

C. H. SPURGEON.

THE
LIFE AND LABORS

-- OF --

CHARLES H. SPURGEON.

-- BY --

S. H. FORD.

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PREFACE.

SEVERAL works, small and large, have been written, embodying the facts in the life of this wonderful man. Among them is a valuable little book by Mr. Stephenson, of England, and quite a large one by George C. Needham, the evangelist.

From these, and from the writings of Mr. Spurgeon, the present unpretentious work is prepared. I have given in its pages my own impressions of the great preacher, and also some facts which I learned from his own lips, from the lips of his venerable father, and from others,—while spending a summer in London.

I believe this little work will fill a place and meet a want not filled or met by any other book, and that it will be an inspiration and a blessing.

Which may the Lord grant.

S. H. F.



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CHAPTER 1.

SPURGEON'S PARENTAGE, BIRTH AND EARLY LIFE.

FEW Americans visit the great city of London who do not, even as a matter of curiosity, seek out the Metropolitan Tabernacle with its world-renowned preacher and its six thousand auditors.

Few men in all England are better known, and few if any, more highly respected than CHARLES H. SPURGEON. In that vast audience is often noticed the great Gladstone, the lordly Tennyson; Nobility and Royalty have been led by impulse or curiosity to mingle in that undistinguishable mass of attentive hearers, and listen to the untitled and unpretending Baptist preacher.

Nor is this a transient wave that has lifted the favorite of fame above the tide but soon to leave him in the trough of the sea. For thirty years, with undiminished power, he has drawn these thousands around him, and sent forth unto all lands burning words which have ceaselessly flashed from his lips.

What kind of a man is this, and what is the secret of his wondrous power?

No architectural beauty, no artistic music, no advertised sensational themes attract or please. No, Spurgeon himself has told the secret of his success. At the anniversary of his fiftieth year,

where some six thousand people attended (though it was held on a week day, at a busy season of the year), he said :

“I feel very much like crying now at the remembrance of all the good and gracious things said to me this day. But let me say this : the blessing which has been here for many years must be entirely attributed to the grace of God and the working of God’s Holy Spirit among you. Let that stand as a matter not only taken for granted, but as a matter felt and distinctly recognized among us. I hope that none of you can say that I have kept back the glorious work of the Holy Spirit. I have striven to remind you of it whenever I spoke—at least I think so. We have not begun and not continued and not ended anything without prayers. We have believed in it up to the hilt. We have not prayed as we should, but still we have so prayed as to prevail, and we are convinced that we owe our success as a church to the work of the Holy Spirit leading us to pray. Nor as a church have we been without a full conviction that if we are honest in our working we must be earnest.”

“Our American friends are generally very ’cute judges, and I have read a great many times their opinion of me, and over and over again they say: ‘He is no orator. We have scores of better preachers in America than Spurgeon; but it is evident that he preaches the Gospel as the majority of our very celebrated men do not preach it.’ Well, I have tried, and I think successfully, to indoctrinate our dear friends with the doctrine of grace. I defy the devil himself ever to get that out of you—if God the Holy Spirit ever puts into you the grand doctrine of substitution, which is certainly the root of everything. You have got that over and over again, and you have got the grip of it, and you will never let it go. I wish to say to all preachers to preach more Christ—more simply and plainly. Yes : fine preaching has no good in it. All the glory of words and the wisdom of men certainly come to nought, but the simple testimony of the good will of God to men, and all His sovereign choice of His own people, this will stand the test, not only the few years which I have preached it, but as many years as all the ages of this world will last till Christ shall come. I thank you all, dear friends, for all your love and kindness to me, and I attribute that in a great measure to the fact that you have been fed with the pure Gospel of the grace of God. I do not believe that the dry dead Gospel of some men could ever have evoked such sympathy in men’s hearts as my Gospel has aroused in yours. I cannot see anything about myself that you should love me. I confess I would not go across the road to hear myself preach.”

CHARLES HADDEN SPURGEON was born at the village of Kelvedon, in Essex, England, June 19th, 1834.

His father and grand father were Congregational ministers. His mother was a devoted Christian. She once said to him, "Ah, Charley, I have often prayed that you might be saved, but never that you should become a Baptist." He smilingly replied, "God has answered your prayer, mother, with his usual bounty, and given you more than you asked."

The father of Charles H. Spurgeon differed very much in appearance and manners from his son. He is nearly six feet tall, a quiet, reticent yet sociable, brotherly man. The writer was introduced to him during an anniversary meeting at the Stockwell Orphanage.

He took my arm and we walked over to a distant part of the green and occupied a garden seat. I alluded to the joy this day must give him—to his sons and grand-sons and especially to Charles. "Yes, yes," he said, "he is a remarkable man, but while these things are reasons for thankfulness they do not elate me. I have my own work to do. I preach the best I can to my congregation at Islington."

I asked him about his wife and the other children. He spoke of them all with great tenderness, and in the course of the conversation told this incident, which it seems had never been mentioned to mortal ear before that evening:

"I had been from home a great deal trying to build up weak congregations, and felt that I was neglecting the religious harmony of my own children, while I was toiling for the good of others. I returned home with these feelings. I opened the front door, and I was surprised to find none of the children about the entry. Going quietly up-stairs, I heard my wife's voice. She was engaged in prayer with the children. I heard her pray for them one by one by name. She came to Charles, and especially prayed for him, for he was of high spirit and daring temper. I listened till she had ended her prayer, and felt, and said, Lord I will go on with thy work, the children will be cared for."

He is still living and is in his 73d year. Old Mrs. Spurgeon is low in stature, like her son. She has a kind word and a smile for all, but perhaps the least assuming lady I met with in all the throngs at that anniversary.

CHAPTER II.

HIS EARLY LIFE—A PROPHECY.

WHEN old enough to leave home, Charles was sent to spend some time with his grandfather, pastor of the Independent church at Stambourne. He was cared for by a loving and pious maiden aunt, and soon showed a precocious interest in religious things. He would sit for hours gazing at the grim figure of Giant Despair, or tracing the adventures of Christian in Bunyan's Pilgrim Progress. He gave marked evidences of that decision of character and boldness of address which have so distinguished his life. On one occasion, when but six years old, he saw a person who had just made a profession of religion, standing in the street in doubtful company. He astonished him by walking up to him and saying: "What doest thou here, Elisha?"

In 1844, when SPURGEON was ten years of age, a preacher who was engaged as agent for the London Missionary Society stayed at the grandfather's house on Friday night, expecting to remain over Sunday and preach at Stambourne. He took a loving interest in young Spurgeon. He made an agreement with the boy that Saturday morning he should show the minister over the garden before breakfast. The flattering request was readily agreed to by the boy. A tap at the door about the dawn roused the child, and he was soon in the garden with his new friend. The conversation soon turned to Jesus and his love. Nor was it mere talk, says Spurgeon in his recollections of the incident. There was a yew-tree arbor cut into the shape of a sugar loaf. The preacher led the boy into this "bower of prayer." He knelt down, and with his arms about the neck of the child, he poured out his soul in prayer for his salvation. The time for his departure arrived, but he did not leave until he had uttered a remarkable prophecy :

"Calling the family together," says Spurgeon, " he took me upon his knee, and I distinctly remember his saying: 'I do not know how it is, but I feel a solemn presentment that this child will preach the gospel to thousands and that God will bless him

to many souls. So sure am I of this, that when my little man preaches in Rowland Hills Chapel [then the largest in London], as he will, I should like him to promise me that he will give out the hymn commencing :

“ God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform. ”

The promise was made, and Spurgeon tells of its fulfillment :

“The prophetic declaration was fulfilled. When I had the pleasure of preaching the word of life in Surrey Chapel, and also when I preached at Mr. Hill’s *first* pulpit at Wootton-under-Edge, the hymn was sung in both places. Did the words of Mr. Knill help to bring about their own fulfillment? I think so. I believed them, and looked forward to the time when I should preach the word. I felt powerfully that no unconverted person might dare to enter the ministry. This made me the more intent on seeking salvation, and more hopeful of it; and when by grace I was enabled to cast myself on the Savior’s love, it was not long before my mouth began to speak of his redemption. How come that sober-minded minister to speak thus to and of one into whose future God alone could see? How came it that he lived to rejoice with his younger brother in the truth of all he had spoken? The answer is plain. But mark one practical lesson : would to God we were all as wise as Richard Knill in habitually sowing beside all waters. Mr. Knill might very naturally have left the minister’s little grandson on the plea that he had other duties of more importance than praying with children; and yet who shall say that he did not effect as much by that simple act of humble ministry as by dozens of sermons addressed to crowded audiences? To me his tenderness in considering the little one was fraught with everlasting consequences, and I must ever feel that his time was well laid out.”

It seems that this loving man, Richard Knill, lived to be present when the young Spurgeon gave out that hymn, and preached to thousands upon thousands in the largest halls in great London. What feelings must have been his! What a reward!

For four years Charles attended school at Colchester, where his parents lived, studying Latin, Greek and French, and carried off the prizes in all competitions. In 1849—now fifteen years of age—he was placed under the care of a Mr. Swindell at Newmarket. Here he became a free-thinker.

“I too,” he says in one of his sermons, “have been like the free thinker. There was an evil hour in which I slipped the anchor of my faith; I cut the cable of my belief; I no longer moored myself hard by the coast of Revelation; I allowed my vessel to drift before the wind, and thus started on the voyage of infidelity. Thank God it is all over now; but I will tell you its brief history—it was one hurried sailing over the tempestuous ocean of free thought.”

From all this drift and doubt and darkness he was soon delivered by the quickening spirit of the Living God.



CHAPTER III.

THE STORY OF HIS CONVERSION.

LIKE Bunyan, Spurgeon felt the "horrors of a great darkness," considering himself the guiltiest sinner that lived. Yet his outward life was pure and moral—"as touching the law blameless." But when the law came, in all its spirituality demanding perfect stainless obedience—"sin revived and he died." He has given us the account of his conversion, which has a volume of deep meaning and interest in it :

"I will tell you how I myself was brought to the knowledge of the truth. It may happen the telling of that may bring some one else to Christ.

"It pleased God in my childhood to convince me of sin. I lived a miserable creature, finding no hope, no comfort, thinking that God would never save me. At last the worst came to the worst—I was miserable; I could scarcely do any thing. My heart was broken to pieces. Six months did I pray—prayed, agonizing with all my heart, and never had an answer. I resolved that in the town that I lived, I would visit every place of worship in order to find out the way of salvation. I felt I was willing to do anything and be anything if God would only forgive me. I set off determined to visit all the chapels, and I went to all places of worship, and though I dearly venerate the men that occupy those pulpits now, and did so then, I am bound to say that I never heard them once fully preach the gospel. I mean by that, they preached truth, great truths, many good truths that were fitting to many of their congregations—spiritually-minded people. But what I wanted to know was: How can I get my sins forgiven? And they never once told me that. I wanted to know how a poor sinner under the sense of sin might find peace with God; and when I went I heard a sermon on, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked," which cut me up worse, but did not say how I might escape. I went again another day and the text was something about the glories of the righteous; but nothing for poor me. I was something like the dog under the table, not allowed to eat

of the children's food. I went time after time and can honestly say I don't know that I ever went without prayer to God, and I am sure there was not a more attentive hearer in all the place than myself, for I panted and longed to understand how I might be saved. At last one stormy day, it snowed so much I could not go to the place I had determined to go to, and I was obliged to stop on the road.

“ And it was a blessed stop to me. I found rather an obscure street and turned down a court, and there was a little chapel. I wanted to go somewhere, but I did not know this place. It was a primitive Methodist chapel. I had heard of these people from many and how they sang so loudly that they made people's head ache ; but that did not matter. I wanted to know how I might be saved, and if they made my head ache ever so much, I did not care. So sitting down the service went on, but no minister came. At last a very thin-looking man came into the pulpit and opened the Bible and read these words: *Look unto me and be ye saved all ye ends of the earth.* Just setting his eyes upon me as if he knew me all by heart, he said: *Young man you are in trouble.* Well, I was, sure enough. Says he: *You will never get out of it unless you look to Christ.* And then lifting up his hands he cried out, as I think only a Primitive Methodist could do: *Look! Look! Look!* *It is only look,* said he. I saw at once the way of salvation. Oh, how I did leap for joy at that moment. I knew not what else he said ; I did not take much notice of it—I was so possessed of that one thought. Like as when the brazen serpent was lifted up ; they only looked and were healed. I had been waiting to do fifty things, but when I heard this word *Look*, what a charming word it seemed to me ; Oh, I looked until I could almost have looked my eyes away ! and in heaven I will *look* on still in my joy unutterable.”

