

**Moody and Sankey's Errors
Versus the Scriptures of Truth**

(A Defense of God's Sovereignty in Salvation)

J. K. Popham

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Agape Chapel Ministries
P.O.Box 59084

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(Free List of Free Materials)

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should not hurt the gross of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads"; and Isaiah xxvii. 2, 3, "In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." The Lord will save the afflicted people, but the false prophet, and the fat shepherd, he will feed with judgment. He will prove His own blessed word true, but in so doing he will make it manifest that "A lying tongue is but for a moment." Therefore, "A poor man is better than a liar."

Galvanize:

1 a : to subject to the action of an electric current especially for the purpose of stimulating physiologically <galvanize a muscle> b : to stimulate or excite as if by an electric shock <an issue that would galvanize public opinion>

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Moody and Sankey's Errors Versus the Scriptures of Truth

(A Defense of God's Sovereignty in Salvation)

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(1847-1937)

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Indifference with respect to a movement which, like an impetuous torrent, has rushed through Scotland, and found its way into many parts of England, which has seized the minds of men and awakened their sympathies, which claims to have God for its author, and His glory in the salvation of sinners, for its end, will, perhaps, be considered a sin against the interests of true religion. But opposition to this movement will doubtless be looked upon as rancorous bigotry. Disclaiming the bigotry, I am bound to say I am opposed to the religious movement of which Messrs. Moody and Sankey are the leaders. I am opposed to it because I fail to see what Mr. Moody so confidently asserted at Birmingham—that the present work is God's. Every religious movement must be judged more by its doctrines than by what we usually see paraded—results. The teachings of its leaders must be brought to God's word, and tested by it. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." If these teachings be contrary to the word of truth, then it becomes the imperative duty of all God's people to testify against the errors. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds," "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ or there; believe it not." "Go not after them, nor follow them." 2 Ep. John 10, 11. Gal. i. 8. Matthew xxiv. 23. Luke xvii. 23.

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If God were in this movement, would not the teachings of its leaders be in accordance with the word of truth? But where are the cardinal doctrines of the Bible to be found in their teachings? Are they not either ignored or pushed aside to make way for their *pet* notion of "sudden conversion?"

Where, in all Mr. Moody's preaching, do we find any declaration of the doctrine of eternal election, that decree of the eternal God which secures some men from everlasting woe? And, yet, this is one of the great doctrines of the Bible. Rom. ix. 11, xi. 5, 7. Eph. i. 4, 11. 1 Thess. i. 4. 1 Peter i. 2, and, indeed, throughout the whole of the scriptures it is seen as a clear and beautiful light. But such a doctrine as this, which takes salvation out of the hands of man, and places it in the hands of Omnipotence and of sovereign grace, would not suit these manmade revivals, for, then, Mr. Moody would not have, as at Birmingham, four thousand "converts" to exhibit, "in a conspicuous position, especially set apart for them," at Bingley Hall. Nor could he have made a pedestal of the weakness of *his converts*, and, standing above them in conscious superiority, lugubriously tell them that he could foresee many of them would be tempted to fall away when *he* departed! Pity he could not see it needful and right for him to remain with these helpless "converts" of *his*, to charm the evil spirit who would tempt many of them to fall away when he was no longer near to protect them! Nor could he have entreated these converts "to put themselves down for a dozen," at least, of fresh converts.

If Mr. Moody had received the doctrine of election into his heart in the love of it, he could not, I repeat, have used the above expressions. But, it may be objected, to preach the doctrine of election to such congregations as Messrs. Moody and Sankey preach and sing to, would be altogether out of place—that it might be abused—that it

about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow." Isaiah i. 2.

The parable of the sower is *not* applicable to this religious movement, since Mr. Moody has no good seed to sow. To be sure he reads the word of God, but, then, he endeavours to expound it, and this exposition is nothing less than a fouling of the pure waters of truth. Ez. xxxiv. 19.

Fundamental errors, preached and sang, cannot produce a *true* Christian. It is, moreover, very clear that some believers in this movement have not a high opinion of the religious character of the "convert." For at a breakfast conference at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, they expressed an opinion that it would be better to instruct him, and so change the "mere emotion to life and action," than to continue the revival meetings, to make more converts, after Messrs. Moody and Sankey were gone away.

