

WRITTEN BY TONY HUTTER



52

**Spurgeon**

STORIES *for* CHILDREN

BOOK 2



**THE MILK'S  
BEEN STOLEN AGAIN!  
AND 51 OTHER GREAT STORIES**

DayOne

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To Sally, my wife, who has greatly helped  
me in the writing of this book



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## *Introduction*



Charles Haddon Spurgeon was born in 1834, and he died in 1892. After he was converted at the age of fifteen, the Lord used him a great deal. During his long ministry in London, many people came to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord. No one else in history up to that time had kept such a large congregation for such a long time.

In the first book, ‘How a Spider Saved a Man’s Life’, I told you about Spurgeon’s childhood, how he became a Christian, about his first church in Waterbeach in Cambridgeshire, and then how he became the pastor of what became known as the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. So now the account continues. Again, each story has a Bible reference, so that you can learn more about the Lord Jesus Christ and God’s will.





# 1

## *A Spoilt Garden!*



*“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”*

*Romans 12:21*

**H**ave you got a garden at the back of your house? Spurgeon lived in quite a large and very nice house, and he had a garden as well. He liked to go there, and look at the different flowers, and thank God for all the wonderful things that He had made.

One day he went into the garden, and soon noticed that some of the flowers didn't look as they should and the flower beds were untidy. He looked more closely, and wondered if an animal of some kind had got in and scratched at them. The garden was tidied up, but before long the same thing happened again. Flowers were looking bedraggled and the beds spoilt. It happened time after time!

It was on one Saturday afternoon that Spurgeon was walking in the garden thinking about a sermon he was to preach the next day, when he saw the culprit. Can you guess what kind of animal it was? It was a dog! It had got through the fence, and there it was, scratching at the flower beds and doing a lot of damage!

Spurgeon suffered from an illness called gout, which made walking quite painful sometimes, and so often he used a walking-stick to help him. He had the walking-stick with him, so he threw it with all his might at the dog to scare it away, and at the same time gave the dog some good advice

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about going home! “Go away, you naughty dog!” But what do you think that the dog did? Any ideas?

The dog picked up the stick, and brought it back to Spurgeon and laid it down at his feet, wagging his tail and looking very pleased with himself! He thought that he was helping Spurgeon, or perhaps he imagined that he wanted to play a game!

Well, Spurgeon really liked animals, and looking down at the happy dog, he felt quite ashamed that he had thrown his stick at him. He told the dog that he was welcome to stay in the garden as long as he liked, and to come as often as he pleased. In fact, for quite a while after that day, whenever the dog visited his garden, Spurgeon would secretly give him bones and other things to eat.

Spurgeon thought about the dog in his garden, and he used the story to teach a lesson. He had been cross with the dog, but the animal won Spurgeon over by trying to be helpful. It is the same lesson that the apostle Paul teaches us in *Romans 12:21*, “*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*”

If someone gets cross with you, it is easy to get cross back, and that leads to more trouble. The best thing is to ask the Lord to help you to be kind in return, and then you may find that the anger of the other person disappears. Like the dog, you could find that your enemy becomes your friend!



## 2

# *The Milk's Been Stolen Again!*



*“[Eve] saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise ... she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.”*

*Genesis 3:6*

Spurgeon had trouble at the back of his house, with that naughty but nice dog spoiling the flower beds, but he also had trouble at the front as well!

Does a milkman call at your house and leave bottles of milk? That doesn't happen so often today, but a few years ago most people had their milk delivered, usually very early in the morning. In Spurgeon's day, milk wasn't delivered in either plastic or glass bottles, but was poured into large cans.

One morning there wasn't as much milk in the can as there should have been—and it wasn't the milkman's fault. The next morning it was the same. And the next. What was happening to the milk? Somebody must be stealing it! It was disappearing so often that it was decided that someone in the house would get up early the next day, hide, and watch very carefully to see who was stealing the milk.

That morning the milkman left the milk in the can. After a while someone strolled across the yard towards the can. It was Spurgeon's cat, called Dick! He was quite big for a cat, weighing eighteen pounds! When he got to the milk can, he lifted the lid, put his paw in, and licked the milk off it! And he

did this until his thirst was quenched! Now the mystery was solved, and the thief was caught.

When Spurgeon heard of it, he thought that it was very funny, and he had the cat and the can brought to him so that he might see how it was done—and Dick showed him! Later, when guests came to the house, he would let Dick show them how he could steal milk. When Dick had performed his party piece, Spurgeon would clap in appreciation and stroke him!

So there was trouble in the back garden from a dog, and trouble in the front garden from a cat!

Spurgeon often drew out important lessons from everyday things. One day when he was talking to the students at the College (and I'll tell you about the College later), he spoke about cats' paws. Have you ever felt a cat's paw? It is so soft! But it is not always soft, for a cat has claws in his paws, and they are very sharp. He said that this is like temptation, which makes sin seem soft and nice at first, but the results will hurt us, and can even be deadly.

Eve discovered that in the Garden of Eden. Adam had been told by God not to eat from one particular tree in the garden, but Eve "*saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise,*" and so "*she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate*" (Genesis 3:6). They had disobeyed God and sinned! What seemed so nice turned out to be deadly. Now they were ashamed and afraid, and didn't want to meet God any more, and since God is holy and must punish every sin, He made them leave the beautiful garden. Because they represented the whole human race, this brought sin and misery into the world.

Always remember that although sin can look very pleasant, it eventually brings sorrow. It may look good, but it isn't good, and it won't do you any good.



### 3

## *A Hunting Dog!*



*“A word spoken in due season, how good it is!”*

*Proverbs 15:23*

**D**o you remember the story about the dog in Spurgeon’s garden? Well, I want to tell you another story about a dog—but it is not the kind of dog you are thinking of!

Spurgeon was the pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle at the Elephant and Castle in South London. When he first went to the church, the people met in a much smaller building. There were only 313 members, but fewer than a hundred of these were active. But before long there were more than two thousand members.

There were also elders and deacons to help Spurgeon, and lots and lots of people worked in the church in different ways. That is how it is meant to be—real Christians want to serve the Lord.

But where is the dog in this story? Well, it’s not really a dog, but a man! He was a member of the church and he was called “Spurgeon’s hunting dog”! He was called that because he was always ready to look for and find and help people who were in need. Hunting dogs pick up wounded birds, and this man helped wounded people.

The Metropolitan Tabernacle was a very busy church, and many meetings took place there. Of course, there were meetings on Sundays, but meetings were held on many other days too. In fact, every day the doors were opened at seven

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o'clock in the morning, and stayed open all day until eleven o'clock at night. All the time people were coming and going!

On Monday evenings a prayer meeting was held. At one of these meetings, Spurgeon was sitting on the platform at the front, and sitting near to him was his "hunting dog". Suddenly, Spurgeon realized that the chair on which the man had been sitting was empty and that he had gone! Whatever had happened to him? Spurgeon looked round for him, and couldn't see him at first. He seemed to have disappeared! But a little later on he saw the man right at the other end of the building. Spurgeon couldn't understand what had happened.

After the meeting had ended, Spurgeon found his hunting dog, and asked him why he had gone off so suddenly. The man said that as he looked round he saw the gas light shining on the face of a woman, and she looked so sad. So he got up, went to sit near her, and as soon as the meeting was over, talked to her, especially speaking to her about the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why he was called "Spurgeon's hunting dog"—he was always on the lookout for wounded people, people he might be able to help.

We should be like that man if we want to please the Lord. The Bible says, "*A word spoken in due season, how good it is!*" (*Proverbs 15:23*).

## *What's on the Platform with Spurgeon?*



*“So God created man in His Own image; in the image of  
God He created him; male and female He created them.”*

*Genesis 1:27*

**I**magine that you lived all those years ago when Spurgeon was alive, and you went to one of the meetings at which the great preacher was to speak. You look at the platform at the front, and there, sure enough, is Spurgeon himself—but you would never guess what else you would have seen on the platform with him—a big, stuffed gorilla!

You might remember that the Tabernacle was open every day, and as well as the Sundays services, the prayer meeting on Monday evenings, there were also meetings held on Friday evenings. These were lectures given about all kinds of things—history, science, nature—but all based on truths from the Bible. Spurgeon, for example, once gave a lecture on “Bats, Moles and Hedgehogs”! That must have been a fascinating talk, mustn't it?

Well, this particular evening, Spurgeon spoke about gorillas, and he had a stuffed one on the platform with him! Have you been to a zoo and seen a gorilla? I don't suppose that many of the people listening to Spurgeon would have seen one, because very few had been brought to Europe at that time. It must have been very interesting to have seen one for the first time, even though it was stuffed!

Spurgeon said something like this, “The gorilla is an enormous ape, and is said to be the closest to us of all the animals, more than the cat or dog, a giraffe or an elephant.” Then he mentioned a man called Charles Darwin, who had put forward the idea in 1859 in a book called “On the Origin of the Species”, that people had developed from animals over millions of years, instead of being directly created by God a few thousand years ago. Spurgeon said, “Charles Darwin has said that we started off as guinea pigs, or oysters, or starfishes. But I believe that there is a great difference between us and gorillas and apes.”

Then he turned and spoke to the stuffed gorilla, and said something like this, “You cannot become us, and we cannot become you!” And then he went on to speak of the sad fact that many people make out that the Bible is wrong, wrong about so many things, and especially wrong about creation.

Many people in the meeting hadn’t had a very good education and were very interested not only in what the Bible says, but they also wanted to learn more about the world God has made. So Spurgeon went on to describe the countries where gorillas are found in Africa. Then he spoke about missionary work there. Have you ever heard or met someone who works as a missionary in Africa? Can you remember which country they work in?

During his talk about gorillas, Spurgeon quoted a verse from the Bible: “*So God created man in His Own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them*” (*Genesis 1:27*). You may have heard of the theory of evolution, the idea that the Bible is wrong about how God made man. You need to remember that that is only an idea, with no proof. Far better to believe what the Bible, which is the Word of God, says about where we came from—from the hand of an almighty and very good God.

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## 5

### *Important People!*



*“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.”*

*1 Timothy 2:1–2*

**T**here were many poor people who lived near Spurgeon’s church, the Metropolitan Tabernacle, and a lot of them turned from their sins and trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ. But although most who came to hear Spurgeon preach were quite ordinary people, some important and famous people also went to hear him. For example, the Lord Mayor of London, who was Jewish; the Chief Commissioner of Police; sometimes it was said sixty or seventy Members of Parliament were there; and it was even reported that some members of the Royal Family sometimes went!

But I want to tell you about two people in particular. One was the Prime Minister. Do you know who is the present Prime Minister of England? When Spurgeon was preaching, it was Mr. William Gladstone. Once, he went to the Tabernacle with his eldest son. They both met Spurgeon in the vestry, and then came out onto the platform with him and the elders and deacons of the church. I don’t suppose the Prime Minister has ever come to a meeting in your church, has he?

Spurgeon and Mr. Gladstone got to know each other quite well, and on a number of occasions Spurgeon was invited to





10 Downing Street and he did go there at least once. (Do you know what is special about 10 Downing Street? It is the house where the Prime Minister lives in London.) Mr. Gladstone also asked Spurgeon if he would visit him in his country home near Chester.

On one occasion Spurgeon was invited to go to Downing Street for dinner on the following Saturday evening, but he wrote back and said, “I cannot be out on a Saturday night, for it is the only time I have to get my sermons!” He thought it more important to prepare for preaching God’s Word than to have dinner with the Prime Minister!

The other person I want to tell you about was even more important than the Prime Minister—at least she was in Holland! Spurgeon went on a preaching tour in Holland, and lots of people went to hear him. He said that the poor people were so glad to meet him and shook his hands so much that they almost pulled him to pieces! But then he got an invitation to go and meet someone really important there—the Queen! (Do the English people have a King or Queen? Do you know his or her name?) Of course, Spurgeon went to meet the Queen, and he spent an hour and a quarter talking with her. He said, “I lifted up my soul to God that I might talk of nothing but Christ, and might preach to her nothing but Jesus; and it pleased the Master to help me.”

The Bible tells us that we are all sinners in need of forgiveness through trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that includes Prime Ministers and Kings and Queens. The Bible also tells us that we should pray for people in important positions. *“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence”* (1 Timothy 2:1–2).



## 6

### *No Hiding from God*



*“Why do you pretend to be another person?”*

*1 Kings 14:6*

God used Spurgeon in an astonishing way sometimes, and led him to say things that applied to some of the people who were listening to him in the Tabernacle. I want to tell you now about two such people.

It was the last Sunday of July, 1864. A man had been converted and became a regular worshipper at the Tabernacle, but his wife never went, and was unhappy about him going. On this particular Sunday evening, the husband as usual went to church, leaving his wife at home. But she was very curious about Spurgeon and his church, so much so that she decided to go herself. She certainly didn't want to be recognized by anybody, especially by her husband. What would you do if you didn't want people to know who you were? You might disguise yourself! And that is what she did! She put on a thick veil and a heavy coat, which took some time, and so she arrived at church a little late. Anyway, she went to the upper gallery—there were two galleries in the church. Well, the service had started; but imagine her surprise when it seemed that Spurgeon pointed at her up high in the gallery, and read his text from the Bible: *“And so it was, when Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps as she came through the door, he said, ‘Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why do you pretend to be another person?’”* (1 Kings 14:6). She was quite amazed, but even more so when in his sermon Spurgeon

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said something like this, “Perhaps I have described someone here tonight! If I have, don’t look to other people and say, ‘I think this refers to somebody else.’ If it applies to you, take it for yourself. I do not suppose there is anybody here disguised, but whoever you may be, disguised or not, you cannot hide from God.” She went home, and a little later her husband arrived and she told him that she had gone to the Tabernacle. She said, “You must have told Spurgeon that I was up there in the gallery!” The poor husband, of course, said that that was impossible. He didn’t know she was there, so how could he have told Spurgeon? But I’m sorry to tell you that she didn’t believe him!

Spurgeon used to give titles to his sermons, and the one the wife heard is entitled, “A Hearer in Disguise”, and you can still read it! What Spurgeon said is true: you cannot hide from God! He knows all about you, and you ought to listen to what He says.

The next day, at the Monday evening prayer meeting, Spurgeon mentioned someone else. He had been preaching at a very big place in London called the Exeter Hall. He had suddenly pointed in a certain direction and said, “Young man, those gloves you are wearing have not been paid for. You have stolen them from your employer!”

After the meeting, a young man wanted to speak to Spurgeon. He looked very worried and anxious. He went into the vestry, and put a pair of gloves on the table in front of Spurgeon. He said, “This is the first time I have robbed my master, and I will never do it again! You won’t tell, sir, will you? It would kill my mother if she heard that I had become a thief!”

I’m sure that young man learned the lesson God wanted to teach him—not only that stealing is wrong, but also that God knows all that we do, even if we do it secretly.