For many years after this occurred, Spurgeon preached in this same chapel. Five hundred hearers were packed there to hear him. It was an anniversary occasion of the church there. He took for his text the memorable words which had lit up his soul just sixteen years before in that very place.

He was now in the noontide of his usefulness and fame.

After giving out the text, he said: “ *These words I heard preached from in this chapel when the Lord converted me.*” And then

pointing to a seat on the left hand of the gallery, he said : “ *I was sitting in that pew when I was converted.*”

All were melted. The preacher could hardly proceed, overpowered by his own emotion.

Spurgeon loves to dwell on sovereign grace of God in his soul's conversion. In his sermon preached in the great Tabernacle in 1856, he said :

“Six years ago to-day, as near as possible at this very hour of the day, I was in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity, but had yet by the grace of God been led to feel the bitterness of that bondage, and to cry out by reason of the soreness of that slavery seeking rest and finding none. I stepped into the house of God and sat there, afraid to look upward lest I should be utterly cut off and lest his fierce wrath should consume me. The minister rose in his pulpit and as I have done this morning, read this text : *Look unto me and be ye saved all ye ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else but me.* I looked that moment. The grace of faith was handed to me that instant—and

Ere since by faith I saw the stream,
His flowing wounds supply ;
Redeeming grace has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.

“I shall never forget that day while memory holds its place ; nor can I help repeating this text, whenever I remember that hour when first I knew the Lord. How strangely gracious. How wonderfully and marvelously kind, that he who heard these words so little time ago for his own soul's profit, should now address you this morning as his hearers upon the same text in the full and confident hope that some poor sinner within these walls may hear the glad tidings of salvation for himself also, and may to-day be turned from darkness to light !”

Spurgeon was raised a pedo-Baptist, had been sprinkled in infancy. But that honest soul of his could not rest satisfied with mere hearsay, or an obedience in which he took no part and of which he had no recollection. His mind was directed intensely to the question of believers' baptism. He wrote to his father (a Pedo-Baptist minister) about it, asking counsel and enforcing his own convictions.

He resided in the family of Mr. Cantlow, a Baptist at New Castle, and assisted him in the school. At length all doubts and difficulties gave way before his clear conviction and force of character. There was no church in New Market—none nearer than seven miles, at a place called Isleham. Here he and Mr. Cantlow *walked* on May 2d, 1851, and he was the next day baptized by his friend—who preached for the little church.

Walking seven miles on a warm day to be baptized—against the desire of his relatives, and against all his earlier prejudices, showed the man. Concerning this obedience of faith, he wrote to his father: “It is very pleasing to me that the day on which I shall openly profess the name of Jesus, is my mother’s birthday. May it be to both of us a foretaste of many glorious and happy days to come.”



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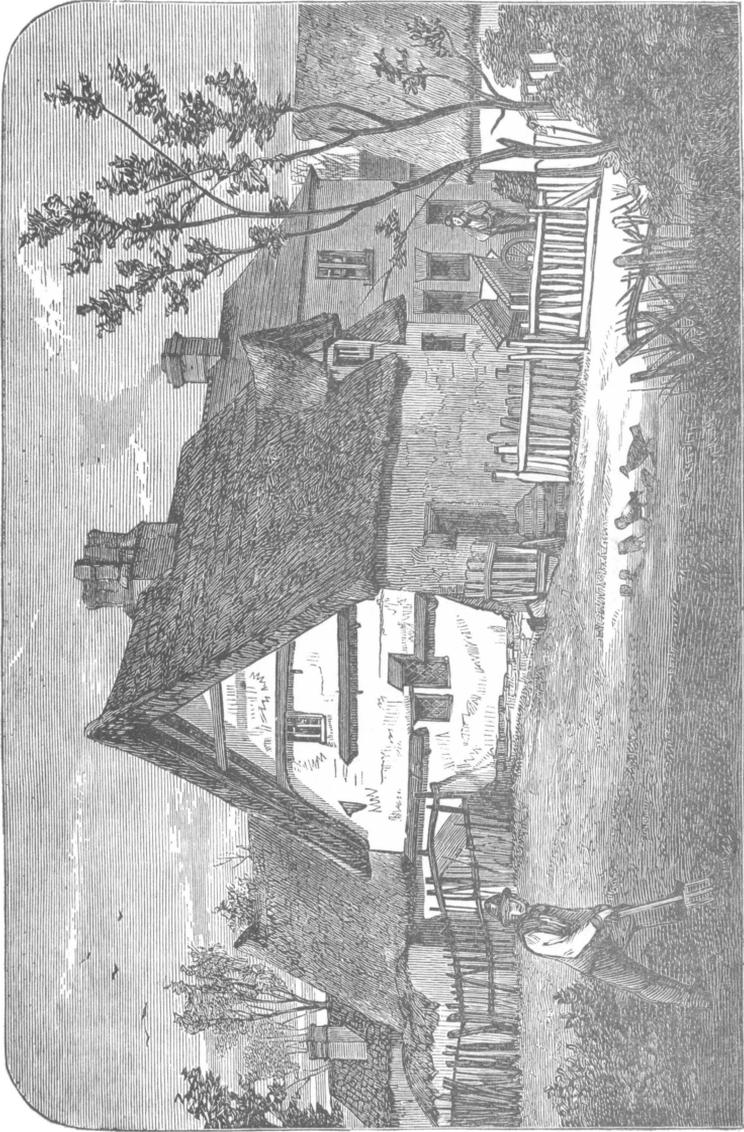
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COTTAGE WHERE SPURGEON PREACHED HIS FIRST SERMON.

CHAPTER IV.

HE BEGINS TO PREACH.

NEW MARKET is not far from Cambridge. To the latter place young Spurgeon removed and continued to teach as assistant or usher (as they say in England), and immediately united with the Old Baptist Church of which Robert Robinson and Robert Hall had been pastors. There was connected with the church what was termed "The Lay-Preachers' Association." He at once joined it. They had thirteen stations, in the villages around Cambridge, to nearly all of which he preached, or talked, in his turn. Of one of those occasions he himself speaks in a sermon on the text: *Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.* He introduced this discourse by saying (in 1873): "I remember well that about twenty-three years ago, the first attempted sermon that I ever made was from this text. I had been asked to *walk* out to the village Taversham, about four miles from Cambridge, where I then lived, to accompany a young man whom I supposed to be the preacher for the evening, and on the way I said to him that I trusted God would bless him in his labors. 'Oh, dear,' said he, 'I never preached in my life. I never thought of such a thing. I was asked to walk with you, and I sincerely hope God will bless you in your preaching.' 'Nay,' said I, 'but I never preached and I don't know that I could do anything of the sort.'

"We walked together till we came to the place, my inmost soul being all in trouble as to what would happen. When we found the congregation assembled, and no one else there to speak of Jesus (though I was only sixteen years of age), as I found that I was expected to preach, I did preach and the text was that just read."

It seems that there was no failure about it. The self-consciousness and fear of the result were lost in the sense of duty and reliance on divine help. And long afterwards a gentleman who heard that first sermon, stated that "he then read, prayed and expounded the word, being attired in a round-jacket and a broad turn-down collar, such as I remember to have been in fashion at

that period with youths. And his preaching afforded that he would become a powerful and popular preacher.”

His own account of this first sermon is characteristic :

“ We entered the low-pitched room of the thatched cottage, where a few simple-minded laborers and their wives were gathered. We sang and prayed and read the Scriptures and then came our first sermon. It was not half such a task as we feared it would be. How long or how short it was we cannot remember, but I was glad to see the way to the conclusion and to the giving out of the last hymn. To my own delight, I had not broken down in the middle nor been destitute of ideas. I made a break and took up the hymn-book, but to my astonishment an aged voice cried out: ‘*Bless your heart, how old are you?*’ Our very solemn reply was, *you must wait till the service is over before making any such inquiries. Let us sing.* We did sing, and the young brother with me pronounced the Benediction. Then began a dialogue which enlarged into a warm friendly talk. ‘*How old are you?*’ was the leading question. *I am under sixty*, was the reply. *Yes, and under sixteen*, was the old ladies’ rejoinder. ‘*Never mind my age, think of the Lord Jesus and his preciousness,*’ was all I could say—if the gentlemen at Cambridge thought me best to do so.”

Among the thirteen stations supplied by the Lay-Preachers’ Association was the village of Water Beach. Here there was a little Baptist church. Here his preaching was received with marked approval. He devoted his Sunday evenings to these people—preaching in cottages, sometimes in a chapel and often on the open common. Soon the little church called the boy to be its pastor and he accepted.

In regard to his scholarship, Mr. Spurgeon has given this statement in his Magazine :

“ Soon after I had begun, in 1852, to preach the Word in Water-beach, I was strongly advised by my father and others to enter Stepney, now Regent’s Park College, to prepare more fully for the ministry. Knowing that learning is never an incumbrance and is often a great means of usefulness, I felt inclined to avail myself of the opportunity of attaining it, although I believed I might be useful without a college training, I consented to the opinion of friends, that I should be more useful with it. Dr. Angus, the tutor of the college, visited Cambridge, where I then resided, and it was

arranged that we should meet at the house of Mr. Macmillan, the publisher. Thinking and praying over the matter, I entered the house at exactly the time appointed, and was shown into a room, where I waited patiently for a couple of hours, feeling too much impressed with my own insignificance and the greatness of the tutor from London to venture to ring the bell and inquire the cause of the unreasonably long delay.

“ At last, patience having had her perfect work, the bell was set in motion, and on the arrival of the servant, the waiting young man of eighteen was informed that the doctor had tarried in another room, and could stay no longer, so had gone off by train to London. The stupid girl had given no information to the family that any one called and had been shown into the drawing-room, consequently the meeting never came about, although designed by both parties. I was not a little disappointed at the moment; but have a thousand times since then thanked the Lord very heartily for the strange providence which forced my steps into another and far better path.

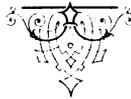
“ Still holding to the idea of entering the Collegiate Institution, I thought of writing and making an immediate application; but this was not to be. That afternoon, having to preach at a village station, I walked slowly in a meditating frame of mind over Midsummer Common to the little wooden bridge which leads to Cherterton, and in the midst of the common I was startled by what seemed to me to be a loud voice, but which may have been a singular illusion: whichever it was, the impression it made on my mind was most vivid; I seemed very distinctly to hear the words, ‘ Seekest thou great things for thyself, seek them not!’ This led me to look at my position from a different point of view, and to challenge my motives and intentions. I remembered my poor but loving people to whom I ministered, and the souls which had been given me in my humble charge; and although at that time I anticipated obscurity and poverty as the result of the resolve, yet I did there and then renounce the offer of collegiate instruction, determining to abide for a season, at least, with my people, and to remain preaching the Word so long as I had strength to do it. Had it not been for those words, I had not been where I am now. Although the ephod is no longer worn by a ministering priest, the Lord guides His people by His wisdom, and orders all their paths in love; and in times of perplexity, by ways mysterious and remarkable, He says to them: ‘ This is the way; walk ye in it.’”

In a letter to his father he says :

“ I have all along had an aversion to college, and nothing but a feeling that I must not consult myself, but Jesus, could have made me think of it. It appears to my friends at Cambridge, that it is my duty to remain with my dear people at Waterbeach ; so say the church there unanimously, and so say three of our deacons at Cambridge.”

And in another to his mother in November, 1852, he says :

“ I am more and more glad that I never went to college. God sends such sunshine on my path, such smiles of grace, that I cannot regret if I have forfeited all my prospects for it. I am conscious I held back from love to God and His cause ; and I had rather be poor in His service than rich in my own. I have all that heart can wish for ; yea, God giveth more than my desire. My congregation is as great and loving as ever. During all the time I have been at Waterbeach, I have had a different house for my home every day. Fifty-two families have thus taken me in ; and I have still six other invitations not yet accepted. Talk about the people not caring for me because they give me so little ! I dare tell anybody under heaven 't is false ! They do all they can. Our anniversary passed off grandly ; six were baptized ; crowds on crowds stood by the river ; the chapel afterwards was crammed both to the tea and the sermon.”



