

Destroying Everything Bad in the Land: Implementing Charles Spurgeon's Gospel-Centered Ethic Toward The Vulnerable in Society

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Advanced Endorsements

Christians today are asking all kinds of questions relating to nationalism, racism, and religious liberty. But we're not the first ones to deal with such questions. 180 years ago, Charles Haddon Spurgeon dealt with these very issues. From British imperialism, to slavery, to living under a state church, Spurgeon sought to help Christians think biblically and live faithfully. For those seeking to learn from the past, Matthew Perry's study invites us to walk alongside a faithful pastor from church history and glean his wisdom for our day.

—Geoff Chang, Assistant Professor of Historical Theology,
Curator of the Spurgeon Library,
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Matthew Perry in his important work *Destroying Everything Bad in the Land* interacts with the best of Spurgeon scholarship in offering a unique book demonstrating academic rigor with practical considerations. Perry offers principles for Christians to apply, drawn from Spurgeon's life and ministry, that are instructive in learning how to better love one's neighbor. Spurgeon's ethical outlook and practices are a reflection of his biblically-driven theology that was centered on the gospel of Christ. He had no interest in the church merely engaging in societal programs of benevolence. Spurgeon's ultimate objective was to promote the gospel through his ministries to the vulnerable. I think you will find Perry's book a helpful contribution to Spurgeon studies and useful to inform your own ministry to the "least of these."

— Ray Rhodes, Jr., author of *Susie: The Life and Legacy of Susannah Spurgeon* and *Yours, till Heaven: The Untold Love Story of Charles and Susannah Spurgeon*

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Preface

Why another book on the life and ministry of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892)? Simply put, evangelicals need help navigating through some serious issues that have arisen in recent times. The rise of Donald Trump to the presidency of the United States divided evangelicals on the role of both patriotism and nationalism in our churches. The rise of the Black Lives Matters movement divided evangelicals on the issue of racism and social justice. The imbalance of how Christians live out their beliefs in a culture increasingly veering away from their worldviews means evangelicals need guidance regarding their religious liberty.

It is the contention of this book that a preacher in nineteenth-century Victorian England can help in providing an ethic toward the vulnerable who struggle against the entrenched authorities of the present day. Spurgeon lived at a time when the philosophy of the government was “empire,” a belief in the superiority of their culture over those they deemed savage and less sophisticated. For Christians like Spurgeon, this philosophy came against the Christian worldview that shows no partiality because all humans are image-bearers of God. Spurgeon used his platform to speak out against these issues while also displaying a love for his country.

Spurgeon also lived in a day when the political and the ecclesiastical were in full alliance. The head of the Church of England (Anglican Church) was also the reigning monarch over the British government. In the United States, many churches meld into the mindset and worldview of their preferred political party and, thus, use this as a test of faithfulness. Spurgeon saw the danger in these heavenly and earthly alliances. He spoke out frequently and fiercely against this problem.

Spurgeon’s ministry coincided with changes in scientific trajectories and during a time when slavery in the American South

was firmly entrenched. These matters, along with the established philosophy of “empire,” developed a sense of racial superiority among the British that certainly influenced policy in society. London also received many refugees from Ireland, who suffered from the Irish Potato Famine of the 1840s and came to Great Britain to start a new life. Christians like Spurgeon preached against the religious and racial bigotry that the Irish faced at the hands of the Londoners. Spurgeon’s biblical message reminded his countrymen that human beings are on equal footing as image-bearers of God.

This book analyzes the sermons of Charles Haddon Spurgeon to construct a gospel-centered ethic toward the vulnerable, specifically when addressing nationalism, racism, and religious liberty. Many of the events and situations that marked Spurgeon’s day in the latter half of the nineteenth century parallel the events and situations of the present day. How Spurgeon approached them from his pulpit and pen will provide the present evangelical world with a needed template.

Finally, a special thanks to Drs. Michael McMullen and Owen Strachan, who guided me so well as my Ph.D. advisors at the Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Also special thanks to Linda Stuchlik for her editorial expertise.

