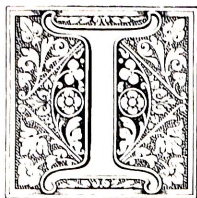


CHAPTER LII.

Varying Voices—Pro and Con.

It is not by the power of *eloquence* that souls are saved. I believe every man who preaches the gospel from his heart is eloquent, so I have used a wrong word; I mean, however, that great oratorical powers are seldom made use of by God to produce great spiritual results. You have heard of the preaching of Whitefield; but did you ever read his sermons? If you did, you will say they were by no means remarkable productions; there is nothing in them that I should think could have approached to oratory, it was only the man's earnestness that made him eloquent. Have you heard any preacher who has been blessed by God to move the multitude? He has been eloquent, for he has spoken earnestly; but as to oratory, there has been none of it. I, for my own part, must eschew every pretension thereunto. I am certain I never think, when I come into this pulpit, "How shall I talk to these people in a grand fashion?" I think, when I come up here, "I have something to say which these people ought to hear;" but how I will tell it to them, does not signify much to me; I find the words, somehow or other, God helping me; but about any of the *graces* of eloquence, or the tricks of oratory, I am utterly and quite in the dark; nor do I wish to imitate any who have been masters in that art. I believe that the men, whom we call eloquent now they are dead, were laughed at in their day as poor bungling speakers; now they are buried, they are canonized, but in their lives they were probably abused.

Now, my brethren, God, I do think, will generally cast a slur upon fine speaking, and grand compositions, and so on, in order that He may show that the blessing comes not by any human power, but by His Spirit. I could stand here, and point my finger in a certain direction, and I could pause at such-and-such a chapel, and say, "There is a man preaching there whose compositions are worthy to be read by the most intellectual persons, but whose chapel contains, this morning, perhaps a hundred people." I could point you to another, of whose preaching I could say that it was the most faultless oratory to which I ever listened, but his congregation were nearly all of them asleep. I might point you to another, of whom I could say that there was the most chaste simplicity, the most extraordinary beauty in the compositions he delivered, but there has not been a soul known to be saved in the chapel for years. Now, why is that? I think it is because God says, it shall not be by any earthly power. And I will also say that, whenever God is pleased to raise up a man by individual power to move the world, or to work any reform, He invariably selects one whose faults and whose errors are so glaring and apparent to everyone, that we are obliged to say, "I wonder that man should do it; surely it must be of God, it could not be of the man himself." No, there are some men who are too great for God's designs, their style is too excellent. If God blessed them, the world would cry,—especially the literary world,—it is their talent that God blesses; but God, on the other hand, takes up some rough fellow, and just shakes the whole world by him. People say, "We do not see how it is, it is certainly not in the man." The critic takes up his pen, dips it in gall, writes a most fearful character about the preacher; he reads it, and says, "It is quite true, and I am glad of it, for if it had not been true, God would not have used me. I glory in my infirmities, because Christ's own power rests on me. If I had not those weaknesses, so much could not have been done; but the very infirmities have insured me against men's saying, 'It was the man.'" I have often been delighted at some of my opponents; they have sneered at everything in me,—from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot, I have been all over bruises and putrefying sores,—every word has been vulgarity, every action has been grotesque, the whole of it has been abominable and blasphemous; and I have said, "Well, that is delightful;" and while some persons have said, "Now we must defend our minister;" I have thought, "You had better let it alone; for suppose it is true,—and it is, the most of it,—there is all the more glory to God; for who can deny that the work is done?" And he is a great workman that can use bad tools, and yet produce a fine piece of workmanship; and if the conversion of hundreds of souls now present, if the sobriety of drunkards, if the chastity of harlots, if the salvation of men who have been swearers, blasphemers, thieves, and vagabonds from their youth up, is not a grand result, I do not know what is. And if I have been the unwieldy, uncouth, unworthy tool employed in doing it, I bless God, for then you cannot honour me, but must give all the glory to Him, and to Him all the glory belongs. He will have it proved that it is "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."—C. H. S., *in sermon preached at the Surrey Gardens Music Hall, August 31, 1857.*



N Chapter L., mention was made of the cruel and libellous articles which appeared in various newspapers after the great catastrophe at the Music Hall, and extracts from two of them were given as specimens of the rest. There were other secular papers which published more favourable comments, one of the first being *The Evening Star*, November 5, 1856, which said:—

“Other questions than that of the structure of the building, or the self-protection of the startled assemblage, are raised by the Surrey Gardens calamity. The vocation of the preacher, and the secret of his power, are brought by it within the range of every man's thoughts, and, therefore, of newspaper discussion. The worldly-minded are forced to reflect on the nature of an institution which survives the most sweeping changes, defies alike persecution and rivalry, and is no less conspicuous in this nineteenth century, to which the press and platform are almost peculiar, than in the twelfth or sixteenth, when the altar and the pulpit had no competitors but in the throne. The devout, moreover, who prefer to think of all religious exercises as more or less supernatural, and the result of direct or indirect inspiration from on high, are compelled to observe the very different operations of the same Divine Spirit working through different human instrumentalities; so that, while a host of good, and perhaps able men, are discoursing from Scripture texts to their few hundreds of hearers each, one—and he a comparatively untrained youth—draws the multitude by ten and fifteen thousand at a time, and is even besought to continue his preaching while the dead and wounded are being carried from the doors of the meeting-house.

