

SUMMER 2024

DID YOU KNOW?...

About Charles Spurgeon's "Eccentric Preachers"

Updated Edition

VALENTINE COOK, JR.

A Man of Great Learning and Genuine Piety

THE ELEVEN

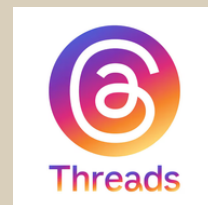
Little-known and Interesting Facts

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A Man of Great Learning and Piety

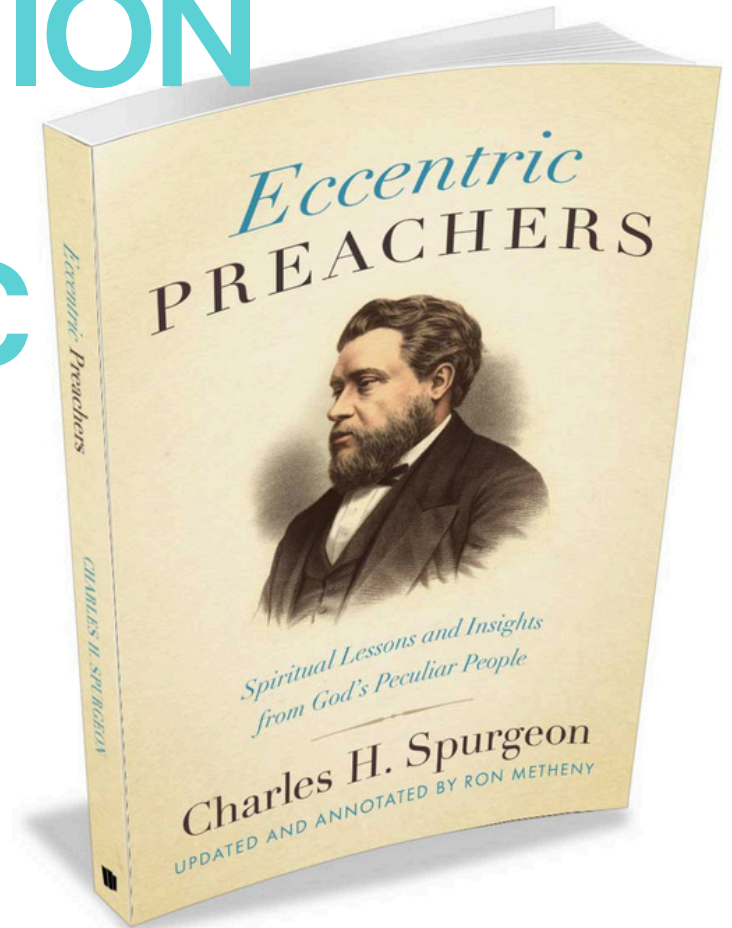
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APPRECIATION FOR THE ECCENTRIC PREACHER

Foreword (condensed) to the newly updated and annotated edition of Charles Spurgeon's "Eccentric Preachers" (Aneko Press).



History and experience have both proved that the man who has truly been called of God to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ is often considered to be a strange and enigmatic man. One might even call him eccentric. To be true to the nature of the call, the preacher steps outside of the mainstream thinking of the world.

Because the man of God is in such a unique position, he comes to find that he is loved and hated for the exact same reason. He has one message to proclaim: Jesus Christ and Him crucified! Some people

come to love him for it, and others are determined to hate him.

Would to God that He would raise up true preachers of the Word who are willing to be fools for the sake of their Master. May they stand in the long line of eccentric preachers who have faithfully served the Lord...This is certainly the heart of the Prince of Preachers that comes bursting forth in the book that you see on this page.

Ron Metheny has done a great service for the people of God by

bringing Spurgeon's book back to modern readers in a fresh and updated form. I, for one, am very thankful for it, and I pray that you are as well. May you read it to your profit, and grow in your appreciation for The Eccentric Preacher.

Pastor Kyle Reeder

**The Solid Rock Baptist Church
Benton, KY
Spring, 2024**



Photograp: Abandoned Grass Valley Methodist Church, Oregon.

DID YOU KNOW?...

On the evening of May 23, 1850, recognizing that death was near, Jacob Gruber requested friends and family to all gather around his bed and safely see him off by singing the chorus of “On Jordan’s Stormy Banks I Stand”:

“I Am Bound
for the
Promised
Land!”

*I am bound for the promised land,
I am bound for the promised land;
oh, who will come and go with me?
I am bound for the promised land.*

QUOTABLE QUOTES



Compiled by Ron Metheny



Charles

Spurgeon



Long prayers and
long speeches blow
out the fire they
intend to increase.

SOURCE (Above): Charles Spurgeon, "Eccentric Preachers (Updated Edition)," p. 111

The slavery of custom is as hard and crushing as any other form of human bondage, and blessed is he who for the truth's sake refuses to wear the annoying chain, preferring rather to be charged with peculiarity and put up with ridicule.

—Charles Spurgeon, "Eccentric Preachers (Updated Edition)," p. 6

To say the least, it is remarkable that eccentricity and usefulness often go together. As it turns out, these extremely eccentric people, who are so frequently condemned, have nevertheless been among the most useful men of their times.

—Charles Spurgeon, "Eccentric Preachers (Updated Edition)," p. 40

Judge the preacher if you like, but please do remember that there is something better to be done than that, namely, to get all the good you can out of him, and pray to his Master to put more good into him.