CHAPTER V.

HIS CALL TO LONDON.

BUT of course such a man was not allowed to remain long in the village of Waterbeach. The account of his call to London to be the successor of Keach and Gill and Rippon and Angus is given in his own words, at the close of his twenty-fifth year as pastor :

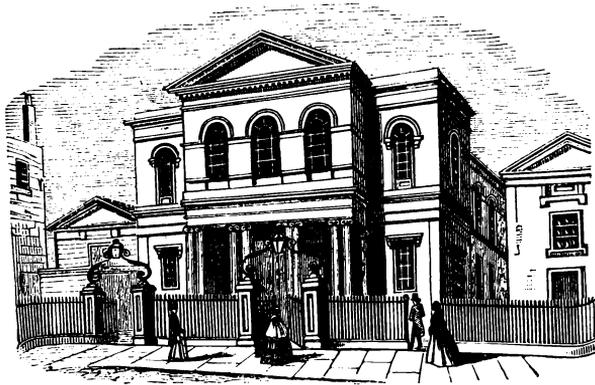
“Twenty-five years ago we walked on a Sabbath morning, according to our wont, from Cambridge to the village of Waterbeach, in order to occupy the pulpit of the little Baptist Chapel. It was a country road, and there were four or five honest miles of it, which we usually measured each Sunday foot by foot, unless we happened to be met by a certain little pony and cart which came half way, but could not by any possibility venture further because of the enormous expense which would have been incurred by driving through the toll-gate at Milton. That winter’s morning we were all aglow with our walk, and ready for our pulpit exercises. Sitting down in the table-pew, a letter was passed to us bearing the postmark of London. It was an unusual missive, and was opened with curiosity. It contained an invitation to preach at New Park-street Chapel, Southwark, the pulpit of which had formerly been occupied by Dr. Rippon,—the very Dr. Rippon whose hymn-book was then before us upon the table, the great Dr. Rippon, out of whose Selection we were about to choose hymns for our worship. The late Dr. Rippon seemed to hover over us as an immeasurably great man, the glory of whose name covered New Park-street Chapel and its pulpit with awe unspeakable. We quietly passed the letter across the table to the deacon who gave out the hymns, observing that there was some mistake, and that the letter must have been intended for a Mr. Spurgeon who preached somewhere down in Norfolk. He shook his head, and observed that he was afraid there was no mistake, as he always knew that his minister would be run away with by some large church or other, but that he was a little surprised that the Londoners should have heard of him quite so soon. ‘Had it been Cottenham, or St. Ives, or Huntingdon,’ said he, ‘I should not have wondered at all; but

going to London is rather a great step from this little place.” He shook his head very gravely ; but the time was come for us to look out the hymns, and therefore the letter was put away, and, as far as we can remember, was for the day quite forgotten, even as a dead man out of mind.

“ On the following Monday an answer was sent to London, informing the deacon of the church at Park Street that he had fallen into an error in directing his letter to Waterbeach, for the Baptist minister of that village was very little more than nineteen years of age, and quite unqualified to occupy a London pulpit. In due time came another epistle, setting forth that the former letter had been written in perfect knowledge of the young preacher’s age, and had been intended for him, and him alone. The request of the former letter was repeated and pressed, a date mentioned for the journey to London, and the place appointed at which the preacher would find lodging. That invitation was accepted, and as the result thereof the boy preacher of the Fens took his post in London.

“ Twenty-five years ago—and yet it seems but yesterday—we lodged for the night at a boarding-house in Queen Square, Bloomsbury, to which the worthy deacon directed us. As we wore a huge black satin stock, and used a blue handkerchief with white spots, the young gentlemen of that boarding-house marvelled greatly at the youth from the country who had come up to preach in London, but who was evidently in the condition known as verdant green. They were mainly of the evangelical church persuasion, and seemed greatly tickled that the country lad should be a preacher. They did not propose to go and hear the youth, but they seemed to tacitly agree to encourage him after their own fashion, and we were encouraged accordingly. What tales were narrated of the great divines of the metropolis and their congregations ! One we remember had a thousand *city* men to hear him, another had his church filled with *thoughtful* people, such as could hardly be matched all over England, while a third had an immense audience, almost entirely composed of the *young men* of London, who were spell-bound by his eloquence. The study which these men underwent in composing their sermons, their herculean toils in keeping up their congregations, and the matchless oratory which they exhibited on all occasions were duly rehearsed in our hearing ; and when we were shown to bed in a cupboard over the front door we were not in an advantageous condition for pleasant dreams.

Park-street hospitality never sent the young minister to that far-away hired room again ; but assuredly the Saturday evening in a London boarding-house was about the most depressing agency which could have been brought to bear upon our spirit. On the narrow bed we tossed in solitary misery and found no pity. Pitiless was the grind of the cabs in the street ; pitiless the recollection of the young city clerks whose grim propriety had gazed upon our rusticity with such amusement ; pitiless the spare room, which scarce afforded space to kneel ; pitiless even the gas-lamps which seemed to wink at us as they flickered amid the December darkness. We had no friend in all that city full of human beings, but we felt among strangers and foreigners, hoped to be helped through the scrape into which we had been brought, and to escape safely to the serene abodes of Cambridge and Waterbeach, which then seemed to be Eden itself.



NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL.

“Twenty-five years ago it was a clear, cold morning, and we wended our way along Holborn Hill towards Blackfriars and certain tortuous lanes and alleys at the foot of Southwark Bridge. Wondering, praying, fearing, hoping, believing,—we felt all alone and yet not alone. Expectant of divine help, and inwardly borne down by our sense of the need of it, we traversed a dreary wilderness of brick to find the spot where our message must needs be delivered. One word rose to our lip many times, we scarce know why,—‘He must needs go through Samaria.’ The necessity of our Lord’s journeying in a certain direction is no doubt repeated in His servants, and as our present journey was not of our seeking,

and had been by no means pleasing so far as it had gone,—the one thought of a ‘needs be’ for it seemed to overtop every other. At sight of Park-street Chapel we felt for a moment amazed at our own temerity, for it seemed to our eyes to be a large, ornate, and imposing structure, suggesting an audience wealthy and critical, and far removed from the humble folk to whom our ministry had been sweetness and light. It was early, so there were no persons entering, and when the set time was fully come there were no signs to support the suggestion raised by the exterior of the building, and we felt that by God’s help we were not yet out of our depth, and were not likely to be with so small an audience. The Lord helped us very graciously; we had a happy Sabbath in the pulpit, and spent the intervals with warm-hearted friends; and when at night we trudged back to the Queen-square narrow lodging we were not alone, and we no longer looked on Londoners as flinty-hearted barbarians. Our tone was altered; we wanted no pity of any one; we did not care a penny for the young gentlemen lodgers and their miraculous ministers, nor for the grind of the cabs, nor for anything else under the sun. The lion had been looked at all round, and his majesty did not appear to be a tenth as majestic as when we had only heard his roar miles away.

“These are small matters, but they rise before us as we look over the twenty-five years’ space which has intervened: they are the haze of that other shore between which rolls a quarter of a century of mercy. At the review we are lost in a rush of mingled feelings. ‘With my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now——.’ Our ill health at this moment scarcely permits us either to hold a pen or to dictate words to another; we must therefore leave till another season such utterances of gratitude as the fulness of our heart may permit us. Common blessings may find a tongue at any moment, but favors such as we have received of the Lord throughout this semi-jubilee are not to be acknowledged fitly with the tongues of men or of angels, unless a happy inspiration should bear the thankful one beyond himself.

“The following items must, however, be recorded: they are but as a handful gleaned among the sheaves. To omit mention of them would be ingratitude against which stones might justly cry out.

“A church has been maintained in order, vigor, and loving unity during all this period. Organized upon the freest basis, even to democracy, yet has there been seen among us a discipline

and a compact oneness never excelled. Men and women associated by thousands, and each one imperfect, are not kept in perfect peace by human means; there is a mystic spirit moving among them which alone could have held them as the heart of one man. No schism or heresy has sprung up among us; division has been far from us; co-pastorship has engendered no rivalry, and the illness of the senior officer has led to no disorder. Hypocrites and temporary professors have gone out from us because they were not of us, but we are still one even as at the first; perhaps more truly one than ever at any former instant of our history. One in hearty love to our redeeming Lord, to His glorious gospel, to the ordinances of His house, and to one another as brethren in Christ. Shall not the God of peace receive our humble praises for this unspeakable boon?

“The church has continued steadily to increase year by year. There have not been leaps of progress and then painful pauses of decline. On and on the host has marched, gathering recruits each month, filling up the gaps created by death or by removal, and steadily proceeding towards and beyond its maximum, which lies over the border of five thousand souls. One year may have been better than another, but not to any marked extent; there has been a level richness in the harvest field, a joyful average in the crop. Unity of heart has been accompanied by uniformity of prosperity. Work has not been done in spurts, enterprises have not been commenced and abandoned; every advance has been maintained and has become the vantage ground for yet another aggression upon the enemy’s territory, Faults there have been in abundance, but the good Lord has not suffered them to hinder progress or to prevent success. The Bridegroom has remained with us, and as yet the days of fasting have not been proclaimed; rather has the joy of the Lord been from day to day our strength.

“The gospel of the grace of God has been continually preached from the first day until now,—the same gospel, we trust, accompanied with growing experience and appreciation and knowledge, but not another gospel, nor even another form of the same gospel. From week to week the sermons have been issued from the press, till the printed sermons now number 1,450. These have enjoyed a very remarkable circulation in our own country, and in the Colonies and America; and, besides being scattered to the ends of the earth wherever the English tongue is spoken, they have been translated into almost every language spoken by Christian people,

and into some of the tongues of the heathen besides. What multitudes of conversions have come of these messengers of mercy eternity alone will disclose: we have heard enough to make our cup run over with unutterable delight. Shall not the God of boundless goodness be extolled and adored for this? The reader cannot know so well as the preacher what this *printing* of sermons involves. This is a tax upon the brain of a most serious kind, and yet it has been endured, and still the public read the sermons,—best proof that all their freshness has not departed. O Lord, all our fresh springs are in Thee, else had our ministry long since been dried up at the fountain, the unction would have departed, and the power would have fled. Unto the Eternal Spirit be infinite glory for His long forbearance and perpetual aid.

“Nursed up at the sides of the Church, supported by her liberality, fostered by her care, and watched over by her love, hundreds of young men have been trained for the ministry, and have gone forth everywhere preaching the Word. Of these some few have fallen asleep, but the great majority still remain in the ministry at home and in the mission field, faithful to the things which they learned in their youth, and persevering in the proclamation of the same gospel which is dear to the Mother Church. When we think of the four hundred brethren preaching the gospel at this moment, of the many churches which they have formed, and of the meeting-houses they have built, we must magnify the name of the Lord who has wrought by so feeble an instrumentality.”

When Spurgeon was called to the charge of the church, there was a small minority against him. It soon vanished. He had supplied the pulpit three months when he was called to its pastorate. Here follows his letter of acceptance:

“75 DOVER ROAD, BOROUGH, April 28, 1854.

“*To the Baptist Church of Christ worshipping in New Park-street Chapel, Southwark:*

“DEARLY BELOVED IN CHRIST JÉSUS,—I have received your unanimous invitation, as contained in a resolution passed by you on the 19th instant, desiring me to accept the pastorate among you. No lengthened reply is required; there is but one answer to so loving and cordial an invitation. I ACCEPT IT. I have not been perplexed as to what my reply shall be, for many things constrain me thus to answer.



SPURGEON AT TWENTY-ONE.

“ I sought not to come to you, for I was the minister of an obscure but affectionate people ; I never solicited advancement. The first note of invitation from your deacons came to me quite unlooked for, and I trembled at the idea of preaching in London. I could not understand how it came about, and even now I am filled with astonishment at the wondrous Providence. I would wish to give myself into the hands of our covenant God, whose wisdom directs all things. He shall choose for me ; and so far as I can judge this is His choice.

“ I feel it to be a high honor to be the pastor of a people who can mention glorious names as my predecessors ; and I entreat of you to remember me in prayer, that I may realize the solemn responsibility of my trust. Remember my youth and inexperience ; pray that these may not hinder my usefulness. I trust, also, that the remembrance of these may lead you to forgive the mistakes I may make, or unguarded words I may utter.

