

Dedication

'To the one God of heaven and earth in the Trinity of his sacred persons be all honour and glory, world without end, amen. To the glorious Father, as the covenant God of Israel; to the gracious Son, the redeemer of his people; to the Holy Ghost, the author of sanctification; be everlasting praise for that gospel of the free grace of God.'

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CHARLES Spurgeon's published sermons undoubtedly constitute the largest body of significant literature from the mind of a single author in the history of publishing. It is a legacy that will almost surely never be surpassed. Comprising an estimated 25 million words, the 3,563 sermons of the *New Park Street Pulpit* and *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* volumes contain more content than the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

The *New Park Street* and *Metropolitan Tabernacle* collections were originally published between 1855 (when Spurgeon was just 20 years old) and 1917 (when paper shortages caused by World War I made printing sermons prohibitively expensive). Individual messages were produced and printed at the rate of one per week without fail for all those years. Known as *Penny Pulpit* sermons, they were collected each 31 December and bound into annual volumes. All but the final book contained at least fifty-two messages. Some years there were more, depending on the number of Sundays on the calendar, with bonus messages here and there for special occasions.

Spurgeon was such a prolific preacher that when he died in 1892, existing transcripts of his unpublished sermons roughly equaled the 2,241 sermons then in print. So Passmore & Alabaster (Spurgeon's primary publishers from the start of his ministry) announced their intention to continue the weekly production of his messages indefinitely—for as long as readers demanded them. The company stayed at that task until forced by difficult economic circumstances to interrupt the process some 25 years later.

The complete set (sixty-three volumes in all) has heretofore been the definitive collection of Spurgeon sermons. Every other significant compilation of Spurgeon's preaching was drawn and adapted from those *Penny Pulpit* sermons that were painstakingly prepared and produced each week for all those years. The full set is a vast treasure—more sermons than the average person could possibly read and digest thoughtfully in a lifetime. They are consistently meaty, eloquent, thought-provoking, heartfelt, evangelistic, and very convicting. The complete collection is also remarkable for its amazing breadth and depth—especially considering the busy schedule Charles Spurgeon kept. He rarely reused his outlines or preached the same sermon twice, even on those fairly rare occasions where

he dealt with the same text more than once. It is simply amazing to realize that those sixty-three volumes have maintained readers' keen interest for all these years. Complete sets are still being produced in America, and they are selling steadily more than a century since Spurgeon's death. Most of Spurgeon's sermons are also available freely in various forms on the Internet, and online users are constantly demanding more.

All of that sets Spurgeon's importance as a preacher in perspective. By any measure, his published sermons stand virtually uncontested as not only one of the greatest achievements in the history of *publishing*, but also the most important and influential anthology of sermons in the history of *preaching*.

Nevertheless, those sixty-three thickset volumes are by no means an exhaustive record of Spurgeon's amazing preaching ministry. By most accounts, he delivered seven or eight sermons each week throughout most of his ministry. Only half to two thirds of those messages were even recorded with an eye toward publication.

Simply recording Spurgeon's messages was a labor-intensive process in those days before electronic sound-capture was commonplace. Spurgeon spoke extemporaneously, without the use of a manuscript. (He normally took only half a used envelope or a similar scrap of paper into the pulpit with him, containing just a handwritten, bare-bones outline.) Two or three stenographers would record his words as he spoke. Their transcriptions would be compared and combined, insuring that very few words were missed. Then either Spurgeon himself (usually), his trusted secretary (especially in later years), or another qualified editor (beginning around the turn of the century) would edit the transcript for publication. I own several pages of edited transcripts with emendations scrawled into the margins by Spurgeon's own distinctive hand, and he was a meticulous editor. (It is some consolation to me as a rather halting preacher to see that some of the stunning eloquence of the published sermons was added during the editorial process. All that genius wasn't straight off the top of Spurgeon's head when he preached—though *much* of it was.) The task of editing and proofreading sermons was a massive one, and the stress of so many relentless deadlines no doubt complicated Spurgeon's frequent health problems. It may well have hastened his death.

Yet he persevered, firmly believing that the sermons would live and bear fruit long after the preacher himself was gone. He was certainly right about that, but he most likely did not imagine the half of it. He could hardly have envisioned that the influence of his preaching would be as profound and as far-reaching as it still is today, so many years after his audible voice was silenced.

When the *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* series was abruptly halted by the Great War, supplies of unpublished sermons were diminishing but not yet completely depleted. That final volume was a short one, containing only nineteen sermons, fewer than half the standard number. More than enough sermons to complete that volume were nearly ready for publication, and (I'm told) dozens of others exist which have still not yet seen the light of day. But after the war, publishers never seemed to regain the vision for such thick books of sermons. Twentieth-century preachers were already leaning toward a lighter preaching style, with more illustrations and less doctrinal content.

