

Wells and Spurgeon from the earthen vessel

Editor's Note: The following information has been gleaned from issues of The Earthen Vessel and Christian Record from the 1855 to 1858 issues. (I found no references on this subject in the 1856 issue) They provide valuable information about the controversy between James Wells and C. H. Spurgeon. In addition they give valuable insight into the character and mindset of both James Wells and the editor Walter Banks.

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First review of Spurgeon by Banks - pages 277ff December 1854

Editor's Note: This was the first in a series by Banks on "The Pastors of our Churches; the Preachers of our day." It is very instructive to see Banks's two basic premise's set out here in the first paragraph: "knowing that there is some good thing in all men" and "to have no hand in exhibiting" faults or imperfections in others. This really sums up his editorship in a few words. On the one hand he loved and strongly defended his friend and fellow worker James Wells. On the other hand he was all too ready to compromise, to seek out only the good in others, especially Spurgeon. This often left him in the unenviable position of balancing between two opposites. Wells on the other hand was first of all concerned with the Truth as opposed to all forms of falsehood. This material is presented here in the hope that truth and not personalizes will prevail.

A Brief and Impartial Review of Mr. Spurgeon's Ministry

[As we have nearly come to the close of another year, we are striking out a new line of mental labor—it is a glance at Ministers as they are. It is not an easy task: but then, we go to this work with a two-fold determination—first, knowing that there is some good thing in all good men, we will try to find out, and to shew, how that good thing is developed in different ways in different men. Secondly, knowing that there are imperfections in all men, we are determined, by help divine, to have no hand in exhibiting them: "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth."]

Mr. C. H. Surgeon is the present pastor of New Park Street Chapel, in the borough of Southwark. He is a young man of very considerable ministerial talent, and his labors have been amazingly successful in raising up the before drooping cause at Park Street to a state of prosperity almost unequalled. We know of no Baptist minister in all the metropolis—(with the exception of our highly-favored and long-tried brother James Wells, of the Surrey Tabernacle,) — who has such crowded auditories and continued overflowing congregations, as Mr. Spurgeon has. But, then, very solemn questions arise—"what Is He Doing?"—"Whose Servant Is He"—"What proof does he give, that,—instrumentally,—his is a heart-searching, a Christ exalting, a truth unfolding, a sinner-converting, a church feeding, a soul-saving ministry"—This is the point at issue with many whom we know—a point which we should rejoice to see clearly settled—in the best sense—and demonstrated beyond a doubt in the confidence of all the true churches of Christ in Christendom. In introducing this subject to the notice of our readers, we have no object in view, further than a desire to furnish all the material which has been thrown into our hands—a careful and discriminating examination of which may, to some extent, be edifying and profitable. At the moment of writing, the following note came to hand. It expresses the silent conviction of a large multitude of Gospel hearers at this moment; and we therefore give it verbatim.

"Dear Mr. Editor,—I went last night to hear Mr. Spurgeon at Park Street—and after much squeezing got into a seat. It appeared to me that a very great number, after ineffectual attempts to gain ingress, went away again, without being able to hear him. He preached from these words:—"He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied." And much to my satisfaction, he delivered a short, pithy, and, to me, powerful discourse; giving us an epitome of the grand and fundamental doctrines of the Bible; powerfully proving, under the head concerning Christ's satisfaction, that if but one of his elect body, the church, could possibly be missing at last, he could not be satisfied.

"God has wonderfully gifted this stripling, he has a powerful voice, an easy and abundant flow of matter. In fact, from the impression I was under, upon the whole, I could not help concluding, that this young man is destined of the Lord, to be a very useful and laborious servant of Christ. He speaks as one having authority, and not as do the Scribes and Pharisees of our day. There are some of my friends, who regard his youth as an obstacle to their well receiving him; but surely, God is able to work by means of a David or a Timothy, as effectually, as by more aged and experienced instruments; and a very few years' time will remove this objection. To all appearance, however, a course of very great usefulness is laid out for this youthful champion; and if he does somewhat closely, (but not too closely,) insist upon fruits corresponding with a profession of the gospel, we must not call this legality, when we know him to be sound in the main; indeed, I think this is what the acknowledged ministers of truth, in our time, have long neglected to enforce.

"Wishing you every success in the proclamation of pure truth, I am dear sir, yours truly, John."

We wish our present remarks to be considered merely introductory, not conclusive; but seeing that the minds of so many are aroused to enquiry as to what may be considered the real position of this young Samuel in the professing church, we are disposed to search the records now before us—and from thence fetch out all the evidence we can find expressive of a real work of grace in the soul—and a Divine call to publish the tidings of salvation, the mysteries of the cross, and the work of the Holy Spirit, in the hearts of the living in Jerusalem.

Before we extract any sentence as uttered by Mr. Spurgeon himself — let us deliberately consider one question—"Does the Bible, the Word of God,—(the only test and standard by which everything connected with salvation matters must be tried,)—demand, or call for, any special or particular qualification to prove that the Great Head of the Church has himself sent such and such a man into the work of the ministry?"

The Scriptures most certainly do insist upon the existence of some qualifications essential to such a work. It is absolutely and essentially necessary that a minister of the gospel should have a deep, and an increasing knowledge of himself, as a fallen, ruined, helpless, and miserable sinner in the sight of a -holy God. [We cannot here give Scripture confirmation: that may come another time.] Also, it is essential that such a man have an internal knowledge of God, as teaching and chastening a sinner out of His holy law—for "every one that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto Christ:" and only such. If a man, therefore, has not been instructed, convicted, humbled, and emptied, under Divine chastisement, he has never truly come to Jesus Christ; consequently he can never trace out the way of life—he can never cast up the high way—he can never really help the poor law-condemned sinner To Hope In The Lord—nor can he confirm the faint and feeble saint in the hour of sharp temptation. Furthermore, a knowledge of Christ in his Person, work, and offices:—in his delivering power; in his pardoning and peace-speaking blood; in his prevalent intercession; and in his ultimate gathering together of all things in himself, is as absolutely necessary in the experience of a minister of the gospel, as the rising of the natural sun is essential to the making our natural day. Some men in the ministry are always gloomy; tending to melancholy; obscure; full of awful threatening's; and encouraging unbelief, despondency, and dreadful fears. But why is this—Simply, because, as yet, the Sun of Righteousness has not arisen in their souls with healing and life-giving power; and whether such men have any Divine authority for standing in the ministry at all, is a very serious question. Another branch of knowledge essential to the ministry, is that of The Person and Work of the Holy Ghost. "Without this, there is no living breath in the ministry: it may be eloquent; it may be theoretically instructive; it may be beautifully attractive to the natural, the moral, and the inquiring mind: it may burn with a vehement circumstantial zeal; it may be influential in producing external reformation; but, unless the Eternal Spirit be known, acknowledged, and honored, there will be no breath; no holy

unction; no glorious discoveries of the mysteries of grace; no laying sinners down in the dust of self-abasement; no raising saints up into sweet communion; no bringing the prisoners out of prison, and letting them into the banqueting house. Let the ministry—in a natural, or in an acquired sense, be what it may—if by that ministry God himself give not the command—"Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain;"—unless this essential blessing be there, we believe there can be No Genuine Conversion or Sinners To God—no building up the saints in their most holy faith. Where there is a sanctified and well-balanced knowledge of Satan's devices, and of the perpetual warfare between the old and the new Adam—between the flesh and the spirit—in the experience of every quickened believer—the ministry will be increasingly valuable, and very highly prized by those whose path-way lays through the deeply trying waters of temptation, tribulation, conflict, and anxious care.

The foregoing briefly described elements as essential to the discovery of a man's Divine call to the ministry, as the beating of the pulse, the circulation of the blood, and the reception of nourishment, is essential to man's natural existence. But for the full development of these elements, time, and other things, are requisite. "Who"—that is wise, prudent, and fearful of rash conclusions—"Who, hath despised the day of small things?" How fully these vital evidences of a divinely authorized ministry are found in the present pastor of New Park Street, the following testimonies may help our discerning readers to judge. Unlike many of the faithful servants of Christ, he was not left to run, for a course of years, into the open paths of practical iniquity and transgression. We have good reason to hope that in very early life the Lord laid his hand upon him for good; put holy fear into his heart, and quickened his soul with life, spiritual and divine. We have been in company and in converse with those who have known the subject of these remarks from his earliest days; what evidence we give, therefore, may be relied on.

Mr. C. H. Spurgeon is the son of Mr. J. Spurgeon, an Independent minister, at Tollesbury, in Essex; and the grandson of the venerable J. Spurgeon, of Stambourne, in the same county. Long before he was fifteen years of age, it is a known fact, that he suffered intense agonies of mind, with reference to the possibility of his soul's salvation. We should be glad to read or hear his own version of those days and nights of secret grief, of mental anguish, and of earnest crying to God, through which he passed in those early days. What an unspeakable mercy, to be thus early brought down with a contrite spirit to the mercy seat! Plucked as a brand from the burning; and preserved! We cannot but be thankful to the God of all grace, for such displays of Divine sovereignty. What a contrast—between the parentage, uprising, conversion, and call of William Huntington, William Gatsby, John Warburton, John Foreman, James Wells, and others, and that of C. H. Spurgeon! Yet—who will dare to say—that the latter is not as much of God, as are all the former?—Mr. C. H. Spurgeon was brought to know the Lord for himself under a powerful sermon preached from these words, (when he was only fifteen years of age,)—"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." About one year and a half from this period, he was baptized at Islebam, in Cambridgeshire; and commenced preaching the gospel as far as it was revealed and opened unto him; and very many seals did the Lord give him even at the outset; some of whom remain in the visible church as witnesses of the power of God even through the feeble instrumentality of a stripling so newly come to the faith. He was chosen pastor of the Baptist Church at Waterbeach, when only seventeen years of age; and continued there until his removal to Scouthwark, in the early part of the present year.

We are disposed to believe there is some truth in the statement of a correspondent—he says—"I believe Mr. Spurgeon is as great a lover of free-grace and of real Calvinism, as any man; but the bigotry of some, who cannot hear the truth unless expressed in certain phrases, seems to put him out of heart; and keeps him walking almost in a separate path. All the moderates," (adds our correspondent,) "are ready to bite their tongues for rage, at, what they call Mr. Spurgeon's hyperism." Poor creatures! 'We have but one desire for them, and that is, that the Lord himself may break their hearts by the powerful application of

Divine truth—cause them to know what it is to be driven to the very ends of the earth; to sink, as Jonah did, into the belly of hell; from thence to look with the eye of a living faith unto the Mediator, with " God be merciful to me, a sinner;" and when sovereign mercy has really delivered, pardoned, and established them on the only solid foundation, as loud as any they will cry—" Salvation is Of The Lord."

In a sermon of Mr. Spurgeon—entitled "A View of God's Glory,"—we have the Sovereignty of God declared in a bold and becoming spirit. After a striking illustration of the Goodness of God, he says—

"I can say no more concerning God's goodness. But this is not all that Moses saw. If you look to the words which follow my text, you will see that God said — 'I will make all my goodness pass before thee' but there was something more. No one attribute of God sets God out to perfection; there must always be another. He said—' I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.' There is another attribute of God. There is his sovereignty. God's goodness without his sovereignty does not completely set forth his nature. I think of the man, who when he was dying, called me to see him: he said, 'I am going to heaven. 'Well,' I replied, 'what makes you think you are going there when you never thought of it before?' 'God is merciful and good.' Now that poor creature was dying, and being lost forever, for he had not a right conception of God. He had only one idea of God: that God is good; but that is not enough. If you only see one attribute, you only have half a God. God is good, and he is a sovereign, and doeth what he pleases, and though good to all, in the sense of benevolence, he is not obliged to be good to any. 'I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and show mercy on whom I will show mercy.' Do not you be alarmed, my friends, because I am going to preach about sovereignty. I know some people, when they hear about sovereignty, say,—' Oh, we are going to have some terrible high doctrine.' Well; if it is in the Bible that is enough for you. Is not that all you want to know? If God says—' I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy,' it is not for you to say it is high doctrine. Who told you it is high doctrine? It is good doctrine. What right have you to call one doctrine high and one low? Would you like me to have a Bible with 'H' against high, and 'L' against low, so that I could leave the high doctrine out, and please you? My bible has no mark of that kind; it says — ' I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.' There is divine sovereignty. I believe some are afraid to say anything about this great doctrine, lest they should offend some of their people; but, my friends, it is true, and you shall hear it. God is a sovereign. He was a sovereign ere he made this world. He lived alone, and this was in his mind, Shall I make anything, or shall I not? I have a right to make creatures, or not to make any. He resolved that he would fashion a world. When he made it, he had a right to form the world in what shape and size he pleased; and he had a right, if he chose, to leave the globe untenanted by a single creature. When he had resolved to make man, he had a right to make him whatever kind of creature he liked. If he wished to make him a worm or a serpent, he had a right to do it. When he made him, he had a right to put any command on him that he pleased; and God had a right to say to Adam, Thou shalt not touch that forbidden tree. And when Adam offended, God had a right to punish him, and all the race for ever in the bottomless pit. God is so far sovereign, that he has a right, if he likes, to save anyone in this chapel, or to crush all who are here. He has a right to take us all to heaven, if he pleases, or to destroy us. He has a right to do just as he pleases with us. Who are as much in his hands, as prisoners in the hands of her majesty, when they are condemned for a capital offence against the law of the land; yea, as much as clay in the hands of the potter. This is what he asserted, when he said—'I will be gracious (to whom I will be gracious, and I will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.' This stirs up your carnal pride, does it not? Men want to be somebody. They do not like to lie down before God, and have it preached to them that God can do just as he wills with them. Ah! You may hate it, but it is what the scripture tells us. Surely it is self-evident that God may do as he will with his own. We all like to do what we will with our own property. God has said, that if you go to his throne, he will hear you; but he has a right not to do it, if he likes. He has a right to do just as he pleases. If he choose to let you go on in the error of your ways, that is his right; and if he says,

as he does — 'Come unto me all ye that are weary, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' it is his right to do so.

That is the high and awful doctrine of DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY." Instead of fighting shy of Mr. Spurgeon— or of being ready to bite our tongues with rage—when we read such sentiments as the following, our souls are ready to jump for joy, to find a young Timothy like him so unflinching—and at the same time so fully alive to the real wants of the churches of Christ in these days. We know it is not very pleasant to go into the pulpit, and see half the pews empty—and then to be told afterward, the people are gone—some to the Surrey Tabernacle, and others to New Park Street. No; no; this is not pleasant to a proud heart; but, if it be so—and if at either of those places the people get better food than we can give them, we must say—"the will of the Lord be done." Come, brethren, read the following paragraph; and, then, if you can, pray that our God may keep this young minister faithful even unto death. In the same sermon to which we have referred, he said—

"Put the two together—goodness and sovereignty—and you see God's glory. If you take sovereignty alone, you will not understand God. Some people only have an idea of God's sovereignty, and not of his goodness, such are usually gloomy, harsh, and ill-humored. You must put the two together; that God is good, and that God is a sovereign. You must speak of sovereign grace. God is not grace alone, he is sovereign grace. He is not sovereign alone, but he is graciously sovereign. That is the best idea of God. When Moses said—' I beseech thee, show me thy glory,' God made him see that he was glorious, and that his glory was his sovereign goodness. Surely, beloved, we cannot be wrong in loving the doctrine of free, unmerited, distinguishing grace, when we see it thus mentioned as the brightest jewel in the crown of our covenant God. Do not be afraid of election and sovereignty. The time is come when our ministers must tell us more about them, or if not our souls will be so lean and starved that we shall mutiny for the bread of life. Oh may God send us more thorough gospel men who will preach sovereign grace as the glory of the gospel."

There may be—we were going to say, there must of necessity be—yea, so may safely say, there is—in Mr. Spurgeon's ministry, but very little of what we are accustomed to call deep, experimental preaching: while, on the other hand, there are frequent bursts of zealous, exhortatory, and urgent expression, which might be considered indicative of a legal and Arminian bias of mind. Nevertheless, there is a wholesome vein running through the whole of it; which constrains us to hope that, to a large class of persons, it will be a great blessing. The following paragraphs, gathered out rather hastily, will, we think, bear us out.

In the course of his sermon on the harvest, he said—

"Every Christian is a sower sent into the world to sow good seed, and to sow good seed only. I do not say that Christian men never sow any other seed than good seed. Sometimes, in unguarded moments, they take garlic into their hands instead of wheat; and we may sow tares instead of corn. Christians sometimes make mistakes, and God sometimes suffers his people to fall, so that they sow sins; but the Christian never reaps his sins; Christ reaps them for him. He often has to have a decoction made of the bitter leaves of sin, but he never reaps the fruit of it. Christ has borne the punishment. Yet bear in mind, my brethren, if you and I sin against God, God will take our sin and he will get an essence from it that will be bitter to our taste: though he does not make us eat the fruits, yet still he will make us grieve and sorrow over our crimes. But the Christian, as I have said, should be employed in sowing good seed, and as such he shall have a glorious harvest. In some sense or other the Christian must be sowing seed. If God calls him to the ministry, he is a seed sower; if God calls him to the Sabbath School, he is a seed sower; whatever his office, he is a sower of seed. Here I stand, Sabbath after Sabbath, and on week days too, and sow seed broadest

all over this immense field; I cannot tell where my seed goes. Some are like barren ground, and they object to the seed that I sow. Let them—I have no objection that any man should do so. I am only responsible to God, whose servant I am. There are others, and my seed falls upon them and brings forth a little fruit, but by and by when the sun is up, because of persecution, they wither away and they die. But I hope there are many here, who are like the good ground that God has prepared, and when I scatter the seed abroad it falls on good ground and brings forth fruit to an abundant harvest. Ah! The minister has a joyful harvest, even in this world, when he sees souls converted. I have had a harvest time when I have led the sheep down to the washing of Baptism, when I have seen God's people coming out from the mass of the world, and telling what the Lord had done for their souls—when God's children are edified and built up it is worth living for, and worth dying ten thousand deaths for to be the means of saving one soul. What a joyful harvest it is when God gives us converted ones by tens and hundreds, and 'adds to his church abundantly such as shall be saved!' Now I am like a farmer just at this season of the year. I have got a good deal of wheat down, and I want to get it into the barn, for fear the rain comes and spoils it. I believe I have got a great many here, good pious Christian persons, but they will persist in standing out in the field. I want to get them into the barns. They are good people, but they do not like to make a profession and join the church. I want to get them into my Master's granary, and to see Christians added to the church. I see some holding down their heads and saying, he means me. So I do. You ought before this to have joined Christ's church: and unless you are fit to be gathered into Christ's little garner here on earth, you have no right to anticipate being gathered into that great garner which is in heaven."

Again—in the following paragraphs— there are weighty and powerful truths thrown out in so striking a manner, as are calculated, under God, to alarm, to arrest, to convince, and to constrain, many a careless professor! Yea, we can never believe that such a ministry will fail—it must do well. Let giddy and careless professors read this:—"The worst harvest will be that of those who sin against the church of Christ. I would not that a man should sin against his body; I would not that a man should sin against his estate; I would not that a man should sin against his fellows; but most of all, I would not have him touch Christ's church. He that touches one of God's people, touches the apple of his eye. When I have read of some people finding fault with the servants of the Lord, I have thought within myself, I would not do so. It is the greatest insult to a man to speak ill of his children. You speak ill of God's children, and you will be rewarded for it in everlasting punishment. There is not a single one of God's family that God does not love, and if you touch one of them, he will have vengeance on you. Nothing puts a man on his mettle like touching his children; and if you touch God's church, you will have the direst vengeance of all. The hottest flames of hell are for those who touch God's children. Go on, sinner, laugh at religion if thou pleasest; but know that it is the blackest of sin in all the catalogue of crime. God will forgive anything sooner than that; and though that is not unpardonable, yet if un-repent-ed of, it will meet the greatest punishment. God cannot bear that his elect should be touched, and if you do so, it is the greatest crime you can commit."

The last discourse of Mr. Spurgeon's which we notice in this introductory paper, is by far the best of any we have yet seen of his—it embraces two vital and valuable portions of a living ministry—The Testimony Of Christ; and The Christian's In Wrought EVIDENCE OF THE TRUTH Of That TESTIMONY. Beyond all question, there are, in this discourse,—(entitled "Confirming the Witnesses of Christ,"—(published by James Paul,) — some substantial fruits, flowing from a mind that has been led to think deeply, and to enter solemnly, into the hidden mysteries of the person, the passion, the work, the victories, and the kingdom of our inexpressibly glorious Mediator—the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, there is something so supernatural and soul-enchancing in the Holy Spirit's revelation of Jesus in the conscience of a heaven-born soul, and in the unctuous testimony which that soul will bear to the honor of his dear name, that always awakens in us a sense of gratitude to God, and of real sympathy to the person thus honored, and helped to know and to rejoice in "the glories of the Lamb." Prudence lays a constraint on us here, or we

could much enlarge. May God the Holy Ghost pour down on the head and heart of this his young servant, and upon all our fellow-laborers in the gospel kingdom, such a measure of holy light, and sanctifying love—as shall produce unity of heart and effort in seeking the glory of God, and the good of souls;—then—and not till then—can it manifestly go well with Zion.

Passing by much that is powerfully telling in this discourse, we come to notice the preacher's description of the Character of that Witness, or testimony, which Christ bore. He first shews, that "Christ witnessed directly from himself; and that is one thing in which he is superior to all the rest of the prophets; and other holy men who testified to the truth."

"When Christ spake, he always spake directly from himself. All the rest only spake that which they had received from God. They had to tarry till the winged cherub brought the live coal, they had to gird on the Ephod and the curious girdle with its Urim and Thummim, they must stand listening till the voice saith—' Son of man I have a message for thee.' They were but instruments blown by the breath of God, and giving sounds only at his pleasure; but Christ was a fountain or living water, he opened his mouth and the truth gushed forth, and it all came directly from himself. In this, as a faithful witness, he was superior to every other."

