

Meeting Of Our Own Church

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon emphasizes the unity, independence, and family character of the local church, advocating for Scriptural church governance and the power of the Gospel to transform lives.

Scripture: Acts 8

Topics: "Church Government", "Unity of Believers", "Gospel Power"

Description

In this sermon, C.H. Spurgeon passionately teaches about the independence and unity of the local church as a complete family under Christ. He explains the Scriptural basis for church government involving elders and deacons, and affirms the enduring power of Gospel doctrines. Spurgeon also addresses the significance of baptism as a public profession of faith and calls for reliance on the Holy Spirit for revival and growth. This message encourages believers to cherish their church's heritage while moving forward in faith and service.

Transcript

A MEETING, in which it was designed to set forth the independency, harmony, and family character of each Church, was held on Monday evening, April 8th. The Rev. John Spurgeon presided. The meeting was opened with singing and prayer, after which

The Rev. C. H. SPURGEON said before giving up the meeting to the Chairman, I will, as on former occasions, briefly state the subject of it. We have met together during the last two weeks as a part of the Baptist denomination, and as a portion of the one great Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have endeavored to give expression to our firm faith in the unity of all the faithful in Christ. We have sought, moreover, to give prominence to our own distinctive Doctrines and forms of worship. We have met here for various purposes of fellowship, and of teaching, and now tonight, the one thought is to be this—that the Church of Christ meeting here is within itself a family; that it is whole and entire, and needs nothing from without to make it complete. We do not, for instance, need to appeal to a synod, or to a general assembly. We do not look up to one minister called a bishop, or to some other person called an archbishop. The Church has its own bishop or pastor; it has its own presbytery or elders; it has its own deaconship, and is not therefore dependent on any other, but should every other Church become extinct, its organization would not be marred. I take it, so far as I have read Scripture, that a modified form of Episcopalian Presbyterian Independency is the Scriptural method of Church government; at any rate, no other form of government would have worked in so large a Church as this. You have found it necessary to have one

who shall be the overseer of the Church under God. You have found it necessary to gather a presbytery around him, that they may be with him the pastors of the flock. You believe it also to be exceedingly necessary that the Church should maintain its congregational principles, and yet be always ready to enter into Presbyterian alliance with any other Church, not for its government, but for mutual assistance to be rendered and to be received. You will have before you tonight, as a representative of the family principle, my own well-beloved father, and my brother also sits beside him. To show the union of this Church with the past, as well as with the present, you will have one Brother who officiated as minister during the latter years of Dr. Rippon's pastorate; another, Dr. Angus, now the tutor of Regent's-Park College; and then Mr. Smith, whom none of us can ever forget, because he always insists on printing two or three books a year, so that we should always have him in mind; they are full of Gospel Doctrine, and are printed at so extraordinarily cheap a rate, that they are scattered about by tens of thousands, and thus his name is had in remembrance.

Mr. Walters would have been here tonight but he said, "There is a great work doing in my own Church, and I do not think I should be justified in sparing the time to come." I thought this a most admirable argument, though I should have been more glad for him to have been one in our midst tonight. We wish him God-speed, and pray that wherever he goes success may attend his labors. I do not think that in the course of the next 20 years, you, as a Church, will have such a choice of pastors as you have had during the last 20 years. If I should die you can do so, I suppose, but I do not think that anything short of that, would get me to go away from this spot. I hardly agree with ministers when they get beaten, showing the white feather, and resigning the charge. I feel I am captain of a vessel, and if there should be Jonah in the ship, I shall as gently and in as Christian a spirit as possible, pitch him out; I shall not think, because Jonah is there, that therefore I ought to get out, but will stand by the ship in ill weather as well as in sunshine! I know that by God's Grace I was called to this place; and if God's Grace and Providence shall move me, well and good, but nothing else ever will. I have not the slightest doubt but that, as our numbers shall increase, in answer to earnest prayer, the Spirit of God will be poured out yet more abundantly upon the minister and the people, and that we, being bound together yet more surely in ties of affection, and in ties of hearty cooperation, may go from strength to strength in glorifying God, and serving one another! Why should not this ancient Church become as glorious in the future as in the past? O may God hear our prayers, and it will be so. Jesus shall here be honored, and the Truth maintained.