Introduction

If one attempts to construct an ethic, one must start with a fundamental question: What is an ethic? In the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, the article on “Christian Ethical Systems” brings up a surprising deficiency throughout church history: “For generations Christians have found directions for daily life in the records of Jesus and the occasional counsels of the apostles; the church has never attempted to systemize its ethical teaching as it did its theology.”¹ In another article from the same dictionary, White helped develop the definition for us further in an entry on “Biblical Ethics,” which has, “its foundation in relationship with God; its objective, imposed obligation to obedience; its appeal to the deepest in people; its down-to-earth social relevance; and its capacity for continual adaptation and development.”²

For the Christian, an ethic is an outworking of the portion of the Great Commandment where Christ tells the church to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:39). How Christians act is grounded in what Christians believe regarding the work of God in the world and with them.

In searching and analyzing the sermons (along with the life and ministry) of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892), this work seeks to construct a set of principles for evangelical Christians to use in caring for the vulnerable and downtrodden in society based on Spurgeon’s sermons in fulfilling Christ’s command to love one’s neighbor. Spurgeon’s doctrinal foundations grounded his ethics. What he believed about God’s work in the world drove his actions in caring for those who bore the image of the One whom he trusted.

¹ White, “Christian Ethical Systems,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Second Edition, ed. Walter Elwell, 398.

² White, “Biblical Ethics,” 402.

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Spurgeon was easily the most influential evangelical of his day—an influence whose impact still carries into the contemporary evangelical world. For the sake of this work, the definition of “evangelical” for this work comes from David Bebbington, author of *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*, who breaks down this into four qualities: Conversionism (a transformation through being “born again” and a change of life), activism (expressing and demonstrating the gospel in mission and social reform efforts), biblicism (high regard for and obedience to the authority of the Bible), and crucicentrism (stress on the work of Christ on the cross in making the redemption of humanity possible). Spurgeon’s paradigm matches Bebbington’s definition.³ The events and situations that marked Spurgeon’s day in the latter half of the nineteenth century parallel the events and situations of the present day. How Spurgeon approached them from his pulpit and pen provides the current evangelical world with a template for constructing this ethic.

Introducing Charles Spurgeon

In his book, *The Saint and His Saviour*, Spurgeon wrote:

Few men would dare to read their own autobiography if all their deeds were recorded in it; few can look back upon their entire career without a blush....Let yon heroic warrior of Jesus recount his deeds; but he, too, points to deep scars, the offspring of wounds received in the service of the evil one.⁴

Despite his fame, Spurgeon always recognized his vulnerability in both the physical and spiritual realms, which led Spurgeon to lean continually and fervently on the mercy and graciousness of Christ his Savior:

³ David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

⁴ Spurgeon, *The Saint and His Saviour*, 12; Quoted in Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, 1:2.

There are some houses in London which would tumble down if you were to remove those on either side that help to support them, but there are other houses which are self contained [*sic*]; you might pull all the houses in the parish down if you liked, but it would not hurt them. Now, the most of men in this world are like houses in a row, they lean one upon another, they are kept up by carnal comforts; but the Christian is self-sustained, and does not lean upon any arm of flesh....Is it not a blessed thing, dear friends, to have a heavenly constitution, a satisfaction which does not depend upon outward circumstances?⁵

Charles Spurgeon was born June 19, 1834, in Kelvedon, Essex to John and Eliza Spurgeon at a providential time in British history. He was the oldest of seventeen children, although only eight survived through infancy. When Spurgeon was eighteen months old, to ease the strain on his parents, he was moved to Stambourne to live with his grandparents James and Susannah Spurgeon until the age of seven. James was a pastor of a Congregational church for more than fifty years. Spurgeon treasured this time in his life because it allowed him to peruse his grandfather's impressive library, which was filled with formative Puritan volumes that would shape Spurgeon's theology for the rest of his life.

When Charles was ten, a visiting missionary named Richard Knill came to the Spurgeon household. Spurgeon noted, "In his heart burned the true missionary spirit, for he sought the souls of young and old, whenever they came in his way."⁶ Knill spent a good amount of time with the young Spurgeon over the next three days, teaching and praying with him. Before Knill left, he placed Spurgeon on his knee and said, "This child will one day preach the gospel, and he will preach it to great multitudes. I am persuaded that he will preach in the chapel of Rowland Hill, where (I think he said) I am now the minister."⁷ Knill's prophecy came to fruition, and thus made Spurgeon seek salvation even more since he "felt very

⁵ Spurgeon, "The Happy Christian," *MTP* 13:176.

⁶ Spurgeon, *Autobiography* 1:33.

⁷ Spurgeon, *Autobiography* 1:34.

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powerfully that no unconverted person might date to enter the ministry.”⁸

Spurgeon was born just one year after the death of William Wilberforce (1759–1833), the man who spearheaded the abolitionist movement in the British Empire. Wilberforce’s work and influence were not lost on Spurgeon or other evangelical believers of the day:

Long before, when England, free in every corner of it, yet held slaves in its colonies, it was God that gave Wilberforce, and raised him up to plead in Parliament the rights of men, till the command went forth—

“Thus saith Britannia, empress of the sea, —
Thy chains are broken; Africa, be free!”

In all such acts of righteousness the coming forth of the man at the hour must be attributed to God’s own hand.⁹

In another sermon in 1883 (fifty years after Wilberforce’s death), Spurgeon invoked the spirit of Wilberforce again:

A healthy church kills error, and tears in pieces evil. Not so very long ago our nation tolerated slavery in our colonies. Philanthropists endeavoured to destroy slavery; but when was it utterly abolished? It was when Wilberforce roused the church of God, and when the church of God addressed herself to the conflict, then she tore the evil thing to pieces. I have been amused with what Wilberforce said the day after they passed the Act of Emancipation. He merrily said to a friend when it was all done, “Is there not something else we can abolish?” That was said playfully, but it shows the spirit of the church of God. She lives in conflict and victory; her mission is to destroy everything that is bad in the land.¹⁰

⁸ Spurgeon, *Autobiography* 1:35.

⁹ Spurgeon, “Certain Singular Subjects,” *MTP* 29:1718 (1883).

¹⁰ Spurgeon, “The Best War-Cry,” *MTP* 29:1709 (1883).

The Christian conviction of Wilberforce fueled Spurgeon, for Wilberforce believed that God established the church to address evil in the culture and to serve as an instrument for its expulsion. This conviction set a trajectory in Spurgeon's life and work.

Spurgeon's conversion to Christianity was formative as well. Though raised in the Congregationalist denomination, his soul was vexed by the conviction of sin that would not loosen its grip. In his *Autobiography*, Spurgeon noted how in his young life he journeyed from chapel to chapel trying to find the answer to his question, "How can I get my sins forgiven?"

On January 6, 1850, a blizzard prevented Spurgeon from arriving at his intended destination by God's providence. The fifteen-year-old Spurgeon entered a small Primitive Methodist church on Artillery Street in Colchester, not only for the purpose of worship but also to find shelter from the brutal elements. The inclement weather prevented the regular minister from preaching that morning, so a layperson whom Spurgeon later described as "a shoemaker, or tailor, or something of that sort," went up into the pulpit to preach. He preached from Isaiah 45:22: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

Initially, Spurgeon struggled with this substitute preacher, believing him to be unskilled for the task of the morning. Spurgeon's initial assessment was blunter: "Now, it is well that preachers should be instructed, but this man was really stupid. He was obliged to stick to the text, for the simple reason that he had little else to say." He went on,

The preacher began thus, "My dear friends, this is a very simple text indeed. It says, 'Look.' Now lookin' don't take a deal of pain. It ain't liftin' your foot or your finger; it is just, "look." Well, a man needn't go to College to learn to look. You may be the biggest fool, and yet you can look. A man needn't be worth a thousand a year to be able to look. Anyone can look; even a child can look. But then the text says, 'Look unto *Me*.' Ay!" and he, in broad Essex, "many on ye are lookin' to yourselves, but it's no use lookin' there. You'll never find any comfort in yourselves. Some look to God the Father. No, look to him by-and-by, Jesus Christ says, 'Look unto *Me*.' Some on ye say, 'We

must wait for the Spirit's working'. You have no business with that just now. Look to *Christ*. The text says, 'Look unto *Me*.'"¹¹

As he reached the end of his sermon, the preacher looked directly at Spurgeon and noted his misery, "You will always be miserable—miserable in life, and miserable in death,—if you don't obey my text; but if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved."¹² God used this preacher in all his vulnerability and unskilled state to show Spurgeon the way. He used this text and this truth many times after to lead others downtrodden in their sins to Christ.

As Spurgeon looked back on the event of his deliverance from sin, he never expressed a sense of entitlement to salvation; rather, he expressed great surprise that he could ever find the hope of forgiveness:

I could not believe that it was possible that *my* sins could be forgiven. I do not know why, but I seemed to be the odd person in the world. When the catalogue was made out, it appeared to me that, for some reason, I must have been left out. If God had saved me, and not the world, I should have wondered indeed; but if He had saved all the world except me, that would have seemed to me to be but right. And now, being saved by grace, I cannot help saying, "I am indeed a brand plucked out of the fire!"¹³

Spurgeon experienced a needed vulnerability before God regarding his sin and brokenness. He could point not only to the Scriptures but to the gravity and joy of his own experience of justification, an experience he desired to see happen in others.

Ministry at Waterbeach

"Have you ever seen the poverty, and degradation, and misery of the inhabitants, and sighed over it...But was it ever your privilege to walk through that village again, in after years, when the gospel had

¹¹ Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, 1:87–88.

¹² Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, 1:88.

¹³ Spurgeon, *Autobiography* 1:103.

been preached there? It has been mine.”¹⁴ Here, Spurgeon refers to the village of Waterbeach, located near Cambridge, approximately seventy miles northeast of London. Spurgeon first preached there on October 7, 1851, at the young age of seventeen and served as the town’s pastor for two years. Even though this village was far away from the cultural center of England, the sight of God changing so many hardened sinners into followers of Christ confirmed God’s call on his life and planted a seed of reliance on the gospel of his Lord.

He had no desire to climb the ecclesiastical ladder, as with other ministers in the more established Anglican church: “I would rather bring the poorest woman in the world to the feet of Jesus than I would be made Archbishop of Canterbury.”¹⁵ His heart always stayed with those who could offer little due to their social and economic status. Spurgeon’s heart stayed with those forgotten communities, even to the point of urging younger preachers to take advantage of the opportunities they presented:

Are there not other young men who might begin to speak for Jesus in some lowly fashion—young men who have hitherto been mute as fishes? Our villages and hamlets offer fine opportunities for youthful speakers. . . . If they go out and tell from their hearts what the Lord has done for them, they will find ready listeners. Many of our young folks want to commence their service for Christ by doing great things or nothing at all; let none of my readers become victims of such an unreasonable ambition.¹⁶

Spurgeon refused to ignore those whom others disregarded or had forgotten; his advice is still serviceable to young, aspiring ministers in the twenty-first century. Even as Spurgeon moved to the historic New Park Street Church in London, the city could not diminish his love for those in the country.

¹⁴ Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, 1:228.

¹⁵ Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, 1:228.

¹⁶ Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, 1:202.

How London Opened His Eyes to the Vulnerable

In 1853, when London's New Park Street Chapel needed a new pastor, the deacons of the church approached Spurgeon in the hopes that he would accept the call. Attendance at New Park had declined, and they hoped a new pastor would lead them to better days. Still, the invitations surprised Spurgeon, considering the church's list of prestigious pastors such as Benjamin Keach, John Gill, and John Rippon.

For Spurgeon, the thought of leaving his beloved congregation grieved him greatly. Yet, he sensed God's call to leave Waterbeach for the big city of London—an intimidating prospect! In his acceptance letter, he confessed, "I sought not to come to you, for I was the minister of an obscure but affectionate people; I never solicited advancement. The first note of invitation from your deacons came quite unlooked-for, and I trembled at the idea of preaching in London."¹⁷ Throughout his ministry, he referred to these two years at Waterbeach frequently and lovingly, serving as another example of how Spurgeon's heart bent toward those whom many had forgotten.

W.Y. Fullerton (1857–1932) penned a biography of Spurgeon from a vantage point that few possessed. Spurgeon befriended and mentored Fullerton (who came from Belfast) and would eventually become involved in Baptist work in London. In Chapter 4 of the biography ("Voice in the City"), Fullerton provides the reader with Spurgeon's impression of London as pastor of New Park Street Chapel in 1853:

There were great areas of slums. It was estimated that over three thousand children under fourteen years of age were living as thieves and beggars; more than twenty thousand over fifteen years of age existed in idleness, and at least a hundred thousand were growing up without education. Ragged schools were even then places of peril to their teachers, and the common lodging houses sheltered tens of thousands "in lairs fitter to be the

¹⁷ Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, 1:352.

habitation of hogs rather than of human beings." But people were beginning to care; Lord Shaftesbury was leading a crusade against the exploitation of the poor. It was a time of transition; the city was ready for a voice, and was not too large to be reached by it.¹⁸

Fullerton attested to the Christlike character and compassion of his mentor. Spurgeon could not ignore the plight of the children he encountered throughout the city streets, many of whom were migrants from Ireland during the Irish Famine of 1845–1852. This “holocaust,” as one author described, led to the death of over one million people and another million fleeing from Ireland. Spurgeon likely saw this as an opportunity to meet a gospel need amid racism and immigration issues.¹⁹

In 1853, the first year of Spurgeon’s tenure at New Park Street Chapel, cholera broke out in London due to unsanitary water, causing an outbreak of severe diarrhea and dehydration, which was highly contagious and often proved fatal. In 1857, Spurgeon wrote, “I remember, when the last time the cholera swept through your streets, ye hurried to your churches, and ye prayed; terror sat upon your countenances, and many of you cried aloud for deliverance. It came. What did you do? Alas! for your piety! It was as the morning cloud, as the early dew, it passed away.”²⁰

Even Spurgeon admitted to the terror he felt making pastoral visits to those in cholera’s clutches. Store owners attached signs to their windows warning of the condition of the streets they occupied, urging pedestrians to travel a safer way. Yet, Spurgeon drew upon his calling to shepherd his flock, even in times such as this, including turning down many preaching and speaking engagements.²¹ In an edition of his monthly magazine, *The Sword and the Trowel*, he spoke in the third person about what motivated him to press on in ministry during this potentially fatal era: “What is it that empowers yonder minister, in the midst of cholera, to climb up that creaking staircase and stand by the bed of some dying creature who has that

¹⁸ Fullerton, *Charles Spurgeon: A Biography*, 52.

¹⁹ Kinealy, *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine 1845–52*.

²⁰ Spurgeon, “Fast Day Service,” *NPSF* 3:386 (1857).

²¹ *Autobiography* 1:372.

dire disease? It must be a thing of power that leads him to risk his life. It is the love of the Cross of Christ which bids him do it!”²² For Spurgeon, the cross (which showed the suffering and vulnerability of Christ himself) fueled his compassion and care for those in such dire conditions.

During the COVID-19 pandemic of the twenty-first century, many pastors evaluated how to minister to those hurting during a time of sickness and quarantine. Spurgeon provides an example: He did not look to his pastoral status as a reason to avoid those affected. Rather, his calling as a pastor led him to serve as an under-shepherd of Christ’s church in its times of distress and unrest.

Spurgeon’s care for the downtrodden was not limited to his own country or countrymen. At times, he faulted his own country’s imperial policies for creating societal problems. In 1857, colonial India rebelled, much to the shock and dismay of the English citizens. Spurgeon wondered if the gospel would have spread fast in India had it not been for the British Empire’s colonization. He recounted that when a British officer became a Christian and asked to be baptized, the officer was then immediately stripped of his rank and sent home.

Spurgeon speculated whether greed had taken precedence over the gospel:

Let the East India Company blush for ever [*sic*], he was stripped of his regimentals, dismissed the service and sent home, because he had become a Christian! Ah! we dreamed that if they had the power they would help us. Alas! the policy of greed cannot easily be made to assist the Kingdom of Christ.²³

In another sermon, which gave blame to both sides, Spurgeon wondered if the rebellions might have turned out differently had England acted more like a “Christian nation.”²⁴ Clearly, Spurgeon had no reservations about preaching truth to power, especially when that power was used to nullify the rights of the vulnerable.

²² SS, 1:105. Quoted in Nettles, *Living by Revealed Truth: The Life and Pastoral Theology of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 78.

²³ Spurgeon, “The Independence of Christianity,” *NPS* 3:149 (1857).

²⁴ Spurgeon, “India’s Ills and England’s Sorrows,” *NPS* 3:150 (1857).

