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presents

**LIFE AND WORKS
OF REV. CHARLES H. SPURGEON**

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continued **BOOK I.**
Rev. C. H. Spurgeon: The Story of His Life and Labors.

CHAPTER IX.
That Great Preacher's Last Illness and Death.

Alarming Reports.-- Messages of Sympathy.-- Cheering Words from the Christian Endeavor Convention of the United States.-- Message from International Congregational Council.-- Letters from the Prince of Wales and Mr. Gladstone.-- Rays of Hope.-- Anxiety and Fervent Prayers.-- Glowing Eulogies.-- Removal to Mentone.-- Unfavorable Reports.-- The Closing Scene.-- Immense Literary Labors.

EARLY in July, 1891, alarming reports became current concerning Mr. Spurgeon's health. It was known that for a long time he had been a sufferer from gout and kidney complaint, and the gravest fears were felt lest these complaints should undermine his otherwise strong constitution, and end his great work.

Daily reports were issued from the sick-chamber; all the newspapers throughout Christendom contained references to the illustrious sufferer, and among all classes of persons profound sympathy was awakened; while thousands besides Mr. Spurgeon's own congregation prayed earnestly for his recovery. On the 16th of July the *Christian World*, the leading religious newspaper of London, reported as follows:

The condition of Mr. Spurgeon is now regarded as quite beyond human aid. Last evening he had further relapsed, and there was much difficulty in getting him to take nourishment.

On Thursday Mr. Spurgeon was in a very critical condition. The bulletin issued on Friday stated that

although the kidneys were acting more freely, the delirium continued, and he was still very prostrate. On Saturday Mrs. Spurgeon considered him "no worse." The report of Sunday afternoon showed a slight change for the better.

Unfavorable Reports.

On Monday night the doctors considered his condition less favorable. Tuesday's bulletin was as follows:

"Rev. C. H. Spurgeon has had a very restless night, with delirium. The waste of albumen from the kidneys suddenly increased, and the prostration of strength is very great."

The next day's official bulletin was still more alarming:

"After a restless night, Mr. Spurgeon is very weak this morning. The heart's action is becoming more feeble, and the amount of nourishment taken is less."

The intense interest felt in Mr. Spurgeon's condition is shown by the messages of sympathy that literally pour in on Mrs. Spurgeon. On Friday the telegraph office at Beulah Hill was completely blocked for a considerable part of the day. The committee of the Baptist Missionary Society, the Nonconformist ministers of Wrexham, the South London Presbytery, the Primitive Methodist General Committee, the British and Foreign Sailors' Society, an assembly of ministers at Grimsby, a meeting of the Loyal Orange Institution at Netley Abbey, the London Wesleyan Council, the Chesham Sunday-school Alliance, the Lambeth Auxiliary of the Sunday-school Union, and the Council of the Evangelical Alliance have all sent telegrams.

Messages of Sympathy.

Letters and telegrams have also been received from Chicago, Ontario, Massachusetts, and many other places. General Booth sent a message:

"Four thousand officers of the Salvation Army, assembled in council at Congress Hall, Clapton, assure you of their hearty sympathy and united prayers for Mr. Spurgeon's recovery."

The rector of Newington, the parish in which the Tabernacle is situated, between whom and Mr. Spurgeon the most kindly feeling has existed, wrote to Mrs. Spurgeon expressing his sympathy, and hoping that her husband's life, so precious to her and his flock, might be spared. The Bishop of Rochester telegraphed:

"As I am myself ill and unable to call and inquire for Mr. Spurgeon, I am anxious to express to you my warm sympathy in your anxiety."

Kind Words from the United States.

The Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, in convention, more than 12,000 strong, sent "love and prayers" from Minneapolis, U.S.A. M. le Pasteur Saillens, of Paris, telegraphed:

"We offer constant prayers for your dear husband and yourself."

Dr. Maclagan, Archbishop- Designate of York, sent "prayerful sympathy." The International Congregational Council sent an expression of profound affection for, and tender sympathy with, Mr. and Mrs. Spurgeon, before commencing business at the Memorial Hall.

