

# C.H. SPURGEON ANECDOTES

by C.H. Spurgeon

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*A biographical collection of stories from Spurgeon's life and ministry, illustrating his sympathy for various forms of Christian work including Sunday schools and his deep commitment to education and outreach.*

10 Chapters

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## 1. Anecdotes 1-10

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### Spurgeon's Anecdotes #1-10 1. A Candidate who was not Candid

Many of Mr. Spurgeon's sermons have been translated into German, Dutch, Spanish, Welsh, Italian, and other languages. Some of the Russian sermons have been stamped with the official seal of the Greek Church. The London correspondent of the Standard stated that, when passing through Cape Colony some eighteen years ago, in many of the houses of the Boers he visited, he found a piano, and a copy of Mr. Spurgeon's sermons in Dutch. A clergyman—not of any English Church—who was a candidate for some important appointment, had to preach a trial sermon. He found it easier to preach one of Mr. Spurgeon's than to make one of his own. He took the easier course, and succeeded. He afterwards wrote to Mr. Spurgeon, confessing his sin, and asking his advice as to resigning his position. We have never heard what answer Mr. Spurgeon gave him.

### 2. A Canting Woman

One day, in the year 1887, a woman met Mr. Spurgeon, as he was entering the Tabernacle, hoping to get money from him. She was one of the canting tribe.

"I remember hearing your dear voice more than forty years ago," she said.

"Heard my voice forty years ago! Where was that?"

"You were preaching at the bottom of Pentonville Hill, near where Mr. Sawday's chapel is."

"Well," said Mr. Spurgeon, "was it not more than forty years ago?"

"Yes," she said, "it might be fifty."

"Oh," said he, "I suppose I was quite young then."

"Oh, yes! you were such a dear young man."

That, of course, was a needless assurance, but he ventured to think that she was not quite so sure of his dearness when he told her that he had never preached at the bottom of Pentonville Hill, and that fifty years ago he was only three years old, adding that it was a shameful thing for her to suppose that he would give her money for telling falsehoods. She was very soon missing.

### 3. According to your Faith, be it unto you

Mr. Spurgeon often told the story of his first student, who came to him complaining that he had been preaching for some months and had not heard of a single conversion. "And do you expect," said Mr. Spurgeon, "that the Lord is going to bless you and save souls every time you open your mouth?"

"No, sir," he replied.

"Well, then," said Mr. Spurgeon, "that is why you do not get souls saved. If you had believed, the Lord would have given the blessing." The young man was nicely caught, but many others would have answered in the same way.

4. A Communion Incident A characteristic anecdote of Mr. Spurgeon was related to the present writer by one of the deacons of St. Andrew's Street Baptist Church, Cambridge. The incident occurred when the young man joined that church. The Lord's Supper had been observed in the chapel on Sunday afternoon, and the communicants were passing out. Sitting in the same seat with young Mr. Spurgeon was a gentleman somewhat advanced in years. There seemed rather too much decorum for the warm-hearted youth, and he determined to break through it by speaking to the gentleman. He did so. The gentleman said, "I do not know you." "Not know me?" said the youth, "why, I am one of your brethren; at least, if you mean what we have been doing by communing together as fellow-disciples." The gentleman was quite captivated by the young man's sincerity and simplicity, and they became life-long friends.

It was at the house of this gentleman that Mr. Spurgeon stayed, when he visited Cambridge in 1870, during the session of the Baptist Union in Cambridge, when he preached on "Parker's Piece." The throng, consisting of several thousands, was so great, and the desire to speak to the preacher so general, that it was necessary for a few of his more intimate friends to make a circle with their joined hands, in the middle of which he walked, until he found refuge in the house of his venerable friend by passing through the garden door.

5. A Dutchman's Grave Question A man once came all the way from Holland to ask Mr. Spurgeon a very important question. He was sitting in his vestry seeing inquirers, when the young Dutchman came in and spoke in broken English.

"Where have you come from?" asked Mr. Spurgeon.

"From Flushing, sir, by boat. I want to know, sir, what I must do to be saved."

"Well, it is a long way to come to ask that question. You know what the Word says: 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.'"

"But I cannot believe in Jesus Christ," said the man.

"Well," said Mr. Spurgeon, "now look here. I have believed in Him a good many years, and I do trust Him; but if you know something or other against Him, I should like to know it, for I do not like to be deceived."

"No, sir," said he, "I do not know anything against Him."

"Why don't you trust Him, then? Could you trust me?"

"Yes, I would trust you with anything," said the Dutchman.

"But you do not know much about me," said Mr. Spurgeon.

"No, not much; only I know you are a preacher of the Word, and I believe you are honest, and I could trust you."

"Do you mean to say," said Mr. Spurgeon, "you could trust me, and that you could not trust the Lord Jesus Christ? You must have found out something bad about Him. Let me know it." The man stood thoughtfully for a moment, and then said, "Dear sir, I can see it now. Why, of course I can trust Him; I cannot help trusting Him. He is such a blessed One that I must trust Him. Good-bye, sir; I will go back to Flushing; it is all right now."

6. A Fighting Preacher A man, says Mr. Spurgeon, was preaching out of doors, when one of his hearers cried out: "Ah, Jack, you dare not preach like that at your own door!"

Unfortunately, this Mr. John—had offered to fight one of his neighbours a little while before, and therefore it was not likely he would have done much preaching near home. Mr. Spurgeon adds, "If any man's life at home is unworthy, he should go several miles away before he stands up to preach, and then, when he stands up, he should say nothing."

7. A Good Retort In the course of a Sunday evening sermon against self-righteousness, Mr. Spurgeon personified someone in the audience saying, "I don't think much of your religion, nor of your religious men, after all. Why, there is a man sitting behind you whom you think a lot of, and you have made him an officer of the church, and I can remember the time when he had scarcely got a shirt to his back." To this the preacher replied: "My dear fellow, don't you be too fast, for you have surely no cause to boast; perhaps your mother remembers the time when you had not any shirt to your back."

8. A Grateful Testimony On the 18th June, 1855, the evening before he was twenty-one, Mr. Spurgeon preached from the text, "What is your life?" (James 4:14)<http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Jas+4:14> It was published under the title of "Pictures of Life, and Birthday Reflections." Many years after, 30th March, 1884, he preached from the same text, shortly after the sudden death of the Duke of Albany. The sermon is published, being No. 1,773, Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit. In the course of the following week a gentleman called to see him on business. He was evidently greatly moved, and thus explained the circumstance: "As I entered this building," said he, "I saw an announcement that you had lately preached from the words, 'What is your life?'"

"Well," asked Mr. Spurgeon, "what is there special about that?"

"Why!" said the gentleman, "the night before you came of age, you preached from the same text."

"A very different discourse," said Mr. Spurgeon, "from the one just delivered."

"Well," said he, "I have never been able to shake hands with you before today, but I have great pleasure in doing so now. When you were twenty-one I was dreadfully depressed in spirit; I was so melancholy that I believe I should have destroyed myself if I had not heard you preach that sermon, nearly twenty years ago. It encouraged me to keep on in the battle of life, and, what is better, it made such an impression on me that I have never gone back to what I was before. Though I live a long way from here, no one loves you more than I do, for you were the means of bringing me up out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay."

9. A Humorous Incident At a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Stockwell Orphanage, one day, when the business was concluded, Mr. Spurgeon said in very grave and solemn tones: "Before we separate, I have a most serious matter to bring before you. It has to do with the Head

Master, Mr. Charlesworth. He has introduced a child into the Orphanage without the consent of any of the trustees." The trustees were astonished, and all looked very grave. Questions were asked, great surprise was expressed, and they were proceeding to discuss the Master's conduct, when Mr. Spurgeon's gravity began to give way, and it soon came to the remembrance of some of them that Mrs. Charlesworth had recently presented her husband with a son.

#### 10. Aldis (Rev. John) and Mr. Spurgeon

It is well known that when Mr. Spurgeon first came to London there were very few of his Baptist brethren in the Metropolis who showed him any active sympathy. Many were jealous of him, not a few had their fears about him, but some saw in the stripling the make of a good man and a great preacher. At one of the "fraternal meetings of the Baptist ministers of South London, for tea, conference, and prayer, one of them prayed for Mr. Spurgeon after this manner: "O Lord, bless Thy young servant, who has so much to learn, and so much to unlearn."

Rev. John Aldis, now residing at Beckington, Somerset, in his ninety-third year, was present, being then the pastor of the Church at Maze Pond. He expressed himself unfavourably as to the manner in which the prayer was offered, saying, "Mind how you treat that young man, for if I am not greatly mistaken he will yet be one of the greatest preachers of the age. He has a fervour of spirit, a command of language, such as I never knew in one so young." The wisdom and kindness of his words were worthy of the man.

## 2. Anecdotes 11-20

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### Spurgeon's Anecdotes #11-20 11. All for Jesus

Mr. Spurgeon had deep and strong sympathy with all kinds of Christian work. Whatever was done for the Master had a place in his heart and his prayers. Not least among many forms of Christian work was that of Sunday-schools. At the Robert Raikes centenary, in 180, when deputations came to London from all parts of the world, a communion service was held at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, presided over by Mr. Spurgeon. Thirty or forty of the foreign delegates and members of Committee were on the platform, and several thousands of Sunday-school teachers, who had come from everywhere to be present, filled the vast building. Mr. Spurgeon's theme was Jesus, and, referring to the fact that the work is for Jesus, he said:—"If my servant is at work in the garden or the field, and is doing what I pay him for, and I tell him that I am perfectly satisfied with him and his work, if some passer-by looks over the hedge and finds fault, he smiles, for he says, 'I shall not go to him for my wages on Saturday night.' Do it for Jesus, and you will be looking forward to His verdict, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' Do it for Jesus. Do it personally, as unto Jesus. That breaking of the alabaster box is an extravagant action; that pouring out of the precious myrrh to fill the room is an extravagant waste until it is done for Jesus; and then for Jesus self-sacrifice is prudence, and to die is but to save your life. He that lives altogether for Christ has in the best sense lived for himself; and he that shall never live for himself at all, but, self-forgetting, shall give himself actually up to his Master, shall have taken the road to procure for himself the highest degree of happiness and immortality. Do it all for Jesus then."

### 12. All of Grace

Mr. Spurgeon was announced to preach, many years ago, in a growing country town. At that time what is now called the Great Eastern Railway was notorious for not keeping time, especially on its branch lines. For this reason Mr. Spurgeon arrived very late. Very properly the people began the service, and as he approached the chapel he found there was someone in the pulpit preaching. It was his venerable grandfather. He saw his grandson enter by the front door and make his way up the aisle, and at once he said, "Here comes my grandson! He may preach the Gospel better than I can, but he cannot preach a better gospel; can you, Charles?" As the latter made his way through the throng, he answered, "You can preach better than I can. Pray go on." But nothing would do but "Charles" must take the sermon. He did so, going on with the subject there and then, just where the grandfather had left off. "There," said he, "I was preaching on 'For by grace are ye saved.' I have been setting forth the source and fountain-head of salvation; and I am now showing them the channel of it, 'through faith.' Now you take it up and go on." This the younger Spurgeon felt no difficulty in doing, he was so much at home with the glorious truths of the Gospel; so he took up the thread of his grandfather's discourse and continued without a break. His oneness with his grandfather in the things of God made it easy for him to do so.

"I went on," says Mr. Spurgeon, "with 'through faith,' and then I proceeded to the next point, 'and that not of yourselves.' Upon this I was explaining the weakness and inability of human nature, and

the certainty that salvation could not be of ourselves, when I had my coat-tail pulled, and my well-beloved grandsire took his turn again.

"When I spoke of our depraved human nature, the good old man said, 'I know most about that, dear friends,' and so he took up the parable, and for the next five minutes set forth a solemn and humbling description of our lost estate, the depravity of our nature, and the spiritual death under which we were found. When he had said his say in a very gracious manner, his grandson was allowed to go on again, to the dear old man's delight, for now and then he would say in a gentle tone, 'Good!' Once he said, 'Tell them that again, Charles,' and, of course, I did tell them that again. It was a happy exercise to me to take my share in bearing witness to truths of such vital importance, which are so deeply impressed upon my heart. I seem now to hear that dear voice, which has been so long lost to earth, saying to me, 'TELL THEM THAT AGAIN.'"