By the galvanizing apparatus these men are using, they succeed in evoking "mere emotion," and this is called conversion, and these galvanized, but dead souls, are, then, called Christians! O horrible profanity! O shocking caricature of a true Christian, of God's living army! Ez. xxxvii. 10.

Well might the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of Jeremiah, say,—"Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, that cause my people to err by their *lies*, and by their *lightness*; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them, therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord." Jeremiah xxiii. 32. This solemn passage will apply in many cases where there is no suspicion of its application. But as these false prophets cannot profit God's people, so neither shall they forever hurt them, nor cause them to err. See Ez. xxxiv., also Rev. ix. 4. "And it was commanded them that they

It is, however, almost amusing to see how very quietly these "Reverend" gentlemen sit at the feet of this great Revivalist to be lectured, and told to smile more, and then more converts may be made—that a whole family had been brought to Jesus by a smile—that they ought to have courage, for God never used any man to do a great work who had doubts and fears! I wonder if any of their minds reverted to poor, doubting Gideon,—to trembling, tearful, backward Moses—to Elijah, who fled from the face of a woman—to Jeremiah, who said "Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak; for I am a child"—or, to mention no more, to Paul, who said "Without were fightings, within were fears." We can understand the great Dr. Owen's reply to one who had expressed surprise that he should go to hear Bunyan preach—viz., that he would part with his learning for Bunyan's grace. But what has Mr. Moody to give these gentlemen, that they should sit at his feet? Echo answers "What?" But they deserve, most richly, all the humble pie they have to eat in this business. And yet there is a more serious view to be taken or the matter. Does not their support of Moody and Sankey stamp their characters? Does it not prove that, with respect to them, "Truth is fallen in the streets?"

We hear much of results, or the number of converts these "Evangelists" make. It is, therefore, an important question as to what kind of being this sudden convert is.

Without doubt there will be a proportion between the means used and the results obtained. The training will be seen in the scholar. Of old it was "Like priest, like people." So is it now. If the leader be blind, so will be his followers; for, assuredly, none with sight would go after him. And yet the blind leader and his disciples say, "Are we blind also?" And truly they have a light, but it is darkness; and great indeed is the darkness, Matt. vi. 23. To all such the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of Isaiah, says, "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves

would drive the majority of hearers away. I reply, that the Lord Jesus of whose meekness we bear so much, opened his ministry in Nazareth by proclaiming this truth, and could only save His life by a miracle, because of the enmity His preaching stirred up in the minds of His hearers—that he told the Pharisees over and over again that they were not His sheep, that *that* was the cause of their not believing in Him. And shall we censure the lips of truth and wisdom by saying such a doctrine ought not to be preached? "But," one may say again, "the times are so much altered," true, but is the gospel? Are its doctrines less true, less imperative, less profitable? All scripture is profitable for doctrine, then is the doctrine of free, *unconditional* election profitable, for it humbles proud nature, it declares that all men are aliens from God, and that He will dispense His mercy in a sovereign manner, freely, and, *where* and *when* He will. "For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." Rom. ix. 15, 16. But Mr. Moody cannot bear this doctrine, for the glorious blaze of it would put out his sparks and leave him in darkness.

But I must remember that I am writing a tract and a protestation.

My second point and ground of objection to this movement is, that *the mighty and invincible work of the Holy Ghost in a sinner's heart is practically denied*. I know there is no verbal denial of His work. But the sovereignty, the invincibility of it, are, I maintain, practically denied. This work is variously described in the scripture, but in each description the two glorious qualities I have mentioned are clearly seen. His work in the heart is compared to the blowing of the wind, and that "*where it listeth*," to a gift, "A new heart also will I give

you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh, And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." John iii. 8, Ez. xxxvi. 26, 27. See also Ez. xxxvii. 1, 14. We see what the scripture teaches on this solemn point, now let us look at the teaching of Mr. Moody.

