

**DAVID SWING,  
POET-PREACHER**

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David Swing, poet-preacher by Joseph Fort Newton

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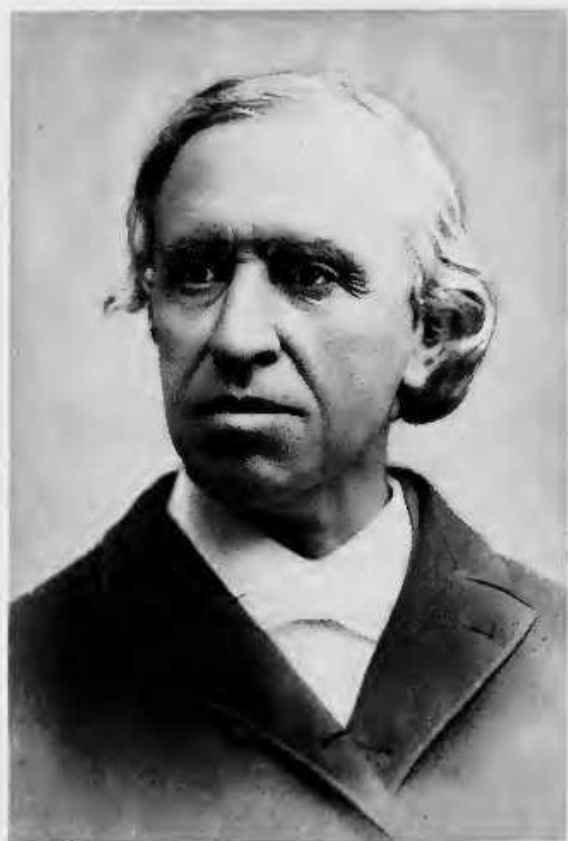
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By  
JOSEPH FORT NEWTON



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TO

JENNIE MAI AND JOSEPH,  
AND A LITTLE BOY WHO  
SLEEPS, THIS BOOK IS AF-  
FECTIONATELY INSCRIBED





## PREFACE

No apology is needed for this record of the life of David Swing, unless it be that the story of his great ministry should not have remained for so long untold. This silence, which has been longer than falls to the lot of even lesser men, is due in part to the rush and hurry of the age, and to the bland facility with which it forgets the men of yesterday. Absorbed in the present, striving for the future, the past and those who with it depart count for too little. It must be that we the living have not been duly mindful of our obligation to the dead and to the advancing generation, or else we have forgotten that the image of a great preacher is kept in the world by the devotion of those whom he inspired.

It is of supreme importance that the life of such a man should be written if it be true, as F. W. H. Myers has said, that the record of a great and pure personality is the best bequest of time. The ministry of Swing was in every way unique and worthy of record, though one is safe in saying that it never once crossed his mind that any one would in the future sit down to tell its story. He was, as all who knew him can testify, at once the most lovable and least aggressive of men. For himself he made no claim, asked for no reward, and seemed to cherish no ambition. His theory of life was that what gift soever a man had should be used for his fellow man, and for no other end; and that theory he carried out. This modesty,

while it gave him a peculiar charm, has made it difficult to follow the course of his years.

My first obligation is to Mrs. Mary Ricker and Mrs. Helen Starring, the daughters of Prof. Swing, who have kindly aided me in every possible way. After them, my special gratitude is due to Mr. Lyman J. Gage, Mr. W. E. Curtis, Mr. Franklin H. Head, Rev. Jenkin Lloyd Jones, Bishop Samuel Fallows, Mrs. W. A. Talcott, the late Mr. Abram Pence, the late Miss Sophie B. Kimball, Mr. Thomas Chard, Judge J. B. Swing, of Cincinnati, and many others, for reminiscences, records, and suggestions. The chapters were published as a series of articles in "Unity," edited by Dr. Jenkin L. Jones, and after some revision and expansion are given this permanent form at the request of many readers.

Any account of Prof. Swing must necessarily be imperfect, but the author is keenly aware of special defects in this record. The genius of Swing was so quiet, unobtrusive and appealing that one finds it difficult to analyze or define it. He was an uncommon man with common principles, a meditative man in a noisy age, undisturbed by the base appetite for popularity, an example of the democracy of culture and the religious uses of common sense. It is as an atmosphere that he is remembered, a gentle, humane, refined spirit, touching the life of his city and his age, ameliorating its crudities, softening its harshness, and permanently modifying its spiritual climate.

J. F. N.