

Notes (From the May 1888 Sword and Trowel)

by C.H. Spurgeon

The speaker emphasizes the importance of standing firm on biblical doctrine and prioritizing truth over fellowship, even in the face of opposition and adversity.

Scripture: Romans 16:17-18, 1 Corinthians 1:10, Ephesians 4:3, Philippians 1:27, 1 Timothy 6:12, 2 Timothy 2:15, 2 Timothy 4:3-4, Hebrews 10:23, 1 Peter 3:15, Jude 1:3

Topics: "Unity in Christ", "Contending for the Faith"

Description

C.H. Spurgeon emphasizes the importance of unity among Christians of all denominations while contending for the core truths of the Gospel. He reflects on the overwhelming support received during his addresses on 'the Unchangeable Gospel' and the necessity of standing firm against the rising tide of unbelief within the church. Spurgeon warns against compromising truth for the sake of broader fellowship, asserting that true charity must not come at the expense of sound doctrine. He expresses concern over the spread of error within the Baptist denomination and calls for a return to the foundational beliefs of the faith. Ultimately, he reassures believers that the truth of God will endure, and those who uphold it will find strength in their patience.

Transcript

THE Evangelical Alliance has done grand service to the cause of truth by calling together Christians of all denominations to bear united testimonies to the common faith. It was our great privilege, on two memorable occasions, to address vast and enthusiastic audiences upon "the Unchangeable Gospel" and "Experience as the proof of the old faith." Very hearty were the words of sympathy addressed to us in private, and overwhelming were the tokens of approval thundered out in public.

Letters from all classes of the community, and from all sections of the Church of Christ, show the deep interest which is felt in the controversy concerning vital doctrines. On all sides there are hisses of the serpent, but in greater volume the voices of the seed of the woman. It is an hour of travail, but the outcome of it all will be the increase and the manifestation of true believers. As to breach of unity, nothing has ever more largely promoted the union of the true than the break with the false.

What is all this noise about?

Is there anything worth contending for? Otherwise contention itself is a serious evil, a sin to be answered for before the great Judge. We again declare that our contention is not for a narrow, sectarian form of

teaching, nor for a personal peculiarity of persuasion: we contend only for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. This is assailed. Unbelief seems to be in the air. It is to be found, not alone in the ministry, but in the deaconship, and in the membership of the churches: not unbelief upon the outskirts truths, but upon the central teaching of revelation.

We only asked that the grosser forms of error should not be tolerated within the bounds of the Christian body to which we belonged. We thought the request a reasonable one, and to obtain it we proposed a form of sound words to be the basis of union. This has raised all this smother. In a few years' time, if the truth should again be to the front, it will scarcely be believed that one of the most pronounced bodies of Evangelical Dissenters hesitated to declare its faith. Even now that body does not like distinctly to refuse, or honestly to yield the demand; and so it balances sentences, discusses everything except the main question, and proffers a base imitation of a declaration in lieu of that which is sought from it.

Writing before the Annual Meeting, we write hopelessly. It is more than probable that another attempt will be made to put off the evil day of confessing its faith by raising some point of procedure; or else a strenuous endeavor will be made to get the scanty and objectionable historical statement of the Council carried through as a substitute for that which is requested. It matters little: the truth of God will stand, and those who hold it will in patience possess their souls.

Much talk is poured forth about charity and love.

Our marvel has been how certain gentlemen, who have been so fluent thereon, could speak without their consciences rebuking them when they remember their ungenerous action, and personal animosity, towards one whom they speak of as an honored friend. The harsh language of more outspoken opponents has more music in it than such idle compliments. But we forbear. What is said of us is nothing; but shall truth be sold to keep up a wider fellowship?

The error in the Baptist denomination is ten times more widely spread than we knew of when we wrote the "Down-Grade" papers, and we are bound not to withdraw a syllable, but to emphasize each word with all our might. We did not at the first aim at the Baptist body, for we thought most hopefully of it, but the controversy has revealed what we little dreamt of. The Lord in mercy bring back the many wanderers!

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