meeting, “I have been looking for you for eight years.” The highly specific assertion of “eight years” seems to suggest, at some point in the past, Moody must have had an epiphany or realization that music was key to accomplishing his vision and goals; but he just couldn’t do it on his own.



If eight years was any kind of accurate accounting, it meant Moody was formulating his concepts about music around 1862 during the Civil War while deeply involved with the Chicago YMCA and the United States Christian Commission, a group responsible for furnishing medical supplies and religious instruction along with social and recreational activities. Moody had undoubtedly approached other gifted church musicians he had come across to assist him, but he was unable to strike the right timing or circumstances. It is interesting to consider how his request for Ira to join him might not have been the first such invitation to a hopeful partner.

It was no wonder that Moody asserted his growing frustrations for Ira to join him in light of the perceived deficiencies with his custom-designed hymn book, fancy organ, or failure to find the right musical helpmate. But now with Ira finally being part of the picture, all that might change.

Yet, although Sankey was now onboard, there seemed to be no plan to alter anything specific about the evangelist's musical approach to ministry. Moody, in fact, was in the midst of focusing his attention far to the west, making plans to travel across the United States to address the Fourth Annual California State Sunday School Convention as its featured speaker.<sup>15</sup> And he was taking Philip Phillips as his musical co-laborer!

That Moody scooped up Phillips to accompany him should have come as no surprise to anyone. Phillips was already a star in this religious solar system, which included the Sunday School movement, the YMCA enterprise, and the Civil War U.S. Christian Commission.

Just six years earlier, on January 29, 1865, Phillips—singing in the Hall of the House of Representatives (House Chamber) before dignitaries including President and Mrs. Lincoln, members of Congress, the Supreme Court, Cabinet, army and navy officers—captured attention that put him in demand at religious gatherings thereafter.

The occasion was the Third Anniversary Meeting of the U.S. Christian Commission. Formed to provide material and spiritual support for Union troops, the Commission had gathered to celebrate the conclusion of the devastating conflict. And cause for celebration it had. In the three years since its formation, it had distributed 991,803 hymn books and psalm books, 1,137,869 Bibles and testaments, 5,697,024 knapsack books, 11,307,008 religious newspapers, and a staggering 36,611,770 pages of religious tracts. It had disbursed receipts amounting to \$1,696,154 with the additional value of stores donated totaling \$1,697,487. Feeding hungry troops and caring for

wounded soldiers also figured prominently. Yet all this largess was directed at the goal of conversion, with countless preaching and prayer meetings being held to that end.<sup>16</sup>

Included on the anniversary program, exhibiting an impressive roster of luminaries, was Item #7: “Singing—‘Your Mission’—by Philip Phillips, of Cincinnati” as requested by President Lincoln. Of the song’s six stanzas, three were especially moving, because Phillips delivered them with a sense of rubato, earnestness, and a “marked tremolo,”<sup>17</sup> giving full expression to the words.

*If you cannot, on the ocean, Sail among the swiftest fleet,  
Rocking on the highest billows, Laughing at the storms you meet,  
You can stand among the sailors, Anchored yet within the bay,  
You can lend a hand to help them, As they launch their boats away.*

At the conclusion of this first stanza, “there was a long breath drawn [from the singer], as if the heart during its singing . . . had forgotten its functions, and the sigh now bursting gave it temporary relief. The singer proceeded with his song, while the listeners, oblivious to everything around, drank in the strains as the traveler in the sun-scorched desert drinks of the cooling streams.”<sup>18</sup> Phillips continued:

*If you cannot, in the conflict, Prove yourself a soldier true,  
If, where fire and smoke are thickest, There’s no work for you to do;  
When the battlefield is silent, You can go with careful tread,  
You can bear away the wounded, You can cover up the dead.*

By this time, “every eye was a fountain of tears . . . strong men wept like children. . . . Among the stifled . . . sobs . . . the singer by a nice art arose a little in the last verse from the depths of sympathy to which he had carried them, and with a slight touch of the exultant in his tones, struck the last verse”:

*Do not then, stand idly waiting For some greater work to do;  
Fortune is a lazy goddess, She will never come to you;  
Go and toil in any vineyard, Do not fear to do or dare,  
If you want a field of labor, You may find it anywhere!  
You may find it anywhere!*

“With the repetition of the last line so skillfully managed . . . every face bathed in tears, and every heart wrought to the highest degree of enthusiasm, felt ready for any service or any sacrifice.”<sup>19</sup>

The stunning impact was not lost on the President, who, with tears streaming down his cheeks, hastily scribbled on the back of the program, “Near the close, let us hear ‘Your Mission’ repeated by Mr. Phillips. Don’t say I called for it.” He handed it to John Farwell—Moody’s chief benefactor in Chicago, as well as the Christian Commission—who passed it on to Phillips, who encoed it as the program neared midnight.

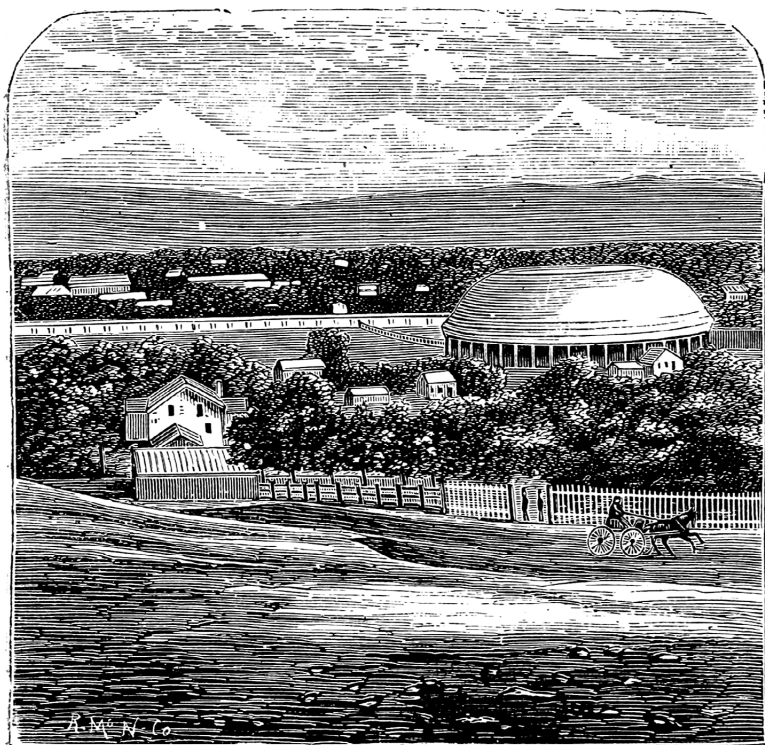
The resulting notoriety kept Phillips so busy, he sought escape to England in 1868, traveling to the Continent for sight-seeing. But on his return to London he was implored to present his famous “song services,” mixing Scripture, anecdotes, and religious solos. Beginning with Sunday School Union meetings in Jubilee Hall, he continued at Temperance Hall in the famed Crystal Palace at Hyde Park before a crowd of 42,000, then on to Spurgeon’s famous Tabernacle, as well as scores of cities and towns, racking up sixty-seven services on a vacation intended for rest and relaxation. So successful was the tour, the British Sunday-School Union requested him to compile a song collection for its classes. The surprisingly quick result was *The American Sacred Songster*. Its preface was quite frank as to its purpose: it was to be a supplemental collection of the latest American Sunday School music.

In preparing this volume of Sunday-School music, it has been my purpose to insert nothing but *Real Gems of Sacred Song*, selected from the works of the most popular American Authors. There will be found in this book but very few of the old standard Hymns or Tunes, as the Committee in charge desired nothing but the real American Melodies of Sacred Song; therefore, it is designed that each School continue to use (in connection with the ‘Sacred Songster’) their former Books of Hymns and Tunes.<sup>20</sup>

The words-and-music collection, with one hundred eighty selections, was phenomenally successful, running to seven editions.<sup>21</sup> It also revealed an apparent thirst among the British people for popular American Sunday School songs. Almost all the selections contained the rather novel musical element of the refrain (or chorus). While it included a couple dozen songs that became Sunday School standards—such as “Shall we gather at the river,” “Jesus loves me, this I know” and “Saviour, like a shepherd, lead us”—few of the selections were part of the new wave of Sunday School music that would overwhelm Great Britain and the United States within the next decade. It did

contain one solo item, “Your Mission” with piano accompaniment, made famous by Phillips at the Christian Commission meeting.

By late March of 1871, Moody had begun an arduous journey across the American continent, which had just been connected to distant Sacramento by the newly opened Transcontinental Railroad. He was accompanied by J.H. Vincent, perhaps the most prominent Sunday School promoter in the land. At Omaha, Nebraska, they joined Philip Phillips, who had already been touring the West. Then in Ogden, Utah, they took a rather odd forty-mile detour due south to Salt Lake City, where Brigham Young had invited Moody to speak to a gathering of Mormons. There Moody preached and Phillips sang to a crowd of eight thousand in the recently completed Tabernacle.<sup>22</sup> Then aboard the Union Pacific’s famous Silver Palace cars—with seats capable of folding into sleeping berths<sup>23</sup>—it was on to San Jose, California, where Moody addressed delegates on the first day of the convention, April 18. Their visit was so successful, successive invitations to speak and sing caused them to remain for some weeks.



Salt Lake City, Mormon Tabernacle at right, in Philip Phillips, *Song Pilgrimage Around and Throughout the World* (1880).

Back in Chicago, Ira received a simple telegram, but this one hit him in the pit of the stomach and left him dumbfounded. As the newspapers reported it:

New Castle, Pa., March 24—The fine residence of Mr. David Sankey, proprietor of the *Lawrence Journal*, of this city, was destroyed by fire at five o'clock this evening. A considerable quantity of furniture was also consumed. Probable loss, \$5,000 or \$6,000. No insurance.<sup>24</sup>

Of course, insurance was the farthest thing from Ira's mind as he was worried sick about his parents' safety. Fortunately, they and everyone else in the house escaped unharmed, but the loss was still devastating. Because Fanny Sankey and the boys still lived a short distance away, Ira's parents were not left homeless. But on some level, for David and Mary Sankey, it felt like starting over.

While Moody and Phillips held meetings in the West, Ira traveled eastward to New Castle, and after doing all he could to soften the family tragedy, joined forces with friend and state YMCA leader Thomas Kirby Cree—who, a year earlier, had urged Sankey to attend the Indianapolis YMCA convention where he met Moody. They joined forces with one of Ohio's dynamic YMCA leaders, K.A. Burnell, with Sankey being enlisted to lead music in a series of sixteen meetings over twenty-six days at small towns in Pennsylvania. While Ira had already provided music for countless individual religious services in his career, it was Sankey's first extended evangelistic campaign. The tour concluded with Ira attending his second international YMCA convention—the organization's sixteenth on May 24, 1871<sup>25</sup>—held in the city of Washington, now called D.C., a result of the newly-approved District of Columbia Organic Act, making it a federal territory.

Even though he was living in Chicago, Ira officially represented, along with Jay Andrews, the New Castle YMCA. The logistics for the convention were as meticulously detailed and pre-arranged as they had been the previous year. Delegates had the option of staying in private homes or at three of the city's centrally located hotels—two on Pennsylvania Avenue—for the reduced rate of \$2 per day. The convention convened on Wednesday morning, May 24, at 10:00AM, with its usual singing of "All hail the power of Jesus' name" and "Stand up, stand up for Jesus." Between the presentation of resolutions, the delegates sang "My country, 'tis of thee" and offered a special



prayer for Queen Victoria, President Grant, and Vice President Colfax, who lay seriously ill.<sup>26</sup>

The First Congregational Church on the corner of 10th and G Streets hosted the evening's welcome reception, which boasted President Grant on the rostrum. Professor W.H. Burlen, from the Methodist Episcopal Church, directed the choir and sang a solo, "One More Year's Work for Jesus," with the audience joining on the chorus. After congratulations from endless delegates, including Y president John Wanamaker—who would soon turn his Philadelphia clothing outfit into Wanamaker's famous department store—the assembled delegates sang "God Save the Queen," the Doxology ("Praise God, from whom all blessings flow"), and dismissed.

On the second day, Ira was appointed to the Committee on Public and Devotional Meetings<sup>27</sup> alongside K.A. Burnell—with whom he had just completed meetings—and General O.O. Howard, known as the "Christian General" because he sought to base his political and policy decisions on biblical principles. After the war, he was appointed head of the U.S. Freedman's Bureau in 1865, with the task of integrating the recently enslaved into southern society and politics during Reconstruction. That year, he also founded Howard University with the goal of educating freed blacks.<sup>28</sup> In addition to his work with the YMCA, he was also central to the U.S. Christian Commission. For Ira, the convention was an opportunity to widen his circle beyond the movers and shakers of evangelical life in Chicago.

Sessions alternated between addresses challenging delegates to develop a heart for the lost, prayer meetings, and discussion periods about practical issues involving local chapters. There was always a lot of singing from the assembled throng or from soloists such as William Doane, who had led music the previous year and compiled the Association's songbook. These were well-known and experienced musical leaders who had long enjoyed a national reputation. But now, on Thursday evening, May 25, at the 7:30PM service, it was Ira Sankey's turn to take the national stage as delegates filled the pews at the First Congregational Church.

The meeting opened with everyone singing "Children of the Heavenly Father" and "Father, whatever of earthly bliss," followed by a reading from 1 John, chapter 2, focusing on God as Father: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."<sup>29</sup>

After prayer by a delegate from Nova Scotia, the assembly sang “Joy to the world, the Lord is come,” reflecting its message as a Second Advent hymn, anticipating the Lord’s future reign on the earth when sin will be vanquished.

Evangelicals during this era shared both a Victorian optimism about the progress of humanity and a biblical perspective known as Post-Millennialism, which generally understood Scripture as teaching how, as long as Christians were faithful in proclaiming God’s Word and seeing people converted—through dynamic organizations like the YMCA or the growing Missions movement—the world would slowly but surely be converted to Christ and conform to biblical principals; the Lord would then return to a redeemed earth to reign for a thousand years. A classic illustration of that goal was expressed by Moody in the preface to his *North-Western Hymn Book*: “May our united prayers go up to God for His blessing upon this effort to advance His kingdom upon earth.”

“Joy to the world, the Lord is come,” Isaac Watts’ paraphrase of Psalm 98, also expounded a powerful vision of that expectation towards which these men were laboring. In fact, that spiritual paradigm—as captured in Watts’ words “No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to make His blessings flow, far as the curse is found”—remained the dominant understanding of eschatology (doctrine of last things) among evangelicals until the devastation of World War I demonstrated its fallacy.<sup>30</sup>

The main focus of the evening’s session was a continuation of the morning question, “How shall the study of God’s Word be promoted in our Associations?” Eleven respondents spoke briefly, each giving his opinion about how to address the challenge. The congregation sang “Blest be the tie that binds,” followed by a prayer, then it was time for Ira to step forward and settle himself behind the pump organ.<sup>31</sup> Although First Congregational Church occupied an imposing Neo-Romanesque brownstone, completed just three years earlier, its construction debt precluded it from having a pipe organ. Just as well, for Sankey felt most at home behind the intimate little melodeon. He checked the instrument’s stop setting, which had just been used to accompany the congregational hymn, and the organist had to pull out all the stops to provide its maximum volume for the large assembly.<sup>32</sup> While Ira had a full and impressive baritone voice, capable of filling immense spaces, he was at his best in the more intimate songs he directed toward individuals, rather than the crowd.



He had been requested to sing “Your Mission,” which had catapulted Philip Phillips to national attention and was obviously a favorite of the delegates. He had sung it many times, often before large gatherings, but this was different. With each of the six stanzas, he took special care to focus on the text, lingering on some words and rushing others in a type of *parlando*, half-way between speech and song. It was a perfect vehicle for Ira, as the first five stanzas began with the the personal charge, “If you.” Here was a message that resonated deeply with these delegates, dedicated to saving forgotten men and boys:

*If you cannot in the harvest, Garner up the richest sheaves,  
Many a grain both ripe and golden, Will the careless reapers leave;  
Go and glean among the briers, Growing rank against the wall,  
For it may be that their shadow Hides the heaviest wheat of all.*

Then Ira concluded with what Philip Phillips had made famous and had become almost a calling card for the YMCA:

*Do not, then, stand idly waiting, For some greater work to do;  
O improve each passing moment, For our moments may be few;  
Go and toil in any vineyard, Do not fear to do or dare;  
If you want a field of labor, You can find it anywhere.*

While the lyrics might at times appear facile and lacking in serious poetic quality, Ira could almost magically turn them into the most deeply felt convictions, reinforcing the values responsible for motivating these men.

The meeting closed with prayer and the assembly processed, *en mass*, half-a-dozen blocks to the White House, where President Ulysses S. Grant shook hands with the delegates and their wives.<sup>33</sup> It was an arduous task, but Grant was running for re-election the following year. Ira spent much of the walk thanking well-wishers for their kind words about his singing and thanking God he had regained his voice in time for the convention, after completely losing it while singing for sixteen services during the week right before.

Discussions during the next few days covered “State Conventions and How to Organize Them,” “Young Men in Business: What Are Their Temptations and How Shall They Be Resisted,” and the ever-contentious Temperance issue. A letter from D.L. Moody to the convention expressed his disappointment at not being in attendance because of his continued preaching tour in California.

For many, the Sunday evening Farewell Service was the highlight of the convention. Every seat on the platform, in the pews, and wherever one could improvise standing room was filled to overflowing in First Congregational Church—where Ira had just sung a few nights earlier. At this service there was no business, resolution, question box, or lecture. It was all prayer and praise. And perhaps most thrilling of all was the congregational singing, with a couple thousand believers lifting their booming, Spirit-filled voices in what must have seemed like a “foretaste of glory divine.”<sup>34</sup> The sheer volume of sound drowned out the little melodeon on the stage; it completely filled every every nook and cranny in the vast sanctuary and “shook the rafters” on the opening hymn’s refrain, “Hallelujah! Thine the glory, revive us again.” “More love to Thee, O Christ,” “Rescue the perishing,” “Stand up, stand up for Jesus,” and “Work for the night is coming” continued throughout the evening and spoke eloquently to the person and mission of the YMCA.

Also of great interest were the vocal soloists, spread throughout the evening service. Convention music director William H. Doane and H. Thane Miller each offered a moving solo as well as combining for a duet with “Where do you journey, my brother?” Just before the final short address of the evening by General O.O. Howard, Ira approached the melodeon and took his seat before a hushed congregation. Most had heard him sing a few nights before, revealing his baritone voice “of exceptional volume, purity, and sympathy.”<sup>35</sup> While his previous solo had been requested by others, Ira chose this fairly recent publication himself, the one he sang the first time he visited a needy family during his tryout week with Moody—“Scatter Seeds of Kindness.”<sup>36</sup> It was similar to “Your Mission” in the way it wasn’t religious; there is no mention of God or the supernatural. It is a sentimental text, focusing upon the positive human values of caring for others; it could be embraced by even the non-religious. However, as is the case with almost any song, it would have been understood within the larger context of the hearer’s worldview.

And for Sankey’s listeners that evening, they would have recalled the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13:13–23, “Then [Jesus] told them many things in parables, saying: ‘A farmer went out to sow his seed,’” inspiring the song’s refrain:

*Then scatter seeds of kindness, Then scatter seeds of kindness,  
Then scatter seeds of kindness, For our reaping by and by.*

Listeners would also have made a connection in the song's second line, "Let us keep the wheat and roses, Casting out the thorns and chaff," with Matthew 13:25 about the Parable of the Wheat and Chaff: "But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way."

After the first stanza, Ira's nerves began to settle down a little, allowing him to focus more on the second stanza.

*Strange we never prize the music, Till the sweet-voiced bird is flown!  
Strange that we should slight the violets, Till the lovely flowers are gone!  
Strange that summer skies and sunshine Never seem one half so fair,  
As when winter's snowy pinions Shake the white down in the air.*

As Ira continued with stanza three, one wonders what memories he retained of his parents sharing about the loss of his siblings. He also realized, on some level, how almost everyone in that crowded hall would be thinking of a departed family member—as his hushed tones recalled:

*If we knew the baby fingers, Pressed against the window pane,  
Would be cold and stiff tomorrow—Never trouble us again—  
Would the bright eyes of our darling Catch the frown upon our brow?  
Would the prints of rosy fingers Vex us then as they do now?*

By now, many in the congregation had tears streaming down their cheeks.

*Ah! those little ice-cold fingers, How they point our memories back  
To the hasty words and actions Strewn along our backward track!  
How those little hands remind us, As in snowy grace they lie,  
Not to scatter thorns—but roses—For our reaping by and by.*

This song would become very dear to Ira, as he later recollected, "For many years this was the favorite hymn of Francis Murphy, the great temperance lecturer, and was the keynote of all his meetings. I . . . have seen him move an audience to tears by his pathetic rendering of this hymn. It is believed that thousands of drinking men have been saved through its instrumentality."<sup>37</sup>

Ira's message was nothing less than the passionate pursuit of sharing Christ's love for sinners. He had been singing for over a decade, but now at the YMCA convention, he was doing so on a national scale. Almost everyone of note in the evangelical movement experienced him first-hand—one of many talented and dedicated religious singers at the convention.

Although Washington would have been the nation's political center, nearby Baltimore was definitely its transportation hub on the East Coast.

Almost all the delegates returning to homes north or west of the convention would have traveled to Baltimore to catch trains from the expanding Pennsylvania Railroad system, or the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne & Chicago line. Most delegates were able to return to their homes for free by showing their certificate as a delegate to the YMCA convention, a result of the Y's Transportation Committee working out detailed agreements with every railroad servicing Baltimore and Washington.<sup>38</sup> During the three-hundred-mile return trip to New Castle, Ira and fellow delegate Jay Andrews relaxed and discussed highlights from the previous week, plus Monday's free steamboat trip from Washington to Mt. Vernon and back, a bonus excursion for all delegates.

Sankey's return to Chicago in early June coincided with Moody's arrival from his extended preaching tour to the West Coast. They found the work in Chicago had suffered noticeably. Without Moody's strong presence to motivate, organize, and preach, much of the Farwell Hall group had been scattered. To aggravate matters, the weather was unusually hot and dry, and all who could abandon the city for cooler climes, including many pastors, had done so.<sup>39</sup> At first, the evangelist decided to offer some sacred concerts or interesting lectures to re-attract the crowds, fearing his preaching alone would not fill the seats. But after praying over the matter, the thought came to him, "Preach to them upon Bible characters."<sup>40</sup>

With ample doubts as to the wisdom of this plan, he began a new series, commencing with Adam. As a friend recalled,

The characters in his stories seemed to live and move in sudden, swift reality, as in a verbal biography; this was the natural outcome of an extraordinary anecdotal gift and a pleading urgency, as he sought, not to tickle the imagination, but to lead his hearers to an immediate saving trust in his Lord.<sup>41</sup>

Within five weeks, Moody was able to bring back the crowds, and Farwell Hall was alive again. He continued with the series of Old Testament characters, and finally, in September, began a six-week series on Christ. Sankey directed the music, always being careful to undergird the preacher's emphasis, often closing the meetings with an appropriate solo. Although Moody had proven successful in calling down God's blessing upon the flock at Farwell—with crowds growing larger each week—he seemed unable to call down any rain. And that situation was becoming critical.

Less than three inches had fallen since July, and the entire region was parched. Trees lost their foliage, lawns withered, and wells ran dry. Forest fires ravaged nearby Michigan and Wisconsin, and Chicago's nearly 60,000 structures, mostly of wood, were dry as matchsticks. On Saturday, September 30, the Burlington warehouse near State Street caught fire and ominously burned to the ground with a loss of \$600,000. Yet throughout the next week, a succession of only small fires plagued the area. In fact, their modest nature tended to inoculate most Chicagoans against any potential disaster.<sup>42</sup>

Then on Saturday night, an hour before midnight, a mill on Canal Street started to burn. When the fire crew arrived, they discovered to their horror that the mill was destroyed and adjacent buildings were ablaze. A courageous sixteen-hour battle then ensued, in which the conflagration was finally extinguished, but only after devouring four city blocks. Perhaps worse, the fire department was left significantly impaired, with equipment damaged and only half its force fit for duty. When the alarm for a fire in the cow barn at 137 DeKoven Street came in about 9:00PM Sunday evening, there was an understandably slow response.

Chicago was divided by the Chicago River into three principal sections whose north and south branches joined about a mile from Lake Michigan then flowed eastward into that body. This main confluence separated the town into the North and South sides, with everything on the far side of the branches being called the West side of the city. DeKoven Street was in this latter section, about three-eighths of a mile west of the South Branch of the Chicago River. The barn in question was said to belong to Patrick O'Leary. Although a fire in this working-class neighborhood was serious, it normally posed no threat to downtown Chicago on the other side of the river. But these were not normal times, and a strong, dry wind was blowing out of the southwest like a bellows, fanning the modest blaze into a fearsome inferno, driving the flames northeast toward the river.

Downtown on Madison Street, Farwell Hall was packed as Moody delivered the fifth study in his series about the person of Christ. He had traced his life from the manger to his arrest and trial and was preaching on the text from Matthew 27:22, "What then shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ?" After making a powerful appeal to receive Christ as Savior and Redeemer, Moody concluded, "I wish you would take this text home with you and turn it over in your minds this week, and next Sabbath we will come to Calvary and the cross, and we will decide what to do with Jesus of Nazareth."<sup>43</sup> He then asked Sankey to sing. Ira rose and stood by the great pipe





Image from Library of Congress.

organ at the rear of the stage.<sup>44</sup> It had taken time, but he had finally taught the organist how to accompany him on his solos, so critical to concluding the service.

*Today the Savior calls: Ye wand'rers, come;  
O ye benighted souls, Why longer roam?*<sup>45</sup>

While there was usually an audible stillness between the stanzas when Sankey paused, tonight there was a noticeable commotion outside, which could easily be heard through the open windows. Ira continued but with increasing competition, perhaps sensing a bit of the irony in the text:

*Today the Savior calls: O hear him now.*

Considering the clatter of excited horses pulling fire engines, the shrieks of the bewildered, and the tolling of city hall's great bell only two blocks away, it is doubtful anyone heard the prophetic third stanza:

*Today the Savior calls; For refuge fly;  
The storm of justice falls, And death is nigh.*

Recognizing the futility of continuing, Moody hastily dismissed the meeting and everyone immediately dispersed.<sup>46</sup> Both men scurried down a small back stairway leading into the old Arcade Court, where they gazed up in amazement as an inferno cast an ominous glare against the sky a half-mile to the west. Moody decided to join his family at home on the North Side. Ira, with no family in the city, headed for the fire—out of both curiosity and a desire to assist. Little did he realize he would not see Moody again for two months.

On reaching the scene, Ira discovered a whole block of small buildings burning fiercely. He joined others in tearing down some board fences in the fire's path, but the blaze was not spreading by its usual means. The relentless wind was simply fanning the flames to jump large sections at a time. In addition, as the fire increased in intensity, "fire devils" or whirling masses of super-heated air carried burning debris a half-mile away, depositing it on tinder-dry structures, which were then quickly engulfed. Soon entire blocks were being consumed in a flash. By 10:30PM the conflagration was officially reported out of control.

Realizing he could personally do little to alter the course of the blaze, Ira hurriedly retreated to Farwell Hall, where his living quarters and belong-



ings were located. Although the fire had not yet crossed the river, Ira had to pause several times during his journey to shake burning embers from his clothing. By the time he reached his destination, flames had already leaped the river and were licking up everything in their path as they approached the city's center on the South Side. Quickly gathering up his most precious possessions, he placed them by the office door and exited to the street to find transportation. It was now between 1:00 and 2:00 in the morning, and no help was in sight.

While he searched, a commotion on Clark Street caught his attention, as a horse and wagon with no driver careened down the road at full speed with a dozen men madly chasing the terrified beast. Ira quickly joined in pursuit until, turning a corner, the animal slipped and fell. It was immediately attacked by the mob, each man claiming right of possession. Not caring to share in the contest, Ira returned to Farwell and began toting his own belongings toward Lake Michigan.

His flight took him past the foundations of what would become the famous Palmer House Hotel. As it had only been built up to the street level, Ira felt he could store his possessions there while returning to the hall for another load. After finding a likely entrance, he carefully walked down a plank to the cellar where he stored two bags in the darkest corner he could find. He then returned for a second haul. As the fire hadn't yet reached that section of the city, most residents felt little cause for panic. Like Noah of old, Ira attempted to warn those he saw of the impending doom; while a few took heed, others simply mocked.

Collecting additional items deemed worth saving, Ira set out from Farwell in a more direct route to the shore. Although by now in the dead of night, the approaching flames lit the sky, making visibility more like day. About two blocks from the shore, near State Street, Ira deposited his cargo on the steps of an imposing residence. Intending to retrieve them on a second pass through the area, he returned to his room one final time. Hastily gathering a few last articles, he returned to where he had abandoned his goods on the steps, only to find them buried beneath a mountain of other's belongings. There was precious little time left and certainly none for digging through a mound of someone else's treasures; those items were simply lost forever.

By now, residents were all awake and nearing panic. The air was filled with huge, soft flakes, resembling a snowstorm, except these flakes left scorch

marks on all they touched. And there was the wind, that hot incessant blast. Ira couldn't help but remember the Genesis account of Sodom and Gomorrah—how the people were warned to flee but only laughed.<sup>47</sup> Few were laughing now.

Sidewalks were buried under stacks of furniture and bundles of clothing. The irregular basement line of many buildings necessitated differing sidewalk elevations within a single block, and these varying levels created additional currents of air, converting the wooden walkways into roaring chimneys. Burning embers also fell between the cracks, igniting dry matter below, and quickly cutting off normal escape routes.<sup>48</sup> The streets were clogged with people running everywhere. Carts, carriages, and wheelbarrows jostled each other in an effort to flee. Horses ran wild. Parents and children became separated as thousands streamed northward on Dearborn, Clark, LaSalle and Wells Streets, attempting to outrun the mile-wide firestorm pursuing swiftly from the south. At the few bridges crossing the main effluence of the Chicago River, pandemonium reigned. As one reporter for the *Chicago Post* marveled:

The sight was one of unparalleled sublimity and terror. . . . [I] could feel the heat and smoke and hear the maddened Babel of sounds, and it required little imagination to believe one's self looking over the adamantine bulwarks of hell into the bottomless pit.<sup>49</sup>

By 2:00AM, Farwell Hall was no more; a half hour later, the courthouse bell, which had tolled over Lincoln's remains lying in state and had practically drowned out Ira's solo only a few hours earlier, came crashing to earth. The blaze had easily vaulted the river and was now engulfing major tracts in the northern section. As a weary Sankey trudged toward the shore, he was overtaken by two men carrying an invalid on a stretcher. They proceeded only a short way farther, where they deposited the rider at his request along the roadside. Realizing they were enterprising porters-for-hire, Ira engaged them to transport his goods to the shore. They made excellent progress until the two looked back to see the section of city where they lived under imminent threat. Without a word, they dropped Ira's belongings in mid-street and, not waiting for compensation, bolted away. Tired but undaunted, Ira finally secured additional assistance and reached Lake Michigan where he perched his possessions right on the water's edge. If the flames became too

intense, he reasoned, he would simply wade out into the lake. Suddenly Ira remembered his stash at the Palmer House. It had likely been stolen already, but he should make the effort. To his surprise and great delight, his bags had gone undetected and he soon added them to his little collection of worldly treasures beside the lake.

Exhaustion and thirst now dominated his attention. The water along the shore was certainly unfit to drink, as the basin acted as an all-too-receptive sewer for the city's 300,000-plus residents and businesses. Finding a fellow refugee, Ira requested him to watch over their belongings as he returned to the city for water. Wabash Avenue, only one block away, boasted one of the finest residential sections in the town. Ira approached a large and impressive house and requested a drink. He was directed to the rear and a faucet, but upon turning it on, was rewarded with nothing but the rush of air. The city's waterworks were gone. So was the gas company, Ira learned, shortly after hearing a thunderous explosion shake the area.

Little could he have known, the wall of fire had already destroyed many of the city's stately mansions to the north—homes of the McCormicks, Trees, Rumseys—now nothing more than piles of hissing embers. Also vanished were Chicago's prized cultural and business establishments—Crosby's sumptuous Opera House (celebrating its opening night), the brand new Grand Pacific Hotel, Marshall Fields' huge marble retail store, and the Historical Society, with its original of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.<sup>50</sup> By 7:00AM, the Illinois Street Church would also lie in ruins.

Ira returned to the shore, wrapped himself in a great overcoat and laid down behind one of the trunks he had saved. Exhausted and somewhat sheltered from the howling wind, he fell into a fitful sleep as Lake Michigan's waves crashed near his feet. But rest was brief, as he awakened an hour later to the sound of roaring flames approaching. It was dawn, and as the wall of fire closed in from the west, the sun was rising over the lake to the east, looking rather fiery itself. Unable to abide the parching thirst any longer, he wandered along the shore and discovered a small craft. Requesting permission from the man who seemed to own it came the reply, "Yes, if you can manage the boat you can have it, as we are not likely to have much more boating in this section for some time to come."<sup>51</sup> Without hesitation, Ira manned the oars and rowed around to his belongings on the shore. He piled them on board and headed toward deeper waters. If he weren't dashed against the pilings supporting the tracks of the Illinois Central Railroad, which were built out over the lake, he might make open water.

Carefully he maneuvered his craft through the jetties and out to where the water seemed safe to drink. He dipped in his hands; it tasted wonderful—and sooty. Tying up to some pilings being employed to erect a new breakwater, he climbed from his little ark onto a heap of lumber used in the construction. From there he witnessed the destruction of the city through the morning light. Frequent explosions punctuated the sound of the waves lapping at his bobbing craft—the apparent result of dynamite being detonated to form firebreaks. As day wore on, the city continued to burn.

On shore, blasts from the gale-driven inferno swept toward the lake, forcing many along its shore to wade into the water, submerging all but their heads. Mothers stood with screaming children and babes in arms, constantly in danger of being pushed out beyond their depth by the masses of those nearer shore as they continued to retreat from the encroaching flames. For those determined to remain on shore, there was a very real danger of being trampled to death by the scores of rampaging horses that had escaped the burning stables.

From his vantage point farther out on the lake, Ira watched as an unending line of thieves and tramps paraded along the Illinois Central tracks, heading south, their backs bent under large bundles of silks, satins, and other salable commodities they had purloined from the wholesale district during the anarchy of the fire. Unknown to the thieves, insurance agents were waiting at the point where the tracks met the land to relieve them of their burdens—and possibly their freedom.

For many residents of the beleaguered city, the human dimension resulting from the disaster was equal to the natural one. During the early course of the fire, looting and drunkenness were commonly reported. Hoping to prevent their saloons from being pillaged, many an owner rolled barrels of whiskey into the streets and soon, both men and women of all classes “were staggering through the city driven by the thought that if this were indeed the end of the world they might as well have one last fling.”<sup>52</sup> The situation was far from humorous, however. A local journalist recorded:

Before daybreak, the thieving horror had culminated in scenes of daring robbery, unparalleled in the annals of any similar disaster. . . . As night wore on, and the terrors aggregated into an intensity of misery, the thieves, amateur and professional, dropped all pretence of concealment and plied their knavish calling undaunted by any fear of retribution. They would storm into stores,

smash away at safes . . . raid in private dwellings . . . and snatch from the cupboards, bureau, trunk, and mantel, anything which their practical senses told them would be of value.<sup>53</sup>

As Ira watched the epic human drama being played out before him like some giant melodramatic theatrical production, he pondered what God was doing in his life. It was certainly a Sunday unlike any he had spent. This was usually a day filled with preaching, singing, and sharing the good news of the gospel. But there was little good news this Lord's Day. Less than a year earlier, he had resigned a steady and secure position and risked all to follow Moody in full time Christian service, and now—all was destroyed! Years of Moody's labors had literally gone up in smoke in a matter of minutes. Had Ira made a tragic mistake? Had he been so wrong in believing this was the Lord's will for his life? He could probably return to New Castle, but to what?

Ira realized his family must be frantic by now, wondering about his safety, as both news and rumors of the fire spread over the telegraph lines and across the pages of local newspapers. And what of Moody and his family; had they escaped the inferno? And what of the others in his care? Many of the poor to whom they ministered at the Illinois Street Church had precious little to begin with; now all that remained for them was their faith in God and a willingness to start again. Suddenly Ira remembered a song he had sung to the Sunday School class the week before. It had never seemed more appropriate, and as the waves lapped at the pilings, he softly sang,

*Dark is the night, and cold the wind is blowing,  
Nearer and nearer comes the breakers' roar;  
Where shall I go, or whither fly for refuge?  
Hide me, my Father, till the storm is o'er.*<sup>54</sup>

Although the day was far spent, the fire was not. It continued on its devastating path, now stretching over three miles north from its origin near the O'Leary barn, which, in a cruel irony, remained untouched by the flames. Ira calculated it was safe enough to return to land and stepped into the boat, but the rope tying it to the pilings snapped and Ira lost his balance, toppling into the boat. The craft lurched and began taking on water, driven by the relentless wind out beyond the breakwater. For a few tense moments, Ira believed he would more likely perish by drowning than by flames, but he regained control and rowed hard for the shore. There he met a gentleman willing to transport his belongings to the Fort Wayne and Chicago Railway;



SING ME A SANKEY: THE STORY OF IRA D. SANKEY

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Images from Library of Congress.





unfortunately, this was no Good Samaritan, and Ira was forced to fork over the exorbitant sum of ten dollars. After securing his possessions and eating his first meal in twenty-four hours, Ira made his way to the scene of his interrupted solo the night before.

All but the ominous facade of Farwell Hall had vanished, as had other structures in the area. Government buildings and their precious records lay in ashes; banks and art galleries were all lost. Even the few “fireproof” buildings recently constructed proved no match for the inferno. There was little left in some areas, making it difficult to identify the location. The fire’s intensity was so great, even those treasures some had hastily buried beneath mounds of dirt were completely incinerated.

Paving stones still sizzled beneath coils of smoldering telegraph wire as Ira gazed in disbelief. Could he have stood on this very spot only twenty-four hours ago? He reversed course, returned to the train station and headed for home—back in New Castle. As the engine belched its dense plume into the air, Ira peered out at the monstrous black clouds of ash, stretching as far as he could see. It seemed like the entire countryside was on fire. Much of Chicago was still burning furiously, and great banks of flames were clearly visible sweeping across the prairie.<sup>55</sup> At times Ira feared he might suffocate

from the acrid smoke. When the train finally reached a working telegraph, he sent word home of his safety and speedy return.

The trip took two days and was filled with as many questions as the journey that had taken him to the Windy City, only a few months earlier. However, Ira's sense of loss over the fire quickly evaporated when an overjoyed Fanny and two sons—who seemed to have grown by inches—welcomed him back to the family hearth. There was naturally little of the public fanfare that accompanied his leaving months earlier; only a few lines in the local paper informing its readers,

Ira D. Sankey arrived in this city on Wednesday morning, from Chicago, having escaped from the great fire with a small portion of his effects. His office in Farwell building was consumed.<sup>56</sup>

Ira quickly resumed his church responsibilities at the Methodist Episcopal Church; everyone was glad to have him back and told him it just hadn't been the same without him.<sup>57</sup> As his Sunday School and musical activities were labors of love and received no remuneration, the question of how to support the family was foremost in the Sankey household. There was no chance of them starving with all their relatives close by, but Ira had been on track to financial stability before his bold decision to join Moody, and now he seemed to be permanently sidetracked, if not derailed.

Still unknown to Sankey, his fellow laborer Moody had escaped the fire with little more than his life and family. When the two men had parted on Saturday night, Moody rushed home to evaluate the situation. A neighbor had already dispatched the Moody children in his crowded carriage, leaving Mr. and Mrs. Moody to decide in a few fleeting moments how to save the memories of their life together. Like most residents, on the North Side, there was time to gather little more than the family Bible, precious photos, personal keepsakes, and any portable wealth, such as rings or silver, that might be wrapped in a tablecloth or blanket.

Emma Moody's most prized possession was an oil painting of her husband, which hung on the parlor wall. Unwilling to lose it, she entreated Mr. Moody to save it.

“Take my own picture? Well, that would be amusing? Suppose I am met on the street by friends in the same plight as ourselves, and they say, ‘Hello, Mr. Moody, glad to see you have escaped; what’s that you have saved and cling to so affectionately!’—wouldn’t it sound well to reply, ‘Oh, I’ve got my own portrait?’”<sup>58</sup>

On this occasion, the usually supportive Emma would not be placated, and the canvas was hastily knocked out of its heavy frame and carried off by Mrs. Moody herself as the other belongings were transported in an available baby carriage.<sup>59</sup>

Consistent with both Moody's character and the spirit of most Chicagoans, there was little thought given to rebuilding—it was just assumed the city would rise again, bigger and better—and more fireproof—than ever. By November, only a month after the fire, Moody turned up in Brooklyn and Philadelphia, preaching and raising support to rebuild his Illinois Street Church. Merchant John Wanamaker, George Stuart, and other well-fixed business leaders formed a committee.

“Mr. Moody, how much money do you need?”

“If I had a thousand dollars I could build a great box that would hold my Sunday School.”

“You shall have three thousand at least,” responded his benefactors.<sup>60</sup>

On some level, it was almost as though Moody hadn't skipped a beat. He seemed to be charging ahead as though his entire ministry hadn't been reduced to ashes. It was, therefore, no surprise then when he wired Sankey to return immediately! ☺

## ENDNOTES

1. Words by Mary G. Brainard, arranged by P.P. Bliss; music by P.P. Bliss, “He Knows,” *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan, and George C. Stebbins, eds. (Cincinnati: John Church Co.; New York: Biglow and Main, 1894), No. 181.
2. Genesis 12:1–2 (KJV).
3. Richard Edwards, ed., “Moody D.L.,” *Chicago Census Report and Statistical Review Embracing a Complete Directory of the City* (Chicago, 1871), 778. W.H. Daniels, *D.L. Moody and His Work* (Hartford: American Publishing Co., 1876), 198–99.
4. C. Howard Hawkins, *History of the Y.M.C.A. in North America* (New York: Association Press, 1900), 149–50. James V. Farwell, *Early Recollections of Dwight L. Moody* (Chicago, The Winona Pub. Co., 1907), 67, claims Moody heard a rumor that the new YMCA hall might be named after him, and to divert that possibility, stood up in a meeting and suggested the hall be named after its benefactor, Farwell.
5. Bridwell was actually a jail for minor offenders who generally stayed for a short term.
6. Daniels, *Moody*, 37.
7. Daniels, *Moody*, 37.
8. Oddly, there is almost no information surrounding the marriage of the era’s most prominent revivalist. In the biography of her grandmother, *Heavenly Destiny: The Life Story of Mrs. D.L. Moody* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1943), 44, the author indicated the only documentation was a notation in the bride’s hand: “D.L. Moody and Emma C. Revell married on August 28, 1862. D.L. busy with his work among the soldiers.” Moody himself simply informed his mother by mail, “I was married on the 28th of last month.” No one in the surviving family—including his children—seemed aware of any further details surrounding this important event.
9. Will R. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1900), 529.
10. Typescript of interview with May Whittle Moody by Moody biographer John Pollock, Moody Bible Institute Archives. In later years, gospel songwriter George Stebbins, a Moody associate, provided another perspective on Moody’s public singing ability. He was playing the organ at the Northfield Bible Conferences and detected “. . . a discordant sound I kept hearing during the singing, which I at first thought was caused by something wrong with the organ. I determined to ascertain if my suspicions were well founded, so when

there was an interval between verses, I listened to see if there might be one of the notes of the organ sounding when it ought to be silent, and found the discords were not from that source. I was not long in doubt, however, for I soon heard the voice of Mr. Moody singing away as heartily as you please, with no more idea of tune and time than a child.” George C. Stebbins, *Reminiscences and Gospel Hymn Stories* (New York: George H. Doran, 1924), 64–65.

11. D.L. Moody, compiler (Chicago, n.p., 1868). [Spalding and LaMonte, Printers and Stereotypers, 138 Lake Street].
12. Although Louis F. Benson, *The English Hymn: Its Development and Use in Worship* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1915), 484, mentions the collection in passing in chapter IX, section 5, “The Offset: The ‘Gospel Hymn,’” this little-noted volume is deserving of more attention than it has received in relation to its role in Moody’s ministry and revivalism in general. A slightly-charred copy—a result of the Chicago fire—is housed in the Archives of the Billy Graham Museum at Wheaton College. This copy suggests that it was in use to some degree when Sankey was working in Chicago with Moody.
13. James E. Findley Jr., *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist, 1837–1899* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 121–22; Richard Curtis, *They Called Him Mr. Moody* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1962), 140–41, gives a considerably more detailed account, based on William Daniels’ 1875 biography of Moody. Curtis strongly intimates that it was Moody who astutely brought the convention back to order with his sharp diplomacy and humble spirit.
14. *Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Young Men’s Christian Associations of the United States and British Provinces Held at Indianapolis, June 1870* (NY: Executive Committee, 1870), 71.
15. *Journal of Proceedings of the Fourth Annual California State Sunday School Convention* (San Francisco: Bacon and Co., 1871), 8–17. A number of sources list this convention as California’s first state Sunday School convention, but it was the fourth.
16. Lemuell Moss, *Annals of the United States Christian Commission* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippencott and Co., 1868), 221.
17. David Williamson, *Ira D. Sankey: the Story of His Life* (London: S.W. Partridge, n.d.), 17–18. The term “rubato” refers to a singer employing a sense of rhythmic flexibility in the melody that doesn’t always correspond to the underlying rhythm. A “marked tremolo” refers to a noticeable vibrato—apparently faster than considered normal.
18. Philip Phillips, *Song Pilgrimage Around the World* (Chicago: Fairbanks,

Palmer & Co., 1880), 79–82. This is not an account of the Christian Commission meeting in D.C., but Phillips quoting an article by Rev. E.E. Stokes in response to his singing this song at the 1865 New Jersey conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church at about the same time.

19. Phillips, *Song Pilgrimage*, 79–82.
20. Philip Phillips, ed., *The American Sacred Songster: A Selection of Music from the Best American Composers, Designed for Sunday School and Home Use* (London: Sunday School Union, 1868), preface.
21. Phillips, *Song Pilgrimage*, 62–63, claims to have sold 1,100,000 copies. That seems incredibly high. A Tonic Sol-Fa edition was published as late as 1871.
22. Phillips, *Song Pilgrimage*, 157–58. This was in the Tabernacle—not the Temple—where non-Mormons could attend.
23. There was even a song published in sheet music about this car: “Silver Palace Car,” music by H.M. Higgins and words by R.C. Hoyt (Chicago: H.M. Higgins, 1868).
24. *The Fort Wayne Sentinel* (IN), 25 March 1871, 1.
25. Ira D. Sankey, “How Mr. Sankey Joined Mr. Moody,” *Association Men* (Feb. 1900), 149. In this recollection, Sankey confused the general chronology of events and transposed the dates of the Indianapolis and Washington, DC conventions, but this seems to be the only place Sankey spoke of this tour of Pennsylvania. *Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the Young Men’s Christian Associations of the United States and British Provinces Held at Washington, DC, May, 1871* (NY: Executive Committee, 1871), 105.
26. *Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Convention*, 14, 23–25.
27. *Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Convention*, 37.
28. *Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Convention*, 37. The university, founded and led by a white Civil War general and evangelical Christian, became one of the most prominent of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and played an important part in the Civil Rights Movement.
29. 1 John 2:1–2, KJV.
30. After World War I, conservative evangelicals gravitated toward a more Dispensational Pre-Millennialism as popularized by C.I. Scofield in the “Notes” to the “Scofield Bible,” carried to church by the majority of Evangelicals. Dispensationalism taught, in part, rather than the world slowly conforming to Biblical values as its inhabitants are converted, the world will experience a growing apostasy until, at the Rapture, Christ will dramatically remove believers from the world. After a seven-year Tribulation period, Christ will re-



turn to earth with his saints and set up the Millennium. For many, it certainly appeared to be a more realistic interpretation of events as World Wars I and II and the spread of Communism dominated the twentieth century.

31. Everett O. Alldredge, *Centennial History of First Congregational Church 1865–1965*, Chapter VI, n.p. <http://www.fccuccdc.org/history/history.htm>
32. It's possible the church actually employed a large pump organ, and it could have set against the front wall of the sanctuary or inhabited the back of the balcony. This would have provided the maximum support for the large congregation. All drawings and descriptions of Sankey singing, however, illustrate a smaller, more portable-type instrument, which could be set on the front of the stage, allowing the singer to occupy an intimate position with the congregation, enabling a highly personable delivery.
33. *Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Convention*, 71.
34. The second line from Fanny Crosby's famous Sunday School (gospel song) hymn, "Blessed Assurance."
35. George C. Stebbins, *Reminiscences and Gospel Hymns Stories* (New York: George H. Doran, 1924), 211.
36. Words by Mrs. Alexander (Mary R.) Smith, music by Silas J. Vail. "Scatter Seeds of Kindness," *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan, and George C. Stebbins, eds. (Cincinnati: John Church Co.; New York: Biglow and Main, 1894), No. 82. Originally published in *Singing Annual for Sabbath Schools* (New York: Philip Phillips, 1870). Having been published only a year before the 1871 YMCA convention, it's probable Ira was familiar with the song from his acquaintance with the publication, and possibly even from Philip Phillips' singing from it.
37. Sankey, *My Life*, 239.
38. *The Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Convention* ran to five pages of fine print in its Transportation Schedule, explaining the details worked out with each railroad line.
39. E.P. Goodwin, pastor of Chicago's First Congregational Church, regularly vacated the city during the summer, remaining for the first time in twenty-six years in 1893 at the behest of Moody to assist in preaching at the Chicago World Exposition. A.W. Williams, *The Life and Work of Dwight L. Moody, The Greatest Evangelist of the XIX Century* (Chicago: P.W. Ziegler, 1900), 275.
40. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 144.
41. George E. Morgan, R.C. Morgan, *His Life and Times* (London: Pickering and English, 1909), 171.

42. Two valuable accounts of the fire, its context, and results are Paul M. Angle, ed., *The Great Chicago Fire: Described in Seven Letters by Men and Women Who Experienced Its Horrors* (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1946) and David Lowe, ed., *The Great Chicago Fire: In Eyewitness Accounts* (NY: Dover Pub., 1979).
43. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 145.
44. Sankey, *My Life*, 25.
45. Words by S.F. Smith, music by Lowell Mason, “Today the Saviour Calls,” *Gospel Hymns Complete*, No. 630.
46. Sankey, *My Life*, 25–34, provides a rather detailed and quite accurate account of his experience in the fire. It seems most probably the conclusion of the meeting was around 9:00PM, about the time the fire department responded to the blaze. This rather late hour for services, which Moody would have kept fairly short, probably reflects its being the second Sunday evening service, with the first being held earlier by Moody and Sankey in the Illinois Street Church.
47. Genesis 18:20–33; 19:1–29.
48. Emma Moody Powell, *Heavenly Destiny: The Life Story of Mrs. D.L. Moody* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1943), 68. Emma Moody Powell was D.L. Moody’s daughter.
49. Lowe, *Chicago Fire, Eyewitness Accounts*, 4.
50. For a graphic account of the attempt to save the document, see Angle, *Chicago Fire: Described*, 71–79.
51. Sankey, *My Life*, 30–31.
52. Lowe, *Chicago Fire, Eyewitness Accounts*, 4.
53. Lowe, *Chicago Fire, Eyewitness Accounts*, 4, quoting journalist William S. Walker.
54. Sankey, *My Life*, 32. Words by Fanny Crosby, music by T.E. Perkins, “Dark is the Night,” *Gospel Hymns Complete*, No. 68.
55. The fire continued through most of Monday, October 9, burning as far north as Fullerton Avenue (the city limit). By late afternoon, it was about burned out, and a late evening rain helped extinguish it completely. It killed 250 people, burned over 17,000 buildings on 214 acres, at a cost of 196 million dollars. Nearly 100,000 persons were left homeless. On October 11, General Philip Sheridan brought a contingent of troops into the city, finally restoring order.

On the same night the Chicago fire erupted, the town of Peshtigo, Wisconsin, and several surrounding villages were destroyed by a fire that swept across the plains, killing 1,200 people—far more than the Chicago disaster.

56. *Lawrence Journal* (PA), 14 October 1871.
57. The fact that Sankey had been listed as Sunday School superintendent during his time in Chicago might suggest he didn't cut all his ties when leaving New Castle; perhaps the school was just slow in finding a new leader. Sunday School certificates awarded to new members and visitors were still signed in his name (probably by the secretary Cyrus Clark) as evident in the Certificate of Admission, dated 14 May 1871, in the Methodist Church archives.
58. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 148. The painting was by the famous American portraitist, George Peter Alexander Healy, probably painted before 1869 when he left to live and work in Paris and Rome. Farwell, *Recollections*, 77.
59. The portrait currently hangs in Moody's birthplace at Northfield, MA.
60. Sankey, *My Life*, 34, 35.

# No. 42. All the Way My Saviour Leads Me.

"The Lord alone did lead him."—DEUT. 32: 12.

FANNY J. CROSBY.

Rev. R. LOWRY, by per.

1. All the way my Saviour leads me; What have I to ask be-side?  
 2. All the way my Saviour leads me; Cheers each winding path I tread;  
 3. All the way my Saviour leads me; Oh, the full - ness of His love!

Can I doubt His ten - der mer - cy, Who thro' life has been my guide?  
 Gives me grace for ev - ery tri - al, Feeds me with the liv - ing bread;  
 Per - fect rest to me is promised In my Fa - ther's house a - bove;

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Heav'nly peace, di - vin - est com - fort, Here by faith in Him to dwell!  
 Tho' my wea - ry steps may fal - ter, And my soul a - thirst may be,  
 When my spir - it, cloth'd immor - tal, Wings its flight to realms of day,

For I know whate'er be - fall me, Je - sus do - eth all things  
 Gushing from the Rock be - fore me, Lo! a spring of joy I  
 This my song through endless a - ges— Je - sus led me all the

*Chapter 7*  
Decisions, Decisions; or  
A Couple of White Elephants  
1871–1873

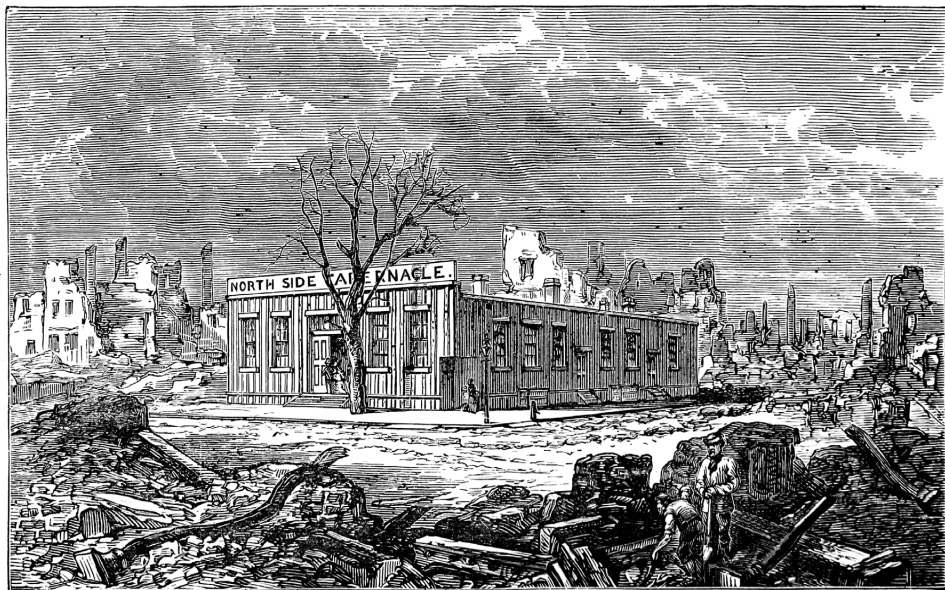
*All the way my Saviour leads me; What have I to ask beside?  
Can I doubt His tender mercy, Who thro' life has been my guide?  
Heav'nly peace, divinest comfort, Here by faith in Him to dwell!  
For I know whate'er befall me, Jesus doeth all things well;  
For I know whate'er befall me, Jesus doeth all things well.*

*All the way my Saviour leads me; Cheers each winding path I tread;  
Gives me grace for every trial, Feeds me with the living bread;  
Tho' my weary steps may falter, And my soul athirst may be,  
Gushing from the Rock before me, Lo! a spring of joy I see;  
Gushing from the Rock before me, Lo! a spring of joy I see.<sup>1</sup>*

MOODY'S TELEGRAM REQUESTING Sankey's return to Chicago seemed like some recurring dream, because this was the third time in as many years he had been summoned to leave New Castle and join the work there. But what work? Was anything left?

Of course, Moody had already begun rebuilding with the help of generous backers. A new lot on the corner of Wells and Ontario Streets was purchased and construction commenced on a great enclosure, resembling a street-car shed, made of rough boards with a flat gravel-and-tar roof. It wasn't pretty, but it would hold a crowd.

For Ira, there was really little question about returning. He had experienced first-hand the amazing work of God in countless lives. In addition, he had faith in both God's goodness and in Moody's tenacity. Remarkably, only eleven weeks after the fire, a new but make-shift structure known as North Side Tabernacle rose like a phoenix from the ashes and was dedicated on Christmas Eve, 1871.



**North Side Tabernacle**, in W.H. Daniels, *D.L. Moody and His Work* (1876).

The Tabernacle was a multi-purpose edifice. For one, it temporarily housed Moody, Sankey, and a Sunday School worker who acted as steward and cook. The situation was definitely spartan, as there were no beds, the men sharing a lounge in a corner of the building. Often the blistering prairie winds drove snow through the loosely-fitted boards, piling up in little drifts on the floor.<sup>2</sup> The building was kept heated night and day and was open to the hungry and homeless. It also served as a distribution center for relief in the area.

Sundays were hectic: a full schedule of services began at 9:00 with the Lord's Supper,<sup>3</sup> Moody preaching at 10:30, followed by dinner in the classroom with the teachers discussing the afternoon lesson, Sunday School at 3:00 (Moody superintending), teachers' prayer, supper, yoke-fellow prayer meeting, Moody preaching at 7:30, and finally an Inquiry Meeting.

On New Year's Eve, a special Sunday watch-night service was added. One visitor who walked to the meeting from the West Side remembered:

Everywhere there were ruins and no inhabitants. Ten below zero, a clear sky, a full moon overhead and absolute quiet. At last I came to Moody's Tabernacle just built among the ruins. It seated 1400 and I found it nearly full. Mr. Moody was just finishing an



address. Another preacher followed whose uproariousness made no impression excepting that in contrast it made Mr. Moody's quiet way more effective. Then Mr. Sankey followed with his organ [melodeon] and extremely sweet voice. . . . Mr. Moody was last and ended . . . a few minutes of 12. He called for silent prayer. Presently the complete silence was broken by his wishing us a Happy New Year. Consider the desolation all about. The midnight; the winter stillness. The yawning cellars and gaunt walls one had to pass walking southward for 45 minutes before reaching buildings and inhabited houses again.<sup>4</sup>

The crude Tabernacle had only been intended as a stop-gap measure, and Moody continued the task of securing funds for a more permanent structure. When it came to raising money, Moody's sincerity and lack of guile proved most disarming. Typical was the day he and Sankey were strolling along one of Chicago's main thoroughfares, and Moody met an old acquaintance.

"Look here, my friend, I am glad to see you, and I want one thousand dollars from you to help me rebuild my church on the North Side."

"I can't give it to you; I haven't got a thousand dollars," replied the startled friend.

"Well, you can borrow it," shot back Moody.

Stunned but also impressed with the evangelist's earnestness, the gentleman quickly replied, "All right, Mr. Moody, I'll send you a check tomorrow." And he did.<sup>5</sup>

As both the city of Chicago—which a London paper called the "concentrated essence of Americanism"<sup>6</sup>—and Moody's labors prospered in the early months of 1872, he decided the work was progressing well enough for him to set sail for Britain. His desire was for further Bible study with a few of the well-known, non-conformist English teachers and preachers, like Henry Varley, famous for telling Moody, "The world has yet to see what God can do with a man fully consecrated to him."<sup>7</sup> For some, Moody's sudden desire to "skip town" in the midst of rebuilding his work seemed odd. But a closer examination suggests this decision was the outcome of various factors already at play.

First, Moody had previously visited Britain in 1867—before he found Sankey in 1870. From May 10 through July 1 that year, he met and preached

before the leading evangelical lights in England, including the country's most famous pastor, Charles Haddon Spurgeon; Scottish publisher of *The Christian* periodical, R.C. Morgan; Plymouth Brethren's famed Bristol orphanage director, George Mueller; and preacher Henry Moorehouse. He spoke at the anniversary of the Sunday School Union in Exeter Hall and was introduced to Anthony Ashley Cooper, 7th Earl of Shaftesbury, a noted social reformer and evangelical Anglican. He also spoke in Edinburgh and Dublin, then visited Paris before a farewell reception in London. Those two months introduced Moody to an entirely new mission field, where his homespun approach elicited widespread support from his British colleagues.<sup>8</sup>

Second, Moody could be seen as following a natural progression, beginning with his early Chicago days as a businessman involved in Christian work, transitioning to a full-time Christian layman helping to develop the YMCA and Sunday School, then to church-builder/preacher, and finally to a full-time evangelist. The need for this last transition possibly became clear to Moody during his tour of the far West the previous year, in the spring of 1871. Philip Phillips, his musical co-laborer on the tour, observed, "It was about this time that Mr. Moody decided to devote himself exclusively to preaching. This decision may perhaps have grown out of his marked success while laboring in San Jose, San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Denver and other western towns."<sup>9</sup> So, transitioning from Christian businessman to evangelist was not a radical move, but a direction he seems to have been heading all along.

Third, numerous close friends, such as his co-laborer Daniel Whittle, believed the Chicago Fire was the principal reason why Moody looked abroad,<sup>10</sup> and his chief financial supporter John Farwell later claimed, "The burning of that building [Farwell Hall] deprived the evangelists of their place of holding meetings in Chicago, and determined them to go to England until it should be rebuilt."<sup>11</sup> It's also possible Moody was simply tired of constantly begging for money to support an ever-expanding set of ministries, a frustration he expressed as early as 1871 in his letter to Cyrus McCormick when requesting money for a new organ.<sup>12</sup>

Fourth, Moody might have unconsciously been seeking to reinvent himself. Some saw this as a larger pattern in Moody's life when he left sleepy Northfield, Massachusetts, for Boston, then proceeded to Chicago for greater opportunities. In Chicago, after almost single-handedly building the local YMCA from a struggling association to a national model, developing a large

Sunday School, and founding a thriving church, he turned his vision nationwide with a constant succession of convention addresses and a prolonged speaking-preaching tour to the West Coast. Now, perhaps, an even broader vision beckoned.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, there was his “baptism by the Holy Spirit,” one of the more mysterious events in Moody’s life—one that was apparently life-changing—yet little talked about by Moody or his friends. It took place during the Christmas holidays of 1871, eleven weeks after the fire, while Moody was in New York raising funds for rebuilding his ministry. His co-revivalist later explained:

He was walking up Wall Street . . . and in the midst of the bustle and hurry of that city . . . the power of God fell upon him . . . and he had to hurry off to the house of a friend and ask that he might have a room by himself, and in that room he stayed alone for hours; and the Holy Ghost came upon him, filling his soul with such joy that at last he had to ask God to withhold His hand, lest he die on the spot from very joy. He went out from that place with the power of the Holy Ghost upon him.<sup>14</sup>

What might initially sound a bit bizarre, to even religious folks, would have been understood as quite common, even desirable, in Moody’s day, for it was part of a powerful stream within evangelical life known as the Holiness Movement. It grew out of the Wesleyan tradition, in which Methodists sought a perfecting work of God in their lives—often called sanctification—a term describing the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians to make them holy and ultimately free from “outward sins.”

For eighteenth-century Wesleyans, it was a spiritual goal, though few claimed they ever achieved sinless perfection. The process and destination can be viewed in Charles Wesley’s famous hymn, “Love divine, all loves excelling.” The concluding stanza rhapsodizes:

*Finish, then, thy new creation; Pure and sinless let us be.  
Let us see thy great salvation, Perfectly restored in thee;  
Changed from glory into glory, Till in heav’n we take our place,  
Till we cast our crowns before thee, Lost in wonder, love, and praise!<sup>15</sup>*

The other Wesley, John, explained it thusly:

We are inwardly renewed by the power of God. We feel “the love of God shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Rom. 5:5), producing love to all mankind, and more especially to the children of God, expelling the love of the world, the love of pleasure, of ease, of honour, of money, together with pride, anger, self-will, and every other evil temper; in a word, changing the “earthly, sensual, devilish mind” into “the mind which was in Christ Jesus” (cf. Phil. 2:5).<sup>16</sup>

Unlike most of the nominally religious folks around them in eighteenth-century England, the Wesley brothers believed a Christian’s daily life should exhibit a marked difference from those who didn’t claim the name of Christ, and they formed the “Holy Club”<sup>17</sup> at Oxford to pursue that end. During their lifetimes, holiness (or sanctification, “perfection”) was a conscious goal, a methodical one, leading to their appellation as Methodists. These methods were found in Wesley’s General Rules, or practical applications of broader biblical principles. One: do no harm and avoid evil, such as taking God’s name in vain, working on the Sabbath, use of alcohol, demanding unlawful interest (usury), or slaveholding. Two: do good, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, being diligent and frugal. Three: attend to the ordinances of God, such as public worship, Lord’s Supper, private and family prayer, reading the Word, fasting, and abstinence. Thus, an outwardly godly life could aid in leading toward “sinless perfection” or sanctification.

In early nineteenth-century America, sanctification was not viewed as religious hyperbole but a daily possibility. Unlike British Methodism, which generally understood sanctification as a gradual process of spiritual growth, American views came to expect a dramatic “second work of grace” (or “second blessing”), subsequent to the first work of grace (conversion), which had saved a person from original sin. And it came from a supernatural experience wherein one was “filled,” “slain,” or “baptized” by the Holy Spirit. This, it was believed, would not only enable the believer to live an outwardly holy life, but would also provide a special “endowment” of power to serve the Lord.

These convictions gained popularity and a methodology with Sarah Lankford, who held Tuesday Meetings for the Promotion of Holiness in her New York home in 1835. Two years later, her sister Phoebe Palmer experienced “entire sanctification” and soon became leader of the meetings and an influential voice in the movement. In 1839, Methodist minister Timothy

Merritt began a journal, *Guide to Christian Perfection*, later renamed *The Guide to Holiness*, which was purchased by Phoebe Palmer and her husband in 1865, reaching a circulation of 30,000.

Palmer's hymn, "The Cleansing Wave," captures both the elements and the intensity of that sanctification:

*Oh, now I see the crimson wave, The fountain deep and wide;  
Jesus, my Lord, mighty to save, Points to His wounded side.*

*The cleansing stream I see! I see! I plunge, and oh, it cleanseth me!  
Oh, praise the Lord, It cleanseth me! It cleanseth me—yes, cleanseth me!*

*I see the new creation rise; I hear the speaking blood.  
It speaks! Polluted nature dies! Sinks 'neath the cleansing flood.*

While the movement had Wesleyan Methodist origins, it enjoyed a presence across a wide spectrum of evangelical Protestantism. It shared a focus on purity and a sort of "back to basics" thrust with the camp meeting movement. It also found itself very much at home in the growing revivalism of mid-century with the likes of Presbyterian William Boardman who promoted Holiness views in his evangelistic campaigns and with his 1858 publication of *The Higher Christian Life*. Holiness teachings operated as an influential stream throughout evangelical life with their own publications, conferences, camp meetings, personalities, terminology, and music.<sup>18</sup>

Additionally, the movement developed a specific program. In its earlier days, the "second blessing" ("baptism") was something a person prayed for, waiting on the Holy Spirit to act. With Phoebe Palmer, there was a process: it came to be called "altar theology." Instead of taking a passive role in waiting on God's time and good pleasure, believers could activate the process by "laying their all on the altar." The altar referred to the place in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem where the faithful brought their animal sacrifices—which were totally consumed by fire. Likewise, New Testament believers were exhorted to offer their minds and spirits on a symbolic altar, and when they did, God would respond by consuming their sinful nature. Cleansing and power were immediately available—no waiting! Elisha Hoffman's popular hymn "Is Your All on the Altar," captured it well:

*You have longed for sweet peace, And for faith to increase,  
And have earnestly, fervently prayed; But you cannot have rest,  
Or be perfectly blest, Until all on the altar is laid.*

*Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid? Your heart does the Spirit control?  
You can only be blest, And have peace and sweet rest,  
As you yield him your body and soul.*

*Oh, we never can know What the Lord will bestow  
Of the blessings for which we have prayed,  
Till our body and soul He doth fully control,  
And our all on the altar is laid.<sup>19</sup>*

The end of 1871 was a critical time in Moody's career; within the context of Holiness teachings, Moody encountered two women who sat on the front row of his services. One was Sarah Anne Cook (Auntie Cooke), a recent English immigrant and Free Methodist who, at a camp meeting, experienced a deep conviction in which "the Lord would give [Moody] the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire." She was accompanied by widow Hawxhurst, who with her friend "prayed in an obvious manner" while Moody preached.<sup>20</sup>

They often told him, "We have been praying for you."

"Why don't you pray for the people?" Mr. Moody would ask.

"Because you need the power of the Spirit," they would say.

"I need the power! Why?"

As Moody later explained:

I thought I had power. I had the largest congregations in Chicago, and there were many conversions. I was in a sense satisfied. But right along those two godly women kept praying for me, and their earnest talk about anointing for special service set me to thinking. I asked them to come and talk with me, and they poured out their hearts in prayer that I might receive the filling of the Holy Spirit. There came a great hunger into my soul. I did not know what it was. I began to cry out as I never did before. I really felt that I did not want to live if I could not have this power for service.<sup>21</sup>

This testimony suggests the impact of Holiness thought—directly or indirectly—upon broader evangelical life. Moody did not possess a Wesleyan background, which would have been comfortable with Holiness thought. But it was often just below the surface in many religious communities, and with the aid of the two faithful women, it became operative in Moody's life.



Oh, what a day!—I cannot describe it, I seldom refer to it; it is almost too sacred an experience to name. Paul had an experience of which he never spoke for fourteen years. I can only say that God revealed Himself to me, and I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay His hand. I went to preaching again. The sermons were not different; I did not present any new truths, and yet hundreds were converted. I would not now be placed back where I was before that blessed experience if you should give me all the world.<sup>22</sup>

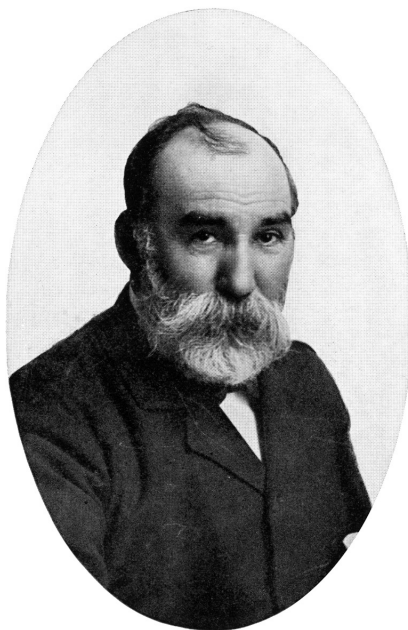
Whether it was any one of these factors—previous travel to England, a natural progression, weariness in fundraising, reinventing himself, his Holiness experience—or a combination of them, Moody seemed to be veering away from his focus in Chicago, toward broader horizons. In addition, his desire to visit England couldn't have been hurt by the diagnosis that his wife Emma was suffering from asthma and would be helped by an ocean voyage with its healing, salty air.<sup>23</sup> As a result, when Moody departed Quebec for Liverpool on the S.S. *Prussia* in late May of 1872,<sup>24</sup> Sankey was left in charge of the Tabernacle. It was a monumental task. But he was a quick study and had been actively involved in the work, often in Moody's absence. In addition, he was assisted in his daily rounds by some very capable yoke-fellows.

One was Fleming H. Revell, younger brother to Moody's wife, Emma. Both were active in Moody's Sunday School, but Fleming went on to play a significant role in the ministry. In 1869, Moody asked him to publish "Everybody's Paper," which Moody was editing for his Sunday School; the following year, Revell began publishing evangelical books and subsequently became the official publisher of Moody's popular works. Perhaps typical of those midwestern entrepreneurs, whose businesses were wiped out in the Chicago fire of 1871, Revell rebuilt from nothing and became the nation's leading publisher of evangelical works with offices in Chicago, New York, London, Toronto, and Edinburgh.<sup>25</sup>

Another fellow-laborer in reaching Chicago was "Major" Daniel Webster Whittle. While he wasn't directly involved with Ira at Moody's Northside Tabernacle, he definitely moved in the same circles, frequently crossing paths, sharing both the blessings and challenges of laboring in a such a chaotic place as the city sought to rebuild after the fire.

Named after famed American orator and statesman Daniel Webster, a youthful Whittle left his birthplace in Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts, to

seek his fortune in the magnet that attracted so many energetic young men—Chicago. There he worked for Wells Fargo Bank until 1861, when he joined the 72nd Illinois Infantry, Company B, serving as second lieutenant. The regiment remained in Illinois the first year, seeing no action; then in the summer of 1862, it received orders to be shipped south. At that moment, Whittle's best friend revealed a startling secret. During Whittle's many visits to their home, he had unwittingly captured the affections of one Abbie Hanson, a sister who was now distraught at the thought of Daniel going off to battle. The news left Whittle dumbfounded—but not indecisive. Perhaps the revelation was a sign from God about his unspoken feelings for Abbie, for he married her the night before he shipped out. They didn't see each other again for over a year.



**D.W. Whittle**, in *My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns* (1906).

Upon his return from the war, he settled in Chicago to work as treasurer for the Elgin watch company with the comfortable salary of \$5,000 per year. But Moody was imploring him to give it up and become a full-time evangelist. He had already risen to the position of leadership in one of the city's largest Sunday Schools on the west side of town, where a young Tad Lincoln attended after the family moved to Chicago following the president's assassination. Tad was impressed enough by Whittle to present him with a photo of himself and his father.<sup>26</sup> In later years, as Sankey and Whittle labored together in Moody's ministries, a close bond grew between them, which would last for the rest of their lives.

Although Moody had intended a nice, quiet time of Bible study and spiritual refreshment during his English visit, he quickly found himself the object of numerous invitations to speak. One was his address on June 28 at the inter-denominational Mildmay Park Conference on mission and social work, begun by Irish Anglican William Pennefather and his wife, Catherine. In 1872, it drew 2,500 attendees to its annual meetings, where Moody gave the final address, eliciting an uncharacteristically enthusiastic response

from normally subdued Englishmen. Thus it potentially reinforced what Moody had been vaguely musing when editor R.C. Morgan penned in his influential periodical, *The Christian*, “We . . . trust that he may soon be led to recross the Atlantic, and pay us another visit. We think that if the way were made plain for him to come for a year or more . . . he would gladly respond to such an invitation.”<sup>27</sup>

Before Moody sailed for home, he spent some time in Dublin, Ireland, where, providentially it must have seemed, he crossed paths with Philip Phillips, his music director/soloist from their tour across the West just a year earlier. It had been highly successful, so much so they extended it beyond their original plan. Now, they met again, both on their second trip to the British Isles, where Phillips was performing one hundred “services in song” to raise money for the Continental Sunday-School Union Fund. Phillips was already well-known in Great Britain, because he had conducted a notable tour there four years earlier for the Sunday School Union and had published a highly successful songbook. So it was no surprise when his tour raised nearly one thousand pounds British sterling for the cause.<sup>28</sup> As his fame continued to spread, fifty more concerts were scheduled, with more than four hundred additional applications being turned down.

Moody couldn’t help but be impressed with Phillips’ accomplishments on that side of the Atlantic—and just at a time when the idea of an extended preaching tour was taking shape in his mind. He would certainly need a musician/soloist to assist him. And here was Phillips, with whom he had already worked. So, in typical Moody fashion, he made Phillips an offer.

Phillips had also been thinking about his next step. While still in England, he had received an invitation from the Presbyterian Tabernacle in San Francisco to present his popular concerts for an entire year—and for the princely sum of \$4,800! It was an offer simply too good to pass up; he had no choice but to graciously decline Moody’s invitation. Yet Phillips had reservations. Could he sustain enough interest in one locale and bring in the crowds needed to make such an undertaking a success? He quickly realized he didn’t want to present the same type of program in one place for an entire year. Even before his days of concertizing, he had traveled incessantly as a singing school teacher; moving around was in his blood.

This was obviously a once-in-a-lifetime offer, and he would be a fool to turn it down, but were there any options? As Phillips pondered his dilemma, he lighted upon what seemed like a brilliant idea. If the Presbyterian Taber-

nacle wanted a whole year of concerts, he would provide it—but not all by himself. What he needed was a partner—another dynamic religious soloist who could share the musical task, perhaps alternating every month or two at the Tabernacle, then traveling the other months.

Immediately his friend Ira Sankey came to mind. They had met over a decade earlier when Phillips had gone to New Castle, peddling musical merchandise and his novel ideas about religious solo singing. After New Castle, Phillips had closely followed Ira's career as he began singing more widely for the Pennsylvania YMCA, then with Moody in Chicago.

Although the details aren't clear, both men already had some kind of business relationship. As Phillips recounted about their early affiliation, "At [that] time Mr. Sankey was engaged in the revenue department, and was the efficient superintendent of the New Castle Methodist Sunday-school. Subsequently he became associated with me in singing and in a business capacity for a few years."<sup>29</sup> As Phillips had been active in areas such as music publishing, sales (he ran a music store in Cincinnati), teaching, and performance, Ira could have agreed to assist him with any one or more of those—perhaps as something like a sales representative. That relationship could have continued after Sankey moved to Chicago, because the Rev. M.M. Parkhurst—Sankey's pastor in Chicago—reported Ira came to him, requesting his assistance in opening "a music store in one of the upper rooms at the Methodist Church Block."<sup>30</sup>

In addition, Phillips remembered how Moody had bragged of what a wonderful, Spirit-filled, musical leader Sankey was during the tour Moody, Vincent, and Phillips had taken to the West Coast the previous year. Phillips knew his friend to be both a man of God and a captivating soloist—just the right combination for the job. There was certainly no doubt in his mind; Ira should accompany him to California.

Phillips left London in February of 1873 after a gala farewell reception and returned to the states. Within a few weeks, he was seated in the parlor of the Sankey home in Chicago, where he excitedly shared with Ira the phenomenal opportunities awaiting them in California. He could sing to large and appreciative crowds at the Tabernacle and be free to travel the rest of the time. In addition, he would be handsomely rewarded. Imagine getting paid thousands of dollars to sing solos for the Lord and spread the gospel. The pair could easily remember recent days when they had to pay their own expenses to present the good news in song; now others wanted to pay them to sing! It seemed like a dream come true.

Subsequently, Ira found himself facing another decision similar to the one confronting him when he left New Castle to join Moody. Should he leave his partner and the ministry for greater opportunities of service and reward with Phillips? And who knew where that might lead? The decision to leave seemed like awkward timing, however, for just a few months earlier in February, Fanny and the boys had settled in Chicago. They had moved into a new place—most of city was new—at 915 North Clark Street, not far from the Tabernacle.<sup>31</sup> They had also moved their membership from the Methodist Episcopal Church in New Castle to Chicago.<sup>32</sup> Although it had not been easy, leaving New Castle had proved to be the right decision; would leaving Chicago also be wise?

Ira asked for time to consider the matter and consult others, particularly Moody, who had returned from Europe a few months earlier. In fact, Moody and Sankey had been holding services outside of Chicago with great success. In Springfield, there had been so many conversions, Ira felt the Lord was revealing the beginning of a spiritual revival through their efforts. But Moody's sights were already set on returning to England, so further work at home was not in the plans. Ira didn't share his disappointment but later recalled, "Indeed, it seemed that if we had remained and thus worked in our own country a great revival would have taken place."<sup>33</sup> Apparently Sankey wasn't the only one who wanted Moody to remain at home, for John Farwell, Moody's strongest and most consistent financial supporter, relayed, "I did all I could to dissuade him from going, but to no purpose, so when the afternoon came for him to leave, I went to his office for a farewell visit . . . and had a check in my hand to give him [for \$500]."<sup>34</sup>

Moody and Sankey met to discuss Phillips' invitation and to seek the Lord's will. Moody certainly understood Ira's excitement and the opportunities it afforded; he even realized his assistant could probably return to Chicago and resume work after his California responsibilities were completed. There would always be a place for Ira in the larger ministry, and Moody could certainly find a temporary replacement for him in the short term. On the other hand, Ira seemed to be making a unique contribution to the work. Just look how well things had gone under his direction during Moody's recent absence. They also discussed the pitfalls of two soloists attempting to share the limelight in California, which could easily produce rivalry or public comparison, potentially lessening their effectiveness.

In the end, it was resolved that Ira would remain in Chicago. The ever-creative Phillips then worked out an agreement with the Presbyterian

Tabernacle to deliver a series of twenty Sunday concerts instead of the original fifty-two—without Ira.<sup>35</sup>

By now, Moody was formulating plans for a return to England. Because Ira had decided to remain in Chicago, it was logical for him to carry on the work in Moody's absence, as he had done so effectively the previous season. But who could Moody find to handle the music overseas? For a man who apparently never forgot a name or face,<sup>36</sup> Moody began to review the shortlist of musicians he kept in his memory. Fortunately for Moody, Chicago was not just a magnet for would-be entrepreneurs like himself and his wealthy supporters, it also exerted a strong pull on those seeking to make a living at music.

One of them was the twenty-seven-year-old farm boy from New York, George C. Stebbins, who, after only a year in the Windy City, had become music director at its First Baptist Church in 1870.

Then there was C.M. Wyman, the successful songwriter and religious singer who worked for Root and Cady Publishing, the most successful music publisher of the Civil War era. Its founder was George F. Root, and his popular "Shouting the Battle Cry of Freedom" was credited with so effectively rallying Union troops that Lincoln reportedly told him, "You have done more [to win the war] than a hundred generals."<sup>37</sup> Wyman was employed at the company, composing and editing song collections, and was familiar to Moody as someone who had already assisted at various meetings, directing the music. In fact, Moody had already recommended Wyman to Daniel Whittle when he was seeking a musical assistant for a Sunday School convention he was leading.<sup>38</sup>

But the man who most readily filled Moody's thoughts was Philip P. Bliss, a colleague of Wyman's at Root and Cady Publishing.

Moody had first met Bliss in the summer of 1869 when the evangelist was conducting Sunday evening meetings in Wood's Museum on Randolph and Clark Streets. Bliss visited one of the services and found Moody without a musical assistant. From the audience, his booming bass voice energized the singing and did not go unnoticed. Ever on the lookout for those who could further his work, Moody met him at the door and quickly elicited his services to help with the music when he was in town.<sup>39</sup> It's not clear how often that was, but Bliss was already assisting Moody on some level when Sankey came to Chicago for his trial run. As Ira later recalled:



It was in the autumn of 1870 that I for the first time met P.P. Bliss. I had just arrived in Chicago to assist Mr. Moody in his work<sup>40</sup> . . . and had gone with him to attend the noonday prayer meeting in Lower Farwell Hall. Mr. Bliss was leading the singing, and at the close of the meeting Mr. Moody demanded of us a song. Seating himself at the piano . . . , we sang from *Hallowed Songs*: “Oh, think of the home over there.” This was our first song together.<sup>41</sup>

Bliss was still helping Moody over a year later, when the *Chicago Evening Post* reported he and Sankey were both to assist with the singing during the watch-meeting in Moody’s temporary mission church (after the fire), back on New Year’s Eve of 1871.<sup>42</sup> Clearly, Moody knew first-hand of Bliss’ gifts.

Bliss, from tiny Rome, Pennsylvania, on the New York border, had arrived in Chicago on November 21, 1865, soon after his two-week stint in the Union Army was completed.<sup>43</sup> He had been invited by Root and Cady Publishing Company to perform concerts with the “Yankee Boys,” made up of Bliss, Lyman S. Chubbuck, and John G. Towner.<sup>44</sup> For some reason, the group quickly disbanded, but Root and Cady offered Bliss—whose music they had begun publishing—\$150 a month plus expenses to hold musical conventions (instruction) of one to four weeks, which would include promoting their music collections, many aimed at the singing school movement. He was also engaged to give concerts for the purpose of highlighting the company and its publications, such as *The Song Messenger of the Northwest*, to which Bliss contributed humorous and informative columns under the pseudonym “Pro Phundo Basso.”

As a well-trained vocalist, Bliss boasted a rich bass voice, with an impressive range stretching from low D-flat to G above the bass clef.<sup>45</sup> In the Chicago area, he performed oratorio solos from Haydn’s *Creation* and Mendelssohn’s *Elijah* and sang a concert with Dudley Buck, one of America’s most respected organists and composers.<sup>46</sup> Along with popular songwriter-publisher Root, Sunday School composer-publishers William Bradbury and William Doane, Bliss possessed a solid background in classical music. This was fostered when Bliss spent his summers away from Chicago and back home in Rome, Pennsylvania, giving him access to the urban center of New York City, where he attended concerts at Steinway Hall, as well as Boston’s gigantic Peace Jubilee, featuring famed violinist Ole Bull and band director Patrick Gilmore. During the summers, he also took occasion to study

voice with pedagogues such as Carlo Bassini.<sup>47</sup> Adding to those strengths, he possessed a winning personality, attracting people with his sparkling Christian testimony and a brimming sense of humor.

Bliss appeared to be the perfect choice for Moody after the refusal from Philip Phillips. But he also proved to be unavailable; there were simply too many obligations at home. Now it was getting late and decisions had to be made. So Moody began to recalculate how responsibilities might be reshuffled in Chicago during his absence—if he took Sankey with him.<sup>48</sup>

From Ira's perspective, both men had experienced the power of God in their recent Springfield meetings, and Ira hoped the evangelist would stay in the United States and allow God to bring revival. And yet, what if God desired to pour out his blessings on Moody and Sankey—but in England?

This was a huge decision, much greater than moving the family from western Pennsylvania to Chicago. It would probably even require leaving the children for a period of uncertain length, plus questions about how they might be supported. Moody promised \$100 a month for a possible three-to-four-month stay, yet plans seemed rather uncertain.<sup>49</sup> Despite their misgivings, Moody's optimism was contagious, reminding his co-laborer, "You have often said that we should go evangelizing together; now go with me to England."<sup>50</sup>

So Ira and Fanny decided to step out on faith and follow Moody into the unknown. Soon they boarded a train for New Castle, entrusting Harry and Eddie to their grandparents. To be safe, Ira sold Lot #11, the one he had purchased four years earlier for \$2,000, earning him a profit of \$400.<sup>51</sup> The three-hundred-mile journey to New York City contained both sadness and excitement.

In spite of the mixed responses at some of his services during the previous trip, Moody had good reason to expect a successful tour in England. His last visit had made many important friends, garnered tremendous praise for his preaching, and elicited a handful of invitations to return. Yet, somewhat inexplicably, Moody had not bothered to confirm his arrival to any of the supposed hosts and supporters.

While Henry Bewley of Dublin had offered some vague promises of help if Moody returned, Cuthbert Bainbridge, the wealthy Methodist layman from Newcastle-on-Tyne was more explicit. But it was William Pennefather, at whose conference in Mildmay Moody had made such an impression, the

fledgling evangelist seemed to be trusting to make plans. Still, Moody made no replies to Pennefather's invitations, including one he sent the third week in August of 1872, advising him of a "wide open door for evangelistic effort in London" and offering support if he would come. In spite of such appeals, Moody apprised only the English preacher Henry Moorehouse of his plans to go abroad. "Moody seemed to have imagined that three men of different denominations living in widely separated parts, who probably were unacquainted . . . were organizing an evangelistic tour."<sup>52</sup>

So it was not entirely surprising when the expected travel funds from his English contacts never materialized and Moody had to wire Farwell, requesting \$450 for traveling expenses.<sup>53</sup> With the money, he purchased tickets for the two couples and Moody's children. Although Moody was crossing the sea to preach the gospel, raising money at home was a never-ending chore. A few moments before he was scheduled to set sail, Moody again contacted his chief benefactor, John Farwell:

I called on Mr. [William E.] Dodge this morning and he says he is coming to Chicago soon, and I hope you will speak to him about our Church [Illinois Street]. . . . I think he will give \$5,000 if you lay it out before him in good shape. I am off in a few minutes for England. . . . I want to thank you for the \$500. . . . I can't tell you how I appreciate it, and all your acts of love and kindness. It is a wonder to me at times, and I do not see why you do not get sick of me and cast me off.<sup>54</sup>

By the 1870s, steamships were enjoying their first golden age. Before the Civil War, wind-driven sailing vessels could take months to cross the Atlantic, depending on the season and specific wind conditions. With the application of the steam engine to a sailing craft, the trip could be lessened to under two weeks. The biggest breakthrough in steam transportation came with the development of the propeller, known as the "screw steamer"—giving rise to the original designation S.S. in front of a ship's name.

The Inman Line's S.S. *City of Paris* had recently set a speed record for the company, averaging 13.4 knots per hour on a run from Queenstown, Ireland, to Halifax, Nova Scotia, in six days. The trip to Liverpool for the Moody-Sankey party was scheduled to consume ten days, departing June 7, 1873 and landing on June 17. And while steam travel had become more dependable than sailing at the mercy of the wind, traversing the Atlantic

was not without its perils. Still fresh on everyone's mind was news of the Star Line's S.S. *Atlantic*, which sailed from Liverpool just a few months earlier with 811 passengers (including two newborns and fourteen stowaways) into a howling North Atlantic gale. Twenty miles south of Halifax and in the dead of night it collided with a shoal off Mar's Head where the liner was lifted up and dropped five times by the raging seas, breaking into two pieces. The stern section sank with a loss of 585 lives—the worst civilian calamity in the Atlantic to date—not encouraging news for those who might question the wisdom of an ocean voyage.

While that disaster would have haunted the Star Line, its competitor the Inman Line, which operated the *City of Paris*, was trying to recover from a series of five sinkings of its own in recent years. Fortunately, this crossing was uneventful, but as Sankey half-humorously observed,

Mr. Moody, shortly after leaving . . . for good and sufficient reasons retired to his berth, where he remained for the larger part of the voyage. I had the good fortune to escape seasickness, and was able to partake of my regular three meals a day. Mr. Moody would frequently send his ship steward over to my side of the ship to ascertain how I was getting on, and suggesting a large number of infallible remedies for seasickness.<sup>55</sup>

At times, the Inman Line was authorized to carry mail between Great Britain and North America. On this occasion, the *City of Paris* docked at Queenstown<sup>56</sup> (later renamed Cobh), Ireland, for mail transfer before sailing on to Liverpool, where Moody and Sankey were greeted by Moorehouse, who shocked them with the news that William Pennefather and Cuthbert Bainbridge, the two Englishmen Moody was counting on for organization and support, were dead. The third, Henry Bewley, was apparently unaware of their arrival—having been given no notice by Moody. This was especially distressing, as the wealthy Newcastle merchant Bainbridge had just reaffirmed his support to Moody a few months earlier while in Chicago.<sup>57</sup> Turning to Sankey, a stunned Moody posed, “. . . it seems as if God has closed the door for us, and if he will not open it we will return to America at once.”<sup>58</sup>

Fortunately, Moorehouse had arrived in time to secure lodgings for the night at the North Western Hotel, where the party could regroup. As Moody pondered their options, he recalled some correspondence from one George Bennett, a young druggist from York who had invited him to address their YMCA if he should come to England.<sup>59</sup> Moody's non-committal

reply had commended Bennett for his earnestness and suggested “he might commence [meetings] at York and would bring someone to lead singing.”<sup>60</sup> Then he promptly forgot it in light of invitations from Bainbridge and Penefather. But now circumstances were reversed and Bennett’s offer seemed much more appealing. “Here is a door” puzzled Moody, “which is partly open, and we will go there and begin our work.”<sup>61</sup>

On Wednesday morning, Ira and Fanny headed out for Manchester, a modest thirty-five miles east, to accept temporary lodgings from Moorehouse for a couple of days. The Moodys were rescued by shipowner Richard Houghton, who provided them a night’s respite from the noisy hotel. Houghton, on hearing of Moody’s latest improvised plans, fired off a warning telegram to Bennett in York: MOODY HERE ARE YOU READY FOR HIM. Not waiting for a reply, Thursday morning found Moody, Emma, and the family heading south for Leytonstone in east London, to stay with her sister, Mary, who had not immigrated to the United States with the rest of the family in 1849.<sup>62</sup>

Their train arrived that afternoon, and after hastily settling in, Moody sought out R.C. Morgan, publisher of *The Christian* religious newspaper. It was Morgan who, during Moody’s visit a year earlier, had glowingly recommended the evangelist return on a prolonged preaching tour. Now that his vision had apparently come to fruition, Morgan enthusiastically spread the news under the headline: “Mr. D.L. Moody in England”:

Mr. Moody has just arrived in England with his family, and is accompanied by a Christian brother who leads the singing . . . after the manner of our much-beloved and well-known friend Philip Phillips. Mrs. Moody and her children remain with her sister . . . while her husband is holding meetings. . . . Any friends who desire his help, especially in the north, should write to him at once, Young Men’s Christian Association, York.<sup>63</sup>

Although publisher Morgan was unfamiliar with Sankey, he could quickly explain to his readers the role of Moody’s helpmate by raising the name Philip Phillips, whom all the faithful would have recognized.

On Friday, Moody received a telegram from the dumbfounded Bennett: PLEASE FIX DATE WHEN YOU CAN COME TO WORK. Excitedly, after consulting the train schedule, the preacher responded: I WILL BE IN YORK TONIGHT TEN O’CLOCK STOP MAKE NO ARRANGEMENTS

TILL I COME.<sup>64</sup> When Moody arrived, he was not yet settled on a plan, but after a late dinner with the dazed Bennett, announced, “Every man has to make his own way, so I propose we make arrangements tomorrow, Saturday, to commence meetings Sunday. You telegraph Mr. Moorehouse to have Sankey here sometime tomorrow.”<sup>65</sup>

Sankey—who by now was accustomed to being hastily summoned by his mercurial colleague—collected Fanny and their belongings and set off on the seventy-five mile journey to York. There he found an eager Moody who laughingly told him, “Our friend [Bennett] here is very much excited over our arrival, and says that he did not expect us so soon, and that he does not think this will be a good time to commence meetings.”<sup>66</sup> Then Moody, who saw opportunities rather than roadblocks, and who was never reticent about requesting others to support his vision, informed Sankey he had asked Bennett to locate a vacant chapel they could use for meetings. As it was obvious their surprise appearance and request for assistance had unnerved their unsuspecting host, Moody exclaimed, “I say Sankey, here we are, a couple of white elephants! Bennett is away all over the city now, to see if he can get us a place. He’s like a man who’s got a white elephant and doesn’t know what to do with it.”<sup>67</sup> ☺



## ENDNOTES

1. Words by Fanny Crosby, music by Robert Lowry, "All the way my Saviour leads me," *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, Ira D. Sankey, James Mc-Granahan, Geo. C. Stebbins, eds. (Cincinnati: John Church Co.; NY: Biglow and Main Co., 1894), No. 42.
2. Ira D. Sankey, *My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns and of Sacred Songs and Solos* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1906), 34.
3. A.W. Williams, *The Life and Work of Dwight L. Moody, The Greatest Evangelist of the XIX Century* (Chicago: P.W. Ziegler, 1900), 145–46. This activity provides an interesting perspective on Moody, who is usually viewed as totally non-sectarian and uninvolved in activities such as baptism or the Lord's Supper, which were often doctrinally controversial and usually the domain of the local church.
4. F.L. Moor, "New Year's Eve Service in Chicago," typescript in Moody Bible Institute Archives. P.P. Bliss was also scheduled to "assist in the singing," as recorded the *Chicago Evening Post*, 30 December 1871, 4. The size of the facility (seating 1,400) is likely an exaggeration; Moody's temporary shed was reported to be 75 by 100 feet (Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody*, 148), built at a cost of \$3,000. A building of this size could accommodate at least 720 people, perhaps more with standing room or narrow aisles.
5. Sankey, *My Life*, 34–35.
6. *The Saturday Review* (London), quoted in Donald Miller, *City of the Century: The Epic of Chicago and the Making of America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 188 fn 123.
7. The source of this quote is unclear, but it can be found as early as 1931 in Edward Frantz, "On aspiring to greatness," *The Gospel Messenger*, Vol. 80, No. 41 (10 Oct. 1931), 3. See also Marguerite Russell, "The Holy Spirit in the Christian life," *Moody Bible Institute Monthly*, Vol. 33, No. 10 (June 1933), 438.
8. This was Moody's first trip to Great Britain. A second trip was asserted by Wilbur M. Smith, compiler, *Dwight Lyman Moody: An Annotated Bibliography* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1942), xxi. If true, that would make his trip in 1872 his third, but Sankey recorded it as his second, *My Life*, 35.
9. Philip Phillips, *Song Pilgrimage Around and Throughout the World* (Chicago: Fairbanks and Palmer, 1880), 64.
10. Daniel Whittle, unpublished diary of 2 October 1876, quoted in James E. Findley, Jr., *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist, 1837–1899* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 130.

11. John V. Farwell, *Early Recollections of Dwight L. Moody* (Chicago: The Winona Pub. Co., 1907), 70.
12. W.H. Daniels, *D.L. Moody and His Work* (Hartford: American Publishing Co., 1876), 200–01, said there was criticism over Moody’s generous dispersal of relief supplies after the Chicago fire. “Hearing of this, and knowing that complaints were made of his too bountiful distribution, he at once withdrew from the work of relief and started for the east.”
13. James F. Findlay, *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist 1837–1899* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1969). Findlay made a great deal of Moody’s habit of “re-inventing himself” from time to time: 129–131.
14. R.A. Torrey, *Why God Used D.L. Moody* (NY: Fleming Revell, 1923), 51–55.
15. First printed in *Hymns for Those That Seek and Those That Have Redemption in the Blood of Jesus Christ* (1747). The concept of Christian perfection was hotly debated between John and Charles Wesley, leading Charles at one point to omit the second stanza, which said, “Take away our power of sinning.” When John edited *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodist* (1780), he changed “Pure and sinless” to say “Pure and spotless.” For more on the development of the hymn and what it meant to the Wesleys, see Chris Fenner & Roger Duke, “Love divine, all loves excelling,” *Amazing Love! How Can It Be: Studies on Hymns by Charles Wesley* (Eugene, OR: Resource, 2020), 86–94, 114–123.
16. “Sermon XXII: The Scripture Way of Salvation,” *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley in Ten Volumes*, Vol. 5 (New York: J. and J. Harper, 1826), 208.
17. This sanctimonious-sounding name was not of the club’s own choosing but was contrived by those making light of them. However, it has stuck as a short-hand description (much as the term “Christian” and “Baptist” derived from their persecutors). They were apparently more commonly known by the epithet “The Oxford Methodists.”
18. See Mel R. Wilhoit, “Holiness hymnody: Some questions—A methodology,” *Wesleyan Holiness Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Fall 1990), 39–63.
19. See Robert S. Wilson and Melvin R. Wilhoit, “Elisha Albright Hoffman,” *The Hymn: A Journal of Congregational Song*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (1984), 35–39.
20. John Pollock, *Moody: The Biography* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 103.
21. Will R. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (New York: Fleming Revell, 1900), 146–47.
22. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 149.
23. Doctors had initially diagnosed Emma Moody with asthma; see Emma

Moody Powell, *Heavenly Destiny: The Life Story of Mrs. D.L. Moody* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1943), 56, 58. Mrs. Moody did feel the sea voyage improved her health. Later in life she was diagnosed with “valvular heart trouble” (p. 119) instead of asthma. Emma Moody also suffered from terrible headaches, ascribed by her daughter to allergies from which she had been cured (p. 142).

24. Douglas Russel, “Messrs. Moody and Sankey,” *The Christian*, 6 February 1930. Evangelist Russel accompanied Moody, without wife or children, on much of the trip. The *S.S. Prussian* was part of the Allan Line and took about 10 days to make the crossing.
25. “Fleming H. Revell, Publisher, Dead,” *The New York Times*, 12 October 1931, 21.
26. Robert D. Kalis, “El Nathan,” *Bread of Life* (Brooklyn: Ridgewood Pentecostal Church), Vol. XXIII, No. 4 (April 1974), 6 (with reproduction of photo). The Sunday School was apparently under the auspices of Chicago’s First Baptist Church, pastored by the Rev. W.W. Everts; the Sunday School superintendent was B.F. Jacobs, the nation’s leading Sunday School leader. See *History of the First Baptist Church, Chicago* (Chicago: R.R. Donnelly and Sons, 1889).
27. Findlay, *Moody*, 131.
28. The specific figures were \$4,450 (889 pounds sterling) as attested on a certificate of appreciation awarded to Phillips at his farewell reception. *Philip Phillips: The Story of His Life* (London: Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Union, 1882), 26.
29. Philip Phillips, *Around the World with Philip Phillips* (New York: Phillips Pub. Co., 1887), 71.
30. *Chicago Tribune*, 13 August 1883, 8. Although there is no initial reason to doubt Parkhurst’s assertion about the request, the article as a whole casts serious aspersions on Sankey’s financial character. However, the report does seem to validate the possibility that this might have been the business connection between Sankey and Phillips. Nothing came of this request, as Sankey was soon to join Moody on his next trip to Britain.

*The Northern Ohio (Painsville) Journal* for 4 September 1875, 3—which is filled with lots of misinformation—records, “By the terms of his engagement Mr. Sankey was to fill any calls that Mr. Phillips might receive for conducting those public meetings known as ‘Institutes.’” The article says he filled such engagements in “various parts of the country,” which remains totally undocumented, as there seems to be no evidence Sankey traveled apart from his work with Moody (except when Moody went to Britain in 1873 and Sankey was engaged in a short evangelistic tour with K.A. Burnell). The 1875 newspaper account is a fairly early one, much earlier than Parkhurst’s 1883 recollections.

31. Sankey's family departed New Castle on 17 October 1872. Frank S. Reader, *Moody and Sankey: An Authentic Account* (New York: E.J. Hale and Son, 1876), 67. The city has since renumbered the streets and Sankey's former address currently corresponds to approximately 2056 N. Clark. On 27 March 1872, Sankey sold Lot #8 (possibly part of the Fulkerson property he had purchased) to Pat Griffin for \$200 (Records of Lawrence County, Pennsylvania, Deed Book #21, 365). On 18 July 1872, he sold another parcel to Stephen Garrity for \$175 (Deed Book #23, 180). In both of these transactions, Sankey's address was listed as "Union Township," which encompasses his home in West New Castle. Although Sankey was apparently liquidating some of his Pennsylvania assets to enable his move to Chicago, he retained his home in New Castle.
32. The church record book from the New Castle Methodist Episcopal Church, 1868–1874, lists both Ira and Fanny's membership being removed by letter, 16 October 1872. It does not say they joined Moody's Chicago Northside Tabernacle, but that would seem the logical choice; however, the Rev. M.M. Parkhurst, pastor of Grace Methodist Episcopal Church on Wabash Ave. (at either 8th or 14th Street), claimed Sankey became a member of his church, continuing his Methodist affiliation. See *Chicago Tribune*, 13 August 1883, 8.
33. Sankey, *My Life*, 35.
34. Farwell, *Recollections*, 54.
35. Phillips, *Song Pilgrimage*, 64. These took place from April to September, 1873.
36. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 129.
37. Robert J. Branham, *Sweet Freedom's Song: "My Country 'tis of Thee" and Democracy in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 132.
38. D.W. Whittle, *Memoirs of Philip P. Bliss* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1877), 42.
39. Moody was apparently already on the prowl for a musical assistant and possibly extended Bliss an invitation similar to what he proffered later to Sankey.
40. This would have been during Sankey's short trial period with Moody, before he made the decision to relocate to Chicago in February of 1871.
41. Whittle, *Memoir*, 168. This recollection reveals Sankey's familiarity with Phillip Phillips' song collection, *Hallowed Songs*, which he later asked the publishers to expand.
42. *Chicago Evening Post*, 30 December 1871, 4.
43. Whittle, *Memoir*, 38. On page 240, a copy of a Bliss letter signed 1 November 1873 says the move to Chicago was "eight years ago today." Bliss could have been confusing his move to Chicago (Nov. 21) with his invitation from Root and Cady, which he listed as November 1 on page 38.

44. “John Griffin Towner,” *Find-A-Grave*, [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com). J.G. Towner was the father of the famed gospel song composer and director of music at Moody Bible Institute, Daniel Brink Towner.
45. J.H. Hall, *Biography of Gospel Song and Hymn Writers* (New York: Fleming Revell, 1914), 182–83.
46. Elias Nason, *The Lives of the Eminent American Evangelists Dwight Lyman Moody and Ira David Sankey* (Boston: B.B. Russell, 1877), 265. The Bliss-Buck concert, on 8 July 1870, was held at First Congregational Church. Buck was serving as organist at Chicago’s St. James Episcopal Church. After the fire of 1871, he moved to Boston and taught at the New England Conservatory of Music. Bob J. Neil, *Philip P. Bliss (1838–1876): Gospel Hymn Composer and Compiler*, dissertation (New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1977), 66–67.
47. Whittle, *Memoir*, 39. For Carlo Bassini, see *Appletons’ Cyclopædia of American Biography*, Vol. 1 (1900), 191.
48. J.H. Cole, Chicago businessman and lay evangelist, took charge of the YMCA work. Daniels, *Moody and His Work*, 506.
49. The issue of Sankey’s support during this time is open to conflicting reports. John Farwell, whose business it was to know about money, said in *Early Recollections*, 5, Moody had “guaranteed \$1,200 salary.” Findlay, *Moody*, 150, quotes him. Bruce J. Evensen, *God’s Man for the Gilded Age* (Oxford: University Press, 2003), 18, states Sankey was promised \$100 per month, and Sankey would be gone “at most three or four months.” In sharp contrast, W.H. Daniels, *Moody and His Work*, 239, states, “It was at length decided that Moody and Sankey should go to England together; trusting wholly to the Lord to direct and support them. . . . They were, as aforetime, to take no salaries or stipends in any form. They were to ask no collections. They were to engage in no business, but to devote themselves solely to the work of God and to rely upon Him for all things.” And the Rev. M.M. Parkhurst, who claimed firsthand knowledge of the evangelists’ financial affairs, claimed Moody promised Sankey a salary for a whole year, but no longer. *Chicago Tribune*, 13 August 1883, 8.
50. Daniels, *Moody and His Work*, 239.
51. Tax records of Lawrence County, PA: Vol. 23, 180. Property in Union Township sold to Patrick Garretty, 26 April 1873. Sankey listed his residence as Chicago. Another record, Vol. 24, 5, lists a sale of Lot #11 on May 20.
52. Pollock, *Moody*, 116–17.
53. This was money Farwell had already given to Moody, who thought support was coming from England, so he had asked Farwell to invest it for him.

54. Farwell, *Recollections*, 77.
55. Sankey, *My Life*, 37.
56. Earlier called Cove, it was renamed Queenstown in 1849 to commemorate a visit by Queen Victoria. Its port was the departure point for 2.5 million Irish who emigrated to North America, as well as the final port of call for the *Titanic* in 1912. Its current name of Cobh was adopted in 1920.
57. Findlay, *Moody*, 150 fn23.
58. Sankey, *My Life*, 38.
59. The details surrounding the arrival of the evangelists in Liverpool have taken on certain dramatic elements, especially the fabled letter from George Bennett, which Pollock, *Moody*, 119, discounted through correspondence he found, which was written to Moody's son, William R., to correct factual errors in the biography he had written of his father. According to Pollock, Moody did not "discover" an unopened letter from Bennett in his pocket as the narrative around this event has developed. He simply recalled earlier correspondence Bennett had sent him.
60. Pollock, *Moody*, 118.
61. Sankey, *My Life*, 38.
62. Diary of Emma Moody for 19 June 1873. Emma consistently named her sister Mary, whereas Emma Moody Powell, author of *Heavenly Destiny*, 74, identified her as Matie (Mrs. Alfred Sharpe).
63. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 156–57. It is interesting to observe how Sankey's name—as a complete unknown—was not listed, but the "well-known" Philip Phillips was.
64. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 156; Daniels, *Moody and His Work*, 241.
65. Pollock, *Moody*, 121–22.
66. Sankey, *My Life*, 39.
67. Pollock, *Moody*, 122. Other sources question whether the narrative around Moody and Sankey being "stranded" with few contacts is accurate. David Bundy, in "Keswick and Evangelical Piety," *Modern Christian Revivals*, Edith Blumhofer and Randall Balmer, eds. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 124, suggests, "Moody hagiography has tended to mislead historians. Earlier biographers . . . intimated that Moody arrived . . . knowing no one, a myth that [others] did little to dispel." He then traces earlier multiple contacts in England that suggest Moody's arrival in 1873 would not have been as lonely and dramatic as popular accounts depict. These are detailed on page 139, footnote 37.





No. 13.

Once for All.

"Justified by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."—ROMANS 3: 24.

P. P. BLISS.

P. P. BLISS, by per.

1. Free from the law, oh, hap - py con - di - tion, Je - sus hath

bled, and *there* is re - mis - sion, Curs'd by the law and bruised by the

CHORUS.  
fall, Grace hath redeemed us once for all. Once for all, oh, sinner re-

- ceive it, Once for all, oh, brother, be - lieve it; Cling to the

Cross, the bur - den will fall, Christ hath redeemed us once for all.

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*Chapter 8*  
Singing the Gospel  
1873

*Free from the law, oh, happy condition,  
Jesus hath bled and there is remission,  
Curs'd by the law and bruised by the fall,  
Grace hath redeemed us once for all.*

*Once for all, oh, sinner receive it,  
Once for all, oh, brother, believe it;  
Cling to the cross, the burden will fall,  
Christ hath redeemed us, once for all.*

*Now we are free—there's no condemnation,  
Jesus provides a perfect salvation;  
"Come unto Me," oh, hear His sweet call,  
Come, and He saves us once for all.*

*"Children of God," oh, glorious calling,  
Surely His grace will keep us from falling;  
Passing from death to life at His call,  
Blessed salvation once for all.<sup>1</sup>*

BY EARLY SATURDAY MORNING, George Bennett had been dispatched to locate a venue where Moody and Sankey could begin meetings in less than twenty-four hours. Although he managed to line up Salem (Congregational) Chapel for Sunday morning—a result of their pastor being away—the general response to his entreaties was one of skepticism: “Americans? in York? during the summer when many had decamped for the seashore? And what was the York YMCA getting out of all this?”<sup>2</sup> Sankey later recalled how Bennett did line up a printer, telling him to write out the following notice:

## EVANGELISTIC MEETINGS

D.L. Moody of Chicago will preach, and Ira D. Sankey of Chicago will sing, at 7 o'clock P.M. tomorrow, [Sunday] and each succeeding evening for a week, at the Independent Chapel. All are welcome. No collection.<sup>3</sup>

Meetings actually began Sunday morning at Salem Chapel in a service designed for Christian workers, especially from the Sunday School; other regular attenders at the church probably showed up. In mid-afternoon, some kind of service took place, apparently at the large Corn Exchange, where Moody and Sankey passed out Bibles liberated from the YMCA, containing a slip of paper with a number and a Bible reference to be read out when Moody called for it. The result, recorded in the *Yorkshire Gazette*, produced a “somewhat novel but very profitable Bible lecture on ‘God is love.’”<sup>4</sup>

Fewer than fifty souls attended that first revival meeting on Sunday evening, June 22, 1873, at the Wesley Independent Chapel on Priory Street, and those who did sit so far away from Sankey, he could barely hear them sing. But that resulted in part from the use of unfamiliar hymns, as Sankey wasn't versed in what these Englishmen knew. He also sang several solos before Moody preached. They were chosen from a scrapbook he had been compiling during his time in Chicago, consisting of a few hymns and many of the newer Sunday School-type songs being composed by friends like Philip P. Bliss. But his English listeners were clearly unfamiliar with what he was asking them to sing. Sankey was definitely winging it.

So was Moody, but he used that first meeting to announce a noon prayer and Bible reading the next day. Six people eventually found their way down the long, dark corridor to the small, dimly lit room above the drugstore on Coney Street where the York YMCA met. Moody was confident as ever. As day and evening meetings continued, both Moody and Sankey gained a little footing, trying to figure out what worked and what didn't. Although Sankey was likely improvising in those early meetings, that was nothing new for him.

At almost thirty-three years of age, Ira had been singing solos and leading congregational singing for over a dozen years—and under every imaginable circumstance. Sometimes it was before a small, aging group of Methodists who didn't believe in using musical instruments; sometimes no hymn books were available and he'd have to quickly ascertain what the congregation knew by heart; sometimes a pump organ was available to accompany his

solos or support the congregation, but half of it didn't work and the other half was comically out of tune. Sometimes, as at the first meeting with Moody in Indianapolis, Sankey wasn't even in charge of the music but simply had to take over by force of will and the power of his voice. At other times, Ira faced congregations of enthusiastic Christian workers as he sang solos or led the heartfelt singing at massive Sunday School and YMCA conventions.

Then there was his work with Moody in Chicago. Ira had joined the evangelist as an experienced church worker who had learned to be quick on his feet and adaptable to any situation. But with Moody, that ability was stretched beyond imagination. For many months after arriving in Chicago, Sankey never knew from one minute to the next what Moody might request in the form of a solo or a congregational song, and he never knew in those early days when Moody might quit preaching in what seemed like the middle of his sermon and call upon him to sing something appropriate.

Ira must have been a little disoriented during those early meetings in York, but he hadn't lost direction. With years of practical experience, Ira's musical senses were highly developed. He could detect, almost instantly, whether a congregation's tepid response resulted from a lack of enthusiasm or from its unfamiliarity with the music. Like Moody, he could read a group of people, quickly determine what the hindrances were, and switch to an alternate approach—whether that meant finding more familiar music, giving the congregation more time to feel comfortable in unfamiliar surroundings, talking more (or less) between his solos, or just being a bit patient while his audience warmed up to this novel American who sang with an unusual delivery and earnestness.

One of the first things Ira discovered was that these English folks knew the tune HURSLEY, most often sung to John Keble's hymn, "Sun of my soul." Although it had been published in England's unofficial Anglican hymn book, *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, in 1861, most of those attending the York meetings were from non-conformist churches and would not have learned it there. More likely they would have become familiar with the tune from their own hymnals or from Philip Phillips' *Hallowed Songs*, which was available for sale at the meetings.<sup>5</sup> What Sankey found advantageous about this tune was the way it fit hymns with a meter of 8.8.8.8, called Long Meter, meaning each stanza had four lines of eight syllables each. As Ira recalled:

The hymn most used by our congregations . . . was, "Sun of my soul," to the tune HURSLEY, which was almost the only distinc-

tively English tune with which I was familiar up to that time, and finding that it could be adapted to “Rock of Ages,” and many other hymns, we used the tune in almost every meeting.<sup>6</sup>

The tune HURSLEY was not really English as Ira had thought, but was a variation of the German chorale tune GROSSER GOTT, WIR LOBEN DICH, which had been adopted into English hymnals about twenty years previously. When it was paired with John Keble’s hymn “Sun of my soul! Thou Saviour dear” in *The Metrical Psalter* (1855), it was renamed HURSLEY in honor of the parish where Keble was vicar.<sup>7</sup> Through Phillips’ adoption of the tune into his collection, Ira became familiar with it, and it proved to be successful in those early days.

For most evangelicals on both sides of the Atlantic, the preaching of God’s Word from the pulpit had always been the central event of every service. In liturgical religious bodies—such as Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches—Communion (or Eucharist) had often been the prominent feature, with preaching taking a lesser position of importance. In nonconformist worship, springing from the Reformation, the Word of God was not just the central part of the service, it was the singular reason for the gathering of God’s people; other elements were often preparatory or peripheral.

But in the meetings of Moody and Sankey, this was conspicuously out of balance. First, the musical portion of the service, including congregational singing and Sankey’s solos, took an inordinate amount of time—almost as long as the preaching. Traditionally, the sermon in most Protestant services lasted an hour. In some London churches, a huge hourglass sat right there on the pulpit where stalwart worshipers were forced to observe the sand as it trickled down ever-so-slowly in a seemingly never-ending flow. The device apparently did little to limit the speaker’s oratory, where “many instances are recorded of the hourglass being turned, and a second or even a third glass of eloquence being indulged in before a weary and starved congregation was permitted to retire homewards.”<sup>8</sup>

When Moody finally took his place behind the pulpit, he spoke in a conversational, American, vernacular style—and he was brief. To some, this shared responsibility with music seemed like a weakening of God’s truth, which should only be mediated through the spoken Word.

Another unsettling component of the Moody-Sankey meetings was its visual element. For right there, beside the pulpit, sat a musical instrument.



It simply couldn't be missed. It was a familiar one to most in the audience, because they probably had one in their parlors. Although the piano was quickly becoming the popular musical furniture in the upwardly mobil Victorian home, the melodeon—sometimes known as a harmonium or pump organ—had long been the domestic instrument *par excellence*. And it often found a place in the church, especially in the nonconformist ones that didn't have the money or interest to install a pipe organ.

Unfortunately for Ira, one of his biggest challenges was having to rely on borrowed keyboards. It was simply too expensive or logistically impractical for Sankey to transport a melodeon or pump organ to each venue, as their tours often included multiple places each day. That meant relying on the local committee to provide an instrument for the services. But on many occasions, those responsible for this critical element simply had no concept of what a proper instrument should possess, often furnishing Ira with an inadequate instrument, either undersized for the large spaces or not in proper working order.<sup>9</sup>

To some extent, a melodeon was a complex machine, containing a multitude of finely tuned reeds and stops and a bellows that could easily leak. Temperature and humidity were factors in its response, and moving one around didn't contribute to its successful operation. In some cases, no instrument at all was provided and Sankey had to rely entirely on his voice for leading the singing. His solo work, however, was most effective when supported by an adequate instrument. Every new venue meant adapting to the peculiarities of some idiosyncratic contraption.

After less than a week of meetings, both men were getting some recognition in the secular press. Of Sankey, the *York Herald* reported, "Professor Sankey, an American, at each service conducted the singing, and also gave a number of pieces, accompanying himself on the American organ."<sup>10</sup> It was this element of solo singing that created the most curiosity and consternation; folks weren't quite sure how to categorize it. When Philip Phillips sang religious solos during his two successful trips throughout the British Isles, he had been "greatly admired and enjoyed, but had not been considered so much a means of grace and salvation as a method of pious enjoyment. When Mr. Sankey began to sing his songs with a view to the awakening and conversion of sinners, many good people were surprised; some were shocked, and others openly opposed the innovation."<sup>11</sup> Perhaps the distinction resulted in part because Phillips usually performed his solos outside the context of

a preaching service, although that was not the case with his work back home. In England, Phillips' singing was somehow perceived as bordering more on spiritual edification—perhaps religious entertainment in disguise—than on worship or evangelism.

There were precedents for solo singing in English religious services, however. Richard Weaver's life story reads like a character out of a Dickens novel—although perhaps more horrifying. He, with his mother and siblings, used to hide in a pigsty to avoid beatings from a drunken father. At seven, he began working in the local mine, dragging a coal cart on his hands and knees for sixteen hours a day. He became a hard-living collier who had fallen down numerous mine shafts and survived six explosions. He was constantly drinking and brawling—known as “Undaunted Dick.” After conversion he became known for literally turning the other cheek, often allowing those who took umbrage with him to take multiple blows at his head before some gave up in shame. Known as the “common man's preacher,” much of his ministry was directed toward the working classes, such as the London meetings of 1860, attended by four hundred obstreperous chimney sweeps, whose rowdiness he mollified by singing to them.<sup>12</sup>

He compiled *Richard Weaver's Hymn Book*, which eventually included eighty selections, words only. They ranged from William Cowper's “There is a fountain filled with blood” to the frightening “Hell”:

*There is a dreadful hell, Far, far away;  
Where apostate spirits dwell, Far, far away!  
By their own transgression slain,  
They endure eternal pain;  
Bound with an eternal chain, Far, far away.*<sup>13</sup>

When no hymnals were available, Weaver would teach a new song to a congregation by singing it through once, then going back over it two lines at a time, requesting his hearers to repeat it. Slowly and patiently, he replayed the process until the assembly could confidently sing:

*Nothing, either great or small, Nothing sinner, no;  
Jesus did it, did it all, Long, long ago.*

By the time they reached the refrain, they would roar:

*It is finished, yes, indeed, Finished every jot:  
Sinner, this is all you need, Tell me, is it not?*<sup>14</sup>

At this point, he could then preach or present a solo to an attentive audience.

As recalled by George E. Morgan, “Richard Weaver’s artless but powerful rendering of Revival melodies led to the popularisation of such hymns (as solos) as, ‘I’m a Pilgrim, Bound for Glory,’ ‘In Evil Long I Took Delight,’ ‘Christ for Me.’”<sup>15</sup> Weaver’s singing of this latter hymn caused R.C. Morgan, publisher of *The Christian*, to confess that his singing of “‘My heart is fixed, Eternal God, Fixed on Thee, Fixed on Thee’ [‘Christ for Me’] had thrilled his heart as no other hymn before or since.” And he further effused that Weaver had converted more people than anyone since George Whitefield.<sup>16</sup>

Weaver was much closer to the model of Sankey’s music-making than that of Phillips, for Weaver both sang and preached with a focus on conversion. But there was likely less controversy with his singing because most of the criticism he experienced derived from his hellfire-and-damnation preaching and his outspoken opposition to the sacramentalism of the Anglican Church. Although Weaver enjoyed fairly wide notoriety during the Scottish Revivals of 1859–60, he was soon eclipsed by Sankey. Yet his combination of singing and preaching with an eye to conversion certainly laid the groundwork and deserves some credit for Sankey’s later acceptance.

Unfortunately, acceptance in York was slow in coming. During the first week, “the spiritual atmosphere seemed at zero and little result was effected,” lamented Bennett, who was also lodging the Sankeys.<sup>17</sup> Then, on July 2—about ten days into the meetings—“the movement broke surface.” “The Holy Spirit’s power was mightily manifested and anxious souls were all over the building, in the body [ground floor] as well as in the gallery.”<sup>18</sup>

While few local pastors supported Moody and Sankey’s early services, a young preacher from Priory Street Baptist Church attended the noontime prayer services and confessed:

Brethren, what Mr. Moody said the other day about the Holy Spirit for service is true. I have been preaching for years without any special blessing, simply beating the air, and have been toiling hard, but without the power of God upon me. For two days I have been away from the meetings, closeted with my Maker. I think he has had the victory over my arrogance and pride, and I believe I have made a full surrender of all to him, and today I have come here to join you in worship, and to ask you to pray for me.<sup>19</sup>

That testimony certainly sounds like someone responding to a sermon about receiving the same “second blessing” or “baptism of the Spirit” Moody

had experienced about six months earlier back in New York. Yet that was not something the evangelist usually preached, especially to those he believed might need the first work of the Holy Spirit. But it seems as though Frederick Brotherton (known as F.B.) Meyer—who would go on to become a star in the evangelical firmament and in the Holiness Movement—was experiencing just that. Whatever the motivation, he opened his church to the revivalists, and from Ira’s perspective, his testimony “was the rod of God’s hand that smote the rock in the desert of doubt and unbelief in York. From that day the work took on a new start, and soon there were hundreds of souls crowding the inquiry room.”<sup>20</sup>

By now, the songs Ira was using were becoming both familiar and attractive, causing him to lend out his scrapbook, only to have it returned too late for the next service. To resolve the demand for words to the new songs, Ira printed up a batch of cards for those who might be interested, but when his audience realized they were free, there was a rush to the stage and the entire supply was depleted. Ira quickly abandoned that plan.<sup>21</sup>

It’s unclear exactly what method Sankey was employing to assist congregations to sing the hymns up to that point. Historically, worshipers of all faiths would intone congregational songs from a words-only book. Music was rarely included, as most people couldn’t read music, and including that unnecessary element made the volume bulky and more expensive. New or unfamiliar tunes were learned as they always had been—by hearing them repeated several times—not reading the music. And congregations didn’t need the harmonies because they sang the melody—not the parts, which would have been the role of the choir. Therefore, Sankey only needed to furnish his growing congregations with the words; he would provide the tune by modeling it from the keyboard with his voice. Unfortunately,

The hymns and tunes used in the British churches and chapels were not adapted to evangelistic services, and neither Mr. Moody nor Mr. Sankey was familiar with the books in use. They therefore adopted for use in their meetings Philip Phillips’ book *Hallowed Songs*, containing many American hymns and a few English tunes.<sup>22</sup>

At some point early on, Moody and Sankey seemed to have accessed a supply of Philip Phillips’ American collection, probably leftover from Phillips’ former English tour of his phenomenally successful “song services”

back in 1868.<sup>23</sup> This collection was already familiar to the evangelists, because they had been using it back in Chicago; it seemed like a good fit.

But it wasn't. Although it contained a few of the newer Sunday School-type songs Ira was popularizing, it lacked many of the latest he was asking his congregations to sing. And that created "a number of complaints" from those who had paid for a book that didn't contain the newer songs.<sup>24</sup> So Ira contacted Phillips' publisher to request they produce an updated edition, supplementing them with the recent songs Sankey was using—but to no avail.<sup>25</sup> Ira would just have to limp along for the time-being.

The impact of Sankey's music didn't seem restricted to the meetings, however. As Ira's lodgings were central to the business center, his singing the novel solos often attracted attention. While singing for friends, his music drifted into the street and caught the attention of a woman who was struggling with spiritual concerns. Requesting to interview the singer, Ira shared the simple gospel of God's redemption from sin, and the woman was converted. This seems to have been the first of many conversions in Britain resulting from the power of music.<sup>26</sup>

Whatever the reason, Sankey was singing with unusual effect—even for him. Moody seemed to notice it early on and wrote home to his Chicago patron and confidant: "Yesterday we had four meetings. I preached. . . . Sankey sang the hymns finely; all seemed to be much pleased with him. I think he is going to do much good here."<sup>27</sup> Little could Moody have realized how prophetic his observation would become.

On July 4, Emma Moody and the children, son William (Willie) Revell and daughter Emma, arrived from London to join Dwight L. Moody, who turned thirty-six years old the next day. Celebrations were limited, however, as Moody carried on preaching, and Emma took the children to visit the imposing York Minister Cathedral, which dominated the city.<sup>28</sup> The family resided with Dr. Hutchings of the Friends Retreat, a private "lunatic asylum" where Willie and Emma played with the more harmless of the residents.<sup>29</sup> The Bennetts introduced Emma Moody and Fanny Sankey to the slightly odd English tradition—from an American perspective—of afternoon tea, which could involve hearty portions of food.<sup>30</sup> And Ira, reacting to the northern latitude, humorously complained the sun would not go to bed at a civilized hour.<sup>31</sup>

Within a few weeks of Moody placing that original ad seeking invitations to preach in R.C. Morgan's religious periodical, *The Christian*, he

began receiving inquiries from pastors in other cities. One was an invitation to hold services in a nearby resort Sankey called “a large watering place on the north shore.”<sup>32</sup> The evangelists accepted and were just a few days from beginning meetings when a deputation of ministers visited with a request to rescind their earlier solicitation. As they had observed the growing attendance at the York meetings, they became concerned about the prospect of Moody-Sankey meetings in their town reducing support for the “penny collections” they received from visitors to the seaside during the summer season. They explained how this special injection of funds supported much of their ministry for the remaining part of the year, and they were having second thoughts. Even though the evangelists received additional invitations from the city, they acceded to the delegation and looked elsewhere.

One alternative was Sunderland, seventy-five miles due north on the coast. Fearing another possible “penny collection” fiasco, Moody sent Sankey to investigate its potential. In Sunderland, Sankey was hosted by a Rev. Arthur A. Rees (known in local religious circles as the Protestant “Pope of the North” because of his autocratic ways) who, after extensive conversations with Sankey, realized he had roomed with Moody on a previous visit to England when the evangelist had asked Rees to join him for evening devotions. Reeves recalled being deeply impressed with Moody’s knowledge of the Scripture and quickly agreed this American visitor should come to Sunderland, and no “penny collections” would be taken to compete with their work. The issue of Moody’s novel co-laborer seemed to be in limbo, however.

During his visit, Sankey was taken to meet an elder and church treasurer, William Longstaff. On entering the house, Sankey discovered a pump organ Philip Phillips had played during concerts he had previously given in that city. When Sankey was asked to sing, he sat at the little instrument and poured forth “Come home, O Prodigal,” “Free from the law,” and “More to follow.” Unbeknownst to him, “the minister [Rees] was strongly opposed, not only to solo singing, but to organs and choirs as well, never allowing anything of the kind in his church.”<sup>33</sup> But as no objections were voiced, it seemed to Sankey as though there were no hindrances to future work.

After four weeks of meetings in York, Moody and Sankey could look back, as support from local ministers had slowly grown and attendance had steadily climbed, resulting in several hundred professions of faith<sup>34</sup> as well as general excitement about the new style of music. Yet there were some who felt the revival had “remained parochial, scattered, the churches not united, the stirrings limited to a ‘parcel of dissenters.’”<sup>35</sup>



Those mixed feelings accompanied the evangelists as they traveled to Sunderland on July 19, where they expected to encounter some opposition. But, as Sankey reported:

A few days after our arrival in that city, we were surprised to see the walls and billboards placarded with enormous posters, containing the following notice: “D.L. Moody of Chicago will preach the gospel and Ira D. Sankey of Chicago will sing the gospel in Bethesda Chapel every afternoon and evening this week . . . at 3 and 7 o’clock. All are welcome.” Thus the phrase “sing the gospel” originated with one of the most conservative ministers in England.<sup>36</sup>

Additionally unexpected was the way a small cabinet (pump) organ had been brought into the church where there had never been one before. And instead of being half-hidden in a corner, or even on the floor level, it was placed in the pulpit area where Ira could better deliver his solos or song-leading. By now, the music was developing a personality of its own. “It was while singing from this scrapbook, ‘Jesus of Nazareth Passeth By,’ ‘Come Home, Prodigal Child,’ and Mr. Bliss’ ‘Hold the Fort,’ ‘Jesus Loves Me,’ and ‘Free from the Law,’ in the old Cathedral city of York, and in Sunderland . . . that we began to fully realize the wonderful power there was in these Gospel songs.”<sup>37</sup>

That power was demonstrated one evening when Sankey sang “Come home, O prodigal, come home!”

*Come home! come home! You are weary at heart,  
For the way has been dark, And so lonely and wild.  
O prodigal child! Come home! oh come home!*

*Come home! come home! For we watch and we wait,  
And we stand at the gate, While the shadows are piled.  
O prodigal child! Come home! oh come home!*

While his solos were usually met by a palpable silence when finished, a cry of “Oh, father, will you forgive me?” went up from a young man who rushed down the aisle to where his father sat. The father rose and responded, “My boy, I forgive everything,” and they departed together for the vestry. The impression upon the assembly was profound, and hundreds crowded the Inquiry Room for prayer and spiritual guidance afterward.<sup>38</sup>

By this point, Sankey was becoming a victim of his own success, as he couldn't respond to the steady stream of requests for the new songs. However, all that changed one evening when he was dining with R.C. Morgan, publisher of *The Christian*, who had come to report on the meetings. Sankey—who was apparently unaware of Morgan's history of publishing religious music—expressed his frustration in failing to interest anyone in printing new materials for the services. That was when Morgan informed him he had long published musical leaflets and he could do the same for Sankey.<sup>39</sup> “So I cut from my scrap-book twenty-three pieces, rolled them up, and wrote on them the words, ‘Sacred Songs and Solos, sung by Ira D. Sankey at the meetings of Mr. Moody of Chicago.’”<sup>40</sup> His selections contained those he found most effective in their meetings. They included a few older songs such as “Sweet hour of prayer,” but most were less than ten years old, some being published just a year earlier.<sup>41</sup>

Within two weeks, Ira received five hundred copies of a sixteen-page pamphlet (words and music), priced at sixpence per copy. It promptly sold out. More copies were requested and these quickly disappeared, being purchased in quantities by entrepreneurs who then resold them in “bookstores, grocers, and dry-goods establishments.” Later, an inexpensive words-only version, costing one penny (two cents American) also became available—at which time they dropped the use of Phillips' collection, *Hallowed Songs*.<sup>42</sup>

As to their respective roles in creating a tangible collection of songs that would define a whole new genre of religious music—gospel hymnody—it seems probable that Moody, who was definitely the decision maker on this trip, would have been central in making arrangements for what seemed to be a risky investment with very limited resources.<sup>43</sup> At the time, however, no one could have imagined the monumental impact flowing from the decision by which “The copyright of the book was not taken out by Mr. Moody or Mr. Sankey, but by the publishers.”<sup>44</sup>

The new and subsequent editions of the collection were often called the “Moody-Sankey” hymn book, a designation reflecting both their contributions to this endeavor.

The meetings soon outgrew individual churches and were moved to The Victoria Hall and Temperance Institute, the twenty-five-hundred-seat (plus 500 standing room), Neo-Gothic, brick edifice, recently funded by the Quaker family of Edward Backhouse. It boasted a spacious area for ground floor seating, plus two substantial balconies. The ample stage also included a prominent pipe organ on the front wall, which Sankey did not use. There

was still a lack of broad support from local ministers, thus limiting the locations for noonday prayer and Bible reading meetings. And the secular press wasn't much help, on one occasion mixing up the evangelists and deploring "Moody's singing style."<sup>45</sup> But the crowds grew steadily, including somewhat tardy support from the local YMCA. "Nevertheless, the evangelists' work so angered some of the local ministers that they turned their backs on the YMCA for having had anything to do with them."<sup>46</sup>

To make up for the noticeable absence of local religious leaders, Moody asked his friend Henry Moorehouse, the Manchester evangelist who hosted the Sankeys on their second night in the country, to speak at some sessions. While he didn't pastor a church, he was a widely known revivalist, central to the awakenings of the 1860s, who directed his attention toward the working classes in northern England. Like pugilist-turned-evangelist Richard Weaver, under whom he was converted, Moorehouse experienced a rough background as a gambler and gang leader who carried a pistol to kill himself if captured. But unlike Weaver, he was not a dynamic speaker and did not possess an impressive physique but was of diminutive stature and boyish looks. In fact, at thirty years of age, he was still mistaken for a youth.

He first met Moody when the Chicagoan had visited Dublin, Ireland, in 1867. He brashly informed Moody he would like to preach for him in America and requested which boat Moody was returning on. Moody, supposing the scrawny lad was only seventeen, said to himself, "He can't preach" and evaded telling him about his return plans. However, soon after arriving in the United States, Moody received a series of letters stating Moorehouse was in the country and wanted to speak. Moody responded rather coolly each time, but Moorehouse showed up anyway. As Moody was planning to be out of town a couple days, he told the church leaders to schedule him at a Thursday evening meeting where attendance was limited; if he did well, he could preach the next night; if not, they could hold a prayer meeting instead. If he was successful at both, he could speak for the Sunday service—although Moody would be back by that time. Moody left, expecting very little.

