

What Grace Can Do

Charles Spurgeon and Joseph Parker were 19th century contemporaries and theologians in London. Both were pastoring churches at the same time, and an incident between them proves instructive, even for us today.

Spurgeon (1834 – 1892) was a British Particular Baptist who remains today highly influential among Christians of various denominations, among whom he is known as the “Prince of Preachers.”

Parker (1830 – 1902) was an English Congregational minister who preached differently from others. He did not follow outlines or list the points of his sermons, but spoke extemporaneously, inspired by his view of the spirit and attitude behind his Scripture text. He was twice chairman of the London Congregational Board and twice of the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

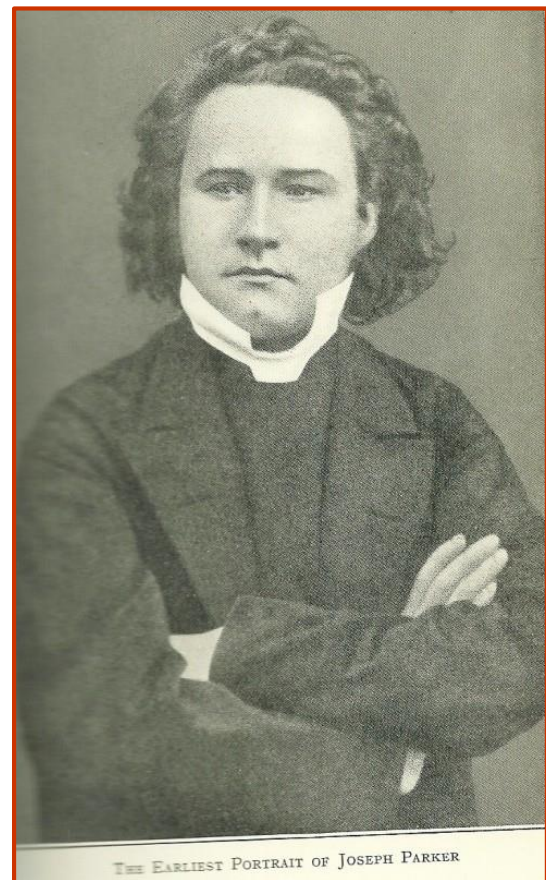
On one occasion, Parker commented on the poor condition of children admitted to Spurgeon’s orphanage. It was reported to Spurgeon, however, that Parker had criticized the orphanage itself.

Spurgeon blasted Parker the next week from the pulpit. The attack was printed in the newspapers and became the talk of the town. People flocked to Parker’s church the next Sunday to hear his rebuttal.

“I understand Dr. Spurgeon is not in his pulpit today, and this is the Sunday they use to take an offering for the orphanage,” Parker said. “I suggest we take a love offering here instead.”

The crowd was delighted. The ushers – because the offering was so immense – had to empty the collection plates three times.

Later that week, there was a knock at Parker’s study. It was Spurgeon.



(more)

“You know, Parker, you have practiced grace on me,” Spurgeon said. “You have given me not what I deserved; you have given me what I needed.”

A couple of lessons to be drawn from this story:

1. ***Be certain of what we speak before we criticize others.*** When false information is relayed – whatever the intention – the effects can be quite harmful.
2. ***A demonstration of grace can have healing power in a relationship*** – and a motivational force for those who witness it.

Those are very, very important principles for life.

But He (God) gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter