

C.H. Spurgeon on Spiritual Leadership by Steve Miller, Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL (2003). (47 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols.)

1. Unceasing Communion with God

What made Spurgeon's prayers so luminous, so memorable? Those who observed his life up close commented on his perpetual private communion with God, and it was the intimate spiritual richness of these times alone with the Lord that overflowed into Spurgeon's public prayers and led people to feel as if he were taking them into the very portals of heaven through his petitions. Spurgeon's ongoing inclination toward prayer is evident in these words:

I cannot help praying. If I were not allowed to utter a word all day long, that would not affect my praying. If I could not have 5 minutes that I might spend in prayer by myself, I should pray all the same. Minute by minute, moment by moment, somehow or other, my heart must commune with God. Prayer has become as essential to me as the heaving lungs and the beating of my pulse.

We've all heard Scriptures command to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). But what exactly does that mean? Spurgeon explained in this way:

Our Lord meant by saying men ought always to pray, that they ought to be always in the spirit of prayer, always ready to pray. Like the old knights, always in warfare, not always on their steeds dashing forward with their lances in rest to unhorse an adversary, but always wearing their weapons where they could readily reach them, and always ready to encounter wounds or death for the sake of the cause which they championed. Those grim warriors often sleep in their armor; so even when we sleep, we are still to be in the spirit of prayer, so that if perchance we wake in the night, we may still be with God. Our soul, having received the divine centripetal influence which it makes it seek its heavenly centre, should be evermore naturally rising towards God Himself. Our heart is to be like those beacons and watchtowers which were prepared along the coast of England when the invasion of the Armada was hourly expected, not always blazing, but with

the wood always dry, and the match always there, the whole pile being ready to blaze up at the appointed moment. [pages 15-16]

2. Prayer's Place in the Leader's Life

Spurgeon's recognition of the priority of prayer came early in his ministry. Biographer W.Y. Fullerton observed that even at the age of sixteen, when Spurgeon began to preach in small rural English churches, he would arise early in the morning to pray and read the Bible. Spurgeon had this to say about the absolute necessity of prayer in a minister's life:

Never account prayer second to preaching. No doubt prayer in the Christian church is as precious as the utterance of the gospel. To speak to God for men is a part of the Christian priesthood that should never be despised.

The minister who does not earnestly pray over his work must surely be a vain and conceited man. He acts as if he thought himself sufficient of himself, and therefore needed not to appeal to God.

Spurgeon often chastised ministers who were more concerned about their outward appearances to men and thus put greater emphasis on the external aspects of their ministry, such as preaching. Many of the ministers in Spurgeon's era expended great effort in producing eloquent sermons that offered scant spiritual nourishment to the hearers, and they spent little time in their private prayer closets. As a result, their ministries lacked life and power, and tragically, the attendance in their churches declined. [pages 19-20]

3. Challenges Faced in Prayer

When it comes to the art of prayer, many of us feel inadequate. We often find ourselves struggling in prayer, wishing we could master it better. We may find solace in knowing that even Spurgeon, with his vast experience in the practice of prayer, included himself among those who feel inadequate in this spiritual discipline. At one point he said, "I usually feel more dissatisfied with my prayers than anything else I do".

Another common frustration we may face is the challenge of making time for prayer in the midst of a busy schedule. The demands of everyday life clamor for our attention, and all too often prayer falls two, three, or even several notches down our list of priorities. Spurgeon commented:

Sometimes we think we are too busy to pray. That is a great mistake, for praying is a saving of time. You remember Luther's remark, "I have so much to do today that I shall never get through it with less than three hours' prayer." ... If we have no time we must make time, for if God has given us time for secondary duties, He must have given us time for primary ones, and to draw near to Him is a primary duty, and we must let nothing set it on one side. Your other engagements will run smoothly if you do not forget your engagement with God. [pages 26-27]

4. Pray for Prayer.

I believe when we cannot pray, it is time that we prayed more than ever; and if you answer, "But how can that be?" I would say pray to pray. Pray for prayer. Pray for the spirit of supplication. Do not be content to say, "I would pray if I could." No, but if you cannot pray, pray until you can.

