

A Marvelous Ministry: How the All-Round Ministry of C H Spurgeon Speaks to Us Today by Tim Curnow, Erroll Hulse, David Kingdon and Geoff Thomas, Soli Deo Gloria Ministries: 2003 (48 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

Chapter 1, Spurgeon Speaks Today, by Erroll Hulse.

1. A Good Sense of Humor

It is usually the enthusiastic recommendation of others that activates our own interest in books ... A godly upbringing does not preclude fun. All his life Charles enjoyed an acute sense of humour which was also a feature of his Grandad. On one occasion when James was asked how much he weighed, he answered, "Well that all depends on how you take me. If weighed in the balances I am afraid I shall be found wanting, but in the pulpit they tell me I am heavy enough!" [Page 2-3]

2. Unity in Marriage through Difficulties

Today the unrealistic and harmful Hollywood concept prevails, that is, that everything in marriage should be fun and sunshine. Unity in a Christian marriage can be strengthened in sharing together the setbacks and the problems and overcoming the incompatibilities which may not have been foreseen. [Page 3]

3. The Plain Means of Grace, Prayer, Teaching and Preaching

Spurgeon arrived in a city which was as unspiritual as London is today. It is true that church attendance was more in vogue, but the fact is that Spurgeon's ministry was a converting ministry unassisted by signs and wonders. Spurgeon refused even the assistance of an organ. It was the preaching that God blessed. There were baptisms and there was the Lord's Table as well as all kinds of outreach, but nothing which went in any way beyond the plain **means of grace**. This should encourage us greatly today. The plain means of **grace, prayer, teaching and preaching** require constant effort. These keep us dependent and humble. They have been the mark of every revival and spiritual awakening since the apostolic age. The spiritual awakening under Spurgeon was no exception. [Page 5]

4. Defend Faith At All Costs

... theology is organic. Its doctrines are interrelated. The stance taken on one truth affects the construction of others. The battle is always changing. What was regarded as a secondary truth yesterday may become primary today. **Luther pointed out we**

need to defend the Faith specifically where it is under attack. That attack varies constantly. New dangers threaten the Church. Increasingly ours is a pluralistic society and the pressure is mounting on evangelicals to compromise the uniqueness of the gospel as the only way of salvation. [Page 10]

Chapter 2, The Preacher's Progress---{A biography), by Geoff Thomas

5. All Elements of Services Were Present in New Testament Church

So the elements that constitute all Spurgeon's services were all those which were present in the New Testament church - the fervent love for God and for one another of a holy congregation of believers, prayer, psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, the reading of the Scriptures, preaching, the baptism of believers and the Lord's Supper (celebrated every Sunday morning). None of those elements absent from the New Testament had a place in his services: no organs and musical instruments, no drama, and certainly no dancing, even when there was this great moving of God's Spirit. Spurgeon said, 'When Christmas Evans preached in Wales, during a time of revival, he used to make the people dance,¹⁴ the congregation were so excited under his ministry that they positively danced. Now I do not believe that dancing was the work of the Spirit. Their being stirred in their hearts might be the Holy Spirit's work, but the Holy Spirit does not care to make people dance under sermons; no good comes of it. Now and then among our Methodist friends there is a great break-out, and we hear of a young woman in the middle of a sermon getting on the top of a form and turning round and round in ecstasy, till she falls down in a fainting fit, and they cry, "Glory to God." Now we do not believe that that is the work of the Spirit; we believe it is ridiculous nonsense, and nothing more ...

'Even the great Whitefield's revival at Cambuslang, one of the greatest and most remarkable revivals that was ever known, was attended by some things that we cannot but regard as superstitious wonders. People were so excited, that they did not know what they did. Now, if in any revival you see any of these strange contortions of the body, always distinguish between things that differ. The Holy Spirit's work is with the mind, not with the body in that way. It is not the will of God that such things should disgrace the proceedings. I believe that such things are the result of Satanic malice. The devil sees that there is a great deal of good doing; "Now," says he, "I'll spoil it all. I'll put my hoof in there, and do a world of mischief. There are souls being converted; I will let them get so excited that they will do ludicrous things, and then it will all be brought into contempt."

