

'Mr. Spurgeon's Confession of Faith' (August, 1891)

by C.H. Spurgeon

The manifesto is a declaration of the brethren's firm belief in the Verbal Inspiration of all Holy Scripture and their acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God.

Scripture: Matthew 25:46, Romans 1:16, Ephesians 2:8-9, 2 Timothy 3:16, James 2:14-18

Topics: "Faith", "Inspiration of Scripture"

Description

C.H. Spurgeon addresses the controversy surrounding the 'Confession of Faith' document, clarifying that it represents a collective belief among a group of ministers rather than solely his own. He emphasizes the importance of the Verbal Inspiration of Scripture, asserting that the Bible is the Word of God in its entirety, and defends the doctrines of grace, including the necessity of faith for salvation. Spurgeon critiques the skepticism towards the Old Testament and the rise of higher criticism, urging believers to stand firm in their faith amidst modern challenges. He encourages unity among those who uphold traditional truths and calls for a bold testimony against contemporary heresies. The manifesto, while met with criticism, serves as a rallying point for those committed to the foundational doctrines of Christianity.

Transcript

QUITE a stir has been caused lately by the publication of the following document, which has been erroneously called "Mr. Spurgeon's Confession of Faith," or "Manifesto":--

We, the undersigned, banded together in Fraternal Union, observing with growing pain and sorrow the loosening hold of many upon the Truths of Revelation, are constrained to avow our firmest belief in the Verbal Inspiration of all Holy Scripture as originally given. To us, the Bible does not merely contain the Word of God, but is the Word of God. From beginning to end, we accept it, believe it, and continue to preach it. To us, the Old Testament is no less inspired than the New. The Book is an organic whole. Reverence for the NEW Testament accompanied by scepticism as to the OLD appears to us absurd. The two must stand or fall together. We accept Christ's own verdict concerning "Moses and all the prophets" in preference to any of the supposed discoveries of so-called higher criticism.

We hold and maintain the truths generally known as "the doctrines of grace." The Electing Love of God the Father, the Propitiatory and Substitutionary Sacrifice of his Son, Jesus Christ, Regeneration by the Holy Ghost, the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, the Justification of the sinner (once for all) by faith, his

walk in newness of life and growth in grace by the active indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and the Priestly Intercession of our Lord Jesus, as also the hopeless perdition of all who reject the Savior, according to the words of the Lord in Matthew 25:46, "These shall go away into eternal punishment,"--are, in our judgment, revealed and fundamental truths.

Our hope is the Personal Pre-millennial Return of the Lord Jesus in glory.

C. H. SPURGEON J.A. BROWN, M.D. F.B. MONTI

A. G. BROWN J.G. COX J.S. MORRIS

J. DOUGLAS, M.A. E.J. FARLEY H. SINCLAIR PATERSON, M.D.

W. FULLER GOOCH A. FERGUSON FRANK M. SMITH

G. D. HOOPER FINLAY GIBSON CHARLES SPURGEON

J. STEPHENS, M.A. CHARLES GRAHAM J.L. STANLEY

FRANK H. WHITE J.W. HARRALD H. E. STONE

J. H. BARNARD W. JACKSON W. THOMAS

J. WESLEY BOUD W. R. LANE GEORGE TURNER

W. H. BROAD H.O. MACKEY W. WILLIAMS

Because Mr. Spurgeon's name was appended to this avowal of belief, it was supposed that he wrote it, and issued it to the world. Some, very wise people even discovered that this was the creed that Mr. Spurgeon wanted to force down the unwilling throat of the Baptist Union! Poor souls, it is really a pity to be obliged to dispel such blissful ignorance! Yet dispelled it will be, as soon as the simple but true story of the manifesto is told. About eighteen months ago, the seven brethren, whose names appear at the head of the above list, banded themselves together as a "Fraternal"; and from time to time they have invited other like-minded brethren to join them.

Membership is not confined to Baptists. Dr. Sinclair Paterson belongs to the brotherhood, as did the late Dr. Adolph Saphir, until he was called to the presence of the Lord he had so long and faithfully served. Several public meetings have been held, at which clear testimony upon the fundamental doctrines of the gospel has been given by various members. In addition, many private gatherings for prayer and consultation upon the Word and work of the Lord have taken place. At one of these, it was suggested (not, however, by Mr.

Spurgeon) that the time had arrived when attention should be called, through the religious and secular press of the country, to certain truths which, in many quarters, are either ignored or rejected. The suggestion met with general approval, a committee was appointed to prepare the document; in due time it was submitted to the whole company, and when the exact wording had been settled, each member signed it in the form in which it has been published to the church and the world.