If your heart be cold in prayer, do not restrain prayer until your heart warms, but pray your soul unto heat by the help of the ever-blessed Spirit, who helps with our infirmities. If the iron be hot then hammer it, and if it be cold, hammer till you heat it. Never cease in prayer for any reason. [page 28]

5. A Final Word on Prayer.

The ministry of Charles Spurgeon and the congregation at the Metropolitan Tabernacle reached far beyond the walls of the massive structure to countries all over the globe. Never before had a church drawn such large crowds, never before had a minister been more widely published and in so many languages. Travelers who came to London from around the world considered a stop at Metropolitan Tabernacle to be equally obligatory as stops at Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral. The kingdom of God was extended mightily through this ministry, with countless multitudes coming to receive Christ as their Savior – and Spurgeon said all of it was a

direct result of prayer ... his own private prayers, and the ongoing intercessory prayers of the congregation. He saw the spiritual health of a church – and an individual – as being inextricably linked to prayer: “I know of no other thermometer to your spiritual temperature than this, the measure of the intensity of your prayer” [pages 33-34]

6. Casting Oneself upon God’s Promises.

How do we demonstrate our faith in God? Spurgeon put it this way: “The pith, the essence of faith, lies in this—a casting oneself on the promise.

Spurgeon could just as well as said “a casting oneself on God.” As we consider a promise from God - any promise - we would do well to remember the character of the One behind that promise. For example, God is true, perfect, unchanging, reliable, loving, just, and faithful. And we can know with absolute certainty that His promises are consistent with His character. So if we ever doubt one of God’s promises, we are, in essence doubting one or more aspects of God’s own character; we are doubting His truthfulness, His perfection, His immutability, His reliability, His love, His justice, and His faithfulness, or some other aspect of Him.

What’s more, the incredible number of promises that abound in Scripture ought to help us realize the extent of God’s care for us. Spurgeon’s book *The Check Book of the Bank of Faith* has 366 daily devotions, and every single one looks at promises found in the Bible. We have so many promises at our disposal that we can safely assume nothing will ever happen to us that falls outside of God’s providential ability to care for us. The greatest assurance of all is that God keeps His promises. In the preface of *The Check Book of the Bank and Faith*, Spurgeon wrote: “God has given no pledge which He will not redeem, and encouraged no hope which He will not fulfill.”

A little later in this preface he added:

My brethren, God is good. He will not forsake you: He will bear you through. There is a promise prepared for your present emergencies; and if you will believe and plead it at the mercy-seat through Jesus Christ, you shall see the hand of the Lord stretched out to help you. Everything else will

fail, but His word never will. He has been to me so faithful in countless instances that I must encourage you to trust Him. [pages 40-41]

7. Our Faith and Our Usefulness to God.

Spurgeon pointed out that our success in the Lord's work is determined not by our ability or our zeal, but by the amount of faith we have in God. In an address to church leaders he said:

Our work especially requires faith. If we fail in faith, we had better not have undertaken it; and unless we obtain faith commensurate with the service, we shall soon grow weary of it. It is proven by all observation that success in the Lord's service is very generally in proportion to faith. It certainly is not in proportion to ability, nor does it always run parallel with a display of zeal; but it is invariably according to the measure of faith, for this is a law of the Kingdom without exception, "According to your faith be it unto you." It is essential, then, that we should have faith if we are to be useful, and that we should have great faith if we are to be greatly useful. [page 44]

8. The Benefits of Exercising Faith.

Each year, the Pastor's College founded by Spurgeon hosted a conference for pastors and church leaders. The conferences were held at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, and the highlight of these meetings was Spurgeon's presidential address. In his 1872 address, Spurgeon asked, "What does our faith work in us?" Here are three key benefits he mentioned, among others:

It works in us, first, a glorious independence of man. We are glad of earnest helpers, but we can do without them. We are grateful for our good deacons, but we dare not make flesh our arm. We are very glad if God raises up brethren in other churches who will fraternize with us, but we do not lean upon them. The man who believes in God, and believes in Christ, and believes in the Holy Ghost, will stay himself upon the Lord alone ... God alone is sufficient for us, and in His might we shall achieve the purpose for our being ...

True faith in God will also make us abundant in good works. The eleventh of Hebrews is a chapter dedicated to the glorification of faith; but if I assert

that it records the good works of the saints, can anybody contradict me? Is it not as much a record of works as of faith? Ay, verily, because where there is much faith, there shall surely ere long be abundant good works. I have no notion of that faith which does not produce good works, especially in the preacher ...

Faith in God enables many of you, I know right well, to bear much hardship, and exercise much self-denial, and yet to preserve in your ministry ... True faith makes a man feel that it is sweet to be a living sacrifice unto God.

