

MEETING OF THE NEIGHBORING CHURCHES NO. 372

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 1861
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

THE invitation to the ministers and members of neighboring churches, to show their sympathy in the opening of the new Tabernacle, by attending especially at a meeting held this evening, was most cordially accepted and the number present proved the heartiness of the response. An audience approaching four thousand in number assembled on the occasion, while on the platform and pulpit were a goodly array of ministerial brothers.

The **CHAIR** was occupied by the **Rev. Dr. STEANE**.

The fourth hymn, given out by **Mr. SPURGEON**, and described as a hymn of welcome and fellowship, was first sung.

The **Rev. WILLIAM ROBINSON**, of York Road Chapel, offered prayer.

The **CHAIRMAN**, in opening the proceedings said, two days ago that magnificent edifice for the first time resounded with the proclamation of the Gospel, and its lofty dome thrilled with the notes of prayer and praise. Then, with an appropriate and becoming solemnity, it was consecrated and set apart to the worship of JEHOVAH, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the God of our salvation.

He had not the privilege of being present on that occasion, but then, as now, he most affectionately and cordially sympathized with his Christian brother who was henceforth to minister there in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and by whose godly zeal and untiring assiduity, sustained by the whole Christian public, the magnificent structure had been reared.

And now, the pastors, the deacons, and the members of the neighboring churches, without regard to denomination, without distinction of name, without reference to varieties of judgment and opinion, had been by him and his friends invited to gather together in that great concourse. That invitation had been accepted with the deep affectionate Christian sincerity with which they believed it to have been given.

And they were there to offer to Mr. Spurgeon, and to the church over which he presided, their affectionate congratulations. As they surveyed that splendid structure—the largest sanctuary which had ever been reared by such churches as theirs to the service and glory of God—they were filled with adoring reverence and gratitude, and exclaimed, “What hath God wrought!”

He wished on that occasion to be commissioned by the meeting to assure Mr. Spurgeon and the church itself of the entire cordiality, of the affectionate respect, of the brotherly love with which the sister churches in the neighborhood regarded them all. He did not want that expression to be the individual expression of his own heart, but of the hearts of the pastors and members of the churches present.

Perhaps he should proceed in a novel and unexpected way, but he should ask, if his brethren, the pastors of the churches, would entrust him with the commission to communicate their congratulations and affectionate love, to signify it by rising. (*Here the ministers rose at once*). If the meeting would commission him to tell Mr. Spurgeon how much they loved him, and how devoutly and unanimously they wished him, “God speed,” they would signify that by rising. (*Everyone in the building at once rose*).

Nothing could have been more prompt, more unanimous, and more delightful, and he now begged to offer to Mr. Spurgeon the right hand of brotherly fellowship. (*This was done in the most hearty manner*). He had no intention, when he entered the building, of proceeding in the manner that he had done. But was it not a good, a wise, and happy suggestion? He trusted that his dear brother would live to be the pastor of that church for a far longer period than any of the brethren present had ministered in their respective churches. Long might he live with God’s blessing to labor there.

He devoutly desired to thank the providence of God which had brought Mr. Spurgeon amongst them. That providence might have brought a brother who would have been an element of strife and discord, but God's grace had brought a brother among them, with whom they were one in feeling, one in doctrine, one in heart, one in sympathy, and one in Christ.

There were present the representatives of many churches, yet they were one church—a part of the general assembly and church of the first-born. They were not two churches. If they spoke of the church of the redeemed in heaven, and the church of the blood-bought on earth, they were not two churches, but one body of which Christ was the ever-living and glorified Head.

He trusted, through the grace of the Lord Jesus pervading all members of that one body, they should henceforth be still more united than in past time they had been, and exhibit that unity in the face of a scoffing, infidel, and ungodly world. He trusted they would spend a happy evening, the recollection of which would never be erased from their memories.

And when, in that upper and better sanctuary, the true Tabernacle, not made with hands like this, through the infinite riches of divine mercy, they should be worshippers together, it might be among the sweetest and hallowed reminiscences of their life on earth, that on the present occasion they were gathered together a united assembly of brethren and sisters in the Lord.

Mr. SPURGEON did not know what he could say in answer to the affectionate expressions of his brethren. They would excuse him if he did not attempt to express his gratitude on his own account, for his heart was too full. It had been singularly his lot to be placed in a position where he had the kindest brethren for neighbors that ever gathered round any man.