“No one can go into a well-filled church, or into the majority of chapels, without being tempted to ask,—‘Where are the poor?’ Preacher and hearers are alike emphatically of the middle class. The grey-headed, white-neckclothed, and otherwise respectable-looking men, in conspicuous seats, are prosperous traders, lawyers, or doctors. The younger fathers of families are clerks or shopkeepers. A few Sunday-school teachers, unmarried shopmen and clerks, make up the males of the congregation. The female portion greatly preponderate in number, are almost exclusively connections of the before-mentioned; though, here and there, is some solitary wife or widowed mother, who has slipped away from a penurious home to snatch consolation from the lips that speak of Heaven. But where are the artizan classes,—that keen-eyed, strong-minded race, who crowd the floor at political meetings or cheap concerts, fill the minor theatres, and struggle into the shilling gallery of the Lyceum or Princess's? So very scanty is their attendance upon the most noted preachers, that it is their adhesion to Mr. Spurgeon which has made that gentleman a prodigy and a phenomenon. The first that we heard of him, two or three years since, was that the Bankside labourers went to hear him on Sundays and

week-nights. The summer before last, we found the artizans of Bethnal Green—a much more fastidious race—flocking round him in a field at Hackney. And in the list of the killed and wounded at the Music Hall, are journeymen painters, tanners, and milliners' girls. It is worth while to ask the reason why.

“A single hearing is sufficient to answer the question,—supposing the hearer can also see. There never yet was a popular orator who did not talk more and better with his arms than with his tongue. Mr. Spurgeon knows this instinctively. When he has read his text, he does not fasten his eyes on a manuscript, and his hands to a cushion. As soon as he begins to speak, he begins to act,—and that not as if declaiming on the stage, but as if conversing with you in the street. He seems to shake hands with all around, and put everyone at his ease. There is no laboured exordium, making you wonder by what ingenious winding he will get back to his subject; but a trite saying, an apt quotation, a simple allegory, one or two familiar sentences, making all who hear feel interested and at home. Then there is no philosophical pomp of exposition,—but just two or three catch-words, rather to guide than to confine attention. Presently comes, by way of illustration, a gleam of humour,—perhaps a stroke of downright vulgarity,—it may be, a wretched pun. The people are amused, but they are not left at liberty to laugh. The preacher's comedy does but light up his solemn earnestness. He is painting some scene of death-bed remorse, or of timely repentance; some Magdalene's forgiveness, or some prodigal's return. His colours are taken from the earth and sky of common human experience and aspiration. He dips his pencil, so to speak, in the veins of the nearest spectator, and makes his work a part of every man's nature. His images are drawn from the homes of the common people, the daily toil for daily bread, the nightly rest of tired labour, the mother's love for a wayward boy, the father's tenderness to a sick daughter. His anecdotes are not far-fetched, they have a natural pathos. He tells how some despairing unfortunate, hastening with her last penny to the suicide's bridge, was stopped by the sound of psalmody, and turned into his chapel; or how some widow's son, running away from his mother's home, was brought back by the recollection of a prayer, and sits now in that pew. He does not narrate occurrences, but describes them, with a rough, graphic force and faithfulness. He does not reason out his doctrines, but announces, explains, and applies them. He ventures a political allusion, and it goes right to the democratic heart. In the open air, someone may interrupt or interrogate, and the response is a new effect. In short, this man preaches Christianity—his Christianity, at any rate,—as Ernest Jones preaches Chartism, and as Gough preaches temperance. Is it any wonder that he meets with like success? Or is he either to be blamed or scorned? Let it first be remembered that Latimer was not less homely when he preached before the king,—nor South less humorous when he cowed Rochester,—nor Whitefield less

declamatory when he moved Hume and Franklin,—nor Rowland Hill less vulgar, though brother to a baronet. To us, it appears that dulness is the worst fault possible to a man whose first business it is to interest,—that the dignity of the pulpit is best consulted by making it attractive,—and that the clergy of all denominations might get some frequent hints for the composition of their sermons from the young Baptist preacher who never went to College.”

Soon after the services were resumed at the Music Hall, a correspondent of *The Sun* newspaper wrote :—“ If what we heard, last Sunday, be a specimen of Mr. Spurgeon's usual preaching, there was certainly nothing at all more extravagant than would be heard from most of the Evangelical clergymen and Dissenting preachers in the country. There were no outrageous descriptions of Divine anger and future punishment, nor any wiredrawn refinements on the theology of repentance. His statements on the latter point were characterized by remarkable common sense ; they were forcibly expressed and illustrated, as were his arguments for the necessity of repentance. Indeed, there was little in which preachers of all creeds would not have concurred. His voice is a noble one, filling the whole place with the greatest ease ; at the further end of the building, we did not miss a syllable. His manner was perfectly unrestrained, but not irreverent. His command of language is very considerable, but does not lead him, for an extempore speaker, into verbosity. His style is unfettered, homely, forcible, and abounds in pointed remarks. There was a total absence of anything humorous or ludicrous. The secret of his popularity, taking last Sunday as a specimen, appeared to us to be something very different.

“ It was impossible not to feel that the preacher was absorbed, not in himself, but in his audience. The formal separation of the pulpit did not separate him from his hearers. He conversed with them, he was one of them. He did not lecture them *ex cathedrâ*, or indulge in disquisitions or topics out of their line of thought ; but spoke with them as he would have done on a solemn subject in their own houses. Most of our pulpits ‘ die of dignity ;’ but, while there was nothing unbecoming on Sunday, the preacher placed himself on a level with all. Of course, a vivid fancy, and considerable powers of expression, aided by a first-rate voice, will account for much ; but we think what we have pointed out was the chief reason why, among so many thousands of hearers, we could not—and we looked carefully—detect a single sleeper.

“ Our more dignified preachers might study with advantage the phenomenon of this youth's popularity. We can only say that, for our part, his manner disarmed criticism, and we could think only of his probable usefulness to the thousands present who, we are confident, by their appearance, are not listeners to our

customary pulpit prosaics. Lord Chief Justice Campbell, with his son, was present on the platform, and seemed to take the same view with ourselves; he remarked several times to one of the managers, after the service, in our hearing, and also to Sir Richard Mayne (Commissioner of Police), who was likewise present, 'He is doing great good, sir,—great good.' London could find room for twenty such preachers; they are just what the populace needs."

