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Editor's Introduction

Welcome to the latest issue of YPS. In this issue we are addressing two main issues – 'Dealing with doubts' and 'Using the word of God, the Bible, to guide you in life'. These issues are related and really important as we live our lives as believers. In addition to this, I have included a rather unusual article in this issue. Many of you will have gone away on holiday over the summer months. What did you do? Where did you go? Was your time well used? One famous Christian from a bygone era, D. L. Moody, visited the UK a number of times to preach the gospel. He also came on holiday. This interesting article explores how Mr. Moody spent his time even when he was on holiday. You might not choose to spend your holidays in the same way but the account brings a challenge as we consider how this man 'redeemed the time' and bought up every opportunity to serve God.

We hope that you will find this issue of YPS profitable and challenging. Our next issue will bring you some more 'Adventures in Acts' and 'Thoughts about thinking'.

Happy reading.

Stephen Baker

'Some men's prayers need to be cut short at both ends and set on fire in the middle'

D. L. Moody

'It is easier for me to have faith in the Bible than to have faith in D.L. Moody, for Moody has fooled me lots of times'

D. L. Moody



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STANDING ON OUR OWN TWO FEET:

Dealing with doubts

BY ANDREW ROBERTSON CHATHAM, ONTARIO, CANADA

'And having your shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace', Eph. 6. 15 NKJV.

It's a ridiculous game, and Canadians want credit for inventing it. The game is called 'broomball', and it is played with a 'stick' that resembles a broom and a ball that is supposed to go in the opponent's net. But here's the catch – the game is played on ice. Not with skates or cleats, but with shoes. As you can expect, the game is filled with the chaos of not being able to stop: collisions, sprawling, flailing and the constant need to find your feet. Broomball is a game designed around the idea of not having a firm footing.

But that's not the only ice sport that Canadians play, of course. We love hockey. We don't often mix shoes and ice. We wear skates. Sharp skates with an edge. Many Canadian kids learn to skate at a very young age. Balance is so important. The sharper the skates, the less chance of slipping and crashing to the ice. It's crucial when trophies are on the line and your teammates are counting on you to stay on your own two feet!

Roman soldiers were not into ice hockey or broomball, but they understood the need for good footwear. Sure, the feet are not vital organs. You won't die if you lose a foot. But in hand-to-hand combat, losing your balance leaves your enemy standing over you. Roman soldiers didn't get to decide what kind of turf they were going to fight on. They needed shoes that could hold their feet firm anywhere anytime. They wore special military grade footwear with sharp spikes in the bottom to keep them steady on anything.

Paul had this in mind as he wrote about the Christian's 'shoes'. He said that our feet needed to be fitted with '*the preparation of the gospel of peace*'. The key to understanding this phrase is the term 'preparation' or 'readiness'. The Greek word that Paul used was also used in the Greek

translation of the Old Testament. It was used to communicate the idea of a 'base', or 'foundation'. Paul is telling us that our thinking needs a solid foundation so we will not slip in spiritual combat with the enemy.

If we follow Paul's train of thought, he has already told us that truth must be our core strength and righteousness must protect our deepest feelings of shame and guilt. But the enemy is relentless. It is possible for us to be in line with reality and know our righteous standing in Christ, and yet to be off-balance with nagging doubts.

Yes, that's how Satan is coming at us now – with the seeds of doubt and 'what-ifs'. He doesn't need us to accept his lies. He doesn't need us to deny the truth or give in to our changing feelings. He just needs to plant a bit of uncertainty in our hearts, and we are thrown off-balance. Unchecked doubt opens us up to consider the devil's alternatives.

He planted the seed in Eve's mind with his first words to her – 'did God actually say?' He is still planting the seeds today. The seeds of doubt come in many shapes and sizes. We may doubt our status as Christians, or God's pleasure in us, or His goodness toward us. We may doubt whether God will come through for us when we surrender to Him. Yet all of these seeds somehow undermine God's character and word. Nagging doubts can be terrifying. They do not need proof in order to exist. Doubts don't have to explain themselves or prove their case – they merely have to ask the questions of our greatest fears over and over again.

Paul tells us that the only answer to our 'what-ifs' is the 'Gospel of Peace'. This is where we can stand with confidence. Jesus Christ has died and risen again to make peace between us and God. And

this means far more than God no longer coming after us in judgement. The gospel of peace says that God is now 'for' us (not just 'not against' us) because we are found in Christ. Paul digs into this reality in Romans and finally concludes that because 'God is for us, who can be against us?' Rom. 8. 31. He reminds us that this God who cannot fail in His plan, cannot fail us because of the sacrifice of Jesus. We can count on the fact that He is working 'all things together for good' in our lives and 'nothing can separate us from the love of God'.