Upon his return, Moody questioned his wife: "How is the young Englishman coming along. Did you like him?"

"Yes, I liked him very much. He has preached two sermons from that verse in John, 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting

life; and I think you will like him, although he preaches a little differently from you.”

“How is that?”

“Well, he tells the worst of sinners that God loves them.”

“Then,” Moody said, “He is wrong.”

“I think you will agree with him when you hear him, because he backs up everything he says with the Bible.”

Sunday morning came and Moody noticed everyone was bringing their Bible to church. “The morning address was to Christians. I had never heard anything quite like it. He gave chapter and verse to prove every statement.”

That evening, Moorehouse preached again from John 3:16 about God’s love for sinners. He began in Genesis and worked through to Revelation to prove how God loved the world in every age. “I never knew up to that time that God loved us so much. This heart of mine began to thaw out. I could not keep back the tears. It was like news from a far country: I just drank it in. So did the crowded congregation,” recalled Moody. For the next six nights, the “Boy Preacher” taught from the same text, carefully and magnificently explaining how “God so loved the world.” Deeply moved, Moody conceded, “By that time we began to believe it and we have never doubted it since.”<sup>47</sup>

A popular feature of the Sunderland campaign, first tried in York, was an all-day meeting, beginning at 11:00AM and continuing for six hours, concluding with an evening service. The first hour was devoted to prayer, the second to praise. The third was a “promise meeting” featuring testimonies about answered prayer or fulfilled promises. The fourth was a “witness meeting” consisting of public confessions of Christ by young converts. Moody presented a Bible lecture for the penultimate hour, and the day ended with a communion service led by Moody and four ministers.<sup>48</sup> Sankey later claimed the pamphlet *Sacred Songs and Solos* was first distributed at this event.<sup>49</sup>

While their schedule of round-the-clock meetings could be quite demanding, the two tried to take Saturday mornings off. On one of these days they took a cab some miles north along the seashore to where perpendicular cliffs crowded the water. They gingerly descended a stairway leading to the beach and enjoyed themselves, marveling at the array of shells washed up by the receding tide. Then they saw someone violently waving to them from the cliff above and realized the rising tide would soon cut off their egress.

Sankey recalled:

It was clear that we had no time to lose. Mr. Moody suggested that I should plunge in and lead the way . . . as quickly as possible, and while I did so he stood looking on, convulsed with laughter at my frantic strides through the water over the slippery rocks. . . . Then the tables were turned, and it was my opportunity to enjoy a sight not soon to be forgotten, as my friend slowly and with considerable difficulty waded through the constantly rising water to the place where I stood.<sup>50</sup>

Both were scheduled to hold a Bible reading at 3:00 that afternoon, but with no time to return to their lodgings, they conducted the service in wet clothes and shoes! As their strange attire obviously needed some explaining, that gave Sankey, who could perceive an element of humor in most circumstances, the chance to debut P.P. Bliss's song, "Pull for the Shore." It eventually became so popular, the phrase "pull for the shore" became a familiar byword of encouragement.

*Light in the darkness, sailor, day is at hand!  
See o'er the foaming billows fair haven's land,  
Drear was the voyage, sailor, now almost o'er,  
Safe within the life boat, sailor, pull for the shore.*

*Pull for the shore, sailor, pull for the shore!  
Heed not the rolling waves, but bend to the oar;  
Safe in the life boat, sailor, cling to self no more!  
Leave the poor old stranded wreck, and pull for the shore.<sup>51</sup>*

Visitors from surrounding cities who had read about their meetings in *The Christian* often attended to scope out the meetings, with Richard Hoyle inquiring about the possibility of the pair relocating to Newcastle-on-Tyne, thirty-eight miles inland. Moody was interested on the condition that local ministers first agree to support the meetings and encourage their flocks to attend, as he was still chafing about the lack of support there in Sunderland.

Some of that pastoral apathy emanated from opposition to Moody's host, the Rev. A.A. Rees, who tended a large and dynamic congregation but was known as a highly sectarian or factional leader. It was therefore only natural for other clergy in the area to suspect Moody of coming to bolster Rees' singular work—thus, offering no support. However, at one point, even

Rees developed second thoughts about the revival and penned a pamphlet, “Religious Dissipation: A Word of Caution for Times of Revival,” beginning with Proverbs 25:16, “Hast thou found honey? Eat so much is as sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.” And an anonymous tract, “Kindly Reflections Upon the Present Religious Movement,” included sections on “Questionable procedures” and “Probably evil results.”<sup>52</sup>

While Wesleyan and Methodist groups feared Moody’s supposed Calvinism, Baptist and Presbyterian followers opposed what they saw as “easy believism.” Nevertheless, one dubious pastor who was certain the evangelists were preaching for money later confessed, “I went to the meeting, being careful to keep out of sight; but when Sankey began singing, I felt it draw me, and very little more of it would have pulled me on to the platform.”<sup>53</sup>

So when a large delegation of nonconformist ministers invited him to Newcastle and suggested that Joseph Cowen, the widely respected publisher of the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, might be supportive, Moody assented.<sup>54</sup> Anglican ministers—even evangelical ones—didn’t feel they could support him, however, because Moody was not ordained and often met in nonconformist churches. Sankey must have felt some irony in the way he was about to minister in another Newcastle, far removed from his hometown of New Castle, Pennsylvania, a reminder to both he and Fanny of the separation from their children, being cared for by Ira’s parents.

Newcastle-on-Tyne was an ancient Roman city, part of whose wall was still visible along West Road. It derived its name from *Novum Castellum*, the new castle built by Robert Curthose, son of William the Conqueror in 1080. By August 25, 1873, when Moody and Sankey began a round of meetings, the city had developed into a powerhouse of the Industrial Revolution as a shipbuilding center and a coal terminal. The city became so associated with coal, the saying “carrying coals to Newcastle”—meaning doing something unnecessary or it has already been done—became world famous. Its heavy industry partially explained the “pea-soup” of densely polluted air, resulting from factories belching soot particulates into the atmosphere, sometimes mixed with sulphur dioxide, which greeted the faithful few who attended the first meeting. But that changed within a few days, because larger halls, such as Rye Hill Baptist Chapel, seating sixteen hundred, were required.

In addition, the popularity of Sankey’s singing, reinforced by the sale of *Sacred Songs and Solos*, was noticeable. So was a large group of Quakers, called Society of Friends, conspicuous in their attendance by their black



dress, with women wearing bonnets. Among these was an older lady who would leave the main hall after Sankey's solo—before the preaching began—and follow Ira to the overflow location, where he would hurry off to sing for those who couldn't get into the primary venue. Upon arrival, she was sure to position herself near the stage so as to hear the new songs, which were becoming popular. Sankey, it seems, was developing a real following. But it also spilled over, well beyond a few aged women and attendees at the services, when “The Sweet By and By,” “That Will Be Heaven for Me,” and “Christ Arose” were being heard in the shipyards, on the streets, on railway trains, and in the markets.<sup>55</sup>

Newcastle-on-Tyne was also the location for the first choir Ira formed for his meetings. This resulted from better organization, from the availability of the pamphlet *Sacred Songs and Solos*—which contained the songs Sankey was finding most useful—and from England's general interest in choral music, similar to what was happening in the United States. In fact, the explosion of participation in amateur choral singing had actually begun in England. By the 1870s, many Anglican parish churches and nonconformist chapels had developed their own choirs, and their annual choral festivals—with Mendelssohn's beloved oratorio *Elijah* as the centerpiece—were growing. There were simply more experienced singers around who wanted to sing.

In the beginning, Ira organized his own choirs and directed them, much as he had that little group of singers back at New Castle's Methodist Church in Pennsylvania. However, as time went on, he invited trained choral directors to lead, and the role of the choir in the meetings became more sophisticated. Perhaps the biggest advantage of a choir was how it lightened the workload on Sankey's voice. No longer did he have to sing every note in every service, especially when teaching the newer songs, which needed more repetition and support.

By this point, there was definitely a difference in the meetings. But it wasn't just the evening services featuring the popular evangelists; there was also a difference in the prayer meetings. As one faithful veteran of many a weary prayer service observed:

Nothing is so remarkable in this revival as the utter demolishing of the old-fashioned prayer-meetings. Enter solemn minister and solemn people, scattered six, eight, ten, over a great area. A long slow hymn. Long portion of the Word. Two elders pray two long

prayers, in which they go from Jerusalem, and round about Illyricum, and a great deal [farther]. Now we have crammed meetings. All sit close together. The singing is lively new songs, new tunes. A few words from the minister. . . . Prayers are short. A few texts from the Word of God are frequently interspersed. Brief exhortations. All this comes from our brethren from America. Why have we not found out how to conduct a prayer-meeting before?<sup>56</sup>

In addition to backing from local ministers, men such as the Rev. William Morely Punshon, respected leader of Canadian and British Methodists, traveled nearly three hundred miles from London to support the meetings, allaying the distrust of those Methodists who suspected Moody of being too Calvinistic. In addition, the secular *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* followed the meetings for seven weeks, proclaiming, “Almost impassable barriers seem to be disappearing,” creating an environment for cooperation among the many competing nonconformist groups. It was also quick to report how Moody “never talks twaddle. His earnestness is intense, his energy untiring.”<sup>57</sup> The same could be said for Sankey, as he found himself singing at both the regular evening service held in Victoria [Music] Hall and in the overflow meeting held simultaneously at the nearby Circus.<sup>58</sup> For the evangelists, it was getting to be quite the juggling act, both mentally and physically, to meet the increasing demands as their fame rose and attendance at the meetings swelled.

Not surprisingly, *The Christian* also filled its pages with glowing reports of the meetings. During the weekly Sunday afternoon assembly for women, the correspondent reported:

Mr. Sankey’s singing at this service was particularly appropriate and effective. At the opening, he sang that solemn and tender invitation to the feast, “Yet There Is Room,” and when Mr. Moody had ceased speaking, and the whole assembly was hushed in silent prayer, he broke the death-like stillness by singing in subdued and pleading tones, “Almost Persuaded.” His rendering of this hymn, which in some places could only be compared to a wail of sorrow at lost opportunities, sent a deep thrill through the hearts of those thousands of listeners.<sup>59</sup>

At other times, *The Christian* could be straightforward in reporting problems that cropped up in the meetings. “Mr. Moody endeavored to get the attention of the children, but failed, the one-third not hearing a single

word.” Seeing could also be a challenge, as Moody employed a creative visual aid called the “Wordless Book” to demonstrate spiritual principles. It consisted of four sheets of colored paper: black—for sin, red—for the blood of Christ, white—for a cleansed heart, and gold—for the streets of Heaven. Introduced by Baptist pastor Spurgeon in 1866 for a sermon to several hundred orphans, Moody—who had worked with children since his earliest days—was quick to pick up on the novel idea. But in such a huge arena, its visual impact was limited.<sup>60</sup>

In an effort to include poor mothers who couldn’t leave their infants, a special meeting was scheduled where they were advised to bring their little ones. Mrs. Moody, who was undoubtedly seated close to the platform, remembered the event: “Such a squealing! First a bass voice, then a shrill tenor. . . . I couldn’t help thinking of the Pied Piper of Hamelin town when he charmed the rats from the houses. The squeals were in fifty different sharps and flats. But the poor women listened as tears ran down their faces, and Mr. Sankey and Mr. Moody were able to continue their talks admirably well.”<sup>61</sup>

Despite a few such minor problems, news of the meetings went nationwide. Moody, who intuitively understood the value of publicity, convinced area ministers to subscribe for a three-month subscription to *The Christian* for all forty thousand ministers in the United Kingdom.<sup>62</sup> Moody and Sankey were becoming newsworthy personalities in their own right, and people were curious.

While Moody could appreciate the value of advertising, it took more than a little effort to convince local pastors of its worth. “It seems to me a good deal better to advertise and have a full house, than to preach to empty pews,” he argued. This included saturation handbills, placards, and newspaper advertising. He also saw nothing wrong with going to where people were and inviting them to come in—a technique he had employed since his earliest days in Chicago Sunday Schools. For the businessman-turned-evangelist, this wasn’t a crass merchandising of the gospel but speaking to a modern world that enjoyed a growing list of activities competing for their time and attention.

During their stay in Newcastle, they held extended meetings in nearby towns, such as Darlington from October 13 to 20, and Bishop Auckland from October 30 to November 2. It was there during a prayer meeting Sankey was leading when the pump organ let out a howl that filled the reverberant chapel with frightening wonders. Try as he might, Ira couldn’t get the

recalcitrant beast to quiet down for what seemed like a brief eternity until it finally ran out of air, causing some to fear the end was indeed near!

Back in Newcastle, Moody and Sankey weren't the only visitors from America. This northern industrial town turned out to be an important stop on the itinerary of the Fisk Jubilee Singers, from Nashville, Tennessee. The group was on its first tour of the United Kingdom and was unlike anything the folks in Newcastle had ever heard. The ensemble consisted of nearly a dozen young African American adults from the Fisk School, open to students of all races, sponsored by the Tennessee Freedmen's Bureau and the American Missionary Association.

In 1871, the struggling institution sent a small vocal ensemble out on a tour to raise money for the nearly bankrupt school. Singing music from the standard choral repertoire, the group made a strong impression but raised little money. But when it sang encores, performing the unfamiliar style of religious music that would be called "Negro Spirituals," the ensemble soon experienced overwhelming acceptance, and money began pouring in to the school. After two successful tours in the United States during 1871–73, in which the group collected a staggering \$40,000, the group set off for England in May of 1873, preceded by a flood of publicity, including letters of praise from Mark Twain.<sup>63</sup>

Such was their fame that upon arriving, they were entertained by Prime Minister William Gladstone with the Prince and Princess of Wales as guests. On another occasion, while singing for an aristocratic gathering, Queen Victoria made an appearance, praising the group for its rendition of "John Brown's Body." Over the course of their tour, they took in \$50,000 to help build Jubilee Hall on their humble campus back in Tennessee.

The singers were especially welcomed by ministers, missionary societies, and temperance organizations. One reason for their popularity was the English missionary societies' interest in Africa. Many Englishmen believed that black missionaries would have the greatest success in Africa and they looked to educated Americans to achieve the desired result. Fisk sent its first student missionaries to Africa in 1878.<sup>64</sup>

In the fall, when the group appeared in Newcastle, they were introduced to Moody, who invited them to sing at a meeting on November 7. Their rendering of "Steal Away to Jesus" impressed the evangelist and he



**Fisk Jubilee Singers**, in *The Story of the Jubilee Singers, with Their Songs*, ed. J.B.T. Marsh (1875).

asked them to return for the All-Day meeting<sup>65</sup> on November 12. Day-long events were always a gamble, and if not well attended, would suggest that interest and support for the meetings was running out of steam. But as this special assembly had worked well in their previous two locations, so it did again in Newcastle, with visitors coming in by train from Sunderland, Shields, and Jarrow.

In addition to the normal round of preaching, singing, and Bible reading that day, the Jubilee Singers added an especially ethereal element to the noon prayer meeting. After a special petition had been offered up for their success, a low note arose from some unknown quarters, slowly swelling to fill the hall. “It was like a snatch of angelic song heard from the upper air—as a band of celestials passed swiftly on an errand of mercy.”

*There are angels hovering round  
To carry the tidings home.*<sup>66</sup>

Following Newcastle, Moody and Sankey moved for a week to Carlisle on November 15, some sixty miles west on almost the opposite coast of En-

gland. They had been invited by an unknown Plymouth Brethren pastor, and things were not going well. So Moody sought a meeting with the local pastors, who informed him they were boycotting the meetings because Moody's host was not supportive of their work, and they were concerned about the meetings being an exercise in "sheep stealing"—an effort by the host pastor to attract their members to his church. A flabbergasted Moody assured them he had no sympathy for "sheep stealing" and wanted to cooperate with all local pastors. He then asked each one to pray and, on completion of their intercessions, found the atmosphere had completely changed. Moody received a pledge of support from the wary ministers, and the meetings continued, enjoying good success<sup>67</sup> with overflow meetings being added. By now, Moody had become adept at running interference with the concerns of local ministers, whether over issues of scheduling, "penny collections" or "sheep stealing." Yet, he still couldn't help agonize on one occasion, "God save me from the devil and ministers."<sup>68</sup> ☺



## ENDNOTES

1. Words and music by Philip P. Bliss, “Once for All,” *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan, and George C. Stebbins, eds. (Cincinnati: John Church Co.; New York: Biglow and Main, 1894), No. 13.
2. John Pollock, *Moody: The Biography* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 122.
3. Details of place and date throughout the tour are somewhat uncertain, owing to conflicting sources. In Sankey, *My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns and of Sacred Songs and Solos* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1906), 39, he recorded Thursday as the day they began services. That would have been June 19, just two days after landing in Liverpool, which is incorrect. Will R. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (New York: Fleming Revell, 1900), 157, recorded a letter Moody wrote to John Farwell on June 30 stating, “I began here one week ago yesterday (Sunday)” which would make the first service on Sunday, June 22. Other sources confirm June 22 as the beginning of the meetings.

The notice Sankey recalled being asked to write out seems inaccurate in the way it lists meetings for an entire week at the Independent Chapel. That was apparently not what transpired and could be another example of Sankey’s fuzzy memory when writing his autobiography decades later.

The schedule of meetings seems to have been: Sunday, June 22—morning meeting at Salem Chapel with Sunday School workers; afternoon meeting at Corn Exchange; (first) evening meeting (Sunday, 22nd) at Wesley Independent Chapel on Priory Street; Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday at Lendal Chapel; Wednesday, back at Wesley Chapel. Sunday June 29 involved the Baptist Chapel on Priory St. at 10:30AM; Lendal Chapel and Corn Exchange later that day. There could have been some meetings at New Street Chapel.

4. Accounts of the Corn Exchange meetings are hard to interpret. On June 28 (6 days after the event), the *Yorkshire Gazette* and *York Herald* reported, “an attentive audience filled the Corn Exchange.” Bennett supposedly reported in *The Christian* of 10 July 1873, that on the first day of meetings (June 22), Moody preached “in the Corn Exchange, to about a thousand people.” Will R. Moody, in his father’s biography, page 161, simply repeated that claim. And John Pollock, who corrected other errors in the Moody-Sankey narrative, recounted, “Some eight hundred people waited in the Corn Exchange, which could hold more,” 123.

Even if one accepts the lower figure of 800 reported by Pollock, such numbers appear preposterous. This meeting occurred on the first day, before any advertising had been disseminated. And even if the evangelists had been giving out enticements such as free meals or prizes of some kind—of which there is no record—a massive crowd of 1000 could not have been gathered,

nor managed, in that short time. In addition, that evening's service in the Wesley Independent Chapel should have enjoyed a healthy attendance, resulting from at least a certain percentage of repeat attenders. But that simply wasn't the case. With the exception of the Corn Exchange meetings, overall attendance was characterized as being modest.

While various explanations are possible, the most likely seems a case of error, such as a typo—perhaps one “hundred” rather than one “thousand” (more likely 10) filling a small room in the Corn Exchange. Unfortunately, successive accounts uncritically repeated the error, which makes no sense on any level.

5. Sankey, *My Life*, 43. It's possible—although not probable—Moody and Sankey brought along song collections (likely the compact words-only editions) to sell at their meetings, such as Philip Phillips, *Hallowed Songs: Newly Revised* (Cincinnati: Hitchcock and Walden, 1870), with HURSLEY tune at page 269 (No. 238). It seems unlikely the hosting venues would have had song collections on hand to sell. *Hallowed Songs* could have been one of about three editions (Hymn Edition [words only], Melody Edition, and Harmonized Edition) of this title, which Sankey recorded using in his early Chicago days: “we sang from ‘Hallowed Songs:’” quoted in D.W. Whittle, *Memoirs of Philip P. Bliss* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1877), 168. Yet, other quotes from Sankey make it seem highly unlikely that the evangelists carried with them quantities of hymnbooks. See Sankey, *My Life*, 37, where he said the only thing he took with him to England was “my Bagster Bible and my ‘musical scrapbook.’” Will R. Moody, in his 1930 rewrite of his father's biography, *D.L. Moody* (New York: MacMillan, 1930), 198, strongly implies that a supply of *Hallowed Songs* was left over from Phillips' earlier tour and was available for the revival services.
6. Sankey, *My Life*, 46–47.
7. For a full accounting of the tune's history, with illustrations, see section VIII of Chris Fenner, “Te Deum laudamus,” *Hymnology Archive* (26 October 2018, rev. 23 June 2023), <https://www.hymnologyarchive.com/te-deum-laudamus>
8. P.H. Ditchfield, “Pulpits,” *Christian Art: An Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (August 1908), 212.
9. Over the course of his ministry, Sankey made so many trips—to England, the European continent, and across the U.S.—it seems evident that most of the time, he relied on borrowed instruments. The humorous example of the hastily borrowed and wrecked organ in Edinburgh (chapter 9) demonstrates this. Sankey sometimes sang in three different locations each evening, also demonstrating his dependence on borrowed instruments. Sankey doesn't seem to claim anywhere that he took an organ with him. *The Christian for*

7 July 1875, 10, recorded how, in meetings for Eton College students, a little pump organ had been transported to Windsor from London.

Other sources seem to suggest he used his own instrument. In *Best Thoughts and Descriptions of D.L. Moody: The Work of Moody and Sankey as Evangelists* (authorship credited to Abbie Clemens Morrow) (New York: N. Tibbals and Sons, 1876), 29, it is asserted, “Mr. Moody with his Bible, and Mr. Sankey with his music-book and organ, [arrived] in Liverpool.” W.H. Daniels, in *D.L. Moody and His Work*, 244, reported, “His lodgings were in the very centre of business, and sometimes, when he would sit down to his harmonium, and sing and play for the friends.” However, Daniels could have been simply referring to an instrument made available to Sankey at his lodging. A number of exhibits housing Sankey memorabilia claim to have an (or “the”) organ on which he played (especially “The Ninety and Nine”). Considering the thousands of services for which he sang and played during a career of over two decades, there must have been thousands of “Sankey” organs!

10. “Young Men’s Christian Association,” *York Herald*, 28 June 1873, 9.
11. W.H. Daniels, *D.L. Moody and His Work* (Hartford, CT: American Publishing Co., 1876), 238.
12. R.C. Morgan, *The Life of Richard Weaver, the Converted Collier* (London: Morgan and Chase, 1861), 92–94.
13. Richard Weaver, compiler, *Richard Weaver’s Hymn Book* (London: Morgan and Chase, n.d.), No. 10 (p. 12).
14. James Paterson, *Richard Weaver’s Life Story* (London: Morgan and Scott, n. d.), 148.
15. Geo. E. Morgan, *Mighty Days of Revival: R.C. Morgan, His Life and Times* (London: Morgan and Scott, 1908), 174, fn.
16. John Kent, *Holding the Fort: Studies in Victorian Revivalism* (London: Epworth Press, 1978), 106, quoting *The Revival*, 1 September 1860. *The Revival* was the original name for R.C. Morgan’s religious newspaper, later changed to *The Christian*. The hymn was written by Primitive Methodist minister Richard Jukes.
17. *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 25 January 1875, 5. The four Moodys stayed with a Dr. Kitching.
18. Pollock, *Moody*, 123–24.
19. Sankey, *My Life*, 40–41.
20. Sankey, *My Life*, 41.
21. Sankey, *My Life*, 43.

22. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 170.
23. Will R. Moody, *D.L. Moody* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1930), 198. This is a highly rewritten biography of his father, almost completely excluding any mention of Sankey's partnership or contribution to Moody's success.
24. Sankey, *My Life*, 43.
25. On this point, the evidence becomes clouded. Sankey, *My Life*, 43, states he "wrote them again" (a second time) but they turned him down. However, the chronology between his requests (likely late June) and his next steps (possibly mid-July) simply doesn't allow time for an extended correspondence carried by steamers that took ten days to cross the ocean (one way), plus the normal lag in making business decisions (likely requiring two months' time). It's possible Sankey telegraphed the publishers, but he claims to have written them. In addition, the reason the publisher supposedly gave for turning him down—being Phillips was on the West coast and they couldn't grant the request without his permission—leads one to ask why they couldn't simply telegraph him? Perhaps this is another point at which Sankey's memory didn't serve him well.
 

Will R. Moody, who doesn't even acknowledge Sankey in the entire narrative related to finding an alternate solution, provided a rather bizarre story about Moody attempting to get Phillips' publisher to print a new edition and being told they didn't want any more of those "damn Yankee songs." Will R. Moody, *D.L. Moody* (1930), 198.

In hindsight, it is possible, as the origin of *Sacred Songs and Solos* was rehashed over time, Phillips' publishers became the bogeyman of the story, furnishing dramatic tension.
26. Daniels, *Moody and His Work*, 244.
27. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 143–44.
28. Emma Moody's Diary for July 1873. Moody Bible Institute Archives.
29. Pollock, *Moody*, 125.
30. From a file in the Emma Moody Powell papers, Moody Museum, Northfield, MA (now part of Moody Center). It's uncertain precisely what this term entailed, as there were many kinds of "tea" and time for the main meal was slowly shifting from dinner—at mid-day—to later in the evening. Eating habits varied greatly among the social classes and geographic areas of the country.
31. Pollock, *Moody*, 125.
32. Sankey, *My Life*, 44. This was apparently the city of Scarborough on the northeastern coast, about 40 miles away. See *Pittsburgh Daily Commercial*, 6 August 1873, 2.

33. Sankey, *My Life*, 45–46.
34. Daniels, *Moody and His Work*, 243, lists 250 conversions.
35. Pollock, *Moody*, 124.
36. Sankey, *My Life*, 45–46. The term “singing the gospel” was actually used earlier in a report from York by Bennett, published in *The Christian* of 10 July 1873. “Mr. Moody preaches the gospel and Mr. Sankey sings it.” Quoted in Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 162. However, Rev. Rees of Sunderland is usually given the credit for coining that phrase. Moody biographer Pollock, 125, explained how the highly conservative Rees had “neatly dodged local prejudice” by employing the term “singing the gospel,” implying that solo singing was within the bounds of acceptable evangelism.
37. Daniel Whittle, *Memoirs of Philip P. Bliss* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1877), 168–169. Although Sankey later includes this quote in his 1906 autobiography, Whittle’s *Memoirs* contains a letter from Sankey in February of 1877 with this exact material—nearly 30 years earlier.
38. Sankey, *My Life*, 50.
39. Morgan, with his partner, Robert Scott (the company was Morgan and Scott) was highly experienced with publishing hymn-related material, including *The Revival Hymnbook* from earlier in 1859. Also see *Heart Melodies*, *Hymns of Grace and Glory*, and *Songs of Love and Mercy*. Morgan, 58–59.
40. Sankey, *My Life*, 48. This is Sankey’s description of how the famous collection came to be. One generation later, R.C. Morgan’s son, George E., who wrote a biography of his father, simply reprinted Sankey’s description when discussing Ira’s interaction with his father: George Morgan, *Morgan, His Life and Times*, 175.

In Will R. Moody’s *Life of Moody* (1900), 170, he wrote, “As the requests for the publication of the hymns continued, Mr. Moody determined to publish the hymns on his own responsibility, and arranged with Messrs. Morgan and Scott to issue a pamphlet of sixteen pages, personally guaranteeing the cost of the plates”—seeming to give Moody, rather than Sankey, any credit for the publication.

In Will Moody’s updated version of his father’s biography in 1930, he took an astonishing approach. Whereas in his 1900 biography, he entitled Chapter VII “Birth of the ‘Moody-Sankey Hymn-book’” (the title by which it was popularly known), in his 1930 treatment (Chapter XXX, pp. 198–209), he never referred to that name nor any other reference to Ira’s contribution. He used the proper title, *Sacred Songs and Solos*, but conveniently left off the rest of it, “as Sung by Ira Sankey.” He also said Moody alone offered to fund the collection—when no one else would—putting up all the money he

had—\$1,600—which seems unbelievable considering how Moody had just borrowed money (\$500) from Farwell for the trip two months earlier! This would have been an astronomical amount for someone receiving no regular salary and living off the goodness of benefactors. He had no savings.

Moody's other son, Paul (along with A.P. Fitt), wrote a biography, *The Shorter Life of D.L. Moody* (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1900), in which he stated, "Standing absolutely alone, and never flinching, Mr. Moody was obliged to print at his own risk and expense. He invested all the money he had left (about one hundred dollars) in a sixteen-page pamphlet of words and music, compiled by Mr. Sankey, and sold at sixpence each," 73. This seems closer to what probably happened.

41. There doesn't seem to be a complete list of the songs Sankey had compiled in his scrapbook anywhere. However, various authors include titles in Sankey's makeshift collection. Sixteen of these are included in *The Great Redemption: or Gospel Light under the Labors of Moody and Sankey* (New York: National Library Association, 1888), 33–34. Nine of the titles are by women poets, a significant shift from the male-oriented hymn collections of the day.
42. Sankey, *My Life*, 48. If *Hallowed Songs* had been an inexpensive, words-only edition, it makes sense the revivalists would have dropped it when another words-only, inexpensive edition (of *Sacred Songs and Solos*) came along. See Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 171. It's unclear why a more expensive (sixpence), words-and-music edition preceded the cheaper (twopence) words-only edition, but that was what apparently happened.

Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 170–171, made a somewhat puzzling observation about *Sacred Songs and Solos*, saying, "For several months it was used in the services as a solo-book, in connection with the larger book originally adopted."

43. If indeed Moody had self-published *The North-Western Hymn Book* back in Chicago in 1868 [see chapter 6], it seems possible he might have also taken on the responsibility for this project. There seems to be no information about any terms with Morgan and Scott to publish the modest pamphlet. Perhaps it was no more than a gentleman's agreement in the beginning stages, and no financial records ever existed.
44. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 171. Yet, there must have been some kind of understanding on the part of Morgan and Scott publishers in which Moody and Sankey might receive some benefit from any profits, as Moody later—at a meeting of prospective London revival supporters (see Chapter 11)—publicly promised to renounce any further money coming to them from the sale of hymn books that had apparently been supporting them, in part, up to that time.



45. Bruce J. Evensen, *God's Man for the Gilded Age* (Oxford: University Press, 2003), 20, quoting *Sunderland Times*, 22 July 1873, 2.
46. Charles Ludwig, *Sankey Still Sings* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1947), 77.
47. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 137–140. Various authors have suggested that Moody changed the content of his preaching after Moorehouse's appearance, focusing on God's love. Others have analyzed his sermons before and after and disputed that interpretation. Moody's son, Will, seems to give this experience significant weight. Stanley Gundry, *Love Them In: The Proclamation Theology of D.L. Moody* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976) makes this a central issue. This book has been reprinted under various titles.
48. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 164.
49. Sankey, *My Life*, 48. Pollock, 127, gives the date as September 16, which would have put the evangelists in Newcastle—not Sunderland, as Sankey recalled. That date probably resulted from Will R Moody's statement in *Life of Moody* (1900), 171, in which the collection's first advertisement in *The Christian* appeared on September 16. If that date was the first advertisement, then it is likely close to the date of the collection's initial release, as Morgan and Scott published both *The Christian* and *Sacred Songs and Solos*, and they would logically have coordinated both the songbook's release and the advertisement. Russell Sanjek, *American Popular Music and Its Business: The First Four Hundred Years*, Vol 2: 1790–1909 (Oxford: University Press, 1988), 249, cites 19 September 1873, as the first advertisement.
50. Sankey, *My Life*, 51.
51. Words and music by P.P. Bliss, "Pull for the Shore" ("Light in the darkness"), *Gospel Hymns Complete*, No. 51.
52. Daniels, *Moody and His Work*, 250.
53. Daniels, *Moody and His Work*, 248.
54. Evenson, *God's Man*, 21.
55. Sankey, *My Life*, 52–53.
56. Daniels, *Moody and His Work*, 264.
57. Evenson, *God's Man*, 23.
58. *The Christian*, Thursday, 4 March 1875, 12.
59. *The Christian*, Thursday, 4 March 1875, 13.
60. *The Christian*, Thursday, 4 March 1875, 12. Moody was sometimes given credit for later adding a fourth page of gold—for streets of gold. And last-

ly, a green page—for growth in the Christian life—completing the nemonic device. Child Evangelism Fellowship began printing the books with instructions in 1939 and a catchy tune, which began, “My heart was [black] dark with sin, until the Savior came in”; this can still be remembered and sung by many of those who attended Bible School in their youth.

61. Emma Moody Powell, *Heavenly Destiny: The Life Story of Mrs. D.L. Moody* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1943), 77.
62. Sanjek, 249. Additional reports of subscriptions for *The Christian* being sent to the mass of ministers—perhaps on different occasions—abound.
63. Joe M. Richardson, *A History of Fisk University, 1865–1946* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1980), 25–35. Other struggling black schools noted Fisk’s financial success and began touring their own musical ensembles to great success. This included the Hampton Singers directed by Thomas P. Fenner from Hampton Institute (1873) and, in the early 20th century, the Tuskegee Institute Singers (later Quartette), which made recordings.
64. Joe M. Richardson, *History of Fisk*, 34.
65. Emma Moody’s diary; Gustavus D. Pike, *The Singing Campaign for Ten Thousand Pounds or, The Jubilee Singers in Great Britain* (New York: American Missionary Society Association, 1875), 151.
66. Pike, *Singing Campaign*, 152–53.
67. Sankey, *My Life*, 54–56.
68. Evenson, *God’s Man*, 21, quoting *The Christian*, 19 February 1874, 8.



No. 11.

# Hold the Fort.

"That which ye have, hold fast till I come."—REV. 2:25.

P. P. BLISS.

P. P. BLISS, by per.



1. Ho! my com-rades, see the sig-nal Wav-ing in the sky!



Re-in-force-ments now ap-pear-ing, Vic-to-ry is nigh!

## CHORUS.



"Hold the fort, for I am com-ing," Je-sus sig-nals still,



Wave the an-swer back to Heav-en,—"By Thy grace we will."

- 2 See the mighty host advancing,  
Satan leading on:  
Mighty men around us falling,  
Courage almost gone.—*Cho.*
- 3 See the glorious banner waving,  
Hear the bugle blow;

- In our Leader's name we'll triumph  
Over every foe.—*Cho.*
- 4 Fierce and long the battle rages,  
But our Help is near;  
Onward comes our Great Commander,  
Cheer, my comrades, cheer!—*Cho.*

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## Chapter 9

### The Ninety and Nine

1873–1874

*Ho! my comrades, see the signal Waving in the sky!  
Reinforcements now appearing, Victory is nigh!*

*“Hold the fort, for I am coming,” Jesus signals still,  
Wave the answer back to Heaven,—“By Thy grace we will.”*

*See the mighty host advancing, Satan leading on:  
Mighty men around us falling, Courage almost gone.*

*Fierce and long the battle rages, But our Help is near;  
Onward comes our Great Commander, Cheer, my comrades, cheer!*

WHILE MOODY AND SANKEY were praying for deliverance from “the devil and ministers,” their financial backers in Chicago were urgently beseeching God to stay the growing plague of financial ruin sweeping the United States. Cycles of boom and bust had always characterized the unfettered industrial capitalism of the Gilded Age, and the latest cycle seemed no different. But a tipping point occurred on September 18, 1873, when the giant Philadelphia investment banking firm, Jay Cooke and Company—which had handled most of the government’s wartime loans—declared bankruptcy after defaulting on its Northern Pacific Railway bonds, issued to help build a second transcontinental railroad.

After the Civil War, railroad expansion had become a mania, with 35,000 miles of track being laid. Railroads were the nation’s largest employer after agriculture, and financial institutions of all sorts competed to leverage themselves in anticipation of handsome returns. But as both banks and railroads—sixty-six of them in the first week—failed, Wall Street ceased trading for ten days on September 20. The Panic of 1873 had begun. Although the impact on Moody and Sankey’s meetings in England was limited, that was not the case back in Chicago. Many of those who had pledged funds to help rebuild Farwell Hall (the YMCA building) and Moody’s Illinois Street

Church after the devastating Chicago fire, had to default, and work came to a halt. With only one storey completed on the church, a temporary roof was improvised and services continued.<sup>2</sup>

There was certainly no halt to the work of Moody and Sankey, however. After twenty-two weeks of demanding labor in northern England, the pair headed across the border to Scotland. They had responded to a petition from ministers and notable laymen after an audition, of sorts, they had been unaware of. It seems that a Reverend John Kelman from the port of Leith in Edinburgh had been observing the meetings for ten days to size them up and ascertain whether they might comport with the more stringent demands of reformer John Knox's Presbyterian Church of Scotland, a body that not only retained its old beliefs but also its historic worship practices.

Although the Scots had been unified in their worship practices, that didn't mean they were unified in their church government. In 1843, the Free Church of Scotland broke away from the Church of Scotland over its entanglement with the state, and ever since the "Disruption," there had been a bitter, nationwide religious gulf.

Scotland had only been part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland since 1706, when the Acts of Union had joined the two long-standing belligerents. But that did not bring Scotland's religious beliefs and practices into line with the Church of England, with which it harbored long and bitter divisions stretching back to 1637. In that year, King Charles I and Anglican Bishop Laud sought to exert more control over the Scots Presbyterians who practiced, the king felt, a form of church government fostering too much independence. They imposed on the Scots the *Book of Common Prayer* (popularly called "Laud's liturgy"), with its fixed forms and prayers, including an approach to Communion that seemed more like the Roman Catholic mass; there were also readings from the Apocrypha and the celebration of saints' days—all elements that Scots had cast off in the Reformation a century earlier.

"Laud's liturgy" was immediately and violently rejected. The most famous tale is that of parishioner Jenny Geddes, who, during a church service at St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh, supposedly flung a chair at the Bishop for using the detested *Book of Common Prayer*. Tempers continued to flare on all sides, and when Walter Whitford, Bishop of Brechin, was threatened for supporting the king's position, he preached from the pulpit with two loaded pistols as his family and servants stood by with additional firepower! While a book of church order and the finer points of church polity (govern-



ment) might seem like foolishly negligible issues to those outside the fold, they were literally fighting words between the two countries.

In accepting an invitation from a body of ministers representing the official Church of Scotland—rather than a ragtag group of dissenting ministers as he had in England—Moody believed he had solved the greatest hindrance to some previous campaigns—lack of pastoral support. By now he had also developed an efficient organization to get the meetings off to a successful start. That included a steady stream of promotion and reporting in advance from *The Christian*, interest from the local secular press, and support from local ministers who encouraged their people to attend the meetings. There was also the use of placards, signs, and handbills.

Whereas Moody and Sankey had been disappointed to find no welcoming committee greeting them on their arrival in England back in June, they now sneaked into Edinburgh unannounced. They made arrangements for that first night at separate hotels, with Sankey finding lodging near the famous Gothic-looking Walter Scott monument, boasting sixty-eight stone figures associated with the “Wizard of the North.”

After getting settled, Ira decided on a stroll down the busy street, only to be accosted by a hand on his shoulder—“Ah, Mr. Sankey, is this you? When did you arrive, and where is Mr. Moody?” Sankey replied, then inquired about the identity of his interrogator. “The chairman of your committee. And I’ve been waiting for days to hear when you would arrive. You’re not to be stopping at a public hotel when there are a hundred homes ready to receive you.”<sup>3</sup> Of course, the gentleman had no way of knowing that Sankey and his wife, Fanny, would have rather spent a quiet night in a hotel than entertaining a host with polite chit-chat till all hours of the morning.

Nevertheless, they were whisked off to 52 Queen Street, the large townhouse of Alexander Russell Simpson, Professor of Midwifery at the University of Edinburgh.<sup>4</sup> As inventor of the action-traction forceps (obstetric forceps), he was later elected president of the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh and was knighted by King Edward VII in 1906. He was a strong Temperance supporter, a leading member of the United Free Church of Scotland, and helped run the Carrubbers Close Mission, which met in the former Atheist Meeting House.<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Simpson—Margaret Stewart Barbour—was also an enthusiastic supporter of evangelical causes and was a writer of devotional literature. The Sankeys found her to be not only a delightful hostess but also an important chronicler of Ira’s singing.

Once Moody's whereabouts had been ascertained, he was carried away to 9 Palmerston Road and the handsome new brownstone home of William G. Blaikie,<sup>6</sup> professor of apologetics at Edinburgh's New College. He was very much in line with Moody's thinking about advertising and promoting the meetings, being editor of the *Sunday Magazine*. Blaikie also cherished a belief that Moody could help bridge the divide between the warring factions of the various Protestant sects.

Meetings began on Sunday, November 23, 1873, in the densely-packed Music Hall, with people crowding into the lobbies, stairs, and entrance passages. Some two thousand inquirers were turned away. Perhaps their disappointment was salved upon hearing how Moody would not be preaching that evening, as he was suffering from a notorious English scourge, the common cold.<sup>7</sup> Sankey was now the star attraction. But the pressure was particularly intense, as the Scots were committed to singing only the words of Scripture.

Since the days of the English Reformation under Henry VIII, the Reformed wing of Protestantism—following the teachings of John Calvin—had been committed to singing only the Scriptures in public worship (“God’s words for God’s praise”), primarily the words of the Psalms translated into English poetry. This practice became known as psalmody and was followed by almost all English-speaking Christians, whether Church of England, Puritan reformers, or dissenting groups such as the Pilgrims. And that applied to both sides of the Atlantic, where psalmody became the universal practice of English Protestants for hundreds of years. It included the singing of Psalms from collections called psalters, mostly consisting of words-only texts—with some set to simple tunes—all without instrumental accompaniment.

In many places, the practice had deteriorated into quite abominable congregational singing, and, by the mid-eighteenth century, various movements were afoot to address its pathetic status. Over the next half-century, both man-made devotional poetry—known as “hymns of human composure” by the likes of Isaac Watts—and the use of instruments to accompany singing became accepted in America and England—but not in Scotland! After some tinkering with Francis Rous’ original efforts, and incorporating some other unofficial attempts, the Scottish National Assembly decreed, as of May 1, 1650, only the Scottish Psalter, *The Psalms of David in Meeter*, could be employed in Scottish churches. By 1873, it had faithfully delivered

over two hundred years of Scottish worship; it was part of the national DNA, and not to be trifled with.<sup>8</sup>

It was with this awareness that Ira faced those stolid believers, who were waiting for the American's novel offerings. Sankey played it safe and announced the One Hundredth Psalm as the opening hymn, something he had often used in other services. It was the beloved setting of Psalm 100 coupled with a familiar tune all could heartily sing. Then came Scripture reading and prayer, and it was Ira's turn again. For many folks, solo singing was considered inappropriate in church, tending to focus on the singer, rather than God. So Ira began with one strike against him. In addition, he was accompanying himself on a musical instrument, often disparagingly referred to as a "kist o'whistles," considered unbiblical because instruments were not found in the New Testament Church, and because organs in particular carried ritualistic (Roman Catholic) overtones. Two strikes.

Sankey also risked a third strike by singing words other than Scripture when offering "Jesus of Nazareth Passeth By." The poem was by Emma Campbell, who had heard a message on Luke 18:37 about a blind beggar sensing a commotion and asking the crowd around him what was happening. It was a song Ira had learned from Philip Phillips' *Hallowed Songs*, the collection they had been using in the earlier meetings. It was too late to change his mind; Ira took a deep breath, played a short introduction in the key of G and began:

*What means this eager, anxious throng,  
Which moves with busy haste along,  
These wondrous gatherings day by day?  
What means this strange commotion pray?  
In accents hush'd the throng reply:  
"Jesus of Nazareth passeth by."  
In accents hush'd the throng reply:  
"Jesus of Nazareth passeth by."*

Ira, the consummate storyteller, paused; there was intense silence. Then he continued to describe the scene in a dramatic fashion few had ever heard musically.

*Who is this Jesus, why should He  
The city move so mightily?  
A passing stranger, has He skill  
To move the multitude at will;*

*Again the stirring notes reply:  
 “Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.”  
 Again the stirring notes reply:  
 “Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.”*

Sankey was so invested in the meaning of his texts that he often “bent” or distorted the notated rhythms of the melody, making them subordinate to the words. This was closer to the technique of *rubato* singing—literally “to rob”—in which the performer does not sing on the regular beat, produced by the accompaniment, but falls behind, then catches up later; a push-and-pull effect that would likely have been more familiar to music-hall singers. And while he sang with an earnestness that impressed even his skeptics, there must have been a few in his hearing who found the words, “A passing stranger, has He skill to move the multitude at will?” a bit prophetic—or perhaps ironic.

The melody was a simple step-wise tune in 6/8 meter with an even simpler harmony. It had six stanzas and was full of words, working much better as a solo than a congregational song. Then, after five stanzas, all concluding with “Jesus of Nazareth passeth by,” the final one included an unexpected play on words:

*But if you still this call refuse,  
 And all His wondrous love abuse,  
 Soon will He sadly from you turn,  
 Your bitter prayer for pardon spurn,  
 “Too late! Too late!” will be the cry—  
 “Jesus of Nazareth has passed by.”  
 “Jesus of Nazareth has passed by.”*

With that sobering warning, Ira concluded. Silence—only a hush, as his listeners sat wondering if Jesus had passed them by. Sankey was definitely “singing the Gospel” there in Scotland.

The Reverend Dr. J.H. Wilson preached a powerful message in Moody’s stead and closed with prayer. Ira was requested to sing “Hold the Fort,” a recent song by Philip Bliss, which also had a narrative element to it. But unlike the lyrical setting of the story from Luke in “Jesus of Nazareth Passeth By,” “Hold the Fort” was a non-biblical, rip-roaring, musical call to arms with a nearly contagious chorus. Sankey wisely spread the contagion around by requesting the congregation to join him on a refrain that was almost impossible to resist, and the supposedly stuffy Scots responded with enthusiasm.

“Hold the Fort!” was one of the new songs responsible for winning over the skeptics. When Sankey hastily cut out the twenty-three songs from his scrapbook and sent them off to be published months earlier, “Hold the Fort!” was one of those selections. By the time he got to Scotland, it was already popular and was almost his theme song, being requested over and over. In fact, the request to sing it that night revealed how its popularity had preceded Sankey himself. It was one of those exceedingly optimistic and buoyant melodies that skipped along with a martial air of dotted eighth and sixteenth notes, boasting a chorus imitating exuberant trumpet calls and fanfares.

Both the text and music had been penned by popular religious music’s most talented young creator, Philip P. Bliss, Moody’s second choice—after Philip Phillips—to accompany him on this journey. He was inspired to devise it upon hearing his co-laborer, evangelist and Civil War veteran “Major” Daniel W. Whittle, tell the story of the October 1864 Battle of Altoona Pass in Georgia, where a vital outpost of rations was positioned to sustain General Sherman’s Union forces stationed nearby. When a large rebel force attacked the fort, it was greatly outnumbered and suffered devastating casualties, including the death of its commander. But just as the beleaguered soldiers were about to surrender, they spied a signal flag atop nearby Kennesaw Mountain directing them to “Hold the fort; I am coming. W.T. Sherman.” At the cost of half their men, they obeyed orders and the rations were saved. After hearing the story, Bliss wrote the song and it became his most famous creation during the next decade. Although he told Sankey he had written better songs and hoped to be remembered for them, his grave stone would eventually list “P.P. Bliss, Author of ‘Hold the Fort.’”<sup>9</sup>

On offering an invitation to host meetings in a town, the sponsoring committee usually agreed to do several things. These involved making arrangements for lodging, appropriate advertising, and organizing the various venues needed for a variety of meetings, such as prayer, Bible reading/study, inquiry rooms, main meetings, and overflow areas. Covering financial expenses was also expected.

By the time Moody and Sankey descended on Edinburgh, the procedure should have been nearly perfected, but there were still a few items left to chance. One surprising omission was ensuring the committee procured a musical instrument for each venue. And in a town where that meant three or four different places each day, the oversight revealed itself very quickly.

It was only the second night, with meetings scheduled in Barclay Free Church, when anyone realized, an hour before the service, there was no instrument for Sankey to accompany his solos. Quickly the committee located one nearby and procured a wagon to fetch it, hoping to install it in the church after Moody's sermon—his voice had recovered—so Ira could sing the closing solo. Unfortunately, the wagon driver possessed more zeal than skill and overturned the conveyance upon approaching the church, scattering pieces everywhere. As Sankey humorously described it, "The 'kist' was in a sadly demoralized condition, and its appearance now strangely suggestive of its Scotch name. The outcome of the disaster was that Mr. Moody had to conduct the second meeting alone, as Ira had led the first alone."<sup>10</sup>

Another Sankey comment about the driver, calling him a "Jehu," reflects both Ira's level of biblical literacy as well as the degree to which biblical language and references were part of everyday life during the Victorian era.<sup>11</sup> 2 Kings 9:20 records, "the driving is like the driving of Jehu, the son of Nimshi, for he drives furiously!"<sup>12</sup> A sense of humor was definitely an asset in such trying situations.

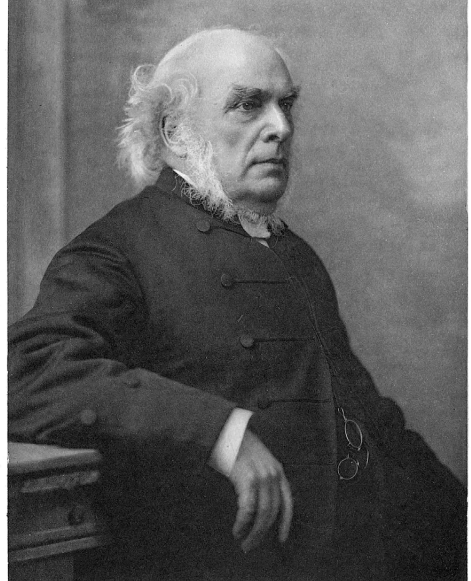
Of course, there was always some level of opposition to two American evangelists coming all the way across the sea to convert the Scots, and to the non-traditional methods involved in both the preaching and the singing. On one occasion, after Ira had just begun to sing, a shrill voice rang out from the balcony where a woman, bolting for the door, cried "Let me oot! let me oot! What would John Knox think of the like of yon?" Ira soldiered on, but it was hard to stay focused, worrying a relative of hers might pop up at any moment. After his solo, he immediately left the service and crossed the street to sing for an overflow crowd. But no sooner had he begun than the same shrill voice uttered, "Let me oot! Let me oot! What would John Knox think of the like of yon?"<sup>13</sup> The next time Ira began to sing, he was more than a little distracted!

Anonymous letters and pamphlets also circulated, accusing the pair of "spasmodic convulsions," "man-made revivals," "superficial experience," "Arminianism," and "unscriptural inventions."<sup>14</sup> At times, Moody responded to his critics, requesting local pastors or even his Chicago financial backers to write letters vouching for his theology or finances. But in the long run, his antagonists made little impact.

By the third evening, Moody and Sankey were finally together on the same stage. Sankey was still nervous as he was aware of the widespread and



negative feelings about the inappropriateness of solo singing. But his dread only increased when he saw the esteemed Dr. Horatius Bonar, pastor of Chalmers Memorial Church, seated near the pulpit. “Of all the men in Scotland, he was the one man concerning whose decision I was most solicitous. He was, indeed, my ideal hymn-writer, the prince among hymnists of his day and generation. And yet he would not sing one of his own beautiful hymns in his own congregation . . . because he ministered in a church that believed in the use of the Psalms only.”<sup>15</sup>



Horatius Bonar, *Hymns by Horatius Bonar* (1904)

Fearing his solo might be interpreted as simply entertainment, Sankey requested the congregation join him in prayer before he sang. He often began with a prayer or story, attempting to set a tone that focused on the message, rather than on his delivery, so the song would have the greatest spiritual impact. “In the prayer my anxiety was relieved. Believing and rejoicing in the glorious truth contained in the song, I sang it [‘Free from the law . . . once for all’] through to the end.” At the meeting’s close, Dr. Bonar turned toward Ira with a radiant face and exclaimed, “Well, Mr. Sankey, you sang the gospel to-night.”<sup>16</sup> And with that affirmation, Ira felt warranted to proceed with confidence from that point forward.

Sankey’s confidence was apparently well-founded, as Professor Blaikie reported in the *Edinburgh Daily Review*: “It is almost amusing to observe how entirely the latent distrust of Mr. Sankey’s ‘kist o’ whistles’ has disappeared.” But that support wasn’t limited to Sankey alone, for the meetings were becoming a form of “civic spectacle” with Moody as a subject that sold newspapers. *The British Weekly* found the meetings “difficult to ignore” while the *Daily Review* editorialized how the meetings were uniting the nation’s churches, and the *Family Treasury* magazine observed how Moody “is on fire himself and kindles those he comes in contact with.” It seems clear that Moody, Sankey, and the sponsoring committee had been faithful in providing a steady stream of reports to various media.<sup>17</sup>

Unlike the meetings in York, Sunderland, and Newcastle—which began with limited interest and slowly grew in attendance—those in Edinburgh opened at full tilt. The meetings generally rotated between three churches and the Music Hall with hundreds being turned away at each location. Sometimes this caused noticeable disappointment and no little rowdiness. By the second Sunday, one week into their meetings, three different churches were scheduled for the evening service: Barclay at 6:00PM, Viewforth at 7:00PM, and Fountainbridge at 8:00PM. To facilitate this tightly choreographed timetable, a horse and carriage were actually standing by to whisk the evangelists from one overcrowded location to the next.<sup>18</sup>

Then there were the daily prayer and Bible-reading services, not to mention meetings designed for special interests such as Christian workers, women, men, and children. What could initially appear to have been Moody's and Sankey's ability to seem omnipresent for a punishing daily schedule can be partially explained by their effective use of the best supporting preachers to lead area meetings. The city—and the nation—was certainly full of capable and enthusiastic ministers who had been promoting the idea of revival for years. Many could recall the famed Scottish Revival of 1859–60—led by Robert Weaver, Brownlow North, Reginald Radcliffe, and Edward Payson Hammond—and were working for its return.

While such folks were thoroughly orthodox in their theological beliefs, they were also open to new approaches to worship that didn't require long, dry, expository sermons and the limitations of singing only the Psalms. There was clearly a large constituency of the faithful, longing for a fresh wind from the Holy Spirit. When Moody and Sankey sailed in on that breeze, it wasn't difficult to set their courses in the same direction. That also meant most local pastors were more than ready to answer Moody's request to fill a pulpit at the various meetings, sometimes consisting of half-a-dozen services at once, spread around the city. This seemed to be God's time of special blessing, perhaps in spite of the novel ways it was being manifest.

Those blessings weren't just limited to the large evening meetings, but were also evident in the daily prayer sessions. Five hundred persons showed up the first day, and by the end of the first week attendance had outgrown Queen Street Hall. The larger and more centrally-located Free Church Assembly Hall was commandeered and attendance exceeded one thousand. Services seemed spontaneous, with the singing of a Psalm or hymn, the reading of submitted prayer requests, followed by prayer, and Moody com-

menting on a Scripture passage. The second half of the meeting consisted of a time when anyone could speak or pray or call for a hymn.

To a great extent, the novel Inquiry Meetings following the evening services were the most accurate gauge for reflecting the spiritual effectiveness of the revival. For these were not intended for the religiously curious who had come to see the famous evangelist or just to hear Sankey's popular songs, they were for those who had been moved by the Holy Spirit to consider a radical change in their lives. As the Reverend Andrew Thomson of the Broughton Place United Presbyterian Church observed,

I was much struck by the variety among the inquirers. There were present from the old man of seventy-five to the youth of eleven, soldiers from the castle, students from the university, the backsliding, the intemperate, the skeptic, the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, and in how many cases were the wounded healed and the burdened eased.<sup>19</sup>

Resulting from the huge number of inquirers who attended the meetings, there was concern about those who counseled them not being qualified to deal with their spiritual needs. To address this, the supporting committee interviewed and issued tickets to those considered competent for the endeavor, a system that worked fairly well.

But there were exceptions to the streamlined process, as reported by Jane (Mrs. Peter) MacKinnon, recalling her attempt to get admission to one of the meetings. As a visitor in town, MacKinnon first inquired about the schedule for that Monday evening. The newspaper reported it as being "for those desiring personal conversation about their souls." Uncertain what that meant, Jane visited a friend, who instructed her to go to the meeting place and locate her husband. Upon doing so, she was ushered to a pew for what she hoped would be instruction about the Inquiry Room. Shortly, Moody entered and gave directions she couldn't hear. She simply followed those in her pew into the Inquiry Room, whereupon Moody turned and asked, "Have you experience?" Surprised, she responded, "A little, not much."

As hundreds of spiritual seekers filled the space, Moody paired inquirers and helpers. "I was left to the last, almost. Perhaps I am not to be allowed to speak to anyone." Then Moody touched her shoulder and directed her to a slightly younger woman.

What a new and powerful experience!—face to face, deliberately set to speak with a woman I had never seen, about her soul. What a solemn experience! An anxious soul, quite unknown to me in all its perplexities, darkness or knowledge, left to me to be guided into the light. I was able to sympathize with her more than I could tell her . . . as there were not many lady-workers, especially of my age.”<sup>20</sup>

As MacKinnon shared the Scripture about Jesus being the slain Lamb of God, she was joined by others who also provided counsel, and the woman went away “with the light of hope on her face.” Subsequently, both women corresponded and met for visits when in town.<sup>21</sup> Moody understood how spiritual conversion was not a singular moment of illumination but a process of being convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit, of understanding through the Scriptures about God’s provision on the cross, of accepting Jesus’ sacrifice on our behalf, then being placed in a community of believers who could nourish and shepherd that experience into a fuller Christian life. The Inquiry Room was a key part of that process.

Christmas was usually a joyous time with family and friends, but Ira and Fanny felt the absence of their children nearly four thousand miles away. For a few moments, they were able to forget the emptiness when, on Christmas day, they were invited to Professor Blaikie’s home—where the Moodys were lodging—for a special tea. It was a large gathering, for it included the Fisk Jubilee Singers, who were also in Edinburgh as part of their fund-raising tour, plus Mr. and Mrs. George L. White, the group’s director and manager.<sup>22</sup>

George White, a Caucasian teacher from the American Missionary Society, exhibited a special love for music, and although possessing no training or exceptional ability, was asked to teach vocal music at the school; he was also appointed its treasurer. His experience with small vocal ensembles at the institution led him to believe that a traveling musical group might be able to alleviate the school’s dire financial situation. In spite of nearly unanimous opposition from all quarters, White’s vision and determination ultimately led to the group’s singular success and saved the struggling institution from ruin.

The tea that day at the Blaikie’s was followed by a retreat to the drawing room, where a convivial crowd spent the evening in boisterous song. For Scottish Christians, especially pious Presbyterians, exuberant celebration was not how they usually observed the Christmas holiday, for historically

they had shunned it as a remnant of papal superstition. In fact, on June 2, 1640, the Estates of Parliament abolished most traditions and activities associated with the Yule season, as it was known. Even though many of those prohibitions were rescinded in succeeding years, Scotland didn't formally recognize Christmas as a public holiday until 1958, and faithful Presbyterians such as Dr. Blaikie and his family would have seen Christmas as more of a secular holiday than a religious one.

To a lesser extent, that was also the case for many American Protestants like the Methodist Sankeys and the African American students from Fisk. With the exception of liturgical groups such as Lutherans, Episcopalians, and Roman Catholics, America's most predominant religious denominations, such as Methodist, Baptist, Congregationalist, and Presbyterian, still harbored suspicions similar to those that had formed the childhood of America's most famous preacher, Henry Ward Beecher, an older contemporary of Sankey.

Of his childhood, Beecher recalled the incident in December of 1820 of trudging through the snow across the village green in Litchfield, Massachusetts, when he encountered a little Episcopalian church, "lit up like a beacon." As he peered inside, he was mesmerized to find "candles blazing at every window, boughs of spruce, pine, and arborvitae twined around the pews, and a choir singing blissfully about the birth of Christ." Beecher had no way to process this experience, as Christmas "was not known in the house of my father [Lyman Beecher], for he was a Puritan of the Puritans. I never heard of Santa Claus when I was a boy. I never hung up a stocking. I feel bad about it to this day."<sup>23</sup>

In Beecher's youth, the tradition of Santa Claus would have been a recent one, with the poem that became "Twas the Night Before Christmas" (originally called "A Visit from Saint Nicholas") only being published in 1823. And many of the traditions that were later central to Christmas, such as decorated trees, resulted from Victorian influences reflecting Prince Albert—Queen Victoria's husband—bringing them to England from Germany in the mid-nineteenth century, and from the immense popularity of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* in 1843.<sup>24</sup>

But that secularizing of Christmas didn't offset the Reformers' fidelity to the Regulative Principle, which mandated that only those things found in the Bible were acceptable in worship or daily life. And nowhere did the Bible say believers were to observe Christ's birth in some special way, and certainly not on December 25.

This principle was evident in the surprisingly few hymns related to Advent or the Incarnation in most hymnals, especially Presbyterian ones. Almost all Christians would have known “While shepherds watched their flocks by night,” a seasonal hymn going all the way back to Tate and Brady’s *Supplement to the New Version of the Psalms* (1700), but that paraphrase from St. Luke was one of the few. Isaac Watts’ setting of Psalm 90, “Joy to the world,” was known and slowly being coupled with a Handel-inspired tune, ANTIOCH, to which it became universally popular, except that text was not originally sung as a Christmas carol looking back to the First Advent, but as a hymn celebrating Christ’s yet-to-come Second Advent, when “No more let sins and sorrows grow, Nor thorns infest the ground” will become a reality.<sup>25</sup>

Many of the selections the Jubilee Singers performed that night were new and fascinating to Ira and were not about Christmas. There was a lot of full-throated singing and raucous laughter. For all involved, it was a delightful occasion and a rare moment of leisure from their hectic schedules. It was also a time when the Whites, Sankeys, and Moodys developed closer bonds, for these folks’ paths were to cross on a regular basis during their travels in Scotland. The group could possibly have presented Ira a new copy of *Jubilee Songs: As Sung by the Jubilee Singers of Fisk University*, published just a couple years earlier.<sup>26</sup>

A week later came the new year. To usher it in, Moody planned a “watch meeting” in the Free Assembly Hall, lasting from 8:00PM until midnight. As attendees came an hour ahead of time to get a place—or rotate with friends in standing room—it meant people would be in the hall for five hours. How to hold their attention was certainly a topic of concern. At precisely 8:00PM, Moody and other ministers ascended the pulpit and announced that anything honoring God was appropriate at any time that evening, whether a testimony, song, or Bible verse.

Fortunately for Ira, he had assistance from the Fisk ensemble, which was still in town. The Jubilee Singers actually spent a good deal of time in the area and often participated in Moody-Sankey meetings when not otherwise engaged. Moody announced his message as the “I Wills” of Christ, and at an appropriate lull, the Jubilee Singers burst forth with “Come, Come to Jesus.” During the course of the evening, Sankey sang “Water of Life,” “Field of Labor,” and led the congregation in Isaac Watts’ “I’m not ashamed to own my Lord” to Lowell Mason’s tune AZMON. During the final hour of prayer, the Jubilee Singers broke the silence with “Steal Away to Jesus.” They also ren-



dered “The Angels Are Hovering Over Us” and “Depth of Mercy Can There Be?” Sankey proclaimed to the assembly, “What a grand all-day meeting we’ll have one day! All will come up. We from our country; you from yours. We must soon part; but, brethren, ’tis true that we’ll meet some day ‘just across the river.’”<sup>27</sup>

Five minutes before midnight, a hush descended upon the assembly, disturbed only by the muffled sounds of revelers outside, as clocks all over the city began chiming the new year—each following its own slightly askew concept of the correct time. Then followed five more minutes of silence until Moody requested the hymn, “Jesus, lover of my soul.” After the benediction, all those assembled began embracing and wishing each other a Happy New Year while a weary Moody and Sankey slipped away unnoticed.<sup>28</sup>

The new year—1874—began with a punishing schedule for Moody, Sankey, and the Jubilee Singers, who were a prominent feature in many of the meetings. On Friday, January 2, they all participated in services at 5:00PM, taking turns in the Free Assembly Hall and the Free High Church, and at 6:00PM in the Established Assembly Hall and Free St. John’s Church; at 8:00PM they ministered in the Grossmarket Corn Exchange, and at 9:30PM in the Free Assembly Hall.<sup>29</sup> Sunday was even more harried with Ira singing at six meetings. Although participation by the Jubilee Singers relieved Sankey of the entire musical responsibility, the physical toll was too much. Exhausted by trying to fill those large halls without the aid of amplification, he was forced to cancel a quick trip to Glasgow, where a disappointed crowd awaited him at the city’s United Prayer Meeting.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to the resumption of regular meetings, special events were also planned, such as the Week of Prayer at the beginning of January and the All-Day Christian Convention on January 14. Hundreds from the surrounding countryside poured in, as well as the infamous Donald McAllan, chairman of the Edinburgh Infidel Club. In the midst of this whirlwind of activity, Moody and Sankey often made quick trips to nearby towns for a prayer meeting or special service. Normally, they were back in Edinburgh for the main meeting that evening, having made the journey on a noisy train or in a bone-jolting carriage. Both men obviously possessed a strong constitution, which allowed them to minister at service after service, week-in and week-out, with rarely an absence.

It was also difficult on the wives, who had to relocate every few weeks, if not every few days when the evangelists changed locations. For Emma



Moody, who also had two young children in tow, her diary entry for the entire month of February—which usually included daily posts—seems to express her exasperation—or fortitude—as she penned: “Came to Glasgow . . . from there went to Helensburgh then to Greenock and then to Paisley and then back to Glasgow.” On occasion, Emma’s hosts provided much-needed childcare.<sup>31</sup>

Mrs. Sankey, while not encumbered by children, was coping with the effects of their prolonged separation from them; she was also dealing with morning sickness. Ira and Fanny had originally planned to be away for about three to four months; when Moody and Sankey left America for England back in June of 1873, there was no prepared itinerary, just a general promise of support from some friends. There was also little thought of their schedule being extended well beyond that initial estimate. When it became clear to Ira and Fanny, after more than six months of meetings with no end in sight, they requested Ira’s father, David, to book passage on a steamer and bring the boys to Scotland. But it would take longer than they hoped.

In light of the uncertain results first experienced in York and Sunderland, Edinburgh turned out to be successful beyond imagination. Yet, friends always sought to keep central the fact that its success was not the result of Moody and Sankey. As part of a circular letter sent to every minister in Scotland, its author was careful to point out:

But the numbers that attend are not the most remarkable feature. It is the presence and the power of the Holy Ghost, the solemn awe, the prayerful, believing, expectant spirit, the anxious inquiry of unsaved souls, and the longing of believers to grow more like Christ—their hungering and thirsting after holiness. All denominational and social distinctions are entirely merged. All this is of the grace of God.<sup>32</sup>

Although it seemed as though Moody and Sankey could remain in Edinburgh indefinitely, plans had long been scheduled to relocate to Glasgow, less than fifty miles to the west. In fact, meetings had already been underway there for a month in preparation for their arrival. But as was often the case before relocating to another large city, the evangelists took advantage of the interval to minister in smaller towns that had been vying for their presence. These included Berwick-on-Tweed, England, where additional trains bringing crowds to the meetings jammed the cars with folks, merrily singing San-

key songs or reading from Moody's sermons.<sup>33</sup> Then it was north to Dundee, Scotland, as a short-term base for visits to Aberdeen—farther north along the coast—concluding in Montrose before heading on to Glasgow.

While Moody and Sankey had become adept at quickly adjusting to new surroundings when preaching or singing, they still had to be adaptable to ever-changing logistics, such as the nature of acoustics, the availability and quality of musical instruments, proper ventilation—less critical in the winter where congregants could actually see their breath in poorly or unheated buildings—and an ever-changing sea of local ministers and supporters who expected some degree of recognition. And by now, after hundreds of meetings, there was the issue of keeping track of which sermon had been preached where, and how many times Sankey had used a particular hymn.

It was while ministering in these smaller venues on their way to Glasgow that reports of a strange and almost supernatural quality began filtering back to the evangelists—involving ministers from the historic Church of Scotland and the more recent Free Church of Scotland appearing on the same platform and actually praying together! This unimagined amalgamation was the result of Moody's plea for unified pastoral support. And what had begun as a simple prayer service among previously skeptical religious leaders turned into a daily prayer meeting, which grew in size and earnestness as it sought God's blessing on the evangelists' advent.

Meetings, as usual for a new city, began on Sunday, this one on February 8. By now, Glasgow was known as "The Second City of the Empire," having passed Edinburgh in population over half a century earlier. It had also surpassed it in industrial might, producing half of England's shipping and a quarter of the world's locomotives. The thriving metropolis was also enjoying the century's biggest economic boom. And the deep-water port on the River Clyde at nearby Port Glasgow contributed to the city becoming a major trading hub, importing tobacco, sugar, and cotton—once central to the Triangular Slave Trade, which had helped make Britain wealthy.

Aesthetically, the city was beginning to acquire fine architecture, such as the Neo-classical Royal Exchange, with its six massive Corinthian columns providing a backdrop for an imposing statue of Wellington in the forecourt. One of the city's newest additions was the impressive Stewart Memorial Fountain in the verdant eighty-five acre Kelvingrove Park, just two short blocks from Ira and Fanny's lodgings at Somerset Place on the west side of town.<sup>34</sup>

At 9:00AM, Moody and Sankey met with three thousand Sunday School workers in City Hall. One of them was David Russell, who, in old age, recalled first hearing Sankey:

I had never heard such magnificent singing. The great consecrated voice, the glad face of the singer, and the almost childish simplicity of the words overcame me, and I found tears streaming down my face. I felt almost ashamed lest anyone should see my weakness, but ere long I noticed tears on other faces.<sup>35</sup>

That evening, the building was filled long before its scheduled 6:30PM opening, with the remaining crowd being diverted into three nearby churches. Overflow meetings often meant that while Moody remained at City Hall, Ira scurried around among the various churches. It was exhausting.

So it also befell their sometime-collaborators, the Fisk Jubilee Singers, who, while performing to great public acclaim, were suffering a heavy toll behind the scenes, resulting from their hectic schedule. As their popularity increased, invitations came in from every direction, requiring a follow-up to see if a concert was feasible. The correspondence was simply overwhelming. There was also the issue of travel and lodging and publicity and remuneration, as well as dealing with the concerns of nearly a dozen singers in a land that was cold and rainy compared to the American South. Matters of mental and physical health invariably soaked up a good deal of time and energy. And there was the constant practice the group needed to stay sharp and to learn new music. Most of that load fell on manager and director George White. But White, as treasurer of Fisk University, also carried the burden of raising funds for the school's survival. The constant strain was crushing and took a toll on his health. Yet he continued to push the ensemble and himself to perform at a consistently high level as he monitored the bottom line of daily contributions.

Unfortunately, White was not the only one to feel the weight of such an undertaking. At one point, Susan Gilbert, the group's chaperone, became ill, as did their business manager, Gustavus Pike. Then Laura, George White's wife, was stricken with typhoid fever. Believing it imperative to continue the tour, White left Laura at Glasgow and continued with the singers, only to be called back to agonize with her for two days before she expired on Friday, February 20. Moody was so deeply affected, he skipped the mid-day children's meeting on Saturday at Wellington Street United Presbyterian Church, asking Sankey to fill it with hymn singing in his absence.<sup>36</sup>

On March 30, Moody and Sankey answered an invitation from five hundred workers at Alexander Stephen and Sons<sup>37</sup>—shipbuilders who later produced vessels for the Royal Navy—to hold a lunch meeting at their factory in Linthouse. Sankey opened the meeting with “Jesus of Nazareth Passeth By,” then sang the famous “Lifeboat” song (“Light in the darkness, sailor, day is at hand”), whose second stanza exhorted:

*Trust in the life-boat, sailor, all else will fail,  
Stronger the surges dash and fiercer the gale;  
Heed not the stormy winds, though loudly they roar;  
Watch the “bright and morning star,” and pull for the shore.*

One can only imagine the roar as two thousand excited shipbuilders thundered back the chorus:

*Pull for the shore, sailor, pull for the shore!  
Heed not the rolling waves, but bend to the oar;  
Safe in the lifeboat, sailor, cling to self no more!  
Leave the poor old stranded wreck, and pull for the shore.<sup>38</sup>*

Apparently these rugged laborers were also deeply appreciative of the Sankey songs, as they requested the ladies of the nightly revival choir to come to the docks and sing for them—a labor of love the women did twice-weekly for a month!<sup>39</sup>

While audiences were always enthusiastic to learn the latest new sacred songs from their American visitor, it didn’t mean they were always successful. For Scottish religious music was usually written in a solid quarter-note motion. With four beats to the measure, it often sounded plodding; but even with three beats to the measure—which should produce a lighter feel—there was rarely a sense of flow. Much of the music Sankey introduced was composed in 6/8 meter, which, when sung as intended, possessed a definite lilt to it. But that was hard for these earnest Scotsmen to grasp.

When Ira sang “Jesus Loves Even Me,” he encountered this challenge in spades. The song is in a 6/8 meter and consists almost entirely of eighth-notes—meant to skip along. But the first seven notes of the melody are all the same pitch. And to delineate them on Sankey’s harmonium required a tiny separation between the notes. But his listeners, in the process of learning the new song, interpreted these pitches as more separated and sang them in a very disjointed nature. In addition, with no feeling for the flow of

compound meters (such as the 6/8 in “Jesus Loves Even Me” or the 9/8 in “Free from the law, O happy condition” [“Once for All”]), Scottish audiences morphed the swinging rhythms into a nearly indecipherable 4/4 (common meter), “greatly marring its beauty.”<sup>40</sup>

Yet, despite some musical confusion, the power of the new songs were a revelation. What a contrast to what we usually hear in our churches! Our leaders and our choirs do their best to sing the music, but too often treat the words as if they were of little or no consequence. To the great shame of our churches, this, the chief end of praise, has been almost entirely overlooked.<sup>41</sup>

In trying to analyze the unusual power of these novel songs, one listener proposed that they were actually not new in style but in association. While the new songs didn’t sound like any sacred music from their past, it did remind its hearers—perhaps subconsciously—of its national or folk tunes.

Who does not feel the sweetness of familiar Irish melody in “Sweet By-and-By” and “Valley of Blessing,” and the thorough Scottish ring in such songs as “Hold the Fort,” “Sweet Hour of Prayer,” “The Gate Ajar,” . . . and many others. It takes us by surprise to hear Gospel truth wafted in strains of our national music.<sup>42</sup>

While the revival meetings involved a high level of spiritual interest, it was clear to all that Moody and Sankey would leave in the near future, and local ministers didn’t want to return to normal. On April 16, five thousand Christian workers from all over Scotland and northern England convened at the Crystal Palace Botanical Gardens to hear presentations on how the benefits of the revival could be continued in ordinary churches. If revival was to impact society after the initial enthusiasm had passed, churches needed to learn how to incorporate it into part of their make-up. Now that God had answered the prayers of so many by sending revival, how could it be continued?

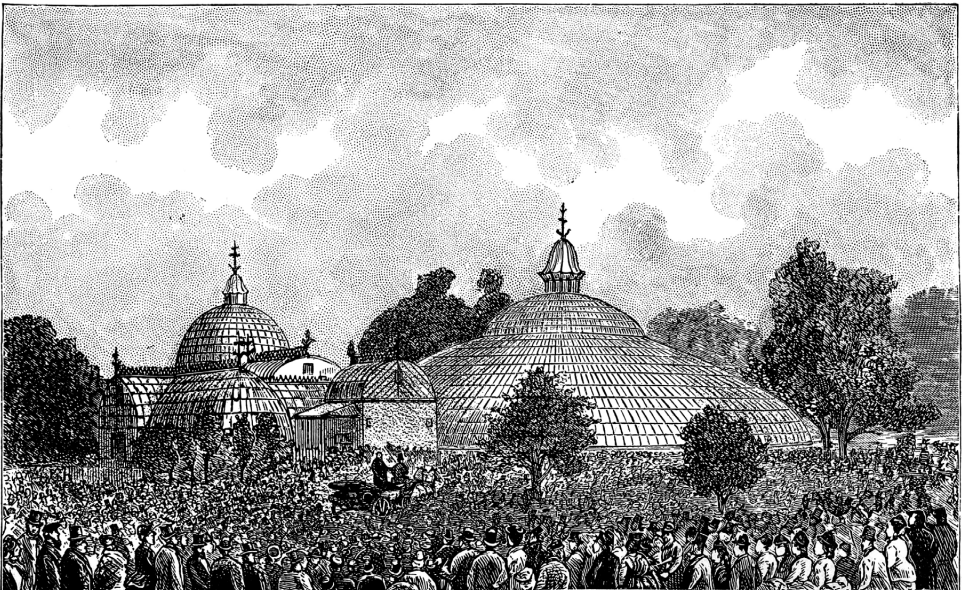
One way was to reach out to working-class folks who were less likely to inhabit Glasgow’s church pews—or even attend the revival services. That resulted in consciously including the poorer classes in the final week of meetings. To house larger-than-normal crowds, the committee reserved Kibble Palace—also known as the Crystal Palace, where the April 16 convention had just met—to accommodate the throngs.



Son of a wealthy industrialist, John Kibble commanded a massive and magnificent glass-and-iron greenhouse, or “palace,” to be erected at his home in Coulton in 1865. But he soon donated it to the Royal Botanic Institution of Glasgow, where it was reassembled—piece by fragile piece—only a year before the Moody and Sankey meetings. From a distance, it appeared as a shimmering glass city covering many acres. It was intended to be used as an exhibition and concert hall, boasting a central dome, 43 feet high and 146 feet in diameter. Past and future prime minister Benjamin Disraeli had just been installed in that Crystal Palace as a rector at the nearby University of Glasgow, as would future prime minister William Gladstone a couple years later. To some extent, this vast, glistening edifice must have seemed as close to heaven as many of its visitors ever hoped to obtain.

The Kibble was the focus of meetings during the final week, beginning May 12.<sup>43</sup> As it could hold only about five thousand attendees, tickets were required, with huge overflow meetings in the park supplementing those inside. For the most part, Sankey stayed inside the building, leading singing and performing solos, often with associate preachers providing the sermons, while Moody seemed to peripatate around the grounds, preaching to those within the sound of his voice.

Sunday saw the final day of regular meetings, as massive crowds began swarming the Botanical Gardens early on, with some supporters walking for



Crystal Palace, Glasgow, in J. Wilbur Chapman, *The Life and Work of Dwight L. Moody* (1900)



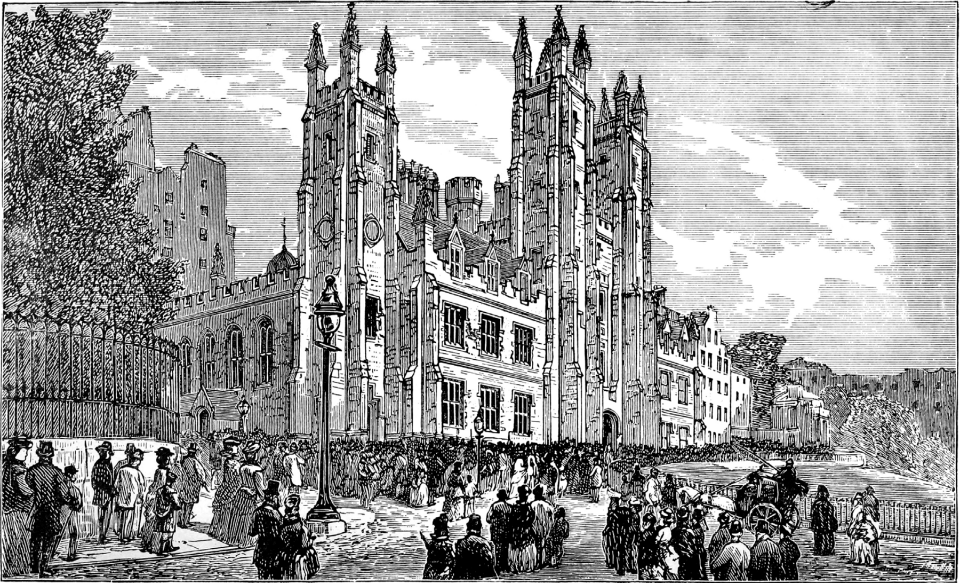
three hours because transportation was not easily attainable on the Sabbath. Unfortunately, the hot spring sun in usually chilly Glasgow heated up the afternoon service in the greenhouse-like Kibble hall to such a degree the inhabitants began to flee back outside, colliding with thousands waiting to get in. Fortunately, injury and mass chaos were minimal.<sup>44</sup> For those pastors who had hoped the final meetings might attract a more diverse crowd than usual, it appeared they had accomplished their goal, as many who attended seemed unfamiliar with the popular songs the regular attendees would know.<sup>45</sup> Ultimately, there were so many individuals interested in hearing more about their spiritual condition, inquirers kept counselors engaged until 10:30 that evening.

On Monday, May 18, Moody and Sankey enjoyed the unusual luxury of boarding a first-class train car, bound for Edinburgh. While their normal mode of travel was the noisy and congested second-class or third-class carriage, both men were exhausted from the last few days in Glasgow and the expectation of soon plunging into a three-day cycle of meetings in Edinburgh. Although the distance was less than fifty miles, they looked forward to a little time for themselves. At Menzies' news stall, Sankey grabbed a copy of a penny weekly, *The Christian Age*,<sup>46</sup> before boarding, hoping to glean some news from America. But he discarded it after finding nothing of interest.

As the duo's train neared Edinburgh, Ira picked up the paper again to scan the advertisements, which included Ambrosial Tea, Shelford Pianos, and Pulvermacher's Galvanic Chain Bands. The list of publications touted Dr. Wheldon's new commentary and the latest collection of sermonic gems from Henry Ward Beecher.

At that point, it was unlikely for Sankey to have heard about the scandal swirling around America's most famous preacher, known for his theatrical support of abolition, his Transcendentalist preaching on God's love, and his roving eye. While Beecher wouldn't be required to suffer the indignity of a highly-publicized adultery trial for a few more years, the pastor of America's most famous church, Plymouth Congregational near Sankey's future home in Brooklyn, always managed to generate front-page headlines and would catch Ira's attention later.

Opposite the paper's advertisements, in bold type, appeared a bit of poetry Ira had missed on first glance. It immediately impressed him as having possibilities as a hymn, but it included no music. Ira excitedly read it to Moody, only to realize the evangelist was lost in his own thoughts and hadn't



Free Assembly Hall, Edinburgh, in J. Wilbur Chapman, *The Life and Work of Dwight L. Moody* (1900)

heard a word. He tore the poem from the paper and added it to his scrapbook, source of all the successful songs he had been singing and publishing.<sup>47</sup>

This trip to Edinburgh, the site of their first major success, was in some respects a short follow-up to their earlier work there. On the first of their three-day schedule in the Free Assembly Hall, numerous local speakers addressed the crowd with testimonies and encouragement. Then Moody read Psalm 23 and spoke on “The Good Shepherd.” This topic was certainly a favorite of preachers, for there was ample material in both the Old and New Testaments to elaborate on the very nature and work of Jesus, employing familiar yet vivid examples of shepherds from the nearby countryside. Even his urbanite listeners were only a few miles in any direction from sheep raising, and some had actually come from that background, so the topic had relevance to almost everyone.

When Moody read Psalm 23, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want,” it would have been understood by all as referring to Jesus, who explained to his disciples in John 10:11, “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” After establishing Jesus as the Shepherd, the focus pivoted to the sheep, who were usually characterized as dumb and unheeding and constantly needing the shepherd’s care. Here attention turned to Luke 15:3–7, where Jesus told the parable about the shepherd going

off in search on one lost sheep while the “ninety and nine” remained safe in the fold. The point was clear: God so loved his sheep, He made extraordinary efforts to search for them, so they might be saved and brought back to safety.

Moody concluded, then requested Dr. Horatius Bonar to close with a few remarks. He was a Scotsman and an eloquent speaker who deeply moved his audience. But Ira couldn’t concentrate on Bonar’s words as his mind raced to what he should do next. Moody had preached this powerful explanation of God’s love many times, and Sankey had usually followed it with something appropriate. But, Ira later recalled, as Bonar concluded, “Mr. Moody turned to me with the question, ‘Have you a solo appropriate for this subject, with which to close the service?’”

That would have been an odd question coming from Moody, who first chose Ira because of his spiritual sensitivity to the moment and his ability to “draw the net.” But, as Ira confessed:

I had nothing suitable in mind, and was greatly troubled to know what to do. The Twenty-third Psalm occurred to me, but this had been sung several times in the meeting. I knew every Scotchman in the audience would join me if I sang that, so I could not possibly render this favorite psalm as a solo. At this moment I seemed to hear a voice saying, “Sing the hymn you found on the train!” But I thought this impossible, as no music had ever been written for that hymn. Again the impression came to me . . . and placing the little newspaper slip on the organ in front of me, I lifted my heart in prayer, asking God to help me so to sing that the people might hear and understand. Laying my hands upon the organ I struck the key of A-flat, and began to sing.<sup>48</sup>

*There were ninety and nine that safely lay  
In the shelter of the fold,  
But one was out on the hills away,  
Far off from the gates of gold—  
Away on the mountain wild and bare,  
Away from the tender Shepherd’s care,  
Away from the tender Shepherd’s care.<sup>49</sup>*

Ira paused, heart pounding. He had made stanza one work, but could he do it with stanza two? Could he remember the same melody and chords? Here the poetess, Elizabeth Cecilia Clephane, had done something subtle,

but effective. She turned what had been a narrative about the Good Shepherd into a personal conversation. Now, the listener was actively involved in the drama.

*“Lord, Thou hast here Thy ninety and nine;  
Are they not enough for Thee?”  
But the Shepherd made answer:  
“This of mine Has wandered away from me.  
And although the road be rough and steep,  
I go to the desert to find my sheep,  
I go to the desert to find my sheep.”*

In stanza three, Clephane began to elaborate, beyond the simple events of the parable, on the intense effort the Shepherd made to rescue the lost sheep. As had been clear from Moody’s preaching, the lost sheep was a metaphor for all those who were not of Christ’s fold. But it was Sankey who took the truth percolating in sinners’ heads and impressed it upon their hearts.

*But none of the ransomed ever knew  
How deep were the waters crossed;  
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed thro’  
E’re He found His sheep that was lost;  
Out in the desert He heard its cry—  
Sick and helpless and ready to die,  
Sick and helpless and ready to die.*

Stanza four sees the greatest expansion on Jesus’ parable—“an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.” Here the conversation turns into an interrogation, revealing how the Shepherd’s search for the sheep caused great sacrifice to Him. Although never specifically stated, Clephane clearly alludes to Christ’s death on the cross when describing His head as “pierced by many a thorn.” It was now clear to all: Jesus was the suffering Shepherd and the listener just might be that one lost sheep.

*“Lord, whence are those blood-drops all the way  
That mark out the mountain’s track?”  
“They were shed for one who had gone astray  
Ere the Shepherd could bring them back.”  
“Lord, whence are Thy hands so rent and torn?”  
“They are pierced tonight by many a thorn.  
Pierced tonight by many a thorn.”*

With the final stanza, the focus returns to Luke 15, verse 6, where the hearers are called upon to rejoice over the lost sheep found.

*But all through the mountains, thunder riven,  
And up from the rocky steep.  
There arose a glad cry to the gate of heaven,  
“Rejoice! I have found my sheep!”  
And the Angels echoed around the throne,  
“Rejoice! for the Lord brings back His own.  
Rejoice! for the Lord brings back His own!”*

The poem would have been difficult to set to music, even if there had been time to compose some, for successive stanzas had irregular numbers of syllables, unlike the regular scansion that most of the songs by Philip Bliss and others possessed. And it didn't fit the standard sixteen-measure format of most popular songs. This poem turned out to be an odd twelve measures long to which Ira improvised a two-bar repetition of the text's last line—such as “Away from the tender Shepherd's care.”

But Sankey had never been a slave to music's regularity, often elongating or shortening the notes of a tune to serve what he felt was a more expressive rendition of the text. So, dealing with an irregular text might not have posed that much of a challenge as he extemporized a melody to fit it. In addition, he sometimes repeated the last line of a song for emphasis; that addition would have seemed natural.<sup>50</sup>

As the singing ceased, a great sigh seemed to go up from the meeting, and I knew that the song had reached the hearts of my Scotch audience. Mr. Moody was greatly moved. Leaving the pulpit, he came down to where I was seated. Leaning over the organ, he looked at the little newspaper slip from which the song had been sung, and with tears in his eyes said: “Sankey, where did you get that hymn? I never heard the like of it in my life.” I was also moved to tears and arose and replied: “Mr. Moody, that's the hymn I read to you yesterday on the train, which you did not hear.” Then Mr. Moody raised his hand and pronounced the benediction, and the meeting closed. Thus “The Ninety and Nine” was born.<sup>51</sup>

This song would soon become the most requested number Ira sang and the one most associated with him for the rest of his life, surpassing his



# No. 43. The Ninety and Nine.

“Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.”—LUKE xv. 6.

The musical score is written in G minor, 6/8 time, and consists of four systems of piano accompaniment and vocal lines. The lyrics are as follows:

1. There were nine-ty and nine that safe - ly lay In the shel - ter of the  
 fold, But one was out on the hills a-way, Far off from the gates of  
 gold. A - way on the mountains wild and bare, A - way from the ten - der  
 Shep - herd's scare, A - way from the ten - der Shep - herd's scare.

2.  
 “Lord, Thou hast here Thy ninety and nine;  
 Are they not enough for Thee?”  
 But the Shepherd made answer: “This of  
 Has wandered away from me; [mine  
 And although the road be rough and steep  
 I go to the desert to find my sheep.”

3.  
 But none of the ransomed ever knew  
 How deep were the waters crossed;  
 Nor how dark was the night that the Lord  
 passed through  
 Ere He found His sheep that was lost.  
 Out in the desert He heard its cry—  
 Sick and helpless, and ready to die.

4.  
 “Lord, whence are those blood-drops all  
 the way  
 That mark out the mountain's track?”  
 “They were shed for one who had gone  
 astray  
 Ere the Shepherd could bring him back.”  
 “Lord, whence are Thy hands so rent and  
 torn?” [thorn.”  
 “They are pierced to-night by many a

5.  
 And all thro' the mountains, thunder-riven,  
 And up from the rocky steep,  
 There rose a cry to the gate of heaven,  
 “Rejoice! I have found my sheep!”  
 And the angels echoed around the throne,  
 “Rejoice, for the Lord brings back His  
 own!”



singing of “Hold the Fort!” It didn’t hurt that the story of the song’s birth, improvised under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, stood up well to the dramatic stories behind other popular songs. “The Ninety and Nine” certainly wasn’t the first or the last sacred song connected with near-supernatural origins, for a legend recounts two early church fathers, Augustine and Ambrose, improvising the historic hymn, *Te Deum laudamus*, as they rose from the waters of baptism.<sup>52</sup> Likewise, the account of Gregorian Chant being revealed to Pope Gregory I (the Great) by a bird representing the Holy Spirit became laden with fanciful details.<sup>53</sup> It was therefore not surprising how the narrative surrounding “The Ninety and Nine” became richer and more varied each time it was recounted.<sup>54</sup>

Unknown to Sankey, the poetess behind the song, Elizabeth Clephane (1830–1869), had been born in Edinburgh. She was a writer of devotional verses who died before eight of her poems were published in a Free Church of Scotland magazine, *The Family Treasury*, edited by William Arnot. “The Ninety and Nine” was one of those eight poems. So was “Beneath the cross of Jesus,” which became a standard hymn, eventually published in more than 460 hymnals.

For some unknown reason, the next few days following the visit to Edinburgh proved to be a logistical nightmare. Moody had apparently booked the little towns of Kilmarnock, Irvine, and Saltcoats—all located on the opposite western coast of Scotland—for a short series of meetings from May 22 to 28. But then, he apparently scheduled a grand Farewell Meeting for Edinburgh, right in the middle of those meetings, seventy miles away on the eastern coast.

That required a flurry of trips back and forth across the country, plus staying overnight in Glasgow—from whence they had just departed—to make the herculean timetable work. It’s not clear why Moody ended up with such an unwieldy schedule, but it was undoubtedly related to the fact of Sunday, May 24, 1874, being Queen Victoria’s fifty-fifth birthday, enjoying the status of a general holiday in Scotland.<sup>55</sup> Perhaps supporters convinced Moody that such an occasion would afford the appropriate conclusion to their memorable work. Whatever the motivation, a great outdoor gathering was scheduled for the plain between Arthur’s Seat—suggesting the location of the famed Camelot—and Salisbury Crag, part of Holyrood Park, dramatically perched atop the extinct volcano surrounding Edinburgh. Its

easy climb made it a famous walking destination and a logical place to hold the meeting.

Thirty thousand possibly attended—hoping for a glimpse of the preacher and a chance to hear a fleeting line or two of a Sankey hymn—as few could reasonably hope to actively participate in such a vast company. The throng was so enormous, it clogged the Great Western Road running through the park to the degree that all movement ground to a halt. While Ira successfully gained entrance to the Kibble Palace, Moody was forced to give up any hope of reaching his destination, being stranded in the midst of an admiring crowd, all decked out in their holiday best with the women in their finest bonnets and the men forming a sea of top hats.

Not one to pass up a chance to preach to expectant crowds, Moody mounted a coachman's box inside his carriage and addressed the faithful jostling his conveyance. There were reportedly two thousand conversions that day. For many, it was a time of celebration and remembrance for what God had done; it was also a chance to dress up and celebrate their earthly sovereign's natal day. A festive spirit was definitely in the air.

After the extended stays in Edinburgh and Glasgow, the pair visited some two dozen Scottish cities over the next three months, usually staying for two or three days each. These included Perth, Dundee,<sup>56</sup> and Aberdeen for two weeks; Huntley, Montrose, Arbroath, Tain, Easter Rose, and Elgin followed. Mrs. Sankey was approaching her seventh month of pregnancy and the constant travel and relocation to different lodgings was almost debilitating. Meetings in Perth began on May 29 and ran through June 7. When Moody and Sankey departed for three days of services in Dundee plus a tour of northern Scotland, it was decided to have Fanny Sankey remain behind. Ira would rejoin her later.<sup>57</sup>

Even the resilient Emma Moody had to constantly adjust to a quixotic schedule. Her diary of May 27 recorded: "D.L. came to see us on his way to Stirling for a few hours." Then, two days later, "D.L. came . . . for the night." But instead of leaving with her husband for Perth the next day as intended, she confided that son Willie, who had been suffering from diphtheria for the last week, was "not well enough for us to go."<sup>58</sup>

While the Moody family remained divided for the time being, the Sankey clan was finally reuniting after more than a year apart. Following repeated failures to find someone to manage the *Lawrence Journal* back in New

Castle, Pennsylvania, David Sankey sold the paper on June 6 and booked passage for England, arriving in Scotland in late June with the two youngest Sankeys in tow.<sup>59</sup> Although Ira was still in the north—holding meetings with Moody—Fanny and the boys, now nine and five, were overjoyed to see each other—she being amazed at how much they had grown and at how much energy it took to parent them. David brought news from home, including details about Fanny’s parents, her nieces and nephews, and the accidental shooting at H.G. Sankey’s grocery store in New Castle. It seems that two boys began playing with a loaded musket standing in the corner and it fired, severing the ear of one of them.<sup>60</sup> Unfortunately, he was also forced to share the particulars about Ira’s sister, Leathy Jane, who had died at age twenty-four, the previous November. To everyone’s joy, she had earlier professed salvation at the local camp meeting.<sup>61</sup>

Finally, after more than a year of constant travel and meetings—preaching and singing to perhaps a million souls—the evangelists from America began a month-long break. On the last day of July, Ira and the Moody family concluded their last meetings in Elgin and departed for Banff on the northern coast, thirty-five miles to the east. Typical of travel anywhere, their rail journey of only a few hours was delayed for seven at Keith where they were to transfer for Banff. To make good use of the time, the party—excepting Emma Moody—set off for a three-mile trek to nearby Tarnash Falls, making for a weary group of travelers who finally arrived at their destination that evening. Of course Moody would still preach three or four times on Sundays and anywhere a crowd gathered—often out of doors—on hearing of the famous evangelist visiting, but the regular round of daily meetings was eased.

With a whole month’s break in their schedule, Ira feverishly purchased a ticket on the Great North of Scotland Railway and headed for Perth, over a hundred miles away. It was early Monday morning, August 3, 1874, and the train couldn’t cover the miles fast enough for Ira, eagerly heading south for a reunion with his father, David, his two sons, Harry and Eddie, and his very pregnant wife, Fanny.<sup>62</sup> ☞

## ENDNOTES

1. Words and music by Philip P. Bliss, “Hold the Fort,” *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan, and Geo. C. Stebbins, eds. (Cincinnati: John Church Co.; New York: Biglow and Main, 1894), No. 11.
2. Will R. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co. 1900), 172.
3. Ira D. Sankey, *My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns and of Sacred Songs and Solos* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1906), 56–57.
4. Alexander had just inherited the townhouse and his teaching position at the university from his late uncle, Sir James Young Simpson, often considered the inventor of chloroform.
5. J.[ane] MacKinnon, *Recollections of Mr. D.L. Moody and His Work in Britain, 1874–1892* (n.p. Privately published, 1901/1905), 23. Carrubbers Christian Center, *Wikipedia*. James Young Simpson, *Wikipedia*.
6. Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Vol. XXVIII (London: Robert Grant and Son, 1879), 14. Telegram from Moody to Horatio Spafford on January 10, 1874, confirming Moody’s lodgings in Edinburgh. Library of Congress, American Colony in Jerusalem Collection, Part I, Box 1, Folder 7, <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/ms010123.mamcol.012>
7. John Pollock, *Moody: The Biography* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 129, says Moody was diagnosed with “acute tonsillitis,” but this seems questionable as Moody missed only one service. He was given a new-fangled throat spray device capable of dispensing medication; it apparently worked, as he spoke the next evening.
8. For a detailed accounting of the development of the 1650 psalter, especially in relation to the paraphrase of Psalm 23, see Chris Fenner, “The Lord’s my shepherd, I’ll not want,” *Hymnology Archive* (10 May 2021, rev. 28 May 2021), <https://www.hymnologyarchive.com/the-lords-my-shepherd-ill-not-want>
9. Sankey, *My Life*, 152. Bliss wrote the song in May of 1870. For the most complete coverage of this song, see Paul J. Scheips, *Hold the Fort! The Story of a Song from the Sawdust Trail to the Picket Line* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1971). Also note John Kent’s *Holding the Fort: Studies in Victorian Revivalism* (London: Epworth Press, 1978). While the phrase “Hold the fort” originally meant to “hold on,” a more recent derivation has come to mean “Hold down the fort” or continue to take care of business while the boss is away.
10. Sankey, *My Life*, 24.
11. Sankey, *My Life*, 59–60.

12. KJV Bible, 2 Kings 9:20.
13. Sankey, *My Life*, 62.
14. Sankey, *My Life*, 60; Will R. Moody (1900), 189.
15. Sankey, *My Life*, 61.
16. Sankey, *My Life*, 61.
17. Bruce J. Evensen, *God's Man for the Gilded Age* (Oxford: University Press, 2003), 29.
18. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 182; Evensen, *God's Man*, 31.
19. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 185.
20. MacKinnon, *Recollections*, 13–17.
21. MacKinnon, *Recollections*, 17.
22. Emma Moody's diary, December 25, 1873.
23. Debby Applegate, *The Most Famous Man in America: The Biography of Henry Ward Beecher* (New York: Three Leaves Press—Doubleday, 2006), 19–20.
24. While Prince Albert is generally credited with introducing Christmas trees to England, some claim that the tradition stems from Queen Charlotte, the German wife of George III, who set up the first known English tree at Queen's Lodge, Windsor, in December 1800.
25. The same re-purposing of a popular Victorian parlor song, "One Horse Open Sleigh" ("Jingle Bells") from 1852, didn't become associated with Christmas until the next century.  
 For additional information on this transformation of American culture, see Penne L. Restad, *Christmas in America: A History* (Oxford: University Press, 1996) and Stephen Nissenbaum, *The Battle for Christmas: A Cultural History of America's Most Cherished Holiday* (Vintage, 1997). Also see David K. Williams, "Unitarians and Episcopalians Created American Christmas," *Christianity Today* (14 December 2022), <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2022/december-web-only/christmas-advent-history-unitarians-episcopalians-created.html>
26. Theodore F. Seward, ed., *Jubilee Songs: As Sung by the Jubilee Singers of Fisk University* (New York: Biglow and Main, 1872).
27. Rufus W. Clark, *The Work of God in Great Britain under Messrs Moody and Sankey, 1873–1875* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1875), 81–83, 86–88.
28. Clark, *The Work of God*, 89.
29. Unidentified Edinburgh newspaper of 3 January 1874 in Scrapbook of notices in archives of Fisk Jubilee Singers at Fisk University.

30. *Glasgow Herald*, 8 January 1874, 4.
31. *Glasgow Herald*, February 1874. Emma Moody Powell, *Heavenly Destiny*, 81. The author recounted how, during Emma’s stay (Moody’s daughter, not his wife) in Glenrich, Scotland, their hostess Mrs. Mackie engaged a nurse “to look after my brother and myself.” Another letter records, “Mrs. Workman, out of the kindness of her heart, got a nurse for us children so that mother could attend some of the meetings,” p. 89. It’s only reasonable to assume the same benefit happened to Mrs. Sankey on occasion.
32. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 188.
33. Clark, *Work of God*, 91.
34. MacKinnon, *Recollections*, 25.
35. Pollock, *Moody*, 138.
36. Joe M. Richardson, *A History of Fisk University, 1845–1946* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1980), 34–35. Unidentified newspaper article in Jubilee Singers scrapbook, archives of Fisk University.
37. Clark, *Work of God*, 134.
38. Words and music by P.P. Bliss. More commonly known as “Pull for the Shore,” *Gospel Hymns Complete* (1894), No. 51.
39. W.H. Daniels, *D.L. Moody and His Work* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1875), 300.
40. Clark, *Work of God*, 141.
41. Clark, *Work of God*, 141.
42. Clark, *Work of God*, 140.
43. Clark, *Work of God*, 152.
44. Clark, *Work of God*, 154–55.
45. Daniels, *Moody and His Work*, 306.
46. *The Christian Age* (London), 13 May 1874.
47. Pollock, *Moody*, 147–148 provides details from *The Christian Age*. Sankey’s account of “The Ninety and Nine” is found in *My Life*, 268–271.
48. Sankey, *My Life*, 270.
49. Words by Elizabeth C. Clephane, music by Ira D. Sankey, “The Ninety and Nine,” *Gospel Hymns Complete* (1894), No. 570.
50. Frank S. Reader, *Moody and Sankey: An Authentic Account of their Lives and Services* (New York: E.J. Hale and Sons, 1876), 72, says the tune was composed beforehand rather than improvised: “The next day, while seated at a



piano in the home of a Christian gentleman, in Edinburgh, Mr. Sankey composed the air for it, and on the following day at the noon-day prayer meeting held in the Free Church Assembly Hall, he sang it for the first time.” His account must be considered as one of the earlier records of that event.

51. Sankey, *My Life*, 271.
52. Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin, eds., *Music in the Western World: History in Documents* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1984), 30–31.
53. Donald Jay Grout and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 5th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), 31.
54. The most thorough investigation of the conflicting accounts related to the song is investigated in Mel R. Wilhoit, “The Birth of a Classic: Sankey’s “The Ninety and Nine,” a chapter in David W. Music, ed., *We’ll Shout and Sing Hosanna: Essays on Church Music in Honor of William J. Reynolds* (Fort Worth, TX: School of Church Music, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1998), 229–253. The closest one comes to an eyewitness account of the service seems to be found in Rufus W. Clark, *The Work of God in Great Britain under Messrs Moody and Sankey, 1873–1875* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1875), 81–83, 86–88.

The song became popular as published in *Gospel Hymns No. 2* (1876), No. 67, with its more complex chord structure on the third strophe, revealing how this was not the original improvised version. The original rendition, as published in the British collection, *Sacred Songs and Solos*, Enlarged Ed. (1875), No. 43, and the American collection, *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs* [No. 1] (1875), No. 6, was a variation on the A-flat chord (I chord or tonic in A-flat), with a logical alternation to the E-flat or V chord. It seems well within the imagination that Sankey could have improvised something close to this rendition, but not the one published later with more complex harmony.

The question of Sankey improvising the tune on the spot is further complicated by the appearance of Clephane’s (unattributed in the first edition) poem, “The Ninety and Nine,” at No. 59 in P.P. Bliss’ collection, *Gospel Songs* (Cincinnati: John Church & Co., 1874). It had only recently been published—sometime that year of 1874 while Sankey was in Britain—possibly even after Sankey’s May performance. It’s possible he may have seen it in a manuscript before he left, played it over, and it stuck in his subconscious. While this seems highly unlikely, the similarities between the tune Bliss composed and the one Sankey improvised are worth considering. Both are in the meter 6/8; both are in the key of A-flat. The rhythms are also nearly identical, and both repeat the last line of poetry—although Bliss actually repeats a bit more of it. On the surface, there’s a very strong similarity. But the distance between the two men and the timeline complicate any conclusions about Sankey being influenced by the Bliss melody.

George Stebbins, who was part of the Moody constellation and would have intimately known the work of both men, said the model for Sankey's melody was J.C. Baker's "A Wonderful Stream is the River of Time" and claimed to have discussed this fact with numerous composers, of whom Sankey was apparently one. See Wilhoit, "The Birth of a Classic," above.

55. If an English holiday fell on a Sunday, the next day was usually celebrated as the holiday.
56. *The Courier and Argus* (from Dundee and Tayside) advertised "Hymn-books. Price Twopence. Book of Songs and Solos (Words only) as Sung by Mr Sankey at Gospel Meetings, may be had at the Doors before and after the Meetings," 17 March 1874, 1.
57. There is no documentation of Fanny Sankey remaining in Perth at this point, but the evangelists and Sankey family were there for nine days, and Ira eventually returned to Perth to rejoin Fanny after further travels. Considering the factors of her late-stage pregnancy and the challenges of constant travel, this narrative seems the most logical explanation.
58. Emma Moody's diary, 23–30 May 1874.
59. S.W. and P.A. Durant, *History of Lawrence County Pennsylvania, 1770–1877*, "Biographical Sketches: Hon. David Sankey," 168. Emma Moody's diary for 25 June 1874 strongly implies the Sankey children had arrived by that date. "Obituary: Hon. David Sankey," *New Castle Courant*, 11 January 1884. When David returned to the U.S. after a couple of months in Scotland, he apparently did not resume work of any kind.
60. *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*, 13 January 1874, 1.
61. *Pittsburgh Daily Commercial*, 24 August 1875, 4.
62. Emma Moody diary, 3 August 1874. David Sankey states his intension to visit his family in Europe during the month of June, recorded in *The Pittsburgh Gazette*, 15 June 1874, 1.

No. 396.

# Revive us Again.

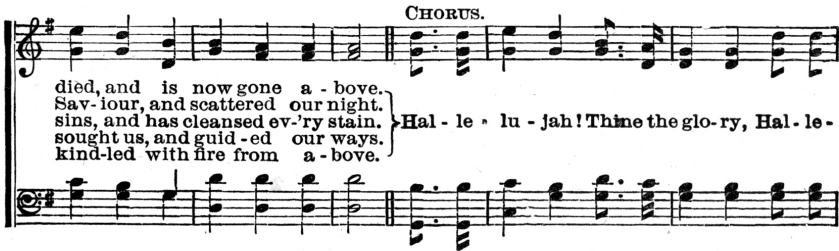
Rev. WM. PATON MACKAY.

JOHN J. HUSBAND.



1. We praise Thee, O God! for the Son of Thy love, For Je - sus who  
2. We praise Thee, O God! for Thy Spir - it of light, Who has shown us our  
3. All glo - ry and praise to the Lamb that was slain, Who has borne all our  
4. All glo - ry and praise to the God of all grace, Who has bought us, and  
5. Re - vive us a - gain; fill each heart with Thy love; May each soul be re -

CHORUS.



died, and is now gone a - bove.  
Sav - iour, and scattered our night.  
sins, and has cleansed ev - 'ry stain. } Hal - le - lu - jah! Thine the glo - ry, Hal - le -  
sought us, and guid - ed our ways.  
kind - led with fire from a - bove.



lu - jah! A - men; Hal - le - lu - jah! Thine the glo - ry, Re - vive us a - gain.

## Chapter 10

### Revival Fire

1874–1875

*We praise Thee, O God! For the Son of Thy love,  
For Jesus who died and is now gone above.*

*Hallelujah! Thine the glory, Hallelujah! Amen.  
Hallelujah! Thine the glory, revive us again.*

*All glory and praise to the Lamb that was slain,  
Who has borne all our sins and has cleansed every stain.*

*Revive us again; fill each heart with Thy love;  
May each soul be rekindled with fire from above.<sup>1</sup>*

IRA ALLEN SANKEY, third son of Ira David and Francis Victoria Sankey, was born August 30, 1874, in Edinburgh, Scotland.<sup>2</sup> He and his mother were fortunate to have Alexander Simpson, Professor of Midwifery at Edinburgh University, as their host and physician during this time. The Sankeys had made their acquaintance back in November of 1873 when they lodged with the Simpsons during the Edinburgh campaign, and now they had returned for the birth of their latest child.<sup>3</sup>

There was certainly widespread agreement about the evangelists bringing a mighty work of God to the land. But they were leaving, and the individual churches were having to grapple with how to continue their daily rounds with a completely different model: one employing familiar local pastors preaching from dark stone churches embodying generations of traditions, and dealing with unique controversies stemming from the theology and practices of Scottish Presbyterianism rooted in the Westminster Confession.

Two of these controversies involved the use of man-made hymns—rather than the biblical Psalms—and the use of musical instruments—specifically the organ. Depending on one’s point of view, the appearance of

Sankey was either providential or diabolical—especially for the Presbyterian Free Church of Scotland.<sup>4</sup> As early as 1866, there had been twenty-one resolutions concerning the use of hymns before the General Assembly, with the Highland churches usually opposing them and the Lowland churches supporting their adoption.

For some in Scotland, this disagreement seemed somewhat artificial, for as *The Daily Edinburgh Review* noted, “Why should there be any prejudice? For generations, most of the Highland ministers, and some of the Lowland ministers too, have sung the gospel, sung their sermons, ay, and sung their prayers too. The only difference is, that they sang them very badly.”<sup>5</sup>

One of the most vociferous and articulate opponents of hymns was Dr. John Kennedy of the Dingwall Free Church, a church he served for over forty years. In 1872, just a year before the Moody-Sankey visitations, Kennedy broke a “lifelong silence on the floor of the Assembly,” presenting a “masterful oration” in opposition to the use of hymns. He argued:

The psalms were inspired and recorded with a view to their being a perpetual vehicle of the church’s praise on earth. . . . But they have not been laid aside by God. They are still in His book. In the New Testament there is nought to take their place. We have no prepared New Testament psalmody. Is it not manifest therefore that the Lord regards the psalms of David as never out of date, whatever men in whom carnal sentiment takes the place of genuine godliness. . . . Is there a phase of spiritual feeling not expressed in them, from a despairing groaning of an Asaph to the highest raptures of triumphant faith? Is there an aspect of Christ, divine, incarnate, humbled, crucified, buried, raised, reigning, giving, pitying, washing, not presented to us?<sup>6</sup>

While Kennedy progressively found himself in the minority amongst his Presbyterian brethren, he continued to disseminate his opposition in pamphlets such as “Hyper-evangelism, ‘Another Gospel,’ though a Mighty Power,” in which he also took aim at the evangelistic campaigns of Moody, especially his use of “musical practisings,” which included the “habitual use of the harmonium” to accompany congregational song and the solos of Sankey. “Singing the gospel to men has taken the place of singing praise to God.” Together, the solos and the harmonium “excite a state of feeling which militates against, instead of aiding, that which is produced by the word.”

It might have been clear to even Kennedy that he was fighting a rear-guard action, reluctantly conceding, “There is little doubt that Sankey’s use of hymns and harmonium went a long way towards legitimizing their wider use in Scotland.”<sup>7</sup>

Of course, few would have claimed Moody and Sankey single-handedly precipitated the spiritual transformation unfolding before their eyes, for they had been supported by a host of preachers and pious laymen who had been faithfully praying for years. “That Scotland was ready, even eager, for revival there can be little doubt. What was required was a man with a message and a means of amplifying that message across an anxious city. The result was a citywide shaking unlike anything in living memory.”<sup>8</sup>

After Scotland and a period of winding down, Moody chose to focus on Ireland. He certainly had plenty of invitations from London, but he didn’t feel there was enough unity among the churches to support a successful campaign at that time. And he certainly wouldn’t be welcomed by the Church of England, so Ireland, where he enjoyed great popularity, became the next destination.

While trains were the most efficient method of travel, the country of Scotland was surrounded by water and filled with lakes, which sometimes meant taking a boat; this didn’t appeal to Moody, who usually suffered from seasickness. Yet, on August 27, Dwight Lyman and Emma Moody’s twelfth anniversary found the family and some friends aboard a steamer on the Caledonian Canal as it maneuvered southwest over sixty miles of spectacular scenery, from Inverness through twenty-nine locks, across Lock Ness, over four aqueducts, and ten swing bridges to Oban. From there, they boarded the steamer Iona on the Crinan Canal, traversing nine more miles in a deluge of pelting rain before arriving in Tarbert. It was there the fatigued party met Peter MacKinnon, who conducted them another forty miles by carriage, with a wagon for their luggage, to their destination in the little burg of Campbeltown near the southern tip of the Kintyre peninsula.<sup>9</sup>

The reason for making such a challenging detour on their way to Ireland resulted from the incessant urgings of Mrs. Jane MacKinnon, imploring Moody to extend the blessings of the revival to their little church. The MacKinnons were “camp followers” of a sort, whose enthusiasm for Moody and Sankey motivated them to travel to distant cities in Scotland to hear the evangelists. Attending a Moody-Sankey meeting was not for the faint of heart, however. As Jane MacKinnon confessed in her *Recollections*: “It was



the old thing over again—crowded cabs, hurried walking in the unheeded drenching showers, unwearied sitting long before to secure a place, unwearied standing or taking the corner of a step to sit on.”<sup>10</sup>

Over the course of many meetings, Mrs. MacKinnon had become known to D.L. Moody and was a friend to both Emma Moody and Fanny Sankey, having visited in the homes where they were lodging, and in accompanying them to meetings. When MacKinnon’s little church in distant Campbeltown began showing signs of revival, someone suggested inviting Moody to come and preach. As his ministrations were at quite a distance and in primarily larger venues, the idea seemed like a wild dream. But Peter MacKinnon—a partner in the British India Line—began to pepper Moody with pleas to visit their work, while Jane solicited Emma Moody and Fanny Sankey, requesting them to intercede on their behalf. Moody later admitted he had never received so many letters and telegrams about any one place.

In addition to a steady stream of correspondence, the MacKinnons tracked down the evangelist when he was preaching in Aberdeen. They learned he was staying in a hotel near theirs and he would be in his room, as he was having his boots repaired.

We went, my husband and I, with very great trepidation and sent in our cards. Mr. Moody came down immediately (in his slippers, of course), his first words being, “You are very persevering,” and so we stated our case. My husband gave the reasons, and I did the urging—bold urging, but he did not dislike it, evidently.<sup>11</sup>

To sweeten the deal, Jane promised Moody—to her husband’s consternation—to procure a steamer to take the family across the sea to Ireland when he was ready. Moody soon relented and agreed to spend a few days in Campbeltown!

While this schedule of demanding and uncertain travel was taxing, usually followed immediately by meetings the next morning, it had become the norm. The Moodys arrived at the MacKinnons at 10:00PM on Saturday evening, August 29, and ate supper. Somehow, by Sunday morning, they had unpacked, prepared their Sunday clothes, organized the children, and appeared at breakfast by 8:00AM. Only an hour later, Moody spoke to Christian workers—typical for the opening Sunday morning meeting in most campaigns—at Lochend Church, then to Longrow Church for the 11:00AM service.

Following the morning assembly and a great spiritual outpouring, Moody pursued the pedestrian task of visiting the location for that evening's meeting at Highland Parish Church to check on the ventilation; he was dissuaded, however, and another went in his stead. Personally checking on seemingly trivial issues such as ventilation had come about as a result of hard lessons, because there on the coast of that Scottish peninsula, the wind could whip up a dreadful howl.

On one occasion, Moody felt something was “spoiling the meeting” and went to investigate. In the church lobby, he found one of the entrance doors was wide open, allowing in a mighty gust. He asked the head usher to keep it closed, but that was apparently not his usual practice and he wouldn't comply. So Moody found a key, locked the door and pocketed it. When leaving three days later, he retorted, “I'll not forget your wind.”<sup>12</sup>

After a 2:00PM meal, Moody laid down for a rest and didn't make it to the parlor for tea and the Bible reading, which many guests had come to hear. Without Moody's presence, “our Bible reading did not come to much,” conceded Jane MacKinnon. The evening meeting was so popular, many were denied entrance. For some who did, there was noticeable grousing among those who could not find a seat when asked to settle for standing room.<sup>13</sup>

Sankey had left Moody's entourage nearly a month earlier, on August 4, to head for Perth, where his pregnant wife and their two boys were staying with friends. It was Ira's original plan to take a couple of weeks to rest and visit London, four hundred and sixty-two miles away, at the other end of the British Isles. There, he could possibly lodge with Emma Moody's sister, who housed the family upon its arrival back in 1873, or with a host of religious and community leaders clamoring for attention from the now-famous pair. Ira could also spend time with R.C. Morgan—publisher of *The Christian* and Sankey's *Sacred Songs and Solos* pamphlet—and become more involved in subsequent editions, with each impending issue becoming larger and including more material.

Another point of interest was Baptist pastor Charles Haddon Spurgeon, whose Metropolitan Tabernacle was the largest non-establishment church in England. Even though Spurgeon's congregation was very conservative musically and sang unaccompanied, Ira might have had occasion to wonder about singing before that vast assembly in the future—resulting from a possible London campaign, something he could perhaps get a better feel for while in London.<sup>14</sup> By the end of August, Ira had returned to Edinburgh and the Simpson family, where Fanny gave birth to little Ira Allen.

Ireland—the evangelists’ next stop—had always been a thorn-in-the-flesh for an England that had never really brought the people of Hibernia to heal. When, in 1536, Henry VIII broke with the pope and declared himself head of the Church of England and Ireland, he set in motion a centuries-long era of tension and sometimes outright hostility. While Henry abolished the monasteries—enriching the crown and its supporters—his son Edward VI tried, unsuccessfully, to impose a Protestant liturgy (worship practices) on the churches. In the following centuries, a series of “Plantations” ensued in which the English crown confiscated Catholic land and “planted” laborers from England, Wales, and Scotland on it.

After the English Civil War, during which Irish Catholics supported Charles I and the Crown, they lost most of their remaining land following the king’s defeat by Oliver Cromwell. Much of it was given to soldiers who had fought for the victorious Parliamentarians. This constant influx of Englishmen led to the Protestant Ascendancy, which by the seventeenth century saw nearly complete English control of Ireland. In 1874, when Moody and Sankey began their efforts in the Emerald Isle, a small Protestant minority owned nearly three-fifths of the land and controlled its economy.

As an agrarian society, much of Ireland was owned by English landlords—some absentee—but run by tenant farmers.

The great majority of Irish peasants farmed little strips of land, and their only crop was the potato. The potato needed next to no maintenance, as a crop. You simply planted it, watched it grow, harvested it, and ate it. Two million acres of Ireland were given over to potatoes. Three million people ate nothing else. Nothing. (Adult males consumed between twelve and fourteen pounds daily).<sup>15</sup>

When the fungal disease *Phytophthora infestans* struck the potato crop in 1845, it left 1.1 million dead from starvation by 1850, and another 4.5 million eventually abandoned the isle, immigrating to England (mostly Liverpool), the Americas (including Canada and South America), and Australia. While the devastation resulted from a mix of factors including English neglect, the general feeling was, “The Almighty indeed sent the potato blight, but the English created the Famine.”<sup>16</sup> From a high of over eight million people before the famine, Ireland’s population declined nearly 40% to less than 5.5 million by 1875. Complicating the famine were sporadic outbreaks of

typhus and cholera where, in 1847, one in five living in Belfast was attacked by the fever.<sup>17</sup>

It was to this land that Moody and his family set sail—after Campbeltown—on an overnight steamer from Greenock, Scotland, to Belfast, commencing more than ten weeks of meetings in Ireland. Ira and his growing family also made the nearly two-hundred-mile trek from Edinburgh, retracing Moody’s path down the Caledonian Canal and across the Irish Sea. Their meetings began on September 6, 1874, in Belfast, a strong Protestant enclave that had been experiencing pressure from Catholic immigration, swarming in to fill jobs in the growing industrial city and making up a third of the population. Just ten years earlier, the city of 140,000 had experienced riots between Catholic and Protestant workers, leaving nearly fifty dead and hundreds injured.

By the time Moody arrived in Ireland, “he was on his way to becoming a Christian superstar on both sides of the Atlantic.”<sup>18</sup> The same applied to Sankey. While collections of Moody’s sermons began to be published, copies of *Sacred Songs and Solos* were spreading throughout the British Isles, a dissemination on the verge of exploding in the coming years. By the time the pair had finished their earlier tour in Edinburgh, accounts of their amazing ministry were already being prepared for publication, and within three years, over a dozen accounts of their work in England had been published.<sup>19</sup> In addition, Ira was being sought out by the religious press to provide interviews. *Times of Blessing* for September 3 published “Singing for Jesus,” in which Sankey discussed his vision:

I am convinced that there is lying almost dormant in the Church a power for most incalculable good, which is being overlooked by many of the leaders of the Lord’s hosts today: I refer to the power of teaching the truth in sacred song. Why should not singing, the power of every Church, be developed and encouraged?<sup>20</sup>

As usual, their campaign began on Sunday morning with an address to Christian workers, this one at 8:00AM in Dugall’s Square Chapel, on the necessity of entire devotion and unwearied labor, something both Moody and Sankey seemed to personify. Common to the meetings was the problem of having crowds greater than planned. On Monday evening, the throng was so vast outside Rosemary Street Church, Moody had to improvise for the remainder of the week, scheduling 2:00PM meetings for women at Fisher-

wick Place Church and allowing only men in the 8:00PM evening assemblies. Enthusiasm in the surrounding area even prodded the nearby city of Bangor to begin holding its own services, staffed by Henry Moorehouse and others.<sup>21</sup>

Widespread enthusiasm didn't mean the meetings were entirely without opposition, however. On the second day, a man interrupted the proceedings, saying Moody "had no business being in the pulpit." Moody usually covered any commotion with a hymn, and Ira was at the ready to keep things flowing smoothly and minimize disturbances. The heckler was arrested, but initially-hostile local papers said the fine imposed was a "small price to pay for telling our American guests off."<sup>22</sup> On the whole, such occurrences were minor exceptions to exuberant crowds.

Ira's dynamic and captivating stage personality allowed him to preside over some of the most challenging meetings, filled with energetic and squirming young people, as he did at the children's meeting on Saturday, the 12th of September. In truth, an auditorium filled with boisterous juveniles was more likely to be engaged by Sankey's singing and stories than Moody's preaching. On Sunday, Ira continued to sing from a repertoire containing a couple dozen solos that worked well as a response to Moody's preaching and rarely failed to move hearers to tears. "Jesus of Nazareth Passeth By" was one of those favorites, producing "glistening eyes and deep sighs" as he followed up the sermon on Mark 16:15, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel."<sup>23</sup>

In addition to the collection of solos Ira had on hand, he could also summon a core of hymns that served to quickly focus the attention of a crowd. During an outdoor meeting at Templemore Park, which drew 10,000 to 15,000 in attendance, a platform was erected on two wagons, so the strong wind could help carry the speakers' voices toward the audience. Soon after the crowd began singing the requested hymn, it immediately became obvious to Ira that a disaster was in the making, the result of either unfamiliarity or inability to hear each other. So he stopped the errant singers after one stanza and requested a change to the familiar Psalm 100, with which they often opened their meetings. Order was quickly restored and the meeting was back on course. Standing in front of thousands required quick thinking and determined leadership.<sup>24</sup>

After an extended stay in October, which greatly inspired him and restored his ailing health, David Sankey took leave of his son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren—two of which had become like his own sons in their parents' absence—and journeyed 3500 miles back to New Castle.<sup>25</sup>

While the Belfast meetings continued under the direction of local ministers, the two evangelists boarded a Saturday evening train and traveled some seventy miles northwest to Londonderry—the name preferred by its loyalist English inhabitants—or Derry, to its growing Catholic population. There they spent four days, October 11 to 14, in an intense campaign, diminished only on Monday evening by a drenching downpour. In these meetings, Moody made special recognition of the assisting local choir, which he felt was well organized and sang more sweetly than any of the choirs he had yet heard.

He also made a pointed plea to encourage the churches to look beyond limiting themselves to singing only the Psalms. “A new hymn was just as good as a sermon. They could sing the Gospel into many a man’s heart. [Moody] hoped the Church would feel alive to its duty in this matter of praise, and not be hindered by prejudice, which is the twin sister of unbelief.” While such advice might appear as spiritual common sense, it was, in fact, quite a direct challenge to churches like First Presbyterian—where some of the revival services were being held—who still opposed musical instruments for congregational song.<sup>26</sup>

Returning to Belfast on Thursday, Moody and Sankey began to wrap up the campaign there. That evening, admittance to the meeting was by ticket only, given out to those who were earnestly seeking spiritual guidance, and over 2,400 responded to the assembly held in St. Enoch’s Church. The closing service on Friday night was for young converts, and 2,150 tickets were applied for. A remarkable harmony filled the air as Ira led the enthusiastic new converts in singing, “Oh happy day that fixed my choice, on Thee my Savior and my God.” Afterward, Ira was presented with an impressive green-leather, gold-embossed commemorative certificate of appreciation by members of the choir.

Address to Mr. Ira D. Sankey of Chicago, United States

We the Members of the Choir who have had the honour of being associated with you in the series of Evangelistic Meetings held in this town during the past six weeks, desire before you leave us to convey to you some slight expression of our Christian love and esteem. We have felt it a high privilege to co-operate with you in this glorious work. . . . We pray that you be long spared to engage in this delightful service. . . .



William Edgar, Secretary  
Belfast, 16th October, 1874

Accompanying the certificate was a photograph of the choir, taken some time before, posed with Ira and his pump organ on the steps of the church.<sup>27</sup>

By this point, Sankey was slowly but surely incorporating the choir into a more effective element of his musical ministry. And he couldn't help but be appreciative as it relieved him of the total musical responsibility for an entire service. Asking the choir to sing an unfamiliar song for the congregation was a welcome rest for a voice that had already sung two or three services earlier in the day. And during those congregational songs of four stanzas, Ira could hold back on a few in the middle and save his voice for the final chorus. And best of all—from a vocal standpoint—in those locations where the acoustics were terrible and Ira would normally be forced to push his voice to be heard, the choir was a great asset.

Many of the services were also preceded by twenty to thirty minutes of congregational singing. This was quite helpful, to involve a congregation that potentially arrived an hour early for the service from getting too restless. Ira did not lead this, as he usually arrived on the platform along with Moody, promptly at the announced service time. But having a choir to help the appointed chorister sustain that effort was a seminal contribution.<sup>28</sup>

By the year 1700, the city of Dublin—where Moody and Sankey next campaigned—was under English control and could boast a population of sixty thousand, making it the second largest city in the British Isles, after London. During the Hanoverian dynasty (George I, II), the city underwent a vast rebuilding scheme, with the Wide Streets Commission demolishing congested medieval lanes and replacing them with a grid plan, opening up the area for handsome Georgian mansions. During that century, the Protestant Ascendancy controlled both houses of Ireland's Parliament, which was located there. Dublin was the center of Irish political life and all the power and money that followed.

In addition to the city's growing wealth, it attracted a certain level of culture. On April 13, 1742, George Frideric Handel chose Neal's Music Hall on Fishamble Street for the premiere of his latest oratorio, *Messiah*. Like many ancient towns, a curious mix of residences and businesses existed cheek-by-jowl. The Music Hall was almost within earshot of Christ Church Cathedral, a block away, which supplied choristers for Handel's work. But

to get there, one had to pass by Copper Alley off of Fishamble Street, home to Maiden Tower brothel, run by the infamous Dorcas “Darkey” Kelly, who just a few years later was hanged—to a degree—then burned for murder. Her gruesome death and tales of witchcraft produced legends that lived long after her demise.<sup>29</sup>

But such neighborhoods were typical for the times and didn’t discourage a highly fashionable crowd from seeking entrance to Handel’s new offering. Seven hundred patrons attended the first concert, with demand for tickets being so great, a notice in the local papers requested gentlemen to dispense with swords and ladies not to wear hoop skirts in order to provide sufficient room in the hall. Unlike its cool reception in London a year later, the work garnered widespread praise in Dublin and Handel scheduled an additional performance.

While the eighteenth century saw Dublin’s star rising, tensions with the native Catholic population led to a faction known as the United Irishmen planning to take over the city in 1798. Although their plan was thwarted, the Crown reacted strongly, and in 1801, with the Irish Act of Union, which merged Ireland with Great Britain, the Irish legislature was disbanded and Dublin ceased to be the nation’s capital. Having lost its most potent connection to wealth, the city failed to keep up with Belfast and Liverpool, whose metropolises enjoyed important natural resources and found themselves central to the growing Industrial Revolution. Dublin’s biggest employer was the Guinness Brewery, which by 1886 would become the largest in the world. Over the course of the century, Catholic migration from the countryside and access to growing political power resulted in their mustering a two-to-one majority of the vote.

With the invasion of Moody and Sankey on October 18, 1874, and their host of supporting preachers and friends, both local and imported, the stage was set for a possible confrontation. The city’s leading newspaper, *The Nation*, bragged of the Irish being not “as gullible as the Scots,” and Dubliners would have no patience with preachers of the “roaring type,” in an apparent reference to the revivals of an earlier decade when lay preachers often gained more attention from their theatrical delivery than the message of salvation. Attendance at the meetings, assured the paper, would result from free admission and the lack of other attractions for those easily entertained.<sup>30</sup>

Moody was certainly sensitive to the religious environment and advertised himself as a lay preacher; he professed in an open letter to the newspa-

pers, there would be no “political Protestantism” at his meetings, a significant admission in a country where religious differences were overlaid with political ones. Here, Moody was trying to separate himself as a religious Protestant from the political Protestant world of Irish life, in which many still told tales of Protestant street gangs—the Liberty Boys—brawling with Catholic ones—the Ormonde Boys—in the rougher neighborhoods.

Revival services attracted not only curious Catholic attendees but also reporters from the Catholic press who were impressed with the immense crowds and a message of “forbearance and sympathy,” which seemed appropriate for the times. Some writers were downright supportive of the revival, considering the larger dangers of secularism and the latest evolutionary theories. As an editorial entitled “Fair Play” in *The Nation* explained:

... 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.<sup>31</sup>

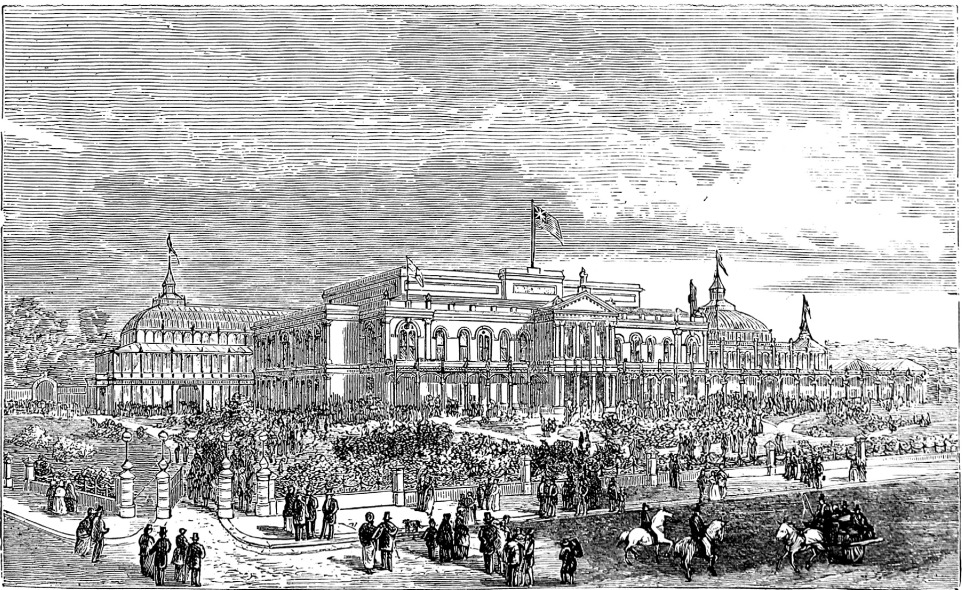
Moody tried to be sensitive to Catholics who might attend the services and avoided calling out Catholicism by name. In addition, for any Catholic who might venture into the Inquiry Meetings after the service, they were offered a Douay-Rheims edition of the Scriptures, rather than the Protestant King James version.<sup>32</sup> That translation of the Bible from Latin, beginning in 1582, was published with commentary by Roman Catholics to counter the impact of the Protestant Reformation and its translations into the vernacular in various lands.

Over the course of the meetings, a conspicuous number of Roman Catholics attended, including two young men who noticed a couple of priests, to whom they had made confession, in the crowd—lightly disguised. Another priest strode in with a Sankey hymn book in hand, while yet another, when asked by a parishioner about the propriety of attending, was told “there could be no harm in hearing about Jesus.”<sup>33</sup>

Despite scattered support from individual Catholics, the official judgment of Cardinal-Archbishop Cullen was to say Moody and Sankey were

“roving minstrels and speculative travelers,” and “Sons of Sceva,” a reference to Acts 11:19–20, in which the apostle Paul accused those exorcists of healing in Jesus’ name with being false prophets. The Catholic press also delighted in presenting examples of anyone suffering from intoxication or mental illness at the meetings as proof of the evangelists being “ranters,” stirring up trouble.<sup>34</sup>

Services began on Sunday with a slightly altered schedule, including two meetings, a Christian workers’ assembly at 8:00AM and a general afternoon session at 4:00PM. The lack of Sunday morning and evening meetings (at 11:00AM and 7:00PM) reflected a desire to avoid competing with regular church services. Weekday evening meetings were held at the huge twenty-thousand seat Exhibition Hall, modeled on the Crystal Palace in London and originally built by a local entrepreneur to promote the Industrial Revolution, which was late in coming to Ireland. Employing the Exhibition Hall for regular evening meetings, rather than the largest churches in the city, reflected a move to utilize “secular” locations capable of housing the growing crowds, and perhaps also providing a more neutral venue for Roman Catholics, or other various skeptics who might feel uncomfortable in a church. Apparently this was not part of the original planning for the meetings—for the hall was secured at the last minute—but it signaled a methodology that would become the norm for upcoming meetings in London and in the evan-



**Exhibition Hall, Dublin**, in W.H. Daniels, *D.L. Moody and His Work* (1876)

gelists' campaigns in America. It would also provide the model for countless successful evangelists for the next century, such as Billy Sunday, J. Wilbur Chapman, and Billy Graham.