In 1864, Spurgeon referred to the political struggle of the Italian Unification in a sermon where he noted the “intolerable evil” of political tyranny. Spurgeon sought freedom for all to worship as their conscience dictated:

Ye did well to crowd your streets and to welcome with your joyous acclamations the man who has broken the yoke from off the neck of the oppressed. Many sons of Italy have done valiantly, but he excels them all, and deserves the love of all the good and brave. Political slavery is an intolerable evil. To live, to think, to act, to speak, at the permission of another! Better have no life at all! To depend for my existence upon a despot’s will is death itself.²⁵

In the September 1869 issue of the *Sword and the Trowel*, Spurgeon reviewed James Greenwood’s book, *The Seven Curses of London*. His purpose in reviewing this book was to “wish every Christian man could be made aware of the vice, the destitution and the misery which surround him; it would make him a better servant of the Lord. We are a vast deal too comfortable.”²⁶ He commented on the seven curses, taking umbrage with how Greenwood dealt with the issues while overall appreciating the exposure provided to the church, sadly, was far too complacent to engage. The curses he listed were neglected children, professional thieves, professional gamblers, fallen women, drunkenness, betting gamblers, and the waste of charity. Though Spurgeon took issue with some of Greenwood’s solutions; for instance, that the prostitution industry should be licensed, as well as Greenwood’s penchant for taking prohibitionists lightly, Spurgeon used Greenwood’s book because he sought to show his congregation and his readers the responsibility to engage in the plights of the culture, not to hide from the problems, but to springboard these contents to provide solutions fueled by the redemptive work of the gospel.

Spurgeon also took aim at another former British colony across the Atlantic, the United States, particularly the American

²⁵ Spurgeon, “The Great Liberator,” *MTP* 10:565.

²⁶ Spurgeon, *The Sword and the Trowel*, September 1869, 385. Quoted in Nettles, *Living in Revealed Truth*, 109.

South, and their defense of slavery. Initially, newspapers on both sides of the ocean printed Spurgeon's sermons weekly, which not only edified those who read them but helped bring in a nice profit for the newspapers themselves. Yet, when Spurgeon expressed his hatred for American slavery, these newspapers and their readers in the American South began to push back. In the February 27, 1860 edition of the *Mississippi Free Trader*, he noted, "Finally, let me add that John Brown is immortal in the memories of good in England, and he lives in my heart as well."²⁷ Another article in the *Chicago Tribune* quoted Spurgeon's hatred for slavery from within his "inmost soul" to such a degree that he would not permit any "man stealer" to come to the Lord's Table for communion. Spurgeon's influence reached across the Atlantic and this quote's appearance in a Midwestern newspaper added fuel to the American fire.²⁸ Spurgeon showed his detestation for racism in any form, whether by plantation owners or the imperial government.

Providentially, Wilberforce lived long enough to see the passing of the Slavery Abolition Act, abolishing slavery in the British Empire. Wilberforce's influence extended to both British churches and politics alike. In his book, *A Practical View of Christianity* Wilberforce made the case for a Christianity that was socially conscience and, yes, practical:

Is it not the great end of religion, and, in particular, the glory of Christianity, to extinguish the malignant passions; to curb the violence, to control the appetites, and to smooth the asperities of man; to make us compassionate and kind, and forgiving one to another; to make us good husbands, good fathers, good friends; and to render us active and useful in the discharge of the relative social and civil duties?²⁹

Like Wilberforce, Spurgeon used his pulpit's influence at New Park Street Chapel and, later, Metropolitan Tabernacle to move hearts and minds toward helping the downtrodden. He penned this powerful sentiment in 1883:

²⁷ *Mississippi Free Trader*, 27 February 1860.

²⁸ "Spurgeon on Slavery," *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 3, 1860.

²⁹ Wilberforce, *A Practical View of Christianity*, 179.

It seems to us that our Lord gave more prominence to cups of cold water, and garments made for the poor, and caring for little ones, that most people do nowadays. We would encourage our friends to attend to those humble, unobtrusive ministries which are seldom chronicled, and yet are essential to the success of the more manifest moral and spiritual work.³⁰

Even at this stage in his ministry at the Metropolitan Tabernacle (where he served for thirty years), Spurgeon never lost his desire to reach out and care for others who had little, if anything, to give in return. Robyn Carswell rightly observed that Spurgeon had:

...drawn first blood [against his enemies] by preaching an uplifting message to the poor and lower classes; that they were not the rabble they had been told they were, but sons and daughters of the King of Heaven, to whom pedigrees and lineage mattered not.³¹

Spurgeon helped those who had been demoralized find hope and care in and through the gospel of Christ, from a place of his own physical and social struggles. The next section outlines several of his struggles, how he dealt with them, and how this helped him minister to others.

³⁰ Spurgeon, *The Sword and the Trowel*, August 1883.

³¹ Carswell, "Charles Spurgeon: The Prince and the Paupers," *Historia* (2005), 126.

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