

THE VICTORIAN PREACHER'S MALADY: THE METAPHORICAL USAGE OF
GOUT IN THE LIFE OF CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the use of the gout metaphor in the life and writings of one of Victorian England's most eminent preachers and gout sufferers, the Baptist Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892). Careful scrutiny of his sermons, articles, and personal correspondence reveals both theological continuity with the seventeenth-century English Puritans as well as contemporaneous cultural currents, such as the Victorian ideal of Christian manliness and the presence of persistent tropes from England's Georgian period. This study highlights the dramatic presentation and use of Spurgeon's body in his preaching performances, especially in his early ministry. Spurgeon's dramatic style, which was often pejoratively labeled as "theatrical," and his phenomenal success, led to the construction of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Completed in 1861, this mammoth structure had a capacity to seat six thousand congregants. The architecture of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, as it was also known, contained a protruding platform and was devoid of a traditional pulpit and organ. It was truly a "preacher's hall." These features focused the hearers' attention on the body of Spurgeon. Spurgeon's platform became the scene of another drama, one that took years to play out. Gout, along with Bright's Disease (chronic inflammation of the kidneys) took its toll on the body of Spurgeon, transforming the once youthful, energetic preacher into a soft and bloated figure that struggled, at times, even to stand through the sermon. This very

public transformation was also chronicled in Victorian material culture through *cartes-de-visite*, Cabinet cards, cartoons, and caricatures. The dissertation concludes with an analysis of gout and the contested body of Spurgeon. Particular attention is paid to the cartoon, “Parsons in the Pulpit.” The cartoon, like Spurgeon’s life, does not become intelligible unless read with gout and the notion of Christian manliness in mind.

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, have examined a dissertation titled “The Victorian Preacher’s Malady: The Metaphorical Usage of Gout in the Life of Charles Haddon Spurgeon,” presented by Dale Warren Smith, candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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For Teresa, whose character is my boon

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

For over thirty-five years, the preaching phenomenon of London, Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892), kept thousands listening. By the time he was twenty, he had preached more than six hundred times. In 1861, construction of the immense Metropolitan Tabernacle was completed. It was a structure without an altar or pulpit. It existed to hold the masses and was designed to maximize the opportunity of viewing and hearing Charles Spurgeon.¹ By 1865, Spurgeon had begun a magazine, *The Sword and the Trowel*, and his sermons were selling twenty-five thousand copies per week.² His sermons were also being translated into twenty languages. The main portion of his ministry was consumed with preparing sermons and preaching the Gospel.³ Spurgeon edited those sermons and other writings, such as commentaries and devotionals, guiding them into print.⁴ He focused his

¹ Joseph S. Meisel has noted, “At capacity, the Tabernacle held around 6,000 people. Thus, with three services, Spurgeon preached to around 18,000 weekly. In design, it was not a church, but rather a great preaching hall.” Joseph S. Meisel, *Public Speech and the Culture of Public Life in the Age of Gladstone* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 129.

² “The weekly printed sermons rose from an initial circulation of under 2000 to an average of 25,000 by 1871.” Mark Hopkins, *Nonconformity’s Romantic Generation: Evangelical and Liberal Theologies in Victorian England* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2006), 154.

³ Robert H. Ellison characterizes Spurgeon’s preaching style as an example of “secondary literacy.” According to Ellison, “Secondary literacy is the practice of taking an idea that has been developed through the use of extemporaneous public speaking and using the medium of print to make that idea accessible to people who were not in the church or meeting hall when the oration was first delivered.” Robert H. Ellison, *The Victorian Pulpit: Spoken and Written Sermons in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1998), 76. Ellison’s idea, which is a variation on Walter Ong’s “secondary orality,” fits Spurgeon’s method and practice. Spurgeon preached extemporaneously and revised the manuscripts weekly. See footnote 4.

⁴ Al Mohler summarized the journey from sermon preparation to publication: “The process whereby the spoken sermon reached the printed page is itself worthy of note. A short-hand stenographer was present for every Sunday service. By late Sunday night or early Monday morning, a rough hand-written draft was ready for Spurgeon’s review. He gave generous energy to the editing of his sermons for print, and gave the printer strict instructions for preparing the galley proofs. Those proofs were to be in Spurgeon’s hand by late Monday,

time on tremendous works of philanthropy and education, beginning and maintaining the Stockwell Orphanages, the Pastors' College, and a great number of other ministries.⁵

Spurgeon was active politically as well, often supporting William Gladstone (1809-1898) and the policies of the Liberal Party.⁶ In January of 1892, his death was observed as a great national loss.

Historians of religion have likened the complex nature of the study of a religious tradition to a group of blindfolded scholars touching an elephant. It is folly to even attempt to describe, in a comprehensive way, a particular religious tradition through the account of just one of those blindfolded individuals.⁷ Likewise, scholars of the Victorian era have described their monumental task by employing an equally compelling word picture, that of an individual rowing out onto a vast ocean of material and lowering down into it a little bucket. The subsequent careful study of the bucket's contents constitutes, at best, that particular historian's contribution to the field of Victorian studies.⁸ Based on those two

and his final revision was submitted to the printer by early Tuesday morning. The printed editions were ready for distribution by Thursday morning." R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "Spurgeon Sermons, Biographies Offer Treasure for Today's Preacher," *Preaching* 8, no. 3 (November-December 1992): 61.

⁵ Arnold Dallimore, *Spurgeon* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 113-32. See also <http://www.childrenshomes.org.uk/Spurgeon/>, accessed April 11, 2017.

⁶ See Appendix C, Figure C26. So close was the association of the two that Spurgeon is seen occupying the "speech region" (according to the phrenologists) of Gladstone's brain.

⁷ Charles L. Cohen and Ronald L. Numbers, eds., *Gods in America: Religious Pluralism in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 33.

⁸ I have tried to follow the advice that Lytton Strachey gave, almost one hundred years ago, to those researching the Victorian Age: "If he is wise, he will adopt a subtler strategy. He will attack his subject in unexpected places; he will fall upon the flank, or the rear; he will shoot a sudden, revealing searchlight into obscure recesses, hitherto undivined. He will row out over that great ocean of material, and lower down into it, here and there, a little bucket, which will bring up to the light of day some characteristic specimen, from those far depths, to be examined with a careful curiosity. Guided by these considerations, I have written the ensuing studies. I have attempted, through the medium of biography, to present some Victorian visions to the modern eye." *Eminent Victorians* (New York: Garden City Publishing, 1918), v.

foundational images, I envisage this attempt at interdisciplinary research, and perhaps most efforts in that direction, as though a blindfolded individual were standing precariously in a boat, next to a blindfolded elephant that is holding a bucket of water with its trunk. The swell of the incoming tide is felt by both man and beast, and success will be determined, not by the description of the contents of the bucket nor the contours of the beast, but by their simply keeping their balance in such a challenging environment. To paraphrase Strachey, the following study attempts, through the medium of a particular Victorian nonconformist's biography, to present to the modern eye a vision of what it meant to be ill and to live out that illness in the public spotlight.

Thesis

My dissertation examines Charles Spurgeon's use of gout metaphors in his sermons, magazine articles, and personal correspondence. Such an examination proves exceptionally fruitful in Spurgeon's particular case for the following reasons: first, he suffered from gout and mentioned his experience in his various writings; second, he was a popular figure over an extended period, almost four full decades, and the changes his body experienced were chronicled publicly; third, when contrasted with the common cultural stereotypes surrounding gout, Spurgeon's unique theological emphasis on the Puritans yields some unexpected results; and finally, focusing on Spurgeon through the lens of gout employs a methodology, a tool from the toolbox, that may encourage other scholars to take a similar approach.

Spurgeon suffered from gout and Bright's Disease (chronic inflammation of the kidneys). Whether he meant to or not, Spurgeon wore the emblem of gout, for this

particular disease was “the virtual insignia of a ruling patriarchy.”⁹ The Monarch’s disease marked him out as a member of the elite. This fact is notable in light of his own claims to be an “anti-elite” and a common man. Modern historians typically portray Spurgeon as a voice of the common man.¹⁰ Spurgeon himself often railed against society’s elites. In the preface to his work, *Farm Sermons*, Spurgeon reaches out to the farmer: “While the earth abideth, with her seed-time and harvest, some men will be tillers of the soil. The day may come when there will be no more squires, but there will be sure to be farmers. Whether there be lords, they shall cease; or lawyers, they shall vanish away; but farmers shall remain.”¹¹ Spurgeon’s primary concern in this passage was to elevate the status of the farmer and to honor his labor.¹²

Who was Spurgeon’s audience? In one sense, he had a national and international audience through his publications. His sermons were very popular in the United States and elsewhere. His strong stance against slavery and the slave trade hurt the sale of his sermons in the South, but they eventually recovered.¹³ The geographical range of the readers of his

⁹ Roy Porter and G. S. Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 143.

¹⁰ See Tom Nettles, *Living By Revealed Truth: The Life and Pastoral Theology of Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (China: Christian Focus Publications, 2013), 112, for an example of Spurgeon preaching against “class sins.” David Bebbington notes, “Spurgeon was profoundly imbued with an anti-elitism that he shared with America. So that nobody should be excluded because of poverty, trainees at his college did not have to pay for their education. When he recommended that students should adapt their pulpit style to their audiences, he told them...to go up to the level of a poor man but down to the level of an educated person. Spurgeon professed a version of egalitarianism that made him seem the champion of the common man.” David Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Downer’s Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2005), 43. One of Spurgeon’s biographers, Lewis Drummond, noted that Spurgeon was called “the poor man’s cardinal.” *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1992), 576.

¹¹ C. H. Spurgeon, *Farm Sermons*, London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1882, iii.

¹² David Bebbington writes: “He [Spurgeon] championed rustic values rooted in the soil...against the debased lifestyle falsely called urbane.” “Spurgeon and the Common Man,” *Baptist Review of Theology*, 5, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 68.

¹³ Arnold Dallimore, *Spurgeon* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 96.

written sermons has been documented and celebrated.¹⁴ A modified question, then, remains: Who was listening to Spurgeon on a weekly basis? Who was sitting in the pews of the Metropolitan Tabernacle? Spurgeon's audience primarily consisted of the middle-class and lower middle-class, but, on occasion, a luminary, such as William Gladstone or John Ruskin (1819-1900), would attend.¹⁵ Charles Maurice Davies, whose career included the ministry and journalism, attended a service at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, in the mid-1870s and observed, "When Mr. Spurgeon makes his appearance at eleven, therefore, the whole place is completely filled. The congregation seems very equally divided among males and females, and consists almost exclusively of the middle class. There is no symptom of the very poor, or, to judge by outward appearance, of the very rich."¹⁶ Mark Hopkins agrees with Davies regarding the class composition, but notes the greater presence of men in the congregation, "The congregation that regularly stretched the 6500 capacity of the Metropolitan Tabernacle was predominately lower middle class, with men outnumbering women by two to one."¹⁷ Spurgeon ministered south of the Thames in a district known as Southwark. R. J. Helmstadter noted the distinctiveness of the area and its impact on the composition of the Metropolitan Tabernacle:

¹⁴ David Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Downer's Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2005), 45.

¹⁵ Patricia Kruppa, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon: A Preacher's Progress* (New York: Garland Publ. Co., 1982), 5; L. Grugel, *Society and Religion During the Age of Industrialization: Christianity in Victorian England*, Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1979, 49; Eric Hayden, "Did you Know?" *Christian History*, 10, no. 29, 1992, 2.

¹⁶ Charles Maurice Davies, *Unorthodox London: Or, Phases of the Religious Life in the Metropolis* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1876), 40.

¹⁷ Hopkins, *Nonconformity's Romantic Generation*, 155.

The social composition of the Tabernacle crowd, moreover, is what one would expect in South London. The area was poor. But Spurgeon's congregation was drawn not from the desperately poor but the lower middle to middle classes. Along the main thoroughfares of South London lived a large number of tradesman. [These] were middle-class [and] chiefly lower-middle-class families who considered their place in the social order very different indeed from that of the unskilled labourers and costermongers of the back streets. This was the church-going class, people for whom church-going itself was a badge of respectability. The Tabernacle congregation seems to have been drawn from just this group.¹⁸

Spurgeon's audience, like Victorians in general, was deeply aware of class differences.¹⁹

These differences were present when Spurgeon moved into "Westwood," spent extended periods of time convalescing in the South of France and were even present at his funeral when he was buried in Norwood Cemetery.²⁰ A component of this study of illness and Spurgeon will involve examining the disparities in class between the sufferer and his congregation.

Spurgeon loved books. His personal library was immense, containing twelve thousand volumes. He reportedly read six books per week.²¹ Although he was widely read, he had minimal formal education. K. Theodore Hoppen accounted for Spurgeon's level of education when he wrote that his "combination of feeling, tears, laughter, and modest learning lightly worn was expertly presented."²² Spurgeon's favorite work, next to the

¹⁸ R. J. Helmstadter, "Spurgeon in Outcast London," *The View from the Pulpit: Victorian Ministers and Society*, ed. P. T. Phillips (Toronto: Macmillan, 1978), 172. See also Geoffrey Best, *Mid-Victorian Britain 1851-1875* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), 192.

¹⁹ See David Cannadine, *Class In Britain* (London: Penguin Books, 2000).

²⁰ Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 390.

²¹ Hayden, "Did you Know?" 2.

²²K. Theodore Hoppen. *The Mid-Victorian Generation, 1846-1886* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 458.

Bible, was John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*.²³ Most Victorian homes contained a copy, and Spurgeon read it yearly throughout his childhood and adult life. Spurgeon was not just the "prince of preachers"; one New York magazine called him the "Bishop of London."²⁴ George Lorimer, one of his many nineteenth-century biographers, even lavished on him the title, "Emperor of the pulpit."²⁵ In the late twentieth century, John Pemble described Spurgeon with some memorable alliteration: "bearded, bulky, booming, and biblical-basic: an evangelical bruiser."²⁶ However he was characterized—and this dissertation discloses a broad spectrum of descriptions—Spurgeon came to be the chief among a pantheon of popular preachers (e.g., R. W. Dale [1829-1895], Henry Parry Liddon [1829-1890], Joseph Parker [1830-1902]), and Spurgeon's influence on Victorian England was profound.

Illustrations are frequently used throughout the first two chapters of this dissertation. There are also two appendices devoted to photographs and other items from material culture that portray the face, body, or sometimes (but not typically), just the words of Spurgeon. These illustrations, images, photographs, cartoons, caricatures, and artifacts from Victorian material culture are central to the argument of this dissertation. Their presence illustrates the ubiquity of Spurgeon's words and image in the Victorian period.

²³ Spurgeon wrote: "Next to the Bible, the book that I value most is John Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress.' I believe I have read it through at least a hundred times. It is a volume of which I never seem to tire." C. H. Spurgeon, *Pictures from Pilgrims' Progress* (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1992), 11.

²⁴ *Vanity Fair* (New York), May 12, 1860. This magazine, less well-known than the later magazine of the same name and published in London starting in 1869, was published in New York from 1860 to 1863.

²⁵ George C. Lorimer, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon: The Puritan Preacher in the Nineteenth Century* (Boston: James H. Earle Publisher, 1892), 69.

²⁶ John Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion: Victorians and Edwardians in the South* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 294.

The visual heritage of gout has included elements that Porter and Rousseau describe as both ludic and erotic.²⁷



Fig. 1.1. Thomas Rowlandson, *Comfort in the Gout*, c. 1785.

These elements are included in Rowlandson's illustration (see Figure 1.1). The older, gouty fellow looks playfully and lustfully toward the woman consoling him. Meanwhile, servants provide him with rich table fare and pour wine for him, communicating both his status and the excess that brought him to his condition. Moreover, he is surrounded by the technologies of gout. There is a cane under his chair. His foot is wrapped in flannel and rests, slightly elevated, on a gout stool. Spurgeon's own place in the visual heritage of gout is understood when a caricature featuring him in a variety of poses is analyzed below. Beyond cartoons and caricatures, I also present a number of other images. Many of the

²⁷ Porter and Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady*, 253.

illustrations are taken from Spurgeon's *Autobiography*, which was compiled by his wife, Susannah, and his personal secretary, J. W. Harrald. The majority of the *cartes-de-visite* (CDVs) and items from material culture come from the author's own personal collection. When the image has been sourced from elsewhere, the sources are noted.

Methodological Use of Elements from Victorian Material Culture

Any investigation into the life of Spurgeon would not be complete if these images and artifacts are not taken into account. These items, particularly the *cartes-de-visite* (CDVs), caricatures, and other photographs, undergird and illustrate key points of the argument. First, Spurgeon enjoyed immense fame and celebrity over several decades. These images were intentional, not random. They portray Spurgeon in ways that were domestic and sympathetic; for example, the image of him on a garden bench with Susannah.²⁸ This particular image was also developed into a stereoview card.²⁹ But there were other images that conveyed both sympathy for him and separation from others, such as the Cabinet Card entitled, "The Mentone Group."³⁰ Beginning in 1871, Spurgeon's yearly trip to Mentone, France, was a much-needed period of convalescence, but it also carried with it elements of class distinction and elitism.³¹

²⁸ See Appendix B, Figure B14.

²⁹ See Appendix B, Figure B15.

³⁰ "The Mentone Group" may feature Spurgeon holding his gold-headed cane as well, such canes were traditionally carried by physicians as well.

³¹ The Magic Lantern Glass Slide presentation featured Mentone in two slides (#28 and #29 of 36 slides). Regarding Mentone, the lecturer was instructed to read the following: "Mentone, during late years, has become a favourite winter resort of invalids and health loungers, from England, Germany, and other countries." *Optical Lantern Readings: Life and Work of Pastor C. H. Spurgeon* (Bradford: Riley Bros. Limited, 1892), 24 [with acknowledgement to Passmore and Alabaster].

Second, the images demonstrate that the changes that Spurgeon's body went through were a very public and visible phenomenon. His rapid rise to glory and, then, his slower physical decline both happened publicly, on the protruding platform of the Metropolitan Tabernacle and through images captured by the lens of the camera.

Third, the proliferation of the CDV revealed not only Spurgeon's popularity, but also the social leveling that was occurring through the photographer's studio.³² William C. Darrah has noted, "Something of tremendous social importance was taking place. No longer was the portrait the exclusive privilege of the well-to-do. The *carte de visite*, by virtue of its low cost, became available to the vast majority."³³

Fourth, the increased availability of these images introduced the Victorian middle classes to a wider world of experience and meaning, a world which featured foreign Royalty, Italian works of art, travel views and, of course, Charles Spurgeon. The *cartes-de-visite*, along with stereopticons, optical lanterns, microscopes and magnifying lenses, were devices that, among many other things, helped to create and establish celebrity.³⁴

"Professional documentation of the world by camera brought to the English viewer an encyclopedic definition by pictures of the Victorian universe. This universe was wonderful

³² In my relentless searching and collecting of images of Spurgeon, I have only come across those taken by professional photographers. In my reading, I found no references to him or any of his close friends using equipment to record family events or other special occasions. It may well be that family photographs have been passed down through the generations and have never been seen by the public.

³³ William C. Darrah, *Cartes de Visite in Nineteenth Century Photography* (Gettysburg: W. C. Harrah Publisher, 1981), 24.

³⁴ Matthew R. Isenburg notes the importance of the CDV: "In conjunction with the early stereo-cards, this small photo became the window to the world for the middle-classes as both an entertainment and a learning tool for those who viewed them. Viewing devices other than albums also found their way into living rooms around the world. Many utilized a magnifying glass to enlarge the image and bring out the details. Other devices stored and viewed the images sequentially thus enhancing the viewing experience." http://www.luminous-lint.com/app/vexhibit/ THEME_Carte_de_visite_01/2/0/0/, accessed March 3, 2017. See Appendix B, Figure B17, "The Great Sensation Card" was best viewed through a magnifying glass.

(in the old sense of the word), substantial, and indisputably existing in a materialistic sense.”³⁵

This dissertation demonstrates that by careful scrutiny of Spurgeon’s choice of which metaphors to employ and the political and social context in which they were deployed, supported by the many popular images of Spurgeon from popular culture, one can enter the larger discursive world of meaning of nineteenth-century Great Britain. One can also realize a deeper understanding of the faith communities that admire Charles Spurgeon today. This research will contribute to scholarship in a number of ways. It will create a greater interest in a body of material, Puritan homiletics, that has been marginalized. Second, it will encourage more critical and less hagiographical approaches into the life and work of Spurgeon.

Hagiography best describes the majority of works about Charles Spurgeon. After his death in 1892, the general public consumed several memorial biographies, followed by a silence of about thirty years.³⁶ Then came the works of several other biographers, although these works were still devotional and hagiographical in their approach.³⁷ The effusive praise

³⁵ http://albumen.conservation-us.org/library/monographs/masters/british_albumen_printing.html, accessed March 3, 2017.

³⁶ See R. H. Barnes and C. E. Brown, *Spurgeon, The People’s Preacher*, London: The Epworth Press, 1892 cited in Kruppa, 1982; Russell Conwell, *Life of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the World’s Greatest Preacher* (New York: Edgewood Publ. Co., 1892); George C. Lorimer, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon: The Puritan Preacher in the Nineteenth Century* (Boston: James H. Earle Publisher, 1892); Henry Davenport Northrup, *Life and Works of Rev. Charles H. Spurgeon* (London: Memorial Publishing Co., 1892); Robert Shindler, *From the Usher’s Desk to the Tabernacle Pulpit: The Life and Labours of Pastor C. H. Spurgeon* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1892); Joseph Manton Smith, *The Essex Lad who became the England’s Greatest Preacher: The Life of Charles Haddon Spurgeon for Young People* (New York: American Tract Society, 1892); H. L. Wayland, *Charles H. Spurgeon: His Faith and Works* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1892).

³⁷ See E. F. Adcock, *Charles H. Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, Christian Hero Series (Anderson, IN: Warner Press, 1925); James T. Allen, *Charles H. Spurgeon* (London: Pickering and Inglis, 1931); Richard Ellsworth Day, *The Shadow of the Broad Brim: The Life Story of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Heir of the Puritans*

contained within these works spilled out into their titles. Spurgeon, for these authors, was “England’s greatest preacher,” “the world’s greatest preacher,” “the prince of preachers,” “the heir to the Puritans,” and “the modern Whitfield.” These titles had their equivalent in the photographer’s studio, not in the single portrait of the standard *carte-de-visite*, but in the montage or composition photograph. These photographs often featured Spurgeon in the center surrounded by other notable preachers, as the greatest light in a constellation of ministerial lights.³⁸

Spurgeon Historiography

In 1982, Patricia Kruppa wrote *Charles Haddon Spurgeon: A Preacher’s Progress*. Ten years later, Lewis Drummond produced an eight-hundred-page biography, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*. This work, along with another biography by Arnold Dallimore (1984), has fostered a growing interest among Evangelicals and Fundamentalists in the life of Charles Spurgeon.³⁹ Before moving on to discuss the most recent scholarship, however, a word must be added about the earliest sources. So great was Spurgeon’s reputation that biographical accounts soon began to appear shortly after his startling rise to fame and celebrity. These were not limited to extended articles in magazines and weeklies, but

(Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1934); William Young Fullerton, *C. H. Spurgeon: A Biography* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1920). Although written later than the thirties, Ernest Bacon’s work should be included among the earlier writers, Ernest W. Bacon, *Spurgeon: Heir of the Puritans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968).

³⁸ See Appendix B, Figure B3 for an early example.

³⁹ Kathy Triggs, *Charles H. Spurgeon: The Boy Preacher of the Fens* (Basingstoke, England: Pickering & Inglis, 1984). Although written in 1978, Iain Murray’s work needs to be included along with Dallimore and Drummond as stirring interest in Spurgeon. Iain Murray, *The Forgotten Spurgeon* (Great Britain: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1978).

included pamphlets, booklets, and miniature gift books.⁴⁰ The demand was great enough to produce some full-length books as well.⁴¹ These materials have been especially helpful in my research. They capture the immediate excitement and fervor of Spurgeon’s ministry. They also contain early accounts of his demeanor and preaching techniques, and they even contain vivid descriptions of the audience members’ bodily effects. These materials were often written as apologies for Spurgeon and illustrate the concerns—sometimes explicitly stated, other times implicitly informing the text—that were confronting the larger community. Finally, they reveal how deeply rooted his Puritan theology was. In the words of one biographer, G. Holden Pike, it was as if Spurgeon had leaped “at a bound, full grown into the pulpit!”⁴² He did not mature into espousing the doctrines of the Puritans, but was wedded to them from the very beginning.⁴³

⁴⁰ For an example of the miniature gift book, see Appendix C, Figure C1. Early works include: *An Account of the Life and Extraordinary Preaching of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon* (London: Thomas Wilks, 1861); *Life of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon: Minister of Park Street Chapel, Southwark*. [Diamond Series of Gift Books] London: Dodd & Co., n. d. (early 1857?) This is a beautiful, miniature biography, 126 pages total, measuring approximately 1.25” x 2”; “A Churchman,” *Mr. Spurgeon’s Critic Criticised. Reflections on Published Opinions in Favor of and Against the Doctrine, Diction, Deportment and Doings of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon* (London: W. H. Collingridge City Press, 1857); *The Life of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon from His Birth to the Present Time: Being a Complete Biographical History of the Greatest Preacher of the Age and a Critical Review of His Sermons* (London: James Paul, 1860).

⁴¹ E. L. Magoon, “The Modern Whitfield”: *The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, of London, His Sermons with an Introduction and Sketch of His Life* (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman & Co., 1856); James Ewing Ritchie, *The London Pulpit*, 2nd ed. (London: William Tweedie, 1858); George John Stevenson, *Sketch of the Life and Ministry of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon* (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1859). See also Stevenson’s follow-up work written sixteen years later, *The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon His Life and Work to His Forty-Third Birthday* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1877).

⁴² Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 162.

⁴³ Under a heading entitled, “The Child is Father to the Man” (51), Tom Nettles writes: “Spurgeon’s resolve against theological shift from the Puritan heritage, who he considered the purest heirs of the Reformation, who were the purest heirs of Augustine, who was the purest (early) interpreter of Paul, never changed from the earliest days after his conversion.” Nettles, *Living by Revealed Truth*, 54.

In the last thirty years, researchers and scholars have begun to take another look at Spurgeon. David N. Duke noted a possible reason for this:

Spurgeon was the best-known preacher in his day and continues to be admired in our own time, especially by those with a Fundamentalist bent. Indeed one historian states that ‘Spurgeon liked to consider himself old-fashioned’, and that ‘truth, for him was something to be proclaimed, not something to be discussed’.⁴⁴ These kinds of reports very likely have deterred scholars...from taking Spurgeon very seriously. Certainly Spurgeon was egocentric, doctrinally rigid, sometimes bull-headed and uncooperative, and oftentimes appealing to an anti-intellectual constituency. Yet there are surprising elements.⁴⁵

One of the “surprising elements” found by Duke is the social and political activity of Spurgeon and the complicated nature of his approach to war and the empire building of Great Britain during this period. Spurgeon was generally supportive of Liberal politicians and was an ardent admirer of William Gladstone (1809-1898). Gladstone, for his part, was an admirer of Spurgeon.

⁴⁴ R. J. Helmstadter, “Spurgeon in Outcast London,” in *The View From the Pulpit*, 165, 170.

⁴⁵ David N. Duke, “Asking the Right Questions about War: A Lesson from C. H. Spurgeon,” *The Evangelical Quarterly* 61, no. (1989), 72. See also Albert R. Meredith, “The Social and Political Views of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, 1834-1892” (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1973).

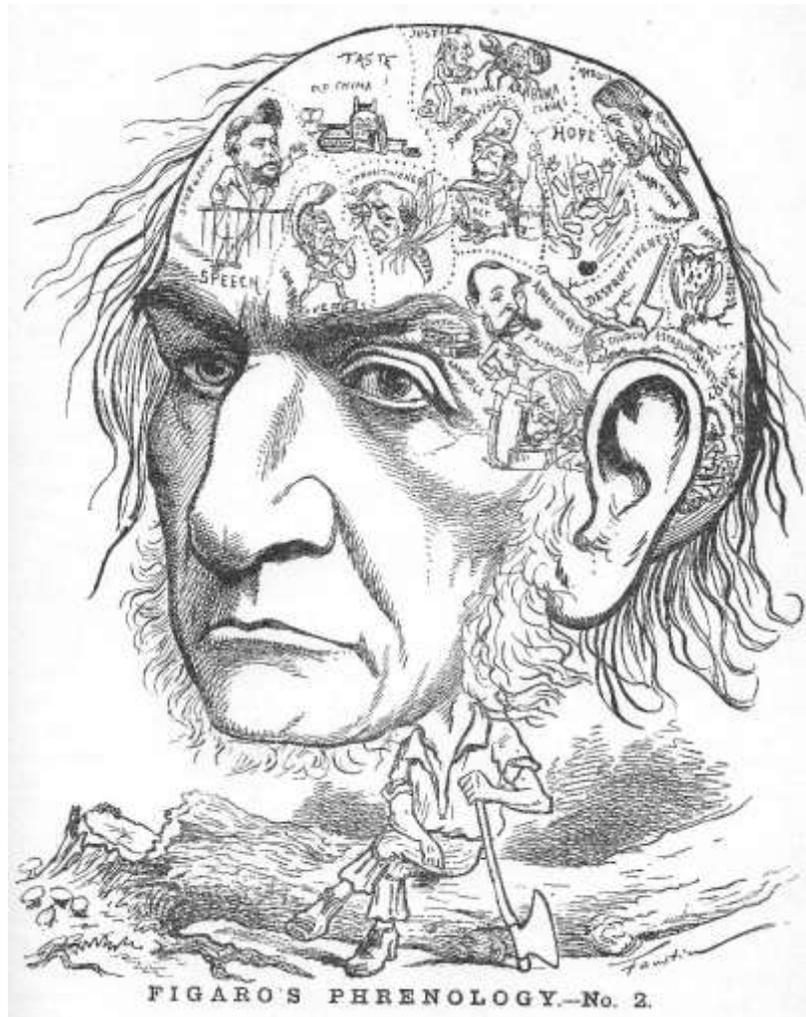


Fig. 1.2. “Gladstone with Spurgeon in the Speech Center.”⁴⁶

Spurgeon was a lifelong Liberal, but he was willing to break from the party when he determined that its policies conflicted with his interpretation of biblical mandates.⁴⁷ The political activity of Spurgeon is also highlighted by Joseph Meisel:

A significant aspect of Spurgeon’s more lasting public appeal is indicated by the way he was regularly likened to that other great contemporary Nonconformist orator, John Bright. These comparisons reflect an aspect of

⁴⁶ See Appendix C, Figure C26.

⁴⁷ The oft-cited example of this was his break from Gladstone over Irish Home Rule. See Drummond, 524-5.

Spurgeon that the biographical literature typically plays down or passes over altogether: his involvement in secular politics.⁴⁸

Recent scholarship also examines the spirituality of Spurgeon.⁴⁹ In general, these studies emphasize a broad, yet focused approach to spirituality concerned “with the conjunction of theology, prayer and practical Christianity.”⁵⁰ William Brian Albert’s work addresses the relationship between Spurgeon’s experience of depression and his spirituality. In other words, how did Spurgeon’s theology inform his understanding of depression, and how did his periods of despondency shape his spirituality?⁵¹

Albert’s focus on the piety of Spurgeon is a welcome addition to the field and supports this investigation. One of the approaches used here is to present and examine the gout metaphors that the Puritans—who were central to Spurgeon’s own theological position—employed. At a minimum, this means recognizing some of the central themes of Puritanism, including: the necessity of conversion, the centrality of sanctification, the emphasis on piety and heartfelt religion, the dominant themes of pilgrimage and spiritual warfare, the rejection of adiaphora (unnecessary elements), the organizing principle of covenant, the role of providence and the presence of an all-embracing determinism, the primary role of the Holy Spirit, and the reality that all these concepts manifested themselves

⁴⁸ Meisel, *Public Speech*, 135.

⁴⁹ See William Brian Albert, “When the Wind Blows Cold”: The Spirituality of Suffering and Depression in the Life and Ministry of Charles Spurgeon (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, December 2015); Peter J. Morden, *The Spirituality of C. H. Spurgeon: Communion with Christ and His People* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013); Tom Nettles, *Living By Revealed Truth: The Life and Pastoral Theology of Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (China: Christian Focus Publications, 2013). Peter J. Morden has also contributed several articles on Spurgeon including an examination of his sense of humor and another on the topic of suffering. By far, Albert’s dissertation on Spurgeon’s suffering and its link to depression presents the most comprehensive look at the subject to date.

⁵⁰ Morden, *The Spirituality of C. H. Spurgeon*, 3.

⁵¹ Albert, “When the Wind Blows Cold,” 5.

in the social and political realm by turning the world upside down.⁵² Dewey D. Wallace, Jr. has described a theme that is central to this study:

The main focus of Puritan spirituality was not on conversion, but upon that which followed in the sanctification (the theological term) and holiness (the spiritual term) of the believer. This process was described as spiritual warfare and pilgrimage. Both images are the very stuff of the greatest Puritan spiritual allegory, John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. In that work, Bunyan distilled the thousands of mundane homiletic exhortations about pilgrimage and spiritual combat into a powerful, imaginative synthesis.⁵³

Wallace recognized that all of the other themes as present and does not deny their importance, but at its core, Puritanism is a piety and he agrees with Hambrick-Stowe that "at its heart...Puritanism was a devotional movement, rooted in religious experience."⁵⁴

This emphasis on piety, heartfelt spirituality, and religious experience is the central motif around which recent Spurgeon studies have gathered. They recognize that Spurgeon is not an academic or systematic theologian but rather a pastor.⁵⁵ His central concern, for

⁵² Regarding these themes, the following texts are a good beginning: Coolidge, John S. *The Pauline Renaissance in England: Puritanism and the Bible* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970); Horton Davies, *The Worship of the English Puritans* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1997); William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938); Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Disciplines in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution 1603-1714* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1961); Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1956); Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Puritan Spirit: Essays and Addresses* (London: Epworth Press, 1967); Alan Simpson, *Puritanism in Old and New England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955); and Peter Toon, *Puritans and Calvinism* (Swengel, PA: Reiner, 1973).

⁵³ Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., ed. *The Spirituality of the Later English Puritans: An Anthology* (Mercer, PA: Mercer University Press, 1987), xvi.

⁵⁴ Wallace, xi. Wallace offered up a couple more titles and a pertinent quote: Gordon Wakefield, *Puritan Devotion: Its Place in the Development of Christian Piety* (London: Epworth Press, 1957) and Richard F. Lovelace, *The American Pietism of Cotton Mather: Origins of American Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian University Press, 1979), 36, who says, "Recent scholarship has increasingly concluded that throughout most of its history English Puritanism can best be understood by examining its predominant stress on Christian experience." [quoted in Wallace, xi-xiii]

⁵⁵ Spurgeon authored no systematic theology as did A. A. Hodge, but rather, according to Nettles, "His ministry was driven by a well-developed, clearly articulated systematic theology and by a commitment to a conversion ministry" Nettles, *Living by Revealed Truth*, 12.

example, with the doctrine of election, is not creating an abstract theological treatise or defending what he views as an obscure point connected to foreknowledge and its contingents, but rather to apply it (or “improve it,” to borrow the Puritan’s term) to his people through its corollary idea of assurance. That is to say, the idea of election, which was a real source of debate and anxiety among some believers, was used by Spurgeon as a source of comfort.

Perhaps one of the most exciting additions to the field of Spurgeon studies is Christian George’s editing of *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon: His Earliest Outlines and Sermons between 1851 and 1854*. This is a significant work of scholarship that allows those interested in Spurgeon a “peek behind the curtain,” a glimpse into the young mind of Spurgeon. These sermons were never truly lost, as George noted, but rather were not published and were laid aside due to other ministry concerns and Spurgeon’s pressing schedule. The first volume was released in February of 2017, and there are eleven more volumes to follow. This work has been especially helpful to me as my focus is on both the early years of Spurgeon’s ministry and on his theological connection to the Puritans. For example, the opportunity to examine Spurgeon’s early sermon, “The Affliction of Ahaz,” revealed his continuity with the Puritans (his first major heading was “To the godly, afflictions in the hand of the Spirit are useful”) and formed a nice contrast with all the suffering that would be his in later life.⁵⁶ This work also contains the obligatory timeline

⁵⁶ Christian George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon: His Earliest Outlines and Sermons between 1851 and 1854*, vol. 1 (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2016), 353.

(see my Appendix A as well) and a fascinating study of the distances he often walked to get to his preaching assignments when he was a member of a Lay Preacher's Association.⁵⁷

Another key work was Andrew Tate's chapter, *Evangelical Certainty: Charles Spurgeon's "Calls to the Unconverted,"* found in *Reinventing Christianity Nineteenth-century Contexts*, edited by Linda Woodhead. Tate focuses on Spurgeon's personal "salvation" testimony. His insightful analysis reveals the way that an intensely personal experience moves from being a private matter into the arena of public discourse. Tate pays careful attention to the way that the Puritans, and particularly John Bunyan, inform and shape Evangelical thought: "Bunyan became a mythical figure for Victorian Evangelicals, and his narrative of pilgrimage viewed as a site of stability and truth. To identify with Bunyan, as Spurgeon does...was to locate oneself in an enduring line of 'pure' gospel ministers."⁵⁸

This identification was the very thing that Spurgeon was eager to do. Throughout his ministry, he compared himself with John Bunyan and other Puritans. He considered himself the last of the Puritans. In a sermon entitled "How They Conquered the Dragon," Spurgeon declared, "Some of us have been styled the echo of the Puritans: yes, the honorable title of 'Ultimus Puritanorum,' the last of the Puritans, has been assigned to us. It is well, we want no higher degree, for the old theology is very dear to us."⁵⁹ Andrew Tate's analysis demonstrates the way that, in an age of anxiety, Spurgeon's use of a literalist hermeneutic,

⁵⁷ George, *The Lost Sermons*, 37.

⁵⁸ Andrew Tate, "Evangelical Certainty: Charles Spurgeon's "Calls to the Unconverted," *Reinventing Christianity Nineteenth-century contexts*, ed. Linda Woodhead (Great Britain: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2001), 34.

⁵⁹ Charles Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 21, 195.

coupled with an appeal to an almost mythic past, could create frameworks of meaning for himself and his hearers.

This construction of meaning was not only occurring in Spurgeon's narrative of personal conversion, his preaching, and the subsequent responsibility of his hearers to convert, but it also informed all of his experience. Biographers have noted the tremendous suffering that Spurgeon endured due to gout and Bright's disease.⁶⁰ Spurgeon's deteriorating health often determined his ministry schedule and, of course, impacted not only his body but the way his body was presented to and understood by the public. While theories of the body multiply, this study adheres closely to Bryan S. Turner's assessment:

Within human cultural history, the body has been frequently used as a metaphor of both social stability and social instability. There appears to be an intimate connection between the exterior order of the socio-political world and the equilibrium of the human body, so that the instabilities within the body are thought to reflect instabilities within the wider social system. For example, Robert Burton in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) regarded the instabilities of the body in the development of melancholy as merely a reflection of the general disease of human society which had fallen from grace.⁶¹

Spurgeon's own illness was experienced not only through theological constructions partially informed by the Puritans but was also presented to his readers and hearers among a web of culturally-constructed meanings surrounding gout that were already in place. One example from Spurgeon's life that highlights these possible disparities in meaning was Spurgeon's annual trip to the South of France. Due to his declining physical condition,

⁶⁰ Elizabeth Ruth Skoglund. *Bright Days, Dark Nights with Charles Spurgeon in Triumph over Emotional Pain* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000).

⁶¹ Bryan S. Turner, "The Body in Western Society," in *Religion and the Body*, ed. Sarah Coakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 17-8. Consider also Mary Douglas's oft-repeated quote: "doctrines which use the human body as their metaphor...are likely to be specially concerned with social relationships." Coakley, *Religion and the Body*, 7.

Spurgeon often retreated to France for lengthy stays, where he rested and recovered from attacks of the gout. During these periods of convalescence, he would write letters to his congregation, church leaders, and others.⁶² This correspondence reveals Spurgeon's marvelous sense of humor, but also gives some insight into his daily struggle with pain. When Spurgeon was well enough to preach and sometimes when he wasn't, he was back in the pulpit preaching to the flock and producing material for his penny press. No work that I am currently aware of, has been done to evaluate the way such diseases (particularly gout) have been employed by Spurgeon in his preaching, nor have scholars researched this aspect of his narrative and sought connections to his idealized Puritan past.

Historiography of Cultural Studies of Gout

Another contribution of my dissertation will be to create a greater interest in the use of disease metaphors (especially gout) found in Puritan sermons (including Spurgeon's sermons) and, in particular, the way these rich resources have largely been overlooked by historians of gout. Although most articles and books published on gout are medical treatises, they also seek to explain its cultural significance. Two works in this category are W. S. C. Copeman's *A Short History of the Gout and the Rheumatic Diseases* (1964) and William Asbury Smith's *Gout and the Gouty* (1970). Copeman's and Smith's works do offer some material regarding the cultural perception of gout, presenting the gouty as wealthy, licentious, and generally deserving. However, the bulk of their works are devoted to clinical descriptions, causes, and treatment.

⁶² Wyncoll, Hannah. *The Suffering Letters of C. H. Spurgeon* (London: Wakeman Trust, 2007). These letters often reveal Spurgeon's theological underpinnings (more on this in chapter five) but were received by a congregation for whom the majority, such travel was financially not possible.

In 1981, William Eamon published an article entitled “The Tale of Monsieur Gout.” His title originated from a story found in *The Poore-Mans Plaster Box* (London, 1634). This book was published by the Puritan divine, Richard Hawes (1603-1668). It was a popular medical handbook. The story illustrates how a personified “gout” came to abide in the house of the rich and bypass the poor man’s house. Eamon acknowledged that the clergy also served the community as medical practitioners, and that “this function of the country parson was especially stressed by the Puritan reformers who, distrustful of monopolies of all kinds, advocated a vernacular system of practical medicine.”⁶³ Eamon noted that there are few references to the popular views of this disease and that therefore, Hawes’ retelling of the story “should interest both social historians and historians of medicine.”⁶⁴ I could not agree more, and one of the goals of this dissertation is to complement the work of Eamon by uncovering the material connected to gout that formed the greatest bulk of the material that the Puritans left behind—their sermons. In 1986, Thierry Appelboom and J. Claude Bennett published “Gout of the Rich and Famous.” Their article was a survey of the patrician victims of the disease, along with a discussion of their diet, drinking, and the possibility of lead contamination.⁶⁵ They mention Richard Hawes’s “The Tale of Monsieur Gout,” but, due to the limited scope of an article, they did not explore the sermons of the Puritans. To be fair to these scholars, the only written work we know of by Hawes is *The Poore-Mans Plaster Box*, and it was not their goal to examine the sermons of his contemporaries.

⁶³ William Eamon, “The Tale of Monsieur Gout.” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 55 (1981): 565.

⁶⁴ Eamon, “The Tale of Monsieur Gout,” 564.

⁶⁵ Thierry Appelboom and J. Claude Bennett, “Gout of the Rich and Famous,” *The Journal of Rheumatology*, 13, no. 3 (1986): 618-22.

The definitive work on gout, a veritable *tour-de-force*, is the much more recent *Gout: The Patrician Malady* (1998) by Roy Porter and G. S. Rousseau. Porter and Rousseau's work is a detailed analysis of the visual and literary representations of gout, particularly in England in the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. They go to great lengths to analyze a variety of texts, including medical treatises, political pamphlets, novels, personal correspondence, and poetry. They also include prints, cartoons, and illustrations from novels and magazines that make up the visual heritage of gout.

Porter and Rousseau have covered a wide variety of sources and have done so almost exhaustively. And yet there is a certain community, along with their texts, that are strangely missing from *Gout: The Patrician Malady*. Porter and Rousseau assert that "eighteenth-century sufferers and writers situated gout within stories of sickness that were normally secular."⁶⁶ A representative author might be Tobias Smollett, whose *The Adventures of Humphrey Clinker* (1771) featured a gouty protagonist. It is these secular stories that capture their attention. However, in passing, Porter and Rousseau acknowledge another approach to understanding gout:

Parallel to such understandings there was also a much more traditional cultural approach, deploying a religious frame. The most elaborate attempt to inscribe gout within the Christian master narrative was produced by Cotton Mather, the principal preacher in early eighteenth-century Massachusetts. Chief among his medical writings was *The Angel of Bethesda*, completed in 1724, the first systematic American medical treatise. Seeing gout as a disease of the dissolute, Mather found it easy to sermonize upon, which he did at great length and in spectacularly baroque prose. His text is fascinating, not least for its utterly Protestant union of divine chastisement and human remedy. But it is difficult to imagine a clergyman of eminence in eighteenth-century England writing in that guise.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Porter and Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady*, 92.

⁶⁷ Ibid..

Porter and Rousseau learn about Cotton Mather's (1663-1728) view of gout through a medical treatise. There is no reference to his sermons. Mather's preached word, which would have been received by some of Boston's elites, is untouched and its imagery unexamined. The same could be said for their passing mention of the English Puritans Edmund Calamy (1600-1666) and Thomas Manton (1620-1677). They refer to Calamy and Manton only as a way to introduce the work of one of their contemporaries:

When Edmund Calamy (1600-1666) and Thomas Manton (1620-1677), popular divines, were arrested and incarcerated, gout kicked in as a dominant image and produced a flood of poems. Robert Wilde's first rendition (1662) versified:

Old Bishop Gout, that lordly proud disease,
Took my fat body for his diocese,
Where he keeps court, there visits every limb,
And makes them (Levite-like) conform to him.

A "gouty fantasy" follows, personifying the sufferer as well as the culpable bishops who have "burned the toes" of their victims.⁶⁸

Joel R. Beeke and Randall J. Pederson note that Manton was "remembered at his funeral as 'the king of preachers,'" and that "Archbishop James Ussher described Manton as 'a voluminous preacher' and 'one of the best in England.'"⁶⁹ Beeke and Pederson also comment on the status of those who heard him preach. He was a "lecturer for London merchants in Pinner's Hall" and his congregation at Covent Garden was composed of "aristocratic followers."⁷⁰ For Porter and Rousseau, the imprisonment of Manton serves as

⁶⁸ Ibid., 219.

⁶⁹ Joel R. Beeke and Randall J. Pederson, *Meet the Puritans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006), 409.

⁷⁰ Ibid..

an introduction to Wilde's poetry. This dissertation builds on Porter and Rousseau's significant work by discussing the pertinent material from Manton's sermons.

The investigation of the sermons of Manton and other Puritans will add another dimension to the already detailed analysis of Porter and Rousseau. It is the task of the historian of religions to examine the meaning of a religious phenomenon without ignoring the historical moment or cultural matrix from which it arises. For my dissertation, this means that the Puritan sermon will need to be closely scrutinized. How were gout metaphors deployed? Were they accompanied by other typical metaphors? What meanings, perhaps focusing on theological constructions and analogous political meanings, are attached to the Puritan's notion of "body"? In what way did the sermon shape the hearer's notion of embodiment? Although writing about captivity narratives, the following words by Gary Ebersole equally apply to the Puritans and their notions of disease and its impact on the body, "It is important for us not to ignore the testimony in Puritan texts...that faith had a bodily effect on individuals, or, to put this another way, that faith affected a person's experience of embodiment."⁷¹ Any study that seeks to trace the development of gout and its metaphors would be remiss if it did not explore the Puritan subculture and its unique perspectives on disease, suffering, and embodiment.

Conclusion

It is my desire that this dissertation will motivate scholars to examine the life and sermons of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, a central figure in Victorian England. Charles Haddon Spurgeon was often called the "Prince of Preachers." He preached thousands of times to multitudes. He founded a college and an orphanage. He was politically active.

⁷¹ Gary L. Ebersole, *Captured by Texts: Puritan to Postmodern Images of Indian Captivity* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 34.

However, in spite of all his activities, scholars have spent very little time analyzing the contributions of Spurgeon. Patricia Kruppa noted:

Gladstone's great career...has received the scholarly attention his remarkable accomplishments deserve, yet curiously little scholarly work has been done on the career of his contemporary, C. H. Spurgeon, although no history of the religious and intellectual life of the Victorian age can be complete which ignores his influence.⁷²

The central idea of this dissertation is that a close examination of the gout metaphors in the sermons, magazine articles, and personal correspondence of the famous Victorian Charles Haddon Spurgeon will both confirm and challenge the current scholarship in the fields of the history of medical science and focus on the use of a different methodology regarding the way, generally, most researchers have approached Spurgeon. In support of these ideas and methods, significant attention is paid to the deep connection Spurgeon felt to the Puritans and the way he sought to make that connection visible in the public and private sphere. The second chapter is divided into two sections. The first section introduces the reader to the basic biography of Spurgeon. The second section presents the nexus between Spurgeon's life and the influence of the Puritans. This is not so much a close examination of sermon topics and texts, but rather the way the Puritans appeared in the story of Spurgeon's life. He mentioned them in many different contexts, from his courtship of Susannah to his choice of where to construct the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Of course, since Spurgeon was an Evangelical, it was the Scripture that held final authority, and his conversion narrative is examined to demonstrate the substantial but secondary influence of the Puritans.

⁷² Kruppa, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 1.

The fourth chapter focuses on the central role that Spurgeon's body played throughout his ministry, especially in the dramatic presentation of his early sermons, but also in the proliferation of artifacts from Victorian material culture that featured his contested body, including his face. The construction of the Metropolitan Tabernacle is analyzed, with special scrutiny given to its great protruding platform that dominated and defined the space. Finally, Spurgeon's final years were marked by debility and disease. This translated into increased pulpit absences and an entirely different experience for himself and his audience when he was present. Almost gone was the dramatic delivery and the freedom to move behind the rail.

The fourth chapter presents and discusses the metaphors of gout. Special care is taken to discuss the culturally shared meanings of gout that are present in the culture-at-large. The second portion of chapter three is devoted to the gout metaphors employed by Spurgeon's chief theological influence, the seventeenth-century Puritans. These metaphors are presented and categorized (within a theological framework they would recognize), and made ready for comparison with Spurgeon's usages of gout metaphors.

The fifth and final chapter analyzes the metaphors of gout employed by Spurgeon, comparing them with the common cultural meanings elucidated in great depth by Porter and Rousseau. Spurgeon's usage of certain gout metaphors support Porter and Rousseau's notions of the persistence of the metaphors while revealing new emphases that were coming to the fore in Victorian culture. These new developments are reflected in the sermons of Spurgeon and in some of the cartoons and caricatures that feature Spurgeon. One particular caricature, "Parsons in the Pulpit," only becomes meaningful when read with gout technologies and the burgeoning idea of manliness in mind.

In conclusion, my dissertation will examine Charles Haddon Spurgeon's use of disease metaphors (especially gout). The primary source material to be evaluated will be the Puritan sermons of the seventeenth century, along with the sermons and correspondence of Charles H. Spurgeon. The analysis of these metaphors will both highlight Spurgeon's theological connection with the Puritans while also revealing a promising approach to understanding the lived world of Spurgeon and his audience. Additionally, the study of these particular metaphors within the general religious tradition of Puritanism will deepen the knowledge of historians of medicine of the sources that informed the popular cultural constructions of gout. And finally, such a study of Spurgeon will encourage more critical and less hagiographical approaches to this seminal and controversial Victorian.

CHAPTER 2

SPURGEON'S LIFE AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE PURITANS

This chapter sketches the major events of the life of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892). Particular attention is paid to the early years of his ministry, especially the period from his pastorate at Waterbeach to his calling to serve the New Park Street Baptist Church in South London and the construction of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Spurgeon's deep connection to the Puritans is also explored both in the way they shaped him theologically and informed his public ministry.

Biographical Highlights

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was born on June 19, 1834 in Kelvedon in the county of Essex.¹ His father, John Spurgeon (1811-1902), was a coal yard clerk. His mother, Eliza (1815-1888), would eventually give birth to sixteen other children beyond her firstborn, Charles. Nine of the children died in infancy. John also preached Sundays at an Independent church in Tollesbury. John Spurgeon would eventually serve a congregation full-time, but during Charles' childhood he was a bi-vocational pastor. It was just after a move to Colchester that Charles was sent to Stambourne to live with his paternal grandparents, the Rev. James and Sarah Spurgeon. Charles was probably around fourteen

¹ See John Marriage, *Witham, Kelvedon, Hatfield Peverel, Silver End and Rivenhall: A Pictorial History* (West Sussex: Phillimore & Co, 1995). His work includes many fascinating photographs of turn of the century Essex (c. 1900 and earlier). Regarding Kelvedon, he described it as a "linear village along the old Roman Road from London to Colchester." In his chapter on *Transport*, he noted, "On 4 July 1836 the construction was authorized of the Eastern County Railway, to run from Bishopsgate, London to Colchester. Work started the following year and by 1843 a double track had been laid, passing through Hatfield Peverel, Witham and Kelvedon, with stations at all three places." [no page numbers given].

months old at the time.² James and Sarah also had an adult daughter living with them, Spurgeon's doting Aunt Ann. An early biographer, George John Stevenson, characterized the household:

Affection, blended with personal piety, was the watchword of the household; Aunt Ann loved and cherished most tenderly her infant charge, and she received, as her reward, the sincere affection of her adopted child. The affection between the two became as strong as between a child and its parent, and "Mother Ann," and "Step son Charles," are terms as familiar and endearing in this case as are the terms mother and child in ordinary cases.³

Ken Connolly also noted, "His eighteen-year-old aunt Ann loved him and taught him to read."⁴ Charles would remain in the home of his grandparents until he was six years old. He was surrounded by three caring adults and was the center of attention. Patricia Kruppa summarized, "He was a year old when he came to live in the village of Stambourne. For the next five years, he lived with his grandparents and their spinster daughter, Anne. Thus, his crucial formative years were spent away from his parents and in the company of older Christians in the quiet setting of a rural parsonage."⁵

Charles Spurgeon's paternal grandfather was James Spurgeon (1776-1864). His paternal grandmother was Sarah Spurgeon. James Spurgeon was the pastor of the only Congregational (independent) Church in the village of Stambourne, in Essex. He was well-liked and enjoyed a convivial relationship with Rev. Hopkins, the pastor of the village's

² G. Holden Pike, *The Life and Work of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 1 (Avon: The Bath Press, 1991), 7. G. Holden Pike's thorough biography was originally published in 1894 and comprised six volumes. I am using a Banner of Truth reprint which combines the material into two volumes.

³ George John Stevenson, *Sketch of the Life and Ministry of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon* (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1859), 25.

⁴ Ken Connolly, *C. H. Spurgeon: A Biographical Sketch* (Pasadena: Pilgrim Publications, 1986), 1.

⁵ Patricia Kruppa, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon: A Preacher's Progress* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1982), 13-4.

Anglican church. James Spurgeon's ministry was lengthy, lasting fifty-four years.⁶ His tenure there was free of trouble. He once remarked, "I have not had one hour's unhappiness with my church since I have been over it."⁷ His parishioners appreciated the gifts and energy James Spurgeon brought to the pulpit. In a description that seems equally applicable to Charles Spurgeon, Arnold Dallimore characterized the oratorical skills of James, "His voice was strong but exceptionally pleasant and widely expressive, and his preaching was both earnest and powerful. Into his work in the pulpit, there often crept a note of humor."⁸ Years later, as the ministry of Charles was proceeding apace and that of his grandfather was winding down, a hearer of both men proclaimed, "I heard your grandfather, and I would run my shoes off any day to hear a Spurgeon!"⁹ High praise indeed.

Charles would always fondly remember his time in Stambourne. He idealized the rural life and loved the countryside, with its rolling fields and winding streams.¹⁰ Toward the end of his life, he returned to Stambourne for a visit. His last book was *Memories of Stambourne* (1891), which was produced with the help of Benjamin Beddow (the grandson

⁶ Lewis Drummond. *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1992), 72.

⁷ Henry Davenport Northrop. *Life and Works of Rev. C. H. Spurgeon* (London: Memorial Publishing Co., 1892), 19.

⁸ Arnold Dallimore, *Spurgeon* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 4.

⁹ Drummond, *Spurgeon*, 89.

¹⁰ Spurgeon was not alone in idealizing the rural setting. Russell H. Conwell, one of Spurgeon's many memorial biographers, extolled the virtue of country life: "The country boy is the favored boy. Alas, for the child of the city. Alas, for him whose early years are spent in the city's prison of brick and mortar, stone sidewalks, harsh pavements, smoky skies, ceaseless din, unnatural cries, tainted atmosphere, and heated rooms. If the early associations of childhood do make or unmake genius, then it is interesting to note that the majority of great men and women of all civilized ages have passed their early years in rural surroundings." *Life of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, The World's Great Preacher* (New York: Edgewood Publishing, 1892), 37. For a summary of idealized country life, see Sally Mitchell, *Daily Life in Victorian England* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 26.

of the pastor who preceded James Spurgeon at the Congregational Church). He would find inspiration for one of his favorite characters, John Ploughman, from one of the occupants of the village, Will Richardson.¹¹ Will embodied the common sense and rural values that seemed to permeate the countryside. The village of Stambourne was small, with only about five hundred inhabitants living in about one hundred dwellings. It was remote, and while Kelvedon would have rail service by 1843, Stambourne would still be lacking a railroad station at the end of the nineteenth century. Kruppa noted, “The revolutions in industry and transportation that transformed Victorian Britain were unknown to Stambourne, where the pace of life revolved around the seasons rather than the machine. Spurgeon’s grandfather preached in an Independent meeting house that dated back to the seventeenth century.”¹²

Charles accompanied his grandfather on pastoral visits. He was with him for the weekly meeting with Rev. Hopkins. He sat quietly on Saturday nights while his grandfather prepared the sermon. He played with the rocking horse in the manse and marveled at the painting of David and Goliath. He explored the rooms, some of which had been darkened due to a window tax. He explored the outdoors and often found unusual places to hide. He learned to read and enjoyed looking at the illustrations in Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*. He was profoundly influenced by *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*. For a while, until it became too costly, his grandparents paid young Charles for each hymn that he memorized.

¹¹ About John Ploughman, Dallimore noted, “Of this imagined person he told numerous tales, each with a pointed moral lesson. He was patterned after both his grandfather and Will Richardson, a farmer he came to know during those days in Stambourne.” (7) Spurgeon’s books featuring John Ploughman (*John Ploughman’s Talks* and *John Ploughman’s Pictures*) were immensely popular, rivaling other notable titles such as Samuel Smiles’ *Self-Help* (1859). For a good introduction to Smiles, see J. F. C. Harrison, “The Victorian Gospel of Success,” *Victorian Studies* 1, no. 2 (December 1957): 155-64.

¹² Patricia Kruppa, “The Life and Times of C. H. Spurgeon,” *Christian History* 29 (1991).

For the most part, Charles' life at Stambourne was a pleasant one. One incident worth noting is the passing of his grandmother. One Sunday morning while James and Charles were getting ready to attend the Chapel services, she complained of not feeling well. She decided to stay home and warm herself by the fire, read her Bible, and keep the two of them in her prayers. When they returned from the service, they discovered that she had died. Her head was slumped over and her finger was pointed to a verse in the Bible that was still in her lap, "the hand of God hath touched me."¹³ Another event that touched both grandfather and grandson was the day they were to be parted. Charles was six years old, and his parents were ready to see him returned to Colchester, where he had a younger brother (James Archer) and two younger sisters (Eliza and Emily) waiting for him. When the day came for them to be separated, James took Charles in his arms and showed him the full moon: "Laddie, we can both look on the same moon."¹⁴ It was his way of reminding him that when little Charles gazed at the moon, he should remember that someone in Stambourne was looking at it as well and thinking fondly of him.¹⁵

Upon Charles' return to Colchester, he found a ready audience in his younger siblings. They played a variety of games. One particular episode saw Charles assume the role of preacher and while standing in a hay rack, preach to his brothers and sisters. Another time he and James were playing with boats in a local stream. Charles had named his boat

¹³ Conwell, *Life of Charles H. Spurgeon*, 39.

¹⁴ Richard Ellsworth Day, *The Shadow of the Broad Brim* (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1934), 33.

¹⁵ E. F. Adcock's biography, written primarily for children, noted Charles' response: "Mr. Spurgeon said that for years he loved the moon because he felt that somehow his eyes and those of his grandfather met there." *Charles H. Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* (Anderson, IN: The Warner Press, 1925), 25.

The Thunderer because “he wanted one that sounded courageous and victorious.”¹⁶ As can be expected, the home of John and Eliza was extremely devout. Spurgeon’s mother often prayed for and with the children and read the Bible to them daily.¹⁷ On one occasion John left and was traveling to his church to preach and was deeply convicted about his own inattention to his children’s spiritual condition. He reported:

I had been from home a great deal, trying to build up weak congregations, and felt that I was neglecting the religious training of my own children while I toiled for the good of others. I returned home with these feelings. I opened the door, and was surprised to find none of the children about the hall. Going quietly up the stairs, I heard my wife’s voice. She was engaged in prayer with the children. I heard her pray for them one by one by name. She came to Charles, and specially prayed for him, for he was of high spirit and daring temper. I listened till she had ended her prayer, and I felt and said, ‘Lord, I will go on with Thy work. The children will be cared for.’¹⁸

Eliza often warned her children not to neglect the salvation of their souls. On Sunday evenings, she made it a habit to read the Scriptures to them and to read portions of Doddridge’s *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*. Spurgeon reminisced about his mother that he “could never forget how she fell on her knees, and with her arms around his neck would pray, ‘Oh, that my son might live before thee!’”¹⁹

Spurgeon is well known for his love of books and for his insatiable appetite for reading. His reading began early while still at his grandparents’ home in Stambourne. He would visit also them during the summers, when his consumption of Puritan tomes would continue unabated. He collected books, particularly Puritan works. At the time of his death,

¹⁶ Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 8.

¹⁷ Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 77.

¹⁸ G. Holden Pike, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon: Preacher, Author and Philanthropist with Anecdotal Reminiscences* (Toronto: S. R. Briggs, 1886), 8.

¹⁹ Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 105.

he had amassed a library of over twelve thousand books, including roughly one thousand seventeenth-century Puritan works. While other boys were outside playing, Charles' father noted that for him it was always, "books, books, books." He loved to read and had an extremely retentive memory. One of his companions noted that he could easily recite long passages of John Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*.²⁰ It is essential to note his love for reading, his fine memory, and the fact that he was, in reality, something of an autodidact. He had no University training, and his formal education has been described as "mediocre" at best.²¹

Another often repeated story featured a six-year-old (or almost six-year-old) Spurgeon rebuking one of his grandfather's parishioners.²² Thomas Roads, a member of Spurgeon's grandfather's church, was spending too much time in the tavern. His conduct was weighing heavy on James Spurgeon's heart. The story is told of how Charles, displaying great moral courage, went into the tavern and confronted Roads. He proceeded to inform him that he was breaking his pastor's heart and should not be passing his time in this manner, frequenting such a place and sitting with the "ungodly." Spurgeon asked Roads, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" The story ended with Roads repenting his disgraceful conduct and returning to church, where he became a productive and involved member of the congregation.

Spurgeon attended a school, Stockwell House, in Colchester from 1841 to 1844. He was remembered as being unusually bright and at the head of the class. It was during the

²⁰ Day, *The Shadow of the Broad Brim* 48.

²¹ Kruppa, "The Life and Times of C. H. Spurgeon."

²² Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 7. Dallimore called this episode, "the restoration of Thomas Roads." The incident was also reproduced in the Magic Lantern Glass Slide presentation. It was slide #5 (of 36) and was entitled, "Killing Old Rhodes." See Appendix C.

summer of 1844 that a most unusual encounter occurred between young Spurgeon and the Rev. Richard Knill (1787-1857). Knill was on a preaching tour through Essex, promoting the work of the London Missionary Society. While in Stambourne, he was staying with James Spurgeon and had an opportunity to meet his visiting grandson—young, precocious Charles. The two engaged in lengthy discussions, and the elderly missionary was so impressed with Charles that on the last day of his visit, he placed the boy in his lap and said in the presence of the assembled family, “This child will one day preach the gospel, and he will preach it to great multitudes. I am persuaded that he will preach in the chapel of Rowland Hill.”²³ Then he went on to give the child a sixpence and to exact a promise from him that on the day when he preached in Rowland Hill’s chapel, he would ask the congregation to sing, “God Moves in a Mysterious Way.” Years later, the prophecy of Knill’s was fulfilled. It is mentioned here because it is a key component to the Spurgeon narrative. It appears in almost every biography and was mentioned by Spurgeon himself as “a sort of star to my existence.”²⁴ Of course, such stories and prophecies were lampooned by the press. One such example comes from a contemporary of *Punch*, the satirical magazine, *Fun*:

That Mr. Spurgeon was a judge of “ungodly persons” before had attained the tender age of six, is a fact which says little in praise of the persons who had charge of this infant phenomenon. We should recommend the pious editor to suppress this fact if he has any respect for those under whose guardianship the precocious baby passed his earliest years. Who will say that the spirit of prophecy has departed from among us and yet give credit to the following paragraph? “When in his tenth year, on a visit ‘to his grandfather at Stambourne, it is said that he attracted the notice of the late Rev. Richard

²³ Patricia Kruppa, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon: A Preacher’s Progress*, 29. Rowland Hill (1744-1833) was an extremely popular preacher and founder of Surrey Chapel, London.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.

Knill, who, meeting the boy in the garden, conversed with him on the subject of religion, and, struck with the remarkable powers exhibited by him, said, ‘You will one day preach the Gospel in, and fill, the largest chapel in the world.’”²⁵

Spurgeon continued his education through various schools, finally coming to be an usher (assistant teacher) in August of 1849 in an Anglican school in Newmarket. His maternal uncle, John Swindell, was a teacher at the school. He had some education in the classics and was briefly tutored in Greek. Shindler summarized his education and highlighted his classical learning: “He went first to Walker’s school at Colchester, and afterwards spent four years in the same town in the school conducted by Mr. Henry Lewis. Here he became a personal friend of Mr. Leeding, the head usher, to whom he was indebted for a thorough grounding in Latin and Mathematics. He was also, for twelve months, at an Agricultural College in Maidstone: and afterwards, he went to Newmarket to be an assistant in the school of Mr. Swindell.”²⁶ Although Shindler described Spurgeon’s knowledge of Latin and Mathematics as a “thorough grounding,” Kruppa is probably closer to the truth when she wrote, “his acquaintance with the classics was fleeting in a period in which undergraduate curriculum was overwhelmingly classical.”²⁷

Spurgeon’s time at Newmarket saw the development of a formative relationship. In the household of Mr. John Swindell, there was a female servant named Mary King. She was called “Cook” by the boys. She was a staunch Calvinist (all five points) and a Strict (Particular) Baptist. She and Charles would debate theological points. Spurgeon later

²⁵ “Mr. Spurgeon: His Life” *Fun*, September 2, 1865.

²⁶ Robert Shindler, *From the Usher’s Desk to the Tabernacle Pulpit: The Life and Labours of Pastor C. H. Spurgeon* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1892), 33.

²⁷ Kruppa, “The Life and Times of C. H. Spurgeon.”

claimed, “Cook taught me theology.”²⁸ His relationship with Mary King has rightly been compared with his relationship with the farmer from Stambourne, Will Richardson. In both cases, Spurgeon claimed to learn more commonsense and theology from common everyday folks than any University-trained divine. Spurgeon commented on Mary, “There are some Christian people who taste, and see, and enjoy religion in their own souls, and who get at a deeper knowledge of it than books can ever give them.”²⁹ Spurgeon was deeply impacted by his conversations with Mary Cook, for it was at this time that he was struggling with his own need to be converted and his own desire to find the burden lifted off his back. Years later, Spurgeon supplied a small pension to Mary King to help improve the life of one to whom he felt indebted.³⁰

When a fever swept through the Newmarket school, the students were sent home, including Charles and his younger brother, James. It was on this break that Charles, who had been experiencing some spiritual anxiety, found the rest he was looking for. It was a snowy Sunday morning (early January 1850), and with his normal routine for worship being altered, he entered a Primitive Methodist Church (Artillery Street Methodist). Charles sat on the back pew and waited. Apparently, the snow storm had detained the normal minister, and an older gentleman rose to deliver the sermon. Charles did not remember the gentleman’s name, although in the years that followed, many claimed to be that particular individual. He

²⁸ Day, *The Shadow of the Broad Brim*, 49. The Baptist historian, Henry Vedder, described Spurgeon as “A moderate Calvinist as to theology, he preached an atonement for the whole world and salvation through Christ’s blood to all who would believe. He stood like a rock against the advancing tide of lax teaching and lax practice.” Henry C. Vedder, *A Short History of the Baptists* (Valley Forge: The Judson Press, 1969 [1907]), 261.

²⁹ Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 101.

³⁰ Tom Nettles, *Living By Revealed Truth: The Life and Pastoral Theology of Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (China: Christian Focus Publications, 2013), 33; Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 101.

remembered the coarseness of the delivery, the thick accent of the older gentleman, and the text itself, a passage from Isaiah. The old man paused in his sermon and seemed to address Charles personally. He challenged him to “Look! Look! Look! And be saved.” And Charles felt that at that moment, he did look and looked to Christ alone for salvation and rest. He often described the encounter in sermons and articles, “That happy day, when I found the Saviour, and learned to cling to His dear feet, was a day never to be forgotten by me...I listened to the Word of God and that precious text led me to the cross of Christ.”³¹ Spurgeon’s journey was now complete. He had learned common sense from a farmer, theology from a cook, and had been led to the cross for salvation by an uneducated and unrefined Primitive Methodist.

In the summer of 1850, Spurgeon went to school in Cambridge under a certain Mr. Leeding whom he had known and sat under in Colchester. He was sixteen years old. He was recently converted, then baptized, and now desired to join a church. Although his parents and grandparents were associated with Independency, Charles, having struggled with infant baptism, decided to follow what he determined to be the biblical teaching on baptism, immersion. Before arriving at Cambridge and certainly with some encouragement from John Swindell, he was baptized in the river Lark by Rev. Cantlow of the Isleham Baptist Church on May 3, 1850. His decision to be baptized by immersion concerned his parents, and Spurgeon sought to allay his mother’s fears. “When he told his mother his intent of being immersed, she had said that she often prayed that he would become a Christian but never had she prayed that he would become a Baptist. Spurgeon, with unusual

³¹ Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 19.

insight and wit, replied to his mother that it was a demonstration that God does abundantly above all that we ask or think.”³²

Having moved to Cambridge, he sought to join the St. Andrew’s Street Baptist Church. He met with a Mr. Vinter, who asked Charles to address a Sunday School class. Mr. Vinter, nicknamed “The Bishop,” led a lay preacher’s association. The purpose of the association was to send men out to local villages to encourage smaller groups of believers. When Mr. Vinter heard Charles address the Sunday School class, he formed a plan to get him out to one of the local villages to preach a sermon or two. He asked Spurgeon to go to the village Teversham to accompany another young man who “was not much used to services and very likely would be glad of company.”³³ He had also requested the very same thing of an older youth. It was on the walk to Teversham that they discovered Vinter’s plan. The older youth absolutely refused to preach, and Spurgeon was obliged to try and share something from God’s Word. The Lay Preacher’s Association entailed visiting thirteen different villages. Spurgeon joined the other lay preachers, and each time he preached, the villagers encouraged him to come back as soon as he could. His schedule became rather regular: study and schoolwork during the day and walking to different villages at night to preach.³⁴

³² Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 154.

³³ Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 33.

³⁴ See Christian George, ed. *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon: His Earliest Outlines and Sermons between 1851 and 1854*. vol. 1. (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2016). Christian George noted many of the villages who were among the first to hear “the boy wonder of the fens”: “Notebook 1 records the Spurgeon’s transition from preaching itinerantly with the Lay Preacher’s Association connected with St. Andrew’s Street Baptist Church to serving as pastor of Waterbeach Chapel. Many of the first thirty-two sermons... were preached in cottages and chapels in the following villages: Balsham, Barton, Cherry Hinton, Comberton, Coton, Dunmow, Grantchester, Hythe, Layer Breton, Milton, Teversham, Toft, Tollesbury, Trumpington, Waterbeach and West Wrating.” (36).

Waterbeach Ministry

In October of 1851 the Baptist church in the village of Waterbeach (rural Cambridgeshire) asked him to be their pastor. Although he was only seventeen, he accepted the call to serve as their pastor. After several weeks, he resigned his duties at the school (as an assistant) and began working to build up the flock at Waterbeach. His success was spectacular. People came from miles around to hear “the boy wonder of the fens.” The Waterbeach Baptist Church experienced revival. The congregation grew from around forty to more than four hundred, a tenfold increase in less than two years.³⁵ The local village, numbering about thirteen hundred, saw a reduction in crime and drunkenness. Spurgeon’s preaching was energetic, extemporaneous, and filled with humor. The content seemed utterly beyond his years, for here was a seventeen-year-old boy preaching the mature doctrine of the Puritans. All of that, with a style designed to draw the hearer in, was enough to fill the small church to overflowing. Drummond noted that the country folk and especially one of the deacons, a Mr. King, sought to tone Spurgeon down, as his early preaching was “quite bombastic if not uncouth.”³⁶ It would not be the last time such charges would be laid at the feet of Spurgeon.

While Charles was enjoying ministerial success and an increasing reputation in the community, his father was concerned that he not neglect his studies and that he prepare more thoroughly for the ministry. Charles reluctantly agreed to meet with Dr. Joseph Angus, the principal of Stepney College, the Baptist ministerial training school. They were to meet at the house of Daniel McMillian, the prominent publisher. What happened next

³⁵ Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 163.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 164.

was a classic mix-up. Spurgeon arrived at the appropriate time and was shown by the maid into the sitting room. Just a little while later, Dr. Angus arrived and was shown to another room. The maid had no idea that the two were to meet each other. Dr. Angus left after he assumed his young prospective student was a no-show. Spurgeon waited for two hours, only to enquire of the maid and learn that Dr. Angus had already left to catch a train.

That evening, while Spurgeon was walking to a local village to preach, he felt as though a voice were trying to communicate to him. The overwhelming impression was received by his mind and heart; it distinctly said, “Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not!”³⁷ Spurgeon was relieved to hear such a message. He believed himself already qualified and ready to be a minister and that additional education would not benefit him any. His brother James seemed to agree that more schooling would not have been advantageous. Years later, he remarked, “He (Charles) was a marvelous example of a preacher leaping at a bound, full grown into the pulpit.”³⁸ The “boy wonder of the fens” would not be going to college but would stay among his flock at Waterbeach.

Spurgeon served the congregation at Waterbeach for about two years when his ability was brought to the attention of a deacon, Mr. Olney of New Park Street Chapel (Baptist Church) in South London. In November of 1853, Spurgeon was addressing a meeting of the Cambridge Sunday School Union. Two other ministers present belittled Spurgeon because of his youthful appearance. One taunted him, “It is a pity boys do not

³⁷ Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 38. The writers at *Fun* mocked this episode as well: “For Mr. Spurgeon’s escape from the demoralizing effect of a University Degree, his admirers cannot be too grateful. Why if he had received a University Education, in all probability his flock would never have understood him!” “Mr. Spurgeon: His Life” *Fun* September 2, 1865.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

adopt the Scriptural practice of tarrying at Jericho till their beards are grown.”³⁹ Spurgeon’s responded gracefully and insightfully. His maturity was striking and did not go unnoticed by one of the attendees, George Gould. Gould was in London a few days later and discussed Spurgeon with one of the leading deacons of the New Park Street Baptist Church, Thomas Olney. Olney reached out to Spurgeon and asked him to fill the pulpit for a Sunday, as New Park Street was between pastors.⁴⁰ Spurgeon, knowing that this was one of the most significant Baptist churches in London, wrote back indicating that they must have the wrong Spurgeon. Olney replied that they did indeed have the right Spurgeon and extended the invitation again.