13. Anecdotal Illustrations, Sample of Mr. Spurgeon's He used it to show that the Gospel may have been useful even to hearers who forget what they have heard. A woman was called upon by her minister one Monday. He found her very busy washing wool in a sieve under a pump. "Well, Mary," said he, "how did you enjoy last Sabbath's discourses?"

"Very much, sir; they did me much good."

"Well, what was the text?"

"I am sorry, I do not recollect."

"Perhaps you remember the subject?"

"No," said she, "it is quite gone from me."

"Do you remember any of the remarks that were made?"

"No; they are all gone."

"Well, then, Mary," said the minister, "it could not have done you much good."

"Oh! but it did me a great deal of good."

"How can that be?" he asked.

"I will tell you, sir, how it is; I put this wool in the sieve under the pump, I pump on it, and all the water runs through the sieve, but then it washes the wool. So it is with your sermons; they come into my heart, and then they run right through my poor memory, which is like a sieve, but it washes me clean, sir."

"You might talk for a long while about the cleansing and sanctifying power of the Word," says Mr. Spurgeon, "and it would not make such an impression on your hearers as that simple story would."

14. A New Suit for the Pastor The name of Olney has stood in honourable connection with the church now worshipping in the Metro-politan Tabernacle for more than half a century. Mr. Thomas Olney acted a prominent part in bringing Mr. Spurgeon to London. The family originally resided at Tring, Herts, and Mr. Daniel Olney, the father of Thomas, was a deacon of the church at New Mill many years, and in the cemetery which adjoins the chapel many members of the family have been



interred.

Thomas Olney—"Father Olney" as he came to be called—was very much attached to his young pastor from the time of his first visit to London. He had a strong desire that he should preach in one of the chapels in his native town. But there were difficulties in the way. Mr. Spurgeon was too high in doctrine for one place, and not high enough for another. At length a chapel in the Aylesbury Road was procured, and the service was largely attended. The place was small, and the usual congregation consisted mainly of poor people, who raised only a small stipend for the minister, Rev. W. Skelton. This was in the first year of Mr. Spurgeon's ministry at New Park Street. He had noticed that Mr. Skelton's coat was worn and old, and, at the close of the sermon, he pleaded that there should be a collection to purchase him a new suit. He said he would charge nothing for his own services, that his friend Olney would give half a guinea, and he would do the same. The result was that a good round sum was gathered, Mr. Skelton had a new suit, and something besides, and his heart, and the hearts of many others, were made glad and thankful. The above is a brief and true version of an incident which has been most grossly misrepresented. Twenty-one years after this, Mr. Spurgeon preached at New Mill; half the collection, which was considerable, was to be for one of his institutions, but he generously handed the entire amount to the pastor.

#### 15. An Unfinished Discourse

Mr. Spurgeon strongly condemned preachers going into the pulpit unprepared. No wise man would do so unless circumstances compelled. He says that he once went to a service with his sermon well thought out. Suddenly he found that the carefully prepared sermon had entirely gone from him, text and all, and another text and subject took possession of him, without, however, any thorough plan of treating the theme. During the hymn before the sermon he saw his way to an introduction and the first division. For a time all went on smoothly. At length he found himself approaching a point beyond which he could not see his way. What should he do? Prayer went up for help, but there was no immediate response, but while uttering his last words, a thunder-storm burst over the place with such a roar of the elements that the preacher's voice was drowned.

After a few minutes the storm cleared. Such an interruption would have made it undesirable to proceed even with the best arranged discourse. A few appropriate words by way of pointing a lesson from the tempest brought the sermon to a close.

Now let us mark the sequel. Two young men of great usefulness in the Church and work of the Lord were led to the Saviour on that occasion,—one by the unprepared and unfinished discourse, and the other by the words spoken after the storm had passed. But this was an exceptional case, and, as in many other things, the exception proves the soundness of the rule that preachers should never enter the pulpit unprepared with a message.

16. An Unskilful Shepherd In a certain parish church, the clergyman's preaching was the means of bringing a man under deep conviction of sin. Where he got the sermon we do not know, but it could scarcely have been his own, as will be seen by the following conversation:—The convinced sinner went to speak to the minister, but there was no sympathy with the sorrowing soul.

"I am very sorry if there was anything in my sermon to make you unhappy; I did not mean it to be so," he said.

"Well, sir," said the anxious inquirer, "you said we must be born again."

"Oh," said the clergyman, "that was all done in baptism."

"But, sir," said the man, who was not to be put off, "you did not say so in your sermon; you spoke of the necessity of regeneration."

"Well, I am very sorry I said anything to make you uncomfortable, for really I think all is right with you. You are a good sort of fellow; you were never a poacher, or anything else that is bad."

"That may be, sir; but I have a sense of sin, and you said we must all be new creatures."

"Well, well, my good man," at last said the clergyman, quite perplexed, "I do not understand such things; I never was born again."

Mr. Spurgeon tells this story, and says that he knew the man, who found his way to the Baptist minister, from whom he got advice and help, and he became a Baptist minister himself.

17. A Pertinent Question When C. H. Spurgeon was only six years of age, he went into the village alehouse, where one of the members of his grandfather's church was drinking with persons of doubtful character. He went up to the big man, and astonished him by asking, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" The seasonable rebuke was made a permanent blessing to the man.

18. A Pretended Son of Hy. Ward Beecher Most public men have need to exercise vigilance against imposition by begging impostors. Mr. Spurgeon was no exception. A smart, well-dressed young man called at "West- wood," one day, and introduced himself as Henry Ward Beecher's son. He brought, he said, his father's esteem and affection to him, and told many stories, mostly fictitious, however, about Mr. Beecher's family and church. Mr. Spurgeon took him round the garden, but presently said he must bid him good-bye. At this point the young man said, "Oh, Mr. Spurgeon, would you oblige me by cashing a cheque for me?" His suspicion was immediately aroused, and he replied, "No, I cannot; and I don't think you ought to ask or expect me to do so. You are a perfect stranger to me. If you are Mr. Beecher's son you have with you, surely, sufficient credentials to enable you to get change at the right quarter." The young man quickly left him. A few days after this, there happened a terrible tragedy on the London and Brighton Railway. An elderly gentleman met his death, after being robbed, by a young man named Lefroy, who was arrested, tried, condemned, and executed for the murder. His portrait appeared in the illustrated papers, and Mr. Spurgeon at once recognized it as that of the young man who had palmed himself off in calling upon him as Henry Ward Beecher's son. Who can sound the depths of human villainy?

#### 19. A Queer Picture

Mr. Spurgeon knew how to turn everything he saw and heard to practical account. Describing a picture of the resurrection which he once saw, he says, "It was one of the queerest pictures I ever saw. The artist had attempted to depict the moment when the work was only half done. There were some who were alive down as far as their waists; some had one arm alive, some had part of their head alive." Telling this fact to his students, he made the following remarks: "There are some men who are only about half alive; they have a living jaw, but not a living heart; others have a living heart, but not a living brain; others have a living eye, they can see things pretty plainly, but their hearts are not alive; they can give good descriptions of what they see, but there is no warmth of

love in them. There are some ministers who are one-half angels, and the other half—well, let us say, maggots. It is an awful contrast, but there are many instances of it. They preach well, and you say, as you listen to one of them, 'That is a good man.' You feel that he is. You go to supper with him at a friend's house that you may hear what gracious words will fall from his lips; and as you watch, out they come—maggots! It was an angel in the pulpit; now come the worms!" These things ought not so to be.

#### 20. A Servant's Omissions Overruled for Good

Soon after Mr. Spurgeon was settled at Water-beach, he was strongly advised by his father and other friends to enter Stepney (now Regent's Park) College to prepare himself more fully for the ministry. Believing that learning is often a great means of usefulness, he felt inclined to act upon their suggestion, although he thought he might be useful in the ministry without a College education, though possibly he might be more useful with it. Accordingly correspondence was opened with Dr. Angus, the principal and tutor of the College, who arranged to meet Mr. Spurgeon at the house of Mr. Macmillan, the publisher.

Thinking and praying over the matter, Mr. Spurgeon went to the house at the time appointed, and was shown into a room, where he waited patiently for two hours, "feeling," says he, "too much impressed with my own insignificance and the greatness of the tutor from London to venture to ring the bell and inquire the cause of the unreasonably long delay." At last the bell was set in motion, and, on the appearance of the servant, the anxious young minister of eighteen summers was informed that Dr. Angus had been waiting for him in another room till he could remain no longer, and had gone off by train to London.

It transpired that the thoughtless servant had given no information to any of the family that anyone had called to see Dr. A., and had been shown into the drawing-room. Mr. Spurgeon was not a little disappointed at the time, though afterwards he thanked the Lord that, by this strange providence, a better course for him was shaped out.

### 3. Anecdotes 21-30

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#### Spurgeon's Anecdotes #21-30 21. A Smart Rejoinder

Mr. Spurgeon, when looking at the books in a second-hand bookshop, was addressed by a Paedo-baptist, who, pointing to a book on infant baptism—we presume that by Mr. Thorne—said, "Here, Mr. Spurgeon, here is your thorn in the flesh."

"Finish the quotation, brother," said Mr. S., "the messenger of Satan to buffet me."

22. A Sound Conclusion On the occasion of one of his visits to Southampton to preach, Mr. Spurgeon was the guest of Canon Wilberforce at the Deanery. Among the company assembled were Lord Radstock and several clergymen and curates of the High Church School. A discussion was started by one of the clergy on the question of the "Sacraments," and on baptism in particular.

"Now, Mr. Spurgeon," said one of the company, "you will grant that our Lord instituted two Sacraments, won't you?"

"I will grant nothing of the kind," said he. "The Lord instituted two ordinances, which is a very different matter. A sacrament was an oath of allegiance taken by a Roman soldier to the Emperor. The Prayer-book may use the term sacraments, but the Bible does not; neither will I." The word ordinance was allowed as expressing more accurately the import of the two commands relating to baptism and the Lord's Supper. The discussion at length brought up the question of "baptismal regeneration." All the arguments available were brought forward in support of the High Church view, when Lord Radstock, who had been a silent listener, interposed, asking, "What sort of persons do those become whom you regenerate in baptism? I will tell you," said he. "Eyes have they, but they see not; ears have they, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not; neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them, so is every one that trusteth in them."

#### 23. A Thief in Heaven?

During Mr. Spurgeon's brief ministry at Water-beach, a gentleman, who was Mayor of Cambridge, asked the youthful preacher if he had really told his people that if a thief got into heaven he would pick the angels' pockets. "Yes, sir," replied Mr. Spurgeon, "I told them that if it were possible for an ungodly man to go to heaven without having his nature changed, he would be none the better for being-there; and then, by way of illustration, I said that if a thief got in he would remain a thief still, and would go round the place picking the angels' pockets." "But, my dear young friend," said the mayor, "don't you know that the angels have no pockets?" "No, sir," he replied, "but I am glad to be assured of the fact from a gentleman who does know. I will set it all right." The following Monday morning Mr. Spurgeon walked into the mayor's shop, and said, "I set that matter right yesterday, sir."

"What matter?"

"Why, about the angels' pockets!"

"What did you say?"

"Well, I told the people I was sorry to say I made a mistake the last time I preached, but I had met a gentleman—the mayor of Cambridge—who told me that the angels had no pockets, so I must correct what I said, as I did not want anybody to go away with a false notion about heaven. I would therefore say that, if a thief got among the angels without having his nature changed, he would steal the feathers out of their wings."

24. A Wicked Man's Gifts and Doom At a tea-meeting Mr. Spurgeon was discussing the large gifts which a well-known person had bestowed on different charities. "Do you know," said he, "that man's fortune has been swollen by dancing saloons, to which are attached private apartments? If such a man does not go to the devil, I don't see what use it is to have a devil at all."

25. Beards

Mr. Spurgeon was an admirer of a good full beard as a manly appendage. Meeting a brother minister one day who had grown a fine beard since they last met, he said to him, "Well, brother—, I am glad to see your face, so much of it as I can see. You remind me of the Apostle Paul, who told the Ephesians that 'they should see his face no more.'"

26. Black from the Soul to the Skin A man in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, the son of Kaffir parents, wrote an interesting letter to Mr. Spurgeon, telling him of the good his sermons had done him. He says that, one day as he was going to his daily work, he met a friend in the street. They spoke together of the Word of God, and his friend asked him whether he had ever seen one of Mr. Spurgeon's books.

"What Mr. Spurgeon is that?" he asked.

"One of the ministers in London," he was told.