# 7

## *Spurgeon's College*



*"Fear not, for I am with you."*

*Isaiah 41:10*

**M**any people turned from their sins and trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ through Spurgeon's preaching, and one of these was a young man called Thomas Medhurst. Now, when anyone gets to know the Lord Jesus, that person wants others to get to know Him as well. Thomas thought that he must tell others about Jesus, and so he began preaching in the open air in some very rough parts of London. That wasn't at all easy, but he had another problem—although he preached God's Word, he hadn't been very well educated and his English was poor.

I expect you go to school, or maybe your parents teach you at home, but I'm sure that one of the subjects you learn is English. You learn how to speak and write properly, how to put words together in sentences; you learn about nouns and verbs, adverbs and adjectives. You also learn about punctuation—where to put commas and full stops in sentences. But Thomas didn't know much about all that!

Some people thought that Thomas should not preach because his English was so bad. Maybe he said something like this: "You may think you ain't a sinner, but I tells you you is!" Can you explain what is wrong with that sentence?

Well, Spurgeon had a talk with Thomas, who admitted that his English wasn't very good, but he said, "I must preach, sir, and I shall preach unless you cut off my head!"

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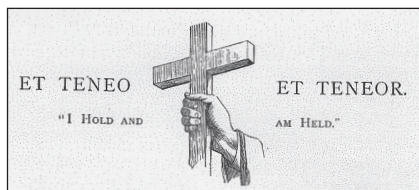


Spurgeon reported back to the people who had complained about Thomas, and they took his words very seriously, and said, “Oh, you can’t cut off Mr. Medhurst’s head, so you must let him go on preaching!”

But Spurgeon thought that he ought to do something for Thomas to help him so that he might be able to preach better, so he arranged for Thomas to be better educated, especially to be trained to preach the Word of God, and Spurgeon himself bore the cost of that. Thomas eventually went on to become the pastor of a church, and the Lord used him a great deal.

Soon more young men came forward, and over the years hundreds went to that College to be trained as pastors and missionaries. That was the beginning of what became Spurgeon’s College, or to give it its proper name in those early days, the Pastors’ College.

The College had, and still has, a motto and a logo—the motto is in Latin and means, “I hold and am held”, and the logo is of a cross being held by a hand. The Lord’s servants hold out the cross before people—that is they tell of Jesus Christ and His death upon the cross, explaining that He died there bearing the punishment due to all those who will trust in Him. And as His servants speak of Christ and His cross, so the Lord holds them safe in His hands. If we trust in Him and seek to serve Him, we can take for ourselves the encouraging words of *Isaiah 41:10*: “*Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.*”



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## *Who Sounds Like Whom?*



*“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher.”*

*Luke 6:40*

Thomas studied well, and his English improved, and so did his understanding of the Bible. Of course, he got to know Spurgeon better and better, for not only did he regularly hear Spurgeon preach, but once a week he went to Spurgeon’s home and spent several hours there, studying and talking.

After a while, as he continued his studies, Thomas began preaching at a church in Bexley Heath on the outskirts of London. The people there got to like him very much, and I’m sure they learnt a lot through his preaching.


Then the church asked Spurgeon to preach there, which he did. After the service, Spurgeon overheard two elderly ladies discussing the sermon. One of them asked, “How did you like Mr. Spurgeon?”

The other replied, “Oh, very well; but I should have enjoyed the service more if he hadn’t imitated our dear Mr. Medhurst so much!”

She thought that Spurgeon sounded like Thomas, but really it was the other way round, wasn’t it? Thomas had heard Spurgeon so often that when he preached he sounded quite like Spurgeon!


I heard of another example like that.

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Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones was a very well known preacher who ministered at Westminster Chapel in London last century. Over the years he had a number of assistant pastors. Somebody once asked for a recording of one of the assistant's preaching, and he was given it, but he returned it, saying that it was the wrong one, for it was the Doctor preaching. The assistant sounded just like the Doctor, for he had heard him so often and, probably without realizing it, he copied his style!

Jesus said, "*A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher*" (Luke 6:40). Thomas was taught by Spurgeon, and so he became a little like Spurgeon. The Doctor's assistant was taught by the Doctor, and so he became a little like the Doctor. And if we are taught by Jesus, and do what He says, we will become a little like Jesus.



That is what God plans for each person who trusts in Jesus, that more and more in our lives we become more and more like Jesus.





## 9

### *A Poor Student*



*“If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things that are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”*

*James 2:15–17*

**T**he Pastors’ College began with one student, Thomas, but more and more men wanted to come and be trained to be pastors or missionaries, and that is how the College grew. God blessed and used many of these men. For example, one man went to a church which had only eighteen members, but within a few years he had baptized eight hundred people who had become Christians.

Usually the course at the College lasted for two years. Most of the men who went there were quite poor, and so couldn’t afford to pay towards their tuition. Spurgeon decided that those who had a lot of money should pay, but most couldn’t. He made it a rule that no one was to be refused a place in the College because of a lack of money.

Spurgeon got other people to give the lectures at the College, but he usually interviewed each man who applied to come, and he also would speak to all the students on Friday afternoons. So it was that he got to know them all very well.

One day he noticed that one of the student’s clothes were badly worn. He was wearing old trousers and an old jacket,





and he didn't look very smart. I'm sure that they were clean, but he just didn't have enough money to buy new clothes.

Spurgeon stopped this student and gave him a note, and asked him to deliver it to a certain address and wait for a reply. Well, of course, the student was pleased to be of any service to Spurgeon, and so he took the note, wondering what it was about and what kind of place he had to deliver it to.

He got to the address, and discovered that it was a tailor's shop—a shop where clothes were made and sold. But he still had no idea what was in the note. Anyhow, he handed it over to the tailor and waited for a reply. Can you guess what the tailor did?

Imagine the young man's surprise when the tailor got out his tape measure and measured him for a new suit and a new coat! And guess who was paying for it all? Spurgeon himself, of course! As well as being surprised, the student was very pleased and thankful.

There are many people, especially in some other countries, who are very poor, so poor that many of them don't have nice clothes and, worse than that, they don't have enough food to eat. We ought to think about them, and help them if we can by giving to missionary societies that help the poor as well as tell people about the Lord Jesus.

James in his letter says, "*If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things that are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead*" (James 2:15–17).



## 10

### *A Proud Man Applies to the College*



*“Pride goes before destruction, and a  
haughty spirit before a fall.”*

*Proverbs 16:18*

One Sunday morning, after the morning service, Spurgeon went into the vestry, and was told that a young man had to speak to him. Spurgeon always wanted to be available to people, so the young man came in.

“Sir,” he said, “I want to enter your College, and should like to enter it at once!” Spurgeon replied, “Well, we don’t have room at the moment, but we shall consider you.” The man said, “But mine is a remarkable case, sir. You have probably never received such an application as mine before!”

Spurgeon therefore gave the young man an application form to enter the College, and told him to come back the following day.

The man claimed to have read a great many books, and he told Spurgeon that many people could testify that he could preach well, and if he could have a proper interview he was sure that he could convince Spurgeon of his ability at once. As Spurgeon listened he realized that the man was very proud of himself.

“We cannot have you in the College!” said Spurgeon. “Why not?” asked the young man. “I will tell you plainly,” said Spurgeon. “You are so dreadfully clever that I could not



insult you by receiving you into our College, where we have none but rather ordinary men.”

The man looked at Spurgeon very severely, and said with dignity, “Do you mean to say that because I have an unusual genius, and have produced in myself a gigantic mind such as is rarely seen, I am refused admittance in your College?” “Yes,” answered Spurgeon, “for that very reason.”

“Then, sir, you ought to allow me a trial of my preaching abilities! Choose any text you like, or suggest any subject you please, and here, in this very room, I will speak about it, or preach on it, and you will be surprised!”

“No,” Spurgeon replied, “thank you, I would rather not have the trouble of listening to you.” “Trouble!” said the man. “I assure you it would be the greatest possible pleasure you could have!” “Yes,” said Spurgeon, “it might be, but I feel myself unworthy of so great a privilege!”

Spurgeon was certainly right about the man’s pride, wasn’t he? Sadly, he later heard that the man got into trouble with the law, and was accused in court of a crime.

If that young man knew the Bible so well, he should have known what *Proverbs 16:18* says: “*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*” We should never be proud of ourselves and of what we have done. Rather we should be humble and give all the glory to God.

## *Two Humble Men Apply to the College*



*“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition  
or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each  
esteem others better than himself.”*

*Philippians 2:3*

**M**ore and more men felt that the Lord wanted them to serve Him, and, having heard about the College and the fact that it was based on the Bible, applied to come so that they could learn how to better teach and preach God’s truth.

One man walked all the way from the Highlands of Scotland down to London to get to the College! See if you can find out roughly how many miles he had to walk. I’m sure that he had to stop many times on the way! How long do you think that it took him?

On one occasion two young men who knew each other and who were friends both applied for training at the College. They came together and, as usual, Spurgeon himself interviewed them to decide whether or not they should be admitted.

Spurgeon spoke to one and said something like this: “Well, you and your friend have applied to come to the College, but suppose we only had one place and couldn’t accept you both—what do you think of your friend? Is he godly? Is he gifted? Do you think he would do well at the College?”

The young man replied, “Oh, he is very godly and gifted,

and I'm sure that he would get on better at the College than I would!"

Then Spurgeon interviewed the other one and said to him, "Well, you and your friend have applied to come to the College, but suppose we only had one place and couldn't accept you both—what do you think of your friend? Is he godly? Is he gifted? Do you think he would do well at the College?"

So this young man answered, "Oh, he is very godly and gifted, and I'm sure that he would get on better at the College than I would!"

Spurgeon was so pleased at what they had both said about each other, and their humility, that he accepted them both into the College for training!

In the previous story we met a proud man, and one of the things that God hates is pride. The opposite of pride is humility, which means being humble and lowly. That is something that God is pleased to see in us. And one of the ways in which we can show humility is by thinking that others are better than we are.

The apostle Paul wrote, "*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself*" (Philippians 2:3). Those two young men were thinking like that, and it pleased Spurgeon, and, more importantly, it pleased God.



## 12

### *A Little Man up a Tree!*



*“And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.’ So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully.”*

*Luke 19:5–6*

The students at the College were always pleased to see Spurgeon, and they especially looked forward to Friday afternoons when he would speak to them. Sometimes he would write a subject or topic on little pieces of paper, and put them all in a hat, and then each student had to put his hand in and pick out one of the pieces of paper and then talk about whatever was written on it! How would you like to do that?

One day Spurgeon did this, and one of the students pulled out a piece of paper on which was written the name “Zacchaeus”. Do you remember the story of Zacchaeus? It is recorded in the first ten verses in chapter 19 of the Gospel of Luke.

Perhaps you know a song about Zacchaeus. It goes like this:

Now Zacchaeus was a very little man,  
And a very little man was he;  
He climbed up into a sycamore tree  
For the Saviour he wanted to see,  
The Saviour he wanted to see.

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Now when the Saviour passed that way,  
He looked up into the tree  
And said, "Now Zacchaeus, you come down  
For I'm coming to your house for tea,  
I'm coming to your house for tea."

The student didn't have very long to think about what he was to say, but, of course, he remembered the story. This is what he said:

"Mr. President and brethren, my subject is Zacchaeus, and it is therefore most appropriate for me; for, first, Zacchaeus was little of stature—so am I! Secondly, Zacchaeus was very much 'up a tree'—so I am! Thirdly, Zacchaeus 'made haste, and came down'—and so will I!"

And having said that, he sat down! The other students called on him to go on, but Spurgeon said, "No, he could not add anything to such a perfect little speech without spoiling it!"

The Bible tells us this, "*And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.' So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully*" (Luke 19:5-6).

Sometimes the Lord Jesus comes to people today. He stops and looks at them, and says, "Today I must stay in your heart!" It is wonderful to do what Zacchaeus did, and to "receive Him joyfully."



## 13

### *Filling the Church!*



*“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me ...”*

*Acts 1:8*

If you go to a church, perhaps a pastor preaches there most weeks. If so, what is his name? Do you know how long he has been the pastor? And do you know how the church got to hear of him, and how they called him to be the pastor?

Nowadays there are many churches looking for pastors who will faithfully preach God’s Word and watch over the people of God. Sometimes it is difficult for them to hear of men whom the Lord is calling to serve Him in this way. Churches sometimes write to good, sound Bible Colleges to find out if any men nearly finishing their studies are seeking the Lord’s guidance about where they should serve Him.

Spurgeon was well known as the principal of the Pastors’ College, and also, of course, he knew all the students very well. So it was that often churches would write to him asking if he could recommend a man to be the pastor of their church.

On one occasion the deacon of a church wrote to Spurgeon to ask if he could send them a student who could “fill the chapel”! What do you think he meant by that? I think that he meant a man who was a very good preacher, so good that many people would want to come and hear him. But maybe he was expecting too much of one man, and wasn’t thinking of the responsibility of the other people in the church.

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So Spurgeon wrote back to say that he didn't have a student big enough to fill the church! But, he also said he could send one who would do his best to fill the pulpit, and preach the gospel faithfully. He went on to say that he thought that it was the business of the people to try to bring people to church. The pastor can fill the pulpit, and the people should try to fill the church!

Some Christians expect others to do all the work—maybe the pastor or the elders or the deacons or the Sunday School teachers or the youth workers. But all God's people should be involved in the work of the church. It takes all the church to do all the work of the church.

You probably are not yet a member of a church. Later on, when you are older and if you are a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you should be baptized and join a good, Bible-believing church. But even now, if you want to serve the Lord, maybe you could invite a friend to the Sunday School or to a youth meeting or to a Sunday service.

The Bible tells us that all believers should be witnesses. Jesus said, "*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me ...*" (Acts 1:8).



## 14

### *Pastors' Pay*



*“Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,’ and, ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages.’”*

*1 Timothy 5:17–18*

**M**aybe the church you go to has a full-time pastor, which means that he has no other job to do but spends most of his time praying, studying the Bible, preaching and teaching the Bible, visiting people who go to the church and also trying to contact people who don't go to church but who need to hear about the Lord Jesus Christ. That is a lot to do! And it is a great responsibility. But like everybody else, he needs money to buy food and pay bills. Maybe he has a family to support as well.

Where do you think the money comes from? Who gives it to him? It doesn't come from the government—it comes from his church! That is why churches have offerings or collections, to pay for all the expenses of the church, including paying the pastor if there is one.

I want to tell you about another letter Spurgeon received, and again it was from a church looking for a pastor. The officers of a small country church wrote to him asking if he knew of anyone who might become their pastor, and in the



letter they mentioned the amount of money they would give him, and it was a ridiculously small amount!

What do you think Spurgeon thought of that? He wrote back in reply, “The only individual I know who could exist on such a stipend (which means the pastor’s pay) is the angel Gabriel! He would need neither cash nor clothes; and he could come down from heaven every Sunday morning, and go back at night, so I advise you to invite him!”