The large crowds filling the hall resulted from a conjunction of many factors: (1) The widespread popularity in the religious and secular press covering Moody and Sankey, even before their arrival. The services and Moody's sermons received more and more front-page attention, and reporters sometimes followed the pair around. Even in that era, Moody and Sankey achieved notoriety to a degree because they were famous. Readers liked to know about famous people. (2) Cooperation and support of ministers across a wide variety of dogmas. (3) The use of neutral or "secular" meeting spaces, especially when they were easily accessible. (4) General curiosity and "civic spectacle," and (5) attraction to the music, coupled with Ira's charismatic leadership.

One long-circulated story recounted a Dublin music hall in which a comedian began his act with "I am rather Moody to-night; how do you feel?" whereupon another retorted, "I feel rather Sankey-monious"—an obvious word-play on "sanctimonious." Supposedly, the audience arose as one and began singing "Hold the fort, for I am coming."<sup>35</sup> It's unclear whether that response resulted from the comedians' poor delivery or from the audience's sympathy with the revivalists. What it does suggest is that "Hold the Fort" was so popular, at least some—who obviously enjoyed this form of entertainment—had become familiar with it outside the revival meetings. It seems those contagious new songs had turned, in many quarters, into the popular music of the moment.

In Dublin, the Sankeys lodged with merchant and banker David Drummond, the uncle of soon-to-be-famous Professor Henry Drummond, Scottish evangelist, biologist, and lecturer. Henry was a strong supporter of revival efforts in Great Britain and became a close friend of Moody, who called him the most Christ-like man he had ever known. His meditation on 1 Corinthians 13 (the famous "love chapter")—*The Greatest Thing in the World*—was published that very year, going on to sell twelve million copies. In 1883, Drummond authored the highly influential *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, which attempted to reconcile the Bible and evolutionary ideas into what would become known as theistic evolution, wherein God was thought to use the evolutionary process to populate the world.<sup>36</sup> Staying with the Sankeys was Mrs. Douglas, the widow of a Free Church of Scotland



minister. She possessed a “splendid voice” and prepared the revival choir, sometimes leading it in Ira’s absence.<sup>37</sup>

Moody and Sankey labored six weeks in Dublin, from October 18 through November 29, with noon meetings in the recently constructed Metropolitan Hall and evening meetings in the Exhibition Hall. As one approached the meeting place, a sense of expectation and excitement grew as the crowd became more dense, and noise from young boys hawking hymn books added to the commotion. Nearby, policemen were present, trying to keep order among the crowd, which at times began pushing when the doors opened, causing no little fright to some seeking entrance. Upon gaining entry, “ushers with portentous long wands, that could reach ever so far to any unruly one,” guided worshippers to various seating, marked by large placards pointing “To the Gallery,” “To the Platform,” or “To the Inquiry Room.”<sup>38</sup>

Some who came to the meetings were not necessarily interested in finding God and caused quite a commotion in the balcony by noisily promenading around during the opening Sunday afternoon service. Yet others, who possessed a spiritual interest but not necessarily a sense of “religious dignity” sang with more enthusiasm than skill. There was plenty of somber reverence, however, when a local pastor opened the evening service with “a long extemporaneous prayer, remarkable for much earnestness of manner and for tautology”<sup>39</sup> (saying the same thing in different words), an approach to prayer detested by Moody.

One of the curious Dubliners attending the meetings was an eighteen-year-old George Bernard Shaw, who some months later wrote a critical letter about the meetings to *Public Opinion*, published on April 3, 1875, perhaps constituting the author and critic’s first appearance in print!<sup>40</sup>

To visitors from Scotland, there was a noticeable difference between them and the Irish, who seemed more talkative and approachable. Emma Moody was quite surprised to be told (without inquiring) by one Irish attendee that the lady preferred Mr. Sankey over Mr. Moody—then asked Mrs. Moody whom she liked better.<sup>41</sup> That preference for Sankey possibly resulted from his special sensitivity for choosing the appropriate song after Moody’s message, a difficult task considering Moody didn’t always know what he would preach until the last minute.<sup>42</sup> Of course, Sankey was ready with his repertoire of tried-and-true solos, which had been accumulating over the years, the latest being his recent improvisation on Elizabeth Clephane’s poem, “The Ninety and Nine,” by now being requested by that name.



So when Moody preached on “Excuses,” Sankey followed with “Nothing but Leaves,” its unusual silences placed just before the final repeated statements, thus emphasizing the emptiness of those excuses.

*Nothing but leaves! The Spirit grieves o'er years of wasted life;  
O'er sins indulged while conscience slept,  
O'er vows and promises unkept, and reap from years of strife—  
... Nothing but leaves!  
... Nothing but leaves!*<sup>43</sup>

Although Moody valued Sankey's care in choosing music, his own sensitivity to criticism sometimes overrode his better judgement. While Sankey often selected “Sowing the seed by the daylight fair” after Moody's sermon on “Sowing and Reaping,” the preacher surprised his soloist one day by requesting he never sing it again. Moody was apparently concerned to the degree that he began announcing which solo he desired Sankey to render following his sermon. After some time, when Moody was no longer announcing his choices, Sankey slowly began reintroducing the song and it became accepted, with even Moody calling for it on occasion.

It appears Moody's initial resistance resulted from the song being criticized by one of the prominent ministers, who, on first hearing, said if Ira kept singing it, he would “have them all dancing.”<sup>44</sup> Although the song was written in a lilting 6/8 meter, it is more likely the offended minister was responding to the oom-pah-pah accompaniment furnished for the song by composer P.P. Bliss—perhaps suggesting to him a Scottish reel!

While the evangelist's decision possibly seemed a bit arbitrary to Ira, it wasn't the first time Moody had censored Sankey's musical choices. About a year earlier, back in Newcastle, when Ira was preparing the first publication of *Sacred Songs and Solos*, Moody requested Ira to exclude “Memories of Galilee,” as it had offended a “prominent and distinguished lady” who felt it was not an appropriate type of hymn. Ira indicated he needed some new solos, and he felt it was a good song, plus it had already been sent to the publishers. A few months later, when the same complainant heard Ira sing “Memories,” she told Moody it was one of the most beautiful songs she had ever heard. Again, it seems probable her initial negativity resulted from the contrasting accompanying parts of alto, tenor, and bass, which formed a sort of answer to the jagged melody, representing a style very much unlike like a traditional hymn, in which all parts move at the same time.<sup>45</sup>

Overall, Moody's judgement about the impact of a song was no thoughtless reflex. As one close friend reported, "It was always interesting to watch Mr. Moody when [Sankey] was singing. He scanned the faces, watching the effect with deepest interest. I believe while he looked, he prayed. Sankey's singing was very powerful in its effects on the great audiences."<sup>46</sup>

There were times, however, when Moody's spontaneity produced no little confusion when managing thousands of people. Primarily, this related to dealing with inquirers after the evening meetings were completed. One of Moody's friends who often assisted in the Inquiry Room admitted how, even after two weeks in Dublin, "the workers had not quite learned Mr. Moody's ways of working—and they were really difficult to follow, for he varied his movements in details, . . . and in an enormous place like the Exhibition Palace it was very difficult to catch up with the details."<sup>47</sup>

Nevertheless, . . . his powers of regulation and order have full opportunity of development, for, every few months, he meets a new set of people to work with . . . men who them-selves are accustomed to lead, and are therefore the less suited to follow; and yet he succeeds in overcoming all these difficulties, and reigning by common consent of all.<sup>48</sup>

Dublin meetings concluded with a three-day convention.<sup>49</sup> Eight hundred ministers from all over Ireland attended the first day, dealing with issues related to winning the lost. On day two, Moody preached to two thousand converts. And on day three, the ministers regathered at the Exhibition Palace.

Aged ministers bowed their gray hairs, and wept at times for joy. A minister would grasp the hand of another he had never seen before, merely because he sat beside him. One might sit, at first, with a look of wonder and almost contempt, but further on in the day his face would quiver with emotion. Now for the first time in the meetings the excitement would not be controlled, but broke out in applause that even the self-recollection of some, and the cry of "Hush!" did not always repress. In truth, the atmosphere was electric.<sup>50</sup>

Sankey, who was so gifted at judging the moment, suddenly launched into "Hold the Fort." And what a perfect choice it was. It almost seemed to

have been created for such an instant, as a lone lookout calls to his compatriots, “Ho, my comrades, see the signal, waving in the sky! Reinforcements now appearing, victory is nigh.” It was no less than a clarion cry from one evangelist to his “comrades” in the faith to be loyal soldiers. Sankey’s perceptive insight into the song’s poetic and narrative nature made it literally explode with life for those who had just been challenged by Moody’s sermon. So, by the time he got to the chorus, the assembled throng couldn’t restrain itself and burst forth, “Wave the answer back to heaven. ‘By thy grace we will.’” The effect was “overpowering and altogether indescribable. Such a scene was never witnessed in Ireland before, for there had never been such a meeting. It was the first time that all these ministers had met on a platform broader than their churches.”<sup>51</sup>

Clearly, by the end of the Dublin meetings, Moody and Sankey’s work had gained a critical mass, which created its own momentum, as glimpsed in a sarcastic yet revealing news article from a “Dublin correspondent”:

Everybody in Dublin is now talking about Moody and Sankey. When I say “everybody,” I hardly think I exaggerate . . . because I meet a good many sorts of people and they all tell me that everyone is talking of Moody and Sankey. If you go into a shop to buy gloves, the young lady who tries them on for you . . . asks you as she wrestles with your little finger . . . “Have you been to hear Moody and Sankey yet, sir? I think they are just splendid.” The waiter in your restaurant, as he whisks about with his napkin says, “Been to hear Moody and Sankey yet, sir? No sir? That’s a pity, sir; everyone goes, sir; very amusing, sir.”

After providing additional entertaining illustrations, he continued:

People come up a hundred miles to hear them. In the house in which I lodge there are at the present moment four people who have come up from the country and taken their lodgings for a month just for the purpose of attending Moody and Sankey’s meetings. . . . I lodge on Stephens’ Green, near the Exhibition Palace, and in the evenings the formerly-quiet streets thereabouts resound with shouts of boys, men, and women who seek to sell hymn-books. “Yer’s yer penny hymn-book, thrupence, large print, or sixpence with the music.” . . . They are “the great American Evangelists,” and have taken the town by storm.<sup>52</sup>

With growing popularity came growing organizational pressures. Up to that time, Moody had simply checked each day's incoming mail to see what needed an urgent reply, then delegated the task to his wife Emma.<sup>53</sup> But now the amount of correspondence Moody needed to address had become unmanageable, so he employed an assistant to help answer the mountain of letters he was receiving.<sup>54</sup> As the scope of their labors had expanded, it seems the ministry was turning into a business.

But it was a business taking place behind the scenes. While it could have appeared to most of the public and the press as though huge crowds magically appeared when Moody and Sankey came to town, that was far from the case. By the time the evangelists arrived in a new location on a Sunday morning, well-oiled committees had long been at work. These included prayer assemblies, which had convened for months to petition God to bless the coming revival. It also constituted an interdenominational communion service the week before, attracting two thousand participants. On a marketing level, thousands of cards were printed with an invitation from Moody on one side and the song "Jesus of Nazareth Passeth By" on the other. These were distributed house-to-house by teams of two persons with the immediate object of getting the gospel into every home, rather than just inviting the curious to evangelistic services. But it did succeed in advertising the meetings in an effective way.<sup>55</sup>

That was certainly the case by the time Moody and Sankey departed Dublin and journeyed nearly two hundred miles directly east across the Irish Sea to England and the country's major industrial center of Manchester. While many in that metropolis were getting rich off the booming textile trade—boasting one hundred eight cotton mills by 1853 and earning the epithet of "Cottonopolis"—Friedrich Engels, who had invited Karl Marx to visit him in 1845, observed indescribable misery on every hand, producing *The Condition of the Working Class in England*<sup>56</sup> and becoming a powerful apologist for what would become Marxism.

Manchester was a cauldron of ideas and currents, boasting the famous Art Treasures Exhibit of 1857, visited by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert; the soon-to-be renowned Halle Orchestra; and being home to the University of Manchester, where Ernest Rutherford would first split the atom. But it was also a center of labor strife and would become, in the twentieth century, the cradle of the Labour and Suffragette movements. It exemplified the "very best and very worst of cities taken to terrifying extremes."<sup>57</sup>

By the time Moody and Sankey arrived in Manchester on November 28, Emma Moody and the two children had already departed for London and were staying in Hampstead with Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Mackay Matheson, a prominent London industrialist.<sup>58</sup> Sankey had a wife, two young boys, and a three-month-old infant in tow. Instead of battling Chicago snowstorms, Moody and Sankey had to contend with the English rainy season, which also greeted those attending that first Sunday morning service with a drenching rain. Yet, in spite of the deluge, the 8:00AM meeting in Oxford Hall was filled to overflowing. Moody preached on “Courage, Perseverance, and Love,” which Ira followed with “Here Am I, Send Me.”<sup>59</sup>

The downpour continued unabated throughout the afternoon, yet Oxford Hall was again filled, with the overflow shunted to Free Trade Hall, where patient but curious attendees listened to various local ministers until Moody and Sankey arrived from the previous meeting, now replaying at least part of their previous singing and preaching. The response at the meetings was tremendous, with many requesting prayer or seeking to make a profession of faith. Noon prayer assemblies saw nearly three thousand in attendance; afternoon meetings were reserved for women, with men being the focus of those in the evening.

Even partially skeptical ministers were forced to confess, “Manchester, I rejoice to say, is now on fire. The most difficult of all English cities, perhaps, to be set on fire by anything but politics, is now fairly ablaze, and the flames are breaking out in all directions.”<sup>60</sup> While religious hyperbole was common in describing what were considered supernatural events, there was widespread agreement that something special was happening in Manchester—something experienced ministers could not recall in their past memory.

Of course, such feelings were not unique to this city but seemed to follow Moody and Sankey wherever they went. For some inexplicable reason, the Holy Spirit seemed to accompany these two men with a special outpouring of God’s blessing in seeing lives redeemed and changed to an extent that had only been dreamed of for decades. And to many, it seemed all the more improbable because Moody was a plain-spoken businessman with no dramatic rhetoric to drive crowds into fits of hysteria; he just spoke in conversational American English, sometimes fracturing it horribly. And Sankey simply sat behind a little pump organ and offered up gospel solos without any noticeable vocal flourishes or acrobatics or impressive high notes. To many, it certainly seemed as if the Spirit of God was powerfully at work.

That power was evident in Sankey's singing as well as Moody's preaching, as reported about

. . . an old gentleman seventy years of age, who had been seeking Christ for thirteen years. He had come a far journey in order to be present at these meetings. Still, he could not find peace. Last Friday evening, as Mr. Sankey was singing "The Ninety and Nine," the light burst in upon his soul: "That's me; Jesus has been seeking me all these years, wandering upon the mountains." He accepted salvation there and then, and found peace in believing.<sup>61</sup>

While thousands descended nightly on the evangelistic meetings, there were still plenty enough of Mancunians (inhabitants of Manchester) to frequent popular entertainment, such as the famous pantomimes or "pantos." Performed during the winter season, pantos were stage productions appropriate for family consumption. Loosely based on a folk or fairy tale, a production would likely include songs, gags, slapstick comedy, and dancing. There were often gender-crossing actors and topical humor. The audience was expected to sing along or join in the gags. While ostensibly aimed at children, there was enough "blue humor," or sly sexual innuendo, to keep the attention of adults. English pantomimes were similar to American Vaudeville entertainment.

On one Saturday evening during the revival meetings, the Theatre Royal was hosting a pantomime. And just before the "transformation scene" usually concluding Act 1, when the stage magically metamorphosed into a fairy land or exotic locale, a bit of topical humor was often inserted, combining singing or a skit, commenting on news of the week. On that evening, the comedian, Mr. Cook, began making sarcastic comments about the revival meetings to the tune of a popular song, "He's a Fraud,"<sup>62</sup> with the line: "We know that Moody and Sankey are doing some good in their way," setting up the audience for a punch line. But the response was both rowdy cheers from a portion of the audience plus hisses and boos from another section, especially in the dress circle (first balcony). Not to be silenced by a little opposition—which was part of the panto tradition in which the audience openly showed its approval or disapproval—Cook repeated his observations. This time, the opprobrium was so great that he was driven from the stage, unable to draw final applause.<sup>63</sup> It's interesting to imagine how some of those parents and children attending the pantomime that evening had also visited Moody and Sankey's children's meeting earlier in the day.



During the closing week of December and the meetings, Moody met with two thousand men at a 9:00PM after-meeting and shared his enthusiasm for the work of the local YMCA. As one of the leading lights for America's associations, he was able to share thrilling tales of countless young men whose lives had been rescued from spiritual ruin by the Y. Like England, America was experiencing a wave of young, single men flocking from the countryside to find work in the progressively industrialized cities—young men with no family roots or opportunities for recreation. He then encouraged the gathered assembly to support the fundraising campaign to purchase the old Museum on Peter Street to house a new facility. The result was an offering of £1,800, one thousand of which came from the chairman of the meeting, Mr. Spencer. Added to their previous contributions, the amount now equaled £8,000 and was pivotal in purchasing the building for the Y's new home the following year, continuing expansion of one of the first YMCAs to be founded in 1846.<sup>64</sup>

On Thursday, December 31, Moody spoke at a noon prayer meeting and read Psalm 103, sharing how this closing of 1874 had been the greatest blessing of any year in his life. Then he and Sankey boarded a train and headed for Sheffield, forty miles to the east, arriving in time to lead two watch-night services—in Temperance Hall at 9:00PM and Albert Hall at 11:00PM—where the faithful had gathered to see the old year out. The second meeting commenced with a new hymn with words by Ira's Edinburgh friend and pastor, the Rev. Horatius Bonar:

*Rejoice and be glad! The Redeemer has come!  
Go look on His cradle, His cross, and His tomb.  
Sound His praises, tell the story of Him who was slain;  
Sound His praises, tell with gladness, He liveth again.*

Ira paired the new text with the familiar tune to “Revive Us Again” by William Paton MacKay (“We praise Thee, O God, for the Son of Thy love”). Combining the new hymn with a beloved melody meant everyone could sing it enthusiastically, an example of Ira fittingly blending the fresh with the familiar as a perfect transition to 1875. ☺

## ENDNOTES

1. Words and music by W.P. McKay, “Revive Us Again,” *Gospel Hymns Nos. 5 & 6 Combined*, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan, and Geo. C. Stebbins, eds. (Cincinnati: John Church Co.; New York: Biglow and Main, 1892), No. 396. The common attribution of the tune to J.J. Husband is an error.
2. David Williamson, *Ira Sankey: The Story of His Life* (London: S.W. Partridge, n.d.), 50, claimed the child’s middle name, Allen, was a Scotch name, given “as a reminder [to his son] of his native place.”
3. There is no documentary evidence to confirm Fanny Sankey returned to the Simpson home for the birth of their child, but as she did return to the city of Edinburgh, where she had earlier stayed with this specialist in childbirth, it only seems logical for this to be the case.
4. As with any changes in long-held traditions, the fuller story is much more nuanced than the result of one dramatic event or person. An excellent explanation of the developments in the Free Church of Scotland is provided in Alasdair J. Macleod, *John Kennedy and the Development of Evangelicalism in the Scottish Highlands, 1843–1900*, dissertation (University of Edinburgh, 2018), 224–28.
5. Elias Nason, *The American Evangelists, Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey* (Boston: D. Lothrop and Co., 1877), 245.
6. Information about Dr. Kennedy’s role in both controversies is found in Macleod, “John Kennedy,” 223–36.
7. Macleod, “John Kennedy,” 229, quoting M.J. Toone, *Evangelicalism in Transition: A Comparative Analysis of the Work and Theology of D.L. Moody and His Protégés Henry Drummond and R.A. Torrey*, dissertation (University of St. Andrews, 1988), 139.  

While Sankey mentor and hymnwriter Horatius Bonar strongly opposed Kennedy’s attacks on Moody’s methods, he was surprisingly tepid in his defense of the organ. “I do not desire it, and I see no advantage in it. . . . We have not introduced it into our church services.” That also apparently applied to the use of hymns. As David Williams observed of Bonar, “His own beautiful hymns are dear to the English-speaking race throughout the world, but I believe he never heard them sung in his own church.” David Williams, *The Life Story of D.L. Moody* (London: The Sunday School Union, [ca. 1901]).
8. Bruce J. Evensen, *God’s Man for the Gilded Age* (Oxford: University Press, 2003), 35, 37.
9. Emma Moody’s diary, 28–31 August 1874.
10. J.[ane] M.[acKinnon], *Recollections of Mr. D.L. Moody and His Work in Britain, 1874–1892* (n.p.: 1901/1905), 27–29.
11. MacKinnon, *Recollections*, 27–29.

12. MacKinnon, *Recollections*, 38, 42.
13. MacKinnon, *Recollections*, 33–34.
14. There is no evidence Sankey actually visited London in August of 1874, although Emma Moody's diary of 4 August 1874, said it was his plan.
15. A.N. Wilson, *The Victorians* (London: Arrow Books, 2003), 78.
16. Wilson, *Victorians*, 80, quoting John Mitchel, *The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)* (Dublin: Irishman Office, 1861).
17. R.W. Strain, *Belfast and Its Charitable Society* (Oxford: University Press, 1961), 269.
18. Evensen, *God's Man*, 37.
19. In addition to coverage in the ephemeral secular and religious newspapers, William G. Blaikie's eight-page pamphlet, *Religious Awakening in Edinburgh with the Visit of Messrs. Moody and Sankey*, seems to have been the first publication singularly devoted to the evangelists. Blaikie was host to the Moodys during their stay in Edinburgh.  
 Of more substantial coverage were the 400+ page tomes of Robert Boyd, *The Wonderful Career of Moody and Sankey in Great Britain and America* (New York: Henry S. Goodspeed, 1875) and Rufus Clark's *The Work of God in Great Britain under Messrs. Moody and Sankey, 1873–1875* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1875). W.H. Daniels' *D.L. Moody and His Work* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1875) was also a fairly early work. By 1875, publications about the evangelists were flying off the presses. For an invaluable resource, see Wilbur M. Smith, *Dwight Lyman Moody: An Annotated Bibliography* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1948), which also contains a helpful chronological summary of Moody's life—and by extension sheds light on Sankey.
20. Evensen lists Robert Peddie's *A Consecutive Narrative of the Remarkable Awakening in Edinburgh under the Labors of Messrs. Moody and Sankey, etc.* (Edinburgh: Partridge, 1874) as perhaps the earliest account. Wilbur M. Smith's *Annotated Bibliography*, 1, also lists it with a publication in London.
20. *Times of Blessing*, 3 September 1874, 324.
21. Will R. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1900), 207.
22. Evensen, *God's Man*, 38, quoting *Belfast Morning News* and *Belfast News-Letter* of 8 September 1874, 2.
23. Clark, *Work of God*, 205–06.
24. MacKinnon, *Recollections*, 49.

25. S.W. and P.A. Durant, *History of Lawrence County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts and Co., 1877), 168.
26. Clark, *Work of God*, 216–17.
27. Certificate of Appreciation and photograph from Moody Archives. Moody Bible Institute.
28. MacKinnon, *Recollections*, 49.
29. While Neal's Music Hall, where *Messiah* was debuted, no longer stands, a pub named Darkey Kelly's operates on Fishamble Street. There is a Handel Hotel next to the former music hall location.
30. Evensen, *God's Man*, 39.
31. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 215.
32. MacKinnon, *Recollections*, 59.
33. Clark, *Work of God*, 230.
34. *The Morning Star and Catholic Messenger*, 29 November 1874, 2.
35. Ira Sankey, *My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1906), 65–66. Evensen, *God's Man*, 39.
36. Henry Drummond, *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1883). *The Greatest Thing in the World* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1894).
37. MacKinnon, *Recollections*, 59. This could have included playing the organ or leading the song service before the preaching meetings began.
38. MacKinnon, *Recollections*, 54, 66, 58.
39. *The Freeman's Journal* (Dublin, Ireland), 20 October 1874, 7.
40. John Pollock, *Moody: The Biography* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 158.
41. Pollock, *Moody*, 56.
42. This oft-repeated claim, meant to demonstrate Moody's spontaneity, can be challenged, as newspapers often printed the revival schedule for the coming week, complete with Moody's sermon titles. That was certainly the case once Moody got to London. Of course, Moody had the option to change his sermon subject, but at some point he was planning what to preach over a week in advance.
43. Words by L.E. Akerman, music by Silas J. Vail, "Nothing but Leaves," *Gospel Hymns Complete* (1894), No. 641.
44. Sankey, *My Life*, 64.
45. Words by Robert Morris, music by H.R. Palmer, "Memories of Galilee" ("Each

cooing dove and sighing bow”). Although the song was included in the British collection *Sacred Songs and Solos*, it didn’t make it into what became the American “Bible” of gospel hymnody, *Gospel Hymns Complete, Nos. 1 to 6*.

46. MacKinnon, *Recollections*, 67.
47. MacKinnon, *Recollections*, 59.
48. MacKinnon, *Recollections*, 78.
49. These were most likely Sunday, November 29, through Tuesday, December 1. However, there was a one-day extension into Wednesday, December 2. MacKinnon, *Recollections*, 74.
50. Clark, *Work of God*, 231–32.
51. Clark, *Work of God*, 232–33.
52. *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, 19 November 1874, 8, supposedly quoting a “Dublin correspondent for the *Pittsburgh Gazette*.” While the article is more entertaining than factual, it reflects the general feeling—of even the skeptical—about the popularity of the evangelists.
53. MacKinnon, *Recollections*, 43.
54. Evensen, *God’s Man*, 40, citing a letter from Moody to W. Crosfield of 31 March 1875.
55. Clark, *Work of God*, 247.
56. Friedrich Engels, *Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England* (Leipzig: 1845), translated into English by Florence Kelly (Wischnewetzky) in 1885. Later editions added the words “in 1844” to the title.
57. Simon Schama, presenter, “Victoria and Her Sisters,” *A History of Britain*. Episode 13. BBC One. 4 June 2002.
58. Emma Moody’s diary, 26 November 1874; MacKinnon, *Recollections*, 82, says Moody took Emma to London, where he also scheduled a meeting with London clergy.
59. Clark, *Work of God*, 238–39.
60. Clark, *Work of God*, 242.
61. Clark, *Work of God*, 248.
62. It’s uncertain what song this might have been, but there’s a good candidate in the music hall song, “You’re a Fraud” with a chorus designed for audience participation, included in *The National Album of New and Popular Comic Songs* (London: Charles Sheard, n.d.), No. 11.
63. Clark, *Work of God*, 263; Sankey, *My Life*, 65.
64. Clark, *Work of God*, 265–66; Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 215.





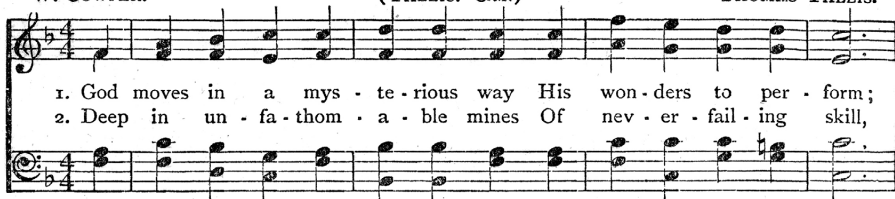
# No. 636. God Moves in a Mysterious Way.

"In the whirlwind and in the storm."—NAHUM i. 3.

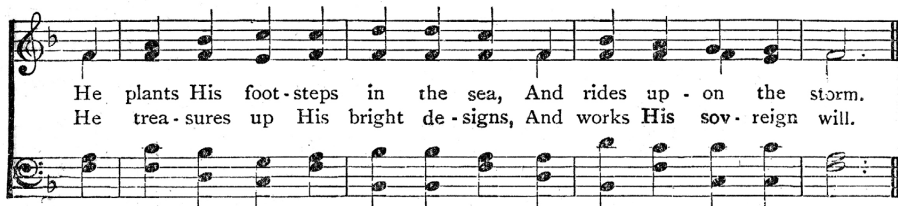
W. COWPER.

(TALLIS. C.M.)

THOMAS TALLIS.



1. God moves in a mys - te - rious way His won - ders to per - form ;  
2. Deep in un - fa - thom - a - ble mines Of nev - er - fail - ing skill,



He plants His foot - steps in the sea, And rides up - on the storm.  
He trea - sures up His bright de - signs, And works His sov - reign will.

3. Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take !  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy ; and will break  
In blessings on your head.
4. Judge not the Lord by feeble sense.  
But trust Him for His grace ;  
Behind a frowning providence  
He hides a smiling face.
5. His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour ;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flower.
6. Blind unbelief is sure to err.  
And scan His work in vain ;  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain.

*Chapter 11*  
“Are Gone Mad Over Moody and Sankey”  
1875

*God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform;  
He plants his footsteps in the sea And rides upon the storm.*

*Ye fearful saints fresh courage take, The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break In blessings on your head.*

*Blind unbelief is sure to err And scan his work in vain;  
God is his own interpreter, And he will make it plain.<sup>1</sup>*

BY 1875, THE YOUTHFUL but now experienced Moody and Sankey were just hitting their strides—enabled in part by near-miraculous developments in transportation. Only a few decades earlier, there had been five stagecoaches traveling between London and Manchester, taking slightly different routes and with varying numbers of stops, requiring between 18 to 22 hours. By the time Moody and Sankey arrived in Manchester, the booming railroad industry had made it possible to shrink distances that normally would take days into a few hours. This allowed Moody to leave Manchester on a Wednesday morning, travel over two hundred miles south to London, spend a few hours with family and friends, and return to Manchester to lead an afternoon prayer service the next day!<sup>2</sup> Embracing the advantages and possibilities of heightened rail travel enabled the men to develop a tight schedule of moving from town to town with a rapidity undreamed of just decades earlier.

The two weeks of meetings in Sheffield commencing on New Year’s Eve were a tremendous success.<sup>3</sup> They were followed by a campaign in Birmingham, proudly self-styled the “Toyshop of the World.” It was also the epicenter of choir music in England, as it hosted the famous Triennial Choral Festival.

Begun in September of 1768 as a music festival to raise money for its local hospital, the event was very popular, and in 1784 it became a perma-

ment fixture, scheduled every three years. Over the next century, the festival drew an impressive array of guests and participants, with the highlight occurring in 1846. That year, the famous German composer Felix Mendelssohn premiered his oratorio *Elijah* (boasting a chorus of 271 singers and an orchestra of 125 players) to massive acclaim—so much so that it was performed every year afterward and became a staple with choral groups around the world.

In 1873, two years before Moody and Sankey's appearance in the town, the festival had commissioned Sir Arthur Sullivan (of operatic Gilbert and Sullivan fame) to compose an oratorio, *The Light of the World*. It's uncertain whether Sankey was aware of the city's rich heritage of choral music, but his revival choir would certainly have benefitted from a pool of experienced singers.

Birmingham was also known as a center of free-thinking and progressive ideas, with Unitarian churches boasting some of the largest congregations. And although there was concern about the city being less enthusiastic than others, that was certainly not the case. In fact, a method that had begun earlier, and of necessity was employed from time to time, was becoming standard operating procedure. For the majority of the revivalists' meetings, the largest churches in a town were reserved for evening sessions, often utilizing additional locales nearby for overflow. Special services, such as closing assemblies, rented larger places such as a Corn Exchange, the Kibble Palace, an Exhibition Hall, or a large outdoor space. But earlier in Dublin, it had become evident from the outset that a larger, secular venue was needed on a regular basis, as crowds outpaced the ability of local churches to host them.

In Birmingham, services began on January 17, 1875, in the massive Bingley Hall, the first purpose-built exhibition edifice in Great Britain. Constructed in 1850, in part, to house the annual cattle show, it could hold from ten to fifteen thousand listeners on wooden folding chairs covering one-and-a-quarter acres of seating. Steel columns—left over from building the local train station—supported trusses carrying five parallel roofs, illuminated with skylights by day and gas jets by night. Crimson cloth was draped from the surrounding galleries, and a massive stage occupied the front of the building, supporting a large sign reading, "God is Love." Considered one of the dreariest-looking buildings in the region, nothing could seem farther from the warm and hallowed confines usually associated with religious meetings. Yet, night after night, masses of the faithful and curious elbowed



R.A. Torrey Preaching in Bingley Hall, Birmingham, 1904,  
in George T.B. Davis, *Torrey & Alexander* (1905).

their way past a shouting hoard of young lads peddling various editions of *Sacred Songs and Solos* for use in the meetings.

It was simply impossible to get a seat close enough to hear anyone on the platform without arriving two hours early. And once the hall was filled to capacity, its ten big doors were shut and locked. Some of the waiting time was filled with songs led by the large choir—which was completely drowned out when the congregation was at full force—with “What Shall the Harvest Be?” and “The Great Physician” being two of the favorites. Other songs fared less well. “Safe in the Arms of Jesus” was apparently so unfamiliar, the congregation had little sense of its time or tune and was asked to stop, being exhorted to “sing quicker, as we were really in the arms of Jesus, and not afraid of them.” The tune selected for “Rock of Ages” was completely novel for the English audience and was abandoned by Sankey after two stanzas.<sup>4</sup> Yet, the music continued to be one of the major draws of the meetings, for as one faithful chronicler observed, “It would be impossible to say whether the audiences are most affected by Mr. Moody’s earnest appeals or Mr. Sankey’s magnificent rendering of some touching hymn.”<sup>5</sup>

Fortunately for Ira, he had the companionship of his growing family when he finally returned to his lodgings after a demanding day of sing-

ing, speaking, and spiritual counsel. It's not clear how much sleep he got at night with a new baby in the bedroom, but he was still happy to be with those he loved.

Moody was alone, however, for Emma and the children had gone to London six weeks earlier. One of the main concerns was for Willie, who had contracted diphtheria back in May of 1874. Sometimes known as the “Strangling Angel of Children,” the toxin *corynebacterium diphtheria* produced a film that slowly coated the throat, making breathing difficult. While the disease was often associated with the working classes, forced into cramped conditions in cities like Birmingham and Sheffield, even royalty were not immune. Just three years later, in 1878, Princess Alice, daughter of Queen Victoria, succumbed to the sickness at thirty-five years of age. Her husband and four of her seven children also contracted the illness, being fatal to her youngest.

London—where Emma and the children had retreated—was, in the winter, a notoriously unhealthy place. As Dickens pictured it in *Bleak House*: “Smoke [was] lowering down from chimney-pots, making a soft black drizzle, with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown snowflakes—gone into mourning one might imagine, for the death of the sun.”<sup>6</sup> The infamous London fog, the result of water vapor sticking to the particulates hanging in the air from factories and from a burgeoning population who used coal for heat, could last a whole week. Although there had been complaints for centuries about the polluted atmosphere, the situation had only worsened in the nineteenth century as the Industrial Revolution came to dominate the cities. Because there were still concerns for Willie Moody's health, Emma was advised to relocate to Bournemouth on the south coast, where they might experience warmer and dryer weather. It would also be free from the toxic air of the capital. Just recently connected by railroads, the town was becoming an important summer seaside destination for Londoners, but during the winter, it offered fresh air. Emma and the children arrived on January 6, 1875, and stayed for two months.<sup>7</sup>

Moody's and Sankey's ministrations in Birmingham lasted two weeks and made a powerful impact on the city. Although the evangelists didn't keep track of numbers, others did, and estimated attendance for the first eight days was 106,000. Another found it interesting enough to record, “. . . it is a curious fact that although the crowds were enormous, very few women fainted.”<sup>8</sup>

But numbers don't relay the personal impact the services possessed. The Rev. Dr. W.R. Dale of Carr's Lane Chapel, and Congregationalism's most respected spokesman, was initially skeptical of the American interlopers. Yet, he was forced to admit:

Of Mr. Moody's own power, 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. 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 to fifteen thousand people for three-quarters of an hour again in the evening, must have some kind of power.

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. . . . I told Mr. Moody that the work was most plainly of God, for I could see no real relation between him and the work he had done. He laughed cheerily, and said he should be very sorry if it were otherwise.<sup>9</sup>

On Tuesday of the final week of meetings, a great all-day convention was held—something that had been a highlight of past campaigns. The 10:00AM service was one of praise, led by Sankey. He shared with the assembled throng how the Bible said more about praise than prayer. And he recounted examples of where singing was central to the victory of God's people, such as when the Levitical choir went out at the head of an army in battle against the Philistines, or when Paul and Silas sang praises to God during their imprisonment.<sup>10</sup> As an old Scottish minister reminded him, “One line of praise was better than a whole page of prayer.” He then led the congregation in the “Old Hundredth Psalm,” a standard in most of their meetings, and closed his segment with the solo, “I have entered the valley of blessing so sweet”<sup>11</sup> with a text by Annie Wittenmeyer, filled with Holiness Movement references to “cleansing” and “perfect love.” And just as Moody had worked out a *modus operandi* for prayer meetings, Bible studies, and evangelistic meetings, so too was Ira refining his ideas about Biblical praise in general and music in revivalism in particular.



By this point, the evangelists were popular enough for the local wags to see them as an appropriate target for ridicule. Perhaps even Moody and Sankey saw the placards posted in the city's Bull Ring—its marketplace—which trumpeted:

*Oh, the town's turned upside down, everybody seems mad,  
When they come to their senses we all shall feel glad,  
For the rich and the poor, and the good and the bad,  
Are gone mad over Moody and Sankey.<sup>12</sup>*

In their final service on Friday, January 29, Moody despaired of the meetings coming to an end, even though he and Sankey were leaving the next day. He reported how the committee could reserve Bingley Hall for another week if those present would commit to support it with their attendance—and there was a great positive response. Part of Moody's enthusiasm was due to the unique construction of their venue. "I must say I've never enjoyed preaching the Gospel more than I have done since we came to Birmingham. We've reached so many people. I only wish we could have such a hall wherever we go. I think if we could only take up Bingley Hall, we would carry it round the world with us."<sup>13</sup>

Unlike most stops on their itinerary, there was a whole week in between the final Birmingham meeting and the next scheduled city, Liverpool. During that week, Sankey got a little breather and spent some time with the family. Moody headed south for Bournemouth where Emma and the children were staying. Like most places Moody traveled to, his fame preceded him and his scheduled address to a crowd of "wealthy and aristocratic residents" on Sunday afternoon, January 31, had to add another service that evening. In between additional preaching services that week, he did get to spend coveted time with the family.<sup>14</sup>

From Bournemouth, Moody headed one-hundred-plus miles to London for an "audition" of sorts before the metropolis' religious leadership. Central, by now, to Moody's accepting the invitation to any city was the promise of widespread support from its religious establishment. While this generally meant backing from the nonconformist wing of evangelicalism—such as Congregationalist, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Independent groups—Moody also hoped for at least some level of approval from the state church, the Church of England.

On Friday, February 5, 1875, Moody and Sankey—who had come down from Birmingham for the meeting—appeared before a crowd of two

thousand ministers and Christian workers at the imposing Free Mason’s Hall in London. It was a combination organizational and promotional event, designed to display the live preacher before those who had only read about him in the religious press. Mr. Stone, a London merchant from Blackheath, chaired the meeting and introduced Moody. Realizing his audience included supporters, opponents, and those on the fence, the evangelist admitted there were innumerable “obstacles” to holding a campaign in London, but all would be solved if they could “meet together and come to an understanding.” He then went on to explain and defend some of the issues that had caused opposition.<sup>15</sup>

He spoke in detail about the Inquiry Room, which was a novel technique in dealing with spiritual concerns. He assured the skeptical of there being no “undue excitement” in those meetings, and “Very often in a room with one hundred inquirers one could hear scarcely a whisper.” Another charge was in regard to Moody replacing the gospel with a focus on Temperance. One questioner inquired if Moody had a financial interest in the religious periodical *The Christian*, which had been promoting the meetings since their arrival in England.

And yet another accusation involved Moody and Sankey getting rich from the sale of *Sacred Songs and Solos*, the songbook used in their meetings. As a result of this criticism, the pair stated they would no longer take any royalties from the books, as had been the case up to that point, but would direct further monies to a committee, chaired by H.M. Matheson, which would funnel the money to charitable causes.

A different question addressed the rumor in which Sankey was allegedly an agent of organ firms—primarily Smith American Organ Company—and was promoting their wares. The rumor had been fanned by the likes of *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, reporting on Sankey:

He has also a fine, ringing baritone voice, . . . and sings very slowly, accompanying himself on an [Smith] American organ (for the sale of which they say he is an agent).<sup>16</sup>

Moody vehemently denied this and proffered the explanation that the American company was loaning them instruments for some of their meetings, but was getting no publicity in return. On the larger question of finances, he concluded:

We do not want your money; we want your confidence and we want your sympathy and prayers, and as our one object in coming here is to preach Christ, we believe we shall have them, and that with God's blessing we shall see many brought into His fold. If we make mistakes, come and tell us. Then I shall not fear for the result.<sup>17</sup>

Various questions followed concerning rumors that had circulated about Roman Catholic participation, Moody's doctrinal position, communion, and what churches the revivalists would send converts back to.

Hostility appeared openly in the question and answer session, but Moody kept his head and ended up making a good impression, even on many not inclined to sympathize with the work. . . . Moody's flair for effective preparation and promotion of his revivals, and his delicately tuned sense of timing revealed themselves. Once again his native shrewdness in turning a potentially volatile and unpleasant situation to his advantage came to the fore.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to Moody's skillful handling of a potentially threatening environment, Ira was on hand to direct the music. Moody had long known how there were few better ways to create a feeling of unity and singular purpose than asking Christian brothers and sisters to lift their voices in praise. And no one could do this better than Ira Sankey. When he finally addressed his inquisitors, he spoke about both spiritual and practical matters. Realizing how the mass meetings of Moody and Sankey would be preceded by many services in their local assemblies and that musical preparation would be involved, he challenged the ministers to be certain that only Christians—and not just those with musical credentials—would be chosen to lead music in the services. Those who wished to be in the revival choir should practice the new songs between then and March, and he would try to come to London and meet with them one day to provide guidance and inspiration.<sup>19</sup>

Advertisements began appearing in *The Christian*—whose subscription was being subsidized and sent to all British pastors—saying, “a choir is being formed to aid the singing at the evangelistic meeting in March. Mr. Sankey requests that all who are willing to help will send their names. Address to Capt. Hon. R. Moreton, Conference Hall, Mildmay Park, N. Only those who can furnish good reference as to Christian character will be accepted.”<sup>20</sup>

In addition to defining his beliefs and practices, Moody used the meeting to present his organizational approach for the London meetings. “The plan as it lies in my mind, is something like this: that London should be divided into four districts, and that we should spend a month in the north, one in the south . . . east . . . west. We must have buildings that will reach at least 10,000 to 15,000 people,” because if they held meetings in local churches, members would come hours early, filling up the spaces so that non-members couldn’t get in. “The success of our [past] meetings has been their failure, because we cannot get at the class of people we would like. We have found this at Dublin and also at Birmingham.”<sup>21</sup>

Overall, Moody’s sincerity and Ira’s winning ways seemed to convince skeptics and fence-sitters, eliciting a promise of unified support. It probably helped for the pair to eschew any further royalties from the new song collection. The way was now clear: Moody and Sankey would soon come to London.

The city of Liverpool on the Mersey River—the next location for Moody-Sankey—was at times wealthier than even London. Owing to its vast cotton imports, which fed the booming English textile industry, it developed strong financial ties to the American South during the Civil War, making it the Confederacy’s strongest overseas supporter. It also enjoyed some of the earliest rail connections to other large cities. And its seaport regularly birthed large ships operated by the White Star Line, which focused upon the Liverpool-to-New York crossing. Its most famous vessel would later be remembered as the *Titanic*.

Moody and Sankey were both humble men who believed God was responsible for pouring out the unimagined blessings of the last twenty months. Yet it certainly must have crept into the corners of their minds how their current heralded entry into Liverpool contrasted with their ignominious landing on its shore back on June 17 of 1873, unknown, unprepared, and ready to go home. Now they were celebrities whose coming was trumpeted by the religious and secular press. Local ministers vied for their time, and organizing committees planned out every detail in advance. People of every class were heard singing Sankey’s songs, and converts by the thousands were finding God. Churches were being renewed and entire cities seemed to be on fire with revival. As William Cowper’s beloved hymn pondered: “God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.”<sup>22</sup>

One of the most conspicuous of those wonders was Victoria Hall, a newly constructed and purpose-built arena for the month’s-long series of

meetings, which began on February 7. It had been evident for some time, perhaps since meetings in Ireland, that holding services in local churches was simply not sufficient for the crowds, forcing Moody and Sankey to scurry from one meeting to another in the same evening to address the overflow. A different approach was required. While a few large halls such as Bingley in Birmingham addressed some of the challenges of holding large congregations, many still remained—such as waiting an hour for the hall to clear so Moody could meet with inquirers. Because no church in Liverpool was large enough to hold the expected crowds, it was decided early in the planning process to construct a temporary facility.

Fortunately for the organizing committee, an empty lot at Victoria and Crosshall Streets, scheduled to be the location for the city's new law courts, was available for two or three months.<sup>23</sup> What would become Victoria Hall was the result, at a cost of four thousand pounds sterling, requiring thirty-nine days to build, and constructed entirely of wood. Unlike Bingley Hall's limited exits, this one had twenty doors, all opening outward, so the crowds of eight thousand—calculated at seventeen inches wide per seat—could quickly disperse. The hall also contained two Inquiry Rooms—central to the work of the evangelists—and both ladies' and gentlemen's "retiring rooms." Eighty-three windows lighted the hall by day, or gas jets by night. Five staircases efficiently moved people to and from the galleries, and two large apparatuses on the roof insured proper ventilation—an ongoing concern of Moody's.<sup>24</sup>

An intensely cold and raw wind greeted nearly six thousand hearty souls at the 8:00AM meeting for Christian workers on Sunday morning. Red bunting provided a bit of color to the otherwise drab hall whose wooden walls were covered with canvas. Precisely on the hour, the large choir on stage broke into "I am so glad that our Father in heav'n tells of His love in the Book He has given." By the time they reached the chorus, "I am so glad that Jesus loves me," most of the congregation had joined in without even looking up the selection in their new edition of *Sacred Songs and Solos Enlarged*, for this was one the earliest songs Ira had begun singing, and it seemed as though Liverpool's citizens were already familiar with Philip Bliss's popular Sunday School song.<sup>25</sup>

Moody was certainly aware of Bliss's gifts and the impact on those who sang his songs. Writing to Daniel Whittle, who often paired with Bliss for revival meetings, Moody revealed:

I am delighted with his music. I do not think he has got his equal on earth . . . his hymns are all ready sung around the world, we are using them to do a great work in this country. To let you know something of how they are liked we are selling of the penny book 250,000 per month . . . & God is using them as much as he did Wesley’s hymns.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to paying attention to functional needs, it seems the builders of Victoria Hall had also managed to solve some of the acoustic challenges, as the singing in this barn of a building was remarkable. While historic churches were much smaller and generally possessed hard surfaces capable of reflecting sound, which made singing seem lively, vast arenas such as this with high ceilings, canvas-covered walls, and thousands of bodies soaking up the sound, often rendered the singing anemic. This was not the case with Victoria Hall, however, in which the acoustic construction of the edifice serendipitously managed to get everything right.

The meetings attracted a wide range of attendees, perhaps most surprisingly, a large number of Roman Catholics. The Dublin correspondent for the *Belfast Witness* reported how two thousand such attendees were present at the evening service, composing nearly a fourth of the congregation, and how Moody reported more Roman Catholics in the Inquiry Room than any other denomination.<sup>27</sup> On March 4, the *Birmingham Times of Blessing* reported:

The special meetings in Victoria Hall have taken an intense hold on the town. The great building is much too small for the work. Messrs. Moody and Sankey hold eighteen meetings in it weekly, and day by day the hall is packed to overflowing. Mr. Moody gave his lecture on Daniel at eight o’clock last Sunday morning, to an audience of not less than ten thousand; and those who could not find room in the hall were addressed in the Circus adjoining by Captain Dutton of the “Allan Line.” Many thousands had to travel long distances in the bitter weather to reach the hall in time for the meeting. No movement like it has ever been seen in this part of England.<sup>28</sup>

As always,

Mr. Sankey’s singing has been made the blessed instrument in arousing many to think of their spiritual condition, and cry out,



like the Philippian jailer, “What must I do to be saved?” Conviction of sin by this means alone has entered many a sin-sick soul, and pointed it to the Great Physician.<sup>29</sup>

Support for the meetings continued throughout the month, with the only notable public opposition arising from one escapee from the local lunatic asylum, claiming a “commission from God” to kill Moody.<sup>30</sup> As the campaign concluded, “Four times Victoria Hall was crowded to its utmost capacity, while Newsome’s Circus and St. James Hall were twice filled. There must have been not less than forty-five thousand persons present at the various meetings.”<sup>31</sup>

In less than two years, Moody and Sankey had seen God pour out his blessings on their work across England, Scotland, and Ireland in ways not felt since the days of Wesley and Whitefield. While the major cities of Great Britain had by now been stirred, it seemed there was nothing left except London—the largest city on earth. ∞

## ENDNOTES

1. Words by William Cowper, from *Olney Hymns in Three Books*, John Newton, ed. (London: W. Oliver, 1779), reprinted in *Sacred Songs and Solos with Standard Hymns, Combined* (1892).
2. Rufus Clark, *The Work of God in Great Britain Under Messrs Moody and Sankey, 1873–1875* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1875), 245–46.
3. 31 December 1874–16 January 1875.
4. *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 23 January 1875, 11. Twenty-first century congregants often do not sing if unfamiliar with a song, but nineteenth-century worshippers generally pitched in enthusiastically, despite not knowing what they were singing. John Wesley had to famously chide some congregants “not to bawl” (cry noisily) during the singing.
5. Clark, *Work of God*, 299–300; 295.
6. Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1868), 1.
7. Emma Moody’s diary, 6 January 1875.
8. J.W. Hanson, in *The Life and Works of the World’s Greatest Evangelist Dwight L. Moody: A Complete and Authentic Review of the Marvelous Career of the Most Remarkable Religious General in History* (Atlanta: J.L. Nichols, 1900), 130.
9. Will R. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1900), 217–19.
10. Old Testament: 2 Chronicles 20:21–22; New Testament: Acts 16:25.
11. Clark, *Work of God*, 303–04.
12. John Pollock, *Moody: The Biography* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 159.
13. Pollack, *Moody*, 312.
14. “Mr. Moody’s Meetings in Bournemouth,” *Signs of Our Times*, 10 February 1875, 82.
15. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 225–26.
16. *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, 19 November 1874, 8. The instrument newspapers always identify as Sankey’s “American organ” was probably from the Smith American Organ Company (Boston), which often identified itself as “The American Organ.” See “Smith American Organ Company” catalog for 1877, inside cover: <https://antiquepianoshop.com/online-museum/smith-american/>

In reality, the term “American organ” was probably a generic description of an “organ-harmonium or flat-topped cabinet organ. This design placed the bellows vertically and underneath the reeds, and served as the model for

the suction-operated American-style reed organ.” See “Mason and Hamlin,” *Wikipedia*. Also see Robert F. Gellerman, *The American Reed Organ and the Harmonium* (New York: Vestal Press, 1996).

On 13 August 1883, *The Chicago Tribune*, 8, printed a somewhat suspect, purported interview with Rev. M.M. Parkhurst, a well-known evangelical who claimed to be Sankey’s pastor while he was in Chicago, and spoke as if he were a knowledgeable “insider” about Moody-Sankey relationships. On the subject of organs and remuneration he was quoted as saying, “Sankey used in his meetings a Smith cabinet organ, and used to take orders for these instruments and receive a commission. Moody did not know this for a long time, but the newspapers got hold of it and began to insinuate that Moody and Sankey meetings were an organ speculation in disguise. This roiled Moody and he compelled Sankey to go out of the organ business at once.”

Although reported as a first-hand account, the story has many problems. It seems highly unlikely for the business-savvy Moody not to have realized Sankey was having people sign to buy Smith organs. In fact, when Moody and Sankey went to Britain in 1873, they were both unknown, and Sankey would not have been an effective representative for any organ company. In addition, the Scots—where Moody and Sankey spent many months—had prohibitions against the use of musical instruments in church and would hardly have been potential customers.

Nowhere in the Smith American Organ Company’s lengthy testimonials did they include Sankey as recommending their product (they seemed to be catering to the classical music lover in their promotions and were known for producing high-end instruments).

The only organ company that seems to have answered to accusations of Sankey being a representative for them was Mason and Hamlin. And they did advertise an “American Organ” as “Used at Moody and Sankey Mission meetings” in *The Graphic: An Illustrated Weekly* (London), 15 September 1883, 18.

So, while there were accusations of profiting from their association with an organ company, and while Sankey did apparently play an “American Organ” at times, Parkhurst’s account—or that conflated by the reporter—makes the story questionable.

At the conclusion of the article, the reporter told of the devious things one journalist did to get an interview with a reluctant Moody. He then concluded his piece by saying, “These reporters are dangerous chaps, I tell you,” perhaps signaling the reader to take some of his story with a grain of salt.

17. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 226; Clark, *Work of God*, 328.
18. James E. Findley Jr., *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist, 1837–1899* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 169.

19. “Messrs Moody and Sankey’s Movements: Conference at Freemason’s Hall,” *The Christian*, Thursday, 11 February 1875, 9.
20. *The Christian*, 11 February 1875, 11; “Mr. Sankey’s Choir in London,” 18 February 1875, 19.
21. *The Christian*, 11 February 1875, 8.
22. The hymn, written by William Cowper in 1773, was titled “Light Shining out of Darkness,” published by friend and hymnwriter John Newton (of “Amazing Grace” fame) in *Twenty-Six Letters on Religious Subjects to Which Are Added Hymns* (1774). It became widely known in Newton and Cowper’s hymnal, *Olney Hymns* (1779). The poem is often credited with popularizing the saying, “God moves in mysterious ways.”
23. “Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey at Liverpool,” *Signs of Our Times*, 10 February 1875, 82.
24. Clark, *Work of God*, 330. *The Liverpool Mercury* for 2 February 1875, 6, contains a wealth of details about the building. It is interesting to note how planners for Victoria Hall allowed 17 inches width per seat, while modern airline seats average only 17.5 inches.
25. Clark, *Work of God*, 330–31; Words and music by P.P. Bliss, “Jesus Loves Even Me,” *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete* (1894), No. 18.
26. Pollock, *Moody*, 160. Given Moody’s head for business, he probably kept close watch on the book’s sales. This seems to be one of the few statistics available, concerning the number of books sold—although it didn’t reflect the larger numbers from the London meetings.
27. Clark, *Work of God*, 337.
28. Clark, *Work of God*, 338.
29. Clark, *Work of God*, 334.
30. Emma Moody Powell, *Heavenly Destiny: The Life Story of Mrs. D.L. Moody* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1943), 90–91.
31. Clark, *Work of God*, 341.

# No. 28. Tell Me the Old, Old Story.

"Tell them how great things the Lord hath done."—MARK 5: 19.

Miss KATE HANKEY.

W. H. DOANE, by per.

1. Tell me the Old, Old Sto - ry, Of un - seen things a - bove, Of  
2. Tell me the Sto - ry slow - ly, That I may take it in— That

Je - sus and His glo - ry, Of Je - sus and His love. Tell me the Sto - ry  
wonder - ful re - demption, God's reme - dy for sin. Tell me the Sto - ry

sim - ply, As to a lit - tle child, For I am weak and wea - ry, And  
oft - en, For I for - get so soon, The "ear - ly dew" of morn - ing Has

## CHORUS.

help - less and de - filed. Tell me the Old, Old Sto - ry, Tell me the Old, Old  
passed a - way at noon.

Sto - ry, Tell me the Old, Old Sto - ry Of Je - sus and His love.

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*Chapter 12*  
Top of the World  
1875

*Tell me the Old, Old Story, Of unseen things above,  
Of Jesus and His glory, Of Jesus and His love.  
Tell me the Story simply, As to a little child,  
For I am weak and weary, And helpless and defiled.*

*Tell me the Old, Old Story, Tell me the Old, Old Story,  
Tell me the Old, Old Story Of Jesus and His love.*

*Tell me the Story slowly, That I may take it in—  
That wonderful redemption, God's remedy for sin.  
Tell me the Story often, For I forget so soon,  
The "early dew" of morning Has passed away at noon.*

*Tell me the same old Story, When you have cause to fear  
That this world's empty glory Is costing me too dear.  
Yes, and when that world's glory Is dawning on my soul,  
Tell me the Old, Old Story: "Christ Jesus makes thee whole."<sup>1</sup>*

ALTHOUGH PENNED TO CAPTURE the paradoxes of the French Revolution, Charles Dickens' famous description from *A Tale of Two Cities* perfectly chronicled London at the three-quarter mark of the nineteenth century:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.<sup>2</sup>

By 1875, London was the biggest, most powerful metropolis on earth. It boasted of, or staggered under, a population of 3.5 million souls. Opportunities to rise above the grinding poverty and near-starvation of the



countryside were legion and magically lured a relentless stream of destitute to the nation's capital. There it was possible, with the right proportions of cleverness and luck, to rise above one's lowly social and economic status and become a respectable and successful member of middle-class society. It was also possible—and more than likely—to find oneself competing against an endless supply of fresh and willing workers for the lowest paying jobs involving mind-numbing and body-ravaging toil under the most inhumane conditions—ones that caused Karl Marx, on his way to study at the British Library, to sharpen his ideas for *Das Kapital*.<sup>3</sup>

The city was also undergoing a radical physical transformation, both above ground and below. The broad, lazy, marshy Thames River, which so dominated the city and its way of life, was being harnessed within much narrower confines by the construction of vast embankments. Plans to wall up part of the Thames stretched back to the Renaissance and Sir Christopher Wren, with countless other schemes following. All were scuttled by Parliaments opposed to costs, special interests, or on the grounds that Parliament did not have jurisdiction over the waterway. But all of that disappeared on a blisteringly hot Wednesday, June 30, 1858, popularly known as The Great Stink.<sup>4</sup>

For centuries, average citizens had relieved themselves in a privy or cesspit some distance from their living quarters. These were occasionally cleaned out, with their product being spread on distant fields as fertilizer. But as London's population ballooned to 2.5 million, this system became strained past its ability to function, with 200,000 cesspits leaking into the water supply—causing deadly cholera outbreaks. In an effort to ameliorate the situation, the city required new construction to employ modern flush toilets, which had become popular with their introduction at the Great Exhibition of 1851. Many older buildings were also retrofitted with the latest convenience, and all these were flushed into newly constructed sewers—emptying directly into the Thames!

When the tide came in, the river was thusly described as a “pestiferous and typhus breeding abomination,” “thickly impregnated with impure matter,” and producing an efflux so bad, “whoso once inhales the stink can never forget it and can count himself lucky if he lives to remember it.”<sup>5</sup> On one occasion, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert abandoned a pleasure cruise on the river after only a few moments of overwhelming malodor. In Parliament, bordering the Thames, curtains were unsuccessfully soaked with lime chlo-

ride to lessen its stench, and future Prime Minister Disraeli—who called the river “a Stygian pool, reeking with ineffable and intolerable horrors”<sup>6</sup>—spent only a few moments in the conference room before fleeing with a stack of papers in one hand and a handkerchief over his nose in the other. Something had to be done.

The result was that Joseph Bazalgette was awarded the herculean task of transforming the city by constructing a vast series of underground sewers spanning eighty-two miles, emptying into the river well below the city. To accomplish this, he walled up the Thames, concealing sewer lines, some running under the newly created twenty-two acres of reclaimed land along the river’s bank. The massive project, requiring 318 million bricks and 880,000 cubic yards of concrete and mortar, was completed in 1875—the year of Moody’s London campaign—and transformed the sanitation and general health of the city, in continuous operation for over a century.<sup>7</sup>

Bazalgette’s sewers were not the only project reshaping the city above and below ground. The other was the new subway system, the first of its kind in the world. This resulted from the daily congestion of a progressively commuting population disgorging itself into the city each morning from seven rail lines that circled the outskirts of the municipality. The resulting gridlock saw the Metropolitan Railway granted a contract to construct tunnels below ground to enable steam engines to tow wooden passenger cars along its tracks.

Begun in 1860, using a “cut-and-cover” method of digging vast open trenches, building the tunnels, then filling them over with roads or new construction, the first phase was completed in 1863 and proved such a success—despite the dark and smoke-filled passenger cars—that other companies competed to build new lines. Thus began a never-ending process of expanding the train lines underground to facilitate the passage of a growing and mobile populace above.<sup>8</sup>

For a challenge as large and daunting as holding a four-month London campaign, Moody and Sankey left themselves little time to regroup and organize after closing their Liverpool meetings on Sunday, March 7, 1875, for only two days later on Tuesday evening, they stood before a vast crowd of eighteen thousand eager souls in their first London assembly.

In spite of how the two evangelists seemed to suddenly appear in the capital and miraculously conjure up massive crowds and a finely tuned support system, they had been preceded by an army of prayer warriors and

astute businessmen implementing what would become a successful *modus operandi* for modern revivalism.

Although requests for Moody to campaign in London had been trickling in for many months, the revivalist had always declined them, believing the time was not right. But following the Edinburgh campaign, Moody enjoyed a lengthy meeting with Scottish industrialist Hugh Mackay Matheson about the possibility of the revivalists coming to the capital.<sup>9</sup> Matheson's interest in Moody stemmed from his role as a Church of Scotland lay preacher and supporter of Presbyterian missions in China. But those were only his avocational interests, as his vocational credentials for approaching Moody resided in his role as a highly successful businessman.

Nearly thirty years earlier, Matheson had spent eighteen months traveling throughout the Far East, sizing up its commercial opportunities. By the time he met Moody, he had become an influential trader with interests in China and Japan. He had also earned a reputation as an important investor and had recently closed a deal with Spain to purchase the famed Rio Tinto copper mines, which became, under his leadership, the largest producer in the world. His Heathlands home in Hampstead Heath was often visited by their sometime neighbor, Prime Minister William Gladstone, who shared many of Matheson's liberal perspectives, including opposition to the China Opium Wars.<sup>10</sup>

As Matheson—the savvy businessman—and Moody—the experienced revivalist—hatched plans for a possible London campaign, they discussed among many subjects the seminal role of publicity.<sup>11</sup> From the outset, R.C. Morgan's publication, *The Christian*, had covered Moody's efforts and acted, at times, as a *de facto* secretary for the evangelist. While Morgan had developed a close relationship with Moody from his first visit in 1867, it was sub-editor George Rettie who systematically reported detailed news of the revivalists' efforts over the previous two years, raising the profile of the two American visitors to the status of religious rock stars.<sup>12</sup> Realizing the power of publications such as *The Christian* to stir up and sustain enthusiasm for the work, Moody implored Matheson to raise the not-inconsiderable sum of £2000 to provide a three-month subscription for the paper to thirty thousand ministers in England.<sup>13</sup>

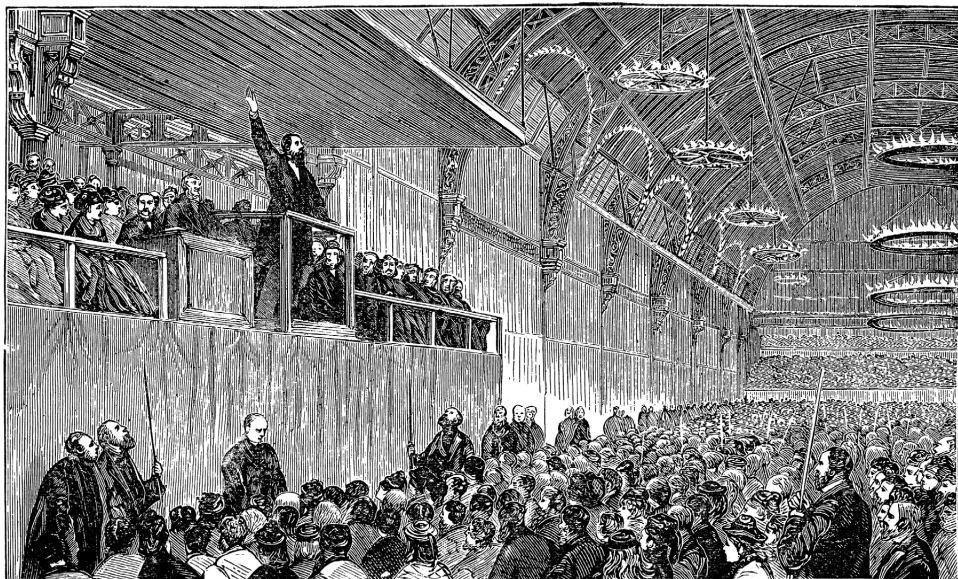
As early as September of 1874, while the revivalists were enjoying God's blessings in Belfast, Ireland, a committee of religious leaders from London had visited to issue a formal invitation for Moody to labor in their vineyard,

and he accepted. Preparations for the visit began the first week in December with the formation of a Central Committee under the leadership of Robert Patton, which oversaw the raising of \$50,000 to finance the work, preparing detailed lists of workers and speakers from three continents. When expected costs for the meetings swelled to \$160,000, prominent banker James Ewing Mathieson assumed the daunting task and raised the additional amount.<sup>14</sup>

As the sprawling capital couldn't be reached successfully from one central location, the city was divided into four zones: North, South, East, West. It was decided to commence in North London, an area containing approximately one million souls, where the parish of Islington alone housed more than a half-million people. It also boasted a cavernous edifice—Royal Agricultural Hall—in which to hold meetings.

By January of 1875, committees in each of the four major sections were directing their efforts toward raising a large choir and visiting every house in their district. To accomplish the visitation, district superintendents were supplied with two maps of their area. One was employed as a reference, and the other was cut into pieces and given to the volunteers who covered a segment. Two workers—like the disciples sent out by Jesus in Luke 10:1—were assigned to an area with the purpose of providing each household with a leaflet containing a gospel message and an invitation to attend the meetings. Thus, part of the leaflet's purpose was evangelistic as well as promotional. Volunteers kept precise records of their contacts, with the resulting publicity boasting how, citywide, a million Londoners had been contacted with the Gospel. While the plan in North London was to visit every household from the Thames on its southern boundary to the open countryside in the north, the vision proved too vast and was never fully realized. Yet it was widely considered the “most gigantic religious undertaking of its kind in the world.”<sup>15</sup>

Royal Agricultural Hall—or the “Aggie” as it was known—was literally a barn of sorts, designed to host the Christmas cattle show—near the great livestock market in Smithfield—and the June horse fair featuring grand processions with twenty to thirty steeds all prancing and jumping at once. It was one of those recent glass-and-iron constructions, 384 feet long by 217 feet wide, made famous by Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace, which hosted Prince Albert's Hyde Park Great Exhibition of 1851. The annual Smithfield Cattle Show drew more than one hundred thousand visitors, but the hall also hosted walking races, dog shows, trade shows, and military celebrations, such as the July 1867 Grand Ball for the Belgian Volunteer Regiments. Its most



Moody in Royal Agricultural Hall, London, in W.H. Daniels, *D.L. Moody and His Work* (1876).

infamous event was the cattle show of December 1873, when a dense, black fog—lasting over a week—suffocated eighty expensive and well-bred cattle, including Queen Victoria’s prize bull.<sup>16</sup>

During the spring of 1867, the Aggie had been commandeered by Charles Spurgeon to preach to crowds of over ten thousand as his famous Metropolitan Tabernacle was under repair.<sup>17</sup> And while that experience received generally positive reviews, many thought the hall was simply too large for such religious services. But Moody’s previous experiences at the Crystal Palace in Glasgow, Bingley Hall in Birmingham, and Victoria Hall in Liverpool disposed him to favoring such a colossal venue, because the great arched barn provided an unimpeded view for the eighteen to twenty thousand worshippers who might gather there.

Beginning March 1 of 1875, Agricultural Hall was rented for a period of ten weeks at fifty pounds-sterling per week. Contractor Sharman added twelve thousand chairs to the two thousand originally there, with an additional two thousand places available on platforms, plus twelve hundred more people sitting on steps at the west end. Including standing room, platform space for dignitaries, and a 220-voice choir, the *London Times* claimed the hall could hold 21,320 souls.<sup>18</sup> Thousands of gas burners, in long rows and semi-circular patterns, illuminated red banners with white letters read-



ing “Repent ye, and believe the Gospel” and “The gift of God is eternal life.” The long side of the hall held a platform for the choir on one side, dignitaries on the other, and Moody-Sankey in a slightly protruding space in the middle, holding a desk for the preacher and a space for Sankey’s harmonium.<sup>19</sup>

From the outset, there were problems with the acoustics. Even though there was a conspicuous sounding board the size of a barn door over Moody’s head, some complained that only a third of the crowd could hear the preaching; others grumbled that even the music was not universally audible. This could have resulted, in part, from situating the platform on the long side of the building to be near the middle of the hall, rather than being located at the far end of the rectangular edifice. While this arrangement located the stage closer to more people, those on either end of the vast auditorium were undoubtedly at a disadvantage because sound is directional, being sent out toward the center of the building, rather than to the far right and left. To ameliorate the situation, canvas partitions were later hung from the ceiling and behind the pulpit in an attempt to reduce the capacity of the arena to around fourteen thousand.

A week before the evangelists appeared, the hall—with incomplete galleries and stage—hosted introductory services to prepare the way. These meetings served a number of purposes. One was to demonstrate the widespread denominational support Moody felt was necessary for the meetings. The opening Sunday afternoon assembly of four thousand was led by an evangelical Anglican clergyman, J. McConnell Hussey of Brixton Road, from the Established Church, where support had been tepid at best. Song sheets with “Sankey songs” were passed out, but were possibly not needed, judging from the whole-hearted response of those assembled. That evening, the Rev. C.B. Sawday of Vernon Baptist Church—a student of Spurgeon’s—anchored the pulpit.<sup>20</sup> And on the following weeknights, various local religious luminaries held forth. Supporting pastors and members of their flock were also conspicuous by their presence.

Another reason to hold such meetings was to act as a “shake-down cruise,” working through the practical problems of hosting a public gathering for well over ten thousand people at each service. To that end, seventy to eighty trained ushers with long wands, under the supervision of the Rev. H.C. Billing of Holy Trinity Church, Islington,<sup>21</sup> gained experience in crowd control and developing a sense of where bottlenecks of people might occur. Seating patterns could be modified and the stage setup could be tried out.



Entrance and especially egress were important factors, as massive volumes of people would be on the move.

Security was also a major consideration, as hundreds or even thousands, who were sometimes denied entry after the hall was full, had been known to become rowdy, even vigorously shaking the locked doors during the services. One of those charged with insuring proper security was Constable George Ling of the Westminster Division for the Metropolitan Police. The night before revival meetings officially began, Ling was on duty at a reception for the evangelists at Exeter Hall. As he stood at the foot of the stairs leading up to the auditorium, Sankey's voice came wafting through the doors, and as he later testified, this "gave me the desire to attend their meetings to hear the evangelists. The result was my conversion."<sup>22</sup>

But that was not the end for Ling. He was soon appointed Queen Victoria's personal police constable, traveling with her to Windsor and Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, where he would hold evangelistic meetings and teach a men's Bible class.<sup>23</sup> Here was the power of Sankey's voice to attract people to the gospel before services had even begun. Ling may have been one of the first converts in London, but he certainly wasn't the last to have his heart quickened by Ira's singing.

On Tuesday evening, March 9, 1875, half the hall's nearly fifteen thousand seats were filled by six o'clock, with a steady stream of the curious soon occupying the rest, including standing room. At half-past the hour, some good-spirited hymn singing broke out in a far corner of the audience, but the moderator for that evening requested the ushers to "repress volunteer attempts of this sort." As one attendee observed, "The silent seating of so many thousands was a masterpiece of administrative care and skill."<sup>24</sup>

At seven o'clock, the Rev. John Thain Davidson of Islington's Presbyterian Church, a couple blocks to the east on Colebrooke Row, rose and announced the hymn "I Hear Thy Welcome Voice." For a brief moment, the muted ruffling of pages stirred the air as thousands leafed through their *Sacred Songs and Solos, Enlarged Edition*<sup>25</sup> to find No. 10. The new edition—in both a music and a words-only format prepared for the London campaign—had been expanded from the original twenty-three selections, which Ira had hastily cut out of his "scrapbook" and sent off for publication, to eighty-one titles, including "many of the old favourite hymns, together with such new ones as have been specially blessed during the months which have elapsed since *Sacred Songs and Solos* first appeared. In addition to these will be

found a small Selection of Standard Hymns.”<sup>26</sup> Many in the congregation had brought their own well-marked copy of the first edition. Others had made last-minute purchases from street urchins hawking the hymnal outside the hall. For many first-time visitors to any Moody-Sankey meeting, these miniature musical entrepreneurs acted as an informal but effective audible set of directions to the meetings, as their presence and volume increased in number as one neared Agricultural Hall.

A few moments later, the 220-voice choir,<sup>27</sup> under the direction of Joseph Proudman of Tonic Sol-Fa Society fame, rose and offered “Tell me the old, old story of Jesus and His love.” Although the service had not yet formally begun, those in charge had learned how to keep a crowd, who had already been sitting for perhaps an hour, occupied. At precisely 7:30PM, Sankey took his place behind the little pump organ, and Moody stepped forward to announce, “Let us rise and sing to the praise of God. Let us praise him for what he is going to do in London.” The long-anticipated London campaign had begun.

From the audience, the raised platform with the choir and supporting ministers was an impressive sight. Representatives from the Presbyterian and Congregational denominations seemed especially prominent. And these were just a few of the nearly two thousand ministers who had met at Free Mason’s Hall to interrogate Moody back in February about his doctrines, practices, and the rumor about him and Sankey being on the payroll of an American pump-organ company.

It was generally agreed after the “audition” meeting that Moody had allayed most concerns and paved the way for broad support. But the situation was more complex than was immediately evident. While Moody’s desire for the revival meetings was to unite the city’s ministers behind the idea, London was not so much a city but an assemblage of cities.

Each minister and congregation formed a separate community, watchfully caring for its own progress, but strongly tempted, by sharp competition, to leave all outside Christian enterprises to take care of themselves. The attitude of many of the pastors was at first one of observation and armed neutrality, though from the beginning a few of the most honored ministers, both of the Established and Nonconformist churches, gave their heartiest cooperation. The cautious brethren occupied the platform by hundreds, but very few of them were willing to assist at the inquiry

meetings, or in any way to identify themselves with Mr. Moody or his work. Still the number of those who were awakened under his preaching, as well as under the singing, increased from week to week.<sup>28</sup>

From the outset, the singing seemed central to the meetings. After Mr. Moody's greetings to the assembly, he announced the Doxology ("Praise God from whom all blessings flow")—a regular opener at their services. The text was the famous last stanza from Englishman Thomas Ken's morning and evening hymns, published in *A Manual of Prayers for the Use of the Scholars of Winchester College*,<sup>29</sup> where he taught before he was elevated to the Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1684. Ironically, Ken's intention for his Doxology was for it to be a part of private devotions, as man-made texts weren't yet considered appropriate for singing in public worship—only the words of Scripture being approved. But it was published as a separate text (not as part of the original poem) in Tate and Brady's *A New Version of the Psalms of David* (1696) in a section following the Psalms called "Gloria Patri," containing numerous doxological responses. That seminal Psalter—with a few original hymns—became an important fixture in English congregational song and helped introduce this text and the tune OLD HUNDREDTH—which the book recommended—to a wide audience.

Next came prayers by a local pastor, accompanied by a chorus of "Amen's" from the audience. Moody called for the Hundredth Psalm ("All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice")—the last selection in the new *Sacred Songs and Solos*. This was the beloved English setting of the Psalm, with roots in previous Psalters, and it was coupled with the same tune the congregation had just sung to the Doxology.<sup>30</sup> Sankey led it with the admonition, "Let us rise and sing. Let all the people sing." Moody reminded the assembly how, in spite of all the detailed preparation and grand expectations, all would be vain unless God was in it. He asked for all to pray, and a great hush fell upon the people, only to be interrupted by painful coughs that sharply punctuated the silence. Undaunted, Moody proclaimed, "It is a great city, but thou art a great God. May we ask great things and expect them."

Then Sankey stepped to the front of the massive stage and sat behind his tiny keyboard right next to the pulpit. As the sounds of a pump organ (harmonium) are not percussive like those of the piano, but more dulcet and vocal-like, he must have wondered if its notes would carry to the farthest

reaches of that vast complex. So, as it had become his practice, he literally pulled out all the stops to access the loudest volume possible.

He chose a solo he had sung countless times, the dramatic “Jesus of Nazareth Passeth By,” which narrates, over the course of six stanzas, the parable of a blind beggar who inquires why the crowd around him had become excited, and was told of the healer Jesus who was passing by. In the days before electronic amplification, public speakers were adept at employing the “call voice,” which functions the way one would if calling to a person far away. It’s not just louder but also involves an “arch” to the sound that lofts it a greater distance. Trained vocalists also realized how, by opening the mouth wide (actually dropping the jaw) and elongating the vowel rather than the consonant, the sound will be bigger and fuller. Although Sankey probably lacked much knowledge of the pedagogical theory of singing, he understood what had worked for him in the past, especially during these last two years with bigger and bigger venues to fill.

He addressed his expectant listeners with “May the Lord bless the singing of this song here, as he has blessed it elsewhere.” Then he requested complete silence, a necessity if worshipers were to hear the words he often declaimed or spoke, rather than sang with a full voice. This somewhat novel singing technique, perhaps more than the unique quality of his voice, was a great part of his appeal, for Sankey’s renditions often tottered on the border between speech and song, holding the listener’s attention as to what would happen next.<sup>31</sup> As one listener recalled, “This is a marked peculiarity of Sankey’s own singing: every syllable can be clearly heard throughout the great halls in which he is accustomed to sing; every sentiment of the hymns is thrillingly rendered.”<sup>32</sup> Especially telling that evening was the way Sankey rendered the line, “What means this strange commotion pray,” as the blind beggar in the parable realized something unusual was happening. Like Moody, Ira had a way of making even mundane poetry come alive.

But that dramatic line about the “strange commotion” turned out to be a bit ironic, as the later stanzas of the song were somewhat marred by a strange commotion in a distant part of the hall, one Ira possibly did not notice. When Sankey finished singing, there was usually an eerie silence—both dramatic and reverential. Good church folk knew a proper response was a respectful silence, or perhaps a hearty “Amen,” whereas applause was never appropriate in a religious service. But there were many in the crowd who did not share that background, and they began to demonstrate their ap-

proval with scattered applause. Perhaps embarrassingly for them, thousands admonished with a “Hush,” which immediately broke the feelings Ira had worked so hard to create.

Of course, this was not the first time Ira had encountered applause. In fact, he was used to a wide variety of responses to his singing, as he had been working in every imaginable situation in rough-and-tumble Chicago from his earliest days with Moody. He had also sung in highly respectable churches where not a stir was heard after he finished. For most of those in the audience, this was the first time they had ever heard Sankey sing, as recordings of the evangelist wouldn’t be available for another twenty-five years. Before the age of recording, the only music-making one ever heard was live.

For many, especially those much closer to the front, Sankey’s solo singing might have matched or surpassed his reputation. For others in the distant corners, there were various levels of disappointment as attentive listeners strained to pick out bits of words or melodies that managed to find their way across the vast spaces filled with the normal shuffling and coughing present in any crowd of people. As one listener complained, “The huge area of Agricultural Hall places both him and his song at a very great disadvantage, and it is little less than cruelty to subject him to the strain.”<sup>33</sup>

Moody preached his first address from 1 Corinthians 1:17–31, which begins, “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.” His was a general challenge to Christians to take up God’s work, employing various examples from Scripture, concluding with an account of General Grant marching on Richmond during the Civil War. He then charged the assembled mass:

The Christians of London, too, must lift high the standard, and in the name of their God, advance in solid column on the enemy before daylight. Let them work together, shoulder to shoulder, with a single eye to the honor and glory of Christ. . . . Let their watchword be “Here am I, send me,” and the result was certain.<sup>34</sup>

Then as Moody sometimes did, he requested Sankey to sing a specific solo, this one being “Hark! the voice of Jesus calling,” which concluded, “Here am I; send me, send me,” echoing the climax of Moody’s sermon. But Ira had been listening attentively and he felt as though Moody’s Civil War illustration and the challenge to “lift high the standard” and “advance in

solid column” suggested his trademark solo, “Hold the Fort!” He also figured most of the congregation—composed of churchgoers—could join him on at least the chorus and produce an unprecedented effect. Expressing his preference for it, he proceeded to sing the song that was so familiar to all and had brought him the most fame to this point.<sup>35</sup> There appears to be no record, however, of any conflict between the two, resulting from this public difference of opinion.<sup>36</sup>

As this was the first evening of the campaign, Moody had been primarily addressing Christians to put their shoulder to the work, so there was no Inquiry Room following the service. That allowed Moody and Sankey to get home a little earlier than usual, after all the dignitaries and well-wishers had been properly greeted. Ira and his family—Fanny, their two boys, and six-months-old Ira Allen—lodged with Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Fitzgerald Kinnaird, Scottish banker and Member of Parliament. They resided next to the banking firm of Ransom, Bouverie & Co. at No. 2 Pall Mall East,<sup>37</sup> on the highly desirable avenue connecting Trafalgar Square and St. James Court.

As an MP (Member of Parliament), Kinnaird espoused support for women’s suffrage and for greater Scottish representation in the governing body. He was such a vigorous supporter of Prime Minister Henry John Temple, known as Lord Palmerston, he was nicknamed “Palmerston’s shadow.” In just a few years, he would succeed his brother as 10th Lord Kinnaird and take a spot in the crimson-upholstered House of Lords. Although Kinnaird was a conspicuous member of London society, he was also a generous supporter of evangelical and philanthropic causes, such as the Lock Hospital and Asylum—to treat venereal disease—plus the London YMCA and YWCA.<sup>38</sup>

The Kinnaird domicile lay three miles from Agricultural Hall, requiring a thirty-minute hansom cab ride through the busy streets—although by late evening, many thoroughfares were nearly deserted. The residence shared a street with the city’s most prestigious Gentleman’s Clubs, such as the Athenaeum, Reform Club, and the Travellers Club—the setting for the start and finish of the fabled race in Jules Verne’s *Around the World in Eighty Days*. On Saturday evenings, Ira no doubt stayed much closer to Agricultural Hall, for the Kinnairds were “strict sabbatarians” and refused to use their carriages on Saturday nights or Sundays.<sup>39</sup>

While the Kinnairds provided lodging for the Sankey family, they were also enthusiastic supporters of the larger world of ecumenical revivalism.



This meant the “daily hosting from twenty to thirty people to luncheon after the noon prayer meeting, and from ten to twenty for early dinner before the evening meeting.”<sup>40</sup> It’s not clear if this culinary outreach continued throughout the entire four months of the revivals, but even if its lifespan was limited, it reflected a deep level of commitment on the part of those wealthy Londoners who channeled their time, money, and reputations into supporting two middle-class Americans associated in some religious circles with religious extremism. Overall, mass revivalism was deeply indebted to the many prosperous supporters who composed the fabric of Nonconformist English life.

Moody would have been happy for any lodgings suitable for reuniting him with his family, for Emma and the two children had been away for over three months, since they had first gone to London back in November, when Moody began in Manchester—then on to Bournemouth on the southern coast in early January, seeking warmer and dryer weather for the sake of little Willie’s health.<sup>41</sup> Although Moody had visited them on at least one occasion in Bournemouth, their reunion in London on Wednesday, March 8, 1875, was a joyous one indeed, for both the man who took special joy in his family and for a wife and children who missed their affectionate father. At this point the Moodys lodged with the Sands family on Highbury Street in Islington in the north of London.<sup>42</sup> But they possibly also spent time with the bachelor and his sister in their manor house outside the city.<sup>43</sup>

On Wednesday morning, the evangelists commenced what would become a fairly regular schedule, which included a daily prayer meeting at noon, some afternoon meetings in Agricultural Hall at 3:00PM, and a mass evening service around 7:30PM—usually lasting an hour and a quarter<sup>44</sup>—followed by the important Inquiry Room meeting. Sometimes a children’s meeting filled a weekday or Saturday afternoon. There were apparently no regular afternoon Bible readings like what Moody had usually hosted in the past. On Sunday, there was a Christian workers’ meeting at 8:00AM—no service during the normal church hour of 11:00AM, so the faithful could attend their own local assemblies—a women’s meeting around 3:00PM with an Inquiry Meeting to follow, and a service for men in the evening at 8:00PM with another Inquiry Meeting after. At almost all these—except for Inquiry—Moody spoke and Sankey sang. The goal was to keep Saturdays free. Somewhere amongst this daunting schedule fit the additional crush of private meetings and counseling, which were required and expected by pastors, supporters, and spiritual seekers. And there were the evangelists’ families,

not to mention any private time for preparation or reflection—or just to catch their breath.

Their first noon prayer service met at Exeter Hall on the Strand, a few blocks from the old City of London.<sup>45</sup> Originally built as an assembly hall for religious and philanthropic organizations, by 1875 it had become famous for hosting anti-slavery events, the most famous being the Great Union and Emancipation Meeting of January 1863, in support of Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation. Attendance was unprecedented, filling the hall and overflowing into three additional open-air spaces.<sup>46</sup>

Exeter Hall also functioned as one of the city’s chief concert venues. Holding up to three thousand, it had featured oratorios by Handel—who had died over a century earlier—and luminary composer-conductors such as the German Felix Mendelssohn and the French Hector Berlioz, whose series of six orchestral concerts in 1852 was considered a highlight of his career.

Moody presided at these hour-long prayer meetings and Sankey provided the music, leading the assembly and a well-drilled choir in “The Great Physician” and “Sweet Hour of Prayer,” an appropriate favorite and recent example of a popular American Sunday School song.

*Sweet hour of prayer! sweet hour of prayer!  
That calls me from a world of care,  
And bids me at my Father’s throne  
Make all my wants and wishes known;  
In seasons of distress and grief,  
My soul has often found relief;  
And oft’ escaped the tempter’s snare,  
By thy return, sweet hour of prayer.<sup>47</sup>*

Part of this song’s popularity undoubtedly lay in its eighth-note-dominated tune by Sunday School notable William Bradbury, although the song’s performance over time eventually slowed to such a crawl that its compound meter of 6/8 was no longer felt as such. Nevertheless, the song became so beloved as to become a requirement for almost every American hymnal.

Moody spoke from Jeremiah 33:27 on “Is there anything too hard for thee,” Ira sang what was becoming his new trademark song, “The Ninety and Nine,” and the meeting was thrown open for requests. Moody often specified for half the time in prayer meetings to be open for prayer requests,

which, at Exeter, became so numerous they had to be grouped into similar categories: fifty requests for unconverted husbands, ten for unconverted wives, fifteen for prodigal sons, and two for unconverted ministers!<sup>48</sup>

To find her way to the fashionable meetings, Jane MacKinnon simply followed the stream of those carrying Sankey's hymn book.<sup>49</sup> These prayer meetings were widely considered so integral a part of Moody and Sankey's successful approach to revivalism that twenty other gatherings were held simultaneously around the city at local churches.

Although the opening meeting on Tuesday night had been very successful, Moody might have been concerned to address a problem that had arisen during Sankey's solo. During the concluding stanzas, a commotion of some sort developed in a distant part of the hall. The ushers apparently reported that it resulted from scores of latecomers trying to find seating. So it was decided to lock the entrance doors at 7:30PM—the service starting time—which prevented a vast number who came late from entering. As a result, Wednesday evening's attendance was conspicuously smaller<sup>50</sup> and a great many could not get in.

This decision to close the hall possibly resulted from what some identified as an antagonistic atmosphere outside. As one eyewitness saw it:

Many policeman [were there] to keep the way; multitudes of young men full of fun and joking; multitudes also of evil women and girls gaily dressed, joining in the ribaldry; the two together forming a mass of well-dressed but disreputable blackguardism, proving to demonstrate that the American evangelists had come at last exactly where they were sorely needed. Omnibusmen, cabmen, tram-car men, board-men, and loafers of every description took part in the universal carnival. Oaths, jests, slang, and mockery were all let loose together.<sup>51</sup>

While no reports of serious problems resulted from the crowds seeking admission to the meetings, this attitude of mockery and opposition seemed present to a much larger degree than had met the evangelists in the past. To no one's surprise, the British humor magazine *Punch*, or *The London Charivari* smirked:

At Islington Hall those Revivalists Yankee,  
Pious pair D.L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey,

Are drawing, they tell us, immense congregations  
By eccentric devotions and droll ministrations.<sup>52</sup>

Some papers called Moody a third-rate ranter, while *Vanity Fair* magazine included a large caricature of Sankey howling from behind his organ with the explanation:

Mr. Sankey's singing is as vulgar as Mr. Moody's preaching, and both his tunes and his methods are such as would be popular at music-halls. Yet when he is not loud he is often natural and it is probable that early training as a nigger minstrel before he had become regenerated has taught him something of the art of producing sound.<sup>53</sup>

"The Moody and Sankey Humbug" was a little paper peddled outside the revival hall to those leaving the services, apparently being quite successful for its author. Needing more fuel for his next rant, the writer attended a revival meeting, but the Holy Spirit convicted the man, who went out of the service, destroyed his paper, and testified of what the Lord had done.<sup>54</sup>

Yet others, like a reporter for *Saturday Review*, seemed perplexed that thousands would flock to hear Sankey, "whose favourite note is one in the back of his throat, with which he pours forth a prolonged 'O! O! O!' something between a howl and a wail, which makes one think of a melodious costermonger crying his cabbages."<sup>55</sup>

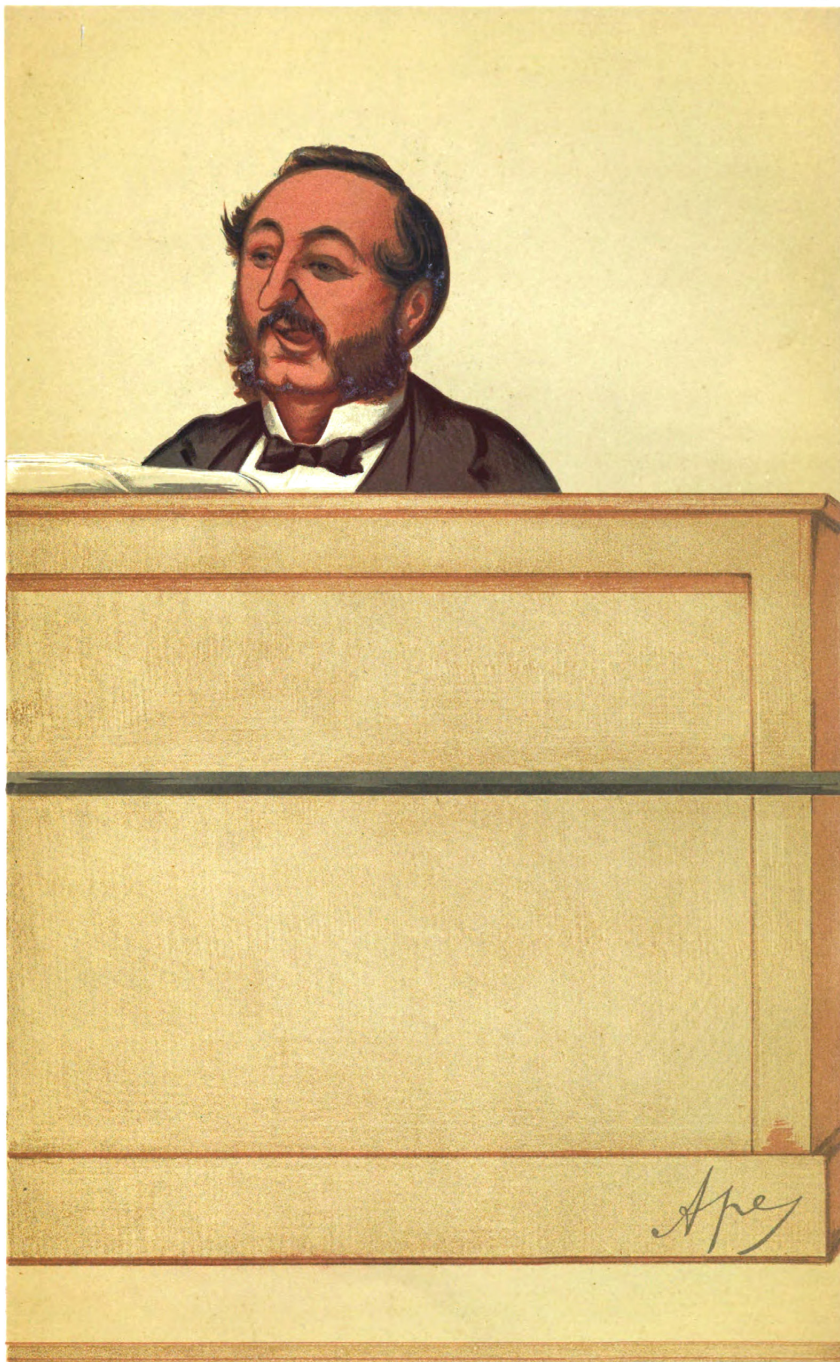
Other descriptions accused the evangelists of being sent to London by American promoter P.T. Barnum, while *The World* reported, "In many English towns they . . . had the satisfaction of throwing females into convulsions, and have been lucky enough to consign several harmless idiots to neighboring lunatic asylums."<sup>56</sup> They were also labeled "pernicious humbugs," "crack-brained Yankee evangelists," "pestilential vermin," and "abbots of unreason." Far from the majority of press coverage was negative, however, and as it became more evident the meetings were attended by a notable segment of respectable society, the antagonism lessened.<sup>57</sup>

That evening, Moody preached on blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46–52) and the tax collector Zacchaeus and the Sycamore tree (LUKE 19:1–10), both of whom, he believed, experienced instantaneous conversion. But that understanding of Scripture was a theological sticking point for some of Moody's more Reformed (Calvinist) supporters who believed salvation usually followed a certain "order" as revealed in passages such as Romans

SING ME A SANKEY: THE STORY OF IRA D. SANKEY

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8:28–30 and 1 Corinthians 6:11, including foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification.<sup>58</sup> Oddly for Moody, who usually showed sensitivity in avoiding doctrinal disputes, he seemed to be openly asserting his perspective when he humorously informed his listeners that Zacchaeus, who was confronted by Jesus while up in a Sycamore tree, “was converted between the branches and the ground.”<sup>59</sup>

At the close of Moody’s sermon, Sankey sang “Come home! Come home!” (“The Prodigal Child”), a solo that had been central to his work at the YMCA, with its focus on wayward men.

*Come home! come home! You are weary at heart,  
For the way has been dark, And so lonely and wild;  
O prodigal child! Come home! Come home!  
Come home! Come home! Come, oh come home!*<sup>60</sup>

Then, as the congregation sang “I Hear Thy Welcome Voice,” Moody made an exit to his first Inquiry Meeting in London, and hundreds followed. Before the crowd was dismissed, they were informed of the presence of pick-pockets in the hall, that care should be taken for their belongings. However, they were encouraged not to take more care for their pocketbooks than for their souls, and “it was just as easy to lay hold on Christ for salvation, as it was to put the hand to the pocket and see that one’s watch was safe.”<sup>61</sup>

The Inquiry Room was usually divided into sections for men and women. This worked well when separate spaces were available. But in former locations like Birmingham’s Bingley Hall, that was not the case, with Moody and the counselors having to wait nearly an hour while the main hall was vacated. At the Aggie, Moody was able to obtain St. Mary’s Hall, a three-thousand-seat concert venue attached to the assembly, for Inquiry. Women were directed to the basement with men initially occupying the auditorium. Counselors spent time with those possessing questions about their spiritual status, reading their Bible, praying, and seeking to answer often difficult questions.

Perhaps more controversial than any other aspect of the Americans’ approach to revivalism was the Inquiry Room. For some, part of their concern was the appearance of a somewhat manufactured process whereby spiritual seekers would go in one end as an unbeliever and exit as a child of God. To critics, it seemed to be one of the many artificial techniques of mass revivalism. Its apparent fascination to many, which implied some type of reli-



gious excitement or supernatural transformation, was so great, “the passages of St. Mary’s Hall were . . . blocked with . . . crowds . . . pushing and elbowing and shouldering and crushing, to get a peep at those who had taken this first important step in coming out from the world and giving themselves to Christ.” To lessen the awkwardness and potential chaos of mingling with the curiosity seekers, “who seemed no less anxious to watch this novel exercise than to hear Mr. Moody preach and Mr. Sankey sing,” male inquirers were sent to the balcony areas where there was more privacy.<sup>62</sup>

Other concerns about the Inquiry Room involved the lack of proper training for counselors, especially as they were not ordained, and the fear of a few that the Inquiry Room would function as a Protestant confessional—the idea of confessing sins to a person, rather than to God.<sup>63</sup>

By this point in the evening, sometime around 9:30PM, Ira was drained of his energy. While singing for large crowds at three services per day demanded a lot of energy and adrenaline, dealing one-on-one with a spiritual seeker about his or her immortal soul was a completely different matter. It would have been easier for Sankey to slip out and return to the comforts of his family, unnoticed. But that was not his practice, for Ira’s motivation from the earliest days of using his voice was the conversion of sinners and the service of God. So it was no surprise to see him patiently conversing with some gentleman, listening to his questions, and trying to provide spiritual guidance toward eternal results. As one young man testified, “I went into the inquiry-room, and Mr. Sankey walked up and down with me, and talked with me as if he had been my own father; and I found Christ.”<sup>64</sup>

At the Thursday noon prayer meeting in Exeter Hall, attendees had to brave sleet and snow. And the issue of late arrivals was still being contested on some level, as doors to the prayer meeting were also closed at the starting time. Between this and the weather, there was a noticeable decrease in attendance over the previous day. And the normally unflappable Moody was noticeably annoyed and expressed his frustration about those restricted from entering the meeting by commenting, “I don’t know what some men would do at a Pentecost,” alluding to the multitudes who were unhindered at the outpouring of God’s Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 2.<sup>65</sup>

Fortunately, by the evening service, issues surrounding when to close the doors had been settled successfully, such that by the third night of the revival, “much better order was observed than at the commencement of the previous evening, the meeting being admirably controlled.”<sup>66</sup>

Protestants had never been much known for celebrations accompanying their religious holidays, associating such activities with popish superstitions of the Roman Catholic Church. In fact, anti-Catholic feeling in England had only been mitigated less than half a century earlier, when, with the Emancipation Act in 1829, Catholics finally gained the right to vote and hold office. And not until 1871 could they matriculate to English universities. So residents who were rudely awakened from their sleep on a normally quiet Sabbath morning could be forgiven for thinking the Roman Catholics were reasserting their Medieval traditions.

On Sunday morning, March 14, the usual unbroken quiet of Islington experienced a striking change. From every direction bands of well-dressed people were hastening to the Agricultural Hall. Many parties of singers had arranged to meet in their different localities, and marched with songs to their destination. Sunday-school teachers resident in the line of march near to the Hall had invited their fellow-laborers to breakfast at a very unusual hour while the vendors of hymns and papers round the Hall took their usual weekday positions, and transacted a large amount of buying and selling.<sup>67</sup>

Upon closer examination, it proved to be no Catholic uprising but rather the exuberant public celebration of Protestant Christian workers who met together for inspiration and a charge to meet the challenges ahead—both as they might assist in the meetings and support their local churches. The singing from the assembled throng was exhilarating beyond description, as eight thousand workers raised their voices in songs they all knew well, even at the onset of the meetings: “Hold the Fort!” “Stand up, stand up for Jesus,” “I love to tell the story.” And this time Sankey sang, “Here Am I, Send Me” when requested by Moody after reading Isaiah 6. Then the evangelist preached to this already-committed crowd from Daniel 12:3, “they that be wise shall shine.”

As always, Moody had a ready supply of appropriate and moving stories to bring home the point of his sermon. But on this occasion, the story about the dying Sunday school worker simply overwhelmed everyone. “Sobs and tears were almost universal. Strong men were weeping like children, and the speaker himself wept abundantly as he remembered and depicted the touching scene.”<sup>68</sup> Moody attempted to close in prayer but had to pause, and in the dead silence, to regain his composure. Then, through

tear-filled eyes and choking voices, the faithful raised their exclamations in that exuberant march, “Work for the night is coming” and departed with a renewed vision to apply their gifts and calling to build God’s kingdom.

At the afternoon meeting for women, Sankey sang “The Ninety and Nine” and “Come Home,” assisted by a choir. At the evening meeting for men, a large number of women accompanied them to the service but were denied entrance as men filled the hall. Sankey sang the popular “Jesus of Nazareth Passeth By,” which was so familiar by now, the crowd was asked to sing the last repeated line of each stanza, “Jesus of Nazareth passeth by,” making it a very personal experience for each one.<sup>69</sup> By this point, Ira had learned how to combine his voice with a choir or congregation, producing an impact considerably more powerful than his singing alone. Both of these services were followed by the chance for seekers to gain additional counsel in the Inquiry Room.

Over the next four weeks, Moody and Sankey held services six nights each week in Agricultural Hall, as well as daily meetings for prayer, usually in Exeter Hall. Some afternoons saw additional services at 3:00PM in Agricultural Hall, where Moody preached the same sermon as he would later that evening, expecting a different crowd. As the revival progressed, afternoon meetings were added at Astley’s Amphitheatre on Westminster Road, where, after observing these services, one attendee couldn’t help but wonder if the cavernous space of Agricultural Hall wasn’t hindering Moody’s impact.

[Astley’s] amphitheatre was crammed from pit to ceiling with a motley crowd, which . . . listened with the most eager attention to the gospel preached and sung. Whether it was that the personal influence of the speaker was proportionally greater in the small building, or whether the congregation was more impressive than those that nightly fill the monster hall in Islington, we cannot say. . . We are inclined to think that the size of the building has not a little to do with the truth spoken. In the Agricultural Hall the effect seems somehow to be dissipated to some extent before it reaches the far-off corners.<sup>70</sup>

Throughout the month, attendance remained strong, giving lie to the prediction in London’s *Saturday Review*, which said, “Messrs. Moody and Sankey would be a nine days’ wonder at the most.”<sup>71</sup> In fact, nearly a month after services began, crowds of fifteen hundred would arrive two-and-a-half hours before the meeting began, “singing hymns till the doors

were opened.”<sup>72</sup> Fortunately, the large crowds were generally good-natured, although, at times, control neared the breaking point, as on Tuesday, April 1, when it was so crowded, “the usual regulations were broken through, and people were allowed to stand down the aisles, or anywhere they could get. Some thousands of persons were again turned away.”<sup>73</sup>

On April 1, there was a special prayer for more counselors who could work with Germans and Jews, reflecting the broad impact of the meetings.

And as late as April 4, nearly a month after beginning services in Agricultural Hall, there were further attempts to address the issue of many in the congregation being unable to hear the speaker. In this case, a large section behind the podium was “boarded in,” providing only a modest improvement. The reason for this late modification was because the services were intended to continue at the Aggie after the evangelists’ departure.

Despite ongoing problems with acoustics, God seemed to be blessing the meetings to a degree that the venerable London clergyman, the Rev. Archibald G. Brown, believed he was beholding “the same wonders Jerusalem did in the days of Pentecost. Then the streets were filled with eager crowds, all pouring along to hear the preaching of Christ, crucified, risen, exalted. Then the conversation of the multitude was all about the strange things which were coming to pass. So is it now.”<sup>74</sup>

That spirit of Pentecost continued through the first week of April, when, after about sixty services in Agricultural Hall reaching nearly 720,000 people,<sup>75</sup> the evangelists began their final week. Resulting from misinformation saying Moody and Sankey had already concluded their appearances at the hall, Monday evening’s attendance on the fifth was noticeably smaller.

Earlier that day, Moody had invited two hundred ministers from north London for tea at St. Mary’s Hall to finalize plans for carrying on meetings at the Aggie after his departure to another part of the city. Rev. William Taylor was chosen to preach the first week, with Rev. W.H. Aitken to continue the next.<sup>76</sup> Moody and Sankey would also return occasionally to speak and sing.

Less clear was what to do about the music. While there appeared to be plenty of candidates able to preach in Moody’s absence, there seemed to be no consensus about someone of Sankey’s stature to take his place. After considerable discussion, it was agreed to invite the Rev. Walter J. Mayers of Bristol, lately of the Baptist Chapel in London’s Battersea-Park, where he had begun to develop a reputation as a gospel singer. Although Sankey had been preceded in England by religious solo singers such as Philip Phillips on

concert tours, it still seemed evident that Ira Sankey was unique in his ability to employ music so directly for the purpose of winning souls. Although Ira appeared to make what he did look easy and natural, his absence from the next day's noon prayer meeting at Exeter Hall was obvious, as there was "a considerable difference in the manner in which the singing was conducted."<sup>77</sup> There just wasn't anyone close to possessing Sankey's gifts and his impact upon listeners.

Anticipating the vocal demands that would be required, Ira skipped the Tuesday noon prayer meeting because the evangelists were hosting a special children's meeting that afternoon at 3:00PM in Agricultural Hall. Fifty-seven schools and institutions brought in four thousand children, many wearing their colorful uniforms. It was a rare warm day, and the sun, streaming through the glass windows in the ceiling, acted as a sort of greenhouse, requiring many in the galleries to shield themselves with umbrellas. Some of the children came from places like the Alexandria Orphanage and proved to be well-drilled in Scripture knowledge and familiarity with the new Sankey songs.

Rather than preach a normal sermon, Moody shared brief anecdotes and Sankey followed each with a song reinforcing the point. "Scatter Seeds of Kindness," "Come to the Saviour," and "Safe in the Arms of Jesus" were among the favorites. For "Jewels" ("When He cometh, when He cometh to make up His jewels"), Sankey requested the children to alternate stanzas between the boys and girls, producing a remarkably sweet sound. After completing the closing hymn, it was discovered that a section of physically disabled children had restricted the general exodus, requiring Ira to render several additional songs.<sup>78</sup>

Sankey occasionally introduced new songs to his repertoire, such as "We Shall Sleep, but Not Forever," "In the Presence of the King," and "I know not the hour when my Lord will come" ("That will be Heaven for Me").<sup>79</sup> On Wednesday of the final week, Ira sang a new tune he had composed to a text by Elizabeth Clephane, author of the now-famous "The Ninety and Nine." It began, "Beneath the cross of Jesus, I fain would take my stand." The opening of Sankey's melody is surprisingly similar to the later melody by Frederick C. Maker, whose tune is wedded to Clephane's poem in most hymnals, suggesting that Maker was inspired by Sankey.<sup>80</sup>

Rain on Thursday evening failed to dampen enthusiasm of the crowds that filled the assembly as they did again on the final Friday meeting in Agri-

cultural Hall. Conspicuous on the platform were a host of clergy from many denominations as well as various “nobleman and distinguished persons,” such as the Lord Chief Justice of the Queen’s Bench, Ireland. Sankey sang the beloved “The Ninety and Nine,” No. 43 in the expanded song collection, prefacing it with a short prayer for God to give him a tender heart, and that “some poor wandering sheep might hear the shepherd’s tender voice.”<sup>81</sup> There were usually no services on Saturday.

As meetings at the Aggie began to wrap up and he gazed out at the thousands of eyes following his every move, Ira’s thoughts pondered the strange road that had led him thus far. How many times had he and Fanny, during the previous meetings at Liverpool, puzzled over what a striking reception they were enjoying compared to their earlier arrival in the same city when no one even knew who they were. But now, just two short years later, Sankey was singing before thousands each day, and soon he was going to be singing on the stage of a London opera house. And not just any opera house, but the stage of Her Majesty’s Theatre! As a good Methodist who shunned the sin of theater-going, Ira had never even darkened the door of an opera house, let alone sung in one. And now, “What hath God wrought?” ☞



## Endnotes

1. Words by Kate Hankey, music by William H. Doane, "Tell Me the Old, Old Story," *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan, and Geo. C. Stebbins, eds. (Cincinnati: John Church Co.; New York: Biglow and Main, 1894), No. 28. This popular Sunday School song was one of the hymns Sankey chose for the first edition of *Sacred Songs and Solos*, No. 14.
2. Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1859), 1.
3. Karl Marx, *Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (Berlin, 1867), translated into English as *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (1887). Marx spent twelve years in the British Library working on the first volume of his *Das Kapital*.
4. "Great Stink," *Wikipedia*.
5. *City Press*, 18 June 1858.
6. *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 151 (London: Cornelius Buck, 1858), 1508.
7. For an overview of this amazing time and transformation, see Peter Ackroyd, *London Under* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2011); Paul Dobraszczyk, *London's Sewers* (Oxford: Shire Books, 2014); Stephen Halliday, *The Great Stink of London: Sir Joseph Bazalgette and the Cleansing of the Victorian Metropolis* (Stroud: History Press Limited, 2013).
8. Expansion of the system continues as the project Crossrail, consisting of 26 miles of underground tunnels and costing nearly 20 billion pounds, opened in May of 2022.
9. [Agnes Ann McFarlan Matheson], listed as only "His wife, ed.," *Memorials of Hugh M. Matheson* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1899), 181, and Will R. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1900), 223, say Matheson met with Moody in Thurso, Scotland, but this writer has not been able to verify when Moody would have been there, as it's quite distant from his itinerary at that time.
10. Matheson, *Memorials*, provides a good overview of his life and achievements.
11. Bruce Evensen's *God's Man for the Gilded Age* (Oxford: University Press, 2003) takes as its major focus the role of publicity in Moody's career.
12. Geo. E. Morgan, [A Veteran in Revival:] *R.C. Morgan, His Life and Times* (New York: Gospel Publishing House, 1909), 173.
13. On an earlier occasion, Moody had convinced donors to provide a subscription to *The Christian* to thousands of pastors.

14. James F. Findlay Jr., *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist 1837–1899* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 166fn, 170–71.
15. Evensen, *God's Man*, 42. William H. Daniels, *D.L. Moody and His Work* (Hartford: American Publishing Co., 1876), 357–58.
16. See Christine L. Corton, *London Fog: The Biography* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press/Harvard University, 2015).
17. Spurgeon had preached to 23,654 people in the Crystal Palace on 7 October 1857 to commemorate a Fast-day Service after the Mutiny in India.
18. Goodspeed, *A Full History of the Wonderful Career of Moody and Sankey* (St. John, New Brunswick: W.E. Erskine and Co., 1876), 196, says the floor of the building seated 9,000, raised platform for choir and minsters 250, eastern side gallery 900, western side gallery 1,000, upper raised gallery in front of platform 1,350, balcony in front 850, upper western balcony 350, totaling 13,700.
19. Rufus Clark, *The Work of God in Great Britain under Messrs. Moody and Sankey, 1873–1875* (NY: Harper and Bros., 1875), 348. John Kent, *Holding the Fort: Studies in Victorian Revivalism* (London: Epworth Press, 1978), 144–45.
20. *The Christian*, 4 March 1875, 15.
21. W.H. Daniels, *D.L. Moody and His Work* (Hartford: American Publishing, 1876), 359.
22. Quoted in John Pollack, *Moody without Sankey: A New Biographical Portrait* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963), 136.
23. Quoted in John Pollock, *Moody: A Biography* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 165.
24. Pollock, *Moody: A Biography*, 165.
25. *Sacred Songs and Solos, Enlarged Edition: Sung by Ira D. Sankey at Gospel Meetings* (London: Morgan and Scott, n.d.). The date for this enlarged version is likely January of 1875, as Moody related in a meeting about the royalties from it: “. . . up to the 1st of January . . . when the Solo Book was enlarged.” *The Christian*, “Conference at Freemason’s Hall,” Thursday, 11 Feb. 1875, 8.
26. *Sacred Songs and Solos, Enlarged Edition*, Preface.
27. *Moody and Sankey: The New Evangelists, Their Lives and Labors* (London: Ward, Lock and Taylor, n.d.), 70, records, “a choir, chiefly composed of ladies.”
28. Daniels, *His Words, Work*, 46–47.
29. First appearing in the Appendix of the 1695 edition.
30. OLD HUNDREDTH was also famous in a version with the same tune but with “gathering notes” (longer than the others) at the beginning of each phrase

and longer note values on other pitches in each phrase. Known as the Scotch version, it didn't seem to be used in the British or American publications of Sankey's collections.

31. Some writers have used the term *Sprechstimme* (“speech-singing” or “spoken voice”), which was popularized by classical composers of the Second Viennese School in the works of Arnold Schoenberg such as *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912), but that does not accurately describe the technique. A better understanding comes from listening to the delivery of gospel singer Doug Oldham, whose recording of Bill and Gloria Gather’s “The King is Coming” in 1971 brought him widespread fame.

Unfortunately, none of the recordings Sankey made late in his life, around 1898 for the Edison Company, reflect his much-described flexibility and novelty of performance. They all seem to be full voice and very rhythmic—such as would be used when leading a congregational song.

32. Daniels, *His Words, Work*, 487.
33. “Messrs. Moody and Sankey in London,” *The Methodist*, 9 April 1875.
34. Clark, *Work of God*, 351–55.
35. *London Times*, 10 March 1875, 5. It is interesting to note how none of the myriad books or religious periodicals that covered the meetings in some detail included this incident.
36. *The Christian*, 18 March 1875, 12.
37. Emily Kinnaird, *Reminiscences* (London: John Murray, 1925), 39.
38. Kent, *Holding the Fort*, 156.
39. Kinnaird, *Reminiscences*, 39.
40. Kinnaird, *Reminiscences*, 39.
41. Emma Moody’s diary, 8 March 1875.
42. Emma Moody’s diary, 8 March 1875.
43. Emma Moody Powell, *Heavenly Destiny: The Life Story of Mrs. D.L. Moody* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1943), 92.
44. J.W. Hanson in *The Life and Works of the World’s Greatest Evangelist Dwight L. Moody: A Complete and Authentic Review of the Marvelous Career of the Most Remarkable Religious General in History* (Atlanta: J.L. Nichols, 1900), 131.
45. The “City of London” contains the historic center and central business district (CBD) of greater London. It constitutes the area from its settlement by the Romans in the first century A.D. to the Middle Ages, but the modern city has since grown far beyond the “City of London” boundary.

46. See Christopher Newman Hall, *Wikipedia*. Hall was also a friend of Spurgeon and a widely published hymnwriter.
47. Words by W.W. Walford (of whom almost nothing is known), music by William B. Bradbury, “Sweet Hour of Prayer,” *Gospel Hymns Complete*, No. 634.
48. Daniels, *His Words, Work*, 361–62.
49. J.[ane] MacKinnon, *Recollections of Mr. D.L. Moody and His Work in Britain, 1874–1892* (n.p. Privately published, 1901/1905), 84.
50. Goodspeed, *Full History*, 185, says it was Moody’s decision to close the hall at 7:30, but another source seems to call that into question.
51. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 230.
52. Islington Hall was another name for Agricultural Hall. Quoted by Pollock, *Moody: A Biography*, 168.
53. “Men of the Day. No. 102. Mr. Ira D. Sankey,” *Vanity Fair*, 10 April 1875. The drawing is subtitled “Prayer and Praise.”
54. Edward Pell, *D.L. Moody: His Life, Work, and Words* (Richmond, VA: B.F. Johnson, 1900), 147.
55. *The Primitive Methodist*, 15 March 1875, quoting *Saturday Review*.
56. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 233.
57. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 233.
58. Kim Riddlebarger, “Basics of the Reformed Faith: The Order of Salvation,” *Westminster Seminary California*: <https://www.wscal.edu/basics-of-the-reformed-faith-th-order-of-salvation/>
59. Goodspeed, *Full History*, 185.
60. Words by Ellen H. Gates, music by William H. Doane, “The Prodigal Child,” *Gospel Hymns Complete*, No. 627.
61. *The Christian*, 18 March 1875, 12.
62. Daniels, *His Words, Work*, 359.
63. Kent,  *Holding the Fort*, “The Inquiry-Room,” 204–14.
64. Elias Nason, *The American Evangelists, Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey* (Boston: D. Lothrop and Co., 1877), 248.
65. Goodspeed, *Full History*, 186.
66. Robert Boyd, *The Lives and Labors of Moody and Sankey* (Toronto: A.H. Hovey, 1876), 173.
67. Clark, *Work of God*, 359.

68. *Times of Blessing*, 25 March 1875.
69. Clark, *Work of God*, 362–63.
70. *The Christian*, 1 April 1875, 13.
71. *The Christian*, 8 April 1875, 11.
72. *The Christian Age*, 7 April 1875, 82.
73. *The Christian Age*, 7 April 1875, 82.
74. *The Christian*, 25 March 1875, 10.
75. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 251.
76. Goodspeed, *Full History*, 197–98, says the week after Moody left, attendance dropped to 1000–2000 nightly before bouncing back up to 5000–6000.
77. *The Christian Age*, 14 April 1875, 97.
78. *The Christian Age*, 14 April 1875, 97–98.
79. Words by M.A. Kidder, music by Silas J. Vail, “We shall sleep,” *Gospel Hymns Complete*, No. 94. Words by Florence Armstrong, music by “English,” “In the presence of the King,” No. 40. Words by P.P. Bliss, music by James McGranahan, “That Will Be Heaven for Me,” No. 621.
80. Maker didn’t publish his version until 1881 in the supplement to the *Bristol Tune Book*. Although Sankey’s melody was well-constructed, his harmonization was too static to be of much interest and his setting never caught on, although he did include it in a number of later collections, including *Gospel Hymns Complete*, “The Cross of Jesus,” No. 32.
81. *The Christian Age*, 14 April 1874, 98.





No. 576.

To the Work.

F. J. Crosby.

W. H. Doane.

1. To the work! to the work! we are ser - vants of God, Let us  
 2. To the work! to the work! let the hun - gry be fed; To the  
 3. To the work! to the work! there is la - bor for all, For the  
 4. To the work! to the work! in the strength of the Lord, And a

fol - low the path that our Mas - ter has trod; With the  
 fount - ain of Life let the wea - ry be led; In the  
 king - dom of dark - ness and er - ror shall fall; And the  
 robe and a crown shall our la - bor re - ward; When the

balm of His coun - sel our strength to re - new, Let us  
 cross and its ban - ner our glo - ry shall be, While we  
 name of Je - ho - vah ex - alt - ed shall be, In the  
 home of the faith - ful our dwell - ing shall be, And we

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CHORUS.

do with our might what our hands find to do.  
 her - ald the tid - ings, "Sal - va - tion is free!" } Toil - ing on, Toil - ing  
 loud swelling chor - us, "Sal - va - tion is free!"  
 shout with the ransom'd "Sal - va - tion is free!"

Toil - ing on,

on, Toil - ing on, Toil - ing on, Let us  
 Toil - ing on, Toil - ing on, Toil - ing on,

hope, Let us watch, And la - bor till the Mas - ter comes.  
 and trust, and pray,

## *Chapter 13*

# The Upper Crust and the Huddled Masses

1875

*To the work! To the work! we are servants of God,  
Let us follow the path that our Master has trod;  
With the balm of His counsel our strength to renew,  
Let us do with our might what our hands find to do.*

*Toiling on, Toiling on, Toiling on, Toiling on,  
Let us hope, Let us watch, And labor till the Master comes.*

*To the work! To the work! let the hungry be fed;  
To the fountain of Life let the weary be led;  
In the cross and His banner our glory shall be,  
While we herald the tidings, "Salvation is free!"*

*To the work! To the work! there is labor for all,  
For the kingdom of darkness and error shall fall;  
And the name of Jehovah exalted shall be  
In the loud swelling chorus, "Salvation is free!"<sup>1</sup>*

THERE WAS A FAMOUS old theater maxim that said, "If you run an opera company, you can be sure of two things: sooner or later you'll have trouble with the soprano or the theater will burn down."<sup>2</sup> Her Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket was a sober incarnation of that maxim, for it was the third opera house on that site—the previous two having gone up in flames.

The first building there was constructed in 1705 and named in honor of Queen Anne. It opened with a performance of a totally forgettable opera called *The Loves of Ergasto* by Giacomo Greber. Fortunately, things went better a few years later when George Frideric Handel mounted his first Italian opera, *Rinaldo*, for the English stage and began a series of successful works. However, when he attempted to present a staged version of the Old Testament story of Esther in the English language, he was opposed by Edmund Gibson, the Bishop of London, who banned performances of biblical stories

being acted on the stage. Handel then adjusted his vision, dispensing with staging, and presented it purely as a concert work, being credited as the first oratorio performance in England. Despite its impressive history, an arson fire destroyed the theatre in 1789 during a rehearsal, sending performers scurrying into the street.

It was replaced by the largest theater in England and was considered one of the most resplendent in the world.<sup>3</sup> The hall hosted English premieres of Mozart's *Magic Flute* and *Don Giovanni*, plus Rossini's *Barber of Seville*. It also premiered English productions of Donizetti and Verdi operas with Jenny Lind in one of the title roles. Popularly known as the Italian or Haymarket Opera House, it burned down in 1867—in less than an hour.

By 1869, a third, magnificent edifice had arisen on the site, this time employing more fireproof materials. Although it was an imposing pile, it had inexplicably remained vacant since its construction, due to a lengthy and highly public legal dispute between the owner and the manager.<sup>4</sup> At the behest of Lord Ward, Earl of Dudley, the theater was secured for revival meetings at £1000 for a three-month period.<sup>5</sup> It was located in an area known as the Haymarket or the West End, near the posh Mayfair district, a neighborhood where one might easily spy those who were among the “upper ten thousand.”<sup>6</sup>

Compared to the huge livestock arenas like Agricultural Hall, Her Majesty's was downright tiny by comparison, seating fewer than 2,500 people. That was on purpose, of course, as the building was designed to showcase plays and operas in an age without electronic amplification. And to hear such performances successfully, the size of the edifice had to be much smaller. When wealthy supporters suggested that Moody and Sankey hold regular evening services there—in addition to the noon prayer and Bible readings he apparently envisaged—Moody initially objected, saying he would rather preach to the massive crowds in Agricultural Hall than the modest-sized Opera House. Nevertheless, a majority at a planning meeting asserted that he would attract a higher class of folks than presently felt comfortable traipsing to the Islington location. What eventually developed was a rotating schedule between the two locations for evening services.<sup>7</sup>

For such an auspicious setting as Her Majesty's Theatre, the roll-out of meetings was surprisingly low key, with only one service scheduled for Monday, April 12, a noon prayer meeting. Although the theater wasn't full—only three of the four galleries being required—an enthusiastic crowd greet-



**Moody Preaching in the Her Majesty's Theatre, London, in J. Wilbur Chapman, *The Life and Work of Dwight L. Moody* (1900).**

ed the evangelists. Moody told his hearers they were not there to dedicate the hall—as, somewhat ironically, they were its first occupants—but to pray for God to fill the place with His presence.

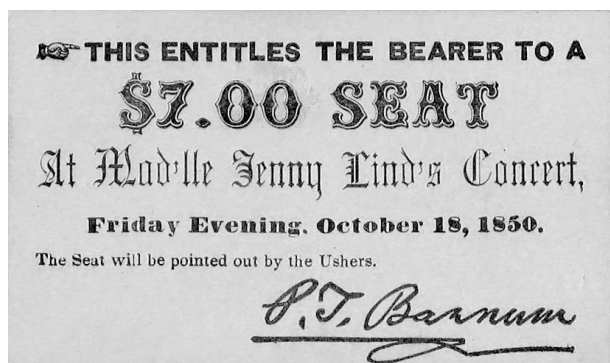
A forty-voice choir graced the stage, which was unusually spacious because, as no productions had as yet occupied the theater, no workrooms or scenery storage had been constructed there. The stage was like “a good-sized church in itself.”<sup>8</sup> And while a large sounding board loomed over Moody’s pulpit, a gilded statue of the Greek god Apollo perched high over the proscenium arch ironically kept watch over the meetings. When Ira finally seated himself behind the harmonium to sing, it must have been a nearly overwhelming experience. As he peered out into the glittering theater, his eyes beheld the great horseshoe of an auditorium with four balconies gracefully sweeping around on either side. While the gallery boxes were packed with people, the two biggest ones directly in front of him—reserved for the royal family—were conspicuously empty. The eighteen-foot-high gas chandelier hanging from the painted dome cast a soft gleam on the glowing surfaces that covered every inch of wall space. It’s uncertain whether Ira even had time to gaze up at the domed ceiling, decorated with the portraits of a doz-

en famous opera composers. There was no way this handsomely appointed palace of fine arts could have been mistaken for any of the large, all-purpose cattle barns he had been singing in for the last year. This was London at its finest—and Sankey was there on stage, right in the middle of it all.

But it wasn't just the stunning building that broadcast he was in a different world; it was also the audience. Whereas those thronging Agricultural Hall looked like middle-class folk, with a sprinkling of high and low society thrown in, the crowd staring back so expectantly at Sankey that Monday noon clearly inhabited a better social station.

Although no opera fan, Ira must have known something about the venue's imposing history and entertained at least some inkling that many now waiting to hear him sing had frequented the former hall and listened to the greatest voices of the age. It's highly unlikely Ira would have recognized the names of any international opera luminaries, because back home, America had no stars of its own and was still in its infancy, trying to establish regular opera offerings for the well-heeled in New York.

If Ira had been required to name anyone of operatic fame, he might have recalled hearing an elderly member of the New Castle community of his youth, famous for regaling anyone who would listen, of having journeyed to Pittsburgh in 1851 to hear singer Jenny Lind, the famous "Swedish Nightingale," on her American concert tour. Phineas Taylor (P.T.) Barnum—the famous humbug, promoter, and later Ringling Brothers circus owner—had hatched the idea of bringing the European opera singer to America and paying her the astronomical sum of \$1,000 per night for 150 concerts. That made her into an international singing sensation, as anyone who attended a concert would later recall and retell, time and time again.



National Museum of American History, Smithsonian



Of course, those who observed one of Lind's concerts were far from experiencing real opera, as her programs were a mix of music for orchestra, featuring violinist Joseph Burke (Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" from *Midsummer Night's Dream*), opera highlights from her singing partner, Giovanni Belletti (the famous "Figaro, Figaro" or "Largo al factotum" from Rossini's *Barber of Seville*), and Lind's four or five selections, including opera arias (Donizetti's "Casta diva" from *Norma*), oratorio solos ("I know that my Redeemer liveth" from Handel's *Messiah*), and the closing "Herdsman's Song" in her native Swedish. The resulting "Lindomania" caused shrewd marketers to slap the name Jenny Lind on any article they could procure, from bonnets to sewing machines to a piano!

Ira was more likely to have come across the world of opera in relation to his friend Philip P. Bliss, whose Sunday School songs had made Sankey famous. Bliss represented the more educated side of mainstream American church music—outside of liturgical churches, which were likely to have hired a European immigrant to play the organ or lead the choir. While in Chicago, Bliss moved in the orbit of publisher/songwriter George F. Root, who was knowledgeable about European art (classical) music but purposely chose to simplify his style and musical publications to reach a larger and as-yet uneducated American audience. Bliss was familiar with and sang solos from popular oratorios (such as by Mendelssohn and Haydn) and studied voice in New York with Carlo Bassini, whose impressive *Bassini's Art of Singing: An Analytical, Physiological and Practical System for the Cultivation of the Voice* made him a renowned vocal pedagogue.<sup>9</sup>

Bliss was among the second generation of Sunday School song writers, with William B. Bradbury being their patriarch. Bradbury had taken more than just a passing interest in classical music by spending two years studying in Europe and listening firsthand to some of the greatest composers of the age. Less well known among this group, because most of his work was done in editing rather than composing, was Hubert Platt Main, the man who probably helped Sankey polish many of his efforts. He lived in New York City, where he maintained a friendship with classical composers like George F. Bristow, and he closely followed the work of Europe's most influential radical composer, Richard Wagner. In fact, Main was such a fan of Wagner's new music, he was dubbed a "Wagnerite," an admirer or follower of the composer whose works were redefining classical music. So, while many of Sankey's colleagues possessed a close affinity with classical music,



the pious Methodist, Ira, was definitely in a musically alien world when it came to the opera house.

When Sankey opened his mouth to sing, one of the most obvious differences between him and a trained singer would have been the use of—or lack of—the “head voice.” A standard technique for trained male voices was to lighten the quality of their sound as they approached the top of their natural range—called the “chest voice.” At that point, they learned how to make a smooth transition into the lighter “head voice.” With practice, they could strengthen this extended register and unobtrusively connect it to the lower “chest voice.” This would not only provide a larger vocal range, but it would also allow the highest notes to be “covered” and avoid straining or unpleasant forcing.<sup>10</sup>

Unfortunately, this wasn’t the approach Sankey took, as recorded by British organist and musicologist Edward Francis Rimbault:

Mr. Sankey has no pretensions [as an accomplished singer] and we question if he could vocalize properly the simplest exercise in the instruction book. He has possibly never had a singing lesson in his life. His voice is a powerful baritone of small compass. He touches E . . . with considerable difficulty and even E[-flat] strains his voice. He sings from the chest register and his intonation is far from perfect.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the professional musician Rimbault faulting Sankey’s limited vocal technique and lack of musical training, he went on to admit, “in many respects, professional singers might take a lesson from him.”<sup>12</sup> As Gamaliel Bradford explained,

To begin with, he himself felt profoundly what he sang. He prepared himself with prayer and his sensitive and nervous temperament responded to the spirit of the hymn and the stimulus of the surroundings often to the point of tears.<sup>13</sup>

Although Ira’s “small compass” or limited vocal range was noticeable at times, it generally did not present a great problem, for Sankey sang his solos as they were published in the gospel hymn collections. He sang them in the same key and with no interpolations of high notes beyond the normal vocal range of congregational singers—which was usually an E on the top of the staff (technically called E5).<sup>14</sup>

As Sankey's concept of solo singing was based on a personal delivery of the gospel message, there would have been no reason to interpolate high notes, drawing attention to the singer's musical ability. It was all about text, not music. Sometime later, with singers who had wider ranges, it became common to end on a note higher than printed in the music. A good example of this technique can be found in "Blessed Assurance" by Fanny Crosby and Phoebe Palmer Knapp, whose concluding phrase ends on the lower notes of the D scale. But it's common for trained voices to raise the last phrase a whole octave for a more powerful conclusion. There is no record of Sankey taking this type of musical liberty.<sup>15</sup>

He was famous, however, for taking such freedom in his solos as to render the notated rhythms nearly unrecognizable. He also employed a more speech-like quality than the normal singing voice on some phrases—all in an attempt to highlight the text.

[I]t was his constant care to bring out the words with the utmost distinctness and intelligibility. The music was not the first thing nor the only thing. Words and music must be involved together in an inextricable and impressive harmony. . . . [T]o convince, as well as move, every word of the hymns had to carry its full meaning to every member of those vast audiences. He made the words do it. It was for this purpose that he required and contrived and obtained absolute sympathetic silence, for this purpose that he rejected great organs and obtrusive accompaniments, and contented himself simply with the small reed instrument to carry the tune.<sup>16</sup>

Of course, such issues were the farthest thing from his mind as he directed the opening hymn, "Rejoice and Be Glad," at that first noon prayer meeting. In fact, Ira didn't sing much at this meeting, as it focused more on testimonies and prayer requests than music, although Moody always spoke on the topic of "Praise" for the Monday meetings. It wasn't until the close of the service that Ira sang Annie Wittenmyer's Holiness-oriented hymn, "I have entered the valley of blessing so sweet." While it wasn't one of Sankey's go-to solos, it must have been familiar enough for the audience to join in the chorus.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the limited amount of music in this service, it was clear from the moment Ira began that he would be singing differently here. In the giant Agricultural Hall, where they were completing their schedule of evening

services, Sankey could hardly hear himself. When he opened his mouth and began a solo, there was nothing in the vast auditorium on which his sound could reflect and return to him in some form, and that was of immense importance, as it provided the chance to judge how a song was coming across, allowing for small adjustments in speed, volume, and interpretation. Even minute amounts of reverberation could support his singing and reinforce his sound. But none of that was possible in the Aggie, when every effort he employed simply drifted out into the vast spaces where thousands of bodies further absorbed his efforts. It was certainly not a musically fulfilling experience.

But here in the Queen's Theatre, all that was different. From the moment Ira engaged his vocal cords, he could actually experience his own voice reverberating from the walls and galleries. Even the raked stage (slightly sloping down toward the audience from the back wall) was designed to allow singers farther away from the listeners—called “upstage” because they were literally higher than the singers “downstage,” closer to the audience—to project a singer's voice. For a few moments, it was a reminder of earlier days when Sankey sang in much smaller venues, but could still hear himself. This was not the vocal drudgery it had sometimes become in trying to sing to the enormous crowds; it was what singing was meant to be! And it was felt by those in attendance, even one who

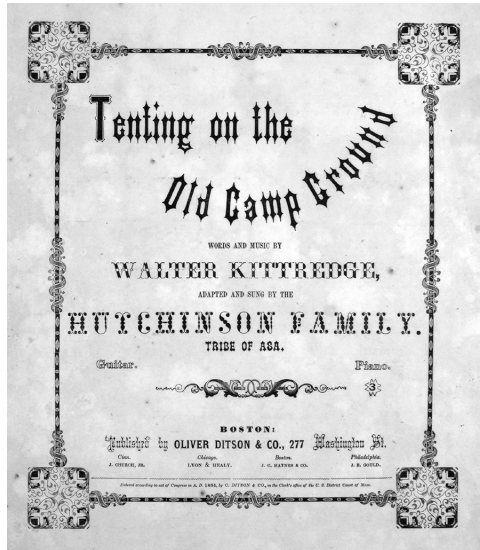
. . . sat at the extreme end of the immense temple, in the very last bench, near the door, and so clear was Sankey's voice, and so distinct and sharp-cut his articulation, that every word and syllable and intonation could be heard with singular sweetness. It was not a cultivated voice. There was no affectation in the pronunciation, and there was a little Western twang, but I could readily understand how a hymn so sung and intoned, so metallic and ringing, would reach hearts already half prepared to approve. At the end of every verse he would pause for nearly a minute, and the silence intensified the deep emotion of the mass, and then he resumed very low, and rose to the last like the prolonged note of a cornet or bugle.<sup>18</sup>

While high praise might have been expected from those evaluating Sankey through a spiritual lens, other less biased observers—such as Sims Reeves, who enjoyed a reputation as one of England's finest operatic and oratorio singers—observed Sankey on several occasions and were impressed with his ability to sway a crowd.<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps because of improved acoustics and the presence of a trained choir, Ira selected a solo for the second day's prayer service (Tuesday) capable of creating an impact with its musical features rather than a highly personalized rendition of the text, as was Ira's specialty. The words were from the revered hymn writer, Isaac Watts: "Give me the wings of faith to rise."<sup>20</sup> While the text was reminiscent of a much earlier era of hymnody, the tune coupled with it in Ira's collection had a rather unusual pedigree. It had been composed by Walter Kittredge in 1863 for his pensive Civil War song, "Tenting on the Old Camp Ground."

