

because of some personal kindness from Mr. Spurgeon's hand or lip, but because of a promise of fifty or a hundred pounds to help him in some of his enterprises. And then when the annual message was being delivered by Mr. Spurgeon to the conference, what a feast. The wisdom, grasp, force, penetration, inspiration of it cannot be described. We were in the heavenly places. During the sessions of the conference the atmosphere was invariably devotional. After some brother had read a paper, and Mr. Spurgeon was summing it up, love, grace, and wit and pathos and wisdom would blend. At some of his wittiest sayings the brethren would now and again lose control of themselves, and he, too, throwing himself into the spirit of the moment, would allow himself to bubble over, and excel even himself in jokes grave and gay and gracious. Five hundred faces would be wet with tears and convulsed in laughter at the same moment. He would soon, however, recall us to the business of the hour. No man could play upon the human harp with such wizard touch as he could. Some of the brethren who, living in other lands, could not attend the conference, were in the habit of sending a letter to Mr. Spurgeon. He invariably mentioned the fact to the conference, gave the name of the brethren and prayed for the absent ones. I mention it with all modesty, but it will be a lasting joy to me to know that the letter I sent him at the time of the last conference, and in which I indulged anew in the luxury of pouring out my unstinted love at his feet was reserved by him until the closing day and, as the London papers said "It was a sight to see how the tears ran down his face as he read a letter from James Grant, of Toronto." His big heart was intensely human and could be readily touched by words of love. Some years ago, finding that I had lost the mail that should carry my letter to the conference, I cabled him, using the words: "Blest be the tie that binds." A few hours later back there flashed: "There is a spot where spirits blend."

The conference always closed with the communion of the Lord's supper, after which, with hand gripping hand, an unbroken chain of five hundred pairs of hands, we sang "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood," and then we parted to meet next year. The thought of meeting next year and touching that right conquering hand of our President was

inspiration for twelve long months. Before the meeting of the next conference, however, many a brother whose coat was voted by the "Governor" as not fresh from the tailor's would have the wherewithal, and shine in garments new.

I do not know that much, if anything, has been written of the juvenility of Mr. Spurgeon. But he never grew any older. The passing years never touched his heart. There were no wrinkles. When we saw him last he was quite as full of youthful pranks and mental elasticity as when we knew him first. It was that poor gouty leg that prevented him from leaping over a five-barred gate, nothing else. He wanted to do it. Every year he would have the students out to his home to spend a day with him, and into the games of the day he would enter with all the zest of the youngest of us. In his love of out-door sports he was a typical Englishman.

The church life of the Tabernacle has been a source of immeasurable benefit to his students in the practical work of the ministry. Many of them cannot be too grateful for what they then saw and learned. It gave them an insight into practical problems and modes of doing things which has stood them in good stead in after years. In the earlier years Mr. Spurgeon himself presided at Church meetings and wished the students to be present to "read, mark and inwardly digest." Occasionally, too, he would give us a lecture on pastoral work. On one of these occasions he told us that it was not all smooth sailing with him when he began his work at the Tabernacle. There were squally gusts more than once. At one time a member of the church, who had repeatedly made himself obstructive, was worse than usual, with the added offensiveness of being rude to the pastor. The deacons naturally resented this and sought to put the brother down, but he was not one of that sort. Finding that the brother would insist upon being heard, all the members got up and went out, leaving Mr. Spurgeon in the chair and "the brother" standing alone away down in his seat. When he, poor soul, grasped the situation and also Mr. Spurgeon's patience with him, he turned round and said: "Mr. Spurgeon, you are the only gentleman in the room," a statement which was true in more senses than one. But that man from that day became one of Mr. Spurgeon's staunchest friends and supporters, and the use Mr. Spurgeon