Beginnings of London Ministry

Spurgeon preached his first sermon at New Park Street on December 18, 1853.⁴¹ The church had declined in numbers, and there were about eighty or so in attendance. The dwindling numbers were disheartening to the congregation, for the sanctuary could accommodate twelve hundred.⁴² Charles’ preaching was well received. The numbers dramatically increased for the evening sermon, swelling to a couple hundred. The deacons invited Charles back to preach the first, third, and fifth Sundays in January. At the end of January, the deacons offered him the pastorate for a six-month trial basis, with a decision to follow after this probationary period. Spurgeon wanted to shorten the time. After a few months of preaching and seeing the pews fill back up again, the church extended a

³⁹ Ibid., 39.

⁴⁰ Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 178.

⁴¹ George, *The Lost Sermons*, xxxix.

⁴² Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 189.

permanent call to him on April 19, 1854.⁴³ Spurgeon accepted the call and formed a relationship with New Park Street that would last almost thirty-eight years. He was nineteen years old and was on the verge of moving from relative obscurity to becoming “the preaching sensation of London.”⁴⁴

Almost immediately, Spurgeon began to draw large crowds. He preached extemporaneously, using only a thin outline of his major points.⁴⁵ His energetic delivery, youthful appearance, and “command of old-fashioned texts, made a vivid impact upon his congregations.”⁴⁶ The rapid growth of the stagnant New Park Street and the addition of multitudes thronging to hear him caused the press to liken “Spurgeonism” to a speeding locomotive.⁴⁷ He simply left others, including older, stodgy Anglicans, in the dust.

⁴³ Ibid., 199.

⁴⁴ Kruppa, “The Life and Times of C. H. Spurgeon.”

⁴⁵ See the work of Christian George for further examination of the earliest of his sermon manuscripts and outlines. Dr. George is curator of the Spurgeon Collection housed at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (Kansas City, MO). They are working to publish the very earliest Spurgeon sermon outlines. This material has not been previously available to the public.

⁴⁶ Kruppa, “The Life and Times of C. H. Spurgeon.”

⁴⁷ For more on the symbolism and significance of trains, see Michael Freeman’s *Railways and the Victorian Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999) and Wolfgang Schivelbusch’s *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2014).



THE FAST TRAIN.

Fig. 2.1. Spurgeon is the Fast Train⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Bob L. Ross, *A Pictorial Biography of C. H. Spurgeon* (Pasadena: Pilgrim Publications, 1974), 43. Spurgeon portrayed riding the train's engine was a powerful way to connect both the elements of modernity and fearful menace (or at least, in his case, apprehension) that his ministry and trains represented early on. (Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2014 [1977]), xiii).



THE SLOW COACH.

Fig. 2.2. The Church of England is the Slow Coach⁴⁹

Russell Conwell summarized that first year in London:

Within one year, New Park-street Chapel had to be enlarged. During the enlargement, Exeter Hall was taken, and it was filled to overflowing every Sabbath morning to hear the young preacher. The chapel, which had been enlarged to the fullest extent of the ground, was soon found to be far too circumscribed for the thousands who flocked to hear him; and by the end of the summer it became necessary to seek for a much larger place to satisfy the demand of the public.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Ross, *A Pictorial Biography of C. H. Spurgeon*, 42.

⁵⁰ Conwell, *Life of Charles H. Spurgeon*, 66.

Spurgeon did not limit himself to London. He traveled to Scotland for a preaching tour in the summer of 1855. Many thousands gathered to hear him wherever he went. When Exeter Hall was no longer available, arrangements were made to use the Surrey Gardens Music Hall. Spurgeon always filled to capacity whatever venue he was in. The largest crowd that gathered to hear him was on October 7, 1857 when 23,654 were in attendance at the Crystal Palace.⁵¹ The occasion was an especially called Fast Day (Humiliation Day) over the Indian Mutiny.



Fig. 2.3. Young Spurgeon (23 years old)⁵²

Because the proprietors of the Exeter Hall did not want to make an extended commitment to Spurgeon (they did not want it to be monopolized by one denomination), the

⁵¹ Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 836.

⁵² “Spurgeon at the Crystal Palace,” *Harper’s Weekly*, November 14, 1857. The article gives the number in attendance around thirty thousand, but, per Drummond, the turnstiles recorded the number cited above.

church decided to hold services at the Music Hall of the Royal Surrey Gardens. The inaugural service was to be held on October 19, 1856. These were exciting times for Charles Spurgeon. He had married Susannah Thompson earlier that January.⁵³ And on September 20, 1856, twin sons, Thomas and Charles, were born. His sermons were being published in *The Penny Pulpit*.⁵⁴ The circulation was growing larger, and his popularity was expanding into the United States as well. Spurgeon had been severely tested in his first few months at New Park Street. It was a test that had fallen on all of London: the Asiatic Cholera epidemic of 1854. London was ravaged, with over two thousand dying in the first week of the epidemic.⁵⁵ A total of twenty thousand died of cholera in London during the year of 1854.⁵⁶ Spurgeon had exhausted himself in caring for the sick and visiting the dying. But the plague of cholera would not be the most severe trial of his early ministry.

Spurgeon's early years in London were marked by stunning success that led him and New Park Street to keep searching for larger and larger spaces to accommodate the crowds. For several years that meant using the Surrey Gardens Music Hall because it could handle crowds numbering more than ten thousand.⁵⁷ The beginning of the ministry there was

⁵³ For more information on the rumors and potential scandal that must have been swirling around Spurgeon before his marriage, see *Life of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon: Minister of Park Street Chapel, Southwark* [Diamond Series of Gift Books] (London: Dodd & Co., n. d. but early 1857?). See Appendix C, Figure C1.

⁵⁴ G. Holden Pike, "Not only did the hearers in the pew perceive a novelty in the preacher's manner, there was a novelty about the style as the sermon appeared in print which captivated the reader." *The Life and Work of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 1 (Avon: The Bath Press, 1991), 124. In the same way that George Whitefield used the colonial newspapers to build a sense of excitement for his campaigns, Spurgeon's printed and inexpensive sermons certainly served a similar function, forming a sort of "advance team" that increased his fame and celebrity.

⁵⁵ Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 221.

⁵⁶ Kruppa, "The Life and Times of C. H. Spurgeon."

⁵⁷ Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 238.

marked by tragedy. On October 19, 1856, Spurgeon ascended the platform to a capacity crowd. Even outside the Hall, another ten thousand milled about, drawn by the stir that the “preaching sensation of London” had caused. Spurgeon began the meeting with a prayer, a hymn, and a reading of the Scriptures. He led out in prayer, but before he could begin the sermon, someone shouted “fire” and caused panic among the crowd. There were shouts of “the galleries are giving way!” People panicked. Spurgeon tried to restore order, but the crowd and the confusion was too great. People rushed for the exits, and before the dust settled, twenty-eight people were injured and seven had been killed in the stampede. Spurgeon, under the weight of the chaos, seemed almost to faint. He was helped out of the building by friends.⁵⁸

Spurgeon was crushed by the news. He fell into a severe depression. The idea that he was the cause or the source of this tragedy was a heavy weight on him. The newspapers, many of which already disapproved of Spurgeon’s ministry, used the occasion to attack him, his preaching style, and his fundraising:

And lastly, when the mangled corpses had been carried away from the unhallowed and disgraceful scene—when husbands were seeking their wives, and children their mothers in extreme agony and despair—the chink of the money as it fell into the collection boxes grated harshly, miserably on the ears of those who, we sincerely hope, have by this time conceived for Mr. Spurgeon and his rantings the profoundest contempt.⁵⁹

Spurgeon was shielded from many of these press reports by his concerned friends and family. He had isolated himself. His wife, Susannah (Suzie) worried over him that this trial might test even his sanity. That first night after the disaster, his life and ministry seemed to

⁵⁸ Ibid., 239-40.

⁵⁹ *Daily Telegraph*, Oct. 20, 1856.

hang in the balance; “he spent the night weeping and tottering on the edge of a mental breakdown.”⁶⁰ He had fallen into a deep depression but one that mercifully appeared to be short-lived. He was walking in the garden of a friend when he was reminded of the verse in Philippians 2 that Christ was to be exalted above every other name. He came to the realization that no matter what happened to him or his reputation, what really mattered is that Christ is exalted and preached. He gathered his strength and was back in the New Park Street pulpit having missed only one Sunday. Furthermore, another attempt was made to use the Music Hall on November 23, 1856. It was successful and without incident. Spurgeon would continue to use the Music Hall for three more years until December of 1859.

The tragedy that occurred in October did nothing to hinder Spurgeon’s popularity. Crowds still flocked to hear him whether it was at the Surrey Gardens, the Agricultural Hall, or the open fields in Scotland. Tourists from the United States made a point to cross the river to hear “Charley.” His sermons often contained scenes where biblical characters communicated with each other and the audience was drawn in to witness the exchange (e.g., God and Adam’s dialogue).⁶¹ Spurgeon would use the whole platform to bring the sermon to life. He might run from side to side on the stage. He preferred not to be hindered by a pulpit.⁶² He was, in the words of his friend John Carlile, “dramatic to his fingertips.”⁶³

⁶⁰ Nettles, *Living By Revealed Truth*, 91.

⁶¹ “Mr. Spurgeon and His Creed,” *The Era*, November 16, 1856.

⁶² The very famous caricature of Spurgeon in *Vanity Fair* (December 10, 1870) has him gripping a rail and preaching; a traditional pulpit is nowhere to be seen. See Appendix C, Figure C19. The accompanying article, “Men of the Day,” No. 16, The Rev. Charles Spurgeon” describes his appeal, “To widen the fold for the sake of those stray lambs, theatres and concert rooms were converted into meeting-houses, the pulpit was exchanged for the platform, and a row of reporters below the footlights gave the utterances of this original and powerful preacher to the press.”

Early photographs often show Spurgeon assuming striking poses (i.e., standing with his finger pointing up was a common pose).⁶⁴



*Fig. 2.4. Young Spurgeon in characteristic pose*⁶⁵

His sermons were filled with illustrations and stories that connected emotionally with the lives of ordinary people. He was not afraid to make an emotional appeal to the crowd. This was done without the use of any sort of altar call. There was no time of invitation at the end of the sermon where an individual might physically walk an aisle. Such techniques became

⁶³ Kruppa, “The Life and Times of C. H. Spurgeon.”

⁶⁴ See Appendix B: Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *A Life through the Photographer’s Lens*. Figure B3 has Spurgeon in the traditional, finger pointed up pose surrounded by four older, less dramatic divines.

⁶⁵ Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 85.

standard among some nineteenth-century revivalists and most twentieth-century mass evangelists. If someone wanted to join Spurgeon's church, they had to first meet with some of the elders and then finally with Spurgeon himself to share their conversion experience.

Spurgeon and New Park Street Baptist Church eventually purchased land south of the Thames, near Elephant and Castle, and constructed the Metropolitan Tabernacle.⁶⁶ It was a megachurch before there were megachurches. It could accommodate six thousand hearers and was designed as a "preacher's church." The building was opened for use in 1861. The project cost approximately £31,000, up from the initial estimate of £13,000. When the first Sunday service occurred on March 31, 1861, the building was entirely debt-free and was the largest Nonconformist church in the world.⁶⁷ The Metropolitan Tabernacle became a base for all sorts of ministries and meetings of various associations.

Spurgeon maintained a demanding schedule and began to branch out into other philanthropic and educational work. He started the Pastors' College that had no academic admission requirements.⁶⁸ He was training up solid gospel preachers and not velvet-mouthed divines.⁶⁹ Regarding the substance of what Spurgeon personally taught the students, Thomas, his son, reported, "On Friday afternoons my father lectures to them, first generally taking some of the old Puritan authors and giving a digest of their writings and for

⁶⁶ See the Old Ordnance Survey Map of 1872 "Elephant and Castle" published by Alan Godfrey Maps to see the size of the building and the way that the Metropolitan Tabernacle dominated the area.

⁶⁷ Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 97.

⁶⁸ See Mike Nicholls, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Educationalist: Part 1," *The Baptist Quarterly* 31, no. 8 (October 1986): 384-401 and Mike Nicholls, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Educationalist, Part 2," *The Baptist Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (April 1987): 73-94.

⁶⁹ Many of these Spurgeon-trained men went on to found other churches or were involved in the renewal of other congregations. See Mike Nicholls, *C. H. Spurgeon: The Pastor Evangelist* (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1992), 175-7. In this helpful appendix, Nicholls listed all the churches that Spurgeon helped to found or was instrumental in their renewal.

the rest of the time giving a free-and-easy talk upon some practical religious subject in connection with the ministry.”⁷⁰

He began the Stockwell Orphanages, opening one first for boys and then for girls as well.⁷¹ He began with his wife a Book Fund that sought to place gospel books into the hands of ministers who could not afford them.⁷² He was active in the Baptist Union. In January 1865, he began a magazine, *The Sword and the Trowel*. He continued his work writing books and having sermons published. He wrote commentaries, including one of his most popular, *The Treasury of David*, which was a commentary on the Psalms. He was continually asked to help with other projects or to speak at another ministry’s special function. He was involved politically and was a great admirer of William Gladstone. When he wrote Gladstone, he addressed him as “Chief.” He almost always supported Gladstone’s Liberal Party, only breaking away from him over the question of Irish Home Rule.

In the late 1880s, Spurgeon discerned what he thought was a drift away from orthodoxy among some Baptists. He feared that some of them were not emphasizing the substitutionary atonement of Christ, the infallibility of God’s Word, or the eternal nature of Hell and judgment. Spurgeon was no stranger to controversy. Years earlier, he had railed against the Church of England in a sermon entitled, “Baptismal Regeneration.” He had also

⁷⁰ “Mr. Spurgeon as Seen by His Son,” *The Pall Mall Gazette*, August 19, 1889. The principal for the Pastors’ College was George Rogers. See Appendix B, Figure B36.

⁷¹ Spurgeon was friends with and influenced by George Mueller, who was well known for his orphanages.

⁷² See Charles Ray, *Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon* (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1973), 66-75; Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 144-50.

preached against the teachings of Darwin and had been satirized in the press as “Rev. C. H. Gorilla.”⁷³ The following cartoon reflected the lampooning some in the press gave him.



“A GORILLA LECTURING ON MR. SPURGEON.”

Fig. 2.5. Gorilla Lecturing on Spurgeon⁷⁴

But in August of 1887, he wrote an article for *The Sword and the Trowel*, entitled “The Down-Grade.” He outlined his concerns about a spiritual apathy that seemed to be

⁷³ See Appendix C: The Contested Body of Spurgeon from Satire to Solemn Procession, Figure C7.

⁷⁴ Ross, *A Pictorial Biography of C. H. Spurgeon*, 47.

afflicting the churches. He wrote further articles and addressed other concerns in subsequent editions of *The Sword and the Trowel*. Finally, in October of 1887, he withdrew from the Baptist Union. The controversy and divisions that ensued took a heavy toll from Spurgeon, some biographers even asserting that it hastened his death five years later.

One of Spurgeon's greatest challenges did not come from theological opponents, critics in the press, or disgruntled church members, but from his own deteriorating physical condition. Spurgeon suffered with gout, Bright's disease, and occasional seasons of depression. He met his trials with humor, prayer, and when appropriate, seasons of rest. It was in 1871 that he discovered the town of Mentone in Southern France. From that year on, he often spent a portion of the winter working there to save his strength and to recover from whatever was ailing him. His whole church supported him in his periods of rest, and he wrote tenderly to them, sometimes printing letters in *The Sword and the Trowel*.

It was in Mentone that Spurgeon died. Mrs. Spurgeon had accompanied him on this, his last trip to France. He had not been in the pulpit since June of 1891, and his people knew that his health was really in decline. The outpouring of support and sympathy was vast. Kruppa described the scene:

When Spurgeon died, in January 1892, London south of the Thames went into mourning. Sixty thousand people came to pay homage during the three days his body lay in state at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. A funeral parade two miles long followed his hearse from the Tabernacle to the cemetery at Upper Norwood. One hundred thousand people stood along the way, flags flew at half-mast, shops and pubs were closed. It was a remarkable demonstration of affection and respect, even in an era when people were scrupulous in observing the rituals that accompanied death."⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Kruppa, *Christian History*. See also Bob L. Ross, *A Pictorial Biography of C. H. Spurgeon*, 126-31. See also Appendix C: The Contested Body of Spurgeon from Satire to Solemn Procession for examples of Magic Lantern Glass Slides revealing the funeral crowds.

The number of services held at the Metropolitan Tabernacle is simply staggering. The crowds just kept coming, desiring to pay their respects to the one who had been called “the Pope of Newington-Butts.” One of the local papers reported, “On February 10, there was a series of memorial services, the vast building being repeatedly full of successive congregations from ten o’clock in the morning until midnight.”⁷⁶ And again, “The final meeting was for the general public, and here the service was opened by Rev. Mackay, while Mr. Manton Smith and Mr. Fullerton were the principal speakers, Mr. Sankey singing a sacred song.”⁷⁷ Charles Spurgeon, pilloried by the press at the inception of his ministry, was now eulogized after a lifetime of preaching and philanthropic work.

The aforementioned material provides just a brief sketch of the life of Spurgeon. But what motivated him? Which theologians deeply informed his own belief structure? How did this theology surface in his personal and professional life?

Spurgeon and the Influence of the Puritans

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was deeply influenced by the seventeenth-century English Puritans. He labeled himself a Puritan. His admirers described him as a Puritan, and one of his biographers called him the “heir of the Puritans.”⁷⁸ Erroll Hulse noted, “C. H. Spurgeon, although he lived in a later period of history, was a Puritan in every fibre of his being. In his preaching we have wonderful examples of the five points of Calvinism preached

⁷⁶ *The Illustrated London News*, February 20, 1892.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ See Ernest W. Bacon, *Spurgeon: Heir of the Puritans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans’ Publ., 1968). Bacon notes, “It is more than thirty years since a biography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon was written, and the time seems ripe for a new one. Spurgeon was steeped in and fashioned by the writings and principles of the Puritans, and can only be understood in their light. This book, therefore, makes no apology for presenting him as ‘heir of the Puritans’. Both in his preaching of Christ, in his controversies, and in his personal life, he would not have been what he was without them.” (7).

evangelistically.”⁷⁹ Another biographer asserted, “It is better, therefore, in speaking of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, to consider him as the Puritan Standard-Bearer, and not merely as the sole and final exponent and defender of one of the mightiest religious movements that ever changed the face of society, revolutionized government, and benefited mankind.”⁸⁰ A very early biographer, George John Stevenson, compared Spurgeon’s style with the Puritans:

He has revived that mode of treating religious subjects which was pursued by most of the old Puritan preachers. Like them he has not been ashamed to labor with a view to furnish the people with a variety of “things new and old.” He has, at the same time, offered them something more delicious than they were accustomed to receive, more delicious because new to them, though in reality it is older than that which they have generally regarded as the oldest. He has now supplied them with the “old corn of the land,” after they had been fed forty years with the daily manna in the wilderness.⁸¹

Even the recent biographer, Lewis Drummond, in a comment that certainly could be expanded to include the scope of Spurgeon’s life, described Spurgeon’s period of struggle just prior to his conversion experience: “That strange Puritan mixture of guilt and hope permeated his entire personhood.”⁸² His critics acknowledged that he “resembles the old Puritans.”⁸³ Whether the title was applied as an epithet or with commendation, Spurgeon wore it as a badge of honor. In a sermon entitled “How They Conquered the Dragon,” Spurgeon declared, “Some of us have been styled the echo of the Puritans: yes, the

⁷⁹ Erroll Hulse, *Who Are The Puritans?...and What Do They Teach?* (Darlington: Evangelical Press, 2000), 24.

⁸⁰ George C. Lorimer, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon: The Puritan Preacher in the Nineteenth Century* (Boston: James H. Earle Publisher, 1892), 21.

⁸¹ George John Stevenson, *Sketch of the Life and Ministry of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon*, 99.

⁸² Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 20.

⁸³ *Vanity Fair*, Dec. 10, 1870.

honorable title of ‘Ultimus Puritanorum,’ the last of the Puritans has been assigned to us. It is well, we want no higher degree, for the old theology is dear to us.”⁸⁴ Spurgeon’s love of the Puritans went well beyond theological preference. In his youth, he was surrounded by Puritan books. He grew up in a region of England known for its Puritan past. His grandfather and father were preachers of the “old theology.” According to Spurgeon, his very style of preaching (plain, forthright, extemporaneous, and rich with Biblical allusions) was patterned after the Puritan pulpit. His writing was replete with quotations from the Puritans. And even at play, Spurgeon preferred the game of the Puritans—lawn bowling.⁸⁵

Any thoughtful analysis of Spurgeon’s life and work must take into account the degree to which he was influenced by the Puritans. This is not an analysis that begins and ends with juxtaposed sermon passages and comparisons of rhetorical devices. Although these types of studies may prove useful, the second section of this chapter highlights the lived experience of Spurgeon and the construction of Spurgeon’s public persona, both by himself and his supporters and those who opposed and criticized him. What follows will be a brief sketch of Spurgeon’s life, albeit one that demonstrates how a pantheon of Puritans

⁸⁴ Charles Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 21, 195.

⁸⁵ In a paper entitled *Calvin in the Hands of the Philistines: Or, Did Calvin Bowl on the Sabbath?*, Chris Coldwell defined the game of Bowls and defended Calvin against his critics, “Bowls is an old game played on a smooth green lawn with a ball of wood (now made of a composite material). It is rolled with the attempt to make it stop as near as possible to another ball. Hence the term ‘bowling on the green.’ The point is not that the game was an immoral pastime, but unlawful on the Lord’s day. The consensus of Puritan thinking on Sabbath recreations is represented by John Wells. Recreations on a Sabbath day “are impediments to duty.... Now how this should be otherwise, is not easily discernible; so do not recreations possess the mind, divert the intention, withdraw from spiritual duties, hinder the service of Christ, and fill the heart with froth and vanity?” John Wells, *The Practical Sabbatarian* (London, 1668), 28. Calvin’s view is similar. http://www.fpcr.org/blue_banner_articles/calvin_bowls.htm#F3, accessed September 8, 2010.

(Richard Baxter, Thomas Boston, Thomas Brooks, John Bunyan, Thomas Manton, George Swinnock, and others) cast their shadows over the Victorian era's "prince of preachers."⁸⁶

If geography and genealogy is destiny, then Charles Haddon Spurgeon was foreordained to be chief among the dissenters. As already noted, he was born in Kelvedon, in Essex on June 19, 1834.⁸⁷ The county of Essex was known for its history of Protestant Nonconformity. A season of persecution occurred there during the reign of Queen Mary. Concerning this time period, Eamon Duffy noted, "Committed protestants... were everywhere a minority. But any illusions the bishops might have entertained about the feebleness of resistance among that minority were quickly dispelled, at any rate in places such as London, Essex and Kent."⁸⁸ Dutch and Flemish exiles escaping Catholic persecution emigrated to the county of Essex during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. And Spurgeon counted himself among their descendants.

⁸⁶ The biographer Stevenson also produced such a list of Puritans and recognized Spurgeon's indebtedness to them: "The mass of modern church-goers are strangers to some of the better qualities of the old Puritan preachers and orators. They have seldom, if ever, tasted the sweetness, juiciness, and wholesomeness of Bunyan, Baxter, Flavel, Bishop Hall, Leighton, Gurnall, Thomas Brooks, Matthew Mead, and Thomas Watson. Serious, quaint, and pedantic as these writers sometimes are, they nevertheless abound in luscious clusters of heavenly thought, in beautiful lessons of experience, and in a generous unction and thorough practicalness which came of long and varied afflictions, leisurely study, and devout meditations, duly combined with laborious activity in the care of poor and persecuted flocks. Mr. Spurgeon has deeply imbued his mind with the spirit of these old writers, and, without copying the style, or quoting much of the matter of any of them, he has been led by the reading of them up to the sources of their inspiration in the oracles of God. He has thus pursued a course which will enable him to overtake, if not to go before them." George John Stevenson, *Sketch of the Life and Ministry of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon* (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1859), 99-100.

⁸⁷ See Clive Anderson, *Travel with C. H. Spurgeon: In the Footsteps of the "Prince of Preachers"* (Epsom, Surrey: Day One Publ., 2002); John Marriage, *Witham: A Pictorial History—Kelvedon, Hatfield Peverel, Silver End and Rivenhall* (Phillimore and Co. Ltd, 1995) and Bob L. Ross, *A Pictorial Biography of C. H. Spurgeon* (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1974) for images of Kelvedon past and present. Clive Anderson's work is particularly interesting, for it is a mixture of history and travel guide and its target audience seems to be the contemporary Evangelical bound for pilgrimage.

⁸⁸ Eamon Duffy, *Fires of Faith Catholic England Under Mary Tudor* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 11.

When the Act of Uniformity of 1662 drove many preachers out of the Church of England, the ancestors of Charles Spurgeon considered themselves ejected as well and followed their pastor out of the church and into Independency. Many others in the county felt the same way. As Patricia Kruppa notes, “The Ecclesiastical Survey of 1676 revealed that Essex contained the largest proportion of Protestant Nonconformists in England. One parish even reported Nonconformists in the majority; the parish was Stambourne.”⁸⁹

Charles was the firstborn son of John and Eliza Spurgeon. They lived in humble circumstances. After the birth of their second child (Eliza would eventually give birth to seventeen children with eight surviving infancy), they decided to send Charles to live with his paternal grandparents, James and Sarah, in Stambourne. Charles was little more than a year old when he left Colchester for Stambourne. He spent the next five years living with his grandparents and their spinster daughter, Aunt Ann. He was the delight of the household. Russell Conwell, the author of one of the many memorial biographies that appeared in 1892, wrote:

Charles was especially his “grandfather’s boy.” His grandfather was a most instructive preacher, who for fifty-four years occupied the same pastorate and lived in the same house. It was very large and situated in the most lovely natural surroundings. His grandfather was a staid, scholarly gentleman...a noble specimen of the old English country gentleman. It is said that he wore the old-fashioned breeches, buckled shoes, and silk stockings; adhering with rigid formality to the attire of the generation before him.⁹⁰

The town of Stambourne was small, with about five hundred residents living in fewer than one hundred homes. Charles’ father was a prominent and highly respected member of the community. The village was an agricultural one, almost untouched by the

⁸⁹ Kruppa, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon: A Preacher’s Progress*, 9-10.

⁹⁰ Conwell, *Life of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the World’s Greatest Preacher*, 24-5.

changes that were sweeping across England, “The Industrial Revolution bypassed the village, and even a forlorn attempt to start a straw-plaiting industry failed. The town had two public houses, but no post office, doctor, chemist, or policeman. Even at the end of the nineteenth-century, there was no railroad station in Stambourne.”⁹¹ Such was the setting for the formative early years of Spurgeon. He was surrounded by older, doting relatives. He went visiting parishioners with his grandfather and watched him as he prepared sermons. He was given some freedom to roam the countryside and was allowed to explore the manse or parsonage.

It was in one of the darkened rooms of the manse that Spurgeon encountered the folios that would have such a profound impact on his life. In his autobiography, the following passage is titled: “The Boy among the Books:”

I am afraid I am amusing myself rather than my reader, and so I will not weary him with more than this one bit of rigmarole just now. But there was one place upstairs which I cannot omit, even at the risk of being wearisome. Opening out of one of the bedrooms, there was a little chamber of which the window had been blocked up through that wretched window-duty. When the original founder of Stambourne Meeting quitted the Church of England, to form a separate congregation, he would seem to have been in possession of a fair estate, and the house was quite a noble one for those times. Before the light-excluding tax had come into operation, that little room was the minister’s study and closet for prayer; and a very nice cosy room, too. In my time, it was a dark den; --but *it contained books*, and this made it a gold mine to me. Therein was fulfilled the promise, “I will give thee the treasures of darkness.” Some of these were enormous folios, such as a boy could hardly lift. Here I first struck up acquaintance with the martyrs, and specially with “Old Bonner”, who burned them; next, with Bunyan and his “Pilgrim”; and further on, with the great masters of Scriptural theology, with whom no moderns are worthy to be named in the same day. Even the old editions of their works, with their margins and old-fashioned notes, are precious to me. It is easy to tell a real Puritan book even by its shape and by the appearance of the type. I confess that I harbor a prejudice against nearly all new editions,

⁹¹ Kruppa, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon: A Preacher’s Progress*, 15. See also John Booker, *Essex and the Industrial Revolution*, 1974 and A. C. Edwards, *A History of Essex*.

and cultivate a preference for the originals, even though they wander about in sheepskins and goatskins, or are shut up in the hardest of boards. It made my eyes water, a short time ago, to see a number of these old books in the new Manse: I wonder whether some other boy will love them, and live to revive that grand old divinity which will yet be to England her balm and benison.

Out of that darkened room I fetched those old authors when I was yet a youth, and never was I happier than when in their company. Out of the present contempt, into which Puritanism has fallen, many brave hearts and true will fetch it, by the help of God, ere many years have passed. Those who have daubed up the windows will yet be surprised to see Heaven's light beaming on the old truth, and then breaking forth from it to their own confusion.⁹² (*italics his*)

This passage gives the reader clear insight into the thought process of Spurgeon and the value he placed on the Puritans and their texts.

While there were many things about that old manse that impressed Spurgeon, such as the hobby horse in the hallway and the “treasures” on the mantel, none had the impact like the discovery of some old Puritan tomes.⁹³ For Spurgeon, the presence of these books was a link to England's sacred past. They were his connection to that past and the cornerstone of his theological education. They were unsurpassed in their wisdom, and their authors were the very best men that England has produced. To read them and to live their truth was to embody the purest, highest form of Christianity. But they are not without their limits, and

⁹² Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon: Compiled from His Diary, Letters, and Records by His Wife and Private Secretary*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1898), 22-3.

⁹³ Adrian Lamkin noted, “Spurgeon's love for books began when he was a lad. By the time he was six years of age, he had become acquainted with the books of theology and Puritan classics that were contained in his grandfather's house in Stambourne. He claimed that he was never happier than when he was reading one of those volumes. Thus, at an early age he developed a strong attachment to these enormous folios.” Adrian Lamkin, “The Spurgeon Library of William Jewell College: A Hidden Treasure Among Baptists in America,” *Baptist History and Heritage*, 19 (October 1984): 39. The Spurgeon Library, which are not the same exact books that so captured young Spurgeon's imagination, is now housed at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

even this text from his autobiography clues the reader in to a higher authority which frames their existence and gives meaning to his experience.

The passage begins with a description of the place where the books, Spurgeon's treasure, were found. The setting is the old manse in the village of Stambourne. Stambourne is the village that time forgot. John Booker, in *Essex and the Industrial Revolution*, lists several of the villages and cities in Essex impacted by the Industrial Revolution, cities familiar to Spurgeon: Chelmsford, Colchester, Hornchurch, and Coggeshall, but Booker fails to mention Stambourne in even a passing reference in the index. Spurgeon presented this village as a place untouched by the intervening centuries. While I have been unable to find him referencing the village as an "Eden" it is clear that there was a pristine quality to Stambourne, as if it leapt from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth century untouched by the pollution and decadence of London.⁹⁴ John Kent, citing the work of Callum Brown, noted the enduring impact of the countryside on England's urban centers: "Victorian cities grew so fast that they were full of the culture of the countryside, with the church of the countryside and with the pastors of the countryside.... They remained for many decades places where religion was a rock in a sea of change, where the church of the country village was transplanted to the urban village. The sea change for British urban religion came, then not when the cities were born or shaped, but when they matured at the end of the century."⁹⁵ This was certainly Spurgeon's experience in the middle to end of the nineteenth century. He came from a line of country pastors and

⁹⁴ However, upon going to London to fill the pulpit at New Park Street Chapel, he felt the city to be pitiless and "Waterbeach...seemed to be Eden itself." Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon*, 318.

⁹⁵ John Kent, "Victorian Religion and the Decline of Britain." *Victorian Studies*, 41, no. 1 (Autumn 1997): 111.

was deeply impressed with rural culture. He idealized Stambourne and the life and values it represented. The village had such a hold on his imagination that in the closing months of his life, he returned to Stambourne. His reflections on that visit, along with the work of some other contributors, were published under the title *Memories of Stambourne* (1891). In that work, Spurgeon recalled, “Maybe, the village would have died out of memory altogether, were it not that, in its center, Puritanism had set up one of its most venerable shrines. Driven from the Anglican Establishment by that silly craving for Uniformity, which produced a needless breach in a church which might have been united, a number of the best educated and most spiritual of England’s pastors preached to their flocks in such conventicles as they could find, or could provide.”⁹⁶ If the village itself was a “venerable shrine” to Puritanism, then where was its altar?

The old manse itself may have served as the altar. In this house Spurgeon encountered the holy. The house was old and traced its heritage back to the very first pastor who separated himself from the Church of England. It was a noble house only lately shrouded in darkness due to the window tax. Benjamin Beddow, co-author of *Memories of Stambourne* and a relative of one of the former pastors, described the house, adding:

We have lingered on these details of the picture, because this ancient parsonage has been the abode of pious families, and the center of quiet village life, through long-drawn years, and there is much about its associations to awaken a sentiment of reverence. For more than two centuries “the tabernacle of the righteous” has been on this spot. If the stone should cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber should answer it, what tales they might tell!⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Charles Spurgeon and Charles Beddow, *Memories of Stambourne* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1891), 4.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

Beddow's recollections served to reinforce Spurgeon's memory and narrative. It would have certainly been flattering for Beddow, also a Baptist pastor, to share this common past with Spurgeon. He was a collaborating partner with Spurgeon and a witness to Stambourne's special place in Puritan history.

It was in a darkened room in the manse that Spurgeon found the Puritan folios. These books not only contained the "grand old divinity" of the Puritans, they were likened unto the saints themselves. They are his portal to a heroic past where the Puritans occupied a place which no "moderns" could hope to attain. They introduced Spurgeon to villains such as "Old Bonner" and to victors such as John Bunyan's "Christian." Although they have been locked up in darkness, a return to their truth will shed great light upon the church and the country as a whole. England's benison or blessing was to be found in the restoration of such books and truth to their rightful place. These are not just the reflections of an older Spurgeon, waxing nostalgic for an idealized past. The following is an excerpt from an early sermon preached on April 15, 1855, entitled, "David's Dying Song:"

It has been my privilege to give more prominence in the religious world to those old doctrines of the gospel. I have delighted in the musty old folios which many of my brethren have kept bound in sheepskins and goatskins, on their library shelves. As for new books, I leave them to others. Oh! If we might but go back to those days when the best of men were our pastors-the days of the Puritans. Oh! For a puritanical gospel again, then we should not have the sleepy hearers, the empty chapels, the drowsy preachers, the velvet-mouthed men who cannot speak the truth, but we should have 'Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will towards men.' Do go home and search. I have told you what I believe to be true; if it is not, detect the error by reading your Bibles for yourselves, and searching out the matter.⁹⁸

Spurgeon was twenty-one years old at the time of this sermon. He was preaching to large crowds who had gathered to hear him at Exeter Hall. Many of the same themes that were

⁹⁸ Charles Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 1, 270.

prominent in the autobiography are present here: a longing to return to the days of Puritans, the Puritans as the best of men, the visceral experience of the texts portrayed (musty old folios), and the promise of blessing upon a sincere return to the puritanical gospel. This blessing included filled chapels, exciting sermons, and preachers who discard the velvet-mouth for the plain-speaking tongue, an apt description of Spurgeon himself.

Spurgeon is not interested in “new books.” It is enough for him to be acquainted with the old authors. It must have been enough for his audiences as well, for a little more than a year and a half later, he was preaching to capacity crowds at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens. On December 14, 1856, he preached a sermon entitled “Faith,” from Hebrews 11:6, “The old writers, who are by far the most sensible—for you will notice that the books that were written about two hundred years ago, by the old Puritans, have more sense in one line than there is in a page of our new books, and more in a page than there is in a whole volume of our modern divinity.”⁹⁹

Spurgeon’s encounter with the books in his grandfather’s parsonage had a profound impact on his life and ministry. He never departed from the theological seeds that he found in those texts. They were the means to spiritual growth and a vehicle for transforming the modern, weak believer into the ‘best of men.’ Benjamin Beddow described how the books came to be in the manse and supported Spurgeon’s theme:

A Mr. Thomas Green gave an excellent library to Mr. Havers [the first Independent pastor at Stambourne], for the use of those who should follow him in the ministry of the gospel in this place. Some forty or fifty volumes still remain, chiefly folios, and containing the solid divinity of the Puritan Fathers. A preacher with a mind to study, and with such good aids thereto, should grow to something amid such surroundings.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Charles Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, 3, 5-6.

¹⁰⁰ Spurgeon and Beddow, *Memories of Stambourne*, 18.

Spurgeon was that young man with an active imagination and a “mind to study.” He carefully read those books. As a young child and an early reader, he read as much of those folios as he could. He studied the images found within Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*. After the age of six, he often returned to Stambourne for the summer months and passed his time among those precious works.

Spurgeon’s deep desire to be identified with the Puritans was met in several ways, chiefly through the preaching of what he assumed to be the same doctrine. To borrow New Testament phraseology, Spurgeon attempted to abide in their teaching and by doing so, shared in both the glory accorded them and also in whatever suffering befell those who preached their puritanical gospel. The following is from an early sermon entitled, “One Antidote For Many Ills,” preached on November 9, 1856 at New Park Street Chapel, Southwark:

This was the glory of the Puritans: they preached doctrines which laid them open to reproach. I am bold to say I have preached the doctrine of the Puritans, and I am bold to say, moreover, that those parts which have been most objected to in my discourses, have frequently been quotations...from some of the Puritans. I have often smiled when I have seen them condemned, and said, ‘There now, sir, thou hast condemned Charnock, or Bunyan, or How, or Doddridge,’ or some other saint of God whom it so happened I quoted at the time.¹⁰¹

Spurgeon gladly joined their company. Did they suffer unjust persecution? Were they ejected from their positions, often losing their income? Were they imprisoned and maligned? If so, then Spurgeon could be too, by preaching the same doctrines. However, while Spurgeon asserted that any suffering or difficulty he experienced was due to his sharing in the same gospel, it is more often the case that his detractors were critical of his

¹⁰¹ Charles Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 5, 816.

style, mannerisms, growing presence in the culture, and his pulpit “performances” more than objecting to his doctrine. One week after this sermon was preached, an article appeared in a London paper, “He [Spurgeon] acquired but little classical learning, while his disregard of English grammar at times, and of the rules of logic, always prove his independence of schools. He read the Puritan Fathers, and smoked tobacco, adopting for model their eccentricity of style and metaphor, rather than their simplicity of doctrine.”¹⁰² Another newspaper article decried Spurgeon’s growing presence in material culture: “There exists a Spurgeon literature...there is a Spurgeon almanac, and sixpenny diamond lives, Spurgeon neck-ties, and Spurgeon pocket-handkerchiefs. Added to all these outward and visible signs of Spurgeonism, we are now to have the monster tabernacle, the foundation stone of which has now been laid.”¹⁰³

Spurgeon arrived in London to fill the pulpit of this prestigious church (New Park Street) whose former pastors included Benjamin Keach and John Gill. The church liked what they heard and asked him to stay for six months with the understanding that if all went well, they would vote on him to be pastor at the end of the agreed time. Things did not work

¹⁰² “Mr. Spurgeon and His Creed,” *The Era*, November 16, 1856.

¹⁰³ *The Morning Chronicle*, August 17, 1859. See Appendix C for examples of Spurgeon’s presence in Victorian material culture. Not only was the word “Spurgeonism” coined, but the popular contributor to the *Daily Telegraph*, George Augustus Sala, also used the word “Spurgeonesque” to describe another preacher in a different setting: “The sermon was an excellent one; but I couldn’t hear it. The singing was unusually good, for a country church; but it grated on my ears. I shall never forget the agony of that experience of the Litany...I could enlarge on my woes; but desist, for fear of being Spurgeonesque.” *Breakfast in Bed or Philosophy between the Sheets* (New York: John Bradburn Publ., 1863), 125. Years later, Sala, recalled some correspondence with Spurgeon: “This labour is rendered necessary in the performance of the task which the outside public, sometimes good-humouredly, and sometimes contemptuously, calls “dashing off a leader.” I remember that excellent man the late Charles H. Spurgeon, who was a frequent correspondent of mine, felicitating me once in bright, cheerful language, on the ease with which I “dashed off” the leaders in question. I thanked him in reply for his kind words; but I added that I should be very much pleased if he would pay me a visit some morning and sit in my study while I was laboriously dictating and not “dashing off” an article of, say, fifteen hundred words.” *Things I Have Seen and People I Have Known*, vol. 1 (London: Cassell and Company, 1894), x. Such a reply must have delighted Spurgeon, who spent many hours each week dictating letters and going over galley proofs of sermons in preparation for publication.

out as they planned. Spurgeon's dynamic preaching captivated the congregation, drew in the multitudes, and caused the deacons to hold a vote after only three months. The church, which had been in a season of decline, was now in the midst of renewal. Spurgeon was very much in demand. He went on preaching tours, and, wherever he traveled, throngs gathered to hear and see him. He was called by some a "comet"—a wonder, but sure to be gone in a flash, and by others another George Whitefield. The New Park Street congregation soon began to look for other venues to meet because their current facility was unable to accommodate the crowds. And so they met for a time at Exeter Hall in the Strand and also at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens. Then the decision was made to build an entirely new facility, The Metropolitan Tabernacle. One of the ways Spurgeon raised the funds for the construction of the Tabernacle was by selling copies of a print that was given to him as a gift. Around 1857, at the tender age of twenty-three or twenty-four, Spurgeon received from a fellow pastor, a print that portrayed men and women of faith (actually almost all men) with a particular emphasis on the Puritans.



Fig. 2.6. Spurgeon among the Divines¹⁰⁴

Featured prominently in the center of the print is the image of Charles Spurgeon. He is striking a pose that was probably typically seen during a sermon. His right hand is pointing up and he is gazing out into the crowd. His entire body dominates the shot, and he is clearly the focal point of the image. Such an image, also known as a montage or composition photography, was designed to be read by the observer. Daniel A Novak comments, "In fact, composition photography led to comparisons between photography and literary narrative. An admirer of Rejlander's noted that one of his composition images was 'as good as a

¹⁰⁴ Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 256.

novel'. Not only were the compositions themselves associated with literature, but the body being photographed came increasingly to be described in linguistic and narrative terms."¹⁰⁵

In this montage, the company to his right is looking to their left and those to the left are looking to the right. Every eye is on Spurgeon and only those under or above him are not looking directly at him. This is a certainly a function of the limitations of the images with which the creator was working. Across the top of the print is the title, "We Preach Christ Crucified" and along the bottom, "The Lord gave the word: great was company of those that published it." After receiving this incredible gift, Spurgeon chose to hang the original in his home and distribute copies to assist with the fundraising.

It is impossible for us to know exactly what was going on in the mind of Spurgeon when he received the print. He did not create it. He cherished it and kept it on the wall at his home. Did it seem an act of hubris to distribute such a print? Did he have any humility at all? Why would such a young man even display it publicly? These questions must have been on the mind of some as Charles Spurgeon began to sell reproductions of the print. It was on the mind of one his memorial biographers when he wrote the following in 1892:

In the hall at 'Westwood' there hangs a picture of considerable size, containing the portraits of one hundred and ninety-two men of mark, almost exclusively divines of the Protestant Church, in the centre of which is a larger portrait, that of Mr. Spurgeon, when about twenty-four or twenty-five and when hardly the promise of a beard adorned his face. The portraits were pieced together in a very neat and ingenious manner by the Rev. Joseph Mountford, then of Sevenoaks, and afterwards of Leighton Buzzard, where he died in 1867, the funeral being conducted and the funeral sermon preached by the present writer, one of his closest and firmest friends. Mr. Mountford presented the picture to Mr. Spurgeon, and it was photographed and sold for the benefit of the Metropolitan Tabernacle Fund, when the building was in

¹⁰⁵ Daniel A. Novak, "A Literature of its Own: Time, Space and Narrative Mediations in Victorian Photography," in *Media, Technology, and Literature in the Nineteenth Century: Image, Sound, Touch*, ed. Colligan, Colette and Margaret Linley. (Farnham, Surrey, England: Routledge, 2011), 73, 76. (ebook)

the course of erection. In the picture Mr. Spurgeon stands in the attitude in which he was commonly represented at that time, the right arm raised, and the fore-finger of the right hand pointing upwards. *It might have seemed to some too great an honour conferred on the young pastor to place him so conspicuously among the learned doctors and great divines of the Puritan and later times*; but his subsequent career has fully justified the honour then conferred upon him. He has eclipsed in popularity and usefulness the greatest of them all.¹⁰⁶

One of the reasons that Spurgeon accepted and allowed the gift to be reproduced was because it revealed him to be in the company of the Puritans. At every turn, he sought to strengthen his connection to that almost mythical group of men. Preachers, pastors, martyrs and soldiers for Christ, they were a noble throng, and Spurgeon was always pleased to place himself or to see others place him in their company.



Fig. 2.7. C. H. Spurgeon in the pulpit at New Park Street Chapel¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Shindler, *From the Usher's Desk to the Tabernacle Pulpit*, xi-xii. (Italics mine.)

¹⁰⁷ Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 121.

Many also realized that Spurgeon's popularity and growing influence would be no match for his critics, and so he was sketched as a mighty Gulliver temporarily restricted by the Lilliputians.



Fig. 2.8. Spurgeon among the Lilliputians¹⁰⁸

Spurgeon always had a special love and appreciation for John Bunyan and *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Among all his favorite Puritan authors, Bunyan occupied a special place. In a lecture given by Lewis Fry, M. P., a reporter noted the following connection between Spurgeon and Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*,

He had seen a statement in one of the daily papers that the book which at the present moment stood next to it [*The Pilgrim's Progress*] in popular esteem was the book written by a well-known popular man—Charles Spurgeon—called “John Ploughman's Talk;” and he was inclined to think that Mr. Spurgeon inherited some

¹⁰⁸ Ross, *A Pictorial Biography*, 47.

of the qualities of John Bunyan. He represented certainly some of his religious opinion, and that broad, good sense, pithy humour, and wonderful command of vigorous terse English which distinguished Bunyan.¹⁰⁹

Eleven years later, Spurgeon's publisher, Joseph Passmore, when asked what had been Spurgeon's most popular book, answered, "'John Ploughman's Talk.' We have sold considerably more than three hundred and seventy thousand copies of it. And what is more, the demand still exists. An edition of ten thousand copies is exhausted every twelve months."¹¹⁰ Such a connection, in language, imagery, and popularity, seemed inevitable, since Spurgeon once boasted that he had read *The Pilgrim's Progress* more than one hundred times over the course of his life.

His love for the Puritans and for Bunyan in particular even manifested itself during the early days of his courtship to Susannah Thompson. When Spurgeon wanted to introduce himself to her, he initiated the contact by sending her a copy of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Susannah described what was to be the beginning of an almost forty-year relationship:

He [Mr. William Olney] may have told the new Pastor about me,--I cannot say;--but, one day, I was greatly surprised to receive from Mr. Spurgeon an illustrated copy of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, in which he had written the inscription which is reproduced in *facsimile*, "Miss Thompson with desires for her progress in the blessed pilgrimage from C. H. Spurgeon. Ap. 20, 1854." I do not think my beloved had, at that time, any other thought concerning me than to help a struggling soul Heavenward; but I was greatly impressed by his concern for me, and the book became very precious as well as helpful.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Lewis Fry, "On John Bunyan and His Work," *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, November 9, 1881. Another article described Spurgeon, "The bluff and hearty manner of Mr. Spurgeon is one of his chief attractions... He is no warbler of poetic prose. His diction has the naturalness, the purity, the sinewy strength, and idiomatic beauty of Bunyan and Defoe." *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, November 5, 1881.

¹¹⁰ *The Pall Mall Gazette*, February 2, 1892.

¹¹¹ Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 6-7.

Having received a copy of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and being favorably disposed to meet with him (their trysting place was The Crystal Palace), Spurgeon took their relationship to the next level. Did he propose? Eventually, yes, but first, he presented to her a volume written by the Puritan Thomas Brooks (1608-1680). He asked her to read through it and make notes on those sayings she found quaint, memorable, or especially edifying. She did that, and he added to her selections. Soon thereafter was published Spurgeon's first work, *Smooth Stones Taken from Ancient Brooks*.¹¹² This was a man who allowed the Puritans to participate in even the most intimate of his relationships.¹¹³

After Charles and Susannah had wed, there were times that she would read to him. They would pass a quiet evening together generally after Sunday services. If the day's preaching went well, she might read to him from some poet. If Spurgeon felt that he had failed the Lord during the preaching moment, then he would have his wife read from the Puritans. She described one such scene:

Another Sabbath night, and the scene is somewhat changed in character. The dear Pastor is not only weary, but sorely depressed in spirit. "Oh, darling!" he says, "I fear I have not been as faithful in my preaching to-day as I should have been; I have not been as much in earnest after poor souls as God would have me be. O Lord, pardon Thy servant!" "Go, dear," he continues, "to the study, and fetch down Baxter's *Reformed Pastor*, and read some of it to me; perhaps that will quicken my sluggish heart." I read page after page of such solemn pleadings, interrupted now and again by his stifled heart-sobs, till my voice fails from emotion and sympathy, my eyes grow dim, and my tears mingle with his as we weep together, --he, from the smitings of a very tender conscience towards God, and I, simply and only because I love him, and want to share his grief.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Charles Spurgeon, *Smooth Stones Taken from Ancient Brooks* (New York: Sheldon & Company, 1860 [1855]).

¹¹³ See also Lamkin, *The Spurgeon Library*, 39-40.

¹¹⁴ Spurgeon, *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon*, vol. 2, 186.

The passages Susannah read were chosen by Charles and designed more to convict than comfort: “I beseech you, brethren, let this thought awaken the negligent! You that draw back from painful, displeasing, suffering duties, and will put off men’s souls with ineffectual formalities; do you think this is an honourable usage of Christ’s Spouse?”¹¹⁵ Spurgeon lamented his perceived failure of Christ’s spouse with his own spouse, and his catharsis was facilitated by Richard Baxter’s text.

Another way that Spurgeon could identify with the Puritans was by tracing his own ancestors to their era. He had done something like that with the village of Stambourne. This village had a direct connection to the seventeenth-century Puritans and was a “venerable shrine” to their ideals. Additionally, his grandfather had been pastor of the Independent Church there for decades (when James Spurgeon died in 1864, he had been the pastor there for over fifty years). Spurgeon was preaching the same puritanical gospel that his grandfather was preaching, with the exception of believer’s baptism. One of his fondest memories was when he was approached by someone who had appreciated his grandfather’s ministry and would any day “run the shoes off his feet to go hear a Spurgeon.” For Spurgeon, Stambourne and the old manse were significant, but the ministry of his grandfather outstripped them both, “Buildings may perish, and new shrines may succeed them; but no earthly house will accommodate a sounder and more useful ministry than that of my grandfather.”¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Spurgeon, *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon*, vol. 2, 186.

¹¹⁶ Spurgeon and Beddow, *Memories of Stambourne*, 66.

However, Spurgeon was not content to stop at two generations. He sought a connection to the golden age of nonconformity and found a tenuous one just a few generations beyond his grandfather:

One namesake, and perhaps an ancestor, Job Spurgeon, of Dedham, had to suffer both in purse and in person, ‘for the testimony of a good conscience,’ as the Quaker record puts it. In 1677, a distress was levied upon him, and some of his goods were seized, because he had committed the atrocious *crime* of attending a Nonconformist meeting at Dedham! Six years later, for a similar *offence*, he and three other godly men ‘were required to give sureties for their good behaviour, which refusing to do, they were re-committed to prison, where three of them lay upon straw about fifteen weeks in the midst of a winter remarkable for extremity of cold; but the fourth, Job Spurgeon, being so weak that he was unable to lie down, sat up in a chair the most part of that time.’ In my seasons of suffering, I have often pictured to myself this modern Job in Chelmsford gaol, and thanked God that I bore the same name as this persecuted Spurgeon of two hundred years ago. So far as I can make out the genealogy, it appears to me that this Essex Quaker was my great-grandfather’s grandfather, and I sometimes feel the shadow of his broad brim come over my spirit.¹¹⁷

In Job Spurgeon, he had found another possible connection to his golden age. This recollection is found in his autobiography, but as early as 1877, fifteen years before his death, an early biographer was trumpeting the connection,

The same spirit of religious intolerance which sent the immortal Bunyan to Bedford Jail for preaching the gospel, also sent, in 1677, Job Spurgeon to Chelmsford Jail, where, for conscience sake, he lay on a pallet of straw for fifteen weeks, in extremely severe winter weather, without any fire. Out of such men God makes heroes.”¹¹⁸

The autobiographical text stresses the tentative genealogical connection, while Stevenson’s text assumes it. Furthermore, the biographer references Bunyan and includes the phrase

¹¹⁷ Spurgeon, *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon*, vol. 1, 8. (Italics his.)

¹¹⁸ George J. Stevenson, *The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon His Life and Work to His Forty-Third Birthday* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1877), 6. This work is found in the special collections room at the Miller Nichols Library at University of Missouri Kansas City.

“Out of such men God makes heroes.” The phrase is ambiguous, and the reader is left pondering if the category of “hero,” which certainly includes Bunyan and Job Spurgeon, might not also include Charles Spurgeon? It is also significant that Charles Spurgeon placed Job Spurgeon in a seated posture of suffering and feels a special bond with him in his own “seasons of suffering.” Charles Spurgeon would pass through times of real pain and weakness due to gout. While he did not mention the disease in this passage specifically, most readers of the *Autobiography* would have known that about him. This story also illustrates the way that some biographers moved from possibilities to certainties.¹¹⁹ Richard Day recounted the same story about Job Spurgeon in his biography published on the centennial of Spurgeon’s birth (1934) and noted, “Undoubtedly we have here [in Job Spurgeon’s weakness and inability to lie down] a partial explanation of the terrible weakness that badgered Spurgeon’s life, rheumatic gout, and brought him to an untimely end at fifty-seven.”¹²⁰ Day assumed the genealogical connection between the Spurgeons and is so confident of its significance that he titled his work *The Shadow of the Broad Brim*.

Spurgeon died on January 31, 1892 in Mentone, France. Once his body arrived in London, there began a series of memorial services in his honor. The whole nation was in mourning. Kenneth D. Brown noted:

The death of Charles Haddon Spurgeon in 1892 was an event of national impact. Even secular newspapers appeared with black-edged columns and filled their pages with reminiscences of the dead Baptist leader, prompting the editor of the *Christian World* to claim that ‘the history of England during the past week has been mainly the story of Mr. Spurgeon’s influence...’ (11

¹¹⁹ W. Miller Higgs, *The Spurgeon Family being an Account of the Descent and Family of Charles Haddon Spurgeon with Notes on the Family in General, Particularly the Essex Branch* (London: Elliot Stock, 1906). The author of this text attempted to trace the Spurgeon family back to 1465 and found no evidence for Job Spurgeon.

¹²⁰ Day, *The Shadow of the Broad Brim*, 21.

Feb. 1892). Because Spurgeon and men of similar eminence had appeared to be virtually permanent fixtures (Spurgeon sustained a powerful ministry for over forty years), the sense of loss within the nonconformist community in Britain was enormous.¹²¹

At one of the many memorial services, the meeting of the Memorial Service for Ministers and Students of all Denominations, the Rev. Herber Evans (chairman of the Congregational Union) spoke about Spurgeon and his lineage: “I have heard it said too often to please me, of late, that Mr. Spurgeon had no great advantages of birth and training. I do not believe that. Was it not a great advantage to be born of godly, prayerful parents? Was it not a great advantage to be able to trace his pedigree back for two hundred years to a martyr for Christ in Job Spurgeon, and to a long and unbroken line of preachers who preached because they believed in the gospel? From such a line came this grandest preacher of the age, who preached the word of God without a single hesitation, and who preached all of it.”¹²² Mr. Evans participated in the construction of the “Job Spurgeon” narrative by accepting and re-telling the story. He stressed his “martyrdom.” He placed Charles Spurgeon firmly in a “long and unbroken line of preachers” and crowned him not only grandest of the line but grandest of the age. High praise that was, and to a certain degree expected in a eulogy, but, nevertheless, revealing in the legend that it accepted and helped to legitimize.

Spurgeon admired and idealized the Puritans and through a variety of means associated himself with them. He sought connections to them through his own family

¹²¹ Kenneth D. Brown, *A Social History of the Nonconformist Ministry in England and Wales 1800-1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 124.

¹²² R. Shindler, *From the Pulpit to the Palm-Branch: A Memorial of C. H. Spurgeon* (London: Passmore and Alabaster Publ., 1892), 137.

history and geography. Two more examples of Spurgeon connecting his own path of ministry to the Puritans might be demonstrated in his first pastorate at Waterbeach and also in the choice of the location for the Metropolitan Tabernacle.

His two years at Waterbeach were spent in a region that had been influenced by Rowland Hill (1744-1833). Hill has been noted already as connected to Spurgeon through Richard Knill's prophecy.

The village [Waterbeach] should not be unknown to fame, for the records of the Baptist Church prove that Rowland Hill first exercised in Waterbeach his gifts as a minister of Jesus, after riding over from Cambridge by stealth between the hours of College duty. The house still stands in which he is said to have commenced his labours as a preacher. Long before that time, the sainted Holcroft, the apostle of Cambridgeshire, ejected by the Act of Uniformity from his living at Bassingbourne, had founded a church in this village.¹²³

Years later, when Spurgeon was getting ready to choose a site for the erection of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, he linked the location to England's Puritan past. In answering the question, where would the Tabernacle be built? Lewis Drummond wrote, "The answer...found its resolution in the Puritan heritage of Spurgeon. In Newington Butts, south London, some Puritan preachers had suffered martyrdom. An ancient record shows that a number of early dissenting Puritans, holding something like Baptist doctrine, were burned at 'the Butts at Newington.' That deeply appealed to Spurgeon's Puritan mindset."¹²⁴

It has always been a subject of satisfaction to me that Newington Butts was the site selected for the erection of the Tabernacle. It appears that, in the old days of persecution, some Baptists were burnt "at the Butts at Newington,"—probably on or near the very spot where thousands have been brought to the Lord, and have confessed their faith in the identical way which cost their predecessors their lives. If this is not actually an instance in which "the blood

¹²³ Spurgeon, *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon*, vol. 1, 293.

¹²⁴ Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 336-7.

of the martyrs” has proved to be “the seed of the Church,” it is certainly a most interesting and pleasing coincidence. Our district seems to have furnished other martyrs, for in a record, dated 1546, we read: -- “Three men were condemned as Anabaptists and brente [burned] in the highway beyond Southwark towards Newington.” Though that description is not very explicit, the region referred to could not have been very far from the place where, these many years, there has been gathered a great congregation of those believers whom some people still erroneously persist in calling “Anabaptists”, though we most strenuously hold to “one Lord, one faith, one baptism.”¹²⁵

Spurgeon sought to present a puritanical gospel or his interpretation of that gospel.

When he encountered suffering, whether it was due to physical or spiritual causes, he imagined his own connection to them through that suffering. Spurgeon encouraged others who cast him in a role of a Puritan leader and saw himself as the “last of the Puritans.” He viewed their era as a time of tremendous vitality and purity. The following exhortation is from a sermon entitled, “A Cure for Unsavoury Meats: Or, Salt for the White of an Egg,” preached on Thursday evening, July 5, 1883, on Job 6:6: “Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?”

Look at the Puritanic age. To this day it is the stumbling-block of infidelity. In these times it is very common to laugh at the Puritans, and to say that their faith is outworn, and that we have got beyond their teaching; and yet the very same men who say this cannot read Carlyle’s writings without marveling at Oliver Cromwell, and the great men who trooped around him. Do they never say to themselves, Upon what meat did these men feed that they have grown so great? They cannot turn to the lives of the Puritans without reading how they saturated all England with godliness, till as you passed down Cheapside in the morning you would have noticed that there was scarcely a single house in which the blinds were not drawn down because the inhabitants were at family prayer. The whole land felt the force of truth and righteousness through these men-these poor, benighted, foolish Puritans, whom our boys fresh from college call by in names. In their contests for truth the Puritans were as mighty as Cromwell’s Ironsides in the days of battle, when they drove the foe before them like chaff before the wind. Then there followed an age of driveling, in which our Nonconformity existed, but gradually dwindled

¹²⁵ Spurgeon, *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon*, vol. 2, 331.

down, first into Arminianism, and then into Unitarianism, until it almost ceased to be.¹²⁶

The revitalization of England depended very much on a revival of Puritan teaching. The current long period of decline may be traced back to the beginnings of a departure from their “meat.” Spurgeon’s lament is that the Puritans are no longer held in high esteem. They are derided. They have fallen out of fashion. Theirs is now a faith that is outworn. But Spurgeon’s appeal is to consider the characteristics of their age. In the days of the Puritans, the leaders were heroes, and even the men who served at their side were great. They were a mighty army for truth and righteousness. Their teaching was so powerful and pervasive that every family was influenced to the good. But, alas, according to Spurgeon, the Puritan age had passed and a new anemic age had replaced it.

How did this happen? To explore this question fully is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, Spurgeon did intimate that it was the material success of the Puritans that helped to lead their descendants astray.¹²⁷ He argued that the holy line of Nonconformity had been diluted. And that this dilution is an example of the parents sinning against the children by not instructing them rightly and by being wooed by material success. From a sermon preached on November 8, 1868, entitled, “Do Not Sin Against The Child,” Genesis 42:22, Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington:

The parents grew rich, and though they were still among us, they were not of us; pride separated them in spirit and their sons and daughters were introduced into other society than could be found amongst the humbler followers of Jesus-to such fashionable company they became united; and now the descendants of Dissenters are amongst the fiercest revilers of our holy

¹²⁶ Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 29, 504.

¹²⁷ Compare with the complaints of second generation New England Puritans regarding the dangers of material success to the spirituality of the early colonies.

faith. Better far were it for us to see our children carried to their graves as infants, to be mourned over with the resignation which a sure hope begetteth, than that they should live to forsake the Lord God of their fathers, and to pull down what their fathers built up. That the sons of the Puritans should degenerate into Cavaliers, that the sturdy Protestant family should be led away by Puseyism, that the godly sire should be followed by a reckless son, is most deplorable, but so has it been in all generations, and so will it be still while the parents sin against the child.¹²⁸

The faith of their nonconformist fathers had been watered down due to pride, material success, and lack of instruction. The generations since that age had been marked by decline and degeneration. New books, new ideas, and modern theology would lead to the conditions that later in his ministry, he would categorize as “The Downgrade Controversy.”¹²⁹ But in 1868, Spurgeon was confined to lamenting the general state of nonconformity and not yet the decline of Baptist theology.

The chapter thus far has tried to present a basic outline of his life and to demonstrate the great affinity that Spurgeon felt for the Puritans. He deeply admired their character. He read a wide range of their works, and by the time of his death, had amassed a Puritan and general theological library of more than ten thousand volumes. He was profoundly influenced by John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. He loved their books and those works that he published (e.g., *The Treasury of David* [a commentary on the Psalms]) would be peppered with quotes and allusions to the Puritans. For Spurgeon, a person could do no

¹²⁸ Charles Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 14, 784. For a similar complaint regarding the rise of wealth within Nonconformity, see the comments of the Congregationalist pastor, Reverend R. Wardlaw Thompson, in *Victorian Nonconformity: Documents of Modern History*, gen. eds, A. G. Dickens and Alun Davies, eds. John Briggs and Ian Sellers (New York: St. Martin’s, 1974), 108-9. The comments fall under the rubric, “Other Solvents of the Puritan Spirit.” Additionally, the editors quote Spurgeon’s work twice and both quotations fall under the title, “Affirmation of the Old Virtues.”

¹²⁹ Iain Murray captured the nexus between this controversy, gout and Spurgeon’s propensity to depression when he wrote: “Spurgeon mistook an unwillingness to follow his leadership as a general defection of Baptists from Christianity, and this, coupled with his gout and rheumatism, produced his gloomy spirit!” *The Forgotten Spurgeon* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1978 [1966]), 14.

better than to follow their teachings. Even the nation would prosper if the “grand old divinity” was restored. But were there limits to the influence and power of the Puritans? And if so, what authority superseded them?

Framing Puritan Authority and Conclusion

As one would expect of a Victorian Evangelical, Spurgeon’s chief source of authority was the Bible. It was an infallible guide for him and the scales by which all other works were to be judged. He was immersed in the language of the Bible and extremely well versed in its metaphors and images. He was particularly adept at humorous word plays, puns, and subtle uses of the text that delighted his Victorian audiences, who were also deeply rooted in the Bible. For Spurgeon, the authority of the Puritans was only just superseded by the authority of the Bible, and the complexity of this relationship is illustrated in the examination of two key passages from his autobiography.

The first passage has already been quoted in full—”The Boy among the Books.” This is a text that introduced the reader to Spurgeon’s first contact with the books of the Puritans. The books themselves are described by Spurgeon in some detail. One of the key Puritan authors, John Bunyan, is mentioned by name. The books were a gold mine to him. They were his passage to happiness. They are described as “precious” to him. He longed for their authors to be restored to their rightful place and for “Heaven’s light” to beam again on the old truth. The focus of the passage is not on the Scripture and yet, the Bible’s higher authority is present.

Scriptural authority is present in the title given to the Puritans. They are the “great masters of Scriptural theology.” They derive their own authority and power from their knowledge of the Bible. Spurgeon was also careful to frame the entire experience with a

quotation from the book of Isaiah: “I will give thee the treasures of darkness” (45:3).

Spurgeon cast the discovery of the books within the realm of God’s promise and providence. And although he cited only one verse, it is the key to the entire text. The verse operates on a number of different levels. First, it communicated to the reader that the whole episode was ordained by God and that the subsequent assertions could be trusted. In other words, it legitimated Spurgeon’s personal narrative. It also assigned a preferred status to the Puritan books themselves, one that was just below the Scripture.

Spurgeon wrote about this experience many years after it occurred. It is highly likely that the placement of this verse in the narrative is a later addition. That is to say, nowhere in the narrative does he say that this verse came into his head as he opened the door to that darkened room. Rather, Spurgeon cited it to assure the reader of the unique category that these books occupied. The text also operates on another very subtle level. In general, Puritan commentators would have understood these verses to be spoken by God through the prophet Isaiah to Cyrus. Matthew Henry’s commentary would be representative:

Cyrus is called God’s anointed; he was designed and qualified for his great service by the counsel of God. The gates of Babylon which led to the river, were left open the night that Cyrus marched his army into the empty channel. The Lord went before him, giving entrance to the cities he besieged. He gave him also treasures, which had been hidden in secret places. The true God was to Cyrus an unknown God; yet God foreknew him; he called him by his name. The exact fulfilment of this must have shown Cyrus that Jehovah was the only true God, and that it was for the sake of Israel that he was prospered. In all the changes of states and kingdoms, God works out the good of his church.¹³⁰

Spurgeon would have interpreted these verses in much the same way as Matthew Henry.

The true God was unknown to Cyrus at this time, but the promise was that he would

¹³⁰ *Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1977), 450.

conquer. This gift to Cyrus would be for the prospering of Israel. Likewise, Spurgeon has cast himself as a type of Cyrus who would be given these treasures and allowed to conquer for the good of the church. This first example demonstrated the complexity of the relationship between the Scripture and the Puritan texts with one verse providing the interpretive framework for the entire experience.

The second example brings into focus the primary role that the preached Word played in Spurgeon's salvation experience. However, Spurgeon's retelling of the event is filled with overt references to the Puritans, who virtually bookend the story. Spurgeon's conversion narrative was deeply shaped by the Puritans and is also employed by him to assert his continuity with them. In his autobiography, he described the role his mother played in preparing him for this experience. One of the central features of the larger narrative is his mother's use of Puritan texts to prepare the foundation for his conversion.

Yet I cannot tell how much I owe to the solemn words of my good mother. It was the custom, on Sunday evenings, while we were yet little children, for her to stay at home with us, and then we sat round the table, and read verse by verse, and she explained the Scripture to us. After that was done, then came the time of pleading; there was a little piece of Alleine's *Alarm*, or of Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted*, and this was read with pointed observations made to each of us...and the question was asked, how long it would be before we would think about our state, how long before we would seek the Lord.¹³¹

The impact of these evenings was not without effect, for later Spurgeon would come under conviction: "I remember, when I used to awake in the morning, the first thing I took up was Alleine's *Alarm*, or Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted*. Oh, those books, those books! I read

¹³¹ Spurgeon, *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon*, vol. 1, 68.

and devoured them when under a sense of guilt. For five years, as a child, there was nothing before my eyes but my guilt.”¹³²

To return to the conversion narrative proper, Spurgeon was living in Colchester with his parents at the time. He was fifteen and while attempting to go to his regular place of worship was forced to attend a different church, a Primitive Methodist Chapel due to a snowstorm.¹³³ The following was recorded in his autobiography under the title, “The Great Change—Conversion:”

Personally, I have to bless God for many good books; I thank Him for Dr. Doddridge’s *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*; for Baxter’s *Call to the Unconverted*; for Alleine’s *Alarm to Sinners*; and for James’s *Anxious Enquirer*; but my gratitude most of all is due to God, not for books, but for the preached Word,--and that too addressed to me by a poor, uneducated man, a man who had never received any training for the ministry, and will probably will be heard of this in life, a man engaged in business, no doubt of a humble kind, during the week, but who had just enough of grace to say on the Sabbath, “Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” The books were good, but the man was better. The revealed Word awakened me; but it was the preached Word that saved me; and I must ever attach peculiar value to the *hearing of the truth*, for by it I received the joy and peace in which my soul delights.¹³⁴

The narrative opens with Spurgeon acknowledging his indebtedness to the Puritans. He listed many of the solid books that blessed him in the past. But he privileged the preached Word as that which saved him. As powerful as those books were, it is simply God’s Word spoken through an uneducated man that brought relief to a troubled fifteen-year-old. The narrative continued:

¹³² Spurgeon, *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon*, vol. 1, 80.

¹³³ For some discussion of possible discrepancies in the date and preacher of record for Spurgeon’s conversion narrative, see T. Francis Glasson. He noted in regard to an account found in Bacon’s *Spurgeon: Heir of the Puritans*, “It should be noted that a number of details in this account need drastic emendation.” “Spurgeon’s Conversion.” *The Expository Times* 79, no. 11 (August 1968): 342.

¹³⁴ Spurgeon, *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon*, vol. 1, 104-5.

I sometimes think I might have been in darkness and despair until now had it not been for the goodness of God in sending a snowstorm, one Sunday morning, while I was going to a certain place of worship. When I could go no further, I turned down a side street, and came to a little Primitive Methodist Chapel. In that chapel there may have been a dozen or fifteen people. I had heard of the Primitive Methodists, how they sang so loudly that they made people's heads ache; but that did not matter to me. I wanted to know how I might be saved, and if they could tell me that, I did not care how much they made my head ache. The minister did not come that morning; he was snowed up, I suppose. At last, a very thin-looking man, a shoemaker, or tailor, or something of that sort, went up into the pulpit to preach. Now, it is well that preachers should be instructed; but this man was really stupid. He was obliged to stick to his text, for the simple reason that he had little else to say. The text was,-- "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." He did not even pronounce the words rightly, but that did not matter. There was I thought, a glimpse of hope for me in that text. The preacher began thus:--"My dear friends, this is a very simple text indeed. It says, 'Look.' Now lookin' don't take a great deal of pains. It ain't liftin' your foot or your finger; it is just, 'Look.' Well, a man needn't go to College to learn to look. You may be the biggest fool, and yet you can look. Anyone can look; even a child can look. But then the text says, 'Look unto *Me*.' Ay!" said he, in broad Essex, "many on ye are lookin' to yourselves, but it's no use lookin' there. You'll never find any comfort in yourselves. Some look to God the Father. No, look to Him by-and-by. Jesus Christ says, 'Look unto *Me*.' Some of ye say, 'We must wait for the Spirit's workin'.' You have no business with that just now. Look to *Christ*. The text says, 'Look unto *Me*.'"135

The Primitive Methodist preacher then began to address Spurgeon personally. He urged the young man, whom he described as appearing "miserable," to look to Christ himself.

Spurgeon did and recorded the following:

Since that dear hour when my soul cast itself on Jesus, I have found solid joy and peace; but before that, all those supposed gaieties of early youth, all the imagined ease and joy of boyhood, were but vanity and vexation of spirit to me. That happy day, when I found the Saviour, and learned to cling to his dear feet, was a day never to be forgotten by me. An obscure child, unknown, unheard of, I listened to the Word of God; and that precious text led me to the cross of Christ. I can testify that the joy of that day was utterly indescribable...Many days of Christian experience have passed since then, but there has never been one which has had the full exhilaration, the

¹³⁵ Spurgeon, *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon*, vol. 1, 105-6.

sparkling delight which that first day had...I thought I could dance all the way home. I could understand what John Bunyan meant, when he declared he wanted to tell the crows on the ploughed land all about his conversion. He was too full to hold, he felt he must tell somebody.”¹³⁶

Spurgeon’s conversion narrative began with a reference to the Puritans and some of their select evangelistic texts and closed with his identifying with John Bunyan and his conversion experience.

These examples have demonstrated how closely Spurgeon identified with and was informed by Puritan theology. He also identified a return to Puritan theology as a way for England to be restored to greatness and virtue. The next chapter will explore the importance of the body in his theology and ministry.

¹³⁶ Spurgeon, *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon*, vol. 1, 108.

CHAPTER 3

SPURGEON AND THE PRESENTATION OF HIS BODY

The story of Charles Haddon Spurgeon to be presented here is preeminently the story of a body. His was a public body, viewed in its health and vigor in the 1850s and 1860s and observed in its decline in the 1880s and early 1890s. Spurgeon's body was a presented body. He proffered it to the crowds, keeping them at arm's length behind his famous rail, but not covering it with robes nor obscuring it through the use of a pulpit. The architecture of the Metropolitan Tabernacle and the nature of the worship service, particularly its anti-ritualism, ensured that the audience's focus would be on Spurgeon, particularly his voice, which carried to his gathered thousands, and his body, which could be viewed without obstruction.¹

Spurgeon's body was also a diseased body. He experienced debilitating bouts of pain, accompanied, at times, by stints of depression. He suffered with gout and Bright's disease, a disorder of the kidneys. He began his ministry "pale and thin."² He ended it "bloated and bedridden."³ He was known as the "Prince of Preachers," yet William Brian Albert affectionately renamed him the "Prince of Pain."⁴ His decline and discomfort was a

¹ For an examination that the role of architecture played in the Victorian camp-meeting, see Steven D. Cooley, "Manna and the Manual: Sacramental and Instrumental Constructions of the Victorian Methodist Camp Meeting during the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, 6, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 131-59.

² Russell Conwell, *Life of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the World's Greatest Preacher* (New York: Edgewood Publ. Co., 1892), 66.

³ Lewis Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1992), 750.

⁴ William Brian Albert, "When the Wind Blows Cold: The Spirituality of Suffering and Depression in the Life and Ministry of Charles Spurgeon," (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, December 2015). A special "thank you" to Dr. Christian George of the Spurgeon Collection housed at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (Kansas City, MO) for bringing this important work to my attention.

public phenomenon, discussed not only in the magazine he personally edited, *The Sword and the Trowel* (1865-1892), but also in local papers.⁵ His visage and vitality waned before a watching world.⁶ The members of the Metropolitan Tabernacle and Christian friends from other denominations watched him deteriorate before their very eyes. They prayed for him. They encouraged the hiring of an associate pastor, eventually employing his brother James Archer, to ease the ministerial burden. They suggested remedies. They urged him to recuperate in Mentone. They tried to carry on the work of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in his seasonal absences.

This chapter will describe Spurgeon's body and its distinguishing features beginning with his childhood and concluding with his final eleven days when he took to his bed in Mentone, never to rise again. Special consideration will be paid to the manner in which Spurgeon sought to present his body before the audience especially within the spacious confines of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Spurgeon was heavily criticized at the beginning of his ministry by the newspapers. They rejected the coarse language, crude puns, inappropriate humor, self-promotion, and especially the style of his delivery. As his ministry and philanthropic concerns became established and with his enduring popularity, the newspapers began to temper their attacks. By the end of his sojourn on earth, they celebrated him as among London's most eminent men. What fueled Spurgeon's unusual and dramatic style of delivery? How did his theology shape and inform the use of his body during the preaching moment, rather than the theological content of his preaching? This

⁵ See "The Editor's Illness," *The Sword and the Trowel*, November, 1867.

