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A MARVELLOUS MINISTRY

by Charles Ray

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A MARVELLOUS MINISTRY

THE STORY OF C. H. SPURGEON'S SERMONS
1855-1905

BY CHARLES RAY

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— **CHAPTERS 11 & 12 ARE 2 SPURGEON SERMONS
INCLUDED IN THE BOOK**

PREFACE

A few words will be sufficient to introduce this little book. It was felt that an event so unprecedented as the consecutive weekly issue of one man's sermons for half-a-century, and the fact that enough manuscripts remain to continue the publication for some years, should, in the jubilee year of publication, find some suitable method of celebration. The whole story of THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE PULPIT is so remarkable that its history is well worth telling in a fuller form than it has ever been told before, and in sending forth this Volume it may be mentioned that probably about no other man's sermons, save Spurgeon's, would it be possible to write a whole book with any likelihood of its being read.

CHARLES RAY

Forest Gate, Essex (June, 1905)

also author of...

Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon

The Life of Charles Haddon Spurgeon

CHAPTER 1

THE GENESIS OF THE IDEA

THE story of how Charles Haddon Spurgeon preached his first sermon at a cottage meeting in the little village of Teversham, and how as a result of the ability shown therein he was placed upon the plan of village preachers in the Cambridge district, has been told too often to need repetition here. It was not long before he was invited to the permanent pastorate of Waterbeach Chapel, and the fame of the young divine — young in years but old in spiritual experience and in skill as a teacher and expositor of Holy Writ — soon spread for miles around, so that when he was occupying the pulpit men and women drove in from outlying villages in large numbers, and the chapel, hitherto half empty, was filled to excess with an expectant and devout congregation.

And that it was not mere eloquence that attracted and held the people was proved in a very short time, for the whole character of the village — hitherto noted above other local villages for its sin and indifference to religion — was changed, and the results of Spurgeon's work have lived to the present day. His preaching was indeed "the power of God unto salvation," and scarcely a service passed without there being known cases of conversion. Such a preacher could not be confined to his own little circle and chapel, and invitations from various churches round, from Cambridge as well as from the smaller villages, poured in. His fame was noised abroad more than ever, and at last reached London, whence he received an invitation to preach at the New Park Street Chapel, an important church ministered to by a succession of famous preachers, including Benjamin Keach [from 1668 to 1704], Dr. John Gill [from 1720 to 1771], and Dr. John Rippon [from 1773 to 1836]. It is not surprising that the youth — he was not yet twenty years of age and very modest — should think some mistake has been made, but when he found that he was indeed the Charles Haddon Spurgeon whose services were sought, he accepted the invitation with much fear and trembling. Only a country youth who has been to London on some important and responsible mission can understand what this visit meant to the young preacher. Unsophisticated,

ignorant of the ways of the great city, and entertaining an altogether exaggerated idea of the importance and requirements of cultured Londoners, he arrived on a dull December evening in 1853, spent a miserable, sleepless night in a Bloomsbury boarding house, and entered the pulpit of New Park Street Chapel with much trepidation. The congregation was small, and, looking to God for strength, he felt a sense of divine comfort and help which reassured him and enabled him to preach a powerful sermon from the text, “Every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17). How far from being a novice at preaching the young man was, may be gathered from the fact that this was his 673rd sermon. It took the people by storm. Many a long week had passed since such a sermon had been heard in their church, and more than one hearer realized that the preacher was destined for great things. At night the chapel was nearly full. The morning worshippers had spoken with delight to their friends of the spiritual feast which they had enjoyed, and the evening congregation was as a result more than double that of the morning. The text of C. H. Spurgeon’s second sermon in London was Revelation 14:5, “They are without fault before the throne of God,” and, as we know, the congregation at the conclusion of the service was too excited to leave the chapel, and made the deacons promise to invite the young preacher to the vacant pastorate.

It is needless to repeat in detail the oft-told story how the young minister was asked to supply for six months, but his modesty forbade him agreeing to more than three months at a time; how directly after he commenced his ministry the chapel was crowded to the doors: how without waiting for the completion of the period of probation he was urged by the deacons to accept the pastorate, and how after much prayer and self-examination he agreed. London at once rang with his fame. People flocked from all directions; the chapel became too small, and Exeter Hall was engaged for the evening services, hundreds of would-be hearers even then being excluded owing to lack of room. Prominent men in the literary, political and social worlds went to hear him, and all who were qualified to speak with authority bestowed the greatest praise upon his preaching, both as to matter and manner. Said Sheridan Knowles, the ex-actor and playwright, to his ministerial students at Stepney College — “Go and hear the Cambridgeshire lad at once. He is only a boy, but he is the most wonderful preacher in the world. He is absolutely perfect in his oratory; he has

nothing to learn from me or from anyone else. He is simply perfect. He knows everything... Why, boys, he can do anything he pleases with his audience! He can make them laugh and cry and laugh again in five minutes. His power was never equalled. Now, mark my words, boys, that young man will to be the greatest preacher of this or any other age. He will bring more souls to Christ than any man who ever proclaimed the gospel, not excepting the Apostle Paul. His name will be known everywhere, and his sermons will be translated into many languages of the world." A remarkable prophecy made in 1854, just after C. H. Spurgeon had become pastor at New Park Street, which was literally fulfilled, as this little book will show.

Many writers in religious and secular journals expressed the opinion that the new preacher was a worthy successor to Bunyan and Wesley and Whitefield, and that he would rival, if not eclipse, such men as William Carey, Gill, Rippon and Robert Hall. In the *Morning Advertiser*, James Grant wrote — "He is quite an original preacher and therefore will always draw large congregations, and consequently may be eminently made the means of doing great good to classes of persons who might never otherwise be brought within the sound of a faithfully preached Gospel. He has evidently made George Whitefield his model, and, like that unparalleled preacher, that prince of pulpit orators, is very fond of striking apostrophes." Later James Grant noted with pleasure that popular applause had not spoiled the preacher, and continued, "With regard again to our other fear, that his excellence as a preacher would not be sustained, the event has, we rejoice to say, no less agreeably proved the groundlessness of our apprehensions. There is no falling off whatever. On the contrary, he is in some respects improving with the lapse of time. We fancy we can see his striking originality to greater advantage than at first." Of course there were some who condemned and abused the young preacher, but these were either older ministers jealous of his success, or ignorant journalists eager to make "copy." The former were severely taken to task by the Rev. Edwin Paxton Hood, who wrote of Spurgeon that he had — "the unbridled and undisciplined fancy of Hervey without his elegance; but instead of that, the drollery of Berridge and the ubiquitous earnestness of Rowland Hill in his best days." "For bold and convincing statements of Evangelical truth," he concluded, "for a faithful grappling with convictions, for happy and pertinent illustrations, for graphic description and for searching common sense we shall look, and we believe we shall seldom look in vain. In a

word, he preaches — not to metaphysicians or logicians — neither to poets nor to savants — to masters of erudition or masters of rhetoric; he preaches to men.”

But perhaps the best and keenest criticism of C. H. Spurgeon’s preaching on his arrival in London was written by a Mr. Hare, who said — “His voice is clear and musical; his language plain; his style flowing, but terse; his method lucid and orderly; his matter sound and suitable; his tone and spirit cordial; his remarks always pithy and pungent, sometimes familiar and colloquial, yet never light or coarse, much less profane. Judging from a single sermon, we supposed that he would become a plain, faithful, forcible and affectionate preacher of the Gospel in the form called Calvinistic; and our judgment was the more favourable because, while there was a solidity beyond his years, we detected little of the wild luxuriance naturally characteristic of very young preachers.”

We have given at some length the opinions of competent and critical authorities upon C. H. Spurgeon’s PREACHING, to show that it appealed to educated men and women who were free from bias, and this was proved more amply by the fact that for years the preacher’s congregations included many prominent persons — literary men like Ruskin, judges and statesmen, members of Parliament, peers and peeresses. But if this was the case, how much more did it appeal to the middle and lower classes? Not for a long time had a prominent preacher condescended to preach the simple Gospel in plain English, free from classical quotations and overburdened rhetoric. The common people heard him gladly because they could understand his sermons, and hence they flocked to New Park Street Chapel and to Exeter Hall, and afterwards to the Surrey Gardens Music Hall and the Metropolitan Tabernacle, in such numbers that not more than a half could find accommodation.

It was this, together with the fact that the interest in Charles Haddon Spurgeon was now getting pretty general all over the country, that led to the earliest publication of his sermons in pamphlet form. That was an age of “penny pulpits,” and one of the most successful series was published by Mr. James Paul. Up to the time of his advent to London none of C. H. Spurgeon’s sermons had appeared in print, although, as he tells us, “Before I ever entered a pulpit the thought had occurred to me that I should one day preach sermons which would be printed. While reading the penny sermons of Joseph Irons, which were great favourites with me, I conceived

in my heart the idea that some time or other I should have a Penny Pulpit of my own." His first printed effort was No. 1 of "Waterbeach Tracts," published in 1853 while the young minister was still at the Cambridgeshire village, but this was specially written for the occasion. It was in August, 1854, that the first discourse was printed and published by Mr. Paul. The sermon was preached at New Park Street Chapel on the 20th of the month, and the text was 1 Samuel 12:17, "Is it not wheat harvest today?" It has since been republished in the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit #2896 (Vol. 50). This appeared as no. 2234 of Paul's Penny Pulpit under the title "Harvest Time," and it sold rapidly and extensively. Then other discourses appeared in Mr. Paul's series, and The Baptist Messenger, a small monthly paper that had just been launched, made its special feature in each issue a sermon by the minister of New Park Street. The first discourse to be published in the little paper was from the text Psalm 84:6, and was entitled, "The Valley of Weeping." It appeared in the September issue, 1854, and was given the place of honour on the opening pages. The circulation of The Baptist Messenger at once went up and showed conclusively that there was a large public eager and anxious for C. H. Spurgeon's sermons in print.

CHAPTER 2

THE LAUNCHING OF THE WEEKLY SERMONS IN 1855

THE demand for C. H. Spurgeon's sermons published in *The Penny Pulpit* increased so rapidly, and the circulation was so in excess of the discourses of other divines, that it was determined to continue publishing a sermon at intervals, though with no idea of a continuance week by week for any length of time. But the success of the printed sermons, and the eagerness with which the public welcomed anything of C. H. Spurgeon's, set his friend, Mr. Joseph Passmore, thinking. Those who are familiar with the life of the great preacher will remember that this was the first real friend he made in London. Mr. Passmore was in partnership with another young man — a Churchman — Mr. James Alabaster, and they conducted a small printing business at Wilson Street, Finsbury. Mr. Passmore, with considerable foresight, saw the prominent position which C. H. Spurgeon must hold among English preachers, and realizing the possibilities which lay in a "penny pulpit" devoted entirely to the young minister's sermons published regularly every week, he discussed the matter with his partner and then approached Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

The latter was much perturbed at the suggestion. His modesty made him dubious of the success of such a venture, and further, he shrank from the increased responsibility and wider publicity. But after considering the matter and praying over it, "With much fear and trembling, my consent was given to the proposal of my present worthy publishers to commence the regular weekly publication of a sermon. We began with the one preached at New Park Street Chapel on Lord's-day morning, January 7th, 1855, upon the text — "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" [Malachi 3:6], #1 (Vol. 1), New Park Street Pulpit, entitled 'The Immutability of God.'

At once "The New Park Street Pulpit" was an established success, and the rapid and unprecedented manner in which the circulation increased gave the young partners some difficulty in meeting the demand. The newspapers

spoke as well of the printed as of the preached sermons. Reviewing a volume of discourses delivered on Sunday mornings at Exeter Hall, the first volume of C. H. Spurgeon's sermons to published, *The Baptist Messenger* said — "There is in these sermons so much of sound doctrine which cannot be gainsaid — evangelical savour, spiritual experience and sacred fervour, together with earnest, practical appeals to the heart that will cause them to be most cordially welcomed by vast numbers of almost every class of professing Christians who love the truth as it is in Jesus," and the paper forthwith gave six closely printed pages of extracts. The volume was issued jointly by Messers. Alabaster and Passmore and Mr. James Paul, and it formed No. 1 of The Pulpit Library. There were ten sermons, and the book being printed in a clear, readable type and well bound in cloth, had a great sale. Charles Haddon Spurgeon gave a copy to his future wife with this inscription upon the fly-leaf, "In a few days it will be out of my power to present anything to Miss Thompson. Let this be a remembrance of our happy meetings and sweet conversations. Dec 12/1855. C. H. Spurgeon."

Not long after this the first volume of The New Park Street Pulpit was issued, in the preface of which the preacher wrote as follows —

"Little can be said in praise of these sermons, and nothing can be said against them more bitter than has been already spoken. Happily the author has heard abuse exhaust itself; he has seen its vocabulary used up and its utmost venom entirely spent; and yet the printed discourses have for that very reason found a readier sale and more have been led to peruse them with deep attention."

"One thing alone places this above contempt — and that accomplishes the deed so triumphantly that the preacher defies the opinion of man — it is the fact that, to his certain knowledge, there is scarcely a sermon here which has not been stamped by the hand of the Almighty by the conversion of a soul. Some single sermons here brought into the society of their brethren, have been under God the means of the salvation of not less than twenty souls; at least that number has come under the preacher's notice from one sermon only; and doubtless more shall be discovered at the last day. This, together with the fact that hundreds of the children of God have been made to leap for joy by their message, makes their author invulnerable either to criticism or abuse."

“The reader will perhaps remark considerable progress in some of the sentiments here made public, particularly in the case of the doctrine of the second coming of our Lord; but he will remember that he who is learning truth will learn it by degrees, and if he teaches as he learns, it is to be expected that his lessons will become fuller every day.”

“There are also many expressions which may provoke a smile, but let it be remembered that every man has his moments when his lighter feelings indulge themselves, and the preacher must be allowed to have the same passions as his fellow men, and since he lives in the pulpit more than anywhere else, it is but natural that his whole man should be there developed; besides, he is not quite sure about a smile being a sin, and, at any rate, he thinks it less a crime to cause a momentary laughter than a half hour’s profound slumber.”

“With all its faults, the purchaser has bought this book, and as it was not warranted to be perfect, if he thinks ill of it he must make the best of his bargain, which can be done either by asking a blessing on its reading to himself, or entreating greater light for his friend the preacher.”

For the first seven years the duty on paper was in force and the sermons had to be printed in small type, as, owing to the cost, not more than eight pages could be given for one penny, although the sermons have always been about the same length. During this early period, too, the preacher could do very little in the way of revision. Referring to these matters he wrote — “Constant habit enables me generally to give the same amount of matter on each occasion, the very slight variation almost surprises myself; from forty to forty-five minutes’ speaking exactly fills the available space and saves the labour of additions and the still more difficult task of cutting down. The earlier sermons, owing to my constant wanderings abroad, received scarcely any revision, and consequently they abound in colloquialisms and other offences, very venial in extempore discourse, but scarcely tolerable in print.” These early sermons were years afterwards revised by the preacher before being reissued uniform with the rest of the series — “There were mistakes in orthography and typography,” he then wrote, “which needed to be corrected; but I was happy to find that I had no occasion to alter any of the doctrines which I preached in those early days of my ministry. I might here and there slightly modify the expressions used thirty or five-and-thirty years ago; but as to the truths themselves, I

stand just where I did when the Lord first revealed them to my by His unerring Spirit.”

In America the sales of the printed sermons were at first even greater than in this country, and of the first bound volume referred to above, no fewer than twenty thousand copies were disposed of in a very short time. In a few years it was estimated that something like half a million volumes in the United States. The North and the South were in antagonism and slavery was a burning question, although the great Civil War was not to come for some years yet. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, in the course of his sermons, felt bound to pass strictures [moral criticism] upon the whole system of slavery, and at once the sale of his sermons in the Southern States fell almost to nothing, while scores of insulting and threatening letters were sent to the preacher.

Of course the publication of the sermons was made an opportunity by writers and speakers of the baser sort for slandering and abusing the young preacher. It was to make money, they said, that he was having his discourses printed, and wild rumours floated about of the vast sums which were coming to him and of the rapidity with which he was accumulating “treasure on earth.” *The Baptist Messenger* referred to this matter: “We understand,” wrote the editor, “he has entered into an engagement with a publishing house of high respectability to prepare for publication a volume of sermons, for the copyright of which, rumour states, he is to receive a very extraordinary sum. Let Mr. Spurgeon follow his own intuitions under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and he will speedily falsify the uncharitable predictions of envious and prejudiced critics.”

It was true that the publication of the weekly sermons brought him large sums of money, but these were used for maintenance of the various institutions and causes which he promoted, and while he spent from six to eight hundred pounds a year, received from the American sales, upon the education of poor ministerial students, he was himself living in comparatively humble circumstances. The falling off in the sales of sermons in the United States and the consequent stoppage of this source of supply was a great trial to him, but he had faith in God, and his prayers were answered.

It seems curious now to learn that at first there was such a prejudice against the sermons of the brilliant young preacher on the part of booksellers that few would sell them, and at Cambridge, for instance

(where he was so well-known), the only place at which they could be purchased was the shop of a grocer — a friend of the preacher. Of course, when it was seen that the sale of the sermons would be a financial success, the booksellers rapidly overcame their scruples and lost their prejudices.

CHAPTER 3

EARLY INSTANCES OF BLESSING

FROM the very first, instances were reported of blessing received through the reading of the printed sermons, and some of the earlier cases may here find a fitting place. They cannot be told better than in C. H. Spurgeon's own words — "As soon as the publication of the sermons was commenced," he says, "the Lord set His seal upon them in the conversion of sinners, the restoration of backsliders, and the edification of believers; and, to His praise, I rejoice to write, that, ever since, it has been the same. For many years, seldom has a day passed, and certainly never a week, without letters reaching me from all sorts of places, even at the utmost ends of the earth, telling me of the salvation of souls by means of one or other of the sermons. There are, in the long series, discourses, of which I may say, without exaggeration, that the Holy Spirit has blessed them to hundreds of precious souls; and long after their delivery fresh instances of their usefulness have come to light. For this, to God be all the glory!"

"There were certain remarkable cases of blessing through the reading of some of the very earliest of the sermons; I mention these not merely because of the interest naturally attaching to them, but because they are representative of many similar miracles of mercy that have been wrought by the Holy Ghost all through the years which have followed. On June 8, 1856, I preached in Exeter Hall from Hebrews 7:25, 'Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.' The sermon was published under the title *Salvation to the Uttermost*, and more than thirty years afterwards I received the joyful tidings that a murderer in South America had been brought to the Saviour reading it. A friend, living not far from the Tabernacle, had been in the city of Para, in Brazil. There he heard of an Englishman in prison who had, in a state of drunkenness, committed a murder, for which he was confined for life. Our friend went to see him and found him deeply penitent, but quietly restful and happy in the Lord. He had felt the terrible wound of blood guiltiness in his soul, but it had been healed, and he was enjoying the bliss of pardon."

“Here is the story of the poor fellow’s conversion as told in his own words — ‘A young man, who had just completed his contract at the gasworks, was returning to England; but before doing so, he called to see me and brought with him a parcel of books. When I opened it I found that they were novels, but being able to read I was thankful for anything. After I had read several of the books, I found one of Mr. Spurgeon’s sermons (#84, Salvation to the Uttermost Vol. 2), in which he referred to Palmer, who was then lying under sentence of death in Stafford Gaol, and in order to bring home the truth of his text to his hearers he said that, if Palmer had committed many other murders, if he repented and sought God’s pardoning love in Christ, even he would be forgiven! I then felt that if Palmer could be forgiven, so might I. I sought the Saviour, and blessed be God, I found him; and now I am pardoned, I am free; I am a sinner saved by grace. Though a murderer, I have not yet sinned beyond “the uttermost,” blessed be His holy Name!’

“It made me very happy,” added C. H. Spurgeon, “when I heard the glad news that a poor condemned murderer had thus been converted, and I am thankful to know that he is not the only one who, although he had committed the awful crime of murder, had, through the Spirit’s blessing upon the printed sermons, been brought to repentance and to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. There was another man who had lived a life of drunkenness and unchastity, and who had even shed human blood with his bowie knife and his revolver, yet he, too, found the Saviour and became a new man; and when he was dying he charged someone who was with him to tell me that one of my discourses had brought him to Christ. ‘I shall never see Mr. Spurgeon on earth,’ he said, ‘but I shall tell the Lord Jesus Christ about him when I get to Heaven.’ It was a sermon read far away in the backwoods that, through sovereign grace, was the means of the salvation of this great sinner.”