Whoever had assisted Ira in compiling this creative arrangement at No. 59 in Sankey's enlarged edition of *Sacred Songs and Solos* definitely possessed editing skills superior to his. First, Kittredge's tune had been raised one-half step to B-flat and coupled—perhaps for the first time—with this text by Watts. The opening stanza was scored for only an unaccompanied solo voice to the tune from "Tenting." Then there followed what had been the chorus for "Tenting," scored for two voices (still unaccompanied) with a text somewhat unrelated to Watts' hymn, "Many are the friends who are waiting today, Happy on the golden strand," followed by a four-part refrain, "Many are the voices calling us away." At the conclusion of the refrain was the direction "Repeat chorus *pp*" (very softly), with the final four measures of "Calling us away . . . to a better land" being repeated yet again.

This selection was clearly different from the majority of songs in the collection, as it was designed to produce a musical effect, especially evident when singers were asked to repeat the final lines in a hushed manner, reflecting the physical distance of those calling from a happy "golden strand." With the help of his trained choir and a much smaller congregation, Sankey molded this sentimental solo into a deeply communal experience as he requested those in the Opera House to join in the refrain, which was simple enough for most to learn with a couple of repetitions. Sankey was now employing the audience almost like a choir, something he couldn't have contemplated



in Agricultural Hall. This was definitely an enlarged conception on Ira's part about the possible role of music in the services. He was no longer limited to his sensitive and somewhat novel delivery of text, so he could now deliver a musical impact as well.<sup>21</sup>

On the whole, while the Opera House noon prayer meetings didn't fill the hall—causing Moody some concern<sup>22</sup>—the afternoon Bible readings did. Although they were a standard feature of past revival meetings, they had not been scheduled while the revivalists were in Agricultural Hall. But now they were back on the docket, and the building was filled to the rafters on Tuesday afternoon with a conspicuously respectable crowd. Those listening to Ira's two solos noted how "his voice was heard to advantage, the building being specially adapted for singing."<sup>23</sup> Ira also took note.

Moody took advantage to preach on Nicodemus, who he contended would take a high position in society if he were alive at that time, yet Christ told him he must be "born again." Moody confessed, he "pitied the man or woman who was a slave to fashion, custom, or society."<sup>24</sup> It's unclear how many of his hearers would have felt he was taking aim at them.

In some respects, these kinds of sentiments were brave remarks, for it was this high level of British society who made the meetings possible. Overall, the initial budget of £30,000—which among other expenses paid for the manufacture of 22,000 chairs to fill the various halls—was met by the well-heeled members of the Committee and their friends.<sup>25</sup> The need to raise funds resulted, in part, from there being no offerings taken in the services themselves.

But the cream of British society were no distant onlookers who salved their consciences by providing financial balm but then ignored the actual work; they were among Moody and Sankey's most avid supporters.

While the Moodys had earlier been staying at the Sands' lodgings, with the opening of meetings in the Opera House, the family moved from near Agricultural Hall to #5 Richmond Terrace, built on the site of Henry VIII's White Hall Palace bowling green.<sup>26</sup> This was the home of Quinton Hogg, seventh son of the 1st Baronet Sir James Hogg. He had made a name for himself with thirty-one appearances for the Wanderers Football Club plus twice representing Scotland in the unofficial internationals in 1870 and 1871. His interest in Christian philanthropy, particularly education for the poor, saw him found the Regent Street Polytechnic, which became the University of Westminster, the largest provider of adult education in London.

A man of boundless energy and sophistication, he not only provided the Moodys a place to lodge, but also appointed four or five women to answer correspondence, with Hogg taking on the duties of chief secretary in order to coordinate the progressively complex schedule of the evangelists. To facilitate his houseguest's far-flung responsibilities, Hogg reserved a brougham (a horse-drawn carriage with a roof and four wheels) just for Moody's use.<sup>27</sup>

While pastors could support the meetings with their presence and encourage their church members to attend, it was the wealthy and powerful supporting Moody and Sankey who allowed them to accomplish what they did on such a grand scale. There was Samuel Morley, the Congregationalist and Liberal Member of Parliament who, as a successful businessman, supported religious causes. Prominent bankers Arthur Kinnaird, James Mathieson, and Hugh Matheson all sheltered the revivalists and their families at some point during their London visits. The socially important upper echelons of society were represented by Frederick Edward Gould Lambart, 9th Earl of Cavan; Hugh McCalmont Cairns, who became a baron and served as Lord Chancellor in Disraeli's government; Granville Augustus William Waldegrave, 3rd Baron Radstock and Peer of Ireland; and Whig MP William Cowper-Temple, second son of the 5th Earl Cowper. While those ostentatious titles held little meaning for most Americans, they identified their holders as embodying the summit of a deeply class-conscious British social order.

Also central to this group was the high-profile Anthony Ashley Cooper, 7th Earl of Shaftesbury.<sup>28</sup> As a Member of Parliament, he became known for his advocacy of more humane lunacy laws, child labor and factory reform, protection for chimney sweeps, education for the poor, opposition to the opium trade, Christian Zionism, and Roman Catholic emancipation laws. He was also an enthusiastic supporter of the London meetings.

Perhaps the highest-ranking political member among revivalist supporters was William Ewart Gladstone, four-time Minister of the Exchequer and four-time Prime Minister.

Support also came, albeit somewhat indirectly, from the highest levels of royalty. On Thursday, the fourth day of meetings, rumors swirled at the noon prayer service that Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales—Alexandra of Denmark, whose father was king of Denmark and whose brother was king of Greece—might attend the afternoon Bible reading. Princess Alexandra was the wife of Albert Edward, known as “Bertie” (or “Dirty Bertie”



and “Edward the Caresser”<sup>29</sup> because of his sexual promiscuity), the eldest son of Queen Victoria, who, as Prince of Wales, would eventually become Edward VII, king of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and Emperor of India.

Long before the afternoon service began, every seat in the dazzling Opera House was filled with congregants sporting noticeably finer attire than would ordinarily be worn to such a common occasion. Eyes consistently darted back and forth between the stage and the royal box, hoping to catch a glimpse of a trend-setter at the pinnacle of British aristocracy. For those on the main floor, this was especially challenging, as the royal box was behind them, and turning completely around would create an awkward situation. It was much easier, however, for those seated in the horseshoe balconies to look across the hall and sight one of the most gossiped-about figures in the country.



**Princess Alexandra & Prince Edward, 1863,**  
National Portrait Gallery, London.

As was the custom, thirty minutes before the appointed hour of 3:30PM, the crowd—led by the choir—began singing favorite “Sankey songs.” But all interest in singing quickly dissipated and became riveted on the festooned seating at the rear of the hall as Her Royal Highness, attended by the Duchess of Sutherland and General Probyn, took their conspicuous seats. Probyn, who would later become Sir Dighton Macnaghten Probyn and enjoy a long list of important titles, was a close friend of the Princess of Wales. For her, he designed gardens at Windsor Castle and Sandringham House. His positions as Keeper of the Privy Purse and Comptroller of the Household to the Prince and Princess—with the responsibility to keep them financially solvent—was particularly challenging, as both royal members were profligate spenders, partly the result of Edward VII’s countless affairs with a long line of mistresses—encompassing actresses, socialites, aristocrats, and countless prostitutes.<sup>30</sup>

Surprisingly to some, the Princess took an active part in the congregational songs and paid close attention to all that was happening on stage. As an acknowledgement of her musical support, Sankey sent her a special copy of *Sacred Songs and Solos* with a letter expressing hope for the words to be of comfort to the Princess and her family.<sup>31</sup>

At precisely 3:30PM, Moody and Sankey appeared. There was the usual opening hymn and prayer, then Moody requested Sankey to sing his famous “The Ninety and Nine,” which to one listener had become “almost as well known as a nursery rhyme.”<sup>32</sup> Ira couldn’t help but realize how the apex of British society was seated in front of him, at almost eye level, but this was a song with which he felt very comfortable. Plus, there was this wonderful building, designed for singers, which allowed him to focus on the message of the text, rather than worry about whether those in the back part of the hall could hear anything. Sankey was in fine voice and sang as if that one “lost sheep” might be out there, sought by the Savior. Moody then preached on “Grace,” reminding his listeners how grace alone was necessary for salvation, and there was no additional need for baptism or the Lord’s Supper, delivering a not-so-subtle rebuke to any who might believe there was saving grace in the sacraments. Ira then movingly sang Bliss’s “Almost Persuaded,” realizing many in the audience might have understood God’s grace for the first time that afternoon. But as these were Bible Reading services, there was no Inquiry Room invitation, and Moody pronounced the benediction.

It quickly became clear, however, that the unusually large attendance had clogged the stairs and brought egress to a halt. Ever at the ready for unexpected circumstances, Ira and the choir launched into “What Shall the Harvest Be” to quell the possibility of impatience at the slow exit. The Princess listened politely for a verse or two, then retired with her party via their private entrance, a curious crowd enjoying a close-up glimpse of royalty.<sup>33</sup> Her public attendance at the meeting opened the door for other aristocrats to support Moody and Sankey.

While the royal box reflected support from some of the country’s most important nobility, there were others who, for various reasons, opposed Moody and Sankey’s presence in Her Majesty’s Theatre. One of these was a Mr. Leader who took the revivalists to court, seeking to evict them from the premises. Although he didn’t attend the services, he advertised his displeasure by forbidding his conspicuous box from holding worshipers. And in a hall that was always jammed on that level, his displeasure was amplified by the frequent question: “Why isn’t that box occupied?”

The lawsuit was no doubt part of the long-running litigation that had caused the Opera House to remain vacant since its completion in 1869. Leader's legal position was apparently a strong one, as the judge—Master of the Rolls—ruled that Moody and Sankey should not be holding meetings there; however, he decreed that Mr. Leader was not suffering any damages as a result of the meetings, and because the services had already been in progress for some time, he would not require them to leave immediately. But they could not continue past their original lease and had to vacate the hall after May 29.<sup>34</sup>

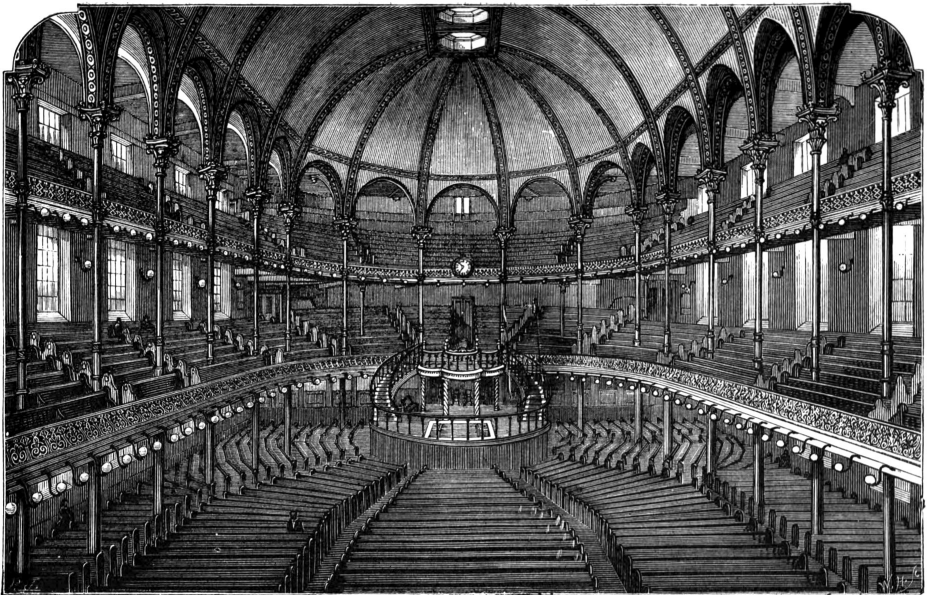
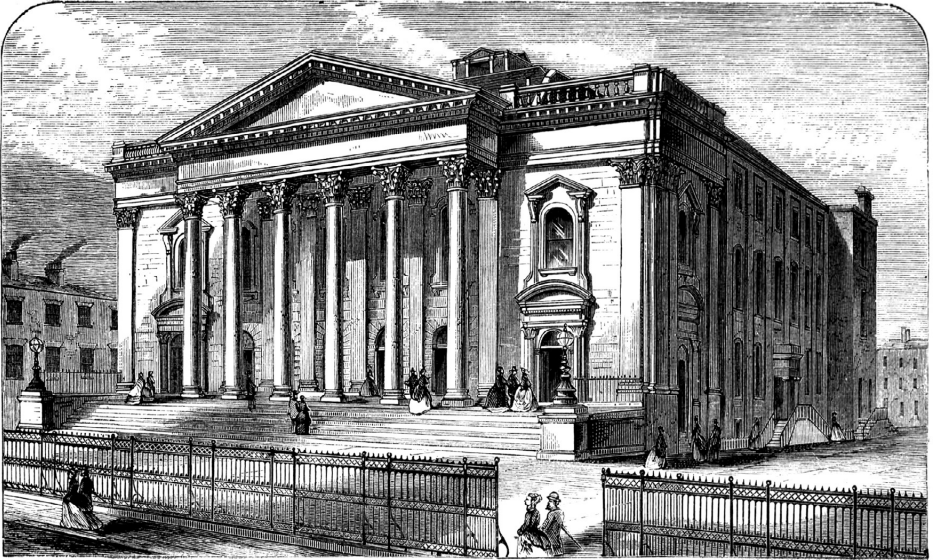
On Friday, the revivalists added an extra service to their normal schedule, appearing at the Rev. Charles Haddon Spurgeon's famous Metropolitan Tabernacle at the junction of Elephant and Castle roads in the Borough of Southwark, south of the Thames. Tracing its history back to 1650 when attendance at a Baptist church was illegal, the Metropolitan Tabernacle had grown under a series of gifted teacher-preachers into the largest Baptist congregation in the land, with four thousand members and curious visitors competing for room at Sunday services. In addition, Spurgeon had founded an orphanage, a Christian literature society, *The Sword and the Trowel* magazine, and a pastor's college from which students went forth to found two hundred new churches. Moody and Sankey were to appear at 10:30AM during one of the April Anniversary Services for his pastors-in-training.

The church was also open, by ticket, to members of the church congregation who came to hear the novel American evangelists. As one visitor remembered:

As surely as the Sabbath-day comes round, so surely is every pew and every aisle of the Tabernacle alive with human beings; . . . as we threaded our devious way to a seat at the foot of the platform stairs, just as the immense congregation called on each other to "Hold the Fort," led by Mr. Sankey, who was seated on the upper platform at his invariable companion, the American organ. Mr. Spurgeon's ordinary congregation always sings with a will, but this special gathering seemed to put more heart and voice than usual into the opening hymn, and its martial strains rolled through the house with thrilling effect.<sup>35</sup>

The Rev. James Spurgeon announced to a disappointed crowd that his brother Charles—known as the "Prince of Preachers"—would not be present that morning. Although James didn't elaborate, many in the con-





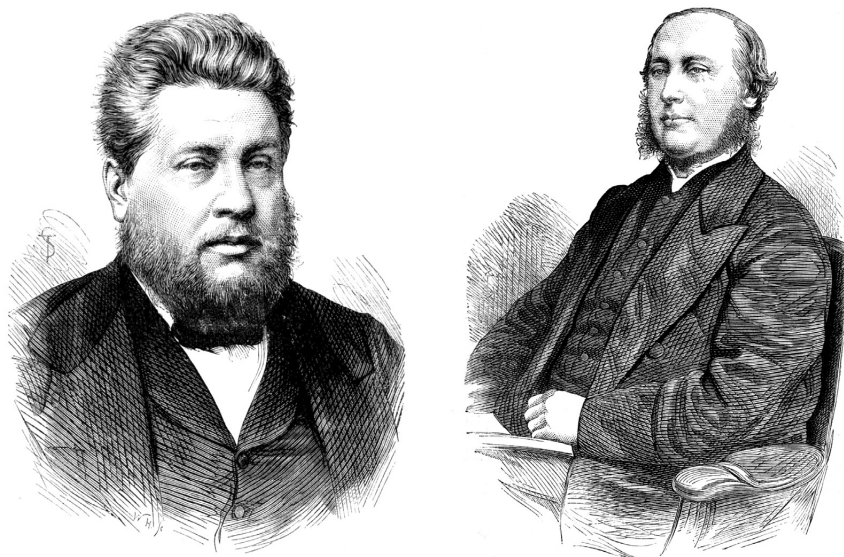
**Exterior and Interior of Metropolitan Tabernacle, London,**  
*in The Metropolitan Tabernacle: Its History and Work (1876).*

gregation would have suspected that Charles Spurgeon had been laid low again with crippling gout. Only six years earlier, at age thirty-five, Spurgeon had been afflicted with intensely painful inflammatory arthritis of the joints.

Each year, his condition became more debilitating, removing him from the pulpit for extended periods. As Spurgeon described it:

Did you ever lie a week on one side? Did you ever try to turn, and find yourself quite helpless? Did others lift you, and by their kindness reveal to you the miserable fact that they must lift you back again at once into the old position, for bad as it was, it was preferable to any other? . . . It is a great mercy to get one hour's sleep at night. . . . What a mercy have I felt to have only one knee tortured at a time. What a blessing to be able to put the foot on the ground again, if only for a minute!<sup>36</sup>

Sankey sang two solos early in the service, “Here Am I, Send Me” and the powerful “Nothing but Leaves”—from a landing on the top balcony, which swept around the front. By that time, the novelty of Ira singing with the aid of a musical instrument would not have been a surprise. But there were undoubtedly many in the congregation who had never heard church music sung with musical instruments, because Spurgeon’s church didn’t use any. The Metropolitan Tabernacle was one of many Baptist strains known as Reformed Baptist, which shared the Calvinistic interpretation of theology common to Presbyterians.



**Charles Spurgeon & James Spurgeon,**  
*in The Metropolitan Tabernacle: Its History and Work (1876).*

They did not share the Presbyterian practice of infant baptism, however, holding to “believer’s baptism”—immersion coming only after a profession of faith—as one of Baptists’ core tenets. Neither did they believe in limiting their singing only to the Psalms—employing a very catholic hymnal, *Our Own Hymn Book*, with selections from a wide variety of sources. Although, like some of their conservative Scottish Presbyterian brethren, they did not believe in nor employ the help of any musical instruments, their concerns were not so strong as to prohibit Sankey from bringing his. At that moment, Ira might have felt like he was back in Scotland, having to prove himself all over again.

During his sermon, Moody commended the work at the Tabernacle by saying, “In 1867, I came across the Atlantic specially with this object—to see this church, in which there were conversions . . . where the Holy Ghost was at work. That is the kind of church we want.”<sup>37</sup>

Ira then sang “Only an Armour-Bearer,” and Moody concluded by asking for three thousand “armor-bearers” to volunteer for house-to-house visitation south of the Thames in preparation for the evangelists’ meetings there in the coming weeks. Then the pair was whisked north along Waterloo Road to Waterloo Bridge, where they paid their toll and crossed in time to lead the noon prayer meeting at the Opera House about three miles away.

For the afternoon Bible reading, the royal box was again occupied by the rich and famous: His Royal Highness Francis Paul Charles Louis Alexander, the Prince of Tek, was the father of Victoria May, who would later become Queen Mary, consort of King George V.<sup>38</sup> And for the second day in a row, the Duchess of Sutherland was present.

The appearance of Anne Sutherland Leveson Gower was much the talk of the Opera House, for she occupied an important position in aristocratic life. She had for the previous four years held the office of Mistress of the Robes, responsible for



Anne Sutherland Leveson Gower, 1860s  
National Portrait Gallery, London



Queen Victoria's clothing and jewelry. Her husband, the 3rd Duke of Sutherland, George Leveson Gower, was the tenth richest man in the Western world, owning 1.4 million acres of land—second only to Tsar Alexander II of Russia, whose wedding he attended—as well as requisite royal residences.

The Duchess was, in fact, much more than a curiosity seeker and returned on regular occasions, sometimes in the company of her daughter and Lady Constance Leveson Gower, who had lately become the first Duchess of Westminster. The Dukes and Duchesses of both St. Albans and Marlborough also made appearances.<sup>39</sup> Although Queen Victoria did not attend the meetings—partly because of her role as head of the Church of England—many British royals did.

Evening assemblies also took place at Her Majesty's Theatre but usually without Moody or Sankey. They were busy speaking and singing at meetings that had been extended for a month at the Aggie. But they were also occupied with a new focus in the eastern sector of the city—at Bow Road and Burdett Streets—known as the East End.

Notorious for overcrowding, abject poverty, debauchery, and crime—with Jack the Ripper murders later gripping the nation in 1888—the East End provided a shocking contrast to the West End, where the evangelists were holding forth at the Opera House. It was populated with dense neighborhoods of immigrants who had flocked to the area for its affordable housing, plus opportunities for factory or dock work. Of the million souls inhabiting the precinct, one-third lived in poverty. Smallpox epidemics were frequent, with an outbreak occurring just four years earlier. Cholera, scarlet fever, and tuberculosis threatened every family.

Yet, it should not be imagined that the East End was without the regular preaching of the gospel, for there were scores of nonconformist, evangelical churches faithfully expounding God's Word in the area. Of particular note was Rev. Archibald G. Brown's East London Tabernacle, perhaps the second largest congregation in the United Kingdom. There was Rev. William Cuff's Shoreditch Tabernacle Baptist Church and Dr. Seddon's Victoria Park Congregational Tabernacle.<sup>40</sup> Added to these were congregations of smaller size, but together adding up to many thousands, not just of worshipers but also of those actively involved in social ministries to the working classes and unemployed. In 1865, William Booth had founded the non-denominational Salvation Army in the East End, which eventually grew to worldwide proportions.

Denominations like the Methodists also produced vibrant work, such as the Wesleyan Mission House on Bishop-gate Street. As reported in its annual meeting of 1875:

The actual work embraced seven workhouses, where 140 sick and other wards, with 5,000 poor people in them, were visited every week, with most blessed results. About forty lodging-houses, with 2,000 lodgers in them, one Female Refuge, three Mission-halls, and fourteen open-air stations, where 581 services had been held. [Overall] 10,208 services held, 11,799 addresses delivered, 311,932 hearers, 135,505 tracts distributed. All this work, besides free breakfasts and teas, and a treat to all the poor people in the workhouses . . .<sup>41</sup>

This picture of a vibrant nonconformist Protestantism was in no way limited to London's East End, however. Much of London mirrored a dynamic wave of religious enthusiasm, participation, and church building. In fact, the era enjoyed a broad spectrum of religious energy and growth in the established Church of England, as well as Roman Catholicism. Even a cursory survey of the 207 British religious periodicals from 1861 reveals an impressive coverage of Christian work on a worldwide scale, with a myriad of preachers, revivalists, and missionaries constantly traversing the globe to share the gospel, as well as the building of new churches, orphanages, schools, hospitals, and mission stations.<sup>42</sup>

Typical of the scope of evangelical outreach are articles contained in *The Christian* for the week of April 22, 1875, which reported on work in Germany, Canada, India, China, Australia, South America, Africa, and North America (St. Louis, New York City, California). This was also the age of flourishing international missionary work, with the founding in England of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792, and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1810. By 1875, there were thousands of Protestant missionaries laboring on six continents.

While there were a score of large and vibrant churches in the East End, none could begin to accommodate the crowds expected to throng the Moody-Sankey meetings, which by now had gained widespread exposure. So it was decided—some months earlier—to construct a custom-built tabernacle to house the masses. Bow Road Hall was patterned after Bingley Hall in Birmingham, which had so impressed Moody with its large size yet excellent acoustics. It was built on a vacant lot on Bow Road at Burdett.

Located near the Borough of Hackney—one of the poorest sections of the East End—it was a square structure, sheathed with corrugated iron and covered with five arches. Cane-bottomed chairs supported nine thousand attendees on a floor covered with a thick covering of sawdust.<sup>43</sup> The contrast between the ostentatious Opera House and the industrial-looking Bow Road Hall must have struck Sankey at some point as rather ironic.

By now, meetings involved a complex round of appearances for the evangelists at Agricultural Hall, the new Bow Road Hall in the East End, and West End meetings at the Opera House. To negotiate the latter two venues, Moody and Sankey had to be transported three miles to the noon prayer meeting at the Opera House, a quick lunch, a 3:30PM Bible reading, often with Inquiry Meeting till 5:00PM, a quick supper, five miles to the East End service at 8:00 or 8:30PM, followed by another Inquiry Meeting, concluded with a five or six-mile trip back to their lodgings—only to repeat this the next day and the day after.<sup>44</sup> Their appearance at Bow Road Hall had actually preceded their work at the Opera House by a few days, beginning on Thursday, April 8, at an afternoon service with about four to five thousand in attendance. That lower turnout reflected the reality of most folks in this part of the city being still at work, not able to attend afternoon services.<sup>45</sup>

Yet, even the traditional Sunday morning service for Christian workers was noticeably smaller in attendance—by half—than what had been present at the Aggie. The afternoon service for women was better attended, but the hall was not full, and men were allowed to occupy vacant seats. Perhaps owing to crowds less familiar with church etiquette, there was a constant flux of people, mostly departing the service early, creating a distraction for those wishing to remain for the full hour. The men's service in the evening suffered even more of the same fate as Sankey attempted to sing "The Ninety and Nine" but was deterred by numbers of men and boys making for the exit. It took "no little trouble" for Sankey to regain the quiet he needed before singing. It's possible the disturbances in both meetings resulted from some who attended simply to get their curiosity filled, and once that happened, they deemed not to stay for the entire service.

Unfortunately, dissension wasn't limited to just those in the audience. Some in the choir—perhaps the same singers who had a reputation in their own churches—promoted themselves to be more important than befitted a spirit of humble service. The situation apparently rose to the level where Ira had to intervene with a stern warning: "Don't trouble yourselves with the

thought that you are essential to the meetings here. They would go on without Mr. Sankey, and certainly they will go on without you.”<sup>46</sup>

In spite of such shortcomings, the choir came in for special praise from one correspondent of *The Christian*:

They have been admirably trained; they sing with great expression, precision, and distinctness of enunciation, and their rendering of the various hymns sung before Messrs. Moody and Sankey appeared, was such as to cherish the hope that in the course of these services not a few hearts will be touched and transformed by hearing the truth so sweetly and feelingly sung.<sup>47</sup>

On Monday evening, the evangelists were absent from Bow Road Hall but returned on Tuesday and Wednesday to a full house. By that point, interest in the meetings was so great, a rowdy contingent that could not gain entry before the meeting began, broke open one of the locked doors and poured into the hall while Moody was speaking. “Accepting the inevitable, he coolly gave out the tenth hymn, which was sung while the incomers were quieted and placed. He then resumed his discourse, and at the close, as on the previous evening, many hundreds arose to be prayed for.”<sup>48</sup>

Sankey was likewise challenged, but in a different way. On Thursday evening, after having ministered at two services in the Opera House earlier that day, he sang at the Agricultural Hall meeting, then was purveyed by carriage nearly five miles to Bow Road Hall to sing at the conclusion of the service in that location. It was a demanding schedule both mentally and physically and one that couldn’t be sustained too long. On the next evening, Moody was scheduled to preach at Agricultural Hall, and Sankey was advertised as singing in both places, hoping his star power would help ensure good attendance at Bow Road, despite the fact of Moody’s absence. Unfortunately, the hall was “terribly dismal and cold [and] only partially lighted.” Whether the ambitious schedule was just too much for Ira, or whether he simply didn’t have ample time to travel across town, he failed to make his expected appearance. There was great disappointment, many having come just to hear him.

Overall, the East End meetings had gotten off to a rocky start.<sup>49</sup>

It will . . . be easily understood that a population so familiar with gin palaces, and all their accessories, were not easily persuaded to attend Divine service. They might go to the Hall once, out of cu-

riosity, or to sit in judgment upon the discourse; for these people are notable critics—equal in self-assurance to the high-learned rationalists themselves—and if something . . . did not suit their fastidious tastes, they walked away grumbling, denouncing the speaker and the singer in terms more forcible than polite.<sup>50</sup>

Yet, Ira was especially impressed and spoke of a “great blessing” in regards to the Spirit-led singing that preceded the services, creating a “subduing effect.” Unfortunately, that wasn’t the case one night when Moody’s colloquial discourse was interrupted at its height by two or three rapid shrieks emanating from the center of the assembly. Without pause, Moody responded, “We’ll stand up and sing ‘Rock of Ages, cleft for me’ and the ushers will please help that friend out of the hall. She’s hysterical.”<sup>51</sup>

It’s unclear what Moody’s thoughts were on “female hysteria,” but it seemed a widely accepted phenomenon at the time. The concept was just coming into play as a medical diagnosis, although there was little agreement on its nature or even symptoms—Dr. George Beard having offered a seventy-five page list! The most common ones seemed to be anxiety, shortness of breath, and fainting. So common was the latter experience that many women carried smelling salts to revive them after an episode. Everyone, including Sigmund Freud, chimed in with explanations, which included demonic possession, the modern industrial age, and licentiousness. In 1908, the *London Times* editorialized, “it is the name most commonly given to a kind of enthusiasm that has degenerated into habitual nervous excitement.”<sup>52</sup>

“Nervous excitement,” or religious hysteria, was also a charge leveled at those who promoted revivalism. When Moody met with the assembled clergy at Freemason’s Hall in October of 1874 to make a case for his proposed London meetings, one of the first charges to be addressed was that of promoting religious hysteria. It was already identified with many preachers associated with the powerful Scottish revivals of 1859. This charge was such a widespread one, even Queen Victoria feared the Moody-Sankey meetings would whip up religious fervor, misinformedly describing them to the Countess of Gainsborough as a “sensational style of excitement.”<sup>53</sup>

Partly to dispel such fears, the evangelists’ meetings always sought to be the model of decorum. Crowd control—via careful management of entry times, trained ushers, and the employment of congregational song before the meetings—was central. But the services themselves also fostered a sense of order and familiarity, being introduced and blessed by local clergy.

While Sankey's singing was novel for some, it was in no way designed to stir up Dionysian feelings. And Moody's preaching was famous for lacking rhetorical flourish, often being described more as a businessman giving a conversational address. Nowhere was there a sense of whipping the crowd into a frenzy with religious hysteria as the result. When it did occasionally occur, Moody and Sankey were ready to quell it—with a calm response and a timely hymn.

Religious periodicals published detailed schedules of the evangelists' appearances, and the crowds followed, although, in Moody's absence, the pulpits were filled by some of the best preachers in the land, many with rhetorical gifts superior to the evangelist himself. As one observer saw it:

Mr. Aitken is well known to the London public . . . as a most successful preacher of the gospel. We hardly know how to write of his addresses on Sunday afternoon and evening. Mr. Aitken seems to us, in a most wonderful degree, to unite in himself the peculiar characteristics both of Mr. Moody and Mr. Taylor [another famed preacher]. He has all the melting tenderness of the one, and all the logical argumentative power of the other, while, at the same time, he possesses the graphic, delineative skill of both.<sup>54</sup>

There were even other soloists who, in Sankey's absence, apparently acquitted themselves admirably, including a Mr. Comber, who sang the Sankey favorite "What Shall the Harvest Be," the audience listening "with riveted attention."<sup>55</sup> Testimonies of conversions at meetings where neither evangelist was present seemed to indicate a larger working of the Spirit. Yet it was obvious that the crowds came to hear Moody and Sankey.

During the winter, people attended but in lesser numbers. The first months of 1875 were unusually cold with the southeast of England experiencing impressive snowfalls. Attendance required a certain resolve, even after arriving at the hall, as "biting currents of cold air"<sup>56</sup> whistled through the poorly or unheated edifice, causing even the hardiest to steel themselves against the elements. The draft was so strong on one occasion, Moody advised the men to keep their hats on.<sup>57</sup> Ironically, it might have been easier for attendees in the East End to contend with the miserable weather than it would have for many in the West End Opera House—those used to more comfortable surroundings. Of the East End audience it was observed:



There is no mistaking this as you glance over the sea of faces. They are those of the sons and daughters of toil; they are faces where the sorrows and cares of real life have left deep traces; the hands held up are ungloved, and have grown hard with labour; and dress is evidently to most no matter of taste or display, but . . . of simple necessity.<sup>58</sup>

Yet, through it all, Sankey sat on stage, usually without an overcoat, and poured out his soul, no matter what the circumstances in the hall or the travails of the day. And because of this,

“The common people heard him gladly,”<sup>59</sup> and they generally flock to hear his earnest messengers. They feel also the truths embodied in song by Mr. Sankey. As the conscience-stirring words of “Nothing but Leaves” rolled over the great assembly, it was easy to see that many a heart was pricked. It was indeed intensely interesting to watch some faces. Men were recalling “each lost and mis-spent day,” and shame, and sorrow, and resolve were successively written on many a brow.<sup>60</sup>

While Moody, Sankey, and the Holy Spirit must be credited with consistently drawing the large crowds to Bow Road Hall, the role of advertising should not be discounted. Horse-driven trams (forerunner of the public city bus) criss-crossed neighborhoods with placards on them advertising the meetings. And it was not unusual to see men carrying two huge boards suspended over their shoulders bearing the message, “Moody and Sankey at Bow Road Hall tonight,” visible from one hundred yards. Or a visitor might instead encounter a gentleman enthusiastically ringing a bell and shouting out information about the meetings, a technique recommended by the evangelist himself.<sup>61</sup>

Of course, Moody also kept a sharp eye on the religious and secular press that gave the meetings their widest exposure. But there were downsides to media coverage.

The determination of the daily press to focus more on the man than his message during Moody’s final five months in England was more curse than blessing for a man who had always understood revival to be the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit and not the result of any single person’s ingenuity.<sup>62</sup>

The press's lionization of both Moody and Sankey created no few challenges for the evangelists. Drawings and caricatures sold on the streets and in the stores. A photographer claimed to have offered the pair \$1,500 to capture their likenesses, but they refused. Hasty and unauthorized biographies sprang up, and replicas of Moody's cap were even available. Perhaps most telling of their fame were the 17-inch high, glazed earthenware Staffordshire figures of them in formal wear, available for purchase and placement on the mantle.<sup>63</sup> Figurines of anything from animals to those in the public eye were also very popular. Twenty nonconformist religious figures were attainable, with the famous Baptist pastor Charles Haddon Spurgeon being the most prominent.



While some in the religious community likely groused privately about the embarrassing commercialization of the evangelists, issues surrounding the sale of sermons on Sunday raised a small outcry to the point of *The Christian Age* publishing a heated notice:

In the name of common decency we would urge the publishers of so-called "Christian" newspapers to stop the scandal of flaunting their "last address of D.L. Moody," . . . in the face of the masses who attend these services on God's holy day. It is to be deplored that this scandalous traffic is encouraged by a considerable reduction in the price charged to hawkers. MANAGER OF THE C.A.<sup>64</sup>

While Moody always enjoyed a large roster of gifted speakers who could assist him, Ira couldn't count on the same personnel. Fortunately, by late June, the Jubilee Singers had returned to England on their second fundraising tour. And as before, they seemed more than eager to sing at the revival services. Their powerful, moving, and novel performances were often seen to be as impressive as Sankey's. In addition to their renditions of plantation spirituals, they sometimes revealed frank observations about themselves. Speaking to one of the children's meetings, a member shockingly revealed:

This is no doubt the first time that many of you have ever seen a man of my colour. . . . We come from America. We belong to a race known there as the African race . . . that was held in bondage. . . . We were . . . subject to sale, just as men in this country sell their horses and cattle. And there are those among us who have been sold. It was customary to sell us away from our fathers and mothers, our brothers and sisters. There were those among us who were sold from their mothers when but six years old, and who have never been permitted to look on the face of their mothers since that time. None of you have ever been subject to such cruelty.<sup>65</sup>

By that point, some in his audience were shocked and others were in tears. Yet he continued:

And now we have come among you again to sing some of the songs that were wrung from our hearts in those days of bondage. . . . With our flesh quivering from the lash from the driver's whip, we used to drag ourselves into the cane-brake, and there, with our hearts uplifted to Jesus, the songs we sung came forth as if by inspiration. They were not written as your songs are, but they were given to us, as if by God himself. They tell of our sorrow; they tell of the grief we bear . . . of the hope we had that after death we should be gathered at the right hand of God.

Although the Jubilee Singers didn't take an offering at the revival meetings, it was understood that anyone hearing these heart-rending testimonies would likely open their hearts and pocketbooks. This second tour to the British Isles would also become another financial success for them.

While Moody and Sankey were ministering to the huddled masses, they were often entertained by members of the upper crust. Owing to his humble origins and Quaker beliefs, William Bryant would not have been recognized as being among the social elites, yet like many nineteenth-century captains of industry, his wealth and influence lessened the social stigma of lacking the proper bloodline. Ever the entrepreneur, William and a Quaker business partner built Bryant and May into a thriving business, becoming one of the largest employers in London, with a workforce of over five thousand—making tiny objects.

It all began when William couldn't import a sufficient number of matches from his Swedish supplier, so he decided to manufacture his own, employing predominantly women and children known as "match girls," eventually producing over three hundred million matches per day, many by piecework employees, working from home. Bryant and May matchboxes with the Ark logo were a familiar item wherever fires needed kindling.



In 1871, the Chancellor of the Exchequer foolishly tried to introduce a tax on matches, effectively doubling the price, falling most egregiously on the poor. Match-making companies organized a protest in Victoria Park, attracting three thousand workers, mostly from Bryant and May. As they marched toward Parliament to present a petition, the crowd swelled upward to ten thousand but were handled roughly by the police, now overwhelmed by the throng. Although the majority were prohibited from reaching their destination, a few actually breached Westminster Hall. Widespread criticism from the public and from politicians—Disraeli and Gladstone—caused the proposal to be withdrawn the next day. William Bryant looked like a winner, supporting both the poorer classes and protecting an important business. When later investigations into working conditions among the poor were conducted, Bryant and May Matches was often considered a model employer.<sup>66</sup>

Bryant died the year before Moody and Sankey held meetings in the East End, a short distance from his factory on Fairfield. But his wife Ann Jago Bryant carried on her husband's support of the London revival, visiting with Fanny Sankey and inviting the family to be guests at their handsome Victorian country home, Oakenshaw, at Kingston-upon-Thames, some dozen miles from the malodorous smells and industrial smog emanating from the family business. Fanny, caring for two energetic boys and an infant, was grateful for the relative peace and quiet away from crowds and admirers, spending a month at the residence.

On one Saturday when Ira came to visit—as daily meetings at Bow Road Hall required him to stay closer—he posed with Fanny and the Bryant family outside their home on its wide steps, between two huge gas lamps, to take a

formal photograph.<sup>67</sup> While Ira and Fanny likely were not familiar with their host's name or reputation beforehand, Londoners would have recognized the famous match boxes and the name of a major employer of East Enders.

At this point, it had been nearly three months since Moody and Sankey had begun their hugely successful campaign at Agricultural Hall in Islington, speaking and singing to perhaps the largest assembly ever gathered in London to that time. Yet only two miles away, just two weeks later, during Holy Week on March 25, a small audience gathered at the Royalty Theatre in Soho to witness the debut of a modest musical production called *Trial by Jury*, commissioned as an "after-piece" to French composer Jacques Offenbach's popular comic-opera farce, *La Perichole*. It resulted from a collaboration between the playwright William Schwenck Gilbert and composer Arthur Seymour Sullivan, who had recently composed the tune for what would be linked with the universally popular Sunday School hymn, "Onward, Christian soldiers."<sup>68</sup>

The plot of their short work was a silly one, filled with topical humor, affectionately making fun of all things Victorian: marriage laws, promotion to the bench, the hypocrisy of public figures, the incompetence of attorneys (who confuse bigamy with burglary), and the powerlessness of women, requiring them to fall back on their "feminine wiles." But audiences loved it, boosting the production to a run of 131 performances. Its success later instigated the collaborators to continue their efforts, eventually becoming known by the the appellation "Gilbert and Sullivan," and producing thirteen more world-famous works known as the Savoy operas.

The opera plot involved a breach-of-promise claim by one Angelina. Defending the accused, Edwin, his counsel, ascends into lofty flights of oratory, claiming Angelina hoodwinked his client into proposing marriage. To demonstrate the power of Angelina's supposed charms, he implies the couple were probably smoking opium, enabling her to convince Edwin that "Camberwell became a bow'r" (meaning an attractive retreat) and "Peckham an Arcadian vale" (idealized country life). Those seated in the audience would have had no problem in catching the topical allusion and guffawing at the preposterous proposition that those impoverished South London districts of Camberwell and Peckham had anything to do with the idyllic.

Yet, that's where Moody and Sankey went for their next set of meetings.



## ENDNOTES

1. Words by Fanny Crosby, music by William H. Doane, “To the Work,” *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan, and Geo. C. Stebbins, eds. (Cincinnati: John Church Co.; New York: Biglow and Main, 1894), No. 576.
2. The name of the theatre changes with the gender of the monarch. Throughout the reign of Queen Victoria it was called Her Majesty’s Theatre, reverting to His Majesty’s on the accession of Edward VII in 1901. In 1952, the theatre again became Her Majesty’s on the accession of Elizabeth II. Following the accession of Charles III on September 8, 2022, the name reverted to His Majesty’s.
3. That view was not shared by the reviewer in *Building News and Engineering Journal*, 2 April 1869. See [www.Arthurfloyd.co.uk](http://www.Arthurfloyd.co.uk)>Her Majesty’s Theatre.
4. At least part of this was related to manager Mapleson’s failure to maintain insurance coverage. *Liverpool* (England) *Mercury*, 21 July 1881, 5.
5. John Kent, *Holding the Fort: Studies in Victorian Revivalism* (London: Epworth Press, 1978), 156.
6. These included most of the peerage, aristocracy, and wealthy merchants or bankers in the City of London and were likely listed in *Kelly’s Handbook to the Upper Ten Thousand* (London: Kelly and Co., ca. 1874). This group was also known by the French reference, the “ton” or *le bon ton*, “the beautiful crowd.” Whereas at Agricultural Hall, most attendees would have walked to the meetings, *The Christian* for 27 May 1875, 8, reported for the afternoon Bible readings at the Opera House, “elegant equipages in double line [waited] from three o’clock, until their occupants drive away again at the close of the service.”
7. Kent, *Holding the Fort*, 156–57, quoting the *Record*, reporting on an April 6 meeting with supporters who also complained that Agricultural Hall was so large, a third of the audience could not hear Moody speak distinctly.
8. *The Christian*, 27 May 1875, 9.
9. Carlo Bassini, *Bassini’s Art of Singing: an Analytical, Physiological and Practical System for the Cultivation of the Voice* (Boston: Oliver Ditson, 1857).
10. The “head voice” is an upward extension of the normal male voice range. By contrast, a *false* voice (meaning “false” in Italian) involves a different process of vocal phonation, allowing a male voice to sound in the register commonly sung by women. The tone quality is more “hooty” and is generally distinct from that of a woman’s voice. The false voice has played quite a central role in modern pop music, including Motown and R&B singers like



Smokey Robinson, Marvin Gaye, and Prince, or pop singers such as Barry Gibb (of Bee Gees), Michael Jackson, and Justin Timberlake.

11. E.F. Rimbault, *Leisure Hour* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1875), Vol. xxiv, 476, quoted in Gamaliel Bradford, *D.L. Moody: A Worker in Souls* (New York: George H. Doran, 1927), 169. I have edited Rimbault's quote to say what he meant. Somehow, "E and E-flat" got reversed in the quotation—which makes no sense, as E-flat is easier to sing than E.
12. Bradford, *D.L. Moody*, 170.
13. Bradford, *D.L. Moody*, 170.
14. Because male voices sound one octave lower than women when singing in unison—such as in congregational singing—Ira's voice would have been singing an E4 on his highest note.
15. Even a century later, the famed gospel singer George Beverly Shea of Billy Graham fame was known more for his sensitive delivery of the texts than his impressive vocalizing (although he did impress with some of his low notes).
16. Bradford, *D.L. Moody*, 170–71.
17. *The Christian*, 15 April 1875, 16.
18. John W. Forney, "The Evangelists in London," *The Cecil Whig* (Elkton, MD), 29 May 1875, 4.
19. David Williamson, *Ira Sankey: The Story of His Life* (S.W. Partridge, n.d.), 64.
20. Isaac Watts, *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* (1709), Book 2, No. 140.
21. *The Christian*, 22 April 1875, 13.
22. *The Christian*, 22 April 1875, 14.
23. *The Christian Age*, 21 April 1875, 11.
24. *The Christian Age*, 21 April 1875, 11.
25. *The Christian*, 29 April 1875, 18. That figure was much expanded as the meetings wore on, the difference usually covered by Moody's monied supporters.
26. "Richmond Terrace and House," UK Parliament, <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/building/northern-estate/normanshaw-parliament-st11/>
27. Ethel M. Hogg, *Quinton Hogg: A Biography* (London: Archibald, Constable and Co., 1906), 88. Ethel was Quinton's daughter.
28. Kent,  *Holding the Fort*, 148.
29. The term is a play on words for the name Edward the Confessor—Anglo-Saxon king and saint who built the original Westminster Abbey (later replaced). His tomb in the current Abbey holds an honored place.

30. Anthony J. Camp, *Royal Mistresses and Bastards: Fact and Fiction, 1714–1936* (n.p. Anthony J. Camp, 2007). Some have estimated that King Edward VII had as many as 55 liaisons, not including the prostitutes he regularly encountered at Paris’s infamous brothel, Le Chabonais. He fathered numerous illegitimate children, scandalized Queen Victoria, and at his coronation in 1901, reserved seating for “the king’s special ladies.” He proved to be a very popular ruler.
31. Williamson, *Ira Sankey*, 63–64. Apparently the Princess sent a kind acknowledgement.
32. *The Christian Age*, 21 April 1875, 11.
33. *The Christian Age*, 21 April 1875, 11. Unidentified news clipping, “The Princess of Wales at the Moody and Sankey Services” in the files of Moody Archives.
34. “Legal Decision against Services in the Opera House,” *Signs of Our Times*, 12 May 1875, 303. An unspecified award for damages was also granted. *The Christian*, 27 May 1875, 9. Services apparently continued through noon, Monday, on May 31. Pollock, *Moody*, 175, footnote 4, also reports the case was taken to court by J.W. Chitty, Q.C. (Queen’s Council).
35. *The Christian*, 22 April 1875, 31.
36. Darrel W. Amundsen, “The Anguish and Agonies of Charles Spurgeon,” *Christian History* (magazine), No. 29 (1991).
37. *The Christian*, 22 April 1875, 31.
38. And great grandfather of Queen Elizabeth II.
39. E.J. Goodspeed, *A Full History of the Wonderful Career of Moody and Sankey* (Ashland, OH: C.C. Wick, and Co., 1877), 198.
40. *The Christian Age*, 21 April 1875, 113.
41. *The Christian*, 1 July 1875, 18.
42. Mark Knight, *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers* (London: Routledge, 2016).
43. *The Christian Age*, 21 April 1875, 113. The religious phrase, “hit the sawdust trail,” meaning to step out at the invitation and respond positively to the “altar call,” became popular during the career of Billy Sunday in the early twentieth century, and also with later evangelists—even though the floors were no longer of sawdust. The Billy Sunday Tabernacle in Winona Lake, Indiana (the evangelist’s home)—on the historic Bible Conference grounds—did have a sawdust floor from its construction in 1920 until its destruction in 1992.
44. As reported by Moody’s close friend Henry Drummond in Will R. Moody,

*The Life of D. L. Moody by His Son* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1900), 244. As one observer told the story, “ignorant of the distances,” Moody scheduled four meetings one Sunday, and because he wouldn’t take a cab, which required someone to work on that day, he walked sixteen miles between services, avoiding breaking the Fourth Commandment not to labor on the Sabbath! (p. 240).

45. *The Christian*, 15 April 1875, 14.
46. W.H. Daniels, *D.L. Moody and His Work* (Hartford: American Publishing, 1875), 367–68.
47. *The Christian*, 15 April 1875, 15.
48. *The Christian*, 22 April 1875, 15.
49. Bow Road Hall’s problems were not unique, however. There were crowd control issues bedeviling the opening of Agricultural Hall, and the acoustic challenges were never mastered.
50. Daniels, *Moody and His Work*, 364.
51. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 238.
52. *The London Times*, 13 December 1908. A related term was “Neurasthenia,” defined as “a mechanical weakness of the nerves.” See David G. Schuster, “Neurasthenia and a modernizing America,” *JAMA*, Vol. 290, No. 17 (5 Nov. 2003), 2327–28.
53. Evensen, *God’s Man*, 44, quoting the Queen’s letter to the Duchess on 27 April 1875.
54. *The Christian*, 22 April 1875, 16.
55. *The Christian*, 22 April 1875, 31. This actually took place later at Victoria Theater in New Cut, Lambeth, in southern London.
56. *The Christian*, 22 April 1875, 32.
57. David Williamson, *The Life Story of D.L. Moody* (London: Sunday School Union, ca. 1901), 69.
58. Williamson, *Life Story of Moody*, 69.
59. An allusion to Mark 12:37 (KJV), describing Jesus’ preaching in which “the common people heard him gladly.”
60. *The Christian*, 22 April 1875, 32.
61. Clark, *Work of God*, 365–66.
62. Evensen, *God’s Man*, 41–42.
63. More than a dozen different examples of the figures were produced. At the time of this writing, a pair of these figures was available for sale on the inter-

net at prices beginning about \$1,000. While Staffordshire was known for its expensive porcelain figures, the cheaper and painted earthenware ones are generally considered examples of British folk art.

64. *The Christian Age*, 21 April 1875, 11.
65. *The Christian Age*, 9 June 1875, 26.
66. This didn't always hold true, as in 1888, a strike led by social activist Annie Besant forced the company to introduce changes. See Patrick Beaver, *The Match Makers: The Story of Bryant & May* (London: Henry Melland, 1985).  
 In an ironic bit of history, Freddy Demuth—the ostensibly illegitimate son of Karl Marx and housekeeper Helen Demuth—eventually went to work as a fitter and foreman in the firm of Bryan and May Match Factory in 1914. That firm would certainly have been one of the symbols of Marx's critique for the condition of the impoverished working class. It seems as though Freddy had worked his way up to the oppressive class! A.N. Wilson, *The Victorians* (London: Arrow Books, 2003), 438. See also "The sad story of Fred Demuth—Marx's son in Hackney," *Anticapitalist Resistance*, <https://anticapitalistresistance.org/the-sad-story-of-fred-demuth-marxs-son-in-hackney/>, and Daniel Kleven, "'Caste Prejudice': Black Protest against Dwight L. Moody, Part 1: 1885," *Biblioskolex* (10 Jan. 2023), <https://biblioskolex.wordpress.com/2023/01/10/caste-prejudice-black-protest-against-dwight-l-moody-1885/>
67. J[ane] M[ackinnon], *Recollections of Mr. D.L. Moody and His Work in Britain 1874–1892* (Printed for Private Circulation, 1901/1905), 89. The author also stated, "Mr. Sankey's invalid brother was one of the party." This cryptic statement and the circumstances surrounding it remain unclear. There is no record of a Sankey relative visiting, but this could have been Horace G. Sankey, a younger brother who died in 1882 at 34 years of age. An uncatalogued photograph labeled "Near London 1875, Mr/Mrs Bryant" captures Sankey, possibly Fanny Sankey, and other unidentified persons (perhaps including Horace Sankey).
68. It was composed in 1871 and was called ST. GERTRUDE. It was made famous by the Salvation Army as one of its processions. Moody apparently did not use the song, as he felt it was too militant.

No. 587.

# Only Trust Him.

J. H. S.

J. H. STOCKTON, by per.

1. Come, ev - 'ry soul by sin oppressed, There's mercy with the Lord,  
2. For Je - sus shed His pre - cious blood Rich bless - ings to be - stow;  
3. Yes, Je - sus is the Truth, the Way, That leads you in - to rest;  
4. Come then, and join this ho - ly band, And on to glo - ry go,

And He will sure - ly give you rest, By trust - ing in His word.  
Plungenow in - to the crim - son flood That wash - es white as snow.  
Be - lieve in Him with - out de - lay, And you are ful - ly blest.  
To dwell in that ce - les - tial land, Where joys im - mor - tal flow.

## CHORUS.

On - ly trust Him, on - ly trust Him, On - ly trust Him now;

He will save you, He will save you, He will save you now.

*Chapter 14*  
Unto the Least of These  
1875

*Come every soul by sin oppressed, There's mercy with the Lord;  
And He will surely give you rest By trusting in His word.*

*Only trust Him, only trust Him, only trust Him now;  
He will save you, He will save you, He will save you now.*

*For Jesus shed His precious blood, Rich blessings to bestow;  
Plunge now into the crimson flood That washes white as snow.<sup>1</sup>*

LAMBETH BRIDGE WAS BUILT on the site of an old horse ferry across the Thames, just south of the newly completed Clock Tower—later famous as Big Ben—connecting the Palace of Westminster (the Houses of Parliament) on the northern side of the river with Lambeth Palace (residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury) on the southern side. And just like Old Vauxhall Bridge farther up river, it was clogged on March 13, 1875, as crowds jostled each other on their way to claim the best seats in the sprawling facilities in South London. Home to the Surrey Cricket Club, the Kennington Oval was hosting this year's Football (soccer) Association Challenge Cup between the Royal Engineers and Old Etonians. For South London, this event was one of great excitement, drawing a crowd of two thousand from both sides of the river.

But it paled in comparison just a few months later when Moody and Sankey began their work just a short distance away at Camberwell Green Hall, newly constructed for the revival meetings. After holding services for three months in the northern, western, and eastern quadrants of the city, the evangelists turned their attention to a section of the metropolis with absolutely no pedigree. While one could stroll along the southern bank of the Thames and stare across the river at the imposing Tower of London, or St. Paul's magnificent cathedral with its soaring dome, or the gleaming neo-Gothic Houses of Parliament—less than a half century old after having



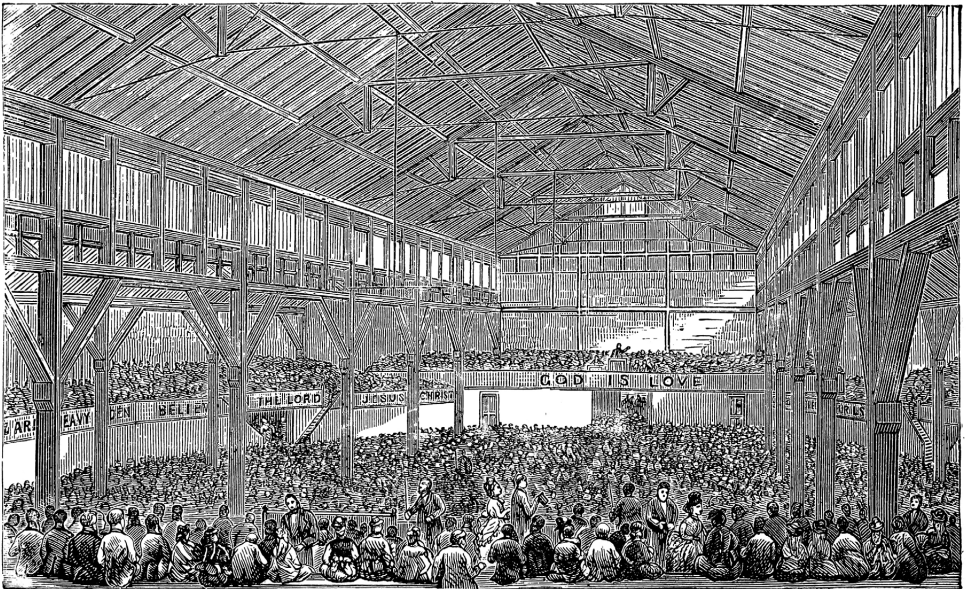
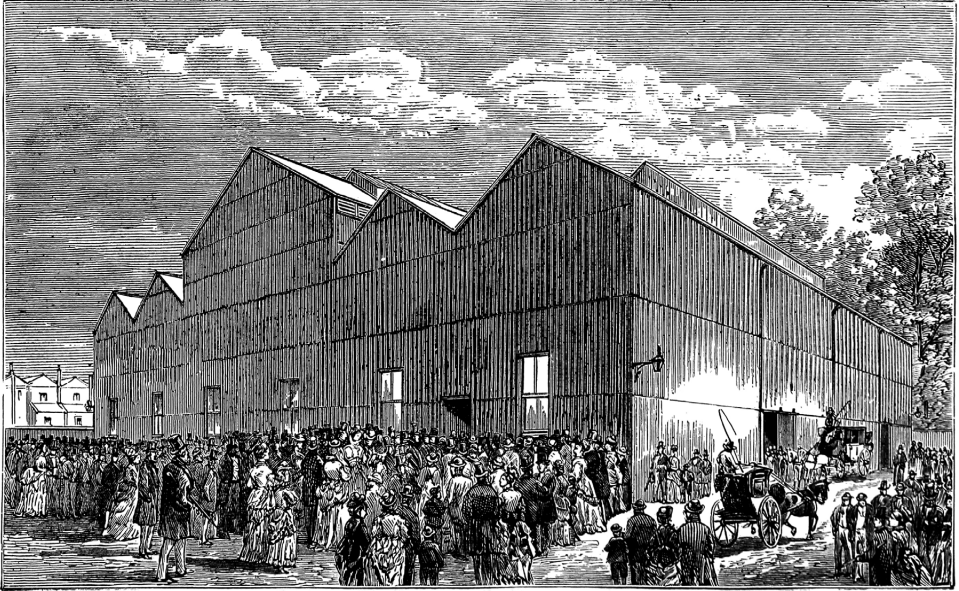
burned down in 1834—South London could boast no such landmarks or accomplishments.

Even before the Elizabethan Age, those heading south amidst the crush on the old London Bridge could expect to enter a land beyond the jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor. Here were to be found pleasures shunned by proper Londoners, such as gambling dens, brothels (called “stews”) and theaters like *The Rose* and *The Globe*. While the Archbishop of Canterbury’s palace at Lambeth constituted a place of religious importance, little else of significance or influence developed south of the Thames. And that held true in May of 1875 when a crew of laborers began to construct a structure on Camberwell Green, an ample, tree-filled grassy park surrounded by stately homes.

Similar to the temporary Bow Road Hall in East London, the one in Camberwell took shape under a Mr. Boulnois, who proudly regaled visitors to the building site with visions of where the entrances, platform, galleries, and Inquiry Room would materialize.<sup>2</sup> Despite the vision of its builders, it was really a temporary, wooden, barn-like structure with a vast dirt floor, a balcony on three sides, and a row of clerestory windows above. Designed to seat eight thousand or more on chairs with additional benches in the rear, a large platform was planned, with half its space reserved for a well-trained choir. This was, in effect, a great balcony hanging over one end of the hall, giving all those on the floor and surrounding gallery an unimpeded view. A special section of “strangers seats” was reserved for those coming from a distance, usually by train, although one gentleman reportedly walked thirty miles to a meeting, then walked home again that evening!<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, the hall’s location, well to the south of the river, made it more challenging to access, especially on foot, and might have limited attendance on occasion—especially with inclement weather, which dogged early meetings.<sup>4</sup>

The first service at Camberwell Green Hall, for Christian workers, was Thursday, June 10, at 3:30PM. This was an unusual commencement to a new series of meetings that usually began at 8:00AM on Sunday morning, ushering in a full day of services. In addition to the attraction of Moody and Sankey, the most famous preacher in the British Isles, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, was scheduled to speak at the opening session. While Spurgeon was a star of Protestant nonconformity north of the Thames, he was a superstar in South London, where his church, the Metropolitan Tabernacle—less than two miles due north up Camberwell and Walworth Roads—was adding five hundred new members per year during the 1870s. This was Spurgeon’s ground zero.

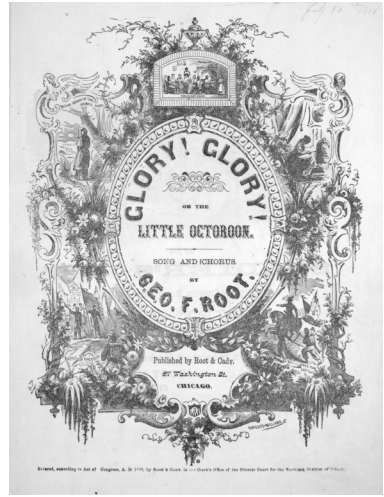
The meeting opened by the gathered assembly singing No. 39 in *Sacred Songs and Solos*, “Ring the Bells of Heaven,” with a tune by George F. Root, one of the most successful American composers of popular music. His “Glory, Glory! or the Little Octaroon” (beginning, “Near the old plantation,



Exterior and Interior of Camberwell Hall, in W.H. Daniels, *D.L. Moody and His Work* (1876).

at the close of day, Stood the weary mother and her child”)<sup>5</sup> was one of these, but Root repurposed its rousing tune for his later Sunday School song “Ring the Bells of Heaven” (words by W.O. Cushing).

Prayer was offered by Dr. Hugh Allen, rector of nearby St. George the Martyr Cathedral, Southwark, reflecting at least some level of Anglican participation. Cornishman W.H. Aitken, who had been one of the major preachers to succeed Moody after he left the previous venues, presented a rousing call to arms, after which Sankey sang, “Here Am I, Send Me,”



. . . which he did in a way calculated in the mind of every Christian present the sense of his personal responsibility in the great conflict between Christ and the power of darkness. Mr. Sankey seemed to sing in this new building with much ease, and it need not be said that his fine voice filled every corner in a way that astonished some who heard him for the first time.<sup>6</sup>

Spurgeon then spoke, addressing some who had earlier—and possibly still—criticized Moody’s and Sankey’s methods. “Let us lay aside all carping criticism, but let us pray, and when we prayed, let us also work, and the Lord would send down blessings such as we never had before.”<sup>7</sup> He then addressed the crowd on “To the work.” Moody announced there would be meetings in the hall for the next thirty days and closed with the Doxology. Unlike previous meetings, tickets were not going to be required for the evening sessions in order to gain early admittance, as was standard practice at Spurgeon’s nearby Metropolitan Tabernacle.

That evening—to a nearly filled hall—Sankey sang the popular “Jesus of Nazareth Passeth By,” requesting only the choir to accompany him on the chorus. But whether out of uncertainty about the instructions or an overwhelming desire to participate in this familiar “Sankey song,” the audience joined in, diluting the intended effect. Finally, on the last stanza, which concludes with the dramatic “Jesus of Nazareth has passed by,” Sankey managed it alone.



In addition to a growing list of favorites his audiences expected to hear—and sing along with to various degrees of audibility—Ira continued the practice of introducing new hymns in greater numbers, which he seems to have begun at Her Majesty’s Theatre—the Opera House. These included quite a few that weren’t contained in *Sacred Songs and Solos Enlarged*. One was the second tune Sankey composed after his initial effort at providing a melody for Horatio Bonar’s hymn “Yet There Is Room.” Composed for the devotional poem “I have a Saviour, He’s pleading in glory,” by R. O’Maley Cluff, entitled “For You I Am Praying,” Ira provided a simple triadic melody (centered around three notes of the tonic triad in G: G, B, D), which fit the devotional nature of the text. In spite of long stretches on just the tonic chord, reflecting a lack of harmonic interest, the approach worked, possessing a satisfying resolution at the cadences. Even though it was one of Sankey’s earliest compositions, he didn’t include it in his enlarged song collection for some reason. However, song sheets of new material were often provided at the meetings. And a copy of the song (with music) was also included in the popular periodical *The Christian*. “For You I Am Praying” became an important addition to his repertoire while in London and remained popular long after his famous “The Ninety and Nine” disappeared from hymnals.<sup>8</sup>

Another was “Not Now, My Child.” Its text was by Catherine Pennefather, wife of William Pennefather, the Irish Anglican cleric; together they founded the influential Mildmay Mission and Conference. He was also one of the two benefactors who had initially invited Moody to England in 1873, but had died before he arrived. Perhaps more significant than the poetry was the music, which came from the pen of Ira himself. Yet the simple, step-wise tune and text never became widely sung.<sup>9</sup>

Out of eighty-one selections in the revival hymn book, Sankey contributed five tunes.<sup>10</sup> The title of the collection, *Sacred Songs and Solos*, seemed to imply that not all the titles were intended for congregational use, with at least some designed for personal devotion or perhaps to follow along with Sankey as he sang them during the meetings. One of these was No. 41, “To the hall of the feast,” entitled “Mary Magdalene,” a narrative of the woman who anointed Jesus’ feet with her perfume (John 12:1–8). Its musical setting was most unusual in the way it contained no repetition of text, an element almost *de rigueur* to make a song memorable. Even Sankey’s improvised melody for “The Ninety and Nine” repeated the last line of the poem in its entirety, giving it reinforcement. Yet, without that seemingly necessary element, Ira’s rendering left a profound impression.

The last is, we think, one of the most effective in his collection. As sung by Mr. Sankey, it tells so eloquently of the sinner's need and the Saviour's all-forgiving love, as well as the gratitude that ought to well up from the heart of every forgiven one, in spite of all discouragement. We never hear Mr. Sankey sing this hymn without having our love increasingly drawn out towards the Saviour who stooped so low to save.<sup>11</sup>

Sankey also introduced new music by others, including the slightly odd "I Left It All with Jesus," No. 28 in the collection. Since the Classical era of Haydn and Mozart, there had developed a certain standardization in musical "syntax"—the basic building blocks of music. And one of these, especially for more popular songs, was the expectation of stating an idea in four measures of music. This unit could be repeated multiple times, with many popular melodies—secular or sacred—forming a sixteen-measure whole. By Sankey's day, this phrase length had come to seem "natural" and most composers employed it on a regular basis. However, in "I Left It All," the composer, H.M. Warner, employed a three-measure phrase, giving the music an off-kilter feel. But Sankey must have liked it, because he included it in his hymn book.<sup>12</sup>

At No. 2 in *Sacred Songs and Solos*, right after the famous "Hold the Fort," was "There is a gate that stands ajar," entitled "The Gate Ajar." The tune was a typical swinging 6/8 meter with an easily grasped and memorable melody. While Ira had earlier received criticism for his solo singing and use of the harmonium, judgment concerning this song came from a different direction. As a correspondent for *The Christian* recalled:

We were gratified with the singing of one of our earliest favorites in Mr. Sankey's book, and one that we have seldom heard of late—"The Gate Ajar." Heresy hunters claim to have detected unsoundness of theology in this hymn, but the ordinary, though perhaps unthinking Christian worshiper never seems to suspect anything unscriptural in it, but often finds soul-refreshment in its story of God's long-suffering mercy.<sup>13</sup>

It's unclear what the specific theological concern would have been, but it was probably related to the charge of Arminianism that had dogged the evangelists since the early days. Whereas those of the Reformed or Calvinistic persuasion believed salvation was entirely the result of God's acts,

“The Gate Ajar” implied salvation was dependent on the sinner to pursue God’s offer. This understanding about the role of election (the result of God’s action) or the sinner’s free will (to make the final decision) divided many evangelicals. “The Gate Ajar” was typical of that theological fault line. Yet, whatever its theological deficiencies might have been, reports abounded of many a soul coming to Christ by its message, saying the door of salvation stood open to them.<sup>14</sup>

Undoubtedly, one of the most widely sung of the newer songs was a selection Ira didn’t compose, but had a significant impact on shaping. Sankey claimed to have discovered a copy of “Come every soul by sin oppressed,” generally known as “Only Trust Him,” in his scrapbook on the way to England in 1873<sup>15</sup>—although it wasn’t actually published until the next year. What is clear is that he changed the words of the refrain, which originally stated, “Come to Jesus, come to Jesus, come to Jesus now,” to “Only trust Him, only trust Him, only trust Him now.” He published the song with his emendations as No. 62b, which suggests it was not included in the original edition of *Sacred Songs and Solos Enlarged*, but was—because of its usefulness—shoe-horned into later printings of that edition.<sup>16</sup> This song became a standard invitation hymn, employed for well over a century in both revival meetings and in countless revival-oriented churches, where an invitation was given at the conclusion of every service for people to “walk the aisle” and come forward for salvation or rededication.

While the title of Sankey’s collection, *Sacred Songs and Solos*, was descriptive of its contents, its title proved cumbersome to the average worshiper. So it wasn’t surprising for this (seemingly) new genre of religious music—almost wholly associated with the American singer from Chicago—to become unofficially known by the alliterative “Sankey songs.”

There was simply no question about what was under discussion: this style of popular religious music of revivalism had also crossed over into the realm of popular secular music—the fashionable song of the day. In fact, according to reports, there was a brisker trade in hymn books than newspapers near the revival hall, and “hand-organs in the city of London are playing Mr. Sankey melodies all through the streets.”<sup>17</sup>

Sankey later recalled his visit to a London bookseller when a sailor rushed in and demanded, “Give me a dozen little Sankeys, quick!”<sup>18</sup> Others observed, “As for the singing, most places of worship are not content with-



out Sankey's hymns, which are popular alike in factories and churches, and conversions are daily the result of such singing."<sup>19</sup>

Testifying as to how the term wasn't just limited to the religious sphere was the laborer who had gone to a meeting at Bow Road Hall and been emotionally arrested by the singing of "The Home Over There." He was reminded of his deceased father and was moved to attend the Inquiry Meeting, where he was led to the Lord.

I never felt so happy in all my life. I feel as though I could sing all day long. Sometimes, when I am at work, I can't help singing a hymn softly to myself; and then the men say, "Sankey, Sankey," and jeer at me. But I think that an honour. I don't mind it. I feel as though I could bear anything for Christ.<sup>20</sup>

By this point, the music of the revivals and the name Sankey had transcended the bounds of the religious community and was in use, even by those holding no sympathy for spiritual things: they knew what a "Sankey song" was.

In fact, the term "Sankeys" soon became the popular British appellation for what would be called "gospel music" in America. One of Ira's English contemporaries and early supporters was F.B. Myer, the highly respected Baptist pastor and prolific writer known for his work with the poor. His obituary dubbed him the "Archbishop of the Free Churches." In speaking of Ira's impact on church music, he observed, "He accomplished a great work, not only with his singing but in setting millions to sing the hymns which we shall always call familiarly 'Sankeys.'"<sup>21</sup> A century later, the American gospel song was still known in England as the "Sankey style."<sup>22</sup>

A month before the Camberwell Green meetings began in June, the Royal Victoria Palace, two-and-a-half miles north at Waterloo and New Cut Road, was pressed into service in preparation for the time when Moody and Sankey would begin meetings south of the Thames. This involved both noon and evening services. To an extent, the meetings acted as something of a training ground for ushers and choir members to learn and refine their skills. Although having a choir at the Palace added to its appeal, both ushers and choir transferred to the main hall at Camberwell when Moody and Sankey later began meetings there.

Moody, famous for commandeering his friends to assist in the work, even if they had just come to observe, lined up preachers James H. Wil-

son, Henry Varley, Mark Guy Pearce, and T.B. Stephenson to helm evening services at the Royal Victoria Palace. Spurgeon was also tagged to lend his reputation. Music was supplied by one Mr. Smith, employing “his silver cornet” while the organ was played by Mrs. Cole, wife of the meeting’s regular preacher, Major Cole of Chicago.<sup>23</sup> While Moody’s friends always seemed enthusiastic to assist, visiting American pastor Dr. Stephen H. Tyng Jr. found the previously vacant Palace a “dark, dingy, doleful place.”<sup>24</sup> On occasion, Sankey made an appearance.

While some had criticized Moody for not reaching “the masses” and just speaking to the same faithful church folk who continued to “fill the pews,” one visitor to the prayer meetings at Victoria Palace was impressed:

We could not help being struck with the large number of real working-men, who, with hands and face begrimed with honest toil, had run in for the hour. And how they appeared to drink in every word that was said! The working-man element was conspicuous by its absence when the noon meeting was held at Exeter Hall and the Opera House. Here, however, we have a proof that the sons of toil are not insensible to the privileges of the “sweet hour of prayer,” when the place of meeting is accessible to them.<sup>25</sup>

Yet, even that supporter couldn’t help but struggle with the single biggest complaint about the meetings—even at the smaller Palace: not being able to hear what transpired on the platform. “Taking refuge in the front seat of the gallery . . . for the sake of hearing,” he experienced mixed emotions.

It was pleasant, too, to see so many mothers present with babe in arms, though it was not calculated to promote feelings of quietude and devotion when assailed on all sides by the cries of the same babes, some of them not by any means weak in the lungs. For the sake of the mothers, however, we repress an inclination to grumble.<sup>26</sup>

Both Moody and Sankey had been careful not to become too closely associated with the Temperance cause, but there were times when it seemed necessary to address the issue. Perhaps typical was the noon prayer meeting, when “Silent prayer was offered for the drunkards of London, and Mr. Moody followed in earnest petition that this curse might be removed from our midst.” At the point in the meeting when anyone could speak, a gentleman shared the agonizing story of a woman who had become an alcoholic,

causing her husband to die of a broken heart. Then Ira, with his usual sensitivity to the moment, sang a highly dramatic Temperance song that reinforced the horror of those caught in drink's embrace.

While Sankey's role in the evening revival services was restricted primarily to music—with limited comments about the song he might sing—that was not the case at the noon prayer meetings, where he took a more active role in testifying and exhorting his hearers. On Thursday, July 6—the next-to-last service there—Sankey related how he and some friends had lately traveled up the Thames and watched as the incoming tide covered up much of the abandoned and ugly debris visible at low tide. Eventually the tide brought the river up fully to the banks, often covered with flowers. “How like God's ‘water of life’ when it flows into a soul covers the sin and despair. Do not let us try to make the tide flow, but let us lie low at the feet of Jesus, and say, ‘Come, Lord Jesus, into this heart of mine.’” He then sang another of his recent compositions, “It passeth knowledge, that dear love of Thine,” which one listener described as carrying a “certain stateliness and majesty in the melody, . . . that interprets well the reverential tone of the hymn.”<sup>27</sup>

It certainly seemed to be a sign of God's work, and not just that of the famous American evangelists, when services continued at the previous locations after Moody and Sankey left. Back at Agricultural Hall in North London, where the pair had preached and sung for three months—March 9 to May 9—extended sessions continued for five more weeks, appealing to those in the surrounding neighborhoods, with Moody and Sankey appearing on occasion.

As a result of the lawsuit, services at the Opera House in the West End were discontinued in that building when the lease was up, with those interested in further meetings gathering in nearby churches.

After Moody and Sankey's departure from Bow Road Hall in East London, meetings continued with strong and enthusiastic attendance. This resulted, in part, from the continuation of effective advertising, featuring the dynamic W.H. Aitken as preacher and the famous Fisk Jubilee Singers. Long before one service began, the hall was filled with “the very sort one never finds in church, and too seldom in the gatherings of our American brethren—the real East-end working-men, in working dress, with their wives, and a sprinkling of a lower stratum still.” During that interval the congregation was led in singing by a volunteer choir that Sankey had earlier admonished, but had lately come in for more and more commendation, worthy of

drawing visitors in its own right.<sup>28</sup> It seems the role of the revival choir had provided a new model for choirs in local churches to make a contribution to dynamic worship.

Undoubtedly some of this choral energy stemmed from the role of young people taking a lively part in the choirs. Emily Kinnaird was the daughter of Sankey's wealthy merchant host, Arthur Kinnaird, and she remembered those times with excitement.

A large number of young people—Beauchamps, Dennys, Drummonds, Hogg, Studds, Waldegraves, and ourselves—rallied round [Moody and Sankey] in the four great Missions held in London. . . . We girls and young men formed a band that accompanied [them] round to these four quarters . . . , and we used to spend our Saturdays together in open-air games . . . [and] never-to-be-forgotten week-ends . . . at Dorking and Edenbridge. The mission hymn-book *Songs and Solos* became a favourite with those of us who were in the choir . . . which we sang over and over again.<sup>29</sup>

Unfortunately, such enthusiasm for choirs was not universal. As the Rev. Dr. De Witt Talmage of Brooklyn—perhaps America's second most popular preacher—exuded, “We are glad at the increasing effort everywhere being made to sing the race to heaven. There are tens of thousands of people who cannot be touched by argument, or facts, or rhetoric, who immediately surrender to sacred song.” Yet he voiced a common feeling about many a church choir. “Let us band together the sweet singers of our churches and Sunday-schools, not into stilted and formal choirs, but into crusading parties.”<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps one of the most damning accusations of church choirs came from the pen of Dr. E.P. Goodwin, pastor of Chicago's First Congregational Church, under whom P.P. Bliss had served. In commending Bliss for his Spirit-led direction of their choir, Goodwin was not sparing in his disdain for the current state of things elsewhere:

Too often . . . the pulpit and the choir gallery are out of harmony . . . ; and the cases are not few, nor hard to find where . . . the Lord's house is turned into a concert hall, the service of song made largely a device for the filling and renting pews. . . . Definitely the Devil likes that way of conducting Sabbath services.

If he can only get people's head full of waltzes, and operas, and sonatas. . . . Little wonder that preaching in such circumstances saves few souls.<sup>31</sup>

And in a highly satirical but obvious reflection of widespread feelings, a correspondent for *The Song Messenger of the North-West* opined his view:

The cock-loft [choir loft], ten feet behind and ten feet above the worshipers, . . . [with a] balustrade to hide the praisers . . . who come tripping to their places . . . with demonstrative delight . . . which in any other part of the church would be considered intolerantly irreverent; . . . then the titter—a disease which is incurable in choirs as it is inseparable from them; . . . a grand reconnoitering of tune-books accompanied by appropriate whippers during the prayer or the reading of the Holy Bible; then . . . an exchange of pencilled notes on all the great questions that interest the human mind—except religion; then the transformation of the choir-loft into a sleeping car, of which the chorister [director] is the conductor who wakes up his passengers when it is time to go to praising again.<sup>32</sup>

Although Bow Road Hall's choir was gaining a reputation for quality and attracting people, they couldn't hold a candle to the Jubilee Singers, who were already familiar to many in the audience. So great was their attraction, by 8:00 one evening, the doors were closed, leading to one, then two overflow tents being filled. Apparently seeking to obtain the same blessings as those in the main hall, the folks in the overflow tent next to the main hall chose to sing the same hymn as those inside—at almost the same time. Yet they did so with a time lag, causing their concluding stanza to compete with prayer in the central building.

As for the strong attendance at the hall, it seemed clear to almost everyone that many who were in the crowd had come to hear the Fisk Jubilee Singers. As one attendee explained:

It is a very difficult and almost impossible task to describe the singing of these coloured brethren and sisters. It is so impassioned, so apparently spontaneous, so full of strange surprises, and altogether so thrilling, that one can only sit entranced, and drink in with ears and eyes, the delightful sounds now concen-

trated into a wild and startling solo, and now grandly swelling out into a burst of most exquisite harmony. The performances of the Jubilee Singers are, in our experience, something altogether unique, and one ceases to wonder at the crowds that flock . . . to hear them.<sup>33</sup>

Coupled with the powerful preaching of W.H. Aitken, attendance in the East London location remained strong—even without the star power of Moody and Sankey.

Back in South London, the evangelists continued to hold noon prayer meetings at Victoria Palace as well as afternoon Bible readings and evening revival services at Camberwell Green Hall. Staring out at the sea of faces consisting of eight thousand or more souls in the vast assembly, Ira was moved to muse over what God was doing. Exactly two years earlier—on June 22 of 1873—Moody and Sankey had held their first service in York, attended by only a handful of people. Yet, how the Lord had led them, and what blessings had followed the preaching and singing of the gospel! Sankey prayed for the next two years to be better still, then sang:

*He leads us on by paths we did not know,  
And well He leads us, though our steps are slow,  
Although we often falter by the way,  
Though storms and darkness oft obscure the day;  
But when the clouds are gone,  
We know He leads us on.*<sup>34</sup>

Momentous and consequential as the meetings of Moody and Sankey were in London during 1875, another dynamic movement was coalescing, which would become a powerful and worldwide current within evangelical circles for a century to come. It came to be known as “The Higher Life Movement,” echoing Presbyterian pastor William E. Boardman’s 1858 publication of *The Higher Christian Life*, which taught that “the Christian life need not be a continuing cycle of trying and failing, but that Christ’s power is available for those who take Him by faith as their sanctification as well as their salvation.”<sup>35</sup> As part of the American Holiness Movement, associated with Boardman, Phoebe Palmer, and James Caughey, the ideas also took strong root in Europe.

The key players were Americans Robert Pearsall Smith and his wife, Hannah. Hannah was a lay leader in the Holiness movement, and her book,



*Holiness Through Faith*, was much read. The couple came to English prominence a year earlier at a conference organized by Mr. and Mrs. Cowper-Temple—later Lord and Lady Mount Temple—at a gathering on the grounds of their spacious Broadlands estate from July 17 to 23 of 1874, “to have a few days of quiet prayer and meditation upon the Scriptural possibilities of the Christian higher life.” There, two hundred attendees were enthralled by the teaching and preaching of the Smiths. *The Christian’s Pathway to Power*—a periodical by Smith and Boardman—boasted, “No description could convey the wonderful sense of the presence and power of God which attended those six days of waiting upon the Lord.”<sup>36</sup>

The gathering was so successful, Smith organized another one, a little more than a month later, on August 29 in Oxford. Twelve to fifteen hundred attendees came by train from Ireland, Scotland, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland. As one Anglican minister wryly observed, “Just name a consecration meeting, and the people run together from twenty to thirty miles round.” The Smiths returned to the United States but were invited by Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany to hold meetings in his country. As an American paper reported, “Immense crowds attend the meetings and members of the nobility occupy seats on the platforms.”<sup>37</sup>

Nine months later, a “Convention for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness” assembled at Brighton, sixty miles from London on the southern coast. It took place from May 28 to June 7, 1875—drawing attendees from over two dozen nations—just as Moody was concluding meetings at the Opera House in the West End. The evangelist took special interest in the meetings—as advertised and reported in *The Christian*, *Signs of Our Times*, and *The Record*—and asked those assembled at the Opera House to pray for its success. Others, such as the Rev. Dr. Andrew Bonar of Scotland, sensed, “There is much talk about higher life and much movement in that direction . . . this may be the Lord’s way of answering the prayers which some of us have sent up, asking in our lives more likeness to Christ.”<sup>38</sup>

There was much more than talk, however, for only three weeks after Brighton, Canon T.D. Harford-Battersby, Vicar of St. John’s in Keswick—a market town in northwestern England’s Lake District National Park—and his Quaker friend Robert Wilson sponsored a convention, “Union Meetings for the Promotions of Practical Holiness.” Four hundred guests met for five days in a tent under the banner, “All One in Christ Jesus” to experience instruction and worship regarding sanctification, holiness, and “The Higher Life.” The meetings, which took place during Moody’s final weeks in London,

developed into a permanent theological influence known as the Keswick (pronounced “Kehzik”) Movement and operated as a prominent stream in European and American evangelical life well into the twentieth century.<sup>39</sup>

Moody, who had experienced the “filling of the Spirit” near the end of 1871, often reminded his followers, “The Holy Spirit in us is one thing, and the Holy Spirit on us for service is another.”

[Moody] taught that all believers had the Holy Spirit within them, but that it was entirely another thing to have the Holy Spirit fall upon you “with power from on high.” He urged his listeners to seek a filling of the Holy Spirit, saying, “We all need it . . . , and let us not rest day nor night until we possess it; if that is the uppermost thought in our hearts, God will give it to us if we just hunger and thirst for it and say, “God helping me, I will not rest until endued with power from on high.”<sup>40</sup>

Later, in 1881, Moody would author *Secret Power; or The Secret of Success in Christian Life and Christian Work* to encourage and instruct believers about the Holy Spirit’s role in their lives. Yet, the evangelist’s relationship to the Holiness/Higher Life Movement was always a nebulous one.

Despite his well-documented connections with the American Wesleyan-Holiness tradition, he never identified with the holiness perspective. However, in an effort to make an impact in Britain, he attempted to look like a Wesleyan/Holiness revivalist and was marketed by Morgan [editor of *The Christian*] as such. He was also presented as a holiness figure in . . . *Signs of Our Times*.<sup>41</sup>

Sankey, on the other hand, never claimed a “filling of the Spirit” and didn’t seem to identify with Holiness folks.

Toward the end of June—as the evangelists began to conclude their work in London—Moody received an invitation to speak at posh Eton College in the shadow of Windsor Palace, forty miles west of London. By 1875, Eton had grown from the “ragged school” for boys, founded in 1440 by King Henry VI, to become one of the most prestigious educational institutions—known as “public schools”—of its kind in Britain, home to an impressive list of past and future leaders, such as the Duke of Wellington, Robert Walpole (England’s first prime minister), William Pitt the Elder, and William Gladstone. It was a hotbed of aristocratic privilege.

The invitation for Moody and Sankey to address some of the nine hundred Etonian lads resulted from several parents attending revival services and desiring their sons to hear about God's good news. A plan was arranged with school officials to hold a meeting on June 26 in a tent erected adjacent to college grounds. By this point, Moody and Sankey were "household words,"<sup>42</sup> and as news spread of the meetings, a Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen, MP, began publishing accounts, accusing the evangelists of offering a "semi-dramatic performance" and being "itinerant vendors of religious wares." As the ensuing controversy ripened, the subject even came up for discussion in the august House of Lords, the evening before the scheduled meeting. Undaunted, the evangelists arrived at Eton on Tuesday, only to find that the local constabulary could not provide the necessary support, and the meeting would need to be cancelled. Last minute attempts to obtain the town hall were also blocked.

At that point, a sympathetic Windsor tradesman named Caley offered his spacious garden for the meeting, and by 3:00PM, around two hundred souls had gathered. A contingent of the choir from the earlier Opera House meetings had also accompanied Moody and led the assembly in singing before the appointed hour. But, because the songs were unfamiliar to the boys brought up on Anglican chapel services, there was little participation, even though song sheets were provided. At 4:00PM, Moody entered the garden, now filled with hundreds of curious students and townsfolk, and ascended his pulpit, consisting of a chair under a large tree.

The basic order of service differed little from the norm and began with everyone singing the familiar 100th Psalm. After prayer from Lord Cavan, Sankey sang "The Ninety and Nine," seated behind a little pump organ that had been transported from London. But because there was no stage and he was level with the crowd, his voice did not carry well. After Moody's message on "The Gospel," Ira was requested to mount the makeshift rostrum and sing from there. Even though he was unable to employ his keyboard, this position apparently provided a much superior perch and elicited numerous requests, which Sankey had to limit, owing to his obligation to sing again at Camberwell Green in a few hours.<sup>43</sup>

Back at Camberwell that evening, although some thought Moody was missing his "perennial freshness and vigour,"<sup>44</sup> there were no such complaints concerning Sankey, who continued singing a mix of beloved favorites and newer selections. In general, attendance remained strong, although

the overflow areas were not so much in demand. For some, a notable feature of the meetings was the absence of any “physical disturbance or excitement,” citing Dr. Horatius Bonar, who suggested, “the less of excitement there is at the meetings, the more likely is the Spirit of God to be at work.”<sup>45</sup>

On Sundays, when services were held for women in the afternoon and men in the evening, the evangelists often repeated exactly the same music and preaching at both meetings. In one of these, Sankey sang Anne R. Cousin’s meditative hymn, “O Christ, what burdens bowed Thy head,” which he had set to music and included in his current collection at No. 44, called “Substitution.” Focusing on the details of Good Friday, Ira’s music for this somber poem sounded much more like a traditional hymn than the lighter music in the collection, which had become popular. This one never did.<sup>46</sup>

July ushered in the last week of meetings in the great capital as well as the commencement of the recently passed Public Worship Regulation Act, which sought to limit the growing influence of ritualism within the Church of England. Ever since the rise of the Oxford Movement in the 1830s, there had been agitation within the Anglican Church to rediscover its “roots,” which those in the movement believed could be found in the Roman Catholic Church. Many, in fact, of its earliest proponents eventually converted to Catholicism, including some hymn writers whose poetry was widely sung in Protestant churches. These included John Henry Newman (“Lead kindly light, amid the encircling gloom”) and Frederick Faber (“Faith of our fathers, living still”). The Regulation Act, introduced into Parliament by Archbishop of Canterbury Tait, was an awkward and ultimately unsuccessful attempt to counter the influence of Rome.

While the Oxford Movement’s doctrinal beliefs—apostolic succession, the *Book of Common Prayer* as a “rule of faith,” denial that the Church of England was Protestant, and a desire to reunite with Rome—were not widely popular, the symbolic practices resulting from their ideas became widespread a generation later. Vestments for the clergy and choir, observance of the liturgical calendar, the expansion of congregational song with medieval Latin hymns in translation, and more frequent celebration of the sacraments, slowly but surely worked their way into much of Anglican life.

This included the building or refurbishment of churches. Ever since the late 1700s, there had been a fascination with the supposedly dark secrets of the past, a central tenet of Romanticism. The Middle Ages was distant and uncertain enough to make it the source of much interest and imitation.

Literary works about King Arthur and his supposed Round Table became famous. And so did a fascination with the Medieval manner of building known as Gothic. This trend gained a certain “official” acceptance when the Houses of Parliament, which burned down in 1834, were rebuilt in a Neo-Gothic style. Not long after, prolific and eccentric art critic John Ruskin, a powerful shaper of Victorian tastes, exalted the ancient style in his 1851 *Stones of Venice*, including a chapter, “What is Gothic,” which surveyed the medieval Italian Gothic and contributed to the popularity of the Victorian Neo-Gothic style.

It is interesting to note how several American churches—including even the Methodists with definite revival roots—were by the 1870s building impressive Gothic-looking edifices in U.S. cities.<sup>47</sup> The Neo-Gothic style had clearly become that of religious respectability and was even embraced by religious groups harboring no sympathy for Roman Catholicism, the originators of the medieval Gothic style. By contrast, when Spurgeon built a new house of worship for his exploding congregation in 1861, he made it very clear that Neo-Classical was the proper style for Baptists, inspired by Greek culture, which gave rise to the early church—conveniently ignoring how those classic Greek models were the center of ancient pagan worship!

The Public Worship Regulation Act in no way affected nonconformist churches but reflected a widely held attitude in England among those who preferred its worship—even in the official church—to be relatively plain and simple. This was certainly the position of Queen Victoria and the recently elected prime minister, Benjamin Disraeli. Many Anglicans, it seemed, preferred the more spartan practices associated with American revivalism—with the exception of revivalism’s opposition to the idea of the sacraments as essential to salvation.

Sunday, July 11 marked the last day of meetings, and as usual for the first service of the week, it was reserved for Christian workers. The doors were opened early at 6:30AM, and despite the cold and rain, Camberwell Green Hall was completely filled within thirty minutes. At 7:30AM, it was announced that thousands were waiting to get in, and the congregation was asked to pack tightly and make room for additional folks who had come from great distances. A few hundred were then added to the expectant multitude with the disappointed remainder being herded into the nearby Presbyterian Church. As one visitor to those final meetings revealed:

There has been intense anxiety shown to attend the services of the last week. Many of our country brethren and sisters having hoped against hope that Messrs. Moody and Sankey would pay their respective districts a visit, and having seen this hope flicker and vanish, as a last resource have come to London specially to attend the meetings. Many, if not most, have come just to see and hear our two friends, but we are assured that not a few of them have had the eyes of their understanding opened, and have seen Jesus as the Saviour they needed.<sup>48</sup>

Sankey, who usually appeared with Moody at precisely the appointed hour, entered the hall early and began singing solos. Yet at 8:00AM, the ever-punctual Moody had not arrived. Ira kept singing, not realizing the crowds surrounding the entrances were so thick that Moody couldn't get near. He was then forced to enter the hall through a private home whose rear abutted the building. By then it was almost 8:10 and Ira was getting worried, as Moody was never late. It was with considerable relief when the evangelist finally ascended the platform and the service began.

For many, a great part of attending any Moody-Sankey meeting was getting caught up in the thrill of singing together in a throng, the likes of which they had never experienced before, nor ever would again this side of heaven. Many imagined themselves close to paradise, as thousands of voices thundered the beloved songs that captured their own spiritual condition. By now, many copies of *Sacred Songs*—inscribed with the owner's name and sometimes a Bible verse and date—had become well-worn, with choice titles being dog-eared. Some contained a penciled list of favorites in the front; to others the owner had appended one of the song sheets containing new pieces that had recently become beloved, such as “For You I Am Praying.”

Before the sermon, Ira sang the familiar P.P. Bliss song, “Only an Armour-Bearer,” and the audience could hardly restrain itself in joining the familiar chorus, “Hear ye the battle cry! ‘Forward,’ the call!” with its insistent repetition of one note. Moody then repeated his familiar sermon on Daniel.

There was a final service for women in the afternoon, and one for men in the evening. Not surprisingly, the hall was filled to every corner. On this last night, Sankey appeared thirty minutes before the scheduled meeting, seated himself behind the little pump organ and sang solos, with the men enthusiastically joining in the familiar choruses. Normally, this was a time in which the restless audience was usually led in singing by the choir, a



well-rehearsed group directed by Wilson Carlile, whom Sankey had earlier recruited to play the harmonium at Agricultural Hall.<sup>49</sup> This fine choir boasted more than just impressive musical leadership, however, for their desire to continue God's blessings prompted them to advertise in religious periodicals: "MR. SANKEY'S SOUTH LONDON CHOIR offer their services to any mission or Effort to win souls to Christ, in the South or West of London; also for assisting in the after-meetings."<sup>50</sup>

When Moody finally stepped before the crowd, he confessed: The time has come for us to close the two years and three weeks we have been trying to labour for Christ among you. This is the last time I shall have the unspeakable privilege of preaching the Gospel in this country at this time. I want to say that it has been the two best years of my life.<sup>51</sup>

At that point, the solemnness of the moment was broken by a booming voice from the audience, shouting, "Have another week, Mr. Moody." Laughter, amens, and some applause lightened the mood, after which Moody continued, "My friend, you can all be saved this night, if you will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. If I stayed another week I do not know what more I could say." When he finished, he led in prayer with a "faltering voice, often choking with suppressed emotion." The service closed with Sankey leading selection No. 25, Fanny Crosby's hymn-like "Safe in the Arms of Jesus," as men streamed into the Inquiry Room for further spiritual counsel.<sup>52</sup>

Monday afternoon, July 12, culminated in a grand Farewell and Thanksgiving Meeting at Mildmay Conference Hall in Islington, where Moody first achieved recognition from some of the most prominent English nonconformist religious leaders during his visit in 1867. It was where revivalist-publisher R.C. Morgan's *The Christian* periodical called upon Moody to return to Britain. It was there at Mildmay where the idea of a preaching tour to England possibly first took hold in his mind.

This meeting was limited to supporting clergy and laypeople, with men and women filling three balconies. Of the seven hundred ministers present, one sample recorded 188 from the Church of England, 154 Congregationalists, 85 Baptists, 81 Wesleyan Methodists, 39 Presbyterians, 8 foreign pastors, 8 United Methodists, 7 Primitive Methodists, 3 Plymouth Brethren, 2 Countess of Huntingdon's Connection, 2 Society of Friends, 3 Free Church of England, 1 Bible Christian, and others whose denominational connections were unknown.<sup>53</sup>

The service opened with the assembled guests singing “Rejoice and Be Glad.” Moody briefly addressed the group, emphatic that the meeting be focused on giving thanks to God and not on praising men. Then pastors from various sectors of the city shared their accounts of God’s blessing on the meetings, with the Rev. Archibald Brown thanking God for

. . . religious stagnation swept away; a longing desire to hear the Gospel created and developed; God has taught his people to get up early on Sunday morning to hear how to study the Bible; an intense desire for the conversion of souls; such prayers offered as we used not to hear; God has shown that the Gospel of Christ is the power to move the masses; the gauntlet thrown down by philosophy, God has taken up, and we are seeing the fruits at the East-end.<sup>54</sup>

Overall, the reports on the meetings were laudatory, with many stories about changed lives. A few preachers wished to reserve judgement until some time had passed, and others—although not at the meeting—grouched about the lack of new converts to their churches.

If widespread news coverage reflected some level of success, Moody and Sankey definitely achieved that, even in the secular press. The evangelists and the huge meetings were news, and a growing thirst for news of any kind helped produce a kind of circular dynamics in which newspapers fanned the flames of interest; people responded, and the newspapers reported on the unusual attendance—a kind of “salvation as civic spectacle.”<sup>55</sup> Of course, the role of advertising and news coverage was only a part of the larger picture, for if something life-changing had not been transpiring every day and evening during those services, there is no way crowds would have braved the weather and vexatious conditions of the meeting halls; novelty could be short-lived, but a deep spiritual interest in the meetings wasn’t.

Although Moody didn’t keep numbers—as almost all later revivalists did—others tried to tabulate attendance. According to one record, 720,000 passed through the doors at Agricultural Hall during 60 services, 330,000 at the Her Majesty’s Theatre during 60 services, 400,000 at Victoria Palace during 45 services, 600,000 at Bow Road Hall during 60 meetings, 480,000 at Camberwell Hall during 60 services—totaling over 2.5 million in attendance.<sup>56</sup>

The meetings accomplished a number of things. Especially with the support of wealthy benefactors and aristocrats such as Lord Hugh Cairns,<sup>57</sup> revivalism gained a level of respect it had not formerly enjoyed. One of the

primary reasons was the way the financial aspects of the operation were open and aboveboard. The cost for the two-year mission amounted to 28,396 pounds sterling, 19 shillings, 6 pence—nearly all of it raised from benefactors during the meetings. Banker James E. Mathieson, Treasurer for the revival committee, kept careful records of receipts and disbursements and submitted them to Turquand, Youngs, and Co., Auditors. A detailed report was then published in the August 26, 1875, issue of *The Christian*.<sup>58</sup>

Conspicuously absent from the audit were any monies paid to the evangelists. Although specific details are unclear, it seems as though benefactors such as John Farwell of Chicago and John Wanamaker of Philadelphia guaranteed some level of support for the two men.

The meetings also made Moody one of the most popular religious figures on either side of the Atlantic, rivaling Spurgeon in England and Henry Ward Beecher in the United States. Sankey, on the other hand, had become associated by name with a relatively new and dynamic style of sacred music that would dominate revivalism and its supporting churches for the next century. And there was really no one else of his stature or star power to compete. Sankey was the living embodiment of revivalistic music.

Those new songs—often called “Sankeys”—consisted of songs formerly associated with the American Sunday School, but they had transcended those juvenile boundaries and were now being enthusiastically sung by adults—a development that quickly began to impact the musical landscape of British nonconformist churches. There seems to be little record of controversy in those churches when parishioners returned to their local assemblies and sought to expand beyond the canon of their revered hymnals to include the new “Sankey songs.” And it didn’t even require an outlay of new resources, as there were multiple copies of *Sacred Songs and Solos Enlarged* on hand. The immense momentum to provide congregations with the latest popular religious songs they had been singing in the meetings was undeniable.

Thus, one of the biggest results was the way this new type of church music had suddenly become popular and was easily accessible in every corner of the nation. And it didn’t disappear or diminish when Sankey left for America. In fact, it continued to expand, as was evident six months later, as reported by an American visitor to Chester, England.

Nothing is more astonishing, however, than the circulation which the little collection of hymns and tunes compiled and used by Mr.

Sankey has attained. One meets them everywhere: at morning worship in families, in prayer meetings, Sunday schools, street services, and even alongside the denominational hymn book in some of the churches. The words alone, in their cheaper form, sell for a penny a copy; the words and music for six-pence. The publishers announce that over three-and-a-half million copies were sold during the first six months of 1875.<sup>59</sup>

Morgan and Scott continued to publish Sankey's song collection, which kept being enlarged and released in new editions, eventually ballooning into a volume of 1200 selections.<sup>60</sup>

Before the work of Moody and Sankey, revivalism had been about preaching the Word of God; after them, it was about preaching and singing that Word, as no self-respecting evangelist would attempt a successful revival without an accompanying singer. Intentionally or not, Moody and Sankey had changed the definition: revival required both preaching and singing. No longer could preachers alone hope to sustain interest among the masses—because they expected music!

That change in expectation was hinted at when the illustrious Earl of Shaftesbury lauded the two evangelists, exclaiming, "Even if Messrs. Moody and Sankey had done nothing more than to teach the people to sing such hymns as 'Hold the fort, for I am coming,' they would have conferred an estimable blessing on Great Britain."<sup>61</sup> Although he meant it as a compliment to both men, at least some in the crowd might have suspected Sankey's music would be remembered long after Moody's preaching.

For Sankey, the last year had encompassed an amazing transformation, one in which his gifts had not gone unappreciated. As a perceptive correspondent for *The Christian* observed:

Time and space would fail us to tell of the deep impressions made by the singing of Mr. Sankey, and how hearts that were frozen and sealed against the Saviour's love have been melted into submission by some tender message of mercy wafted to them on the unseen wings of sweet song, the way being thus paved for the reception of the Gospel more fully delivered by the voice of the preacher.<sup>62</sup>

And although Sankey's name was ineluctably coupled with that of the evangelist, there were at least some who realized the passing of time would remember the singer's name in even larger letters.

When the history of this movement comes to be written by competent hands, we doubt not full justice will be done to the part Mr. Sankey has, in God's good providence, been enabled to play in this most blessed work of pointing sinners to Christ. In his hymn-book he has left us a legacy, the value of which, we believe, will never be exhausted, as long as there is a single singing pilgrim left in this vale of shadow and of tears.<sup>63</sup>

After the Farewell and Thanksgiving meeting, Moody and his family spent the next two weeks at the country estate of Mount Alyn in Rossett, twenty-five miles south of Liverpool on the Welsh border. His host was Alexander Balfour, philanthropist and founder of the Balfour Williamson shipping company. Although the the trip was officially a vacation, there was no such thing for Moody, who preached many times to large crowds at Mount Alyn, Bala, and surrounding towns. He was assisted in the meetings by W.H. Aitken, whose multiple endowments had made him such a versatile co-laborer, ably preaching for Moody after he had departed Bow Road Hall in East London. On this trip, Aitken preached—on one occasion for one hour and a quarter, outlasting many in the congregation—led the music, and even possessed the confidence or temerity to sing “The Ninety and Nine.”<sup>64</sup>

Sankey, on the other hand, had decamped with his family across France, stopping in Calais and Paris before arriving in Switzerland. Moody had also been asked to go, but he felt it was possibly designed as a small preaching tour, so he declined. Sankey hoped for some time, free from singing or even speaking.<sup>65</sup> Switzerland was an eye-popping experience for the Sankey clan, far from the rolling hills of western Pennsylvania. Although they had experienced some impressive mountain ranges in Scotland, nothing could have prepared them for the breathtaking Alps. It was summer in Switzerland and many of the roads were now passable, but the snow-capped mountains stayed white all year round.

Although Sankey's fame had preceded him, there was initially strong Swiss resistance to accepting any new music when they possessed the glories of Luther and Zinzendorf. “We have our good old hymns, . . . do not talk to us of those American songs.” But after translations of “Safe in the Arms

of Jesus” and “Jesus of Nazareth Passeth By” became available, the music achieved popularity all over the country. As one saint described it:

Now these songs have become the staple of all the Union meetings, which I may say are a very blessed feature of Christian life at Berne. You hear them in the assemblies in church and chapel, as well as in the Sunday-schools, down to the remotest parts of the hills and valleys of this canton, the “Old, old story of Jesus and his love,” being not only preached, but sung also, wherever the pulse of Christian life beats high.<sup>66</sup>

It was not surprising then when Ira was asked to sing at a Sunday evening service in Berne’s largest church, holding fifteen hundred. Although he sang in English, the translation into German (the language of the Bernese Swiss), was so good that the congregation could readily follow the meaning of the text, and many were moved to tears. The following day, the Sankeys and two hundred guests were invited to afternoon tea at the Enge Hotel, with its famous veranda looking out at a spectacular view of the Oberland glaciers. Miraculously to some, the rain of past weeks departed and the sun cast dramatic shadows on the peaks. Ira sang and also shared a testimony about his conversion as a young man.

In Basel, Sankey had no sooner arrived than he heard music under his hotel window. Although he couldn’t understand the words, he recognized the tune as “Safe in the Arms of Jesus,” and, going out to meet the *ad hoc* choir of fifty, he conversed with them via a translator. The songs he had begun singing in England two years earlier had by now become international in scope.

By Monday, August 2, the four Moody family members and the five Sankeys were back in Liverpool, preparing for their return to the states after two years abroad. The Moodys lodged at the Compton, the massive former five-floor department-store-turned-hotel, now catering to American guests. The Sankeys stayed with friend and preacher Henry Moorehouse, who had offered them shelter upon their unexpected arrival back in 1873.

Now, the challenge was to negotiate the outpouring of love from friends and supporters who were holding a Christian workers’ conference in Victoria Hall, featuring a long list of British and American speakers. As part of that schedule, a couple of farewell meetings were planned, beginning on Tuesday afternoon at 3:00PM. At a quarter till, Moody, Sankey and a group



of friends “emerged from the trap-door in the middle of the platform” to the applause of a packed assembly. To the mystification of some, large bouquets of flowers had been piled on Sankey’s keyboard—apparently an “American custom” it was thought.

Sankey sang two stanzas of “Tell me the old, old story” in an especially affecting manner, causing one visitor to disagree with a reporter who had earlier contended that “the timbre of Mr. Sankey’s voice is perceptibly impaired.”

I was struck with the clearness and rich quality of Mr. Sankey’s tones, and the circumstance was to me most gratifying. It would be no cause for wonder if, after the constant strain of two years’ daily public singing in all states of this changeable climate, his voice should be affected, but as far as I am capable of judging, it seemed on this occasion to ring out with more power and expression than ever.<sup>67</sup>

Then came addresses by a long assortment of reverends, doctors, and laymen, with Sankey providing welcome musical relief between some of the speakers.

Later that evening, “Every inch of space where a person could sit, or stand, or crouch, was occupied” reported one paper. Unfortunately, the hot August weather greatly fueled the discomfort to a degree that some congregants broke out the hall’s windows to facilitate desperately needed ventilation. As usual, the crowds of people who assembled well ahead of time were kept busy with singing, praying, and reports of Christian work. Before his solo, Sankey requested his hearers to pray for them, as they would do in turn, then sang what had become a favorite selection, “For You I Am Praying,” to a deathly still audience. Moody gave an unusually long address—over an hour—but his hearers sat in rapt attention, even though darkness in the hall had become quite pronounced as the gas lighting could not be activated.

Then Sankey, to the flickering illumination of a dramatic lone candle, sang a parting remembrance to the tune of Henry Bishop’s famous song, “Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home.”

*Farewell faithful friends, we must now bid adieu  
To the joys and pleasures we’ve tasted with you;  
We’ve labored together, united in heart,  
But now we must close, and soon we must part.*

*Home! Home! sweet, sweet home!  
Prepare us, dear Saviour,  
For yonder blest home.*

By the time he finished the sixth stanza—

*Farewell, every hearer: we now turn away,  
No more shall we meet til the great judgment-day;  
Though absent in body, we're with you in prayer,  
And we'll meet you in heaven—There is no parting there.*<sup>68</sup>

many were in tears.

The sun rose at 4:23AM on August 4 to threatening skies, typical weather for a seaport in northern Britain during the summer. But there was nothing typical about this day, for Emma Moody and Fanny Sankey were both eagerly anticipating returning home—having lived out of a steamer trunk as guests in others' residences, plus caring for small children during the last two years. Now they were headed back to family and some semblance of normalcy.

Dwight Moody had acquiesced to speak one more time that morning to over five thousand faithful who materialized at Victoria Hall by 7:00AM. Although Sankey did not join him, Moody appeared at 7:20AM and addressed the young men, challenging them to study Bible characters, align with some organized religious body, and find a ministry to pursue. “The eyes of Christendom are upon you” he reminded them. He then returned to the Compton Hotel, followed by a large crowd singing “Hold the Fort!” Instead of disbursing, many in the throng lingered in the street for ninety minutes until the Moody family emerged and entered their conveyance, only to be mobbed again.

Enjoying a bit more privacy, the Sankey family had been residing with the Moorehouses on Edge Lane, eleven miles due east of the Mersey River. Arriving about 10:00AM at the Prince's Dock, they and their party of well-wishers proceeded towards a special tender (boat) reserved to take them to the S.S. *Spain*, anchored farther down the river. To avoid the usual chaos, police had cordoned off a wide pathway to access the tender. Moody and his family soon boarded to cheers and the singing of Sankey's popular hymns. As the small boat glided down the river through a thick haze toward its rendezvous with the larger ship, people on either side offered “Huzzahs,” as did those in ferry boats and ships moored nearby.

Not unexpectedly, even the diminished throng who had accompanied the evangelists on the tender had a hard time managing final goodbyes.

Only when the *Spain's* anchor was being raised, and the tender was upon the point of starting, could many of the friends tear themselves away. As the *Spain* moved slowly down the river, the people in the tender, which was still alongside, cheered heartily, and the passengers on board the *Spain* replied with another cheer, and the waving of handkerchiefs and hats. As the *Spain* passed on ahead, the people in the tender sang . . . “Hold the Fort,” and . . . “Work, for the night is coming.” Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey stood at the bulwarks . . . and bowed and waved their handkerchiefs until the two ships were out of sight of each other.<sup>69</sup>

The evangelists were finally headed for home—not as two Christian workers who had left American shores with vague hopes of converting the English, but now as the best-known names in American religious life. ∞

## ENDNOTES

1. Words and music by J.H. Stockton, “Only Trust Him” (“Come every soul by sin oppressed”), *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan, and Geo. C. Stebbins, eds. (Cincinnati: John Church Co.; New York: Biglow and Main, 1894), No. 587.
2. *The Christian*, 27 May 1875, 8.
3. *The Christian*, 24 June 1875, 11.
4. *The Christian*, 17 June 1875, 11.
5. An octaroon was a person of one-eighth mixed race. “The Octaroon” was the second most famous ante-bellum play (after “Uncle Tom’s Cabin”), by Dionysius Lardner “Dion” Boucicault, which opened in 1859.
6. *The Christian*, 17 June 1875, 11.
7. *The Christian*, 17 June 1875, 12.
8. A song sheet was published in *The Christian*, 10 June 1875, 16. The publication did print songs from time to time. The publisher of *Sacred Songs and Solos*—Morgan and Scott—also published *The Christian* (advertising the fact on the title page of the song collection). Because of the more soloistic nature of “The Ninety and Nine,” it faded from hymnal use—although never completely disappearing—before the more congregational “I Am Praying for You” did. At the time of writing, Hymnary.org listed “The Ninety and Nine” as having appeared in 326 hymnals, with “I Am Praying for You” appearing in 440.
9. Words by Mrs. [Catherine] Pennefather, music by Ira D. Sankey, “Not now, my child,” *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, No. 628.
10. The numbering runs to 81 selections, but No. 62 includes 62a and 62b.
11. *The Christian*, 20 May 1875, 14.
12. Words by Ellen W. Willis, music by H.M. Warner, “I Left It All with Jesus,” *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, No. 53.
13. *The Christian*, 25 June 1875, 8.
14. Ira Sankey, *My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1906), 262–64.
15. Sankey, *My Life*, 212–213.
16. It would have been logical to add new material after the previously printed final hymn, but in Sankey’s collection, about twenty words-only hymns were printed as the last few numbers. It was basically an editorial decision to append “Only Trust Him” with its full page of music with other similar

- material. Of Sankey's claim of having discovered the song before its publication, hymnologist William J. Reynolds suggested, "Apparently Sankey had secured a manuscript copy of this hymn prior to its first publication." *Hymns of Our Faith: A Handbook for the Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1964), 22.
17. *The Christian Age*, 17 November 1876, 178, by American Evangelical Episcopalian rector Dr. Stephen Tyng.
  18. Sankey, *My Life*, 69.
  19. *The Christian*, 20 May 1975, 12.
  20. *The Christian*, 20 May 1975, 15.
  21. David Williamson, *Ira D. Sankey: The Story of His Life* (London: S.W. Partridge and Co., n.d.), 145.
  22. Erik Routley, *A Short History of English Church Music* (Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Co., 1997), 75.
  23. *The Christian*, 27 May 1875, 12–13; 24 June 1875, 13.
  24. It also suffered a fire when, in 1858, sixteen people were crushed to death during a mass panic that ensued when an actor's clothing caught fire. "The Royal Victoria Hall—"The Old Vic,"" *British History Online*, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol23/pp37-39>; *The Christian Age*, 17 November 1875, 178.
  25. *The Christian*, 24 June 1875, 8.
  26. *The Christian*, 24 June 1875, 8.
  27. *The Christian*, 15 July 1875, 10.
  28. *The Christian*, 24 June 1875, 10.
  29. Emily Kinnaird, *Reminiscences* (London: John Murray, 1925), 39–40.
  30. *The Christian*, 24 June 1875, 10, quoting Talmage in one of his periodicals.
  31. Dr. E.P. Goodwin, as quoted in D.W. Whittle, ed., *Memoirs of P.P. Bliss* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1877), 44. The comment about renting pews reflects the common practice of churches supporting their work from the annual rent families paid to reserve a pew or box. The closer a family sat to the altar or pulpit, the higher its social or economic position.
  32. "A Fashionable Choir," *The Song Messenger of the North-West*, Vol. 6, No. 9 (Sept. 1868), 142. P.P. Bliss was a contributor to this publication of his employer, music publisher Root and Cady, although he probably did not pen this article.
  33. *The Christian*, 24 June 1875, 10. This quote was made about the singers while

ministering at Camberwell Green, but it applied equally well to all their appearances, including those at Bow Road Hall.

34. *The Christian*, 24 June 1875, 11.
35. William E. Boardman, *The Higher Christian Life* (Boston: Henry Hoyt, 1858). In this book, Boardman attempted to make a distinction between his teachings and the more traditional views of Methodist “sanctification,” of which there was much overlap.
36. Edith Blumhofer and Randall Balmer, eds., *Modern Christian Revivals* (Champaign, IL: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1993), 125; Nigel Scotland, *Apostles of the Spirit and Fire: American Revivalists and Victorian England* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009), 210.
37. Scotland, *Apostles*, 211.
38. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 244.
39. The meetings took place from June 28 to July 2, 1875. By this point, Robert Pearsall Smith was no longer part of Holiness leadership, having been accused of a romantic indiscretion outside of his marriage.
40. Simon Fry, “Another Radical Transformation: Being Filled with the Holy Spirit, Part 3” (25 Feb. 2017), <https://simonjfry.wordpress.com>, quoting *D.L. Moody, Secret Power; or The Secret of Success in Christian Life and Christian Work* (Chicago: F.H. Revell, 1881), chapter 2.
41. David Bundy, “Keswick and the Experience of Evangelical Piety,” in Edith Blumhofer and Randall Balmer, eds., *Modern Christian Revivals*, 124.
42. *Evangelical Christendom* (published by the British Evangelical Alliance), 1 April 1875, 102.
43. *The Christian*, 7 July 1875, 10; Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 246.
44. *The Christian*, 1 July 1875, 15.
45. *The Christian*, 8 July 1875, 12.
46. Words by A.R. Cousin, music by Ira D. Sankey, “Substitution” (“O Christ, what burdens bowed Thy head!”), *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, No. 39. *The Christian*, 6 May 1875, 10, reported that in the early Sunday morning meeting for Christian workers, there was a visible exodus of folks on their way to their local church service during Sankey’s closing song.
47. A classic example is Mount Vernon Methodist (Episcopal) Church—dubbed the “Cathedral of Methodism,” built in 1872 in Baltimore, MD. It is discussed further in Chapter 20 in connection with Moody’s meetings in Baltimore.
48. *The Christian*, 15 July 1875, 11.



49. “Islington Undenominational missions: Moody and Sankey mission,” *British History Online*, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/middx/vol8/pp115-117#h3-s5>. Carlile later founded the “Church Army” which by 1925 had become the largest home mission society in the Church of England. Known as “The Chief,” he inspired generations of evangelists.
50. *The Christian*, 22 July 1875, 20.
51. *The Christian*, 22 July 1875, 13.
52. *The Christian*, 22 July 1875, 13.
53. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 247–48.
54. *The Christian*, 22 July 1875, 13.
55. The main thrust of Bruce J. Evensen’s *God’s Man for the Gilded Age: D.L. Moody and the Rise of Modern Mass Evangelism* (Oxford: University Press, 2003) is the role of advertising—both religious and secular—in the career of Moody (and Sankey). It is a rich resource for this perspective. His quip “salvation as civic spectacle” can be found on page 46 and elsewhere.
56. It’s unclear what these figures consist of. Some of the venues hosted multiple meetings, such as noon prayer services and afternoon Bible readings, plus evening revival meetings. Some were used for fewer meetings. It’s not clear if these numbers included meetings that continued after Moody and Sankey moved on to their next venue. And some don’t seem realistic, given the limited size of the auditoriums (eg: Haymarket Opera House). But they seem to be the generally accepted numbers. Moody didn’t keep track of how many claimed to be converted as he believed only God would know the true number.
57. In Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 257–58, D.L. Moody is quoted as saying Lord Cairns was one of the two most important influences on the meetings, for “the people said that if the Lord Chancellor [Cairns] came to my meetings they had better come too.”
58. *The Christian*, 26 August 1876, 12–13.
59. Frank S. Reader, *Moody and Sankey: An Authentic Account of Their Lives* (New York: E.J. Hale, 1876), 69. The letter was written by J.B.T. Marsh of Chicago on 8 December 1875.
60. The series experienced perhaps a dozen expansions (generally undated), culminating in *Sacred Songs & Solos: Revised and Enlarged, with Standard Hymns: Twelve Hundred Pieces* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, [1904]). The publisher continued issuing the volume into the late 20th century.
61. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 247. The author is quoting accounts from the Mildmay meeting of 12 July 1875.

62. *The Christian*, 26 August 1876, 12.
63. *The Christian*, 26 August 1876, 12.
64. See “Moody’s Welsh Holiday” by Andrew Barnes in *YPS [Young Precious Seed] Magazine*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (2016). In it, Barnes recorded numerous details of Moody’s visit that are not covered in his biographies, and he corrected Will R. Moody’s error [*Life of Moody*, 1900, 251] in attributing his stay at Bala—rather than Mount Alyn in Rossett. There is also a fascinating and detailed account in *The Christian*, 12 August 1875, 6–7.
65. Robert Boyd, *The Lives and Labors of Moody and Sankey in Great Britain and America* (Toronto: A.H. Hovey, 1876), 342.
66. *The Christian*, 29 July 1875, 6.
67. *The Christian*, 12 August 1875, 8.
68. Words by Edward Payson (E.P.) Hammond, music by Henry Bishop, “Farewell, My Friends,” *Sacred Songs & Solos: Nos. 1 and 2 Combined* (London: Morgan and Scott, 1880), No. 111.
69. *The Christian*, 12 August 1875, 8–12.



### **III. THE PROFESSIONAL GOSPEL HYMNIST**

No. 110.

Sweet By-and-By.

"The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads."—ISA. 35: 10.

S. FILLMORE BENNETT.

JOS. P. WEBSTER, by per.

1. There's a land that is fair - er than day, And by faith we can see it a -  
 2. We shall sing on that beau-ti - ful shore The mel - o - di-ous songs of the  
 3. To our boun - ti - ful Fa - ther a -bove, We will of - fer our trib-ute of

far; For the Fa - ther waits o - ver the way, To pre - pare us a  
 blest, And our spir - its shall sor - row no more, Not a sigh for the  
 praise, For the glo - ri - ous gift of His love, And the blessings that

CHORUS.

dwel - ling place there. In the sweet by - and - by, We shall  
 bless - ing of rest.  
 hal - low our days.  
 In the sweet by - and - by,

meet on that beau - ti - ful shore, In the sweet by - and -  
 by - and - by, by - and - by, by - and -

by, We shall meet on that beau - ti - ful shore.  
 - by, by - and - by,

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*Chapter 15*  
Home, Sweet Home;  
or, God Was in It  
1875

*There's a land that is fairer than day,  
And by faith we can see it afar;  
For the Father waits over the way,  
To prepare us a dwelling place there.*

*In the sweet by-and-by, We shall meet on that beautiful shore,  
In the sweet by-and-by, We shall meet on that beautiful shore.*

*We shall sing on that beautiful shore  
The melodious song of the the blest,  
And our spirits shall sorrow no more,  
Not a sigh for the blessing of rest.<sup>1</sup>*

THE S.S. *SPAIN* WAS one of the largest and finest steamers sailing the Atlantic on the Liverpool-to-New York run. Built only four years earlier, it was large at 4,871 tons and 425 feet long. Although it retained four masts and sails—reminiscent of earlier days of wind propulsion—it was fitted with two compound steam engines producing an impressive 600 horsepower, belching a steady black discharge through two great smokestacks, sending the craft scuttering across the ocean in ten days. Advertisements from the National Steamship Company boasted of the vessel possessing a “remarkable steadiness at sea. Passengers are not so liable to seasickness.”

That fact alone could have sold Moody on the ship, as he was notoriously bilious at sea. In addition to the craft’s avowed stability, the evangelists’ cabins were located toward the center of the vessel, which reduced the effects of a boat’s yaw, pitch, and roll. The saloon/state-rooms—below deck—were touted as being “unusually large.” The company even boasted of its accommodations in “steerage,” where the majority of its perhaps one thousand immigrants—on their way to make a new life in America—experienced the voyage. The price of a ticket in steerage was \$26 (“being \$2.00



cheaper than most other lines,” claimed the advertisements), whereas saloon-class passengers, such as the evangelists, relinquished \$50–70 each, but were provided access to a “Ladies Boudoir—also Piano, Library, Smoking, and Bath Rooms.”<sup>2</sup>

Once aboard, the Moody and Sankey families<sup>3</sup> were introduced to Captain R.W. Grace, then were shown to their quarters. The children were naturally excited about this grand, new adventure, while their mothers discussed how they might both entertain their charges and keep them from falling overboard.

By 1875, a transatlantic journey seemed a near miracle of speed and comfort compared to the voyages endured by revival preacher George Whitefield, who made eight crossings from England to the colonies in the mid-1700s, fanning the flames of the Great Awakening. With only the winds and tides to propel ships, his journey took from forty-five to sixty days on average. That provided ample time to read, pray, and ponder.

Pondering the future was also on the minds of the four adults making a return after more than two years’ absence. But what kind of home would they be returning to? Emma Moody and Fanny Sankey must have been eager to resume some level of domestic normalcy, especially with young children to raise and educate. In the case of Fanny, she had experienced little stability for the past three years—with the latest child born outside the United States. For it was in October of 1872, while still living in New Castle, PA, that she—at first reluctantly—agreed to relocate to Chicago when Ira decided to rejoin Moody after the fire.<sup>4</sup> Less than a year later, in May, when she was finally able to get their new residence in some household order, she and Ira began their journey to Britain, which then entailed moving constantly from place to place. While both women understood and whole-heartedly supported their husbands’ work and could see the evident blessing the Lord had poured out, bouncing around from pillar-to-post could be quite challenging, and at times, almost overwhelming.

Dwight Moody and Ira Sankey also spent time pondering the future. Moody’s work in Chicago seemed a thing of the past; his ministries there seemed stable, and he was now a full-time evangelist with a host of invitations to preach in major American cities. Ira had left home as a Christian worker and religious soloist and was returning as the embodiment of a new form of religious music—and not just singing the songs created by others, but with a growing number of very popular ones penned by himself.

By now he intuitively knew the practical strengths of his voice—those notes that produced the most “ring” and carried best in large arenas. And after singing to thousands of folks many times per day, he knew how to render each song for maximum effect, pausing here and there with a dramatic silence, rushing some notes and stretching others in ever-so-subtle ways to drive home the meaning of the words. He had also learned how to employ his moderate skills at the pump organ to highlight his delivery, often playing just one chord as he sang an entire phrase.<sup>5</sup> He understood which tempo worked best in a particular environment, depending on the acoustics or size of the crowd. He knew which solos had the greatest impact with Moody’s sermons—by now having heard some of them hundreds of times.

In addition, he had learned a lot about publishing cycles, copyrights, royalties, wholesale and retail distribution, advertising, and the benefits and pitfalls of being a public figure. He had made the friendship of amazing and influential people—including Britain’s wealthy and powerful—and had experienced God’s faithfulness in supplying his family’s financial needs; he had been stretched and had grown spiritually. Ira was also aware on some level of how people often viewed him and Moody as equals in terms of the ministry. It was no longer the case of a famed preacher with a musician in tow. It was “Moody and Sankey,” with the musical half receiving equal billing—something unheard of in the Protestant religious world.<sup>6</sup>

Both men, to some degree, also had to consider how their families would fit into their lives at home. Moody was less reflective than Sankey, yet both had to ponder, how were they to be sustained—and where would their families live? And how would their massive popularity abroad translate into recognition at home?

At 6:00AM on August 14, after a smooth trans-Atlantic crossing, the S.S. *Spain* docked at pier #42 in New York’s North River.<sup>7</sup> It had actually arrived an hour earlier, where it had to anchor at Upper Quarantine Landing for a doctor to board and inquire about anything that might be communicable. Trailing behind the doctor was a reporter from the *New York Herald*, who spent the time in quarantine sniffing out the whereabouts of the two evangelists to gain a scoop on his fellow scribes waiting at the dock. Both men seemed happy to wile away the time, talking to the inquisitive journalist.<sup>8</sup>

They tried to make it clear that, unlike their nearly continuous round of meetings in Britain, they intended to enjoy a period of rest for a couple

months—out of the limelight. And it was also clear that Moody hadn't made any commitments about where to go next. When the reporter finally located Sankey, he was playfully hoisting his young son Ira Allen in the air. There he discovered a man

. . . of average height, somewhat inclined to corpulency, with a pleasant and open face. His eyes are somewhat small, but very bright and animated. In dress he is somewhat dandified, his black coat and gray pants fitting him with Chesterfieldian precision, while his hat was a model of style. There is an indescribably magnetic influence about the man.<sup>9</sup>

Even before docking, the Honorable George Stewart—prominent Philadelphia businessman and founder of its YMCA—and his supporters had taken a small boat out to the ship and greeted the company on board with, “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord.”<sup>10</sup>

Upon disembarking, an ironic scene greeted the evangelists as a host of reporters (from *The New York Times*, *Herald*, and *Tribune*) and pastors swarmed the pair, seeking information about their next venture—a stark contrast to their lonely arrival in Liverpool two years earlier. The retinue then proceeded to the Grand Union Hotel, where a dinner was planned for the honored guests, perhaps the first Moody could enjoy in over a week, owing to his constant seasickness.

Following the splendid reception, where countless welcomes and commendations and rehearsals of their triumphs were repeated *ad nauseam*—to the wearying of its honorees—the Moody family boarded a 3:00PM train at the Grand Central Depot, bound for the evangelist's birthplace in the tiny village of Northfield, Massachusetts, on the state's northern border. There they settled in with his seventy-year-old mother on the farm where he'd grown up. They did not return to Chicago.

The Sankey family stayed overnight in Brooklyn with D.W. McWilliams, successful banker and railroad man, who was on the board of multiple companies. Similar to many of the evangelists' supporters, he was also active in countless Christian endeavors: Vice President of the American Sunday School Union, President of Brooklyn YMCA, and Sunday School Superintendent at Lafayette Presbyterian Church, which Sankey would later join. The McWilliamses excitedly hosted all five Sankeys as they prepared for their journey back home.<sup>11</sup>



**D.L. Moody's Home, Northfield, MA**, in J. Wilbur Chapman,  
*The Life and Work of Dwight L. Moody* (1900).

Within a couple days, Ira, Fanny, Harry, Eddie, and baby Ira Allen had set out by train for distant New Castle, Pennsylvania, where Ira still owned a “little two-storey, white frame dwelling”<sup>12</sup> on a hill across the Shenango River in adjacent West New Castle. The sun was just setting as the dingy steam locomotive hauled its wooden passenger cars into the town’s small station. It was Wednesday evening, August 18, and the Sankey family had been on the train for three days. Although appearing to friends as the “picture of health,” they were all tired and eager to get home and wash away nearly four hundred miles of grim, accumulated from being towed behind a coal furnace on wheels. The children had been restless and bored for countless stretches but were now excited to see their grandparents and sleep in a real bed.

Of course, Ira and Fanny feared this would not be a quiet arrival, and they were right. “Iry”—as many knew him<sup>13</sup>—was the region’s most famous citizen and everyone, it seems, wanted to get a look at the hometown “boy-made-good.” While Fanny and the children were able to slip away, Ira spent the next two hours recounting the amazing works God had done. When asked for an explanation, all the tired traveler could muster was, “God was in it.” Finally, either the throng had its curiosity satiated or Ira could speak

no more and he headed for home. Unfortunately, in his two-year absence, it had been rented out and was occupied at the moment, so the Sankeys settled down with the Edwards family, Fanny's parents, about a mile west of town.<sup>14</sup> Of course, Ira's mother and father were nearby in West New Castle. It had been quite a homecoming!

On Sunday, the Sankeys were back on display, but no more so than the last two years. Ira was asked to speak to the Sunday School:

It was in this place that I first learned to love Jesus. I have tried to love him and work for him. Oh! how sad it was to see our names blazoned forth in the papers. We did not ask it—did not want it. It was sad indeed. We looked to Jesus for our reward. I ask all here to pray for dear brother Moody and myself.<sup>15</sup>

And while Ira wanted to shun the limelight, Fanny did more so. But at times like this, it couldn't be avoided, as Sunday School superintendent Reis, in trying to recognize those saints who often toil in obscurity, proudly declared, "We have Sister Sankey here, too. Will Sister Sankey please stand up and let all the children see her?" And, just as she had done countless times over the last two years, Fanny modestly rose as the Sunday School scholars gawked at someone who was supposed to be important.<sup>16</sup>

More enjoyable for Fanny that morning were the endless greetings from folks she was genuinely excited to see after the long absence from the community where she had grown up, gotten her first job, met her husband, settled down to domestic life—however briefly—and begun a family. She was finally back with kin and childhood friends and familiar faces on every hand. And yes, she endlessly agreed with everyone, how the children had grown. That Sabbath morning in the First Methodist Episcopal Church, Ira and Fanny sat in the family pew, surrounded by parents, siblings, and so many who had invested in their lives. It was good to be home!

While the impromptu welcome at the train station the previous Wednesday evening had been gratifying, it couldn't compare to the official one held Sunday afternoon in the Opera House, with nearly two thousand in attendance. C.C. Sankey—Ira's cousin—recited an ode he had composed,<sup>17</sup> and various dignitaries and representatives from countless organizations and churches welcomed the family home. Although Fanny eschewed notoriety—seeking to settle down to a quieter domestic life—she was recognized as "a worthy companion of the singing pilgrim. Quiet, modest, plainly appareled,

with love for her children, which makes woman the highest in the order of ministers, she has comforted and helped her husband in his arduous toils more than archbishop ever helped a pastor.”<sup>18</sup> While that was a lovely tribute to Fanny, only she could have appreciated how profound those words really were—encouraging and nursing Ira in times of discouragement, sickness, and exhaustion—all the while taking care of a young family in strangers’ homes in a strange land.

Another cousin and the man who had sold Ira his house, Cyrus Clark, gave the principal address. Ira spoke briefly, requesting that any honor on the occasion go to the Savior and not to man. He then sang numerous solos which, although well known in England, were just now becoming familiar to his fellow townsfolk.<sup>19</sup>

Even in little New Castle, newspaper reporters pursued Sankey. And while some tried to get their stories straight, a few—who apparently couldn’t land an interview—descended to creating fanciful accounts. In an otherwise factual column, one reporter manufactured a conversation out of whole cloth. He imagined Ira staying at a hotel on his first evening back in America and related this account in which the evangelist judged it

inexcusable . . . to have reporters find his [hotel] room door when he was asleep and awaking him throw their notebooks and pencils over the transom and ask him to write down his age, how he liked Europe, where he was going, and how long he expected to stay there. One energetic sort of a cuss wanted his opinion on ballooning. . . . It was annoying to the evangelist to have to get up out of bed and whisper through the keyhole that he was not an aeronaut.<sup>20</sup>

While publicity had made Ira famous, it was also a double-edged sword that could make him misunderstood by friend and foe alike.

“Tickets to the camp meeting, tickets to the camp meeting!” shouted the young conductor as the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne, and Chicago train neared Leetsdale, filled with passengers bound for Camp Sewickley.<sup>21</sup> It was Monday the 23rd, and some five thousand folks paid ten cents each at the gate to enter the Methodist camp grounds. Around 9:00AM, Ira arrived with his father and other church friends. During the day, Sankey sang a couple songs and shared—choking back emotion—how his lately deceased sister had been converted at that camp two years earlier. It was a very personal



experience for him to be there, but he could not stay longer, as one of the children was very sick at home and needed his attention.<sup>22</sup> It's certainly possible to imagine how Fanny Sankey had put her foot down and demanded more of Ira's presence at home to assist with the family, now that they had returned to the U.S.!

As joyous as it was to be home, Sankey was back on the train again in two weeks for the 550-mile journey to rejoin Moody in Northfield,<sup>23</sup> assisting with meetings and formulating plans for a fall campaign. He arrived on Tuesday, September 7, and was joined the next day by evangelist Daniel Whittle and his musical assistant, P.P. Bliss, who had authored so many of the songs Sankey had made famous, such as "Hold the Fort!" They had all been summoned by Moody, who was apparently beginning to see his work—including his methods of financial support—as the model for other evangelistic duos under his general inspiration and guidance.

Revival services began on Friday evening, September 10,<sup>24</sup> in the little Congregational Church, attended by Moody's Unitarian mother, brothers, and visitors from near and far. Although the meetings were microscopic in comparison to those the evangelists had just completed in England, major newspapers sent reporters who covered them in surprising detail, commenting—perhaps with a degree of sarcasm—"it is doubtful if in the whole country four finer-looking men could be collected."<sup>25</sup>

Crammed onto the small platform in front of the church, the "evangelical quartet" of Moody, Sankey, Whittle, and Bliss—as the *New York Herald* described them—shared the service, with Sankey singing four solos and Bliss one, followed by addresses from Whittle and Moody. On one occasion, Sankey led "Safe in the arms of Jesus, safe on his gentle breast," then followed with:

I remember that while coming over the sea, the rain was falling very hard, and in the storm many were sick. I had my little boy with me, and he did not want to stay down below with the others, and together we went on deck. We sat down there for many hours alone. The storm was raging all around, but at last he climbed up, and pillowing his head upon my breast, he went to sleep. I did not want to disturb him. He had such confidence in me that he slept peacefully through the storm. I thought that to-night Jesus is here; he loves us more than I could my boy; lay your head on his breast, come to Him. Look away to Jesus to-

night. Don't look to Mr. Moody, or these men here, but to Jesus; He will help, He will save; and safe in the arms of Jesus you are safe indeed.<sup>26</sup>



**Congregational Church, Northfield, MA,**  
in J. Wilbur Chapman, *The Life and  
Work of Dwight L. Moody* (1900).

While tiny Northfield was far from the limelight of London, Sankey could still be found long after the evening service had been dismissed, praying with a circle of inquirers. For Ira, sharing the gospel—in song or speech—was not a profession in which he was at the top, but a holy calling intended to produce eternal rewards.

While the main reason for this auspicious gathering was to coordinate future evangelistic ministry in the states, the evangelists developed a close personal bond as they fellowshiped and ministered together. At least three of the four were known for having quite the sense of humor, so there was no shortage of hearty guffaws among the spiritual band of brothers.