“ Blessed be the name of the Most High ! if He has called me to this office He will support me in it ; otherwise, how should a child, a youth, have the presumption thus to attempt a work which filled the heart and hands of Jesus ? Your kindness to me has been very great, and my heart is knit unto you. I fear not your steadfastness ; I fear my own. The gospel, I believe, enables me to venture great things, and by faith I venture this. I ask your co-operation in every good work,—in visiting the sick, in bringing in inquirers, and in mutual edification.

“ Oh that I may be no injury to you, but a lasting benefit ! I have no more to say, only this : that if I have expressed myself in these few words in a manner unbecoming my youth and inexperience, you will not impute it to arrogance, but forgive my mistake.

“ And now, commending you to our covenant-keeping God, the triune Jehovah, I am yours to serve in the gospel,

C. H. SPURGEON.”

His fame now spread throughout London. Crowds flocked to hear him. The church soon doubled in membership, and the chapel had to be enlarged.

The largest halls in the Metropolis had to be secured to accommodate his audience—Exeter Hall and the Surrey Music Hall, capable of holding 7,000 people, were crowded with charmed listeners, and up to this day he has grown in power, in popularity and abiding influence. What a man !

CHAPTER VI.

AN EPITOME OF ENGLISH BAPTIST HISTORY.

MR. SPURGEON introduces the history of the Tabernacle Church with an outline of General Baptist History. It is as follows :

“ We care very little for the ‘ historical church ’ argument, but if there be any thing in it at all, the plea ought not to be filched by the clients of Rome, but should be left to that community which all along has held by ‘ One Lord, one faith, and one baptism. ’ This body of believers has not been exalted into temporal power, or decorated with worldly rank, but it has dwelt for the most part in dens and caves of the earth, ‘ destitute, afflicted, tormented, ’ and so has proved itself of the house and lineage of the Crucified. The church which most loudly claims the apostolical succession wears upon her brow more of the marks of antichrist than of Christ; but the afflicted Ana-baptists, in their past history, have had such fellowship with their suffering Lord, and have borne so pure a testimony, both to truth and freedom, that they need in nothing to be ashamed. Their very existence under the calumnies and persecutions which they have endured, is a standing marvel, while their unflinching fidelity to the Scriptures as their sole rule of faith, and their adherence to the simplicity of Gospel ordinances is a sure index of their Lord’s presence among them.

It would not be impossible to show that the first Christians who dwelt in this land were of the same faith and order as the churches now called Baptists. The errors of the churches are all more or less modern, and those which have clustered around the ordinance of baptism are by no means so venerable for age as some would have us suppose. The evidence supplied by ancient monuments and baptistries, which still remain, would be conclusive in our favor, were it not that upon this point the minds of men are not very open to argument. Foregone conclusions and established ecclesiastical arrangements are not easily shaken. Few men care to follow truth when she leads them without the camp, and calls them to take up their cross, and endure to be thought singular even by their fellow Christians. However,

we are not writing upon the question of believers' baptism, and are content to leave its discussion for another opportunity. We care more to be conformed to Scripture itself than to the oldest of usages. The moss of antiquity, cannot command our veneration if it only garnishes error. The witness of churches is well enough, but 'we have a more sure word of testimony' in the Bible itself.

We are content for present purposes to begin with a quotation from an adversary. That the so called Ana-baptists are no novelty in England is admitted by those least likely to manufacture ancient history for them. That rampant ritualist, W. J. E. Bennett, of Frome, in his book upon 'The Unity of the Church Broken,' says :

'The historian, Lingard, tells us that there was a sect of fanatics who infested the north of Germany, called Puritans. Usher calls them Waldenses; Spelman, Paulicians (the same as Waldenses). They gained ground and spread all over England; they rejected all Romish ceremonies, denied the authority of the Pope, and more particularly *refused to baptize infants*. Thirty of them were put to death for their heretical doctrines, near Oxford; but the remainder still held on to their opinions in private until the time of Henry II. (1158); and the historian, Collier, tells us that wherever this heresy prevailed, the churches were either scandalously neglected or pulled down, and *infants left unbaptized*.'

We are obliged to Mr. Bennett for this history, which is in all respects authentic, and we take liberty to remark upon it, that the reign of Henry II. is a period far more worthy of being called remote, than the reign of Henry VIII., and if Baptists could trace their pedigree no further, the church of Thomas Craumer could not afford to sneer at them as a modern sect. Concerning the poor, persecuted people who are referred to in this extract, it seems that under Henry II., they were treated with those tender mercies of the wicked which are so notoriously cruel. 'They were apprehended and brought before a council of the clergy at Oxford. Being interrogated about their religion, their teacher, named Gerard, a man of learning, answered in their name, that they were Christians, and believed the doctrines of the apostles. Upon a more particular inquiry it was found that they denied several of the received doctrines of the church, such as purgatory, prayers for the dead, and the invocations of saints; and refusing

to abandon these damnable heresies, as they are called, they were condemned as incorrigible heretics and delivered to the secular arm to be punished. The king (Henry II.) at the instigation of the clergy, commanded them to be branded with a red-hot iron on the forehead, to be whipped through the streets of Oxford, and, having their clothes cut short by their girdles, to be turned into the open fields, all persons being forbidden to afford them any shelter or relief under the severest penalties. This cruel sentence was executed with its utmost rigor; and it being the depth of winter, all these unhappy persons perished with cold and hunger.'

Indeed, no doubt, to flee to this country from the continent by the rumored favor of Henry II. to the Lollards, they found nothing of the hospitality which they expected; but for Jesus' sake were accounted the offscouring of all things. Little did their enemies dream that, instead of being stamped out, the (so-called) heresy of the Baptists would survive and increase till it should command a company of faithful adherents to be numbered by millions.

All along our history from Henry II. to Henry VIII. there are traces of the Ana-Baptists, who are usually mentioned either in connection with the Lollards, or as coming from Holland. Especial mention is made of their being more conspicuous when Anne of Cleves came to this country as the unhappy spouse of that choice defender of the faith, the eighth Harry. All along there must have been a great hive on the Continent of these 'Reformers before the Reformation,' for despite their being doomed to die almost as soon as they landed, they continued to invade this country to the annoyance of the priesthood and hierarchy, who know by instinct the people who are their direst enemies, and whose tenets are diametrically opposed to their sway.

During the Reformation and after it, the poor, Ana-baptists continued to be victims. Excesses had been committed by certain fifth-monarchy men who happened also to be Baptists, and under cover of putting down these wild fanatics, Motley tells us that 'thousands and ten of thousands of virtuous, well disposed men and women, who had as little sympathy with ana-baptistical as with Roman depravity, were butchered in cold blood, under the sanguinary rule of Charles, in the Netherlands.'

The only stint allowed to persecution in the low countries was contained in a letter of Queen Dowager Mary of Hungary;

‘care being only taken that the provinces were not entirely depopulated.’

Luther and Zwingle, though themselves held to be heretics, were scarcely a whit behind the papists in their rage against the Ana-baptists, Zwingle especially uttering that pithy formula: ‘*Qui iterum mergit mergatur,*’ thereby counselling the drowning of all those who dared immerse believers on profession of their faith.

The time will probably arrive when history will be re-written and the maligned Baptists of Holland and Germauy will be acquitted of all complicity with the ravings of the insane fanatics, and it will be proved that they were the advance-guard of the army of religious liberty, men who lived before their times, but whose influence might have saved the world centuries of floundering in the bog of semi-popery if they had but been allowed fair play. As it was, their views, like those of modern Baptists, so completely laid the ax at the root of all priestcraft and sacramentarianism, that violent opposition was aroused, and the two-edged sword of defamation and extirpation was set to its cruel work, and kept to it with relentless perseverance never excelled, perhaps never equalled. All other sects may be in some degree borne with, but Baptists are utterly intolerable to priests and popes; neither can despots and tyrants endure them.

We will leave the continental hive, to return to our brethren in England. Latimer, who could not speak too badly of the Baptists, nevertheless bears witness to their numbers and intrepidity. ‘Here I have to tell you what I heard of late, by the relation of a credible person and a worshipful man, of a town in this realm of England, that hath about five hundred of heretics of this erroneous opinion in it. The Ana-baptists that were burnt there, in divers towns of England (as I have heard of credible men—I saw them not myself), met their death even intrepid, as you will say, without any fear in the world. Well, let them go. There was in the old times another kind of poisoned heretics, that were called Donatists, and those heretics went to their execution as they should have gone to some jolly recreation and banquet.’ Latimer had, ere long, to learn for himself where the power lay which enabled men to die so cheerfully. We do not wonder that he discovered a likeness between the Baptists and the Donatists, for quaint Thomas Fuller draws at full length a parallel between the two, and concludes that the Baptists are only “the old Dona-

tists new dipped.’ We can survive even such a comparison as that.

Bishop Burnet says that in the time of Edward VI. Baptists became very numerous and openly preached this doctrine, that ‘Children are Christ’s without water.’—Luke 18: 16. Protestantism nominally flourished in the reign of Edward VI., but there were many unprotestant doings. The use of the Reformed liturgy was enforced by the pains and penalties of law. Ridley, himself a martyr in the next reign, was joined in a commission with Gardiner, afterwards notorious as a persecutor of Protestants, to root out Baptists. Among the ‘Articles of Visitation,’ issued by Ridley in his own diocese, in 1550, was the following: ‘Whether any of the Ana-baptists’ sect, and others, use notoriously any unlawful or private conventicles, wherein they do use doctrines of administration of sacraments, separating themselves from the rest of the parish?’ It may be fairly gathered from this article of visitation that there were many Baptist churches in the kingdom at that time. This truth is also clear from the fact that the Duke of Northumberland advised that Mr. John Knox should be invited to England, and made a Bishop, that he might aid in putting down the Baptists in Kent.

Marsden tells us that, in the days of Elizabeth, ‘the Ana-baptists were the most numerous and for some time by far the most formidable opponents of the church. They are said to have existed in England since the early days of the Lollards.’

In the year 1575 a most severe persecution was raised against the Ana-baptists in London, ten of whom were condemned, eight ordered to be banished, and two to be executed. Mr. Fox, the eminent martyrologist, wrote an excellent Latin letter to the Queen, in which he observes: ‘That to punish with the flames the bodies of those who err rather from ignorance than obstinacy, is cruel, and more like the church of Rome than the mildness of the Gospel. I do not write thus,’ says he, ‘from any bias to the indulgence of error; but to save the lives of men, being myself a man; and in hope that the offending parties may have an opportunity to repent and retract their mistakes.’ He then earnestly entreats that the fires of Smithfield may not be rekindled, but that some milder punishment might be inflicted upon them, to prevent if possible the destruction of their souls as well as their bodies. But his remonstrances were ineffectual. The Queen remained inflexible; and, though she constantly called him ‘Father

Fox,' she gave him a flat denial as to saving their lives, unless they would recant their dangerous errors. They both refusing to recant were burnt in Smithfield, July 22, 1575, to the great and lasting disgrace of the reign and character of Queen Elizabeth.

Neither from Elizabeth, James, or Charles I. had our brethren any measure of favor. No treatment was thought too severe for them; even good men execrated them as heretics for whom the harshest measures were too gentle. Had it been possible to destroy this branch of the true vine, assuredly the readiest means were used without hindrance or scruple—yet it not only lives on, but continues to bear fruit a hundredfold.

When Charles I. was unable any longer to uphold Episcopacy, liberty of thought and freedom of speech were somewhat more common than before, and the Baptists increased very rapidly. Many of them were in Cromwell's army, and were the founders of not a few of our village churches. When these men were to the front doing such acceptable work for Parliament, it was not likely that their brethren could be hunted down quite so freely as before. Accordingly we find that contentious divine, Daniel Featley, groaning heavily because they were permitted to breathe, and between his pious groans recording for our information certain facts which are, at this juncture, peculiarly useful to us.