'Now if you see any of these strange works arising, look out. There is that old Apolyon busy, trying to mar the work. Put such vagaries down as soon as you can, for where the Spirit works, he never works against his own precept, and his precept is, "Let all things be done decently and in order." It is neither decent nor orderly for people to dance under the sermon, nor howl, nor scream, while the gospel is being preached to them, and therefore it is not the Spirit's work at all, but mere human excitement.'¹⁵

¹⁴This is hard to believe. We know that Spurgeon personally supported Christmas Evan's widow for many years.

¹⁵*The Great Revival*, a sermon on Isaiah 52:10; 'The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.' This sermon was preached on Sunday March 28, 1858 in the Music Hall, Surrey Gardens, and is to be found in *New Park Street Pulpit*, 1858, p 161ff. – [Page 32-33]

6. Sought Christ-likeness

Guthrie has the ability to dissolve a congregation into tears, and judged this to be the mark of great preaching. Spurgeon, no doubt, was not lacking in such a facility, but that ambition never entered his mind. He judged tears or laughter to be amongst the most rudimentary responses for any preacher to create and to have little to do with the presence of the Spirit of God, or in encouraging Christ-likeness. [Page 35]

7. Best Style in Preaching Is That Which Nobody Notices

Spurgeon said, 'People come to me for one thing, and it is no use my pretending to give them the opposite as well. I preach to them a Calvinist creed and a Puritan morality. That is what they want and that is what they get. If they want anything else they must go elsewhere. 'He said he was flattered when visitors grumbled because they detected nothing special in his preaching: 'The best style of preaching in the world, like the best style of dressing, is that which nobody notices.' [Page 38]

8. Loved His Wife

They were a sickly pair, but blissfully happy. He would send her a stream of cards, letters and love notes from all his travels. One from Pompei has this message scribbled on it, 'I send tons of love to you - hot as fresh lava.' If there was something she fancied, be it an opal ring or a bull-finch, he would get it for her. [Page 39]

9. Pew Rentals

People who wished to attend regularly paid for a seat on the three-monthly basis and were admitted by ticket. Others remained outside until five minutes before the beginning of the service, at which time they were allowed to take any empty seats. The rent from the 3,000 pew holders constituted the Tabernacle's chief income. There was no offering taken during the service. Spurgeon took no salary, living on the royalties from his publications. He had an annual income for £20,000 to £30,000 but was exceptionally generous and maintained his various ministries, leaving an estate of a mere £2,000 at the end of his life. It is known that there was a box near the entrance of the building to receive gifts for the support of the College, and there may well have been other boxes for gifts for the general support of the church. [Page 42]

10. Personally Interviewed Those Desiring Membership

... membership of the Tabernacle was restricted to those who had been baptised on profession of faith. Spurgeon again said that he 'would rather give up his pastorate than admit any man to the church who was not obedient to his Lord's command.'²¹ There were about 40 baptisms a month.

Spurgeon personally interviewed every applicant for membership. He once told this congregation, 'I lately saw forty persons one by one and listened to their experiences and proposed them to the church. I felt as weary as ever a man did in reaping the harvest. I did not merely give them a few words as enquirers, but examined them as candidates with my best judgment. I thought that if I had many days of that sort I must die, but I also wished it may be my lot to die in that fashion?'²²

²¹ Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1861, p 260.

²² Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1884,p310. -Page43

11. Don't Doubt God

The famous Methodist preacher, Dinsdale T Young, once heard Spurgeon say, 'O God, if some of us began to doubt thee we should begin to doubt our senses, for thou hast done such wonderful things for us. Thou has done more for us than thou didst for Thomas. Thou didst allow Thomas to thrust his finger into thy wounds; but thou hast often thrust thy finger into our wounds, and healed them.' [Page 45]

12. Prayers Full of Theology

Spurgeon's prayers were full of theology: 'Beware of an untheological devotion,' he would warn. There was care shown in acknowledging the differences in the persons and work of the members of the Godhead. He had studied God, delighted in God and walked with God, especially the Son of God. The blood of the everlasting covenant was everything to his devotion¹ [Page 45]