Here is another early instance “One Saturday morning in November, 1856, when my mind and heart were occupied with preparation for the great congregation, I expected to address the next day at the Surrey Gardens Music Hall, I received a long letter from Norwich from a man who had been one of the leaders of an infidel society in that city. It was most cheering to me, amid the opposition and slander I was then enduring, to read what he wrote”

“I purchased one of the pamphlets entitled Who is this Spurgeon? and also your portrait (or a portrait sold as yours) for 3d. I brought these home and exhibited them in my shop window. I was induced to do so from a feeling of derisive pleasure. The title of the pamphlet is, naturally, suggestive of caricature, and it was especially to convey that impression that I attached it to your portrait and placed it in my window. But I also had another object in view; I thought by its attraction to improve my trade. I am not at all in the book or paper business, which rendered its exposure and my motive the more conspicuous. I have taken it down now. I am taken down too...” “I had brought one of your sermons of an infidel a day or two previously. In that sermon I read these words, ‘They go on; that step is safe, — they take it; the next is apparently safe, — they take that; but their foot hangs over a gulf of darkness.’ I read on, but the word darkness staggered me; it was all dark with me. I said to myself, ‘True, the way has been safe so far, but I am lost in bewilderment; I cannot go on as I have been going. No, no, no; I will not risk it.’ I left the apartment in which I had been musing, and as I did so the three words, ‘Who can tell?’ seemed to be whispered to my heart. I determined not to let another Sunday pass without visiting a place of worship. How soon my soul might be required of me, I knew not; but I felt that it would be mean, base, cowardly, not to give it a chance of salvation. ‘Ay!’ I thought, ‘my associates may laugh, scoff, deride and call me coward and turncoat; I will do an act of justice to my soul.’” “I went to chapel; I was just stupefied with awe. What could I want there? The doorkeeper opened his eyes wide and involuntarily asked, ‘It’s Mr. _____, isn’t it?’ ‘Yes,’ I said, ‘it is.’ He conducted me to a seat and afterwards brought me a hymn-book. I was fit to burst with anguish. ‘Now,’ I thought, ‘I am here, if it be the house of God, Heaven grant me an audience and I will make a full surrender. O God, show me some token by which I may know that Thou art and that Thou wilt in no wise cast out the vile deserter who has ventured to seek Thy face and Thy pardoning mercy!’ I opened my hymn-book to divert my mind from the feelings that were rending me, and the first words that caught my eyes were —

*‘Dark, dark indeed the grave would be...
Had we no light, O God, from Thee!’*“

“After mentioning some things which he looked upon as evidences that he was a true convert the man closed up by saying, ‘O sir, tell this to the poor wretch whose pride, like mine, has made him league himself with hell; tell it to the hesitating and the timid; tell it to the desponding Christian that God

is a very present help to all that are in need! ...Think of the poor sinner who may never look upon you in the world, but who will live to bless and pray for you here and long to meet you in the world exempt from sinful doubts, from human pride and backsliding hearts.’“

“After that letter,” concludes C. H. Spurgeon, “I heard again and again from the good brother; and I rejoiced to learn that, the following Christmas day, he went into the market-place at Norwich and there made a public recantation of his errors and a profession of his faith in Christ. Then, taking up all the infidel books he had written or that he had in his possession, he burned them in the sight of all the people. I blessed God with my whole heart for such a wonder of grace as that man was, and I afterwards had the joy of learning from his own lips what the Lord had done for his soul, and together we praised and magnified Him for His marvellous mercy.”

Such instances might be multiplied, but the few given above will show that the printed sermons were as efficacious in meeting the needs of those with spiritual doubts and difficulties as the preached word, and they further prove that C. H. Spurgeon’s power did not lay in mere oratory, but that it was the substance of his discourses which led to his success and popularity.

CHAPTER 4

REMARKABLE GROWTH

THE circulation of the sermons went up by leaps and bounds and none was more surprised at the success of the venture than C. H. Spurgeon himself.

“After all these years,” he wrote in 1886, “it is a glad thing to be able to say, ‘Having, therefore, obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great.’ How many ‘Penny Pulpits’ have been set up and pulled down in the course of these years, it would be hard to tell; certainly, very many attempts have been made to publish weekly the sermons of most eminent men and they have all run to their end with more or less rapidity, in some cases through the preacher’s ill-health or death, but in several others, to my knowledge, from an insufficient sale. Perhaps the discourses were too good: the public evidently did not think them too interesting.” “Those who know what dull-reading sermons are usually supposed to be, will count that man happy who has for over thirty years been favoured with a circle of willing supporters, who not only purchase but actually read his discourses. I am more astonished at the fact that any other man can possibly be, and I see no other reason for it but this — the sermons contain the Gospel preached in plain language and this is precisely what multitudes need beyond anything else. The Gospel ever fresh and ever new, has held my vast congregation together these many long years and the same power has kept around me a host of readers.”

The work of translation into other languages soon began. First of all a Welsh issue was prepared and sermons were published in that tongue once a month. Then Dutch translations were made and had large circulations among all classes in the Netherlands from the peasant to the sovereign. The Queen of Holland had copies sent to her, read them, became interested in the preacher, and when he was travelling on the Continent asked him to visit her, which he did. In Germany a score or more of publishers issued versions and there were translations bearing date from Baden, Carlsruhe, Ludwigsburg, Hamburg, etc. The sermons in Swedish circulated largely among the upper classes, and the translator informed Charles Haddon Spurgeon that there had been cases of conversion among some of noble

and even of royal birth through their perusal. Other languages into which the sermons have been translated include: Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Bulgarian, Castilian (for the Argentine Republic), Chinese, Congo, Czech, Estonian, French, Gaelic, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Kaffir, Karen, Lettish, Maori, Norwegian, Polish, Russian, Servian, Spanish, Syriac, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. Some sermons were also early prepared in Moon and Braille type for the use of the blind.

The enthusiasm for the sermons on the part of some wealthy men was remarkable. One purchased and gave away no fewer than a quarter of a million copies. He had volumes containing forty-two sermons bound in elaborate style and presented one to each crowned head in Europe. Volumes less expensively bound, containing twelve sermons each, were prepared and sent to all the students of the Universities, and years afterwards, at least one wrote to Westwood to say how he had been blessed by the perusal of one of these volumes. Similar sets were sent to all the members of both Houses of Parliament, and the generous donor even commenced to distribute volumes among the principal householders in the towns of Ireland. "May the good results of his laborious seed-sowing be seen many days hence," wrote C. H. Spurgeon. "The self-denial with which this brother saved the expense from a very limited income and worked personally in the distribution, was beyond all commendation; but praise was evaded and observation dreaded him; the work was done without his left hand knowing what his right hand did."

Another gentleman, a city merchant, belonging to the Society of Friends, advertised the sermons in all sorts of journals offering to supply them from his own office, and by this means large numbers were sold to persons who would not have been reached through the ordinary channels.

A wealthy Russian, who had read some of the sermons, was so impressed with their value that he obtained the permission of the censor to publish Russian translations and a million copies were at once prepared. They were approved and licensed by the heads of the Orthodox Church and having been marked on the front cover with the official stamp, to certify that they might be read and circulated by faithful members of the Church, were distributed and broadcast over the Czar's dominions. Thus the discourses of a "heretic" were blessed, sanctioned and commended by the ecclesiasties of the most tyrannous Church in Christendom. By the time the eighth volume of the English edition was commenced, C. H. Spurgeon's Church

had moved from New Park Street Chapel to the Metropolitan Tabernacle and consequently the name was changed to... ..the sale at the same time largely increasing. To celebrate the publication of the five hundredth weekly issue, Messrs. Passmore and Alabaster entertained a company of friends to dinner at the Tabernacle in March, 1863, where various speeches were made, and it transpired that up to that time eight million copies of the sermons had been distributed all over the world. C. H. Spurgeon declared that he regarded the republication in Canada, Australia, and the United States as only second in importance to the issue in England. During the evening a sum of five hundred pounds was subscribed for the Pastors' College, an institution that was ever very close to the preacher's heart and to which the bulk of his profits from the sales of the sermons was devoted.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon now found time to revise the printed sermons, and he wrote that — “the work of revision has been a very useful exercise to me, supplying in great measure that training in correct language which is obtained by those who write their productions before they deliver them. The labour has been far greater than some suppose and has usually occupied the best hours of Monday and involved the burning of no inconsiderable portion of midnight oil. Feeling that I had a constituency well deserving my best efforts, I have never grudged the hours, though often the brain has been wearied and the pleasure has hardened into task.” The preacher took a much greater interest, too, than heretofore in preparing the prefaces to the annual volume. Thus, in the eighth he declared that he wished to commune a little with the great host of readers who continually perused the discourses and commenced forthwith to address various classes.

“*Sick saints*, what a delight I feel in ministering to you! Shut out from the sanctuary and the sound of the Word, you find a solace in reading what others have crowded to hear. Accept my tenderest sympathy in your affliction, while I breathe the prayer that He who suffers in you, may abide with you... Let your chamber be a sanctuary, your bed a pulpit, your loving experience of divine grace the constant sermon. We cannot do without you in the Lord's battles. Your power for good is wonderful; forget not your advantageous position, but lift up the banner of your Lord on high. Let no persons retire from your bedside without being enriched by some affectionate admonition. In the night-watches, when your eyes are held waking so that you cannot sleep, plead for the Church, the world, your minister, your friends, and do not omit the unworthy brother who now

writes to you. What showers of mercies your intercessions may bring down. The golden keys of heaven are at your girdle, open the treasury and bless us all.” ‘As the sufferings of Christ abound in you so may your consolation also abound in Christ.’

“*My brethren in the ministry*, receive my affectionate salutations and my best thanks for your kind endeavours to promote the circulation of these sermons. I count myself thrice happy to have so many readers among the leaders of our Israel; and, if like the lad in the Evangelists, I may bring the barley loaves and small fishes which the Master may distribute to you, that by you thousands may be fed, we will all of us rejoice together...”

“*To those brethren who publicly read these sermons* in cottages and village preaching rooms, a word of hopeful encouragement. Several cases of conviction and comfort have come under my notice this year through your good work in publicly reading my discourses. I pray you, persevere. No man need despair of winning souls. In these days the lack of talent is no bar to usefulness. If we cannot preach the sermon ourselves, if reading it to a few cottagers may be blessed by God the Holy Spirit, who could refuse to do it? Go on, dear friends, and may the Lord continue to bless us in publishing the glad tidings of His grace. We serve a generous Master, who thinks much of our littles. O, that we thought more of Him.

“*To all my brethren*, thanks and Christian love. Thanks for your assistance in spreading my ‘words for Jesus,’ and love, because we are one in Him. Let me entreat you to wrestle together with me in your prayers that the good news may be received by many prepared hearts. If all my readers would pray for the preacher and for a blessing upon the sermons as they travel throughout all lands, what a great result would follow. The Holy Spirit is able to make the word as successful now as in the days of the Apostles. He can bring in by hundreds and thousands as easily as by ones and twos. If we have the Spirit sealing our ministry with power, it will signify very little about our talent... ..Men may be poor and uneducated; their words may be broken and ungrammatical, there may be none of the polished periods of Hall or the glorious thunders of Chalmers; but if the might of the Spirit attend them the humblest evangelists will be more successful than the most learned of divines or the most eloquent of preachers. It is extraordinary grace not talent that wins the day. It is extraordinary spiritual power not extraordinary mental power that we need. Mental power may fill a chapel but spiritual power fills the Church. Mental

power may gather a congregation, spiritual power will save souls. We want spiritual power.”

In his preface for the following year, C. H. Spurgeon hinted at the labour involved in the preparation of the printed sermons. “When our year’s ministry is over, we feel a sweet relief; we sit down upon the milestone of our preface and remember that we are nearer home; looking back with gratitude upon the steps already trodden we are cheered in our onward way. This volume is the record of another year’s campaign against sin and Satan; the memorial of another series of struggles, contentions, buffetings, wrestlings, defeats, and triumphs. Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof; we began with trembling hope, we close with deep repentance for our shortcomings and hearty thanksgivings for our successes. Little doth any man know, beside the man who endureth the like, the agonies and joys of a preacher; a stranger intermeddeth not therewith. As the weaver seeth every thread dyed with the sweat of his brow, and marketh in the fabric his own nerves and sinews interwoven in its tissue, even so does the minister of God when he reviews his sermons. The husbandman has been first partaker of the fruits, and in that first feasting he tasted his own labours, anxieties and hopes sweetened with the dew of heaven and flavoured with the genial sunshine of God; no other man can partake of the fruits with such a zest as he. Permit me, then, to pour out of my whole soul unto God in praise for the unceasing mercy which has given me this series of discourses.” He notes that during the year he had heard with joy of conversions, wrought by the Holy Spirit, from most of the discourses in the volume and concludes thus — “Believers, we entreat you give your continual prayers for a blessing upon our endeavours. Let all who read to profit pray with fervour, and who can tell the blessed result? O, for an unction from on high! This is the one thing needful. Let us pray that the everpresent Spirit may work among us more and more. O, Lord, send now prosperity. Amen.”

One more extract from these interesting prefaces that in themselves are almost worthy to be gathered together in an independent volume. In 1866 C. H. Spurgeon writes — “Twelve yearly volumes of our sermons are now before the public, and in looking back upon them, like Pharaoh’s butler, we do remember our faults. Bishop Jewel says, ‘faults’ will escape a man betwixt his fingers, let him look to it ever so narrowly! but ours are to be reckoned by handfuls, for we have never enjoyed the opportunity of making careful revision, but our raw and hasty words have been served up

at once like ill-cooked meat, and the grain of our thoughts has been bound up in sacks altogether unwinnowed and almost unthreshed... ..If Augustine needed to correct, in his riper years, the errors of his youthful writings (upon which he had spent considerable care), how much latitude must be allowed to us, who, being without his ability are also without his leisure and have to bear the responsibility, not of treatises deliberately written, but of words spoken upon the spur of the moment and but hurriedly amended before their issue from the Press. If the grapes of the well-trimmed vine are sometimes sour, shall the clusters of the wild vine be always sweet? If the land which yielded milk and honey was not without its briars, what shall be said of the garden which borders upon the wilderness? Youth has not quite departed from us, but when the first of these twelve volumes was born into existence we had but barely reached the age of twenty-one. Is there need of more apology when wise men are the critics, and if the critics be not wise, of what avail is any apology whatever?"

CHAPTER 5

THE COMPLETE HISTORY OF A SERMON

IT may not be uninteresting to trace here the complete history of a sermon, from the time when the text first suggested itself to the preacher, until the moment that the final proof left his hands for the printers.

The work commenced at six o'clock on a Saturday evening, when C. H. Spurgeon invariably wished any visitors or guests in his study to pray over and prepare his sermon for the coming morning. "No human ear," Mrs. Spurgeon has told us, "ever heard the mighty pleadings with God for himself and his people, which rose from his study on those solemn evenings; no mortal eyes ever beheld him as he wrestled with the Angel of the covenant until he prevailed and came back from his brook Jabbok with the message he was to deliver in his Master's name. His grandest and most fruitful sermons were those which cost him most soul-travail and spiritual anguish; not in their preparation and arrangement, but in his own overwhelming sense of accountability to God for the souls to whom he had to preach the gospel of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ."

Sometimes a text would have been laid upon the preacher's heart during the week, but occasionally it was well into the Saturday evening, and only after much prayer that he could feel he had a message from above. Mere suggestions of texts from others were never taken, unless, at the same time, C. H. Spurgeon felt that it was the Lord's distinct will that he should preach therefrom and that the Scripture had been sent to him in that way. His wife was on many occasions the means of conveying a text to him, and she helped him greatly in the preparation. On one occasion he took a number of ministers (former students of his Pastors' College), into his confidence and told them something of his methods.

"Brethren," he said, "it is not easy for me to tell you precisely how I make my sermons. All through the week I am on the look-out for material that I can use on the Sabbath; but the actual work of arranging it is necessarily left until Saturday evening, for every other moment is fully occupied in the Lord's service. I have often said that my greatest difficult is to fix my mind

upon the particular texts which are to be the subjects of discourse on the following day; or, to speak more correctly, to know what topics the Holy Spirit would have me bring before the congregation. As soon as any passage of Scripture really grips my heart and soul I concentrate my whole attention upon it, look at the precise meaning of the original, closely examine the context so as to see the special aspect of the text in its surroundings, and roughly jot down all the thoughts that occur to me concerning the subject, leaving to a later period the orderly marshalling of them for presentation to my hearers.”

“When I have reached this point I am often stopped by an obstacle, which is only a trouble to those of us whose sermons are regularly printed. I turn to my own Bible, which contains a complete record of all my published discourses; and looking at those I have preached upon the text, I find, perhaps, that the general run of thought is so similar to that which I have marked out, that I have to abandon the subject and seek another. Happily, a text of Scripture is like a diamond with many facets which sparkles and flashes whichever way it is held, so that, although I may have already printed several sermons upon a particular passage, there is still a fresh setting possible for the priceless gem, and I can go forward with my work. I like next to see what others have to say about my text; and, as a rule, my experience is that if its teaching is perfectly plain, the commentators to a man explain it at great length, whereas, with equal unanimity, they studiously avoid or evade the verses which Peter might have described as ‘things hard to be understood.’ I am very much obliged to them for leaving me so many nuts to crack; but I should have been just as grateful if they had made more use of their own theological teeth as nut-crackers. However, among the many who have written upon the Word I generally find some who can at least help to throw a sidelight upon it; and when I have arrived at that part of my preparation, I am glad to call my dear wife to my assistance. She reads to me until I get a clear idea of the whole subject; and gradually I am guided to the best form of outline, which I copy out on a half-sheet of notepaper, for use in the pulpit. This relates only to the morning sermon; for the evening sermon I am usually content, if I can decide upon the text and have a general notion of the lessons to be drawn from it, leaving to the Lord’s day afternoon the final arrangement of divisions, sub-divisions and illustrations.”

In passing it may be mentioned that Messrs. Passmore and Alabaster have published an interesting little volume, entitled Facsimile Pulpit Notes,

which contains a dozen sermons by C. H. Spurgeon, together with exact facsimiles of the notes upon half-sheets of notepaper, from which the sermons were delivered. By means of this book the preacher's methods may be closely followed. At the Tabernacle a shorthand writer was always in attendance to take down the sermon as delivered, and the reporter found C. H. Spurgeon an ideal speaker for this purpose. Mr. Thomas Allen Reed, who for many years performed the important duty, has recorded his impressions of the speaker. "When a speaker, he says, "has a distinct articulation, combined with a clear, strong voice, the reporter, who has to follow him, is in Elysium [paradise]; that is, if the utterance is not too rapid, or the style of composition too difficult. The combination, however, is rare. It has a very striking example in Mr. Spurgeon, who, without apparent effort, makes himself distinctly heard at the farthest end of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. To a clear, ringing, musical voice he adds an almost perfect articulation... The average rate of public speaking is about 120 words a minute. Some speakers vary greatly in their speech. I have, for example, a memorandum of a sermon by Mr. Spurgeon, showing that during the first ten minutes he spoke at the rate of 123 words a minute; the second ten minutes, 132; the third ten minutes, 128; the fourth ten minutes, 155; and the remaining nine minutes, 162; giving an average of about 140 words a minute. Another sermon shows an average of 125 words a minute: namely, the first ten minutes, 119; the second ten minutes, 118; the third ten minutes, 139; and the remaining sixteen minutes, 126. Taking the average of a number of sermons, his rate may be reckoned to be nearly 140 words a minute."

The sermon, written out in longhand by the reporter, was taken to C. H. Spurgeon's house, and early on Monday morning he commenced to revise it, first of all glancing at the number of folios to see whether the discourse were longer or shorter than usual, whether he would have to cut it down or write some additional matter to bring it to the required length. On one occasion, at least, the preacher was found by the servants at work upon the manuscript as early as four o'clock in the morning, and sometimes, when he had preaching engagements in the country on Monday (necessitating an early departure), he has been compelled, on Sunday night, after returning weary from the day's labours at the Tabernacle, to begin revising the shorthand writer's manuscript then. The work could not be left till Tuesday, and C. H. Spurgeon used playfully to remark that the earth itself

would cease to revolve if the sermon did not come out every Thursday morning.

After the preacher had made the alterations and corrections which he considered necessary upon the manuscript, he used to hand it over to his private secretary for the verification of quotations, the proper punctuation of the matter, etc., and when about a third was ready, a messenger would take that installment post-haste to the printers, returning later for the remainder. By this time it was usually late in the afternoon, for the work was done thoroughly, and after tea the preacher had to hurry off to the Tabernacle for the weekly prayer meeting, which was sometimes followed by another engagement.

Then, on returning home, his first question was, "Has the sermon come," and if it had, he proceeded to see if the length, as shown on the printer's gallery slips, was correct to a line. Otherwise, there had to be further cutting or addition. If a preaching engagement was to be fulfilled on the following day, the revision of the proof had to be finished that night or early the next morning, but this done the work was complete. Probably, very few, however, of those who read the discourses had any idea of the amount of labour entailed, not only in preparation before delivery, but in revision and correction afterwards.

Yet, with all his stress of work the preacher was thoughtful of others, as witness the following note sent to Mr. Passmore: "When that good little lad come here on Monday with the sermon late at night, it was needful. But please blow somebody up for sending the poor little creature here late tonight, in all this snow, with a parcel much heavier than he ought to carry. He could not get home till eleven, I fear; and I feel like a cruel brute in being the innocent cause of having a poor lad out at such an hour on such a night. There was no need at all for it. Do kick somebody for me, so that it may not happen again."

Throughout their long connection, the relations between the preacher and his publishers was of a most cordial character. There was never a hitch or a harsh word on either side, and C. H. Spurgeon often used to ask Mr. Passmore, jokingly, "Do I write for you or do you print for me; and I your employer or are you mine?" The following letter will give a pretty clear indication of the relationship:

“My dear Mr. Passmore: As you have today paid to me the largest amount I have ever received from your firm at one time, I seize the opportunity of saying, what I am sure you know already, that I am most sincerely thankful to God for putting me into your hands in my publishing matters. My connection with you has been one of unmingled satisfaction and pleasure. Your liberality has been as great as it has been spontaneous. Had I derived no personal benefit it would have delighted me to see you prosper, for my interest in you is as deep as if you were my own brother, as, indeed, in the best sense you are. From you and your partner I have received nothing but kindness, courtesy and generosity. My share of profits has always exceeded my expectations, and the way it has been given has been even more valuable than the money itself. God bless you both in your business and your families! May your health be recruited, and, as long as we live, may we be on as near and dear terms as we ever have been! I am afraid I sometimes tease you when I grumble in my peculiar way; but I never intend anything but to let you know where a screw may be loose with your workmen and not because I really have anything to complain of. Your growing welfare lies very near my heart, and nothing gives me more pleasure than to see you advance in prosperity. I need not add my Christian love to you as my friend and deacon.” — Yours ever truly, C. H. Spurgeon

CHAPTER 6

MEMORABLE INCIDENTS AND LETTERS.