"No, I never saw such a book in my life." The other said he bought it from the bookseller. He asked the name of the book, and was told it was the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, and he went straight to the shop and bought one. "On my reading it," says he, "I arrived at a place where Job said, 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.' I am sure I can't tell how to describe the goodness you have done to us, we black people of South Africa. We are black, not only outside, even inside; I wouldn't mind to be a black man only in colour. It is a terrible thing to be black from the soul to the skin, but still I am very glad to say your sermons have done something good to me. May the Lord bless your efforts and prosper your work. May it please Him to gain many sons into His glory through you as His instrument, not only in London but also in Africa!" To all of which we say, "Amen."

27. College or no College The disappointment caused to Mr. Spurgeon through the careless omission of the servant (see No. 20) did not altogether repress in him the desire for a collegiate education, but he was brought to a decision in a remarkable way. He says: "Still holding the idea of entering the collegiate institution, I thought of writing and making an immediate application, but this was not to be. That afternoon, having to preach at a village station, I walked slowly, in a meditative frame of mind over Midsummer Common to the little wooden bridge which leads to Chesterton,

and in the midst of the common I was startled by what seemed to me a loud voice, but which may have been a singular illusion; whichever it was, the impression on my mind was most vivid; I seemed very distinctly to hear the words, 'Seekest thou great things for thy- self? Seek them not.' This led me to look at my position from a different point of view, and to challenge my motives and intentions. I remembered my poor but loving people to whom I ministered, and the souls which had been given me in my humble charge; and although at that time I anticipated obscurity and poverty as the result of the resolve, yet I did there and then renounce the offer of collegiate instruction, determining to abide, for a season, at least, with my people; and to remain preaching the Word as long as I had strength to do it. Had it not been for these words I had not been where I am now. The Lord guides His people by His wisdom, and orders their paths in love; and in times of perplexity, by ways mysterious and remarkable, He says to them, 'This is the way, walk ye in it.'

## 28. Deacons

Among the many false stories that have been told, especially in former years, of Mr. Spurgeon and his sayings, is that respecting deacons. He is reported to have said that deacons are worse than the devil, because if you resist the devil he will flee from you, whereas if you resist a deacon he will fly at you. Of course this was somebody's invention, and a wicked one, too, for he never said any such thing. He had some admirable deacons and elders, and no minister ever felt more strongly bound to other men in his church than Mr. Spurgeon did to his beloved brethren in the deacons' and elders' office. Indeed, he sometimes cautioned his students not to be harsh and forward to censure and condemn them when difference of opinion arose. He mentions one who undoubtedly was a good man, but every now and again was overcome with fits of temper. It was a mystery to all who knew him that such should be the case, for he was usually most gracious and devout. When he died a surgeon examined his head, and found a little bit of bone protruding into the brain. The mystery of his occasional irritability was thus explained.

There are deacons and deacons; some who execute their office faithfully and adorn it, but there are others who magnify their office, and not in the best sense. But upon the whole they are a worthy set of Christian men, though, like ministers, none of them are perfect. Less of self-esteem, and more of the grace of humility, forbearance, and brotherly love, would improve some deacons and ministers also.

## 29. "Do as he Does, not as he Says."

One day, when travelling by rail with Mr. Spurgeon, the latter related the following story, which has not, so far as the writer knows, found its way into any of his books, or any other publication. In the year 1858, a Congregational minister, labouring in Kennington Lane, told Mr. Spurgeon that he had a young lady in his congregation who wished to be baptized (immersed) on her profession of faith. "Very well," said Mr. S., "we shall be baptizing on such a date, let her come, or bring her, and we will attend to the matter."

"But," said the other, "I think every pastor ought, if possible, to baptize his own candidates."

"Very well, it shall be so if you wish it." The day and time having been arranged, all the parties met in Mr. Spurgeon's vestry before the service.

"Now," said Mr. Spurgeon, "my people have often heard my side of the question, if you would like to say a few words on your side, you are at liberty to do so. You will see how I perform the rite, and you can follow." The service proceeded, and when the time came for the clerical visitor to state his views on the mode of baptism, he delivered himself of a series of objections to immersion, all, however, of venerable date and of a negative character: Immersion was unnecessary, unhealthy, etc., etc., and then added that, nevertheless, if anyone believed it to be right, God would accept it. A most unsound and unscriptural position. He then baptized his candidate. Meanwhile, the people wondered greatly how Mr. Spurgeon came to allow him to speak on such a subject and in such a way. The matter was soon put right, however, in a few words, when Mr. Spurgeon said, "All I shall say is, do as he does, not as he says."

### 30. Don't Attempt the Grand

Addressing his students one day, Mr. Spurgeon said: "If you should attempt the grand in your preaching, mind you are sure of not making a fool of yourself, as the brother did who exclaimed, 'It thundered, brethren—it thundered—like—like—like—anything.' Nor yet as he who, describing the angels ascending and descending Jacob's ladder, said, 'They went up and down, up and down—like—like'—but he did not know what to liken their movements to, but only made himself look like a fool."

## 4. Anecdotes 31-40

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Spurgeon's Anecdotes #31-40 31. Faithful Dealing made a Blessing At some places where Mr. Spurgeon preached, he did not have a warm reception. In one such place, instead of a kind welcome all was cool and distant. The managers were to receive pecuniary benefit from his visit. There had been a majority at the church-meeting in favour of inviting him, but the deacons did not approve of it, for they said he was not "sound in the faith." There were people there from other churches who were pleased and profited, but the people belonging to the place did not get a blessing; they had not expected it, so of course they did not receive it. When the service was over, Mr. Spurgeon went into the vestry, and there stood the two deacons, one on each side of the mantelpiece. "Are you the deacons?" asked Mr. Spurgeon.

"Yes," was their reply.

"The church does not prosper, does it?"

"No." they replied.

"I should not think it would with such deacons."

"Do you know anything against us?" they answered.

"No; but I do not know anything in your favour."

"I thought," said Mr. S., "that if I could not get at them in the mass, I would try what I could do with one or two."

One of the deacons was so irritated that he left the place, but the other was stirred up to prayer and diligent effort. The chapel had been without a minister for a long time, but better days dawned, and a man of the right stamp was settled among them, and the cause prospered.

### 32. Familiarity but not Vulgarity

Some men make true friendship with them impossible, because they allow a slight familiarity such license as to border on vulgarity. "There was Mr.

B—," said Mr. Spurgeon; "he was a big man in his way, and seemed very anxious to make me his friend. He was very hospitable and generous. I was friendly and agreeable with him. Then he began to call me 'Charles.' I looked at him. I did not mind it much, but had he been my father or brother he could scarcely have done more. I thought I would let him see how it looked, so I called him 'John.' He did not see my purpose, and so went on to call me 'Charley.' Then I called him 'Jack.' That cured him, and he dropped it. But I could see he had little of the sense of propriety." Undue familiarity with men of position, especially with ministers of the Gospel, calling them "Tom," or "Bob," or "Dick," is unworthy, and ought not to be indulged in.

### 33. Gabriel without Wings



Among Mr. Spurgeon's earliest recollections was that of attending the school for juveniles, kept by a Mrs. Burleigh. He heard a good deal about her son Gabriel, and asked, as a special favour, that when he came home from the town where he lived, he might go and see him. His wish was granted, but he was greatly disappointed. "To see Gabriel!" he says, "I don't think I had absolutely reckoned upon the largest pair of wings, but wings certainly, or something otherwise angelic. To see a young man in trousers, with no trace of cherubim or seraphim about him, was too much of a come down. 'What's in a name?' was a question not then known to me. But no one will need to ask me now."

#### 34. Grace, or the Liver?

Mr. Spurgeon tells a story of a gentleman in a railway carriage who overheard a conversation between two of the passengers. One of them said: "Well, now, I think the Church of Rome has great power, and is likely to succeed with the people because of the evident holiness of her ministers.

There is, for instance, Cardinal—, he is just like a skeleton; through his long fasting and prayers, he has reduced himself almost to skin and bone. Whenever I hear him speak, I feel at once the force of the holiness of the man. Now, look at Mr. Spurgeon, he eats and drinks like an ordinary mortal. I would not give a pin to hear him preach." His friend heard him very patiently, and then said quite quietly, "Did it ever strike you that the Cardinal's appearance was to be accounted for by the fact of his liver being put of order? I do not think it is grace that makes him as lean as he is, I believe it is his liver."

"So," said Mr. Spurgeon, "there are some brethren who are naturally of a melancholy disposition. It is not a sign of grace, but of the liver being out of order."

#### 35. Hard-working Men

Two intelligent working men, each looking for a chance to better himself, were overheard in the following conversation:—"I don't much care," said one, "whether I get it or not; the only thing is that it will mean a rise of two shillings a week for me, and where a man has a wife and family that's a consideration." "It is indeed," said the other, "and that's why I am here, but no doubt more money will bring more work."

"It is sure to do that," was the reply. "I consider this a very hard-working age. I do quite as much as I ought, what with my Chapel, and Band of Hope, and Sunday-school, besides my ten or twelve hours a day at my regular business; but I suppose I am not the hardest worked man of the age."

"No, you may be pretty sure of that. I wonder who is? It is certain that many of the public men we read of don't have a very easy time of it. There's Gladstone, for instance, a splendid worker he is."

"Yes; but my man works harder than Gladstone."

"Who is your man?"

"Spurgeon."

"Oh! you don't catch parsons hurting themselves with work, I know."

"Don't you, though; I believe that Spurgeon is really killing himself with overwork. Look here, I cut this out of The Sword and the Trowel. It is a bit of Spurgeon's own. It won't take a minute. This is what he says:—"The pastorate of a church of four thousand members, the direction of all its agencies, the care of many churches, arising from the College work, the selection, education, and guidance in their settlements of the students, the oversight of the Orphanage, the editing of a Magazine, the production of numerous volumes, the publication of a weekly sermon, an immense correspondence, a fair share in public and denominational action, and many other labours, besides the incessant preaching of the Word, give me a right to ask of our friends that we be not allowed to have an anxious thought about the funds needed for our enterprises."

"Yes, your parson certainly does work," acknowledged the man. "He doesn't get his bread and cheese for nothing. We will call him one of ourselves—one of the working men of Old England."

"You are right! I don't believe there is any man in the world to beat him at work." The man was right. Mr. Spurgeon was all the time working at high pressure, and the terrible pain he so often suffered made the work doubly onerous.

### 36. Hats Off

One day, three young men entered the Surrey Gardens Music Hall when Mr. Spurgeon was preaching there, and seated themselves in a conspicuous position, with their hats on. The officials requested them to take off their hats, but they refused to do so. Presently, Mr. Spurgeon caught sight of them, and led his discourse round to show the respect which all are bound to show to the feelings and usages of others. "The other day," said he, "I went into a Jewish synagogue, and I naturally uncovered my head, but on looking round I perceived that all the rest wore their hats, and so, not wishing to offend against what I supposed to be their reverent practice, though contrary to my own, I conformed to the Jewish use, and put on my hat. I will now ask those three young Jews up in the gallery to show the same deference to our Christian practice in the House of God as I was prepared to show them when I visited their synagogue, and take off their hats." Of course, after this kind and sensible appeal, they could do no other than comply.

### 37. Have you ever Told Jane?

One Sunday evening, in the course of his sermon, Mr. Spurgeon said: "Now, you mothers, have you ever prayed with each of your children, one by one, and urged them to lay hold on Christ? Perhaps dear Jane is now in bed, and you have never yet pleaded with her about eternal things. Go home tonight, wake her up, and say, 'Jane, I am sorry I have never told you about the Saviour personally, and prayed with you, but I mean to do so now.' Wake her up, and put your arms round her neck, and pour out your heart to God with her." This was a bow drawn at a venture, but God directed the arrow. The very next Monday evening, a good woman, who had a daughter named Jane, came to see him in the vestry, bringing her daughter Jane with her. On the Sunday night, when she went home, she found Jane in bed. She woke her up, and began: "Dear Jane, I have not spoken to you about Jesus, as I ought to have done."

"Oh, dear mother!" said Jane, "I have loved the Saviour these six months, and wondered you had not spoken to me about Him." Are there not many such mothers and fathers? And may there not be many such Janes or Johns? Let us never be ashamed or afraid to talk to our children, or other relatives, or servants, about Him who is "The fairest of ten thousand fair," the "All in all" in every

believer's salvation.

