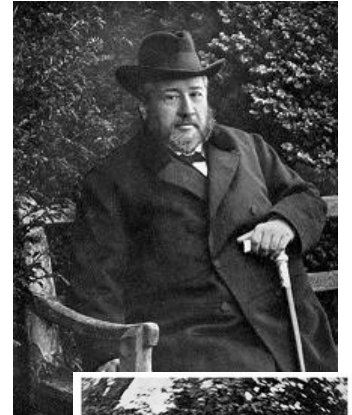


# History of the Reformation

## Charles Haddon Spurgeon



- Why Spurgeon is Famous
  - His sermons
    - Eagerly heard by the original hearers
    - Printed immediately, sold for a penny, and widely distributed
    - Sold 25,000 per week
    - Still read, loved, and used by God today
    - Still studied and analyzed as models of preaching
  - His message was “Jesus Christ”
    - “I take my text and make a bee-line to the Cross”
  - His theology of “glorious Calvinism”
  - His pastoral work
    - The Pastor’s College, 1856, now Spurgeon’s College
    - Metropolitan Tabernacle Colportage Association, 1866
    - Stockwell Orphanage, 1867, 1879
  - His sense of humor
  - His writings (49 volumes, not counting *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*)
    - Collections of sermons and devotional materials
    - Commentaries on Matthew and the Psalms (*The Treasury of David*)
    - Books on the gospel (*All of Grace, The Soul Winner*)
    - *Morning and Evening*
    - *Lectures to my Students* and *Commenting and Commentaries*
    - *Autobiography* (Vol. 1: *The Early Years* and Vol. 2: *The Full Harvest*)
  - His controversial stands on departures from Biblical truth
- Personal characteristics
  - He was a fast reader with extraordinary powers of retention
  - Read 6 books per week
    - Remembered everything he read
    - And even where he’d read them
  - He devoured the old Puritan writings as a teenager
- Preached as many as 10 times per week
  - Felt he was nothing compared to George Whitefield
- Health was always an issue
  - Severe bouts of depression
  - Extremely painful Gout
  - Bright’s disease (kidney infections)
- His wife was an invalid from the late 1860’s
- Youth, Conversion, Baptism
  - Born in Kelvedon, Essex, NE of London, in 1834, to John Spurgeon, an Independent minister, and his wife, Eliza.
    - One of 17 children, 9 of whom died in infancy
  - Due to hardship, sent at age 2 to live with his grandfather, James Spurgeon, also a Independent minister in the village of Stambourne since 1810.
  - Showed himself to be a precocious child, who loved his grandfather’s old Puritan books.
    - He read Pilgrim’s Progress by the time he was 6
  - At 10, he received a prophecy from evangelist Richard Knill that he would preach to great multitudes.
    - Rowland Hill’s Chapel
    - God Moves in a Mysterious Way
  - In 1840, returned home to Colchester to be raised by his parents.



- In 1850, at age 16, was converted after months of conviction, at the Artillery Street Primitive Methodist Chapel in Colchester.
- May 3, 1850, baptized in the river Lark near Isleham village, the only Baptist in his family.

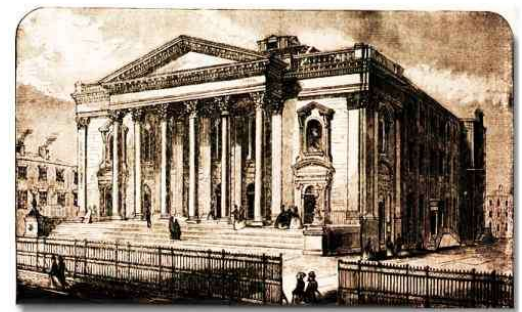


- First Sermon; First Pastorate
  - Still in 1850, duped into preaching his first sermon in a cottage in Teversham, near Cambridge.
  - Began to speak in other villages, and the Baptists in one village, Waterbeach, wanted him to keep supplying their pulpit. He became their pastor in 1851, at age 17.
- New Park Street Chapel
  - Called at age 19, four years after conversion, to New Park Street Chapel, the largest Baptist church in London, but with a declining membership;
  - Formerly pastored by Benjamin Keach, John Gill (51 years) and John Rippon (63 years).
  - Within a month, attendance shot up from about 200 to 1200, the capacity of the building.
  - Because the chapel needed to be expanded, services began to be held during remodeling at Exeter Hall, with thousands in attendance.
  - January 8, 1856, married a church member, Susannah Thompson, by whom he had fraternal twin sons, Charles and Thomas September 20, 1856,

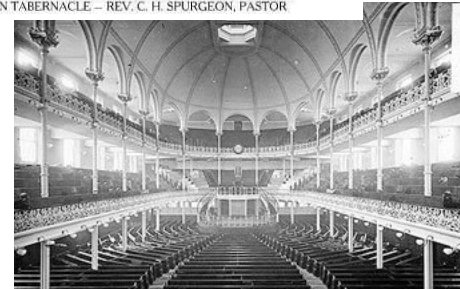


- Controversy
  - Spurgeon's very popularity and his use of a secular concert hall caused him to be attacked in the press.
  - He preached the Calvinistic view of salvation and condemned both Arminianism and hyper-Calvinism, incurring wrath from both the secular and the religious press.
  - The Surrey Gardens Music Hall disaster, October, 1856.
  - October, 1857, preached to more than 20,000 at the Crystal Palace.
    - Tested the acoustics with "Behold, the Lamb of God."

