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C. H. SPURGEON.

(*From a Photograph by Messrs. Elliott & Fry.*

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON.

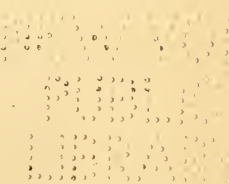
BY

REV. JAMES J. ELLIS,

AUTHOR OF

"MARKED FOR DEATH," "MESSAGES OF CHRIST," ETC. ETC.

"A soul wrapped in its own purposes, and these Divine ones, untouched by that vanity, that fussiness which we so often notice pertaining to men—a mind happy and luminous in its own repose—such a mind must always be attractive and beautiful, and very satisfying to look at."—*The Vocation of the Preacher.*



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PREFACE.

THE writing of this biography has been a labour of love with the author, and it is intended as a tribute of esteem and affection to Mr. Spurgeon.

The author was a student in the Pastors' College, and then and afterwards heard from Mr. Spurgeon's own lips many of the incidents that have since appeared in print.

For every opinion advanced in the following pages the writer is alone responsible. Some difficulty was felt in dealing with the great abundance of materials that freely flowed in. Should this publication be met with a favourable reception, the author hopes to issue a larger and more complete work.

He will be thankful if Mr. Spurgeon's many friends will supply him with incidents and facts that may enable him to present a more complete picture of the great preacher and of his work. Many things which

have been necessarily omitted here will appear in that book.

The place that Mr. Spurgeon occupies is unique and important; the splendid service that he has rendered to the whole Church of Christ by his sermons, his exposition of the Psalms, and by his magnificent philanthropy, which has overflowed to all who are in need; his marvellous tact as a teacher, and his conscientious adherence to what he believes to be right, all these are claims upon the age, and are lessons to all who will learn.

The recent controversy in which Mr. Spurgeon took part has not, we trust, weakened his hold upon the age; surely it is time for those who differed from him to recognise his magnificent unselfishness and lasting beneficence.

Nothing has been set down in these pages to accentuate any differences, and if at times the writer appears partial, he pleads as an excuse his love for Mr. Spurgeon and his admiration of his talents and life.

It may be well here to say again that Mr. Spurgeon is not responsible for any of the opinions expressed in the following pages, although his son, the Rev. Charles Spurgeon of Greenwich, and Mr. Spurgeon's

sister, Mrs. Page, have kindly read the proof-sheets of this book. To them the writer begs to tender his grateful thanks.

The author also desires to thankfully acknowledge the kind assistance that he has received from Mr. Spurgeon himself, Rev. W. Jackson, Rev. J. L. Keys, and many other friends, who have in various ways assisted with facts and suggestions which have been of priceless service.

That God may richly bless Mr. Spurgeon, and make many a life speak out the praise of God through him, is the prayer of many besides the author of the following pages.

12 Woodside Terrace, Wightman Road,
Harringay Park Hornsey, N.

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C. H. SPURGEON.

CHAPTER I.

THE ELIJAH OF HIS AGE.

"All hail to the man
Who leads in the van,
Be the struggle of brain or of muscle;
For what the world needs
Is the man who succeeds,
And comes out atop in the tussle."

"The real heroes of God's making . . . have their natural heritage of love and conscience, which they drew in with their mother's milk; they know one or two of those deep spiritual truths which are only to be won by long wrestling with their own sins and their own sorrows; they have earnest faith and strength, so far as they have done genuine work."—SCENES FROM CLERICAL LIFE.

1776–1850.

LIKE AN AMEN TO THE BIBLE—"NOT A CAKEY MAN"—INSTINCT WITH POWER—TEACHING BY A STICK—FIGHTING IN EARNEST—GOD AS GOOD AS HIS WORD—THE BOY WHO WOULD BE HEARD—DRY-AS-DUST—LOOK! LOOK! LOOK! A GREAT REWARD FOR A SMALL SERVICE.

"WHEN I think of you, it is like AN AMEN to the Bible, to the truth and certainty of all its blessed promises," was said by Augustus Hare to a friend.

Which is a high style of life—to be God's Amen to the principles, facts, and promises of redemption that make up the Bible; and this honour, in the opinion of many Evangelical Christians, belongs to Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Whatever opinions may be entertained as to some of his utterances and methods, all who love the cardinal doctrines of the Reformation recognise him as a wonderful example of the power and success of the Gospel; in other words, as one of *God's Amens* to the Bible. In some degree this is possible to all who are participators by faith in the benefits of the atonement, and therein their lives convey comfort to men. The life of C. H. Spurgeon speaks clearly an emphatic Amen to the statements and claims of the Bible; and therefore it is helpful to them.

To trace out the successive advances of this great preacher, to learn from his weaknesses and to be sustained by his strength, to admire the faith in God which has imparted to him power over men, and, above all, to recognise in him one of the kingly, prophetic, champion souls that arise from time to time with marvellous consequences to the human race; in short, to hear the speech of this life, which, like the fabled statue, is musical because the sunlight has kissed it, is our purpose now.

"Blessed influence of one true loving human soul on another; not calculable by algebra, not deducible by logic, but mysterious, effectual, mighty as the hidden

process by which the tiny seed is quickened and bursts forth into tall stem, and broad leaf, and glowing tasselled flower." It is, indeed, impossible to adequately estimate the influence of Spurgeon upon the religious thought and life of this age, for it has been, and is still, truly enormous. One who differs greatly from Mr. Spurgeon recently said to the author, "I went to hear him preach, and I said to myself, 'He is still a force.'" A force he is, and a force he will remain.

One or two things may be stated at the outset as the result of careful inquiry and personal knowledge.

C. H. Spurgeon is not a "cakey man," as John Lawrence termed those who affect undue refinement, and hence with sickly sentimentalists he has not the slightest sympathy. And the words of John Foster about Robert Hall may, we think, be applied with equal, if not greater truth to C. H. Spurgeon. The great essayist says: "In some remarkable manner everything about him, all he does and says, is *instinct with power*." After frequent and varied opportunities of observing his character under many lights, C. H. Spurgeon not only appears to be instinct with power, but as holding back much of his mental strength—in other words, as endowed with immense reserve force. Had he chosen any other calling in life than that of the ministry, he would have been equally conspicuous; indeed, he is so well proportioned mentally, and so desperately in earnest as a preacher, that much of his wealth of intellect is unseen, although it acts as a fount

of supply to the gushing waters that have refreshed and strengthened thousands. If the word king means a leader, and probably a steersman, as Max Müller says that it does, is it too much to apply it to the man who, in spite of objections from many quarters, leads, and will lead, an immense multitude, who admire his high endowments, share his beliefs, love him for his self-sacrifice and devotion, and regard him almost as if he were an angel sent from God, as indeed he is? Thousands will endorse the application to him of the words that form J. T. Lynch's epitaph: "A herald of God, loving His message; a guardian of the light of God, holding it forth conspicuously; a shepherd whose wisdom is as a fold for the Saviour's sheep, and his comfortable words a hospice on the rude mountains for those who were crossing them on their way to the promised country."

The awful cruelties of Alva, that "fleshless instrument of massacre," in the sixteenth century, drove many of the inhabitants of the Netherlands to seek a home in England. And no wonder; for Alva "strode with gigantic steps over haughty statutes and popular constitutions, crushing alike the magnates who claimed a bench of monarchs for their jury, and the ignoble artisans who could appeal only to the laws of their land." History has recorded but few names of those heroic emigrant-sufferers, but God has not forgotten

them, and they are enrolled among the noble army of martyrs, whose deeds are known in heaven. Would that some more careful Foxe would gather up the traditions about them that still linger in the farmsteads, villages, and small towns of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, and thus show the immediate cause of the sturdy and Protestant character of the natives of those parts.

One family of refugees from the Netherlands was named Spurgeon, and they made their home in Norfolk and in Essex. From the Essex settlers Charles Spurgeon has descended. Such men, after leaving their homes and all that they possessed for conscience' sake, were not likely to submit to the profligate hypocrisy of Charles the Second, or the equally dangerous dogged tyranny of James the Second. All honour to them and thanks to God that the reign of vice and of absolutism has for ever passed away from England. But our liberties have been won by suffering, and surely no Evangelical Christian will either defend the tyranny of the King and his advisers or refuse to admire the heroic martyrs. Episcopalians can afford to esteem Bunyan and his fellow-confessors, just as Nonconformists can admire Hall, Leighton, and Ken.

"My great-grandfather's grandfather was a Quaker," said Mr. Spurgeon, "and was imprisoned in the gaol at Chelmsford; and I sometimes feel the shadow of his broad brim come over my spirit, inasmuch as I believe in spiritual monitions."

For fifteen weeks John Spurgeon lay in Chelmsford gaol, without fire, although the weather was severe, because he refused to believe in religion as he was bidden by a King who at heart was really an atheist and a Papist. The story of those times is truly shameful, especially when we reflect that honest and worthy men stooped to defend the shameless vice of Charles and his companions; but the story is heroic when we see how men chose rather to endure poverty, prison, and death than to do what they thought to be wrong:—

> "Men of England, who inherit
> Rights that cost your sires their blood,
> Men whose undegenerate spirit
> Hath been proved on field and flood;
> We're the sons of sires who baffled
> Crowned and Papal tyranny,
> And defied the field and scaffold
> For their birthrights—so will we!"

The martyr spirit took another form in James Spurgeon, the grandfather of our hero. He was born at Halstead, in Essex, on the 29th of September 1776. He was evidently a remarkable man, accustomed to think for himself and to speak his mind, as became the child of the martyrs. For fifty-three years he was pastor of a Congregational church at Stambourn, in Essex, and with such success, that he declared that during this protracted period he had not had one hour's unhappiness with his church.

He was asked on one occasion what he weighed,

and replied: "If I were weighed in the balances I should be found wanting, but if I were weighed in the pulpit I should be heavy enough."

A man with some keen sparkle of wit, and a sturdy English pride in him. "John," said he to his son, "we are an honourable family; not rich in this world's goods, but where is there a family with five preachers making known the Gospel every Sunday? There are few families, indeed, that can say so much."

A hard-shelled man, who, with all his kindness, was tenacious of what he esteemed right and true. For instance, it is said that he loved and admired Watts' hymns. Nowadays it has become too customary to sneer at Dr. Watts' hymns. It may be safely predicted, that as long as the service of song of the House of the Lord continues, such favourites as "Come let us join," "How strong Thy arm is," "When I survey the wondrous cross," "O the delight, the heavenly joys," "Give me the wings of faith to rise," and other noble hymns will be sung.

Rev. James Spurgeon believed in Dr. Watts, and when a visitor who had come to preach at Stambourn gave out, one after the other, two hymns that were by other authors, he closed his book as a protest. When a third hymn was announced, and that also not by his favourite author, it is said that he shook his fist most significantly at the young preacher. After the service had concluded, he said to the offending minister, "Young man, if you don't want your brains knocked

out, you must use Dr. Watts' hymns!" As he spoke, he waggishly raised and flourished a huge stick that had supported his steps. The minister promised amendment, and kept his word, for at the next service Watts' hymns only were sung. The Nestor, no longer angry, said to him, "Right, sir, right; I am glad to see you can appreciate the best authors so quickly. Go now and get your ram's horn ready like those men, and God may make you the means of hurling to the ground walls as stubborn as those." The sermon had been upon the capture of Jericho by Joshua. The grandson of this worthy relates some pleasing reminiscences of him. In the "Spare Half-Hour," a volume of a most useful series, to which reference will be made in a later chapter of this book, C. H. Spurgeon relates several anecdotes of his grandfather. Rev. James Spurgeon, we are told, most intensely believed in the devil. One day during his sermon, it occurred to the good man that it would be wise to board in the cupboard in which was kept the sand for the floor of his manse. With characteristic pugnacity he rejoined mentally, "What business has the devil to talk about my sand-closet on a Sunday, and in the pulpit too? I will not board it in at all!"

This sturdy antagonist of the great enemy of men dreamed once that the devil threatened to tear him in pieces if he ventured to pray beneath a certain tree in Honeywood Park. When he awoke, the dream came to his mind, and he reasoned on it thus: "Whether

it be a dream or a temptation of the devil, I cannot tell, but anyhow I will not yield. I will not do Satan's bidding, and to defy him I will go to the very tree." To those whose belief in Satanic agency in this world is only skin-deep, the heroism of this act is not very evident; but those who believe that we are, like Job, the objects of the enmity and power of Satan, will judge otherwise. Here was a man defying the devil, and determined not to yield to what he believed to be an attempt to deter him from his duty. He went right on towards the tree. Yet in doing this he suffered most intensely; the mental conflict wrung great beads of water from his face; he shook and trembled, but he went forward until he reached the oak in safety. Who can say that James Spurgeon did not then and there win a real victory over the enemy of God and man? To those who do not believe in a personal tempter, it may be well to suggest that if there were no tempter, human depravity would be incurable; but because man has been led away by a worse than himself, redemption becomes possible. Carlyle, it will be remembered, took his friend Emerson (who denied the existence of Satan) from one London den of infamy to another. He asked him after each sight, "Do you believe in a devil now? Do you believe in a devil now?" The misery and infamy of men he felt would be inexplicable except upon the belief that fallen men are led away by the devil. And the Scriptures explicitly declare that our

adversary the devil "goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour."

All honour, then, to the man who met what was to him a real temptation and triumphed over it.

Rev. James Spurgeon, the village pastor, was very popular in the country round Stambourn; his gentleness, his sturdiness, his adherence to truth, and his love for all who held it, his orthodoxy and his catholicity, endeared him to Dissenting ministers, and even to the Rector of his parish; for after all, the bonds by which good men of all communions are held together are stronger than others can realise; and the differences between those who hold the Evangelical faith are smaller than we know.

The true spirit of the Gospel is that which is manifested by Cowper, who, on entering an unknown church, sat near a stranger who sang most devoutly. "Bless you for praising Him whom my soul loveth," said Cowper to himself. "Bless you for working for Him whom my soul loveth," ought to be the feeling of all true Christians towards each other.

At a watch-night service in the Tabernacle, Mr. Spurgeon related the following incident:—

"I knew a minister who once threatened his boy that, if he repeated an offence, he would visit it with such a punishment that he would remember it if he lived for a hundred years. He regretted the rash threat, but when his boy was detected in the forbidden

act, he called him aside for prayer, and then told him he must proceed to inflict the threatened punishment. He bade him follow him to the corner of a cornfield beyond the reach of hearing. The trembling culprit obeyed, and conjectured every conceivable form of punishment it was possible his father might inflict. Arrived at the chosen spot, the father bade him kneel, and then with two stalks of wheat lightly brushed his cheek. 'There,' said he, 'I have kept my word; you will never forget that punishment.' And he never has,' said Mr. Spurgeon, 'for that boy was my own father, and he repeated the story to me only a few days ago."

Rev. James Spurgeon lived to rejoice in his grandson's success. On one occasion he told the congregation that while Charles might be able to preach better than his grandfather, he had no better Gospel than that for which his fathers had suffered rather than surrender.

The integrity of the old Puritan appears in the fact that while he might legally, and some would have said morally, have claimed the chapel in which he had preached, he refused to do what he regarded as unjust. He put the chapel in trust, according to the intention of the founders.

And he was poor at the time, which makes the deed appear the more noble—so poor, indeed, that when his cow died he had not sufficient money in hand to buy another. "What will you do now?"

asked his wife, thinking of the ten hungry children who needed food.

"I cannot tell what we shall do now, but I know what God will do. God will provide for us; we must have milk for the children," was the noble reply. His faith was rewarded, for the next morning the post brought him sufficient money to purchase another cow. God had heard his prayer, and remembered his faith.

The writer once heard Mr. Spurgeon relate, that when his grandfather lay in his last sickness, some one repeated to him the hymn, "Firm as the earth His promise stands."

The dying man corrected the speaker. "That would be but sorry comfort for me now," he said. "The earth is slipping away from me. No; 'firm as His throne His promise stands.'"

The second of the ten children who formed the family of this good man, John Spurgeon by name, is the father of the great preacher. A hale, hearty Englishman, of the robust, noble stamp that one might expect from such a home. Mrs. John Spurgeon, the mother of Charles, was a native of Colchester. After the ancient Puritan style she trained up her children, not knowing that from among them should arise one of the most remarkable men of the age.

Her two sons, Charles and James, are ministers, and two of her daughters have married those who have given their lives to the preaching of the Gospel.

We are favoured by the Rev. J. Keys with the following memorandum:—

"*September 4th*, 1888.—I went this day to Somerset House to seek the register of baptism of Rev. C. H. Spurgeon. I saw the long, narrow vellum-bound book in use at Stambourn at the time of the passing of the Registration Acts. There is with it a letter from the Rev. James Spurgeon, the pastor, to the representatives of the Commissioners.

"The following is a copy of the original copy, procured by me. I think the entry in the Stambourn book ends at the word 'August.'

"'Charles Haddon, son of John and Eliza Spurgeon, his wife, of the parish of Kelvedon; born the 19th of June 1834; baptized the 3rd of August by the Rev. James Spurgeon.'

"Certified to be an extract from the register or record numbered Essex 59, and entitled a Register of births, baptisms, and burials, formerly kept by the Independents at Stambourn.

"On March the 8th, 1889, I again went to Somerset House to get the register of the birth or baptism of John Spurgeon, father of Pastor C. H. Spurgeon. He was born at Clare, Suffolk, July 15, 1810; but his father appears to have closed his ministry there at the end of 1810 or early in 1811. For this reason John Spurgeon's 'baptism' is not in the Clare book of baptisms, burials, &c., but in that of Stambourn, a copy of which I obtained.

"While looking at the Clare book, I noticed the entries of the two following as baptized by the Rev. J(ames) Spurgeon:—

"'Stephen Church Spurgeon, son of William and Rachel Spurgeon, born June 22, '87' (meant for 1807).

"'Sarah Spurgeon, daughter of James and Sarah Spurgeon, born September 18, 1807.'"

Mrs. Jackson (daughter of Rev. John Spurgeon), under date February 20, 1891, writes thus to the author about her father: "In previous biographies very little is recorded of this venerable man of God, who has now attained the ripe age of fourscore years. He has always been an embodiment of homeliness, and from the earliest recollections of his children he imparted a charm to the home-life of his family. His sons and daughters were never so happy as when he gathered them around him for recreation, instruction, and devotion.

"They hailed his return from business and from religious services with delight, for they knew he would not fail to delight them by relating in his own captivating manner the incidents which had come under his observation during the day. Thus 'pleasant evenings' were wisely provided at home, and the temptations which characterise and endanger 'modern society' were avoided. Those early days of happy family life are remembered with devout gratitude.

"No wonder that it is Spurgeonic to prefer old methods.

"To-day the father is greatly revered by his eight living children on account of his devout spirit and the impressive way in which he used to conduct religious services in their midst; and at least one of them rejoices in being brought to Jesus while the father was tenderly pleading for the conversion of his offspring.

"Several stories have already appeared in print as facts or fancies, but others have not found their way into the press. One has the endorsement of an uncle, who was at home at the time: it may do good if told. 'A certain professor of religion in the village was in the habit of going to fairs, &c., which so shocked the thoughtful and puritanical boy, that he resolved to attack the man, in order to kill him as an inconsistent individual. Accordingly, he followed him one day when he was on his way to a fair at some distance, and dealt him blows with the hammer of God's Word, which made him reel, tremble, and turn aside to confess his sin, and pray for pardon and grace to keep him in future.'"

At the time of his eldest son's birth, Mr. Spurgeon kept a shop in the village. Subsequently he removed to Raleigh, in Essex. At a later period he became head-clerk in a coal, coke, and shipping office in Colchester, a position of considerable trust and importance, which he relinquished in order

to undertake the pastorate of the church at Cranbrook.

It is said that Mr. John Spurgeon remarked that, "as the parent of seventeen children, I have frequently worn a shabby coat, when I might have possessed a good one, had I cared less for my children's education." He must have long since enjoyed the reward of his self-sacrifice. Indeed, no blessing ever came to men that had not been purchased by pain; many must suffer that the world may be blessed.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was born on the 19th of June 1834, at Kelvedon, in Essex. His first learning was obtained at a school in Colchester, for even genius requires teaching, and learning involves labour. In "John Ploughman's Talk" Mr. Spurgeon relates an anecdote of his early days. He was at the time a small boy in pinafores, and had lost his pencil. He was without pocket-money, and purchased a slate-pencil on credit. The debt amounted to one farthing, which sum he purposed to pay at Christmas. By some means his father heard of this transaction, and after a powerful lecture upon the sin and danger of debt, the boy was marched down the street, and the farthing was paid amid many solemn warnings. "It was a fine lesson, and I have never forgotten it," says Mr. Spurgeon. "God bless my father," say I, "and send a breed of such fathers into Old England, to save her from being eaten up with villainy; for what with companies, and schemes, and

paper-money, the nation is getting to be as rotten as touchwood." His father informed Dr. Ford, an American, that "I had been from home a good deal, trying to build up weak congregations, and felt that I was neglecting the religious training of my own children while I toiled for the good of others. I returned home with these feelings. I opened the door, and was surprised to find none of the children about the hall. Going quietly up the stairs, I heard my wife's voice. She was engaged in prayer with the children. I heard her pray for them one by one by name. She came to Charles, and specially prayed for him, for he was of a high spirit and daring temper. I listened until she had ended her prayer, and I felt and said, 'Lord, I will go on with Thy work; the children will be cared for.'"

If West became a painter because of his mother's kiss, is it too much to say that his mother's prayers contributed to make Spurgeon a preacher?

From an early age the child was sent occasionally to visit his grandfather, to whom reference has been made. There a maiden aunt, Miss Ann Spurgeon, who lived with the aged minister, ministered to the boy, not without discernment of his marvellous possibilities. Some years since Mr. Spurgeon related the following anecdote of those days, which had been recalled to his mind by his Aunt Ann.

One of the members of the church at Stambourn, named Rhodes, was in the habit of frequenting the

public-house, greatly to the grief of his pastor. Little Charles had doubtless noticed his grandfather's sorrow on this account, and laid it to heart. One day he suddenly exclaimed, in the hearing of Mr. Spurgeon, "I'll kill old Rhodes, that I will!" "Hush! hush! my dear," said his grandfather, "you mustn't talk so; it's very wrong, you know, and you'll get taken up by the police if you do anything wrong." "Oh, but I shall not do anything bad; but I'll kill him though, that I will." The good grandfather was puzzled, but yet perfectly sure that the child would not do anything which he knew to be wrong, so he let it pass with some half-mental remark about "that strange child." Shortly after, however, the above conversation was brought to his mind by the child coming in and saying, "I've killed old Rhodes; he'll never grieve my dear grandpa any more." "My dear child," said Mr. Spurgeon, "what have you done? Where have you been?" "I haven't been doing any harm, grandpa," said the child; "I've been about the Lord's work, that's all." Nothing more could be elicited from little Charles. Before long the mystery was explained. "Old Rhodes" called to see his pastor, and, with downcast looks and evident sorrow of heart, narrated the story of how he had been killed, somewhat in this fashion:—"I'm very sorry indeed, my dear pastor, to have caused you such grief and trouble. It was very wrong, I know; but I always loved you, and wouldn't have done it if I'd only

thought." Encouraged by Mr. Spurgeon's kind words, he went on with his story thus:—"I was a-sitting in the public, just having my pipe and mug of beer, when that child comes in. To think an old man like me should be took to task and reproved by a bit of a child like that! Well, he points at me with his finger just so, and says, 'What doest thou here, Elijah? sitting with the ungodly, and you a member of a church, and breaking your pastor's heart! I'm ashamed of you! I wouldn't break my pastor's heart, I'm sure.' And then he walks away. Well, I did feel angry; but I knew it was all true, and I was guilty; so I put down my pipe, and did not touch my beer, but hurried away to a lonely spot, and cast myself down before the Lord, confessing my sin and begging for forgiveness. And I do know and believe the Lord in mercy pardoned me; and now I've come to ask you to forgive me; and I'll never grieve you any more, my dear pastor." Truly a child to be loved, observed, and trained; it was evident that from his childhood Charles Spurgeon discovered his life-mission. Of his life in the village manse we have several beautiful pictures. Mr. Spurgeon has repeatedly drawn upon his own experience to supply illustrations of his doctrine. In "Feathers for Arrows" he thus speaks:—

"On the mantelshelf of my grandmother's best parlour, among other marvels, was an apple in a phial. It quite filled up the body of the bottle, and my

wondering inquiry was, 'How could it have been got into its place?' By stealth I climbed a chair to see if the bottom would unscrew, or if there had been a join in the glass throughout the length of the phial. I was satisfied, by careful observation, that neither of these theories could be supported, and the apple remained to me an enigma and a mystery. But as it was said of that other wonder, the source of the Nile—

'Nature well known, no mystery remains,'

so it was here. Walking in the garden, I saw a phial placed in a tree bearing within it a tiny apple, which was growing within the crystal; now I saw it all; the apple was put into the bottle while it was little, and it grew there. Just so must we catch the little men and women who swarm our streets—we call them boys and girls—and introduce them within the influence of the Church; for alas! it is hard indeed to reach them when they have ripened in carelessness and sin."

The second reminiscence is as follows:—

"When a little child, I lived some years in my grandfather's house. In his garden there was a fine old hedge of yew of considerable length, which was clipped and trimmed till it made quite a wall of verdure. Behind it was a wide grass walk which looked out upon the fields, and afforded a quiet outlook. The grass was kept mown, so as to make

pleasant walking. Here, ever since the old puritanic chapel was built, godly divines had walked, and prayed, and meditated. My grandfather was wont to use it as his study. Up and down he would walk when preparing his sermons, and always on Sabbath-days, when it was fair, he had half-an-hour there before preaching. To me it seemed to be a perfect paradise, and being forbidden to stay there when grandfather was meditating, I viewed it with no small degree of awe. I love to think of the green and quiet walk at this moment, and could wish for just such a study. But I was once shocked, and even horrified, by hearing a farming man remark concerning this *sanctum sanctorum*, 'It 'ud grow a many 'taturs if it wor ploughed up.' What cared he for holy memories? What were meditation and contemplation to him? Is it not the chief end of man to grow potatoes, and to eat them? Such on a larger scale would be an unconverted man's estimate of joys so elevated and refined as those of heaven, could he by any possibility be permitted to gaze upon them."

In the "Spare Half-Hour" Mr. Spurgeon relates another incident which is one of the commonplaces of religious story. We give it in his own words:—

"When I was a young child staying with my grandfather, there came to preach in the village Mr. Knill, who had been a missionary at St. Petersburg, and a mighty preacher of the Gospel. He came to preach for the London Missionary Society, and arrived

on the Saturday at the manse. He was a great soul-winner, and he soon spied out the boy. He said to me, 'Where do you sleep? for I want to call you up in the morning.' I showed him my little room. At six o'clock he called me up, and we went into the arbour. There, in the sweetest way, he told me of the love of Jesus, and of the blessedness of trusting in Him and loving Him in our childhood. With many a story he preached Christ to me, and told me how good God had been to him, and then he prayed that I might know the Lord and serve Him. He knelt down in the arbour and prayed for me with his arms about my neck. He did not seem content unless I kept with him in the interval between the services, and he heard my childish talk with patient love. On Monday morning he did as on the Sabbath, and again on Tuesday. Three times he taught me and prayed with me, and before he had to leave, my grandfather had come back from the place where he had gone to preach, and all the family were gathered to morning prayer. Then, in the presence of them all, Mr. Knill took me on his knee, and said, 'This child will one day preach the Gospel, and he will preach it to great multitudes. I am persuaded that he will preach in the chapel of Rowland Hill, where (I think he said) I am now the minister.' He spoke very solemnly, and called upon all present to witness what he said. Then he gave me sixpence as a reward if I would learn the hymn—

'God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform.'

I was made to promise that when I preached in Rowland Hill's Chapel that hymn should be sung. Think of that as a promise from a child! Would it ever be other than an idle dream? Years flew by. After I had begun for some little time to preach in London, Dr. Alexander Fletcher had to give the annual sermon to children in Surrey Chapel, but as he was taken ill, I was asked in a hurry to preach to the children. 'Yes,' I said, 'I will, if the children will sing "God moves in a mysterious way."'

As an example of his smartness, it is related that during his school-days he observed that the bottom place in the class was the warmest. At once he contrived to work his way downwards, until the master detected the reason, and reversed the position of the class. The boy immediately went up to the top of the class, which was now next to the fire.

In the year 1844 he went to spend his vacation with his grandfather, and during these happy days his love of Protestantism was deepened. To men like the pastor of Stambourn, Popery was a real foe, and the pages of Foxe were diligently read and believed. It has been said that one of the greatest gifts that God has conferred upon man is the power of asking questions. This faculty Charles, after the manner of acute intellects, began to exercise, sometimes most amusingly, as appears in the pages of the "Spare Half-Hour." The

child was permitted to read the Scriptures at family prayer. He came to a passage that he did not understand, and he asked for an explanation. This was not given; but morning after morning the same chapter was read and the same questions asked, until the grandfather yielded and gave the needful information. Which thing was prophetic. Man's highest prerogative is to know, and he must ask before he knows.

It has for a long time been the style to speak of Mr. Spurgeon as if he were ignorant and untrained. He himself has jocosely remarked that he had not the benefit of a college training, and teased his brother about the supposed superior advantages that he enjoyed. As a matter of fact, Mr. Spurgeon is far better provided with learning than those who are not intimate with him know. Parade of all kind he abominates; but it is certain that at the age of seventeen he could easily have secured a degree had the Universities then been open. His tutor, Mr. Edward Leeding, now dead, was very emphatic about the solid learning and talents of his illustrious pupil, and certainly he should be permitted to know. His testimony is, "that at the age of seventeen Mr. Spurgeon could have easily secured a degree at the University if he had so desired."

It must not be forgotten that the use of strong, spicy Saxon is not a proof of ignorance, but of learning, and still more of that native sense and discernment of what is best and fit which is a mark of true genius.

In the year 1849 Mr. Spurgeon went to Newmarket as usher in a school there. The pastor of the Baptist church of that town was of the dry-as-dust kind, and the youth would often impart his dissatisfaction at the sermon to a good servant of the family.

"Well," she would say, "did you get anything this morning?"

"No, not a bite."

"Neither did I, until I joined *not* with every word that he said, and then I did better."

It is an odd sermon that requires a negative to make it understandable!

Another time this woman said, "I felt like an old hen scratching on a dung-heap for a grain of corn, but there was none. Never mind, I thought; scratching will keep your legs warm."

A Bishop of Cork once said of a sermon preached by his Dean, "It was an admirably arranged and delivered sermon, clear, eloquent, argumentative, illustrative, but it had not in it Gospel enough *to save a tomtit!*" Which kind of sermon may gratify those who do not care about personal religion, but can never satisfy a seeking soul; it did not satisfy Charles Spurgeon.

It is further related that when, in accordance with the custom of the Independents, the youth should have been proposed in a church-meeting as a candidate for fellowship, the minister delayed doing so. Whereupon, after sundry ineffectual remonstrances, which were disregarded, the youth called upon the minister and informed

him that he intended to walk down to the church-meeting and propose himself! Verily a youth who seemed likely to cause much trouble to the Rev. Govery-easy and to all his kind. At a meeting of ministers and deacons, held at the Metropolitan Tabernacle on Tuesday, May 28, 1889, Mr. Spurgeon said: "I was a member of the church at Newmarket when I first joined the church, and was afterwards transferred to the church at Cambridge, one of the best in England. I attended for three Lord's days at the communion, and nobody spoke to me. I sat in a pew with a gentleman, and when I got outside I said, 'My dear friend, how are you?'

"He said, 'You have the advantage of me; I don't know you.'

"I said, 'I don't think I have, for I don't know you. But when I came to the Lord's table and partook of the memorials of His death, I thought you were my brother, and I thought I would speak to you.'

"I was only sixteen years of age, and he said, 'Sweet simplicity!'

"'Oh, is it true, sir?' I said, 'is it true?'

"He said, 'It is; but I am glad you did not say this to any of the deacons.' He asked me home to tea.

"I said I could not come that day; and he said, 'Come next Sunday, if you like.' I agreed, and for three years I was often in his house. I was his friend and companion, and when his wife was sick and died,

I was still his friend and helper, and we are bound together by the closest ties. He naturally laughs now very much at the way in which I introduced myself without a card."

A period of religious despondency had preceded this avowal of his faith in God, a time such as comes in the life-history of all souls, when the faith of childhood has to be transmuted into the faith of riper years. This time of gloom and mental anguish was ended one snowy morning, when, entering the Primitive Methodist Chapel at Colchester, an unknown preacher discoursed from the text, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." The preacher, after the fashion of his denomination, kept to his text, and urged his hearers to look to Christ. This the unknown youth did, and found that looking to Christ cured his doubts and gave him peace. This was in January 1850.

A Primitive Methodist preacher once remarked that Dr. M'Call carefully polished a stone before he flung it. "The probability is that it will fly off and hit nobody, because it is so well polished. I go down to the seaside and catch up a good handful of stones, and fling them, with what force I can, among the crowd, quite sure that by God's grace every stone has its mark, and hits somebody." Which style of preaching Rowland Hill calls "slapdash," but which he highly commends as the most useful.

For preachers have an aim, and must keep it in

view; they watch to win souls as those who must give an account. Who can tell but that the faithful preaching of the Gospel by thee may not be wonderfully successful? Subordinately to the great purpose, every man should preach as best he can, always remembering that his methods must be such as are in accordance with the principles of the Gospel. It is large comfort for men of little ability that in a small Primitive Methodist chapel the greatest preacher of the age was converted under a simple sermon preached by an unknown man.

The pulpit from which this sermon was preached has been purchased, and stands in the playroom of the Stockwell Orphanage. A more valuable memorial of the sermon is the vast multitude in heaven and earth that have been won for Christ by the books and sermons of Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

"Sow in the morn thy seed,
At eve hold not thy hand;
To doubt or fear give thou no heed,
Broadcast it o'er the land."

CHAPTER II.

THE SAUCIEST DOG THAT EVER BARKED IN A PULPIT.

"The leafless boughs are stirred
With a spirit and a life,
Which is floating all around,
And the covert glades are rife
With the new awakened sound.

Our pleasure and our duty,
Though opposite before,
Since we have seen His beauty,
Are joined to part no more."

"He ever kept before him a purpose of usefulness alike in teaching men what to think about and how to think about it."—PAXTON HOOD OF DR. WATTS.

