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

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Rev. C. H. Spurgeon: The Story of His Life and Labors.

CHAPTER V.
Successful Labors.

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RETURNING home, the industrious pastor found abundance of important work awaiting him. During the April previous the land had been secured at Stockwell for the ORPHAN HOUSES. The work of preparation for their erection had been so far advanced that a great festival was arranged, and on Monday, September 9, 1867, a party of some four thousand, persons assembled at Stockwell, a large proportion of the company being collectors; and it was part of the programme for the foundation-stones of three of the houses to be laid, and for the numerous collectors to lay on the stones their respective contributions. It was an auspicious day for Mr. Spurgeon, for his deacons and church-members. A widely extended interest had been felt in the work, and the occasion became a grand holiday in that southern suburb of London. Three of the houses were thus far advanced in their progress, namely, the Silver Wedding House, the Merchants' House, and the Workmen's House. The united sum the collectors laid upon the stones amounted to eleven thousand dollars.

A Home for Orphans.

The entire spectacle was both novel and touching. Prayers were offered on the occasion, the influence of which it is believed will be felt throughout all time. Appropriate hymns were sung, each ceremony being conducted with verses specially prepared, the first of which was as follows:

Accept, O Lord, the grateful love

Which yields this house to Thee;

And on the Silver Wedding House

Let blessings ever be.

It was announced at the close of the ceremony that in addition to the one hundred thousand dollars given by Mrs. Hillyard, the money in hand was then twenty-seven thousand five hundred dollars. The assembly returned home highly delighted with the service and the glad tidings they had heard, whilst the pastor, worn out with fatigue and anxiety, retired home to rest.

The mental and physical strain of such heavy responsibilities was too much for Mr. Spurgeon, who was soon after laid aside quite ill. Although physically prostrate, his mind was in active exercise; and after being a sufferer for two months, he wrote an article for his magazine entitled, "On My Back," in which he submissively said, that after two months of ill health and severe pain, yet he believed there was a limit to sickness, and that Jesus knew all about it, feeling assured that the design of sickness was divinely good. This long absence from the pulpit led to the appointment of his brother, James Archer Spurgeon, as co-pastor to the church at the Tabernacle, and he officially entered on those duties in January, 1868.

Busy with Pen and Voice.

Although the year 1868 did not furnish occasion for such important events as the preceding one, yet was there much earnest work done by Mr. Spurgeon at his Tabernacle. Not able to do so much physical work, he used his pen very freely. He wrote two articles for his magazine to advocate the claims of the Colportage Association. In March he delivered at the Tabernacle a lecture on "Our History and Work," with Mr. W. McArthur, M. P., in the chair. He also wrote an interesting article relating incidents in the life of his grandfather. In the month of May he preached the Sermon to Young Men at Mr. Martin's Chapel, Westminster, on behalf of the London Missionary Society-- a service rendered the more cheerfully, remembering as he did, the prophetic words of good Richard Knill, that he would preach in the largest chapel in London. That was probably the largest chapel he had preached in, excepting his own. During the same month he spoke at the Breakfast Meeting of the Congregational Union.

Generous Donations.

In the month of March a generous friend sent to the pastor five thousand dollars for the College and five thousand dollars for the Orphanage-- such instances of liberality amply testifying the high

estimation in which the noble enterprises of Mr. Spurgeon were held by the public. On his birthday, June 19th, a great meeting was held, and liberal contributions made for the Orphanage.

Bright as are these spots in the life of the pastor, and in his work at the Tabernacle and its belongings, yet there hung over his home all the time a dark shadow which Divine Providence saw fit to place there. Mrs. Spurgeon had long been a great sufferer, and to alleviate her sorrows, if possible, a very painful operation had to be undertaken. The most skilful surgeons of the land were engaged, under the direction of Sir James Simpson, of Edinburgh. Prayer was made for her by the whole church, and, by the blessing of God, the operation was so far successful that her sufferings were alleviated and her life prolonged; but it has been a life of pain and weakness, though with less of anguish.

A Jubilant Note.

