

Notes (From the May 1889 Sword and Trowel)

by C.H. Spurgeon

Spurgeon warns of the rapid decline of Christian doctrine and practice in the church, and calls for holy zeal and true faith among Christians.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 4:3

Topics: "Authority of Scripture", "Church Integrity"

Description

C.H. Spurgeon addresses the concerns regarding the Baptist Union's leadership and its drift towards liberalism, particularly criticizing Dr. Clifford's association with Unitarianism and the blasphemous company he keeps. Spurgeon emphasizes that the true position of Baptist ministers remains unchanged despite external pressures to conform to larger religious communities. He expresses a deep concern for the state of the church, lamenting the complacency of many members who tolerate errors in preaching and a lack of zeal for the truth. Spurgeon calls for a revival of faith and courage among believers to stand firm for the gospel amidst growing compromise. He also warns against the diminishing view of Scripture, urging the church to uphold the Bible's authority and integrity.

Transcript

RIENDS will have noticed the anxiety of the public press to put us into some ecclesiastical position which they can understand. To be the pastor of a church of Christ is enough for us; but it seems to them that we must join some one of the great religious communities: one day it is the Presbyterian, and the next the Episcopalian. Meanwhile, nothing has been said or done by us indicating any alteration in the position we have always held as to doctrine and church government. When we make a change, our friends will not need to learn it from the secular press: that when will not, probably, occur in this century, nor in the next. It does not yet dawn upon some minds that to quit a society like the Baptist Union involves no change in our position or sentiments. Baptist ministers are pastors of separate churches, which may associate with other churches, or cease to associate with them, as they judge best; but the minister and the church are not dependent upon the associations they may choose or decline. We are in fellowship with all the churches of our Lord Jesus which hold the truth, but have never entertained the thought of changing this way or that. Certainly we never dreamed of entering the Church of England.

The Baptist Union President, Dr. Clifford, took one of a series of Sunday afternoon addresses at South Place, Finsbury, a chapel which belongs to a people who are something more, or worse, than Unitarian. He figures with Messrs. Voysey and Picton, and others of the exceedingly broad school; and this not

merely in his private capacity, but the bills are made clearly to state that he is President of the Baptist Union. This chapel is adorned with tablets, bearing the names of Moses, Voltaire, Jesus, Paine, Zoroaster, &c. The blasphemous association of our Lord with Thomas Paine and Voltaire creates an indescribable feeling in a Christian mind, and makes us wonder how a man, professing to be a servant of the Lord Jesus, could associate himself with such a place. Well might the Union resent our complaints against its more obscure wanderers, when its President, before he closed his year of office, would thus publicly associate himself with the deniers of our Lord's divinity. Has the body of Baptists over which this gentleman presides become so easy-going and docile that it will by its silence endorse the action of its President? Is it really so, that to preserve their confederacy any amount of looseness will be tolerated? We do not see that anything worse can be invented than that which the governing party either condones or admires. On the "Down-Grade" the train travels very fast: another station has been passed. What next? And what next?

We would like to agree with one who says that the bulk of our church-members love the old gospel; but we are not quite sure of it. If there were so general a soundness in the rank and file, would they quietly endure the abounding errors of the pulpits, and the babyish amusements with which congregations are being drenched? We fear the plague is among the people as well as among the priests. Yet, surely, there must be some who will fling aside the dastard love of peace, and speak out for our Lord, and for his truth. A craven spirit is upon many, and their tongues are paralyzed. Oh, for an outburst of true faith and holy zeal!

In The Sunday School Chronicle, of April 12, occurs an editorial note, which concludes as follows:--"Almost all writers now recognize the human element in the Bible, and see that this brings in human infirmity in matters of detail. We had a letter from a friend the other day, and there were several mistakes of spelling in it, but the letter quite fully conveyed to us our friend's thought. And if there are some inexactnesses, and even some mistakes, in the Bible, it carries to us, nevertheless, the mind and will of God. A lamp may give light to the feet on a dark night, even if the tin is a little bent in, and one of the panes is cracked."

Is the Sunday School Union going to teach our youth that the Bible is like an old cracked lantern? To this we call the attention of those who are charged with the superintendence of the Union literature. Surely there are members of the Committee who cannot allow such teaching to pass unchallenged.

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