### 38. Hot Water

Some years ago, as is well known, Mr. Spurgeon preached on the theory of Baptismal Regeneration, which created a great stir, and occasioned no little controversy. He met a minister, one day, who said to him: "I hear, friend Spurgeon, that you are in hot water." "Oh, dear no," was his reply, "I am not in hot water; the other fellows are. I am the man who makes the water boil."

39. How his Mind was Changed In the early days of Mr. Spurgeon's ministry, many predicted his speedy collapse, but, thank God! they were not true prophets. Not a few of these were ministers, good men who held and preached the doctrines of sovereign grace, which the young preacher steadfastly held and fearlessly proclaimed; but they objected to his repeated fervent appeals to sinners, as such, to "Repent and believe the Gospel," to "Look and live." But this was not the case with all who held these truths. A few years since, the writer made the acquaintance of an elderly Christian man, who had been a member of the church at the Grove, Camberwell, under the ministry of Rev. Joseph Irons. Mr. Irons had been called home, and his successor was not equally satisfactory to all Mr. Irons's people. One evening a minister of the Strict Baptist order called upon this friend, who then resided in Walworth. It was Thursday, and the minister was going to hear the young preacher at New Park Street, and wished his friend to accompany him. "No," said he, "I have had enough of boy preachers." Still the minister urged him, and finally, for his sake, and that he might not seem unkind and wanting in courtesy, he consented, and went. The hymns, the exposition, the prayers, but, more than all, the sermon, so laid hold on his heart, that he took sittings in the chapel, and continued to attend all the time he remained in London. The young preacher handled old truths in a new and certainly very striking manner, and people could not help being attracted, whether they received the doctrine or otherwise.

40. "Hum, Ha!" The weekday prayer-meetings at Stambourne were well kept up, excepting at such times as haying and harvest, when the venerable pastor and a few old women were all that could be relied on. In one of his visits to Stambourne, young C. H. S. asked,— "Why, grandfather, we always sang, and yet you don't know any tunes, and certainly the old ladies didn't."

"Why, child," said he, "there is one common metre tune which is all 'Hum Ha, Hum Ha,' and I could manage that very well."

"But how if it happened to be a long or short metre hymn?"

"Why, then, I either put in more 'Hum Ha's' or we left some out, but we manage to praise the Lord."

## 5. Anecdotes 41-50

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Spurgeon's Anecdotes #41-50 41. In the Depths

Mr. Spurgeon was sometimes the subject of great depression of spirit. He speaks thus of one of these seasons, and of what came of it.

"Certain troublous events had happened to me; I was also unwell, and my heart sank within me. Out of the depths I was forced to cry unto the Lord. Just before I went away to Mentone for rest, I suffered greatly in body, but far more in soul, for my spirit was overwhelmed. Under this pressure, I preached a sermon from the words, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?' I was as much qualified to preach from that text as ever I expect to be; indeed, I hope that few of my brethren could have entered so deeply into those heart-breaking words. I felt to the full of my message the horror of a soul forsaken of God. Now that was not a desirable experience; I tremble at the bare idea of passing again through that eclipse of soul; I pray that I may never suffer in that fashion again unless the same result should hang upon it.

"That night, after the sermon, there came into the vestry a man who was as nearly insane as he could be to be out of an asylum. His eyes seemed ready to start out of his head, and he said that he should utterly have despaired if he had not heard that discourse, which had made him feel that there was one man alive who understood his feelings, and could describe his experience. I talked with him, and tried to encourage him, and asked him to come again on the Monday night, when I should have a little more time to talk with him. I saw this brother again, and I told him that I thought he was a hopeful patient, and I was glad that the word had been so suited to his case.

"Apparently he put aside the comfort which I presented for his acceptance, and yet I had the consciousness upon me that the precious truth he had heard was at work upon his mind, and that the storm of his soul would soon subside into a deep calm."

Now hear the sequel. One night, when Mr. Spurgeon had been preaching from the words, "The Almighty hath vexed my soul," in walked, after the service, this self-same brother who had called on him five years before. "This time," says Mr. S., "he looked as different as noonday from midnight, or as life from death."

"I said to him, 'I am glad to see you, for I have often thought about you, and wondered whether you were brought into perfect peace.'"

Mr. Spurgeon went to Mentone, and his patient went into the country, so that they had not met for five years. To Mr. Spurgeon's inquiries, the good man replied: "Yes, you said I was a hopeful patient, and I am sure you will be glad to know that I have walked in the sunlight from that day till now. Everything is changed and altered with me." Mr. Spurgeon added:—"As soon as I saw my poor despairing patient the first time, I blessed God that my fearful experience had prepared me to sympathise with him and guide him, but when I saw him perfectly restored, my heart overflowed with gratitude to God for my former sorrowful feelings. I would go into the deep a hundred times to

cheer a downcast spirit."

#### 42. It's all Right

Letters have reached Mr. Spurgeon from all parts of the world, telling him of the usefulness of his sermons, and some of the incidents related are worth repeating. A woman in Victoria wrote him, telling of blessing received many years ago. "At that time I lost a darling boy, everything seemed dark, and nothing brought me any comfort. The Word of God, which had been my stay through many similar trials, seemed all dark to me. A friend brought me one of your sermons, and asked me to allow her to read it to me. I refused at first, but at length consented. I forget the title of it, but it was that everything is ordered by God, nothing comes by chance. I felt all the time my friend was reading afraid to breathe. I could only say, 'Go on, go on.' When she had finished, I leaped from my couch, and said, 'All is right; thank God! my dark mind is all light again.' I have had similar trials since, and many other trials, but I could say from my heart, 'Thy will be done! It is all right.' "From that time my husband ordered your sermons monthly, and we continue to do so. Every Sunday evening we read one aloud, so that all may hear, and afterwards I send them into the bush."

43. I was Sitting in that Pew On the 11th October, 1864, Mr. Spurgeon preached in the Primitive Methodist Chapel, Colchester, taking for his text the ever-memorable words (Isaiah 45:22), "Look unto Me, and be ye saved," etc. "That was the text," said he, "that I heard preached from at this chapel when the Lord converted me." Then, pointing to a seat on his right hand, under the gallery, he said, "I was sitting in that pew when I was converted." A profound impression was made on the congregation.

44. Let him Try In 1881, some of the autumnal meetings of the Baptist Union were held at Portsmouth, and Mr. Spurgeon preached to an immense gathering in the large Music Hall. Just before the service began, there was some excitement below which so reminded him of the catastrophe at the Surrey Music Hall that it almost threw him off his balance. Happily, he so far recovered himself as to preach a very memorable sermon, from the text, "Without Me ye can do nothing." Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar and his suite were on the platform, and, at the close of the service, the Prince introduced himself, and thanked Mr. Spurgeon for his excellent discourse. The close of the sermon contained a note of sarcastic and triumphant defiance. The passage is introduced for the sake of the telling anecdote with which it closed: "I have read very constantly that the old-fashioned Gospel has nearly died out. I was reading, the other day, that those of us who believe in the old evangelical doctrine, and especially the Calvinistic doctrine, have got to be so miserably few that we are of no account—that, in fact, we do not exist at all; that though there may be one or two persons who still believe it, we may be reckoned to be dead, and they dance over our graves, and say the Gospel is gone. Dear brethren, they tell us that if it is not quite gone, it is very nearly gone. Then, put on your nightcaps. You who believe in evangelical doctrine, go home and go to bed, your mission is over, advanced thought has done away with you entirely, and if it has not quite done so, there are men coming, great men, men of thought and men of culture, who are going, once and for all, to sweep you away with the besom of destruction. Wonderful, is it not? Very wonderful, and I will tell you how I thought of it.

"One afternoon—a very hot afternoon—away in New England, in one of the old Puritan chapels, chapels which were built, you know, as if they were intended to withstand seven earthquakes at once, all the pillars immensely strong—enormous pillars—the roof not very lofty but very

substantial, and the only thing about the chapel which you could commend, for it was uglier than any other portion, on that afternoon the minister was prophesying to dry bones, and very dry they were. Some were asleep, and others were being edified, and just in the middle of this delightful service, up rose a lunatic in the midst of the congregation, denounced the minister, and said he would there and then pull the chapel down about their ears; so, getting up to one of the pillars, this new-born Samson proceeded to carry, out his threat. The good women began to faint, the men were all up, there was a rush to the aisles, and nobody knows how many might have been killed, when an old deacon, sitting under the pulpit, calmed all the tumult in a minute. He said, 'Let him try.' "That is exactly what I say, 'Let them try.' They shall never succeed, for God is not with them; and if He be not with them, how can they prosper?"

#### 45. Like Rain on Dry Land

Two missionaries, in one of the isles of the Grecian Archipelago, wrote Mr. Spurgeon, saying, "Your sermons are to us like rain upon a dry land. We have no church to attend, and no Christian friends to associate with."

#### 46. Little Mary's Prayer

Speaking at the Tabernacle, at Mr. Spurgeon's Jubilee, in 1884, the Earl of Shaftesbury related the following anecdote of Mr. Spurgeon's usefulness to a depraved couple: "I and my wife," said the man, "were the most godless, wicked, and wretched couple on the face of the earth. We cared neither for God nor man. We never went to church or chapel. One evening we were passing by the Tabernacle, and my wife said to me, 'Let us go in.' I said, 'I have no objection to hear the nonsense talked.'" They went in. Mr. Spurgeon was in his best vein. He dwelt upon the most solemn and serious things. When the man and his wife went home, the man said, "Sukey, did you hear what the preacher said?"

"Yes, I did," she said. "He told us we should go to hell if we did not pray."

"Do you ever pray, Sukey?"

"No," said she.

"Nor I," said the man, "and I do not know how to do it."

"Oh," said the wife, "by-the-by, there is our little Mary upstairs; she goes to Sunday-school; she will know how to pray."

Up they went. They woke the little child, and said to her, "Mary, you must pray for father and mother." And the little girl did pray for them, and what do you think was the declaration of the man? "Why, sir," said he, "from that hour I was a changed man, and now I go to places of worship with all my heart and soul."

There are, no doubt, hundreds of such cases, perhaps thousands, recorded in the chronicles above, which have never been recorded on earth, and which have never been made known to Mr. Spurgeon or any of his friends. But Jesus wears the crown of them.

#### 47. Look after Strangers in the House of God

Mr. Spurgeon often impressed upon his hearers, especially those who sympathised with his great aim,—to bring souls to Christ,—the need of caring for others. "I recollect," said he, "several persons joining the church who traced their conversion to the ministry at the Surrey Music Hall. They said, however, that it was not the preaching alone, but another agency co-operating therewith. They were fresh from the country, and some good man met them at the gate, spoke to them, said he hoped they had enjoyed what they had heard, heard their answer, asked them if they were coming in the evening, and said he would be glad if they would drop into his house to tea. This they did, and he had a word with them about the Master. The next Sunday it was the same, and, at length, those who had been only partly impressed by the sermons, were brought to hear with other ears, until, by and by, through the old man's persuasive words, and the good Lord's gracious work, they were converted to God.

"There is good scope for this kind of work, especially in every large congregation, for all who really want to do good.

"In some congregations many are too stiff and starchy even to notice a stranger; they are afraid their dignity might be sullied by contact with the unknown, especially the poor and outcast. So did not the Saviour when He rested on the well at Sychar."

Mr. Spurgeon's words are plain and forceful where he says, "Beloved, we must win souls; we cannot live and see men damned; we must have them brought to Jesus. Oh! then, be up and doing, and let none around you die, unwarned, unwept, uncared for."

#### 48. Look! Look! Look!

Mr. Spurgeon was convinced of sin while yet a small boy. As he grew older, his convictions deepened, and he was in great distress of mind, in an agony to obtain pardon and peace. He was then living with his father in Colchester. He was willing to do anything if God would only forgive him his sins. Not that he ever went astray into the paths of vice and ungodliness; far from it; but he felt sin to be exceeding sinful, and he groaned under the burden. He went to all the places of worship in the town, hoping to hear how he could find salvation. The preachers were good men, and fed the sheep and instructed believers, but he could hear nothing to suit his case as a guilty, perishing sinner.

One snowy Sunday morning, he could not go to the place he had determined to go to, so he stopped on the road. In Artillery Street, he found a little chapel, and he turned in there. It was a Primitive Methodist place of worship. The service began, but for some time there was no preacher. At length a thin-looking man entered the pulpit, and read his text, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." The preacher fixed his eyes on him as if he knew all that was in his heart, and said, "Young man, you are in trouble, and you will never get out of it unless you look to Christ." Then, lifting up his hands, he cried out, "Look, look, look! It is only look." "I saw at once," says Mr. Spurgeon, "the way of salvation. Oh, how I did leap for joy! I was so possessed with that one thought that I noticed very little else that he said. I had been waiting to do fifty things, but when I heard this word 'Look,' what a charming word it was to me. Oh! I looked until I could almost have looked my eyes away; and in heaven I will look on still in my joy unutterable."