I wonder what the officers of that church thought when they received Spurgeon’s letter! Maybe, after reading it, they realized that they would have to give more to any pastor they called.

We should be concerned about the Lord’s people who serve Him full-time, whether as pastors in this country or as missionaries here or overseas. Certainly we should pray for these people, but we should also give, if we can, so that they have enough to live on.

I once heard an American preacher say that he had heard of some missionaries who had been sent used tea-bags from supporters back home! That is disgraceful, isn’t it?

The Bible says, “*Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,’ and, ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages.’*” (1 Timothy 5:17–18).



## 15

### *A Perfect Pastor!*



*“One and the same Spirit works all these things,  
distributing to each one individually as He wills.”*

*1 Corinthians 12:11*

One of the biggest decisions for any church is the calling of a pastor. He will be the one who does most of the preaching, so must have a good Bible knowledge, be able to explain its meaning and how it applies to people. He must have a desire that others be saved, so should be able to challenge people about their relationship with God, and tell them clearly that in order to be saved they must repent of their sins and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and His death upon the cross. He must preach the gospel. He must also have a love for the church members, so that like a shepherd he leads, guides and protects them. That really is what the word “pastor” means—a shepherd.

I have told you about two churches that wrote to Spurgeon enquiring about a pastor, and I’ll tell you about one more. A deacon wrote saying that his church wanted someone “whom they could look up to as their leader”. Well, that was all right, wasn’t it? A pastor should be someone who can be looked up to. But the deacon also sent a very long list of qualifications and qualities that the pastor would have to have!

Spurgeon looked at this long list, and thought that the church was asking too much of one man! So he wrote back with two suggestions.

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The first suggestion was this. The deacon should take a large sheet of brown paper and cut out a pastor of the size and shape that was wanted! I don't think that the deacon tried that, do you?

The other suggestion was that the church could ask for the services of a very famous preacher who had died some years previously and was in heaven, for, Spurgeon said, he couldn't think of anyone else who could fulfil all the church's requirements! I'm sure that the deacon didn't try that either, for people who have gone to heaven cannot come back, and I'm sure they wouldn't want to either!

Do you see the point? No man in this world is perfect, or gifted in every way. Some pastors are very good preachers; others may not be quite so good at preaching, but be gifted in personal work. I knew a pastor once who wasn't a brilliant preacher. In fact, when I heard him in his own church, on one or two occasions in the sermon he couldn't think of the right word to use, so he asked the congregation, and they came up with various suggestions until one of them shouted out the right word! But I know that he was very good at getting alongside people and giving them good, biblical advice. And the church members really loved him! A church that looks for a perfect pastor is going to be disappointed! The Bible says, "*One and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills*" (1 Corinthians 12:11). To some He gives one gift, to another person a different gift.

So it was that the deacon received Spurgeon's letter with its two suggestions, neither of which was any good! But the letter made the deacon think, and he wrote back with more reasonable requirements. Eventually a man went to that church from the College, a man whose ministry was greatly appreciated and whom the Lord used.



## 16

### *Hearing!*



*“When they hear, Satan comes ... and takes away  
the word that was sown in their hearts.”*

*Mark 4:15*

**O**ften as people get older, they get a little deaf. I have heard some older people say that although they went to a meeting in church and tried hard to listen, they couldn't hear all that the preacher said. Sometimes people like that tend to sit at or near the back of the church, so maybe they ought to sit nearer the front! But it is a shame if people go to hear God's Word and miss out because they are a little deaf. Preachers also have a responsibility to speak clearly and loudly enough.

Many churches today have an amplification or loudspeaker system. Next time you go to church, see if there is a microphone in the pulpit and speakers somewhere in the building.

When Spurgeon was alive, loudspeaker systems hadn't been invented, and so preachers had to rely just on their voice. Spurgeon himself had a very powerful and wonderful voice, and people could hear him a long way away.

On one occasion he was speaking to his students, and said that one of the most important things is for a preacher to be heard! It is no use preaching a wonderful sermon if people cannot hear it, is it? He said it ought to be possible to whisper in a large building and still be heard! The students looked at him in disbelief! He then said to them, “Do you not think so?”

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Very well, gentlemen, let us go to the Tabernacle and scatter over the building!” The College was right next door, so they went out across the College yard and into the Tabernacle. You might remember that the building was huge, seating 3,600 people with standing room for another 2,000. It also had two galleries.

Some of the students went up to the back seats in the top gallery, as far away from the pulpit as possible. Spurgeon got up into the pulpit with a smile and whispered, “Gentlemen, if you hear what I say, show your pocket handkerchiefs!” What do you think happened? All 60 or 70 students got out their handkerchiefs and waved them! They had all heard his whisper all that distance away! Then he said much more loudly, “Gentlemen, put them away! They are not clean!”

The most important message you will ever hear is how to have your sins forgiven and to be right with God. The Bible has many other important things for us to learn which will help us to honour Him and to live a worthwhile life. I hope that your hearing is good, but we can all hear things without really listening, can’t we? We hear the words, but we don’t think about them.

Jesus told the Parable of the Sower, and this is what He said about some of the seed: *“And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts”* (Mark 4:15). Next time you are in church or Sunday School, listen with your ears and listen in your heart. Don’t let Satan snatch away the Word of God from you.



## *Strange Presents!*



*“Praying always with all prayer.”*

*Ephesians 6:18*

**I**t’s nice to get presents, isn’t it? I expect that you get gifts on your birthday and at Christmas, and maybe at other times. Do you remember what was the last one you received? Are you still using it? Can you think of the most unusual one you ever had? Maybe you didn’t know what it was at first, and someone had to tell you!

Spurgeon knew all the students in the College very well, and he also had a good sense of humour. On one occasion at the end of term, just before the students had a holiday, he told them that if he could have afforded it he would have given every student a present. You would never guess what some of those gifts were!

To one he said he would have given a corkscrew, to another a sausage stuffer, and to another a canister of gunpowder! What strange presents! Can you think why he chose them?

Spurgeon looked at one of them and said, “To you I would give a corkscrew, because although you have a good deal in you, you cannot get it out.” Some bottles have a cork instead of a top to unscrew, and the only way to get to the drink is to use a corkscrew to pull the cork out. I think that Spurgeon meant that that student understood a lot of the Bible, but found it difficult to explain it to others. It was in him, but he





found it difficult to get it out! If he was going to be a pastor or missionary, he needed help to teach God’s truth to others.

Then Spurgeon looked at another student and said to him, “As for you, my brother, I should give you a sausage stuffer, for you need to have something put into you.” I am sure that you eat sausages sometimes. What shape are they? You might say that they are sausage-shaped! The meat is put into a kind of skin to hold it together. A sausage stuffer enables the butcher to do this. This student had the opposite problem to the first one, didn’t he? The first one had a lot inside which he found difficult to get out, but the second didn’t have enough inside. Spurgeon meant by this that he would have to take in the truths of the Bible more, just like the meat is put into the skin by the stuffer!

To a third student Spurgeon said, “And to you I would give a canister of gunpowder to be set alight exactly when you get to your second point in your sermon to stir you up!” He had heard this student preach, and the man did very well in his first point, but when he got to the second he slowed down, and seemed to lose his enthusiasm, and lost the attention of the congregation. When a canister of gunpowder explodes it certainly wakes people up! This was what this student needed during his preaching—something to wake him up and keep the congregation awake!

Spurgeon saw that each of those students needed something to make them more useful in the Lord’s work, and, of course, none of the Lord’s servants is perfect. That is why we should pray for those who preach God’s Word. Paul, even though he was an apostle, realized his need for the prayers of God’s people. He wrote, “*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel*” (Ephesians 6:18–19).



## *An Operation and a Coat!*



*“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, Who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”*

*James 1:5*

**M**ost of the students at the College, at the end of their course, were going to become pastors of churches or go to foreign countries as missionaries. What do you think that they would need to prepare them for serving the Lord?

Of course, first of all they must know and love the Lord Jesus Christ for themselves. Then they must have a good knowledge and understanding of the Bible. The great task of any servant of the Lord is to explain what God’s Word says and how it applies to people. Then also they must have a concern and love for the people to whom they go, whether in a church or on the mission field. The students in the College spent some years learning God’s truth and how to teach it to others.

But you would never guess what Spurgeon suggested that one student should have before leaving the College to become a pastor.

Spurgeon said to him, “I want you to undergo an operation before you leave!” That must have been a surprise for the student! He continued, “I am going to put out one of your eyes, to stop up one of your ears, and to put a muzzle on your mouth!” That sounds like a very big operation, doesn’t it? An operation on his eyes and his ears and his mouth!



Spurgeon then said, "Then you had better have a new suit of clothes before you go." That sounded better, didn't it? But there was more to come: "And you must tell the tailor to make in the coat a pocket without a bottom!" Have you ever heard of a pocket without a bottom? Then he asked the student, "Do you understand my parable?"

Can you understand what Spurgeon was getting at? Think about it. Certainly Spurgeon didn't mean that he was going to give the student the kind of operation that is carried out in hospital! But what a strange coat having a pocket without a bottom!

Of course, the student had to give an answer to Spurgeon's question, so he said, "I think so, sir, but I should like your interpretation." That was a wise answer, wasn't it?

Here is Spurgeon's explanation: "Well, there will be many things in your people that you must look at with the blind eye, and you must listen to much with the deaf ear, while you will often be tempted to say things which had better be left unsaid, then, remember the muzzle! Then all the gossip you may hear, when doing personal work, must be put into the bottomless pocket!"

When Jesus sent out His disciples to preach the gospel, He said to them, "Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16). They needed wisdom, as we do, to know when to turn a blind eye to something, when to forget what we hear, and when to keep our mouths shut, as well as taking no notice of the gossip we hear.

But how shall we get this wisdom? We have the promise of God: "*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, Who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him*" (James 1:5).



## 19

### *A Crown and a Palm!*



*“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*

*John 3:3*

I'm sure that you know by now that Spurgeon had a very good sense of humour. He loved to have a good laugh! And this story was one that he enjoyed telling. I must warn you, though, that you will have to think very hard to work out what was meant. You will have to think “outside the box”!

Spurgeon was very well-known, and many stories were told about him. So it was that one day three men were talking together. One of them was a famous preacher called Dr. Guthrie, one of them was a man called Mr. Bunting, and the other was a man who had been trained at the College, so he knew Spurgeon very well.

Mr. Bunting said that he had heard that Spurgeon had preached a sermon on Palm Sunday (that is the day when we remember how the Lord Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey) while he was wearing a crown on his head and holding a palm in his hand! The College man said, “Yes, and it is true too!”

Dr. Guthrie said, “It is very shocking!” The College man replied, “Spurgeon is not the only preacher to have done this,” and then he mentioned the name of another preacher. Mr. Bunting, knowing that preacher, said that it was not true. The College man then said, “And Dr. Guthrie did so, too!”

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Now this was too much for Dr. Guthrie. He jumped up and said, "I am Dr. Guthrie, and it is a downright lie!" He knew that he had never placed a crown on his head and neither had he held a palm in his hand while preaching.

Can you work out what the College man meant? I told you that you would have to think very hard to solve the problem. Any ideas before you read on?

Put your hand on the top of your head. What do you feel? Hair, of course, and underneath your hair ... the crown or top of your head! Now look at one of your hands. What do you see, right there in the middle? The palm of your hand! Every person has a crown on their head and a palm in their hand!

The College man thought that he ought to explain what he meant before Dr. Guthrie got any angrier. He said, "How would you have looked without a crown to your head and a palm in your hand?" Dr. Guthrie saw the joke, and laughed heartily!

Sometimes when we hear something we mistake the meaning, as Dr. Guthrie and Mr. Bunting did. There was a man who heard what the Lord Jesus Christ said, and he got quite the wrong end of the stick. The man was called Nicodemus, and Jesus said to him, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*" (John 3:3). Nicodemus took this the wrong way, and said, "*How can a man be born when he is old?*" (verse 4). So Jesus had to explain to him what He meant. "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*" (verse 6). A Christian is someone who has received new life from God. He or she is born again by the Holy Spirit and is now in the family of God.

## *A Tape Measure for Measuring What?*



*“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold,  
now is the day of salvation.”*

*2 Corinthians 6:2*

Spurgeon married a godly young lady called Susannah Thompson. She had been at the church that first Sunday evening when he preached in London, and a friendship grew between them and they got to know each other better and better. They were very much in love, and so on January 8th 1856, they were married. After a honeymoon in Paris, they went to live in a house in New Kent Road in London. Much later that same year they moved into a new home, and just ten days afterwards Susannah gave birth to twin boys, Charles and Thomas. They were the only children that they were to have.

I want to tell you what happened one day when the twins were growing up. I don’t know how old they were, although Spurgeon called them “little boys”. He said to them, “Come on, we are going out!” “Where are we going?” they asked. “Wait and see,” Spurgeon answered, “but I want you to bring a tape measure.”

I’m sure that the two brothers wondered what they were going to measure. To their surprise their father took them to a churchyard—a graveyard, with many graves in it! Whatever were they going to measure in a graveyard?

Spurgeon said to them, “Now, see how tall you are!” So the

brothers measured each other. Maybe they were about four feet tall. Is that how tall you are? Go and measure yourself if you are not sure. But, of course, the twins must have thought to themselves that they could have done that at home, without going to a graveyard!

Then he said, “Now, go and measure some of the smaller graves.” They did that, and they discovered that some of the graves were shorter than they were. Some of the people whose bodies were buried there had died at a younger age than Charles and Thomas!

Next time you see a graveyard and have the time, go and look at some of the graves. There’s no need to take a tape measure with you. You can look at some of the gravestones and see the ages of the people buried there. You will find that some died at a very young age, maybe even only a few months or days. Others lived to their nineties, or even over one hundred! See if you can find someone who died at the same age as yourself.

Why do you think that Spurgeon took Charles and Thomas to that graveyard and had them measure some of the graves? It was to teach them a very important lesson—that none of us knows when we are going to die.

If we all died at the same age, for example at the age of seventy, then we would probably decide to put off thinking about God and the Saviour and heaven and hell until we reached the age of sixty-nine! But we don’t know these things. That is why the Bible says, “*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation*” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

God’s Word tells you at what age you ought to become a Christian. Do you know what age that is? Your age!



## 21

### Say “Cheese!”



*“As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of  
the word, that you may grow thereby.”*

*1 Peter 2:2*

So Spurgeon and Susannah had twin boys, and early on they had a good idea. Can you guess what it was from the heading of this story?

They decided that they would have a photo taken each year of the boys. I’m not sure, but I wouldn’t be surprised if it was on their birthday. Cameras had been invented in Spurgeon’s day, but they were not like the small digital ones that we have now. They were quite large, and usually a professional photographer would have to take the pictures.

So photos were taken each year of the two boys until they came of age, which means until they were eighteen. If you had visited Spurgeon’s home you would have seen these photos hanging on one of the walls, the first one showing them as very small babies, then, year by year, growing up, until in the last one they were young men. Maybe your parents have a book about Spurgeon, or perhaps your church has a library and you might find one there, and you might be able to see a photo of the twins!

Here is something else you might like to do. See if you can find some old photos of yourself, first of all as a baby, and then pictures of you as you have grown up, year by year. You

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have changed, haven't you? At first so small, then growing and changing until you look like you do now!

One day one of Spurgeon's friends visited his home, and took a particular interest in these photos hanging on the wall. Spurgeon then said, "Ah, if one could only grow in grace like that!" Do you understand what he meant by that?

When a person becomes a Christian, that person is born again, as Jesus said. They have a second birth! We could say that at the beginning they are "baby Christians". But God doesn't want them to stay like that. Babies that stayed babies would have something very wrong with them! Babies must grow, and baby Christians ought to grow. Peter wrote in his letter, "*As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby*" (1 Peter 2:2).

Every Christian should be growing, maturing, understanding more of God's Word, being more pleasing to the Lord, becoming more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ. But this doesn't happen automatically. If we are really born again believers we must regularly read the Bible, which will provide us nourishment. A baby that didn't eat wouldn't grow! The Bible is like spiritual food which sustains us inside.

We must also keep in contact with God by prayer, so that just as He speaks to us through the Bible, we speak to Him in prayer. There must be two-way communication.

Now have another look at those photos of yourself. You see the difference, don't you, as you have grown? Then look back over your life. Have you been born again? If you have, are you growing as a Christian? Do you understand more of the truths of the Bible? Are you becoming more and more like the Lord Jesus?



## *What's On the Ceiling?*



*“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*

*Matthew 5:10–12*

**T**onight you will go to bed. When you lie on your back in bed, what do you see? Unless it’s very dark, you see the ceiling, don’t you? And that is probably all you will see—just the ceiling! But that is not what Spurgeon saw one night when he got into bed and looked up. You’ll never guess what he saw, so I’ll have to tell you.

Although Spurgeon was a very popular preacher and thousands wanted to hear him each week, not everybody liked him. In fact, for quite a long time, especially in his early years in London, all kinds of people criticized him and said unkind things about him. There were even some other pastors of churches who said that his ministry and success wouldn’t last. Newspapers said nasty things about him too, poking fun at him, and even printing cartoons about him. It is hard being criticized, especially when you are doing what is right and what God wants.

There came a time when Spurgeon was getting a bit depressed over all this criticism. Susannah, of course, noticed this, and was very concerned. She thought that she had better



do something to help and encourage him, but what could she do? Then she had a good idea! She got a very large sheet of paper, and she printed three verses from the Bible on it. Then she stuck that sheet of paper on the ceiling of their bedroom, directly over Spurgeon's side of the bed!

Can you imagine it? Spurgeon, probably tired after a hard day's work, gets into bed, and looks up—and then to his great surprise, he sees that sheet of paper with Bible verses on it!

The verses were these and they are words of the Lord Jesus: *“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you”* (Matthew 5:10–12).

Reading those verses was a great comfort to Spurgeon, and he was very thankful that Susannah had had that unusual idea! In fact that sheet of paper stayed there on the bedroom ceiling for quite a long time. Every evening when he went to bed, and every morning when he woke up, Spurgeon was able to draw comfort from the words of the Lord Jesus.

Very often people who don't love the Lord criticize or ridicule or even persecute those who do. If you are going to follow Jesus you must be ready for that. At such times you can turn to His Word for comfort. He says that even when others are nasty to us because we follow and are obedient to Him, He will bless us and one day give us a wonderful reward. Of course, we can never deserve or earn anything from Him, but because He is so kind and gracious, He promises us a great reward in heaven. You don't need those verses on the ceiling of your bedroom, but try to remember them if other people poke fun at you for trusting in the Lord Jesus.

## *Sleeping and Preaching!*



*“Preach the word!”*

*2 Timothy 4:2*

**D**id you know that people sometimes, without realizing it, talk in their sleep? When I was a student, I shared a room with a young man who came from Wales, and he occasionally talked in his sleep—the only problem was that he spoke in Welsh, and so I couldn’t understand anything he said! But more of that later in our story...

Maybe you go to church regularly, and perhaps your church has a pastor who usually preaches Sunday by Sunday. If so, does he preach a series of sermons on a book of the Bible, or does he preach from different parts of the Bible each time? Many pastors find it very helpful to go verse by verse through a particular book of God’s Word. Spurgeon, however, wouldn’t usually preach a series of sermons like that because so many different visitors came to the Metropolitan Tabernacle each Sunday.

He was so busy during the week that he would leave his Sunday sermon preparation to the Saturday evening. If friends were at his house, at six or seven o’clock he would leave them and go into his study. The first thing he had to do was to decide which verse he was going to preach from. One Saturday he decided on the text, but couldn’t see how to preach from it! He struggled and thought, but just couldn’t get on. He stayed up late, past his bedtime, but still couldn’t make any progress! In

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the end Susannah said, “Come to bed and get some sleep, and I’ll wake you up very early in the morning, so you can prepare then.” So Spurgeon took her advice and went to bed.

It was very early in the morning when Susannah was woken up. Spurgeon was still asleep, but it wasn’t his snoring that woke her. It was his voice! She listened, and to her surprise she heard him preaching on the very text that he couldn’t understand the evening before! He was preaching in his sleep! She listened hard, and tried to remember all she heard. When he stopped, she went over in her mind what he had said. She meant to stay awake and wake him up early, but she fell asleep too!

They both slept on, until Spurgeon woke up and saw how late it was! He jumped up, and was upset that she hadn’t woken him earlier, and was worried that he didn’t have the time now for his sermon preparation. But she told him what had happened during the night, how he had preached the sermon in his sleep, and she repeated the sermon to him. He then said, “Why, that is just what I wanted! That is the true explanation of the whole verse! It is wonderful!”

I don’t suppose that any other preachers have got their sermon that way, but do you see what Spurgeon wanted to do? He wanted to find out the real meaning of the verse. He didn’t want to talk of other things, give his own thoughts, or tell stories. True preaching is the preaching and explanation of the truth of God’s Word. The apostle Paul gave this solemn charge to young Timothy, “*I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word!*” (2 Timothy 4:1–2). We ought to thank God for faithful men who preach God’s truth, and we ought to pray for them, that the Lord would help them and use them.



24

## Look Up!



*“My help comes from the LORD.”*

*Psalm 121:2*

Many churches have pastors, and for some that is their only job. Perhaps that is the case in your church. You might think to yourself, “That’s an easy job—only working one day a week, for a couple of hours!” Well, what do you think that the pastor is doing the rest of the week? Lazing about in bed until lunch time? Sitting in the garden all day drinking orange juice? Lounging in an armchair watching television most of the day? Playing golf with his friends? The answer is No!—but what does he do? As Spurgeon’s grandfather said to him when he was quite young, “Find out!”

If there is a pastor in your church, I expect that he is quite busy (doing what?), but I dare say that he is not as busy as Spurgeon used to be. He ...

- preached a lot, not only on Sundays but often many times in the week
- interviewed people for baptism and membership
- visited people in need
- prepared sermons and Bible studies as well as lectures at the College
- prepared sermons for publication
- wrote about five hundred letters every week
- produced articles for “The Sword and Trowel” and other magazines

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- visited children at the two orphanages he had started
- oversaw more than 25 different organizations run by the church
- and a lot more!

To help him, Spurgeon had a secretary, a man called Joseph Harrald. One morning when the two men were busy, Susannah walked into the study where they were working. Now, you know, ladies usually notice things that men (and children) do not! Think about your mother. When she walks into your bedroom, she notices if it is tidy (or not!), if anything is in the wrong place, and if you have left your clothes on the floor. She will know if everything is not quite right!

So Susannah looked round the study and immediately saw that the blinds on the window had not been drawn up properly. Spurgeon hadn't noticed it, nor had Joseph—but Susannah did! She said to Spurgeon, “The blinds haven't been drawn up properly!” Spurgeon replied, without thinking too much about it, “We have been too busy to look up!” But then he suddenly realized what he had said, and he thought about it, and drew a lesson from it.

Sadly, most people fill their lives with so many things. They are busy in the home, busy in the school or college, busy at work, busy with their friends, busy enjoying themselves, busy with the things of this world—too busy to look up to God.

If we are too busy to look up to the God Who made us and keeps us alive, then we are too busy! We must make time regularly to look to Him, to think about Him, to learn from Him. The Psalmist wrote, “*I will lift up my eyes to the hills—From whence comes my help? My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth*” (Psalm 121:1–2).



## *Can You Improve What is Perfect?*



*“It is finished!”*

*John 19:30*

Sometimes it’s good to go away on holiday. Think of some of the places you’ve been on holiday. What did you like doing?

On one occasion Spurgeon and Susannah went away from home. Sadly, this didn’t happen very often because Susannah was quite unwell a lot of the time, and so she couldn’t go away. This time, however, she was feeling much better, and so they both left home.

They lived in a large house, and, as was usual in those days, there were servants to look after the house, and also gardeners to tend their large garden. In the garden there were some ancient stone vases and other stone things of that kind. It must have looked very nice and tidy, and Spurgeon liked walking around it.

I am sure that Spurgeon looked after all the servants very well, including the gardeners. Well, one of the gardeners thought to himself that he would do something special to welcome Spurgeon and Susannah when they got back.

So, after a while, they returned. I expect that the garden itself looked very nice, flowers blooming, grass cut and tidy, hedges trimmed, leaves swept up, and everything in order. But when they looked round, they saw something that horrified them! One gardener had painted the vases and other





things a brilliant combination of blue and yellow! He thought that they looked better in those gaudy colours, and that the returning couple would think so too!

But neither Spurgeon nor Susannah liked what they saw. For them it spoilt the garden completely! Of course, Spurgeon realized that the gardener wanted to please them, so he didn't tell him off, but before long he managed to get them returned to their former beauty without hurting the feelings of the well-meaning man.

There are some things that we cannot improve on, and if we try to do so, we spoil them. For example, it would be foolish to paint a daffodil, wouldn't it? It looks beautiful just as God made it. To try and make it look better would make it look ugly!

Many people try to add something to what the Lord Jesus Christ has done to save sinners. They think their own good works or religious ceremonies are needed too.

One of the things that Jesus said as He was dying on the cross was this: "*It is finished!*" (*John 19:30*). He meant that the work of salvation was complete. Nothing more needed to be done. He had paid the price of sin, and had taken all the punishment due to those who would believe in Him.

All we now have to do is to trust in Jesus and that finished work. God the Father is satisfied with what Jesus did, and we must be satisfied with it too. You cannot improve that which is perfect, and if you try, you spoil it!



## *Small Things!*



*“For who has despised the day of small things?”*


*Zechariah 4:10*

What happens when you are feeling really unwell? Your mother probably says to you, “You’d better stay in bed!” Well, often Spurgeon himself, as well as Susannah, was ill and couldn’t preach at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. One Saturday he was feeling very unwell, so he went to bed, and decided that it would be impossible for him to go to church the next day. So he arranged for someone else to preach for him. However, on the Sunday morning he felt a little better, and, although weak, managed to get up and go downstairs. Susannah had an idea. She said, “Do you think that you could read a chapter in the Bible to the servants and any who might come in?”

Spurgeon thought about it, and said that he would try. I don’t know exactly how many servants he had, but in the end twenty people gathered to hear him. So that Sunday morning, instead of preaching to about five thousand, he spoke to only twenty. That was a big difference, wasn’t it? He read a chapter from the Bible, and then explained what it meant, but he still felt very weak.

Among the twenty was one of Spurgeon’s gardeners. Now I don’t think that he had ever heard Spurgeon preach before, but he listened very carefully and attentively. Afterwards he went home and said to his wife, “Why, I understand the Bible when the master reads it!” She said, “Do you think he will do the same thing next Sunday?” “Perhaps,” said the gardener, “if he doesn’t







get well!” I’m sure that in one way they wanted Spurgeon to get better quickly, but in another way they hoped that he didn’t get too well so that again the next Sunday he would explain a little more of the Bible to the people at home instead!

During the week the gardener thought a great deal about what Spurgeon had said, and he came to realize that he was a sinner, and that he needed to be saved. In fact he turned from his sin and trusted in the Lord Jesus. He became a Christian!

Well, the next Sunday came and still Spurgeon wasn’t well enough to go to church, so he decided to follow Susannah’s suggestion again. Once more in his own home he read a chapter from the Bible and explained its meaning. The gardener was there, his wife was there, and one of her friends was there too! They all listened very well. Wonderfully, both the gardener’s wife and her friend also trusted in the Saviour.



In the Old Testament there are some books called “the minor prophets”. We don’t call them that because they are unimportant, but because the books these prophets wrote are much shorter than the longer ones like Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Can you find out the names of a few? Here’s one to start you off: Zechariah. In that book there is this verse, “*For who has despised the day of small things?*” (*Zechariah 4:10*).



Think of Spurgeon preaching to only twenty people instead of the usual five thousand! Those two Sunday mornings were “days of small things”. Yet the Lord worked in at least three people’s hearts, so they became days of great things! Maybe we feel that the Lord isn’t doing so much in our country and in our churches as He did in the past! Maybe not many people attend the church you go to. Maybe these things make us feel discouraged and depressed. But, as that verse in Zechariah says, we should not despise these “days of small things”, because the Lord is working out His perfect will.



## *A Ring and a Bird!*



*“[God] gives us richly all things to enjoy.”*

*1 Timothy 6:17*

Maybe at times your father has been away and brought you back a present? Spurgeon was sometimes away preaching in other places, and in the winter he would often spend time in France—maybe in another book I’ll tell you some of the things that happened to him abroad. Because she was often very ill, Susannah usually couldn’t go with him. Sometimes before he left he would ask what she would like as a present.

One particular time she said she wanted a ring and a bird—specifically an opal ring, and a piping bullfinch! (See if you can find out what an opal looks like.) Spurgeon looked surprised and said, “Ah, you know I cannot get those for you!” For the next two or three days they joked about her requests.

Soon afterwards, one Thursday evening, Spurgeon came back from a meeting with a big smile on his face. In his hand was a little box, and in the little box—an opal ring! An elderly lady, whom he had visited when she was ill, had sent the ring as a small present for Susannah! Many years later, when she was writing a biography or life-story of Spurgeon, she was still wearing that opal ring! So she got one of the things she wanted! What about the other one—the piping bullfinch?