Only faith could keep us in ministry, for ours is not vocation which brings with it golden pay; it is not a calling which men would follow who desire honor and rank. We have all kinds of evils to endure, evils as numerous as those which Paul included in his famous catalogue of trials. [pages 45-47]

9. Trials as Stepping-Stones to Greater Things.

Spurgeon said it is faith that enables us to see our hardship as “stepping-stones to grander results” and “platforms for the display of His grace”, as he put it:

Faith leads us to believe in difficulties being overruled to promote success. Because we believe in God, and in His Holy Spirit, we believe that difficulties will be greatly sanctified to us, and that they are only placed before us as stepping-stones to grander results. We believe in defeats, my brethren; we believe in going back with the banner trailed in the mire, persuaded that this may be the surest way to lasting triumph. We believe in waiting, weeping, and agonizing; we believe in a non-success which prepares us for doing greater and higher work, for which we should not have been fitted unless anguish had sharpened our soul. We believe in our infirmities, and even glory in them; we thank God that we are not as eloquent as we could wish to be, and have not all the abilities we might desire, because now we know that “the excellency of the power” shall “be of God, and not of us”. Faith enables us so to rejoice in the Lord that our infirmities become platforms for the display of His grace.

Indeed, faith enables us to see the silver lining in the clouds when it comes to the setbacks of life. As Spurgeon said, we should fully expect times to

defeat, weeping, and agonizing – all of which work to forge in us a greater dependence upon God and a more enduring faith:

God never gives strong faith without fiery trial; He will not build a strong ship without subjecting it to very mighty storms; He will not make you a mighty warrior if He does not intend to try your skill in battle. The sword of the Lord must be used; the blades of heaven must be smitten against the armor of the evil one, and yet they shall not break, for they are of true Jerusalem metal which shall never snap. We shall conquer, if we begin the battle in the right way. If we have sharpened our swords on the cross, we have nothing whatever to fear; for though we may be sometimes cast down and discomfited, we shall assuredly at last put to flight all our adversaries, for we are the sons of God even now. Why, then, should we fear? Who shall bid us “stay” if God bid us advance? [pages 47-49]

10. A Commitment to Holiness

Spurgeon’s exhortations for Christians to live holy lives were not mere lip service. Rather, they emanated from a deeply heartfelt conviction of the absolute necessity for holiness in his own life as a messenger of no less than God Himself. So passionately did he feel about this that he said, “Every saint must be holy, but he should be holiest of all who ministers before the Lord.” He recognized that the works of a holy God are impaired when transmitted through an unholy vessel.

Our effectiveness, then, is proportionate to our holiness. As Spurgeon said,

We must cultivate the highest degree of godliness because our work imperatively requires it. The labor of the Christian ministry is well performed in exact proportion to the vigor of our renewed nature. Our work is only well done when it is well with ourselves. As is the workman, such will the work be. [pages 58-59]

11. An Awareness That Others Are Watching.

As we carry on our work of ministry, it’s essential we live with a constant awareness that people are watching us. We have the potential to be either a positive or negative influence upon others. We are accountable for the

spiritual well-being of our followers, and need to exercise care that our thoughts, words and actions represent God and the Christian life accurately.

“Our lives should be such as men may safely copy,” Spurgeon once summarized. This was a recurring theme in the messages Spurgeon gave at the Pastor’s College and the annual college conferences:

A very considerable and essential part of Christian ministry lies in example. Our people take much note of what we say out of the pulpit, and what we do in the social circle and elsewhere. Do you find it easy, my brethren, to be saints? – Such saints that others may regard you as examples? We ought to be such husbands that every husband in the parish may safely be such as we are. Is it so? We ought to be the best of fathers.

It is a shocking state of things when good people say, “Our minister undoes in the parlor what he has done in the pulpit; he preaches very well, but his life does not agree with his sermons.” Our Lord Jesus would have us perfect even as our Father who is in heaven is perfect. Every Christian should be holy; but we are laid under a sevenfold obligation to it: how can we expect the Divine blessing if it be not so?

We are watched by a thousand eagle eyes; let us so act that we shall never need to care if all heaven, and earth, and hell, swelled the list of spectators. Our public position is a great gain if we are enabled to exhibit the fruits of the Spirit in our lives; take heed, brethren, that you throw not away the advantage. [pages 60-61]

12. The Seriousness of Sin.

Satan takes a special delight in the failure of a spiritual leader. He knows that to seduce just one leader into sin can have a ripple effect that disrupts the lives of everyone under that leader’s influence. Thus he is especially persistent in his assaults against those in key positions of ministry, and we need to stand ever vigilant because his schemes are so crafty and subtle. As Spurgeon noted in his Lectures to My Students:

The great enemy of souls takes care to leave no stone unturned for the preacher’s ruin.