If you are struggling with doubts, you are not alone. It is perfectly normal in the battle of faith to face relentless misgivings. Acknowledge your doubts and admit them to God. Take them seriously and confront them. Talk to other Christians about them. But most importantly, only Jesus Christ can be your sure foundation. He will never let you slip. Keep your eyes fixed on Him.

Wilbur Chapman was a well-known evangelist at the turn of the 20th century. At one point, he was struggling with severe doubts and went to speak with D. L. Moody about them. While Moody continued to point to John chapter 5 verse 24 and ask Chapman whether he believed it or not, Chapman continued to struggle. Finally, Moody asked him, 'whom are you doubting?' Instantly it became very personal to Chapman as his eyes were now fixed on Christ. He may have had doubts about himself, his conversion, and even Bible verses, but how could he doubt the One who died for him?



MR. MOODY'S Welsh holiday

BY HOWARD A. BARNES

Introduction

Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey, along with their families, arrived from New York at the port of Liverpool, UK on June 17th 1873. Although they were both equally good preachers, Moody was tone deaf, but Sankey had a fine baritone voice and a very dramatic way of singing gospel hymns. They didn't know anyone, and virtually no one knew them. Moody had the names of three men who, on a previous visit, had encouraged him to come back to the UK for gospel meetings. However, he found that two of them had now died and the third couldn't remember asking him! However, Moody and Sankey pressed on.

Two years later, on 4th August 1875, they left Liverpool on the steamship *Spain* to return to the USA. During that short time, the thirty-eight year-old Moody had become the most well-known preacher in the English-speaking world, and Sankey had sold millions of his gospel song book, *Sacred Songs and Solos* (about 50 million copies were sold by 1900, and by today about 100 million copies, with the number of hymns increasing from 23 hymns in 1873, to 750 by 1900, and the well-known figure of 1200 by 1903). The measure of their achievement was that in the four months previous to this, Moody was preaching in various venues around London and over 2.5 million people had attended the 285 meetings! This spiritual awakening became world news and it was estimated that 5,000 had come to Christ during that time.

Liverpool, February 1874

After his earlier arrival in Liverpool in 1873, it would be another 19 months before Moody arrived back in Liverpool to conduct a gospel mission. This came at the invitation of a group of businessmen led by Alexander Balfour (1824–1886), the

Scottish-born merchant and founder of the Liverpool shipping company Balfour Williamson. Preaching commenced on Sunday, 7th February, 1875, and went on for about a month in a large purpose-built wooden building called Victoria Hall (where the Victoria Street Car Park is now located). Moody himself stayed at the Compton Hotel in Church Street (the present location of Marks and Spencer). Often during those weeks, over 10,000 people crowded into the hall. The Rev. (later Canon) W. H. M. Hay-Aitken (1841–1927), a vicar in the city, helped Moody with the preaching. (Moody later encouraged him to become a full-time evangelist, which he did, and it is said that he then saw 100,000 people saved in 1000 gospel campaigns.)

The Welsh holiday

When Moody had finished his strenuous London meetings, Alexander Balfour offered him a well-deserved fortnight's holiday in north Wales (near Liverpool) before he sailed home to the USA. Balfour had a country mansion called Mount Alyn in Rossett, near Wrexham in north Wales, from where he commuted by train to his Liverpool business. (Few biographical accounts of Moody mention this holiday, and, when they do, there is either no real detail or they are incorrect, i.e., even Moody's son's biography of him says that the Balfour mansion was in Bala. However, ample details can be gleaned from contemporary Welsh newspapers, available online at <http://newspapers.library.wales>.)

The great disappointment of many Welsh people in missing out on having Moody preaching in their own locality was summed up in one contemporary news report which said, 'Wales had often been visited with great revivals, but in the present day,



Bala, July 27th 1875

Wales was an exception to the general religious excitement', *Flintshire Observer* 6th August 1875. In fact, during the Liverpool mission the previous February, many people had travelled from north Wales to support Moody and Sankey's meetings. Press reports indicated that people had come from many towns and villages, even from as far away as the island of Anglesey. The theological students at Bala's Calvinistic Methodist College in mid-wales had travelled to Liverpool *en masse* on one free Monday to hear Moody. Perhaps because of this general interest, even though he was on holiday, when Moody was showered with requests for him to preach in various places in north Wales, he felt obliged to agree to two venues, i.e., Bala and Wrexham. The latter was agreed to on his second Monday, 26th July, in Rossett, early in the morning before he set off on a sightseeing tour, when prominent Christians from the nearby town of Wrexham requested him to preach there. The following Sunday evening was finally agreed upon.