One day, the ensemble was crossing the little Connecticut River via a ferryboat on their way to share a dinner with Moody's uncle Cyrus. The craft was powered by a ferryman pulling on a cable strung across the river. In route, Sankey and Bliss broke into song with "Waiting for the boatman" and "There is a land of pure delight." But they soon noticed how the vessel wasn't making any headway. Upon investigation, they found Moody in the rear, pulling back on the rope with all his might in order to confuse his companions and prolong their singing—even though he could barely recognize one tune from another. Moody, as usual, relished a good laugh and they all continued, singing Bliss's appropriately named song, "Pull for the Shore."<sup>27</sup>

The presence in Northfield of Daniel Whittle and Philip Bliss resulted from their having joined together in full time revival ministry at Moody's urgings. Ever the inveterate letter writer, Moody had peppered the men individually to leave their jobs and enter full-time evangelism. And much like Sankey a few years earlier, in struggling with Moody's invitation to join him

in Chicago, both men experienced a prolonged period of uncertainty. While Whittle and Bliss entertained a strong desire to minister more fully for the Lord, they were also aware that Moody's enthusiasm could be quite overwhelming. So did Mrs. Lucy Bliss, as she voiced her concerns. "I am willing that Mr. Bliss should do anything that we can be sure is the Lord's will . . . , but I don't want him to take such a step simply on Mr. Moody's will."<sup>28</sup>

To ascertain the Lord's will in the matter, a trial run of sorts was planned for three or four nights, beginning March 24 of 1874, in Waukegan, Illinois, some fifty miles north of Chicago on Lake Michigan. The first night's service was disappointing with modest attendance and no marked results. Rain dampened expectations the second evening, but attendance was twice that of the earlier service, and as Bliss sang his "Almost Persuaded," many stood requesting prayer. The Holy Spirit seemed very much at work.



*Memoirs of Philip P. Bliss (1877).*

The next afternoon, Whittle and Bliss met with the pastor, and the answer they had been long seeking seemed clear.

Bliss made a formal surrender of everything to the Lord, gave up his musical conventions, gave up his writing of secular music . . . , and in a simple, childlike, trusting prayer, placed himself, with any talent, any power God had given him, at the disposal of the Lord, for any use He could make of him in spreading the Gospel.<sup>29</sup>

Upon their return to Chicago, Whittle resigned his \$5000 job at Elgin Watch Company, and Bliss began to untangle his publishing and teaching obligations. For Bliss, this was a big step financially, as he had been building a successful career as a songwriter of both secular and sacred works, plus leading music conventions (or training sessions) for other aspiring musicians. He and his family were just beginning to develop a sense of security—something rare for a self-employed musician.

It was apparently Moody's plan for the two to be supported financially from the largesse of his benefactors, such as John Farwell and Cyrus McCor-

mick in Chicago, plus John Wanamaker and George Stuart in Philadelphia. William B. Dodge of New York also filled out that list of munificent and wealthy friends.

This generous support can be explained by the response from one of Moody's benefactors to a query about the evangelist's access to the titans of commerce and industry. "How is it that while you and other like men are all but inaccessible, fenced in by closed doors and guarded by polite but immovable private secretaries, Dwight L. Moody sees you at any time?" Without thinking came the reply, "He is one of us."<sup>30</sup>

By the time Whittle and Bliss joined Moody in Northfield, they had already held meetings in over a dozen cities in the midwest and Kentucky-Tennessee. More significant, however, was Bliss's publication, *Gospel Songs: A Choice Collection of Hymns and Tunes New and Old for Gospel Meetings, Prayer Meetings, Sunday Schools*, etc. It was obviously intended as an all-purpose collection, with "gospel meetings" as one of its main uses. It had just been published a year earlier, in 1874, and listed P.P. Bliss as its compiler-editor, "Author of 'Charm,' 'Sunshine,' 'Joy,' etc." It was issued by The John Church Company, which had recently purchased the publishing firm of Root and Cady, with whom Bliss had been employed as a song contributor and editor of popular collections.

*Gospel Songs* was heavily reliant on compositions for which Bliss had provided text, music, or both. This included "Hold the Fort!" at a distant No. 79, a number of Anglican-type chants intended for texts such as "When I survey the wondrous cross" and "Joy to the world," a tune composed by Bliss for the poem "There were ninety and nine" at No. 59, and his first Sunday School song, "If Papa Were Only Ready," an unusually maudlin text, at No. 118.<sup>31</sup>

One important decision resulting from the quartet's meeting was that a new revival songbook was needed. For reasons still unclear, the evangelists did not choose—or were unable—to continue the use of the highly successful *Sacred Songs and Solos*, published by the London firm of Morgan and Scott. It was probable that if the evangelists had used the British publication in America, the publishers would have enjoyed no copyright protection, for there were effectively no international copyright laws in the United States until the Chase Act of 1891, meaning the U.S. didn't recognize English legal claims on music.

In fact, piracy of English music by Americans was so bad, just a few years later, eight different New York theaters were simultaneously running

purloined productions of Gilbert and Sullivan's British operetta *H.M.S. Pinafore*—without a single penny accruing to its author, composer, or publisher. So upset were its creators, they actually sailed to America, and on New Year's Eve of 1879, informally produced the first performance of their next work, *Pirates of Penzance*, effectively claiming an American copyright and legal protection. As Morgan and Scott was a British entity, unable to defend its holdings in America, *Sacred Songs and Solos* was apparently not a viable option.<sup>32</sup>

However, for Moody, the issue seemed not to be one of royalties but of reputation. Ever since their previous British mission—even after publicly disavowing any additional benefit from the *Sacred Songs and Solos* publication—Moody had been hounded by accusations of making a fortune from the hymn book's popularity. Now he wanted to make a clean break.

The idea was apparently to produce a new American volume, which would—from the start—publicly assign all royalties to a trusteeship helmed by William E. Dodge Jr., one of Moody's wealthy benefactors. But Dodge required the participation of fellow Christians George Stuart of Philadelphia and John Farwell of Chicago—a veritable board of trustees.<sup>33</sup>

To further avoid charges of profiting from the new hymnal, Sankey and Bliss agreed to give up all royalties on their own songs such as Bliss's "Hold the Fort!" and Sankey's "The Ninety and Nine."<sup>34</sup> Considering the financial success of the previous British publication, Dodge recalled years later:

Mr. Sankey, especially, had given up copyrights that would have brought him a large sum yearly and opportunities to hold musical institutes and conventions, which would have added largely to his income. Neither of them<sup>35</sup> during the whole continuance of the trust received one dollar of personal advantage, and as they had no definite means of support, the self-sacrifice and unselfishness of this course in order to prevent the slightest breath of scandal and not weaken the influence of their personal work, were very remarkable and beautiful. I never knew anything like it.<sup>36</sup>

That meant Bliss's freshly-minted *Gospel Songs* (1874) was also apparently rejected, one reason being that Sankey's name should be associated with the new American collection. For it was Ira Sankey who had brought international attention to these former Sunday School songs, and it was Sankey's name that actually gave rise to what these new songs were being

called—“Sankeys.” Plus, the collection also needed to include the latest “hits” Sankey had popularized, including his version of “The Ninety and Nine.” Bliss seems to have understood this, and there is no record of his disappointment at their bypassing the very volume—his *Gospel Songs*—that would now have to be reinvented.<sup>37</sup>

Although Bliss’s little collection wasn’t chosen for Moody’s and Sankey’s upcoming meetings, it did continue to be advertised as “The Song Book for Sunday Schools: Gospel Songs By P.P. Bliss.” What was new to recent ads was the commendation, “Contains the songs sung by Ira D. Sankey in the great revivals in England and Scotland.”<sup>38</sup>

Highly significant and of historical import was this first published use of the term “gospel songs” as applied to a repertoire previously associated with the Sunday School. While they were known in Great Britain as “Sankeys” or Sankey-songs, in America, they would fall under the rubric of gospel songs or gospel hymns.

More significant at that point was the decision to make Sankey and Bliss co-editors of the new work, with Bliss’s name listed first on the title page and under the editorial preface. Perhaps this was simply an alphabetical matter, but it could have reflected Bliss’s impressive track record of composing the most successful songs Sankey had been singing. Second, Bliss had strong connections with religious publishers in America, having edited and contributed to numerous collections of Sunday School songs and popular secular music. Third, and perhaps most importantly, Bliss had already produced and was presently using a collection, *Gospel Songs*, which had been published the previous year.

At some point, it must have been evident—although perhaps not voiced—that Bliss was the far more talented and experienced partner when it came to purely musical issues. Sankey was developing as a composer of tunes—having created a few that were becoming well known—but Bliss already had a track record boasting multiple collections of religious and secular songs.

While a survey of the simpler Sunday School/revival songs alone might be insufficient for ascertaining the comparative musical gifts between the two men, a brief examination of Bliss’s 1872 collection, *The Song Tree: A Collection of New Songs, Duets, Trios, and Quartets*, reveals many striking facets. First, it is a collection of secular songs in a large format—designed to sit on the piano—rather than that of the smaller Sunday School/revival

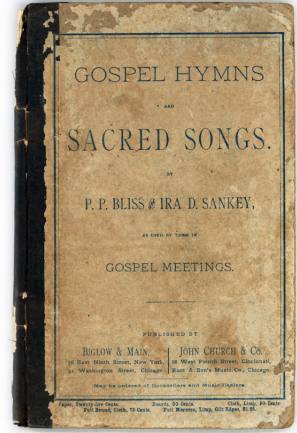
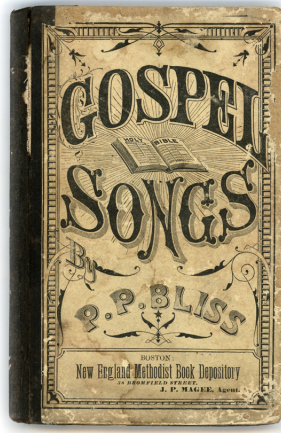
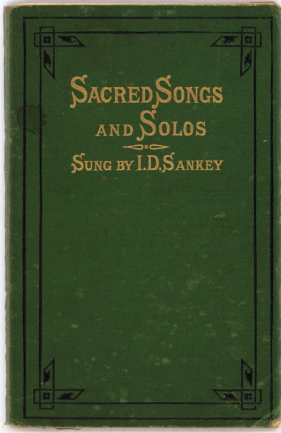


books designed to be held in the hand. The first thing a reader notices about the music is the way many selections are in compound time, such as the opening “My Heart and My Tree,” in 12/8. This alone doesn’t necessarily reflect musical sophistication until a reader looks at the alto, tenor, and bass parts—many moving at different times and with different rhythms. Over its five pages, there is variety of textures, with some voices dropping out or singing descant parts.

The piano accompaniment also reflects a level of independence from the voices, revealing the hand of a composer familiar with the keyboard. And that trait holds true for all the songs in the collection. The keyboard parts reflect a variety and mastery of style. At times, Bliss humorously parodied melodramatic music in novelty pieces like “The Elopement [sic] Ballad,”—words and music by Pro Phundo Basso, Bliss’s *nom de plum*—spoofing overly serious classical music. The entire collection reflects the work of a thoroughly skilled and sophisticated creator of light entertainment—far in advance of anything Sankey could produce at that time.<sup>39</sup>

So it was decided to have Bliss co-edit the new collection, providing critical music editing skills, as well as his connection to The John Church Company, the publisher controlling the copyrights on all of Bliss’s popular music.<sup>40</sup> It was only logical for John Church to demand a role in publishing any new collections containing those materials. Sankey would provide the all-important name recognition and a connection to Biglow and Main from New York, the chief publisher of Sunday School books containing Fanny Crosby’s popular songs. Combining these two important publishers on this collection practically assured excellent advertising and distribution long after the revival services had concluded.

In an attempt to differentiate the name of the new collection from Bliss’s *Gospel Songs* and the British songbook, *Sacred Songs and Solos*, the title *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs* was chosen, unintentionally providing this new genre of sacred music with two competing terms: “gospel songs” (from Bliss’s collection) or “gospel hymns” (from the new offering). The term “hymns” in *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs* might also have reflected a recognition of these selections as being intended for congregations, and were more than the novelty solos many had originated as, or the light Sunday School ditties associated with children. Missing from the title was the term “Solos”—as found in the British collection—perhaps suggesting its greater focus on congregational usage. This was now “grown up” music, worthy of its place alongside the standard hymnody in regular adult religious services.



There was plenty of discussion about which selections would be included in the new songbook and how big it should be. The size of a book was often dictated by what price it would sell for. Once that was decided, the publisher could tell the client how large a book could be produced for that price. As Bliss already had considerable experience as a compiler-editor with The John Church Company, he undoubtedly had those figures in his head.

Bliss's *Gospel Songs* had been 128 pages and sold for 35 cents, the standard rate for his other Sunday School collections.<sup>41</sup> As a new round of revival meetings was due to begin in just over a month, and the new collection was intended for its use, time was of the essence. Perhaps for that reason, the new volume contained about 50% of its contents from Bliss's *Gospel Songs* and 50% from Sankeys *Sacred Songs and Solos*. Final decisions were likely made very quickly, and Bliss probably contacted his former publisher, John Church, to get the project rolling. As the co-publisher Biglow and Main was located in Manhattan, it's not clear what role it played.

Even after the book had been submitted to the publisher, last-minute changes were still being made. As Ira later recalled:

After we had given the completed compilation to our publishers I chanced to pick a up a small paper-covered pamphlet of Sunday-school hymns. . . . I discovered ["What a friend we have in Jesus"] and sang it through, and determined to have it appear in *Gospel Hymns*. As the composer of the music was my friend, C.C. Converse, I withdrew from the collection one of his composi-

tions and substituted for it [this hymn.] Thus the last hymn that went into the book became one of the first in favor.<sup>42</sup>

“What a friend we have in Jesus” went on to become one of the most published and sung of all American hymns, appearing in over 1,500 hymnals.<sup>43</sup>

By September 19, Sankey was on his way back to New Castle, and the Whittle-Bliss team had departed for meetings in Minnesota. Moody continued holding services in Northfield.<sup>44</sup> During this time, Moody was still assessing both written and personal pleas from around the country, imploring him to favor their particular metropolis. Emissaries from Washington, DC, New York City, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, Brooklyn, and other humbler communities all made their pitch to host the next revival campaign.<sup>45</sup>

The decision, in fact, was not Moody’s alone but resulted from complex negotiations among several parties. On October 12, the Revs. Dr. Talmage, Cuyler, and Budington—prominent Brooklyn pastors—arrived in Philadelphia to discuss with their biggest competitor where Moody should begin. The Philadelphia contingent brought out their heavy hitters in the form of the Revs. Dr. Richard Newton, Cooper, Wylie, and Wheaton Smith. Evangelical giants of the local Sunday School and YMCA—as well as Moody’s close friends and financial backers, George Stuart and John Wanamaker—also weighed in for the “City of Brotherly Love.”

The Philadelphians—with a petition from 180 evangelical pastors—pressed the claim that they had been the first American city to invite Moody when he was previously in England and that he had consented. But the Brooklyn contingent countered that their town was

... aglow with fervour, that the wide fame of the revivalists’ good work had created a strong public feeling, that the field was ripe for harvest, that committees of arrangements had been organized, a building secured and money raised, and that Moody had expressed a desire to begin his work at once.<sup>46</sup>

While some of this boosterism might have been only partly true, that last point was possibly the clincher, as Philadelphia was not yet prepared to host such massive services.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, having been outmaneuvered by their northern brethren, the conclave concurred to have Moody and Sankey begin their American campaign in Brooklyn, but stay only four weeks, after which they would decamp to Philadelphia.<sup>48</sup>

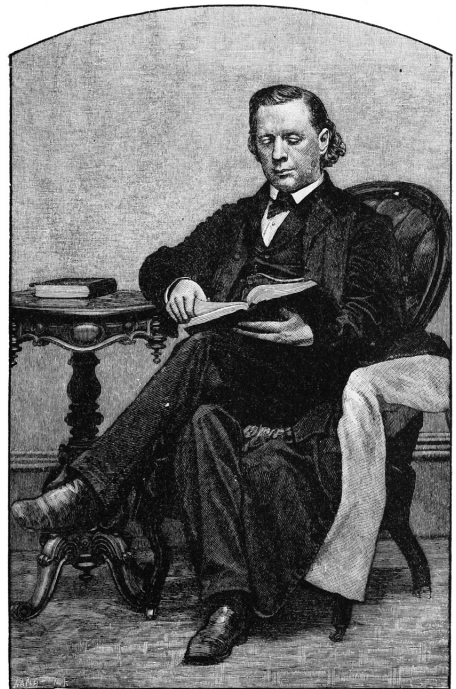
On many levels, the choice of Brooklyn seemed like a wise one, indeed. As some with rose-colored glasses described it:

With fewer than one hundred thousand souls, one-fifth the size of its sister across the bay, Brooklyn was a quiet, modest place, strident only in its virtues. Even at night, the gentle sex held the upper hand. Every respectable house was shut up tight by ten, and prayer meetings were the big Friday-night entertainment. There were no theaters, music halls, and few dens of ill repute outside the waterfront area.<sup>49</sup>

But on another level, it seemed a questionable decision. Some accused the town of being ruled by breweries, saloon keepers, and illiterate party hacks, with corruption as the norm for business. Perhaps worse, the city was a national laughingstock, as it had just emerged from a spectacular and embarrassing public display over the issue of seduction and adultery by one of its leading citizens—the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher.

Beecher was the most famous preacher in America. The son of New England’s Lyman Beecher, the grand-old-man of a popular wing of Calvinism that focused on an angry and judgmental God, Henry had morphed into an evangelical Transcendentalist of sorts, focusing solely on God’s love, forgiveness, and acceptance.<sup>50</sup> His fuzzy but appealing message and impressive rhetorical skills vaulted him to the vanguard of contemporary preachers; his progressive views on society and his theatrics focusing on issues such as abolition (before the Civil War) made him the darling of powerful men like the evangelical merchants Arthur and Lewis Tappan—known for combining “principle and profit.”

During his travels abroad, he was recognized as the country’s highest profile voice for abolition. His famous Plymouth Church at 57 Orange



*A Biography of Rev. Henry Ward Beecher (1888).*

Street was a must-see for anyone of note passing through the area. Abraham Lincoln, Mark Twain, Clara Barton, Charles Dickens, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Horace Greeley, and William Thackeray all occupied a coveted pew at some point. And so did Ira Sankey, who was whisked away after a Sunday morning service he and Moody had completed to attend Beecher's church, seated in the personal pew of ex-Alderman Whitney.<sup>51</sup> Even celebrities like Sankey wanted the Beecher experience!

The scandal began back in May of 1871, when a letter appeared in the newspaper, and it would slowly drag the preacher—later dubbed as a cross between St. Augustine, P.T. Barnum, and John Barrymore<sup>52</sup>—into a progressively deeper undertow involving treachery, chicanery, and free love. While Beecher had been a staunch supporter of women's rights over the decades, he had broken with some of their advocates, such as Victoria C. Woodhull, who became an avid supporter of free love.<sup>53</sup>

In an effort to vindicate her much-vilified beliefs, Woodhull submitted a bombshell letter to the *New York World*. It read in part:

Let him that be without sin cast the stone. . . . My judges preach against "free love" openly and practice it secretly. . . . For example, I know of one man, a public teacher of eminence, who lives in concubinage with the wife of another public teacher of almost equal eminence. . . . I shall make it my business to analyze some of these lives. . . . I have no faith in critics, but I believe in justice.<sup>54</sup>

This set off an avalanche of endless newspaper accounts and letters, public confessions, retractions, and re-retractions, church disciplinary expulsions, and behind-the-scenes shenanigans that kept the public pot boiling. At Plymouth Church, the controversy only increased attendance. "Beecher was still the benevolent, white-maned incarnation of righteousness on the rostrum; he was as imprudent as ever in his private life."<sup>55</sup> The convoluted, real-life soap-opera—in which Henry's sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe, actually sat on the front row of the church in order to intercept their other "mad" sister who threatened to reveal the scandal—reached its nadir with a public civil trial, beginning January 11, 1875, in Brooklyn City Court. In the Beecher-Tilton case, Henry was sued—technically for the tort (civil wrong) of "criminal conversation"—for having intercourse with Elizabeth, the wife of his friend and fellow church member, Theodore Tilton.

The trial lasted six months, with interruptions during the winter, in which the frozen East River prohibited ferry crossings, and during hotter



weather when lawyers and jurors fainted from the heat. The prosecution (Tilton) called a dozen witnesses; the defense (Beecher), ninety-five! Tilton retained five vaunted attorneys and Beecher topped that with six—all spouting grandiloquent oratory, endlessly quoting from Shakespeare, Carlyle, Byron, Scott, Burns, Milton, Cardinal Newman, Dr. Johnson, Hawthorne, Saint Paul, and the Scriptures—requiring two months for opening and closing statements. Tickets for courtroom seats were scalped on the black market, and Judge Neilson spent much of his time—to little avail—warning those present to refrain from hissing or applauding.

Day in and day out, Mrs. Beecher, wearing a black dress and looking like a raven, sat impassively in a wooden armchair in the spectators' section of the courtroom. Beecher, for his part, carried a nosegay of flowers; even when he was on the stand, he sniffed occasionally at a bunch of violets.<sup>56</sup>

The case finally went to the jury as a steamy June turned into a sweltering July. On the second, the jury returned. After fifty-nine ballots, they were hung at nine for Beecher and three for Tilton. Talk of a retrial soon fizzled. Beecher, like many powerful and charismatic personalities, was either pathologically self-deceived or was a con-man of unparalleled audacity, yet he continued to preach at Plymouth Church to ecstatic adulation. More objective voices such as the *New York Sun* found the reverend to be “an adulterer, a perjurer [*sic*], and a fraud.” *The Tribune* opined, “Ten thousand immoral and obscene novels could not have done the harm which this case has done in teaching the science of wrong to thousands of quick-witted and curious boys and girls.” And a popular commentator scoffed, “mankind fell in Adam, and has been falling ever since, but never touched bottom till it got to Henry Ward Beecher.”<sup>57</sup>

This, then, was the surreal environment into which Moody and Sankey began their quest for souls on the American continent, less than two miles from Beecher's church. In the long run, all the lurid gossip might not have mattered to the majority of Brooklynites, for they would soon turn out in droves to hear the evangelists.

The city already boasted an impressive roster of high-profile clergy. Moody possibly lodged with the Rev. Dr. Thomas De Witt Talmage, pastor of the famous Brooklyn Tabernacle,<sup>58</sup> and the Sankey family with the Rev. Theodore Cuyler, who later became one of Ira's closest friends. By this time,



ties had already been cut with Chicago, for when Sankey went home after spending time with Moody in Northfield, he wrote to his housekeeper in the Windy City concerning the family's belongings—the ones they left behind when going to Great Britain:

New Castle, PA

Oct. 13/75

Dear Mrs. Hitchcock,

On account of our commencing work on the 24th of this mo. in Brooklyn I will not have time to go out to your city, and get my folks settled in Brooklyn too. We all go East in a week. . . . Would you please drop me a line informing me . . . in what condition my little kit of household goods are. Also if it would be possible to sell the stoves, table, sofa, etc. and anything near their value . . . and the bed clothes packed up and sent with the pictures etc. to this town [New Castle] it would be a relief to the mind of Mrs. Ira D. if not to himself also. The reason for this move is that we have become Religious Tramps, and in all probability—will never be long enough in one place to have a home.

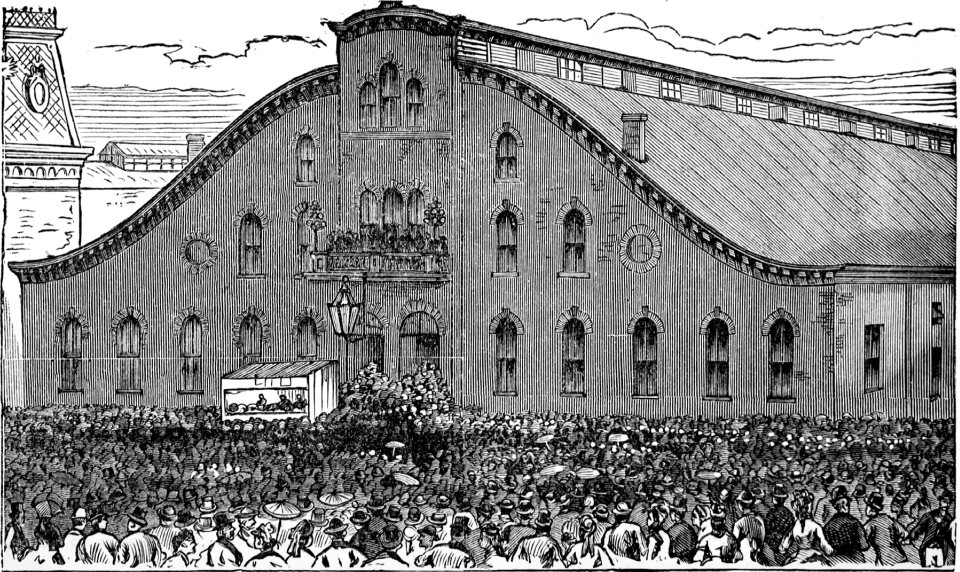
Ira D. Sankey<sup>59</sup>

This fascinating missive suggests that Sankey's view of his identity as an itinerant musical evangelist had solidified by this time, even before the evangelists' success in America. It's not clear how Fanny Sankey felt about being "religious tramps."

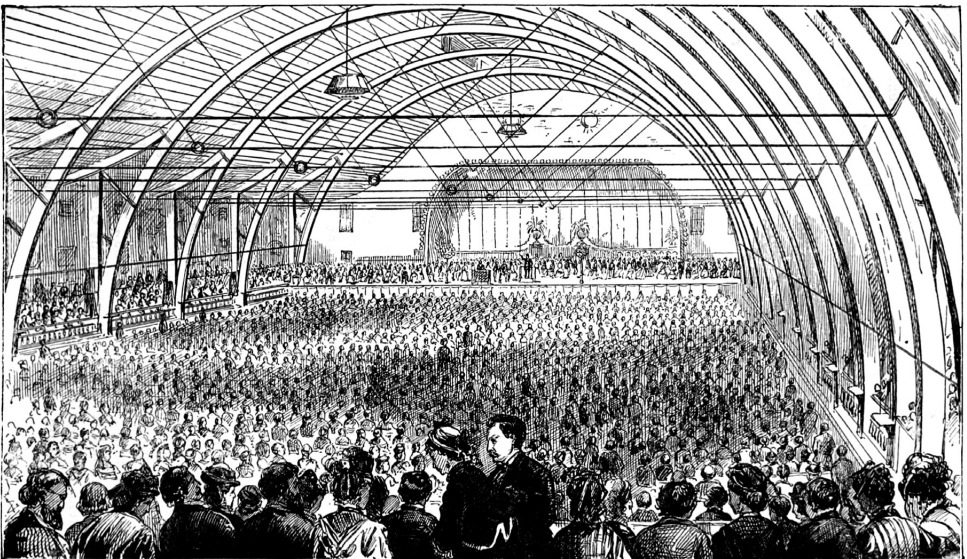
Moody didn't arrive until the day before meetings began. Sankey also cut it close—as was both men's custom—having traveled from meetings in Toronto, Canada.<sup>60</sup> Because of the late decision to begin in Brooklyn, the organizing committee—seeking to raise \$7,000—had been frantically at work for only two weeks, trying to pull together the myriad details of organizing ushers, a choir (consisting of one hundred fifty from four churches and one hundred from the YMCA), Inquiry Room workers, advertising, lodging, transportation, security, tickets of admittance, hymn books, overflow locations, prayer meeting venues, coordination with local pastors, twenty tables for forty reporters, and a proper hall designed to hold the expected crowds.

That place was the Clermont Avenue Rink.<sup>61</sup> Built in 1865 to house the latest fads of roller and ice skating, the Rink had become a famous center

of recreation as well as an exhibition hall for political conventions, boxing, trade shows, and religious meetings. Ice skating—to Conterno’s Band—became so popular that “raising the red ball” on Brooklyn streetcars was a sign to indicate favorable conditions for a spin on the ice. Currier and Ives’



**Brooklyn Rink, Exterior**, in Elias Nason, *The Lives of Dwight Moody and Ira Sankey* (1877).



**Brooklyn Rink, Interior**, in E.J. Goodspeed, *A Full History . . . of Moody and Sankey* (1876).

colorful and idyllic depiction of “Central Park Winter: The Skating Pond” in 1862 delighted thousands and helped popularize the current craze.

As late October weather was still in the 70s, there was no chance of using the building for ice skating, because a frozen surface could only be obtained at that time by opening the doors and letting sub-freezing temperatures—when available—do their work.<sup>62</sup> The Rink, with six thousand chairs (costing twenty-seven cents each) and a mat covering the floor to dampen sound, was leased for revival meetings for four weeks with services beginning on Sunday, October 24, 1875, at 8:30AM.

The City Railroad Company added fifty new cars, departing every five minutes for the Rink, and the Vanderbilt Avenue Line laid a fresh set of tracks to the hall, installing a special switch across from the Rink to handle all the traffic. Those coming by boat from Manhattan Island, who arrived at Fulton Ferry, could reach the meetings in exactly twenty-five minutes.

For the opening service, trains transported 5,385 riders to join those who had walked or come by horse.<sup>63</sup> “They came in street cars, in carriages, in wagons, and on everything that would carry.”<sup>64</sup> Folks began to assemble at 6:00AM, and by 7:45 when the doors opened—the ushers at each entrance being cued by a bell—there were four times as many people as could get in, with the crowd “surging hither and thither like troubled waters.” Once the building was full and the doors were shut, police had all they could do to keep them so.<sup>65</sup>

Promptly as ever, Moody and Sankey appeared under a huge sounding board, curving upward and resembling the crest of a mighty wave. The preacher announced, “Let us rise and sing the 24th hymn,” whereupon the assembled throng began leafing through their freshly minted copies of *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs* to find “Rejoice and be glad, Thy Redeemer has come”:

It didn't take long into the chorus:

*Sound His praises, tell the story of Him who was slain.*

*Sound His praises, tell with gladness—He liveth again.*

There was a swing, a movement, irresistible and contagious. The refrain was taken up by row after row of singers until the whole building rang with its measure. Yet, amid all these voices, the mellow, sympathetic tones of the chief singer's voice, like the tones of a violoncello in an orchestra, floated out clear and well

defined. The peculiar accentuation and staccato movement of the song made it decidedly effective, the echo of the last note bringing sighs and Amens from all quarters.<sup>66</sup>

As one observer effused, seven thousand voices poured forth with “such singing as was never heard before in Brooklyn.”<sup>67</sup>

That was indeed high praise, for vibrant congregational song was a hallmark of many Brooklyn churches, spurred on by the groundbreaking *Plymouth Collection of Hymns and Tunes for Christian Congregations*, compiled for Henry Ward Beecher’s church in 1855. It had fostered such an impact on what had often been moribund congregational singing that many in the constant flow of visitors to Plymouth Church came to hear the singing as much as the preaching.<sup>68</sup>

Part of the exuberant response from those in the Rink resulted from the sheer size of the crowd—larger than any single church could hold. Additionally, there was the elation resulting from getting into the arena and singing under the direction of the renowned Ira Sankey, employing his brand-new song collection, available at the door: five cents for words-only, or twenty-five cents with music.<sup>69</sup> Its preface informed readers:

This Collection of GOSPEL HYMNS AND SACRED SONGS, has been compiled with great care, and is believed to contain the most useful and popular pieces to be found in the whole library of Christian Song. A large number of the hymns were used in the late Special Service in Great Britain, and it is hoped that a like blessing will accompany the use of them in this land, together with the new hymns found in this collection.

P. P. Bliss  
Ira D. Sankey

At the bottom of that page was the reminder that no one was allowed to print or publish any of the copyrighted material without written permission from the publishers. These songs were intended for an eternal purpose, but they were also a temporal, commercial product.

Sankey led the congregation in additional singing, supported by a choir of two hundred fifty he had rehearsed the night before, accompanied by a large organ separate from Sankey’s smaller one.<sup>70</sup> There were prayers, and Moody requested Sankey to sing “The Ninety and Nine” as a solo only, em-



phasizing the final direction for worshipers not to sing along. By now, this had become Sankey's trademark, and he had sung it numerous times in the previous Northfield meetings, but few in the audience had heard it, and certainly not by Sankey. In requesting for only Sankey sing the selection, Moody apparently wanted to be sure this first impression was a powerful one.

At this moment, Sankey was at the height of his career and only thirty-five. Up to a certain point, the human voice actually improves with age, getting stronger, richer, and more expressive. So it had been with Sankey. Now he was fully in charge of all his gifts.

As Mr. Sankey's magnetic voice and wonderfully expressive singing filled the great auditorium, the sympathy among his hearers grew and increased, until it seemed as if, had he continued the sweet melody and earnest supplication, every person in the whole audience would have risen and joined with him in a grand musical prayer of mingled appeal and thanksgiving. The effect he produced was simply marvelous. Mr. Sankey's voice is a marvel of sweetness, flexibility, and strength. It has a charm purely its own, which attracts and holds one with a power that is gentle but irresistible.<sup>71</sup>

The sermon focused on the return of spies from the land of Canaan, found in the Old Testament book of Numbers, chapter 13. Then Ira followed with Bliss's "Only an Armour-Bearer," singing the verses with the assembly responding on the chorus, "Hear ye the battle cry! 'Forward,' the call!" It was a glorious beginning to revival in America. The assembly was then dismissed with the expectation to progress to their own local church services.

An afternoon meeting at 4:00PM drew an even bigger throng—perhaps fifteen thousand, with folks coming from Manhattan, New Jersey, and Long Island. Many were shunted into overflow meetings in Rev. Simpson's Methodist Church and Dr. A.R. Thompson's Reformed Church nearby.<sup>72</sup> Unfortunately, Sankey was sent racing around to various locations, trying to be as omnipresent as humanly possible.

Yet, despite the haste that Ira was expected to observe, he still found time to pay attention to personal and spiritual matters. As a friend later confessed:

I was told by a lady, well known in religious circles for her life-long zeal, that she gained the first real incentive to a whole-hearted Christian life from Mr. Sankey's own happy manner and from a short walk she had with him when he was being piloted by her from one meeting to another.<sup>73</sup>

While planners for the meetings expected large crowds, they woefully underestimated Brooklynites' desire to either hear God's Word preached or see religious celebrities. Perhaps the most perceptive report observed that if people were coming only to see celebrities, they would not be willing to sit in the vast overflow meetings, where they had no chance of seeing Moody or Sankey on most occasions. Yet they did come consistently by the thousands and filled the overflow rooms, suggesting there was a true desire to be part of an amazing work of God. That evening, a special meeting for men was held at 9:00PM so as not to interfere with local church services.

Monday, the second day of the meetings, was as busy as ever, with multiple services: 8:00AM prayer in Dr. Talmage's Tabernacle, a women's meeting to follow, an afternoon meeting, then the evening service in the Rink, sometimes an additional men's assembly, plus the Inquiry Meeting to conclude the day. Yet Moody still had time to communicate with his benefactors about widespread interests that needed a constant financial infusion. On October 25 he wrote to John Farwell, his chief Chicago backer from the early days:

If you can hold the Association [YMCA] for a few months, I think we can lift [its] debt. I do not want you to say anything, but I think we will make enough from the hymn book, so I think I would let the matter rest as it is. All goes well here. I never needed the help of my friends as much as now. God bless you richly.

D. L. Moody<sup>74</sup>

This letter reveals Moody's feelings of obligation to help the Chicago YMCA, which was attempting to rebuild after the fire—the third YMCA Farwell had helped finance—the first two having burned down! It also shows Moody forecasting income from a new source over which he had influence, but not direct control. Hymn book royalties had been the subject of public interest since the early days in England. That concern caused London banker Hugh M. Matheson to issue a report in the widely circulated *The Christian*



periodical only a few weeks earlier, on October 7, explaining the disposition of such funds.

When Mr. Moody was invited to come to England [in 1873] . . . his expenses and those of Mr. Sankey were guaranteed. But . . . the honoured friends who had addressed to him the invitation had been removed by death before his arrival, and Mr. Moody unexpectedly found himself entirely without resources. As, however, it soon became necessary to print a volume of the solos and other hymns sung at the meetings, an arrangement was made with the publishers to allow him a royalty on the proceeds, as a fund to provide for the expenses of the evangelists and their families. This arrangement continued all through the mission in Scotland and in Ireland, but when Mr. Moody came to London last January, and met the ministers . . . , he voluntarily announced in public that he did not mean to take another shilling of this royalty, as sufficient for the expenses of the whole visit had already been received.<sup>75</sup>

At that point, Matheson was put in charge and collected royalties from Morgan and Scott during the London meetings, spanning basically January 1 to June 1 of 1875. Amounting to £5667, 17s, 6d, Matheson directed the monies toward the completion of Moody's church (North Side Tabernacle), which had burned during the Chicago fire. According to his report, the amount he sent to George Stuart in Philadelphia, who was handling finances for the Chicago church, amounted to \$27,092—the exact amount needed to retire the loan.<sup>76</sup>

There were others, however, who raised red flags regarding the royalty issue. In an article about Philip Phillips (*The Singing Pilgrim*), appearing in the religious periodical *Signs of Our Times*, the writer digressed to address the English collection, *Sacred Songs and Solos*, claiming the royalties for the period from January to July “cannot have been less than twenty thousand pounds.”<sup>77</sup> Then, in a footnote, the author bemoaned,

Although it was repeatedly stated that those profits on Mr. Sankey's hymn-book were to be given to charitable institutions, yet less than six thousand pounds have been so given, and Morgan and Scott have the rest of the profits. We much regret that, although making a great profession of piety, yet in the very midst

of the Revival movement Morgan and Scott sent threatening lawyer's letters to prevent other booksellers publishing [t]hese Revival Hymns.<sup>78</sup>

It's unclear what additional information the writer possessed that caused such a specific accusation, but in general, the scenario presented by Hugh Matheson seems to have been the most widely accepted.

As the meetings continued, Sankey explored the possibility of purely musical effects as he led the singing. This was something normally impossible with congregational song, which, to many, was closer to a duty or "ordinance," as the famous Puritan preacher John Cotton described it.<sup>79</sup> Even later, with the heartfelt singing of the Methodists, congregational song was seen primarily as a way to deliver biblical truth.<sup>80</sup> But with Sankey, it bordered—at times—on becoming a musical experience, albeit under the imprimatur of a religious activity.

Such was the case as Ira led "Hold the Fort!," the song for which he was best known at that time. Following the first stanza, which begins, "Ho! my comrades, see the signal," the spiritual war cry climaxes on the first notes of the chorus, "Hold the fort, for I am coming." Not only is it the poetic climax of the song, the words are voiced on the high note on which the song is built (the tonic of D). As the pitch is a fairly high one for all singers, it demands a good deal of energy to reach it—often requiring more effort than skill. But even for tentative singers, it can be attempted as the words "Hold the fort" are repeated and reinforced on the open vowel of "o," providing a maximum of sound for all involved.

But those characteristics were the genius of its creator, Philip Bliss. At the meetings, Ira took it a step farther as he "dwelt with redoubled force upon the word, 'Hold,' until the vast chorus had caught the spirit and action of the leader."<sup>81</sup> Sankey was evidently stretching the length of the notes on the chorus (actually a clever sort of onomatopoeic treatment),<sup>82</sup> allowing every member of the congregation to roar out with one accord on the song's central message. Then Sankey "produced a remarkable effect by the manner in which he rendered the last line, 'Victory is nigh.'"<sup>83</sup> This was not the congregational singing of the worshipers' little churches back home; it was something almost dangerously thrilling.

In addition to employing the congregation to a thunderous effect, Sankey also demonstrated the nearly enchanted sound of a large group of people singing in hushed tones.

A peculiar rendering of “Come, Holy Spirit” was made at the request of Mr. Sankey, in which each singer modulated his voice to a gentle whisper, with a combined effect stilling and impressive.<sup>84</sup>

On another occasion, the congregation was asked to sing the chorus of “The Sweet By and By.” But just as they assumed the song was concluded, the choir faintly repeated the last line, “we shall meet on that beautiful shore,” creating a remarkable effect.<sup>85</sup> As one worshiper observed:

Hitherto shouting has generally been associated with revival services, and even encouraged as a sign of heartiness and fervor. But no one who hears such soft singing as Mr. Sankey produces can doubt whether, after all, gentleness is not mightier than force.<sup>86</sup>

This preference for a subdued atmosphere over a boisterous one also mirrored Moody’s concern that emotion not get out of hand. On one occasion, he preached a powerful sermon, closing with the story of a prodigal son, a stern father, and a dying mother. “The story was so feelingly told that a spell of suppressed emotion seemed to sway the vast audience.” Moody concluded with “Let us pray,” and while heads were bowed in silence, Sankey softly began the appropriate and oft-used “Come home, prodigal child.” Soon a passionate weeping broke out and a man near the platform became almost uncontrollable. After one stanza, Moody halted Sankey’s solo and asked the congregation to stand and sing “There is a fountain filled with blood,” restoring calm.<sup>87</sup>

While some evangelists would have welcomed a degree of religious frenzy as a sign of the Holy Spirit’s miraculous presence and anointing of their work, neither Moody nor Sankey wanted to generate superficial responses by making an appeal to base emotions. Rather, they desired to open hearts and minds so the Holy Spirit—not manipulative stories—might work an eternal change. But that didn’t mean the evangelists were careless about practical matters. To that end, Moody often asked inquirers—during the final hymn—to move toward the Tabernacle next door where counseling was to take place, so they wouldn’t get swept up in the masses exiting to catch a street car.

In early November, despite the presence of six large furnace heaters, each dispatching two hundred feet of stovepipe intended to warm the rink,<sup>88</sup> temperatures dropped to a high of 42 degrees inside but didn’t cool enthusiasm for attendance. In fact, part of Moody’s problem was in the way he failed

to convince church members to refrain from attending every meeting, leaving little room for the unconverted and unchurched. He clearly recognized one of the revival's greatest failures as its inability to reach the unchurched masses.<sup>89</sup> As one participant castigated:

The Brooklyn revival has been in certain features a sad disappointment to us who have taken an interest and part in it. But it must be confessed that it was the dishonesty, the selfishness of excitement-seeking professed Christians, that made the meetings a partial failure. Mr. Moody tried his best to open the doors into his meetings to those who are not church-goers and to shut it to church members. He begged these latter to stay at home. He plead [*sic*] with them, but they still would come. He then issued tickets, that were offered only to the non-church-goers, but the conscience-hardened professors but would rob their unconverted neighbors of their tickets and lie their way into the Rink.<sup>90</sup>

Puzzling to so many was the extraordinary and sustained interest in the meetings of Moody and Sankey. The massive and enthusiastic crowds could initially be explained if the curious and sensation-seekers turned out only to have their demand for novelty satisfied and then never returned, but those attending the revival meetings braved challenging conditions, night after night and week after week. There was something different going on.

What was all the more confusing was how Moody was succeeding in drawing an audience when others with obviously superior gifts had recently failed. "Preachers had been preaching their heads off nearly, and yet were effecting nothing."<sup>91</sup> This was particularly baffling to those with renowned rhetorical gifts, as were so many of Brooklyn's famed orators.

Moody, on the other hand, was known for his straightforward, business-like approach to a congregation, sounding more like someone addressing a board meeting than a sacred convocation. As one attender observed:

His manner is alert and prompt, but not graceful; his voice is unmusical, and indeed, harsh; his enunciation is very clear, but sometimes too rapid. . . . He gesticulates but little, and his gestures are evidently extremely unstudied. His style of speaking is entirely conversational, and hearing him perhaps a dozen times, I have never detected in him any attempt at eloquence. He is evidently, by his pronunciation, a Yankee, clipping some of the mi-

nor words in his sentences, . . . but he has no “Yankee drawl.” He speaks the language of the people, . . . using only the commonest words; and that he had no early educational advantages is plain from his frequent use of “done” for “did” and other ungrammatical colloquialisms. In short, his appearance is not imposing; his figure is not graceful but that of a farmer or hard-working laborer. . . . His externals, therefore, are all against him.<sup>92</sup>

Yet many of his return-audiences were highly cultivated, and all in attendance paid rapt attention.

Neither was Sankey a highly trained practitioner of his craft, sometimes displaying certain limitations. As one correspondent for *The Christian* observed, “Mr. Sankey’s voice has suffered somewhat from the keen Brooklyn air, and he has been necessitated to exercise unusual care to avoid serious trouble from it. But he has thus far been able to use it daily, and with unvarying power over his hearers.”<sup>93</sup> Another challenge to Ira’s singing came from those seated in the great auditorium. While the masses managed to stay quiet during his instrumental introduction and actual singing, the coughing between the stanzas could be quite unsettling.

Among the frequent hymns Sankey helped to make famous during that Brooklyn revival—their first in the nation—were “The Ninety and Nine,” “The Prodigal Child,” “Almost Persuaded,” “Hold the Fort!,” “Knocking, Knocking, Who Is There?” “I Left It All with Jesus,” “I Have a Saviour,” “Sowing the Seed,” “Nothing but Leaves,” “Go Bury Thy Sorrow,” and “Jesus of Nazareth Passeth By.”<sup>94</sup>

Friday, November 12, was set aside as a special day of prayer and fasting, in which there appeared on the platform a preacher who had only been present in the audience for some time. It was the immensely popular but highly controversial Henry Ward Beecher, who only the year before had managed to escape total ignominy with a hung jury decision in his tawdry adultery trial. During the meetings that day, the famed orator uttered a prayer that produced a “deep impression” on those present.<sup>95</sup>

A week later, before the final meeting, Sankey met with the 250-voice revival choir in the lecture room of the North Reformed Church, opposite the Rink. There, choir members were thanked for their faithfulness in singing night after night. Sankey expressed his joy in working with them, and he was presented “an elegant traveling timepiece, about four inches high, and

beautifully mounted in a case of dark wood.” It was inscribed to “Ira D. Sankey, from his Brooklyn choir, November 19, 1875.” A perceptive choir also presented Ira with a gift for his wife, Frances, a purse “well filled.”<sup>96</sup>

During the evening service, Ira sang, “Shall we meet beyond the river?,” assisted by a double quartet—a rather novel approach for Ira, considering he was generally the star musical attraction of the meetings.<sup>97</sup>

For many skeptics, the Brooklyn meetings had been viewed as a test case for the evangelists. Would the success that surrounded them in Britain pursue them in America? Could they sustain interest night after night and week after week? Would they gain the support of local clergy and the press? Would both the well-healed and the down-trodden respond?

One answer came from the Rev. Edgar Johnson Goodspeed, who judged, “the glorious and successful meetings in Brooklyn, . . . will always be remembered as initiatory of a revival that promises to be widespread, if not national, in its influence and extent.”<sup>98</sup>

Whether a national revival did follow would no doubt depend on the continued success of subsequent campaigns and the ability to inspire its duplication in numerous other locations. ☺



ENDNOTES

1. Words by S. Fillmore Bennett, music by Jos. P. Webster, “Sweet By-and-By” (“There’s a land that is fairer than day”), *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan, and Geo. C. Stebbins, eds. (Cincinnati: John Church Co.; New York: Biglow and Main, 1894), No. 110.
2. [https://www.norwayheritage.com/p\\_ship.asp?sh=spain](https://www.norwayheritage.com/p_ship.asp?sh=spain)
3. The Sankey family also included Ira’s brother Richard Watson Jr., who had joined them earlier, probably while still in London. *The New York Times*, 15 August 1875, 7.
4. Frank S. Reader, *Moody and Sankey: An Authentic Account of Their Lives and Services* (New York: E.J. Hale and Son, 1876), 67. The exact date was 17 October 1872.
5. Reader, *Moody and Sankey*, 77; Reader provided a fascinating but limited explanation of Sankey’s accompanying himself at the melodeon.
6. *The Christian*, 26 August 1875, 12–13, ran a two-page spread recording the financial details of the London meetings under the banner, “Messrs. Moody and Sankey’s London Mission.” This double billing of both men was common in *The Christian* periodical, as well as others.
7. Bruce J. Evenson, *God’s Man for the Gilded Age* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 50. The National Line’s Advertising Card suggests pier #34 was their usual docking locale.
8. *The Chicago Tribune*, 17 August 1875, 2. This was carried in the *New York Herald* a day earlier.
9. *The Chicago Tribune*, 17 August 1875, 2. “Chesterfieldian,” meaning polished and suave. An empty Sankey hatbox is exhibited at the Moody Museum at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.
10. Quoting God’s promise to his prophet in Zechariah 4:6.
11. *The New York Times*, 15 August 1875, 7.
12. *Signs of Our Times*, 15 September 1875, 578.
13. *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*, 25 August 1875, 4.
14. *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*, 25 August 1875, 4.
15. *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*, 25 August 1875, 4.
16. *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*, 25 August 1875, 4.
17. *The Northumberland County Democrat* (Sunberry), 9 September 1875, 2, reported how C.C. Sankey also sang “The Carrier Dove” with a text that initially seems to make no sense for the occasion.

18. *Signs of Our Times*, 15 September 1875, 578.
19. *The Christian*, 16 September 1875, 17.
20. “Sankey on Sunday,” *Pittsburgh Weekly Gazette*, 25 August 1875, 4.
21. “Mount Sewickley Camp Meeting Grounds—Bell Acres Borough,” <https://bellacresborough.org> > history. Train tickets were generally 60 cents.
22. *Pittsburgh Daily Commercial*, 24 August 1875, 4.
23. Sankey apparently traveled to Northfield from Plainfield, OH, where he had been staying with his longtime friend Walter Curtis Tisdell. See *Northern Ohio Journal* (Painsville), 4 September 1875, 3. Tisdell was superintendent of Painsville’s Congregational Church and an officer in the town’s YMCA.
24. *Northern Ohio Journal* (Painsville), 30 September 1875, 6. Sankey recorded the date of the first meeting as September 9 in *My Life*, 71.
25. *New York Herald*, quoted in *The Christian*, 30 September 1875, 6.
26. *The Christian*, 14 October 1875, 7.
27. Sankey, *My Life*, 71. Will R. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1900), 259–60.
28. D.W. Whittle, *Memoirs of P.P. Bliss* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1877), 49.
29. Whittle, *Memoirs*, 50–51.
30. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 263.
31. This odd inclusion was probably a sentimental favorite of the author as his first Sunday School song.
32. Perhaps that is what Will R. Moody was trying to explain in *D.L. Moody* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1930), 200, when stating, “The existence of copyrights owned by different authors and publishers [in England] prevented Moody from using *Sacred Songs and Solos* when he returned to America.” But considering the reality of copyright law—or the lack thereof—his explanation makes little sense on almost any level. The copyrights to all of Bliss’s songs were owned by an American company, John Church of Cincinnati. This was clear later when Daniel Whittle, in *Memoirs*, 147, wrote a biography of Bliss after his death and had to request permission from The John Church Company to include Bliss’s songs in his book—as they owned the copyrights.
33. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 174.
34. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 173. Gamaliel Bradford, *D.L. Moody: A Worker in Souls* (New York: George H. Doran, 1927), 158, stated—with no attribution—“It is even said that it was Moody who persuaded Sankey to give up his royalty on the Hymn Books.”

35. Dodge was actually referring to Moody and Sankey (“them”), but the quote applies equally to Sankey and Bliss.
36. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 174.
37. Bliss’s collection, *Gospel Songs*, was popular enough to require a second printing. The first was sometime in 1874; the second must have been in 1875 (although retaining the 1874 publishing date). A comparison of copies from the different printings reveals a couple changes to No. 59, Elizabeth Clephane’s text for “The Ninety and Nine” to Bliss’s own tune (composed before Sankey improvised his). One change was the addition of “Furnished by Ira D. Sankey,” raising lots of questions including: How did Bliss get the poem—slightly altered—for his 1874 publication when Ira supposedly didn’t discover it until May of that year? Did they both discover it nearly simultaneously—on different continents? It’s possible Bliss had previously found the earliest printing in an 1868 children’s collection. But why did he decide in a later edition to credit Sankey for it when he hadn’t earlier—before they began collaborating? Other questions include: Did the second printing come out before the decision to collaborate with Sankey was made? Did Bliss abandon *Gospel Songs* in his meetings when *Gospel Hymns* was released in 1875 and begin using their joint venture?
38. Advertisement in *Tennessee Baptist* (Memphis), 19 June 1875, 15. It also states that Bliss’s *Gospel Songs* was “Chosen over all others for the State [probably Sunday School] meetings in New York, Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, and others,” reflecting a certain level of popularity.

While the term “gospel music” came to be associated with a genre of African American sacred music in the mid-twentieth century, it originally described music written for Sunday Schools and nineteenth-century revivalism of the Moody-Sankey variety. Black gospel music is often traced to the important Black collection *Gospel Pearls*, but that was not issued until 1921 by the Sunday School Board of the National Baptist Convention.

39. P.P. Bliss, *The Song Tree: A Collection of New Songs, Duets, Trios, and Quartets* (Cincinnati: John Church & Co., 1872). It would hardly be fair to compare Sankey’s earliest efforts with Bliss’s mature output. But one of the earliest Sankey compositional efforts was apparently “For Me! For Me!” This was published as a “musical leaflet” by Morgan and Scott—publishers of the *Sacred Song and Solos* collection—and included in *The Christian* for 28 May 1874. It was in three parts (not usual 4), with a meandering melody and a static harmony with exactly the same rhythms as the melody. There seemed little understanding of harmonic movement or even word setting (where strong words should match strong beats in music). Whereas the text—credited to Sankey—is up to the sentimental expressions of the age, the poet completely

misses a word rhyme in stanza 2. It was published as No. 104 in *Sacred Songs and Solos Nos. 1 and 2 Combined* with an explanation: “Written on the dying words of a young convert (Maggie Lindsay) who lost her life in the railroad catastrophe at Manuel.” It was published in spite of the desperate need of editing—something Bliss could provide for the American collection.

40. Whittle, *Memoirs*, 147.
41. See advertisement for all Bliss’s books on back of 2nd run/edition of *Gospel Songs*. The next several editions of *Gospel Hymns* ran to precisely 112 pages.
42. Ira Sankey, *My Life*, 296–97. The text had been mistakenly attributed to Scottish hymnwriter Horatius Bonar—rather than its author Joseph Scriven—and both *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs* (No. 30), and the next edition, *Gospel Hymns No. 2* (No. 57) repeated that misattribution. As an admirer of Bonar’s hymn writing, Sankey should have known better; perhaps he was just in a hurry. Scriven was finally given credit in *Gospel Hymns No. 5* (No. 167)
43. “What a friend we have in Jesus,” Hymnary.org. The actual number of hymnals was 1570 when accessed on 29 Dec. 2021.
44. *The Christian*, 14 October 1875, 7.
45. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 257, 261.
46. *Signs of Our Times*, 2 November 1875, 690.
47. The Brooklyn committee hadn’t actually raised all the needed finances, and there wasn’t the wide degree of support from area churches Moody had desired.
48. *Signs of Our Times*, 2 November 1875, 690.
49. Debby Applegate, *The Most Famous Man in America: The Biography of Henry Ward Beecher* (New York: Doubleday/Random House, 2006), 200. Brooklyn did not officially merge with Manhattan and others to become part of greater New York City until 1 January 1898.
50. Beecher’s church gradually dropped all doctrinal requirements, eventually jettisoning any faith-related avowal for membership. Evenson, *God’s Man*, 62.
51. *Times Union* (Brooklyn), 15 November 1875, 4.
52. Evensen, *God’s Man*, 60.
53. Her use of the term seemed more related to “woman’s empowerment,” in which women had more of a choice about marriage, child rearing, and physical relationships.
54. Victoria C. Woodhull, *New York World*, 22 May 1871, 5. By 1875, Woodhull espoused Christianity and opposed the Spiritualism she had earlier embraced. She was credited with being the first woman to accomplish a list of

- items, including the first woman to run for President. Her colorful career has inspired an opera, *Mrs. President*, a musical, *Onward Victoria*, a documentary, *America's Victoria*, and multiple posthumous recognitions.
55. Robert Shaplan, "The Beecher-Tilton Affair," *The New Yorker*, 12 June 1954.
  56. *The New Yorker*, 12 June 1954.
  57. *The New Yorker*, 12 June 1954.
  58. Talmage built a large Tabernacle to house his growing church but it burned down in 1872. His 1874 replacement—which was employed during the revival meetings—suffered the same fate in 1889. Convinced there was something "fatal" about the location, the church rebuilt in a different neighborhood. That burned down five years later. Thomas De Witt Talmage, *Wikipedia*.
  59. Letter of Ira D. Sankey to Mrs. Hitchcock, 13 October 1875.
  60. *The British Whig* (Kingston, Ontario, Canada), 22 October 1875, 2. Ira was apparently there without Moody.
  61. The venue was so well known as to never be published with an address; however, it was probably on the corner of Willoughby Ave., next door to the Clermont Armory, between Willoughby and Myrtle.
  62. By 1875, the ice skating craze could no longer fill the Rink, and it was vacant much of the time because of its sheer size. Evensen, *God's Man*, 64.
  63. Evensen, *God's Man*, 64.
  64. *Burlington Weekly Free Press* (Vermont), 5 November 1875, 2.
  65. *The Christian Age*, 17 November 1875, 178. *New York Herald*, 24 October 1875, 6. Evensen, *God's Man*, 65–67, provides a fascinating and highly colorful description (from newspaper accounts) of that first meeting.
  66. *Evansville Courier and Press* (IN), 31 October 1875, 1, quoting the *New York Herald*.
  67. *Evansville Courier and Press* (IN), 31 October 1875, 1, quoting the *New York Herald*.
  68. There was certainly a wide degree of participation in congregational song in American churches. Methodists were known as a singing people, yet "the records of First Church [Amherst, Massachusetts] indicates pastor after pastor tried and failed, even as late as 1920, to convince the congregation to sing along with the hymns." Christopher N. Phillips, *The Hymnal: A Reading History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018), 195, discussing Emily Dickinson's church.
  69. Evensen, *God's Man*, 65.

70. Goodspeed, *A Full History of the Wonderful Career of Moody and Sankey* (Ashland, OH: C.C. Wick & Co., 1877), 231. Robert Boyd, *The Wonderful Career of Moody and Sankey in Great Britain and America* (New York: Henry H. Goodspeed, 1875), 571.
71. Boyd, *Wonderful Career*, 570.
72. *The Christian Age*, 17 November 1875, 178.
73. David Williamson, *Ira D. Sankey: the Story of His Life* (London: S.W. Partridge and Co., 190?), 149.
74. John V. Farwell, *Early Recollections of Dwight L. Moody* (Chicago: Winona Publishing, 1907), 135.
75. *The Christian*, 7 October 1875, 6, submitted by Hugh M. Matheson on 30 September 1875.
76. *The Christian*, 7 October 1875, 6.
77. *Signs of Our Times*, 5 November 1875, 690.
78. *Signs of Our Times*, 5 November 1875, 690.
79. John Cotton, *Singing of Psalms: A Gospel Ordinance* (London: Printed by M.S. for Hannah Allen and John Rothwell, 1647).
80. There's no doubt at various times during the history of congregational song—such as the camp meetings of the Second Great Awakening—participants were carried away with the musical element itself. But within the walls of the church itself, that was rarely the case.
81. Boyd, *Wonderful Career*, 596.
82. An *onomatopoeia* is a word sounding like the thing it describes. “Buzz” makes the sound—somewhat—of buzzing. Elongating the word “hold” is doing what the word describes. It's doubtful that Sankey was thinking about it in those technical terms. He just knew it created a powerful effect.
83. Boyd, *Wonderful Career*, 596.
84. *New York Evangelist*, 28 October 1875, 5.
85. Reader, *Moody and Sankey*, 75.
86. Reader, *Moody and Sankey*, 75.
87. Boyd, *Wonderful Career*, 587.
88. *New York Herald*, 24 October 1875, 6.
89. Boyd, *Wonderful Career*, 573.
90. Goodspeed, *Full History*, 263.



91. Goodspeed, *Full History*, 261–62.
92. Boyd, *Wonderful Career*, 575.
93. *The Christian*, 25 November 1875, 7.
94. *The Christian*, 25 November 1875, 7; Reader, *Moody and Sankey*, 74.
95. *The Christian*, 9 December 1875, 12.
96. *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 20 November 1875, 4.
97. *The Christian*, 9 December 1875, 13. The one major exception seems to have been the Fisk Jubilee Singers, who were often featured prominently in their meetings in Britain.
98. Goodspeed, *Full History*, 308. This E.J. Goodspeed lived 1833–1881 and should not be confused with Chicago theologian E.J. Goodspeed, 1871–1962.



# No. 30. I Love to Tell the Story.

"I will speak of Thy wondrous work."—PSAL. 145: 5.

Miss KATE HANKEY, 1867.

W. G. FISCHER, by per.

1. I love to tell the Sto - ry Of unseen things above, Of Je - sus and His  
2. I love to tell the Story! More wonderful it seems, Than all the golden

Glo - ry, Of Je - sus and His Love! I love to tell the Sto - ry! Be - fan - cies Of all our golden dreams. I love to tell the Sto - ry! It

cause I know it's true; It sat - isfies my longings, As noth - ing else would do. did so much for me! And that is just the rea - son, I tell it now to thee.

CHORUS.

I love to tell the Sto - ry! 'Twill be my theme in glo - ry,

To tell the Old, Old Sto - ry Of Je - sus and His love.

## Chapter 16

### “It’s Harder Getting into the Depot Than Heaven”; or, “There’s a Sucker Born Every Minute”

1875–1876

*I love to tell the Story Of unseen things above,  
Of Jesus and His Glory, Of Jesus and His love!  
I love to tell the Story! Because I know ’tis true;  
It satisfies my longings, As nothing else would do.*

*I love to tell the Story! ’Twill be my theme in glory,  
To tell the Old, Old Story Of Jesus and His love.*

*I love to tell the Story! ’Tis pleasant to repeat  
What seems, each time I tell it, More wonderfully sweet.  
I love to tell the Story; For some have never heard  
The message of salvation From God’s own Holy Word.*

*I love to tell the Story! For those who know it best  
Seem hungering and thirsty To hear it like the rest.  
And when in scenes of glory, I sing the NEW, NEW SONG.  
’Twill be—the OLD, OLD STORY! That I have loved so long.<sup>1</sup>*

PHILADELPHIANS HAD NEVER anticipated anything of such scope and size, for it would certainly gain national recognition and bring visitors from near and far. Both the city of Philadelphia and the state of Pennsylvania were highly supportive in securing the necessary facilities and promoting the event. The U.S. Congress even agreed to approve it—if it didn’t cost them any money. Preparations began on a massive scale, focused on raising financial support. A multitude of organizing committees were formed to address every possible detail, and the city’s spacious Fairmont Park—second only in grandeur to New York’s Central Park—was reserved as the site. Local businesses prepared for an increase in customers as a steady stream of advertising raised consciousness and expectations across the city. Such was

the interest that even President Ulysses S. Grant and many in the Federal Government planned a visit.

Officially named the International Exhibition of Arts, Manufactures, and Products of the Soil and Mine, it was more popularly known as the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, celebrating the hundredth birthday of the United States. It was also the first official World's Fair held in America, running from May 10 to November 10, 1876. The idea had been conceived in far-off Crawfordsville, Indiana, ten years earlier by John L. Campbell, a professor of mathematics and astronomy at little Wabash College. Initially the idea garnered little enthusiasm until Philadelphia's Franklin Institute persuaded the City Council to get behind the plan to host the nation's birthday observance.

When the Moody and Sankey Organizing Committee for Philadelphia revival meetings invited the evangelists to preach in their metropolis, they knew they had to steer clear of competing with the monumental celebration right there in the same city. And that's why they wanted the campaign as early as possible. Unfortunately, they couldn't get plans ready in time for Moody's wish to begin in October, causing them to lose out to the more nimble Brooklyn—but for only four weeks, a fairly short stay for the evangelists in a large metropolis.

Moody and Sankey concluded meetings in Brooklyn—the “City of Churches”—on November 19, 1875, and began in Philly—less than one hundred miles to the south—a few days later on the 21st, lasting nine weeks, with over a million in attendance, spanning 250 meetings, including 17,000 inquirers, and 4,200 who prayed to receive Christ—all with a budget of \$40,000.<sup>2</sup> Rather than emerging from interest among the city's religious leaders, Moody and Sankey owed their presence to the vision of spiritually-minded businessmen.

The evangelists, while still holding meetings in London, received an invitation from Joshua Longstreth Baily, the prominent Quaker dry goods merchant, temperance promoter, philanthropist, and peace advocate; Alexander Whilldin, wool merchant and founder of Sea Grove (near Cape May, NJ), a Presbyterian summer resort; and George H. Stuart, founder of the dynamic Young Men's Christian Association of Philadelphia.

Opened on June 15, 1854, the Philadelphia YMCA was only the second one in the country—the first being Boston in 1851—with the goal of

reaching for Christ, “the many thousands of neglected youth not likely to be brought under any moral influence by any other means.” By 1875, the population of Philadelphia was 817,000, ranking as the nation’s second largest metropolis, with a quarter of its inhabitants being Irish and German immigrants. There was also a substantial influx of young men from the countryside seeking employment. George Stuart was at the center of the effort to evangelize his city, and getting Moody to hold a revival there would go a long way toward accomplishing that goal.

Even before receiving a positive reply from Moody, the committee began searching for a site capable of holding the anticipated crowds. But the only roofed enclosure suitable for accommodating thousands was an abandoned train shed, the Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Depot, terminating at 13th and Market Streets near construction of the new city hall—destined to be the largest in the country. Upon inquiry, the committee was informed that the edifice, a few blocks from Independence Hall, was already under contract to “Pious” John Wanamaker. Wanamaker, who had only opened his first department store fifteen years earlier, was well on his way to becoming the city’s foremost retailer, and was planning on the Depot location for his next expansion. Stuart contacted Wanamaker, who was in France at the



**Pennsylvania Railroad Freight Depot, Philadelphia,**  
in J. Wilbur Chapman, *The Life and Work of Dwight L. Moody* (1900).



time, gleaning ideas from Paris' Bon Marche and Louvre department stores and purchasing stock for his establishment. Upon hearing of the plan to invite Moody to Philadelphia, Wanamaker offered him use of the Depot "for \$1, with repossession on thirty days' notice." "The new store can wait a few months for its opening; the Lord's business first."<sup>3</sup>

Wanamaker and Stuart were old friends, having joined to form the U.S. Christian Commission in November of 1861 to provide spiritual and material aid to Union soldiers. By then, Stuart had long recognized Wanamaker's unique gifts, having hired the nineteen-year-old clothing store clerk as the Philadelphia YMCA's chapter secretary at a \$1000 annual salary to stimulate interest in the organization. His tenure coincided with the nationwide 1857 revival movement known as the Prayer Revival or Businessman's Revival, which was sweeping the country with overflow crowds of professional people turning out during their lunch hours across the country to pray in local churches.

After one year, Wanamaker had expanded the Y's membership by two thousand men, partly by offering noontime meetings—filled with a dynamic but business-like mix of fellowship, prayer, and praise—to clerks and merchants. By March of 1858, Wanamaker couldn't find space large enough to hold the three-thousand-plus men wanting to gather for noontime prayer.

Wanamaker was no stranger to D.L. Moody, whom he had recognized as an energetic worker with his involvement in the Christian Commission during the Civil War. Then, after the conflict, he had hosted Moody in his home as the young Chicagoan did some preaching in Philadelphia's Central Presbyterian Church. By 1866, Wanamaker had already opened his own store and was finding success with his novel approaches to advertising, merchandising, and employment. In 1876, he combined his friendship with his growing financial position to back Moody and Sankey as they considered bringing revival to Philadelphia.<sup>4</sup>

Once the Depot was secured for meetings, well-known architect Addison Hutton redesigned the building for free, including three Inquiry Rooms and a vestibule that surrounded three sides of the mammoth edifice, encompassing an entire city block. Two hundred workmen were tasked with ripping up the old railroad tracks where teams of mules had formerly hauled freight cars laden with merchandise. Laborers began installing a board floor, pitched so attendees could see the stage, which would hold a five-hundred-voice choir and hundreds of dignitaries. A thousand gas jets provided illu-

mination, while acoustical experts constructed a wooden shell they hoped would address the nagging problem of people seated far from the stage. George Stuart ordered 8,900 chairs—at twenty-eight cents each—for the main floor and 1,300 for the massive platform, but Wanamaker convinced him to order four more for each area, totaling 8,904 and 1,304, figures the savvy promoter believed would capture the attention of the press more than a generic statistic: “Tell the exact number and people will believe; round numbers, sound as though you are merely guessing.”<sup>5</sup> This unprecedented scale of preparations became a major news event in itself, providing the revival with lots of free publicity.

The press was certainly one of the keys to capturing public attention, and most of the city’s newspapers were ready to promote a good story—especially of this size—when they saw it. In fact, it seemed as though many of the papers relished competition with each other to cover the meetings in the greatest detail. These included the *Public Ledger*, *Philadelphia Times*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Evening Bulletin*, *Daily Press*, *Evening Telegraph*, and *Public Record*. They also benefitted from the revival committee’s \$30,000 advertising budget, with much of it going to purchase ads in these papers.

Conversely, the *Catholic World* called Moody “The Reverend Eliphalet Notext” and the *North American and U.S. Gazette*—the oldest daily paper in the country—questioned the need to convert the better classes of Philadelphia and suggested he focus on “saving the souls of those poor wretches” in the western Pennsylvania coal fields. *The Sunday Dispatch* called Moody a “loud-mouth braggart” who sold religion like “cheap patent medicine.”<sup>6</sup> Such disparaging voices were in the minority, however.

Thomas Kirby Cree, a veteran worker of numerous YMCAs—and the western Pennsylvanian who had encouraged Ira to attend that Providential meeting in Indianapolis where he met Moody—was appointed secretary of the arrangements committee. He was the practical point-man to make things happen.

From his office flowed a steady stream of circulars and printed instructions. These bulletins defined the duties of the ushers and the choir, provided information to ministers about seats available to them on the platform, solicited money from evangelical groups throughout the city, and pleaded with out-of-town newspapers to advertise the revival in their columns more often.<sup>7</sup>

McCree later estimated that over 50,000 circulars were distributed each week, with 162,000 being disseminated on one Saturday alone. These included a request for area churches to provide six hundred choir members—many eventually coming from Wanamaker’s Bethany Bible Study. Three hundred ushers—organized into seven categories and able to communicate with each other and the stage through “speaking tubes”—were also recruited with the blue-badge level coming from Wanamaker’s store.<sup>8</sup> One hundred eighty policemen provided security, which included a telegraph to headquarters.

Preparations were not limited to highly organized committees, however, as one of Moody’s chief requirements for holding revival services was for widespread support from the churches to be central, realizing how publicity could stir interest from the curious, but sustained support from the churches was necessary for an extended campaign. Well before the evangelists arrived, this meant supporting churches would hold weekly prayer meetings focused on revival, slowly adding other services to their schedule. A city-wide day of “fasting and prayer” helped to concentrate and intensify the focus, while sermons from countless pulpits raised the expectation of God doing a special work. Of course, those selected as a choir member, an usher, or a counselor in the Inquiry Room created an additional level of anticipation.

It was still dark, and rain fell in torrents for an hour as a crowd gathered for the opening meeting on a Sunday morning, November 21. Intended for Christian workers, doors parted at 7:00AM for the 8:00 service. Among the patient throng was Evangeline Trenifidi, who imaginatively recalled:

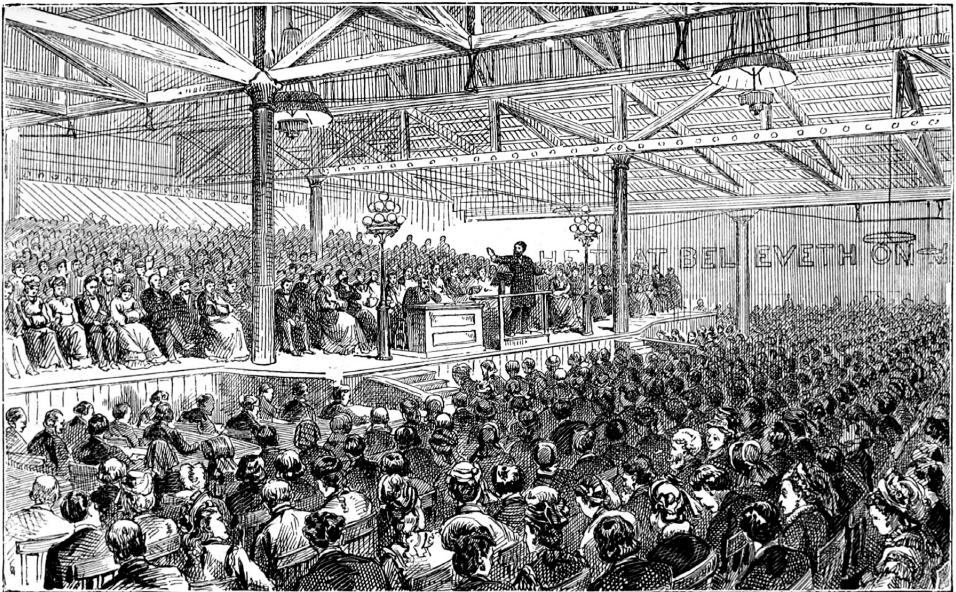
The building outside presents a striking resemblance to the traditional Noah’s Ark. So much so that on the first morning of these services, as the rains descended and the floods came and the winds blew in such a way as to astonish Philadelphia, two little frightened doves followed the dripping congregation into the building, alighting on a convenient rafter where they plumed their wet feathers and eyed the gathering multitude with a pert and saucy inquisitiveness, comical to behold. One could easily realize the scene as the ark floated out upon the swelling waters.<sup>9</sup>

The hall quickly filled with waterlogged worshipers, clutching Bibles, hymn books, and dripping umbrellas. Doors closed promptly—and permanently to all—when the service began, Moody having learned that late-

comers disturbed the meetings. Ten doors, one manned by the police chief himself, admitted a crowd of 10,960,<sup>10</sup> many transported by special street cars with signs proclaiming, “Moody and Sankey Meetings.”<sup>11</sup> Besides the opening day, which was usually reserved for Christian workers, the entire first week was aimed more at the faithful than the faithless. But the order of meetings remained essentially the same, combining a mixture of congregational song—using the new American collection, *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs*—prayer featuring local ministers, solos by Ira, and preaching by Moody. Although the exact order of items differed from service to service, with Moody stage-directing the familiar components, there was a dynamic balance between the routine and the spontaneous.

During the week, morning prayer began at 8:00AM, initially meeting in Chambers Presbyterian Church but quickly transferring to the Depot to accommodate the crowds. Then a women’s assembly gathered at a nearby church. These seemed less successful to one visitor who complained of long prayers and listless singing, with “not more than one in twenty sisters taking part in services of song.”<sup>12</sup> This criticism hardly seemed like one where either Moody or Sankey would have been present.

The evening service at 7:30PM in the Depot was always filled to capacity while hundreds, if not sometimes thousands, were steered to nearby



**Moody Preaching in the Depot**, in E.J. Goodspeed,  
*A Full History of the Wonderful Career of Moody and Sankey* (1876).

churches manned by Moody's assistants from local congregations. Frustration from those not gaining entrance was always a delicate matter of crowd control—hence the presence of uniformed police—with one embittered seeker lamenting that “It's harder getting into the Depot than heaven.”<sup>13</sup> After the service, John Wanamaker ran a men's meeting at Arch Street Methodist Church, sometimes lasting until midnight, but posting good attendance and notable results. During that time, both evangelists were busy providing spiritual counsel for the Inquiry Rooms in the Depot.

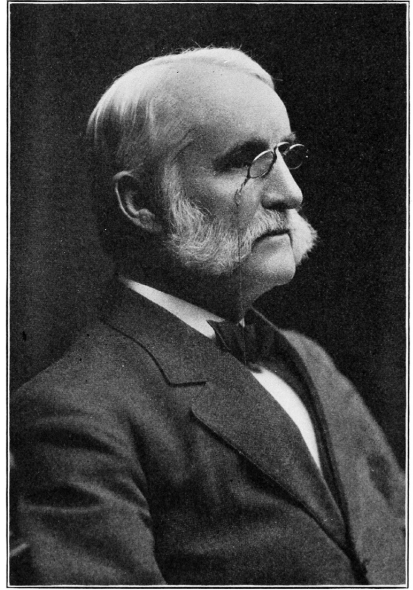
Despite a daunting schedule, Sankey kept up correspondence with many in England. Writing to friends at *The Christian*—which had done so much to advance the revivals from the very first days—Sankey reported, “You will be glad to know that the interest in the work in Brooklyn and Philadelphia is quite equal to that shown in Liverpool and London. I do not think I ever saw so many people in the streets trying to get into our meetings as I saw yesterday.” With such enthusiasm in the meetings, Sankey continued his celebrity status, being waylaid by local newspapers like the *Evening Herald*, eager for any scoop that could help sell more copies.<sup>14</sup>

It's uncertain whether Ira had ever met William Gustavus Fischer before Philadelphia, but he was certainly aware of his music, having included five of his tunes in the British collection, *Sacred Songs and Solos*. In fact, after P.P. Bliss and Sankey, more of Fischer's tunes appeared in the collection than any other composer. And now Fischer was directing the 500-voice choir, which crowded part of the huge stage in the Depot. Professor Fischer, as he was called, because of his earlier employment as a music teacher at Girard College, was presently involved in a piano business he shared with Jay Edgar Gould. He would soon gain attention for conducting large choruses like those at the Methodist camp ground in Ocean Grove, New Jersey, and the Welsh choral “Eisteddfod” festival.<sup>15</sup>

He had already become well known, particularly for his melody to Kate Hankey's hymn, “I love to tell the story.” It's possible the song's popularity stemmed from Fischer's creation of the chorus—both text and tune—which optimistically summarized the stanzas and provided a contagious melody that lodged in the memory. First published in 1869, it had quickly been issued in sheet music form, reflecting its widespread acclaim. Along with his other tunes and popular hymns, Fischer was becoming recognized as something of a leader in this new direction of sacred music that would be called gospel hymnody. And central to that new type of music—at least for adults—was the infectious major-key refrain or chorus.<sup>16</sup>



Although Fischer—who sported large, mutton-chop sideburns like Sankey—was something of a local celebrity, only three of his tunes (for “God loved the world of sinners lost,” usually titled “Wondrous Love”; “I love to tell the story”; and “I am coming to the cross”) made it into the American version of *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs*, which was being used in the meetings.<sup>17</sup> That was because Sankey and Bliss were relying on a larger proportion of their own songs to fill the latest songbook. Nevertheless, Fischer’s well-trained revival choir made an important contribution to the meetings in such a cavernous space, often enhancing Sankey’s solos on titles such as “Sowing the seed by the daylight fair” in which the final stanza, “Sowing the seed with an aching heart,” was dramatically echoed in a whisper by the choir.<sup>18</sup>



W.G. Fischer, in J.H. Hall, *Biography of Gospel Song and Hymn Writers* (1914)

Attendance remained strong throughout the meetings with surrounding communities finding themselves in something of a public contest to send the most visitors. Tickets on special trains also assured riders a reserved seat in the Depot. Newspapers published the figures and egged on the “contenders” with Lancaster sending 1000 attendees; Harrisburg, 850; Wilmington, 700; Trenton, 600; and West Chester, 300.<sup>19</sup>

Part of the attraction to the meetings stemmed from which famous people might be seated on the vast stage on any given evening. It was not unusual to see the most revered ministers from the city or its environs, and it was certainly expected for famous businessmen and high-profile Christian workers like George H. Stuart and John Wanamaker to occupy their nightly perch.

It was, in fact, Wanamaker who received a note from a justice of the Supreme Court requesting that members could attend a service without having to “mingle with the throng that waited in the streets.” Whether Wanamaker was being serious or sarcastic, he responded, “I would be obliged to place the justices under arrest at the corner of Thirteenth and Chestnut streets, where a band of police officers would conduct them to the platform.”<sup>20</sup>



Yet nothing compared to the array of dignitaries concentrated behind the evangelist on Sunday evening, December 19. For no less than President Ulysses S. Grant, members of the Cabinet, Judges of the Supreme Court, Governors of Pennsylvania and other states, several distinguished senators and members of the House, as well as the famous historian George Bancroft were present.<sup>21</sup> Their purpose in town was an inspection tour of the Centennial preparations scheduled for May, but Grant responded to an invitation from his close friend, George Childs, with whom he was staying to visit the famed revival meetings.<sup>22</sup>

Their appearance on the stage caused no little stir from the congregation, eliciting some applause. Unfortunately, Moody was hoarse that evening, resulting from a cold that had been aggravated by preaching earlier in the day, plus time spent counseling spiritual seekers. But as he struggled to preach the Gospel, his voice strengthened and he continued with “wonted earnestness . . . [and] his usual rapidity.” Governor John Hartranft was particularly impressed with his public speaking skills, while the Methodist President Grant singled out Ira’s singing for special attention.<sup>23</sup>

As much publicity as this esteemed gathering brought to the meetings, most of those assembled echoed the larger spiritual import of the evening. As Dr. C.D. Cooper explained:

Probably no man has ever addressed a more distinguished congregation in this city than that to which Mr. Moody preached last night. While we are asking blessings for others, do not let us forget to pray that the words spoken in the ears of the President, his Cabinet, the Judges of the Supreme Court, and many members of the Congress . . . might prove to each one of them words of salvation. What an influence would go out through the distant parts of our beloved land if truth and righteousness should prevail in the hearts of all who fill important offices at the seat of government.<sup>24</sup>

New Year’s Eve always held a special focus, and this year was no different, with the evangelists holding three watch-night meetings. At eleven, the final service began with two of Charles Wesley’s beloved hymns, “O for a thousand tongues to sing” and “A charge to keep I have.” These were sung with Sankey standing beside his organ while Fischer played it, “beating time by gently clapping his hands.”<sup>25</sup> Ira sang his famous “The Ninety and Nine,”

reminding the congregation that it would be the last time they would hear it “in this old year.” At a quarter till the chiming of 1876, and following Moody’s sermon on “Decision,” Ira broke the silent prayer with soft strains of “Almost Persuaded,” which he recited in a broken voice—that being the third service of the evening.<sup>26</sup>

Besides experiencing physical exhaustion, sometimes the evangelists revealed their emotional fatigue, such as the prayer service where Moody began:

We have a great deal of trouble with people coming into the inquiry room on outside business. One man pressed past the ushers yesterday and wanted to shake hands with me just because I was born in New England; another wanted to see me because I had once lived in Chicago; others want to present requests for friends; others want to talk on all sorts of subjects, and because I cannot attend to them think I am very rude. Now I don’t want that impression to get abroad, and therefore ask all who desire to talk with me on purely personal or general subjects to try and find some other time for seeing me.<sup>27</sup>

Unfortunately, the evangelists couldn’t always control the results of their fame. Hawkers purveyed statuettes of Moody for two dollars each, and hymn books sold for what the market would bear. And to Moody’s consternation, newspapers printed his sermons verbatim, raising the specter that it would soon seem like he was repeating himself and running out of ideas, especially with meetings in close proximity such as Brooklyn, Philadelphia, and soon, New York City. In contrast to the written word, it seemed like the greater the coverage of music, the more popular it became and the more demand resulted.

After eight weeks and 250 services, addressing over a million attendees (1,031,000 according to the *Public Ledger*<sup>28</sup>), meetings closed on January 16, 1876. Although no collections had been taken during the services, a thank-offering amounting to \$127,000 was received at the conclusion,<sup>29</sup> the vast amount, no doubt, coming from the revivalists’ wealthy benefactors. Most of it was directed towards completing the building of a new Philadelphia YMCA before the Centennial celebrations opened.

This was followed three days later by a Christian Convention for religious workers, which sought to translate the supernatural events of the

revival into the humdrum of everyday church life. While the meetings addressed a wide variety of spiritual and practical issues such as “How should the music be conducted in the Lord’s work,” Sankey reminded his listeners, “Sometimes a grasp of the hand from a man with a smiling, sunny face will do more than long prayers.”<sup>30</sup>

By now, Sankey had sung for thousands of meetings and counseled hundreds of souls in countless cities. He had also heard all of Moody’s sermons enough times that he could preach them himself. Yet it never seemed to become dull or routine. In fact, during the Philadelphia meetings, he sought to develop a stronger biblical foundation as he counseled those in the Inquiry Room, and he wrote to Moody, requesting a list of Bible verses suitable for answering various concerns. Moody typically farmed out much of this correspondence to his wife, Emma, who mislaid Sankey’s missive during the busy Christmas season and didn’t discover it until the new year—when she wrote him a fairly extensive reply, addressing his queries. “I have written in haste but hope you will be able to make them out. Hoping you may have the happiness of seeing many brought into the fold.”<sup>31</sup>

To further questions at the Convention, Moody’s main answer to “how to make church services more effective” was, “make them interesting.”<sup>32</sup> Moody also urgently reminded his hearers how royalties from the revival hymn books did not go to either him or Sankey but were controlled by three trustees: William Dodge of New York, George Stuart of Philadelphia, and John Farwell of Chicago.

Presbyterians did a particularly thorough job of trying to gauge the results of the meetings on their churches. The Synod of Philadelphia determined that the ninety-nine churches supporting the revival had received an average of fifty new members, making it the best year for memberships on record. And they declared the revival year of 1875–1876 to have been “the greatest in the history of the Synod of Philadelphia.”<sup>33</sup>

Although Moody didn’t keep numbers, those who did recorded:<sup>34</sup>

|    |                         |            |         |
|----|-------------------------|------------|---------|
| 24 | Sunday meetings         | attendance | 224,000 |
| 44 | Weekly evening meetings |            | 440,000 |
| 52 | Noonday meetings        |            | 208,000 |
| 8  | Bible readings          |            | 48,000  |
| 46 | Young Men’s meetings    |            | 46,000  |
| 24 | Young Women’s meetings  |            | 12,000  |

|    |                                    |           |
|----|------------------------------------|-----------|
| 20 | Men and Women's afternoon meetings | 20,000    |
| 4  | Christian Convention meetings      | 30,000    |
| 18 | Meetings for Boys                  | 1,000     |
| 20 | Meetings for the Intemperate       | 5,000     |
|    | Various other meetings             | 20,000    |
|    | Making a total of                  | 1,054,000 |

At the close of the Christian Convention, John Wanamaker, owner of the Depot, immediately began transforming the quasi-sacred site into a temple of earthly commerce. The first step was a massive auction, selling off every imaginable stick of furnishings to help defray revival expenses. The advertisement read:

*Sale at Depot, Thirteenth & Market Sts.  
M. Thomas & Sons, Auctioneers,  
Catalogue of  
PARTITIONS, FLOORINGS,  
Large and Small Platforms, Office Furniture,  
Lately Used By  
Messrs. MOODY & SANKEY, at their Meetings,  
SATURDAY MORNING, FEB'Y 5, 1876,  
At 10 O'Clock*

Items from “Mr. Moody’s Room” included “6 Walnut Cane-seat Chairs” (going for \$55 each), a “Set Stone China Toilet Ware, with Slop Jar”; from the main building, a “Flat-top Cook Stove and Pipe,” an “Engineer’s Gong,” “Mr. Moody’s Bible Rest, covered with Plush,” an “Oak Cane-seat Chair, used by Mr. Sankey” (going for \$55), “Mr. Sankey’s Organ Platform,” “Ingrain Carpet on Mr. Sankey’s Platform,” “11,000 Windsor Chairs—To be sold in lots to suit purchasers;” a “Scrub Brush” and “Dustpan,” a “Tea Kettle” and “Milk Boiler;” “74 yards of Cocoa Matting—Aisle 6,” “72,000 feet White Pine, 1 inch thick;” and from the ticket office, one “Hatchet and Hammer.”<sup>35</sup>

As for the exterior, Wanamaker retained the footprint of the massive building but squared up the front and built double stories at the entrances, mirroring the grand style of the forth-coming Centennial buildings. Festive flags flew from pagoda-like towers. The former locus of God’s heavenly Kingdom quickly transformed into a conspicuous symbol of worldly mammon, anticipating Centennial festivities—beginning on July 4—just three miles away.<sup>36</sup>

While Philadelphia ramped up plans for a national jubilee, Moody and his family—who had been staying with the Wanamakers—traveled to Florida for a rest. Sankey—who had lodged with John F. Keene<sup>37</sup>—returned to New Castle, where his wife and children had moved back into their home, next door to his mother and father. Both of their properties bounded Greenwood Cemetery to the south, where some of his siblings already lay.

These included nine-year-old brother, Edwin; twenty-five-year-old sister, Theresa May; twenty-seven-year-old sister, Rosanna, whose daughter Eva had lived with Ira and Fanny when they purchased their first home; and twenty-four-year-old sister, Leathy Jane, who had died less than six months after Sankey had gone to England in 1873. There were deep roots here—where his mother and father would also be laid to rest.

In Europe, when a person died, they were usually buried in the family grave plot in the church yard in the community where they had lived and labored their entire life. But in America, the idea of commercial cemeteries where one paid for a plot of ground became popular. In New Castle, the major one was located right next to Sankey's home. But like many a privately or corporately run enterprise, it had suffered both management and financial ups and downs since its founding by Ira's enterprising uncle, Ezekiel Sankey. David Sankey later played a major role in its ownership and governance, but he had just sold his interest about six months earlier,<sup>38</sup> and Ira had concerns about the plot—almost visible from his window—where he and his family would someday be buried.



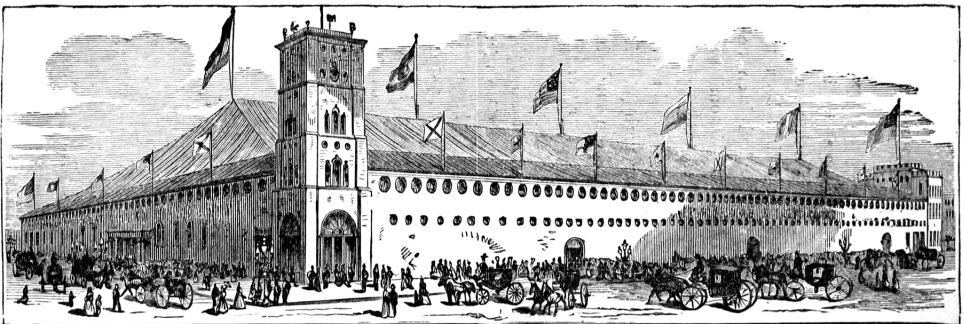
WHILE THE APHORISM “There's a sucker born every minute” has been attributed to the man known as “Mr. Humbug”—Phineas Taylor (P.T.) Barnum—there is no record of him actually having said it, yet his notoriety among purveyors of extravagance and flim-flam was legendary.<sup>39</sup> If that epithet had been in vogue at the time, Moody's and Sankey's most implacable foes would also have applied it to them, especially as they held their next series of revival meetings in the very building Barnum had baptized as his Monster Classical and Geological Hippodrome, or just plain “Roman Hippodrome” on Madison Avenue, between 26th and 27th Streets in New York City.<sup>40</sup>

In a move that possibly inspired John Wanamaker to purchase the Pennsylvania Railroad Depot in Philadelphia, Barnum had leased Cornelius Vanderbilt's abandoned New York and Harlem Railroad passenger de-

pot and freight warehouse in 1871, the city council having recently banished trains from its central business district, cutting off access to the depot. By 1874 he had erected a twenty-eight-foot-high walled complex spanning 425 feet by 200 feet. Inside, on a second level, was an oval ring for performances, measuring 270 feet by 84 feet, surrounded by spectators perched on wooden benches. A lower level contained a giant aquarium, museum, and menagerie. In case of inclement weather, a canvas canopy could be drawn over the open-air arena. Perhaps somewhat tellingly, advertisements attempted to assure potential customers that, despite two of Barnum's previous locations having burned down in a spectacular manner, the doors of this edifice were wide enough to accommodate "two fire engines abreast."

On April 24, 1874, his Hippodrome opened with a sensational pageant called the Congress of Nations. The procession was led by a depiction of Queen Victoria in her royal carriage, surrounded by an escort of "Life Guards, Grenadiers, Highlanders, and knights in full armor." Actors portraying the rulers of Prussia, Russian, Egypt, and China—seated on a Dragon-like wagon—followed. No less than the "Pope" in a chariot was accompanied by eight Cardinals and appropriate Bishops. *The New York Times* reported, "This magnificent display of pageantry preceded horse and chariot races, gymnastic performances, [and] an elephant trot."<sup>41</sup>

Twelve thousand curious customers bought tickets (thirty cents for adults; fifteen cents for children) for that first performance, with countless others to follow. Yet, before the age of mass tourism, there were only so many patrons Barnum could lure into his extravaganzas. He did discover, however, a seemingly bottomless pit of mesmerized masses as he toured the country with a large contingent of his show, first by circus wagons and later by railcar. As the touring produced a better income stream, he leased his Ro-



Hippodrome, New York City, in Elias Nason, *The Lives of Dwight Moody and Ira Sankey* (1877).



man Hippodrome to a famous bandleader, Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore—who penned “When Johnny Comes Marching Home” and would direct celebrations to dedicate the Statue of Liberty—now leading a popular group of his own. Gilmore filled the arena with a conglomeration of “monster” concerts, beauty pageants, the first of what would become the Westminster Dog Show, and religious meetings, including those hosting the third series of meetings by Moody and Sankey since returning from Europe as celebrities.

New York’s influential William Dodge, the wealthy copper magnate, headed up the revival committee, which rented the Hippodrome for \$1,300 a week after investing \$15,000 to equip a place fit for preaching. The upper arena was subdivided into three areas: one end provided facilities for an audience of seven thousand to hear Moody preach, while the other end encompassed seating for four thousand as an overflow area, with a space between the two for offices and the Inquiry Room. It’s possible a single, large area holding twelve thousand people could have been created, but Moody had apparently learned his lesson in terms of the limits to how many people could actually hear his voice in an age before amplification. It’s uncertain whether a heating system Barnum had installed to warm patrons during the New York winters was still in operation. It had boasted the ability to keep the audience at “the agreeable height of seventy degrees.”<sup>42</sup> One clergyman recorded his impression of the converted facilities:

[T]he location of our Tabernacle is in the very centre of the city, accessible from every direction by all classes. On one side of it lie the homes of wealth, the avenues of fashion, and the great hotels, and on the other the masses of the middle class, and a little beyond, the crowded abodes of the poor and the dens of wretchedness and vice. It was the scene of Barnum’s great pageant. . . . Frequently [during services] the roar of the wild beasts [from their cages on the lower level] would be heard mingling with the singing and prayers.<sup>43</sup>

It’s rather ironic how the very types of entertainment that made the place popular were the kinds of secular amusement Moody’s supporting pastors would have warned their parishioners to studiously avoid. This would have included dancing, gambling, horse racing, boxing, theater attendance, and anything competing with the Lord’s Day. But now, with the presence of Moody and Sankey, the Hippodrome had become somewhat sanctified—set

apart to God—and commended as a destination dedicated to advance God's Kingdom! There must have been quite a few souls—among those pious Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians who passed through the doors of Barnum's garish monument to excess—who nourished a secret thrill as they entered—with God's blessing, no less—those previously forbidden portals leading to the dens of iniquity!

And iniquity was not far from the minds of most New Yorkers—certainly for anyone who followed the news. For on the very day Moody came to check acoustics in the Hippodrome, “Boss” Tweed, the infamous leader of the corrupt Democratic political machine that bestowed patronage on those who voted for him, had just bribed his way out of a twelve-year prison sentence and was rumored on his way out of the country. President Grant's administration was deeply mired in scandal, while Congress had just voted itself retroactive pay increases, popularly derided as the “Salary Grab Act.”<sup>44</sup>

But all of that paled in comparison to the constant drumbeat of coverage in the New York and national press over the salacious Beecher-Tilton adultery trial, which had dominated the papers, often printing every word of the lengthy trial proceedings. From January through July of 1875, it was impossible to avoid news about America's most famous preacher—Henry Ward Beecher, from just across the river in Brooklyn. Just six months later, as the revival services were about to begin and the whole fiasco had begun to die down, the Plymouth Congregational Church stirred the pot again by holding a final public conclave to exonerate Beecher. Both private and public iniquity seemed to be winning the day all round.

In addition, the country was in the grip of its third year of economic depression, which rocked the finances of tycoons like the aged Cornelius Vanderbilt, who not only supported Moody but also entertained a bizarre relationship with the famed feminist, free-love promoter, and clairvoyant, Victoria Woodhull, whose earlier letter to the press had brought the whole Beecher scandal into the open. Financial titans like Jay Gould, Daniel Drew, “Diamond” Jim Fisk, and Jay Cooke all suffered crippling losses, triggering countless New York collapses: 25,000 businesses, 5,000 commercial houses, and 28 life insurance companies—resulting in bread lines, soup kitchens, and mass protests.<sup>45</sup>

To most, the widespread political corruption and prolonged economic panic cried out for revival.

As usual, most newspapers puffed the revival, reporting in detail every meeting from special desks constructed for the journalists just below the stage. They then published headlines expressing amazement at the huge crowds, drawing more curious souls to the services, in what became a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy.

While local churches toiled to prepare their members for God's special blessings, daily noon prayer meetings, such as had characterized the 1857 Prayer Revival, enjoyed strong attendance at Lyric Hall and Fulton Street, uptown. In preparation for the main meetings, a committee of business leaders quietly labored behind the scenes to ensure all details were being addressed. Among those assembled to minister to the expected crowds were 500 ushers, 1200 choir members, a multitude of Inquiry Room workers, plus 150 policemen, for services beginning Monday, February 7, 1876, at 8:00PM.

The first to arrive were choir members, who had tickets to enter on the south side of the building. Once inside, they assembled on the left of the commodious stage. On the opposite side were a contingent of five hundred complimentary and clergy ticket holders, who had been admitted through the entrance on 27th Street. When the seats on the stage were filled, the remainder of special guests were ushered to the chairs on the main floor in front of the pulpit. Like the crowds to follow, all had navigated a gauntlet of peddlers purveying religious merchandise, including songbooks, supposed biographies of the two evangelists, as well as their imagined likenesses.<sup>46</sup>

Just before 7:30PM, the head usher rang his bell ten times, signaling those manning the doors that the hour was near. Then came another series of bells and the three great doors opened, allowing an orderly but determined stream of humanity to enter the hall. They were met by a phalanx of wand-wielding ushers who shepherded the multitudes of faithful and curious down the aisles to their seats. By 7:55, the hall was filled, the doors were shut, and police dispersed those unable to access either the main hall or the overflow area. While the crowds were well-behaved, there was still sufficient excitement to cause twenty women to faint. As it was not considered unusual for the delicate sex to succumb to overstimulation in crowds, a small army of assistants was at the ready to support Dr. J. Varnum Mott, who was prepared for such feminine incapacity.<sup>47</sup>

At 7:45, the great choir, under the direction of L.P. Thatcher from Boston, began singing familiar hymns from the songbook. Then, a little after

8:00PM, the evangelists came through a little unpainted door at the rear of the stage.

First came Moody, “a sturdy figure in a tightly fitting frock coat, a well-shaped head, made to look smaller than its actual size . . . a much-bearded face, the black hair not only hanging down over his chest, but growing thickly up each cheek . . . keen eyes . . . and a heavy black moustache hiding the mouth.”<sup>48</sup> Sankey followed, “taller, and with features more delicately chiseled, long, aquiline nose, chin sharp-cut and projecting, luxurious whiskers, and slight moustache, which failed to hide his white, even teeth.”<sup>49</sup> He clutched a “Bagster Bible,”<sup>50</sup> and proceeded to his melodeon while Moody sat in his chair near the pulpit with face in hands. Then the preacher rose and requested, “Let us bow our heads in silent prayer.” The silence was deafening until Moody called for all to rise and sing hymn No. 85, “Jesus, lover of my soul.”

While most of the standard hymns sung in the revival services were already familiar to church goers, many of those songs recently penned were, by this point, well known to New York congregants because many had gone across the river to visit the meetings in Brooklyn a year earlier. As the *New York Tribune* observed: “Their *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs* have been sung in the churches until it is a very frequent occurrence to meet school children singing ‘Hold the Fort,’ or ‘The Ninety and Nine.’”<sup>51</sup> These “Sankey Songs” had truly become part of the popular music of the day.

Of course, many had come to see and hear the famous Ira David Sankey. But undoubtedly more than a few went home disappointed that evening, as the vocalist exhibited noticeable hoarseness on the high notes of his trademark, “Hold the Fort!” Fortunately, an enthusiastic congregation was more than ready to assist on the choruses. After a passage from 1 Corinthians was read, Moody asked his vocalist to sing No. 79 in the hymn book, “Sowing the seed by the daylight fair,” then he preached, “For God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty.” Moody was obviously preaching to Christians, encouraging them to take responsibility for bringing revival.

At the point where he read John 3:30, “He must increase, I must decrease,” he launched into a heartfelt plea for those attending the meetings to refrain from buying the merchandise being peddled on the streets. The hymn books were an exception to his prohibition, however, which should be purchased in a bookstore.<sup>52</sup> As William Hoyt Coleman, a writer for the *Christian Union* observed:

Congregational song has received a great impetus. The little “Moody and Sankey” hymn book is crowding out the bulky collections of twelve hundred or fourteen hundred hymns, some of them one-third unsingable and one third padding. Containing only pieces, new and old, that the people can sing, the people have found it out, and are singing them all over the land and beyond the seas in Europe, Asia, and Africa, until five million copies and twenty different translations give some idea of the popularity of this little book. With it goes a new idea—that of singing the Gospel, for many of these pieces are not hymns at all, but simply gospel songs, and they have been the means of converting many souls.<sup>53</sup>

In one respect, the Hippodrome was nothing like the other halls the evangelists had occupied, because it contained its own overflow space. No longer were those who couldn't gain access to the main meeting required to retreat to the nearest church or find a place in some overflow tent, but had simply to walk a short distance to the eastern end of the giant arena where four thousand could hear one of Moody's associates. This novel arrangement was certainly superior to some of the meetings in England where the evangelists were whisked off via a waiting carriage to another location to present a truncated version of the first service.

On this opening night of the revival campaign, the overflow hall also contained a small choir of thirty, which helped lead the singing in the absence of the charismatic Sankey. Drs. Hall, Tyng, and Paxton presided and preached, with Moody making an entrance during the latter's address, interrupting it with subdued applause. While Paxton hastily concluded his remarks, it became obvious that Moody—who had hurried over during the final hymn in the main hall—was in need of a few moments to recover from just preaching to a crowd of seven thousand, and Dr. Hall filled the interval. Finally the evangelist, who all had patiently remained to hear, spoke:

I have already preached in the other room, and I cannot begin preaching twice in the evening. For if I do, it will have to be kept up. We only expect to get acquainted with the people and make a start in the meetings tonight. Mr. Sankey [who had also lately arrived] will sing “Pass me not, oh gentle Saviour,” and then we will close the meeting.<sup>54</sup>

Apparently, Moody didn't realize Sankey was almost at the end of his tether and had been struggling vocally in the earlier service. So when Moody requested his colleague to provide yet one more solo that evening, Ira had little left to give. He relayed to his disappointed listeners that he had caught a cold and had already sung two solos in the other hall. They would need to sing the hymn instead. Soon thereafter—for there was no Inquiry Meeting this first night—Sankey retired in hopes of regaining his voice.

Thus began the revival in the heart of America's largest metropolis, which would run for seventy-four days.

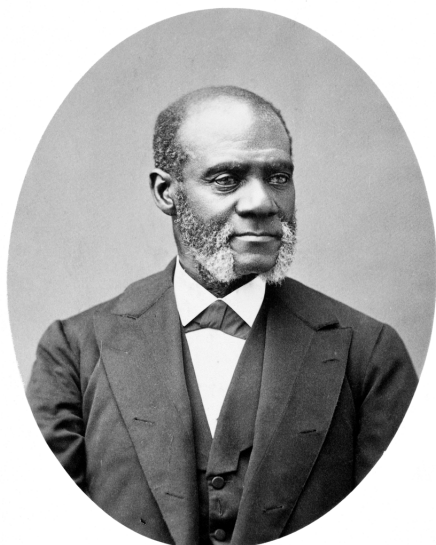
Tuesday was the first full day of meetings and began at 12:05PM in the overflow hall. About two thousand—mostly women—were in attendance. The noon meetings had traditionally been times of prayer, and this seemed no different. Moody took up a lower area near the audience while Sankey occupied the higher stage with his melodeon and the remnants of a small choir. "Sweet hour of prayer" officially opened the service, which included the public reading of previously submitted prayer requests. Moody then requested another hymn and spoke briefly on the spirit and power of prayer.

Another hymn (which had already been sung by the choir), "I need Thee every hour," signaled a time of brief testimonies or words of exhortation from the assembled clergy. But as this was a more informal service with an unplanned order of speakers, Ira often felt it appropriate to share a word of testimony or encouragement. On this occasion, he spoke about the verse "Restore unto me the joy of my salvation," from the passage Moody had read earlier, Psalm 51. He related the story of a clergyman at their London meetings who had finally decided to attend the Inquiry Room, only to find his own son there and to lead him to the Lord. "Let us, instead of waiting for the feeling of joy, go to work in the Lord's vineyard and the joy will come."<sup>55</sup> While Ira's unique abilities were centered in his gifts of music, he was not above taking every opportunity to share the Gospel—God's good news—in music or in word. Sankey was a man who understood and had personally experienced the grace of God, and he was pouring out his life in an effort to share that good news with as many as possible.

Unlike the schedule in London, which had often included an afternoon meeting for Bible reading and comments, the New York revival was initially limited to two daily services, with the main focus on the large evening assembly. The second evening's service was held in a noticeably cold auditorium. As usual, the stage hosted the choir and supporting clergy.



Among these was Henry Highland Garnet, the renowned African American abolitionist, educator, minister, and orator. He was a handsome and dignified gentleman, sporting a clean-shaven chin and large side whiskers similar to Sankey's. Over a decade earlier, on the occasion of Congress passing the Thirteenth Amendment ending slavery, Garnet had delivered a sermon before the House of Representatives, being "the first colored man who has on any occasion spoken in our National Capital."<sup>56</sup> His father had been an African warrior-chief who was captured and sold into slavery in America. But on the ruse of attending a nearby wedding, the family escaped via the Underground Railroad, eventually settling in New York. Henry became a radical abolitionist, praising John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry and calling for total emancipation through armed rebellion, causing moderate leaders like Frederick Douglass and Andrew Lloyd Garrison to break with him.



**Henry Highland Garnet,**  
Smithsonian, National Portrait Gallery

His conspicuous presence on the stage reflected his position as pastor at Shiloh Presbyterian Church in New York City, a former stop on the Underground Railroad. It also seemed to suggest some level of acceptance, or at least tolerance, for him and his radical political views.<sup>57</sup> He also represented a small number of African Americans who frequented the meetings.

The service progressed in its typical business-like manner with a minimal amount of personal communication from the stage. Moody—who appeared to one attendee as an individual whose "quick, soldierly bearing marks every movement"—announced the opening hymn in the tersest manner and "so rapidly that we can scarce catch the words."<sup>58</sup> Moody was also perfunctory in announcing the solos: "Mr. Sankey will sing the 120th hymn, 'Hark the voice of Jesus cried,'" leaving it to Ira to provide a more personal introduction to his selection. One observer explained:

A man of larger build, clear-cut features, and shaven chin; a voice clear, melodious, powerful. Easier and gentler in bearing than Moody, he has enough force and fire in speech and song to hold an audience in perfect quiet; and when he sings alone you hear every word and catch from face and voice the full meaning of the song. Both men impress you as honest and good, hearty and wholesome in body and mind, and thoroughly earnest.<sup>59</sup>

Then, without comment, Moody read from the fifth chapter of Luke. Sankey preceded the sermon with another solo, “Rescue the perishing,” Fanny Crosby’s theologically odd expression<sup>60</sup> of her social work among the poor of New York City, set to the rousing march tune by her best collaborator, businessman William H. Doane.

Moody—who had apparently slowed his rapid-fire delivery from 220 to 180 words per minute<sup>61</sup>—preached on faith, sharing examples from Scripture about those whose minimal faith had brought them to a saving meeting with Jesus. But part way through the sermon, a mysterious banging began on the roof of the Hippodrome, sounding like a workman swinging a hammer—although it was a dark, winter night outside. Continuing intermittently for three or four minutes, Moody smoothly ad libbed that the Jews in Peter’s house “heard a noise above, something like the noise we now hear on the roof and the people all looked up as [we] are looking up here now to find out what the noise was.”<sup>62</sup> Once the quasi-supernatural phenomena ceased, however, the remainder of the service proceeded without additional interruption. There must have been a number in the audience that night who wondered if God himself wasn’t sending some kind of message from above!

Ira was evidently much recovered, as he seemed under no vocal limitations. In fact, while Moody did not attend the overflow session—with only four hundred folks present—Ira made an appearance after the main assembly had concluded, spoke some words of introduction and sang “Scatter seeds of kindness” for an appreciative crowd.

Over the course of the meetings, a large variety of congregational songs were requested, and all of Sankey’s solos were taken from *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs*. In fact, Ira’s solos did not seem to diverge much from what was printed on the page, but their effectiveness came from Sankey’s unique interpretation, sometimes more spoken than sung. One example was the tune Philip Bliss had supplied for the text “Go work in my vineyard, there’s plenty

of work to do,” which reminded one listener of the secular song, “Bonnie Dundee.” While Bliss probably had not used the Scottish folk song as a model for his melody, many of the gospel songs he and others composed had a sense of naturalness and singability, giving them a folk-song quality.<sup>63</sup>

Of course, Ira could always rely on some tried-and-true favorites to make a powerful impression. These included “Jesus of Nazareth Passeth By,” which, by now, he had sung many hundreds of times. Yet he was still able to present it in a way that made a profound spiritual impression upon its hearers. As he concluded the final stanza, which announced, “Jesus of Nazareth has passed by,”

The effect produced by the closing lines was electrical, people fairly jumped in their seats, and a large sigh broke from the congregation as Mr. Sankey, his countenance wrapped in an angelic smile, paused, fixing his eyes on the ceiling, allowed his body to fall gently back into his chair.<sup>64</sup>

These were powerful performances, leaving a lasting impact on those who heard him.

It was thought that the rainy weather, muddy roads, and local church prayer meetings had dampened attendance on Wednesday evening when the overflow room was not needed, but Thursday’s meetings all rebounded in numbers. In addition, special meetings for women and men were added. As the revival progressed, the evening schedule sometimes became rather complex, requiring sophisticated planning and the coordinated efforts of many people. Typical was one evening during the first week. After the closing hymn, it was announced that there would be a special men’s meeting in the overflow hall with a service for boys in a smaller space. The Inquiry Room—between the two halls—would be filled with workers to provide spiritual counsel for those seeking more guidance, and a prayer meeting would follow in the main hall.

After the benediction, the choir reprised the final hymn, “I need Thee every hour,” while a sea of humanity began to churn. Some folks went home; those seeking spiritual counsel and those providing it worked their way to the Inquiry Rooms, while hundreds of men sought to exchange places with those exiting the overflow space. And those staying for the meeting in the main hall began filtering to the front to occupy the seats of those who were leaving—all while the choir sang on.<sup>65</sup>



**Moody in the Hippodrome Inquiry Room**, in E.J. Goodspeed, *A Full History of the Wonderful Career of Moody and Sankey* (1876).

Attendance at the noon prayer service grew so large, it was moved from the overflow location to the main hall on February 17, with one reporter commenting, “the services, however, were much shorter and less stirring than usual, Mr. Moody’s remarks being exceedingly brief.”<sup>66</sup> It was followed by a women’s meeting, which actually decided to move to a smaller location because they couldn’t be heard in the larger hall.<sup>67</sup>

Press coverage certainly helped the meetings. While *The New York Times* faithfully covered the revival with reports on most of the services relegated to pages five or eight, the *New York Tribune* ran lengthy dispatches occupying page one, filling several columns with full accounts of the gatherings. Said one newspaper reporter:

Lawyers, bankers, merchants, some of whom scarcely ever enter a church, are just as much a part of his congregations as are the second-rate and the third-rate boarding-house people.<sup>68</sup>

On February 24, the revival had to compete for space with the latest news about the lingering Beecher-Tilton affair. Although the *Tribune* assigned the scandal to the back page, news of the revival was dwarfed in *The New York Times* by continuing calls from Andover Seminary (support-

ed by Congregational churches such as Beecher's Plymouth Church) for a more thorough investigation, outrage about "leaky delegates" who divulged details of the secret Advisory Council to the press, and volumes of private correspondence from various parties involved in the sordid soap-opera, with its charges and counter-charges providing captivating reading. Often appearing side-by-side with reports from the revival meetings, non-believers and scoffers must have felt a sense of gratification, confusion, or disgust as Christians endured ridicule and embarrassment over their dirty laundry being hung out in a very public display. There seems to be no record of Moody's or Sankey's comments on the subject.

While the two evangelists had learned to be flexible and quickly adapt to unexpected circumstances, Moody was quite adamant on two issues relating to the services. He believed latecomers—whom he felt were simply the curious wandering in off the street—disturbed the service and shouldn't be allowed in after it began. He therefore followed a strict policy of closing and locking the doors when the service commenced, even if it meant seekers were turned away from still-empty seats.

Another area of contention was the issue of fresh air. Because he believed a warm and stuffy environment made listeners drowsy, he often required ushers to open windows during frigid weather. "Fresh air is as important as the sermon. We've got to keep these people awake," Moody claimed when requesting the uppermost windows in the galleries be opened, only to have those blasted by the wintry wind close them—setting off a contest for temperature control.<sup>69</sup> There is no word how Ira, whose voice was certainly affected by his surroundings, felt about Moody's convictions on this point. Of course, he had already braved the most challenging conditions during the cold and damp days of British weather.

Moody was also serious about trying to reach the lost. When he felt as though church members were coming early to the services to ensure they might get seats in the main auditorium, even though it meant less-committed folks couldn't get in, he was very blunt in his requests.

As he looked around a packed auditorium at the beginning of one service, he announced, "Now, won't a thousand of you Christians go into the Fourth Avenue Hall [the overflow assembly] and pray for this meeting and let those outside have your seats?"

Modest response.



“Not half enough. I want a great many more to go out. I see many of you here every night, and if I knew your names I’d call you out.”

Finally there was a noticeable exodus, and the entrance doors were opened to admit others. Then Moody turned toward the dignitaries on the platform, who were enjoying their honored positions and watching the commoners depart.

“Now, some of you go? And will the ushers please open the windows?”<sup>70</sup>

On April 16—Easter Sunday evening—Dom Pedro II, Emperor of Brazil, appeared on stage in seats reserved for pastors and guests. He had lately arrived in New York at the beginning of a nationwide tour, ending at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, where he spoke on Alexander Graham Bell’s new invention—the telephone. Dom Pedro visited many religious sites; in addition to the revival meeting, the Emperor also visited St. Patrick’s Cathedral (Easter Sunday morning), a synagogue, the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, and a joss house or Chinese temple that was a tourist stop in San Francisco’s Chinatown.<sup>71</sup> At the revival service, a friend explained much of what was going on, and the Emperor expressed his pleasure at Sankey’s singing. Moody, who was apparently unaware of the plainly dressed royal seated near him, said he simply assumed Dom Pedro was “some warm-hearted Methodist preacher, just come in from the country.”<sup>72</sup>



**Dom Pedro de Alcântara of Brazil,**  
etched by H.B. Hall (1878), Library of Congress.

Three days later, on Wednesday, April 19, the evangelists held their final day of services<sup>73</sup> in the Hippodrome with a noon prayer meeting, in which Sankey sang, “O to be nothing, nothing,” as a duet with choir director Thatcher. At the afternoon meeting, Moody was still trying to raise the balance of \$250,000 for local Christian ministries. Still somewhat short, he announced to the audience, “Mr Sankey will sing ‘Nothing but Leaves’ and we’ll give the [remaining] \$65,000.”<sup>74</sup>



The evening service opened with two choirs singing “’Tis the promise of God, true salvation to give.” Sankey paired again with choir director Thatcher for a second time that day for a duet on “Shall we meet beyond the river?,” a timely hymn for the final meeting, but a clue that Ira was not in his best voice. However, by the conclusion of the meeting he was able to sing the touching “Farewell friends, we must now bid adieu,” a sentimental text by O. Parker, set to Henry Bishop’s beloved tune for “There’s no place like home.”

*Farewell, faithful friends: we must now bid adieu  
To those joys and those pleasures we tasted with you.  
We labored together, united in heart,  
But now we must close, and soon we must part.  
  
Home, home, sweet, sweet home,  
Prepare us, dear Saviour, for yonder blest home.<sup>75</sup>*

Between that and Moody’s closing remarks, there were few dry eyes in the great arena.

As soon as the closing hymn, “Praise God from whom all blessings flow,” had been solemnly intoned and the crowds begun thinning out, one hundred determined workers from the Twelfth Regiment began removing chairs, tearing down partitions, and preparing the venue for next evening’s regimental drill, dress parade, and promenade concert, among whose guests would be the Empress of Brazil.<sup>76</sup>

Moody and Sankey had labored for ten weeks to great and enthusiastic crowds—one sixth being working class—estimated to total one million souls. While inclement weather occasionally affected attendance, the meetings usually had to contend with overcrowding. At one meeting, the hall filled up so quickly on opening the doors that the service uncharacteristically began fifteen minutes early. The meetings enjoyed widespread support from area churches and generally positive coverage from the press—despite a few articles in the *New York Herald* claiming “sensitively organized people of delicate fibre, have their fragile constitutions overpowered by Moody’s message,” causing them to appear drunk and disorderly to arresting officers!<sup>77</sup> Despite a few journalistic concoctions, countless testimonies of changed lives were shared, and many unbelievers came to a saving knowledge of Christ—with four thousand claiming tickets for the recently converted.

By the beginning of May, it seemed clear to all that God’s special anointing of the evangelists in Britain had followed them to America. But

then, just as Moody had seemed to fine-tune his model for revival on a national scale, he set off in a different direction. ☞



## ENDNOTES

1. Words by Kate Hankey, music by William G. Fischer, "I love to tell the story," *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan, and George C. Stebbins, eds. (Cincinnati: John Church Co.; New York: Biglow and Main, 1894), No. 30.
2. Bruce J. Evensen, "'It's Harder Getting into the Depot than Heaven': Moody, Mass Media and the Philadelphia Revival of 1875–76," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, Vol. 69, No. 2 (Spring 2002), 150. This article is basically reprinted as chapter 4 in Evensen's *God's Man for the Gilded Age* (Oxford: University Press, 2003). Joseph H. Appel, *The Business Biography of John Wanamaker, Founder and Builder* (New York: MacMillan, 1930), 77–78.
3. Appel, *John Wanamaker*, 77.
4. Evensen, *God's Man*, 79–80.
5. Evensen, *God's Man*, 77; Evensen, "Depot," 165–67; Lefferts Augustine Loetscher, "Presbyterianism and Revivals in Philadelphia Since 1875," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (January 1944), 57.
6. Evensen, *God's Man*, 155–56.
7. James F. Findlay Jr., *Dwight L. Moody: American Evangelist, 1837–1899* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 199.
8. Findlay, *Dwight L. Moody*, 204; Evensen, *God's Man*, 83. A letter to the supporting churches—along with a stack of postcards to send out—called for singers to constitute a choir. A "Circular to the Members of Messrs. Moody and Sankey Choir" from its "beloved leader, Professor Fischer" reminded members not to transfer their "Regular Choir ticket to any one," to observe "proper decorum . . . by avoiding all unnecessary conversation and . . . levity" on the platform, to "bow your heads in prayer whenever Mr. Moody requests it" and to "remember that we are not singing to display our proficiency in music . . . but to bring souls to Christ." There was also a detailed, four-page "Rules for the Ushers," which provided instruction about how to deal with seating, disorders, and sickness.
9. Frank S. Reader, *An Authentic Account of Their Lives and Services* (New York: E.J. Hale & Son, 1876), 246. The writer was referring to the dove Noah released after the flood from the ark (Genesis 8:8–12).
10. Appel, *John Wanamaker*, 77.
11. Many came by streetcar, despite the Market Street Bridge, with its main streetcar line to the meetings, burning up. J. Wilbur Chapman, *The Life and Work of Dwight L. Moody* (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1900), 161.

12. E.J. Goodspeed, *A Full Account of Moody and Sankey* (St. John, N.B.: W.E. Erskine, ca. 1876), 308.
13. Evensen, *God's Man*, 73.
14. *The Christian*, 9 December 1875, 13; 30 December 1875, 7.
15. Gould, who composed hymns and was best known for the tune to "Jesus, Saviour, Pilot Me," died in 1875 and Fischer took over the business. The camp ground at Ocean Grove didn't get its first official choir until 1878, so any of Fischer's leadership there would have been after his appearance at the Depot. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* for 25 October 1882, 2, reported that Fischer directed 1800 voices at the Welsh choral festival, "Eisteddfod," in the "time-honored" "March of Men of Harlach" in Centennial Music Hall at the final competition for four choirs of three hundred singers each. It was reportedly sung so well that the audience demanded an encore.
16. The element of the chorus would have already been familiar to almost two generations of Sunday School children whose songs had contained such choruses.
17. Second in popularity to Fischer's "I love to tell the story!" was his 1872 tune for "Whiter than Snow" ("Lord, Jesus I long to be perfectly whole"), appearing in some 230 hymnals and remaining popular for over a century.
18. Goodspeed, *Full Account*, 309.
19. Evensen, *God's Man*, 86.
20. A.W. Williams, *Life and Work of Dwight L. Moody: The Great Evangelist of the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: P.W. Ziegler Co., 1900), 196.
21. Goodspeed, *Full Account*, 333-34, lists over two dozen dignitaries by name and position.
22. Evensen, *God's Man*, 86.
23. Goodspeed, *Full Account*, 333-34.
24. Goodspeed, *Full Account*, 333-34.
25. Goodspeed, *Full Account*, 355.
26. Goodspeed, *Full Account*, 350, 356.
27. Goodspeed, *Full Account*, 324.
28. Loetshcer, "Presbyterianism and Revivals," 63.
29. Chapman, *Life and Work*, 163.
30. *New York Tribune*, 1 March 1876, 2.
31. Letter to Dear Mr. Sankey from Emma C(harlotte) Moody, 10 January 1876.

32. *Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States and British Provinces, Held at Indianapolis, Ind., June, 1870* (New York: Executive Committee, 1870), 107–08. Moody repeated this advice on countless occasions.
33. Loetscher, “Presbyterianism and Revivals,” 66. The author continues, “The honeymoon was soon to end. Statistics show at a glance why enthusiasm for what Moody had done soon waned.” He then traces declining numbers over the next decade, apparently believing the revival’s success could be explained with a simplistic appeal to “statistics.” Moody certainly didn’t believe numbers told the story. Unlike successive revivalists, he didn’t even record them.
34. *Times of Blessing: A Weekly Record Containing Full and Authentic Accounts of the Present Religious Movement*, 17 February 1876, 705.
35. Goodspeed, *Full Account*, 405.
36. Philadelphia and Centennial booster John Wanamaker became chairman of the central finance committee for the Centennial celebration. As Robert Sobel concluded in “John Wanamaker: The Triumph of Content Over Form” in *The Entrepreneurs: Explorations Within the American Business Tradition* (New York: Weybright & Talley, 1974), 74, “Wanamaker succeeded, in part at least, because, more than any of the others, he captured the mood of his period in his life and work. He became famous in the High Victorian age, and Wanamaker was a Victorian to the core.” The same could be said about Ira Sankey.
37. Charles R. Erdman, *D.L. Moody: His Message for Today* (New York: Fleming Revell, 1928), 60. Erdman records, “All the expenses of the evangelists were met by these two men.” The location was probably 2000 Spruce Street, Ira’s mailing address during the meetings, about one mile distant.
38. Aaron L. Hazen, *20th Century History of New Castle and Lawrence County Pennsylvania and Representative Citizens* (Chicago: Richmond-Arnold Publishing Company, 1908), 98.
39. Andree Brooks, “Debunking the Myth of P.T. Barnum,” *The New York Times*, 3 October 1982, Section 11, 1.
40. Barnum’s (Roman) Hippodrome at Madison and 26th should not be confused with the later edifice (1905–1939) of the same name on 6th Ave between West 43rd and 44th Streets (where Barnum circuses also played). Some authors, such as Evensen, are either confused or are not clear on the distinction.
41. *The New York Times*, “Amusements: Barnum’s Roman Hippodrome,” 25 April 1876, 7.

42. *New York Tribune*, 9 February 1875. Moody began meetings in February of 1876.
43. Goodspeed, *Full Account*, 416.
44. Evensen, *God's Man*, 102–03.
45. Evensen, *God's Man*, 185–86.
46. *The New York Times*, 8 February 1876, 5.
47. *The New York Times*, 9 February 1876, 8.
48. Nathaniel P. Babcock, “When Moody and Sankey Stirred a Nation,” *Ladies Home Journal*, October 1897, 10.
49. Babcock, “Moody and Sankey,” 10.
50. Samuel Bagster the Elder (1772–1851) was founder of Bagster & Sons publishing, which issued a series of Bible editions with various aids, such as commentaries or Hebrew/Greek parallel readings.
51. *New York Tribune*, 8 February 1876, 1.
52. *New York Tribune*, 8 February 1876, 1.
53. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 281–82. Later editions of Sankey’s English collection, *Sacred Songs and Solos*, did reach 1200 selections, and the American series reached 739 in its *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete* of 1894.
54. *New York Tribune*, 8 February 1876, 5.
55. *New York Tribune*, 9 February 1876, 8.
56. *A Memorial Discourse by Henry Highland Garnet, Delivered in the Hall of the House of Representatives, Washington City, D.C. on Sabbath, February 12, 1865. With an Introduction by James McCune Smith, M.D.* (Philadelphia: Joseph M. Wilson, 1865).
57. Typical of his post-Civil War political positions was one supporting Cuban independence and hosting a reception for Cuban revolutionary leader Antonio Maceo in 1878.
58. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 277.
59. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 277–78.
60. Stanza three proclaims, “Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter, feelings lie buried that grace can restore; Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness, Chords that were broken will vibrate once more.” This certainly sounds more like a later version of a liberal theology that taught everyone was a child of God whose flame of divinity simply needed fanning,



rather than the evangelical understanding of people being dead in sin, possessing nothing pleasing to God, and fully dependent on God's external work of grace. Despite the questionable theology, this challenge to Christians to go forth and "Rescue the perishing" became one of Crosby's biggest hits for nearly a century.

61. Goodspeed, *Full Account*, 419.
62. *The New York Times*, 9 February 1876, 8.
63. Baptist pastor Robert Lowry supplied both the text and music for the famous Sunday School song "Shall we gather at the river," sometimes called "At the River," in 1864, published by The American Tract Society in their 1865 tract *Happy Voices*. It became a Sunday School favorite and was later arranged by Charles Ives (*114 Songs*, No. 45) and Aaron Copland (*Old American Songs*, Set 2, 1952). Its popularity, like many of Stephen Foster's songs, was so great, it became known as a folk song. It was also part of the gospel song tradition and has been included in hymnals of the revivalist tradition for over a century.
64. Unidentified newspaper clipping in the Emma Moody Powell papers in Northfield Archives, Moody Center, Northfield, MA.
65. *The New York Tribune*, 29 February 1876, 2, reported how the choir often sang during these transitions (providing "traveling music") with hymns like "Only Trust Him."
66. *The New York Times*, 18 February 1876, 5.
67. *New York Tribune*, 25 February 1876, 2.
68. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 282.
69. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 280.
70. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 280.
71. Phil Roberts, "All Americans Are Hero-Worshippers': American Observations on the First U.S. Visit by a Reigning Monarch, 1876," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (2008), 465.
72. H.L. Northrop, *Life and Labors of Dwight L. Moody the Great Evangelist* (New Haven, CT: Butler and Alger, 1899), 119.
73. Moody historian John Pollock, *Moody: The Biography* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 207, claimed Moody became irritated with a major supporter of the meetings and "decided to close the Hippodrome mission two weeks early before the three months were up. Immediately he believed he had done wrong."
74. *The New York Times*, 20 April 1876, 8.

75. Robert Boyd, *The Wonderful Career of Moody and Sankey in Great Britain and America* (New York: Henry H. Goodspeed, 1875), 390.
76. Boyd, *Wonderful Career*, 390.
77. Evensen, *God's Man*, 120. The article contends that people were going mad from "religio-mania."

No. 76.

# It is Well with My Soul.

"He hath delivered my soul in peace."—Ps. 55: 18.

H. G. STAFFORD.

P. P. BLISS, by per.

1. When peace, like a riv - er, at - tend - eth my way, When sorrows, like  
2. Though Sa - tan should buffet, though trials should come, Let this blest as-

sea - bil - lows, roll; What - ev - er my lot, Thou hast taught me to  
sur - ance con - trol, That Christ hath re - gard - ed my help - less es -

## CHORUS.

It is well,.....

say, It is well, it is well with my soul. It is  
tate, And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

.....with my soul.....  
well with my soul, It is well, it is well with my soul.

- 3 My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious thought—  
My sin—not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to His cross and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, oh, my soul! *Cho.*
- 4 And, Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll,  
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,  
"Even so"—it is well with my soul. *Cho.*

*Chapter 17*  
**The Unimaginable**  
1876

*When peace like a river attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,  
“It is well, it is well with my soul!”*

*It is well, It is well with my soul.*

*My sin—oh, the bliss of this glorious thought—  
My sin, not in part, but the whole,  
Is nailed to His Cross, and I bear it no more;  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!*

*And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;  
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend;  
“Even so,” it is well with my soul.<sup>1</sup>*

GIVEN THE STATE of medical knowledge in the late nineteenth century, a prescription requiring a “change of climate” was not uncommon, especially with chronic medical problems involving pulmonary issues. Not surprisingly, that “new climate” always seemed to be somewhat distant from where the patient currently resided. And for childhood illnesses, the responsibility fell heaviest upon the mother, whose duty it was to rear the children.

This certainly seems to have been the case with Emma Moody, who, back in 1875, had spent the winter months on the English coast in Bournemouth for the sake of their son Willie’s health while her husband, Dwight Lyman, labored away in London, preaching daily at revival meetings. As in England, the cause of this latest dislocation from their home in Northfield was one of the children. Avoiding a New England winter was apparently necessary, so Emma took the little ones south. Why the doctor recommended

hot and humid Augusta, Georgia, is anyone's guess, but that's where Moody set off after the New York meetings.<sup>2</sup>

Commencing six days after their close, Moody preached for two weeks to crowds of over three thousand on the lawn of the Presbyterian Church. Local newspapers lauded his presence and printed verbatim accounts of the meetings—just so long as he avoided social or racial issues. While Republican President Grant generally sought to uphold the ideals of Reconstruction in the defeated Confederate states, most Southerners remained defiant, only waiting for their chance to resume political power and reconstruct a white-ruled local government with freed blacks forced into positions as *de facto* slaves in what would soon become Post-Reconstruction, Jim Crow South.<sup>3</sup>

Unsurprisingly, when blacks began attending the revival meetings and mingling with whites, there was outrage. Even though Moody's main focus was upon restoration and healing the wounds between the North and South—rather than insuring equal treatment for black people—when whites set up barriers to herd the newly freed populace into a separate area, Moody was uncomfortable and expressed his feelings to a local minister who responded, “I am proud of my rebellious feelings, and will rebel until the day I die.”<sup>4</sup> The evangelist apparently made no further issue of the separation. Perhaps that put an end to some of the rumors in which Moody was a Radical Republican who wanted to force Southerners to treat those formerly enslaved as equals.<sup>5</sup>

In Augusta, Moody was assisted by evangelist Daniel Whittle—of the Whittle-Bliss team—whom Moody was indirectly supporting through his generous patrons. Bliss was not present, although he had just been there for five days, conducting services that concluded on April 16, only a week before Moody's arrival.<sup>6</sup> It's uncertain how long Whittle remained with Moody, who continued his tour with brief stops in Nashville, Louisville, St. Louis, and Kansas City. Also missing was the assistance of his friend and colleague, Ira Sankey, who had returned to New Castle after the New York meetings.

Back in Pennsylvania, life in small town New Castle couldn't have been more different from the previous three months in New York City. Gone was the challenge of maneuvering through a crowd of thousands before whom he would soon appear on stage, singing to perhaps the largest gatherings in the country. Gone was the ceaseless noise of streetcars and horses and the cry of vendors peddling their wares, including the revival hymn book created by Sankey himself. Gone was the daily demand to expend his energy and project his voice to the farthest reaches of the barn-like Hippodrome.

And gone was the constant glare of the public spotlight with its perpetual demands to be “on.”

In New Castle, Sankey could relax and enjoy time with his wife, Fanny, and his three boys, Henry (Harry)—11, John Edward (Eddie)—7, and baby Ira Allen—1-1/2. His parents resided next door, and a host of kinfolk inhabited West New Castle. Of course, Ira was still expected to sing at church and at as many local events as he could be roped into, but his daily schedule was minimal, compared to the often-grueling demands of the previous months.

Although aspects of local community life or family could command some level of attention, Ira and his father probably devoted their most animated conversations to politics. As Republicans, both men were concerned what their party would do at the upcoming nominating convention. David had always been politically involved, first serving in the Pennsylvania legislature and later as a government appointee, serving as tax collector for the 24th congressional district. Ira had undoubtedly inherited his father’s interests and had spent part of his youth singing at rallies for local politicians. Their enthusiasm for the upcoming presidential election merited lots of attention.

President Ulysses S. Grant’s second term had been marred by successive scandals, leaving the Republican party in disarray. So at their convention on June 14, they nominated fifty-three-year-old, three-time governor of Ohio, Rutherford B. Hayes, a compromise candidate who had no taint of scandal from which the Republicans needed to distance themselves. William Almon Wheeler, a politician who “advanced himself politically while covering himself with obscurity,” was likewise revered for his scrupulous honesty and became the candidate for Vice President.<sup>7</sup>

Democrats nominated a corruption-crusading candidate who had built his reputation on defeating “Boss Tweed” of the infamous Tammany Hall political machine in New York City. At their St. Louis convention in June, they selected the ticket of Samuel J. Tilden and his friend, Andrew Haswell Green, considered the “Father of Greater New York.”

Both David Sankey and his son Ira would have campaigned for the Republican candidate, and it could have been at one of those rallies that Ira was confronted with a most perplexing experience, possessing elements both familiar and strange at the same time. For—to his surprise—“Hold the Fort! for I am coming,” which had been his theme song in England and was the opening selection in his British *Sacred Songs and Solos, Enlarged*, had morphed into the campaign song, “Hold the Fort for Hayes and Wheeler.”



There is no record of whether Ira felt pride at the song being so well known that it could be retooled for political purposes—and for his own party—or whether he felt angry about the way a sacred song encouraging Christians to faithfulness could be hijacked for profane ends. Perhaps there was a bit of mixed emotion in his response. But the song caught on.