A gratifying fact is recorded by Mr. Spurgeon this year, who publicly acknowledges the kindness of Dr. Palfrey, of Finsbury Square, for his gratuitous and generous professional attendance on the poor members of the Tabernacle.

At Christmastide, and at the opening of the year, the claims of Mr. Spurgeon's benevolent agencies were remembered by his many friends, who sent him of their worldly substance with generous hands, so that he commences the first number of "The Sword and the Trowel" for 1869 with a most jubilant note: "Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

He also made the announcement that a gentleman in Australia had written to say he intended to reprint his sermons weekly in that far-off land, to give them a yet wider circulation.

From the very commencement of his ministry strange tales had been put into circulation by his detractors, most of which Mr. Spurgeon passed by in silence. Several very, ludicrous speeches were attributed to him soon after he became popular in London. In the midst of his work, at the opening of the year 1869, the voice of the slanderer was again heard, and many were troubling the busy pastor to know how true were the statements in circulation respecting him.

Absurd Stories.

In reply to all these, under the head of "Silly Tales," he wrote in his magazine:

"Friends who write us about silly tales may save themselves the trouble. We have been enabled in our ministry and in our walk before God so to act, through grace, that we have given no occasion for the slanderers, save only that we have kept the faith, and been very jealous for the Lord God of Israel. Many of the absurd stories still retailed everywhere are the very same libels which were repeated concerning Rowland Hill and others long gone to their rest."

Having seen much of the folly too frequently exhibited at funerals, he published his views, with the apt title, "Funerals; or a Black Business," in which, after exposing the folly of using feathers and

gold-headed sticks in carrying a dead body to the grave, he observes:

"I would sooner be eaten by crows than have pride and pomp feeding on my little savings which are meant for my bereaved wife and children, and not for unsuitable, untimely, and unholy show.

I have heard that more than four millions of money are squandered every year in funeral fopperies. The money buys or hires silk scarfs, brass nails, feathers for horses, kid gloves and gin for the mutes, and white satin and black cloth for the worms. It seems to me to be mighty fine nonsense, more for the pride of the living than the honor of the dead, more for the profit of the undertaker than any one else."

Attack of Small-Pox.

In June of that year the first report of the Orphanage was issued, which plainly set forth how earnestly the work had been carried on for it in having the houses erected and in getting them furnished and occupied. Twenty-nine boys were then in residence, one of whom was the son of one of the workmen who had assisted in building the Workmen's House, the father having died after the house was erected.

Taking a short holiday in July, Mr. Spurgeon, accompanied by a friend, climbed the Summit of Hindhead, in the South of England, then paid a brief visit to the Continent. Soon after his return home, in October, he was entirely laid aside from pastoral work by a slight attack of small-pox. His friends became seriously anxious about him, and special prayer was made again and again for his recovery. It came slowly, but in anticipation thereof the first article in the magazine for November was "A Sermon from A Sick Preacher." Possessed of such mighty faith in God, and with such indomitable courage, Pastor Spurgeon found opportunities for doing good, whilst others are considering what had best be done. He even wrote directions "How to Bear Affliction."

New Year's Letter.

During the progress of his recovery he wrote a New Year's Letter to his ministering brethren, which commences his magazine for 1870, in which, with much affectionate earnestness, he urges them, even by special means, if ordinary ones fail, to aim at the salvation of the souls of their congregations, enforcing this duty upon them by the example of the Ritualists, who are zealous, working to spread their delusions, especially amongst the poor, with whom they know how to succeed by bribes of bread and clothing. He says he writes as a sick man, but feels the urgency and importance of soul-winning.

The prostrate condition of the pastor's health for nearly three months made it necessary for him to appeal with his pen for the aid of his friends in sustaining the benevolent works of the Tabernacle. In March, 1870, his appeal took the following form:

"The pastorate of a church of four thousand members, the direction of all its agencies, the care of many churches arising from the College work; the selection, education, and guidance in their settlements of the students; the oversight of the Orphanage, the editing

of a magazine, the production of numerous volumes, the publication of a weekly sermon, an immense correspondence, a fair share in public and denominational action, and many other labors, besides the incessant preaching of the Word, give us a right to ask of our friends that we be not allowed to have an anxious thought about the funds needed for our enterprises."