The CHAIRMAN—Christian Friends and Brethren—I feel tonight that I am not exactly where I ought to be; I feel that I cannot say anything, because I have so many things to say; in fact, I feel too much to be able to say anything, and I am happy to think I have been placed in the chair, because mine will be merely a nominal office. One thing, however, I would say. If we had time and it was proper, I would speak first of the love of God, and then of His faithfulness. God is

Love, and He says He will withhold no good thing from them who walk uprightly. Our earnest prayers—for I speak of my dear partner as well as myself—have often gone up to the Throne of Grace, and we have said, "O Lord, who has led us and fed us all our lives, bless the lad." God has blessed him, and can you doubt, my Friends, that God is a God hearing and answering prayer? We have prayed that the little one might become a thousand; it has become a thousand and more than a thousand! God has given us, and given him, and given you the desire of our hearts. We have seen the foundation stone of this place laid, and now the topstone is brought forth with shouts of, "Grace, Grace unto it!" May God bless you still, and increase you as a flock. I rejoice there is so much harmony between us, even though we may differ, perhaps, in some points of view. I do not see clearly into this water before me [pointing to the Baptistry],

but if I did, I would go down and be baptized at once! If there are any friends here tonight who have only weighed this matter, and feel that Christ has commanded you to follow Him there, it is your sin if you live another day without it. Oh, never bring this burden upon your mind, that you may not be able to have near communion with God by neglecting any known duty! It becomes a positive sin to any man if he lives in the neglect of that which he knows to be his bounden duty. I did hope I would have been able to have brought my own father here tonight. God has been pouring out His Spirit upon his labors in answer to earnest prayer. Some little time ago, when the people were all busy with the harvest, there were only three present at one of the Prayer Meetings, but the old gentleman was so led by the Spirit to believe in a revival of religion, and that God would pour out His Spirit upon them, that he was full of joy in looking for the blessing! Nor has he been disappointed, for at a later Prayer Meeting, when there were some 300 people present, he was so overcome with joy that they were obliged to take him home to bed! He wrote to me somewhat to this effect—"My dear boy, do not press me to go; I believe it would so affect me, that it would be too much for me. I would be so overwhelmed with the love and faithfulness of our God, and I had rather die at home." Oh, dear Friends, go away from this meeting not to doubt God, but to love and serve and praise Him for all that He has done! You will not expect me to make a long speech, and my feelings will not allow me to do so, but I would desire to bless God for all that He has done for us.

The Rev. JAMES SMITH then addressed the meeting. He said he heard the chairman say the last time he saw him, that he thought his son had made a mistake in coming to London, but from the very first time he (Mr. Smith), had heard Mr. Spurgeon, he always thought he had done perfectly right. He well remembered that when he had decided on leaving London, several friends came and expostulated with him, and told him how very wrong it was for him to leave Park Street; and a minister in the city asked him what he thought would become of it when he had left. His answer was that if God wanted a man for Park Street, He knew where to find one; and if He had not prepared Him, He could prepare him in a short time. He now felt confirmed in that opinion, for if he had not left Park Street, humanly speaking, they would never have had that Tabernacle—they would not have had the Church they now possessed—nor would they have seen the wonders worked in the land which they had witnessed! God seemed to be setting forth most important subjects for His Church to contemplate. If they went to Bristol, God had been teaching them there that faith in, and prayer to a God of Providence, were all but Omnipotent, and in connection with themselves, they had seen that the old-fashioned Gospel still retained all its power. Some of them had been told years ago that they must keep pace with the times, that their Doctrines were growing obsolete, and that something new was required—but the old Doctrines had been preached among them, and had proved to be the power of God to the salvation of multitudes! No one could now say that the Truths of the Gospel had lost their power. What the Church needed was not something new, but more of the power and operation of the Holy Spirit. In that Church, those Doctrines had always been preached—though not always with the same fullness, with the same vivacity, or the same success. Before the immortal Gill formed the Church by a division from the one afterwards assembling in Unicorn Yard, the same Doctrines had been preached by Keach and others in the midst of opposition and persecution; and when Gill laid down his mantle, Rippon took it up, and preached the same Gospel with as much, if not more power; and after he had labored long, he found one to assist him in the same glorious work, before he quite retired from the field; and another Brother came forward till the Lord found him other work. When he (Mr. Smith) was invited to become the pastor, the Lord also enabled him in simplicity—not in the words of man's wisdom, but in the words of Scripture; in the language of the heart rather than the language of the head—to preach the same Doctrines in connection with their influence upon the heart, and their effects in the life; and though the measure of success awarded him was not to be compared to what had been awarded to their present beloved pastor, yet there were hundreds brought in through his instrumentality,