Secondly, he shews Christ's testimony was uniform.

"We cannot say that of any other. Look at Noah, he was a very good testifier to the truth, except once, when he was intoxicated; he was a sorry testifier to the truth then. David was a testifier to the truth, but he sinned against God, and put Uriah to death. The same might be said of Isaac; and if you go through the whole list of holy men, you will find some fault in them; and we shall be obliged to say, they were very good testifiers, certainly, but their testimony is not uniform. There is a plague spot which sin has left upon them all; there was something to shew that man is nothing but an earthen vessel after all. But Christ's testimony was uniform. There never was a time when he contradicted himself; there never was an instance in which it could be said, 'what you have said, you now contradict.'"

After shewing that Christ's testimony was perfect, and final, he comes to the confirmation of the testimony of Christ in the believer's own experience. And here we are a little disappointed. We had hoped the preacher would have freely and fully given us the benefit of his own experience in the reception, and in the realization of The Truth as it is in Christ. This, however, he has hardly touched. It may be he is keeping this back for a special occasion; but we will venture to beseech of him never to withhold his own daily experience of God's grace—nor his Spiritual exercises under faith's trials. We do not wish any minister to be everlastingly preaching about himself; but a testimony hot and honest from the ever-bubbling breast of an exercised child of God, is of more value to God's living family than all the fine woven essays, and theoretical dissertations which the brain of man can produce. Oh, thou valiant little pastor of Park Street! For Christ's sake, and for the sake of poor tried and tempted souls, we pray thee, hold not back a full and faithful declaration of God's gracious dealings with thine own soul. Go —brother—go, in David's path, and cry out —" Come, and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell thee what he has done for My Soul." Having gone thus far, we must not leave our readers to suppose that the preacher said nothing from himself. No; by reading the following sentences, (with which we close up this first paper, and that very abruptly, too, having to take a journey in the Master's cause), some pleasing testimony from the preacher's own heart will be found. Our readers must understand the following are not entire extracts—they are sentences selected; but they are his own words; and more of them we hope to give another day; for, if we live, we have not done with Mr. Spurgeon yet, The following, however, forms an interesting close to this hasty notice. He said—

"Oh, beloved, that is the best confirmation of gospel truth, which every Christian carries about within him. I love 'Butler's Analogy;' it is a very powerful book. I love 'Paley's Evidences;' but I never need them myself, for my own use. I do not want any proof that the Bible is true. Why? Because it is confirmed in me. There is a witness which dwells in me, which makes me bid defiance to all infidelity, so that I can say—

"Should all the forms that men devise, Assault my soul with treacherous art, I'll call them vanities and lies, and bind the gospel to my heart." I do not care to read books opposing the Bible; I never want to wade through mire for the sake of washing myself afterwards. When I am asked to read a heretical book I think of good John Newton. Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, said to him, 'Dare you read my "Key to the Romans?"' 'I have turned it over,' said Newton. 'You have turned it over!' said the Doctor; 'and is this the treatment a book must meet with which has cost me so many years' hard study. You ought to have read it carefully, and weighed deliberately what comes forward on so serious a subject.' 'Hold,' said Newton, 'you have cut me out full employment for a life as long as Methuselah's. My life is too short to be spent in reading contradictions of my religion. If the first page tells me the man is undermining truths, it is enough for me. If I find the first mouthful of a joint tainted, I do not want to eat it through to be convinced I ought to send it away.' Having the truth confirmed in us, we can laugh all arguments to scorn; we are plated in a sheet of mail when we have the witness within us of God's truth. All the men in this world cannot make us alter one single iota of what God has written within us. Ah, brethren and sisters, we want to have the truth confirmed in us. Let me tell you a few things that will do this. First, the very fact of our conversion tends to confirm us in the truth. Oh, says the Christian, do not tell me there is no power in religion, for I have felt it. I was thoughtless like others; I laughed religion to scorn, and those who attended to it; my language was, let us eat, drink, and enjoy the sunshine of life; but now through Christ Jesus I find the Bible a honeycomb, which hardly needs to be pressed to let the drops of honey run out; it is so sweet and precious to my taste that I wish I could sit down and feast on my Bible forever. What has made this alteration? That; is how the Christian reasons. He says, there must be a power in grace, otherwise I never should be so changed as I am, there must be truth in the Christian religion, and otherwise this change never would have come over me."

[Ah, dear brother, but the Christian has another side to his experience; and from that you might have read a leaf or two.]

"Some men have ridiculed religion and its followers, and yet Divine grace has been so mighty, that those very men have become converted and felt the new birth. Such men cannot be argued out of the true religion. You may stand and talk to them from dewy morn to setting eve, but you can never get them to believe that there is not truth in God's word. They have the truth confirmed in them.

"Then, again, another thing confirms the Christian in the truth, and that is, when God answers his prayers. I think that this is one of the strongest confirmations of truth, when we find God hears us. Now I speak to you on this point of things which I have tasted and handled. The wicked man will not believe this; he will say, Ah, go and tell those who know no better. I say, I have proved the power of prayer a hundred times, because I have gone to God, and asked him for mercies, and have had them. Ah, say some, it is only just in the common course of providence. 'Common course of providence!' It is a blessed course of providence. If you had been in my position you would not have said that; I have seen it just as if God had rent the heavens, and put his Hand out and said—' There, my child, is the mercy.' It has come so plainly out of the way, that I could not call it a common course of providence. Sometimes I have been depressed and downcast, and even out of heart at coming to stand before this multitude; and I have said, what shall I

do? I could fly anywhere rather than come here anymore. I have asked God to bless me, and send me words to say; and then I have felt filled to the brim, so that I could come before this congregation or any other. Is that a common course of providence? It is a special providence—a special answer to prayer. And there be some here who can turn to the pages of their diary, and see there God's hand plainly interposing—we can say to the infidel, be gone! The truth is confirmed in us; and so confirmed, that nothing can drive us out of it.

"You have had the truth confirmed in you, my dear friends, when you have found great support in times of affliction and tribulation. Some of you have passed through trouble, for we can never expect a congregation which is free from it. Some of you have been tried and have been brought very low. And cannot you say with David, 'I was brought low, and the Lord helped me?' Can you not think how well you bore that last trouble? When you lost that child you thought that you could not bear it so well as you did; but you said, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'" Many of you have loved ones under the sod; your mother, father, husband, or wife. You thought your heart would break when you lost your parents; but is not the promise true—'If thy father's mother forsake thee, the Lord will take thee up?' He told thee, woman, that he would be a Father to thy children; and hast thou not found it so? Canst thou not say, not one good thing has failed of all the Lord has promised? That is the best confirmation of the truth of God. Sometimes persons come to me in the vestry, and they want me to confirm the truth outside of them. I cannot do that; I want them to have the truth confirmed in them. They say, 'How do you know the Bible is true?' 'Oh,' I say, 'I never have to ask such a question as that now, because it is confirmed in me.' The Bishop has confirmed me—I mean the Bishop of souls; for I never was confirmed by any other; and so confirmed me in the truth, that no one can confirm me out of it."

An intelligent, and rather charitable correspondent, says he has discovered very much in the sermons we have just noticed, "that fall with an ill grace from the" lips of a mere youth. It may be so; many a good man has repented both of his manner, and of some of his matter, when more advanced in life. If there were no marks of imperfection to be seen in friend Spurgeon, he would be a rare exception indeed. Should his life be spared, and his soul's experience of Divine things be deepened, we believe that when many of us are silent in the grave, he will be found of great use in the church of Jesus Christ.

James Wells reply to Walter Banks positive appraisal of Spurgeon – pages 13ff 1855

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE "EARTHEN VESSEL" ON HIS REVIEW UPON HIS REVIEW OF MR. SPURGEON'S MINISTRY

Dear Mr. Editor.—I cannot but express my sincere regret at the course which the Earthen Vessel has of late taken. It appears to me, and too many more beside me, to bear strong marks of apostasy from the spirit of truth.

Personalities, where they must of necessity be causes of disputation, ought to be avoided. Why is Dr. Cumming paraded before us?—a man of whom, perhaps, we cannot, as a gentleman, a scholar, a philanthropist, and an advocate of Protestantism, speak too highly! But who, taught of God, ever once thought his ministry to be that of life and freedom, in the gospel and new covenant sense of the word?

But this I should have passed by—hoping the matter would drop; but, to my unbounded astonishment, we have thrust upon us by your own hand in your December number, another very questionable personage—namely, the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon. To hold my peace any longer would be criminal and traitorous to that cause dearer to me than mortal life.

You begin your review of his ministry with great caution and seeming honesty; you then rise into raptures; you tell us you are made to "jump for joy." But anon, you sink down again into disappointment, and loudly call for something, with which Mr. Spurgeon does not furnish you; and your call for fire, or rain, or whatever you are calling for, sounds very like, "O Baal, hear us!" But Baal could bring neither fire, nor rain; nor can a false gospel—or, which is the same thing, the true gospel, perverted—bring either true judgment into the conscience, or true mercy into the soul.

But then, after this lamentable cry, you fall into a very kind, caressing sort of mood; and then it is — "Ah, dear brother, the Christian has another side to his experience." Yes, that he has: in this thou saidest truly.

I would not wish my hand to be more heavy upon you than is needful; nor will I impute to you the motives which, I can assure you, many do impute to you in this matter. I judge that you have erred (for I most solemnly believe you have erred) in this matter, by oversight; you have not sufficiently weighed the matter; and also by that great amount of benevolent and good feeling so natural to you; a feeling much to your credit; but, like other feelings, it needs control.

I believe, also, that canting professors have had some weight with you. Hence, the real object of your correspondent John, in writing to you, is not, to exalt Mr. Spurgeon, but to level an arrow at those men of God who, because they insist upon fruits that spring from, and accord with the true root, are spoken of as though they did not insist upon fruits at all.

If the Earthen Vessel intend to change Masters, let it do so at once, and the living in Jerusalem will have done with it. If the candle of a true experience, that searches all the inward parts, be taken away, I, for one, should care but little for the candlestick; as the mere candlestick would be but a poor means to light me along in that path which the vulture's eye, keen as it may be, hath not seen. If the Vessel hold fast, to a certain extent, the letter of truth—yet, if there be not the life of truth, the Vessel must be blotted out of the book of life; and if it grow lukewarm, and is neither hot nor cold, we must cast it out of our mouths, nor must we take up its name into our lips.

Now, dear Editor, I write not this to shame you, but from the Christian love I have to you as a man of God, the good wishes I have for the true prosperity of the Vessel; and above all, the concern I feel for the truth as it is in Jesus.

I have no personal antipathy to Mr. Spurgeon; nor should I have written concerning him, but for your review of his ministry: his ministry is a public matter, and therefore open to public opinion, and as you assure us that the sermon on 1 Cor. 1. 6,—The Testimony of Christ Confirmed in You—by Mr. Spurgeon—is by far the best, I will, by your permission, lay before you my opinion of the same. But I will first make a few remarks concerning Mr. Spurgeon, to which remarks I think he is entitled.

It is, then, in the first place, clear that he has been, from his childhood, a very industrious and ardent reader of books—especially those of a theological kind; and that he has united with his theological researches books of classic, and of scientific caste; and has thus possessed himself of every kind of information which, by the law of association, he can deal out at pleasure; and these acquirements, by

reading, are united, in Mr. Spurgeon, with good speaking gifts. The laws of oratory have been well studied, and he suits the action to his words. This mode of public speaking was, in the theatres of ancient Greece, carried to such an extent, that one person had to speak the words, and another had to perform the gestures, and suit, with every variety of face and form, the movement to the subject in hand. Mr. Spurgeon has caught the idea, only with this difference, that he (Mr. S.) performs both parts himself.

Mr. Spurgeon is too well acquainted with Elisha Coles, not to see in the Bible the sovereignty of God; and too well acquainted with the writings of Toplady and Tucker, not to see in the Bible the doctrine of predestination, and an overruling providence; and too well versed in the subtleties of the late Dr. Chalmers, not to philosophize upon rolling planets, and methodically moving particles of earth and water, each particle having its ordained sphere.

But in addition to these, he appears to be a well-disposed person—kind, benevolent, courteous, full of good will to his fellow creatures, endearing in his manners, social; a kind of person whom it would seem almost a cruelty to dislike. The same may be with equal truth said, both of Dr. Pusey and of Cardinal Wiseman.

But then, it becomes us to be aware, not only of the rough garment of a mock and "arrogant humility," but also of Amalakite-measured, and delicate steps; and also of the soft raiment of refined and studied courtesy, (Matt. xi. 8), and fascinating smile, with, surely, "the bitterness of death is past." 1 Sam. Xv. 32. But Samuel had too much honesty about him to be thus deceived. We must, then, beware of words that are softer than butter, and smoother than oil. (Psa. lt. 21). Not one of the reformers appears to have been of this amiable caste; but these creature refinements pass with thousands for religion; and tens of thousands are deluded thereby. It was by great, very great politeness, that the serpent beguiled Eve; and, unhappily, her posterity love to have it so: so true it is, that Satan is not only a Prince of darkness, but transformed also as an "angel of light" and shall deceive, if it were possible, even the very elect.

And yet further than all this, he (Mr. S.) was, so says the Vessel, brought to know the Lord when he was only fifteen years old. Heaven grant it may prove to be so! for the young man's sake, and for that of others also! but I have—most solemnly have—my doubts as to the Divine reality of his conversion. I do not say—it is not for me to say—that he is not a regenerated man; but this I do know, that there are conversions which are not of God; and whatever convictions a man may have—whatever may be the agonies of his mind as to the possibility of his salvation— whatever terror any one may experience, and however sincere they may be, and whatever deliverance they may have by dreams or visions, or by natural conscience, or the letter, or even apparent power of the Word, yet, if they cannot stand, in their spirit and ministry, the test of the law of truth, and the testimony of God, there is no true light in them; for a person may be intellectually enlightened—he may taste of the heavenly gift, and be made partaker of the Holy Ghost, professionally, and taste of the good Word of God, (Heb. vi.), and yet not be regenerated, and therefore not beyond the danger of falling away, even from that portion of truth which such do hold. Such are never thoroughly convinced of what they are by nature; Psalm xxxviii.; Rom. vii.; shew a path to which they make some approaches, and of which they may eloquently talk, but at the same time give certain proofs that they are not truly walking therein.

Mr. Spurgeon tells us, in his sermon on the Ministry of Angels, that he has more angelology about him than most people. Well, perhaps he has; but then, if a real angel from heaven were to preach another gospel, he is not to be received.

But now, dear Mr. Editor, as we humble readers of the Vessel look somewhat to you, and in most cases have the pleasure of being instructed, and refreshed, and profited, and as you inform us that Mr. Spurgeon's sermon on 1 Cor. 1 6—The Testimony of Christ Confirmed in You—is the best that you have read, I will take that as a sample, and give—not hastily, but deliberately, and in the fear of God—my opinion upon it. And to me the said sermon appears, both in the negative and in the positive, to be materially faulty; that is, that there is the absence of something that should be present, and the presence of something that should be absent.

The faulty points are these:—

1st. We are told, page 1, that the Corinthians had much of the learning of the Greeks, and were men of classic taste, and that they should have used these gifts to confirm the testimony of Christ.

Mr. Spurgeon, and the Word of God, very widely differ, upon this Greek wisdom and classic taste. The Word of God rejects the wisdom of the flesh, and declares it to be foolishness with God, and that it is at best but "earthly, sensual and devilish," and essentially different from the wisdom that is from above. Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; but the wisdom by which he led Israel out of Egypt, came altogether from another quarter. The apostle Paul was a man of much Greek learning, and classic taste; but it was by a very different kind of wisdom that he preached among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; he came not as our moderns do, of Greek learning, and classic taste; these come in the jingle, and play, and wisdom of words, but not in the demonstration of the Spirit, or of the right kind of power.

2ndly In page 2 we are told, that he (the Lord) "determined upon sending a Mediator into the world, whereby he might restore it to its pristine glory, and save to himself a people who are to be called the elect of God."

Now, here Mr. Editor, we get two rather singular doctrines: first, that the world is to be restored to its pristine glory; and secondly, that the people of God are to be called the elect of God.

Here, again, Mr. Spurgeon and the Bible are at variance. The one says, the heavens are to vanish away like smoke, and the earth wax old, like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; that the earth is to be burned up; but Mr. Spurgeon says No, to this, and restores it to its pristine glory. "But the people of God" says the sermon "are to be called the elect of God." I thought this nomination was already settled, and that from before the foundation of the world.

3rdly. The very paragraph, Mr. Editor, which you quote from the sermon, appears to me to be very faulty; nor can I feel at all one with the sermon, in the way it speaks of the testimony of Christ. The sermon says, that the testimony of Christ was direct from himself, and that the testimony of prophets was second hand; that the testimony of Christ was uniform, but that the prophets contradicted themselves; that the testimony of Christ was perfect, but the testimony of the prophets was not perfect; that the testimony of Christ was final.

Now, Mr. Editor, this appears to me to be nothing but vain jangling, and a jargon of truth and error, ingeniously interwoven. Just try the several parts.

"The testimony of Christ was direct from himself." But the Word of God contradicts this, and says, "The words that I speak are not mine, but his that sent me." "But the testimony of the prophets was second

hand" But the Word of God contradicts this also, and says, that prophecy came not in the olden time by the will of man, but "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The truth is, that both the prophets and Jesus himself spake direct from heaven by the same Spirit.

Again: The sermon says that the testimony of Christ was uniform. This is most readily granted. "But" says the sermon "we cannot say that of other men." What, then! Were the holy prophet's one thing in the truth of God today, and another thing tomorrow? What is this, but invalidating their testimony, and setting them aside?" The testimony of Christ," says the sermon "was perfect." Well, of course it was; and so was the testimony of the prophets — unless the sermon means to charge the Holy Ghost with imperfection. The sermon brow-beats the prophets, "twitting them of their personal infirmities, and making their testimony to be nothing but a few scattered threads. Does the New Testament do this? Would a man with the true fear of God in his heart do this?

But then, the sermon brings in some of the old, bye-gone fathers of the early ages, and some few moderns; among which, a prophet does not dare to shew his head. Now, these fathers are the great luminaries of the world, and blest with the title of galaxy of stars. So much for Greek learning, and classic taste.

But the sermon says, also, that the testimony of Christ was final; and this is true; and so also was the testimony of the prophets final. From their testimony there is no appeal. They testified of Christ, and that by inspiration of God.

Mr. Spurgeon's mode of confirming the testimony of Christ, is not the apostles' mode of doing the same. Mr. Spurgeon makes it consist chiefly in something to be done by mortal man; but the Holy Ghost decides it thus—" Who (that is, God) shall confirm you, unto the end that ye may be blameless (generally, especially from apostasy, for so I take it) in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Verse viii.) Mr. Spurgeon's mode of confirming the testimony of Christ is merely heathen and natural. The conscience of the heathen accused and excused, and by the things around them, told them of a Supreme Being; so Mr. Spurgeon's mode of confirming the testimony of Christ, is to prove to others that the Bible is not a fiction. He pretends to set aside Butler's Analogy, and Paley's Evidences, as unnecessary; and yet advances in substance the same thing himself.

And how does the sermon close? Why, it closes with the veriest cant, hypocrisy, falsehood and delusion of the present day. It closes with just the deception that suits the taste of the empty and flimsy profession of thousands. For I make no hesitation in saying, that neither himself nor one of his hearers, either does or can practice what he preaches. Does he — or can he come to the throne of grace when he pleases? Yet, his hearers are to go home and make a fresh vow to God, and to register this new resolution. And moreover, his hearers are not to do this in their own strength. But how are they to do it in God's strength, unless he give that strength? And why should they seek his strength, when they are content with their own? Why did not Job get God's strength, and come at once to the mercy-seat, and so have done as Mr. Spurgeon would have commanded him? Pity, that Job, and the poor tried prophets and holy apostles, had not lived in this enlightened age!

Now, Mr. Editor, you, perhaps, will say, these samples are only a few straws. Well, be it so; but they shew which way the current is directing its course. But mind, I have given but few, out of the many proofs this sermon gives of its unscriptural character.

And now, to sum up the whole, I do most solemnly, and as in the sight of God, believe that while this sermon makes some approaches to the truth, yet, that it is not in the path marked and described in Psalm

xxxviii and Romans vii and numbers of other such Scriptures, which is the path the holy prophets went. I believe Mr. S. well capable of talking about those paths, but I cannot see that he is walking therein. This sermon is not in a path that can by possibility confirm the testimony of Christ. It is not a path in which it can be known.

Concerning Mr. Spurgeon's ministry, I believe the following things:—

1st, That it is most awfully deceptive; that it passes by the essentials of the work of the Holy Ghost, and sets people by shoals down for Christians, that are not Christians by the quickening and indwelling power of the Holy Ghost. Here free-willers, intellectual Calvinists, high and low, are delighted with him, together with the philosophic and classic taste Christian! This is simply deceiving others, with the deception wherewith he himself is deceived.

2ndly, that as he speaks some truth, convictions will in some cases take place under his ministry; such will go into real concern for their salvation; and will, after a time, leave his ministry, for a ministry that can accompany them in their rugged paths of wilderness experience.

3rdly.—Though I do not attach the moral worth to such a ministry as I should to the true ministry of the Spirit, yet it may be morally and socially beneficial to some people, who perhaps would care to hear only such an intellectually, or rather rhetorically gifted, man as is Mr. Spurgeon; but then they have this advantage at the cost of being fatally deluded.

4thly.—My opinion is, and my argument is, and my conclusion is, that no man who knows his own heart, who knows what the daily cross means, and who knows the difference between the form and the power, the name and the life itself, the semblance and the substance, the difference between the sounding brass or the tinkling cymbal and the voice of the turtle, pouring the plaintive, but healing notes of Calvary into the solitary and weary soul; he who walks in this path, could not hear with profit the ministry of Mr. Spurgeon.