The Bala instance arose during the tour of North Wales which began on the Monday morning, along with the above-mentioned Balfour and Hay-Aitkin. They set off by train in an open carriage, and got off at Llangollen to visit various local landmarks. That night they arrived at Bala on the last train from Llangollen, just before 9 p.m., and stayed overnight at the White Lion Hotel in the town. At the hotel a number of prominent local Christians urged him to speak in the town before he moved on, and by 11 p.m. he had agreed. So, that night between 11 p.m. and 12 midnight, the town crier was dispatched to go around Bala ringing his bell and announcing that the famous American evangelist D. L. Moody would be preaching the following morning at 9 o'clock! People were very surprised; some thinking it was a hoax!

It should be pointed out that Bala was a very special place in terms of revivalist preachers such as Moody, for it was here that Thomas Charles (1755–1814) – who has been called 'one of the makers of modern Wales' – was based for many years. Previously, when the pioneer Methodist evangelist, Howel Harris, had visited Bala during a preaching tour in 1741, he was almost killed by a mob. However, a half-century later, in 1791, the town of Bala was in the grips of an extremely powerful spiritual awakening. Thomas Charles wrote of one Sunday night in October 1791, 'Towards the close of the evening service, the Spirit of God seemed to work in a very powerful manner on the minds of great numbers present, who never appeared before to seek the Lord's face . . . About nine or ten o'clock at night, there was nothing to be heard from one end of the town to the other, but the cries and groans of people in distress of soul'. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, north Wales had become a stronghold of Calvinistic Methodism, and Bala had become its Jerusalem! One prominent authority on the history of Welsh revivals has claimed that the years between 1785 and 1815 were the most successful period ever for the gospel in Wales. It was this same Thomas Charles that 15-year-old Mary Jones visited in 1800 looking for a Welsh Bible to buy, having walked over 25 miles barefooted to get to the town!

The next morning at seven o'clock a prayer meeting was held at the Calvinistic Methodist Chapel in Tegid Street, and it was well attended, despite the short notice. A marble statue of Thomas Charles had been unveiled just a month before in the square outside the chapel by his granddaughter, Mrs. Jane Edwards, who was born in the very year that Thomas Charles died, 1814, and Moody would have seen the gleaming new statue as he entered the chapel. By 9 a.m., the large chapel was full, and Mr. Moody delivered his message for three-quarters of an hour based on 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verses 1-6. As someone present commented, it was extremely powerful, more so than when they heard the same message once before in England!

From Bala the holiday party then journeyed through the hills to the slate-mining town of Ffestiniog, travelling in an open horse-drawn carriage – the railway connection would not be built for another two years or so. At Ffestiniog they stayed overnight at the Pengwern Arms Hotel, then moved on to Tanybwllch, Betws-y-Coed, Llanberis, Caernarfon, Bangor, Conwy, and thence back to Rossett, via Chester. These latter towns were well served by railways.

Wrexham, Sunday August 1st 1875

The following Sunday evening a great crowd gathered at the Wrexham Beast Market. This was a large open space on the east side of the town used for the weekly Monday cattle market (it is now a large car park opposite Tesco's in St. George's Crescent). News had spread rapidly during the previous week, and people came from all around for the six o'clock meeting. With very few exceptions, all the places of worship in the district had cancelled their meetings to enable their congregations to attend the service. A newspaper reported that 'During the whole of the afternoon, springcarts, most of them containing a dozen occupants, continued to pour into the town from the districts round and the approaches to the market were thronged by people for a couple of hours before the time fixed for the commencement of the meeting'. 'By six o'clock the Beast Market was one sea of heads, and it was computed that from 25,000 to 30,000 people were present, packed for

the most part like herrings in a barrel'. The *Wrexham Guardian*, August 7th noted that 'Since the days of Whitfield and Wesley, such a monster congregation has probably never been known in a town of the size of Wrexham as that which assembled in the Beast Market on Sunday evening to hear the celebrated American evangelist'.