13. Discipline of Private Devotions

Spurgeon also taught that the best preparation for any public ministry was the discipline of private devotions: 'How dare we pray in our battle if we have never cried to the Lord while buckling on our armour!' he said to his students. He admired much the intense prolonged times of personal devotion of Alleine, Martyn and Brainerd - 'You cannot pray too long in private. The more you are on your knees alone the better,' he would say. [Page 46]

14. Pray as a Sinner

I frequently find that I cannot pray as a minister. I find that I cannot sometimes pray as an assured Christian, but I bless God I can pray as a sinner.³⁵

³⁵ Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1870, pp 559-60. - Page 47

15. The Word of God

Speaking of the Bible, Spurgeon said, 'This book is God's hand-writing; these words are God's ... Oh, book of books! And wast thou written by my God? Then will I bow before thee. Thou book of vast authority, thou art a proclamation from the Emperor of Heaven; far be it from me to exercise my reason in contradicting thee ... Oh! if you could ever remember that this Bible was actually and really written by God ... Oh, tremble, tremble, lest any of you despise it; mark its authority, for it is the Word of God ... This is the book untainted by any error; but it is pure unalloyed, perfect truth. Why? Because God wrote it. ³⁶

³⁶New Park Street Pulpit, 1855, pp 111-2. - Page 47

16. Preached from Every Part of Bible

He preached from every part of Scripture. It was for him the Aeolian harp through which the wind of the Spirit was always sweeping. He was not a man given to

speculative theories. 'I do not know what may be the peculiarity of my constitution, but I have always loved safe things. I have not, that I know of, one grain of speculation in my nature?8 He knew his God-given commission was to preach the word. 'I have been charged with being a mere echo of the Puritans, but I would rather be the echo of truth than the voice of falsehood. ,³⁹

³⁸The Autobiography, I, p 193. ; ³⁹An All Round Ministry, p. 17. Page 48

In that gospel, substitution was at its heart. 'It is the very marrow of the whole Bible, the soul of salvation, the essence of the gospel.' Spurgeon once said, 'I feel that if Christ did not actually and literally die as my substitute, the just for the unjust, I am not saved, and never can be at rest in my heart again. I renounce all preaching whatsoever if substitution be not the leading feature of my theme, for there is nothing worthy preaching when that is gone. I regard that doctrine as the fundamental truth of the gospel.' [Page 48]

17. None but Jesus

Spurgeon would often quote the words of Joseph Hart at the conclusion of his hymn, 'Come ye sinners, poor and needy' which say 'None but Jesus, None but Jesus, Can do helpless sinners good.' After he had been a preacher for fifteen years he could say, 'I have been preaching nothing but this name and it has a savour about it sweeter than ever; and if I had but one word more to speak, methinks this should be it: none but Jesus, none but Jesus.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1864, p 484. - Page 49

18. The Gospel in Plain Words

He deplored the cultivation of oratorical rhetoric that had spread throughout the Victorian pulpit. 'Oh, that all would tell the gospel out in plain words! I long that all may understand what I have to say: I would be more simple if I knew how. The way of salvation is far too important a matter to be the theme of oratorical displays. The cross is far too sacred to be make a pole on which to hoist the flags of our fine language. ,⁴⁶

⁴⁶Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1886, p 28. - Page 49

19. Prolific Correspondent

Spurgeon claims 'a weekly average of 500 letters had to be answered. It would not be possible for him to handle that many and he must have relied upon his secretaries to a great extent. Nevertheless, Spurgeon was certainly a prolific correspondent. [Page 55]

20. The Doctrines of Grace

Spurgeon was most anxious that his congregation be clear on the doctrines of grace. Bringing them to a conviction of this was part of his understanding of his responsibility as a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. He never departed from those convictions throughout his long ministry. That was the theology upon which his evangelistic success drew its strength. [Page 57]

21. Did Not Read Stories About Him in Print

Spurgeon once said that he rarely read any story in print about himself which had a shade of truth in it and he cautioned that 'no man's speeches or lectures should be judged by an ordinary newspaper summary, which in any case is a mere sketch, and in many instances a vile caricature.'⁷²