⁶ See Appendix B, Charles Haddon Spurgeon: A Life Through the Photographer's Lens. I have assembled a number of Carte-de-Visite that illustrate the changing physical condition and public image of Spurgeon.

chapter will conclude by focusing on the diseases that held Spurgeon in their painful grip. When did his condition begin to deteriorate? Where did he try to find relief? Which doctors treated him? Did he benefit from any advances in medical technology? Because he was such a public figure, Spurgeon received medical advice from all quarters. What was the nature of this advice, and how did he respond to it?

Description of His Body, Face, and Eyes

Charles Spurgeon has been consistently described from childhood on as a reader and not as someone given to athletic activities. Shindler notes, “As a child, he was a thoughtful boy, commonly fonder of his books than of his play.”⁷ His father was concerned that he did not take any interest in exercise or games. His brother James confessed, “While I was busy here and there meddling with everything a boy could touch, he kept to books and could not be kept away from study.”⁸ He was also a clumsy child. He was not inclined to exercise, only occasionally playing a game of Bowls, mostly because it was a Puritan favorite. Kruppa concluded, “The fact is that Spurgeon was always physically weak.”⁹

At the age of fifteen, while at school in Newmarket, he came into contact with another student, J. D. Everett. Everett was a fellow usher (assistant) and kept a diary. He described Spurgeon:

A clever, pleasant little fellow...small and delicate, with pale but plump face, dark brown eyes and hair, and a bright lively manner, and a never-failing flow of conversation.” In later years, he recalled that young Spurgeon had

⁷ Robert Shindler, *From the Usher's Desk to the Tabernacle Pulpit: The Life and Labours of Pastor C. H. Spurgeon* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1892), 24.

⁸ Lewis Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 96. See Arnold Dallimore, *Spurgeon* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 11-2.

⁹ Patricia Kruppa, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon: A Preacher's Progress* (New York: Garland Publ. Co., 1982), 33.

been “rather deficient in muscle, did not care for cricket or other athletic games, and was timid of meeting cattle on the roads.”¹⁰

Spurgeon’s lack of athleticism has been well attested to, and W. Y. Fullerton offered a reason for it, “His head and chest were larger than average (one phrenologist described his head as “massive”), but he was abnormally short from knee to loin, which made it difficult for him to run.”¹¹

Spurgeon was of average height for the time, reaching 5’6” in adulthood. Spurgeon was frequently described as short in his youth, which has led Kruppa to assume that he was “shorter than 5’6” during his adolescence.”¹² Perhaps Spurgeon experienced a growth spurt during his late teen age years. While the majority of his biographers downplayed his

¹⁰ The remarks are found in J. H. Barnes and C. E. Brown, *Spurgeon: The People’s Preacher* (London, 1892), 14, quoted in Kruppa, 33.

¹¹ W. Y. Fullerton, *C. H. Spurgeon, A Biography* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1920), 185. See also J. C. Carlile, *C. H. Spurgeon, An Interpretive Biography* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1933), 27. I have yet to find the documentation that Spurgeon submitted himself to an examination by a phrenologist. However, see Nicholas Morgan, *Phrenology and How to Use it in Analyzing Character* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1871), in discussing the “median line at the top of the backhead” which, according to its development, indicates the presence of self-esteem. Morgan wrote, “C. H. Spurgeon is another example of the correspondence between a large development and manifestation of Self-Esteem.” (263) A year after the publication of his book, Morgan visited the Metropolitan Tabernacle. From that visit, comes Nicholas Morgan, *Phrenological Characteristics of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon and the Secret of His Success as a Preacher* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1872). In this work, he noted that Spurgeon’s secret was in the “natural adaptation of his mental capacities and tastes to a very large majority of the people.” This work was also reported on and reviewed in *The Gospel Magazine and Theological Review Series* 5, 3, no. 1 (July 1874): 223. See also, W. Pugin Thornton, *Heads and What They Tell Us: Phrenological Recollections* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston & Company, 1892). Regarding the “tilting up” portion of the head that indicates the presence of Self-esteem, “It certainly is an objectionable quality except to the owner, whom it perhaps helps in his business or profession, making his...customers believe that he is a better man than he is.” The presence of the bump is seen in a “gait characteristic of presumed superiority.” (55-56) I could not find a direct link from Spurgeon’s “bump of Self-esteem” to his confident strutting during the sermon in Thornton’s text. For an internet resource and link aggregator, see: <http://www.historyofphrenology.org.uk/overview.htm>, accessed February 25, 2017.

¹² Kruppa, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 33. Note that many pedestrian trainers viewed the ideal athlete as being “long in their thighs” and in height, “from five feet seven to five feet ten.” Dave Day and Samantha-Jayne Oldfield, “Delineating Professional and Amateur Athletic Bodies in Victorian England,” *Sport in History* 35 (2015): 33. Spurgeon did not meet either of these qualifications.

physical prowess, one attribute that surfaced was his “staying power.”¹³ Later in life, he had the ability to endure the physically demanding schedule of pastoring the New Park Street Church. His work was greater than most because he engaged in preaching tours throughout Scotland. He was always in demand for sermons and lectures in various parts of England. And while he never traveled to the United States, he made himself available to help other pastors and associations by speaking at their special anniversaries and other functions. During the period that the Metropolitan Tabernacle was being planned and built, he also traveled extensively, preaching and fundraising so that the project could be completed free of debt.

Spurgeon’s biographers and early newspaper articles went to great lengths to describe, while sometimes contradicting each other, the face, eyes, and body of Spurgeon. J. D. Everett described Spurgeon’s face as “plump.”¹⁴ George John Stevenson, a biographer writing before the construction of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, could not decide how to describe Spurgeon’s face, “Mr. Spurgeon is a little below the common stature, with a person that inclines to the thick and plump. The color of his eyes is black, that of his hair dark chestnut, and his complexion is bloodless; his face is a medium between the circle and the square, and approaches either according to the point from which it is viewed. It is rather

¹³ There is no question that the amount of walking Spurgeon did during his early ministry (Lay Preacher’s Association) increased his strength and endurance. For an interesting table that computed that distances from the Cambridge town centre to the villages where Spurgeon preached, see Christian George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon: His Earliest Outlines and Sermons Between 1851 and 1854*, vol. 1 (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 201), 37.

¹⁴ There were many references to his eyes in the early accounts but I did not come across any that referenced his ears until I discovered the following article entitled “A Chapter on Ears.” Regarding Spurgeon’s ear, the author writes, “This prominence of the lower anti-helix is indeed the chief characteristic of Mr. Spurgeon’s ear; in other respects, a strong, normal specimen.” George Newnes, ed. *The Strand Magazine: An Illustrated Monthly*, vol. 6 (London: Burleigh Street, Strand, 1893), 526. See Appendix B, Figure B53.

sleek and inexpressive.”¹⁵ Russell Conwell described Spurgeon as “pale and thin.” One of his most thorough biographers, G. Holden Pike described Spurgeon as “round-faced.”¹⁶ An early newspaper article noted, “the inquiring visitor sees a short square-built man enter, with a round pallid looking face.”¹⁷ Some of his early critics reported unfavorably on Spurgeon’s countenance, “His face is not coarse, but there is little refinement in it; it is a square face; his forehead is square; we are wishing, albeit we are no phrenologist, that it had evinced more benevolence of character.”¹⁸ In 1857 a female hearer described the then-twenty-three-year-old as having a “square forehead and magnificent dark eyes.”¹⁹ Another reporter’s account suggested “piercing eyes” and “restless eyes,” “A short, squarely-built man, with piercing eyes, with thick black hair parted down the middle, with a sallow countenance only redeemed from heaviness by the restlessness of the eyes.”²⁰

Spurgeon’s eyes were apparently important to biographers, newspaper reporters, and the general public. They revealed a native intelligence or perhaps, the scheming of a charlatan. One writer called them “expressive dark eyes,”²¹ another suggested his was “an

¹⁵ George John Stevenson, *Sketch of the Life and Ministry of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon* (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1859), 92-3.

¹⁶ Pike, *The Life and Work of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, vol. 1 (Avon, The Bath Press, 1991), 20.

¹⁷ “Mr. Spurgeon and His Creed,” *The Era*, November 16, 1856.

¹⁸ *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, April 11, 1857. The idea of reading a person’s character from the shape of their head (phrenology) or the study of the face or a composition of faces to create an ideal was at the center of an article entitled, “Composite Portraits of Men of Genius,” *The Strand Magazine: an Illustrated Monthly* 30 (December 1905): 679-684. By means of overlaying photographic negatives, they were able to create the “ideal” statesman, artist, actor, doctor, lawyer or divine. Of course, Spurgeon’s face made up one of those that contributed to the ideal divine.

¹⁹ David W. Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Downer’s Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2005), 41.

²⁰ *The Daily News*, September 9, 1856.

²¹ “Mr. Spurgeon and His Creed,” *The Era*, November 16, 1856.

expressionless eye.”²² The Rev. Joseph Parker noted that his face was “brightened by eyes overflowing with humor.”²³ Sometimes his eyes were linked to famous religious revivalists. When preaching in Wales, it was noted, “a competent dame hearer thought that he might have taken better with the people if, by having one eye knocked out, he could have been made more to resemble a Christmas Evans.”²⁴ Lewis Drummond, when describing his appearance, noted certain peculiar traits of Spurgeon’s eyes: “In build, he had to stand as tall as possible to measure five foot six inches. His teeth protruded and were slightly crossed. His eyes did not quite match either.”²⁵

The unusual eyes of Spurgeon linked him to another famous English revivalist, the early Methodist itinerant, George Whitefield. Whitefield’s eyes did not match either, being slightly crossed. Whitefield’s condition earned him the nickname “Dr. Squintum.”²⁶ The connection of Spurgeon to the revivalist Whitefield was a source of great encouragement to

²² *The Essex Standard*, April 18, 1855.

²³ Fullerton, *C. H. Spurgeon, A Biography*, 158.

²⁴ “Spurgeon as a Friend of the People,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, January 31, 1897.

²⁵ Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 195. See also Kruppa, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 107. See Appendix B: Figure B1 to see an example of his slightly protruding teeth.

²⁶ Alfred O. Aldridge mentioned an attack on Whitefield that appeared in 1769. “A similar scurrilous attack on Whitefield appeared in 1769, in *The Town and Country Magazine*... It bore the title ‘Dr. Squintum and Parrawankaw,’ lampooning Whitefield under the appellation of Dr. Squintum. He had earlier been referred to as Dr. Squintum by Samuel Foote in his play “*The Minor*” (1760), probably because of a pronounced squint in his eyes which Whitefield had acquired during childhood. There is no mention of Georgia in “*The Minor*,” however, and the main plot has very little connection with either Whitefield or Methodism. Squintum does not appear on the stage, although he is several times mentioned by a despicable bawd, Mrs. Cole, as the outstanding exhorter of repentance and the new-birth. It is quite probable that Foote added the ridicule of Methodism as a means of attracting attention to his play, after it had been entirely finished in another form. “George Whitefield’s Georgia Controversies,” *The Journal of Southern History* 9, no. 1 (February 1943): 376. A satirical cartoon lampooning Whitefield as “Dr. Squintum” (1763) may be viewed at: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/ppmsc.00263/>, accessed February 25, 2017. Spurgeon was also satirized and lampooned by the press (see Appendix C).

Spurgeon, although he preferred to be associated with him because of his dynamic gospel preaching rather than by any unusual facial similarities.

In conclusion, Spurgeon's body was, more or less, a normal male body. He had no deformities. He was not missing any limbs. He was not exceptionally tall or short. When he came to the attention of London, he was not overweight, nor demonstratively unhealthy. In the words of biographer John Brown, "Then, too, so far as the man himself was concerned, there was nothing about his personal appearance to account for his success. His face, it is true, could light up wonderfully when he was fairly under weigh [sic]."²⁷

Brown dropped the clue as to what drove the Spurgeon phenomenon. He brought a level of performance to sermon delivery that had not been seen for a generation. David C. Bebbington described his unique sermon delivery: "He developed his own style of vivid declamation, homely and pungent, yet strongly doctrinal and probingly experiential."²⁸ It was Spurgeon's dramatic qualities combined with his mastery of "old fashioned texts" that turned the heads of his hearers and brought the crowds to him.²⁹

Early Success and His Dramatic Style

Charles Spurgeon's success was rapid, stunning, and wholly incomprehensible to many of his contemporaries and cultured critics. In January 1854, he had just been called to New Park Street Chapel. Spurgeon had not yet reached his twentieth birthday. He was not even officially the pastor of New Park Street. His first sermon, in December of 1853, had been well received, but many thought he looked like a country bumpkin or an "Essex

²⁷ John Brown, *Puritan Preaching in England: A Study of Past and Present* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001 [1900]), 221.

²⁸ Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism*, 40.

²⁹ See Kruppa, "The Life and Times of C. H. Spurgeon," *Christian History* 10, no. 29, 1991.

Bumpkin.”³⁰ To some he appeared to be a rustic, comically waving a blue handkerchief with white spots while in the pulpit.³¹ Certainly Spurgeon’s appearance and perhaps his word choices and dialect (reflecting rural Essex), shocked some in attendance on that first occasion to hear him.³² Yet overall the congregation was pleased and called him back to preach three more Sundays in January 1854. It was at one of those meetings that Sheridan Knowles, who was an instructor at Stepney College, first heard Charles Spurgeon. Stepney was the institution that Spurgeon would have attended if it hadn’t been for the providential

³⁰ *Optical Lantern Readings: Life and Work of Pastor C. H. Spurgeon* (Bradford: Riley Bros. Limited, 1892), 12 [with acknowledgement to Passmore and Alabaster].

³¹ In Spurgeon’s *Autobiography*, Susannah commented, “I do not think that ‘little Susie’ particularly cared about being present (for Spurgeon’s evening sermon): her ideas of the dignity and propriety of the ministry were rather shocked and upset by the reports which the morning worshippers had brought back concerning the young man’s unconventional outward appearance.” *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon: Compiled from His Diary, Letters, and Records by His Wife and Private Secretary*, vol. 2 (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1898), 5. See also Tim Curnow, Erroll Hulse, David Kingdom, and Geoff Thomas, *A Marvelous Ministry: How the All-round Ministry of Charles Haddon Spurgeon Speaks to Us Today* (Ligonier, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publ., 1993), particularly the second chapter by Geoff Thomas, “The Preacher’s Progress,” for information on Spurgeon’s early ministry, including 1856, which Thomas deemed “the notable year” for all the change Spurgeon experienced.

For more on the potential symbolism of the blue handkerchief with white spots, see Dave Day and Samantha-Jayne Oldfield, “Delineating Professional and Amateur Athletic Bodies in Victorian England,” *Sport in History* 35, 2015: 19-45. Different colored handkerchiefs were often worn by competitors in walking matches (pedestrianism) and by opposing pugilists as well. See Table 1 of Day and Oldfield’s article. In 1852 the entrant named Cook in a 20-mile match, wore the colours “blue with white spots.” (28) And in 1828, a boxer named O’Neal “tied up his own colours of blue with white spots.” (24).

³² Charles Ray, one of Spurgeon’s biographers, cited a letter from a Mr. Hood who heard young Spurgeon preach. Hood asserted that it was the truly great preachers who resolved to speak in the people’s idiom and dialect. “Mr. Hood then went on to praise the young minister’s preaching, and to combat those who said that Charles Haddon Spurgeon was a mere imitator of other preachers... It is probable that many of us walk far too gingerly in our estimate of public speech. He who determines never to use a word that shall grate harshly on the ears of a refined taste, may be certain that he will never be very extensively useful; the people love the man who will condescend to their idiom, and the greatest preachers—those who have been the great apostles of a nation—have always condescended to this. Bossuet, Massillon, Hall, Chalmers, McAll, were the doctors of the pulpit; at their feet sat the refinement, the scholarship, the politeness of their times; but such men as Luther and Latimer, St. Clara and Knox, Whitefield and Christmas Evans—such men have always seized on the prevailing dialect and made it tell with immense power on their auditors.” Charles Ray, *The Life of Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1903), 186-7.

forgetfulness of Dr. Angus' maid. Mrs. Spurgeon inserted into Spurgeon's *Autobiography* a letter received from a former student of Knowles:

Pastor G. H. Davies of Lisbon, North Dakota, thus records Sheridan Knowles' remarkable prophecy: --"I was a student at Stepney, now Regent's Park College. Sheridan Knowles, the celebrated actor and play-writer, had just been baptized by Dr. Brock, and appointed our tutor in elocution. We had collected funds to give the grand old man a handsome Bible. The presentation was made one Wednesday afternoon. It was an occasion never to be forgotten, not only for sake of Sheridan Knowles himself, but because of his prophecy concerning one of whom till then we knew nothing. Immediately on entering, Mr. Knowles exclaimed. 'Boys, have you heard the Cambridgeshire lad?' None of us had heard him. 'Then boys,' he continued, 'go and hear him at once.' This was after Mr. Spurgeon had been preaching at New Park Street Chapel two Sundays. 'Go and hear him at once if you want to know how to preach. His name is Charles Spurgeon. He is only a boy, but he is the most wonderful preacher in the world. He is absolutely perfect in oratory; and, beside that, a master in the art of acting. He has nothing to learn from me, or anyone else. He is simply perfect. He knows everything. He can do anything. I was once a lessee of Drury Theatre; and were I still in that position, I would offer him a fortune to play for one season on the boards of that house... Now mark my word, boys, *that young man will live to be the greatest preacher of this age or any other age. He will bring more men to Christ than any man who ever proclaimed the gospel, not excepting the apostle Paul. His name will be known everywhere, and his sermons will be translated into many languages of the world.*"³³

Knowles' praise of Spurgeon was effusive, perhaps, only to be matched in intensity by the scorn he was to receive in the press. He highlighted especially his natural acting ability and noted that his knowledge of oratory was flawless. His command of his hearers

³³ Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon*, 353-4 (italics in original). His autobiography was produced in four volumes and compiled by his wife, Susannah and his private secretary, Mr. Harrald. Regarding the composition of this "autobiography," Albert R. Meredith wrote, "This is not a true autobiography, for Spurgeon did not write it beyond the many quotations which are included. As a detailed source of factual data about his life and career it is indispensable. As one might imagine, however, there is little or nothing of a critical nature in it." Albert R. Meredith, "The Social and Political Views of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, 1834-1892" (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1973), 248. Al Mohler noted about the *Autobiography*, "Spurgeon was fortunate that his wife and personal secretary survived him and collaborated in producing this substantial project. Likewise, readers are fortunate that Mrs. Spurgeon shared so generously from her personal materials. Without her active cooperation and participation, it is unlikely that the project would have been so generously filled with personal materials." R. Albert Mohler, "Spurgeon Sermons, Biographies Offer Treasure for Today's Preacher," *Preaching* 8, no. 3 (November-December 1992): 63.

was such that he could have them laughing and weeping and back to laughing all within a five-minute time span.³⁴ He was such a gifted dramatist that were he to leave the ministry, his fortune on the stage would be assured. And all of these qualities were wrapped up in a “boy.” Spurgeon’s youthful appearance certainly added to the wonder that Knowles felt when he heard him speak. Knowles died seven years after this event, but he lived to see Spurgeon go from the New Park Street Chapel to Exeter Hall to Surrey Gardens to the Crystal Palace (for a one-time speaking engagement) to settle finally in the Metropolitan Tabernacle.

Spurgeon was not afraid to use his body during the preaching moment. He moved freely about the platform. He was never chained to a pulpit; he desired to have the space to roam. He acknowledged this five years later when, in a meeting that was held in the yet-unfinished Metropolitan Tabernacle (August 21, 1860), he said, “You see, above us, the pulpit, or platform, which might hold a large number of persons. I cannot stand like a statue when I preach; I prefer a wide range both of thought and action.”³⁵ What he describes as an inability to stand still, others labeled, “strutting up and down the platform as though he were at the Surrey Theatre.”³⁶ Another paper reported, “He walks up and down the platform, and is only at home when he has such a stage. A pulpit cramps him.”³⁷ One particularly virulent attack came from *The Essex Standard*: “He belongs to the peripatetic, or Walker school,

³⁴ Ibid., 353.

³⁵ Spurgeon, *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon*, vol. 2, 354-5.

³⁶ *The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, April 28, 1855. (Italics theirs, quoted in vol. 2 of Spurgeon’s *Autobiography*, 55.)

³⁷ “Mr. Spurgeon and His Creed,” *The Era*, November 16, 1856.

perpetually walking up and down as an actor treading the boards of a theatre.”³⁸ They denounced him as vulgar and praised the Established Church, where “such outrageous violations of decorum are rendered impossible.”³⁹

Nevertheless, it was Spurgeon’s outrageous violations of decorum that were filling the pews of the New Park Street Chapel. The church needed to physically expand its structure to accommodate the crowds. For a season, while the church was being enlarged, Spurgeon was preaching at Exeter Hall.⁴⁰ The following newspaper account was written only sixteen months after Spurgeon’s arriving in London:

“[Spurgeon] has created a perfect furor in the religious world. Every Sunday, crowds throng to Exeter Hall, as to some great dramatic entertainment. The huge hall is crowded to overflowing, morning and evening, with an excited auditory, whose good fortune in obtaining admission is often envied by the hundreds outside who throng closed doors. For a parallel to such popularity, we must go back to Dr. Chalmers, Edward Irving, or the earlier days of James Parsons. But I will not dishonor such men by comparison with the Exeter Hall demagogue. They preached the gospel with all the fervor of earnest natures. Mr. Spurgeon preaches himself. He is nothing unless he is an actor,—unless exhibiting that matchless impudence which is his great characteristic, indulging in coarse familiarity with holy things, declaiming in a ranting and colloquial style, strutting up and down the platform as though he were at the Surrey Theatre, and boasting of his own intimacy with Heaven

³⁸ *The Essex Standard*, April 18, 1855, quoted in Spurgeon’s *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 49.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁴⁰ Another very early and favorable account recognized this move to Exeter Hall as key to building Spurgeon’s reputation: “The Rev. William Brock, of Bloomsbury Chapel, had been preaching in Exeter hall while some repairs were being done to that place of worship; and when Mr. Spurgeon had been at New Park-street thirteen months, and the chapel had proved to be too small for the number of people who regularly gathered to hear him, it was suggested that he should follow the example of Mr. Brock while the chapel was being enlarged. This was at once resolved upon, and he began to preach in that large edifice on the 11th of February, 1855, and continued to do so every subsequent Sabbath till the 27th of May. A crowded congregation attended at every service; and when the hall was full a placard had to be hoisted at the doors to that effect, for the information of the throng who still pressed for admission. It was during these four months that the general public first heard of Mr. Spurgeon’s peculiarities and powers—thanks to the newspaper and periodical press, to which the reverend gentleman is very largely indebted for the position which he came so speedily to occupy.” *The Life of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon from his Birth to the Present Time: Being a Complete Biographical History of the Greatest Preacher of the Age and a Critical Review of His Sermons* (London: James Paul, 1860), 12-3.

with nauseating frequency. His fluency, self-possession, oratorical tricks, and daring utterances, seem to fascinate his less thoughtful hearers, who love excitement more than devotion.”⁴¹

The following color lithograph was produced around this time (1855) and illustrated Spurgeon’s ability to draw tremendous crowds.



Fig. 2.9. “Catch ’em Alive O” (Charles Haddon Spurgeon)⁴²

⁴¹ *The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, April 28, 1855. (Italics theirs, quoted in vol. 2 of Spurgeon’s *Autobiography*, 55.)

⁴² Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London. Spurgeon’s hat is made of flypaper and he is drawing all sorts of individuals to himself. His hand is up in its characteristic pose. This image was also used in a set of Magic Lantern Glass Slides (#11). The lecture notes that accompany this slide read, in part: “No man in the

Another representative article, this one from November 1856, was printed just a few weeks after the Surrey Music Hall disaster (October 19, 1856):

Now, what is the manner and matter of this preacher? The inquiring visitor sees a short square-built man enter, with a round pallid looking face, relieved, however, by expressive dark eyes and a profusion of black hair parted in the middle. His reading and prayer over, in which there is nothing very singular, unless it be a familiarity suggestive of profanity with which he addresses the Throne of Grace, he begins his sermon. If it have reference to the fall of Adam and expiation of sins through faith in Jesus Christ, he lets his audience know, in a jovial kind of tone, that he is about to amuse them. He looks intently to the farthest corner of the house, and exclaims, 'Holloa, Adam! Where art thou Adam?' In the presumption that Adam is afraid to face such a congregation, in answer to such a summons, he makes the father of mankind reply tremulously, 'Here am I, what wouldst thou?' 'What would I?' he indignantly rejoins, 'I would know what you have done, Adam, that we are all damned through you?' Adam makes a speech. The preacher answers him. Adam has a rejoinder; the preacher another. Adam is greatly abashed, and has decidedly the worst of the argument, and is told in the slang of the tap-room, 'I thought I should make you sing small.' Then in jolly, rollicking, bantering style, he comforts Adam thus,--'Ah, never mind, never mind, man; we have a new Adam, we have Christ instead of you,' &c... And this it is which the tens of thousands of the metropolitan population are crowding, even unto death to hear, to grieve at, or to approve by occasional bursts of laughter or floods of tears. He gives scenes from hell, in which the persons of his drama are his brother ministers with their congregations; he has a powerful voice, and alters its tones with considerable effect, in a dramatic sense. He walks up and down the platform, and is only at home when he has such a stage. A pulpit cramps him. He tells that gains to the kingdom of Christ have been a thousand souls a year since he came to London, and he expects that they will amount to an additional thousand this year. Have we said enough of this preposterous mountebank? Surely we have.⁴³

world was more vilified than Spurgeon at this time. Everybody who becomes popular has to pay for it in some shape or other, but the treatment Mr. Spurgeon received was exceptional in its severity. Ridiculous cartoons of him were issued, depicting him in anything but complimentary attitudes. One of them represented him as a seller of fly-papers, and was entitled 'Catch-'em-Alive-O!'" *Optical Lantern Readings: Life and Work of Pastor C. H. Spurgeon*, 12 [with acknowledgement to Passmore and Alabaster].

⁴³ "Mr. Spurgeon and His Creed," *The Era*, November 16, 1856.

Still, Spurgeon was drawing in the multitudes with his “wonted vigour.”⁴⁴ His ability to bring his sermons to life with his body was only one of the components that made him successful with the crowds. According to one reporter, many among his crowds may not have regularly attended worship, “I would charitably conclude that the greater part of the multitude that weekly crowd to his theatrical exhibitions consists of people who are not in the habit of frequenting a place of worship.”⁴⁵ James Ewing Ritchie laid similar charges at the feet of Spurgeon: “Mr. Spurgeon is the youngest, and the loudest, and the most notorious preacher in London—little more; the idol of people who dare not go to theatres, and yet pant for theatrical excitement.”⁴⁶ It was a great insult, laden with irony, that Spurgeon’s sermons were so often equated with the theatre. Another early example: “All his discourses are redolent of bad taste, are vulgar and theatrical.”⁴⁷ And Robert H. Ellison noted that such theatrics motivated some to issue a call to action: “In addition to being thought excessively dramatical and theatrical, Spurgeon was accused of defiling the pulpit with sacrilege. A representative early comment is one written in October 1856 by a reporter for the *Daily Telegraph*, who encouraged his readers to ‘set up a barrier to the encroachments and

⁴⁴ Although the following account came a few years later (1859), it described the habitual energy that Spurgeon brought to his discourses. “Exeter Hall was filled to overflowing on Tuesday night, when the seventh lecture of the usual winter course in connection with the Young Men’s Christian Association was delivered by the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon. The lecture was delivered without the aid of notes, and with Mr. Spurgeon’s wonted vigour.” *The Illustrated London News*, January 8, 1859.

⁴⁵ *The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, April 28, 1855. (Italics theirs, quoted in vol. 2 of Spurgeon’s *Autobiography*, 55.)

⁴⁶ James Ewing Ritchie, *The London Pulpit*, 2nd ed. (London: William Tweedie, 1858), 159.

⁴⁷ *The Ipswich Express*, February 27, 1855 (cited in Spurgeon’s *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 44). The Baptist historian William R. Estep noted, “Cartoonists took delight in lampooning his youth, then his humor, his figure, and his popularity. Popular ballads echoing the caricatures became commonplace. ‘O my plump, my rosy Spurgeon’ was the refrain of one of them.” William Estep, “The Making of a Prophet: An Introduction to Charles Haddon Spurgeon.” *Baptist History and Heritage* 19 (October 1984), 13.

blasphemies of men like Spurgeon.”⁴⁸ The attacks on Spurgeon were so numerous that one author, writing in 1857, compiled them and offered his “impartial” analysis. Regarding Spurgeon’s style, he noted:

DEPARTMENT. Corroborative of our assertion, we need not make more than two extracts: —the first from the Daily News, the second from the Morning Chronicle. 1. “The most striking feature of Mr. Spurgeon’s preaching is, the strong dramatic element which is so prominent. He walks up and down the platform, throws himself into various attitudes, gesticulates, varies his voice, and roars, bellows or whines, as the case may demand.” 2. “A respectable low comedian he would unquestionably make, whilst the pulpit, so far as its intended and proper influence is concerned, would not only lose nothing, but the cause of Christianity, of public morals, decency, and good order would gain immensely—incalculably.” Expressions such as these, when applied to a preacher of Mr. Spurgeon’s status, must be regarded by the majority of the public as the outpourings of virulent abuse, rather than as the result of dignified dispassionate criticism.⁴⁹

Even Horton Davies, a twentieth-century historian inclined to praise Spurgeon, wrote, “Spurgeon was... a master of shock-tactics. Often his congregation experienced the sensation of pins and needles at the very start of his sermon.”⁵⁰ The anticipation of hearing Spurgeon speak must have created a sensational, almost electric atmosphere among those assembled. Another early account, from a correspondent named “Beta” and dated March 14, 1856, described the powerful, bodily effect that Spurgeon’s preaching had on his hearers: “Some of his appeals to the conscience, some of his remonstrances with the

⁴⁸ Robert H. Ellison, *The Victorian Pulpit: Spoken and Written Sermons in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1998), 73. For a critical review of Ellison, see Mary Wilson Carpenter, “The Victorian Pulpit: Spoken and Written Sermons in Nineteenth-Century Britain,” *Victorian Studies* 43, no. 2 (Winter 2001): 305-6.

⁴⁹ “A Churchman,” *Mr. Spurgeon’s Critic Criticised. Reflections on Published Opinions in Favor of and Against the Doctrine, Diction, Deportment and Doings of the Rev, C. H. Spurgeon* (London: W. H. Collingridge City Press, 1857), 22.

⁵⁰ Horton Davies, “Expository Preaching: Charles Haddon Spurgeon,” *Foundations: A Baptist Journal of History and Theology* 6, no. 1 (January 1963): 23.

careless, constituted specimens of a very high order of oratorical power. When pronouncing the doom of those who live and die in a state of impenitence, he makes hundreds of his congregation quail and quake in their seats. He places their awful destiny in such vivid colors before their eyes, that they almost imagine they are already in the regions of darkness and despair.”⁵¹ The correspondent for *Harper’s Weekly* described a similar scene:

On another occasion he was preaching on the contrast between the sufferings of the damned in hell and the delights of the blessed in heaven. When he came to that part of the discourse in which he draws a picture of the place of punishment, the orator’s voice was raised to the highest pitch, his tone was sonorous and awful, his manner so vivid that many of his hearers actually quivered with horror.⁵²

Spurgeon transgressed boundaries as he transgressed established roles and expectations. He mixed the profane (actor/theatre) with the holy (preacher/church). His preaching style was a novelty. Comparisons with Whitefield were made in his time and our own.⁵³ It is tempting to insert Spurgeon’s name for Whitefield’s, when Harry Stout offers

⁵¹ George John Stevenson, *Sketch of the Life and Ministry of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon* (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1859), 133. This is a very early biography and the letter from “Beta” was part of an appendix that Stevenson attached to his work. Here is another early example (1857) from one hearer’s experience at Surrey Gardens: “After waiting more than half an hour—for if you wish to have a seat you must be there at least that space of time in advance—Mr. Spurgeon ascended the tribune. To the hum, and rush, and trampling of men, succeeded a low, concentrated thrill and murmur of devotion, which seemed to run at once, like an electric current, through the breast of every one present; and by this magnetic chain, the preacher held us fast bound for about two hours.” “A Churchman,” *Mr. Spurgeon’s Critic Criticised. Reflections on Published Opinions in Favor of and Against the Doctrine, Diction, Deportment and Doings of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon* (London: W. H. Collingridge City Press, 1857), 26-7.

⁵² *Harper’s Weekly*, November 14, 1857.

⁵³ A wonderful example comes from a very early miniature biography. The work is not dated but internal evidence dates it to 1857. There is no author but the text begins, “Somewhat more than a century ago George Whitfield burst, like a meteor, on public notice, attracting admiring crowds by his fiery eloquence and religious fervor...” *Life of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon: Minister of Park Street Chapel, Southwark*. [Diamond Series of Gift Books] (London: Dodd & Co., n. d. but early 1857?). See Appendix C, Figure C1. Another comparison comes from Horton Davies: “Whitefield was Spurgeon’s hero and model. Spurgeon not only recited numerous anecdotes about Whitefield, but wrote a book about him which was almost replete with filial gratitude. Both made their names as popular preachers when they were young men. Both were unyielding Calvinists in doctrine. Both had remarkable sonorous voices. (Spurgeon was clearly heard by over 25,000 people at the Crystal Palace, and Whitefield was heard by the companies of two adjacent ships when he preached from the

the following on the latter: “To understand the novelty of Whitefield’s experiential preaching, we must move beyond the text to the context. And here the most salient point is the insertion of the body into his discourse. Even though his first sermons were written out in classic Anglican fashion, his body did not—could not—remain still in the prescribed fashion.”⁵⁴ As already noted, Spurgeon was repeatedly accused of being an actor.⁵⁵ Such accusations were not without merit; he did bring biblical characters to life on stage. E. L. Magoon, in an early sketch of the preacher, observed how great were “his powers of personification and dramatic presentation, from the scene which he paints between the dying Christian and death, or between Christ and justice, and the justified sinner.”⁵⁶ A fairly early review of Spurgeon’s ministry disparaged his vulgar focus on death and “startling suppositions”:

Spurgeon, again, is continually indulging in the most startling suppositions, and just those which are most commonly entertained by vulgar minds, —as, for instance, the supposition of some one, himself or some unfortunate

central one in a swell while crossing the Atlantic in convoy.) Both were masters of the emotions and easily elicited tears and smiles. Both were dramatic orators in utterance and gesture. Both were inveterate punsters. Both used simple, racy, colloquial Anglo-Saxon diction. Both loved telling anecdotes in the pulpit. Both preached with great effect in the open air. Both were great money-raisers, and founders and maintainers of orphanages. Both had a profound compassion for and understanding of ordinary people.” Horton Davies, “Expository Preaching: Charles Haddon Spurgeon,” *Foundations A Baptist Journal of History and Theology* 6, no. 1 (January 1963): 17-8.

⁵⁴ Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 39. Craig Skinner noted that Spurgeon took “George Whitefield, the open-air evangelist of the previous century, as his major model.” But softened Spurgeon’s dramatic style, “Although not an entertainer, he wisely included some dramatic elements in his preaching as a means to a higher end.” Craig Skinner, “The Preaching of Charles Haddon Spurgeon,” *Baptist History and Heritage*, vol. 19 (October 1984), 16-7.

⁵⁵ Even as late as 1921, Edward R. Thompson was excoriating Spurgeon, “His style was very theatrical: a foreign scoffer remarked that his denunciations of the stage must have been prompted by jealousy, since he himself was so consummate an actor.” Edward R. Thompson, *Portraits of the Nineties* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1921), 261.

⁵⁶ Magoon, E. L. *“The Modern Whitfield”: The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, of London, His Sermons with an Introduction and Sketch of His Life* (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman & Co., 1856), xiv.

hearer, dropping down dead in his chamber. And, in general, he makes abundant use of that apprehension of death, which is far stronger in the uneducated than in the more refined, as a source from which he may gather thunderbolt after thunderbolt with which to startle the indifferent and hardened heart. What matter though the sentiment to which he appeals be a perverted sentiment?⁵⁷

Spurgeon also addressed famous figures from the Bible on stage, joking with them, teasing them, and drawing lessons from their life and applying it to the hearts of his hearers. From *The Era*, one finds the following report: “Then he brings the persons of the Trinity on the platform, and holds colloquy with them. In like manner, he introduces prophets, apostles, and all other scriptural personages. He makes the Saviour and Mary Magdalene hold conversation, the preacher imitating the tones of a timid repentant woman.”⁵⁸ For some, these theatrics were a bit too much; another early account lamented this mixing of the sacred and the profane. “In Protestant countries in general, and in England in particular, we shrink from undue familiarity with holy words and things. We have just as much aversion to see a church turned into a theatre as to see a theatre turned into a church. We hold an opinion...that it is almost as offensive to see a clergyman perform in his pulpit as to hear actors invoke Heaven in a theatre.”⁵⁹ Most of the early newspaper accounts predicted that

⁵⁷ Review of *Spurgeon's Sermons Seventh Series*. (New York: Sheldon and Company, n.d.) from *The Atlantic Monthly* 12, no. 69 (July, 1863).

⁵⁸ “Mr. Spurgeon and His Creed,” *The Era*, November 16, 1856. One historian noted that some of this was a function of the times. “In an age when mass communication was for the most part a matter of the unmediated human voice, the great preachers were the star performers, their names often household words.” Kenneth D. Brown, *A Social History of the Nonconformist Ministry in England and Wales 1800-1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 198.

⁵⁹ *The Daily News*, September 9, 1856, quoted in Spurgeon's *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 59.

he was a “nine days’ wonder” and that he “has gone up like a rocket, and ere long will come down like a stick.”⁶⁰

Yet Spurgeon was no “nine days’ wonder.” It seemed his whole short life up to this point had been building up to his preaching career. He had been steeped in Puritan theology from his earliest years. His father and grandfather were both preachers of the gospel. He had a prodigious memory and could keep large amounts of biblical text at the ready. He experienced a long period of wrestling with sin prior to his conversion in the Artillery Street Methodist Church. Although he only had two years of ministerial experience prior to coming to New Park Street Chapel, by his own accounting, he had already preached more than six hundred times.⁶¹ Spurgeon would not stop even if his critics in the press heaped abuse and vitriol on him.

Spurgeon addressed some of his frustrations with his critics in an instructive letter written to a friend, Mr. James S. Watts. The letter was written very early in his ministry, when on March 23, 1855, he had been at New Park Street only about fifteen months:

It is strange that such a power should be in one small body to crowd Exeter Hall to suffocation, and block up the Strand, so that pedestrians have to turn down by-ways, and all other traffic is at a standstill.

The Globe, of last evening, says that never since the days of Whitefield was there such a religious *furor*, and that the glories of Wesley and Whitefield seem in danger of being thrown in the shade. Well, the Press has *kicked* me quite long enough, now they are beginning to *lick* me; but one is as good as

⁶⁰ *The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, April 28, 1855.

⁶¹ Iain H. Murray, *Letters of Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1992), 49. Spurgeon wrote to his father in early 1854, “Many other ministers have schools; it is a usual thing. It is not right for you to say, ‘If you mean to be a minister;’ for I *am* one, and have been for two years as much a minister as any man in England; and probably very much more so, since in that time I have preached more than 600 times.” The letter is incomplete but testifies to his assertive character and possibly concerns that his father, John Spurgeon, had about the necessity of further education.

the other as long as it helps to fill our place of worship. I believe I could secure a crowded audience at dead of night in a deep snow.⁶²

The rest of this dissertation could be a slow unpacking of the contents of this singular letter. Spurgeon expresses wonder at the power that his “small body” contained.⁶³ He was astounded that the very life of London was altered by his preaching. His point, which will be visited at greater length later, is that power is flowing through his body to affect the great masses crowding the streets in their desire to hear him. This revival power is reminiscent of the Methodist itinerants and the preachers of the “new birth,” John Wesley and George Whitefield. He had done something earlier, when he compared the revival and moral improvement of the town of Waterbeach with the same type of reformation that Richard Baxter experienced at Kidderminster.⁶⁴ In his youthful confidence, Spurgeon even suggested that the glories of Wesley and Whitefield might be surpassed. And it is easy to hear that same confidence as arrogance as when he boasts that he could gather a crowd in even the worst of conditions. Finally, he seems to have an intuitive grasp of marketing or the need for public exposure when he assumed that even attacks by his critics resulted in an increase in the size of his audiences.⁶⁵

⁶² Ibid., p. 56. See also *Vanity Fair's* article, “Men of the Day, No. 16 The Rev. Charles Spurgeon” (Dec. 10, 1870). The author described the young preacher’s ability to bring traffic to a standstill, “In 1853 the fame of his natural oratory had won for him the position of Minister in New Park Street Chapel, which soon overflowed with his audiences, so that the narrow streets were blocked. . .to widen the fold for the sake of these stray lambs, theatres and concert rooms were converted into meeting-houses.”

⁶³ Lest Spurgeon appear to be a megalomaniac, Michael Haykin, when discussing Spurgeon’s pneumatology, noted that “Spurgeon was also insistent that those who pastor and preach be continually conscious of their deep need of the Spirit of God.” Michael Haykin, “‘Where the Spirit of God is There is Power’: An Introduction to C. H. Spurgeon’s Teaching on the Holy Spirit,” *Churchman* 106, no. 3 (1992): 201.

⁶⁴ Fullerton, *C. H. Spurgeon, A Biography*, 48.

⁶⁵ Regarding marketing and the proliferation of the images of Spurgeon, another memorial biographer noted, “Mr. Spurgeon’s likeness has gone everywhere with his sermons. Some time ago there appeared in a shop window . . . under a lithographic likeness of Mr. Spurgeon, the announcement, ‘Spurgeon reduced to sixpence.’”

Another feature of his preaching was his use of humor. He seemed to bubble over with humor, both during the preaching moment and in his everyday life. A good friend of his, William Williams, commented on Spurgeon's effusive sense of humor, "What a bubbling fountain of humour Mr. Spurgeon had! I laughed more I believe when in his company than during all the rest of my life besides. He had the most fascinating gift of laughter I ever knew in any man and he had also the greatest ability for making all who heard him laugh with him."⁶⁶ Spurgeon needed his sense of humor when dealing with his critics, his admirers, and his congregation. In his second collection of Proverbs, *The Salt Cellars, Vol. 2*, after presenting the pithy saying, "More know Tom Fool than Tom Fool knows," he lamented, "Public characters are known by thousands, but they cannot know thousands themselves. 'Don't you know me? I heard you speak at Exeter Hall.' Wonderful argument!"⁶⁷ It was simply not possible for Spurgeon to know of all the people who heard him. Even his congregation was too large for him to get to know each member.

His sense of humor not only endeared him to the listening crowds but also helped ameliorate potentially awkward encounters. In his *Autobiography*, we find, "A gentleman who had been at one of the annual College suppers, was again present the following year. The President (Spurgeon) saluted him with a hearty greeting, 'Glad to see you, Mr.

A friend informed Mr. Spurgeon of it, and hoped that he was not quite so poor as the notice implied." Richard Briscoe Cook, *The Wit and Wisdom of Rev. Charles H. Spurgeon* (Baltimore: R. H. Woodward and Co., 1892), 108. Spurgeon's image was everywhere and his reputation exceeded all limits, "An English school-boy when asked, 'Who is the Prime Minister of England?' answered, 'Mr. Spurgeon.'" Cook, 9. Lewis Drummond described Spurgeon as an innovator: "Spurgeon quite often used highly unorthodox means of getting a hearing for the Gospel, at least unorthodox for nineteenth century Britishers. He began to advertise publicly his sermons and meetings. In Victorian England, the populace associated posters with the circus and the theater." Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 283.

⁶⁶ William Williams, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon: Personal Reminiscences* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1933), 24.

⁶⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Salt Cellars*, vol. 2 (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1889), 25.

Partridge.’ The visitor was surprised to find himself recognized but he replied, ‘My name is Patridge, sir, not Partridge.’ ‘Ah, yes!’ was the instant rejoinder; ‘I won’t make *game* of you any more.’”⁶⁸

Spurgeon loved to play with puns. Peter Morden, a tutor at Spurgeon’s College, has noted, “When asked by someone, ‘In what coloured ink should a promise of marriage be written?’ Spurgeon responded, ‘in violet.’ (the pun was on the word, ‘inviolat.’)”⁶⁹ But his use of puns, especially in his earlier sermons, was a source of contention with the press.

They railed against his coarseness:

We lately heard him delivered of a pulpit pun as follows:--”The key-note of the true Christian is not A, nor B, nor C, nor D, nor F, it is *Je—sus*.” And this—”A man sits down in self-sufficiency thinking I *can* do all that. Oh blessed day when God directs his shots against all that. I know I hugged that old idea a long time with my ‘cans,’ ‘cans,’ ‘cans’; but I found my ‘cans’ would hold no water, and suffered all I put in to run out.” The man whose intellectual poverty permits the utterance of this despicable pun on water cans has been, for months’ past, followed by thousands, by ten, fifteen, or twenty thousand of eager hearers, gathered chiefly from the middle classes of London.”⁷⁰

The newspapers sometimes attributed Spurgeon’s success to his dramatic ability, in which humor played a key part: “The secrets of Mr. Spurgeon’s success seemed to be his profuse command of illustration, and the knack he has of throwing personal individuality into his sermons. His preaching is essentially dramatic; he acts his sermons all through; and does not hesitate to employ mimicry, slang, or jocosity.”⁷¹ Some of this joking was identified as coarse and was judged inappropriate by his critics. The following account

⁶⁸ Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, vol. 3, 345.

⁶⁹ Peter Morden, “Spurgeon and Humor,” *Transmission* (Spring 2011), 21.

⁷⁰ *The Glasgow Herald*, October 24, 1856.

⁷¹ “Spurgeonism in Belfast,” *The Morning Chronicle*, August 20, 1858.

testified not only to his use of humor, but to his understanding of the value of marketing and the widespread presence of his printed sermons, which began to circulate in January 1855.⁷²

Another portion of the account from *The Glasgow Herald*:

His first “game” in the metropolis (he uses such slang in the pulpit as ‘the gospel is *our game*, and no mistake’) was unlimited advertising, which still continues. From the centre of the city to the furthest suburbs, every dead wall, boarding, and spare post with “Who’s your Hatter?” and “Holloway’s Ointment,” “the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon will preach,” or “New Park Street Pulpit,” or “Sayings and Doings of C. H. Spurgeon,” &c. At last people asked, “Who and what is this Spurgeon, whose name is on every wall always?” His sermons were purchased and read, and being a kind of comic pulpit, though in parts dismal and obscure, readers became listeners.⁷³

In general, Spurgeon’s humor was linked to driving home or illustrating and applying a spiritual lesson. The widely circulated and influential *Vanity Fair* highlighted Spurgeon’s use of humor: “No other preacher has succeeded like him in sketching the comic side of repentance and regeneration.”⁷⁴

Spurgeon’s theatrical style included a heavy dose of humor. It was an ingredient in the recipe that kept his audience coming back. He was mocked for it and derided as an example of “intellectual poverty,” yet the crowds kept coming. The middle classes of

⁷² Regarding the circulation of his sermons, Mark Hopkins, *Nonconformity’s Romantic Generation: Evangelical and Liberal Theologies in Victorian England* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2006), “The weekly printed sermons rose from an initial circulation of under 2000 to an average of 25,000 by 1871.” (154). One notable exception was his sermon “Baptismal Regeneration,” which saw sales of 350,000.

⁷³ *The Glasgow Herald*, October 24, 1856. The author noted “The New Park Street Pulpit.” Lewis Drummond noted, “A short time after Spurgeon’s acceptance of the London church. Passmore suggested that Spurgeon start his own weekly ‘Penny Pulpit’ series. The series came to be called the ‘New Park Street Pulpit.’” Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 314. Joseph Passmore and Spurgeon became close friends (they traveled to Mentone together) and “Passmore and Alabaster” published numerous works written by Spurgeon. Since he preached more often than once per week, they were able to continue printing his sermons, one per week, through 1917 (when a paper shortage stopped their production. (Drummond, 314). See also “Mr. Spurgeon’s Sermons and Their Sale: An Interview with His Publishers” *The Pall Mall Gazette*, Feb. 2, 1892.

⁷⁴ “Men of the Day., No. 16, The Rev. Charles Spurgeon,” *Vanity Fair*, December 10, 1870. For more background on what it meant to read or be caricatured in the magazine, see *In ‘Vanity Fair’* by Roy T. Matthews and Peter Mellini. See also Appendix C, Fig. C18, for the caricature of Spurgeon.

London could not get enough of his earthy humor, playful punning, and dramatic roleplaying. Peter Morden concluded, “Spurgeon, with his word play and his simple stories of everyday people, communicated effectively with those whom the cultured elite viewed with disdain. The Liberal politician the Earl of Rosebery described Spurgeon disparagingly as the ‘apostle of the grocers’.”⁷⁵

Spurgeon’s priority was to keep the crowd listening.⁷⁶ If walking back and forth across the platform, telling puns and jokes or recreating a bible character by using his own limbs and lips kept them coming, then he would not change his mannerisms or methods.⁷⁷ Spurgeon’s great desire was to spread the gospel. His whole being, mind, body, and voice would be used to present the gospel. He would, in the words of Richard Baxter, “Preach as a dying man to dying men.” A sense of urgency characterized his preaching. An early newspaper account attempted to understand his passion: “Mr. Spurgeon institutes a new era, or more correctly, revives the good old style of Bunyan, Wesley, and Whitefield, --men whose burning eloquence carried conviction to the hearts of their hearers.”⁷⁸ Such accounts were a delight for Spurgeon. He, “the boy preacher of the fens” delighted to be compared to

⁷⁵ Peter Morden, “Spurgeon and Humor,” 22. Morden added, “The novelist George Eliot’s comments on the Pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle were similar. He held, she said, to a ‘grocer’s back-parlour view of Calvinistic Christianity.’” Ibid., 22.

⁷⁶ “I must...make the people listen.” And “The people require a simple and stirring style.” Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 52.

⁷⁷ An article in *Fraser’s Magazine* in 1857 noted the following characteristics of Spurgeon’s preaching: “careful preparation of the subject matter, great earnestness and vehement gesticulation in its delivery, a commanding voice, and a copious vocabulary” (cited in Ellison, *The Victorian Pulpit*, 63). Spurgeon is noted for the “vehement gesticulation” of his limbs. They must have been quite active to warrant such a description. Ellison also noted, according to Walter Ong, preachers who are categorized as “oral delivery” also have a “high somatic component.” (63) Early newspaper accounts seem to agree that Spurgeon’s extemporaneous delivery was accompanied by a highly active bodily performance.

⁷⁸ *The Essex Standard*, April 25, 1855(?), quoted in Spurgeon’s *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 50-1.

one of his heroes, George Whitefield, who was nicknamed, “the boy parson.”⁷⁹ Spurgeon, who would go on to read *Pilgrim’s Progress* one hundred times over the course of his life, rejoiced in the comparison with John Bunyan. Another newspaper account sought to give Spurgeon the benefit of the doubt regarding his dramatic style and pulpit antics: “No doubt he is a very good young man, with the best of intentions; but will not this man-worship spoil him? Between the parts of the service, his mannerism in the pulpit is suggestive of affectation and vanity; --it might be only an overpowering sense of responsibility...”⁸⁰ Spurgeon himself felt a tremendous weight upon his shoulders before entering the pulpit or stepping onto the platform to preach. He believed the fates of individual souls hung in the balance when he rose to preach. It often caused him to feel slightly nauseous, lightheaded, and almost overwhelmed. He shared these feelings with his grandfather, who sympathized with him: “I wrote, many years ago, to my venerable grandfather, and told him of many things that happened to me before preaching,—sickness of body, and terrible fears, which often made me really ill. The old gentleman wrote back, and said, “I have been preaching for

⁷⁹ Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans’ Publ., 1991), 36. See also Ellison, for material on those critics who “explicitly rejected their colleagues’ comparisons of Spurgeon and Whitefield.” *The Victorian Pulpit*, 72. A very early biographer, George John Stevenson, also called Spurgeon a “modern Whitefield” but more interestingly compared him to the Methodist Adam Clarke: “One of the youngest persons ever sent out into the work of the ministry among the Methodists was the late learned Dr. Adam Clarke. While yet a “youth in his teens,” we find him appointed to a circuit so wide, that he had to preach in a different place, once at the least, during every day in each successive month. Although tall in person, yet so slender, he was generally denominated “the little boy” preacher. There are many points of resemblance in the early preaching career of this eminent scholar, divine, and Christian, to those connected with Mr. Spurgeon. The almost tender years of both preachers prompted many to go and hear for themselves.” Stevenson, *Sketch of the Life and Ministry of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon* (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1859), 10.

⁸⁰ *The Lambeth Gazette*, September 1, 1855, quoted in Spurgeon’s *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 57.

sixty years, and I still feel many tremblings. Be content to have it so; for when your emotion goes away, your strength will be gone.”⁸¹

For Spurgeon, the presentation or offering of his body to the crowds during the preaching moment was not about recreating the stage or giving approval to the theatre or theatre-going. It was about expressing his deeply held theological convictions about the efficacy of the gospel, the power and necessity of a return to Puritan beliefs, and creating a connection between himself and his hearers through the use of his body. The energy and drama of Spurgeon’s preaching performances reflected a connection to the Puritans and their gospel. Horton Davies, commented on the Puritans, “What might appear as mere enthusiasm in the Puritan preacher, was in reality the expression of his sense of urgency. By his preaching the Gospel he was actually, under Christ, binding and loosing the souls of men. Puritan preaching is thus, in Goodwin’s phrase, ‘experimental, saving, applying knowledge’. It was thus far removed from didacticism and subjectivism.”⁸² This sense of urgency might involve the preacher becoming more active. Davies referenced Watts in this regard: “Isaac Watts is within the Puritan tradition when he maintains: ‘But let the warmest zeal for God, and compassion for perishing men, animate your voice and countenance.’”⁸³ Spurgeon’s great interest was in seeing his hearers regenerated and repentant, and if he had to express the need for that comically or through the recreation of a biblical drama, he would do just that.

⁸¹ *The Sword and the Trowel*, August 1882.

⁸² Horton Davies, *The Worship of the English Puritans*, 185.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 184. See Davies for more examples from Watts and Baxter on the need for animation.

Spurgeon and the Theater

Although Spurgeon was not opposed to using his body and voice in a theatrical manner, he was a typical Evangelical in his condemnation of the theatre.⁸⁴ In many sermons, tracts, and articles, he warned others concerning the evil of theater-going.⁸⁵ Criticism of the theater went back generations: “The Evangelicals had a profound dislike of the theatre, as was shown by the comments made during a discussion in the Eclectic Society in 1800 on why a Christian should denounce theatrical amusements. The Revd Josiah Pratt insisted, with rather dubious logic, ‘a sermon is the essence of dullness after a play: this shows the evil of the play.’”⁸⁶ But what if the sermon was just as exciting as the play? Of course, until Spurgeon, that almost never was the case. The English theater was a veritable pit, a place where profanity abounded and where actors of questionable character enticed audiences to follow their example. It portrayed a world where sinners gathered (not visible saints) and sin was not punished. Ian Bradley noted, “The Revd Basil Wood was concerned that ‘the theatre often exhibits false representations of Providence: things end well for the wicked’, while the Revd John Venn declared that ‘If Vice were to come in person to take up

⁸⁴ This attitude of condemnation of the theatre would weaken among Nonconformists as the decades progressed. Michael R. Booth noted that a certain play, *The Sign of the Cross*, first performed at the Lyric in 1896 (four years after Spurgeon’s death), won the approbation of some preachers. “*The Sign of the Cross* was praised from the pulpit and recommended to congregations... The success of *The Sign of the Cross*, which even won over Nonconformists, provoked a lengthy and often excited correspondence in the *Church Review* that on the whole focused upon the general question of religion and the stage rather than on Barrett’s production.” Michael R. Booth, *Theatre in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 24.

⁸⁵ One such example contrasted nicely attendance at the theatre with attendance at the Metropolitan Tabernacle: “Then, when the man [the hypocrite or ‘pretended pilgrim’] is seen walking into the alehouse, you know how they greet him. ‘Ah, Mr. Sobersides! so you’ve come back, have you?’ When they track him to the theatre, they say to him, ‘How long is it since you were at the Tabernacle?’ or make some coarse joke about him. They know how to handle the whip of scorn, and I thank them for using it.” C. H. Spurgeon, *Pictures from Pilgrim’s Progress* (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1992), 30.

⁸⁶ Ian Bradley, *The Call to Seriousness* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1976), 102. See also Charles Kingsley, *Plays and Puritans*.

residence in London, she would naturally visit the play-house.”⁸⁷ At roughly the beginning of Spurgeon’s ministry, Bebbington captured the general feeling about the theater:

At the start of the period there was no stronger taboo than that on the theater. Evangelical Anglicans were told by their magazine in 1851 that, since there was no prospect of improving the theater, Christians should stand aloof from it. “To act otherwise,” it declared, “to sanction the representation of sin, is surely equivalent to mocking at it; to wink at the playing with iniquity, is as much as to allow that we account that which cost the Saviour’s blood a thing of nought.”⁸⁸

This general condemnation of the theater among Evangelicals was mirrored by Spurgeon. He preached sermons using illustrations of actresses coming to repentance and quitting the theater: “Her profession she determined at once, and for ever, to renounce; and for some little time excused herself from appearing on the stage, without, however, disclosing her change of sentiments, or making known her resolution finally to leave it.”⁸⁹ When finally tested by her old manager, she breaks down and instead of performing when the curtain is drawn, she sings an old hymn she learned from a “few poor people.”⁹⁰ The men left the theater, some of them ridiculing her and others went home to “consider their ways.” She continued on in her Christian life, eventually marrying a minister of the gospel.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 102. See also Richard Foulkes, *Church and Stage in Victorian England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 62. “Certainly the Victoria Theatre as described by Kingsley in *Alton Locke* (1850) is a den of iniquity into which ‘beggary and rascality of London were pouring...to their low amusement’. Indeed the theatre is explicitly likened to hell: ‘These licensed pits of darkness, traps of temptation, profligacy and ruin, triumphantly yawning night after night...’”

⁸⁸ Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism*, 233. Bebbington does note that toward the end of the century [late 1880s], Joseph Parker of the City Temple in London announced, to the chagrin of Spurgeon, that he could accept theater-going.

⁸⁹ Charles Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 2 (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1856), 375-6. The complete sermon illustration was developed into a tract entitled, “The Actress.” It was one in a series called *The New Park Street Tracts*. She was an example of one who turned the theater boards into a preaching platform.

⁹⁰ I think this is a fine example of theology and gospel instruction being delivered by the poor and marginalized. Spurgeon held in high regard the Will Richardsons and Mary Kings of the world.

Spurgeon also compared the pit in the theater with the bottomless pit of hell. He warned his audience:

Have ye never, as from some distant journey ye have returned to your houses at midnight, seen the multitudes of people who are turning out of casinos, low theatres, and other houses of sin? I do not frequent those places, nor from earliest childhood have I ever trodden those floors, but, from the company that I have seen issuing from these dens, I could only lift up my hands, and pray God to close such places; they seem to be the gates of hell, and their doors, as they very properly themselves say, “Lead to the pit.”⁹¹

Although Spurgeon categorized a whole list of recreations as sinful (casinos, horse-racing, dancing, etc.), he reserved a special contempt for the theater, “The theatre...was his most constant cultural target. Drawing on the traditional Puritan hatred of the theatre, he assumed an atmosphere of immorality and temptation engulfed both audience and players.

Furthermore, the theatre was useless, a temple erected to serve the goddess of pleasure. It belonged to a world in which art seemed valued for its own sake, an unmanly world far removed from South London.”⁹²

Spurgeon proclaimed that judgment was waiting to fall on those who attended the theatre. This passage is reminiscent of the passage in Jonathon Edwards’ *Sinners in the*

⁹¹ Charles Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 3 (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1857), 577. From a sermon entitled, “India’s Ills and England’s Sorrows” preached on September 6, 1857 at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens from Jeremiah 9:1, “Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.”

⁹² R. J. Helmstadter, “Spurgeon in Outcast London,” *The View from the Pulpit: Victorian Ministers and Society*, ed. P. T. Phillips (Toronto: Macmillan, 1978), 179. See also Nettles, *Living By Revealed Truth: The Life and Pastoral Theology of Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (China: Christian Focus Publications, 2013), 108, for a discussion of Spurgeon’s review of *The Seven Curses of London* by James Greenwood (“The Editor’s Illness,” *The Sword and the Trowel*, September 1869). Greenwood’s work enumerates the many problems of London: neglected children, professional thieves, drunkenness, and betting gamblers are among them. Greenwood omitted the theatre, but Nettles is certain that were Spurgeon able to add an eighth curse, “he would have selected the theatre.” Contempt for the theater had a long history, stretching back to a couple of centuries and more. John Marlowe noted, “The attitude of the Elizabethan Puritans succeeded in establishing the drama for the next 200 years as being in the same category as such sports as horse-racing, cock fighting, and boxing—which were patronized by the aristocracy and the masses and frowned upon by the middle classes as being degrading both to the participants and to the onlookers.” John Marlowe, *The Puritan Tradition in English Life* (London: The Cresset Press, 1956), 99.

Hands of An Angry God, where the sinner dangles above the hellfire suspended by only the slenderest of spider's thread. The passage also captures nicely his dramatic ability, as Spurgeon called out for Gabriel and addressed him directly. A nice irony to denounce the theatre while being theatrical.

As the Lord liveth, sinner, thou standest on a single plank over the mouth of hell, and that plank is rotten. Thou hangest over the pit by a solitary rope, and the strands of that rope are breaking. Thou art like that man of old, whom Dionysius placed at the head of the table; before him was a dainty feast, but the man ate not, for directly over his head was a sword suspended by a hair. So art thou, sinner. Let thy cup be full, let thy pleasures be high, let thy soul be elevated, seest thou that sword? The next time thou sittest in the theatre, look up and see that sword; the next time thou art in a tavern, look at that sword; when next in thy business thou scornest the rules of God's gospel, look at that sword. Though thou seeest it not, it is there. Even now, ye may hear God saying to Gabriel, 'Gabriel that man sitting in his seat in the hall; he is hearing, but is as though he heard not; unsheathe thy blade; let the glittering sword cut through that hair; let the weapon fall upon him and divide his soul and body.' *Stop, thou Gabriel, stop!* Save the man a little while. Give him yet an hour, that he may repent. (emphasis his)⁹³

The sword of judgment hung over not only the individual who attended the theatre, the tavern or, defrauded others in business; it was also suspended over the whole city of London. God's sure judgment on London, the "behemoth city," is justified because of the presence of the theatres and their polluting influence. If London were "dug up" to its very foundations and "cast into the sea," this would be well-deserved, according to Spurgeon. On June 21, 1857, two days after his twenty-third birthday, he preached, "Surely there can be no nation and no country that can show a city so utterly debauched as this great city of London, if our midnight streets are indications of our immorality." What is the principal means of

⁹³ *Sermons of Rev. C. H. Spurgeon of London*, vol. 1 (New York: Funk & Wagnall's, 1855(?)), 294-5. Harry Stout's comment on how to read Whitefield's sermons seemed equally applicable to Spurgeon, "To appreciate Whitefield's printed sermons fully, we have to read them less as lectures or treatises than as dramatic scripts, each with a series of verbal cues that released improvised body language and pathos...The words were the scaffolding over which the body climbed, stomped, cavorted, and kneeled, all in an attempt—as much intuitive as contrived—to startle and completely overtake his listeners." Stout, *The Divine Dramatist*, 40.

this debauchment? “Ye can sit in theatres to hear plays at which modesty should blush, I say nought of piety. That the ruder sex should have listened to the obscenities of *La Traviata* is surely bad enough, but that ladies of the highest refinement, and the most approved taste, should dishonor themselves by such a patronage of vice is indeed intolerable.”⁹⁴

Spurgeon believed that the body, which could be an instrument of unrighteousness, was also capable of being transformed by the power of the gospel. It could be an instrument of righteousness. In much the same way, the theatre itself could be used to spread the gospel. What was formerly the territory and province of the devil could become an instrument by which the masses were reached. In the following sermon, delivered on January 6, 1861 while Spurgeon was still preaching at Exeter Hall, he recounted the way the theatres were being transformed into preaching stations.

Look at the past year; I commend it to your consideration when you meet for prayer. Has there been for the last twenty years such a year as the last? If any man had said seven years ago there would be preaching in St. Paul’s Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, we should never have believed him. But it has been, and is to be again. If any friends had said that nearly all the theatres in London would be filled on the Sabbath-day, “Oh,” you would have said, “it is ridiculous, it is an absurd notion.” But it is done, sirs, it is done. If any had said to you seven years ago there would have been a congregation of many thousands who, without any drawback in numbers, would always assemble every Sabbath day to listen to one minister, you would have said, “Ridiculous! there is no precedent for it; it is impossible; it is not at all possible that the Spirit of God can incline a people’s heart so long to listen to one man.” It is done, sirs, it is done. And what are we to do but to give God thanks for it?⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Charles Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 3 (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1857), 406. The sermon was preached at Royal Surrey Music Hall.

⁹⁵ Charles Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1861), 101-102. The sermon was from Colossians 4:2, “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.”

Spurgeon preached this sermon while the Metropolitan Tabernacle was being constructed. It was almost complete, and within weeks, March 18, 1861, they would begin to have meetings in the building. On March 26 at a meeting that was limited exclusively to the Contributors of the Building Fund (there were three thousand present for this meeting) one of the evening's speakers noted the transformation of the theatres: "He would just say one thing further in reference to the miraculous influence which the preaching of Mr. Spurgeon had had on the Christian world. He had said a hundred times that they should never have had...the Theatres opened for Sunday preaching if it had not been for such influence."⁹⁶ A few weeks later, on April 12, Henry Vincent praised Spurgeon for his beneficial influence on both the theatres and the Established Church: "[A]nd now thanks in part to the exertions of my worthy friend, Mr. Spurgeon, they have not only thrown open—and I give him the credit of battering the doors—they have not only thrown open St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, but you see clergymen preaching in public halls and theatres, in imitation of Nonconformists."⁹⁷

Spurgeon was an innovator who was willing to change both his sermon delivery and the venue for where the gospel was preached. Five years after the opening of the

⁹⁶ Charles Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1861), 350. See also G. Kitson Clark for the contributions of Anglicans such as J. C. Miller, whose preaching in the open air helped to modify the Law regarding preaching in unlicensed areas and thus opened up venues such as Exeter Hall and theatres. G. Kitson Clark, *The Making of Victorian England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 185-7. The writers of *Punch* had this to say about Spurgeon stirring the Church of England to change their views about where to preach: "What is all this pother about?" And they are straightway told that the noise is made by an unestablished prophet, who has had no hand laid upon him; that, such is the volume of his trumpet it reaches through all sorts of winding streets; into courts, and up alleys. And the Bishops, almost with one accord, say, "Dear brethren, this will never do. To meet the changing necessities of the age, the Established Church must become a Church Itinerant. Hence, for a time, Exeter Hall may be even as St. Paul's, and Canterbury Hall even as Canterbury Cathedral. Henceforth the preacher shall make the building, and not the building the preacher!" "Exeter Hall in Parliament" *Punch*, June 6, 1857.

⁹⁷ Charles Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 7 (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1861), 624.

Metropolitan Tabernacle, the gospel was still being preached in theatres by men who could communicate it in a natural style. Many of these men were converts of Spurgeon's or, at least, had received some training by him at his Pastors' College. Notably the first student of Spurgeon's was Thomas Medhurst (July 1855), who was an actor before he converted and began to preach.⁹⁸ Spurgeon preached a sermon entitled, "Fields White for Harvest" on a Sunday evening, July 29, 1866. In this text, he referenced the partial transformation or sanctified use of the theatres: "See how Sunday night after Sunday night the theatres have been filled when our brethren have gone there to preach to the working classes the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is false that the working men of London do not care to hear the gospel; they do care to hear it. Only preach it so that it can be understood, take the velvet from your mouths, and speak plainly, and they will be sure to come to listen."⁹⁹ Spurgeon used the term "velvet" to describe the weak, powerless, and effeminate preaching of the Established Church. His derision was really reserved for any speaker who, due to his advanced education and lack of experiential knowledge, preached an anemic gospel. Such preaching could not reach the common man and would not draw a crowd. The revivalist, George Whitefield, also used the term "velvet-mouthed" in reference to the Anglican preachers that he disapproved of.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Ken Connolly, *C. H. Spurgeon: A Biographical Sketch* (Pasadena: Pilgrim Publications, 1986), 1.

⁹⁹ Charles Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 12 (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1866), 568.

¹⁰⁰ Stout, *The Divine Dramatist*, 67.

Spurgeon's dramatic techniques, unusual venues, and use of advertising all contributed to what some critics called Spurgeonism.¹⁰¹ He spread his likeness about town. He sold thousands of sermons weekly in the *Penny Press*. He distributed religious material or tracts and had been doing so from his days in Waterbeach. He has been described as a "pamphleteer, preacher and puffist."¹⁰² The writers of *Punch* noted and lamented these techniques in an article from July 19, 1856, entitled "Pious Puffery":

We have from time to time called the attention of the public to the system of pious puffery which has been brought into existence by the demand for religious excitement, and which has been extensively employed for the purpose of advertising popular preachers, or pious periodicals. In what may be called low religions neighbourhoods, the plan of bill-sticking has been very generally adopted with the view of obtaining notoriety for certain names, and the walls appear to be divided between the theatres and the chapels, the pet parsons and the popular comedians. In one particular neighbourhood the broadsides proclaiming the attractions of the conventicle are so blended with those inviting audiences to the playhouse, that it is really difficult at first sight to distinguish one from the other; and a glance is likely to create in our minds a confusion as to whether the Rev. C. Spurgeon is to be seen "every night at half-price," or whether it is Mr. Wright or the Rev. Something Binney that appears "during the week" in "A Bottle of Smoke at the Adelphi."¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ *The Morning Chronicle*, August 17, 1859. The term "Spurgeonism" was employed by many others as well. See Christian George, *The Lost Sermons*, 14, fn. 32. The term "Spurgeonisms" was also used not to indicate a technique, but, most likely, a pithy or somewhat controversial saying. In the following article, "Advice in Hot Weather," the writers at *Punch*, in order to stay cool, recommend: "Avoid all theological hairsplitting matters of metaphysical mysticism, Spurgeon-isms, parish squabbles, and Puseyite scandals, until the cool of the evening." *Punch*, July 3, 1858.

¹⁰² Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 284. This pamphleteering went both ways. An early (1857), "unbiased" defender noted, "Notices and correspondence concerning him have appeared in many newspapers and magazines, secular as well as religious. He is the subject of no inconsiderable extent of pamphleteering, and at the present day, the assertion may be boldly ventured that no living preacher gives rise to so much conversation, and it may be added, so much controversy, as the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon." "A Churchman," *Mr. Spurgeon's Critic Criticised*, 2.

¹⁰³ "Pious Puffery" *Punch*, July 19, 1856.

Even the approving biographer, Charles Ray, described him as the “Barnum of the pulpit.”¹⁰⁴ This circus-like atmosphere was noted even at the laying of the foundation stone for the future Metropolitan Tabernacle on August 16, 1859. The following newspaper account captured nicely his use of marketing, his showmanship, and the disgust and criticism that some directed toward him:

For some days past the town has been placarded with huge posters, announcing the laying of the foundation stone of the new chapel, ‘tickets of admission, 2s. 6d., reserved seats, 5s.;

’ whining appeals, ‘that it is hoped the visitors will not omit to lay some money on the stone,’ and then a tea meeting to follow in the ‘horse repository;’ ... Then too there were flags, and evergreens, and decorations, all arranged with a due regard to stage effect, and calculated to afford opportunities for improving the occasion. The performance commenced at two o’ clock. The site chosen as that on which to erect the temple of Spurgeonism is nearly opposite the Elephant and Castle. One huge blue banner bore the inscription in letters of silver, ‘Spurgeon must have room to preach, and thousands to hear.’¹⁰⁵

Up to this point, Spurgeon had preached in a variety of venues, but the goal was to build a structure that would hold the crowds and be a base for ministry.

Spurgeon and the Tabernacle

The Metropolitan Tabernacle, which would come to be known as Spurgeon’s Tabernacle, was tailor-made for Spurgeon. It would provide him with the room he needed to preach and the space for his thousands to hear. The Tabernacle had seating for 3,600. At the end of each pew, there was a flap seat supported by iron rods. These additional seats increased capacity by another thousand. It was also common to allow people to stand

¹⁰⁴ Ray, *The Life of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 195.

¹⁰⁵ *The Morning Chronicle*, August 17, 1859. The same account included the phrase “monster tabernacle” and concluded, “The rapid growth of the fame of this prominent Baptist minister is one of the curiosities of the age.” The writers at *Punch* used the expression “monster chapel”: What is to be done with the Great Exhibition building? Will the REVEREND MR. SPURGEON make a monster chapel of it? or will some enterprising manager convert it into a big theatre? “A Theatre for Brompton,” *Punch*, January 24, 1863.

through the service, adding another thousand. Spurgeon's Tabernacle had a total capacity of around 6,000.¹⁰⁶ It was the largest Nonconformist Church in the world.¹⁰⁷ It dwarfed other Protestant churches, including Carr's Lane Chapel in Birmingham, the home of R. W. Dale (1829-1895), which had a capacity of 1,800 and was praised for its size, except when compared to Spurgeon's "gigantic hall."¹⁰⁸ It was bigger than Newman Hall's (1816-1902) Surrey Chapel, which had a maximum capacity of 2,500.¹⁰⁹ The Metropolitan Tabernacle was larger than Joseph Parker's (1830-1902) City Temple.¹¹⁰ William Adamson described the City Temple's capacity and ornateness, features which were notably absent from the "Temple of Spurgeonism.":

The City Temple was now open [dedicated May 19, 1874] for the high and holy ends for which it had been erected. It is a noble structure, and is one of the finest and best adapted for public worship in the City of London. It accommodates two thousand five hundred persons with seats, but when all available space is occupied—which is almost every Sunday—it holds

¹⁰⁶ Curnow et al., "The Preacher's Progress," 42. Drummond quoted Charles Ray, "On the evening of Spurgeon's jubilee, Lord Shaftesbury presiding, one deacon said, 'We counted eight thousand out of her; I don't know where she put 'em, but we did.'" Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 350. Certainly, eight thousand was exceptional.

¹⁰⁷ Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 97.

¹⁰⁸ "The Jubilee of Carr's Lane Chapel," *The Birmingham Daily Post*, September 26, 1870. One newspaper, *The Illustrated London News*, called it Spurgeon's "colossal tabernacle." (August 20, 1859) This article was written just after the laying of the foundation stone for the tabernacle.

¹⁰⁹ Newman Hall, *Sermons by Rev. Newman Hall D. D. with A History of Surrey Chapel and Its Institutions* (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1868), 23.