“To record only a tithe of the memorable incidents that have occurred in connection with the publication of the sermons and to mention but a few of the prominent men who have found them of benefit and blessing to themselves, would occupy far more space than can be spared in the present little volume; but a few typical instances may be given.

Perhaps one of the most remarkable features of the early circulation of the sermons was the way in which they became generally known in Australia. A Christian gentleman in that colony, feeling the need of sending the Gospel into outlying districts in such a way as to ensure that it would be read, obtained C. H. Spurgeon’s permission to insert some of the sermons in the Australian papers as advertisements. This was a course which, as the preacher himself said, necessitated the advertiser “spending week by week a sum which I scarcely dare to mention, lest it should not be believed.” The spirit in which this Colonial admirer of C. H. Spurgeon’s discourses entered upon his expensive mission may be gathered from the following letter which he sent to the preacher: “Having been brought through grace to feel somewhat of the power and love of Jesus and the blessings of the glorious Gospel, and knowing the wants of the great mass of our widely-scattered population, and seeing that your sermons so fully set forth the way of salvation, I was induced to publish them in the newspapers here. *The Australasium* being a sporting paper, the manager seemed indisposed to help in carrying out my idea, so he gave orders that I was to be charged the full price as advertisements for the sermons; but, feeling the importance of the step, I resolved to pay what he demanded until his readers were interested in them, and then I thought better terms might be obtained. After the publication had continued for some six or nine months, I waited on the manager, who did not even then appear willing to grant me the reduction I wanted; and, not being able to convince him of the appreciation his readers had for the sermons, I suggested that we should ask for an expression of their opinion with regard to them. The result was that about four hundred letters were received; and I send the enclosed specimens of them for your

good cheer. I should be sorry that any name should be made public, and I have withheld my own from the papers here, fearing that the enemy might say that I am seeking the approbation of men. The reason of my sending these letters to you is that Mr. ___ called on me and I showed them to him, and he said that I ought to let you see them.

“I have sent a few of the papers; containing the sermons to Mr. Samuel Morley, Mr. Peabody, Earl Shaftesbury and others, in the hope that they might: be induced to do likewise, as a newspaper often falls into the hands of men and women who would not take a tract. May I ask you for any suggestion that will help to further the cause and advance the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ?

“In conclusion, I would beg your prayers for myself. I am seeking to grow in grace and in knowledge of the love of God. Also, please pray that this work of publishing the sermons here may abundantly prosper.”

Four hundred letters was a large number to receive in response to an invitation by a Colonial paper in those early days, and the replies came from all parts of Australia and New Zealand, from the inhabitants of towns and villages, and from lonely dwellers in the Bush. In many cases the sermons, published in so strange a manner, were blessed to the salvation of souls, and it appeared to be no uncommon thing for the people of a scattered district to gather together weekly to hear the welcome advertisement read out. One and all, the letters were most cheering.

“Sir,” wrote one man in an outlying part of Victoria, “having seen an advertisement lately, at the head of one of the sermons published weekly in *The Australasiam*, asking for an expression of opinion as to their usefulness, I venture respectfully to offer the following plain and brief statement in reply. I have been for some five years or more one of those unfortunates who are commonly called ‘swagmen.’ Travelling about a few months since looking for employment, I came to a public-house by the roadside, into which I went for a drink and an hour’s rest, as I was very tired. A newspaper was lying on the counter containing Mr. Spurgeon’s sermon on the text, ‘Turn, O backsliding Children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you.’ I read it through with increasing interest as I went along; and it exactly met my case. It aroused me to a sense of my utterly lost condition as a sinner of the deepest dye, and, at the same time, so encouraged me to seek for mercy and peace at the foot of the Cross, that I could not resist: doing so; and I humbly hope and believe that I did not

seek in vain. I left that public-house resolved never to enter one again, unless absolutely compelled by circumstances to do so. Since then I have enjoyed at peace to which I had been long a stranger. I now make God's Word my daily study and attend Divine service whenever I can. Although nominally a Church of England man, previous to reading the sermon alluded to, had only been once to church since my arrival in the Colony, now nearly seven years ago. To my personal knowledge, these sermons are extensively read in the country districts; and, for my own part, I look to the arrival of the weekly paper — which my employer always lends me — as the messenger of joy and comfort to myself; and I pray that it may prove to be the same to hundreds of others also. I would just, in conclusion, ask you to offer the expression of my humble and heartfelt thanks to the friend who pays for the advertisements of Mr. Spurgeon's sermons."

Another correspondent wrote thus: "Reading in *The Australasiam* a request that parties approving of Mr. Spurgeon's sermons would communicate with you, I place the following facts before your notice. I have been in the Colony about sixteen years; and during that period have been into a place of worship about three times, and then more from accident than design. During my abode in this Colony I am sorry to say that I have contracted the horrible habit of drunkenness, occasionally getting what some people call on the spree 'for a fortnight' or three weeks at a stretch. The summer before last I had 'the horrors' twice; and last summer I had delirium tremens just coming on. Unable to either sit, stand, lie down or walk about, I casually picked up *The Australasiam*, and what should catch my eye but Mr. Spurgeon's sermon on 'The Approachableness of Jesus' (No. 809). I commenced reading it: and before I had gone far tears came into my eyes and I had not got through it before I had to hold my hand before my face for very shame. By the time I had read it all, I found myself looking to Christ to be relieved from my hideous burden of sin; and, to my astonishment, the delirium tremens vanished like a heavy dew on a summer's morning. I was weak in consequence of the long drinking-bout, but felt quite happy in my mind; and since, am glad to say, that I never enjoyed such peace of mind in my life before." Many years later, when Pastor Thomas Spurgeon was in Geelong, the writer of this letter called upon him and had a most interesting conversation, during the course of which he produced from his pocket a torn and discolored copy of the newspaper containing the sermon that had been used by the Holy Spirit to his conversion.

The writers of the four hundred letters referred to above were, of course, not the only people to whom the sermons in *The Australasian* had been blessed. C.H. Spurgeon himself, over a course of years, received direct many letters of similar import, and, from time to time, other instances of conversion by the same means, became known. In one letter a minister recorded a remarkable case of conversion. "I was preaching," he said, "in the Baptist Chapel, Aberdeen Street, Geelong, a few years ago, when, at the close of an evening service, an elderly man came to the platform to bid me 'good-night.' As he was a stranger, I asked him where he came from, and how long he had known the Lord: he then told me the story of his conversion, and the strange way by which he was led to the Savior. About five years before, while keeping sheep, some miles beyond Ballarat, he picked up a sheet of a weekly newspaper, which the wind had blow, over the plains. He glanced at a few sentences, and these drew him on to read more, and then he found he was eagerly perusing a sermon by Mr. C. H. Spurgeon. 'If I had known it was a sermon,' he said, 'before I had begun to read it, I should have tossed it away;' but, having commenced the discourse, he wanted to see how it finished. It set him thinking; he carefully preserved it, reading it over and over again in deep concern, until, finally, it became the means of leading him to the Cross. For many years he had not entered a place of worship, and he was utterly careless about his soul till this paper was blown to his feet. Now, when he has the opportunity, he always attends some Baptist service; but this is a rare pleasure, owing to his lonely life and employment in the bush. He does, however, get the weekly sermons, which cheer and comfort him with spiritual nourishment."

More remarkable still was the case of the conversion of a woman, the wife of a publican in England. She received a parcel from a friend in Australia, and the wrapper happened to be a copy of a newspaper containing one of C. H. Spurgeon's sermons. The woman read it casually, became interested, then felt exercised in soul, and, finally, was led to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as her Savior. A somewhat similar case occurred in Jersey, where a gentleman used to receive regularly a copy of the paper containing C. H. Spurgeon's sermons. He had been converted by reading one of the sermons in *The Australasian*, and, not knowing anything about the English edition of the discourses, he subscribed to the colonial paper. Years afterwards, when he learnt of the preacher, he wrote to him as follows, enclosing a gift of money for use in some of his many good works: "I have been a reader of your sermons these seventeen years or more, and

God has been graciously pleased to bless them to the salvation of my soul. I had almost begun to think my Savior had forgotten me; I knew I had long ignored Him. I have lately found out the way to procure the sermons in any number, and have gladly availed myself of it. I think I have now nearly six hundred of them; I lend them out in books of fifty. I prize them above every other means of grace, save the Book. As you so frequently want money for the good works in which you are always engaged, I thought you would not despise my trifle. I wish it were fifty times as much. Receive my sincere and heartfelt thanks for the unspeakable help your sermons have afforded and still afford me.” We can find room for only one more Australian case, that of a well-known saw-mill proprietor in New South Wales, who had become an able and earnest local preacher in the Wesleyan Church. At an evangelistic service he thus referred to his own case:

“For twenty-five years of my life I lived in the darkness of sin. I had never been inside a Protestant place of worship. I had never in all that time met a Christian man. I knew nothing of the distinction between Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, etc; they were all alike despised, in my eyes, as being all in gross error. About that time five of my companions were drowned together at Port Stevens. The occurrence made a deep impression upon my heart. The thought would force itself upon me, ‘What if you had been among the number? Would you not now have been weeping and wailing among the lost souls in hell?’

“I was greatly troubled, and did what alone I could do — prayed to God; but not knowing anything of the way of salvation through faith in Christ, and having no one to guide me, I lived for two years in the most awful agony. I would rather die than live those two years over again. I knew nothing of the great preachers of the day, until I happened to hear of Mr. Spurgeon; and a friend being about to visit Sydney, I asked him to get me at volume of Spurgeon’s sermons. I read them eagerly, and received much light and comfort from them. At length, I came to one bearing the title, ‘Seeking for Jesus’ (No. 947), and as I read God spoke peace to my troubled heart. I felt that my sin was pardoned, and I could sing aloud for joy. It was about noon on a glorious Sabbath day when the great change took place, and I well remember the spot on which it occurred. Since then, ten years ago now, I have been telling the story of the Cross wherever I can.”

A Wesleyan minister, who wrote and told C. H. Spurgeon of this incident, mentioned that a night or two afterwards an old gentleman stood up in the service and stated that twenty-one years earlier he was led to decision for Christ through reading the sermon entitled, "Now" (No. 603).

From America similar remarkable incidents were constantly being recorded. One must suffice here. At a great religious Convention, held in Chicago, in 1867, a delegate was present from a newly-formed settlement in the Far West, and he expressed the earnest desire that a preacher might be sent to minister to the spiritual needs of the Christians there, as, through the reading of C. H. Spurgeon's sermons, two hundred persons had been converted to God.

It was the same everywhere. The sermons appealed to no particular class, or creed, or nationality. They contained the Word of God and the Word of God knows no distinctions. They were read in little country chapels, where no preacher was available, and they were read in churches of the Establishment which boasted a high ritual. An instance of this was mentioned to C. H. Spurgeon in a letter from a correspondent, who said: "I think it will be gratifying to you to know that at St. _____ Church _____ Road [a fashionable place of worship in the West End of London], which is generally supposed to be what is termed 'very high,' each Thursday afternoon during Lent there have been devotional readings, consisting of extracts from the works of various living divines. The reading this afternoon was from a sermon preached by you, fourteen or fifteen years ago, from the text, 'What if they father answer thee roughly?' (No. 1188). The greater part of the discourse was read from the pulpit by the junior curate."

Many distinguished men made the sermons their constant companions. Dr. Livingstone, living a lonely life in the very heart of the Dark Continent, found comfort from these discourses. Among his possessions after his death was found a discolored and much used copy of the sermon, Accidents and Punishments (No. 408). It had been carried by him throughout his travels, and at the top of the first page he had written the words: "Very good, D. L."

Bishop Welldon was a close friend of C. H. Spurgeon, and he told the preacher how greatly his grandmother prized the sermons; whereupon C. H. Spurgeon wrote a kindly note to the old lady and sent it through her grandson. Dr. Welldon replied: "I am deeply grateful for your kind thought

of my grandmother. Nothing, I think, could cheer her so much in her last days as this word from you. It will, perhaps, be a little interesting to you to know that some years ago, when I was about to live in Germany, she put into my hands several volumes of your sermons, and made me promise to read one every Sunday morning until I came home, as she thought, poor dear! that Senior Classics were sure to be skeptical, and ever since then I have been a student of your writings, so that I suppose there are few members of the English Church who know them better, or owe more to them, than I do.”

About the same time Canon Frederick Harford, of Westminster, wrote asking the preacher for the numbers or texts of any of his sermons wherein he dwelt upon the life of the world to come, and, in reply, C. H. Spurgeon sent him two discourses, one of which was the famous sermon, entitled, “Supposing Him to be the Gardener” (No. 1699). The Canon at once acknowledged thee gift in these words: “Little did I guess, on entering my house last night at 10:30, that such a rare and precious feast was prepared for me. Both of those sermons are valuable treasures, but the inspired dream at Mentone [the sermon named above] is one that exceeds in *usefulness*, as well as in *superb cleverness*, all the memorable sermons I have read from English or from American sources during the last twenty-five years. I have ordered fifty copies today, purposing to send the first to the poor mourner, whom your message is certain to comfort, and another to your germine admirer, Louisa, Lady Ashburton. Some shall go to France, where I hope a translation will be made into the language of the country; and some will go to certain weak brethren whom I have been lately called to ‘work at’ and endeavor to draw away from Agnosticism and so-called Spiritualism . . . I must not forget to tell you how one of the most excellent women I ever knew — and whose loss I shall ever mourn — always read your sermons from the year 1856, when I was ordained at Croydon, until the year 1868, when she was taken away.”

Similar testimony, as to the value of the sermons, was given by Colonel Morton, of Mildmay, who wrote to the preacher: “Allow me, very late in the day, to thank you for the numberless times you have refreshed and strengthened and comforted us soldiers, who, often in India and other countries, on the line of march hundreds of miles from any place of worship, or means of grace (in the ordinary sense of the word), have met under trees, some little distance from camp and hav, after prayer and hymns, introduced you as our foreteller. We had a large Bible-class in my

regiment in those day, and many a blessing has been entreated upon you by those dear fellows, your sermon ‘In the Garden with Him’ (No. 2106), was my companion, quite lately, when going up Monte Pelegrino, near Palermo, en route from Malta to England. In what stray corners of the wide world, where soldiers and sailors are, oh you not come and bring messages of God’s love and truth? I have long wished to thank you, as hundreds of others would wish to do; and here is my opportunity. May God increasingly bless you!”

Mr. Gladstone more than once heard C. H. Spurgeon in the pulpit, and when the great preacher was lying ill at Norwood, in July, 1891, he wrote to Mrs. Spurgeon as follows:” In my own home, darkened at the present time [Mr. Gladstone had recently lost his eldest son], I have read with sad interest the 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.” After the preacher’s death, when Mr. Gladstone received a volume of his sermons, he wrote: I have retained a high impression of Mr. Spurgeon’s great qualities, and of an integrity and manhood is remarkable is his eloquence. . .”

Before closing this chapter, there is one curious incident that must be recorded. It is best told in C. H. Spurgeon’s own words:

“I once learnt something,” he says, “in a way one does not often get a lesson. I felt at that time very angry and very sad and very heavy at heart and I began to doubt in my own mind whether I really enjoyed the things which I preached to others. It seemed to be it dreadful a thing for me to be only a waiter and not a guest at the gospel feast. I went to a certain gentry town, and on the Sabbath day entered a Methodist Chapel. The man who conducted the service was an engineer he read the Scriptures and prayed and preached. The tears flowed freely from my eyes. I was moved to the deepest emotion by every sentence of the sermon, and I felt all my difficulty removed, for the Gospel, I saw, was very dear to me and had a wonderful effect upon my own heart. I went to the preacher and said, “I thank you very much for that sermon. He asked me who I was, and when I told him he looked as red as possible, and he said: Why, it was one of your sermons that I preached this morning! ‘Yes,’ I said, ‘I know it was, but

that was the very message that I wanted to hear, because I then saw that I did enjoy the very Word I myself preached.' It was, happily, so arranged in the good providence of God. Had it been his own sermon it would not have answered the purpose nearly so well as when it turned out to be one of mine."

CHAPTER 7

SOME NOTABLE SERMONS.

EVERY one of the printed discourses of Charles Haddon Spurgeon has had an enormous sale, but there are some which have been especially notable from their matter or occasion, and have outstripped all others in circulation. One of the first to create an unusual demand was the sermon (No. 154) preached at the Crystal Palace, on the Fast Day proclaimed at the time of the Indian Mutiny, October 7th, 1857. C. H. Spurgeon was then a young man of twenty-three years of age, and the mere physical ordeal of addressing 23,654 persons was so great that the preacher afterwards slept from Wednesday night to Friday morning without a break. The Proclamation stated that the day was appointed “for a Solemn Fast, Humiliation and Prayer before Almighty God, in order to obtain pardon for our sins, and for imploring His blessing’ and assistance on our arms for the restoration of tranquillity in India”; and C. H. Spurgeon did not hesitate to denounce and call upon his congregation to give up the open sins of which the community was guilty. “I am inclined to think,” he said, “that our class-sins are the most grievous. Behold this day the sins of the rich. How are the poor oppressed! How are the needy down-trodden! In many places the average wage of men is far below their value to their masters. In this age there is many a great man who looks upon his fellows as only stepping-stones to wealth. He builds a factory as he would make a cauldron. He is about to make a brew for his own wealth. Pitch him in! He is only a poor clerk, he can live on a hundred a year. *Put him in!* There is a poor time-keeper, he has a large family: it does not matter; a man can be had for less *in with him!* Here are the tens, the hundreds and the thousands that must do the work. *Put them in:* heap the fire; boil the cauldron; stir them up; never mind their cries. The hire of the laborers kept back may go up to heaven: it does not matter, the millions of gold are safe. The law of demand and supply is with us, who is he that would interfere? Who shall dare to prevent the grinding of the faces of the poor? Cotton-lords and great masters ought to have power to do what they like with the people; ought they not? Ah! but ye great men of the earth, there is a God, and that God has said He executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are

oppressed. An yet the sempstress in her garret and yet the tailor in his den, and yet the artisan in his crowded factory, and yet the servants who earn your wealth, who have to groan under your oppression, shall get the ear of God and He will visit you. 'Hear ye the rod.' It is for this the rod falleth on you.

"Mark, again, the sins of merchants. Was there ever an age when the merchants of England had more fallen from their integrity? The mass of them, I believe, are honest to the core; but I do not know who among them are so. We can trust none in these lines. Ye heap up your companies and delude your myriads; ye gather the money of fools; ye scatter it to the winds of heaven, and when the poor call upon you ye tell them it is gone; but where? O, England, thou wast once true, upright, honest; men could not rightly call thee then 'Perfidious Albion;' but now, O, Britain, alas! for thee! Unless thou dost recover thyself who can trust thee? God will visit the nation for this, and it shall be seen that this alone is one of the things which God would have us hear when we hear the rod.

"There are many of you that are poor. I saw you smile when I spoke to the rich. I will have at you also. If we are to humble ourselves this day as a nation, ye have cause also to humble. Ah, nay God, what multitudes there are of men who deserve but little of their employers, for they are eye-servers, men-pleasers, and do not with singleness of heart serve the Lord. Were men better workmen their masters would be better. There are hundreds of you that are here today who are the best hands in all the world to prop up walls when you ought to be busy at your own work — who, when your time is bought and paid for, steal it for something else. And how many there are in what are called the lower ranks — and God forgive the man that invented that word, for we are none of us lower than the other before the Judge of all the earth — how many are there that do not know what it is to look: up to God and say, 'Though he has made me a servant I will discharge my duty, and I will serve my Master, and serve my God with all my might.' Many are the sins of the poor. Humble yourselves with the rich; bow your heads and weep for your iniquities; for these things God doth visit us and ye should hear the rod.

"It is impossible for me today to enter into all the sins of illiberality, of deceit, of bigotry, of lasciviousness, of carnality, of pride, of covetousness, and of laziness, which infest this land. I have tried to indicate some of the chief, and I pray God humble us all for them.

“And now, ‘Hear ye the rod.’ O Church of God, the rod has fallen and *the church* ought to hear it. I am afraid that it is the Church that has been the greatest sinner. Do I mean by ‘the Church’ that established by law? No, I mean the Christian Church as a body. We, I believe have been remiss in our duty; for many and many a year pulpits never condescended to men of low estate. Our ministers were great and haughty; they understood the polish of rhetoric, they had all the grandeur of logic; to the people they were blind guides and dumb dogs, for the people knew not what they said, neither did they regard them. The Churches themselves slumbered; they wrapped themselves in a shroud of orthodoxy and they slept right on, and whilst Satan was devouring the world and taking his prey, the Church sat still and said, ‘Who is my neighbor?’ and did not arouse herself to serve her God. I do hope that we have already seen the beginning of a revival. The last year has seen more preaching than any year since the days of the Apostles. We are stirring in ragged schools and in various efforts for doing good but still the Church is only half awake; I fear she still slumbers. O Church of God! awake! awake! awake! for verily, the rod has fallen for thy sake. ‘Hear thou the rod, and him that hath appointed it!’”

The congregation, which listened with rapt attention, was greatly impressed by these solemn words, and for long after the fast day the discourse was in great demand, and even today it is often asked for.