⁷² Eccentric Preachers, London, 1879, preface. - Page 57

22. God Rules Free Agents

I couple with what is called Calvinistic doctrine the other doctrine of free agency and responsibility, which seems to me to be equally true. My God is not a mere omnipotent being, who can rule dead materialism and compel insensible atoms to do his will; but he can rule free agents, leaving them absolutely free, and yet effecting all his purposes with them. God's eternal purposes are accomplished, and yet men remain responsible free agents both in their beginning and in their ending. Do you say that you do not understand how this can be? Neither do I, but I believe it.'⁷⁶

⁷⁶Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1883, p 245. - Page 58

23. Mercy Is Free to Be Had

'.... I think that if a poor sinner wants mercy and he sees that there is mercy to be had, he had better not pause to ask, "Did God decree me to have it?", but go and take it, and he will then find that in doing so, he is fulfilling God's decrees.'⁸⁰

⁸⁰Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1919, p 534. - Page 59

24. 5 Points.

Spurgeon saw more to Christianity than the five points of Calvinism, but he saw departure from those points in sober terms: 'I firmly believe the five great doctrines of Calvinism are, in some degree, a summary of the rest; they are distinctive points wherein we differ from those who "have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows". But there are many more doctrines beside these five; and all are alike precious, and all are alike valuable to the true believer's soul, for he can feed upon them to his heart's content.'⁸¹

⁸¹Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1898, p 410. - Page 59

25. Waiting for Signs and Wonders

The work of the Holy Spirit, by which men are quickened from their death in sin, is not inferior to the power which made men speak in tongues.'⁸⁶ On October 31st 1869 he preached a very relevant sermon for today upon the text, 'this is an evil generation: they seek a sign' (Luke 11 :20), which he entitled, 'A Word For Those Who Wait For Signs And Wonders.'⁸⁷

⁸⁶Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1884, p 386.

⁸⁷ Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1869. - Page 60

26. General Booth and Spurgeon Not Close

Modernism was his relentless foe and there could be no quarter given in his opposition to it. In this he stood shoulder to shoulder with General Booth of the Salvation Army whose pronouncements on religious unbelief were almost identical to his own. But the two men were not close. Privately, Spurgeon expressed the opinion that Booth was a fool for 'playing at soldiers', while Booth opposed Spurgeon's smoking tobacco and questioned his fitness to pastor the Tabernacle. ⁸⁸

⁸⁸ P S Kruppa, Charles Haddon Spurgeon---*A Preacher's Progress*, p 451. – Page 60

27. Graham and Lloyd-Jones Not Close

If Billy Graham is the natural successor of D L Moody, then there are many who agree with Paul Cook, 'If Spurgeon could be described as the modern Elijah then Lloyd-Jones was the modern Elisha upon whom his mantle fell.'⁹⁷ Yet the relationship between Graham and Lloyd-Jones was not cordial and the issue was initially over Graham's

invitation system of evangelism and later over Graham's cooperation with modernist preachers and Roman Catholics.⁹⁸ There is no way one can use the graciousness of Spurgeon towards Moody to justify those who today claim the theology of Spurgeon being unconcerned with Billy Graham's cooperative evangelism. Modernism is the great enemy of the Christian faith and every effort made to blur the distinction between liberalism and Christianity hinders the revival of New Testament religion.

⁹⁷Foundations, Spring 1992, 'The God of Spurgeon' p 2.

⁹⁸Cf D Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Fight of Faith*, Iain Murray, 1990, pp 302-42 and 440-2. - Page 62

28. Even in Apostate Church, A Few Believe

In his autobiography Spurgeon writes, 'I am not an outrageous Protestant generally and I rejoice to confess that I feel sure there are some of God's people even in the Romish Church ... In Brussels, I heard a good sermon in a Romish church. The place was crowded with people, many of them standing, though they might have had a seat for a halfpenny or a farthing; and I stood, too; and the good priest - for I believe he is a good man preached the Lord Jesus with all his might. He spoke of the love of Christ, so that I, a very poor hand at the French language, could fully understand him, and my heart kept beating within me as he told of the beauties of Christ and the preciousness of his blood, and of his power to save the chief of sinners. He did not say, "justification by faith," but he did say "efficacy of the blood," which comes to very much the same thing. He did not tell us we were saved by grace, and not by our works; but he did say that all the works of men were less than nothing when brought into competition with the blood of Christ, and that the blood of Christ alone could save.

