

# Spurgeon a New Biography #7

by C.H. Spurgeon

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*C.H. Spurgeon's life and death profoundly impacted his community, emphasizing the importance of preaching and the Christian faith.*

**Duration:** 35:12

**Scripture:** Matthew 24:44, John 3:16, John 14:6, 1 Corinthians 15:55, Ephesians 2:8-9, Philippians 1:23, Hebrews 9:27

**Topics:** "Christian Biography", "Evangelism"

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## Description

The sermon transcripts describe the funeral service and interment of a pastor named Spurgeon. The sermon was preached by Dr. Pearson, who spoke of Spurgeon's genius in the intellectual, moral, and spiritual spheres. The transcripts also mention the impact Spurgeon had on others, infusing his love for souls into the hearts of missionary workers and inspiring them to bring members to the church. The sermon emphasizes Spurgeon's ability to meet people where they were and bring them to a place of joy and redemption.

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## Transcript

And now chapter 21 With Christ, which is far better. That's the title of chapter 21. The quote is written by Ian Murray.

It begins the chapter. It's from his The Full Harvest. And here's how it reads.

At the close of his sermon on Lord's Day evening, December 27, 1874, Spurgeon said, In a little while there will be a concourse of persons in the streets. Methinks I hear someone inquiring. What are all these people waiting for? Do you know? He is to be buried today.

And who is that? It is Spurgeon. What? The man that preached at the tabernacle? Yes, he is to be buried today. That will happen very soon, and when you see my coffin carried to the silent grave, I should like every one of you, whether converted or not, to be constrained to say, He did earnestly urge us, in plain and simple language, not to put off the consideration of eternal things.

He did entreat us to look to Christ. Now he is gone. Our blood is not at his door if we perish.

And now chapter 21 With Christ, which is far better. Secretary Harold immediately sent a telegraphed message to the tabernacle in London. It read, Our beloved pastor entered heaven 11-5, Sunday night.

Previous telegrams had reported Spurgeon's increasingly serious condition, but this one proved a sudden and terrible shock for the tabernacle people. The news became the chief subject of the Monday papers in London, and so heavy was the demand for copies that it was soon difficult to find one left for sale anywhere. Papers in other lands throughout much of the world likewise carried the report, and messages of condolence came to Mrs. Spurgeon with such abundance that the telegraph wires at Montaigne could carry but a small portion of them.

The body, placed in an olive wood casket, was taken to the Presbyterian church in Montaigne. A year earlier, Spurgeon had preached at the opening of this church's new building, and he had long enjoyed rich fellowship with its minister, a warm evangelical. Many persons from various parts of southern France gathered there for a service on the morning of Thursday, February 4, and then the casket was placed aboard a train for its four-day journey to London.

Meanwhile at the tabernacle there were days of tear-filled prayer and solemn remembrance. The Monday had been previously planned as a day of intercession regarding the influenza epidemic that was then raging in the city, but to those petitions there were now added those on behalf of Mrs. Spurgeon and the bereaved church. The deacons, with congregational approval, asked James Spurgeon to continue as pastor in charge, and Dr. Pearson to accept the office of officiating minister, and on the following Sunday these men ministered to crowds that packed the building itself and also overflowed with a host of saddened men and women flooding a large area outside the doors.

The next morning, Monday, February 8, the casket reached London. It was placed first in the common room of the pastor's college, and throughout the day a steady stream of people, estimated to number as many as 50,000, passed by. On the Tuesday it was carried into the tabernacle, where two or three front seats had been removed to provide an open area in which it could be placed.

Flowers surrounded it, and over it there waved several palm branches, which Mrs. Spurgeon had chosen, en montant, as emblematic of the palms spoken of in the book of Revelation. Around the railing of the upper platform there ran the sentence, Remember the words that I said unto you, being yet present with you. And around the lower, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

It was not recognized that the tabernacle, despite its great size, would not contain all the people who would want to attend the funeral service, and therefore five services were planned. The first was held on the Wednesday morning, and it was for members of the church. The second, for ministers and students, was at three in the afternoon.

The third, for Christian workers, at seven o'clock in the evening. And the fourth, for the general public, was at the late hour of ten p.m. And by way of footnote, we refer again to the quotes that appeared around the upper and lower platform. By way of footnote, we read, In several biographies that appeared after Spurgeon's death, it was said that he had used these words as descriptive of his life, and that he uttered them just before he died.