1850–1854.

"I LOST A THOUSAND FEARS"—SUET-PUDDING—THE MAN WHO WOULD NOT BE DRIVEN AWAY—"THE SAUCIEST DOG THAT EVER BARKED IN A PULPIT"—COMING TO LONDON—HIS TACT—GREAT IN PREACHING, BECAME GREAT IN PRAYER.

MR. SPURGEON, after a careful study of the Greek Testament, came to a conviction that the Baptists were right in their interpretation of "baptize." He at once decided to be immersed. In the *Sword and Trowel* for April 1890 there is an engraving of the place where

he was baptized. It is situated at Isleham Ferry, on the River Park. Thither on the 3rd of May 1850, the youth, dressed in a jacket and wearing a boy's turn-down collar, walked from Newmarket, a distance of eight miles. "I lost a thousand fears in that River Park, and found that in keeping His commandments there is great reward," says Mr. Spurgeon.

One of his biographers relates that Mrs. Spurgeon humorously said to her son, "Ah! Charley, I have often prayed that you might be saved, but never that you should become a Baptist." With equal humour her son replied, "Ah! mother, God has answered your prayer with His usual bounty, and given you more than you asked."

Upon the question of Popery Mr. Spurgeon is most pronounced, and probably this is largely owing to his early study of Foxe's "Martyrology," which, alas! is too seldom read now-a-days. It ought never to be forgotten that while Foxe may be defective in arrangement, and a little careless about a few details, his main facts have never been disputed. Rome is unchangeable, and will ever be the enemy of the Scriptures until destroyed by our Lord by the brightness of His coming. It is absurd to attempt any *modus vivendi;* if the Papists are right, we are heretics and lost; and if we are right, they are idolaters and under the curse pronounced by Christ in Revelation.

Mr. Spurgeon has always been a sturdy Protestant; when a youth he competed for a prize which was

offered for the best essay upon Popery; and although he did not secure the prize, he received a sum of money as a recognition of the merit of his paper. It was entitled "Antichrist and her Brood; or, Popery Unmasked." His ministry has always proceeded upon the sound principle—Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; the complete sufficiency and sovereign authority of the Holy Scriptures, and no truce with Romish or any other vital error.

Mr. Spurgeon moved from Newmarket into Cambridge, where he studied during the day and engaged in various forms of Christian service during the evening. The writer heard him relate how he obtained a hearing in one locality. He set writing-copies for the children, who were terribly neglected, and then he called at their homes in order to see how they were progressing with their writing. The parents were proud of these visits, and they gradually became attached to the young usher. There are still many in the Fen Country, near Cambridge, who heard the young man speak in his early days, and who recognised in his Sunday-school addresses the characteristics of a great preacher.

During this period he addressed a letter to one of his sisters, which we are able to print:—

"CAMBRIDGE, *Thursday.*

"To Miss CAROLINE LOUISA SPURGEON,—Your name is so long that it will almost reach across the paper. We have one young gentleman in our school whose

name is Edward Ralph William Baxter T——. The boys tease him about his long name, but he is a very good boy, and that makes his name a good one.

"Everybody's name is pretty if they are good people.

"The Duke of Tuscany has had a little son. The little fellow was taken to the Catholic cathedral, had some water put on his face, and then they named him —you must get Eliza to read it—

"*Giovanni Nepomuceno Maria Annunziata Giuseppe Giovanbattista Ferdinando Baldassere Luigi Gonzaga Pietro Allesandro Zanobi Antonino.*

"A pretty name to go to bed and get up with! It will be a long while before he will be able to say it all the way through.

"If any one is called by the name of Christian, that is better than all these great words. It is the best name in the world, except the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"My best love to you. I hope you will enjoy yourself, and try to make others happy too, for then you are sure to be happy yourself. Whereas, if you only look out to please yourself, you will make others uncomfortable, and will not make even yourself happy. However, you know that, and I need not tell you of it. A happy Christmas to you.—Your loving brother,

"CHARLES."

As yet he had not known his mission. Others saw and determined that he should fulfil it. He was asked

to accompany a young man to Teversham, and went, not knowing that he was expected to preach. When he discovered the device, he began to expound "Unto you which believe, He is precious" (1 Peter ii. 7), a text which is characteristic of his piety. It is what he himself calls a meaty text. Luther would have said that it is a little Bible.

Overcome with wonder at the youth of the eloquent preacher, it is said that an old dame called out during the service, "Bless your dear heart, how old are you?"

"You must wait until the service is over before making any such inquiries," responded the preacher.

The question was eagerly repeated after the service had concluded, and the answer was, "I am under sixty." "Yes, and under sixteen," added the first interrogator.

Young as he was, there could be no mistake; the simple villagers recognised that a great preacher had arisen in their midst. Henceforward he was busily engaged in preaching, until at length he made it the chief business of his life. Some of his adventures during this period were amusing. We select the following. He had been preaching, and was invited to dine with a poor man. Upon the table smoked a huge suet-pudding, the sole dish. The farmer helped himself to a huge slice, and one member of the family after another did the same. No one looked after the guest, who, understanding what he was expected to

do, cut himself a slice of pudding, and made his dinner off it.

He himself relates how he was once the guest of Potto Brown, a philanthropic miller of Houghton. Potto Brown was an original character in his way, and told his visitor that his preaching was very well for an apprentice-boy. This at once set Spurgeon at his ease, and after a theological combat upon the respective merits of the Calvinistic and Arminian dogmas, he learned to respect his host.

In the year 1851, at the age of seventeen years, Mr. Spurgeon became minister of the Baptist Church in Waterbeach Cambs. The previous pastor had enjoyed a stipend of twenty pounds per year. We have ourselves heard Mr. Spurgeon say that he was as rich while at Waterbeach as he was in London. "Hearing a smile," to quote Mr. Goschen, he explained, "So I was, for then I gave away all I had, and I do so now;" which saying is strictly true.

The chapel at Waterbeach was built of conglomerate with whitewashed walls. It was burned down in 1866. A careless individual flung some hot coals upon a heap of rubbish near, which resulted in a fire. Not only the old chapel, but one or two buildings were involved in the conflagration. "If it had not been burned down, the chapel would never have been pulled down, for there were people there who venerated the very smoke."

"Well I remember," said Mr. Spurgeon recently,

"beginning to preach in a little thatched chapel, and my first concern was, would God save any souls through me? They called me a ragged-headed boy; I think I was—I know I wore a jacket. And I preached, and I was troubled in my heart because I thought, 'This Gospel has saved me, but then somebody else preached it; will it save anybody if I preach it?' Some Sundays went over, and I used to say to the deacons, 'Have you heard of anybody finding the Lord?' 'Have you heard of anybody brought to Christ?' My good old friend said, 'I am sure there has been, I am quite sure about it.' 'Oh,' I said, 'I want to know it, I want to see it.' And one Sunday afternoon he said, 'There is a woman who lives over at so-and-so who found the Lord three or four Sundays ago through your preaching.' I said, 'Drive me over there, I must go directly,' and the first thing on Monday morning I was driving down to see my first child. Many fathers here recollect their first child; mothers recollect their first baby—no child like it, you never had another like it since. I have had a great many spiritual children born of the preaching of the Word, but I do think that woman was the best of the lot. At least she did not live long enough for me to find many faults in her. After a year or two of faithful witness-bearing she went home to lead the way for a goodly number since. I have had nothing else to preach but Christ crucified. How many souls there are in heaven who have found their way there through that preaching;

how many there are still on earth, serving the Master, it is not for me to tell; but whatever there has been of success has been through the preaching of Christ in the sinner's stead."

Mr. G. Holden Pike once interviewed Mr. Coe, one of the deacons at Waterbeach. Mr. Coe remembered Mr. Spurgeon's first sermon at Waterbeach, which was preached in the autumn of 1851. Said Mr. Coe, "He sat on one side of the table-pew, and I on the other side. I shall never forget it. He looked so white, and I thought to myself *he'll* never be able to preach—what a boy he is! I despised his youth, you know, and thought all this while the congregation was singing. Then, when the hymn was over, he jumped up and began to read and expound the chapter about the Scribes and Pharisees and lawyers; and as he went on about their garments, their phylacteries, and long prayers, I knew that he *could* preach. All along I was fully persuaded in my own mind that he would not remain long at Waterbeach. I could see that he was something very great, and was evidently intended for a larger sphere. I could not make him out; and one day I asked him wherever he got all the knowledge from that he put into the sermons. 'Oh,' he said, 'I take a book, and I pull the good things out of it by the hair of their heads.'"

A friend who knew Mr. Spurgeon when he first came to London said to the writer, "He would sit talking with me and looking at a book. He would

have all the life out of a book in ten minutes." A great gift, and but rarely possessed, that of reading with one's fingers, and rapidly catching up the life-sap of a book.

Mr. Pike tells us that Mr. Coe, in answer to the question, "Mr. Spurgeon astonished everybody at that time?" replied, "Of course he did."

"How then did he preach?"

"Why," continued the old man, looking straight at me, as though I ought to know all about it, "why, like a man a hundred years old in experience!"

Mr. Spurgeon, after his removal to the metropolis, tried for a long time to induce this worthy to visit London. As a bribe, Mr. Spurgeon promised to give a new flagon for the Communion Service. At length Mr. Coe came to London, and the flagon was duly presented. Mr. Pike says of the worthy deacon, that "on his return, he tried to tell the people what he had really seen; but memory grew confused. His unsophisticated mind seemed to retain but one thing, the lustre of which darkened everything else—'Mr. Spurgeon was very glad to see me!'"

During the ministry of Mr. Spurgeon at Waterbeach, "Deacon Coe was passing through one of the most enjoyable experiences of his life; and his pleasure was only lessened by the consciousness that the sunshine could not last. If his friends mentioned the matter to him, Deacon Coe would shake his head in his characteristic expressive manner, and remark, 'He

will not be here long. God has a great work for him to do somewhere. I don't know where, but he will not be here long.'"[1]

The author once heard Mr. Spurgeon relate the manner in which he conquered the hostility of one village near Waterbeach. This village was a hotbed of infidelity, immorality, and every vice. The Wesleyans had been driven away from the place, and some of them ill-used. Whereupon Mr. Spurgeon and some of his friends went thither with intent to preach. The natives, as their manner was, turned out with stones in order to assail the new-comers. Mr. Spurgeon was equal to the occasion, and seriously told them that he had heard how they had driven away the Wesleyans. "They would only have preached error," he said. "We have come to preach the right doctrine. I am very glad you drove them away, for that shows that you are sensible people."

The villagers, amazed at such an audacious speech, dropped their stones and listened to the sermon. Within a short time the character of the village was entirely changed, and it is now more moral and religious than any in the locality.

The author's brother was preaching in Landbeach, near Cambridge, where he met with an old man who said, "I'm the man who taught Mr. Spurgeon to smoke. My wife doesn't want me to say it, but I'm the man who taught Mr. Spurgeon to smoke." He con-

[1] C. H. Spurgeon, by G. Holden Pike.

tinued thus: "You see, he came in one day to see me, and I was smoking away, enjoying my pipe. 'I think I'd like to try a pipe,' he says, and I gave him a pipe. He sucked away until I said, 'You'd better put it down.' He laid it down and said, 'It's very nice; I'll have another try!' And try he did until he could smoke," said the man, adding, "I'm the man who taught Mr. Spurgeon to smoke."[1]

Abraham Lincoln was once asked if a neighbour of his was a man of means. He replied, "He ought to be, for he is about the meanest man in these parts."

One such individual resided in Waterbeach, and from one of the natives we have this story, which Mr. Spurgeon himself has related more than once.

The mean individual once prayed publicly that some one might be induced to give the minister a new hat. On the following Sunday he brought Mr. Spurgeon seven and sixpence, and a week later another half-crown.

"What do you mean by this? Last week you gave me seven and sixpence, and this week you bring me half-a-crown. What do you mean?" asked Mr. Spurgeon.

"Only I am a very wicked man," said the sinner. "The Lord told me to give you a new hat, and I kept back half-a-crown of the amount. There it is!"

The fame of the young preacher spread far and wide through the Fen country, and his sayings and

[1] Mr. Spurgeon's son doubts this statement.

sermons were repeated, sometimes with variations. We heard Mr. Spurgeon relate that one day he was stopped by a gentleman in Cambridge, who said to him, "I say, young man, I heard that you said that if an unconverted man got into heaven, he would pick the Archangel Gabriel's pocket. Now you shouldn't have said that; it was wrong, for the angels have no pockets."

"Thank you," said the hardened offender against civic propriety. "I am very much obliged to you. I will soon put that right."

"Do so," said the other, little dreaming of what was to come.

Some time afterwards they met again, and Mr. Spurgeon said, "Oh, I have put that right—about the angels' pockets, I mean."

"What did you say?" asked the other, vaguely surmising what might have been said.

"Oh, I told them that I had made a mistake, and that a very clever man, named B——, who lived at Cambridge, had told me that the angels had no pockets!"

Verily the young preacher was a dangerous antagonist.

Another encounter took place in 1852, when the young pastor went to preach for an old minister. He was not well received, for the aged minister made some rude remarks about the youthful preacher.

"How do you do? I've come to preach your anniversary sermon," said Mr. Spurgeon.

"Ugh! I am none the better for seeing you," said the old minister, who evidently did not much regard the injunction, "Be courteous." "Tut, tut! a pretty kettle of fish," he added; "boys going up and down the country preaching before their mother's milk is well out of their mouths!"

By way of helping his visitor, the old man freely imparted his disgust to others. Alas! he little knew what was in store for him; for the boy whose "mother's milk was not out of his mouth," expounded "A hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness" (Prov. xvi.). He commented freely upon those who treated a guest who came to preach to them with contempt, probably to the discomfort of the old man.

After the sermon had ended, the minister emerged from the hiding-place from whence he had expected to witness the boy's confusion, and, after his rugged fashion, expressed his praise. "You are the sauciest dog that ever barked in a pulpit," he said, and emphasised his words by a slap across the back.

Another story, which is very similar to the preceding, is that of another minister who said, "I never allow boys in my pulpit." Subsequently he relented, and said, "You may give out the hymns." Then, growing pleased as the service proceeded, he signified from time to time that the preacher might continue. When the sermon was over, the old man crept up the pulpit-stairs, placed his hand upon the youth's

shoulders, and said, "Why, boy, you can preach almost as well as I can."

Some men of note among the Nonconformists of those parts regarded the audacious speaker with pleasure, and among them was Cornelius Elvin, of Bury St. Edmunds.

Cornelius Elvin was a huge man in physical bulk. On one occasion he went to preach in a meeting-house, and had to climb into the pulpit by a ladder, as the doorway would not permit such a huge mass to enter. Strangely enough the good man then preached from "My leanness! my leanness!"

A good woman upon entering a chapel saw him in the pulpit, and retreated, exclaiming, "No, no! the man has too much flesh about him; I cannot hear him!" He once declined taking part in a baptism service, because, he said, that if he got wet, there was not a vest within forty miles that would fit him. This huge man had a huge heart, and he gave loving and wise counsel to the young preacher. "Study hard," he said, "and keep well ahead of the best Christians in your church."

The Nonconformists were for many years excluded from the Universities, and were therefore compelled to provide academies for the training of their ministers. Mr. Spurgeon was urged by his father and many friends to enter Stepney, now Regent's Park College. It was arranged that he should meet Dr. Angus, the then and present Principal. The two waited for each

other in separate rooms of the same house, but owing to a blunder on the part of a servant, Dr. Angus went away without meeting his friend. "What momentous consequences sometimes hang on small matters! How much may occasionally depend on the remissness of a half-witted servant-maid," says Holden Pike.

Pondering this disappointment, Mr. Spurgeon was walking across Midsummer Common, when he seemed to hear a loud voice that said very distinctly, "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not." He began to review his former decision, and though at the time he did not know the consequences of his self-sacrifice, all must recognise the interposition of God. At the time he felt that, in deciding to follow the path of duty, he doomed himself to the poverty and obscurity of a village pastorate, and in that light we must regard his decision.

In a letter to his mother Mr. Spurgeon wrote: "I am more and more glad that I never went to college. God sends such sunshine on my path, such smiles of grace, that I cannot regret if I have forfeited all my prospects for it. I am conscious I held back from love to God and His cause, and I had *rather be poor in His service than rich in my own.* I have all that heart can wish for; yea, God giveth more than my desire. My congregation is as great and loving as ever. During all the time that I have been at Waterbeach I have had a different house for my home

every day. Fifty-two families have thus taken me in; and I have still six other invitations not yet accepted. Talk about the people not caring for me because they give me so little! I dare tell anybody under heaven 'tis false! They do all they can!"

In the year 1853 Mr. Spurgeon was invited to preach in Park Street Chapel, London. He could not believe, when he received the invitation, that the letter was really for him; but a sage old deacon shook his head gravely, and said that he had always feared such a calamity, which had come sooner than he had anticipated. The epistle was returned, but a second invitation followed, and "wearing a huge black satin stock, and using a blue handkerchief with white spots," the visitor came to London. He was entertained at a boarding-house. The guests were much amused that "the country lad should be a preacher. They did not propose to go and hear the youth, but they seemed tacitly to agree to *encourage* him after their own fashion, and we were encouraged accordingly. What tales were retailed of the great divines of the metropolis and their congregations! One, we remember, had a thousand *City* men to hear him; another had his church filled with *thoughtful* people, such as could hardly be matched all over England; and a third had an immense audience, almost entirely composed of the *young men* of London, who were spell-bound by his eloquence! The study

which these young men underwent in composing their sermons, their Herculean toils in keeping up their congregations, and the matchless oratory which they exhibited on all occasions, were duly rehearsed in our hearing; and when we were shown to bed in a cupboard over the front-door, we were not in an advantageous condition for pleasant dreams."

The next morning the youth of nineteen, longing for the quiet village, which, as compared with London, seemed now like a Garden of Eden, went sorrowfully to the meeting-house in New Park Street. Borne down by a sense of weakness, such as always precedes a preacher's triumph, he wended his way pondering the words, "He must needs go through Samaria."

It is said that on his arrival at the vestry of the chapel, Mr. Spurgeon sat down in Dr. Gill's chair and exclaimed, "He must needs go through Samaria." This text had been upon his mind. During the walk to the chapel he had come to regard his visit to Park Street as a part of his needful training. He had no thought of a permanent settlement in London, and said plainly to the deacons, "I knew that I should be of no use to you, but you would have me come."

"On that first Sunday in Park Street," says Dr. Wayland, "there were perhaps eighty persons present. The deacons had made a great effort to get people out, so as to swell the audience. One of the deacons went to a young lady and said, 'Do come on Sunday; there

will be a young man from the country, and we do want to make as much of a show as we can.' The young lady went and saw the young man from the country, and heard him preach. She told me this herself. She has seen him a good many times since; and, in fact, in a couple of years later she took him for good and all; and what a blessing she has been to him and to the world only eternity can tell."

One of the deacons, Mr. Thomas Olney, however, thought that the youth could be of use, and in order to have the best judgment, brought his invalid wife to the evening service. Mrs. Olney came all the way from Croydon to hear "the wonderful young man" of whom her husband had told her.

Her verdict, after the evening service, was, "He will do! he will do!" an opinion that years of marvellous success has confirmed. So the day passed, and at night Mr. Spurgeon returned to his lodging. "Our tone was altered; we wanted no pity of any one; we did not care a penny for the young gentlemen-lodgers and their miraculous ministers, nor for the grind of the cabs, nor for anything else under the sun. The lion had been looked at all round, and his majesty did not appear to be a tenth as majestic as when we had only heard his roar miles away."

The church that then met in Park Street Chapel is at least two hundred years old, and it had enjoyed a succession of able ministers. Besides being able men, they had all been more or less distinguished for wit

and those qualities that are part of the qualification for the pastoral office.

Mr. Spurgeon, in his interesting shilling volume, entitled "The Metropolitan Tabernacle, its History and Work," has preserved many anecdotes of these worthies.

Thus he says that Dr. Gill nobly replied, when warned that a certain line of conduct would entail loss upon him, "Do not tell me of losing. I value nothing in comparison with Gospel truth. I am not afraid to be poor." He also said, "I am not afraid of the reproaches of men; I have been inured to them from my youth upwards."

Some one complained to this tough old Calvinist of the tunes that were used in worship, and he asked her what she desired. She at once replied, "I should very much like David's tunes." "Well, if you will get David's tunes for us, we will try to sing them," was the discrete reply.

His successor, Dr. Rippon, of hymn-book fame, was, in his way, a character. He was selected to read an address from the Dissenters to King George III., and he said at one sentence, "Please your Majesty, we will read that passage again;" and he did so, doubtless to the amusement of the King, who, with all his faults, admired honest bluntness.

From various causes the congregation that had been ministered to by these worthy men had dwindled away, until in a chapel capable of holding some twelve hundred persons not more than two hundred assem-

bled. The history of Christianity has always been one of advance and recession, but in each case it has been found that the advance or failure has been attributable to causes that are palpable. Churches become elated by success, run themselves thin by neglect of prayer, and require the needful tonic of failure that they may become lowly enough for the Divine blessing. There are few times more painful in the minister's life than when he feels that God is not in the camp, as there is no joy out of heaven to be compared to a ministry on which the holy dew rests.

Tennyson somewhere speaks of "a mist of green." There is "a mist of green" in church life when the promise of spring appears upon the cold bare trunks that once were clothed with leaf and flower. Under the ministry of the young man there were promises of spring, and the church at Park Street endeavoured to induce Mr. Spurgeon to remain in London. For three alternate Sabbaths he preached at Park Street, and then he consented to become minister for a period of six months.

Before he left Waterbeach one of his charge prayed that Mr. Spurgeon might "be delivered from the bleating of the sheep." At the time the expression was mysterious, but the young pastor grew to understand its meaning. By which expression the good man meant the unreasonable requests and complaints of some very good people, who seem determined to prove their own unfitness for heaven by making others

uncomfortable on earth. Two examples may be given of Mr. Spurgeon's tact with "bleating sheep."

One man came to him full of complaints of one and another. Mr. Spurgeon refused to hear him, and recommended him to forget and forgive. It was only when he was told that Mr. Spurgeon would not interfere that the man left off "bleating."

We have heard him relate that at one church-meeting a man rose and complained loudly about the minister. One deacon after another protested against the man being heard, and when Mr. Spurgeon permitted the complainant "to bleat," the whole meeting went into another room.

"Aren't they a lot of cowards?" Mr. Spurgeon asked. "But I say, So-and-so, you might have come to my house and said all this."

"I will never say a word against you all my life," said the man, fairly overcome by the minister's tact. Verily a born leader of men, and one who knew what to avoid, what to do, and how to do it.

Probably some part of Mr. Spurgeon's success may be attributed to this *bonhomie* and kindly method of treating men. We heard him say at Kingston-on-Thames, "When I have an apple a little bit specked, I turn it with the speck towards the wall; then when I go again, the speck has gone and the apple is sound."

To which may be added the words of a man who marked his early life. He said, "It is not so much his talent or his wit that I feel so overpowering,

as his sincere goodness." Which may explain what a recent visitor to London meant when he records in the newspaper that, after hearing Dr. Parker preach, he came away with the feeling that he was a great man. After listening to Mr. Spurgeon, he felt that Jesus was a great Saviour; and in the difference we may see the explanation of the two ministries. Because he has been careless of his own strength, reputation, and money, but has freely given them all for what he believes to be right, Charles Haddon Spurgeon is beloved by all who hold the Evangelical faith. His geniality, generosity, wonderful eloquence, are quite insufficient to explain his hold over the human mind; he is heard and beloved because he preaches the great truths of redemption, which are dearer than life itself, and which, indeed, are the life of the soul of man. He stands before his age as the type of great earnestness in the Christian career, and to that intense forcefulness of faith in the doctrines of the Cross which compels him to transparent speech and conduct we trace his power.

At the risk of being thought erratic, we venture to say that, great as he is as a preacher (and some of his sentences cut like a knife, while others are as fragrant and tender as a mother's kiss), his prayers are more wonderful still. His prayers have been a means of grace, and a revelation of what prayer might more often be to those who have been unable to hear them without intense mental emotion. The author treasures

among some of his most forceful memories prayers that ring in his heart still and mingle with his holiest purposes, which, indeed, they inspired.

For spiritual stimulus, for restful faith, for infectious fervour, and for subduing and inspiring power, the prayers of Charles Haddon Spurgeon are treasured by those who have heard them with a delight that a stranger cannot understand.

CHAPTER III.

THE BAPTISM OF FIRE.

"Had he not seen in the solitudes
A vision of love about him fall?
Not the blinding splendour that fell on Saul,
But the tenderest glory that rests on them
Who walk in the New Jerusalem;
Where the sun nor the moon are never known,
But the Lord and His love are the light alone."

—WHITTIER.

"The preacher does not show that it is a well, and show when and how it was dug, and by what processes the stream percolated until it reached that spot; he does not spend time in assuring you that it is trustworthy food; he exclaims to an eager if a small company, Eat abundantly, O friends; yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."—THE VOCATION OF THE PREACHER.

1856–1859.

"BE A BRIGHT POKER"—A GIANT FOR WORK—A PURITAN BOUND IN MOROCCO—THE GIFT OF AN ONION—LAUGHED AT, BUT UNHARMED—"HE'S A GOOD SORT"—SURREY GARDENS MISHAP—THE TESTIMONY OF THE ROCKS.

"MY dear boy, be a bright poker," said Douglas Jerrold; advice which was thus varied by a vivacious friend of ours: "Be a curate, and not a rector; for the black poker does all the work, and its bright

brother does all the shining." C. H. Spurgeon has never been a bright poker; he has always been a curate, in that he has lived to be of use.

George Moore wrote thus in his diary: "Ryle and Spurgeon got on capitally. Indeed, Spurgeon gets on well with everybody. Henry Chester is quite in love with him; they have found out many things on which they agree. There is nothing like getting men of different opinions thrown together. Spurgeon is a remarkable man. He has such a memory, such good humour, and such spirits; *and he is a giant for work.*"

Mrs. Moore says, "Mr. Spurgeon interested George greatly. His wit and humour delighted him. One day, seeing what influence he had on the farmers and people about, Mr. Spurgeon said to me, '*You* are a queen, for your husband is king of Cumberland.' 'Oh! no,' said I, 'he is not that.' 'No,' was his quick reply, 'he is Mo(o)re.'"[1]

In the same biography there is also this paragraph: "I went to Mr. Spurgeon's in the evening. What a wonderful sight! He sent for me, and I introduced my friends to him." In which extracts there are two or three things to be observed. The man who finds out points of agreement rather than of difference, who is a giant for work, and, above all, who is sunny and mirthful, must of necessity be popular quite apart from all other qualities of genius. Without his undoubted

[1] Life of George Moore, by Smiles.

great abilities in the presentation and enforcement of truth by pathos, wit, and even invective, Mr. Spurgeon would have been a remarkable man, merely because of these three characteristics of his mental structure.

When he came to London, men comforted his father with doleful prophecies of failure; and one hardly wonders at their fears. A mere youth, unknown, save to very few, without wealth or powerful friends, and, moreover, belonging to one of the most despised of all the sects, it did not seem probable that the new-comer would be known beyond the narrow circle of his own church. They who spoke thus knew nothing of the immense powers that lay behind that beardless face, and some, if they suspected them, were jealous and suspicious of him.

"If he had not succeeded, what an awful failure he would have been," said one to the writer. It is perhaps wise to forget the past, but those who complain of some of Mr. Spurgeon's early sayings must remember that at his advent respectable London Nonconformity was horror-stricken at his audacity. He ventured to dress, act, and speak as if he had no terror or fear of men before his eyes—as if a youth without a beard could be a prophet! Besides, who ever heard of a great preacher who had not the imprimatur of several colleges, the heads of which could not preach themselves, and therefore knew what ought to be accepted as good preaching? He could not be a prophet, and the Dryasdusts felt the whole

thing was likely to cover Nonconformity with ridicule; and so they ignored, ridiculed, wondered, and at last were silent. All except that ancient man-of-war, fighting John Campbell of the Tabernacle in Tottenham Court Road, who being himself eccentric, discerned what this audacious youth really was. It has been said that at that time London Nonconformity was divided into two sections, one of which believed in Dr. Campbell most devoutly, and the other did not. Whatever his faults, and they were not few, the old champion had penetration enough to recognise genius and grace where he saw them, and he understood what this phenomenon might be.

Not that Mr. Spurgeon desired pity or trembled very much on account of his isolation; we almost fear that, shocking as it is to confess it, he rather enjoyed it.

Dr. Campbell was not Mr. Spurgeon's only champion, for the Lord Chief-Justice of England, Lord Campbell, said to Sir Richard Maine, who was then Chief Commissioner of Police, "He is doing great good, sir! he is doing great good."

John Howard Hinton, too, the author of several works that at one time attracted great attention, when he visited the Tabernacle, said to one of the deacons, "Take care of that young man; he is an old Puritan bound in morocco." "But I maintain that I am bound in calf, for I belong to Essex," replied Mr. Spurgeon.

Of these early days in London Mr. Spurgeon relates the following incident:—

"In the year 1854, when I had scarcely been in London twelve months, the neighbourhood in which I laboured was visited by Asiatic cholera, and my congregation suffered from its inroads. Family after family summoned me to the bedsides of the smitten, and almost every day I was called to visit the grave. I gave myself up with youthful ardour to the visitation of the sick, and was sent for from all corners of the district by persons of all ranks and religions. I became weary in body and sick at heart. My friends seemed falling one by one, and I felt or fancied that I was sickening like those around me. A little more work and weeping would have laid me low among the rest. I felt that my burden was heavier than I could bear, and I was ready to sink under it. As God would have it, I was returning mournfully home from a funeral, when my curiosity led me to read a paper which was wafered up in a shoemaker's window in the Dover Road. It did not look like a trade announcement, nor was it, for it bore in a good bold handwriting these words: '*Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.*' The effect on my heart was immediate. Faith appropriated the passage as her own. I felt secured, refreshed, girt with immortality. I went on with my visitation of the

dying in a calm and peaceful spirit; I felt no fear of evil, and I suffered no harm. The Providence which moved the tradesman to place those verses in his window I gratefully acknowledge, and, in the remembrance of its marvellous power, I adore the Lord my God."[1]

We also heard him relate, with a mirth-provoking twinkle of the eye, the two following incidents of the times now under review.

He had long desired more ventilation in his chapel, but his wishes were not heeded.

"One morning," he said, "it was discovered that all the windows were broken along one side of the chapel. It really looked as if some one had gone along with a stick and had rapped at them. I suggested that the deacons should offer a reward of five pounds for the discovery of the offender, but they shook their heads gravely. They fancied that they knew the culprit. I myself have walked with the stick that caused the mischief!"

The other story is as follows:—

"There was a man who used to sit in the Chapel and weep most profusely during the sermon. One day he came to me with a huge piece of calico in his hand. 'Look here,' he said; 'I received this the other day, and inside the calico was this large onion.'

"I looked at the calico, and found that upon it there was a label bearing this inscription, 'This is for you to use while the pastor is preaching.'

[1] Treasury of David.

"The man said, 'What shall I do with it?'

"'Do with it,' I replied. 'Why, cook the onion for supper.'

"He looked so strangely at me, he almost fancied that I sent it." Then, after the laughter had subsided, Mr. Spurgeon added, "I knew that he was only a hypocrite, and so it was soon discovered!"

Of course all who have the gift of tears after this man's fashion will condole with him; but every noble nature must loathe sham, pretence, and cant, especially that hypocrisy which wears a religious garb for a pretence.

Mr. Spurgeon went to Scotland, and under date 20th July 1855 he wrote to the papers complaining of the peril to which he and others had been needlessly exposed. On the forenoon of Wednesday he was returning from the Highlands, and desired to land at Govan Ferry. The boat came alongside, but Mr. Spurgeon found when they put off that the men in charge of her were intoxicated. They insisted upon rowing across the track of a steamer. At length the remonstrances of the passengers prevailed, and the men altered their course. Instead of landing, they brought the boat alongside another steamer, and then packed it so full that the passengers could not move. One gentleman was up to his knees in water, but by Divine mercy all the party reached land in safety.

An American Quarterly thus describes the appearance of the young orator at the beginning of his

London ministry. The opinion is evidently jaundiced, but if it were true, it would only serve to set off the success of the ministry which began so unfavourably:—

"In personal appearance he was not prepossessing; in style he was plain, practical, simple; in manner, rude, bold, egotistical, approaching to the bigoted; in theology, a deep-dyed Calvinist; in church relations, an uncompromising Baptist. We could scarcely imagine a more unpromising list of qualifications, or rather disqualifications, for public favour."

In those days Mr. Spurgeon's present secretary, Mr. Keys, was residing at Tring, where he kept a school. His father came from London to visit him, and they called together upon one of the Baptist ministers of the town. While they were talking with him, a messenger came into the room and said that a famous London minister was in Tring, and would preach in the chapel if he were asked.

"Do you know anything about him?" asked the minister.

"I do; he is orthodox," said Mr. Keys, senior; and upon this the desired permission was given.

When the father and son left the minister's house, said the former, "Your minister is very shabby; he ought to have a new suit of clothes."

"We really cannot do more than we do in the way of salary; the people are poor."

"Now is the time to make an effort; there will be

a great many strangers at your chapel to-night, and you can make a collection for him."

This was in the afternoon, and after seeing his father off, Mr. Keys went round inviting one and another of his neighbours to attend the Baptist Chapel to hear this famous preacher.

When he himself reached the chapel, the service had already commenced, but, although terribly nervous, Mr. Keys ascended the pulpit and found Mr. Spurgeon intently reading the Bible.

"I want you to make a collection to-night for the minister," said Mr. Keys. "Our minister wants a new suit of clothes."

"There is to be a collection for the debt," said Mr. Spurgeon.

"The debt is a mere trifle, and can wait. Look at the poor man; that is his best coat."

"Leave it to me," said Mr. Spurgeon.

"But please promise, sir."

"The hymn is nearly finished, and I have not selected my reading-lesson."

"But, sir, please promise."

"I will see to it;" and, contented at this indefinite pledge, Mr. Keys went to his pew and listened to the sermon.

"I never heard such preaching before," he said; "it was a revelation to me. I had never before heard sinners invited to come to Christ, and there was a warmth and a glow about the preaching such

as I had never experienced in my life. It was wonderful."

