

Notes (From the June 1888 Sword and Trowel)

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon calls for separation from the Baptist Union due to its inability to reform and advocates for a new, informal fellowship.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 6:17, Hebrews 10:24

Topics: "Separation", "Fellowship in Christ"

Description

C.H. Spurgeon reflects on the Baptist Union's attempts to reconcile and mend relationships, expressing skepticism about its effectiveness and the clarity of its resolutions. He shares his decision to separate from the Union, feeling that true reform is unattainable and emphasizing the importance of personal conviction in such matters. Spurgeon acknowledges the need for fellowship among like-minded believers who have also chosen to step away, suggesting that any new community should arise organically rather than through forced organization. He emphasizes the value of unity and support among believers while recognizing the potential challenges of isolation in church life.

Transcript

IT was no small comfort to see the Baptist Union anxious to clear itself, and to make peace. I hoped that in this happy frame of mind it would do something which would mend matters, and therefore in all haste I retracted my prophecy that it would do nothing at all. But what has it done? The resolution, with its footnote, with the interpretation of its mover, and the re-election of the old council, fairly represent the utmost that would be done when everybody was in his best humor. Is it satisfactory? Does anybody understand it in the same sense as anybody else? Does not the whole virtue of the thing lie in its pleasing both sides a little? And is not this the vice and the condemnation of it?

I am not, however, careful to criticize the action of a body from which I am now finally divided. My course has been made clear by what has been done. I was afraid from the beginning that the reform of the Baptist Union was hopeless, and therefore I resigned. I am far more sure of it now, and should never under any probable circumstances dream of returning. Those who think it right to remain in such a fellowship will do so, but there are a few others who will judge differently, and will act upon their convictions. At any rate, whether any others do so or not, I have felt the power of the text, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate," and have quitted both Union and Association once for all. The next step may not be quite so clear; but this is forced upon me, not only by my convictions, but also by the experience of the utter uselessness of attempting to deal with the evil except by personally coming out from it.

The instinct of the gracious life is to seek congenial communion, and hence the necessity of some form of fellowship for ourselves and our churches will suggest itself to those who sorrowfully come forth from the old camp. To institute such a thing formally, and ask persons to join it, would be folly: it must grow up of itself--by the demand of those who desire it, and then it will be true and lasting. I do not, therefore, move in this direction till I hear from other brethren of like mind that they desire to do so. It will not harm us to abide alone for a little while, till we see where we are; and then, whether we are few or many, we can unite to help our poorer brethren, and to conserve the faith. Our desire is not to oppose others, but that we may strengthen each other's hands in the Lord. Utterly isolated church life would have its evils, and in true union there will be not only strength but joy. This will come in due time if it be the Lord's will.

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