"True, there were objectionable sentences, as naturally there must be in a discourse delivered under such circumstances; but I could have gone to the preacher, and said to him, "Brother, you have spoken the truth;" and if I had been handling his text, I must have treated it in the same way as he did, if I could have done as well. I was pleased to find my own opinion verified, in his case, that there are, even in the apostate church, some who cleave unto the Lord - some sparks of heavenly fire that flicker amidst the rubbish of old superstition, some lights that are not blown out, even by the strong wind of Popery.'¹⁰²

¹⁰² *The Full Harvest*, pp 21-2. Page 64

29. Division Among the Godly

James Durham of Scotland, one of Spurgeon's Scottish Puritan mentors ('Durham is a prince among spiritual expositors'), wrote a book entitled *The Scandal of Division among the Godly*. And that theme was crucially important to Spurgeon. He entered upon controversy with his brethren as reluctantly as any activity. To preach the gospel of grace in his pulpit and pastor his people was his sole concern, and yet providence constrained him to speak up when the lambs in that congregation were being led astray. Spurgeon said, 'Far be it for me to imagine that Zion contains none but Calvinistic Christians within her walls, or that there are none saved who do not hold our views.' Iain Murray comments, 'In other words Spurgeon saw - what we need to see - that a distinction must be drawn between errors and persons. All that are within the circle of Christ's love must be within the circle of our love, and to contend for the doctrine in a manner which ignores this truth is a rending of the unity of that Church which is His Body.'¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴*The Forgotten Spurgeon*, 1966, p 73. - Page 65

30. Full of Common Sense

Charles Haddon Spurgeon became John Ploughman, his wise spokesman, that shrewd Englishman full of common sense. For example, he refused to endow the Pastor's College, arguing in a wholly characteristic way, 'Why should I gather money which would remain after I am gone to uphold teachings which I might entirely disapprove? No! Let each generation provide for its own wants.'¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶all Mall Gazette, XXXIX, June 19, 1884, P 11. - Page 67

31. Fellowship with Christ in the Grave

At a time when there was much emphasis upon the rapture of the saints at the coming of Christ Spurgeon was unenthusiastic: 'If I die not I shall have lost what thousands have had who died, namely, actual fellowship with Christ in the grave. Let me have it, let me have it. Let me wear the clay-cold shape of death that was once Christ's, and sleep within the sepulchre as Christ did. To die and rise again, and be with Him forever is to complete the circle of the perfect.'¹¹¹

¹¹¹Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1868, p 599. - Page 69

Chapter 3, Spurgeon and his Gospel Invitations, by Erroll Hulse

32. All Gifts Combined in Spurgeon

It is about once a century that all the gifts seem to combine in one person. Spurgeon had a voice like Pavarotti, rich and powerful, a magnetic personality, a brilliant intellect, an obedient memory, and an amazingly fertile and imaginative mind. Let us give the praise to our Saviour for that. We have to struggle with our limitations. Nevertheless we can make sure that our Calvinistic doctrine inspires and helps our preaching rather than inhibits or hinders it. [Page 76]

33. Invitation of the Gospel to All

Holding consistently to the tension of divine sovereignty and human responsibility meant that Spurgeon wholeheartedly and without restriction of any kind, exhorted unconverted persons to repent and believe and to come to Christ as the Son of God and receive him immediately as Lord and Saviour. He addressed all sinners without exception, promising them that if they came to Christ he would in no way cast them out. Not for a moment did he ever think that they could believe and repent by their own power, but he did not allow himself be inhibited by that and nor did he ever encourage confusion in his listeners. Repent and believe they must to be saved. That was an immediate and urgent necessity. The details of enablement were beside the point. He exhorted them to come just as they were in all their sin and guilt. He guaranteed salvation if they would do that:

'O sinner, you can never perish if you will cast yourself at the foot of the cross. If you seek to save yourself you shall die. If you come just as you are, all black, all filthy, all hell deserving, all ill deserving, I am my Master's hostage, I will be answerable at the day of judgment for this matter, if he does not save you.'¹⁷

Spurgeon never pandered to the idea that gospel invitations should be confined to the spiritually hungry or those who could trace some drawing in themselves. For him human responsibility was the bottom line and he pressed outright responsibility upon all with no exceptions.