The sermon, “Accidents not Punishments” (No. 4118), preached on September 8th, 1861, after the collision in the Clayton tunnel on the Brighton Railway, has already been mentioned as the discourse a copy of which Dr. Livingstone carried with him to the heart of the African Continent. In this C. H. Spurgeon refuted what had hitherto been a popular and very general theological idea, that all disasters were sent as a judgment for special and gross forms of sin.

“It has been most absurdly stated,” he declared, “that those who travel on the first day of the week and meet with an accident, ought to regard that accident as being a judgment from God upon them on account of their violating the Christian’s day of worship. It has been stated, even by godly ministers, that the late deplorable collision should be looked upon as an exceedingly wonderful and remarkable visitation of the wrath of God against those unhappy persons who happened to be in the Clayton tunnel. Now, I enter my solemn protest against such an inference as that, not in my own name, but in the name of Him who is the Christian’s Master and the

Christian's Teacher. I say of those who were crushed in that tunnel, Suppose ye that they were sinners above all the other sinners? 'I tell you, nay, but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.' Or, those who were killed last Monday, think ye, that they were sinners above all the sinners that were in London? 'I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repeat, ye shall all likewise perish.' Now, mark, I would not deny that there have been judgments of God upon particular persons for sin; sometimes, and I think but exceedingly rare, such things have occurred. Some of us have heard, in our experience, instances of men who have blasphemed God and defied Him to destroy them, who have suddenly fallen dead; and, in such cases, the punishment has so quickly followed the blasphemy that one could not help perceiving the hand of God in it. The man had wantonly asked for the judgment of God, his prayer was heard, and the judgment came. But in cases of accident such as that to which I refer and in cases of sudden and instant death, again I say, I enter my earnest protest against the foolish and ridiculous idea that those who thus perish are sinners above all the sinners who survive unharmed."

The preacher then went on to reason the matter out. "It is true," he said, "the wicked man sometimes falls dead in the street; but has not the minister fallen dead in the pulpit? It is true that a boat in which men were seeking their own pleasure on the Sunday has suddenly gone down; but is it not equally true that a ship, which contained none but godly men, who were bound upon an excursion to preach the Gospel, has gone down too? The visible providence of God has no respect of persons; and a storm may gather around the *John Williams* missionary trip, quite as well as around a vessel filled with riotous sinners. Why, do you not perceive that the providence of God has been, in fact, in its outward dealings, rather harder upon the good than upon the bad? For, did not Paul say, as he looked upon the miseries of the righteous in his day, 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable'? The path of righteousness has often conducted men to the rack, to the prison, to the gibbet, to the stake; while the road of sin has often led a man to empire, to dominion and to high esteem among his fellows. It is not true that in this world, God does, as a rule, and of necessity, punish men for sin and reward them for their good deeds; for, did not David say, 'I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree;' and did not this perplex the psalmist for a little season, until he went into the sanctuary of God, and then he understood their end? "Will you allow me to remark that the

supposition against which I am earnestly, contending, is *a very cruel and unkind one*? For if it were the case that all persons who thus meet with their death in an extraordinary and terrible manner were greater sinners than the rest, would it not be a crushing blow to bereaved survivors, and is it not ungenerous on our part to indulge the idea, unless we are compelled by unanswerable reasons to accept it as an awful truth? Now, I defy you to whisper it in the widow's ear. Go home to her and say, 'Your husband was a worse sinner than the rest of men, therefore he died.' You have not brutality enough for that. A little, unconscious infant, which had never sinned, though, doubtless, an inheritor of Adam's fall, is found crushed amidst the debris of the accident. Now think for a moment; what would be the infamous consequence of the supposition that those who perished were worse than others; you would have to make it out that this; unconscious infant was a worse sinner than many in the dens of infamy, whose lives are yet spared. Do you not perceive that the thing is radically false?"

It is not surprising that this sermon has been of help and comfort of thousands in distress, and it has always had a considerably increased sale at times when great public disasters have occurred.

The sermon, preached on the occasion of the death of the Prince Consort, from the text, "Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?" (No. 426), was another of the discourses which had an exceptionally large sale at the time it was published, and which has continued to be in great demand from time to time as occasions, similar to that which called it forth, have occurred. The line which the preacher took in connection with the sad calamity was that God had done it and done it with a design, and in this fact he found comfort and consolation for the bereaved relatives.

"If God hath done it," he said, "for ever be put away all questions about its being right. It must be right. If any would reply, we would answer them in the curt phrase of Paul, 'Nay, that O man, who art thou that repliest against God? 'But to take him away and to remove, him just in the hour of the nation's peril — can this be right? Brethren it must be. He has died at the best hour; the affliction has come at the most fitting season. It would have been wrong that it should have been otherwise it would neither have been wise nor kind that he should have been spared. And this I gather from the fact that God has taken him away; and, therefore, it must be wisest, best, kindest. Only say the same over all your losses. Though 'our dearest friend be' removed, be hushed, be dumb with silence and answer not,

because Thou didst it, even Thou O God, therefore we say, ‘Thy will be done.’ And this, too, shall be our best comfort. God hath done it. What! shall we weep for what God hath done? Shall we sorrow when the Master hath taken away what was his own? ‘The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.’ The gardener had a choice flower in his beds. One morning he missed it. He had tended it so carefully that he looked upon it with the affection of a father to a child, and he hastily ran through the garden and sought out one of the servants, for he thought surely an enemy had plucked it, and he said to him, ‘Who plucked that rose?’ And the servant said, ‘I saw the master walking through the garden early this morning when the sun was rising, and I saw him bear it away in his hand.’ Then the that tended the rose said, ‘It is well; let him be blessed; it was his own; for him I held it; for him I nursed it; and if he hath taken it, it is well.’ So be it with your hearts. Feel that it is for the best that you have lost your friend or that your best relation has departed. God has done it. Be ye filled with comfort; for what God hath done can never be a proper argument for tears.”

Another very notable sermon, not preached on any historic occasion, but circulating in its printed form to an enormous extent, is that already mentioned, “Supposing Him to be the Gardener.” The text was St. John 20:15, and the leading thought brought out by the preacher was that the Church of God is the garden and the Lord Jesus Christ the gardener. Of all C. H. Spurgeon’s discourses this is one of the most beautiful, both as to the matter and the language in which the thoughts are clothed.

“Supposing Him to be the gardener,” he said, “we have here THE KEY TO MANY WONDERS in the garden of His church. The first wonder is *that there should be a church at all in the world*; that there should be a garden blooming in the midst of this sterile waste. Upon a hard and flinty rock the Lord has made the Eden of His church to grow. How came it to be here — an oasis of life in a desert of death? How came faith in the midst of unbelief, and hope where all is servile fear, and love where hate abounds? ‘are of God, little children, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one.’ Whence this being ‘of God’ where all beside is fast shut up in the devil? How came there to be a people for God, separated and sanctified, and consecrated, and ordained to bring forth fruit unto His name? Assuredly it could not have been so at all if the doing of it had been left to man we understand its existence, ‘supposing Him to be the gardener,’ but nothing else can account for it. He can cause the fir tree to flourish instead of the

thorn, and the myrtle instead of the briar; but no one else can accomplish such a change. The garden in which I sat was made on the bare face of the rock, and almost all the earth of which its terraces were composed had been brought up there, from the shore below, by hard labor, and so upon the rock a soil had been created. It was not by its own nature that the garden was found in such a place; but by skill and labor it had been formed: even so the Church of God has had to be constructed by the Lord Jesus, who is the author as well as the perfecter of His garden. Painfully, with wounded hands, has He built each terrace, and fashioned each bed, and planted each plant. All the flowers have had to be watered with His bloody sweat, and watched by His tearful eyes: the nail-prints in His hands, and the wound in His side are the tokens of what it cost Him to make a new Paradise. He has given His life for the life of every plant that is in the garden, and not one of them had been there on any other theory than ‘supposing Him to be the Gardener.’”

After suggesting other wonders, all easily explained by “supposing Him to be the Gardener,” the preacher continued: “Let your imaginations run along with mine while I say that ‘supposing Him to be the Gardener,’ should be a SPUR TO MANY DUTIES. One of the duties of a Christian is joy. That is a blessed religion which among its precepts commands men to be happy. When joy becomes a duty, who would wish to neglect it? Surely it must help every little plant to drink in the sunlight when it is whispered among the flowers that Jesus is the gardener. ‘Oh,’ you say, ‘I am such a little plant; I do not grow well; I do not put forth so much leafage, nor are there so many flowers on me as on many round about me!’ It is quite right that you should think little of yourself: perhaps to droop your head is a part of your beauty many flowers had not been half so lovely if they had not practiced the art of hanging their heads. But ‘supposing Him to be the Gardener,’ then He is as much a gardener to you as He is to the most lordly palm in the whole domain. In the Mentone garden right before me grew the orange and the aloe, and others of the finer and more noticeable plants; but on a wall to my left grew common wallflowers and saxifrages, and tiny herbs such as we find on our own rocky places. Now, the gardener had cared for all of these, little as well as great; in fact, there were hundreds of specimens of the most insignificant growths all duly labeled and described. The smallest saxifrage could say, ‘He is my gardener just as surely as he is the gardener:’ of the Gloire de Dijon or Marechal Niel.’ Oh, feeble child of God, the Lord taketh care of you! Your heavenly Father

feedeth ravens, and guides the flight of sparrows: should He not much more care for you, oh ye of little faith? Oh, little plants, you will grow rightly enough. Perhaps you are growing downward just now rather than upward. Remember that there are plants of which we value the underground root much more than we do the baulm above ground. Perhaps it is not yours to grow very fast; you may be a slowgrowing shrub by nature, and you would not be healthy if you were to run to wood. Anyhow, be this your joy, you are in the garden of the Lord, and, ‘supposing Him to be the gardener,’ He will make the best of you. You cannot be in better hands.”

Finally, the preacher gave a warning to the careless. “In this great congregation many are to the Church what weeds are to a garden. They are not planted by God; they are not growing under His nurture, they are bringing forth no fruit to His glory. My dear friends, I have tried often to get at you, to impress you, but I cannot. Take heed; for one of these days, ‘supposing Him to be the gardener,’ He will reach you, and you shall know what that word meaneth, ‘Every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.’ Take heed to yourselves, I pray.

“Others among’ us are like the branches of the vine which bear no fruit. We have often spoken very sharply to these, speaking honest truth in unmistakable language, and vet we have not touched their consciences. Ah, but ‘supposing Him to be the gardener,’ He will fulfill that sentence: ‘Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away.’ He will get at you, if we cannot. Would God, ere this old year were quite dead, you would turn unto the Lord with full purpose of heart; so that instead of being a weed you might become a choice flower: that instead of a dry stick, you might be a sappy, fruit-bearing branch of the vine.”

This discourse has been issued in its pulpit series and also in various pamphlet forms.

The two sermons suggested by the loss of the *Princess Alice*, “Divine Interpositions,” and “An Anxious Inquiry for a Beloved Son” (Nos. 1432 and 1433), have had and still have a very great circulation although issued as a double number. But no sermon preached by Charles Haddon Spurgeon and published in the series of printed discourses, ever achieved such fame or attained such a great and continuous circulation as that which bore the title” *Baptismal Regeneration.*” It was delivered on Sunday morning, June 5th, 1864, and formed No. 573 of the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit. The

preacher himself had long been exercised about the matter with which he dealt, but on the memorable Sunday morning neither his “congregation,” nor the outside world had any idea of what a bombshell was to be thrown.

The text of the sermon was St. Mark 16:15,16, “And He said unto them, go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” After a few introductory words, the preacher reminded his hearers that the Apostles so wielded the sword of the Spirit as to put to flight all their foes. Never did they dream for a moment of adapting the Gospel to the tastes or prejudices of the people, but at once directly and boldly brought down with both hands the mighty sword upon the crown of opposing error. “This morning,” he continued, and his congregation began to realize that a statement of unusual import was about to come,” in the name of the Lord of Hosts, my Helper and Defence, I shall attempt to do the same; and if I should provoke some hostility — if I, through speaking what I believe to be the truth, lose the friendship of some and stir up the enmity of more, I cannot help it. The burden of the Lord is upon me and I must deliver my soul. I have been loth enough to undertake the work, but I am forced to it by an awful and overwhelming sense of solemn duty.”

The preacher then declared that the great and growing error to be contended with throughout England was one in direct opposition to his text, namely, the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, a doctrine which he maintained was plainly taught by the Established Church in its Prayer Book. “But,” he continued, “I hear many good people exclaim ‘there are many good clergymen in the Church who do not believe in baptismal regeneration.’ To this my answer is prompt, ‘Why, then, do they belong to a church which teaches that doctrine in the plainest terms?’ and he went on to speak in somewhat firm language of the attitude of the evangelical clergy towards this dogma, and what he considered that attitude involved.

Naturally, on the publication of this vigorously worded sermon, the whole evangelical party in the Church of England was up in arms. Replies and refutations were preached and printed, not by the score, but literally by hundreds, and no complete collection of the pamphlets issued seems to exist. C.H. Spurgeon himself possessed ten stout volumes of tracts and sermons on the subject. A selection which the writer has been able to examine forms a volume between three and four inches in thickness. Some replies were academic in character and others were abusive; one, at least,

was decorated with a colored diagram, and the majority seem to have vied with one another in appearing with “catchy” titles. A few of these chosen at random will give some idea of the varied character of the replies and counter replies. “An ‘Honest’ Evangelical Reading of the Prayer-Book. Doctrine on the Subject, being a pamphlet suggested by Mr. Spurgeon’s sermon;” “An Exposure of the Fallacies and Misrepresentations in Mr. Spurgeon’s Sermon;” “A Chart illustrative of the Doctrine of the Church of England on Baptism and the Divine Covenants, also an Explanatory Key and Notes, together with a lull reply to the misrepresentations of the Revelation C. H. Spurgeon;” “Regeneration and its Counterfeits;” “The False Regeneration;” “The Voice of the Church on Holy Baptism;” “The Popish Error of Baptismal Regeneration not the doctrine of the Church of England;” “The Corrector Corrected;” “What has Mr. Spurgeon Done? and By Whose Authority Has He Done It?;” “Spurgeon Right! and the Church of England Wrong! or, Believers’ Baptism versus Baby Baptism;” “The Great Gun is Sounding! Clergymen Beware, or, a few words showing that Mr. C. H. Spurgeon is in the Light and the Evangelical Clergy in the Dark;” “Who’s in Error? or, Baptists and Baptism;” “What is to be done with this Spurgeon? and, What Saith the Scriptures?;” “Great is Diana, or, Mother Church and the Babes;” “The Revelation C. H. Spurgeon Settled;” “An Artful Fox Unearthed and Trapped;” “The Lambeth Gospel, or, Every Man His Own Savior;” “Curious Twistings: or, the Contortions and Distortions of the Revelation in His Tract entitled, ‘Mr. Spurgeon shown to be a Teacher of Baptismal Regeneration, Clerical Logic Illustrated;” “The Veil Removed and Truth Displayed;” “Vindication a Letter to the Revelation C. H. Spurgeon;” “Who Ought to be Baptized?;” “Regeneration and De-generation: a Pill for the Parsons and a Spur for Spurgeon;” “On Which Side is the Dishonesty?;” “The Spurgeon-Antidote;” “What Is It All About?” “Weighed in the Balances: The Revelation C. H. Spurgeon Self-Condemned;” “The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon Settled;” “Regeneration not Salvation;” “Regeneration: The Use and Abuse of a Word;” “The Evil-Speaking and Ignorance of the Revelation C. H. Spurgeon;” “Clerical Shuffling or, the Acrobatic Feats of Mr. —;” “The Tables Turned. Mr. Spurgeon’s Ignorance Wisdom, and His Critic’s Wisdom Ignorance;” “Infant Baptism, Why Sneer At it?”

Some prominent men took part in the controversy, including Dean Goode, the Revelation Hugh Stowell, M.A., of Manchester, the Revelation Hugh Allen, D.D., and the Revelation Joseph Bardsley, M.A., on the Church of

England side; and Dr. Brock, of Bloomsbury Chapel, Dr. Landels, of Regent's Park Chapel, and Dr. Hayeroft, of Bristol, on the Baptist side. For months the pamphlets followed one another from the Press, and whether their circulations were large or small, the original sermon of Mr. Spurgeon had sold in a few weeks by the hundred thousand. "It was delivered," the preacher declared, "with the full expectation that the sale of the sermons would receive very serious injury; in fact, I mentioned to one of the publishers that I was about to destroy it at a single blow, but that the blow must be struck, cost what it might, for the burden of the Lord lay heavy upon me and I must deliver my soul. I deliberately counted the cost and reckoned upon the loss of many an ardent friend and helper, and I expected the assaults of clever and angry foes. I was not mistaken in other respects; but in the matter of the sermons I was altogether out of my reckoning, for they increased greatly in sale at once. That fact was not in any degree to me a test of my action being right or wrong; I should have felt as well content in heart as I am now as to the rightness of my course had the publication ceased in consequence, but still it was satisfactory to find that though speaking out might lose a man some friends, it secured him many others; and if it overturned his influence in one direction, it was fully compensated elsewhere."

The exigencies of space forbid a further detailed reference to special discourses, but twelve of the most notable of C. H. Spurgeon's sermons have been bound up in a shilling volume, entitled "Twelve Memorable Sermons Preached on Remarkable Occasions." This book, of course, does not include the Baptismal Regeneration discourse, nor any sermon of a controversial character."

CHAPTER 8

FURTHER INSTANCES OF BLESSING.

RIGHT up to the time of his death, C. H. Spurgeon used to hear almost weekly of cases of blessing, which had followed the reading of his printed sermons. All of these were cheering, but some were of an unique character, and clearly putting His seal upon the work in a very special manner. Here, for instance, is a curious instance which we find recorded. A woman in Scotland, who was determined as far as possible to have nothing to do with religion, threw her Bible and all the religious literature she could find in her house upon the fire. One pamphlet fell out of the flames, and the woman hastily threw it back. But it fell out a second time, and again the woman committed it to the flames. Half the pamphlet was consumed when the remainder slipped into the hearth again, and the woman, picking it up, exclaimed, "Surely the devil is in this tract, for it won't burn." Out of curiosity she glanced at the paper, found it was one of C.H. Spurgeon's sermons, read on, and was converted by its means.

Still more remarkable was another incident which the preacher related to his congregation at the Tabernacle. "At the close of one of our services," he said, "a poor woman, accompanied by two of her neighbors, came to my vestry in deep distress. Her husband had fled the country, and in her sorrow she had gone to the house of God, and something I said in the sermon made her think that I was personally familiar with her case. Of course I had really known nothing about her; I had made use of a general illustration which just fitted her particular case. She told me her story, and a very sad one it was. I said, 'There is nothing that we can do but kneel down and cry to the Lord for the immediate conversion of your husband.' We knelt down, and I prayed that the Lord would touch the heart of the deserter, convert his soul, and bring him back to his home. When we rose from our knees I said to the poor woman, 'Do not fret about the matter. I feel sure your husband will come home, and that he will yet become connected with our church.'

"She went away and I forgot all about her. Some months afterwards she reappeared with her neighbors and a man, whom she introduced to me as

her husband. He had indeed come back, and he had returned a converted man. On making enquiry and comparing notes, we found that the very day on which we had prayed for his conversion, he, being at that time on board a ship far away on the sea, stumbled most unexpectedly upon a stray copy of one of my sermons. He read it; the truth went to his heart; he repented and sought the Lord and as soon as possible he came back to his wife and to his daily calling. He was admitted as a member at the Tabernacle, and his wife, who up to that time had not joined the church, was also received into fellowship with us,

“That woman,” added the preacher, “does not doubt the power of prayer. All the infidels in the world could not shake her conviction that there is a God that heareth and answereth the supplications of His people. I should be the most irrational creature in the world if, with a life every day of which is full of experiences so remarkable, I entertained the slightest doubt on the subject. I do not regard it as miraculous; it is part and parcel of the established order of the universe that the shadow of a coming event should fall in advance upon some believing soul in the shape of prayer for its realization. The prayer of faith is a Divine decree commencing its operation.”

In the very same sermon that the above incident was narrated, C. H. Spurgeon told of another case of conversion which had occurred it few days before the delivery of the discourse.

“About a fortnight ago,” he said, “there stood in Cheapside a young man reading one of my sermons which had attracted his attention. As he was reading it he came across this passage:

If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ you are saved now. But I want you to project your faith further and to believe in Jesus Christ for the whole of your life; for if you do so, you shall not only be saved now, but you shall infallibly be saved for ever.’ Then followed the text, ‘I give unto them eternal life,’ and this comment upon it: — ‘Now, eternal life cannot come to an end. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” Everlasting life cannot come to an end; it is a thing that lasts forever. Believe for everlasting life and you have it; you are saved forever.’ The young man said, ‘Standing there, I did believe just as I was told. I trusted Christ and I believed then that in Him I had everlasting life. The next minute I felt, “Oh, what a glorious thing this is! How I love Christ who has done this great thing for me! What is there that I can do to serve Him? What sin is there

that I would not give up?" Then,' he added, ' I said to myself as I walked on, "Why, I am saved! I am sure I am, because now I love Christ; now I want to give up sin, and now I want to serve Him."' And was not that," continued C. H. Spurgeon, "a sure proof of his being saved, because he saw the greatness of Divine love to him, and this made him grateful; and that gratitude turned him right round and made a new man of him?"