When the sermon was over, Mr. Spurgeon said, "There is to be a collection to-night. At first we thought it should be for the debt, but it will be for the pastor. There are a great many strangers present who know and respect the minister of this chapel; they will be glad of the opportunity of showing their esteem for him. You know that he has served the Lord well; now we wish to get him a new suit of livery."

Very few in the congregation had come provided with money, but many of them promised to send contributions to Mr. Keys. Mr. Spurgeon himself put his hand into his pocket, and took out a handful of silver and put it in the plate; his friend, Mr. Olney, also gave; and then Mr. Spurgeon noted the amount of the contribution, £3 15s., in a Beza's Latin Testament, which Mr. Keys still preserves as a memorial of the event.

The minister, it would seem, had been praying for a new suit of clothes, and thus, without effort of his own, his prayers were answered.

To Mr. Keys we are indebted for the following anecdote:—

A short time after this sermon Mr. Spurgeon again visited Tring. He had now become famous, and a great throng gathered to welcome him. Mr. Keys stood on the outskirts of the crowd, and near him stood a lady of his acquaintance.

"I should like to shake hands with Mr. Spurgeon," said the lady, a Miss W——.

"He knows me," said Mr. Keys.

Mr. Spurgeon came out, and amidst the throng that pressed around him he spied Mr. Keys, whom he had only seen for a few moments at the chapel.

"This young lady would like to shake hands with you, sir," said Mr. Keys, after he had been noticed.

"How do you do, Miss G——?" said Mr. Spurgeon.

"This is Miss W——, sir."

"But I met you at Cambridge some months ago."

Then it was explained that this lady had been with her uncle, Mr. G——, and had been seen by Mr. Spurgeon, who had conjectured and remembered her name.

I quote this as an example of the tenacious memory of the great preacher.

The attacks of his enemies, the hostility of the press, and the ardent devotion of his friends contributed to spread the preacher's fame all over the kingdom, and crowds flocked to hear him wherever he went.

In his own church Mr. Spurgeon became increasingly popular, and, large as was the structure, it became far too small for the crowds that thronged to hear this new order of preaching.

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, and by faith this wall shall fall down too," said Mr. Spurgeon, pointing to the wall behind the pulpit.

"Never let us hear you say that again," said one of his go-gently deacons, who did not dare to anticipate such great things.

"You shall hear of it until it is done," said Mr. Spurgeon, who better understood his own powers and future.

The wall fell down, the chapel was handed over to the builders, and during the process of enlargement Mr. Spurgeon preached at Exeter Hall. From the 11th of February to the 27th of May that great hall was filled to overflowing to hear the young preacher; and with most remarkable results, for one after another sinners were converted, and that in large numbers. The West End of London was stirred with the audacity of the preacher, and sent forth crowds to hear him. It seemed almost like a second Pentecost, and affected all the Churches in a most remarkable degree. Boldness is an element of success in the ministry of the Gospel, and the faith of a man who dares to avow his belief in it is infectious beyond his knowledge. At a critical moment in the battle of Alma a frightened French officer rode up to Raglan, who calmly promised to send help to his more numerous allies. His evident faith in his men strengthened the French, and inspired them to win a victory.

If Mr. Spurgeon had done no more than to calm the terrors of those who, when he came to London, not unnaturally feared for the cause of God and of truth, he would not have lived in vain. His work

inspired the faint-hearted, and said to the Churches what Lawrence said to his workers during the Mutiny, "Press on! press on! To stand still is fatal."

Such a success, achieved by a young and independent man, could not but provoke hostility, but the malice of his detractors perhaps only served as the grindstone to impart a keener edge to the polished blade. The most absurd falsehoods were circulated and repeated with solemn emphasis. Burns speaks of those who—

> "——— hae been kenned,
> In holy rapture,
> A rousing whid at times to vend,
> And nail't wi' Scripture."

A clergyman assured a friend of ours that he had heard Mr. Spurgeon, in the course of preaching, ask a woman in the congregation, "Mother, what do you pay a pound for lamb?"

"A shilling or fourteenpence," was the reply.

"You can have the Lamb of God for nothing."

Our friend objected, "Surely Mr. Spurgeon could never say such a thing!"

"Indeed he did. I heard him myself."

Again and again we have heard the absurd story repeated about Mr. Spurgeon sliding down the pulpit-stairs in order to illustrate how sinners go to hell; a story which has again and again been disproved, inasmuch as he had no pulpit-stairs at New Park Street, but came out of a hole in the wall into a swallow-nest pulpit. One is not surprised at such

falsehoods being invented; they have been manufactured by the same hand for every great enemy of sin. But surely Christian people should be careful not to participate in falsehood and slander merely to be thought wise or able to satisfy the curiosity of the vulgar crowd. Every public man is liable to such attacks; but even if we differ from those who are doing Christ's work after another method than our own, we ought to guard their reputation as the common heritage of the people of God. Mr. Spurgeon's son once told us that he sat in a railway carriage, and heard the most absurd accounts of his father's wealth and luxury from one of these retailers of petty falsehood. Mr. Spurgeon denied the statements of the speaker without revealing his own name. We need a higher standard of morality in trifles, for right and wrong do not admit of degrees. An action is right or wrong, and cannot be a little of each, and that which is not truthful is a lie.

Jabez Bunting and Dr. Guthrie were in a room with a man who had been educated at the Pastors' College. Mr. Bunting said that he had heard a statement to the effect that Mr. Spurgeon had preached a sermon on Palm Sunday with a crown on his head and a palm in his hand.

"Yes; it is too true."

"It is very shocking," remarked Dr. Guthrie.

"Mr. Punshon also preached with a crown on his head and a palm in his hand," said the Pastors' College man.

This Mr. Bunting contradicted; whereupon the Spurgeonite said, "Dr. Guthrie did so."

"I am Dr. Guthrie, and it is a downright lie!"

"How would you have looked without a crown to your head and a palm to your hand?"

Dr. Guthrie laughed heartily at the joke.

Besides many most absurd stories, the public press teemed with caricatures of Mr. Spurgeon, and many of them were of a ludicrous character.

Among them is one picture which is labelled "Catch 'em alive O!" The young preacher is represented as a seller of fly-papers, one of which is wound around his hat. Upon this fly-trap many flies have already been caught, while others are preparing to alight to their ruin. "Brimstone and Treacle" is the title of another. In this picture Mr. Spurgeon is represented standing beside Bellew; Mr. Spurgeon, of course, is the brimstone, and the simpering, sentimental lecturer is the treacle.

Among the caricatures there is one entitled, "The Spurgeon Save-all." In the middle of the picture there is a representation of a candlestick with a save-all; upon the latter is the inscription, "Spurgeon's save-all for wicked lives." On the right side of this candlestick is a save-all, upon which there remains a smoking candle-snuff, with the legend, "The snuff of life gone out." On the right side of the sheet there is a pictorial candle which is intended to represent a sinner's life. Near the flame there is a small picture in the

substance of the candle; it represents a child-thief picking a pocket. Underneath this there is a picture of a young man and a girl, who have now reached the second stage in the progress of evil, debauchery and vice. Below is a picture of a man robbing a trunk. The burglar becomes a thief-trainer in the next picture, while the old age of infamy concludes the series. This candle stands in "Spurgeon's save-all." Below the whole series is the following inscription: "The Spurgeon save-all for burning up the fag-ends of wicked sinners' lives." "Speaking of sinners, Mr. Spurgeon said in one of his sermons, 'God would stick them on a save-all, for He loves to burn up His small pieces of candle.'"

One, in looking at this, thought of Whitfield's words, "May I die blazing, and not go out as a snuff." There is all the difference between the finish of even good men's lives; many go out like a snuff, and others burn into brighter light.

One of the most amusing of the series is styled "Clerical Shadow Sketches." In the cartoon there are two figures that each cast a shadow upon the wall behind. Mr. Spurgeon stands erect, with his finger lifted above his head; the shadow that he casts resembles a lion, and beneath are the words, "The Great Lion of the day." The second shadow is cast by an archbishop, who stoops in the pulpit, toothless as he is, and whose shadow assumes the shape of an ancient woman. The motto beneath this is, "The Funny Old Woman of the day."

There is truth in the sarcasm, for, as with all reformers and leaders of men, there is a leonine element in Mr. Spurgeon. He would never have acquired the influence that he has had it not been for the lion-like audacity and hardihood that made him despise what would have long since demolished weaker men.

A third caricature is called the "Old and New Conductors." In one cartoon there is an omnibus, which is explained to be the *Regular*. There is a bishop's mitre above the door, and beneath it on the door we can read the stages, Lambeth, Westminster, St. Paul's, Canterbury, with the announcement, "The old fares all the way." In the fellow-cartoon we see the *Opposition omnibus*. Upon the roof of the latter is a small banneret bearing the announcement, "Cheap fares." Upon the door we read, "New Park Street Chapel." Mr. Spurgeon stands as conductor; the 'bus is filled inside and out, while an eager throng strive to catch the new conductor's eye.

The same idea is expressed in "The Slow Coach" and "The Fast Train." The slow coach is seen starting from the sign of the Golden Fleece. A bishop acts as driver; his two horses are named Church and State. The companion picture, "The Fast Train," represents a locomotive named "The Spurgeon," upon which the new preacher, with his hair streaming in the wind, sits driving the engine as boys might a go-cart. His toy-reins pass round the funnel of the locomotive.

A more amusing sketch represents Mr. Spurgeon in the midst of an enormous crinoline, which he is relentlessly demolishing. Beneath the picture is the explanatory sentence, "Crinoline torn in tatters." "He would rather see his sisters habited as Quakers, than that they should magnify, extend, and enlarge themselves as they now did." This is dated 1859.

During the previous year (1858) there appeared a drawing which suggested a possible use for the *Great Eastern*. It was to employ it as a leviathan casino, one of the attractions of which would be that "C. H. Spurgeon would preach every three hours."

In 1861 a different cartoon appeared; it represented Mr. Spurgeon as Greatheart. He stands arrayed in complete armour in the midst of enemies, whose darts have broken harmlessly upon his mail. Foul and unclean things crouch at his feet. One scowling satyr is engaged upon a caricature of the champion. A hideous figure, with legs like a shrimp, has crawled along the telegraph wires; it has discharged a dart which represents a venomous telegram.

A far worse picture appeared in the same year, when, on the 10th of October 1861, Mr. Spurgeon lectured upon "The Gorilla and the land he inhabits." This drew forth a series of pictures, in one of which the gorilla stands arm in arm with the lecturer. In another, Mr. Spurgeon is himself represented as a gorilla; his name

is given as "Rev. C. H. Gorilla." The most amusing of the series is "The Gorilla upon C. H. Spurgeon." In this sketch a gorilla discourses upon the great preacher, to gorillas, placing his front paw upon a bust of Mr. Spurgeon.

Another lecture, which was delivered in the November of the same year, upon "Shrews and how to tame them," provoked a sarcastical sketch in which Mr. Spurgeon appears as Petruchio in "The Taming of the Shrew."

"The Dream of Paul the Clerk," is the title of another cartoon. It represents a choice assortment of sign-posts, upon each of which is the head of a prominent divine. In the explanatory text is this reference:—

> "The Caledonian preacher,
> Though not a prophet, a good creature!
> And near him cheerful Mr. Spurgeon,
> Fisher of men, small fry and sturgeon."

The sign-post that is covered by Mr. Spurgeon's head has three arms. That pointing towards Rome says, "Beware of man-traps; this is not the true rock." In the middle the arm says, "No thoroughfare; no purgatory." The left arm shows the way "To heaven direct; no roundabout road."

A choice specimen of the criticism that Mr. Spurgeon had to endure is the following, which appeared in 1872. The writer speaks of Mr. Spurgeon's style as "a happy combination of the style of John Bunyan,

a coarse imitation of Rowland Hill and Sydney Smith, some of the antics of the late Mr. Grimaldi, and a choice collection of native slang," by which mixture, we are informed in shockingly bad English, "he produced a taking novelty in preaching." The critic must forgive our disbelief in his opinion, for men are not permanently and largely influenced except by truth.

During 1878 a caricature appeared which represented, "C. H. Spurgeon as an authority in the matter of dips." The great preacher is shown as snuffing out "a Roman candle."

After all, Mr. Spurgeon has never been assailed by the coarse abuse such as Wesley endured from Hogarth and others. The times would not tolerate the grossness which was once esteemed as wit, but the malice which underlies both attempts to damage a messenger of God arises from the same cause. These cartoons Mr. Spurgeon preserves, and so little do they trouble him, that when he is unwell he amuses himself by looking over them.

Rev. J. L. Keys supplies us with the following anecdote of Mr. Spurgeon's ministry at New Park Street.

There was a man who was in the habit of spending his Sunday evenings with his friends. One Sunday evening, while on his way to purchase some gin, he noticed the crowd of people waiting to shake hands with the young preacher. The man noticed Mr. Spurgeon, and thought, "Well, he looks a good sort."

On the following Sunday evening the man again witnessed the hearty welcome that the people gave to Mr. Spurgeon, and he also pressed forward to shake hands. He crushed into the chapel, and managed to secure standing-room on the top of the stairs. He listened with wonder, until the preacher said, "Even that man standing in the gallery with a pint of gin in his pocket may be saved." "Oh," thought the man, "who has been telling him about me?"

On the 8th of April 1884, Mr. Spurgeon said at a prayer-meeting: "There came to see me last week on some business a gentleman, who said, 'A minute ago I felt overwhelmed.'

"'Why?' said I.

"'Well, because when I entered this place I saw a notice that you had been preaching from the text "What's your life."'

"'What is there special about that?'

"'The day that you were twenty-one you preached from that text.'

"'A very different sermon from that I preached this time, no doubt.'

"'I have not been able to shake hands with you before; I have great pleasure in doing so to-day.'

"'Why should you have pleasure in shaking hands with me?'

"'I was dreadfully down when you were twenty-one years old. I was so depressed and melancholy that I should certainly have destroyed myself if I had not

heard you preach that sermon on your twenty-first birthday. It encouraged me to keep on in the battle of life, and what is better, it made such an impression on me that I have never gone back to what I was before. Though I live a long way off from here, no one loves you more than I do. You brought me out of a horrible pit.' I felt so glad to hear this testimony, for these things are our joy and delight."

Of that period Mr. Spurgeon himself says, when speaking about his astonishing success, "I recollect when I first went to preach to a mere handful of people in London—such a handful; but, oh! how they could pray! How we sometimes seemed to plead as though we could see the angel present and must have a blessing, but we were all so awe-struck with the solemnity of prayer that we said, 'Let us be quiet.' And we sat for some moments silent, while the Lord's power seemed to overshadow us, and all the minister could do was to pronounce the blessing, and say, 'Dear friends, we have had the Spirit here to-night; let us go home, and not lose His blessed influences.' Then down came the blessing; the house was filled with hearers; and many souls were converted; and I always give all the honour to God first, and then to a praying people."

At a public meeting held some ten years ago, Mr. Spurgeon spoke about one of his deacons—"they were very venerable deacons in those days, and were always very solemn in their demeanour"—who once

pulled out his huge gold watch, and held it in front of the young minister. This was intended to remind him that he was half a minute late. Mr. Spurgeon is a most punctual man, and, nothing daunted by the reproof, he steadily examined the watch with the cool remark, "It is a very good watch, but out of date."

Another and a worse form of opposition then ridicule appeared when the growing congregation met in the Royal Surrey Music Hall, in Walworth. The enlarged chapel was still far too small to admit the crowds that came, and as Exeter Hall was not then available, the Music Hall was secured for the Sunday-evening services.

On Sunday evening, October 19, 1856, the first service in the Surrey Music Hall was held. It is estimated that 12,000 persons thronged the vast building. In the *Sword and Trowel* for March 1890, Mr. Spurgeon re-tells the story of the evening. The preacher upon his arrival found all the approaches to the Gardens thronged, and with difficulty made his way through the multitude. A vast throng stood outside the building, and crowds were unable to even enter the gardens. The service had proceeded as far as the second prayer, when suddenly from various parts of the vast building there rose cries of "Fire! fire! The galleries are giving way! The place is falling!" The audience was seized with a sudden panic, and many, terrified beyond self-control, hurled themselves down the stairs, trampling

upon each other and injuring themselves. As they forced their way out, others entered the building, which increased the panic. Mr. Spurgeon did his utmost to calm the frightened people, and to some extent he succeeded. But when he began to preach, the miscreants who had created the panic made such noises that he closed the service. Seven persons were killed and many were seriously injured. Dr. Campbell says, "The thing bore the impress of a plot to which hundreds of persons at least appeared to be parties."

To Mr. Spurgeon the shock of the accident was terrible. "I was for a short time incapable of any mental effort," he says. "Who would not be? How great a trial to have a number of one's hearers killed or maimed? A word about the calamity, and even the sight of the Bible, brought from me a flood of tears and utter distraction of mind." For "it might well seem that the ministry which promised to be so largely influential was silenced for ever. There were persons who said so exultingly. They knew not what they said." Mr. Spurgeon went to stay for a time in the country, and so distressed in mind was he, that it was feared that his reason would give way under the pressure of grief. One day, while thus disturbed, he stood beneath a tree, when there flashed upon him that text, "Him hath God highly exalted and given for a Prince and a Commander of the people." "In a moment," said he, "my fear was gone. I felt that I was only a private soldier, and that Christ was my

leader. I felt that I could go back to the battle, which was really His warfare."

Mr. Spurgeon gives an instance of the malice with which he was then regarded by many persons; of which, indeed, the outbreak was the expression. For while it is possible that the panic was caused by thieves for purposes of plunder, some have believed that it was an attempt to discredit the young preacher. Be that as it may, a gentleman applied to the local magistrates for a police inquiry into the catastrophe. He hinted that to gather such a large congregation was a serious offence, and, ignorant of the fact that the hall had been licensed for public worship, he asked that Mr. Spurgeon and his friends should be treated as rogues and vagabonds because they collected contributions from the audience towards the expenses of the services.

A mission-hall and schools have been recently erected upon the site of this music-hall as a memorial of this terrible calamity.

After the accident the services continued to be held in the hall on Sunday mornings, and great crowds were thus gathered to hear the preaching of the Gospel. It is pleasing to observe that, although he had many enemies, Mr. Spurgeon found friends in unexpected quarters, and perhaps on account of the sympathy created for him by the recent accident. A writer in the *Times* described his preaching with approval, and suggested, "If I were the examining chaplain of the Archbishop of ——, I would say, 'May

it please your Grace, here is a man able to preach eloquently, able to fill the largest church in England with his voice, and, what is more to the purpose, with people. And may it please your Grace, here are two churches in the metropolis, St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey. What does your Grace think of inviting Mr. Spurgeon, this heretical Calvinist and Baptist, who is able to draw 10,000 souls after him, just to try his voice one Sunday morning in the nave of either of those churches?' At any rate, I will answer for one thing, that if he preaches in Westminster Abbey, we shall not have a repetition of the disgraceful practice now common in that church, of having the sermon before the anthem, in order that those who would quit the church before the arid sermon begins may be forced to stay it out for the sake of the music which follows it."

In the Greville Memoirs we find the following notice:—

"*February 8th.*—I am just come from hearing the celebrated Mr. Spurgeon preach in the Music Hall of the Surrey Gardens. It was quite full; he told us from the pulpit that 9000 persons were present. The service was like the Presbyterian—psalms, prayer, expounding a psalm, and a sermon. He is certainly very remarkable, and undeniably a fine character; not remarkable in person, in face rather resembling a smaller Macaulay; a very clear and powerful voice, which was heard through the hall: a manner natural, impassioned,

and without affectation or extravagance; wonderful fluency and command of language, abounding in illustration, and very often of a very familiar kind, but without anything either ridiculous or irreverent. He gave me an impression of his earnestness and sincerity; speaking without book or notes, yet his discourse was evidently very carefully prepared. The text was 'Cleanse me from my secret sins,' and he divided it into heads—the misery, the folly, the danger (and a fourth which I have forgotten) of secret sins, in all of which he was very eloquent and impressive. He preached for about three-quarters of an hour, and, to judge of the handkerchiefs and the audible sobs, with great effect."

About this time an unknown critic began to send to Mr. Spurgeon a list of minute errors that he had detected in his sermons. Mr. Spurgeon has always been free from the petty jealousy that begrudges another's success or resents counsel. He read and noted the somewhat austere criticisms which duly arrived every Monday morning. Blessed is the man who can tolerate anonymous and caustic criticism! For example, the critic would point out that a phrase occurred more than once in a sermon. On one occasion the preacher quoted the line—

"Nothing in my hand I bring;"

and the critic commented, "You have no need to inform us of the vacuity of your hands."

For three years Mr. Spurgeon occupied the Surrey Gardens Music Hall, and with increasing popularity and success. During that period the traveller David Livingstone took part in the service, and made Mr. Spurgeon's acquaintance.

After that great traveller had given his life for Africa, a sermon of Mr. Spurgeon's was found in one of his boxes. Mr. Spurgeon has preserved it as a precious treasure.

The proprietors of the Hall determined to open the building for Sunday-evening amusements, and thereupon Mr. Spurgeon removed with his congregation to Exeter Hall. He preached in the last-named place from 18th December 1859 until the 1st of March 1861, until, in fact, he entered upon his work in the huge Tabernacle.

Dr. Binney, during this period of anxiety and testing, showed his appreciation of the new preacher. To some detractors he said, "I myself have enjoyed some amount of popularity; I have always been able to draw together a congregation; but in the person of Mr. Spurgeon we see a young man, be he who he may, and come whence he will, who, at twenty-four hours' notice, can command a congregation of 20,000 people. Now I have never been able to do that, and I never knew of any one else who could do it."

It was not in London alone; wherever he went the people flocked to hear him.

On the 7th of October 1857 he preached at the Crystal

Palace to an audience of 24,000 people. A sum of nearly £700 was then contributed towards the Indian fund!

Here may, perhaps, be the place to allude to Mr. Spurgeon's outdoor sermons. In his "Lectures to my Students" (second series), Mr. Spurgeon describes some of his open-air experiences.

In Oxfordshire a friend once arranged a preaching-place for him which was situated in the midst of a wood. The undergrowth and most of the trees were cleared away, leaving a large square which was shaded by a number of young oaks. Alleys were cut through the wood, which added to the romantic beauty of the spot, as well as furnished ready access to the preaching-place.

Mr. Spurgeon has frequently preached on the lawn of a friend's house in Scotland. Beyond the lawn natural terraces planted with fir trees rise, forming a natural gallery.

"I once preached a sermon in the open air in haying-time during a violent storm of rain. The text was, 'He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth,' and surely we had the blessing as well as the inconvenience. I was sufficiently wet, and my congregation must have been drenched; but they stood it out, and I never heard that any one was the worse in health, though, thank God, I have heard of souls brought to Jesus under that discourse."

"I remember well preaching between Cheddar Cliffs.

What a noble position! What beauty and sublimity! . . . Concluding a discourse in that place, I called upon those mighty rocks to bear witness that I had preached the Gospel to the people, and to be a testimony against them at the last great day if they rejected the message. Only the other day I heard of a person to whom that appeal was made useful by the Holy Spirit."

CHAPTER IV.

THE LAST OF THE PURITANS.

"In the church of the wilderness he wrought,
Shaping his creed at the forge of thought,
And with Thor's own hammer welded and bent
The iron links of his argument,
Which strove to grasp in its mighty span
The purpose of God and the fate of man!
Yet faithful still in his daily round
To the weak and the poor and the sin-sick found;
The schoolman's lore and the casuist's art
Drew warmth and life from his fervent heart."

—WHITTIER.

"A parish priest should be like a French milliner, always bringing out new modes, in order to keep up the interest and stimulate a languishing taste."—CARDINAL CARLO BORROMEO.

"ONLY A NOISE" — THE HUGE TABERNACLE — MAKING AND MENDING SAINTS—"EAT YOUR WAY THROUGH AND FATTEN AS YOU GO"—"WHAT'S IN A VOICE?"—KNOCKING THE CANDLE DOWN—DIALOGUE OF DEVILS.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN once told a story about two Irishmen who, soon after their landing upon the American continent, were greatly alarmed by a grand chorus of bull-frogs. They valiantly advanced to meet this "inimy," and were puzzled not to find him. Said one

to the other, "And sure, Jamie, I believe it is just nothing but a *noise*."

The which belief was held and expressed by many people at the beginning of Mr. Spurgeon's life in London. The noise, however, continued, and their opinions must have been rudely broken when the first steps were taken for the erection of the huge Tabernacle.

Such a building had become a necessity, and indeed as such had been foreseen by many of Mr. Spurgeon's friends; but none the less is it an audacious act of faith. The great cathedrals of England and the Continent were not erected for sermons to large congregations. The daring belief that seven thousand persons could be gathered Sabbath after Sabbath to a simple service devoid of musical attractions would be more observed if it had not fully justified itself.

It stands as a most marvellous testimony to the power of the Gospel that for thirty years a congregation of seven thousand persons has assembled, Sabbath after Sabbath, in one of the worst districts of a wicked city, not to listen to an anthem, but to hear sermons! It is true that great throngs listened to Whitfield, Wesley, and other great orators, but none of these men ministered continuously in one place. There is nothing like it in the history of the human race; the fact is unique, as Mr. Spurgeon is a distinct and marked personality among all the great intellects that have been employed by God in the service of the Gospel.

The foundation-stone of this remarkable edifice was

laid by Sir Morton Peto on the 16th of August 1859.

Mr. Spurgeon's father at this gathering said: "I always thought my son did wrong in coming to London; now you see that I was wrong. I always thought he was wrong in not going to college; I tried three or four times with him one night with a dear friend that loved him, but it was no use; he said, 'No, I will never go to college, only in strict obedience to you as a father.' There I left the matter; and I see that God has been with him, though I thought it was a wrong step in him to go to London. And I thought it was a wrong step for me to come here to-night; but perhaps I may be mistaken again. I can tell you it is one of the happiest days of my life. I feel beyond myself when I think of the kindness which has been shown to him when but a youth. I ascribe it all to God's goodness and the earnest prayers of his people. He has been exposed to temptation from every source, and even now, my friends, he is not free from it. You have prayed for him, and God has sustained him. Oh! let me entreat you to continue your prayers. Every one here to-night, go home and pray for your pastor. A meeting like this is enough to carry a man beyond himself and fill his heart with pride; but the grace of God is all-sufficient. Some persons said to me—I do not know what their motive was—'Your son will never last in London six months; he has no education.' I said, 'You are greatly mis-

taken; he has had the best education that can possibly be had; God has been his teacher, and he has had earthly teachers too.' I knew that so far as education went he could manage London very well. Then they said his health would fail; but it has not failed him yet. He has had enough to shake his constitution, it is true, but God has been very merciful to him. I think if there is one thing that would crown my happiness to-day, it would be to see his grandfather here. I should have loved to see him here. He said, 'Boy, don't ask me to go; I am too old; I am overcome with God's goodness and mercy to me.' He is always talking about him. Old people like to have something to talk about, so he always talks about his grandson. And next, I should like, my dear friends, to have seen his mother here. I believe, under God's grace, his mother has been the means of leading him to Christ."

Judge Payne concluded the meeting in a characteristic speech, in the course of which he said: "Now what does 'C. H. S.' mean? Why, it means first, Charles Haddon Spurgeon. But I don't mean that. C. H. S. means a *Clear-Headed Speaker* who is *Clever* in *Handling Subjects* in a *Cheerful-Hearted Style.* He is a *Captain* of the *Hosts* of *Surrey;* he is a *Cold-Hating Spirit;* he has a *Chapel-Heating Skill;* he is a *Catholic-Humbug Smasher;* he is a *Care-Hushing Soother;* he is a *Child-Helping Strengthener;* he is a *Christ-Honouring Soldier;* and he is a *Christ-Honoured Servant.*"

On 1st March 1861, just before he left Exeter Hall,

Mr. Spurgeon said: "In the providence of God, we, as a church and people, have had to wander often. This is our third sojourn within these walls. It is now about to close. We have had at all times a compulsion of mercy; sometimes a compulsion of conscience, at other times a compulsion of pleasure, as on this occasion. I am sure that when we first went to the Surrey Music Hall, God went with us. Satan went too, but he fled before us. That frightful calamity, the impression of which can never be erased from my mind, turned out, in the providence of God, to be one of the most wonderful means of turning public attention to special services, and I do not doubt that, fearful catastrophe as it was, it has been the mother of multitudes of blessings. The Christian world noted the example and saw its after-success; they followed it; and to this day in the theatre and in the cathedral the word of Christ is preached where it was never preached before. In each of our movings we have had reason to see the hand of God, and here particularly; for many residents in the West End have in this place come to listen to the Word who probably might not have taken a journey beyond the river. Here God's grace has broken hard hearts; here have souls been renewed and wanderers reclaimed. 'Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength; give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name.' And now we journey to the house which God has in so special a manner given to us, and this day would I pray, as Moses did, 'Rise up, Lord,

and let Thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee.'"

On the 25th of March 1861 the opening services of the huge Tabernacle commenced, and before their termination the whole of the cost of the building had been met. Nearly £32,000 had been collected, the larger part by Mr. Spurgeon himself, and all had been paid for without any subsidy or grant in aid from the State. What responsibility and anxiety the gathering of this money involved will never be known by those who did not share it; but Mr. Spurgeon has revealed one or two secrets about the enterprise.

The one is, that he realised before the commencement of the undertaking that the design was immense, and therefore he trusted in God for strength to accomplish it. He says somewhere that if it had been a small undertaking, he might perhaps have attempted it in his own strength; but because it was so vast, he cast it all upon God. Hence the Tabernacle is a proof both of the power of prayer and of the consequences of fervent faith. If it required any inscription, over its doors might be written, "Ask, Trust, Enjoy." Its outward appearance is well known through all the Christian world; it is almost as familiar as are the features of the great preacher, and it, like all his work, is simple, good, and the best possible for its purpose.

Then Mr. Spurgeon himself tells us that he and a friend since deceased especially prayed one evening amidst the planks, bricks, and stone, that not only might

the work prosper, but that not one of the workmen might be injured—a prayer which was most minutely answered. Why should it be thought a strange thing for God to hear the prayer of faith? Who ever heard of a volume of unanswered prayers?

Yet he realised the awful strain preaching in such a huge structure involved.

"When I took the Tabernacle," he said in 1875, "I expected that it would kill me in seven years. I have continued to exist for fourteen years, but I cannot last much longer."

The church that is gathered in this huge building now numbers 5328 members. In addition to the help of a large staff of elders and deacons, it enjoys the ministry of the Rev. J. A. Spurgeon, who is co-pastor with his brother, and of the Rev. W. Stott, once minister of St. John's Wood.

The two brothers are as unlike mentally as they are physically, but their happy co-service says not a little for the high qualities of each. The Rev. J. A. Spurgeon is one of the most keen of business men, and the quiet work that he effects out of sight is the secret of a large part of the success of the huge church over which his brother presides.

A few lines should be devoted to Mr. Stott, who is an original in his way. A more spiritual, lowly, or earnest man does not breathe, but he has a knack of blending the most incongruous metaphors and of saying the most odd things.

We shall never forget hearing him speak at Acton, when he related the story of his conversion. He related that when his father refused to allow young Stott to pray, the boy said his prayers at the keyhole of his father's door, and thus compelled him to hear. Of a brother of ours he said, "He is a man who would hang the devil while any one else was looking for the rope." At the Tabernacle he recently prayed thus: "Lord, create some new saints and mend the old ones;" a petition undoubtedly needful, but quaintly expressed. Another prayer was, "Lord, fill us inside and out," which process he illustrated by supposing a full bottle floating in a sea. "It would be full inside and out," said Mr. Stott. Altogether a man who would be invaluable to a satirist, and still more valuable to those who, in spite of these blemishes, can admire sincerity, self-denial, and earnest self-sacrifice.

In connection with the Metropolitan Tabernacle there are many institutions that cannot be alluded to here. That great hive of Christian life is never still, and one admires the tact and skill that contrives to maintain so many varying forms of agency, and all in efficient operation. Some of these agencies will be best treated separately, but a word may be given here to one or two less known enterprises. A number of smaller churches or mission stations are supported, with their apparatus of Sunday and Ragged Schools, tract distribution, Bands of Hope, and similar enterprises by the Tabernacle Church. Two benefit societies, almshouses, and Sunday

and day schools do not exhaust the list; and other societies too numerous to name have gradually grown out of the one main purpose, which was and ever has been the conversion of the ungodly by the faithful preaching of the Gospel.

Never before in the history of the Christian Church have so many gigantic philanthropic and religious enterprises grown around one single man.

The building and the paying for the building of the Tabernacle were a life-work worthy of a giant, but they have not been permitted to dissipate Mr. Spurgeon's strength. He regarded them as wholly subsidiary to his main purpose, and he continued to achieve both, while, in Whitfield's phrase, "hunting for souls."

Here will perhaps be the best place in which to refer to Mr. Spurgeon's claim to the title that stands at the head of this chapter. It was either Carlyle or Dr. Dale, we believe, who first applied it to him, and if for "last" we substitute "modern," the phrase will not be disputed. Mr. Spurgeon is a modern Puritan, and that in more senses than one. He is a devout admirer of Puritan theology, as are all men who will take pains to read it, and he does not scruple to avow his preference. To his students he once said, while speaking of the Puritans, "Go at them like mice at a rich cheese; eat your way through, and fatten as you go."

It is, of course, a pity that the Puritan divines had the gift of continuance in such plenitude, and the even less commendable gift of minute subdivision. Some of

them used quaint, and even indelicate titles, but these blemishes were the faults of their time, and were not offensive in an age of plain dealing.

Mr. Spurgeon has never defended these faults, but he has always admired the solid adherence to the great essentials of the Gospel, the industrious employment of every power in the preaching of the Gospel, and the martyr spirit which has made most of the Puritan treatises tender with the woes of those who died rather than yield to what they believed to be sin.

It is easy to laugh at their objections to postures and dresses, but believing, as they did, that these things were sinful, they could not, without violating their consciences, have done other than they did.