—Charles Spurgeon, "Eccentric Preachers (Updated Edition)," p. 62

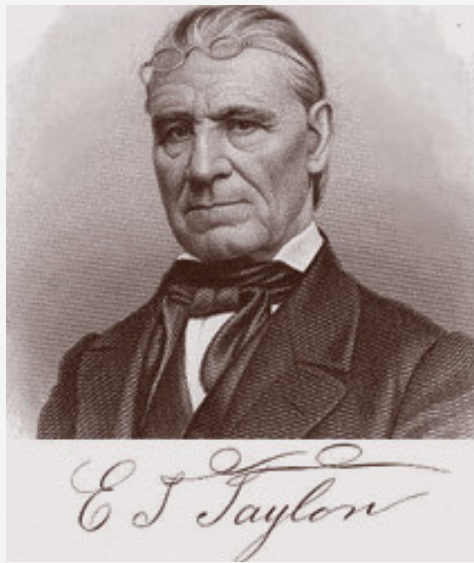
THE ELEVEN

Little-known and interesting facts about the eleven historic pulpiteers featured in Charles Spurgeon's "Eccentric Preachers."



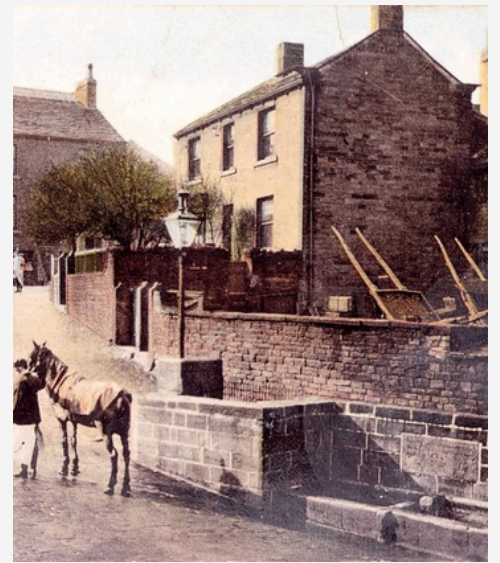
**HUGH PETERS
(1598–1660)**

In 1636 Peters sailed to Massachusetts. As the stepfather of John Winthrop, Jr.'s wife, he helped to make Connecticut a colony through his connections with the prominent Winthrop family. He was also one of the founding board members of Harvard College (c. 1638).



**EDWARD TAYLOR
(1793–1871)**

Taylor may have served as a model for Herman Melville's fictional character, Father Mapple, in his 1851 novel "Moby Dick."



**"SQUIRE" EDWARD BROOKE
(1799–1871)**

The last entry from Brooke's diary contains five Bible verses — Isaiah 30:15, John 1:50, Psalm 21:3, Ezekiel 36:11 and Psalm 131:2 — followed by two enigmatic words: "NEVER BEFORE."

THE ELEVEN (Continued...)



**ROWLAND HILL
(1745–1833)**

Hill was on close terms with Edward Jenner, the pioneer of smallpox vaccination, and promoted his own plans to inoculate the various congregations to which he visited and preached. He published a tract on the subject in 1806 at a time when many in the medical profession refused to sanction it. John C. Lettsome, an eminent Quaker physician of the day wrote to Hill saying:

“You have done more good than you imagine; and for everyone you may have saved by your actual operation, you have saved ten by your example; and perhaps, next to Jenner, have been the means of saving more lives than any other individual.”



**BILLY BRAY
(1794–1868)**

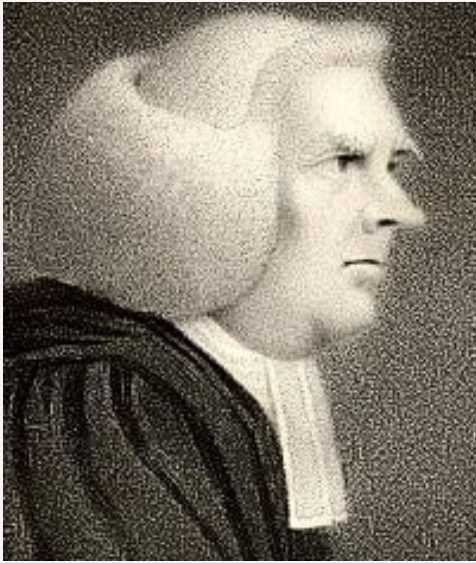
Bray, “the uneducated soul winner,” was a Bible Christian. The Bible Christians — also known as Bryanites after their founder, William Bryan — were an offshoot of the Methodist Church. From the start, the Bible Christians used lady ministers, including Bryan’s wife Catherine, and his daughter Mary. Members of this sect were well aware of the appeal of female evangelists, especially among the residents of mining towns in Cornwall and Devon (England).



**DANIEL BURGESS
(1645–1713)**

For many years, Burgess was an extremely popular minister in London; yet, some of his contemporaries thought “his piety and learning were alloyed by too much humor and drollery. In one sermon he declared that the reason why the descendants of Jacob were named Israelites was that God would not have his chosen people called Jacobites.”

THE ELEVEN (Continued...)