Take heed, therefore brethren, for the enemy hath a special eye upon you. You shall have his most subtle insinuations, and incessant solicitations, and violent assaults. As wise and learned as you are, take heed to yourselves lest he over-wit you. The devil is a greater scholar than you, and a nimbler disputant; he can “transform himself into an angel of light” to deceive, he will get within you and trip up your heels before you are aware; he will play the juggler with you un-discerned, and cheat you of your faith or innocence, and you shall not know that you have lost it: nay, he will make you believe it is multiplied or increased when it is lost. You shall see neither hook nor line, much less the subtle angler himself, while he is offering you his bait. And his baits shall be so fitted for your temper and disposition, that he will be sure to find advantages within you, and make your own principles and inclinations to betray you; and whenever he ruins you, he will make you the instrument of your own ruin. Oh, what a conquest will he think he hath got, if he can tempt a minister into covetousness or scandal! He will glory against the church, and say, “These are your holy preachers: you see what their preciseness is, and whither it will bring them.” He will glory against Christ Himself. [pages 62-63]

13. Sin’s Impact on our Ministry.

Your whole life, your whole pastoral life especially, will be affected by the vigor of your piety. If your zeal grows dull, you will not pray well in the pulpit; you will pray worse in the family, and worst in the study alone. When your soul becomes lean, your hearers, without knowing how or why, will find that your prayers in public have little savor for them; they will feel your barrenness, perhaps, before you perceive it yourself. Your discourses will next betray your declension. You may utter as well-chosen words, and fitly-ordered sentences, as aforesaid; but there will be a perceptible loss of spiritual force. [pages 64-68]

14. Preventing Unholiness.

We must, dear friends, never become weak in another sense, namely, in our communion with God. David slackened his fellowship with God, and Satan vanquished him through Bathsheba; Peter followed afar off, and soon denied his Lord. Communion with God is the right arm of our strength; and

if this be broken, we are weak as water. Without God, we can do nothing; and in proportion as we attempt to live without Him, we ruin ourselves ... If it be true that only as we hang upon the Lord are we strong, then broken fellowship will soon bring broken strength. [page 67]

15. The Benefits of Holiness.

An additional benefit observed by Spurgeon is that holiness, because it is so supremely important, can make up for certain deficiencies we might have:

You must have holiness; and dear brethren, if you should fail in mental qualifications (though I hope you will not), and if you should have a slender measure of the oratorical faculty (though I trust you will not), yet depend upon it, a holy life is in itself, a wonderful power, and will make up for many deficiencies; it is in fact, the best sermon the best man can ever deliver. [page 70]

16. Our Reason for Holy Living.

Above all, it helps to remember why holiness is so important. As spiritual leaders, we are not our own. We were bought with a price, and we are ambassadors of God to a watching world – Ambassadors of not just any earthly king, but the King of all kings and Lord of all lords:

Behave yourselves, Christian brethren, for you bear a great Name ... If you are indeed in Christ's stead, what manner of persons ought you to be! May God help you to be worthy of the embassy on which you are sent!

Be ye holy, for ye serve a holy God. If you were making a present to a prince, you would not find Him a lame horse to ride upon; you would not offer Him a book out of which leaves had been torn, nor carry Him a timepiece whose wheels were broken. No, the best of the best you would give to one whom you honored and loved. Give your very best to your Lord. Seek to be at your best whenever you serve Him.

Indeed, Spurgeon pursued purity with a passion. When it came to holiness, he lived what he preached. He constantly admonished other leaders toward similar commitment in their own lives for the simple reason that the Bible

calls for such. And he was ever mindful of the impact a holy life can have on a multitude of others. One evening during a lecture to his pastoral students, Spurgeon quoted Robert Murray McCheyne, a devout Scottish preacher whose words capture well the truth that the call to a holy life is a truly noble calling indeed:

Remember you are God's sword, His instrument – I trust a chosen vessel unto Him to bear His name. In great measure, according to the purity and perfection of the instrument, will be the success. It is not great talents God blesses so much as likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God. [pages 71-73]