and since that time he had met with many persons in various parts of the country who acknowledged that though they never joined the Church, they were, through the power of the Word, brought into union with Christ, and had been living in fellowship with Him. For his own part, he had no doubt that as long as his Brother lived, he would continue to preach the same great, grand, and glorious Truths, and he hoped with tenfold more power and success! Glorious as it was to see such a building as that in which they were then assembled, he would be glad to see ten more before he departed this life, and then to have the news brought up to Heaven after he had arrived there, that Christ was exalted in every one of them, and that the power of the Spirit was displayed, and the glorious, efficacy of atoning blood realized and experienced! At present he could but exclaim, "What has God worked!"

He remembered coming to London on one occasion, after New Park Street Chapel was thronged, and a member of the Church, not very comfortably seated on account of the crowd that surrounded him, speaking to him of the wonderful success that was given, and the glorious work that was being worked, said, "Ah, Sir, your prayers are answered! Did you not use to pray Sunday after Sunday that God would crowd the place? Have I not heard you say, 'Lord cram the place?' And He has done it, and I think now you ought to be satisfied; however uncomfortable it may be for us, you ought to be very comfortable to think that God has answered your prayers." If his prayers had been connected with what God had done for them, he could only be thankful, and tell them to take encouragement, and believe more firmly the promises of God. Let them besiege the Throne of Grace, and determine in the strength that God had given them, that they would have no rest till the salvation of Zion should go forth as brightness! Let them make the present a steppingstone to the future; let them unfurl the blood-stained banner of the Cross everywhere, and let each one of them preach the Gospel of Christ by tongue and pen, and especially by their life and conduct. The chairman had said he could not see his way into the water. His (Mr. Smith's) sight was not as good as formerly, but though he had not his spectacles, he could see to the very bottom of it! After his conversion, the first thing he saw was, that it was his duty to profess Christ in Baptism. He was brought up in the Episcopal Church; he had never heard a sermon on Baptism, and had never witnessed the administration of the ordinance; but by the simple reading of God's Word, it appeared to him as clear as the sun shining at noon, or the letters of the Roman alphabet, and he wondered that other people could not see it. He was really tempted once to say that they could not see it because they would not, but he had given that up now. Very many honest, enlightened, and godly men had assured him they could not see it, and all he could do was to say that as light must come before duty, let them pray for light, and then follow it. He had been very much struck lately, just before administering the ordinance of Baptism, by reading the Eighth Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. He thought that if a man who had never seen Baptism administered in any form, should simply read that narrative and then go to some Episcopal place of worship and see the priest in his surplice stand by the font, open a book, and after reading a certain form, take into his arms a beautiful baby, dressed and decorated for the occasion, sprinkle a little water on its face, and then mark the sign of the cross on its brow, and the man would ask what they were doing, and on being told they were baptizing the child, he would reply that he had been reading but yesterday in a very old book an account of a Baptism which took place nearly 2,000 years ago, but that it was totally different from what he had just seen!

But supposing the same man went into a chapel in some respects like the Metropolitan Tabernacle, and should see the minister of Christ standing with Brothers and Sisters by his side, and after reading God's Word, and stating what he believed to be taught there, and then after solemn prayer and praise, taking a Brother or Sister by the hand, went down into the water and immersed the candidate, the man would say at once that this corresponded exactly to the case he had been reading of, while the other certainly did

not! He only wished other people saw this as clearly, and enjoyed it as much as he did, for he had seldom attended to the ordinance without enjoying his Master's Presence and the witness of the Spirit as to the importance and Scriptural character of the ordinance! In conclusion, he hoped that as long as the marble of that Baptistry lasted, or at least until Christ should come the second time, the Baptistry may be in constant requisition, and that hundreds and thousands converted by the Spirit's power, and conformed to the image of God's Son, may there publicly profess their faith in Christ. They had erected the house for God, and he hoped God would be greatly glorified there; they had erected it for Christ, and he hoped Christ would be highly exalted there; and that much good would be done both to saints and sinners whenever Christ was lifted up before them.