¹¹⁰ Joseph Parker described the Metropolitan Tabernacle as a "huge structure." Albert Dawson, a biographer of Joseph Parker, related how the two esteemed preachers swapped pulpits on a Thursday night service, "At one Thursday service (February 15th, 1883), C. H. Spurgeon preached in the City Temple, Dr. Parker occupying the pulpit of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in the evening. Dr. Parker's impressions of his visit will be of interest: 'I have had the pleasure of paying a visit to the Metropolitan Tabernacle and preaching in that huge structure such words as were given to me. I cannot let an event of that kind pass without saying how thankful I am for my own sake that it has transpired. No more cordial and sympathetic reception could have been given to any minister of Christ by all who take a leading part in the affairs of the Church. I do not know that I was ever in such a climate during the whole course of my ministry; every one seemed to be aflame with sacred zeal and love.'" (Albert Dawson, *Joseph Parker His Life and Ministry*. London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1901), 107.

upwards of three thousand. Its proportions are symmetrical and its acoustics perfect. The windows are mostly memorial, filled with richly designed stained glass, and the pulpit, inlaid with variously coloured marbles, is commodious and commanding.¹¹¹

J. W. Stephenson was a gifted church financier, physician, and preacher who built the commanding Metropolitan Church (AME) of Washington, DC. Simmons and Turner, in *Men of Mark*, a collection of biographical sketches about African-Americans who made significant contributions to society, noted:

He [Stephenson] is one of the greatest revivalists in the connection, and is likely to become the Spurgeon of the A. M. E. church, and is looked upon as being the greatest church-builder and financier of the connection, having planned and constructed the largest church among colored people in the United States, namely, the Metropolitan Church of Washington, District of Columbia. This church has a seating capacity of two thousand five hundred.¹¹²

Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887), pastor of the Plymouth Church in Brooklyn was another well-known pulpit giant who preached to capacity crowds. His church was described as “a cavernous building that could hold a standing-room only crowd of three thousand people—which it did whenever he was slated to give the sermon.”¹¹³ Although Spurgeon’s typical crowds dwarfed Beecher’s, both men were known for their dynamic style: “Beecher’s volcanic preaching was so widely celebrated that tourists by the hundreds

¹¹¹ William Adamson, *The Life of the Rev. Joseph Parker, D. D.* (London: Cassell and Company, 1902), 118-9. See also, “The City Temple” *The Illustrated London News*, February 6, 1875.

¹¹² William J. Simmons and Henry MacNeal Turner, *Men of Mark: Eminent, Progressive and Rising* (Cleveland, OH: Geo. M. Rewell & Co., 1887), 822.

¹¹³ Debby Applegate, *The Most Famous Man in America: The Biography of Henry Ward Beecher* (New York: Three Leaves Press, 2006), 4.

took the Sunday ferries, nicknamed “Beecher Boats” from Manhattan to Brooklyn to hear the flamboyant preaching at “Beecher’s Theater.”¹¹⁴

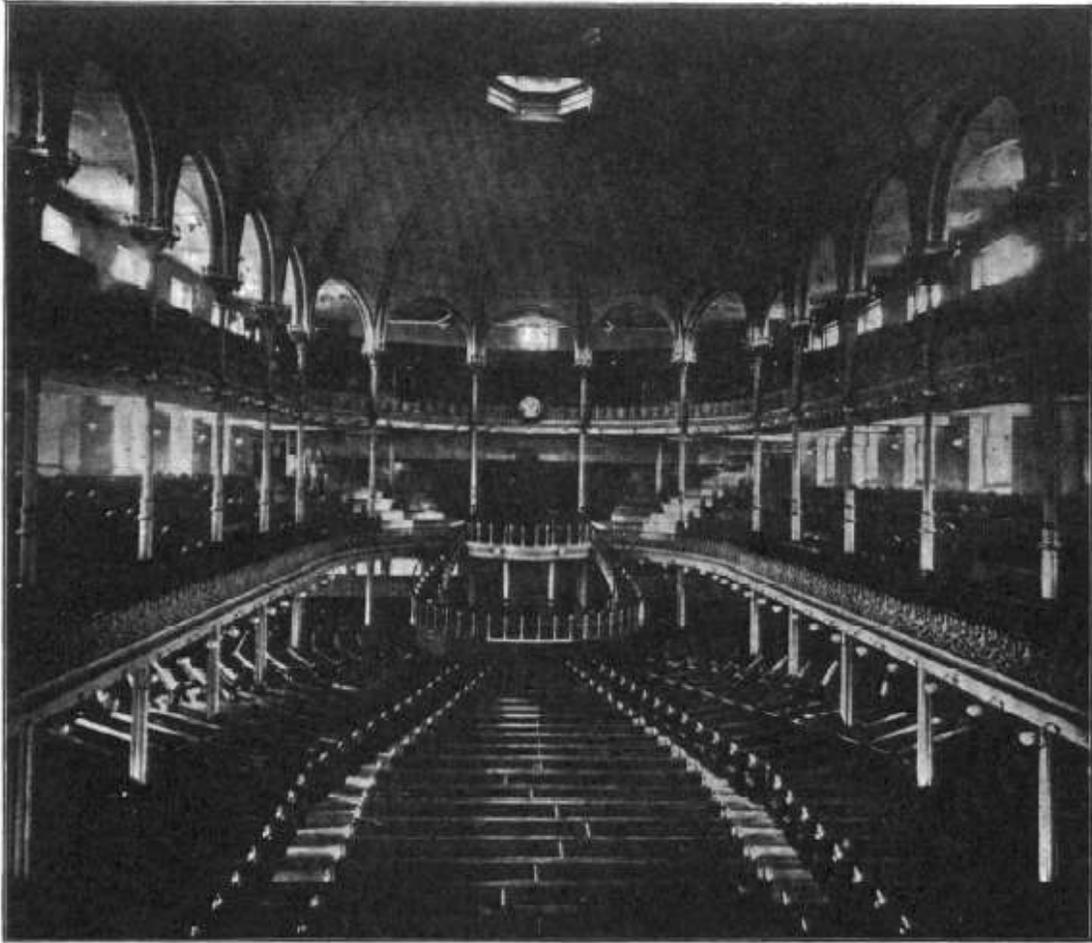
The Tabernacle was designed in Grecian style. Spurgeon rejected the Gothic architecture that was predominant at the time. Greek was the language of the New Testament and, therefore, according to Spurgeon, should govern the design of the Tabernacle. The façade had six pillars.¹¹⁵ There was a basement that could hold 900. There were six class rooms and an additional spacious Sunday School class room for 1,000 children. The building was constructed with multiple exits and enlarged staircases leading to the galleries. Each staircase led to its own exit. Spurgeon was determined that the Surrey Gardens Music Hall disaster could not be repeated at the Tabernacle.¹¹⁶ The real glory of the Tabernacle was its main floor with two levels of gallery seating and a protruding platform.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 4. “Beecher Boats” had their rough equivalent in London, “The conductors of the horse-drawn buses on the north side of the Thames, on Sunday mornings, used to entice people into their vehicles with the shout, ‘Over the water to Charlie!’ and with what eagerness they clambered aboard.” Ernest W. Bacon, *Spurgeon: Heir of the Puritans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman’s Publishing Co., 1968), 47. For an interesting appeal for visitors to explore Southwark for more than just a visit to “Mr. Spurgeon’s Tabernacle,” see William C. Preston, “Ancient Southwark,” *Good Words*, 30 (December 1889): 683-9.

¹¹⁵ See Appendix C, Figure C38, a stereoview card from 1907 by Underwood & Underwood Publishers. The Metropolitan Tabernacle caught fire in 1898 and much of the church burned. Fortunately, the façade was spared from damage and the structure was rebuilt.

¹¹⁶ Regarding the ability of the congregation to exit quickly, “the provision of the means for the ingress and the egress of the congregation was such that they would be able to quit the chapel [Tabernacle] in about six minutes, whereas at the former place [Surrey Music Hall] it took at least 20 minutes for them to disperse.” *The Times*, April 4, 1860.

¹¹⁷ Bob L. Ross, *A Pictorial Biography of C. H. Spurgeon* (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1974), 67.



INTERIOR OF THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, VIEWED FROM THE AREA.

Fig. 3.1. Interior of the Metropolitan Tabernacle

The platform was spacious and in the words of Kruppa, “The design was intended to allow as many people as possible to see the preacher, for this was a preacher’s church.”¹¹⁸ The area was spacious: “The inner auditorium was 146 feet long and 81 feet wide. It had an elliptical ceiling 62 feet above the main floor. The auditorium floor level was some ten feet above the ground level, which required a large set of steps. Besides many pews on the main

¹¹⁸ Kruppa, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 154.

floor, there were two large galleries or balconies. They wrapped completely around the building, even around the back of the pulpit [platform].”¹¹⁹

This was a structure designed to carry the voice of the speaker to every corner. Spurgeon was known for his strong clear voice. Two early newspaper accounts describe the speed and flow of his delivery: “His delivery is a railway speed of joining sentences, conflagrasticated (sic) into a discourse.”¹²⁰ “He is fluent; he talks without stopping; he has certain theatrical attitudes of which he knows how to make the most.”¹²¹ By this point in his career, he had preached to more than ten thousand with some regularity, as the Surrey Gardens Music Hall had a maximum capacity of ten to twelve thousand.¹²² Robert Shindler cited a diary entry of Charles Greville (1794-1865): “—8th February, 1857. I have just come from hearing the celebrated Mr. Spurgeon preach in the Music Hall of the Surrey Gardens. It was quite full. He told us from the pulpit that there 9,000 persons present. He [has] a very clear and powerful voice, which was heard throughout the hall.”¹²³ His voice was also

¹¹⁹ Lewis Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 350. See Shindler, *From the Usher's Desk*, 99, for an illustration of the Surrey Gardens Music Hall.

¹²⁰ *The Bucks Chronicle*, April 28, 1855. Cited in Spurgeon, *Autobiography, Volume 2*, 53. Eric Hayden noted the pace of his delivery, “For an average sermon, Spurgeon took no more than one page of notes into the pulpit, yet he spoke at the rate of 140 words per minute for 40 minutes.” Eric Hayden, “Did You Know?” *Christian History* 10, no. 29 (1991): 2.

¹²¹ *The Bristol Advertiser*, April 12, 1856 cited in Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, vol. 2, 58.

¹²² Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 238. “A fruit seller of Kennington, questioned in 1908, remembered Spurgeon in the Surrey Gardens days: ‘He was a stout man and wore a broad-brimmed hat. People used to say that he ran down the theatre, and yet he copied a lot of his antics from there.’” (*The Surrey Comet*, October, 1908). Quoted from <http://www.romans45.org/spurgeon/misc/bio5.htm#note17>, accessed December 17, 2016.

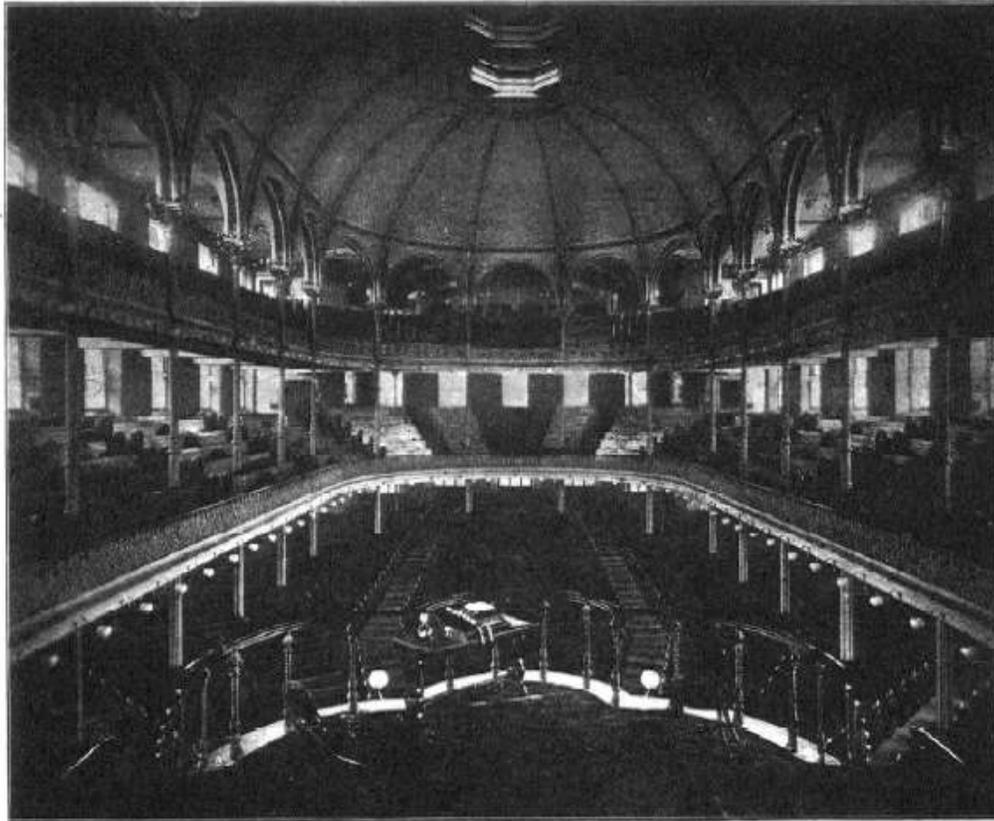
¹²³ Shindler, *From the Usher's Desk*, 101-2. The entry in *Greville Memoirs* continued, “a manner natural, impassioned, and without affectation or extravagance; wonderful fluency and command of language, abounding in illustration, and every often of a very familiar kind, but without anything ridiculous or irreverent.” (102).

clearly heard in the Crystal Palace when those assembled numbered more than twenty-three thousand. Spurgeon's voice had no difficulty in reaching out to every hearer.

While the building was certainly designed to enable everyone to hear the great preacher, its extended or protruding platform also allowed for him to be seen. Spurgeon's dynamic preaching, his peripatetic style, demanded that his body be observed. Drummond described the pastor's stage:

The auditorium itself had no pulpit, at least in the traditional sense. A curving platform projected out from the wrap-around first balcony. An open railing surrounded the platform, which held only a table and a settee for the pastor. Below this preaching platform on the ground floor level, another curving platform contained a marble baptistery. It had been constructed high enough that the baptisms were fully visible by all the people. A temporary floor covered the baptistery on which they placed the communion table and chairs when the church observed the Lord's Supper.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 350-1.



THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE.—VIEW FROM THE PULPIT.

Fig. 3.2. Interior of Metropolitan Tabernacle, view from the platform

Once constructed, the Metropolitan Tabernacle would be his home and a base of operations for a variety of ministries.¹²⁵ It became one of the sights of London: “‘For a generation no country trip to town has been complete,’ wrote a friendly critic, ‘without a visit to the great religious theater where Mr. Spurgeon so completely filled the stage.’”¹²⁶ It

¹²⁵ For a description of the how the Tabernacle was a “centre of social service,” see Philip Paul, “Spurgeon and Social Reform,” *The Expository Times* 86, no. 8 (May 1975): 246-7; David Nelson Duke, “Charles Haddon Spurgeon: Social Concern Exceeding an Individualistic, Self-Help Ideology,” *Baptist History and Heritage* 22, no. 4 (October 1987): 47-56; Lewis Drummond *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, chapter 8 “Spurgeon’s Social, Educational, and Outreach Ministries,” 397-441; and Ian F. Shaw, “Caring for Children,” *Christian History* 10, no. 29 (1991): 31-3.

¹²⁶ Fullerton, *C. H. Spurgeon, A Biography*, 133. Kenneth D. Brown wrote, “Describing a visit made to London by some of his rural relatives the historian A. L. Rowse notes that it included the ‘obligatory’ trip to hear Spurgeon at the Metropolitan Tabernacle.” Kenneth D. Brown, *A Social History of the Nonconformist Ministry*, 199. Another example comes from the *Review of Reviews*: “The Metropolitan Tabernacle became

was also called a “place of pilgrimage.”¹²⁷ He never traveled to the United States to preach, although he had been offered large sums to make the journey.¹²⁸ He would continually preach in the Tabernacle, only taking a break in 1867, while some renovations were made to the building.¹²⁹ The presence of the Tabernacle offered tangible proof that Spurgeon was not a “comet” or a flash in the pan. It also “provided a statement of the solidness of his work.”¹³⁰ Spurgeon would spend the next thirty-one years preaching from that platform, gripping the rail, and pointing his right finger heavenward.¹³¹

thus one of the pilgrim shrines of the nineteenth century. “I dinna want to die,” said an old North-countryman, “till I gan to London to see Madame Tussaud’s and to hear Mr. Spurgeon”; and the odd juxtaposition of the Waxworks and the Tabernacle illustrates the extent to which the ‘Essex bumpkin’ had made himself one of the sights of town.” Albert Shaw, ed. *The Review of Reviews* 5, no. 26 (March 1892), 146.

¹²⁷ Rosemary Chadwick, “Charles Haddon Spurgeon,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 52, eds. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 7.

¹²⁸ James Munson (*The Nonconformists: In Search of a Lost Culture*. (London: SPCK, 1991), 138. See also Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 135.

¹²⁹ The Agricultural Hall, Islington was used in March and April of 1867. The following is from a monthly magazine (May 1, 1867), entitled *The Church*, under the section, “News of the Churches”: “For several Sundays, since the publication of our last number, the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon has been preaching at the Agricultural Hall, Islington, during the repair of the Tabernacle. The audiences have been estimated at upwards of twenty thousand, and all have heard! The sermons have been most appropriate and impressive—From the April number of the *Sword and the Trowel* we learn the following interesting facts:—The net increase of membership is small, “ and,” adds Mr. Spurgeon, “ we trust it always will be, for our object is to induce our friends to swarm off into now hives, as they have done this year.” *The Church*, vol. 10, New Series (London: Elliott Stock Publ., 1867), 140.

¹³⁰ Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 100.

¹³¹ See Appendix C, Figure C19. This is the famous caricature of Spurgeon at the rail from *Vanity Fair*, December 10, 1870.

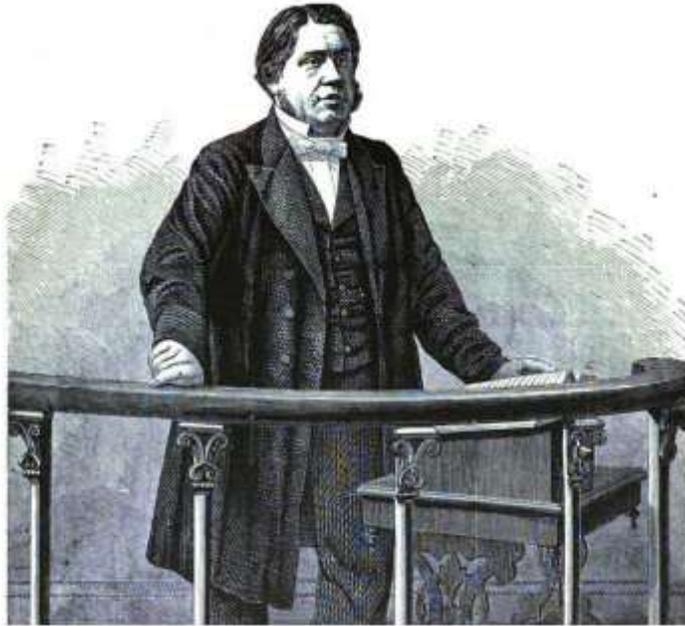


Fig. 3.3. Young Spurgeon at the Rail¹³²

Spurgeon's Tabernacle was notable for its extended or protruding platform. Eric W. Hayden referred to the platform and its famous rail as the "crow's nest."¹³³ This lofty perch allowed every eye to be on Spurgeon. James Munson noted, "*The Building News* said in 1860 that the new chapel, which was then the largest building in England for public worship, had solved Wren's query as to how 5,000 people in one building could all both see and hear a service. In the Tabernacle all but fifty had a perfect view."¹³⁴ This was, indeed, a church designed for the preacher to be seen. The following description of the movement of Spurgeon comes from a pamphlet published just after the opening of the Tabernacle:

Mr. Spurgeon uses the greatest freedom of motion of any modern preacher of celebrity. His hands in the fervour of his appeals, traverse the hand-rail along

¹³² Albert Shaw, ed. *The Review of Reviews* 5, no. 26 (March 1892), 176. This illustration was originally entitled "Mr. Spurgeon in the Pulpit Some Thirty Years Ago."

¹³³ Hayden, "Did You Know?" 1.

¹³⁴ Munson, *The Nonconformists*, 138.

the whole line of his semi-circle, so that when he finishes a sentence or a paragraph, he is standing at a distance of five or six feet from the point at which he began it. His action is sometimes vehement, and his open palm frequently comes down with force upon the hand-rail. Yet his gesticulation is well chosen and never ungraceful; nor does he resort to action except when the elevation of the thought justifies the uplifted arm, the threatening gesture, or the impetuous action.¹³⁵

Another distinguishing feature of the Tabernacle was what it lacked: it contained no organ. In a sermon entitled, “Life v. Machinery,” Spurgeon preached, “The organ can do no more than help us in noise-making, and it is a mere idol, if we imagine that it increases the acceptance of our praises before the Lord.”¹³⁶ Kruppa noted, “Spurgeon followed the Puritans in objecting to musical accompaniment in churches. He refused to allow an organ to be installed in the Tabernacle, even though many in his congregation wanted one.”¹³⁷ The focal point of the building was the preacher’s stage. Drummond added, “The building had no organ or choir loft. A so-called ‘Precentor’ set the pitch of each hymn with a tuning fork and then led the singing with his own voice. Spurgeon said, ‘Services of religion will be

¹³⁵ *An Account of the Life and Extraordinary Preaching of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon* (London: Thomas Wilks, 1861), 7. This is an eleven-page booklet priced at one penny. The subtitle refers to the Metropolitan Tabernacle as an “unsurpassed and gigantic edifice.”

¹³⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Bible and the Newspaper* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1878), 106. It would be a mistake to imagine that the refusal to tolerate an organ meant that Spurgeon minimized the role of singing during the worship service. In fact, in 1868, he commissioned a new hymnal for use at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. In the preface to the hymnal, he noted the demands that a steady flow of visitors puts on their distinctive congregation: “The providence of God brings very many new hearers within the walls of our place of worship, and many a time have we marked their futile researches and pitied the looks of despair with which they have given up all hope of finding the hymns, and so of joining intelligently in our words of praise. We felt that such ought not to be the state of our service of song and resolved if possible to reform it. None of the collections already published are exactly what our congregation needs, or we would have cheerfully adopted one of them. They are good in their way, but we need something more. Our congregation has distinctive features which are not suited by every compilation, not indeed by any known to us.” C. H. Spurgeon, *Our Own Hymn-Book, A Collection of Psalms and Hymns for Public, Social, and Private Worship* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1868), v-vi.

¹³⁷ Kruppa, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 103. James Munson described Joseph Parker’s City Temple, “Behind the pulpit was room for an orchestra although in 1882 an organ was installed, something the more old-fashioned Puritan, Spurgeon would never allow.” (138).

conducted without any peculiarity of innovation. No musical or aesthetic accompaniment will ever be used.”¹³⁸

Spurgeon’s Tabernacle was built without a pipe organ, which he called “the devil’s whistle.”¹³⁹ It also lacked a choir loft and stained glass. Thielicke emphasized its sparseness: “The impression would begin with the interior of the Metropolitan Tabernacle and what went on there. It was an enormous secular hall without any ecclesiastical embellishments: no marble columns, no candles, and no churchly trimmings.”¹⁴⁰ In the words of a local newspaper, “the interior will be chaste and unpretending in its character.”¹⁴¹ Spurgeon’s motivation for this sparseness and absence of stained glass was theological, as Kruppa noted: “Most of his ideas concerning worship were grounded in the teachings of the Puritans. He had the Puritan’s horror of graven images and stained glass. He said of stained glass windows that Cromwell’s hammer was the best way to deal with them and the Romish superstition they represented.”¹⁴² Spurgeon also refused to wear a gown or robes: “Charles always refused to wear clerical garb. He said, ‘Except a duck in pattens, no creature looks more stupid than a dissenting preacher in a gown.’”¹⁴³ He wore a gown only once, when he had the honor to preach in Geneva in Calvin’s pulpit.

¹³⁸ Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 350-1.

¹³⁹ Clive Anderson, *Travel with Spurgeon In the Footsteps of the “Prince of Preachers”* (Surrey: Day One Publications, 2002), 61. This book is described as both a “carefully researched biography and a valuable travel guide.” It is an interesting publication that demonstrates the persistent appeal of Spurgeon and the impulse to pilgrimage.

¹⁴⁰ Helmut Thielicke, *Encounter with Spurgeon* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), 28.

¹⁴¹ *The Times*, December 6, 1860.

¹⁴² Kruppa, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 153-4.

¹⁴³ Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 201.

The ministry of Charles Spurgeon focused on the presentation of and careful attention to a body—Spurgeon’s body on a protruding and elevated platform. The focus was on him and the gospel he was preaching. Distractions and extraneous elements, especially ones that smacked of the “Anti-Christ and Her Brood,” were to be eliminated.¹⁴⁴ To hear Spurgeon was to hear the gospel as the Puritans delivered it (or so he thought), probingly experiential, strongly doctrinal, and presented in an animated fashion. To wear robes or vestments was a hindrance. To allow the eye to be drawn away from the preacher by the presentation of idolatrous images formed in glass was a sacrilege. To be caught up in pomp and rituals was to deny the Word of God and, by extension,—the preacher of the Word of God—the attention that they deserved.¹⁴⁵

Spurgeon’s preaching performances were also aided, though not consciously so, by his anti-ritualism. The unadorned nature of his worship service reinforced the audience’s focus on the presentation of his body. This was not something Spurgeon intended, but, nonetheless, it resulted in increasing the significance of the physical presence of Spurgeon on his platform.

¹⁴⁴ At age fifteen, Spurgeon wrote an essay that won an honorable mention in a local contest. The title of his essay was “Anti-Christ And Her Brood or Popery Unmasked.” Spurgeon’s strong anti-Catholic sentiments were not uncommon, most often being fueled by political concerns and the popularity of *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*. In a letter to his church in December of 1871 while vacationing in Rome, Spurgeon wrote the following: “Standing where Satan’s seat is, in the midst of ten thousand idols, I beseech those who worship God in the Spirit to wrestle in prayer for times of refreshing, that all lands may know that Jesus Christ is Lord.” Hannah Wyncoll, *The Suffering Letters of C. H. Spurgeon* (London: Wakeman Trust, 2007), 155. His opposition to the Catholic Church was so strong and well-known that *Punch*, in a column called “Infallible Intelligence,” made light of it: “Mr. Whalley is expected to spend Christmas in a visit at the Vatican, in company with...the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.” *Punch*, December 5, 1874.

See Hopkins, *Nonconformity’s Romantic Generation*, 160, for a slight shift in Spurgeon’s position toward the end of his career.

¹⁴⁵ Here is one area that Spurgeon differed from his hero, George Whitefield. “The very pomp and ritual that dissenters found so offensive and ‘papist’ were to Whitefield, in light of both childhood experience and theatrical eye, consistent with the gospel he proclaimed.” Stout, *The Divine Dramatist*, 202.

Spurgeon and Anti-Ritualism

The next portion of the paper will explore Spurgeon's anti-ritualism. What factors were involved in Spurgeon's anti-ritualism? Why was it so extreme? What function did it serve? The answers are not simple. Anti-ritualism cannot be presented as a single thread easily traced through his life. Rather, it is a multiplicity of threads interwoven to form a tapestry. Each one is intertwined and dependent on the other. However, it is possible to discern some of those threads that make up that tapestry. The factors to be explored in this portion of the chapter are: Spurgeon's theological emphasis that derived from the Puritans; the connection of ritual with Rome; the perceived Catholic resurgence in England of the mid-nineteenth century; and the connection he drew between ritual and the High Churchmen of the Church of England (Puseyism).

Without a question or a doubt, the single greatest influence on the life of Spurgeon was the thought of the Puritans. From an early age, he was immersed in Puritan books. His work on the Psalms, *The Treasury of David*, is a massive commentary on the Psalms, replete with Puritan quotes. He read Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* once through every year. He grew up reading *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. He admired the sacrifice of the martyrs. He adopted their theological emphases.

Nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in the plainness of the Worship Service and the centrality of the preaching of the Word. The Puritans, following the Reformers before them, had stripped away the sacraments, which were falsely believed to have salvifically efficacious power. His emphasis was on justification by faith and by faith alone. But how would this faith come? The Puritans knew that "faith came by hearing and hearing by the Word." (Romans 10:17). The decisive moment, the powerful event in the

service, no longer happened at the altar; it now happened in the pulpit. It was a very serious responsibility, indeed, to preach the Word. It was through the preacher that the “mystery” of salvation would be plainly revealed. This preaching had a sense of urgency. It had for its content the Scriptures. It had for its conduit a preacher who had experienced what he was urging his hearers also to experience. The urgency of the preaching moment did not always lend itself to the reading of a sermon. More often than not, the sermon was delivered extemporaneously. David Leverenz notes:

The preacher had to speak from the heart himself: from memory, not from manuscript, William Perkins decreed. He also had to have experienced a valid conversion to preach conversion, somewhat like our contemporary requirement for psychoanalysts. God’s Word had to be the sole ground for preaching, with no extraneous views or private interpretations. Speaking from memory or perhaps notes encouraged a clear format of simple order, authoritative argument, and practical uses. The minister’s aim throughout was not to exercise subtlety or wit but to change behavior toward rebirth in God.

None of that is peculiar to New England Puritanism. At the end of the seventeenth century Richard Baxter defined Puritans as those who had “a suspicion of all that is Ceremonious in God’s Service, and of all which they find not warrant for in Scripture, and a greater inclination to a rational convincing way of Preaching and Prayers, than to the written Forms of Words, which are to be read in Churches. And they are greatly taken with a Preacher that speaketh to them in a familiar natural Language and exhorteth them as if it were for their lives.”¹⁴⁶

The portrait that Leverenz paints fits Spurgeon to a tee. He spoke extemporaneously. He preached without a written text. William Jewell College had an example of his pulpit notes on display. They are little more than a 3”x 5” card with a few scribbled notes on it.¹⁴⁷ Spurgeon also took great care to remove the “ceremonious” from the service. As Lewis

¹⁴⁶ David Leverenz, *The Language of Puritan Feeling* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1980), 141.

¹⁴⁷ Midwestern Seminary purchased the Spurgeon Library from William Jewell College in 2004.

Drummond noted, “The services were very simple in makeup. The ‘order of service’ normally ran as follows:

Silent Meditation
Pastoral Prayer
Hymn
Bible Reading with Comments
Long Prayer
Hymn
Sermon
Benediction”¹⁴⁸

The comparison of Spurgeon’s order of service with one that is taken from the Reformer’s day (1556) is striking. This is an order of service used by the English congregations in Geneva: “The Sunday Morning Service consists of the following items:

A Confession of Sins
A Prayer for Pardon
A metrical Psalm
A Prayer for illumination
The Scripture Lection and Sermon
The Long Prayer and the Lord’s Prayer
The Apostle’s Creed
A metrical Psalm
A Blessing”¹⁴⁹

The essential characteristics of Puritan worship, “the Word of God as sufficient basis of Divine worship and the apostolic simplicity as its precedent,”¹⁵⁰ were clearly the foundation upon which Spurgeon constructed his own worship service. It was this heritage that

¹⁴⁸ Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 372.

¹⁴⁹ Davies, *Expository Preaching*, 31.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 32.

Spurgeon appealed to as legitimate. In a sermon entitled, “The True Apostolic Succession,” he challenged the congregation:

Our fathers were men inured to hardships, and unused to ease. They present to us their children, an unbroken line which comes legitimately from the apostles, not through the filth of Rome, not by the manipulations of prelates, but by the Divine life, the Spirit’s anointing, the fellowship of the Son in suffering and of the Father in truth.¹⁵¹

Spurgeon’s anti-ritualism is steeped in a tradition he traces from the Reformers to the Puritans and down to select Nonconformists in his own day.

The Puritans passed on to Spurgeon their disdain for the Roman Catholic Church.

The following quote, from a sermon by Benjamin Needler, is typical of the Puritans of the mid-to-late seventeenth century:

Let us caution against superstition and all false worship. It is the great interest and concern of the church of Christ, to keep the worship of God pure and uncorrupt. It is to be acknowledged that Satan is a great enemy to the truths of God, as well as the worship of God; yet his design is rather that the worship of God be corrupted, than the truths of God be perverted: for he knows that it is possible for religion to be depraved in some points, and yet many may keep themselves from defilement, and may not be tainted with the errors of the place where they live, or the church unto which they do belong, provided the worship of God be kept pure and uncorrupt; but if once the worship of God be publicly corrupted by superstition and idolatry, it is next to an impossibility if the infection do not spread over the face of the whole church, and by consequence there can be no communion with that church without sin: and hence the great business of Popery is coming to Mass. It may be, some Papists, at least such as are moderate, may allow you to adhere to some Protestant principles, if you will come to the Mass; but that is indispensable.¹⁵²

Two hundred years later, Spurgeon was still marching to the beat of the same drum as he preached:

¹⁵¹ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 7, 1112.

¹⁵² *Puritan Sermons 1659-1689* (Wheaton, IL: Richard Owen Roberts Publishers, 1981), 295.

In the Romish church her images are the image of her faith. What Christ is that which we see portrayed in places of worship of the papal order? We see there times without number Jesus as a child in his mother's arms, feeble, dependent, insignificant; well setting forth how the worship of Christ is overshadowed by that of the Virgin, and how his blood and righteousness are forgotten amid the imaginary glories of Mary. How else do you see the Savior in papal churches? Why, everywhere he is represented as dead, as nailed to a cross, or wrapt in winding-sheets. So far, so good, for we also believe in Christ who died, though we set not up his image or picture; I [sic] but Jesus is not now dead, neither is he here among the tombs, for he has risen. It is testified of Jesus that he liveth; but in the church of Rome it is the priest that lives and sets, and does all things, while the Christ of God is virtually excluded, and made of no avail apart from sacraments and ceremonies.¹⁵³

Spurgeon railed against what he perceived to be the idolatry of the Roman Catholic Church. He rejected the prominence of Mary. He abhorred the presence of the ceremonious. He saw the sacraments and their infusion of merit as the center of the matter. He writes in a sermon entitled, "A Vindication of the Doctrine of the Justification of Faith," "The contest lies really between the Popish doctrine of merit and the Protestant doctrine of grace, and no man who calls himself a Protestant can logically dispute the question with us and our friends."¹⁵⁴ He may have been more right than even he knew.

Spurgeon's fear of Roman Catholicism was one he inherited from the Puritans. He could not tolerate Catholic rituals nor the theology that lay behind those rituals. He saw the Roman Catholic Church not only as polluted but as causing others to stumble into idolatry. In Spurgeon's opinion, the missionary impulse of such an idolatrous church threatened to destroy Christianity itself:

The idea was to Christianize heathenism. They virtually said to idolaters, "Now, good people, you may keep on with your worship, and yet you can be

¹⁵³ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, "The Substance of True Religion," vol. 27, 349.

¹⁵⁴ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 21, 422.

Christians at the same time. This image of the Queen of heaven at your door need not be moved. Light the lamp still; only call the image ‘our Lady,’ and ‘the Blessed Virgin.’ Here is another image; don’t pull it down, but change its name from Jupiter to Peter.” Thus with a mere change of names they perpetuated idolatry: they set up their altars in the groves, and upon every high hill, and the people were converted without knowing it—converted to a baser heathenism than their own. They wanted priests, and, lo, there they were, robed like those who served at the altars of Jove. The people saw the same altars and sniffed the same incense, kept the same holy days and observed the same carnivals as aforetime, and called everything by Christian names. Hence came what is now called the Roman Catholic religion, which is simply fearing God and serving other gods. Every village has its own peculiar saint, and often its own particular black or white image of the Virgin, with miracles and wonders to sanctify the shrine. This evil wrought so universally that Christianity seemed in danger of extinction from the prevalence of idolatry, and it would have utterly expired had it not been of God, and had he not therefore once more put forth his hand and raised up reformers, who cried out, “There is but one God, and one Mediator between God and man.” Brave voices called the church back to her allegiance and to the parity of her faith.¹⁵⁵

There is little doubt that Spurgeon saw the Catholic Church as the great compromiser who had diluted the Gospel into ineffectiveness. The robes or vestments of the priests, the rituals of the church, and the images of the saints all served to cloud the Gospel, bringing the true church to the very brink of destruction. It was Spurgeon’s calling and duty to join those “brave voices” to call “the church back to her allegiance.” But why was such a call necessary?

In the mid- to late nineteenth century, many in England thought that such a call was absolutely necessary. In 1850, Pope Pius IX had issued Letters Apostolic. He restored the English Catholic hierarchy, appointing Nicholas Wiseman as Archbishop of Westminster. Along with this, Wiseman, from Rome, sent a letter to English Catholics that was triumphal in tone, calling on English Catholics to convert their fellow countrymen. The letter fell into

¹⁵⁵ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, “Mongrel Religion,” vol. 27, 726.

the hands of the press. Moorman writes, “The outcry against ‘papal aggression’ was loud and prolonged and Parliament actually passed a bill in 1851 imposing a fine of £100 on any Roman Catholic Bishop who dared to use a title conferred on him by the pope.”¹⁵⁶

Wiseman, who served as Archbishop from 1850 to 1865, was dedicated to his task. He had a missionary’s zeal. He matched Spurgeon for being rigid in his beliefs. He was “flamboyant in his way of life...and exotic in his devotions.”¹⁵⁷ Moorman noted their new zeal:

From now onwards there were parallel episcopates in England and a sudden increase in the building of churches and schools by Roman Catholics and in the publicity given to their activities. A note of aggressiveness now entered into all their work. The Catholic community felt that they had been charged with the responsibility of “converting” the English people, and were prepared to give time, money and energy to this task.¹⁵⁸

Spurgeon also feared this advancing Roman Catholic Church. Archbishop Wiseman was still in office when Spurgeon preached the following sermon in 1864:

Here let me bring in another point. It is a most fearful fact, that in no age since the Reformation has Popery made such fearful strides in England as during the last few years. I had comfortably believed that Popery was only feeding itself upon foreign subscriptions, upon a few titled perverts, and imported monks and nuns. I dreamed that its progress was not real. In fact, I have often smiled at the alarm of many of my brethren at the progress of Popery. But, my dear friends, we have been mistaken, grievously mistaken. If you will read a valuable paper in the magazine called “Christian Work,” those of you who are not acquainted with it will be perfectly startled at its revelations. This great city is now covered with a network of monks, and priests, and sisters of mercy, and the conversions made are not by ones or twos, but by scores, till England is being regarded as the most hopeful spot for Romish missionary enterprise in the whole world;¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ J. R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Church in England* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publ., 1980), 391.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, “Baptismal Regeneration,” vol. 10, 399.

Spurgeon's opposition to ritual, which was well grounded in the theology of the Puritans, was only strengthened by recent fears of a Catholic resurgence. The idea of London being blanketed by "Romish missionaries" led Spurgeon to increase his anti-Catholic rhetoric.

The war which Spurgeon was fighting was really a two-front affair. Not only was Spurgeon battling with a growing Catholic Church, he was also engaged with a High Church Movement within the Church of England. The Tractarian Movement out of Oxford was a reform movement that was more creedal and liturgical in its orientation. Its founders were less inclined toward enthusiasm and more inclined to the *Via Media* that, historically, had characterized the Church of England. Naturally, this meant more ritualism and, in Spurgeon's eyes, a departure from orthodoxy. Spurgeon began producing a monthly magazine, *The Sword and the Trowel*, which declared war on all things ritual, whether they be found in the Roman Catholic Church or the Church of England. As always, his intentions were clearly discernible:

But we fight against doctrinal Popery, not in Rome alone, but at Oxford too. To us the sacramentarianism of the English Church is not a thing to be winked at. We hold that he who hates Popery because of its antichristian teaching, will never stay his hand because it assumes a Protestant dress. The English Church is so Popish in its catechism, its baptismal service and much of its ritualism, that it must not so much be reformed as transformed. These are not times to keep this matter in the background, and we have not done so.¹⁶⁰

Spurgeon's commitment to maintaining a "pure" order of service was only strengthened by this resurgence of ritual that was occurring in some portions of the Church of England. In the recent past, wealthy supporters and proponents of the Oxford Movement,

¹⁶⁰ Spurgeon, *The Sword and the Trowel* (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Press, 1975), vol. 2, preface.

such as E. B. Pusey, had given resources to help the movement, only to realize mixed results:

In 1845 a new church in Leeds, S. Saviour's, had been built by Pusey at his own expense. It immediately introduced certain unfamiliar and therefore suspicious practices. It was administered by a group of clergy who lived on almost monastic lines. A Midnight Mass was celebrated in 1848, and daily Mass introduced in the following year. Confession was widely taught and practiced and many other things hitherto regarded as purely Roman. The Bishop of Ripon described the parish as "a plague-spot in my diocese"; Hook, the Vicar of Leeds was desperately worried about it; even Pusey was disheartened and fearful. The fact that of the first fifteen clergy to serve the Church, nine had gone over to Rome by 1851 showed that there were grounds for apprehension.¹⁶¹

If the Church of England had its apprehensions, the Nonconformists had none, Spurgeon countered:

Listen to the Puseyite, and hear his word: "You should take care to attend Matins, and early celebrations, in our holy and beautiful Church; you should decorate the altar, get a surpliced choir, have processions, and put on the holy garments."

Now, you see at once that these are not spiritual things: these are not life. Ritual performances are very pretty spectacles for silly young ladies, and sillier men to gaze upon, but there is no shadow of spirit or life in them. The High Church ritual does not look like a divine thing; on the contrary, if I stand among the throng, and gaze at all its prettinesses, it looks amazingly like a nursery game, or a stage-play. Want of taste, say you. Not so, I reply; my eyes admire your glittering colors, and the splendor of your services is taking to me, as a man; I enjoy the swell of your organ, and I can even put up with the smell of your incense (if you buy it good), but my spirit does not care for these fooleries, it turns away sickened, and cries, "There is nothing here for me; there is no more nourishment for the spirit in all this than there is food for man in a swine's trough. The words of Jesus Christ are throughout unceremonial and unformal—they are spirit and they are life, and we turn to them with all the greater zest after having seen enough of your childish things."¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ Moorman, *A History of the Church in England*, 353.

¹⁶² Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Pulpit Tabernacle Series*, "A Blow to Puseyism," vol. 11, 703-4.

The idea of a return to ritual, to processions, and to decorated altars was folly to Spurgeon. Those “ritual performances” that the Tractarians encouraged had no vitality in them. They were empty, nothing more than “pretty spectacles” observed by “silly young ladies.” Winning the spiritual war that raged in England would not be accomplished by ritual or holy garments. Spurgeon longed for the purity of a former age: “Architecture, apparel, music, liturgies, these are neither spirit nor life: let those rest on them who will; we can do without them, by God’s help. Our sires, in the Puritanic age, fought and won the battles of Christ without these things.”¹⁶³

Spurgeon’s anti-ritualism was profound. It was anchored in the theology of the Reformers and Puritans. It grew as a counter to religious movements like the Tractarians. It was motivated by political developments, like the influx of the Irish and the growing strength of the Roman Catholic Church. His anti-ritualism, which caused his worship service to be stripped down, perhaps inadvertently, highlighted and focused the attention of his audience on his body.

Spurgeon and the Diseased Body

Spurgeon’s body was not only a presented body, it was also a diseased body. As already noted, he spent a great portion of his ministry suffering from gout, Bright’s disease, and periods of depression. These illnesses kept him from fulfilling his ministerial duties, sometimes for months at a time. J. W. Harrald, nicknamed the “armor-bearer,” was one of Spurgeon’s personal secretaries and a very dear friend. He estimated that “from the age of thirty-five [1869-1870] Spurgeon was out of his pulpit for one-third of the time either in

¹⁶³ Ibid., 704.

pain, sickness or convalescing.”¹⁶⁴ Darrel W. Amundsen noted this time period as a crucial turning point, “Spurgeon was seldom free from pain from 1871 on. The intervals between times of forced rest became increasingly shorter.”¹⁶⁵ One of his memorial biographers, Henry Northrup, noted just such a devastating occurrence: “Soon after the annual College supper which was held in March, 1871...Mr. Spurgeon was laid aside by a more than usually severe attack of gout, which confined him indoors for three long, weary months.”¹⁶⁶

These debilitating seasons of illness only increased as Spurgeon grew older. Lewis Drummond, who structured his biography of Spurgeon by using the allegories found in *Pilgrim’s Progress*, described Spurgeon’s descent: “Frequently he found himself in the grips of ‘Great Despair,’ the character in *Pilgrim’s Progress*. After he reached his mid-forties, his illness and seasons of depression increasingly plagued him. His inherited rheumatic gout played havoc as Bright’s disease began to take its toll.”¹⁶⁷ Peter Morden agreed: “From 1879 this physical suffering became increasingly acute, culminating in his death at the age of fifty-seven.”¹⁶⁸ Some biographers believe that his kidney troubles began before his mid-thirties. Patricia Kruppa located the inception of his physical problems earlier in his ministry: “From the beginning of his ministry until his death there was not a year in which

¹⁶⁴ Nettles, *Living by Revealed Truth*, 595. In October of 1869, he also suffered a “slight attack of small pox.” (Northrup, *Life and Works of Rev. Charles H. Spurgeon*, 98) Regarding Spurgeon’s friendship with Harrald, see *Autobiography*, vol. 4, 223 for a poem written by Spurgeon in Harrald’s honor.

¹⁶⁵ Darrel W. Amundsen, “The Anguish and Agonies of Charles Spurgeon,” *Christian History*, 10, no. 29 (1991): 22.

¹⁶⁶ Northrup, *Life and Works of Rev. Charles H. Spurgeon*, 102.

¹⁶⁷ Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 456.

¹⁶⁸ Peter Morden, “C. H. Spurgeon and Suffering,” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 35, no. 4 (2011): 308.

he enjoyed consistent good health.”¹⁶⁹ Mark Hopkins agrees with Kruppa’s assessment: “Nothing did more to amplify the cycle of ecstasy and despondency than the ill-health that dogged him for most of his ministry. The kidney trouble he began to have in his early twenties developed into chronic Bright’s disease; and he was afflicted by rheumatic gout for prolonged periods after 1867.”¹⁷⁰ The exact timing of the beginning of Spurgeon’s illnesses may remain a mystery, but there seems to be agreement that 1867 was a crucial year, followed by an increase in the number of episodes beginning in the period of 1869 to 1870. One woman noticed a difference in him in 1865. She had heard Spurgeon preach in 1857 and had described his “square forehead and magnificent dark eyes.”¹⁷¹ Then, eight years later, she noted his deterioration, he was “coarse-looking even to grossness, heavy in form and features,” but “as soon as he spoke, one felt the same power was there and that the man himself was unchanged.”¹⁷² Whether the swelling was due to Bright’s disease is unclear.

Spurgeon was afflicted with Bright’s disease, and this was complicated with gout.

These two conditions were often related. The following entry is from *Modern Household Medicine* (1893):

Chronic Kidney or Bright’s Disease

DESCRIPTION AND SYMPTOMS.—: This malady may date back to an attack of acute inflammation, such as we have described in the last section, or it may arise independently, being often associated with gout. The patient first complains of feeling weak, and then notices some puffiness about the ankles and eyelids. The urine, in the early stage is generally frequent and copious, and is passed several times at night; it contains albumen, which may be easily detected by the process described under “The Urine,” Part I. Gradually the

¹⁶⁹ Kruppa, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 387.

¹⁷⁰ Hopkins, *Nonconformity’s Romantic Generation*, 130.

¹⁷¹ Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism*, 41.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

patient becomes weaker, the amount of urine is diminished, and dropsy becomes general. The lungs may become involved, or the urine becomes more and more scanty, the solid portion (urea) is not excreted, convulsions ensue, and the patient dies comatose.¹⁷³

The same document defines a condition often mentioned by Spurgeon's biographers—rheumatic gout, “When Chronic Rheumatism, (not being a sequel to an acute seizure) attacks the small joints of the feet and hands, it is termed Rheumatic Gout.”¹⁷⁴ These two conditions, combined with a tendency toward depression (melancholy), made for some very dark days for Spurgeon. In a letter to a medical advisor, he described both the pain and his willingness to try to follow the orders of his doctors: “Omitting further medicine I felt better, but in the evening shock returned. Pains in the ears, jaws, and temples flashed continually, I felt strung up and ready to snap.”¹⁷⁵ He continued, “I took a dose of Tonga [?] about 12...for the present I would rather leave this powerful medicine.”¹⁷⁶ Tonga was a “compound fluid extract prepared from the root of *Raphidophora vitiensis* (nat. ord., Araceae) and the bark of *Premna taitensis* (nat. ord., Verbenaceae), both plants indigenous to the Fiji Islands.”¹⁷⁷ At this period, it was a well-known remedy for neuralgia and gout, as well as epilepsy and syphilis.

¹⁷³ Charles Robert Fleury, *Modern Household Medicine: A Guide to the Mode of Recognition and the Rational Treatment of Diseases and Emergencies Incidental to Daily Life* (London: E. Gould & Son, 1893), 358.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁷⁵ Iain Murray, *Letters of Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1992), 168.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 168-9.

¹⁷⁷ George S. Davis, *The Pharmacology of the Newer Materia Medica: Embracing the Botany, Chemistry, Pharmacy and Therapeutics of New Remedies Being the Results of the Collective Investigation of New Remedies, as Conducted Under the “Working Bulletin” System, Properly Arranged, Classified, and Indexed* (Detroit, MI: publisher not given, 1889), 1176. Eventually, the use of Tonga fell out of favor. “This native mixture of plant drugs was recommended to the profession for trial by Dr. Sidney Ringer and Wm. Murrell in 1880, but it has not fulfilled their expectations and is no longer treated by authorities on pharmacology. The fact that it is an indefinite mixture of practically unknown drugs is sufficient to exclude it from rational

Spurgeon listened to and consulted with a variety of doctors. He was often offered well-meaning advice and samples of medicinal cures by his congregation. In late 1867, after a severe attack of rheumatic gout/Bright's disease, he addressed the congregation through his monthly magazine, *The Sword and the Trowel*:

— I have spent two months in ill health, and much of the time in severe pain, but, by the good hand of God upon me, I am now much better, and hope to resume my home work very speedily. It is due to many friends to make the following communications; and I beg them to receive them with their customary kindness.

1. MANY THANKS are hereby tendered to the scores of thoughtful friends who have sent me prescriptions of eminent physicians, medical works, and advice as to homeopathy, hydropathy, animal magnetism, galvanism, Turkish baths, patent medicines, cotton wool, hot fomentations, cold compresses, etc., etc. I can assure my friends that I have had communications concerning all these, and more. It has been a great pleasure to receive such a vast number and variety of evidences that Warm sympathy towards me abounds, and an additional comfort to discover that there are at least hundreds of ways in which rheumatism and rheumatic gout may be cured, in periods varying from an hour to a week. My gratitude is doubly due to those who not only gave me advice and prescriptions, but were so generous as to purchase the medicines and send them to my house. I have received boxes of pills, bottles of liniment, and phials of physic in super-abundance; I am most truly grateful for the kind feeling which prompted the gifts, but I have been so utterly bewildered as to which out of such a number should have the first trial, that I have fallen back upon my kind friend and tried physician, Dr. Palfrey, of Finsbury Place, and I feel quite content with the result of having followed his directions. Will friends be so good as to cut off the medical supplies, now that all need for them is, I trust, over for the present! While some of the prescriptions are more amusing than valuable, there are little incidents connected with some of these well-meant gifts which much pleased me; it would not be right to print them, but they proved most clearly that the poorest persons can show their sympathy with as much tenderness and delicacy as the best educated and the most refined.¹⁷⁸

therapeutics. Tonga was first exploited by Parke, Davis & Co. and it has since been incorporated into a number of nostrums which are sold under extravagant claims for the relief of neuralgic pains, rheumatism, etc.” *A Reprint of the Reports of the Council on Pharmacy and Chemistry of the American Medical Association with the Contents that Appeared in the Journal during 1912* (Chicago: Press of American Medical Association, 1913), 47.

¹⁷⁸ “The Editor’s Illness,” *The Sword and the Trowel* (November 1867), 465-6.

The letter revealed that Spurgeon's congregation, along with others not directly connected to the Metropolitan Tabernacle, were moved by love and sympathy to try to alleviate his pain.¹⁷⁹ Spurgeon's playfulness and sense of humor was also manifest in this letter. Despite his pleas, the flow of advice from his people continued more or less unabated. Eight years later, he wrote, "We have received many prescriptions for the gout, both for inward and outward application, and should have been dead long ago if we had tried half of them."¹⁸⁰ His real concern was that the work of the Tabernacle should continue to be supported in his long absences. In the same letter, he urged, "Those who would really aid in the restoration of our health can best do so by preventing our having any anxiety about either College, Orphanage, or Colportage while we are away. If the funds keep up, and the works are carried on by those engaged in them, and especially if the Lord will bless the enterprises, it will be better to us than all the lotions, liniments, specifics, and elixirs put together, with twenty sorts of magnetisms thrown in."¹⁸¹

Spurgeon's health continued to decline through the 1880s. He often took recuperative trips to Mentone, in the South of France. The first of his trips to Mentone was in 1871. He had encountered the resort town a few years earlier on a European tour and found the climate agreeable and restorative.¹⁸² He did not travel alone on these trips but was

¹⁷⁹ See William Brian Albert, "When the Cold Wind Blows" for a list of books in the Midwestern Library sent to Spurgeon from physicians with inscriptions.

¹⁸⁰ *The Sword and the Trowel* (February 1875), 275.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² Mentone was a popular resort town in Southern France on the Mediterranean. Queen Victoria visited the area for the first time in 1882. She helped transform the region (including Mentone) into a tourist destination. Michael Nelson notes, "Queen Victoria did not herself discover the Riviera, of course, but she did affirm its position as an important holiday centre, rather than a centre for convalescence." Michael Nelson, *Queen Victoria and the Discovery of the Riviera* (New York: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 2001), 2. For an important work

accompanied by his private secretary J. W. Harrald and sometimes a personal physician, Dr. Bennet.¹⁸³ His wife, Susie, was sick herself and did not accompany Spurgeon with the exception of the very last trip he made.¹⁸⁴ Spurgeon often fellowshipped with other well-known religious figures on these trips.¹⁸⁵ These recuperative trips included working on forthcoming books (*The Treasury of David*), editing his magazine (*The Sword and the Trowel*), and responding to correspondence, but the work load did not begin to compare with his normal work load when in London.

It was Spurgeon's incredible schedule that some biographers conclude hastened the onset of disease and exhaustion. As Dallimore notes, "Spurgeon's ill health was very largely caused by the tremendous amount of work he tried to do and the burden of responsibility he constantly carried."¹⁸⁶ The more recent biographer, Tom Nettles, notes the

that revolutionized the travel habits of the British, see Tobias Smollett, *Travels through France and Italy* (1766).

¹⁸³ In a letter dated November 24, 1879, Spurgeon wrote to his deacons and elders from Mentone, "I am carefully attended by one of the most skilful of physicians, who has for some years been my friend, namely Dr. Bennet." Hannah Wyncoll, *The Suffering Letters of C. H. Spurgeon*, 34. Dr. Bennet authored *Winter and Spring on the Shores of the Mediterranean, Or, the Riviera, Mentone, Italy, Corsica, Sicily, Algeria, Spain, and Biarritz, as Winter Climates*, 4th ed. (London: John Churchill and Sons, 1870 [1861]). Bennet helped to popularize Mentone and the whole French Riviera as a resort area especially beneficial for those recovering from illness. Of course, a certain amount of wealth was required to convalesce in those surroundings for an extended period of time. The ability to retreat to Mentone separated Spurgeon from almost all of his church members with few exceptions.

¹⁸⁴ Susie was treated by the famous Dr. James Y. Simpson, known for his work with chloroform. He was a friend and admirer of Spurgeon and operated on Mrs. Spurgeon in 1867. He did not charge Spurgeon for his services, writing, instead, "Well, I suppose it [the cost of the operation] should be a thousand guineas; and when you are the Archbishop of Canterbury, I shall expect you to pay it. Till then, let us consider it settled by love" 366. See C. D. T. James, "Spurgeon and Simpson," *Baptist Quarterly* 20, no. 8 (October 1964): 365-8. See also Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 136.

¹⁸⁵ A couple of examples: W. Y. Fullerton described a trip to Mentone that son Thomas took with his illustrious father in January of 1879, "He [Thomas] had the privilege of meeting three notable men—Hudson Taylor, George Mueller, and Pastor John Bost of the Hospitals of La Force." W. Y. Fullerton, *Thomas Spurgeon: A Biography*, 84-5.

¹⁸⁶ Dallimore, *Spurgeon*, 133.

sheer stamina Spurgeon needed to maintain his work: “One should not marvel that Spurgeon became chronically sick comparatively early in his ministry; rather, the marvel is that he was able to maintain such a trying and rigorous schedule of travel and preaching for so many years before it became impossible.”¹⁸⁷ As early as 1871, a tome devoted to celebrities of religion and philanthropy expressed sympathy with Spurgeon: “The toil he goes through is wonderful, what with his Orphanage, his great Tabernacle, his public calls, and an endless detail of activities. No wonder they tell every now and then on his health.”¹⁸⁸

Eventually, Bright’s disease, crippling seasons of gout, and the related times of depression began to wear on Spurgeon. The “boy wonder of the fens” was gone. His ability to play the peripatetic was coming to an end. His body was now a “compromised body.”¹⁸⁹ Kruppa notes the change in his preaching style: “In later years Spurgeon was not so free to roam across the platform as he preached. Gout slowed him down, and it was often necessary for him to preach with his knee resting on a chair to ease his pain.”¹⁹⁰ One report, written after the Tabernacle had caught fire (April 1898), recalled Spurgeon’s difficulties: “Rows of faces all turned towards the platform... a door was opened, and Charles Haddon Spurgeon came slowly, often in evident pain, down the stairs to the semi-circular platform.”¹⁹¹ His wife, Susie, described the change in his preaching:

So extremely sensitive as my beloved was to any degree of pain, it was simply marvelous how he overcame this weakness of body, and served while

¹⁸⁷ Nettles, *Living by Revealed Truth*, 31.

¹⁸⁸ *Fifty Portraits of Religious and Philanthropic Celebrities* (London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1871), 34.

¹⁸⁹ Nettles, *Living by Revealed Truth*, 30.

¹⁹⁰ Kruppa, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 80-1.

¹⁹¹ “The Destruction of Spurgeon’s Tabernacle,” *The Sketch*, April 26, 1898.

suffering, when work for the Master called forth his spiritual energies. Many a time, at the Tabernacle, has he painfully limped into his pulpit, leaning heavily on his stick, and, unable to stand, has preached, kneeling with one knee on a Chair; but even then, the astonished congregation has seen him, warming to his work, and inspired by his all-consuming zeal, push the chair aside, and, grasping the rail of the platform with both hands, stand there for the rest of the service, apparently forgetful of his bodily distress, because absorbed by his passionate desire to persuade poor sinners to come to Christ.”¹⁹²

As early as March of 1881, he needed help to ascend to his protruding platform.¹⁹³ Peter Morden, cited an article in *The Baptist*, “the results of this latest attack [March 1881] were unmistakable on his countenance as he tackled the platform steps with the aid of a stick.”¹⁹⁴ Ten years later and just about ten months before his death, his friend from Boston, Rev. George Lorimer, was visiting the Tabernacle and recorded the scene:

Some ten months ago I parted from him on leaving London for my home, and I brought with me the impression of a change prophetic of the end; though I admit it has come sooner than I expected. He seemed to have grown prematurely old; his shoulders were more bent than formerly; he leaned heavily on chair or railing when he preached, and walked with painful slowness; and though his mind was apparently as clear as ever, his voice unmistakably betrayed his physical infirmity, and his countenance was careworn, and rarely illumined with its old-time fascinating smile.¹⁹⁵

Spurgeon was very close to the end. For years, Spurgeon had missed months at a time while he recovered and gathered his strength. But now the inflammation of his kidneys, the

¹⁹² Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, vol. 4, 351-2.

¹⁹³ In early January of 1892, Spurgeon showed some signs of recovery but then passed on January 31, 1892. During this last trip to Mentone, the church decided to build a lift so that Spurgeon would no longer have to struggle with the steps to the platform. Biographer Jesse Page noted, “The people... who had begun to build a lift so that he might be spared the toil of the staircase, were now in mute grief to receive that olive casket with its precious burden and palm branches at the doors.” Jesse Page, *Spurgeon: His Life and Ministry*, 154.

¹⁹⁴ Peter Morden, “C. H. Spurgeon and Suffering,” 309. See also *The Times*, August 25, 1884, “The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon has been suffering for the past few days from rheumatic gout, and yesterday was unable to preach at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. His place was occupied by his son, Mr. Thomas Spurgeon.”

¹⁹⁵ George C. Lorimer, *Charles Haddon Spurgeon: The Puritan Preacher in the Nineteenth Century* (Boston: James H. Earle Publisher, 1892), 18.

painful swelling, the labored breathing, and the general strain to his system was keeping him out of the pulpit with even greater regularity. Peter Morden notes, “During this final phase of ministry, the question as to whether or not Spurgeon would be able to take the services at his church on any given Sunday became a weekly drama, one that was regularly played out in the press.”¹⁹⁶ His last Sunday at the Tabernacle was June 7, 1891. Eric Hayden adds, “He broke down finally, however, not from influenza or overwork, but from a combination of rheumatism, gout and Bright’s disease. On Sunday morning, 7 June, he preached for the last time in the Tabernacle (see No. 2,2138 —”The statute of David for the sharing of the spoil”), completing forty years of preaching the gospel (although only 57 years of age), over thirty of them in the Metropolitan Tabernacle.”¹⁹⁷ He had collapsed some weeks earlier during a service and had to be helped off the platform by a couple of deacons.¹⁹⁸ He retired to his home, Westwood, on Beulah Hill. Later that fall he returned to Mentone eager to recover and ready to get back to work. He was surrounded by physicians. William Brian

¹⁹⁶ Peter Morden, “C. H. Spurgeon and Suffering,” 308. Here is an example of the doctor’s visit to Spurgeon being reported in the press. “When Dr. Miller paid his usual afternoon visit to Mr. Spurgeon yesterday he was able to report that, if anything, the patient was a trifle better. At 8:30 p.m. there had been no change since the morning bulletin, which was as follows: --‘The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon passed a restless night. The waste of albumen is still very great, withstanding a fresh outburst of gout. —R. M. Miller, M.D., Jos. Kidd, M.D.’” *The Times*, July 13, 1891. A newspaper in Ireland testified of the “universal interest felt by the Englishspeaking race in all lands in the condition of Mr. Spurgeon during his long illness.” *The Donegal Independent*, September 11, 1891. Another example of the press following the condition of Spurgeon: “There was something infinitely touching in the prayers offered up for Mr. Spurgeon’s recovery in St. Paul’s Cathedral, by Prelates of the Church of England, and by earnest religious bodies all over the kingdom and even beyond the seas.” *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, July 25, 1891.

¹⁹⁷ Eric W. Hayden, *Highlights in the Life of Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1990).

¹⁹⁸ “On May 17 Mr. Spurgeon could not preach. He began the service and read part of the chapter, then he turned to Mr. Stott and said, ‘Finish the reading.’ It was a dramatic moment. The vast congregation felt the thrill of something momentous. Spurgeon seemed to stagger. Two of the deacons assisted him up the stairs to his room. In a moment or two one of them returned and announced that Mr. Spurgeon... would be unable to continue the service.” J. C. Carlile, *C. H. Spurgeon, An Interpretive Biography* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1933), 259-60.

Albert, in his valuable work on Spurgeon and depression, notes those who cared for Spurgeon at the end:

Doctors Joseph Kidd (1824-1918), R. M. Miller (n. d.), and Russell Reynolds (1828-1896) all treated Spurgeon in his final days with Bright's disease. Doctor Kidd, who had treated patients with the illness prior to Spurgeon and was sent by Prime Minister Gladstone (1809-1898), provided the simple but solemn diagnosis, "this case is a very difficult and dangerous one." In his final hours, Spurgeon could not walk, talk ably or eat comfortably and looked much older than the fifty-seven young years he lived.¹⁹⁹

Spurgeon died on January 31, 1892. He had lived fifty-seven years and died at the same age as one of his favorite role models, George Whitefield.

Conclusion

To tell the story of Spurgeon is to tell the story of a body filled with power and then depleted of the same. He used his body as a tool, not only employing his magnificent voice but also gesticulating, roaming and "strutting" across the platform. He mastered the techniques of the stage in order to gain and keep an audience. And this audience that he gathered and kept for decades had a front-row seat to a body in decline, a swollen body that seemed to stoop prematurely, yet one that through seasons of temporary defeat gripped the railing and preached "victory."

¹⁹⁹ Albert, "When the Wind Blows Cold": The Spirituality of Suffering and Depression, 63. Albert's excellent annotations are included: Joseph Kidd (1824-1918) was one of the leading homoeopathic physicians of the nineteenth century. He was personal physician to two Prime Ministers of England, Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881) and William Gladstone (1809-1898). His treatment of Spurgeon would have been thorough, as he had treated many with Bright's disease. He probably made the official diagnosis of Bright's disease in Spurgeon and would have limited Spurgeon's medication. His style clashed with Dr. Andrew Clark (1826-1894) who was given the opportunity to treat Spurgeon as well, but declined because he did not wish to consult with Dr. Joseph Kidd. See in sources in Albert (63): George Simmons, "Medical News," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 71 (Dec 1918), 1928; Alfred Pope, "The Reverend C.H. Spurgeon and Sir A. Clark, Bart.," *Homoeopathic Review*, 35 (September 1, 1891) 618-9. Spurgeon had Dr. Kidd's book, *On the Adaptation of External Nature to the Physical Condition of Man* (London: William Pickering, 1836) in his personal library.

In the next two chapters, we will explore the powerful metaphors that surrounded the gouty. We will explore their usage in England's cultural history, paying special attention to the English Puritans that so deeply influenced Spurgeon. Finally, we will examine Spurgeon's own use of gout and the significance of the metaphors in his sermons, magazine entries, and personal correspondence.

CHAPTER 4
GOUT'S CULTURAL METAPHORS AND THE
SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PURITANS

In the past two chapters, we examined Spurgeon's biographical highlights, paying close attention to the following: his early years in Stambourne, Knill's prophecy, his conversion, baptism, and educational experiences, including successes and mishaps. His intimate knowledge of and deeply lived connection to the Puritans was established and explored. Particular attention was paid to his early preaching, both at Waterbeach and in Southwark at the New Park Street Chapel, and his subsequent rise from notoriety to celebrity. He came to the metropolis and was immediately engulfed in controversy. Some portrayed him as a young lion. Others viewed the young upstart as a lamb, an object to be attacked and sacrificed by the press and some jealous peers, but his life closed with him being almost universally lauded as the "Lion of London."¹

Additionally, we investigated the central role Spurgeon's body played, both in his pulpit performances and in the manner it was presented to his hearers. This focus on the preacher's body was accentuated through the stripped-down nature of the worship service and was aided by the particular architectural features of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Furthermore, Spurgeon's body became the site of a decades long drama, the heroic struggle between a preacher, Valiant-for-Truth, and a debilitating cluster of illnesses ranging from Bright's Disease, complicated by gout, to occasional seasons of depression.² Spurgeon

¹ *The Daily Telegraph*, February 1, 1892.

² William Brian Albert characterized Spurgeon's depression as "regular, public, varied and great." "When the Wind Blows Cold": The Spirituality of Suffering and Depression in the Life and Ministry of Charles Spurgeon (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, December 2015), 26-35.

sojourned extensively in the “kingdom of the ill.”³ His struggles were described in his own magazine, *The Sword and the Trowel*, reported on by the secular press, and captured in his personal correspondence. But his journey with pain was most vividly displayed when he, often with his gold-headed cane, ascended the stairs to the Tabernacle’s platform to preach.⁴ It was on that protruding platform that the congregation witnessed the collision of two kingdoms, the kingdom of Heaven and the kingdom of the ill.⁵ It was especially during the preaching moment, while Spurgeon gripped the railing, that his hearers observed the power of grace and the painful effects of gout.

The focus of this third chapter is twofold. The rich metaphorical history of gout is discussed after a brief look at its etiology and the incredible capacity of some of the

³ Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1978), 3.

⁴ “Moreover, Spurgeon’s popularity had so grown that stores would print his picture on their yearly calendar. He had become so respected that when (October 1880) a thief broke into Spurgeon’s study and stole his gold-headed cane, the thief battering the head and selling it to a pawn shop, the owner of the shop realized whose it was and returned it to Charles.” (Drummond, *Spurgeon, Prince of Preachers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications), 501. I include this somewhat obscure incident from the preacher’s life to highlight several facts: 1) the frequent and very public use of the cane; 2) the extreme value of a gold-headed cane (such an item becomes iconic and closely connected to gout imagery); and 3) the high esteem and sympathy the shopkeeper felt for Spurgeon to return the cane. See also, Robert B. Taylor, *White Coat Tales: Medicine’s Heroes, Heritage, and Misadventures* (New York: Springer Nature Publishing, 2008) “Another appliance used by gout sufferers was...the cane. Because gout was a disease of the affluent...the cane eventually became fashionable. Some medical practitioners carried gold-headed canes and the object has become linked with physicians.” (185). And Stephen A. Schwarz, “Like the gout stool the gout sufferer’s crutch and cane became a visual cue for comedy, and social criticism. Laurence Sterne’s classic comic mega novel *Tristram Shandy*, first published in 1760, includes several scenes of gouty men beating lesser mortals with their walking sticks and crutches. Hogarth himself did illustrations for the novel with all the comic cues of crutches, easy chairs, gout stools; his overweight gentry are a study in porcine overindulgence.” Stephen A. Schwarz, “Disease of Distinction,” *Explore* (New York, NY) 2, no. 6 (November-December 2006): 515. See also Roy Porter and G. S. Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 79 for the discussion on Horace Walpole and his bootikins. Bootikins were a covering for the hand or foot that shortened the period of suffering for the victim of gout. See the following auction site, <https://www.doeandhope.com/products/a-very-rare-c-1800-crocodile-leather-gout-boot?variant=685345765> (accessed February 16, 2017) for an example of a crocodile leather gout boot, c. 1800.

⁵ To be sure, Sontag’s two kingdoms are the kingdom of the well and the kingdom of the sick. “Illness is the night-side of life, a more onerous citizenship. Everyone who is born holds dual citizenship, in the kingdom of the well and in the kingdom of the sick. Although we all prefer to use only the good passport, sooner or later each of us is obliged, at least for a spell, to identify ourselves as citizens of that other place.” Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor*, 3.

gout-related metaphors to persist to this day. The second focus is on the texts of the English Puritans, especially, but not limited to, their sermons and the ways that they deployed gout as a metaphor. These metaphors, taken from both the common cultural stock and from the writings of the Puritans, form the general background with which to understand Spurgeon's own use of the term in personal correspondence, magazine articles, and especially when they appear in sermons. While it is necessary to examine these individual usages of gout—the common literary tradition and the more particular Puritan examples—by providing frameworks of cultural and possibly theological meaning, in chapter four, I analyze in greater detail the examples of usage from Spurgeon's own writings and the possible meanings and significances that may be discerned by comparing the aspects of the gout metaphor that Spurgeon either emphasized or omitted.

Gout, Etiology, and Its History in Metaphor

Claude Rawson opened his review of Roy Porter and G. S. Rousseau's work, *Gout: The Patrician's Malady* by acknowledging the persistence of the disease and its prevalence among particular groups: "Things you should know about gout: One in a hundred white males are at risk. Women seldom get it before menopause. Executives are more likely to get it than blue-collar workers."⁶ Rawson was writing in 1998, and the number of cases of gout has not diminished since. Rather, the authors of the recently published *Gout* (Oxford Rheumatology Library), noted its proliferation: "Gout is the most common form of inflammatory arthritis in adults. The prevalence of gout in adults is rising, and now affects

⁶ Claude Rawson. "Review of 'Gout: The Patrician Malady,'" *New York Times Book Review* 103, no. 49 (December 6, 1998): 26.

approximately one in 25 adults in the United States.”⁷ Most of these sufferers are men or post-menopausal women.⁸ Thomas Benedek noted the reason: “The explanation of the gender difference appears to lie in the efficiency with which this normal metabolic product is excreted. It is principally a renal function, and the kidneys of healthy women eliminate uric acid more effectively than those of healthy men.”⁹ Gout is also increasing as global dietary habits shift: “Increasing affluence has also led to an expansion in the number of people following a westernized diet and lifestyle, and this has been paralleled by an increase in the incidence and prevalence of gout worldwide.”¹⁰

Gout is described by Benedek as a “chronic, intermittently symptomatic disease. It is manifested primarily by small numbers of acutely painful, swollen joints that result from an inflammatory reaction to the precipitation of crystals of monosodium urate.”¹¹ The presence of uric acid had been known for some time. “In his remarkable volume *The Nature and Treatment of Gout and Rheumatic Gout* (1859), Garrod stated that, ‘the deposited urate

⁷ Nicola Dalbeth, Lisa Stamp, and Tony Merriman. *Gout*, Oxford Rheumatology Library (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1.

⁸ Nuki and Simkin add, “Historically, gout has been considered to be primarily a male disease. The fact that women can also develop gout was first recognized during the reign of Nero (AD 54-68) by Seneca, who observed, “in this age, women rival men in every kind of lasciviousness ... why need we then be surprised at seeing so many of the female sex afflicted with the gout?” In the modern era, although gout remains primarily a disease of men in middle age, it has become increasingly more frequent in women, particularly after the menopause.” George Nuki and Peter A Simkin, “A Concise History of Gout and Hyperuricemia and Their Treatment,” *Arthritis Research & Therapy* 8, Suppl. 1 (2006), <https://arthritis-research.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/ar1906>, S1.

⁹ Thomas G. Benedek, “Gout in Women: A Historical Perspective,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 71, no. 1 (1997): 12.

¹⁰ Nuki and Simkin, “A Concise History of Gout and Hyperuricemia and Their Treatment,” S1.

¹¹ Thomas G. Benedek, “Gout.” *The Cambridge Historical Dictionary of Disease*, ed. Kenneth F. Kiple (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 153.

of soda may be looked upon as the cause, and not the effect, of the gouty inflammation.”¹²

Benedek concurred on the importance of Garrod:

Prerequisite to the occurrence of gouty joint inflammation there is either a metabolic abnormality that results in the overproduction of uric acid, or a renal abnormality that causes its inadequate excretion. This was already hypothesized by Alfred B. Garrod (1819-1909) in 1854 London, a mere six years after he had devised the first test for the detection of uric acid in the blood of gouty patients. Dyce Duckworth (1840-1928), the other English gout expert of the time, in 1889 stated simply: ‘No uric acid, no gout.’¹³

Gout is an extremely painful disease, “This disease causes flares of severe joint pain, structural bone and cartilage damage, loss of participation and disability. Gout is also strongly associated with...chronic kidney disease.”¹⁴ Spurgeon, attempting to describe the incredible pain that accompanied an attack of the gout, wrote to a friend, “What is gout like?” [the friend asked] “If you put your hand into a vice and let a man press as hard as he can, that is rheumatism; and if he can press a little harder that is gout.”¹⁵

The classical description of a gout attack is from the highly-regarded physician, Thomas Sydenham (1624-1689). Sydenham was a “most astute clinician, and he described his observations on diseases and disease patterns in a precise and orderly manner.”¹⁶

¹² Nuki and Simkin, “A Concise History of Gout and Hyperuricemia and Their Treatment,” S1.

¹³ Benedek, “Gout in Women: A Historical Perspective,” 1.

¹⁴ Dalbeth et al., *Gout*, 1.

¹⁵ Jesse Page, *Spurgeon: His Life and Ministry* (London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1903), 148. Page also recorded Spurgeon’s belief that his suffering was hereditary, “Mr. Spurgeon once said to a friend, “I have inherited most of my father’s excellences and the gout with them.” (148).

¹⁶ Gordon Low, “Thomas Sydenham: The English Hippocrates,” *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Surgery* 69, no. 4 (April 1999): 258. See also William F. Bynum, “Chapter 17: Nosology,” in *Companion Encyclopedia of the History of Medicine*, vol. 1, edited by W. F. Bynum and Roy Porter (London: Routledge, Publ., 1993), especially 340-3. “Sydenham advocated a programme for clinical medicine that was widely appreciated in the eighteenth century. In essence, Sydenham’s programme was simple: medicine is a craft activity and medical progress results from the accumulation of repeated careful observations of patients suffering from disease, and of the consequences of various treatments for their diseases.” (341).