Mr. Harold emphatically denied this, stating that Spurgeon's attitude was one of utter humility, and that he never would have applied these statements to himself. A number of men took part in these services. All spoke of Spurgeon's great devotion and extraordinary abilities, and all expressed profound sorrow at his passing.

Their full remarks are worthy of being repeated, but we can notice merely a few. J. W. Harold, reporting many details of Spurgeon's last few months on earth, made mention of the Christian fortitude manifested by Mrs. Spurgeon. He told how the five persons who were with Spurgeon during his final moments, upon realizing that death had come, knelt at the bedside.

Mrs. Spurgeon broke forth in prayer, and Harold says, We were touched beyond all expression to hear the voice of the loved one, so sorely bereaved, thanking God for the many years that she had had the unspeakable joy of having such a precious husband lent to her. Seven months ago she gave her husband up to the Lord, during his extreme sickness in London, but the Lord lent him to her a little longer. Deacon T. H. Olney also spoke, and after enlarging on Spurgeon's many qualities, told of the leadership he exercised among the deacons and elders, and in turn throughout all the church.

Quote, I must also bear testimony that he inspired very great confidence in us all. Whatever he recommended, we accepted at once. I can remember the building of this great tabernacle, the opening of the Stockwell orphanage, and other things that we have not time to refer to.

Many of the great undertakings might at first have seemed imprudent, but his plans were always well matured. They were always thought over beforehand and prayed upon before they were introduced to us. We as deacons had very little to do but back him up.

End quote. Elder J. T. Dunn, who had been a chief helper to Spurgeon since his early days in London, spoke especially of his ability and delight in leading souls to Christ. Quote, When persons came to inquire concerning salvation or to confess their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, how his eyes would brighten, and how heartily he would welcome them.

It mattered not to him what the character of the clothing or what the age of the candidate, he could always meet their condition and tenderly sympathize with them. Many a one I have seen go into that vestry with a tearful eye, who has returned with joy on the countenance. The Lord has struck the fetters from many a sin-bound soul while upon his knees in that hallowed room.

End quote. Another member of the Olney family, Deacon William Olney, stated, quote, I have been asked to speak on behalf of the many missionary workers. Our dear pastor, whom God has taken to himself, had a remarkable power of infusing his own love for souls into the hearts of others.

In response to his trumpet calls to Christian energy, from this platform men went out of this congregation in hundreds to fling themselves into the slums of the south of London and bring in members to this church out of some of the lowest parts of the neighborhood. As a consequence of this, there are today twenty-three mission stations and twenty-six branch schools, and at these places there are, every Sunday evening, about one thousand members of this church working for the Lord Jesus Christ amongst the poor. End quote.

Several of the leading figures of the Baptist Union, though they had failed to agree with Spurgeon's withdrawal from that body, had continued to express the love and admiration in which they held him. The major figure among these men was Dr. Alexander McLaren, and as one of the speakers at the funeral services, he said, quote, and say that, to myself, it proclaims that if a man desires to reach and to hold and to bless the largest number of his fellow men, he must keep fast to the great verities of the Christian faith, salvation through Jesus Christ, the incarnate Lamb of God, life through the Divine Spirit, faith in Christ, the uniting bond. End quote.

Representatives of all the Protestant denominations took part in these services, the moderator of the Presbyterian Synod, the president of the Congregational Union, and certain members of the Church of England clergy. We notice, however, an especially perceptive paragraph from Dr. Stevenson, president of the Wesleyan Conference. Quote, I venture to suggest to you in reference to our dear friend who has gone, he rendered a great service to his age, and to the coming age also, in that he upheld during so long a time the majesty of preaching.

Men say that preaching is played out, and that the pulpit is superfluous. The editor is to be the great minister of God in the future, and people are to get the gospel from the newspapers. But with that coffin before us, none of us can doubt that the pulpit is the power in the world still, that still by the foolishness of preaching, God is pleased to save men.

I am quite sure that in the fact that from this place there rolled forth over the world a voice, which it was willing to hear, and which it listened for, yes, listened for even with the strife and din of politics, of commerce and pleasure, there has been maintained a testimony to the power of the simple preaching of the gospel, the value of which it is impossible for us to estimate now." At the time of Spurgeon's last illness, Moody and Sankey had been conducting an evangelistic campaign in Scotland. Upon learning of Spurgeon's death, Moody wanted to hasten to London to stand, he said, by the grave of him who has done so much for me. But it was impossible for him to be absent from his meetings, and therefore he asked Sankey to go and to represent them both.