17. A Heart for Service.

He also shared frequently his convictions about the necessity of having a servant's heart. He could not have been more direct when he said, early in his ministry, "The very motto of a Christian should be, 'I serve'." And many years later, in another sermon, he said,

As long as there is breath in our bodies, let us serve Christ. As long as we can think, as long as we can speak, as long as we can work, let us serve Him. Let us even serve Him with our last gasp. [pages 77-78]

18. Every Leader a Servant.

Spurgeon didn't see church leaders as exempt from the call to servanthood. If anything, he felt ministers should be more selfless than their brethren. He stressed that leaders were to serve alongside their followers, citing no less than the great Roman emperor Caesar as an example:

We are to be examples to our flock in all things. In all diligence, in all gentleness, in all humility, and in all holiness we are to excel. When Caesar went on in wars, one thing always helped his soldiers to bear hardships: they knew that Caesar fared as they fared. He marched if they marched, he thirsted if they thirsted, and he was always in the heart of the battle if they were fighting. We must do more than others if we are officers in Christ's army. We must not cry, "Go on", but, "Come on." Our people may justly expect of us, at the very least, that we should be among the most self-

denying, the most laborious, and the most earnest in the church, and somewhat more. [pages 78-79]

19. Kindness.

Spurgeon's benevolence extended to even the smallest of things. He "was forever giving people something. In the many happy hours that were spent by visitors in Spurgeon's home he would often pluck an 'everlasting flower' that he had taken from his garden to give to the visitor as a memento." On the trait of kindness, Spurgeon himself said:

If there be virtue which most commends Christians, it is that of kindness; it is to love the people of God, to love the Church, to love poor sinners, to love all ... Imitate Christ in your loving spirits; speak kindly, act kindly, and think kindly, that men say to you, "He has been with Jesus." [Page 83]

20. Humility.

Remember that God has come unto us, not to exalt us, but to exalt Himself, and we must see to it that His glory is the one sole object of all we do. He must increase, and I must decrease. Oh, may God bring us to this, and make us walk very carefully and humbly before Him.

Spurgeon not only encouraged his students toward humility, but reminded them of the one and only source in which they should place their confidence: "It is admirable to see a man humbly conscious of his own weakness, and yet bravely confident in the Lord's power to work through his infirmity. [pages 85-86]

21. Diligence and Wholeheartedness.

Two additional characteristics of a true servant, according to Spurgeon, are diligence and wholeheartedness.

Spurgeon exhorted Christian leaders with these reminders about being diligent in their service:

What kind of men does the Master mean to use? They must be laborers. The man who does not make hard work of his ministry will find it very hard to answer for his idleness at the last great day.

Be consumed with love for Christ, and let the flame burn continuously; not flaming up at public meetings, and dying out in the routine work of every day. We need indomitable perseverance, dogged zeal, and a combination of sacred obstinacy, self-denial, holy gentleness, and invincible courage.

Concerning wholeheartedness in service, Spurgeon told his listeners:

God deserves to be served with all the energy of which we are capable. If the service of God is worth anything, it is worth everything. We shall find our best reward in the Lord's work if we do it with determined diligence. Our labor is not in vain in the Lord, and we know it. Half-hearted work will bring no reward; but when we throw our whole soul into the cause, we shall see prosperity.

We must never think, because the particular work we have in hand seems to be insignificant, that therefore we can't do it, or should not do it, thoroughly well. We need Divine help to preach a-right to a congregation of one. If a thing is worth doing at all, it is worth doing it well. If you had to sweep a crossing, it were well to sweep it better than anybody else ... Knowing your work, and bend over it, throwing your heart and soul into it; for, be it great or small, you will have to praise God to all eternity if you are found faithful in it. [pages 90-91]

22. Be Willing to Start Small.

At a breakfast to men in Aberdeen, Scotland, on March 31, 1861, Spurgeon said:

Do not think of waiting until you can do some great thing for God; do little things, and then the Master will bid you go up higher ... If one wishes to be a steward in God's house, he must first be prepared to serve as a scullion in the kitchen, and be content to wash out the pots and clean the boots. Remember our Lord's rule, "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." [page 92]