#### 49. More Pilfering from Spurgeon

Mr. Spurgeon received but scant courtesy from some Church of England writers. There was a certain magazine of theirs, which, month by month, had a piece of his in it, taken, word for word, from his *Feathers for Arrows*, and they put at the bottom of the extracts, "By an Old Author." The "Old Author" was no other than Mr. Spurgeon, then in middle life. An editor of a Church of England magazine took John Ploughman's *Almanack*—"And John Ploughman," says Mr. Spurgeon, "is a friend of mine." Well, this gentleman took the *Almanack*, and put in every month the whole of the proverbs, January, February, March, and so on, as if they had been his own; "And I wondered," says Mr. S., "how long that kind of thing was going on, so I wrote to the editor to say that it was a very bright idea for him to take all my friend 'John Ploughman's' proverbs in that way, and print them in his magazine as he was doing, but that I was instructed by 'John Ploughman' to say that he was not to do it any longer." The editor wrote back to ask what he should do, because he had begun printing the proverbs, and he should like to publish them in his magazine right through the year.

Mr. Spurgeon replied: "Well, if you do so, you ought to say that I am the author of the proverbs, and that you took them from me. If you do that, you will be a gentleman and a Christian, and I will say nothing more about the matter; but as that is, perhaps, too much to expect from you, you may simply put the name of the publishers, and say that the proverbs are 'John Ploughman's,' and then my name will not defile your pages." The gentleman actually accepted the second alternative.

#### 50. More than she Asked

Speaking one day to her son Charles of her solicitude for the best interests of all her children, his beloved mother said, "Oh, Charley, I have often prayed that you might be saved, but never that you should become a Baptist." Charles replied:—"The Lord has answered your prayer, dear mother, with His usual bounty, and given you more than you asked."



## 6. Anecdotes 51-60

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Spurgeon's Anecdotes #51-60 51. Mr. Knill's Prophecy (See Number 67.)

Before Mr. Knill left Stambourne to fulfil other appointments, he called the family together, and taking the boy Spurgeon on his knee, said:—"I do not know how it is, but I feel a solemn presentiment that this child will preach the Gospel to thousands, and God will bless him to many souls. So sure am I of this, that when my little man preaches in Rowland Hill's chapel" (then the largest in the South of London), "I should like him to promise me that he will give out the hymn commencing:—

"God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform."

The promise was made, and so was another, namely, that at his express desire the boy would learn the hymn in question, and think of what he had said. This prophetic declaration was fulfilled. When Mr. Spurgeon preached in Surrey Chapel, and also when he preached in the chapel at Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire—Mr. Hill's summer residence—the hymn was sung on both occasions.

Mr. Spurgeon always believed that the words of Mr. Knill helped to bring about their own fulfilment. He believed them, and looked forward to the time when he should preach the Word. He felt very powerfully that no unconverted person might dare to enter the ministry. This made him more intent on seeking salvation, and more hopeful of it; and when by grace he was enabled to cast himself on the Saviour's love, it was not long before he spoke of his redemption. The prediction was coined in the loving heart of Mr. Knill, God the Holy Spirit influencing him.

52. No Laughing Matter

Mr. Spurgeon had many strange experiences, and some of these incidents he related to his students in his Friday afternoon talks with them.

While living at Nightingale Lane, a visitor called, who was certainly not at all welcome, and his admittance might have had very serious consequences if the beloved master of the house had not been graciously guided in his mode of dealing with the madman.

Mr. Spurgeon happened to be passing the entrance-hall just as someone rapped rather loudly at the door; and, without considering who might be seeking admission in that unceremonious fashion, he opened it. In an instant, a wild-looking man, armed with a huge stick, sprang in, slammed the door, stood with his back against it, and, in a most menacing manner, announced that he had come to kill Mr. Spurgeon! The situation was extremely critical, for there was no way either to escape from the maniac or to summon assistance to get rid of him; so Mr. Spurgeon said, "You must mean my brother, his name is Spurgeon;"—knowing, of course, that he could give him timely warning if there was any fear of the man going to Croydon.

"Ah!" said the crazy fellow, "it is the man that makes jokes that I mean to kill."

"Oh, then, you must go to my brother, for he makes jokes!"

"No," he said, "I believe you are the man," and then suddenly he exclaimed, "Do you know the asylum at—? That's where I live, and it takes ten men to hold me."

Then Mr. Spurgeon saw his opportunity, and drawing himself up to his full height, he said, in his most impressive tones, "Ten men! that is nothing; you don't know how strong I am. Give me that stick." The poor creature, thoroughly cowed, handed over the formidable weapon.

Seizing it, and opening the door, Mr. Spurgeon almost shouted, "If you are not out of the house this very moment, I'll break every bone in your body." The man quickly fled, someone was at once sent to give information to the police, and it was a great relief to hear that, before long, the escaped madman was again under restraint.

#### 53. Not a Great Success

"Somehow," says Mr. Spurgeon, "I don't think our (Stambourne) Sunday-school came to so very, very much. Having been on one occasion pressed into the service when I was still a boy, but was in Stambourne on a visit, I felt myself a failure, and I fancied that some around me were not brilliant successes. Still, in those early times, teaching children to read and to repeat verses of hymns, and to say the (Watts's) catechism by heart was a good beginning."

#### 54. Not a Sham, but a Delusion

One has known persons, mostly females, who have fancied themselves ill and unable to leave their bed, when in reality there was not much the matter with them. Mr. Spurgeon was called to such a case by the mother of a girl who was the victim of a desponding frame of mind. The mother could not believe that her daughter was really ill, though it was no case of sham.

Mr. Spurgeon went to see the young woman, and coincided with the opinion of the mother.

"Come," said he, "you must get up; your mother believes, and I believe, that there is nothing really the matter with you; but, if you persist in thinking you are ill, you may lie here and die. But, remember, God has His own place to which He sends suicides." The girl seemed startled, and said, "I will come to the Tabernacle on Sunday." She did so, and gave her mother no further trouble.

55. Number, The, of the Beast A man who is great on prophecy wrote to Mr. Spurgeon, saying he could make the name of Gladstone and of Napoleon, and of others, tally with the numbers of the beast in the Revelation, but could not make his do so, and wanted him to tell him why. "I suppose it's because I am not a beast," was his reply.

56. One Song, One Heart An affecting passage in a memorable service at the Tabernacle thrilled every heart, when Mr. Spurgeon proposed that the whole assembly should join hands, and form an unbroken chain extending from the floor to the platform, and from the platform to the galleries, and that then the congregation should sing,—

"E'er since by faith I saw the stream Thy flowing wounds supply, Redeeming love has been my theme, And shall be till I die."

At first the people were slow to understand and respond, and there was some difficulty about the joining hands of those above and those below; some had to stand on the stairs, and it was scarcely in accordance with English usage for strangers to take each other's hands; but Mr. Spurgeon uttered a cheery word, and the thing was done without any mishap. There were few dry eyes when the singing had reached the last verse:—

"Then in a nobler, sweeter song, I'll sing Thy power to save, When this poor lisping, stammering tongue Lies silent in the grave."

No one present could ever forget the scene and the circumstances, or the deeply moving words and tones of the speaker. In the twenty years that have followed what numbers of that throng have met where they still sing the new song:—"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood," etc.

57. On Going to Church Mr. Spurgeon says:—

"Some go to church to take a walk;

Some go there to laugh and talk;

Some go there to meet a friend;

Some go there their time to spend;

Some go there to meet a lover;

Some go there a fault to cover;

Some go there for speculation;

Some go there for observation;

Some go there to dose and nod; The wise go there to worship God."

58. Picking them Off A great number of persons have been converted in the Tabernacle by the personal conversation of zealous and active members and officers of the church. While Mr. Spurgeon was preaching, they would be all about the place watching for anxious ones.

"A brother was speaking to me, one Monday night," says Mr. S., "and suddenly he vanished before he finished the sentence he was whispering. I never quite knew what he was going to say, but I speedily saw him in the left-hand gallery, sitting in a pew with a lady unknown to me. After the service, I said to him, 'Where did you go?' He said, 'A gleam of sunlight came in at the window, and I saw a face which looked so sad that I hurried upstairs, close to the woman whose countenance was so sorrowful.' 'Did you cheer her?' 'Oh, yes; I spoke to her of the Lord Jesus, and she received Him very readily into her heart. Just at that moment, I noticed another eager face, and I asked her to wait in the pew till after the service, and I went after the other, a young man.' He prayed with both of these, and would not be satisfied until they had yielded themselves to God and accepted Christ as their Saviour.

"That is the way to be on the alert," said Mr. Spurgeon. "We need a body of sharpshooters to pick off their men one by one. When we fire great guns from the pulpit, execution is done, but many are

missed. We want loving spirits to go round, and deal with individual cases by pointed personal warnings and encouragements."

59. Pilfering from Spurgeon A certain gentleman produced two volumes of anecdotes and illustrations, in the first of which he took a number of Mr. Spurgeon's thoughts, and appended his name. Here and there through the book was the name, "Spurgeon, Spurgeon." Speaking sarcastically, Mr. Spurgeon said, "It was very kind to use the poor man's illustrations like that; very kind indeed; I ought to take off my hat to the gentleman, and I would, only it is not on my head." But while the second volume was being prepared, Mr. Spurgeon preached very strongly against some of the teaching of the Church of England. Many considered it a grievous sin. For this reason the compiler was unable to put the name of Spurgeon into his second volume, but he was unwilling to refrain from taking his illustrations, so he took them and inserted them without the author's name, and there is the first volume disgraced and degraded, as some thought, with the name of Spurgeon, but the second volume had his thoughts and illustrations without his name.

Mr. Spurgeon says, in reference to this plagiarism: "I am a considerable sufferer by makers of anecdote books, for they never make one now without plucking my feathers pretty freely, and using my illustrations without stint. I do not say much about that matter; but there is one thing which, to me, is a greater cause for complaint—I mean when people take my material without even giving me the credit of it." No doubt that was thought to be a clever way of proceeding, but Mr. Spurgeon could not see the justice of it.

#### 60. Prayer, a Drawing Near to God

There was a time, late in the fifties, when Mr. Spurgeon had the use of the Congregational Church, Tunbridge Wells, secured for him by a friend. He preached there many times, and the present writer did not miss any one of the sermons. He remembers especially two of them. "Things that accompany Salvation" was one; the other was on prayer as drawing near to God: "It is good for me to draw near to God." His remarks went to show that, whether in a form of prayer or in extemporaneous supplication, that alone is true prayer in which the soul seeks to draw near to God. The divisions of the sermon were very remarkable and original. He said: "First, I shall use the text as a Touchstone." "Second, I shall use it as a Whetstone, to sharpen the activity of the soul God-ward.

"Third, I shall set it up as a Tombstone over the myriads of dead prayers, both formal and extempore." The discourse throughout was striking, telling, and searching. Three evangelical clergymen who were present evidently thought the sermon calculated to be profitable to others besides those who had listened to it, and they sought Mr. Spurgeon's permission to have it printed as a booklet for distribution in the town and neighbourhood.

Those services in the Congregational Church were the means of much good, and people came in from the country around to listen to the preacher, whose usefulness and popularity were extending on every side.

## 7. Anecdotes 61-70

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### Spurgeon's Anecdotes #61-70

61. Prayer Answered At different times, Mr. Spurgeon has related remarkable proofs, drawn from his own experience, that God is the hearer of prayer. The funds of the College, the Orphanage, and other of his institutions have often been replenished in answer to prayer.

Once, when the funds of the Orphanage were low, he and his co-trustees united in earnest prayer for the needed help, having first given liberally themselves, and within twenty-four hours more than £800 came in unexpectedly. A gentleman withdrew a large annual gift to Mr. Spurgeon's work because a certain action of the great preacher displeased him. Just at the time notice was received that the gift would cease, a lady travelled from England to Mentone to see Mr. Spurgeon, who was at the latter place. She declared that it had been laid upon her heart to see him, and give him a contribution. She handed him just the exact sum that had been withdrawn, about which she knew nothing at the time.