Dr. John Campbell reprinted the foregoing letter in *The British Banner*, and added the following remarks:—

"Such a testimony, from such a quarter, possesses a special value, and the deliberate language of the Lord Chief Justice of England will be duly estimated wherever it shall be read. There is no living man from whom a ranting, raving enthusiast would have so much to fear. A better judge of teaching, or preaching, or eloquence, than Lord Campbell, is nowhere to be found. The friends of Mr. Spurgeon, therefore, may congratulate themselves on having anticipated the decision of this great legal luminary."

The famous *Greville Memoirs* contain the following record relating to the period now under consideration:—"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 were 9,000 persons present. The service was like the Presbyterian,—psalms, prayer, expounding a Psalm, and a sermon. He is certainly very remarkable; and, undeniably, a fine character;—not remarkable in person; in face, rather resembling a smaller Macaulay;—a very clear and powerful voice, which was heard through the hall; a manner natural, impassioned, and without affectation or extravagance; wonderful fluency and command of language, abounding in illustration, and very often of a very familiar kind, but without anything either ridiculous or irreverent. He gave me an impression of his earnestness and sincerity; speaking without book or notes, yet his discourse was evidently very carefully prepared. The text was, 'Cleanse Thou me from secret faults,' and he divided it into heads,—the misery, the folly, the danger (and a fourth, which I have forgotten,) of secret sins, in all of which he was very eloquent and impressive. He preached for about three-quarters of an hour; and, to judge by the use of the handkerchiefs and the audible sobs, with great effect."

The letter on pages 247 and 248 was published in *The Times*, April 13, 1857. Mr. Spurgeon thought it was worthy of preservation, for it came from the pen of a learned professor, and did much to turn the tide of public opinion in his favour.



THE FUNNY OLD WOMAN OF THE DAY.

AND

THE YOUNG LION OF THE DAY

"PREACHING *and* PREACHING.

"To the Editor of *The Times*,

"Sir,—One Sunday morning, about a month ago, my wife said, 'Let us send the children to St. Margaret's, to hear the Archbishop of —— preach on behalf of the Society of Aged Ecclesiastical Cripples, which is to celebrate to-day its three hundredth anniversary.' So the children went, though the parents, for reasons immaterial to mention, could not go with them. 'Well, children, how did you like the Archbishop of ——, and what did he say about "the Aged Ecclesiastical Cripples"?' Here the children—for it was during their dinner,—attacked their food with great voracity; but never a word could we get out of their mouths about the spiritual feast of which they had just partaken. No! not even the text could they bring out. The more they were pressed, the more they blushed, and hung their heads over their plates, until, at last, in a rage, I accused them of having fallen asleep during the service. This charge threw my first-born on his defence, and he sobbed out the truth, for, by this time, their eyes were full of tears. 'Why, papa! we can't say what the Archbishop of —— said, because we could not hear a word. He is very old, and has got no teeth; and, do you know, I don't think he has got any tongue either, for, though we saw his lips moving, we could not hear a single word.' On this I said no more, but I thought a good deal of 'the Aged Ecclesiastical Cripples,' and their venerable advocate, and, being something of a philologist, I indulged in dreamy speculations on the possibility of an alphabet composed entirely of labials; and if my wife had not roused me from my dream by some mere matter-of-fact question, I almost think I should have given my reflections to the world in the shape of a small pamphlet entitled, 'The Language of Labials; or, how to preach sermons without the aid of either tongue or teeth; published for the benefit of the Society of Aged Ecclesiastical Cripples, and dedicated, of course by permission, to the Archbishop of ——.'

"Now listen to another story. A friend of mine, a Scotch Presbyterian, comes up to town, and says, 'I want to hear Spurgeon; let us go.' Now, I am supposed to be a High Churchman, so I answered, 'What! go and hear a Calvinist,—a Baptist,—a man who ought to be ashamed of himself for being so near the Church, and yet not within its pale?' 'Never mind, come and hear him.' Well, we went yesterday morning to the Music Hall in the Surrey Gardens. At first, I felt a strange sensation of wrong-doing. It was something like going to a morning theatrical performance on Sunday; nor did a terrific gust of wind (which sent the Arctic Regions, erected out of laths and pasteboard in a style regardless of expense, flying across the water of the lake,) tend to cheer a mind depressed by the novelty of the scene. Fancy a congregation, consisting of ten thousand souls, streaming into the hall, mounting the galleries, humming, buzzing, and swarming,—a mighty

hive of bees,—eager to secure at first the best places, and at last, any place at all. 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 everyone present; and by this magnetic chain, the preacher held us fast bound for about two hours. It is not my purpose to give a summary of his discourse. It is enough to say of his voice, that its power and volume are sufficient to reach everyone in that vast assembly; of his language, that it is neither high-flown nor homely; of his style, that it is at times familiar, at times declamatory, but always happy, and often eloquent; of his doctrine, that neither the Calvinist nor the Baptist appears in the forefront of the battle which is waged by Mr. Spurgeon with relentless animosity, and with gospel weapons, against irreligion, cant, hypocrisy, pride, and those secret bosom sins which so easily beset a man in daily life; and to sum up all in a word, it is enough to say of the man himself that he impresses you with a perfect conviction of his sincerity.