- The Metropolitan Tabernacle
  - Built by the congregation at New Park Street to accommodate the crowds, with a seating capacity of 5,500 and standing room for 500.
  - March, 1861, the tabernacle was dedicated.
    - Site of Southwark Martyrs burning at stake by Bloody Mary
  - Worship was very simple with acapella singing; the baptismary was in the floor. The building was filled with visitors once a quarter when members were asked to stay home!
  - Spurgeon's last sermon at the tabernacle was 30 years after the dedication, June 7, 1891.
  - During that time 14, 692 were baptized and joined the tabernacle.
  - 1898 – the tabernacle burned, then suffered bomb damage in WWII; each time a smaller building was built behind the famous façade.



METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE – REV. C. H. SPURGEON, PASTOR

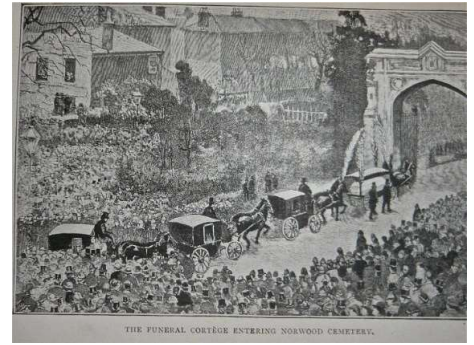


- Dr Peter Masters pastor since 1970



- Baptismal Regeneration
  - 1864, preached and printed a sermon called “Baptismal Regeneration”
  - He argued that the plain sense of the wording on baptism in the C. of E. Book of Common Prayer was unscriptural and was conducive to Romanism.
  - In 2 subsequent sermons, he called on evangelicals within the Church of England to come out of the church
  - Held that the Book of Common Prayer was without Biblical authority.
  - In this he offended J.C. Ryle and other friends who were able to rationalize staying in the C. of E., as well as many Anglicans in general.
- The Downgrade Controversy
  - The Metropolitan Tabernacle was a member of the Baptist Union of England, a fellowship which had no authority over churches, existing for purposes of cooperation,
    - But having no doctrinal statement and requiring only the practice of baptism by immersion for membership.
  - Pastors in many of the churches were
    - questioning the Biblical doctrine of creation because of the publication in 1859 of Darwin’s *Origin of Species*,
    - accepting Higher Criticism, which was undermining the authority of Scripture and reducing it to the level of a human book.
  - March 1887, Spurgeon’s monthly magazine *The Sword and the Trowel* published the first of 2 articles titled “The Down Grade,” not written by Spurgeon, but approved by him.
  - The drifting from truth was like a slope with a down grade.
  - Spurgeon himself wrote on the Down Grade in August
    - He told of much correspondence and information he had received about apostasy and compromise in Baptist Union churches.
  - He questioned whether those who held to Scripture should be in confederacy with those departing from truth. He quoted II Cor. 6:17.
    - The article shocked many and ministers began to speak against Spurgeon.
  - He argued that there should be some form of doctrinal statement for the Union other than the commonality of baptism.
  - He hoped the issue would be dealt with at the autumn meeting of the Union, but it never even came up.
  - October 28, 1887, Spurgeon withdrew from the Union.
  - The president of the Union, S.H. Booth had talked to Spurgeon many times about the problems and had even given him names of liberal ministers.
    - But when Baptist Union Council castigated Spurgeon for not naming names, Booth did not reveal that he had given names to Spurgeon, and Spurgeon did not betray Booth’s confidence.
    - In fact, he denied that Spurgeon had complained to him! The ministers argued that Spurgeon should have proceeded according to Matthew 18, which Spurgeon had done.
  - January, 1888, the Baptist Union Council, after sending representatives to meet with Spurgeon, voted to accept Spurgeon’s withdrawal; then they voted to censure him, 95 to 5.
  - April, 1888, the Baptist Union did adopt a weak doctrinal statement, with ambiguous terminology so that liberals could agree to it. 7 voted against it.

- The Down Grade controversy was a perpetual grief to Spurgeon until his death
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- Spurgeon's Death
  - in Mentone, France, on January 31, 1892
  - He lay in state for 3 days, more than 100,000 lined the streets to view the funeral procession
  - He is buried in West Norwood Cemetery, London



E'er since by faith I saw the stream  
 Your flowing wounds supply  
 Redeeming love has been my theme,  
 And shall be till I die;

Then in a nobler, sweeter song  
 I'll sing the pow'r to save  
 When this poor, lisping, stam'ring  
 Tongue lies silent in the grave

(Wm Cowper, 1771)