JOHN BERRIDGE
(1716–1793)

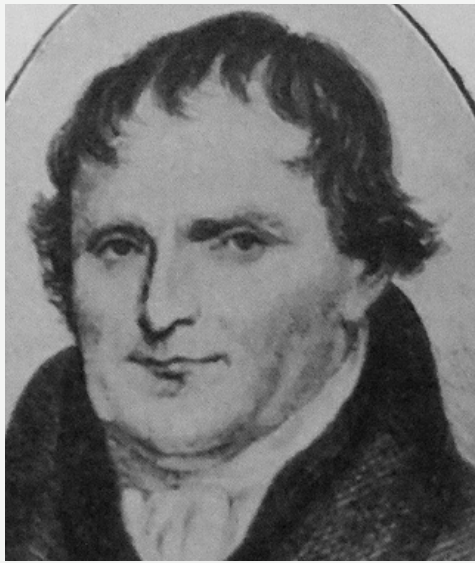
Berridge was Vicar of Everton, near Sandy in Bedfordshire. He was a passionate open-air preacher who travelled throughout the area and across the neighbouring counties. Some historians claim that had he lived in London, he would have been one of the most famous preachers that ever lived.

A complaint was once brought against him, and the bishop sent for him and reproved him for preaching “at all hours and on all days.”

“My lord,” he said modestly, “I preach only during two seasons.”

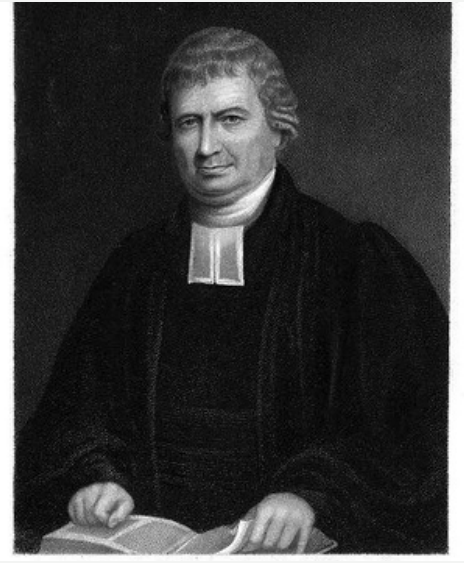
“Which are they, Mr. Berridge?”

“In season and out of season, my lord” (cf. 2 Timothy 4:2).



WILLIAM DAWSON
(1733–1841)

Dawson was a bachelor, though late in life he made a few attempts to marry, but without success. When others spoke of titles, he would pleasantly style himself a “Bachelor of Arts.”



MATTHEW WILKS
(1746–1829)

Wilks was one of the fathers of the London Missionary Society, the Evangelical Magazine, the Irish Evangelical Society, the Bible Society, and the Religious Tract Society. In fact, from his great practical wisdom, he was called upon to be a leader in all kinds of Christian work.

THE ELEVEN (Continued...)



**HUGH LATIMER
(C. 1487–1555)**

The deaths of Latimer, Nicholas Ridley and later Thomas Cranmer – now known as the Oxford Martyrs of Anglicanism – during the reign of Catholic Queen Mary I, are commemorated in the city of Oxford by the Victorian-era Martyrs’ Memorial near the actual execution site, which is marked by a cross in the pavement of Broad Street.

The memorial was designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott, one of the most important architects of the Victorian era. His design shows Latimer facing west, his arms crossed on his chest; Ridley faces east, and Cranmer holds a Bible while facing north.



**JACOB GRUBER
(1778–1850)**

David Martin, pastor of the Fredericktown (Maryland) Methodist Church, famously published a record of the “Trial of Rev. Jacob Gruber, Minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church, at the March Term, 1819, in the Frederick County Court, for a Misdemeanor” (1819). Gruber's trial took place on account of his having been arrested in 1818 for preaching a camp-meeting sermon that was a strong indictment of slavery; the official charge was inciting slaves “to resist the lawful authority of their ... respective masters and lawful owners.”



VALENTINE COOK, JR.

By Ron Metheny



Most individuals of whom we may recall as being *eccentric*, are remembered as such on account of their having exhibited some prevailing trait of social awkwardness or peculiar personal habit during their respective lifetimes. They are considered *eccentric* because of their distinctive patterns in *behavior*. This, however, is not wholly the case in regards to the *eccentric preacher*, Rev. Valentine Cook Jr. His chief peculiarity was to be found in his physical appearance. He was naturally strange looking. An 1858 biographical sketch of him by Edward Stevenson paints a very unflattering portrait:

“Valentine Cook was slightly above the medium height and size. There was no symmetry in his figure; his limbs, being disproportionately long, seemed more like awkward appendages than well-fitted parts of a perfect whole. He was what is called stoop-shouldered to such a degree, that his long neck projected from between his shoulders almost at a right angle with the perpendicular of his chest. His head, which was of peculiar formation, being much longer than usual from the crown to the point of the chin, seemed rather suspended to than supported by the neck. A remarkably low forehead, small, deeply sunken hazel eyes, a prominent Roman nose, large mouth, thin lips, a dark sallow complexion, coarse black hair, with here and there a thread of gray, formed a tout ensemble in which nature seemed to have paid no regard to order, strength, or beauty.”