Mr. SPURGEON said that when they wanted to get the steam up, cold water was a very useful thing; but unless they also had some fire, they could not expect to get steam. He did not intend lighting the fire, but only bringing some coals, which he trusted some of the later speakers would kindle into a blaze. He thought by speaking for a short time, he could perhaps suggest some topics to the speakers. First of all, they had some peculiarities which he supposed were not to be found in any other Church, at least in England. The first of these was, that for some time they had maintained the Eldership in their midst. He supposed no one would deny that Elders were continually spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles. They were told in Baptist and Independent Churches that the deacons were Elders as well, but he wished to know by what law the two offices had been amalgamated. He could only say that it would have been utterly impossible for that Church to have existed, except as a mere shell and huge presence, if it had not been for the Scriptural and most expedient office of the Eldership! He blessed God for his deacons, and they worked very hard; but when they had both the temporal and spiritual conduct of the Church's work, it was too much for them, and he saw at once that if the Elders took the spiritual and the deacons the temporal conduct of affairs, the work would be much more efficiently performed. He believed his Elders had uniformly commanded the respect, the esteem, and the love of the Church, and he personally felt extremely grateful to them for what they had done. He only wished other Baptist Churches would follow their example in this matter, and he was sure that both the Churches and the minister would find the good effects of such a course. His officers and Church had made him the happiest man on earth, and when he had any cares or trouble, it was very seldom they came from the Church. Another of their peculiarities was that they were Baptists holding open communion, and yet having none but persons who had been baptized in the membership of the Church. He was prepared to maintain this position against the attacks both of the Strict Communionist and the Open Membership man, both of whose principles he believed to be unscriptural. He would rather give up his pastorate than admit any man to the Church who was not obedient to his Lord's command; and such a course would certainly promote the downfall of any church that practiced it! The mixed Baptist Churches were eating out the very vitals of the denomination; and though they were its strength in numbers, he believed them to be its real weakness. But however strict we were in discipline, Communion was a thing over which they had no control. Every man who became a member of a recognized Church of Christ had a perfect right to Christian ordinances, he had a right to Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the fact of a man's being unbaptized, was no reason why he should not have extended to him the fullest Christian fellowship. He wished the Baptist Churches both of England and America would soon give up their open membership and hold the same position in this respect which his Church occupied—strict discipline, and unlimited fellowship with all the Church of God.

Another peculiarity was that they had a perfect uniformity of Scriptural Doctrine. When his brother, a pastor of a Church at Southampton, had taught a class of young persons the Doctrines of Grace, and introduced the old Baptist Confession of Faith, he raised a clamor in the Church which made him an

unhappy man, but which rendered him even more faithful to God, and to the Church! The Southampton Church had no doctrines—no creed. They claimed the glorious liberty of believing anything they liked! He (Mr. Spurgeon) denied that there could be a church without doctrines, and he denied their right even on their own unprincipled principles, to restrain their pastor from teaching whatever he believed. Those who did not insist upon Christ's Truths were not a church at all, but a mixed multitude of Israel and Egypt, ready to rebel at all times. Churches would get on very well without creeds as long as they were dead, but when they were alive, and had the energy of the Spirit among them, they would find that creedless men were like dead limbs, and would have to be cut off. He believed it would be difficult to confute the youngest member of their Church on any of the Five Points. They all loved the old Doctrines of Grace! It was sometimes said of him that he had preached an Arminian sermon; but he could say that he always preached what he believed true. Whenever he got a text, he tried not to make it Calvinistic, but to make it say what it really did say, whether that should be called Calvinism, Arminianism, Fullerism, Mongrelism, or whatever people liked to call it—it was his Master's Word and not his, and his Master would one day explain whatever did not seem to harmonize now. There were two or three things which had made that Church strong. One of these was its prayerfulness. A morning Prayer Meeting had been established some four or five years ago as the result of a sermon which he preached, and it was still continued, and he hoped it would never be given up. His success had been due under God to the prayers of his Church. No mere preaching could do what had been done, but it was the prayer which had done it. Another part of their strength was their young converts. The old members were the backbone of the Church, but the young members were its hands, and what a Church needed was an influx of young blood. He could narrate some most striking instances of some who had been converted during the last three or four years which would astonish those who heard them. Now-a-days it was the fashion to put the least thing that occurred in connection with a Church into the newspapers, but this had never been done by them, or if any had done it, they had done it on their own responsibility. That Church was always left to speak for itself by what it did in the Savior's cause. As a Church, too, they were all very united. It had been said that Baptist Church Meetings were a sort of ecclesiastical bear-garden. That, however, was not the case there, for they always had the most delightful Church Meetings. As a Church they had their dangers, and one of them was that they might grow proud and be lifted up. There were a great many people who professed to be very anxious about him on this point. A very stately gentleman or a lady dressed in the very height of fashion, would sometimes tell him that they made it a matter of daily prayer that he might be kept humble. Now there was great danger of all of us becoming lifted up, but such remarks as these, from conceited individuals, would not cure the evil. To God's Grace we look, and there alone!

Mr. W. OLNEY, on behalf of the deacons, then addressed the meeting. He said they all felt they had experienced the amazing goodness of God in such a manner in the erection of that building, and that as a Church they were utterly unable to express the obligations they were under. From the very commencement God had been with them, and he felt they all ought to admit that their God had given them the place. It was not the house they had built for God, but the house God had built for them. God had given them the ground on which the building stood. He had given them wisdom in the choice of the design. He had permitted them to labor heartily and unanimously in the work, and He had opened the hearts of His people generally throughout the land to help them in raising the necessary funds. They had also to acknowledge the goodness of God in sparing to them the life of their beloved pastor who had been engaged in very arduous and incessant labor for the last seven years, and yet was among them then in every respect a better and happier man for all his labor in the Master's cause. They had other causes of thanksgiving such as—that they themselves individually were permitted to see the completion of the work—that they had with them on the present occasion their former pastors—and that the opening

services had been so successful. But great as were the blessings they had received, they were warranted in expecting still more. Their God who had been with them in temporals would be with them in spirituals. They had a great work before them as a Church and congregation, and God would prosper and bless them in doing it. It was of importance to remember that as God had highly blessed them, so they should recognize His goodness by renewed consecration and devotedness to His cause. They had one special mission for God as a Church, which was, to pray for their pastor—to sympathize with him—to strive earnestly to hold up his hands, and encourage his heart. They would also find, every one of them, some post to occupy. Let it be the endeavor of all to support the institutions which were about to be established, and particularly to encourage strangers (who would come to hear in large numbers) to cast in their lot with the people of God! Above all, let that solemn text be remembered by every one of them, "Unto whomever much is given, of him shall be much required." However much some other persons might not like the name, Tabernacle, that had been given to the building—to them it was singularly appropriate! It was in that Tabernacle they would offer continual sacrifice. Here they would seek guidance in all spiritual matters—here they would enjoy mutual fellowship and union. The place would be for a memorial of God's goodness to their children—here they would find exercise for joy, and faith and love—here would they realize the special Presence of their Father and God—and here would they seek continual preparation for higher and nobler service, until having done with Tabernacle worship, they would be transferred to the Temple above to see Him, "Whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

The REV. DR. ANGUS said he was sure they must all feel with him that it was a most delightful thing to be present on that occasion. He could not tell them how much he sympathized with the chairman when he spoke of how God had blessed his son. He could hardly imagine the feelings of a father who had a son in the Christian ministry, and especially the feelings of one who had two sons, both serving the same Master, in the same noble and devoted spirit. Mr. Spurgeon had told them they were overdone with advice, but as Mr. Olney had set the example of running counter to the pastor, he for once would side with the deacon. He had heard of the Tabernacle before, but had not seen it, and he could only say the half had not been told him! A finer, nobler, and in some respects, more amazing sight than that place when filled with people, he could scarcely imagine. He would remind them that as they had a model place, and in most respects, if not in all, a model pastor, they should also be a model Church—for this purpose they needed to be humble, though perhaps they had less danger of becoming proud than if they had had fewer gifts; for the proudest men were generally those who had the least to be proud of, and the humblest man was generally the one who had great gifts and recognized the greatness of them. He did not say they were more likely to be proud there than in their old place, but that they needed a measure of humility in proportion to their new privileges. In addition to this, they should combine with the strongest maintenance of their old Doctrines, a large-hearted and catholic spirit. They could afford them both, and should combine them. Such was the soundness of their creed, and the Scripturalness of their Doctrines. They held firmly the views of John Calvin; they held the spirituality of the Christian Church, and saw clearly into the meaning of the ordinances; let them hold all these views still, but yet be always ready to give their hand and heart to all who loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in Truth. In proportion as Churches combined these two things, and sacrificed neither of them to the other, they would be mighty in God's work and in extending His Kingdom. They needed to also combine spirituality with a wise machinery; the latter to meet the acquirements of such a Church, the former to give life and power to the whole. But especially he would urge them to continue to love their pastor, to pray for him, and work with him. Let them always remember that he was what the Grace of God had made him, and if in the Providence of God he should be taken from them—whether at a sooner or a later period—let them still trust in the same God! He believed Mr.

