

The Boy that Went West

D.L. Moody:

A number of years ago, before any railway came into Chicago, they used to bring in the grain from the western prairies in wagons for hundreds of miles, so as to have it shipped off by the lakes. There was a father who had a large farm out there, and who used to preach the gospel as well as to attend to his farm. One day, when church business engaged him, he sent his son to Chicago with grain. He waited and waited for his boy to return, but he did not come home. At last he could wait no longer, so he saddled his horse and rode to the place where his son had sold the grain. He found that he had been there and got the money for his grain; then he began to fear that his boy had been murdered and robbed. At last, with the aid of a detective, they tracked him to a gambling den, where they found that he had gambled away the whole of his money. In hopes of winning it back again, he then sold his team, and lost that money too. He had fallen among thieves, and, like the man who was going to Jericho, they stripped him, and then they cared no more about him. What could he do? He was ashamed to go home to meet his father, and he fled. The father knew what it all meant. He knew the boy thought he would be very angry with him. He was grieved to think that his boy should have such feeling toward him. That is just exactly like the sinner. He thinks because he has sinned, God will have nothing to do with him. But what did that father do? Did he say, "Let the boy go?" No; he went after him. He arranged his business, and started after the boy. That man went from town to town, city to city. He would get the ministers to let him preach, and at the close he would tell his story. "I have got a boy who is a wanderer on the face of the earth somewhere." He would describe his boy, and say, "If you ever hear of him or see him, will you not write to me?" At last he found that he had gone to California, thousands of miles away. Did that father say, "Let him go?" No; off he went to the Pacific coast, seeking the boy. He went to San Francisco, and advertised in the newspapers that he would preach at such a church on such a day. When he had preached, he told his story, in hopes that the boy might have seen the advertisement and come to the church. When he had done, away under the gallery, there was a young man who waited until the audience had gone out; then he came toward the pulpit. The father looked and saw it was that boy, and he ran to him, and pressed him to his bosom. The boy wanted to confess what he had done, but not a word would the father hear. He forgave him freely, and took him to his home once more.

I tell you Christ will welcome you this minute if you will come. Say, "I will arise and go to my Father." May God incline you to take this step. There is not one whom Jesus has not sought far longer than that father. There has not been a day since you left Him but He has followed you.