

Spurgeon a New Biography #3

by C.H. Spurgeon

Spurgeon's ministry was characterized by his theology of victory, his earnestness in preaching and praying, and his care for souls, which led to the growth of his church and the conversion of many.

Duration: 1:32:29

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Mark 16:16, John 3:16, Acts 16:31, Romans 10:9, 1 Timothy 2:5, James 4:8

Topics: "Doctrines Of Grace", "Spiritual Transformation"

Description

The video is a summary of a sermon given by a preacher who traveled extensively to preach the word of God. He accepted invitations to preach and traveled by horse and carriage or train, which could be tiring. The preacher emphasized the importance of understanding the doctrines of grace and recognizing that salvation comes from God's choice and action. He also spoke about the power of God's fire to bring about transformation and conversion in the lives of sinners. The preacher encouraged his listeners to seek God's blessing and be a blessing to others.

Transcript

Moreover, the New Park Street people had already appointed a committee to make plans for the construction of a new and very large church, and the catastrophe moved them to work and pray to see the planning completed and the actual construction begun. And Spurgeon benefited within himself. The opposition taught him to sacrifice even his reputation for Christ.

If I must lose that too, he wrote, then let it go. It is the dearest thing I have, but it shall go too, if, like my master, they shall say I have a devil and am mad. The experience, heart-rending though it was at the time, brought him into an increased maturity, and it was a wiser Spurgeon who led his church forward.

Undoubtedly, some would like to think of Spurgeon as a man who seldom disagreed with anyone, and who was always widely loved and admired. But in his doctrinal emphasis, he ran contrary to many, and for this reason, in addition to his unusual zeal, he became an object of ridicule and reproach. And some years were to elapse before the nation began to recognize his true qualities and to know his extraordinary worth.

Chapter 8 now, entitled Revival in London. And it too is prefaced by a quote from Spurgeon himself, written in January 1860. Here's the quote.

There was a specimen before me of the plowman who overtook the reaper, of one who sowed the seed who was treading on the heels of the men who were gathering in the vintage, and the like activity we have lived to see in the Church of Christ. Did you ever know so much doing in the Christian world before? There are gray-headed men around me who have known the Church of Christ sixty years, and they can bear me witness that they never knew such life, such vigor and activity as there is at present. And now chapter 8, again entitled Revival in London.

For three years Spurgeon used the Surrey Gardens Music Hall as the site of his morning service, and the evening congregation continued to meet, though terribly overcrowded, in the New Park Street Chapel. These were years of tremendous labor and also of great blessing. A congregation of an unusual nature was drawn to the Great Hall.

Among them were many persons of learning and position, and a large number were middle-class citizens, people whose possessions were sufficient to afford them a very comfortable manner of life. But there were numerous poor in London in those days, and among them poverty was the daily lot, sickness was frequent, and drunkenness, immorality, and thievery abounded. Life was hard, suicides were not uncommon, and most had long been forced to say, no man careth for our souls.

Hundreds from this poor class came to hear Spurgeon. The first experience many of these people had with Spurgeon was during the cholera epidemic. He had not tried to escape the contagion, but had gone freely to the homes of the sick.

He had shown kindness, prayed for the suffering, comforted the mourners, and buried the dead. News of his actions had spread around the entire area, and people recognized that here was a preacher who truly cared about them. The attention thus drawn to Spurgeon was increased by the campaign of opposition against him.

His name was on many tongues, and it was spoken so frequently in contempt and with such bitter accusations that many people were moved by curiosity to go to hear him. Moreover, going to the hall did not seem like going to so forbidding a place as a church. And as they listened, they found he did not speak in some difficult style, but he spoke their language, the tongue of the common man.

He used words they knew well, and illustrations they could understand, and he seemed to be talking to each one personally. Above all, he had a message that reached many hearts as he told of the new life that could be had in Christ. In seeking to reach these people, indeed in every aspect of his ministry, Spurgeon was characterized by an earnestness that almost defies description.

Some authors have assumed that he was little more than an entertainer. They picture him as a man who went to the pulpit in a jovial manner, made people laugh and feel good, and who regarded preaching as something of a casual pastime. Nothing can be further from the truth.

Certainly, Spurgeon had a gift of humor, and at times it came into play as he preached. A Scottish minister, after hearing him, said his speaking was enlivened here and there with a flash of wit that was like the gleam of sunshine on the ripples of a river. But to suppose that Spurgeon told jokes in the pulpit or treated the work of preaching lightly is to reveal an utter ignorance of the man and of his concept of the ministry.

In speaking to his students on how the He said, It may be done by putting empty-headed men in the pulpit, men who have nothing to say, and say it, or frothy, feathery men who introduce a joke in the pulpit for joking's sake. Clowning in the pulpit called down his strongest denunciations. In his regular Sunday work, he spent some time before the beginning of the services alone with God, feeling the awesome responsibility of preaching the gospel to lost mankind and pouring out his soul in prayer.

On some occasions he seemed unable to go out and stand before the people, and the deacons found it necessary almost to lift him from his knees as the moment for commencing the service drew near. Yet he went forth, always right on time, and as he stood before the congregation he experienced a great sense of power from on high. He preached with confidence, with clear instruction and heartfelt pleading, but as soon as the service was concluded he hastened away to his vestry, there to groan out before God his sense of failure.

He could not be alone for long, for people came lining up before the vestry door, some coming as visitors from afar to greet him, but others coming to tell him they were in sore spiritual need and wanted him to show them the way to the Savior. Spurgeon spoke out against the kind of minister who before preaching can be a jolly fellow, happily greeting the people, and who after the service can gather jovially with him at the door having fair words for all. His place at such a time, he declared, is with God, weeping out the failure of his preaching and pleading that the seed sown in hearts might take root and bring forth fruit unto eternal life.

This earnestness characterized the whole service, the singing, the scripture reading, and the preaching, but it was especially evident as Spurgeon led the congregation in prayer. Throughout his entire ministry many hearers remarked that, moved as they were by his preaching, they were still more affected by his praying. D. L. Moody, after his first visit to England, being asked upon his return to America, did you hear Spurgeon preach? replied, yes, but better still I heard him pray.

Spurgeon asked that no one take down his prayers in shorthand, declaring prayer was too solemn an activity to be subjected to reporting, but at times the request went unheeded. His prayer at the watch night service in 1856 was recorded, and we may sense something of his tremendous earnestness as we read it. Quote, O God save thy people, save thy people, a solemn charge hast thou given to thy servant.

O Lord, it is too solemn for such a child. Help him, help him by thine own grace to discharge it as he ought. O Lord, let thy servant confess that he feels his prayers are not as earnest as they should be for his people's souls, that he does not preach so frequently as he ought with that fire, that energy, that true love for men's souls.

But, O Lord, damn not the hearers for the preacher's sin. O destroy not the flock for the shepherd's iniquity. Have mercy on them, good Lord, have mercy on them.

