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

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

**CHAPTER VIII.**  
**Annual Report of Stockwell Orphanage.**

A Devoted Woman.-- Faith Insures Success.-- Story of an Old Puritan.-- Need of a Double Income.-- Health of the Orphanage.-- An Appeal Hard to Resist.-- Young Choristers.-- Spontaneous Charity.-- A Notable Year.-- Enlarging the Bounds.-- Girls' Orphanage.-- Liberal Response to Appeals for Help.-- The Miracle of Faith and Labor.

IN issuing the twelfth annual report of the Stockwell Orphanage the Committee writes:

With profound gratitude to our Heavenly Father we issue the Twelfth Report of the Stockwell Orphanage, and our gratitude will be shared, we doubt not, by all who have given of their substance towards the maintenance and development of the institution. We therefore invite all our readers to "rejoice with us" in the tokens of the divine favor which has crowned our labors during another year. "The Lord hath been mindful of us: He will bless us."

When we remember how this gracious work began by the consecrated thought of a holy woman, and then grew into an actual gift from her hand, and further developed, by the large help of others, into houses and schools, infirmary and dining-hall, and all manner of provision for destitute children, we feel bound to cry, "What hath God wrought!" Our God has supplied all our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. The Story of the Stockwell Orphanage will be worth telling in heaven when the angels shall learn from the Church the manifold wisdom and goodness of the Lord.

### **Unfailing Friends.**

Incidents which could not be published on earth will be made known in the heavenly city, where every secret thing, shall be revealed. How every need has been supplied before it has become a want; how guidance has been given before questions have become anxieties; how friends have been raised up in unbroken succession, and how the One Great Friend has been ever present, no single pen can ever record. To care for the fatherless has been a work of joyful faith all along, and in waiting upon God for supplies we have experienced great delight. The way of faith in God is the best possible. We could not have carried on the work by a method more pleasant, more certain, more enduring. If we had depended upon annual subscribers we should have had to hunt them up and pay a heavy poundage, or perhaps fail to keep up the roll; if we had advertised continually for funds our outlay might have brought in a scanty return; but dependence upon God has been attended with no such hazards.

### **Watchful Care.**

We have done our best as men of business to keep the Orphanage before the public, but we have desired in all things to exercise faith as servants of God. Whatever weakness we have personally to confess and deplore, there is no weakness in the plan of faith in God. Our experience compels us to declare that He is the living God; the God that heareth prayer; the God who will never permit those who trust in Him to be confounded. The business world has passed through trying times during the last few years, but the Orphanage has not been tried; men of great enterprise have failed, but the home for the fatherless has not failed; for this enterprise is in the divine hand, an eye watches over it which neither slumbers nor sleeps.

Let the people of God be encouraged by the fact of the existence and prosperity of the Stockwell Orphanage. Miracles have come to an end, but God goes on to work great wonders. The rod of Moses is laid aside, but the rod and staff of the Great Shepherd still compass us.

### **Story of an Old Puritan.**

The son of an old Puritan rode some twenty miles to meet his father, who came a similar distance to the half-way house. "Father," said the son, "I have met with a special providence, for my horse stumbled at least a dozen times, and yet it did not fall." "Ah," replied the father, "I have had a providence quite as remarkable, for my horse did not stumble once all the way." This last is the happy picture of the Orphanage for some time past, and, indeed, throughout its whole career; we have never had to issue mournful appeals because of exhausted resources, and in this we must see and admire the good hand of the Lord.

We now enter more fully upon a fresh stage of our existence; we shall need to double the amount of our present income, and we shall have it from the ever-opened hand of the Lord our God. Friends will be moved to think of our great family, for our Great Remembrancer will stir them up. The duty of each Christian to the mass of destitute orphanhood is clear enough, and if pure minds are stirred up by

way of remembrance there will be no lack in the larder, no want in the wardrobe, no failing in the funds of our Orphan House.

We labor under one great difficulty. Many people say, "Mr. Spurgeon will be sure to get the money, and there is no need for us to send." It is clear that if everybody talked so, our president's name would be a hindrance instead of a help. He will be the means of finding money for our institution, for the Lord will honor his faith and hear his prayers, and be glorified in him; but there will be no thanks due to those who fabricate an excuse for themselves out of the faithfulness of God.