During the opening services of the Council earnest prayer was offered for the recovery of Mr. Spurgeon, and after the elections had been disposed of, a resolution expressive of sympathy with Mrs. Spurgeon, and the earnest prayers of the Assembly that the valuable life of her husband might be spared to the Churches. The hearty manner in which the resolution (which was forwarded by telegram) was carried, showed how brotherly feeling could dominate denominational distinctions and theological differences.

Letter From Mrs. Spurgeon.

Later, the following letter was heard with sympathetic interest:--

Mrs. Spurgeon is very grateful for the sympathy and Christian love expressed in the resolution passed by the International Council of Congregationalists. The way is very dark just now, but the light of God's love is beyond the darkness. The prayers of all are still needed, for the dear patient's condition is still very critical. Nothing is impossible with God, and we still hope, saying, with all our hearts, "God's will be done." Please to accept the warmest thanks of Mrs. Spurgeon and of yours sincerely,

C. SPURGEON.

Most kindly allusion was made by Canon Sinclair on Sunday afternoon at So Paul's Cathedral to Mr. Spurgeon's protracted illness, and the prayers of the congregation were asked. Among those who made personal calls during the week were Mrs. Benson, who left the Archbishop's card with her.

Prayer meetings were held through the week at the Tabernacle, and were largely attended. On Monday Dr. Clifford, Rev. Newman Hall, Rev. Arthur Mursell, and Mr. Cuff were among those present. On Tuesday numbers of people were waiting as early as half-past six for the seven o'clock prayer meeting, many of these being old pensioners from the neighboring almshouses. The loving sympathy of friends from all parts of the world is greatly appreciated, not only by Mrs. Spurgeon and Rev. J. A. Spurgeon, but by the church deacons, who expressed their gratitude in a statement issued on Sunday.

Inquiries from the Prince of Wales.

By command of the Prince of Wales Colonel Knollys wrote to Dr. Kidd, making inquiries concerning, Mr. Spurgeon's condition, asking the doctor, in the event of his having an opportunity, to convey the

expression of His Royal Highness' sympathy to Mr. Spurgeon in his illness. Dr. Kidd read that letter at his patient's bedside yesterday morning, when Mr. Spurgeon remembered having on a former occasion received a communication from the Heir-Apparent.

Mrs. Spurgeon has been enabled to keep up so well that she seems to have been specially strengthened for the ordeal she has been passing through. Those only to whom he has been accustomed have been allowed to be in attendance on Mr. Spurgeon. One of these is the faithful man-servant known to all visitors as George, while the other men-servants have taken turns by night. Mr. Spurgeon has never been unconscious, nor has he all along ever been delirious in the sense of not knowing those about him. He has often asked for his private secretary; he has sometimes been attended by his other secretary, Mr. Keys; and when visited by Dr. Russell Reynolds he remembered having seen the Doctor on a certain occasion at Mentone.

Letter from Mr. Gladstone.

Mrs. Spurgeon has received the following letter from Mr. Gladstone:

Corton, Lowestoft, July 16.

My dear Madam,- In my own home, darkened at the present time, I have read with studied interest daily accounts of Mr. Spurgeon's illness, and I cannot help conveying to you the earnest assurance of my sympathy with you and with him, and of my cordial admiration not only of his splendid powers, but still more of his devoted and unfailing character. May I humbly commend you and him, in all contingencies, to the infinite stores of Divine love and mercy, and subscribe myself, my dear Madame, faithfully yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

Mrs. Spurgeon sent the following reply, the postscript being in her husband's handwriting:

Westwood, Upper Norwood, July 18, 1891.

Dear Mr. Gladstone,- Your words of sympathy have a special significance and tenderness coming from one who has just passed through the deep waters which seem now to threaten me. I thank you warmly for your expression of regard for my beloved husband, and with all my heart I pray that the consolations of God may abound toward you even as they do to me. Although we cannot consider the dear patient out of danger the doctors have to-day issued a somewhat more hopeful bulletin. I feel it an honor to be allowed to say that I shall ever be your grateful friend.

S. SPURGEON.

P. S.- Yours is a word of love such as those only write who have been in the King's country, and have seen much of His face. My heart's love to you.

C. H. SPURGEON.

A Gleam of Hope.

On giving the news of Mr. Spurgeon's condition to the congregation on Sunday morning, Mr. Stott said that hope of the pastor's recovery was being, strengthened, but they must keep on praying rather than yield to too pleasurable excitement; for Mr. Spurgeon was not yet "out of the wood." Under the most happy circumstances, it would still be some time before the patient could become convalescent.