Here is another instance of blessing told in a letter to the preacher from the secretary of a country branch of the Young Men's Christian Association:

—

"Dear Sir, —I met with a young man a few days ago, whose case will interest you as you have had much to do with guiding him to his present position. W. T — was converted seven years ago. He was manager of a large brewery. As he was not happy, he commenced to read your sermons week by week. These made him more wretched, because they showed him that he had not made a full surrender to the Lord, and he felt that he could not continue in his business and serve the Savior fully. The time came when he saw that one or the other must go, and he told his uncle, who is the principle partner in the firm, that he must leave, giving his reasons for so doing. His father and uncle tried to persuade him not to be so foolish as to throw away what they considered his only chance in life; but his answer was, 'I must throw away this or Christ: the one I cannot, the business I must.' His uncle then offered to give him as many shares in the firm as he liked to name, but still his answer was, 'No, I must wash my hands of the trade,' and he left, not knowing where he would go or what he would do, but confident that the Lord who had given him grace to take this stand would help him to realize his one desire to please his Lord and Master. The way was opened for him to enter the City Mission, where he has been working for the last eighteen months with much success. I asked if he had told you the benefit your sermons had been to him, and, finding that he had not done so, suggested that he should write, knowing that you are encouraged by every fresh case of blessing."

From Quebec came a letter: "Since reading a sermon delivered by you a long time ago, on the text, ' Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (No. 293), in which you set forth the great sin of unbelief, I have felt a strong desire to write to strengthen your hands by letting you know that your labor is not in vain, as I for one can testify to the great good derived from that and other sermons of yours. My father, before we

left Scotland seven years ago, always got your sermons, as well as your *Sword and Trowel*, and having derived great benefit from them, he carefully put them away. About a year ago, my brother sent me a few of those old sermons, which I read, and — glory be to God! — He opened my eyes while I was reading the sermon I have mentioned, and I found peace in believing.”

An Australian lady wrote: “I have often felt inclined to write to you. Twelve years ago I lost a darling boy; everything seemed dark and nothing brought me any comfort. The Word of God, which had been my stay through many previous trials, was all darkness to me. A friend brought me one of your sermons and asked me to allow her to read it. At first I refused, but at last I consented. I forget the title, but it was to the effect that everything is ordered by God, and that there is no such thing as chance. I felt all the time my friend was reading almost afraid even to breathe; I could only say, ‘Go on, go on!’ When she had finished it, I leapt from my couch and said, ‘All is right; thank God, my dark mind is all light again!’ I have had similar sorrows since and many other trials, but I could from my heart say to the Lord, ‘Thy will be done; it is all right.’ At that time my husband ordered your sermons monthly, and we still continue to have them. Every Sunday evening we read one of them aloud for all to hear, and afterwards I send them into the bush. My dear sir, go on and preach what you feel; it has often been a great comfort to us that you seemed to feel just as we felt.”

Two instances may be given from America. Wrote a minister in Tennessee: “Nine years ago I was a wild young man, but I was converted through reading one of Mr. Spurgeon’s sermons, and I am now the Pastor of a large and influential church. The Lord’s name be magnified!” The other case was that of a slanderer in California converted through reading the sermons of the preacher whom he formerly maligned. “I consider it but justice to yourself,” he wrote, “and my duty as one who is striving to follow the example set by our Lord and Master to seek Your pardon for the manner in which I have spoken and thought of you in former years. Too much prejudiced to hear and see for myself, although the opportunity lay daily within my reach, I accepted and repeated all I heard to your reproach, not remembering the injunction of the Holy Scriptures to ‘prove all things.’ And you have had a noble revenge, for it was your words, as read by me in your published sermons, that have shown me to myself as I really was, and have been the means through the grace of God of

awakening a desire within me to seek to lead a pure and holy life; and not only this, but they have likewise awakened a great desire in me to be the means, God willing, of bringing others to see the danger of their sinful state, and to lead them also to the Savior.”

A remarkable instance of the work performed by the sermons in New Zealand is worth recording. The three grown up sons — all unconverted — of Christian parents left England for that colony, and after their departure, the father and mother conferred as to what could be done for the spiritual welfare of their sons. They decided to send copies of C. H. Spurgeon’s sermons to the young colonists and to pray that these silent messengers might be used by God to the salvation of their souls. Sure enough God owned the effort and all three young men were converted through reading the discourses.

It was not always by letter or in a personal interview that the preacher heard of such cases. Sometimes he would see in a newspaper an announcement of blessing following the reading of the printed sermons. An instance of this occurred in a Baptist paper, published in America. Under the heading, “For Brother Spurgeon’s Eye,” the following paragraph appeared: “At our prayer-meeting the other Sunday evening, a brother, to show the different ways there are of doing good, mentioned an incident that occurred on board a steamer in which some time before the was a passenger up the Pacific Coast to Oregon. It was Sunday; and a passenger, who had with him a volume of Spurgeon’s sermons, went round asking one and another to read one of them aloud. The passengers declined, till he came to our brother, who consented to act as reader. Quite a company gathered round him, which gradually increased as he went on with the discourse, until, looking up, after a little time, he saw that, not only the passengers but all the crew, who could possibly be at liberty, were among his audience and that all were very attentive.

“The informal service was soon over. But not so the effect of the sermon; for some months after, being in San Francisco, he was abruptly saluted in the street one day by a stranger — a sailor — who seemed overjoyed at meeting him. ‘How do you do?’ said he. ‘Don’t you know me? Why I heard you preach!’ ‘I am not a preacher, my friend; so you must have made a mistake.’ ‘Oh, no! I have not; I heard you preach. Don’t you remember the steamer that was going to Oregon?’ ‘Oh, yes!’ replied the gentleman, ‘I recollect, and I read one of Mr. Spurgeon’s sermons.’ ‘Well,’ said the

sailor, ‘I never forgot that sermon; it made me feel that I was a sinner and I have found Christ and I am so glad to see you again.’”

A friend of C. H. Spurgeon’s, seeing this paragraph, wrote to him and told of another incident that occurred in connection with the sermons on board ship.

“One of the most earnest and devoted of the Christian brotherhood at *Dover*,” he said, “had been ‘before the mast,’ in a small schooner, the master of which, a godly man, going for a cruise of some months, and being anxious about the spiritual welfare of his crew, resolved to take with him some Bibles, in order that none on board should be without at least the letter of the Word. He, however, from some cause or other (probably, forgetfulness), sailed without the Bibles; but had to put back to harbor through stress of weather. Again he essayed to go to sea, but with a similar result. As he lay in port, weather-bound, it flashed across his mind that it might be the hand of the Lord which had detained his vessel; and, believing it to be so, he added to his freight some of the incorruptible seed of the Word in the form of Bibles, for his crew; and with them some of your own sermons, one of which latter he read to the assembled ship’s company each Lord’s-day morning.

“Our brother informed me that his spiritual birth was the fruit of one of these sermons read by the illiterate captain, who had adopted this simple method of echoing our exposition of God’s truth. The sermon read upon the momentous morning in question was from the text, ‘Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned and clone this evil in Thy sight’ (No. 86). The arrow guided by the Holy Spirit, went home to the hearer’s heart, and David’s conviction and confession were repeated in the case of our brother, who gratefully recognizes the sovereign grace of the Lord in His repeated interference with man’s purpose, and the saving efficacy of God’s truth in the unpretending service on the schooner’s deck.”

These that have been quoted are but a few typical instances of the work wrought by the Holy Spirit of God through the sermons, but they show that the blessing was confined to no particular class, sinners having been saved, backsliders reclaimed, and saints comforted through reading or hearing the printed discourses.

CHAPTER 9

SINCE C. H. SPURGEON'S DEATH.

THE most remarkable fact of all in connection with the publication of C. H. Spurgeon's sermons is their sustained popularity since his death. Sermons, either separately or in volumes, are not looked upon as the most saleable of literature, and a visit to the second-hand bookstalls of any large town will show what a large proportion of the books upon the penny and two-penny barrows are homiletical in character. Yet, even now, more than a dozen years after the preacher has passed away, his sermons come out regularly every week, have an enormous sale, and are looked forward to eagerly by men and women in all parts of the English-speaking world. Not only do the new sermons still sell in large quantities, but there is a constant demand for the older discourses, and from time to time, comes an order from some part of Great Britain or from abroad for a complete set of the volumes to be forwarded to the writer. Applications are received from every continent and almost every country from persons of all denominations, from Bishops and other dignitaries of the Established Church, from high church and low church clergymen, from Roman Catholics and Plymouth Brethren, from noblemen and officers of the army and navy, from lawyers and doctors, from merchants and tradesmen, from artisans and laborers, from men and women, old and young, and even from children.

I have had the opportunity of looking through a memorandum book which the publishers keep for recording an interesting incident that may arise in connection with the sale of the sermons, and a few of the brief records may be selected at random and given in these pages.

A lady, about to make a tour in Scotland, purchased a considerable number of the sermons to give away during her holiday. She declared that she found they were always accepted by those to whom she offered them.

A gentleman, who had traveled much, was purchasing some sermons, when he mentioned that he had found them in all parts of the world. He had seen them in Egypt and Syria, and quite recently at the Blue Mountains in Jamaica.

A clergyman stated that he was dining with the Bishop of Huron, who, in reply to the questions of three young men at table, who asked his lordship what were the most useful books to read, said "Saturate yourself with Spurgeon, but do not forget Spurgeon's teacher, the Holy Spirit."

A minister mentioned that he was dining with two officers at an outlying station in the hills of India. One of these, in the absence of the chaplain, had to conduct a service in the church, and he used to read one of C. H. Spurgeon's sermons.

Another minister said that Dean Vaughan used often to be seen reading Spurgeon's sermons in the train as he traveled.

A man who is stone deaf visits the publishing office nearly every week for a sermon. He often remarks, "I am a poor man who cannot hear the Gospel preached, but Spurgeon is my pastor. The sermons are next to the Bible, my greatest comfort."

A missionary to seamen at Malta, purchasing a number of sermons, said he found them most useful. Quite recently, one given to a sailor had been the means of the conversion of himself and his wife. Even Roman Catholics and people who will not look at other Protestant religious literature, will read Spurgeon's sermons.

A lady missionary told the publishers that she found the sermons most useful to her in her work, and she had been in the habit of ordering them to be sent out to the Holy Land to her.

A customer bought several sermons, and in the course of conversation said, "I attend Church and the sermons delivered there are so wretched that I find it quite impossible to follow them. I therefore take a Spurgeon's sermon with me, place it in my prayer-book and read it while the clergyman is delivering his discourse.

These instances; are all culled from the entries for the past three years. Almost every morning mail brings letters from the four quarters of the globe. On one particular day recently there were orders from several places in the United States, from Chili, Canada, New Zealand, India and the Gold Coast.

A reference was made above to the accumulation of sermon-volumes on the second-hand bookstalls, and almost any published discourses may be

picked up there at some time or other for a penny or twopence. But there is one exception. You never find Spurgeon's sermons on the barrows. The present writer is a constant visitor to the London stalls, and a persistent book-buyer, but he has never once in twenty years seen a volume of the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit for sale, second-hand, on a barrow.

To quote all the recent opinions of prominent men upon C. H. Spurgeon's discourses would occupy a vast deal of space, but a selection may be given as examples, all but the first two having been occasioned by the recent publication of the fiftieth volume.

The present Bishop of Durham, Dr. Handley Moule, in his volume, "To Sly Younger Brethren," says, "For average individuals. I know no style more perfectly answering my idea than that of Mr. Spurgeon in his printed sermons of recent years; I happen to know that Mr. Spurgeon has always taken great and systematic pains with his English. His sentences, never thin or weak in matter, are always straight." Dr. Robertson Nicoll, addressing the delegates at the session of the Baptist Union, said: "Read, above all things your Bible; and whatever books you add to your Bible, add some volumes of your great apostle Charles Spurgeon, — not to preach out of them, for you might almost as well talk of plagiarizing from the Epistle to the Romans as of plagiarizing from Spurgeon. Read him because he is the unrivalled interpreter of the mysteries of the

New Covenant. I take him up constantly and find myself repeating Browning's words, —

*"A turn and we stand in the heart of things:
The woods are round us heaped and dim."*

The present Primate of All England, who, by the way, pronounced the benediction at the funeral of C. H. Spurgeon, wrote through his chaplain that he had found "both profit and interest in reading such volumes of sermons."

Archdeacon Sinclair said, "There is much in Mr. Spurgeon's teaching that will do everybody good. It is specially suitable to the vast God-fearing mass of the people who hold simply to the Puritan view of the verbal inspiration of Scripture. There is no preacher whose influence is to be compared with that of Mr. Spurgeon, through the almost illimitable circulation of the printed sermons."

“I have read carefully,” wrote Dean Lefroy, “the sermon number ‘God hath spoken.’ There is not a sentence in the discourse I would omit or revise. The utterance is true; experimental and worthy of all acceptance. Such sermons must do immeasurable good, especially in districts where the Gospel of the Grace is marred by superstition or by skepticism. May Goct accompany the 50th volume.”

This is Prebendary Webb Peploe’s opinion: “Mr. Spurgeon’s sermons are outside the inspired volume of God’s Word, I should say, an absolutely unique production. No man ever preached so many with such variation of style and thought, and yet always bringing his hearers (and readers) to the one Central Personality for whom he lived and labored, viz., Jesus Christ our Lord. This I have ever found, when reading Mr. Spurgeon’s sermons, to be the key-thought or central idea of everything that he produced. The man lived and labored as an exhibitor of Christ Jesus. To him the Gospel meant a Person, that Person, God manifest in the flesh. This, ‘the mystery of Godliness,’ was with him the explanation of the fertility and power of his productions and the key to all his marvelous success. All who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth must be thankful for what Mr. Spurgeon was permitted to do as a messenger of the Lord of Hosts, and though there may be points in which members of ether denominations could not, of course, see eve to eye with the great preacher of the nineteenth century, yet no one can honor and worship the blessed Savior of mankind without thanking God for having raised up in our day such a wonderful preacher as C. H. Spurgeon.”

“It is my humble judgment,” says Dr. John Watson (Ian Maclaren), and I rejoice to express it, that Mr. Spurgeon was God’s chief preacher to the English-speaking race of our day, and I rejoice also to know that there are so many sermons of his yet to be published. For every sermon I have ever read of Mr. Spurgeon’s, and I have read many from boyhood unto this day, has been charged with the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Dr. J. H. Jowett considers “the widespread distribution of these sermons as an invaluable ministry in the cause of Christ.” “I have for many years,” he says, “sought and found nutriment for my own pulpit in his marvelous expositions.”

“To my mind,” writes the Rev. Dinsdale T. Young, “Spurgeon is the greatest of all preachers the world has known during the last century, if not during any century. None can measure the good those matchless discourses

have accomplished and will accomplish. Spurgeon's Gospel was never needed more than it is today."

Dr. Pearson McAdam Muir, Minister of Glasgow Cathedral, declares, "It is needless to commend sermons which have had a circulation altogether unparalleled. But I can bear witness that they exercise a profound influence on persons with whom I am acquainted, and that they are waited for, week by week, by some as eagerly as the most sensational periodicals are waited for by others."

"You may well print the Jubilee number of Mr. Spurgeon's sermons in gold! Gold befits gold!" says the Revelation F. B. Meyer. "I can never tell my indebtedness to them. As I read them week by week in my young manhood, they gave me a grip of the Gospel that I can never lose, and gave an ideal of its presentation in nervous, transparent and forcible language which has colored my entire ministry. It is marvelous to notice, also, that the last volume, just published, seems to lack nothing in comparison with those that have gone before. What a blessed ministry this has been to myriads!"

"I know nothing like his sermons for lasting interest," is the opinion of the Revelation Archibald Brown. "As a boy I was charmed with his preaching, though I knew nothing of the things of God. As a student and preacher of the Word of God for fifty years, I prize his teaching more than ever. There is a perpetual freshness about all his utterances. Thank God he lives and preaches today as much as ever."

The Revelation Marshall Hartley is equally emphatic as to their value. "I have for many years," he says, "revelled in Mr. Spurgeon's writing's, and owe much to his fervent evangelism, racy wit and deep spirituality as therein expressed."

"The Christian Church," writes the Rev. J. Wilson, "might well say that one of the 'miracles' of the 19th century has been the circulation of Spurgeon's sermons, and I am believing that it will be the miracle of the 20th century. They ought to be scattered throughout the world like autumn leaves."

"The publication of Mr. Spurgeon's sermons for fifty years," says the Revelation J. Morgan Gibbon, "seems to me to illustrate in a striking manner the inexhaustible fullness of the Bible, Mr. Spurgeon's own versatility, and the soundness of the popular taste."

Pastor W. Cuff declares that “for forty years out of the fifty, I have been a close reader and student of Mr. Spurgeon’s sermons, and today they are as fresh as a frosty morning to my heart and mind. They appeal to me and help me as no other sermons ever did, or do now. I still turn to them with mental hunger and I am never disappointed. If I ask for bread they never give me a stone. If I ask for water they never offer me mud.”

“The sermons are models of a type of preaching we need to reach the people of our own day.” So writes the Rev. John F. Wakerley. “They are saturated with Gospel teaching put in homely and withal attractive garb, and never failing by the Spirit’s power, ‘to wound and heal,’ to ‘kill and make alive.’ How my heart thanks God for the ministry of the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, by which many another ministry has been enriched! This great modern Puritan could afford from his treasury to throw off at random material that would have been a wealthy possession for many an ordinary man.”

Lord Kinnaird expresses his pleasure at knowing that for years to come the sermons will be issued weekly. “I know from personal experience,” he says, “God has blessed Mr. Spurgeon’s sermons and they have reached and helped many saints and sinners; and in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland they have been and are valued.”

Many other prominent ministers and laymen write in the same strain. The Revelation R. J. Campbell says, the more of Mr. Spurgeon’s sermons that are published, “the better for the world,” and Dr. Horton expresses his intense appreciation of the discourses and for Mr. Spurgeon’s splendid work. But it is impossible to repeat all the opinions that have been given of the value of the printed sermons. They come from men of widely different schools, and of almost all denominations, and the Press — religious and secular — is equally emphatic in its praise. “I never heard him, but I know some of his sermons;” writes Viator in *The Church Times*, “the discourse on the words, *And Kissed Him*, from the parable of the Prodigal, is one of the most magnificent pieces of reported oratory that I ever read.”

Similarly, the *Low Church Rock* says of the latest volume of sermons, “It is truly refreshing to turn from the emasculated discourses (by courtesy sermons) of the Higher Critics or the second-hand science dished up in some pulpit utterances in the place of revealed truth, to such sterling gold of the Gospel as we find here, where the old, old story of the cross is emphatically told with charming freshness and unflinching truth.”

Shortly after C. H. Spurgeon's death the Spurgeon Memorial Sermon Society was started, having for its object the systematic lending of copies of the discourses free of charge, and in the years went by the society greatly increased, and it now operates in all parts of the world. It was for this organization, by the generosity of a wealthy gentleman, that the largest order ever given for any sermons, was received by Messrs. Passmore and Alabaster. The order was for a million copies, and these were duly delivered and circulated by the society. A quarter of a million sermons change hands every week under the auspices of this institution.

The fiftieth volume has now been published, and already nearly 2,950 discourses have appeared. These are upon texts from every book in the Bible save the second Epistle of St. John, and it may be interesting to give the list of books with the number of sermons from each: Genesis, 80; Exodus, 51; Leviticus, 15; Numbers, 25; Deuteronomy, 40; Joshua, 12; Judges, 15; Ruth, 6; 1 Samuel, 303; 2 Samuel, 273; 1 Kings, 25; 2 Kings, 23; 1 Chronicles, 12; 2 Chronicles, 21; Ezra, 2; Nehemiah, 93; Esther, 2; Job, 78; Psalms, 389; Proverbs, 36; Ecclesiastes, 8; Song of Solomon, 58; Isaiah, 233; Jeremiah, 90; Lamentations, 10; Ezekiel, 47; Daniel, 203; Hosea, 45; Joel, 5; Amos, 11; Obadiah, 1; Jonah, 9; Micah, 14; Nahum, 4; Habbakuk, 8; Zephaniah, 4; Haggai, 2; Zechariah, 30; Malachi, 10; Matthew, 211; Mark, 78; Luke, 213; John, 274; Acts, 84; Romans 128; 1 Corinthians, 72; 2 Corinthians, 50; Galatians, 38; Ephesians, 64; Philippians, 34; Colossians, 27; 1 Thessalonians, 13; 2 Thessalonians, 9; 1 Timothy, 17; 2 Timothy, 20; Titus, 7; Philemon, 10; Hebrews 127; James, 20; 1 Peter, 38; 2 Peter, 12; 1 John, 50; 3 John, 1; Jude, 10, Revelation, 71. The actual number of copies of the sermons issued from the beginning is not known. So vast is it that all count has been lost, but it is estimated that about a hundred and fifty millions have been disposed of in this form. Add to these the immense number issued abroad in various languages, and those that have been printed in newspapers, and probably more than three hundred millions of Spurgeon's sermons have gone out on their evangelistic mission. The human mind quite fails to grasp what these numbers mean. Take the regular weekly sermons only. If all that have been issued were to be placed side by side they would stretch a distance of 13,889 miles, or more than half way round the globe. If the pages were torn out and placed end to end they would reach nearly from the earth to the moon. And figures of this kind might be multiplied without limit. There has never been anything like it in the history of printing. The Scriptures

have circulated enormously, but nothing to compare with Spurgeon's sermons, and it is pretty safe to say there never will be another publication that can be called a rival. As to the future, the publishers have enough unpublished sermons to last for some years yet. Those that are appearing now are not quite so long as the older ones, as they were delivered not on Sundays but on Thursday evenings. But this is no disadvantage, as it enables the publishers to give each week in addition to the sermon, the reading and exposition which preceded it. In conclusion it must be stated that the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit by no means exhausts the list of Spurgeon's published sermons, for there are many scattered about in odd volumes and magazines, which have never been embraced in the great series.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was indeed a wonderful man, but of all the wonders connected with his life and work, none can for originality and vastness, compare with the circulation of his sermons. In fact, he raised printed sermons to a place they had never hitherto occupied in the great world of books, and the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit will always form a "body of divinity" such as is not to be found anywhere else in the world. As Dr. Robertson Nicoll wrote, in 1898: "The continued life and power of his printed sermons show that his oratory, noble as it was, was not the first thing. Our firm belief is that these sermons will continue to be studied with growing interest and wonder, that they will ultimately be accepted as incomparably the greatest contribution to the literature of experimental Christianity that has been made in this century, and that their message will go on transforming and quickening lives after all other sermons of the period are forgotten," and, still more recently: "The sermons preached fifty years ago are a living message today, and ones dares to prophesy, will not be out of date when this twentieth century is drawing to its close."