Spurgeon was doing a work which all his predecessors, from Dr. Gill downwards, had not been permitted to do; in any event, God had blessed him more than He had blessed them all. For his own part, he could only be thankful that God had made him so useful as he had, and he prayed that God would continue to bless both him and his people more and more.

The REV. C. ROOM then addressed the meeting, and gave some interesting particulars relating to the time when he was engaged as co-pastor with Dr. Rippon.

Mr. SPURGEON then said that he had now in the name of the Church to present a testimonial to their senior deacon, Mr. James Low, as an acknowledgment of the judicious and valuable services he had rendered to the Church for more than 50 years as a member, and 25 years as a deacon. Mr. Spurgeon said he could most cordially agree with all that was expressed in the testimonial, and was right happy to assure his friend of his hearty appreciation of his prudent advice, and admirable counsels. Whenever he (Mr. Spurgeon) conceived a new scheme, Mr. Low was always the longest in seeing it. But when he did see it, he was one of the most fervent and earnest in carrying it out! He thought it was always a good thing to have a few conservatives in connection with any body in order to prevent the coach from going down the hill too fast. He was himself a very great conservative in Church matters, and he liked to have associated with him such a man as Mr. Low, so that when some of the younger people, such as the deacons behind him, were going too fast, Mr. Low and he could put the skid on! It was a great mercy that God had spared their friend's life so long, and he earnestly hoped that they should long have him in their midst. The testimonial, which consisted of an illuminated sheet of parchment, enclosed in a handsome and massive frame, was then presented to Mr. Low. We here present a copy to our readers.

The Baptized Church of Jesus Christ, under the pastoral care of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon. At the Annual Church Meeting, held on Wednesday, January 16thh 1861, the following Resolution was proposed, seconded and carried unanimously— "That we desire to record our devout gratitude to our Heavenly Father for His continuing to us as a Church the eminently judicious and valuable services of our esteemed and beloved senior deacon,

JAMES LOW, who has been a member of this Church for a period of 50 years, and a deacon for 25 years. We desire also to express to our beloved Brother our hearty congratulations that God has so long spared his valuable and useful life, and granted him Grace to serve the Church of Christ so faithfully and so well. May that Master whom he has so long served graciously continue to our Brother His special and comforting Presence, and give him in his future life much nearness of communion with Him, and at a distant period an abundant entrance into His Kingdom and Glory." Signed on behalf of the Church by the Pastor, Deacons and Elders.

Mr. Low, in coming forward to return thanks, was received with loud cheers. He said that they would easily conceive that the kind expressions of their beloved pastor, supported as they had been by their kind response, were enough to overwhelm any man, particularly such an old man as he was. If he looked back at the 50 years during which he had been in connection with that Church, he had great cause for gratitude and humility, especially that he had been spared to see the Church through so many phases, and to what it had risen under their dearly-beloved pastor. It fell to his lot first to invite Mr. Spurgeon to supply their pulpit, and he remembered that Mr. Spurgeon readily answered that invitation, expressing his surprise that he should be asked to supply a metropolitan pulpit, and that although he had been for some little time the minister of the Church where he was laboring, he was only 19 years of age. Young as he was, he (Mr. Low) renewed his application, and they all had had an opportunity of seeing the results! God had blessed