O Lord, have mercy on them. There are some of them, Father, that will not have mercy on themselves. How we have preached to them and labored for them.

O God, thou knowest that I lie not. How have I striven for them that they might be saved. But the heart is too hard for man to melt, and the soul made of iron too hard for flesh and blood to render soft.

O God, the God of Israel, thou canst save. There is the pastor's hope, there is the minister's trust. He cannot, but thou canst, Lord.

They will not come, but thou canst make them willing in the day of thy power. They will not come unto thee that they may have life. But thou canst draw them, and then they shall run after thee.

They cannot come, but thou canst give them power. For though no man cometh except the Father draw him, yet if he draw him, then he can come. O Lord, for another year has thy servant preached.

Thou knowest how. It is not for him to plead his cause with thee. But now, O Lord, we beseech thee, bless our people.

Let this, our church, thy church, be still knit together in unity. And this night may they commence a fresh era of prayer. They are a praying people.

Blessed be thy name. And they pray for their minister with all their hearts. O Lord, help them to pray more earnestly.

May we wrestle in prayer more than ever, and besiege thy throne until thou makest Jerusalem appraise, not only here, but everywhere. But, Father, it is not the church we weep for, it is not the church we groan for, it is the world. O faithful promiser, hast thou not promised to thy son that he should not die in vain? Give him souls, we beseech thee, that he may be abundantly satisfied.

Hast thou not promised that thy church shall be increased? O increase her, increase her. And hast thou not promised that thy ministers shall not labor in vain? For thou hast said, As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, even so shall thy word be, it shall not return unto thee void. Let not the word return void to-night.

But now may thy servant in the most earnest manner, with the most fervent heart, burning with love to his Saviour, and with love to souls, preach once more the glorious gospel of the Blessed One. Come, Holy Spirit, we can do nothing without thee. We solemnly invoke thee, Great Spirit of God, thou who didst rest on Abraham, on Isaac, and on Jacob, thou who in the night visions speakest unto men.

Spirit of the prophets, Spirit of the apostles, Spirit of the church, be thou our Spirit this night, that the earth may tremble, that souls may be made to hear thy word, and that all flesh may rejoice together to praise thy name. Unto Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the Dread Supreme be everlasting praise. Amen.

The essence of Spurgeon's theology is revealed in this prayer. He recognized that the human heart is set against God, and that so severe is the nature of sin, that unregenerate man will not and cannot come to God of himself. Man is lost in sin, and such is his condition that he can in no way help himself.

Yet Spurgeon found assurance in knowing that Christ on the cross accomplished the full salvation of all whom God would call, and that God makes unwilling men willing in the day of his power. He regarded himself as responsible to preach the gospel to them all, to every creature, and to do so as zealously as if the outcome depended entirely on himself. He knew that salvation is of the Lord, and that as he went on with a mighty task he could be confident that the word would not return void, but that God would use it to bring about the salvation of souls.

His was a theology not limited by the response of man. It depended upon God, and it was to Spurgeon a theology of victory. The earnestness manifested in his praying characterized also Spurgeon's preaching.

His first aim was that of bringing glory to Christ. In mentioning the strain he frequently experienced when he first began to preach in Exeter Hall, Mrs. Spurgeon wrote, I remember the Sunday evening when he preached from the text, His Name Shall Endure Forever. It was a subject in which he reveled.

It was his chief delight to exalt his glorious Savior, and he seemed in that discourse to be pouring out his very soul and life in homage and adoration before his gracious King. But I really thought he would have died there in face of all those people. At the end of the sermon he made a mighty effort to recover his voice, but utterance well nigh failed, and only in broken accents could the pathetic prayer be heard, Let my name perish, but let Christ's name last forever.

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, crown him Lord of all. You will not hear me say anything else. These are my last words in Exeter Hall for this time.

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, crown him Lord of all. And then he fell back, almost fainting, in the chair behind him. Together with his love for the Lord, Spurgeon's preaching manifested a great love for the souls of mankind.

Christians were fed, and needy saints were comforted under his ministry, but above all sinners were pleaded with to come to Christ. One of his early sermons closed with, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned. Weary sinner, hellish sinner, thou who art the devil's castaway, reprobate, profligate, harlot, robber, thief, adulterer, fornicator, drunkard, sweeper, sabbath-breaker, list, I speak to thee as to the rest, I exempt no man.

God hath said there is no exemption here. Whosoever believeth in the name of Jesus Christ shall be saved. Sin is no barrier, thy guilt is no obstacle.

Whosoever, though he were as black as Satan, though he were guilty as a fiend, whosoever this night believes, shall have every sin forgiven, shall have every crime effaced, shall have every iniquity blotted out, shall be saved in the Lord Jesus Christ, and shall stand in heaven safe. That is the glorious gospel. God applied to your hearts and give you faith in Jesus.

Almost every sermon contained, especially toward its close, an entreaty of this nature, warning, begging, pleading, urging the sinner to come to Christ. Spurgeon took further steps in directing souls who had come to Christ, and were therefore ready for baptism and membership in the church. He did not ask people to walk to the front of the auditorium, raise a hand, sign a card, or perform any outward action.

But throughout each sermon, and especially as he drew it to its close, he pleaded with unsaved hearers to believe on Christ, and he expected them to do so then and there. At times he told them to go quietly to their homes, to go to a room alone, and to stay there seeking the Lord till he planted faith and repentance within their hearts. During his first years in London, he made himself available every Tuesday afternoon, that persons who were in trouble about their souls might seek his advice, or those who had recently come to know Christ might tell him of their experience.

These were glorious occasions to him, and he rejoiced to point a seeking one to the Lord, or to hear a testimony of the transformation of a life. In turn, on Tuesday evening, as the church gathered for prayer meeting, he presented the names of those he had reason to believe were truly born again, and often the person was there to tell of his experience before the large company. The church then voted to receive these ones for baptism and church membership, and that happy task was almost the only business of the

church.

Before long, however, the number of persons who came to Spurgeon proved so large that he found it necessary to change his procedure. Names of persons who were known to be seekers, or who claimed to have recently come to Christ, were presented at the Tuesday evening meeting, and in each case a man whom the church called a messenger was appointed to visit the person, in order, as far as possible, to ascertain the spiritual condition. The messenger wrote a report of his dealing with this person, and entered it in a book entitled Record of Inquirers, which was kept by the church.

The work done by the messengers reveals that they had developed a marvelous spiritual maturity. Undoubtedly, when Spurgeon first came to New Park Street, the men of the church were little accustomed to dealing with inquiring souls. But, under Spurgeon's instruction, they learned to perform the sensitive task, and, as one reads their reports, it is impossible not to be struck by their wisdom.