A few minutes after six Mr. Moody arrived and preached on Zacchaeus, his text being 'For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost', Luke 19. 10. A newspaper report said, 'He commenced by addressing the crowd in stentorian [i.e., powerful] tones, and it was evident that he was putting forth great efforts to endeavour to make himself heard to the extreme limits of the immense gathering. He proceeded in his well-known style, interspersing his remarks with the anecdotes and illustrations which serve so much to render what he says attractive'. Another report quoted him as saying that Zacchaeus' conversion 'must have taken place between the branch of the tree where he was sitting and the ground to which he descended, when Jesus called upon him to come down'. It then says that: 'After Mr. Moody had preached for a quarter of an hour his voice failed him, and he became quite hoarse and found that he could not make the immense mass of people hear, even though a sounding board will be placed above him. This was evident from the number who were walking about at the outskirts of the meeting and going away, he resolved to give up the task, and, abruptly closing his discourse, he engaged in prayer'. Another reporter suggested that 'The difficulty in Mr. Moody making himself heard was probably owing to the state of the atmosphere. There was not a breath of wind, the clouds hung lazily overhead, with the sun shining out brilliantly, now and then in his face. The heat was most oppressive, and caused several persons who were in the crowd to faint'. Mr. Moody suggested that they move to the nearby Feathers Field where he thought he might be heard better, and, standing on a table at the top of a slope in the field, he found his voice again and preached to a smaller crowd 'with much fervour for some three-quarters of an hour'. He asked and answered the question, 'What must I do to be saved?' Acts 16. 30, and his words 'were carried home with . . . power.'

Rossett 2nd August 1875

Moody's last engagement in north Wales was on Monday, 2nd August at Rossett, where he laid a foundation stone for a new Presbyterian Church in Station Road, of which Mr. Balfour was a promoter. 'Next day . . . the pretty little village of Rossett, about five miles north of Wrexham, was invaded by a multitude of people such as, I suppose, it was never witnessed before, and probably never will again. Mr. Moody was advertised to lay the foundation-stone of a new chapel . . . at 3.45 p.m., and afterwards to give a gospel address at 4.30 in the park surrounding Mr. Balfour's residence at Mount Alyn. Early in the day the people began to converge on the spot where the ceremony was to be performed, coming from all points of the compass, and by all sorts of conveyance. The day was dry and warm; the roads were very dusty. A crowd clustered around the intended site of the chapel, and some hymns were given out, but being on the edge of a narrow roadway, only a small proportion of the assembled concourse could get near'.

'The ceremony being over, Mr. Moody and the friends who accompanied him drove to Mr. Balfour's fine and extensive park, followed by a multitude of people, which, when completely assembled, must have numbered some 15,000. Here, standing in the carriage, Mr. Moody once more proclaimed the glad tidings of salvation from the story of Nicodemus and his conversation with Christ on the new birth, John 3. 3. Mr. Moody was listened to with the most devout attention'.

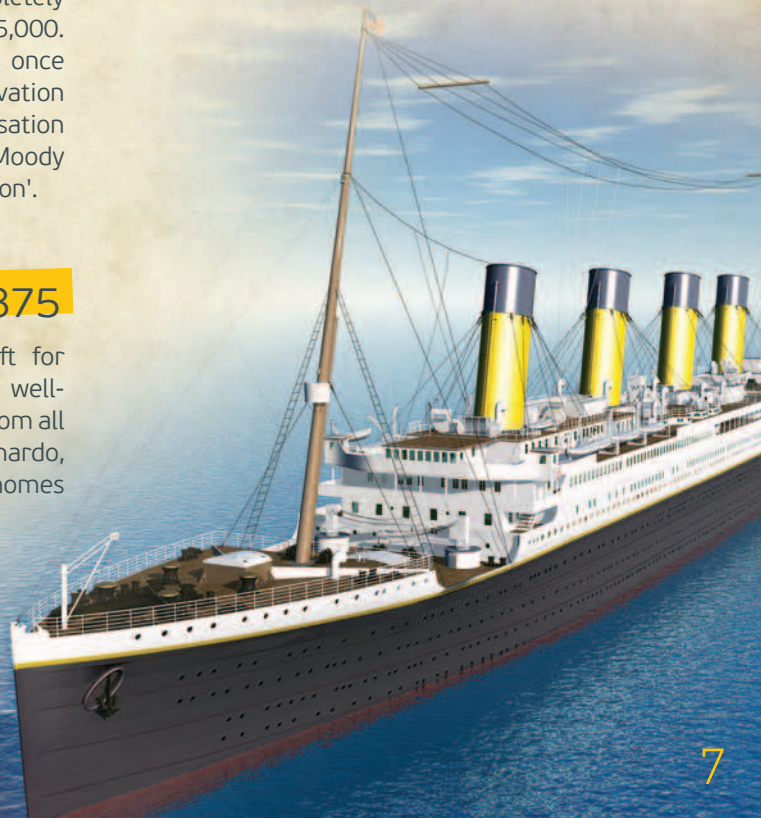
Liverpool farewell, Wednesday August 4th, 1875