23. Spurgeon with His Pen.

We shall be exalted by the Lord if we humble ourselves. For us the way upward is downhill. When we are stripped of self we are clothed with humility, and this is the best of wear. The Lord will exalt us in peace and happiness of mind; He will exalt us into knowledge of His Word and fellowship with Himself; He will exalt us in the enjoyment of sure pardon and justification. The Lord puts His honors upon those who can wear them to the honor of the Giver. He gives usefulness, acceptance, and influence to those who will not be puffed up by them, but will be abased by a sense of greater responsibility. Neither God nor man will care to lift up a man who lifts up himself; but both God and good men unite to honor modest worth. [page 95]

24. A Love for the Lord His Word.

On February 23, 1886, Charles Spurgeon wrote, “I am well, but this gigantic work must crush me sooner or later.” A survey of the incredible volume of work Spurgeon did during his ministry years reveals his words to be no exaggeration. Along with pasturing a huge church, he directed several social agencies and outreach ministries, including the Pastors’ College, the Stockwell Orphanage, the Old Ladies Home, and the Colportage [literature] Ministry. At the college, he took personal oversight of the selection of the students and lectured to them weekly. Spurgeon also produced and wrote for *The Sword and the Trowel*, a monthly magazine that he began in 1865 and that continued to be published past his death in 1892. He wrote numerous books, and the sermons he preached during his lifetime fill some seventy thick volumes. He was also active in the startup of churches pastured by students from the college, and carried on an immense correspondence.

So great was Spurgeon’s output that Charles Ray began his biography of the man with these words: “It is not easy in the compass of a single volume to give anything like a fair idea of Charles Haddon Spurgeon’s life and work. Indeed his activities were so manifold, and the channels in which his energies were extended were so numerous, that the biographer is bewildered by the very mass of material at his disposal.”

All the more remarkable is the fact that throughout his life Spurgeon suffered long and frequent bouts of illness, primarily in relation to his rheumatic gout. At times the pain from his gout was so severe he could not rise out of bed or move about for says or even weeks. A letter Spurgeon wrote to the men's Bible class at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in 1886 hints at how much the pastor's ill health frustrated him:

Young men, work for the Lord while you can. It would greatly embitter my season of painful retirement if I could accuse myself with having wasted the time of my health and strength. When I can work, I pack a mass into a small compass because I am so painfully aware that days and weeks may come wherein I cannot work. [pages 98-99]

25. An All-Consuming Love for the Lord.

That Spurgeon's devotion to the Lord was intense and unflinching was also affirmed by his friend W. Y. Fullerton:

His soul was seen best when he was listening to some one else speaking the praises of his Lord. He would clasp his hands, catch his breath, the tears would fill his eyes and overflow, his face would shine with a radiance other than of earth, and his rapture would communicate itself to those around. . . . At such times you saw the real man, the man to whom the Lord Jesus Christ was more dear than all the universe, whose boast was in the name of the Lord all the day long. [pages 100-101]

As spiritual leaders, then, we would do well to ask ourselves frequently about the state of our love for the Lord, for it is our love for Him that can help motivate and energize us in all we do. It is our love that will carry us onward when we're ready to quit or we're running on empty. Besides, it is only right that we examine the condition of our love for God in light of the fact that Jesus Himself urged us to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37) [pages 101-102]

26. An All-Consuming Love for The World.

A natural extension of Surgeon's love for the Lord was his love for God's Word. Spurgeon possessed a contagious enthusiasm for Scripture that overflowed into his messages, letters, and books. Spurgeon's love for the Bible manifest itself in at least three ways: He (1) held a high view of Scripture, (2) maintained a steady focus on Scripture, and (3) expressed complete dependence on God's Word. [page 102]

27. Spurgeon's Steadfast Focus in Scripture.

Spurgeon's reverence for the Bible was such that he also had a healthy fear of inadvertently mishandling the Scriptures. He once said: "I would sooner a hundred times over appear to be inconsistent with myself than to be inconsistent with the Word of God." [page 106]

28. The Bible Is Inexhaustible.

After preaching the Gospel for forty years, and after printing sermons I have preached for more than six-and-thirty years, reaching now to the number of 2,200 in weekly succession, I am fairly entitled to speak about the fullness and richness of the Bible, as a preacher's book. Brethren, it is inexhaustible. No question about freshness will arise if we keep closely to the text of the second volume. There can be no difficulty as to finding themes totally distinct from those we have handled before; the variety is as infinite as the fullness. . . . In the forty year of my own ministry I have only touched the hem of the garment of divine truth, but what virtue has flowed out of it! The Word is like its Author, infinite, immeasurable, without God. (Page 108-109)