In dealing with a person who testified he had come to know the Lord, the messenger looked for three marks of true conversion. One, had the person, knowing himself to be a sinner and unable to do anything toward saving himself, gone to God, begging for mercy, and had he entirely trusted his soul to Christ, believing in the saving merit of his death upon the cross? This individual experience of the soul with God was the unalterable and basic necessity, and without it there was no recognition of the person as truly converted. Number two, had the person entered into newness of life, experiencing a change of affections, victory over sin, a love for the word of God, and a desire to win others to Christ? Three, did he or she possess a basic understanding of the doctrines of grace, recognizing that salvation did not begin with himself or his own will, but with God's choice and God's action, and that God who saved him would keep him through time and through eternity? The messengers dealt very tenderly and understandingly with these babes in Christ, and the reports of their visits possess a spiritual richness that is rare in Christian literature.

In cases in which the messenger was satisfied on these three matters, he expressed his rejoicing in the report, and wrote at the bottom of the page, Give him or her a card to see the pastor. But when he was not satisfied, the report might read, in the case of a woman, Recommend her to attend Mrs. Bartlett's class. I will see her again in three months.

A man would be directed to one of the men's classes, and in some instances two and three dates on which further visits were made were written in. But there were several instances in which the messenger was not satisfied that the person was truly saved, and each year a list of refusals containing perhaps sixty or seventy names was pasted into the front of the book. Spurgeon was still available each Tuesday afternoon to meet with inquirers, but the work of the messengers had already done much toward saving his time.

On several occasions he remarked on the joy he had in hearing the testimonies of these new Christians, and he was often in tears as he heard them tell of the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, of their struggles with sin and their victories over it, and of their new life in Christ. Many mentioned the very sermon under which their hearts had been smitten with a realization of their need, and some even spoke of a text he had used or a single statement he had made that was used of the Lord to awaken them and draw them to himself. He gave encouragement and advice.

In these interviews he came to know the persons individually, and this acquaintance enabled him, even when the membership rose to six thousand, to remember almost every one of them by name. On various

occasions he was so lost in joy in hearing the accounts of conversion that he forgot all about supper, and he was sorry when the hour for the prayer meeting arrived and he had to leave several individuals to be dealt with the following week. Those names were presented to the church that evening.

The people joined him in rejoicing as they heard the new converts, and several each week were received for baptism and membership. Sometimes the number was as low as twelve, and often as high as twenty and more. In his extraordinary earnestness, Spurgeon could not do less than exercise this great care in dealing with souls.

He truly believed in hell, and he recognized the awful possibility should he give some person cause to believe he was saved if there was no evidence that it was so. Moreover, membership in the church was never allowed to become a mere formality. Members were given tickets, one of which must be presented at each communion service, and the names of any who were absent four months without good cause were removed.

Likewise, the names of those who ceased to live in London, in those days many an Englishman emigrated to Australia, Canada, and other lands, were deleted, and the principle that except in the case of shut-ins, membership must be active, was rigidly maintained. The new members were very largely people who did not come from other churches. The vast majority were men and women who had never been in the habit of attending church, but they came, especially to the music hall, heard the gospel, and were converted.

Many of these represented marvelous transformations, drunkards, harlots, and thieves with lives changed and homes made anew, men and women who once did not know God, but now were happily living for the Lord and serving Him. The blessing experience under Spurgeon's ministry soon affected other churches. Although at first there had been the loud outcry against him, as time passed and as people read his sermons and saw his work, their opinions began to change.

By the time he had been in London three years, some of the papers wrote of him very favorably, and certain of the great literary and political figures of the nation frequently dropped into the services. His fervor gradually had an influence on religious conditions in general. Several ministers who had been sorely lacking in zeal began to labor with diligence.

Special evangelistic efforts were conducted in many quarters, and some even followed Spurgeon in holding meetings in Exeter Hall. He spoke of his church as the advance guard of the times. I cannot help observing that during the last four or five years a wonderful change has come over the Christian mind.

The Church of England has been awakened. Great services have been held. I cannot help remembering that God honored us to let us stand in the front of this great movement.

From our example, the blessed fire has run along the ground and kindled a blaze. When I first heard that clergymen were to preach in Exeter Hall, my soul leaped within me. When I heard that Westminster Abbey was opened for the preaching of the gospel and then St. Paul's Cathedral, I was overwhelmed with gratitude and prayed that only the truth as it is in Jesus might be preached in these places.

A year later he asserted, The times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord have at last dawned upon our land. Everywhere there are signs of aroused activity and increased earnestness. A spirit of prayer is visiting our churches.

The first breath of the rushing mighty wind is already discerned, while on rising evangelists the tongues of fire have evidently descended. He spoke of the blessing God had bestowed upon his ministry as a harvest which is not twenty- nor thirtyfold, but even seventyfold. Yet he and his people were anticipating a still larger in-gathering, for the days of their meeting in rented halls were almost ended.

As 1861 dawned, they were ready to enter their new church home, the great Metropolitan Tabernacle. But now we begin another subsection of the book entitled The Long Period of Mature Ministry, and the dates are 1861 to 1886. And it begins with chapter 9, The Metropolitan Tabernacle.

And here's a quote at the beginning of chapter 9 from his first sermon in the Metropolitan Tabernacle dated March 31, 1861. Here's the quote. Let God send the fire of his spirit here, and the minister will be more and more lost in his master.

You will come to think less of the speaker, and more of the truth spoken. Suppose the fire should come here, and the master be seen more than the minister. What then? Why, this church will become two, three, and four thousand strong.

We shall have the lecture hall beneath this platform crowded at each prayer meeting, and we shall see in this place young men devoting themselves to God. But we shall find ministers raised up and trained, and sent forth to carry the sacred fire to other parts of the globe. If God shall bless us, he will make us a blessing to multitudes of others.

Let God but send down the fire, and the biggest sinners in the neighborhood will be converted. Those who live in dens of infamy will be changed. The drunkard will forsake his cups.

The swearer will repent of his blasphemy. The debauched will leave their lusts. Dry bones be raised, and clothed afresh, and hearts of stone be turned to flesh.

That's the quote. Now let's begin chapter nine, The Metropolitan Tabernacle. Spurgeon had been in London merely two years when plans were begun to build a large new church.

Despite the enthusiasm in his ministry manifested by the deacons and the people, some questioned the wisdom of this action. Just thirty years earlier, Edward Irving, the Presbyterian orator, had taken London by storm, and a magnificent church had been erected for him. But he had quickly faded from public attention, and there were those who said the same would be true of Spurgeon, and that his people too would be left with a nearly empty building, and a huge debt.

Nevertheless, the vast majority were strongly in favor of going forward with the project. An excellent piece of property was acquired at Newington Butts, an area south of the Thames at a busy junction of three roads, at the cost of five thousand pounds. A design for the building to seat three thousand six hundred, and to have temporary seating and standing room for almost two thousand more, was accepted.

The new church was to be called The Metropolitan Tabernacle. Spurgeon made much of the fact that the architecture was Grecian, a relationship, he said, that was clear to the evangelical heart, for the New Testament was written in Greek. Much time was consumed in these preliminary arrangements, but meanwhile Spurgeon was, if possible, busier than ever.

Among other activities, he now addressed the largest gathering of his entire career. There had been a mutiny in India, against Britain's rule over that land, and a service of national humiliation was planned. It

was to be held in the Crystal Palace, and was to be addressed by the one man with voice enough to reach the expected gigantic audience, Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

The day before the service he went to the palace to weigh up the task he was facing. The building had not been planned with any thought of meetings, and in order to test the acoustics he repeated several times the scripture, Behold the Lamb of God which take away the sin of the world. His words were heard by a man who was working somewhere in the building.

That man came to him some days later to say the message of the verse had reached his heart, and he had come to know the Lord Jesus Christ. The people attending the service counted at turnstiles as they entered, numbered 23,654. This was undoubtedly the largest indoor congregation ever reached with the human voice in all history until that time.

As he preached, Spurgeon was critical of England's actions in India. He called for national repentance and humiliation. There were no words of condemnation for the government in that sermon.

He impeached their treatment of India and reminded them that only righteousness could exalt a nation. An offering was received to help persons wounded in the mutiny, and it amounted to 675 pounds. Following the service, held on a Wednesday evening, Spurgeon was so exhausted that he slept two nights and a day.

He did not wake up till Friday morning. Spurgeon's chief project during that time was raising money for the new tabernacle. The estimated cost was 13,000 pounds, and he held to the principle that there must never be any debt in doing the Lord's work.

This place must be entirely paid for before it was opened, and he was prepared to take upon himself the responsibility of providing a considerable portion of the costs. To begin, he gave a series of weeknight lectures in Exeter Hall. His subjects were of general educational interest, and at each meeting, an offering was received.

He also accepted as many as possible of the numerous invitations he received to come and preach. When the journey was short, he traveled by horse and carriage, but for the longer trips he went by train, and that could be a grimy and exhausting experience. When being put up for the night in someone's home, he asked for a quiet place and said, It is the lionizing that tires me, and he sought escape from the pressure of the crowd.

The story is told that when staying in a small hotel one night, he asked that he be awakened at five in the morning to catch a train. At three, a youth knocked upon his door, and when Spurgeon finally answered, the lad said, In accepting these invitations, Spurgeon suggested to each pastor that half the amount received in the offering go to the work of that church, and the other half be used toward the construction of his new tabernacle. This was always an agreeable arrangement, but sometimes he saw some special need.

For instance, a farmer who had suffered years of crop failure or a minister who was trying to bring up a family on sixty pounds a year, and he devoted the whole to meet such a necessity. This labor took Spurgeon to Ireland for some days of meetings. Many of the people at first considered him inferior to their own great evangelist, Grettton Guinness, but before long they forgot the human comparison and were much drawn to the gospel Spurgeon preached.

The heavy agenda of traveling and preaching he had set for himself soon proved too much for him to bear. After his return from Ireland, he was too ill to continue and was laid aside for nearly a month. This was the first indication of the breaking down of his health, and a sign that throughout the rest of his life his labors would often be conducted under severe physical difficulty.

Nevertheless, as soon as he was able, he became fully active again. On the afternoon of August 15, 1859, the foundation stone of the tabernacle was laid. Although it was a weekday, Tuesday, some three thousand persons were present, and esteemed Christian baronet Sir Morton Pateau was in the chair.

Spurgeon and his father each gave an address. A large ceramic jar containing a Bible, a copy of the Baptist Confession of Faith, Dr. Rippon's hymn book, and the program of the day's proceedings were placed beneath the stone. In the evening another meeting was held.

That day the offering was well over four thousand pounds. Spurgeon was also devoting to the tabernacle the income derived from the sale of his sermons. A sermon was published each week and was circulated among subscribers throughout the British Isles, in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and translations were being made into German, Dutch, French, Italian, and Swedish.

There was also a very large circulation in America. Moreover, at the end of each year, a volume containing fifty-two sermons was produced, and for that there was a similar international demand. The Americans were not satisfied merely to read Spurgeon.

They wanted to hear him too. He received several invitations to visit the United States. The first offered him ten thousand pounds to preach four discourses in the splendid and spacious music hall of New York.

Whether or not he decided to go we do not know, but a London paper said he did, and announced he will leave England in April and will preach at Rochester, at Boston or Philadelphia, as well as at New York. Another journal said he would not accept the ten thousand pounds, but would go on an independent basis. The idea was soon dropped by both sides.

A young black man who had escaped from a slave owner in South Carolina was then in England, giving talks on his experiences. He was a true Christian, and Spurgeon had him come to an evening service and tell of his sufferings and his escape. The matter of slavery was then sorely dividing America and leading towards civil war, and Spurgeon's action brought strong criticism upon him.

Persons in both North and South demanded that he clearly declare his position on the matter, and in reply he wrote an article for an American publication. Quote I do from my inmost soul detest slavery, and although I commune at the Lord's table with men of all creeds, yet with a slaveholder I have no fellowship or any sort or kind. Whenever one has called upon me, I have considered it my duty to express my detestation of his wickedness, and I would as soon think of receiving a murderer into my church as a man-stealer.

End quote. Of course, such statements drew a storm of protest, especially in the southern states. Effigies of Spurgeon were burned in several places, his American publishers suspended the printing of his sermons, and various papers urged readers to destroy any they might possess and to forego all purchase of his publications in the future.

Thus the income from America was largely cut off. Spurgeon had recognized his statements would provoke severe opposition, so their reaction was no surprise. But being so strongly moved against slavery,

he could do nothing else, and he willingly suffered this financial loss.

Nevertheless, money came in steadily from other lands. In his task of preaching the gospel and raising support, Spurgeon spent some days in Wales, was at Bristol and Birmingham, and took a trip to Scotland, ministering in various places in England on the way. He visited Europe and was warmly received in Paris, where he preached by means of an interpreter, and in one of the great experiences of his life, he preached in Calvin's Pulpit in Geneva, Switzerland.

And from all these journeyings, he came home with added funds toward the new building. Providentially, one of the deacons of the church, William Higgs, was a successful contractor. He was a man of pronounced Christian character who also excelled at his profession, and he was awarded the contract for the construction of the tabernacle.

Between Higgs and Spurgeon there was the happiest relationship, as stone by stone the great new structure took shape. Construction lasted nearly two years, and the cost, which had been estimated at 13,000 pounds, became 31,000 pounds. Just before the building was ready to be opened, since the entire costs had not yet been met, a great bazaar was held to raise the remaining amount.

This action caused questioning in many evangelical minds then, and it will do the same today. But Spurgeon believed in the practice, and the receipts from the bazaar enabled him to open the building free from all debt. The first Sunday service in the Metropolitan Tabernacle was held on Sunday, March 31, 1861.

Of course this was a high day for Spurgeon. He was only 26, yet under his leadership his congregation had grown from the 80 or so he first addressed in London to 6,000 or more, and from New Park Street Chapel to this great edifice, the largest nonconformist church in the world. Yet his joy lay not especially in these accomplishments, but in the fact that he would now have a church home, a building in which the activities of his people would center, in which they would be built up in the things of God, and to which outsiders would be drawn in great numbers to hear the gospel and to enter the Christian life.

The tabernacle was admirably planned to meet the needs of Spurgeon's ministry. In addition to the floor level referred to in those days as the area, there were two galleries. The whole had seating for about 3,600.

At the ends of the pews were flap seats, which when lifted into position held by iron rods could seat another thousand. Besides this, there was standing room for well over a thousand more, and the reports of nearly 6,000 being packed into the building are probably true. Behind the auditorium at the level of the first galley were three vestries, the center one for the pastor, the others for the deacons and the elders.

Above this level, parallel with the second gallery, were a ladies' parlor and rooms for storing Bibles and books, ready for distribution. The auditorium had no actual pulpit, a curving platform projected out of the front of the first gallery. It had an open railing and contained a table and a settee for the pastor, and behind them a row of chairs for the deacons.

Beneath this preaching platform was another of equal size in which there was set a marble baptistry, which was, as Spurgeon desired, fully visible to all. A temporary floor was put over the baptistry for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and on those occasions this area held the communion table and chairs. There was no organ and no choir.

A presenter set the pitch of each hymn with a tuning fork and led the singing with his own voice. People who wished to attend regularly paid for a seat on a three-month basis and were admitted a ticket. Others remained outside till five minutes before the beginning of the service, at which time the restriction was removed, and the crowd rushed in and filled the rest of the building.

There were more than three thousand seat holders, and the money thus received constituted the tabernacle's chief income. There were no collection plates and no offering was taken up during the services. Spurgeon accepted no salary after his books and sermons began to sell so widely, but there was a box near the entrance of the building in which gifts for the support of the College could be placed.

There may have been other boxes for general contributions. Since he was ever conscious of the Surrey Garden Music Hall tragedy, Spurgeon made sure the tabernacle was very strongly constructed. Moreover, if ever the need should arise that the audience be removed from the building in a hurry, it could be done with speed and with safety, for each gallery had its own set of stairways.

These were of adequate size and ran down all the way to their individual exit doors. Beneath the auditorium was a full basement. It held a large lecture hall, extensive Sunday school facilities, and a well-furnished kitchen.

The meetings celebrating the opening of the tabernacle lasted for two weeks. The first words Spurgeon spoke in the new building clearly declared his doctrinal position and his overall purpose. I would propose that the subject of the ministry in this house, as long as this platform shall stand, and as long as this house shall be frequented by worshippers, shall be the person of Jesus Christ.

I am never ashamed to avow myself a Calvinist, I do not hesitate to take the name of Baptist, but if I am asked what is my creed, I reply, it is Jesus Christ. Jesus, who is the sum and substance of the gospel, who is in himself all theology, the incarnation of every precious truth, the all-glorious personal embodiment of the way, the truth, and the life. Several other ministers joined Spurgeon and his people throughout those grand weeks.

One day was given over to the exposition of the five points of Calvinism, and Spurgeon had five visiting pastors share the speaking with him on this day of instruction and declaration. Spurgeon himself replied to objections often raised against Calvinism, asserting that most of the great men of God of previous centuries had held this form of doctrine, and that this was the body of truth God had historically used in sending revival. As the church entered its long history of labor for the Lord in the new tabernacle, one of the first features of its work was the baptism of large numbers of people and their reception into membership.

At one end of the baptistry were two built-in boxes, one at each side, and in those stood two deacons ready to assist the candidates as they came into the pool. Other deacons guided the men to and from the baptistry, and Mrs. Spurgeon did the same for the ladies. Spurgeon conducted the ordinance with magnificent propriety, and the whole proved a beautiful picture of being buried with Christ by baptism into death and raised with him to walk in newness of life.

A month after the tabernacle was opened, 77 persons were received for baptism and church membership. The following month, another 72 were thus received, and when another month had passed, a further 121 were added. If we bear in mind the evidence of true conversion that Spurgeon required, in contrast with the methods often used today, these figures become all the more noteworthy.

The membership which at the time of Spurgeon's coming to London had been 313, less than a hundred of whom were active, had become more than 2,000, and now that the church had its own home, the prospect of growing still more rapidly lay immediately ahead. The completion of the tabernacle not only gave Spurgeon an adequate place in which to minister, but it also provided a statement of the solidness of his work. The New Park Street chapel had always been sadly insufficient, and both Exeter Hall and Surrey Hall were someone else's property.

The lack of a permanent meeting place of their own had given strength to the assertions that Spurgeon's ministry was not permanent and that he would soon fade away. But now, all could not help but recognize that he was there to stay. In turn, the opposition, which for months had been gradually disappearing, became still less, and the tendency to accept and even to admire him was noticeably increased.

Spurgeon joyfully settled into his ministry at the tabernacle. The building was to be the scene of his preaching, the center of his life, and the site of multiplied miracles of grace till thirty-one years later, when, a tired warrior and a faithful servant, he heard the voice that called him home. Chapter Ten Training Young Preachers And it begins with another quote from Spurgeon himself.

Here's the quote. What was wanted was an institution where these rough and ready men could be drilled in the simple rudiments of education and so fitted for the work of preaching and the discharge of plain pastoral duties. From the commencement, our main object was to help men who, through lack of funds, could not obtain an education for themselves.

These have been supplied not only with tuition and books, gratis, but with board and lodging, and in some cases with clothes and pocket money. Scholarship for its own sake was never sought, but to help men to become efficient preachers has been and ever will be the sole aim of those concerned in its management. I shall not, in order to increase our prestige, refuse poor men or zealous young Christians whose early education has been neglected.

Pride would suggest that we take a better class of men, but experience shows that eminently successful men spring from all ranks, that diamonds may be found in the rough. Again, that was written by Spurgeon. And here's chapter 10, Training Young Preachers.

During Spurgeon's first year in London, he came to know a young man named Thomas Medhurst. Medhurst had been brought up in James Wells' church, but had never been born again. He had recently done a little acting and hoped to earn a living on the stage.

But upon hearing Spurgeon, he was converted, and soon experienced a tremendous zeal to spread the gospel. He began to preach in the open air in some of London's roughest districts, and before long he brought two converts to Spurgeon asking that he baptize them. With great earnestness he expressed his certainty that God had called him to his work and declared his determination to spend his life preaching and winning souls.