"My hair seemed almost to stand on end," said Mr. Spurgeon. "I felt God to be so truly near and real. And yet," he adds, "there are plenty of wretched fellows who declare there is no such thing as answered prayer. The arguments such men use are exactly like the Irishman's, who, when charged with murder, and told that a dozen people saw him commit it, said, 'I can bring fifty people who did not see me do it.'"

God's promises are like cheques drawn by God Himself on the bank of heaven. They are never dishonoured.

62. Preaching Christ An old minister, who had heard a sermon by a young man, was asked by the preacher what he thought of his discourse. The old gentleman was very slow to answer, but at length he said, "If I must tell you, I did not like it at all; there was no Christ in your sermon."

"No," answered the young man, "because I did not see that Christ was in the text."

"Oh!" said the old minister, "but do you not know that from every little town and village and tiny hamlet in England there is a road leading to London? Whenever I get hold of a text, I say to myself, 'There is a road from here to Jesus Christ, and I mean to keep on His track till I get to Him.'"

"Well," said the young man, "but suppose you are preaching from a text that says nothing about Jesus Christ?"

"Then I will go over hedge and ditch but what I will get at Him."

"So must we do, brethren," said Mr. Spurgeon, addressing the students, "we must have Christ in all our discourses. There ought to be enough gospel in every sermon to save a soul. Take care that there is the real gospel in every sermon, whether you are called to preach before Her Majesty the Queen or to a company of charwomen.

"I have heard of a young man asking, when he was going to preach in a certain place, 'What kind of a church is it? What do the people believe? What is their doctrinal view?' I will tell you how to avoid the necessity for such a question: Preach Jesus Christ to them, and if that does not suit their doctrinal views, then preach Christ the next Sunday, and the next, and the next. Those who do not like Jesus Christ must have Him preached to them till they do like Him, for they are the very people who need Him most."

63. Providential Supply In the early days of the Pastors' College, Mr. Spurgeon was not seldom straitened for means of carrying on the work. "Once," he says, "I was reduced to the last pound, when a letter came from a banker in the City, informing me that a lady, whose name I have never been able to discover, had deposited a sum of £200, to be used for the education of young men for the ministry. How did my heart leap for joy! I threw myself then and henceforth upon the bounteous care of the Lord."

64. Prudence versus Faith The first time Mr. Spurgeon preached at New Park Street Chapel, which could seat 1,200 people, scarcely 200 were present, but in a very few weeks the place was filled to overflowing.

One evening the preacher exclaimed, "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, and by faith this wall at the back shall come down, too!" A venerable deacon, who had more prudence than faith, said to the preacher after the sermon, "Let us never hear of that again."

"What do you mean?" said Mr. Spurgeon. "You will hear no more about it, when it is done!" As we all know, the enlarged chapel soon proved too small for the congregation, and they had to go to Exeter Hall, and the Surrey Gardens Music Hall.

65. Reason's Paper Pellets Powerless

Mr. Spurgeon once had a man who sat to hear him almost every Sunday. One day he said to Mr. Spurgeon, "You are my only link with better things, but you are an awful man in my estimation, for you have not the slightest sympathy with me."

"No, I have not," said Mr. S., "or, rather, I have not the least sympathy with your unbelief."

"That makes me cling to you," said the other, "for I fear that I shall always remain as I am; but when I see your calm faith, and perceive how God blesses you in exercising it, and know what you accomplish through the power of that faith, I say to myself, 'Jack, you're a fool!'"

"You are quite right in that verdict," said Mr. Spurgeon, "and the sooner you come to my way of thinking the better, for nobody can be a bigger fool than the man who does not believe in God."

Mr. Spurgeon proceeds: "One of these days I expect to see him converted. There is a continual battle between us, but I never answer one of his arguments. I said to him once, 'If you believe that I am a liar, you are free to think so if you like, but I testify what I do know, and state what I have seen, and tasted, and handled, and felt, and you ought to believe my testimony, for I have no possible object to serve in deceiving you.' That man would have beaten me long ago if I had fired at him with the paper pellets of reason."

66. Rev. James Spurgeon's Jubilee The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon went down to Stambourne to preach on the occasion of the jubilee of his grandfather's pastorate, in 1860 Rev. John Spurgeon and his younger son, Rev. James A. Spurgeon, were there, and many friends from far and near. An extemporized erection of tents and tarpaulins connected with a barn was the place of meeting. In the afternoon Mr. Spurgeon made some allusion to Dr. Binney's book, "How to Make the Best of Both Worlds," and expressed his opinion that no one could serve two masters, or live for more than one world. The spirit of a Congregational minister present was aroused, and he interrupted the preacher. It raised a discussion, but it had no effect on the evening meeting, which was as thronged and as enthusiastic as that of the afternoon.

Years after, the gentleman who interrupted the preacher came to have such an opinion of him, that in a very kind and genial letter he reminded Mr. Spurgeon of the incident, and asked him to preach for him, pressing his request by quoting the old saying about Cranmer, "If you do my Lord of Canterbury an ill turn, he will be your friend all the days of your life."

Mr. Spurgeon was unable, owing to prior engagements, to grant the request, but he said he would right gladly have done so had it been in his power or within the region of the possible. The meetings at Stambourne were such as to be remembered by all present.

67. Richard Knill and C. H. Spurgeon The name of the Rev. Richard Knill has been "a household word" for many years, and his memory will long continue to be precious to thousands at home and abroad. When C. H. Spurgeon was about ten years of age, and was spending a school vacation with his grandfather, Mr. Knill visited Stambourne, and other Congregational churches in that district, as a deputation from the London Missionary Society. He reached Stambourne on a Friday, ready to preach there on the Sunday. He heard the lad read, and commended him. The minister and the boy were evidently drawn to each other. Mr. Knill was always on the look-out for opportunities of doing good. He coveted the souls of men as misers covet gold, and specially laid himself out for the young. An agreement was made with the lad that he would show him over the garden and take him for a walk the next morning before breakfast. There was a tap at the lad's door, and he was soon dressed and in the garden with his new friend, who won his heart by pleasing stories and kind words, and by giving him opportunities to speak and ask questions. The talk was all about Jesus, and the pleasure and blessedness of loving Him. There were prayer and pleading too. Into the great yew tree arbour, cut into the shape of a sugar-loaf, both went, and the soul-winner knelt down, and with his arms around the lad's neck, he poured out his soul for him. The next morning, and the next, witnessed the same instruction and supplication, while on each day the pair were never far apart, nor out of each other's thoughts.

68. "Salvation to the Uttermost." The following incident was communicated to Mr. Spurgeon by one of his elders:—An Englishman was engaged as an engineer in a South American city. He was surrounded with Portuguese, and seldom saw the face of one of his own countrymen. Somehow he heard of an Englishman who had been guilty of murder, and was confined for life in the prison. Being a Christian man he determined to call on him, and speak to him concerning the love of God in Christ to sinners. Having obtained permission, he entered the prison, and commenced at once to speak through the grating to the convict. The man told him that, a few years before, a young Englishman had called upon him in a similar manner, and left behind some English novels, but between the leaves of one of the novels there was a sermon which had been preached in Exeter

Hall by C. H. Spurgeon in 1856. The convict read the sermon. It was upon Salvation to the Uttermost (No. 84), and there was a reference to the notorious William Palmer, then lying under sentence of death. Mr. Spurgeon said Christ could save murderers, and sinners a thousand times worse even. The words entered his heart, and he immediately knelt down in his cell, and cried for pardon. God heard his prayer, and he received an assurance of forgiveness on the spot, and he was still rejoicing that God for Christ's sake had forgiven him. He said he had no hope of liberty in this life, but he rejoiced in the glorious hope set before him in the Gospel.

#### 69. Shams: Mr. Spurgeon's Description of

What multitudes of mahogany-handled drawers there are to be met with in daily life labelled in black on a gold ground, with swelling and mysterious names of precious healing drugs, but, alas! they are handles which do not pull out, or drawers that are full of nothing. What myriads of empty bottles make up your enormous stock, in the universal emporium so largely advertised! What a noble army of canisters filled with air stand marshalled in shining ranks, as if they were fresh from China, and brimming with the fragrant leaf!

Now, in mere business such things may answer well enough, but bring them into your moral dealings, and you shall soon become contemptible.

One smiles at the busy tradesman arranging the shams in his window, but- we are indignant with a man who exhibits unreal virtues and excellences; he thinks that he makes a fair show in the flesh, but when we have found him out once, even what may be genuine in him is subjected to suspicion, and the man's honour is hopelessly gone.

#### 70. Sick, Literally Sick

"I remember," says Mr. Spurgeon, "the answer I received when I once said to my venerable grandfather, 'Never have I to preach but I feel terribly sick—literally sick, I mean—so that I might as well be crossing the Channel,' and I asked the dear old man whether he thought I should ever get over that feeling. His answer was, 'Your power will be gone if you do.' So, my brethren," said he, addressing a body of his students, "when it is not so much that you have got hold of your subject, but that it has got hold of you, and you feel its grip with a terrible reality yourself, that is the kind of a sermon that is most likely to make others feel. If you are not impressed with it yourself, you cannot expect to impress others with it."



## 8. Anecdotes 71-80

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### Spurgeon's Anecdotes #71-80 71. Singing in the Colosseum in Rome

During one of Mr. Spurgeon's visits to Italy, he and some friends were resting in the Colosseum in Rome. They were cheerful and happy, and broke out into song. The verses they sang begin—

"Jesu's tremendous name Puts all our foes to flight, Jesus, the meek, the angry Lamb, A Lion is in fight."

Attracted by the singing, two strangers approached them.

"May we join you?" said they. "What are you singing?"

They told them, and together they sang the next verse:—

"By all hell's host withstood;

We all hell's host o'erthrow; And conquering them, through Jesu's blood, We still to conquer go."

This song of holy triumph brought the entire company into harmony, and a pleasant interchange of Christian fellowship followed. One of the strangers was an English clergyman, and the other an American minister.

### 72. Sin not Dead

"A cat once sprang at my lips," says Mr. Spurgeon, "and bit me savagely. My friend, in whose house it occurred, decreed that the poor creature should die. The sentence he executed personally, to the best of his ability, and threw the carcass away. To his surprise, the cat walked into the house the next day." Believers who have vowed death to evil propensity, and have fondly dreamed that the sentence was fulfilled, have afterwards found the sinful tendency still surviving.

73. Sliding Down the Banisters of the Pulpit A story is told of Mr. Spurgeon which, like many of the tales told about him, is a story in two senses.

It is said that, in order to show the way in which men backslide, he once slid down the banisters of the pulpit. There have not been wanting persons who solemnly avowed that they saw him do it. The fact is that there were no stairs to the pulpit at New Park Street at that time visible in the chapel, the pulpit being entered through the wall at the back. "So that," as Mr. Spurgeon himself says, "the reverend fool (which he would have been if he had done what people said) could not have performed the antic, if he had been inclined to attempt it."

### 74. Soul Comforting a Holy Art

Mr. Spurgeon tells a story of an aged Christian woman who had loved and served the Lord for fifty years or more. Somehow, partly owing, no doubt, to physical causes, she fell into a state of melancholy and deep distress, from which no one could rouse her. He called several times to see

her, and endeavoured to cheer her up, but generally when he left she was worse than before. The next time he called upon her he did not say anything to her about Christ or religion. She soon introduced those subjects herself. He remarked that he was not going to talk to her about such holy things, as she did not know anything about them, for she was not a believer in Christ, and had been, no doubt, a hypocrite for many years.

She could not stand that, and asserted, in self-defence, that the Lord above knew her better than he did, and He was her witness that she did love the Lord Jesus Christ. She hardly forgave herself afterwards for admitting so much in her favour, but she could never talk to him so despairingly as before.

"True lovers of men's souls," Mr. Spurgeon adds, "must learn the art of dealing with them, when the Holy Spirit will make them expert soul-surgeons for Jesus. It is not because a man has more abilities, nor altogether because he has more grace, but the Lord makes him to love the souls of men intensely, and this imparts a secret skill, since, for the most part, the way to get sinners to Christ is to love them to Christ."

#### 75. Spurgeon, C. H., and D. L. Moody

Mr. Spurgeon's jubilee was celebrated at the Tabernacle, 18th and 19th June, 1884. The first speaker on the 18th was Mr. D. L. Moody. In referring to his wonderful evangelistic mission work in England, Mr. Spurgeon made a free quotation of the Scotch song, "Bonnie Prince Charlie":—

"Bonnie Moody's gain' awa', Will he no come back again?