Charles Kingsley has pointed out that the Puritan style of dress has most singularly triumphed; no English gentleman would now think of dressing as did the Cavaliers. And the theology of the Puritans, stripped of its defects of language and style, will survive still, because it was a presentation of those truths which can never be forgotten. The dress of the Gospel must vary from age to age, because human speech fluctuates, but the Gospel itself must not and cannot be altered. In as far as the Puritan theology then was true to the New Testament, Mr. Spurgeon is a Puritan, and there are many who think and believe with him. For the essence of Puritanism is the prime principle of Protestantism, the sole authority of the Word of God,

the right of private judgment, and the sole sufficiency of the work of Christ, as applied by the Holy Ghost for salvation. If to hold these doctrines is to be a Puritan, there are multitudes in Britain who are proud of the name.

Mr. Spurgeon's theology is tolerably widely known, for he has always had the courage of his beliefs. He has always spoken with the accent of conviction, and hence he has been heard. For men will never listen long to "guesses after truth;" they crave certainty, for they must know to enjoy. We have heard Mr. Spurgeon more than once relate with indescribable humour how he was accustomed to tease one of the variable prophets who now and then appear. This divine had changed his religious beliefs more than once, and Mr. Spurgeon, when he met him, would say—

"Well, what are you now?"

"Well, that is unkind," said the victim once. "You asked me that the last time we met."

"Did I? Well, what are you now?" persisted Mr. Spurgeon; and the man had to confess that he had once more altered his opinions.

Of course every religious teacher must grow, but there are some things that he cannot outgrow. No musician can outgrow the laws of harmony, and the multiplication table is the basis of all calculations; within certain limits only is healthy growth possible. It is not correct to say that theology is a progressive science; it is rather an unfolding of beauties

that lay concealed until higher powers revealed their presence.

There have always been two opinions among Christian people upon the doctrines of grace, freewill, and the permanence of the work of the Divine Spirit upon the heart. It is only in prayer that the saints appear as one, and while engaged in prayer only they are really one. God has permitted a diversity of opinions in order by the differences of men to attain His purpose.

Mr. Spurgeon is a Calvinist, not exactly of the Fuller type, although he is nearer Andrew Fuller than any other great divine. It is not perhaps too much to say that he is a type in himself, for his system of theology and his method of presenting it are characteristic and most pronounced. This is as it should be, for every man must give an account of himself and of his personal peculiarities before God.

Reference will be made in a future chapter to the sermons; suffice it here to notice that a family likeness is evident in each discourse.

"In speaking of Mr. Spurgeon's success, 'How do you account for it all?' said a minister to me.[1]

"And I replied, 'Have you read the volumes of sermons?'

"'Who can wade through all these?' he said.

"And I replied, 'True; but if you would wade through them—and such a task to a minister would not be a difficult, but a very instructive exercise—you

[1] Paxton Hood in "Lamps and Pitchers."

would find in Mr. Spurgeon's sermons that one of the striking elements of their greatness and strength is their average power. Of course some sermons are better than others, some are more eloquent, passionate, vehement; but there is an average of strength and raciness very delightful, also very astonishing, but which goes far to explain the staid and sustained attractiveness of the preacher."

"In freshness and vigour of thought, in simplicity and purity of language, in grasp of Gospel truth, and in tact and force in its presentation, he is perhaps without a peer in the pulpit. . . . He continues to grow in brilliancy as well as in efficiency year by year. No one can yet point to the slightest indication of exhaustion in either his faculties or his resources. This, doubtless, is attributable in a measure to his industry and well-directed application, as well as to natural ability and great personal piety. But that which seems to distinguish Mr. Spurgeon from all the preachers of his time, and, it may be said, of all time, is the inexhaustible variety which characterises his sermons" (Dr. Holme). The same writer adds: "He handles his text with as much apparent reverence and appreciation as if those few words were the only words that God had ever spoken. The text is the germ which furnishes the life, the spirit, and the substance of the discourse. Every sermon has the peculiar flavour and fragrance and colour of the Divine seed-truth, of which it is the growth. The sermon to his view lies in the text, like

the flower in the heart of the seed; all he has to do is to develop it. Thus, as the Bible is a storehouse of seed-truths inexhaustible and of infinite variety, so Mr. Spurgeon's sermons are never alike. If he brings you up again and again to the same old truths, it is always on a different side, or in a new light, or with new surroundings."

Paxton Hood, who is no mean authority upon pulpit eloquence, thus speaks of what we have always regarded as one of the wonderful gifts of the orator—his voice:—"Once heard it can never be forgotten; its sweetness, its perfect submission to the will of the speaker, its range, and a somewhat that is peculiar to loving and gracious souls, linger in the heart with an undying charm and force." . . . "There can be no doubt that perhaps first, and before all things, the voice counts for much—a voice of astonishing compass—a voice the waves from which roll with astonishing ease over the immense company, full, sweet, and clear—clear and ringing as a bell; a voice like the man and the matter—independent of most nervous impressions and all nervous agitations. It is a clarion of a voice. Other voices of orators have pierced us more—have possessed more accent—have been able to whisper better; but we never knew nor conceived a voice with such thunderous faculty. I have called it a trumpet, and, better still, a bell: it is not a perfect peal, but its tones roll on—there is no exhaustion; the tones are not many, but they are full and sweeping,

and they give the idea of a great, fully-informed, and immensely capacious will and nature. Mr. Spurgeon might possess many of his mental attributes, but manifestly this power of being easily heard, of always striking the right pitch, so that he compasses immense assemblies, is one great element of success in holding the attention of masses of people. It is an old idea, and a very true one, we believe, that the voice is the man; as the voice is, so the soul; a full voice is a full nature. The last achievement of Mr. Spurgeon (in 1867) will be regarded by many as the most wonderful of all in his early but extraordinary career. Whatever the capacities of the Agricultural Hall of Islington may be, and its minimum of 12,000, or its maximum of 20,000 auditors, unquestionably the Church notes in its history very few instances of preachers able to attract and to hold in attention so mighty a mass. True, audiences grow like avalanches, and as force grows, the means of sustaining force also grow. But the greatest of the preachers the Church has known, such as Chrysostom, Augustine, Hall, Chalmers, or Irving, however the passion of their accents might have been desired, and the majesty or music of their eloquence, would have found themselves as foiled by their own voice as a silver bell on the mast of a vessel in the roar of a storm, in immense masses. The measured cadences, the swing and toll, the melodious roar, if we may use the expression, of Mr. Spurgeon's voice rises rather like the fabled Inchcape bell, tolling highest and

deepest when the waves and winds are at their loudest. It may be, as I have implied it is, Mr. Spurgeon's least attribute, but it is that without which he would have possessed all his other attributes in vain for the immense influence they possess and wield."

We give another extract from the same author, who thus speaks of Mr. Spurgeon's composition: "It is a level style on the whole, though of course we are prepared to note great exceptions; it is a thoroughly English style; it rolls, yet the sentences are never long; they never will be where the wheels of the mind are moving swiftly and the furnace of the soul is hot."

Mr. Spurgeon's adventures as a preacher have been full of interest. Now and then he relates incidents such as this (told in "Sermons in Candles"):—He was once preaching in a small pulpit, and with a candle carefully placed on either side of the pulpit. Forgetting where he was, Mr. Spurgeon made a vigorous movement, and one of the candles fell on the bald head of a man below. Says Mr. Spurgeon, the sufferer "looked up with an expression which I can see at this moment, and it makes me smile still. I took no more notice of the accident than to weave it into what I was saying; and I believe most of my hearers considered it to have been a striking practical illustration of my remark that accompanied it, 'How soon is the glory of life dashed down!'"

Oh, to have been there to have beheld the poor man with a burnt head and the ready-witted preacher!

We have heard Mr. Spurgeon more than once relate the following incident. He preached once from the text, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Psalm xxii. 1). He was very unwell at the time and suffering from intense mental sorrow, and from his own bitter anguish he depicted the horror of a soul forsaken by God. After the service a wild man, with his eyes starting out of his head, almost, if not quite insane, came into the vestry, and, in listening to the poor man's story, Mr. Spurgeon understood why he himself had been permitted to suffer. Five years afterwards they met again, and then Mr. Spurgeon heard that the poor God-forsaken man had found peace and rest in Christ.

We once heard him relate how a poor cripple (in a Midland town, we think it was) felt convinced that if he could only persuade Mr. Spurgeon to come and pray beside him that he would be healed. Mr. Spurgeon came into the town, visited the house, and prayed beside the cripple: the boy was cured, worked for his living, and continued well after the lapse of some years. "It was no miracle," said Mr. Spurgeon; "only the boy believed in me and therefore he was healed." So Mr. Spurgeon thought that probably many of the Mediæval miracles, if real, and those of the faith-healers that were genuine were effected.

At the risk of being too diffuse, we mention a few other unlike incidents, which we have also heard from his lips. A Dutch gentleman wrote to Mr. Spurgeon

once thanking him for the benefit that he (the Dutchman) had derived from reading Mr. Spurgeon's sermons. But, to his grief, he had discovered that Mr. Spurgeon wore a moustache, after which it would be clearly impossible for him to read the sermons with either pleasure or profit; and, to effect, if possible, a change in the appearance and attire of the obdurate offender, he enclosed a portrait of his own minister, who was carefully shaven and shorn, and who, moreover, wore a huge ruffle several inches deep!

This is almost as bad as the Church who was deeply exercised about the iniquities of a husband and wife connected with their fellowship; the husband actually wore red morocco slippers, which were considered by his fellow-members to be a sure proof of a worldly spirit, and the wife was so insensible to propriety that she wore her hair in ringlets!

Mr. Spurgeon has received his due share of annoyance. On one occasion a lunatic went to his house and obtained an interview. He showed his arm, which he said had been shrivelled up by Mr. Spurgeon, and he declared that he had come to kill him. Mr. Spurgeon talked with the man, and the lunatic said, "After all, you seem a very decent fellow; I don't like to kill you. Have you a brother?"

"Yes; perhaps it was he who offended you," said Mr. Spurgeon, who fully realised the peril in which he stood.

"Perhaps it was," said the man. "No, it must have been you."

Mr. Spurgeon drew himself up and said, "You say I have withered up your arm, you insignificant shrimp! Walk out of that door, or I'll——"

The man walked out of the door, which was speedily closed behind him and secured. The poor lunatic was afterwards captured and detained in safe custody. Mr. Spurgeon's coolness and tact, humanly speaking, saved his life.

Mr. Spurgeon has had his share of annoyance from impostors, as appears from the following:—A man once called upon him, and, failing to obtain a personal interview, he delivered a note, in which he disclosed the fact that he was the father of two noble infants. This estimable parent declared that unless Mr. Spurgeon gave him some money to relieve his wants, he intended to take a pan of charcoal into his room that night and to destroy himself, his wife, and his noble infants.

"If the man does charcoal himself, I shall feel very queer over the thing," said Mr. Spurgeon, and he sent the man ten shillings. He regarded the money with noble scorn, and said, "What a trifle! Do you think I am going to save the lives of my wife and my two 'noble infants' for ten shillings? Take it back to Mr. Spurgeon, and tell him I resent the insult."

Another time Mr. Spurgeon found himself in company with a young man who was grieving his friends by a fast life. The young man prepared for a sermon, but he was surprised when he was asked, "You go in for racing, I think?"

"Yes, I do."

"Good! Keep dogs, and so on?"

"Yes."

"I am glad to hear it. Go on as fast as you can, for when you have spent all, you will be inclined to return."

It is interesting to relate that the young man, who would have resented a sermon, was both surprised and won at this address, and altered his ways.

A man once said to him, "I do more good in the world than you do. You only propagate your own opinions, and I run racehorses."

"Then perhaps you will answer me a riddle, to which I have never yet received an answer. Why does not the devil run express trains to hell?"

"I believe neither in the devil nor hell, and so I can't answer."

"Then I will tell you. It is because he finds that men can get there faster by running racehorses."

Perhaps by far the most remarkable speech that we have heard of was that delivered by Mr. Spurgeon at the laying of the foundation-stone of Devonshire Square Church, Stoke Newington. A former pastor of this ancient church was John Macgowan, a convert of John Wesley. He wrote the famous "Dialogue of Devils," a book once highly popular, though now but little known and less loved. Devonshire Square Church stands at one corner of a street, and at the opposite corner is a public-house.

The then Lord Mayor performed the ceremony of declaring the stone well and truly laid, and then he called upon Mr. Spurgeon to speak. Mr. Spurgeon said: "This church has had a wonderful history; one of its pastors was John Howard Hinton, and another was John Macgowan, the author of the 'Dialogue of Devils.' I fancy I can hear a dialogue of devils to-day. The news comes down to the infernal regions that there is a noise in Stoke Newington. Beelzebub says to one of his imps, 'Go and see what is the matter.'

"'They are laying the foundation-stone of a new church,' reports the spy.

"'That is bad news for our kingdom. Go up again.'

"'The Lord Mayor is present,' reports the imp.

"'Good! good! No good ever comes to the Church when it is connected with the State. Patronage is good for our kingdom. Go up again.'

"The imp comes back and reports, 'There is a public-house at the opposite corner.'

"'Good,' said Beelzebub. 'That church will do no good. Between trusting to civic authority and the public-house, it cannot prosper.'" This characteristic introduction was followed by a speech of remarkable force. There were some circumstances in the arrangements which called forth and justified this severe protest against patronage and a worldly spirit.

CHAPTER V.

"*THE TIRSHATHA.*"

"Classed in their ranks who serve the Lord of Hosts,
He takes his place, nor badge of honour boasts;
Asserts no claim, nor, truckling to the great,
Receives the hireling's guerdon from the State.
Let him who must the preacher's creed deny,
Eschew his words—his works who can decry?
So, clinging to the faith, this soldier true
Holds fast the form and grasps the substance too.
So honest doubt, itself by creeds unbound,
Pays tribute to the faith that works have crowned.
Unhouseled unbelief may, if it can,
Reject the word—it cannot doubt the man.
Glad hearts in home and refuge are his wage,
Echo his words the lips of youth and age.
Oh, kindly pastor, large of heart and brain,
Needs must thy labours cease—their fruit shall long remain."

Prize Acrostic, by H. M. Blaine.

"Above all, let me mind my own personal work, keep myself pure and zealous and believing; labouring to do God's work, and yet not anxious that it should be done by me rather than by others, if God disapprove my doing it."—*The last entry in Dr. Arnold's Journal.*

"DO SOMETHING; DO IT"—EXPECT SUCCESS, AND ATTAIN IT—REPORTS OF THE COLLEGE—"A GOOD BANKER INDEED!"—TWO THINGS FOR A MINISTER—PIONEER AND MISSIONARY WORK.

No man has less of the Pope in his constitution than Mr. Spurgeon; hence he is irreverently but familiarly

known among his intimate friends—at any rate, behind his back—as "the Governor," a title in which he rather glories. And this familiarity is equalled by his practical wisdom in using others for performing needful work.

"Do something—do it!" was the frequent exclamation of a pious man of the last century. "Do something—do it!" is good advice still. Sir John Lawrence said during the Indian mutiny, "Our danger is rather from want of action than from want of means;" and the same is true of the Christian Church of to-day; it needs the motto, "Do something—do it."

Mr. Spurgeon has always been a "Do something" man, and some of his enterprises have vastly outgrown his original expectations; especially is this true of his College. It is a singular fact that nearly every really great ministry has been fruitful in producing other preachers. Thus Francis of Assisi, Dominic, Wycliffe, and Wesley were all remarkable for their power of attracting disciples whom they trained, imbued with their spirit and methods, and then sent forth to continue and extend their work. Every permanent upward religious movement has thus produced both preachers and singers, and by these it has become permanent. The work of Mr. Spurgeon has amounted, on the whole, to a religious reformation, and as such it has proved its vitality by the disciples it has trained and the ministries it has created and sustained. One is not surprised to hear that his College has ever been the favourite

enterprise of Mr. Spurgeon; it alone is occupation sufficient for a lifetime, and as a "Do something" man, it commends itself as much to his judgment as to his affection.

In the course of the thirty-four years of its life, the Pastors' College has trained and sent out into the Baptist ministry not less than 837 men, of whom 654 are at present engaged in evangelistic service of one form or another.

Like all other Tabernacle institutions, it is unique, and bears the impress of the founder's personality. It differs widely from almost all other academies. Its success, however, has justified the method that Mr. Spurgeon adopted.

The students are selected from those who have been previously engaged in preaching, and during their term of study they are boarded in families rather than gathered under one roof.

Dr. Bellamy thus advised a young minister who was in some trepidation as to his future course, "Fill up the cask—*fill up the cask*—FILL UP THE CASK; then if you tap it anywhere, you get a good stream. If you put in but little, it will dribble, dribble, dribble, and you must tap, tap, tap, and then get but little after all." The utmost that a college can do for any man is to teach him how to fill up the cask, that he may dispense the blessing to others, and this Mr. Spurgeon's College has done.

The Pastors' College grew in the most natural manner

out of the original and larger enterprise. Mr. Spurgeon himself says in one of his reports: "The Pastors' College is the genuine result of a successful ministry. It has grown with its growth and strengthened with its strength. It was neither planned nor designed, but presented itself to notice, and asserted its claim for encouragement and support on the ground of its own merits. . . . Its connection with a pastorate of great order, extent, and vitality necessitates a familiarity with Church government, both in its internal and external advantages, which might require years of after experience to obtain."

The College began with one student, a young man named T. W. Medhurst, who had been converted under Mr. Spurgeon's preaching, and been sent out to preach at Billingsgate and elsewhere. His remarkable success induced Mr. Spurgeon to suggest that he should devote his life to preaching. To this Mr. Medhurst agreed, and so he became the first student of the College. It is recorded that early in his ministry Mr. Medhurst called upon Mr. Spurgeon to say that he feared that he had made a mistake.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, I've been preaching for five or six months and have not heard of any conversions."

"You don't expect conversions every time you preach, do you?" asked Mr. Spurgeon.

"No, I don't expect them every time."

"Then be it unto you according to your faith," Mr.

Spurgeon answered. "If you expect great things from God, you'll get them; if you don't, you won't."

To which sensible advice, which is worthy of frequent repetition, may be added three testimonies on preaching, and these from Romish sources.

The Cardinal de Bézulle said, "My first counsel, if you want to preach well, is to pray well; my second is to pray well; my third, fourth, and tenth is still to pray much to God."

"A man whose whole heart was filled with God only would draw the whole world after him," said a French Dominican. "We must love before we can persuade men; love solves difficulties and reveals mysteries, which many words do but render more confused."

"God rewards great orators with the applause of men," said a French princess, the daughter of Louis XIV.; "but he who will preach the Gospel shall be honoured by God to save souls."

Good counsel indeed, and never to be forgotten by the minister of Jesus Christ. Expectant faith, persistent prayer, and an emphatic adherence to the cardinal truths of the Gospel, are conditions which must result in blessing. These have ever been essentials in Mr. Spurgeon's opinion, and they have been insisted on in his College. Perhaps the best idea of the Pastors' College may be gathered from the opinion of one who, just after he had left the institution, wrote:—

"It would be as difficult to prevent a child from talking about his happy home, or a soldier from speak-

ing of his gallant regiment, as to deter one who has just said farewell to the Pastors' College from referring to his Alma Mater. As one who but a day or two since left the dear old place, my mind naturally reverts to her walls, and my lingering thought here finds an utterance. I think no student ever forgets the first day of College life. The hopes and fears, the aspirations and the wonderings as to the future, added to the novelty of the whole experience, go to impress it indelibly upon the mind. Personally, I may say that lessons of humility and of determination were learned on that day, and on many succeeding ones. Somehow or other, those powers which I had mentally invested with some degree of importance assumed smaller proportions as the days passed by, and I discovered that I was even as other men: possibly less than most—certainly not more. To-day I thank God for the discovery, and I believe that it was the prophecy of any progress I may have made since.

"As students, we all found, on entering the Pastors College, that if we desired idleness, we had certainly turned our steps in the wrong direction. The various classes afforded full scope for untiring energies and indomitable perseverance. The matter ever urged even upon the most advanced was, 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after.' Yes, we had plenty of real hard study, whether in the classes for Logic and Metaphysics with Professor Fergusson, or under Professor Marchant with

Cæsar and Xenophon, or taking our loftier flights in the pleasures of Tacitus and Plato; not forgetting Theology, Greek Testament, and Hebrew, with Principal Gracey. I do not think we minded the toil; and if then we were not so grateful for it all as we should have been, I believe we are now becoming more thankful every day.

"However, we sometimes felt fagged out towards the end of the week, but a few helpful words from the Vice-President and a bracing talk from the President on the Friday afternoon, coupled with the College prayer-meeting in the evening, nerved us for further struggle. Those occasions have often been the means of renewing our strength and of relieving the weighted wings of our spirits. Is it the experience of most students? I know not whether it is so or not; but sometimes I have been in danger of forgetting the great end of my student life: in the study itself there have been times when the keen edge of my spiritual life has seemed turned and blunted, when the constant association with books and themes, bearing directly or indirectly upon religious matters, has appeared to dull and deaden the soul's sensibilities to the influence of spiritual things. At such times the stirring words of the President and the prayers of the evening meeting have often been used to bring the Master of our spirits near, and I have entered into the meaning of those words:—

'We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.'

"Reviewing the past, my heart is filled with gratitude for all the help I have received in my spiritual life by my association with the Pastors' College. It might have been otherwise had there not been every incentive towards a holier walk and a fuller consecration to the service of Christ. One often feels that the Christ of the Schools is not the same as He who sat at Samaria's well and who suffered on Calvary—that sometimes the Rose of Sharon seems marred and crushed by the rough hands of polemic gladiators; but to-day I remember with joy the wise counsels to guard jealously our personal piety by communion and study of Scripture, and I think also of the opportunities for preaching the Gospel, when ofttimes the Divine presence was felt, ay, and known too, by the hearts of hearers touched and lives transformed.

"In all our studies the tutors appealed to the highest possible motives. We were not urged to our work on the ground of scholastic attainments, but from the loftier motive of equipment for the ministry of Christ and usefulness in His kingdom. Thus were we helped in our inner lives, and the Saviour became more real to us than He might otherwise have been.

"I presume it is quite a pardonable offence, but we always considered our tutors the very best in the world; and it is only truth to say that all the present students hold precisely the same view. Of course the three tutors differ in temperament, which is only reasonable to expect, since they represent the three countries of

the United Kingdom; but they are grand men; and how far their teaching and characters have gone to mould the thought and life and ministry of the students who have passed under their influence, who can say?

"And so in their classes, and under the instructions of Professor Cheshire in Science, and Professor Richardson in Elocution, my time has passed. These four happy years have sped, forming a bright and glad retrospect, leaving me thankful for the real, hearty brotherhood that has ever existed amongst us as students, and for the love which made us all one. This has ever been characteristic of the men of our College, and it is hoped and believed that the time will never come when the ties of a common salvation and of a conquering cause will be less binding than they are to-day.

"And now, in anticipating my future work, for which the College course has so greatly helped me, I thank Heaven that the pathway leading to the active service of our Lord has been so cheery and so sunlit as the past student years have proved; and I ask your prayers for what has been to so many a very gate of heaven, the Pastors' College."

This may be considered by some as an expression of the natural but undue partiality of a grateful heart; it may perhaps be of service to the candid inquirer to hear the opinion of one who writes as an outsider. He says of the College:—

"The first thing which, as 'a candid friend,' I will acknowledge is that, while I have heard many things that indicate a hearty appreciation, I have also, now and then, heard strictures which make me desirous of defining the niche your College occupies among the ministerial training institutions of the country. The Pastors' College appears to me to have sprung into life amid the throes of the greatest religious and educational revolution this country has witnessed. Both elements of this revolution—the religious and the educational—have, I believe, as they deserve, the entire sympathy of every right-thinking individual in the country, because, when properly treated, they are helpful to each other. For our present purpose, it is not needful to inquire whether the religious movement first excited the educational, or the educational first quickened the religious; nor will I stop to ask whether, in this result, so far as it is seen, religion has gained more from education than education has reaped from religion. The one only outcome I have in view, and that bears a relation to the work of the Pastors' College, is this—and I think it will not be disputed—that there is now more education on the side of religious people, however gravely it may be questioned whether there is more religion on the side of the educated.

"In early days, then, the problem was, How shall the Pastors' College minister to the peculiar need of the times and circumstances that gave it birth? The solution of this problem I have watched, it must be

confessed, at times with considerable anxiety. Will the young school minister satisfactorily and efficiently do the double-mouthed need? Owing its origin directly to a revival of religion, it did not take much discernment to see that it would doubtless suitably provide for the demands of a revived religion. But can it make adequate provision for a revived religion stimulated and accompanied by a higher education? Thus the question stood.

"In deciding whether the Pastors' College has risen to 'the height of this great argument,' it is not a necessary condition to require that all the alumni should be 'wranglers' or 'double firsts.' It meets every equity of the case if there should be a number sufficient to occupy a due proportion of pulpits where scholarship as well as piety is deemed essential in the ministrations. On looking around, what do I behold? Some of the pulpits of the denomination most valuable and illustrious in past generations—the two, Cambridge and Broadmead, most famous of all—I find are occupied by men from the Pastors' College. Nor do I observe that the laurels gained by their predecessors wither in the wearing of these younger men trained in the younger, though not the youngest, school of Baptist pastors.

"Such achievements are, to my mind, full of meaning. When, too, I put these results side by side with the vast and truly sympathetic efforts made to reach the masses which have their typical representatives in the East London Tabernacle and in the Shoreditch

Tabernacle, in the former case backed up by much practical philanthropy extended to the miserable, I cannot but admit that the Pastors' College is effecting a solution of the problem above stated that might give content to the most exact and to the most exacting. To the double-mouthed need it is ministering with a double-handed plenitude. The comprehensiveness which enlists both a spirit and capacity, not only fully abreast of religious life and action, but which has, in many places within my knowledge, inspired and directed them to higher efforts, I submit fully entitles the Pastors' College to take rank with the most vigorous and apt institutions of our times for ministerial training. I take it that its history hitherto has shown that all doubt as to its thorough fitness to fulfil the mission embodied in its name is now laid at rest.

"In all fairness to others as well as to myself, however, I must confess there was a period when fears would come, and doubts also, though I was very averse to give them any entertainment. Would the College be a mere transient growth? Would it subside into the narrow groove of training temporary preachers and itinerant evangelists? Would it give only a rough-and-ready preparation for the lower grades of work, and send no representatives into the higher and more permanent ranks? These were questions with me in common with many friends who wished well to the undertaking. Some early indications gave me hope that in due time a full proportion of the higher

forms would fall to your share. But this was not everywhere recognised, and in some quarters where it was seen to be inevitable it was not much appreciated. I trust a more generous feeling has now set in. I recall the time when you were emerging from the dreary quarters in the basement of the Tabernacle to the light and airy and commodious rooms in the substantial new College buildings, and I wondered whether that change of scene would be marked by a corresponding emergence into a freer and cheerier recognition of the College and its work.

"That such a recognition had long been deserved I was convinced in my own mind. Now, I am bound to testify that I meet with few who are not of that opinion. I am inclined to look upon your new buildings as an outward and visible sign of the esteem, won by dint of merit, from the public at large. I must say, from what I have seen and heard, this esteem had to be won; nay, in some circles compelled. But being gained thus, it is the more valuable, and is likely to be the more durable.

"May I now, without pretending to do anything more than is well within the range of an outside observer, glance at those qualities which have led on to success? I will not venture on the dogmatic, and you may take my opinion for what it is worth.

"I have had many opportunities of observing both the 'brighter stars' and the 'lesser lights' among the preachers that hail from the Pastors' College. I have

found much variety, much dissimilarity in gifts, in capacities, in styles of preaching. But in the midst of this copious variety, I think I have been able to detect a very close family likeness. The point of resemblance, and what has most impressed my mind, is that the Pastors' College men have invariably something definite to say on the great themes of the Gospel. I find they have some crisp and pointed teaching that bears directly on the conscience, concerning the nature of sin, and the one Divine way of escape therefrom. I find that they do not aim to set these things forth on a basis of speculation, but on the authority of God's Word. And I cannot but say that even where the finer graces of style may be wanting—where there may be very little of eloquence, or ornament, or illustration—yet the wholesome plainness of sound doctrine, delivered with the accent of a heartfelt conviction, which I generally find among your students, has a grace and an eloquence all its own, and storms the human heart. I feel assured, too, that such ministrations are on the line of the great Evangelical testimony and message of God to perishing men in all ages. These are the chief qualities which I believe have conciliated the affections and won the support of so many of the best friends of the Gospel in 'all the churches.'

"Alongside with these leading characteristics I note others. I regard it as a most hopeful feature that your men seem to be alive and awake to the requirements of their office. In the absence of university examinations,

which I understand are not comprised in your methods, you have succeeded somehow in thoroughly arousing the energies of your men and drawing out their capacities. I notice they come forth from College, not as if their energies had been spent there, but invigorated. An impulse rests on them; there is movement in them, and they, as a rule, rise to the demands of their work. This is a great point. For whatever be the educational standard—whether it be so low as in Queen Elizabeth's days, when some parish clergymen were ordered by the Queen in Council to peruse the lessons in private, because they were 'but meane readers;' or so high as Edward Irving set it, when he said 'that no man is furnished for the ministry till he can unclasp his pocket Bible, and wherever it opens, discourse from it largely and spiritually to the people;' or so much beside the mark as to consist chiefly in 'Pagan literature,' as Mr. Mozley confesses was the case with himself and others at Oxford fifty years ago—no ministerial training can be effective which does not stimulate and strengthen in the minister of the Gospel both his capacities as a man and his graces and energies as a Christian.

"Your speciality—pastoral work—implies a great deal. It may, and ought to be, the focus of many converging beams of knowledge and experience. The excellency and efficiency of your work lie not so much in cultivating separate branches of knowledge, but in combining kindred subjects, and concentrating various lights upon your one exclusive object.

"As you advance, I, in company with every well-wisher, earnestly trust you will still keep the one aim steadily in view. The proper prominence given to this will keep all parts in their rightful place. It will subordinate the literary to the devotional, the critical to the believing, the intellectual to the spiritual, the merely denominational to the broadly catholic and Christian purposes of the ministry of the Gospel. And if you will allow me to make a suggestion, I would add that the way to secure these results increasingly is, in addition to all your other educational machinery, to let the Word of God be increasingly an open book—open in its original languages, open in all the variety and inspired authority of its teachings—before the eyes of your students, for their humble, prayerful, and believing study. The method of Haldane with his student-friends at Geneva I hold to be very near the normal Christian method of preparation for the ministry. The pastor 'mighty in the Scriptures' will be 'thoroughly furnished for every good work.'"

We cannot refrain from quoting from one of the reports (which are extremely interesting reading, and will furnish every Christian worker with useful facts and suggestions) the following testimony, which is entitled "The Inner Collegiate Life, by One who Knows it:"—

"'How can there be an inner collegiate life when no students live within the precincts of the College?' I fancy I hear one ask, and in the same breath answer, 'Impossible!' Had the problem not been worked out,

I too should have said so. But the facts in this case, as in many others, are strongly in favour of the paradox. Throughout the country the students of the Pastors' College are known by certain strongly marked characteristics, and as it is admitted they did not possess these upon entering the institution, the natural inference is that they acquired them in College by the *modus vivendi* there. How this comes to pass without the students dwelling together in the same building, without spending their leisure as well as their working hours together, is the point upon which I wish to cast a little light. As a rule, residence at college serves to promote a kind of life which is neither after the business nor ministerial type, not sufficiently retired to be monastic, nor maintaining enough intercourse with the outside world to be truly social. It is a life found at college and nowhere else. Its maxims and habits belong to no other sphere. From such a mode of existence it is the peculiarity of our collegiate life to differ utterly.

"The fact is, that a college life, in the ordinary sense of the term, is not known among us. The brethren on the one hand are dispersed abroad in twos and threes in various homes in the neighbourhood, and on the other hand they are largely employed in preaching and evangelistic work during their term of study. They only meet together for class-work, and all the subjects upon which they are engaged there are graduated with a direct bearing upon their future

life-work. Taking these facts into account, life in college becomes, as near as may be, an apprenticeship to the ministry of the Gospel. This is the peculiarity which puts its stamp upon the career of the students, and breathes its influence throughout the College.

"It shows itself in the spirit of devotion. Any one who spends a few hours with the students must feel that they are not only devoted, but also devotional men. Theirs is a devotion doubtless of such a fashion as would give a shock to those who cannot believe in piety without a long face. It has neither a whine nor a scowl. It is of a cheerful look and joyous tone. It is of the temper which Dr. Arnold preferred—earnest rather than serious. The merely frivolous would find himself as little at home in its presence as would the woe-begone stickler for long-winded sanctimoniousness.

"As all life has in a greater or less degree the powers of assimilation and expulsion, the College life is not deficient therein. The beginning of a session is the time when these two opposite powers may be seen to exert themselves with most marked effect among the freshmen. Most new-comers for some time survey the scene with a puzzled look of mingled wonder and timidity. A very few days, or weeks at most, are sufficient to teach a man whether he is in his right place or not. In the latter case, he soon begins to have headaches and to ask leave of absence, which is at once granted to an unlimited extent. The men of kindred spirit, and of a

genial, hearty disposition, soon find themselves at home. Should a brother, however, be rather reserved or prim, or starchy or uppish, he will, as a rule, find these foreign elements put under a grinding process, which occasionally grates a little on the softer sensibilities. This is done for his good, he is told, and his benefactors exhort him to view the matter cheerfully, as they do. While the robust get many a rub, the spirit of bullying is unknown, and the timid are treated with a truly generous consideration.

"The College is emphatically a brotherhood, a brotherhood including presidents and tutors, the ties whereof hold those who have gone to America and Australia, and draw members even from those vast distances to the Annual Conference. The ordinary attachment to Alma Mater has in the case of the *alumni* another element added. This element is something more than the gratitude or reverence felt by the disciple towards his master; it is more akin to the many-sided feeling of the clansman for his chief. It rivals the enthusiastic affection which Luther and Calvin awakened towards themselves among the students. And to no other source is their affection for the President traceable but to the unaffected spirit of true brotherly kindness which he ever shows to all the students, on account of which he may well be called the *Elder Brother* of the College.