The Balfour and Moody families then left for Liverpool, where there were a series of well-attended farewell meetings, with speakers from all over the UK, including the well-known Dr. Barnardo, the founder and director of the Barnardo's homes for poor children. Then, on Wednesday, 4th August, Mr. Moody, his wife Emma and their family, accompanied by a large number of friends, drove to the Prince's landing-stage. Mr. Sankey

joined them, following his return from Switzerland, and a special steam tender delivered them all to the *Spain*, a full-sailed steamship operated by the National Steamship Company. Ten days later, after calling at Queenstown in southern Ireland, the *Spain* docked in New York with its 700 or so passengers (most of whom were emigrating to the USA). It would be another five years before Moody and Sankey set foot again in Wales (Swansea, Cardiff and Newport, September 1882). In all, during his lifetime, Moody would personally preach to about 100 million people without the aid of radio, television or the internet in doing so!

I SPY: try finding the following

- (1) The 1905 statue of Alexander Balfour in St. John's Gardens, Liverpool;
- (2) The statue of Thomas Charles in Tegid Street Bala;
- (3) The foundation stone laid by D. L. Moody on the front of the Presbyterian Church, Station Road, Rossett; and
- (4) The historic 1898 recording on YouTube of Ira Sankey himself singing.



THE BIBLE:

Light for guidance

BY ALAN AFFLECK LOSSIEMOUTH, SCOTLAND



As a younger christian I, like many others, found myself with a great deal of major life decisions to make. I was keen to follow the will of God but felt at times that what God wanted me to do was unclear. I looked at how God spoke to people in the Old Testament, how He appeared to Abraham, how He spoke to Moses from the burning bush, even how He used Balaam's donkey to speak to him. I wished that God would be as clear when speaking to me as He was when speaking to them.

Of course, I had forgotten about God speaking to Daniel through his reading of the book of Jeremiah, Dan. 9. 2, and the many times that Jesus Christ and the disciples quoted the Old Testament when declaring the mind of God to their audience. The psalmist wrote, 'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path', Ps. 119. 105 NKJV.

A Light to my Path

Through the Bible, God gives us guidance regarding key decisions in life. Initially, this was with regard to our salvation, where we discovered how we could renew our relationship with him. The Bible also tells us that once we are saved we should be baptized. It is a clear instruction; it cannot be interpreted any other way. For many other life decisions the Bible may be less specific, as it does not name particular people or places of employment. However, God can still guide.

As we are given teaching regarding church order, we can draw conclusions about what church God would have us attend. A particular church may be lively or have many young people attending, but if it is not conducted in accordance with the Bible then we would not expect it to be God's will for us to attend such a place.

Regarding relationships, God states in the Bible we should not be unequally yoked with an unbeliever, 2 Cor. 6. 14. If a Christian is considering a relationship which is forbidden in scripture, how can they say that they want to know what God thinks about the relationship

when it has already been so clearly expressed.

In respect of career choices, the Lord Jesus tells us to seek first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you, Matt. 6. 33. The conclusion we can draw from this is that my career should not place so many demands on my time and energy so as to leave little time for God. Therefore, if someone is in the fortunate position of being able to choose between more than one employment opportunity such verses may be helpful.

A Lamp for my Feet

The Bible not only offers guidance on major life decisions, there is also help for the steps I am taking right now, the day-to-day decisions I make. It advises husbands how they should behave with their wives and wives with their husbands. It advises children on their relationship with their parents and parents with their children. It instructs me how I should act as an employer and how I should act as an employee.

God can and does guide us in many ways, including the circumstances of life or advice from other believers. However, His primary mode of communication is through His word, and anything else that appears to be the will of God must be measured against this. A feeling or an experience may be the prompting of the Spirit, but it cannot be so if it is contrary to the Bible. A well-intentioned believer may give advice on a matter, or I may simply apply my own logic to a situation, but if the view expressed is not in harmony with the Bible it must be rejected.

Of course, we also must be careful not to interpret the Bible in such a way so it backs up what we want to do. If we truly want to be guided by God then we will approach our scripture reading prayerfully and may discuss our choices with mature Christians to ensure we have considered all relevant passages. Having, therefore, trusted God with our decisions, we can be confident that He will direct our path, Prov. 3. 5-6.