



My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns

Ira D Sankey

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THIS SCHMUL PUBLISHING CO. EDITION IS NOT A SCANNED FACSIMILE OF A USED BOOK. It has been carefully typeset and proofread for accuracy and for easier reading by today's readers. Consequently there are no odd characters or missing text. The evangelistic team of Dwight L. Moody and the Methodist Church's Ira Sankey provided the prototype model for twentieth-century mass evangelism. Early on, Moody recognized the value of working with a song evangelist, setting the emotional and spiritual tone for the sermon. He called it "singing the gospel," comparing it to "preaching the gospel." In "My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns" Sankey describes how he had hardly arrived in 1871 to help Moody in Chicago when the Great Fire broke out, consuming Moody's meeting hall and sending Sankey onto Lake Michigan in a boat to save his own life. Despite the catastrophic setback, the two set about re-establishing their ministry in the city and reaching beyond its environs to enlarge the Kingdom of God. Over the years they crisscrossed America and traveled around the world, winning souls by the thousands. In today's environment of growing hostility to the Church, it is hard to believe the extent of their influence. It was so great that theatergoers would boo attempts by comedians to lampoon the pair or to blaspheme their revivalist message. Streetcars crowded with singing Christians on their way to revival meetings in large cities would be applauded by passerby on the street. Sankey became world renowned for his singing, and hymnbooks published by him sold out repeatedly. Composers of new gospel songs offered their work to him, and he freely used the new songs to move sinners to the Cross and to build up believers. This is the story, in Sankey's own words, of the great campaigns, the trials and obstacles, and the victories won in the name of Christ. Here, too, are the back stories to scores of gospel songs and hymns, many of them born out of tribulation— many more, out of blessing.



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