*Float aloft the starts of freedom! Upward toward the sky,  
Freemen rally 'round the standard, For the time is nigh.*

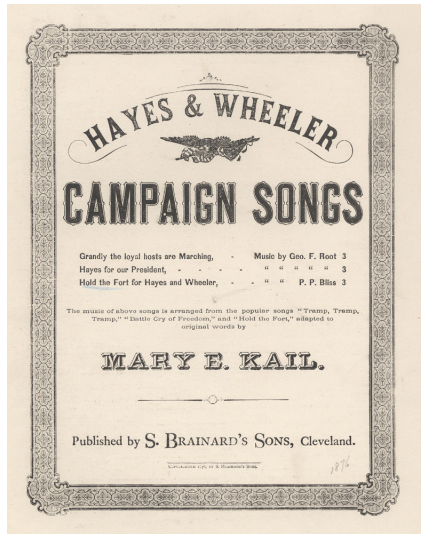
*Hold the fort for Hayes and Wheeler While their pulses thrill;  
Loyal men and solid columns, Answer back “We will!”*

*When to save our glorious country We must brave the storm;  
Vote for Hayes and reformation, Wheeler and reform!*

*Honor to our loyal commanders; Let the echo run  
Unto every kindred nation Now beneath the sun.<sup>8</sup>*

Depending on the stamina of the performer or listeners, the song could go on for six stanzas and choruses. It, along with others whose lyrics were adapted to popular tunes like “When Johnny comes marching home,” was published and sung at exuberant rallies attempting to bolster its candidates. Given Ira’s healthy sense of humor, it seems probable that he was able to take much of the situation in stride, perhaps even joining in the joke on occasion.

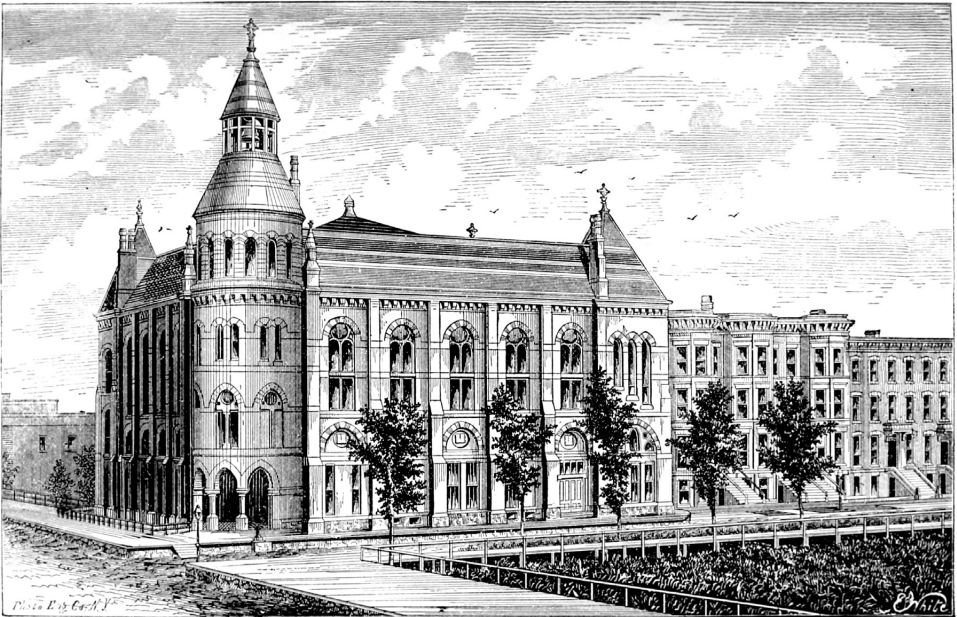
Unfortunately, Ira’s usual indefatigability—which had carried him through two arduous years in Great Britain and three major American campaigns—seemed to be displaying signs of faltering. By the end of the New York revival, Ira was definitely showing signs of fatigue. While his summer in New Castle was beneficial, it was interrupted by a four-hundred-plus mile journey to Chicago for an event he felt strongly about—the dedication of Moody’s rebuilt Chicago church, which had burned down in the fire of 1871.



On July 16, 1876, nearly five years after the devastating fire, the church Moody had founded to care for his thriving, rag-tag Sunday School students and their families who didn't feel at home in the more respectable places of worship, was dedicated, debt-free and re-christened the Chicago Avenue Church—partially the result of children giving their pennies and the generous application of royalties from the British collection of the Moody-Sankey hymn book, *Sacred Songs and Solos*.<sup>9</sup>

Moody was of course present, this being the last stop on his summer revival circuit. Sankey was also there, but as Edgar Goodspeed remembered:

Mr. Sankey rose and said that he did not know if he should be able to sing the hymn, but he would try. The fact was he had just come from a sick-bed, but was so anxious to be present that night, he had endeavored to brace up all he could. He did hope that the day would come when they might reap a rich harvest from that church. After a request that the choir on the platform would join in the chorus, Mr. Sankey sang the hymn, and though evidently not in his usual good voice, the sweet though powerful



**Chicago Avenue Church**, in E.J. Goodspeed, *A Full History of the Wonderful Career of Moody and Sankey* (1876).

tones, and well known, stirring power of delivery, thrilled his hearers and left an evident impression.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, this was all too much for Ira, and he quickly returned to New Castle. As Moody explained to a session at Farwell Hall, he had seen his co-laborer off at the train station the day before, and Sankey had “now gone back to Pennsylvania under the advice of his physicians, who despaired of his life if he continued his labors without intermission for rest.”<sup>11</sup>

Although Ira was no longer a member of his former Methodist Episcopal Church, his influence was being powerfully felt in the very structure of the church building, as it set upon a remodeling plan to move the position of the choir, from the “ancient tower in which they now sing”<sup>12</sup> at the back of the congregation, to the front of the church, directly behind the pulpit. This represented a huge shift—both physically and symbolically—concerning the role of music and the choir in the life of any church. Whereas before, most choirs had been placed out of sight—separate and in a loft above and behind the congregation—now the choir was being relocated, front-and-center, in a conspicuous position, competing for attention with the pulpit. And this momentous shift—requiring a significant reconfiguration of the very worship space in terms of position and allotted square footage—was not limited to little New Castle but also unfolded in countless churches throughout the land—a direct result of Sankey’s example, showing how music could be an equal to the preached Word in delivering the gospel.<sup>13</sup>

While Ira’s fame might have helped reconfigure many a church’s interior, it also made him the target of newsworthy gossip. The *Cincinnati Enquirer* had run an item, supposedly based on testimony from one Rev. Dr. Hepworth of New York City, saying Moody and Sankey had a falling-out over money.<sup>14</sup> As a juicy rumor was always good to sell papers, the story was picked up by various outlets, especially in the British Isles, where the evangelists had enjoyed such success, and it spread all over the world.

A typical version claimed Moody and Sankey had appropriated a \$6,500 “thank offering from converted sinners” for themselves from the New York revival. When questioned, Moody supposedly said the money was simply “the private property of the converters.” But instead of splitting the money equally as in the past,

Moody considers himself entitled to the lion’s share, and considers his companion a mere paid servant. Poor Sankey objected . . .

and he did not appreciate Mr. Moody's running off with \$5,000, and leaving him with only a beggarly \$1,000. High words arose, and in the end Mr Moody informed his "friend and fellow-worker" that if he did not like his share of the plunder, he was quite welcome to leave it, since it would be easy to get a vocalist who could do all that Mr Sankey did for \$50 a month. . . . The "singing pilgrim" does not quite like this style of treatment, and threatens an appeal to the Courts.<sup>15</sup>

It wasn't long before the evangelists were getting letters, especially from abroad, asking for clarification. As the pot boiled, it seemed as though they were on the verge of becoming an international scandal. In response, both Sankey and Rev. Hepworth wrote to *The Christian* in London, denying the truth of the accusations. But it was certainly a blow to the almost uniformly positive reputation the men—and by extension, revivalism—had earned.<sup>16</sup>

Neither was Moody unaffected. In fact, he was so deeply pained, his very private wife Emma could barely refrain from getting caught up in the public discourse over the matter. Instead, she let off steam with an emotional letter to her Scottish confidant, Jane MacKinnon, in which she lamented the story as a "wicked fabrication":

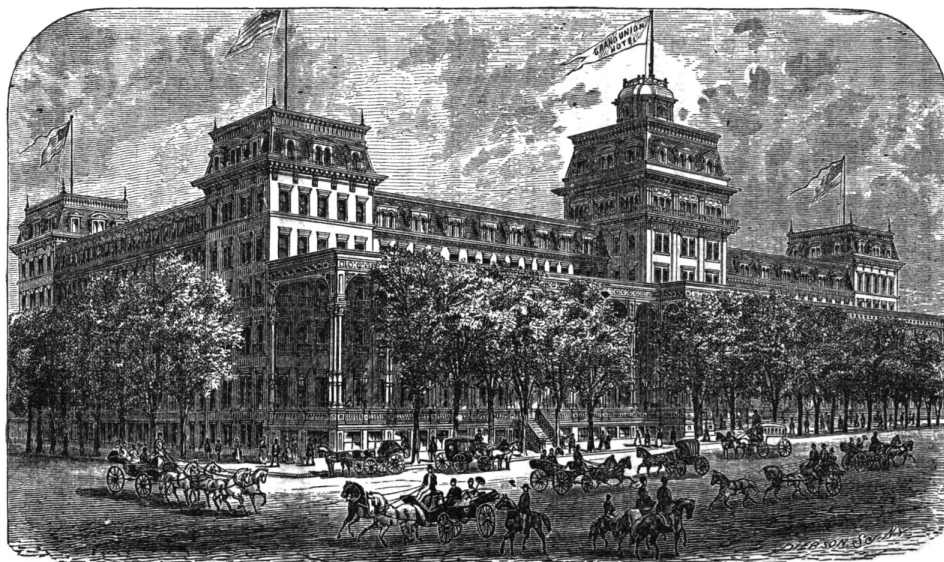
In the first place, they never had the money in New York mentioned to quarrel about, and in the next place, Mr. Sankey & Mr. Moody have never quarreled about anything, and the insinuation at the close [of the news article] is so fearful I have not seen anything from the newspapers trouble Mr. Moody as this has done & especially as every English mail brought letters from friends asking if there was any truth in it.<sup>17</sup>

Fortunately, scores of respected men publicly attested to the evangelists' good character and integrity, and few souls not already committed to doubting the revivalists seemed swayed. But it was a very public and painful experience with the potential to cast a dark cloud over their ministry.

In August, Ira, Fanny, and little Harry made a trip to Saratoga Springs, New York, to enjoy the famed mineral waters with their touted healing qualities. They possibly stayed at the newly renovated Grand Union Hotel, which catered to two thousand guests and claimed to be the largest in the world. It boasted elevators, and it was in the process of completing the miracle of indoor plumbing, providing an "ice-cold spring of pure and delicious fresh



water, connected by underground pipes, whereby a constant and abundant supply, both hot and cold, is furnished in every room of the hotel.”<sup>18</sup> Saratoga was a magnet for the rich and famous, and one might easily rub shoulders with notable politicians, business tycoons, and gamblers. Gambling and horse racing—two of the city’s famed attractions—were definitely not on the Sankeys’ agenda, however.



Grand Union Hotel, Saratoga Springs, NY, in *Saratoga Illustrated* (1881).

The trip was not all pleasure, for Ira had business to transact. As the collection *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs* was co-published by Biglow and Main in New York City, Ira included a stop there on his itinerary.<sup>19</sup> He might also have been singing close by at a church; following their New York revival just a few months earlier, Sankey was still famous and much in demand. Yet he took time to reach out to friends and acquaintances:

Dear Bro. and Sister [unclear]

We will pass through your city [Albany] Saturday morning . . . and take the day boat [down the Hudson River] to New York. If you can meet us at the boat . . . we will be very glad to see you both. We cannot stop over as we are engaged to be in New York Sunday. Mrs. S. and Harry are with me.

With fresh memories of ‘Auld Lang Syne,’ I am very truly

Yours

Ira D. Sankey<sup>20</sup>

To begin the new revival season of 1876–77, Moody had decided to revisit the scene of his rise to fame and success, Chicago. Since departing for Britain three years earlier, neither Moody nor Sankey had spent much time there, with their energies being focused on the East Coast. But now the time seemed right to return to the metropolis that had launched Moody’s career.

For a city devastated by fire only five years earlier, Chicago had rebounded on an amazing scale; there was little evidence of the former disaster. The inferno had consumed an area four miles long by one mile wide (2,124 acres), incinerating most of the business district, including 17,450 buildings and leaving 90,000 souls—a third of the city’s inhabitants—homeless. Yet only three days after the fire, *The Chicago Tribune* boldly proclaimed, “CHEER UP. In the midst of a calamity without parallel in the world’s history, looking upon the ashes of thirty years’ accumulations, the people of this once beautiful city have resolved that CHICAGO SHALL RISE AGAIN.”<sup>21</sup>

While the paper proclaimed the Chicago fire “a calamity without parallel in the world’s history,” its editor was probably unaware of a much greater conflagration that had consumed more than a million acres near Peshtigo, Wisconsin, killing upwards of 2,500 souls—and on the same day as the Chicago disaster—making it the deadliest fire in U.S. history. Although fewer than three hundred folks were estimated to have perished in Chicago, it was the center of national attention and a symbol of the young country’s buoyant ideals. Fortunately for the city, most of its stockyards and meat-packing plants had been spared, as well as its wharfs, lumberyards, and the majority of grain elevators. Also intact were its rail lines, which competed to bring much-needed goods and services to the rejuvenated city.

Unfortunately, the stock market crash and ensuing financial depression of 1873 had brought much rebuilding to a halt. Then another smaller but still significant fire the next year helped convince Chicagoans to rebuild with more durable materials. Unable to afford the newer, expensive stone homes, many who had lived within the central city were forced to seek affordable housing farther afield. For Moody and Sankey, the city was hardly recognizable when they returned after three-years’ absence. Both Farwell Hall and Moody’s Illinois Street Church had been destroyed and rebuilt af-



ter the mighty conflagration. And the Sankey home at 915 N. Clark Street near the Tabernacle—where the young family had eagerly begun life in the metropolis—was also gone.

Now both Moody and Sankey were going to experience a homecoming of sorts. At least that's the way many in the press saw it. They had left Chicago in 1873 as a couple of religious workers, off on some unspecified mission; they had returned three years later as two of the most famous names in America. "The city had 'given Moody to the world,' and now it was its turn to 'welcome him home.'"<sup>22</sup> And they were just what the city needed, preached many of the papers, who saw them as bringing "real religion" to restore the fading embers of the "old Christian faith of this community," combined with a necessary dollop of "Western grit."<sup>23</sup>

This secular religion of broad Protestant and Victorian-styled moral values seemed critical for a city that had recently banished Bible reading from the public schools.<sup>24</sup> Chicago, a metropolis of 400,000, consisting of half immigrant and half U.S.-born, was not a particularly religious place, with only about one in twenty-two citizens belonging to mainline Evangelical churches. Overall, religious folks were spread out among 33 Roman Catholic, 23 Methodist, 23 Presbyterian, 21 Baptist, 17 Episcopal, 16 Congregational, 7 Reformed Episcopal churches, and many small ethnic associations.<sup>25</sup>

Perhaps reflecting the inhabitants' lukewarm interest in church membership was the rampant presence of vice as reported to a shocked audience in Farwell Hall by the Boston reformer Addie Ballou:

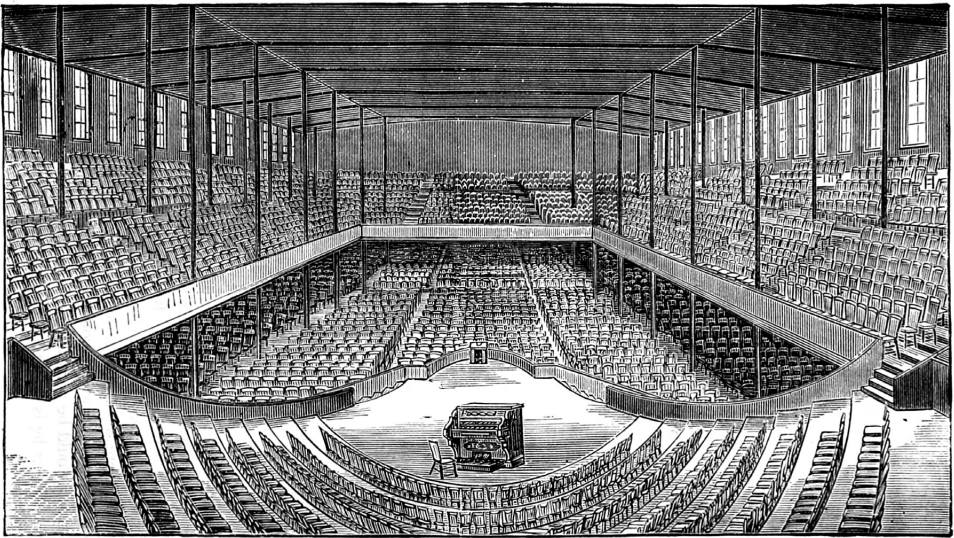
The city fathers and clergymen countenance not only three hundred and fifty brothels, but hundreds more places of assignation. I have personally seen city officials and ministers in brothels. Your taxes are going to support harlots. It is not only the criminals who maintain vice, but the elite of this city, which has become a modern Sodom that must perish if it does not change its ways.<sup>26</sup>

For many in the community, they saw the evangelists as "civilizing the city by preaching a gospel of good citizenship."<sup>27</sup>

Moody had not decided on Chicago without some drama, however. One of Moody's requirements was for there to be a large, central location in which to hold the meetings. As the city seemed to possess no such facility, many of those inviting the evangelist suggested meeting in various churches.<sup>28</sup> But Moody would not hear of it, even though his strongest benefactor,

John Farwell, tried to explain the difficulty of raising money during a long financial depression for a structure that would be torn down after the meetings ended. Nevertheless, Farwell donated a centrally located plot at Monroe and Franklin to construct a new tabernacle. He also spurred an effort that raised \$5000 from the executive committee to get the project rolling.

A new brick edifice—one of the largest in the city—began construction in mid-August and was completed—despite thirteen days of rain—the day before meetings began. It seated 8,000, with 4,500 on the ground floor and 2,900 in a 40-foot-wide, three-sided gallery facing a large stage holding the choir and special guests. A lighted cross with “God Is Love” ran along the crossbeam in front. Under the main floor, rooms for committees, Inquiry, and the press were fitted out. Steam heat attempted to lessen the winter’s chill while gas fixtures lighted evening meetings.<sup>29</sup>



**Interior of Chicago Tabernacle**, in E.J. Goodspeed, *A Full History of the Wonderful Career of Moody and Sankey* (1876).

Gas illumination was relatively new, especially for Chicago, which didn’t see the first company to supply gas and build out an infrastructure chartered until 1849. Gas lighting usually made its debut to illuminate the streets, with the first one in America being Baltimore, 1817.<sup>30</sup> It next made its way to new construction, often of public buildings, which were numerous as Chicago rebuilt after the fire and continued its dynamic expansion in all directions.

Before gas lighting, illumination of the largest buildings, such as theaters, depended on candle power. This was expensive (if good beeswax candles were used), labor intensive (to replace the candles or trim the wicks during long meetings) and rather ineffective in large interiors. Gas lighting was a breakthrough technology for nighttime meetings, as testified to by Dr. Rev. David Messner, who was visiting church services in London in 1864. In the late afternoon's waning light he attended St. Paul's Cathedral, and afterward, "I stepped from the dusk of the venerable Cathedral into the Metropolitan Tabernacle of Spurgeon, illuminated by a thousand gas-lights! It was as if I had entered another world."<sup>31</sup>

To a great extent, the Moody-Sankey revivals produced the same effect. While individuals had been accustomed to dark, flickering interiors after the sun disappeared, entering into a revival meeting might not be just spiritually enlightening but also visually exhilarating. Of course, gas was not without its challenges. It could be hot, smelly, and noisy as the vapor poured out of the gas-jets, mixing with the air and igniting—emitting an ominous hissing sound. In addition to crying children and restless congregants, Moody and Sankey had to constantly compete with roaring gas jets.

While the physical space for the revival was taking shape, organizational preparations were in full swing. Moody relied on faithful and experienced Thomas K. Cree—who had directed this effort in Philadelphia—to handle the myriad of details that could now be duplicated from city to city. This included house-to-house visitation aimed at covering the metropolis. When someone objected that visiting every dwelling in Chicago would be impossible, Moody retorted, if the political bosses could do so when it came time to getting out the vote, why couldn't they?<sup>32</sup> Members from ninety-eight supporting churches acted as "John the Baptists"—preparing the way for the good news in an effort that had worked so well in London, taking a personal letter of invitation to every household and business.

A small army of ushers—three hundred—was recruited, one of them being Charles J. Guiteau, who later achieved infamy in 1881 for his assassination of James A. Garfield.<sup>33</sup> As usual, coordination with the railroads resulted in eleven of them offering discounted fares to the meetings. And the city's light company brought out locomotive headlamps to illuminate streets leading to the Tabernacle.<sup>34</sup>

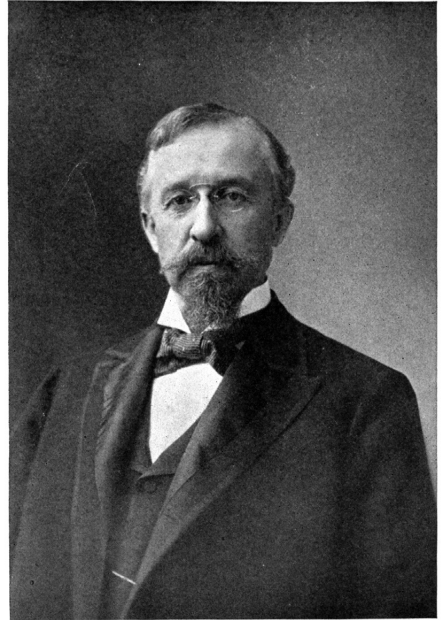
A choir of one thousand singers was enlisted and trained by another of Chicago's highly gifted church musicians, George C. Stebbins. Stebbins

was six years younger than Ira and had crossed paths with the evangelists during his tenure at First Baptist Church in the city. In 1874, he moved to Boston to direct music at Clarendon Street Baptist Church, then to Tremont Street Baptist Church (later famous as Tremont Temple) in January of 1876.

It was one of the first big city places of worship not to charge pew rents—a tradition reaching back to the Reformation and being one of the major means of generating revenue. Tremont wanted its entire church—not just a portion—to be available to those of any economic class, so they rented out extra space on the premises to businesses to produce needed income. On occasion, its auditorium—the building had begun as a theater—was rented out for meetings, with one of the most notable events being English author Charles Dickens reading *A Christmas Carol* in 1867.

Stebbins didn't stay long at Tremont, however, because in the summer of 1876, he had made a visit to Moody in Northfield, Massachusetts. And like other gifted preachers and musicians before him, he was implored by Moody to enter full-time evangelistic work. Perhaps Stebbins had already been considering that possibility, as he seems to have made a fairly quick decision to leave Boston and join Moody's growing circle of revivalists. His first assignment was preparing the choir for the upcoming revival campaign just a few months away in Chicago, a city Stebbins knew well.<sup>35</sup> Unlike William Fischer, who prepared the choir in Philadelphia, Stebbins had not published any gospel hymns for use in the meetings. And none of his songs had been included in either the British or American collections of Sankey's songs. But all that would soon change in a most unexpected way.

By the time meetings opened at 8:00AM on Sunday morning, October 1, 1876, the combination of widespread church support, city visitations, blanket advertising, and the constant drumbeat of newspaper coverage



**George C. Stebbins**, in *Reminiscences and Gospel Hymn Stories* (1924).

meant this event was not to be missed by either the faithful or the free-thinker. The Chicago meetings were also graced by a constellation of religious luminaries in the Evangelical world, seated on the platform, leading in prayer, preaching at overflow services, or assisting in the Inquiry Rooms. In addition to choir director George Coles Stebbins, there was evangelist and author George C. Needham, British preacher Henry Moorhouse, London evangelist Charles Inglis, YMCA leaders Frank M. Rockwell and Charlie Morton (“Apostle of the Common People”), and Sunday School pioneer B.F. Jacobs—father of the International Uniform Plan. Conspicuous were leading merchants John V. Farwell and Marshall Field; the Whittle-Bliss evangelistic team under Moody’s direction was also present. Emma Dyer, Christian educator, and Frances Willard, temperance crusader and women’s suffragist, rounded out the roster.<sup>36</sup>

As at previous services in Philadelphia and other cities, tickets were issued for early seating. But as more tickets were issued than there were available seats, a mad crush and many alienated folks who couldn’t get in—even with tickets—made this a sore point of the otherwise well-oiled organization. After a few weeks, tickets for early seating were dropped.

The first service opened with Stebbins leading his choir of three hundred voices in William P. Mackay’s hymn, “We praise Thee, O God! for the Son of Thy love.” Prayers, Scripture, and a couple of Sankey solos (“Only an armour-bearer, proudly I stand”) preceded Moody’s address on “Rolling Away the Stone from the Door,” wherein he identified the three great impediments blocking the door as unbelief, prejudice, and sectarian spirit.<sup>37</sup> Thus began a campaign intended to last 93 days, but it enjoyed such blessing that it was required to extend its run.

At the 4:00PM service, nine thousand souls filled every seat in the Tabernacle, with the overflow directed to Farwell Hall.<sup>38</sup> As a reporter for the *Chicago Times* looked over the vast crowd, he spied

. . . men and women of all ages and every condition, the devout and the un-devout, the church-goers and the Sabbath-breakers, Sunday-school children and hoodlums, without regard to age, sex, or previous condition of service.<sup>39</sup>

Philip Bliss and his wife, Lucy, had just arrived from their home in distant Rome, Pennsylvania—nearly seven hundred miles away—where he had spent the summer writing songs for a second volume of *Gospel Hymns*



and *Sacred Songs* he was planning with Ira. The Blisses were guests of H.M. Thompson, proprietor of the Brevoort House Hotel, a popular watering hole in the business district next to the city's Court House. Bliss purposely chose to avoid taking an active role in the meetings so he could concentrate on writing songs. He and Ira were apparently up against a publishing deadline.

To ensure their success, Bliss briefly moved his residence to the Union Pacific Hotel where Sankey was staying. As co-laborer, Whittle observed the two men at work:

It was a scene long to be remembered, to be with them alone for an hour . . . as they compared and tested and criticised the songs to be used in their meetings. First, one would be at the organ rendering a song, then the other, and both laughing, crying, and praying together over their work. They rejoiced in each other's gifts, and praised God for the honor conferred upon them in being used in his service.<sup>40</sup>

Their major goal seems to have been that of completing a new edition for the next Moody-Sankey campaign and for the Whittle-Bliss team to use in their work. On some level—whether intentional or not—Sankey had established the precedent, reaching back to his earliest collections in Britain, of introducing fresh and popular religious music that people were clamoring to sing. And that meant ever-newer editions with songs in the latest style. Of course, any new book would also need to contain enough standard hymns to make it practical for general use. So part of their work required choices about the collection's content—what to retain from the current volume and which new songs to add.

One fascinating choice might have elicited some fierce discussion: what to do about Sankey's earlier "theme song," the selection in the coveted No. 1 position in his British collection, "Hold the Fort!" Even before leaving England in the summer of 1875, it had been replaced by Ira's setting of "The Ninety and Nine" in terms of popularity. More important—and disturbing—was the fact that at this very moment, on the eve of a national presidential election, "Hold the fort for I am coming, Jesus signals still," had been hijacked and was being raucously belted out around Chicago and the rest of the country as "Hold the fort for Hayes and Wheeler while their pulses thrill." For all practical purposes, its effectiveness as a sacred song had been ruined, for who could not help but think of its latest political incarnation when sung



in a religious service. The result: it was banished to No. 130, near the back page of the new collection!

Another interesting decision was what to do about Sankey's most popular song, "The Ninety and Nine." First, an unusual instruction was added immediately above the music (No. 67) in the upcoming collection: TO BE SUNG ONLY AS A SOLO. Although this song was birthed as a vocal solo, it was a melody everyone wanted to sing—and had been singing for quite some time. It can only be assumed that both Sankey and Bliss had experienced the difficulty of trying to drag a congregation through five stanzas—all being necessary for the narration of the text to make good sense—and finish at anything less than a crawl.

Although written in 6/8 meter, it was not meant to skip along like so many gospel songs. Even if it was initiated at an appropriately moderate tempo to tell the serious story of a lost sheep, most congregations—especially large ones—simply could not retain the necessary momentum and would lag slower and slower over five stanzas. Unfortunately, the rather dulcet sound of the harmonium employed for accompanying the singing in those days—before the prevalence of the more percussive piano, which could drive the rhythm of the singers along—meant the retention of rhythmic integrity often fell on the song leader's voice to keep the congregation from abating. Sankey and Bliss were undoubtedly attempting to address their unhappy experiences in leading groups of people who were trying to sing this somewhat lengthy song. It's unclear how many followed their directions.

Perhaps the most unusual change from all previous printings of this song is that it was reharmonized. According to the familiar story, the music for the song was improvised on the spot after a sermon about the Good Shepherd. And the way the song was originally published—consisting mostly of two chords under a simple melody—made sense under those circumstances.

But for the new edition, the song was given a much more sophisticated treatment, with the harmony briefly shifting to a relative minor key in its third phrase, providing some needed musical tension and intensifying the feelings of "Away on the mountains, wild and deep." This was a subtle yet somewhat sophisticated tweak, unusual for gospel songs of the day and seemingly in advance of Ira's musical skills at this time. It did seem like an improvement entirely within the scope of Bliss's skills, however, and one that has stuck ever since<sup>41</sup>—despite Sankey's later claim, saying, "note by note the tune was given, which has not been changed from that day to this."<sup>42</sup>

While a few hymns such as “The Ninety and Nine” claimed engaging tales connected with their creation, none matched the drama behind the poetry Bliss set to music for what would become No. 76 in the new collection, “When peace like a river attendeth my way,” known as “It is Well (with My Soul).” Bliss’s normal process was to write both the words and music for his songs. But here, he created music for another’s poem, that of Horatio G. Spafford, a man whose life story read like the modern counterpart to Job from the Old Testament.

And like Job of old, Spafford had been a wealthy and successful man with a loving wife and children. It’s uncertain whether Satan was allowed to afflict Spafford—as he did Job—but Horatio, who had been a prosperous lawyer with the firm of Spafford, McDaid, and Wilson, and a big investor in Chicago real estate, was devastated by the fire of 1871. Subsequently, the Financial Panic of 1873 struck, further hobbling his situation. Unlike other Chicagoans such as Marshall Field, who was heavily insured, Spafford was unable to bounce back.

Horatio G. Spafford had been one of that impressive fraternity of dynamic and successful Chicago businessmen who were also committed Christians, expending both their time and their wealth in the Kingdom’s service. That included visits to jails and prisons, participation in prayer meetings, revival services, and teaching Sunday School. Spafford was also a strong supporter of Abolition and Temperance causes, entertaining many of its leaders in his handsome Lake View “Cottage.” This included his dear friends Moody and Sankey, whose success in Britain he had followed in the religious press.

Somewhat at a loss as how to proceed at home after their financial calamity, Horatio and his wife, Anna, had accepted an invitation from Moody to sail to England and provide needed assistance with the revivals. To that end, he booked passage for the family, including their four daughters, Annie, Margaret, Elizabeth, and Tanetta, on the S.S. *Ville du Havre*, a newly refitted, three-masted, single-screw propeller ship sailing between New York City and Le Havre, France, at the mouth of the Seine River on the English Channel. It was scheduled to sail on November 21, 1873, with the Spafford family, the children’s governess, and Willie, the child of a family friend they were escorting to school in Europe. At the last minute, Horatio was confronted with a business issue that required his remaining in the country. Anna and the children continued on ahead.

Three hundred thirteen passengers and crew were on board for this, the maiden voyage of the newly christened ship. Driven by three sails and a new engine, *Ville du Havre* was plowing the Atlantic at twelve knots when, from out of the dark, she was broadsided by the iron English clipper ship *Loch Earn*, tearing a forty-by-twenty-foot gash in the hull. It was 2:00AM, and by the time drowsy passengers managed to stumble on deck, the ship was going down—in twelve minutes! There was little time to board lifeboats, many of which were stuck fast to the deck, owing to a recent paint job. Anna Spafford tried to rescue her charges, but they were all dumped into the freezing Atlantic, many being sucked under with the submerging vessel. Two hundred twenty-six souls perished.

Anna was found, drifting unconscious on some debris. Recovered along with eighty-six other survivors—mostly crew—she was taken by a passing vessel, the *Trimountain*, to Cardiff, Wales, where she telegraphed Horatio the unimaginable news: “Saved alone, what shall I do.”<sup>43</sup> It had been eleven days since the family had set off for a new phase in their lives—and now?

Form 2. 2694

No. 345

**ATLANTIC CABLE MESSAGE.**  
**THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY.**

All CABLE MESSAGES received for transmission must be written on the Message Blank provided by this Company for that purpose, under and subject to the conditions printed thereon, and on the back hereof, which conditions have been agreed to by the sender of the following Message

O. H. PALMER, Secretary. WILLIAM ORTON, President.

To *Spafford* Received at *Chicago, Ill*

*Dec 2 5709 1873*

*159 LaSalle St*

*Chicago*

*Saved alone what shall I do. Mrs Goodwin Children Willie Cecler lost go with Lorraines until answer reply Porclain 64 Rue Aboukir Paris*

*Spafford*

*29*

Telegraph from Anna to Horatio, Library of Congress, American Colony in Jerusalem Collection, Part 1, Box 1, Folder 6.

A stunned Spafford immediately sailed for Europe to rescue his wife. In stupefaction he must have wondered, what more could God allow them to suffer? And it didn't help that the week-long sea voyage to Cardiff would have reminded Spafford of his children's watery grave with every swell of the vast ocean. In a letter he wrote to his sister Rachel, he described the experience of approaching the area where the ship had been struck:

On Thursday last we passed over the spot where she went down, in mid-ocean, the water three miles deep. But I do not think of our dear ones there. They are safe, folded, the dear lambs, and there, before very long, shall we be too. In the meantime, thanks to God, we have an opportunity to serve and praise Him for His love and mercy to us and ours. "I will praise Him while I have my being." May we each one arise, leave all, and follow Him.<sup>44</sup>

The Spaffords soon returned to America and attempted to pick up the pieces, where their faith in God seemed incomprehensible to those around them. Anna wrote to a friend,

How thankful I am that their little lives were so early dedicated to their Master. Now he has called them to Himself. . . . If I never believed in religion before, I have had strong proof of it now. We have been so sustained, so comforted. God has sent peace in our hearts. He has answered our prayers. His will be done.<sup>45</sup>

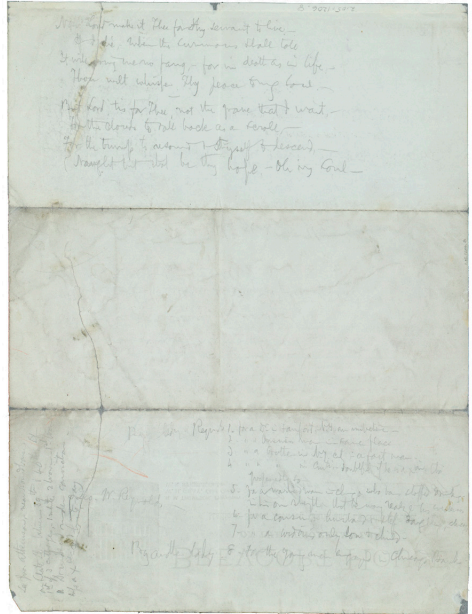
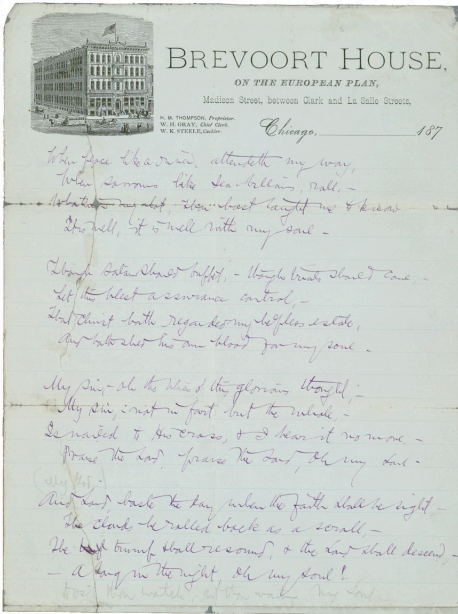
In Chicago, they worked toward starting a new family, welcoming Horatio Jr. on November 16, 1875. The hymn came the following year, amidst the flurry of preparing the new hymn book. Ira described the circumstances:

In 1876, when we returned to Chicago to work, I was entertained at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Spafford for a number of weeks. During that time, Mr. Spafford wrote the hymn "It is well with my soul" in commemoration of the death of his children. P.P. Bliss composed the music and sang it for the first time at a meeting in Farwell Hall.<sup>46</sup>

Horatio had worked out his ideas on a piece of stationery from the Brevoort House Hotel, just around the corner from his law office, a place where he would have entertained clients. Inexplicably, like Job, who refused to "curse God and die," Spafford found it possible to dredge up the words:



SING ME A SANKEY: THE STORY OF IRA D. SANKEY



Manuscript of "It Is Well," Library of Congress, American Colony in Jerusalem Collection, Part 1, Box 1, Folder 11.

*Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,  
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.*

In blue ink, he penned four stanzas, which were very little altered in future printings. On the back, he scribbled two other stanzas in pencil; those found publication in Sankey's British publication, *Enlarged Songs and Solos* (1877), but did not make the American printings.<sup>47</sup>

*For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live;  
If Jordan above me shall roll,  
No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life  
Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.*

*But Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming we wait,  
The sky, not the grave, is our goal;  
Oh, trump of the angel! Oh, voice of the Lord!  
Blessed hope! blessed rest of my soul.*

Most of the works for which Bliss had become famous were in the newer style of lively Sunday School songs, bubbling with lots of eighth notes. However, Bliss could also compose in a more hymnic style with solemn quarter and half notes, as he had done for “Man of Sorrows, what a name” (“Hallelujah! What a Saviour”). But this creation turned out to be more of a hybrid. Although it sounded like a hymn during its first half, Bliss composed a chorus for the second part from the gospel song tradition he had helped establish. It featured a duet for soprano and alto, echoed by tenor and bass, reinforcing the words “It is well with my soul” in a masterful miniature of pseudo-choral writing, driving home its primary spiritual truth of unflinching faith in God’s goodness.<sup>48</sup>

Spafford’s daughter Bertha—born in 1878, who with sister Grace, born in 1881, were the only two children to live into adulthood—later claimed the hymn had been written over the spot where the *Ville du Havre* sank.<sup>49</sup> While this version of events is much more romantic and often gets retold, Sankey’s plain account of the two men writing the song in Chicago in 1876 is probably much closer to the truth.

Less than a week after the Chicago revival began, Moody received word that his brother Sam Holton had died, likely from an epileptic seizure. He immediately departed for the family homeplace in Northfield, Massachusetts, to conduct the funeral on October 10th. Daniel Whittle preached in his stead.

Upon Moody’s return to Chicago, he admitted, besides his wife, children, and his mother, “I have loved none so dearly as my youngest brother,” and he preached from John 1:41, “He first found his own brother and brought him to Jesus.”

Moody then confessed how he had prayed fourteen years for his brother’s salvation, finally seeing that take place in the last year. “If you, my dear Christian friend, have a brother out of Christ, go bring him in. You will by and by have to stand by the open grave of some dear brother, and to be without Christ, how can you bear it?” Said one listener, “The great congregation seemed to feel as though it had been their brother, as well.”<sup>50</sup>

After three weeks of concentrated work on the next volume of *Gospel Hymns*, Philip Bliss left for Kalamazoo, Michigan, to resume evangelistic work. This was part of Moody’s larger vision for revival to be broader than Chicago. In an attempt to see a regional or even a national one, Moody dispersed teams into the surrounding cities to sing and preach the gospel, with



the Chicago revival's example inspiring the outlying churches. Subsequently, each team sent dispatches to local and regional papers describing instances of conversions and answered prayer. That news, combined with reports and telegrams from area churches, was then shared in the noonday prayer services at Farwell Hall in Chicago to encourage the attendees with news of the spreading revival<sup>51</sup>—producing a sort of spiritual feedback loop. During the meetings, reports actually poured in from all over the world, including those from Scotland and England, where revival fires were still burning. As to the propriety of aggressively promoting the revival, Moody declared, “God will do His work if we do ours.”<sup>52</sup>

As the second month of meetings began, more attention turned to the impending presidential election between Republican Rutherford B. Hayes and Democrat Samuel J. Tilden—just a few days away. While feelings nationwide seemed to be running neck-and-neck, Hayes would have probably won the race in a landslide if those in the Tabernacle had been polled on any given night—for most folks in Moody's and Sankey's orbit were Republicans. “They identified the party of Lincoln as the standard-bearer of honesty, freedom, and the continuation of a ‘Christian civilization.’ Hayes was a Protestant and a ‘patriot.’”<sup>53</sup>

Of real concern for both the businessman and the average church-goer was the rise of the immigrant Catholic population and the growing threat of labor unrest.

As Protestants viewed the matter, a true revival in Chicago would entail the conversion of large numbers of the unchurched poor and foreign-born. It would mean the firm reestablishment of the values and institutions Protestants held dear, thereby assuring the eventual defeat of the “Romish” threat. Poverty would diminish as the values of industry and frugality permeated every level of society. The conflict of labor and capital would harmonize through revival. Revival could do wondrous things for Chicago.<sup>54</sup>

There was certainly a widespread feeling among most in the revivalist camp that revivalism and Republicanism ran on parallel courses. As the Republican-supporting Chicago newspaper, the *Inter-Ocean*, explained it: “If Moody and Sankey have the success which good men pray for, the Democratic vote in Chicago will be next to nothing in November. For that matter, it might be unanimous.”<sup>55</sup>

Unanimity, however, was the farthest thing from the voters' minds on November 7 of 1876. While the campaign had been bitter, with charges of corruption and national disloyalty being hurled against each other, nearly 82% of the nation's electorate turned out to vote. Yet, in spite of all the political rancor, election day on the nation's centennial was surprisingly quiet. But that didn't last long. Although voting returns could be slow to come in during an era when ballots were counted by hand, the outcome seemed clear, as important swing states such as Connecticut, Indiana, and New Jersey voted for Tilden. When New York finally tipped in his favor, Hayes admitted defeat and went to bed.

By the morning of November 8, it appeared to almost everyone that Tilden had won. The *New York Tribune* led with "TILDEN ELECTED: Tilden and Hendricks seem to be elected by a fair majority of the Electoral College. They have probably carried the 'solid South.'"<sup>56</sup> But two days later, as votes were still being certified, a strange telegram landed on the desk of John C. Reid, editor of *The New York Times*, which would change the course of American history. ∞

## ENDNOTES

1. Words by Horatio Spafford, music by P. P. Bliss, "It is Well with My Soul," *Gospel Hymns No. 2* (Cincinnati: John Church & Co.; New York: Biglow & Main, 1876), No. 76.
2. New York meetings concluded on 19 April 1876. Emma Moody Powell, *Heavenly Destiny: The Life Story of Mrs. D.L. Moody* (Chicago: Moody Pub., 1943), 113–14.
3. E.J. Goodspeed, *A Full History of the Wonderful Career of Moody and Sankey in Great Britain and America* (St. John, New Brunswick: W.E. Erskine, 1876), 615. Edward J. Blum, *Reforming the White Republic: Race, Religion and American Nationalism 1865–1898* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2015), 141.
4. Blum, *Reforming*, 288–89.
5. Goodspeed, *Full History*, 617, recounts a sermon where Moody addressed this criticism.
6. Daniel D. Whittle, ed., *Memoirs of Philip P. Bliss* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1877), 71. Moody departed Augusta on 9 May 1876.
7. Wendy Wolff, ed., *Vice Presidents of the United States 1789–1993* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1997), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CDOC-104sdoc26/html/CDOC-104sdoc26.htm>. "If history remembers William Wheeler at all, it is for his character. In his introduction to John F. Kennedy's Profiles in Courage, the historian Allan Nevins reproduced a colloquy between Wheeler and Senator Roscoe Conkling, the Republican political boss of New York. 'Wheeler, if you will act with us, there is nothing in the gift of the State of New York to which you may not reasonably aspire,' Conkling tempted; to which Wheeler replied, 'Mr. Conkling, there is nothing in the gift of the State of New York which will compensate me for the forfeiture of my self-respect.'"
8. Words by Mary E. Kail, music by P.P. Bliss, "Hold the Fort for Hayes and Wheeler" (Cleveland, OH: S. Brainard's Sons, 1876).
9. Will R. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1900), 172.
10. Goodspeed, *Full History*, 620.
11. Goodspeed, *Full History*, 624.
12. *New Castle Courant*, 19 May 1876.
13. For some insight into this subject, see Anne Bagnall Yardley, "Choirs in the

- Methodist Episcopal Church, 1800–1860, *American Music*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring 1999), 53–54.
14. “Messrs. Moody and Sankey,” *Mount Ida Chronicle* [Australia], Vol. 7, Iss. 401 (17 November 1876), 3.
  15. “Moody and Sankey,” *Otago Witness* [New Zealand], Issue 1301 (4 November 1876), 21; also *The Australian, Windsor, Richmond, and Hawkesbury Advertiser* (2 December 1876), 4.
  16. Few sources related to Moody reported on this incident, which Mrs. Moody called a “newspaper scandal.”
  17. Photocopy of long-hand notice in Moody Archives: “From a letter dated Sept. 11, 1876 written from Northfield, Mass. by Emma (Mrs. D.L. ) Moody to Mrs. MacKinnon in Scotland.”
  18. Grand Union Hotel (Sarasota Springs, NY).
  19. It seems that at least some important decisions about content of the *Gospel Hymns* collection now resided with Biglow and Main publishing, rather than its co-publisher, John Church & Company.
  20. Letter to “Bro. and Sister [unclear],” 10 August 1876. Unidentified photocopy.
  21. *The Chicago Tribune*, Vol. 25, No. 66 (11 October 1871), 2.
  22. Bruce J. Evensen, *God’s Man for the Gilded Age* (Oxford: University Press, 2003), 139, quoting the *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, 25 September 1876, 4.
  23. Evensen, *God’s Man*, 131.
  24. *The Chicago Tribune*, 4 October 1875, 4.
  25. *Chicago Churches* (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1878), quoted in Darrel M. Robertson, *The Chicago Revival, 1876: Society and Revivalism in a Nineteenth-Century City* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1989), 15.
  26. Robertson, *Chicago Revival*, 17.
  27. Evensen, *God’s Man*, 132.
  28. The Wigwam, built for the 1860 Republican convention, held 12,000 delegates but had been demolished by 1871. The gargantuan Inter-State Industrial Exposition Building on the lake shore was apparently thought impractical or was unavailable for the planned three-month-plus needs of the revival.
  29. Robertson, *Chicago Revival*, 51.
  30. 7 February 1817, at the corner of North Holliday and East Baltimore Streets.
  31. David Messner, “Memorials of a Journey to England, Scotland, and Ireland,” *The Reformed Presbyterian Magazine for 1864*, 255. In 1812, Parlia-

ment granted a charter to the London and Westminster Gas Light and Coke Company, and the first gas company in the world came into being. Less than two years later, on 31 December 1813, the Westminster Bridge was lit by gas street lights. By 1823, numerous towns and cities throughout Britain were lit by gas.

32. Robertson, *Chicago Revival*, 65.
33. Guiteau always seemed to be mentally unstable, identifying with many religious and political causes throughout his life.
34. Robertson, *Chicago Revival*, 53.
35. Possibly one reason for Moody's encouraging Stebbins to leave his church position was because the Chicago meetings were scheduled to begin in the fall and they didn't have a choir director yet.
36. Willard, who became head of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in 1879, became one of the most influential women in the country.
37. Elias Nason, *The American Evangelists, Dwight L. Moody And Ira D. Sankey* (Boston: D. Lothrop, 1877), 170–71. Nason is quite specific that the opening hymn by the choir was sung “from leaflets,” which is odd, considering he specified how Sankey then sang from the collection that contained the opening hymn.
38. Robertson, *Chicago Revival*, 63, reports: “On October 1, 1876, at precisely 3:30PM, Dwight L. Moody ascended the stage of the great Chicago Tabernacle, completed only days earlier. The campaign for Christ and for right was about to begin.” It's unclear why Robertson didn't recognize the earlier 8:00AM service—to which Moody referred during the afternoon meeting—as opening the meetings.
39. Robertson, quoting *Chicago Times*, 2 October 1876, n.p.
40. Whittle, *Memoirs*, 76.
41. Hubert P. Main—of Biglow and Main, publishers of the collection—was a frequent collaborator with Sankey over the years and could have been responsible for this change. A few of his tunes appear in *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs*.
42. Ira Sankey, *My Life and Story of the Gospel Hymns* (New York: Harper and Bros.), 271. Technically, Sankey was correct, as the melody throughout various editions remained the same; but the harmony did not.
43. Cable in Library of Congress, “American Colony in Jerusalem Collection,” Part I, Box 1, Folder 6. Sankey reported in his autobiography, 168–169, “One of the sailors of the vessel, named [*Loch Earn*—whom I afterward met in

Scotland—while rowing over the spot where the vessel disappeared, discovered Mrs. Spafford floating in the water.”

44. Quoted in Bertha Spafford Vester, *Our Jerusalem* (London: Evans Brothers, 1951), 53.
45. Quoted in Vester, *Our Jerusalem*, 55–56.
46. Sankey, *My Life*, 169. See also D.W. Whittle, *Memoirs of Philip P. Bliss* (1877), 49, 83; Chris Fenner & Chuck Bumgardner, “It Is Well,” *Hymnology Archive* (15 July 2021), <https://www.hymnologyarchive.com/it-is-well-with-my-soul/>; for a more sinister view of the family, see Thomas E. Corts, *Seeking Solace: The Life and Legacy of Horatio G. Spafford* (Birmingham, AL: Samford University Press, 2014). It is believed that Spafford took the words “It is well” from the words of the Shunammite woman who lost her only son but was later raised from the dead by Elisha (2 Kings 4:26).
47. Library of Congress, American Colony in Jerusalem Collection, Part 1, Box 1, Folder 11.
48. Although the song was apparently not an immediate hit, it grew in popularity from about 1900 up to World War II, when it lost popularity; it experienced interest again beginning about 1960 and retained popularity into the twenty-first century. It also became the source of many choral arrangements. See a graph of its inclusion in hymnals since its inception in Hymnary.org, “It is Well with My Soul.”
49. Bertha Spafford Vester, in *Our Jerusalem* (1951), 53. Bertha was born two years after the hymn was first published and would have only heard about these events second-hand.
50. Robertson, *Chicago Revival*, 65–66.
51. Robertson, *Chicago Revival*, 83. The British periodical *The Christian* is credited with contributing to Moody’s success in England by spreading news of its meetings. In 1738, John Wesley read Jonathan Edwards’ account of colonial revivals in *Faithful Narrative* and wrote, “Surely this is the Lord’s doing and is marvelous in our eyes.” Frederick Dreyer, “Evangelical Thought: John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards,” *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1987), 179. The spread of revivals was often facilitated by the news of other revivals.
52. Evensen, *God’s Man*, 140.
53. Robertson, *Chicago Revival*, 40.
54. Robertson, *Chicago Revival*, 41.
55. Robertson, *Chicago Revival*, 41, quoting the *Inter-Ocean* newspaper of 3 September 1876. The religious press was also generally pro-Republican. *The*



*Methodist Northwestern Christian Advocate* (15 September 1875, 4) admitted, “denominations had often been identified with particular parties and, most recently, the Methodists with the Republicans.” Robertson, *Chicago Revival*, 172.

56. *New York Tribune*, 8 November 1876, 1.



No. 18.

# Jesus Loves Even Me.

"God is love."—1 JOHN 4: 8.

P. P. BLISS.

P. P. BLISS, by per.

1. { I am so glad that our Fa-ther in heav'n Tells of His love in the  
 Won-der-ful things in the Bi-ble I see; This is the dear-est, that

### CHORUS.

Book He has giv'n, } I am so glad that Je - sus loves me,  
 Je - sus loves me. }

Je - sus loves me, Je - sus loves me, I am so glad that

Je - sus loves me, Je - sus loves e - ven me.....

2 Though I forget Him and wander away,  
 Still He doth love me wherever I stray ;  
 Back to His dear loving arms would I flee,  
 When I remember that Jesus loves me.  
 I am so glad, etc.

3 Oh, if there's only one song I can sing,  
 When in His beauty I see the Great King,  
 This shall my song in eternity be :  
 " Oh, what a wonder that Jesus loves me."  
 I am so glad, etc.

1 Jesus loves me, and I know I love Him,  
 Love brought Him down my poor soul to  
 redeem :  
 Yes, it was love made Him die on the tree,  
 Oh, I am certain that Jesus loves me.  
 I am so glad, etc.

2 If one should ask of me, how could I  
 tell ?  
 Glory to Jesus, I know very well :  
 God's Holy Spirit with mine doth agree,  
 Constantly witnessing— Jesus loves me.  
 I am so glad, etc.

3 In this assurance I find sweetest rest,  
 Trusting in Jesus, I know I am blest ;  
 Satan dismayed, from my soul now doth flee,  
 When I just tell him that Jesus loves me. I am so glad, etc.

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## Chapter 18

### Ashtabula

1876

*I am so glad that our Father in heav'n  
Tells of His love in the Book He has giv'n,  
Wonderful things in the Bible I see;  
This is the dearest, that Jesus loves me.*

*I am so glad that Jesus loves me,  
Jesus loves me, Jesus love me,  
I am so glad that Jesus loves me,  
Jesus loves even me.*

*Oh, if there's only one song I can sing,  
When in His beauty I see the Great King,  
This shall my song in eternity be:  
"Oh, what a wonder that Jesus loves me."<sup>1</sup>*

"TILDEN ELECTED"—ran page one of the *New York Tribune*, the day after the election, crediting the Democratic candidate with winning the expected states, northern swing states, and most of the South. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* moaned, "LOST. The Country Given Over to Democratic Greed and Plunder," while Washington, DC's *National Republican* printed: "POSSIBLY, TILDEN—HOPEFULLY, HAYES." At that point, Hayes had only secured enough states to accumulate 166 electoral votes; Tilden—at 184—needed only one more vote from those remaining undecided to reach the magic number of 185 to assure the election.

With such odds, most of the country, as well as the candidates, were ready to concede Tilden's win, with Hayes admitting, "I think we are defeated. . . . I am of the opinion that the Democrats have carried the country and elected Tilden." But then a couple Republicans began working the math. One was Daniel Sickles—a one-legged, self-aggrandizing Union General

who shot and killed the son of Frances Scott Key across from the White House in broad daylight. He successfully pleaded “temporary insanity” for killing his wife’s lover—the first to do so—and went on to live a long and scurrilous life.<sup>2</sup>

When he stopped by Republican headquarters in New York City late on election night, he found the Republican national chairman, Zachariah Chandler, asleep. But as he pored over election returns into the night and the next day, he concluded that if Hayes could capture all the outstanding electoral votes, he could win the White House. Whether the plan had any chance of working hinged on the three southern states who had not yet reported their votes and had election boards controlled by Reconstruction-appointed Republicans.<sup>3</sup>

Sickles was apparently not the only one considering the math. Early the next morning at 3:00AM, John C. Reid, editor of *The New York Times* received a message from the State Democratic Committee: “Please give your estimate of the electoral votes secured by Tilden. Answer at once.” Reid was dumbfounded. What the Democrats were requesting as a corroboration of their earlier winning tallies, Reid wrongly interpreted as doubt about Tilden’s win. He also realized the election hung on one electoral vote.

Progressing to Republican headquarters in the middle of the night—about twenty-four hours after Sickles—he convinced national chairman Chandler to telegram Republican election officials: “Hayes is elected if we have carried South Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana. Can you hold your state? Answer immediately.” While this seemed a mandate to go to any lengths to carry the vote, this was hardly a novel instruction to state officials, for both Republicans and Democrats had been competing to sabotage their opponents with dirty tricks, bribes, and intimidation for a long time. But now it was part of a broader, more coordinated plan.

And part of that plan was for the Republican press to immediately begin proclaiming Hayes’ victory. So that very morning *The New York Times* led with “THE BATTLE WON. A REPUBLICAN VICTORY IN THE NATION. GOV. HAYES ELECTED PRESIDENT AND WILLIAM A. WHEELER VICE PRESIDENT[.] THE REPUBLICANS CARRY TWENTY-ONE STATES, CASTING 185 ELECTORAL VOTES.”<sup>4</sup>

While the Republican plan to get their electors in the three southern states to declare that Hayes had carried the day, Democratic electors re-

ceived validation from the states' Democratic governors, filing competing claims of a Tilden win. Congress was left holding the bag, and the country was left in limbo!

Revival meetings continued in Chicago as they had throughout the election campaign, after having fallen to a low on election night: "there was a small detachment of the choir and a few stragglers on the platform—altogether about 1,000 people—an immense audience for ordinary times on a rainy night, but rather lonesome for the Tabernacle." But only two days later, attendance had revived, having "taken a new lease on life, now that the election is over, and the audiences beginning to improve, and the singing, ditto."<sup>5</sup>

As services moved into their seventh week, a number of new faces at the meetings came from Christians who lived at a distance and had been reading about the meetings in the press. At some point, these folks decided to see for themselves what God was doing in Chicago, and they did so in large numbers, often purchasing the special fares many railroads were offering from Toronto, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and St. Louis.<sup>6</sup> To entice these visitors to remain longer in the Windy City—and fill up empty rooms on weekends when not used by businessmen—hotels like the St. James at State and Washington Streets offered rooms at \$2.00 per night, plus boasting street car service to the meetings seven blocks away. Reserved seating in the "Great Tabernacle" could also be secured; shopping opportunities at the famous Field and Leiter department store (later to become Marshall Field and Company) was right across the street. Inquires should be directed to J.N. Strong, proprietor.<sup>7</sup>

Around the same time, Moody began holding meetings aimed at special groups. Four hundred employees from the Field and Leiter store were given the afternoon off to hear Moody at Farwell Hall. Others were aimed at businessmen, parents, Germans, and "fallen women."

This latter focus was probably as much a press concoction as a reality, but on December 13, perhaps one thousand prostitutes turned out to an invitation by Moody and visits by a committee of Christian women who had gained the addresses of various "ranches" on Clinton Street and Fourth Avenue. This was in response to a letter Moody had received from a woman who wrote, "there are many young girls in this city who are leading lives of shame because of the lustful passions of men who have joined your meetings."<sup>8</sup> She went on to ask, "[Have] you nothing to say to us and our class. Chicago has nearly as many abandoned women as men."



The service included Sankey leading the congregation in “Ring the Bells of Heaven!” and Fanny Crosby’s prescient hymn, “Rescue the Perishing,” written when she was living among the poorest of the railroad workers and their families in a New York tenement. Moody read Scripture from Luke 7:36 about the woman who was a sinner but washed Jesus’ feet with her hair, and Ira sang “with much tenderness and expression” No. 64 in *Gospel Hymns*, “A Sinner Forgiven.”

*To the hall of the feast came the sinful and fair;  
She heard in the city that Jesus was there;  
Unheeding the splendor that blazed on the board,  
She silently knelt at the feet of the Lord.*

*The frown and the murmur went round thro’ them all,  
That one so unhallowed should tread in that hall;  
And some said the poor would be objects more meet,  
As the wealth of her perfume she showered on His feet.<sup>9</sup>*

While the text was written to be sung about an “erring woman,” it’s doubtful the author ever envisioned it being sung directly to such a large gathering of them.

Monday saw new convert meetings, while Friday was reserved for converted alcoholics. Temperance meetings, led with the help of Women’s Christian Temperance Union’s leader, Frances Willard, were always an important part of revivalism’s DNA. These special meetings came to be a significant part of the revival, as they targeted individual needs and provided a sense of community to others of similar experience.

While constant news coverage, special services, and visitors from outside the city kept attendance strong, the evangelists often walked a fine line between encouraging Christians to attend the meetings and, alternately, convincing them to refrain from coming early and taking up all the good seats, potentially excluding those they most wanted to reach.

As an attempt at good-natured scolding, Moody explained one of the reasons for offering special meetings. There were a great number of men and women who felt “duty bound” to attend every service, he said. One gentleman in Brooklyn always came early and occupied a front seat. “Even Mr. Sankey . . . got tired of seeing the same face in the same place every night.” So when they began meetings in Philadelphia, they thought they’d seen the

last of him—but there he was again, every night. Finally, Moody and Sankey moved on to New York City, but there was their old friend in his old seat. “But he couldn’t get into the women’s meetings,” said Moody, half jokingly.<sup>10</sup>

Of course, many came night after night to hear the music that was becoming more popular with every passing week. In fact, one didn’t have to attend the Tabernacle to hear the music, for the catchy tunes were soon adopted to serve a wide variety of purposes. Already noted was the commandeering of “Hold the Fort!” into the political arena, but in “A New Use for Revival Music,” the *Christian Register* offered a novel perspective.

A few evenings ago, in Chicago, another use was made of the Sankey music, which has disturbed some pious souls and is denounced as a king of profanation. At a large wedding party the most popular and touching of the Sankey melodies were adapted to the dance, and under the skillfull manipulation of the leader of the most fashionable dancing orchestra, proved to be the most delightful numbers upon the list of the dancing tunes. The elegantly dressed company courtesied [*sic*] and waltzed to the tunes of “What Shall the Harvest Be?” and “Almost Persuaded,” with joy in the new exhilaration, and with no sense that they were committing a sin against sanctity.<sup>11</sup>

Entertainment of a different sort was the goal of some Chicagoans, seeking to be amazed by the latest technological developments of the day—the telephone. Having been demonstrated at the Centennial Exposition less than a year earlier, the first pair of devices in Chicago was placed in the homes of Bernard E. Sunny, manager of the Atlantic and Pacific Telegraph Company, and that of John N. Hills at 1464 N. Leland in Ravenswood-Lake View.

Many demonstrations of their working were given, chiefly on Sunday afternoons and in the evenings. After the theatre was a popular time for neighbors to drop in at Mr. Hills’ home to hear the telephone speak and sing. The noise over the circuit was great and talking was difficult, but singing traveled over the wires successfully. Since there was a Moody and Sankey revival going on . . . at the time, some of the most popular songs for demonstration purposes were “Nearer, My God, to Thee,” “Pull for the Shore,” etc. These would be sung, often by Mr. Sunny, from the offices of the telegraph company for the edification of Mr. Hills’ guests.<sup>12</sup>

The enormous popularity of this new style of religious music, which so easily “crossed over” and found itself readily accepted in a range of cultures, was a puzzle to many. One who tried to analyze it stylistically was probably only half-serious when he posited: “determine the pleasure you get from a circus quick-step, a negro-minstrel sentimental ballad, a college chorus, and a hymn all in one, and you have some gauge of the variety and contrast that may be perceived in one of these songs.”<sup>13</sup>

Those effects were felt most strongly, however, not in Sankey’s solos but in an experience one could not find anywhere else in the city, nor for that matter, in the whole country: eight thousand people lifting their voices together in one mighty chorus—the congregational singing from *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs*. While gospel melodies could be diverted for political or entertainment purposes, nothing could compare with thousands of people intoning eternal truths sung to captivating tunes that followed a person around all day. While not a few reporters and worshipers commented on the “almost awesome” atmosphere of Tabernacle singing, the anti-revivalist Unitarian minister J.T. Sunderland, nevertheless, seemed completely mesmerized:

I insist that the greatest power of the music of the great meetings held has not lain in Mr. Sankey’s singing. It has lain in the sweeping, surging, irresistible, overwhelming, singing of the congregations. . . . And you, too, though you have only gone in as an indifferent and critical spectator, before you know it you too are drawn into the enchanted current, and are being borne with strange intoxication on the bosom of the wild but wondrous song.<sup>14</sup>

Sankey was indeed transforming the nature of congregational song from the spiritual duty it occupied in many churches into a nearly ecstatic spiritual experience for many.<sup>15</sup>

Despite the attraction of the powerful congregational singing, without a doubt, Ira Sankey was still—as he had been from those early meetings in York, England, back in 1873—the main musical attraction. While the quality of his voice was appreciated, most who commented on his singing did so for different reasons. “The time is now slow, now rapid, constantly changing, the notes of every variety of length, and the general effect of the whole designed to give pronounced meaning to the words”—all for the purpose of creating “moods appropriate to the message.”<sup>16</sup> When asked about his novel approach,

Ira revealed, “I never sing the second verse of a tune as I sang the first verse, nor do I sing the third as I sang the second. Why should I? The words are different, the meaning is different and so the rendering must be different.”<sup>17</sup> And because the meaning of those songs usually dealt with weighty matters of eternal significance, it was not unusual for both Sankey and his listeners to finish a song in tears.

It didn’t hurt that Ira possessed certain personal characteristics that made him fascinating on the stage.

Tall, gracious, and physically attractive [at 36], Sankey offered a sharp contrast to the rugged, stocky, brusque Moody. Whereas Sankey was graceful in bearing and unassuming in manner, Moody was aggressive and commanding. Both men, however, had the ability to read an audience correctly and move them emotionally in the direction desired.<sup>18</sup>

By November 23, P.P. Bliss was back in Chicago to make final conferrals with Sankey about the next edition of *Gospel Hymns*. Unlike earlier in the meetings, Bliss consented to appear at a Christian Convention that Moody often held for ministers dealing with practical church matters. On this occasion, Bliss spoke to a thousand clergy at their noon meeting in Farwell Hall on the 24th. He addressed the assembly on the topic of music in worship, and he sang, “Do you see the captive Hebrew kneeling? Are your windows open toward Jerusalem?” a new work intended for the upcoming song collection.<sup>19</sup> Like many of his creations, it had been inspired by a particular incident—this, an address by Horatio Spafford to inmates at the Joliet State Prison, when he preached on the captive Daniel who prayed three times a day with his window open toward Jerusalem.<sup>20</sup>

Whether Spafford was present that day at Farwell Hall is unclear, but Bliss also chose to sing—for the first time—the hymn penned by Spafford about the death of his children, “It is Well with My Soul.”<sup>21</sup> Little could anyone in that company have realized it was the last time they would ever hear Philip Paul Bliss sing.

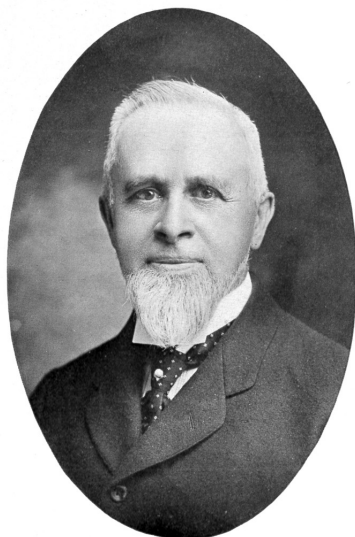
Sankey was also collaborating with other contributors for the new edition of *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs*. After Philip Bliss, businessman William H. Doane was perhaps the most successful Sunday School and gospel song composer, having already written many tunes for the lyrics of Fanny Crosby, the Sunday School movement’s most prolific poet. His contribu-

tions to the first edition of *Gospel Hymns* included music for Fanny Crosby's hymns "Safe in the arms of Jesus," "Rescue the perishing," "Pass me not, O gentle Saviour," "Jesus keep me near the cross," "Saviour, more than life to me," Kate Hankey's "Tell me the old, old story," Ellen Gates' "The Prodigal Child," and Lydia Baxter's "Take the name of Jesus with you." All but one of these songs became standards in the revivalist tradition, being sung for over a century and around the world.<sup>22</sup>

In his letter thanking Doane for two songs he had submitted to the new edition, Ira revealed his skills as an editor by alerting him to the similarities of his submission with a piece already in the current collection. The new edition would soon include Doane's tunes for Elizabeth Prentice's "More love to Thee, O Christ!," plus Crosby's "I am Thine O Lord (Draw me Nearer)," "Only a step to Jesus," "To the work!," "Now just a word for Jesus," "Rescue the perishing," and "My song shall be of Jesus" (the last having been written under her married name, Mrs. Van Alstyne). In Ira's letter to Doane, he penned, "Hope you will have new and fresh power given you from above to write for the millions who know not the Blessed Saviour." He then shared with Doane how the "Work [is] spreading into all the churches. Ten or twelve of the Leading Pastors reported so today at the noonday meeting. 'Hallelujah what a Saviour.'"<sup>23</sup>

Sankey was being more than just optimistic in his report about the success of the revival, halfway through its schedule. As reported in the *Independent* for November:

Pastors are finding their hands more than full with cases of peculiar religious interest. Wherever you go, you hear the names of Moody and Sankey, and on the horse-cars, in counting rooms, and even in saloons and gambling dens men are discussing the services in the Tabernacle and the good which these services are accomplishing.<sup>24</sup>



William H. Doane, in *My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns* (1906)

Another confessed:

I have invited people to come to me as inquirers a good many times, but seldom anybody came. But now there were so many people coming that I can hardly find time to speak to them all. I have a long list of names in my book, so many cases that I can hardly overtake them. These are like the times spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles, when the Lord added to the Church daily of such as should be saved.<sup>25</sup>

A week before Christmas, the normal schedule—usually a noon prayer meeting, a 3:00 Bible reading, an evening service at the Tabernacle, and special meetings to follow—was modified to focus on smaller groups and greater opportunities for those desiring personal counsel.

From 1 o'clock til 10:00PM on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, the Tabernacle will be open for inquiry meetings, at which Mr. Moody and others [will] give personal instruction. The women's meeting and the men's meeting from 1 to 1:30PM; the temperance meeting from 3 to 4 PM; a young ladies' meeting from 4 to 5 PM; and the reformed men's meeting, the boys' meeting and the young converts' meeting, in different rooms of the Tabernacle from 8 to 9 PM From 9 to 10 PM there would be a men's meeting at Farwell Hall, at which Mr. Moody would preside.<sup>26</sup>

Although there were fewer large nightly meetings, Moody and Sankey were kept busy appearing at the many smaller assemblies plus providing individual spiritual counsel during much of the day. Although the one-on-one Inquiry Meetings didn't receive the publicity of the mass Tabernacle services, some of the spiritually-sensitive members of the press began to take note.

The inquiry-meetings continue to be thronged. . . . The inquiry-room is where the real practical work of salvation is carried on. The general meetings interest the sinner and awaken him to a sense of his guilt. He listens to the singing of Mr. Sankey and the preaching of Mr. Moody, and his inner nature is troubled. . . . But without the advice of experienced Christians he is weak and apt to break his good resolutions. Let him go into the inquiry-room, and there he finds the personal counsel and advice which is so . . . essential to the maintenance of the proper strength and purpose.<sup>27</sup>



After a week of the modified schedule, Moody and the supporting pastors were apparently impressed enough with the results that it was extended for a similar period. This could also have occurred because, by this time, Moody was physically and mentally wearing thin.<sup>28</sup>

Part of his angst resulted from the physical condition of his daughter, Emma, still suffering from scarlet fever, one of the biggest killers of children between five and twelve.

Apparently, little Emma had been sick since early October when the meetings began, and she was still too ill to leave Chicago. This same scourge would snatch the life from Horatio and Anna Spafford's son Horatio Jr. at four years old in 1880. And even though thousands were praying for Emma's recovery, the Moodys harbored deep concerns as doctors confessed that her weak condition was much too prolonged for a bout of normal scarlet fever, now in its third month. Moody even admitted to his audience on Christmas eve how he felt like "a prisoner," and the conclusion of his part in the revival campaign was dependent on his daughter's recovery.<sup>29</sup>

In Moody's mind, revival wasn't limited to a specific place where he and Ira led the charge, for on December 20 he wrote to churches in the Northwest, "The work in Chicago ought to be regarded as only a small part of a great general awakening."<sup>30</sup>

Originally, the meetings had been scheduled to conclude by mid-December, when Moody and Sankey would move on to Boston for the next major campaign. Earlier in London, revival services had continued after the evangelists' departures, often anchored by one of Moody's dynamic associates. So a continuation of the revival—with other leadership—was not an odd thing. Discerning exactly how that would happen was less clear.

In the case of Chicago, the outcome seemed to be a combination of the divine and the mundane. The first simply reflected the momentum of the revival, which showed little signs of ebbing. Many were pleading for Moody and Sankey to continue. But there were some hesitant folks who bravely voiced sentiments that were probably more widespread than admitted, for they wanted the services to end, simply being worn out, attending to its demanding daily schedule over the last ten weeks. In addition, others felt the revivals competed with the local churches, sapping their resources.<sup>31</sup>

Then there were simply the pragmatic reasons. In addition to Emma's condition was the situation in Boston, the next stop on the itinerary, which

hadn't yet completed plans for the evangelists to visit their city. So, as Christmas day dawned, neither Moody nor Sankey could make any specific arrangements for the new year.

On Monday, Christmas day, it was announced that evangelist Daniel Whittle and Philip Bliss would “conduct the 4 o'clock meetings at the Tabernacle next Sunday afternoon.”<sup>32</sup> This was unwelcome news for the Whittle-Bliss team, as they had been dreading their assignment in Chicago. For from the time the two had joined together in full-time evangelistic work, they had generally gone out to cities with medium-to-smaller populations—nothing like Chicago. And they had not attempted to hold meetings in large, specially built arenas. As Whittle later recalled: “Mr. Bliss, from the very first, had an almost unaccountable aversion to the plan proposed of his . . . returning to Chicago, and work there.”<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless:

Today [Dec. 4], Bliss, wife and I [Whittle] united in special prayer that God would guide as to our future movements. . . . The pastors meet in Chicago, today, to consider inviting us there after Moody leaves, and calls are before us to various places. We know not what is best, but trust we are all willing to be led, and we ask the Master to plan for us and to keep us. We had rather go anywhere else than to Chicago, and shrink much from following Mr. Moody there. May God give us wisdom to know His will.<sup>34</sup>

By December 14, Whittle and Bliss had concluded their meetings in Peoria, Illinois, one hundred-fifty miles southwest of Chicago, and had taken the night train to partake of a sleepy breakfast with Moody at the popular Brevoort House Hotel, only to be informed they were to begin meetings in Chicago on December 31st. As Whittle recalled, “After the Lord was through with us in Chicago, we were to go to England. Bliss yielded about coming to Chicago, but to the last was unconvinced as to its being best.”<sup>35</sup> In fact, Bliss openly communicated his negative feelings to Ira, who seemed to agree the meetings in Chicago should cease once he and Moody departed for Boston.<sup>36</sup> But the revival committee had decided otherwise.

Whittle remained in the Windy City while Bliss returned to his children and extended family in Rome, Pennsylvania, for the Christmas holidays. He decorated the tree he had cut down, played Santa Claus, and presented toys he had made to the children, enjoying “the happiest Christmas he had ever known.”<sup>37</sup>

Although Whittle and Bliss had been informed they would be ministering in Chicago by the end of the year, Bliss wrote to Whittle, “I hear nothing from you definite to my being wanted in Chicago next Sunday. Unless I hear from you, I shall not leave this week.” Although Bliss was scheduled to sing on Sunday afternoon, Whittle admitted,

It was necessary to telegraph him to come. But evening came and found me at home and the telegram was not sent. All day long it was upon my mind . . . that Bliss must be telegraphed for, and that I did not like to take the responsibility of doing it. Late in the evening, the dispatch was forwarded.<sup>38</sup>

But Whittle must have sensed something foreboding, as he later remembered, “I had not forgotten it, but did not want to send it. I did not know then, I do not know now, why.”<sup>39</sup>

The next morning, Thursday, December 28, Philip Bliss took his two small boys aside and confided, “I would love to stay. I would rather stay than go, if it were God’s will, but I must be about the Master’s work.” Then he and Lucy left the children in the care of her parents and set out for the little whistle-stop of Waverly, just across the border in New York. There the couple purchased tickets and checked their luggage through to Chicago on the Buffalo and Lake Shore Rail line. “Shall be in Chicago Friday night,” Bliss telegraphed. “God bless you all forever.”<sup>40</sup>

It didn’t take long to realize their travel plans were to be thwarted, as engine trouble on their train to Buffalo caused them to miss their connection to Chicago. Instead of sitting up all night in a jerky train car, they spent it in a Buffalo hotel, delayed until Friday afternoon for the last link to their destination.

The Pacific Express was an eleven-car train pulling a mixture of baggage cars, sleepers, coach cars, and one parlor car, where the Blisses were seated. Outside, a fierce snowstorm had reduced the train to a crawl. Ashtabula—meaning “always enough fish to be shared”—was located in the extreme northeast corner of Ohio, where the Ashtabula River empties into Lake Erie. Before the Civil War, it had been an important stop on the Underground Railroad, just across the lake from Canada.

For trains to cross the river on their way to Chicago, they had to traverse a new, 159-foot Howe-truss bridge, soaring seventy feet above the water. But just as the double-engine entered the bridge, a span gave way and

the entire chain of cars plunged onto the frozen ice, piling onto each other, “some on end, some on the side,” the ironwork “bent and twisted like snakes.” Then fire broke out among the wreckage, the result of stoves used to heat each car.

Smoke and screams filled the air. In the chaos, Philip Bliss was able to exit a window but returned to rescue Lucy who was jammed fast in the tangled wreckage. As a fellow-passenger and survivor of the disaster recalled, “Finding he could not save [her], he stayed there . . . and died.”<sup>41</sup> The flames, fanned by the intense windstorm, quickly reduced the coach interiors—including their inhabitants—to ashes.

Of course, no one in Chicago could have imagined the tragic events playing out over four hundred miles away as they gathered in Sankey’s hotel suite to await their beloved co-laborers. Ira had booked rooms near Bliss, excited to see the partner who had helped him complete the second volume of *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs*—which had just been issued for the upcoming Boston meetings.

I was seated at a small cabinet organ in the hotel . . . that sad Saturday morning, awaiting the coming of my friends. . . . The hour for their arrival had passed, and someone remarked, “The train must be late,” when a friend rushed into the room, and, laying a hand upon my shoulder as I was singing one of Bliss’s hymns said, “Sankey, Bliss is dead.” All were shocked, and for a time, could not believe the story, but in a few minutes others brought confirmation . . . that Bliss had been killed in a railway accident in Ashtabula, Ohio.<sup>42</sup>

Then the details and rumors began to pour forth. “DOWN TO DEATH” ran the headlines in Saturday morning’s *Chicago Tribune* with more teasers proclaiming: “The wreck immediately takes fire and burns furiously; While a terribly cold and biting wind is raging. One hundred believed to be either Crushed, Drowned,

**DOWN TO DEATH.**

A Train on the Lake Shore Road Falls Through a Bridge.

The Scene of the Calamity Near Ashtabula Depot, Ohio.

Eleven Coaches Plunge Down a Depth of Seventy Feet;

Crushing to Pieces as They Strike the Ice Below.

The Wreck Immediately Takes Fire and Burns Furiously;

While a Terribly Cold and Biting Wind Is Raging.

One Hundred and Seventy Persons on the Ill-Fated Train.

One Hundred Believed to Be Either Crushed, Drowned, or Burned to Death.

The Number of Injured Estimated at Between Fifty and Sixty.

Special Dispatch to The Tribune.  
ASHTABULA DEPOT, O., Dec. 29.—Train No.

*The Chicago Tribune,*  
December 30, 1876

Frozen, or Burned to Death.” Somewhat ironically, page six reported on the revival services with announcements saying, “Whittle and Bliss will have charge of the noon meeting at Farwell Hall, and will hold gospel meetings there, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday at 8 o’clock PM”<sup>43</sup>

By Sunday morning, December 31, the paper was running a series of eyewitness accounts under the headline, “INTO RUIN HURLED,” including that of fellow passenger and survivor J.E. Burchell, who apparently gave shape to the story, “P.P. Bliss Burned to Death Trying to Extricate His Wife and Children.”<sup>44</sup>

That Sabbath also witnessed hasty memorial services organized in various churches across the nation. In Chicago, the normal Moody-Sankey 8:00AM revival service at the Tabernacle was transformed into one such meeting. From the platform and the galleries, mourning drapery was hung with festoons of black and white.

Four beautiful crowns of white flowers [woven of camellias and lilies] were placed in front of the small organ near the speaker’s stand, the smaller ones being for his two children, Paul and George, who at that time were supposed to have been killed with their father and mother.<sup>45</sup>

Sankey intoned Bliss’s hymns, but as he sang the author’s, “I know not the hour when my Lord will come,” the chief usher came quietly up the aisle, and bore away the two smaller crowns—word had just been received that the children were still alive, having remained at home with friends in Rome [Pennsylvania].”<sup>46</sup>

At 11:00, the evangelists presided at Moody’s Chicago Avenue Church; they held another meeting at 4:00PM, then at 9:00, began their annual “Old-Fashioned Watch-Meeting” to see out the old year. By now, the reality of the tragedy was finally setting in. Moody waxed uncharacteristically noble as he asserted, “Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen in Israel.”<sup>47</sup> Sankey sang Bliss’s “Man of Sorrows! What a name (Hallelujah! What a Savior!),” and Moody prefaced an offering taken to erect a Bliss memorial by saying,

I consider him the most remarkable man that has lived in our time. He had three remarkable gifts: first he wrote the hymns, then he wrote the music, and then he was one of the sweetest singers I

ever heard. He heard me preach on the love of God, and the next time I met him he sang me a little hymn, “I am so glad that Jesus loves me.” He wrote me a fire hymn after the Chicago fire. He spent a week with me last summer, and every day he brought out a new hymn, music and all. Thank God for such a man. Chicago don’t [*sic*] know what kind of a man they have lost.<sup>48</sup>

Then he read a telegram from Daniel Whittle, who had gone to the scene of the accident. “Work closed for today. No hope of any recovery.” ∞



Philip & Lucy Bliss, in Elias Nason, *The Lives of Dwight Moody and Ira Sankey* (1877).



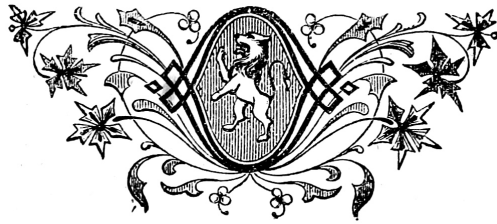
## ENDNOTES

1. Words and music by Philip Paul Bliss, "Jesus Loves Even Me," *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan, and Geo. C. Stebbins, eds. (Cincinnati: John Church Co.; New York: Biglow and Main, 1894), No. 18.
2. Sickles' life is almost too bizarre to be believed. Chris DeRose, *Star Spangled Scandal: Sex, Murder, and the Trial that Changed America* (Washington, DC: Regnery History, 2019).
3. The details about the timeline for the events surrounding the plan to carry the Southern states are somewhat unclear. This narrative is based upon information from Louis Kleber, "Presidential Election of 1876," *History Today*, Vol. 20, Issue 11 (November 1970); George H. Mayer, *The Republican Party: 1854-1966* (Oxford: University Press, 1964), 194; James R. Stoller Jr., "Counting Every Vote," a review of *Fraud of the Century: Rutherford B. Hayes, Samuel Tilden, and the Stolen Election of 1876*, by Roy Morris, Jr.; and William Rehnquist, *Centennial Crisis: The Disputed Election of 1876*, in *Claremont Review of Books*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Winter 2004-2005).
4. *The New York Times*, 9 November 1876, 1.
5. *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, 7 and 9 November, 1876, 5.
6. Bruce J. Evensen, *God's Man for the Gilded Age* (Oxford: University Press, 2003), 144.
7. Photocopy of advertisement from 1 November 1876 (unidentified).
8. Evensen, *God's Man*, 146.
9. *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, 15 December 1876, 7. Sankey sang all four stanzas of the poem by J.J. Callanan, who was not acknowledged in *Gospel Hymns*.
10. A.W. Williams, *Life and Work of Dwight L. Moody, the Great Evangelist of the XIX Century* (Philadelphia: P.W. Zeigler and Co., 1900), 196. Chicago's *The Inter Ocean* for 20 December 1876, 5, reported how an "old lady" was very distressed about being turned away for a meeting of "young ladies."
11. "A New Use For Revival Music," *Christian Register*, December 1876, No. 53.
12. From typescript dated 27 July 1928, copied from "Bell Telephone News," no date. Archives Moody Bible Institute.
13. Evensen, *God's Man*, 77, quoting *The Nation*, 9 March 1876, No. 22, 157.
14. Darrel M. Robertson, *The Chicago Revival, 1876: Society and Revivalism in a Nineteenth-Century City* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1989), 77.
15. *The Westminster Directory for Public Worship of God*—issued by Parliament

in 1644, which also became the defining document for belief and musical practice among American Puritans, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists and others—declared: “Of Singing of Psalms. It is the duty of Christians to praise God publickly, by singing of psalms together in the congregation, and also privately in the family.” Methodists, like Sankey, came from a tradition that saw congregational song as a more emotional experience, yet for many believers in churches with less-than-strong musical leadership, congregational singing was more of a rote spiritual chore—a duty—than a “foretaste of glory divine.” There were certainly exceptions, such as the famous congregational singing in H.W. Beecher’s Plymouth Congregational Church, or the ecstatic singing in the camp meetings of the Second Great Awakening.

16. Robertson, *Chicago Revival*, 75, quoting the *Nation*, 9 March 1875, 256.
17. Robertson, *Chicago Revival*, 75.
18. Robertson, *Chicago Revival*, 74.
19. It would become No. 10 in *Gospel Hymns No. 2*.
20. Old Testament, Daniel 6:10 (KJV).
21. Daniel Whittle, *Memoirs of Philip P. Bliss* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1877), 83; also Sankey, *My Life*, 169.
22. They had already appeared in many Sunday School books.
23. Photocopy of letter to “Dear Bro. Doane” on 13 November 1876.
24. Robertson, *Chicago Revival*, 82, quoting *Independent*, 2 November 1876, 12.
25. Robertson, *Chicago Revival*, 82–83.
26. Robertson, *Chicago Revival*, 77.
27. *The Chicago Tribune*, 20 December 1876, 3.
28. *The Chicago Tribune*, 19 December 1876, 5.
29. *The Chicago Tribune*, 25 December 1876, 2.
30. Elias Nason, *The American Evangelists, Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey* (Boston: D. Lothrop and Co., 1877), 168.
31. Evensen, *God’s Man*, 150.
32. *The Chicago Tribune*, 26 December 1876, 3.
33. Whittle, *Memoirs*, 86.
34. Whittle, *Memoirs*, 86.
35. Whittle, *Memoirs*, 91.
36. David Williamson, *Ira Sankey: The Story of His Life* (London: S.W. Partridge, n.d.), 78.

37. Whittle, *Memoirs*, 91. He received as a gift “a magnificent music box from his loved friend and publisher, Mr. Church.” The John Church Publishing Company published, along with Biglow and Main Publishing, *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs*.
38. Whittle, *Memoirs*, 93.
39. Whittle, *Memoirs*, 93.
40. Whittle, *Memoirs*, 93.
41. Whittle, *Memoirs*, 290–296. Whittle provided extensive and dramatic details about the wreck. The account of Bliss initially surviving the crash then returning to be with his wife comes from his acquaintance, J.E. Burchell of Chicago, who survived the accident, but probably didn’t witness Bliss returning to his death. In his account, he mistakenly recorded that Bliss’ children were among the dead, although they had remained at home. Likewise, his other statements should also be viewed through the uncertainty of dramatically unfolding events.
42. Williamson, *Ira Sankey*, 78.
43. *The Chicago Tribune*, 30 December 1876, 1, 6.
44. *The Chicago Tribune*, 31 December 1876, 1.
45. Williamson, *Ira Sankey*, 79.
46. Williamson, *Ira Sankey*, 79.
47. Quoting 2 Samuel 3:38, KJV, wherein King David mourned the death of Abner, cousin of the deceased King Saul and his commander-in-chief.
48. *The Chicago Tribune*, 1 January 1877, 4.



No. 50.

Only an Armour-Bearer.

Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison that is on the other side; it may be that the LORD will work for us: for *there is* no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few. And his armour-bearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart; turn thee; behold, I *am* with thee according to thine heart. And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armour-bearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armour-bearer slew after him. So the LORD saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over unto Beth-aven."—1 SAM. 14: 1, 6, 7, 13, 23.

P. P. BLISS.

P. P. BLISS, by per.

1. On - ly an armour - bear - er, proudly I stand, Wait - ing to  
 2. On - ly an armour - bear - er, now in the field, Guard - ing a  
 3. On - ly an armour - bear - er, yet may I share Glo - ry im -

fol - low at the King's command; Marching if "onward" shall the  
 shin - ing hel - met, sword, and shield, Wait - ing to hear the thrilling  
 mor - tal, and a bright crown wear: If, in the bat - tle, to my

or - der be, Standing by my Cap - tain, serv - ing faith - ful - ly.  
 bat - tle - cry, Ready then to an - swer, "Mas - ter, here am I."  
 trust I'm true, Mine shall be the hon - ors in the Grand Re - view.

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*Chapter 19*  
The Lion's Mouth: Athens of America  
1877

*Only an armor bearer, proudly I stand,  
Waiting to follow at the King's command;  
Marching, if "onward" shall the order be,  
Standing by my Captain, serving faithfully.*

*Hear ye the battle cry! Forward! the call;  
See, see the falt'ring ones, backward they fall;  
Surely my Captain may depend on me,  
Tho' but an armor bearer I may be;  
Surely my Captain may depend on me,  
Tho' but an armor bearer I may be.*

*Only an armor bearer, yet may I share  
Glory immortal, and a bright crown wear;  
If in the battle to my trust I'm true,  
Mine shall be the honors in the Grand Review.<sup>1</sup>*

CHRISTIANS, INCLUDING EVEN the most godly saints, it appeared, were not immune to horrible pain and crippling loss. Stunned by the deaths of Philip and Lucy Bliss, Ira and his friends realized afresh how God's ways were often beyond human comprehension. Here was P.P. Bliss—one of God's choice servants, whose musical gifts were already being sung around the world—dead at thirty-eight! What greater blessing might he have been if he had lived another thirty-eight years?

The new year—1877—certainly began with the dark cloud of death looming over everything. Additional uncertainty derived from the nation being no closer to solving the dilemma of who would be the next president. Little Emma Moody hadn't yet recovered from scarlet fever, and her father still found it necessary to deny the evangelists were making money from hymnal royalties. Referring to Sankey, he declared, "Now about that charge



of his singing for money. The royalties on this book [*Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs*] has amounted to about \$60,000 which has been devoted to charitable purposes.”<sup>2</sup>

On January 16, nearly a month after their original plan to close the Chicago meetings, the evangelists held their final service in the Tabernacle. By 7:00PM, nine thousand attendees jammed the hall with four thousand assigned to chairs reserved for recent converts. Thousands more were turned away although many remained outside, hoping to grasp a bit of music or preaching. The service began with everyone singing No. 22, “We’re going home tomorrow” to one of Bliss’s less-inspired tunes.<sup>3</sup>

It was customary at the final meeting for Moody to take up a thank-offering, usually to defray revival expenses and to pay off the costs for some local Christian organization, such as Farwell Hall—a project Moody had admitted earlier as being one of his biggest regrets by funding its construction through a “stock plan.”<sup>4</sup> He asked for the staggering sum of \$80,000, but then spent considerable time reading the names and amounts of those who had already pledged support, beginning with A.M. Billings and John Farwell’s promises of \$5,000 each, and continuing down to the \$500 level. Then the “Hallelujah Chorus” was sung—perhaps the first time a revival choir had ever sung a classical piece of music—and Moody launched into his final message on the word “Able.”

He concluded his remarks with some very telling thanks to the Chicago press, which “has treated us so kindly. I have yet to find any unkind word in any of our daily papers. I pray heaven’s richest blessing to rest upon the press of Chicago, and I hope they will continue to spread the Gospel of Christ as they have done during these meetings.”<sup>5</sup> Moody’s calling out the press for special recognition showed how important the daily free publicity was—often publishing his entire sermon—to the revival’s success. It also showed how Moody—or someone close to him—carefully monitored all those papers.

He then thanked everyone else who had contributed to the wonderful results of the meetings, beginning with the choir, which sang “night after night for sixteen long weeks.”<sup>6</sup> Brother Harvey, “who was always so near at hand,” led the Executive Committee, excelling even those splendid folks in Philadelphia and New York. Thanks were rendered to the businessmen who built the Tabernacle they were now sitting in, “the best of all the buildings ever erected,” in which he could speak as easily “as in a drawing room.” Ush-

ers, janitors, and all who assisted were recognized and requested to pray for the upcoming meetings in Boston.<sup>7</sup>

“Good night; we will meet again in the morning,” concluded his remarks and was followed by a prayer, “full of love and tenderness.” Sankey then led “Shall we meet beyond the river,” and all closed with the Doxology. A benediction was pronounced, and the meetings over which Moody and Sankey had presided came to a close.

As usual, their continuation on a smaller scale was scheduled for the next evening at Plymouth Congregational Church on the South Side,<sup>8</sup> led by evangelist Whittle, and filling in for the lately-deceased Bliss, George Stebbins, who had been in charge of the Tabernacle choir. He doubtlessly encouraged all who were not thoroughly exhausted in his present choir to come and assist with a new ensemble he was forming for meetings at Plymouth Church. Messrs. Parkhurst and Spencer would commence preaching at Clark Street Church on the corner of Washington, and Whittle-Stebbins would continue noon meetings at Farwell Hall.<sup>9</sup>

While Moody didn't keep records of converts, preferring to say their names were recorded in heaven, the press was more than ready to broadcast its tallies:

The number of persons already received into the Chicago churches are set down as follows: Baptist, 300; Congregational, 300; Methodist 700; Presbyterian, 750; Reformed Episcopal, 300. . . . About 6,000 tickets were given out for the farewell meeting, of which a careful record was kept . . . the names sent to the pastors of these churches, into whose care they appropriately fall. Thus every one is to be looked after.<sup>10</sup>

Overall, “the unusual surge in membership was not reserved to just a few churches but was spread broadly among churches supportive of the revivalist.”<sup>11</sup> By all accounts, the return of Moody and Sankey to Chicago had been an unqualified success. But not one in which the two men took time to bask, for the very next day, January 17, they set off for Boston, nearly one thousand miles due east.

Boston was the fountainhead of liberal theology and anti-revivalist fervor, yet it had a fabled history with revivalism. Part of it reached back to 1738, when pastors in the city were so impressed with Jonathan Edwards' account of the revival in Northampton,<sup>12</sup> one hundred miles due west, that

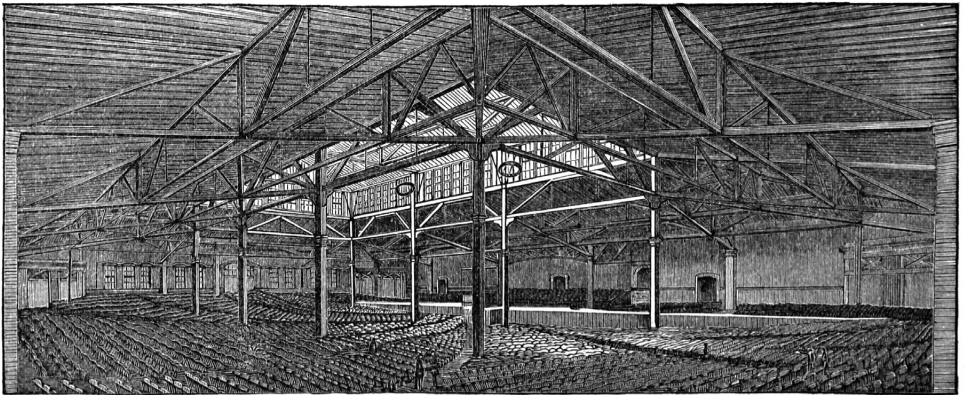
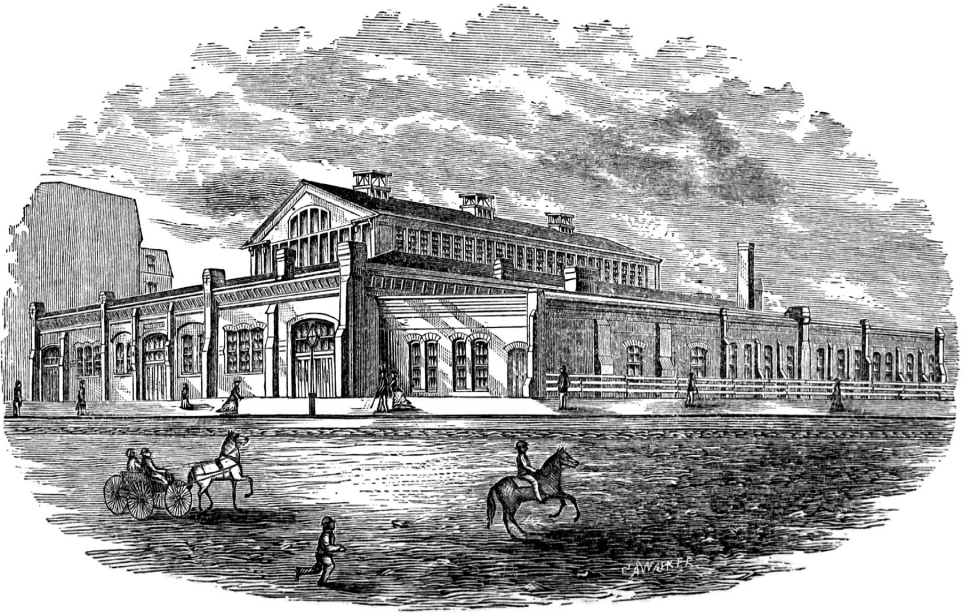
they invited the famed English preacher George Whitefield—known as the “Grand Itinerant”<sup>13</sup>—who had just landed in the colonies, to come preach in Boston. Whitefield was well-known from his writings and reputation, such that interest was already high when he arrived in the city on Thursday, September 18, 1740, at 8:00 in the evening. The next day, a crowd of two thousand gathered, and the numbers simply continued to climb each time he preached.

In one instance, on September 22, so many people crowded into the New South Church, the sound of a cracking board caused panic as people feared the balcony was collapsing. Some in the galleries jumped out windows while others leaped upon those below, resulting in five deaths. Whitefield arrived amidst the chaos and managed to calm the situation, relocating outside. Eventually he preached to over twenty thousand on Boston Commons—perhaps the largest gathering on the continent to that date. It was there that his longtime friend Ben Franklin did an experiment to ascertain how many people could actually hear the evangelist at one time, calculating that number to be well over twenty thousand.<sup>14</sup> As a result of Whitefield’s impassioned preaching, pastors from across the area were quick to report on lives changed and members added to their churches.

Successive revivals were reported in the 1820s and 1840s, with the nationwide Prayer/Businessmen’s Revival of 1857 drawing large numbers. Boston was also home to the nation’s first YMCA in 1851, which, by Sankey’s day, had become one of the most dynamic forces in evangelical life.

By Thursday, January 25, 1877, when a dedication service took place for the custom-built brick Tabernacle located on Tremont and Montgomery Streets, meticulous preparations had already been completed. In May of the previous year, Moody had announced that seventy-eight area churches were working to bring him to Boston; the next month he met with three hundred ministers to discuss organizational plans. By September, a fifty-member Executive Committee had been formed to carry out the details, and within two more months, \$30,000 was pledged toward a new building.<sup>15</sup>

Moody also enjoyed support from a wide array of the city’s most revered religious and cultural personalities. The Reverend Adoniram Judson Gordon was a leader of Boston evangelicals and future founder of a seminary and college named after him. He was an active hymnwriter and his tune for the devotional poem “My Jesus, I love Thee” would appear in the third volume of *Gospel Hymns*, as well as become a standard in almost all



**The Tabernacle, Boston**, in Elias Nason, *The Lives of Dwight Moody and Ira Sankey* (1877).

future hymnals. Henry Durant, the successful criminal lawyer, who with his wife Pauline had recently founded the Wellesley Female Seminary (later Wellesley College), played host to the Moody family during the revivals.

Also welcoming was Phillips Brooks, the popular Episcopal rector of the newly completed Trinity Church on Copley Square, the most impressive Protestant religious edifice in the city. As a result of his visit to Bethlehem a decade earlier, he had penned “O little town of Bethlehem” for a Christmas



Sunday School service, and his organist and Sunday School superintendent, Lewis Redner, provided a tune; the carol quickly became a favorite.

Another surprising supporter of the revivals was the Quaker abolitionist, founding contributor to *The Atlantic Monthly* magazine, and poet, John Greenleaf Whittier. Two of his poems became well-known hymns, although they were never widely appreciated in revivalist circles: “O Brother Man, fold to thy heart thy brother,” and the better-known, “Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways.”

While many Bostonian luminaries and the secular press welcomed Moody and Sankey to their city, considerable opposition arose, especially among those on the liberal theological spectrum, such as the Unitarians.

Boston—which prided itself as the “Athens of America”—was undoubtedly ground zero for Unitarianism, a set of beliefs that had developed among Polish Brethren in Transylvania after the Reformation, in which adherents believed that only God—not Jesus or the Holy Spirit—was divine. The movement taught the Oneness of God (from the Latin *unus*, meaning *one*) and rejected orthodox views of the Trinity, predestination, and the Bible’s infallibility. Unitarian teachings had taken root in Boston as early as 1782 in King’s Chapel and at Brattle Street Church by 1800. In 1805, Unitarian Henry Ware became a full professor of theology at Harvard, signaling its acceptance at that original bastion of Orthodoxy. From the 1820s on, Unitarian beliefs found a warm welcome in many of Boston’s Congregationalist churches, inheritors of the old Puritan theology. Moody’s and Sankey’s revivalism, rooted in the transforming power of Jesus Christ and a trust in the supernatural, was clearly at odds with modern Unitarian thought, which relied on reason for guidance and understanding.

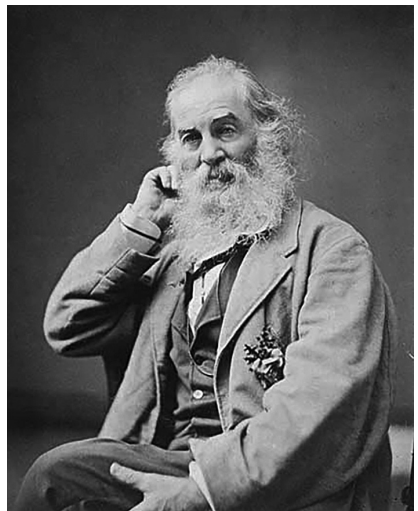
It was not surprising then to see the Unitarian press, especially through the oracle of *The Christian Register*, heap scorn upon the revival in general and the evangelists in particular. Unsympathetic reports variously characterized Moody as “an illiterate evangelist” of “limited intellectual resources,” possessing “businesslike earnestness and ingenious ignorance.” The revivals were accused of fostering “an organized epidemic of frights and frenzies,” offering cheap civic entertainment, stirring up people’s selfishness—for who wouldn’t want to live forever in paradise with friends and family? The Catholic *Pilot* painted the supposed “singing, acting, and weeping” of the revivals as more fit for the stage than pulpit.<sup>16</sup>

Despite such reservations or opposition, the mainline press was much more supportive. But that was in part because of the symbiotic relationship Moody had developed with the papers. First, reporters were catered to on many levels. The Tabernacle was constructed with reporters' boxes enjoying an unobstructed view and within earshot of the pulpit where they could easily understand every word. In addition, they were supplied with a chair, desk, inkwell, and paper, if necessary. Long-stemmed candles at each table provided additional illumination beyond the Tabernacle's gas lights. And reporters were the only persons admitted late to the meetings after the doors had closed.<sup>17</sup>

To further assist reporters, each day's program, speakers, and sermon titles were supplied in advance. Campaign staffers readily provided additional information to those attempting to make the latest edition. Thrice-weekly meetings for reporters at Tremont Temple provided sidebar information and often hosted Moody or Sankey, offering "scoops" to those present.<sup>18</sup> The Boston *Herald* dropped its "Personal Column" in favor of a "Religious Department," which printed Moody's entire sermons.<sup>19</sup> And coverage of the revivals surpassed the national crisis over the presidential election, still languishing in Congress.

The papers even corrected Moody's atrocious grammar, to the degree that when Walt Whitman finally attended a meeting, he was shocked. As reported in the *Sunday Times* (of New York), he arrived at a "heavenly hippodrome" where he was "jostled, hurried, squeezed, hat smashed, and clothes torn." He hunkered down among "Beacon Street Brahmins, South Cove snoozers, Free Thinkers, Yankees, German, and Irish," waiting to "take our peep at Moody and Sankey and be saved."<sup>20</sup>

But most disturbing to Whitman was Moody's "endlessly bad grammar" and "murder of syntax," skillfully edited out by the papers, he believed, which obscured the evangelist as an "ignorant charlatan" or a "mistaken enthusiast." Whitman determined it was the news-



Walt Whitman, ca. 1867, photo by Mathew Brady, Smithsonian



papers that had made Moody a celebrity and the revival a grand spectacle. As the former editor of two New York papers, the poet and newspaper man must have marveled at this power of the press.

Notwithstanding such occasional barbs, Moody maintained a positive relationship with the press, and it responded in like fashion by declaring him to be “a revivalist of worldwide reputation,” and those he impacted would be “better and truer men and women.”<sup>21</sup>

The new brick Tabernacle seated six to seven thousand folks, with standing room around the sides for hundreds more. The wide and surprisingly low stage across one end seated eight hundred guests plus a massive choir, which had been recruited and prepared by Eben Tourjée, one of the country’s most respected musicians. An active Methodist and YMCA supporter, Tourjée had founded what would become the New England Conservatory of Music in 1867. Two years later, he marshaled choral forces for the gargantuan spectacle at the National Peace Jubilee in Boston, belatedly celebrating the end of the Civil War.<sup>22</sup> The choir, made up from various choral societies and numbering as many as ten thousand, was intended to be the largest in the world. So successful was Tourjée at raising a massed choir that notices had to be sent out, closing participation to additional singers.

A colosseum (named The Temple of Peace) holding fifty thousand spectators—it was advertised—hosted a five-day extravaganza, whose most memorable event was a performance of the famous “Anvil Chorus” from Giuseppe Verdi’s opera *Il Trovatore* by a reputed chorus of ten thousand, an orchestra of one thousand, and a phalanx of one hundred red-coated and brass-buttoned firemen hammering away on anvils. The “monster concert” also boasted an enormous organ and the world’s largest bass drum, measuring twenty-five feet in circumference.

Tourjée also assisted in the World’s Peace Jubilee and International Musical Festival on an even larger scale, just a few years later in 1872—basically doubling the size of the 1869 celebration in a vast hall costing half a million dollars. Both events were the vision of the showman-conductor-promoter Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore, who in 1874 began managing the New York Colosseum, which Moody later rented for revival services.<sup>23</sup>

By 1877 and the Boston revivals, Eben Tourjée was very comfortable with large choirs and related events on the grandest scale the country had ever seen. He was clearly a major draw. Singing in a revival choir led by one of the nation’s most famous choral directors would have been quite

the honor for those participating in the meetings.

Yet Tourjée's musical activities weren't limited to just grand civic spectacles, because he took a deep interest in sacred music. In 1851, he combined the resources of Sunday School, church choir, and congregation in what he called "Praise Meetings" or "Services of Praise," which were described as "similar to the popular English Service of Song, with connected Scripture readings, the design . . . being to illustrate a single subject by Scripture and song."<sup>24</sup>

By the time of the Boston revivals, Tourjée had long perfected his direction of congregational singing and was perhaps the best man in the nation to assist Ira with the music at the mass gatherings.

To that end, he recruited a choir of two thousand voices, divided into five or six groups. Nightly, an ensemble of hundreds filled the stage where, thirty minutes before the service began, the bald, bearded, and slightly rumpled Tourjée led them in singing from the revival hymn book. After about twenty minutes, the congregation was invited to formally join the choir, although many an eager worshiper had already begun quietly humming or enthusiastically intoning a familiar song.

Tourjée—whom Moody mispronounced as "Dr. Trojay"—would soon lead the choir and congregation, waving his arms and employing the standard conducting patterns of a choral director.<sup>25</sup> But that was an approach none of his contemporary revival musicians—such as Philip Phillips, George Stebbins, P.P. Bliss or Ira Sankey—could employ, for they led congregations, seated at their harmonium/pump organs, which required their hands be on the keyboard. By contrast, Tourjée led the choir by standing in front of them (facing them), and using standard conducting gestures, an approach almost necessitated when directing many hundreds of singers. And he could do that because he had an assistant, A.S. Akers, to play the pump organ.

Directing from the keyboard as Sankey did was actually the common practice, even in non-revivalist settings, for it was normal in most churches for congregations to limp along during the hymn singing, often half-a-beat



**Eben Tourjée**, in Elias Nason, *The Lives of Dwight Moody and Ira Sankey* (1877).

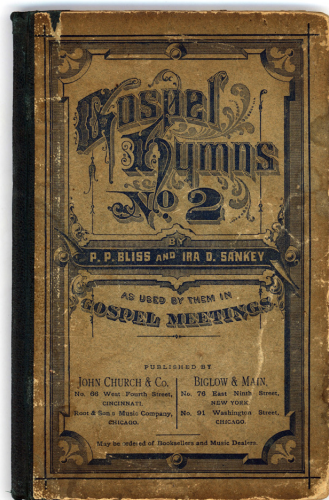
behind an organ that was located in some overhead choir loft. It wouldn't be until the next generation of revival songleaders under the influence of Charlie Alexander, and a separate keyboard player,<sup>26</sup> that mass congregations would be directed by an arm-waving songleader.<sup>27</sup>

With no more direction or support than only a modest-sounding pump organ and Sankey's own voice (with no amplification), there must have been countless occasions in those vast arenas when members of the congregation—sitting far to the rear or in a distant balcony—were dramatically out of sync with Sankey's leadership from the stage. Undoubtedly, there were more than a few moments of musical chaos during the congregational singing—but it was perhaps too far away for Sankey to even notice.<sup>28</sup>

While there was a large group of singers on the platform at the revival services, it rarely functioned in the normal sense as a “choir” whose purpose was to sing music specifically written for them. Instead, the revival singers acted as a model congregation—not a choir—singing the hymns found in the newest edition of *Gospel Hymns*, the same book those in the Tabernacle were clutching.

*Gospel Hymns No. 2* (which dropped the formerly prominent “and Sacred Songs” from its title) was hot off the press—having been printed in the closing days of 1876 and advertised in *The New York Evangel* by January 4, 1877. The ad for January 9 informed readers that it would first be used in the upcoming Boston meetings.<sup>29</sup>

Its preparation had occupied much time and energy from its two editors, Philip Bliss and Ira Sankey. Bliss, who had supplied the majority of compositions for the first *Gospel Hymns*—used in Brooklyn, Philadelphia, New York, and Chicago—seriously appreciated the necessity of providing his time toward a new edition. As he informed Daniel Whittle the previous spring: “In regard to the book [*Gospel Hymns No. 2*] . . ., my only thought is to write all summer, if the Lord will please to send me some good hymns, then His wisdom in regard to publishing them. I have declined eight invitations . . . [to hold meetings]. Am determined to rest and write all summer.”<sup>30</sup>



Bliss apparently accomplished his goal and resumed holding evangelistic meetings with Daniel Whittle the next fall. He traveled to Chicago for the Moody-Sankey meetings in October, but he was careful not to actively participate. He spent two weeks during the meetings residing in the Union Pacific Hotel with Ira, working intensely on the new songbook, nearing its final phase of preparation before being sent off to the publishers, Biglow and Main of New York and John Church of Cincinnati. It's not recorded why those involved chose to publish a second and different volume instead of simply enlarging their first songbook as the British publisher Morgan and Scott had done with *Sacred Songs and Solos, Enlarged*.<sup>31</sup>

The timing for the publication of a new *Gospel Hymns* also presented something of a mystery, as there had been a mild disagreement among the parties as to the need for another book or when it might be released. Whittle and Bliss had been lobbying for a new collection to use at their meetings, as Bliss reported the latest developments to Whittle: "I said to [publisher John] Church about what you and I agreed upon . . .; but in general a book for our work would be wanted for next season, and I wanted him to see Moody." A little later he opined, "Nothing about book from Bro. Sankey or Moody. I guess Moody will let [*Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs*] alone as it is."<sup>32</sup>

But that didn't happen, and there was a new edition out by January. When it came to decisions about publishing revival hymn books for their meetings, it seems as though Moody could have been the chief decision maker. By now, publishers Biglow and Main and the John Church Company would have been eager to put out a new book and benefit from its additional revenue stream. It's unclear what the specific concerns were about the hymn book or who held them. Of course, *Gospel Hymns No. 2* enjoyed instant name recognition and sold thousands of copies at 25 cents each. Its availability wasn't limited to the revival meetings, however, as advertised at the bottom of the front cover: "May be ordered of Booksellers and Music Dealers." Additionally, "Price in board covers, \$30 per 100 copies, 35 cents each, by mail." Everyone, it seems, wanted to join the masses singing the old favorites and latest popular selections.

After months of planning and anticipation, it all came together on Sunday afternoon, January 28, when eight great doors were flung open in the newly completed Tabernacle, quickly filling its six thousand seats with a varied throng, including "the gray-haired church veteran and the giggling school girl, the youth about town, and the mother who had carefully

wrapped a Moody and Sankey hymnal in a pocket handkerchief.”<sup>33</sup> Thirty minutes before the scheduled hour, Eben Tourjée amassed his musical forces, the size of which had never been seen in any Boston religious meeting.

At 4:00PM, Moody and Sankey came through a rear door on the stage and proceeded directly to the podium and harmonium. Moody brusquely announced the opening hymn, and thousands crinkled the pages of their new songbooks. Dr. Webb offered a prayer, and Sankey sang “The Ninety and Nine,” the song everyone had come to hear. It’s uncertain whether he employed the new, more dramatic, harmonic setting published in *Gospel Hymns No. 2* at No. 67. But that version soon became standard.

Before the message, he sang Bliss’s “Only an Armor-Bearer,” which would have prepared hearts for the evangelist’s familiar sermon on “Going Up to Possess the Land.” Moody began by recounting a warning he had received from some fellow Christians: “You must remember that Boston is a peculiar place, and you cannot expect to do the same here as elsewhere; there are many obstacles.” But the evangelist retorted, “It is the same old story. Boston is the same as other places. The enemy cannot hinder God from working, if we only have faith. This terrible unbelief can shake in Boston, as easy as a mother can shake her little child.” Sankey followed Moody’s sermon with the appropriate charge for believers to “Hold the Fort!”—located way back in the “words-only” section of the new songbook at No. 130—and the beloved Episcopalian rector of the city’s famous Trinity Church, Phillips Brooks, pronounced the benediction.

The first evening service was a bit uncommon because the revivalists didn’t usually hold meetings on Sunday nights to avoid conflicting with local church services. Yet thousands turned out, filled the Tabernacle, and spilled over into churches on both Clarendon and Berkeley Streets. The services themselves were replicas of those held previously in Brooklyn, Philadelphia, New York, and Chicago. Moody preached many of the same sermons, varying the details and illustrations to fit the present situation. Sermons like the one on the Old Testament hero, Daniel, had become well known. In addition, his sermons were available in published form, both authorized and bootlegged. Sankey sang a core repertoire of songs, introducing new ones and retiring older titles. Of course, whatever he sang was right there in the song collection for all to follow.

The basic components of an evening service included:

1. A “praise service” of thirty minutes preceding the appearance of Moody and Sankey at precisely 7:30PM;
2. An opening hymn announced by Moody;
3. Prayer by one of the local clergy;
4. A solo by Sankey, often introduced by his remarks;
5. Scripture reading by Moody;
6. Another congregational song;
7. Announcements somewhere;
8. Various periods for silent prayer;
9. Another Sankey solo;
10. A sermon by Moody of less than thirty minutes;
11. A solo, often related to the sermon;
12. A closing congregational hymn;
13. Invitation to a prayer meeting (in the early days of the revival) or the Inquiry Room (when Moody’s preaching focused on salvation);
14. Closing prayer.

Within this format, Moody made alterations of order or personnel, especially with visiting clergy. Sankey also varied the way he introduced a solo or involved the congregation in singing—sometimes requesting them to join the refrain of a solo when active involvement would reinforce the message. Unfortunately, one constant during the meetings was the omnipresent sound of coughing, which “ran from one part of the house to the other”<sup>34</sup> and marred an otherwise attentive congregation.

But this didn’t mean the meetings seemed formulaic or lackluster; as author and hymn writer Reverend Elias Nason observed:

Notwithstanding the inevitable “sameness” of the exercises, the crowds still press onward to the Tabernacle to hear the “word” presented by Mr. Moody, and the “goodness of his grace” by his companion.<sup>35</sup>

Of course, from night to night, there might appear any number of surprising elements. Heavy rains could limit attendance, and on occasion,



beat so hard on the rectangular clerestory roof right above the pulpit as to compete with the sermon or Sankey's solo.<sup>36</sup> One one occasion, a constant drumbeat from outside competed with "The Ninety and Nine" so incessantly through all five stanzas, such that, after its conclusion, one sympathetic worshiper attempted encouragement with a shout of "Glory to God," producing embarrassed laughter from some.

Other distractions sometimes resulted from inebriated souls who wandered in from the street out of curiosity and "made [themselves] ridiculous." Fainting women seemed to be an ongoing problem. One newspaper kept track of these and recorded twenty-six women and one child who had passed out by the eighth week of the meetings—the third week in March. Three of those took place in one evening alone, with the ushers quickly responding to carry out those who had succumbed.<sup>37</sup> Tragically, a few deaths also occurred among people attending the meetings.<sup>38</sup>

Some visitors seemed to attend with the intent of poking fun at the whole process. That appeared to be the case one evening when an old gentleman, apparently from the country, seated himself in an usher's chair, listening to music of the introductory Praise Service. Soon after, an usher informed him that he was occupying a reserved spot.

"Yes" said the man, "it is a very good seat indeed."

"But it is the usher's seat," replied the young attendant with emphasis.

"Yes, you told me so."

"But I say it is the usher's seat and you must not occupy it."

"Who is the usher?" queried the old gentleman.

"I am," replied the exasperated young man.

"And you want me to get up, don't you?"

"Yes, I do," reaffirmed the officiant.

"See here, young man, do you think this is the way to treat an old gentleman like me who has come here to get religion?"

And off trotted the usher for reinforcements.

Seeing two men returning with determination in their eyes, the older man warned, "Now don't aggravate me. When I get excited, I am liable to have a fit. I feel one coming on right now. If I do, just take me right out into the fresh air."

With that warning, many folks in the vicinity left their seats with great haste. Then the old man—who was known to some for enjoying a joke—moved to a vacated chair nearer the stage. The Praise Service continued without incident.<sup>39</sup>

Other surprises were also humorous—from a distance. As one embellished newspaper account recorded: one evening, after the sermon, an African American gentleman right in front of Moody was so “intoxicated with religious joy” that, during the closing hymn, he leaped to his feet, clapped his hands rapidly and loudly, expelling “an almost unearthly shout . . . to stand up for Christ.” As he continued throughout the entire first stanza, many in the crowd began craning their necks to identify the unseen cacophony.

Because the commotion continued unabated during a second stanza, a somewhat perplexed Moody looked down smilingly as he quickly gathered his thoughts on how to address this excess of the Spirit. During an interlude Sankey provided between stanzas, Moody stepped down and requested the celebrant to control his outburst—but to no avail, as the third stanza was accompanied by the same rapture. Sankey continued unabated to the end, when the ever-resourceful Moody explained to the congregation, “This dear colored brother is so full of love for Christ that he hardly knows what to do with himself. I don’t blame him. It is enough to have any man shout for joy to have such a Saviour. I wish we were all so full of joy as this man. But it wouldn’t do to make so much noise about it. That would upset everything.”

Here again, with Moody’s comical turn-of-phrase, a potentially awkward moment was transformed into a charming interlude.<sup>40</sup>

Following the nightly meetings in the Tabernacle, special interest services included the Inquiry Meeting for those seeking further spiritual counsel, a men’s prayer meeting in a nearby church, and a boys’ meeting directed by a local pastor. On Tuesday evening, February 27, an unusual speaker took the stage to address the lads in the meeting for boys. He was a youth of twelve, and when introduced, he rose from his chair and read from the 16th chapter of John about the role of the Holy Spirit. He then explained, “I think we must first receive the Holy Spirit from the Bible before we can hope to accept Christ. I hope that all here will have his Holy Spirit tonight.” With that exhortation, the young Harry Sankey—the oldest of the three Sankey children—sat down, being perhaps his first time in testifying publicly. This continued for some time until others were calling him “a boy evangelist.”<sup>41</sup>

Both parents were certainly proud of their son's participation in the revival and were thankful they could be lodged close by, so the whole family could be more easily involved. At only a half-mile distance, straight up Clarendon Street, the Sankeys' lodging at the Brunswick Hotel made access to the Tabernacle and other central locations most convenient.

The hotel itself was a brand new (1874), seven-storey, red brick and sandstone edifice, costing one million to construct. If not the poshest hostelry in the city, it certainly rivaled the likes of Boston's famous Hotel Vendome. "All chambers are supplied with every modern convenience; every apartment has hot and cold water; and every suite has a bath-room. The passenger elevator is one of the most luxurious in Boston," providing a point of endless fascination for the Sankey children. And in a brilliant stroke of advertising at its opening, management threw the hotel keys into the nearby Charles River, symbolizing its policy of remaining open twenty-four hours a day.<sup>42</sup> For Fanny Sankey, staying in the same location, rather than moving and re-packing as she was often required to do in Britain, took a lot of the pressure off supporting her husband's work—especially with three young children.

By this point, Sankey's frequent singing of "The Ninety and Nine" was becoming something of a burden. Like any acclaimed performer, Ira was publicly associated with his most famous solo, "Hold the Fort!" during the early British meetings, and "The Ninety and Nine" after that. Which meant those coming to the meetings—especially just for a single visit—wanted to hear Sankey sing "his famous song." That's certainly what they would remember and regale their friends and family about for years to come.

Soon it came to the point that both Moody and his soloist were constantly inundated with requests to sing the celebrated number. And not just in the evening services but also at the noon prayer meetings and anytime Sankey appeared. For a while, Moody tried to comply with the constant entreaties and often acquiesced, requesting Ira to sing this sacred "hit-song." There's no record of Sankey ever balking, but he must have longed to share some of the newer selections he and Bliss had worked so hard to prepare.

It wasn't surprising then, when Moody, at a noon prayer meeting, admitted that many requests were received daily for Sankey to sing "The Ninety and Nine." He said the hymn was sung so much that he was really ashamed to announce it. Although requested, he hoped Sankey would be excused for not singing it this time. He recognized how some folks had come from out of town and had never heard it, but many present had heard it often, and "if

we hear it three times a day [in each of the three services] it will grow common.” He then promised that Sankey would sing it in some other meeting and requested him to sing “Nothing but Leaves.”<sup>43</sup>

By the Boston meetings, “The Ninety and Nine” had long escaped its confines of religious music and had become, along with “Grandfather’s Clock” and “I’ll Take You Home Again, Kathleen,”<sup>44</sup> one of the country’s most popular songs.<sup>45</sup> And that made Ira Sankey one of the nation’s most popular singers.

While those in the Tabernacle would have sung the beloved solo—or followed along as Sankey sang—from the collection *Gospel Hymns*, which they could have purchased in the lobby, the song became famous among the general public as sheet music. This was the format in which popular songs had been disseminated for many decades. The songs of Stephen Foster, or later, Charles K. Harris, were typically issued as single songs rather than in a collection. Sheet music included music of every possible genre including “parlor songs” by composers like Stephen Foster, patriotic music, minstrel tunes like “Dixie,” classical music (often in simplified form), piano music of all grades for an exploding market, a wide array of dance music, political songs, and religious music.

Many popular hymns were issued as sheet music, with the newer Sunday School songs (e.g. “Shall we gather at the river?”) and gospel hymns providing a wealth of material. “Ninety and Nine” or “The Lost Sheep” was published by C.M. Cady in New York the previous year—1876. Its cover featured engravings of Moody and Sankey and advertised the song “As Sung by Ira D. Sankey and Wm. W. Bentley in All Their Meetings.” At the bottom of the page, Bentley was credited as the arranger, perhaps explaining the odd attribution, “As Sung by . . . Wm. W. Bentley in All Their Meetings,” for there seems to be no mention of Bentley voicing this song in any of the previous Moody-Sankey assemblies. Most likely, he had the technical skills to produce a piano accompaniment as would have been required for sheet music featuring vocal solos, and he was simply awarded the honor of his name being listed alongside Ira’s as having sung it, “In All Their Meetings.”<sup>46</sup>

While attendees at the revival meetings only saw the public side of the evangelists, both Moody and Sankey had to present a “brave face” whenever they were in front of a group. And that was every day for months on end. Perhaps Moody’s heaviest burden was the health of his family, especially his children, for it seems that by early February, just a few weeks into the revival,

young Willie—only seven years old—was also stricken with scarlet fever.<sup>47</sup> It's likely he caught it from his older sister, Emma, who had endured a long and serious bout during the Chicago meetings. As a young child, Willie had often been ill during the family's sojourn in England, forcing Mrs. Moody to leave her husband for an extended period and take the family to surroundings healthier than London.

Now he was sick again, and Emma wished they could have been home, rather than staying as guests at Henry Durant's elegant residence on 30 Marlborough Street, a block from the Boston Commons Public Garden. Although Henry and Pauline Durant were wonderful hosts, their domicile was locus to a menagerie of visiting dignitaries, missionaries, or students from nearby Wellesley College, creating less than the calm atmosphere Mrs. Moody might have preferred in caring for a sick child.<sup>48</sup>

While Ira's family seemed to be flourishing, he periodically struggled with vocal problems. Moody certainly missed meetings because he was hoarse, but he wasn't famous for the beauty of his discourse. Ira, on the other hand, depended on the quality of his voice for his success, and that didn't always serve him well. While most hearers raved over the performances of Ira Sankey, a few listeners were more critical.

In a lengthy letter to the editor of the *Unitarian Christian Register*, the writer spoke at length in a highly sarcastic tone about many issues related to the revival. As to the throng of first-time visitors, he quoted an unnamed paper that observed:

It was the remark of many that in Mr. Moody they were disappointed, and in Mr. Sankey they were surprised. Certainly Moody has few prepossessing points. Neither his voice is harsh, and though powerful, is not at all times distinct. He has not one of the arts of a speaker, save in his earnestness. . . . Mr. Sankey is a handsome man . . . with a pleasant voice . . . and a countenance that lights up wonderfully as he speaks or sings. His singing is marvelously sweet; and, in all respects, the singer and his singing are the opposite of the speaker and his speaking.<sup>49</sup>

Yet the writer continued:

But I venture to say that many of the most discerning recoil from the sound of Mr. Sankey's remarkable voice. A voice combining

great power and sweetness, of so pure a tone that it might well be heard by a hundred thousand people at once, it yet often shows the effect of having been overstrained and abused. . . . Aiming always at the pathetic [strong emotion], it flats whole lines into prosaic dreariness, with a complete loss of melody. Never is there in it a sound of joy. Never does it warm the heart, or fill it with a sense of exultation. His “Hallelujah” is wholly joyless. “Rejoice! I have found my sheep,” is a long cry, from the desert indeed, hopeless, lonely, and cold.<sup>50</sup>

*Tabernacle Sketches*<sup>51</sup> contained a series of articles published in the *Boston Times* that skewered the revival in highly sarcastic tones, often commenting on Sankey:

It is not the masterly manner in which Sankey manipulates the pedals of the organ with his own pedals [feet], nor the celestial crack in his voluminous voice that makes him such a monarch of melody. If Dr. Tourjée [the revival's choir director] sat in front and watched the ravishing roll of Sankey's eyes towards the Tabernacle roof, and the saintly shimmer of his row of pearly-white teeth, and the angelic movement of those mutton chop whiskers, he would know better. But it's the play of the seraphic countenance that does the mischief.<sup>52</sup>

While that description could be chalked up to someone opposed to all things religious, others more sympathetic to the revival did seem to notice the wear-and-tear on Ira:

Mr. Sankey's voice is considerably broken, and if the success of his singing depended upon purely artistic effects instead of its dramatic power and the influence of the Holy Ghost, he would hardly hold his fort or continue to be armor-bearer [allusions to popular songs Ira was singing] to Mr. Moody. He realizes this himself, speaks humbly though not despondingly of his “worn-out” voice, and has asked special prayer that God may use the “broken vessel” for his glory. I cannot see, however, that the effectiveness of his singing is in the least abated.<sup>53</sup>

Whatever the level of Sankey's vocal troubles, they must have been obvious enough that a rumor surfaced, when he missed some meetings, saying



he had lost his voice and left Boston. He didn't flee the city, but did seem to ask the congregations to more consistently join in on the choruses of many hymns, even in his solos, perhaps to save his voice. Overall, considering the unforgiving conditions of Boston winters coupled with the evangelists' grueling schedules, it's a miracle that neither of the pair missed any more meetings than they did. In the previous Chicago revival, it was not voice problems but a toothache that prohibited Moody from participating in services at Christmas, but that appeared to have improved by Boston.

On Thursday, February 15, a huge noon prayer meeting of forty-five hundred was held in the Tabernacle. H.L. Whitney—who often filled in for the ailing Tourjée—found it hard to get the crowd to sing. A reporter at the meeting theorized, “There are a great many people attending the Tabernacle meetings who seem to be afraid of their own voices. This fear wears off, however, as the exercises proceed.”<sup>54</sup> Part of that hesitancy could have simply stemmed from many of the selections being unfamiliar to such a large group of visitors. That day's hymns were “Come, Holy Spirit,” “Hasten, sinner, to be wise,” “Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,” “'Tis the promise of God,” “My latest sun is sinking,” and “I gave my life for thee”<sup>55</sup>—certainly unfamiliar titles to those not frequenting the services on a regular basis. It did seem, however, that the introductory Praise Services—often incorporating ten to twelve hymns—acted, in part, to introduce new songs to the congregations—a very practical approach, even if it sometimes limited enthusiastic participation.

Monday evening, February 26, was reserved for a “praise meeting,” with Sankey in charge. A slightly diminished choir of five to six hundred was directed by Tourjée, assisted by A.S. Ackers, who played at the organ, except when Sankey sang his solos. The service began with Ira requesting the crowded congregation to turn to No. 65, “Hallelujah, 'Tis Done!” While the choir offered several stanzas, the congregation echoed back the refrain:

*Hallelujah, 'tis done! I believe on the Son;  
I am saved by the blood of the crucified one.*

Unlike some services where the congregational singing was a bit lackluster, “The volume of tone was grand, and there was a remarkably good observance of time in the rendering of the music.”<sup>56</sup>

Sankey read from Psalm 145: “I will extol thee, my God, O King; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever.” The choir then sang Charles Wesley's hymn “Jesus, lover of my soul,” No. 69, to the unusual tune REFUGE, by the

composer Joseph P. Holbrook. Its style—half of which was written in two-parts, including some unusual triplets, and requiring two high F-sharps—did not make it into *Gospel Hymns No. 3*.<sup>57</sup> However, both Sankey and Tourjée promoted this melody quite consistently, often as a duet, and it became widely known in that form.

Sankey then gave the main address for the evening on the subject of praise, focusing on Colossians 3:16, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

Now there is praising and teaching and preaching in song, but these missions of song are not fully understood. Take the hymns “Jesus of Nazareth Passeth By” and “What Shall the Harvest Be?”; they are called hymns of praise often, and yet there is not a word of praise in them. They are teaching hymns, but “Praise God from whom all blessings flow,” is a hymn of praise. I suppose many have wondered why I have sung alone. Well, I sing alone because I believe that I may reach some heart that could not be reached by the congregational singing.<sup>58</sup>

Later, during this service, Sankey sang “The Ninety and Nine,” and his introduction to the song’s creation cast some interesting light on the tune’s fabled origin—that Sankey improvised it on the spot. He explained how, a few years earlier in Edinburgh, he found the poem in a religious paper and realized it might make a great new song. “The next day, the little chant formed itself” in his mind and became the basis of the tune he improvised at the organ, becoming “The Ninety and Nine.”<sup>59</sup> This explanation—only a few years after the tune’s inception—suggests the later story of the entire song being improvised on the spot merits some skepticism.

During such meetings, believers were permitted to behold the heart of a man who often appeared to most as some distant soloist behind a little organ. Particularly telling was Ira’s answer to a question about working with choirs:

“How can we have singers speak plain?”

His reply, “By speaking to them gently and asking them to do so. Don’t laugh at them, or criticize or abuse them, but speak to them properly and they will be glad to correct their faults.”<sup>60</sup>

Here, Ira's sunny disposition and natural personal gifts spilled over into his choral pedagogy—and people loved him for it. He must have then found it most perplexing, if not a little amusing, to read:

The Court Street M.E. [Methodist Episcopal] Church is in arms against the pastor, because he peremptorily ordered the choir to vacate their accustomed seats and take another place, whereupon the aforesaid choir “stepped down and out,” and the anti-choir and the choir party in the church are fighting the battle in the local newspapers.<sup>61</sup>

March 2, 1877, witnessed the consummation of one of the most contentious struggles in American political history, for Congress finally concluded months of political jockeying by declaring Rutherford B. Hayes as the nineteenth president of the United States—by just one electoral vote. The outcome had been determined by a Congressional Commission, consisting of 8 Republicans and 7 Democrats—who voted 8 to 7—to award the Republican Hayes the twenty contested electoral votes from three southern states in what became known as the Compromise of 1877. The decision was made only three days before Hayes' public swearing in on March 5.<sup>62</sup>

It was generally a day of rejoicing for Republicans and evangelicals who saw Hayes as representing the values they upheld. As an example, “To the delight of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union [whose future president, Frances Willard, was assisting with some of the revival meetings], Lucy Webb Hayes carried out her husband's orders to banish wines and liquors from the White House.”

Back in Boston, alterations were being made to the giant stage of the Tabernacle—the one not constructed very high above the congregation. As always, it seemed as though poor acoustics were the chief culprit. Rather than the very supportive surroundings of the Chicago Tabernacle, which Moody had boasted about while still in that city, those in Boston sounded lackluster at best. And that muted situation extended to the music as well, as one attendee related: “Hundreds, if not thousands, of the audience join in the singing, yet the Tabernacle is so large that there is no overpowering rush of sound. It is pleasant enough to hear, but not in the least exciting.”<sup>63</sup>

To address the problem, major changes caused the choir and visitor section of the stage to be heightened. “The organ has been raised about four inches, and Mr. Moody's position is removed from the corner to the centre,

the platform on which he stands being raised about fourteen inches." The Inquiry Rooms were also enlarged.

The biggest musical change was the installation of a new and much bigger Mason and Hamlin reed organ on March 12—perhaps in time for the Christian Convention. The previous instrument had certainly performed adequately for the past six weeks, but now a much-improved version took its place—one with plenty of “bells and whistles.” Sankey had quickly learned over the course of his career how to adapt to different instruments, sometimes in almost every service as the evangelists moved from one building to the next, but this seemed an altogether different kind of instrument.