“But I have not written so much about my children’s want of spiritual food when they listened to the mumbling of the Archbishop of —, and my own banquet at the Surrey Gardens, without a desire to draw a practical conclusion from these two stories, and to point them by a moral. Here is a man not more Calvinistic than many an incumbent of the Established Church, who ‘humbles and mumbles,’ as old Latimer says, over his liturgy and text. Here is a man who says the complete immersion, or something of the kind, of adults is necessary to baptism. These are his faults of doctrine; but, if I were the examining chaplain of the Archbishop of —, I would say, ‘May it please your Grace, here is a man able to preach eloquently, able to fill the largest church in England with his voice, and, what is more to the purpose, with people. And may it please your Grace, here are two churches in the metropolis, St. Paul’s and Westminster Abbey. What does your Grace think of inviting Mr. Spurgeon, this heretical Calvinist and Baptist, who is able to draw ten thousand souls after him, just to try his voice, some Sunday morning, in the nave of either of those churches? At any rate, I will answer for one thing that, if he preaches in Westminster Abbey, we shall not have a repetition of the disgraceful practice, now common in that church, of having the sermon *before* the anthem, in order that those who would quit the church when the arid sermon begins, may be forced to stay it out for the sake of the music which follows it.’ But I am not, I am sorry to say, examining chaplain to the Archbishop of —, so I can only send you this letter from the devotional desert in which I reside, and sign myself,—

“HABITANS IN SICCO.”

“Broad Phylactery, Westminster.”

The Times, of the same date, had the following leading article upon the letter :—“Society, like the private individual, has its grievances,—certain old-established sores, any allusion to which is sure to excite general sympathy in all companies. The extortions of cabmen, inn charges, rates and taxes,—any reference to these veteran impositions kindles a spark of genial hostility in every circle. Everyone has had his particular collision with these offensive claims, and has his story to tell. Those compositions called sermons belong to this class of veteran grievances. An allusion to them will revive a drooping conversation, and awaken a spirit of rebellion in every breast. Everybody has suffered from this quarter, and a long vista of recollection opens out before every eye the retrospect of a yoke long borne,—the image of yourself sitting in a pew or stall after or before an anthem, with a look of calm resignation, which vaguely betrays, however, the general impression that something or other—we do not say what,—will be over in half-an-hour, or three-quarters of an hour, or even an hour from the present moment. A series of tableaux, representing yourself in formal relations with a sounding-board, is produced by the machinery of the brain. The relation is one of temporary subjugation. There are one or two others near you with the same mixed expression that you have yourself, indicative of transient and bearable adversity. The sky is lowering overhead, but the horizon is clear. We will not call this ‘smiling at grief,’ because, to say the truth, the attitude of the figures is rather too comfortable to be sentimental. It is unnecessary to say what sympathy the same pictorial representation pervading the whole company creates. ‘A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind.’ It is, indeed, curious to observe the extraordinary difficulty which some of our most respectable writers—nay, our ablest moralists,—seem to have had in encountering this particular ordeal. Dr. Johnson repented, most sincerely and devoutly, but still annually, over his very rare use of this great opportunity and privilege. We hardly know whether it is fair to notice the same delinquency in the valetudinarian Coleridge. Certainly, to hear the remarks that are generally made, a good preacher does seem to be a very rare production, and to require the lantern of Diogenes to discover him. The fact of the excessive dulness of sermons being indeed taken for granted, people are lost in perplexity how to account for it. Do the Canons require it? Do the Bishops enjoy it? The evil is altogether mysterious, and broods over the public like a nightmare. Its origin, like that of the source of the Nile, is unknown. Is it the result of volcanic influences? Will the same discovery explain it that will, some day, explain the phenomenon of the tides? Or does the enigma await a meteorological solution? There appears also to be something mysterious in the sensations of the sufferers. Language can give the superficial characteristics of what is experienced, but there seems to be something at the bottom which is indescribable. In fact, the whole thing is very mysterious, and we feel out of our depth when we attempt to penetrate it analytically.

But, as metaphysicians say, the facts of consciousness in this department are plain ; and, so long as we keep quite close to them, we feel ourselves tolerably safe.

“ Now, undoubtedly, preachers have something to say on their side of the question. As a class of public exhibitors, they labour under peculiar difficulties. For example, a good lecture and a good theatrical piece can be repeated, and we have Mr. Albert Smith and *The Corsican Brothers* night after night. But a good sermon has only one existence. It goes off like a rocket, and disappears for ever. The preacher cannot advertise a second delivery. If it takes place, it is by stealth. But success is not so frequent that it can afford this waste and extravagance without serious results. In other departments, the failures escape notice, because they are merely tentative, and are withdrawn as soon as they are discovered not to take, while one good hit is hammered for months running into the public mind. In the case of sermons, good and bad are on the same exhibitory level, and human nature is pinned forcibly to its average mark.

“ The reputation, however, of this class of compositions being thus low, it is not surprising if the sudden phenomenon of a monster preacher excites some astonishment ; and if our correspondent, ‘ HABITANS IN SICCO,’ regrets that the Church has not the benefit of similar services, it is quite natural to ask why should such demonstrations be confined to Dissent? Why cannot the Church have a monster preacher drawing his crowds ?

“ Physically speaking, there can be no reason why the Church should not have, at any rate once or twice in a generation, a natural orator in its clerical ranks endowed with a voice as loud as Mr. Spurgeon's ; and, if she has, there can be no cogent reason why she should not use him. A loud voice is a decided gift, an endowment ; it may be thrown away in the prodigality of nature upon a man who has no purpose to turn it to, no thought to utter from that splendid organ ; upon a man, in fact, who is a mere pompous Stentor in a pulpit ; but give it to one who has thought and a purpose, and see the effect. It collects a crowd to listen, but that is only the first step. Another crowd comes because there is a crowd to begin with, and a third follows the second. But this is not all. A multitude listens with a different feeling to a speaker from that with which a roomful of people or a churchful of people listen, for the multitude *feels* itself a multitude ; it is conscious of its numbers, and every individual partakes in some degree the gigantic vibrations of the mass. The addition of power which is thus gained is immense ; and, therefore, how is it that the Church never has a monster preacher ?