CHAPTER 10

“DINNA FORGET SPURGEON.”

The following interesting reminiscence, written by Dr. John Watson (Ian Maclaren) was felt to be so picturesque that permission was obtained to re-publish it in this volume.^{F1}

HIS varied charge was given to the good man on the morning of market day as he brought the mare out from the stable, as he harnessed her into the dogcart, as he packed the butter basket below the seat, as he wrestled into his top coat, worn for ceremony's sake, and as he made the start — line upon line and precept upon precept as he was able to receive it; but the conclusion of the matter and its; crown was ever the same, “Dinna forget Spurgeon.”

“There's twal pund o' buner for the grocer, the best ever left this dairy, and he maun gie a shillin', or it's the laist Andra Davie 'ill get frae me; but begin by askin' fourteenpence, else it's eleven ye'll bring back. He's a lad, is Andra, an' terrible grippy.

“For ony sake tak' care o' the eggs, and mind they're no turnips ye're handlin' — it's a fair temptin' o' Providence to see the basket in yir hands — ninepence a dozen, mind, and tell him they're new laid an' no frae Ireland ! there's a handfu' o' flowers for the wife, and a bit o' honey for their sick laddie, but sa naethin' o' that till the bargain's made.

“The tea and sugar a've markit on a bit paper, for it's nae use bringin' a bag' o' grass-seed, as ye did fower weeks ago; an' there's ae thing mair I nicht mention, for ony sake dinna pit the paraffin oil in the same basket wi' the loaf sugar; they may fit fine, as ye said, but otherwise they're no gude neeburs. And, John, dinna forget Spurgeon.”

Again and again during the day, and in the midst of many practical operations, the good wife predicted to her handmaidens what would happen, and told them, as she had done weekly, that she had no hope.

“It’s maist awfu’ hoo the maister ‘ill gae wanderin’ and dodderin’ thro’ the market a’ day, pricing cattle he’s no gaein’ tae buy, an’ arguin’ aboot the rent o’ farms he’s no gaein’ to tak’, an’ never gie a thocht tae the errands till the laist meenut.

“He may bring hame some oil,” she would continue, gloomily, as if that were the one necessity of life to which a male person might be expected to give attention; “but ye needna expect ony tea next week” — as if there was not a week’s stock in the house — “and ye may tak’ ma word for it there ‘ill be nae Spurgeon’s sermon for Sabbath.”

As the provident woman had written every requirement — except the oil, which was obtained at the ironmonger’s, and the Spurgeon, which was sold at the draper’s — on a sheet of paper, and pinned it on the topmost cabbage leaf which covered the butter, the risk was not great; but that week the discriminating prophecy of the good man’s capabilities seemed to be justified, for the oil was there, but Spurgeon could not be found. It was not in the bottom of the dogcart, nor below the cushion, nor attached to a piece of saddlery, nor even in the good man’s trouser-pockets — all familiar resting-places — and when it was at last extricated from the inner pocket, of his top coat — a garment with which he had no intimate acquaintance — he received no credit, for it was pointed out with force that to have purchased the sermon and then to have mislaid it was worse than forgetting it altogether.

“The Salvation of Manasseh,” read the good wife; “it would have been a fine like business to have missed that, a’ll warrant this ‘ill be ane o’ his sappiest, but they’re a’ gude”: and then Manasseh was put in a prominent and honorable place, behind the basket of wax flowers in the best parlor till Sabbath.

It was the good custom in that kindly home to ask the “lads” from the bothle into the kitchen on the Sabbath evening, who came in their best clothes and in much confusion, sitting on the edge of chairs and refusing to speak on any consideration. They made an admirable meal, however, and were understood to express gratitude by an attempt at “gude nicht,” while the foreman stated often with the weight of his authority that they were both “extraordinar’ lifted” by the tea and “awfu’ ta’en up” with the sermon. For after tea the “maister” came “but,” and having seen that every person had a Bible, he gave out a Psalm, which was sung usually either to Coleshill or Martyrdom — the musical taste of the household being limited

and conservative to a degree. The good man then read the chapter mentioned on the face of the sermon, and remarked by way of friendly introduction:

“Noo we ‘ill see what Mr. Spurgeon has to say the nicht.” Perhaps the glamor of the past is on me, perhaps a lad was but a poor judge, but it seemed to me good reading — slow, well pronounced, reverent, charged with tenderness and pathos. No one slept or moved and the firelight falling on the serious faces of the stalwart men, and the shining of the lamp on the good gray heads, as the gospel came, sentence by sentence, to every heart, is a sacred memory and I count that Mr. Spurgeon would have been mightily pleased to have been in such meetings of homely folk.

It was harvest-time however, when Manasseh was read, and there being extra men with us, our little gathering was held in the loft, where they store the corn which is to be threshed, in he mill. It was full of wheat in heavy, rich, ripe, golden sheaves, save a wide space in front of the machinery, and the congregation seated themselves in a semi-circle on the sheaves. The door through which the corn is forked into the loft was open and, with a skylight in the low dusty roof, gave us, that fine August evening, all the light we needed. Through that wide window we could look out on some stacks already safely built, and on fields, stretching for miles, of grain cut and ready for the gathering and, beyond, to woods and sloping hills towards which the sun was westering fast. That evening, I remember, we sang

“I to the hills will lift mine eyes,”

and sang it to French, and it was laid on me as an honor to read “Manasseh.” Whether the sermon is called by this name I do not know, and whether it be one of the greatest of Mr. Spurgeon’s I do not know, nor have I a copy of it; but it was mighty unto salvation in that loft, and I make no doubt that good grain was garnered unto eternity. There is a passage in it when, after the mercy of God has rested on this chief sinner, an angel flies through the length and breadth of Heaven, crying, “Manasseh is saved, Manasseh is saved.” Up to that point the lad read, and further he did not read. You know, because you have been told, how insensible and careless is a schoolboy, how destitute of all sentiment and emotion... and therefore I do not ask you to believe me. You know how dull and stupid is a plowman, because you have been told... and therefore I do not ask you to believe me.

It was the light which got into the lad's eyes, and the dust which choked his voice, and it must have been for the same reasons that a plowman passed the back of his hand across his eyes.

"Ye 'ill be fired noo," said the good man; "let me feenish the sermon," but the sermon is not yet finished, and never shall be for it has been unto life everlasting.

Who of all preachers you can mention of our day could have held such companies save Spurgeon? What is to take their place, when the last of those welt-known sermons disappears from village shops and cottage shelves? Is there any other gospel which will ever be so understood of the people, or so move human hearts as that which Spurgeon preached in the best words of our own tongue? The good man and his wife have entered into rest long ago, and of all that company I know not one now; but I see them as I write, against that setting of gold, and I hear the angel's voice, "Manasseh is saved," and for that evening and others very sacred to my heart I cannot forget Spurgeon.

“SUPPOSING HIM TO BE THE GARDENER.”

NO. 1699

DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING,
DECEMBER 31ST, 1882, BY

C. H. SPURGEON.

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Supposing him to be the gardener.” — John 20:15.

I WAS sitting about a fortnight ago in a very lovely garden, in the midst of all kinds of flowers which were blooming in delightful abundance all around. Screening myself from the heat of the sun under the overhanging boughs of an olive, I cast my eyes upon palms and bananas, roses and camellias, oranges and aloes, lavender and heliotrope. The garden was full of color and beauty, perfume and fruitfulness. Surely the gardener, whoever he might be, who had framed, and fashioned, and kept in order that lovely spot, deserved great commendation. So I thought, and then it came to me to meditate upon the church of God as a garden, and to suppose the Lord Jesus to be the gardener, and then to think of what would most assuredly happen if it were so. “Supposing him to be the gardener,” my mind conceived of a paradise where all sweet things flourish and all evil things are rooted up. If an ordinary worker had produced such beauty as I then saw and enjoyed on earth, what beauty and glory must surely be brought forth “supposing him to be the gardener!” You know the “him” to whom we refer, the ever-blessed Son of God, whom Mary Magdalene in our text mistook for the gardener. We will for once follow a saint in her mistaken track; and yet we shall find ourselves going in a right way. She was mistaken when she fell into “supposing him to be the gardener;” but if we are under his Spirit teaching we shall not make a

mistake if now we indulge ourselves in a quiet meditation upon our ever-blessed Lord, “supposing him to be the gardener.”

It is not an unnatural supposition, surely; for if we may truly sing —

*“We are a garden walled around,
Chosen and made peculiar ground,”*

that enclosure needs a gardener. Are we not all the plants of his right hand planting? Do, we not all need watering and tending by his constant and gracious care? He says, “I am the true vine: my Father is the husbandman,” and that is one view of it; but we may also sing, “My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest wine” — that is to say, he acted as gardener to it. Thus has Isaiah taught us to sing a song of the Well-beloved touching his vineyard We read of our Lord just now under these terms — “Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice.” To what purpose does he dwell in the vineyards but that he may see how the vines flourish and care for all the plants? The image, I say, is so far from being, unnatural that it is most pregnant with suggestions and full of useful teaching. We are not going against the harmonies of nature when we are “supposing him to be the gardener.”

Neither is the figure unscriptural; for in one of his own parables our Lord makes himself to be the dresser of the vineyard. We read just now that parable so full of warning. When the “certain man” came in and saw the fig’ tree that it brought forth no fruit, he said unto the dresser of his vineyard, “Cut it down: why cumbereth it the ground?” Who was it that intervened between that profitless tree and the axe but our great Intercessor and Interposer? He it is who continually comes forward with “Let it alone this year also till I shall dig about it and dung it.” In this case he himself takes upon himself the character of the vine-dresser, and we are not wrong in “supposing him to be the gardener.”

If we would be supported by a type, our Lord takes the name of “the Second Adam,” and the first Adam was a gardener. Moses tells us that the Lord God placed the man in the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. Man in his best estate was not to live in this world in a paradise of indolent luxury, but in a garden of recompensed toil. Behold, the church is Christ’s Eden, watered by the river of life, and so fertilized that all manner of Fruits are brought forth unto God; and he, our second Adam, walks in this

spiritual Eden to dress it and to keep it; and so by a type we see that we are right in “supposing him to be the gardener.” Thus also Solomon thought of him when he described the royal Bridegroom as going down with his spouse to the garden when the flowers appeared on the earth and the fig tree had put forth her green figs; he went out with his beloved for the preservation of the gardens, saying, “Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.” Neither nature, nor Scripture, nor type, nor song forbids us to think of our adorable Lord Jesus as one that careth for the flowers and fruits of his church. We err not when we speak of him, “supposing him to be the gardener.” And so I sat me still, and indulged the suggested line of thought, which I now repeat in your hearing, hoping that I may open many roads, of meditation for your hearts also. I shall not attempt to think out such a subject thoroughly, but only to indicate in which direction you may look for a vein of precious ore.

I. “Supposing him to be the gardener,” we have here THE KEY TO MANY WONDERS in the garden of his church.

The first wonder is *that there should be a church at all in the worm*; that there should be a garden blooming in the midst of this sterile waste. Upon a hard and flinty rock the Lord has made time Eden of his church to grow. How came it to be here — an oasis of life in a desert of death? How came faith in the midst of unbelief, and hope where all is servile fear, and love where hate abounds? “Ye are of God, little children, an,1 the whole world lieth in the wicked one.” Whence this being “of God” where all beside is fast shut up in the devil? How came there to be a people for God, separated, and sanctified, and consecrated, and ordained to bring forth fruit unto his name? Assuredly it could not have been so at all if the doing of it had been left to man. We understand its existence, “supposing him to be the gardener,” but nothing else can account for it. He can cause the fir tree to flourish instead of the thorn, and the myrtle instead of the briar; but no one else can accomplish such a change. The garden in which I sat was made on the bare face of the rock, and almost all the earth of which its terraces were composed had been brought up there, from the shore below, by hard labor, and so upon the rock a soil had been created. It was not by its own nature that the garden was found in such a place; but by skill and labor it had been formed: even so the church of God has had to be constructed by the Lord Jesus, who is the author as well as the perfecter of his garden. Painfully, with wounded hands, has he built each terrace, and fashioned each bed, and planted each plant. All the flowers have had to be

watered with his bloody sweat, and watched by his tearful eyes: the nail-prints in his hands, and the wound in his side are the tokens of what it cost him to make a new Paradise. He has given his life for the life of every plant that is in the garden, and not one of them had been there on any other theory than “supposing him to be the gardener.

Besides, there is another wonder. *How comes the church of God to flourish in such a clime?* This present evil world is very uncongenial to the growth of grace, and the church is not, able by herself alone to resist the evil influences which surround her. The church contains within itself elements which tend to its own disorder and destruction if left alone; even as the garden has present in its soil all the germs of a tangled thicket of weeds. The best church that ever Christ had on earth would within a few years apostatize from the truth if deserted by the Spirit of God. The world never helps the church; it is all in arms against it; there is nothing in the world’s air or soil that can fertilize the church even to the least degree. How is it, then, that notwithstanding all this the church is a fair garden unto God, and there are sweet spices grown in its beds, and lovely flowers are gathered by the Divine hand from its borders? The continuance and prosperity of the church can only be accounted for by “supposing him to be the gardener.” Almighty strength is put to the otherwise impossible work of sustaining a holy people among men; almighty wisdom exercises itself upon this otherwise insuperable difficulty. Hear ye the word of the Lord, and learn hence the reason for the growth of his church below. “I, the Lord, do keep it: I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it, night and day.” That is the reason for the existence of a spiritual people stilt in the midst of a godless and perverse generation. “This is the reason for an election of grace in the midst of surrounding vice and worldliness, and unbelief. “Supposing him to be the gardener,” I can see why there should be fruitfulness, and beauty, and sweetness even in the center of the wilderness of sin.

Another mystery is also cleared up by this supposition. The wonder is *that ever you and I should have been placed among the plants of the Lord?* Why are we allowed to grow in the garden of his grace? Why me, Lord? Why me? How is it that we have been kept there, and borne with in our barrenness, when he might long ago have said, “Cut it down: why cumbereth it the ground?” Who else would have borne with such waywardness as ours? Who, could have manifested such infinite patience? Who could have tended us with such care, and when the care was so ill-

rewarded who would have renewed it so long from day to day, and persisted in designs of boundless love? Who could have done more for his vineyard? who could or would have done so much? Any mere man would have repented of his good intent, provoked by our ingratitude. None but God could have had patience with some of us! That we have not long ago been slipped off as fruitless branches of the vine; that we are left still upon the stem, in the hope that we may ultimately bring forth fruit, is a great marvel. I know not how it is that we have been spared, except upon this ground — “supposing him to be the gardener”; for Jesus is all gentleness and grace, so slow with his knife, so tardy with his axe, so hopeful if we do but show a bud or two, or, perchance, yield a little sour berry — so hopeful, I say, that these may be hopeful prognostics of something better by-and-by. Infinite patience! Immeasurable long-suffering! where are ye to be found save in the breast of the *Well-beloved*? Surely the hoe has spared many of us simply and only because he who is meek and lowly in heart is the gardener.

Dear friends, there is one mercy with regard to this church which I have often had to thank God for, namely, *that evils should have been shut out for so long a time*. During the period in which we have been together as pastor and people, and that is now some twenty-nine years, we have enjoyed uninterrupted prosperity, going from strength to strength in the work of the Lord. Alas! we have seen many other churches that were quite as hopeful as our own rent with strife, brought low by declension, or overthrown by heresy. I hope we have not been apt to judge their faults severely; but we must be thankful for our own deliverance from the evils which have afflicted them. I do not know how it is that we have been kept together in love, helped to abound in labor, and enabled to be firm in the faith, unless it be that special grace has watched over us. We are full of faults; we have nothing to boast of; and yet no church has been more divinely favored: I wonder that the blessing should have lasted so long, and I cannot make it out except when I fall into “supposing him to be the gardener.” I cannot trace our prosperity to the pastor, certainly; nor even to my beloved friends the elders and deacons, nor even to the best of you with your fervent love and holy zeal. I think it must be that Jesus has been the gardener, and he has shut the gate when I am afraid I have left it open; and he has driven out the wild boar of the wool just when he had entered, to root up the weaker plants. He must have been about at nights to keep off the prowling thieves, and he must have been here, too, in the noontide

heat to guard those or you who have prospered in worldly goods, from the glare of too bright a sun. Yes, he has been with us, blessed be his name! Hence all this peace, and unity, and enthusiasm. May we never grieve him so that he shall take away from us; but rather let us entreat him, saying, "Abide with us. Thou that dwellest in the gardens, let this be one of the gardens in which thou dost deign to dwell until the day break and the shadows flee away." Thus our supposition is a key to many wonders.

II. Let your imagination run along with mine while I say that "supposing him to be the gardener" should be A SPUR TO MANY DUTIES.

One of the duties of a Christian is joy. That is a blessed religion which among its precepts commands men to be happy. When joy becomes a duty, who would wish to neglect it? Surely it must help every little plant to drink in the sunlight when it is whispered among the flowers that Jesus is the gardener. "Oh," you say, "I am such a little plant; I do not grow well; I do not put forth so much leafage, nor are there so many flowers on me as on many round about me!" It is quite right that you should think little of yourself: perhaps to droop your head is a part of your beauty: many flowers had not been half so lovely if they had not practiced the art of hanging their heads. But "supposing him to be the gardener," then he is as much a gardener to you as he is to the most lordly palm in the whole domain. In the Mentone garden right before me grew the orange and the aloe, and others of the finer and more noticeable plants; but on a wall to my left; grew common wallflowers and saxifrages, and tiny herbs such as we find on our own rocky places. Now, the gardener had cared for all of these, little as well as great; in fact, there were hundreds of specimens of the most insignificant growths all duly labeled and described. The smallest saxifrage could say, "He is my gardener just as surely as he is the gardener of the Gloire de Dijon or Marechal Nell." Oh feeble child of God, the Lord taketh care of you! Your heavenly Father feedeth raw, us, and guides the flight of sparrows: should he not much more care for you, oh ye of little faith? Oh little plants, you will grow rightly enough. Perhaps you are growing downward just now rather than upward. Remember that there are plants of which we value the underground root much more than we do the balm above ground. Perhaps it is not yours to grow very fast; you may be a slow-growing shrub by nature, and you would not be healthy if you were to run to wood. Anyhow, be this your joy, you are in the garden of the Lord, and, "supposing him to be the gardener," he will make the best of you. You cannot be in better hands.

Another duty is that of *valuing the Lord's presence, and praying for it*. We ought whenever the Sabbath morning lawns to pray our Well-beloved to come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits. What can we do without him? All day long our cry should go up to him, "O Lord, behold and visit this vine, and the vineyard which thy right hand has planted." We ought to agonize with him that he would come and manifest himself to us as he does not unto the world. For what is a garden if the gardener never comes near it? What is the difference between it and the wilderness if he to whom it belongs never lifts up spade or runing-hook upon it?

So that it is our necessity that we have Christ with us, "supposing him to be the gardener;" and it is our bliss that we have Christ walking between our beds and borders, watching every plant, training, tending, maturing all. "Supposing him to be the gardener," it is well, for from him is our fruit found. Divided from him we are nothing; only as he watches over us can we bring forth fruit. Let us have done faith confidence in man, let us forego all attempts to supply facts of his spiritual presence by routine or rant, ritualism or rowdyism; but let us pray our Lord to be ever present with us, and by that presence to make our garden grow.

"Supposing him to be the gardener," there is another ditty, and that is, let each one of us *yield himself up entirely to him*. A plant does not know how it ought to be treated; it knows not when it should be watered or when it, should be kept dry: a fruit-tree is no judge of whoa it needs to be pruned, or digged, or dinged. The wit and wisdom of the garden lieth not in the flowers and shrubs, but in the gardener. Now, then, if you and I are here today with any self-will and carnal judgment about us, let us seek to lay it all aside that we may be absolutely at our Lord's disposal. You might not be willing to put yourself implicitly into the hand of any mere man (pity that you should); but, surely, thou plant of the Lord's right-hand planting, thou mayest put thyself without a question into his dear hand. "Supposing him to be the gardener," thou mayest well say, "I would neither have will, nor wish, nor wit, nor whim, nor way, but I would be as nothing in the gardener's hands, that he may be to me my wisdom and my all. Here, kind gardener, thy poor plant bows itself to thy hand; train me as thou wilt. Depend upon it, happiness lives next door to the spirit of complete acquiescence in the will of God and it will be easy to exercise that perfect acquiescence when we suppose the Lord Jesus to be the gardener. If the Lord hath done it; what has a saint to say? Oh thou afflicted one, the Lord hath done it: wouldest thou have it otherwise? Nay, art thou not thankful

that it is even so, because so is the will of him in whose hand thy life is, and whose are all thy ways; The duty of submission is very plain, “supposing him to be the gardener.”