The fact that so many of Spurgeon's messages have remained unpublished long after any paper shortage hindered the work is a decades-long travesty, and I'm thrilled Terence Crosby and DayOne are beginning to remedy it. The volume you hold in your hands is the first full-length supplement to *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* since my great grandfather's era, and I am delighted to have it finally for my shelves.

I first met Terence Crosby years ago when he was Secretary of the Evangelical Library in London. I renewed my acquaintance with him about two years ago during some meetings at Trinity Road Chapel in Upper Tooting, within a short walk of where Spurgeon once lived. Dr Crosby is a precise and conscientious scholar; he is a gifted writer and skilled editor; and I have little doubt that Spurgeon himself would be overjoyed with the way these sermons have been prepared for publication.

Years ago a student just entering seminary visited my office and noticed that two large shelves behind my desk are filled with the *New Park Street* and *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* collections, which he had never before seen in their entirety. He was fascinated by the set. Thumbing through a random volume, he observed out loud what almost everyone nowadays would notice first of all: by today's standards the books are very

thick, the type quite small, and the paragraphs surprisingly long. (Judging a book by its cover, a casual first-time observer frankly might not find Spurgeon very inviting.) The student looked up from the book he was holding and asked whether I had read every sermon in all sixty-three volumes. I told him I had not (still haven't) and that reading Spurgeon is a pleasure I expect to savor with care and patience, sermon by sermon, for the rest of my life.

'Why do you have all the volumes, then?' he asked. 'Why not read the chapters one at a time and wait to purchase a new book until you reach the end of the previous one?'

I explained that I don't read Spurgeon chronologically. I select sermons to read based on whatever passage of Scripture I am studying at any given time. (I wouldn't think of preaching on a passage until I've seen what Spurgeon had to say about it.) I find Spurgeon best feeds my soul that way; when I'm already immersed in a passage of Scripture, his messages on that particular text are most meaningful. He almost never fails to shine a bright light into some dark corner of the text, showing me things I would not have seen otherwise.

That's why I'm so thrilled to have this complete new volume of never-before reprinted material from the Prince of Preachers.

These sermons will surely take their place right alongside the earlier works. The 'definitive collection' is no longer complete or truly definitive without them. My prayer is that they'll help awaken new appetites for Spurgeon's preaching. May they influence the current generation of preachers to be more bold and more biblical in their content. May the *next* generation of preachers gain from them a better vision of what makes preaching truly 'relevant'. And may our grandchildren and all subsequent generations continue to benefit from them as so many of us have.

PHIL JOHNSON

THE 63 volumes and 3563 sermons of Spurgeon's *New Park Street* and *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpits* were a remarkable achievement, as has been their reprinting by Pilgrim Publications. It was only on account of the shortage of paper and metal caused by the First World War that publication ceased on 10 May 1917 (see Lewis Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* (Kregel Publications, 1992), pp. 314, 324; Craig Skinner, *Spurgeon and Son* (Kregel Publications, 1999), p. 224). Many hundreds of sermons were ready and waiting for their weekly publication and notices in the last two sermons (nos 3562–3) indicated that it was the intention to resume publication once peace had been restored. These two sermons were not available for Pilgrim Publications' original reprint of volume 63, but have been incorporated in a recent edition—no.3562 *Peter walking on the sea* (Matthew 14:28–31) and no.3563 *A cheering congratulation* (Psalm 32:1). However, only twenty hitherto unpublished sermons were to appear in 1922 in a volume entitled *Able to the Uttermost*, also now reprinted by Pilgrim Publications. It is the purpose of this volume to bring to light the sermons which probably would have appeared in the remainder of Volume 63 and at the start of Volume 64 of the *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, sermons which originally appeared only in magazine format from 1877 to 1881.

The New Park Street and Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpits

Spurgeon's earliest sermons in print appeared in a weekly *Penny Pulpit* in 1854 and their popularity encouraged him to commence with some trepidation his own *New Park Street Pulpit* weekly from the start of 1855. Initially this was a special edition of the *Penny Pulpit* and sermons carried two numbers, one that of Spurgeon's sermons and the other that of the *Penny Pulpit* itself. The six and a quarter volumes of the *New Park Street Pulpit* employed tiny close type due to the need to avoid heavy paper tax; this was to continue for the rest of volume seven in which the *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* commenced (from no 369). Volume eight (from no. 427) must have been a relief to readers with its larger and clearer print. Other developments were to follow: from no. 588 Spurgeon dropped the title Rev. from his name on the front page; in response to requests his Scripture readings began to appear in 1865, starting with no. 623. In 1868 Spurgeon

dropped his customary preface which had graced the opening pages of the first thirteen volumes; it was never to return. Then in 1873, starting with no. 1116, it became the practice to indicate the numbers of the hymns from *Our Own Hymnbook* which were sung on most of the occasions.