Rev. W. Stott presided at the Monday evening prayer meeting in the Tabernacle. Rev. J. A. Spurgeon, who had a sore throat and a voice weak from cold, said that he had seen his brother in the course of the day, and although he was seriously ill, he did not look like a dying man. Weak as he was, he might yet be restored. Still he was very seriously ill, and their hope was only in God, who could restore him. When at prayer concerning his brother, he had had a struggle, but he had at last left it in God's hands. They left all to God, but when they had done that, they felt that they could not let Him go until they had their pastor back.

Mr. James Spurgeon went on to say that his brother was happy in his mind and was contented. Notwithstanding all that they had heard about his wanderings, his heart had not wandered from Christ. He was not in trouble, and not in much pain, and God was to be thanked that in that respect he was as he was. They wanted him back, but would still say, "Thy will be done." The Lord has never made a mistake, and never would do so. How many were thinking of the sick pastor, and how many were reading his sermons who had not done so for years. Thus good would come out of the affliction.

A Voice to the Nation.

If in the end prayers did not avail, and the physicians found that that they could do nothing more, then they would have to believe that it was as the pastor had himself hinted some time ago, namely, that his time was come, and that his work was done. The numbers of letters and telegrams received at Westwood was marvelous. God was speaking to the nation, and it might be to the Church; people now saw what a servant England had in C. H. Spurgeon. If he was raised up again to preach the Gospel, perhaps the nation would learn more to appreciate his testimony.

As regarded the prayer-meetings they were holding, they could not fail to be a mighty lesson to those who took part in them, apart from Mr. Spurgeon. How little earth seemed in comparison with eternal things! God might have a purpose in dealing with them as He was doing. Then what a wonderful spirit of prayer was manifest. There had been one hundred and fifty prayers offered on the preceding, Monday, and one hundred had been offered in their meetings of that day. It was decided that their meetings should be continued until there was a decided change in their pastor's condition one way or the other-- till their Father in Heaven should say, "It is enough."

Cheering News.

Shortly before nine o'clock a telegram arrived from Westwood giving the cheering news of a slight

improvement in Mr. Spurgeon's general state. The internal congestion was somewhat diminished, the gout was less painful, while the delirium was milder, intervals of accurate memory occurring. The condition was one of grave danger, but there was said to be some hope.

Words of Appreciation.

One of the foremost journals of the- metropolis gave expression to the public sympathy. and voiced the estimate of Mr. Spurgeon's life and work, as follows:

"While there is life there is hope," and we rest in confidence that unless the will of God our Saviour see that the kingdom of his dear Son will be better served by this his true and faithful servant being removed to the sanctuary above, our beloved and honored brother, C. H. Spurgeon, will be raised up to continue his labors in the gospel on earth.

But if he should be taken up, a crowning testimony will have been given to the profound impression made upon his fellow-Christians and upon his fellow-men throughout the world, by his long and faithful witness to the truth. Men and women from all parts of the world, had written, telegraphed, or called to express their deep sympathy. Thousands expect with eager interest the morning paper, and the first thing they look for is the bulletin describing Mr. Spurgeon's condition.

Why the People are Moved.

This phenomenal interest is not due alone to personal affection for a beloved brother or father in Christ; to admiration of his fearless character, his marked individuality, his English tenacity; to Christian reverence for one who has scattered the gospel broadcast throughout the world, largely by his voice, and far more largely by the press; to regard for the Orphans' friend, to respect for the gifted evangelist, pastor and teacher, who has exercised his God-given gifts of perfecting other men for the work of ministering, though all these elements are included in it.

But lying beneath them all is a conviction of the truth of the gospel which he has ministered-- the gospel of the atonement; the good tidings of the kingdom of God; the unwavering witness of a man true to the core to "the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, by whom we believe in God who raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory that our faith and hope may be in God."

The Highest Praise.

No higher honor could be accorded to a man than that, lying helpless, suffering, delirious, upon his bed of death, the world was moved with sympathy and tender love, because, like Daniel, he was found faithful to his God; because he chose to have the gospel pure and plain, as pulse and water, rather than spiced with delicacies for the great and wise.