Valentine Cook Jr. Was born February 13, 1763. We must conclude that both his rugged looks and his rugged individualism originated with his parents, Valentine (Sr.) and Susannah, who were among the very first permanent settlers in the area that would later be named Monroe county, West Virginia. They had arrived in 1773 with young Valentine Jr. and seven other children from the Shenandoah Valley, and by 1774 had claimed a 650 acre tract immediately west of what is now Greenville. In 1778 and 1781, their fort on this land sheltered up to 300 settlers during tensions with Native American tribes.

From an early age on, Valentine Jr. was an avid hunter. Being an excellent marksman, and having at command a well-trained pack of hounds, he pursued wild game of every kind, from the stately bison to the screaming pheasant. On one occasion, he set out to recover his father's horses that had been stolen by Native Americans. He discovered the horses tied up in a dense thicket, and unaware that their captors were watching, leaned his rifle against a tree and proceeded to untie them. Several Native Americans appeared and overpowered him. To quote again Edward Stevenson:

“After carefully surveying him from head to foot, laying their hands on his long black hair, and looking him full in the face for some time, one of the most elderly of the party exclaimed, ‘Booh!’ and added (purportedly in broken English), ‘Indian! Young Indian!’ They returned the horses, saying ‘Indian won’t kill Indian boy!’”

(The above anecdote being further evidence of Valentine Cook Jr.’s unusual appearance —especially, in light of his Caucasian descent.)

It was during the 1780’s that Valentine Jr. found his calling as an itinerant Methodist preacher. Thanks, in part, to a visit paid by Francis Asbury, the well known circuit-rider and one of the first bishops of the Methodist Church ordained in the United States. According to Owen F. Morton in “The History of Monroe County” (1916):

“[Francis Asbury’s] first visit west of the Alleghenies was in 1781, and Methodism in the Greenbrier dates from about this time. Jacob and Valentine Cook (Jr.), sons of Valentine Cook (Sr.) of Indian Creek, were the first Methodist preachers belonging in Monroe. Jacob was a local preacher and traveled a great deal. Valentine, Jr., born in Pennsylvania, had few advantages in early life and yet managed to acquire the rudiments of an English and German education at Cokesbury College, the first Methodist school in America. ‘He was an instance of the triumph of intellect and goodness over singular physical defects. But when he began to preach these peculiarities were forgotten as attention was arrested by the tones of his voice and his words.’”

In addition, we are told that the first Methodist society in Monroe county was founded in 1784 on property belonging to the Cook family. Elderly parishioners of “Cook’s Chapel” would later recall Valentine Jr. as their “youthful champion of Methodism” and as “the chief instrument of their awakening and conversion to the new religion.” Their reminiscing also heralded him posthumously as “that wonderful young man,” and “that angel of a preacher.”

By 1788 Valentine Jr. was received into the traveling ministry, and labored on different circuits in Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania until 1793. It was around this time that he met and married his first wife, Katherine Kraft (c. 1789). In 1794 and 1795, he traveled the Philadelphia District. In 1796 and 1797, he was appointed to the Pittsburgh District. The following extracts are once more gleaned from Cook’s sole biographer:

“At all times and in every place, he was ready to preach Jesus Christ crucified. By day and by night, during the weekdays, as well as on the Lord’s

Day, he was always ready to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation to a perishing world. To him the place was nothing. Wherever the people were assembled and willing to hear—whether in the church, the courthouse, the schoolroom, or the marketplace, in the mansions of the wealthy and the shacks of the poor, to the slaves in their quarters as well as to the vast multitudes on the campground, he was never found unprepared to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. No ordinary circumstances could prevent the full and faithful discharge of his duty in this respect. His travels were never impeded by inclement weather. Through summer's heat and winter's cold, amid torrential rains and blinding snows, he was always at his appointments, holding forth in strains of melting sweetness the gospel of the grace of God. The conversion of sinners—whether poor or rich, learned or illiterate, bond or free—was the all-engrossing subject of his thoughts, and the all-controlling intent of his life. His word, whether in the pulpit, the classroom, the prayer-meeting, or the social circle, at all times, and in every place, was 'living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart' (Hebrews 4:12 ESV)."

Cook's peculiar devotion to the study of God's Word, and his "being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts" (James 1:25), contributed greatly to his exceptional style of preaching. Like his blessed Master, he was constantly "going about doing good" (cf. Acts 10:38 ESV).

"The Bible was his constant companion, at home and abroad, in public and in private. Other books he read as opportunity served and occasion required, but the Bible he read every day. Whether found in his private study, the schoolroom, the field, or the forest, he always had the precious volume at command. He was often observed poring over its sacred pages when traveling on horseback as well as on foot. So thoroughly was he posted in the teaching of the inspired pen-men, that no passage could be called for that he was not able to repeat, or to which he could not turn in a few moments. Of him it may in truth be said, he was 'mighty in the Scriptures.' In the pulpit he usually announced the book, chapter, and verse of his quotations; and when he deemed it necessary, as he sometimes did, for the establishment of an important position or doctrine, it was truly astonishing with what facility he could call up his proofs from all the different parts of the inspired volume.

". . . The principal ground of complaint among unbelieving, impenitent sinners, and cold-hearted, worldly-minded professors was that they understood him too well for their comfort and quietude.

“A wicked man once remarked that he could listen to the Rev. Mr. *so-and-so* all day, and sleep soundly all the following night; but added, ‘I never get a comfortable night’s rest for at least a month after hearing Father Cook preach one sermon. He always says something that I can’t forget.’