Sankey spoke at the service for Christian workers, saying, quote, I feel it a great privilege to meet here with the thousands who gather around this bier, to pay some little note of homage to one who has done so much for me. That voice is silenced forever on earth, but who of us cannot recall its clarion tones as it has moved us from time to time in this great temple? It has always been my custom when coming from my own land to this country to visit this tabernacle to have my torch lighted anew. When darkness seemed to be spreading over the religious world, we would often cast longing eyes to London and watch what this great captain was saying and doing.

We always found inspiration from this pulpit and always felt that in him we had a friend who would stand against all foes, a friend we could safely follow. Many a prayer has come across the sea for him from those who never had the joy of hearing his magnificent voice. Our land loves Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

I learned from the pastor of this church how to use the voice that God had given me, that I might preach to the thousands who have assembled in our great congregations. I might almost say how he taught me how to sing the praises of God. I have held him up as an example, as a man who could inspire his people to worship in hymns of praise by devoting time to the reading of the hymn and then standing and singing with the people.

The praise of God is a part of the worship and should not be slighted. I will sing a little hymn that I think is appropriate for this occasion. Mr. Sankey then sang, with exquisite feeling, the hymn beginning, Sleep on, beloved, sleep and take thy rest.

Lay down thy head upon thy Savior's breast. We love thee well, but Jesus loves thee best. Good night, good night, good night.

The final funeral service and the interment were held the following day, Thursday, February 11. Two of the men who had attended the pastor's college and whose subsequent ministries had won the warm approval

of Spurgeon, William Williams and Archibald Brown, took part first, the former leading in prayer and the latter leading the scriptures. The sermon was preached by Dr. Pearson and he spoke of Spurgeon as a genius in the intellectual sphere, a genius in the moral sphere, and a genius in the spiritual sphere.

He closed with the words, Quote, Never again take our hands within its holy embrace. We bless God for thee, my brother. We are glad that heaven is made richer, though we be made poorer.

And by this bier we solemnly pledge that we will undertake, by God's grace, to follow thy blessed footsteps, even as thou didst follow thy blessed Lord. End quote. The service closed with the singing of a hymn which had been a favorite with Spurgeon.

Forever with the Lord, Amen, so let it be, Life from the dead is in that word, Tis immortality. Here in the body pent, Absent from him I roam, Yet nightly pitch my moving tent A day's march nearer home. My father's house on high, Home of my soul, How near at times to faith's foreseeing eye Thy golden gates appear.

Ah, then my spirit faints to reach the land I love, The bright inheritance of saints, Jerusalem above. So when my latest breath shall rend the veil in twain, By death I shall escape from death, And life eternal gain. Knowing as I am known, How shall I love that word, And oft repeat before the throne, Forever with the Lord.

Following the benediction, Thousands of handkerchiefs were raised to tearful eyes, As they took a last loving look at the casket That contained all that was mortal of him, To whom all owed so much. The hearse bearing the casket with several funeral carriages Set out on its five-mile journey to the Norwood Cemetery. People lined the streets in great numbers all the way, The bells of churches were sounded as the procession passed, And even the pubs along the route were closed.

At the orphan house a covered platform had been erected, And in deep mourning the children sat there, Supposed to be singing, but most of them weeping, For Mr. Spurgeon had taken them all to his heart. At the cemetery the near relatives of the departed pastor Gathered first around the tomb, Then over a thousand mourners assembled within the barriers, And many thousands crowded beyond. The service at the graveside was taken largely by Archibald Brown.

Looking down upon the casket and thinking of the dear form it carried, he said, Beloved President, Faithful Pastor, Prince of Preachers, Brother Beloved, Dear Spurgeon, We bid thee not farewell, but only for a little while good night. Thou shalt rise soon at the first dawn of the resurrection day of the redeemed. Yet it is not the good night ours to bid, But thine, it is we who linger in the darkness, Thou art in God's holy light.

Our night shall soon be past, and with it all our weeping, Then with thine our songs shall greet the morning of a day That knows no cloud nor close, For there shall be no night there. Hard worker in the field, thy toil is ended. Straight has been the furrow thou hast plowed, No looking back has marred thy course.