One more duty I would mention, though others suggest themselves.

“Supposing him to be the gardener,” then *let us bring forth fruit to him*. I do not address a people this morning who feel no care as to whether they serve God or not. I believe that most of you do desire to glorify God; for being saved by grace, you feel a holy ambition to show forth his praises who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. You wish to bring others to Christ, because you yourselves have been brought to life and liberty in him. Now, let this be a stimulus to your fruit-bearing, that Jesus is the gardener. Where you have brought forth a single cluster, bring forth a hundred, “supposing him to be the gardener.” If he is to have the honor of it, then labor to do that which will give him great renown. If our spiritual state were to be attributed to ourselves, or to our minister, or to some of our fellow Christians, we might not feel that we were under a great necessity to be fruitful; but if Jesus be the gardener, and is to bear the blame or the honor of what we produce, then let us use up every drop of sap and strain every fiber, that, to the utmost of which our manhood is capable, we may produce a fair reward for our Lord’s travail. Under such tutorship and care we ought to become eminent scholars. Doth Christ train us? Oh let us never cause the world to think meanly of our Master. Students feel that their *alma mater* deserves great things of them, so they labor to make their university renowned. And so, since Jesus is tutor and university to us, let us feel that we are bound to reflect credit upon so great a teacher, upon so divine a name. I do not know how to put it, but surely we ought to do something worthy of such a Lord. Each little flower in the garden of the Lord should wear its brightest hues, and pour forth its rarest perfume, because Jesus cares for it. The best of all possible good should be yielded by every plant in our Father’s garden, supposing Jesus to be the gardener.

Thus much, then, on those two points — a key to many wonders, and a spur to many duties.

III. Thirdly, I have found in this supposition A RELIEF FROM CRUSHING RESPONSIBILITY. One has a work given him of God to do, and if he does it rightly he cannot do it carelessly. The first thing when he wakes he asks, “How is the work prospering?” and the last thought at night is, “What can

I do to fulfill my calling?" Sometimes the anxiety even troubles his dreams, and he sighs, "O Lord, send now prosperity!" How is the garden prospering which we are set to tend? Are we broken-hearted because nothing appears to flourish? Is it a bad season? or is the soil lean and hungry? It is a very blessed relief to an excess of care if we can fall into the habit of "supposing him to be the gardener." If Jesus be the Master and Lord in all things it is not mine to keep all the church in order. I am not responsible for the growth of every Christian, nor for every backslider's errors, nor for every professor's faults of life. This burden must not lie on me so that I shall be crushed thereby. "Supposing him to be the gardener," then, the church enjoys a better oversight than mine; better care is taken of the garden than could be taken by the, most vigilant watchers, even though by night the frost devoured them, and by day the heat. "Supposing him to be the gardener," then all must go well in the long run. He that keepeth Israel doth neither slumber nor sleep; we need not fret and despond. I beg you earnest workers., who are becoming depressed, to think this out a little. You see it is yours to work under the Lord Jesus; but it is not yours to take the anxiety of his office into your souls as though you were to bear his burdens. The under-gardener, the workman in the garden, needs not fret about the whole garden as though it were all left to him. No, no; let him not take too much upon himself. I pray you, bound your anxiety by the facts of the case. So you have a number of young people around you, and you are watching for their souls as they that must give account. This is well; but do not be worried and wearied; for, after all, the saving and the keeping of those souls is not in your hands, but it rests with One far more able than yourself. Just think that the Lord is the gardener. I know it is so in matters of providence. A certain man of God in troublous times became quite unable to do his duty because he laid to heart so much the ills of the age; he became depressed and disturbed, and he went on board a vessel, wanting to leave the country, which was getting into such a state that he could no longer endure it. Then one said to him, "Mr. Whitelock, are you the manager of the world?" No, he was not quite that. "Did not God get on pretty well with it before you were born, and don't you think he will do very well with it when you are dead?" That reflection helped to relieve the good man's mind, and he went back to do his duty. I want you thus to perceive the limit of your responsibility: you are not the gardener himself; you are only one of the gardener's boys to run on errands, or to do a bit of digging, or to sweep the paths. The garden is well enough managed even though you are not head manager in it.

While this relieves us of anxiety it makes labor for Christ very sweet, because if the garden does not seem to repay us for our trouble we say to ourselves, "It is not my garden after all." Supposing him to be the gardener, I am quite willing to work on a barren piece of rock, or tie up an old withered bough, or dig a worthless sod; for, if it only pleases Jesus, the work is for that one sole reason profitable to the last degree. It is not mine to question the wisdom of my task, but to set about it in the name of my Master and Lord. 'Supposing him to be the gardener,' lifts the ponderous responsibility of it from me, and my work becomes pleasant and delightful."

In dealing with the souls of men, we meet with cases which are extremely difficult. Some persons are so timid and fearful that you do not know how to comfort them; others are so fast and presumptuous that you hardly know how to help them. A few are so double-faced that you cannot understand them, and others so fickle that you cannot hold them. Some flowers puzzle the ordinary gardener: we meet with plants which are covered with prickles, and when you try to train them they wound the hand that would help them. These strange growths would make a great muddle for you if you were the gardener; but "supposing him to be the gardener," you have the happiness of being able to go to him constantly, saying, "Good Lord, I do not understand this singular creature; it is as odd a plant as I am myself. Oh, that thou wouldest manage it, or tell me how. I have come to tell thee of it."

Constantly our trouble is that we have so many plants to look after that we have not time to cultivate any one in the best manner, because we have fifty more all wanting attention at the time; and then before we have done with the watering-pot we have to fetch the hoe and the rake and the spade, and we are puzzled with these multitudinous cares, even as Paul was when he said, "That which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." Ah, then, it is a blessed thing to do the little we can do and leave the rest to Jesus, "supposing him to be the gardener."

In the church of God there is a discipline which we cannot exercise. I do not think it is half so hard to exercise discipline as it is not to be able to exercise it when yet you feel that it ought to be done. The servants of the householder were perplexed when they might not root up the tares. "Didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares?" "An enemy hath done this. Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?"

“Not so,” said he, “lest ye root up the wheat with them.” This afflicts the Christian minister when he must not remove a pestilent, hindering weed. Yes, but, “supposing him to be the gardener,” and it is his will to let that weed remain, what have you and I to do but to hold our peace? He has a discipline more sure and safe than ours, and in due time the tares shall know it. In patience let us possess our soul. And then, again, there is that succession in the garden which we cannot keep up. Plants will die down, and others must, be put into their places or the garden will grow bare; but we know not where to find these fresh flowers. We say, “When yonder good man dies who will succeed him?” That is a question I have heard many a time, till I am rather weary of it. ‘Who is to follow such a man? Let us wait till he is gone and needs following. Why sell the man’s coat when he can wear it himself? We are apt to think when this race of good brethren shall die out that none will arise worthy to unloose the latches of their shoes. Well, friend, I could suppose a great many things, but this morning my text is, “Supposing him to be the gardener,” and on that supposition I expect that the Lord has other plants in reserve which you have not yet seen, and these will exactly fit into our places; when they become empty, and the Lord will keep up the true apostolical succession till the day of his second advent. In every time of darkness and dismay, when the heart sinks and the spirits decline, and we think it is all over with the church of God, let us fall back on this, “Supposing him to be the gardener,” and expect to see greater and better things than these. We are at the end of our wits, but he is not at the beginning of his yet: we are nonplussed, but he never will be; therefore let us wait and be tranquil, “supposing him to be the gardener.”

IV. Fourthly, I want you to notice that this supposition will give YOU A DELIVERANCE FROM MANY GLOOMY FEARS. I walked down the garden, and I saw a place where all the path was strewn with leaves and broken branches, and stones, and I saw the earth upon the flower-beds tossed about, and roots lying quite out of the ground: all was in disorder. Had a dog been amusing himself? or had a mischievous child been at work? If so, it was a great pity. But no: in a minute or two I saw the gardener come back, and I perceived that he had been making all this disarrangement. He had been cutting, and digging, and hacking, and mess-making; and all for the good of the garden. It may be it has happened to some of you that you have been a good deal clipped lately, and in your domestic affairs things have not been in so fair a state as you could have wished: it may be in the

Church we have seen ill weeds plucked up, and barren branches lopped, so that everything is *en deshabelle*. Well, if the Lord has done it our gloomy fears are idle. "Supposing him to be the gardener," all is well.

As I was talking this over wit, h my friend, I said to him — "Supposing him to be the gardener," then the serpent will have a bad time of it. "Supposing Adam to be the gardener, then the serpent gets in and has a chat with his wife, and mischief comes of it; but supposing Jesus to be the gardener, woe to thee, serpent: there is a blow for thy head within half a minute if thou dost but show thyself within the boundary. So, if we are afraid that the devil should get in among us let us always in prayer entreat that there may be no space for the devil, because the Lord Jesus Christ fills all, and keeps out the adversary. Other creatures besides serpents intrude into gardens; caterpillars and palmerworms, and all sorts of destroying creatures are apt to devour our churches. How can we keep them out? The highest wall cannot exclude them: there is no protection except one, and that is, "supposing him to be the gardener." Thus it is written, "I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts."

I am sometimes troubled by the question. What if roots of bitterness should spring up among us to trouble us? We are all such fallible creatures, supposing some brother should permit the seed of discord. to grow in his bosom, then there may be a sister in whose heart the seeds will also spring up, and from her they will fly to another sister, and be blown about till brethren and sisters are all bearing rue anlwormwood in their hearts. Who is to prevent this? Only the Lord Jesus by his Spirit. He can keep out this evil, "supposing him to be the gardener." The root which beareth wormwood will grow but little where Jesus is. Dwell with us, Lord, as a church and people: by thy Holy Spirit reside with us and in us, and never depart from us, and then no root of bitterness shall spring up to trouble us.

Then comes another fear. Suppose the living waters of God's Spirit should not come to water the garden, what then? We cannot make them flow, for the Spirit is a sovereign, and he flows where he pleases. Ah, but the Spirit of God will be in our garden, "supposing our Lord to be the gardener." There is no fear of our not being watered when Jesus undertakes to do it. "He will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground." But what if the sunlight of his love should not shine ca the

garden? If the fruits should never ripen, if there should be no peace, no joy in the Lord? That cannot happen “supposing him to be the gardener;” for his face is the sun, and his countenance scatters those health-giving beams, and nurturing warmths, and perfecting influences which are needful for maturing the saints in all the sweetness of grace to the glory of God. So, “supposing him to be the gardener” at this the close of the year, I fling away my doubts and fears, and invite you who bear the church upon your heart to do the same. It is all well with Christ’s cause because it is in his own hands. He shall not fail nor be discouraged. The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands.

V. Fifthly, here is a WARNING FOR THE CARELESS, “supposing him to be the gardener.” In this great congregation many are to the church what weeds are to a garden. They are not planted by God; they are not growing under his nurture, they are bringing forth no fruit to his glory. My dear friend, I have tried often to get at you, to impress you, but I cannot. Take heed; for one of these days, “supposing him to be the gardener,” he will reach you, and you shall know what that word meaneth, “Every plant which my heavenly Father hath act planted shall be rooted up.” Take heed to yourselves, I pray.

Others among us are like the branches of the vine which bear no fruit. We have often spoken very sharply to these, speaking honest truth in unmistakable language, and yet we have not touched their consciences. Ah, but “supposing him to be the gardener,” he will fulfill that sentence: “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.” He will get at you, if we cannot. Would God, ere this old year were quite dead, you would turn unto the Lord with full purpose of heart; so that instead of being a weed you might become a choice flower; that instead of a dry stick, you might be a sappy, fruit-bearing branch of the vine. The Lord make it to be so: but if any here need the caution, I pray them to take it to heart at once. “Supposing him to be the gardener,” there will be no escaping from his eye; there will be no deliverance from his hand as “he will thoroughly purge his floor, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire, So he will thoroughly cleanse his garden and cast out every worthless thing.

VI. Another set of thoughts may well arise as A QUIETUS TO THOSE WHO COMPLAIN, “supposing him to be the gardener.” Certain of us have been made to suffer much physical pain, which often bites into the spirits, and makes the heart to stoop: others have suffered heavy temporal

losses, having had no success in business, but, on the contrary, having had to endure privation, perhaps even to penury. Are you ready to complain against the Lord for all this? I pray you, do not so take the supposition of the text into your mind this morning. The Lord has been pruning you sharply, cutting off your best boughs, and you seem to be like a thing despised, that is constantly tormented with the knife. Yes, but “supposing him to be the gardener,” suppose that your loving Lord has wrought it all, that from his own hand all your grief has come, every cut, and every gash, and every slip: does not this alter the case? Hath not the Lord done it? Well, then, if it be so, put your finger to your lip and be quiet, until you are able from your heart to say, “The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.” I am persuaded that the Lord hath done nothing amiss to any one of his people; that no child of his can rightly complain that he has been whipped with too much severity; and that no one branch of the vine can truthfully declare that it has been pruned with too sharp an edge. No; what, the Lord has done is the best that could have been done, the very thing that you and I, if we could have possessed infinite wisdom and love, would have wished to have done; therefore let us stop each thought of murmuring, and say, “The Lord hath done it,” and be glad.

Especially I speak to those who have suffered bereavement. I can hardly express to you how strange I feel at this moment when my sermon revives a memory so sweet dashed with such exceeding bitterness. I sat with my friend and secretary in that garden some fifteen days ago, and we were then in perfect health, rejoicing in the goodness of the Lord. We returned home, and within five days I was smitten with disabling pain; and worse, far worse than that, he was called upon to lose his wife. We said to one another as we sat there reading the word of God and meditating, “How happy are we! Dare we think of being so happy? Must it not speedily end?;” I little thought I should have to say for him, “Alas, my brother, thou art brought very low, for the delight of thine eyes is taken from thee.” But here is our comfort: the Lord hath done it. The best rose in the garden is gone. Who has taken it? The gardener came this way and gathered it. He planted it and watched over it, and now he has taken it. Is not this most natural? Does anybody weep because of that? No; everybody knows that it is right, and according to the order of nature, that he should come and gather the best in the garden. If you are sore troubled by the loss of your beloved, yet dry your grief by “supposing him to be the gardener.” Kiss the

hand that has wrought you such grief? Brethren beloved, remember the next time the Lord comes to your part of the garden, and he may do so within the next week, he will only gather his own flowers, and would you prevent his doing so even if you could?

VII. “Supposing him to be the gardener,” then there IS AN OUTLOOK FOR THE HOPEFUL. “Supposing him to be the gardener,” then I expect to see in the garden where he works the best possible prosperity: I expect to see no flower dried up, no tree without fruit: I expect to see the richest, rarest fruit, with the daintiest bloom upon it, daily presented to the great Owner of the garden. Let us expect that in this church, and pray for it. Oh, if we have but faith we shall see great things. It is our unbelief that straitens God. Let us believe great things from the work of Christ by his Spirit in the midst of his people’s hearts, and we shall not be disappointed.

“Supposing him to be the gardener,” then, dear friends, we may expect divine intercourse of unspeakable preciousness. Go back to Eden for a minute. When Adam was the gardener, what happened? The Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the day. But “supposing HIM to be the gardener,” then we shall have the Lord God dwelling among us, and revealing himself in all the glory of his power, and the plenitude of his Fatherly heart; making us to know him, that we may be filled with all the fullness of God. What joy is this!

One other thought. “Supposing him to be the gardener,” and God to come and walk among the trees of the garden, then I expect he will remove the whole of the garden upward with himself to fairer skies; for he rose, and his people must rise with him. I expect a blessed transplantation of all these flowers below to a clearer atmosphere above, away from all this smoke and fog and damp, up where the sun is never clouded, where flowers never wither, where fruits never decay. Oh, the glory we shall then enjoy up yonder, on the hills of spices in the garden of God. “Supposing him to be the gardener” what a garden will he form above, and how shall you and I grow therein, developing beyond imagination. “It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” Since he is the author and finisher of our faith, to what perfection will he conduct us, and to what glory will he bring us! Oh, to be found in him! God grant we may be! To be plants in his garden, “supposing him to be the gardener,” is all the heaven we can desire.

THE WHOLE MACHINERY OF SALVATION.

NO. 2327

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY,
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
'ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 18TH, 1889.

“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?
and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?
and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they
preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the
feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings
of good things!” — Romans 10:14,15.

PLEASE notice, dear friends, that in the thirteenth verse we have the way of salvation set before us in the plainest terms: “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” I remember well when I lived on that verse for many months. I longed for salvation; I could not see that there was any way of hope for me; I thought that I must be left out, that I was too sinful, or too hard, or too something or other, so that others might be saved, but I should not be. But when I read this verse, I did what I ask you to do, I caught at it; it seemed like a life-line thrown to a sinking man. I clung to it, and it became a life-buoy to me: “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” “Ah!” thought I, “I do call on that blessed name, I will call on that glorious name; if I perish, I will never cease to invoke that sacred name.” An invocation of the name of God, a trusting in God, and a consequent calling upon God and acknowledgment of God, this it is that saves the soul.

But I must get you to notice these words a little more in detail. There is here, first, a wide word, a very wide word: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." "Whosoever." I have heard that, when a person is making his will, if he wishes to leave all he has to one person, say to his wife, if he just says so, that is the best thing he can do; but he had better not go into details, and begin making a list of what he is leaving, because he will probably leave something or other out. Now, in order to make this will of God very distinct, he does not go into any detail, but he just says,

"Whosoever." That means the black man, and the red man, and the yellow man, and the white man. It means the rich man, and the poor man:, and the man who is not a man. It means everybody of every sort, and those who are of no sort at all, or of all sorts put together. "Whosoever." That includes me, I am sure; but I am equally certain that; it includes you, you in the aisles who were never here before, you who are quite unknown in London, you who are a stranger and a foreigner, whoever you may be. It is much better to have it put so, without going into detail, because otherwise somebody might be left out. I have often thought that, if I had read in Scripture that "If Charles Haddon Spurgeon shall call upon the name of the Lord, he shall be saved," I should not have felt half as sure of salvation as I do now, because I should have concluded that there might have been somebody else of that name, and very likely there is, and I should have said, "Surely it did not mean me;" but when the Lord says "Whosoever," I cannot get out of that circle. It is a big net that seems to entangle all men in its meshes. "Whosoever." If I call upon the name of the Lord, if you call upon the name of the Lord, if the man who lies upstairs a-dying calls upon the name of the Lord, we shall be saved. What a wide word that "whosoever" is!

And then, next, what an easy word we have here! "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord." Anybody can call upon the name of the Lord. Everybody understands what it is to call "Hi, there!" Have you not often used such a call as that? And if you have been in distress or danger, have you never called, "Help, help, help?" Very well, he who can thus call, let him call upon God, invoke his help, clamor for his mercy, crave his pity. If he does that; in a believing way, as we shall have to show you, trusting that God will hear him, he shall be saved. So there is no difficulty here that wants a doctor of divinity to explain; the truth is put mainly in monosyllabic words: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord

shall be saved.” It is as plain as a pikestaff. Oh, that you might see it, and begin to call upon the name of the Lord by earnest prayer!

But here is another word, a sure word: “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” There is no “if” here; no “maybe” here; but a glorious “shall.” Our shalls and wills are poor, puny things; but God’s “shall” is firm as the eternal mountains. “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,” as surely as there is a God. The Lord has made no mistake; he will not revoke his declaration by changing his mind. “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Oh, that many would call upon his name, tonight, and find immediate salvation, which will last them throughout life, and throughout eternity, for “shall be saved” reaches a very long way, even throughout the eternal ages that are yet to come.

Now here, you see, friends, we have a wonderful remedy for the disease of sin, very simple and very abundant; but the difficulty is to get it to the people who need it. I am going to talk about that matter in very plain language, because I want to be very practical, and I pray that God’s Spirit may make my whole discourse to be so.

In our text there are four necessities upon which Paul insists.

Praying to God, calling upon his name, will save a man; but first, *there is no praying aright without believing*: “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?” But, secondly, *there is no believing without hearing*: “How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?” Thirdly, *there is no hearing without a preacher*: “How shall they hear without a preacher?” And fourthly, and lastly, *there is no effective preaching without being sent*: “How shall they preach except they be sent?”

I. First, then, THERE IS NO PRAYING ARIGHT WITHOUT BELIEVING, from which I gather this moral, then let us believe. Since we must pray, and only by prayer can find salvation, and there is no praying without believing, may the Lord help us to believe, for how shall we pray aright unless we do believe?

I think that I have persons here tonight who have commenced to pray, who have begun pleading with God. I hope, dear friends, nay, I feel sure of it, that, if that prayer is sincere, there is a measure of faith in it, for would you ask God to save you if you did not believe that *you needed to be saved*.

There is a measure of faith in that. Would you ask God to save you if you did not think that *there is a way of salvation by which he can save you*? There is a measure of faith in believing that. I think that you believe that *there is a Savior*. There is a measure of faith in that; and, I hope, a measure of saving faith, too, in your believing that, notwithstanding all your sins and sinfulness, there is a Savior provided, who is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him. You may not have much faith; but you must have some faith if you are really praying to God from your heart, and entreating him to save you.