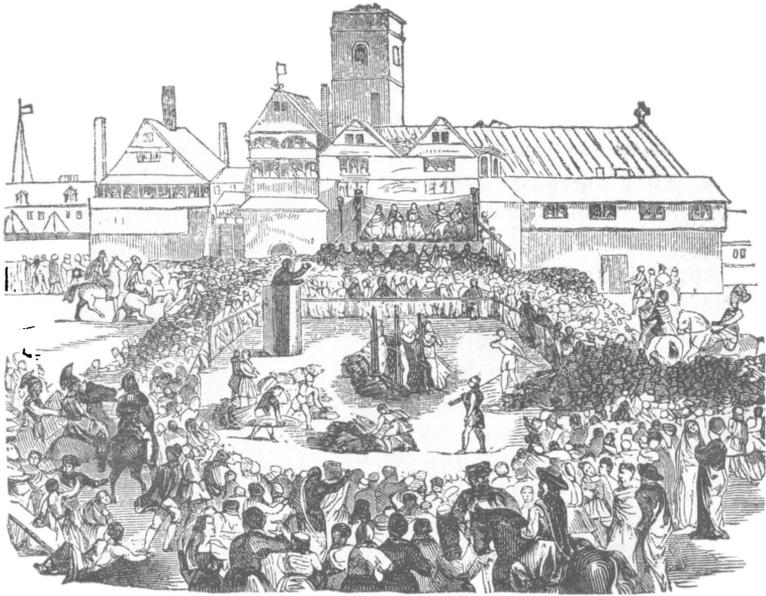
Dr. Featley says: 'This fire which, in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James, and our gracious sovereign [Charles I.] till now was covered in England under the ashes; or if it brake out at any time, by the care of the ecclesiastical and civil magistrates it was soon put out. But of late, since the unhappy distractions which our sins have brought upon us, the temporal sword being otherways employed, and the spiritual locked up fast in the scabbard, this sect among others has so far presumed upon the patience of the State, that it hath held weekly conventicles, re-baptized hundreds of men and women together in the twilight, in rivulets, and some arms of the Thames, and elsewhere, dipping them over head and ears. It hath printed divers pamphlets in defense of their heresy, yea, and challenged some of our preachers to disputation. Now, although my bent has always been hitherto against the most dangerous enemy of our Church and State, the Jesuit, to extinguish such balls of wildfire as they have cast into the bosom of our church; yet, seeing this strange fire kindled in the neighboring parishes, and many Nadabs and Abihus offering it on God's altar, I thought it my duty to cast the waters of Siloam

upon it to extinguish it.' The waters of Siloam must have been strangely foul in Featley's days, if his 'Dippers Dipped' is to be regarded as a bucketful of the liquid.

The neighboring region which was so sorely vexed with 'strange fire,' was the borough of Southwark, which is the region in which the church now meeting in the Metropolitan Tabernacle was born. We are not aware that any of its pastors, or indeed any Baptist pastor in the universe, ever set up for a priest, and therefore the Nadabs and Abihus must be looked for elsewhere, but Dr. Featley no doubt intended the compliment for some of our immediate ancestors."



JACOB DE ROOR, AN ANABAPTIST, EXAMINED IN PRISON IN HOLLAND.



BAPTISTS BURNT IN SMITHFIELD, LONDON.

CHAPTER VII.

HISTORY OF THE TABERNACLE CHURCH.

THIS church was born in stormy times.

From some one of the many Baptist assemblies which met in the borough of Southwark, the Tabernacle Church took its rise. Crosby says: "This people had formerly belonged to one of the most ancient congregations of the Baptists in London, but separated from them, in the year 1652, for some practices which they judged disorderly, and kept together from that time as a distinct body." They appear to have met in private houses, or in such other buildings as were open to them. Their first pastor was William Rider, whom Crosby mentions as a sufferer for conscience' sake, but he is altogether unable to give any further particulars of his life, except that he published a small tract in vindication of the practice of laying on of hands on the baptized believers. The people were few in number, but had the reputation of being men of solid judgment, deep knowledge, and religious stability, and many of them were also in easy circumstances as to worldly goods. Oliver Cromwell was just at that time in the ascendant, and Blake's cannon were sweeping the Dutch from the seas; but the Presbyterian establishment ruled with a heavy hand, and Baptists, were under a cloud. In the following year Cromwell was made Protector, the old Parliament was sent about its business, and England enjoyed a large measure of liberty of conscience.

How long William Rider exercised the ministerial office we are unable to tell, but our next record bears date 1668, when we are informed that, "the pastor having been dead for some time, they unanimously chose Mr. Benjamin Keach to be their elder or pastor." Accordingly he was solemnly ordained with prayer and the laying on of hands in the year 1668, being in the twenty-eighth year of his age. Keach was one of the most notable of the pastors of our church. He was continually engaged in preaching in the towns of Buckinghamshire, making Winslow his headquarters; and so well did the good cause flourish under his zealous labors and those of others, that the Government quartered dragoons in the district in order to put down unlawful meetings and stamp

out dissent. The amount of suffering which this involved, the reader of the story of the Covenanting times in Scotland can readily imagine. A rough soldiery handled with little tenderness those whom they considered to be miserable fanatics. When the favorite court poet was lampooning these poor people and ridiculing their claims to be guided by the spirit of God, common soldiers of the Cavalier order were not likely to be much under restraint in their behavior to them.



BENJAMIN KEACH.

Having written a book called “The Child’s Instructor,” in which he avowed that children are born in sin, and in need of redemption by Jesus Christ, he was publicly tried and convicted. The merciful (?) judge pronounced upon the culprit the following sentence :

“ Benjamin Keach, you are here convicted for writing, printing, and publishing a seditious and schismatical book, for which the court’s judgment is this, and the court doth award : That you shall go to jail for a fortnight without bail or mainprize ; and the

next Saturday to stand upon the pillory at Aylesbury in the open market, from eleven o'clock till one, with a paper upon your head with this inscription : *For writing, printing, and publishing a schismatical book, entitled the Child's Instructor ; or, a New and Easy Primer.* And the next Thursday to stand, in the same manner and for the same time, in the market at Winslow ; and then your book shall be openly burnt before your face by the common hangman, in disgrace of you and your doctrine. And you shall forfeit to the King's majesty the sum of twenty pounds, and shall remain in jail until you find sureties for your good behavior, and for your appearance at the next assizes ; then *to renounce your doctrines*, and make such public submission as shall be enjoined you. Take him away, keeper !”

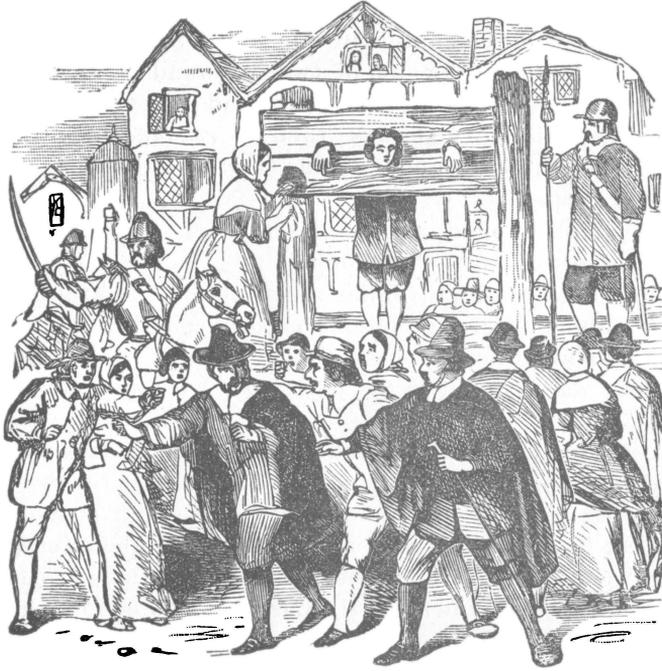
Keach simply replied, “ I hope I shall *never renounce* the truths which I have written in that book.”

The attempts made to obtain a pardon or a relaxation of this severe sentence were ineffectual ; and the sheriff took care that everything should be punctually performed.

When he was brought to the pillory at Aylesbury, several of his religious friends and acquaintances accompanied him ; and when they bemoaned his hard case and the injustice of his sufferings, he said with a cheerful countenance, “ The cross is the way to the crown.” His head and hands were no sooner placed in the pillory, but he began to address himself to the spectators, to this effect : “ Good people. I am not ashamed to stand here this day, with this paper on my head ! My Lord Jesus was not ashamed to suffer on the cross for me ; and it is for His cause that I am made a gazing stock. Take notice, it is not for any wickedness that I stand here ; but for writing and publishing those truths which the Spirit of the Lord hath revealed in the Holy Scriptures.”

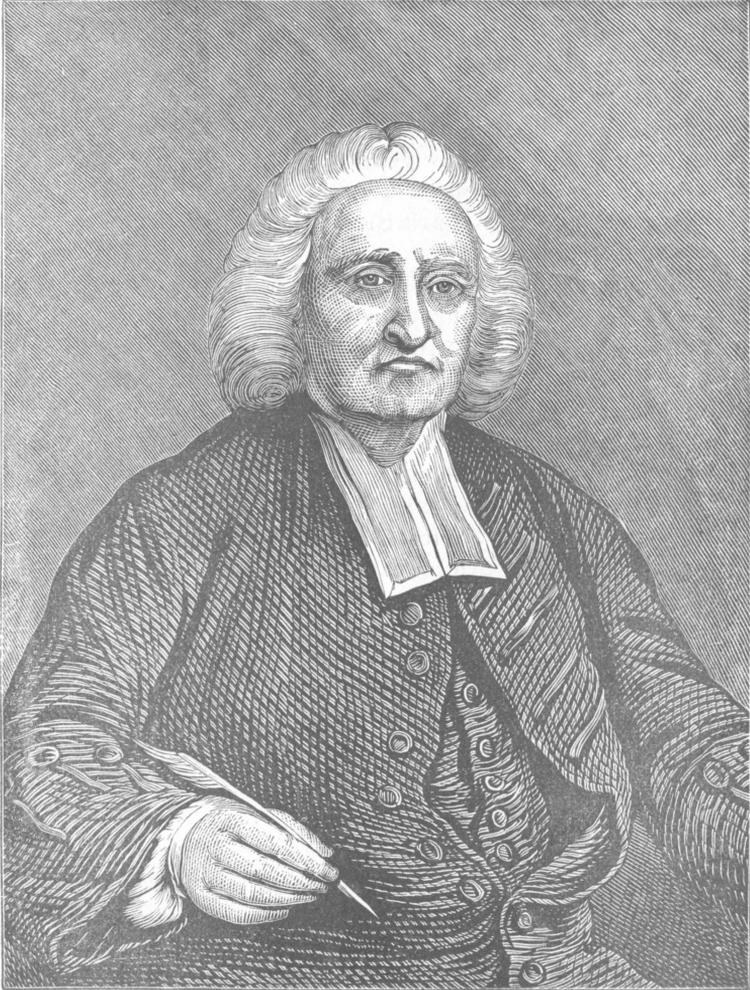
Very sweetly did Mr. Keach preach the great fundamental truths of the gospel, and glorify the name and work of Jesus. His “ Gospel Mine Opened,” and other works rich in savor, show that he was no mere stickler for a point of ceremony, but one who loved the truth as it is in Jesus, and felt its power. The doctrine of the Second Advent evidently had great charms for him, but not so as to crowd out Christ crucified. He was very solid in his preaching, and his whole conduct and behavior betokened a man deeply in earnest for the cause of God. In addressing the ungodly he was intensely direct, solemn, and impressive, not flinching to declare the terrors of the Lord, nor veiling the freeness of divine

grace. He was a voluminous writer, having written in all forty-three works,—eighteen practical, sixteen polemical, and nine poetical. Some of them were very popular, having reached the twenty-second edition.



BENJAMIN KEACH IN THE PILLORY.

Mr. Keach was of a very weak constitution, being often afflicted with illness, and once to such a degree that he was given over by the physicians; and several of the ministers, and his relations, had taken their leave of him as a dying man and past all hope of recovery; but the Reverend Mr. Hanserd Knollys, seeing his friend and brother in the gospel so near expiring, betook himself to prayer, and in a very extraordinary manner begged that God would spare him, and add unto his days the time He granted to His servant Hezekiah. As soon as he had ended his prayer, he said, "Brother Keach, I shall be in heaven before you," and quickly after left him.



DR. JOHN GILL.