According to Copeman, his description of a gout attack, “which was based upon his own sufferings...has never been surpassed.”¹⁷ Although the following description is oft-repeated, Sydenham playfully conceded that as to gout’s effective treatment, “since he had suffered from the unrelenting attentions of the disease for thirty-four years his observations on its cure might not carry very much weight.”¹⁸ Here is his description:

The patient goes to bed and sleeps quietly until about two in the morning when he is awakened by a pain which usually seizes the great toe, but sometimes the heel, the calf of the leg or the ankle. The pain resembles that of a dislocated bone ... and this is immediately succeeded by a chillness, shivering and a slight fever ... the pain ..., which is mild in the beginning ..., grows gradually more violent every hour ... so exquisitely painful as not to endure the weight of the clothes nor the shaking of the room from a person walking briskly therein.¹⁹

For those experiencing it, the pain of gout was all-consuming. It immobilized its victim. In previous centuries, it sent the sufferer straight to “flannel and patience.”²⁰ Porter and Rousseau noted the extreme nature of the disease, the afflicted joints “become swollen and inordinately painful (it felt, remarked Sydney Smith, ‘like walking on my eyeballs.’”²¹ This

¹⁷ W. S. C. Copeman, *A Short History of the Gout and the Rheumatic Diseases* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), 65.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 65. See also Lois N. Magnier, *The History of Medicine* (New York: Marcel Dekker, 1992), 222. “Some of Sydenham’s most vivid writings are those describing the onset, pain, and progress of gout. Sydenham confessed that he had endured the agonies of gout for 34 years without discovering anything useful about its nature or treatment.”

¹⁹ Nuki and Simkin, “A Concise History of Gout and Hyperuricemia and Their Treatment,” S1.

²⁰ Charles Scudamore (1779-1849) noted the common custom but inefficiency of such treatment, “Flannel and patience still form the adage of many, whose caution is greater than their judgment. It is obvious that the confinement of morbid heat by warm covering, on the one hand, must serve to increase pain, and prolong the disease.” Charles Scudamore, *A Treatise on the Nature and Cure of Gout* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1816), 180.

²¹ Porter and Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady*, 3. The Rev. Sydney Smith (1771-1845) helped found *The Edinburgh Review*. He was a well-known wit and was involved in social reform. Stanley L. Wallace described him and his contribution to the history of gout: “In addition to Smith’s brilliant sermons, pamphlets, articles, reviews, he was a master letter-writer. He made frequent mention of his gout in his letters. From these letters, the reader can obtain a picture of the medical and lay knowledge of gout in England from the

debilitating type of pain often kept Spurgeon out of the pulpit. On one occasion, after visiting his mother's grave on a Saturday, he fell ill and had his trusted private secretary, J. W. Harrald, preach in his stead. He wrote the congregation, "About eight o' clock torrents of pain broke over me, and the knee was soon swollen. Now I cannot put the foot on the ground, and the pain is something to remember."²² On another occasion, the pain so consumed him as to render thought impossible: "My thoughts are few by reason of pain, which disorders my head; but they are all on fire, for my heart remains true to my Lord, to His gospel, and to you."²³

Central to the experience of the gout sufferer was pain. Lois Magner defined gout and the severity of the accompanying pain: "Primary gout is described as an inherited disorder of purine metabolism which results in the accumulation of uric acid. Gout attacks are not fatal, but they are so painful that some victims have been driven to suicide."²⁴

It is the pain and suffering that gout inflicted that helped to keep it as the center of attention throughout history. Perhaps the pain of gout and the need for humanity to create frameworks of meaning to interpret that suffering formed the impetus for the creation of the many metaphors that have become associated with gout.²⁵ Porter and Rousseau noted the suffering, but they did not explore the numerous metaphors that came to be attached to gout:

period 1830 through 1845, depicted with Smith's charm and good humor." Stanley L. Wallace, "A Wit and His Gout: The Reverend Sydney Smith," *Arthritis and Rheumatism* 5, no. 6 (December 1962): 610.

²² Iain Murray, *Letters of Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust), 174. The letter is dated May, 1888.

²³ C. H. Spurgeon, *An All-Round Ministry* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), 251.

²⁴ Magner, *A History of Medicine*, 222.

²⁵ See David B. Morris, *The Culture of Pain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). He noted, "An understanding of pain requires many kinds of knowledge, but the knowledge we most consistently ignore or

So gout cannot be shrugged off as if it were a trivial complaint, an archaic disease, an ailment of the elite, a condition inconsequential because self-inflicted. Gout has been, and remains, a major cause of human suffering, and for that reason it is worthy of attention. Yet it is also an intriguing example of a malady whose very specification has been marked out with medical, cultural and social meanings. Gout early acquired a personality.²⁶

Before entering into an extended examination of some of the separate metaphors that became associated with gout, it should be noted that many of these metaphors have endured even to this day. Two recent articles demonstrate the persistence of these gout metaphors. In *The New York Times*, Jane F. Brody noted,

You may think of gout as a disease that afflicts wealthy, overweight middle-aged men who are prone to overindulgence. Known since antiquity as the patrician malady and a disease of kings, gout clearly had a penchant for people who could afford a life of gluttony and intemperance. But the risk of developing this excruciating ailment is not limited to those who treat themselves as royalty. About 2.1 million Americans have it.²⁷

Charles Dubow assumed the same metaphors were still operative when he wrote in *Forbes*, “The problem is that gout is widely misperceived as a self-inflicted disease that affects only the upper classes. It has been referred to, maybe a touch inaccurately, as “The disease of kings and the king of diseases.”²⁸ These misperceptions reveal the power and

dismiss, as I have claimed, concerns the bond that links pain with meaning. The point I want to emphasize is that humankind—across cultures and across time—has persistently understood pain as an event that demands interpretation.” (18).

²⁶ Porter and Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady*, 5.

²⁷ Jane F. Brody, “Gout Hobbles Plenty of Commoners, Too,” *The New York Times*, May 25, 2004.

²⁸ Dubow, Charles, “The Disease of Kings,” *Forbes* (April 1, 2003). He continued, “The reason for this misperception is that overindulgence in food and wine has long been thought to be the primary cause of gout. While it is true that diet is related to gout, the notion that only the rich get gout is not. Gout, in fact, strikes many people of all social and financial backgrounds, currently more than one million people, almost all of them male, in the U.S. Women rarely develop gout and, then, only after menopause.”

longevity of certain gout metaphors. Somehow, the notion that gout is the sole property of those with wealth and property abides.²⁹

Before examining the dominant metaphors for gout, the name of the disease itself and some explanation of the historical framework for understanding the body, its ailments, and treatments is needed. Gout has a long and painful past that began in pre-history, “Arthritic conditions have been identified in the skeletal remains of Neanderthal man and in Egyptian burial sites.”³⁰ From there the disease never receded but became entrenched in the history of humankind. William Smith, M.D., asserts, “Memories of gout, have passed into the very consciousness of western civilization, with mention of it made in all quarters.”³¹ Egypt, Greece, and Rome all recognized the existence of gout. “Gouty arthritis was among the earliest diseases to be recognized as a clinical entity. First identified by the Egyptians in 2640 BC, podagra (acute gout occurring in the first metatarsophalangeal joint) was later recognized by Hippocrates in the fifth century BC, who referred to it as ‘the unwalkable disease’.”³² The Romans knew of the disease and believed it be fairly rare during the virtuous days of the Republic. It was only during the decadent age of the Empire that it became a problem.³³ But the Greeks gave it its name, “Podagra, Greek—‘poda,’ the foot plus ‘agra,’ a seizure or an attack. Thus an attack affecting the foot. A name for the gout.

²⁹ Of course, a search on eBay for “antique gout stools” produced twenty-two results (January 21, 2017), thus proving there is a market for just about anything.

³⁰ Porter and Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady*, 13.

³¹ William Asbury Smith, M.D., *Gout and the Gouty* (San Antonio, TX: The Naylor Company, 1970), 14.

³² Nuki and Simkin, “A Concise History of Gout and Hyperuricemia and Their Treatment,” S1.

³³ Porter and Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady*, 13.

An ancient term, podagra, it meant a trap for the feet.”³⁴ It is a vivid word picture, sometimes translated “foot-grabber.”³⁵

It was not until the thirteenth century that the word “gout” was applied to the disease. The change in the name signaled the presence of the humoral framework for understanding the human body and disease. A Dominican monk first used the word in a modern sense.³⁶

The first person to use the word “gout” to describe podagra (*gutta quam podagram vel artiticam vocant* — “the gout that is called podagra or arthritis”) was the Dominican monk Randolphus of Bocking, domestic chaplain to the Bishop of Chichester (1197-1258). The term is derived from the Latin word *gutta* (or “drop”), and referred to the prevailing medieval belief that an excess of one of the four “humors” — which in equilibrium were thought to maintain health — would, under certain circumstances, “drop” or flow into a joint, causing pain and inflammation.³⁷

Humoralism was a system based on an ancient Greek theory for understanding the body and disease by positing four distinct humors or humours (bodily fluids). The humors were associated with the four elements: fire (yellow bile), earth (black bile), air (blood), and water (phlegm). These were paired with other qualities (hot, cold, dry, and moist). They also came to be connected to temperament and personality types. The key to good health was to keep the four humors in balance and flowing. Samuel Johnson’s dictionary entry from 1755 demonstrated the contemporary medical understanding:

³⁴ Henry Allen Skinner, *The Origin of Medical Terms* (Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1949), 283.

³⁵ Stanley Finger, *Doctor Franklin’s Medicine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 276.

³⁶ Copeman, *A Short History of the Gout*, 2. Copeman clarified, “This specific use of the word was not, however, adopted throughout Europe until Guillaume de Baillou... first clearly drew the distinction clinically between gout and rheumatism (1642) and Sydenham, a little later, made this separation final.”

³⁷ Nuki and Simkin, “A Concise History of Gout and Hyperuricemia and Their Treatment,” S1. Jacalyn Duffin noted, “Other disease names describe symptoms. The name ‘gout,’ or in French ‘goutte’ — a ‘drop’ or a ‘dripping’ — was related to dropsy, which was thought to be caused by a liquid distilled drop by drop on the joint.” Jacalyn Duffin, *Lovers and Livers: Disease Concepts in History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 11-2.

GOUT. n.s. [geutte, French.] 1. The arthritis; a periodical disease attended with great pain. The gout is a disease which may affect any membranous part, but commonly those which are at the greatest distance from the heart or the brain, where the motion of the fluids is the lowest, the resistance, friction, and stricture of the solid part the greatest, and the sensation of pain, by the dilaceration of the nervous fibres, extreme.”³⁸

Vivian Nutton has noted, “Humoralism is a system of medicine that considers illness to be the result of some disturbance in the natural balance of the humors, within the body as a whole or within one particular part. It stresses the unity of the body, and the strong interaction between mental and physical processes.”³⁹

Humoral medicine stressed the need for moderation and balance. When imbalance occurred within the body, there would be a subsequent production of a certain fluid (pus, sweat, expectorated phlegm, vomit, diarrhea, etc.). This was the body’s way of removing the disease or “cooking” (a favorite metaphor) out the peccant humor. Lester S. King described the process: “For the humoralists, material entering the body underwent a transformation from a crude to a finished state. What could not be assimilated could be excreted. If the transformation went according to a normal pattern, the patient was healthy. But if the patient was not healthy, then coction, assimilation and excretion were not normal.”⁴⁰ This focus on the restoration of balance often led physicians to a fairly holistic approach to the practice of medicine. They often recommended bloodletting, along with changes in diet and exercise. They prescribed certain medicines to aid in the removal of “non-naturals” or to help the patient for “Chronic disease... resulted from ‘depraved juices’.

³⁸ Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London: W. Strahan, 1755), 779.

³⁹ Nutton, Vivian. “Chapter 14: Humoralism,” In *Companion Encyclopedia of the History of Medicine*, vol. 1, edited by W. F. Bynum and Roy Porter (London: Routledge, Publ., 1993), 281.

⁴⁰ Lester S. King, *The Road to Medical Enlightenment 1650-1695* (London: Macdonald, 1970), 130.

Their cause was the ‘inability of Nature to concoct the humours’. This inability might be irreversible.”⁴¹ William Bynum summarized: “Taken as a whole package, Greek Humoralism was the most powerful explanatory framework of health and disease available to doctors and laymen until scientific medicine began gradually to replace it during the 19th century.”⁴²

The theory of Humoralism formed the backdrop for some of the metaphors that surrounded gout. Whether it was the notion of the “constitutional” nature of the gouty or, at times, the Puritan’s use of gout in a sermon illustration, the humoral theory provided the framework of meaning without which many of the metaphors would be meaningless. This was certainly true when considering the prophylactic nature of gout but much less true when the focus was simply on the pain and suffering associated with gout. Examples of this are found in the sermons of many of the English Puritans. But before getting too far ahead of ourselves, let us consider some of the dominant metaphors of gout and also its usage in the writings (mostly sermons) of the English Puritans.

Gout has been characterized as a disease stemming from excess. Great wealth and privilege, excessive drinking and eating, and a disproportionate amount of sexual activity have all been associated with gout. Robert Macnish, a Scottish physician, in an early Victorian work *Philosophy of Sleep and Anatomy of Drunkenness*, posted an entry for “gout” under the chapter heading “pathology of drunkenness.” His entry reflected the thought at the time:

⁴¹ Ibid., 126.

⁴² William Bynum, *The History of Medicine: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 11.

Gout is the offspring of gluttony, drunkenness, or sensuality, or of them all put together. It occurs most frequently with the wine-bibber. A very slight cause may bring it on when hereditary predisposition exists; but in other circumstances considerable excess will be required before it makes its appearance. It is one of the most afflicting consequences of intemperance, and seems to have been known as such from an early age—mention being made of it by Hippocrates, Aretaeus, and Galen. Among the Roman ladies gout was very prevalent during the latter times of the empire; and, at the present day, there are few noblemen who have it not to hand down to their offspring as a portion of their heritage.⁴³

Nuki and Simkin note, “Throughout history gout has been associated with rich foods and excessive alcohol consumption. Because it is clearly associated with a lifestyle that, at least in the past, could only be afforded by the affluent, gout has been referred to as the ‘disease of kings.’”⁴⁴ It was Copeman who called the Age of Reason, the Golden Age of Gout.⁴⁵ This was an age, especially Georgian England (the focus of Porter and Rousseau’s work), where the diet of the upper classes, which consisted of an abundance of red meat and port wine (high in purines), contributed to the increased numbers of gout sufferers.⁴⁶ This affliction had a causal link to the upper classes became characterized as a rich man’s disease.⁴⁷ Charles Rawson added, “Like many illnesses, gout has a cultural history and an

⁴³ Robert Macnish, *Philosophy of Sleep and Anatomy of Drunkenness* (New York: William Pearson & Co., 1835), 78.

⁴⁴ Nuki and Simkin, “A Concise History of Gout and Hyperuricemia and Their Treatment,” S1.

⁴⁵ Copeman, *A Short History of Gout*, 80.

⁴⁶ After 1703, port wine flowed into England from Portugal in greatly increasing numbers. The casks were lead lined and may have increased the numbers of those who suffered with poisoning.

⁴⁷ See Thierry Appelboom and J. Claude Bennett, “Gout of the Rich and Famous,” *Journal of Rheumatology* 13 (1986): 618-22. “The review of the history of the royalty of France brings interesting data: between 1328 and 1830, 20 kings ascended the throne of France...many were reported to be gouty.” (620). Compare with Sontag, who identified the class connections with tuberculosis and cancer: “TB is often imagined as a disease of poverty and deprivation—of thin garments, thin bodies, unheated rooms, poor hygiene, inadequate food... In contrast, cancer is a disease of middle-class life, a disease associated with affluence, with excess.” Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor*, 15.

image. The image is of dyspeptic aristocrats, port-swilling neurasthenics, Dickensian fireside tipplers—a “patrician malady” or “monarch’s disease” (the Emperor Charles V and several kings were victims).⁴⁸ Gout was truly a “disease of distinction that dominated much of medicine.”⁴⁹ A list of recorded sufferers read like a list of the most eminent personages in England and the Continent: George Augustus Frederick of Hanover (later King George IV); Philip Dormer, fourth Earl of Chesterfield; Admiral Lord Howe; Horace Walpole; Edward Gibbon; Samuel Johnson; William Pitt, first Earl of Chatham; Lord North, second Earl of Guilford; Cosimo de Medici (1389-1464); Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (1500-1558); William Cecil; Lord Burghley; Selina Hastings (1707-1791); Countess of Huntingdon (supporter of John Wesley); Charles Darwin; Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford; and John Milton.⁵⁰

Religious figures also suffered and wrote about this condition. The Puritan Richard Hawes, a “Cambridge graduate and a ‘useful preacher,’” included a version of the story “The Tale of the Spider and Mr. Gout” in his medical treatise, *The Poore-Mans Plaster-Box*

⁴⁸ Claude Rawson. “Review of Gout: The Patrician Malady,” 26.

⁴⁹ Stephan A. Schwartz, “Disease of Distinction,” 515.

⁵⁰ Copeman, *A Short History of the Gout*, 80, 100; Porter and Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady*, 28, 173; Appelboom and Bennett, “Gout of the Rich and Famous,” 621. An alternative list is offered by Geoff Nicholson: “The roll call of famous gout sufferers is long and distinguished and includes Benjamin Franklin, Leonardo da Vinci, Martin Luther, Oliver Cromwell, Galileo, Theodore Roosevelt, Henry James, Benjamin Disraeli, Thomas Jefferson and Karl Marx.” Geoff Nicholson, “My Literary Malady,” Sunday Book Review/Essay, *New York Times* (August 3, 2008): BR23. Nicholson is a writer who suffers from the gout and facetiously hopes that “one day soon gout will become more accepted and maybe even fashionable.” Another interesting list that contains sufferers from all ages may be found at <http://www.nndb.com/lists/861/000125486/>, accessed February 8, 2017.

(1634).”⁵¹ The story was central to explaining how Mr. Gout came to live in the rich man’s house and not the poor man’s.⁵² Martina Scholtens offers a summary of the tale:

The tale tells of Monsieur Gout and his travelling companion, the spider. Mr. Gout lodged with a poor man, and the spider with a rich man. When they reviewed their accommodations the next day, both had complaints.

“Mine,’ said the Gout, was the worst as ever I had, for I had no sooner touched the poor man’s legs, thinking there to take my rest, but up he gets, and to thrashing he goes, so that I had no rest the whole night.’

And I,’ said the spider, had no sooner begun to build my house in the rich man’s chamber, but the maid came with a broom, and tore down all my work.”

They then agreed to change places and were so pleased with their respective new homes that they each decided to put up permanent residence, for the spider’s webs were not disturbed by the poor man, and “the Gout he was entertained with a soft cushion, with down pillows, with dainty caudles, and delicate broths. In brief, he did like it so well, that ever since he takes up his lodging with rich men.”⁵³

Scholtens concluded, “This fable purports to explain gout’s apparent predilection for the upper class. Gout was referred to as *morbis dominorum et dominus morborum*, lord of disease and disease of lords, because of its respectable antiquity and its association with intemperance afforded only by the wealthy.”⁵⁴ The founder of Methodism, John Wesley (1703-1791), was a victim of the gout and wrote about various treatments for it in his

⁵¹ Finger, *Doctor Franklin’s Medicine*, 277.

⁵² William Eamon, “The Tale of Monsieur Gout,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 55 (1981): 564-7. Eamon on Hawes: “Only a few details concerning Hawes’s life can be pieced together. They suggest the image of a man torn between his own intemperate habits and devotion to a loutish and backward country parish.” (564).

⁵³ Martina Scholtens, “The Glorification of Gout in 16th to 18th Century Literature,” *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 179, no. 8 (October 7 2008): 804.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Primitive Physick (1747).⁵⁵ He recommended the following treatment. “The Gout in the Foot or Hand, Apply a raw lean Beef stake. Change it twice in twelve Hours, ’till cured.”⁵⁶ He also recommended rubbing warm treacle (molasses) on the troubled limb and then binding it with flannel.

Gout’s characterization as a disease of the wealthy, as the property of the propertied, insured that it would be seen as a crest or an insignia that conferred patrician status on the sufferer.⁵⁷ But there were other competing narratives as well. Thomas Sydenham, the astute clinician, had served in Cromwell’s army and while acknowledging the disease to be generally found among the rich, sought to find meaning within a “traditional cultural approach, deploying a religious framework.”⁵⁸ He observed:

But what is a consolation to me, and may be so to other *gouty* persons of small fortunes and slender abilities, is that kings, great princes, generals, admirals, philosophers and several other great men have thus lived and died. In short, it may, in a more especial manner, be affirmed of this disease that it destroys more rich than poor persons, and more wise men than fools, which seems to demonstrate the justice and strict impartiality of Providence, who abundantly supplied those that want some of the conveniences of life with other advantages, and tempers its profusion to others with equal mixture of evil. So it appears to me universally and absolutely decreed that no man shall enjoy unmixed happiness of misery, but experience both. Since those she favors in one way she afflicts in another.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Copeman, *A Short History of the Gout*, 82.

⁵⁶ John Wesley, *Primitive Physic* (Bristol: William Pine, 1767), 70.

⁵⁷ Porter and Rousseau, *The Patrician Malady*, 6.

⁵⁸ Porter and Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady*, 92. They use that particular phrase when discussing Cotton Mather’s medical treatise, *The Angel of Bethesda*. Of that work, they write, “Seeing gout as a disease of the dissolute, Mather found it easy to sermonize upon.”

⁵⁹ Copeman, *A Short History of the Gout*, 72.

William Eamon commented, “Sydenham’s reflection on providential justice—the belief that gout afflicted primarily the wealthy and privileged classes of society—has long been a source of amusement to common people. Indeed, the *morbus dominorum* was widely taken as symbolic of a leisured class whose members brought their grief upon themselves through excessive living.”⁶⁰

Cotton Mather (1663-1728), pastor of Boston’s original North Church, was deeply interested in science and closely followed the writings of Robert Boyle. In 1724, Mather wrote a medical treatise, *The Angel of Bethesda*. The manuscript was not published until 1972. He offered several pages of cures and helps for treatment including a milk diet and bathing the feet in cow’s urine. He noted that “some that have been dismally handled with the Gout, have by the Use of Bears-Grease internally taken, obtained a Strange Deliverance.”⁶¹ Mather, too, called the disease the “*Dominus Morborum*; But Especially, *Morbus Dominorum*.”⁶² While recommending treatments later in the text, he opened his chapter, “The Prisoners of the Earth under, the Gout” with some playful *double entendre*, “We will therefore, for *his* Entertainment make this Article Somewhat Larger than Some of the Rest in this hour *Hospital*; It shall be a *Swol’n* Article that will now entertain him.”⁶³ He went on to assert that because gout so often prevents other diseases from taking hold in the body (prophylactic function) the sufferer should remember God “who in wrath Remembers

⁶⁰ “The Tale of Monsieur Gout” written on December 13, 2010. Found at <http://williameamon.com/?p=414>, accessed May 12, 2017. The source blog post was adapted from William Eamon, “The Tale of Monsieur Gout,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 55 (1981): 564-7.

⁶¹ Cotton Mather, *The Angel of Bethesda: An Essay Upon the Common Maladies of Mankind* ed. Gordon W. Jones (Barre: American Antiquarian Society and Barre Publications, 1972), 73-4.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

Mercy” and “sent this Rough Messenger, to rescue thee.”⁶⁴ According to Mather, gout teaches the sufferer to “consider their ways” as their affliction might be due to “Veneral Irregularities” or some “Intemperance.”⁶⁵ He noted that “A Gouty Man, made a Praying One, will be an Happy One.”⁶⁶ Concerning the religious framework and “spectacularly baroque prose” of Mather, Porter and Rousseau commented, “It is difficult to imagine a clergyman of eminence in eighteenth-century England—as distinct from New England—writing in that guise. It was within a human and moral economy, rather than the divine, that gout was perceived among Old World educated and articulate classes. Its meanings remained powerful but they vibrated essentially within the natural rather than the providential order.”⁶⁷

As noted by Mather, gout was often linked to sexual excess as well. Porter and Rousseau described the strange love child, “As gout took up residence with ministers and monarchs, it also became identified as the monarch of maladies—often being jocularly referred to with echoes of Classical lore, as a quasi-deity born of the union of Bacchus and Venus.”⁶⁸ It would not be the only time that this disease was ascribed with aphrodisiacal qualities. Thomas G. Benedek noted that gout, as an agent in stimulating interest in and performance of sexual activities, was noted as early as 1562: “The earliest reference in which crippling specifically due to gout was cited as an aphrodisiac, was the *Podagra*

⁶⁴ Ibid., 68.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 69.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Porter and Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady*, 92.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 29.

Encomium of 1562 of Hieronymus Cardanus (1501-1576).⁶⁹ Benedek cited the pertinent passage: “For with Venus and Bacchus and the feasts of the voluptuaries an abiding covenant serves as a check, and such a cause of happiness is she [the gout] that those who are restrained by her are compelled to lead lives that, except for the pain itself are happy. For she does not render them sterile but restores them to Venus with increased prowess.”⁷⁰ Cardanus asserted that gout increased desire, though this was a view that did not really take hold. Cadogan attributed sexual activity a causal role, but its sufferer was not a beneficiary. He wrote of all diseases, “Their first causes [are] very few. I think they may very fairly be reduced to these three: Indolence, Intemperance, and Vexation.”⁷¹ Benedek noted that a century after Cardanus, Nicolaas Heinsius (1656-1718) focused on the aphrodisiacal effect of gout pain. Heinsius noted, “I have known not one but various gouty people who have assured me that, even though the most terrible pain sometimes began in the midst of coition, they...still maintain their thoughts on the loving embrace...”⁷² This characterization, gout as a powerful aphrodisiac, was not standard, and “most physicians did not hold with Heinsius that any manifestations of gout are due to a local effect on the genitalia.”⁷³

The typical way of understanding gout was to assert that it was caused by fulfilling excessive appetites, including sexual activity and did not enhance those activities. The

⁶⁹ Thomas G. Benedek, “Disease as Aphrodisiac,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 45, no. 4 (July-August) 1971: 323.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 323.

⁷¹ William Cadogan, *A Dissertation on the Gout and All Chronic Diseases* (London: J. Dodsley, 1771), 16.

⁷² Benedek, “Disease as Aphrodisiac,” 324.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

highly-respected physician S. A. D. Tissot (1728-1797) offered a more standard view of the nature of the gouty and the effects of the disease:

The sharp gouty humour, the fruit of bad digestion, irregular perspirations, and often of inflamed blood, is another of those diseases peculiar to such as eat at the table of voluptuousness, indulge in the pleasures of love, give themselves up to sleep, inactivity, the passions, and strong contentions of the spirit, all which are almost unknown among the rustics. Unhappily it passes from the parents who deserved it to their innocent offspring, and when it is once established, it is difficult to eradicate.

When it is regular, from time to time it causes pains so intolerably acute, that we regret ever having done any thing to give them birth: but the greatest evil of which it is productive, is, when it cannot fix itself, or when it injures, in either case, by wandering in the mass of humours, inflaming successively different interior or exterior parts; it alternately produces pains, convulsions, palsies, anguish, fevers, cholics, obstructions, the stone, swellings, continual uneasiness, an habitual weakness of the legs, a privation of self-enjoyment, and of all other pleasures.⁷⁴

It was a short leap from a personified quasi-deity who caused pain and discomfort to the idea that gout was a bellicose enemy bent on destruction. Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) called gout a tyrant: “But so uncertain are all human affairs, that I found myself arrested by a mighty unrelenting tyrant, called the gout;”⁷⁵ His imagery was drawn from the battlefield. He wrote to a friend, J. B. Holroyd, on November 14, 1777, “With regard to myself, the gout has behaved in a very honourable manner; after a complete conquest, and after making me feel his power for some days, the generous enemy has disdained to abuse his victory, or to torment any longer an unresisting victim. He has already ceased to torture the lower extremities of your humble servant; the swelling is so amazingly diminished, that they are

⁷⁴ S. A. D. Tissot. *Three Essays: First, on the Disorders of People of Fashion: Second, On Diseases Incidental to Literary and Sedentary Persons, with Proper Rules for Preventing their Fatal Consequences, and Instructions for their Cure; Third, On Onanism, or, A Treatise upon the Disorders Produced by Masturbation, or, The Effects of Secret and Excessive Venery*, trans. from the French by Francis Bacon Lee, M. Danes and A. Hume (Dublin: James Williams Publisher, 1772), 41-2.

⁷⁵ Edward Gibbon, *The Life and Letters of Edward Gibbon* (London: Frederick Warne and Co., 1889), 265.

no longer above twice their ordinary size. Yesterday I moved about the room with the laborious majesty of crutches; to-day I have exchanged them for a stick.”⁷⁶

If gout could be portrayed as an aggressor, then how about as a defender? Another fascinating and popular metaphor of gout was the idea of gout as friend, prophylactic, or medical blessing. To have the gout was to be spared the devastating attacks of other diseases. It was a shield for the sufferer. The idea of gout as a prophylactic or a preservative was connected directly to the nature of Humoralism. Vivian Nutton wrote, “In Humoralism, prophylaxis plays as great a role as therapy.”⁷⁷ And gout, by its very nature—a disease that lodged in the joints—prevented other diseases from taking hold within the system. Charles Rawson described some of the history of this prophylactic: “Sydenham and others also thought gout a medical blessing, protecting victims from more serious diseases by acting as an ‘overflow pipe, Nature’s means of evacuating poisons.’” One author said it was an antidote to “‘murdering Maladies’ and dangerous fevers. It was incurable but not fatal, and sufferers tended to be long-lived. During plagues, war and famine, the gout-ridden were a disproportionately small minority among fatal casualties.”⁷⁸ For this reason Horace Walpole (1717-1797) wrote to the Rev. Cole about his own suffering with the gout, “I do not desire to be entirely delivered from the gout, for all reformations do but make room for some new grievance: and, in my opinion, a disorder that requires no physician, is preferable

⁷⁶ Ibid., 256. The backdrop of the letter is, in part, the rebellion occurring in the Colonies. To explore the potential influence of gout on the formation of the American Colonies (especially as gout affected the lives of William Pitt, Benjamin Franklin, and John Hancock), see Nuki and Simkin, “A Concise History of Gout and Hyperuricemia and Their Treatment,” S1.

⁷⁷ Nutton, “Chapter 14: Humoralism,” 281.

⁷⁸ Rawson, “Review of Gout: The Patrician Malady,” 27.

to any that does.”⁷⁹ And again, in correspondence with Lady Hervey (1766), Walpole praised the prophylactic nature of gout: “It is true I am a bad judge: I never tasted illness but the gout, which, tormenting as it is, I prefer to all other distempers: one knows the fit will end, will leave one quite well, and dispenses with the nonsense of physicians—and absurdity is more painful than pain: at least the pain of the gout never takes away my spirits, which the other does.”⁸⁰ When he learned that a friend, Horace Mann, was suffering with the disease, he sent a letter (June 18, 1777): “You will be angry, perhaps,—I mean, as much as you can be,—but I am not sorry you have a little gout; it will be a great preservative.”⁸¹

Benjamin Franklin was also a well-known victim of the gout. He struggled with understanding the gout as both a friend and a foe. At the time, many physicians portrayed gout as having definite benefits. Franklin had read their works and was conflicted about the “protection theory.” He certainly knew Sydenham’s work (1683) on the subject, as well as Cadogan’s *Dissertation on the Gout* (1771).⁸² Stanley Finger demonstrated how widespread and influential the protection theory was:

Perhaps more than any other disorder, many highly respected men of medicine in the eighteenth century thought the gout “was a mascot, talisman, or charm, a disorder inoculating against the worst.” Thomas Sydenham, who in the previous century had maintained that when conditions favor one disease a deadlier enemy might be put in abeyance, still remained very influential. And this belief had significant repercussions. Some people fearing a worse disease, tried to contract gout. For those without the money

⁷⁹ Horace Walpole, *Private Correspondence of Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford Volume VI*, ed. Peter Cunningham (London: Bickers and Son, 1880), 206.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 447.

⁸² Stanley Finger, *Doctor Franklin’s Medicine*, 290-1.

to buy rich foods and abundant wine, there was always bathing in waters frequented by gout sufferers.⁸³

Ultimately, Franklin attempted to manage his own gout attacks. He never pursued an aggressive course of treatment, preferring to reduce the rich fare and decrease his consumption of wine while attempting moderate exercise. For the most part, he followed the same course of treatment that Edward Gibbon espoused, writing, “My health is remarkably good. I have now enjoyed a long interval from the gout; and I endeavour to use with moderation Dr. Cadogan’s best remedies, temperance, exercise, and cheerfulness.”⁸⁴

Gout was also characterized as having a playful side (*podagra ludens*). This expressed itself both in the literary and visual depictions of the disease and its sufferer. The nature of the disease, its characteristic swelling (rising) and falling, the current medical framework (Humoralism) and the age and status of many of its victims, all invited comic observations. Porter and Rousseau noted a possible reason for comic word play:

A grey zone exists between the medical condition gout and the play on words its sufferers generated. This *double entendre* elicited a tension between “being in a humour” —sick and diseased, as in a “fit of gout” —and “being humorous” —funny and witty. Gout...entailed a ludic and comic state of affairs for the whole “body”, perhaps owing to the need to trivialize its ponderous moral links to sex and debauchery.⁸⁵

Two examples, featuring different kinds of play, are seen in the letters of Horace Walpole. In the first example, he compared the goose losing its feathers to the gouty hand losing its quill. He wrote to the Rev. Mr. Cole (Jan. 9, 1775), “I every day intended to thank you for the copy of Nel Gwyn’s letter, till it was too late; the gout came, and made me moult

⁸³ Ibid, 290.

⁸⁴ Gibbon, *The Life and Letters of Edward Gibbon*, 352.

⁸⁵ Porter and Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady*, 229.

my goose quill. The letter is very curious, and I am as well content as with the original.”⁸⁶

In the second example, Walpole wrote to a friend, Mr. Montagu (April 15, 1768): “Mr. Chute tells me that you have taken a new house in Squireland, and have given yourself up for two years more to port and parsons. I am very angry, and resign you to the works of the devil or the church, I don’t care which. You will get the gout, turn methodist, and expect to ride to heaven upon your own great toe.”⁸⁷

Uses of gout varied greatly. They were most often connected to excess. They communicated privilege and moral laxity. Contracting the gout was not necessarily seen as a tragic occurrence due to its being view as a crest or insignia of wealth and superiority. Another positive about contracting the gout was the possibility of medical blessing or the assumed prophylactic nature of the disease. Gout was painful but seldom killed the patient directly. Gout invited comic word play as well. For the ready wit, the metaphor of gout offered a plethora of swollen and thinly veiled meanings. But what were some of the meanings and usages offered by those who preferred to deploy a more standard religious framework? What did the Puritans, who so deeply influenced Spurgeon, have to say about *podagra* and *podagra ludens*?

English Puritans and the Metaphors of Gout

James I. Packer compared them to “Redwoods,” that is to say, theological giants with deep roots that tower over their peers.⁸⁸ They were the English Puritans, pastor-theologians, men such as Owen, Baxter, Flavel, Gurnall, Brooks, Watson, Boston, Manton,

⁸⁶ Walpole, *Private Correspondence of Horace Walpole*, 506.

⁸⁷ Walpole, *Private Correspondence of Horace Walpole*, 235.

⁸⁸ James I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1990), 11.

Charnock, Bunyan, Sibbes, Sedgwick and others who “were men of outstanding intellectual power...in them mental habits fostered by sober scholarship were linked with a flaming zeal for God and a minute acquaintance with the human heart.”⁸⁹ The introduction covered the Puritans generally and the first chapter developed Spurgeon’s connection to them. The next section examines their use of gout, primarily in their sermons. Some of them, such as Richard Sibbes and William Guthrie, suffered from the disease as well.

The many and varied ways that gout was deployed in the sermons of the Puritans is surprising. One expects connections between the very substantial and visceral pain of gout and the torments of hell, and they are there.⁹⁰ But a myriad other usages sprinkled throughout the sermons and found in other sources, such as poetry and allegorical works, proliferated. References to gout, like Bunyan’s grace, abounded, not only to sinners but to saints alike. It was linked to conversion and sanctification, favorite themes of the Puritans. Gout was unable to touch Christ but did not keep him from being a sympathizing high priest. Gout even proved the superiority of Christ. Gout increased the sympathy that believers were to have for each other. One of the attractions of heaven was that it was a gout-free place and that the bodies of the saints would be untouched by it. But on earth, gout was often linked to the rod of affliction and suffering which, when wielded by the hand of Providence, would work to the believer’s advancement. A very unusual example compared the spendthrift wife

⁸⁹ Packer, *A Quest for Godliness*, 29.

⁹⁰ Regarding the connection between pain and the possibility of a theological framework, David B. Morris commented, “Within a homogeneous culture, that is, certain well-established meanings (such as the penitential and redemptive quality of pain for medieval Christians) remain stable for long periods. For example, few people in the Middle Ages openly disputed the belief that sinners would face an eternity of torment in Hell. Pain thus gave Christians a taste of what it meant—theologically speaking—to be damned. It brought theology down to earth.” David B. Morris, *The Culture of Pain*, 51.

to the gouty leg.⁹¹ Another fairly unique case mentioned gout with a cluster of typical themes (providence, covenant, etc.) but called for the reader to enjoin a Christian manliness.⁹² Although the overwhelming majority of the examples come from seventeenth-century Puritanism, there is a fascinating case from the preaching of George Whitefield where he implored his hearers to look heavenward and consider the appeal of a gout-free heaven.⁹³ Gout was also used in an aphoristic form on multiple occasions. The idea that the world cannot adequately address the needs of the believer or the theme that the passing foolishness of the world and its ways could not solve the eternal concerns of humanity was captured in the phrase, “the velvet slipper cannot cure the gout.” Such a formulation appeared in many forms, including “the silver slipper cannot cure the gout,” and a “golden slipper [cannot cure] the pain of the gout.” It would eventually be picked up by Spurgeon as well and printed in his collection of proverbs and sayings, *The Salt Cellars*.⁹⁴

The following usages of gout have been organized and presented through a theological framework familiar to the Puritans. The first examples are connected to the central theme of justification. The ideas include: the fallen nature of humanity and its

⁹¹ George Swinnock, *The Works of George Swinnock*, vol. 1, 5 vols. (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1868), 512. Many of these Puritan works were reprints produced as part of a series, *Nichol's Series of Standard Divines*. Bob L. Ross described the impetus for its production: “Spurgeon’s favorites were the Puritans. He was responsible for the republication of the Puritan works issued by Mr. James Nichol under the title, *Nichol's Series of Standard Divines*. Spurgeon said, ‘It would do all our country brethren good to read more Puritanic theology, and have the opportunity of storing their libraries better. I have long had this project on my mind, and some time ago I asked Mr. Nichol, an eminent publisher in Edinburgh, who brought out a series of British Poets at a cheap rate, whether if I could get some Presbyterians and Independents to back up the scheme, and spoke myself to my Baptist brethren, he could not reprint much of our standard divinity at a cheap rate.’” Bob L. Ross, *A Pictorial Biography of C. H. Spurgeon* (Pasadena: Pilgrim Publications, 1974), 105.

⁹² Swinnock, *The Works of George Swinnock*, vol. 3, 5 vols., 61-2.

⁹³ George Whitefield, *The Works of the Rev. George Whitefield*, vol. 5. (London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1772), 451-2.

⁹⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Salt Cellars*, 2 vols. (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1889).

corollary—the superiority of Christ, the necessity of and helps toward conversion, and the danger and torments of hell. The second major theme relates to sanctification or holiness of life. Puritan theology was designed around a heartfelt spirituality and a concern for application of truth.⁹⁵ These usages of the gout metaphor include: holy living and mortification, ideas of contentment, the rod of affliction, providence, and the necessity of strong doctrine to assist the believer in attaining maturity. The final major theme explores the connection of gout to the idea of glorification. The focus of these examples includes the state of the resurrected Christ, the nature of the believers transformed or heavenly body, and the description of heaven itself. Finally, two other examples from the writings of George Swinnock (1627-1673) will be included that fall outside the former categories. The first will be the comparison of the wife who financially ruins her husband with the gouty leg. The second example involves the connection of gout to the need for manliness.

The overwhelming majority of the Puritan usages of gout were not connected to the theme of excess. However, John Flavel (1628-1691) did reference the dangers of intemperate drinking and the dangers it posed. Flavel was a Puritan pastor in Dartmouth. He was praised for his “plain exposition of Scripture.” Due to the Act of Uniformity, he was ejected from his pulpit in 1662 but continued to meet secretly with his congregation. Beeke and Pederson noted the lengths he went to in order to preach to his people: “Once he even disguised himself as a woman on horseback in order to reach a secret meeting place where he preached and administered baptism.”⁹⁶ Some of what Flavel preached is as follows:

⁹⁵ See Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., ed. *The Spirituality of the Later English Puritans: An Anthology* (Mercer, PA: Mercer University Press, 1987), xvi.

⁹⁶ Joel R. Beeke and Randall J. Pederson, *Meet the Puritans with a Guide to Modern Reprints* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006), 247.

A strong and vigorous constitution will be readily acknowledged to be so great an external blessing and mercy, that no man of sound intellects ought to do anything to destroy it; but is obliged to use all proper methods for the preservation of it. If therefore temperance shall be found to preserve it, and excess to impair and destroy it; let your own reason judge, which of these two courses you are obliged to take. Consult either the best physicians, or your own and other men's experience; and they will tell you, that apoplexies [strokes], palsies [paralysis], gout, and innumerable other diseases are bred by such excesses, in the soundest and strongest constitutions, and death itself hastened by such intemperate courses; whereas temperance and sobriety might have made your lives more comfortable and durable. As strong as you are, frequent drunkenness will bring Cain's curse upon your vigorous bodies, and make you go shaking and trembling (as he did) about the world.⁹⁷

Gout and excess, which were so often coupled in secular sources, were not the main driver for Puritan uses. But here, Flavel linked frequent drunkenness and gout (admittedly along with several other conditions) with Cain's curse. Cain's mark, which was a badge of shame, a sign of protection, and a curse to wander the earth, worked rhetorically well with one of gout's consequences, the inability to walk. Flavel's usage, at first glance, would seem typical, but I included it before the theological framework due to its atypicality.

The Puritans preached the reality of sin and the fallen nature of humanity. Sin itself had birthed the evils that afflicted individuals and society. In the following passage, George Swinnock (1627-1673) described sin and its pernicious effects. Among the devastating consequences of sin is the "running gout." Gout, at this time period, was portrayed as a disease that not only lodged in the big toe (podagra in the foot and gonagra in the knee) but could float through the body, due to the fluidity of the humoral system, and disrupt other organs. Gout is in a list that began with the diseases of the body and culminated in the torments of hell. Swinnock was ordained in 1651 and served in Rickmansworth. He

⁹⁷ John Flavel, *The Whole Works of the Rev. Mr. John Flavel*, vol. 6 (London: W. Baynes and Son, 1820), 506.

became vicar of Great Kimble, Buckinghamshire in 1661 and was ejected a year later for Nonconformity.⁹⁸ He wrote:

Take sin in its effect, and what evil is like it? It is the cause of all other evils. Dost thou consider the emptiness, vanity, and vexation in the creatures? Eccles. i, 3; the heavens fighting against man, the earth bearing thorns and briers; the diseases in men's bodies, the burning fever, watery dropsy, aching teeth, running gout, racking stone, renting colic, the quivering lips, trembling loins, ghastly looks of dying men; the horrors of conscience, flashes of the internal fire, curses of the law, wrath of God, torments of hell; all these are the fruits of sin. All misery calleth sin mother; this is the root of bitterness upon which they grow: 'The wages of sin is death.'⁹⁹

The fruit of sin is made visible in the diseases that afflict the bodies of men. Most of the diseases mentioned manifest themselves in terrible bouts of discomfort and pain.

Racking stone and aching teeth were often listed with gout and were the source of terrible suffering. Richard Sibbes (1577-1635) even prioritized the pain of the stone [bladder stone] over the gout: "Nothing makes us miserable but sin. Take a man when he lies a-dying. Ask him what troubles him? Oh! he cries out of sin, of the wrath of God. He feels not sickness, even as the gout is not felt by one that hath a fit of the stone upon him."¹⁰⁰ Edward Reynolds (1599-1676), who was bishop of Norwich and died of kidney stones in 1676, compared the pain of gout with the pain a woman experienced in childbirth and determined that not all pain should be considered equal.¹⁰¹

A cloud may hide the sun from the eye, but can never blot it out of his orb. Nay, spiritual grief is to that light which is sown in the heart, but like harrowing to the earth; it macerates for the time, but withal it tends to joy and beauty. There is difference between the pains of a woman in travail, and the

⁹⁸ Beeke and Pederson, *Meet the Puritans*, 568.

⁹⁹ Swinnock, *The Works of George Swinnock*, 179.

¹⁰⁰ Sibbes, *The Complete Works of Richard Sibbes Volume VI* (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1863), 176.

¹⁰¹ Beeke and Pederson, *Meet the Puritans*, 498.

pains of a gout, or some mortal disease; for though that be as extreme in smart and present irksomeness as the other,— yet it contains in it, and it proceeds from, a matter of joy: and all the wrestlings of the soul with the enemies of salvation are but as the pains of a woman in travail; when Christ is fashioned, when the issue is victorious and with gain, the soul no more remembereth those afflictions, which were but for a moment.¹⁰²

Benjamin Keach (1640-1704), a predecessor to Spurgeon at New Park Street Chapel, Southwark, emphasized the pain of gout. He also experienced deliverance from illness.

Erroll Hulse described the incident, “Towards the end of [Hanserd] Knollys’ (1599-1691) life the famous leader Benjamin Keach was taken ill to the point of death. Knollys visited him and implored the Lord to spare him in the same way that he had spared King Hezekiah. Keach recovered and lived another fifteen years.”¹⁰³ In a sermon entitled, “How shall we escape of we neglect so great a salvation,” he highlighted the delivering power of the gospel: “If a Man be but delivered from Want, or from Hunger, being almost starved to Death, and ready to tear his own Flesh to feed himself, or from Nakedness, or from tormenting Pain, suppose it be but the Extremity of the Tooth-ach, Gout, or tormenting Pain of the Stone, or from Slavery in Turkey or from some grievous and cruel imprisonment, being in Bonds and Irons, lying In a dark Dungeon among Toads and Serpents, would he not think it a Great Salvation?”¹⁰⁴ Gout, the stone (bladder stones, not kidney stones in this era), and tooth aches formed a triad of pain. The *a fortiori* argument was also a common one when gout

¹⁰² Edward Reynolds, *The Whole Works of the Right Rev. Edward Reynolds*, vol. 1 (London: B. Holdsworth, 1826), 392.

¹⁰³ Erroll Hulse, *Who Are The Puritans?...and What Do They Teach?* (Darlington: Evangelical Press, 2000), 108-9. For more on the relationship between Knollys and Keach and on this incident of healing, see Michael A. G. Haykin, *Kiffin, Knollys and Keach—Rediscovering our English Baptist Heritage* (Leeds, England: Reformation Today Trust, 1996), 60.

¹⁰⁴ Benjamin Keach, *A Golden Mine Opened or The Glory of God’s Rich Grace Displayed in the Mediator to Believers: And His Direful Wrath Against Impenitent Sinners* (London: printed by the author and William Marshall, 1694), 394-5.

was deployed by the Puritan preacher. It generally went as follows: If a person rejoiced when delivered by a very painful, yet finite and localized disease (such as gout), then how much more would they rejoice when being delivered from a never-ending, universally felt and all-encompassing pain (such as hell).

This triad of painful diseases appeared again in the work of Thomas Manton (1620-1677). He was one of Spurgeon's favorite authors. Concerning his abilities and value to other ministers, Spurgeon wrote:

His works occupy twenty-two volumes in the modern reprint: a mighty mountain of sound theology. They mostly consist of sermons; but what sermons! They are not so sparkling as those of Henry Smith, nor so profound as those of Owen, nor so rhetorical as those of Howe, nor so pithy as those of Watson, nor so fascinating as those of Brooks; and yet they are second to none of these. For solid, sensible instruction forcibly delivered, they cannot be surpassed. Manton is not brilliant, but he is always clear; he is not oratorical, but he is powerful; he is not striking, but he is deep. There is not a poor discourse in the whole collection: he is evenly good, constantly excellent. Ministers who do not know Manton need not wonder if they are themselves unknown. Inasmuch as Manton used but a few figures and illustrations, it came into my head to mark them all, for I felt sure that they would be very natural and forcible...¹⁰⁵

Porter and Rousseau also noted: "When Edmund Calamy (1600-1666) and Thomas Manton (1620-1677), popular divines, were arrested and incarcerated, gout kicked in as a dominant image."¹⁰⁶ Their focus was not on the sermons of Manton but rather the work of a poet commenting on the incident. Joel R. Beeke and Randall J. Pederson noted that Manton was "remembered at his funeral as 'the king of preachers,'" and that "Archbishop James

¹⁰⁵ C. H. Spurgeon, *Illustrations and Meditations or Flowers from a Puritan's Garden* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1883), preface.

¹⁰⁶ Porter and Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady*, 219.

Ussher described Manton as ‘a voluminous preacher’ and ‘one of the best in England.’¹⁰⁷ Beeke and Pederson commented on the status of those who heard him preach. He was a “lecturer for London merchants in Pinner’s Hall” and his congregation at Covent Garden was composed of “aristocratic followers.”¹⁰⁸ One of the figures and illustrations that Manton used was the figure of gout.

In this example, Manton compared disease and sin. He referenced the triad of painful diseases and focused on the omnipotent God’s ability to see all of the hearer’s sins.

What a miserable spectacle is a poor creature that hath a complication of diseases, and is exercised with many at once, the stone, gout, strangury [the inability to void urine except a few drops at a time—often a symptom of bladder stones], pain of the teeth! Consider it; oh, what are we that have so many kinds of sin? We look on sins severally, but God conjunctly. Though he can see every sin apart, yet he seeth them altogether, in the whole course and track of it.¹⁰⁹

For Manton, the God who sees all is ready to fall on the sinner in fierce judgment. In the case of the impending wrath of God, the pain of gout provided the needed motivation for the sinner to realize how ill-equipped he was for that great day. “Ah wretch! how canst thou endure the wrath of God? Thou canst not endure to be scorched a few days with feverish flames; thou canst not endure the acute pains of stone and gout, when God armeth the humours of thine own body against thee; thou canst not endure the scorching of a little gunpowder casually blown up; thou canst not endure the pains of a broken arm or leg; and

¹⁰⁷ Beeke and Pederson, *Meet the Puritans*, 409.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Thomas Manton, *The Works of Thomas Manton*, vol. 21 (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1874), 362.

can you endure the wrath of God, when God himself shall fall upon you with all his might?”¹¹⁰

William Bridge (1600-1670) was appointed as a lecturer in Colchester, Essex and later served as pastor of an Independent church in Yarmouth (1642-1662).¹¹¹ He spent some time in Rotterdam, where he pastored a congregation that included Jeremiah Burroughs (1600-1646). Bridge asked his congregation a question that was designed for the soul’s conversion but was deeply rooted in their bodily experience:

What if God will that his people should have a taste of hell in this life, that so they may be sensible of and very thankful for their deliverance from hell and the wrath to come? There are three things in hell: torment of body, horror of conscience, loss of God. By our pains and torments, gouts and stone, we think of the torments of hell, or may think. By the horror of conscience that we meet withal, we may think of the horror of conscience there. And by God’s withdrawing and God’s departing from us here, we may think of the loss of God for ever there.¹¹²

The bodily experience of pain preceded the horror of the afflicted conscience. For Bridge, gout (and stone) was the instrument. It was the means by which his hearer grasped the reality of eternal punishment. Pain, which bred certainty in the afflicted, was employed to convince his congregation of eternal verities. For Flavel, the power of the conscience was exceedingly great; so much so, that the pain of a troubled conscience made the pain of gout seem a trifling experience. Here are two excerpts of Flavel’s “The Poem”:

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 300.

¹¹¹ Beeke and Pederson, *Meet the Puritans*, 93.

¹¹² William Bridge, *The Works of the Rev. William Bridge*, vol. 3 (London: Thomas Tegg, 1845), 163-4.

THE POEM.

AMONG the dreadful works of God, I find
No metaphors to paint a troubled mind.¹¹³

...

O conscience! who can stand before thy power,
Endure thy gripes and twinges but an hour?
Stone, gout, strappado, racks, whatever is
Dreadful to sense, is but a toy to this.
No pleasures, riches, honours, friends can tell
How to give ease: In this 'tis like to hell.¹¹⁴

George Swinnock (1627-1673) employed a similar tactic when warning his congregation about the judgment of the Lord and the prospect of future punishment. In this passage, he mentioned the familiar trope: teeth, gout, and stone.

Secondly, It [eternal death] will teach thee the severity of the Lord. Now possibly thou knowest what the pain of the teeth is, or what the fury of a fever, or what the violence of the gout, or what the rack of the stone is, but not what the wrath of the Lord is: though these things speak it somewhat, yet thou dost not believe it at all; but then feeling will be believing. Suppose every part of thy body were as much tortured as ever thou hast felt any one part, and that for ten thousand years, how heavy would it be to bear! this were but a flea-biting to what thy body must undergo in hell.¹¹⁵

Swinnock's argument hinged on the hearer having some experience with bodily pain. This pain of gout, which the person might possibly know, "speak it [the Lord's wrath] somewhat." In that day, they will believe because "feeling will be believing." So now he implored his congregation to believe based on the certainty of the pain they had experienced. This emphasis on pain in no way contradicted the Puritan's primary goal, to glorify God and enjoy him forever. J. Stephen Yuille noted, "To a man, the Puritans believed that God

¹¹³ Flavel, *The Whole Works of the Rev. Mr. John Flavel*, 266-7.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Swinnock, *The Works of George Swinnock*, 137.

designed us for a specific end—namely, to find pleasure in Him.” And, “The Puritan George Swinnock stood firmly in this tradition.”¹¹⁶ Swinnock’s hope was to apply or improve upon the doctrine of eternal death to his church’s benefit.

Many other Puritans joined him in this approach. Benjamin Keach, in a sermon on Luke 16:23: “And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments,” warned his congregation in the most graphic way: “The torments of hell are intolerable, because worse than any plague, anguish, or misery, undergone by any in this world; some feel the anguish and tormenting pains of cruel wounds, broken bones, sawing off legs and arms; and others the pain of the stone, gout, cholic; some burning in gentle fires, being consumed by degrees, and long before they could die, and some have been impaled, &c. Now, consider these torments...”¹¹⁷ Thomas Vincent (1634-1678), brother of the popular preacher Nathaniel Vincent (1639?-1697), asserted that the increased capacity of the soul in hell will do nothing but increase the amount of suffering that would be experienced. He also made reference to the common trope of tooth, gout and stone:

The punishment of hell will be extreme; The souls of the wicked shall be filled with anguish, as full as they can hold. Their capacity will be larger, and they will be filled up to the height of their capacity, and their bodies also will have the most exquisite pain it is possible for them to endure; their sense of pain will be quicker, and their strength to endure pain greater, and their pain will be in the utmost extremity: Some pains of the body here are not very acute, and some troubles of mind- may well enough be borne; but any disease in extremity is very irksome; the pain of the head or the tooth in extremity, the gout, stone, cholic in extremity, especially the troubles of the mind in extremity will make a man weary of his life; but to have every part afflicted

¹¹⁶ George Swinnock, *The Fading of the Flesh and the Flourishing of the Faith*, ed. J. Stephen Yuille (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2009 [1662]), preface.

¹¹⁷ Benjamin Keach, *An Exposition of the Parables and Express Similitudes of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (London: Aylott and Company, 1858), 835.

in extremity, and the uttermost extremity, and that beyond our own capacity, or conception, this will be very dreadful.¹¹⁸

Hell was not one particular pain troubling a soul for eternity but rather a plethora of pains, sorrows, and torments assaulting the individual all at the same time. George Swinnock referenced the pain of gout, stone, and toothache along with a whole host of other diseases and discomforts so that “every sense [was] molested.” He preached:

In regard of the universality of the pains it will cause. Fire hath all manner of torments in it, and afflicts the whole man. If any be troubled extremely with the gout, or the stone, or the colic, or the toothache, or any one racking distemper, how dolefully doth he cry out and complain! But if all manner of diseases should in extremity seize a man, and that in every part of him, how dreadfully would he weep and wail! The truth is, colic, stone, cancer, gout, toothache, pleurisy, St Anthony’s fire, and all other, are included in this fire. It hath not only extremity, but also universality of torments; thick darkness for the eyes, hideous yelling for the ears, loathsome brimstone for the smell; and every sense molested and offended in the highest degree, every part tormented in flames.¹¹⁹

James Janeway (1636-1674), whose cherubic face belied a man unafraid to stir the soul heavenward by presenting the sufferings of hell, was widely appreciated for his work, *A Token for Children: Being an Exact Account of the Conversion, holy and exemplary Lives, and Joyful Deaths of several Young Children*. While that work, which was essentially an evangelistic primer for parents and educators, did not reference gout, his other work, *Heaven upon Earth or Jesus the Best Friend of Man*, did. He, too, mentioned the stone and toothache in connection with gout and employed an *a fortiori* argument,

Can you with any patience bear the stone, gout, toothach, colic, or some such distempers of body which last but for a while? ...How then will you be able to lie down in those torments, the least drop of which is abundantly more painful

¹¹⁸ Thomas Vincent, *Christ’s Sudden and Certain Appearance to Judgment* (Wheeling, VA: Davis & McCarty, 1823), 177-8.

¹¹⁹ Swinnock, *The Works of George Swinnock*, 298.

than the greatest torment that ever you felt in your life? If these seem dreadful to you, why do you not go the way to avoid them? which is by getting an interest in Him who hath the keys of hell at his girdle...”¹²⁰

Of course, the one with the keys of hell at his girdle was Christ. The Puritans urged their hearers to seek him and his kingdom without delay. Thomas Watson (1620-1686) was a favorite of Spurgeon’s. Watson was known for his “love of application and gift of illustration.”¹²¹ He ministered in a variety of locations before and after the Act of Uniformity (1662). In 1672, he began a ministry at Crosby Hall, Bishopsgate that included five years of co-laboring with Stephen Charnock (1628-1680).¹²² His use of gout did not make a direct connection with the torments of hell. Rather, he focused on gout as an impediment to effective seeking. It is possible to interpret his imagery in a comic manner.

Thou that sayest, thou wilt look after the kingdom of heaven to-morrow, knowest not but that thou mayest be in hell before to-morrow: sometimes death comes suddenly, it strikes without giving warning. What folly is it putting off seeking the kingdom of heaven till the day of grace expire, till the radical moisture be spent? as if a man should begin to run a race when a fit of the gout takes him.¹²³

His co-laborer, Stephen Charnock, followed the theme of gout as an impediment as well. The emphasis was on the fallen nature of humanity and the inability of the sinner to cease from sin. “Man, as a creature, had a power to believe and love God; to resist temptations, avoid sin, and live according to nature; but man, as corrupted by a habit derived to him from his first parents, and increased by a custom in sin, cannot believe, cannot love God, cannot bring himself into a good frame; as a musician cannot play a lesson when he

¹²⁰ James Janeway, *Heaven Upon Earth or Jesus the Best Friend of Man* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1867), 232.

¹²¹ Beeke and Pederson, *Meet the Puritans*, 606.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Thomas Watson, *A Body of Practical Divinity*, vol. 2 (Berwick: W. Gracie, 1806), 142.

hath the gout in his fingers. When the eyes are full of adultery, when the heart is full of evil habits, it ‘cannot cease to sin,’ it cannot be gracious.”¹²⁴ The emphasis in this illustration was not on the pain of gout but the way gout rendered the limb or appendage useless. A similar theme is found in John Preston’s *The Golden Scepter Held Forth to the Humble*:

The meaning is this: it appears in the faculties of the mind, when they are set about any action that is good, and in the relation is called the law of the members, because it is discerned in the use of the members: as the palsy may lie undiscerned in the hand, but when a man comes to use it he finds it; so the gout, or soreness or lameness in the leg, though it be there, yet it is most discerned when a man begins to walk: such a lameness or difficulty in our faculties appears when we go about anything that is good.”¹²⁵

Thomas Boston (1676-1732) described man’s body as a seminary or seedbed for various diseases:

Miseries on men’s bodies, sickness and bodily pains, as burning fevers, languishing consumptions, distorting convulsions, ugly deformities, gout and gravel [meaning stone], and all the dismal train of wasting diseases and acute pains. Sin hath made man’s body a seminary of diseases, and planted in it the fatal seeds and principles of corruption and dissolution, and made him liable to attacks from all dis-temper, from the torturing stone to the wasting consumption.¹²⁶

Since the coming of disease was an effect of the fall of Man, then the Puritans reasoned that prelapsarian Adam knew of no such trouble. In this passage, Thomas Boston described Adam in just such a state:

There was no blemish, defect, nor disease, to be found in him. He [Adam] was not liable to any attack by gout or gravel, or any tormenting pain. All the humours of his body were in a just temperament and disposition, calculated to

¹²⁴ Stephen Charnock, *The Complete Works of Stephen Charnock*, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1865), 173.

¹²⁵ John Preston, *The Golden Scepter Held Forth to the Humble* (London: printed by R. B. for N. Bourne at the Royall Exchange, 1638), 227.

¹²⁶ Thomas Boston, *The Whole Works of the Late Reverend Thomas Boston of Ettrick*, vol. 1, ed. Rev. Samuel McMillan (Aberdeen: George and Robert King, 1848), 298.

prevent any distemper which might tend to the dissolution of that excellent constitution. His senses were all quick and lively, able to perform with vigour and delight their several operations. He was immortal in this state; and not subject to the attacks of death.”¹²⁷

Adam suffered no imbalances in his humours and avoided what many others did not, painful attacks by gout and gravel.

Diseases were signs and effects of the fallen nature of humanity. They were part of a disordered world. The consequences of sin touched man at his very core. Gout was a painful part of these consequences and was a result of both changes in the body or nature of man—his humoral system and a result of poor choices—excessive drinking. To be sure, the connection to excess did not seem to be a central theme. In this next example, Thomas Manton identified Christ as an individual who was qualitatively different in his constitution and choices. Manton preached,

Disease is put for any kind of trouble and molestation, because they are the things that are most irksome. For otherwise Christ, though he had many griefs, yet he had no diseases, these usually arising out of some intemperance or badness of constitution, neither of which agree to Christ. He took our personal, not individual infirmities; hunger and thirst he was acquainted with, not stone or gout or fever.¹²⁸

Although Richard Sibbes’ language seemed less precise, he agreed with Manton and maintained that Christ was gout free: “He took upon him our miseries; all that are natural, not personal. He took not the leprosy and the gout, &c., but he took all the infirmities that are common to the nature of man, as hunger, and thirst, and weariness; he was sensible of grief.”¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Ibid., 184

¹²⁸ Thomas Manton, *The Works of Thomas Manton*, vol. 3 (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1871), 248.

¹²⁹ Sibbes, *The Complete Works of Richard Sibbes*, 498.

The inability of gout to swell the toe or touch the essential nature of Christ in no way limited Christ's ability to atone for sin or to be a sympathizing high priest. William Gouge (1575-1653) answered what must have seemed to be a natural question: Did the fact that Christ was not afflicted with diseases (like gout) impede his ability to feel mercy toward his creatures? In other words, was it mandatory for him to suffer the gout in order that he might be an effective or efficacious mediator? For Gouge, the answer was found in the shared nature of Christ, not in the sharing of all of the effects of the fall. Gouge, in his commentary on Hebrews, wrote,

To the second I answer, that Christ as man would questionless have been merciful, though he had not been subject to human frailties and miseries. The very union of the human nature with the divine would have moved him to have shewed mercy to such as were in misery; yet it cannot be denied but that the experience which he had of man's miseries moved him as he was man to be the more pitiful. They who have been pained with the gout, stone, or other tormenting maladies, use to pity others that are so pained, and that more, for the most part, than they who never felt any such pain."¹³⁰

While Christ was gout-free, the usage of gout still came into play. When Gouge wanted to make the point of the depth and heartfelt nature of his sympathy, he employed "gout, stone or other tormenting maladies." These maladies when shared by members of the congregation increased their love and pity one for another. Christ experienced the same pity in his sharing human nature even though he was not afflicted with gout, stone, or the other maladies.

Thomas Manton, reflecting on the same passage in Hebrews, drew a similar conclusion. He also deployed gout as a source for developing sympathy. Likewise, he did not ascribe the disease to Christ himself. Reflecting on Hebrews 4:15, he preached, "He

¹³⁰ William Gouge, *A Commentary on the Whole Epistle to the Hebrews*, vol. 1, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1866), 186.

was in all points tempted as we are.’ He hath felt the weight and trouble of temptations himself, and will be sensible of our condition; as a man that has had the stone or gout knows better how to sympathise with others in the like case, and as Israel was commanded to be merciful and pitiful to strangers, because they knew the heart of a stranger.”¹³¹

Isaac Ambrose (1591-1664) echoed those ideas as well:

It is Christ’s compassion that causeth intercession: Christ is such an high-priest, (saith the apostle) as cannot but be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. When he was on earth, he felt our infirmities, frailties, miseries: and as a man that hath felt the stone, or gout, or fever, or especially that hath felt soul troubles, cannot but compassionate those that are in the like condition; so Christ having had the experience of our outward and inward sufferings, cannot but compassionate us; and hence it is (his very compassion is moving) that he intercedes to his Father in our behalf.¹³²

Gout illustrated both Christ’s compassion and the pity that suffering individuals could feel for another.

Richard Sibbes (1577-1635), a very popular preacher and something of a pastor to pastors, wrote *The Bruised Reed and Smoking Flax* and has been described as a “physician of the soul.”¹³³ Beeke and Pederson noted his influence: “David Masson, biographer of John Milton, wrote, ‘No writings in practical theology seem to have been so much read in the mid-seventeenth century among the pious English middle classes as those of Sibbes.’ The twentieth-century historian William Haller said Sibbes’s sermons were ‘the most brilliant and popular of all the utterances of the Puritan church militant.’”¹³⁴ In the

¹³¹ Thomas Manton, *The Works of Thomas Manton*, vol. 18 (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1874), 404.

¹³² Isaac Ambrose, *Works of Isaac Ambrose* (London: Henry Fisher at the Caxton Press, 1823), 426.

¹³³ Hulse, *Who Are the Puritans?* 84.

¹³⁴ Beeke and Pederson, *Meet the Puritans*, 536.

following example, Sibbes compared the inability and frustration of earthly physicians with God, who never fails to heal: “There are some diseases which are called the scorn of physicians, as the gout, the ague [fever marked by chills, shivering and sweating], and the like; wherein, in some cases, they are put to a stand, and know not what to do. But God is never at a loss. His skill cannot be set down. He is good at all diseases, to pardon all manner of sins.”¹³⁵

The relationship between gout, physicians, and the need for an effective medicine or cure was visited often by the Puritans. Ralph Venning (1622-1674) equated the gospel with sure medicine: “If we had gout or a gallstone what would we not give for a remedy, an infallible medicine to cure us? We always welcome surgeons though they cause us pain, and apothecaries though they bring us loathsome drugs; indeed, so dear is health to us, that we not only thank but reward them too. What a welcome, then, should Christ and his gospel have!”¹³⁶ And for Benjamin Keach, Christ was that medicine: “What ease and a perfect cure is to a man tormented with intolerable pain (whether of the stone, gout, or what is worse) that is Christ to a tormented despairing soul, that finds him: or what a healing and infallible balm, is to a man mortally wounded, that is Christ to a wounded sinner that finds him.”¹³⁷

The Puritans deployed gout in a variety of ways as it pertained to the necessity of conversion, the fallen nature of humanity, and the unique status of prelapsarian Adam and Christ. They found it especially illustrative of the nature and horror of hell or the second death. They often included other afflictions along with gout, such as stone or the toothache,

¹³⁵ Sibbes, *The Complete Works of Richard Sibbes*, 309.

¹³⁶ Ralph Venning, *Sin, the Plague of Plagues, or The Sinfulness of Sin* (1669), 120.

¹³⁷ Keach, *An Exposition of the Parables*, 202.

in an effort to connect with their audience, anchor their application in the certainty that accompanied pain, and persuade them to repent and trust the Great Physician.

Gout and Sanctification

Gout metaphors included the need for holiness or sanctification as well. The Puritans were devoted to developing a heartfelt spirituality. Charles Hambrick-Stowe notes, “Puritanism was a devotional movement, rooted in religious experience.”¹³⁸ If the goal of the Christian life was to walk with God, then anything that hindered the believer’s movement would potentially be an instructive figure. Additionally, Puritan theology focused on what William Haller called an “all-embracing determinism.”¹³⁹ There was an emphasis on the providence of God and on his “rod of affliction.” Such ideas translated into the need to discern rightly and react appropriately to the chastening hand of God. John Dod (1549-1645) captured the idea succinctly with the saying, “Sanctified afflictions are spiritual promotions.”¹⁴⁰ Another element of the holy life was developing a contented heart. This was achieved by refusing to look to the world and its passing pleasures. The believer needed to practice mortification or the putting to death the inclinations to sin that originated from their sinful or fleshly nature. One sure help toward these ends was to listen to strong doctrine. And gout was deployed to illustrate each one of these elements.

Obadiah Sedgwick (1600-1658), the father-in-law of Thomas Manton, was a preacher of some reputation. Beeke and Pederson noted that “during the civil wars, he was

¹³⁸ Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Disciplines in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), vii.

¹³⁹ William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), 146.

¹⁴⁰ Puritan Broadside entitled, *The Worthy Sayings of the Late Reverend John Dod* (Dash, Printer, Kettering [imprint location], n.d.).

called upon to preach before Parliament at least fourteen times—more than any other minister except Stephen Marshall.”¹⁴¹ In the following passage he extolled the congregation to continue in the practice of mortification. The theme of walking made the gout metaphor especially apropos.¹⁴²

There must be solid mortification of the heart, or else you can never come to walk in these paths; you may as soon expect that a man lame with the extremity of the gout (who cannot endure to put his foot to the ground) that this man should run, as that a heart laden and captivated with lusts, with sinful diseases and fetters, should walk in a righteous path. For he hath no principle of righteous motions in him, nay his principles strongly and prevalently incline him to crooked paths.”¹⁴³

For the individual who needed to return to the path of righteousness, self-denial was key.

Edward Reynolds (1599-1676) encouraged the practice of mortification and used gout to illustrate how even those who indulge in excess exercise some self-control. He wrote:

By a present sense of the weight and burden of remaining corruptions, which work, and move, and put forth what strength they can, to resist the grace of God in us. As the time past wherein sin reigned, so the present burden of sin besetting us, is esteemed sufficient, and makes a man careful not to load himself wilfully with more, being ready to sink, and forced to cry out under the pain of those which he unwillingly lieth under already. A very glutton when he is in a fit of the gout or stone, will forbear those meats which feed so painful diseases:—a penitent sinner is continually in pain under the body of sin; and therefore dares not feed so dangerous and tormenting a disease.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Beeke and Pederson, *Meet the Puritans*, 517.

¹⁴² The gouty and ineffectual leg is an especially powerful image, due in part, to the centrality of “walking” and “pilgrimage” as a means to depict the Christian life. As Hambrick-Stowe emphasized, “The principal metaphor running through Puritan spirituality and devotional practice was the pilgrimage. Puritans in the seventeenth century used the metaphor to structure their understanding and experience of the life of the spirit.” Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety*, 54.

¹⁴³ Obadiah Sedgwick, *The Shepherd of Israel or God’s Pastoral Care over His People* (London: D. Maxwell, 1658), 158.

¹⁴⁴ Edward Reynolds, *The Whole Works of the Right Rev. Edward Reynolds*, 267.

Thomas Watson also employed the idea of forbearing sin to avoid punishment and forbearing certain foods to avoid the gout. He instructed his congregation on numerous occasions, “A man may forbear sin, yet retain the love of it: he may forbear the act of gross sin...for fear of hell; as a man may forbear a dish he loves, for fear it should bring his disease upon him, the stone or gout.”¹⁴⁵ And again, “Some make it all their care to keep out of trouble; they had rather keep their skin whole, than their conscience pure: but our care should be chiefly to keep from sin. How careful are we to forbear such a dish, as the physicians tell us is hurtful for us: it will bring the stone or gout?”¹⁴⁶

The work of mortification never ended for the believer, because the sinful nature or old man would accompany them throughout their life. In this passage, William Gurnall (1616-1679), author of the popular *The Christian in Complete Armour*, described the necessity of taking your medicine daily:

If thou wouldst Christian, shew the power of holiness, never give over mortifying work, no, not when thy corruptions play least in thy sight. He that is inclined to a disease, gout, stone, or the like, he must not only take physic when he hath a fit actually upon him, but ever and anon should be taking something good against it; so should the Christian, not only when he finds his corruption stirring, but every day keep his soul in a course of spiritual physic, against the growing of it; this is holiness in its power.”¹⁴⁷

The work of mortification required humility. Pride was the great enemy. Richard Sibbes used a very simple and straightforward analogy to illustrate how pride made the believer unfit for Christian service: “Above all, labour for a spirit of humility. An humble man is fit to do or suffer anything. A proud man is like a gouty hand, or a swelled arm, unfit for any Christian performance; he is not in a state to do good; but an humble man is thankful

¹⁴⁵ Thomas Watson, *A Body of Practical Divinity*, 391.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 365.

¹⁴⁷ William Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1845), 308.

that God will honour him so far as to let him suffer for the cause of Christ. He is wondrous empty and vile in his own eyes, and admires why God should reserve such infinite matters for so base a worm as he is.”¹⁴⁸

If a proud man is like a gouty hand, then what is an undisciplined woman like? George Swinnock offered an incredible comparison, the analysis of which might justify a future journal article. He wrote,

Women ought to take care of their husbands’ affairs within-doors, to see that her servants be employed, her children and servants supplied with necessaries, and that nothing be either wanted or wasted. Some women are like a gouty leg, they love to lie soft, to be wrapped warm, to have much tendance [watchful care], but in the meantime they sit still and do nothing. Some tell us the merchant must ask his factor whether he shall thrive or no. Most men may ask their wives whether they shall thrive or no. If she be lavish, though he be laborious, a great estate may quickly come to little.”¹⁴⁹

For Richard Sibbes, gout, along with many other things, was a stimulant to introspection and self-examination. The road to humble service began with acknowledging their own sinful condition. But the unspiritual individual refused to look inward. Sibbes called such an individual carnal or fleshly. His use of gout in this passage almost contained a comic note as he posited the absurdity of the carnal man’s position.

A carnal man is ready to justify himself and complain of God, he complains not to God, but of God, at the least, in secret murmuring, he complains of others that are but God’s vials; he complains of the grievance that lies upon him, but never regards what is amiss in himself within; openly he cries out upon fortune, yet secretly he striketh at God, under that idol of fortune, by whose guidance all things come to pass; whilst he quarrels with that which is nothing, he wounds him that is the cause of all things; like a gouty man that complains of his shoe, and of his bed, or an aguish man of his drink, when the cause is from within. So men are disquieted with others, when they should rather be disquieted and angry with their own hearts.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Sibbes, *The Complete Works of Richard Sibbes*, 399.

¹⁴⁹ Swinnock, *The Works of George Swinnock*, 512.

¹⁵⁰ Sibbes, *The Complete Works of Richard Sibbes*, 151.