It was not much later, just before Susannah had to go to Brighton to have an operation, that Spurgeon came into the

room one evening with a large package! What could be in it? He took the cover off, and there was a cage, and in the cage a lovely bird, a piping bullfinch! He had been to see a lady whose husband was very ill, and she said, "I want you to take my pet bird to Mrs. Spurgeon. I know that 'Bully' (that was the bird's name!) will interest and amuse her in her loneliness while you are so much away from her!" Spurgeon told her that that was just what Susannah wanted!

So it was that Susannah got both the things she asked for. She took the bird with her to Brighton. The doctor who performed her operation travelled all the way from Edinburgh in Scotland. He was Sir James Simpson, who became famous because he discovered chloroform, which puts people to sleep while they have operations. If you visit Edinburgh you can see his statue in Princes Street.

As people had to pay for operations in those days Spurgeon asked how much it was. Sir James said, "Well, I suppose it should be a thousand guineas (an awful lot of money!), and when you are the Archbishop of Canterbury, I shall expect you to pay! Till, then, let us consider it settled by love." You see, he, too, was a Christian who loved the Lord Jesus. Of course, Spurgeon would never have become the Archbishop of Canterbury, so Sir James knew he would never be paid! The Bible says of God, "*Who gives us richly all things to enjoy*" (1 Timothy 6:17).

## *Punch and (not Judy but) Gyp!*



*“He Who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The  
LORD shall hold them in derision.”*

*Psalm 2:4*

What is one of the last things that people often do before they go to bed at night? They check that all the doors are locked and that all the windows, at least the ones on the ground floor, are closed. You know why they do that, don't you?

One Sunday evening, somehow a small downstairs window was left open in Spurgeon's house. During the night a burglar saw it, climbed in and got into the study. He didn't feel that it was safe to turn on the lights so, as he had a box of matches with him, he kept striking these to try and see what he might be able to steal. What do you think was in Spurgeon's study? Some Bibles and thousands of books about the Bible. I'm sure the thief didn't want to steal them!

The burglar threw the used matches on the floor, and some of them were still alight when he did this! Some papers in the study caught fire, but thankfully the fire soon went out and didn't spread, otherwise the whole house might have burnt down and people might have been hurt! In the end he didn't get much for his trouble, but he did take a valuable stick which had gold at the top. He later took it to a shop to sell it, but the shop-keeper looked at it carefully, saw the name "C.H. Spurgeon" printed on the gold, so knew it was stolen property. "Just wait here, will you?" he said to the burglar.

He sent for the police, but the thief became suspicious and ran off. News of the burglary was reported in the newspapers, because Spurgeon was very well known. He had had a surprise when he discovered the robbery, and another one when he saw that a fire had started in his study. But now he had a third surprise. He received a letter from the burglar himself! He said that he hadn't realized that it was Spurgeon's home and if he had known he wouldn't have stolen anything. And then he wrote, "Why don't you shut your windows and keep a dog?"

That was an unusual letter, wasn't it, but it got Spurgeon thinking. Yes, he must make sure the windows were closed at night, and it sounded a good idea to get a dog! And that is what he did. The dog became known as Punch, or Punchie! When Spurgeon was away from home, for example in France, he would often mention Punchie and say that he was missing him!

A little later there was another dog in Spurgeon's home. Punchie had a son whose name was Gyp! When Gyp was quite young and small, one day he heard thunder for the first time. It gave him such a fright! He leapt up, looked round in anger, and then began to bark! When the thunder crashed again he ran round the room barking!

Spurgeon said that that is like some people—they bark or complain at God. When He threatens them with punishment for their sin, they bark at Him! But Gyp couldn't stop the thunder, and people cannot stop God. We would do best to listen to Him, take note of what He says, and trust in the only Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

At the beginning of Psalm 2 we are told of people who plot against God and want to rebel against Him. But "*He Who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The LORD shall hold them in derision*" (Psalm 2:4). Barking at the thunder won't do any good, nor will rebelling against God.



## *Cats, Dogs, Bees, Goldfish and Horses!*



*“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”*

*Exodus 20:8*

Spurgeon loved animals. He had a cat called Dick (he is mentioned in the second story in this book). Then there were his two dogs, Punchie and Gyp. He also kept bees! He had a hive of bees in his garden, and he thought that they all knew him and loved him, and would never sting him! However he had a doubt or two on one occasion when a great number of them swarmed over him and landed on him, and he had to run into the house and take off his outer clothes in a hurry—but even then he didn’t get stung! He had some goldfish in a pond in the garden, and they would come to him to be stroked.

He also had some horses. Why do you think he needed them?

Of course, in those days there weren’t any cars, and so he had a carriage pulled by horses. During his first years in London he had a one-horse carriage, but later he moved to a very nice house further away from the Metropolitan Tabernacle, and so he decided that because of the longer journey he needed two horses to pull his carriage. I’m sure those horses had a busy life, because he preached and led Bible Studies and prayer meetings at the church not only on Sundays, but also during the week. He had many people to visit, and places to go such as the College and two orphanages that he had started. In addition, he would often preach in





other churches in or near London, and so the horses were often needed for these journeys!

Spurgeon cared for all his animals, including the horses. Because they were usually so busy, he thought that they needed a day of rest! Which day do we keep as a day of rest when we especially think about the Lord? Yes, it's Sunday, isn't it? But the horses had to work on Sundays, taking Spurgeon to church and back again! So he said that they should have Saturday as their day of rest, and that is what usually happened. Spurgeon said, "My horses, being under the law and not under grace, keep the seventh day Sabbath!" What do you think he meant by that?

God gave the people of Israel the Ten Commandments back in the time of Moses. The fourth commandment is this: *"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work ... For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it"* (Exodus 20:8–11).

The people of Israel kept the seventh day of the week as a rest and holy day. Which day is that? Yes, it's Saturday. That is why Spurgeon said that his horses were still under the law, resting on Saturdays. But we keep the first day of the week as a special rest and holy day, which is Sunday. The day has been changed because on that day the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead. In Revelation 1:10 it is called "The Lord's Day". Every Sunday is a reminder that Jesus is alive! And that also means that we are now under grace—that means that God saves us when we when we trust in Jesus not because we are good people or reach a high standard, but because He is very kind.



## *Crowds Waiting to Get In!*



*“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”*

*Isaiah 55:1*

**T**he Metropolitan Tabernacle, where Spurgeon was the pastor, was situated in the South East of London at a place called the Elephant and Castle, and it's still there today! If you go there, you will see that it is at a very busy road junction, with lots of traffic going by, including many buses. It was just the same in Spurgeon's day, but all the buses would have been pulled by horses.

One day a man who was a shopkeeper, and who wasn't a Christian, was on a bus going past the Tabernacle. It was a Sunday, and he looked out and saw crowds of people outside, waiting until the doors were opened so that they could go in and listen to Spurgeon preaching God's Word. This was quite normal in those days on a Sunday!

It so happened that he was sitting next to a well-known Jewish man. The shopkeeper turned to him and said, “Ah! That humbug always attracts people!” A humbug is an imposter, someone who deceives others, so it wasn't a very nice thing to say about Spurgeon, was it?

The Jewish man replied, “Wouldn't you like to see such a crowd as that round your shop? I should welcome them at my place of business! I have ridden past here for twenty-eight years,



and have always seen just such a crowd as that waiting to get in! Now, if your shop had been crowded for twenty-eight years, and anybody said that you didn't sell good things, what would you say? You would probably say that you must be selling good things or they wouldn't keep coming! Now, I am a Jew, yet I think I might go and listen to what Mr. Spurgeon has to say, because I see these crowds of people going to hear him!"

Well, I don't know if the Jew did go to hear Spurgeon, but what he said got the shopkeeper thinking. The more he thought about it, the more sensible it sounded! If crowds of people had been going to hear Spurgeon for at least twenty-eight years, surely he must have something important to say!

Eventually he decided that he would join those crowds, and so one day he went along and listened for himself. He discovered that the message was very important, for it was about the salvation of his soul. He realized that he needed a Saviour, and that the only Saviour is the Lord Jesus Christ. He repented of his sins, and trusted Christ for forgiveness and salvation!

The Lord gives a wide invitation to all people: "*Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price*" (Isaiah 55:1). This verse means that we can come to the Lord Jesus for the spiritual blessings we need, and we don't have to try and pay for them or buy them!

Millions and millions of all kinds of people for thousands of years have come to Jesus, and have found Him to be kind and gracious. He has forgiven their sins, given them eternal life, and promised that they would never perish. All of them would say that coming to Him was the best thing that they ever did. Millions have come—but have you?

*What's the Time?*

*“Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.”*

*Luke 23:42*

Spurgeon was able to say that every day for over twenty years he heard of conversions through his ministry! This is the account of one of them.

There was a young man called Henry. His parents were Christians, but he was not. They lived in a country town, but Henry got a job in London, working for a silversmith. All went well for a while, but sadly one day he stole something from his employers, was found out, and got the sack. His father came to London to meet him. As they walked together through the crowded streets, suddenly Henry ran away! His father looked and searched, but Henry had disappeared. Even the police tried to find him, but gave up! The father went home very sad, and told Henry's mother all about it, but there was nothing either of them could do.

Two years went by, and during all that time they didn't hear a word from Henry or anything about him. I'm sure they prayed a lot for him, but one Sunday evening, when they were reading the Bible together, they both felt that God was urging them to pray for their son. A little later, one of their servants came into the room, and said that she, too, felt she ought to especially pray for Henry. So father, mother and servant spent some time in prayer. They had no idea where he was or what he was doing.



Well, Henry was still in London. He had joined a gang of thieves, who just then were on their way to break into a shop and steal things! No one in the gang had a watch and they needed to know what the time was. As they passed the Tabernacle, one of them said, "Henry, just run up the steps, and see what the time is," thinking that in a big building like that there would be a clock somewhere! Whether he realized that the building was a church I don't know, and whether he knew that a meeting was being held just then I don't know, but Henry soon found out!

So Henry ran up the Tabernacle steps and there was Spurgeon preaching! He was talking about the repentant thief who was crucified with Jesus, and especially about these verses, "*Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.' And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise'*" (Luke 23:42-43). So here was a thief hearing about the dying thief! But Henry got a bigger surprise. He thought that Spurgeon pointed directly at him when he said, "If there is a thief here tonight, Jesus Christ can save him!" He didn't go outside to rejoin the gang to steal things that evening. Instead he went back to his room, and there prayed to the Lord Jesus to save him and change him.

A week later, there was a knock on the door of the family home—it was Henry! He went back to his father and mother, and told them that he was now a Christian and how sorry he was for his past behaviour! How happy they all were!

All kinds of people have been saved by Jesus—respectable people and criminals, nice people and nasty people—all need to be saved, and He never turns anyone away.



## *A Good Heart or a Bad Heart?*



*“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.”*

*Romans 7:18*

Some people are members of a church, and every church has a number of members. Everyone, of course, is most welcome to come to services and meetings, but many people actually join the membership of the church. Do you know how people join, and if there are any qualifications?

Well, the first and most important thing is that they are true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ—that they have repented of their sins, and trusted in Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross of Calvary and are trying to live for His glory. They are also interviewed, usually by the pastor of the church, to make sure that they really are believers and know about the responsibilities of membership. It was Spurgeon who usually interviewed people who wanted to join the Tabernacle.

One day a girl wanted to join, and so Spurgeon had a talk with her.

He asked her, “Have you a good heart?”

She answered, “Yes, sir!”

He then said, “Have you thought over that question? Have you not an evil heart?”

She replied, “Oh, yes!”

Well, that sounded a bit strange, didn’t it? First she said



that she had a good heart, and then she agreed that she had an evil heart!

Spurgeon then asked her another question, “Well, how do your two answers agree?”

This is how she answered, “Why, I know that I have a good heart, because God has given me a new heart; and I also know that I have an evil heart, for I often find it fighting against my new heart!”

Spurgeon, looking back on the interview, said, “The girl was right!”

It is wonderfully true that when we trust the Lord Jesus we are changed and are now God’s children, but we are not yet made perfect. We are still tempted to sin, and we sometimes yield to temptation and do sin. Even the great apostle Paul found this to be true. He wrote, “*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find*” (Romans 7:18). Paul, like all Christians, found the Christian life a battle.

That is what the girl was thinking about when she answered Spurgeon’s questions. She had a new heart from the Lord, which was a good heart, but she also knew that there was still evil in her heart.

Often the things that we know we ought to do to please the Lord, we find difficult to do, and the things that we know would displease the Lord, we find ourselves doing! The Lord will help us if we look to Him, and, if we do fall, He will lift us up again. When we confess our sins He will forgive us again.



## *A Forgotten Newspaper*



*“Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence  
of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ...”*

*Philippians 3:8*

A father one day asked Spurgeon to pray for his daughter, who was twelve years old, that she might be converted. Well, Spurgeon was always talking to different people, he was often asked to do various things, and he had lots of things to remember. What do you sometimes do if you need to remember something? Maybe you do what he did—he wrote it down! It just so happened that he had a newspaper with him, and so he jotted down this prayer request on the newspaper, thinking that later on he would read it and pray for the girl.

He went into his library, and put the newspaper down—and then forgot all about it! And we all know that’s very easy to do, don’t we? How many things we have put down somewhere and forgotten all about them!

Several weeks went by, and no one noticed the newspaper there where Spurgeon had put it in the library. But at last one of the servants in the house saw it. Perhaps she was cleaning the room. She probably looked at it, saw that it was a number of weeks old, and took it out of the library. I expect she was going to throw it away. Maybe just then she was called away to do something else in the house, but for some reason she put it down on a window sill.

It wasn’t long after that that Spurgeon was expecting a

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friend to call, and while he was waiting, he went over to the window sill, maybe to look out to see if his friend was coming. But what is this on the sill? That's strange, it's a newspaper! That's a funny place to leave a newspaper! He picked it up, and saw the note he had made about praying for the girl. He had forgotten all about it, but now it all came back to him.

Straightaway Spurgeon went into the library, and knelt by his chair and prayed for the conversion of the girl. He went on praying for a while until there was a ring at the front door. He got up, and went to answer the door, expecting that it was the friend he was waiting for. And there on the doorstep was ... not his friend ... but the girl herself!

She said to him, "Mr. Spurgeon, I have come to ask you to tell me how to be a Christian!"

She then told him how she came to be there on his doorstep. She knew where he lived, and had been passing his house, with no concern about her soul. Quite suddenly as she walked along she felt convicted about her sins, and straightaway decided to call on Spurgeon and talk to him about the way of salvation. Of course, he explained to her about sin and about the Saviour. Before long she became a Christian, and later on was a Sunday School teacher in the Metropolitan Tabernacle! How pleased Spurgeon must have been to have the opportunity of explaining to her how to become a Christian, and how happy her father must have been when his greatest desire for her was granted!

That girl came to realize that the best thing in life is to love, follow and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul knew that too. Writing to the believers in Philippi he said, "*Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ...*" (Philippians 3:8).