Future Punishment.

This remarkable picture of energy and activity will scarcely be surpassed by any man living, if indeed it can be equalled by more than one in a million, even in this industrious age. But there were other duties pressing on Mr. Spurgeon's mind at the time, which he could not throw off. For some months previously a controversy had been warmly carried on in the columns of the "Christian World" newspaper advocating a curious system of future punishment ending in annihilation. The editor of the paper prohibited in his columns the publication of any letters on the opposite side, excepting only what Mr. Spurgeon might write. Mr. Spurgeon wrote to the editor, pointing out that his conduct was not quite frank, and declining on his part to help the agitation, telling him that the words of our Lord-- "These shall go away into everlasting punishment"-- finally settled the point; and he held that the publication of views which are opposed to that declaration, and the views themselves, were equally dangerous.

A Controversy.

Greatly were the funds of the college aided by the lectures which its President gave from time to time on its behalf. After one of his visits to Italy Mr. Spurgeon delivered a very interesting and lively lecture on "Rome, and what I saw and heard there." Some of the reporters for the daily press-- not a few of whom are Jesuits-- misrepresented some very material portions of the lecture in their abridged account. Mr. Spurgeon was obliged to defend himself; and what he said against such insidious foes in the pages of his own magazine led to another kindred topic being brought before the public about the same time, when these same reporters misled the public mind by applying to King Victor Immanuel of Italy a prayer which belonged only to Immanuel, Victor over sin, the man Christ Jesus.

In May, 1870, Mr. Spurgeon sent forth a new work entitled "Feathers for Arrows," intended to supply preachers and teachers with useful material for filling up their sermons, lectures, and addresses. Ten thousand copies of the book were sold in three months.

The Bible in the Public Schools.

The public mind was considerably agitated at that time by the action of the School Board in reference to religious teaching in their schools; some wanting to exclude the reading of the Bible from them, and so deprive the upgrowing population of the use of the best book in the language. A large meeting was held in Exeter Hall, in July, in defence of the Bible being daily read in elementary schools. Mr. Spurgeon took the chair on the occasion. The result of the meeting was, the Bible retains its place as a daily school book. The wisdom of the decision then made has been abundantly manifested since, and

especially so by the great gathering of Board-School children in the Crystal Palace in July, 1877, when some thousands of prizes were publicly given to the pupils for proficiency in knowledge of the Bible, and when it was most convincingly shown that parents in London (excepting only a few Jews) do not object to their children being taught daily from the Word of God.

The special religious services held in February, at the Tabernacle, were seasons of much blessing. More than one hundred members were added to the church in one month. The people went to the services expecting to receive good, and they were not disappointed.

Severe Attack of Gout.

Soon after the annual College supper, which was held in March, 1871, at which the sum of seven thousand five hundred dollars was given Mr. Spurgeon was laid aside by a more than usually severe attack of gout, which confined him indoors for three long, weary months; yet in the midst of all his pain and suffering he wrote in July of the great mercies he had received from the hand of God, and by the bounty of his friends to the Orphanage and the College. It was at the close of this protracted attack of bodily pain that he was privileged to preach the sermon which forms No. 1,000 of his published discourses. Its second title is "Bread enough and to spare," and it is based on Luke xv. 17. It was the delight of the pastor to receive from a friend five thousand dollars on behalf of the College, in honor of the event just named. Who would not pray that God's blessing may rest forever on that friend?

Taking the advice of his friends, Mr. Spurgeon proceeded to the Continent for a short tour and for rest. His observant eye was constantly discovering some passing beauty which his ever-ready pencil recorded in his note-book, a book which contains a store of incidents which serve to enrich his conversation and fill up his magazine. Accordingly, taking Jersey and Guernsey on his way, we find before the end of the year an interesting article from his pen, on St. Brelade's Bay.

Pilgrimage to Sunny Italy.

As the cold raw winter weather set in, the beloved pastor was urged by his friends to seek a warmer climate. Illness in a severe form again overtook him, on the second day of which he received a telegram from Boston, America, offering most liberal terms to him if he would go to that country and deliver a series of lectures. So large a sum would have been a strong temptation to most men, but not so to this minister of Jesus Christ, whose prompt reply was, "he had neither time nor strength to go to America." Instead of journeying westward for personal gain, he started on a pilgrimage to sunny Italy and the South of France, taking what he designated a Scriptural holiday, a forty days' rest. Accordingly, leaving gloomy December in England, he spent that month in visiting Pompeii, Venice, Florence, Rome, Naples, and France-- a fitting holiday after having completed nineteen years' labor in London.

In taking a survey of the work of the year, for the preface to his magazine, Mr. Spurgeon sums up the record by saying it had been a year of spiritual drought in the churches generally, but at the Tabernacle they had witnessed much prosperity, and the trained pastors who had gone out from them had been

also blessed in like manner. Eleven students were appointed to pastoral duty during 1872. During this year, also, Archibald G. Brown opened his large Tabernacle in the East of London. It is a building for extent and variety of Christian work second only to Mr. Spurgeon's. Mr. Brown is one of the most successful students trained in the Pastors' College.

Results of Overwork.

In the hope that the genial sunshine of Southern Europe, in which he has passed out of the old into the new year, would have established his health for renewed efforts, the pastor appeared once more at the Tabernacle, and at the church meeting in January, 1873, he had the gratification of finding one hundred and thirty-five new members to be received into fellowship, thus demonstrating that there was life in the church, though its chief pastor had been away. The cold, raw, damp weather continuing with the new year, he was again prevented from leaving his own home, and for many weeks he was unable to preach on the Sabbath. How great a trial that silence was to the preacher, none so well knew as himself. Sorrowing greatly at the privation both to himself and his church, he yet submitted without murmur to the will of God.

Shut in from the outer world, he had an opportunity of surveying the progress of the work which was being done at the Tabernacle. The College reports exhibited the outposts which had already been reached by the students, one of whom was laboring, to set forth Jesus as the only Saviour of sinners, in China; one in Sydney, one in Tasmania, one in Adelaide, two in Madrid, one in Ontario, one in Ohio, one in Philadelphia, one in South Africa, and one in Toronto. What a vast prospect of work to be done in the intermediate spaces between each one of those missionary agents and the Tabernacle!

Thousands of Church Members.

At the Annual Church Meeting held in February, 1873, the total membership was reported at 4,417. The losses during the previous year had been 263, the additions were 571, leaving a net increase for the year of 308 living members. Well might both pastor and deacons rejoice at the presence of the Lord God in their midst. At this date came a renewed application from the United States to come over and lecture. Note the preacher's reply:

"An American firm offer[s] Mr. Spurgeon twenty-five thousand dollars to deliver twenty-five lectures in that country, at one thousand dollars each and further arrangements can be made for one hundred lectures. Although the remuneration offered is very far beyond anything our beloved people are likely to give us, we prefer to have the gospel according to our Lord's words preached freely, rather than to use the Lord's time for earning money for our own purse."

Fisk Jubilee Singers.

Always sympathizing with the oppressed, it did not Surprise any one to learn that the Fisk Jubilee Singers received an early invitation from the pastor and deacons to give one of their concerts in the

Metropolitan Tabernacle. It would be difficult to determine which party experienced the most delight, the colored singers to go and see and hear Mr. Spurgeon speak in his own church, or his congregation to welcome, with all the heartiness they could manifest, those liberated slaves, whose vocal powers had by anticipation preceded their visit, to insure them a hearty greeting. It was indeed a pleasant hour, that which introduced the singers to the vast mass of people which crowded every inch of space in the building to hear them. Indeed, hundreds had to go away, unable to crowd in anywhere within sight or hearing. And the collection which followed it was right royal in amount. They cleared about eleven hundred dollars for their University by singing at the Tabernacle alone.

The effect on the mind of the pastor himself, he thus describes in his own magazine:

"The melodies were rendered by our emancipated friends in a manner altogether unique: we have never heard anything like it; pure nature untrammelled by rule, pouring forth its notes as freely as the wild birds in the spring. The people were charmed: our intercourse with the choir was very pleasant."

