

## CHAPTER LXVIII.

### The Pastors' College, 1861—1878.

It is a grand assistance to our College that it is connected with an active and vigorous Christian church. If union to such a church does not quicken the student's spiritual pulse, it is his own fault. It is a serious strain upon a man's spirituality to be dissociated, during his student-life, from actual Christian work, and from fellowship with more experienced believers. At the Pastors' College, our brethren can not only meet, as they do every day, for prayer by themselves, but they can unite daily in the prayer-meetings of the church, and can assist in earnest efforts of all sorts. Through living in the midst of a church which, despite its faults, is a truly living, intensely zealous, working organization, they gain enlarged ideas, and form practical habits. Even to see church-management and church-work upon an extensive scale, and to share in the prayers and sympathies of a large community of Christian people, must be a stimulus to right-minded men. It has often done me good to hear the students say that they had been warned against losing their spirituality during their College course; but they had, on the contrary, proved that their piety had been deepened and increased through association with their brethren and the many godly men and women with whom they were constantly brought into contact. Our circumstances are peculiarly helpful to growth in grace, and we are grateful to have our Institution so happily surrounded by them. The College is recognized by the church at the Tabernacle as an integral part of its operations, and is supported and loved as such.—C. H. S.



WHEN the Tabernacle was opened, the students migrated from Mr. Rogers' house to the class-rooms in the new sanctuary, and the Pastor took an early opportunity of bringing the work of the College more distinctly before his church and congregation than he had previously done. On Lord's-day morning, May 19, 1861, in reminding his hearers of the object for which the collection had been announced, Mr. Spurgeon said :—" It has been thought desirable that I should state a few particulars relative to our Institution for training young men for the ministry. Some five or six years ago, one of the young men of our church gave promise of being a successful minister if he could but have a good education. With the assistance of two friends, I resolved to take him under my charge, send him to a suitable tutor, and train him for the ministry. So useful was that brother, that I was induced to take another, and another, and another. Hitherto, I have been myself committee, secretary, treasurer, and subscriber. I have not, except in one or two instances, even mentioned the matter to anyone; but have been content to spare everything that I could out of my own income, beyond that which is necessary for the support of my household, in order to educate any suitable young men who came in my way, that they might become ministers of the cross of Christ. There are now seven settled out, all of whom have been eminently successful. They are probably not men who will become great or brilliant, but they have been good and useful preachers. I think there are not other seven in the whole Baptist

denomination who have had so many converts during the years that they have been settled. They have been the means, most of them, in the hands of God, of adding many members every year to the churches of which they are pastors; and most of those churches are not in provincial towns, but in villages. I have therefore been led still further to increase my number of students, and I have now about sixteen young men wholly to support and train. Beside these, there is a very considerable number of brethren who receive their education in the evening, though they still remain in their own callings. With the wider sphere we now occupy as a church, I propose so to enlarge my scheme that all the members of this church and congregation, who happen to be deficient in the plain rudiments of knowledge, can get an education—a common English education, for themselves. Then, if they display any ability for speaking, without giving up their daily avocations, they shall have classes provided for higher branches of instruction. But should they feel that God has called them to the ministry, I am then prepared—after the use of my own judgment, and the judgment of my friends, as to whether they are fit persons,—to give them two years' special tutorship, that they may go forth to preach the Word, thoroughly trained so far as we can effect it in so short a time. I know I am called to this work, and I have had some most singular interpositions of Providence in furnishing funds for it hitherto. At the day of judgment, the world shall know that there has never lived a man upon the face of the earth who has less deserved the calumny of 'seeking to enrich himself' than I have. I shall say no more upon that matter; let the world slander me if it will. I want the money to-day, not for myself in any respect;—I give my services and my time freely, and of my own income all that I can spare. I only want my friends, who feel interested in this work, to assist me, that we may provide men who shall preach the gospel to multitudes who are longing to hear it fully and faithfully proclaimed."

In addition to the public collection for the College, generous gifts were contributed privately, and on July 1, a church-meeting was held, of which the church-book contains the following account:—

"Our Pastor having told the members of his Institution for educating young ministers, and having stated that several of them are now settled in country charges, and labouring with great success, it was unanimously agreed,—That this church rejoices very greatly in the labours of our Pastor in training young men for the ministry, and desires that a record of his successful and laborious efforts should be entered in our church-books. Hitherto, this good work has been rather a private service for the Lord than one in which the members have had a share; but the church hereby adopts it as part of its own system of Evangelical labours, promises its pecuniary aid, and its constant and earnest prayers."

