

Brighten The Corner

By
Bill Dagle

The year was 1913. Homer Rodeheaver makes his way to the platform in the tabernacle at Columbus, Ohio. The crowd of five thousand anticipates the excitement yet to come. To begin this evening of meeting with God, Homer has chosen a new song written because of a car accident.

Ina Ogdon had plans to speak that summer of 1912 at Chautauqua, a Methodist camp in western New York. Just days before her departure, her father was injured in an automobile accident. Choosing to care for her father, the potential audience of 10,000 became an audience of one. Through her despair and disappointment, she was finally able to make up her mind that no matter what, she would learn to brighten the corner where God had placed her. She prayed that God would give her a way to encourage others to face life's problems with the right attitude. The answer was a poem.

Homer stands in the Billy Sunday tabernacle in Ohio with trombone in hand. At the first notes, the dust rises from the sawdust floor as thousands jump to their feet. Then, the air fills with the musical sounds and words of Ina Ogdon's song from a poem written that fateful summer of 1912. For the next 22 years, "Brighten the Corner" would open every Billy Sunday meeting and become the theme song for the Sunday campaigns.

Mrs. Ogdon thought she would reach thousands that summer; but instead, she has reached millions. More than 25 million copies of her song have been printed. Billy and Homer gave the song to over 100 million in the 200 tabernacles they built across America. Even now, I share the song as I do the "Billy Sunday Story" in churches. This proves once again, what Dr Al Smith once said "God's ways aren't always our ways, but they're the best ways."

Do not wait until some deed of greatness you may do,
Do not wait to shed your light afar,
To the many duties ever near you now be true,
Brighten the corner where you are.

Just above are clouded skies that you may help to clear,
Let not narrow self your way debar,
Tho' into one heart alone may fall your song of cheer,
Brighten the corner where you are.

Refrain

Brighten the corner where you are! Brighten the corner where you are!
Someone far from harbor you may guide across the bar,
Brighten the corner where you are.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Matthew 5:16