5thly.—I believe that Mr. Spurgeon could not have fallen into a line of things more adapted to popularity: his ministry pays its address courteously to all; hence, in this sermon he graciously receives us all; (such a reception as it is;) he who preaches all doctrine, and he who preaches no doctrine, he who preaches all experience, and he who preaches no experience; and hence, intellectually high Calvinists of easy virtue receive such a ministry into their pulpits, at once shewing that the man of sin, the spirit of apostasy, is lurking in their midst. Low Calvinists also receive him, shewing that there is enough of their spirit about him to make him their dear brother; only his hyperism does sometimes get a little in their way, but they hope experience will soon take away this Calvinistic taint, and so make things more agreeable. But in this I believe they will be disappointed if he has chosen his sphere, his orbit may seem to be eccentric, but he will go intellectually shining on, throwing out his cometary attractions, crossing the orbits of all the others—seeming friendly with all, yet belonging to none.

His originality lies not in the materials he uses, but in ranging them into an order that suits his own turn of mind, at this he industriously labors: in this he is a reproof to some ministers of our own denomination who are not industrious, nor studious, nor diligent, but sluggish, slothful, negligent, empty-headed, and in the pulpit as well as in the parlor, empty handed—preaching then is like sowing the wind, and reaping the whirlwind; and many on this account leave our ministers, and prefer a half-way gospel ingenuously and enthusiastically preached to a whole gospel not half preached, or preached without variety, life or power. May the Lord stir up his own servants that they may work while it is day.

But, in conclusion, I say—I would make every allowance for his youth, but while I make this allowance, I am nevertheless thoroughly disposed to believe, that we have a fair sample of what he will be even unto the end: a man cannot preach with any success what he does not know; but be this as it may, we cannot, Mr. Editor, when we ask you once a month for bread be content with a stone; no not even when that stone is carved and colored into the outward likeness of a loaf, the touch and the taste soon convince us that we have hold of something too cold and hard to be eaten. And we ask an egg and you send us a scorpion, and that instead of feeding us, sting us and torment us, as the torment of a scorpion when he strikes a man; we ask of you as a faithful steward, a hundred measures of wheat, and you reduce us to a starvation fifty; we are entitled to a hundred measures of oil, and you put us off with four score. It must have been an oversight, I cannot believe it willful on your part. Are these times in which to trifle with either the souls of men, or the vital truths of God? Whatever construction be put upon what I have here written, I can fall back conscientiously upon my motive, and can truly say, I have judged of others as I myself wish to be judged, making the word of God, and the realities of experience, my guide herein.

I am sincerely averse to disputation; I hold the truth for higher and better purposes; but, nevertheless, I am not content to sit still, and see it stolen from me without at least saying a word or two for that which is so well worth contending for.

I have a strong feeling towards both you and the Vessel; your present course does appear to me to be wrong, though unperceived by you.

I have no wish to part with either you or the Vessel, as companions on the way to the Kingdom; and hope I may have in future no cause so to do. Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day? Job.

Bank's initial response to Wells (Job)

Editor's Note: Here is Banks initial response to Wells (this follows immediately after the section above in the magazine):

[When we first read this reproof from our friend and brother "Job," we resolved to put in our defense, at some length: but we must not occupy much room on the subject this month. In writing our review of Mr. Spurgeon's ministry, we only desired faithfully and charitably to answer the many inquiries which arose in different quarters, as to the true position he occupied in Zion. We seek for no favors from Mr. Spurgeon, nor from any of his friends. We ask for no patronage beyond that which our work may be considered to deserve. We acknowledge no man on earth, nor no set of men, as our master. The Earthen Vessel was commenced ten years since without one single minister, or influential person, as its friend. Its circulation, for some time, was exceedingly limited; not two-hundred copies per month were sold. During the last eight years it has continually and gradually increased, until seven thousand copies per month, on the average, have been issued, its readers, beyond doubt, are from twenty to thirty thousand during the four weeks of every month in the year. We believe—we know—the blessing of God has attended it. immense as the labor has been, we also know that the hand of the Lord has helped us: and if it please the Lord to spare us—and still to employ us—we are joyfully willing to give up ourselves and all we possess to his dear cause and service; although—God knowest—we have no prospect of ever receiving temporal remuneration for our labor.

If, on the other hand, the churches of Jesus Christ are quite satisfied that we have "apostatized from the spirit of truth," then let them discard the Earthen Vessel at once, and forever. But our conscience witnesses to no such apostasy. Our ability for either speaking, or writing, is small; but such as it is, it has been—under God—employed for many years in earnestly contending for a living faith; a living hope; a living ministry; a living gospel—yea, the Person, and Work of God the Holy Ghost, as the only Quickener of elect and ransomed sinners; as the only Revealer of, and Leader unto, Christ; as He who only can guide into truth, and, by the truth, make poor, sensible, Christ-seeking sinners free. This has been our theme, our work, the great end of our labor, whether in the pulpit or from the press; and in our contention for this all important work, we give place to no man on earth; no, not even to brother "Job" himself. We know his talent is great; his influence is immense; his success as a minister is, in these days, almost without parallel; and our love to, and esteem for him, is sincere, permanent, and practical; but "Job" never more boldly contended for vital godliness— (for the life of God in the soul, as the only pledge of entering glory)—in all his days, than we have done. Nay, Brother Job, we are not to be frightened by either your charge of apostasy, or your threat of discarding the Vessel. We may have meddled with men that we had better left alone; we may have introduced many things into the Vessel which had better been omitted; and, in reviewing Mr. Spurgeon's ministry, we may possibly have "erred," as "Job" says we have: but apostatize from the spirit of truth, we believe, by God's grace, we never shall. And we hereby call upon all the friends to real vital godliness in the three kingdoms, in the colonies, and in the cities across the Atlantic—we earnestly beseech all the living in Jerusalem, who have received us as sent of God, to step forward boldly and practically in endeavoring to spread our humble testimony to, and contention for, Living Realities, to the very ends of the earth.

We must say one word, in conclusion, respecting Mr. Spurgeon. We heard a great deal for, and very much against him, with prayer to God, we went to hear for ourselves in his expounding Scripture, and in his supplications at the throne of grace, we realized a melting of soul, and a union of spirit to some blessed truths as advanced by him. We did regret—and we still confess the same—to find an almost total omission of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit; but Godly persons have assured us that in this department of his ministry they have been abundantly satisfied. We have, therefore hoped, that God, even our God, had set him on the Walls of Zion for usefulness and for real good to thousands of poor sinners. If we have erred, the good Lord pardon us. It has not been from a WILLFUL INTENT, but from a WEAKNESS IN JUDGEMENT; if we have not erred, the day will declare It.—Ed.]

Bank's more detailed and thought out reply to Wells – pages 45ff 1855

"JOB'S" REVIEW OF MR. SPURGEON'S MINISTRY EXAMINED AND CONSIDERED.

We are unexpectedly thrown into a somewhat serious position. Very innocently, — (we think,) in our December number, — impartially, and in a charitable spirit,—we wrote a brief review of Mr. Spurgeon's ministry; noticing, and quoting from, some sermons which had recently been preached by him, and published in The Penny Pulpit. Mr. Spurgeon is a public man: his ministry is the property of the professing church in Christendom. Multitudes were crowding to hear him:—On every hand, we were met with queries like the following—" Who is this Mr. Spurgeon?" —" Where does he come from?" "To what section of the Church does he belong?" "Is he sound in the faith of the Gospel?" &c., &c. Under these circumstances, we furnished an article bearing on his ministry; and, as far as possible, meeting the enquiries; not for a moment thinking that we should incur the displeasure of any of the brethren, who

stand on the walls of Zion in these days. Our brief, and unfinished review had scarcely made its appearance, ere some severe strictures upon the same came to hand; the first sight of which led us to fear that we had been too precipitate; and that, instead, of rendering good service to the citizens of our much loved city, we had done mischief: but, on carefully perusing what we had written, on examining our motive and our aim, we feel no condemnation whatever. We consider it imperative upon a Christian man to confess his fault, as soon as he is convicted of having done wrong. Could we have been persuaded that we had done any injury to the cause of truth in thus noticing Mr. Spurgeon's ministry, we would freely and fully have confessed the same. We were not, however, sufficiently convinced of this. Still, we felt it solemnly laid on our conscience to publish the letter signed "Job;" believing that it was calculated to lead to much close examination in the breasts both of ministers and laymen; and that a wholesome benefit to many would be the result. "Job's" letter was published in the January number; and from the first of its issue until now, paper pellets have been poured in upon us, enough, indeed, to shatter the few poor nerves to pieces, which near thirty years' labor has left in a sadly dilapidated state. We are determined, by the grace of God, to maintain an independent course:—our aim shall be to Defend the Truth—let the truth be found where it may. There is not a minister, nor a Christian man on earth, that shall bias, or frighten us, into a wrong course, if we can, by watchfulness and prayer, avoid it. We will tell our Correspondents, once for all, that no threats, no cruel insinuations, no thunderbolts, no bitter reflections upon the past, will intimidate us. If the seven thousand persons, who now purchase the Earthen Vessel cease to do so, we retire from our heavy task at once: but so long as God gives us life, strength, means, and a sufficiency of merciful readers, we will onward steer our course, gladly publishing the tidings of mercy; and rendering all the service to the Churches we possibly can. Now, for a moment, let us review our Correspondence on this momentous matter.

Letters to the editor in reply to Wells comments on Spurgeon

The first communication which our brother "Job's" letter has produced—or, rather, the one which we notice first, is the following, which we give entire as it came to hand. The writer says:—

Me. Editor.—It was with mingled emotions of pain and pity, I read in the Earthen Vessel for January, the letter from your Correspondent "Job." His censures are excessively harsh, both as respects yourself and Mr. Spurgeon; and the arguments used to establish his propositions altogether inconclusive.

His letter does not bear those marks of Christian love and humility which should characterize the intercourse of the professor with his fellows. I do not presume to penetrate into his heart, and bring to light the mainspring of all the bitter language he uses in his epistle; to an attentive and intelligent reader, that is quite apparent on the face of it; but content myself with pointing out the errors he has made in judgment. I do not call these errors willful; although it is very difficult for me to conceive how any mind could be so blinded, unless by anger, or some of the darker passions of humanity, as to fall into such gross and palpable mistakes. The passages of Mr., Spurgeon's sermon are plain and Scriptural; but "Job," by some mental contortion, presents them in an adverse and erroneous light.

With your permission, Mr. Editor, I will briefly confirm the preceding remarks. It is but right that justice be rendered to Mr. Spurgeon; who, I am persuaded, is too much the gentleman to return an answer to such charges brought against himself; and too much the Christian to be angry because of them. It will be at the same time exonerating you from the blame so unjustly bestowed, and promote of the cause so dear to your heart.

Some weak ones may be stumbling because of the remarks of "Job;" and this may reassure them. It is always injurious to the cause of the Redeemer, when Christians fail to observe that law of love he hath ordained. I therefore proceed to obviate, as much as possible, the erroneous impressions that have been made in the letter by "Job."

In the first place, he begins wrong, by throwing out insinuations which, however unfounded tend to prejudice the mind of the reader. He (Mr. S.) is called "a very questionable personage;" compared to a mountebank of the Grecian stage; paralleled with Dr. Pusey and Cardinal Wiseman; likened to the "Prince of Darkness," who beguiled Eve with very great politeness; and, finally, the "Divine reality of his conversion" is doubted of—upon what flimsy grounds we shall presently see. Now all this is surely ungenerous, and it will shortly be perceived to be altogether unjust.

Job says, "We are told, page 1, that the Corinthians had much of the teaching of the Greeks, and were men of classic taste, and that they should have used these gifts to confirm the testimony of Christ;" and then adds, "Mr. Spurgeon, and the Word of God, very widely differ upon this Greek wisdom and classic taste;" but he ("Job") very wisely, for his own purpose, refrains from attempting to show wherein this difference lies; because in reality it does not exist. The Word of God calls this "wisdom foolishness;" and what does Mr. Spurgeon say? Why, simply the very same thing, "that gifts are nothing unless they are laid on the altar of God."

He, ("Job") objects to Mr. Spurgeon's remark, "that he (the Lord) determined upon sending a Mediator into the world whereby he might restore it to its pristine glory, and save to himself a people who are to be called the elect of God;" because he finds it said, the heavens are to vanish away like smoke, and the earth wax old like a garment; that the earth is to be burned up; forgetting the passages that refer to its restoration. The earth is to be purified with fire; but the Apostle John was privileged to obtain a glimpse in prophetic vision of the "new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness;" this is the restoration Mr. Spurgeon points to; and it is undeniably a restoration to the pristine glory when the Creator pronounced it "very good." "Job" must have surely read the Bible too little use to have overlooked such predictions.

Again, he then quibbles about the words "to be" in the passage already quoted; and says, that he "thought this nomination was already settled, and that from before the foundation of the world." It is very true that this nomination was settled from before the foundation of the world, but Mr. Spurgeon was referring to the Council of Eternity, when the Godhead was deliberating of these things which were not yet; and uses the only tense proper in the circumstances.

Again, "Job" calls Mr. Spurgeon's remarks upon the testimony of Christ and the Prophets, "vain jangling, and a jargon of truth and error, ingeniously interwoven." This is false, as you see when I take up and refute his seeming arguments:

1st. He says, "The testimony of Christ was direct from himself, but the Word of God contradicts this and says, 'The words that I speak are not mine, but him that sent me.'" Now, the Word of God does not contradict it, for another passage, wherein Christ declares that he and the Father are one, reconciles the seeming contradiction pointed out by "Job." But "the testimony of the prophets was second hand;" the truth of that remark is manifested by the very passage brought up to refute it, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" that is, they uttered not their own thoughts, but were simply the instruments of the Spirit, and consequently their testimony was second hand, the Spirit being the prime mover.

2nd. The sermon says that the testimony of all but Christ was not uniform, and quite correctly, the sermon states wherein this uniformity failed; and if "Job" had but attended to it, he would not have fallen into the absurd mistake he has. It was in their conduct, not in their predictions that they failed; this did not always correspond with the testimony they gave by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which was uniform and perfect in kind, though not perfect in degree, inasmuch as it was continually being added to by those who followed after them, and was finished by Christ.

In the paragraph following the one just answered, "Job" attributes to the word final, "a sense altogether different from that in which it is used by Mr. Spurgeon; Mr. Spurgeon says, "Christ's testimony was final, and in the next sentence explains what he means by final, namely, "This was the last testimony, the last revelation, that ever will be given to man." Now, this is very different from saying what "Job" would make him appear to say, namely—that from their (the prophets) testimony there is any appeal; he does not say there is appeal, but he simply says, that the testimony of the prophets was not last, but Christ's was.

Again, "Job" says, "Mr. Spurgeon's mode of confirming the testimony of Christ is not the Apostle's mode of doing the same." It is just the same mode; the testimony of Christ is confirmed in the Christian by the Holy Ghost; and Mr. Spurgeon just says that in effect, by saying it is confirmed by conversion, which is the work of the Spirit; by answer to prayer, which is through the Spirit; by support in times of affliction and tribulation, which is by the Spirit. And in confirming it with respect to others, his remarks are also just and right, for it is written, "Let your light so shine before men that they seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven."

In his remarks upon the conclusion of Mr. S.'s sermon, he ("Job") is equally unkind and unjust as in all the rest of what he writes. Mr. Spurgeon does desire his hearers to go to the throne of grace, and vow afresh, and register this new resolution, so to live as to confirm more and more the testimony of Christ; but he does not say they are to do this in their own strength, they are to seek strength from the Holy Ghost; he does not just then point out the way in which to seek that strength, but having often before pointed it out, contents himself at that time with merely indicating the source of the strength.

Now, Mr. Editor, having shown that every single stricture that "Job" has made on the sermon is unjust and unfounded, I have no hesitation in saying, that I can prove every other objection he chooses to raise equally un-tenable. He has in most instances perverted the plain meaning of the sermon, to be enabled to start an objection at all; I do not call that perversion willful, that I leave to his own conscience and his God; but I do say, that unless it was plainly stated in his letter that he intended to criticize Mr. Spurgeon's sermon, I would never have been able to imagine that the strictures made had any reference to the sermon on "Confirming the witness of Christ."

We can now see the utter futility of Job's concluding remarks, his premises being false, his conclusions must also be untrue; he does not offer one valid argument for the excessively harsh opinions he gives forth. In one place ("4thly," page 15,) he tells us that his "opinion is, and his argument is, and his conclusion is," so and so; I defy the humblest, as well as the most profound logician, to shew the smallest vestige of an argument, or conclusion, in that paragraph.

Finally, to convince you of my impartiality, I must tell you I am a stranger in London, unacquainted personally with Mr. Spurgeon, not a hearer of his, and do not know "Job;" I have sometimes read parts of your Earthen Vessel, and been much pleased with it; I have also read most of Mr. Spurgeon's published

sermons, and have heard him preach three times; and can testify that had "Job" been there on those occasions he would not have fallen into the error of supposing that Mr. Spurgeon neglects the work and agency of the Holy Spirit.

Only a very small moiety of Mr. Spurgeon's sermons has been published, and to suppose that because he does not there set forth at length a view of the operations of the Spirit, he denies its efficiency altogether, is un-logical, unphilosophical, and unjust.

But the fact is he does sometimes speak of the work of the Spirit in his published sermons, although not so fully as in some unpublished; for example, at the close of the sermon entitled, "the house of mourning and the house of feasting," we have these words, "it is the power of the Holy Ghost alone that can give the life."

I am sorry, Mr. Editor, to have trespassed so much upon your room; but it was due to Mr. Spurgeon, as well as to yourself, and coming from a stranger to all parties, it is hoped these remarks may not prove unacceptable or unprofitable.

I wish well to you, and the great cause of our common Lord. Henry J. Mclardy.

We make no comment upon this letter. The sermons referred to, are in print. Our readers can judge for themselves. We proceed to notice one other Correspondent; and with that we leave the subject for the present. The Correspondent referred to is "Sarah."

"Sarah" says she calls Mr. Spurgeon "The Apollos of the Borough;" and after much consideration, she has wished that "Job" had done as Aquila and Priscilla did with Apollos, of whom it is said, that "when they had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him The Way Of God more perfectly." Upon this hint of "Sarah's" we wish to write a word or two—first, upon what "Job" has done ; and secondly, upon the comparison which "Sarah" makes between Apollos and the present Pastor of New Park Street Chapel. First, as to what "Job" has done. He has certainly written very decidedly, but we believe he has written sincerely. The fact is, during the last quarter of a century "Job" has seen many start up with a flaming zeal, with shining talents, with an attracting style, and with a ministry combining almost all the principal features of each section of the professing church. And "Job" has seen many such men not only go down as fast as they came up; but he has been called to sympathize with many who have been deceived, deluded, and brought into deep distress. We say therefore, too many of our correspondents who have written so censoriously of "Job"—do not condemn so rashly. We are determined, if the Lord will help and guide us in this matter,—to "do justly; to love mercy;" and to walk humbly and honestly as in the sight of a heart-searching God. Men, brethren, and fathers—hear ye our words—we have nothing to fear from "Job;" neither have we anything to seek from him. We have nothing to fear from Mr. Spurgeon, neither have we any favors to ask at his hands. "Job" and C. H. Spurgeon are two men—two ministers—two pastors of influential churches in the great Metropolis. Between these two great ministers stands the attacked Editor of The Earthen Vessel; and if either "Job" or C. H. Spurgeon, or any of their friends, were to attempt to bias the said Editor—(which he knows they will not)—he would tell them plainly, that sooner than he would be the mere tool of a party for unholy purposes, he would let the Vessel be dashed to atoms, and himself be driven where so ever an adverse power might carry him. While we thus speak, we highly esteem, and feel deeply grateful to "Job," for the use God has made of him on the walls of Zion these many years. We say it fearlessly, "Job" has his peculiar work, and his singularly original way; but that God has rendered his ministry an essential blessing, thousands can testify. We are bound, therefore, to believe that what he has done, he has done for the good of Zion; and if in the doing, he has

not exactly done it as some could wish; let us forbear; let us forgive; let us continue to love him, and to pray that his life and his labors may be lastingly and increasingly useful in gathering ransomed sinners to Christ, and in feeding the living family of our ever gracious God. We have no sympathy with those butterflies, who—will make a servant of Christ an offender for a word, and for such supposed offence turn from and speak unkindly of him. From all such proceedings, and from all such professors, the good Lord deliver us. A farther notice of communications on 'Job's' strictures will be found on the covers.

Now, secondly, for "Sarah's" comparison. The character and portrait of Apollos is drawn in Acts xviii. Of whom the Holy Ghost says,—he was "an eloquent man" he was "instructed in the way of the Lord" he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord" and "he spake boldly in the synagogue." We are free to confess that in some points "Sarah's" comparison will hold good. Since the thoughts and conclusions of brother "Job" have been published, we have been exceedingly concerned to know, if possible, the real position of this our modern Apollos; consequently, seeing him announced to preach the Association sermon on the afternoon of Wednesday, Jan. 10th we went to hear for ourselves. He took for his text 2 Cor. x. 4, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds." The strongholds of "antiquity," "infidelity," "arminianism," "antinomianism," "sinful self," and "righteous self," were surveyed, attacked, and denounced in an energetic and forcible manner. The character of "our weapons" were then described, "not carnal," but "mighty through God." "We left the sanctuary with a solemn impression of this kind: to ourselves we said —" the ministers of Jesus Christ are said to stand on the walls of Zion; these walls, of course, separate "the garden of the Lord" from "the wide spreading wilderness," and "from the valley of dry bones:" some of Christ's faithful ministers who stand on these walls have their back to the wilderness and the valley, and their faces and their front toward the church looking right into her midst, and speaking to her heart. In such a position, more particularly, stood William Huntington, the rich and mellow-minded Brooks, William Gadsby and a host beside. But others of Christ's ministers stand with their face and front more generally towards the wilderness, instrumentally attacking the enemy's strongholds; instrumentally sounding forth the terrors of Sinai, and the glorious attractions of Calvary's Cross; instrumentally calling for the four winds of heaven to come down into the valley, and to breath upon the slain; instrumentally plucking sinners as brands from the burning, and leading them up to the gates of Zion. And, In Such a Position did we conceive Mr. Spurgeon to stand that afternoon. In such a position stood Martin Luther, Toplady, Whitfield, and a multitude beside; and we do prayerfully anticipate the day, when side by side, on Zion's walls, there shall be seen our rapid and deep-taught brother "Job," with his heart beating over Zion's afflicted children, his back bent in stooping down to sympathize with them, and his tongue pouring out the mighty, the mysterious, the merciful, dealings of a covenant God with covenant saints; while in juxta-position there shall be found the eloquent Apollos of the present day. And, like "Sarah," we say to brother "Job," do as Aquila did; and until such a New Testament example has been followed—until personal intercourse has proved the contrary —hope that of Mr. Spurgeon it may be true, as of Apollos it has been said, (after Aquila and Priscilla had done with him,) "He Helped Them Much Who Had Believed though Grace." We must for the present forbear.

A second reply from James Wells on this subject. — pages 48ff 1855

A FEW MORE WORDS FROM "JOB".

Dear Me. Editor—in one part of my review of Mr., Spurgeon's sermon, I have said of him as a minister, ("page 16) "I am thoroughly (it should have been strongly,) disposed to believe that we have a fair sample of what he will be to the end." It is to be regretted that some persons have tried to make the above

mean—that as Mr. Spurgeon is in a state of nature now, he will so continue even unto the end; whereas, I neither did, nor do mean, any such thing: all I mean is, that his ministry, as it now is, is I am strongly disposed to believe a fair sample of what it will be even unto the end. I do not here refer to his personal destiny at all—though no doubt many would have been glad to have seen me commit myself, by rushing in “Where angels fear to tread.” What I have written, I have written conscientiously and sincerely, and without partiality, and without hypocrisy; and sought on my bended knees by solemn prayer to God, direction in this matter; nor am I conscious of one vestige of anger, or unhallowed, or wrong feeling in the matter; and the Lord himself is my witness, that I have no feeling towards Mr. Spurgeon, but that of the best wishes (subject to the law of gospel truth) for his welfare; and if in the face of the tens of thousands of perishing follow mortals in this Metropolis, I could have written from envy, I think the sooner I throw off the Christian name the better. Never, under heaven, were accusers further from the truth than those who impute such a feeling to me. A concern for truth, and vital godliness, has been my motive. I have exercised merely the right of judging for myself, and others of course have a right to do the same.

I am, Mr. Editor, credibly informed, that Mr. Spurgeon himself intends taking no notice of what I have written, and if I am to be counted an enemy because I have spoken what I believe to be the truth (Gal. iv. 16,) I am perfectly willing to bear the reproach thereof; and most happy should I be to have just cause to think differently of his ministry; but I am at present (instead of being shaken,) more than ever confirmed in what I have written. I beg therefore to say that anything said upon the subject by Mr. Spurgeon's friends will be to me as straws thrown against a stone wall, (Jeremiah 1. 18,; and of which I shall take no notice. Only let them beware lest a voice from him by whom actions are weighed, say unto them, "Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right as my servant Job bath." Job. xlii. 7. Job.

Walter Banks review of some newly printed “New Park Street Sermons” – pages 193ff
1855

Editor's Note: It is very interesting and instructive to note how Banks proceeds in his set task of evaluating Spurgeon's New Park Street sermons. First and foremost he pre-defines, at great length, what must exist for a minister (in this case Spurgeon) to receive his blessing. These pre-determined attributes (and none other) are the primary evidence. He is in fact, very possibly unconsciously, laying down a foundation upon which he can pronounce Spurgeon a godly minister. Only after this extensive introduction does he come to the actual sermons. Once he arrives at that point in the next section after this one it's a forgone conclusion that Spurgeon's sermons pass the test. The test has been set up in such a way that only one outcome is possible. Only after all this is taken into consideration will he even think of entertaining any negative aspects of the sermons. Whatever else this is not an unbiased approach! Banks actually goes so far as to say in reference to Spurgeon: “Let us not be found fighting against him, lest unhappily we be found fighting against God.” This is, in and of itself, an incredible admission of extreme bias of Spurgeon. It appears to me that he is more cautious when defending Wells, never pushing as hard as he does for Spurgeon.

THE GOSPEL MINISTRY CAREFULLY CONSIDERED,

IN CONNECTION WITH A BRIEF REVIEW OF "New Park Street Pulpit"

Introductory Paper

We have now before us several parts of the New Park Street Pulpit, very neatly got up in the printing-house of Messrs. Alabaster and Passmore, of Wilson-street, Finsbury; and having pledged ourselves to a faithful review of the sermons contained in this serial, we would quietly proceed to the fulfilment of that promise. This month's number is so pre-occupied with ordinations, and other matters of great interest to some of our churches, that but a small space is left for us. There is, however, sufficient; as we can do but little at a time in work of this character. We wish to avoid any reference to the different correspondents who have favored us with their thoughts, their threats, and their different suggestions; we would by no means treat them uncourteously; but being urgently requested "carefully to read the New Park Street Pulpit' for ourselves—to form our own judgment, and to report accordingly; to that task, and that only, would we now, for a few moments turn our unbiased attention.

The preaching, and the publishing of these discourses, has given rise to much zealous controversy. Whether, on either side, that zeal has sprung from right principles, or has been directed toward the attainment of right ends, it is not for us hastily to determine. In the calm and retired moments of our soul's prayerful meditation we have been enabled to comfort ourselves with the inward assurance that we could not willfully, intentionally, designedly, or habitually, persevere in any course—take sides with any man—or, instrumentally, strengthen any cause—that would be adverse to truth, afflicting to Zion, or grievous in any measure, to the real Christian's tender conscience and peaceful mind. No—No—NO, brethren: some of you have ill-judged us here. Mistakes we have made—but The Truth of the Gospel has been too dearly bought, and too deeply taught, ever willfully to be sold, sacrificed, or parted with, under any circumstances. Convince us that we have practically done, or written, or said, anything detrimental to truth, we will publicly confess our fault before the many thousands who now read the Earthen Vessel.

We have said something about zeal. Let each of us well consider the fact that there is a genuine, and there is a false zeal, in close approximation to matters connected with the visible church of Christ on earth; and to trace out the source, the nature, and ultimate end of our zeal, is a work worthy of every well-wisher to the real prosperity of Zion. A zeal that is not heaven-born, has not unfrequently produced both a labored philosophy, and a daring enthusiasm—an enthusiasm, which, for a time, has carried before it thousands and tens of thousands whose minds are never occupied by themselves, but are let out to, and occupied by, any power that may rise up to demand their attention: while a pure zeal labors on frequently in the face of much opposition, and accompanied by but few to cheer it on in its narrow path. We are here tempted—yea, we yield to the temptation—to adopt the language of a living author, in discriminating between a spurious and a genuine zeal. The following brilliant words may, under God, set many a man to search and to try his ways. "The passion of Saul, (says the quoted one) at the martyrdom of Stephen was an earthly fire—the earnestness of Paul at Mars Hill was a heavenly flame. The glowing and unquenchable devotion of the immortal tenants of the vallies of Piedmont, was a pure and lofty sentiment—the spirit which moved their persecutors was a foul and malignant fume. The furious onslaught of the maddened populace in the suburbs of Jerusalem, in the days of the Messiah, was a pestilential outbreak from the dark crevices of hell—the spirit which dictated the prayer, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,' was the emanation of fathomless benevolence and love. The features which are impressed on a false zeal, compared with those which are worn by its opposite, are too darkly shaded and too distinctly defined, to palliate the folly of hesitation or of mistake. A spurious zeal anticipates reason, genuine zeal renders obedience to it. A spurious zeal discountenances enquiry, genuine zeal invites and promotes it. Spurious zeal practices disguises, genuine zeal is the handmaid of uprightness. Spurious zeal may spring from an excited imagination, [like the violent and unholly effusions of certain pulpit orators of late,]

genuine zeal flows from a renovated heart. Spurious zeal is unscrupulous in its methods, genuine zeal is conscientious in the means it selects. Spurious zeal aims at the extension of a party, genuine zeal seeks the enlargement of the Church of Christ. Spurious zeal would bind the nations in fetters, genuine zeal would proclaim liberty to the captives."

These are searching words! They throw a light upon the character and spirit of many whose impudence, ignorance, and daring presumption, has been taken for zeal—yea, for godly devotion, for spiritual earnestness, and faithfulness in the cause of truth. This digression must not at present be encouraged: in returning to our main design, we venture to express a conviction that the Gospel Ministry, in our day, considered as a body, is seriously fallen: some portion of it lying in the grossest ignorance; other portions of it, absorbed in self-esteem, and a deceitful pride: and a very large bulk of it is beguiled and blinded by errors and perversions as antagonistic to the spirit and genius of the Gospel, as ever the powers of darkness were opposed to the manifestative glories of a Redeeming God. The material for fully exposing this state of things stands thick around us. We may even be driven to such a painful work: we have counted the cost: we are prepared for the sacrifice: but would not advance one step until a dire necessity prevents further delay.

In attempting to review the sermons contained in "The New Park Street Pulpit," we have proposed, first, clearly to exhibit all that is decidedly and indisputably good. Secondly, to plainly notice that which is not good: and, thirdly, to suggest inquiries respecting those portions which are not sufficiently expressive of the mind and meaning of the preacher. Now the question meets us most decidedly—"what is good?" 'We answer, briefly, for a ministry to be essentially, successfully, and permanently good, it must be a living ministry; the Holy Ghost himself must be the author of it: it must be a truth-expounding ministry: the Sun Of Righteousness himself must shine in it and through it, throwing pure heavenly light into the sanctified minds of the chosen family of the Lord God Almighty. It must be a sympathizing ministry; one that can come down, and enter into, the various hard cases, perplexing trials, and heavy sorrows of the living in Jerusalem. It is not enough, for God's exercised children, merely to have truth thrown at them; the mere setting up the skeleton of gospel principles, is a two-fold evil; in the first place it is tantalizing to thirsty souls who pant for living bread; and in the second place, it tends to settle down dead formalists in an awful delusion. For a ministry, then, to be essentially good, it must be one that has a Divine power to take the Bread of Life; to break it up in suitable and seasonable morsels; and under the unseen but certain guidance of God the Holy Ghost, gives a portion to six, and even sometimes to the seventh—even to those who appear to be at the very ends of the earth. Furthermore, we add, for a ministry to be essentially and permanently useful, it must be a growing ministry. Tell us why it is— that one man stands for twenty, thirty, forty years in one place, constantly acceptable, feeding the church of God with the finest of the wheat—while others are always moving hither and thither? We will not allow ourselves to attempt the reply; although in few words it may be given. That the good ministry is a growing ministry is easily proved. How many have said to us, "I knew so-and-so when he first came out, very many years ago; but, oh, what a different preacher now, to what he was then! He preached the doctrines of grace then; he preaches the doctrines of grace now: he entered into the experiences of the Lord's people then, he enters into their experiences now ; he contended for new covenant settlements and New Testament ordinances then, and contends for the same things now; but there has been much thrown overboard; and the ministerial vessel has spread her sails more fully; has hoisted her colors more consistently; has cut her course through the ocean of truth more deeply and extensively; and the consequence has been, she has taken in more than ten times the number of passengers she used to carry." Oh, yes; the ministry is a growing ministry: it does never grow out of truth, or away from truth; but it takes root downwards deeper, deeper, and deeper still. It spreads its thickly - clothed, richly-laden branches wider, wider, and wider still; it rears its exalted head higher, higher, and higher still; it opens up its treasures, and unfolds its heaven-born beauties with

immeasurable power; until it leads us sometimes so Tran sportingly into the fullness of gospel glory, that we can but cry out—" He hath brought me into his banqueting house, and his banner over me is love."

Oh, what a treasure is such a ministry! And what a cheat is the counterfeit of it! We bless the Lord with all our hearts that ever we found a ministry that had in it life, a seeing, feeling, communicating, growing, Life—the incorruptible seed—the word or God, that lives and abides forever.

If we go on at this rate, we shall never get into New Park Street. It was necessary— at least thus we have been led—to make a few prefatory remarks on the ministry itself. "We are now prepared to obey the command —to read for ourselves, and report accordingly. The Printer says we can have no more space this month. We purpose, therefore, to lay the New Park Street Pulpit Sermons in our bed-room. Every morning, please God, we will read a portion; and next month the result of that reading shall be given.

Continuation of Bank's review of Spurgeon's Sermons (really the start of the same) - pages 202ff 1855

SECOND PAPER

In our first paper we proposed to ourselves a certain course;—that course we wish steadily to pursue: consequently, to make a fair and faithful exhibition of that which is decidedly and indisputably good, is the first branch of our work. For a ministry to be essentially and practically good, we have said, it must be a living— a truth-expounding—a sympathizing, and a growing ministry. What evidence, then, have we from the "New Park Street Pulpit; that there is divine life, heavenly illumination, spiritual sympathy, and a well-guided progression, in Mr. Spurgeon's ministry? This is the first point. With us, it is a vitally important one: let it be proved to us—as far as it can be proved—that these elements are to be found in the ministry referred to; then, we are justified in the hopes we have entertained respecting it; and are persuaded that in kindly, carefully, and faithfully dealing with any of its discrepancies, we shall have the blessing of the Master attending our labors. To criticize, to cast reflection upon, and to condemn any ministry that comes NOT out boldly against any vital part of the Gospel of Christ—is to tread on dangerous ground. "Touch not mine anointed; and do my prophets no harm:"—" Se that toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye : "—these are solemn Scriptures; and by them our minds have been awed: and we hope ever to be careful in either speaking or writing, violently or harshly, against any man who professes to be—who appears to be—and, who, in the consciences of many witnesses, is declared to be,—a servant of the living God.

We know well enough, that many of the Lord's deep-taught children have gone to hear Mr. Spurgeon: and they have said,—"his ministry will not do for me:" but this is no argument against the vitality of his commission. What in the world would become of all our preachers and pastors, if all God's dear people could profitably and comfortably hear Mr. Spurgeon? Infinite wisdom is most beautifully displayed in the provision and adaptation of ministers, suited to the varied experiences, and conditions of the believing family;—and wonderful, indeed, are the diversities of gifts, graces, abilities, and experiences, even of the most eminent of the Lord's servants.

It was a nice word of Richard Sibbes's, when he said, "the office of a minister is to be a wooer, to make up the marriage between Christ and Christian souls:" and we will plainly speak our mind;—we have hoped, that C. H. Spurgeon's work, in the hands of the Holy Ghost, is to woo, and to win souls over unto Jesus

Christ; and we have an impression —should his life be spared, that, through his instrumentality—all our churches will, bye and bye, be increased. God Almighty grant that we may be true prophets; and then, to all our cruel correspondents we will say— fire away—cut up, cast out, and condemn The Earthen Vessel, much as ye may, ye will do us no harm. The temple of the Lord is being built: the workmen are in all parts of the building—some outside, and some in: some in the lower parts, some in the higher; some can hardly be seen or heard at all, others make a tremendous noise, and a most conspicuous show; still, the work goes on: the blazing beauties of Zechariah's speech shall shine in full perfection soon, when of Christ, that prophet said—"He shall build the temple of the Lord; even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory." We set out by declaring, that we have no grounds for suspecting the genuineness of Mr. Spurgeon's motives, nor the honesty of his heart. We are bound to believe that his statements respecting his own experience are just and true. We are bound to believe that in prosecuting his ministry, he is sincerely aiming at three things—THE GLORY OF CHRIST—THE GOOD OF IMMORTAL SOULS —*and the well-being of Zion*; and that in all this, the love of Christ constrains him.

If—in thoroughly weighing the sermons before us—proof to the contrary appeared, we would not hide it up, but we sincerely trust, no evidence of that kind can be produced.

Now, then, for the proofs of life, illumination, sympathy and growth: and the first proof which we derive is that of a spiritual appetite for, and internal relish of gospel grace and gospel glory. This shines most conspicuously in many parts of these sermons. Whenever the preacher touches upon any string that is directly connected with the eternal glories of a Three-One Jehovah, on the one hand; and with the salvation of sinners on the other, then his very soul appears to wrap itself in all the energy, and love that it possesses, and plunging into the very bowels of the truth in contemplation, he revels there with great delight, with almost unbounded zeal, and evidently labors to throw this energy, love, and holy fire into the souls of all who are now listening to his voice, and hanging on his lips. A specimen of this, appears in the following sentence.

"Nothing will so magnify the whole soul of man, as a devout, earnest, continued investigation of the great subject of the Deity. And —while it is humbling and expanding, this subject is also consolatory"

Now, see, how the inflamed feelings of the preacher's soul break forth in ideas which powerfully bespeak a deep acquaintance with the theme in hand. He says—" Oh, there is in contemplating Christ, a balm for every wound; in musing on the Father, there is a quietus for every grief; and in the influence of the Holy Ghost, there is a balsam for every sore. Would you lose your sorrows? Would you drown your cares? Then, go, plunge yourself in the Godhead's deepest sea; be lost in his immensity; and you shall come forth as from a couch of rest, refreshed and invigorated." [There may be extravagance here as regards words; it is true, it may be said to be the language of free-will; implying that the creature can thus plunge into the deep mysteries, and bathe in the ever-flowing mercies of a covenant God; but it is not so: it is the fervency of the preacher's soul earnestly pressing home upon the spirits of his hearers the necessity and the value of close communion with, and of holy meditation upon the purposes, promises, and mediatorial performances of our immortal and invaluable Immanuel. He follows it up with a testimony hot from his own heart, and says]—"I know nothing which can so comfort the soul; so calm the swelling billows of grief and sorrow; so speak peace to the winds of trial, as a devout musing upon the subject of the Godhead."

We cannot but most deeply sympathize with the preacher in these expressions. We have, for years, been favored to enjoy, at different times, soul-reviving and the purest comforts from meditation on the Person, gospel, grace, and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. We could not throw ourselves into that holy sea—we could not plunge ourselves into that river "the streams where of make glad the city of our God:"—but in waiting, in seeking, in meditating,—how frequently has the door of the mercy-seat been opened! The dark clouds have fled—the true light hath shined—our cares and our sorrows have rolled into the valley beneath our feet; while Naphtali-like—as "a hind let loose"—we have mounted high in holy joy, rejoicing in our Saviour-God, and praising his thrice holy name.

This sacred, this spiritual, this Divine realization of the Redeemer's promise—" Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters,"—can never be frequently, powerfully and blessedly known, but in the souls of the adopted sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. In the course of Mr. Spurgeon's ministry there are frequently to be found such gushing forth of love to God—of ravishing delights in Christ — of the powerful anointing's of the Holy Ghost—as compel us to believe that God is in him of a truth. We must confess this is the deep-wrought conviction of our spirit; and we dare not conceal it. Why should we? We may be condemned by many; but, whatever it may cost us — whoever may discard us—we must acknowledge that, while in these sermons we have met with sentences that perplex us— and with what some might consider contradictions— still, we have found those things which have been powerful demonstrations of the indwelling of The Life and The Love of a triune God in the preacher's heart.

In thus giving—without reserve—an unbiased verdict respecting the main drift of the Sermons contained in " The New Park Street Pulpit," we do not endorse every sentence, nor justify every mode of expression: our first work has been to search for—(that which in every new work that comes to hand, we search for; that which we search for in every candidate for membership;—it is) Life: and if we have not found evidences of a divine life in the ministry at New Park Street, we are deceived—yea, we are blind; and the powers of spiritual discernment are not with us.

In our next, we shall endeavor to set these evidences of a heaven-born, and of a God-sent ministry clearly before our readers. And in closing this, our second paper, we earnestly beseech all Christian people who long for a revival in the midst of our churches, to pray for this young man, whom we do earnestly hope THE LORD HAS SENT AMONGST US. Let us not be found fighting against him, lest unhappily we be found fighting against God. Let us remember, he has not made himself—he has not qualified himself—he has not sent himself; all that he has, which is good, Godlike, and gracious, the Lord has given him ;— all that he is doing, that is of real benefit to immortal souls, the Lord is doing by him. Therefore, brethren, be careful. Let us remember, also, that infidel Reasoners, Jesuits, Mormonites—and hosts of open enemies are working hard to deceive men, to lead them on to the gates of death, and to cast contempt upon the glorious gospel of our lovely and thrice blessed Elder Brother, Immanuel, God With Us—but this young man comes forth to expose error; to defend truth; to expound the mysteries of the gospel; to exalt The Saviour; to warn the wicked.; and, as far as in him lies, to feed the Church of God. "We do not now take upon ourselves to deny the many assertions antagonistically made: we will do that; not one stone shall be left unturned. We feel a determination, God helping, to sift this ministry—and the general state of the ministry now standing in our churches, to the very bottom; and we believe our labor shall not be in vain.

Correspondence about this subject – following the review of the sermons

The pages of "the Earthen Vessel," are impartially open to every good man to speak his mind on matters of vital interest to the church of Christ. We therefore give the following communication, which is one among many on this subject, recently come to hand.

Dear Sir.—It has been my intention for some time past to write you a few lines relative to the manner in which you have been treated by parties from whom we thought better things, for the independent course which you have hitherto pursued in regard to Mr. Spurgeon and his traducers, but I have delayed it to the present time. I have not the pleasure of personally knowing you, beyond through the medium of the Vessel; nor am I personally acquainted with Mr. Spurgeon; whom I have heard preach twice —once at Exeter Hall, and once at his own chapel. Having heard so much of Mr. Spurgeon, I thought I would go and hear him for myself. I did so. The first time he spoke from these words—"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." And I must say, that although I did not exactly like his attitude, yet I had nothing to say against those sacred truths which he then so plainly and forcibly proclaimed. I thought I beheld a future great man, and able defender of the doctrines of Divine grace. On the second occasion I went with a country friend to hear him at his own chapel; but I heard but little, the chapel being thronged. On this occasion I thought he was rather legal, by his stating what they, as a church, could do, and intended to do, in the neighborhood; and I was also rather surprised when he mentioned something about Mr. Sherman having been there; or more strictly, what that gentleman in his sermon remarked. Still, I would by no means condemn the stripling. He is young, soldier-like, full of zeal for his adorable Lord, and apparently desirous to spread abroad his mighty acts.

Now, to tell you the real truth, I do not approve of the ministers of a free-grace gospel admitting into their pulpits men who preach sentiments which cannot bear to be tested "by the law and the testimony;" it being, as the highly respected minister of the Surrey Tabernacle not long since said of the Welsh Chapel, Bartlett's Buildings, a marriage; of which, he also said, there is too much now-a days. However, the youthful pastor of New Park Street Chapel is not the only minister who is guilty of these matrimonial connections. How frequently do we see advertisements announcing that Mr. This, a preacher of Calvinistic principles, and Mr. That, a rank Arminian, are going to attend some Sunday school tea meeting! Or going to preach at some anniversary! This latter fact I saw posted about this very month; it being announced that the worthy pastor of Ebenezer Chapel, Camden Town, was going to preach with a rank Arminian at Willesden; and it is not many weeks ago, when the aforesaid minister allowed sermons to be preached in his own chapel by professed Arminians; and I believe the good pastor of Ebenezer is not the only inconsistent—or, as the pastor of the Tabernacle says, marrying parson. It is as notorious as the noonday sun, that some of our would-be sound churches have connection with what I call unsound societies. Look at Keppel Street. There they have an auxiliary to the General Baptist Missionary Society; which society, it is well known, holds doctrines inimical to "the truth as it is in Jesus."

Dear Sir, excuse my warmth; but I do not like to see people who dwell in glass houses throw stones. Now, I have thought for some time past, that many of those men who are so very forward in pointing out what they call errors in Mr. Spurgeon, are far more faulty than he is; and that it is

(do pardon me for so saying) nothing but envy which makes them so spiteful as they are against the young man—his pulpit talents being so great. I should not wonder that if those gentlemen were narrowly watched in their preaching, that we should at times, at least, be shocked at their unsound sentiments. It is not very long since that I heard the pastor (a well-known pastor, too) of a large and noted free grace church, make a sad, a very sad blunder about the inspiration of "the Scriptures of truth;" endeavoring with all his might to shew that that precious volume was variously inspired — viz., superintendence, elevation, and suggestion: whereas, God's own Spirit tells us that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God"

Trusting you will pardon this somewhat long letter, I remain, your's in the best of bonds, B.

All true believers are picked out by God's own hand for himself, "Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself." The tongues of men and angels cannot prevail on one soul to renounce the chains of Satan and sin. The strongest rhetoric and most moving eloquence alike fail here. For the hand of man is too weak to pluck any soul out of the crowd of the world, and to set him amongst the company of believers. It is only Gods the Holy Ghost that can enter the heart, when all other speakers must stand without.

The third continuation of the New Part Street Pulpit - pages 241ff 1855

THE GOSPEL MINISTRY CAREFULLY CONSIDERED.
IN CONNECTION WITH A BRIEF REVIEW OF
New Park Street Pulpit.

THIRD PAPER.

It is two o'clock in the morning, of Sept. 21, when we rise from our sleepless couch to commence this further notice to which we have been pledged. In externals, "deep hath called unto deep" with us; and we are more fitted for silent contemplation, than critical reading; we are more disposed for solemn and earnest prayer to God, than we are for penetrating the works of men. But we must proceed

We promised to set "The evidences of a heaven-born and of a God-sent ministry," clearly before our readers.

It is plain enough to be gathered from Joseph Hussey's Preface to his work, entitled, "God's Operations of Grace, but no Offers of Grace," that he—in the earlier stages of his ministry—"labored to varnish his faith with human testimonies:" he thought he had done but poorly if he did not quote a whole string of the fathers, from "The Two Clements," down to " Chrysostom, Auz," and, says he, "I do not know how many more.' This system—this fetching fire from old forges, this garnishing the mind with the testimonies of men—and, in a measure, attempting to be independent of God the Holy Ghost—he found to be deceitful, unprofitable, and unaccompanied with that blessing which makes the soul of the minister, and the hearts of the living people, rich; adding no sorrow there unto. How powerful is Joseph Hussey's testimony respecting the ministry which God gave him! He says—

"As my ministry was to be of Christ, and not of myself; therefore his grace hath been sufficient for me. When one temptation had blown over, another beat upon my soul; that was respecting my own insufficiency to keep off from the Arminianism of my natural mind, without which all Calvinism and orthodoxy is but form and notion: I felt that the power of grace was necessary to possess and fill up, in the soul, all sound notions of it. Without this vital principle, all orthodoxy or dry doctrine, is but a dead burden."

Joseph Hussey doth here hit two nails on the head which, during the last quarter of a century, hath often pierced and plagued our own spirits; and that severely too. The first is, "a laboring to garnish his faith by the testimonies of the fathers." The second is— "The Arminianism of his own natural mind." To be thoroughly beat off, and brought off from these two things, which will stick to us like a leech, is no small mercy; but rarely will you ever find a young minister whose training has been under religious influence, and connected with a liberal education—free from them, until fires, floods, flames, and bard fighting's, have proved them to be like broken reeds and deceitful bows.

Much of the correspondence with which we have been favored, adverse to the views we have taken, raises objections upon these two grounds. "It is a second-hand ministry, deeply tainted with an Arminian spirit." This is the conviction of many. But we require proof. A minister is to be highly commended for research and reading. There never was a man of extensive and of permanent usefulness in the church, who was not an extensive and a constant reader: the material they gather, is of great advantage in a stated ministry; to call such a ministry "second-hand" is no more correct, than it is to attribute the bursts of an anxious heart to do good, to an Arminian spirit. But we are wandering. Our business is to produce the evidences of LIFE—Divine Life—in the ministry at New Park Street; and we increasingly hope that those evidences will be more and more prominent, and so influential that the fears of our fearful brethren may be removed, and a happy, a holy, a useful union formed; a union embracing all who, in principle and in practice, in doctrine and in discipline, carry out the great essentials of that dispensation which Jesus of Nazareth established; which his immediate disciples perpetuated—which the New Testament enjoins, which the Holy Ghost has honored and confirmed in every age. A union between the living and the dead, never can exist: between those who know and love The Truth, and those who are unacquainted with and haters of The Truth, there never can be an association. It is a union founded in Life, cemented by Life, and maintained by the unceasing flowing and undying powers of Life, that we so much desire to see established, and flourishing, for the mutual edification and prosperity of all Zion's faithful watchmen, of all Zion's new-born sons.

One of the evidences of Life—the life of God in the soul, is "a crying out against ourselves," as Paul doth in the seventh of the Romans. The law in the members, warring against the law in the mind, caused the apostle to cry out most bitterly, "Oh, wretched man that I am!" Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" What was the real cause of Paul's thus crying out? Let him answer for himself—

"I (saith Paul) was once alive without the law.;" I thought myself a brave man, I was somebody, my conscience never troubled me, I knew not my disease, while the law stood aloof off, and I was without the law. (Not that Paul had not the law both written in his heart, and in his book: for as a Pharisee he was bred up among the commentators of the law) but he was without it, or, he was but

at the out-side of it (though I give it not for the proper meaning of the place, yet in that sense also), he was without the law, he had not travelled through the length and breadth of it: 'But (saith he) when the commandment came,' when it came in the spiritual-ness of it, and I saw in some measure what holiness was couched there, I was then in a woeful condition, I saw myself a lost man, 'then sin revived, and I died;' and 'sin by the commandment became exceeding sinful;' that is, when the commandment was cleared to me, then I saw that I was extremely sinful, or felt the violent motions of my sin. My sin being discovered by that light, began to spit out its venom, either provoking me with fresh and unwearied assaults to commit it, or terrifying and vexing me for what I had committed.

This "crying out against ourselves," from a deep and painful sense of "the plague of the heart," is, indeed, an evidence of two things: The Life of God in the Sole, and The Law of God in the conscience. Is there anything of this kind in The New Park Street Pulpit? There certainly is. Speaking of one tiring that is a source of grief to all real Christians, more or less—their proneness to forget the Lord—Mr. Spurgeon says,

"We forget him, because we carry about with us the old Adam of sin and death. If we were purely new-born creatures, we should never forget the name of him whom we love. If we were entirely regenerated beings, we should sit down and meditate on all our Saviour did and suffered; all he is; all he has gloriously promised to perform; and never would our roving affections stray; but centered, nailed, fixed eternally to one object, we should continually contemplate the death and sufferings of our Lord. But alas! We have a worm in the heart, a pest-house, a charnel-house within, lusts, vile imaginations, and strong evil passions, which, like wells of poisonous water, send out continually streams of impurity. I have a heart, which God knoweth, I wish I could wring from my body and hurl to an infinite distance; a soul which is a cage of unclean birds, a den of loath-some creatures, where dragons haunt and owls do congregate, where every evil beast of ill-omen dwells; a heart too vile to have a parallel—'deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.' This is the reason why I am forgetful of Christ."

We will fetch out another expression, proving acquaintance with sinful self. The preacher is on "the smoking flax." Says he,

"To me, no odor in all the world is as abominably offensive as smoking flax. But some say, 'How can you speak in so low a style?' I have not gone lower than I could go myself, nor lower than you can go with me; for I am sure you are, if God the Holy Ghost has really humbled you, just as offensive to your own souls, and just as offensive to God as a bruised reed would be among the pipes, or as smoking flax to the eyes and nose. I often think of dear old John Bunyan, when he said, he wished God had made him a toad, or a frog, or a snake, or anything better than a man, for he felt he was so offensive. Oh! I can conceive a nest of vipers, and I think that they are obnoxious; I can imagine a pool of all kinds of loathsome creatures, breeding corruption, but there is nothing one half so worthy of abhorrence as the human heart. God spares from all eyes, but his own, that awful sight, a human heart; and could you and I but once see our heart, we should be driven mad, so horrible would be the sight."

A perfect knowledge of what we really are as sinners in the fall, is one powerful demonstration of life and light in the inner man. A minister without this is deceived in himself, and will deceive

others; a minister without this, can never trace out the experience of quickened souls, nor can he comfort poor tempted saints. We know this is the dark side of the ministry, but it is a necessary side: this may be called a negative and a questionable evidence; nevertheless, it is one that has many promises for its consolation, for "the Lord is nigh to them that have broken hearts; and saveth such as are of contrite spirits."

When the enlightened eyes are turned within, three things are then discerned; — enmity, impurity and infidelity, or unbelief. When the enlightened eye of faith is led to look to the Loud Christ, there is Love to melt away our enmity; there is blood to cleanse away our impurity; and there is the promise of the Spirit, so to reveal Christ as to assure our consciences of their part in the Redeemer's sacrifice. And when these two paths are daily and hourly trodden in by a minister, his labor will not be in vain. We are too much borne down with trial to go any further this month. We must abruptly close our third paper; but in some future numbers we wish to embody the sentiments of Hussy, Huntington, Toplady, Gill, Goodwin, Owen, and others, respecting the ministry. Our impression still is, that to a very serious extent, the true Gospel ministry is on the wane. Ministers have been more numerous than ever—but they have not waxed more valiant in fight, nor more fruitful in service. The Word is beautifully styled, "the sword of the Spirit." May the blessed Spirit again unsheathe that sword, and wield it in the hand, and mightily nerve the arm of all his servants. Then shall the glory of God in the Gospel ministry be seen.

A letter defending Wells (Reply to Rhoda) - page 286 1855

Editor's Note: Rhoda's request can be found on page 268 of the 1855 edition of the magazine. Part of the reply was unreadable as is reflected in the gaps below.

RHODA'S REQUEST.

Mr. EDITOR, Dear Sir: Will you or some of your correspondents state in your next Vessel, if you think it right for Calvinistic ministers to reach for Wesleyans to collect money to aid their cause? Mr. Spurgeon did so at Cannon-street, on Tuesday, the 2nd October; and, I am told that Mr. James Wells has done the same; but it appears by their conduct, either Wesleyanism is not so bad as represented, or they are to be blamed for so doing. You know John says, "He that biddeth them God speed, is partaker of their evil deeds." Yours sincerely, Rhoda

October 11, 1855.

[We shall wait to see if our brethren choose to reply. ED.]

MR. JAMES WELLS DEFENDED.

A REPLY TO "RHODA."

My Dear Sir.—You being Editor of the Vessel, and often called upon to take part in subjects of an argumentative character inserted therein, I am rather disposed to think, for more reasons than one, those subjects are not the most calculated to elate your feelings; not because I deem your pen inefficient to express an opinion, but simply on the ground of many readers often unjustifiably

identifying you with the views taken by other writers. For this simple reason I would humbly try and help you, when I can; and with this object I use my pen in way of briefly responding to "Rhoda's request.

The inquiry made, is—Is it a consistency of procedure on the part of Mr. James Wells, and Mr. Spurgeon, to preach for Wesleyans to collect money to aid their causes? It appears to "Rhoda," by their conduct, either Wesleyanism is not so bad as represented, or they are to be blamed for so doing.

Now, in regard to Mr. Spurgeon, I am not sufficiently acquainted with his line of doctrine, to make any particular comment upon his amalgamating with either this or the other sect. But in reference to Mr. Wells, whose views of truth I love and cherish, I must confess it as my honest opinion, that I cannot see why his preaching the gospel of God's free grace, to Wesleyans, should prompt us to believe any better things of them than has been -----ented. Neither do I see it mitig-----, or renders him in fault ----- of the living God. He is -----authority commanded to contradict-----mit them among any one class. -----Command is—"Go and preach the Gospel to every creature." Now it does not ----- preach to Calvinists or Independents or Wesleyans, but to "every creature?" not according to what they are, or whom they belong, or what be their creed: and with such a scripture license, I deem Mr. Wells commendable and not blamable, for proclaiming aloud, amongst the inhabitants of the world, — yea, even amongst the inhabitants of an Arminian camp, the sound of a free, full, pure, and complete salvation, and thus teach them that if saved it is "not by works of righteousness which they have done, but according to God's mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." It is true, for truth's sake, we could not feel justified in allowing Arminian principles to amalgamate with us, for the simple fact, that they cannot hold the truths as they are in Jesus; they are unwilling to embrace them; but of this we are not surprised, for "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." At the same time, we would gladly have the truth spoken in their midst; God forbid we should ever indulge in a narrow minded feeling of selfishness least any one should feel, love, and cherish, the truths as we do; and thus it is we would overlook any small circumstantial benefit which might be derived by a Wesleyan body in having Mr. Wells to preach for them; and from the ardent desire we feel that the truths in all their purity should be told to thousands who know them not, we would ever rejoice to hear of his entering the ranks of such; and our earnest prayer is, that the good Lord may abundantly bless his ministrations to them, causing many to see the error of their ways, and sensibly be brought to exclaim, through his instrumentality, "The Lord spake thus to me, with a strong hand, and instructed me, that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, say ye not a confederacy to all them to whom this people shall say a confederacy, neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid; sanctify the Lord God of Hosts himself, let him be your fear, and let him be your dread, and he shall be for a sanctuary." Veritas.

The correspondence between James Wells and Joseph Wilkins about Spurgeon - pages 108ff 1857

MR. JAMES WELLS AND MR. SPURGEON.

A CORRESPONDANCE AND A QUESTION

Dear Mr. Editor.—A correspondence between Mr. Wells, of London, and Mr. Joseph Wilkins, of Brighton, having fallen into my hands, I think its publication in the Vessel may do no harm, as it may bring under discussion the question of how far ministers that differ in doctrine are, or are not, justified in preaching together.

It appears that Mr. Wilkins, when at the meeting at Unicorn Yard, asked Mr. Wells to come to Brighton in the course of a few weeks to preach two sermons at Windsor-street Chapel, Brighton, to which Mr. Wells consented; but in a day or two afterwards it came out that Mr. Wilkins was in close fellowship with Mr. Spurgeon. Upon the back of this information reaching Mr. Wells, he received by letter from Mr. Wilkins what may be called a more official invitation, fixing the time for the anniversary. The following is the correspondence that ensued.

Now, Mr. Editor, will any of your correspondents inform us whether Mr. Wells be right or whether he be wrong in refusing to preach with Mr. Spurgeon? This is a difficulty with many, and a clear answer may do no little amount of good. Your's very truly, A Lover of Good Men.

April 8, 1857.

Mr. Wells to Mr. Wilkins. "6, St. George's-place, North Brixton, "March 30, 1857.

"Dear Friend.—every principle I hold is with me a matter of conscience; and if I seek by the truth to get money to uphold that which is not truth, I make myself a transgressor.

"Now, Mr. Spurgeon informs us that he cannot reconcile Matt. xi. 20, 21, 23, 24, with verses 25, 26, or with verses 28, 29, 30; so that by exalting mere Ninevite repentance (first five verses) into that repentance which God alone can bestow, he hereby makes the Holy Ghost a self-contradictory Witness. He thus preaches a suicidal gospel, a gospel divided against itself. This is that piece of delusion which softens the great truths of the gospel down to the taste of the carnal mind; and from such a gospel I do most solemnly and conscientiously differ; and however much this may tend to my unpopularity, a good conscience before God is with me a greater treasure than all the world can give.

"I have no unkind feeling whatever to Mr. Spurgeon. There are some right things in his ministry, but still his ministry is divided against itself, and I shall be much more comfortable in keeping at an honest distance than I should be in (doing as many have done) making a hypocritical profession of receiving his ministry, and then go and backbite him. I write thus because I have been informed since Tuesday last that you are one with Mr. Spurgeon, and that you spoke at Park-street on the evening preceding the meeting at Unicorn Yard, and that you intend to have Mr. Spurgeon again to preach for you, which of course you have a right if you choose to do, as you have; and I would as willingly grant you your right to your convictions as I have to mine.

"As, then, I believe Mr. Spurgeon's ministry not to be in accordance with the new covenant, consequently not Scriptural, I must decline working with him; and as he would have a much larger congregation, and bring more temporal help than I should bring, he is the proper person for you to have. I must stand out for what I believe and trust I experimentally know to be the truth as it is in Jesus.

"I have no sympathy whatever with the reproachful things said in the public papers of Mr. Spurgeon's ministry, as such things arise from ignorance, envy, and prejudice against his honest and out-spoken manner of advocating what he believes to be truth.

"I much regret being thus compelled to decline coming to Brighton. This letter is not in confidence. You can make any use of it you think proper. Yours faithfully,

J. Wells.

Mr. Wilkins, Brighton.

Mr. Wilkins to Mr. Wells.

4, West-hill-road, Brighton, April 1, 1857.

"My dear Brother. — It was with mingled feelings I read your letter, which reached me last evening. I was sorry you had declined to pay us the expected visit, and sorry, too, that any difference should exist between those I believe to be the servants of God. Yet I was pleased with your honesty, and the good feeling your letter exhibited, and am still led to believe that a line or two of explanation will set the matter at rest, so far as you and I are concerned.

"When I saw you at Unicorn Yard last week, and asked you if you would give us a visit, I felt thankful with your kind promise to do so, on which occasion you asked me what I really thought of Mr. Spurgeon; to which I replied that had you heard him as I had, you would have received him as I did.

I have no more sympathy with anything short of a full, free, and effectual gospel than yourself; and did I find the contrary in any man, I should at once reject it. It is not supposed because we receive a brother, we receive everything he says, or endorse every sentiment he holds. No one ever thought when brother Wells mentioned the names of Huntington and Irons, that he had been converted to their views of baptism, or when he spoke of Toplady and Hawker, that he was become an Episcopalian. Nor is it understood that your brethren who receive Mr. Spurgeon have pledged themselves to avow every sentence he advances. I am open to confess that I differ with him on some points,—such as the communion question, and his views of the millennium, &c, but there is too much of Christ and sovereign grace in his ministry to allow me to reject it. I have no doubt there are many brethren you meet with, with whom you as widely differ. Did I find anything in any man calculated to undermine the faith of the church in the great truths of the gospel, like yourself, I would at once keep at a distance, and expose the error. But with reference to Mr. Spurgeon I have not found it, but to the contrary. The subject you have noticed concerning his views on repentance I have not seen. My own views on repentance, faith, and everything else worth having, is found in Ephesians ii. — 'by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the Gift of God.' And what is not of self, I have never seen any common sense in calling upon self to do. From your letter I am thinking you imagined I was laying a trap for you (viz., by ringing you to Brighton to preach with Mr. Spurgeon), because you understood I was at Park-street on the Monday, and had said Mr. Spurgeon was coming for me. It is true I was there, of which I made no secret, as you are aware; and in my address I said, 'Seeing the many thousands

in this metropolis regardless of God, the Bible, or the Sabbath, as I saw them yesterday in Whitechapel and elsewhere, I could say, would to God a thousand Spurgeon's were raised up to attract the multitude to hear the Word of life!' And I feel assured you will go with me in this expression. And as he is doing what no other living man can do, let us rather rejoice than lament. And if you and I differ in opinion concerning a servant, we are not to let that opinion hinder our union respecting the Master.

"I trust no word will ever escape my lips contrary to covenant love—covenant blood for covenant sinners; the two former securing all needful blessings, agency and means to the latter. Agreeing as we do on such vital points, surely we cannot be far wrong. As for Mr. Spurgeon's coming to Windsor-street, that will not be for several months to come, and certainly you would not object to preach in the same pulpit, many months apart. I would not be found playing a trick on any, much less on brethren I highly esteem. You will see, therefore, that your invitation was independent of everyone else, and that we expected you to take the two services alone.

Shall I, my dear brother, after the explanation I have candidly given, have the happiness of expecting you as I did before receiving your letter? And may we not still hope that your visit may be looked forward to, with the most fervent desires that our covenant God and Father will make it, by the Holy Gospel, a united season of seed time and harvest?

"Wishing you every blessing in your own soul, and in your work, I am, my dear brother, your's faithfully in gospel union,

"Joseph Wilkins." To Mr. J. Wells."

Mr. Wells to Mr. Wilkins.
April 3, 1857.

Dear Friend.—I am much obliged by your prompt, kind, and well-written reply. I am glad to see in you the elements of a good and able preacher of the gospel.

"It seems you have not read Mr. Spurgeon's sermon on 'The Sin of Unbelief' or his more recently printed sermon, entitled, 'Unimpeachable Justice,' which sermon, as well as many others of his sermons, clearly shews that he holds that men are not lost by the fall, or condemned according to their personal wrongs, but are lost by refusing to become true believers in Jesus Christ. And holding this doctrine, he, as he deems occasion requires, brings forward this doctrine and preaches it to the ungodly, hereby reducing the settlements of grace to a mere jest; for if it be of works (and it certainly is if those are in hell who might have been in heaven), then it is no more of grace. He thus connects the doctrines of grace (in reality) with the works of dead captive sinners.

"Now, from this doctrine of duty-faith (for this is what it is) you seem in your open profession to stand clear. But though I receive not the mark of error in my forehead so as openly to avow that error, yet if I give the right hand of fellowship to it, I do hereby receive the mark of error, though not in my forehead, yet I receive it in my hand. Whereas I am commanded to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

A man having great powers of numerical attraction is no criterion of truth: it is the hugeness of Popery, Church-of-Englandism, Wesleyanism, and Mahommedanism, which has awed so many into submission; and all this is very natural to those whose faith stands in the wisdom of men, and who love the praise of men more than the praise of God.

The good men to whom you refer held no doctrine which had a tendency immediately to sap and undermine the truths of the new covenant; whereas there is no doctrine in existence that more insidiously destroys the vital truths of the gospel from the churches than this duty-faith doctrine. It is by this doctrine that such numbers are converted— such a conversion as it is. It is by this doctrine they come into the churches, and the truth, and not always by slow degrees, becomes expelled from such churches. Where are the old Fullerite churches gone to, but into the grossest Arminianism?

Is there one prophet, is there one apostle that would for one hour give way to such a doctrine as duty-faith? No, not one; no, not even if an angel from heaven should preach it. Now, I am solemnly convinced from Mr. Spurgeon's printed sermons that he docs hold (no doubt conscientiously) this pernicious error; and nearly every church of truth who under an impression of the contrary have received him, have reaped in nearly every case the fruits of their conduct. The minister has fallen like a thistle, the right minded have lost confidence in him, and the church becomes divided. Your experience in this matter is yet to come; a flimsy gospel makes but flimsy friends; and if we practically deny what we profess to hold, who will have any confidence in us?

I would stand second to no man in concern for the souls of men; but I must be concerned also for the purity of new covenant truth. A man may be a son of thunder to sinners, as well as a son of consolation to saints, without speaking wickedly for God. If, therefore, I seek to get money to uphold error, I do thereby give my sanction to that error.

It is very unpleasant to me to make these almost personal allusions to Mr. Spurgeon, but still every man's public ministry becomes public property and of course Mr. Spurgeon might as much object to my mode of speaking to the ungodly as I do to his duty-faith doctrine, and yea and nay gospel. I know of no man I should feel more attachment to, where he but straight in the truth; but it is not so; I lament it; and none but the Lord can alter it. Therefore, whether I am doing right or doing wrong, so it is, that I feel that with the fear of God before my eyes I dare not labor to get money for a church, if not professing, yet willfully or ignorantly giving the hand of fellowship to what I believe to be an error of the most serious description. I am, therefore, compelled to decline coming to Brighton.

I freely exonerate you from all intention to mislead me, nor do I for one moment seek to dictate to you. I am (as I have said), from Mr. Spurgeon's printed sermons, convinced that he holds an unscriptural doctrine, which virtually (though he sees it not) destroys the truth and temple of God. You, on the other hand, are not convinced of this; but, on the contrary, believe him to be sound in all the essentials of the gospel.

I suffered before I knew what the truth really was, so much from yea and nay gospels, that I have done with them forever; but as you feel satisfied with Mr. Spurgeon's ministry, act accordingly, and honestly abide by him; and as to his open communion, millennium, &etc. these are

circumstantial which do not so immediately touch essentials. I feel more and more my need of wisdom from on high to know how to act, especially in such cases as this. I am, in declining to come to Brighton, doing what I conscientiously believe to be right. I make no pretensions to infallibility, but if truth be my guide I cannot be far out. While I remain yours faithfully in the gospel (not of men but of God), J. Wells.

"To Mr. Wilkins.

"Note.—The nearer the counterfeit is in weight and appearance to the real coin, the greater the danger, and the more complete the-deception."

Continuation of this correspondence - pages 126ff

MR. JAMES WELLS AND MR. SPURGEON.
A CORRESPONDENCE AND A QUESTION.

(Continued from our last).

[It has been a most difficult task for us, this month, to select from among the many letters on this subject, those that were really most likely to edify the churches; and, also, to lead to a profitable issue a controversy which, if conducted in a Christian spirit, may be of considerable benefit to the multitudes who now throng the gates of Zion in these gospel-professing days. The four letters which follow, may be considered fairly to represent the many which are every day coming to hand. Our readers must not consider us as endorsing every, or even any, sentiment which this controversy may cause us to publish in connection therewith. We are simply the medium through which each real friend to Zion may express his mind; it is more than probable, however, that we may cast in our mite, after our more able brethren have done their best.

One word we must say, by way of endeavoring to correct an erroneous impression which some of our correspondents have received. They think Mr. Wells stands as an enemy to Mr. Spurgeon. It Is Not So. We take upon ourselves the responsibility of declaring that we are satisfied there is not a man on earth who more esteems the gifts God has given to C. H. Spurgeon, than does James Wells; and, although, for the present, he decidedly refuses anything like co-operation, we firmly believe that the pastor of the Surrey Tabernacle rejoices in the shaking and stir that is now being given to professing Christians, and to our nominal gospel churches; and we zealously believe that the agitation of the question now under consideration will be instrumental in giving many to see the grand and eternal difference between flaming professions without, and the life-imparting powers of the Holy Ghost within. We must not enlarge, or we should sail into an ocean of thoughts and facts which would, we believe, lead to a discovery of the great secret; but we, for the present, retire, that others may speak first.—Ed.]

To the Editor of the Earthen Vessel.

Sir.—Reading the correspondence between Mr. Wells and Mr. Wilkins, respecting Mr. Spurgeon's ministry, I, with many others, seem perplexed to understand why Mr. Wells should refuse to preach

for Mr. Wilkins, and yet he preaches for Mr. Cozens, as Mr. Spurgeon preached and collected for Mr. Cozens only in October last! Does Mr. Wells think Mr. Wilkins's ministry is not sound? He says, "If I seek to get money, by truth, to uphold that which is not truth, I make myself a transgressor" (truth). Yet, I find there was a collection at Somers Town, and Mr. Cozens must approve of Mr. Spurgeon, or he would not have had him there. Has Mr. Cozens seen his error, and recanted? I fear many use Mr. Spurgeon as a sponge, to wipe off old debts, more than out of love to his ministry. If so, woe, woe be to them!

I find no fault of what Mr. Wells has said about Mr. Spurgeon's ministry; what he has said is honest; but I wish the more experienced in the ministry would do as Aquila and Priscilla did with Apollos—teach him the way of God more perfectly.

M. B. Kern.

Mr. Wells and Mr. Spurgeon.

Sir.—It would almost seem an unnecessary vindication that of the character of one, who by his works and labors gives such significant and unmistakable proofs of his calling and credentials; but it is a fact to be lamented, and grieved over, that the self-same spirit which has split asunder the church in every age, sown discord, and separated her members, and discomfited the whole Israel of God, is now as rampant as ever. From narrowing minds and human hearts come all this mischievous and hurtful spirit. Men will not believe there can be essential oneness, where there is individual peculiarities. If they would learn from God's acts and works, they would see and discern that variety and peculiarity mark them all; and to all of his creatures he acts as he pleases, dispensing favors to one which he withholds from another; bestowing gifts on one which he debars another from possessing. Let us know, that whatever gifts men have showered on them, are for purposes eternally designed, and which no others could effect. If we believe this, then we have a ready key to understand why one of God's servants is a Paul, another a Silas, one a John, another a Peter; each had his work, and each the sphere for that work. Shall we accuse the loving John of timidity, because he had not the fire of Peter; or despise the sublime reasoning of Paul, because his style differed from that of other holy men? God forbid; let us be content to know, that God can raise up whom he will, and give what gifts he pleases, nor shall all the offended inhabitants of the earth let or hinder him.

The correspondence between Mr. Wells, of London, and Mr. Wilkins, of Brighton, relative to Mr. Spurgeon's ministry seems calculated to do one of two things, perhaps both —and which seems, apparently to be the motive of the principal party therein (Mr. Wells). —First, either to prove the un-scripturally of Mr. Spurgeon's teaching, and so exonerate those who have stood aloof from him; or, secondly, to establish the principle, that cooperation with a fellow-laborer necessarily implies an indorsement of all his teachings.

As to the first, no one doubts, or ever will, that Mr. Wells is conscientiously sincere in all he says of Mr. Spurgeon's teachings and doctrines; believing, as he does, they are not Scriptural, nor accord with truth, he does, as he should, preach against them; he need no other vindication of his character; he can have no more; a clear conscience counter balances all the world can give or say. But as to

the second, that laboring with a brother implies an indorsement of his peculiarities, seems, though not new, somewhat inconsistent, and which, if carried out in daily life would very soon uproot society, the world, and the church. If we are to establish this principle, then away all sort of remembrance for the poor; all endeavors to overcome the evils of life, of suffering, and distress; away all labor in a common cause. Does Mr. Wells remember that a few years ago, when this country was rent by the Cry of "No Popery and Papal aggression," that one and all, were glad of the assistance of each other to meet the common foe? Did the Churchman sacrifice his ritual, the Wesleyan his points, any more than the Calvinist did election? But hand in hand, and side by side, were they arrayed against the treacherous foe. And what and where should we be now, but for that glorious and united co-fellowship? How soon should we have had mass offered, and the host elevated in Saint Paul's and Westminster Abbey, but for that great and united action! But for it, think ye, the glorious truths of an invincible and ever conquering grace and gospel would be from week to week proclaimed: in the Surrey Tabernacle? Let us think every day to be a crisis, and not merely that there is but one in a century.

But whether Mr. Spurgeon is right in all he says and preaches, for myself I do not for one moment, fear to venture an opinion. I believe he does sometimes, in his addresses to the ungodly, overstep that boundary which God and Scripture has marked. But, O! it must be a difficult thing to stand before thousands, whose souls will hereafter be where hope never comes, with the consciousness of the high and solemn work and charge committed to the preacher, and not to warn them of their sins, and yet not deceive them by shadowy promise and hope ; indeed, it does need teaching from on high. Peter's love for his Master made him draw the sword and smite the High Priest's servant's ear. His Master rebuked his manners, but loved him I still. An earnest man is the most likely to be an erring man. Forgive the errors, ask the object, and love the man.

It is time we looked through words to motive. What is Christian biography? The whole is summed up in one sentence—love to God. If a man love God, we know God loves him—" We love him because he first loved us." If loved of God, God will exemplify his love by making him productive of good. Many of us may not know the object of our being now, but hereafter we shall; meanwhile it is written, "By the fruits of a tree ye shall know it." Has God worked by Mr. Spurgeon? Who will say conscientiously nay? Has he any credentials of his ambassadorship? If so, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

It seems not unworthy of notice, and that on which I would wish to press most forcibly, that those who have condemned Mr. Spurgeon's ministry the most, have been the most silent and reserved in giving their opinion as to their belief of the reality of his discipleship. There is more in this, than many would seem to think. For, if he is believed to be one of the family, the greater the error in not receiving him: "love the brethren, and especially they of the household of faith." On the other hand, if he is not believed to be a good man, how comes it to pass that he has so many seals to his ministry, and witnesses that the Spirit is with him? Surely, God would not so manifestly work by the instrumentality of error—if error he preaches—for God is not slackened in his arm that he cannot raise up whom he will, to gather in his elect, and make his kingdom come. If Mr. Wells, and those on his side, believe at all that God has worked by the instrumentality of Mr. Spurgeon, and yet that he preaches (and that constantly) error, how can it be reconciled with the necessity of the institution of a gospel church and a Christian ministry? If error produces good, in what light, and position, stands error? Upon this reasoning, we may as well sheath the sword against popery,

Arminianism, and every other heresy; so that, I think, that on either side, Mr. Wells' friends must find themselves encompassed with difficulty when they reflect on the part they have taken.

Mr. Spurgeon is a young man, only just on his Master's errand. Mr. Wells has been half a life time on the same errand. Has Mr. Wells learned nothing since he first began to exalt the unsearchable riches of Christ? If so, let him not be rash. Mr. Wells may be a more cautious speaker than Mr. Spurgeon. Again, I say, look at intention. Carefully read a volume of Mr. Spurgeon's sermons, and can any one mistake what he believes or teaches? A sentence here and there picked out may look, and is legal, I freely grant it. But what says the whole? Arminians take the Bible, and say that universal redemption is therein. Romanticists take it, and say that it is right to pray to the Virgin Mary, and that purgatory is therein. Mormons, too, also use the Bible. It is not what one verse seems to say, but what says the whole? Let us not judge other men by a standard we should be reluctant to be tried by ourselves. How many good men have there been, who are now far above the reach of doubt, or where it can enter, who in their time talked as though man could do that which they knew full well God only could effect. Does not Mr. Wells' congregation, in common with the Christian world at large, worship God by singing many of Dr. Watts' hymns?

O, may that day not be far distant, when all the petty differences which has embittered the church and poisoned her peace, be remembered no more in the fullness of the glory of that light which shall, extinguish all other, Christ Jesus 1 D. S.

To Mr. James Wells.

My Dear Brother.—I have now read in *The Earthen Vessel* for this month, the correspondence to which you alluded when I was privileged to meet with your church last ordinance day. And truly glad I am at length to see the subject of Mr. C. H. Spurgeon's ministry brought so simply and so scripturally before the body of Baptist believers.

Mr. Spurgeon, as a free citizen of Britain, has an undoubted right to live and reign in a region of unfettered thought and expression—that is one thing. But for Zion, whose freedom is in "the kingdom of God," to receive him, unknown by personal communion and fellowship; untried by soul affliction and sorrow; and unproved by adversity, age, or experience, is another. And I do say, it is a scandal and disgrace in the Baptist body, to give even the coloring of approbation to a ministry, merely because of its exciting popularity on the one hand, or its success in obtaining the people's money on the other.

It may suit the giddy millions to make sport with the bewitching philosophy of dramatic display, and to riot in the amusing freaks of artist's "airy footed love." But are the "children of light" to be caught in the snare of popular talents, and to be cheated by mere pulpit eloquence? Are dreams and delusion to captivate Zion? Is "excellency of speech," and "man's wisdom," to supplant the "demonstration of God's Spirit," and our old fashioned gospel of "power?" Are "enticing words" to ensnare the elect—and thus we, who have begun in the Spirit, to end in the flesh? Shipwreck of faith would be sure to all the seed, if these elements of the world, from which they are once delivered, were thus to overcome them again.

It is not enough that a man adopts our scriptural cognomen, or professes to endorse our spiritual creed! He must be a believer by spiritual baptism, and a Baptist from spiritual belief. A child of God must be made so by God himself; and from the same infallible source must also receive "grace and apostleship" for the work of the ministry. Then will the fruits and effects be more corresponding with the testimony of truth, than those which at present grow on the wide spreading Spurgeon tree.

I have not a particle of prejudice against the young and amiable aspirant after pulpit fame: but I have read his sermons, heard his preaching, and closely observed the profession and conduct of his followers; and upon the face of these things, I see not the lively feature of a healthy child. The souls of men are not always blest, when they say and think they are; neither is it "hearing well," when the fancy only is pleased and the flesh reasoned into acquiescence. The wisdom of the world and the "wisdom of God " are antagonists; and a man will "cease" from the former, if he really possesses the latter, and when this is the case with a minister, his knowledge in Christ will be made manifest to the souls of God's people by the communication of the Truth, and Eternal Life, through the power of the Holy Ghost; and until the mystery of redemption is thus revealed through Mr. Spurgeon's ministrations, the Church of God cannot acknowledge him in the preached gospel of Christ.

Therefore I say, at present, at least, there should be a becoming reserve in our reception of him, and a prudential carefulness in our uniting with him. Wait awhile, and let patience have her perfect work.

It maybe that God has raised him up to a great work, which in the end would then speak; but maybe will not warrant a compromise on the part of a people built up in "shalls" and " wills."

Thinking the sweet spirit of Mr. Wilkins, of Brighton, is highly to be admired; your noble stand for the truth to be commended; and brother Banks for the publication of both letters to be thanked; and wishing all grace may abound to the trio, I am, my dear brother, faithfully your's in the gospel of Christ,

Josiah Cowell
Chelmsford, May 5, 18S7.

A WORD FROM WANDSWORTH.

A Letter to Mr. James Wells.

My Dear Sir.—I heard that you refused to preach with Mr. Spurgeon at Brighton, and also that there was some printed correspondence in the Earthen Vessel. I felt very indignant that you should refuse preaching with so good a man, but I resolved to see for myself, and got the book referred to; and upon a perusal I feel glad that the Lord has made you thus honest, and still possessing a kind feeling to our young brother; and my object in writing this is to encourage you, as I would other able bishops of our church, to teach him the gospel more perfectly, which, under the Divine blessing, may be attended with the best and happiest results. I heard him last Lord's-day morning from those important words, "Ye must be born again." In the first place he said that no one could

possibly belong to the church, except born from above; and used very pointed and good similes to establish his assertion; after which he told his audience that his regeneration was not as the Puseyites supposed, produced at baptism (so called), but it was entirely supernatural i.e., entirely and alone of God. After which, he said he would expostulate with his hearers upon the necessity of the new birth; and from his energy, arguments, and expostulations, you would conceive that he had entirely lost sight of his first propositions, and folks would suppose that it after all remained with themselves to set about making themselves new men at once.

On the Sabbath preceding he said he wished he could speak with energy. Welsh ministers they have such a method of working on the people; but we have not so learnt; we know "'Tis not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." However, judging of his ministry affectionately, I should hope it may be said of him as of others—" Then shall wo know if we follow on to know the Lord."

I am sure he needs the prayers of the church, and the kind admonitions and cautions of those who have been longer in the way; but 'tis astonishing how very many of professed ministers of Christ cling to this duty-faith system. As Mr. Spurgeon appears to be an honest, open-hearted man, I hope he may be brought to see and preach the truth as it is in Jesus.

You will pardon, I hope, so great a liberty, and intrusion on your valuable time. Wishing you a long and useful life, and an abundant entrance into the joy of the Lord, that when your heart and flesh shall foil, he may be your portion forever. Amen. May 6, 1857.

Review of Spurgeon's Ministry being a response to this correspondence by James Wells - pages 153ff 1857

MR. JAMES WELLS AND MR. SPURGEON.

A CORRESPONDENCE AND A QUESTION.

A REVIEW OF MR. SPURGEON'S MINISTRY, By James Wells, Of the Surrey Tabernacle.

Dear Mr. Editor,—The correspondence between myself and Mr. Wilkins, of Windsor-street Chapel, Brighton, being published in the Earthen Vessel, I think it needful that I should verify the truth of my assertion—that Mr. Spurgeon is a duty-faith man. And although he does not, in any of his printed sermons that I have seen in so many words, declare it to be the duty of all men savingly to believe in Christ, yet he clearly holds the doctrine. A doctrine, when stripped of its obscurity, fleshly sympathies, and deceptive rhetoric, amounts simply to this—that the great God has, in love and mercy, recorded the names of a people (whom he hath chosen) in the Lamb's Book of life from before the foundation of the world; and that those people whom he hath sovereignly left out are to be condemned to all eternity, for not having their names there also. Impossible as it was for their names to be in the Book of Life, yet they, for not being there, are to be cast into hell. And one of Mr. S's sermons containing this said doctrine is entitled "Unimpeachable Justice."

What, then, I say, is this duty-faith doctrine? It is that Jesus Christ laid down his life for the sheep—and for the sheep only and the others are to be damned to the lowest and hottest hell because they did not make him their Saviour also. And this is to be called “Unimpeachable Justice.”

Again, I say, what is this duty-faith doctrine? It is that all the objects of eternal election have obtained it; that is, obtained it, by electing grace making them indissolubly one with Christ; and the others are to be doubly punished for not being one with him too.

The Holy Spirit gives to every man severally as he will. As the heavenly wind, he bloweth where he listeth: yet the others are to be cursed of God because they are not regenerated also.

A kingdom is to be possessed for ever by a people, for whom, from the foundation of the world, that kingdom was prepared; and the others are to be cast into the lake of fire, because they do not take possession of what was never meant for them, for it shall be given to them for whom it was prepared.

Now, I proceed from Mr. Spurgeon's printed sermons, to prove that he holds and preaches this doctrine of a baseless condemnation; this figment of a causeless curse; this miserable apology for the damnation of men. That viper of a doctrine is among the sticks that he gathers; and though not so often seen in the ministry of some of his low doctrine brethren, still the poison is there. This leaven is, however, imperceptibly, still working. These are the names I give to such a doctrine; then, Mr. Spurgeon holds it as a Bible doctrine; and, therefore, holds it in reverence and respect, and will not be ashamed to own this duty-faith doctrine, though, of course, he would not like to own it in the nudated state in which I have here presented it, nor, by any means, suffer it to wear such names as, in my estimation, belong to it.

To give in full the first proof would be to quote the whole of his sermon on the “Sin of Unbelief.” I shall give but few words from the 19th and last page of that sermon.

The sermon, page 19, says—“ I could not have thought that persons could be so foolhardy as to venture to assert that it is no sin for a sinner not to believe in Christ.” This same sermon closes thus—if you are lost it will be because ye believed not on Christ; and, if you perish, this will be the bitterest drop of gall—that ye did not trust in the Saviour.”

Now, that infidel unbelief—that is, a disbelief of God's Holy Word, is sin, no right minded man will deny,—but that absence of saving faith is sin, I do most distinctly deny. Now, as the sermon makes no distinction between the faith which God alone can bestow, and that conscience, natural, religious believing in the truth of the Bible, which thousands of graceless people possess; the unavoidable conclusion of every reader of that sermon must be, that it holds that it is the duty of all men savingly to believe in Christ—for where faith is not a duty, unbelief cannot be a sin. And the sermon, unlike some other sermons by the same author, is all through consistent with itself, and very properly closes with a most awful threat to those who neglect the duty of savingly believing in Christ. “This shall be the bitterest drop of gall—that ye did not trust in the Saviour.” Could a Wesleyan say more? The Saviour was never meant for them; and yet this is to be the bitterest drop of gall—that they did not trust in the Saviour; whom the author of these sermons declares, again and again, died for the elect only. And yet they are to find this the bitterest drop of

gall—that they did not trust in the Saviour. This sentence is in perfect keeping with the main drift of this sermon; to tell me, after reading this sermon, that its author is not a duty-faith man, is to tell me that words have no meaning.

And, if his gospel be divided against itself is it not a suicidal gospel? Is it not a kind of self-murdering gospel? And does not such an idea remind one of that scripture "that no murderer hath eternal life?" I speak as I feel; and assert and testify that to me such a gospel is yea and nay; and by such a gospel I (whatever others may do) cannot look for eternal life.

I hold, but I do not here stop to prove, the truth of my position. I hold that infidel unbelief is sin; but I do not hold that the non-possession of the faith of God's elect is sin. There is plenty to condemn poor benighted fallen man without the mockery of turning electing grace, redeeming blood, and regenerating mercy into laws of wrath, vengeance, and direst destruction. Nor will I stop to tell out how strongly I feel against this duty-faith poison—this column of smoke from beneath; out will go on to prove my point—that Mr. S.'s sermons contain the doctrine of duty-faith and self-contradiction. Nor am I speaking as the representative of any one person under heaven but myself: let me, therefore, bear all the blame. I claim my right to speak for myself; and, let me die in a workhouse or rot in a prison, or be burnt at a stake, rather than make shipwreck concerning faith. Let everything else go, but let me stand fast in the faith. Nor have I any end in view but the honor and truth of God and godliness. Nor am I seeking to find fault with Mr. S.; I am doing by him as I myself would be done by; and merely proving that those doctrines, and that that gospel which he so conscientiously, sincerely, industriously, and with such numerical success preaches, is, nevertheless, to me a yea and nay gospel.

In the sermon entitled "The two effects of the Gospel," page 199, we have these words— "It is a fact that the gospel of Jesus Christ will increase some men's damnation at the last day."

Again, in sermon entitled "Freewill a Slave," we have, on page 402, these words— suppose a thief should say to a Judge, I could not help it, I had a bad heart. What would the Judge say? Why, you rascal, why, if your heart is bad I will I make the sentence the heavier, for you are a villain indeed." The idea (as the connection shows), here intended, is—that as the sinner makes his bad heart an excuse for not coming to Christ, this sinner is to be reckoned a rascal, and a villain indeed. What analogy there is between a living man willfully becoming a thief, and a dead sinner not coming to Christ, I must leave others to determine. One thing is clear, that the Lord could, had it been his will, have come to the sinner, though the sinner would not, and could not, come to him; but if the Lord will not, and the sinner cannot, then vain is the help of man.

Again (page 263) in the sermon entitled "Unimpeachable Justice," we have these words—" Tossed back on a wave of fire, they will see written on every spark that emanates there from, thou knowest thy duty, but did it not. Again, he plunges into another wave, &c. Yes, it may be, My Friends that I shall be one of your tormentors in hell; and, when you lift up your eyes to heaven, you will shriek, and say, O God! There is my minister looking down reprovngly on me."

Again, in the "Christian Spectator," Jan., 1856, there is a review of the sermon entitled "Truths Taught by the Resurrection of Lazarus." In which sermon, in the extracts they give, are these words—" My friends, it's all nonsense about metaphors: men are really dead, in a spiritual sense."

And, then, at the beginning of the next paragraph but one, we have these words—" But me thinks I hear some say, I cannot do anything. I will sit down where I am, and make myself content. What now? Wilt thou sit thyself down when hell blazes before thee?" &c. The reviewers are low doctrine men! but they see the self-contradiction, and find fault therewith. The Calvinism of the sermon being as much to their distaste, as the Arminianism of the sermon is to my distaste. But they agree with me, and I with them, in this—that it is self-contradictory.

Again, in a sermon preached in Glasgow, Aug. 10, 1856, by Mr. Furguson B. A., the preacher in page 4 of the said sermon, speaks concerning Mr. S.'s comment at Glasgow on the 11th chapter of Matthew thus :—" Mr. Spurgeon read the 11th chapter of Matthew. He (Mr. S.) said that there were three important doctrines taught in that paragraph of Scripture. The responsibility of man, in the woe which Christ pronounced upon Khorasan and Bethsaida, for disregarding his miracles — the electing sovereignty of God in the 26 verse—' I thank thee, oh, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes,' and the unlimited freeness of the gospel invitation—' come unto me, all ye that labor.' That he (Mr. S.) could not (says Mr. Ferguson) reconcile the first and the third doctrines with the second, but expected to be enabled to do so by the light of the upper world."

Here we have another instance of self-contradiction; all arising from the duty-faith doctrine. All the three doctrines above are reconciled simply by taking the repentance spoken of for what it is— viz., the repentance like the repentance of the Ninevites—of reformation, but not the repentance of regeneration, or that accompanying salvation.

I will now set some of these samples of Mr. S.'s sermons on the left hand, and the Bible on the right, and let us see what, relation there is between them.

Mr. Spurgeon

the Bible

" I should not have thought any person so fool-hardy as to say it is no sin not to believe in Christ."	"Murmur not among yourselves; no man can come to me except the Father draw him." John vi. 43, 44.
"This shall be the bitterest drop of gall that ye did not trust in the Saviour."	"Cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." Gal. iv. 30.
"It is a fact that the gospel of Jesus Christ will increase some men's damnation at the last day. "	"For the Son of Man is come not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Luke ix. 55.
"Ye knew your duty, and ye did it not."	"Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep."
"I shall be one of your tormentors in hell."	"Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." Rom. xii. 19.
"What! Now sit thyself down, when hell blazes before thee!"	"The dead know not anything." Ec. ix. 5.

Now, I conclude from the foregoing proofs, that Mr. S. belongs to the duty faith class of preachers; and that he preaches a self-contradictory gospel. But do most distinctly deny saying this disrespectfully or unkindly; I state these merely as facts. Nor is Mr. S.'s position in this respect anything either new or uncommon; for although a position (at least I believe, and so I speak) unknown to the Bible, yet it is a

position which has been occupied by men celebrated, but at the same time uninspired men. But with me human tradition is but chaff; the word of the Lord is the wheat; "And what is the chaff to the wheat? Saith the Lord."

Now, as I have said, I speak only for myself, yet I believe some thousands of real Christians who firmly believe that Mr. Spurgeon's ministry is a duty-faith yea and nay ministry; and if it be so, let Mr. Spurgeon, as a public and as an honest man, publicly avow in so many words and without any ambiguity, that he believes that men are lost for not taking possession of that inheritance which never was, never will be, never can be meant for them; for we well know that if by any means they should get possession of it, yet as they (the non-elect) are bond children, they must nevertheless be cast out—yes, even after Mr. Spurgeon himself has brought them in. Now, let Mr. Spurgeon plainly avow his position. And on the other hand, if he be not a duty-faith man, but that preaching his "Unimpeachable Justice" sermon on the occasion of Palmer's execution, he unintentionally threw in a few grains of strychnine, and that in his other duty-faith sermons he does not mean what his words say, but that these wild gourds got by oversight into the pot, that this leaven (and it takes but very little leaven to leaven the whole lump; it takes but very little of this duty-faith folly to cause the ointment to send forth a stinking savor; but this little, however) was an oversight—if, I say, thousands are led astray by Mr. Spurgeon's words, and are judging in this matter wrongfully of him, let him, as a man who professes to care for the souls of men, let him one way or the other undeceive us; the more popular he is, the more plain he ought to be.

For myself, I would be the last to make a man an offender for a word, or for a thousand words; but when a doctrine from the evil one is broached, forming a kind of undercurrent which now and then breaks out, and may one day overflow all the banks of every truth he now preaches, and carry away as with a flood both himself and his followers—a kind of circumstance not at all uncommon; this, then, I say, becomes a matter too serious to be trifled with. Again, then, I say, "A little leaven leavens the whole lump."

I had marked many more proofs that Mr. Spurgeon is a Fullerite, but I will give but two or three more, with a few words on each.

In the sermon entitled—"Future Bliss," page 126, he thus speaks—"I am afraid I am not elect. Oh! Dear souls, do not trouble yourselves about that; if you believe in your Christ you are elect; whosoever puts himself on the mercy of Jesus, and who has nothing at all to right, shall have mercy if he come for it."

What am I to understand by this? Do not such words quietly set election aside, and rest the whole matter with the creature? Election is to keep out of the way, while the creature, by mighty hand and outstretched arm, puts himself on the mercy of Jesus. Election here is an intruder; and, therefore, must get out of the way while man makes himself more just than God, and more pure than his Maker. This, if the words have any meaning at all, is the sentiment they convey. These words of Mr. S. sort very badly with the 6th and 10th chapters of John, as well as sorting very badly with the general analogy of faith. This mode, in which Mr. S. often treats election, apologizes for that decision and boldness with which, at other times, he speaks of the truth of the doctrine of eternal election. These softeners ease the minds, and reconcile the feelings, of carnal hearts to a ministry they would otherwise most piously kick at. These pillows, under the armholes, are a great repose to the self-deceived. "Thus saith the Lord, woe to them that sow pillows to all armholes. Will ye hunt the souls of my people, and save the souls that come unto you?" Ezek. xiii. 18.

Now, Mr. S., of course, does not intend such words for pillows of carnal ease, but as whips of small cords to lash the lazy won't come into action. But this mode of address to my mind is like having more faith in the supposed power of the creature than in the truth of the living God. And yet curious enough, that while

Mr. S. winds up so many of his sermons with the rankest Arminianism, he, nevertheless, very ingeniously condemns such a line of things. We have, says Mr. S, ("The Holy Ghost, the Great Teacher," page 381.) We have, says Mr. S., "some who preach Calvinism all the first part of the sermon, and finish up with Arminianism, because they think it will make them useful—useful nonsense: that is all it is. A man, if he cannot be useful with truth, cannot be useful with an error."

As Mr. S. chooses thus to be witness against himself, I need not say anything—only that it is another instance of yea and nay in his ministry.

In his sermon on, "Making light of Christ," the creature is put above and before the Creator. Nearly all through the discourse, in aiming to charge sin upon man, he has misrepresented God. And as for the recently preached sermon, (April 26, 1857,) from, "Let the whole earth be filled with thy glory," had I seen no other sermon of Mr. S.'s, certainly I should have taken this one to be intended as a formal denouncement of every new covenant truth of the gospel. He mistakes a millennium, general calm, for universal conversion, and prays, as he says he does, for the conversion of every being existing. This is, no doubt, a very benevolent, naturally charitable feeling. But which am I to side with? With him who prayed not for the world? Or with Mr. S., who does pray for every being existing?

Mr. S. also tells us that David would have every man converted; but the 109th Psalm, with many other Psalms, does not look much like it.

Mr. S. evidently mistakes altogether the meaning of his text,— "Let the whole earth— (the whole land— for so would be the more proper rendering of the original) be filled with thy glory." And this prayer, in the mere letter of it, was answered in Solomon's day, when there was neither evil nor adversary concurrent; "but they were every man under his vine and under his fig tree, eating and drinking from Dan to Beersheba." But ultimately it will be fulfilled in the new earth, the chosen land, when all Israel, from the least to the greatest, shall know him.

But Mr. S. has broken through (in the above sermon) all these boundaries, and has revelled, with delight, in the boundless chaos of generalisms, an ocean of uncertainties into which I have no desire to plunge. Having been there once, I am too happy of having escaped ever to wish to be there again.

I will notice one more of Mr. S's sermons, and then sum up, in a few words, all I shall at present say upon this matter. The sermon to which I shall now refer is entitled—"Salvation is of the Lord," and was preached at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens, on the morning of May 10th, 1857. This sermon was sent into the vestry to me on Friday, May 29th, not quite three weeks after it was preached. The object of the person (as I gather from his note) was to shew that Mr. S. was a man of sound gospel truth. The paper in which the sermon was sent was pasted on the last page of the sermon, and which made me a little suspicious that something was there which I was not to see. But the paste very kindly gave way, and had not obliterated the last page, but I could read it; and so I found, as I suspected, a nice little pot of free-will honey—a sample of which I will presently give.

"Salvation is of the Lord" is the text, and the doctrine of the text is wrought out right well. The sermon is what no real Christian can find fault with, at least, as far as doctrine is concerned. The sermon does certainly contain the truth as it is in Jesus, and so do many of Mr. S's sermons; and yet amidst so much that is yea and amen, there is the nay.

Now in this sermon Mr. S. labors, and very properly too, to shew that if salvation were not of the Lord in the application of it, as well in other respects it could be of no avail. And to help to illustrate the point, he shows that when King Charles was shut up in Carisbrooke Castle every facility outside the castle was made for his escape. But not being able to get out of the window of the castle, all other provisions for his escape were unavailable. So with the sinner; if the Lord had left one thing for the sinner to do it would not be done: the sinner would be lost.

Now, then, does Mr. S. really mean what he here says? If so, how is it, in the last page of this same sermon, he says – “As salvation is of God, damnation is of man; and if you are lost, you have lost yourselves? ‘Turn, O house of Israel, why will ye die?’ And in his sermon on election, he says- “Damnation will be entirely your own fault.”

Now, here is a mixture of truth and error. Damnation entirely your own fault. But is there any fault at all in condemnation? Is it not a righteous condemnation? But then, whence came this condemnation? It came from original sin. This deed is done; all are under this condemnation. Original sin is ours; and so far as sin is concerned condemnation is by our own fault. And so far as men have light, they have no excuse for acting contrary to that light. And national Israel, by their apostasies from God, destroyed themselves by bringing themselves under the penalties of a broken covenant. And these Israelites were exhorted to return from those apostasies. But what has this to do with the ultimate state of men, or with the ultimate judgment of God concerning them?

As well may I be told, if I am mortal it is my own fault; that if my body die it will be my own fault. To tell me that my being punished eternally is my own fault is to mock me; it is to belie both me and the Most High God too; to use the words of a learned Judge upon another subject, "To tell me that my damnation is entirely my own fault is a mockery, a snare, and a delusion." It is a mockery of my helplessness; it ensnares me in a lie against God; it deludes me by hiding from me my real state as a sinner before God.

Damnation entirely my own fault; so, then, it lies with me after all. Just now King Charles could not get out of the window; now he is to be beheaded for not getting out. He could not get out, yet it was his own fault that he did not get out. Now, which of these two doctrines am I to believe? For believe both I cannot, will not, must not. What, then, after all, is this sermon upon "Salvation is of the Lord," but yea and nay? And, suppose Mr. S. were tried by his own rule, where would he be? Why, he would cut himself off from being anything but a minister of a certain personage translated into an angel of light, and his ministers as ministers of righteousness. Mr. S.'s ministry is, to all intents and purposes, yea and nay. Though he seems not conscious thereof, the sincerity of the motive may, with some, atone for all. But, then, I do not hold the Popish doctrine – that the end sanctifies the means – nor does Mr. S. either. God forbid that I should judge unrighteous judgment.

To me, then, I say, Mr. S's ministry is yea and nay. But of a yea and nay ministry, Mr. S. ("The Holy Ghost, the Great Teacher" page 885) speaks thus—" You may know him (the minister) in the first place by the constant unity of his testimony, a man cannot be enlightened by the Holy Spirit who preaches yea and nay. The Spirit never says one thing at one time and another thing at another time." Such is the testimony of Mr. S. against himself. Does not this prove how unconscious he is of his ministry being yea and nay?

Nor should I have given the above proofs thereof, but for the fact, that many deny that he ever used such words as I have here given; while some theoretically high Calvinists, who have had Mr. S. to make a penny of him, pretend that such sermons and paragraphs are over-sights—a very good subterfuge for those who are half ashamed of the carnal motives for which they availed themselves of his popularity.

I shall here take no notice of the evil motives which have been, and which, of course, will be imputed to me.

I know my own motives, and with them I shall be content, and that in a dying hour.

I have thought, and I still think, that the purity of new covenant truth is of infinite and eternal importance; and, therefore, is, at any cost, well worth contending earnestly for.

I have not sought to reprove, much less reproach, Mr. S., nor do I dream of instructing him. But as I see no reason why I should lay my soul and conscience down for any, and every, error to ride over rough shod, I have claimed my right to speak. I dictate to no one. I have shewed merely my opinion.

And, now, Mr. Editor, the remarks you made in the last month's Vessel, relative to my feelings towards Mr. Spurgeon, I can sincerely endorse.

Think not that I object to terrific appeals to sinners, or to anything truthful tending to awaken them, but I object to yea and nay; or, to use Mr. S.'s own words, if we cannot be useful by truth, we cannot be useful by error.

Now, then, after all, it may be asked, what do you want? Well, I will state what I want.

1st. I want, if it be the Lord's will, to see so highly a gifted and admirable a man as is Mr. S. to be convinced that he is in a castle of self-contradiction. And should be happy to see Mr. Charles H. Spurgeon enabled to do what King Charles could not do—that is, escape from the castle. I should then glory in seeing him in the pulpit of the Surrey Tabernacle, and in every pulpit of truth in the world, and in every pulpit of error too. But I should not like him to have a collection for such as hate the truth, as I do not deem it to be very loyal to be helping that forward which is seeking to cast down some of the highest honors of our King.

2nd. I want to see ministers and churches of truth beware of receiving another gospel.

3rd. I want to be shown that I should be justified in getting money to help those who sanction a yea and nay gospel.

As to the simple circumstance of preaching, I would preach anywhere—in a palace or a bam, on a dunghill, or even in a Catholic Cathedral. This is not the point of difficulty; the difficulty comes at the end. The collection—here is the difficulty.

The letters in the last number of the Vessel, relative to the correspondence between myself and Mr. Wilkins, of Brighton, are very excellent, but they do not clear up the difficulty—the collection—the collection. Here lies the problem, who will solve it?

I preached for Wesleyans, but it was for the Sunday school. This I did upon moral principle. But the outrageous hymn they sung at the end of the service made me feel as though I had no business there.

Poison is generally given in something good; or else who that wished not to be poisoned could be so deceived as to take it? Duty-faith is a doctrine which secretly and in a most deadly manner poisons the mind against the very truths in connection with which it is preached. Some of the old duty faith churches

have become the greatest enemies to the truth which the truth has ever known; and yet because Mr. Spurgeon unconsciously throws this poison into the food, or that he does not believe it to be poison, I am to be hated because I will not join in partnership with such unscriptural trading. Be it so; I am content with my lot; and hope to my latest breath to prove the sincerity of my decision. I am, Mr. Editor, your's sincerely, in the gospel of God, -London, June 3rd, 1857. Jas. Wells.

Banks defense of James Wells and continued support of Spurgeon - pages 198ff

MR. JAMES WELLS AND MR. SPURGEON.
MR. SPURGEON AT WELLINGBOROUGH.
MR. WELLS'S POSITION REVIEWED.

(To the Editor of the Earthen Vessel.)

Dear Sir—I have, of late, seen much in your magazine from Mr. J. Wells reviewing Mr. Spurgeon's preaching, and though I never could see much in Mr. S.'s published sermons to justify Mr. Wells; yet I have observed that the effect upon the minds of many of your readers (who had not heard Mr. Spurgeon,) was to prejudice them very strongly against him.

Mr. Wells is a good preacher, but I am sure he is in the wrong respecting Mr. Spurgeon. I heard Mr. Spurgeon twice last Tuesday, at Wellingborough, and I am prepared to tell Mr. Wells that two sermons more full of gospel truth, or more free from "deceptive rhetoric" I never heard, either in London or out of it.

Dear Sir, will you oblige me by giving insertion to this brief note in your next number? And if you do not, of course I shall know the reason. Yours truly,

Thos. Corby.

Weston Favell, Aug. 13.

We insert this note because many of a similar character have reached us; and we wish to record our conviction that, in reviewing Mr. Spurgeon's ministry, Mr. James Wells has had but one object in view, THE DEFENCE OF PURE, UNMIXED GOSPEL TRUTH. Mr. Wells is no stranger. He is no new man. He is not an untried man. During the whole course of his public ministry, thirty years or more, he has never been known, in the slightest degree, to deviate or to depart from one iota of essential truth. He was evidently raised up by God, at a time when many living souls (who had fed under the ministrations of the late William Huntington, the late Henry Fowler, and some other blessed men of God), were left as sheep without a shepherd. At that critical and eventful period — when dry talkers were springing up by shoals— when law-men and letter-men, and not a few very light-men came before the church as candidates for the ministerial office — in that day— James Wells was brought up out of obscurity—out of darkness,— out of ignorance,—out of all Arminian fetters and free-will delusions, and stood forth like another David

to face the Philistine-foe of Israel. James Wells commenced his ministry in defense of New Covenant truths—he has continued a defender of the same from the first day until now; he has increased in wisdom, in popularity, in real usefulness, and in a deep acquaintance with the things which accompany salvation, and with salvation itself. He has travelled thousands and thousands of miles to serve all the churches and ministers of truth in this kingdom whenever any important business in Zion required an able and decided man. Multitudes of souls have been called, comforted, set at liberty, and built up through his instrumentality. In short, he has been one of the most powerful witnesses for, and ministers of, the gospel, with which the living Church of God has been favored during the last half century. In one of the most populous and accessible districts to be found in this kingdom, the providence of God placed him, the power of God has supported him—the presence of God has cheered him, the Spirit of God has honored him, and all the churches of Christ in Christendom, nearly with one voice, have welcomed him. In that position he has stood, enlarging his chapel to its utmost possible extent, increasing the church far beyond any Particular Baptist Church either in the Metropolis or in any of the provinces, and multiplying his congregation until neither crook nor corner could be found for more. And all this, let it be remembered, has gone on gradually, and steadily extending, while an untold number of ministers and churches have waned into nothing.

Now, then, we ask, in a spirit becoming the gospel; we ask, in grateful recollection of the immense service God has enabled him to render unto the cause of truth; we ask, cautioning our antagonistic brethren to beware, lest they be found fighting against God; we ask—is it compatible with our character as Christians, to turn round and charge James Wells with jealousy, with cruelty, with bigotry, and with a "determined design to prejudice people against Mr. Spurgeon," simply because he has discovered in Mr. Spurgeon's ministry some deficiencies, and has not feared to express his mind openly and frankly? There by exposing himself to the criticisms and cutting rebukes of all who will not allow a man the liberty of practically acting out that essential injunction of the apostle, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God." In trying and testing Mr. Spurgeon's ministry, Mr. Wells has aimed at the good of Zion ; and, although we have neither seen nor heard from Mr. Wells now for some time, yet, in all our communications with him, he has invariably spoken most kindly of Mr. Spurgeon, breathing the highest esteem of his abilities, and the deepest desires that, in sanctified gifts, and in a happy growth in grace, he might be found to answer, in every branch, that great charge which Paul gave to Timothy, "Watch thou in all things; endure afflictions; do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of thy ministry." Mr. Wells has long felt himself to be a dying man; his ministry cannot last another thirty years; and we venture to believe he would be only too glad to have indisputable evidence that another ambassador for Christ, with all the talents and decision which, at times, have marked Mr. Spurgeon's career, was destined to be found in the person and ministry of the New Park-street pastor. We contend not for perfection in Mr. Wells. We have sometimes wished he could have written otherwise than he has done; but, notwithstanding all the apparent extravagancies and infirmities attached to him, as well as to every other mortal man on the earth (and broadly and boldly declaring that we are not either bound or influenced by him), we must confess it is the judgment of our most sober moments, that tauntingly to charge us with merely being "the tool of Mr. Wells," or to reproachfully charge him with sinful, carnal, and unhappy motives, is cruel, ungrateful, anti-Christian, and altogether at variance with that zeal for the glory of Christ, and the maintenance of gospel truth, unto which all the best servants of God are most solemnly bound. We are grieved to know that, for some weeks now, Mr. Wells has been hindered, by bodily illness, from following his much-loved work. The churches can ill spare him, in times like these.

We cannot close this hasty and spontaneous comment upon Mr. Corby's note, without one word respecting Mr. Spurgeon. It is very well known, we favorably noticed his advent into the ministry in 1854, we have had close converse with him, in his chamber, when a temporary sickness laid him prostrate, we

prayed with him, and in Christ, loved him with a love that can never die, we think. We have heard him expound the Scriptures with a soul-melting power; and through his ministry have been led up to the cross with tears and deep contrition. We have also heard him contend for the distinguishing doctrines of grace most vehemently and comprehensively. We have bidden him God speed in all that was God like, and of a true gospel character. In these things we have had an advantage, perhaps, over Mr. Wells, who has, we believe, never either seen or heard Mr. Spurgeon. A hope that the Great Head of the Church has set Mr. Spurgeon upon the walls for great good, is not dead. Nevertheless, when we have known him visit towns, and passing silently by God's poor persecuted servants, go and preach for men, who scorn the gospel Mr. Spurgeon preaches, and sneer even at him when he is gone, and they have secured the money he has gathered for them; when facts of this kind have come repeatedly before our eyes, we have been shaken, and afflicted too. We have much more to say, but the time is not yet come.—Ed.

Letter in favor of Wells - pages 221ff 1857

Mr. James Wells and his work

To the Editor of the Earthen Vessel

Sir, I thank you for your vindication of dear James Wells. I would at this time adopt the prayerful language of our brother Chivers on a former occasion and say, "Dear God, spare his valuable life; we cannot afford to lose him." All good men are not qualified to pass an opinion concerning James Well's motive for dissecting Mr. Spurgeon's ministry because all good men have not felt the task of the Egyptian taskmasters. James Wells is sent of God to bring his people out of bondage; this is his particular work; and where is there a man that can knock down a "duty faith" fabric, and wheel away the rubbish, like him? I am a qualified judge in this matter: for this is the service he rendered me, under God, who had prepared him for the work. If James Wells had never suffered himself from the satanic duty-faith system, he would not have been qualified to probe my case. This happened on Good Friday, 1844, at the anniversary of the Baptist Chapel at Clapham. He took for his text, "Therefore, every scribe which is instructed into the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man which is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasury things now and old." The man of God began by explaining what the new things were; to my utter astonishment I found they were precisely what I had been suffering from in my search after truth. I belonged to a moderate Calvinist church; now God knows what I endured in trying to find out what it was I was expected to do. James Wells explained that it was their wish that I should make bricks without straw.

After having experienced much of the love of God in my soul, I have rolled on the floor in agony of mind when God began to hide himself, because I could not act faith, believe, take God at his word, &c. I was dreadfully alarmed, for fear I should come short. The thought of the possibility of being separated from the God I loved was dreadful; and yet I knew I had been plucked as a brand from the burning, against my will. I had been an atrocious sinner. Alas! My teachers kept back the mercies of David.

After shewing me where I was, and how I had been deluded, the dear man of God brought forth the "old things" of everlasting bills. I never heard the like before, and could scarcely keep my seat for joy. I left the chapel a new man. All my fetters were knocked off; the wall of duty-faith was knocked down to the ground. I was called under a duty-faith minister; I suppose those who are called under the truth escape the ordeal that J. W. and myself have suffered so much from. A burnt child dreads the fire; and I dare not

read a duty-faith sermon, or hear one preached to this day. I'm afraid of those of the Lords people who hold the doctrine; for what is to become of me, if Christ had not done all for me? For I can do nothing.

Yours in Jesus, S. J. SEELY.

Trelleck, near Chepstow, Sept. 6.

Banks summary of Wells ministry and Banks own Testimony

[This short note we consider to be a key to open the mysterious controversy now pending. Mr. James Wells suffered severely from those ministers who preach a mixed gospel telling the people to do this, that, and the other, and thrashing them because they cannot do their taskmasters command them. Mr. James Welles being at length delivered from such hard bondage by new covenant mercies is honored of God, to bring perhaps thousands of living, laboring souls out from that same state of captivity as Mr. Seely here describes. Here, then, lays one chief part of our brother Wells work. With ourselves it has been, and is somewhat different. For near fourteen years we sat down in darkness and in the shadow of death: but we sat under no freewill, no duty-faith, and no Fullerite preachers. Our "form" and "profession laid in "going to church—" singing psalms – saying prayers-- sitting still while the clergyman read something or other for just about twenty minutes, and then out we all went, thinking we had done our duty, and hoping God would be merciful unto us, although the terrors of death and of hell lay hard upon us. By and by, the storm within increased; and while the tempest was heavy on our soul, one Sunday morning as on the bed we lay, --, these words came with quickening, enlightening, faith and prayer producing power—"Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give the light." immediately, the scales fell from our eyes: - we arose, and fell upon our knees, crying out" Lord! Fulfill that promise, Christ shall give them light." Light entered into our soul. We saw and loved the Saviour; and wept at His sacred feet. That morning our steps were directed to an almost unknown chapel: a minister we never saw before preached from these words "being confident of this very one thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ." Now nearly thirty years have passed since then, but we now say with confidence, a light above the brightness of the sun shone into our soul, while the glories of Christ's Person, and the exceeding greatness of His work were revealed in us, through the instrumentality, of that sermon. Every doubt and fear fled, and in the holiest raptures, we mounted up into fellowship with our blessed Lord. No free-will or duty-faith preachers have ever tormented or troubled us since. We have often heard them: and pitied them; and wondered how they could dare to preach such rubbish. But in preaching, we seldom think of but three things- the most awful and dreadful nature and consequences of sin- the most blessed Mediator, Days-man, Intercessor-our LORD JESUS CHRIST; and the work of the Eternal Spirit in calling, quickening, and sanctifying the election of grace, leading them to Jesus, and preserving them unto his heavenly kingdom. Our faith and our fellowship have been dreadfully assailed; nevertheless, through grace divine, we are kept cleaving close to His feet, His word, His gospel, His ordinances, and all that is dear to Him and His people. Blessings forever on his dear name for the glorious work He has given us to do. We have no mind for strife's, nor censures. We hate error, we abominate sin, we love all truly good men who love and preach our Jesus, we adore him, and long to be more completely devoted to him. Let men and ministers say and do what they may, this is our most solemn testimony. Ed.]

Two miscellaneous articles of some general interest

Correspondence – A plea for Ministerial Unity – pages 179ff 1858

Original Correspondence

THE PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENTS OF MR. JAMES "WELLS.

A PLEA FOR MINISTERIAL UNITY.

TO THE EDITOR.

Dear Sir—With many of your readers I rejoice in seeing that Mr. Wells is taking a different view of Mr. Spurgeon's movements to what he once did. It seems, Mr. Editor, that you were right, and Mr. Wells wrong, in your first opinions of the pastor of New Park Street. Would it not be a good thing to have a large meeting of ministers of truth, such as our brethren Wells, Spurgeon, Foreman, Banks, Flack, Bloomfield, &c, and see what could be done for the spread of the distinguishing truths of the gospel? The Baptist churches seem going over to errors of every description. We want more Foremen's, Bloomfield's, Wells', Banks', and Surgeon's. Perhaps if you will put this into the Vessel, it may be the means of bringing some gloriously united movement about. If we could see our ministers more united and earnest, we should become more united as members of churches. The ministers will excuse a well-wishing layman giving advice and counsel. Your's, A Simple Member of A Baptist Church.

King's Cross, July 10th, 1858.

[We give the above note for several reasons. First, because it proceeds from a Christian brother who is most extensively acquainted with the minds of the people who make up our truth-defending churches; he has here spoken not for himself merely; but for thousands and tens of thousands who sincerely long to see pure gospel truth extending, as extend it must, because heaven has decreed it shall throw its glorious beams of holy light into the remotest corners of the earth. Secondly, we give this note because statements have been made with much confidence and circulated with considerable zeal, to the effect that an invitation to preach with Mr. Wells was sent to Mr. Spurgeon. If, on either side, a confirmation, or a contradiction, can be given; let it be done: although, from the first, we believe Mr. Spurgeon determined not to be identified -with any party; or to be strictly associated with any of the leaders of any of the existing denominations. He knew that in some things he differed from the whole of them; and having the strongest confidence in the kind of mission he had to work out, he has gone forth; desiring, we believe, to manifest a love to all who sincerely love, and believe in, The Person and Gospel of Christ—but without the least desire to run parallel with any man, or number of men, who, for years, had gone before him into many parts of the great field of truth. We never expect to see the Surrey Tabernacle pastor, and the New Park-street pastor running together:—they are different men:—they have each of them a different work:—and so long as the Lord is pleased to continue them here and to bless their labors, both will have a host of friends who will hold up their hands, and encourage their hearts. But all the work is not to be done by them. There is a very large body of men rising up in the three kingdoms, and in our colonies too, who are as evidently sent of God as the two we have referred to. Let a union be formed between them, if it can possibly be done. Let it be a union in life divine, in love to God, in a growing knowledge of the Bible, and in a holy and consistent decision for every essential principle of revealed truth. To obtain a ministerial unity of this kind, having for its object the propagation of The Gospel by all, by every proper means,—we would labor most earnestly. Among our younger brethren there is a growing desire for this; and if the

venerable elders continue to look coolly upon these uprising desires, the juniors will march on without them. It is pleasing to see Mr. James Wells in the Crystal Palace, and in the Music Hall, preaching the gospel to thousands; while such good brethren as John Bloomfield, William Flack, and others, are going out into the squares, the fields, and the lanes, preaching Christ unto the people. These movements are but the beginnings of more earnest and united efforts: — and we hope "the slow coaches" will be presently hooked on to the express trains; and that "the day of God's power," and "the Best time to favor Zion," may soon appear. We defer, for the present, many other remarks which "A Simple Member's" letter calls for; but the subject must not drop.

A letter from James Wells on the condition of the Church - pages 223ff 1858

A LETTER FROM MR. JAMES WELLS,

(ADDRESSED TO MR. MOTT, OF NEW YORE)

ON THE ASPECT OF OUR CHURCHES, ETC., ETC.

Dear Brother in The Lord—I see by this month's Vessel, you state that in New York there is a report that I hold and have published, that if a child of God commit sin, it is the fault of the Holy Ghost.

Well, what will men not say? And where I to take notice of one-tenth of the misrepresentations to which I am subjected, I might do hardly anything else. How many times have I, from the pulpit and the press too, contradicted many such reports? But what of it?

"He that's convinced against his will,
Is of the same opinion still."

They still go on reiterating the same, and so I suppose it will be to the end. Some draw certain inference from what I say, and then turn those inferences into premises, and then adopt as certainties their own fabrications, and some do this from one motive, and some from another. One because he likes to have something to say; another because he has more learning than he has any market for, and so graciously gives some of it away; another because he cannot get it out of his head but that he is a downright clever fellow; and how it is the people do not see it, and flock to hear him, he cannot think. Another because he would like to succeed in the ministry, just as I have been favored to do, but somehow or another there is a mistake about it. I am the wrong man; it ought to have been my good surgical friend, who has at least tried to extract so many beams from my visual orbs, while he himself has not so much as even a mote in his eye; but who can be angry with such men? Why it is a great relief to them to say something; and after all, these little bits of find-fault often arise from the impulse of the moment, and like impulses of laudation, a very great discount is to be taken off from both; for it is very seldom in these petty affairs that men mean in reality one-half, and sometimes not one-tenth of what they say, and when they do, they are welcome for me to all the good they can get by such trading.

Now, as to the above, namely, that if a child of God commits sin, it is the fault of the Holy Ghost, I not only never published, or ever held such a sentiment, but I make no hesitation in saying, that not one of my

brethren in the ministry can be farther from such irreverence, such presumption, such blasphemy, than I am, and always have been; but it is a very small thing with me that I should be judged of man's judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self, but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Years ago these misrepresentations were rather hard to bear, but I have had so much knocking about that I am not quite so thin skinned as I was then. Besides, I have known men laboring under these misrepresentations, send me off by name from their pulpits to the devil, and just after this I have had (at least in some cases,) an opportunity of doing them some favor, and it is astonishing how that has explained matters and set things right. I allude now to some of my own brethren in the ministry, and whom I love for the truth's sake; and after all, I do not know that I have not thrown a stone at some of them, and I certainly have nothing to boast of except that mercy by which I am saved. I let most of these flying reports die a natural death; it is true some of them die rather hard, and some of them rise again from the dead, but I care not for them, nor will I quarrel with any of my brethren merely about words. If I come to doctrine, then that is another thing. You must not suppose this my disavowal of the profane sentiment of charging sin upon the Holy Spirit of God will have much weight or put to silence those who have made up their minds not to be convinced, and who would almost feel it a calamity to be deprived of this cud of falsehood, which with such pleasure they roll from one side of the tongue to the other. It is a very nasty habit they have got hold of; but never mind, let them enjoy it, it will help to keep them quiet, and I say no more upon these nothings, but close with a word or two upon other matters.

I rejoice to find you still kept in the truth, not trifling therewith, nor in any way holding it in unrighteousness, but walking in the fear of God, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh; not distorting the beautiful order of the new covenant; nor moving one inch from that liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, but living unto God, for God, and for eternity, and having been made in earnest for your own soul, you can, from such experience, contend earnestly for the 'faith once delivered unto the saints.' We have here in England everything to encourage us so to do; we, like you on that side of the Atlantic, are free; and we have a goodly sprinkle scattered over our favored land, who faithfully and honestly contend for the truth as it is in Jesus; and I believe that in proportion to the population England never had a larger number of real Christians than it has at the present time. It is true, we have not very many ministers of very great gifts, but, we have many with something better; namely, a gracious and an honest heart, and upon the whole, our land is pretty generally seasoned with the salt of truth and grace; not that we have truth in anything like proportion to error, but we have a goodly few who enter in at the strait gate, and find the narrow way. Drawbacks, of course, we have. Some of the worst are, that some who profess the truth, can wink at another gospel, and at the same time, try to persuade themselves, and others, that it is not another gospel. And then again some churches are scandalously cold towards their ministers, not supporting them half as they should and ought to do. He gets to his Bible, he groans and sighs through chapter after chapter, seeking earnestly to enrich his soul, that he may shew himself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed; but alas, the cold chills come over him. He knows that by some of his greatest men, he shall be listened to with stoical indifference, and that many of them, are, instead of listening prayerfully and earnestly for a word by the minister from the throne of God, they are thinking more about the world, or else of their importance in the church. The poor minister's tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth, and well it may, in the presence of such worldly and lordly professors. Instead of shewing their love to him by so arranging matters with the people as to do all that can be done for him, they leave him in poverty's vale, and then sit down and hear him with the same indifference or lordly importance that they treat him, and find fault with the poor fellow because he does not preach well, and that he does not fill the place.

Fill the place! Indeed! Why, Sirs, it is your icy hearts that freeze your minister's spirits, and kill him, and then complain because he is so dead. Sirs, I tell you the death is with you, ye dead-letter, selfish professors;

you can lay out your pounds for your own fleshly purposes and aggrandizement fast enough, but while you can spend your hundreds upon yourselves; yet if the minister should want five pounds of you, you grunt and sigh as though you were going to be ruined, and yet expect your minister to be in good spirits, and preach with freedom and delight; clip his wings, and then expect him to fly; withhold from him what you ought to give him, and then expect him to minister to you with as much freedom as though he was supplied and treated as he ought to be treated. My heart has often ached for a good and honest man so placed. Not many years ago a very rich man, (much, richer than a good man ought to be, for they ought to devote more to the cause of God, and to the poor;) this rich man said to me, 'Well, I have lost in a business transaction, £6000, and I am enabled to leave it. It does not trouble me, bless the lord, I have plenty left.' 'All!' said I, 'if you had lost six score pounds by the cause of God, or by any tried minister of God, it would have troubled you then.' Now, said I, you have withholden from the cause of God just £6000 too much, and so the Lord has taken it from you. He said no more; what he thought I do not know, but I am persuaded that this want of proper care of the minister is one of the greatest drawbacks that we have to the prosperity of our churches. The minister is frozen in his very soul, and what, when it is almost all winter, can the produce be? How many anniversaries have I gone to, where at the end of the service, it is, what do you charge? just as though I had been mending an old shoe, or weeding their gravel walk; they know what they ought to give, but to get out of that it is, 'what do you charge?' or else they pop, wrapped in a great piece of paper, the third-class fare into your hand, which you must not be so ungracious as to look at in their presence, but when you are in the carriage, then indulge your curiosity; unroll the paper, behold two shillings, a four penny piece, and a three penny piece, the amount of your 3rd class fare to A. T.

I allude not now to little places, supported by a few poor people, but to places where they can afford to be liberal; and the more money you get 'for the cause,' as it is called, at such anniversaries, the more the pockets of the rich are saved. The minister any the better for a good anniversary? No, not a mite. But time fails me to point out the deadening effects of this worldly spirit in the churches, and I have often noticed, in the next generation, and sometimes in the same generation, the wealth of such professor's melt away under the curse of him before whom Ananias and Sapphire fell dead upon the spot.

But there are some tolerable, some honorable, and some, but very few, noble exceptions. In these churches, the ministers are happy; they feel that their services are really desired, and well received; and being thus in a great measure released from the cares of this life, they, through grace, give themselves up to the work of God and godliness.

It is very clear that a worldly spirit in our churches is on the increase. Very few of their officers feel as they ought to feel for the souls of men, but space forbids my enlarging, or I might write a volume upon the drawbacks we have in our churches. I could propose a remedy, but I forbear for the present.

Now I do not for a moment believe that you on that side of the Atlantic are, with all your freewill revivals; (which revivals have, by our divinity-auctioneers here in England, been puffed into the very first stage of the millennium) you are not, I say, with all your revivals, anywhere near us here in England for ministers of truth, or for real Christians. We out-number you greatly; the old duty-faith and freewill fables cover your land; we are bad enough and you are worse, but the Lord can revive his work.

I trust you will still keep, as through grace you did keep, in the truth all the years that you were with us a member at the Surrey Tabernacle; and, through mercy, it is the Surrey Tabernacle still, walking in the fear of God, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, respected by other churches of the same faith and order, and feeling and exercising the same respect to her sister churches; on the one hand, having no desire to

get into the spirit of I am and none else; nor on the other hand, to say any confederacy where the unity of the spirit in the bond of new covenant peace in Christ Jesus is, not the ground of fellowship; giving way not one inch either in promise or precept, doctrine or practice, but fixed and decided for all the ordinances of God, being no mere halfway or make-believe Baptists, no half-way work, but abiding by the laws of faith, and love, and liberty, and the Lord, we trust, is with us.

I have thus written rather a long and rather a rambling letter, and have, as you see, taken but very little trouble to refute what people say of me. The fact is, I feel but very little annoyed by such things, but some of my hearers who have not been so much accustomed to war, are sometimes very much put out with these things, but I wish them all to look at them as not worthy of notice, for how much better it is to be envied than pitied; and the best way, after all to overcome is to render good for evil. Yours very sincerely,
in the glorious gospel of the blessed God,

James Wells. 6, St. George's Place, Brixton Road, London, Sep. 10, 1858.