It was not easy for people to love *him*, for he sometimes said very strong things. When he meant to say a thing that should take effect, he felt that he ought to say it in a strong manner in an age like this so shallow and so careless. Yet he had the love and esteem of his brethren far more than if he had attempted to speak smoothly.

He believed he was everybody's debtor. He did not know that anybody owed him anything, but he owed something to everybody, for all his friends had kindly helped in the present effort. While his own church had to do the most, yet there had hardly been a place from which they had not received some aid. He could scarcely look round London upon any church of Christ where he could not find some dear brother who had taken as large an interest in the work as themselves.

He could only say on behalf of his own church that they were heartily at one with all churches of our Lord Jesus Christ, who held their common faith in that neighborhood, and he hoped in the future they would have better opportunities of testing their willingness to assist all efforts carried on by their brethren.

Next week there was to be a meeting, called a meeting of denominations, which would be addressed by members of all denominations upon the Scriptural Unity of the church. They, as a church, had ever been distinctly Baptists, but he hoped it would be their pleasure yet more and more in the future to bear upon their banner the motto of "Union in Christ," which was the true light in which to see the union of all the saints.

He hoped they should have meetings for fellowship and mutual encouragement at least every quarter, and thus the pastors of the district would become more intimate and more cordial, by joining their prayers and by mingling their efforts.

The Rev. WM. HOWIESON, of Walworth, said he had come there that evening to bid his brother Spurgeon "God speed" in his new and enlarged sphere of labor. He believed he was his nearest ministerial neighbor, and if his coming to Newington should affect the attendance at other places of worship in the neighborhood, he (Mr. Howieson) would be very likely to suffer himself.

Still, whatever might be the consequences to him in that respect, he did most heartily welcome Mr. Spurgeon to Newington, and he prayed that his most sanguine expectations as to the success of his ministry might be more than realized.

A short time after the site for the building had been secured, he had some conversation with a Baptist minister, from the West of England, respecting it. He was asked, "What do you and the other ministers in the neighborhood of the Elephant and Castle mean to do, now that Mr. Spurgeon's tabernacle is to be built there?" He did not understand the question.

"Well," said the gentleman, "you will find brother Spurgeon a very potent neighbor, and if you do not do something, you will find you will not hold your own." He wanted to know what they were to do, and asked his friend what he had to suggest. The reply was—"You must do as they were accustomed to do in the old coaching days. When a new opposition coach had been put upon the road, the people connected with the old conveyance said one to another, 'If we mean to stand our ground, we must horse the old coach better.' So, said he, you and your brethren must preach better—horse the coach better."

He trusted that this would be one of the effects of Mr. Spurgeon's coming there—that they should all preach better. There was no doubt much room for improvement, and perhaps that improvement was needed more in the spiritual than in the intellectual qualifications for their work.

The Chairman had been nearly forty years a pastor of the same church, and he was sure he could not have been so long a pastor without having become acquainted with the peculiar temptations to which they as ministers were exposed. He knew they were in danger of neglecting their own hearts, whilst they were professedly taking care of the souls of others; that they were tempted to substitute a critical study of the Scriptures as ministers for a devout and daily perusal of them as Christians; that they were apt to perform or discharge the duties of their office in a professional sort of way, instead of feeling themselves the power of those truths which they declare to others; that they were in danger of resting satisfied with a fervor and elevation of soul in public, instead of a calm and holy communion with God in private.

He said if they gave way to those things, then as the result of diminished spirituality, there would be a barren ministry. For it was only as they were living near to God themselves, that they could be the means of blessing to others—it was only by feeding on His truth themselves that it became spirit and life to those who heard it. It was only as they were living and preaching in the spirit of prayer that the weapons of their warfare were mighty through God "to the pulling down of strongholds."

Happy then would it be for them as ministers, and happy for their respective churches, if the coming of Mr. Spurgeon to Newington should drive them all to their knees in prayer, and should lead them to cry mightily to God for the help of His Spirit, and should impress upon their minds more than it had ever been—that a minister's life was the life of his ministry.

But he demurred to one representation of his West of England friend, for this was not an opposition coach. It was doubtless opposed to something, for it was opposed to Satan and all his works, but it was not opposed to him, nor to his church, nor to any minister in that neighborhood who preached Christ and Him crucified.

What was his brother Spurgeon's object in the building of that large place of worship? Was it merely to gather round him a large and influential congregation? Was it merely that he might be admired and applauded? Was it that he might commend the Gospel to the tastes rather than the consciences of his hearers? Oh, no! It was that he might not cease to teach and preach in that place Jesus Christ, and that a great number might believe and turn unto the Lord.

Then their hearts, their Master, and their success were one. There were "diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit," there were "differences of administration, but the same Lord," there were "diversities of operations, but it was the same God which wrought in all." When, therefore, he looked round upon that beautiful structure and tried to imagine its future history, he could not but rejoice to think of what would take place within its walls.

There, hearts would be broken by the power of God's Spirit, and then healed again by the restoring power of Christ's precious blood. *There*, multitudes of conversions would be wrought by regenerating grace, and then these multitudes trained up for glory. *There* backsliders would be reclaimed, mourners comforted, believers established.

There, there would be many triumphs of faith over temptation, of love over selfishness, and of hope over the fear of death. *There*, there would be workings of devout emotion—now sinking down in the dust of penitence, now soaring to heaven in praise—sometimes earnestly wrestling in supplication, and sometimes pouring forth the strains of adoring gratitude—one hour weeping before the Savior’s cross, another exulting before the Savior’s throne.

Oh! when he thought of the probable history of that magnificent place of worship, he was compelled as a Christian to pray, “The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as you are, and bless you as He has promised.”

The Rev. PAUL TURQUAND said he was the nearest independent minister to Mr. Spurgeon, and perhaps the first of that denomination who had spoken in that place of worship. He did not wish to bring them before him as a Christian church and utter the language of flattery, nor did he wish to stand before the minister of that noble place of worship and swing the censer of adulation, and cover him with that perfume.

But he would like to utter the language of heartfelt praise. The minister and the congregation had done well, nobly, magnificently, triumphantly, and he did not think he was praising them unduly when he gave expression to those words. They had taught others by the success which had crowned their efforts that they ought to hope for nobler things, and dare greater things than they had hitherto done.

They had proved there was a latent power in the Christian church which only needed circumstances to fully evoke it. Their friends had shown them, when the Christian church had a good purpose before it, resolution to accomplish it, and faith in God to accomplish it, that their work would be sure to be crowned with success.

He was exceedingly glad that this admirable edifice had received the name of “Tabernacle.” It was a word which carried them back to the structure erected in the wilderness. It told them of the brazen altar on which the substitutionary victim was laid. It brought before them the brazen laver in which the water typifying the influence of the Holy Spirit was held, and as his brother, Mr. Howieson, had said, just as it was *there* so should it be *here*—that God’s work and power should be greatly manifested.

His prayer for them and their minister was, “Clothe Your ministers with the garments of salvation, abundantly bless the provision of Your house, satisfy Your poor with bread, so we Your people will give You thanks, and show forth Your praise from day to day.”

He was very glad the Tabernacle had been placed in the midst of London. Some country brother told him that it would be a good thing if it had been placed in Pekin or St. Petersburg. He himself would not have been sorry if it had been built in Paris, or better still, in Rome. What would the Pope have thought of it? If he had been consulted, he should perhaps have recommended that it should be erected on the other side of the water.

As, however, it was in Newington, he would say it was in a very good place indeed. He was glad that it was placed in the middle of *London*, for there was no city in the wide world that had so much influence as London, and if they acted upon London they acted upon the whole world.

He was pleased to think that the Tabernacle was in his own neighborhood, but still some prophets of evil put the question, how would it act upon their churches? It might perhaps cause some vacant seats—perhaps some members of their churches might leave. Well, there was no garden but what wanted occasionally to be weeded—and they might depend upon it the garden of the Lord occasionally wanted weeding.

“What is a weed?” was asked of a celebrated botanist. And he said, “A weed is a flower out of its right place,” and Mr. Spurgeon very likely would take some of those weeds, and by planting them in their right places, cause them to become flowers in the garden of the Lord. He had a powerful and eloquent voice, and was well able to arouse the indifferent, and to make those who were careless and unconcerned, thoughtful with regard to their souls.

If there had been one burden upon his (Mr. Turquand’s) spirit, it was this—that in that neighborhood indifference seemed to have gathered like a cloud on the people. He did not think they were more

immoral than in other parts of London, but he did think they were more indifferent. If, however, they would come to hear Mr. Spurgeon, they might be led to go and hear others, and he hoped a spirit of hearing would be diffused among them. Why, in such a case, when the congregations grew larger, the preacher would grow more eloquent, and possibly the Paul of York Street might become an Apollos.

At any rate, when a noble bark was stranded and men were perishing, it was a high crime to quarrel about the manning of the life boat. Let us haste to the rescue and be as willing to take the oar as to stand at the helm. As the representative of his congregation, he could say they had always had a friendly spirit towards Mr. Spurgeon, and had done something to help him.

They had but one object in view—the conversion of souls and the glory of their Master. When an army stood in phalanx before the foe, they did not regret that some general great in battle was coming to their help, and should they not rejoice that another had come to assist them in the tremendous struggle, whose watchword was—“to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”

A hymn was here sung, after which the **CHAIRMAN** introduced the Rev. GEORGE ROGERS as the gentleman who had the educational superintendence of the young men, who were in training for the ministry, under Mr. Spurgeon.

The Rev. GEORGE ROGERS, after speaking in terms of congratulation, said he had been told the building was an extravagant affair—a nine-days’ wonder—and that before many months had passed, it would be converted into a penny theater. A man’s prophecy was often the intimation of his desire. The wish was father to the thought.

Such a remark might apply, if it had been a simple speculation, erected for an untried object. But he believed it to be the result of a gradual and solid growth. A giant infancy and a giant youth required a habitation of its own when it came to manhood. He felt, and all must feel, that that magnificent structure had been raised as a public homage to the doctrines which Mr. Spurgeon preached, and to the earnest manner in which he had proclaimed them.

This house was built, not for him, but for the God whom he serves; not for him, but for the Savior whom he loves; not for him, but for the Spirit on which he relies; not for him, but for the church over which he presides; not for him, but for the souls by which he is encompassed. It was a noble memorial of the unseen realities of the faith of the Gospel.

To every passer-by it would be a witness that the tabernacle of God was with man and that He would dwell among them. To every eye it would tell of the liberty, and the independence which Protestant dissenters could claim in this land, and of the readiness of the Christian public to support doctrines of such a nature, when earnestly preached.

Some ascribed it to the infatuation of the people. Why, Englishmen were not such fools as to give their money away without consideration and without an approval of the object. Some time ago, in a continental city, the priest of a certain cathedral got up a subscription for a golden crown to be put on the head of the Virgin. A solemn festival was held on the occasion of the coronation, at which the king and his courtiers were present.

But one man retired from the scene to weep, and when asked why he wept, said, “They put a golden crown upon the Virgin, but there is no crown for the infant Jesus.” But here, what they had done had been to put a crown upon the head of Christ, and as they would often sing in that place, to “Crown Him Lord of All.”

The building gave the lie to those who said the doctrines of grace were inimical to good works. Their friend Mr. Spurgeon preached all the doctrines of grace. Election, particular redemption came from his lips in trumpet tones. He saw the love of Christ to His church, and of the church to Christ, overflowing in sweet nectar in the Song of Solomon.

Some said those doctrines were destructive of all good works—that people who listened to such doctrines did nothing. His answer to these objectors was, let them look at that building. Election would never have built it, except by seeking to make their calling and election sure. Particular redemption would never have built it without the particular love which it was calculated to inspire. The doctrine of

perseverance would never have built it without the act of perseverance. Faith would never have built it without works.

One of his students, who came late one morning, said his clock did not go right. He replied to him it was an antinomian clock—it was without good works. The creed of Mr. Spurgeon was not antinomian, and that building was a witness to it. Nor would works without faith have built it. No tree could grow without being well-watered at the roots, and if they wished this tree of theirs to grow and bear much fruit, they must bring down the rains and dew of heaven by their prayers.

Why were they, the neighboring ministers and churches there, but to show that the object was not to set up altar against altar? It was to publish the same doctrine. The God whom we all honor is to be honored in this place. The Savior whom we love is to be exalted in this place. The Gospel which we loved is to be preached here. The atonement on which we rest our hope is to be the open fountain here for sin and for uncleanness.

He, therefore, felt an interest in the building, and all his brethren in the ministry must have a common interest in it. Although one star might differ from another star in glory, it was their combined rays that guided the pilgrim on the desert and the mariner upon the wave. They had done a good work, and had worked long, and hard, and unitedly. What was next to be done?

They had now no more to do with begging, with bricks and mortar, and with bazaars. Let them turn all their energies into spiritual channels. Let the hands that had been stretched out to labor, be lifted up in prayer. Let the feet that had borne them to the houses of the rich to collect gold, now carry them to the habitations of the poor to give them that consolation whose price was far above rubies.

Having such a start, great things were expected from them. The eyes of the church and of the world were upon them. There was much grace needed, and it was to be had with faith and prayer. He came to that meeting from the bed of an aged lady, and when he told her he was coming to Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle she said, "May it be a house in which thousands shall be turned to God."

That was his wish, and he was sure it was the wish of them all.

The CHAIRMAN called upon the Rev. Mr. BETTS, of Peckham, whom he introduced as the successor of the well-known Dr. Collier.

The Rev. R. W. BETTS said, like William Jay of Bath, he was not born under the platform dispensation, but when he received the hearty letter from his brother, Mr. Spurgeon, asking him as a neighboring minister to come and give them a few words of greeting upon taking possession of that magnificent edifice, he felt it altogether impossible for him to refrain, and therefore he had come as a neighboring minister to bid them welcome and God speed.

He was perfectly astonished at that beautiful and that magnificent structure. After some remarks upon the name of the building, he proceeded. As he was coming from Westminster the other evening on an omnibus, there were two large buildings which he passed, and he could not help remarking the contrast presented by the outward aspects of those buildings.

The one was St. George's Cathedral. The other was the "Metropolitan Tabernacle." The one was dimly lighted, with a group of some dozen miserable people standing outside the gate, and the whole thing seemed enshrined in gloom. But in the Tabernacle, the light was brilliantly streaming from the windows, and the whole place seemed full of life and vigor.

If he had been a stranger in London, he would not have needed anyone to tell him the difference of those buildings—the one all darkness, the other all light. The one full of the light of Christianity, the other a hollow empty sepulchre of rites and ceremonies. In the one, the living personal Christ, preached as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes. In the other His glory eclipsed by rites and ceremonies, and all taken away that is vital and essential in the Gospel of our Lord and Savior.

There was another thing that struck him about those two buildings—the incompleteness of the one, and the beautiful perfection of the other. The spire of the one structure—where was it? It was nowhere. Although so many years had elapsed since that structure was commenced, yet the faithful did not seem to be ready with their offerings—the needful was not exactly forthcoming.

What was the case with the Tabernacle? Within a year or two the magnificent sum of £30,000 had been subscribed for its erection. He looked upon that as a token of the earnest Protestantism of our land, of the love of the people of England for the simple Gospel of our Lord and Savior.

He supposed that the spire of St. George's Cathedral would one day be completed, but whether completed or not, Roman Catholicism as a system must fall. It was founded in the sands of human tradition and priestly ordinances. And when the waves of our Gospel salvation and the winds of divine truth shall have beaten upon it a little more, it will fall and great will be the fall of it—and God speed that day.

But he did not come to tell them that. he came there simply as a neighboring minister to bid Mr. Spurgeon and his friends a hearty welcome, and God speed to that locality. He did so because they came in his Master's name. In conclusion, he urged them, as there only remained £500 to completely finish the edifice, to see if they could subscribe it that night, and then in future the meetings would be free.

"All hail the power of Jesu's name," was then sung.

The Rev. NEWMAN HALL congratulated the congregation and the pastor upon the successful termination of their arduous labors, and upon their being able to meet in a building free from debt—a building not raised by taxes wrung from the community at large, willing or unwilling, but a structure raised by the free-will offerings of God's people—of those who, recognizing the spiritual gifts with which God had endowed their friend, and were desirous that a building should be reared capable of holding as many thousands as could be conveniently reached by his rich voice.

He need not say to them, what, no doubt, they were saying to themselves, "Be not high-minded on account of what you see." He knew they felt it to be a matter not of pride, but of deep humble gratitude to God, who condescended to permit unworthy sinners in any way to be engaged in advancing the interests of His kingdom.

He knew their earnest prayer was that the old words might be continually verified—"What house will ye build for me? I dwell in the high and holy place, but with this man will I dwell, who is of an humble and contrite spirit, and who trembleth at my word."

For some time, Surrey Chapel had been the largest Christian sanctuary south of the Thames. He hoped there was not a worthy member of Surrey Chapel who did not rejoice that there was a sanctuary raised more than twice as large. And even should it lead to a decrease of the number of worshippers at Surrey Chapel, yet, if on the whole, the cause of God were more advanced, it would be their duty and their pleasure to say—"Herein do I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."

Envy, jealousy, pitiful everywhere, were monstrous in connection with the work of God. What! Regret if others are doing more than we are! regret that others are more useful than we! Is it not all one business—one interest? Are not all things ours? Whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas—all are ours. We are rowing the same boat against the strong tide—each of us doing our best, shall I regret if others in the crew with stronger arm and more vigorous strokes are helping to send the boat more strongly against the tide, and bringing it more quickly into port?

Our house is on fire, we are bringing water to extinguish the flames—shall I be sorry if my brother can handle a larger bucket, and throw a greater volume of water upon them? We are engaged in one grand warfare, and if we are each of us standing in the place our Captain has bidden us occupy, and fighting bravely for Him, shall we regret it if others are more advanced in the fight, and with heavier blows, and surer aim are making greater havoc among the enemy?

It might sound anomalous, but it was most true, in great enterprises every man must do his best to excel his brethren, and when he had done his best, he must rejoice that many of his brethren excelled himself. They might excel Surrey Chapel in the size of the building, and in the number of the congregation, but they did not and could not be expected to excel it in the machinery they employed for evangelization.

This was the work of his revered predecessors, Rowland Hill and James Sherman, and therefore he could refer to it without any supposition of arrogance or boasting. In connection with Surrey Chapel,

they had eighteen Sunday evening services conducted by members of the congregation in various courts and lanes in the district—five evangelists were maintained to go about and instruct the poor and comfort the sorrowful.

They had twelve Sunday schools with four thousand five hundred children, and four hundred teachers—four week-day schools, three sets of secular lectures going on week by week, in different parts, for the benefit of the working classes. They had benevolent societies distributing about £400 a year in addition to the money collected at the sacrament for poor members, and they had the Temperance Society helping all.

He sincerely hoped the time was not far distant when they would exceed Surrey Chapel in all these instrumentalities and labors. When they would have thirty-six Sunday evening services, ten evangelists, twenty-four schools with their nine thousand children, and eight hundred teachers, eight week-day schools, and half a dozen sets of lectures.

And he trusted that this sanctuary would soon be opened for the advocacy of the glorious temperance principle, which had rescued so many from vice and ruin. Let them ever bear in mind what a church was. It was not an institution the members of which had nothing to do but to come on Sunday and hear a comfortable sermon, and go home and discuss it, weigh the doctrines in it, and criticize the preacher. He knew their minister would be the last to encourage them in a namby-pamby sort of religion of that kind.

No, the churches were to be arsenals where the weapons of love were stored with which they were to attack the enemy round about—grand depositories of Christian enterprise, a glorious propaganda, every member a member of the society of Jesus—not leaving it to the pastor to be the only evangelist, but every man saying to his neighbor, “Know thou the Lord God.”

What an interesting sight was the opening of a new sanctuary! How one’s thoughts looked forward! What important events would take place in this sanctuary in the course of years!—events that might not be chronicled in the history of this world, but in which angels would take the very deepest interest.

“Here the people of God, worn and jaded by the toils and cares of life, will come to be refreshed with the heavenly manna and the invigorating streams of the river of life. Here the sorrowful and downcast will feel their burdens lightened, and be able to say to an old Yorkshire working man, a friend of mine, ‘Ah, it is blessed work, cross-bearing, when it’s tied on with love.’ Here those who come tormented with doubts and fears will see the clouds dispersed, and feel their anxieties removed.

“Here the tempted, carried down headlong by the tide of peril, will see the hand of love stretched out, and grasping it by the hand of faith, will be drawn up unto the firm land of salvation. Here souls dead in trespasses and sins will hear the voice of Jesus, ‘Come forth.’ There will be many a cry, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ There will be many a prayer heard, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy upon me.’

“Here the saints of God will be trained for a better sanctuary. Angels will often hover over this spot and carry up the glad tidings, ‘Behold, he prayeth.’ I seem to see the ladder that Jacob beheld let down from heaven—angels are coming up and down, blessings are descending, and prayers and praise are ascending. And Jesus the Redeemer is above, seated at the right hand of power, making all-prevalent intercession for His people.

“Oh, may this be the consecration that shall hallow this Tabernacle! Never may *Ichabod* be written on these walls. Never may there cease to be preached here and loved here, the pure, the simple, the all-glorious Gospel of the grace of God—the grace of God revealed to all transgressors.

“The size of the building seems to me in glorious harmony with the glorious character of the redemption that we preach. It seems impossible to speak of a straitened and limited theology in a spacious building so vast as this. No, as Dr. Chalmers says, ‘In the commission we have received to preach the Gospel to every creature, there is no frozen limitation, but a munificence of mercy, boundless as space, free and open as the expanse of the firmament.’

“I am persuaded that never will there be so great a multitude gathered together here that your minister will hesitate to proclaim a Christ for every man, declaring that all who believe shall be saved,

and that none shall be lost except those to whom it is said, ‘Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life!’

“Christ—Christ crucified, the only foundation of the sinner’s hope, the only secret of the believers’ life and joy. This, my friends, is the true palladium of the church. ‘Here,’ as old Oliver Cromwell says in one of his letters, ‘here rest I would and here only.’

“It is not our sect, however we may prefer it—Episcopacy, or Independency, or Presbyterianism, or Methodism. It is not the having a Liturgy, or the having free prayer. It is not a gorgeous ceremony and it is not a Scriptural simplicity. It is not much water or little water—it is not the adult immersion or the infant sprinkling.

“No, it is Jesus exhibited in the pulpit, honored in the worship, manifested in the lives of all the people, that is the glory of the church—and without that there is no glory. It is not the splendor of architecture, nor your glorious portico, and majestic columns—not this graceful roof, and these airy galleries, and these commodious seats so admirably arranged for worship and for hearing.

“It is not the towering dome, or the tapering spire emulating the skies. It is not clustering columns and intersecting arches through which a dim religious light may wander—it is not all these—though I do not despise the beauties of architecture—which is the glory of the church. Nor is it the splendor of the pew, though wealth, and fashion, and learning may be there, and overflowing numbers crowd the sanctuary.

“It is not the splendor of the pulpit—the eloquence that can wave its magic wand over a delighted audience till every eye glistens and every heart beats with emotion—the erudition that from varied stores of learning can cull its illustrations to adorn the theme—the novelty of thought, and sentence, and argument, that can captivate the intellect and satisfy the reason—the fancy that can interweave with the discourse the fascinations of poetry and the beauties of style.

“No, it is not any one of these, nor all of these together. But it is Christ in His real and glorious divinity. Christ in His true and proper humanity. Christ in the all and sole sufficiency of His atonement. Christ in His in-dwelling Spirit and all-prevailing intercession. This is the glory, and without this, though we had all other things, *Ichabod* must be written on the walls of any church.

“This is the true ark before which alone Dagon falls prostrate. This it is that gives us a glory greater than that which the temple of Solomon ever possessed. For here we have the living manna upon which we may feed. Here we have the true mercy seat. Here we have the real sacrifice—He that takes away the sins of the world.

“Here we have constant miracles. What! will they tell us there are no such things as miracles possible. There are miracles—actual, glorious miracles taking place continually, verifying the truth of our Christian system. The eyes of the blind are still being opened. The ears of the deaf are still being unstopped. And the lame man still leaps as a hart, and the dead man sepulchred in his sin comes forth to live a life of holy obedience and grateful love.

“Because I know this Gospel of Christ crucified is preached, and will be preached and manifested here, therefore I say there is no enchantment against Israel, there is no divination against Jacob. ‘How goodly are thy tents, O Israel, and thy tabernacles, O Jacob.’ Peace be within these walls and prosperity within these palaces.

“For my brethren and companion’s sake, we all of us now say, ‘Peace be with thee.’”

Mr. SPURGEON proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman and to the various ministers, observing that large as the place was, and preaching as he did a great redemption, yet every pillar was made of iron, firmly fixed and immovable, and he hoped to preach a sure, settled covenant Gospel, and not a frail and failing one. The thanks were carried by acclamation.

The Doxology was sung and the meeting separated.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.