Spurgeon preached his last sermon at the Metropolitan Tabernacle (no. 2208) on the morning of 7 June 1891. From the beginning of 1855 to that point an almost complete run of his Sunday morning sermons had appeared in volumes 1 to 37. Comparatively few of the sermons preached on Sunday evenings, Thursday evenings and other occasions had been identified, since over three hundred of these, published mainly during Spurgeon's frequent illnesses, were published undated. For the rest of 1891, during Spurgeon's long final illness, most of the sermons in the second half of volume 37 consist of sermons he preached on the Sunday evenings and Thursday evenings of 1891.

The posthumous sermons

Spurgeon died on 31 January 1892; volume 38 had hardly begun. The publishers decided to continue as they had started during his illness, by concentrating on his Sunday evening and Thursday evening sermons; as these were somewhat shorter than the morning sermons they began to include his Scripture expositions, starting with no. 2253. Their policy was to work backwards through the years of Spurgeon's ministry. So, with a few exceptions, volume 38 concentrated on 1890, volume 39 on 1889, volume 40 on 1888, volume 41 on 1887, volume 42 on 1886, volume 43 on 1885 and 1884, volume 44 on 1883 and so on. Apart from a major hiccup in volume 53, which includes sermons from thirteen different years, the process continued until volumes 55 and 56 by which time sermons from 1873 had been reached. Thereafter those sermons which were dated in volumes 57 to 63 largely worked forward from 1863 to 1872; volume 58 contains many sermons from 1866.

However, other sources also had an impact upon the posthumous sermons. Spurgeon's sermons had also appeared in other publications, such as the *Penny Pulpit*, the three volumes of his *Pulpit Library*, the *The Sword and the Trowel* and *Farm Sermons*. Volumes 52 to 61 of the *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* contain over sixty sermons which

originally appeared in the *The Sword and the Trowel*, while volumes 46, 50 and 53 to 55 contain a further twenty two which had appeared in the first two volumes of the *Pulpit Library*, the three in volume 50 (1904) having been preached 50 years earlier in 1854. The third volume of the *Pulpit Library* consists of twelve of the first thirteen sermons in *New Park Street Pulpit* volume 4 (i.e. nos. 165–173, 175–177). But the major contributor amongst these was the monthly magazine *The Baptist Messenger*, which was the apparent source of 261 of the sermons in the posthumous volumes, some with new or modified titles.

Spurgeon and *The Baptist Messenger*

‘Soon after I settled in London, the Editor of *The Baptist Messenger*, then recently started, asked me to write some articles for his Magazine, and I wrote a brief Exposition of Psalm lxxxiv. 6, which was published in September 1854, under the title, “The Valley of weeping”. The following month, the next verse furnished me with a sequel, which appeared in the October number under the heading, “Onward and Heavenward”. Month by month, I continued to contribute short meditations to the pages of the Messenger until my other work absorbed all my time and strength, and from then up to the present, one of my sermons has regularly occupied the first page of each issue of the little Magazine.’ So wrote Spurgeon in his Autobiography (see *The Early Years* (London: The Banner of Truth, 1962), p. 393). After 20 years he wrote, ‘In *The Baptist Messenger* a sermon has been inserted every month during the same time, making 240 more; 34 in addition have appeared in three volumes of the *Pulpit Library*’ (see *The Full Harvest* (London: The Banner of Truth, 1973), p. 351).

The Baptist Messenger ran from 1854 to 1899 and included about 550 Spurgeon items; curiously only a few are actually dated. Apart from the aforementioned articles in 1854–5 and a few expositions in 1856 and 1858 nearly all of Spurgeon’s contributions were sermons; as mentioned already 261 of these, all but a few appearing in *The Baptist Messenger* from 1855 to 1877, were reprinted in the posthumous volumes of the *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*. Early in 1881 *The Baptist Messenger* began to reprint sermons which had originally appeared in the *New Park Street Pulpit* and this procedure continued until the last issue in 1899. These are oddly described as

having been preached at the Metropolitan Tabernacle! Two hundred and twenty three *New Park Street Pulpit* sermons were thus reprinted. Between these two sequences there is a substantial gap; nearly all of the sermons in *The Baptist Messenger* from late 1877 to early 1881 are unaccounted for in the *New Park Street* and *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpits*, nor do they appear in *Able to the Uttermost*. They are forgotten sermons!

***The Baptist Messenger* and the posthumous sermons**

Four isolated sermons from *The Baptist Messenger* appeared at the end of volume 41 and at the start of volume 42 (1895–6) of the *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*. Initially, on a more or less monthly basis, volumes 44 to 63 (1898 to 1917) incorporated fairly systematically and chronologically nearly all of the sermons which had appeared in *The Baptist Messenger* from 1855 to 1877. In volumes 44 to 55 a rough attempt was made to date *The Baptist Messenger* sermons for 1856 to 1866 by season and year, according to the year and issue of the magazine in which they had first appeared. While helpful in some cases, this method of dating was not foolproof; no. 2651 was said to have been preached in the autumn of 1857 by virtue of its appearance at the end of the 1857 volume of *The Baptist Messenger*. However, the same sermon also appears in a contemporary document where it is dated 23 September 1855! No. 78 in the *New Park Street Pulpit* was preached on 22 May 1856, but curiously appears at the start of *The Baptist Messenger* for 1859. Due perhaps to the uncertainty of relying on such a rough method of dating, volumes 55 to 63 of the *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* reproduce without any attempt at dating most of the sermons which had appeared in *The Baptist Messenger* between the end of 1865 and the start of 1878.

The Baptist Messenger became an increasingly important source of material for the posthumous volumes of the *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*. Of the 177 sermons in the last four volumes of the *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, no less than 90 (over half) had initially appeared in *The Baptist Messenger* for 1870–1878. Of the final 45 sermons, 31 (two-thirds) were derived from *The Baptist Messengers* from 1875–1878. How exciting it is, therefore, to find in *The Baptist Messengers* for 1877–1881 a further 39 sermons not represented in the *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*!

Posthumous *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* sermons showing original years of publication in *The Baptist Messenger*:

- I855:** 2554, 3105, 3126
I856: 2558, 2562, 2563, 2567, 2572, 2576, 2581, 2585, 2589, 2594, 2602
I857: 2443, 2598, 2607, 2611, 2615, 2616, 2621, 2625, 2629, 2634, 2639, 2642, 2647, 2651
I858: 2656, 2660, 2664, 2668, 2673, 2677, 2681, 2686, 2690, 2695, 2700, 2703, 2707
I859: 2711, 2715, 2720, 2724, 2728, 2733, 2737, 2741, 2746, 2750, 2754
I860: 2759, 2763, 2766, 2772, 2776, 2780, 2785, 2789
I861: 2794, 2798, 2802, 2807, 2811, 2815, 2819, 2823, 2828, 2833, 2841, 2872
I862: 2868, 2880, 2885, 2889, 2894, 2898, 2902, 2911, 2920, 2924, 2929, 2988
I863: 2934, 2938, 2943, 2947, 2952, 2955, 2960, 2963, 2967, 2972, 2974
I864: 2979, 2984, 2992, 2997, 3001, 3005, 3009, 3013, 3018, 3023, 3026
I865: 3030, 3038, 3044, 3050, 3056, 3058, 3062, 3072, 3073, 3079, 3085, 3091
I866: 2444, 3097, 3103, 3110, 3116, 3122, 3131, 3137, 3147, 3151, 3163, 3167
I867: 2450, 3141, 3172, 3179, 3185, 3191, 3197, 3203, 3209, 3215, 3233, 3239
I868: 3245, 3251, 3257, 3263, 3269, 3275, 3281, 3287, 3293, 3299, 3305, 3311
I869: 3317, 3323, 3326, 3338, 3343, 3347, 3352, 3360, 3365, 3368, 3374, 3379
I870: 2448, 3332, 3334, 3385, 3389, 3391, 3395, 3397, 3399, 3404
I871: 3402, 3403, 3406, 3410, 3414, 3418, 3422, 3424, 3426, 3432, 3441, 3445
I872: 3408, 3412, 3416, 3420, 3428, 3430, 3433, 3435, 3438, 3440, 3447, 3448
I873: 3450, 3453, 3455, 3457, 3459, 3461, 3462, 3467, 3469, 3470, 3472, 3480
I874: 3474, 3477, 3482, 3485, 3487, 3491, 3494, 3495, 3497, 3500, 3502, 3505

- 1875: 3508, 3510, 3511, 3514, 3516, 3519, 3520, 3522, 3523, 3524, 3526, 3528
1876: 3529, 3530, 3534, 3537, 3538, 3541, 3542, 3546, 3547, 3552, 3553, 3559
1877: 3532, 3533, 3536, 3543, 3549, 3550, 3555, 3556, 3560, 3561
1878: 3562, 3563 (last two *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* numbers)
1884: 3446

The forgotten sermons

Logic strongly suggests that these 39 sermons would have provided the bulk of the material awaiting publication in volumes 63 and 64 of the *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* when the series came to an abrupt halt in May 1917. Perhaps they would have been interspersed with the 20 sermons which appeared in *Able to the Uttermost* in 1922. The 39 are here reproduced together with a further six sermons from earlier years of *The Baptist Messenger*, omitted for some reason by the publishers of the *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*. Two of the sermons in this volume ('Things to come' and 'Remember Lot's wife') will be seen to duplicate existing titles and texts, but there are already another 18 instances of such duplication to be found in the title index of the *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*! Within the space of eleven sermons *The Baptist Messenger* for 1880 to 1881 has provided us with two sermons entitled 'A call to communion', albeit based on different verses from the Song of Solomon. But these are small matters compared with the importance of finding 45 forgotten sermons, a third of which deal with texts not found elsewhere in Spurgeon's preaching. The extension of the *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* has commenced!