"This brotherliness affects the methods in which the class-work is carried on. Each student is at full liberty

to state his difficulties and seek explanations. From their manner it can easily be seen that the brethren *mean business.* Most, before entering College, have been inured to severe application of some sort, and long hours, and having addicted themselves to the ministry only after mature deliberation, they bring the energy of determined men to bear upon their studies. Were this not the case, the difficulties in the path of some would be wholly insurmountable. As it is, the pressure at which the work is pursued not unfrequently towards the end of the session registers itself in not a few invalided members. The vigour which marks the educational classes is carried into those that are held mainly for the purpose of discipline—I mean the classes for sermons and discussions. The latter afford free scope for the exercise of the debating powers of the brethren, and many a sharp encounter is witnessed amid the mental and oratorical battle. There, too, fledgling orators try their pinions, and are often fain to get back cowering to their perch again before an unexpected squall. Where a brother takes higher ground than belongs to him, every effort is benevolently made to bring him to his natural level. This occasionally means a break-down, but his brethren, being comprehensively kind, are not the less desirous on that account of seeing him obey the law of 'the eternal fitness of things.' Foibles, crotchets, mannerisms, provincialisms, and cockneyisms meet with scant ceremony, and many a brother is taught, by the deliberate application of

'chaff,' that he may be a genius, but he must not be an oddity.

"When a brother has read two or more sermons for criticism, he is fairly entitled—at least as far as the kindly offices of the critics go—to be classed with the pachydermata. The preacher, as well as the sermon, is put under the hammer of criticism, and happy is he who escapes without broken bones. There are two defects never excused in these productions—one is an absence or misstatement of evangelical truth, and the other a failure in exhibiting truth with the direct aim of drawing men to the Saviour. Offending in these respects, no erudition, no depth of thought, no cogency of logic, no power of rhetoric or grace of style can save the preacher from a severe castigation. He has run counter to the deep persuasion and ruling purpose of the College, and he must suffer. That persuasion is, that those truths which are commonly called 'Evangelical' contain the very pith of the Gospel of our Lord, and that purpose is to win souls unto salvation. On these subjects the unmistakable accent of conviction pervades the College. If no other cause could be assigned for the notable success that has followed their labours in all parts of the world, this alone would be abundant. They preach Christ and Him crucified, because they know no better message for a weary and sinful world. The cross which Constantine inscribed on his banners, the cross which the Templars wore in ruddy hue upon their breasts, this in its vital meaning

has been both the motto and the motive power of the ministry of the brethren wherever they have gone. *In this sign they conquer.*"

From the last report we learn that the members of the Pastors' College Evangelical Association (of which more presently) have, since the year 1865, baptized 92,035 persons, and have gathered around them churches which represent a membership of 74,808 individuals. The returns for 1890 are defective, but they show a clear increase of 3155, or an average per church of eight new members for the year. The immense spiritual work that this represents will be understood by all who know the present religious and social difficulties.

From the first the financial burden of this institution has wholly rested upon Mr. Spurgeon himself. Two friends, indeed, assisted Mr. Spurgeon to support the first student, but, as the one student grew to many, the whole of the increased expense fell upon Mr. Spurgeon himself, and hence lessened his income. This was further reduced by his fearless honesty in denouncing the iniquitous slavery of the Southern States of America, which seriously affected the sale of his sermons over the water. Mr. Spurgeon generously contemplated parting with his horse and carriage, in order to find the funds needful for the support of his students, although they were almost necessaries, owing to his many journeys. This sacrifice his friends opposed, and a weekly offering was started at the Taber-

nacle in order to aid in the support of the College. This contribution has been continued ever since.

Mr. Spurgeon has often related how he had come to his last pound, and knew not whence to find the money that was absolutely necessary for the continuation of the work. He mentioned his need to a friend, who reminded him that he had a good banker. "Yes, and I should like to draw upon Him now, for I have nothing," replied Mr. Spurgeon.

"Well, how do you know? Have you prayed about it?"

"Yes, I have."

"Well, then, leave it with Him. Have you opened your letters?"

"No; I don't open my letters on Sundays."

"Well, open them for once."

He did so, and in the first one he opened there was a banker's letter to this effect:—"Dear Sir,—We beg to inform you that a lady, totally unknown to us, has left with us two hundred pounds for you to use in the education of young men."

Soon after this a friend of Mr. Spurgeon's provided a supper for the friends of the institution, at which the guests contributed towards the funds of the College. This gathering has been continued every year until the present time. This year (1891) £3000 was subscribed at this supper.

In connection with the College an annual gathering of all who have enjoyed the benefits of the institution

is held during the spring. A week is spent in prayer and council, the great charm of the meetings being the speeches and humorous counsels of the President.

A few words may be devoted to the workers who have assisted Mr. Spurgeon in this enterprise.

The first tutor of the College was the Rev. George Rogers, a Congregational minister, who still survives, although at a great age. The unwearying kindness, solid learning, and tact of Mr. Rogers have contributed not a little to the position that the College has attained. He said recently to a minister who visited him, "There are two things that a minister should ever keep in mind: 'Flee from the wrath to come,' and 'Lay hold upon eternal life.'" Then he soliloquised thus: "The wrath is yet to come, but the life is near at hand; let your hearers lay hold upon it, that the wrath may not lay hold upon them."

The present Principal, Rev. David Gracy, was at one time a student in the College; he is a man in middle life, gracious, cultured, and in every way suitable for the position that he holds. With him are associated two other ministers—Revs. D. Ferguson and Marchant.

In addition to the ordinary work of the College, evening classes are held, which are largely attended by young men engaged during the day in business, and who have thus been assisted in their efforts to fit themselves for other positions in life.

The Pastors' College has itself, in its turn, given

birth to vigorous offshoots, that promise, banyan-like, to form future groves, that in their turn will yield large results.

Six evangelists are employed, all of whom have been trained in the College. They have visited and held services in most of the principal towns in the United Kingdom, and have been the means of the conversion of thousands. Recently an account of this mission has been published in an interesting volume.

Two of the students are engaged in what is called "pioneer work." They visit villages that are deficient in Christian teaching, and, to quote their own words, "(1) endeavour, by God's help, to increase weak Baptist churches, and, where possible, to get them the help of a minister; (2) to commence new Baptist causes in rising towns or needy neighbourhoods; (3) to generally evangelise in halls, tents, or by other methods to further the interests of this aggressive work."

"The following works (says the leader of this movement) have been commenced by us during this last winter:—

"*New Brighton.* — Bills were posted announcing Albert Hall, Victoria Road, as the place of meeting. 'How many will attend?' 'Will the Baptists rally round?' These are the questions which would perplex us, only that we believe God will give us favour, and send whom He will, if we are sure of His leading at the outset. We were greatly encouraged, for, to every

one's surprise, nearly forty met us on the first morning, and our boat was launched then and there. Pastor E. Morley is preaching here for the present, and his services are much appreciated.

"*Waterloo* was the next place we commenced, in September last. This important town was without a Baptist church until we started. We meet in the Gymnasium, where we trust many will be instructed in the holy art of spiritual gymnastics. 'Just like home,' was the opinion expressed concerning the first Communion service. Many are thankful for this movement. Pastor G. Goodchild, from Preston, is about to take charge of this important work.

"*Birkdale.*—This is a residential suburb of Southport, with a population of about 12,000. One friend, outside of our denomination, wishes us success, stating it as his opinion that there was more work needed in Birkdale than all the denominations could do. Mr. Philips, of our College, who has settled at Southport, will help to superintend this work, and will preach on the Thursdays for the present.

"*Horwich,* near Bolton, was formerly a village, but now has about 12,000 inhabitants, and the number is constantly increasing. We meet in the Co-operative Hall. Three services and Sunday-school are carried on each Lord's-day by Mr. Boswell, a young man whom I have taken from business, believing he is called of God. He received a cheque 'for expenses of work,' and on opening it, found it a cheque for a pot of beer. I

should be very glad of some cheques of a more substantial kind. I believe this work will soon be a strong centre."

Recently in connection with the College a Missionary Association has been formed. This is not intended to be a rival to the great societies, but rather to supply districts that are left out of their range; it has planted its first missionaries in Morocco, in connection with the North Africa Mission. The following are a few items from the report of Mr. N. H. Patrick, who labours among the Spaniards in Tangier. "Mr. Patrick went to work among the Moors in January 1889, but the Lord had evidently people of another tongue to whom He was about to send the glad tidings by His servant. Mr. Patrick was led to devote himself to the Spanish-speaking people, at first through an interpreter, and in addition to his labours among the Moors. He soon was convinced that his mission was to the Spaniards, and gave himself wholly thereto."

The work is located in the Café Oriental, which café we suppose was, before its conversion, something after the style of our London music-halls. Of it Mr. Patrick says:—

"We entered the Café Oriental on July 15, 1889. It was well situated, admirably adapted for our work, and we needed larger premises; so we took it in faith. The place that had been a den of iniquity is now a house of praise. We have platform instead of stage, and preaching in the place of acting.

"Where the money was to come from to pay our heavy rent and other expenses we did not know; but our trust was in God, and our every need has been supplied. Unto Him be all the praise. The whole place was in a horribly dirty condition, and so the expenses for cleaning, &c., have been very heavy.

"Our evangelistic meetings, held on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings, have been well attended. One Sunday evening quite 150 were present, but this was exceptional. We believe that souls have been converted, and converts strengthened and comforted. I do not like to quote numbers, as the work is so new. There are quite a number that we believe are true Christians; but so many of them are *very* ignorant and *very* weak, that I often feel that the work in England most like my work here would be the 'infant class.' I trust that before next report we shall have a church. The attendance at our Sunday-morning service is still small.

"Every Tuesday night a school for men is held. Reading and writing, in Spanish or English, are taught. We close with a Gospel address, and know that this endeavour has brought great blessing to several young men.

"The Café Dispensary, connected with the Mildmay Mission to the Jews, is opened each Tuesday and Saturday from three o'clock to seven o'clock. Our esteemed brother, Dr. Churcher, has treated a very large number of patients. This agency assists us greatly in winning

the hearts of the poor of Tangier. The Gospel is preached to all attending.

"At five o'clock each evening (Sunday excepted) we open our Coffee Bar. Tea, coffee, and cocoa are sold at a halfpenny per cup, also lemonade, biscuits, &c., at low prices. Nothing is sold during the time of meetings. Thus the attendance at our meetings is increased; we have better opportunities for conversing with our converts, and they can keep away from the wine-shops, &c., in the town. Our hall is brightly lighted, and our good caretaker, Mrs. Barnard, drives a brisk business, endeavouring at the same time to speak a word to her customers about the Gospel feast."

And all these varied and useful agencies have come out of the ministry of C. H. Spurgeon. When it is remembered that to a very large extent the men who have been trained in the College have gone out among the lapsed masses, and have brought them under Christian influence, have formed them into religious communities, so that they represent auxiliary forces of the highest form of home missionary success; and that this has been accomplished without any endowment, or anything but such contributions as those interested or benefited by the work may be able to spare, the enormous vitality of a ministry that, while sustaining such an ordeal as the pastor of the Tabernacle bears, can yet branch out into such works as we have enumerated, is self-evident. Had space permitted, references might have been made to the philanthropic and other work of

some of the men who have been trained in the Pastors' College, such as the great work of Archibald G. Brown and others in the East End of London; and under God, this success is due to the inspiration of Mr. Spurgeon's example and character.

Such a life can only be compared to Wesley's, from which it differs in several noteworthy particulars, to which reference will be made in a later chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

C. H. SPURGEON AS A PHILANTHROPIST.

"Here queenly Charity doth hold her court,
And joy and peace attend her royalty."

At a meeting of the Church Pastoral Aid Society, Lord Shaftesbury said of Mr. Spurgeon, "He is a truly good man, and all must acknowledge that he is a wonderful preacher; and I will further say that he has trained a body of men who manifest in their preaching that they possess to a great extent his great secret of going right to the hearts of his audience."

To the Secretary of the Ragged School Union he wrote in reference to a meeting at which Mr. Spurgeon was expected to speak: "I am much grieved that I am unable to be present. I am grieved because there is no man in the country whose opinion and support in such matters I prize more highly than those of my friend Mr. Spurgeon. It would give me singular pleasure, after nearly forty years of work in the Ragged School cause, to hear the testimony and counsel of so valuable a man. Few men have preached so much and so well, and few men have combined so practically their words and their actions. I deeply admire and love him because I do not believe that there lives anywhere a more sincere and simple servant of our blessed Lord. Great talents have been rightly used, and under God's grace have led to great issues."

"The Diaries," says Mr. Hodder, "abound with references to Mr. Spurgeon similar to the following:—

"'*June* 12, 1875.—At eleven o'clock yesterday to Spurgeon's Tabernacle to go with him over all his various institutions, School, College, Almshouses, Orphanage. All sound, good, true, Christianlike. He is a wonderful man, full of zeal, affection, faith; abounding in reputation and authority, and, yes—perfectly humble, with the openness and simplicity of a child.

"'*June* 20, 1884.—Yesterday to Metropolitan Tabernacle to preside

over grand meeting in honcur of Spurgeon's fiftieth birthday. A wonderful sight: nearly, if not quite, seven thousand adult enthusiastic souls crammed even to suffocation by way of audience. Felt at first quite appalled.'"—*Life of Lord Shaftesbury.*

FOUNDED IN SACRIFICE AND SUSTAINED BY FAITH—THE LORD WILL PROVIDE WHEN HE IS TRUSTED—THE TESTIMONIAL HOMES—"PLEASE, MR. SPURGEON, THAT'S ME"—ALMSHOUSE AND COLPORTAGE.

PROBABLY no part of Mr. Spurgeon's work has met with such cordial and universal approval as his philanthropic work for the orphans. After a careful examination of many similar institutions, it will be seen that the Stockwell Orphanage is unique in the annals of charity and one of the best of its kind.

For example, in order to secure the benefits of the Orphanage there is no need for canvassing, such as some otherwise most excellent institutions require, and what this must mean to a woman suffering from the pang of recent bereavement can be imagined. Then the happy idea of supplying cottage homes for the children in preference to the barrack system, naturally tends to the development of mental and spiritual individuality, which is itself a boon. We have always been struck with the joyousness of the children, and the absence of the "I-shall-be-beaten" look, such as we have seen on the cowed faces of inmates of some other orphanages that need not be named.

Nor is it a small kindness on the part of the trustees that instead of dressing the children in a uniform that

stamps them with some shame, they are all dressed respectably and differently, so that they wear no badge of charity. This must tend to develop self-respect among them.

We recommend visitors to look for themselves at the internal arrangements of the houses, and to inquire of such children as they know are to be trusted, and they will with us admit that, for considerate kindness, for as much freedom as is consistent with moral and religious training, and above all for those influences that shape and mould a life for the highest purposes, there is no similar institution in the world.

Like many other noble designs, it—the Stockwell Orphanage—arose out of what may be called a chance.

Mr. Spurgeon had in the *Sword and Trowel* indicated the need that there was for work among the orphans, and in the September of 1866 he received a letter from Mrs. Hillyard, who offered him a sum of £20,000 with which to found an orphanage for fatherless boys. This lady, the widow of a clergyman, in her last days had become a Baptist. Mr. Spurgeon rather shrank from what he felt was a considerable addition to the heavy burdens that he already bore. He advised the lady to send the money to George Müller, but Mrs. Hillyard adhered to her purpose that Mr. Spurgeon was to receive and use the money. Recognising her persistance as a Divine call, Mr. Spurgeon at length accepted the trust. The money was invested, twelve trustees were chosen,

and a plot of land was purchased at Stockwell upon which it was intended to erect an orphanage. The enterprise was a huge responsibility, and as such Mr. Spurgeon felt it when he began.

In the June of 1867 he wrote:—"The Lord is beginning to appear for us in the matter of the Orphanage; but as yet He has not opened the windows of heaven as we desire and expect. We wait in prayer and faith. We need no less than £10,000 to erect the buildings, and *it will come;* for the Lord will answer the prayer of faith."

"*July* 1867.—We have been waiting upon the Lord in faith and prayer concerning our Orphanage; but He is pleased at present to try us. As we have no object in view but the glory of God by the instruction of fatherless boys in the ways of the Lord, having a special view to their souls' salvation, we had hoped that many of the Lord's people would at once have seen the usefulness and practical character of the enterprise, and have sent us substantial aid immediately. The Lord's way, however, is the best, and we rejoice in it, let it be what it may. If the work is to be one of time and long effort, so let it be, if thereby God's name is magnified.

"We have engaged a sister to receive the first four orphans into her own hired house until the orphanages are ready. Our beloved friend, the original donor, has given her plate to be sold for this object, and in so doing, has set an example to all believers who have

surplus silver which ought to be put to better use than lying wrapped up in a box."

"*August* 1867.—Let the facts which with deep gratitude we record this month strengthen the faith of believers. In answer to many fervent prayers, the Lord has moved His people to send in during the last month, in different amounts, towards the general funds of the Orphanage, the sum of £1075, for which we give thanks unto the name of the Lord. More especially do we see the gracious hand of God in the following incidents:— A lady (Mrs. Tyson), who has often aided us in the work of the College, having been spared to see the twenty-fifth anniversary of her marriage-day, her beloved husband presented her with £500 as a token of his ever-growing love to her. Our sister has called upon us and dedicated the £500 to the building of one of the houses, to be called *The Silver Wedding House.* The Lord had, however, another substantial gift in store to encourage us in our work; for a day or two ago a brother believer in the Lord called upon us on certain business, and when he had retired, he left in a sealed envelope the sum of £600, which is to be expended in erecting another house. This donation was as little expected as the first, except that our faith expects that all our needs will be supplied in the Lord's own way. The next day, when preaching in the open air, an unknown sister put an envelope into my hand enclosing £20 for the College and another £20 for the Orphanage. What hath God wrought!"

The workmen in the employ of Mr. Higgs, who had erected the Tabernacle, generously gave their labour to build another house, and Mr. Higgs himself supplied the materials for what has since been called "The Workmen's House." The foundation-stones of these houses, called respectively "The Silver Wedding House," "The Merchants' House," and "The Workmen's House," were laid on the 9th of August 1867. At the meeting it was announced that the £5000, which had been needed for the purchase of the land, had been received, in addition to which the princely sum of £2200 was brought by various friends towards the funds of the institution.

This encouraged Mr. Spurgeon and his friends to enlarge their hopes, and they resolved to erect eight houses, in which they estimated that not less than 150 children would find homes. To maintain this large family a yearly income of £3000 would be required, and the trustees had no endowment upon which to rely; their only income was what might be given by the charitable. If Mr. Spurgeon hesitated before he began the Orphanage, he did not linger when once he had taken the scheme in hand. It was probably because he waited to be quite convinced that he was in the path of duty that he did not quail as the responsibilities increased. And he was not disappointed; for in the November of the same year his friend Mr. Olney contributed £500 towards a house which should, when it was erected, commemorate Mrs. Olney, after

whom it was named "Unity House." Certainly a nobler memorial than a marble tomb.

The awful need that there was for such an institution will be seen by the fact that, although only fifty children could be admitted, not less than 200 applied, of whom of course 150 were disappointed.

In January 1868 Mr. Spurgeon wrote:—

"About three weeks ago the noble sum of £1000 was brought us by an unknown gentleman toward the erection of two other houses."

"*March* 1868.—Just at the last moment, as we are going to press, we received £2000 from A. B., an unknown friend. We call upon all our friends to magnify the Lord for this amazing instance of His care. How base a thing is unbelief, and how largely does the Lord honour His servants' faith! The note which attended this munificent gift proves it to be from the same donor who gave £1000 a few weeks ago. We had feared that the Orphanage might impoverish the College; see, dear readers, how graciously the Lord rebukes this unbelieving fear."

This letter we have been permitted to see, and note that it is written in a clear, bold style, which seems indicative of the writer's business-like habits of mind. It is as follows:—

"My Dear Sir,—You will recollect my intention to send a donation to your College.

"I have this day dropped into your letter-box an envelope containing bank-notes for £2000, one of

which is for the College, and the remaining thousand to help to complete the *Orphanage*. The latter led me to contribute to the *former*.

"I am a stranger to you, but not to your sermons (printed).

"May the Lord give you health and strength many years to preach His Word and carry on His work.

"A. B."

The Baptist denomination, not to be behind in their appreciation of Mr. Spurgeon's philanthropy, contributed a sum of £1764, 14s. 4d., which offering paid for the building and fitting up of two houses, which were called "The Testimonial Houses." At the laying of the foundation-stones of these, June 1, 1868, the Rev. J. B. Wigner presented to the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon an address from the Baptist Churches of England. The houses bear the following inscription:—

"These two houses were built by the voluntary contributions of Baptist Churches in Great Britain and presented as a tribute of regard and affection to the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

"A. B. GOODALL, *Treasurer of the Fund.*
"J. T. WIGNER, *Hon. Secretary.*"

On Mr. Spurgeon's birthday, the 19th June, Mr. Olney, jun., laid the foundation-stones of the "Sunday-school Houses," which were paid for by the children of the Sunday-schools meeting in the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Mrs. Spurgeon herself laid the foundation-stone of what is called "The College House," which was sub-

scribed for by the ministers who had been trained in the Pastors' College.

In January 1869 Rev. J. Charlesworth, who had for seven years served as co-pastor with Rev. Newman Hall at Surrey Chapel, was appointed head-master of the Orphanage, a choice which has been abundantly justified by the prosperity of the institution under his care.

Another extract may be given before we leave the subject:—

"*December* 1873.—To our surprise, the report of the Secretary was, 'All bills paid, but only £3 in hand.' Prayer went to work at once, and results followed. Will the reader, however, picture himself with more than 220 boys to feed and only £3 in hand? He may say, 'The Lord will provide,' but would he feel the force of this truth if he were in our straits?"

Notwithstanding this experience of struggle, Mr. Spurgeon had such confidence in God that he was impelled to attempt to provide an orphanage for girls, and he has successfully carried out his design.

Once a year, on Mr. Spurgeon's birthday, a festival is held in the Orphanage grounds, at which large offerings are brought by many friends. It has been our privilege to attend many of these gatherings, and in one house at least this *fête* is always a day of joy, anticipated with pleasure, and enjoyed most thoroughly.

Before leaving this subject, we may mention the fact that recently Mr. Charlesworth and a band of the orphans have visited most of the chief towns in the

United Kingdom. They give a hand-bell entertainment, which is interspersed with recitations. The author ventures to suggest that Christian Churches might materially assist this most beneficent design by inviting Mr. Charlesworth and his band to plead the cause of this institution. From the experience of more than one visit, the writer can testify to the delight with which the public appreciate the efforts of the boys.

That such a suggestion may be made without offence will be seen when the following table is examined. It will be especially noticed, that staunch as Mr. Spurgeon is in his own beliefs—and he is most intensely a Baptist—the Stockwell Orphanage is not a *sectarian* institution.

THE RELIGIOUS PROFESSION OF THE PARENTS OF THE ORPHANS.

Church of England	585	Roman Catholic	3
Baptist	387	Moravian	2
Congregational	160	Bible Christian	2
Wesleyan	140	Society of Friends	2
Presbyterian	28	Salvation Army	1
Brethren	9	Not specified	194

Mr. Spurgeon has often related the following incident, which we cannot refrain from quoting from a brochure entitled "Stockwell Orphanage," which was published last Christmas by Messrs. Passmore & Alabaster. Mr. Spurgeon says:—"Sitting down in the Orphanage grounds upon one of the seats, we were talking with a brother trustee, when a funny little fellow, we should think about eight years of age, left the other boys who were playing around us and came deliberately up to us.

He opened fire in this fashion, "Please, Mister Spurgeon, I wants to come and sit down on the seat between you two gentlemen."

"Come along, Bob, and tell us what you want."

"Please, Mr. Spurgeon, suppose there was a little boy who had no father, who lived in an orphanage with a lot of other little boys who had no fathers; and suppose those little boys had mothers and aunts who *comed* once a month and brought them apples and oranges, and gave them pennies; and suppose this little boy had no mother and no aunt, and so never came to bring him nice things; don't you think somebody ought to give him a penny? 'Cause, Mr. Spurgeon, *that's me!*"

Somebody felt something wet in his eye, and Bob got a sixpence, and went off in the jumping stage of delight. Poor little soul! he had seized the opportunity to pour out a bitterness which had rankled in his little heart, and made him miserable when the monthly visiting day came round, and, as he said, "Nobody never came to bring him nice things."

Mr. Spurgeon concludes thus: "Turning the tables, we think some grown-up persons, who were once little Bobs, might say, "Suppose there was a poor sinner, lost and undone, who was forgiven all his sins for Jesus' sake, and made a child of God; and don't you think that he ought to help in the Saviour's cause? 'Cause, Mr. Spurgeon, *that's me*, and here's some money for your orphans."

On the first page of this beautiful booklet the

shadows cast by the avenue of trees upon the pathway leading up to the Orphanage gates spell the word HOME. As to whether this is usual we are unable to say, but that it is a Home we are convinced, after many careful investigations. H.M. Inspector reported thus: "An admirable institution, good in design, and, if possible, better in execution."

In addition to the Orphanage-work, Mr. Spurgeon has originated other philanthropic institutions which cannot be alluded to here, with the exception of his Almshouses, which are situated near the Elephant and Castle Station. Here seventeen poor women, who are all above sixty years of age, and are members of the Tabernacle Church, are sheltered and provided with a liberal allowance of seven shillings per week. This money is partly provided by a sum of £5000, which was raised upon the completion of Mr. Spurgeon's silver wedding, and which he invested for the benefit of the poor women.

Here, perhaps, an allusion may best be made to the Colportage Association, which began in January 1866.

At first only two men were employed, but from the last report we learn that ninety colporteurs are now employed during the year.

In a volume entitled "Booksellers and Book-Buyers," from the pen of our friend, G. Holden Pike, there are some most interesting stories of good that have been accomplished by the colporteurs. Want of space forbids our quoting any of the facts therein stated.

CHAPTER VII.

C. H. SPURGEON AS AN AUTHOR.

"He has fought his way to a commander's place in the religious world, and holds it with no abatement of faithfulness, although the work of years is leaving weak spots in his body. There's life in the old guard yet, however, and he stand squarely to his work on the outposts, no matter how the storms may gather about him. His energy, his heroism under bodily pain, his sweet toil, all combine to make him stand out in the clear light as an evangel of the Lord, worthy of the cross and the crown! What a great loving heart he has! How his sympathies encircle the whole world! As one of God's workers, he has no superior among men."—COLONEL GRANT, *U.S. Consul at Manchester, in a letter dated February 2*, 1890.

The following sentences are written in Mr Spurgeon's study Bible:—

"C. H. SPURGEON. 1856."

" The lamp of my study."

"The light is bright as ever! 1861."

"Oh, that mine eyes were more opened! 1864."

"Being worn to pieces, rebound 1870. The lantern mended, and the light as joyous to mine eyes as ever!"

THINKING INTO VOLUMES—"BOOKS IN BOOTS"—"VERY GOOD; OR, TRUE IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES"—BOOK AFTER BOOK, AND ALL GOOD—THE "SWORD AND TROWEL."

DORA LLOYD once asked Sterling what Kant thought. He replied, "He thought fifteen octavo volumes." Mr. Spurgeon, among his many other engagements, has

thought a mass of literature, which is as varied as it is immense. There is nothing in the history of civilisation that is at all comparable to it; and, in spite of adverse criticisms, his books continue to circulate, and that in large editions.

At the head of his writings we would place his printed sermons, which are, indeed, his most extensive means of usefulness. The weekly sermon before us bears the number 2206. Altogether they form thirty-six volumes.

In Mr. Spurgeon's library at Westwood there is a large bay which is filled with translations of his works into almost all the known languages of the earth—at any rate, "into all the languages spoken by Christians," said Mr. Spurgeon when pointing out the array to us. Among these discourses some sermons, of course, are more excellent than others, but that is a matter of necessity. If they were so poor as some assert, how is it that they have acquired so extensive a circulation, and have maintained it? The logic of facts is irresistible; it may be possible, indeed, to criticise individual sermons, and to point out various divines who, from time to time, have achieved, with infinite effort, better occasional productions; but it remains as a tribute to Mr. Spurgeon's unique place in the Church of Christ that his sermons are read in every land by people of widely different opinions, and that so far from their having become a drug upon the market, they are more popular than ever.

This surprising result may be, and has been, assigned to various causes, but it is probably wiser to go at once to the root of the matter, and say that Mr. Spurgeon is a man sent from God to speak to the hearts of men, and God, who gave the message, has also inclined men to hear it.

We subjoin specimens of Mr. Spurgeon's sermon notes. They will show how little paper he uses in the pulpit. Of course he is always preparing; his constant intercourse with "books in boots," his intimate knowledge of affairs around him, and above all his diligent study, keeps his mind perpetually full. He is a great reader and a constant student, and this is one element of his success. He never displays his learning, but the learning is in its right place, and is the bony skeleton which gives consistency and shape to the beautiful form that men see. There are men who endeavour to place parts at least of the bony skeleton outside, and they have their reward. The place of learning is within, and when clothed upon, it fulfils its purpose though unseen. One is reminded, when conversing with Mr. Spurgeon, of Dr. Arnold's saying, "His mind is a running stream;" this is one element of his power.

Rough Notes of Sermons.

1 KINGS XVIII. 12.—PSALM LXIX. 5.

1. Early Piety. 2. Persevering Piety. 3. Eminent Piety. 4. Practical Piety. 5. Comforting Piety.

1. *Early Piety.*—Prevents regrets—Determines connection—Forms habits—Facilitates attainments—His name—His confession—His singularity—Genuine—Not joy—Knowledge—Fear—Reverent awe—Dread to offend.

2. *Persevering Piety.*—Length of time—Badness of times—Destruction of men—Difficulty of position—Temptation to gain—Trial of success—God glorified—Jezebel defeated—Truth preserved.

3. *Eminent Piety.*—Distinctly decided—Known leader of the party—Save—Protector of ministers—Saviour of sinners—Condemner of guilty—To the young—To the old.

4. *Comforting Piety.*—In time of need—In old age.

Psalm cxxxii. 18.

I. *His enemies clothed.*

1. *Who are they?*—Openly profane—The moral but irreligious—The self-righteous—The hypocritical.

2. *How clothed with shame?*—In repentance—In disappointment—In remorse—In destruction—Sin detected—Self-defeated—Hopes scattered.

3. *Who clothes them?*—The Lord—He will shame them thoroughly.

II. *Himself crowned.*

1. *His crown.*—Dominion—Glory.

2. *Its flourishing.*—Glory extending—Subjects increasing—Wealth growing—Foes fearing, &c.

Zech. xii. 10.—Isa. l. 3-6.

I. *The special mourning of the Jew.*—His own Messiah rejected and slain—The deed ratified by generations—The Scriptures perverted—His glory altogether ignored—Lost their best of kings—Kings, prophets, priests, and people—The women recognised.

II. *Our own especial grief.*—Of our unregeneracy—Our sins caused His sufferings—Our rejection ratified the doom—Gentile pierced—Carelessness—Resistance—Unbelief. 1. The grief of all Christians—His deity denied—His claims slighted—His religion travestied—Deed done in His name—Done by professors—False teaching.

Since our conversion.—Backsliding—Love of the world—Want of zeal, love, self-denial, courage, patience, fellowship—2 Cor. vii. 11.

Our present state.—It is the beauty of evangelical repentance that it remembers the injury done to the Lord, and sympathises with Him, "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned"—The prodigal—It results from a look upon Christ—It was a fruit of the Spirit, and attended with prayer.

I. *There is a special mourning for the Jew.*—The seed had a special interest in Messiah, but it rejected and slew Him—For these many generations that rejection has been confirmed—Amid chastisements most terrible—Their own Lord and King has been denied His throne—Mourn for the best beloved—For their slain king—Mourn all, and mourn sincerely.

II. *There is a general sorrow for the Church.*—Pierced by scepticism, and false doctrine, and blasphemy—Pierced by superstition, idolatry, &c.—Pierced by outsiders who despise Him—Pierced by those who bear His name; war, &c.—Pierced by His own people.

III. *There is the special sorrow of each family.*—The husband and the wife—The children—The parents—The masters and servants.

IV. *There is the personal mourning of each.*—Our unregeneracy—Sin—Continuance—Unbelief—Resistance—Carelessness—Contempt.

Since our conversion—Backsliding—Great sin—Coldness—Disobedience—Want of self-denial—Fellowship.

At this day, what is our bearing towards our Lord?—Too little of His Spirit—Little love—Survey a single week.

What should be the nature, the fruit, and the result of such sorrow.

HEB. XIII. 20–25.

The close of the Epistle is a blessing—That blessing is instructively expressed—Our practical holiness is desired.

I. The peculiar name of God which is mentioned.
II. The special act which is dwelt upon.
III. The remarkable manner in which it is described.
IV. The appropriate conclusion to which it leads.

Appropriate titles of God to be used.

I. Sin is war; to remove it is to make peace—God's peace breeds—No peace in a church while sin is there—No peace in the heart—Shepherd.

II. Return from death—*That great Shepherd of sheep*—Peace—Perfecting—Egypt and Moses—The Red Sea.

III. Fitness for service—Universal—Practical.

I. Deliverance.
1. From hopeless imprisonment.
2. Comfortless.

I. The Divine deliverance.
II. The Divine invitation.
III. The Divine promise.

Comfortless—Hopeless—Fatal.

From what?—By whom?—By what means?
What?—When?—Who?

Among Mr. Spurgeon's sermons there is one, an edition of which was printed in gold letters. It was, we believe, presented to the subscribers at the College supper of that year. But there is another sermon, yellow, travel-worn, and stained by exposure to the sun, which is far more interesting and valuable. It was carried by Dr. Livingstone in his last journey to Africa. The title of it is "Accidents not Punishments." Across the top is written,

"*Very Good*—D. L."

It was found in Dr. Livingstone's boxes after his death, and was sent by his daughter, Mrs. Bruce, to Mr. Spurgeon.

We handled the relic with profound reverence, and endeavoured to realise Dr. Livingstone sitting in his tent after a hard day's march and reading with interest the words that in his solitude were more than words to him. Who can tell what comfort, stimulus, and help this sermon was to the great pioneer who opened Africa to civilisation and the Gospel?

What if that old relic could speak? what would it say? Would it not say what it would delight our hearts to hear? Would it not tell of comfort imparted by it to the neglected, suffering, resolute hero who requires comfort no more? Of toils endured, and hopes deferred, the results of which are known in some measure to him who now requires no earthly solace?