“At a camp meeting held in Southern Kentucky, while Mr. Cook was preaching on these words, ‘Beware lest wrath entice you into scoffing, and let not the greatness of the ransom turn you aside’ (Job 36:18 ESV), a gentleman arose in the congregation and exclaimed under great excitement, ‘Stop! Stop until I can get out of this place!’ Mr. Cook immediately paused, and said, ‘Let us pray for that man.’

“The gentleman started from where he stood, but just as he reached the outskirts of the assembly he sank to the earth and began to cry aloud for mercy.

“Valentine Cook literally preached the gospel ‘with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven’ (cf. 1 Peter 1:12 KJV), and with so much sincerity, affection, and tenderness, as not only to arrest and fix the attention, but to carry the truth directly home to the hearts of his hearers. Though deeply read in the arts and sciences, and possessing as intimate a knowledge of the original languages as any man of his day, he made no ostentatious display of his learning; and, except in controversy, was seldom known to recite the original in the pulpit. In the elucidation and enforcement of his subjects, he sometimes alluded to science, philosophy, and history, and, in fact, to every thing within the range of his knowledge: this, however, he always did in a manner so perfectly plain and simple, that the most ignorant and unlearned could not possibly fail to understand his meaning. He studiously avoided metaphysical discussions. His subjects were always strictly evangelical, and well adapted to the occasions. In their discussion the important points were generally illustrated and enforced with such well-known facts and familiar circumstances, as to make a deep and lasting impression on the minds of his hearers.”

Charles Spurgeon, in his book “Eccentric Preachers,” points out how during the American Pioneer, most itinerant preachers were woefully lacking in “classical” education. Some, we may deduce, were practically illiterate. Valentine Cook Jr. was quite the opposite. As previously mentioned, Cook was a highly educated man, having “managed to acquire . . . an English and German education at Cokesbury College” in Maryland. That rare acquisition of a formal education benefited him immensely, and aided him in practical ways throughout much of his ministerial journeys. Spurgeon relates:

“After traveling a whole day without refreshment in a region where he was unknown, he halted in the evening at the house of a German, and asked if he

could obtain some feed for his horse and something for himself to eat. Being a tall, rough-looking specimen of humanity, the good woman, who was busy spinning yarn, took him to be an Irishman. She was not at all favorably impressed with his appearance, but at her husband's request she fixed a lunch for him and returned to her spinning wheel, saying to her husband somewhat petulantly in German, that she hoped the Irishman would choke while eating. After Cook had finished his meal he asked the privilege to pray, which being granted he knelt down and offered up a fervent petition in German. In his prayer he asked the Lord to bless the kind woman at the wheel and give her a new heart, so that she might be more hospitable towards strangers. Such a personal reflection was more than the good woman could stand, and she left her spinning wheel and ran from the house overwhelmed with chagrin at her wicked wish."

By 1798 Valentine Jr. was sent as a missionary to Kentucky; that same year he was appointed Presiding Elder of Cumberland District. On November 9, 1799 he married his second wife, Tabitha "Tabby" Slaughter, the niece of future governor Gabriel Slaughter. His declining health precluded the rigors of the itinerant preacher's life and he eventually settled on a farm along Muddy River in Logan county, KY but remained active in preaching and teaching in the nearby area. It was at this stage of life that another eccentricity appears to have surfaced: his absentmindedness. According to Stevenson:

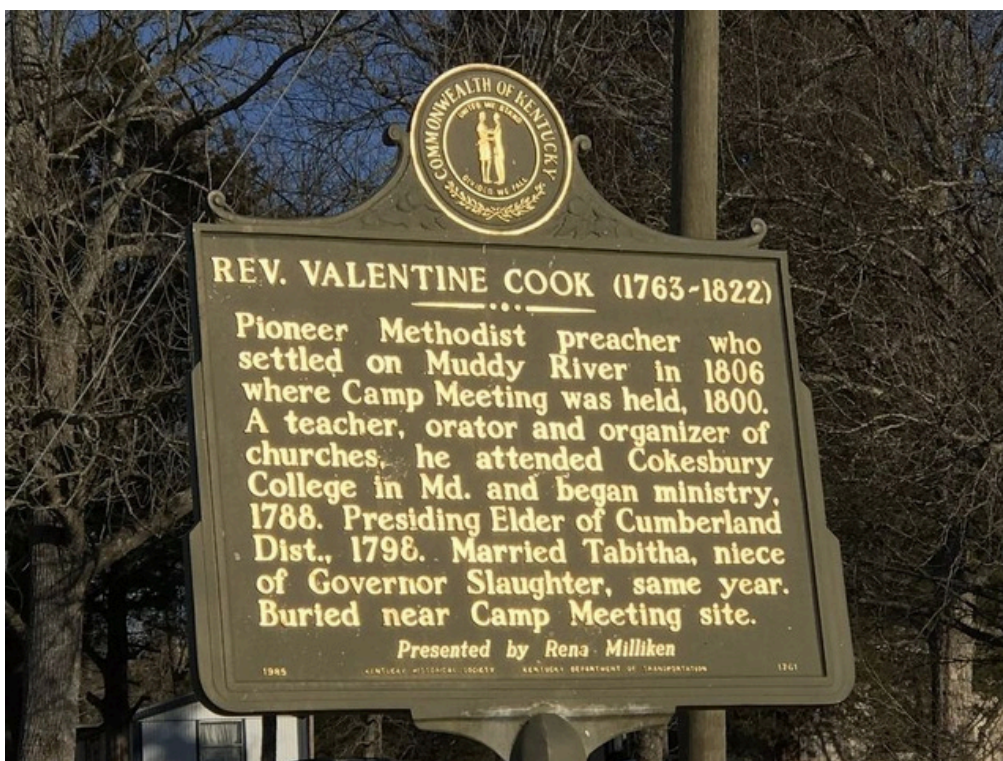
"He was frequently known to leave his horse tied up in the woods, or safely housed in the stable of some friend where he had preached, and walk all the way home, never once thinking of his horse, until interrogated on the subject by his wife or children. On one occasion, he started for an appointment some six or eight miles from his residence. When but a short distance from the chapel at which he was to preach, he turned aside into the barrens, as was his custom, for the purpose of spending a moment in private devotion.