1. Sermons from *The Baptist Messenger* awaiting publication in 1917

1877

p. 281 A blessed competition (Luke 7:42)

p. 309 His manifest love (John 11:36).

1878

- p. 29 Two trenchant addresses (Isaiah 43:6)
- p. 57 Sowing the seed (Matthew 13:3–8)
- p. 85 Sorrowful upbraidings (Galatians 5:7)
- p. 141 A glimpse of the glorified (Revelation 22:3–4)
- p. 169 A notable confidence (Micah 7:7)
- p. 197 The very blessing we crave (Acts 4:31)
- p. 225 Sinning against the light (Job 24:13)
- p. 253 The believer's expectations (Psalm 62:5)
- p. 281 Rest and refreshment (Song of Solomon 1:7)
- p. 309 The great interposer (Numbers 16:48)

1879

- p. 1 The old, old story (Hebrews 7:25)
- p. 29 A watchword for soul-winners (Isaiah 56:8)
- p. 57 Are you invited? (Matthew 22:9–10)
- p. 85 The banished ones restored (2 Samuel 14:14)
- p. 113 A strong cry (Habakkuk 3:2)
- p. 141 A notable warning (Hebrews 11:7)
- p. 169 A plant of renown (Ezekiel 34:29)
- p. 197 A request of the beloved (Song of Solomon 2:14)
- p. 225 A fillip for the wayworn (Numbers 21:4)
- p. 253 'Though often unperceived by sense, faith sees him always near'
(Genesis 28:16)
- p. 281 The faithful witness (John 8:18)
- p. 309 No condemnation (Romans 8:1)

1880

- p. 1 Things to come! A heritage of the saints (1 Corinthians 3:22)
- p. 29 Our faults (Genesis 41:9)
- p. 57 Melting and moulding (Romans 6:17)
- p. 85 A call to communion (Song of Solomon 8:13–14)
- p. 113 Thorns and briars of the wilderness (Judges 8:16)
- p. 141 The pedagogue and the pupils (Galatians 3:24)
- p. 169 Remember Lot's wife (Luke 17:32)

- p. 197 Incessant prayer (Luke 18:1) (preached on Thursday evening 18 October 1866)
- p. 225 De profundis (Psalm 22:24)
- p. 253 A miracle of mercy (John 9:30)
- p. 281 The Master's call (John 11:28)
- p. 309 Holiness indispensable (2 Timothy 2:19)

1881

- p. 3 A simple proof of sincere love (John 14:15) (misprinted as John 15:15)
- p. 29 A call to communion (Song of Solomon 4:8)
- p. 57 A host of fears put to flight (Psalm 62:2)

2. Other earlier sermons omitted from *New Park Street/Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpits*

1855 JANUARY–JUNE

- p. 19 The Holy War (2 Corinthians 10:4) (preached at New Park Street Chapel on Wednesday afternoon 10 January 1855 on behalf of the London Association of Baptist Churches)

1856 JANUARY–JUNE

- p. 73 The faultless assembly (Revelation 14:5) (preached at New Park Street Chapel on Sunday evening 18 December 1853) (This sermon also appears in Spurgeon's *Autobiography*)

1856 JULY–DECEMBER

- p. 29 The Dew of Blessing (Hosea 14:5–7) (This sermon has close similarities to undated sermon no. 342, preached at Tottenham Court Road Chapel. Comparison provides an insight into how Spurgeon treated the same subject on different occasions at different locations)

1859 JULY–DECEMBER

p. 57 The trowel and the sword (Nehemiah 4:18) (probably preached late August 1859)

1870

p. 169 Our redeemer's supremacy (Romans 14:9)

p. 253 Woes to come (Revelation 9:12) (this sermon also appeared in *Storm Signals*, 1885)

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Genesis 28:16	293	Luke 7:42	21
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Nehemiah 4:18	595	John 11:36	28
Job 24:13	125	John 14:15	506
Psalms 22:24	448	Acts 4:31	106
Psalms 62:2	536	Romans 6:17	362
Psalms 62:5	137	Romans 8:1	321
Solomon's Song 1:7	149	Romans 14:9	606
Solomon's Song 2:14	268	1 Corinthians 3:22	336
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Micah 7:7	92	Revelation 9:12	620
Habbakuk 3:2	225	Revelation 14:5	570
Matthew 13:3–8	50	Revelation 22:3–4	78
Matthew 22:9–10	201		

A blessed competition

**A sermon delivered at the Metropolitan Tabernacle,
by C. H. Spurgeon**

IT would be very sad, dear friends, would it not, if we were all of us to indulge in the question of the Apostles, ‘Who among us shall be the greatest?’ Much of the blessing which God has granted to us has come, I believe, in consequence of the Lord having given us so much unanimity of spirit. I do not know that any of us desire to be in other than our right place. I do not see the spirit of envy, of jealousy, of emulation; but I do see, as far as I can discern, a spirit of holy union, of Christian fellowship, and of earnest intention to work together for the common cause.