Like numerous other young men in those days, Medhurst had little learning and was uncultivated in his ways. Nevertheless, Spurgeon believed he was called of God, and recognizing he possessed both a true zeal and a native gift of utterance, he felt responsible to help him. He arranged for him to attend a boarding school operated by a minister at Bexley and undertook to defray all the costs.

Once a week, Medhurst was to visit Spurgeon for an afternoon of instruction in theology and in ministerial work in general. In no time, other young men, moved by the spiritual fervor of Spurgeon's preaching, expressed their desire to have the same training. They too were zealous for God and were busy preaching in mission halls or ragged schools or on the street corners, but they also were sorely in need of education.

In the face of this appeal, Spurgeon realized God was placing upon him a heavy responsibility. He had not sought it, but it was now evident that he must found and maintain a ministerial training school with all the burden and yet all the joy such an enterprise could bring. With this prospect in mind, he looked for a man capable of leading such an institution.

The person selected must be found in the faith and possess both theological knowledge and evangelical warmth, and he prayed God would raise up such a man. While he prayed, a man who possessed those qualities, George Rogers, was also praying for a means to begin the task to which he knew God had called him, that of training men for the work of the ministry. Rogers was a congregationalist and did not accept Spurgeon's position on believers' baptism, but the two men had all other doctrines in common and an agreement was reached between them.

Spurgeon formed an institution he called the Pastor's College, and he made George Rogers its principal. During its first years, the classes were held in Rogers' home, and the eight students boarded there too. Spurgeon personally undertook the entire financial responsibility, depending largely on the income received from the sale of his sermons and books, but it was shortly after the college began that this income was greatly reduced by the lack of sale in America, and although he and Mrs. Spurgeon economized fully, they were often brought into difficulty.

At one point, Spurgeon spoke of selling his horse and carriage, but since he could not possibly get along without transportation, Rogers talked him out of the idea. Then, at that very time, a note from a banker informed him that an anonymous donor had deposited two hundred pounds to the college's credit, and before long, another one hundred pounds was similarly placed in the same bank. These events of miraculous supply steadily increased Spurgeon's faith and enabled him to believe the Lord would provide.

With the increase in the college attendance, the classes were held in the New Park Street Chapel, and the students were boarded in the homes of members. But with the opening of the tabernacle, the college was transferred to the lecture hall and its adjoining rooms in the lower level, thus giving it much improved facilities. Moreover, the deacons and the people of the tabernacle realized this burden had become too large for their pastor to bear alone.

There were now sixteen students, and several more had applied for admission, so they agreed to install a box in which offerings for the college might be placed. Spurgeon had definite goals for the college. There were three other Baptist ministerial schools in England, but this one was to fill needs the others failed to meet.

Although some men who came to the college had been brought up in good homes and had received considerable schooling, the majority who applied came from poorer circumstances, and it was for those that Spurgeon had particular concern. He wanted men who, one, had been truly born again, two, had experience to the call of God to the ministry, and three, under the effect of those two experiences, had begun to preach and had been active in this undertaking for some time, preferably two years. He made much of the fact that he was not trying to make preachers, but to help some who were already engaged in that work become better preachers.

It was not Spurgeon's purpose to produce men who were scholars, and little or nothing else, as was the case with many schools. In his college, learning was a means to an end, to enable men to be powerful preachers and fervent soul winners. The whole of the institution's life was patterned to fulfill this purpose.

The pastor's college had also a clear doctrinal emphasis. Calvinistic theology, said Spurgeon, is dogmatically taught, not dogmatic in the offensive sense, but as the undoubted teaching of the word of God. The Regents Park College also claimed to be Calvinistic in its theology, but Spurgeon doubted that those doctrinal concepts were taught there in a manner that aroused men to evangelistic zeal and gave powerfully convicting force to the message they proclaimed.

The course at the college lasted merely two years, and except in the case of a few who could afford to pay, the tuition and board were free, and clothing, books, and even pocket money were provided. There were no examinations, no graduation exercises, and no degrees. The lack of such accepted accompaniments of college life, together with the shortness of the course, brought many criticisms from outsiders.

But this school had a benefit the others did not possess. The college was part of the life of the tabernacle, and association with a great and active church provided a wealth of instruction and a power of inspiration to be found nowhere else. Moreover, Spurgeon maintained a personal relationship with all his students.

He interviewed the men who applied for admission, and although he refused many, those he accepted received his warm encouragement and immediately knew him to be their friend. This relationship continued throughout their days in the college, and men went to him freely for his advice, and if necessary, his reprimand. In his concern, he was ever mindful of men's needs.

For instance, noticing on one occasion that a certain student's clothes were badly worn, Spurgeon stopped him and asked that he go on an errand for him. He gave the man a note to deliver to a certain address and told him to wait for a reply. The address turned out to be that of a tailor's shop, and the reply was a new suit and coat with which the tailor provided him.

Spurgeon's slightly playful action in this matter was typical of many such deeds he did on behalf of his students. Shortly after the college was moved to the Tabernacle, Spurgeon began his Friday afternoon lectures. Some of those were later published and have long been widely known.

Lectures to my students. He said that the manner of teaching in the school was not formal and dictatorial, but familiar and fraternal, and this was nowhere more true than in the Friday afternoon gatherings. The students had come to the end of a tiring week of study, and most were also preparing to preach on Sunday, and Spurgeon purposely mingled something of his native humor with his serious presentation concerning the work of the ministry.

One of the students reported, In those days the President was in his prime. His step was firm, his eyes bright, his hair dark and abundant, his voice full of sweetest music and sacred merriment. Before him were gathered a hundred men from all parts of the United Kingdom, and not a few from beyond the seas.

They had been brought together by the magic of his name and the attraction of his personal influence. Many sitting before him were his own sons in the faith. Among his students he was at his ease, as a father in the midst of his own family.

The brethren loved him, and he loved them. Soon the floods of his pent-up wisdom poured forth, the flashes of his inimitable wit lit up every face, and his pathos brought tears to all eyes. It was an epic in student life to hear him deliver his lectures to my students.

What weighty and wise discourse he gave us on the subject of preaching! How gently he corrected faults and encouraged genuine diffidence! What withering sarcasm for all fops and pretenders! Then came those wonderful imitations of the dear brethren's peculiar mannerisms. One with the hot dumpling in his mouth, trying to speak. Another sweeping his hand up and down from nose to knee.

A third with his hands under his coat-tails, making the figure of a water-wagtail. Then the one with his thumbs in the arm-holes of his waistcoat, showing the penguin style of oratory. By this means he held the mirror before us so that we could see our faults.

Yet all the while we were almost convulsed with laughter. He administered the medicine in effervescing drafts. After this came the wise counsel, so kind, so grave, so gracious, so fatherly.

Then the prayer that lifted us to the mercy seat, where we caught glimpses of glory, and talked face to face with the Master himself. Afterwards, the giving out of appointments for the next Lord's Day took place. The class was dismissed for tea, and then came the men who wanted advice.

Some were in trouble, others in joy, and the President listened patiently to all their tales. Anon he would laugh, and then he would weep. At last he is through, weary in the work but not weary of it.

His cheery voice gradually dies away as he ascends the stairs to his sanctum." Many of my readers will have read Spurgeon's Lectures to My Students, recalling with joy such subjects as the minister's self-watch, the call to ministry, sermons their matter, and the faculty of impromptu speech. The lectures are evidence of the standards set in the college. At the time he gave them, Spurgeon was only thirty-four.

The college now had three instructors beside Mr. Rogers. They were Alexander Ferguson, David Gracie, and W. R. Selway. The school majored on the study of theology, but the whole course was similar to that of many seminaries, and Rogers listed other chief subjects as mathematics, logic, Hebrew, the Greek Testament, homiletics, pastoral theology, and English composition.

Spurgeon mentions astronomy also as part of the course in physical science, and some of the men became, like himself, particularly interested in the stars and the laws governing the heavenly bodies. To the work of the college, throughout the day, Spurgeon added that of evening classes, the regular pastoral course for those who could not be present in the daytime. But there were also studies of a more primary nature.

Since England had no national educational system at the time, the children of poorer families usually grew up with little or no schooling. Many young men were unemployed, and several who had jobs were fixed in a condition of poverty, working long hours for small wages. Due to their lack of learning, they had virtually no prospect of improving their lot in life.

For such men, particularly for those who were members of the tabernacle, Spurgeon made the beginnings of an education available. The evening classes, like those of the day, were provided free of charge. The number in attendance was about two hundred each evening, and many young men who earnestly entered upon those studies found not only their mental powers disciplined and knowledge enlarged, but also their whole outlook elevated.

Undoubtedly, many rose to better conditions in life as a result of the evening classes, and we may be sure the social impact of this work was felt throughout the whole area of South London. Though the college held no examinations, most students were motivated by a desire to earn Spurgeon's approval, and that motivated them still more when they went out into the work. The graduates of other colleges usually went into the ministry with little or no experience in actual preaching, but with Spurgeon's men, things were different, for they had preached before entering the college, and during their student days, most had been active nearly every Sunday.

Thus, when they entered upon their full-time labours, they did so with considerable preaching experience. Moreover, they possessed spiritual fervour, and were determined to exercise a vigorous, sacrificial, and soul-winning ministry. Several churches wanted Spurgeon men.

Some were fairly large, some were smaller, and some were suffering difficulties. Knowing the situations, Spurgeon personally chose the men he believed would best meet them. Many men went to places where there were no churches, and built them.

Some went to good residential areas, others to poor districts. Some went to the slums, and there they witnessed for the Lord, preached on the street corners, visited door to door, and gave out tracts. They then secured meeting places of some kind, and gathered people in, won them to the Lord, baptized them, and organized them into a church.

By 1866, in London, alone, the Spurgeon men had formed eighteen new churches. For eight of those, new chapels had been erected, and the other ten were expecting soon to begin construction. Preaching was carried on at another seven stations, and the plans were that in each of those, a church would shortly be organized.

Seven old and decaying churches had been revived, and among the other eighty former college men who were ministering in various parts of Britain, blessings were being constantly manifested. One man went to a church that had been reduced to eighteen people, but within a few years he had baptized some eight hundred. Among college men, baptism was administered only after there was clear evidence of the new birth, and Spurgeon's students largely followed his own methods in leading souls to Christ and accepting them as believers.

The college added heavily to Spurgeon's already weighty load of responsibilities. Its operating expenses amounted to one hundred pounds a week. Money from sales in Australia, Canada, and several other lands, as well as from various parts of Britain, supplemented the giving of the Tabernacle people.

Nevertheless, there were several occasions on which the treasury seemed almost depleted, and although he suffered under the burden, Spurgeon saw the hand of God move in the miraculous supplying of the need, often without his even knowing whence the money came. During his first few months in London, Spurgeon taught his people to strive with God in prayer, and such true praying continued to characterize their lives. This was manifest especially during the week of prayer with which he usually opened the new year.

The first week of 1856 was attended by a visiting minister who told first of a time in which the failures of pastors were confessed. Quote, Sins of omission and commission, neglect, and shortcomings were acknowledged. Solemn, simple, earnest appeal was made to the eye of the heart-searching God that his servants might wish to hide nothing from his gaze.

And when the words, Lord is it I, is it I? were uttered, many broke forth, saying, It is I, it is I! The beloved pastor of the tabernacle church wept like a child, and sobbed aloud, while the brethren around could not restrain their weeping and groaning before God. End quote. Prayer then was made for the people in general, and many felt that they had never before seen such real, awful, general grief as that which rolled over the spirits of that vast assembly.

God the Holy Ghost was there, and his people had a sight of themselves, and of their ways, in the very light of his holiness. Great indeed was the relief and calm, the peace, which followed the sweet words uttered by Mr. Spurgeon. There is a fountain filled with blood.

Then prayer was made for the unconverted. The earnest work of supplication was ended by pastors Scott and C. H. Spurgeon pleading with God for anxious and careless souls present. A number of Christians retired into a room below with many anxious ones, several of whom received peace with God through faith in the precious Savior.

Many of these have since been seen by Mr. Spurgeon, who tell us that he conversed personally with no less than seventy-five inquirers in one day subsequent to the meeting. This report, though much abbreviated from the magnificent account originally written, lets us see something of the intense fervor and reality of faith of Spurgeon's people, and it also reveals something more of the methods he used in leading souls to Christ. Moreover, this praying opened the door to undertakings besides the pastor's college, a monthly magazine, a home for aged women, and an orphanage for needy children.

It begins with a quote from The Life of Charles H. Spurgeon, 1892, written by Russell H. Conwell, and here's the quote. And the first gift for the building of the pastor's college and the first donation towards the girls' orphanage came directly in response to an editorial in The Sword and Trowel. Alright, here's chapter 11.

Again, the title is The Growth of the Spurgeonic Enterprises. What a title. In 1865, Spurgeon took another historic step in his work.

He began to publish a monthly magazine, The Sword and the Trowel. The title carried also a second line, A Record of Combat with Sin and Labor for the Lord. In his first issue, he declared its purposes.

Quote, Our magazine is intended to report the efforts of those churches and associations which are more or less intimately connected with the Lord's work at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, and to advocate those views of doctrine and church order which are most certainly received among us. We feel the want of some organ of communication in which our many plans for God's glory may be brought before believers and commended to their aid. Our friends are so numerous as to be able to maintain a magazine and so earnest as to require one.

We do not pretend to be unsectarian if by this is meant the absence of all distinctive principles and desire to please parties of all shades of opinion. We believe, and therefore speak. We speak in love, but not in soft words and trimming sentences.