Taking for his text John iii. 3, Mr. Moody remarked that "Regeneration was coming to Christ as a poor, lost, ruined sinner, and taking life from Him." What is this! a dead soul *walking* to Christ for life! The *act* and *motion* of life the cause of that life! No mention of the eternal and ever blessed Spirit's gracious work on the soul, no; but the dead sinner's ceasing from certain specified work, and commencing another, or rather others, "coming and taking." Regeneration, then, is a dead soul, performing the most active functions of life! Truly this is strange blindness. Had this teacher ever been under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, whose divine person and work he ignored, while preaching a subject which especially sets forth that person and that work, he would have known that in regeneration the soul is passive. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." James i. 18. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man but of God." John i. 13 "As men contribute nothing to their first birth, so neither to the second; as no man generates himself, so neither can he regenerate himself, as an infant is passive in its natural generation, and has no concern in it; so passive is a man in his spiritual generation, and is no more assisting in it. It is a maxim that will hold good, *nil dat quod non habet* nothing can give that which it has not." [Dr. Gill] This is the teaching at the scripture, but the teaching of this "Evangelist" is totally different. According to Mr. Moody there is no need of the astonishing grace and power

breathe life into the soul. "The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." John v. 25. Neither does He come to a living, burdened, guilty, ready-to-perish soul, to offer pardon, but to pardon actually, and remove the guilt. And when He comes to one who is in prison, in his feelings, and who fears the pit will shut her mouth upon him, it is not to offer liberty, but give it: for He is sent to "proclaim liberty to the captives, and the *opening* of the prison to them that are bound." But a gospel so sovereign in every branch of it, so mighty in its application—leaving man nothing to boast of—is hated by those who have not been under the humbling, but saving teaching of the Holy Spirit.

Assuming that it is the will of God that every creature should be saved, which is not true, men have made the conversion of sinners an art, and have resorted to all sorts of unscriptural methods to compass their end. "Sadly forgetful" of Him who said "I kill, and I make alive," they are "madly bold" in their efforts to wrest God's special work out of His hands. We have the new doctrine of Regeneration by faith, singing theology, sudden conversions, the enquiry room, and sensational advertisements, such as—"February for Jesus, Liverpool for Jesus, body and soul for Jesus, &c." And when these new appliances have completed the task allotted them, we have an exhibition of the work done!

One of the sad features of this movement is that it is approved, and followed by so many ministers. Oh, where is the deep experimental religion of our Puritan Fathers and ministers, and where their profound knowledge and ardent love of the scriptures, which would not permit them to show to pass unchallenged, and with impunity, such gigantic errors, which strike at the glory of God, and the root of true religion!

shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord." Ez. xvi. 16, 63.

"Just believe this, and go home, and sing and dance," say those who are wise above what is written.

Reader, which is the good and right way? The Lord give thee understanding.

It is truly awful to see the dishonour done to Christ by the preaching and singing of these "Evangelists." Where are the scripture evidences that Christ is knocking, and "has knocked many times already," at the heart of every person to whom Messrs. Moody and Sankey may speak or sing? If He desires to dwell in this or that particular heart, what shall hinder? Mr. Moody is singularly unfortunate in his illustrations, or rather they are remarkably unscriptural. He tells us, "A woman in Glasgow got into difficulties. Her rent was due, but she had no money for the landlord. A Christian man hearing of her trouble went to her house with the kind intention of helping her. He knocked at her door, but in vain; there was no door opened. He had to return without completing his mission. Learning afterwards who it was that knocked at her door she exclaimed, "Why, I thought it was the landlord, and I was afraid to open the door!" Then follows the application, concluding with the remark, "And, now, He comes! Bringing the gift of salvation to the door of your hearts. Will you receive the gift?" Here is the unfitness of the application, the poor woman did not know the knock of the gentleman who went with help; but Christ says "My sheep hear my voice," and it is indeed a mighty and sweet voice. John x. 27, see also Psalm xxix, 4. Here is the untruthfulness of it,—that Christ will go away from any heart to which He approaches. If He comes, it is with a fixed purpose, and He will not repent of that, it is *indeed* with a gift, and that He will not repent of. Num. xxiii, 19. Rom. xi, 29. Besides, if He comes to a dead sinner it is not to ask him to open his heart, but to

promised in Ez. xxxvii. 12, 13, for all that is required to regenerate is within the dead sinner's power—it is ceasing from one work and commencing another! Dr. Kennedy, in his very able tract, "Hyper-evangelism, another gospel, though a mighty power," written against this same movement in Scotland, says on page 16, "After some strong sayings about the necessity of regeneration, in one of the leader's addresses, the question was put, "How is this change to be attained?" And the speaker answered the question by saying, "You believe, and then you are regenerated," and in confirmation he referred to John i. 12, forgetting the verse which follows. Ah! But would not the recollection of that most important verse have been fatal to this anti-scriptural theory of "regeneration by faith?" for it takes conversion out of the meddling hands of man, and exposes the hollowness of the question "Now, who will take the gift this night?" and thus be regenerated!