It would be a great pity if I were to throw an apple of discord in among you, and I am not going to do so. Yet I am going to stir you up, or, at least, try to do it. My text is one which will lead you, if you enter into its spirit, to desire to take the foremost place. It will suggest that to your mind. It is a question which, answered aright, answered with the holy enthusiasm of a spirit’s ambition for Christ’s glory, would lead each one of us to seek to excel his fellow. This is the question:—

‘Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?’—LUKE 7:42.

I feel inclined to knock the word ‘them’ out, and to put it as a question to ourselves this evening—‘Tell me, therefore, which of *us* will love him most?’ He has forgiven us all our debts; nay, he shed his blood first to pay them: tell me, therefore, which of us will love him most?

Now, it is a good thing, when there is a competition, *for us to feel that we are able to compete*. Suppose the question should be: ‘Tell me, therefore, which will preach him best?’ some of you might say, ‘Well, I must not preach; Paul bids me keep silent in the assembly;’ others would say, ‘I cannot preach,

Chapter 1

I have not the necessary ability, neither am I equal to such a task.' Well, that is not the question, you see; and it is well for us that it is not. And it is also well that the question is not—'Tell me, therefore, which of us shall give him most?' because, in point of quantity in giving, there are some here who always must, if they give their full share, be bound to give ten times, perhaps twenty times, more than some others to whom God has entrusted but very little of this world's goods. If that were the race, perhaps some of you might be soon out of it, and others of you could not enter the lists at all. But it is not who shall preach him best, nor yet who will give most money to his cause; but the question is an open one: 'Tell me, therefore, which of us will love him most?' Here, surely, the poor are on an equal footing with the rich, and the man of one talent stands on a level with the man of ten, for we have each of us a heart, and that heart in each case is capable of the most fervent affection. Or should it not be in every case so large, yet we can pray—'Lord, enlarge my heart,' so that there may be in our soul, when enlarged, as much room for the love of Christ, as in the soul of the greatest saint that has ever lived, or ever shall live. The competition seems to be a very open one. 'Tell me, therefore, which of us shall love him most?'

Observe, too, that the question is not 'Tell me, therefore, which of us *shall love him?*' That is quite another question. Oh! I think there are many of us who can say we do love him. 'Tis not a point I long to know,' nor 'does it cause me anxious thought.' I *do* know the Lord, and feel his love shed abroad in my heart. There are many here who can say that very confidently, though, alas, there are others to whom it is not an anxious question, because they do not care for Christ; they do not love him. I will leave them, however, with the question which Christ proposed to Peter: 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?' Mary, do you love Christ? Thomas, is your heart given to the Saviour? I leave that question and come to another—not 'Which of us shall love him?' but 'Which of us shall love him most?'

Well, some of you will have to love him a very great deal if you love him more than some who are here to-night, for I thank God there are some in this place

'Whose hearts are fully bent
To magnify his name;'

and who do rejoice at the very mention of him; whose hearts are entirely set upon him; and who spend and are spent in his service. These, perhaps, *do* love him most. I think I could single some of them out; but still the question is, ‘Which of us *shall* love him most?’ and we intend to excel these excellent ones, and to outrun even these first runners, so that ‘that other disciple’ may ‘outrun Peter.’ ‘That other disciple’s’ name may not be known, but still it may be a well-ascertained fact that he has outrun Peter, good runner as Peter is. ‘Which of us shall love him most?’

The question may be put in another shape—‘Which of us *ought* to love him most?’ Well, I ought; but if the question is put I suppose all of you will claim to make the same reply. Some of us were saved when we were very young; surely for that early mercy we ought to love him most! And some of you were spared a long while, when you lived in sin and provoked the wrath of God, yet you were called at an advanced stage of life; well, he that is called at the eleventh hour has deep reason for gratitude, and ought to love most. Some here present have been able to live a consistent course of Christian profession for many years with an unstained public character. Why, this is a great privilege. They ought to love him most, for they have been saved those broken bones which the wandering Davids get, and which the erring Peters are sure to meet with. And then, on the other hand, there are some present who, though they once stained their profession, have been restored by rich grace, and they are now rejoicing in Christ Jesus. They ought to love him most. It is a blessed competition amongst us when it comes to be, Which has the deepest motive for gratitude? Which has the most powerful incentive to love? I do not know that we shall ever end the controversy this side of heaven, and perhaps in heaven we shall still have to raise the question—‘Which of us ought to love him most?’