We shall not court controversy, but we shall not shun it when the cause of God demands it. We shall supply interesting reading upon general topics, but our chief aim will be to arouse believers to action and to suggest to them plans by which the kingdom of Jesus may be extended. We would sound the trumpet and lead our comrades to the fight.

We would ply the trowel with untiring hand for the building of Jerusalem's dilapidated walls, and wield the sword with vigor and valor against the enemies of the truth." The magazine showed something of the range and intensity of Spurgeon's mind. Each month he published an article of some thorough spiritual and biblical substance. He frequently commented on conditions in the religious world, providing facts and figures to show the increase or loss experienced among various denominations.

There was news of the Lord's work at home and in distant lands, with reports of the going or return of missionaries. Each issue carried book reviews, almost all of them written by Spurgeon himself. From time to time there could be a poetical composition from his pen, or an account of the life of some great Christian from preceding centuries, one of the early fathers, a reformer, or perhaps some mighty figure from among the Puritans.

The magazine added heavily to Spurgeon's responsibilities. Already he published a sermon every week. In 1865 he produced his *Morning by Morning*, and a little later, *Our Own Hymnbook*.

Also at this time he began working on the major literary production of his career, *The Treasury of David*, the seven volumes of which would appear one by one over the following twenty years. By this time the Tabernacle had become a multifaceted organization with several activities that required his direction and care. The Pastor's College in 1865 had 93 students, besides some 230 in the evening classes.

The Sunday School had an attendance of about 900 with 75 teachers, and Spurgeon's report stated that other Sunday schools and ragged schools are sustained and conducted in other districts in connection with the Tabernacle. After mentioning an Evangelist's Association which has numerous preaching stations in neglected districts, sustained by the students at the evening classes, the report goes on to state, There are numerous Bible classes in connection with the Tabernacle. One is held every Monday evening after the prayer meeting.

Bible classes are conducted by Mr. Stiff, Mr. Hanks, and Mr. John Olney. All are efficient and well attended. A ladies' class conducted by Mrs. Bartlett is both the most numerous and most remarkable in its immediate results.

It numbers nearly 700, and 63 have joined the Church from it during the past year. There is a Bible Society Depot at the Tabernacle at which Bibles are sold at cost price. There is a Tract Society in extensive operation.

There is a Jews' Society which holds its meetings monthly. A Ladies' Benevolent Society, a Maternal Association, a Missionary Working Society, and a Sunday School Working Society are also in full operation. A Minister's Fraternal Association has lately been established.

Two city missionaries are sustained by the Church and people, two other missionaries on the continent, in Germany, and considerable aid is given to foreign missions." Spurgeon proved marvelously adept at choosing people to undertake various tasks. The activities operated without friction, and peacefulness was maintained not by the giving of orders on Spurgeon's part, but by the people's desire to prosecute the work of the Lord. Nevertheless, the growing body of organizations was, in its final analysis, Spurgeon's burden, and from time to time he felt it was becoming too heavy for him.

The title, *The Sword and the Trowel*, provided a true picture of Spurgeon's ministry. He was ever in combat with sin and in labor for the Lord, fighting wrong belief and wrong action and striving mightily to

build God's work. In 1864, he engaged in one of the supreme conflicts of his life, the Baptismal Regeneration Controversy.

During the early 1830s, the Tractarian movement led by John Henry, later Cardinal, Newman, had begun in Oxford. It asserted that since the clergy of the Church of England admitted that the authority for their ordination came through their Church's descent from the Roman Catholic Church, they were really part of the Roman body, and ought to return to it. On this basis, Newman and several other clergy led numerous people to the Roman Communion.

In turn, a sentiment began to grow within the Church of England that favored the use of Roman practices and beliefs, and accepted the idea that a total Anglican gravitation to Rome was highly probable. Within the Church of England, however, there were a number of evangelical clergy who strongly opposed the Romanizing tendencies. Spurgeon held these men, especially their leader, Bishop J. C. Ryle, in high esteem.

But he felt such men were working against the evangelical cause by their acceptance of infant baptism, a rite, he said, believed by Anglicans to mean regeneration. Spurgeon considered the practice to be teaching salvation by works, which was therefore a direct contradiction of justification by faith, and of the Savior's declaration ye must be born again. By 1864, Spurgeon felt he must declare his soul on this matter.

He informed his publishers that the step he was about to take would severely lower the sale of his sermons and his books, but that he would not, on that account, refrain from preaching against a teaching that he believed was misleading millions. He preached a sermon entitled Baptismal Regeneration. He spoke with conviction and force, declaring that the prayer book taught that the sprinkling of an infant made the little one regenerate, and he denounced the teaching as false.

His words were directed especially against the evangelical clergymen as he charged them with inconsistency in asserting that the little one was regenerating, and then telling such a one when it grew up that it was unregenerate and must be converted. Something of his fervor is seen in his statement. We want John Knox back again.

Do not talk to me of mild and gentle men, of soft manners and squeamish words. We want the fiery Knox, and even though his vehemence should ding our pulpits into blads, it were well if he did but rouse our hearts to action. News of this sermon spread quickly across Britain.

But instead of reducing the sale of his sermons, it increased it. This one soon had a circulation of 180,000, and the figure rose shortly to 350,000. It provoked a tremendous number of replies, most against but some for.

He replied to some of the opposers, and carried his battle further in three additional sermons, calling for all true believers to make the sacrifice of going forth unto him without the camp bearing his reproach. Spurgeon's action cost him many friends. Lord Shaftesbury, who had stood with him in his charitable endeavors, now said, You are a very saucy fellow.

Several clergymen had raised money toward the construction of the tabernacle, and now they believed Spurgeon had betrayed their trust. Many of them were members of the Evangelical Alliance, of which he was a prominent figure. Believing he could no longer be linked with them in this way, he now withdrew his

membership.

There was strong feeling against him, yet almost all who entertained it recognized he spoke only from deep conviction, entirely without malice. And as the future actions of many showed, they admired him still. But though Spurgeon thus wielded the sword, he was much more active in using the trowel.

All his enterprises were growing, and new ones also were being born. A particularly useful new organization was the Colporteur's Association. The word colporteur was an old French term that meant peddler.

In Reformation times it had been used of the men who went from place to place distributing tracts and selling Bibles, and in more recent years it had been applied to men who were doing a similar work in Scotland. Spurgeon had seen this labor and its fruits during his visits to that land, and despite the many activities for which he was already responsible, he determined to launch into this undertaking in England, too. As soon as Spurgeon mentioned the idea, a man offered a substantial sum of money with which to begin it, enough to purchase a stock of Bibles, books, and tracts.

Spurgeon then drew up a statement of the purposes of the organization and appointed a committee to oversee it. Men arose who were willing to serve as colporteurs. Spurgeon agreed to raise 40 pounds per year for each man, but each was expected also to earn at least another 40 pounds from the Bibles and books he sold.

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