Nor is this the only romance that clings to Mr. Spurgeon's sermons, for they have made for themselves

a romantic mass of adventure and incident which is highly interesting. Some day we trust this will be arranged and published. Here we cannot do more than refer to them. A word ought, perhaps, to be spared for the work carried on by means of the sermons among the lighthouse-keepers. A Mr. John Green, finding himself cut off from other service, began distributing Mr. Spurgeon's sermons among invalids and others who were deprived of the means of grace. Encouraged by the reception of his gifts, he sent them to all the lighthouse men of the British Isles. Mrs. Spurgeon supplied him with sermons for this purpose, and as they were welcomed by the men, Mr. Green enlarged the area of his operations. He now distributes the sermons and other Christian literature not only among the light-keepers of the British Isles, but as far away as Canada and Australia.

Next to the sermons "The Treasury of David" is Mr. Spurgeon's chief work, as it is the most valuable. The sermons are, indeed, a mass of expository literature, but it is in "The Treasury of David" Mr. Spurgeon's genius shines and burns with peculiar brilliance. Mr. Spurgeon's own comments are of the highest order of exposition. The illustrative extracts appended are culled from a wide range of reading, but especially is the homiletical section immensely suggestive to all who will use the help wisely.

Had Mr. Spurgeon time and strength to do the same office for other portions of God's Word, it is not too

much to say that he would rank amongst the most helpful of commentators.

Next in point of usefulness we would place "Around the Wicket Gate," a shilling book which is intended for inquirers, and the numerous class that are not far from the kingdom of God. The style is Mr. Spurgeon's best: the illustrations are vivid, and the tone of the book such as will be most helpful to all who ponder the great interests included in the salvation of the soul. Angel James' "Anxious Enquirer" and Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul" are both standard works and have accomplished much good in their time, but they are out of date. They remain as Christian literature, but the seekers of to-day need more direct and simple dealing, and especially aid in overcoming the difficulties which were not difficulties when James and Doddridge wrote.

Next in order we would place the *shilling series*, such as "All of Grace," "The Spare Half-hour," "Eccentric Preachers," of which there are now published in all seven volumes.

A book which has not attained the large circulation that it deserves is "Commentary and Commentaries," the remarks in which are in themselves most suggestive and useful.

For ministers, Mr. Spurgeon has also written "Lectures to my Students," first and second series; the sale of large editions has proved how acceptable they have been to those to whom they were addressed.

"My Sermon Notes" is in two volumes, and consists of a series of outlines of sermons with illustrative anecdotes: a better series of sermon models we do not know of.

And this may be said in spite of the alleged tendency to copy Mr. Spurgeon. It is a frequent sneer that men imitate this or that preacher. It may be answered that the objector himself is only sinning in the same way. Men must imitate if they will learn, and success is largely on stereotyped lines; and while the mere copyist is contemptible, no man attains excellence except by a judicious study of the methods by means of which others have achieved success. It is in preaching as in military tactics; nations watch other nations, and imitate what is excellent in each system. It is as in business, for every wise merchant is ready to adopt that which has enlarged his neighbour's operations. And in Christian enterprises, every man should be ready to imitate what is excellent in all the men who have influenced and helped the world.

In addition to the volumes named, Mr. Spurgeon in 1868 issued "Feathers for Arrows," a collection of extracts and anecdotes. This was followed by a similar volume, "Flowers from a Puritan's Garden." In the last book are all the illustrations and beauties to be found in Manton's useful volumes (a very continent of prairie, wearisome to contemplate, but, if one had time, most profitable to cultivate).

"The Present Truth," "Storm Signals," and "Farm

Sermons," are all selections from Mr. Spurgeon's sermons.

Perhaps, however, these have not been so generally useful as the well-known "Morning by Morning" and "Evening by Evening," of which we think the first is incomparably the better. The enormous circulation of 200,000 that has been attained by these volumes shows that they have been highly appreciated by the Christian public.

At the risk of being thought eccentric, we may venture to say that we have found the "Cheque-Book of Faith," which is upon the same lines, even more helpful than either of the above-named books. In the preface to the "Cheque-Book" the author thus explains his purpose: "A promise from God may very instructively be compared to a cheque payable to order. It is given to believers with a view of bestowing on them some good thing. It is not meant that he should read it over comfortably and then have done with it. No; he is to treat the promise as a reality, as a man treats a cheque.

"He is to take the promise and endorse it with his own name by personally receiving it as true. He is by faith to *accept* it as his own. He sets to his seal that God is true, and true as to this particular word of promise. He goes further, and believes that he has the blessing in having the same promise of it, and therefore he puts his name to it, to testify to the receipt of the blessing.

"This done, he must believingly *present* the promise to the Lord, as a man presents a cheque at the counter of the bank. He must plead it by prayer, expecting to have it fulfilled. If he has come to heaven's bank at the right date, he will receive the promised amount at once. If the date should happen to be farther on, he must politely wait till its arrival; but meanwhile he may count the promise as money, for the bank is sure to pay when the due time arrives.

"Some fail to place the endorsement of faith upon the cheque, and so they get nothing; and others are slack in presenting it, and these also receive nothing. This is not the fault of the promise, but of those who do not act with it in a common-sense, business-like manner."

Mr. Spurgeon calls the book "a sweetmeat of promise," but it is in our judgment the most helpful of the three volumes of daily portions that he has written.

Here may be the place to allude to the *Sword and Trowel*. In the year 1864 Mr. Spurgeon preached and published the sermon on Baptismal Regeneration, to which reference will be made in the next chapter. The Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance, upon his sole authority, wrote desiring Mr. Spurgeon either to retract his sentiments or to withdraw from the Alliance. Mr. Spurgeon at once resigned, and he refused to reconsider his decision, although the Alliance repudiated the action of their servant. He did what was better, he commenced a monthly magazine of his own, the first num-

ber of which appeared on the 1st of January 1865. It therefore has reached the twenty-seventh volume, and at the time of writing (February 1891), the monthly circulation amounts to 14,000. The price, threepence, is, in these days of cheapness, somewhat against it, so that, as things are, the circulation may be fairly regarded as very remarkable.

The magazine perhaps suggested—certainly it helped—in the publication of several of Mr. Spurgeon's books. "The Treasury of David," "John Ploughman's Talk," were first printed in the *Sword and Trowel* before their publication as volumes.

While writing, we have received a parcel of tiny booklets which are sold at sixpence per dozen. These are, we believe, Mr. Spurgeon's last publication. Altogether Mr. Spurgeon has published about forty-six books, exclusive of the thirty-six volumes of the sermons, and the twenty-six volumes of the *Sword and Trowel*. We may say, therefore, that he has thought more than one hundred volumes!

CHAPTER VIII.

C. H. SPURGEON AS HUMOURIST AND CONTROVERSIALIST.

"Guilty sinner, fly to Jesus;
He alone can purge our guilt;
From each deadly sin He frees us,
'Twas for this His blood was spilt.
Come, and welcome;
Come this moment, if thou wilt.

Empty sinner, haste to Jesus,
For in Him all fulness dwells,
And His inmost soul it pleases
When a longing soul He fills.
Be not backward;
He invites whoever wills.

Hopeless sinner, look to Jesus,
In His death thy ransom see;
From despair His word releases,
Trust in Him and fear shall flee.
High as heaven
Are His thoughts of love to thee.

Worst of sinners, come to Jesus,
He has said He'll cast out none;
Come with all thy foul diseases,
He can cure them every one—
And, with wonder,
Thou shalt sing what grace has done."

—C. H. SPURGEON.

"We English have many famous men, but we have no John Knox," said a visitor to Melrose. "True, you have no John Knox, but you have Mr. Spurgeon," replied the custodian.

"*A downcast man* is raw material, which can only be manufactured into a very ordinary Christian."—FABER.

"THE BENEFIT OF HUMOUR"—AN AWFUL SIN!—"JOHN PLOUGHMAN"—SALT FOR MANY A DISH—SILENT PROTEST—"IN HOT WATER; OR, MAKING THE WATER HOT FOR OTHERS"—THE DOWN-GRADE CONTROVERSY.

DR. BUCKLAND, we learn from Caroline Fox, always felt nervous in addressing large assemblies until he had made them laugh, and then he was entirely at his ease; which ability to amuse while instructing is a high talent, although in the past it has perhaps been employed far too seldom. Charles Kingsley even believed that humour was an element of the Divine nature; but there have been those who have treated wit as if it were necessarily evil and a proof of frivolity. It is true that it has too often been employed to excuse evil, but so also have both music and painting. Wit, as other qualities, is beneficial or harmful as it is employed for good or evil.

A writer in 1861 was terribly shocked by Mr. Spurgeon's mirth. He says: "At the list of subscriptions read for the new Tabernacle, Messrs Knight & Duke contributed; at which Spurgeon said, 'Really we are in grand company! "Mr. King five shillings." Why, the king has actually given his crown. What a liberal monarch!' Directly afterwards Mr. Pig was called out as having given a guinea. 'That,' said Spurgeon, 'is a guinea-pig!' It cannot be said after this that Mr. Spurgeon has never made a joke without a spark of irreverence in it."

Shocking indeed, and yet we fear that Mr. Spurgeon will not amend his ways; and what would the objector

say if he knew that even bishops have dared to offend in this awful fashion?

The Rev. John Robertson of Glasgow informed us that he once told Mr. Spurgeon about some of the difficulties that he had to surmount when he commenced preaching. For example, one worthy office-bearer came to church, and seated himself before the minister with one finger in each ear. "There was a nice thing for a young preacher. What would you have done, Mr. Spurgeon?" "I should have prayed——" began Mr. Spurgeon; and said Mr. Robertson, "I got my face very solemn, for I expected something very spiritual." He continued, "I should have prayed—that a fly might have alighted on his nose!"

Mr. Spurgeon's chief work as a humourist is "John Ploughman's Talk." This proved such a success as a serial that it was afterwards issued as a book, and the fact that 370,000 have been sold of it proves it to be worth reading.

This book was followed by "John Ploughman's Pictures," of which 130,000 have been issued. If wit be employed merely to gladden sad lives, or to impart velocity to truth, it is not misemployed, for with many people life is terribly dreary and crushing; but when humour is so directed as to make evil absurd and good attractive, it is indeed well employed, and is indeed a moral force of the utmost importance. Of course, like anger, it must be well under control, just as the same fire prepares our food when kept within the kitchen-grate,

that would be fearful if it were in our pocket. Mr. Spurgeon's wit is of the kitchen-range order, that is, it is ready to burn up rubbish and make food more palatable and nourishing; it is, indeed, part of his original endowment, and one element of his success.

In the year 1872 a sheet almanac was issued, which, under the title "John Ploughman's Almanac," has commanded a large sale.

The proverbs and quaint sayings that from year to year brightened this broadsheet have been revised and arranged under the singularly appropriate title of "The Salt Cellars." The two volumes of "The Salt Cellars" are the most handsomely got up of Mr. Spurgeon's books. As to his purpose, the writer says in the preface: "I have never lost sight of my one aim in a page which I have written, whether the mood has been grave or gay, and that one aim has been the spiritual good of my readers. Godly sentiments sandwiched in between slices of wit and common-sense may become nutriment for the soul, although they may be almost unconsciously received. . . . Sermons would seldom be dull if they were more alive with aphorisms and epigrams. Comparatively they are trifles, but nothing is trifling by which serious truth can be brought home to careless minds."

Concerning the book itself it is difficult to speak, because to criticise, one ought to reproduce selections from almost every page. In our judgment the first volume is by far the better, although we

would not be without the second volume for a great deal.

The book is characterised by an abundance of proverbs and counsels upon matrimony, some of which are characteristic. We select a few sayings on this important topic:—

"One who marries a woman for her beauty alone is as foolish as the man who ate a bird because it sang so sweetly."

"While a man is single, let him live hard, that in after years he may not be forced to keep to 'bread and pull-it,' but may have pullet with his bread."

"It cannot always be honeymoon; therefore eat up the moon and keep the honey. Some eat all the honey, and have nothing left but the moon."

References to matrimony occur upon almost every third page, and they are of this amusing, practical character.

Then we observe the abundance of temperance teachings, of which we select the following specimens:—

"Keep the cork in the bottle, and no evil spirits will carry you off your legs."

"Don't have lockjaw, but yet lock your jaw."

> "'Of Lions white and red beware,
> They always take the lion's share.'

"It is curious that these mythical animals should so often be selected as signs for houses of entertainment. Is it because the weary traveller will there find something to *lie on?* Or is it because by means of lions white and red many are apt to make beasts of themselves?"

"Double stout, though said to be very nourishing, may readily carry a man half-seas over."

From the many miscellaneous maxims that sparkle on almost every page of the book we select the following:—

"Buy sixpenny-worth of stick-to-it."

"The mere dandy is like his mother in this only; she will never be a man, nor will he."

"The outs and ins are as like as lawyers; they both want to stick in good places."

"No blinkers are like those of conceit."

"The man who has nothing to boast of but his good ancestors is like a potato; all that is good of him is under ground."

"Man is an animal that sins. He is often a wolf to man, a serpent to God, and a scorpion to himself."

Beside these amusing sayings, there are copious sections of proverbs of a more spiritual character.

Mr. Spurgeon has recently printed his lecture on "Sermons in Candles," which is the best known of all his many lectures. "Sermons in Candles" has, with and without Mr. Spurgeon's permission, been delivered in different parts of the kingdom by various friends.

The lecture arose out of a remark which was made by one of Mr. Spurgeon's students as to the difficulty that all preachers feel in securing a wealth of suitable and taking illustrations.

"Yes," replied Mr. Spurgeon, "if you do not wake up, but go through the world asleep, you cannot see

illustrations; but if your minds were thoroughly aroused, and yet you could see nothing else in the world but a single tallow candle, you might find enough illustrations in that luminary to last you for six months."

In order to prove his own assertion, Mr. Spurgeon produced the lecture, which as a book we are not surprised to learn has commanded a large sale. We have no space to spare for illustrative selections, but we do not know of a better shilling's worth of wit and wisdom.

A few words must be now devoted to Mr. Spurgeon's experiences as a man of war; he has more than once been a controversialist, and that from the very nature of his calling as a teacher and leader of men.

When the corps of Guides were marching to Delhi during the Indian mutiny, they were so exhausted by the heat of their long tramp, that their officers represented to the commander, Nicolson, that they must really rest. He protested that delay would or might be fatal, but at length he was compelled to permit them to lie down under the shade of some trees. The weary men rested, when, after a time, one of them peeped around him to see where Nicolson was. He sat erect upon his horse in the middle of the road, without shelter, and exposed to the scorching beams of the sun, for he at least did not require to rest. He was waiting until they were ready to start once more for the capture of Delhi. The silent protest was irresistible; the wearied men sprang up one after another,

and, inspired with new strength by the stern endurance and passive argument, they followed their indomitable leader to victory.

A silent adherence to right is sometimes all that can be accomplished by the bravest soldier, and which is then a most effectual aggression; for men admire those who will dare to perform their duty alone.

It is not too much to claim for Mr. Spurgeon that his ministry has been singularly independent of all self-seeking, time-serving, and fear of man, and that it therefore has exerted a rousing influence, the extent of which cannot be estimated. He has always furnished the silent protest of an earnest consecrated life, which has inspired many others to holy endeavour and duty. He has, moreover, been a man of war from his youth, and, not content with a resolute personal adherence to what he has believed to be right, he has more than once been engaged in furious controversy. Although he has never sought conflict, he has never feared it; indeed, sometimes he has enjoyed it. As when during the Baptismal Regeneration controversy he once met with a minister who said to him—

"I hear, friend Spurgeon, that you are in hot water."

"Oh, dear no," said Mr. Spurgeon; "I am not in hot water. The other fellows are; I am the man that makes the water boil."

The facts of this controversy are briefly these. On the 5th of June 1864, Mr. Spurgeon preached a sermon

from Mark xvi. 15, 16. This sermon was afterwards published, and kindled great excitement at the time. It, in fact, began one of the most furious doctrinal battles of recent years. The sermon which commenced this memorable conflict is still read with interest; indeed, it has now reached a sale of 250,000 copies. It is printed in volume x. of Mr. Spurgeon's Sermons. In it Mr. Spurgeon asserts that Baptismal Regeneration is—(1) out of character with the spiritual religion that Jesus came to teach; (2) that it is not supported by facts. He also points out the evil influence of such a figment upon men, and its effects in producing an advance of Popery.

In contrast to this dogma, Mr. Spurgeon asserts that salvation always was and is through faith in the atonement of Christ, and, in conclusion, he indicates the place and benefit of baptism as a refreshment to faith.

This deliverance was speedily challenged by those who believed in Baptismal Regeneration, and, in addition to numberless newspaper articles and reviews, it almost snowed pamphlets and sermons on one or the other side of the question. In Mr. Spurgeon's library we have seen a complete collection of these publications, the only complete collection, we believe, in existence. It is indeed a large one, and will be of interest to the historian of the religious thought and life of our age.

We are not writing a history of this almost forgotten

controversy, and therefore reserve our comments for a future volume.

After this war of the giants, Mr. Spurgeon was at peace until the recent conflict with the Baptist Union led to his secession from communion with that body.

This controversy is generally known as the "Down Grade." Into this dispute we do not now propose to enter at length, but no Life of Mr. Spurgeon would be complete without a reference to this, the greatest of his battles.

The facts are briefly these. Mr. Spurgeon published three articles in the *Sword and Trowel*. In the first of these, which appeared in August 1889, he made these definite assertions:—1st, That "in many churches and chapels the atonement is scouted, the inspiration of Scripture is derided, the Holy Spirit degraded into an influence, the punishment of sin is turned into a fiction, and the resurrection into a myth." 2nd, That, "at the back of doctrinal falsehood there has come a natural decline of spiritual life, evinced by a taste for questionable amusements and a weariness of doctrinal meetings."

This article was followed by another, headed "A Reply to Sundry Critics and Inquirers," and that by a third paper called "The Case Proved."

This last concludes thus: "What action is to be taken we leave to those who can see more plainly than we do what Israel ought to do. One thing is clear to us—we cannot be expected to meet in any union which com-

prehends those whose teaching is, upon fundamental points, exactly the reverse of that which we hold dear. Those who can do so will no doubt have weighty reasons with which to justify their action, and we will not sit in judgment upon these reasons. They may judge that a minority should not drive them out. To us it appears that there are many things upon which compromise is possible, but there are others in which it would be an act of treason to pretend to fellowship. With deep regret we abstain from assembling with those whom we dearly love and heartily respect, since it would involve us in a confederacy with those with whom we can have no communion in the Lord. Garibaldi complained that by the cession of Nice to France he had been made a foreigner in his native land, and our heart is burdened with a like sorrow; but those who banish us may yet be of another mind, and enable us to return."

The Baptist Union met at Sheffield immediately after the publication of these articles, and during its session took no formal notice of these articles. We believe that this was done with the sincere desire to maintain peace, but some caustic allusion was made in a public meeting by two speakers, to which no reply could then be made.

Mr. Spurgeon, who had expected that some official notice would be taken of his protest, thereupon sent the following letter to Dr. Booth, the Secretary of the Baptist Union:—

"Westwood, Beulah Hill, Upper Norwood,
October 28, 1887.

"Dear Friend,—I beg to intimate to you, as the Secretary of the Baptist Union, that I must withdraw from that Society. I do this with the utmost regret, but I have no choice. The reasons are set forth in the *Sword and Trowel* for November, and I trust you will excuse my repeating them here. I beg you not to send any one to me to ask for reconsideration. I fear I have considered too long already. Certainly every hour of the day impresses upon me the conviction that I am moving none too soon.

"I wish also to add that no personal pique or ill-will has in the least degree operated upon me. I have personally received more respect than I desired. It is on the highest ground alone that I do take the step, and you know that I have long delayed it because I hoped for better things.—Yours always heartily,

"C. H. Spurgeon."

In reply to this letter Dr. Booth wrote thus:—

"Beckenham, *October* 31, 1887.

"Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

"My Dear Friend,—Your letter announcing your formal withdrawal from the Baptist Union reached me here at mid-day on Saturday last. I cannot express adequately the sense of pain such a step has caused me. Nor can I at present calmly think of the future. I can only leave it as it is for a while, merely adding that I think you have wounded the hearts of some—of

many—who honour and love you more than you have any idea of, and whose counsel would have led to a far different result.—I am, yours very truly,

"S. HARRIS BOOTH."

Various efforts to effect a compromise were attempted in vain, and Mr. Spurgeon was visited by a deputation from the Baptist Union.

As it was alleged that some ministers who were members of his own Conference were not orthodox, Mr. Spurgeon next proceeded to reorganise his Conference.

In order to ascertain the truth or falsehood of this assertion, on the 3rd of February 1888, a meeting of those ministers working in London who had been educated in the Pastors' College was held, in the course of which Mr. Spurgeon declared that he could not remain associated with those who held the new theology, and offered, if it were wished, to resign the Presidency of the Conference, a proposal which was received with a most emphatic "No." It was resolved to dissolve the Conference. A new Association was then formed, and a declaration of faith was drawn up as a basis of association. The creed was declared by resolution to be —(1.) The doctrines of grace. (2.) Believers' baptism. (3.) Earnest endeavours to win souls for Christ; and it was agreed that any who ceased to be in agreement with their brethren upon these points have, in consequence, severed their connection with the Association.

This resolution was sent by post to the country

ministers who were members of the former Conference, with the result that out of 496 members, 432 agreed to the new basis of agreement, and were formed into The Pastors' College Evangelical Association, which now numbers 450.

In April 1888, the Baptist Union met at the City Temple, London; a compromise was agreed to, with the purpose of uniting the two opposed sections of the Baptist denomination, but this Mr. Spurgeon subsequently repudiated.

On Tuesday 11th of April, Mr. Spurgeon withdrew from the London Baptist Association.

"I shall never cease to regret that Mr. Spurgeon has left us. We have no equal to him. I believe he has left his best and truest friends, and might have rendered better and nobler service in the Union than he can against it. But we have Dr. Maclaren and Dr. Angus, and a host of others. Still we sadly miss Mr. Spurgeon," wrote Rev. Charles William to an American friend.

On the 6th of June 1890, Mr. Spurgeon united with a small Association of Churches hitherto known as the Surrey and Middlesex Baptist Association. This was re-named The Home Counties Association. Upon joining this body, Mr. Spurgeon promised to provide two colporteurs to labour among the villages of Surrey. The accession of Mr. Spurgeon has given new life to this small association, which is doing most important evangelistic service in the villages and small towns of Surrey.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FRUIT OF THE LEMON-TREE, OR LOVE THAT WROUGHT IN PAIN.

"Distance divides not wedded hearts,
Thought's pinion doth not tire,
Nor can the waterfloods of grief
Quench love's eternal fire!"
—LADY H. LAWRENCE.

"Instead of finding fault with a bookless preacher, who has to beat his brains for fresh subjects, and then finds it hard to treat them with any freshness, it would be far wiser to send him a present of suggestive volumes. To whip the horse is both unjust and unwise when a feed of corn is really wanted."—C. H. SPURGEON.

"When my God gives to any words of mine the power to bless and comfort His people, I feel overwhelmed with a sense of His goodness and love. Some folks think that only *sin* can keep us humble, but my own experience certainly does not allow that view of the matter. I find that *grace* is the potent soil for true humility to grow in; and the greater the favours the Lord bestows on me, the more unworthy do I deem myself of such indulgence."—MRS. C. H. SPURGEON.

"LOVE THAT WROUGHT IN PAIN"—WORK THAT GREW—FOOD FOR THE BODY AS WELL AS THE MIND—A HAPPY HOME—LETTER TO CHILDREN.

THE Malays, when they are about to rear a house, place a girl in the deep hole which is to receive the huge beams of the building. The beam is thrust

into its place, and thus literally the house is reared in blood. Which thing is true of many a fortune and a great name, and in another sense is also true of all that is noble and worth doing. By the pain, and perhaps by the death of the worker, every Christian enterprise is accomplished.

And it is singular, also, to observe that the history of Christian progress is a history of the triumph of woman's service for God, a service which is almost always rendered in pain. The records of the past are luminous with the names of Susannah Wesley, the Countess of Huntingdon, Mrs. Fry, and many others. Nor is it without comfort that the present age boasts of womanhood as noble and as loving in its service as any preceding era. Want of space forbids illustration of this truth, if other were needed than that which is furnished by the work which has been rendered by Mrs. Spurgeon to all the churches of Christ. And when we remember that what she has done for others has been performed at the cost of great personal suffering, the sacrifice is all the more a pattern of what can be done even by one who is laid aside from ordinary forms of Christian enterprise.

Of Mrs. Spurgeon herself very little has been heard, and we shall consult her wishes best if we speak of her work rather than of herself.

That work has been described in a delicate *brochure*, the reading of which will be a source of great personal enjoyment to all who admire gracious self-sacrifice and

concentrated purpose for the noblest ends, and which will make one exclaim—

> "I know by the gleam and the glitter,
> By the traces of pain and tear,
> By your heart's sweet sense of comfort,
> Of the fire you have had to bear."

"Ten Years of my Life in the Service of the Book Fund" is the title of the book to which we allude, and after perusing it one wishes that Mrs. Spurgeon had been strong enough to write very much more. In this volume we have delightful glimpses of a happy home-life, which are all the more attractive and charming because they are unconsciously drawn.

Thus, when moving from Nightingale Lane to Westwood, Mrs. Spurgeon wrote:—

"The heart yearns over a place endeared by an intimate acquaintance of twenty-three years, and full of happy or solemn associations. Every nook and corner, both of house and garden, abounds with sweet or sorrowful memories, and the remembrance of manifold mercies clings like a rich tapestry to the walls of the desolate rooms. On this spot nearly a quarter of a century of blissful wedded life has been passed, and though both husband and wife have been called to suffer severe physical pain and months of weakness within its boundary, our home has been far oftener a 'Bethel' to us than a 'Bochim.' The very walls might cry out against us as ungrateful, did we not

silence them by our ceaseless thanksgiving; for the Lord has here loaded us with benefits, and consecrated every inch of space with tokens of His great loving-kindness. The sun of His goodness has photographed every portion of our dear home upon our hearts, and though other lights and shadows must be reflected there in coming days, they can never obliterate the sweet images which grateful memory will jealously preserve. Tender remembrances will render indelible the pictures of the sick-chamber, which so many times had almost been the gate of heaven to our spirit; the little room tenderly fitted up by a husband's careful love, and so often the scene of a scarcely hoped-for convalescence; the study, sacred to the Pastor's earnest work, and silent witness of wrestlings and communings known only to God and his own soul. In the room," adds Mrs. Spurgeon, "by desire of the incoming tenants, has been placed the following inscription, written by Mr. Spurgeon:—

'Farewell! fair room; I leave thee to a friend!
Peace dwell with him, and all his kin.
May angels evermore the house defend,
Their Lord hath often been within.'"

Sometimes her work furnishes topics for mirth, such as the following incident:—

Two letters had reached Mrs. Spurgeon, "The first from a young man who evidently desired to possess Mr. Spurgeon's 'Lectures to my Students,' but, being either misinformed on the subject, or having evolved

a whimsical conjecture out of his own brain, he asked me deliberately and emphatically to give him MY LECTURES. '*The lectures written by you*,' explained he, underlining the words lest there should be any mistake about such precious productions.

"My husband made the richest fun out of this blundering request. 'Oh!' he said, '*they're not published yet! That is a pity. They are first-rate, but they are only orally delivered.*' I let him go on in this style for ever so long, enjoying it to his heart's content, and then I triumphantly produced the second letter, saying, 'Well, now, we will hear the other side of the question, for the writer of *this* note asks me the price of "MY MASTER'S" Treasury of David!' Here was sweet revenge for me; and I duly exulted in turning the tables gleefully upon dear John, who is very fond of calling me 'the Missis,' and having a real merry time over the innocent insinuations which, by a most curious coincidence, met in the same post. We laughed till we almost cried, and since then have made our friends laugh too. Here is, thank God! only love and peace in home, sweet home! Of course, John Ploughman is the master, as he ought to be, and *my master* too. I am proud to confess his dominion, and my sweet thraldom; but equally, of course, I am 'the Missis;' and if I do sometimes yearn to give a 'lecture,' I try so to fashion it that dear John shall think he is listening to a lyric, and like it immensely. And he does, but it couldn't be printed."

In addition to such bright flashes of mirth we have some sacred passages like the following:—

"One morning when I was reading the portions of Scripture in 'Daily Light,' my husband said, 'What are the texts for to-day, wifey?' So I read:—

"'O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do Thou it for Thy Name's sake.'—Jer. xiv. 17.

"'Let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, The Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression.'—Numb. xiv. 17, 18.

"'Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy Name; and deliver us, and purge away our sins for Thy Name's sake.'—Psalm lxxix. 9.

"'These texts remind me,' I said, 'of a circumstance which came to my knowledge lately, which pleased and interested me much.' I then related to him the story as I read it:—

"A prayer-meeting was being held in a country town, and a good man was praying very earnestly, pleading promise after promise before God with great fervour, when he was suddenly interrupted by some one crying out in a loud voice, 'That's it, brother, that's it! Bind Him down to that! He can't go from His word!'

"The dear Pastor looked grave as I uttered the last words, and his conclusion differed widely from the one I had arrived at. A shadow as of pain passed over his face, and in tender, measured tones he replied, 'Ah!

but He does not need binding down to it, bless His dear Name!'"

The following is very touching and beautiful:—

"For some time past it has been the dear Pastor's custom, as soon as the texts for the Lord's-day's services have been given by the 'Master,' to call me into the study, and permit me to read the various commentaries on the subject-matter in hand. Never was occupation more delightful, instructive, and spiritually helpful. My heart has often burned within me as the meaning of some passage of God's Word has been opened up, and the hidden stores of wisdom and knowledge have been revealed; or when the marrow and fatness of a precious promise or doctrine has been spread like a dainty banquet before my admiring eyes. Shall I ever forget those solemn evenings, when the sufferings of the Lord Jesus were the theme of tearful meditation, when, with love and grief our heart dividing, we followed Him through the night on which He was betrayed, weeping like the daughters of Jerusalem, and saying, 'There never was sorrow like unto this sorrow,' or the more rapturous time when the exceeding riches of His grace was to be the topic for the morrow, and we were fairly bewildered by the inexhaustible treasures of love and grace to be found in that fair 'land of Havilah, where there is gold!'

"Gracious hours are those thus spent, and unspeakably precious to my soul; for while the Lord's dear servant is reaping the corn of the kingdom for the

longing multitude who expect to be fed by His hand, I can glean between the sheaves, and gather the 'handfuls of purpose' which are let fall so lovingly.

"Then come delightful pauses in my reading, when the book is laid down, and I listen to the dear voice of my beloved as he explains what I cannot understand, or unfolds meanings which I should fail to see, often condensing into a few clear, choice sentences whole pages of those discursive old divines in whom he delights, and pressing from the gathered thoughts all the richest nectar of their hidden sweetness. Thus a *poor prisoner* has the first sip of the *wines on the lees* well refined, the first morsel from the loaves with which the thousands are to be fed and refreshed on the morrow. How can I sufficiently thank God for this drink of the brook by the way, this holy place within my home, where I find the Lord deigns to meet with me, and draw out my heart in adoration and worship? Lord, I bless and praise Thee, that thus Thou hast most blessedly fulfilled Thine own words, 'I will not leave you comfortless. I will come unto you.'"

These extracts sufficiently show the finish, charm, and sweetness of this book; the story of Mrs. Spurgeon's Book Fund is told in the following passage:—

"It was in the summer of 1875 that my dear husband completed and published the first volume of his 'Lectures to Students.' Reading one of the 'proof' copies, I became so enamoured of the book, that, when

the dear author asked, 'Well, how do you like it?' I answered with a full heart, 'I wish I could place it in the hands of every minister in England.'

"'Then why not do so? How much will you give?' said my very practical spouse.

"I must confess that I was unprepared for such a challenge. I was ready enough to *desire* the distribution of the precious book, but to assist in it, or to help to pay for it, had not occurred to me. But John Ploughman drives a straight furrow to one's heart, and knows how to turn over the thick clods of selfishness which lie there choking up the useful growths, and very soon his words set me thinking how much I could spare from housekeeping or personal matters to start this new scheme. I knew it would necessitate a pressure somewhere, for money was not plentiful just then; but to see dear John's face become so radiant at the idea of my scattering his books far and wide was worth any effort, and love even more than obedience constrained me to carry out the suddenly formed plan.

"Then comes the wonderful part: I found the money ready and waiting. Upstairs in a little drawer were some carefully-hoarded crown-pieces, which, owing to some foolish fancy, I had been gathering for years, whenever chance threw one in my way; these I counted out, and found they made a sum *exactly* sufficient to pay for one hundred copies of the work! If a twinge of regret at parting from my cherished but unwieldy favourites passed over me, it was gone in an instant,

and then they were given freely and thankfully to the Lord; and in that moment, though I knew it not, the Book Fund was started."

We learn from a subsequent page that during the previous winter (1874) Mrs. Spurgeon had planted a lemon pip, which in due time became a plant, and is now a tree! This lemon tree has become associated with the work of the Book Fund, for both have sprung from tiny seeds, sown without any idea as to what they would become.

It was a favourite fancy of Mrs. Spurgeon that for every leaf on her tree she would receive a hundred pounds for her book fund.

"You'll see," I said to my boys, "the Lord will send me hundreds of pounds for this work." For many a day afterwards, mother's "hundreds of pounds" became a household word of good-humoured merriment and badinage."

The original design was to give one hundred copies of the Lectures; this number increased to two hundred, and then Mrs. Spurgeon resolved to give, as far as possible, the volumes of the "Treasury of David." At first only those ministers who had been students in her husband's College were the recipients, but after a time other Nonconformist pastors were favoured. Then curates and clergymen of the Church of England requested not to be overlooked, and even some among the High Church clergy received with gratitude Mr. Spurgeon's books. The authoress is careful to explain

that all the recipients have asked for her husband's books, although in some cases other standard and helpful books have been given.

The depth of suffering in many pastors' homes that was disclosed by Mrs. Spurgeon's work is terrible; it is an unlovely side of Evangelical religion that many of the ministers inside the Church and among the Nonconformists have laboured in literal poverty.

The terrible pinch and struggle to obtain needful food and clothing leave but little or no money for the purchase of books, which, in the way of stimulative suggestion and mental tonic, are a necessity to a religious teacher. For although it is true that the Book of God can only be interpreted by spiritual understanding, yet because it is a human as well as a Divine book, men require helps to understand it.