“ The reason is, that a loud voice requires its proper material to exert itself upon. The voice is notoriously the most sympathetic thing in nature. It cannot be loud and soft indiscriminately. Some things are made to be shouted, and others to be whispered. Nobody shouts out an axiom in mathematics ; nobody balances

probabilities in thunder,—*Nemo consilium cum clamore dat.* There must be a strong sentiment, some bold truth, to make a man shout. In religion, there must be something rather extravagant in the shape of doctrine. The doctrine of sudden conversion or of irresistible grace can be shouted; but if a man tried ever so hard to shout in delivering a moderate and sensible discourse on free-will, he would find himself talking quietly in spite of himself. A loud voice, then, must have 'loud' doctrine to develop it. But the Church of England has rather a distaste for 'loud' doctrine; her general standard is opposed to it, her basis is a balanced one, mixing opposite truths, and qualifying what she teaches with judicious protests and disclaimers. She preaches Catholicity with a protest against Rome, and Protestantism with a protest against Geneva. This is very sensible, and very true; but it is not favourable to popular preaching. Of the two parties into which she is divided, one thinks it wrong to shout, as being against the principle of reverence. This school specially contrasts itself in this respect with 'the rude world,' which is supposed to be always shouting, and doing everything that is noisy and vulgar, and with heretics who are audacious and immodest; and it plumes itself on its refinement and good taste in the delivery of religious truth, which it thinks ought to be done in a sort of veiled and fragmentary way, so as to reach the sensitive ears of the good, and pass over those of the profane. All this is very excellent and refined, but it is against popular preaching. So much for one party. The other party might speak loud if it liked; it has no theory against it, and its doctrines admit of it, but it does not like the trouble. And, besides, this party, though it professedly holds strong doctrine, practically tempers it considerably, and bends to the moderate standard of the Church. Thus, what with the fear of criticism, the deference to a recognized standard, idleness, reverence, and a great many other things,—what with some thinking it heretical to shout, and others thinking it unpolite to be popular,—there is no monster preaching in the English Church. It does certainly admit of a question whether, in our general policy, we are not over-cautious, and gain greater theoretical correctness at the cost of much practical efficiency. It admits of a question whether a little extravagance and a little onesidedness might not be tolerated for the sake of a good, substantial, natural, telling appeal to the human heart. We should have no objection, for our part, to an Evangelical clergyman, with a strong voice, doing what Mr. Spurgeon does. The doctrines of the two are in reality much the same; and, that being the case, why should fear of criticism prevent the Evangelical school from making themselves as effective as they can? But such is the influence of a conventional standard, which, like conscience, 'makes cowards of us all.'"

The British Quarterly Review, June, 1857, contained a long article, of which the following were the opening and closing paragraphs:—

"CHARLES SPURGEON AND THE PULPIT.

"Mr. Spurgeon is a notability. He filled Exeter Hall with eager listeners for months together. He has since done the same in the great Music Hall of the Surrey Gardens, though spacious enough to receive 9,000 persons. Hitherto, the prophets have been in the wrong. The feeling does not subside. The crowds gather even more than before. The 'common people' are there, as at the first; but with them there are now many who are of a much higher grade. Professional men, senatorial men, ministers of state, and peers of the realm, are among Mr. Spurgeon's auditory. These are facts that cannot be questioned. That there is something very extraordinary in them, everyone must feel. How is the matter to be explained? . . .

"We believe that, to explain the fact presented in the Sunday meetings at the Surrey Gardens, we must go beyond the personal as found in the preacher, beyond the scheme of truth which he propounds,—and we must rest in nothing short of the Divine hand itself. The All-wise has often worked by instruments, and in ways which would seem to have been chosen for the purpose of making a mock of the world's wisdom. He did so when he founded Christianity,—He may do much like it again.

"Certainly, a choice rebuke has been administered to a course of speculation which has become somewhat rife among us of late, especially among parties who account themselves as belonging to the far-seeing of their generation. It has come to be very much in fashion, with some persons, to speak of all things connected with religion as beset with great difficulty and mystery. On all such questions, we are told, there must be two sides; and the negative side, it is said, is generally much more formidable than is commonly imagined. It is assumed, accordingly, that, to be in a state of some hesitancy and doubt, is the sign of intelligence, while to be positive, very sure about anything, is the sign of a vulgar and shallow mind. Our people are said to be familiar with phrases about the doctrines of the gospel, but with little more. They may become bigots in their conceit on such subjects, and know nothing. Educated men now must not be expected to be content with phrases, or with assertions. The preacher, in consequence, owes it to himself to deal with matters much otherwise than formerly. To insist on the authority of Scripture now, as in past times, it is said, would be in vain. To set forth the doctrines of the gospel now as formerly, would be wasted labour. The preacher must be more considerate, more candid, more forbearing. He must acquit himself with more intelligence, more independence, and in a more philosophical spirit, presenting his topics on broader and more general grounds. In other words, the old mode of presenting what is called 'the old truth' has had its day. Whitefield himself, were he to come back, would produce little impression on our generation.

“But here comes a man—no Whitefield in voice, in presence, in dignity, or genius, who, nevertheless, as with one stroke of his hand, sweeps away all this sickly sentimentalism, this craven misbelief. It is all to him as so much of the merest gossamer web that might have crossed his path. He not only gives forth the old doctrine of Paul in all the strength of Paul's language, but with exaggerations of his own, such as Paul would have been forward to disavow. This man knows nothing of doubt as to whence the gospel is, what it is, or wherefore it has its place amongst us. On all such subjects his mind is that of a made-up man. In place of suspecting that the old accredited doctrines of the gospel have pretty well done their work, he expects good from nothing else, and all that he clusters about them is for the sake of them.

“The philosophical precision, the literary refinements, the nice discriminations between what we may know of a doctrine and what we may not, leaving us in the end, perhaps, scarcely anything to know about it,—all this which, according to some, is so much needed by the age, is Mr. Spurgeon's utter scorn. He is the direct, dogmatic enunciator of the old Pauline truth, without the slightest attempt to soften its outline, its substance, or its results; and what has followed? Truly, Providence would seem once more to have made foolish the wisdom of this world. While the gentlemen, who know so well how people ought to preach, are left to exemplify their profound lessons before empty benches and in obscure corners, the young man at the Surrey Gardens can point to his 9,000 auditors, and ask, ‘Who, with such a sight before him, dares despair of making the gospel, the good old gospel, a power in the great heart of humanity?’”

The following extracts from an article written by Mr. J. Ewing Ritchie (“Christopher Crayon”), and published in his volume entitled, *The London Pulpit*, will show that, even in 1857, “all men” did not “speak well” of the young preacher:—

“THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

“I fear there is very little difference between the Church and the world. In both, the tide seems strongly set in favour of ignorance, presumption, and charlatanism. In the case of Mr. Spurgeon, they have both agreed to worship the same idol. Nowhere more abound the vulgar, be they great or little, than at the Surrey Music Hall on a Sunday morning. Mr. Spurgeon's service commences at a quarter to eleven, but the doors are opened an hour and a half previously, and all the while there will be a continuous stream of men and women,—some on foot, some in cabs, many in carriages,—all drawn together by this world's wonder. The motley crowd is worth a study. . . . A very mixed congregation is this one at the Surrey Gardens. The real flock—the aborigines from Park Street Chapel—are a peculiar

people,—very plain, much given to the wearing of clothes of an ancient cut,—and easy of recognition. The men are narrow, hard, griping, to look at ;—the women stern and unlovely ;—yet they, and such as they alone, if we are to believe them, are to walk the pearly streets of the New Jerusalem, and to sit down with martyrs and prophets and saints,—with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob,—at the marriage supper of the Lamb. . . .

“Here is a peer, and there his tailor. Here Lady Clara Vere de Vere kills a weary hour, and there is the poor girl who sat up all night to stitch her ladyship's costly robe. Here is a blasphemer come to laugh ; there, a saint to pray. Can these dry bones live ? Can the preacher touch the heart of this listening mass ? Breathed on by a spell more potent than his own, will it in its anguish and agony exclaim, ‘What must we do to be saved ?’ You think how this multitude would have melted beneath the consecrated genius of a Chalmers, or a Parsons, or a Melville, or an Irving,—and look to see the same torrent of human emotions here. Ah, you are mistaken !—Mr. Spurgeon has not the power to wield ‘all thoughts, all passions, all delights.’ It is not in him to ‘shake the arsenal, and fulmine over Greece.’ In the very midst of his fiercest declamation, you will find his audience untouched ; so coarse is the colouring, and clumsy the description, you can sit calm and unmoved through it all ;—and all the while the haughty beauty by your side will fan herself with a languor Charles Matthews in ‘Used Up’ might envy. Look at the preacher ;—the riddle is solved. You see at once that he is not the man to soar ; and, soaring, bear his audience, trembling and enraptured, with him in his Heavenward flight. . . .

“Of course, at times, there is a rude eloquence on his lips, or, rather, a fluent declamation, which the mob around takes for such. The orator always soars with his audience. With excited thousands waiting his lightest word, he cannot remain passionless and unmoved. Words and thoughts are borne to him from them. There is excitement in the hour ; there is excitement in the theme ; there is excitement in the living mass ; and, it may be, as the preacher speaks of a physical hell and displays a physical heaven, some sensual nature is aroused, and a change may be effected in a man's career.

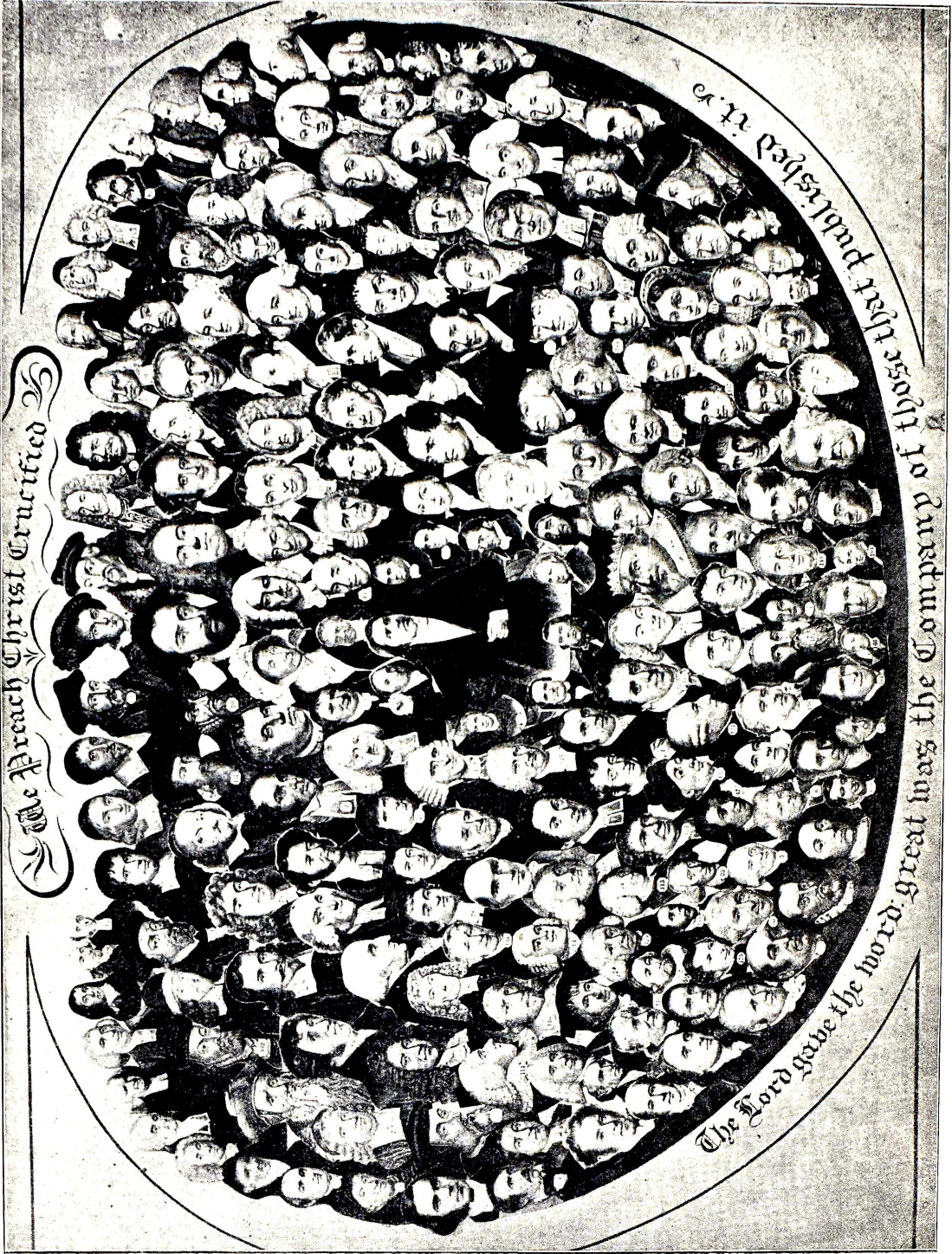
“Little causes may produce great events ; one chance word may be the beginning of a new and a better life ; but the thoughtful hearer will learn nothing, will be induced to feel nothing, will find that, as regards Christian edification, he had much better have stayed at home. At the best, Mr. Spurgeon will seem to him a preacher of extraordinary volubility. Most probably he will return from one of Mr. Spurgeon's services disgusted with the noisy crowding, reminding him of the Adelphi rather than the house of God ; disgusted with the commonplace prayer ; disgusted with the questionable style of oratory ; disgusted

with the narrowness of the preacher's creed, and its pitiful misrepresentations of 'the glorious gospel of the blessed God;' disgusted with the stupidity that can take, for a Divine afflatus, brazen impudence and leathern lungs. Most probably, he will come back confessing that 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. . . .

“Will not Mr. Spurgeon's very converts, as they become older,—as they understand Christianity better,—as the excitement produced by dramatic dialogues in the midst of feverish audiences dies away,—feel this themselves? And yet this man actually got nearly 24,000 to hear him on the Day of Humiliation. Such a thing seems marvellous. If popularity means anything, which, however, it does not, Mr. Spurgeon is one of our greatest orators. It is true, it is not difficult to collect a crowd in London. If I simply stand stock still in Cheapside, in the middle of the day, a crowd is immediately collected. The upper class of society requires finer weapons than any Mr. Spurgeon wields; but he preaches to the people in a homely style, and they like it, for he is always plain, and never dull. Then, his voice is wonderful; of itself, a thing worth going to hear; and he has a readiness rare in the pulpit, and which is invaluable to an orator. Then, again, the matter of his discourses commends itself to uneducated hearers. We have done with the old miracle-plays, wherein God the Father appeared upon the stage in a blue coat, and wherein the devil had very visible hoofs and tail; but the principle to which they appealed—the love of man for dramatic representations rather than abstract truths—remains, and Mr. Spurgeon avails himself of it successfully. Another singular fact—Mr. Spurgeon would quote it as a proof of its truth,—is that what is called high doctrine,—the doctrine Mr. Spurgeon preaches,—the doctrine which lays down all human pride,—which teaches us we are villains by necessity, and fools by a Divine thrusting on,—is always popular, and, singular as it may seem, especially on the Surrey side of the water.

“In conclusion, let me not be understood as blaming Mr. Spurgeon. We do not blame Stephani when Caliban falls at his feet, and swears that 'he's a brave god, and bears celestial liquor.' Few ministers get people to hear them. Mr. Spurgeon has succeeded in doing so. It may be a pity that the people will not go and hear better preachers; but, in the meanwhile, no one can blame Mr. Spurgeon that he fearlessly and honestly preaches what he deems the truth.”

In the Preface to the volume, *From the Usher's Desk to the Tabernacle Pulpit*, Mr. Shindler thus writes concerning the group represented on page 256:—“In the hall at 'Westwood' there hangs a picture, of considerable size,—containing the portraits of one hundred and ninety-three men and women of mark, almost



(For key to above illustration, see page 257; for description, see pages 255 and 258.)