Not long afterwards, Mr. Spurgeon brought the College still more prominently before the notice of the Christian public by means of the following letter :—

“To Believers in our Lord Jesus Christ,

“Dear Friends,

“Not in vain ostentation, as though I would say, ‘Come and see my zeal for the Lord,’ but for sundry weighty reasons, I feel moved to place before you this statement concerning a most important department of Christian labour which the Lord has committed to my charge. This I do in the fear of God, expecting His blessing in the deed, since I have a single eye to His glory and the benefit of His Church. As I have not founded this Institution for training young men for the ministry because any persuaded me to do so, and as I have not continued to labour in it because many have favoured the design, so I should not lay the work aside if, in future, I should meet with no sympathy in regard to it. If it be of men, may it come to nought; but if it be of God, *He* will take care that it shall stand. The work is no mere experiment,—no wild-goose chase after an imaginary good; but the result of many prayers, and a deliberate dedication of the soul, followed up by the practical experience of seven years. Solemnly do I know that this work of training young evangelists has been laid upon me by the Lord. I have espoused the service as my life’s labour and delight,—a labour for which all my other work is but a platform,—a delight superior even to that afforded by my ministerial successes. Give it up, I cannot; and so long as the Lord enables me, I hope to persevere, even though I should have to toil alone, unaided, or even unapproved.

“This remark is made at the outset, not because I undervalue the sympathy of my brethren in Christ, but to show that the work rests on a firmer foundation than the approbation of men, and is carried on in another spirit than that which depends upon an arm of flesh. Resolute perseverance, based upon a conviction of special call, is not to be overcome unless the Divine power which it invokes should refuse its aid. Questions about the necessity or the propriety of the Institution will, of course, be asked, and the writer is far from denying that liberty to any man; but, meanwhile, that enquiry has long ago been so abundantly answered in the conscience of the person most concerned therein, that the work continually goes on, and will increasingly go on, whatever may be the decision of other minds. When the Lord withholds His aid, the work will cease; but not till then. Faith grows daily, and rests more and more confidently upon the promise and providence of God; and, therefore, the work will rather increase than come to a pause. I do not, therefore, pen these lines because I would look to man, or feel a need of human aid to buttress the Divine. The Institution was never so flourishing as now, and it is no necessity which urges me to tell my brethren what is being done. Whether men, money, or

churches, be required, the Lord will surely supply them ; and just now they are brought to us in superabundance, so that there is no need for me to beg for aid.

“ But it would be, to my own soul, an inexpressible source of joy if believers would afford this Institution a place in their fervent prayers. All of us engaged in the enterprise feel our entire dependence upon the Holy Spirit ; and, hence, we value, beyond all price, the prayers of the saints. We cannot teach efficiently, our men cannot study to any purpose, and their labours cannot avail to win souls, except as the Lord our God shall pour out His blessing upon us. Oh, that we could win the hearts of some of the King's intercessors, so that they would plead with our Lord to remember us in mercy ! Moreover, if the Christian Church should be moved to take an interest in our affairs, many of God's people would feel stirred up to give of their substance for the support of the Lord's young prophets. While we look up to the treasury in the skies for the supply of every need, we know that the means must come through the channel of the saints. It is not consistent with our plan to ask anyone personally, or to request regular pledged subscriptions ; yet we think it meet to remind believers of their stewardship, and of their obligation to extend their Master's Kingdom ; and we do not hesitate to declare that no work more deserves their aid than that which the Lord has laid upon us ; there is not one more likely to bless the Church, and to gather together the wandering sheep. Of this, however, each one must judge for himself ; and, according to the verdict of his conscience, each one must act. None but those who thoroughly appreciate our work will be likely to send assistance. This is as it should be, and as we believe the Lord would have it. Of what value can unwilling subscriptions be in His sight ?

“ Some seven years ago, one youthful brother was blessed of God in street-preaching. He was quite uneducated, but had a ready utterance and a warm heart. In conjunction with my beloved friend, Rev. G. Rogers, the task of training the young soldier was undertaken ; and, by Divine grace, the brother became a most useful and successful minister of the gospel. From this small beginning has arisen the Pastors' College at the Tabernacle, in which, at present, 50 men are under constant tuition, and more than 150 receive instruction in the evening. It is not my intention, just now, to detail the various stages of growth ; suffice it to say that the hand of the Lord has been with us for good, and the encouragements and rejoicings far exceed the difficulties and trials, although these have been not a few. Financial pinches there might have been if it had been my habit to look only at visible resources ; but when I have fallen for an hour into an unbelieving frame of mind, I have been so severely chastened, and withal so tenderly assisted, that I am compelled to forego all complaint or fear. I write it to the honour of my Master,—He has made my cup to run over, and has supplied all my need ‘ according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus,’ so that I have had no real financial difficulties at all.

Money has flowed in even before it was required. As to finding the men, they have always offered themselves in larger numbers than I could receive ; and in the business of the settlement of the students in pastorates, there has been no difficulty, for they are demanded by the churches even before the brief season of their training has expired. Some eight spheres of labour are at the present moment waiting for the young reapers to go forth. When openings do not occur, we make them ; and, by planting new interests in the vicinity of London, we hope to increase the number and strength of the churches of Christ. In every other matter, a straight path has been opened, and direction afforded. God has been with us of a truth.

“At first, I had only intended to send out some one or two brethren ; but the increase has been thrust upon me, so that the number of students is not fixed, but may be increased or diminished, as means are given. I may receive a hundred if enabled to do so ; or I may lower our numbers to a few if required. Plans also have been suggested, not by forethought, but by experience,—which, after all, is no mean teacher,—and new methods will be followed whenever they commend themselves to my judgment. The reasoning which has formed and fashioned my purpose and action is in a measure as follows :—

“It seems to me that many of our churches need a class of ministers who will not aim at lofty scholarship, but at the winning of souls ;—men of the people, feeling, sympathizing, fraternizing with the masses of working-men ;—men who can speak the common language, the plain blunt Saxon of the crowd ;—men ready to visit the sick and the poor, and able to make them understand the reality of the comforts of religion. There are many such men among the humbler ranks of society, who might become master-workmen in the Lord's Church if they could get an education to pare away their roughness, and give them more extended information ; but, in most of our Colleges, the expenses are too great for poor men ; indeed, to meet their case, there must be no cost at all to them, and they must be fed, housed, and clothed while under instruction. Why should not such men have help ? Why should they be compelled to enter our ministry without a competent knowledge of Scripture and Biblical literature ? Superior in some respects already, let them be educated, and they will be inferior in none. It was the primary aim of this Institution to help such men, and this is still its chief end and design ; although, of late, we have been glad to receive some brethren of superior station, who put us to no charges, and feeling the education to be of the precise kind they require, are happy to accept it, and maintain themselves. This, however, does not alter our main plan and purpose. Whether the student be rich or poor, the object is the same,—not scholarship, but preaching the gospel,—not the production of fine gentlemen, but of hard-working men.

“C. H. SPURGEON.”

The list of students in the College, at about the time this letter was written, contained the names of men of God who have left their mark upon the age, and whose work as preachers and soul-winners, or as teachers of others, is only second to that of the beloved President himself. Four of those names stand out conspicuously,—David Gracey, who was "called home" one year after Mr. Spurgeon; Frank H. White (now of Talbot Tabernacle, Notting Hill); Archibald G. Brown (now of West Norwood); and Charles Burt Sawday (the present Assistant-pastor at the Metropolitan Tabernacle). At the annual meeting of the Pastors' College in 1898, Mr. Archibald Brown thrilled the audience with his graphic description of a scene of which he was one of the eye-witnesses six-and-thirty years before.



THE LADIES' ROOM, METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE.

*(The chair on the right was the one used by Mr. Spurgeon at Monday evening prayer-meetings in the Tabernacle.)*

"At that date," said Mr. Brown, "the dear Governor—he was always 'the dear Governor' to us,—held his Friday afternoon class in the newly-completed ladies' room at the Tabernacle. One day, as he entered, we noticed that he had brought with him a tall, pale young man; and, as soon as the cheering, which always greeted his arrival, had subsided, he said to us, 'Here, brethren, is a student who knows more than the whole lot of us put together. He is quite able to teach us all, yet he would not let me rest until I promised to take him into the College; give him a hearty

welcome.' That pale young man," added Mr. Brown, "was dear David Gracey." This gifted and gracious brother had been brought up as a Presbyterian; but, while yet a youth, he became a Baptist. Having received a good education in his boyhood, he passed into Glasgow University to be prepared, unconsciously, for the great work which God had in store for him. Brilliant as a student, he would, doubtless, have distinguished himself in the scholastic world, had not higher aims taken possession of his heart. In the providence of God, it happened that



PASTOR FRANK H. WHITE.