At a recent meeting one speaker condoled and wept about the suffering masses, and was replied to thus: "I pity them five pounds, how much do you pity them?" The pitiful stories of distress among ministers that came to Mrs. Spurgeon moved her to originate a new fund, which began in 1877. From this, called the Pastors' Aid Fund, from time to time, the worst cases were relieved, and judging from the extracts from letters published in "Ten Years," in the most gracious and judicious manner.

The original intention to restrict the gift to Baptists was soon abandoned, and Mrs. Spurgeon resolved to supply books to ministers of every Evangelical deno-

imnation in active charge whose total income did not exceed £150 per year.

No means were employed to establish the fund; it simply grew, because it was from God and was the subject of prayer.

From time to time brief notices of the work were given in the *Sword and Trowel*, but no advertisements were required or thought of. The God to whom the service was rendered gave the money, and without endowment the work went on increasing year after year.

More than once Mrs. Spurgeon found herself with no funds in hand, but with many pressing needs that she longed to supply. Then the exact amount of money required came in, and she was able to gratify her desire to console and reinspire the obscure and disheartened sufferers.

Mrs. Spurgeon relates this touching incident arising from this work:—A poor minister was compelled by ill-health and the poverty of his church to resign his charge. The only chance for life was for him to go to Australia. How to pay the passage-money thither was a difficulty, and the good man proposed to go first, leaving his wife in England to attempt to support herself and children by needlework. Then Mrs. Spurgeon became acquainted with the facts, and she at once generously provided the funds, with the exception of about £16, which she still required. But on the very morning when this money must be forth-

coming Mr. Spurgeon received an anonymous gift of £15 as a personal present, and this cheque he generously allotted for the purpose of paying the passage-money of the poor family.

Such instances are remarkable, not only for the proof that they supply as to the virtue of prayer, but also as to the revelations of self-sacrifice and piety furnished by them. Mrs. Spurgeon's book is a record of answered prayer, and of triumphant faith, which we would place, as we would George Müller's, among the most convincing of our Christian evidences. God by these things proves that He exists, and that He does answer prayer. Look at the facts!

Mrs. Spurgeon acknowledges gratefully the help that her publishers have rendered in supplying her with books at low terms, and in printing and binding the report of her work free; for it is part of the reward of every gracious self-sacrificing deed that it stimulates others to imitation.

Scattered through the book from whence we glean this information are such gems as the following, which we cannot refrain from copying:—

"'Do you notice, husband,' I said, 'how closely the Lord keeps the work within the bounds of my strength? Year by year almost the same sum of money comes from His hand. If one friend fails us, He raises up another, and, without advertisement, without offer or inducements of any sort, the stream of applications *from the right people* follows the course of the channel

of supply. Six years now have witnessed this constant incoming and outgoing—a quiet steady work, just fitted and moulded to the weak fingers which joyfully guide its machinery. Is not the Lord's tender care seen in this?'

"'Put that in your report, wifey,' said my 'Head.' So I put it in."

There are many similar passages that are beautiful tokens of a happy home-life and of a mutual service quite as important as the higher forms of Christian usefulness, which are rendered in the blaze of day.

In the year 1888 an auxiliary book fund was commenced in response to an appeal from Mrs. Spurgeon. This contemplates rendering to local preachers and other similar workers the help that Mrs. Spurgeon's Book Fund has given to ministers.

From the last report we learn that during the year 1890, 6867 volumes have been given away, making a total of 122,129 volumes for the fifteen years. In addition to these books, nearly 7000 sermons have been sent out, with many thousands of tracts, for home distribution, and as many for foreign lands.

As a proof of the catholicity of the work, we observe that during the last year named (1890) for which a report is issued, the gifts were distributed thus:—

122 Clergymen—119 Baptists—109 Methodists—76 Independents—48 Missionaries—7 Presbyterians—2 Moravians—1 Lutheran—484 in all.

The balance-sheet for 1890 may also be of interest, as showing what fruit the lemon-tree has yielded.

Receipts.	£	s.	d.	Expenditure.	£	s.	d.
Balance in hand .	562	5	8	By Books . .	809	8	11
Donations, &c. .	980	19	0	„ Postage . .	27	7	11
Interest . .	27	0	9	Balance in hand .	733	8	7
	£1570	5	5		£1570	5	5

The figures are remarkable, because we can read behind them not only the faithfulness of God and the power of prayer and faith, but also what one suffering soul may accomplish in the service of Christ for others.

Would that there were more of such service rendered at the cost of comfort, self, and life, for such alone is accepted of Christ.

A word or two may here be given to Mrs. Spurgeon's twin sons, both of whom are preachers of the Gospel.

They were born on the 20th of September 1856 in a house in the Old Kent Road, London.

Rev. Charles Spurgeon was educated at Brighton, and was not only a most successful student, but also a cricketer of note. In the year 1877 he entered the Pastors' College. While thus engaged in preparing for the great business of his life, Mr. Charles Spurgeon took charge of a small and dying church in Wandsworth. The faithful and thoughtful ministry of the student was greatly blessed, and a large and influential church has resulted from this enterprise.

In the year 1879 he undertook the difficult task of superintending a flagging church in Greenwich. This endeavour was also surprisingly successful, and there he has ministered ever since. On the 11th of April 1881 Mr. Spurgeon was married to Miss Jacob of Norwood.

Rev. Thomas Spurgeon, whom his mother fondly calls "My Seagull," was compelled by ill-health to leave our damp climate. In Australia and New Zealand he has been instrumental in performing great service to all the Churches.

Rev. Charles Spurgeon is better known in England than his brother Thomas. He visited Cardiff some years ago, and while in the lobby he overheard some one say, "That is Mr. Spurgeon; he is a chip of the old block." Mr. Spurgeon at once retorted, "My father is not a block, though I may be a shaver."

The writer was present at the Stockwell Orphanage Festival when each of Mr. Spurgeon's sons made his first public speech. There were then present Rev. John Spurgeon, the grandfather; Rev. C. H. and James Spurgeon; and Rev. C. H. Spurgeon's two sons—three generations.

Here perhaps will be the best place to insert a letter which in the year 1889 Mr. Spurgeon sent to the children of Baptist ministers.

At a meeting of the Conference of that year, Dr. Usher of Belfast prayed for the children of the mini-

sters who were present. Mr. Spurgeon remarked upon the prayer, and offered to write to the children of any minister present who desired it. The offer was gratefully accepted, and while for younger children a simpler note was prepared, to those who were older, the following letter was sent:—

"Westwood, Norwood.

"O Lord, bless this letter!

"My Dear ——,

I was a little while ago at a meeting for prayer, where a large number of ministers were gathered together. The subject of prayer was 'our children.' It soon brought the tears to my eyes to hear those good fathers pleading with God for their sons and daughters. As they went on entreating the Lord to save their families, my heart seemed ready to burst with strong desire that it might be even so. Then I thought, I will write to those sons and daughters, and remind them of their parents' prayers.

"Dear ——, you are highly privileged in having parents who pray for you. Your name is known in the courts of heaven. Your case has been laid before the throne of God.

"*Do you not pray for yourself?* If you do not do so, why not? If other people value your soul, can it be right for you to neglect it? All the entreaties and wrestlings of your father will not save you if you never seek the Lord yourself. You know this.

"You do not intend to cause grief to dear mother and father; but you do. So long as you are not saved, they can never rest. However obedient, and sweet, and kind you may be, they will never feel happy about you until you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and so find everlasting salvation.

"Think of this. Remember how much you have already sinned, and none can wash you but Jesus. When you grow up, you may become very sinful, and none can change your nature and make you holy but the Lord Jesus, through His Spirit.

"You need what father and mother seek for you, and you need it *Now*. Why not seek it at once? I heard a father pray, 'Lord, save our children, *and save them young*.' It is never too soon to be safe; never too soon to be happy; never too soon to be holy. Jesus loves to receive the very young ones.

"You cannot save yourself, but the great Lord Jesus can save you. Ask Him to do it. 'He that asketh receiveth.' Then trust in Jesus to save you. He can do it, for He died and rose again that 'whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.' Come and tell Jesus you have sinned; seek forgiveness; trust in Him for it, and be sure that you are saved.

"Then imitate our Lord. Be at home what Jesus was at Nazareth. Yours will be a happy home, and your dear father and mother will feel that the dearest wish of their hearts has been granted them.

"I pray you to think of heaven and hell; for in one of those places you will live for ever. *Meet me in heaven!* Meet me at once at the mercy-seat. Run upstairs and pray to the great Father, through Jesus Christ.—Yours very lovingly,

"C. H. SPURGEON."

CHAPTER X.

"THE CONTINUATOR OF A HUNDRED VIRTUES."

(On a bag of flour sold at a bazaar in aid of James Grove Baptist Chapel, was printed the following lines.)

"Our bodies are the servants of our souls,
And yield obedience to their lordly sway.
Our souls have daily need of heavenly food;
And if the bread which nourisheth our flesh
Cannot, because of grossness, feed the mind,
'Tis seeming that it aid to build the house
In which the sacred banquet shall be spread."

—C. H. SPURGEON.

"The Chinese cannot pronounce 'Spurgeon' correctly, so we call him in this quarter *Sze-Pah-ng, i.e.*, 'the successor or continuator of a hundred virtues.' The word 'hundred' in Chinese stands for an indefinite number."

1865–1890.

"CROOKEDER THAN EVER"—CHRIST THE CONQUEROR—FLOWER MISSION—MORTIFYING THE OLD MAN—"THE ANGELS DID THEIR WORK WELL"—THE OPEN LETTER.

"GENTLEMEN, all is well, but much has yet to be done," said Marlborough, when complimented after one of his most brilliant exploits. "All is well, but much has yet to be done."

The same may be said of Mr. Spurgeon and his work, and in this spirit he has gone from one enterprise to another.

His history since the opening of the huge Tabernacle has been singularly interesting and full of romantic incidents, but for want of space we must content ourselves with noting a few only of the more remarkable events of some years.

In the year 1865 Mr. Spurgeon first issued the *Sword and Trowel*, which in its turn led to the establishment of the Orphanage and other enterprises.

We believe that it was during some special meetings for prayer that were held during this year that the following incident occurred:—

A man stood up, and with tears running down his cheeks, and in sore distress, prayed much after this fashion: "O Lord, thou knowest that I have a good wife at home—a very good wife, but she has such a shocking bad temper. Thou knowest, O Lord, that I have reasoned with her, talked with her, but it's all of no good; she won't improve. Thou knowest, O Lord, that last Sunday night I brought her to hear our dear pastor preach. When she came out I said to her, 'How did you like it?' and she said, 'Oh, it was beautiful!' But when she got home she was crookeder than ever."

This year of 1865 was a heavy one at the Tabernacle. A Band of Hope was formed, and also an association of the London ministers who had once been in the College; the latter has since developed into the Pastors' College Evangelical Association, of which we have spoken. "Our Own Hymn Book" was then first issued, and

Mr. Spurgeon with others founded what is known as the London Baptist Association.

Among these pleasing tokens of successful effort there were, of course, difficulties and troubles. Mr. Spurgeon was much annoyed by the assertion that he was attempting to found a new denomination. Had he contemplated such a design, he could easily have accomplished it, but he has more than once distinctly repudiated any intention to propagate what has been called Spurgeonism. In the *Sword and Trowel* for March 1866 he strongly asserted his purpose to be not to gather any new denomination. "He who searches all hearts knows that our aim and object is not to gather a band around self, but to invite a company around the Saviour," he said. "'Let my name perish, but let Christ's name last for ever,' said George Whitfield, and so has Charles Spurgeon said a hundred times."

The Colportage Association commenced its efforts this year.

The increasing toil of his many works led Mr. Spurgeon to seek assistance, and on the 1st January 1868 his brother, Rev. James Spurgeon, became co-pastor with him.

Rev. J. A. Spurgeon has never had full justice done to his remarkable business abilities and attainments. He is of another order than his brother, but that is a high and important order. In a future publication we intend to refer more at length to Mr. J. A. Spurgeon, and now content ourselves with observing that

his work has not a little contributed to the permanent success of the huge church that has gathered around his brother and himself.

In the year 1870, the doctrine of the future state came into prominence, and the *Christian World* freely opened its columns to those who assailed the orthodox faith, refusing a hearing to their opponents with one exception—Mr. Spurgeon. Mr. Spurgeon felt that as the general consent of the Christian Church from the first has been with those who believe that the punishment of sinners is unending, and that therefore the burden of proof lay with those who sought to introduce what they alleged to be a more scriptural view, declined the controversy, but at his request Rev. George Rogers set forth the orthodox view in two exhaustive articles, which were afterwards published as pamphlets. The same year, 1870, saw the issue of Mr. Spurgeon's "Feathers for Arrows."

Two years later Mr. Spurgeon visited Rome, and while sitting in the Colosseum he said to his friends, "Is it not glorious to look at this old ruin, and see how Christ has conquered here? for all these ruins tell what desolations He hath made on the earth, how He breaketh the bow and cutteth the spear in sunder."

Then with his companions he sung:—

"Jesus, tremendous name,
Puts all our foes to flight;
Jesus, the meek, the angry lamb,
A lion is in fight."

An American and an English clergyman came up and united in the next verse, and in sight of the ruin which told of what had once hindered the Gospel, they sang—

"By all hell's host withstood,
We all hell's host o'erthrow,
And conquering them through Jesus' blood,
We still to conquer go."

In the year 1874 Mr. Spurgeon was much assailed because he, when exposed to an injudicious attack on account of his smoking, retorted that he could smoke to the glory of God.

Many people object to smoking, but to assail Mr. Spurgeon in his own Tabernacle upon a point which is confessedly one upon which Christians have differed, was most unjustifiable and ungracious. Mr. Spurgeon defended himself most ably in the *Daily Telegraph*.

"The expression 'smoking to the glory of God' standing alone has an ill sound," he said, "and I don't justify it; but in the sense in which I employed it I will stand to it. No Christian should do anything in which he cannot glorify God, and this may be done according to Scripture in eating and drinking, and the common actions of life. When I have found intense pain relieved, a weary brain soothed, and calm, refreshing sleep obtained by a cigar, I have felt grateful to God, and have blessed His name. This is what I meant, and by no means did I use sacred words triflingly."

This defence silenced his adversaries, and after a time the controversy subsided.

In the same year, on the 21st of September 1874, Mr. Spurgeon baptized his two sons.

Although out of the order of time, reference may here be made to two meetings which were held on June 18th and 19th, 1884. Mr. Spurgeon was then presented with a testimonial consisting of an address, accompanied by a gift of £4500, which he at once appropriated to various Christian societies associated with the Tabernacle. The address is a beautiful work of art; it contains in the borders a correct photograph of the two pastors. It says—

"To the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon,

Pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle.

"With an united voice of thanksgiving to our ever-blessed God on your behalf; with a cordial acknowledgment of the good services you have rendered to the universal Church of our Lord Jesus Christ; and with a profound sense of the high character and wide reputation you have established among your fellow-Christians, we beg to offer you our sincere congratulations on this the fiftieth anniversary of your birthday.

"Accept our assurance that no language but the language of personal affection could fitly express the esteem in which you are held by ourselves and by the numerous constituency we represent. Were it possible for the lips of all those who love you as a brother, and those who revere you as a father in Christ, to sound in

your ears the sentiments of their hearts, the music of their chorus at this glad hour would be like the noise of many waters.

"Gathered together, as we now are, in this sacred edifice—sacred not by reason of any superstitious ceremony at the opening, but by the soul-saving miracles of grace subsequently wrought beneath its roof—it becomes us to greet you first as Pastor of this Ancient Church. More than thirty of those fifty years you chronicle to-day have been spent in our midst. As our Minister you are known to the utmost ends of the earth. Richly endowed by the Spirit of God with wisdom and discretion, your conduct as our Ruling Elder has silenced contention and promoted harmony. The three hundred souls you found in fellowship at New Park Street Chapel have multiplied to a fellowship of nearly six thousand in this Tabernacle. And under your watchful oversight the family group has increased without any breach of order.

"You came among us in the freshness of your youth. At that flowering age when boys of good promise are wont to change their curriculum from school to college, you had already developed into manliness, and there was ripe fruit as well as pleasant foliage on your branches. The groundwork of your education appeared to be so solid, and the maturity of your character so thoroughly reliable, that you were unanimously elected by venerable members of the Church of Christ to preside over their councils. The fair prospect of your

spring-time has not suffered from any blight. Your natural abilities never betrayed you into indolent habits. The talents you possessed gave stimulus to your diligence. A little prosperity did not elate you, or a measure of success prompt the desire to settle down in some quiet resting-place. You spread your sails to catch the breeze. The ascendency you began to acquire over the popular mind, instead of making you vain-glorious, filled you with awe, and increased the rigour of that discipline you have always exercised over yourself. These were happy auguries of your good speed. Not that the utmost vigilance on your part could have sufficed to uphold you amidst the vast and accumulating responsibilities that have devolved on you as the sphere of your ministry widened. He who ruleth in the heavens has screened you in times of peril, and piloted you through shoals and quicksands, through straits and rapids. His grace and His goodness, His promises and His providence have never failed you. From the hour when you first committed your soul, your circumstances, and your destinies to the keeping of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have never feared such a disaster. To your unwavering faith in His guardian care we venture to attribute the coolness of your head and the courage of your heart in all the great adventures of your life. Some of us have been with you from the beginning of your charge. Since then a generation has almost passed away. According to a law as legibly written as any law of nature, the

Scripture has said, "Instead of the fathers, shall be the children." Hence, in not a few instances, you must miss the sires while you meet the sons. The retrospect of your career, to those who have followed it throughout, appears like one unbroken series of successes; but as our memory retraces the steps you have taken, we can testify to the exhaustive labours in which you have blithely engaged, the constant self-denial you have cheerfully exercised, and the restless anxieties that have kept you and your comrades incessantly calling on the name of the Lord. By such an experience you have enlarged the field of evangelical enterprise in the various institutions of the Church. And it has been your happiness not only to see the growth of those institutions beyond the most sanguine hopes you cherished when planting them, but to have received the grateful thanks of those who derived unspeakable benefit in partaking of their fruits. Such gratitude demands our notice, though only in the lowest degree. Your skilful generalship has laid ten thousand happy donors to your charities under lasting obligations to you for providing outlets for their benevolence. It has pleased the Lord to make whatever you do to prosper. You have been the faithful steward and the kindly executor of hundreds and thousands of pious individuals, whose fond design has been to lay up treasure for themselves in heaven by paying into the exchequer on earth of their substance for the widow and the fatherless in their distress, for the poor, and those who have no

helper. Let the acknowledgments of subscribers to the various purses you hold in your hands, as well as those of recipients, cheer you as you enter on a fresh decade of the days of the years of your earthly pilgrimage.

"An occasion like this is so solemn, and an address like the present is so serious, that we may well search the sacred volume for suitable words. We feel sure that brethren in all parts of the earth pray for you. And we are equally certain that the churches which are in Christ throughout the world glorify God in you. The Lord preserve and keep you to the end. To this hour you have maintained an unsullied reputation among men. Erring as we all are before God, it is our sincere conviction that if such a thing were possible, a second edition of your life, revised by yourself, could hardly be an amendment.

"You braved much calumny on the outset of your career, and you have outlived it. The secularists, who once denounced, now salute you. Where your theology has failed to convert them your philanthropy has sufficed to enchant them. You are lifted in public esteem above suspicion, as a true man—no traitor or time-server. Your kindness to everybody has made everybody kind to you. You have illustrated the force and the fulness of a divine proverb which has puzzled many a philosopher: "When a man's ways please the Lord he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

"If, dear Sir, you give us full credit for the intense

sympathy we have felt when sickness and sorrow have weakened your strength in the way, you will not deny us the gratification of alluding to the private and domestic joys that pour down like sunbeams on your face and gladden your Jubilee.

"Your beloved and estimable wife, whose life long trembled in the balance, has been restored to health. Had she been less heroic and more exacting in her protracted illness, you must have been more reserved and less generous in the consecration of your time and thought to the good works you were doing. In the stillness of enforced retirement her inventive genius discovered new channels of usefulness. Her 'Book Fund' is beyond all praise. And her delicate mission has been so appreciated, that throughout the British Isles, and in foreign lands, her name has become linked with your own at every station where an ambassador of Christ publishes the glad tidings of the Gospel.

"Your father and mother, walking before God in quiet unpretentious piety, have both been spared to see their first-born son in the meridian of a career that has made their once obscure patronymic famous throughout the world.

"Your worthy brother and trusty yoke-fellow in the pastorate is still by your side rendering good service, for which his fine business tact, and his manly but modest desire to second all your motions to go forward, eminently qualify him.

"Your two sons have both devoted themselves to the

ministry; and each of them in his own sphere of labour has found proof that he was divinely anointed to his pastorate.

"To yourself, however, we turn as a central figure, recognised from afar by tens of thousands of people, to whom your name is an emblem of purity and power, and by whom you are accounted second to none among living Preachers, and your sermons are appreciated as a faithful exposition of the Gospel of God, instinct with the witness of the Holy Spirit, and therefore quickening in their influence on the conscience and the hearts of men.

"On your head we now devoutly invoke those blessings which we believe the Almighty is abundantly willing to bestow.

"May your steps in the future be ordered of the Lord as they have been in the past. May a generation yet unborn witness that your old age is luxuriant and fruitful as your youth. May your life on earth wind up like the holy Psalter that you so much love. Be it yours to anchor at last in David's Psalm of Praise, prolific as it was of other Psalms, into which no groan or sigh could intrude. So may you rest in the Lord with a vision of the everlasting Kingdom dawning on your eyes, and Hallelujah after Hallelujah resounding in your ears."

In the same year a clergyman wrote to Mr. Spurgeon, pointing out that in his opinion the great preacher's frequent illnesses were a judgment from Almighty God

in consequence of Mr. Spurgeon's attacks upon the Church of England. This letter came while the death of Bishop Wilberforce (who broke his neck by a fall from his horse) was still fresh in the public mind. Mr. Spurgeon crushingly retorted upon his assailant by asking, "If a swollen leg be a mark of God's displeasure, what shall we say of a broken neck?"

The reasons for afflictive providence are among the secret things of God, and it ill becomes foolish men to pry into the Divine designs. Yet, while there is a general connection between the sin that is ever present in the world, and the sorrow that has resulted from it, our Lord Himself has laid down the law upon this matter: "Neither this man sinned nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John x. 3).

On the 1st of May 1875 Mr. Spurgeon's sons made their first public speech. The meeting was held at the Orphanage, and there were present three generations of Spurgeons who took part in the meeting.

On the 16th July 1876, Mr. Spurgeon threw open the Tabernacle to those who were not in the habit of attending any form of public worship. It was an experiment, and was crowned with remarkable success. The seatholders and ordinary worshippers vacated their seats, and the Tabernacle was packed with a dense crowd of those who, perhaps for the first time, heard Mr. Spurgeon preach.

On the 26th of June 1876, three persons were bap-

tized at the Tabernacle who had been converted under the preaching of Mr. Spurgeon's sons, a circumstance which must have been most encouraging to their father.

In the year 1877 the ladies of the Tabernacle Church inaugurated the Flower Mission. They distributed among the sick of various hospitals and infirmaries bouquets of flowers to which texts of Scripture were appended. We once heard Mr. Spurgeon relate that a man lay in a hospital awaiting a dangerous operation. The poor man was terribly despondent; he thought sadly about his life-work, in all probability about to end; his wife and children were far off in a Northern city. A lady brought him a bunch of flowers, to which was tied a card with the singular text, "He trusted in God: let Him deliver him if he will have Him!" The man read the words, and they were a message from God to his soul. All his fears were removed, and he sent for the surgeons to say that he was willing to submit to the operation when they were ready.

In the year 1877 Mr. Spurgeon visited the Golden Lane Mission, which is conducted by Mr. W. Orsman, one of the members of the Tabernacle. To those who have only heard Mr. Spurgeon preaching in his own church, it is a revelation of special talents to hear him address such a throng as then gathered to hear him at the Golden Lane Mission. The success of a preacher consists of his power of adaptability, and this Mr. Spurgeon possesses in a marvellous degree.

On the 6th of May of the same year the foundation-stones of three almshouses were laid at Newington. In the following month the first chapter of "John Ploughman's Talk" appeared in the *Sword and Trowel.*

In the same year (1877), Mr. Spurgeon addressed the members of the London Stock Exchange. He afterwards preached to men of business on the "Claims of God."

During the following year (1878) Mr. Spurgeon had a narrow escape from death. He was driving in the Highlands of Scotland when the harness broke and the horses bolted. They rushed down a steep at great speed, but suddenly turned, and stopped at the brink of a precipice.

Athough Mr. Spurgeon declined to receive a money gift when his silver-wedding testimonial was presented to him, on the 5th of May 1879, a sum of £6248, 18s. 5d. was handed to him to dispose of as he might think best.

Of this princely amount Mr. Spurgeon apportioned £5000 to the endowment of the Tabernacle almshouses, and the balance to other benevolent enterprises. About Mr. Spurgeon's pecuniary position there is, and has been, considerable error. Mr. Spurgeon has had ample and repeated opportunities of enriching himself, and that without any one being able to complain of it. Most men would have done so, but Mr. Spurgeon throughout his career has been singularly

generous; his hands have not only been clean, but he has been generous, even up to the point of self-sacrifice. It is a well-known fact that Mr. Spurgeon gives annually more than his salary to various forms of usefulness, and this without ostentation, and often without its being known. If the Church at the Tabernacle has been generous and self-sacrificing, it owes much to the generosity and self-denial of its minister.

At the meeting held at the Tabernacle on the occasion of the presentation of this gift, Mr. Spurgeon referred to the building of the Tabernacle. He said :—"When we came to the undertaking of responsibilities, there was a natural shrinking on the part of the committee with which we started. No one could be blamed : it was a great risk, and personally I did not wish any one to undertake it. I was quite prepared for any risk, but then I had no money of my own, and so was a man of straw. I say there was a measure of fear and trembling, but I had none. I was as sure of the matter as possible, and reckoned on paying all the cost. This quiet assurance, however, had a foundation which reflects credit on one who has for some years gone to his reward. When I was riding with a friend to preach in the country, a gentleman overtook us and asked me if I would get out of the trap and ride with him in the gig, as he wanted to speak to me. I did so. He said, 'You have got to build that big place.' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'You will find that many friends will feel nervous over it. Now as a business man I am

sure you will succeed, and besides that, God is with the work and it cannot fail. I want you never to feel nervous or downcast about it.' I told him that it was a great work, and that I hoped the Lord would enable me to carry it through.

"'What do you think,' said he, 'will be required at the outside to carry it through?'

"I said, '£20,000 must do it in addition to what we have.'

"'Then,' he said, 'I will let you have the £20,000 on the condition that you shall only keep what you need of it to finish the building. Mark,' said he, 'I do not expect to give more than £50, but you shall have bonds and leases to the full value of £20,000 to fall back upon.' This was royal. I told no one, but the ease of mind this act gave me was of the utmost value. I had quite as much need of faith, for I resolved that none of my friend's money should be touched; but I had no excuse for fear. God was very good to me, but by this act I was recalled from all personal boasting. My friend gave his £50 and no more, and I felt deeply thankful to him for the help which he would have rendered had it been required."

Rev. James Spurgeon at this meeting said, "I have been asked many many times, 'What is the secret of the great success at the Tabernacle?' I do not think I could ever give a better answer than I once gave to one of the most unlikely people in the world to ask the question. I went into a Jew's shop at Shoreditch to

purchase something, and when the man there found out that my name was Spurgeon, he wanted to know if I was related to the great man of that name. When I told him that I had the honour to be his brother, he shut the door, looked all round the shop to see that no one was listening, and then asked me, 'What is the secret of his great success?' I said, 'I think it lies in the fact that he loves Jesus of Nazareth, and Jesus of Nazareth loves him. I do not mean to put that offensively to you, knowing what you are, but I do believe that in these two facts you will find the secret of his success.'"

In August 1880 Mr. Spurgeon left his house at Clapham for Beulah Hill.

In the year 1880 Mr. Spurgeon took a more active part than he had hitherto done in politics. He has more than once told a story to this effect.

"I had to preach for my good old friend John Offord, who was half a Plymouth Brother and half a Baptist. I said to him, 'I should have been here a quarter of an hour sooner, only I stopped to vote.'

"'My dear friend,' he said, 'I thought you were a citizen of the New Jerusalem, and not of this world.'

"'So I am,' I replied, 'but I have an old man in me yet, and he is a citizen of the world.'

"'But you ought to mortify him.'

"'So I do, for he's an old Tory, and I make him vote Liberal.'"

During the great struggle which overthrew Lord

Beaconsfield's Government, Mr. Spurgeon issued an address to the electors of Southwark, in which he said :— "Great questions are involved in the struggle; never were weightier issues before the nation. . . . Are we to go on invading and slaughtering in order to obtain a scientific frontier and feeble neighbours? How many wars may we reckon on between now and 1886? What quantity of killing will be done in that time, and how many of our weaker neighbours will have their houses burned and their fields ravaged by this Christian (?) nation?"

Two years afterwards Mr. Gladstone, the then Premier, attended an evening service at the Tabernacle, and had an interview with Mr. Spurgeon.

On the 3rd, 4th, and 5th of January 1882 a great bazaar was held in the Lecture Hall of the Tabernacle, which in the three days realised the sum of £2000 for the Girls' Orphanage. At the opening of this bazaar, Mr. Spurgeon, in the course of his speech, said, "When I was in Paris a short time since, I saw no end of things—a whole Palais Royale full of gewgaws and decorations. The only article I bought was a rat-trap. I happen to have some rats, and I saw quite a new sort of trap there, which the English rats don't know. I bought it out of love for them, and I hope they will find it useful. Doubtless you may all manage to buy here something that may be useful to you, and if you buy an article that is not useful, put it out of sight. We don't want to sell anything that is not worth the

money paid for it; for we think that such should not be the case when the object is to benefit orphan children. When you leave here, you need not be in the plight of the gentleman who was met by footpads on his way home. 'Your money or your life!' demanded one of them. 'My dear fellow, I have not a farthing about me. Do you know where I have been?' asked the gentleman. 'I have been to a bazaar.' 'Oh! if you've been to a bazaar, we should not think of taking any money from you. We'll make a subscription all round, and give you something to help you home.' That is a bazaar as it ought not to be."

In the year 1885 Mr. Spurgeon preached at the Mansion House. The meeting was in connection with the Bankers' Prayer Union. A large number of bankers and bankers' clerks gathered to hear him.

It is said that in the same year Mr. Spurgeon was passing from France into Italy. The custom-house officers of the latter country demanded some fruit that he had in his possession. Mr. Spurgeon withdrew three paces into French territory, and there he ate the fruit in view of the officials.

In the year 1888 Mr. Spurgeon lost his mother. For some time Mrs. John Spurgeon had been in failing health, and on the 18th of May she passed into rest at Hastings. She was interred at Croydon, and at the funeral her sons and grandson took part; it was the wish of Mr. Spurgeon's father that no stranger should intrude into the family sorrow.

The grief of this bereavement brought on an attack of illness, and Mr. Spurgeon wrote to his congregation the following letter:—

"*28th May* 1888.

"DEAR FRIENDS.—When I came home from my mother's grave I was laden. It was raw and cold, and my knee became painful, but I had no fear. At about eight o'clock torrents of pain broke over me, and the knee was soon swollen. Now I cannot put the foot to the ground, and the pain is something to remember. I send my love to you all, and am sorry that I cannot be with you. But what can I do? The Lord make use of my great faggot of troubles for His own glory. —Yours sorrowfully."

A missionary wrote from China in 1888:—

"For about a year the magic-lantern has been used in the country work, with good results. . . . The picture of a place of worship perhaps comes next. We have one showing the interior of Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle, and the statement of the number of people it contains always produces a profound impression.

"It also gives an opportunity to explain that the heavenly doctrine is not believed in only by a few 'barbarians,' but that vast numbers of people in the West believe in Christ, and that as in China the country is crowded with temples, so in England every-

where churches abound where the one true God is worshipped."

In January 1889 Mr. Spurgeon met with an accident while at Mentone. He had been conducting a service in his hotel, and was intending to rest for a while at a private villa which had been placed at his service. The marble stairs of the hotel were carpeted, but Mr. Spurgeon placed his stick on the edge of the carpet. It gave way; he fell down six stairs, and rolled over. Two of his teeth were knocked out, and his money was emptied from his pockets into his boots. When he was picked up, he remarked, "Painless dentistry." At the time he did not think much of the accident, but it was soon evident that he had sustained serious injuries. To his congregation he wrote—"I cannot write a letter to go with the sermon to-day, for I am too full of pain to command my thoughts, but I send this painful line. I am getting on admirably, but last Sunday afternoon I slipped upon a marble staircase, and fell a considerable distance. I thought I had escaped with the loss of two teeth and a bruised knee, but the knee is a more serious business than I thought. I am a close prisoner, and my pain is by no means a trifle. I hope soon to be restored, not only to health, but also to my beloved people and my happy work. At present I am helpless and much bruised." On 15th January he was able for the first time to write a letter. To the Rev. Newman

Hall, LL.B., minister of Surrey Chapel, Mr. Spurgeon wrote—

"BELOVED BROTHER,—Your love allows brevity. Thank you. I am arising from stupor to pain, from pain to intervals of ease, from coughing hard to a weak voice, from writhing to wriggling about in an initial style of walking with a chair for a go-cart. I have had an escape which makes me shudder with gratitude. Here is a man who knocked out his teeth and yet did not cut his flesh, and turned over twice so completely as to put his money into his boots. Something of the comic attends solemnity when I am in the midst of it. I have not lost a grain of peace or even of joy, yet I pity a dog that has felt so much in all his four legs as I have had in one. All is well. I shall be home soon. —Yours most lovingly, C. H. SPURGEON.

"MENTONE, *Jan.* 20."

On the 18th of January Mr. Spurgeon wrote with his own hand the following characteristic letter to his congregation:—

"KIND FRIENDS,—My injuries are greater than I supposed. It will take some time before foot, mouth, head, and nerves can be right again. What a mercy that I was not smashed quite up. *The angels did their work well*, for another stone would have brought me to mine end.