him in a marvelous manner, and it rejoiced his (the speaker's) heart to see the Church in its present prosperous condition; and although his work was nearly done, it was a great consolation to him to have listened to the delightful and practical speech which had been made that evening by Mr. William Olney. Instead of the fathers, the children were rising up. With reference to the testimonial they had so kindly presented him, he had not the remotest idea that anything of the kind was going to be done. He highly appreciated it, and could assure them that he should hand it down to his family, and it would be carefully preserved by them. It had fallen to his lot to receive many testimonials from public bodies, but none had given him so much pleasure as that one. He was especially pleased to find that the testimonial had not been paid for out of the funds of the Church, but by the voluntary contributions of the members. In conclusion he begged to return his sincere thanks for the great kindness they had shown towards him.

Mr. SPURGEON said he also had the pleasure of presenting a similar testimonial to their much-loved friend, Mr. Thomas Olney, who had been connected with the Church for 51 years as a member and 22 years as a deacon. Mr. Olney had been of great use to the Church in many ways during the long time he had been connected with it, and had rendered it most important service as its treasurer. Mr. Olney was a father to the minister, and a sleepless guardian of the Church. Such a deacon few Churches possessed, and a better was never chosen. He rejoiced in their joy, and sorrowed in their sorrow. Abuse fell to the pastor's lot sometimes, but his kind deacons and elders always had a cheering word. He had been told they were singing songs about him (Mr. Spurgeon) in the street. He was sure that if any poor man could get a half-penny by abusing him, he hoped he would carry on his trade. The following is a copy of the testimonial—

The Baptized Church of Jesus Christ, under the pastoral care of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon. At the Annual Church Meeting, held on Wednesday, January 16th, 1861, the following Resolution was proposed, seconded and carried unanimously— "That this Church desires to record its devout gratitude to Almighty God for that abundant Grace which has preserved our dear and honored Brother,

THOMAS OLNEY, as a consistent, useful and beloved member of this Church for the lengthened period of 51 years. And while to the Grace of God all the varied excellencies of our Brother are to be ascribed, the pastor, officers and Church members cannot refrain from returning unfeigned and hearty thanks to our Brother for his indefatigable labors as deacon for 22 years, and for his most valuable services as treasurer. No man can be more truly worthy of the esteem of his Christian Brethren, and we most earnestly invoke a blessing upon him, upon our beloved Sister, the partner of his life, and upon his godly family, which is by so many ties united with his as a people. We trust that in that great House of Prayer, over every stone of which he has watched so anxiously, he may be spared to see the largest wishes of his heart fulfilled in the gathering of immense assemblies, the salvation of many souls, and the daily increase of our members as a Church." Signed on behalf of the Church, by the Pastor, Deacons and Elders.

Mr. THOMAS OLNEY then rose, but was unable to speak for some little time on account of the enthusiastic manner in which he was received. He returned his most hearty thanks to them for the kindness they had shown towards him, and said he felt extremely grateful if God had allowed him in any measure to be of any service whatever in connection with the Church.

Mr. SPURGEON then proposed a vote of thanks to his father for presiding, which was carried with acclamation.

The CHAIRMAN begged to return his thanks for the kindness which had been manifested towards him, and the honor conferred upon him. He had been exceedingly interested in the meeting, and he hoped its result would be an increased feeling of fellowship between them all. He was able to announce that he believed his son would soon have to baptize his mother in the Baptistry before him. He could but express his gratitude to God for the favors which had been shown both to him and to them, and he earnestly prayed that God would still extend His mercy towards them.

The Benediction having been pronounced, the proceedings terminated.

Dr. Steane, Dr. Hamilton, and Mr. Spurgeon presided at the tables. The deacons and Elders of the neighboring Churches served the communicants, and Rev. J. Lafleur of Canada, and Rev. J. Hitchens prayed. Solemnity of feeling and union of heart were manifest throughout the house, and the addresses were full of the sweet spirit of love and Grace. Such a season we have hardly ever enjoyed before.

Dr. STEANE remarked that they met in the largest of Non-Conforming sanctuaries, as the largest number of Believers who had ever communed together at one time since the days of their glorified Lord! The offering, amounting to nearly 100 pounds, was presented to the widow of the late Rev. J. George.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/meeting-of-our-own-church/>

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