29. The Bible Is Our Strength and Success.

Men speak of waters that revive the spirits, and tonics that brace the constitution; but the Word of God has been more than this to us, times beyond count. Amidst temptation sharp and strong, and trials fierce and bitter, the Word of the Lord has preserved us. Amidst discouragement which damped our hopes, and disappointments which wounded our hearts, we have felt ourselves strong to do and bear, because the assurances of help

we find in our Bible have brought us a secret, unconquerable energy. [page 109]

30. The Bible Fills Us for Ministry Service.

It was a very wet day the last time I was in Cologne, and I occupied a room in the hotel, which presented me highly picturesque view of a public pump. There was nothing else to see, and it rained so hard that I could not shift my quarters, so I sat and wrote letters, and glanced at the old pump. People came with pails for water, and one came with a barrel on his back, and filled it. In the course of an hour, that individual came several times, indeed, he came almost as often as all other comers put together, and always filled his vessel. He was coming, and coming and coming all the while; and I rightly concluded he was a seller of water, and supplied other people; hence he came oftener than anybody else, and had a larger vessel. And this is precisely our condition. Having to carry the living water to others, and we must go oftener to the well, and we must go with more capacious vessel than the general run of Christians. Look, then, to the vigor of your personal piety, and pray to be “filled with all the fullness of God.” [page 110]

31. Spurgeon’s Response to External Attack.

I am content to be criticized, misunderstood, and misrepresented. The cost was counted long ago, and the estimate was so liberal that there is no fear of its being exceeded. “I know who I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that Day.” [page 117]

32. Part Of Spurgeon’s Sermon June 15, 1856 at Exeter Hall.

Are you striving to do good, and do others impute wrong motives to you? Do not be particular about answering them, just go straight on, and your life will be the best refutation of the calumny. . . . If any man desires to reply to the false assertions of his enemies, he need not a word; let him go and do good, that will be his answer. [page 119]

33. In Response to Personal Afflictions.

He focused solely on the issues at stake and not the personalities involved, as is evident in this excerpt from a lengthy letter he wrote to the ministers and delegates forming the Baptist Convention of the Maritime Provinces of Canada:

The pain I have felt in this conflict I would not wish any other man to share, but I would bear ten thousand times as much with eagerness if I could see the faith once for all delivered to the saints placed in honor among the Baptist church of Great Britain. I resolved to avoid personalities from the very beginning; and, though sorely tempted to publish all that I know, I have held my peace as to individuals, and thus have weakened my own hand in the conflict. Yet this also I had rather bear than allow contention for the faith to degenerate unto a complication of personal quarrels. I am no man's enemy, but I am the enemy of all teaching which is contrary to the Word of the Lord, and I will be in no fellowship with it. [page 120]

34. His Response to Personal Affliction.

As if the suffering from without weren't enough, Spurgeon also had to contend with afflictions from within, as we noted earlier. In one of many letters he wrote while sick or bedridden, he described himself as "altogether stranded," noting "I am not able to leave my bed, or to find much rest upon it. The pain of rheumatism, lumbago, and sciatica mingled together, are exceedingly sharp. I am aware I am dwelling in a body capable of the most acute suffering. [page 121]

35. God's Chastening.

In spite of his many difficult circumstances, Spurgeon trusted God and accepted his afflictions. When a critic told Spurgeon that his ills were due to the Lord's chastening, Spurgeon quipped, "I rejoice that I have such a God as that; and if He were to chasten me a thousand times worse than this, I would still love Him; yea, though He slay me, yet will I trust him." [pages 120-121]

36. Spurgeon's Instruction on Suffering.

Most of the grand truths of God have to be learned by trouble, they must be burned into us with the hot iron of affliction, otherwise we shall not truly receive them. No man is competent to judge in matters of the kingdom until first he has been tried, since there are many things to be learned in the depths which we can never know in the heights. We discover many secrets in the caverns of the ocean, which, though we had soared to heaven, we never could have known. He shall best meet the wants of God's people as a preacher who has those wants himself, he shall best comfort God's Israel who has needed comfort, and he shall preach salvation who has felt his own need of it. [pages 122-123]

37. Tribulations of Adversity, Pain, and Temptation.

The development power of tribulation is very great: faith, patience, resignation, endurance, and steadfastness are by far the best seen when put to the test by adversity, pain, and temptation. (Page 123)

