

Note: This was taken from the April 1<sup>st</sup> 1859 edition of The Earthen Vessel pages 93 – 94. It is of interest that Mr. Butt played a large part in the distribution of the printed sermons. Richard Schadle

THE PRESENTATION OF A HANDSOME TESTIMONIAL TO MISTER  
EDWARD BUTT,  
A DEACON AT THE SURREY TABERNACLE

In retiring from a large meeting held in the Surrey Tabernacle, on Thursday evening, March 17th, 1859, we could not refrain (in the stent meditations of our heart,) from adopting and applying the words of Solomon, when speaking of the true church of Christ, under the character of a woman, he said, “Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excel them all.” In looking round upon the churches of our faith and order, there are many of them which have done nobly; and have prospered, (through the given grace of God,) and succeeded, in establishing and maintaining the great principles of the New Covenant dispensation; and, in this day when a gradual declension into a fashionable amalgamation, is the leading feature, it is a mercy, that we have churches not a few, whose pastors are both faithful and fruitful, and whose order is beautifully consistent with all the revelations of heaven, respecting the things to be observed and done by the professed spouse of Christ while in her militant state upon the earth; but, if we may be allowed freely to express ourselves, we must confess, that for a generous, a prosperous, and a benevolent exhibition of gospel conduct, the church at the Surrey Tabernacle does excel.

This proposition was fully justified in the circumstances of the evening referred to; and which we shall now briefly describe.

A large company sat down to tea, between five and six o'clock: but by the time the more public meeting commenced, there were present nearly or quite 1200 persons.

Mr. James Wells presided; and delivered a warm, lively, and truly congratulatory address. After a hymn read by Mr. Carr, John Thwaites, Esq., took a review of his own connection with the Surrey Tabernacle, during the last twelve or fourteen years: and in a shrewd, and interesting speech, described both the conflicts and the comforts, which he had experienced, as a member, and as a deacon of that Christian body. There were three points in that speech, we consider worthy of special remark; we distinctly record them, because we are exceedingly anxious that our report of this meeting may be the means of stirring up the deacons, pastors, and members of our churches to seek for a much happier and more harmonious course of action as is now enjoyed in many places. The points were these: (1) that through the goodness of the Lord toward them, they had been helped so to fulfil their office that the pastor had never been compelled to call them to account for any dereliction of duty. This, we hold, to be a most happy statement to be able to make. Here are seven deacons: all of them working on for a number of years in much perseverance; beholding the growth of the cause to an amazing extent. (2) Mr. Thwaites confidently assured us, that among the church and the deacons, there was a growing conviction that the prosperity and the harmony

of the church was the result of that clear, unflinching, that full, comprehensive, that truthful, and that experimental ministry under which they had been favored to sit; and instead of wishing Mr. Wells to modify in any degree his ministry of a full Gospel, he, (Mr. Thwaites) would say, and he knew his brethren in office, would say, and he believed the whole of the church would say 'GO ON!' Mr. Thwaites was here most emphatic. He spoke as a gentleman, as a Christian, as a tried believer; as one who daily felt that such is the wickedness of the world in which we dwell; such the weakness of our poor sinful nature, that nothing short of a Gospel which takes us up, and carries us through all, right into heaven itself, could ever be a solid support to the battling, church of Christ, in her present warfare and woe. The third, and last point was to the effect that, in presenting a handsome testimonial to Mr. Butt, there was among the deacons, members, and congregation but one feeling. No jealousy existed; no party feeling had suggested it. No complaint from Mr. Butt, for his arduous labors had called it forth; it was the fruit of a deep sense of the church's gratitude toward a brother, whose devotion, untiring perseverance, and most acceptable services, had constrained them to express their love to him, and their desire to do him good. Never, on earth before, did we behold, with our own eyes, an illustration so powerful of the Psalmist's words as this meeting presented; 'How good and how pleasant, for Brethren to dwell together in unity!' Mr. Lawrence then gave out a hymn; and Mr. Edwards, (a senior deacon, having been with Mr. Wells nearly thirty years) delivered an enthusiastic address, as full of Welch fire and Gospel zeal, as it well could be. A hymn by Mr. Thomas Howard; and then Mr. James Wells presented the Testimonial to Mr. Edward Butt. It was a beautiful purse, made by a blind person, containing One Hundred and Fifty New Sovereigns, laid on a handsome Silver Salver, worth ten guineas, in the middle of which was engraved the following lines

Presented,

WITH A PURSE OF ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY SOVEREIGNS TO

MR. EDWAED BUTT,

BY THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION AT

THE SURREY TABERNACLE,

BOROUGH HOAD,

AS A TOKEN OF CHRISTIAN REGARD,

March 17th, 1860.

DEACONS,

Joseph Lawrence, John Carr,  
Evan Edwards, Henry Atfield,  
John Thwaites, Thomas Howard.

MINISTER,

James Wells

In presenting the testimonial, Mr. Wells expressed, in a most affectionate manner the obligations he was under to Mr. Butt, and the other deacons. It appeared that Mr. Butt, living near, and having his evenings at command, had been the principal working man; the other brethren being closely engaged in their several departments in commerce, &etc., could not give that time and energy to the Church's affairs, and to the wants of the poor, which Mr. Butt had devoted, consequently it might be said he had well-earned this good degree in office; and this noble expression of thankfulness now awarded.

Mr. Butt, in receiving and acknowledging, the testimonial, found great difficulty in giving utterance to his feelings. One sentence is all we can give. He said "the benevolence of this church toward the poor, ought not to be passed by in silence. During the last twelve years, no less than £4,600, had been distributed by the church and congregation in the Surrey Tabernacle, among the poor, in various ways.

C. W. Banks spoke a few words after Mr. Butt; and Mr. Wells then closed the meeting; which, in every sense, was one of the happiest developments of Christian philanthropy we ever witnessed.

Walter Banks