Yet though we speak of the possibility of his being taken, we fervently unite in the universal, loving prayer that God may restore his servant to years of better health and greater usefulness than before he was laid so low.

Removal to France.

Mr. Spurgeon continued to improve and was finally able to make the journey to Mentone, where the climate and surroundings had proved on several occasions to be highly beneficial to his health. Here he spent the last months of 1891, apparently gaining strength, yet very slowly, and hopes were entertained that he would ultimately recover. He became well enough to correct the proofs of his sermons, the publication of which was continued, but his progress towards recovery was so slow as to be scarcely perceptible.

Suddenly in the latter part of January, 1892, news came that he had met with a serious relapse. At once the fears of his multitude of friends and admirers were revived. For several days reports were received which were far from reassuring. The following dispatch relates the story of his death:

"MENTONE, France, Jan. 3 I.-- The celebrated divine, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, died here fifteen minutes before midnight to-night. Mrs. Spurgeon, his private secretary, and two or three friends were present at the last moment. He was unconscious when the end came, and had not spoken for some hours.

"Mr. Spurgeon did not recognize his wife throughout the day; he refused all food, and although milk was given him it was not retained. A large number of telegrams of inquiry and sympathy were received by the pastor's family."

Thus ended the life of the celebrated divine, whose voice had held listening thousands spell-bound, and whose influence had been felt in all the earth.

Enormous Literary Work.

Glancing at Mr. Spurgeon's work it will be seen that it was enormous. Besides editing and furnishing most of the matter for his monthly magazine, *The Sword and Trowel*, since January 1, 1865, he wrote "The Saint and His Saviour," "The Treasury of David, an Exposition of the Psalms," in seven octavo volumes; "The New Park Street Pulpit," and the "Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit," which contains about two thousand of his weekly sermons, from 1855 to 1889, making thirty large volumes. Also "Lectures to My Students," "Commenting and Commentaries," "John Ploughman," the "Cheque Book of the Bank of Faith," and various other publications. Many of these have been translated into various tongues.

In October, 1887, Mr. Spurgeon withdrew from the Baptist Union, in announcing his decision to withdraw, and replying to his critics, he said:

"To pursue union at the expense of the truth is treason to Jesus. To tamper with His

doctrines is to become traitors to Him. We have before us the wretched spectacle of professedly orthodox Christians publicly avowing union with those who deny the faith, and deny the personality of the Holy Ghost."

Mr. Spurgeon had long been contemplating the act of secession. He announced his determination of withdrawing if certain other clergymen, who were for some reason distasteful to him, were not excommunicated. This, of course, the Union refused to do. The resignation which he tendered was accepted, and the great church which he had built up went with him without question.

Mr. Spurgeon's Obsequies.

Upon the death of the celebrated divine, the newspapers throughout the world, both secular and religious, contained lengthy obituary notices which were highly eulogistic of the man and his work. He had died at the very height of his power and usefulness, yet his life had been so busy that the labor of half a dozen ordinary men had been condensed into it. It was difficult for his congregation to believe that they never would again hear the rich, magnetic voice of their beloved pastor. There were demonstrations of sorrow on every hand; the great heart of the public was moved and throbbed with sympathy and grief.

The announcement was made at once that the body would be removed from Mentone to London, and that a public funeral would be held. The obsequies were attended by thousands of all religious denominations, and all classes of people. Such a demonstration has seldom been witnessed even in the great metropolis. Every evidence of the respect in which Mr. Spurgeon was held was manifested, while all expressed sincere sorrow that his wonderful life-work was finished.

It was gratifying to know that his last days were cheered by the tender ministries of his family and friends, while he expressed his unflinching faith in the great truths he had taught, and his uncomplaining submission to the will of that gracious providence which has a purpose even in the sparrow's fall. He desired further life only that he might carry on the work to which all his powers had been devoted.

As he had spoken by his living voice to myriads, so by his death he gave a more impressive lesson to the world. At the age of fifty-seven he was called up higher, and "all the trumpets of heaven sounded," and his work, which was not to be measured merely by years, was ended.

And now the great champion of the evangelistic faith, the flaming zealot, the magnetic orator, the prolific author, the one man who more than any other affected the whole religious world, is laid to his final rest.

Peace to his honored ashes! May his rest be as sweet and satisfying, as his life was laborious and crowned with suffering.