I think, too, that you must have a little faith that *the Savior will save you*. You have been praying to him to do it. Would you have expressed that desire, and have come to him in prayer about it, unless there was some kind of sediment of faith in your heart? I want to put it very gently to you, yet very plainly. Remember, faith is not measured by the quantity, but by the quality. A man of strong faith is happier, but he is not more truly saved, than a man of weak faith, so long as he has any faith at all. If yours is only feeble faith, the Lord will say to you, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." The faith that comes behind Christ, and touches the hem of his garment, is a saving faith; and I think that is what you are doing when you say, "Lord Jesus, save me." If this is a real prayer, and not a sham one, if it comes from your heart, there is, at any rate, a tint, a shade, if not an actual color of faith, upon your soul already. How could you call on him in whom you have not believed? Would we call for help from a person who we did not think would help us or could help us? No; the mere fact of calling upon anyone for help proves that we have some measure of confidence in that person, that he can and will help us. Well, if thou believest as much as that concerning Christ, and if thou wilt cast thyself upon the believing that thou shalt be saved, I would that thou hadst more faith, but even that little faith will bear thee into heaven.

You believe also that *Christ can and does hear you*. Ah, you would not have been alone upstairs this afternoon, crying for mercy, if yea had thought that there was nobody to hear you! Rational beings do not go and ask of nobody. You believe that Christ is able to hear you, and you have some faith that he does hear you, for which I am very thankful indeed.

I think that I may add that *you are measurably trusting to Christ*. Certainly, you are not trusting to anybody else. The fact that you often pray to him for mercy, for the pardon of sin, for the renewal of your nature, proves that

you have some degree, at least, some faint measure of faith in him. Now, let me exhort you, while you keep on praying, to mix more faith with your praying. "With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt," and with all thy prayings thou shalt offer faith. When thou askest anything of God, believe, and thou shalt receive. When thou dost appeal to his mercy, believe in the mercy. When thou art pleading for his help, believe in the help, for there is much power in faith. "According to your faith, be it unto you."

You all know, surely, what believing is. You say, "I shall go home to pray." No, no, no; believe, and pray as much as ever you like, and a believing prayer will save you. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved;" but "how then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" Faith comes first. Believe, then, before you do anything else. May God, of his great mercy, enable, some poor sinner to have done with doings and with feelings, and to trust, just to trust Jesus! There you are, hanging up there in a tree; you are afraid of failing down, so you cling with all your might. Suppose that a strong man comes underneath, and says, "Here, drop into my arms; I will catch you, I am able to bear your weight." If you trust, him, you will drop into his arms. That is what you have to do with Christ tonight; trust him, and let go every other confidence; just drop into his arms, and you shall be saved. Remember, then, this first lesson, that there is no praying aright without believing.

II. Now we go another step, and come to the second necessity. **THERE IS NO BELIEVING WITHOUT HEARING:** "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?"

The word "heard" is to be understood in a wide sense. Reading is a kind of hearing. It is not merely listening with the ear; but *you must, by some means or other, come to a knowledge of the truth*, and you cannot know what you do not hear, or read, or learn. The truth must come under your notice, so that you are aware of it, or else there can be no faith in you concerning it. I hope that none of you ever believe with the faith of the man who, when he was asked what he believed, said that he believed what the church believed. "Well," said one, "what does the church believe?" "Oh!" he replied, "the church believes what I believe." "Well, then, please tell me, what do you and the church believe?" "We both believe the same thing," answered he; and he could be got no farther. Now, there is no faith in that at all; it is simple ignorance, and nothing more. "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" Why, to believe a thing is to

know the ins and outs of it! To get at it by reading it or hearing it, are only different forms of the same thing.

Well, now, if any man here desires faith, what should he do to obtain it? Sit still, and say, "I will try to believe?" Certainly not. Suppose that I were to announce to you tonight that the Czar of all the Russias is dead, and you said that you wished to believe it. You could not believe it by an effort of your mind; you would enquire for evidence of the truth of my statement, or you would wait till you saw the telegrams tomorrow, and so you would learn whether it was true or not. It is not a distinct act of the will alone that brings faith: "Faith cometh by hearing."

Listen, then. *The offender you hear the gospel, the better.* I mean you who have not yet believed it. As you are hearing it, you may come to believe it. It may insensibly, as it were, steal over you. Having heard it, and heard it, and heard it, again and again, you may at last find yourself believing that Jesus suffered on the cross for you. I recommend all seekers after Christ to hear the Word often.

Take another piece of advice. *Hear better;* hear with both your ears at once; hearken as you would listen if the preacher were telling you how you could make a fortune in ten minutes. How everybody would listen, how everyone would want to have a front seat, so as to make no mistake! How the pencils would go to work to take down the instructions! Hear that way, for there is more at stake than a fortune, even your immortal soul. Heaven and hell hang upon the hearing or not hearing of the Word. Hear often, and hear well.

But *so hear as to try to understand it,* and if you cannot meet with the preacher who seems to proclaim an all-round gospel, do what is better, go to the Bible itself. Read this blessed Book through studiously, with such helps as good men can give you. Yes, try and understand the truth, and prove it by experience. Come to this Book, and come to the house of prayer with this thought on your mind, "There is a something that I have to believe, and I am going to know what it is; I am going to know the top of it and the bottom of it, the head and the front and the heart of it; and, at any rate, I will, if I can, know what it is, and what are the grounds and reasons for it." Hearing thus, you will believe it.

There let me leave that point, then. Hear the gospel; only mind that what you hear is the gospel. You can hear some very smart sermons, and very

clever sermons; and, as a rule, I may say that the cleverer they are, the worse they are; where you see so much of the man, you will see very little of his Master; when everything seems yielded up to the turning of the phrases, putting the thing very grandly, and carrying you away with wonderful eloquence, the gospel itself gets put out of sight. Let the eloquent men have a shop for themselves on a Monday; but let us have the Sabbath-day given up to plain dealing with the souls of men. We want none of this word-daubing; men are going to heaven or to hell, and it is time that we came to close grips with them about this all-important matter. God help us so to do! Hear that which really is aimed at your heart and conscience; hear that which tells of Christ, and heaven, and the way thither; hearing that, you are on the way to believing it.

III. Thirdly, THERE IS NO HEARING WITHOUT A PREACHER: “and how shall they hear without a preacher?” Therefore, let us preach.

Someone must make the truth known to men. They will not find out about the Savior unless they are told of him. The gospel will not be revealed to men by any supernatural agency; we must go with it. They cannot learn it without being taught it. No man will know the gospel unless somebody shall tell it to him, by word of mouth, or by the gift of a book or a tract, or by a letter, or by the open preaching of the Word. Somebody must make it known to the man, for how can he believe in him of whom he has not heard, and how can he hear without a preacher?

Who ought to preach, then? *Everyone who can preach, should do so.* The gift of preaching is the responsibility for preaching. I often wonder at *some* Christian men who cart fire away so grandly on the hustings, or the platform, but who never speak for Christ; they will have to account for those prostituted tongues. If a man can speak upon the temperance question, he can speak upon the salvation question; let him take care that he does so. I do not wish him to be silent on the one, but I do earnestly entreat him not to be silent on the other. There are a great many persons who ought to preach the gospel, but who do not. Every man who knows the gospel ought to make it known. “Let him that heareth say, Come.” When you hear the gospel, tell it to somebody else; you Christian people are all bound, in proportion to your gifts and your opportunity, to make the gospel known. “Why!” says one, “I thought that work was for priests.” Just so, it is only for priests; but then all believers are priests. By his mighty grace, our Lord Jesus Christ hath made us kings and priests unto God; and

it is our duty, as well as our privilege, to exercise this blessed priestly function of telling to the sons of men the way whereby they may be saved. Each man, then, in this place, who knows Christ, and each woman and each young person, too, are bound to tell of Christ in some way or other to all who are round about them.

For this work, *a high degree of gifts is not required*. It does not say, "How shalt they hear without a doctor of divinity?" It does not say, "How shall they hear without a popular preacher?" Oh, dear! some of us would have been lost if we could not have been saved without hearing a man of great abilities. I thank God that I owe my conversion to Christ to an unknown person, who certainly was no minister in the ordinary acceptation of the term; but who could say this much, "Look unto Christ, and be saved, all ye ends of the earth." I learned my theology, from which I have never swerved, from an old woman who was cook in the house where I was an usher. She could talk about the deep things of God; and as I sat and heard what she had to say, as an aged Christian, of what the Lord had done for her, I learned more from her instruction than from anybody I have ever met with since. It does not require a college training to enable you to tell about Christ; some of the best workers in this church have little enough of education, but they bring many to Christ. Go on, my dear brothers and sisters, telling of Christ's love to you, even if you have very few gifts.

Remember that, *when you have told out the story of the cross to men, you are rid of one responsibility*. At any rate, if they perish, it will not be because they did not know; and if they perish through ignorance, it will not be that their ignorance was through your neglect in teaching them. Now, tonight, I wish that I could stir up everyone here to become a preacher, women and all; not that I care much for women preaching, but I want them to preach in the sense in which I have laid the matter down; that is, to make known to somebody the wondrous story of the cross. Speak to an individual, if you can. If you cannot do that, write. If you cannot write, send a sermon, or give a tract. Only do keep on making Christ known. I suppose that there are two or three thousand believers here tonight out of these six thousand people. If every one of you Christians would every day make Christ known to somebody, what a missionary organization we should be! How can they hear without a preacher? Now, let every one of you become, in the sense in which the text means it, a preacher, by telling out in some form or other, and making known in some way or other, the wondrous doctrine of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.

It is pitiable that anybody should live and die without knowing the gospel. You can have no idea, unless you go into the houses in many of our streets, what absolute ignorance there is in this city of London about the simple elements of the gospel of Christ. City missionaries have often told me stories that have amazed and appalled me. You think, because so many come to some of our houses of prayer, that the people of London go into the house of God. There is at least a million of people, and perhaps two millions, who never attend any place of worship at all. There would be three millions, I suppose, out of our five millions, who only occasionally go to any place of worship at all. Why speak of "heathendom?" We have it at our doors. The more earnest a man is to win souls, the more he is shocked, amazed, and appalled by the necessity there is to keep on making known the gospel of Christ. And now they are starting new the-elegies, inventing falsehoods. Up with you, men and Christians publish Christ again. The only way to put this false fire out is with the old fire of the gospel; men fear that fire. Put down the new heresy with the old orthodoxy. Bring out Christ crucified. Cry again, with Luther's earnestness, "Believe and live!" Cry again, with Calvinistic determination, "Salvation is all of grace, of grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ." I would to God that we might all preach thus. If we had but all our church-members resolved to testify the gospel of the grace of God, then should we see men hearing; then should we find men believing; and men believing are men saved.

IV. So I come to the fourth necessity, with which I shall close. **THERE IS NO EFFECTIVE PREACHING WITHOUT BEING SENT:** "and how shall they preach, except they be sent?" "Ah!" says one, "now we have you in a corner. We must not all go and preach, if we are not sent." If you are not sent, do not go.

But what does it mean, "How shall they preach, except they be sent?" A man who goes to tell others about Christ must feel that he is sent to do it, or he will never do it properly and effectively. The man who is sent, first of all, has *a message given to him*. You do not say to your servant, "*You go north, south, east, west, and that is all.*" No, if you send him, you give him a message: "Go and say to Mr. So-and-so, this and that;" or you write it down, and you say, "Deliver that letter to such a person." You do not leave him to go and say whatever he likes: "John, I want you to call on Mr. So-and-so to-morrow morning, and to say whatever first comes into your head." You do not act like that, do you? Yet that is the notion some people have, nowadays, of what a preacher is; he is a man who makes his message

up as he goes along; he is a “thinker;” he excogitates the gospel out of his own brains. I have heard of a German who is said to have constructed a camel out of his own consciousness. Very likely; but I am sure that nobody will construct the gospel that way he must receive it by the revelation of God. The other plan is not Paul’s notion, for he asks, “How shall they preach, except they be sent?” First, then, get your message, be determined to know nothing among men but what the Lord, himself has revealed to you in his Word, by the teaching of his Spirit. Get it well into you; say to yourself, “What I am going to speak is nothing of my own; else it would fall flat and powerless; but I am going with, ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ This is God’s message.” Then, if you are sent, you will preach, and you will so preach that men will hear; and they will so hear that they will believe; and they will so believe that they will be saved. But you must go as a God-sent man, having received your message from the mouth of your Master.

Next, I think that, even if we get a message from God, we want something more than that, *there must be an impulse felt within*, that shall compel us to speak of Christ. If you merely go and flippantly talk about Jesus Christ to people, you may as well talk about anything else; but if you pity them, if you love them, if you feel that they must not be lost, that you cannot bear the thought of it, if it is in your mind, so that ye cannot sleep while you are thinking of such an one because he is going down to perdition, if it gets such a burden that it oppresses you, and weighs you down, so that you must speak to somebody about his soul, ah, then you will speak, for you will feel that you are sent! Now, my impression is that, if we are in a right state of heart, we shall always feel like that. If a Christian man were in a right condition of heart, whether he found himself in the train, or along a country road, or at the railway-station, or in the police-court, or waiting in the lobby of a house, or anywhere, he would begin at once to deal with the person with whom he came into contact about his soul. I wish that it were your habit to be always looking out for souls. Up then, ye Christian men, and seek as God shall help you, by every means in your power, to make known Christ to the dying all around you! But you will not do it unless you are sent, driven, impelled, forced; you will not win souls for Christ till the gospel is like a fire in your bones, and you feel that woe is unto you if you do not preach it.

Well now, before you go to try to do that, there is one thing more. You cannot do it effectively unless you are sent; and to be sent means to have *power given you with which to do the work*. Can that power be had? If you

feel impelled to cry to God to give you the power to preach, the spiritual power, the power of the Holy Ghost, if you are propelled to teach in the Sunday-school, — and it is not worth doing unless you feel that you are impelled to it, and sent to it, — then pray for the power to win the souls of those dear children for Christ. If you feel called upon to write a letter to a friend tomorrow about his soul or her soul, do it because you feel called upon to do it; but pray to God to show you how to do it. Pray to him to put the power into the words that you utter, that you may say the right words, and put even the right tone into those words. There is a good deal even in the tone of the preacher. “How shall they preach, except they be sent?” They must be clothed with divine power; but the Lord can clothe even a child with that power; he has often done it. He can clothe a humble Christian woman, who never spoke in public, with the power to win souls; he has often done it. And you, brother, who have been quite satisfied to be a church-member and to do nothing for Christ, — a most unsatisfactory state of things indeed, — should begin to be doing something for him who has; done so much for you. First tarry at Jerusalem till you are endued with power from on high; and then go forth as Christ’s witnesses; for how shall you preach, except you be sent? But the power being obtained, you must go forth, and tell out the message that your Lord has given you.

But you have not done it all till you have *given a report to you, Master*. If you have been sent, you will go back to your Lord after you have delivered his message, and you will tell him what they have to say about it. Every man who is sent on an errand gives an answer by-and-by as to the reply of the person to whom he was sent. I am afraid that some teachers and preachers forget this. We ought to go, like Isaiah, back to the Master, and say, “Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” You have tried hard with Mary to bring her to Christ; did you ever tell the Master about Mary? Mother, you have tried hard with your boy to bring him to the Savior; have you ever told Jesus about your boy? Last Tuesday night, there were a mother and father who had a son about whom they had once been very hopeful; but he had left home, and gone away, for weeks, though he promised to return. He had gone off, and they had not heard a word about him. They came to a company of Christian people, last Tuesday night, broken-hearted. They had done their best to find their son, but they could not find him. It was to Haddon Hall that they came, and the people of God there prayed for his father and mother. The father himself prayed, and broke down with emotion about his lost son. He

went home, and there was a letter from his son to say that the Savior had found him. He had given up the drink, and he hoped to be a comfort to his father and mother all the rest of their days. He was many miles away, and knew nothing of his father's prayer. Often, when you do not get on with people, go and tell the Lord Jesus Christ about it; say, "Lord, I have preached to them, I have prayed for them, I have talked to them, I have wept over them, I bear them on my heart as a burden. Their very name seems to burn itself with letters of fire into my soul. Lord, save them! Lord, save them, and they will be saved!" That is the way to win souls. If God works, he first of all makes us travail in birth for the souls of others, and then are they born into the kingdom. The rest of the text is a kind of vision. The prophet sees persons coming down the mountain side; he looks at them, and perceives that they are not men of war; else the greaves upon their legs would be terrible to the peaceful inhabitants of the plain. Yet here they come, a great company from the mountain tops, descending into the valleys. Who are they? As he looks, he says, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" They are coming bearing the white flag, servants of the great King with whom you have been at war. They bear the banner that speaks of peace with God.

We, to whom the text alludes, who are the preachers of this gospel of peace, say to you tonight: Sinner, throw down your weapons of rebellion. Guilty one, fight no longer against God; come, and be at peace with him. His peace is proclaimed to you through Jesus Christ. He will freely forgive you every transgression and iniquity; he is ready to forget and blot it all out. God invites you to be reconciled to him, to have done with warring against him. We preach peace to you; and, if you hear us, we then tell you glad tidings of good things, full pardon for all the past, a change of heart to be given to you, to make you a new creature in Christ Jesus, — yes, to be given you tonight, before you leave the Tabernacle, — help for the future to strive against sin; strength to conquer and tread the dragon beneath your feet, power to become a child of God, to become an heir of heaven, to be taken under the guardian wing of providence, to be directed by the infinite wisdom of the Holy Spirit. These glad tidings of good things are published to all of you, even you that are farthest off from Christ, and hope, and peace. Believe in Jesus; trust him; trust God in human flesh, trust him who bled to death upon the cross, and paid down the ransom for your soul, and

trust him now. He will do all for you that you need to have done for you, and he will save you, and bring you to his right hand in glory.

Now I have talked all in vain unless the Lord shall apply the truth to you, and you believe it; do not wait for somebody to believe for you; trust Christ for yourself; believe in Jesus even now. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON.

ROMANS 10.

Verse 1. *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*

Desire is the mother and the soul of prayer: "My heart's desire and prayer." These Israelites had hunted Patti about, and sought to kill him. They were his deadly enemies; but the only return he made them was to pray that they might be saved. I hope you will never have a worse wish for your worst foe.

2. *For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

Always see all the good that is to be seen; and, when you have to reprove and rebuke, begin by admitting what is good: "They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge."

3. *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.* They were very zealous; but it was blind zeal. They were very energetic; 'but they used their energy in going the wrong way. God has a righteousness, and our wisest course is to submit to it. Our righteousness, if we set it up in opposition to God's way of salvation, will only increase our sin. You can be ruined by your righteousness, as surely as by your righteousness, if you set it in the place of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. "They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

4. *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* If we get Christ by believing, we have the righteousness of the

law. All that ever could come to us by the highest and most perfect obedience to the law, we get by faith in Christ Jesus.

5. *For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law,* And being the one through whom the law was given, he knew how to describe it; and we may be sure that he made no mistake. This is his description of legal righteousness: —

5. *That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.*

That is it: “Do and live.” That is the law, and a very just law, too. Leave anything undone, or break the command in any respect and you die; that is the law.

6. *But the righteousness which is of faith —*

This is quite another thing; it —

6. *Speaketh on this wise,*

And it is Moses who speaks here, as in the previous verse. This is what the righteousness of faith says: —

6-9. *Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

God’s way of salvation, then, is “Believe and live.” Believe in Christ; Christ dying, Christ raised from the dead. If thou so believest, thou art saved. Thou needest not mount to heaven in rapture, nor dive to hell in remorse. As thou art, believe and live. This is the way of the righteousness of God.

10. *For with the heart ,man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

True faith must be accompanied by an open confession. Come forward, and outwardly own what you inwardly believe. Remember those words of the Lord Jesus, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Here, as there, the confession is put after the faith, as indeed it must be. First, the

reality, the thing signified, faith; afterwards, the outward and visible sign in the confession of that faith.

11. *For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

He need never be ashamed of his faith. It will bear him up; it will bear him through; it will bear him up to heaven.

12, 13. *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

That is a wonderful sentence; catch at it. Doubting, troubled spirits, catch at it, believe it, practice it; and you shall find it true.

14, 15. *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*

See here the whole machinery of salvation. God provides salvation in Christ Jesus, he sends the preacher to tell of it, men hear, they believe, and salvation is theirs. You have not to make a righteousness, you have to accept the one that is made for you. It is not what you shall do that shall save you; it is what Christ has done. You are to get out of self-confidence into confidence in him; and as soon as you do so, you are saved.

16. *But they have not all obeyed the gospel.*

Oh, no; all who have heard it, have not obeyed it! There are many here who have heard it from their childhood, and yet they have not obeyed it. Notice the word “obeyed,” for the gospel comes to you with the force of a divine command. If you reject it, you sin against it, for it is your duty to accept it: “but they have not all obeyed the gospel.”

16. *For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?*

So few were the obedient, that he asked where they were.

17, 18. *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard?*

Oh, may they hear, indeed !

18, 19. *Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.*

Has he not done it? Israel is rejected, and remains without Christ, while many out of “a foolish nation” of Anglo-Saxons, who were idolaters, have accepted Christ. People who were regarded as dogs by God’s chosen nation Israel have come into the house of the Lord, and still Israel refuses to come.

20. *But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not;*

Hear, then, you who have never had any religion; you who seldom go to the house of God. Even you may be saved, for it is written, “I was found of them that sought me not.”

20. *I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.*

Here is the manifestation of sovereign grace, God choosing and saving whom he wills, irrespective of their condition; exercising the sovereignty of his mercy in saving the most undeserving.

21. *But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands —*
In the attitude of invitation and entreaty, and readiness to receive, —

21. *Unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*

And that is what he has done to thee, O thou careless child of pious parents, thou unregenerate hearer of the Word! All day long has he stood and stretched forth his hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people. The Lord forgive all such, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK” — 485, 540, 503.

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