Sibbes used more or less the same image when describing the individual's search for peace and contentment. The way forward was to deal with the interior condition or the problem of the heart. He wrote, "In the uncertainty of all events here, labour to frame that contentment in and from our own selves which the things themselves will not yield; frame peace by freeing our hearts from too much fear, and riches by freeing our hearts from covetous desires. Frame a sufficiency out of contentedness. If the soul itself be out of tune, outward things will do no more good than a fair shoe to a gouty foot."¹⁵¹ In the next example, Sibbes repeated the image with a slight variation, "A bad conscience cannot joy in the midst of joy. It is like a gouty foot or a gouty toe covered with a velvet shoe. Alas! what doth it ease it? What doth glorious apparel ease the diseased body? Nothing at all. The ill is within. There the arrow sticks."¹⁵²

The word picture of the "fair shoe to a gouty foot" or "gouty toe covered with a velvet shoe" would become a central motif for the Puritans. Thomas Brooks (1608-1680), author of *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*, employed the image when urging his hearers to resist the devil: "The first remedy against this device of Satan is, to dwell upon the impotency and weakness of all these things here below. They are not able to secure you from the least evil, they are not able to procure you the least desirable good. The crown of gold cannot cure the headache, nor the velvet slipper ease the gout..."¹⁵³ All that the world had to offer offered no comfort to the one searching for lasting peace.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 164.

¹⁵² Ibid., 224.

¹⁵³ Thomas Brooks, *The Complete Works of Thomas Brooks*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1846), 63.

George Swinnock exchanged the velvet for silver, but the meaning remained: “Can a silver slipper cure the gout? or a golden crown the headache? or the greatest empire in the world the pain of the teeth? Much less can these things cure the diseases of thy soul.”¹⁵⁴

Stephen Charnock exchanged the silver for gold, but the meaning remained: “What creature can cure the wound that God makes? What can comfort when the Almighty troubles? All carnal contentments can no more remove inward and spiritual distempers than a crown can cure the headache, or a golden slipper the pain of the gout. Therefore, go to none of these things, but run to that hand which did wound you, unto the Spirit of God, who is the author of conviction.”¹⁵⁵

John Flavel used the image of the silk stocking, but the essential meaning of the image was unchanged: “No creature can administer the least relief, by the application of any temporal comfort or refreshment to it. Gold and silver, wife and children, meat and melody, signify no more than the drawing on of a silk stocking to cure the paroxysms of the gout.”¹⁵⁶

Thomas Brooks urged his congregation to realize the folly of pursuing earthly wealth and instead find the riches that Christ offered: “They [earthly things like wealth] can never satisfy divine justice; They can never pacify divine wrath; Nor they can never quiet a guilty conscience. And till these things are done, man is undone. The crown of gold cannot cure the headache, nor the honourable garter cannot cure the gout, nor the chain of pearls about

¹⁵⁴ Swinnock, *The Works of George Swinnock*, 227.

¹⁵⁵ Stephen Charnock, *The Complete Works of Stephen Charnock*, vol. 4 (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1865), 218.

¹⁵⁶ Flavel, *The Whole Works of the Rev. Mr. John Flavel*, 146.

the neck cannot take away the pain of the teeth. Oh but the unsearchable riches of Christ give ease under all pains and torments.”¹⁵⁷

Richard Baxter (1615-1691), the pastor at Kidderminster that Spurgeon deeply admired, continued the theme and summarized the folly of trying to find satisfaction in earthly things.

My next question to you is, ‘What is it that you do seriously expect from the world for the time to come that should persuade you to stick so close to it as you do?’ Some great matter sure you do think it will do for you; or else you would never so esteem it. I pray you tell me what it is? Do you think verily, that it will make you truly happy? Do you expect that it should bring you to heaven? I suppose you do not. What then will it do for you? It will neither prevent a sickness, nor remove it: it cannot take away a toothache, nor a fit of the gout or stone: it will not save you from the jaws of death, nor keep your bodies from rotting in the grave, nor bribe the worms or corruption from devouring them. When your physician tells you that your disease is incurable, and you see that there is no way but one with you, and you must be gone, there is no remedy; if then you cry to the world, it cannot help you: friends cannot save you, riches and honours, houses and lands cannot preserve you; death will obey his will that sendeth it, and you must away.¹⁵⁸

His image employed the triumvirate of painful afflictions—toothache, gout, and stone—and combined with picturesque language, urged his hearers to abandon affection for the world.

For the Puritans, it was not enough to turn from the world but sanctification or holy living involved embracing Christ. The believer’s walk with God ensured that, according to Romans 8, “all things work together for best unto them that love God.”¹⁵⁹ Richard Sibbes emphasized when he declared that Christ turned everything, even gout and stone, to the

¹⁵⁷ Brooks, *The Complete Works of Thomas Brooks*, 160.

¹⁵⁸ Richard Baxter, *The Practical Works of the Rev. Richard Baxter*, vol. 9 (London: James Duncan, 1830), 467.

¹⁵⁹ *Geneva Bible* (1599).

benefit of the believer. If the church lacked comfort, it was due to not drawing near enough to Christ. He preached,

They do not consider how Christ hath sweetened all. He hath turned God, and turned all to us. He hath made God our Father, and in him all things favourable unto us. So that now the fixe is our friend, the stone, and the gout, and all diseases, disgrace and temptation, all are at peace and league with us; all is turned in the use and issue to good, to the help and comfort of God's children.¹⁶⁰

God desired that believers use “all things” to their spiritual benefit. David Dickson (c. 1583-1662) argued that the times of ease that occur between times of pain should be used to promote holiness. He wrote the following as part of his exposition of the tenth chapter of Job:

We see that God gives ease in this life, because it is short and troublesome; he mixes pain with ease, so that the gout, gravel, throb but whiles, not always, that they may get leave to cry to God. The pains of a woman's birth come in showers, that the silly creature may draw the breath when ease is given, and not tye [lose] her wits by constant growing pain. Employ the time of ease well, which is given as a breathing time in pain, for ease when it comes, makes pain more tolerable.”¹⁶¹

Even the thorn of the apostle Paul, that messenger of Satan, which according to Manton, might have been gout, would have been included in the “all things.” Manton preached, “God hath a ministry for Satan to punish careless souls, to hinder the word, inject ill thoughts, lay snares, raise persecution, sow tares, accuse and trouble the faithful, vex their bodies as he did Job; so Paul had a messenger of Satan, some racking pain in his body, the stone or gout, or the like.”¹⁶² This thorough-going trust was a popular theme with the

¹⁶⁰ Sibbes, *The Complete Works of Richard Sibbes*, 92.

¹⁶¹ David Dickson, *Select Practical Writings of David Dickson*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: John Greig, 1845), 74.

¹⁶² Manton, *The Works of Thomas Manton*, vol. 21, 57.

Puritans and was seen in the trust they were to have in the Lord even while under the rod of affliction or chastisement. John Bunyan wrote, “Let us learn like Christians to kiss the rod, and love it.”¹⁶³ And Stephen Charnock, “We often learn more of God under the rod that strikes us, than under the staff that comforts us.”¹⁶⁴ And Henry Smyth, “An obedient child doth not only kiss the hand which giveth, but the rod which beateth.”¹⁶⁵ Thomas Brooks, in *The Privy Key of Heaven*, described God’s use of the rod in the life of the believer:

Observe what sin that is that did most sting and terrify thee in an evil day, as when thou hast been under some loathsome disease or tormenting pain; be it stone, gout, or burning fever, or when thou hast been in some imminent danger, or when thou hast had a sentence of death upon thee, and there hath been but a short step between thee and eternity. Doubtless that sin, which hath lain as a heavy load upon thy conscience in the days of thy former distress, that is the sin that God would have conquered and brought under by his present rod.¹⁶⁶

Brooks wrote in *The Signal Presence of God*, how God used gout not only to chasten the believer but also to scourge the dreaded Catholic. Brooks noted,

And so Justice Gilford, a violent papist in Queen Mary’s days, going up the stairs to Mrs. Roberts her chamber, to compel her, will she or will she not, to go to mass, at that very nick of time he was suddenly taken with his old disease the gout, and so grievously tormented, that he swore he would never trouble her more.¹⁶⁷

Although gout seemed to defend Mrs. Roberts from the “violent papist,” I don’t think this usage qualified for the type of prophylactic that Porter and Rousseau described.

¹⁶³ I. D. E. Thomas, ed., *A Puritan Golden Treasury* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1989), 17.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁶⁶ Brooks, *The Complete Works of Thomas Brooks*, vol. 2, 152.

¹⁶⁷ Brooks, *The Complete Works of Thomas Brooks*, vol. 5, 590.

When gout afflicted others and when the rod of affliction was pressed upon them, it was a call for sympathy and tender feeling. William Gouge urged his hearers to pity those who suffered: “Persecutions by imprisonment, banishment, sword, fire, sundry tortures, are they not grievous? So sundry diseases, as stone, gout, strangury, &c.; so reproach, loss of goods, oppressions, &c.; Oh, pity and bear with them that are afflicted: succour and support them in what you can. Their condition being grievous, it needs and requires compassion, help, and succour.”¹⁶⁸ George Swinnock continued the theme: “Those that have been sensible of the stone, or gout, or toothache, are the more pitiful towards them that are affected with the same pain. My God bids me to be gentle, shewing all meekness towards all men, Titus iii. 2, 3; because I myself was sometimes disobedient, deceived, and serving divers lusts and pleasures.”¹⁶⁹

The art of contentment might also be learned by observing those who pass through the severest of trials. Thomas Watson wrote, “Think of this and be content. It is worse with them who perhaps deserve better than we, and are higher in God’s favour... Hast thou a gentle fit of an ague? Look on them who are tormented with the stone and gout, &c. Others of God’s children have had greater afflictions, and have borne them better than we.”¹⁷⁰

The Puritans also used the relationship between the physician and the gout sufferer to illustrate the necessity to hear sound doctrine and to follow the counsel of their pastors. In *A Discourse of the Building, Nature, Excellency, and Government the House of God; Counsels and Directions to the Inhabitants Thereof* (1688), John Bunyan equated the role of the

¹⁶⁸ Gouge, *A Commentary on the Whole Epistle to the Hebrews*, 197.

¹⁶⁹ Swinnock, *The Works of George Swinnock*, 326.

¹⁷⁰ Watson, *A Body of Practical Divinity*, 494.

overseer or the pastor with a sub-physician. They were to be heeded because one of their skills included healing the gout:

They [overseers] are your sub-physicians, and know
What sickness you are incident unto;
Let them but feel your pulse, and they will tell
You quickly whether you are sick or well.
Have you the staggers? They can help you there;
Or if the falling-sickness, or do fear
A lethargy, a fever, or the gout,
God blessing of their skill, you need not doubt
A cure, for long experience has made
These officers the masters of their trade.
Their physic works by purge and vomit too,
Fear not, nor full nor fasting but 'twill do.
Have but a care, and see you catch no cold.
And with their physic then you may be bold.¹⁷¹

But the Puritans realized that many would not sit under the teaching of their pastors. In these cases, the metaphor of the gouty foot could also apply. Of those who won't tolerate biblical doctrine, William Gurnall wrote, "Paul tells of some 'that will not endure sound doctrine,' 2Tim. iv. 3. Alas! how should they, when their minds are not sound? It is too searching for them. Gouty feet cannot go but on a soft way, which generally yields to them. Such must have a doctrine that will comply with their humour, which the word will not, but rather judge them."¹⁷²

The prospects of many not heeding instruction did not hinder Richard Steele (1629-1729) in his role as overseer (sub-physician): "If these directions I have given be but studied and applied, as you would study and apply a medicine for the gout, or stone, or but for the

¹⁷¹ John Bunyan, *The Works of John Bunyan*, vol. 2, ed. George Offor (London: Blackie and Son, 1855), 582.

¹⁷² Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour*, 580.

tooth-ache, I verily trust they will prove the destruction of your distractions; but if they be neglected, your distractions will prove your destruction.”¹⁷³

Conclusion

For the Puritans, gout was a powerful metaphor that applied in many different contexts. It was deployed to add certainty and moral seriousness and to evoke feelings of sympathy. For the individuals who could not contract gout, prelapsarian Adam and Jesus Christ, it communicated their special status as different or other. Gout was often accompanied by other maladies, like stone and toothache, to form a triad of pain. But could the gout metaphor be used to engender hope? After seeing so many different ways that gout was deployed, the unsurprising answer is, yes.

The metaphor of gout which was deployed to depict the perfect condition of pre-fall humanity was naturally well-suited for the afterlife. The body of the believer would someday have its humors perfectly balanced and its earthly pains vanquished. While these were ideas that any of the Puritans might share in the normal course of a Sunday sermon, they would be especially timely during a funeral sermon. The following passage, by Thomas Manton, took place at the funeral service for a Miss Jane Blackwell, wife of Elidad Blackwell, a pastor in London:

Here we complain that the candle of the Lord doth not shine over us with a like brightness, but there our sun remains in an eternal high noon, without clouds and the shadows of this night. The afflictions of the body are done away; heaven is a happy air, where none are sick; there is no such thing there as gouts and agues, and the grinding pains of the stone. The body here is called a vile body, Phil 3:21, as it is the instrument of sin and the subject of diseases. We have the root of diseases in the soul, and the matter and fuel of diseases in the body, peccant [dry] humours and principles of corruption. As

¹⁷³ Richard Steele, *A Remedy for Wandering Thoughts in the Worship of God* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1835), 252.

wood is eaten out with worms that breed within itself, so are there in our bodies principles of corruption that do at length destroy them; but there we are wholly incorruptible. Yea, because deformity in the body is a monument of God's displeasure, one of the inconveniences introduced by Adam's fall, it is done away.¹⁷⁴

This doctrine was a source of great comfort and consolation to those whose lives were marked by pain. Manton again sounded a hopeful note: "What a comfort is this to them that are racked with stone and gout, humbled with diseases, or withered with age, to think they shall have a body without aches and without decays, that shall be always in the spring of youth!"¹⁷⁵ Thomas Vincent held forth the same hope when discussing the heavenly bodies of the righteous: "Hence it follows that their bodies will be most healthful bodies, they will be free from all pains and disease, which may in the least weaken them; the temperature of their bodies will be so exact, that there will be no fighting of contrary qualities within them, no flowing of ill humours. In heaven there will be no plague, nor ague, nor fever, nor gout, nor strangury, nor any distemper; no need of food to preserve health, nor physic to recover it."¹⁷⁶

Although not properly a seventeenth-century Puritan, George Whitefield used the idea of a gout-free heaven in a sermon entitled, "Christ's Transfiguration." This text captured his dramatic style as he called for his hearers to "look yonder, look up to heaven."

It is a technique that Spurgeon employed as well. Whitefield preached:

Thou mayest, perhaps, have a natural fear of dying: the body and the foul do not care to part without a little sympathy and a groan; but O look yonder,

¹⁷⁴ Manton, *The Works of Thomas Manton* vol. 2, 463. For a list of funeral sermons, see Robert P. Martin's *A Guide to the Puritans: A Topical and Textual Index to Writings of the Puritans and Some of their Successors Recently in Print* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1997), 469-73.

¹⁷⁵ Manton, *The Works of Thomas Manton*, vol. 16, 193.

¹⁷⁶ Vincent, *Christ's Sudden and Certain Appearance to Judgment*, 200.

look up to heaven, see there thy Jesus, thy Redeemer, and learn, that thy body is to be fashioned here- after like unto Christ's more glorious body; that poor body which is now subject to gout and gravel, and that thou canst scarce drag along ; that poor body, which hinders thee so much in the spiritual life, will ere long hinder thee no more: it shall be put into the grave; but though it be sown in corruption, it shall be raised in incorruption, though it is sown in dishonour, it shall be raised again in glory.¹⁷⁷

The call of “O look yonder” invited the hearer to see the redeemer Jesus and to envision a gout-free future. Would it be an invitation reissued by Spurgeon?

It has been said that gout “early on acquired a personality.” The many aspects of that personality have been demonstrated and explored not only in some of their secular appearances but also in many of the religious texts of the English Puritans. We have noted how gout metaphors have been widely used by many Puritan authors and in a variety of contexts. These were the individuals who left a deep impression on Spurgeon. These were the preachers and theologians that he consciously decided to extol publicly and to read privately. He amassed a great number of their works in his personal library and referenced them often. One of Spurgeon's earliest works, *Smooth Stones Taken from Ancient Brooks*, was a collection of pithy quotes and memorable excerpts drawn from the writings of Thomas Brooks.

In the next chapter, the following questions will be posed: first, in light of Spurgeon's deep connection with the Puritans and with an understanding of the central role that his body played in his ministry, how did he deploy the metaphors of gout in his sermons, personal correspondence, and other writing? Second, what can that usage or omissions tell us about Spurgeon himself, the audience at the Metropolitan Tabernacle

¹⁷⁷ Whitefield, *The Works of the Rev. George Whitefield*, vol. 5, 451-2.

(along with the wider readership), and finally, the broader Victorian culture in which they operated?

CHAPTER 5
SPURGEON'S USE OF THE GOUT METAPHOR AND ITS
MEANINGS AND SIGNIFICANCES

In the first chapter, I outlined the biographical highlights of the life of Spurgeon and noted the pervasive influence of the Puritans on the life and ministry of Spurgeon. The Puritans shaped him theologically. They comprised a major portion of his private library. They were also very much a part of his public persona. He trumpeted his admiration for them. The newspapers recognized that his preaching was an attempt to convey those old truths. The texts of the Puritans formed the curriculum for Spurgeon's Friday afternoon lectures at the Pastors' College. Many of Spurgeon's publications involved reprinting or collecting excerpts and aphorisms from Puritan sermons.¹ His commentaries were replete with Puritan quotations.

In the third chapter, I explored the various ways that the Puritans used gout in their sermons and writings. Gout was one among many ailments or diseases that were deployed to capture the attention and imagination of their hearers and reading audience. It was used metaphorically within a wide range of theological frameworks. It created bonds of sympathy among believers. It communicated the painful realities of hell. Heaven and the bodies of the resurrected believers were, like prelapsarian Adam and Christ, free from gout. Among the writings of the Puritans, it was very rarely used with notions of excess and generally lacked the ludic or playful sensibility. The believer suffering with gout was

¹ Three examples: *Smooth Stones Taken from Ancient Brooks* (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1860); *Illustrations and Meditations or Flowers from a Puritan's Garden* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1883); and *The Salt Cellars*, vol. 2 (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1889).

presented with a special opportunity to trust God through their affliction and subsequently experience significant spiritual advancement.

Between these two chapters that focused on Spurgeon's adherence to Puritanism and the Puritans' own use of the gout metaphor, I explored the importance of Spurgeon's body in his ministry. The preaching moment for Spurgeon was a demonstration or experience of incredible power. The life-changing message of the gospel stirred not only the soul of Spurgeon but also animated his frame. In his early ministry, he was criticized heavily for his pulpit performances which included "strutting" and turning the pulpit's sacred space into little more than the morally compromised boards of the theatre. Spurgeon's desire for freedom and space manifested itself in the architecture of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. It was truly a preacher's church, designed so that Spurgeon could be seen and heard. But Spurgeon's body was not free to roam the platform for his entire ministry. He was afflicted with gout, Bright's disease, and seasons of depression. These diseases, especially his suffering with gout, were played out before the eyes and ears of his congregation and reported to a watching world.

It is within this context—his very visible, public, and physical decline and with the understanding that he was deeply influenced by the Puritans—that I present and analyze his own use of the metaphors of gout. In this chapter I explore the following: the continuity between the Puritans and Spurgeon's use of the gout metaphor; examples that are discontinuous along with possible reasons for the discontinuity or even the omissions of usage; and finally, the ways that the insights gained from these comparisons between Spurgeon and the Puritans can affirm and complement modern scholarship. The work of

Porter and Rousseau, Copeman, and others have sought to understand gout within its cultural context, but largely ignored the evangelical Christian culture.

Spurgeon's Use of the Gout Metaphor

Charles Spurgeon often met challenges and crises with aplomb and a lively sense of humor. The humorous side of Spurgeon has been the subject of several articles and occupied portions of dissertations as well. Spurgeon met the challenge of disease and depression with a touch of humor. William Brian Albert has noted that Spurgeon, like so many pastors and speakers, collected joke books in his private library. "There are approximately twenty books on jokes and humor in the Spurgeon Library at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary."² Spurgeon's sense of humor was evident already in his childhood and continued throughout his life. One of the first references to gout that appears in his writings is in a letter that he wrote to his Aunt Ann. He had a very close relationship with her. He even referred to her as "mother Ann." When Spurgeon lived with his grandparents in Stambourne, it fell to Ann to care for her young charge. Years later, Spurgeon wrote a letter to her enquiring about his grandfather's health and requesting that she have him post a letter to him:

When I was last at his house, he was extremely kind to me, and I flattered myself that, if I should ever have occasion to ask a favor, I should not be refused; or, if denied, it would be in so kind a manner that it would not look like neglect. If he is alive, and not gone beyond the seas, please to give him my kind love the first time you meet him, and tell him I suppose he must have gout in his hands, so that he cannot write. Should it turn out that it is so, keep all wines and spirits from him, as they are bad things for gouty folk; and be so good as to foment his hands with warm water boiled with the heads of poppies. By this treatment, the swelling will subside; and,

² William Brian Albert, "When the Wind Blows Cold": The Spirituality of Suffering and Depression in the Life and Ministry of Charles Spurgeon (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, December 2015), 50.

as soon as he is able, if you find him at all tractable, put a pen in his hand, and make him write his name, and post it to me, so that I may be sure he is alive. Ah, 'tis a sad thing people will get gouty!³

Spurgeon was nineteen at the time he wrote this letter. He had no idea of the suffering that lay before him. He could not have conceived that future jokes would involve his own inability to write due to gout.⁴

In this letter, Spurgeon recommended treatments for his grandfather to follow to recover his health. He suggested abstinence from wine and strong drink. This advice was especially humorous because Spurgeon's grandfather, the pastor of the Independent Church in Stambourne, would not have been given to excess and might have abstained completely from alcoholic beverages.⁵ Spurgeon's letter affirmed the persistent cultural understanding that high levels of alcohol consumption fueled the onset of an attack of gout.⁶ Spurgeon also encouraged him to "foment his hands with warm water boiled with the heads of poppies."

³ Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, vol.1, ?.

⁴ Spurgeon wrote to an elder, from Mentone, December 21, 1877. Dear _____, This is a Sabbath with us, but not a Sunday. It is grey and windy, and I am not able to go out. Yet I am much better, although my middle finger is only middling, and will not let the gout go out. The small punning which appears above is solely due to your letter. I am not in the habit of committing puns, but there is a contagion about persons who have the evil in its very worst form I desire you to tender my kindest love to each one of the elders I thank those who pray for me. In my pain and weakness I have had great need of your prayers, and now that I am getting well I feel it even more. Oh, for a great blessing! I open my mouth wide, and there is the promise, "I will fill it." The weather is unsettled here, and cold for this place. The logs of olive blaze cheerfully, and are a necessity.

Remember me to _____. Peace be unto you. I cannot write more—the finger forbids.

Yours heartily, C. H. SPURGEON.

⁵ Spurgeon's grandfather, James Spurgeon, was not a teetotaler.

⁶ Another illustration of the persistence of the theme of excess occurred when Spurgeon was accused of heavy drinking and that this was the primary cause of his suffering with gout: "An article in an American paper charged a popular London preacher with intemperance [1879], stating that his gout necessitated frequent visits to France, the gout being caused by excessive drinking of beer, brandy and sherry! Needless to say it was incorrect to attribute this to the Pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle." Eric W. Hayden, *Highlights in the Life of Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1990), 56.

Such a treatment was in keeping with the medical advice of the times. To bring relief to a troubled leg, *The Lancet* suggested, “Let the whole limb be occasionally fomented with a decoction of poppy heads.”⁷ It may well be that this whole passage was written tongue-in-cheek and that Spurgeon was playing the jester throughout the letter. But gout did run in his family, and his grandfather did suffer from it.

Spurgeon was, in jest, playing the doctor, but he knew that the medical community could aid the sick. Throughout his life, he and his wife often relied on the advice of physicians. Years later, Spurgeon’s sense of humor broke through again when he described an encounter he had with a quack who proffered a foolproof cure:

Years ago, when I was suffering from gouty rheumatism, a gentleman sought an interview, who was confident that he could cure me almost immediately. He was a marvelously positive quack, and before long he had informed me that he had in his exclusive possession a most astounding medicine. I do not know whether a smell of it would not have cured all the ills of humanity. No, he could not even hint what the medicine was; and I did not press the point, for I could not expect to be favoured with the golden secret; but I was indulged with some insight into the preparation of the miraculous drug. The professor said, “These pills are infallible in their effect, because they are so powerful. Their power does not lie in the mere ingredients, which are extremely simple; but their efficacy is the result of the careful preparation of the material by myself.” Being a very healthy man, and full of life-force, the professor professed to work up these pills in such a way that he transferred to them the electric or biological energies of his own personality; and thus he infused health-power into the sick. I have never taken the aforesaid pills.⁸

About thirty years after the letter to his grandfather was written, on June 18, 1884, the Metropolitan Tabernacle hosted a jubilee (50th birthday) celebration for Spurgeon. It

⁷ Thomas Wakley ed., *The Lancet for 1839-1840* in Two Volumes, vol. 1 (London: George Churchill, 1840), 279. The poppies were grown in Eastern England and opium could be extracted from them. Additionally, willow bark or natural aspirin was another standard pain-killer.

⁸ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 35, 381.

was at this celebration that Charles's brother, James Spurgeon, highlighted the family history of suffering. Pastor James turned to his brother and said:

Looking back, I can see that both of us have been children of many prayers; and all honor to my father and his father, to my mother and to our good grandmother, for we came of a praying stock, and we came of a pious stock for generations past. I think it was in the year 1662 that Job Spurgeon sat a winter through in prison in a chair because he would not go to the steeple-house to worship. He was so afflicted with rheumatism (which the major part of our family inherits) that he could not lie down; so that my dear brother's infirmities are venerable because of their age. With other things he has inherited much weakness, but it was gained in the Master's service, and because one of our ancestors would not submit to worship God in any other way than that which he thought right.⁹

Porter and Rousseau's influential work suggests that the heyday for overt metaphorical usage of gout, both in written and visual texts, was the early nineteenth century. After this period and all the way through the Victorian era, the presence of gout was assumed, but the trope is not explained or emphasized. "The high noon of gout persisted or did not diminish until deep into the Victorian era."¹⁰ Writing in regard to Sir Grandgout, one of the characters in Disraeli's *Vivian Grey* (1826), "At this point there was no need to go on about 'comic insulation and masculine excess.' The cultural heritage was firmly established."¹¹ The cultural meanings that gout had acquired, its "personality," which reached a zenith in Georgian England, were still reverberating through the early and middle Victorian period. The patrician's malady held fast as "traditional connotations of the

⁹ Charles Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle: Its History and Work* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1876), 74. See examples of "the pedigree of podagra conceit," in Porter and Rousseau, where, "The gouty paralysis served as an emblem for the dead-weight of tradition." Porter and Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 154.

¹⁰ Porter and Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady*, 143.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 147.

condition were still taken for granted.”¹² The meanings even trickled down to the middle-classes as the period saw “a vast public eager to share the diseases of high society and with money in their pockets to join the medical marketplace.”¹³ The persistence of the metaphors of gout, particularly in “nineteenth-century magazines and the popular press” indicates that the “rising middle [class] found a malady like gout so intriguing.”¹⁴ Porter and Rousseau cite the novels of Wilkie Collins (1824-1889), which occasionally featured gouty characters and were extremely popular with the middle class. The great irony is that Collins suffered terribly from the gout over a long period of time and considered the disease a great evil, even though his periods of isolation fueled periods of productive writing. Ideas of wealth and excess, hereditary inheritance, and motifs of insulation were operating deep into the Victorian era.

My research into Spurgeon confirmed this contention. Throughout the written material, the common cultural understandings of gout were at play. Moreover, the visual material that features Spurgeon, especially the cartoons and caricatures, swells with meaning once they are read with his gouty condition in mind. The cartoon or caricature, “Parsons in the Pulpit” from *Moonshine* (1890), which defies easy labeling due to its mixture of both

¹² Ibid., 154.

¹³ Ibid., 171. The work of David Cannadine is helpful in defining class structures and the multiple understandings of class that operated in an ebb and flow throughout England’s history and historiography. Regarding the time period in which Spurgeon’s ministry (for the most part) flourished, Cannadine noted: “During the Mid-Victorian period, the hierarchical view was successfully reasserted, and the triadic and dichotomous pictures of society were generally much less popular.” David Cannadine, “Beyond Class? Social Structures and Social Perceptions in Modern England,” *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 97, 95-118 (The British Academy, 1998), read at the Academy 24 April 1997. The hierarchical view envisioned society as a seamless web where each individual had their place. The triadic view divided English society into those who lived on rents, those who lived on profits, and those who earned wages in exchange for their labor. The dichotomous view posited society as a struggle between two antagonistic groups.

¹⁴ Porter and Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady*, 175.

comic and grotesque elements, was a particularly powerful example of a persistent symbol of gout, interacting with another burgeoning cultural construct, the idea of Christian manliness.

Spurgeon's letter to his Aunt Ann, with its references to wine and spirits, as well as his brother's speech at the Jubilee, confirms that notions of hereditary and excess still operated in the middle decades of the Victorian period. Spurgeon's own testimonies concerning his periods of retreat and rest to Mentone, coupled with his ability to continue writing sermons and editing articles for his magazine while there, parallel Collins's own productive periods when he was in relative isolation.

According to Porter and Rousseau, Spurgeon's primarily middle-class audience would have been fascinated with gout and its meanings. Of course, the majority of them were not afflicted with the disease, but on the platform of the Metropolitan Tabernacle there was a living example of gout-come-in-the-flesh. Many of the contemporary cultural constructions of the disease were paraded out almost weekly behind the rail of the largest church in the English-speaking world. Moreover, the afflicted individual was no ordinary man. He was the "Essex bumpkin" who had come to the big city and became an incredible success. In London, his preaching genius—and genius was sometimes associated with gout—was revealed.¹⁵ The "boy wonder of the fens" had become the "Bishop of London." Yet along with such titles and privilege came disease. Gout, it seemed, had claimed another victim. He had passed the poor man's house and settled into the more comfortable setting of the rich man's manor.

¹⁵ Spurgeon's genius was featured in another article: "Obesity and Genius," *The Strand Magazine*, 35, no. 208 (May 1908): 410-3.

Spurgeon, whether he meant to or not (there is no indication that he was consciously making choices to differentiate himself from his people), was almost a cipher for the collection of cultural meanings that came crashing down into and through him. When he missed almost a third of his pulpit time due to prolonged sickness, this was forgiven because his elders and the people loved him. Moreover, it was assumed that that was what gout did: It sent its victim into periods of relative isolation. It was a tyrant, to employ Gibbon's term, that dictated the schedule of the sufferer. When Spurgeon purchased the great manor house, Westwood, in 1880, it was ostensibly because of its healthful springs and fresh breezes. Eric Hayden, former pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, wrote, "Spurgeon was now 46 years old and for the sake of his health, on doctor's advice, moved to "higher ground" to "Westwood," Upper Norwood. There was a medicinal spring in the grounds which it was thought would help his rheumatism (there is now a modern school erected in the grounds of "Westwood" and they have kept the name, also calling the street "Spurgeon Road")."¹⁶

¹⁶ Hayden, *Highlights in the Life of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 58.



A PEEP ACROSS THE LAKE

Fig. 5.1. The View of Westwood from across the Lake.¹⁷

Westwood was also an emblem of success. It was, symbolically, an estate where gout might also take up residence.¹⁸ When Spurgeon traveled to Mentone to recuperate and convalesce, as he did consistently for about twenty years, it communicated wealth, leisure, and class to the members of his congregation. For some in Victorian England, recovery meant a trip to a convalescent home. These were institutions that began in the middle of the century and

¹⁷ Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon: Compiled from His Diary, Letters, and Records by His Wife and Private Secretary*, vol. 4 (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1898), 52.

¹⁸ Spurgeon was sensitive to criticism on account of the estate's size: "Though Mr. Spurgeon had described "Westwood" as too grand for him, he was very vexed when an American visitor published a grossly-exaggerated account of 'its park, and meadows, and lakes, and streams, and statuary, and stables,' which were supposed to rival those of the Queen at Windsor Castle!" *Autobiography*, vol. 4, 52. The whole of Westwood was situated on less than nine acres.

grew to number more than three hundred by the end of the century. They became a popular destination where, after spending a few weeks or months, patients might recover. Eli Anders noted that there was another option available to the wealthy: “Not all recovering patients aspired to visit convalescent homes. Wealthy patients were unlikely to visit hospitals of any sort as they had the means to hire private physicians who tended them during both sickness and convalescence. Such patients could afford to travel to a spa or coastal health retreat to recuperate.”¹⁹ Spurgeon’s annual trip to the South of France conveyed his socio-economic status. It was the presence of gout that necessitated and justified such trips.

In his later years, when Spurgeon used a chair on the platform of the Tabernacle, its presence was associated with gout. When he struggled to ascend or descend stairs (and he often did so), it was with one of his canes. These canes also came to represent his pain and suffering. These canes varied in their appearance from the very plain to the ornate. Peter J. Morden has even included an image of some of them in his recent work, *C. H. Spurgeon: The People’s Preacher*.²⁰

¹⁹ <https://remedianetwork.net/2014/11/07/locating-convalescence-in-victorian-england/>, accessed March 10, 2017.

²⁰ Peter Morden, *C. H. Spurgeon: The People’s Preacher* (China: IOIO Printing International, 2009), 158.



Fig. 5.2. Spurgeon's Canes²¹

When Charles was photographed with his brother, James Archer, he was holding one of his canes.²² Spurgeon did not grab the cane thinking he would convey a certain meaning, of course. Nevertheless, its presence signaled his condition and carried with it additional meanings.²³ The same was true, even more so, for the Cabinet Card entitled, “The Mentone Group.”²⁴ Spurgeon is seated in the fourth position surrounded by friends and co-workers

²¹ Peter Morden, *C. H. Spurgeon: The People's Preacher*, 158.

²² See Appendix B, Figure B40.

²³ A cane not pictured featured a gold head. The story is told in Spurgeon's *Autobiography*, vol. 4, 60: “One Monday morning, not long after removing to “Westwood,” the whole household was in a state of consternation because there had been a burglary during the night. On the Sabbath evening, a service had been held in the study, and a small window had been opened for ventilation. It was not noticed at the time for locking up, so it remained open, and made it a comparatively easy matter for a thief to enter. He did not get much for his pains, and his principal plunder almost led to his arrest. Mr. John B. Gough had given to Mr. Spurgeon a valuable stick as a token of his affection; this was amongst the burglar's booty, and, after hammering out of shape the gold with which it was adorned, he offered it for sale at a pawnbroker's in the Borough. It was possible still to read the name, C. H. Spurgeon, in the precious metal, so an assistant was despatched for the police; but, before they arrived, the man decamped, and was not seen again.”

²⁴ See Appendix B, Figure B36.

from the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Joseph Passmore, his publisher, was certainly wealthy enough to afford such trips, but what of George Rogers, the former Congregational Pastor who was serving as the principal of the Pastors' College? Higgs, "Father Abraham," might have accrued some wealth from his business, but what of J. W. Harrald, Spurgeon's private secretary? All of these men were friends of Spurgeon, and their presence on the trip was due to that friendship. In their minds, such a trip was justified because of the presence of gout. Furthermore, the Cabinet Card was published by Passmore and Alabaster and was marketed for sale. Why purchase such a card? Spurgeon's celebrity status, initially achieved through his amazing and dramatic preaching performances and cemented later, in part, due to his valiant and continuing struggle against gout, fueled the consumption of such photographs and other mementos. Of all the men photographed in "The Mentone Group," only one was holding a cane. Of course, it was Spurgeon. The cane and other items were associated with disease, disability, and the medical community.²⁵ As Porter and Rousseau noted, "Technology and machinery also played a role in gout's visual heritage."²⁶ During Spurgeon's final trip to Mentone, the deacons even discussed installing a lift to help their pastor to the platform. Spurgeon died before such a device could be installed, but how freighted with meaning its presence would have been.

Spurgeon's body was a contested site where theological and cultural forces gathered and clashed in a most public way. When Spurgeon preached against Darwin and his ideas, his body, through the *carte-de-visite*, became transformed into that of a gorilla. The gorilla

²⁵ The continued value of the gout rocker, one of many gout technologies, was extolled by Philip Lewin, M.D. in a letter to the editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (August 7, 1954). "It [the gout rocker] makes any chair as comfortable as a deck chair on an ocean liner." (1368).

²⁶ Porter and Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady*, 264.

at this time was itself a tremendous spectacle in London.²⁷ The gorilla kept its body but exchanged its head for the head of Spurgeon.²⁸ Or alternatively, the gorilla was cast as Spurgeon and was preaching, in the sixth millennium, on such a crude creature as Spurgeon.²⁹ According to some in the press, Spurgeon's contemptuous marketing techniques were mocked by placing Spurgeon between two sandwich boards, promoting his lecture on the gorilla.³⁰ These satirical CDVs were produced after the Metropolitan Tabernacle was open, but fairly early in the ministry. Certainly they were made before his publicly endearing philanthropic ministries, like the Stockwell Orphanage, were established.

Most of the items presented in the third appendix are not satirical, but they demonstrate how Spurgeon's body was used to promote causes and sell products. At times, both motivations were combined into one. The silk Stevengraph bookmarks, or "book-registers," as they were called, produced profits for Thomas Stevens, but they also benefited the silk industry in Coventry.³¹ These bookmarks needed to sell, and the portraits placed on them were carefully calculated to appeal to a broad audience in order to generate sales. Who better to put on the front of the bookmark than Charles Haddon Spurgeon? The first bookmark came out the year after the Temple of Spurgeon opened. The name of Spurgeon

²⁷ L. Perry Curtis, Jr. writes: "In the comic weeklies of the 1860s jokes about apes and their resemblance to man became the fashion. The first number of *Fun* (21 September 1861) contained Brennan's cartoon of 'The Gorilla Family at the Sea-Side' in which father and mother gorilla and their relations were dressed like eminently respectable Victorians on holiday at a seaside resort, while a few startled human beings looked on." L. Perry Curtis, *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), 100.

²⁸ See Appendix C, Figure C7.

²⁹ See Appendix C, Figure C8.

³⁰ See Appendix C, Figure C9.

³¹ See Appendix C, Figures C4 and C5.

was everywhere. Why shouldn't his visage be as well? The second bookmark, from about fifteen years later, was a testament to the success of the first.³² Spurgeon's face had changed, however. He was now sporting a Vandyke beard but his popularity had only increased. Spurgeon's face and body was also used to sell porcelain, Parian ware, and a variety of other products.³³

The face of Spurgeon was seemingly everywhere in the marketplace. As an author, his name was on a steady stream of books. His travels were reported in the press. However, many of the early accounts in the newspapers, as has been noted, were attacks designed to damage his reputation. Many of the later accounts were efforts to defend him and his ministry. When Spurgeon was attacked in the middle of his career by a jealous minister of the Anglican Church, one of the newspapers, *The Sussex Daily News*, came to his defense. Spurgeon answered this attack, or a very similar one, in his magazine:

A clergyman writes to inform us that the gout is sent to us as a judgment from God for opposing the Church of England. If a swollen leg proves that a man is under God's displeasure, what would a broken neck prove? We ask the question with special reference to the late Bishop of Oxford. As for the information that on account of our late speech at the Liberation Society's meeting we shall soon have another attack, and in all probability, will be carried off by it, we will wait and see if it be true.³⁴

³² See Appendix C, Figure C5.

³³ See Appendix C, Figures C10-18 and C20-C21.

³⁴ *The Sword and the Trowel*, July, 1874. The Liberation Society campaigned for the disestablishment of the Church of England. It was founded by the pastor of a Congregational chapel in Leicester, Edward Miall, in 1844. In July of 1871, a caricature of Edward Miall appeared in *Vanity Fair*. The artist was 'Ape' (Carlo Pellegrini) whose sketch of Spurgeon was in the magazine eight months earlier. The Bishop of Oxford's broken neck probably referred to the death of Samuel Wilberforce (1805-1873), Bishop of Winchester who was thrown from a horse (July 19, 1873) and died of a dislocated neck. See *The Ecclesiastical Gazette*, August 12, 1873. Samuel was the son of William Wilberforce.

The other pastor had alleged that Spurgeon's suffering with gout was a demonstration of the displeasure and judgment of God. The newspaper, *The Sussex Daily News*, parried the attack:

We say nothing of the anti-Christian character of this clergyman's communication, and merely content ourselves with remarking that he seems to have forgotten all about the Tower of Siloam and the lesson which the Great Teacher, whom he ought to reverence, drew from it. What we would more particularly point out is, how strange it is that the clergyman, who is, no doubt, a fine old Tory of the ancient school, should have considered Mr. Spurgeon's gout a judgment upon him. Why, the gout is simply the most aristocratic and most Conservative institution in the country. It was a companion of Pitt, it was the intimate associate of the late Lord Derby. No church dignitary lower than a dean, or a canon at the very lowest, would presume to say he had the gout. Instead of taunting Mr. Spurgeon with being tormented with it, we feel much more inclined to chide him for his impertinence in venturing to claim acquaintance with it.³⁵

It is intriguing that the writer made only a minimal attempt to defend Spurgeon on theological grounds by citing the common Tower of Siloam teaching from Jesus. This is the biblical passage that basically separated the misfortune that falls on some individuals and appears to be random events, from the judgment of God.³⁶ However, this attempt at theology is not the most interesting portion of the passage. Notably, the author used the common cultural meanings attributed to gout both to support Spurgeon and to chide the other minister.

Spurgeon's body was a site where current understandings of gout could be expressed and debated. Furthermore, this was not an analysis of a literary figure created by Collins or Dickens. This was a real man who appeared in public multiple times a week and whose very actions and words could be studied. When young, Spurgeon claimed to need a full

³⁵ Lewis Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1992), 577.

³⁶ Luke 13:1-5.

range of motion; this claim contrasted sharply with the older Spurgeon, who leaned heavily on the rail or who could not preach without using a chair. The following illustration portrays Spurgeon with his right hand, characteristically pointed up in images of him as a young man, is now gripping the back of the chair for stability and support.

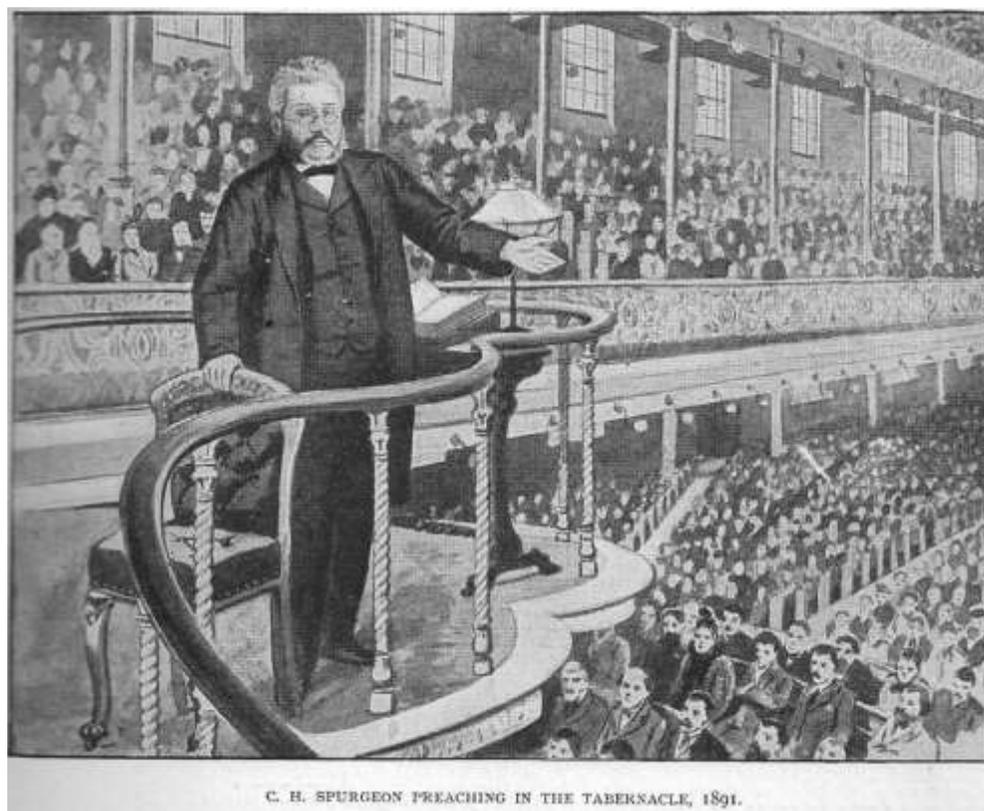


Fig. 5.3. Spurgeon Gripping his Chair, c. 1891³⁷

Several of the cartoons and caricatures capture his use of the rail. A well-known caricature from *Vanity Fair* has a heavier set Spurgeon right up against the rail.³⁸ The magazine began in 1869 and very soon after was often purchased for its entertaining caricatures. Who better

³⁷ Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, vol. 4, 355.

³⁸ See Appendix C, Figure C19.

to feature in order to sell copies than the most famous preacher in London? The choice of Spurgeon was natural enough, but how to depict him? Should he be portrayed in his study? Or in front of his Tabernacle? Neither one was selected, no doubt because the one essential piece of furniture that was associated with Spurgeon was his preaching rail. The rail was picked up again by the cartoonist in *The Hornet*.³⁹ In this image from the 1870s, Spurgeon is bringing his fist down on the rail. It is clenched, and his posture almost indicates a pugilist or, at the very least a man engaged in a struggle. He appears defiant and ready for whatever challenge modernity or medical difficulties placed before him. About the same time, Spurgeon was featured in a cartoon with the two revivalists, Moody and Sankey, who visited England in the mid-1870s.⁴⁰ This cartoon presented Spurgeon with a cigar. He appeared to be a sort of conductor, although Sankey was the musician of the three, and could be leaning against a rail. Spurgeon's famous rail also appeared in a caricature of Gladstone.⁴¹ Spurgeon occupied the speech portion of Gladstone's head and the famous body of Spurgeon is again behind the rail.

The cartoons and caricatures of Spurgeon behind the rail convey a great number of meanings. To be sure, the rail was a part of the design of the Tabernacle with which Spurgeon was deeply associated. He could have had tremendous success as an itinerant evangelist, yet he desired to stay in one place. In later years, Spurgeon rarely traveled; rather, people came to him. What did they find when they entered the Tabernacle? A unique space, devoted to the preached Word, with an extended, semi-circular platform that

³⁹ See Appendix C, Figure C24.

⁴⁰ See Appendix C, Figure C25.

⁴¹ See Appendix C, Figure C26.

had a rail running along its length. That rail was used for emphasis (when his fist would come down on it or when he would move along its edge during the sermon), for support, and as a separation device.

It was behind that rail that the body of Spurgeon moved, jumped, knelt dramatically, and eventually, limped and hobbled. It was from behind that rail, as well as from his pen, that his people heard and saw what it meant to have gout. Spurgeon's body was a contested one, and this dissertation argues that the struggle operated not only in the theological realm, through sermons and devotions that we will examine momentarily, but also in the public sphere.

Spurgeon's great admiration for the Puritans influenced the way he interpreted his suffering from gout. The Puritans shaped the way he spoke about gout from the pulpit and the words he chose when he wrote about gout in private letters. It would be very odd, given his extensive reading of Puritans such as Manton, Sibbes, Watson and Gurnall, if those same motifs did not appear in his sermons. After examining the early sermons of Spurgeon, one finds a repetition of some of the traditional Puritan themes relating to gout. He shared a common theological framework with them, and this is reflected in the very earliest of his sermons. Furthermore, Spurgeon loved to employ metaphor and was known for his wide range of illustrations drawn from all sorts of sources. He explained this proclivity with these words: "The worlds of nature and of providence are full of parallels to things moral and spiritual, and serve as pictures to make the written book of inspiration more clear to the children of God. The Bible itself abounds in metaphors, types, and symbols; it is a great picture book."⁴²

⁴² C. H. Spurgeon, *The Bible and the Newspaper* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1878), iii.

At the very beginning of his London ministry, Spurgeon earned a reputation not only as a dramatist, but also as a preacher of the old Puritanical truths. One cartoon labeled Spurgeon as “brimstone,” whereas his peers in the Church of England were simply “treacle.”⁴³ The following sermon excerpts are very early from the New Part Street Chapel, February 17, 1856. The title of the sermon is “The Resurrection of the Dead.” One intriguing thing about these passages is the tremendous amount of theological ground that Spurgeon covered in the same sermon. The first excerpt focuses on the fallen nature of humanity, the pains every person feels, and the relief that is promised in heaven:

And here is comfort for you too, you poor sufferers, who suffer in your bodies. Some of you are almost martyrs with aches of one kind and another - lumbagoes, gouts, rheumatisms, and all sorts of sad afflictions that flesh is heir to. Scarcely a day passes but you are tormented with some suffering or other; and if you were silly enough to be always doctoring yourselves, you might always be having the doctor in your house. Here is comfort for you. That poor old rickety body of yours will live again without its pains, without its agonies; that poor shaky frame will be repaid all it has suffered. Ah! poor negro slave, every sear upon your back shall have a stripe of honor in heaven. Ah! poor martyr, the crackling of thy bones in the fire shall earn thee sonnets in glory; all thy sufferings shall be well repaid by the happiness thou shalt experience there. Don't fear to suffer in your frame, because your frame will one day share in your delights.⁴⁴

Spurgeon used gout, along with lumbagos (lower back pain) and rheumatisms, to form a trio of painful diseases. His diseases were different than the Puritans' triad—gout, tooth and stone—but the effect of their use was the same. He communicated that human existence on earth was one of pain and suffering. Spurgeon engaged the imagination of his hearers by addressing them directly and promising future relief from present pain. He went so far as to address two groups far removed from his congregation at the time—slaves and

⁴³ See Appendix C, Figure C3.

⁴⁴ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 2, 170.

martyrs. His address to the “poor negro slave” would have probably been edited out of some newspapers in the United States.⁴⁵ The address to the martyrs called his audience to imagine the historical suffering of the church and was probably delivered with the English Protestant martyrs in mind. Certainly, Spurgeon’s audience was familiar with *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs* and would have had their anti-Catholic sentiments reinforced. This first excerpt reflects the theological continuity between Spurgeon and the Puritans. Thus, Spurgeon’s earliest use of gout in a sermon deployed a common religious framework and reflected a traditional Christian understanding.

The second excerpt comes from the same sermon. Spurgeon contrasted the resurrection of the believer and their freedom from pain with those tormented in hell’s flames. After an interesting passage where he assured his hearers of his dramatic ability, “And now I am talking to you of things that are real. If I were standing on a stage this morning, and were acting these things as fancies, I would make you weep: I would make the godly weep to think that so many should be damned, and I would make the ungodly weep to think that they should be damned.”⁴⁶ He portrayed the eternal nature of the damned:

That very throat down which thou pourest drink shall be filled with fire.
Those very lips and arms of thine will be tortured all at once. Why, if thou hast a headache thou wilt run to thy physician; but what wilt thou do when thy head, and heart, and hands, and feet ache all at once? If thou hast but a pain in thy reins, thou wilt search out medicines to heal thee; but what wilt thou do when gout, and rheum, and vertigo, and all else that is vile attack thy body at once? How wilt thou bear thyself when thou shalt be loathsome with every kind of disease, leprous, palsied, black, rotten, thy bones aching, thy marrow quivering, every limb thou hast filled with pain; thy body a temple of demons, and a channel of miseries. And will ye march blindly on?⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, 480.

⁴⁶ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 2, 173.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 175-6.

Spurgeon urged his hearers to turn from such a horrible fate. He closed his appeal, aware of how some in his audience would mock him and categorize him, “Do I move you now? Ah no! Many of you will go away and laugh, and call me, as I remember once being called before, ‘a hellfire parson.’ Well, go; but you will see the hell-fire preacher one day in heaven.”⁴⁸ When rejected, he considered himself in good company, for the Puritans before him were rejected as well. For Spurgeon, the body suffering in hell became a temple of demons. They gnawed at the metatarsophalangeal joint and filled every limb with pain. From a sermon in the 1870s, Spurgeon recognized gout as a herald of death: “When death cometh even to the good man he cometh as an enemy, for he is attended by such terrible heralds and grim outriders as...joint-torturing gout, and ever-gnawing rheum.”⁴⁹ Again, gout is a joint-torturer. One wonders if Spurgeon had Gillray’s well-known image in mind?

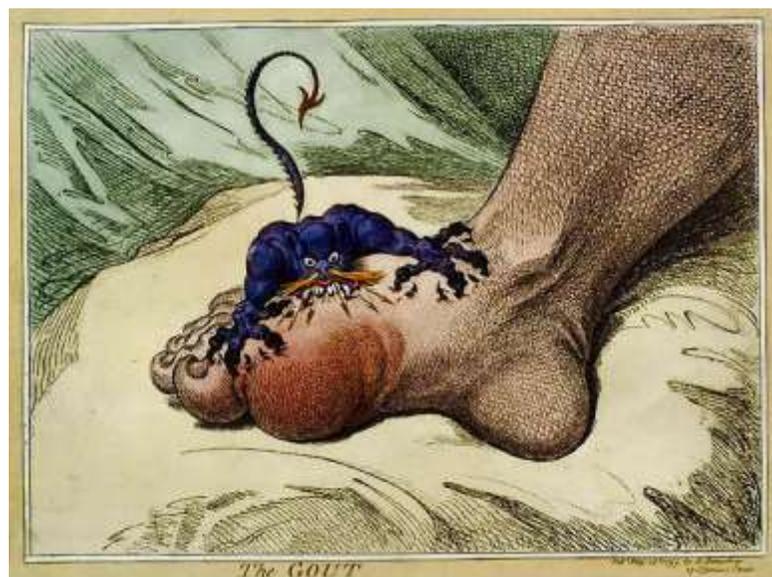


Fig. 5.4. James Gillray, *The Gout*, c. 1799⁵⁰

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 176.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 22, 883.

⁵⁰ No work on gout can be considered complete without the use of Gillray’s famous image.

The Puritans' usage of the gout metaphor included many references to torment and eternal punishment. Several of them—Swinnock, Keach, and Janeway— employed similar techniques. At the same time, Spurgeon's usage reflected his own reading as well as the messages he heard from his father and grandfather.



Fig. 5.5. Henry Bunbury, *Origin of the Gout*, c. 1815

The sermon excerpt below appeared in his book, *Around the Wicket Gate* (1890). In this text, he began the passage by discussing hell and the wrath to come. Here gout is used not to illustrate the pain of hell, but rather the folly of listening to quack medicine.

Quackery was a false hope and is contrasted with the only true remedy, the gospel:

It would be an awful thing to go dreaming down to hell, and there to lift up our eyes with a great gulf fixed between us and heaven. It will be equally terrible to be aroused to escape from the wrath to come, and then to shake off the warning influence, and go back to our insensibility. I notice that those who overcome their convictions and continue in their sins are not so easily moved the next time: every awakening which is thrown away leaves the soul more drowsy than before, and less likely to be again stirred to holy feeling. Therefore our heart should be greatly troubled at the thought of getting rid of its trouble in any other than the right way. One who had the gout was cured of it by a quack medicine, which drove the disease within, and the patient

died. To be cured of distress of mind by a false hope, would be a terrible business: the remedy would be worse than the disease. Better far that our tenderness of conscience should cause us long years of anguish, than that we should lose it, and perish in the hardness of our hearts.⁵¹

Spurgeon's personal experience, although not mentioned in this text, was one of being continuously offered all sorts of medicines, elixirs and "cures." In *The Sword and the Trowel*, he acknowledged the many remedies and suggestions that he received. In response to the congregation's kindness, he wrote, "Many thanks are hereby tendered to the scores of thoughtful friends who have sent me prescriptions of eminent physicians, medical works, and advice as to homeopathy, hydropathy, animal magnetism, galvanism, Turkish baths, patent medicines, cotton wool, hot fomentations, cold compresses, etc., etc. I can assure my friends that I have had communications concerning all these, and more."⁵² On another occasion, he quipped that similar suggestions would have killed him: "We have received many prescriptions for the gout, both for inward and outward application, and should have been dead long ago if we had tried half of them. We are grateful for the kindness although we cannot utilize it."⁵³

⁵¹ Charles Spurgeon, *Around the Wicket Gate*, 5.

⁵² "The Editor's Illness," *The Sword and the Trowel*, November, 1867. He added: "It has been a great pleasure to receive such a vast number and variety of evidences that warm sympathy towards me abounds, and an additional comfort to discover that there are at least hundreds of ways in which rheumatism and rheumatic gout may be cured, in periods varying from an hour to a week. My gratitude is doubly due to those who not only gave me advice and prescriptions, but were so generous as to purchase the medicines and send them to my house. I have received boxes of pills, bottles of liniment, and phials of physic in super-abundance; I am most truly grateful for the kind feeling which prompted the gifts."

⁵³ *The Sword and the Trowel*, February, 1875. His letter continued: "Those who would really aid in the restoration of our health can best do so by preventing our having any anxiety about either College, Orphanage, or Colportage while we are away. If the funds keep up, and the works are carried on by those engaged in them, and especially if the Lord will bless the enterprises, it will be better to us than all the lotions, liniments, specifics, and elixirs put together, with twenty sorts of magnetisms thrown in."

On August 11, 1861, Spurgeon took another approach. Although he was still healthy and his first attack of gout had yet to take place, he employed another traditional metaphor of the Puritans, the capacity of gout to evoke sympathy. From a sermon on the text from Job 13:10, “And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends.” He preached: “Why, you would not be angry I suppose, with a man for having the gout, or a torpid liver, or a cataract in the eye, you would pity him. Why be angry with your brother because of his being proud? It is a disease, a very bad disease that scarlet fever of pride; go and pray the Lord to cure him, your anger will not do it; it may puff him up and make him worse than ever he was before, but it will not set him right.”⁵⁴ In this passage, being afflicted with gout should cause the brother to have sympathy or pity for the sufferer.

As an aside, Spurgeon loved word play and puns, and linked “gout,” with “pride,” and being “puffed up.” Here he was echoing a similar thought from a sermon by Richard Sibbes, “A proud man is like a gouty hand, or a swelled arm, unfit for any Christian performance; he is not in a state to do good; but an humble man is thankful that God will honour him so far as to let him suffer for the cause of Christ.”⁵⁵ Spurgeon, in correspondence with his church family (December 4, 1890), repeated a similar thought:

I pray that while you are in two hands you may have a double blessing. May the Lord, who has been our guide and our glory all these years, sanctify these broken weeks to an increase of his manifested power. For me there are many reasons for humble gratitude,—chiefly that I am free from pain, and I can use my hand a little though it is swollen, and writing cannot be long continued. I see that if we are puffed up we cannot work.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 7, 453.

⁵⁵ Richard Sibbes, *The Complete Works of Richard Sibbes*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1862), 399.

⁵⁶ Hannah Wyncoll. *The Suffering Letters of C. H. Spurgeon* (London: Wakeman Trust, 2007), 70.

At other times, Spurgeon simply noted the joy that came when he was healthy enough to work. He wrote the following from his home, Westwood, on May 16, 1886: “This last week has been one of great pain. One of its worst trials has been my inability to hold a pen. When I woke this morning and found that my right hand had become smaller and that I could write—I felt ready to cry for joy.”⁵⁷

The idea of bearing one another’s burdens and forgiving one’s fellow believer was a recurrent theme with the Puritans. It was included with the idea of gout or other ailments that evoked sympathy. Spurgeon continued that theme in both a general way and by inserting himself and his experience directly into his sermons. The first example comes from a sermon based on Ephesians 4:32: “Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” Spurgeon encouraged his congregation to be mindful of the other person:

If your friend is very ready to take offense, and you know that he is; have respect, then, to his infirmity of temper, such as you would have if he were afflicted in body. If you have rheumatism or gout, your friends do not go stamping across the room and saying, ‘He ought not to mind that; he ought not to feel it.’ Kind-hearted people step across the floor with a light step, for fear they should hurt the poor suffering limb. If a man has a diseased mind and is very irritable, treat him gently, pity his infirmity, and do not irritate him.⁵⁸

The next example is drawn directly from Spurgeon’s experience. He was often accused of inserting himself into his sermons too much and he even addressed the accusation from the pulpit, “Sometimes the ways of God are full of truth and mercy manifestly—they have been so to me in many a notable instance. I hope I do not trouble you

⁵⁷ Ibid., 58.

⁵⁸ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 24, 880.

too often with personal experiences. I do not narrate them out of egotism, but because it seems to me that every Christian should add his own personal testimony to the heap of evidence which proves the truth of our God.”⁵⁹

This rationale aside, on August 26, 1886, he urged his audience to bear each other’s burdens and used his own example, to illustrate the kind of love and sympathy the gospel engendered:

Open your eyes, and read the text: “and so fulfill the law of Christ.” If the Lord Jesus Christ can put up with you, you ought to be able to put up with anybody. “Oh, but some people are so exacting!” Yes, some of you know that I am sometimes very exacting. When I am suffering very greatly from gout, if anybody walks heavily and noisily across the room, it gives me pain. Well, then, what do you think happens? Why, they go across the room on tiptoe; they do not say to one another, “We cannot help it that he is ill, and that our noise gives him pain; we shall walk just as we always do; we have a right to walk like that.” No, no, they do not need even to be asked to move about quietly, but they say, “Poor man, he is so ill that we must be as gentle as ever we can with him.” Could not you look in that kind of spirit upon brothers and sisters, who are not quite all that you would like them to be, and say, “They are not well spiritually,” and deal very gently with them, “and so fulfill the law of Christ.”⁶⁰

Still, Spurgeon rarely mentioned his personal suffering with gout from the pulpit.⁶¹ The majority of the examples are drawn from his personal correspondence, or from a letter or an article found in *The Sword and the Trowel*. While he mentioned and used gout as a metaphor in a very early sermon and other examples are sprinkled throughout other writings,

⁵⁹ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 33, 551.

⁶⁰ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 49, 305.

⁶¹ This general silence was not linked to stoicism. In a sermon entitled, “Job’s Resignation,” he preached: “Job was very much troubled, and he did not try to hide the outward signs of his sorrow. A man of God is not expected to be a stoic. The grace of God takes away the heart of stone out of his flesh, but it does not turn his heart into a stone. The Lord’s children are the subjects of tender feelings; when they have to endure the rod, they feel the smart of its strokes; and Job felt the blows that fell upon him. Do not blame yourself if you are conscious of pain and grief, and do not ask to be made hard and callous. That is not the method by which grace works; it makes us strong to bear trial, but we have to bear it; it gives us patience and submission, not stoicism.” Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 42, 133.

it is quite unusual to find him discussing his own experience directly from the pulpit. Even in the case above, he added a word of self-deprecation: “some of you know that I am sometimes very exacting.” That is, Spurgeon confessed to be trying or difficult, at times. Yet his friends treated him with care. Spurgeon urged his hearers to conduct themselves in a similar manner.

Normally reluctant to share his personal struggle with gout from the pulpit, he did, on another occasion, use the receipt of a letter from an unnamed friend to mention gout. Like the Puritans, Spurgeon compared human physicians with the Great Physician. From a sermon, entitled “The Best Friend” delivered on Feb 23, 1882, after he had just returned from Mentone, Spurgeon preached:

I remember that, when lying sore sick, I had a letter from a kind old gentleman who said that he had that day celebrated his eightieth birthday, and the choicest friend he had at his dinner table was the old family doctor. He said, “He has attended to me so long that he thoroughly knows my constitution, he is nearly as old as myself; but the first time I was ill I had him, and he has attended me now for forty years. Once,” he said, “when I had a severe attack of gout, I was tempted to try some very famous man, who very nearly killed me; and until I got back to my old friend, I never was really well again.” So he wrote to advise me to get some really good physician, and let him know my constitution, and to stick to him, and never go off to any of the patent medicines or the quacks of the day. Oh, but there is a great deal of truth in that in a spiritual sense! With the utmost reverence, we may say that the Lord Jesus Christ has been our family Physician.⁶²

The author of the letter was a kind old gentleman who had celebrated his eightieth birthday. His advanced age reinforced a common saying that “many men die gouty but few die of the gout.” Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, gout carried with it the idea of prophylaxis. Its presence was terrible, but sometimes it was welcomed as it kept much worse conditions at bay. However, I was not able to find this idea of prophylaxis in the

⁶² Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 45, 396.

writings of Spurgeon. This text above continues the theme of the dangers posed by quacks and patent medicines. Porter and Rousseau noted that even after Garrod proved that uric acid was the cause of gout, there were still “deeply contested divisions between basic science, clinical investigation and therapeutics.”⁶³ Apparently, Garrod’s breakthrough and its publication (1859) did not immediately make it to the patient’s couch. Spurgeon testified to the abiding presence of quacks and the variety of cures available to the general public.

Spurgeon often directly borrowed from Puritan and other theological sources.⁶⁴ In the examples studied so far from his books, sermons, and letters, we have seen allusions to earlier Puritan writers (such as Sibbes and Manton) written against the common cultural understandings still operating in the Victorian era. One of the inheritances of the Puritans that flowed directly into and through the Victorian middle classes was the presence of the proverb. Writing about the predominance of success literature (e.g., Samuel Smiles), J. F. C. Harrison noted the source of many of these ideas: “Various as were the types of the literature of success, they were all in substantial agreement as to the elements necessary to get on in the world. The combination of certain moral qualities with a few simple techniques of living would produce those habits which would, almost inevitably, lead to success. The pedigree of these ideas of Victorian social morality was Puritan, transmitted through the dominant evangelicalism of the middle classes.”⁶⁵ He went on to note that the

⁶³ Porter and Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady*, 181.

⁶⁴ Extremely early in his Waterbeach experience, Spurgeon is directly borrowing material from John Gill, whose pulpit he would come to fill at New Park Street Chapel. Christian George notes: “More than a handful of sermons were not even original to Spurgeon. He lifted them directly from the works of John Gill, Philip Doddridge, Richard Baxter, John Bunyan, Charles Simeon, George Whitefield...and others.” Christian George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon: His Earliest Outlines and Sermons between 1851 and 1854*, vol. 1 (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2016), 26.

⁶⁵ J. F. C. Harrison, “The Victorian Gospel of Success.” *Victorian Studies* 1, no. 2 (December 1957): 160.

vehicle for transmitting these values was often the short, memorable saying, “It was thus that the social devices and conveniences of the age acquired the compulsion of moral, even religious, virtues. They were popularized in many forms, but particularly as proverbs and aphorisms.”⁶⁶

Spurgeon, with his voracious appetite for Puritan material, naturally would have been inclined to produce a work featuring a selection of proverbs. Edmond Hez Swem did something like that for Spurgeon with his publication of *Spurgeon’s Gold* (1888) before Spurgeon himself produced *The Salt Cellars* in 1889. As noted in chapter three, the Puritans had employed the following saying —“The crown of gold cannot cure the headache, nor the velvet slipper ease the gout”—or one of its variations, as a warning to their congregations not to trust in wealth.⁶⁷ The riches of the world could not heal the gout or bring temporary comfort. Therefore, how much more powerless would they be to secure eternal relief. John Flavel went so far as to couple a dependence on human relationships as a source of happiness as an equivalent folly: “No creature can administer the least relief, by the application of any temporal comfort or refreshment to it. Gold and silver, wife and children, meat and melody, signify no more than the drawing on of a silk stocking to cure the paroxysms of the gout.”⁶⁸ Spurgeon’s list of proverbs, which included some homely notes as well, would include a reference to the “velvet slipper.”⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Thomas Brooks, *The Complete Works of Thomas Brooks*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1846), 63.

⁶⁸ John Flavel, *The Whole Works of the Rev. Mr. John Flavel*, vol. 3 (London: W. Baynes and Son, 1820), 146.

⁶⁹ The subtitle for *The Salt Cellars* included the following, *being a Collection of Proverbs together with Homely Notes Thereon*. The front cover also contains the quote: “These three things go to the making of a proverb: shortness, sense, and salt.”

A tree that is often transplanted bears little fruit.
A good argument against needless changes.

A velvet slipper cannot cure the gout.
Another version of “A silver sofa cannot cure the sick.”

Wealth cannot purchase immunity from disease. Remember the painful case
of the late German Emperor Frederick.

A virtuous woman is a splendid prize;
A bad - the greatest curse beneath the skies.⁷⁰

Spurgeon included the familiar Puritan verse and then added his own commentary
concerning the German Emperor Frederick.⁷¹

Spurgeon’s “velvet slipper” was presented with the alternative “silver sofa.” Earlier
we noted that Swinnock referenced silver, “Can a silver slipper cure the gout?”⁷² Stephen
Charnock exchanged silver for gold, but the meaning remained: “What creature can cure the
wound that God makes? What can comfort when the Almighty troubles? All carnal
contentments can no more remove...spiritual distempers than a golden slipper the pain of
the gout. Therefore, go to none of these things, but run to that hand which did wound you,
unto the Spirit of God, who is the author of conviction.”⁷³ The central theme of these verses
was not to look to carnal or worldly solutions for spiritual problems.

⁷⁰ Charles Spurgeon, *The Salt Cellars*, vol. 2 (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1889), #50. This work is simply a list of proverbs. Some of these have commentary from Spurgeon but this amounts to no more than a sentence or two.

⁷¹ See Porter and Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady*, 161.

⁷² George Swinnock, *The Works of George Swinnock*, vol. 5, 5 vols. (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1868), 227.

⁷³ Stephen Charnock, *The Complete Works of Stephen Charnock*, vol. 4 (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1865), 218.

Stephen Charnock went so far as to assign to God causality for the condition of gout and its associated suffering, when he posed the question: “What creature can cure the wound that God makes?”⁷⁴ F. K. Drayson, writing on divine sovereignty in the thought of Stephen Charnock, cited Macaulay’s observation on the nature of the Puritan thought: “The Puritans were men whose mind had derived a peculiar character from the daily contemplation of superior beings and eternal interests...Not content with acknowledging, in general terms, an over-ruling providence, they habitually ascribed every event to the will of the great Being for whose power nothing was too vast, for whose inspection nothing was too minute.”⁷⁵ Charnock defended the sovereignty of God regarding sin and the presence of evil by insisting that God’s “permission of them [sinful acts] does not imply either His causing them or approving of them.”⁷⁶ The goal of contemplating God’s actions in the world, including the suffering of humanity, was to foster a certain “reverence before God” that “was at the heart of the Puritan temper.”⁷⁷

Spurgeon, Gout, and Sanctification

Spurgeon, because of his medical conditions, lived with a tremendous amount of pain and suffering. He interpreted much of that suffering in the same way that Charnock did. He saw in it the hand of God, and he submitted to it, knowing that, through this trial, he would be purified. A representative quote is: “If you drink of the river of affliction near its outfall, it is brackish and offensive to the taste, but if you will trace it to its source, where it

⁷⁴ Ibid., 218.

⁷⁵ F. K. Drayson, “Divine Sovereignty in the Thought of Stephen Charnock,” (chap. 4), *Puritan Papers*, vol. 1, 1956-1959, ed. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones (Phillipsburg, NJ: P 7 R Publishing, 2000), 213.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 222.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 225.

risers at the foot of the throne of God, you will find its waters to be sweet and life-giving.”⁷⁸

For Spurgeon, affliction was sent by God and could be used instrumentally by the believer to strengthen their communion with God.⁷⁹ The Puritan John Dod captured the idea succinctly: “Sanctified afflictions are spiritual promotions.” Spurgeon repeated the sentiment when he wrote from Mentone (December 6, 1890): “Up to this date I have had no opportunity to enjoy rest, but have been at first suffering, and now slowly recovering. This, however, is not lost time if I have but grace to improve the trials. Let us always seek sanctification through affliction rather than escape from it.”⁸⁰ So significant was this idea of “sanctification through affliction” that Peter Morden noted it while citing Spurgeon: “‘The rod of God teacheth us more than all the voices of her ministers’, said Spurgeon in his sermon, ‘Trial by the Word’. Such a comment can seem surprising coming from one who

⁷⁸ Darrel W. Amundsen, “The Anguish and Agonies of Charles Spurgeon,” *Christian History*, 10, no. 29 (1991): 25.

⁷⁹ The following anecdote revealed the depth of Spurgeon’s convictions: Mr. Spurgeon used often to describe the encounter he had with one of his neighbors; at Nightingale Lane. After a long and painful illness from gout, he was starting for a short drive, in the hope of gaining a little strength, when this gentleman came up to the carriage, and pointing to the dear sufferer’s bandaged hand and foot, said, with all the scorn and contempt he could compress into the words, “‘Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth.’ I would not have such a God as that.” In relating the story, Mr. Spurgeon always said, “I felt my blood boil with indignation, and I answered, ‘I rejoice that I have such a God as that; and if He were to chasten me a thousand times worse than this, I would still love Him; yea, though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.’” Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, vol. 3, 203.

⁸⁰ Wyncoll, *The Suffering Letters of C. H. Spurgeon*, 71. Spurgeon wanted other preachers and teachers to share these sentiments with their audience as well. He wrote the following anecdote expecting it to be shared: “AFFLICTION— Right View of—Our crosses are not made of iron, though painted some times with iron colours; they are formed of nothing heavier than wood. Yet they are not made of pasteboard, and will never be light in themselves, though our Lord can lighten them by his presence. The Papists foolishly worship pieces of wood supposed to be parts of the true cross; but he who has borne the really true cross, and known its sanctifying power, will value every sliver of it, counting his trials to be his treasures, his afflictions argosies of wealth, and his losses his best gains.” C. H. Spurgeon, *Feathers for Arrows, Or, Illustrations for Preachers and Teachers from My Note Book* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1870), 8.

had such a high view of preaching, but it shows the vital importance of suffering to Spurgeon's theology and spirituality."⁸¹

Suffering and the believer's right response to it were central to Spurgeon's theology. God, in his sovereign providence, had elected some to bear incredible burdens: "We are all at school, and our great Teacher writes many a bright lesson on the black-board of affliction."⁸² But affliction, for its own sake, was never to be sought out. Spurgeon corrected an inquirer, "I remember that a person came to me once and told me that she had prayed for affliction. I replied, 'Dear soul, dear soul, do not be so foolish. You will have quite enough trouble without asking for it.'"⁸³ Spurgeon's responses to God's mysterious choices were being worked out both publicly and privately. After an extended period of illness, during which he produced much of *The Cheque Book of the Bank of Faith*, he wrote:

'I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.' - This has long been the motto fixed before our eye upon the wall of our bed-chamber, and in many ways; it has also been written on our heart. It is no mean thing to be chosen of God. God's choice makes chosen men choice men We are chosen, not in the palace, but in the furnace. In the furnace, beauty is marred, fashion is destroyed, strength is melted, glory is consumed; yet here eternal love reveals its secrets, and declares its choice. So has it been in our case Therefore, if to-day the furnace be heated seven times hotter, we will not dread it, for the glorious Son of God will walk with us amid the glowing coals.⁸⁴

In another talk delivered at a prayer meeting, Spurgeon taught:

Dear friends, for your own comfort, "I pray you to fasten your grips" on the promises of God. In days to come the younger ones may see the wisdom of this advice. I will tell you what will help you to fasten your grips—a sharp

⁸¹ Peter Morden, "C. H. Spurgeon and Suffering," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 35, no. 4 (2011): 325.

⁸² Edmond Hez Swem, *Spurgeon's Gold: New Selections from the Works of C. H. Spurgeon* (Washington, DC: Judd & Detweiler, 1888), 130.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁸⁴ Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, vol. 4, 353.

touch of rheumatism, if grace goes with it. I do not want you to have the rheumatism, or any other trial; but if you do, I trust you will have grace given to lay hold upon precious promises suitable to your condition. Sanctified afflictions will help you to fasten your grips. If you have a very dear one long lying ill; or if your property is melting away; or if your jubilant spirits are sinking in depression, you will want the promises, and you will feel the necessity of fastening your grips. A grip of a promise of God is better than a grasp of a bag of gold.⁸⁵

The promises of God had greater worth than anything this world offered. It was sanctified affliction, which in Spurgeon's case was a "sharp touch of rheumatism," that drove him to the precious promises. And what was the result of such intense suffering? In Spurgeon's case, and he would say "by God's grace," the result was a great increase in usefulness. Seventeen months earlier, he addressed his magazine's readers: "I suspect that if we care to do great things for God, we shall have to become gnarled and twisted by suffering. I suppose that a few good people may possibly escape from trial and suffering, but I do not know them. Those whose lives are very easy are usually of small account in the matter of usefulness."⁸⁶ It was the gnarled or the heavily pruned tree that bore the most fruit.⁸⁷ Great and sanctified suffering often led to seasons of genuine productivity in the Kingdom of God. What was the solution for those who were not productive? Spurgeon continued, "Many who are doing very little would be all the better for the fertilizing processes of pain and anguish. Even a week or two of gout might cure them of fancies, and

⁸⁵ *The Sword and the Trowel*, August, 1888.