## *A Missing Husband!*



*“In the day of my trouble I will call upon  
You, for You will answer me.”*

*Psalm 86:7*

**A**fter meetings at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Spurgeon was usually available in the vestry for anyone who wanted to talk to him, and of course many wanted to!

On one occasion a lady came with two of her neighbours. She had a sad story to tell, for her husband had left her, and not only that, he had left the country! She had come to church that day feeling very depressed, and had listened to Spurgeon preach God’s Word. Something that he had said in his sermon made her think that he knew about her and her situation. Of course, really he didn’t know her or anything about her. Sometimes the Lord leads preachers to say things that just fit in with the people who are listening!

The lady told Spurgeon all about her husband, and how he had left her and left the country. He said, “There is nothing that we can do but kneel down, and cry to the Lord for the immediate conversion of your husband.”

That is what they did. Spurgeon prayed that the husband might be converted and come back. The lady then went home, and as time went by Spurgeon forgot her and her needs, for he had so many other people to think about and pray for.

A few months went by, and then she turned up again to see Spurgeon! The two neighbours were with her again, and



someone else was with her too—a man! Who was it? It was her husband! He had been converted, and he had come home to be with his wife again!

Spurgeon asked the husband a few questions to find out what had actually happened to him. It became clear that on the very day when Spurgeon and the others had prayed for him in the vestry, he was on a ship at sea. Maybe he was a little bored and couldn't think of anything else to do, but he somehow found a copy of one of Spurgeon's sermons, and decided to read it! He read it, and as he did so the Lord spoke to him.

He realized that he was a sinner needing to be saved, and that he must trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. He became a Christian! He also realized that he should not have left his wife. So he came to the Lord, came back to his country, came back to his wife, and came back to his old job! Before long both he and his wife joined the Tabernacle.

I expect that lady knew a verse in the Psalms that says: *“In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, for You will answer me” (Psalm 86:7).*

If we are God's children, when things go wrong in our lives we should always turn to the Lord and tell Him all about it. We can “take it to the Lord in prayer”. He understands our situation and how we feel. He will not only listen to us sympathetically, but also answer us. Maybe the answer will not be what we want or expect, but it will always be the right answer which will bring blessing to us and glory to Him.



## *Who's the Preacher?*



*“How shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”*

*Romans 10:14*

**H**ave you ever met someone who knows you, or thinks that he knows you, but you don't recognize him at all? That sometimes happens, doesn't it, and it can be a bit embarrassing! It happened one day to a Christian in America. He was in San Francisco and was walking along the street, when a man he didn't recognize or know came up to him, overjoyed at meeting him! The man was a sailor.

The sailor said, “How do you do? Don't you know me? Why, I heard you preach!”

This mystified the Christian even more, and he said, “I am not a preacher, my friend, so you must have made a mistake.”

The sailor answered, “Oh, no, I haven't! I heard you preach!”

The Christian just couldn't understand it! But the sailor continued, “Don't you remember the steamer that was going to Oregon?”

Then it was that the Christian remembered! What had happened was this. He had been on a ship going up the Pacific Coast to Oregon, and it was a Sunday. Often on ships in those days there would be a Christian worship meeting on board,



to which everyone was invited. However, there were no plans to have such a meeting on this particular ship. One of the passengers had a book of Spurgeon's sermons with him, and he went around the passengers asking if any of them would like to read one of these sermons aloud to any who might want to listen. Why he didn't want to do it himself I don't know! But all the people he asked said, "No!"

At last he approached the Christian, and asked him, "Would you read one of Spurgeon's sermons to us?" Well, the Christian agreed, so that is what he did! A lot of people gathered round him and listened, and then more and more people came to listen, until very soon all the passengers and all the crew who weren't working just then, listened, and they all listened very well! It so happened that the sailor was there, and he heard the sermon being read.

It was a few months later when the sailor met the Christian in San Francisco. After reminding him of that journey to Oregon, he said, "I never forgot that sermon! It made me feel that I was a sinner, and I have found Christ, and I am so glad to see you again!"

Perhaps the sailor didn't realize that the sermon was being read, and was not that Christian's own sermon, but one of Spurgeon's! But that didn't matter, did it? The Lord spoke to him through it, and he became a Christian because of it!

How important it is for people to hear the gospel, the good news about the Lord Jesus Christ and how He saves! The apostle Paul wrote, "*How shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?*" (*Romans 10:14*). The original preacher of that sermon was Spurgeon, but someone else read it out loud, and through it the sailor was converted!

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## *What to Take With You When You Go Away*



*“Against You, You only, have I sinned,  
and done this evil in Your sight.”*

*Psalm 51:4*

The captain of another ship was a Christian, and he and his crew were going on a voyage which would last several months. He had to think of what was needed on a long trip like that. I expect that he had a big list of things, especially food and drink! Was there anything else? Ah yes—can you guess? A Bible! When you are going away, don't forget to take your Bible!

So the captain packed his Bible, but he was also concerned for the crew. He decided to take Bibles for them as well! I'm sure that he had many things to think about in preparation for the journey, and at last everyone was on board and the ship sailed—but some things were missing! The captain remembered the Bibles—he had forgotten to bring them! But by then it was too late! How easy to forget things, isn't it?

The ship hadn't put out to sea for long before the weather got very bad. The wind was blowing and the waves were beating on the ship. It was a sailing ship, of course, so soon the captain decided that the safest thing to do was to turn around and go back to the harbour. It was too dangerous to go any further.



They waited in the harbour, and a little later the weather got better, so they sailed out again, but the same thing happened—a storm put the ship in danger, so once more the captain gave the order to return to port.

Then the captain thought to himself, “Why is it that every time we try to sail, the weather gets bad? I wonder if God is telling me something. I wonder if He doesn’t want us to sail without Bibles on board!”

So the captain went to get the Bibles, and not only that—he also brought some of Spurgeon’s sermons as well!

The ship left port, and this time the weather stayed fine. But then the captain thought to himself: “We’ve got the Bibles, and the crew can read them if they want, but perhaps I ought to do something more. I wish I could preach, but I’m no preacher, I couldn’t do that!” Then he had a good idea! Can you guess what it was?

He said to himself, “I know what I can do—I can read one of Spurgeon’s sermons!” And that is what he did. He gathered the crew around him, and read Spurgeon’s sermons to them! One morning he did this, and the text was from Psalm 51. In that Psalm David is feeling very guilty because of his sin, and so he prays to God to graciously forgive him. The text was, “*Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight*” (Psalm 51:4).

If you ever feel convicted about your sins, you may like to use this Psalm to explain to God how you are feeling, as you ask Him to have mercy on you and forgive you.

As the captain read this sermon of Spurgeon’s, at least one member of the crew was converted. As he listened he realized that he was a sinner, and he asked for forgiveness, and trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ.



## “Satan” Converted!



*“But he who sins against Me wrongs his own soul; all those who hate Me love death.”*

*Proverbs 8:36*

Some people imagine that Jesus saves only good people. In fact, many think that they can get to heaven because of their own supposed goodness. Sometimes mistaken parents have said to their children, “Be good, or you won’t go to heaven!”


Now, the bad news is that all of us are sinners and all of us are bad—even the very best of us! But the good news is that the Lord Jesus Christ can forgive and save bad people, very bad people! That is why He came to this world and died on the cross.

In Spurgeon’s time, in a village somewhere in England there lived a man who was a sailor, and he was also a Christian. One day he went on a voyage with a number of other sailors from that village. He lived the Christian life before them all, and he witnessed to them as well. By life and by lip he pointed to the Lord Jesus. Marvellously, they were all converted—they all got to know, love and obey Him.

It so happened that there was another man who lived in that village and he was a sailor as well, but he was definitely not a Christian. He was a very wicked man, and the people in the village gave him a terrible name because he was so wicked. It was perhaps the worst name they could have given him. They called him “Satan”! Well, this man who was called “Satan” hadn’t been on the voyage when all the sailors were









converted, but he heard about it. He decided that he wanted to go on a voyage with the Christian sailor, and try to beat his Christianity out of him. So it was arranged, and during the whole journey “Satan” tried to turn the Christian sailor away from the Lord! He probably laughed at him, ridiculed him, argued with him, was nasty to him, and maybe he even threatened him. He tried every way he could think of to turn the man away from the Lord Jesus. But, of course, it didn’t work! He couldn’t stop the Christian trusting and following Jesus.

At last, the ship arrived in London, and the Christian asked “Satan” if he would come and hear Spurgeon preach at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. It so happened that “Satan” had heard of Spurgeon, and he also knew that Spurgeon had been brought up near the village where he lived. So he agreed to go.



One Sunday morning, therefore, the Christian and “Satan” went to hear Spurgeon preach. I don’t know what the text of the sermon was, but Spurgeon spoke about soul-murder. I’m only guessing, but maybe it was, *“But he who sins against Me wrongs his own soul; all those who hate Me love death”* (Proverbs 8:36). Spurgeon must have pointed out that when we sin we hurt and harm ourselves!



As “Satan” listened to Spurgeon talk about sin and the Saviour, God convicted him. He sat there and he started to cry and cry! He said to his Christian friend, “People are noticing me! I had better go out!” But his friend wouldn’t let him go, and so he stayed and heard the rest of the sermon. God spoke to him, and he trusted in the Lord to save him! Then he started to tell others how Jesus had forgiven him. The people of his village must have seen the great change in his life, and I’m sure that they stopped calling him “Satan” after that! It is wonderful to know that Jesus can save very wicked people, but it is marvellous to know that He will save you if you trust Him!



## *Converted and Taken to Heaven in Less Than a Week!*



*“And reckon that the long-suffering  
of our Lord is salvation.”*

*2 Peter 3:15*

Many people were converted through Spurgeon’s ministry, both in the Metropolitan Tabernacle and in other places where he preached. One young man, who wasn’t a Christian, had been ill with a fever but he was getting better. He decided that although he was still quite weak, he would go and hear Spurgeon preach. He got to the Tabernacle, and he listened, and in the middle of the sermon it seemed to him that Spurgeon exactly described him!

When he got back to his home, he wrote to his mother to tell her of what he had heard. He wrote, “I went to Spurgeon’s Tabernacle on Sunday night, and I heard such a sermon! I never felt anything like it before! He looked at me, and picked me out as if I was the only man there, and described me exactly!”

Then in the letter he quoted the words that Spurgeon had used. They were these, “You have had a fever lately, and have hardly been out before. You have come hither tonight, still weakly, scarcely recovered! Why were you saved from that fever when others were cut down? Surely it must mean salvation! At any rate, the God Who was so pitiful as to spare you, now says to you, ‘Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.’”

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No wonder that young man listened well! He continued in his letter, "It was a true description of myself! If the sermon is printed, pray get me a copy that I may read it when I come home, for I felt the power of it, and I prayed there and then that God would bring me to my mother's God, and save me!"

The young man's mother was a Christian, and she was so pleased to get that letter! But about an hour later she heard some other, much different news. Her son had become a Christian on Sunday. On Wednesday he got on a boat at Gravesend, and there was a collision and he was drowned! First she heard that he had been converted; an hour later she heard that he had been killed! She received good news, then bad news, but even in the bad news there was good news! How can that be?

Now, where do you think he went when he died? Yes, he went to heaven! Wouldn't it have been awful if he had not been converted? He wouldn't have gone to heaven then, would he?

The mother and her husband wrote to Spurgeon, saying how wonderful it was that their son was converted before he died. That was their comfort. He went to Jesus on earth, and just a few days later went to Jesus in heaven!

That sermon of Spurgeon's was preached in 1886, and his text was, "*And reckon that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation*" (2 Peter 3:15). (You can still read it today.) The Lord had been very patient with that young man. His parents were believers, and I'm sure that they told him about the way of salvation, but he didn't believe. Then he became very ill with a fever, but still he wouldn't go to the Lord for forgiveness. Then God helped him to get better, but still he wasn't thankful. At last, though, the Lord saved him, and a few days later took him safely to heaven! The Lord has been patient with you, but now is the time to trust Him.



## *The Same But Different!*



*“Repent therefore and be converted, that  
your sins may be blotted out ...”*

*Acts 3:19*

**H**ow many meetings do churches hold every week? Of course, it varies. Some smaller churches have just a few; some larger churches have a lot! If you go to a church, do you know how many take place there?

Usually there will be two meetings every Sunday—a morning and an evening service. Maybe there will be a Sunday School as well. Then during the week there may be meetings for children and young people, and maybe another for ladies. There should also be a meeting one evening during the week for Bible study and prayer.

You probably have never been to the Bible study and prayer meeting, so maybe you don’t know exactly what happens. During the Bible study part, someone will explain what the Bible teaches—very similar to the sermon preached on a Sunday, but possibly going into greater detail. There could be some discussion as well. During the prayer time, people who are there can pray out loud if they want to—not everybody does, but the more people who do, the better!

Of course, prayer meetings were held at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, and at one of these a man prayed out loud, and I mean out loud, very loudly! He had a very powerful voice! I think that he must have been wearing a sailor’s uniform,



because everyone at the meeting recognized that he was a sailor.

One of the ladies at the meeting, hearing this sailor pray so loudly and thinking that his voice sounded familiar, whispered to her friend, “Is that Captain So-and-so?” Her friend answered, “Yes! Why do you ask?” The lady said, “Because the last time I heard that voice its swearing made my blood run cold! His swearing was terrible! Can it be the same man?”

Well, that was peculiar, wasn’t it, if indeed it was the same man? Swearing and cursing, and then praying at the prayer meeting! It sounds as if he was a hypocrite, using bad language as non-Christians do and then pretending that he was a good Christian at the prayer meeting!

Someone else had heard the conversation, and then said to the lady a little later, “Go and ask him if he’s the same man!” So that is what she did. After the meeting she went up to the sailor and timidly asked him, “Are you Captain So-and-so that I heard swearing in the street, outside my house?” The sailor replied, “Well, I am the same person, and yet, thank God, I am not the same!”

That sounds strange too, doesn’t it? Do you know what he meant? How could he be the same person and yet not the same?

The answer is—he had been converted! When Peter was preaching after a lame man had been healed, he said, “*Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out ...*” (Acts 3:19). That word “converted” means “changed”. When someone is converted, when they repent of their sins and trust in the Lord Jesus, they remain the same person, but they are changed! They are the same but different! They now live a different kind of life. In the case of that captain, instead of swearing, he was praying! What a change! But that is the kind of change Jesus makes in a person’s life.

*All At Sea!*

*“Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You”*

*Psalm 56:3*

**H**ave you been abroad to another country? Maybe you went by a ferry, but if you went to a country a long way away, you probably flew. Travelling by plane is very quick. Things were very different in Spurgeon’s day. There were no planes, so if you wanted to go abroad you went by sea. That took a long time, and could be very dangerous. Ships at that time didn’t have all the modern navigational aids that we have today. In those days many sank and people were drowned.

One day a ship started to sink! I don’t know where it was, but it was a long way from land. The sailors had to abandon it, but they were able to get into a lifeboat. They must have felt very sad as they saw their ship sink and go beneath the waves!