¹⁷*New Park Street Pulpit*, 1857, p 232. - Page 81-82

34. The Invitation Is Today

It was Spurgeon's custom to say, 'Remember I have no authority to ask you to come to Christ tomorrow. The Master has given you no invitation to come to him next Tuesday. The invitation is "Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the day of provocation. For the Spirit says today!"'

Concluding one sermon he said, 'For Now, mark it, Now is the accepted time to believe on him who justifies the ungodly. Oh! may the Holy Spirit give you faith that you may be saved now, for then you will be saved forever!'²⁷

Yet Spurgeon disdained using decisionist methods. He fiercely opposed the slick counseling methods of the enquiry room likening that to Romish priestcraft. 'Sometimes shut up that enquiry room. I have my fears about that institution if it be used in permanence, and as an inevitable part of the services. It may be a very wise thing to invite persons, who are under concern of soul, to come apart from the rest of the congregation, and have a conversation with godly people; but if you should ever see that a notion is fashioning itself that there is something to be got in the private room which is not to be had at once in the assembly, or that God is more at that penitent form than elsewhere, aim a blow at that notion at once. We must not come back by a rapid march to the old way of altars and confessionals, and have Romish trumpery restored in a coarser form. If we make men think that conversation with ourselves or with our helpers is essential to their faith in Christ, we are taking the direct line for priestcraft. In the gospel, the sinner and the Saviour are come together, with none between. Speak upon this point very clearly, "You, sinner, sitting where you are, believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, shall have eternal life. Do not stop till you pass into an enquiry-room. Do not think it essential to confer with me. Do not suppose that I have the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, or that these godly men and women associated with me can tell you any other gospel than this, he that believes on the Son has everlasting life".²⁸

²⁷*New Park Street Pulpit*, 1856, p 240.

²⁸*An All-Round Ministry*, p 372ff. Page 86

Chapter 4, Spurgeon and his Social Concern, by David Kingdon

35. Greatest of English Preachers

Sir Robert Ensor ... wrote that 'if native eloquence and wide popular appeal be the test, [Spurgeon] must be ranked among the greatest English preachers of any age.' ¹

¹R C K Ensor: England 1870-1914, (Oxford University Press, London, 1936) p140. -Page 91

36. Gospel and Social Action In One

In C H Spurgeon, the preacher of the gospel and the man of social action were one. The social action flowed from the compassion for people which was so marked a feature of his preaching. Commenting on the methods of the Roman Catholic Church in going to the poor with material relief in order to win them to the Church, Spurgeon said in a sermon preached in 1862, 'I would that we who have a purer faith, could remember a little more the intimate connection between the body and the soul. Go to the poor man and tell him of the bread of heaven, but first give him the bread of earth, for how shall he hear you with a starving body? Talk to him of the robe of Jesus' righteousness, but you will do it all the better when you have provided a garment with which he may cover his nakedness. It seems an idle tale to a poor man if you talk to him of spiritual things and cruelly refuse to help him as to temporals. Sympathy thus expressed, may be a mighty instrument for good.'²

²*Christian Sympathy - A Sermon for the Lancashire Distress, Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1862, p 630. - Page 65*

37. Compassion

For Spurgeon, it was axiomatic that faith in God's Son must lead to compassion towards one's fellow men and women and their children. For him compassion was empty unless it led to action to relieve the sufferings of the poor and needy. [Page 94]

38. Root of All -- the Bible

.... the most important root of Spurgeon's social concern was the Bible. As he read, meditated upon, preached and practiced the Book of books, his social concern grew and found expression in a network of Christian enterprises of which he was the centre, though aided by many who worked heartily with him.