- 1 Edward Ashburner, M.A.
2 Dr. Andrews.
3 George Burder, D.D.
4 Sir Edward Buxton.
5 John Butterworth.
6 William Bull.
7 William Bates, D.D.
8 William Burkitt.
9 John Brown.
10 J. Brown (Commentator).
11 T. Brown. (Son of J. B.)
12 Isaiah Birt.
13 John Bunyan.
14 Samuel Brewer.
15 H. Blair, D.D.
16 George Betts.
17 Benjamin Brook.
18 J. Bradford (Martyr, 1555).
19 Abraham Booth.
20 Theodore Beza.
21 John Berridge, M.A.
22 T. Cranmer (Martyr, 1556).
23 Cornelius Cayley.
24 Thomas Craig.
25 John Carter.
26 William Carey, D.D.
27 Richard Cecil.
28 Thomas Charles.
29 Dr. Chalmers.
30 Tobias Crisp, D.D.
31 William Cowper.
32 George Campbell.
33 Ingram Cobbin.
34 Miles Coverdale, D.D.
35 John Clayton, Sen.
36 "Cupido."
37 Doctor Collyer.
38 John Cooke.
39 William Cooper.
- 40 Edmund Calamy, B.D.
41 James Hoby, D.D.
42 Stephen Charnock.
43 William Burrows.
44 John Calvin.
45 Charles Drelincourt.
46 R. M. McCheyne.
47 R. De Courcy, M.A.
48 Dr. Dick.
49 Dr. Dillon.
50 Dr. Doddridge.
51 Timothy Dwight.
52 Edward VI.
53 John Evans, D.D.
54 Andrew Fuller.
55 Dr. Fletcher.
56 Professor Francke.
57 Dr. Fawcett.
58 William Fox.
59 John Gill, D.D.
60 S. Greathead.
61 Colonel Gardener.
62 W. A. Gunn.
63 Thomas Goodwin, D.D.
64 G. H. Goddin.
65 W. M. Goode, M.A.
66 J. Hooper, D.D. (Mtr. 1555)
67 Elizabeth Rowe.
68 George Herbert, B.A.
69 John Howe.
70 Joseph Hussey.
71 John Hyatt.
72 William Huntington.
73 J. Huss, D.D. (Mtr. 1415)
74 Charles Hyatt.
75 Rowland Hill, M.A.
76 R. Hawker, D.D.
77 Thomas Hawies, D.D.
78 Richard Hurd, D.D.
- 79 Dr. Horneck.
80 Matthew Henry.
81 James Hamilton, D.D.
82 Joseph Irons.
83 Jerome (Martyr, 1416).
84 James Janeway.
85 John Chin.
86 Benjamin Keach.
87 William Kiffin.
88 Dr. Latimer (Martyr, 1555).
89 Robert Lowth, D.D.
90 Martin Luther.
91 Philip Melancthon.
92 John Macgowan.
93 Samuel Medley.
94 William Mason.
95 Erasmus Middleton.
96 James Montgomery.
97 John Newton.
98 Felix Neff.
99 John Milton.
100 John Owen, D.D.
101 William Paley, D.D.
102 Jonathan Edwards.
103 Robert Pearsall.
104 Dr. Ridley (Martyr, 1555).
105 William Roby.
106 John Ryland, Sen.
107 John Ryland, Jun., D.D.
108 John Rippon, D.D.
109 John Rees.
110 Edward Reynolds, D.D.
111 William Romaine.
112 Robert Raikes, Esq.
113 Samuel Stennett, D.D.
114 C. C. Sturm.
115 Dr. Sibbes.
116 William Newman, D.D.
117 Walter Shirley.
- 118 Augustus Toplady, B.A.
119 Lord Teignmouth.
120 H. Tanner.
121 Henry Thornton, M.P.
122 James Upton.
123 William Wilberforce.
124 John Williams.
125 John Witherspoon.
126 Matthew Wilks.
127 Mark Wilks.
128 George Whitefield.
129 Isaac Watts, D.D.
130 Griffith Williams.
131 Dr. Young.
132 John Wycliffe.
133 W. Wilkinson, M.A.
134 John Howard.
135 David Denham.
136 T. T. West.
137 John Knox, M.A.
138 Richard Hale, M.A.
139 Lady S. Huntingdon.
140 Henry Fowler.
141 James Hervey, M.A.
142 John Warburton.
143 Joseph Kinghorn.
144 T. Sharp.
145 John Wesley.
146 William Groser.
147 Thomas Scott.
148 Dr. Yates.
149 William Leppard.
150 W. Tyndal (Martyr, 1536).
151 Joseph Hughes, M.A.
152 Joseph Hall, D.D.
153 Walter Row.
154 Duchess of Ferrara.
155 J. H. Hinton, M.A.
- 156 John Flavel.
157 Reginald Heber, D.D.
158 General Sir H. Havelock.
159 Frederick Trestrail, D.D.
160 B. W. Noel, M.A.
161 Edward Steane, D.D.
162 Robert Hale, M.A.
163 W. B. Gurney.
164 S. Pearce.
165 Dr. Kitto.
166 J. Thomas.
167 Archbishop Usher.
168 John Angell James.
169 Dr. Cumming.
170 Robert Maguire, M.A.
171 Dr. Livingstone.
172 J. H. Evans, M.A.
173 Dr. Cox.
174 Joseph Ivimey.
175 Sir S. M. Peto, M.P.
176 William Brock D.D.
177 George Murrell.
178 Charles Stovel.
179 C. Eiven.
180 H. J. Betts.
181 H. S. Brown.
182 J. P. Chown.
183 Richard Baxter.
184 W. Poole Balfern.
185 Joseph Mountford.
186 T. Winter.
187 Christmas Evans.
188 William Knibb.
189 Thomas Burchell.
190 Eustace Carey.
191 C. H. Spurgeon.
192 W. Barker.
193 James Smith.

exclusively divines of the Protestant Church,—in the centre of which is a large likeness of Mr. Spurgeon, when about twenty-three years of age, 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. 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 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 forefinger 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 position then assigned to him. He has eclipsed in popularity and usefulness the greatest of them all, though no one could have dreamed, at that time, to what vast dimensions his influence, his fame, and his varied and marvellous usefulness would extend."

Beside the historic interest attaching to the group of portraits, readers of the *Autobiography* will be able to pick out the likenesses of many ministers and prominent laymen who were more or less closely associated with Mr. Spurgeon, and whose names are mentioned in this or the preceding volume.