Mr. Frank White was sent by Mr. Spurgeon to Glasgow, just about that time, at the request of Mr. John Anderson, to conduct a week's special evangelistic services. Respecting this mission, Mr. White writes:—"I preached every night in large cold 'churches' with varied success. I was too much advertized, and the people expected too much from me, and looked for a sensation, which I neither could nor sought to produce. I believe, however, that souls were saved. It was then that I met and talked long with our dear Mr. Gracey, who was greatly exercised in mind concerning his position. He enquired much about the Pastors' College, which he seemed desirous to enter, and I strongly urged him to do so."

Mr. Spurgeon humorously conferred upon Mr. White, while in College, the title of "Professor of Button-hole Theology,"—in allusion to his constant endeavour to "button-hole" individuals, and lead them to the Saviour;—and among the hundreds of men whom the beloved President helped to prepare for the Christian ministry, there were none who stood higher in his estimation than the two of whom

he always spoke as "Frank White and Archibald Brown." It is noteworthy that the "Fraternal" with which Mr. Spurgeon was identified, during the last year or two of his earthly service, was called by him "the Whitey-Brown brotherhood" because of the active part taken by these two brethren in its initiation and development.

Mr. White has kindly written, for this volume, the following reminiscences of his student-days, and some later notable experiences:—"Early in 1862, Mr. Henry Hull—who was himself a master in the blessed art of soul-winning,—wrote to Mr. Spurgeon with a view to my admission to the Pastors' College. An appointment for an interview was soon made, and with some fear and trembling (for the first and last time,—for I never afterwards trembled in his presence, except with delight,) I stood before the great preacher in his vestry at the Tabernacle. 'The very man I want,' was his hearty exclamation the instant I entered the room. I do not remember anything else he said, except, 'You must go to Paradise Chapel, Chelsea, next Sunday.' Accordingly, to Paradise Chapel I went; and that little riverside sanctuary became a very Eden to me, though its surroundings were often quite the reverse of paradisaical. Only eighteen persons were present at the first morning service at Chelsea; but, by the grace and power of the Lord the Spirit, some eight hundred were baptized before my ministry in that part closed.

"What happy days were those we spent in College, and with what eagerness did we, after the intense strain of the study and work of the week, look forward to those delightful Friday afternoons with the President! Being fewer in number, the intercourse was closer than was possible in after days. How favoured we were even in the ordinary course of things; but what of those special opportunities, such as a six-days' driving tour, which was once my happy lot? The letter of invitation is before me now.

"Dear Mr. White,

"I am expecting you at my house, at 8 a.m. next Monday, to go for a week's drive. I have reserved a seat in the carriage for you, which I could have filled with some other friend, so that you must not feel free to decline under any consideration whatever. Your charges will all be paid, and your company appreciated. Not to have you with me, would grievously afflict—

"Your loving friend,

"C. H. SPURGEON."

"Breakfast at Nightingale Lane at 8;—bound to me till Saturday evening;—may reach home by 6 on that evening."

"Think whether a poor, worn-out, hard-worked student—such as Archibald Brown, or myself,—would be glad to receive such a command, or not. I must leave

it to an abler pen than mine to describe those drives from day to day ; but to me, they were indescribably joyous. The very trees of the field clapped their hands ; and we were closely examined as to their nomenclature, and then most delightfully instructed as to their peculiarities and characteristics. I wish I could recall some of the dear Governor's conversations as we rode along ; but I do remember one thing that he said. We were close by the spot where the Bishop of Winchester fell from his horse, and was killed ; and Mr. Spurgeon said that he had just received a letter from a clergyman, who informed him that his bodily sufferings were a judgment from God upon him for speaking against the Church of England. In replying to his unfeeling correspondent, he had asked,—If a swollen hand or foot was to be regarded as a mark of Divine displeasure, what was to be said concerning a broken neck ? Needless to say, that question remained unanswered."



PASTOR ARCHIBALD G. BROWN.

Mr. Brown has preserved the following letter inviting him to form one of the party on another of those memorable driving tours :—

“ Nightingale Lane,  
“ Clapham,

“ May 23.

“ Dear Friend,

“ Will you go out with me and others, on June 15, for a week, or two weeks, or three weeks, or a few days, or whatever time you like ? We feel that we should like your company, and we think we might do you good. You are

very dear to us ; to *me* especially. We shall be very quiet, and jog along with the old greys.

“ I pray the Lord to bless and comfort you.

“ Yours so heartily,

“ C. H. SPURGEON.”

Two other letters show what a true yoke-fellow Mr. Brown was to his beloved President, and with what intense affection and esteem Mr. Spurgeon regarded his former student :—

“ Nightingale Lane,

“ Clapham.

“ Loving Brother,

“ I thank you much for preaching for me, praying for me, and loving me. I am better, but have had a sharp nip. Lucian says, ‘ I thought a cobra had bitten me, and filled my veins with poison ; but it was worse,—*it was gout.*’ *That was written from experience, I know.* Yet I bless God for this suffering also, and believe that your prophetic card will be truer than Dr. Cumming’s vaticinations.

“ Yours ever lovingly,

“ C. H. S.”

“ Nightingale Lane,

“ Clapham,

“ January 29th.

“ Three cheers for you, my true-hearted comrade ! The story of your East London gathering of the clans fills me with delight. The Lord be with thee, thou mighty man of valour ! Whether, in striking the Spiritualists, you are hitting the devil or a donkey, does not matter much ; you have evidently hit hard, or they would not be so fierce. I am not able to take much credit for bringing you up, but I am about as proud of you as I dare be.

“ I hope we shall have a good meeting on Friday week. It is oil to my bones to see you all.

“ Yours always lovingly,

“ C. H. SPURGEON,”

The fourth of the notable students of 1862—Mr. Sawday—has kindly forwarded the following letter, which Mr. Spurgeon wrote to his father when the question of a College training for our dear friend was under discussion :—

“ Clapham,

“ April 12th, '62.

“ My Dear Sir,

“ I scarcely wonder at your preference of Regent’s Park College for your son, but I think you labour under some mistake, for it so happens that

the ground of your choice is just one of the evils which my Institute seeks to remedy.

“The residence of a number of young men in one house encourages and necessarily generates levity; their separation from common social life is a serious injury, and tends to unfit them for the wear and tear of future work among ordinary mortals. When a young man resides in a Christian family, not only is he under the most vigilant oversight, but he never ceases to be one of the people. We are far from putting our men into the way of temptation; on the other hand, we think our arrangement is the most effectual method of preservation. I merely write this because your brief acquaintance with our systems may allow me to suppose that this view of the case has not suggested itself to you.

“Our tutors are sound scholars; but, as we do not aim at any very profound scholarship, we allot but two years to the course. The young men who have left us have been very useful, and the class now in hand will bear comparison with any body of men living.

“I could not, while possessing any self-respect, prepare your son for Dr. Angus; but I shall be delighted to be of any other service to him.

“Yours most truly,

“C. H. SPURGEON.”



PASTOR C. E. SAWDAY.

Mr. Sawday sends this explanation of the letter, and also mentions how the difficulty was happily overcome:—“My dear father was prejudiced against Mr. Spurgeon; and, in his anxiety for me to receive an efficient training for the Baptist ministry, had arranged for my admission to Regent's Park College. But I had

heard Mr. Spurgeon several times at the Tabernacle, and I pleaded with my father not to insist on my going to Regent's Park, and with Mr. Spurgeon to admit me to the Pastors' College. In those early days, it was no wonder that my father, whose whole religious life was spent among the Wesleyans, should have been unwilling for his son to be associated with so pronounced a Calvinist as Mr. Spurgeon was, and he had conscientious objections against contributing towards my support. The dear Pastor met us both, one Sunday morning, after the service, and ended the matter by saying, 'Well, Mr. Sawday, your son is set on entering my College, and he shall be trained, if necessary, at my own expense.' It is not surprising, therefore, that I feel that I have more cause than many of our brethren for holding in grateful love the memory of our now glorified President."

Mr. Spurgeon could scarcely have imagined that, by this generous offer, he was preparing the way into the ministry for a brother who would, for a third of a century, be greatly owned of God as a winner of souls, and, then, after his beloved President's departure, become the able and loyal assistant of *his* son and successor in the pastorate at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Yet so it has proved by the unerring wisdom of Him who—

"Moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform."