

# Notes (From the October 1888 Sword and Trowel)

by C.H. Spurgeon

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of standing firm on the fundamentals of the faith and not compromising with error, in order to preserve and spread the gospel.*

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 6:14, Galatians 1:6

**Topics:** "Faithfulness to Scripture", "Separation from Error"

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## Description

C.H. Spurgeon addresses the alarming trend of unbelief infiltrating Congregational and Baptist churches, emphasizing that both ministers and congregants are straying from the foundational truths of Scripture. He warns that the acceptance of modern theories undermines the infallibility of God's Word, leading to a compromise that dilutes the gospel's power. Spurgeon calls for true believers to separate from those who deny essential doctrines, arguing that remaining in such fellowship only perpetuates error. He stresses the importance of a clear and shared understanding of faith, urging the church to uphold vital truths rather than succumb to a broad tolerance of differing beliefs. Ultimately, he seeks the preservation and spread of the gospel, imploring prayer for guidance in these challenging times.

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## Transcript

EVERY DAY affords more and more evidence that while many are true to their Lord, unbelief has sadly eaten into Congregational and Baptist churches. It is not the ministers only who have espoused the modern inventions; but in some instances where the pastor remains true to evangelical doctrine, the deacons and leading members have gone aside to novel theories. The inspiration of Holy Scripture in the sense of its being the infallible Word of God, is not held sincerely by all those who wish to appear evangelical.

This is the most serious matter of all, since it removes the very foundations of faith. We do not bring hasty accusations, but know what we affirm; and those of whom we make the affirmation know that we speak the truth. The varied views of the future which now obtain are naturally linked in with other errors, or logically involve them. The door is open, and droves of falsehoods enter by it. Numbers of good brethren in different ways remain in fellowship with those who are undermining the gospel; and they talk of their conduct as though it were a loving course which the Lord will approve of in the day of his appearing.

We cannot understand them. The bounden duty of a true believer towards men who profess to be Christians, and yet deny the Word of the Lord, and reject the fundamentals of the gospel, is to come out from among them. If it be said that efforts should be made to produce reform, we agree with the remark; but when you know that they will be useless, what is the use? Where the basis of association allows error, and almost invites it, and there is an evident determination not to alter that basis, nothing remains to be done inside, which can be of any radical service.

The operation of an evangelical party within can only repress, and, perhaps, conceal, the evil for a time; but meanwhile, sin is committed by the compromise itself, and no permanently good result can follow. To stay in a community which fellowships all beliefs in the hope of setting matters right, is as though Abraham had stayed at Ur, or at Haran, in the hope of converting the household out of which he was called. Complicity with error will take from the best of men the power to enter any successful protest against it.

If any body of believers had errorists among them, but were resolute to deal with them in the name of the Lord, all might come right; but confederacies founded upon the principle that all may enter, whatever views they hold, are based upon disloyalty to the truth of God. If truth is optional, error is justifiable. If some supposed "life" is to be all, and "truth" is to be thrust out of doors, then there is room for all except the believer in the doctrines which have been revealed by the Eternal Spirit.

Our present sorrowful protest is not a matter of this man or that, this error or that; but of principle. There either is something essential to a true faith--some truth which is to be believed; or else everything is left to each man's taste. We believe in the first of these opinions, and hence we cannot dream of religious association with those who might on the second theory be acceptable. Those who are of our mind should, at all cost, act upon it. The Lord give them decision, and wean them from all policy and trimming!

Our one sole aim is the preservation and spread of the gospel of our Lord Jesus, and we mourn that godly men should be parties to a system which is destructive of good, and only promotive of error. It is clear that, as a general rule, error by itself has not the power to maintain communities in a flourishing condition among Nonconformists. As a general fact, churches avowedly Unitarian, or anti-evangelical, gradually dwindle. The Old General Baptists, once rid of the evangelicals, made a rapid descent to their present moribund condition, while the evangelicals multiplied abundantly.

The plan of the enemy now is to lay the egg of error in the nest of our churches. It is hoped that among a people so tolerant of false doctrine as many Baptists and Congregationalists now are, this new doctrine will work secretly, and gain too strong a hold to be removed. The plan is a very crafty one, and seems likely to succeed. It is hard to get leaven out of dough, and easy to put it in. This leaven is already working. Our daring to unveil this deep design is inconvenient, and of course it brings upon our devoted head all manner of abuse.

But that matters nothing so long as the plague is stayed. Oh, that those who are spiritually alive in the churches may look to this thing, and may the Lord himself baffle the adversary! We are represented as wishing to force upon the churches a narrow creed. Nothing was further from our mind. We do not consider that the demand for agreement to vital truths common to all Christians can be looked upon as a piece of sectarian bigotry. Here is a man, who is himself a Calvinist, who does not ask that a Union should draw up a Calvinistic creed, but only begs for one which will let the whole world know that brethren are associated as Christians, and that those who do not agree to the first principles of our faith will be intruders.

Is this narrowness? If, after a basis is laid down, errorists do intrude, the case will be very different from what it is at present, and less of responsibility will lie upon the members of the community. It is mere cant to cry, "We are evangelical; we are all evangelical," and yet decline to say what evangelical means. If men are really evangelical, they delight to spread as glad tidings the truths from which they take the name. Waiting still for guidance, we begin to see our way in a measure, but implore prayer that every step may be of the Lord.

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