Spurgeon did not read his Bible as a pietist who separated religion off into a private realm removed from social and political life. For Spurgeon the Christian religion is a 'present religion' to use the title of a sermon he preached in 1858 on 1 John 3 :2, 'Beloved now are we the sons of God'. he would permit no escape into otherworldliness to avoid the duties of the present moment, as if heaven us best anticipated by ignoring present needs. [Page 97-98]

39. Needs of Soul and Needs of Body Equal

Spurgeon in consequence was no dualist exalting the needs of the soul over the demands of the body. In a sermon entitled 'Camp Law and Camp Life' based on Deuteronomy 23:14 and printed in Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1890, Spurgeon begins thus: 'I will scarcely allude to the context, which you ought to notice at home, but I must say as much as this: the Lord cared for the cleanliness of his people while they were in the wilderness, literally so; and this text is connected with a sanitary regulation of the wisest possible kind. What I admire is that God the glorious, the all-holy, should stoop to legislate about such things. Such attention was very necessary for health and even for life, and the Lord in condescending to it, conveys a severe rebuke to Christian people who have been careless in matters respecting health and cleanliness. Sainly souls should not be lodged in filthy bodies. God takes note of matters which persons who are falsely spiritual speak of as beneath their observation. If the Lord cares for such things, we must not neglect them.'¹⁷

¹⁷'Camp Law and Camp Life', Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1880, p 661. - Page 98-99

40. Plight of Lancashire Cotton Mill Workers

On Sunday morning, 9 November, 1862, he preached a sermon on Job 30:25, 'Did I not weep for him that was in trouble? Was not my soul grieved for the poor?' The occasion of the sermon was 'The Lancashire Distress', the plight of the workers in the Lancashire cotton mills who were made unemployed because of the drying up of supplies of American cotton as a result of the ravages of the civil war then raging in the United States. Spurgeon recognizes 'the generous feeling towards the poor and suffering that exists in many an unregenerate heart'. Yet he insists that sympathy is especially a Christian duty. 'The Christian is a king; it becometh not a king to be meanly caring for himself ... The Christian's sympathy should ever be of the widest character, because he serves a God of infinite love ... To me a follower of Jesus means a friend of man. A

Christian is a philanthropist by profession, and generous by the force of grace; wide as the reign of sorrow is the stretch of his love, and where he cannot help he pities still. ²¹

²¹Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1862, pp 628-9. - Page 99

41. Sympathy Sanctified by Holy Spirit

You street-preachers, city missionaries, Bible women, and tract distributors, you who in any way seek to serve your Lord - a heart, a heart, a tender heart, a flaming heart, a heart saturated with intense sympathy, this, when sanctified by the Holy Spirit, will give success in your endeavours. ²³

²³ Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1862, p 629. - Page 100

42. Man's Inhumanity to Man

Though he did not idealize the poor he was prepared, much more than many preachers today, to see them as victims of man's inhumanity to man. Preaching on the parable of the Good Samaritan in 1877 on behalf of the Hospitals of London, he points out that, 'Certain paths of life are peculiarly subject to affliction.' The way which led from Jerusalem to Jericho was always infested with robbers. Jerome tells us that it was called the "bloody way" on account of the frequent highway robberies and murders which were committed...'

Spurgeon then applies the point with great force: 'Years ago there were many trades in which from want of precaution death slew its thousands. I thank God that sanitary and precautionary laws are better regarded and men's lives are thought somewhat more precious. Yet still there are ways of life which may each be called "the bloody way": pursuits which are necessary to the community, but highly dangerous to those who follow them. Our mines, our railways and our seas show a terrible toll of suffering and death. Long hours in ill ventilated work-rooms are accountable for thousands of lives, and so are stinted wages, which prevent a sufficiency of food from being procured. When I think of the multitude of our working people in this city who have to live in close, unhealthy rooms, crowded together in lanes and courts where the air is stagnant, I do not hesitate to say that much of the road trodden by the poor in London is as much deserving of the name of the way of blood as the road from Jerusalem to Jericho.'²⁴

²⁴'The Good Samaritan', Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1877, pp 351-2. - Page 100-101