Mason and Hamlin was the biggest reed organ producer in the United States, turning out nearly two hundred instruments a week from its factory at the foot of Cambridge Street in Boston. With the popularity of the revival meetings and the centrality of the reed organ to Sankey's leadership, it only made good advertising sense for the company to provide the meetings with an instrument—one costing \$120 in an oak or walnut case; \$150 for “elegant rosewood.”<sup>64</sup>

The company catalog made much of the superiority of its current “cabinet organ” over previous “melodeons” and “harmoniums,” terms reflecting a technical difference but often employed interchangeably, along with “pump” or “reed organ.” The new instrument boasted “tones closely resembling those of a pipe organ. It has thirteen speaking tubes . . . three forte stops, an octave coupler, and a stop that gives the full organ. The keyboard is five octaves.”<sup>65</sup>

Although the piano would eventually become—a generation later—the instrument most associated with revivalism for the next century, the company catalog voiced a skepticism that sounds odd at present: “The piano-forte, though admirable in its place, not only lacks volume of tone, but is in other respects so poorly adapted as an accompanying instrument for choruses, and for rendering sacred music, that its use for these purposes has rarely been attempted.”<sup>66</sup>

It also compared the desirability of their top-of-the-line model—costing \$450—to the pipe organ. “For a large church, a pipe organ costing not less than \$2,000 is the only suitable instrument, but for chapels and small churches, private houses, and all but quite large halls, the Pedal Bass Cabinet Organ is admirably adapted and greatly to be preferred to the low-priced pipe organs, which are in fact but the merest apologies for this noble instru-

ment.”<sup>67</sup> There is no record of Sankey’s feelings about the recent acquisition, but he apparently adjusted quickly and perhaps even enjoyed some of the new options.

Over the course of the three-plus months of meetings, there was a noticeable rise and fall in attendance, affected by the weather and other factors. By late February, there had been a lull, perhaps after the first wave of curiosity had worn off. But as the meetings continued, a stream of visitors from out of town, organized by regional churches, discounted railroad tickets, and reserved spaces at the meetings served to fill more seats.

Noon prayer meetings and a 4:00PM service proved highly popular with “day-trippers,” boasting a party of one hundred visitors from Marblehead—sponsored by that city’s YMCA—joining others from Worcester and Lynn, helping to fill the fifteen hundred reserved chairs for out-of-town guests. By mid-March, four hundred churches had joined the New England Prayer Alliance—sending scores to the services from the surrounding region. It was reported that crowds from Vermont and New Hampshire purchased twenty thousand revival songbooks, and some, in returning home at night, disturbed the peace by singing the famous hymns in the streets.<sup>68</sup> In March, one thousand volunteers canvassed Boston’s ninety thousand homes and distributed one hundred thousand copies of Moody’s “Tabernacle News”—further affecting a renewed interest in the meetings.<sup>69</sup>

Unfortunately, some of that interest was for less-than-godly purposes. One choir member lost her purse, only to recover it later, empty of its \$12. Another woman was shocked to find, while in a meeting, her gold necklace had been clipped off its chain. And newspapers warned,

Selling tickets of admission to the Tabernacle services is a pretty mean kind of business. Parties buying them are deceived, and all persons will do well to bear in mind that persons offering tickets for sale are sharpers.<sup>70</sup>

By the eighth week, beginning March 19, attendance had so grown in the noon prayer meetings that services were held in several locations at once: businessmen occupied Tremont Temple; two hundred manual laborers (in their frocks and overalls) working around Fanueil Hall met in a large room over Lakeman Market on Blackstone and North Streets; ladies—led by the Women’s Christian Temperance Union’s Frances E. Willard—gathered at Park Street Church; and another service offered prayer requests at South Baptist Church.

As there appeared the desire for a choir at some of these burgeoning meetings, Sankey stood up at Tremont Temple, five minutes before noon, and invited anyone present who wanted to sing to assemble on stage; many responded and became part of an *ad hoc* ensemble, which then opened with “’Tis the Promise of God.” A strong spirit of religious interest was palpable at all the meetings and continued to their scheduled close, about April 30.

While some churches and those in the press had voiced doubts in the beginning about the revival, by its conclusion, there seemed to be near-universal agreement that Moody and Sankey had been good for Boston and its churches. *Zion's Herald* thought the religious interest reflected a modern Pentecost. Moody and Sankey had appeared before an estimated one million folks, and six thousand souls had made confessions of faith. During 1877, Baptists and Congregationalists received more than double the usual number of members, with the Methodists following closely behind.<sup>71</sup> Moody had preached nearly 500 sermons and Ira had sung nearly triple that many solos.

While hastily cobbled biographies of Moody appeared in bookstores, along with copies of his sermons often taken down by reporters, Sankey's and Bliss's *Gospel Hymns No. 2* began turning up in church Sunday Schools, prayer meetings, and mission works. And the idea of a solo singer, rather than just the choir or the congregation providing music for a religious service, began to take root—although Sankey himself voiced caution about its use in regular worship services.<sup>72</sup> The paradigm for what constituted the acceptable way to do church music was changing—and Ira Sankey was the model for its new direction. ∞



## ENDNOTES

1. Words and music, Philip P. Bliss, "Only an Armour-Bearer," *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan, and George C. Stebbins, eds. (Cincinnati: John Church Co.; New York: Biglow and Main, 1894), No. 50.
2. *New York Evangel*, 11 January 1877, 4.
3. *The Chicago Tribune*, 17 January 1877, 7.
4. *The Chicago Tribune*, 29 December 1876, 8.
5. *The Chicago Tribune*, 29 December 1876, 8.
6. There is no record of choir director George Stebbins' recognition.
7. *The Chicago Tribune*, 29 December 1876, 8.
8. Darrel M. Robertson, *The Chicago Revival, 1876: Society and Revivalism in a Nineteenth-Century City* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1989), 147, reports that after Moody and Sankey left, meetings "Initially held at the Tabernacle . . . were soon moved to Plymouth Congregational Church due to the increasingly sparse crowds. Near the end of February, these meetings ceased altogether."
9. *The Chicago Tribune*, 29 December 1876, 8.
10. *The Chicago Tribune*, 29 December 1876, 8.
11. Robertson, *Chicago Revival*, 93. "In every case, the gains in membership during the revival months were atypical of normal growth rates in previous years," 189 fn 23. Robertson devoted an entire chapter, IX, to "Aftermath: The Impact of the Revival on Church and Society."
12. That was Jonathan Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls in Northampton* (London, 1737) in various editions but being widely published in Boston by 1838.
13. Meaning traveling from place to place, often without a permanent base. His opponents often called him "Dr. Squintem" because of his cross-eyed condition.
14. Thomas Kidd, "The Science of Sound: Whitefield's Massive Crowds," [www.thegospelcoalition.org](http://www.thegospelcoalition.org). "Using speech intelligibility, distance, geometry, and our best information about the Market Street area during Franklin's experiment, we worked backward to estimate the average sound pressure level (SPL) of Whitefield's speaking voice. The ideal acoustic conditions probably were fragile with any crowd of such a large size, but it seems possible that on certain occasions he may have been able to reach 50,000 people, at least for short periods of time. However, the majority of his large crowds were reported at

20,000 to 30,000, and these were the sizes Franklin was trying to validate.”

15. Elias Nason, *The Lives of the Eminent American Evangelists, Dwight Lyman Moody and Ira David Sankey* (Boston, D. Lothrop & co. [1877]), 205. Chapter IX of this book is the most detailed account of the Boston meetings.
16. Bruce J. Evensen, *God's Man for the Gilded Age: D.L. Moody and the Rise of Modern Mass Evangelism* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 173, 175.
17. Evensen, *God's Man*, 169.
18. Evensen, *God's Man*, 173.
19. Evensen, *God's Man*, 170.
20. Evensen, *God's Man*, 177. His reference to the “heavenly hippodrome” was an allusion to P.T. Barnum’s Hippodrome in New York City, which had housed the revival when it was held there the year before.
21. Evensen, *God's Man*, 171.
22. One of the best surveys of Tourjée’s life is by Leo Eben Tourjée, “God’s Apostle of Music’ Dr. Eben Tourjée, Musical Pioneer,” *The Etude* (April 1947), 187, 194.
23. For all practical purposes, Gilmore was the “Music Director of the Nation,” leading music at almost every important event including the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, the 1886 dedication of the Statue of Liberty, and successfully introducing and popularizing a new band instrument into American life—the saxophone. Sousa called him the “Father of the American Band.” His life was a model for Meredith Willson’s Broadway show, *The Music Man*.
24. David W. Music and Paul Akers Richardson, *“I Will Sing the Wondrous Story”: A History of Baptist Hymnody in North America* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008), 395.
25. I.A.M. Cumming, *Tabernacle Sketches* (Boston: Times Publishing, 1877), 82. The satirical publication printed crude sketches related to Tabernacle events. On page 10, it includes a drawing of Eben Tourjée with both hands raised in a choral conducting pose. *The Christian Register* for 24 February 1877, 2, reported, “Mr. Tourjée lifts his hand and the choir begins to sing,” revealing how Tourjée directed the revival choir with conducting gestures, rather than from a keyboard.
26. Robert Harkness.
27. Mel R. Wilhoit, “Alexander the Great’ or Just Plain Charlie,” *The Hymn*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (April 1995), 20–28. There was no need for someone to direct the congregational singing in the average church as their musical contribution

was considered unimportant (or almost non-existent), with most of the attention being directed to the choir.

28. There don't seem to be any references to this kind of musical dysfunction, although those who would most likely report such things—the press—were seated immediately next to the stage where they wouldn't have been aware of such musical malfunctions.  
 There are those humorous yet sad diary entries of Samuel Sewall, the eighteenth-century Boston precentor who, on more than one occasion, was mortified by the way the congregation confusedly morphed the Psalm tune he had begun into another one. See Samuel Sewall diaries for 28 December 1705; 5 July 1713; 6 February 1715, and others.
29. *New York Evangel*, 4 and 9 January 1877. The ad on January 6 advertised: “Gospel Hymns No. 2 by Ira D. Sankey and Philip P. Bliss” with Sankey's name listed first. That order was reversed with the January 18 ad, reflecting the order they were printed in the song collection.
30. From letters written on 4 and 11 May 1876. D.W. Whittle, ed. *Memoirs of Philip P. Bliss* (NY: A.S. Barnes, 1870), 270.
31. A process that continued until the collection contained 1200 titles and vied for size (in its music edition) with most standard hymnals of the day.
32. From letters written 4 May and 22 August 1876. Whittle, 270, 271.
33. Evensen, *God's Man*, 172.
34. *Boston Globe*, 17 March 1877, 2.
35. Nason, *American Evangelists*, 223.
36. Clerestory: a raised section of roof with windows.
37. *Boston Journal* unidentified clipping, likely from 20 March 1877.
38. David Williamson, *Ira D. Sankey: The Story of His Life* (London: S.W. Partridge and Co., n.d.), 152.
39. *Boston Journal* unidentified clipping. The Christian Convention began Tuesday, March 13.
40. Unidentified news clipping entitled “An Incident.” As numerous details in the description sound questionable, it's reasonable to assume that the reporter was applying a certain amount of journalistic creativity.
41. *The Christian Register*, 3 March 1877, 2. M. Laird Simons, in a biographical sketch of Ira Sankey, remarked, “the eldest [son], Henry, is already a boy evangelist.” *The Gospel Awakening* (St Louis: n.p., 1878), 22. Although designed to bring derision upon those affiliated with the revival, *Tabernacle Sketches*, 35, reported—in its jaundiced way—on this meeting.

42. *The New York Times*, “Brunswick Hotel Closed in Boston: Hosts to Presidents Grant, Garfield and Arthur,” 3 February 1935, 31. See also Moses King, ed., *King’s Handbook to the United States* (n.p.: Moses King Corp., 1891), 375.
43. *Boston Journal* unidentified clipping.
44. “Grandfather’s Clock,” words and music by Henry Clay Work (Chicago: C. M. Cady, 1876). “I’ll Take You Home Again, Kathleen,” words and music by Thomas P. Westendorf (Cincinnati: John Church & Co., 1876).
45. Julius Mattfeld, *‘Variety Music Cavalcade’ 1620–1969: A Chronology of Vocal and Instrumental Music Popular in the United States* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971).
46. It seems a bit odd that C.M. Cady Company would be the publisher of Sankey’s hit song, as both Biglow and Main of New York and John Church Company of Cincinnati already enjoyed the copyright of this song in the *Gospel Hymns* series. For information on the Cady company, see Dena J. Epstein, “Music Publishing in Chicago before 1871: The Firm of Root & Cady, 1858–1871,” *Notes*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Sept. 1944), 49–59. The company’s biggest success was Henry Clay Work’s “Grandfather’s Clock,” also published in 1876.

“The Ninety and Nine” with a tune by P.P. Bliss (not the Sankey tune) had been published in 1874 in two formats: as No. 59 in Bliss’s collection, *Gospel Songs* (John Church & Co.), and in popular sheet music form as “The Ninety and Nine: Solo and Quartet” with piano accompaniment appropriate for solo music. It was also published by John Church & Company—but it’s uncertain whether it was issued before or after (or simultaneously) with the collection *Gospel Songs*. This sheet music is part of the Lester S. Levy Collection and is published by Johns Hopkins University Sheridan Libraries (IV.4399). It is available online at [sheetmusicplus.com](http://sheetmusicplus.com). The sheet music did not credit Clephane—or anyone—as author of the text. Bliss was apparently unaware of the text’s author.

Bliss’s tune was later included in the collections *The Great Awakening: A Choice Collection of New and Standard Gospel Songs Prepared under the Personal Supervision of Rev. Sam. P. Jones, for Use in All Gospel Meetings* (Cincinnati: John Church, 1886), No. 55, and *The Joy-Bells of Canaan or Burning Bush Songs No. 2* (Waukesha, WI: Metropolitan Church Association, 1905), No. 124. Bliss’s tune for Clephane’s poem never became popular or widely known, while Sankey’s became a hit song.

It’s unclear whether Sankey was aware of Bliss’s setting of the text. He certainly never suggested that knowledge in his many tellings of the tune’s near-spontaneous creation in a revival meeting. However, Bliss’s tune is the clearest model for Sankey’s tune (if one is needed), much clearer than the possibilities this author earlier investigated in an article about “The Birth of

- a Classic: Sankey's "The Ninety and Nine" in *We'll Shout and Sing Hosanna: Essays in Church Music in Honor of William J. Reynolds*, edited by David W. Music (Fort Worth: School of Church Music, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1998), 229–53.
47. Nason, *American Evangelists*, 214. Emma Moody Powell, *Heavenly Destiny: The Life Story of Mrs. D.L. Moody* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1943), 115, says Willie "indulged in scarlet fever."
  48. Florence Morse Kingsley, *The Life of Henry Fowle Durant: Founder of Wellesley College* (NY: The Century Co., 1924), Chapter XXVI.
  49. "The Revival in Boston," *The Christian Register*, 17 February 1877.
  50. "The Revival in Boston," *The Christian Register*, 17 February 1877.
  51. It was issued under that name as a complete work, attributed to the humorous *nom-de-plum*, *I.A.M. Cumming with Illustrations by Haskell* (Boston: Times Publishing, 20 May 1877, dedicated "To the Rational Men and Women of Boston, who are laboring to uproot superstition, destroy bigotry and intolerance."
  52. *Tabernacle Sketches*, 35–36. Of the preacher, it asserted, "Mr. Moody beats time in its ragged rhythm with his right hand on the rail and his left foot," 64.
  53. *The Christian Register*, 24 February 1877, 1, quoting *The Christian Intelligencer* (n.d.)
  54. *Boston Journal*, 15 February 1877. Whitney was assisted at the keyboard by Wm. S. Sargent.
  55. *Boston Journal*, 15 February 1877.
  56. *Boston Journal*, unidentified clipping, "Praise Meeting in the Evening."
  57. Hymnologist Louis Benson unflatteringly described the tune as "parlor music" in *The English Hymn: Its Development and Use in Worship* (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1915), 479.
  58. Nason, *American Evangelists*, 222–23.
  59. *Boston Journal*, 27 February 1877. This explanation suggests that the tune for "The Ninety and Nine" was perhaps not as instantaneous as later explanations seemed to convey. Here, there seems to have been some type of incubation process.
  60. *Boston Journal*, unidentified clipping.
  61. *The Chicago Tribune*, 25 December 1876, 2.
  62. As March 4—Inauguration Day—fell on a Sunday, Hayes was privately sworn in on March 3 in the White House Red Room, with the public ceremony waiting until Monday, March 5.

63. *The Christian Register*, 17 February 1877, 1, quoting the *Worcester Spy*.
64. "Mason and Hamlin's Cabinet Organs and Melodeons" (1863), 15.
65. *Boston Journal* unidentified clipping around 1 March 1877.
66. "Mason and Hamlin's Cabinet Organs and Melodeons" (1863), 8.
67. "Mason and Hamlin's Cabinet Organs and Melodeons" (1863), 20.
68. As I.A.M. Cumming's *Tabernacle Sketches* was published as a lengthy (95 pages) and sophisticated lampoon of the meetings, it should be read with great caution in attempting to ascertain the facts in any situation.
69. Evensen, *God's Man*, 173.
70. *Boston Journal* unidentified clipping. The term "sharpers" equals the modern equivalent of "scalpers."
71. Evensen, *God's Man*, 178–180. For a far more negative assessment of the Boston revival, along with a wealth of details related to many aspects of revival preparation and the religious culture of the city at large, see Benjamin L. Hartley, *Evangelicalism at a Crossroads: Revivalism and Social Reform in Boston: 1860–1910* (University of New Hampshire Press, 2011), chapter 1: "D.L. Moody Arrives in a Changing Boston."
72. Ironically, Sankey seemed quite conservative on the subject of solo singing in church—perhaps not realizing the degree to which his novel solos would soon revolutionize the idea of what was proper in church music.





## **IV. THE PROLIFERATION OF REVIVALISM**

# No. 61. Wonderful Words of Life.

"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."—JOHN 6: 61.

P. P. B.

P. P. BLISS, by per.

1. Sing them o - ver a - gain to me, Won - der - ful words of  
 2. Christ, the bless - ed One gives to all Won - der - ful words of  
 3. Sweet - ly ech - o the gos - pel call, Won - der - ful words of

Life, Let me more of their beau - ty see, Won - der - ful words of  
 Life; Sin - ner, list to the lov - ing call, Won - der - ful words of  
 Life, Of - fer par - don and peace to all, Won - der - ful words of

Life. Words of life and beau - ty, Teach me faith and du - ty;  
 Life. All so free - ly giv - en, Woo - ing us to heav - en.  
 Life. Je - sus, on - ly Sav - iour, Sanc - ti - fy for - ev - er.

Beautiful words, wonderful words, Wonderful words of Life, Life.

*Chapter 20*  
A Change of Pace—Sort of  
1877–1879

*Sing them over again to me, Wonderful Words of Life,  
Let me more of their beauty see, Wonderful Words of Life.  
Words of life and beauty, Teach me faith and duty;  
Beautiful Words, wonderful Words, Wonderful Words of Life,  
Beautiful Words, wonderful Words, Wonderful Words of Life.*

*Sweetly echo the gospel call, Wonderful Words of Life,  
Offer pardon and peace to all, Wonderful Words of Life.  
Jesus, only Saviour, Sanctify forever,  
Beautiful Words, wonderful Words, Wonderful Words of Life,  
Beautiful Words, wonderful Words, Wonderful Words of Life.<sup>1</sup>*

WITH THE CLOSE of meetings in Boston, Moody and Sankey could add another major American city—and one of its most skeptical—to their list of places where God had evidently poured out His manifold blessings. By the spring of 1877, the evangelists had settled into a regular calendar for holding massed meetings—sometimes called “union meetings.” These ran from October through May in what might initially appear to be an odd schedule, considering how the weather was more challenging during the fall-winter-spring months—especially in northern cities with their rainy, frigid, and harsh winters.

That required heating the vast revival arenas at no little cost and effort. There was also the issue of snow clearance and removal. Thousands of worshippers packing rainwear and umbrellas or heavy winter coats added to the challenge of managing large crowds under one roof. And it got dark much sooner, requiring travel to and from the meetings with mostly lamps or moonlight for illumination. And the vast auditoriums also had to be lighted during dark winter days and nights.

At first glance, it might seem as though the revivalists were simply reflecting a national trend to organize important events like the public school calendar along the lines of a fall-winter-spring schedule, with summers off so rural areas could have their children free to work on the farms. But that wasn't the case in the 1870s. There was simply no standardized school year as related to schedules or even the number of days requiring attendance. During that era, each school district set its own calendar, reflecting local resources, agricultural needs, or religious considerations. In fact, rural schools were more likely to dismiss students during spring planting and fall harvesting than during the summer growing season when less labor was required.

What apparently influenced Moody and Sankey to follow their seemingly odd schedule was a pattern that had earlier developed in American church life. It was rooted in the unique calendar of Unitarian practices—the denomination of Moody's youth. One of the most significant dates for Unitarian growth was the year 1805, when Henry Ware was elected to the Hollis Chair of Divinity at Harvard Divinity School, signaling that institution's acceptance of Unitarian beliefs. As the oldest and most prestigious educational institution in the country, the influence of Unitarianism grew quickly. And because many of Unitarianism's leaders were associated with the school, they tended to follow Harvard's general model on matters such as the calendar. In the case of Harvard College, it did not hold classes during the summer, and most Unitarian churches followed suit.

Many of New England's Congregational churches—which had inherited the older Puritan tradition—also suspended services during the summer when many of their more affluent worshipers were gone away. This practice eventually spread to many Evangelical churches, especially with middle and upper-class parishioners.

Because Moody insisted on widespread church support before he would agree to hold a revival, summers—with their sporadic church attendance—were an unlikely choice for successful meetings, which required a steady stream of attendees.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Moody and Sankey followed a schedule commencing in October and drawing to a close around May—awkward as it might seem from a later perspective.

After the Boston revival concluded at the end of April, Moody took on a few short meetings, such as one at New Haven, Connecticut, on May 24. But much of the summer was spent in Northfield, Massachusetts, where he had purchased a farm near his mother.

The Sankey family, on the other hand, boarded the South Shore Railroad and journeyed a short distance to Cohasset, Massachusetts, where Ira's bachelor brother, Richard Watson, lived. Richard, born in 1845, was five years Ira's junior, but they enjoyed a close relationship and corresponded regularly. Richard even sported lamb-chop whiskers like his older brother. Despite the addition of five more Sankeys to Richard Watson's domicile, the Cohasset location proved a convenient central site for the Sankey family, as Ira was scheduled the next year for meetings throughout New England.<sup>3</sup>

In Cohasset, Ira enjoyed time with his wife, Fanny, his boys, and his brother, "Wat." He also spent part of each day corresponding with colleagues about music publishing and writing new tunes. During that summer, he invited the young evangelist George C. Needham—later considered by some to be a successor to Moody—to join him for a week of evangelistic meetings. When Needham expressed the desire for a hymn about "The Smitten Rock," a subject on which he was preaching, Ira responded, "Here is a new hymn [melody] which came to me last night in my sleep." He then challenged Needham to supply a text. After some protests from the preacher, saying he didn't know how to fit poetry to music, he wrote out his ideas and they matched Ira's nocturnal inspiration. He later sang it that night after Needham's address.<sup>4</sup> "The Smitten Rock" ("From the riven Rock there floweth living water ever clear") became No. 49 in the third volume of *Gospel Hymns* Ira was preparing over the summer.

Cohasset turned out to be a God-send for Fanny Sankey, as she decided to remain there during the coming fall revival season. Rather than staying for just a short period in city after city, requiring the family to relocate every few weeks to a new town and host home, Mrs. Sankey wanted some stability. She now had three boys, ages twelve, eight, and three—the youngest of which she was still nursing.<sup>5</sup> Their single location back in Boston—at the Brunswick Hotel—had demonstrated the necessity of greater domestic stability. Ira would have to go it on his own.

Back in Northfield, Moody was as usual besieged with a raft of invitations from pastors and leaders of major metropolitan centers to hold the next outpouring of God's blessing in their town. But rather than continue the previous practice of holding services in just a couple large cities during the next nine months, he seemed to take a new direction. As Emma Moody, the evangelist's daughter, would later recall: "The winter of 1877–1878 marked a decided change in the campaign plans of D.L. Turning away from



the crowds of the largest cities, he now invaded places like Burlington and Montpelier, Vermont; Concord, New Hampshire; Providence and Newport, Rhode Island; Springfield, Massachusetts; and Hartford and New Haven, Connecticut.”<sup>6</sup>

Surveying a partial list of the evangelists’ schedule for those months confirms Emma Moody’s recollections:

|                 |                           |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Oct. 4–31, 1877 | Burlington, VT            |
| Nov. 1–29       | Manchester, NH            |
| Dec. 4–31       | Providence, RI            |
| Jan. 3, 1878    | Hartford, CT <sup>7</sup> |
| Jan. 4          | Chicago, IL               |
| Jan. 6          | Manchester, NH            |
| Jan. 7–14       | Hartford, CT              |
| Jan. 15 & 28    | New Haven, CT             |
| Feb. 1–8        | Hartford, CT              |
| Feb. 12–Mar. 1  | Springfield, MA           |
| Mar. 11–16      | Boston, MA                |
| Mar. 20         | Baltimore, MD             |
| Mar. 22         | Boston, MA                |
| Mar. 24–May 10  | New Haven, CT             |

Typical of this new approach were the spring revival meetings in New Haven. Compared with the nation’s major cities, where the evangelists had held their last five revivals, New Haven was relatively small, at around sixty thousand inhabitants. Yet that still qualified it to rank as America’s twenty-fifth-largest city. It was also the home of Yale University—a far cry theologically from Boston’s Harvard College.

Harvard had begun in 1636 as the colony’s first college and a training ground for Puritan clergy. But within two hundred years, it had become the epicenter of those Unitarian values expressly opposed to Puritan Orthodoxy and revivalism. Yale, on the other hand, had experienced a season of revival under its former president Timothy Dwight, grandson of famed Puritan preacher Jonathan Edwards. Upon his inauguration as head of the school in 1795, Dwight began to re-establish a position holding to the authority of the Bible and its teachings. By 1805, a series of revivals had impacted the institution and town, extending through 1831, with hundreds in New Haven being converted. Less than a half-century later, when Moody and Sankey

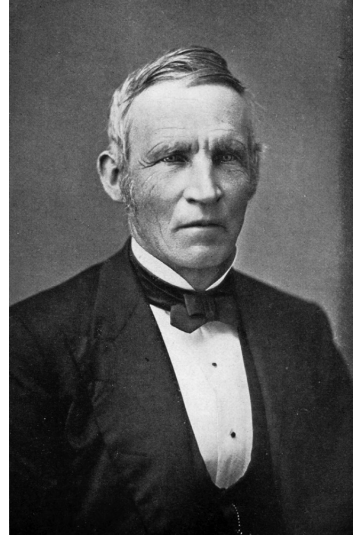
sought to bring revival, Yale University still maintained a position of belief in the Scriptures with the school's president, Noah Porter, enthusiastically supporting a revival.

On Monday, January 28, 1878, president Porter opened the combined meeting of interested churches, assessing the requirements for hosting a Moody-Sankey revival.<sup>8</sup> Although Moody had shifted his focus to smaller cities, he continued to pursue the same methodology that had proved so successful in America's largest centers.

At this organizational meeting, a proposal was floated to rotate meetings among the city's churches or for Moody to visit several churches in the same evening, with other speakers filling in when he was elsewhere. That would certainly be the most economical approach, deemed the committee tasked with raising funds. But Moody remonstrated, replying that such approaches had failed both in England and the U.S. He insisted on a central venue that could hold five to six thousand souls. So the committee gave in, and after prolonged arguments about its location, built a 168-foot by 175-foot Tabernacle, looking like a train shed, on the corner of Whatley Avenue and Dwight Street. As reported in the *New Haven Journal and Courier*: "Hundreds repair daily to the spot to see the Moody and Sankey Tabernacle, which has risen as if by magic, the sides being up, the floors laid and the rafters in position for the covering."<sup>9</sup>

Although the meetings were supported by various bankers and prominent citizens, such as former Connecticut governor Hobart Bigelow, only \$4,000 had been raised at the building's completion, causing a public listing of expenses to be read aloud during a choir practice, just two days before Moody's arrival: \$4,700 for the Tabernacle, \$150 for steam pipes, \$400 for installation of the boiler (donated by governor Bigelow), \$550 for seats and chairs, and \$2,250 for extras, bringing the total expenditure to \$8,350.<sup>10</sup>

A series of committees, such as had functioned so well in the previous campaigns, efficiently carried out their duties, with the Music Committee announcing:



**Noah Porter**, in *Memories of Yale Life and Men, 1854-1899* (1903)

We invite any person who has a voice to sing and a willingness to use it for the Master, whether able to read music or not, as the tunes will be mostly familiar ones from *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 and 2*, and who will try and be as regular in attendance as possible. . . . Probably the opportunity to do as great service with our voices in song will never come again to us in New Haven.<sup>11</sup>

Hoping to attract a chorus of three hundred who could practice in the nearby Atheneum, the invitation elicited 1300–1400 singers, causing rehearsals to be held in the Tabernacle. So enthusiastic was the city about its choir that a public rehearsal was scheduled, attracting over five thousand spectators—before services even began.

In addition to the committees' work, local entrepreneurs seized the moment, with the *Paladium* recording, “keepers of boarding houses, hotels, and restaurants are already busy in their plans for feeding the multitudes of out-of-town people.” Henry Oviatt constructed a new horse shed on his vacant lot, just down the street from the Tabernacle, and businesses of all kinds stocked a large supply of the song collection *Gospel Hymns*, with W.H. Lindsley's shoe store advertising a free hymn book for everyone who spent at least two dollars.<sup>12</sup>

To no one's surprise, all of the Tabernacle's 4,892 bench seats for the audience and its 960 chairs on the stage were filled before the 3:00PM meeting began, when the throng rose and intoned “Hallelujah! 'Tis Done,” No. 65 in their *Gospel Hymns No. 2*. Yale's president, Porter, led an opening prayer, and Ira introduced his first song, “Hark! the voice of Jesus crying,” with the hope that his solos might bring home the truth of the gospel to those who heard him. It was Sunday, March 24. Moody's sermon—as was usual in the opening meetings—was addressed to Christians. The already-popular choir sang the appropriate challenge to “Work for the night is coming,” followed by the comforting “Jesus, Lover of my soul.” Later, the first evening meeting took place at 7:00PM.

On Mondays, the noon prayer meetings—which were such an integral part of the revivalists' success—began in Center (First) Church. Their major role was in providing a forum for Christians to share with other believers the issues that touched the deepest concerns of their hearts, such as an unconverted spouse, a wayward child, a failing business, or a life-threatening illness. It was also a time to rejoice in answers to previous petitions, as well

as to hear news of revivals around the world. Yet the meetings accomplished far more:

[They] played a vital role . . . as they provided a channel of dialog between Moody and the New Haven community that was necessarily lacking in the sermon-and-hymn services at the Tabernacle. The relationship between Moody and the city's spiritual leaders developed as Moody's initial illustration or question at the prayer meeting was afterwards further discussed and developed by the ministers present.<sup>13</sup>

Overriding all these factors was the demonstration of God being at work in their midst. "The meeting was marked by the profoundest emotion. Anecdotes of conversions . . . were listened to with the keenest interest and the entire audience seemed pervaded with a solemn sense of God's nearness."<sup>14</sup>

By the end of week one, Moody wrote to a friend, expressing great satisfaction with the response from the students at Yale. And Sankey's solos were being singled out by local newspapers—often printing the entire hymn text—for their ability to emphasize the themes of Moody's preaching: "The mistakes of my life have been many."<sup>15</sup>

The most serious problems during the meetings resulted from issues of crowd control. It immediately became evident that more police were needed, and doors to the services were opened earlier to even out the flow of overenthusiastic worshipers, who nearly trampled a woman during the first week. Unfortunately, some in the crowds harbored sinister motives rather than spiritual ones, with Martin Tuttle reporting that his gold watch had been purloined during the Sunday evening service.

Special meetings were soon announced, including the addition of 2:30PM Bible readings, separate services for men, women, youth, children, Sunday School teachers, and Temperance concerns. The latter proved so successful that an all-day Temperance gathering was planned for April 12, with the portly Moody teasing the crowd to "bring your lunch, enough for you all and me."<sup>16</sup> Two thousand folks showed up for the morning meeting.

The pattern for the New England revivals seems to have been to stay one month, with a possible extension if needed. By April 20, the evangelists had been in New Haven for four weeks and attendance was beginning to flag. Nevertheless, the revivalists and supporting pastors often carried the

gospel—or Good News—outside the Tabernacle walls to places like railroad shops and carriage factories. Coinciding with the arrival of P.T. Barnum’s circus on April 30, Moody and Sankey took their place on a makeshift podium above the floor of the railroad station at 8:30 in the morning to catch the mechanics on the next shift. Although many of these meetings were devoted to men testifying about changes in their lives since receiving Christ, “the workmen seemed particularly taken with Ira Sankey’s hymns,” which they vigorously belted out.<sup>17</sup> A few days later, on Friday, May 3, at the carriage factory, Moody’s preaching was interrupted by the appearance of the locally famous third-baseman for the New Haven Haymakers, Clarke, who made a very public profession of faith.

During the final days of the revival, a series of well-attended meetings were held for Yale students in the old college chapel’s recitation room at 6:30PM, causing no little rush to arrive at the Tabernacle by 7:30. That was especially the case on May 10, Moody’s final service. That evening, he had run too long at the Yale meeting, then realized he had left his sermon notes back at his residence. Only through quick action from one of the students was disaster averted. During the final service, Moody preached and Sankey sang to an appreciative crowd that hung on their every word.

As usual for the Moody-Sankey meetings, a follow-up team of evangelist and music director was often brought in to wind down the revival after the main attractions had left. In this case, it was the aptly named preacher George Pentecost and his associate musician, George Stebbins, who had led the revival choir in Chicago. They were scheduled to carry on for an additional four weeks, for by now, they were functioning as an evangelistic duo under Moody’s direction, much as Daniel Whittle and Philip Bliss had done earlier. They were given the thankless task of following the charismatic and well-publicized Moody and Sankey.

In actuality, Pentecost’s preaching was very well received, and Stebbins’ music made a strong impression, especially when he and his wife, Elma Miller, began singing a song Philip Bliss had written for publisher Fleming H. Revell’s new Sunday School paper called *Words of Life* (1874). The result was “Wonderful Words of Life” (“Sing them over again to me,” etc.). It had gone unappreciated, with even Bliss himself failing to include it in his 1874 collection, *Gospel Songs*. But as Stebbins and his wife sang the simple Sunday School melody, its popularity became so widespread that the couple was offered “an absurdly large sum of money” to sing it for the Connecticut State

Sunday School Convention. Stebbins, who went on to take Bliss's place as editor for successive *Gospel Hymn* editions, assisting Sankey, included it in the next iteration of the series, *Gospel Hymns No. 3*, and it became one of the most beloved gospel hymns in the canon, lasting well into the late twentieth century.<sup>18</sup>

Overall, newspapers, even the initially critical ones, looked back at a successful campaign, free of the “pious whine” often associated with revival preachers. Supporting churches reported membership growth more as a result from conversions than from transfer between churches—as was often the case—reflecting real changes in lives resulting from the meetings. And interest in the role of church music had been stirred sufficiently such that the Church of the Redeemer issued a set of “rules for good singing.” Unfortunately, Ira was still plagued by accusations of profiting from hymn book royalties and a rumor saying he had formerly been a New England patent-medicine salesman!<sup>19</sup>

Once the meetings closed, Sankey was certainly happy to be back in Cohasset, where his family was residing. He was also excited about the addition of a new family member who was to marry his brother Richard in the fall. Ira kept busy planning *Gospel Hymns No. 3*, to be issued later that year (1878). First, there needed to be a replacement for the deceased Philip Bliss, who was likely responsible for much of the musical editing in the previous two volumes. That role was soon filled by two men; one was Stebbins.

The other was James McGranahan. McGranahan, who had been a friend of the young P.P. Bliss and was the same age as Ira, pursued a career very much like that of his companion. He located to Chicago where he worked for Root and Cady Publishing, writing songs and teaching music conventions. When Bliss died in December of 1876, he joined with Bliss's partner in evangelism, Daniel Whittle, as soloist and music director. He also took Bliss's place (along with Stebbins) as an editor on the *Gospel Hymns* series. His most popular contributions to gospel hymnody were included in that publication.

Preparing a third edition of the *Gospel Hymns* series presented many of the same issues as the second, but with somewhat different publishing dynamics. Part of Bliss's contribution to the project had been his relationship with John Church & Company of Cincinnati, one of *Gospel Hymns'* co-publishers. But with Bliss gone from the scene, Biglow and Main in New York seems to have become more central.



On August 8, Ira wrote to Hubert P. Main in New York, thanking him for sending copies of new songs, and assuring him, “I will have the whole book ready for you by Monday, and will go down to N.Y. again on Monday evening’s boat.” He also requested Main to pass along his desire to visit Biglow on Tuesday morning.<sup>20</sup> Seeing a publication with multiple contributors, editors, and publishers through to completion on terms favorable to Ira possibly required a level of personal intervention, reflected in his letter to song contributor and friend, William Doane, on August 5.

My dear Bro. Doane,

I want to see you before I go away. How can it be done. Will you be East. Could you and Lowry [an editor at Biglow and Main] and Biglow and I meet some where for a good brotherly talk?

Your friend,

Ira D. Sankey<sup>21</sup>

Here it seems clear that Ira felt a personal meeting with many of the parties involved in the publication of the new edition needed to take place; correspondence wasn’t enough. Of course, there had already been a meeting of all the creative partners a year earlier—the summer of 1877—in Northfield. It involved Sankey and his two new co-editors, McGranahan and Stebbins. But as the men realized they were producing a song collection for other evangelists going out under Moody’s auspices, they were wise enough to invite them to the collaborations as well. These included evangelists Daniel Whittle and George Pentecost—all guests of Mr. Moody. As Stebbins later recalled:

The mornings were spent in going over the selections that had been made, we three singers singing the songs and the three evangelists sitting in judgment upon them, passing such comments upon their effectiveness and fitness for evangelistic purposes as occurred to them. After the verdict on their merit was pronounced, time would be given to the examination of the hymns as to their strength and to their devotional character as well.<sup>22</sup>

Of course, with that group of extroverts gathered in one place, there was scarcely a moment when someone was not telling a story or cracking a joke, “causing roars of laughter that continued until it seemed as if we no

longer had strength to endure it. Mr. Sankey went to one side of the room and, with his head on his arm, leaned against the widow, and I to another room suffering with pain.”<sup>23</sup>

The fall of 1878 was an unusual one, for Moody had not planned another big revival meeting.<sup>24</sup> In fact, the evangelist desired to spend some time in study and rest during the fall. As Sankey explained—with a possible twinkle in his eye—to a reporter:

I was not so very much exhausted myself, for, you know, I only sing, and that is not very much of an exertion. But Mr. Moody was tired out. He had worked incessantly for months, and he needed not only rest, which is, perhaps, the last thing that a real worker in the Gospel field thinks of, but also time and opportunity for study to prepare for the next campaign.<sup>25</sup>

Ira sought to convince his colleague and friend to do so in England, where they could informally relive the scenes of their memorable meetings just a few years earlier. In many of those places, revival fires were still burning, and it seemed like a propitious time to return. But Moody couldn’t go, because his wife Emma was pregnant, although they weren’t making it public.

Despite Moody’s desire to stay home, Sankey was determined to cross the ocean again, especially because no major revival was planned for the fall. So the two made an agreement to separate for a year.<sup>26</sup>

But before Ira and the family could set off, they gathered at the wedding of his brother, Richard Watson Sankey, to Bethia (known as Bertha<sup>27</sup>) Lothrop in September. She was the daughter of Daniel T. Lothrop, a ship captain and insurance underwriter who had authored an important report on deaths from shipwrecks off Cohasset’s coast. When Richard married Bethia, they moved into the grand home at 30 Summer Street, which Captain Lothrop had built a century earlier, just a couple of blocks from the bay.

Ironically, Ira’s family didn’t need the space vacated by Richard Watson, as they soon found themselves aboard a steamer bound for France.<sup>28</sup> Of course, the captain requested Sankey to lead Sunday devotions, and two days later, the famous American led a “service of song” using a supply of revival songbooks aboard the ship.<sup>29</sup> It was becoming rare that a stack of Moody-Sankey songbooks wasn’t handy almost anywhere for those who wanted to sing the Good News gathered.

The Sankeys made a short visit to Paris for Ira to conduct some “private business.”<sup>30</sup> Hoping to go unnoticed, they visited the Scott’s Kirk (L’Eglise Ecossoise) near the Champs Elise on Sunday, but were soon discovered. A short speech and several solos followed.

Ira’s journey was originally intended to be a low-key victory lap and a period of rest and recreation. He hoped to visit the scenes of his greatest triumphs without the need to constantly fill vast arenas with his voice. He could also renew friendships with his beloved co-laborers, and there was no pre-arranged schedule. Of course, Sankey expected to sing almost everywhere, and to be asked for those songs he had made famous, especially “Hold the Fort!” and “The Ninety and Nine.” For the family, it was intended to be a more relaxed time, as Fanny could count on her husband being around to help, rather than running off to fill Moody’s daunting schedule.

But things didn’t work out exactly as planned.<sup>31</sup> Even before landing in October, Sankey had received requests to assist various pastors. “The universal call was too much for me, and I felt that I must do something for the Master.” So he departed Paris, crossed the English Channel, and descended on London’s Exeter Hall for the two final services held by the Rev. W.H. Aitken, who had played such an important part in the evangelists’ previous meetings. Of his role, Ira commented, “He did the talking and I did the singing.” As he further clarified:

The enthusiasm at these meetings was intense. It was an English enthusiasm, however, and very different from the religious fervor, which takes the form of excitement, that you see in America. The audiences were very large . . . but they were very quiet. The English people are not like the Americans, and must not be judged by the same standard. They don’t show their feelings on the surface as we do.<sup>32</sup>

Before long, the Sankeys returned to the Continent, where Ira linked up with the “Swiss Moody,”<sup>33</sup> the dynamic German evangelist, Father Weiner, whose preaching, Ira believed, had the power “to strike men’s hearts.” They began in Königsfeld in the Black Forest, where Ira and Fanny deposited Harry, their eldest, at the Moravian-run Zinzendorf Boarding School.<sup>34</sup> After having spent the last few years singing to and praying with countless Americans, Ira continued to refine his understanding of how different Christians expressed themselves. He was impressed by the way the German people

were “very staid and stately and show no enthusiasm in the American sense of the word. They are very thoughtful and seem to weigh well every sentence which they hear.”<sup>35</sup>

Herisau, Switzerland—one hundred miles to the southeast—was the next stop, where the family remained for a month, enjoying the spectacular Swiss countryside; then it was on to Zürich, where the largest churches and the Protestant cathedral were made available for meetings. But they were found to be unworkable, as each required ascending a long set of steps to reach the pulpit with barely enough room for the preacher—but certainly not for a harmonium. When more accommodating facilities were procured, the crowds were so dense, Sankey needed thirty minutes to progress down the aisle to access the pulpit area. “I sang the hymns in English, but the people knew them so well by the tunes that everybody understood them.” Those meetings made a deep impression on Ira, who admitted, “Our work there . . . was remarkably successful, and I began to think that I had been called specially to this field, and was not abroad simply for rest and recreation.”<sup>36</sup>

In Basel, Father Weiner planned his sermons around Sankey’s solos, which Ira would stop and sing at various points in the preaching.

My hymns were printed on slips of paper, one column having the English words, and the next a German translation of them. I sang them in English, of course, but as the people had the translations in their hands, they not only caught the spirit of the music, but they appreciated the sentiment of the words.<sup>37</sup>

As for the music, at least one music-box company had produced a device capable of playing twenty-four of the popular melodies for domestic consumption. When Sankey came to a town, its citizens were already humming his tunes.<sup>38</sup>

Yet despite the overwhelming success of his efforts, the ever-positive Sankey—who seemed to focus all his energies on communication of the text—felt it was “depressing to sing to other people in another language than their own.”<sup>39</sup> So after a stop in Geneva, the family returned to England.

As the new year, 1879, loomed, Ira answered some of the requests he had received for assistance, returning to the scene of his and Moody’s early successes in Newcastle-on-Tyne. For about five weeks, he held meetings in chapels and local churches, including some in the four-thousand seat Circus, assisted by “an efficient choir of Ladies and Gentlemen.”<sup>40</sup> And where

the greatest skepticism had often arisen from religious quarters on their previous visit, now it seemed almost a competition to be part of his work, wherever he went, even among many in the Established Church of England. Sometimes the overflow spilled into two additional halls, which Ira would dash off to, singing his solos.

A surprise for some was how effective Sankey appeared to be without his senior companion. As one paper noted:

[T]he people who attend [the meetings] find as much power in his singing as they did in Mr. Moody's preaching, and that his appearance without his former colleague is not, as it was feared it might be, "like producing the tragedy of Hamlet with the character of the Prince of Denmark left out."<sup>41</sup>

And yet, another minority report strangely lamented:

To tell the truth, he is a man of altogether inferior power as compared with his colleague. He had a voice which some people liked, and a dramatic way of singing hymns, *solus*, which, happily, had the charm of novelty. But, as he speedily discovered when he came to walk by himself, it was his colleague who was the man of power.<sup>42</sup>

The winter of 1879 found Sankey visiting a myriad of small northern English towns: Blythe, Morgan, Hexam, Gateshead, Stockton, Darlington, Arlington, and Humgate. During these services, in which the local pastor often preached, Sankey sang solos and led congregational singing, using the "enlarged edition of Sankey's hymns" as newspapers informed their readers.<sup>43</sup> For the British version of the collection, *Sacred Songs and Solos*, the publisher Morgan and Scott had taken the logical approach of simply adding new selections to the original pamphlet to produce a series of larger editions, which continued to expand for another quarter of a century.

The spa resort town of Harrogate boasted a large, Greek-looking temple fronted by six giant Doric columns, dubbed the Royal Spa Concert Rooms, which provided a wide range of entertainment, including variety entertainer "The Great Juleen," and Scottish singer-comedian Arthur Lloyd. For three days (February 23–25) Ira was joined by his friend Henry Moorehouse—the "Boy Preacher" who came over from Liverpool—in holding two daily services for enthusiastic crowds, where he sang a mix of familiar songs

and new music.<sup>44</sup> Clearly, the use of a central hall, rather than a local church, reflected Sankey's continuing appeal.

All this took place during the third coldest winter on record. Unfortunately, it was too much for Ira, who became ill, causing him to lose his voice and cancel appearances in additional venues. Fortunately, he—and the family—found repose at the ancient manor house of Ford Hall in Derbyshire, center of the romantic Peak District. This noble but modest residence traced its origins well beyond Henry VIII to the middle ages. It was currently inhabited by Trinity College, Cambridge-educated, William Henry Greaves Bagshawe.<sup>45</sup>

Bagshawe was also warden—overseer—of St. Thomas Becket parish church, less than two miles down Sheffield Road. Although Bagshawe belonged to the Church of England, he was a conspicuous part of its “low-church” wing. By Victorian times, the Anglican Church could be understood as consisting of three somewhat identifiable groups: “High-church” adherents, who emphasized sacramentalism (saving grace through the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist/Lord's Supper), church authority, and Anglo-Catholic roots; “broad-church,” which described the majority of Anglicans, who placed less emphasis on history or theology, seeing themselves as part of mainline Victorian culture, encompassing most royalty, upper, and middle class; and “low-church,” which included those holding more strictly to the Bible, eschewing ritualism, the sacraments (as a means of bestowing saving grace), and church authority. Known as the “evangelical party,” they had long been supportive of revivalism, back to the days of John and Charles Wesley.

As a preacher, Moody had never been officially welcomed by the Church of England, for he wasn't even ordained—by anyone! He was just seen as an itinerant lay-exhorter—albeit a famous one. He also carried the stigma in Anglican circles of preaching against the value or efficacy of the sacraments. Sankey, by extension, was seen by many as no different, occupying the firmament of the rabble-rousing, “cheap grace”<sup>46</sup> revivalism among the lower classes.

While the “low-church” wing had always been sympathetic to the revivalists, many within its orbit now openly supported Sankey's presence. And those included The Reverend George Hall, Vicar and Rural Dean of St. Thomas Becket church in the town of Chapel-en-le-Frith. It was he—probably at church warden William Bagshawe's instigation—who gave permission



for Sankey to sing in their historic church, which traced its roots back to the days when the Peak District had been the king's royal hunting preserve.

The state of the average Anglican parish church in the Victorian era reflected its economic surroundings. If the parish was poor and had been so for a long time, the building might actually embody a time capsule, slowly decaying, having little changed over hundreds of years. If the parish had been more prosperous at various points in its past, the church might have knocked down a wall and added a side-aisle to accommodate more folks. Or it might have added an interior balcony, running around the sides to seat the church's expansion, reflecting a growing town or fruit from the revivals that impacted eighteenth-century England. If the town had enough resources, it might have occasionally remodeled the building to reflect the latest architectural trends, adding or removing a porch (entrance), or a steeple (often damaged by lightning), changing the windows to a pointed Gothic style, or replacing bells in the creaky and unsafe old tower. If it were really modern, it might have replaced the old, enclosed box pews—designed to seat a family unit in a low-walled space—with more modern bench pews, open to all.

Music in parish churches was fairly modest. Whatever was available emanated from cramped quarters in a balcony over the West End (at the opposite end from the pulpit). That might have included a very modest pipe organ with no pedals, playing mercilessly out of tune. In some rural churches, local parishioners who played the fiddle, flute, cello, bassoon, or bagpipes would bring their humble gifts to inflict upon the worshipers during the hymns—in a practice known as the West Gallery tradition.<sup>47</sup> No matter who was making the music, it certainly wasn't front and center.

At St. Thomas Becket parish church, this was also the case, with all music coming anonymously from above and behind a seated congregation. It was not the place of sacred music to call undue attention to itself. At least, not until Ira came to town. It's unclear whether Sankey was responding to a formal invitation to sing at St. Thomas Becket or if he graciously relented to a personal solicitation from his host at Ford Hall—who was also the church warden.

It's also not clear if his voice had fully recovered. Whatever the circumstances, sometime during his two-week stay in late March of 1879, permission was not only granted to sing, but to do so from a special platform constructed in front, under the chancel arch—space usually reserved for the most important sacred functions, such as preaching or the sacraments. The

platform also featured a pump organ. To some, it seemed as though religious music was being performed for its own sake—a veritable concert—not as an adjunct to something more important. And it was all taking place from a very conspicuous, raised dais in the center of the church—all performed by an American dissenter!

Although there is no record of which four solos Ira sang, “The Ninety and Nine” must have been one of them. While his host and the people of St. Thomas Becket would have been greatly blessed to have him at their local church, some Anglicans saw it as a scandal, “one of the worst instances of this sort of thing.”<sup>48</sup>

To further his recuperation, Ira and the family traveled to Llandudno, Wales, on the northern coast, to undergo hydropathic therapy, which involved the “internal and external use of water as a therapeutic treatment.” During the nineteenth century, there was little difference between what would later be seen as homeopathic treatment and standard medical practice. In fact, hot springs and water-related cures remained popular well into the twentieth century throughout Europe and America.<sup>49</sup>

While there, Ira purchased a thick, little travel book with blank pages. In it he inscribed, “This book belongs to Ira D. Sankey New York U.S.A.,” which was a strange location for Sankey to claim, as he’d never resided in the city nor the state. Over the next decade, he somewhat erratically scribbled sermon notes, jokes, addresses of acquaintances, and diet information into it.<sup>50</sup>

There was no way Ira could have known that Frances Ridley Havergal would die just a few weeks after his visit in May. In fact, during his two-week stay at her humble cottage of Park Villa on Caswell Bay Road in Swansea—on the southwest coast of Wales—Frances seemed to be suffering from nothing more than a bad cold.<sup>51</sup> It’s unclear whether the two had ever met before his visit, but they knew of each’s other’s work. Sankey had included her hymn “I gave my life for thee” in all three editions of *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs*, and he had just added “Take my life and let it be” to his latest edition. She certainly knew of the mighty revivals of Moody and Sankey, perhaps having made a visit to one of their meetings about five years earlier. Little by little, this humble spinster had become recognized as a gifted hymn-writer with about half-a-dozen of her poems enjoying widespread inclusion in both British and American hymnals—as well as gospel song collections. She eventually acquired the appellation “The British Fanny Crosby.”

While staying as guests, Frances shared parts of her life story with the Sankeys and tried to interest Ira in the hymns of her friend Samuel Prout. On Sankey's departure, Ira assured her, "We'll meet again," to which she replied, "Yes, if not here, in the bright city there."<sup>52</sup> She died a couple weeks later of peritonitis on June 3, 1879.

Ira concluded his travels with a spring ramble through the Lake District, which he credited with fully restoring his health. Returning to London, he visited Spurgeon's famous Metropolitan Tabernacle on his final Sunday in town. He and Fanny attended the morning service—likely on July 20—and attempted to blend in with the massive crowd, but they were recognized by the pastor, who called Ira to the platform and requested him to sing for the evening service.

Considering Spurgeon's convictions about church music, his invitation to Sankey was magnanimous, for on many levels, Sankey's whole ministry would have been at odds with the Baptist pastor's public declarations.

As to the employment of musical instruments in worship, Spurgeon explained King David's enthusiasm for musical instruments as such:

"Praise the Lord with the harp." Men need all the help they can get to stir them up to praise. This is the lesson to be gathered from the use of musical instruments under the old dispensation. Israel was at school, and used childish things to help her to learn; but in these days, when Jesus gives us spiritual manhood, we can make melody without strings and pipes.<sup>53</sup>

The implication seemed clear, as the preacher set forth in his commentary of Psalm 42:

What a degradation to supplant the intelligent song of the whole congregation by the theatrical prettinesses of a quartette, the re-



Frances Ridley Havergal, in *Famous Hymns and Their Authors* (1902)

finer niceties of a choir or the blowing off of wind from inanimate bellows and pipes! We might as well pray by machinery as praise by it.<sup>54</sup>

In addition to delegitimizing the use of instrumental music, it appears evident from Spurgeon's pronouncements that solo singing was beyond the pale of even being considered alongside the "degradations" of a musical quartet—a popular replacement for the choir in some churches—a church choir, or the use of musical instruments, which were conspicuously and theologically absent from the Metropolitan Tabernacle.

There were also concerns about the very songs Sankey made popular while accompanying himself with that "machinery," as they could not be mistaken for the Psalms of David or even the more recent offerings of Isaac Watts. They were completely different in nature from the weekly fare the Tabernacle raised to God. This becomes evident by comparing Sankey's songs of personal experience, such as "The Ninety and Nine" (about the one lost sheep), with the more objective, consistently third-person, poetry in the Tabernacle's *Our Own Hymn-Book*, even in the section on "Revivals and Missions."<sup>55</sup> And there was certainly no presence of the lighter Sunday-School-fare-turned-gospel-songs that had quickly begun to refashion church music in the mid-1870s. These new songs were revolutionary in poetry and music, compared to what the folks at the Tabernacle were so gustily singing each Sunday.

In many ways, Spurgeon and those at the Tabernacle embodied an approach to evangelical Christianity that harkened back to an earlier era when Calvinism was still in the ascendancy, with its focus on God and His glory as the beginning, middle, and end of all things. Sankey, on the other hand, represented an approach to God's eternal plan in which men and women were recognized as active agents. God had offered salvation to all, but it was up to each individual to decide whether to accept or reject the offer. This was crystal clear in songs such as P.P. Bliss's "Once for All" with its chorus, "Once for all, O sinner, receive it; once for all, O friend, now believe it." For the theological universe in which Ira moved—some might call it more Arminian (as were the Methodists from which Sankey sprang)—the focus of both preaching and singing, such as Bliss's "Whosoever Will May Come," seemed to be on the sinner as much as on God. But that certainly wasn't how a Calvinist understood salvation, in which the sinner was drawn to God by His "irresistible grace."<sup>56</sup>

While Sankey and his new methods couldn't have been much farther from Spurgeon's approach to musical worship if he had tried, nevertheless, Spurgeon, in his wisdom not to impose his own interpretation on the church at large, confided:

We . . . do not believe these things to be expedient in worship . . . , [nor] do [we] . . . affirm them to be unlawful, and if any George Herbert or Martin Luther can worship God better by the aid of well-tuned instruments, who shall gain-say their right? We do not need them, they would hinder [rather] than help our praise, but if others are otherwise minded, are they not living in gospel liberty?<sup>57</sup>

Sankey apparently fell within this category of "gospel liberty" and was seemingly welcomed with open arms, singing solo music with the aid of a mechanical assistant—his harmonium! Still, Spurgeon would affirm that "No instrument [is] like the human voice. As a help to singing the instrument is alone to be tolerated, for keys and strings do not praise the Lord."<sup>58</sup>

At the evening service, which was not-surprisingly filled, Ira sang "Who Is on the Lord's side?," then "Hold the Fort!" While the latter song was certainly not in the Tabernacle's hymnal, that hadn't prevented those staunch Calvinist Baptists from already learning it. As one observer reported, when Sankey raised his famous song,

. . . the entire congregation rose to their feet spontaneously and joined in the chorus so lustily that Mr. Spurgeon remarked that the roof of his Tabernacle having withstood that volume of sound might be considered safe. The enthusiasm of the audience was so great that Mr. Spurgeon had the chorus sung over three times.<sup>59</sup>

This event must have held a special place in Ira's memory, for he often repeated it for eager listeners.

To some extent, this trip allowed Sankey to step back and gain a broader perspective than he could have experienced on the former whirlwind tour. Now there was time to discuss with fellow ministers the impact—not just the immediate popularity—of his work and to hear countless stories of how the music he had brought to Great Britain was not only changing individual lives but also the nature of church music. The Scottish Presbyterians had become much more open to singing fare beyond just the Psalms; English

evangelicals now enjoyed an energy and life to their congregational song that many had only dreamed of; and church choirs had gained a new vitality, with some actually changing their location from anonymously singing in a rear, overhead loft to be relocated front-and-center, almost on a par with the preacher. And Sunday Schools—which were generally on the periphery of English church life—had gained a new respect as they were recognized for being the birthplace of this dynamic form of religious music. Although Ira couldn't have fathomed the centrality of his role in this seismic shift, he couldn't have failed to be aware of something incredible taking place. At some point, he and Fanny must have puzzled in wonder and amazement about what God was doing in their lives!

The steamer *City of Berlin*, carrying the Sankey family, arrived back in New York City on Saturday afternoon, July 26, 1879. But fear of the unknown gripped many passengers, as rumors of a yellow fever epidemic raced through the ship. The nation's worst outbreak had terrified many cities the previous summer with over twenty thousand fleeing Memphis, Tennessee, in August. As the disease's cause—being bitten by an infected *aedes aegypti* mosquito—wasn't clearly understood and was believed to be contagious among humans, President Rutherford B. Hayes had signed the Quarantine Act of 1878, which tasked the Marine Hospital Service with halting the disease from coming ashore via sailors.

For that reason, the *City of Berlin* had to stop at Quarantine before final docking at Pier 37 in the North River<sup>60</sup> to check the health of its crew. While there, passengers heard rumors of the scourge's presence in Harlem. So when a *New York Times* reporter came aboard to interview Sankey—whom he spotted leaning over the rails and conversing with the actors Imry Kiralfy and W.H. Crane—the first question out the singer's mouth was, “Is it true that we have yellow fever in New York?”<sup>61</sup>

Fortunately, the danger had passed, and the Sankeys could begin to trade their nomadic ways for a more permanent abode. The family put up at the Metropolitan Hotel, where they were supposed to meet Moody, but he was deterred, the result of a sick child. They did reunite the next day, Sunday—the first time together in nearly a year—and it's hard to imagine the flood of emotion these two yoke-fellows in the faith must have felt.

What brought them back together was participation in afternoon and evening services at C.W. Sawyer's weekly Gospel Temperance meetings at Cooper Union in New York. Thousands of folks—some who had attended



the revivalists' Hippodrome campaign in 1876—were turned away for lack of room.<sup>62</sup> Many remained in the street, however, to catch the mighty waves of congregational song they knew would follow.

The weather was so stiflingly hot that poor draught horses forced to tow their heavy loads dropped dead in the streets. Inside the crowded afternoon meeting, some people fainted and were taken into anterooms for reviving. A chorus of two-to-three hundred voices—from the former Hippodrome revival choir—was no little excited to shake Ira's hand and recall their glory days together. Thirty minutes before the service began, S.P. Thatcher led them in familiar songs.<sup>63</sup> Excitement was so high that applause broke out in places after Sankey's solo, "Waiting and Watching for Me." As usual, Moody reminded the exuberant crowd of this being a religious service and not a theatrical one; no more applause was thereafter detected.

It was actually a gospel-Temperance service. And some saw the recent connection between revivalism and Temperance's new popularity as a result of combining the two. As one reporter explained:

After a lapse of many years, during which, through misdirected efforts, the Temperance cause made little progress, new elements, new impulses, and new agencies are now at work. The Gospel mode of converting drunkards into Christians, so effectively inaugurated by Moody and Sankey, has inspired good men to follow their example.<sup>64</sup>

The writer went on at some length to detail the current status of a vibrant Temperance work in New York. Then he made an astonishing claim:

These Gospel reformers, under the auspices of McAuley, Bunting, Moody, Sawyer, and Murphy, owe their success largely to the singing of Gospel hymns. This invariable accompaniment [regular singing of the gospel songs] has a soothing and softening influence. The effect of the best sermons is greatly increased by the sacred melodies which precede and follow them.<sup>65</sup>

Little could Ira have suspected that these meetings at the Union would be the first of what would become a regular engagement for him.

While no one believed Moody to be a spell-binding orator—as were many famous late-nineteenth-century preachers like Henry Ward Beecher or Thomas De Witt Talmadge—few could match his ability to share a per-

sonal-interest story and make it real. On that day, Moody told of the man who was unmoved by the evangelist's sermon, but was irritated by the hymn that kept repeating the word, "come." He went home, mad at the meeting, mad at the preacher, and mad at himself. He went to bed, but the pillow, the bed, and the entire room seemed to echo "come." So he got up, found the hymn book he'd brought home and threw it in the fire. Yet the next day he returned to the meeting, only to hear Moody give out the same hymn. At first, he cursed the preacher, but in exasperation got a copy of the song collection and began to scan the hymn. At that point, the evangelist announced he would preach on Isaiah 55, "Incline your ear, and come unto me, and your soul shall live." The man was converted.<sup>66</sup>

Although most people found Moody to be a compelling speaker, not everyone shared that opinion. A correspondent for the *New York Observer* confessed that Moody was "a conundrum I have never been able to guess. . . . [T]o me he is, with perhaps one exception, the most tiresome preacher in New York." Yet, surprisingly, he admitted:

Mr. Sankey is fine looking, particularly after he begins to sing. If I could imagine Cherubim or Seraphim with moustaches and slightly bald heads, I would say he was suggestive of [them]. While he was singing "Watching and Waiting," my thoughts went back to . . . "the angel whose heart strings are a lute, and who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures."<sup>67</sup>

During the Sankey family's earlier stay in Britain and the Continent, the Moody clan had taken up residence in Baltimore—the country's seventh largest city, with 332,313 souls. It had recently enjoyed the opening of Peabody Institute, with a book collection possessing more volumes than the Library of Congress. Its wealth would soon support more millionaire philanthropists than any American city, while maintaining its dominance as a railroad hub and fertilizer producer. Just two years earlier, The Johns Hopkins University had opened as America's first research-oriented school. The strongly Catholic city also supported a number of dynamic and growing Protestant evangelical churches. Moody had gone there, ostensibly for rest and study. But as Emma Moody saw it:

Mr. Moody has made quite a rigid rule whereby he takes six hours each day for study. Besides this, he has daily except Mondays and Saturdays a Bible reading in the afternoons, and preaching

services in the evening with their inquiry meetings. Sundays he preaches four times besides Inquiry Meetings, so you see he did not come here to Baltimore for *rest*, as some say, but for *study*.<sup>68</sup>

Since the fire in Chicago, he had had limited access to a theological library, and he realized the need for additional study, as he had been preaching the same sermons over and over and wanted to avoid endlessly repeating himself. He clearly desired a deeper understanding of Scripture. Additionally, by this time, all his sermons were widely available in print. He was also hoping for a period when constant travel wouldn't devour so much of his time and he could spend longer with his family—especially an expectant wife.

Dwight Moody, Emma, Willie, and daughter Emma arrived by train from nearby Philadelphia on Wednesday evening, October 8, and settled into their rented quarters at 168 Lanvale Street. On Sunday morning,<sup>69</sup> they attended the fashionable, neo-Gothic Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church, where the family would worship throughout their stay. They would remain in the city for the whole of the revival season—fall, winter, spring. Writing to her friend in Scotland, Mrs. Moody explained,

I am not ill, as I hear the report has gone to England. I suppose one thing that has taken such a report to England is that . . . Mr. Sankey may have told someone over there that we were expecting a new arrival in our family next spring. When Mr. S. urged Mr. M. to go to Europe instead of staying here, Mr. M. told him the main reason he must remain here. I thought I must be in my own hired house.<sup>70</sup>

It's doubtful that Mrs. Moody really expected her husband to spend all his time in quiet study and contemplation; this was Dwight L. Moody—the man of boundless energy. So, soon after arriving, he met with a committee of ministers who developed a plan, dividing the city into four zones. Shortly, Moody was preaching nightly at various Methodist Episcopal,<sup>71</sup> Baptist, Reformed, and Presbyterian churches around the city, staying from two to eight weeks in each spot—but not in a large central hall, as had been his requirement in the past. Moody also spent many hours speaking at the local Penitentiary, at Temperance meetings, the Maryland Institute, and at the YMCA. In total, the evangelist was credited with delivering 270 sermons during his six-month “rest period” in Baltimore.<sup>72</sup>

Music in those services was often supplied by the host church, although Professor Harry Sanders generally led the music, which included, on at least one occasion, a woman soloist, a Mrs. Mealev.<sup>73</sup> At the Fifth Regiment Armory meeting in April, two gentlemen played cornets that “swelled the volume of melody which rolled up to the arched roof.”<sup>74</sup> Notices about revival meetings in the newspapers asked attendees to “Bring *Gospel Hymns No. 3*” to the service.<sup>75</sup> It’s unclear what Moody felt about the quality of the music or if he longed for his yoke-fellow, Ira’s presence. He continued to employ music as a practical tool to control his surroundings, as in the watch-night service, preaching and praying out the old year of 1878. During that meeting, Moody spoke for two hours, “stopping several times for the choir to sing when he discovered anyone sleeping or nodding.” Some of the drowsy were unintentionally kept awake by a man in the congregation who repeatedly punctuated Moody’s sermon with a hearty “Amen.” The preacher asked him to stop as he wasn’t used to such enthusiasm and it “put him out.” But the gentleman simply rose and said he’d respond whenever he felt like it.<sup>76</sup> Apparently no one else fell asleep.

Little Paul Dwight Moody was born to Dwight and Emma on April 11, 1879. The family remained for another six weeks in Baltimore, with Moody speaking at the closing meeting of the International YMCA convention,<sup>77</sup> where he was elected its national president. On May 25, the family decamped to Northfield, where they spent the summer in the company of the greater Moody clan.

Sankey spent much of the summer in New Castle, although he never seemed to remain still for too long. In August, he traveled north to Chautauqua, New York, to provide musical assistance for J.H. Vincent, who had recently begun a Sunday School training assembly.<sup>78</sup> But instead of returning home, he traveled 450 miles to Northfield, Massachusetts, for a very special occasion: the laying of a cornerstone for Moody’s latest vision—the founding of a school to educate young girls from the region in the ways of faith.

The idea had stemmed from a plan, formulating in his mind after he visited the fledgling Wellesley College, founded by his Boston hosts, Henry and Pauline Durant. To that end, he purchased one hundred acres of bare, sandy hills between his home and the river in Northfield. And on August 21, surrounded by Henry Durant, evangelist George Pentecost, Moody’s mother and local friends, Moody laid the cornerstone for his new vision. Of course, Ira was there to lead the appropriate music.<sup>79</sup>

Perhaps providentially, with a sense that the work would be blessed and last for some time, a copper box was placed beneath the cornerstone, filled with various secular and religious newspapers, a 130-year-old piece of gravestone from the city's first pastor, a history of Northfield, a photo of Moody's birthplace, a reading-spelling-medical book belonging to Moody's great grandfather, a Bible, a copy of Moody's sermons (to which he objected), some American coins, a copy of *Gospel Hymns*, and a recording of Sankey singing "Hold the Fort!"<sup>80</sup>

This last item—reported in various newspapers—that Sankey had made a recording of his voice on a tin cylinder and placed it in the box, seems highly improbable, for Edison had only conceived the idea for an invention to record sounds less than two years earlier in December of 1877. Yet, only a month later, he established The Edison Speaking Phonograph Company, which began producing models that were soon exhibited around the country in stores, hotels, churches, and cities as distant as Paris and London.



**Edison and His Tinfoil Phonograph, 1878**, in  
Dyer & Martin, *Edison: His Life and Inventions* (1910).

In demonstrations of its novel abilities, stunned spectators were treated to the device's almost magical powers as various people spoke into a tube that captured sound by making indentations on a piece of tin foil wrapped around a small cylinder. When the cylinder was rotated and pressed by a stylus, the original sounds could be "played back," producing a sound quality commensurate with the newly invented telephone. After demonstrations, the operators sometimes cut up the tin foil cylinders and distributed them to spectators who found them to be highly collectible.<sup>81</sup>

Ira undoubtedly attended one of those demonstrations as he traveled around the country and sang "Hold the Fort!" for an impressed phonograph operator, who then gave him a piece of the cylinder, or perhaps the whole thing. Obviously not realizing the significance of this as the earliest recording of gospel music, Ira donated it to Moody's initial efforts at his girls' school. It would be another twenty years before Sankey could record his voice for the Edison Company in a manner that was more permanent.<sup>82</sup>

Until Edison's invention, music had only been heard live—in the whole history of the world! There had simply been no way to record live sound and reproduce it at a later time or in a different place. Edison himself included "recording music" as one of many possibilities he listed in promoting the new device, and at least a few newspaper reporters imagined using the novel invention to preserve the voices of opera singers such as Jenny Lind.

There is no record of Sankey's thoughts on hearing his own voice or how he responded to it, for a person's voice always sounds different to them than to others. So at the moment Sankey's voice was played back to him, it was the first time he had ever heard what millions of others crowded into packed auditoriums would hear. Perhaps he was happy to bury it.

In the fall of 1879, the evangelists resumed their normal schedule of holding extended meetings in larger cities, with Cleveland, Ohio,<sup>83</sup> occupying them during October and early November. In that city, they did employ a central hall, Doan's Tabernacle on Ontario Street, which seated five thousand people.

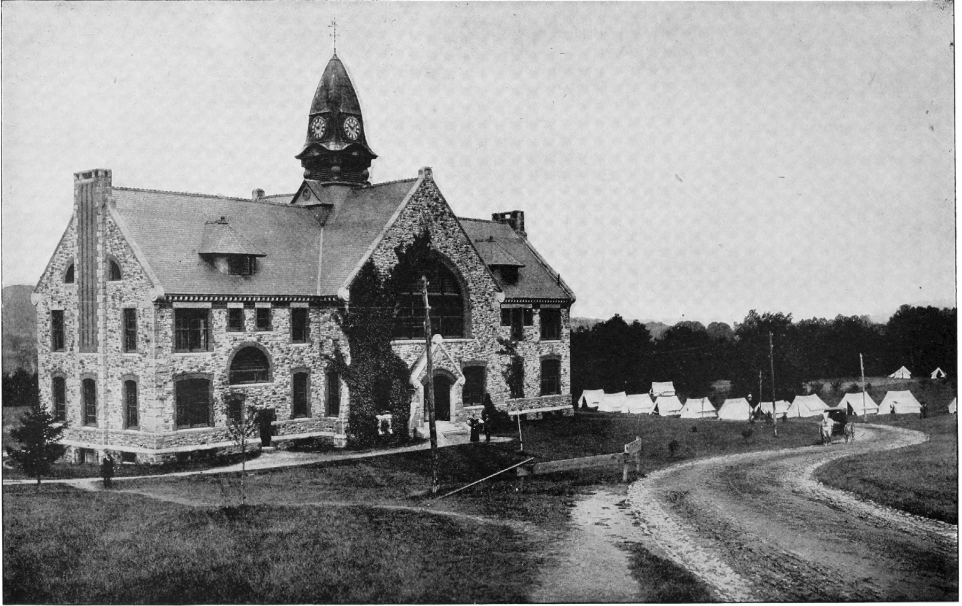
On November 3, Moody's Northfield Seminary for Young Women opened. As no dormitory was available, he modified his home to accommodate eight female students; twenty-five showed up! In addition, the Moody dining room provided space for lessons until the Recitation Hall was finished.

Both evangelists were still major news-makers, with their meetings—and often their personal lives—being covered in great detail. New parents



SING ME A SANKEY: THE STORY OF IRA D. SANKEY

named their children after the evangelists, as did keepers at the Philadelphia Zoo, who dubbed a couple of new chimpanzees Moody and Sankey.<sup>84</sup> ☞



**Stone Hall, Northfield Seminary**, in J. Wilbur Chapman,  
*The Life and Work of Dwight L. Moody* (1900).

## ENDNOTES

1. Words and music by P.P. Bliss, “Wonderful Words of Life,” *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan, and George C. Stebbins, eds. (Cincinnati: John Church Co.; New York: Biglow and Main, 1894), No. 579.
2. That was also evident in England, to some extent, when the evangelists sought to begin meetings in York, only to be told that it was not a good time to begin meetings, as church members were away during summer months. See chapter 8.
3. It is unclear if the Sankey family relocated to Cohasset in 1877 after the Boston revival or in 1878. They were clearly there in the spring of 1878, but conditions in 1877 (such as Fanny Sankey’s child care issues) were the same as those in 1878 when correspondence establishes them in Cohasset.
4. Ira Sankey, *My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1906), 279–80. The event is mistakenly identified as happening in 1876, but it should be 1877. Needham’s obituary of 17 February 1902, in *The New York Times*, reads like a script from an adventure movie, filled with adolescent torture and branding on the high seas, only to be abandoned to cannibals in Patagonia!
5. Letter of 1 April 1878, from (Mrs.) Emma C. Moody to her friend Jane MacKinnon. Northfield (Mass.) Museum, Emma Moody Powell papers, page 2. Mrs. Moody stated that Mrs. Sankey came to New Haven, “occasionally on a short visit to her husband.”
6. Emma Moody Powell, *Heavenly Destiny: The Life Story of Mrs. D.L. Moody* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1943), 115.
7. See *Moody and Sankey in Hartford: Reports of Sermons and Prayer-Meeting Talks, in January and February, 1878* (Hartford, CT: 1878).
8. Barry L. Dustin, “Dwight L. Moody Comes to New Haven,” *Journal of the New Haven Colony Historical Society*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Spring 1975), 17–18. This account is a fascinating and detailed account of the revival.
9. Dustin, “Dwight L. Moody,” 17–18.
10. Dustin, “Dwight L. Moody,” 18.
11. Dustin, “Dwight L. Moody,” 19.
12. Dustin, “Dwight L. Moody,” 20.
13. Dustin, “Dwight L. Moody,” 25.
14. Dustin, “Dwight L. Moody,” 25.

15. Dustin, "Dwight L. Moody," 23.
16. Dustin, "Dwight L. Moody," 27.
17. Dustin, "Dwight L. Moody," 30–31.
18. George C. Stebbins, *Reminiscences and Gospel Hymn Stories* (New York: George H. Doran, 1924), 91–92.
19. Dustin, "Dwight L. Moody," 32.
20. Letter to H.P. Main from Ira Sankey, 8 August 1878. The letter seems to suggest that Sankey's relation to Main was more business-like than personal.
21. Letter to William Doane from Ira Sankey, 5 August 1878, in the Archives of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton College, Illinois. It's unclear whether that meeting ever took place.
22. Stebbins, *Reminiscences*, 212.
23. Stebbins, *Reminiscences*, 213.
24. In early October, Moody held some meetings in Montreal, Canada, but without Sankey.
25. "Gospel Hymns in Europe: Mr. Sankey Singing in England and on the Continent," *The New York Times*, 27 July 1879, 8.
26. *The Newcastle Daily Chronicle* of 4 January 1879, 4, reported on a speech Sankey had presented to a group of pastors in Newcastle-on-Tyne, in which he explained, "Mr. Moody felt that he must stay home and study, and for that purpose they agreed to separate for a year." But Moody biographer John Pollock, in *Moody: the Biography* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 227, claims to have discovered a rift between Moody and Sankey over the proposed journey. Moody apparently tried to "dissuade" Sankey from going, but he "crossed the Atlantic in high expectation, and Moody made a sudden decision to start at Baltimore, to the delight of its ministers, who presumed Sankey's absence to be temporary. But Sankey had walked out of the partnership. That was the end of Moody and Sankey. . . . Sankey failed in England. 'He wrote to me,' Moody told Whittle, 'that if I would take him back, the money [from the hymn books] might be disposed of as I pleased,'" as Moody had an endless list of causes needing funds.

This is a strange interpretation, because Pollock implies that Sankey desired some say in how the hymn book royalties were dispersed, but he states in another paragraph, "their finances had nothing to do with their parting." The writer also seems to be completely unaware of Sankey's lengthy ministry in both Germany-Switzerland and in Britain during their separation, at times enjoying support from those who had been lukewarm or non-supportive (Anglican ministers) on their former visit.

Indeed, Sankey's talk to a huge group of assembled ministers at a luncheon in Newcastle-on-Tyne on 3 January 1879—as reported in *The Newcastle Daily Chronicle* of 4 January 1879, 4—records Sankey addressing the gathering and explaining his reason for being there: to fan or help rekindle revival fires in the local church.

A survey of British newspapers from 1879, when Sankey began his tour of Britain, shows enthusiastic support and attendance at the extended meetings, including large venues and overflow crowds. Most of these were in smaller cities, especially in the north of England, but can hardly be characterized as a failure—far from it. Pollock's claim that Sankey left Moody and experienced failure without him, seems grossly unsupported on any level.

27. See letter to Ira's brother, R.W. (Watson) for 19 March 1895, in which he calls her Bertha. *Centenary of Ira D. Sankey*, New Castle Historical Society (New Castle, PA: 1940), 53, 55.
28. This trip to Europe seems to be totally absent from any account of Sankey's life, including his brief autobiography and the biography *Sankey Still Sings* by Charles Ludwig. Of course, its coverage would have been absent in any of the works about Moody, as he did not go to Europe with Sankey. Information about it only seems available in newspaper accounts.
29. *Kansas City Times*, 31 July 1879, 3, quoting the *New York Star*.
30. *Kansas City Times*, 31 July 1879, 3, quoting the *New York Star*.
31. "Gospel Hymns in Europe: Mr. Sankey Singing in England and on the Continent," *The New York Times*, 27 July 1879, 8.
32. "Gospel Hymns in Europe," *The New York Times*, 27 July 1879, 8.
33. *The Burlington Free Press*, 1 August 1879, 3, quoting the *New York Herald*. It lists the evangelist's name as Wenger (rather than Weiner).
34. It's unclear what the motivation or timeframe was for Harry's attendance. There was evidently some level of personal connection. The school remains in business as one of the largest in the Germany.
35. *The New York Times*, 27 July 1879, 8.
36. *The New York Times*, 27 July 1879, 8. The article spells the city as Herisan.
37. *The New York Times*, 27 July 1879, 8.
38. *The Burlington Free Press*, 1 August 1879, 3, quoting the *New York Herald*.
39. *Kansas City Times*, 31 July 1879, 3, quoting the *New York Star*.
40. *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, 4 January 1879, 1.
41. *Chicago Tribune*, 16 February 1879, 9.

42. *The Western Times* (Exeter and Devon, England), 21 October 1879, 7.
43. *Northern Echo* (Darlington-Durham, England), 15 February 1879, 1.
44. *The Leeds Mercury*, 1 March 1879, 17.
45. *The Carmarthen Journal* (Wales), 4 April 1879, 7, quoting *The Guardian*, 26 March 1879, 416. William H.G. Bagshawe, *The Bagshawes of Ford: A Biographical Pedigree* (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1886); W.H.G. Bagshawe, *A Memoir of William Bagshawe of Ford Hall, Styled "The Apostle of the Peak"* (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1887).
46. "Cheap grace" was a charge leveled against those who preached salvation was attainable simply by repenting and believing on Christ.
47. The definitive work on this and related subjects is Nicholas Temperley, *The Music of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
48. William Henry Baptist Proby, *Annals of the "Low-church" Party in England, Down to the Death of Archbishop Tait* (London: J.T. Hayes, 1888), 451.
49. Well into the twentieth century, water treatment programs such as that at Warm Springs, Georgia—popularized by President Franklin Roosevelt—were available all over the U.S.
50. "Bought in Llandudno, So. Wales, April 22/79." Pasted into the front or back cover is the notation: "This Book belonged to IRA D. SANKEY, in his home at Brooklyn, New York, and was purchased at the private sale of his effects, in February, 1911, by CHARLES M. ALEXANDER." Alexander was Sankey's successor as songleader for the next generation of great revival crusades. He worked with R.A. Torrey.
51. She did suffer horribly from erysipelas—a nervous inflammation of the face. *The Guardian*, "The Hymns were Hers," 30 March 2002.
52. David Edward Pike, "Frances Ridley Havergal and Wales," <http://dai-bach-welldigger.blogspot.com/2016/03/the-influence-of-wales-on-frances.html>
53. Scott J Shifferd, "Charles Spurgeon Differs from Today's Baptists on Church Music," *The Breath of God*, <https://godsbreath.net/2008/03/17/charles-spurgeon-about-church-music/>
54. Commentary on Psalm 42:2, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David: An Original Exposition of the Book of Psalms*, Vol. 2 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1870).
55. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, compiler, *Our Own Hymn-Book* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1866), was words-only, containing no music. A new edi-

tion, Chris Fenner and Matt Boswell, eds., *Spurgeon's Own Hymn Book: A Collection of Psalms and Hymns for Public, Social, and Private Worship* (Ross-shire, England: Christian Heritage, 2019).

56. Irresistible Grace was one of the five tenets—often called TULIP—used to explain salvation: Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace, and Perseverance of the saints. These were defined in the Second Synod of Dort in 1618–1619, after Calvin's death. TULIP has become a modern acronym to explain Reformed theology (i.e. Calvinism).
57. Spurgeon, *Treasury*, Psalm 33:2.
58. Spurgeon, *Treasury*, Psalm 33:2.
59. *The Burlington Free Press*, 1 August 1879, 3, quoting the *New York Herald*.
60. *Kansas City Times*, 31 July 1879, 3.
61. "Gospel Hymns in Europe: Mr. Sankey Singing in England and on the Continent," *The New York Times*, 27 July 1879, 8.
62. *Indianapolis News*, 1 August 1879, 2, claimed "over 5000 persons were turned away."
63. *The New York Times*, 28 July 1879, 8; *Chicago Tribune*, 30 July 1879, 8.
64. *The Holton (Kansas) Recorder*, 6 January 1879, 4.
65. *The Holton (Kansas) Recorder*, 6 January 1879, 4.
66. *Raleigh (NC) News*, 31 July 1879, 1.
67. *The Observer* (Raleigh, NC), 2 August 1879, 2, quoting the *New York Observer* for 29 July 1879.
68. John Pollock, *Moody: The Biography* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 228.
69. *The Baltimore Sun*, 17 May 1879.
70. Letter of 4 December 1878 from (Mrs.) Emma C. Moody to her friend Jane MacKinnon, in Northfield, Mass., Moody Museum.
71. Moody claimed there were 79 Methodist churches in Baltimore. Methodism was widespread in Maryland, having been officially organized in the U.S. at the Baltimore Christmas Conference of 1784.
72. Moody's first meeting was held at the city jail on Sunday, October 13; he then spent two weeks traveling west to Pittsburgh and Chicago for meetings; he returned and resumed meetings in the local penitentiary on October 27. By then a local committee had scheduled services beginning on Tuesday afternoon (October 29) at Mount Vernon Methodist Episcopal Church (the "Cathedral of Methodism") at Mt. Vernon Place, with its grand monument to George Washington—the cultural center of the city.



While Moody preached at many other churches, this one seemed to be the principal location. Recently completed in 1872, it wasn't like anything down-to-earth Methodists had ever known: consisting of an imposing Norman-Gothic edifice with room for 900 worshippers, flanked by a soaring spire (ca. 178 feet) and a magnificent stained glass window over its triple-door entrance—modeled after the one in the Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris. It easily held its own for architectural awe with any of the city's other places of worship.

Little information about Moody's work in Baltimore for 1878–79 has been included in the vast biographical coverage afforded the evangelist. There was fairly consistent reporting on him in *The (Baltimore) Sun* with a good overview appearing in “Close of Mr. Moody's Meetings in Baltimore—History of His Sojourn and Labors,” 17 May 1879. This article is probably the source of the widespread attribution of him preaching at 270 services.

73. *The Sun*, 5 April 1879, 1.
74. *The Sun*, 28 April 1879, 1.
75. *The Sun*, 15 February and 30 August 1879, were two examples.
76. *The Sun*, 1 January 1879, 1.
77. *The Sun*, 26 May 1879, 1.
78. “The success of the Chautauqua, N.Y., assembly led to the founding of many similar ‘Chautauquas’ throughout the United States, patterned after the original institution. By 1900 there were hundreds of ‘tent’ Chautauquas and nearly 150 independent Chautauquas with permanent lecture halls, many of which continued the tradition of the lyceum movement. Although the remote Chautauquas began to decline after their peak year in 1924, the original institution at Chautauqua remained in existence, offering a diversified program that included symphony concerts, operas, plays, university summer school courses, and lectures.” *Britannica* online: “Chautauqua movement.”
79. *The Berkshire County Eagle* (Pittsfield, Mass), 4 September 1879, 1. It's possible the date was August 28; but it was definitely on a Thursday.
80. *Chicago Tribune*, 31 August 1879, 10; *The Buffalo (NY) Commercial*, 5 September 1879, 4; *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (Dublin, Ireland), 5 September 1879, 5.
81. Ira's recording appears to have been part of a brief moment of transition from Edison's development of the tin foil cylinder to the wax cylinder, which quickly replaced it. Reflecting the popularity and novelty of this development, there is a trade card from an 1878 Chicago exhibition of the phonograph, containing a piece of previously recorded tin cylinder attached to it. See “‘Ephemera’ of the tinfoil era: Page 1 — Spring and Summer 1878,”

René Rondeau's *Antique Phonograph Pages*, <https://www.edisontinfoil.com/ephemer1.htm>

82. The tin recording cylinder only contained two minutes of recording time, but "Hold the Fort!" took less time than that to include its three stanzas. For detailed information and actual recordings of Sankey and his contemporaries singing, see Richard Martin, *Waxing the Gospel: Mass Evangelism and the Phonograph, 1890–1900* (Champaign, IL: Archeophone Records, 2016).
83. *The Great Redemption or Gospel Light under the Labors of Moody and Sankey . . . held at The Cleveland Tabernacle During Oct. and Nov., 1879, from Stenographic Reports taken verbatim for the Cleveland Leader* (Chicago: Merchant's Specialty, 1891). Moody had apparently planned to go there before his detour to Baltimore. *The Sun*, 17 May 1879, 1. Meetings were held in Doane's Tabernacle, among other places. *The New York Times*, 6 Oct. 1879, 8.
84. *The Philadelphia Times*, 31 August 1879, 6.

No. 127.

# Ye must be Born again.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."—JOHN 3: 3.

W. T. SLEEPER.

GEO. C. STEBBINS, by per.

1. A rul - er once came to Je - sus by night, To  
 2. Ye chil - dren of men, at - tend to the word So  
 3. O ye who would en - ter that glo - ri - ous rest, And  
 4. A dear one in heav - en thy heart yearns to see, At the

ask Him the way of sal - va - tion and light; The Master made answer in  
 sol - emn - ly uttered by Je - sus, the Lord, And let not this message to  
 sing with the ransom'd the song of the blest; The life ev - er - last - ing if  
 beau - ti - ful gate may be watching for thee; Then list to the note of this

a - gain.....

words true and plain, "Ye must be born a - gain, a - gain."  
 you be in vain, "Ye must be born a - gain, a - gain."  
 ye would ob - tain, "Ye must be born a - gain, a - gain."  
 sol - emn re - frain, "Ye must be born a - gain, a - gain."

CHORUS. a - gain..... a - gain.....

"Ye must be born a - gain, a - gain," Ye must be born a - gain, a - gain, I

## Chapter 21

### A New Approach to Revival

1879–1880

*A ruler once came to Jesus by night,  
To ask Him the way of salvation and light;  
The Master made answer with words true and plain,  
“Ye must be born again.”*

*“Ye must born again, again,” “Ye must be born again,”  
I verily, verily, say unto thee, “Ye must be born again.”*

*O ye who would enter that glorious rest,  
And sing with the ransom'd the song of the blest;  
The life everlasting if ye would obtain,  
“Ye must be born again.”<sup>1</sup>*

ONLY SLIGHTLY WEST, but farther south of Chicago, lay St. Louis, Missouri, on the mighty Mississippi River—the great inland waterway of the nation. By 1879, St. Louis boasted a population of over 300,000 and enjoyed a strategic location to facilitate transit to the endless possibilities beyond. As a result, within the next few years, it became the fourth largest city in the U.S., after New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago. One reason was the completion of a bridge across the vast Mississippi effluence. To test the new technology of an arch-bridge design, the first span was loaded with a coal wagon, a train, and an elephant. It passed, and additional tests involving fourteen locomotives loaded with coal proved the bridge's safety, so 200,000 pedestrians paraded across the metal marvel during the city's Independence Day celebrations in 1874.

Over that same Eads Bridge, Moody and Sankey made their way into St. Louis on Saturday, November 22, 1879, with Sankey and his family settling in the relatively new 270-room Lindell Hotel at Sixth Street and Washington Avenue, while the Moody family took up residence in a furnished



*Eads Bridge at St. Louis (1880)*

home at 3412 Franklin Ave.<sup>2</sup> By noon, the evangelists had gathered with a myriad of denominational representatives to develop plans for the meetings. For Moody, who had usually planned all the details well in advance, this organizational session seemed to be rather last-minute and haphazard.<sup>3</sup>

But on closer examination, it appears to have been part of a new direction Moody was slowly adopting: a more decentralized approach based in local churches. It's not clear when Moody began questioning his adamant belief in the necessity of a large, central meeting place, which he had been requiring as recently as a couple of years earlier. His preference for a central hall resulted from his experiences in England, as the crowds began to grow during that first year of preaching, and it became evident that no single church could hold all those who wanted to attend. So renting or even constructing a central hall was only logical, as it seemed to address multiple needs. In addition, the large auditoriums became a sort of advertisement in themselves, attracting yet more folks who required yet a bigger space.

That plan seemed to work well for their American meetings at the Brooklyn Rink, the newly renovated Philadelphia Train Depot, the New York City Hippodrome, and the newly built Chicago and Boston Tabernacles. Moody was still convinced of its necessity for his meetings at New Ha-

ven in January of 1878, when he persuaded a hesitant committee to build a large, central hall as a requirement for his coming to their city.

But sometime between those meetings in New Haven and the ones in St. Louis, less than two years later, Moody apparently had a significant change of heart. Perhaps it was a gradual realization that the evangelists' great public successes were coming at the cost of local churches. There had always been some grouching about the extended and wearying demands of the faithful from neighborhood churches who carried the brunt of the work: as ushers, choir members, Inquiry Room counselors, visitors to homes, and general support staff. Or it possibly came from the pastors themselves.

Another came from England's greatest Protestant voice, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who, although being a strong supporter of Moody and Sankey during their London meetings, was not wholly uncritical of their work.

I am the earnest friend and helper of all who preach the Gospel of Jesus; yet I deem it no unfriendly thing to speak the truth. . . . The movement in London [Moody campaign of 1875] had (comparatively) no link with the Churches, and fostered a rival spirit, and hence it did not bring a permanent blessing of increase to the Churches. Still, it brought a great blessing to the Church universal, and revived and encouraged us all.<sup>4</sup>

Although Moody did not necessarily see this particular correspondence, he likely had other contact with the famed English pastor and heard more than he'd bargained for. It's also possible that Moody himself began to recognize how the great public successes of Moody and Sankey placed a heavy burden on the supporting churches. Or perhaps, he heard glowing reports from the pairs of evangelists he had sent out—such as Whittle and Bliss, or Pentecost and Stebbins, who were ministering in local churches rather than grand halls—and began to wonder about his own approach.

It is also possible the turnabout happened as an indirect result of Moody's time in Baltimore. Ostensibly, he had gone there for rest and study, with no revival campaign intended. Yet, it was no surprise when the city's pastors wanted him to preach in their churches, bringing with him the crowds and excitement. But as no massed meetings had been planned, and as no revival "machinery" (committees) accompanied him, it's certainly possible the meetings initially grew up in an *ad hoc* manner, although Moody's preaching schedule soon became as daunting as ever. But all of it seemed to take



place within the confines of the local church. At some point, Moody must have realized this was a credible approach, of which the local pastors were much more receptive. Whatever the reason, by the time Moody and Sankey reached St. Louis in November of 1879, a sea-change had taken place.

As reported in the *Sunday-School Times*, the Rev. C.L. Goodell of the city's Plymouth Congregational Church explained:

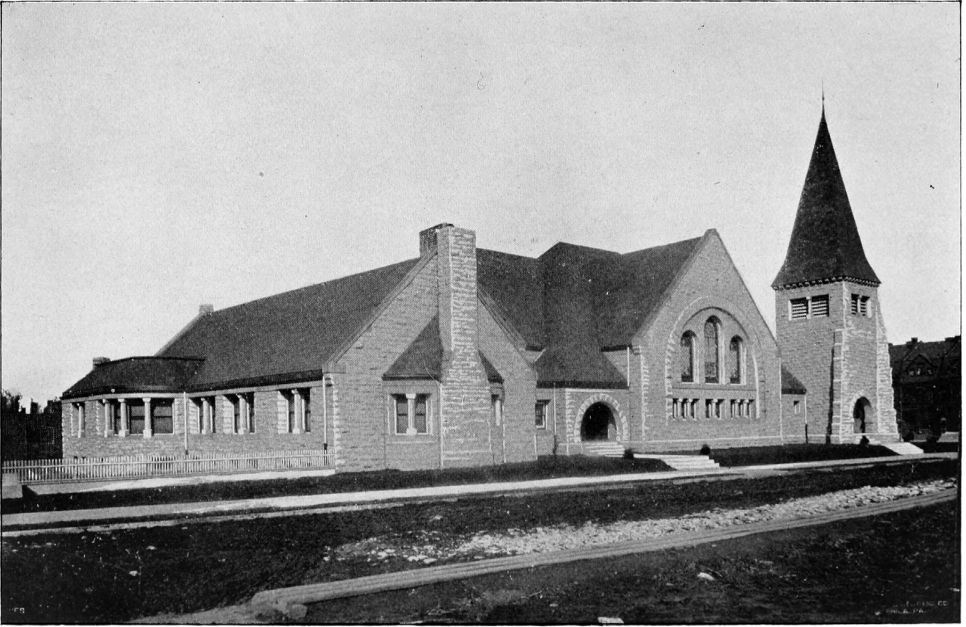
Forty ministers met Messrs. Moody and Sankey in conference the day after their arrival in St. Louis. No tabernacle was declared, the object being to work in and with the churches, and to quicken the churches themselves into more active effort and higher spiritual life; keeping the interest in them, and not drawing it away to outside centers. The arrangement was made after the plan in Baltimore, which Mr. Moody regards as an improvement on the tabernacle method, putting especial honor on the churches and established ordinances of God.<sup>5</sup>

As a result of this decision, a committee of seven pastors hastily met and divided the city into five districts.

Additional business focused on the committee for organizing the revival. At first, local preachers proposed having a body under the auspices of the Evangelical Alliance of local pastors be in charge of planning and details. But Moody wanted none of that, citing the possibility of running afield of their "red tape." He instead demanded a committee of local civic leaders, perhaps feeling more at ease with men of business than men of the cloth.

Another major change was to hold only afternoon meetings for the first couple of weeks at the centrally located First Presbyterian Church on Fourteenth and Lucas—to begin Tuesday. Gone were the grand, widely-publicized opening meetings for Christian workers, boasting a huge choir and a stage full of dignitaries.

An hour before the scheduled meeting at 4:00PM on November 25, 1879, the church was full. A special platform had been constructed, capable of holding Moody's pulpit, Sankey's harmonium, and at least fifteen prominent pastors. The order of the service was little changed from the thousands of others as had gone before. It opened with the Rev. J.G. Wilson of St. John's Methodist Church offering an earnest invocation, asking for God's Spirit to be present, followed by Moody—in his typical, perfunctory manner—inviting all to rise and sing "Nearer, my God, to Thee." He then prayed an



First Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, in *Commercial and Architectural St. Louis* (1891).

atypically long prayer for someone noted for his brevity, dwarfing the earlier intercession of pastor Wilson.

Sankey requested the congregation to sing a stanza of “There is a fountain filled with blood” and launched into an unusually long introduction to his first solo, “Are Your Windows Open Towards Jerusalem?” by Philip Bliss. In an age of greater Biblical literacy, those church folk would have easily understood the allusion to the Old Testament hero and exile to Babylon, Daniel, who faithfully prayed three times a day, facing Jerusalem through his open window. But perhaps Ira felt there might be some in the congregation who needed a reminder of the way Daniel had been dragged off to a foreign country and forbidden to pray to any god but that of his captors. Yet, the power of God accomplished miracles, and Ira asked his hearers to pray for that same power. “I hope we will catch the wonderful spirit of the man of whom we sing.” Another hymn followed, and Moody read from Luke, chapter 5. Sankey sang “Waiting and Watching,” a selection from the older *Gospel Hymns No. 2*.

By now, the latest edition of the songbook, *Gospel Hymns No. 3*, had been in circulation for over a year and was one that many would have brought with them. It was published in 1878 and might have been available

for Ira to examine before he left for England. If not, he would have received a copy while holding services in Britain. And there, he would have been confronted with a different approach to publishing an ever-growing body of gospel songs.

The initial method began in England, where the new genre of gospel hymnody, published by Morgan and Scott, began life as a twenty-three song pamphlet called *Sacred Songs and Solos*, which Sankey had selected from a notebook of songs he had collected. To incorporate additional material, the publisher had taken the path of simply adding new songs to successive editions and naming it something liked “Enlarged” or “Combined.” That process continued through various iterations into the early twentieth century, when *Sacred Songs and Solos with Standard Hymns*—attempting to become an all-purpose hymnal—mushroomed into a volume of 1,200 selections.<sup>6</sup>

But in America, a different approach—with publishers Biglow and Main of New York and John Church of Cincinnati—was to issue additional, separate volumes containing mostly new selections. This was evident in *Gospel Hymns No. 3*, with its two new co-editors replacing the deceased Philip Bliss. In particular, the contributions of James G. McGranahan were conspicuous. Nearly thirty of his melodies<sup>7</sup> appeared in the collection of one hundred tunes, and a few became popular, some set to the poetry of his friend and fellow revivalist, Daniel W. Whittle—listed as D.W.W. in the collection. These included “I will sing of my Redeemer,” to a text by Bliss, “It may be at morn when the day is awaking” (“Christ Returneth”), and “O what a Savior that He died for me!” (“Verily, Verily”). He also composed some extended revival songs that were possibly intended for revival choirs.

The other new editor was George C. Stebbins, who had directed the revival choir in Chicago. He supplied over a dozen melodies, including tunes for “I’ve found a friend; oh, such a friend,” “A ruler once came to Jesus by night” (“Ye Must Be Born Again”), “There is a green hill far away, without a city wall,” the very hymn-like “Saviour, breathe an evening blessing” (“Evening Blessing”), and “Must I go and empty-handed.” Of Sankey’s eight tunes, only his “O safe to the rock that is higher than I” (“Hiding in Thee”)<sup>8</sup> became popular. Conspicuously absent was “There were ninety and nine.”

The collection opened with Reginald Heber’s Victorian hymn “Holy, Holy, Holy” set to John B. Dykes’ tune NICAEA, which had only been published seventeen years earlier in the Anglican Church’s *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (1861), and could hardly have been the universally loved canticle it

later became. It is unclear which one of the three editors pushed to open the collection with that most un-gospel-song-like selection.<sup>9</sup>

With three different editions in circulation, publishers Biglow & Main and John Church tried to solve the problem of providing a single collection containing all the popular songs under one cover by issuing *Gospel Hymns Combined, Nos. 1, 2 and 3*, published earlier that year (1879). As they explained:

This collection embraces in one volume all the hymns and tunes, as used by D.L. Moody, and others, found in *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs* [volumes 1, 2, 3]. The hymns found from No. 2 and No. 3 have been renumbered in consecutive order; all duplicates omitted, and for convenience of reference, the original numbers are printed at the top of each hymn in brackets.<sup>10</sup>

While newspaper ads requested the public to “bring *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1, 2 and 3* bound together”<sup>11</sup> to the meetings, nevertheless, there must have been no little confusion on the part of those bringing only the separate editions and a constant juggling of books over which edition to consult or which page to find the current song.

In spite of some uncertainty about which book to sing from, services continued in the afternoons, with the Thursday meeting falling on Thanksgiving Day. Although it hadn’t yet become a national holiday, the tradition of celebrating with a festive meal was widespread. It’s uncertain with whom Ira spent his Thanksgiving dinner, but he was sure to overcome any urge to appear drowsy, as Moody warned some of his hearers:

I see two or three have gone asleep. I guess they have been eating too hearty a dinner this Thanksgiving Day, but I would like to have you keep awake until you hear this, because it is more important to get spiritual thoughts than it is to get the very best dinner that anybody can get in the City of Saint Louis at any table.<sup>12</sup>

During the afternoon meetings, Ira took a more prominent role than in the evening services, where he usually limited his speaking to an appropriate introductory remark before his solos. But as he had done in the previous noon prayer and afternoon Bible readings, he often told lengthy stories suitable for bringing his solos into fuller context. At the Friday afternoon service, he told the story of Mrs. Pennefather, wife of one of his original hosts to Britain in 1873. When her husband died, she possessed a desire to

be with him but was filled with the thought, “Not now, not now, my child: there is labor for you to do still for the Master,” and she penned the hymn, “Not now, my child—a little more rough tossing.”<sup>13</sup>

On Sunday, November 30, evening meetings commenced at the Plymouth Congregational Church at the corner of Ewing and Washington Avenues. While the church was one of the larger ones in town, there was no comparison to the barn-like edifices that had earlier dwarfed both the preacher’s and the singer’s efforts. So it was no surprise that Sankey’s singing continued to impress, even those of a skeptical nature:

Mr. Sankey’s singing is somewhat of a disappointment at first, for one has heard so much of “the sweet singer of Israel” that the expectations are apt to exceed the reality; which is that his voice is clear, penetrating, and not devoid of sweetness, but, with an occasional twang that is decidedly unpleasant. Yet somehow after a time this twang disappears, or at least ceases to annoy, his voice gains fullness and sweetness, in a remarkable degree, and it always possesses the rare merit of great distinctness; so great that even when it scarcely rises above a whisper, every word is audible throughout the large building.<sup>14</sup>

While Moody and Sankey did not get paid from funds raised for revival expenses, they often had to contend with those who sought to profit from their notoriety. One instance involved a young entrepreneur who set up a large board on the street outside the Methodist Church at Eighth and Washington, displaying alleged photographs of the evangelists. He did a brisk business in selling his wares, perhaps implying that they went to help support Moody and Sankey. When word got back to the revivalist, he took occasion during an afternoon sermon to emphatically say the photographs were not of the evangelists, as he hadn’t sat for a photograph in fifteen years, and neither he nor Sankey had anything to do with the scheme.

After the service, a few who had purchased the merchandise confronted the salesman.

“This is not Moody’s photograph at all” said one disgruntled customer.

“Does it look like him?” queried the vendor.

“Yes, but [Moody] says it is not his picture.”

“It is his picture for I had a man go into the church while he was preach-

ing and draw a crayon of him, and I had a picture taken of that,” responded the plucky young peddler who had done the same for Sankey.<sup>15</sup>

Undoubtedly, the biggest news story to come out of the meetings, and one carried all over the country, was the report of the famed clown Dan Rice having been converted at the Moody-Sankey meetings. Four decades earlier, Rice had been one of the most recognized names in the country. Born Daniel McLaren, Rice was variously incarnated as a circus clown, animal trainer, actor, producer, dancer, and politician, running—unsuccessfully—for the Senate, Congress, and President of the United States. He boasted working in a circus with the first canvas-top tent and owning a trained pig, Sybill, which was capable of telling time. In addition to appearing in blackface minstrelsy, he created “Dan Rice’s Multifarious Account of Shakespeare’s Hamlet.” His circus fame supposedly eclipsed that of rival P.T. Barnum, and Mark Twain alluded to him in his *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Before Barnum, he was described as the “Greatest Show on Earth.”<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps to revive a long-diminished reputation, Rice gave interviews to papers, claiming, “It’s a fact. I’ve been a buckin’ agin’ this thing for a long time, but they’ve fetched me at last.” He continued, “That singing of Sankey’s; it completely laid me out, hit me right square in the soft spot, you know, and did the business right there and then.” Moody preached, but “Pretty soon he got through talking, and Sankey began to sing. Oh that song, how hard it did strike me! Why it knocked me! It was a song my mother sang to me a long while ago. It goes ‘Come ye sinners, poor and needy.’ There I was, listening to that old song saying, ‘Come ye needy.’ I was needy and poor too; I had to go; I was forced to it. I had to cave right in.”<sup>17</sup>

At that point, the reporter confided, “Here the veteran circus clown and showman pulled his linen handkerchief out of his overcoat pocket and blew his nose in a very violent manner.” Rice continued his colorful narrative, describing both evangelists talking with him about his spiritual condition and Moody promising to preach a special sermon for him the next evening. It was about the “Lost Sheep.” Rice responded and immediately decided to become an evangelist. Asked if he would include a singer in his work, he boasted that he could do his own singing.<sup>18</sup>

This big news cast the revival in a highly successful light, but when queried about the reports of Rice’s conversion, Moody said there was no foundation to it, and in his one conversation with the former clown, he “gave no evidence of conversion whatsoever.”<sup>19</sup>



The new year—1880—found the evangelists holding Sunday morning services at First Baptist Church Colored, with crowds so large that many were turned away from the “considerable awakening.” In the afternoon, the more centrally located YMCA was commandeered to stand in for Dr. Post’s church, which couldn’t be reached because of heavy rains and muddy streets.<sup>20</sup>

The new year also saw Moody requesting specialized help when he realized the city contained a large number of German-speaking folks he couldn’t reach. That resulted in him calling on Frederick von Schlümbach from the East Coast to join them. “I came here upon the invitation of Mr. Moody, who pays my salary and maps out the program for me to pursue,” reported von Schlümbach.<sup>21</sup>

While daily news coverage remained strong, one intrepid reporter took a different approach, sleuthing out an encyclopedic level of minutia. Perhaps unsurpassed in the evangelists’ lifetime was the detailed analysis, “Saintly Statistics,” in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* for March 6, 1880, written after over five months of meetings. The reporter calculated, by that point, Moody had preached 154 sermons, spanning 4,620 minutes—or 77 hours. They entailed 1,256,640 words, covering over 68,000 lines of type. Sankey was said to have sung 336 solos in the revival meetings with another 504 coming from prayer services and Bible readings. He played the harmonium for an additional 672 hymns.

Revival expenses to date totaled \$2,800, with \$400 going for the rental of Library Hall, \$250 to \$400 per month for advertising in four newspapers, 3,500 big posters printed for St. Louis and the surrounding cities, half-a-million fliers (called “dodgers”) distributed, and 2,000 hymnals purchased. Host churches were reimbursed for gas lighting, coal heating, covering the carpets, building stages, and custodial duties. The *Globe Democrat* paid stenographers \$100 weekly to record sermons in Moody’s afternoon meetings, costing the paper \$1,400.

Average attendance at those meetings was 600, with 1,300 more in the evenings, totaling 159,600 souls. Adding new church memberships from conversion to the estimated number of those who hadn’t yet joined, the reporter calculated the number of sinners saved at 2,400—which averaged out to \$116 per soul. “The expense, therefore, has not been large, looking at the result from a debt and credit standpoint.”<sup>22</sup>

While this impressive accumulation of facts and figures potentially sold a few more papers, editors knew there was nothing like a bit of salacious gossip to grab much wider attention. And it all began one evening when a Mrs. Williams appeared at the service. On the platform she spied Mr. Henry Williams leading the choir. His voice, which some compared to Sankey's, sounded familiar to Mrs. Williams. So after the meeting, she cornered the chorister, inquiring if he had ever been in Lexington, Illinois, to which he replied in the negative. Sensing that the woman might be a religious fanatic, Henry made a quick getaway and forgot about the incident. But a few days later, he was accosted by reporters responding to newspaper articles saying he was a bigamist and had formerly been married to Mrs. Williams. It seems the woman in question had gone to Moody with her complaint—who said he would investigate—then to the press, who readily published the charge before examining it.

The upstart was that everyone who had had any contact with Henry F. Williams was besieged by reporters seeking some angle on the potentially volatile story. Those included both Moody and Sankey, of course. While neither of the evangelists had any knowledge of Mr. Williams' background, they—like everyone else—were caught up in the rumors swirling around the accused. It seemed to have made little difference that Mr. Williams would have been only four years old when he was alleged to have married Mrs. Williams; the story just grew.

Fortunately, Mrs. Williams possessed enough reason to finally admit she had made a mistake in accusing Henry Francis Williams of being Henry T. Williams—the man who had abandoned her after five years of marriage. But not before newspaper reporting eclipsed the meetings themselves. Widespread press coverage was clearly a double-edged sword.<sup>23</sup>

While Moody and Sankey received most of the publicity for the revival meetings, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* also reported on others who didn't usually share the limelight.

A small cohort of soldiers of the cross were summoned here to assist Moody. These revivalists held additional meetings at points here and there through the town. They are lesser lights revolving around Moody. Mr. F. Von Schluembach [is] "the German Moody." . . . His co-worker is the Rev. Mr. Wert, the "German Sankey," who has a very fine voice. It is their special mission

to gather in the Germans. E.W. Bliss is from Baltimore . . . doing Gospel and temperance work. He is a sweet singer. Charles M. Morton . . . is an effective speaker, being both original and humorous. Capt. W.O. Lattimore [is] a gospel and temperance worker. Mr. Hellenbeck . . . is also a reformed drunkard. Mr. H.F. Williams . . . is the leader of the choir.<sup>24</sup>

Speaking or singing in front of people many times a day could easily become rote, but Sankey seemed to be motivated from a deep spiritual well, which allowed him to stay focused on eternal goals. On February 26, the final day of a three-day Christian Convention for nearly one thousand religious leaders, Sankey requested the congregation to sing hymn No. 29 during the morning service, but Moody in his informal manner blurted out, “No, no, we want a solo.” Of course, his outburst signaled some in the congregation to then offer their own suggestions, with “The Ninety and Nine” coming as no surprise.

But rather than seize the moment and placate the crowd, Sankey revealed his heart, asking for prayer first, with the explanation, “For it is machine work if I sing without prayer.” “Dr. Goodell then prayed aloud, and Mr. Sankey sang ‘The Ninety and Nine’ amidst solemn silence.”<sup>25</sup> By now, it was a solo he had sung thousands of times, and one he could have delivered effectively and memorably by rote to those eager Christians, but his desire was that it be more than another performance of a famous solo; rather that it be empowered by the Holy Spirit. While it was widely acknowledged that Sankey did not possess Christendom’s greatest voice, there were few who would argue that it wasn’t one of the most Spirit-led.

Meetings in St. Louis wound down rather than concluding with massive farewell assemblies. In fact, Moody might not have intended them to end when they did, for he admitted, “I am now tired of preaching to the same audience and want a change. I will take a rest, preaching only in the evening,”<sup>26</sup> But that was probably wishful thinking on Moody’s part. After preaching 244 times, filling 500 columns of newspaper space, and Sankey singing at 300 hundred services, the St. Louis meetings came to a close on April 7.<sup>27</sup>

The next day, Moody and Sankey boarded the paddle-wheel steamer *Annie P. Silver* of the New Orleans Anchor Line, ferrying apples, whiskey, and various passengers.<sup>28</sup> Their plan was to spend about six weeks in the South, holding meetings of one to three days, then return to St. Louis for Moody to

rejoin his family, who had remained behind.<sup>29</sup> From St. Louis, it was a fairly straight shot south to New Orleans, down the great estuary separating East from West and America's established territory from its frontier. Travel on the Mississippi in those days was not all that different from the steamboats Mark Twain had described in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*—except they didn't blow up so often!

While the steamer *Annie P. Silver* never blew up, it did get a reputation for being jinxed. In fact, the boat on which Moody and Sankey began their southern sojourn had recently come back from being rebuilt—the result of a fire. That occurred on September 12 of the previous year as it sailed past Cairo, Illinois, with a cargo of \$100,000 and twenty passengers. Upon the fire's discovery, the ship headed for shore, where the crew spent thirteen grueling hours unloading most of its cargo while unsuccessfully fighting the smoldering flames. Rather than lose the entire vessel to fire, it was sailed out into thirteen feet of water, where the crew took axes to the hull, sinking the ship—but putting out the fire. It was soon raised, refitted, and returned to service in time for the evangelists to sail—without mishap—to their next destination. Perhaps ironically, that stop was Cairo, Illinois, one-hundred-fifty miles downstream, where on Sunday morning, Moody and Sankey ministered in the local Presbyterian church.<sup>30</sup> Then it was on to the Old South.

The Old South, later known as the Jim Crow South, was a hellish place to live after the end of Reconstruction—if you were Black. For the freedoms and rights attained by those formerly enslaved as a result of the Civil War were all washed away as southern states began to impose regulations, laws, and generally inhumane conditions on African Americans after Federal troops were withdrawn in 1877. The right to vote, hold office, or freely move about in public all vanished. And the penalty for real or imagined offenses against a white person ranged from false imprisonment (and being farmed out as manual labor) to beatings or rape or lynching. There was simply no redress to law enforcement or the courts—all of which colluded to control a Black population it no longer legally owned. Acquiescing to or even reinforcing those values was the white church, a Church whose denominations—Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian—had all split off from their northern brethren before the war over the issue of slavery.

Moody had previously spent some time preaching in Savannah, Georgia, in 1877 and had experienced the entrenched attitudes toward Blacks,

even among his Christian supporters. While Blacks in the North had only attended Moody-Sankey campaigns in limited numbers, they were generally treated as equals, mixing freely with the white worshipers at the meetings. Not so in the South. And this would be Sankey's first venture there.

Here, Ira would discover an entirely different cultural understanding about race. And although the Gospel of Christ was expected to change individual lives, it wasn't expected to change the larger culture overnight. In fact, "Moody felt that social change was not possible to any large degree. He felt that the possibility of reform apart from personal regeneration was ridiculous."<sup>31</sup>

Perhaps an exception to this rule was Moody's strong support for the Temperance movement, although the evangelist might have argued that his efforts in this matter were aimed at individuals and not at attempts to achieve social change. But the movement itself was often deeply involved in broader societal transformation—sometimes campaigning for women's right to vote.

Arriving at Baton Rouge, the plan was for the evangelists to take a tug boat to Donaldsonville, then a train to New Orleans, arriving in time for a formal reception at the YMCA. But things didn't work as planned, and the evangelists transferred to the steamer *R.R. Springer*, only to find it permanently delayed north of their destination. Wary of their guests not arriving in time for the formal reception, lads from the welcoming committee at the YMCA chartered a tug boat to traverse ten miles upriver and ferry the men to their meeting. River-weary but glad to conclude their journey, Moody and Sankey finally appeared at the gathering as the sun was going down.<sup>32</sup> Of course, a fatigued Sankey was expected to sing.

As little as five years earlier, New Orleans had been a city in political chaos. Republicans and Democrats competed for control of the state legislature, committing verbal assaults, kidnappings, and shootings, resulting in both parties setting up rival governments within the city. It all came to a head on January 4, 1875, when Colonel Philippe Régis Denis de Keredern de Trobriand led Federal troops right into the legislative chamber, expelling five Democrats.<sup>33</sup> The resulting outcry helped move public opinion—even in the North—to view as unsustainable the role of the Federal government stationing troops in various Southern states to guarantee Black rights. By 1880, when Moody and Sankey arrived, the political scene had become less chaotic, as those in the majority had regained control of local politics—at the expense of any persons of color.

For the next few days, April 18–20, they ministered to packed assemblies in various churches around the city. A local paper recorded, “the services are conducted in the ordinary manner, except that an organ is placed beside the pulpit, at which Mr. Sankey sits and plays when he sings, which he does in a manner which once heard will never be forgotten.”<sup>34</sup> The *New Orleans Daily Democrat* tantalizingly reported, “After the opening prayer, Mr. Sankey, presiding at the piano, conducted the singing.” If the reporter was not mistaken that Sankey played the piano rather than some form of pump organ, it seems to have been the first record of him playing the piano in a religious meeting.

During the middle of the nineteenth century, important developments in the piano made it a popular instrument for the home and some public places—although generally not the church. One of these advances was the iron frame, which allowed the strings to come under much higher tension, producing a fuller range of dynamics and a richer, louder sound. Another development was the “upright” form of the piano, which was both cheaper and more compact in its space requirements. Soon, the powerful and more percussive piano was replacing the pump organ/harmonium in the home, public sphere, and Sunday School spaces. It was simply a superior musical instrument.

Within a few years of Ira’s first playing of the piano for ministry, hundreds of manufacturers were turning out 100,000 instruments per year, rising to a high point of 300,000 in 1924. Piano music of every type, style, and difficulty was sold to an ever-growing number of adults and children who were expected to become proficient enough on the instrument to perform in the dreaded public piano recital. This era marked what became known as the piano’s “Golden Age.”<sup>35</sup>

If Ira found himself seated before a piano at the YMCA, it probably wouldn’t have been the first time he had ever confronted the instrument. But it’s uncertain how he had understood the need to adapt his technique of playing to this wholly different keyboard. For Ira was often known to sustain one chord for a period of time while he wove a melody line above it. In sustaining a chord—by pumping the pedals of the organ—he could employ maximum rhythmic flexibility with his solo—something he was known for. “The Ninety and Nine” presents a good example, where in the original version, beginning with the words “away on the mountain wild and steep,” the harmony requires only an A-flat chord for an extended time. But a piano



sound begins a rapid decay from the moment a key is struck; that simply wouldn't work for the way Ira delivered his solos. So he would have had to adapt in some way.

That could easily be accomplished by speeding up the tempo of the song to arrive at the next chord sooner, before the previous one had decayed completely. Another adjustment would be to repeat the same chord more often, and a final approach that developed later as the piano eventually took its place as the dominant instrument of musical revivalism, was to break up the chord into its separate notes and repeat them in different octaves—a technique called arpeggiation, which every church pianist would eventually learn.

After New Orleans, there was a “flying trip to Texas” by train, including Morgan City—where Ira’s singing “caused a sensation”<sup>36</sup>—San Antonio, and Austin. Then north to Muskogee, Oklahoma, where Moody and Sankey were presented a close-up view of the “Indian Question,” which basically asked what should be done with all the Native Americans uprooted from their ancestral lands. Moody was so impressed with the needs of the tribes that he offered to educate a dozen girls at his new school in Northfield.<sup>37</sup> In Oswego, Kansas, Moody remained behind to visit a brother, while Ira returned to St. Louis via the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad. It was the first day of May.

Before heading east, both men reunited, putting in an appearance at the Illinois State Sunday School Convention in Galesburg, Illinois. Then Ira travelled nearly one thousand miles farther east to New York City to assist C.W. Sawyer, holding Temperance meetings at the Cooper Institute, a work that was apparently quite important to him. It's possible that Ira was also completing plans for a major change involving the whole family.

He didn't arrive back home in New Castle until May 12, where his homecoming proved to be a fairly brief one. Whether the folks in New Castle sensed that Sankey and his family were leaving them for good is not clear, but there must have been some who suspected. It might not even have been evident to the Sankeys that they were permanently departing from their family and friends, because it certainly wasn't unusual for the Sankey clan to be gone for extended periods and to spend their summers in places like Cohasset, Massachusetts, where Ira's brother lived.

So going off to Brooklyn for the summer would not have been all that unusual, but this time seemed different. For that reason, New Castle's Methodist Church—where Sankey had led the choir, the Sunday School, a class

meeting, and been one of the church's shining lights—was packed beyond capacity on June 23 as Ira presented a service of song. In fact, ministers representing sister Baptist and Presbyterian churches were conspicuous in attendance.<sup>38</sup> It certainly seemed like more than a temporary send-off.

This wasn't the first time Fanny Sankey had to pack up and move away from her family and the community she loved. It was fewer than ten years ago when she and Ira had answered Moody's call to relocate to Chicago and help rebuild his ministries after the fire. But within a short time—as they set off for England with Moody—it became clear that they might never have a permanent home, as Ira so prophetically told a friend, “We have become religious tramps.”<sup>39</sup>

But now there was the prospect of moving to perhaps the most important city in the country—or at least its sister across the river, Brooklyn. By July, the family had settled into temporary quarters, a few blocks from the Clermont Rink, site of the evangelists' first large revival campaign in the United States after returning from England as religious celebrities. From Brooklyn, Ira could easily access publisher Biglow & Main and the Cooper Institute across the river in New York City, where he became a regular leader at C.W. Sawyer's Gospel Temperance meetings. And although Brooklyn was two hundred miles away from Moody's home and headquarters in Northfield, Massachusetts, it was much closer than distant New Castle.

By late August, newspapers all over the nation were reporting that the Sankey family had moved to Brooklyn, some suggesting that Moody had failed to lure him to Northfield. Of course, Ira could never be sure when he would be summoned to Northfield for some new project. And that seemed to be the case near the end of August, when Moody sent out a circular seeking a “Convocation of Prayer,” the object of which was for “solemn self-consecration, for pleading God's promises, and waiting upon Him for fresh anointment of power from on high.”<sup>40</sup>

Back in Chicago, eight years earlier, Moody had made a name for himself as a builder of religious institutions, like his huge Sunday School, Illinois Street Church, and YMCA (actually three Farwell Halls). Yet he later admitted:

The Chicago Fire was the turning point in my life. I become so mixed up with building Farwell Hall and was on committees for every kind of work, and in my ambition to make my enterprises succeed because they were mine I had taken my eyes off the Lord

and had been burdened in soul and unfruitful in my work. When the Fire came, as a revelation, I took my hat and walked out!<sup>41</sup>

But now it seemed as though Moody was beginning to repeat the same pattern by opening the Northfield Girls' School, announcing a forthcoming boys' school, and organizing a conference with the potential to be ongoing. Although Moody's purpose for the "convocation" seemed rather nebulous, hundred of attendees—bankers, merchants, manufacturers, mechanics, railroad men, and both male and female Christian workers—arrived at the Springfield train station where, for twenty-five cents, they could hire a buggy to take them the two miles to Moody's farm in Northfield. There, facilities for his girls' school had been turned into dormitories and eating areas for guests; local residents opened their homes to visitors, and many camped out in tents for ten days to seek the Spirit of God.

Of course, Ira was there too, in the middle of a diverse group of two hundred men, including a Colonel Clark of Chicago, who had owned a California gold mine, a businessman from Alabama, and a Quaker physician from Baltimore. They had all come to seek God's presence and power and were expectantly awaiting the opening session, some seated in chairs and benches or reclining on the straw floor of a large tent. At 9:00AM, Moody requested heads to be bowed in silent prayer. After five minutes, accompanied by the chirping of birds and wind blowing through the trees, Ira's sweet voice interrupted with:<sup>42</sup>

*More holiness give me, more strivings within.  
More patience in suffering, more sorrow for sin.  
More faith in my Saviour, more sense of His care.  
More joy in His service, more purpose in prayer.*

He was quickly joined by the small throng.

*More purity give me, more strength to o'er come.  
More freedom from earth-stains, more longings for home.  
More fit for the kingdom, more useful I'd be.  
More blessèd and holy, more, Saviour, like Thee.*<sup>43</sup>

Although this "convocation" wasn't billed as a Holiness event, touting the movement's most famous practitioners, the opening song couldn't have framed it better, for the Holiness goals of personal purity, inward searching of

the heart, and the desire for an intimate relationship with Christ ran parallel with the broader evangelical movement personified by Moody and Sankey.

Ira's opening selection happened to be a classic statement of Holiness theology, but it wasn't the product of a Holiness zealot; it was the outpouring of a broad evangelical, the late P.P. Bliss, who had furnished Ira with so many of the songs—such as “Hold the Fort!”—responsible for making him famous and introducing gospel hymnody to the world. By September of 1880, there was a broadly understood, yet specific, language reflecting the key Holiness components embraced by most folks sympathetic with Revivalism.

In retrospect, this first “convocation” turned out to be only the beginning of a focus on the town of Northfield, which would definitely pull Ira more deeply into its orbit.

Abolition and Temperance were the two most important social movements in nineteenth-century American life, with the question of Abolition being settled with the conclusion of the Civil War. Thereafter, Temperance became the focus of social reform, with as many as ten percent of the population taking “the pledge” to refrain from the use of alcohol.

An important contingent of that group was Methodism, whose eighteenth-century founder John Wesley had preached against alcohol consumption. By the late nineteenth century, American Methodists were strong supporters of Temperance, and Ira Sankey was a loyal son of his denomination.

As part of their revival meetings, there had always been a significant component of the Temperance movement present. But in addition to those meetings, Ira seemed to hold strong personal support for Temperance goals. After departing Moody's Northfield “convocation,” Ira returned to New York City by September 12, where he had assisted C.W. Sawyer a few months earlier at the Sunday Temperance meetings at the Cooper Institute. Two weeks later, he sang at the Clinton Avenue Congregational Church for one of the country's most prominent women, Frances C. Willard, soon to be president of perhaps the nation's largest organization of women, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU).

In between, he made an appearance at Chickering Hall on Fifth Avenue, near the grand mansions of New York's rich and famous. This impressive stone edifice was meant to rival the Chickering piano company's chief competition, Steinway pianos, whose new building stood a few blocks away. In addition to displaying Chickering's fine instruments, a large auditorium

above the piano showroom hosted all manner of civic events, including the American debut of Europe's most famous concert pianist, Hans von Bulow.

According to the press, Chickering offered von Bulow the astronomical sum of \$20,000 to appear on their stage. That helped America earn a much-deserved reputation for offering famous European performers and composers sums undreamed-of in their native lands to parade themselves in front of American audiences. Von Bulow was impressed with Chickering pianos, but he hated advertising and sometimes kicked over the Chickering signs at his concerts. The company tried to outwit him by stenciling their name in gold letters on one of the instruments they lent him, but he took out a pocket knife and scratched it out.

A few years before Sankey graced the hall, Alexander Graham Bell held a much-anticipated demonstration of his new invention, the telephone. Unfortunately, as his assistant Watson spoke the famous words "Mary had a little lamb," all that came out over the telephone lines was static.

Sankey was at Chickering Hall to promote the opening of revival services for the Rev. Samuel Colcord. Long before the appointed hour, the 1500-seat auditorium was filled in anticipation of hearing Sankey sing. The program began with a prelude on the newly-installed, three-manual Roosevelt pipe organ—something rather alien to Ira Sankey and his little keyboard. After a selection by the choir, its leader requested, "And now let us sing the hymn on the opposite page—the grandest hymn ever written—DUNDEE—all sing and please do not drag the rhythm." DUNDEE was the tune often coupled with William Cowper's beloved text "God moves in a mysterious way." The congregation sang a number of hymns until Sankey entered the hall with the Rev. Colcord. He expressed joy in finally meeting this group and asked to share a new hymn with them, "Deliverance Will Come" (sometimes known as "Palms of Victory").



**Chickering Hall, New York,**  
in *The Commemoration of the Founding  
of the House of Chickering & Sons* (1904).

It's not clear where Sankey discovered this song, the words and music of which he apparently thought was an older folk hymn.<sup>44</sup> It wasn't the typical newer-sounding gospel-song type that Sankey was known for. Although it sounded more like a folk hymn from the frontier camp meeting era, its text was clearly that of a single author with some poetic skills.

*I saw a wayworn traveler, In tattered garments clad,  
And struggling up the mountain, It seemed that he was sad;  
His back was laden heavy, His strength was almost gone,  
Yet he shouted as he journeyed, "Deliverance will come!"*

The chorus was a simple one, and the congregation joined with Sankey after a couple of attempts.

*Then palms of victory, crowns of glory,  
Palms of victory I shall bear.*

Of course, Ira knew the crowd had come to hear him sing the song he had made famous, "The Ninety and Nine." Yet, in a revealing anecdote, Ira prefaced his singing with a recent experience at Northfield. It seems Moody had asked him to sing "The Ninety and Nine," but Ira responded that he had a new one he'd like to sing as the old one was sung so often. "Well, the other one first, then "The Ninety and Nine"" interjected Moody, aiming at a compromise.

Like any successful innovator, Ira wanted to create new songs and share them with those who had made him famous. But those same folks didn't come to hear new hymns; they wanted Sankey to sing the song they knew—"The Ninety and Nine." So Ira explained how, after he finished singing at Northfield,

. . . a good brother who had been converted by the influence of the old hymn took him to task for not wanting to sing a hymn which had done so much good, saying, "Mr. Sankey don't say the old 'Ninety and Nine' is worn out, but sing it wherever you go."<sup>45</sup>

In telling this story, Ira confessed, having sung the same old song day after day, it was easy to forget how "The Ninety and Nine" had produced an eternal impact on many lives. And Ira was trying to remind himself how life-changing it was for many people who came to hear him. ☺



ENDNOTES

1. Words by W.T. Sleeper and music by George C. Stebbins, “Ye Must Be Born Again,” *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan and George C. Stebbins, eds. (Cincinnati: John Church Co.; New York: Biglow and Main, 1894), No. 127.
2. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 7 January 1880, 8. Mrs. Moody and the children were delayed in coming because of a sick child—again.
3. *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, 23 November 1879, 7. According to the paper, Sankey came to St. Louis with “his wife and child,” perhaps overlooking two of the children, or indicating two of them remained in New Castle with their grandparents. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 3 April 1880, 2.
4. Letter of C.H. Spurgeon to Ben Nicholson, Esq. (in Westwood), 1 April 1882, in William Williams, *Personal Reminiscences of Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1895), 225.
5. *The New York Times*, 24 November 1879, 8.
6. The publishing history, enumerated in “Ira Sankey,” *Hymnology Archive*, Chris Fenner, ed., <https://www.hymnologyarchive.com/ira-sankey>, is as follows:

*Sacred Songs and Solos Sung by Ira D. Sankey* (23 hymns, 1873)

*Additional Sacred Songs and Solos* (29 hymns, 1875)

*Sacred Songs and Solos, Enlarged Ed.* (81 hymns, 1875)

*Sacred Songs and Solos Sung by Ira D. Sankey & P.P. Bliss* (163 hymns, 1876)

*Later Songs and Solos* (190 hymns, 1877)

*Enlarged Songs and Solos* (271 = 81+190, 1877)

*Sacred Songs and Solos No. 2* (170 hymns, 1882)

*Sacred Songs and Solos, Nos. I & II Combined* (441 = 271+170, 1882)

*The Christian Choir* (1886)

*Additional Sacred Songs and Solos with Standard Hymns* (309 hymns, 1888)

*Sacred Songs and Solos with Standard Hymns, Combined* (750 = 441+309, 1892)

*New Hymns and Solos* (138 hymns, 1892)

*Sacred Songs and Solos with New Hymns* (888 = 750+138, 1897)

*The Christian Choir, Revised & Enlarged* (281 hymns, 1897)

*Sacred Songs and Solos with The Christian Choir* (1169 = 888+281, 1897)

*Sacred Songs and Solos Revised and Enlarged* (1200 hymns, 1904)

7. McGranahan seemed to have a preference for compound meters: 6/8, 9/8, 12/8.
8. It is interesting to note how Sankey's tune for this hymn first appeared in *Welcome Tidings: A New Collection of Songs for the Sunday School* (No. 60), compiled by Robert Lowry, William Doane, and Ira Sankey in 1877, published by Biglow and Main and by John Church—the same publishers who were currently producing the *Gospel Hymns* series.
9. 1878 was also the first year this hymn appeared among the highly revivalistic Methodist groups. As this hymn seems to have been one of the more accessible and popular titles among those groups who sang primarily gospel songs, it is interesting to speculate whether its inclusion in *Gospel Hymns No. 3* had any impact on its acceptance among those primarily gospel-song-singing revivalists.
10. *Gospel Hymns Combined, Embracing Volumes No. 1, 2 and 3, as Used in Gospel Meetings and Other Religious Services* (New York: Biglow and Main; Cincinnati: John Church, 1879). It might be of significance to note how the publishers stated, “as used by D.L. Moody,” without recognizing Sankey, who had made the songs—and the success of the publications—famous.
11. *St. Louis Globe*, 3 December 1879, 5.
12. *St. Louis Globe*, 28 November 1879, 5.
13. *St. Louis Globe*, 29 November 1879, 2.
14. *Kansas City Times*, 16 December 1879, 2.
15. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 7 January 1880, 8. *The Indiana State Sentinel* (Indianapolis) 4 February 1880, 7, reprints an undated article from the *St. Louis Times* called “Moody and I,” which purports to be a highly entertaining interview with the seller.
16. *Wikipedia*; David Carlyon, *Dan Rice: The Most Famous Man You've Never Heard Of* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001).
17. The earliest accounts appear about 20 December 1879, and quote the *St. Louis Republican*, which probably carried it on December 19. Newspaper accounts, sometimes with varying creative details, were published throughout the United States.
18. See footnote 17.
19. *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 27 December 1879, 8.
20. *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 12 January 1880, 8.
21. *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, 17 January 1880, 4. In some of his meetings, there was singing by a German male choir.

22. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 6 March 1880, 4. The article is an amazing compilation of revival-related facts and personnel.
23. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 6 February 1880, 8. The *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 8 February 1880, 2, also reported that his wife played the organ—perhaps accompanying him. The *Muscatine (Iowa) Journal* for 11 February 1880, 2, carried a detailed article in which evidence in the case was shared at one of the afternoon meetings, concluding with a resolution affirming the character of H.F. Williams. After it passed, the poor soul was asked to sing, somewhat ironically, “Down life’s dark vale we wander, till Jesus comes.” The *Alton (IL) Evening Telegraph* for 7 February 1880, 7, recorded that Mr. Williams filed a lawsuit for \$25,000 against the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* for libel.
24. A somewhat detailed account of the work of these men, in tandem with Sankey, is recorded in *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 6 March 1880, 4.
25. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 26 February 1880, 8; also see 25 February 1880, 8. The meetings were held at Centenary M.E. Church at the corner of 16th and Pine Streets.
26. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 3 April 1880, 2. Earlier, the *St. Paul Globe*, 25 January 1880, 5, had reported about the meetings, “the throngs are great, but the enquirers are relatively few. Moody does not know what to make of it.” It is difficult to know how accurate this report was, or if it continued, or if it affected Moody’s decision in any way.
27. *Pittsfield Sun* (Pittsfield, MA), 19 May 1880, 3, quoting *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*.
28. *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 9 April 1880, 7.
29. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 3 April 1880, 2. This was clearly the stated case for Moody; it is assumed Sankey would have done the same, although it’s possible that Fanny Sankey and the children could have returned to New Castle on their own at the close of the meetings.
30. Mrs. Moody—and possibly the children—traveled with Mr. Moody to Cairo, where they took a return boat to St. Louis. There is no information if the Sankey family did the same. This was probably on April 12.
31. For a perceptive analysis of Moody’s position as related to the tumultuous social changes of the age, see Myron Raymond Charter, “The Social Views of Dwight L. Moody and Their Relation to the Workingman of 1860–1900,” Fort Hays (University) History/Studies Series, No. 40 (or No. 6), 1969. Chapter VIII, “Summary and Conclusions.” Also see Edward J. Blum, *Reforming The White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism 1865–1898* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 2015 edition), Chapter 4.

32. *The New Orleans Daily Democrat*, 18 April 1880, 8.
33. Some sources record eight men being ejected.
34. *The Telegraph Bulletin* (Monroe, LA) 28 April 1880, 1. *The New Orleans Daily Democrat* for 18 April 1880, 8, also recorded that Sankey played the piano at the YMCA reception.
35. It is variously described as the 1890–1920s or as long as 1875–1932.
36. *The Galveston Daily News*, 22 April 1880, 4.
37. *The Indian Journal* (Eufaula, OK), 6 May 1880, 6. The financier Jay Gould reportedly paid the travel expenses—which included traveling part-way in a “handsome Pullman Palace Car”—for sixteen Indian girls. *Norfolk (VA) Landmark*, 25 September 1880, 1.
38. *New Castle Index*, 23 June 1880, 3.
39. Letter to his Chicago housekeeper, Mrs. Hitchcock, from New Castle, PA, 13 October 1875.
40. John Pollack, *Moody: A Biography* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 236. This certainly possessed the language and spirit of Holiness terminology.
41. John Pollack, *Moody*, 235.
42. *Vermont Phoenix* (Brattleboro), 17 September 1880, 3.
43. Words and music by P.P. Bliss, “My Prayer,” *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, No. 594. This song was one of the first published by Bliss and was included in his *Gospel Songs* (1874), No. 95, and Ira’s *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs* (first edition, 1875) at No. 93.
44. In *Gospel Hymns No. 4* (Cincinnati: John Church & Co., New York: Biglow and Main, 1881), No. 44, the words are listed as “Anon.” and the tune as “Old Melody—arr.” In *Gospel Hymns: Nos. 1 to 6 Complete* (1894), both words and music are listed as Rev. Jno. B. Matthias, 1836.
45. *St. Joseph Weekly Herald* (St. Joseph, Missouri), 30 September 1880, 2.

# No. 631. Where is my Boy to-night?

R. L.

Rev. R. LOWRY.

*With tenderness.*

1. Where is my wand'ring boy to-night—The boy of my tenderest care, The  
 2. Once he was pure as morn-ing dew, As he knelt at his moth-er's knee; No  
 3. O could I see you now, my boy, As fair as in old - en time, When  
 4. Go for my wand'ring boy to-night; Go, search for him where you will; But

boy that was once my joy and light, The child of my love and prayer?  
 face was so bright, no heart more true, And none was so sweet as he.  
 prattle and smile made home a joy, And life was a mer - ry chime!  
 bring him to me with all his blight, And tell him I love him still.

CHORUS. *Not too fast.*

O where is my boy to - night? O where is my boy to - night? My

heart o'erflows, for I love him, he knows; O where is my boy to - night?

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*Chapter 22*  
**Go West, Young Man!**  
1880–1882

*Where is my wondering boy tonight—The boy of my tenderest care,  
The boy that was once my joy and light, The child of my love and prayer?*

*O where is my boy tonight? O where is my boy tonight?  
My heart overflows, for I love him, he knows;  
O where is my boy tonight?*

*Go for my wandering boy tonight; Go, search for him where you will;  
But bring him to me with all his blight, And tell him I love him still.<sup>1</sup>*

HE LOOKED LIKE a character straight out of a Dickens novel in his massive overcoat, huge top-hat, clean-shaven face with long gray whiskers sprouting from his neck and falling over a high collar. Horace Greeley had always been a lightning rod of a character, and his name was highly revered in the Sankey family, so much so that David and Mary Sankey named one of their sons after him.<sup>2</sup> He was of the Whig political persuasion, as was Ira's father, David. In fact, both were involved in politics that helped elect Benjamin Henry Harrison to the presidency in 1840—the year Ira was born. From a poor family, Greeley migrated to New York City to seek his fortune, later founding the *New York Tribune*, which turned out to have the greatest circulation in the country. A staunch abolitionist and crusader against political corruption, his successful newspaper and fame encouraged him to run as a Democratic candidate for the presidency in 1872, only to be soundly defeated by Ulysses S. Grant.<sup>3</sup>

A year earlier, as editor of the *Tribune*, Greeley had responded to a young correspondent, R.L. Sanderson, who requested career advice. Greeley's prescription concluded with the most famous direction in American history:

So many people ask me what they shall do; so few tell me what they can do. Yet this is the pivot wherein all must turn. I believe



that each of us who has his place to make should go where men are wanted, and where employment is not bestowed as alms. Of course, I say to all who are in want of work, Go West!”<sup>4</sup>

And that is exactly what Philip P. Bliss, George Stebbins, Daniel Whittle, Dwight L. Moody, and Ira D. Sankey did in casting their lots with the western city of Chicago. It turned out to be sage advice, for Chicago, even after the devastating fire, became one of the most dynamic spots in the country. But the “West” was a moving target, stretching all the way to the Pacific.

By the summer of 1881, Moody had decided that he and Sankey should travel across the country to spend an extended visit in San Francisco.<sup>5</sup> When the two regrouped in Chicago on Friday, October 15, to begin their fall campaign, they held a service at the YMCA’s Farwell Hall and at Moody’s rebuilt Chicago Avenue Church. As the evangelist admitted to a reporter for the *Chicago Daily Telegraph*, “Ever since we came back from Europe in 1875, they’ve been inviting us out to the Pacific slope, and we’ve been promising them we’d come.”<sup>6</sup>

Their journey began as the Chicago and Northwestern Railway carried them five hundred miles due west to Omaha, Nebraska, the beginning of the Transcontinental Railroad. In an age of near-miraculous progress, the Transcontinental Railroad ranked as one of its grandest achievements. Partly a result of the Pacific Railroad Act of 1862—in which the Federal government rewarded railroads with \$48,000 in government bonds and 12,800 acres of land (Indian territory) per mile of track laid—the task was completed in 1869. What would have required a six-month wagon train endeavor or a twenty-five day stagecoach journey to reach California was cut to just four days. The entire nation was opening up to travel, and soon, to settlement.

It was Ira’s first trek this far west. Both he and Moody were without families but were accompanied by a recent convert, M.L. Hallenbeck, who focused on Temperance work. They all traveled first class—a ticket costing a hefty \$134.50—likely because of second class’s crowded conditions and because no food was provided. Not so in first class, which contained sleeping, dining, and parlor cars—the first taste of true luxury for many Americans.

As a famous pair, the evangelists made news as they traveled through each area. Even before their first stop, the local newspaper noted:

The famous evangelists Moody and Sankey will spend the day in Omaha tomorrow and will hold one meeting under the auspice-

es of the Y.M.C.A. They are on their way through to California, where they will begin an extended series of meetings for the conversion of the wicked, including the hoodlums of San Francisco and the heathen Chinese.<sup>7</sup>

Even though Chinese workers had built much of the western segment of the railroad, widespread racial discrimination banished them to the third-class “Chinese” railway car, as was reported by Robert Lewis Stevenson on his trip through the country only a year earlier.

Polygamy was currently a hot topic as the train neared Utah, for the U.S. Supreme Court had recently ruled unanimously—in *Reynolds vs. the United States*—that freedom of religion was not a legal basis for the Mormon practice of “plural marriage.”<sup>8</sup> And now the evangelists were going into the heart of Mormon territory.<sup>9</sup> The topic must have come up between Moody and Sankey and their associates or passengers on the train when it stopped at Salt Lake City, for it was not only a somewhat titillating subject—shrouded in a certain amount of sexual mystery—but also a legitimate subject for speculation about the limits of religious freedom.

For Moody, his stop in Salt Lake City on October 21 was a return engagement, having preached there in March of 1871. On that occasion, he had been invited by Brigham Young to speak at the newly constructed Tabernacle (not the Temple, however). Young, who reputedly enjoyed fifty-five wives who bore him fifty-six children, had died three years earlier. Mormon leadership reportedly offered use of the Tabernacle again, but to avoid any controversy, it was not accepted.<sup>10</sup> Moody and Sankey spent three weeks in Salt Lake City at the local Presbyterian and Methodist Episcopal churches, with overflow meetings taking place at the Liberal Institute. While Moody preached in the churches, M.L. Hallenbeck exhorted those at the overflow meetings. As soon as Moody began preaching, Ira would abandon the church location and dash off to the Institute to sing for those who couldn’t hear Moody.

Enthusiasm for the meetings seemed high with one supporter writing to *The Salt Lake Tribune* to say,

[Moody and Sankey] seem already to have accomplished more for the moral and religious instruction and welfare of the people; more for the consolation of those in sorrow, darkness, and distress, more to lift up the fallen and give hope to those in despair,

than has been done by all the services in the Great Tabernacle in ten years.<sup>11</sup>

Of Sankey, the writer belived Moody's sermons

. . . never would get the hold they do upon the masses without the grand service of Mr. Sankey. There appears to be only one word which fully describes his singing and that word is eloquent. It thrills, moves, and melts the hearts of the people like grand eloquence. Mr Sankey's singing has far more to do with putting the people into the proper frame to hear the gospel from the lips of Mr. Moody than is generally supposed.<sup>12</sup>

News coverage of the revivalists continued to appear on a nationwide scale with large and small town papers employing news services to reproduce any account, large or small, accurate or inaccurate about the pair: including detailed reports of their meetings, the story of the Sankey family having relocated to Brooklyn, and of the two men having quarreled and separated over hymn-book royalties. There were also reports comparing the difference between Moody and the famous religious skeptic and lecturer Robert G. Ingersoll—all reflecting a continued high level of interest on the part of the press, and apparently their readers.

By November 8, the team of Moody, Sankey, and Hallenbeck were on their way to San Francisco, the ninth largest city in the U.S. For a metropolis that had been cut off from the rest of the country for most of its existence until the recent arrival of the railroads, it was a booming place, boasting 239,959 souls. In 1880, it still bore the reputation of its gold rush days as a land of lawlessness, prostitution, greed, political corruption, and moral apathy, which religion had had little success in taming. Newspapers warned: "Moody and Sankey, the revival sharps [con-men] arrived today"<sup>13</sup> and would have to confront Beelzebub and the Prince of Darkness from the start. The Rev. W.J. Smith opined,

I do not want to be a prophet of evil omen, but if Jesus could not do mighty works in Nazareth because of their unbelief, there may be things to hinder the blessing of God coming to us even by those dear brethren who have been so successful elsewhere. This city, like Nazareth, is filled with unbelief.<sup>14</sup>

For the evangelists, this echoed like a stale tirade they had heard in almost every city where they ministered with warnings about the special

hardness of its spiritual soil. However, such negative expectations had often been muted by overall positive press coverage; here, it was hard to tell how supportive *The San Francisco Examiner* was going to be with its sarcastic musing over whether Moody and Sankey’s “blood-stained banner of the cross” would “triumph over the sulphurous [*sic*] ramparts of the aggregate and individual wickedness of the Coast.”<sup>15</sup>

Upon arrival at their destination, the evangelists checked into the Italianate-style, four-storey Occidental Hotel, which could be spied from outside the city, towering over the low-slung buildings. New guests were often greeted with flowers and a bowl of fruit. The lodging also provided hot and cold baths, carpeted stairs, lounges with rocking chairs, and “pianos of the best manufacture.” More importantly, however, was its central location to area churches and the ferry across the bay to Oakland.



**Occidental Hotel, San Francisco.**  
Online Archive of California.

Reporters roamed the premises, cornering Sankey—whose first impression seemed to be that of a “well-to-do business man” of “ample proportions”—in the hallway. But he seemed more than happy to share his time and future plans with the press. “We propose to hold entirely impromptu meetings with no previous preparations, and will begin with the organization next Friday evening . . . of a volunteer choir. I shall direct it myself but shall reserve my voice for solo performance only.”<sup>16</sup>

The initial “spiritual battle”—as the press saw it—took place on the following Sunday evening, November 14, at the 1500-seat First Congregational Church at the corner of Post and Mason Streets, pastored by Dr. Stone. The “impromptu nature” Ira had mentioned was evident in the hasty distribution of *Gospel Hymns Combined Nos. 1, 2 and 3* to those desiring to make up the revival choir. As per Moody’s typical matter-of-fact instructions, “If the ladies and gentlemen who sing will please take seats on the right hand side of the platform, that will be a great help to us.”

Then Moody addressed the crowd, “We will open the meeting by singing the eighty-eighth hymn, ‘Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah.’” As this

hymn was printed with no music accompanying it, Sankey clarified, “We will sing it to the old familiar tune of GREENVILLE. Please all rise and sing.”<sup>17</sup> Moody followed with instructions for seating late-comers, and Sankey led out with No. 85, “Jesus, lover of my soul,” requesting all to remain seated. After prayer, Moody passed word to his associate to lead in “Rock of Ages,” then “Sweet hour of prayer,” the latter being the first example of the newer gospel songs the revivals were known for.

After a lengthy time of congregational singing—which became a common feature in San Francisco meetings—Ira offered his first solo, “Nothing but Leaves.”

Mr. Sankey then alone, and in a wonderfully deep, impressive and flexible baritone, sang the beautiful hymn, and the rapt and reverend silence with which it was listened to was the first real proof of one of the wonderful powers of the two great revivalists, who everywhere have moved such masses of people to at least a temporary interest in their exhortations.<sup>18</sup>

Another congregational song followed and Moody preached.

To some extent, these meetings were more like the early days in England, where they were improvising their logistics as they went along. It’s assumed that Moody forwarded a set of requirements to the ministerial association responsible for inviting them to San Francisco, but there was apparently no organizing committee attending to every detail, as there had been by the time of their first American meetings.<sup>19</sup>

One of the issues had to do with singing. It seemed obvious to reporters that many of the songs chosen for the congregation were unfamiliar.

As most of the hymns are new to this coast and as all the [550] hymn books distributed by the evangelists have disappeared, the singing was confined almost exclusively to Mr. Sankey and the choir, and frequently to Mr. Sankey alone. . . . Mr. Sankey . . . urges buying at the bookstore of the hymn-books. . . . Books are on the way here for a second free distribution, but it cannot be expected that enough will come to supply each of the hundreds of people who make a single visit . . . out of idle curiosity and never return either themselves or the hymn books.<sup>20</sup>

On another occasion, Moody attempted to circumvent the hymn-book shortage by asking worshipers to turn to the requested selection, “O for a

thousand tongues to sing,” in the church hymnal, only to be informed by a deacon in an audible whisper that the hymnals were not in the pews and most of the gospel songbooks had all been carted off. Whereupon Moody announced that 550 new books would arrive by next Friday night, but in the meantime could be purchased for 15 cents at any bookstore. Perhaps attempting to moderate an awkward moment, the revivalist mused, “I am informed that all we distributed are gone. I suppose that they have been innocently taken home so that there could be good singing.”<sup>21</sup>

Unfortunately, the approach of employing a local church rather than a large, central building had its drawbacks. Critics complained that by using single churches incapable of holding the swelling crowds, only religious folks who could afford to go at least an hour early were able to obtain a seat. And once full, doors were locked to those who hadn’t come early enough.

It would be well to change the place. If the meetings could be held on the other side of Broadway, where there are four churches within two blocks, . . . all who wish to attend could be accommodated. Mr. Moody could preach in one while Mr. Sankey sings in the other for part of the hour, and then each changes places, while the unemployed ministers, who only act as dummies on the platform, could assist in the work.<sup>22</sup>

Perhaps unknown to the writer, Sankey had long been scurrying from church to church or to overflow halls in a process that must have felt emotionally as well as physically draining. On one occasion, those who couldn’t gain access waited outside the church until Sankey exited on his way to the overflow location, following him and filling the building.<sup>23</sup> Under such conditions, it felt more like putting out fires than ministering to people’s deepest spiritual needs. It was almost assembly-line revivalism.

Yet there were some who felt the central tabernacle approach—and its attendant costs—was preventing local churches from experiencing revival.

The career of Moody and Sankey renders it almost impossible for the majority of churches to hope for the old-fashioned power that used to attend the simple proclamation of the truth under such men as Finney, Knapp, and Swan. They cannot afford to support the machinery required by modern methods, as nearly every evangelist wants a first-class singer and strives to rival Moody and Sankey in supplying attractions to thousands of



churches; and so they are inclined to forego the enjoyment of a meeting because of their inability to defray the expense.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to their meetings in San Francisco, the city of Oakland, just ten miles across the bay, was the site of afternoon services at 2:00PM in the First Congregational Church. Before the service, Ira gathered a chorus—of apparently just ladies—in the lecture room to prepare. They then took their places on the enlarged rostrum in the church to help Ira lead nearly a dozen songs of varying types.<sup>25</sup> This location provided sufficient time for the evangelists to sail back across San Francisco Bay for evening services at Howard Street Presbyterian or at Howard Street Methodist Episcopal Church.

It was no secret that many in the excited crowds came as much to hear Sankey sing as they did Moody preach. Yet not all responses were positive, even for the singer's famous "The Ninety and Nine," for which one listener reported,

. . . his voice was in excellent tune, but was just a little coarse on the high notes. On the lower scale his voice is soft and sweet, and evidently made a deep impression upon the congregation. Many were disappointed in Mr. Sankey's singing, as expectation was too high. His voice is strong, and like Moody's preaching, his singing has the merit of force. This seems to be the general impression made upon our somewhat critical community.<sup>26</sup>

A different listener compared him to George Stebbins, whom Moody had recently called to California to assist with the music, generally in connection with M.L. Hallenbeck. Stebbins was that Chicagoan who had become crucial to the Moody team, having led the choir during the Chicago revivals, provided follow-up services in Boston, been paired full-time with evangelist George Pentecost, and had taken P.P. Bliss's place as a co-editor with Sankey on the *Gospel Hymns* series.<sup>27</sup> "Mr. Stebbins' voice is equally forcible with that of Mr. Sankey, and is far more tender in tone." The listener then went on to report how Mrs. Stebbins, who often duetted with her husband, "sings with a feeling expression and exquisite effect, and if comparisons were not unequal, she would excel the gentlemen."<sup>28</sup>

Another fellow called Sankey's singing "execrable"<sup>29</sup> ("dreadful"). Yet, sometimes even his critics unintentionally captured the essence of his appeal:

Sankey has the all-firedest, biggest mouth, like a three-storey house, or a pot with the lid lost, the corner of which he pulls clear

down to his shoulder. But such singing. All of a sudden he roars out like a pasture full of short horns, and then glides insensibly into round, soft tones that would rival the cooing of a dove for gentle sweetness. And all the while he lays back and rolls a pair of very expressive eyes whose force and effectiveness are only surpassed by his magnetic voice.<sup>30</sup>

By the final meeting on April 8, the evangelists had been on the West coast for five months. Although Moody didn't record conversions, one estimate put the number at 1,000; another recorded 2,300.<sup>31</sup> The First Presbyterian Church of Oakland alone claimed the addition of 220 new members on profession of faith.<sup>32</sup> Other sources recorded new memberships to supporting churches the month after the revival closed, ranging from 552 to 700.<sup>33</sup>

P.P. Bliss's song, "Where is My Wandering Boy Tonight?" was considered by Ira to have been one of the most effective songs in the meetings. It was like a few other popular selections Ira sang—"Your Mission" and "What Shall the Harvest Be?"<sup>34</sup>—purely sentimental and lacking any theological depth. There was certainly no "gospel" in it: no mention of sinners, eternally separated from God, needing a Savior who died on the cross to save them from sin, allowing them to be reconciled to God. Yet listeners who were already familiar with God's gospel of forgiveness would have superimposed this religious interpretation upon the song. It had not been included in the *Gospel Hymns* series until the most recent third volume.<sup>35</sup>

At that final meeting, as was his custom, Moody sought to pay off the debt of some local organization, such as the YMCA, this one laboring under the obligation of \$82,000 in indebtedness. By meeting time, all but \$6,000 had been subscribed, with half the money pledged by Moody's friends in the East. For the remaining balance, Moody played the part of auctioneer, asking for pledges until \$6,000 was finally secured, then all stood and sang the Doxology.<sup>36</sup> The meeting closed as Ira was joined by George and Elma Stebbins in singing "Shall we meet beyond the river?" and "Fading Away."<sup>37</sup>

The return home followed a southern route encompassing Los Angeles, Denver, Abilene, Topeka, and finally Chicago, usually stopping for two or three days to hold overflowing meetings in each city. The reporter who attended a Denver meeting was impressed with the variety of folks who stood out in the Sunday afternoon sun and dust to hear the evangelists:

All the curious-looking people were there, the odd characters and the typical men of the West, and with them were the ordinary cut-and-dried, all-alike, tailor made men of any region. [It was a] mixture of city and mining camp, of top-boots and patent-leather shoes, of hickory shirts and polished linen, blue-jean clothes and the latest cut in tweeds.<sup>38</sup>



**Sankey Home, Brooklyn, Side View**, in  
*My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns* (1906).

By May 1, Sankey had returned to his new home in Brooklyn, a growing locus for Ira's circle of friends, as the Stebbins family was also relocating there from Chicago.<sup>39</sup> Although the warmer months were not part of the normal revival season, Ira made regular appearances at Cooper Union/Institute in New York City, where he had directed music for C.W. Sawyer's popular Temperance meetings before he went West. In spite of both Moody and Sankey being advertised to appear at the May 1st meeting—insuring a capacity crowd—Moody did not appear, and Sankey was left to fill the void. "I have been requested to relate the experience of Mr. Moody and myself in the campaign just finished by us. We are not in the habit of speaking about our own work, and I hardly know how to begin."<sup>40</sup>

Sankey then recounted details of their travels. Certainly his listeners were interested to hear his impressions of Utah and work among the Mormons. Fresh on everyone's mind would have been the recent Supreme Court decision, which said religious belief was not a legal basis for polygamy. But Ira revealed that he believed preaching the gospel "will do more toward the redemption of the Mormons than all the legislating that can ever be done."<sup>41</sup>

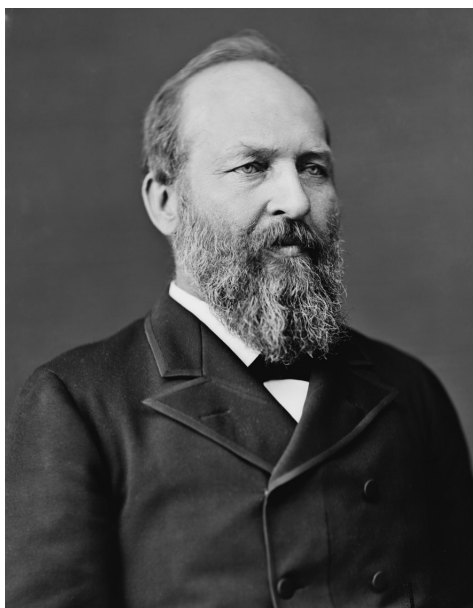
Then the singer related a typical but highly unlikely story that so moved audiences of the day: There was an affluent lady living in the East whose son had taken to drink, lost his job and family, and drifted out to the California gold fields. The woman asked Ira if he could find her son and deliver a letter. In San Francisco, Sankey found the man, living in a deserted building with nothing but a few rags and the scraps of food he could beg. Ira invited him to the revival meetings but the man made excuses. Eventually he relented, came to hear the preaching, and was converted. Slowly he regained his name and position and was returned to his family. "I could tell you very many such instances, but let that suffice," concluded Sankey, then closed with a song.<sup>42</sup>



THE FIRST TIME Charles Jullus Guiteau fired the new British Bulldog revolver he had just purchased, it nearly knocked him over. But he kept practicing and became proficient enough that when he encountered President Andrew Garfield at the Baltimore and Potomac Train Station in Washington, DC, on July 2, 1881, he was able to fire two bullets at him from behind. The first one grazed the President's shoulder, causing him to throw up his arms and cry, "My God, what is that?" The second one entered his back, just missing his spinal column. Guiteau bolted for the door and a waiting cab, but ran into a policeman running in on hearing the shots. He arrested the would-be assassin but was so excited to apprehend him that he failed to search the assailant and detect the gun, residing in Guiteau's coat pocket.

The wounded-but-conscious Garfield was soon transported to the White House, where a tragic comedy of errors unfolded as physicians constantly probed the president's wound with unsterilized fingers and instruments, attempting to locate the bullet. One of those attempts punctured his liver. Alexander Graham Bell devised a metal detector to locate the bullet but the metal bed frame and attending physicians thwarted that effort. Navy engineers rigged up a fan that blew cool air across an ice block into the President's sweltering room. Physicians kept probing with no success.





**Charles J. Guiteau & President Andrew Garfield.** Library of Congress.

At this point, American physicians did not understand Germ Theory. In fact, only a few years earlier did Louis Pasteur in France, Robert Koch in Germany, and Joseph Lister in Great Britain begin making headway toward explaining and developing a process for preventing deadly sepsis in patients. Unfortunately, Garfield was not attended by one of those men. In an effort to provide a more healthful environment, the President was put aboard a train traveling to the Jersey Shore via a rail line that had been laid overnight to the mansion called Franklyn Cottage so he could be propped up in a window to see the ocean and benefit from its breezes. During his seventy-nine days of suffering, Garfield—who had only been in office less than four months—went from 210 to 130 pounds. He died on September 19, and was succeeded by Chester A. Arthur.<sup>43</sup>

This was front-page news, and soon, anyone who had been connected with Guiteau was being interviewed for some new angle on the story. Unfortunately, that included Moody and Sankey, for the deranged man had often made himself highly conspicuous at revival meetings, posing as an usher, Inquiry Room worker, or on-stage guest. Moody reported that he had known of him for ten years and had him put out of numerous meetings. Guiteau even put up posters for his own lectures, stating he was connected with Moody,

who couldn't do anything but denounce the troubled man. According to news accounts, Guiteau also sent threatening letters to the evangelist.<sup>44</sup>

When Ira was interviewed about about the matter, he responded, "I know the miserable scoundrel who fired the wicked shot. He was often about our meetings in Chicago, New Haven, Boston, and other places." Yet the writer of the article went on to conjecture:

Moody and Sankey must have had special attraction for people such as Guiteau. . . . It was probably the work of Moody and Sankey that turned the weak heads of such fellows as Guiteau for it is more than probable that their "meetings" drew more lunatics and insane persons together than any other "meetings" in the country, and many a weakling may have had their brains cracked by hearing their performances.<sup>45</sup>

Unfortunately, the charge of revivalism and insanity wasn't unique to this paper. Typical was the Stockton, California, *Mail*, which reported on the suicide of a woman who had faithfully attended the Moody-Sankey revival meetings and spent "hours at a time in her room in prayer. If Messrs. Moody and Sankey have not anywhere made any appreciable difference in criminal records, they have left behind them a train of suicides and religious maniacs, so that their labors have not been wholly in vain."<sup>46</sup>

And in a fairly lengthy article called "Religious Insanity," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* broadcast:

In England, Scotland, and Ireland, during the revival campaign of Messrs. Moody and Sankey a few years ago, it was found by the magistrates and doctors that insanity increased at a fearful ratio. Women and young girls especially just passing into womanhood were seized with paroxysms of remorse for imaginary sin, and even strong men had to be restrained from self murder, under the delusion of an inevitable hell. So much was this the case, that the keepers of lunatic asylums would say, on receiving such persons, "Here comes 'another Moody and Sankey,'" and on showing them to visitors would whisper, "That is 'another Moody and Sankey;'" the number is increasing daily.<sup>47</sup>

Fortunately for the revivalists, the remainder of the summer of 1881 was quieter, with scattered appearances at Sunday School conventions or



Temperance meetings.<sup>48</sup> The big gathering, of course, was Moody's Northfield Conference he had begun the summer before. Over a hundred Christian workers assembled in the little Massachusetts town to hear Bible teaching from the famed Scottish preacher Andrew Bonar—whose brother, Horatio, was Ira's friend and was the writer of hymns such as "I heard the vice of Jesus say"—and his daughter, who was famed for leading music in Scotland.

The month of meetings, from August 3 through September 1—which saw attendees come and go—provided only two hours of meetings per day with the rest of the time designed for "recreation and social intercourse." In addition to preachers George Pentecost and Daniel Whittle, the conference was a who's-who of gospel music leadership. In addition to Ira Sankey, both George and Elma Stebbins were there. So was James McGranahan and his wife, Addie. New to the mix was E.F. Miller, the recently procured director of music at the "Moody Church" (Chicago Avenue) in Chicago. With the assistance of these gifted leaders, music would go on to play a vital role in the life of the Northfield Conferences for many decades.

The fall of 1881 ushered in a new revival season, with the long-anticipated return to Great Britain. Sankey and his family departed New York, along with Andrew Bonar and his daughter, on the Inman Line, *City of Berlin*, the same ship Ira had boarded upon returning from England on his previous journey.<sup>49</sup> Moody and his family, plus Emma Moody's sister, departed from Quebec on September 24, all bound for the port of Liverpool.

While the Great London Exhibition (Crystal Palace Exhibition), thirty years earlier, potentially marked the high point of British dominance during the recent Industrial Revolution—vaulting England to one of the world's most powerful countries and earning it the title "Workshop of the World"—cities such as Newcastle-on-Tyne in the north were still booming. It was there that Moody and Sankey had enjoyed some of their first large-scale successes eight years earlier, and now they had chosen this city of working-class folks to begin this latest campaign.

In their first appearance, they had been relative unknowns; now they had returned as celebrities, enthusiastically greeted and feted by all. In fact, while Ira and the family usually stayed in the homes of supporters or friends, Moody was lodged in a hotel to accommodate the comings and goings of visitors.<sup>50</sup> Before meetings began on Sunday afternoon, October 9, supporting pastors honored the pair with a welcome breakfast.

Not surprisingly, the West Clayton-Street Congregational Church was filled long before the 2:30PM start time. Moody entered and requested the throng to sing “Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah.” Sankey sang a total of three solos, some assisted by the choir, and Moody preached from Acts 17:30, “But now God commandeth man that they shall all everywhere repent.”

During Moody’s sermon, Sankey made his way to the overflow venue at nearby Berwick Street Baptist Church, speaking to those unable to get into the main hall. Because Moody wouldn’t be appearing, Sankey shared a lengthy account of his time with Frances Ridley Havergal shortly before her death. He told Frances that he valued her work, particularly the hymn, “I gave my life for thee, my precious blood I shed.” And she asked him to sing her hymns in his meetings. As a result, he introduced “Light after darkness, gain after loss,” to which he had provided a tune.<sup>51</sup> Their second British campaign had officially begun.

The evening assembly met at Brunswick-Place Wesleyan Chapel, holding about two thousand, where noon prayer meetings would also occur. There were likewise meetings at a large secular venue, the Circus on Percy Street. Observers often found Moody a bit stouter but undiminished in energy. Many thought Sankey to be in excellent voice, but a few believed his singing had “lost something of its sweetness.”<sup>52</sup> Of course, it’s possible that a darkening in tone could simply have been a result of aging, which affects the voice.

From most perspectives, it appeared the evangelists were reprising their previous triumphant tour, perhaps with an even wider degree of support from the Established Church. As the *Newcastle Chronicle* reported:

In point of numbers, the present visit of Messrs. Moody and Sankey has been characterised by attendances at least three times larger than those witnessed in 1873. The aggregate number of persons addressed must have exceeded the populations of both Newcastle and Gateshead put together; but as many persons attended several of the meetings, it is fair to assume that the number of different persons who heard Mr. Moody preach and Mr. Sankey sing would reach about 100,000.<sup>53</sup>

They ministered in Newcastle through November 13, then headed for London. On the way, they paused at Durham, thirty miles to the south, for three days (Nov. 15–17), and at Oxford, another 250 miles by train. On Sun-

day, November 20, they appeared in London's Metropolitan Tabernacle for both morning and evening services. Then, these amazingly hardy and seemingly tireless evangelists reversed course and headed north again, 350 miles to Edinburgh, Scotland, for some preparatory meetings on Wednesday, November 23.

Eight years earlier, Scotland had been the scene of their most protracted and transformative successes. And now they had taken up an extended schedule there. Yet, as Ira later explained:

The plan of operations there had been entirely different from the one followed in England. It was [our] aim whilst rousing the lagging energy of Protestant churches, at the same time to unite members of all denominations. The law in England . . . was a hindrance to [us] in one respect, in as much as [we] could not go into the Church of England for the purpose of holding service. At the same time [we] had received the hearty cooperation of the Bishops and clergy of the Church when on neutral ground [such as a secular Corn Exchange, but not in a church or chapel].<sup>54</sup>

Even with widespread ministerial support, there were still tensions over the presence of some Scottish Free Church ministers who had been promoting the disestablishment of the Established Church of Scotland. The competing Free Church of Scotland (Scottish Free Church) had formed in 1843 when a third of the Church of Scotland—mostly its evangelical members—withdrawed to form their own body. While the Established Church of Scotland got to keep all the properties, buildings, and endowments, the seceders had to begin from scratch.

By the 1880s, there were loud voices from various quarters—religious and secular—calling for a separation of church and state in Great Britain. And for a while—until Parliament made some concessions—it looked like that could happen. Obviously, Church of Scotland pastors did not feel comfortable cooperating with those ministers calling for their church's disestablishment and its loss of privileges. Yet, on the whole, this did not dampen participation, and by December 18, the evangelists were appearing before four to five thousand folks in the Edinburgh Corn Exchange.

While meetings followed a traditional schedule, Moody introduced Saturday morning children's meetings called "illustrated sermons," where he placed a lighted candle on a central table, then covered it with a bushel

to demonstrate Jesus' teaching from the Sermon on the Mount ("Ye are the light of the world"). Sankey was also there to provide music. As one observer recounted, "Altogether it was a novel and a pretty sight, the mingling of white-headed and venerable fathers with bright little children, some of them not more than five years old. For example, Mr. Sankey was quite surrounded with little people."<sup>55</sup> As a father with children of a similar age, Sankey could easily identify with these exuberant young ones. On another occasion, Moody asked the children to bring toys to donate to the poor of that city. Two wagon loads were collected.

Of course, Ira was still expected to sing favorites such as "The Ninety and Nine," which he did in the Free Assembly Hall for the watch-night service on December 31. The new year of 1882 found the evangelists concluding six weeks in Edinburgh and garnering some powerful words of support from Scottish theologian Professor Blaikie:

The very infidel has had to own that Moody travels in the footsteps of his Master, and that no other force in the world, least of all the force of scepticism, ever shows such a spirit or engages in such labors of love.<sup>56</sup>

On January 22, Moody and Sankey began a lengthy stay—five months—in Glasgow. The city had been divided into ten districts with meetings scheduled to last two to three weeks in each one. Church members were requested to attend only the services in their district to insure adequate room for visitors and non-church members.<sup>57</sup> The campaign began with a free breakfast for two thousand and an evening service at St. Andrews Hall. It was scheduled for 7:00PM, but as no tickets were required and it was open to all, by 5:00PM it was "besieged on every side, and a desperate rush for places followed the opening of the doors."<sup>58</sup> Not surprisingly, the hall was quickly packed to capacity. Fortunately, an "exceptionally large choir of ladies" led by William Moodie and accompanied by an unnamed female at the little organ relieved the tedium.

Around 6:00PM, the usually punctual Moody arrived an hour early and sat on stage, observing attempts to squeeze in additional bodies. Sankey soon entered and took his place by the preacher before moving to his harmonium. Both men were described as wearing dark suits, but looking in no way ecclesiastical. While Moody was adduced to be "a little under average stature," Ira was perceived to be "a tall, graceful man."<sup>59</sup> At 6:15, a consensus

concluded that as no more people could be wedged into the building, the service should begin.

Moody stepped forward, and in an atmosphere of “profound silence,” instructed all to rise and sing the Hundredth Psalm. After prayer, Sankey requested the assembly to sing “Man of Sorrows, what a name,” with the choir responding on its refrain, “Hallelujah, what a Saviour.” Moody then explained how, for some evening meetings, tickets would be issued, so businessmen and visitors from out of town could get into the meetings without waiting for hours. Additionally, services would be scheduled in different parts of town. Ira then led the congregation in “There is a fountain filled with blood” and asked prayer for the Lord to bless the songs being sung, as well as for those who came out from night to night to sing them. His desire was for God’s message of love to find its way into many a heart, and they might “hear the gentle voice of Jesus saying, ‘Peace be still,’” the hymn prefacing Moody’s sermon on Faith.

After the service, Ira met with the choir and its director in the hall’s reception room. He conveyed his joy in seeing them and observing their management. It’s unclear whether he rehearsed any music with them, but he did share one of his techniques for leading revival choirs: “Let the chorus commence slowly and increase the time towards the climax. In that way more expression would be given to the words.”<sup>60</sup> Here Ira seemed to be asking the choir to slow down as they reached the end of a song to make it more meaningful and exciting.

While this technique would seem to be common sense for anyone who makes music, it should be remembered that congregational song was not thought about in those terms. If anything, traditional congregational hymn singing was closer to regulated plodding. The idea of adjusting the tempo to make a congregational song more expressive was generally considered impractical, as there was no one standing in front of a congregation to speed them up or slow them down. Even at the most sophisticated churches where there was an organ with a strong choir singing from a loft behind the congregation—dragging them along nearly a beat behind at times—there would have been very limited options in terms of hymnic tempo. As for Ira’s singers, suggesting to them that the tempo of a congregational song should be varied was probably quite novel.

It’s also important to realize the manner in which many of the tunes Sankey was leading were of a wholly different nature than what most of

those folks had been singing. Whereas the bulk of their tunes were “weighty, dignified, majestic, and modest,” reflecting Calvin’s dictum in the Genevan Psalter,<sup>61</sup> the songs Ira had published and was singing were filled with lilt-ing eighth-notes—such as Bliss’s “Jesus Loves Even Me” or “The Ninety and Nine.” While it’s true that many of the songs in Sankey’s English collection reflected the older quarter-note (isometric) style of traditional hymn tunes—such as OLD HUNDREDTH—Ira brought another whole dimension to church music—one that was especially novel for these spiritual heirs of John Calvin.

Logistically, Ira reminded the choir that everyone was needed on Sunday evenings, whereas on weeknights, different segments of the group would form the ensemble. As for the choir being only female, that wasn’t originally the plan, for an ad in the *Glasgow Herald* for December 2 had requested

Ladies and Gentlemen . . . willing to join the choir to send their names—also stating what part they take. . . . The Choir will be Trained by Mr. Wm. Moodie. Meeting for Practice in the Christian Institute on Wednesday and Saturday at 4 P.M. Mr. Sankey’s new hymn book will be supplied.<sup>62</sup>

The “new hymn book” to which the advertisement referred was the latest edition of *Sacred Songs and Solos*—an expansion of the original title Sankey had compiled during his visit in 1873. It had begun as a sixteen-page pamphlet containing twenty-three titles reflecting the newer Sunday School type of songs—featuring a chorus—by composers like Philip P. Bliss. As Sankey added songs to his repertoire, the publisher Morgan and Scott—at 12 Paternoster Building in London—simply enlarged the original edition from time to time. In 1877, 271 titles were collected into what was called *Enlarged Songs and Solos*; this was followed in 1882 by *Sacred Songs and Solos No. 2*, with 170 new titles,<sup>63</sup> and the amalgamated volume was called *Sacred Songs and Solos, Nos. I & II Combined*, with 441 selections.<sup>64</sup>

In those few short years since the first edition, the series had made an unprecedented impact. A reviewer for the latest edition reminded readers:

In these days of earliest evangelistic activity, the *Sacred Songs and Solos* in the short space of eight years have not only become a household book throughout the British dominions, but have been translated into many of the languages of the earth. In Scotland, these SONGS AND SOLOS everywhere found ready entrance and wild acceptance. Douce [sober] kirk-going folk, to whom the



Scottish psalms were a second nature, were greatly taken by these sacred lays; and in the “land o’ cakes”<sup>65</sup> these hymns were soon more widely known than the songs of Robert Burns.

And so, north and south, east and west, the little books found their way. They were used in hundreds of Sabbath-schools, in scores of mission rooms, and in a large number of chapels and churches, as an appendix to the ordinary hymn books. These SONGS AND SOLOS were sung in many a drawing room.<sup>66</sup>

The circumstance of women exclusively responding to fill Sankey’s revival choir resulted, in part, from Scottish Presbyterian churches not recognizing the legitimacy of having a choir. Most felt there was no need for a special agglomeration of singers to sit together and call attention to themselves or the music during a time when the focus was supposed to be on the declamation of God’s Holy Word—as was found in their beloved psalters (containing the words of the Psalms arranged in poetic form for singing). It might be hard to fathom, but for many of them, singing the Psalms was not so much a musical experience as a spiritual duty—a joyful and spiritually fulfilling one—yet a duty first of all. But now, during the Moody and Sankey revivals, singing was something more: it was a blessing, it was thrilling, it was fun! In all probability, this level of spiritual near-ecstasy was something most godly Presbyterian men were not ready to experience in any large numbers. Like most church choirs of any era, women usually outnumbered men.

With the momentum of Edinburgh propelling their spiritual sails, the pair swept into Glasgow. Moody again stayed in a hotel rather than a private home to handle the onslaught of visitors. But it was somewhat lonely for the evangelist, whose family was too sick to join him. He could have likewise been expressing Sankey’s feelings when he wrote home in January about this distant place: “I like America so much better than this land, we seldom see the sun in this country & it is so cloudy & dark most of the time.”<sup>67</sup> If Ira shared those sentiments, it didn’t help matters that within a week of commencing services, he came down with a cold and began missing meetings.<sup>68</sup>

In fact, Sankey missed lots of meetings. He missed nearly a week, beginning on January 27. Two weeks later, on February 14, he was laid low again and missed another week. His absence was generally attributed to a cold, but there were undoubtedly more serious issues, probably aggravated by Scotland’s notoriously damp climate. It’s very possible that Ira’s health

issues in Glasgow were related to ones responsible for causing him to miss meetings in Scotland during his earlier solo excursion there. Yet, considering the punishing schedule the evangelists had been practicing, it's astonishing how these men—and their intrepid wives—were able to sustain such a demanding agenda.<sup>69</sup>

On February 21, Sankey was well enough to return from what the papers called a “serious indisposition.” Reflecting Ira’s excitement to be back, he made a rare entry of its kind in his journal on February 26:

Glasgow: Great meeting of men at 11 o'clock in St. Andrews Hall. Sang “Oh! to be over Jordan.” Mr. Moody preached on “What is repentance.” At the close 142 men rose for Prayers and came forward to front seats. This was one of the best meetings yet had.<sup>70</sup>

There was so much interest in the revival, on one occasion—while Ira was providing instructions to the choir following a service in St. Andrews Hall—someone came in and reported how, after the previous meeting had concluded, the auditorium was unintentionally refilled with people who couldn't gain entry to the preceding service. It was subsequently proposed that another meeting be held and the choir return to their places in the hall. This they did, but by this time Moody and Sankey had left. Those in charge explained the highly unusual circumstances to the new audience and said they were free to leave, but most stayed to hear the Rev. Steward of Trinity Free Church provide the sermon while William Moodie reprised his role as choir director.

While God blessed the meetings with overflowing crowds and good responses, the press continued to publish charges that the evangelists were secretly demanding money.

... although Messrs. Moody and Sankey did not wish a word to be said about the matter in public, they insisted privately upon being handsomely remunerated, the remuneration being at the rate of £700 a month.<sup>71</sup>

Despite the charges being roundly disputed by the local organizing committees from New Castle, Edinburgh, and Glasgow—often taking out ads in the papers to answer the accusations—controversy sold newspapers and was hard to stamp out.

Compared to such negative press, however, those with a more intimate relationship to the revivalists often maintained a different point of view. As

the Rev. Dr. Andrew Bonar confided in his diary:

This week Mr. Moody [and Sankey] closes . . . five months' work among us. And, on looking back, I think it was the Lord who inclined me to go last season to America and thus help to engage him to come to us. It seems to me plain that the Lord shows His sovereignty [through] the converting power of God on the various classes of men. The drunkards have had their day of visitation, and many others of the working men especially. I can now see in the great blessing before us an answer to my prayers on board the ship in my journey to and from America. One marked effect upon ministers here has been the state of expectation of which they now are; they are looking for real results.<sup>72</sup>

The breadth of this ministerial “state of expectation” had already become evident when, in March, a formal invitation from over three-hundred signatories—including the prominent Earl of Shaftesbury and pastor C.H. Spurgeon—came to the evangelists, petitioning them to spend “not less than twelve months” in London, holding revival services. But that was only one of countless solicitations pouring in from all over the land. Their fame and continuing success, it appeared, was spiraling almost beyond their control.

A more serious challenge confronted the Sankey family, for one of their sons—either eldest Harry (15) or John Edward (12)—was in such poor physical health that Ira left the meetings for a month—possibly in April—taking him all the way to Germany for treatment. It's unclear what the malady was, but when Ira returned to the Glasgow meetings, friend Jane MacKinnon reported his son as being “well and strong,” living on a farm, “away from books and lessons.”<sup>73</sup>

When meetings finally closed during the second week of June,<sup>74</sup> Moody traveled to London to meet one hundred gentlemen from all over the United Kingdom, vying for the evangelists' presence in their towns.<sup>75</sup> By now it had become evident that Moody and Sankey had received enough invitations to keep them busy for the rest of their lives, plus urgent pleas to return to Chicago. Something had to be done. So a committee was formed to parcel out and organize a schedule for them over the next couple years.

The result was a grueling, seven-and-a-half-month itinerary, which saw them in constant week-long meetings with no break in between. The plan was obviously the result of a committee seeking to cram as many meetings as possible into the shortest period of time, reflecting little concern for the

human toll the schedule was proposing. Mercifully, it did include a ten-day break at Christmas.

The “Programme,” as its was called, was issued by the London YMCA and ran from September 1 of 1882 until mid-April of 1883, concluding in Liverpool, from where the two men would “Sail for America, for a visit of a few months, before returning to London.” It was signed by H.M. Matheson, Chairman of the London Committee, and was quickly reproduced in papers across the land.

Moody somewhat surprisingly spent the rest of his summer preaching in cities scattered throughout Scotland, rather than returning home as usual to provide attention to his two new schools<sup>76</sup> and the Northfield Conference he had recently established. Because the names Moody and Sankey were so indissolubly connected, at least one attendee at Moody’s meetings adamantly declared that George Stebbins, who was assisting Moody, was none other than Ira Sankey himself because of his powerful singing.<sup>77</sup>

The Sankey family made the trek to Germany, where Ira had earlier taken his son for medical help. They stayed the better part of a month.<sup>78</sup> Germany was famous for its health spas, and Ira certainly felt he had benefited from hydrotherapy treatments in Wales on his previous trip. Perhaps something similar had been included in his son’s earlier regimen.

In July of 1882, the family returned home on the S.S. *Polynesian* of the Allan Line, making the Liverpool-to-Quebec run—carrying 120 first-class passengers and up to 850 immigrants, many from Norway—in eight days.<sup>79</sup> Although none of the Sankeys complained about getting seasick, the ship was saddled with the epithet, “Rolling Polly.” They arrived on the 21st and took a riverboat to Montreal, where they lodged overnight at the newly opened Windsor Hotel,<sup>80</sup> with its massive domed lobby, catering to well-heeled travelers. One reporter who interviewed Ira on his return felt “his personal appearance would be taken for a bluff, hearty Englishman, one of the regular John Bull type instead of the true American he is.”<sup>81</sup> After resting for the final leg, the Sankeys boarded a train for New Castle and the welcome of family and friends.

Their stay was short, however, for soon they were back on the rails, bound for their new home in Brooklyn, one they had actually not inhabited for very long.<sup>82</sup> Ira spent some time in nearby Manhattan at the offices of Biglow and Main, one of the publishers of the *American Gospel Hymns* series, discussing current sales figures and talking about a new edition.



ON SATURDAY EVENING, August 3, 1882, a reporter for *The New York Times* observed:

It was a motley assemblage which had been attracted to the spot. Scores of people who never before visited the mission visited now that the great singer was to appear there. A carriage with its attendants in livery wheeled up in a flourish before the modest room, and deposited millionaire passengers who were content to mingle in a throng whose great majority came from the lowest strata of society.<sup>83</sup>

The center of all the commotion was Jerry McAuley's Cremorne Mission at 104 West 32nd Street in the Tenderloin district, near what would later become Times Square. McAuley was a celebrity of sorts in revivalist circles. As a lad of thirteen, he had been put on a boat in Ireland and shipped off to relatives in New York. But he was soon out on the street among a rough crowd. As he later confessed, "Stealing came natural and easy. A bigger nuisance and loafer never stepped above the ground." Although he spent years in and out of jail, it was a false conviction for highway robbery that sent him to Sing Sing for fifteen years. Upon entering the infamous penal institution, he noted a sign above the door. "The way of the transgressor is hard." Later he would write,

All thieves and wicked people know it well, and they know, too, that it is out of the Bible. It is a well-worn proverb in all the haunts of vice, and one confirmed by daily experience. And how strange it is knowing so well that the way is hard, the transgressor will still go on it.<sup>84</sup>

Conditions at Sing Sing were nightmarish. Windowless cells measured three feet wide by seven feet deep. A bucket substituted for plumbing, and the odor made it hard to breathe. Mice, cockroaches, lice, fleas, and bedbugs infested everything. Prisoners were not allowed to talk, and for two years McAuley was confined to hard labor, which took its toll, both mentally and physically.

Yet his hard heart was moved to tears upon hearing Orville Gardner give the testimony of his conversion one Sunday in the prison chapel. McAuley tried to pray but didn't know how. He began studying the Bible

and through agony of soul eventually found Christ. In 1864, at twenty-six years of age, he received a pardon and was set free. Although he continued to struggle spiritually, he slowly grew in grace and developed a vision to reach men like himself.

While there had long been benevolent institutions in many U.S. cities, they were generally designed to assist the “deserving poor”—those who should not be blamed for their poverty, which resulted from structural forces outside their control, rather than their bad behavior or character flaws. Criminals occupied the category of “undeserving poor,” warranting neither public nor private assistance.

Jerry McAuley labored under no such delimitations and founded “Helping Hand” mission for men of all types at 316 Water Street in October of 1872. His love and acceptance of everyone needing help led to thousands of conversions and encouraged the founding of similar “downtown missions” all over the country.

In 1882, he established the Cremorne Mission to help needy women. There Ira addressed an overflow audience—spilling out onto the sidewalk—including wealthy businessman Frederick Hatch, who had seen something special in McAuley, becoming a lifelong supporter and bankrolling him in his vision.

My visit to America is to be only temporary. I must return to my work across the sea. You have not heard so much of that work as of our campaign eight years ago, but the fruits are twice as great. I return in September, and with Mr. Moody will go through the towns in the south of England, ending in Liverpool next April when we hope to come back to this city again [New York] and revive the old times which so thrilled us in the Hippodrome and Cooper Union.<sup>85</sup>

Ira sang nine selections, mostly new and unfamiliar, beginning with “The crowning day is coming” and concluding with “Over Jordan,” the audience joining in the chorus. Uncharacteristically, “The Ninety and Nine” didn’t seem to be among them. McAuley sat quietly throughout until the end, when he rose and said, “You may go now. I’m very thankful that you’ve been so good and quiet. Let us give Mr. Sankey a vote of thanks by raising our hands.”<sup>86</sup> Every hand in the house went up. Although McAuley’s work prospered, he was dead in less than two years, the victim of tuberculosis he had contracted in Sing Sing. ♪



## ENDNOTES

1. Words and music by Robert Lowry, “Where Is My Boy To-night?” *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan, and George C. Stebbins, eds. (Cincinnati: John Church Co.; New York: Biglow and Main, 1894), No. 631. This surprisingly non-theological (no mention of God or the supernatural in any way) and terribly maudlin hymn was written by Lowry, a Baptist pastor, in 1877.
2. Horace Greeley Sankey, 7 July 1846–22 December 1882. Find-a-Grave incorrectly lists his death as 1922.
3. David Sankey was apparently among a significant group of “Liberal Republicans” who did not support their own candidate, Ulysses S. Grant, during the election. Not only did Greeley lose to Grant, but he died before the Electoral College could meet to count the electors.
4. Letter from Horace Greeley to R.L. Sanderson, 15 November 1871, Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC00608, <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/spotlight-primary-source/horace-greeley-go-west-1871>
5. *New York Tribune*, 2 September 1880.
6. *Chicago Daily Telegraph*, 16 October 1880, 1. The *Omaha Daily Bee* for 18 October 1880, 4, reports this interview was held over the phone while Moody had stopped for breakfast during his train trip.
7. *Lincoln Daily Globe*, 16 October 1880, 4.
8. The court ruling was announced 6 January 1879.
9. It was literally a Territory and wouldn’t become a state—partially because of the widespread belief and practice of polygamy by Mormons—until 1896, when the church publicly changed its official position in its 24 September 1890, “Mormon Manifesto,” counseling followers to abide by laws outlawing “plural marriage.”
10. *The Daily News* (Lebanon, PA), 10 May 1881, 2. Sankey claimed that 92 persons were converted.
11. *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 31 October 1880, 4.
12. *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 31 October 1880, 4.
13. *Oakland Tribune*, 10 November 1880, 3.
14. *The Sun* (New York), 31 October 1880, 4. Beelzebub is a name for Satan, associated with the Philistine god Baal in the Old Testament, 2 Kings 1.
15. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 13 November 1880, 3.

16. *The San Francisco Examiner*, 11 November 1880, 3. Sankey could have been suggesting that he was going to rely on the choir—rather than his own voice—to lead congregational singing, or that he wouldn't be doing any preaching or speaking much in the meetings.
17. By the tune GREENVILLE, Sankey apparently meant what is commonly known as SICILIAN MARINERS HYMN, which was coupled with this odd-meter text in *Gospel Hymns No. 2* at No. 89.
18. *Examiner*, 13 November 1880, 3.
19. There were committees who decided on the various venues for the meetings and who might assist. They were also probably responsible for newspaper releases, but there didn't seem to be a highly organized, central committee responsible for pre-planning every detail. Avoiding a large, purpose-built tabernacle certainly simplified the logistical challenges.
20. *Examiner*, 17 November 1880, 2.
21. *Examiner*, 16 November 1880, 3. Fifteen cents was the cost of the words-only edition. The book with music, *Gospel Hymns Combined Nos. 1–3*, cost seventy-five cents.
22. *Oakland Tribune*, 17 November 1880, 3.
23. *Oakland Tribune*, 15 November 1880, 3.
24. *The Biblical Recorder* (Raleigh, NC), 21 February 1883, 1, quoting *The Watchman* (n.d.), “Evangelists and Their Methods,” by Dr. Fulton.
25. *Examiner*, 27 November 1880, 2.
26. *Examiner*, 17 November 1880, 3.
27. Stebbins was probably supported financially, like many of Moody's evangelistic team, through the largess of his wealthy supporters. Apparently evangelist George Pentecost, with whom Stebbins was paired, had some responsibility for his financial upkeep, as he wrote Moody on 20 December 1880, “Stebbins is with you by this time. I paid him up to January 1st.” Letter in Moody Museum, Northfield, MA.
28. *Examiner*, 27 December 1880, 3.
29. *Examiner*, 23 December 1880, 3.
30. *The Douglas Index* (Douglas, Kansas), 13 May 1881, 2. Earlier in the article the reporter had excoriated both evangelists—particularly their large physiques. Newspapers.com has this paper mislabeled as *The Church Record*.
31. *The Star* (Coffeyville, KS), 12 May 1881, 1.
32. *Hartford Courant* (CT), 26 March 1881, 1.

33. *Boston Post*, 4 May 1881, 2; *Howard Courant* (Howard, KS), 12 May 1881, 1.
34. While the song text makes no mention of spiritual or supernatural subjects, those with a religious background would have probably made a connection to the biblical “Parable of the Sower” found in Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23.
35. Although the song contained no explicit statement of the gospel, it still made a spiritual impact. The famed evangelist Billy Sunday of the early 20th century recalled how, before his conversion, he heard Chicago street musicians singing “Where is my wandering boy tonight,” initiating a spiritual journey that brought him to salvation. He counted that song as his favorite. Kevin Mungons and Douglas Yeo, *Homer Rodeheaver and the Rise of the Gospel Music Industry* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2021), 226.
36. *Head-Light* (Thayer, KS), 22 April 1881, 7.
37. Ira also joined them to sing “Beyond the Smiling and the Weeping” and “Pray, Brethren, Pray.” Stebbins, *Reminiscences and Gospel Hymn Stories* (New York: George H. Doran, 1924), 99.
38. *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 29 April 1881, 3, reporting on an April 18 meeting.
39. The apparent reason for Stebbins’ relocation was taking the job as music director with his former partner in evangelism, George Pentecost, who had recently taken a pastorate in Brooklyn. Stebbins, *Reminiscences*, 100. The Sankey and Stebbins homes were less than two miles apart off Fulton Street. Although Brooklyn city directories don’t list Ira Sankey as a resident until 1884–1885, the Sankey family most likely took up residence at 297 Cumberland Street, perhaps as renters.
40. *The Topeka Daily Capital*, 6 May 1881, 6.
41. *The Topeka Daily Capital*, 6 May 1881, 6.
42. *Passaic* (NJ) *Daily News*, 2 May 1881, 3.
43. The causes of Garfield’s death have been attributed to uncontrolled sepsis, a ruptured splenic artery aneurysm, bronchial pneumonia, a ruptured gall-bladder, and starvation. Guiteau was found guilty of murder and executed 30 June 1882.
44. “Guiteau Repudiated by Moody and Sankey,” *Sheffield and Rotherham* (England) *Independent*, 29 July 1881, 3. This is but one of a myriad of news accounts linking Guiteau to the revival meetings. At a noon prayer meeting, Guiteau had apparently become fascinated with ideas about Christ’s Second Coming. After spending much time in personal study, he determined the Second Coming had taken place at the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. He then procured a church and gave lectures on the subject. *Evening Star* (Washington, DC), 23 November 1881, 2.

45. *The Selinsgrove (PA) Times-Tribune*, 3 August 1881, 3.
46. *The Mail* (Stockton, CA), 23 March 1881, 2.
47. *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 26 July 1880, 2. The *London Weekly Dispatch* for 23 October 1881, 7, printed: “A Medical WARNING. The Medical Press and Circular says:—‘We are concerned in the interests of impressionable females and weak-minded young men to notice the arrival in England of Messrs. Moody and Sankey, of explosive revival fame. Former experience of the pernicious influence of the hystero-religious mania with which these clever men were identified leads us to hope that most people will guard against an undue preponderance of the emotional passion.’”
48. This included the evangelists’ attendance at the Vermont Baptist Sunday School Convention in early June and Sankey’s somewhat regular appearances at Sawyer’s Gospel-Temperance meetings in NYC.
49. Papers such as the *Boston Globe*, 11 September 1881, 5, said the Sankeys left for England with “their two children,” but this was probably a mistake, because they had three boys.
50. *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post, Western Countries and South Wales Advertiser*, 4 July 1882, 3.
51. It was included in *Gospel Hymns No. 5* (1887) at No. 198. It carried a copyright date of 1881 in *Gospel Hymns Complete* at No. 193.
52. *The Guardian* (London), 24 October 1881, 5.
53. *Liverpool Mercury*, 15 November 1881, 6, quoting the *Newcastle Chronicle*.
54. *The Montreal Star*, 24 July 1882, 4.
55. Will R. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody by His Son, Will R. Moody* (Chicago: Fleming Revell, 1900), 299.
56. *Crawford Mirror* (Steelville, MO), 25 May 1882, 6. Blaikie had hosted Moody on his first visit in 1873.
57. *The Montreal Star*, 24 July 1882, 4.
58. *North British Daily Mail*, 23 January 1882, 5.
59. *North British Daily Mail*, 23 January 1882, 5.
60. *North British Daily Mail*, 23 January 1882, 5.
61. Preface to the Genevan Psalter (*Les Pseaumes mis en rime françois*, 1562), cited in Charles Garside, Jr., *The Origins of Calvin’s Theology of Music: 1536–1543* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1979), 32–33.
62. *Glasgow Herald*, 2 December 1881, 1.
63. *The Hamilton Advisor* (Strathclyde, Scotland), 6 May 1882, 1.

64. *The Hamilton Advisor*, 6 May 1882, 1. It “may be had separately either in the old or new notation or in every variety of size or binding or without music for one penny.”
65. “Hear, Land ’o Cakes and brither Scots”: Robert Burns used this expression to describe Scotland in the opening line of his poem “On the Late Captain Grose’s Peregrinations Thro’ Scotland.”
66. *The Hamilton Advisor*, 6 May 1882, 1.
67. John Pollack, *Moody: The Biography* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 251.
68. These probably included January 27–29 and could have extended through February 1. Again, from February 14 through 20, Ira was absent from meetings. *North British Daily Mail* (Glasgow), 28 Jan. 1882, 4; Feb. 2 and 15, 4.
69. It seemed that almost anyone involved in professional revivalism needed to exhibit near-supernatural strength. Singer George Stebbins, who went to Scotland to assist Moody in the summer, commented about his crushing schedule in assisting the evangelist. Of his own partnership with revival preacher George Pentecost, Stebbins observed, “he also had an iron constitution and never seemed so happy as in preaching the gospel, which he lived to do till near his eightieth year.”

The wives and children were a different matter, however. Mrs. Moody, who often left her husband and took the children to more healthful climes for extended periods, suffered “a great deal” from headaches, perhaps migraines.

70. Sankey 1879 journal, n.p.
71. *The North Devon Journal-Herald*, 8 December 1881, 8. This article, which appeared while the evangelists were in Edinburgh, contains refutations signed by members of the Newcastle revival committee.
72. *The North Devon Journal-Herald*, 8 December 1881, 8.
73. This account is only mentioned in passing in Jane (Mrs. Peter) MacKinnon’s diary, later published as *Recollections of D.L. Moody and His Work in Britain 1874–1892* (Campbelton, Scotland: Printed for Private Circulation, 1904/1905). She was a close friend of Mrs. Moody and was probably the closest observer of the families, recording them on an unedited level.

MacKinnon not only reported that Ira’s son was doing well physically, but, “I am happy to say that the lad recovered, and has been taken home to America,” 108. However, if the Sankey son had returned to America, he could not have been present a few months later—June—when newspapers reported the Sankey family returned to Germany to address their son’s health issues.

Apparently, Sankey’s son was given a prescription involving fresh air and sunshine (perhaps not surprising after months in rainy Scotland) in the German (or American) countryside. Moody must have picked up on the idea

and asked a friend, who was purchasing parcels of land in Northfield, Massachusetts, for his growing ventures, to be on the lookout for a nice farm where he hoped Sankey might settle his family. Moody letter to H.N.F. Marshall of 12 June 1882 in Moody Family Papers, Correspondence with H.N.F. Marshall, 51, Digital Archives of Moody Center, Northfield, MA. Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 25.

Moody's letters are often cryptic, as he wrote in bursts of thought, without punctuation, capitalization, or much context. The letter in question asserts: "I told Sankey he could get it for \$8,000 I hope you will encourage him all you can to take it for if he does not get some place & get his family settled soon he will ruin his boys they must be got in to the country."

74. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 299.
75. The date was Tuesday, 13 June 1882.
76. The Girls' School opened in 1879 and a Boys' School in 1881.
77. *The Irvine Herald, and Cunningham Advertiser* (Strathclyde, Scotland), 12 August 1882, 5.
78. *The Wilmington (NC) Morning Star*, 11 June 1882, 2. The same information ran in many American newspapers.
79. Apparently, the advantage of landing in Quebec, far to the north, rather than the more centrally located New York, was in having three days of the trip protected in the Straits of Belle Isle and the St. Lawrence seaway rather than on the more dangerous and seasick-enducing North Atlantic. For immigrants hoping to enter the United States, Canada provided a more convenient point of entry, as there were no U.S. immigration restrictions to meet, and movement across the Canadian border was not subject to strict control until about 1894.
80. *The Montreal Star*, 24 July 1882, 4.
81. *The Montreal Star*, 24 July 1882, 4. "John Bull is a national personification of the United Kingdom in general and England in particular, especially in political cartoons and similar graphic works. He is usually depicted as a stout, middle-aged, country-dwelling, jolly and matter-of-fact man," *Wikipedia*.
82. This was most likely 297 Cumberland Street in Brooklyn. See letter from Sankey to William Doane, 23 June 1885, from this address. Letter in Billy Graham Center Archives.
83. *The New York Times*, 4 August 1882, 5.
84. Jerry McAuley, *Transformed* (New York: self-published, 1876), n.p.
85. *The New York Times*, 4 August 1882, 5.
86. *The New York Times*, 4 August 1882, 5.



No. 226.

# Take me as I am.

"Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto Thee."—Ps. 102: 1.

ELIZA H. HAMILTON.

GEO. C. STEBBINS.

1. Je - sus, my Lord, to Thee I cry, Un - less Thou help me I must die;  
2. Help - less I am and full of guilt, But yet for me Thy blood was split;  
3. I bow be - fore Thy mercy-seat, Be - hold me, Saviour, at Thy feet;

Oh, bring Thy free sal - va - tion nigh, And take me as I am.  
And Thou canst make me what thou wilt, And take me as I am.  
Thy work be - gin, Thy work complete, And take me as I am.

## CHORUS.

Take me as I am, Take me as I am;

Lord, I give my - self to thee, Oh, take me as I am.

4 If Thou hast work for me to do,  
Inspire my will, my heart renew;  
And work both in, and by me too,  
And take me as I am.

5 And when at last the work is done,  
The battle fought, the victory won;  
Still, still my cry shall be alone,  
Oh, take me as I am.

*Chapter 23*  
Acclaim and Acrimony  
1882–1883

*Jesus, my Lord, to Thee I cry; Unless Thou help me I must die:  
Oh, bring Thy free salvation nigh; And take me as I am.*

*And take me as I am, And take me as I am,  
My only plea—Christ died for me! Oh! take me as I am.<sup>1</sup>*

THE S.S. *CITY OF BERLIN* steamer was fast—at fifteen knots—and luxurious, boasting the first electric lighting in its walnut-paneled saloon. Once a month, it made the round trip between New York and Liverpool, England, carrying 202 first-class passengers, over a thousand persons in steerage below deck, and the “Royal Mails.” Officially known as the Liverpool, New York, and Philadelphia Steamship Company, the Inman Line—as it was commonly called—had pioneered the screw propeller to power its fleet of four ships crossing the Atlantic, forcing its fabled competitor, the Cunard Line, to abandon its reliance on the paddle-wheel steamer.

The *City of Berlin*’s propulsion came from twelve boilers fired by thirty-six furnaces, gobbling up a massive 170 tons of coal per day. In case of engine failure, three large masts could unfurl a forest of sails, attempting to harness a free but sporadic source of power. The company boasted a slightly southern route across the Atlantic to avoid the threat of icebergs—although that certainly wasn’t a danger to passengers choosing to travel at this time of year, nearing the end of summer. But just in case of an accident, eight lifeboats were at hand.

Accommodations for first-class passengers included staterooms that were touted in advertisements as being “roomy, well-lighted, [with] regulated ventilation.” Each possessed an electric bell to summon a steward if there was need of anything. There were water closets on board with a “constant and copious supply of water,” as were the three baths for men and one for women. Passengers were allowed twenty cubic feet of luggage space—the



**S.S. City of Berlin**, photo by J.S. Johnston, Detroit Publishing Co., ca. 1890. Library of Congress.

size of one fairly recent invention—the “steamer trunk.” Tedium during the eight-day crossing could be assuaged by plenty of social interaction in the spacious saloon, with its gold-topped Corinthian columns towering over seats upholstered in deep purple velvet. Passengers could admire themselves or spy on others in a blaze of mirrors, and someone always seemed to be playing the fine piano.<sup>2</sup>

It certainly didn’t take Ira long to get acclimated to the *City of Berlin*, as this was his third voyage on this vessel.<sup>3</sup> While there’s no record of Ira leading fellow passengers in the popular new gospel songs, it’s almost impossible to imagine that the famous and gregarious Ira David Sankey didn’t spend many an evening at the piano, directing enthusiastic crowds in singing “Hold the Fort!” and “The Ninety and Nine.” In fact, many such boats boasted having a ready supply of Moody-Sankey hymnals on hand for just such occasions—although not with the prospect of Sankey himself using them.

It was the last week of August, 1882,<sup>4</sup> and Sankey was off to begin another season of revival meetings—called “The Programme”—in the land where he and Moody had risen from obscurity to international fame. Ira was apparently without his family on this journey. Perhaps Fanny Sankey

was concerned about the son who had been so ill last season not being well enough to travel across a vast ocean to a foreign country without a settled location.<sup>5</sup>

A carefully planned schedule had been widely published, capable of keeping the evangelists busy for well over a year. It began in Swansea, Wales, on the southern coast. Known as Copperopolis, Swansea processed 60% of the copper ore being imported into Britain at the time. Along with its other smelting operations, it was one of the world's booming industrial centers. It became the evangelists' headquarters of sorts during their campaign.<sup>6</sup>

Before leaving the United States, Fanny Sankey possibly pressed Ira to check out Swansea—the land of her father's migration while just a lad—because some of the Edwards kin were still in the area. It's unclear what connections Ira made while there, but he likely formed a clearer picture of the vague names of people and places his father-in-law had fondly recalled.

Meetings began on Sunday morning, September 3, at Albert Hall. But they did so without Sankey, for his ship wasn't scheduled to arrive until Monday. Although Moody was the famed preacher, Ira's appearance on Tuesday evening was highly anticipated. Despite bad weather, "The announcement that Mr. Sankey would be present at the evening meeting resulted in a largely increased attendance." "The Albert Hall was even more crowded than on Monday evening—so crowded, in fact, that it seemed impossible by any known method of compression to get a dozen more persons into the building."<sup>7</sup>

During his first service, Sankey offered a brief prayer and sang three songs, including "Master, the tempest is raging," with the choir joining sweetly on the refrain. Ira did not stay for Moody's sermon, however, for as soon as the evangelist began preaching, he dashed off to the overflow meeting holding twelve hundred persons, where, by sharing his presence, he lessened their disappointment in not getting to hear Moody preach.

For some, however, the disappointment was in actually hearing the evangelist speak. Mr. Moody has no charm of manner, and his speech, so far from being adorned with any oratorical graces, is marred by a distinct American accent, but his unmistakable earnestness alone commanded breathless attention, and the vast audience listened with intense interest to his plain and simple definition of true repentance.<sup>8</sup>

Likewise, among some, Sankey's performance in Swansea was met with faint praise: "Although he cannot be described as a cultivated vocalist, he has a voice of pleasing quality and considerable power, which he renders additionally effective by distinctness of articulation, and careful expression."<sup>9</sup>

Meetings in Swansea set the pattern for other cities. Overall, attendance was strong, with regular overflow meetings being held, often presided over by E.D. Bliss (no relation to the deceased P.P. Bliss), who had come from the states to assist the evangelists. The day included a noon prayer meeting, an afternoon Bible reading, and an evening service—usually held in a secular venue. An Inquiry Meeting often followed; separate meetings for men and women were common. There was widespread support from area ministers, including quite a few from the Established Church, and press coverage was positive, including meeting information as well as advertisements for *Sacred Songs and Solos*, which some papers were calling "Sankey's Hymns."<sup>10</sup> Meetings often lasted from three days to a week and reflected a high level of spiritual interest. This pattern was then replicated in other cities.

Cardiff, forty miles to the southeast, was the largest city in Wales, famed for its coal port. Meetings were held in its Circus and were so popular that extra trains were added, departing Cardiff at 10:30PM after the evening service so people could get home the same night.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps one of Moody's and Sankey's secrets in working together was their ability to tag-team or fill in for each other when needed. Typical was the meeting for men held at 8:00PM on Monday evening, September 11. It was scheduled back-to-back with one for women, at which Moody preached. However, it ran long, and the huge throng of waiting men were becoming restless when no Moody arrived. At that point, Sankey sprang into action, taking his place at the harmonium and beginning to sing. "His earnestness and enthusiasm won the sympathy of the people, and when he asked them to join in a refrain, they responded with an almost unanimous voice."<sup>12</sup>

One of his selections was Horatio Spafford's moving hymn, "It is well with my soul." Before he sang, Ira shared the tragic story of Mrs. Spafford and their children traveling across the Atlantic on the steamship *Ville du Havre*, which was rammed and sank in the middle of the night. While the children were dragged down to their deaths, Mrs. Spafford was found floating on some debris and was rescued. She cabled Horatio, who had remained in the states, with now-famous words, "Saved alone." Despite the horror of that experience, Mr. Spafford later managed to write the hymn, "When peace like a

river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll; whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say, 'It is well, it is well with my soul.'"

This story of the horrendous tragedy and the Spaffords' unfathomable assurance of God's goodness never failed to move listeners. But it was all the more profound in this case, because when Mrs. Spafford was rescued, she was first brought to that very port at Cardiff.<sup>13</sup>

Fifteen miles up the coast was Newport, where the evangelists ministered from September 17 to 24. Right on its heels,<sup>14</sup> they headed south to Plymouth, England, famous as the final embarkation point for the three-masted, square-rigged, merchant ship *Mayflower*, which headed for the new world on September 16, 1620. The meetings, from September 24 to October 6, were well attended, spilling over from the Drill Hall into the Plymouth Guild Hall and King-Street Chapel.<sup>15</sup>

Then Moody and Sankey took an unusual detour across the English Channel, headed for Paris. It's not recorded how they got there, but it most likely involved sailing from the seaport town of Plymouth across the channel to Le Havre on a paddle-wheel steamer—which was transitioning from parcel and mail services to hauling passengers—then overland by train to Paris. Travel of any distance was always a logistical challenge, because about one hundred fifty rail companies criss-crossed England alone, where their maze of tracks and arbitrary time schedules made long-distance connections a daunting challenge. Fortunately, there was *Bradshaw's Continental Railway Guide*, a tome dedicated to minutely recording all details of time, place, and changes in schedules, making itself indispensable for most travelers well into the next century.<sup>16</sup>

Only two days after closing meetings in Plymouth, the evangelists had crossed the channel and arrived at the most sophisticated city in Europe.<sup>17</sup> By 1882 Paris boasted—or stumbled under—a population of over two-and-a-quarter million souls. It was still recovering from losing a disastrous war with the Prussians, who had surrounded the city in 1871, slowly starving the residents, who resorted to eating horses, dogs, cats, and rats—with one eatery advertising: "Consommé de cheval au millet" (horse); "Brochettes de foie de chien à la maître d'hôtel" (dog); and "Salamis de rats. Sauce Robert" (rats). When those were fully depleted, animals in the city zoo—where the beloved pachyderms Castor and Pollux resided—met a similar fate!

There was also the shadow of the short-lived but radical Paris Commune, where disgruntled soldiers of the defeated National Guard took over



the city, installing—for two months—an anti-religious government of social democracy and working-class radicalism that went so far as to burn the Tuileries Palace and the city hall (Hotel de Ville). It also executed the Archbishop of Paris, Georges Darboy. Once the national French army was re-established, it put down the insurgents, killing or executing between ten to twenty thousand of them. Although the Paris Commune was totally obliterated, it became the inspiration for other left-wing movements, with Karl Marx analyzing and admiringly writing about it in “The Civil War in France.”<sup>18</sup>

But it was also the Belle Epoque (beautiful era) associated with optimism, elegance, and progress, in which Paris became the most celebrated city in Europe, the one to which many aspiring American artists later journeyed.<sup>19</sup> Like many national capitals, it was a place of both worldly elegance and stifling poverty—subjects made famous in popular novels such as Alexandre Dumont’s *The Count of Monte Cristo* and Victor Hugo’s *Les Miserables*. In fact, few folks of either strata were involved in the Moody-Sankey meetings.

There was, however, quite a contingent of English-speaking Protestants in Paris. They—especially the women—were the main attendees at the first meeting in the American Chapel of Paris on Rue de Berri. It was pastored by the Reverend Edward W. Hitchcock, who had come to the work a decade earlier, bringing a strong evangelistic spirit. He founded a Missionary Association at the church “to cultivate the missionary spirit among its members.” Under his ministry, the church grew, establishing three mission outposts, a Children’s Mission, the “Model Industrial School,” and various medical clinics. He also established a dynamic Sunday School, which saw about thirty-five English-speaking additions per year.

Pastor Hitchcock was responsible for most of the planning and fundraising for the revival meetings, commencing Sunday afternoon, October 8, in his church. On one level, the church had long been known to Moody. As he explained at the first meeting:

More than twenty years ago in the city of Boston, I used to hear my pastor, Dr. Kirk, pray every Sabbath for the American Chapel in Paris. You can therefore understand the feelings with which I stand here to-day. Many of these prayers have been answered in the years past, and God is ready to answer them to-day.<sup>20</sup>

That admission reflected the international connections common among Evangelicals who were interested in missions around the world. The

names and locations of missionaries thousands of miles from home were often well-known to American church-goers who prayed and gave to support the far-flung works. Additionally, regular reports on the missions in those places were readily available in religious newspapers such as *The Christian*.

For the first week, Moody preached in English—to a primarily English-speaking audience. This consisted of 3:00PM afternoon Bible studies at the American Church, with evening services taking place at L’Eglise de L’Etoile on the Avenue of the Grand Army, pastored by Eugene Bersier, the most distinguished French preacher of the era.<sup>21</sup> Sankey led a choir of young ladies, who sang hymns, with the congregation joining from time to time.

The biggest surprise was the lack of fiery oratory in Moody’s preaching. As one reporter observed, “I can easily imagine, indeed, that Mr. Moody, even in his most unrestrained efforts, fails to reach the standard of vivacity essential to the entertainment of a French audience.”<sup>22</sup> Apparently, Sankey did not make much of an impression either. For one correspondent of the meetings, the only excitement resulted from an old gentleman who shouted “Amen and glory” at one point. Otherwise, the general atmosphere was reported as quite subdued.

The second week of services was attempted in French, with Moody preaching and pastor Theodore Monod translating. On Monday and Tuesday nights at eight o’clock, services were held in the Temple Protestant de l’Oratoire du Louvre, at 145 rue Saint-Honoré. Originally built as a Roman Catholic royal chapel for the Louvre Palace, it had hosted the funerals of two French kings and Cardinal Richelieu. But after the French Revolution it was decommissioned and used to store stage sets for many years. In 1811, Napoleon gifted it to the French Protestants, who turned it into a church. Now it was made available for revival services by the Liberal Protestant Presbytery. Whereas Moody’s sermons were translated into French, Sankey sang in English, assisted by a choir who sang in French to crowds estimated at about two thousand people each evening—sometimes singing in both languages at once.<sup>23</sup>

Although Moody was not always pleased with having to stand idly by while pastor Monod attempted to translate his fractured American vernacular into acceptable French, response to the meetings was significant enough for them to be extended through Friday evening. Overall, Moody’s reaction was positive. “In all our experience, Mr Sankey and I have found no more promising field of labor than Paris. Instead of the two weeks we wish we could stay here two months.”<sup>24</sup>

With no time to waste before meetings were due to open in Bristol, England, Moody and Sankey began the journey from Paris to London, generally requiring from eight to twelve hours. At the station, they boarded a one-o'clock train heading for the English Channel, where a ferry—weather permitting—would take them across at the water's narrowest point to deposit them beneath the white cliffs of Dover. From there they caught a train—probably the London, Chatham, and Dover railroad—to the capital, where any number of welcoming homes with comfy accommodations would have vied to house them overnight. However, because they were due in Bristol the next day, it's likely they stayed at one of the newer railroad hotels built by competing companies to facilitate growing train travel.

Most of these were located at the terminus of a line's tracks in London, so passengers could get off the train, walk a few steps, and check into a reputable place for an overnight stay—complete with food service—and depart fresh the next day for their intended destination. The newest and most impressive was the Midland Grand Hotel at St. Pancras train station. Completed in the spring of 1876, the sixty-million red-brick, Neo-Gothic edifice was situated in front of Midland Railroad's immense train shed, spanning 243 feet, making it the widest and largest undivided space ever enclosed. From there passengers could directly access the three-hundred-room hotel via a grand staircase or novel “ascending chambers” (elevators). Each room had its own fireplace, but preceded the days before ensuite bathrooms were common, requiring a battery of servants, continually ferrying chamber pots, tubs, bowls, and spittoons to each room.

On Tuesday evening, October 24, Bristol's Colston Hall was filled with an expectant crowd. A platform of three hundred choir members under the direction J.F. Hunt of Cotham Grove Baptist Church<sup>25</sup> also awaited the evangelists. Sankey appeared first at 7:30PM, with Moody, who had been detained in London, expected shortly. Sankey, who usually spoke sparingly in evening meetings to direct listeners' attention to a Scripture verse or to ask prayer for his solo, was uncharacteristically chatty, taking time to rehearse what blessings the Lord had poured out on their work in Paris. He then introduced J.M. Scroggie and E.D. Bliss, who had assisted them in Scotland and their previous work in England. He asked prayer for them and requested the choir to sing a couple selections. Sankey announced the hymn “Sowing in the morning” (“Bringing in the Sheaves”), with the congregation echoing the choir on the refrain. Next, Sankey related that the hymn most blessed in England and Scotland was “Jesus, my Lord, to Thee I cry” (“Take

Me As I Am”), requesting the choir to sing it with the congregation joining on the chorus.

Sankey was clearly stalling. He had done so many times before when Moody was on his way from a meeting across town, but this was halfway across the country. It’s unclear if others had seen the telegram he received from Moody stating, “Will not get [there] until eight o’clock; go on with the meeting, and I will be there in time to preach.” By this point, many in the crowd were wondering whether the main attraction was actually going to appear. And there were certainly no few among the clergy on the platform who were mulling over their favorite “sugar stick” sermon, the one they had preached perhaps hundreds of times and could do so at the drop of a hat. Of course, they had come to hear Moody, but an opportunity to preach before such a huge and expectant crowd was not to be ignored.

Sankey next requested the P.P. Bliss hymn “Man of sorrows, what a name,” then “There is a gate that stands ajar,” “sung with animation by the whole congregation,”<sup>26</sup> while he kept stretching the time by providing appropriate reminiscences, telling his listeners how in the previous week he had led two thousand people singing the same hymn in French. By now it was 8:30 and didn’t look like Moody would be coming any time soon. So he announced that Mr. Scroggie would preach.

Scroggie had slightly different ideas and said he would like to share incidents about their work in Scotland. However, no sooner had he begun than a wave of applause rippled through the crowd, signaling the arrival of the long-awaited Moody, who, without any further explanation, simply announced Mark chapter 1: “Repent ye, and believe the Gospel,” and began to preach. The revival in Bristol—continuing at various times and sites—lasted eleven days, finishing on November 3. At least one correspondent for the Bristol *Western Daily Press* was excited about both Moody and Sankey but found “the later being the great attraction.”<sup>27</sup>

There was nothing quite like Guy Fawkes Day. It was rooted in the infamous English Gunpowder Plot of 1605 and was the latest in a series of schemes by disaffected Roman Catholics to bring down the Protestant government. In it, Guy Fawkes and fellow conspirators leased storage space beneath the House of Lords, where they secreted thirty-six barrels of gunpowder—enough to send Parliament and the Protestant King James I into glory—or perdition—depending on one’s religious perspective. At the last minute, the plot was foiled and November 5 became a national holi-

day filled with rejoicing and anti-catholic sentiment, often erupting into riots and general mayhem. Over the centuries, as fear of Catholic rebellion subsided, the day became one of bonfires, fireworks, but with a lingering amount of mayhem.

It's uncertain to what degree the young rowdies at Cambridge University took their cue from this opportunity for mischief, but they certainly carried on its spirit as they streamed into Moody and Sankey's meeting in the venerable college town on November 5th for the 8:00PM service.<sup>28</sup> "In they came, laughing and talking and rushing for seats near their friends."<sup>29</sup> When the revival choir sang hymns before the service, they answered with music hall ballads. Several particularly exuberant young men attempted to build a pyramid of chairs. A fire cracker was thrown against an outer window, causing additional trepidation. They were only a small part of the seventeen hundred capped-and-gowned undergraduates who showed up that night for the service in the giant Corn Exchange, where all were provided with song collections.<sup>30</sup> While most were respectful, the young louts seemed to control the meeting.

The evangelists had come to the town less than sixty miles north of London, but one that was light-years away in its cultural expectations from the places where revivals had taken place. Moody and Sankey had long ago been invited to the famous university by a contingent of evangelical students, local clergy, and professors—part of the Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union. One of the most prominent students was the famous cricketer John Edward Kynaston Studd. A scholar at Trinity College, he came from a famous sporting family, which included cricketer brothers, George (G.B.) and Charlie (C.T.). They were part of a small but conspicuous group of evangelical students at a university famous for its skepticism.

Cambridge was one of England's most prestigious educational institutions, having been founded in 1209, resulting from a dispute between Oxford University students and the people in that town, causing many to decamp to the nearby hamlet of Cambridge to found a new school. By 1882, Cambridge University boasted thirty-five hundred undergraduates, "nearly all of them raised in homes of real or comparative affluence and bred in the arid religion of the British public school."<sup>31</sup> Their world was filled with chapel services and public prayer before meals, but it was all empty tradition. It took courage to be a real believer at Cambridge.

Moody and Sankey entered the Corn Exchange at 8:00PM, only to be greeted with hoots and cheers from the troublemakers. The first hymn was

met with sarcastic cries of “Hear, Hear.” Then Ira began to sing “The Ninety and Nine.” To his relief, he navigated the first stanza in silence. But that didn’t last long, as students beat the floor with canes and umbrellas. Successive stanzas elicited roars of “Encore”<sup>32</sup> and applause. This was a huge shock, because Ira was used to a near-supernatural hush accompanying his singing as those in the front row or farthest corners strained to catch every nuance. In fact, silence during Ira’s solos was so important to Moody, he usually instructed ushers to close all doors to the venues—allowing no one to enter or exit—until Ira had finished singing. But now Sankey was contending with catcalls! If it had only been a personal slight, Ira might have ignored it, but this seemed like spiritual insolence on a grand scale. When the hymn “Man of Sorrows” was totally disrupted, Ira almost came to tears.<sup>33</sup>

Then it was Moody’s turn. When his prayer was met with applause, the majority who wished for proper decorum went to hissing their unruly brethren. Unfortunately, the interruptions continued. Moody’s ironic choice for a sermon was “Daniel in the Lion’s Den,” but his clipped Massachusetts dialect sounded like “Dan’l,” and every time he mentioned the name, there were jeers of “Dan’l, Dan’l.” Furthermore, Moody’s Americanisms were greeted with bursts of laughter and whoops of “Well done.” Much of his sermon was simply undistinguishable, due to a combination of continuing derision and atrocious acoustics in the hall. Through it all, Moody did not lose control but asked for a fair hearing.

Like Sankey, Moody was used to rapt attention when delivering God’s eternal Word, and this level of scorn for spiritual truth was almost unthinkable. Perhaps Moody had a flashback to his earliest days of trying to teach Sunday School on the north side of Chicago to bands of young rascals, far more obstreperous than these.

As Moody preached, many of his staunchest supporters felt embarrassment, not just because of the rowdies, but because Moody was so ignorant of proper grammar and speech. The evangelist himself later confessed, “There was never a place that I approached with greater anxiety than Cambridge. Never having had the privilege of a university education, I was nervous about meeting university men.”<sup>34</sup> Even in America, Moody had been criticized for his lack of proper grammar and his colorful dialect. And now, here was Moody in the epicenter of what would become posh British ways of speaking.

However, in 1882, the concept of “The King’s Speech” or “Received Pronunciation”<sup>35</sup>—the way of speaking imposed upon Eliza Doolittle by



Professor Henry Higgins in George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion* (1913), which later became the musical *My Fair Lady*—had not yet become the “correct” way of speaking. While the lads at Cambridge were more likely to share a dialect associated with the southeast midlands of England, and particularly greater London, many boys at the school carried the unmistakable provincialism of their local regions.

Nevertheless, when the young cricketer John Edward Studd, who had been instrumental in inviting Moody and Sankey to come, finally listened to Moody speak, he confessed, “[my] heart sank when I heard him, for his way of speech was not our way of speech, his accent was not our accent, and I feared what undergraduates, full of spirits and ready to make fun of anything would do.”<sup>36</sup>

Yet, in spite of the constant disruption and invective, the Holy Spirit seemed to tame the energy of the lads, and when Moody gave an invitation for those seeking prayer to remain, four hundred did so, including some of the disruptors, now seemingly chastened.

During the week, afternoon and evening meetings for townsfolk were held at the Corn Exchange and were well attended. In fact, overflow meetings were held at Trinity Church, to which Ira and part of the choir reassembled while Moody preached. Then it was off to the Gymnasium in Market Passage near Great St. Mary's Church, designed for university students. It seated five hundred, but a downpour on Monday night contributed to a modest crowd of about one hundred, many of whom were in the choir. Perhaps unique to the music at this meeting was the appearance of a mixed quartet consisting of a Mrs. Brownlow and friend who sang with Sankey and a Rev. W. Guttridge.<sup>37</sup> Tuesday and Wednesday evenings the attendance was a bit improved, but not by much. On Wednesday, a letter from J.E. Studd appeared in the *Cambridge Review*, upbraiding his fellow students for the lack of respect owed to invited guests.

Throughout the week, a stream of visitors stopped by the drab, four-story Bull Hotel at 68 Trumplington Street, near St. Catherine's College where the evangelists lodged. On Monday morning, a bellboy knocked on Moody's door, bearing a card, “Mr. Gerald Lander, Trinity College.” Lander had been one of the main agitators at the previous meeting but was there with a surprising message: “I want to apologize sir. And—I've brought a letter of apology from the men.”<sup>38</sup> Apparently, upon reflection, some of the students realized they had overstepped the bounds of common decency and wanted to

respond as English gentleman. While Moody wasn't completely convinced, he challenged Lander to prove his apology and attend the next meeting. Although Lander agreed to appear, the evangelists were still smarting from treatment the night before.

On Thursday afternoon, Moody held an unusual meeting with hundreds of local mothers, asking them to pray for the university men as they were all "some mother's sons." It didn't take long for their prayers to be answered, for the Thursday evening meeting at the Gymnasium took a different turn. As Arthur Benson of King's College recalled over twenty years later:

[A]n immense bilious man with black hair and eyes surrounded by flaccid, pendant, baggy wrinkles—who came forward with an unctuous gesture and took his place at a small harmonium, placed so near the front of the platform that it looked as if both player and instrument might inevitably topple over; it was inexpressively ludicrous to behold. Rolling his eyes in an affected manner, he touched a few simple chords, and then a marvelous transformation came over the room. In a sweet and powerful voice, with an exquisite simplicity combined with irresistible emotion, he sang "There were Ninety and Nine." The man was transfigured. A deathly hush came over the room, & I felt my eyes filled with tears; his physical repulsiveness slipped from him, and left a sincere impulsive Christian, whose simple music spoke straight to the heart.<sup>39</sup>

Moody preached on "Sowing and reaping," and before he had spoken a dozen words, the same young man who had been so moved by Sankey's singing said of the preacher, "I felt as though he and I were alone in the world." Handley Moule, principal of Ridley Hall—the new theological college—and initially a lukewarm supporter of the evangelist, was pleased to find Moody's sermon "a noble masterpiece of Christian faithfulness, courage and wisdom."<sup>40</sup>

After the sermon, Moody decided to announce his first Inquiry Meeting to follow the evening service. For the young lads, it was certainly possible to attend the meeting itself out of a sense of curiosity or maybe even to poke fun at the evangelists, but to attend an Inquiry Meeting signaled a personal interest in deeper spiritual things, risking public derision from fellow students.

The gallery, the Gymnasium fencing room, was up a clattering iron staircase in the center of the hall in full view of all. No man would reach this impromptu inquiry room without a deliberate noisy movement before friends. In a Varsity quick to ridicule eccentricity, where men hated to show their feelings, it could hardly have been chosen better to prevent shallow decisions.<sup>41</sup>

Moody's first invitation to attend the Inquiry Room was met with deafening silence and a complete stillness in the crowd. But then, on the third or fourth appeal, a Trinity scholar, "half hiding his face in his gown, bounded up the stairs two at a time."<sup>42</sup> Then another, and another followed as the choir sang. Moody later recalled, "I never saw the gowns look so well before." When Moody and Sankey finally reached the gallery to counsel the men, there were fifty-two present—including Gerald Lander.<sup>43</sup>

Eighty miles to the southwest was Oxford University, which if possible, shone even brighter in Britain's intellectual firmament. And there Moody and Sankey experienced much the same treatment as at Cambridge. This time, Moody seemed to be more confrontational, even demanding an apology from the offending students. Overall, the evangelists slowly gained the respect of the men and completed a week of meetings with great blessings.

Although the number of conversions was not spectacular at either school, *The Christian* recorded:

We have seen a good deal of Mr. Moody's and other evangelistic meetings, but if we can trust our memory we have never seen anything like this. The power of God seemed to be present in such a degree that these young men, many of them the flower of the rising intellect of our land, seemed to be swayed at his will like the ripe standing corn before the breezes of heaven. We could but exclaim in our hearts: "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes."<sup>44</sup>

Later biographers also adjudged these meetings to have been some of the most important in Moody's career,<sup>45</sup> culminating in the formation of the "Cambridge Seven" (six Cambridge students—including the famous cricketer and revival sponsor C.T. Studd—and one from the Royal Military Academy). Shockingly, these young British elites publicly committed to leaving their privileged positions in Victorian society and becoming missionaries to China in an age before foreign missions became a defining trait of Evangeli-

cal.<sup>46</sup> Both Moody and Sankey later spoke of these meetings as some of their most memorable.<sup>47</sup>

In retrospect, Moody and Sankey seemed to have been the main engines driving an international movement that planted and nourished the spread of the gospel around the world. And at every point that wave was carried on the wings of gospel song, of which Ira D. Sankey was the undisputed leader.<sup>48</sup>

The evangelists continued their itineracy through the end of the year, holding three to seven-day meetings in Torquay (where a fierce wind rattled the panes of glass in Winter Garden meeting hall),<sup>49</sup> Exeter, Southampton, Portsmouth, and Brighton. Brighton was a city hardly associated with piety. In fact, its fame had been built upon the excesses of King George IV (reigned 1820–1830), who, as Prince Regent before becoming king, expended his efforts and the royal finances on developing the seaside town into an opulent playground. Central to that plan was architect John Nash’s Royal Pavillion, built in a rather bizarre Indo-Islamic style, complete with domes and minarets. Some of the interior was finished off in a Chinese fashion or medieval Gothic style.

With the completion of rail lines to the town, day trippers from nearby London—forty seven miles to the north—could also enjoy the growing popularity of a seaside outing. It was not exactly a pilgrimage destination for the pious.

Yet, like other locations, interest in all the revival services was strong, with the evangelists daily appearing before thousands, assisted by a choir of hundreds. Enthusiasm required overflow meetings, in which Sankey darted from meeting to meeting. Many attendees brought well-worn hymn books—costing a penny<sup>50</sup>—to sing their beloved “Sankey songs” or to follow Ira as he sang with “faultless enunciation” in a “good clear voice that scarcely betrays his nationality.”<sup>51</sup>

Christmas that year was actually designed to provide a ten-day break in their schedules before returning to a hectic round of attending to people’s souls. But what was intended as an interval of relaxation and celebration with family and friends was shattered by a telegram on December 22. Ira’s younger brother, Horace Greeley, was dead—at thirty-four.<sup>52</sup>

It certainly wasn’t the first death in the family, for six of Ira’s siblings had already passed away: two unnamed infants who died soon after birth;<sup>53</sup>

nine-year-old Richard Watson<sup>54</sup> when Ira was only five; twenty-six-year-old Rosanna Amelia; fifteen-year-old Leathy Jane; and exactly a year later, ten-year-old little brother Eddie when Ira was fifteen. It had been almost seventeen years since the death of a family member, and Ira had almost forgotten the pain of losing a sibling. But now, the wound was fresh and the ache was real.

Horace's death was not completely unexpected, however, because he had been battling tuberculosis for half a decade.<sup>55</sup> In fact, just four years earlier, he had given up his livelihood and begun traveling around the country in search of a cure—all to no avail. Tuberculosis—or consumption, as it was known—was a growing scourge in the nineteenth century, although it had been around since classical antiquity. It was certainly one of the conditions for which earlier sufferers had sought the “royal touch” of healing when King Henry IV of France extended his hand in a supposed sovereign cure once a week after taking communion or during a royal walkabout.<sup>56</sup> And in England, some editions of the *Book of Common Prayer* actually contained a Royal Touch ceremony, in which the king rubbed the sufferer's face, hung a coin around his or her neck, read passages from the Gospels, and offered prayers to God and the Virgin Mary.

By the late nineteenth century, more credible approaches were under investigation. In fact, the year Horace died, Robert Koch's discovery of *tubercule bacillum* revealed the disease to be one of contagion. But such discoveries were too late to aid the tens of thousands who had already contracted the pestilence, causing a prolonged wasting away.

In a strange twist of literary license, the terrible affliction became known as “the romantic disease” with Lord Byron moaning, “How pale I look!—I should like . . . to die of consumption . . . because then the women would all say, ‘see that poor Byron—how interesting he looks in dying!’” Because writers like Charlotte Bronte or composers such as Frederic Chopin died from it, consumption acquired an association with genius or great sensitivity. Consumptive heroines such as Violetta in Verdi's opera *La Traviata* (based on Dumas' novel *Camille*) or Mimi in Puccini's *La Boheme* were all the rage, with many women powdering their faces—even using arsenic—to achieve a pale or dying complexion.<sup>57</sup>

For the Sankey family, however, there was nothing exotic about the curse that took a young man, leaving his wife, Harriet, and two boys. He was buried in the family grave plot in Greenwood Cemetery, adjacent to his

boyhood home. With Horace's passing, the forty-two-year-old Ira was left with only one sister and one brother—out of nine children.

Solace came in the form of singing “Watching and waiting for me,” an experience Sankey shared soon after returning to meetings. He told the congregation how he had recently lost a relative but found great comfort in this hymn, and he directed attention to No. 195 in their hymn books, requesting them to join him, E.D. Bliss, and a friend who sang the first stanza.<sup>58</sup>

For Moody and Sankey, the new year, 1883, actually began on December 31, with a meeting of three thousand people in Dublin's Christian Union Building, displaying a banner proclaiming “Jesus Only” in large letters. A correspondent for the local paper regarded Moody as “a stout middle-aged man, with an almost Falstaffian<sup>59</sup> expression of countenance. He looked around himself with a self-complacent smile, and appeared quite unexcited.”<sup>60</sup> Sankey was described as “a rather good-looking man, with dark whiskers, and his singing of some of the hymns would have been rather pleasing but for a[n] [American] nasal twang.”<sup>61</sup>

Congregational singing was generally enthusiastic, except on those occasions when the audience was unfamiliar with a new hymn. That was likely the case on Wednesday afternoon, January 3, when the response to the hymn “Christ for Me” was not up to Moody's satisfaction. The evangelist, whose perception about crowd responses was always finely tuned, had become aware that participation by those in the galleries had been nearly non-existent throughout the meeting. Perhaps intuiting that the hymn was unfamiliar and the audience was unable to sing the tune, Moody—who was more interested in participation than precision—instructed them “to just say the words.” A perplexed but compliant audience gave it a try: “The result was a kind of weird muttering, which formed a very sombre accompaniment to the singing; and, indeed, the effect was quite sepulchral. Altogether there was more sound than harmony.”<sup>62</sup> There is no record of Sankey's response to the curious outcome.

Meetings in the industrial city of Birmingham began Thursday, January 18, and were scheduled for Bingley Hall, seating nine thousand, a venue Moody had roundly praised eight years earlier, claiming it the best he had ever spoken in. Despite broad ministerial support and strong attendance, there was always a degree of misunderstanding—or perhaps misrepresentation—by other ministers, who accused the meetings of leading to “a kind of calculated hysteria . . . and evils of a worse kind.”<sup>63</sup> Others blamed the meet-



ings for a rise of thefts from suburban homes while the owners were away at revival services.<sup>64</sup>

A month later, at their next stop in Belfast, the hall was filled with expectant Christian workers for an 8:00AM service to open a week of meetings. Sadly, a huge throng was turned away, including one lady who drove her carriage the lengthy distance of twenty miles to hear the evangelists.<sup>65</sup> It quickly became apparent how badly the revival committee had miscalculated the huge outpouring of interest in the meetings, as both the skeptic and the saint who couldn't manage to snag a seat at St. Enoch's were directed by signs to Carlisle Memorial Church, only to find it also running over and to be diverted to Rev. M'Kay's church on Clifton Street.<sup>66</sup> By the time Sankey appeared at all the locations, he must have wondered how he would survive Belfast!

The crowds were so great, in fact, they overran the city's tramcars, causing one poor conductor, David Townley, to be called into court for exceeding—by sixteen passengers—the vehicle's limit of forty-six. The company defended itself, claiming they were “besieged by thousands who were on their way to Messrs. Moody and Sankey's services.” There was no record as to whether poor Mr. Townley escaped with only a fine.<sup>67</sup> Other arrests related to the meetings included a cattle dealer named McGregor who purloined John Kelly's watch while he was worshipping at the St. Enoch Church meeting.<sup>68</sup>

Although most of the revival services were like one another—with a blend of prayer, preaching, congregational song, and solo singing—there were often elements of surprise. The revival at Nottingham—lasting just four days—contained particularly novel elements. For example, toward the end of one meeting, enthusiastic folks in the crowd took the initiative and called out for “Hold the Fort!” to be sung; and it was! At another, the heat was so great that many women fainted, sending one to the hospital. And at another, a six-hundred voice choir was accompanied by two violins, a bass viol, and two trumpets—a highly unusual combination, probably reflecting the availability of local talent.<sup>69</sup>

For the Manchester revival beginning March 1—with an invitation from 520 pastors, including some from the Established Church—the YMCA secretary kept an impressively detailed record:

21 gospel meetings, attended by 68,000 persons at 14 Bible lectures, attended by 46,000 persons, at five meetings for men only,

attended by 16,000; they had two meetings for Christian workers attended by 7,000, and ten prayer meetings attended by 7,500 persons.<sup>70</sup>

The number of professions was recorded at 1,843, and their names were given to local pastors for follow-up.

One of those was H.S. Phillips, a young man who attended a meeting at the Free Trade Hall.

I was with my father, when Mr. Sankey wonderfully sang, “Hear the clanging bells of time,” with its thrilling chorus, “Eternity, Eternity,” [and] I was greatly moved. I do not remember Moody’s sermon, but the other world loomed large that night.<sup>71</sup>

Phillips was invited to the Inquiry Room, where he talked and prayed with an anonymous counselor. “We parted and I never saw him again but the decision had been taken which changed my life. An intended legal career was abandoned.” He then matriculated at Cambridge, where he found a vibrant Christian community. “I with many others were swept into the mission field and here I remained after 36 years.”<sup>72</sup>

While both Moody and Sankey brought highly celebrated individual gifts to the revival efforts, less obvious would have been their rather seamless functioning as a team. Typical was the evening when a man in the service stood up and shouted, “Fire,” causing panic among the worshipers. After quickly ascertaining there was no danger, Moody sought to allay the confusion and called on Sankey to sing something. “As soon as the soothing notes of the song reached the audience, those who were on the point of departing sat down again, and soon order was restored completely.”<sup>73</sup>

Perhaps unique to the meetings in Manchester was the choir, provided by the Sacred Song Association, a group resulting from the Moody-Sankey meetings eight years earlier. The ensemble had managed to stay together since that revival, often singing for the Royal Infirmary, mission halls, and ragged schools. On Saturday evening, when the evangelists rested from meetings, the Song Association met in its own hall for their eighth annual meeting, complete with music and an address from Sankey.<sup>74</sup>

Like everywhere else, the crowds at Leeds showed up over an hour early for the evening services—many with noisy infants squirming on their mother’s laps.<sup>75</sup> Amidst the throng were

. . . persons fortified against impatience. Two or three women have brought their knitting with them, and not a few have brought their babies. Pages of fiction from the Public Library are being glanced at by some of the men present, while others turn to the newspapers of the day. One by one, however, the novels, the news sheets, and the knitting drop out of sight. The babies do not disappear but their voices are no longer heard. Another sound fills the building. Someone has started the line of a gospel hymn, and the melody grows in volume as one portion after another of the great audience join in. Hymn follows hymn almost without a break. Sometimes the key-note is struck from the body of the hall, sometimes from the gallery.

There are hymnbooks enough. But, as a rule, the waiting audience are independent of the book. It is their own praise service, and the words of the hymns they sing are fixed in the memory. "Hold the Fort!" remains a favorite. The jubilant words are rung out from three or four thousand voices with the power and precision of a trained choir.<sup>76</sup>

The final round of meetings in their lengthy itinerary coalesced in Liverpool, the great ship building center and principal port for vessels sailing to and from America. For two weeks, Moody and Sankey held forth at the five-thousand seat Hengler's Circus.

Charles Hengler (1821–1887) came from a famous circus family that made its mark by holding entertainment in tents. But as more folks migrated to the cities, Hengler built a series of permanent showplaces in various towns, visited in rotation by his traveling show. With his permanent location in Liverpool, these "scrupulously inoffensive (a novelty)" entertainments included spectacular riding displays on "forty horses and diminutive ponies," tight-rope walkers, rival clown displays, and in later years, popular aquatic extravaganzas that saw twenty-three thousand gallons of water flood the arena floor in thirty-five seconds. In 1886, Hengler gave a command performance at Windsor Castle. Throughout his grand, gas-lit productions, everything ran like clockwork.<sup>77</sup>

During April of 1883, the Circus was available for a Moody-Sankey revival. At one end of the arena, a great platform was constructed to hold a choir and invited guests. On the opposite end, "The stables . . . have been converted into an 'inquiry room,' comfortably furnished with matting and

chairs. The walls are recoloured, and the mangers covered with red drapery.<sup>78</sup> While Hengler's Circus held only half as many people as the previous Victoria Hall, which seated ten thousand folks, it was readily acknowledged that at the Circus, everyone would finally be able to hear Mr. Moody—unlike his previous visit, when nearly half the crowd strained but failed to apprehend the preacher.

While the issue of hearing the speaker seems to have been addressed, Moody expressed concern for working folks who didn't have the luxury of coming an hour early to get seats. Although the revival committee tried to provide tickets for these men to reserve a spot, the system didn't seem to work.

On Monday, April 16—probably during the daytime sessions—Ira attended a Welsh psalmody festival—*Cymanfa Ganu*—a gathering for the singing of hymns, traditional in Welsh Nonconformist churches (eg: Methodist), in which the whole congregation participated, singing in four-part harmony, led by a choral director. In most churches, singing in harmony by the congregation would have been unusual, generally relegated to the choir when one was present. But this tradition celebrated everyone singing a part.

The festival included some popular “Sankeys” (gospel hymns), for in 1874—only a year after the original Moody-Sankey revivals in England began—Methodist minister John Roberts (Ieuan Gwyllt in Gaelic) issued *Sŵn y Jiwbili*, an arrangement in Welsh of gospel hymns and tunes. Ira might have directed the festival in some of the popular songs. Welsh hymn singing was also famous for its emotional or religious fervor—something it shared with the singing at Moody-Sankey meetings.<sup>79</sup>

From his earliest days, Sankey seemed to develop a special connection with his choirs, and the one at Liverpool was no exception. On the final day of meetings, the choir asked Ira to make the presentation of a gold watch to their choir director, Thomas Storey.<sup>80</sup> Coming from Sankey, it seemed to have special meaning.

Ira continued to select a wide variety of old favorites and new titles as solos and congregational songs, sometimes drilling the congregation by asking different sections of the hall to sing back the melodies. Notices of the meetings were extensively advertised in the papers, usually alongside information about where *Sacred Songs and Solos* could be purchased. Many of the ads called the hymn books *Sankey's Songs and Solos*<sup>81</sup> rather than the more common but awkward *Moody and Sankey Hymnal*. In addition to book dealers seeking to cash in on the meetings, Evan's City Restaurant at 41 Dale

Street advertised themselves as being “centrally situated for those attending the [meetings],” offering “BREAKFASTS, LUNCHEONS, DINNERS, AND TEAS AT MODERATE CHARGES.” “P.S. *Sankey’s Songs and Solos* can also be had.”<sup>82</sup>

Sundays were often their busiest days, with meetings for Christian workers early in the morning, meetings for non-church attenders at the normal church hour, and separate afternoon meetings for men and women before a final evening service and the Inquiry Room. Because the revival remained so popular, overflow meetings in multiple locations were common. But while Moody remained in the primary venue to preach his sermon, Ira performed a marathon, attending each overflow and accumulating—on at least one occasion—eleven meetings in one day.<sup>83</sup> Despite this superhuman effort, Ira was later able to boast how he had remained in excellent health and had never felt better.

By the close of the Liverpool meetings, both men were ready for a less chaotic departure and apparently colluded with local authorities to sneak out of the Compton Hotel, where, during their stay, they had entertained a steady stream of admirers, spiritual seekers, and the just plain curious. To achieve the subterfuge necessary to get them to the steamship S.S. *Alaska* in the harbor, the evangelists were booked on a special tender—one hour earlier than the noontime boat for taking regular passengers to the waiting ship.

Long before noon, crowds had gathered in the rain at Prince’s Landing to catch a glimpse of Moody or Sankey and wish them farewell. But it was not to be. When well-wishers finally realized the pair had absconded earlier, they crowded onto the tender *Rover* with the regular passengers scheduled for the voyage. Upon arriving at the *Alaska*, they swarmed the ship, and “after much pushing and crushing,” finally discovered the objects of their pursuit in a stateroom where Mrs. Moody was presented with several bouquets of flowers as the evangelists’ hands were duly wrung. Only when the final signal that the *Rover* was returning to the dock did the crowds dissipate and give the evangelists some peace.<sup>84</sup> It was Saturday afternoon, April 28.

Boats leaving from Liverpool, England, to America made one stop in Queenstown, Ireland,<sup>85</sup> before venturing out upon the vast North Atlantic. In Queenstown, careful calculations were initiated for the great steamers, all seeking to break the latest record for the fastest crossing to North America. The *Alaska*, carrying two hundred regular passengers plus those in steerage—usually immigrants traveling to the New World—was nicknamed the

“Greyhound of the Sea,” for it was sleek and fast, one of the finest ships of the Williams and Guion Line, having just won the Atlantic Blue Ribbon for a record crossing the previous April. Like other voyages, it was also seeking to set new records, even in the face of fog and icebergs on the journey.

Despite a smooth crossing, Moody was seasick as usual, while Sankey enjoyed a robust constitution. In fact, he apparently took part in various services for both regular passengers and those in steerage. But the meetings were not purely spiritual in purpose, for a contingent of Temperance enthusiasts managed to convince ninety passengers to sign the Temperance pledge on the last day.<sup>86</sup>

Because Moody’s queasiness resulted in confinement to his cabin, he had a long period to reflect on the last eighteen months—as he had not returned to the U.S. as had Sankey the previous summer. Now, with a little hindsight, he had time with Ira to look back on their efforts. One thing seemed clear: compared to their visit eight years earlier, far more pastors had signed invitations to bring revival to their towns. And although the earlier novelty of the pair—especially with Sankey’s solo singing—was no longer breaking new ground, attendance had been impressive with overflow facilities regularly being called into use. Indeed, it seemed as though Ira was used as a sop for all those who couldn’t get into the main venue, as advertis-



**S.S. Alaska**, photo by J.S. Johnston, Detroit Publishing Co., ca. 1890. Library of Congress.



ing assured readers that Sankey would sing in each overflow meeting, often resulting in Ira's having to sing at three services per evening.

Newspaper coverage was also strong, with extensive reporting of noon prayer assemblies, afternoon Bible readings, and evening revival services, with the music and Moody's sermons reported in detail. Many pastors testified to the lasting impact of the evangelists' earlier ministry, implying that this visit would also bear lasting fruit. In fact, the respected Congregational church leader W.R. Dale affirmed that 70% of converts from the earlier Moody-Sankey meetings "continue to stand firm in their new faith."<sup>87</sup> And while Moody did not keep count of conversions, those who did registered solid numbers.

When the *Alaska*, under the expert command of Captain George S. Murray, finally crossed the "finish line" at Sandy Hook, New Jersey, at 4:54AM, it had indeed set a new Atlantic crossing record of 6 days, 23 hours, and 48 minutes—beating her previous record by two hours.<sup>88</sup>

Numerous newspapers noted—somewhat sarcastically—how the *Alaska*'s 8:00AM docking time was early enough for passengers to attend church that Sunday morning on May 6, 1883. Instead of church, Ira and the Moody clan were whisked off to 1 Rutherford Place in Manhattan, the home of Lucius Horatio Biglow, the more silent partner of Biglow and Main, publishers of Sankey's *American Gospel Hymns* series.<sup>89</sup>

Not surprisingly, a reporter from the *New York Tribune* tracked them down, seeking an interview. Moody was still recovering from his nautical nausea, but Ira was willing as usual to offer his views. When queried, "You must be very much fatigued," Sankey proudly countered, "No, not a great deal. My health is better than it has been for ten years. From the day I left this country, I have not had one moment's sickness. Mr. Moody, too, has enjoyed unusual health, and he would be about now, but he is not as good a seaman as I am." He followed this with a chuckle, "In fact, he is about the worst seaman I have ever known."<sup>90</sup>

Ira's train for western Pennsylvania and his family in New Castle didn't leave until Monday morning,<sup>91</sup> so he joined his friend C.W. Sawyer at Cooper Union for its weekly Temperance meeting. In addition to leading an exuberant congregation in song and singing some favorite solos, he rehearsed the narrative he had earlier shared with the *Tribune* reporter about how God had blessed their recent efforts: what widespread support they had enjoyed from ministers of all groups, including the Anglican Church; how crowds

consistently overflowed the meeting places, requiring him to constantly sing in additional venues; and how their meetings at Cambridge and Oxford Universities had been highlights. He also explained how the evangelists were back in the states for a rest and would return to England in the fall.<sup>92</sup>

On Monday morning, Moody and his family headed to their home in Northfield, and Sankey headed for New Castle to greet his long-absent family, where Fanny Sankey and the three boys—who hadn't seen him in eight months—eagerly awaited.<sup>93</sup> So when he first spied Harry, Eddie, and Ira Allen, he couldn't believe how much they had grown—with Harry and Eddie beginning to resemble young men.

Ira's father, David, was ill and confined to his home, so Ira took over as superintendent of a building project he was undertaking.<sup>94</sup> But he didn't stay put very long, for Ira headed back to New York to attend with Moody a special meeting at Cooper Union to celebrate the Temperance organization's fifth anniversary on Sunday night, May 20. Ira enjoyed a long association with C.W. Sawyer and the Temperance work at Cooper Union, having often appeared there. But this occasion was special, as evidenced by the luminaries on the platform.

In addition to the expected gaggle of clergy, there appeared William E. Dodge Jr., a wealthy New York businessman involved in mining, railroads, life insurance, real estate, and numerous other endeavors. While vice president of the New York Chamber of Commerce, this Presbyterian was also an active philanthropist and president of the American Temperance Society, vice president of the American Sunday School Union, and a supporter of D.L. Moody. In fact, he was one of three men overseeing the royalties from the *Sacred Songs and Solos*.

Another guest was the Philadelphia retail merchant and city booster, John Wanamaker, who had provided the building for Moody's Philadelphia revival in 1876. Cyrus W. Field was also present. He had helped found the American Telegraph Company and laid the Atlantic cable.<sup>95</sup> These and additional movers and shakers of the American economy were strong supporters of Temperance and revivalism, supplying a deep reserve of both financial and influential capital to those movements and the people in them.

While Moody had recovered from his former bout with sea sickness, he evidenced problems with his voice on a couple occasions, joking that he actually needed to speak four or five times per day to get back in shape. Although New York City wasn't as large as Paris, where Moody had seen

results of the Paris Commune of 1871, he seemed aware of turmoil growing in urban centers and warned his hearers of the gospel being the only thing “which would keep our City from communism.”<sup>96</sup>

It’s not clear how long it had been in the planning, but when Ira returned home to the family in New Castle, he and son Harry had a major tour of the West mapped out. Harry was the oldest child.<sup>97</sup> With their luggage in tow, they departed the New Castle train station, Friday, June 1, on the Chicago and Alton line, heading for Huntington, Indiana, where they checked into the modest Exchange Hotel on West State Street.

It was a pleasant evening, and the two went out for a lengthy stroll. However, upon returning, Ira was not surprised to find an enterprising reporter who had gotten wind of their stay and was eagerly waiting to interview the celebrity in their little whistle-stop. As always, Sankey seemed gracious to share his plans with the small-town journalist, who attempted to describe to his readers a subject they had read about but had never seen:

He is a man of medium height and is very fleshy. His beard consists of a moustache and burnsidies of a dark color. The face is a very pleasant one and is frequently lit up with a smile. The forehead is very high. He was dressed neatly but plainly, wearing a suit of grayish colored cloth. There was an absence of anything flashy in his dress, and his manners and pleasant conversation made the visit long to be remembered. His appearance would indicate that he was about forty-five years of age. He was accompanied by his son, Harry, a very pleasant young man.<sup>98</sup>

Sankey informed his interrogator that their immediate destination was Chicago and a service at Farwell Hall on Sunday evening. Then it was off to St. Paul, Omaha, Denver, Santa Fe, and El Paso. From there, they would traverse the Texas and Oklahoma Indian Territories, concluding with St. Louis and Chicago.

In speaking of their meetings and of their future plans, the gentleman [Sankey] was careful not to speak in a boastful manner, but spoke simply of the great blessings which had been given their labors.<sup>99</sup>

During their month-long journey, Ira met many acquaintances he had made on the trip out West with Moody some years before. He was always expected to sing, of course.

On August 13, an unexpected article appeared in *The Chicago Tribune*. Although the paper relegated the article to a distant page eight, it still sent shockwaves through the Sankey household and far beyond. It was entitled: “Moody and Sankey: The True History of Their Financial Arrangements, as Related by Dr. Parkhurst.” Parkhurst had been Ira’s pastor at Grace Methodist Episcopal Church in Chicago, prior to his first mission to Britain, and he claimed to have the inside scoop on all matters financial. The article began well:

A great many people think . . . Moody and Sankey are rich. But there was never a greater mistake. I know all about them and their work, especially in its financial phases.<sup>100</sup>

But then it took an ominous turn:

. . . they are two as poor men as you will find in a day’s march. Sankey was never as unselfish in the work as Moody, but Moody has managed that neither he nor Sankey is worth anything.

Next, the reporter asked:

How long did Moody pay Sankey a salary [of supposedly \$125 per month for a year]?

Parkhurst:

The contract was for one year, and the salary was paid until the year was up. After that, Moody refused to work with Sankey unless Sankey would abandon the salary and live by faith, as he did. That wasn’t all either; Sankey used in his meetings a Smith cabinet organ and used to take orders for these instruments and receive a commission. Moody did not know this for a long time, but the newspapers got hold of it and began to insinuate that Moody and Sankey meetings were an organ speculation in disguise. This riled Moody, and he compelled Sankey to go out of the organ business at once.

Later the reporter asked,

What about the profits from the sale of the hymn-book?

Parkhurst:

I think I know all about that. The book sold in Great Britain for only a penny, and yet the profits amounted to \$80,000. I suppose that, taking America into account, the first, second, third, and fourth parts have earned \$300,000 to \$400,000 up to this time. Sankey, of course, was anxious that this money should be appropriated by himself and Moody. But Moody put his foot down again, and insisted that they must not take a penny of it; and, although the book was Sankey's work, Moody, by threatening to withdraw from Sankey, compelled him to agree to an arrangement for devoting it all to benevolent purposes.<sup>101</sup>

Soon, it seemed that every newspaper in the country was running the story, sometimes with headlines such as "How the Great Revivalist Refused Great Chances of Wealth," coupled with "His Care to Prevent the Hymn-Writer From Speculating on the Meetings."<sup>102</sup>

While the charge of making money off their revival meetings was nothing new, this version portrayed Moody as an altruistic man of integrity, compared to Sankey, a grasping money-grubber—the villain of the story—whose longing for lucre almost wrecked their partnership.

And all just a few weeks before the evangelists were due to resume preparatory meetings in America for their return to Britain. In the past, Moody had rarely responded to such attacks, allowing his friends to vouch for the revivalists' integrity. But this was on a national scale. It had the potential to destroy their ministry and leave a deep wound on revivalism!

Anger, confusion, and hurt welled up in various degrees as Ira sought to comprehend why his friend and former pastor, Parkhurst, would have said such things—if he actually did, for perhaps it was just the imagination of some eager reporter trying to earn front-page coverage with dubious tales of public figures. But because newspapers in the 1880s subscribed to news services (providing news stories to even the smallest papers), there was no way to respond to the avalanche of bad publicity pouring out of the press. There seemed little that Ira could do. ∞

## ENDNOTES

1. Words by Eliza H. Hamilton, music by George C. Stebbins, "Take Me As I Am" ("Jesus, my Lord, to Thee I cry"), *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete*, Ira D. Sankey, James McGranahan, and George C. Stebbins, eds. (Cincinnati: John Church Co.; New York: Biglow and Main, 1894), No. 226.
2. Information about the Inman Line and its ships is generally available online; also see *The New York Times*, 6 April 1876, 10. For a while, the *City of Berlin* held the Blue Ribbon speed record for crossing the Atlantic.
3. His first trip on the *City of Berlin* was a return from England in July 1879; the second was a voyage to Great Britain in the fall of 1881.
4. The ship left New York at 5:00PM on August 26 with Sankey, the mail, and a cargo of spices. *The Morning News* (Belfast, Northern Ireland), 28 August 1882, 8.
5. The issue of Sankey's family being absent on this tour is not completely clear, but Mrs. J.A. MacKinnon, who chronicled so much of Moody's and Sankey's work first-hand, reported, around December of 1882, "Mrs. Sankey and the children are in America. It is trying for him to be separated from them." Jane MacKinnon (Mrs. Peter MacKinnon) *Recollections of D.L. Moody and His Work in Britain 1874-1892* (Campbelton, Scotland: Printed for Private Circulation, 1904/1905), 157. John Pollock, *Moody, the Biography* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 270, records that Moody and Sankey stayed part of their trip in hotels as "grass widowers," meaning without their spouses.
6. *The Pall Mall Gazette* (London), 24 May 1883, 11.
7. *Western Mail* (Cardiff, Wales), 6 September 1882, 3.
8. *Western Mail* (Cardiff, Wales), 4 September 1882, 3.
9. *Western Mail* (Cardiff, Wales), 6 September 1882, 3.
10. Rather than *Moody-Sankey Hymns*, as had been common. *Western Morning News* (Plymouth, Devon), 1 September 1882, 1.
11. *Western Mail*, 13 September 1882, 3.
12. *Western Mail*, 12 September 1882, 3.
13. *Western Mail*, 12 September 1882, 3.
14. Sankey possibly missed some meetings because of illness. According to the *Birmingham Daily Post*, 3 October 1882, 4, "Sankey had quite recovered from his [unspecified] illness."
15. *The Devon Evening Express*, 6 October 1882, 2.
16. *Punch* magazine (1865) described Bradshaw's efforts: "seldom has the gigantic intellect of man been employed upon a work of greater utility."



17. The evangelists did not travel together, for Sankey left on October 5, with Moody following a day later. *The Devon Evening Express*, 6 October 1882, 2.
18. Karl Marx, “The Civil War in France.” The first edition of the pamphlet, a slim document of just 35 pages, was published in London on about 13 June 1871 as “The Civil War in France: Address of the General Council of the International Working-Men’s Association.” *Wikipedia*.
19. David McCullough, *The Greater Journey: Americans in Paris* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011).
20. Joseph W. Cochran, *Friendly Adventures: A Chronicle of the American Church of Paris (1857–1931)* (Paris: Brentano’s, 1931), chapter IX, “Riding Out the Storm.”
21. The Reverend James Archer Spurgeon, brother of Charles Haddon Spurgeon of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, assisted with some of the meetings. *The Western Daily Press* (Bristol), 11 October 1882, 8.
22. *The Freedman’s Journal* (Dublin), 10 October 1882, 5.
23. As one paper reported, “Hold the Fort” was so poorly translated, “Both words and music fell lifeless on the hearts of lively Parisians.” *Evening Bulletin* (Marysville, KY), 1 December 1882, 1.
24. Cochran, *Friendly Adventures*, chapter IX.
25. *The Western Daily Press* (Bristol), 25 October 1882, 6.
26. *The Western Daily Press* (Bristol), 25 October 1882, 6.
27. *The Western Daily Press* (Bristol), 21 October 1882, 5.
28. The meetings actually began that Sunday, with an early morning prayer meeting and another in the afternoon designed for townsmen.
29. Pollack, *Moody*, 254.
30. Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 351.
31. The British Public School is the equivalent of an elite American private school.
32. Pollack, *Moody*, 254.
33. Pollack, *Moody*, 254.
34. “D.L. Moody: Impressions formed during his late visit to England,” *The Friends’ Review*, Vol. 38, No. 13 (1 Nov. 1884), 1, reprinted from *The Pall Mall Gazette*.
35. The term is generally credited to Daniel Jones, who in his English *Pronouncing Dictionary* of 1917 called it “Public School Pronunciation” but later termed it “Received Pronunciation.” When this way of speaking was later adopted by the BBC for its announcers, it soon became associated with the “proper

way of speaking” and carried many issues of class—as presciently dramatized earlier in Bernard Shaw’s *Pygmalion* and later, the musical *My Fair Lady*.

36. Pollack, *Moody*, 253–54.
37. *Cambridge Independent Press*, 11 November 1882, 6.
38. Pollack, *Moody*, 256.
39. Pollack, *Moody*, 258–59. Moody biographer Pollack warns that this account of Sankey’s portliness, penned over twenty years later, is not corroborated by any other sources from the era and could have resulted from a fuzzy memory on the author’s part, or a desire to enhance the drama of the event.
40. Pollack, *Moody*, 259. Handley Moule would later become Bishop of Durham.
41. Pollack, *Moody*, 259.
42. Pollack, *Moody*, 257.
43. Pollack, *Moody*, 257. Gerald Lander, one of the initial troublemakers in the meetings, went on to become an Anglican priest with many positions, eventually becoming Anglican bishop of Hong Kong and South China.
44. Quoted in Will R. Moody, *Life of Moody* (1900), 356.
45. Biographer John Pollack concluded, “Down the corridor of time, the most significant event, both for Moody and for the world, is seen to be the week’s adventure in Cambridge.” *Moody*, 253.
46. John C. Pollock, *The Cambridge Seven: The True Story of Ordinary Men Used in No Ordinary Way* (n.p.: Christian Focus, 2012). The men authored a pamphlet, “The Evangelisation of the World: A Missionary Band,” which became a national best seller. Their influence led to the formation of Robert Wilder’s Student Volunteer Movement in America.
47. *The Pall Mall Gazette* (London) 24 May 1883, 11. *Manchester Currier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 26 May 1883, 13, reported an interview with Sankey in which he said, “I look back with most pleasure to my work in those places [Oxford and Cambridge].”
48. Had P.P. Bliss lived, he might have rivaled or even surpassed Sankey as gospel hymnody’s patriarch—owing to his manifold gifts and his position as co-editor of the *Gospel Hymns* series—but that possibility faded with his death on 29 December 1876.
49. *The Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 22 November 1882, 8. The Torquay Winter Gardens had earlier hosted popular groups such as minstrel-related “Ethiopian banjo and bones.”
50. The words-only edition was only a penny, with the music edition at 1 shilling, 6d (6 pence).

51. *The Hampshire Advertiser* (Southampton), 2 December 1882, 6.
52. Most obits get his age wrong. His tombstone reads 27 July 1848–22 December 1882.
53. These were the first-born child of David and Mary Sankey, who lived 7–14 July 1831, and the twin brother of Richard Watson Jr., who died in childbirth, 4 February 1845. See S.W. and P.A. Durant, *History of Lawrence County, Pa., 1770–1877* (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts and Co., 1877), 167.
54. Not to be confused with younger brother, Richard Watson Jr., known as Wat.
55. *The Daily Register* (Wheeling, WV), 23 December 1882, 1.
56. See engraving of Royal Touch ceremony of Henry IV on *Wikipedia*, “History of Tuberculosis.”
57. The widespread tendency to romanticize tuberculosis must seem grotesque until one considers how much the same was done with HIV in the late 20th century: the movie *Philadelphia* with Tom Hanks or the hit musical *Rent*.
58. Text by Marianne Farningham (Hearn), set to a P.P. Bliss tune. First published in Bliss’s *Gospel Songs* (1874). *The Freeman’s Journal* (Dublin), 6 January 1883, 3.
59. Meaning jovial, plump, dissolute.
60. *Freemans Journal*, 1 January 1883, 2.
61. *Freemans Journal*, 1 January 1883, 2.
62. *Freemans Journal*, 4 January 1883, 3.
63. *The Birmingham Daily Mail*, 12 February 1883, 3.
64. *The Birmingham Daily Mail*, 3 February 1883, 2. The evangelists stayed at the Colonnade Temperance Hotel.
65. *North British Daily Mail* (Glasgow, Scotland), 3 February 1883, 4. That was generally a whole day’s ride for a horse—depending on lots of variables.
66. *The Morning News* (Belfast), 14 February 1883, 8.
67. *The Morning News* (Belfast), 22 February 1883, 6.
68. *The Morning News* (Belfast), 17 February 1883, 5.
69. *The Nottingham Evening Post*, 26 February 1883, 4.
70. *Manchester Evening News*, 21 March 1883, 2.
71. Unidentified typescript, probably written 1911.
72. Phillips was part of a first generation of missionaries associated with the Cambridge Seven movement, which helped spread Christianity around the

world, often described as the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions. He spent much of his time in Foochow (Fuzhou), China.

73. David Williamson, *Ira D. Sankey: The Story of His Life* (London: S.W. Partridge and Co., n.d.), 88.
74. *Manchester Evening News*, 12 March 1883, 2.
75. *The Leeds Mercury*, 19 March 1883, 8.
76. *The Leeds Mercury*, 24 March 1883, 9.
77. John M. Turner, “Hengler’s Circus and Gloucestershire,” *Gloucestershire History No. 3* (1989), 4–5.
78. *Liverpool Mercury*, 2 April 1883, 6.
79. H. Barlow, “‘Praise the Lord! We are a Musical Nation’: The Welsh Working Classes and Religious Singing,” *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (2020), 445–72. “John Roberts,” *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* online.
80. *Liverpool Mercury*, 11 June 1883, 8.
81. *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 13 March 1883, 3. This was typical of numerous advertisements in various papers.
82. *Liverpool Daily Post*, 2 April 1883, 1.
83. *The Selma (AL) Times*, 26 May 1883, 2, quoting *Boston Herald*.
84. *Liverpool Daily Post*, 30 April 1883, 7.
85. In 1920, this city in County Cork was renamed Cobh.
86. *Vicksburg Evening Post*, 12 May 1883, 3, quoting New York paper of May 6.
87. *The Pall Mall Gazette* (London), 6 February 1883, 11.
88. Captain Murray became a minor celebrity as a result, endorsing products such as Warner’s Safe Rheumatic Cure and Honest Long Cut Tobacco. Roy Morris Jr., *Declaring His Genius: Oscar Wilde in North America* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2013), 23.
89. “Lucius Horatio Biglow (1833–1909),” *WikiTree*, <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Biglow-54>
90. *New York Tribune*, 7 May 1883, 5.
91. Although the Sankeys had recently established a home in Brooklyn, Ira returned to New Castle where Fanny and the three children had apparently stayed during Ira’s absence.
92. *New York Tribune*, 7 May 1883, 5; *The New York Times*, 7 May 1883, 5.
93. It seems fairly clear that Sankey’s family did not accompany him on this last revival season. *The Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* for

30 April 1883, 6, reported, on the return trip to America, “Mrs. Moody and her three children accompany Mr. Moody, and Mrs. Sankey and Mr. Revell, her brother from Chicago, are with Mr. Sankey.” However, the reporter has obviously gotten confused as Revell was the brother of Emma Moody—not Fanny Sankey. Apparently Mrs. Sankey was not on board the ship, but residing in New Castle, PA.

*The New York Times* for 7 May 1883, 8, records a list of passengers on the ship *Alaska* upon returning to New York. While Moody and his family are listed, Ira is the only Sankey recorded as a passenger.

It’s entirely possible to believe Ira and Fanny saw eight months spent across the ocean in a foreign land with no settled home as not being good for their son’s health, which had earlier required some serious intervention during the last revival season.

94. *The Daily News* (New Castle, PA), 25 August 1883, 4.
95. *The New York Times*, 21 May 1883, 12.
96. *The New York Times*, 21 May 1883, 12.
97. And possibly the one who had been ill for so long on their previous trip to Britain.
98. *The Huntington (IN) Democrat*, 7 June 1883, 2.
99. *The Huntington (IN) Democrat*, 7 June 1883, 2. Their stop in St. Louis included the 270-room Lindell Hotel, famous for its barbershop and Turkish baths—all for \$2.50–\$4.50 per night. *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 26 June 1883, 9.
100. *The Chicago Tribune*, 13 August 1883, 8.
101. *The Chicago Tribune*, 13 August 1883, 8.
102. This article—with its more pointed headlines—was still running 10 days after the initial *Chicago Tribune* story of August 13. See also: *Indianapolis Journal*, 18 August 1883, 10; *Wheeling (WV) Daily Intelligencer*, 17 August 1883, 3; *Junction City (KS) Weekly Union*, 18 August 1883, 1; *Boston Globe*, 20 August 1883, 8; *Fall River (MA) Daily Evening News*, 23 August 1883, 1; *The Buffalo (NY) News*, 23 August 1883, 3; *Wyandotte Gazette* (Kansas City), 24 August 1883, 1; *Sun-Journal* (Lewiston, Maine), 25 August 1883, 3; *Richmond Dispatch*, 26 August 1883, 3. A survey of newspapers into September shows the continued popularity of this controversial story.

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