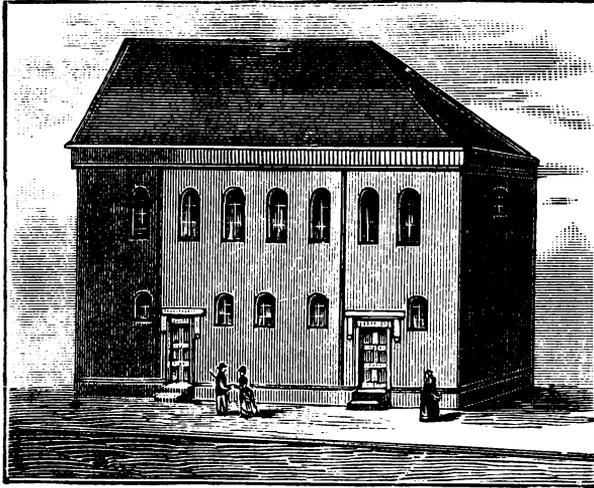
So remarkable was the answer of God to this good man's prayer, that we cannot omit it; though it may be discredited by some, there were many who could bear incontestable testimony to the fact. Mr. Keach recovered of that illness, and lived just fifteen years afterwards; and then it pleased God to visit him with that short sickness which put an end to his days. He "fell on sleep" July 16, 1704, in the sixty-fourth year of his age, and was buried at the Baptists' burying-ground, in the Park, Southwark. It was not a little singular that in after years the church over which he so ably presided should pitch its tent so near the place where his bones were laid, and New Park Street should appear in her annals as a well-beloved name.

When Mr. Keach was upon his death-bed he sent for his son-in-law, Benjamin Stinton, and solemnly charged him to care for the church which he was about to leave, and especially urged him to accept the pastoral office, should it be offered to him by the brethren. Mr. Stinton had already for some years helped his father-in-law in many ways, and therefore he was no new and untried man. It is no small blessing when a church can find her pastors in her own midst; the rule is to look abroad, but perhaps if our home gifts were more encouraged the Holy Spirit would cause our teachers to come forth more frequently from among our own brethren. Still, we cannot forget the proverb about a prophet in his own country. When the church gave Mr. Stinton a pressing invitation, he delayed awhile, and gave himself space for serious consideration; but at length, remembering the dying words of his father-in-law, and feeling himself directed by the Spirit of God, he gave himself up to the ministry, which he faithfully discharged for fourteen years,—namely, from 1704 to 1718.

Spending himself in various works of usefulness, Mr. Stinton worked on till the 11th of February, 1718, when a sudden close was put to his labors and his life. He was taken suddenly ill, and saying to his wife, "I am going," he laid himself down upon the bed, and expired in the forty-third year of his life. He smiled on death, for the Lord smiled on him. He was buried near his predecessor, in the Park, Southwark.

In the beginning of the year 1719, the church at Horsleydown invited John Gill to preach, with a view to the pastorate; but there was a determined opposition to him in about one half of the church. It divided; John Gill's friends secured the old meeting-house for the term of forty years, and he was ordained March 22d, 1720.

His successor was Dr. John Rippon. He preached for a lengthened time on probation, and finally some forty persons withdrew because they could not agree with the enthusiastic vote by which the majority of the people elected him.

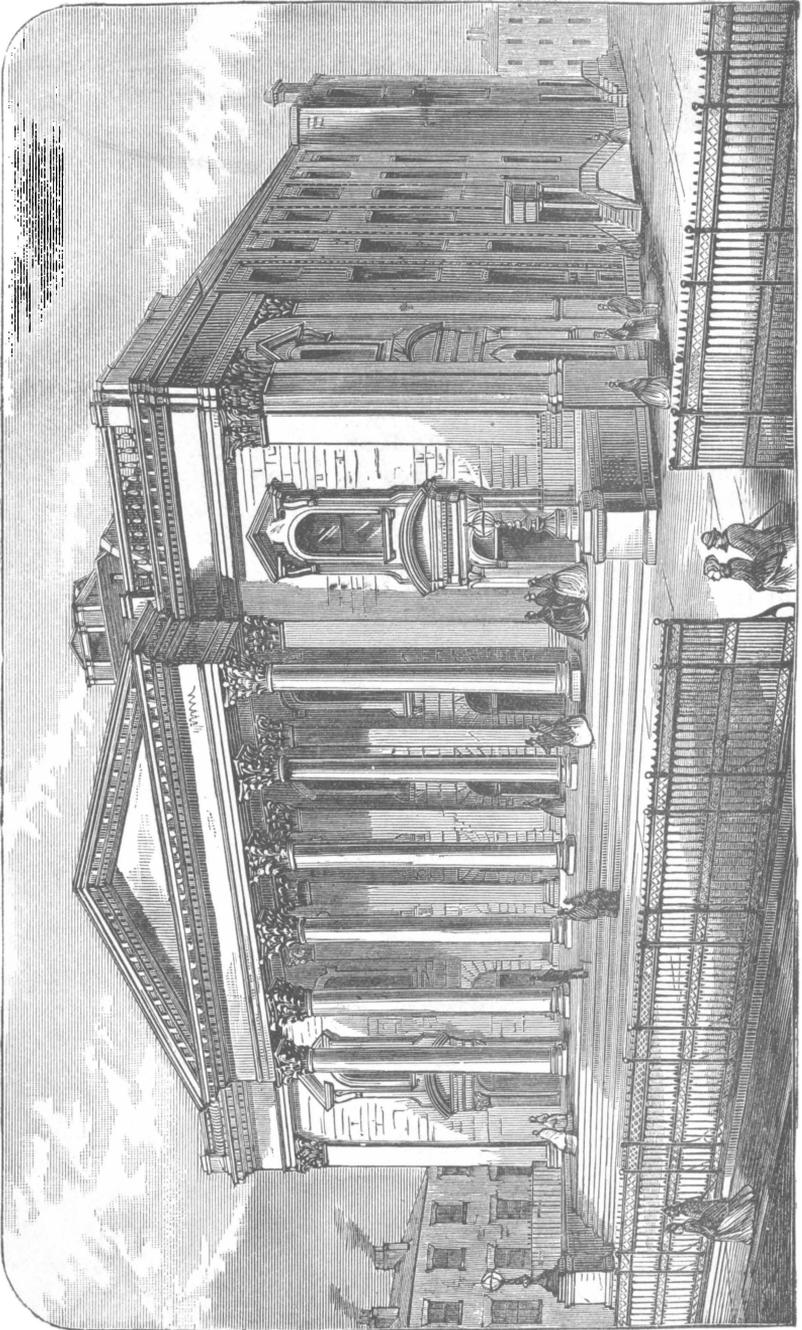


CARTER LANE CHAPEL

The next pastor of the church was Mr.—now Doctor—Joseph Angus, a gentleman whose career since he left us to become Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, and afterward the Tutor of Stepney Academy, now Regent's Park College, has rendered his name most honorable among living Baptists. He is one of the foremost classical scholars, and is a member of the committee for producing a revised version of the Holy Scriptures. He is the author of those standard books, "The Bible Handbook," "The Handbook of the English Tongue," and "Handbook of English Literature."

Mr. James Smith succeeded Dr. Angus, and after a useful pastorate of eight years resigned on account of ill health. In October, 1849, he wrote: "For a considerable time I have felt an oppression on my chest, and great difficulty in breathing. Last week I consulted a doctor upon it, and he advised me to leave London as soon as I could, and get into the country, as my lungs require





a purer air. I am seeking wisdom from God: I cannot doubt but He will guide me.”

In February, 1850, he said: “I have written my resignation of office, and laid it before the deacons. It is a serious and important step which I have taken. I trust I have taken it in a proper spirit, and from a right motive. My mind is now calm and peaceful, the agitation from which I have long been suffering is at an end, and I feel as if I could now leave the matter with the Lord.

In July, 1851, the church invited the Rev. William Walters, of Preston, to become the pastor, but as he understood the deacons to intimate to him that his ministry was not acceptable, he tendered his resignation, and although requested to remain, he judged it more advisable to remove to Halifax in June, 1853, thus closing a ministry of two years. These changes daily diminished the church and marred its union. The clouds gathered heavily, and no sunlight appeared.

A change soon occurred, however. Mr. Spurgeon took charge of the church in 1853.

Under date January 6, 1861, there stands in the records the following solemn declaration, signed by the pastor and leading friends: “This church needs rather more than £4,000 (twenty thousand dollars) to enable it to open the new Tabernacle free of all debt. It humbly asks this temporal mercy of God, and believes that for Jesus’ sake the prayer will be heard and the boon bestowed. As witness our hands.”

Now let the reader mark that, on May 6th of the same year, the pastor and many friends also signed their names to another testimony, which is worded as follows: “We, the undersigned, members of the church lately worshiping in New Park-street Chapel, but now assembling in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington, desire with overflowing hearts to make known and record the loving-kindness of our faithful God. We asked in faith, but our Lord has exceeded our desires, for not only was the whole sum given us, but far sooner than we had looked for it. Truly, the Lord is good and worthy to be praised. We are ashamed of ourselves that we have ever doubted Him, and we pray that as a church and as individuals we may be enabled to trust in the Lord at all times with confidence, so that in quietness we may possess our souls. To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost we offer praise and thanksgiving, and we set our seal that God is true.”

CHAPTER VIII.

A VISIT TO SPURGEON'S TABERNACLE.

It was the Sunday just preceding his *forty-second year*, that I first saw and heard this prince of preachers.

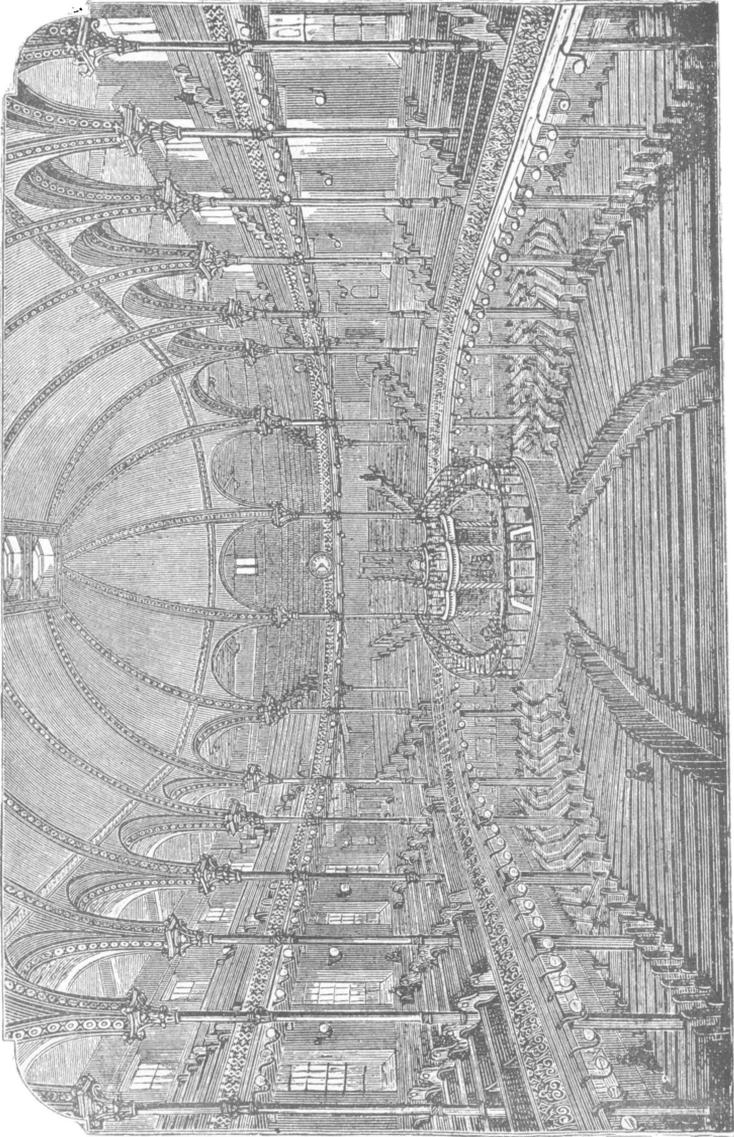
Arriving in the great metropolis Friday evening, I was driven to the Charing-Cross Hotel and spent Saturday in viewing the historic points in its vicinity.