### **Give Ye Them to Eat.**

This difficulty, however, does not distress us. go forward, believing that when we have twice our present number of children the Lord will send us double supplies. We cannot entertain the suspicion that the girls will be left without their portion, for we, being evil, care as much for our daughters as for our sons, and our Heavenly Father will do the same. It is well, however, to remind our friends of this, that each helper of the Orphanage may try to interest another generous heart, and so enlarge the circle of our friends. It may be that by such means the Great Provider will supply us; for we know that when our Lord fed the multitude He first said to His disciples, "Give ye them to eat."

The sanitary condition of the Orphanage has been all that we could desire. Considering that so large a proportion of the children come to us in a delicate condition, and some with the taint of hereditary disease, it is a matter for devout thankfulness that their general health is so good, and that so few deaths have occurred. Out of the entire number who have left, only one boy was unable to enter upon a situation in consequence of an enfeebled constitution. We owe it to an ever-watchful Providence that, during the prevailing epidemic, not a single case of fever or smallpox has occurred in the institution.

### **Religious Culture.**

Family worship is conducted twice daily, before the morning and evening meals, by the head master or his assistants, the service being taken occasionally by the president, or a member of the committee, or a visitor to the institution who may happen to be present. The Word of God is read and expounded, hymns sung, and prayer offered, and the whole of the boys repeat a text selected for the day. A service is conducted for the elder boys every Wednesday evening by Mr. W. J. Evans, when addresses are given by ministers and other friends.

During their term of residence in the institution all the boys are total abstainers, no alcoholic liquors being allowed except by order of the doctor, but most of them are pledged abstainers, with the approval of their friends. Band of Hope meetings are held every month, when the children receive instruction from competent speakers; and lectures are given at intervals during the winter months.

### **The Cry of the Orphan.**

The operations of the institution reveal to the managers the wide-spread necessity which exists. The cry of the orphan comes from every part of our beloved land, and the plea of the widow for Christian sympathy and help is restricted to no one class of the community. Faces once radiant with smiles are saddened with grief, for the dark shadow which death casts falls everywhere. How true are the lines of the poet:

"There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended, But has one vacant chair."

It is a constant joy to the president and the committee that they are able to mitigate to such a large extent the misery and need which are brought under their notice; and it must be an equal joy to the subscribers to know that their loving contributions furnish the sinews for this holy war.

As our Sunday-school is affiliated to the Sundayschool Union, we allow the boys who desire to do so to sit for examination. Of the candidates who were successful at the last examination, three gained prizes, twelve first-class certificates, and thirty-eight second-class certificates.

### **Young Choristers.**

During the year the boys took part in the Crystal Palace Musical Festivals, arranged by the Band of Hope Union and the Tonic Sol-fa Association.

In order to make the character and claims of the institution more widely known, the head master and the secretary have held meetings in London and the provinces, and the success which has crowned their efforts is of a very gratifying character. The boys who accompany them to sing and to recite furnish a powerful appeal by their appearance and conduct, and commend the institution to which they owe so much. The local papers speak in terms of the highest praise of their services, and thus a most effective advertisement is secured without any cost to the institution. So far as the boys are concerned these trips have an educational value, for they get to know a great deal of the products and industries of different parts of the country, besides securing the advantage of being brought into contact with Christian families where they reside during their visit.

The amount realized during the year, after defraying all expenses, is \$3,320, and our thanks are hereby tendered to all who assisted in any way to secure such a splendid result.

### **Spontaneous Benevolence.**

The committee record with thankfulness that there has been no lack in the funds contributed for the efficient maintenance of the institution. Friends prefer to give donations rather than pledge themselves to send annual subscriptions, and the benevolence thus manifested is purely spontaneous. The admirable custom of making shirts for the boys is still continued by the young ladies of an educational establishment, who send in a supply of two hundred shirts every year. Their efforts are supplemented by several working associations, but the supply is not yet equal to the demand, and we cordially invite the co-operation of others, to whom we shall be glad to send samples and patterns.

The work of caring for the widow and the fatherless is specially mentioned by the Holy Spirit as one of the most acceptable modes of giving outward expression to pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, and therefore the Lord's people will not question that they should help in carrying it out. Will it need much pleading? If so, we cannot use it, as we shrink from marring the willingness which is the charm of such a service. The work is carried on in dependence upon God, and as His blessing evidently rests upon it, we are confident the means will be forthcoming as the need arises. While commending the work to our Heavenly Father in prayer, we deem it right to lay before the stewards of His bounty the necessities and claims of the institution.