Better loved ye canna be, Will he no come back again?"

In the course of his speech Mr. Moody referred to a former visit to England, paid by him in 1867, and said that on that occasion the first building he entered was the Metropolitan Tabernacle. "I was told," said he, "that I could not get in without a ticket, but I made up my mind to get in somehow, and I succeeded. I well remember seating myself in this gallery. I remember the very seat, and I should like to take it back to America with me. As your pastor walked down to the platform my eyes just feasted on him, and my heart's desire for years was at last accomplished. It happened to be the year he preached in the Agricultural Hall. I followed him up there, and he sent me back to America a better man. Then I went to try to preach myself, though at the time I little thought I should be able to do so."

#### 76. Spurgeon, C. H., and Dr. Livingstone

While Mr. Spurgeon continued his services in the Surrey Gardens Music Hall, many of England's nobility attended his ministry. Perhaps they would not have entered a chapel for public worship. As noble as any of them was a man who sprang from the people, and who had won honours far beyond coronets as a pioneer missionary and discoverer—Dr. Livingstone. On the occasion of one of his visits a scene of touching beauty and pathos was witnessed. On the platform, near the pulpit, the late Dr. Armitage, of New York, was sitting, and still nearer the pulpit the apostolic Dr. Livingstone. The sermon was one of great power, full of earnest appeals and heart-searching utterances, which had produced tears in many eyes during its delivery. Immediately the sermon was over, Dr. Livingstone's presence was announced to Mr. Spurgeon. As Dr. Livingstone approached, Dr. Armitage came forward to offer his congratulations and to shake hands with the

preacher. Mr. Spurgeon withdrew his own hand, remarking pleasantly to the American divine, "No, shake hands first with Dr. Livingstone; he is the worthier man." The congratulations of the African explorer and the New York Baptist pastor were given with manifest sincerity, Mr. Spurgeon bearing these with that simple, unaffected modesty which was so characteristic of the man. During the brief conversation which followed, Dr. Livingstone remarked that no religious service he ever remembered had so deeply impressed his own mind as that he had witnessed and participated in that morning. He added that when he had retired again to the solitudes of Africa, no scene he had ever witnessed would afford him more consolation than the recollection of the man God had raised up who could so effectively and impressively preach to congregated thousands, whilst he should have to content himself by preaching to units, or, at most, tens, under a tropical sky in Africa.

#### 77. Spurgeon, C. H., and George Muller

During one of his visits to Mentone Mr. Spurgeon had an opportunity of listening to the preaching of Mr. Muller. "It was," says he, "just such an address as might be given to a Sunday-school by an ordinary teacher, yet I never heard a sermon that did me more good and more richly profited my soul." "How was it that it was so powerful?" "Well," says Mr. Spurgeon, "it was George Muller in it that made it so useful. There was no George Muller in it in one sense, for he preached not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord; he was not only there in his personality as a witness to the truth, but he bore that witness in such a manner that you could not help saying, 'That man not only preaches what he believes, but also what he lives.' In every word he uttered his glorious life of faith seemed to fall upon both ear and heart. I was delighted to sit and listen to him; yet, as for novelty or strength of thought, there was not a trace of it in the whole discourse."

"What, then, was its special power?" "Holiness was the preacher's force; and if God is to bless us, our strength must lie in the same direction."

#### 78. Spurgeon, C. H., and John B. Gough

Mr. Gough greatly admired and loved Mr. Spurgeon, and the attachment was mutual. One Saturday Mr. Spurgeon took Mr. Gough to visit the Orphanage at Stockwell.

"When we entered the grounds," says Mr. G., "the boys set up a shout of joy at the sight of their benefactor."

"What are the requirements for admission?" asked Mr. Gough.

"Utter destitution. There is nothing denominational. We have more of the Church of England children than of the Baptists. We have Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists—all sorts."

After the boys had gone through their gymnastic exercises and musical drill, Mr. Gough spoke a few words to them. Mr. Spurgeon was like a great boy among boys.

"There are two hundred and forty boys—only think!"

"How many pence are there in a shilling?" he asked.

"Twelve."

"Right! How many shillings in a pound?"

"Twenty."

"Right, again. Twelve times twenty, how many?"

"Two hundred and forty."

"That's a penny apiece for each boy."

"Here, Mr. Charlesworth,"—handing him a sovereign—"give these boys a penny apiece." A loud and shrill hurrah was given as Mr. Spurgeon turned away with an expression of keen enjoyment.

79. Spurgeon, C. H., and the Orphan Boy Mr. Spurgeon afterwards invited Mr. Gough to go with him to the infirmary.

"We have a boy," said he, "very ill with consumption; he cannot live, and I wish to see him, for he would be disappointed if he knew I had been here and not seen him."

They went into the cool and sweet chamber, and there lay the boy. He was very much excited when he saw Mr. Spurgeon. The great preacher sat by his side. Holding the boy's hand in his, he said, "Well, my dear, you have some precious promises in sight all around the room. Now, dear, you are going to die, and you are very tired lying here, and soon you will be free from all pain, and you will rest. Nurse, did he rest last night?"

"He coughed very much."

"Ah, my dear boy, it seems very hard for you to lie here all day in pain, and cough all night. Do you love Jesus?"

"Yes, sir."

"Jesus loves you. He bought you with His precious blood, and He knows what is best for you. It seems hard for you to lie here, and listen to the shouts of the healthy boys at play. But soon Jesus will take you home, and then He will tell you the reason, and you will be so glad."

Then, laying his hand on the boy, without the formality of kneeling, he said: "O Jesus, Master, this dear child is reaching out his thin hand to find Thine. Touch him, dear Saviour, with Thy loving, warm clasp. Lift him as he passes the cold river, that his feet be not chilled by the water of death; take him home in Thine own good time. Comfort and cherish him till that good time comes. Show him Thyself as he lies here, and let him see Thee and know Thee more and more as his loving Saviour."

After a moment's pause he said: "Now, dear, is there anything you would like? Would you like a little canary in a cage, to hear him sing in the morning? Nurse, see that he has a canary tomorrow morning. Good-bye, my dear; you will see the Saviour perhaps before I shall."

Mr. Gough adds: "I have seen Mr. Spurgeon holding by his power sixty-five hundred persons in a breathless interest. I knew him as a great man universally esteemed and beloved, but as he sat by the bedside of a dying pauper child, whom his beneficence had rescued, he was to me a greater and a grander man than when swaying the mighty multitude at his will."

80. Sugared Bread and Butter When Mr. Spurgeon's grandfather was minister of Stambourne Meeting, Rev. Mr. Hopkins was rector of the parish. The two good men were fast friends. They preached the same Gospel, though they differed in some of their principles. At times the leading resident went to church in the morning, and to chapel in the afternoon. The Bible Society held its meetings alternately in connection with the church and the meeting-house.

"When I was a boy," says Mr. Spurgeon, "I have, on Monday, gone to the Squire's to tea, with Mr. Hopkins and my grandfather. The glory of that tea-party was that we four, the three old gentlemen and the little boy, all ate sugared bread and butter together for a treat. The sugar was very brown, but the young boy was very pleased, and the old boys were merry also." The harmony between the two ministers of Christ at Stambourne, and their mutual esteem, grew as they increased in years. As Mr. Hopkins had more of the meat, and Mr. Spurgeon more of the mouths, the rector did not forget to help his friend in divers quiet ways, such as a five-pound note for a sick daughter to go to the seaside, and presents of comforts in illness. On one occasion, it is said, that having a large joint of beef on the rectory table, the clergyman cut it in halves, and sent his man on horseback with one half of it to the Independent minister, while it was yet hot—a kind of joke not often practised between Established and Dissenting ministers.

Such cases are doubtless too few, but the present writer could tell similar tales of a godly vicar not many years deceased.

Mr. C. H. Spurgeon reports that this kindly feeling has been continued by the present rector, R. D. Rice Jones, who sent him, in conjunction with his wife, a hearty invitation to stay with them at the rectory, and to search the old registers of Stambourne Church. To love as brethren is certainly one indubitable mark of the true and faithful ministers of Jesus Christ.

## 9. Anecdotes 81-90

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### Spurgeon's Anecdotes #81-90 81. The Art of Soul-winning

Mr. Spurgeon once illustrated his discourse on soul-winning, or being "fishers of men," by an incident related by Washington Irving. Some three gentlemen, who had read in Izaak Walton a good deal about the delights of fishing, resolved to make trial of the pleasures of "the gentle art." They went into New York, and bought the best rods and lines that could be purchased, and also such flies as were suited to every particular day of the season, expecting the fish to bite at once, and their basket soon to be filled with fish that might think it an honour to be caught by such fishers and such tackle. They fished, and fished, and fished the live-long day, but their basket was still empty. They were discouraged and almost disgusted with a sport that was fruitless.

Presently there came down from the hills a ragged boy, without either shoes or stockings. His success quite humiliated them. He had a bit of a bough pulled off a tree, a piece of string, and a bent pin. He put a worm on the pin-hook, threw it in, and out came a fish directly, as if by magic, or as a needle is drawn to a magnet. In again went the line, and out came another fish, and he repeated the process until his basket was quite full. They asked him how he did it. "Ah," he said, "I cannot tell you that, but it is easy enough when you have the way of it."

"Much the same is it in fishing for men," says Mr. Spurgeon. "Some preachers who have silk lines and fine rods preach very eloquently, and exceeding gracefully, but they never win souls."

82. The Bottomless Pit In 1844, when the future great preacher was but ten years old, during a school vacation which he spent at Stambourne with his grandfather, he was allowed to read the Scriptures at family worship. Once, when reading Revelation 20, the words, "The bottomless pit," arrested his attention. He paused and said, "Grandpa, what does this mean?"

"Pooh, pooh," said the good man, "go on, child." This was not a satisfactory answer, and he meant to have one; so he selected the same chapter, morning after morning, Sunday included, and always paused at the same place to repeat his inquiry. At length his venerable grandsire capitulated, and said, "Well, dear, what is it that troubles you?" The boy had often seen fruit-baskets with bottoms, which in course of wear became bottomless, and allowed the fruit placed therein to fall out upon the ground. Here was the puzzle: If the pit was bottomless, where would all the people go who had fallen through the bottom? This puzzle rather disturbed the proprieties of family worship, and had to be laid aside for explanation at a more convenient season.

### 83. The Cabman's Testament

Hailing a cab one day, to be driven home, when Mr. Spurgeon paid his fare, the man said, "It is a long time since I drove you last, sir."

"Did you ever drive me before?" asked Mr. Spurgeon, "I do not recollect you."

"Oh, yes," said the man; "it is about fourteen years ago, but if you have forgotten me, perhaps you will remember this," and as he spoke he pulled out a Testament from his pocket.

"What," said Mr. Spurgeon, "did I give you that?"

"Yes, sir, and you spoke to me about my soul, and nobody had ever done that before. I have never forgotten it."

"And haven't you worn the Testament out in all these years?"

"No, sir; I wouldn't let it be worn out. I have had it new bound."

#### 84. The Dog in Mr. Spurgeon's Garden

Mr. Spurgeon told, with very considerable effect, in a sermon in the Tabernacle, an incident that occurred in his own garden. There was a dog which was in the habit of coming through the fence and scratching in his flower-beds, to the manifest spoiling of the gardener's toil and temper. Walking in the garden, one Saturday afternoon, and preparing his sermon for the following day, he saw the four-footed creature—rather a scurvy specimen, by-the-by—and having a walking stick in his hand, he threw it at him with all his might, giving him some good advice about going home.

"Now, what should my canine friend do but turn round, pick up the stick in his mouth, and bring it and lay it down at my feet, wagging his tail all the while in expectation of my thanks and kind words? Of course, you do not suppose that I kicked him, or threw the stick at him any more. I felt quite ashamed of myself, and I told him that he was welcome to stay as long as he liked, and to come as often as he pleased. There was an instance of the power of non-resistance, submission, patience, and trust in overcoming even righteous anger."

Mr. Spurgeon added that he did not feel he had at all degraded himself by telling the story.

85. The Housemaid The Earl of Shaftesbury and Mr. Spurgeon were very great friends. They cherished a mutual admiration and esteem, and a strong affection for each other. The good Earl was a not infrequent visitor at "Westwood." He took a deep interest in all that pertained to the temporal and spiritual interests of the lower classes, and he worked hard in the interests of the costers and their donkeys. Someone said to him, one day, "I shall never look on a donkey again without thinking of your lordship," of course intending it as a compliment, without seeing its ludicrousness.