Betimes, on Sunday morning I started for Newington Butts, the name of that quarter of London where the Metropolitan Tabernacle stands. I was not unacquainted with the localities of the great city. I had years before spent months in its immediate suburbs, and familiarized myself with all its leading thoroughfares, and could now without difficulty tread my way to where the Tabernacle had been built since my last visit to London. The Strand, which is a continuation of Ludgate Hill and Fleet street, running parallel with the Thames, terminates at Charing-Cross; for here the river makes a bend southward, and the street bends with it under the name of White Hall street. Just at this bend stands the Charing-Cross Hotel, and from this point the Dover railroad bridge crosses the river.

All was very quiet that Sunday morning, and I walked leisurely past the old palace of White Hall, with the execution of Charles I. vivid in my thoughts; and then where this broad street narrows into Parliament street, I came in sight of Westminster Abbey and the clock tower of the House of Commons. Westminster Bridge is on the left at a right angle, and the Abbey to the right, surrounded by small enclosures blooming with summer flowers and adorned with statues of England's favorite statesmen.

I entered the Old Abbey, and gazed a few moments on its columns, its fretted roof, its forest of statues which seemed amid the silences of those early hours in that vast mausoleum—where I was the only *living* being—like the presence of the mighty dead starting from their tombs.

I left it with feelings not easily described, and passed over the stone bridge, looking back at the Abbey, and then at the Parliament Houses, and to my right across the river the bishop's



palace, or Lambeth Palace, and recognized the Lollard's tower, and on the left St. Paul's Cathedral, rising like a mighty giant over the now silent city.

Passing Westminster bridge, a *tramway*—as they call the street cars—was boarded, and I was soon at the “Elephant and Castle,” the starting point in old times for the stages to Canterbury, and other points in Surrey and Kent.

“There is Spurgeon's Tabernacle,” said the conductor. I was at the iron railing which incloses the massive, plain-looking building.

There were hundreds about the gate and in the “close,” or yard in front of the edifice. A policeman was on duty, and he directed me to a deacon to whom I made myself known. He gave me a ticket of admission and pointed out a side entrance—the front doors being still closed. I entered and made for the first gallery on my right,* but was not admitted to a seat in a pew until the hands of the large clock should point to five minutes to eleven. I had ten minutes to wait. The great building was about half full.

It was a moment of serious thought. I was four thousand miles from home. I had just crossed the ocean. A solemn holy atmosphere seemed to pervade the place. The desire of years was about to be gratified—to see and hear Spurgeon. I felt, even as I had not in the silence and solitude of mid-ocean, my own insignificance.

My reflections were suddenly interrupted. There was a rush: the front doors were opened, the seats and the aisles were rapidly filling up. I saw it was just five minutes to eleven, and as instructed I entered one of the pews—they were *now* free to all. It was the third seat from the front on the left of the platform. The narrow passage which led down to this, and the other pews were now full—men and women, after the pews were packed, seating themselves on the steps and standing along by the walls. It took but a few minutes to fill up every available spot. Some six thousand persons were gathered beneath the spacious roof.

* The view is from the front gallery; this, as the one above it, extends all round the house, the platform or pulpit juts out a little, and there is ample room behind the preacher for a dozen or more persons to be seated. Under the pulpit is a still larger circular platform, this is the baptistry; but during Sunday service it is filled with chairs and occupied by hearers.

Then all eyes turned to the platform, and along the narrow aisle under the clock came the preacher, followed by a number of elders (for every elder or preacher is an officer in this church,) and stepping to the front of the platform, in a clear voice he said "Let us pray."

My curiosity to see the man was overcome by the solemnity of the moment, and with bowed head I followed him in that humble, trustful, thankful invocation. He then gave out a hymn. It was very familiar—each line closing with the words—

"Say poor sinner lovest thou me."

There was no accompaniment to the singing. A man beside him on the platform stepped forward and "raised the tune." The preacher (you could see by his movement) joined heartily in the singing. All had books. The whole congregation rose. Some twenty-five hundred voices sent up their wave of song from the body of the building. This was met by another wave from two thousand voices in the first gallery where I stood, and from the upper gallery a thousand voices met these billows of song till all mingled and rolled in an ocean-tide of melody up lifting and sublime. I could not sing, the whole scene was overwhelming. I sat down and wiped away my tears.

Then came the reading of the Scriptures. There was nothing like a desk or pulpit in front of the preacher. A small table was near him, on this he placed the bible which he brought in his hand when he entered. He commenced reading the fourth chapter of the first of John. On reading the third verse he paused.

"John," he said, "was the beloved disciple, and this chapter is all love. John was a lovely, loving spirit, but he was not a *milk sop*." The expression startled me. He continued: "John could call false teachers liars."

After reading the chapter with comments, he gave out another hymn. It was lined, as was the preceding one—that is, the first two lines of each stanza were read with distinctness and energy. Then followed a prayer, deeply devotional, tender, plaintive, beseeching, in power and pathos beyond anything I have ever read in his sermons. The impressions left by that prayer are fresh in my mind and heart to-day.

Another hymn was sung, the third before preaching. This time the audience was seated and so was the minister. Yet sitting in his chair and leaning forward with his large hymn book

on his knee, he still read out the two first lines of each stanza and sung with the congregation.

There were no announcements made, these were written on blackboards placed at each of the entrances. There were no breaks in the services. The often trivial announcements about picnics and suppers, the witticisms which in some cases accompany these, marred not the solemn scene and sacred emotions which followed those songs and that prayer. And then came the text: "WE LOVE HIM BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US."

After a brief introduction he announced very deliberately his analysis. I never saw this sermon in print, but the preacher wrote it on my memory by his simple divisions. 1st.—*Theologically*. God's love to us is the cause of our loving Him. 2nd.—*Experimentally*. We felt his love to us, therefore we love him. 3rd.—*Argumentat rely*. He first loved us, therefore we ought to love him.

The sermon closed with a brief prayer, and the audience retired without singing—quietly, solemnly, impressed seemingly with the glorious theme, to an extent which hushed every voice.

I at once made for the pastor's room back of the little aisle, along which he retired after preaching. Some twenty persons were ranged along the passage, waiting for an audience. A deacon guarded the door. I showed him my letters and he at once agreed to admit me in my turn, which soon came. And there I stood, face to face with Spurgeon. Placing my card and some letters on the table before him, he recognized me at once and said: "Oh yes, you edit the magazine which has Christ in the vine on the cover. I like it." A hearty shake-hands followed. I had published his sermons in the magazine in 1855, the first periodical in America that did so. He knew it, and hailed me as a brother and friend.

The anniversary of his birthday was to be held the next Tuesday afternoon, at Stockwell Orphanage. He gave me a ticket of admittance, and a hearty invitation to attend it.

HIS FATHER, SONS AND BROTHER.

I had spent the afternoon of Tuesday in the Speaker's gallery of the House of Commons, and on leaving it about six o'clock, saw one of its members come from its main entrance and pass out through Westminster Hall, before me. He walked over Westminster Bridge and entered a tramway, the same that I must take. I was seated beside him. As the conductor collected our fares, I told him I wished to get out at Stockwell Orphanage, and did not know where it was. The gentleman whom I had followed, told me he was also bound for the Orphanage. We entered into conversation. I told him I had visited the Commons, that I was invited to Mr. Spurgeon's birthday anniversary. He soon informed me that he was Sir Henry Havelock, son of the great Baptist General, and that he was announced to preside at the anniversary meeting that evening.

We entered the green lane leading to the interior of the Orphanage, just as the "Tea Meeting" was over. Mr. Spurgeon was mounting a wagon out in the tufted yard, in which were chairs for the speakers. A thousand or more people were gathered around the improvised platform. Sir Henry Havelock took the chair. Charles H. Spurgeon, his two sons, his father and his brother—five Spurgeons, occupied the seats in the wagon. A hymn was sung, a prayer was offered, and the meeting opened by a bright, happy yet affecting speech, from the preacher. Then his father followed in a short address, thanking God for the day and its mercies. Next came his brother, then each of his sons. Then a minister named Price, who had been connected with the Tabernacle. Spurgeon, in his happy humor, promised sixpence to whoever made the best and shortest speech, and amid much pleasantness, awarded the prize to his brother.

The public speaking over, a general social mingling followed. All over the green sward groups gathered. I had been introduced by Mr. Spurgeon to his venerable father, then sixty-five years of age. He took my arm and we walked over to a distant part of the green and occupied a garden seat. I alluded to the joy this day must give him—to his sons and grand-sons and especially to Charles. "Yes, yes," he said, "he is a remarkable man, but while these things are reasons for thankfulness they do not elate

me. I have my own work to do. I preach the best I can to my congregation at Islington.”

I asked him about his wife and the other children. He spoke of them all with great tenderness, and in the course of the conversation told this incident, which it seems had never been mentioned to mortal ear before that evening :

“I had been from home a great deal trying to build up weak congregations, and felt that I was neglecting the religious training of my children, while I was toiling for the good of others. I returned home with these feelings. I opened the front door, and I was surprised to find none of the children about the entry. Going quietly up-stairs, I heard my wife’s voice. She was engaged in prayer with the children. I heard her pray for them one by one by name. She came to Charles, and specially prayed for him, for he was of high spirit and daring temper. I listened till she had ended her prayer, and felt, and said : Lord, I will go on with thy work, the children will be cared for.”



CHAPTER IX.

THE PASTORS' COLLEGE.

NONE is better fitted to speak of the College, than its honored president. Its object, methods, and results are thus sketched by his own pen :

THE College was the first important institution commenced by the pastor, and it still remains his first-born and best beloved. To train ministers of the gospel is a most excellent work, and when the Holy Spirit blesses the effort, the result is of the utmost importance both to the Church and to the world.

The Pastors' College commenced in 1856, and during this long period has unceasingly been remembered of the God of heaven, to whom all engaged in it offer reverent thanksgiving. When it was commenced, I had not even a remote idea of whereunto it would grow. There were springing up around me, as my own spiritual children, many earnest young men who felt an irresistible impulse to preach the gospel, and yet with half an eye it could be seen that their want of education would be a sad hindrance to them. It was not in my heart to bid them cease their preaching, and had I done so, they would in all probability have ignored my recommendation. As it seemed that preach they would, though their attainments were very slender, no other course was open but to give them an opportunity to educate themselves for the work.

The Holy Spirit very evidently had set His seal upon the work of one of them, by conversions wrought under his open-air addresses; it seemed therefore to be a plain matter of duty to instruct this youthful Apollos still further, that he might be fitted for wider usefulness. No college at that time appeared to me to be suitable for the class of men that the providence and grace of God drew around me. They were mostly poor, and most of the colleges involved necessarily a considerable outlay to the student; for even where the education was free, books, clothes, and other incidental expenses required a considerable sum per annum. Moreover, it must be frankly admitted that my views of the gospel and of the mode of training preachers were and

are somewhat peculiar. I may have been uncharitable in my judgment, but I thought the Calvinism of the theology usually taught to be very doubtful, and the fervor of the generality of the students to be far behind their literary attainments. It seemed to me that preachers of the grand old truths of the gospel, ministers suitable for the masses, were more likely to be found in an institution where preaching and divinity would be the main objects, and not degrees and other insignia of human learning. I felt that, without interfering with the laudable objects of other colleges, I could do in my own way. These and other considerations led me to take a few tried young men, and to put them under some able minister, that he might train them in the Scriptures, and in other knowledge helpful to the understanding and proclamation of the truth. This step appeared plain; but how the work was to be conducted and supported was the question, — a question, be it added, solved almost before it occurred.

Two friends, both deacons of the church, promised aid, which, with what I could give myself, enabled me to take one student, and I set about to find a tutor. In Mr. George Rogers, God sent us the very best man. He had been preparing for such work, and was anxiously waiting for it. This gentleman, who has remained during all this period our principal tutor, is a man of Puritanic stamp, deeply learned, orthodox in doctrine, judicious, witty, devout, earnest, liberal in spirit, and withal juvenile in heart to an extent most remarkable in one of his years. My connection with him has been one of uninterrupted comfort and delight. The most sincere affection exists between us; we are of one mind and of one heart; and, what is equally important, he has in every case secured not merely the respect but the filial love of every student. Into this beloved minister's house the first students were introduced, and for a considerable period they were domiciled as members of his family.