Harvests have followed thy patient sowing, And heaven is already rich with thine ingathered sheaves, And shall be still enriched through years yet lying in eternity. Champion of God, thy battle, long and nobly fought, is over. The sword which claved to thy hand has dropped at last.

A palm branch takes its place. No longer does the helmet press thy brow, Oft weary with its surging thoughts of battle. A victor's wreath from the great commander's hand Has already proved thy full reward.

Here for a little while shall rest thy precious dust. Then shall thy well-beloved come, And at his voice thou shalt spring from thy couch of earth, Fashioned like unto his body, into glory. And then spirit, soul, and body Shall magnify thy Lord's redemption.

Until then, beloved, sleep. We praise God for thee, And by the blood of the everlasting covenant Hope and expect to praise God with thee. Amen.

Thus, while the soul of Charles Haddon Spurgeon Was in the presence of the Lord, His body was placed within its tomb, There to await, as Archibald Brown had so beautifully stated, The dawn of the resurrection morning. And the people returned to London To take up their duties in the tabernacle, The college, the almshouses, the orphanage, And the numerous missions and schools, To labor with fervor and patience, As they had done for years, But yet to feel a sad difference, For the leader, the pastor they had loved, Was no longer there. How rich his life had been! He had walked with God and lived in prayer.

Nothing in his actions was merely put on, But all was wonderfully real. His one purpose had been to preach Jesus Christ And Him crucified. And in this determination He had devoted all his talents, The extraordinary memory, The great powers of public speech, And his joy had been found In bringing glory to the Savior And in leading souls to know Him.

Early in life he had lost all consideration of his own self, And his prayer that he might be hidden behind the cross, That Christ alone might be seen, Had expressed his heart's chief purpose. Spurgeon used to declare that when he reached heaven He would stand at the corner of one of the streets And proclaim to the angels The old, old story of Jesus and His love. Whether or not such a privilege will be granted any saint We do not know.

But we may be sure that as the redeemed multitude Before the throne sings Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, Lifted among them with eternal enthusiasm Will be a voice that, delighted to praise the Lamb Here upon the earth, The voice of Charles Haddon Spurgeon. And now we read the appendix of the book. Subsequent History of the Metropolitan Tabernacle At the time Spurgeon died, The tabernacle and its institutions Were all in strong operation.

The church was as well attended as ever, The financial support came in regularly, And the prosperity of all seemed assured For several years to come. But needed was a pastor Who would maintain the work in Spurgeon's manner. A few years earlier, Dr. Pearson Had described the services of the tabernacle, Saying, Here is nothing to divert the mind From the simplicity of worship and the gospel.

A presenter leads congregational song Without even the help of a coronet. Prayer and praise, The reading of the word of God, With the plain putting of gospel truth, These have been Mr. Spurgeon's Lifelong means of grace. For the time being, Dr. Pearson Continued to serve as officiating minister, And James Spurgeon as pastor in charge.

This arrangement could only be temporary, As Dr. Pearson, being a Presbyterian, Did not accept the doctrine of believer's baptism. He was also a dispensationalist, A position Spurgeon had vigorously rejected. In four months, it was necessary for Dr. Pearson To fulfill an engagement in America, And Thomas Spurgeon, Who had recently returned from New Zealand, Was asked to supply the pulpit.

After another four months, Dr. Pearson was able to return, But the congregation was divided About having him resume the duties Of officiating pastor. By that time, Thomas Spurgeon Had returned to New Zealand,

And more than 2,000 members of the church Voted to have him come back to England, And accept the pastorate of the tabernacle. Thomas accepted the call.

He possessed something of the voice And pulpit manner of his father, But he was a much weaker preacher. Throughout the 1890s, As though several of the older officials And members of the tabernacle passed away, The congregation continued to be numbered In the thousands, And several institutions were generally maintained. Nevertheless, there was a noticeable lack Of the fervor that had formerly characterized the work.

In 1898, The tabernacle was destroyed by fire. The services were held in temporary quarters, And many people began to attend other churches. After three years, The building was reconstructed, But with a reduced seating capacity.

During this period, Spurgeon's invaluable library of 12,000 volumes, Many of them rare items from Puritan times, Was put up for sale, And was purchased by the William Jewell College Of Liberty, Missouri. In 1907, Thomas Spurgeon's health Caused him to resign the pastorate. He was followed by Archibald Brown, An able preacher and a man much like Spurgeon In doctrine and methods.