What had they been able to take with them? Thankfully they had enough food and water to last them for about nine days. One of them had brought something else. It was a book by Spurgeon called “Morning by Morning”! That book has a Bible verse for each day of the year, and a few comments by Spurgeon to help people understand the verse. The book is still published, and you might be able to see a copy of it. Many people (like my wife!) read it every day and find it very helpful.

Of course, there were no telephones in those days or radios with which to ask for help. The sailors didn’t know how long they would be in the lifeboat, they had no idea when another

ship would come their way and see them and rescue them. They hoped that it wouldn't be too long!

They decided to do three things. They had only nine days' supply of food and water, so they determined to be very careful and try and make what they had last as long as possible, much longer than nine days! The second decision was to begin each day with prayer, because they realized that they were in God's hands and needed His help. Can you guess what the third thing was? It was to start each day by reading from Spurgeon's book!

The days went by as they drifted about in the lifeboat. One, two, three ... ten, eleven, twelve ... twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two ... twenty-eight, twenty-nine ...! As each day passed they prayed and read Spurgeon's book, and they tried to make do with less and less food and water. Remember, normally it would have lasted for only nine days, but they had been very careful, although by the thirtieth day it had nearly all gone! They began to think that they would never be rescued, and they would all die!

On that thirtieth day they saw a ship! How pleased they must have been! But would they be seen in this quite small lifeboat? I'm sure that they jumped up and down and waved whatever they could to attract the attention of the ship! Someone on board did see them, and came to rescue them! They were safe! On board that ship was a missionary, and he spoke to them, and they told him what a comfort Spurgeon's book had been to them during those frightening thirty days!

If we trust in the Lord Jesus that doesn't mean that life will always be easy. We will have to go through some difficult and maybe scary situations, but He will always be there to help us. The Psalmist said, "*Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You*" (*Psalms 56:3*).

*A Deacon's Son*

*“Let the wicked forsake his way.”*

*Isaiah 55:7*

Most churches have members who are called “deacons”. They are officers of the church who have the responsibility for the finances, the church buildings and things of that kind. If you go to a church, are there deacons? Do you know who they are?

One of the deacons in Spurgeon’s church had a son who wasn’t a Christian, and in fact his parents were very worried about him because he was living a sinful life. What they didn’t know was that he had decided to leave home and go to America, and he had gone so far as to buy a ticket for a ship to take him there! His plan was to leave without even telling his parents!

This deacon one day went to see Spurgeon and asked him if they could pray for his son. But it was a bad moment. Spurgeon was hurrying to do something else, and so he said that he couldn’t stop to pray just then. So he left the deacon, but hadn’t gone very far before he had second thoughts. Surely he could make time to pray for this young man, especially because his father was so concerned about him. He went back and they both went into a room in the church, and they prayed for the son together.

What they didn’t know was this—just then the son was in Liverpool looking at the steamer he intended to take for America. He had his ticket, there was the ship, so all he had



to do was to get on board, and off he would go to a new life! But something suddenly happened! As he looked at the ship, he unexpectedly felt very convicted about his sin, and especially about his ingratitude to his parents who had been so good to him! They had looked after him, and told him about the Lord.

He felt that he couldn't get on board, and so the steamer sailed away without him, but he really didn't know what he ought to do! He walked up and down the streets, feeling very sad and miserable. He went to a hotel to stay for the night, but he couldn't sleep! All he could do was to pace the room in misery!

Then he had an idea, a very bad idea! He thought that the only way out was to commit suicide! That is a very wrong thing to do! He found out where there was a gunsmith's shop in order to buy a gun with which to kill himself! He got to the shop, but it was closed! So he went back to the hotel, and paced to and fro again.

Then he had a better idea! He would pray! He knelt down by the bedside, and prayed to the Lord. The next day he was still very unhappy, but he continued to pray, and before long the joy of having his sins forgiven flooded his heart! He was now a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and what a difference that made to him!

He went back to the ship's office and was pleased that they gave him his money back, which he used to return to London and his surprised but happy parents! And I'm sure that Spurgeon, when he heard about it, was thankful that he had made time to pray with the deacon for his son!

This story is an illustration of a wonderful verse in the Bible: "*Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon*" (Isaiah 55:7).

## “The Charles Haddon Spurgeon”



*“I have become all things to all men, that  
I might by all means save some.”*

*1 Corinthians 9:22*

**D**o you like fish? Maybe you keep some. These days there are all kinds that people have, some of them of the most amazing colours and shapes. We once had a couple of goldfish, and it was always interesting watching them swim about! But I don’t mean fish to look at or to look after—I mean fish to eat! Eating fish is good for you!

The fishing industry is not so big in Britain as it was years ago, and when Spurgeon was alive many fishing boats would go out and bring great piles of fish back! One of the busiest fishing ports was Grimsby. See if you can find Grimsby on a map. Here’s a clue—it is on the east coast of England, about half-way up—or down!

Have you ever named a pet, maybe a dog or a cat? We called our goldfish “Bubble” and “Squeak”! Your parents had to decide what to name you, which maybe they found quite difficult. Do you like your name, or would you have chosen another? But not only do people and often pets have names, but boats and ships do as well. Maybe you have seen some of these names. Can you remember any of them?

There was a man in Grimsby who knew Spurgeon, and he had a fishing boat, but before it went out to catch fish he had to think about what to name it. He decided to call it “The

Charles Haddon Spurgeon”! And so “The Charles Haddon Spurgeon” would go out into the North Sea, and bring fish back to the port of Grimsby.

One day the boat was out on a fishing trip, and the fishermen on board noticed a ship, a schooner, not too far away. Then they saw something else. There was a flag flying from the mast, and it was a flag of distress! This was usually the only way of passing on messages.

The schooner was a foreign ship, and “The Charles Haddon Spurgeon” approached it and came alongside. Some of the fishermen boarded the ship and found her full of water, and in great danger of sinking! They spoke to the sailors on board, and it was agreed that the fishing boat would try and tow the ship all the way into Grimsby. Two men stayed on board the schooner, at great risk to their lives, for it could sink at any moment! Eventually “The Charles Haddon Spurgeon” was able to pull the schooner into port, but it took three days and three nights! That must have been an anxious time for the fishermen and the sailors!

Someone told Susannah about this rescue, and then pointed out that that is what Spurgeon himself had done for him, spiritually speaking! Spurgeon had worked to bring souls in danger safely to the Lord Jesus Christ and to heaven! And that is what every Christian ought to do!

The apostle Paul also was very committed to the work of rescuing people in spiritual danger. He wrote, “*I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some*” (1 *Corinthians* 9:22). Of course, by that he didn’t mean that he himself could save anyone—he meant that by telling them about the Lord Jesus Christ, they might realize their need of Him, and trust Him, and so be saved.

## *Another Boat, Another Name!*



*“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ So they said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved ...’”*

*Acts 16:30–31*

The owner of the boat “The Charles Haddon Spurgeon” was doing well in his fishing business, so much so that he decided to have another boat built. So it was that again he faced the same problem—what to call it? Can you guess what name he chose? Let me give you a clue—Spurgeon was married to Susannah, and so the boat was to be called “The Susie Spurgeon”!

In those days boats would have a flag with the name on it, and so, while the boat was being built, the owner sent this flag, which was called a burgee, to Susannah. She unpacked it when it arrived, and found that it was very large—eight yards long and two and a half yards wide, and there, in big letters, was written “The Susie Spurgeon”! It was too big to go anywhere in the house but the largest room, and so it was put up there, wound round the book-cases and the curtain rods until it was needed!

Susannah thought about the boat, and the men who would sail in her. She thought of their souls, and their need of the Saviour. How could she remind them of God and His Son as they went into the ocean to fish? Then she had an idea. She thought that she would add some words to the flag in the



form of a poem! She said that she wasn't very good at poetry, but this is what she wrote:

This flag shall bear on high my prayer,  
While playful winds enwreath it;  
God save the crew, good men and true,  
Who worship God beneath it!

Susannah showed it to Spurgeon. He smiled, and shook his head, and said that it was "very nice, but it would not do!" So she decided to have another go:

This flag shall bear aloft my prayer,  
As it floats in the heavenly blue;  
God bless the S.S., give good success,  
And save every one of the crew.

She took her second offering to Spurgeon. What did he think of this one? He still wasn't very happy, so he thought he'd better have a go! This is what he wrote:

This flag shall bear aloft my prayer,  
That good success attend you;  
God save each one, through Christ His Son,  
And from all ill defend you.

Which do you prefer? Well, anyway, it was Spurgeon's poem which was put on the flag which eventually flew from "The Susie Spurgeon". The fishermen on the boat and on many other boats must have seen and read those words. I hope that God did save each one through Christ His Son!

In Acts we read that the jailor brought out Paul and Silas from prison asking, "*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*" So they said, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved ...*" (Acts 16:30–31). Salvation comes through trusting in Him.



## *What's for Breakfast?*



*“And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you.”*

*1 Thessalonians 5:12*

Spurgeon travelled quite a lot, often to preach God's Word in different places, but sometimes to have a holiday. If you go right to the top of England, do you know which country you come to? Scotland, of course! Scotland is a good place to have a holiday, and on one occasion that is where he went to have a rest. A friend of his owned a large yacht, and invited Spurgeon to join him for a trip.

There were a few people on board and Spurgeon took one of his sons, Charles, with him. They had sailed along the Caledonian Canal, and were now on Loch Etive, which is not far from Oban. See if you can find the Loch on a map. When they got to the Loch it was getting late, so the yacht anchored there for the night.

Next morning, the steward got up early to get breakfast ready. What do you usually eat for breakfast? Many people have cereals like cornflakes or rice crispies, and in Scotland—do you know? Porridge! And what do you need for cereals? Milk! And milk is needed for tea and coffee. Yes, there was some milk, but not enough! So the steward decided to go ashore to buy some. He used a little rowing boat to get to the shore, and young Charles watched him as he got out of the boat, climbed a hill, and knocked on the door of a small

cottage. A woman opened the door, and Charles could see that the two of them were having a lively conversation, although, of course, he couldn't hear them. Then the steward turned away without any milk! Clearly the lady wouldn't or couldn't give him any. He came back to the yacht empty-handed!

Charles was most interested to find out what the lady had said, and the steward told him. He had told the lady that milk was needed on the yacht, and he had mentioned that Spurgeon was one of the passengers on board. The lady had heard of Spurgeon, and she said she wouldn't give him any milk unless she could actually see Spurgeon!

Spurgeon was told about this, so he came up on deck and waved his hand in the direction of the lady! She at once recognized him; maybe she had heard him preach, or seen drawings or photographs of him. She was so pleased to see him that she did a "Scottish reel"! Do you know what that is? It's a special Scottish dance. By this time, the steward had rowed back to the shore again. He climbed up to the cottage, and soon the lady, having finished her dance, gave him a big jug full of milk!

Why was the lady so happy to see Spurgeon? I don't know, but I expect it was because his ministry had been a blessing to her. If she hadn't actually heard him preach, maybe she had read some of his sermons, which were sent all over the world every week. She was pleased to see him, and pleased to be able to do something for him—giving him some milk for his breakfast!

Who has told you about the Lord Jesus? Maybe your parents, a Christian friend, a Sunday School teacher, or a preacher. You should be thankful for them. The apostle Paul wrote, "*And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake*" (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

*Burn Them!*

*“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me.”*

*John 6:37*

The last story was about a Scottish lady who did a Scottish reel, and how she could well have read Spurgeon’s sermons, and now I want to tell you about two other ladies who lived in Scotland, and they, too, are connected to Spurgeon’s printed sermons.

Spurgeon usually preached on Sundays, and then during the week one of his sermons was printed and sent all over the world, and these were especially popular in Scotland. On one occasion a husband was going to town, and his wife said to him, “Dinna forget Spurgeon!” I expect you can guess what she meant by that. She meant, “Don’t forget to buy Spurgeon’s sermon!” The husband replied, “I canna forget!” Just as many people today buy a daily or weekly newspaper, so many people would eagerly wait to buy the latest Spurgeon sermon!

But not everyone liked those sermons. Another lady in Scotland, who wasn’t a Christian, one day decided to have nothing at all to do with Christianity. She went through the house looking for anything which was connected with the Christian faith. She found her Bible, some tracts and some of Spurgeon’s sermons. She collected them all and put them together.

In those days people didn’t have electric fires or central





heating and radiators—they had open wood or coal fires. She decided that the best way to get rid of all these things which reminded her of Christianity was to throw them all on the fire. That is what she did. The Bible, the tracts, and Spurgeon’s sermons—on the fire they went!

Now it so happened that one of Spurgeon’s sermons fell out of the fire, so she picked it up and threw it back on. But again it fell out! So once more she picked it up and threw it on again. Can you guess? Yes, a third time it fell out of the fire! I expect she was getting a little tired of picking it up and throwing it back into the fire! So for the fourth time she threw it on the fire.

This time part of it was burnt but part of it fell out again! She said, “It won’t burn!” And she wondered why it wouldn’t seem to burn and be destroyed. She picked up the part that had fallen out and looked at it. And then, of course, her curiosity got the better of her, and she began to read it! As she read, the Lord started to work in her heart.

She realized her great mistake—trying to have nothing to do with Christianity. But she realized something even more important—that she was a sinner needing a Saviour. Through reading that sermon which she had tried to burn four times, she was converted!

Jesus said, “*All that the Father gives Me will come to Me*” (*John 6:37*). Even though that lady tried at first to destroy God’s message to her, He wanted her to be saved, and so He made sure that she was saved! Maybe you are reading this story because He wants you to be saved as well!

## *A Long Journey!*



*“So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”*

*Isaiah 55:11*

The first person to sail round the world was a navigator called Juan Sebastian de Elcano who came from the Basque region of Spain. He lived from about 1476 to 1526. With a crew of seventeen sailors he made the long and difficult journey in a ship called “The Victoria”—a journey which took three years. The King of Spain, Charles I, on his return awarded him a coat of arms featuring a globe with the motto in Latin, “You went around me first.” Today, of course, people can travel very quickly in aeroplanes. Have you been abroad to a foreign country? See if you have been to either of the countries mentioned in this story.

I want to tell you about a long journey which something (not someone!) took.

One day an evangelist was asked to visit a lady in Nottingham because she was dying. He didn’t know her, but of course he went to see her. He was very happy to discover that she was a believer in the Lord Jesus, and although she was near death, she was rejoicing in Christ her Saviour.

“How did you become a Christian?” he asked her. “How were you converted?”

“Reading that,” she replied, handing him a torn piece of paper.

The evangelist looked at it and saw that it was an extract from one of Spurgeon’s sermons which had been printed in an American newspaper.

“Where did you get it from?” he asked.

She answered, “It was wrapped around a parcel which was sent to me from Australia!”