"On remounting his horse and returning to the road, he unwittingly took the wrong turn, and was jogging along towards home, humming a favorite tune, when met by some of his friends who were going to hear him preach. 'Well, brethren,' said the old gentleman, very pleasantly, are you not going the wrong way?' They thought not. 'We are going to Bibb's Chapel to hear you preach, and this is certainly the right road.' He appeared much astonished, but yielding the point, he turned around and accompanied them to the church, being much more inclined than any of the company to laugh at his blunder."

Rev. Valentine Cook Jr. died August 22, 1822 at the age of fifty-nine in Russellville, Ky. Per a gravesite monument erected by the Louisville Annual Conference Historical

Society (July 29, 1934), his grave lies 500 yards due East to “the site of the first camp meeting held in the world in July 1800.”

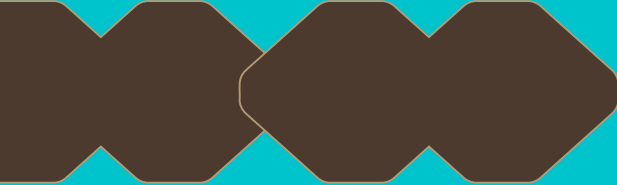
“He was a man of great learning and genuine piety.”



Historical marker at the intersection of Proctor Mill Road (State Road 1588) and J. R. Williams Road near Russellville, KY in Logan County

MORE ANECDOTES

Further Tales to Tell about
“Eccentric Preachers”!



DR. ADAM CLARKE and Rev. Richard Watson differed widely in their views on the eternal Sonship of Christ. William Dawson was present one evening when this subject was discussed. He acted the part of moderator; and in the company where opposite opinions were espoused, he pleasantly broke off the debate by observing, in reference to each person: “Dr. Clarke is tall, and Mr. Watson is still taller; but if the one was placed on the shoulders of the other, the doctrine of the Sonship, such is its profundity, will be found deep enough to drown them both.”

—Joseph Beaumont Wakeley, *The Heroes of Methodism*



MORE ANECDOTES (Continued...)

THOUGH JACOB Gruber was sometimes severe in his criticisms of young preachers, he always entertained for them a fatherly affection, and sought only to correct their errors. At a certain place he preached in a house that was occupied part of the day by ministers of another denomination. The parties had an understanding that they were not to preach on any disputed points of doctrine, or to interfere with each other's sentiments or observances. One morning a young preacher took the floor, and, forgetful or regardless of the mutual agreement, attacked Methodism, and was extremely bitter in his denunciations as well as false in his representations. His sermon was a caricature of Methodist doctrines and observances. Gruber was present and heard him, and was invited at the close of the sermon to offer the concluding prayer. He accepted the invitation, and addressed the throne of grace in his usual manner, praying for the people and for good results of gospel efforts, as well as for a blessing on the various Christian Churches in the land. As was customary he also prayed for the preacher, saying: "Oh Lord, bless the young man who has preached to us this morning, and grant in mercy to make his heart as soft as his head, and then he will do some good."

—W. P. Strickland, *The Life of Jacob Gruber*

SOME YEARS ago when Rowland Hill (1745–1833) was in Scotland, he was introduced to an elderly minister, somewhat resembling himself in piety and eccentricity. The old man stared closely at him for some time, and eventually said, "Well, I have been trying to make sense of all the lines on your face." "And what do you think?" asked Mr. Hill. "Why, I am thinking that if the grace of God hadn't changed your heart, you would have been one nasty piece of work." Mr. Hill laughed heartily and said, "Well, you have just hit the nail on the head."

"Oh Lord, bless the young man who has preached to us this morning, and grant in mercy to make his heart as soft as his head, and then he will do some good."

SQUIRE BROOKE often accosted stone-breakers on the highway, who seldom received kind words from passers-by. "Now, John," he would say as he reined up his horse, "you have hard work here. You don't get much for this job. Religion is a good thing, man. Godliness is profitable to all things. You must begin to pray, and you will soon get out of your poverty. Now, John, I will pray for you;" and getting out of his gig the squire would kneel down on the stone-heap, heedless of passers-by, and pray until in most of the cases the stone-breaker's heart of stone was broken, and the big tears fell, and the cry for mercy rose; and then slipping a piece of silver into the poor guy's hand, and giving a few last words of loving exhortation, he left him; wondering whether it was a man or an angel with whom he had met.