Suppose I put the question in another shape and inquire, Which of us has *shown our love* to Christ the most? Methinks I can picture to myself some who show their love to Christ most by their scrupulous obedience to his laws. I am sorry to say I have met with Christians who seem to think that the discipleship of Christ does not demand any further obedience than they are pleased voluntarily to render. To some of his precepts they show profound respect, especially if agreeable to their own taste; but if there be other precepts which prove a little inconvenient, or seem a little

troublesome to the flesh, whatever it may be, they wink their eye at that, they pass it by as insignificant; and not being particularly impressed with its value, or concerned about its obligations, they leave it entirely out of their reckoning. Surely if we cannot live according to his precepts our hearts do not answer to that Divine request, ‘If ye love me, keep my commandments.’ Instant and constant, cheerful and impartial, thoughtful and hearty, should be our obedience to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ; for this is one of the marks of those who love him most. Those love Jesus Christ the most, I think, who take most delight in his company. If our closets are little frequented, if communion with Christ is a thing of long-divided intervals, if we become absorbed in the world and seek to draw all our comfort from the gratification of our natural senses, making few approaches to our Beloved, then we can hardly pretend that there has been any special feature to distinguish our love. Far otherwise; we must, in that case, if we love him at all, fall back amongst the very small ones in the rear. It is being much with Jesus that gives a sure indication of Jesus being much beloved of us. I think, too, those who love Jesus most, *become most like* Jesus. We may easily judge ourselves by this rule. Have we tried to curb that ugly temper, or to break down that high, domineering spirit which mayhap has often gained the mastery over us? Have we striven, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to be fervent and zealous, whereas naturally we are languid and dull? Have we endeavoured to be generous, in spite of an ill propensity to be stingy and mean? Have we sought to be forgiving, instead of being revengeful; to forget insults or injuries instead of treasuring them up in a too retentive memory? If we have been brought by the Holy Spirit into some conformity with Jesus, and his mind be in us, we may gather from this likeness to him some inkling of the depth of our love to him; or, on the contrary, we may see proof of the shallowness of our pretensions.

And may we not, dear friends, test our love to Jesus by asking—*Who do the most for him—comparatively?* I am obliged to put in the word ‘comparatively,’ because I believe that some who seem to do very little love him more than some who apparently do much. Their different ability and position must be taken into account. It may be a great thing for some of you to speak to one soul, and yet for me it may have been a light matter sometimes to have spoken to many thousands. Your fidelity in a small case

may have been more commendable than mine. At least, dear friends, we may lay less stress on the quantity that we do, than on the quality of our work. I must freely confess that I often envy some of you with all my heart when I think how easily you can fill your little sphere, while mine is so huge that I cannot even hope to fill it; so far has it out-grown all the capacities of any one human being. The vineyard has become too big for my labour or my oversight. I cannot attend to it as I would, and I can only throw myself back on the thought that my Master will not expect me to do more than I can, and even then I rely on his grace to do even that, be it little or much. So then, brethren, give all diligence; render all the service you can without grudging; surrender yourselves without reserve to show the sincerity of your love to Christ. Alas that there should be any with great abilities who use them to little profit, for they do not do much for Jesus Christ! They give Christ a little corner of their hearts. They profess to enthrone him as supreme. But they seem to treat him as a stranger, for they do not take much notice of him. Happily there are others who give Jesus Christ their whole hearts. When you pierce a barrel near the top, and insert the tap there, not much of the liquid will run out; but all that is inside will flow forth if the tap be inserted near the base of the barrel. Even so it is with those who love Christ most devotedly; they empty their whole soul and spirit in the service of their Lord. Do not let it be half reserved, but let it all run out as a libation of love. Spend yourselves every time you have ought to do or ought to say. Trust God to replenish you as your needs arise; do your best at every opportunity; as your days demand, so should your strength be. Those love Christ most who do most for him exhaustively. May we be amongst those who do thus show themselves his truest disciples!

In giving, as well as in doing, you may prove the fervour of your love. Not that the largest sum counts for the liveliest offering. The poor widow's two mites were a very blessed contribution. So far as she was concerned they were queenly; an imperial gift; her entire fortune—her all. Howbeit her example has cost the Church more than I can count. The rich, in their abundance, have too often sheltered themselves behind that woman, and doled out of their abundance an offering that only befitted her penury. Such their wilfulness, their wickedness, their foul hypocrisy. The reason why our Lord commended the woman was obviously not because she had

given only two mites, but *because those two mites were all her living*. I remember a rich man once giving me a small coin for a great work in the Lord's vineyard, saying, 'There, that is my mite.' To which I replied, 'Oh, am I to presume, then, that your mite is all your living?' He looked round as if he remembered the story and felt the rebuke. Of course he meant the widow's mite to excuse his meanness. I thought it rather unseemly on his part to suggest a comparison between him and the widow; his pittance and her bounty. His donation was a deception. His liberality was a lie. So I thought then; so I think still. The widow's mite was not to be measured by the amount. It was a princely present, or a paltry pittance, according to the means of the donor. When that gracious woman, to whom we are indebted for the Stockwell Orphanage, gave twenty thousand pounds to found that institution, it was *nearly* all she had. Her noble gift was like the widow's mite; in fact, it was in quality nearly identical. There are plenty of persons who have vastly more than she had, who, if they had given away a pound or two in charity would have thought they had made a noble sacrifice.