So here is the journey that sermon made:

- Spurgeon preached the sermon in London
- An extract was printed in a newspaper in America
- Somehow that newspaper was sent to Australia
- Someone in Australia used part of that newspaper to wrap up a parcel which was sent to the lady in Nottingham!

Spurgeon’s sermon, or part of it at least, went round the world! Roughly how many miles do you think that sermon travelled?

- 215 miles
- 2,150 miles
- 21,500 miles
- 215,000 miles or
- 2,150,000 miles?

You will find the answer on page 112.

The great thing was that at the end of that long journey the lady in Nottingham came to know the Lord Jesus Christ as her Saviour and Lord. God makes a wonderful promise in *Isaiah 55:11*: “So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” In this story, God sent His word to the other side of the world and back again, but it achieved what He wanted it to—the salvation of that lady.

## *A Lonely Life*



*“Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”*

*Matthew 18:3*

**W**hat job would you like to do when you leave school, or what career would you like to follow? Maybe you will need to do further studies at college or university. If you rely upon the Lord, He will guide you into the right way.

Do you know anyone who works in an office? A shop? A factory? A hospital? Those whose jobs are in places like that usually work with or meet a lot of other people. On the other hand, some people have very lonely jobs, and they don't see many others. Can you think of any jobs like that? I suppose that farmers often have a lonely life, and so do shepherds.

This story is about a shepherd. Can you think of any people in the Bible who were shepherds? Moses was doing the work of a shepherd when the Lord appeared to him in the burning bush. David was a shepherd before he became the King of Israel. The prophet Amos was also a shepherd. And don't forget the shepherds to whom the angel appeared with news that Jesus had been born!

But our story is about a shepherd in Australia. In Spurgeon's day, shepherds in Australia had a hard life. Their living conditions were poor, they usually lived in huts, and their diet was monotonous. This shepherd looked after sheep

a long way from any town, so he rarely saw other people. He was lonely! And he wasn't a Christian. He hadn't been to a church for years!

One day as he was looking after the sheep he saw something unusual. You wouldn't think it unusual, because you could probably see this almost any day in a town or city, but it was unusual out in the Australian bush. It was a sheet of a newspaper! It must have been blown a long way over the plains!

Well, the shepherd hadn't got much else to do, so he picked it up and started to read it. Of course, he had no idea what the sheet was about, and if he had known beforehand he wouldn't have picked it up in the first place! Maybe you can guess what was printed on the sheet? Yes, it was one of Spurgeon's sermons! Having started to read it, his interest was aroused, and he couldn't stop. Then he kept that sheet, and he read it again and again—until he came to trust the Saviour for himself!

He started going to church when he could, but he still spent most of his time in the bush, looking after his sheep. He wasn't so lonely either, because he now knew the Lord was with him all the time. And he also began to do something else—he arranged to receive Spurgeon's sermons week by week!

Jesus said, "*Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven*" (Matthew 18:3). We must be converted if we are to enter heaven, and to be converted we must be teachable and humble. That shepherd came to understand what Jesus meant, and I'm sure that he thanked the Lord for arranging for that piece of a newspaper to blow all the way across the plains so that he might see it, read it, and be converted through it!

## *Asked in England, Answered in Australia!*



*“The effective, fervent prayer of a  
righteous man avails much.”*

*James 5:16*

**W**e’ve had some stories about Scotland, and a couple about Australia. Let’s stay with Australia for this one!

The year was 1887. Some Christians moved to London. They had a friend who was not a Christian. He had lived in England, and had regularly gone to church. Then he had moved to live in Australia, and as soon as he got there he stopped going. He seemed to have no interest in spiritual things, and was not at all concerned about his relationship with God. The dearest wish his Christian friends had for him was that he, too, should come to know the Saviour for himself.

In London the Christians met Spurgeon and told him about their friend, and asked him if he would pray for the man that he might be converted. And that is what Spurgeon did, and he did so publicly at one of the meetings at the Tabernacle.

Over in Australia, the man being prayed for didn’t know anything about Spurgeon, and at the time when Spurgeon prayed for him he was in Melbourne—maybe you could look that place up on a map. He was working on a building, and was carrying a piece of wood from one part of the building to another. Suddenly, although he couldn’t understand it at the time, he thought about God, and his responsibility to God.

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He realized then and there that he was a sinner who needed forgiveness. He wasn't a particularly bad person—in many ways he was quite respectable—but there in that building in Melbourne he knew that he needed to get right with God. Tears came to his eyes and his hands began to tremble!

What could he do? He went straightaway to the superintendent in charge of the building work, and told him that he couldn't do any more work there that day. He went back to the boarding house where he was staying, fell on his knees and prayed for God's forgiveness.

Of course, the man didn't know that thousands of miles away many people in the Metropolitan Tabernacle were praying for him, but God heard those prayers and answered them in the most wonderful way.

The same night, the man remembered his Christian friends back in England. I'm sure that before he left for Australia they had spoken to him about the Lord. Now he wanted to tell them that he, too, had found the Saviour. There were no telephones then, so he sat down and wrote a letter to them, telling them what had happened so unexpectedly as he carried a piece of wood on the building site. They must have been so pleased to get his letter, and I expect they told Spurgeon the good news and how his prayer had been answered.

God promises to hear and answer the prayers of those who trust Him. Of course, He doesn't always give us what we ask for. If He says "No" to us it is because He knows what we need better than we do! And even when He says "No", He will give us something which in the long run will be better for us. But this story (and there are thousands and thousands of others like it) shows us that God does answer prayer. James tells us this: "*The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much*" (James 5:16).

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*Which Word Applies?*

*“He who believes in Him is not condemned.”*

*John 3:18*

Many people go to church, sing the hymns or psalms, bow their heads during the prayers, follow the Bible reading and listen to the sermon—and then they go home and forget all about it! Well, sometimes Spurgeon would ask the people who came to church to go home and spend a little time quietly and alone, and think about their relationship with God. Did they really know and love Him? What was the Lord Jesus Christ to them? Did they know Him as their Saviour, Lord and Friend? Were they living for Him day by day, trying to please Him? Were they serving Him?

Occasionally he suggested that at home they should get a pencil and paper, and write down one of two words. If they felt that they were not real Christians, and didn't know the Lord personally, what do you think that word was? It was the word “CONDEMNED”, which means being under God's anger and judgement. If, on the other hand, they were truly trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation, loved Him and tried to live for Him, then they should write down a quite different word. Which word was that? “FORGIVEN”. Some people did this, and as they quietly sat at home and thought deeply about these matters, came to trust in the Saviour.

There was one young man who did this. He went home,



and he thought about his relationship with the Lord. He knew that he was not a Christian. So he got out a pencil and paper and which word did he write down? Yes, the word “CONDEMNED”. But as he looked at the word, his tears began to flow and his heart began to break. He began to realize how terrible his situation was. He was going to be condemned by God! That realization made him turn then and there to Jesus in repentance and faith. He threw that piece of paper into the fire, got another piece, and wrote on it “FORGIVEN”. Soon afterwards he went to see Spurgeon, told him how he had been converted, and said that he wanted to join the church.

Another man went home and told his wife that he was going to write down the word which fitted his case—he was going to write the word “CONDEMNED”. His wife was a Christian, and she pleaded with him to think again, and to turn to Christ. But no, he picked up the pencil and was just about to write the letter “C”, when his young daughter, who was also a Christian, caught hold of his hand, and said, “No, father, you shall not write it!” Both wife and daughter then spoke to him about the way of salvation, and he too was converted, and later joined the Tabernacle.

The Bible says, “*He who believes in Him [the Lord Jesus] is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*” (John 3:18).

Spurgeon’s advice was good, wasn’t it? You too ought to think seriously about your relationship with Jesus. If you had to write down one of those two words that applied to you, which one would it be—CONDEMNED or FORGIVEN?

## *The Man Who Tried to Run Away*



*“Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins.”*

*Acts 13:38*

One day, a man asked to become a member of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, and so Spurgeon asked him how he had been converted. This is the story he told.

He had been the driver of a horse and cart. He didn’t go to church at all, and in fact no one had spoken to him about God or Jesus. One day he was driving his cart across London Bridge when suddenly a man jumped up and climbed into the back. The driver was just about to use his whip to get the man off, when the man said, “Hold on, mate! I’ve got a message for you!” “What is it?” the driver asked. “I’ll tell you, but I may as well sit in the front.” So the man came and sat next to the driver.

“What is your message?” asked the driver. “It’s a message from God to your soul,” said the man. The driver cursed and swore at him but that made no difference to his passenger. In fact he said, “You are the very man I was after! I knew you were a swearing man, for it was that that first attracted my attention to you, and I’m sure my message is for you!”

The driver asked again, “What have you to say? Make it short!” The man then told the driver what would become of him if he died a swearer and a sinner without being forgiven, and told him of the world to come. He said that there was a Saviour for sinners, and that, if he trusted in Jesus, he would

be saved. Before he got off the cart, he made the driver promise to go and hear Spurgeon preach.

Later the driver was sorry that he had made that promise, but he thought to himself that a promise was a promise, and even if he regretted making it, he had better keep it! So on Sunday morning he went to the Tabernacle, and there at the gate was the man who had jumped on his cart. He took the driver into the church, gave up his own seat for him and had to stand for the whole of the service, the church was so full of people!

After the service, the man asked the driver, “Did you like it?” “No, I did not!” he replied. “That is not the sort of thing I care about. I don’t believe in religion!” “Ah, but you will,” said the man.

So the two men said goodbye and the driver hoped that he would never meet that Christian man again. But some weeks later he was walking along the road when he saw him! Quickly he turned round the first corner he came to and ran to get away. But the Christian had seen him, and he could run, too, and that is what he did! He caught up with him and asked him, “Well, mate, how are you?” “All right,” answered the driver. He was too ashamed to ask the Christian to his house because he and his wife spent a lot of money on drink, and so couldn’t afford much furniture. He wanted to get rid of the Christian man and so to bring the conversation to an end he promised to go again the next Sunday to hear Spurgeon preach! He kept his promise again—and became a believer in the Lord Jesus!

That is the story he told Spurgeon, and so he was able to become a member of the Tabernacle. He might well have thought of what the apostle Paul said, “*Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man [the Lord Jesus Christ] is preached to you the forgiveness of sins*” (Acts 13:38).

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# 51

## *Little Things*



*“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all  
in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks  
to God the Father through Him.”*

*Colossians 3:17*

**W**hat important things did you do today? Did you go to see the Prime Minister in No 10 Downing Street in London, and help him sort out some of the country’s problems? Perhaps while you were in London you called in at Buckingham Palace and gave your advice to the Queen? Or maybe you flew across to America and visited the President there and gave him a few tips to help him run the United States of America? No? You didn’t do any of those things? I thought not!

You are just like most people in the world. Every day we all do very small things, and because they are so small we don’t think that they are very important. The things we do are not reported in the daily newspapers, and are not mentioned on the radio or television. They are unimportant, routine, mundane, little things. Some of them are good and kind, and others may be bad and unkind, but we imagine that they are so small that no one takes any notice of them.

I want to tell you of a quite small thing that Spurgeon did, and of how it really became very important, and how the Lord used it.

There was a man who wasn’t a Christian, and he used to



get drunk a lot, and commit lots of other sins. He didn't attend the Metropolitan Tabernacle, but one day, for some reason, he went round to the back of the building. Perhaps he was taking a short cut to his home, or maybe he just wondered what the big building looked like from the back.

Spurgeon, when he left the Tabernacle, usually didn't go out through the front door, but instead went out through a door at the back. Just when the man was at the back, Spurgeon came out! He saw the man—and then he did a very small, unimportant thing—he held out his hand to shake the man's hand! Imagine—shaking hands with Spurgeon!

The man must have known who Spurgeon was, and he still didn't attend any of the meetings at the Tabernacle, but from that day he would often stand at the back door of the building, and every time that Spurgeon came out, the two of them would shake hands! As time went by, the man came to realize that Spurgeon was really very friendly. And then he thought to himself that he would actually go and hear this friendly preacher. That is what he did, and before long, as he listened to the gospel being proclaimed, he saw clearly his need of a Saviour. He turned away from his many sins, and trusted in the Lord Jesus. He then wanted to join the church.

Spurgeon was always very interested to hear how people were converted, and when he questioned the man, he was told that it all began in a very small way—when Spurgeon shook hands with him!

You don't have to do big and important things to please the Lord, or to be used by Him. If you look to Him, He will help you to do the small things for Him, and He will be pleased.

The apostle Paul wrote, “*And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him*” (Colossians 3:17).

*A Letter to Children*

*“Ask, and it will be given to you.”*

*Matthew 7:7*

As you will know by now, Spurgeon was a very busy man. He preached a lot, talked to many people personally, had articles and books to write, and here is something else he did—he wrote letters, lots and lots of letters! When was the last time you wrote a letter? Maybe it was to thank someone for a birthday or Christmas present that was sent to you. I don’t expect that most people write as many as Spurgeon did—he wrote about five hundred every week! And remember, in those days there were no computers or laptops, so all his letters were handwritten with pen and ink.

Here is part of a letter Spurgeon sent to a girl called Lily. In it he mentions how it was that he came to write it in the first place. At the top he put, “O Lord, bless this letter!”

Dear Lily,

I was a little while ago at a meeting for prayer where a large number of ministers were gathered together. The subject of prayer was ‘our children’. It soon brought tears to my eyes to hear those good fathers pleading with God for their sons and daughters. Then I thought, I will write to those sons and daughters, and remind them of their parents’ prayers. Dear Lily, you are highly privileged in having a parent who prays for



you. Your name is known in the courts of heaven. Your case has been laid before the throne of God.

Think of this! Remember how much you have already sinned, and none can wash you but Jesus. When you grow up, you may become very sinful, and none can change your nature and make you holy but the Lord Jesus, though His Spirit. You cannot save yourself, but the great Lord Jesus can save you. Ask Him to do it! “He who asks, receives.” Then trust in Jesus to save you. He can do it, for He died and rose again that whosoever believes in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life. Come and tell Jesus you have sinned; seek forgiveness; trust Him for it, and be sure that you are saved. I pray you to think of heaven and hell, for in one of those places you will live for ever. Meet me in heaven!

Yours very lovingly,  
C.H. Spurgeon

That was the letter Spurgeon sent to Lily, but not only to her. In fact, he wrote the same thing to hundreds of boys and girls! And the Lord used that letter and spoke to many of those children through it.

If your parents are believers in the Lord Jesus, then they certainly pray for you—in fact, they started before you were born! They ask that you be kept safe, and for many other things, but most of all that you may be saved, and one day go to heaven.

Spurgeon wrote to Lily, and to many other children, “Meet me in heaven!” Will you meet Spurgeon in heaven? Will you meet your parents in heaven? Think of what Jesus said, “*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened*” (Matthew 7:7–8).

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