Encouraged by the readiness with which the young men found spheres of labor, and by their singular success in soul-winning, I enlarged the number; but the whole means of sustaining them came from my own purse. The large sale of my sermons in America, together with my dear wife's economy, enabled me to spend from three thousand dollars to four thousand dollars in a year in my own favorite work; but on a sudden, owing to my denunciations of the then existing slavery in the States, my entire resources from that "brook Cherith" were dried up. I paid as

large sums as I could from my own income, and resolved to spend all I had, and then take the cessation of my means as a voice from the Lord to stay the effort, as I am firmly persuaded that we ought under no pretence go into debt. On one occasion I proposed the sale of my horse and carriage, although these were almost absolute necessities to me on account of my continual journeys in preaching the Word. This my friend Mr. Rogers would not hear of, and actually offered to be the loser rather than this should be done. Then it was that I told my difficulties to my people, and the weekly offering commenced; but the incomings from that source were so meagre as to be hardly worth calculating upon. I was brought to the last pound, when a letter came from a banker in the City, informing me that a lady, whose name I have never been able to discover, had deposited a sum of one thousand dollars, to be used for the education of young men for the ministry. How did my heart leap for joy! I threw myself then and henceforth upon the bounteous care of the Lord, whom I desired with my whole heart to glorify by this effort. Some weeks after, another five hundred dollars came in, from the same bank, as I was informed, from another hand. Soon after Mr. Phillips, a beloved deacon of the church of the Tabernacle, began to provide an annual supper for the friends of the College, at which considerable sums have from year to year been given. A dinner was also given by my liberal publishers, Messrs. Passmore and Alabaster, to celebrate the publishing of my five-hundredth weekly sermon, at which twenty-five hundred dollars were raised and presented to the funds. The College grew very much, and the number of students rapidly advanced from one to forty. Friends known and unknown, from far and near, were moved to give little or much to my work, and so the funds increased as the need enlarged. Then another earnest deacon of the church espoused as his special work the weekly offering, and by the unanimous voice of the church under my care the College was adopted as its own child. Since that hour the weekly offering has been a steady source of income, till in the year 1869 the amount reached exactly £1,869 (\$9,345).

There have been during this period times of great trial of my faith; but after a season of straitness, never amounting to absolute want, the Lord has always interposed and sent me large sums (on one occasion five thousand dollars) from unknown donors. When the Orphanage was thrust upon me, it did appear likely that this

second work would drain the resources of the first, and it is very apparent that it does attract to itself some of the visible sources of supply ; but my faith is firm that the Lord can as readily keep both works in action as one. My own present inability to do so much, by way of preaching abroad, occasions naturally the failure of another great source of income ; and as my increasing labors at home will in all probability diminish that stream in perpetuity, there is another trial of faith. Yet, if the Lord wills the work to be continued, He will send His servant a due portion of the gold and silver, which are all His own ; and therefore as I wait upon Him in prayer, the All-sufficient Provider will supply all my needs. About twenty-five thousand dollars is annually required for the College, and the same sum is needed for the Orphanage ; but God will move His people to liberality, and we shall see greater things than these.

The young brethren are boarded generally in twos and threes, in the houses of our friends around the Tabernacle, for which the College pays a moderate weekly amount. The plan of separate lodging we believe to be far preferable to having all under one roof, for, by the latter mode, men are isolated from general family habits, and are too apt to fall into superabundant levity. The circumstances of the families who entertain our young friends are generally such that they are not elevated above the social position which in all probability they will have to occupy in future years, but are kept in connection with the struggle and conditions of every-day life.

As to the quality of the preachers whom we have been enabled to send forth, we need no more impartial witness than the good Earl of Shaftesbury, who was kind enough to express himself publicly in the following generous terms :—

“ It was an utter fallacy to suppose that the people of England would ever be brought to a sense of order and discipline by the repetition of miserable services, by bits of wax candle, by rags of Popery, and by gymnastics in the chancel ; nothing was adapted to meet the wants of the people but the Gospel message brought home to their hearts, and he knew of none who had done better service in this evangelistic work than the pupils trained in Mr. Spurgeon’s College. They had a singular faculty for addressing the population, and going to the very heart of the people.”

When the necessity for new college buildings was plainly indicated, a friend in May, 1873, sent \$5,000 towards that object. On October 14, 1873, the foundation-stone of those buildings was laid, when the people contributed \$5,000, the students gave \$1,500, and undertook to raise the amount to \$5,000. In 1874 Messrs. Cory and Sons, of Cardiff, sent for the benefit of the fund \$5,000 worth of paid-up shares in their colliery company. In July, 1875, the president received \$25,000 for the same object as a legacy from the late Mr. Matthews. These are named as examples of the various ways in which God has answered prayer and rewarded the faith of His servant in that important work.

The suitable and commodious new buildings, which have been erected and furnished, cost about \$75,000, all of which is paid. Here we have a fine hall, excellent class-rooms, a handsome library, and in fact, all that a college can require. The way in which the money was raised was another instance of divine goodness; \$15,000 was given as a memorial to a dear and lamented husband; \$10,000 was a legacy to the College from a reader of the sermons. The ministers who had been formerly students came to our help in a princely fashion. Large amounts were made up by the unanimous offerings of Tabernacle friends on days when the pastor invited the members and adherents to be his guests at the College. In answer to prayer, the gold and the silver have been ready when needed. How our heart exults and blesses the name of the Lord.

The Evening Classes are in a high condition of prosperity, there being about two hundred men in regular attendance, and a considerable number among them of hopeful ability. Out of this class city missionaries, lay preachers, writing for the press, and colporteurs are continually coming. It is an eminently useful part of the College work.

There are now hundreds of men proclaiming the gospel who have been trained in the College. We are daily expecting more missionaries to be raised up among us.

Our statistics, which are far from being complete, show that these brethren baptized 20,676 persons in ten years (1863-1874) that the gross increase to their churches was 30,677, and the net increase 19,498. LAUS DEO.



Mrs. SPURGEON.

CHAPTER X.

MRS. SPURGEON.

IT was a day of joy when the youthful Spurgeon, in the morning glow of his popularity and usefulness, was announced to be married to Miss Suzanna Thompson. It was a cold day, the 8th of January, in the forenoon. The street where the old chapel was located was thronged with those who desired to catch a glimpse of the young bride as she entered the chapel to be married to the beloved young pastor. Like everything else it was all simplicity, no bridal music march or parade or flowers or other adornments. Judgment as well as intense affection guided him in his choice, and an angel being has shed a sweet influence over his sweet home. But she has been a constant sufferer. After giving birth to twins (Charles and Thomas, both of whom are now preachers) she became a confirmed invalid.

The devotion of the laborious preacher to this tender wife, who named him *the prince of her life*, will be *felt*, in reading this poem from Spurgeon's pen, ten years after his marriage. It was written by him while on a visit to Hull, in Yorkshire.

MARRIED LOVE—TO MY WIFE.

Over the space that parts us, my wife,
I'll cast me a bridge of song,
Our hearts shall meet, O joy of my life,
On its arch unseen, but strong.

The wooer his new love's name may wear
Engraved on a precious stone ;
But in my heart thine image I wear,
That heart has long been thine own.

The glowing colors on surface laid,
Wash out in a shower of rain ;
Thou need'st not be of rivers afraid,
For my love is dyed ingrain.

And as every drop of Garda's lake
Is tinged with Sapphire's blue,
So all the powers of my mind partake
Of joy at the thought of you.

The glittering dewdrops of dawning love
Exhale as the days grows old,
And fondness, taking the wings of a dove,
Is gone like a tale of old.

But mine for thee, from the chambers of joy,
With strength came forth as the sun,
Nor life nor death, shall its force destroy,
Forever its course shall run.

No wonder she called him the *prince of her life*.

This noble woman, amid all her afflictions originated and has carried out a plan to provide poor pastors "who are in actual charge and whose income from all sources does not exceed seven hundred dollars a year" with books.

From one of her reports her inner life is disclosed. She says :

"To-day \$1,000 is mine from the great Testimonial Fund raised last Christmas; \$500 is allotted to the Book Fund and \$500 to the Pastors' Aid Society. My dear husband's kindness secures this splendid help to my work, and I bless God both for him and his delightful gift. If John Ploughman's wife might say here what she thinks of John in this and all other matters, it would be an easy task to fill these pages with his praises; but since such a wifely eulogy might be deemed out of place, Mrs. J. P. may at least record in her little book her hearty and appreciative thanks to the hundreds of true friends, who have lately done honor to the 'Prince of her life'* and furnished him with the means of more abundantly blessing all the poor and needy ones who look to him as their best earthly friend and comforter. If I knew any one who doubted the truth of that Scripture, 'There is that scattereth and yet increaseth,' I could bring no more unanswerable proofs of veracity than is found in the unselfish life and loving deeds of the God-honored man I reverence as my head and husband. I find a graceful appropriateness in the gift of

* Name for Mr. Spurgeon suggested by a Welshman.

part of this money to Baptist pastors, seeing that to one of themselves the whole magnificent sum is offered as a tribute of devoted admiration and love. What a joy it will be to use this consecrated gold in their service! What heavy burdens it will lift! What aching hearts will be consoled! What praise to God will be given by joyful lips! When I think of all it will do, I wish it were ten times as much! I get greedy for their sakes—my poor weary, toiling brethren,—but that only lasts a moment, for indeed I am most fully ‘satisfied with favor’ on their behalf, both from the Lord and from man.

And closing another report she writes: Truly there are times when silence is more eloquent than speech, and we are constrained to worship ‘afar off’ from very awe of His goodness. Such a season comes to me now as I sit pondering over all the Lord’s marvelous, loving kindness; and looking back on the great and manifold mercies of the fast-closing year, my spirit is overwhelmed within me, the weight of blessing seems almost too much for me, and I lay aside my poor, useless pen to bow the knee before Him in silent adoration and thanksgiving. ‘I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant.’”

This sweet story from Mrs. Spurgeon’s pen will comfort those in affliction:

“A curious little incident happened lately during a time of prolonged sickness. At the close of a very dark and gloomy day, I lay resting on my couch as the deeper night drew on, and though all was bright within my cosy little room, some of the external darkness seemed to have entered into my soul and obscured its spiritual vision. Vainly I tried to see the Hand which I knew held mine, and guided my fog-enveloped feet along a steep and slippery path of suffering. In sorrow of heart I asked, “Why does my Lord thus deal with His child? Why does He so often send sharp and bitter pain to visit me? Why does He permit lingering weakness to hinder the sweet service I long to render to His poor servants?” These fretful questions were quickly answered, and though in a strange language, no interpreter was needed save the conscious whisper of my own heart. For a while silence reigned in the little room, broken only by the crackling of the oak-log burning on the hearth. Suddenly I heard a sweet, soft sound, a little clear, musical note, like the tender trill of a

robin beneath my window. “What *can* that be?” I said to my companion, who was dozing in the firelight; “surely no bird can be singing out there at this time of the year and night.” We listened, and again heard the faint, plaintive notes, so sweet, so melodious, yet mysterious enough to provoke for a moment our undisguised wonder. Presently my friend exclaimed, “It comes from the log on the fire!” and we soon ascertained that her surprised assertion was correct. *The fire was letting loose the imprisoned music from the old oak’s inmost heart!* Perchance he had garnered up this song in the days when all went well with him, when birds twittered merrily on his branches, and the soft sunlight flecked his tender leaves with gold. But he had grown old since then, and hardened; ring after ring of knotty growth had sealed up the long-forgotten melody, until the fierce tongues of the flames came to consume his callousness, and the vehement heat of the fire wrung from him at once a song and a sacrifice. Ah, thought I, when the fire of affliction draws songs of praise from us, then indeed are we purified, and our God is glorified! Perhaps some of us are like this old oak log, cold, hard, and insensible; we should give forth no melodious sounds, were it not for the fire which kindles round us, and releases tender notes of trust in Him, and cheerful compliance with His will. ‘As I mused the fire burned,’ and my soul found sweet comfort in the parable so strangely set forth before me. Singing in the fire. Yes. God helping us, if that is the only way to get harmony out of these hard, apathetic hearts, let the furnace be heated seven times hotter than before.”

And so, a contemporary journal speaking of Pastor Spurgeon’s last jubilee says: “With our greeting to him, we would give the expression of our most earnest and heartfelt wishes for blessings upon the noblest of women who adorns his home.”

Heaven’s blessing on them both.