It might just as well be called "Mr. Archibald Brown's Confession of Faith," or Mr. White's, or Mr. Hooper's, or Dr. Paterson's. It is as much theirs as it is Mr. Spurgeon's, and as much his as theirs; but no more

appertaining to any one of the thirty than to all the rest. It is certainly a "confession of faith" in this sense, that the brethren whose names are appended to it do believe what they there state, and they are not ashamed to confess their faith before any number of witnesses; but no one of them would think of regarding this short statement as a full declaration of all that he believes about the great verities of God.

As for "Mr. Spurgeon's Confession of Faith," any one who wants to read that will find it "writ large" in the thirty-six volumes of The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit. If the reading of two thousand two hundred sermons is too great a task for the searcher after "Mr. Spurgeon's Confession of Faith," he will be able to get a condensation of it in the President's Address delivered at the last College Conference We venture to repeat here almost the last words written by Mr. Spurgeon before his illness:-- "The Greatest Fight in the World is our testimony for the present moment.

It is to be had in a neat form, and at a very small price--namely, sixpence. Nothing would please us more than to see it scattered by scores of thousands, and rousing a controversy on essential truths . . . Those of our readers who abhor modern heresies, will be our true allies if they will help us in scattering this bombshell where it may do execution. In this address we speak without bitterness, but also without reserve. The present policy of the Down-grade men is to be quiet and cautious; but we shall no more copy their method than their doctrine.

Our speech is outspoken. Friends will be pleased to know that the demand for the first edition far exceeds our expectations. Why not go in for fifty thousand?" A translation of "Mr. Spurgeon's Confession of Faith," that even men of the world can understand, will be found at the Stockwell Orphanage, where living faith shows itself in works of mercy for the widow and the fatherless (James 2:14-18). The manifesto has not met with universal approval. The Christian World ridiculed "The 'Faithful' Few," by the quotation marks in the heading of a short article, in which it said:--" It is a document which few will read without a feeling of perplexity and sadness.

These thirty gentlemen appear to regard themselves as a little band of faithful adherents to the truth amidst a faithless church. The profoundest thought, the highest learning, the devoutest inquiry, are by implication branded as treason to the truth, if they have reached conclusions different from those propounded in this manifesto. Infallibility would seem to be the reward of the resolute refusal to allow the light of science and scholarship to fall upon the divine Word. All must be wrong except the few who can pronounce this Shibboleth" Thank you, dear Christian World; but your censure is a choice compliment and commendation to every member of the Fraternal!

The Echo called the manifesto "A Voice from Dark Ages." A northern newspaper wrote as follows:--"No one who does not possess the power to an alarming extent of persuading himself anything, can possibly, if he have any real acquaintance with the controversy, hold the views as to the sense in which the Bible is divine revelation which prevailed, in almost all the churches fifty years ago, It is not that theories have been formed; but facts have been brought to light which must modify old-fashioned opinions, and have already modified them to a considerable extent.

It did not, however, require any new discoveries of criticism to disprove the dogma of verbal inspiration upon which Mr. Spurgeon and his friends insist as one of the prime essentials of Christianity. If it be an essential, then Christianity is no better than a myth. And these men, with all their boasted loyalty to religion, ought surely to see that in associating the Christian belief with unnecessary, unprovable, and directly disprovable dogma, they are doing the work of the atheist and unbeliever, who stand by smiling to

see the process of destruction going on from within.

If religion and verbal inspiration must stand or fall together, then it is the latter alternative which will happen--assuredly they will fall." The italics are ours. The Baptist, in publishing the manifesto, said:--"It is perhaps remarkable, not so much for the signatories, as for the names which are conspicuous by their absence." Similar remarks have been made by other papers; but the writers of them appear not to have noticed the first words of the document :--" We, the undersigned, banded together in Fraternal Union."

It is just what it professes to be, an avowal of belief made by the members of a Fraternal. If it is asked, "Why is Mr. So-and-so's name not there?" the answer is," He is not a member of the Fraternal, and therefore his name has no right to be there." Many clergymen and ministers have written, expressing their willingness to sign the manifesto; and various signs indicate that there is a very widespread desire for some kind of union in which lovers of the old faith might join with brethren like-minded, without being compromised by association with those who are not one with them in the faith.

That, however, was not the object of those who signed this paper. Fraternals have been used often enough for the spread of Down-grade error; it therefore seemed right to make use of a Fraternal for the declaration of belief in Up-grade truth. If any Down-graders are not satisfied with what has been done, let them accept the challenge of the editor of Word and Work, himself one of the signatories of the document :--"Such a manifesto as this is at least timely, and the men who sign it make no secret of their creed.

Is it too much to expect that those who have changed their beliefs will be honest enough to express in language similarly plain the extent of the change, that all the world may see clearly where they stand? It is a fair challenge; will it elicit a fair response?"

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/mr-spurgeons-confession-of-faith-august-1891/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net