One stone-breaker with whom the squire prayed was very meagerly dressed, so, after putting a half-crown into his hand, the squire stripped off his own coat and put it on his half-naked brother, saying, "I have two coats with me today, and I will give you one;" and we may be sure that counsels and prayers, sustained by such kind deeds, would not be easily forgotten.

—Richard Vickerman Taylor, *Yorkshire Anecdotes*

ONE DAY Billy Bray bought a dress for his wife Joanna and put it in a basket to carry home. While dancing happily and praising Jesus on his way home, he did not see the dress fall out of the basket. When he got home his wife told him that the dress he bought her was no longer there. Billy joyfully replied, "Glory to God I danced the dress out of the basket!"

The next day Billy Bray told his church what he had done. The church took up an offering and gave him another dress for his wife. But then two days later, someone found Billy's lost dress and gave it to him. He rejoiced and told everyone, "Glory to God I got two dresses for one!"

—F. W. Bourne, *The King's Son*

MORE ANECDOTES (Continued...)

THE DAY after Hugh Peters was condemned to die, he preached to his friends and fellow prisoners in Newgate, on the text: “Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation” (Psalm 42:5 ESV). In the early part of his imprisonment, he had suffered greatly from depression, fearing that he would dishonor the faith in the sufferings that he anticipated; but, for a short time before he went to the place of execution, his mind became perfectly composed, and he said with great cheerfulness, “I thank God, now I can die. I can look death in the face and not be afraid.” When the fatal hour arrived, he was carried on a sledge from Newgate to Charing-cross—the place of execution; and was made first to witness the execution of Mr. Cook, the former Solicitor General, who also suffered as a regicide. A person now came to him calling on him, in a tone of great severity, to repent of the role he had played in the death of the King; but he replied, “Friend, you do not do well to trample on the feelings of a dying man. You are greatly mistaken. I had nothing to do with the death of the King.” When Mr Cook was cut down, and brought to be quartered, the hangman was commanded to bring Mr. Peters near, so that he might witness the horrid spectacle. As the hangman approached him, rubbing his bloody hands together, he said, “How do you want this, Mr. Peters?” To which Mr. Peters replied, “I thank God, I am not terrified by this—you may do your worst.” As he was about to die, he gave a piece of gold to a friend, and asked him to take it to his daughter, as a token of love from her dying father, and to let her know that “his heart was as full of comfort as it could be, and that before that piece should come into her hands, he would be with God in glory.” He went off with a smile on his face, and the language of triumph on his lips. He suffered October 16, 1660, aged sixty-one; and his head was set on a pole on London bridge.

—Papers of the American Society of Church History

THE EVENING before Daniel Burgess’ death, a friend who came to see him, speaking of public affairs, said that it was feared there would be a storm; he answered with cheerfulness, “But God will house some of his children first.”

—Matthew Henry, Life of the Rev. Mr. Daniel Burgess

ONE OF Edward Taylor’s old friends whom he did not recognize spoke to him on the street. Taylor asked, “Who are you?”

“One of your old salts.”

“No fear of your spoiling,” came the quick retort, “you’ll keep all the better then.”

—Thomas Russell and Gilbert Haven, Father Taylor, the Sailor Preacher

IT IS reported that Jacob Gruber once answered a heckler at a camp meeting by asserting, “Sir, I refuse to argue with a man who has holes in his stockings.” When the taken-back heckler responded indignantly, “I don’t have any holes in my stockings,” the pastor simply asked, “Then how did you get them on your feet?”

—W. P. Strickland, The Life of Jacob Gruber

ON A certain occasion, when Rowland Hill was preaching to a crowded audience in Zion Chapel (Commercial Road, London), he chose as his text the well known passage in the twelfth chapter of Romans: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1 ESV). In the course of his sermon, he took the opportunity to refer to the ingratitude so generally cherished by man towards his Maker; when he went on to say that even the canine creation should make men, yes, and even Christians, blush on this point. “Since,” he added, “everyone of you knows that if you were only to give a dog a bone, the poor animal would express his gratitude for the gift, worthless as it is, by afterwards putting his paws on your knees, shaking his tail, and looking you good-naturedly in the face.”

—James Grant, The Metropolitan Pulpit

MORE ANECDOTES (Continued...)

DANIEL BURGESS often said he chose rather to be profitable than fashionable in his preaching, and that he thought it cost him more pains to study plainness, than it did others to study finesse; and he would be willing to go out of the common way to meet with sinners, to persuade them to return to their God. “That is the best key” he said, “that fits the lock, and opens the door, though it is not a silver or golden one.” And many have acknowledged that they came to hear him at first only to scoff at him, and make a joke of what he said, but went away under such convictions about the concerns of their souls, and another world, as it was hoped, ended in a happy change of their spirits.

—Matthew Henry, *Life of the Rev. Mr. Daniel Burgess*

AFTER WILLIAM Dawson’s powerfully inspired sermon, he called out that excellent hymn, “O Love Divine, How Sweet Thou Art!” by Charles Wesley. When the choir was singing the third verse,

“God only knows the love of God;”

he stopped—addressing them in this manner: “Stop, friends! If angels, the first born sons of light, cannot understand the height, the breadth, the depth, the length of the love of God, how can we expect to fathom it while here below?” Then he repeated with profound eloquence, thrilling his large audience:

“God only knows the love of God.”

Let us sing it again, friends; since we will have to sing it in heaven:

“God only knows the love of God.”

—Joseph Beaumont Wakeley, *The Heroes of Methodism*

WHEN EDWARD Taylor was about to embark for Europe, he expressed concern for the spiritual welfare of his listeners at the Seamen’s Bethel in Boston, Massachusetts. “To be sure,” he said, “I am sorry to leave my own babies, but He who takes care of every whale, and can give him a ton of herrings for breakfast, will surely find food for my babies.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson in *The Atlantic Monthly* (August, 1906)

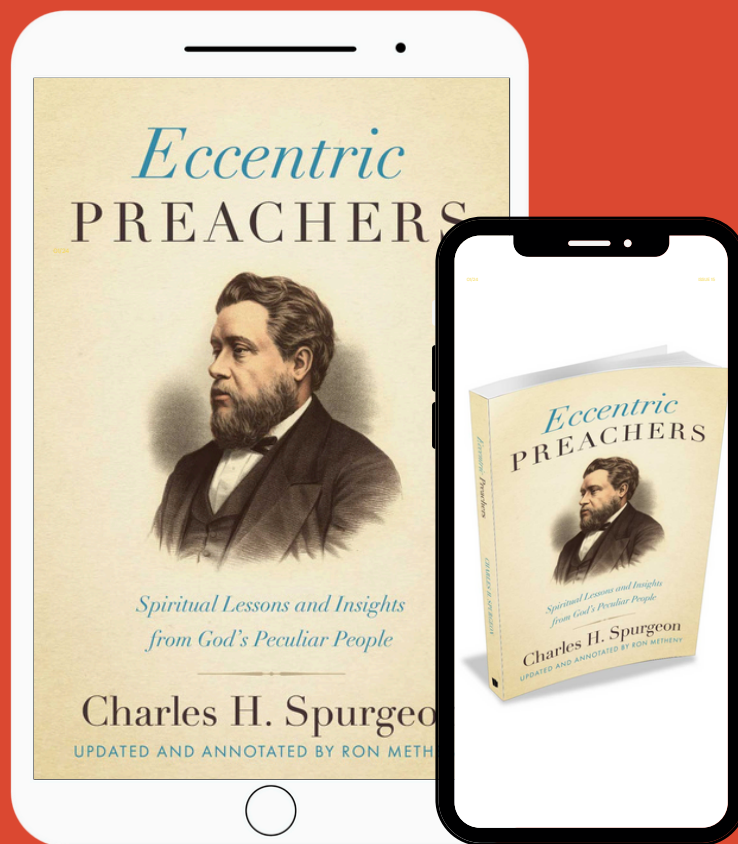
SOMEONE ONCE asked Billy Bray, “How long should we pray at a time to stay healthy?” Billy pointed to a candelabra that needed polishing and said, “If you give it a rub every five minutes you’ll keep it bright; but if you don’t rub it a long time, it’ll take a long rub to get it bright again.”

—F. W. Bourne, *The King’s Son*

JACOB GRUBER—a widower—was on his way to be married to a widow named Mrs. Martin. A brother who had talked a lot about the matter, and tried to prevent the “match,” met Mr. Gruber; the brother knew on what errand Gruber was going, and thought he would quiz him a little. He asked, “Brother Gruber, where are you going?” He replied, “I am going to attend to the eleventh commandment, ‘Mind your own business.’” He then drove on adding nothing more, and soon enough, Mrs. Martin was Mrs. Gruber.

—Joseph Beaumont Wakeley, *The Heroes of Methodism*

**DID YOU
KNOW?...**

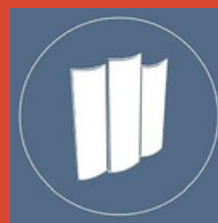


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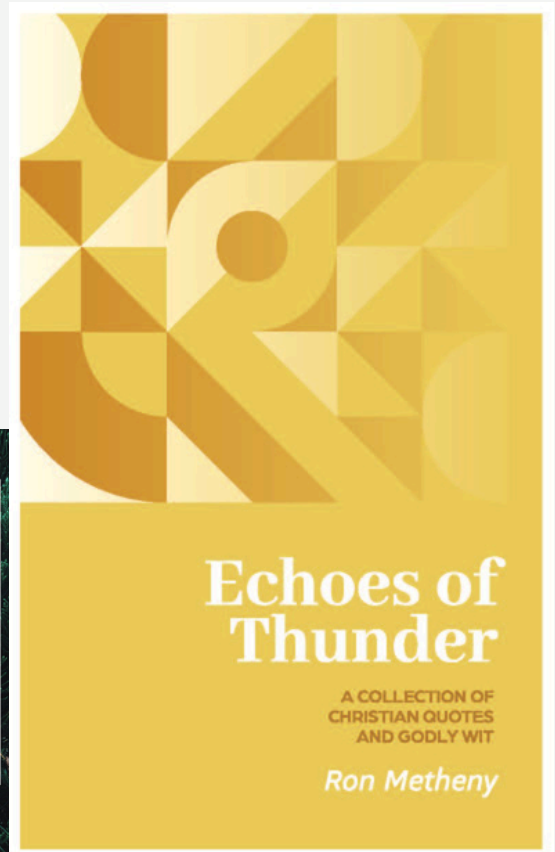
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