Do not make cloaks for yourselves to cover the contortions of conscience; and never rely on a reputation you do not rightly deserve. Those love Christ most who give him the most according to their means. The widow with the two mites gave her all. No fraction of that man's wealth who owned a million would vie with hers. His was but a part, hers was a total which left an empty purse. Well might that woman have taken a front place, not ambitiously, but none the less deservedly. Who of us has given all as she did? Some few have done so, and they would be prepared to do it again, by God's grace, whenever they saw that the Church of God demanded such a sacrifice from the loving members of its sacred fellowship.

I believe, then, that those love Christ most who not only do most, and give most, but who do all, and give all. This is what we should seek to do in the cause of Christ. We are occupied in the world; we are busy here and there with a thousand things, and yet there is such a thing as fulfilling all our ordinary duties as unto the Lord. It is possible for a man to act the part of a priest in the workshop, or in the warehouse, being holy unto the Lord. Your common vestments may be as the garments of the Lord's anointed; you may go about your ordinary service, be it in the nursery or in the kitchen, doing the duties of home as unto the Lord and not unto men. The

humble and common acts of domestic or commercial life may be gilded with a grace which is better far than gold. The glory of God as it shines through the heart of a man wholly sanctified to the Most High throws a bright halo round his action. These, then, seem to me to love him most.

Well, now, for the noble rivalry, which of us shall love him most? Brethren, I hope you will every one of you excel me in this, but I will try my best to surpass you all. I should not like to sit down complaisantly, and say, 'There, then, you may all love Jesus Christ more than I do.' No; but I hope you will. And yet it shall be my aim by thought, by word and by deed, to offer the highest conceivable expression of my love to my blessed Saviour. I would, and I will, by the help of the Holy Spirit, give myself unreservedly to him. And then, if you take precedence of me, I shall have one consolation, like him of old in the Roman State, who, when others were elected to be consuls before him, said he was thankful that his country had better men than himself.

Let this searching question be seriously entertained by us all, 'Which of us shall love him most?' Let it not be which of us shall talk most pretentiously about him, nor which shall make the loudest profession. There was a lamentable observation made just now at our elders' meeting. I fear I must bear witness to its truthfulness, that some of those very persons who seemed at one time to be the most earnest helpers have been the most grievous dishonour to us. We almost tremble when we hear of people so supremely good that they seem too good for this world, who presently turn out so bad that they very soon appear to us too bad for it. It is sad that it should be so, but it has too often happened. We do not want, therefore, to get into a state of mind that deceives ourselves and others also; but we do pray that our love to Jesus may increase in depth and volume, like the water of a full river fed by many springs; and that our love to Jesus may burn vehemently, and shine more and more brightly, like a fire which many waters cannot quench, neither can the floods drown it. May we be wholly given up unto him who loved us and gave himself for us! Which of us shall love him most? Let this question stimulate us during the week and throughout our lives, and may God help us to press forward in the sacred race, and win the coveted prize of his approbation, as disciples whom he specially favours and servants he delights to honour!

His manifest love

**A sermon delivered at the Metropolitan Tabernacle,
by C. H. Spurgeon**

‘Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!’—JOHN 11:36.

IF the sight of Jesus weeping constrained the Jews to admire his love to Lazarus, with what emotions shall we contemplate the far greater proofs of affection which this same Jesus has given to poor, lost, and ruined sinners. I wish it were in my power so to set forth my Lord’s love to the perishing children of men, that you also would be constrained to exclaim—‘Behold how he loved us!’ Were it possible for me to paint the bleeding Saviour in such lovely colours that, as the apostle Paul said to the Galatians, ‘Before your eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you,’ I am persuaded the evidence of his great love would become so irresistible, that you would cry out, ‘Behold, how he loves us!’ Oh that the Spirit of God may grant me this desire of my heart, while I try to *hold up the love of Jesus to your admiration.*

Surely if you ponder the love of Jesus towards sinners, as shown in his concern for their welfare, your admiration must begin to kindle. In distant ages, far beyond our power to count, before this world was created, God, who sees all things from the beginning, foresaw that man would violate his law, fall into sin, and consequently plunge into sorrow. Wonderful to relate, the Lord Jesus Christ, the maker of the heavens and of the earth, prescient of the future, and seeing us lost and ruined, exercised his gracious mind and his infinite wisdom to devise a way to save rebellious man. Have you ever considered it—that he, to whom the great circle of the heavens is but a span, who holds the waters of the rolling seas in the hollow of his hand, who plucks up the mountains by their roots, and counts the islands to be a very little thing—exercised his infinite thought in old eternity for