In the next place I find Mr. Moody's teachings respecting sin are lamentably defective. To be sure he speaks of sin, and tells his hearers that they must "come to Christ as poor, lost, ruined sinners." But this is nullified by what is said about sin elsewhere. "My wife," he said at one meeting, "has a little boy, who, on one occasion, got possession of a pair of scissors. His sister tried to get them from him, but failed. She then got an orange, which she held before the little fellow, he dropped the scissors for the orange; he got something better. And so it is with the gospel. You give up your sins, and in Christ you find that which is infinitely better."

An illustration should bear some proportion of truth and fitness to the thing to be illustrated. It is not so in this ease. Sin is not spoken of, in the Bible, as something extraneous, belonging to an entirely different substance from the sinner. It is plainly declared to be a component part of his nature. "The carnal mind is enmity against

God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. viii. 7. "The old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." Eph. iv. 22. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Ephesians ii. 1. "But I am carnal, sold under sin." Rom. vii. 14. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jer. xvii. 9. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Ps. li. 5.

If Mr. Moody had felt the guilt and power of sin in his own conscience, and known what an evil thing and bitter it is to sin against God, he could not talk so lightly of it.

Speaking of the Revivalists when in Scotland, and their teachings, Dr. Kennedy says—"A vague, brief sense of danger is all that is required at the outset; and converts are taught that, once they have believed, they are not to remember and mourn for their sins." "Why raise up your sins again to think of and to confess them?" their leading teacher said to them; "for were they not disposed of nearly two thousand years ago? Just believe this, and go home, and sing, and dance." But if the Lord makes a sinner possess the iniquities of his youth, and sets his secret sins in the light of His countenance, (Job viii. 26, Psalm xc. 8) by the application of the law to his conscience, he is under no necessity at raising them up, and he finds it is impossible for him to dispose of the burden of them in the way prescribed. Think of and confess them he does, and cries to the Lord in the language of the Psalmist, "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities." The teaching of the Holy Ghost cuts down all that presumption, "Go home, and sing, and dance." A view of God as a holy, sin-hating God, in the law, makes the sinners' comeliness turn into corruption within, him, "When the commandment came sin revived, and I died." Rom. vii. 9. His mouth is stopped, and he is brought in guilty before God. Clouds

of guilt, and the terrors of the Lord rolling over his soul, make him exclaim, "I am undone." Looming in the distance is the judgment seat, clothed with the terrible majesty, glory, power, and immutability of God in the threatening of the broken law. What now can he do! God against him, the throne prepared for judgment, can he lightly, or presumptuously say "Christ died for me," and "go home, and sing, and dance?" No. Sin is an evil thing, and bitter to him, —wormwood and gall—and he craves and waits for the inward witness of the Holy Ghost: and finds in due time, the truth of God's word, "They shall not be ashamed that wait for me," Isaiah xlix. 23. It is not true that a person can give up his sins, and take Christ, as the child the scissors. Can he drop his carnal mind? "Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led." "Hurried with violent impressions from the devil, into the service of idols." [Dr. Owen's paraphrase] Therefore, "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

It is a mournful thing that any person should profess to be a teacher of religion who manifests the grossest, the most entire ignorance of the very rudiments of Christianity. And still more and that thousands should have to listen to such a teacher. But they love to have it so. The one comes with a cry of "Peace," the others say "Prophecy smooth things." But, without doubt, God is greatly dishonoured by such teaching, and He will say to all false teachers "Who hath required this at your hands?" How can the Redeemer be valued if there is no apprehension of and sorrow for sin?

"Only acknowledge thine iniquities," saith the Lord.

"No," say these Revivalists, "do not raise up your sins to confess them, for were they not disposed of two thousand years ago?"

"That thou mayst remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy