

REV. THOMAS SPURGEON.

A late number of the *Christian* gives a sketch of the life of the Rev. Thomas Spurgeon which will be of special interest in view of the fact that he is now in charge of the pulpit so long filled by his illustrious father.

Thomas, the younger of the twin sons of the late beloved C. H. Spurgeon, was born in the New Kent-road, on September 20, 1856. The specially close relationship of Charles and Thomas makes it impossible to give a sketch of the one brother without frequent reference to the other. After a period of home instruction, the two boys were placed at Camden House School, Brighton, where Thomas won golden opinions from his tutors for his assiduity and progress, as well as for his general excellence of character and disposition.

Inquiries as to the time when Thomas gave evidence of conversion, and the instrumentality employed, elicited the somewhat paradoxical reply, "He must have been always converted; it seems as if he were born converted." Every believer will intuitively recognize in this case one of the countless instances of God's faithfulness to his promise to bless the children of the righteous. In the *Sword and Trowel* for April, "Son Tom" thus writes:—"The man who was so good to other people's children was, you may be sure, a good father to his own. So busy a life prevented him from taking a very active part in the upbringing of his boys; besides, my precious mother was the best possible trainer. We learned from father's example rather than by his precept. I fear we have not profited by it as we should; but it was bound to tell." Although it is somewhat anticipating, we insert in this connection a few sentences from a record in the Church book of the Metropolitan Tabernacle on the occasion of the Pastor's sons "coming before the church"; "We would praise our gracious God that it should have pleased him to use so greatly the pious teachings and holy life of our dear sister, Mrs. Spurgeon, to the quickening and fostering of the divine principle in the hearts of her twin sons, and we earnestly pray that amidst her severe sufferings she may ever be consoled with all spiritual comfort, and by the growing devoutness of those who are thus twice given to her in the Lord."

At Brighton the two lads gave unmistakable evidence of Christian discipleship. They started and regularly conducted a prayer-meeting for their schoolfellows, and were ever ready to avow their loyalty to Christ. Upon leaving school in 1874 they applied for membership at the Tabernacle, and were baptized on Monday evening, September 21, and received into fellowship by their beloved father on Lord's Day, November 1.

The brothers lost no time in entering upon business life. Thomas, who had shown considerable artistic taste, and also skill in drawing, chose the profession of a wood-engraver, and made exceptionally rapid progress in the study and practice of the art.

In the summer of 1875 the two young men engaged in systematic aggressive Christian work. Not far from their home at Clapham, an earnest working-man named Rides had for several years been carrying on a mission work among his neighbors, giving up two rooms in his house for the purpose. He labored under great disadvantages, until Mr. Charles made his acquaintance, and went to his help. Thomas also joined the little band, and the two brothers gave all their available time to evangelistic work in connection with the Clapham-road Mission. Nearly two years were thus spent in happy and successful work for Christ, not the least arduous of which was the collection of money for the erection of a much-needed chapel. By the help of generous friends this was accomplished, and Clapham-road Chapel was opened free of debt in August, 1877.

We have now come to the time when the paths of the brothers diverge.

Mr. Thomas Spurgeon's health began to give his parents some cause for anxiety, and he was advised to take a voyage to Australia; he accordingly left England for Melbourne in June 1877. By request of the captain of the good ship "Lady Jocelyn," he conducted religious services every Lord's Day, often amidst difficulties

and hinderances; "an admirable preparation," wrote his father, "for addressing crowds on shore." His reception at Melbourne was most enthusiastic. On the pier a crowd of friends awaited him, vying with each other as to who should claim the young stranger as their guest. After a few days' stay in Melbourne, he went to Geelong, where he preached his first sermon in Australia. This was on September 2; and from that day until he started on his homeward voyage his life was one of unceasing activity in his Master's service; preaching in the largest chapels and public halls in the larger towns of Victoria; invariably to crowded houses; or taking long and toilsome journeys into the interior to assist struggling causes.

South Australia was next visited, and in Adelaide and the region round about he preached or spoke at twenty-four meetings during his eight weeks' stay. In no spirit of self-glorification, but in humble thankfulness to God, he wrote home: "There is scarce a sermon I have preached but what some are blessing me for it. Oh, this is glorious! not the praise of men, but the smile of God!"

After an evangelistic tour in Tasmania

beloved pastor, and again and again his son Thomas occupied the pulpit. As soon as the invalid could undertake the journey, father and son went to Mentone. On their return Thomas entered the Pastors' College; but so much of his time was taken up with preaching that he could secure but little time for study and needful rest; and the state of his health made it necessary for him to return to Australia. He reached Melbourne in the December of 1879, and proceeded to Tasmania, where for several months he went about preaching the Word and "confirming" the churches.

Passing over his evangelistic journeys in Victoria and Queensland in 1880, we come to the most interesting and fruitful period of his ministry, namely, his pastoral and evangelistic work in New Zealand. In 1881 he accepted the call of the Baptist Church, Wellesley-street, Auckland, to become their pastor. So largely did God bless the ministry of his servant, that the old wooden chapel soon proved too small for the largely increased membership (about 600), and early in 1882 the Choral Hall was rented for the Sunday-evening services; and here, too,

May 17, 1885, the pastor had the joy of knowing that it was unencumbered by debt, although it had cost nearly £15,000. According to the Baptist Handbook, it is the largest chapel of the denomination, and has the largest membership of any Baptist church in the Australian Colonies.

With larger and more efficient material appliances, came larger spiritual results, until the pastor found that his strength was unequal to the legitimate demands of so large a church, with its three outlying branch churches, and multiplied agencies. He therefore resigned his charge, "to the very great regret, not only of the members of his own denomination, but of Christians of all sections of the Church." This was in November, 1889.

Here we must note the interesting fact of the marriage of Pastor Thomas Spurgeon to Miss Lila M. Rutherford, daughter of Mr. Gideon Rutherford, of Dunedin, on February 10, 1888.

Very shortly after Mr. Thomas Spurgeon resigned his pastorate, he was requested by the Baptist Union of New Zealand to give himself to the work of a mission preacher or evangelist to the churches of the Union, to which request he acceded, after a period of needful rest. The annual report of the Union testifies that "this work has borne the seal of the Master's approval from the first, and proved that the Union was guided by the Holy Spirit, when it set Mr. Thomas Spurgeon apart for this itinerant ministry. During the past year he has conducted nineteen missions, in as many of our churches, holding 236 services, most of them being distinctly evangelistic, and has delivered eighteen lectures in the interest of our Home and Foreign Missions. He has conversed personally and privately with 600 inquirers, besides a large number of young children. He has been graciously used of God to point many burdened pilgrims to the Wicket Gate, to lead many waverers to decide for Christ, and many converts to the open avowal of their faith by baptism and church fellowship. No single mission has been quite fruitless, and some have been Pentecostal in the plentiful success which has crowned them. To God be all the praise."

And now this beloved servant of God is with us once more; but how sad a homecoming is his, we could not, even if we would, attempt to tell. It is generally known that he has come in response to the invitation of Pastor J. A. Spurgeon and the office-bearers of the Tabernacle church, enthusiastically endorsed by the entire membership. We confidently bespeak for him the special and earnest prayers of the people of God, that he may be divinely comforted, strengthened, and helped, especially when he stands up to preach in the place of such hallowed and tender memories.

WHAT IS YOUR INFLUENCE?

An aged man said to a lady who was looking over the family photographs upon his son's centre-table.

"Do you find one of my photographs there? If so I want it destroyed, for when I take my departure from this world I want nothing left behind as a reminder of me."

"But there is one thing you cannot take with you," said the lady.

"And pray tell me what that may be," said the man with some eagerness.

"Your influence," was the reply.

The man winced under the answer. It appeared to be something he had not thought much about, and for the moment it stunned him. He was an infidel and the son of an infidel father, but he could not forget that in childhood he had a Christian mother who used to talk to him of Jesus and kneel by his bedside at night to pray for him.

Yes, he had exerted an influence, and he was well aware it had not been a good influence. Three of his children had died without a hope in Christ, darkness, like a pall closing in upon them as they neared the portals of eternity. Three children were still living, all but one the same belief as their father.

Surely his influence was to exist long after he had passed from earth. He might destroy his photographs, but could not efface the infidel principles he had stamped upon the tablets of his children's minds, and they must carry those with them into eternity.—*American Messenger*.



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he went to Queensland. "My sojourn," he wrote, "was full of work and pleasure. Everywhere I rejoiced to note the willingness to come, and the eagerness to hear the Gospel, it being no difficulty to muster an audience of one thousand people, even on a week evening. On all hands I had abundant testimony that God was blessing his own Word by quickening his people and awakening outsiders."

While on a preaching tour in this colony, he was unexpectedly recalled by the following telegram from London: "Mother worse, return," and with a heavy heart he turned his face homewards. After forty-three anxious days at sea, he was gladdened by news at Plymouth that his beloved mother had been spared. His heart was full of songs and gratitude. When he reached home, however, he was sorrowful rather than songful; for though "mother was better," she was very ill and weak, and "father was sick," and "Son Tom" found himself called upon, with but a few hours' warning, to take the place of the sick pastor at the Tabernacle on the Lord's Day (Nov. 10) when the Tabernacle was "open to all comers." Wearisome weeks of pain and weakness were the lot of the

"the people had to be requested to sit closer" to make room for those who flocked to hear the Word; and, best of all, there was a continuous ingathering of converts.

On Easter Monday, April 14, 1884, the foundation stones of the Auckland Tabernacle were laid, and arrangements were made that during its erection the pastor should visit his friends in the Old Country and solicit their help, £4,000 being required for the completion and furnishing of the chapel and schools. He arrived in London in time to take part in the Orphanage Festival, and received an enthusiastic welcome. Mr. Thomas Spurgeon had been "home" but a few weeks when his much-afflicted father was laid low by sickness, and "son Tom" was again called upon to occupy the pulpit at the Tabernacle. How efficiently this service for the Master was rendered may be seen in the little book entitled, "The Gospel of the Grace of God; Sermons delivered at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, by Thomas Spurgeon"; and especially in the preface by the now glorified pastor.

When the Auckland Tabernacle was opened for worship on the Lord's Day,