### **A Memorable Year.**

The year 1880 will be a memorable one in the history of the institution, and we record with gratitude the fact that the foundation-stones of the first four houses for the Girls' Orphanage were laid on the 22d of June, when the president's birthday was celebrated, It was a joy to all present that Mrs. Spurgeon was able to lay the memorial stone of "The Sermon House, the gift of C. H. Spurgeon and his esteemed publishers, Messrs. Passmore and Alabaster." The memorial stone of another house, the gift of Mr. W. R. Rickett, and called "The Limes, in tender memory of five beloved children," was laid by C. H. Spurgeon, who made a touching allusion to the sad event thus commemorated. Mrs. Samuel Barrow laid the memorial stone of the house called "The Olives," the amount for its erection having been given and collected by her beloved husband. The trustees of the institution, having subscribed the funds for the erection of a house, the treasurer, Mr. William Higgs, laid, in their name, the memorial stone which bears the inscription, "Erected by the Trustees of the Orphanage to express their joy in this service of love."

### **Plans for Enlarged Usefulness.**

At the present moment the buildings of the Orphanage form a great square, enclosing a fine space for air and exercise. Visitors generally express great surprise at the beauty and openness of the whole establishment. Much remains to be done before the institution is completely accommodated; there is needed an infirmary for the girls, and till that is built one of the houses will have to be used for that purpose, thus occupying the space which would otherwise be filled by thirty or forty children; this should be attended to at an early date.

Baths and washhouses will be urgently required for the girls, and we propose to make them sufficiently commodious for the girls to do the washing for the entire community of five hundred children, thus instructing them in household duties and saving considerable expense. We would not spend a sixpence needlessly. No money has been wasted in lavish ornament or in hideous ugliness. The buildings are not a workhouse or a county jail, but a pleasant residence for those children of whom God declares himself to be the Father. The additional buildings which we contemplate are not for luxury, but for necessary uses; and as we endeavor to lay out money with judicious economy, we feel sure that we shall be trusted in the future as in the past.

### **Honored Names.**

Are there not friends waiting to take a share in the Stockwell Orphanage Building? They cannot better commemorate personal blessings, nor can they find a more suitable memorial for departed friends. No storied urn or animated bust can half so well record the memory of beloved ones as a stone in an Orphan House. Most of the buildings are already appropriated as memorials in some form or other, and only a few more will be needed. Very soon all building operations will be complete, and those who have lost the opportunity of becoming shareholders in the Home of Mercy may regret their delay.

At any rate, none who place a stone in the walls of the Stockwell Orphanage will ever lament that they did this deed of love to the little ones for whom Jesus cares. Honored names are with us already engraven upon the stones of this great Hostelry of the All-merciful; and many others are our co-workers whose record is on high, though unknown among men. Who will be the next to join us in this happy labor? When the whole of the buildings are complete, the institution will afford accommodation for five hundred children, and prove a memorial of Christian generosity and of the loving-kindness of the Lord.

### **The Girls' Orphanage.**

The following description of the Girls' Orphanage is from Mr. Spurgeon's own pen:

In our address at the presentation of the late testimonial, we disclaimed all personal credit for the existence of any one of the enterprises over which we preside, because each one of them has been forced upon us. "I could not help undertaking them," was our honest and just confession. This is literally true, and another illustration of this fact is now to come before the Christian public.

Several of us have long cherished the idea that the time would come in which we should have an Orphanage for girls as well as for boys. It would be hard to conceive why this should *not* be. It seems ungallant, not to say unrighteous, to provide for children of one sex only, for are not all needy little ones dear to Christ, with whom there is neither male nor female? We do not like to do such things by halves, and it is but half doing the thing to leave the girls out in the cold. We have all along wished to launch out in the new direction, but we had quite enough on hand for the time being, and were obliged to wait. The matter has been thought of, and talked about, and more than half promised, but nothing has come of it till this present, and now, as we believe at the exact moment, the hour has struck, and the voice of God in providence says, "Go forward."

### **The Work Begun.**

The fund for the Girls' Orphanage has commenced, and there are about a dozen names upon the roll at the moment of our writing. The work will be carried on with vigor as the Lord shall be pleased to send the means, but it will not be unduly pushed upon any one so as to be regarded as a new burden, for we want none but cheerful helpers, who will count it a privilege to have a share in the good work.

We shall employ no collector to make a percentage by dunning the unwilling, and shall make no private appeals to individuals. There is the case: if it be a good one and you are able to help it, please do so; but if you have no wish in that direction, our Lord's work does not require us to go a-begging like a pauper; and we do not intend to do so.

We have never been in debt yet, nor have we had a mortgage upon any of our buildings, nor have we even borrowed money for a time, but we have always been able to pay as we have gone on. Our prayer is that we may never have to come down to a lower platform and commence borrowing.

### **Abundance of Girls.**

It has often happened that we have been unable to assist widows in necessitous circumstances with large families, because there did not happen to be a *boy* of the special age required by the rules of our Boys' Orphanage. There were several girls, but then we could not take girls, and however deserving the case, we have been unable to render any assistance to very deserving widows, simply because their children were not boys. This is one reason why we need a Girls' Orphanage.

Everywhere also there is an outcry about the scarcity of good servants, honest servants, industrious servants, well-trained servants. We know where to find the sisters who will try to produce such workers out of the little ones who will come under their care.

We have succeeded by God's grace and the diligent care of our masters and matrons in training the *Ids* so that they have become valuable to business men: why should not the same divine help direct us with the lassies, so that domestics and governesses should go forth from us as well as clerks and artisans? We believe that there are many friends who will take a special interest in the girls, and that there are some whose trades would more readily enable them to give articles suitable for girls than those which are useful to boys.

### **Help for Mary and Maggie.**

Here is a grand opportunity for Christian people with means to take their places among the first founders of this new institution, and if they judge that such a work will be good and useful, we hope that they will without fail, *and wilhoid delay*, come to our assistance in this fresh branch of service. We cannot afford to lose a single penny from the funds for the boys, but this work for the girls must be something extra, and above. You helped Willie and Tommy: will you not help Mary and Maggie?

It is very needful to add that foolish persons often say: Mr. Spurgeon can get plenty of money, and needs no help. If all were to talk in this fashion, where would our many works drift to? Mr. Spurgeon does get large sums, but not a penny more than the various works require, and he gets it because God moves His people to give it, as he hopes, good reader, He may move you.

We have no personal end to serve; we do not, directly or indirectly, gain a single penny by the Orphanage, College, or any other societies over which we preside; neither have we any wealthy

persons around us who are at loss to know how to dispose of their property; but our hard-working church keeps continually consecrating its offerings, and our friends far and near think upon us. Our treasury is the bounty of God; our motto is: THE LORD WILL PROVIDE. Past mercy forbids a doubt as to the future, and so in the name of God we set up our banners.

### **Work, not Miracles.**

The girls' part is not yet fully complete, but it soon will be so, and then we must take in the girls. Now it occurs to me to let my friends know the increased need which has arisen, and will arise from the doubling of the number of children. The income must by some means be doubled. My trust is in the Lord alone, for whose sake I bear this burden. I believe that He has led me all along in the erection and carrying on of this enterprise, and I am also well assured that His own hand pointed to the present extension, and supplied the means for making it. I therefore rest in the providence of God alone.

But the food of the children will not drop as manna from heaven, it will be sent in a way which is more beneficial, for the graces of His children will be displayed in the liberality which will supply the needs of the orphans. God will neither feed the children by angels nor by ravens, but by the loving gifts of His people. It is needful, therefore, that I tell my friends of our need, and I do hereby tell them. The institution will need, in rough figures, about one thousand dollars a week. This is a large sum, and when I think of it I am appalled if Satan suggests the question: "What if the money does not come in?"

But it is nothing to the Lord of the whole earth to feed five hundred little ones. He has kept two hundred and fifty boys for these years, and He can do the like for the same number of girls. Only let not His stewards say that there is no need at Stockwell, for there is great and crying need that all my friends should inquire whether they may not wisely render me much more aid than they have done. The buildings are not all finished yet, nor the roads made, but this will soon be accomplished, and then the institution will be in full operation, and its requirements will be great. I have written these lines with a measure of reluctance; and I hope that it is not in unbelief, but as a reasonable service, that I have thus stated the case.

### ["LIFE AND WORKS" CHAPTER 9](#)