

The preacher at the Metropolitan Tabernacle had no doubt of the *fact* or of the *guilt* of sin. Human depravity was to him no inversion of brain cells, or abnormality of nerve ganglia, no mere misfortune or "fall forward." To him man represented a revolted province with all its functionaries involved in the ruin; as Robert Vaughan suggests in his "Hours with the Mystics," reason, conscience, imagination, will, understanding, desire, all at the service of a usurper, sin: the ermine of the judge, the verdict of the court, the song of the poet, the books of the student, the vessels of the merchant, the sceptre of the will, all perverted to the purposes of Satan. Spurgeon saw the awful arm of treason lifted against God, with the very weapons He had forged turned against His rule; and to him the preacher's office was to lead back to allegiance, so that the decisions of the court of conscience should be in accord with the Divine common and statute law, so that the understanding should burn its magic books and renounce its magic arts, and the imagination become the aid to faith, the aspiration fix its gaze on the future, and the will use its golden sceptre as God's vice-regent! This generation has not known, in any other pulpit, forty years of such plain dealing with sin and salvation, such undeviating, unflinching testimony to the truth. What shall we do without him!

## II. *Spurgeon had a world-wide witness as to simplicity of worship.*

The service which he rendered was in this respect also an invaluable one. The Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Herodians represent permanent sects in the Church of God; the ritualists, the rationalists, and the secularists we have always with us; and, of them all, the ritualists are not least to be feared. Formalism substitutes rites for righteousness and ceremony for sanctity. It is a suggestive historic fact that, whenever the glory of the Shekinah gets dim, the wax tapers of formalism begin to make the darkness visible, and a multitude of outward symbols and ceremonies becomes the substitute for spirituality and devoutness. It was but a few years since that an aged and venerable clergyman of the old school, whose deep attachment to evangelical truth revolted against the encroachments of a Romanist ritual in the Anglican body, was importuned by his son, who had joined the extreme wing of the ritualists, to preach in his "chapel of ease." He did so after much urging, but caused no little consternation when he announced his text, "*Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic!*" and then proceeded to show the utter, hopeless lunacy of modern ritualism and ceremonialism.

The Metropolitan Tabernacle, with its simple, apostolic worship, is, after forty years, the standing monument to apostolic practice. There is nothing to interfere with the pure worship of God and the impression of gospel truth. No attempt at art, even in the architecture; everything severely but not repulsively plain; no choir nor organ, not even responsive reading; no pictures nor statues, nor even startling colors in furniture or garniture, to draw off the mind through the eye. God alone is exalted there. This is another form of missionary service which the departed