38. Our Companion in Suffering.

There is no riding to heaven in a chariot; the rough-way must be trodden, mountains must be climbed, rivers must be forded, dragons must be fought, giants must be slain, difficulties must be overcome, and great trials must be born. It is not a smooth road to heaven, believe me, for those who have gone but a very few steps therein have found it to be a rough one ; it is to be a rough one. It to be a pleasant one; the most delightful in all the world, but it is not easy on itself, it is only pleasant because of the company, because of the sweet promises on which we lean, because of our Beloved who walks with us through all the rough and thorny brakes of this vast wilderness. [pages 124-125]

39. The Benefits of Suffering.

Perhaps the only way in which most men get their faith increased is by great trouble. We do not grow strong in faith on sunshiny days. It is only in rough weather that man gets faith. Faith is not an attainment that droppeth like the gentle dew from heaven; it generally comes in the whirlwind and the

storm. Look at the old oaks, how is it that they have become so deeply rooted in the earth? Ask the March winds and they will tell you. It was not the April shower that did it or the sweet May sunshine, but it was March's rough wind.

Storms and tempests are the things that make men tough and hardy mariners. They see the works of the Lord and His great wonders in the deep. So with Christians. Great faith must have great trials. [page 125]

40. Remembrance of Suffering.

If we have any power to console the weary, it is the result of our remembrance of what we once suffered—for here lies our power in sympathize. [page 126]

41. Those Who Have Suffered.

The laborious pastor, the fervent minister, the ardent evangelist, the faithful teacher, the powerful intercessor, can all trace the birth of their zeal to the suffering they endured through sin, and the knowledge they thereby attained of its evil nature. We have ever drawn the sharpest arrow from the quiver of our experience. We find no sword-blades so true in metal as those which have been forged in the furnace of soul-trouble. [page 127]

42. Greater Usefulness in Ministry.

Suffering also leads to greater usefulness for ministry. Spurgeon noted:

I am sorry to say that I am made of such ill stuff that my Lord has to chasten me often and sorely. I am like a quill pen that will not write unless it be often nibbed, and therefore I have felt the sharp knife many times, and yet I shall not regret my pains and crosses so long as my Lord will write with me on men's hearts. That is the cause of many ministers' afflictions, they are necessary to our work. [pages 125-128]

43. The Heart of Effective Preaching.

In relation to his preaching, Spurgeon said, “I take my text and make a bee-line to the cross.” In a lecture at the Pastors’ College, he stated:

Of all I would wish to say this is the sum; my brethren, preach CHRIST, always and evermore. He is the whole gospel. His person, office, and work must be our one great, all-comprehending theme. The world still needs to be told of its Savior, and of the way to reach Him. . . . We are not called to proclaim philosophy and metaphysics, but the simple gospel. Man’s fall, his need of a new birth, forgiveness through an atonement, and salvation as the result of faith, these are our battle-ax and weapons of war. Page (136-137)

44. Preaching the Gospel.

It is not ours to improve the gospel, but we preach, and obey it when we hear [page 137]

45. Drawing Life from the Scripture.

You need not bring life to the Scripture. You should draw life from the Scripture [page 138]

46. The Gospel’s Purity.

The best attraction is the gospel in its purity. The weapon with which the Lord conquers men is the truth as it is in Jesus. The gospel will be found equal to every emergency an arrow which can pierce the hardest heart, a balm which will heal the deadliest wound. Preach it, and preach nothing else. Rely implicitly upon the old, old gospel. You need no other nets when you fish for men, those your Master has given you are strong enough for the great fish, and have meshes fine enough to hold the little ones. Spread these nets and no others, and you not fear the fulfillment of His Word. “I will make you fishers of men.” [page 139]

47. Preaching the Outgrowths of Scripture.

Sermons should be full of Bible; sweetened, strengthened, sanctified with Bible essence. The kind of sermons that people need to hear are outgrowths of Scripture. If they do not love to hear them, there is all the more reason why they should be preached to them. The Gospel has the singular faculty of creating a taste for itself. Bible hearers, when they hear indeed, come to be Bible lovers.

If we want weapons we must come here for them, and here only. Whether we seek the sword of offence or the shield of defense, we must find it within the volume of inspiration. If others have any other storehouse, I confess at once I have none. I have nothing else to preach when I have got through with this book. Indeed, I have no wish to preach at all if I may not continue to expound the subjects which I find in these pages. What else is worth preaching? Brethren, the truth of God is the only treasure for which we seek, and the Scripture is the only field in which we dig for it. [pages 136-141]