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**MOODY'S HOME LIFE AND HIS DEATH**  
**By Henry Davenport Northrop**

A digital publication taken from:  
Life and Labors of Dwight L. Moody  
By Henry Davenport Northrop

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The following interesting letter is from Dr. N. P. Wood, of Northfield, Mr. Moody's family physician. This letter and the graphic account of Mr. Moody's home life appear exclusively in Rev. Dr. Northrop's "Life of Moody."

Office Of  
N. P. Wood, M.D.,  
127 Main St.  
Northfield, Mass.,  
Jan. 20th, 1900

"Dear Sir:

"With regard to a photograph of Mr. Moody, you have the one to which I referred, viz.: the one where he is sitting in an open wagon holding the reins. The conversation to which I referred was as follows: About two hours before Mr. Moody's death, after some conversation with various members of his own family, he turned to me and said, 'Dr. Wood, I have always been an ambitious man; not ambitious to leave my children a lot of money, but ambitious to leave them plenty of work to do. Now, I want to make my will.' (Here he made a short pause.) 'I will the care of Hermon School to Will' (his elder son). 'I will the care of the Chicago Institute to

Percy' (his son-in-law), 'and I will the care of the Seminary to Paul' (his younger son) 'and George' (his favorite brother). 'And I want Ambert to be their business agent.' Ambert is his brother George's son, who has acted as general agent for Mr. Moody for several years in regard to the schools in Northfield.

"The article which I enclose gives glimpses of Mr. Moody's home-life in Northfield. The conversation that I have recorded is almost exactly verbatim."

The old proverb, "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country," cannot be said of D. L. Moody, for surely no person could be more sincerely loved and honored by his townsmen than was he. Expressions of sorrow are heard from all classes of people in the town, and could each tribute be represented by a blossom on his grave it would be piled high with flowers. His townsmen have been proud of him as a citizen, as a man, and as a religious worker. Although not all of them have endorsed his religious belief, they have thoroughly believed in his honesty of purpose and sincerity, and are convinced that the results of his life-work will be lasting and of inestimable value to future generations.

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#### Great Improvements At Northfield

They know that Northfield has been changed from a quiet farming town, with corresponding advantages, to a thrifty village, with a steady growth, and that there and at Mount Hermon have been established two of the best preparatory schools in the State, all through the energy and perseverance of this man. Every effort has been made by him to bring these schools within the reach of the boys and girls of the town, and many an ambitious father and mother have been able to educate their children through his efforts.

A few months before his death he was told of a woman who was supporting her family taking in washing, and that her daughter was ready for the Seminary; but she almost despaired of her ability to send her there. Mr. Moody instantly replied: "Tell the principal to put her on the free list and place her in the building; the town girls must be helped first." This is only one instance of many similar ones. Under certain provisions, a few years ago, he offered every Northfield boy free tuition for the first year at Mount Hermon, and several boys availed themselves of this opportunity each year afterward.

He was instantly alert and ready with money and work to forward any plans being made to benefit the town. At the time the village Improvement Society was formed, he subscribed \$100 for work to improve the street, knowing that it would be expended in a part of the village remote from the school or his residence. Every year after its formation he gave generously of money, also offered valuable advice and wise suggestions. When the kindergarten was started in the town a piano was much needed for the work. Mr. Moody knowing of this, gave the school one if the committee would move it and have it tuned.

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## Seminary Hill In June Splendor

He was very proud of the magnificent trees of the village and nothing irritated him more than any attempt to injure them. One day observing a tree in the yard of a friend which had been seriously injured by a horse being tied to it, he said to the woman, "Tell your husband he would be justified in knocking the man down who should deliberately injure so beautiful a tree." He caused to be set a large number of trees and shrubs about his place and on the Seminary grounds. It must have been very gratifying for him to see Seminary Hill in all its June splendor, knowing that in his childhood it was considered one of the most barren places in town, one old man having told the writer that "that side hill wouldn't bear white beans." He was a kind neighbor, sickness and trouble finding him ready with sympathy and material help. Delicacies of his garden and fruit orchard found their way into many a humble home. He encouraged his wife and daughter to interest themselves in helping the sick and needy in all parts of the town.

He was very fond of children, and the grandchildren in his home found an advocate and friend. When boasting one day that the grandchildren always gave him instant obedience, a member of the family asked him the secret of his power, and he laughingly replied, "I am very careful never to ask them to do a thing which I am not sure they want to do." This tells in part the secret of his great power over men; he studied them and was very careful not to ask a favor until he was reasonably sure of their willingness to comply with it.

He was well versed in the maxim "that a man can be led, but not driven." During the autumn, when fruit, was abundant, the Seminary girls were given free access to the orchard and grapery of his private grounds to eat, and carry baskets full to their rooms. One fall he gave all the surplus fruit on his and the Seminary farm, and solicited from the farmers apples to the extent of several hundred bushels, which were distributed among the poor in Boston.

He was full of fun and nothing suited him better than a good story. He had a strong aversion to committees. A few months before his death an organization was being effected in the Town Hall and a motion was made to appoint certain committees. Mr. Moody rose and said: "We don't want committees; when you want anything done tell Mr. So and So to do it and you will accomplish something. One is enough to constitute any committee. If there had been a committee appointed, Noah's Ark would never have been built."

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## No Cut And Dried Program

When the summer conferences were in session, a committee was never known to make a program. One evening in the summer of 1899, after devotionals, he rose and said: "I want fifty cents from every person present; now don't look so glum, for I want to buy Tribunes to send to ministers. Dr. Shaw's magnificent address must be placed in as many pastors' hands as possible. Tomorrow morning Dr. Wilton Merle Smith will speak. He hasn't heard of it before, but this is a fairly good notice. In the afternoon Rev. Mr. Toffy will speak on 'Prayer.'" When asked for material for a sketch of his life he said: "I was born of the flesh in 1837. I was born of the Spirit

in 1856. That which is born of the flesh may die. That which is born of the Spirit will live forever."

Mr. Moody had the friendliest feeling toward the other churches and it is said that at the time the Catholic church was burned he contributed toward the rebuilding. Students from the Unitarian and Catholic churches have graduated from the schools without being disturbed in their religious faith.

During one of the first conferences held in Northfield, a minister was asked to speak who never had been there before. Knowing that a Unitarian church was in the place, this man spoke at some length in criticism of that denomination. After the meeting was over a friend of Mr. Moody found him by himself in a very despondent frame of mind. Asking him what was the matter, Mr. Moody said: "I have tried to make my meetings attractive to the Unitarians so that they would come, not that I wish to proselytize, but I like to have them in my meetings. This man has kicked it all over by what he has said this morning; there are Unitarians here this morning who will tell this through the town and they won't come here again."

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#### Use Of Means Must Go With Faith

Mr. Moody offered a gratifying contrast to many of his cloth, especially revivalists, in his appreciation of regular medicine and antipathy for quacks. In speaking of a prominent Christian scientist, he praised medicine as the noblest of professions after that of the ministry. "Never yet," he said, "in all my years of work have I called upon an able doctor, telling him of the sickness and need of some poor and friendless person, that he did not at once go to the rescue, without money and without price." "These are the men," he continued, "who are called devils by the faith healers." "God heals," he said, "through doctors and medicine. What do I do when I fall sick? Get the best doctor to be found, trust in him and trust in the Lord to work through him." This brief sketch of some characteristics of Mr. Moody as a citizen of Northfield, may indicate that this man of great works who could move multitudes, could also be interested in the welfare and prosperity of his native town.

It is often said that great men shrink and grow smaller the nearer we get to them. The very opposite can be said of Mr. Moody. The people of Northfield where he was known from boyhood had the highest appreciation of his sincerity, his public spirit and great ability. The town was simply transformed under the magic power of his touch.

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THE END