But Brown also was not in good health, And he remained only three years. At the suggestion of Dr. Pearson, The tabernacle then called another American, Dr. A.C. Dixon. Dr. Dixon's methods were quite different From those of Spurgeon.

He installed a piano and formed a choir, And under his rather sensational type of ministry, There were numerous professions of faith, But the church showed a decline In attendance and zeal. Moreover, it was while he was at the tabernacle That the First World War took place, Taking many men into the services And disturbing the work of the church. In 1919, Dixon left the tabernacle, And it was then a very different church From what it had been under C.H. Spurgeon.

Dixon was followed by H. Tidman Chilvers. Mr. Chilvers was a more Spurgeonic type of man, And although under his ministry An organ was installed in the church, He endeavored to bring the work back To the simplicity and the Calvinistic doctrine Of former days. He also took a strong stand Against liberalism and worldliness, And under his ministry, Which lasted until 1935, The attendance was increased, And the church became generally strengthened.

After two years without a pastor, In 1938, a call was extended To Dr. Graham Scroggie. Dr. Scroggie was a Scotsman, And was widely known as a preacher and an author. His ministry, however, Was hindered by the Second World War, For not only was the congregation scattered By the removal of numerous persons out of London, But the tabernacle received a direct hit In a bombing attack in 1941, And was again destroyed.

Services were held in the basement, With the ruined remains overhead, And although Dr. Scroggie labored faithfully, By 1943, his age and poor health Caused him to resign. By this time, changes had come about also In Spurgeon's institutions. In 1923, a fine estate at the edge of London Was made available to the pastor's college, And the college, Disassociated from any management by the tabernacle, Was removed there.

In later years, a new library and other buildings Were added to the original large stone mansion. During the Second World War, The children in the orphanage were taken to safety In a town to the south of

London, And at the end of the war, The trustees, who no longer needed to be members Of the tabernacle, Had a new building constructed In the town of Birchington in Kent. After Dr. Scroggie's resignation, Two ministries carried on the work Under the difficult circumstances Of the much-reduced congregation And the bombed-out building.

A period without a pastor followed, And the church rejoined the Baptist Union. In 1954, Eric W. Hayden Accepted the pastorate And led the people in the work of reconstruction. A considerable sum of money, 224,500 pounds, Was provided by government agencies, And a new tabernacle that incorporated The front entrance from the original building Was erected.

It ceded about 1800, But by this time, The area had changed. The days of Spurgeon were long forgotten, And an auditorium that would have accommodated Three or four hundred With suitable Sunday school accommodations Would have sufficed. Mr. Hayden remained for five years, But a time of depressed conditions followed.

The area proved difficult to reach. The sword and the trowel seized publication, And the congregation became so small That in 1965, The new pastor, Dennis Pascoe, Stated, Our membership can now be accommodated In a few pews. Then, in 1970, Dr. Peter Masters Accepted a call to the tabernacle.

Dr. Masters was spurgeonic In doctrine and methods, And under his ministry, Despite the difficulty, The work began to grow. He led the work out of the Baptist Union, Began to republish The sword and the trowel, And used buses to pick up children For the Sunday school. He established a school of theology, Which guides men's studies throughout the year And conducts a week of lectures During the summer, With an attendance of some 350.

In recent years, The size of the auditorium Has been reduced by the construction of a wall That cuts off a third or so of the building And renders it more suited To the present congregation Of some 300 hearers. Thus, the theology that Spurgeon held Is still preached at the tabernacle, And although the institutions are gone, In an England that is very largely Given over to agnosticism, The work Spurgeon began Is still being conducted After the pattern he set for it. And that concludes our book.

The following is an annotated bibliography And a general index. And my, what a book this has been. I've been privileged to have read it.

Spurgeon is the name of the book, Spurgeon, A New Biography By Arnold Dalimor Published by the Banner of Truth Trust And copyrighted in 1985. Originally the book was published By the Moody Press. It was copyrighted in 1984, But the publication rights were transferred To the Banner of Truth Trust The following year.

And the book was reprinted Most recently in 1988. So I'm sure it is still in print. It has been quite inspiring work as well.

Extremely well researched, And yet written in a way that Leaves much of the tedium Sometimes of biographies aside And gives us the broad general outlines Of an individual so inspired By the Lord to faithfully preach his word.

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