As soon as the singers arrived in London on their second tour, they received an earnest invitation to repeat their visit to the Metropolitan Tabernacle.

Pointed Preaching.

As the practical pastor was again charged with being too personal in preaching, in one of his articles on "Personal Preaching," Mr. Spurgeon remarks:

"We aim at speaking personally and pointedly to all our hearers; and they are the best judges whether we accomplish it, and also as to whether we use language at which any man ought to be offended. Very seldom does a week occur without our receiving letters from persons unknown to us, thanking us for advising or comforting them in our sermons, the parties evidently being under the impression that some friend had communicated their cases to us, though, indeed, we knew nothing whatever of them. Frequently we have had apologetic notes acknowledging the justice of the rebuke, and correcting us in some minor details of a description supposed to refer to a special sinner; whereas we were unaware of the writer's existence. We have ceased to regard these incidents as curious, for we remember that the Word of God is 'a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.'"

A Rally for Missions.

Strange and interesting facts have often reached him. At the commencement of Mr. Spurgeon's ministry he related having received a letter from a poor shoemaker during the week, who said that he was the man who had kept his shop open on the Sunday, who had sold only one pair of old boots for one-and-eight-pence and that having broken the Sabbath for so small a sum and been so publicly exposed, none but God could have told the facts to the preacher, he had resolved to break the Sabbath no longer. He became converted, and joined the church; but the preacher had no knowledge of the

man till he wrote about himself.

During the spring weather of '73 Mr. Spurgeon did not recover his accustomed health, neither did he give up his accustomed work, excepting when really unable to leave home. At the end of April he preached one of the annual sermons before the Wesleyan Missionary Society, in Great Queen-street Chapel, to the largest congregation ever assembled on a similar occasion, at the close of which the collection reached an amount greater than had ever before been made for that object.

In June he took part in the services connected with laying memorial stones for a new Baptist chapel near his own residence at Clapham. He stated that it had long been in his heart to build a chapel in that locality, and he had laid aside one thousand dollars to commence the work, but all his efforts had failed. He was glad that others were doing what he had not been able to do. He had himself been delighted that year to preach for the Wesleyans, and to speak for the Independents; but he urged all Baptists residing in that district to give to the church which intended to assemble in that new erection. In the early part of the year Mr. Spurgeon had made a collection at the Tabernacle on behalf of the new Surrey Chapel for Mr. Newman Hall, which reached five hundred dollars.

Laying a Corner Stone.

In taking a survey of the literary work of "The Sword and the Trowel" for the year, the editor in his preface for 1873 remarks:

"I have been hunting up topics of interest with no small degree of anxiety, sending forth the magazine with earnest desires to win a hearing and to produce good results of all kinds. I edit the periodical most conscientiously, giving it my personal attention, and I spare no pains to make it as good as I can."

The applications made to the College for pastors during 1873 were more numerous than had before been made. Thirty of these were supplied. Out of that number two were sent to Spain, one to India, one to China, one to Prince Edward Island, one to Ireland, and one to Scotland. On the 14th of October the foundation-stone of the new College buildings was laid by the President. It was a day which will long be remembered with delight. The people on the occasion gave five thousand dollars, and the students gave fifteen hundred more; but the chief joy of the day was the whole-day prayer-meeting which the students held, that the divine blessing might rest on the work, and upon all connected with the College.

The month of January, 1879, will long be remembered. Having completed the twenty-fifth year of his pastorate, it was decided to celebrate the occasion, which was termed THE PASTORAL SILVER WEDDING, by presenting Mr. Spurgeon with a liberal testimonial. The amount proposed to be raised was twenty-five thousand dollars. A large bazaar was opened, which was well supported, and with the subscription lists the proceeds exceeded the amount originally proposed.

With his usual large-heartedness he declined accepting the amount for his private benefit. There was one important institution connected with the Tabernacle that needed to be placed on a surer footing, and this was a fitting opportunity for securing that end. The Almshouses, affording homes for

nineteen poor widows, required a more permanent support, and all the proceeds of the "Pastoral Silver Wedding Fund" were devoted to this laudable object, thereby insuring its future maintenance.

["LIFE AND WORKS" CHAPTER 6](#)