43. Orphanhood Not a Child's Fault

... probably for reasons of economy, uniformity of dress tended to emerge, a trend which seems to have accelerated after Spurgeon's death, despite Spurgeon's frequently stated view that, 'Orphanhood is a child's misfortune and should not be treated as though it were his fault. In a garb which is the symbol of dependence, it is difficult if not impossible for an orphan to preserve a feeling of self-respect.'³⁷

³⁷Cited by Ian Shaw, p 76 from Stockwell Orphanage: Annual Report 1889. - Page 105

44. Open Cottages

As Paul Mersh points out, 'The prevailing form of provision for orphaned children at this time was the workhouse,'³⁸ and even Muller in Bristol still used barrack style accommodation. It was a friend of Spurgeon, Thomas Barnardo (who quite probably borrowed the idea from Spurgeon) who was to open 'cottages' at Barkingside in Essex in which house parents cared for small family units.

³⁸opcitp12. -Page 105

Chapter 6, Spurgeon and his Activity in Politics, by Tim Curnow

45. No Fear to Speak of Politics

Spurgeon was not one who subscribed to the notion held by some that Christians, and especially ministers, ought to remain aloof from the grubby world of politics. He was convinced, on the contrary, that the political sphere lay within the 'world' to which Christians were called to be an influence for good: 'It is not for the Christian', he wrote in 1879, 'to descend into the dirt and treachery of politics, but ... to draw politics up into the light and power of Christ ... The United States has shown us what horrible corruption is engendered by Christian men refusing to be the salt and light of the world; let it not be so among us.'¹ 'Every God-fearing man', he wrote in another place, 'should give his vote with as much devotion as he prays.' From the pulpit Spurgeon was careful not to 'sink the spiritual in the temporal', but, as we shall see, he had no qualms in expressing political opinions and even exerting political pressure outside the pulpit.

¹*Sword and Trowel*, bound volume for 1879, p 41. (All volumes of this magazine can be seen in the Evangelical Library, 78A Chiltern Street, London WI) - Page 134

46. War a Product of Sin

He maintained that war was the product of sin and that it was only by God's intervention in human affairs that the world enjoyed any peace at all. He knew that if a society's warlike character were to change, it would be by individual transformation through the preaching of the gospel: 'All soul saving', he argued, 'is a blow at the war-spirit.' The Christian '... becomes ashamed of blows and battles.' 'This peace-teaching', he continued, '...is but another name for practical gospel teaching.'¹¹

¹¹ Article entitled 'Periodical War Madness' in *Sword and Trowel*, April 1878. - Page 143

47. Reasons for War

There were nevertheless justifications for war which Spurgeon held to, according to D N Duke¹³: firstly, because governments are God's instruments, and governments have deemed war necessary; secondly, because of sin, war will not cease until the reign of Christ with his Second Coming; thirdly, wars are permitted by God for necessary and useful purposes; fourthly, because war may be the last resort of an oppressed people.

Some Christians argued that the great expansion of Protestant missions owed much to military aggression opening up the way for heathen lands to receive the gospel. As early as 1854, Spurgeon strongly rejected the idea that the gospel could be spread by conquest: 'Whenever England goes to war, many shout, "It will open a way for the gospel." I cannot understand how the devil is to make a way for Christ; and what is war but an incarnate fiend, the impersonation of all that is hellish in fallen humanity ... For English cannon to make way for an English missionary is a lie too glaring for me to believe for a moment.'

¹³In his helpful article, 'Asking the Right Questions about War' in *Evangelical Quarterly*, vol LXI No. 1 (January 1989) - Page 144

48. Live Life All for Christ

Spurgeon regarded it as his duty and privilege to exhaust his life in the cause of his Saviour. Every faculty, every opportunity must be used. 'I feel that, if I could live a thousand lives, I would like to live them all for Christ, and I should even then feel that they were all too little a return for His great love to me.'¹⁶

¹⁶Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1902, p 274. - Page 147

Curnow, Tim, Erroll Hulse, David Kingdon and Geoff Thomas, *A Marvelous Ministry: How the All-Round Ministry of H. Spurgeon Speaks to Us Today*. Ligonier, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1993.