Found in the Sand

D.L. Moody:

While I was attending a meeting in a certain city some time ago, a lady came to me and said, "I want you to go home with me; I have something to say to you." When we reached her home, there were some friends there. After they had retired, she put her arms on the table, and tears began to come into her eyes, but with an effort she repressed her emotion. After a struggle she went on to say that she was going to tell me something that she had never told any other living person. I should not tell it now, but she has gone to another world. She said she had a son in Chicago, and she was very anxious about him. When he was young he got interested in religion at the rooms of the Young Men's Christian Association. He used to go out in the street and circulate tracts. He was her only son, and she was very ambitious that he should make a name in the world, and wanted him to get into the very highest circles. O, what a mistake people make about these highest circles. Society is false; it is a sham. She was deceived like a good many more votaries of fashion and hunters after wealth at the present time. She thought it was beneath her son to go down and associate with those young men who hadn't much money. She tried to get him away from them, but they had more influence than she had; and, finally, to break his whole association, she packed him off to a boarding-school. He went soon to Yale College, and she supposed he got into one of those miserable secret societies there that have ruined so many young men, and the next thing she heard was that the boy had gone astray.

She began to write letters urging him to come into the kingdom of God; but she heard that he tore the letters up without reading them. She went to him to try and regain whatever influence she possessed over him, but her efforts were useless, and she came home with a broken heart. He left New Haven, and for two years they heard nothing of him. At last they heard he was in Chicago, and his father found him and gave him $30,000 to start in business. They thought it would change him, but it didn't. They asked me, when I went back to Chicago, to try and use my influence with him. I got a friend to invite him to his house one night, where I intended to meet him, but he heard I was to be there, and did not come near, like a good many other young men who seem to be afraid of me. I tried many times to reach him, but could not. While I was traveling one day on the New Haven railroad, I bought a New York paper, and in it I saw a dispatch saying he had been drowned in Lake Michigan. His father came on to find his body, and after considerable searching, they discovered it. All his clothes and his body were covered with sand. The body was taken home to that broken-hearted mother. She said, "If I thought he was in heaven I would have peace." Her disobedience of God's law came back upon her. So, my friends, if you have a boy impressed with the gospel, help him to come to Christ. Bring him in the arms of your faith, and He will unite you closer to Him.