⁸⁶ *The Sword and the Trowel*, March, 1887.

⁸⁷ From Westwood, on September 27, 1891, Spurgeon wrote: "If sharp pruning makes fruit-bearing branches bring forth more fruit it is not a thing to be lamented when the great Vine-dresser turns his knife upon us." Wyncoll, *The Suffering Letters*, 100.

put them upon real work. Sympathy with others is not learned without personal suffering. The power to comfort grows out of our own afflictions.”⁸⁸

Personal suffering led to greater usefulness, increased personal sympathy, and for the preacher, a more substantial message. In his book, *An All-Round Ministry* (1900), Spurgeon discussed the value of affliction:

Do you not think that we all make mistakes as to what will be a blessing? In the matter of faith-healing, health is set before us as if it were the great thing to be desired above all other things. Is it so? I venture to say that the greatest earthly blessing that God can give to any of us is health, *with the exception of sickness*. Sickness has frequently been of more use to the saints of God than health has. If some men, that I know of, could only be favored with a month of rheumatism, it would, by God’s grace, mellow them marvellously. Assuredly, they need something better to preach than what they now give their people; and, possibly, they would learn it in the chamber of suffering.⁸⁹

For Spurgeon, suffering was still directed by the design of God, was rooted in his providence, and required submission.⁹⁰ In this regard, he remained deeply connected to the thought of the Puritans. Concerning that period, Roy and Dorothy Porter noted: “The perception of sickness as a sentence was widespread amongst all social and religious groups, more especially in the seventeenth century. When the Dissenting practitioner Richard Kay

⁸⁸ *The Sword and the Trowel*, March, 1887. Along the same line, Spurgeon advised: “Discontented persons need a course of the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, to cure them of the wretched habit of murmuring. Even things which we loathed before, we shall learn to prize when in troublous circumstances.” Spurgeon, *Feathers for Arrows*, 4.

⁸⁹ Charles Spurgeon, *An All-Round Ministry*, 247. (Emphasis his.) From Westwood, on October 3, 1891, “I am worth all the more as a worker because I have so fully been a sufferer.” Wyncoll, *The Suffering Letters*, 101.

⁹⁰ Once again, Spurgeon contrasted his ideas with that of the Stoics (or what he thought their position was): “So it is in bearing as well as acting. If we say concerning sickness, ‘I shall never be impatient. I can bear it like a stoic.’ What if that? You will then have done no more than many have done before you, with no great gain to themselves or to others. But if, bowing your head before the Lord, you wait his sovereign will, and say, ‘Lord help me. If thy left hand shall smite me, let thy right hand sustain me. I am willing to drink this bitter cup, saying, ‘Not as I will, but as thou wilt.’ Lord, help me!’—you shall bear up triumphantly, and come out of the furnace refined, to the praise and the glory of your God. When you fancy that you are strong to suffer, you will fail; but in conscious weakness you will be enabled to play the man.” Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 34, 595.

fell ill, he spoke of it sometimes as a ‘Thorn in the Flesh, a Messenger of Satan to Buffet me’, and sometimes as a ‘rod of correction’, which he vowed would prove the ‘school of instruction’, beseeching God, ‘Lord, May every Affliction be a proper warning to me to get me ready for my last Affliction’.⁹¹ Spurgeon’s extremely popular character, John Ploughman, dispensed plain advice to plain people and reflected this Puritan sensibility:

The best remedy for affliction is submitting to providence. What can’t be cured must be endured. If we cannot get bacon, let us bless God that there are still some cabbages in the garden. Must is a hard nut to crack, but it has a sweet kernel. “All things work together for good to them that love God.” Whatever falls from the skies is, sooner or later, good for the land: whatever comes to us from God is worth having, even though it be a rod.⁹²

Spurgeon viewed gout in similar terms, employing words like “rod of correction” or “rod of affliction.” On December 8, 1872, when preaching about the apostle Paul’s “thorn in the flesh,” he entertained the ideas of one commentator who thought that it might be gout:

It was a thorn ‘in the flesh’—in the flesh. He was not tempted in the spirit; it was in the flesh. I suppose the evil had an intimate connection with his body. Many as the leaves of autumn have been the guesses of learned men, as to what Paul’s thorn in the flesh was; almost every disease has had its advocates. I was particularly pleased to find that Rosenmuller thought it to be the gout; but then other critics think it to be weak eyesight, stammering, or a hypochondriacal [referring to the digestive system] tendency.⁹³

⁹¹ Roy Porter and Dorothy Porter. *In Sickness and In Health: The British Experience 1650-1850* (Avon: The Bath Press, 1988), 171.

⁹² Charles H. Spurgeon, *John Ploughman’s Talk or Plain Advice for Plain People* (Philadelphia: Henry Altemus, 1896 [1883]), 55. Spurgeon’s follow-up book, *John Ploughman’s Pictures*, contained a similar idea: “Teacher writes many a bright lesson on the black-board of affliction. Scant fare teaches us to live on heavenly bread, sickness bids us send off for the good Physician, loss of friends makes Jesus more precious, and even the sinking of our spirits brings us to live more entirely upon God. All things are working together for the good of those who love God, and even death itself will bring them their highest gain. Thus the black hen lays a white egg.” Charles H. Spurgeon, *John Ploughman’s Pictures, Or, More of His Plain Talk for Plain People*. (Philadelphia: Henry Altemus, 1896), 163.

⁹³ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Series*, vol. 18, 846. Spurgeon’s contemporary, J. C. Philpot (1802-1869), excoriated those commentators who presumed to speculate regarding Paul’s thorn. He mentioned gout as well: “There have been many conjectures, and some very foolish ones, as to the nature of this thorn in the flesh which was given to Paul. Men who know nothing of spiritual things, in their own experience, are as unable to understand and explain matters of this kind as I should be to write a treatise upon astronomy or to

Spurgeon likened gout, or for that matter any affliction, to an instrument to be employed for the glory of God and the refinement or purification of the believer.⁹⁴ The believer was potentially made holy or sanctified by his response, assisted by the Holy Spirit, to the trial. This sanctified use of affliction led to the believer himself increasing in holiness as well. It was this increase in holiness that led to an increase in ministerial usefulness. Suffering, when received well and responded to correctly, led to an increase in fruitfulness. The instrumental use of gout increased the personal effectiveness of the believer. For Spurgeon, this impacted his view of the body, leading to an emphasis on the instrumental use of the body. An example is found in a letter dated February 28, 1878, written to the church, while he was recovering in Mentone: “May the Lord sanctify both the trial and the recovery, so that I may be a fitter instrument in his hand to promote his glory and your highest good.”⁹⁵

Spurgeon and the Construction of the Body

A particularly helpful approach to understanding Spurgeon’s use of the body is to scrutinize his instructions to the students of the Pastors’ College. During his lifetime,

publish a grammar in Arabic. Thus, some have said that it was the colic, others the gout; some have thought that it was a pain in the ear; others the gravel or the stone. I have named these ridiculous interpretations to show how wildly and foolishly men can write who have no experience to teach them better; for I am well assured that unless preachers and commentators know something of spiritual things in their own soul, they must needs be bad interpreters of the word of God, and can only betray to a discerning eye their ignorance and folly when they attempt to explain what can only be understood by personal experience.” J. C. Philpot, *Gospel Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 3, 103-4.

⁹⁴ See George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon*, 353. One of Spurgeon’s earliest sermons (from the Waterbeach era) was entitled, “The Affliction of Ahaz.” Spurgeon’s first point and supporting material reveal how deeply ingrained his puritanism was. The first heading was: “I. To the godly, afflictions in the hands of the Spirit are useful. The reasons for this were fourfold: 1. They shake our earthly prospects and set us longing for glory; 2. It is like correction. It keeps us from destruction; 3. It manifests our graces, and 4. [it] tries and confirms our faith by experience and so sanctifies us and meetens us for heaven.”

⁹⁵ Wyncoll. *The Suffering Letters*, 25.

Spurgeon's college graduated close to nine hundred men. They helped to re-establish churches and founded new churches. They were involved in a variety of ministries, and many of them were personally placed by Spurgeon.

Spurgeon thought of the body as periodically unreliable. He stressed the intimate connection between the mind and the body. In a lecture entitled, "The Minister's Fainting Fits," Spurgeon instructed the students:

Moreover, *most of us are in some way or other unsound physically*. Here and there we meet with an old man who could not remember that ever he was laid aside for a day; but the great mass of us labor under some form or other of infirmity, either in body or mind. Certain bodily maladies, especially those connected with the digestive organs, the liver, and the spleen, are the fruitful fountains of despondency; and, let a man strive as he may against their influence, there will be hours and circumstances in which they will for awhile overcome him.⁹⁶

Spurgeon again referred to the body as an unreliable companion to the preacher: "I doubt not you are all conscious of different states of mind in preaching. Some of those states arise from your body being in different conditions. A bad cold will not only spoil the clearness of the voice, but freeze the flow of the thoughts. For my own part if I cannot speak clearly I am unable to think clearly, and the matter becomes hoarse as well as the voice. The stomach, also, and all the other organs of the body, affect the mind."⁹⁷ The body for Spurgeon was a betrayer and a battleground where the mind ruled by noble principles encountered resistance. In the aforementioned lecture, "The Minister's Fainting Fits," Spurgeon blamed the very task of sermon preparation as part of the problem: "To sit long in one posture, poring over a book, or driving a quill, is in itself a taxing of nature; but add to this a badly-

⁹⁶ Charles Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publ. Co., 1994), 173. (Emphasis his.)

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 11.

ventilated chamber, a body which has long been without muscular exercise, and a heart burdened with many cares, and we have all the elements for preparing a seething cauldron of despair.”⁹⁸

The body for Spurgeon was not only a potential cause of despair, it was a tool to be used for God’s service. While the body certainly plagued humanity with a variety of afflictions both physical and emotional, it was God’s gift to humanity and was to be used for the advance of the Gospel. In a lecture entitled, “The Minister’s Self-Watch,” Spurgeon admonished, “We are, in a certain sense our own tools, and therefore must keep ourselves in order. If I want to preach the gospel, I can only use my own voice.”⁹⁹ It was his body that he described as “my nearest machinery for sacred service; my spiritual faculties, and my inner life, are my battle ax and weapons of war.”¹⁰⁰ In a letter from Mentone (December 4, 1879) to the church, he referred to his body’s own need for restoration: “Some tools are not well enough constructed to be kept in constant use; much of their time must be spent in being repaired.”¹⁰¹ Spurgeon, then, portrayed his own body as a tool. The body was described as Spurgeon’s “nearest machinery.” He called on his young listeners to cultivate themselves. Their own bodies were part of their “weapons of war,” and their “machinery.”

Perhaps it was for this reason that Spurgeon encouraged his students to use dumbbells and to be physically strong. In a lecture on the voice, he encouraged self-discipline:

In all other matters exercise a rigid discipline until you have mastered your voice, and have it in hand like a well-trained steed. Gentlemen with narrow

⁹⁸ Ibid., 176.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 12-3.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 12-3.

¹⁰¹ Wyncoll. *The Suffering Letters*, 36.

chests are advised to use the dumb-bells every morning, or better still, those clubs which the College has provided for you. You need broad chests, and must do your best to get them. Do not speak with your hands in your waistcoat pockets so as to contract your lungs, but throw the shoulders back as public singers do. Do not lean over a desk while speaking, and never hold the head down on the breast while preaching. Upward rather than downward let the body bend. Off with all tight cravats and button-up waistcoats; leave room for the full play of the bellows and the pipes.¹⁰²

The image of body as a machine and tool continued in this lecture. Spurgeon compared the voice to an organ. He wanted the pipes and bellows to have “full play” during the sermon. Spurgeon advised the young men to be physically fit. This was so important that the College even provided them with “clubs.” The body was an instrument. The preacher’s body should not be awkwardly carried nor clumsy but during the sermon it was to bend “upward” so as to give the pipes plenty of room to play.¹⁰³

Spurgeon emphasized discipline. The voice, the body, the whole individual was to be trained. In a lecture entitled, “Posture, Action, Gesture,” Spurgeon insisted that all young men, not only preachers, would benefit from this kind of physical instruction:

There is a lumpishness ...innate in the elements of some men’s constitutions. The drill-sergeant is of the utmost use in our schools, and those parents who think that drill exercise is a waste of time are very much mistaken. Drill brings a man’s shoulders down...expands the chest, shows him what to do with his hands...and to bring himself into something like ship-shape. Very spiritual people will think me trifling, but indeed I am not. I hope the day will come when it will be looked upon as an essential part of education to teach a young man how to carry himself, and move without clumsiness.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Spurgeon, *Lectures*, vol. 3, 138.

¹⁰³ Donald E. Hall highlighted a defining characteristic of muscular Christianity: “An association between physical strength, religious certainty, and the ability to shape and control the world around oneself. Acts such as hunting, [and] doctoring were inextricably linked with ‘self’-construction and a physical armor-plating to withstand various potential threats to religious belief, bodily health, and social stability.” Donald E. Hall, ed., *Muscular Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 7-8.

¹⁰⁴ Spurgeon, *Lectures*, vol. 3, 100.

Spurgeon's own childhood and adolescence were marked by a lack of athleticism and clumsiness. He would have none of his own experience visited upon future generations. This example was based on a military ideal.¹⁰⁵ The most useful man was not the preacher at this moment but rather the "drill sergeant." There was a certain knowledge that is carried around in one's body. Posture and gesture demonstrated what abides in the interior of the individual. There was a connection between the constitution of the man and how he conducted himself in the world. Such connections would manifest themselves in the pulpit and would be visible to the audience.

The body for Spurgeon was a complex construction. It was a battleground where the renewed man and the old man fought. It was a machine. It was an organ. He described it as "my coach" which on one occasion, had "turned over [with] all four horses going down."¹⁰⁶ The body was a seedbed for all sorts of afflictions. It was in need of discipline. It also needed to be refreshed and renewed. Just as a tool needed to be sharpened, so the body needed rest. Spurgeon, like so many of the Puritans, was not opposed to rest or pleasure. He just opposed the wrong ordering of these things. It was for humanity to care for the body and to rightly order their pleasures. In "Posture, Action, Gesture," Spurgeon emphasized the care of the body: "Pardon my saying that the condition of your body must be attended to,

¹⁰⁵ See David D. Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990); J. A. Mangan, "Duty unto Death: English Masculinity and Militarism in the Age of New Imperialism," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 27 nos. 1-2 (January-February 2010): 124-49; and John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire* (Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2005), 31. Regarding the great amount of material devoted to manliness, Tosh noted: "For the nineteenth-century historian the situation is at first sight particularly encouraging because of the hundreds of volumes written on the subject of 'manliness' —a high profile ideology of masculinity, if ever there was one. It was elaborated, reiterated, contested and adapted—by preachers, schoolmasters and novelists. It was treated as the essence of civic virtue and the root of heroic achievement, while at the same time being scaled down to everyday proportions as a guide for the little man."

¹⁰⁶ Wyncoll, *The Suffering Letters*, 68. The letter is dated November 9, 1890 and was written from Westwood.

especially in the matter of eating, for any measure of excess may injure your digestion and make you stupid when you should be fervent.”¹⁰⁷ The danger of excess, which was a disordering, was an ever-present danger for the young preacher. It was a folly to which the world perpetually returned: “Another great evil of the times is the insatiable craving for amusements. That men should have rest from labour, and that they should enjoy such amusements as refresh both body and mind, nobody wishes to deny. Within suitable bounds, recreation is necessary and profitable.”¹⁰⁸

The above passage is noteworthy not only for its railing against the “evil of the times,” but also for the way that it reaffirmed the body. Humanity should enjoy some amusements. To what degree should they enjoy amusements? To the degree necessary to “refresh both body and mind.” The body was a tool, a good tool. It was a gift from God and as such, was heavily bounded by God’s laws and expectations. Pleasure and rest were fine. They had their place, but they must stay within “suitable bounds.” This emphasis on order and moderation was reminiscent of the Puritans. David Tripp has discussed the thought of Richard Baxter as it related to dancing. For Baxter, dancing was “under God’s judgment”; it was a “preparation for destruction.” Tripp added:

But, though the body has its role in the temptations which lead to sin, the real seat of sin is “an excess of complacency,” an illegitimate act of the will (I, 77). To be carnal is therefore not a matter of being in the life of the senses, but of worshipping one’s will (I, 210-218). The Christian calling, Baxter insists, (I, 548), is of the whole person:

Look also to your tongues and the deportment of your bodies that the whole man may worship God in holiness, as he requireth. Pretend not your good meanings, nor the spirituality of your worship, to excuse you from

¹⁰⁷ Spurgeon, *Lectures*, vol. 3, 141.

¹⁰⁸ Spurgeon, *An All-Round Ministry*, 189-90.

worshipping with your *Bodies*. Your *Hearts* must be *first* looked to; but your *Words* and *Bodies* must be next look'd to: And if you regard not *these*, it is hardly credible that you regard your *Hearts*.

Properly ordered, Baxter can even say (I, 212), the pleasure of the senses is a pointer and an invitation to delight in God. It must be remembered that this advice comes from a man constantly oppressed by a sense of ill-health, by a body described as “a shoe that pinched me.”¹⁰⁹

The continuity between Baxter and Spurgeon is obvious. There is an affirmation of the body, but this affirmation comes with a strong warning. The individual's body plays its part in the divinely ordered life. For all of its weakness, it may also be a vehicle for getting closer to God. Baxter drew closer to God through his body even though it was “a shoe that pinched.” For Spurgeon, the diseased body may provide the sufferer with an opportunity to draw closer to God. The crisis of affliction and the vulnerability that accompanied that trial had the power to draw God to the believer's side: “I have learned, dear friends, that at the Red Sea of affliction we see most of the right arm of God.”¹¹⁰ But the afflicted had to reach out in adoration and dependence:

We must have faith, not only in the form of fixity of creed, but also in the shape of *constant dependence upon God*. If I were asked what is the sweetest frame within the whole compass of human feeling, I should mention, as the most exquisite delight of my being, a condition of conscious dependence upon God. It has been often associated with great pain of body ...to lie passive in the hand of love, to die into the life of Christ.¹¹¹

The doorway to this conscious dependence upon God was through the bodily pain that so often plagued Spurgeon. The tremendous agony that Spurgeon felt and that all humanity experienced, provided the young preacher (Spurgeon's student) with a measure of

¹⁰⁹ D. Tripp, “The Image of the Body in the Protestant Reformation,” *Religion and the Body*, ed. Sarah Coakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 144.

¹¹⁰ Swem, *Spurgeon's Gold*, 58.

¹¹¹ Spurgeon, *An All-Round Ministry*, 119.

sympathy. This compassion for others that was achieved through the shared pain of humanity's embodied experience actually served to advance the Gospel. Spurgeon taught his students, "Disembodied spirits might have been sent to proclaim the word, but they could not have entered into the feelings of those who, being in this body, do groan, [and are] burdened."¹¹²

The human body helped to form a bond of sympathy between persons. Angels were not qualified to preach, and God did not ordain them as ambassadors because their disembodied nature keeps them from humanity's "feelings." The masses need to hear the Gospel from a creature who, like them, feels the burden of the body and groans under its weight. Spurgeon viewed his own body as a tool to be used by God, for God's own glory, and the conversion of sinners. Spurgeon's evangelicalism, as outlined by Bebbington, contained distinct characteristics: crucicentrism, conversionism, biblicism, and activism.¹¹³ And all of these found their mark in Spurgeon, including activism, the necessity to be "up and doing." Effort and hard work was expected of the believer.

Spurgeon's activism was influenced by the Puritan theme of the godly warrior. The Puritans viewed their spiritual journey as a practically unending struggle against the flesh, the world, and the devil. J. I. Packer noted the presence of these themes in a work that deeply influenced Spurgeon: "Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is a story of almost constant fighting, both verbal and physical, and the ideal Puritan pastor, Mr. Great-heart, who acts as

¹¹² Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, vol. 1, 173.

¹¹³ David Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Downer's Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2005), 23.

a guide, instructor, and protector to Christiana's party, is cast for the role of giant-killer as well."¹¹⁴ Spurgeon was cast as a modern Mr. Great-heart.¹¹⁵

Spurgeon may also have been influenced, at least partially, by the heroic ideal. Regarding this ideal, Peter J. Morden noted that "to argue that Spurgeon was influenced by this cultural movement is not usual."¹¹⁶ And David N. Duke, in a discussion of Spurgeon's ideas of empire and war, cautioned as well, "Spurgeon's firsthand experiences with the suffering of soldiers gave him little sympathy for the romantic portrayals of heroism."¹¹⁷ With all that in mind, though, Morden asserted that one could still discern in some of Spurgeon's sermons, ideas that "evoke a heroic ideal."¹¹⁸ The example he cited comes from a sermon entitled, "The Pitifulness of the Lord and the Comfort of the Afflicted":

We count that man happy who has passed through trial and hardship with a brave endurance. Such life is of an interesting and manly kind; but life without struggle and difficulty is thin and tasteless. How can a noble life be constructed if there is no difficulty to overcome, no suffering to bear? ...Studying the lives of eminent men, we come to this conclusion, that on the whole it is good for a man to bear the yoke...good for a man to pass through fire and through water, and so to learn sublime lessons. When we see what poor, paltry things those are who are nursed in the lap of luxury and consequently never come to a real manhood, "we count them happy that endure."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ J. I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1990), 334-5.

¹¹⁵ See Figure 5.7.

¹¹⁶ Peter J. Morden, "The Bible for the Masses," in *Text Message: The Centrality of Scripture in Preaching*, Chapter 7, eds. Ian Stackhouse and Oliver D. Crisp (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 103.

¹¹⁷ David N. Duke, "Asking the Right Questions about War: A Lesson from C. H. Spurgeon," *Evangelical Quarterly* 61, no. 1 (1989): 75.

¹¹⁸ Morden, *Text Message*, 104.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. The full sermon text is found in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 31, 325-36.

In this passage, the hero passes through all sorts of trials and endures all manner of suffering. The hero's body and life know hardship and have emerged on the other side as victorious. This is not an experience open to the wealthy but was an option to the common man, the one who was not born into the "lap of luxury." The truly "noble life" came not from carriages and education, but rather was constructed out of struggle and difficulty. Spurgeon appeared to be the perfect representative man for the heroic ideal. He rose from the ranks of the common man to a place of relative wealth and standing. He endured and embraced a life of suffering while maintaining his Christian walk. Spurgeon's body had passed through the fire, and the life he lived on the other side of those experiences was, in his words, a "real manhood."

Spurgeon and the Ideal of Manliness

Spurgeon's construction of the body was clearly a complex one. His thought had a definite affinity with the Puritans and yet, there are clear indications that his social and cultural context—the notion of the heroic ideal—impacted him as well. One of the most significant ideas that flourished during the Victorian era was the idea of manliness. Christian manliness related to physical vigor, patriotism, chivalric ideals, and military qualities. Although the concept of Christian manliness grew exponentially in the Victorian era, there were precursors to it, such as George Swinnock's *The Christian Man's Calling* (1661). In the following passage, he brought together the concepts of providence, submission, courage, gout, and hell:

A Christian should also exercise patience and submission to God's will under his pain. It is the rule of Hippocrates, that that sickness is most dangerous in which the sick man alters his countenance. Undoubtedly it is ill and unbecoming Christianity, when men who in health are mild and meek, in sickness are altered to be peevish and passionate; that their relations and

attendants, who pity their pain, and pray for their ease, and watch and work night and day to serve them, are requited with harsh words and fretful returns. Gaius Marius suffered the veins of his legs to be cut out for the cure of his gout, and never shrunk for it. The Grecians were cowardly in their encounters with men, but valiant and patient in their conflicts with diseases. Master Jeremiah Whitaker, who on his death-bed had dreadful fits of the stone, bore them with marvellous patience, often turning up his eyes to heaven, and saying, "Blessed be God this is not hell." The saint who is in covenant with God, and hath engaged himself to God to submit to all his providences, and hath God engaged to him to lay no more upon him than he will enable him to bear, may well with patience endure the divine pleasure.¹²⁰

Christian "manliness" was an umbrella term that might be employed to give force or linked to any virtue that the speaker wished to extol. Norman Vance, in *The Sinews of the Spirit*, has researched the development and manifestations of this concept of Christian manliness.

One of the ways that Spurgeon could effectively make an appeal to members of all classes, especially the middle classes who made up the bulk of his audience, was to use ideas and phrases that evoked a powerful response from them. One of those ideas and images at his disposal was the idea of Christian manliness.

Christian Manliness was the title of a popular and representative religious work published by the Religious Tract Society in 1867. This "book of examples and principles for young men", compiled by the Revd S. S. Pugh, draws attention to a much wider range of concerns than its title suggests. "Christian manliness" was a common Victorian preacher's catch phrase. It represented a strategy for commending Christian virtue by linking it with more interesting secular notions of moral and physical prowess. "Manliness" in this context generally embraced all that was best and most vigorous in man, which might include woman as well. Pugh holds up the example of Christ and St. Paul who combined the virtues of both sexes in their manly energy and gentleness. Most of Pugh's material came from the Bible, but he enlivened it with allusions to secular literature and references to General Havelock, a conveniently Christian hero of the Indian Mutiny, and to Wilberforce and other heroes of the abolition of the slave-trade.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Swinnock, *The Works of George Swinnock*, 61-2.

¹²¹ Norman Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1.

For Pugh, Luther and the Puritans represented a sternness and courage in public, while their private lives were marked by gentleness: “The men of the Puritan times in England bore the same witness. In the field, in the council, they bore themselves as men whom no danger could daunt, whom no bribe could pervert,—strong, firm, faithful: but in private, kind and gentle, considerate and loving; so that their homes were scenes of peace and beauty.”¹²²

For Spurgeon, the manly man exhibited courage:

Do not be such a coward as to be afraid of anybody. Stand straight up as God made you, and say, “No, he never made me to be afraid of man or woman either. He has made me a man, and the very least thing I can do is to pray him to make me manly enough to but the truth and sell it not, and take up my cross and follow Christ, come what may of it.”¹²³

And of course, the manly refused to submit to the Catholic Church: “My friends, have ye no manliness? Does it not seem to you, as it does to me, to be a monstrously degrading thing that you should prostrate yourselves before a man like yourselves [i.e., the Pope], and believe that he can pronounce the pardon of your sins?”¹²⁴ The manly resist temptations that came from their work environment:

We have heard of young men who, under extraordinary pressure, have felt as if they must relax integrity a little to obey a master, and thus keep the position they hold. Well, from that time forward their nose has been to the grindstone as long as they have lived; and if they had the manliness, let alone the godliness, to do right it would have been the turning point in their entire career, and have saved them from a thousand sorrows.¹²⁵

¹²² S. S. Pugh, *Christian Manliness: A Book of Examples and Principles for Young Men* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1867), 121.

¹²³ *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 21, 517.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 586.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 290.

The manly individual was the one with integrity.¹²⁶ He did right though under tremendous pressure, whether it be from an employer or church tradition. The manly individual did not succumb to the Pope's doctrines. He needed no human intercessor. The manly was not rude. Pugh noted some of the distinctions of Christian manliness:

Manliness does not consist in being rough, uncourteous, uncouth. It does not show itself in mustering self-assertion, or in dogged self-will. These ideas of manliness are relics of old barbarisms, when savage manners were supposed to imply savage strength.—when they did often indicate savage ferocity. That was the heathen type. The Christian type is of an altogether higher order. This strength is consistent with calmness, with repose. “A Christian,” says a late writer, “is God Almighty's gentleman.”¹²⁷

Christian manliness, as presented by Pugh, borrowed from many different sources but was traced to the apostle Paul and the images he employed in the New Testament.¹²⁸ The imagery of the soldier, of spiritual warfare, and of the Christian life as a “race” are readily found in the New Testament. These could be employed by the preacher to guide the hearer to decision and action. Of course, the preacher was to be the preeminent example of manliness.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ John Tosh on the transformation of manliness by the Evangelicals: “Not surprisingly, the Evangelicals set out to clean up physical manliness. Their reformed version, vigorously promoted by virtually all the churches during the Victorian period, set a new moral standard. The fatal flaw in the traditional notion of manliness from the Evangelical standpoint was that it was built on *reputation* and therefore involved playing to the worldly standards of one's peers. Instead of this...the Evangelicals substituted *character*. This was particularly true of ‘courage,’ now interpreted to mean standing up for what is true and right, rather than showing physical guts.” John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire* (Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2005), 112. According to Tosh, one of the central dilemmas that Evangelicals faced in the nineteenth-century was how manhood was related to domesticity.

¹²⁷ S. S. Pugh, *Christian Manliness*, 122. For an additional list of works on manliness, produced during Spurgeon's era, see: http://www.ampltd.co.uk/collections_az/Masc-2/contents-of-reels.aspx, accessed April 27, 2017.

¹²⁸ Pugh, *Christian Manliness*, 98-102.

¹²⁹ Although not discussed in this dissertation, Spurgeon's attitude toward women preaching was fairly standard: The task of public preaching belonged to men. In his book, *Feathers for Arrows* (1870), which was a collection of anecdotes designed to be used by other teachers and preachers, Spurgeon offered the following:

The idea of manliness varied greatly, however. “Manliness has almost always been a good quality, the opposite of childishness and sometimes of beastliness, counter not so much to womanliness as to effeminacy. It brings with it connotations of physical and moral courage and strength and vigorous maturity.”¹³⁰ The manly are, therefore, patriotic, strong, resolved to do the virtuous, chivalrous, brave, generous and self-sacrificing.¹³¹ The manly ones are the heroes. They are like Wellington on the battlefield and Nelson on the sea. They have the moral resolve and determination of a Wilberforce.

Manliness was linked to war and sports. Wellington’s quote that the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton, may or may not be accurately attributed to him, but it reflected a sentiment that was common in nineteenth-century England. The connection between war and sports as a more civilized war was clearly established.

Manliness was linked not only to courage but to a physical sturdiness that allowed the English to win the battle and dominate the field. For all the brutishness of war and sport, British manliness had roots of a more refined nature, in the concepts of chivalry and the

“WOMEN-Preaching: When Boswell told Johnson one day that he had heard a woman preach that morning at a Quaker’s meeting, Johnson replied, ‘Sir, a woman preaching is like a dog’s walking on his hind legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all.’ We will add that our surprise is all the greater when women of piety mount the pulpit, for they are acting in plain defiance of the command of the Holy Spirit, written by the pen of the apostle Paul.” C. H. Spurgeon, *Feathers for Arrows, Or, Illustrations for Preachers and Teachers from my Note Book*, 260. For more on women preaching and some discussion of its decline in the Victorian era, see Deborah M. Valenze, *Prophetic Sons and Daughters: Female Preaching and Popular Religion in Industrial England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 274-81.

¹³⁰ Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit*, 8.

¹³¹ See Susan Walton, *Imagining Soldiers and Fathers in the Mid-Victorian Era: Charlotte Yonge’s Models of Manliness* (Farnham, England: Ashgate Publications, 2010), 5. Walton noted the complexities involved in the study of masculinity: “Far from being easy to acquire for anyone born with the appropriate chromosomes, masculinity is a ‘prize to be won or wrested with struggle’; a ‘precarious or artificial state that boys must win against powerful odds.’ [citing Gilmore] The use of the plural, masculinities gives a better sense of the variety of traits which masculinity can incorporate. This underlines the changeable nature of those characteristics viewed as acceptably male, impelling some men constantly to shift their stance. It also elicits a possible imbalance between a man’s inner and outer self: masculinity as the costume to wear for public appearances away from the privacy of a domestic setting.”

virtue of being a gentleman. These ideas experienced a revival in the mid-nineteenth century. The idea of the knight who protected the weak and who was loyal and unselfish was once again popular. The idea and image had been democratized and made more accessible to the common man. One could achieve a knightliness, of sorts, by his conduct, not just as a birthright. As Vance noted, “The knight of medieval chivalry and the gentleman of earlier times had fused in the popular imagination into a conventional moral ideal democratically applicable to all classes.”¹³² This ideal was easily adopted and adapted by the preacher and pressed into Christian service.

The moral components of manliness often were linked to the apostle Paul and the New Testament. The religious writings of Coleridge, F. D. Maurice, and Thomas Arnold provided a vision that was religious and strenuous, a vision that would be modified on a less sophisticated level by fervent Evangelicals. Norman Vance cited the robust rhetoric of Spurgeon in describing Christian manliness: “When I say that a man in Christ *is* a man, I mean that, if he be truly in Christ, he is therefore manly. There has got abroad a notion, somehow, that if you become a Christian you must sink your manliness and turn milksop.”¹³³ In this text, the image of Christ as the perfect man is upheld. Those in Christ are not “weak” but rather are the true men. Christ may embody a definite gentleness but

¹³² Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit*, 17. See David Newsome, 64-7 regarding class and aspirations. In relation to being a gentleman and a manly Christian, Newsome writes: “Nineteenth-century society, however, required more than outward and visible signs. There had to be some inner graces as well. *John Halifax, Gentleman*, in Mrs. Dinah Craik’s novel of 1856, rose from humble beginnings to sufficient affluence to keep his carriage, and his son’s reaction was the same as young Osborne’s. ‘We are gentlefolks now,’ he exclaimed. His father knew better. ‘We always were, my son,’ he said. He meant by that not the gift of education...but something akin to moral graces: one’s behavior to other people, the possession of a Christian manly spirit.” David Newsome, *The Victorian World Picture: Perceptions and Introspections in a World of Change* (NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 66-7.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 26.

there stands between this gentleness and any ideas of weakness or effeminacy (milk-sop), a great gulf.

One of Spurgeon's favorite and persistent targets was the Church of England. Like most Protestants, he viewed the rituals and especially the vestments of the "high church" as signs of effeminacy. In his book, *The Bible and the Newspaper* (1878), he commented on the high cost one woman claimed to need to clothe herself every year and he blamed the Anglican priests for this:

We wonder how much of the extravagance of female dress could be traced to the man-millinery of Anglican priests. Church congresses have been edified by exhibitions of ecclesiastical finery, in which were seen robes and vestments of the costliest material and the gaudiest colours. We have read of altar frontals which have taken years to finish, and are valued at more than £500. All this to deck out a table; no wonder that it costs so much to dress a woman. When men, and even ministers, take to resplendent trappings, who can wonder that the weaker sex exercise a larger liberty? For shame, ye so-called priests, put away your baby garments and quit yourselves like men.¹³⁴

The word "manly" was also linked to combat and placed in the realm of the believer's heart. The biblical text Spurgeon spoke on was from 1 John 5:4.

The world said, "Be rich, be rich;" but the Holy Spirit said, "No! Be honest and serve thy God." Oh, the stern contest and the manly combat carried on within the heart! But he said, "No; could I have the stars transmuted into worlds of gold, I would not for those globes of wealth belie my principles, and damage my soul:" thus he walks a conqueror. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."¹³⁵

The majority of the themes of manliness were present. Spurgeon employed the common concept of warfare; note the phrase "manly combat."¹³⁶ The picture was not

¹³⁴ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Bible and the Newspaper* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1878), 34.

¹³⁵ Charles Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 1, 196.

¹³⁶ Spurgeon often used words and images borrowed from the battlefield, but his actual endorsement for war and "soldiering" for the State is a little more complicated: "In contrast to the Victorian ethos which lauded 'manliness' and war heroes, Spurgeon was not much impressed." David N. Duke, "Asking the Right Questions

dissimilar to the one used by the apostle Paul in a variety of Biblical passages.¹³⁷ Combat was referred to as a “stern contest.” The person who resisted the world is a “conqueror.” All of this overcoming was grounded in a Scripture text that is well suited for that purpose. And again,

I think the idea prevails among pious people that everything we do for Christ ought to be done in a quiet, gentle, soft, milk-sop fashion—that we must pray in a very smooth tone of voice, speak in a whisper, and sing so as not to shock anybody’s nerves! This seems to me to be totally inconsistent and utterly alien to the spirit of genuine Christianity. When you espouse godliness you need not renounce manliness. If anything be fitted to develop all the energies of a man’s nature, and call forth all the powers and faculties of his being, it should be enlisting on the side of King Jesus.¹³⁸

There was a fairly straightforward appeal to a moral manliness. The idea of being manly was linked to virtue. The moral man demonstrated his bravery, courage and knightly nature by refusing to engage in wickedness, by refusing to follow the commands of an enemy general. In the same paragraph, Spurgeon made reference to the Christian, military hero, Havelock, “But you shall not say that we are cowardly. Lived there ever a more earnest Christian than Havelock?”¹³⁹ The moral idea was reinforced with a military example.

The second example demonstrated that the concepts of godliness and manliness are not inconsistent. The true man is the one who follows the “spirit of genuine Christianity.” As a matter of fact, the man who enlists (military imagery) to follow King Jesus is the one

about War: A Lesson from C. H. Spurgeon,” 76. For Spurgeon, the kingdom of God is the central concern, not expanding the empires of men. Duke continued, “Spurgeon put it this way: in times of war the fundamental question must be: How will God’s Kingdom prosper?” (77).

¹³⁷ Some representative passages are: Romans 7 and Ephesians 6.

¹³⁸ Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Series*, vol. 7, 268.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 221.

who is in the best position to “be fitted to develop all the energies of a man’s nature.” The “powers and faculties of his being” are utilized and expanded more by the man who follows Christ than by any other. Spurgeon has turned the tables on the scoffers and shown them to be the real “milk-sops.” The emphasis is away from an effeminacy and toward a real, robust masculinity.

Manliness seemed to be a virtue a tier below godliness. The manly were not always godly, but the godly were always manly. Wellington epitomized the concept of manliness on the military field. Havelock displayed not only bravery on the field, but his conduct off the field gained the approval of the leaders of Evangelicalism. Spurgeon used the common cultural concept of “manliness” to serve his own purposes. It was one of many tools he employed to illustrate what the ideal Christian should be. It was a concept which also served to inform how he perceived the character of the model believer.

Spurgeon’s Contested Body and His Final Years

This dissertation has posed many questions about the life and writings of Charles Spurgeon. It has sought to compare and contrast his use of gout with that of the seventeenth-century Puritans. It has explored the impact of gout in the life of Spurgeon and has attempted to catalog changes in the appearance of his body through artifacts from material culture. I want to close this dissertation by asking a few final questions: What exactly was happening on that protruding platform, especially in Spurgeon’s final years? In his early years, Spurgeon had used his body in a dynamic fashion to reveal the power of the gospel and to illuminate, through quite dramatic means, spiritual truths. What was happening, then, behind the rail of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in his old age? If “Spurgeon

in his youth and Gladstone in his old age” were the wonders of the Victorian era, how are we to understand the spectacle of Spurgeon in the final years of his ministry?

Spurgeon’s final years were never regarded as the zenith of his ministry. He was often characterized as the “boy wonder of the fens” or the “boy preacher” who captivated London at a startlingly young age. Many late or memorial newspaper accounts featured portraits from his youth or remarkable scenes from very early in his ministry, such as his preaching at the Crystal Palace in 1857.¹⁴⁰

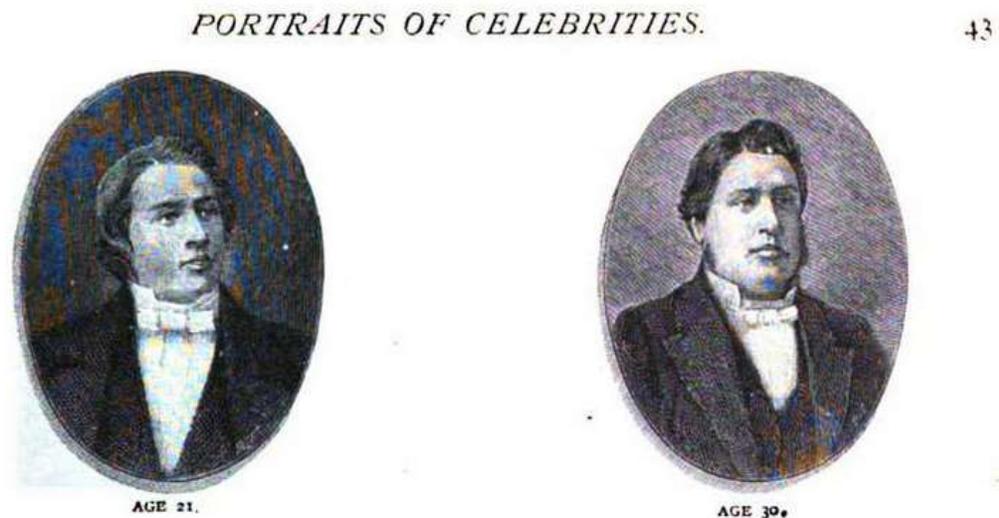


Fig. 5.6. Spurgeon at 21 and 30, c. 1891¹⁴¹

Nevertheless, Spurgeon’s final years in the pulpit were just as important. Periods of lengthy absence from the pulpit only served to highlight the struggle that was taking place on the

¹⁴⁰ See *The Illustrated London News*, February 6, 1892. This particular account illustrates my point by featuring two pictures of the coffin and two pictures from the early period of his ministry. One image is Spurgeon preaching at 23 and the second is the special service at the Crystal Palace.

¹⁴¹ George Newnes, ed. *The Strand Magazine: An Illustrated Monthly*, vol. 1 (London: Burleigh Street, Strand, 1891), 43.

platform of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. As a young man, Spurgeon's body was placed on charging locomotives.¹⁴² It was transformed into the body of a gorilla.¹⁴³ Yet, the shadow of his body revealed his true nature, that of a lion.¹⁴⁴ The items that accompanied him in the early cartoons reflected popular conceptions surrounding his ministry. In one color lithograph, his hat was transformed into flypaper.¹⁴⁵ In a caricature from *The Hornet*, he was drawn in a barrel and holding a book which labeled him as the "pious punster."¹⁴⁶ Another image labeled Spurgeon as "the pious sandwich."¹⁴⁷ Some cartoons attempted to cast him as a character from Bunyan's narrative, as a Victorian "Great-heart," or a modern "Valiant-for-Truth."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴² See Figure 2.1

¹⁴³ See Appendix C, Figure C7.

¹⁴⁴ See Appendix C, Figure C2.

¹⁴⁵ See Figure 2.9

¹⁴⁶ See Appendix C, Figure C23.

¹⁴⁷ See Appendix C, Figure C9.

¹⁴⁸ "The Christian pastor, then, in the character of Greatheart, is to be the leader of men, as manly as he is Christian, humanly touching life at all points, a living, large-hearted man." John Brown, *Puritan Preaching in England: A Study of Past and Present* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001 [1900]), 140.



C. H. SPURGEON AS "GREAT-HEART."

Fig. 5.7. Spurgeon as "Great-heart" from *Pilgrim's Progress*¹⁴⁹

Many of these early images, at least the ones with Spurgeon after the construction of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, almost always featured Spurgeon's famous rail. It was found in such disparate images as a caricature of Gladstone, a cartoon from *The Hornet*, and the famous caricature by "Ape" in *Vanity Fair*.¹⁵⁰ The rail became a symbol for the Metropolitan Tabernacle itself. It represented the location where Spurgeon preached and presented his body and voice to the waiting multitudes.

This dissertation closes with an analysis of another caricature that appeared close to the end of Spurgeon's life. In August of 1890, the cartoon, "Parsons in the Pulpit" was

¹⁴⁹ Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, vol. 3, 85.

¹⁵⁰ See Appendix C, figures 23 and 18 (respectively).

published in the weekly magazine, *Moonshine*. It featured seven different sketches of Spurgeon engaged in a variety of poses, almost all of them linked to the preaching moment.

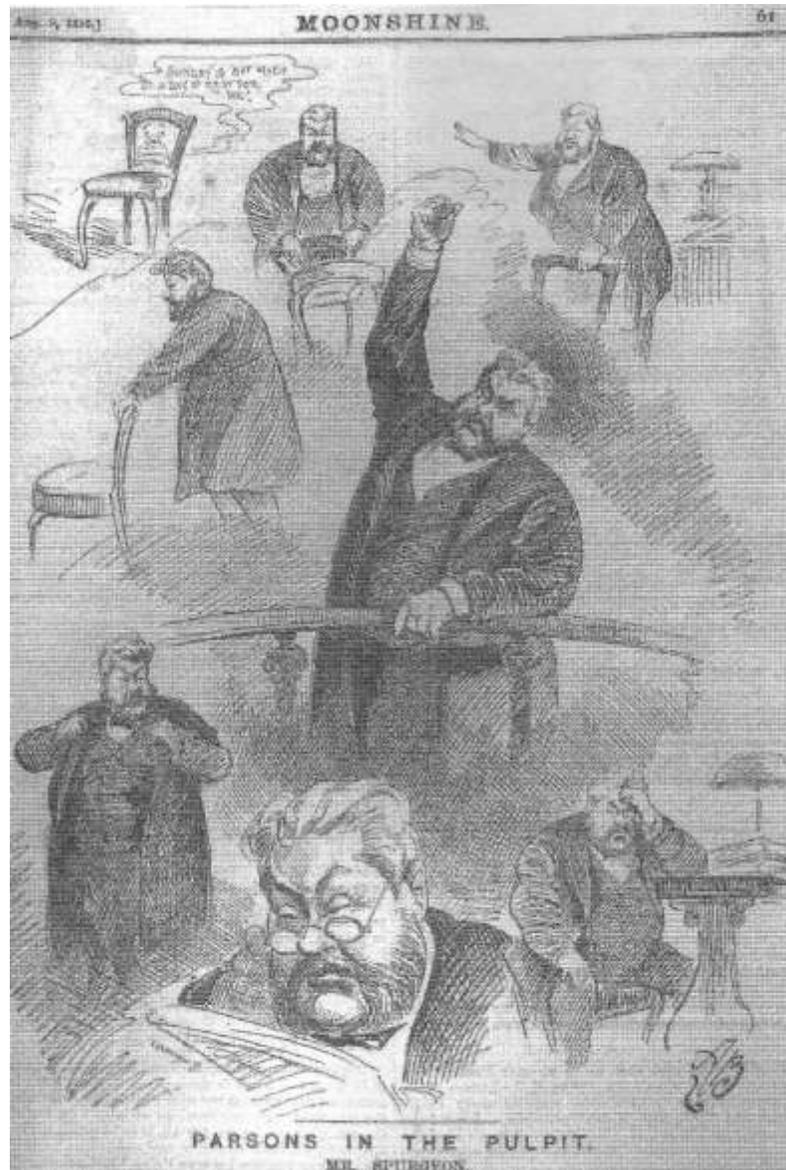


Fig. 5.8. “Parsons in the Pulpit” *Moonshine*, August 9, 1890¹⁵¹

The central figure and largest figure of the composition featured Spurgeon in a modified characteristic pose, his right finger pointing heavenward. He is portrayed leaning

¹⁵¹ See Appendix C, Figure C28 to view a larger image. The chair’s caption reads: “Sunday’s not much of a day of rest for me!” *Moonshine* was a weekly magazine published from 1879 to 1902.

slightly on the Metropolitan's rail. His full, almost bloated figure dominates the cartoon in much the same way that he dominated the world of English Nonconformity and in the same way that the Metropolitan Tabernacle dominated the skyline of Southwark. His right hand, which in the earlier years is open or, at the very least, features his right index finger pointing skyward, is now closed into a fist. He is presented as something of a fighter, someone engaged in combat. It is reminiscent of the way *The Hornet* portrayed him when he was bringing his closed fist down on the rail.¹⁵² Spurgeon's raised fist would not have been interpreted as an act of rebellion against God, but rather the sign of a man who has vowed to continue fighting against the forces arrayed against him. These forces included theological opposition (e.g., the Downgrade Controversy), seasons of depression, and gout.

The primary opponent he faces in the cartoon is gout itself. Everyone in his congregation and in the world, through his magazine and newspaper accounts, knew that Spurgeon was in a great struggle to survive. It was well known that he spent months in Mentone and was frequently required to stay at Westwood to recover from debilitating episodes. He did not mention gout very often from the pulpit, but he often referred to his health in letters and updates in *The Sword and the Trowel*. Spurgeon often used aids or technologies designed to increase his support and mobility. One such technology was the cane. Porter and Rousseau have discussed the presence of wheeled gout chairs and their symbolism in Georgian and early Victorian caricatures.¹⁵³ For Spurgeon's audience, the chair on the platform became a symbol of gout and his struggle with the disease. Toward the end of Spurgeon's life, one observer noted: "His earnestness was often terrible. We have

¹⁵² See Appendix C, Figure C24.

¹⁵³ Porter and Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady*, 164.

seen him preach when in such agony from gout that he could not keep his foot on the ground, but had to kneel on a chair while speaking. But presently, as he warmed to his subject, he would spring to his feet and advance to the front of the pulpit and preach with all his old vigour, regardless of the pain that burned like a fire in his bones.”¹⁵⁴ He used the chair to relieve his pain, but once the sermon’s subject had him in his grip, then his body became animated once again.

One of the keys to understanding “Parsons in the Pulpit” is interpreting the whole cartoon in light of the gout chair. While presumably a scene of Spurgeon preaching, the only words, a ludic quip, in the cartoon are spoken by the chair: “Sunday’s not much of a day of rest for me!” the chair exclaims. The top three images of Spurgeon show him wrestling with the chair, tipping it back, and leaning against it as well. One of the poses features him with his right arm extended, pointing, perhaps, toward the crowd, but not straight up. The chair itself has a face and it is frowning in exasperation. Finally, the chair is located in the bottom right-hand corner of the cartoon, where Spurgeon is using it to rest and recover after the preaching moment has passed. He is still on the platform though, as the platform contained a small table that held a lamp and his Bible. Spurgeon’s left hand supports his forehead and he appears to be tired and almost beaten. Below the central image of Spurgeon at the rail, there are two more “parsons.” The first, to the left, is Spurgeon looking out on the audience during a moment of preaching or perhaps, observing himself as he concludes the sermon. The foundational image at bottom center shows Spurgeon holding

¹⁵⁴ [By one who knew him well]. *Charles Haddon Spurgeon, A Biographical Sketch and an Appreciation* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1903), 106.

a book or perhaps reading a text, perhaps one of his own many published works or Scripture. The use of Scripture is more appropriate to the moment.

The cartoon summarized nicely the prominence that gout played in the closing years of Spurgeon's life. From the very beginning of his ministry, he used his body dynamically to present the gospel. He felt no greater calling than to preach the gospel, and from that moment all the other ministries, philanthropies, and published works developed. Spurgeon maintained something of an instrumental view of the body and that, coupled with his love for the Puritans with their emphasis on providence and submission, fueled his desire to climb the stairs and to ascend to the platform. Additionally, Spurgeon was influenced by the idea of Christian manliness, and perhaps, as well, by the heroic ideal. All of these factors came together to transform his body into a contested one where a disease laden heavily with cultural significance, a theology steeped in the past, and a transformative Victorian culture met, combined, and radiated out to a watching world.

APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGY OF CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON¹

June 19, 1834	Born in Kelvedon, Essex
April 18, 1835	Family moves to Colchester
August 1835 to August 1841	Lives with grandparents and Aunt Ann at Stambourne ²
Summer 1844	Richard Knill's prophecy about Spurgeon
1848	Attends St. Augustine's College, Maidstone
August 17, 1849	Attends school at Newmarket, Cambridge as pupil-assistant usher
January 6, 1850	Conversion in Artillery Street Primitive Methodist Church
May 3, 1850	Baptized by immersion in the River Lark
June 20, 1850	Enters Leedings School, Cambridge
October 2, 1850	Joins St. Andrews Street Baptist Church, Cambridge
Spring 1851	Preached first sermon at a cottage in Teversham
October 3, 1851	First sermon at Waterbeach Baptist Chapel
November 1853	Invited to preach at New Park Street Baptist Church, London
December 18, 1853	First sermon at New Park Street Baptist Church
April 28, 1854	Accepted invitation to pastor New Park Street Baptist Church
January 7 1855	<i>New Park Street Pulpit</i> (printed sermons) first issued
February to March 1855	Preached in Exeter Hall, the Strand

¹ A variety of sources have been used to compile this chronology. Notable among them were: Eric Hayden, *My Spurgeon Souvenirs: A Biography of C. H. Spurgeon Based on Some Memorabilia* (Belfast, Ambassador Publ., 1996), 93-4; Ken Connolly, *C. H. Spurgeon: A Biographical Sketch* (Pasadena, TX, Pilgrim Publ., 1986); Peter Morden, *C. H. Spurgeon: The People's Preacher* (China: IOIO Printing International, 2009), 172-3; and Christian George, *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon: His Earliest Outlines and Sermons between 1851 and 1854*, vol. 1 (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2016), xxxiii-xlix.

² There is some discrepancy with these dates. Connolly thinks Spurgeon returned to his parents' home in 1840. Pike gives the date of Spurgeon's arrival in Stambourne around March of 1835, not August.

July 1855	Visited Scotland for the first of several times; Also Thomas Medhurst begins training under Spurgeon: The origins of the Pastors' College (now Spurgeon's College)
October 1855	Republished London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 ³
January 8, 1856	Married to Susannah Thompson
September 20, 1856	Twin sons, Charles and Thomas, born
October 19, 1856	Surrey Gardens Music Hall first service held and tragedy
November 23, 1856	Surrey Garden Services reconvened after Spurgeon's recovery
November 1856 to December 1859	Sunday Morning Services held at Surrey Gardens Music Hall
October 7, 1857	Preached at Crystal Palace (23,654 in attendance)
Autumn 1857	Moved to house in New Kent Road
December 13, 1858	Site for Metropolitan Tabernacle purchased
August 16, 1859	Foundation-stone of Metropolitan Tabernacle laid
1860	Traveled to Paris and Geneva, preached in Calvin's gown and pulpit
March 18, 1861	Tabernacle officially opened
October 1861	Delivered famous "Gorilla" lecture against evolution
December 1861	<i>Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit</i> (printed sermons) first issued
June 5, 1862	Delivered famous "Baptismal Regeneration" sermon
January 1865	<i>The Sword and the Trowel</i> first issued
1866	Organized the Metropolitan Tabernacle Colportage Association
January 1867	Site for Stockwell Orphanage purchased

³ Spurgeon wrote a preface for the Confession and republished it, in part, in order to quell rumors that he held to some strange doctrines. George John Stevenson, *Sketch of the Life and Ministry of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon* (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1859), 118.

March to April 1867	Preached in Agricultural Hall, Islington during Tabernacle renovations
August 9, 1867	Foundation-stone of Stockwell Orphanage laid
October 1867	First serious episode with illness (rheumatic gout/Bright's Disease)
January 6, 1868	Charles' brother, James Archer Spurgeon, becomes assistant pastor
Summer 1869	Helensburgh House built
December 1869	Spurgeon suffered from smallpox
November 1871	First visit to Mentone, France. Location became his winter retreat
September 21, 1874	Twin sons, Charles and Thomas baptized
Summer 1880	Moved to Westwood, Beulah Hill
January 8, 1882	Gladstone attends a Sunday evening service at the Metropolitan Tabernacle
June 19, 1884	Spurgeon's 50 th Birthday (Jubilee); D. L. Moody preached
August 1887	Downgrade Controversy begins
October 1887	Spurgeon withdraws from the Baptist Union
June 7, 1891	Last sermon preached at Tabernacle
October 26, 1891	Traveled to Mentone for the last time, accompanied by wife
January 31, 1892	Died in Mentone, France
February 11, 1892	Interred at Norwood Cemetery
November 1905	Spurgeon's Library is sold to William Jewell College. Iain Murray suggests that it probably "contains the best private collection of Puritan literature in Britain." ⁴
2006	Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary purchases the Spurgeon Library from William Jewell College for \$400,000.

⁴ Iain Murray, *The Forgotten Spurgeon* (Great Britain: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1978), ix.

APPENDIX B

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON:

A LIFE THROUGH THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S LENS

The following images are all examples of the *Cartes de Visite* (CDV) with the exception of the Woodburytype Photograph (circa 1880), the stereoscopic card, the bromide print and the two Cabinet Cards. The *carte-de-visite* was an albumen photograph known by many names, “card portrait,” “card picture,” or “card photograph,” and the format refers to the “style and size of photograph.”¹ The *carte-de-visite* was extremely common, being “the most popular and diversified type of photography produced in the nineteenth century.”² The numbers produced and sold were quite staggering. For this reason, the phenomenon was termed “cartomania.” “In England alone, 300 to 400 million cartes were sold every year from 1861 to 1867.”³

These card portraits were often personal mementos and some were produced in collectable series. Many times, these card portraits were gathered into albums.⁴ These

¹ Gary W. Clark, *19th Century Card Photos Kwikguide: A Step-by-Step Guide to Identifying and Dating Cartes de Visite and Cabinet Cards* (Published by PhotoTree.com, 2013), 15.

² William C. Darrah, *Cartes de Visite In Nineteenth Century Photography* (Gettysburg: W. C. Harrah Publisher, 1981), 31.

³ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴ For more on the construction and importance of the Victorian family photo album, see Linley and Colligan, *Media, Technology, and Literature in the Nineteenth Century: Image, Sound, Touch*, edited by Colette Colligan and Margaret Linley (Farnham, Surrey, England: Routledge, 2011), 7 (ebook). “The Victorian family photo album was just one of the many novel forms of mixed media in the period that allowed for reflection on the meaning and formation of the social.” See also Brian Maidment’s *Comedy, Caricature and the Social Order 1820-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013) for an excellent analysis of the use of caricature and comic imagery in the thirty years before Spurgeon’s ministry. Regarding the construction of albums, not necessarily family albums, in Spurgeon’s time, he noted, “The second half of the century saw a more commercialized exploitation of album making as a hobby, drawing more and more on professionally produced images and increasingly incorporating greeting cards, trade cards or even pressed flowers.” (78).

collections were assembled according to themes: family, celebrity, travel (topographic) and topical or subject albums.⁵ *Carte-de-visite* were also used as an “advertising novelty. Typical British examples...show music-hall star, Jenny Lind with a backing of promotional text for ‘Tanus’ the royal table water.”⁶ The CDV was mounted on stiff card stock of varying thickness. The thickness of the card, along with a whole host of other factors, allows the researcher to date the card with an amazing degree of precision usually within two to four years.⁷

The following images of Spurgeon are arranged, more-or-less, in chronological order. As can be imagined, Spurgeon’s image was extremely popular, both in England and abroad. W. E. Gladstone, about a month after the death of the pulpit giant and reflecting on a recent trip to France, wrote the following to Spurgeon’s private secretary, J. W. Harrald, “The only English photographs I saw in the shop windows of Paris were those of the Duke of Clarence and Mr. Spurgeon.”⁸

These CDVs, along with the other examples, are drawn from three sources: the author’s personal collection (which is the overwhelming majority of them), the National

⁵ Darrah, *Cartes de Visite*, 9. Some topical collections included: Civil War, works of art, architecture and humorous.

⁶ Maurice Rickards, *The Encyclopedia of Ephemera: A Guide to the Fragmentary Documents of Everyday Life for the Collector, Curator and Historian* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 76.

⁷ Clark, *19th Century Card Photos Kwikguide*, 12. Clark lists other clues to determining the CDV’s date: card borders and artwork, card edges, corners and colors, the photographer’s imprint, image size in the print, tax stamps, clothes and hair styles, studio backgrounds and props. (15) Clark omits the presence of advertising, which is understandable, since the overwhelming majority of cards did not feature celebrities like Spurgeon who was a “personality of national standing.” However, I do have an example of a CDV with Spurgeon’s image on the front and a promotion for “Tanus—The Royal Table Water” on the back.

⁸ *The Times*, March 9, 1892. For more examples of correspondence from Gladstone to Spurgeon with some commentary, see D. P. Kingdon, “Spurgeon and Gladstone,” *The Baptist Quarterly* 20, no. 2 (April 1963): 62-4.

Portrait Gallery, London and one image was from the Pinterest page of the Spurgeon College. When possible, the images are presented in actual size, front and back. They capture the youthful, energetic Spurgeon who posed in dramatic fashion. They reveal his youthfulness and contrast it nicely with older divines who, although noteworthy and included, are not the center of attention. Spurgeon's biographer, Ernest W. Bacon summarizes the appearance and transformation of Spurgeon:

Something may here be said about Spurgeon's appearance. When he came to London as a clean-shaven youth, he was slender, and only five-foot-six in height. He had rosy cheeks and a countrified appearance. But he soon put on weight, and became the stout, heavy-looking figure so often seen in the photographs of the time. He never took enough exercise. At about the age of thirty-five he grew a Vandyke beard, and his facial appearance was much improved. (Many of the Puritans wore such beards; was this a coincidence?) He had striking eyes, hazel brown, narrow-lidded, and penetrating in look. He suffered terribly from gout, inherited from his father; his hands were so puffy that, when shaking hands with him, one's fingers sank into his flesh.⁹

The CDVs and especially the Cabinet Cards (note the abovementioned hands) also demonstrate his increasing weight gain and ill health. Finally, the two memorial CDVs reveal a worn and haggard Spurgeon who is close to losing his battle with Bright's Disease.

⁹ Bacon, *Spurgeon: Heir of the Puritans*, 161.



MOFFAT, 103 PRINCES STREET, EDINBURGH

Fig. B1. Very Early Image of Spurgeon.

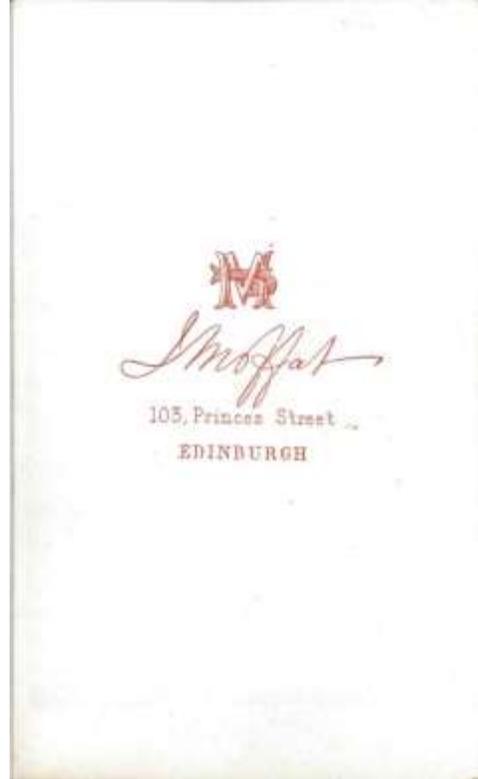


Fig. B2. Published by John Moffat.¹⁰

¹⁰ John Moffat (1819-1894) was located at 103 Princes Street from 1861 to 1875. In 1875 he moved to larger premises, 125 Princes Street. The intertwined “J.M.” is known as “Block” back style. See also John Moffat, *John Moffat: Pioneer Scottish Photographic Artists 1819-1894* (Eastbourne: JSM Publishing, n.d.).



Fig. B3. Montage, "London Pulpit Orators."¹¹



Fig. B4. Published by R. B. & Co.¹²

¹¹ Spurgeon is featured in a typical pose, surrounded by (starting at upper left and moving clockwise): Rev. William Morley Punshon (1824-1881), Rev. William Brock (1807-1875) pastor of Bloomsbury Chapel, the stridently anti-Catholic Rev. John. Cumming (1807-1881) and Rev. Christopher Newman Hall (1816-1902) pastor of Surrey Chapel and later Christ Church. The montage, also known as a composition or composed photograph, was an important component of the photographer's production. "Typically, the carte montage is a group of portraits of persons in some association: members of a family, a prime minister's or president's cabinet officers, members of a college faculty, a team of foreign religious missionaries, a group of Union generals, of Confederate naval commanders, a college graduation class, a state legislature, and many, many more." (Darrah, *Cartes de Visite*, 208). Morley Punshon is included in this montage and both men were linked together in an article from *Harper's Weekly*: "Rev. Messrs. Spurgeon and Punshon—There seems to be appearing in the Church, particularly in the Old World, a rare race of men who arouse and retain public attention even against the judgment of the critics and the conservatives. Among these are the young Baptist minister, Spurgeon, and the young Wesleyan minister, Punshon." *Harper's Weekly*, April 25, 1857.

¹² Latin inscription reads: *honi soit qui mal y pense*, "shame on him who thinks ill of it." The publisher was probably Russell, R. B. and Company and the date is probably no later than the mid-1860s.



Fig. B5. Spurgeon in his Early Thirties Striking a Very Characteristic Stance.



Fig. B6. Published W & D Downey.¹³

¹³ William and Daniel Downey. William Downey (1829-1915) was known as the “Queen’s photographer.” The brothers opened their studio in 1863 on Eldon Square in Newcastle. This image is probably best dated mid-1860s.



Fig. B7. Characteristic Pose (Early 1860s)

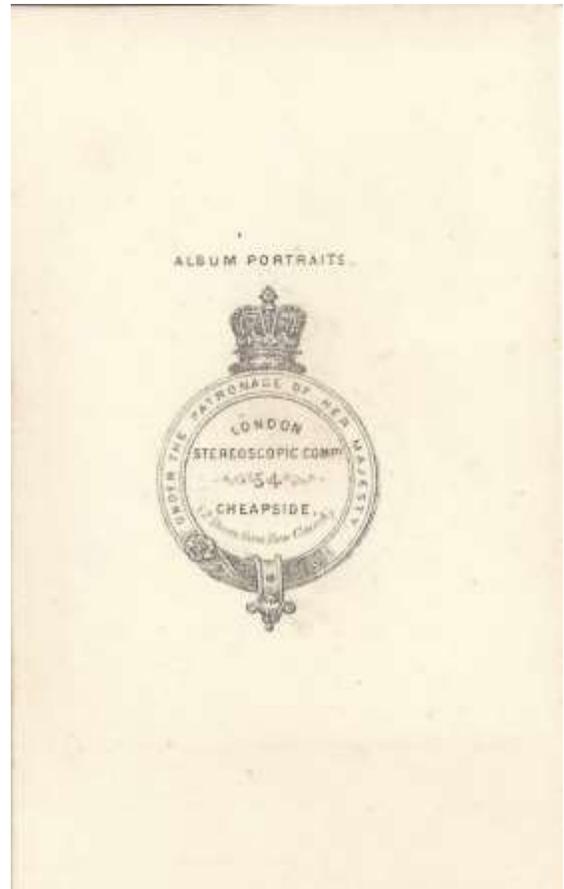


Fig. B8. Published by London Stereoscopic Company.¹⁴

¹⁴ The address of "54 Cheapside" standing alone indicates a production date between 1857 and 1862.



Fig. B9. Spurgeon Early 1860s, Published by Ashford Bros.¹⁵

¹⁵ Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London. Nathan G. Burgess described the setting for so many of the *carte-de-visite* in his manual: “In most cases these portraits are taken in a standing position, and with outdoor dresses, over coats, hats, shawls, &c.; though a beautiful effect is produced not unfrequently in a sitting posture, either in reading or engaged in some other occupation, with other accessories in the picture, as chairs, tables, &c.” Nathan G. Burgess, *The Photograph Manual; A Practical Treatise Containing the Carte-de-Visite Process, and the Method of Taking Stereoscopic Pictures* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1865), 207. See figures 10 and 12 as well.



Fig. B10. A Casual Spurgeon.



*Fig. B11. Published by The London School of Photography.*¹⁶

¹⁶ Samuel Prout Newcombe (1824-1912) founded The London School of Photography in 1853. He would eventually have multiple studios including one in Liverpool. The studio at 103 Newgate Street was active under his ownership from 1860 to 1875. For more information, see http://www.photohistory-sussex.co.uk/Hastings_Newcombe.htm, accessed February 20, 2017.



Fig. B12. A Contemplative Spurgeon.

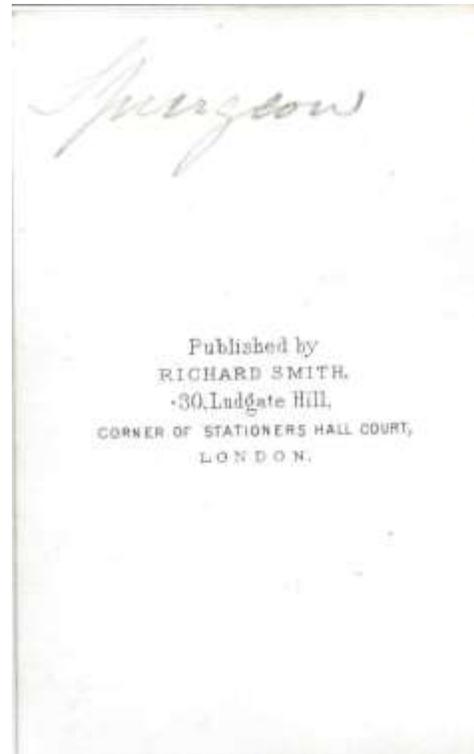


Fig. B13. Published by Richard Smith.¹⁷

¹⁷ Richard Smith was active in the 1860s.



Fig. B14. Charles Haddon Spurgeon; Susannah Spurgeon (née Thompson)¹⁸, Publisher Unknown (early 1860s)

¹⁸ Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London.

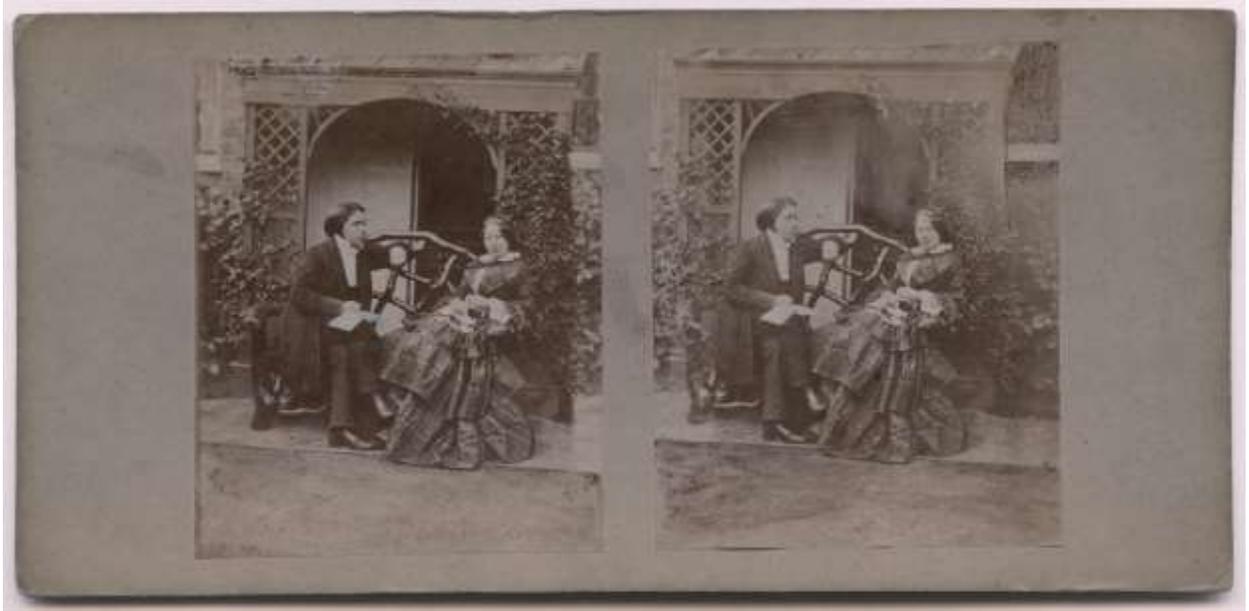


Fig. B15. Charles and Susannah Spurgeon Seated Together, Publisher Unknown (Early 1860s).¹⁹

¹⁹ Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London. Stereoscopic card (early 1860s), same photo as above (fig. 14); two copies of an albumen photograph mounted to a stiff card designed for use in a stereoscope or stereopticon.



Fig. B16. Spurgeon 1864, Published by W. & D. Downey.²⁰

²⁰ Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London. W. & D. Downey had the reputation of photographing only the most famous and elite clientele, but in 1882, H. B. Pritchard tried to assure the public that all were welcome: “Some people may suppose that the Messrs. Downey reserve to themselves the right of only photographing titled personages; this is a mistake. A circular published by them certainly conveys the idea that ‘anybody, as calls himself anybody,’ must perforce be portrayed by the famous Newcastle firm which has now established itself in the neighbourhood of Buckingham Palace; but Messrs. W. and D. Downey are really not averse to take any of Her Majesty’s subjects any more than the Queen herself. Indeed, we may go further, and say that on comparison Messrs. Downey’s charges will be found to be less in some respects than those of other fashionable portraitists.” Henry Baden Pritchard, *The Photographic Studios of Europe* (London: Piper & Carter, 1882), 19.



Fig. B17. The Great Sensation Card.²¹

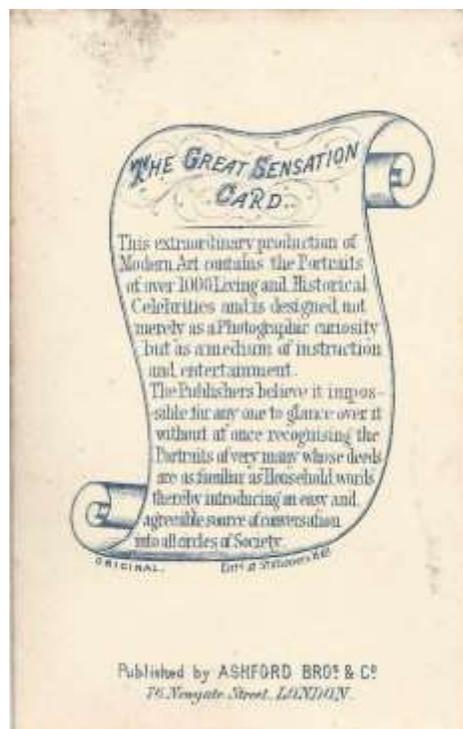


Fig. B18. published by Ashford Brothers & Co.²²

²¹ One of the Ashford brothers' most notable cards, The Great Sensation Card, a montage, featured more than 1,000 portraits of living and historical celebrities. The brothers published individual photos of well-known celebrities that had been taken by other professional photographers as well. The list included Florence Nightingale, Anthony Trollope, Giuseppe Garibaldi and of course, Charles Spurgeon. They often acted as agents for other photographers, reproducing and distributing their prints. See <http://www.photohistory-sussex.co.uk/AshfordBrothers.htm>, accessed February 20, 2017.

²² The two Ashford brothers, Henry and Thomas Bristo, formed a partnership in 1862 and dissolved it by 1867.



Fig. B19. Spurgeon with Ornate Desk Late 1860s; Published by Richard Smith.²³

²³ Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London.



Fig. B20. Spurgeon, c. 1869; Published by J. F. Knights.²⁴

²⁴ Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London. They give the date as [1869?].



Fig. B21. Spurgeon in the late 1860s.

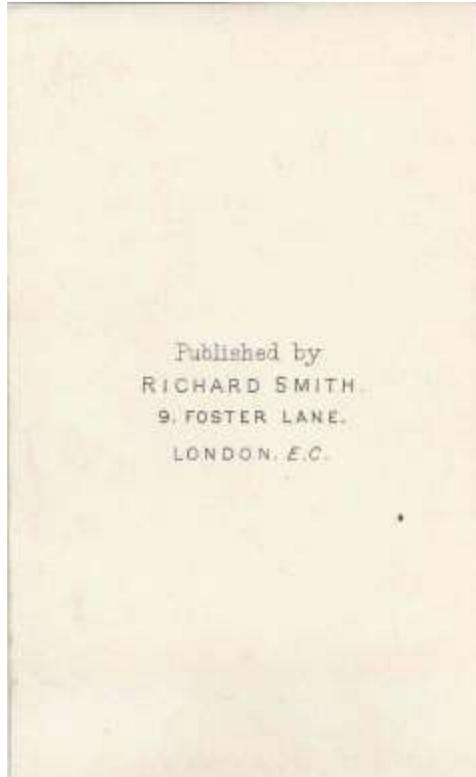


Fig. B22. Published by Richard Smith.



Fig. B23. Spurgeon in the Late 1860s (Tinted); Published by Richard Smith.²⁵

²⁵ Gary W. Clark notes, "Initial efforts at coloring photographs were kept to highlighting cheeks, lips, and sometimes gold tinting on necklaces, watches and other accessories. By the early 1860s, however, complete dresses were being colorized. Gradually more elements in the photograph were tinted, including table cloths, carpet, and drapes. This height of popularity was reached about 1865, though by 1870 the trend had nearly faded away." Clark, *19th Century Card Photos Kwikguide*, 33.



Fig. B24. Spurgeon 1870s, This Example Features Details that Were Sketched in.



Fig. B25. Publisher unknown.



*Fig. B26. Charles Spurgeon in the 1870s.*²⁶



Fig. B27. Publisher Unknown.

²⁶ Three things place this CDV in the 1870s: 1) the oval frame; 2) the yellow tint to the card; and 3) the single line, rounded border. Clark, *19th Century Card Photos Kwikguide*, 18-20.



Fig. B28. Spurgeon Mid-1870s.



Fig. B29. Published by The London Stereoscopic & Photographic Company.²⁷

²⁷ The three addresses—110 & 108 Regent Street and 54 Cheapside—mentioned on the reverse date this CDV from 1866 to 1875. However, the superscription “Prize Medal for Portraiture Vienna Exhibition (1873)” provided the key clue. The exhibition closed on October 31, 1873. This CDV should be dated late 1873 to 1875.



Fig. B30. Spurgeon Mid-1870s.

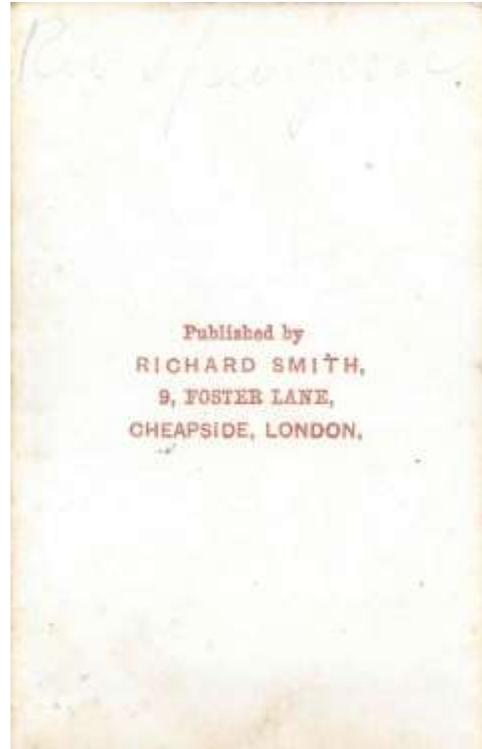


Fig. B31. Published by Richard Smith.



Fig. B32. Vignette portrait of Spurgeon.²⁸

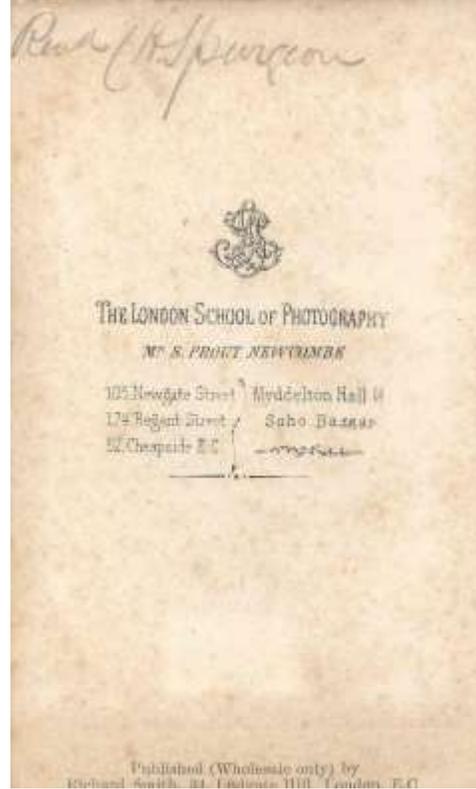


Fig. B33. published by The London School of Photography.²⁹

²⁸ Darrah noted, “The vignette head was enormously popular in the United States in the 1860s but seldom appeared in Europe until the early 1870s. It was a bust picture ‘produced by shading off, in printing, the background and the drapery, so as to show only the head and shoulders seemingly clouded off.’ [Waldeck, C. *The Card Photograph*, 5] Note that the subject of a vignette portrait had been photographed in a seated pose and the image was printed by masking most of the negative.” Darrah, *Cartes de Visite*, 29.

²⁹ S. Prout Newcombe owned these five studios in London, dating this CDV to around 1868. “The trade plate of The London School of Photography - Proprietor: Mr. S. Prout Newcombe, from the reverse of a carte-de-visite portrait (c1868). At this stage, Samuel Prout Newcombe owned five studios in London. At the height of ‘cartomania,’” when thousands of cartes-de-visite were being produced each week, Samuel Prout Newcombe owned 8 photographic studios in London, plus two branch studios in Lancashire, one in Liverpool, the other in Manchester.” (http://www.photohistory-sussex.co.uk/Hastings_Newcombe.htm, accessed February 20, 2017).



Fig. B34. Spurgeon mid-1870s.

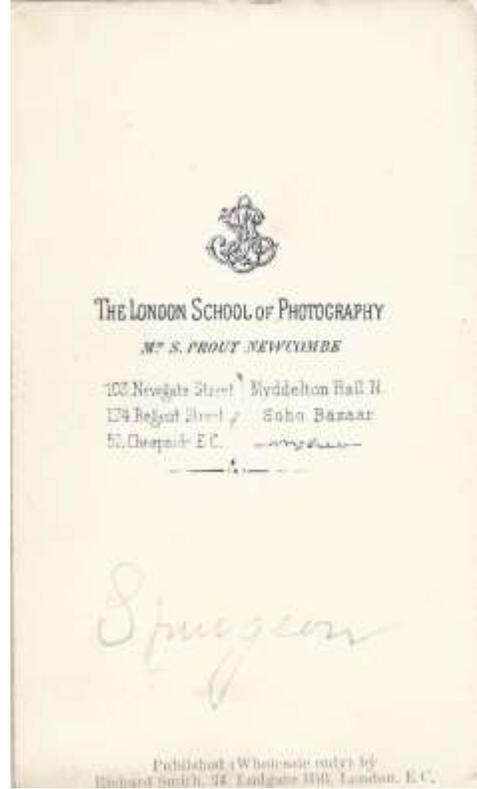


Fig. B35. published by The London School of Photography.



Fig. B36. “The Mentone Group” dated 1880; published by Passmore and Alabaster.³⁰

³⁰ Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London. From left to right: 1. J W. Harrald; 2. George Rogers or “Old George,” 3. Joseph Passmore; 4. Charles Spurgeon; and 5. Robert Abraham or “Father Abraham” (the Oxfordshire deacon). Spurgeon’s doctor noted the following: “As might be anticipated, such a climate [in Mentone] is favourable to gout, and I have known many gouty persons enjoy a happy immunity from habitual suffering. Sharp attacks of gout, however, may occur here as elsewhere, in those who are liable to them.” James Henry Bennet, *Winter and Spring on the Shores of the Mediterranean, Or, the Riviera, Mentone, Italy*,



Fig. B37. An Especially Crisp Image of Spurgeon, c. 1882.³¹

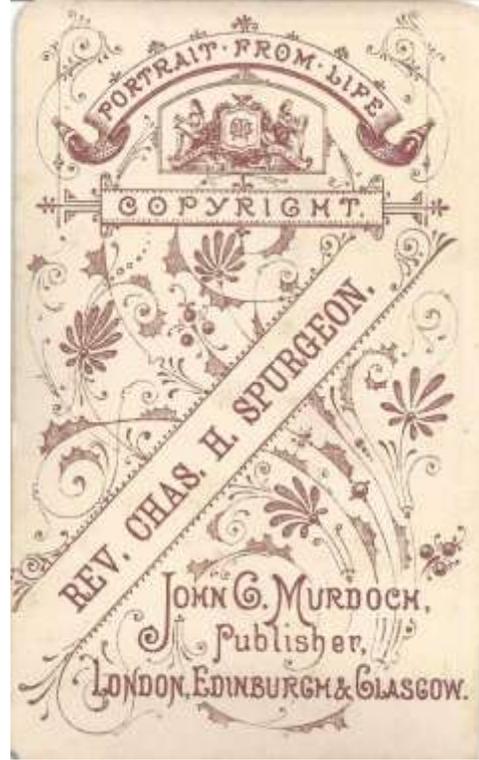


Fig. B38. Published by John G. Murdoch.³²

Corsica, Sicily, Algeria, Spain, and Biarritz, as Winter Climates. 4th ed. (London: John Churchill and Sons, 1870), 181-2.

³¹ The quality of the image is due to the Woodburytype process.

³² John C. Murdoch (1830-1902) was a publisher of Family Bibles and photographic albums. He eventually became involved in the sale and manufacture of musical boxes, pianos and organs. He was also an avid numismatist.



Fig. B39. Woodburytype Photograph circa 1880; Published by Lock and Whitfield.



*Fig. B40. James Archer Spurgeon and Charles with Cane, c. 1880s.*³³

³³ Image from Spurgeon College Library Pinterest page:
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/559501953679099475/>, accessed March 29, 2017.



Fig. B41. Spurgeon Mid-to-Late 1880s.

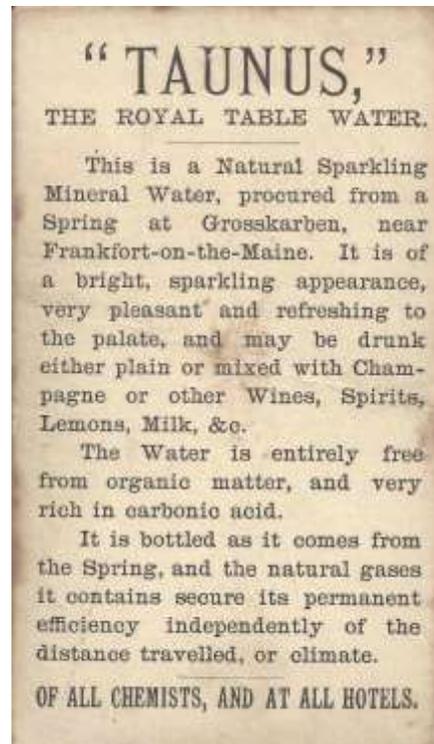


Fig. B42. “Taunus,” The Royal Table Water.³⁴

³⁴ Some of the celebrity CDVs had back imprints that were used for advertising. “The carte-de-visite also appeared as an advertising novelty. Typical British examples, produced by the Woodburytype process, show music-hall star Jenny Lind with a backing promotional text for ‘Taunus’, the royal table water, and comedian Edward Terry backed by Miss E. Rutherford of Old Ford, London, ‘Shirt, Collar and Cuff Ironer.’” (Rickards, 76). Promotional advertising, such as the one pictured above, reinforce the immense celebrity that Spurgeon had attained.



Fig. B43. Spurgeon, 1884.³⁵

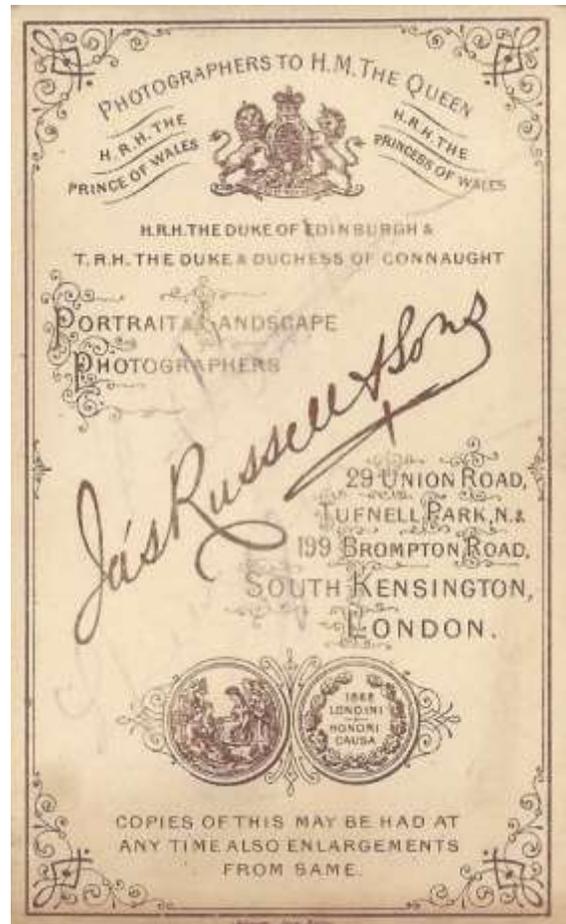


Fig. B44. Published by James Russell and Sons.

³⁵ Front matter (style and addresses) allows this card to be dated with some precision. H. B. Pritchard was impressed with their work when he visited their studio: “The judges at the Pall Mall Road Exhibition recently awarded a medal to Messrs. Russell and Sons, the particular picture securing the honour being a group of three ladies posed with rare grace and skill. This, coupled with another excellent picture—that of a rough countryman laughing and showing every tooth in his head, a laugh so infectious that you could not pass the portrait without laughing too—showed what good work could be done in Messrs. Russell’s studio, and we were very glad, therefore, when opportunity permitted us to pay it a visit.” Henry Baden Pritchard, *The Photographic Studios of Europe* (London: Piper & Carter, 1882), 179.



Fig. B45. Cabinet Card of Spurgeon Mid-to-Late 1880s; Publisher Unknown.



Fig. B46. Cabinet Card of Spurgeon.³⁶

³⁶ Cabinet Cards became increasingly popular as the nineteenth-century progressed. Gary W. Clark noted, “Eventually the larger cabinet card flourished, capturing nearly all of portrait work by 1885.” (Clark, *19th Century Card Photos Kwikguide*, 38) While most of the photographs for cabinet cards and CDVs were shot in studio, this particular cabinet card was not. This is Spurgeon in his study at Westwood (his home). The same chair and setting may be seen in Eric Hayden’s *A Pictorial Biography of C. H. Spurgeon* (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1974), 134.

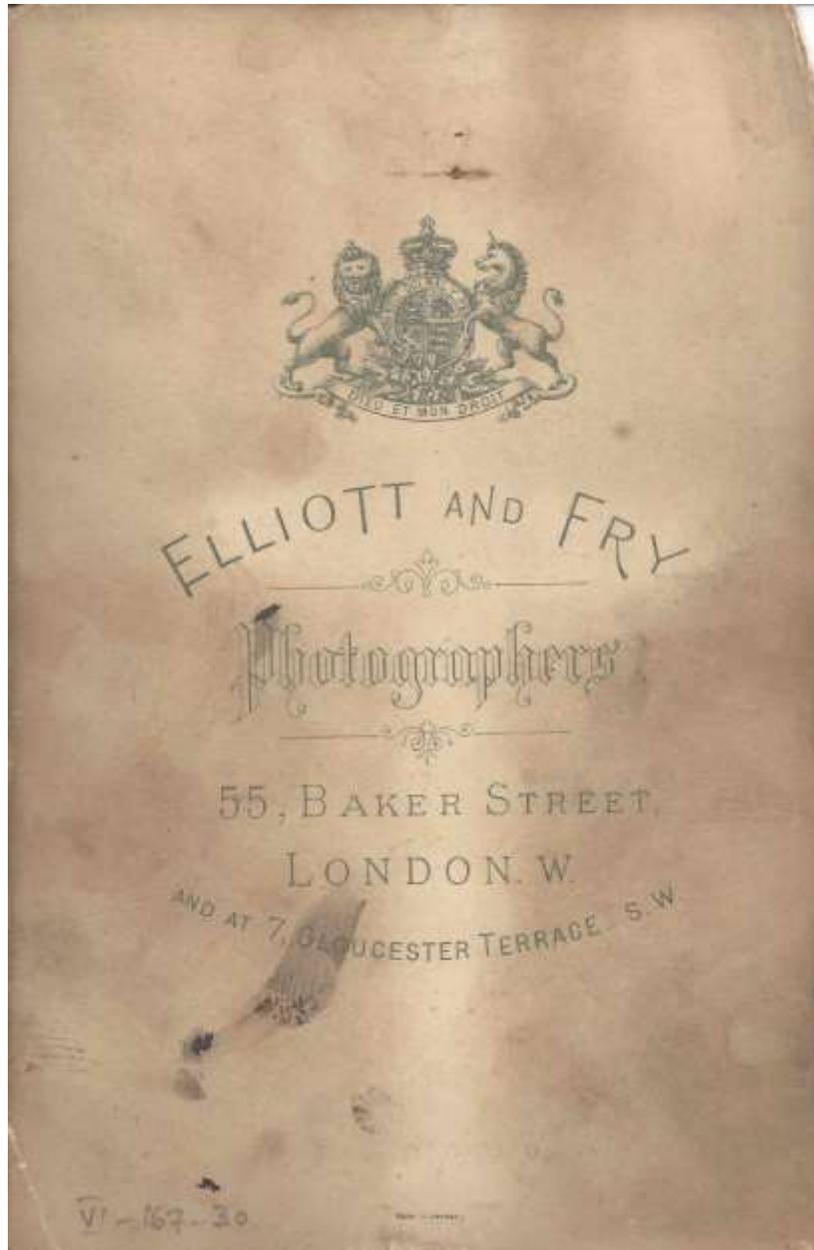


Fig. B47. (Back Matter for Figure B46); Published by Elliott and Fry.³⁷

³⁷ The back imprint covers the entire card, indicating a publication date between 1887 and 1892. (Clark, *19th Century Card Photos Kwikguide*, 45) Regarding the firm of Elliott and Fry, the National Portrait Gallery notes: “The firm of Elliott and Fry, founded in 1863 and active until 1963, was one of the most important in the history of studio portraiture in London. Opened by Joseph John Elliott and Clarence Edmund Fry their first premises were a series of studios at 55 Baker Street. H. Baden Pritchard in his 1882 book *The Photographic Studios of Europe* records his tour of their extensive galleries, where the predominant decoration consisted of important contemporary art works, which relaxed his sitters before their actual photographs were taken. Posing in the naturally lit “glass-room,” they could choose from a selection of fifteen painted backgrounds. Sittings were charged at a guinea, which entitled the sitter to eighteen cartes-de-visite (visiting card size) or six of the larger ‘cabinet portrait’ photographs.” (<http://www.npg.org.uk/whatson/display/2007/victorian-photographs-by-elliott-and-fry>, accessed March 30, 2017).



*Fig. B48. Memorial Card of Spurgeon.*³⁸



*Fig. B49. Published by Automatic Machines Union Limited.*³⁹

³⁸ "Cadby Hall, West Kensington" was an office and manufacturing district located in Hammersmith, London.

³⁹ The monogram "A. P." stands for "Automatic Photo."



Fig. B50. More Detailed Memorial Card of Spurgeon.⁴⁰

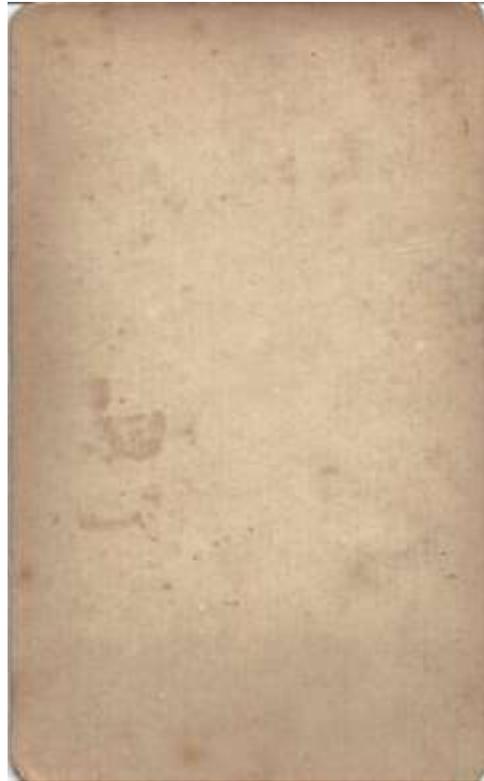


Fig. B51. Published by London Stereoscopic Company (on Front of Card, Lower Left Corner).

⁴⁰ The Scripture verse, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith,” was draped on both sides of the open hearse as it made its way to Norwood Cemetery. (Drummond, 757) In the last month of his life, Spurgeon wrote to his congregation, “Jesus does give rest to those who come to him, he does save those who trust him, he does photograph his image on those who learn of him.” (Wyncoll, *The Suffering Letters*, 118) For a man whose image was so ubiquitous I thought it striking that one of his last metaphors about Jesus and the believer’s relationship to him would involve photography.



Fig. B52. Spurgeon among a collection of preachers, c. 1890s.⁴¹

⁴¹ Bromide print of various clergymen, published by Elliott & Fry, courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London. Spurgeon is featured in numbers 333-335. Actual image size is 197 mm x 131 mm.



THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON'S EAR

*Fig. B53. Spurgeon's ear*⁴²

⁴²George Newnes, ed. *The Strand Magazine: An Illustrated Monthly*, vol. 6 (London: Burleigh Street, Strand, 1893), 526.

APPENDIX C

THE CONTESTED BODY OF SPURGEON

FROM SATIRE TO SOLEMN PROCESSION

The public portrayal of the body of Charles Spurgeon presented ready material for satirists, admirers, marketers, and fundraisers. Satirical CDVs of Spurgeon resembling a gorilla were produced.¹ Parian busts of Spurgeon were sold.² Statues of Spurgeon in his characteristic pose (arm extended and right finger pointing heavenward) were produced by Staffordshire. Spurgeon's likeness was engraved in steel and sold by his publishers.³ Spurgeon's face was also used to sell Player's Cigarettes. His words adorned Christmas cards. His visage was on commemorative plates and silk Stevengraph bookmarks.⁴

¹ See Christian T. George, ed. *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon: His Earliest Outlines and Sermons Between 1851 and 1854*, vol. 1 (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2016), 19. Spurgeon was attacked in the press for his "Gorilla Lecture" and another lecture, entitled "Shrews, and How to Tame Them." One epithet was "familiar buffoon." *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post*, October 23, 1861.

² See Paul Atterbury, ed. *The Parian Phenomenon: A Survey of Victorian Parian Porcelain Statuary & Busts* (Somerset, England: Richard Dennis, 1989), 234. Spurgeon's bust is found next to Joseph Parker's, fig. 766. "Parian' is the name now used for a form of porcelain developed in England in the early 1840s. The porcelain body was made to have a resemblance to marble, and when first introduced it was heralded as an affordable way for people to bring into their homes smaller scale copies of the large marble statues and busts found in Stately Homes." (http://www.antiqueparian.com/en-GB/about-parian-ware/page_302, accessed February 22, 2017.)

³ The advertisement also offered a picture of Spurgeon's birthplace, suitable for framing. The ad ran as follows: "Birth-place of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon. —Beautifully Printed in Colours, with Handsome Border, for Framing. Size, 13 inches by 10. 1s."

A New Life-like Portrait of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon. —Just Published. Engraved on Steel, by S. ALLEN, from a Photograph by the London Stereoscopic Company. India Proofs. 1s." "A Churchman," *Mr. Spurgeon's Critic Criticised. Reflections on Published Opinions in Favor of and Against the Doctrine, Diction, Deportment and Doings of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon* (London: W. H. Collingridge City Press, 1857), 34.

⁴ See Darby 330a and Geoffrey A. Godden, *Stevengraphs and Other Victorian Silk Pictures* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1971), 667. See <http://www.stevengraph-silks.com/stevens/bookmarks/sb1528-1911/sb1896.html>, accessed February 28, 2017. Regarding the growing popularity of silk bookmarks (around 1862), Godden noted, "The subsequent public demand was probably not so much attributable to patriotism and the relief of distress amongst the silk workers [in Coventry] as to the fact that the book markers were 'cheap and pretty.'" 16.

After his death, there was a steady demand for material (e.g., medals and pocket watch fobs) associated with him and the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Kenneth D. Brown described the momentous occasion that was Spurgeon's passing:

The death of Charles Haddon Spurgeon in 1892 was an event of national impact. Even secular newspapers appeared with black-edged columns and filled their pages with reminiscences of the dead Baptist leader, prompting the editor of the *Christian World* [Feb. 11, 1892] to claim that "the history of England during the past week has been mainly the story of Mr. Spurgeon's influence."⁵

Many of the items are directly connected to or depict some scene from the funeral or its mammoth procession, which was said "to have extended considerably over a mile [and] passed through a district which seemed to be observing a day of mourning."⁶ Several of the items in this appendix are directly connected to the funeral itself. Maurice Rickards noted, "The very high survival rate of Victorian *funeralia* is due to two factors. In the first place there was a lot of it: though much may have disappeared, much remains. Secondly, unlike most ephemera, memorial material is designed to be kept."⁷

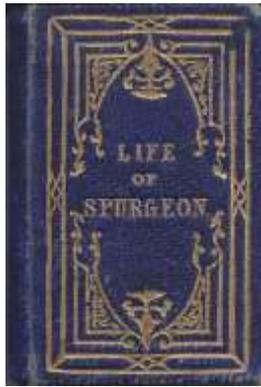
Items associated with the Metropolitan Tabernacle were highly sought after as well. Eric Hayden, pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle (1956-1962) and author of *My Spurgeon Souvenirs: A Biography of C. H. Spurgeon Based on Some Memorabilia*, described a marble paperweight in his possession that was a souvenir from the original marble baptistry of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. After the Tabernacle burned down on April 20, 1898 leaving only

⁵ Kenneth D. Brown, *A Social History of the Nonconformist Ministry in England and Wales 1800-1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 124.

⁶ "The Funeral of Mr. Spurgeon," *The Illustrated London News*, February 20, 1892. The immense size of the crowds is depicted in the Magic Lantern Glass Slide.

⁷ Maurice Rickards, *Collecting Printed Ephemera* (Oxford: Phaidon, Christie's Publishing, 1988), 174. See also Maurice Rickards, *The Encyclopedia of Ephemera: A Guide to the Fragmentary Documents of Everyday Life for the Collector, Curator and Historian* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 155-8.

the pillared façade standing, the baptistry “was cut into suitable pieces and sold in order to raise funds for the rebuilding.”⁸ The images in this appendix capture the contested nature of the body of Spurgeon and the stage where that body was presented, the Metropolitan Tabernacle.



*Fig. C1. Life of Spurgeon Miniature Gift Biography (Actual Size)*⁹

⁸ Eric Hayden, *My Spurgeon Souvenirs A Biography of C. H. Spurgeon Based On Some Memorabilia* (Belfast: Ambassador Press, 1996), 15. Some of his other souvenirs include a cup and saucer bearing the image of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. These were produced in 1861 and sold to raise the necessary funds to pay the building off.

⁹ *Life of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon: Minister of Park Street Chapel, Southwark*. [Diamond Series of Gift Books] (London: Dodd & Co., n. d. but early 1857).



Fig. C2. Early Cartoon of Spurgeon as “The Young Lion”¹⁰

¹⁰ Spurgeon, *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon: Compiled from His Diary, Letters, and Records by His Wife and Private Secretary*, vol. 2 (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1898), 246. In this cartoon, Spurgeon’s shadow reveals his true nature or interprets rightly his real body which is that of the lion. It is contrasted with the stodgy Church of England minister whose shadows reveals a bent over, old woman who is potentially arthritic and certainly slow to respond to changes in the environment. Charles Spurgeon and members of his family often kept newspaper clippings that featured the famous public figure. M. H. Spielmann noted: “Mr. Spurgeon, too, used to keep all the cartoons and caricatures that sought to turn him to ridicule; and Lord Beaconsfield, like the Prince Consort, Lord Randolph Churchill (who possessed several of the original Punch drawings into which he had been introduced), among other politicians of the day, kept these artistic instruments of political torture before him, as a man treasures in his locket the hair of the dog that bit him.” Marion Harry Spielmann, *The History of “Punch”* (London: Cassell and Company, 1895), 199.

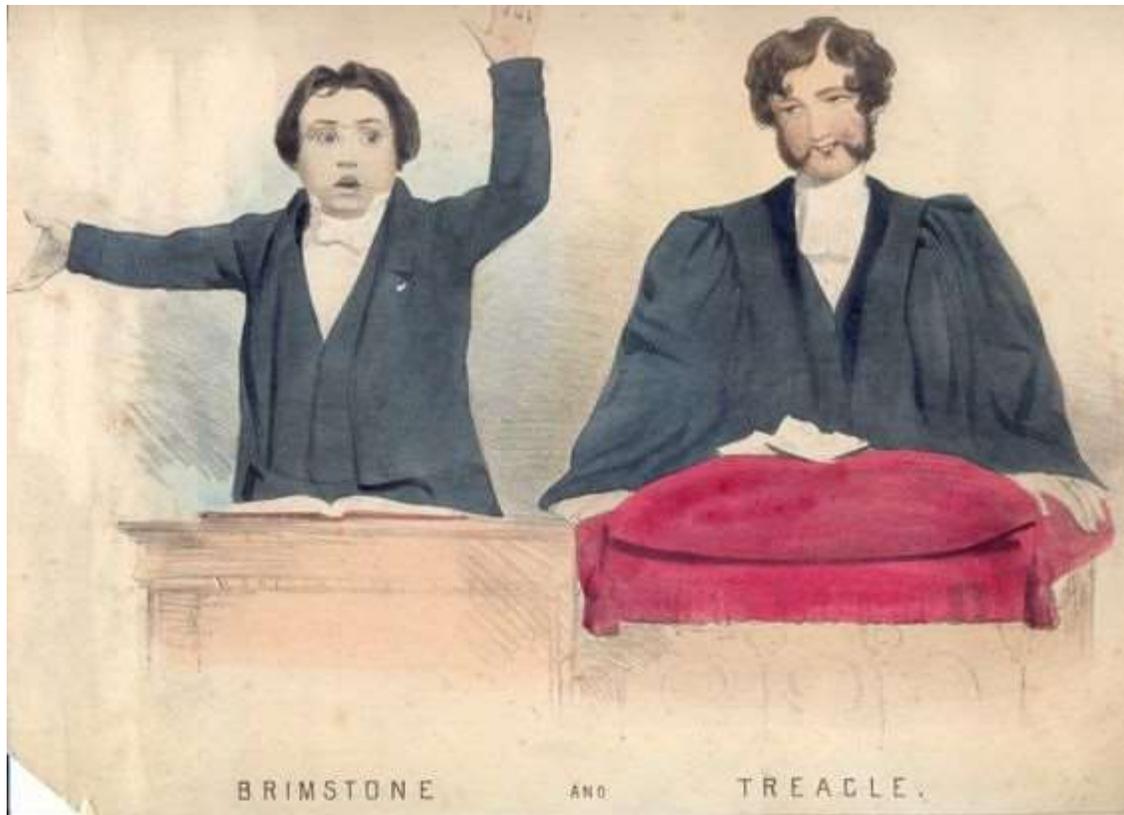


Fig. C3. Spurgeon as “Brimstone.”¹¹

¹¹ Note “Treacle’s” lifeless hands, robe and more ornate pulpit draped in velvet. Another reference to “brimstone and treacle” and “Spurgeon” is found in *Fraser’s Magazine for Town and Country*; the author bemoaned the moral laxity in the cities and commented: “If each man of influence in our crowded cities could be made sensible of his responsibility to those around him, and be brought to act accordingly, it would be more effectual [by] far in ameliorating the condition and elevating the morals of the poor than those Spurgeon denunciations and Exeter-hall rhapsodies which seem now so popular; this brimstone of hell and treacle of sentiment spasmodically mixed, may not prove, after all, so efficacious an antiscorbutic dose for the body social.” *Fraser’s Magazine for Town and Country*, 56, no. 334, July-December 1857 (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1858), 387. This particular issue is from October 1857.



Fig. C4. Silk Stevengraph Bookmark, c.1862¹²

¹² The following comes from an advertisement in *The Bookseller*, October 31, 1862. The ad listed the Spurgeon bookmark as available for purchase. “These new and beautiful productions of the loom are the wonder and admiration of all beholders. They are not only useful as book-registers, but elegant and tasteful as presents, and have already commanded an extensive sale throughout the world; and so great is the variety that appropriate subjects may be found applicable for every purpose.” Geoffrey A. Godden, *Stevengraphs and Other Victorian Silk Pictures*, 329.



Fig. C5. Silk Stevengraph Bookmark, c. 1870s¹³

¹³ <http://www.stevengraph-silks.com/stevens/bookmarks/sb1528-1911/sb1900.html>, accessed March 31, 2017. See also, Maurice Rickards, *Encyclopedia of Ephemera*: “The 1860s saw the advent of woven silk bookmarks (many by Thomas Stevens of Coventry, later renowned for Stevengraphs). These came in a variety of designs (religious, greetings, or commemorative) which could be given as gifts, a tradition which continues to the present day.” (59).

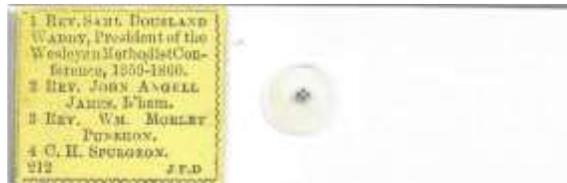


Fig. C6. Microphotographic slide produced by London Stereoscopic and Photographic Company (?), c. 1862¹⁴



Fig. C7. Early Albumen Print of Spurgeon as Rev. C. H. Gorilla, c.1862¹⁵

¹⁴ The tiny images include four preachers. Rev. William M. Punshon is also featured on the montage CDV from Appendix B, Figure B3.

¹⁵ This print is the correct size to be glued to CDV card stock. For more on the use of caricature as it relates to Darwin and his theories, see Janet Browne, "Darwin in Caricature: A Study in the Popularisation and Dissemination of Evolution," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 145, no. 4 (December 2001): 496-509. Concerning caricature, she noted, "In fact, the visual side of science is often underestimated. Caricatures, for example, vividly present the voice of the people. A humorous cartoon is a unique form of communication between human beings that makes new ideas, or the difficulties inherent in new ideas, obvious." (499) Regarding the proliferation of ape or gorilla images, L. Perry Curtis, Jr. notes, "In the comic weeklies of the 1860s jokes about apes and their resemblance to man became the fashion. The first number of *Fun* (21 September 1861) contained Brennan's cartoon of "The Gorilla Family at the Sea-Side" in which father and mother gorilla and their relations were dressed like eminently respectable Victorians on holiday." *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), 100.

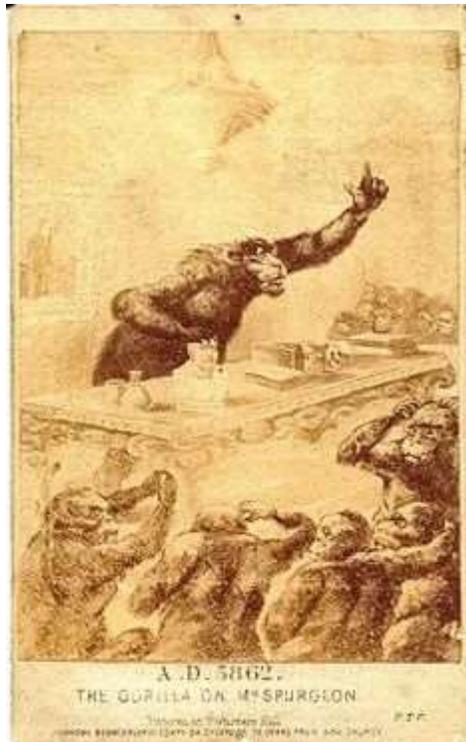


Fig. C8. "A.D. 5862, The Gorilla on Mr. Spurgeon," c. 1862¹⁶

¹⁶ "Who does not lecture nowadays? Everybody has something to say about somebody, and occasionally about anything, behind a green baize table and a pair of reading-lamps. We see that the indefatigable Mr. Spurgeon has been delighting the congregation at the Metropolitan Tabernacle by a lecture on the gorilla, 'illustrated with dissolving views.'" *The Illustrated London News*, October 3, 1861.

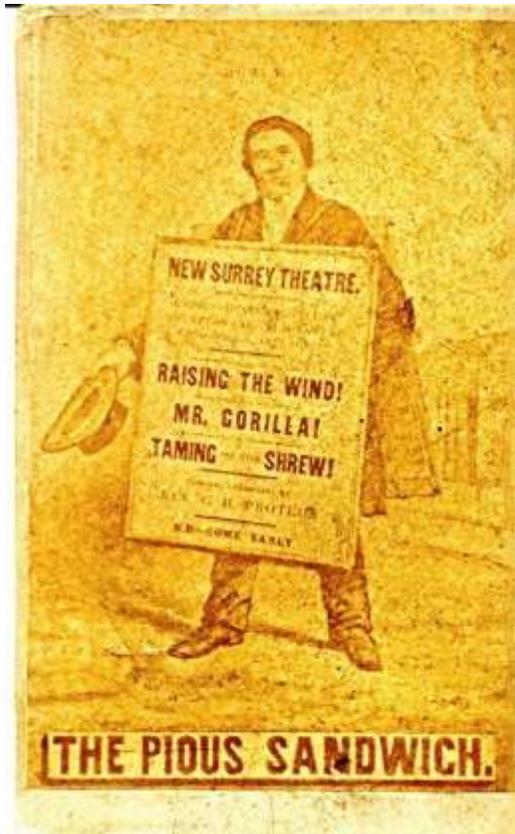


Fig. C9. Spurgeon as “The Pious Sandwich,” c. 1862¹⁷

¹⁷ Most of the time Spurgeon was criticized as a dramatist strutting up and down the boards. In this cartoon, he is portrayed between the boards as C. H. Proteus. The reference to two of his lectures dates the cartoon to around October, 1862. On March 18, 1855, at Exeter Hall, Strand, Spurgeon preached on “The Victory of Faith,” he told the many thousands gathered: “This fight with the world is not one of main force, or physical might; if it were, we might soon win it; but it is all the more dangerous from the fact that it is a strife of mind, a contest of heart, a struggle of the spirit, a strife of the soul. When we overcome the world in one fashion, we have not half done our work; for the world is a Proteus, changing its shape continually; like the chameleon, it hath all the colours of the rainbow; and when you have worsted the world in one shape, it will attack you in another.” Seven years later, the cartoonist lampooned Spurgeon’s methods (he was a master of publicity) and message by placing him between two sandwich boards.



Fig. C10. Staffordshire Bust of Spurgeon in Characteristic Pose, c. Late 1850s to Early 1860s



Fig. C11. Close-up of Staffordshire bust



Fig. C12. Staffordshire Bust of Spurgeon, c. Late 1850s to Early 1860s¹⁸

¹⁸ For more information on the Staffordshire busts of Spurgeon (figures 9-13), see Gordon P. D. Pugh, *Staffordshire Portrait Figures and Allied Subjects of the Victorian Era* (New York: Praeger Publishing, 1971), 375, 385-386. For a list of religious figures that were produced by the potteries of Staffordshire, see 373-6. Notable busts of religious personalities included: “William Booth, Thomas Cranmer, Christmas Evans, Rowland Hill, Hugh Latimer, Henry Edward manning, Dwight Moody, Pius IX, Nicholas Ridley, Ira Sankey and John Wesley.” (373-6). Pugh noted the following about the busts: “The religious figures are even more surprising, there being at least fifteen Nonconformist preachers and only one Church of England Clergyman, the Reverend Goulburn. Even the identity of this figure is in some doubt.” (9). Regarding the dating of the Spurgeon figures, Pugh writes: “Charles Spurgeon, the Baptist preacher who first came to London in 1854 but whose figures probably date to the late fifties or early sixties.” (4).



Fig. C13. Staffordshire Bust of Spurgeon, c. Late 1850s to Early 1860s¹⁹

¹⁹ Balston Collection of Staffordshire Figures, <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/341428>, accessed March 22, 2017.



*Fig. C14. Staffordshire Figure of Spurgeon, c. 1856*²⁰

²⁰ Balston Collection of Staffordshire figures, <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/341431>, accessed March 22, 2017.



Fig. C15. Porcelain Commemorative Plate



Fig. C16. Detail from Back Side of Plate



Fig. C17. Porcelain Commemorative Plate



Fig. C18. Detail from Back Side of Plate



Fig. C19. Caricature of Spurgeon by "Ape" (Carlo Pellegrini) *Vanity Fair*, December 10, 1870

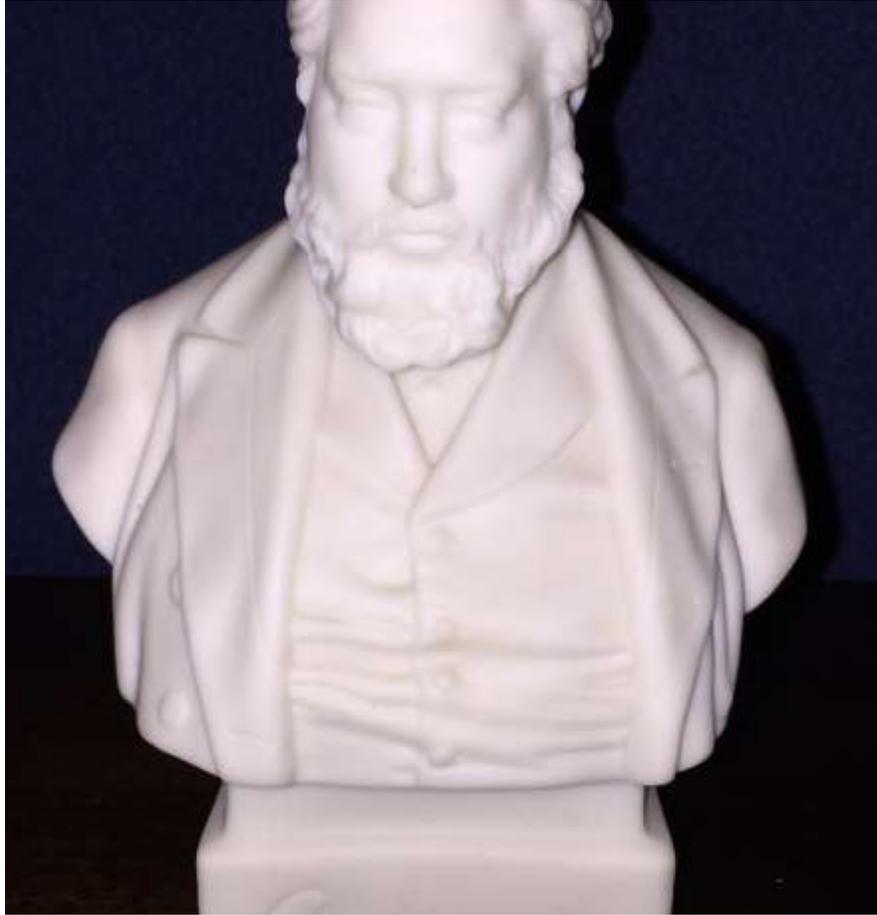


Fig. C20. Parian Bust of Spurgeon, Produced by Robinson and Leadbeater, c. 1878²¹

²¹ Regarding the maker, “One of the few potteries to concentrate entirely on the production of high quality Parian, the partnership of Robinson and Leadbeater was established in the early 1860s in Hanley. The company operated from two factories...and...quickly became one of the largest and most ambitious manufacturers of Parian, with a large share of the Home market and an extensive export trade.” Atterbury, *The Parian Phenomenon*, 225. The bust is 5” tall.



Fig. C21. Parian Bust of Spurgeon, View of Back Matter, c. 1878.²²

²² “The new partners [Robinson and Leadbeater] adopted a specialty, concentrating most of their efforts on the production of portrait busts of famous men and women of the times. These were seldom made above seven inches in height and were sometimes smaller.” Charles Shinn and Dorie Shinn, *The Illustrated Guide to Victorian Parian China* (London: Barrie & Jenkins Ltd., 1971), 39. The production of Spurgeon’s bust falls within the years of peak production, “The production of Parian was probably at its peak from 1850 to 1880. During this period hundreds of different models were produced, designed to satisfy a wide range of tastes and pockets.” (Atterbury, *The Parian Phenomenon*, 20) The text on the back reads: “Published by the Rev. C. Dunnett, Manfurd By Robinson & Leadbeater, Stoke on Trent, Copyright, J. A. Acton, Fecit 1878.” Other Parian busts produced by Robinson and Leadbeater that featured religious figures were: “Rev. Clark, Garrett, Holyoak, Spurgeon, Parker, Cardinal Manning (three different busts), Leo XIII, and John Wesley.” (234).



Fig C22. A Victorian Christmas Card with a Spurgeon Quotation, c.?

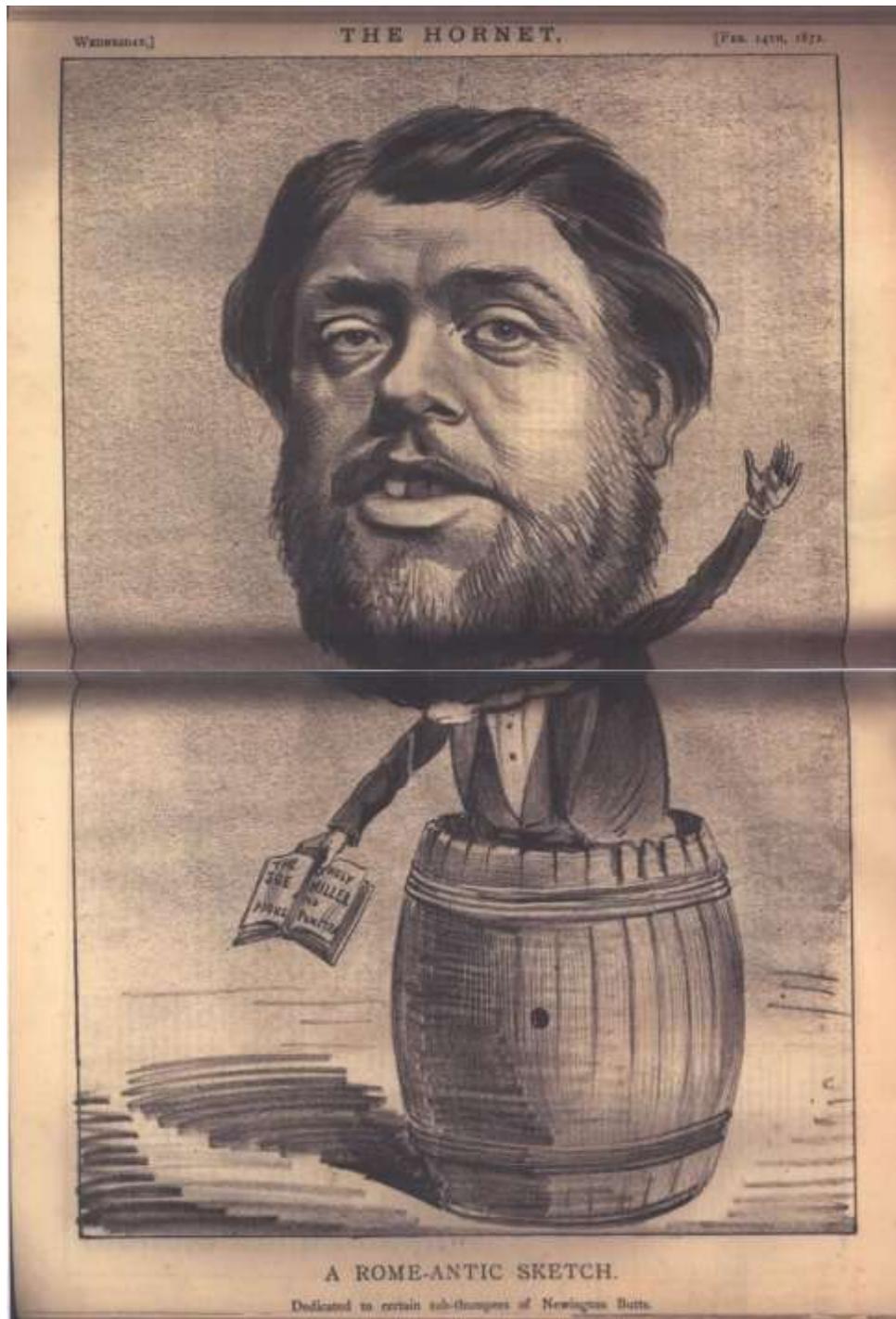


Fig. C23. Spurgeon in "A Rome-Antic Sketch"²³

²³ *The Hornet*, February 14, 1872. *The Hornet* was also known under its earlier title *The Hornsey Hornet*. It was published from 1867 to 1880. The book in Spurgeon's hand contains script: "The Holy Joe Miller and Pious Punster." The subtitles read: "A Rome-Antic Sketch" and in smaller print under that: "Dedicated to certain tub-thumpers of Newington Butts." The author of the article described Spurgeon as "prince of thumpers of the tub of non-conformity...and light and glory of the classic region of Newington-butts." The



*Spurgeon preaching
from The Hornet*

Fig. C24. Charles Spurgeon at the Rail, c. 1870s²⁴

author continued, “At an early age he began to feel much too good for this wicked world and the sinfulness of manual labor, and discovering a ‘mission’—the spiritual term for a good financial speculation—began to preach up pew rents and thank-offerings, and tramp on for the promised land.” (260).

²⁴ Mike Nicholls, *C. H. Spurgeon: The Pastor Evangelist* (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1992), 51. This particular caricature featured Spurgeon as both preacher and pugilist. It is little wonder that John Pemble defined Spurgeon as “an evangelical bruiser.” *The Mediterranean Passion: Victorians and Edwardians in the South* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 294.

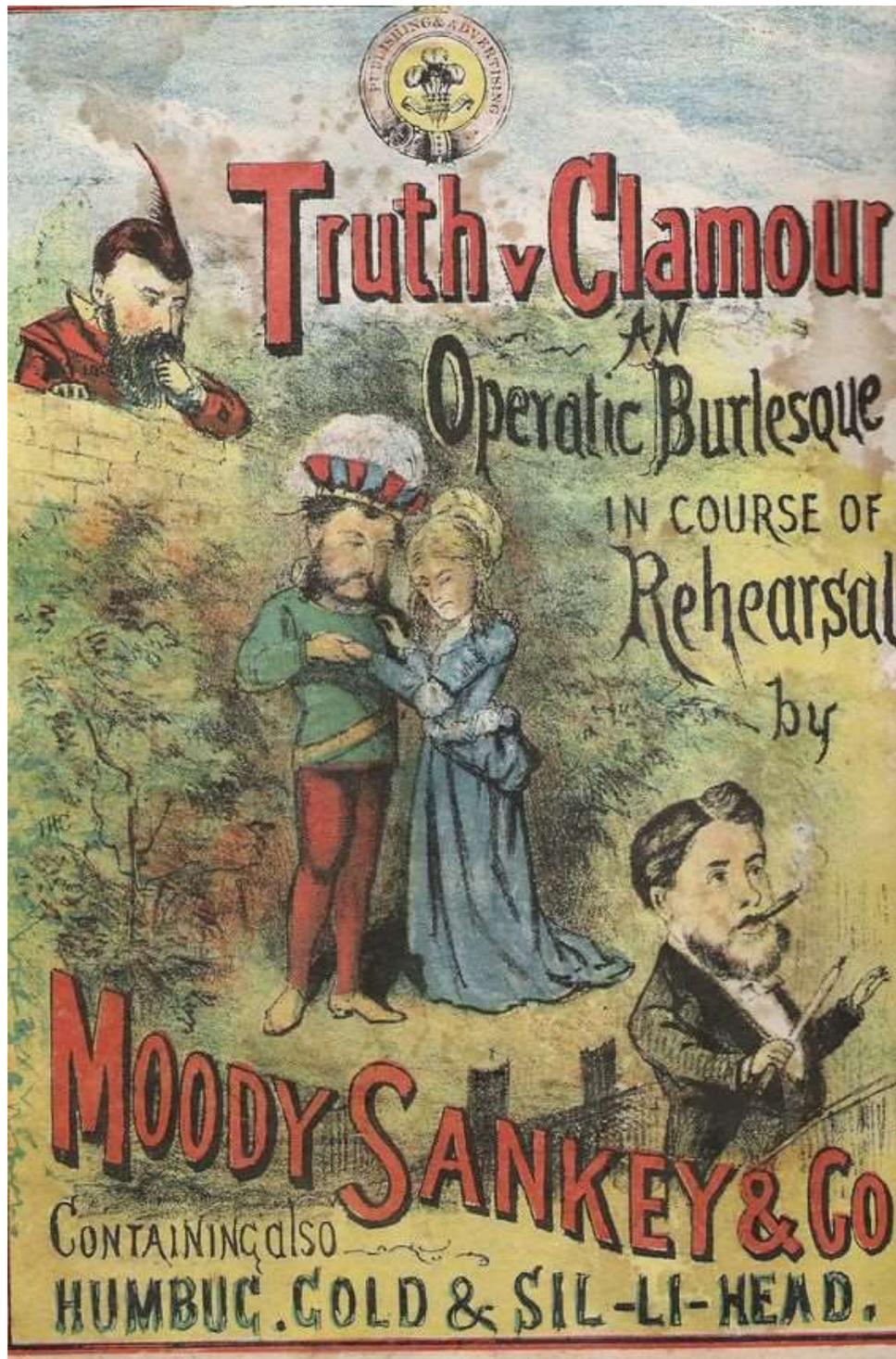


Fig. C25. Cartoon Featuring Moody and Sankey, Spurgeon is in Lower Right Corner, c. 1870s²⁵

²⁵ Spurgeon is the conductor and is portrayed (lower right corner) with his famous cigar. Dwight L. Moody is in the upper left corner and Ira Sankey is center.

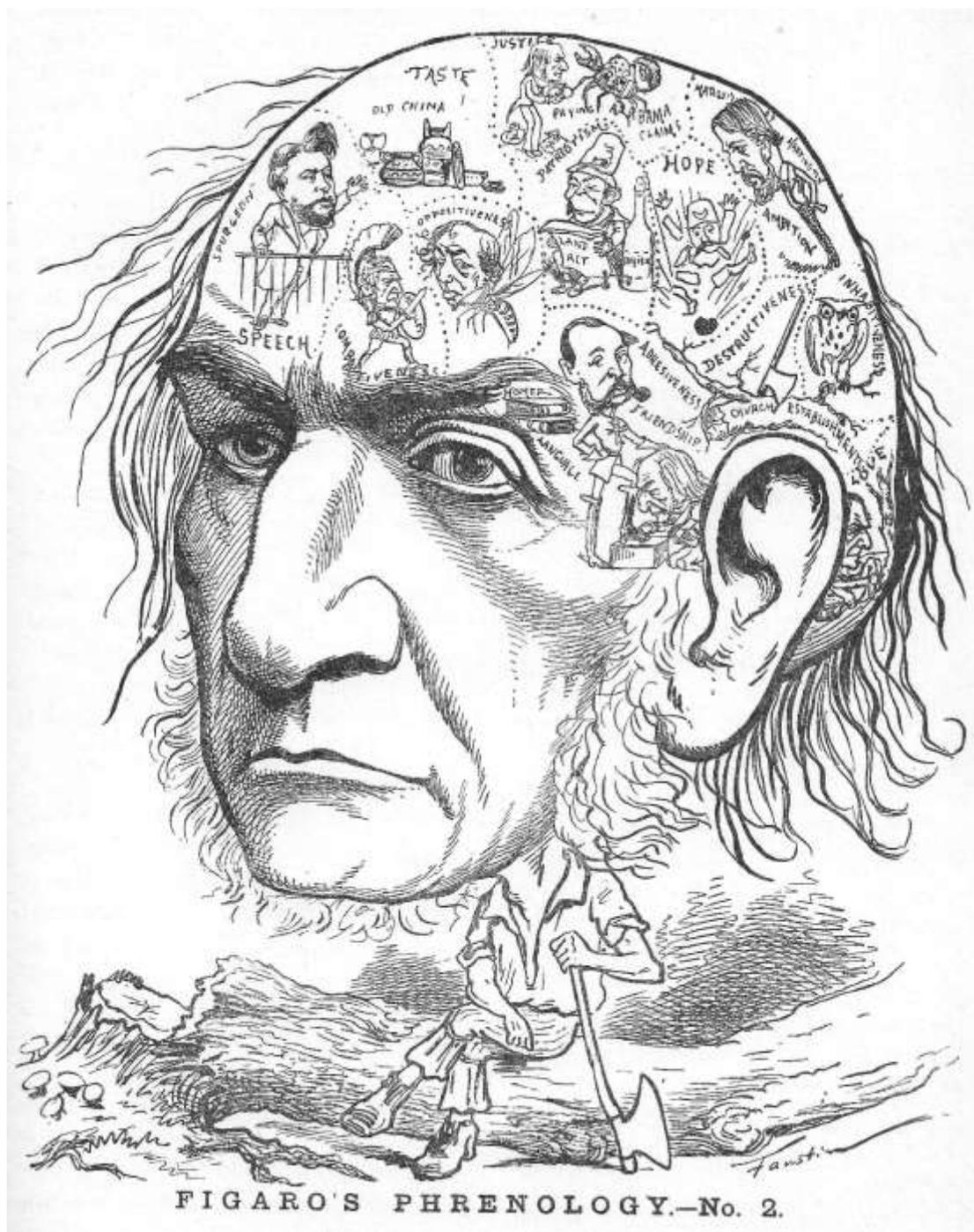


Fig. C26. Spurgeon at the Rail and in the Brain of Gladstone²⁶

²⁶ Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, vol. 3, 343.



Fig. C27. "Silhouettes of Celebrities." Spurgeon is the Central Figure.²⁷

²⁷ The image was originally published by the *Boy's Own Paper*, October 9, 1880. It was included in Spurgeon's *Autobiography*, vol. 4, 185. Kelly Boyd noted the following about the *Boy's Own Paper*, "Probably the best-known publisher of boys' story papers during these years was not an individual but the Religious Tract Society, whose flagship periodical was the *Boy's Own Paper* (1879-1967)." Kelly Boyd, *Manliness and the Boys' Story Paper in Britain: A Cultural History, 1855-1940* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 30. Publication by the Religious Tract Society may explain why Spurgeon is the central image and the lead character in the story this montage was trying to communicate.

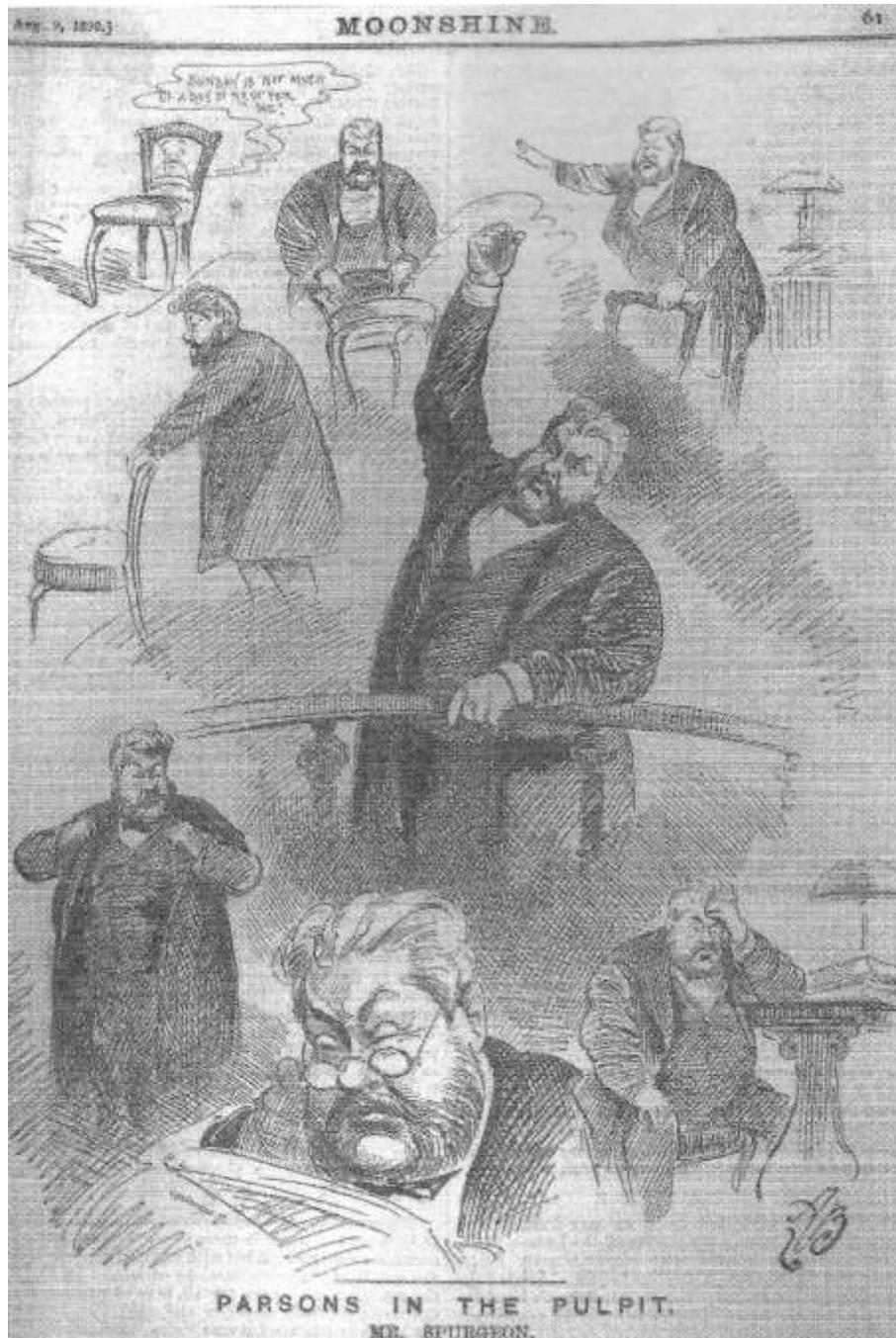


Fig. C28. Parsons in the Pulpit, *Moonshine*, August 9, 1890²⁸

²⁸ From Peter J. Morden, *The Spirituality of C. H. Spurgeon: Communion with Christ and His People* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013), illustrations between 164-165. Compare this late caricature with the younger cartoons. A much heavier Spurgeon retains his dramatic style but instead of strutting about the platform he expends his energy on the chair. Produced almost twenty years after Ape's caricature, Spurgeon is still at the rail. Morden rightfully draws attention to the words of the chair, "Sunday is not much of a day of rest for me!"

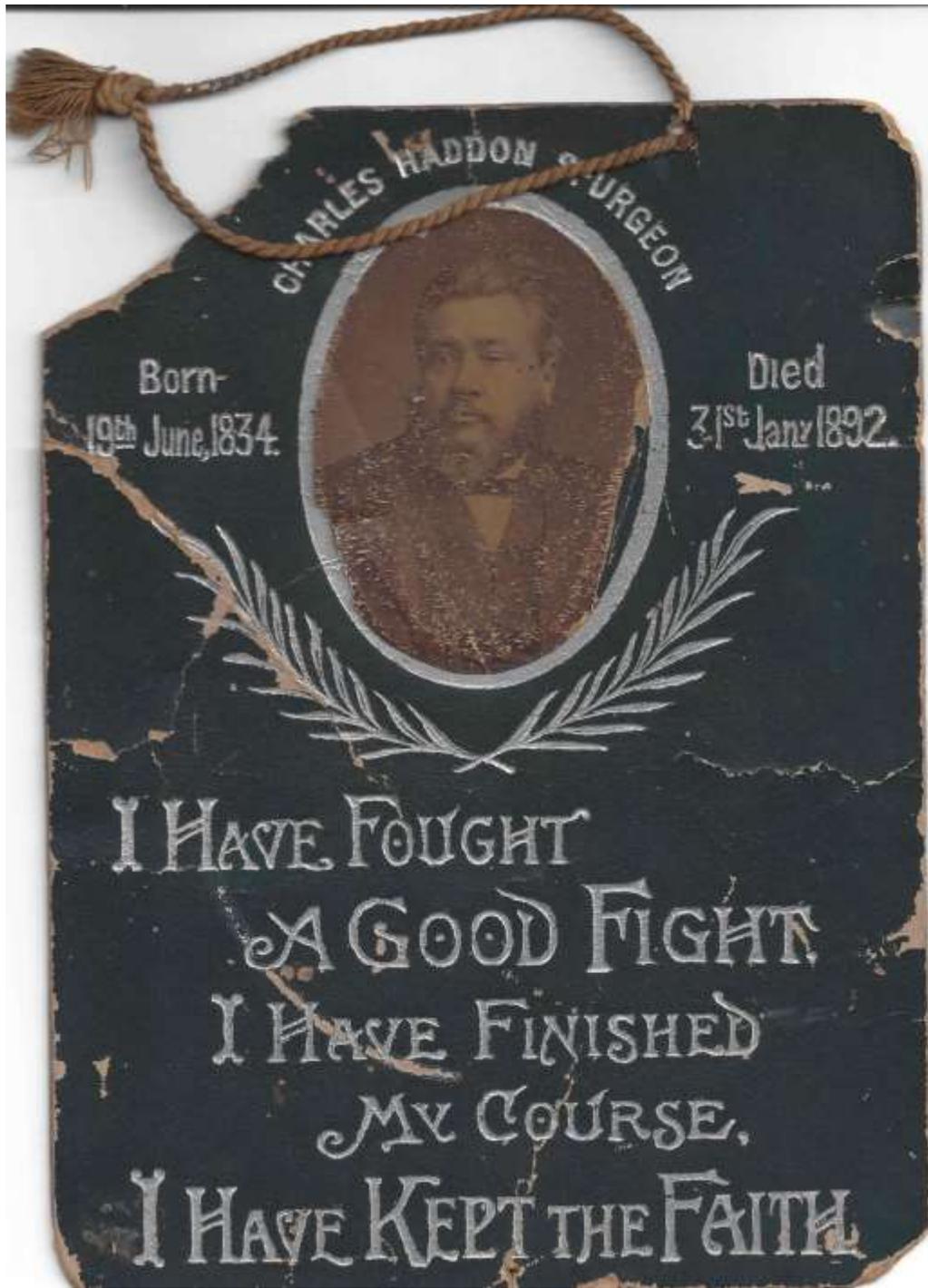


Fig. C29. Memorial Card, c. 1892



Fig. C30. Memorial Pocket Watch Fob, Front and Back, c. 1892 (actual size)²⁹



Fig. C31. Magic Lantern Glass Slide, c. 1892, #2 of 36 Produced by Newton & Co.³⁰

²⁹ The obverse reads: “In Loving Memory of C. H. Spurgeon”; The reverse reads: “Died at Mintone, Jan. 31st, 1892, aged 58 years.” Two corrections: he was 57 when he died and the common spelling was Menton or Mentone.

³⁰ The following four Magic Lantern Glass Slides are part of a thirty-six slide series, entitled, “Life and work of pastor C. H. Spurgeon” type of text, lecture, date 1892, number of slides: 36; <http://www.magiclantern.org.uk/readings/reading.php?id=4004142>, accessed March 9, 2017. The slides included lecture notes. W. J. Chadwick noted the increased popularity of the Magic Lantern and photography’s role in that increase: “Perhaps nothing could have enlivened the spirit of lantern exhibitions so much as photography, for now we are able to procure at a cheap rate photographic slides of almost every country in the world, and these, as well as being arranged in series, can be obtained with excellent descriptive lectures accompanying the different sets.” *The Magic Lantern Manual* (London: Frederick Warne and Company, 1878), 10. In the accompanying lectures (readings), the notes for the second slide are as follows: “Mr. Spurgeon. A life-like portrait of Mr. Spurgeon. No description is necessary—the face is too well known.” *Optical Lantern Readings: Life and Work of Pastor C. H. Spurgeon* (Bradford: Riley Bros. Limited, 1892), 7 [with acknowledgement to Passmore and Alabaster].



Fig. C32. Magic Lantern Glass Slide, #26 of 36



Fig. C33. Magic Lantern Glass Slide, #30 of 36



Fig. C34. Magic Lantern Glass Slide, #36 of 36³¹

³¹ The other slides in the series are as follows: 1. Bird's Eye View of Stockwell Orphanage; 2. Mr. Spurgeon; 3. Old Manse and Meeting House, Stambourne; 4. Birthplace of Charles Haddon Spurgeon; 5. Killing Old Rhodes; 6. Isleham Ferry, Baptizing Place; 7. Cottage where Mr. Spurgeon first preached; 8. Old Chapel, Waterbeach; 9. New Park Street Chapel; 10. "Brimstone and Treacle"; 11. "Catch-'em-alive-O!"; 12. Music Hall, Surrey Gardens (exterior); 13. Music Hall, Surrey Gardens (interior); 14. Surrey Gardens Memorial Hall; 15. Mr. Spurgeon preaching in the Crystal Palace; 16. The Metropolitan Tabernacle (exterior); 17. The Metropolitan Tabernacle (interior); 18. The Pastors' College; 19. Stockwell Orphanage (entrance); 20. Stockwell Orphanage (boys' side); 21. Stockwell Orphanage (the Head Master's house); 22. Mr. Spurgeon and the Boys; 23. Mrs. Spurgeon; 24. Tabernacle Almshouses; 25. Westwood; 26. Westwood (the study); 27. Facsimile of Letter after long illness; 28. Hotel Beau Rivage, Mentone; 29. Mentone; 30. Mr. Spurgeon as an Author; 31. John Ploughman's Talk: He has a Hole under his Nose, and his Money runs into it; 32. John Ploughman's Talk: Never stops a Plough to catch a Mouse; 33. Mentone: Funeral Cortege at Station; 34. The Olive-Casket under Palm-Branches at the Tabernacle; 35. The Tabernacle to the Tomb; and 36. The Address at the Grave. *Optical Lantern Readings: Life and Work of Pastor C. H. Spurgeon* (Bradford: Riley Bros. Limited, 1892), 3 [with acknowledgement to Passmore and Alabaster].



Fig. C35. Cigarette Card, John Players and Sons “Famous Authors and Poets” Series, c. 1900³²



Fig. C36. Cigarette Card, John Players and Sons “Famous Authors and Poets” series (Back Matter), c. 1900³³

³² The series featured twenty famous authors and poets. Spurgeon was number twenty in the series. For more information on Spurgeon and his love for cigars, see <http://www.spurgeon.org/misc/cigars.php>, accessed March 24, 2017.

³³ Although this card is from my personal collection, more information can be gathered on the whole series at: George Arents Collection, The New York Public Library. “Spurgeon.” *The New York Public Library Digital Collections*. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e2-3430-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>, accessed March 12, 2017.

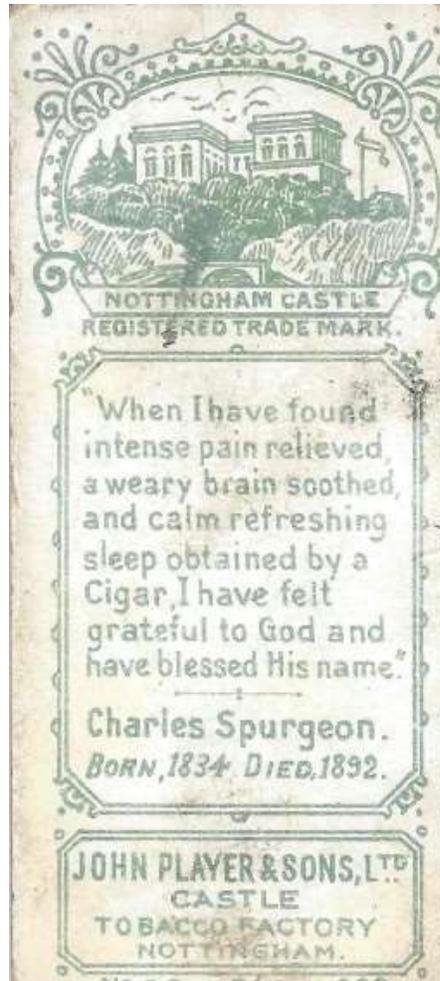


Fig. C37. Cigarette Card, John Players and Sons “Famous Authors and Poets” Series (Enlarged Back Matter), c. 1900³⁴

³⁴ Spurgeon’s quote on the back of the tobacco card comes from a personal letter he wrote to *The Daily Telegraph*, September 23, 1874, London. (William Brian Albert, “When the Wind Blows Cold”: The Spirituality of Suffering and Depression in the Life and Ministry of Charles Spurgeon (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, December 2015), 157. There are many stories surrounding Spurgeon and his love of cigars. This story involves Spurgeon teasing a visiting American: “When the guests rose from the table it was past midnight and they went at once for their wraps; their carriages lined up at the front and in a few moments only the Goulds and Mr. Spurgeon and myself were left. Almost immediately Mr. Gould brought out the cigars and handed them to Mr. Spurgeon. “No,” said Mr. Spurgeon, doggedly, “I will not smoke. This American here,” pointing at me, “was over at my house last summer and I offered him a cigar. He took it but was too good to smoke it, and I am afraid that such a man as I am ought not to smoke in his presence.” I gave forth no sign and the cigars were taken away and we began to rekindle the conversation when Mr. Gould, bethinking himself, brought the cigars and offered them to me. I thanked him quietly, took the cigar, lit it, turned my back to Mr. Spurgeon and began to smoke, for the first time in full ten years. The clouds of smoke were visible in the room but almost absolute silence reigned. “Mr. Gould,” said Spurgeon, in a grimly humorous tone, “bring that box of cigars back. This is a better man than I took him to be and I believe I will join him in his smoke.” That was all that was said. He never asked me whether I often smoked or not and it ended at that.” William E. Hatcher, *Along the Trail of the Friendly Years* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1910), 247-8.



Fig. C38. Stereoview of Metropolitan Tabernacle, c. 1907; Published by Underwood & Underwood.³⁵

³⁵ The Metropolitan Tabernacle burned on April 20, 1898. The façade was spared. This stereoview card illustrates the continuing influence of Charles Spurgeon and the Metropolitan Tabernacle. His son, Thomas, was pastor of the Tabernacle at the time, serving from 1893 to 1908.

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VITA

Dale W. Smith was born June 17, 1967, in Hartford, Connecticut. He was educated at Windham High School in Windham, Connecticut. He then pursued undergraduate studies and was awarded a B.A. in Christian Ministries from Southwest Baptist University, Bolivar, Missouri. After taking courses at various seminaries, he graduated from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity degree in December of 1994. He returned to Connecticut, where he completed a S.T.M. degree (Master of Sacred Theology) from Yale University, graduating in May 1997.

In addition to the academic journey, Mr. Smith has served a number of churches as pastor. He has worked with Southern Baptist churches, such as Faith Baptist Church, in Willington, Connecticut, and Discovery Baptist Church, in Grain Valley, Missouri. He also pastored a non-denominational church, Fairmount Christian Church, in Independence, Missouri. He has served a number of educational institutions as either a guest or adjunct instructor. These institutions include Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Rockhurst University, and University of Missouri at Kansas City.

Mr. Smith entered the University of Missouri-Kansas City Interdisciplinary Ph.D. program with a passion for learning more about the intersection between disease, the embodiment of faith, and the way these influences shape biography and autobiography. To that end, he has written, "The Victorian Preacher's Malady: The Metaphorical Usage of Gout in the Life and Work of Charles Haddon Spurgeon." Upon completion of the Doctor of Philosophy degree, Mr. Smith plans to continue adjunct teaching, researching facets of Victorian history, and sharing what he has learned with other historians.