He told Mr. Spurgeon that his housemaid had given notice to leave. He could not understand why. When, however, she was pressed for a reason, she said she did not like being personally alluded to at family prayer. His lordship was more bewildered than before. He had never made any personal allusion to the housemaid that he knew of, but he thought he would look over the prayers that he was in the habit of reading. A probable solution offered itself, which proved to be the explanation of the matter. He found that he had prayed for all things that Thou hast made, and the young woman thought he said "The housemaid"

#### 86. The Large Heart of Soul-winners

"I have noticed," says Mr. Spurgeon, "that men succeed in the ministry, and win souls for Christ, in proportion as they are men with large hearts. I think, for instance, of Dr. Brock; there was a mass

of a man, one who had bowels of compassion; and what is the good of a minister who has not? I do not hold up the accumulation of flesh as an object worthy of your attainment, but I do say that you must have big hearts if you are to win men to Jesus; you must be Greathearts if you are to lead many pilgrims to the Celestial City.

"I have seen some very lean men," Mr. Spurgeon added, "who said they were perfectly holy, and I could almost believe that they could not sin, for there did not appear to be anything in them that was capable of sinning. They were like old bits of leather. I met one of these 'perfect' brethren once, and he was just like a piece of sea-weed; there was no humanity in him. I like to see a trace of humanity somewhere or other about a man, and people in general like it, too; they get on better with a man who has some human nature in him. Human nature, in some aspects, is an awful thing, but when the Lord Jesus Christ took it, and joined His own Divine nature to it, He made a grand thing of it; and human nature is a grand thing when united to the Lord Jesus Christ."

87. The Prime Minister of England A distinguished American minister, speaking one day at the Tabernacle, related a story of an examination at one of the schools. Among other questions he asked was, "Who is the Prime Minister of Great Britain?" A boy held up his hand and replied, "Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, sir." He had no doubt heard of Gladstone, Beaconsfield, and Salisbury, political Prime Ministers, but he looked at the matter in a higher light—that of Gospel Prime Ministers. The boy was right.

#### 88. The Pulpit the Thermopylae of Protestantism

"The pulpit is the Thermopylae of Protestantism," says Mr. Spurgeon, "the tower of the flock, the Palladium of the Church of God. Well might Paul magnify his office." "Let Glasgow flourish by the preaching of the Word," is the motto of that city.

Clemens Brentano, a literary acquaintance of Dr. Krummacher, and a Romanist, once said to the doctor, "Till you Protestants pull down the chatter-box" (he meant the pulpit), "or, at least, throw it into the corner, where it ought to be, there is no hope of you," Dr. Krummacher replied, "It is true, indeed, that our pulpits stand greatly in the way of you Catholics."

#### 89. The Unkindest Cut of All

Faithful and earnest ministers of Christ are greatly honoured, but they are not seldom sorely wounded. After having brought many to Jesus, and things have gone well in the church, it has sometimes happened that, in their declining years, changing modes and fashions have thrown the good men into the shade, and their spiritual children have lifted up the heel against them. Even Mr. Spurgeon was not a stranger to this. "The pang," says he, "is not unknown to me. I can never forget a certain household, in which the Lord gave me great joy in bringing four employers and several persons engaged by them to Jesus' feet. Snatched from the utmost carelessness of worldliness, those who had previously known nothing of the grace of God were joyful confessors of the faith. After a while they imbibed certain opinions differing from ours, and from that moment some of them had nothing but hard words for me and my preaching. I had done my best to teach them all the truths I knew, and if they had found out more than I had discovered, they might at least have remembered where they learned the elements of the faith. It is years ago, and I have forborne to speak of it, but I feel the wound much. I merely mention these sharp pricks to show how very sweet it is to have those about you whom you have brought to the Saviour." This is an



old experience; the apostle Paul knew it in connection with the churches in Corinth and Galatia. It is a sad thing when pride and conceit override the lovely graces of humility, brotherly love, Christian meekness, and other fruits of the Spirit.

90. "Thou art the man."

About 1858, or 1859, Mr. Spurgeon preached two sermons at the Baptist Chapel, Matfield Green, Brenchley, near Tunbridge Wells. At that time there was no other Baptist chapel nearer than Seven-oaks and Maidstone where he would have been permitted to preach. There was a very large attendance. People began to arrive for the afternoon service soon after eleven. The large windows right and left of the pulpit were taken out, and a temporary erection put up behind. The vicar of the parish lent all the movable seats in his church for use at the chapel, and sent a good sum to the collection. The text in the afternoon was John 6:37 : "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." Some of the hearers took in readily the first part of the discourse, but objected to the latter part; while some, better taught, gladly received both. The evening text was 2 Samuel 12:7 : "Thou art the man." Various characters were described, good and bad, and the text was brought to bear on each one, while the eye of the preacher was directed and his finger pointed here and there as he felt led. In the auditory was an artist, a man of sceptical opinions, and as he sat in front of the pulpit he was visible to all. After a description of the vain-glorious fool who says in his heart, "There is no God," Mr. Spurgeon looked right at this man and pointed to him as he repeated his text, "Thou art the man." Mr. Spurgeon knew scarcely any of the congregation, and certainly not this man; but the poor fellow was much annoyed that he should have been made the butt of one of the preacher's shafts. It would have been a mercy if, like David, he had been humbled under the mighty hand of God, so as to seek and find forgiveness.

## 10. Anecdotes 91-100

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Spurgeon's Anecdotes #91-100 91. Too Much of a Calf A certain American, a D.D., in an interview with Mr. Spurgeon, told him that he was going to Germany to study. "Haven't you any theological seminaries in America?" asked Mr. S. "Yes," said the doctor, "but I don't think I know everything, though I graduated at Princeton, and I am going to Germany to try and learn more." "Well," said Mr. Spurgeon, "I hope you will not be like the calf I once heard of. The milk of one cow was not enough for it, so they gave it the milk of two, and the more milk it drank the more of a calf it became."

### 92. True Religion no Joking Matter

Mr. Spurgeon loved true mirthfulness, and was an advocate for cheerfulness in a preacher. He loved a good joke, and sometimes made them, but he observed the Scriptural rule: "To everything there is a season." He tells of a man who was dying, and sent for the minister to visit him. When the minister came in, the dying man said to him, "Do you remember a young man walking with you one evening, some years ago, when you were going to preach?"

"No; I do not."

"I recollect it very well," said the sick man. "Do you not remember preaching at such and such a village, from such and such a text, and after the service a young man walked home with you?"

"Oh, yes, I remember that very well."

"Well, I am the young man who walked home with you that night; I remember your sermon; I shall never forget it."

"Thank God for that," said the preacher.

"No," answered the dying man, "you will not thank God when you have heard all I have to say. I walked with you to the village, but you did not say much to me on the way there, for you were thinking over your sermon. You deeply impressed me while you were preaching, and I was led to think about giving my heart to Christ. I wanted to speak to you about my soul on the way home; but the moment you got out you cracked a joke, and all the way back you made such fun upon serious subjects that I could not say anything about what I felt, and it thoroughly disgusted me with religion and all who professed it; and now I am going to hell, and my blood will lie at your door as sure as you are alive." And so he passed out of the world.

93. Two Hearts A girl having applied to Mr. Spurgeon to become a member of the church, he very properly asked her some testing questions.

"Have you a good heart?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir," she replied.

"Have you thought over that question?" said he. "Have not you an evil heart?"

"Oh, yes," was her answer.

"Well," said he, "how do your two answers agree?"

"Why," responded the girl, "I know that I have a good heart, because God has given me a new heart; and I also know that I have an evil heart, for I often find it fighting against my new heart."

"The girl was right," says Mr. Spurgeon.

94. Verses in a Tradesman's Window In 1854, when Mr. Spurgeon had been in London scarcely twelve months, the neighbourhood in which he laboured was visited by Asiatic cholera, and his congregation suffered from its inroads. Family after family summoned him to the bedside of the smitten, and almost every day he was called to visit the grave. He gave himself up with youthful ardour to the visitation of the sick, and was sent for from all corners of the district by persons of all ranks and religions. He became weary in body and sick at heart. His friends seemed falling one by one, and he felt, or fancied, that he was sickening like those around him. A little more work and weeping would have laid him low among the rest. He felt that his burden was heavier than he could bear, and he was ready to sink under it. But one day, as God would have it, when returning mournfully home from a funeral, curiosity led him to read a paper which was wafered up in a shoemaker's window in the Dover Road. It did not look like a trade announcement, nor was it, for it bore in a good, bold hand, these words: "Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my Refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." The effect on him was immediate. Faith appropriated the passage as her own. He felt secured, refreshed, and girt with immortality. He went on with his visitation of the dying in a calm and peaceful spirit; he felt no fear of evil, and he suffered no harm. The providence which moved the tradesman to place those verses in his window, he gratefully acknowledged, and in the remembrance of their marvellous power he adored the Lord his God.

95. "What the Young Usher has to Say."

While at Newmarket Mr. Spurgeon consented to give an address on missions at a public Sunday-school examination. In the audience was a clergyman. During the examination he heard of the death of his gardener, and at once left for home; but while on his way he began to reason with himself thus:—"The gardener is dead; I cannot restore him to life; I will return and hear what the young usher has to say on missions." He heard the address, and showed his approval by presenting the young speaker with a sovereign.

96. Where could the Child be?

Outside Stambourne Meeting there was a horseblock, for the convenience of lady riders. When the large lime trees shed their leaves in autumn, the old chapel-keeper would sweep them up and ram them into the horseblock. Sometimes the child C. H. was lost. His guardian angels knew where he was, but no one else.

"But, Charles," said his dear old Aunt Ann, one day in recent years, "where did you get to when you were such a little child? We used to look for you everywhere, but we never found you till you came walking in by yourself."

"The horseblock was the usual haunt when there were leaves, and an old tomb would serve at other times."

97. Who Opened his Mouth? A man once wrote to Mr. Spurgeon to ask him whether he ought to preach or not. As he did not know enough of the man to give him a definite answer, he replied to this effect:—"If the Lord has opened your mouth, the devil cannot shut it; but if the devil has opened it, may the Lord shut it up."

Six months afterwards he met the man, and he thanked him for his letter, which, he said, greatly encouraged him to go on in preaching.

"How is that?" said Mr. Spurgeon.

"Why, you said, 'If the Lord has opened your mouth, the devil cannot shut it.'"

"Yes, I did say so; but I also put the other side of the question."

"Oh!" said he at once, "that part did not relate to me."

98. "With Great Discretion."

Mr. Spurgeon once met a High Churchman, who told him that he had purchased Feathers for Arrows. Said he, "Some of the illustrations are very telling; but they have to be used with great discretion." His words seemed to imply that the expressions were possibly a little too strong, and perhaps somewhat rough and unpolished here and there.

"Well," said Mr. Spurgeon, "that is how I wrote them."

"He looked at me," says Mr. S., "but he said nothing; probably it had never occurred to him that the same kind of discretion was necessary in making the illustrations as in using them."

99. Woman's, A Persistent, Liberality

Mr. Spurgeon had been preaching in a country village, and a good woman gave him five shillings. He said to her, "I do not want your money."

"But you must take it," she said; "I give it to you because I get good from you."

"Shall I give it to the College?" said Mr. S.

"I don't care about the College. I care about you."

"Then I will give it to the Orphanage."

"No; you take it yourself."

"But you want it more than I do."

"Now," she said, "do you think that your Lord and Master would have talked like that to the woman who came and broke the alabaster box over Him? I do not think He would. I know you do not mean to be unkind. I worked extra to earn it, and I give it to you."

He told her that she owed him nothing, and that that woman owed the Lord everything. He asked again, "What am I to do with it?"

"Buy anything you like with it. Only, mind, you must have it for yourself."

#### 100. Zacchaeus

Mr. Spurgeon sometimes sought to draw out the ability of his students as extempore speakers by passing round several slips of paper, each having a subject written on it. Each man took a paper, and was expected to speak impromptu on the subject named. One man drew the subject Zacchaeus. He at once rose and spoke to this effect:—"My subject is Zacchaeus, about which allow me to say:

"First, Zacchaeus was a man of small stature; so am I.

"Second, Zacchaeus was very much up a tree; so am I.

"Third, Zacchaeus made haste and came down; so will I," and at once resumed his seat. "Go on," shouted the brethren, "go on." "No," said Mr. Spurgeon, "he could not improve upon that if he tried ever so much."

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