"Through what a stupor I have passed! Yet in a day or two I shall be none the worse. I am overcome with gratitude. May I be spared to keep my own footing to the end, and *let the Down-graders know how terrible is a fall from the high places of the Lord's truth.*"

On the 27th of the same month Mr. Spurgeon wrote: "This morning I feel as if within sight of harbour. I cannot yet walk, nor could I even stand for five minutes, but there is every sign that the knee is gathering strength and recovering from its injuries. As soon as I can stand through a sermon and walk without pain, I will take it as my order home."

On the 5th of March 1887 Mr. Spurgeon, when speaking at a prayer-meeting, said, "Now it is a cold night, and if anybody prays very long, somebody will be frozen to death. I remember that Paul preached a long sermon once, and a young man tumbled out of a window and killed himself. If anybody gets frozen to-night, I am not like Paul, and cannot restore him, so please don't render a miracle necessary, as I cannot perform it."

On the 25th of April 1890 there appeared in one of the religious newspapers an open letter entitled "Parker to Spurgeon." At Mr. Spurgeon's wish, no reply was made to this production (which was mercifully toned down by the editor of the paper in which it appeared).

This was afterwards republished in Dr. Parker's own paper.

It is more pleasant to turn from this unhappy exhibition of folly to a touching speech made by Mr. Spurgeon at the Mildmay Conference in 1890. He said:—"After a period of continued pain, with little sleep, I sat up, as best I could, one morning in my bed in an agony of pain, and I cried to the Lord for deliverance. I believed fully that He could deliver me there and then, and I pleaded my sonship and His fatherhood. I went the length of pleading that He was my father, and I said, 'If it were my child that suffered so, I would not let him suffer any longer if I could help him. Thou canst help me, and by Thy fatherly love I plead with Thee to give me rest.' I felt that I could add, 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.' But I did the first thing first. I pleaded with my Father, and went first where Christ went first, saying, 'My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' I shall never forget my success in my appeal. In real earnest I believed God to be my Father, and threw myself upon Him, and within a few moments I dropped back upon the pillow, the pain subsided, and very soon I slept most peacefully."

Much of the interest of Mr. Spurgeon's speeches arises from these snatches of personal experience; indeed, his speeches and sermons are a mine of autobiographical wealth. For example, last year he related that many years before he had been invited to preach at Isleham,

Cambridgeshire. "I was to preach in the morning," said he. "My brother Aldis, I think it was, preached in the afternoon, and I was to preach in the evening. The people at Isleham had such a belief that I should draw a congregation that they went and borrowed the biggest chapel in the place. I shall never forget it, because I preached that morning at eleven o'clock to seven persons. That was all I had, and I remember that I told them it reminded me of the ducks. Did you ever see ducks go through a door? You never did see a duck go through a door without ducking his head. They will do it even when they go through a barn door. The door may be twenty feet high, but a duck never goes through without putting his head down, for fear he might possibly hit the top of the door. So I said, 'You were so afraid of your place being overcrowded that you borrowed that big place for seven people.' I preached that morning, and the brother who preached in the afternoon said to me, 'I can't think how you did it. You were as earnest and preached as well as if you had had the place full.' Yes, I thought that it was the only chance of getting it full in the evening when I had to preach again. So I thought I would just lay all my guns out and fire away with these few people. In the afternoon we had a very decent audience of perhaps a hundred or a hundred and fifty, but when I preached at night there was not standing room in the place. Though I did not compliment myself, yet I could not help saying that if I had not

preached my best to the seven I should not have had the company at night, for the people who were there in the morning went away and talked about how they had got on in the morning, and then the others came out to see what kind of fellow I was."

It is somewhat difficult to accurately estimate the character of a living man, and all the more so when the subject of a book has filled so many offices, and has been so long under the glare of publicity as has Mr. Spurgeon. The task is also hard for one who pleads guilty to affection for his subject. Every life becomes interesting when it is studied in the light of love, and one learns to know a man whom one loves. But love is blind in common opinion, and is apt to be partial to the peculiar excellences of its object.

Many years ago we remember that we had a conversation with Jabez Inwards, lecturer and orator. He told us of a debate in which he had maintained that C. H. Spurgeon was the greatest preacher in all time.

"Who," he said, "has built so large a tabernacle, and paid for it before it was opened, and that without endowment or grant from Parliament or any great society?

"Who has founded such a College, the students of which, in spite of opposition, have forced themselves into the front?

"Who can say that when he steps upon the plat-

form his every utterance will be taken down, telegraphed across the globe, printed, and then read with delight by thousands in every land?

"Who is there that can say that in every train that runs from our great termini, in every ship that leaves our shores, there is one at least of his sermons?

"All this and more may be said of Mr. Spurgeon."

It must be remembered that Mr. Spurgeon began his public life long before most men leave school. He came to London without friends, and as the minister of the most despised of all the sects.

His success must be ascribed entirely to the Divine grace that endued him with the talents that were required for his special mission to the present age.

While a great deal may be attributed to the original talents which constitute his stock-in-trade, a great deal must also be apportioned to his diligence, patience, skill, and industry. Mr. Spurgeon has worked for the success that he has attained, and he has employed all his talents for the highest purpose.

His ministry, travels, writings, have all been devoted to one purpose alone. He has steadily kept in view the salvation of souls, and the training of men and women for heaven.

He is thus a magnificent example of a man with one purpose—a purpose which he has never lost sight of from his youth until now. He has written wittily, earnestly, lovingly; he has lectured, expounded, and made war; he has preached to multitudes, and

written books that have sold in large editions; he has fed the orphans, taught the ignorant, and scattered printed matter broadcast, but with one purpose—"if by any means I might save some." Nor has he laboured in vain, for it is a matter of common knowledge that in all his work he has been singularly useful as a soul-winner first and chiefly.

He stands, therefore, as a proof that the Gospel of Christ is still the power of God unto salvation, and that if any minister will confine himself to the simple verities, that God will bless them. Above all, his life is a supreme call to service that is self-sacrifice; for that Mr. Spurgeon's life has been.

He might have been a wealthy man, and that without any possibility of imputation. But he has deliberately worked, laboured, and suffered in order that he might dedicate what he had earned to those who had no claim upon him except that of need.

It is not too much to say that this is a claim to reverence and honour that alone has made him dear to men.

APPENDIX.

When the preceding pages were prepared during the spring of 1891, no one imagined that the valued life they record was so soon to terminate. On the 20th of February 1891 the author visited Mr. Spurgeon, who had always taken a kindly interest in the writer's books.

"Well," said Mr. Spurgeon, "what is the next book about? Whose life do you intend to write next?"

"Your own."

"In the 'Men with a Mission' series?"

"No; in 'Lives that Speak.'"

"I wish you had a better subject," replied Mr. Spurgeon, with that incomparable laugh that so many regret they can never hear again.

He talked over the book, counselled, and rendered valued assistance towards the completion of the work, which was intended to be a tribute of affection. The volume was published during his illness; now, with intense sorrow, a short history of the weary months of pain that have ended for ever, must be added to the book.

On Friday, May 15th, the writer saw Mr. Spurgeon for the last time. He looked ill, and spoke of being weary; but he went to the Presbyterian Missionary Meeting at Exeter Hall. He was unwell on the Saturday, and unable to preach on the Sunday. On Monday the doctor pronounced his illness to be influenza, accompanied by congestion of the lungs and other complications.

He had been so often ill that no alarm was felt; indeed, many had come to regard his as a charmed life. Mr. Spurgeon so far recovered, that on the 7th of June, although very weak, he preached at the Tabernacle. This was at the morning service; no one then knew that it was to be his last effort. He was unable to officiate again in the evening; but it was thought that rest and change of air would speedily restore him to his wonted vigour. On the Monday he went down to visit Stambourne, where much of his youth had been spent. He was in high spirits; happy in the society of his host, and delighted with what he called "my grandfather's country." But on the Thursday he took a chill, which induced an overpowering headache, accompanied by gout. He returned home on the Friday, and for three months lay between life and death. It had been arranged that he should open the schools which had been erected as a memorial of his ministry in Surrey Gardens; but although the date of opening was altered from June 2nd to June 23rd, he was not then able to be present.

The symptoms had become so alarming, that additional medical aid was sought; and then the religious world awoke to a sense of the patient's danger. The delirium, during which he imagined himself away from home, and begged piteously to be taken to Westwood, at length subsided, but on the evening of the 4th of July it returned. The doctor slept at the house, and everything was done to save his life that affection and skill could suggest, but with only partial success.

On the 11th there was a serious relapse, and as it became evident that the sickness was unlike any from which he had before suffered, a general interest was excited, and expressions of sympathy poured in from all parts of the world. The Prince of Wales inquired more than once about him. Mr. W. E. Gladstone, although himself recently bereaved, wrote as follows:—

"CORTON, LOWESTOFT,
July 16.

"MY DEAR MADAM,—In my own home, darkened at the present time, I have read with studied interest daily accounts of Mr. Spurgeon's illness, and I cannot help conveying to you the earnest assurance of my sympathy with you and with him, and of my cordial admiration not only of his splendid powers, but still more of his devoted and unfailing character. May I humbly commend you and him, in all contingencies, to the infinite stores of the Divine love and mercy, and subscribe myself, my dear Madam, faithfully yours, "W. E. GLADSTONE."

To this the following reply was sent, the postscript of which was written by Mr. Spurgeon :—

"WESTWOOD, UPPER NORWOOD,
18*th July* 1891.

"DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,—Your words of sympathy have a special significance and tenderness coming from one who has just passed through the deep waters which seem now to threaten me. I thank you warmly for your expression of regard for my beloved husband, and with all my heart I pray that the consolations of God may abound towards you, even as they do to me. Although we cannot yet consider the dear patient out of danger, the doctors have to-day issued a somewhat more hopeful bulletin. I feel it is an honour to be allowed to say that I shall ever be your grateful friend. S. SPURGEON."

"*P.S.*—Yours is a word of love such as those only write who have been into the King's country, and have seen much of His face. My heart's love to you.—C. H. SPURGEON."

Among other letters of interest the following was sent by the Chief Rabbi :—

"Office of the Chief Rabbi,
16 Finsbury Square, London, E.C.,
July 21.

"My dear Madam,—Pray be assured that although, owing to my absorbing official duties, I have not called to inquire personally, I have been following the bulletins touching the health of your dear husband with deepest interest, and with earnest prayer to our common Father that his precious life may be spared for yet many years. I was delighted when the reports on Saturday were more reassuring, and I am deeply grieved to learn this morning that this improvement has not been maintained. May the Father of all flesh sustain the patient sufferer on his bed of languishing; may it please Him to restore him to health and strength; may He sustain you and yours during the period of trial. With every good wish for Mr. Spurgeon,

"Yours sincerely,
"N. Adler, Chief Rabbi."

Among a general chorus only one note of discord was heard. The *Echo* published the following letter, which it is only fair to say was repudiated by the leading Romanists. Canon Fleming said, after reading the letter: "God defend us from a religion which can prevent a man from praying for any one and every one who is sick in body or soul. Well did our Reformers break from off the neck of our nation the yoke of such a Church. Spurgeon is a great Englishman, apart from his religious denomination, and thousands of us pray, 'O King, live for ever!'"

"Mr. Spurgeon—A Roman Catholic's Prayer.

"Sir,—As a Catholic, I cannot be expected to agree with any religion which is opposed to the Catholic Church I belong to, and therefore cannot easily be united in sympathy and prayer with Mr. Spurgeon's sympathisers on

account of his illness. Surely, if the Catholic Church to which I belong is the false and idolatrous Church which many of Mr. Spurgeon's sympathisers teach it is, they ought not to require a sign from God in answer to their prayers that it is. If Mr. Spurgeon is of the true religion, it ought to be sufficiently evident without requiring a sign from God. Judging how much some of his sympathisers are permitted to speak against the Catholic Church in your paper, they certainly, if justified, are sufficiently certain that the Catholic Church is false and idolatrous as to be in no need of a sign from God that it is; but if they have spoken loudly against the Church without sufficient evidence that they were justified in doing so, and have made a mistake, it seems to me very much like imposing on God to now ask for a sign in answer to their prayers that their blasphemies against the Church were just. To practise such deceit as this is utterly intolerable and deserves punishment; and though granting that Mr. Spurgeon may be a better man than myself, yet, rather than be united in prayer with his sympathisers for his recovery, I am disposed to pray that he may not recover. It may seem the height of blasphemy and daring on my part to do so in the face of all his sympathisers who are doing the contrary, but I nevertheless do so; and if you will permit this letter to appear in your paper, so that they may have an opportunity to read it, they then may be moved to pray against me. Indeed, I venture to make the following proposition: that if Mr. Spurgeon does not recover, but dies, and I continue to live, it shall be regarded as a sign from God that He has heard my prayers against him rather than their prayers for his recovery; or whether he dies or not, if I die, provided it is not by murder and it is well known how I die, that I do so in answer to their prayers against me.

"Really the deceit which some of these hypocrites are allowed to practise against the Catholic Church is beyond endurance, and deserves the punishment which I pray God

will bring on them. This great expression of sympathy for Mr. Spurgeon is equivalent to a great expression that the Catholic Church which I belong to is false and idolatrous; and to pray that Mr. Spurgeon may recover has for its object the effecting of a great deceit. I therefore heartily pray against the recovery of Mr. Spurgeon.—Yours, &c.,

"A. H. P. Blunt.

"40 Edge Street, Kensington, W., *July* 10."

An English clergyman, writing to Mrs. Spurgeon from Norway, says:—

"On July 23rd, I was crossing the great Jostedel glacier. At eleven, we rested for a time on the summit of the great snowfield. One of our guides, who spoke no English, began to ask me in Norse about an English 'Prieste,' who was very ill, and tried to pronounce your husband's name. I told him that when I left England there was a very slight improvement, at which he expressed great delight. He told me that your dear husband's writings were much read among the peasants, and that many were praying for his recovery."

Day after day great prayer-meetings were held in the Tabernacle, that were attended by Christians of every name. This widespread interest and sympathy was not only most comforting to Mr. Spurgeon's family, but during the infrequent intervals of consciousness it consoled and revived him. He said, when he heard of the multitudes who were praying for him, "God bless them all."

On the 9th of August, Mr. Spurgeon was so far recovered that he was able to write the following letter, the first he had written since the commencement of his serious illness. This document was reproduced in *facsimile*, and distributed among the friends at the Tabernacle:—

"Dear Brethren,—The Lord's name be praised for first giving and then hearing the loving prayers of His people!

Through these prayers my life is prolonged. I feel greatly humbled, and very grateful, at being the object of so great a love and so wonderful an outburst of prayer.

"I have not strength to say more. Let the name of the Lord be glorified! Yours most heartily,

"C. H. SPURGEON."

On the 8th of September Mr. Spurgeon was carried downstairs into the garden, where he spent half-an-hour.

On the following day the weather was warm and sunny, and Mr. Spurgeon, accompanied by his wife and son, went for a drive. The sufferer had over-estimated his strength, and was greatly fatigued.

On the 12th September, Rev. George Rogers, who had been for many years associated with Mr. Spurgeon in the work of the Pastors' College, died.

On the 13th September Mr. Spurgeon wrote cheerfully thus:—"DEAR FRIENDS,—I cannot write much, but I cannot withhold my heart and my pen from saying 'O bless the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.' This week has, by its fine weather, set me free from a three months' captivity. Those believers, of all denominations, who so lovingly prayed for me will now help me to praise the Lord. Verily, the living God heareth prayer. I fear my doctors would have a mournful tale to tell of my disease, and from inward consciousness I must agree with them; but I feel better and can get into the open air, and therefore I hope my face is turned towards recovery. Reading, writing, thinking, &c., are not yet easy to me. I am forced to vegetate. I fear it will be long before I can be at my beloved work. I send my hearty love to you all, and my humble gratitude to that army of praying people who have been heard by the Lord in their cries for the prolongation of my life. May we believe more, pray more, and therefore receive more.—Yours, in bonds of true affection, C. H. SPURGEON."

He had indeed so far recovered that he was able to leave home for a short visit to Eastbourne, from whence he wrote the following account of his health :—

"EASTBOURNE, 10*th October*.

"DEAR FRIENDS,—I was rightly directed to this place, for I have found a measure of appetite, and feel much better. I think I shall soon be able to reach a warmer clime. This is the great desire of my doctor. The deaths of others cause anxiety about a chill, especially as I have lost one skin, and the new one is exceeding tender, and would feel the influence of the cold most readily. However, I am in those hands which control temperature and everything else. I am, indeed, happy in being borne up by the prayers of saints as by the hands of angels.

"I am relieved of great anxiety by the Lord's plainly directing me to secure Dr. Pierson to fill the pulpit during my absence. He is a man after my own heart, and a great winner of souls. He will not aim at anything but the glory of God. He begs that the whole church will grant him the aid of their united prayers and efforts. He is just now quitting America, and will be ready to preach, Oct. 25, if the Lord will. I shall be among you as soon as I feel that it would be right and wise, and then he will be ready to return to his own land. He has set aside everything to serve us. I was guided to him at the same moment that he was led of God to think of helping me.

"May our Lord be with you and grant you each one His presence, power, and peace. Oh that many might yield to Jesus *now*, that all may see that the Lord saves by every instrument. When Mr. Newman Hall bids sinners 'come to Jesus,' may the Holy Spirit draw them, and the same in the evening. May you have a glorious day. Mrs. Spurgeon's company here makes me feel very happy; but when shall I meet with all the companions of nearly forty years' service, and feel that each one adds to my joy?—

Yours very heartily, C. H. SPURGEON."

On the 23rd he left Eastbourne, and after spending two days at Westwood, he left England for the South of France on the 26th. For some time the change seemed to have completed the apparent cure: Mr. Spurgeon himself was confident as to his ultimate recovery, as appeared in the following letter:—

"MENTONE, *Nov.* 21, 1891.

"*To the Readers of my Sermons.*

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,—This morning I read in the *Times* that 'Mr. Spurgeon was *rapidly* recovering.' These words exactly describe what I am *not* doing. The symptoms are the same as when I was at home. I am tossed up and down upon the waves of my disease, and what is thought progress to-day is gone to-morrow. I have seasons of utter prostration. Always weak, it seems at times that I have no strength whatever, and must altogether collapse.

"*I shall recover*, for this is the tenor of the prayers which our God has so far answered; but there are no traces or signs of anything *rapid* about my condition. *Emphatically*, any advance I make is *the slowest of all slow things*. I write this at once to prevent disappointment to sanguine friends. I know not why I should be the object of so much tender sympathy, but as I am thus privileged, I would have a sensitive regard for the feelings of such benefactors, and warn them against statements for which there is no basis in truth. Their friend remains feeble, and has no hasty recovery to expect.

"Please continue prayer. Have great patience. Relieve me of anxiety as to the institutions; and praise God for what He has already done. Your deeply indebted servant for Christ's sake, C. H. SPURGEON."

But after a time he grew painfully conscious of his weakness, and in the *Sword and Trowel* for December 1891

he wrote an article which is headed by three notes of interrogation, thus :—

"? ? ?"

"After a long, wasting sickness," he says, "there came a time of gracious improvement to me. The indescribable pleasure of a sense of recovering visited my heart, and I was glad. A journey was taken to a warmer climate, and the expected weariness did not follow as its result ; in fact, I felt better than when I started. All this put the patient in high spirits, and made me hope that a cure, which had been granted in answer to the prayers of the universal Church, would be carried to perfection with unusual speed. Nothing seems impossible to one upon whom a marvel of healing has been wrought by the hand of the Omnipotent. With sanguine spirit, in exceeding gratitude to God, I planned a return to my pulpit which might surprise my beloved people by its speediness. How could I be idle even for a week? The moment I could preach, I would do so ; and that moment would come very soon. The bells of my heart began to ring out a welcome to returning health and strength. I wrote in a style of exhilaration, with the gold pen of expectation, and I fear I raised a thousand false hopes in others through my own vain confidence.

"Before many hours, suspicious tokens of feebleness appeared ; but these were regarded as mere relics of a disease which had fled, and the roseate colours of false hope were by no means lowered. The doctor came ; expressed his surprise and delight to find such a patient presenting so hopeful an appearance, but remarked that he would be round in the morning, before I had left my bed, and examine me for himself. He had received an exceedingly full and correct account of my goings on from my medical attendant at Norwood, and he would like to see for himself whether any alteration had occurred through

the journey. He came at the appointed hour, and listened with his instrument to the sounds of the lungs and the heart. He said very little; but I could read his countenance. I saw that he did not feel pleased about a certain 'murmur' which was by no means less than when I was at home. I had hoped that this was reduced to the imperceptible; but it was not so. By another test it was soon apparent that *the disease* itself was not changed from what it was in Norwood; or if any change was manifest, it was for the worse. The leakage of life-power was not stopped. No sudden relief had come; but the case was proceeding according to ordinary rules.

"Now, all this was what I might have expected, and it was told to me with a very tender reserve; yet it was a great disappointment. It was only a disappointment because of my unwarranted confidence. The temperature of my animal spirits fell below zero; though, I thank God, my faith in the sure result of prayer in obtaining a full restoration did not waver for a second. Proposals of speedy return home to my happy service vanished into thin air, and I saw that I must remain an invalid for a considerable season. Since then I have had infallible proofs that the physician's judgment from the symptoms was far more reliable than my hasty conclusions from my feelings. 'Things are not what they seem.' A flush of excitement, or a temporary pulling of one's self together for a special effort, may be quite consistent with a real decline of inward vigour; and it is undoubtedly so in my case. I am apparently strong for the moment; but it is a temporary illusion.

"It may be whispered that it was a pity to let the patient know depressing facts, and that it might have been well to allow him to buoy himself up with pleasing hopes. Might not his high spirits, however they were sustained, have wrought beneficially? There is no need to discuss the question; for it was absolutely necessary that the sick

man should be aware of his own serious condition, just because it was so serious. He needed to be warned, and warned most solemnly, against taking a chill, or climbing hills or stairs, or hurrying, or giving way to excitement of any kind, or talking too long with friends who might call, or indulging in any wearying mental labour. Very kindly, but very earnestly, were the danger-signals held forth, and the right track pointed out. It was a stern necessity of the case that premature hopes should be swept away; for they might lead to very serious mistakes in diet and in conduct. If the patient tried to act like a person in full health, he would soon bring upon himself a serious catastrophe, by acts most natural, and, to the healthy, most beneficial. Now I am thankful that I know enough of my malady to make me careful, and that I am not likely very soon to make sorrow for myself by again indulging unreasonable anticipations. It is such a pity to be up in the sky upon waxen wings, which the sun is sure to melt: the higher we soar in such a case, the more terrible the fall, and the consequences of such a fall are likely to be fatal. Every letter from my medical friend in England has CAUTION written large within it, varied with the Italian proverb, '*Chi va piano va sano*'—'Who goes softly goes safely.' All this should save the sick man from unfounded expectations."

After the death of the Duke of Clarence the following message of condolence was sent by Mr. Spurgeon to the Prince of Wales:—

"Grateful memories of gracious kindness to me in my affliction constrain me respectfully to present assurance of tender sympathy with you and the Princess. Fervently I pray God to sustain and bless you both.—SPURGEON.

"MENTONE."

Mr. Spurgeon received the following reply:—

"We send our heartfelt thanks for your kind message of sympathy."

The following extract from a private letter, dated Mentone, January 20th, was read at the morning service at the Metropolitan Tabernacle on the following Sunday:—

"The sun shines at length, and now I hope to get on. I have not been up to the mark the last few days, and have a little gout in the right hand, which makes it hard to write."

The letter was followed on Saturday by the following telegram:—

"MENTONE,
Saturday, 2.17 *p.m.*, *Jan. 23rd.*

"Pastor been very ill. Cannot write. Kept his bed three days. Decided improvement to-day. Pray earnestly. HARRALD."

On the 26th he was unwell, but it was not until the 29th of January that public alarm was aroused. On Sunday, January 31st, the following telegrams were received, which tell their own tale:—

"3.30 P.M.—The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon is now insensible, and much weaker than he was this morning.

"(Signed) FITZHENRY."

"6.30 P.M.—Mr. Spurgeon's condition this evening is extremely critical. The rev. gentleman does not recognise his wife, and appears to be quite unconscious. He refuses food. Milk is forced down his throat, but is not retained. Telegrams of sympathy are being received from all quarters, and a large number of persons have called to inquire the latest news during the day."

"10 P.M.—Mr. Spurgeon is sinking fast, and all hope of his recovery has been abandoned. He is quite unconscious, and suffers no pain."

On Monday, February 1st, outside the Metropolitan Tabernacle, printed copies of the following telegram, which tells its own tale, were affixed to the rails.

[Copy of telegram.]

"MENTONE, 11.50.

"SPURGEON'S TABERNACLE, LONDON.

"Our beloved pastor entered heaven 11.5 Sunday night. HARRALD."

His last thoughts were about his wife and Orphanage; almost his last act was to send a large amount to the latter institution. His last quotation from Holy Scripture was significant and prophetic. Mr. Spurgeon said to his secretary: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. iv. 7).

* * * * * *

The following appeal, the last he issued on behalf of the Stockwell Orphanage, will be read with sorrowful interest:—

"TO ALL MY FRIENDS.

"A most happy Christmas, and a New Year bright with blessings. I had not hoped to be yet among you. May the Lord, who 'restoreth my soul,' be with you through the coming year.—Your grateful friend,

"C. H. SPURGEON.

"MENTONE, *Dec.* 1891.

"As President of the Stockwell Orphanage, I congratulate the noble army of its helpers upon the continued prosperity of our happy work. We have been favoured from the beginning with the Divine blessing, and never more so than

during the past year. The work of caring for orphans is in great measure its own reward. It is one of those things which make music for us in sleepless hours. May every one who has had a share in this enterprise partake of the recompense.

"Our Orphanage has never known the meaning of the word DEBT. Our only trust has been trust in God. Neither have we been driven to appeal for funds on the ground that we were in actual *want*. Faith may ask for her daily bread, and be content to receive no more; but that daily bread is sure. We are bound to keep ourselves before our friends by occasionally stirring up their pure minds by way of remembrance, and hence this memorandum. On advertisements of our necessities we spend nothing; and therefore we take liberty once in the year to ask our partners in our sacred business to think of our family of five hundred.

"I am, alas, unable to prepare such a booklet as I sent out last year, and even to write these lines is an effort; but the doing of it rests my heart, and if my ever kind friends will send a specially thoughtful reply to this gentle appeal, it will do me a world of good. 'The Lord will provide,' and He will provide by pouring the grace of liberality into the hearts of His children. Thus will they gain by giving, and grow rich by helping the poor.

"We have a serious difficulty pressing us, in the injury caused to the girls' houses by the Electric Railway. We have had to rent premises elsewhere, as the buildings are so terribly shaken. However the Courts may deal with the matter, we are sure to be put to considerable expense. Hence the need of extra income just now. I have no anxious care about this matter, or any other; but I would beg my fellow-believers to remember the Orphanage in their prayers.

"I have made many pauses in writing these paragraphs, and now I make an end.—With gratitude and love I am, dear friend, yours very heartily, C. H. SPURGEON."

The following letter was sent to the Secretary of the Ragged School Union, one of whose workers had died:—

"MENTONE, *Dec.* 31, 1891.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Mr. Frank Passmore's removal from us is a loss in many ways; but chiefly in the Lord's work he will be missed in Lansdowne Place. May the Lord enable the brethren who served with him to abide faithful, and may a fit leader be found.

"God bless Ragged Schools this next year, and make 1892 a true year of our Lord. Weak, but hopefully improving.—Yours heartily, C. H. SPURGEON."

The following letter, written when Mr. Spurgeon was fifteen years of age, was published during his illness:—

"MY DEAR UNCLE,—Dumb men make no mischief. Your silence, and my neglect, make one think of the days when letters were costly, and not of penny postage. You have doubtless heard of me as a top-tree Antinomian. I trust you know enough of me to disbelieve it. It is an object of my life to disprove the slander. I groan daily under a body of sin and corruption. Oh for the time when I shall drop this flesh and be free from sin! I become more and more convinced that to attempt to be saved by a mixed covenant of works and faith is, in the words of Berridge, 'to yoke a snail with an elephant.' I desire to press forward for direction to my Master in all things; but as to trusting to my own obedience and righteousness, I should be worse than a fool and ten times worse than a madman. Poor dependent creatures! prayer had need be our constant employment, the foot of the throne our continued dwelling-place; for the Rock of Ages is our only safe hiding-place. I rejoice in an assured knowledge by faith of my interest in Christ, and of the certainty of my eternal salvation. Yet what strivings, what conflicts, what

dangers, what enemies stand in my way! The foes in my heart are so strong that they would have killed me and sent me to hell long ere this had the Lord left me; but, blessed be His name! His electing, redeeming, saving love has got fast hold of me; and who is able to pluck me out of my Father's hand? On my bended knees I have often to cry for succour; and, bless His name! He has hitherto heard my cry. Oh, if I did not know that all the Lord's people had soul-contention, I should give up all for lost! I rejoice that the promises left on record are meant for me as well as for every saint of His, and as such I desire to grasp them. Let the whole earth, and even God's professing people, cast out my name as evil; my Lord and Master, He will not. I glory in the distinguishing grace of God, and will not, by the grace of God, step one inch from my principles, or think of adhering to the present fashionable sort of religion.

"Oh, could I become like holy men of past ages—fearless of men—holding sweet communion with God—weaned more from the world, and enabled to fix my thoughts on spiritual things entirely! But when I would serve God, I find my old deceitful heart, full of the very essence of hell, rising up into my mouth, polluting all I say and all I do. What should I do if, like you, I were called to be engaged about things of time and sense? I fear I should be neither diligent in business nor fervent in spirit. 'But' (say you) 'he keeps talking all about himself.' True, he does; he cannot help it. Self is too much his master. I am proud of my own ignorance; and, like a toad, bloated with my own venomous pride—proud of what I have not got, and boasting when I should be bemoaning. I trust you have greater freedom from your own corruptions than I have; and in secret, social, and family prayer enjoy more blessed, sanctified liberty at the footstool of mercy.

"Rejoice! for heaven awaits us, and all the Lord's family! The mansion is ready; the crown is made; the

harp is strung; there are no willows there. May we be enabled to go on, like lions, valiant for the truth and cause of King Jesus, and, by the help of the Spirit, vow eternal warfare with every sin, and rest not until the sword of the Spirit has destroyed all the enemies in our hearts.

"May we be enabled to trust the Lord, for He will help us; we must conquer; we cannot be lost. Lost! Impossible! For who is able to snatch us out of our Father's hand? May the Lord bless you exceedingly.

"Your affectionate nephew,

"C. H. SPURGEON."

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The following stories are subjoined without regard to order:—

At one time, according to one of his old students, Mr. Spurgeon gave to a seedy-looking beggar a suit of his own black clothes, after feeding him with a good dinner. The man changed the clothes in the house, and carried his own away in a bundle, looking quite respectable. Mr. Spurgeon thought that he had done the man an injury, and that now no one would give him anything. Happening to be out a short time after, he met his beneficiary; but he had known his trade, and was wearing his old clothes, and carrying those Mr. Spurgeon had given him in the bundle!

A little boy who died in Baltimore recently, when he was eight years old, while in London, was taken by his father to hear Mr. Spurgeon. The little fellow had heard it said that Mr. Spurgeon was the greatest preacher in the world. On being seated in the great Tabernacle for the first time he was all interest; and when the preacher began the service he leaned forward with open mouth, and listened through the entire time with most intense earnestness, scarcely moving his eye from the speaker. When the service was over, and they got into the street, his father

said, "Willie, what do you think of that man?" He stood still and looked up into his face, and asked, "Papa, is that the greatest preacher in the world?" "Yes, I think he is." "Well, then," said the boy, with a glow of enthusiasm in his face, "I know how to be the greatest preacher in the world." "How?" asked his father. "Why, just pick out a nice chapter in the Bible, and tell just what is in it so that everybody can understand you, and nothing more."

An enthusiastic young Liberal, after one of Mr. Spurgeon's sermons, went into the vestry to thank the preacher for his faithful discourse, and wandering away a little from the matter in hand, referred to the Ritualistic party in the Church of England, ending a somewhat severe denunciation of their views by saying, "Surely you must have a feeling of strong indignation against such teachers, and see with fear the harm they are doing." Mr. Spurgeon answered, "No, not entirely so; they have stirred up much earnest work, and we all may take a lesson from their self-sacrificing and devoted lives."

In the pulpit of Mr. Spurgeon's first church, at Park Street, was an arrangement which was supposed to catch the preacher's voice and convey it through sundry pipes of india-rubber to certain deaf members of the congregation. Mr. Spurgeon immediately stuffed his handkerchief into the orifice; the people, failing to catch any sound through their favourite tubes, lifted up their faces to the speaker to find that they could hear his marvellous voice without any such arrangements.

Mr. Spurgeon had an almost unexampled faculty of recognising people and remembering their names. If he ever made a mistake he would rectify it felicitously. A gentleman who had been at the annual college supper was present again the following year. Mr. Spurgeon saluted him with "Glad to see you, Mr. Partridge." Mr. —— was surprised to find himself recognised at all, but replied, "My name is

Patridge, sir." "Ah yes," was the instant rejoinder; "I won't make game of you any more."

On one occasion Mr. Spurgeon, in the midst of his sermon, turned to the deacons, who occupied seats immediately behind him, and without appreciably interrupting the course of his sermon, said in a low voice, "Pickpocket, Mrs. So-and-So's pew," and resumed the thread of his discourse. Two deacons left their seats, and, passing out by the stairs behind, re-entered the Tabernacle on the area floor from opposite, one of them bringing with him the policeman stationed at the doors. They met in the aisle by the pew indicated, and the pickpocket was taken out, most people supposing it was merely a case of fainting.

Once Mr. Spurgeon put to his students, with infinite seriousness, a case of casuistry. Whitefield, he said, died in America, and his body was enclosed in a coffin with a glass lid, to admit of its being seen by the crowds who desired that privilege. Some time after the coffin was secretly broken open and an arm-bone taken, which, notwithstanding the utmost diligence of search, was never recovered. Was this an act of theft? Whose was the bone? Could it be said to belong to Whitefield himself after he was dead? or was it the property of the owner of the ground? Did the person who took it *steal* it? Various opinions were expressed, some of them going into the philosophy of ownership and mortmain. At length the decision was referred back to Mr. Spurgeon, who remarked drily, "I should say he *boned* it."

THE END.

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