

Notes (From the September 1888 Sword and Trowel)

by C.H. Spurgeon

The Pastor and Church at the Tabernacle stand firm in their commitment to the authority of Scripture and the evangelical faith, despite the challenges posed by the Down-Grade Movement.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16

Topics: "Unity in Christ", "Faithfulness to Scripture"

Description

C.H. Spurgeon reflects on his recovery from illness and the continued blessings at the Tabernacle, expressing gratitude for the support from American friends and the broader Christian community. He addresses the troubling trend of a union that accepts diverse beliefs, emphasizing the importance of holding fast to the inspiration of Scripture amidst growing skepticism. Spurgeon reassures that the church remains committed to the old faith and is open to divine guidance while remaining cautious of misleading information. He highlights the impactful work of Mr. Henry Varley in defending the authority of Scripture and celebrates the restoration of deacon William Olney, whose perseverance serves as an inspiration. Despite the summer lull, the church continues to witness growth and the transformative power of the Gospel.

Transcript

TO MANY inquiring friends the editor would gratefully say that he is much better, though specially weak. Changing weather, with so much wet and cold, prevent a quick return to usual health. After a severe illness strength is slow in returning. Yet the work of the Lord has gone on with not less of blessing than in years past. Hosts of American friends have been at the Tabernacle, and have greeted the preacher with loving sympathy. With these have come men of eminence, and plain lovers of the gospel belonging to all the denominations, bringing warm and tender words of sympathy and cheer.

God is very gracious, and sends consolation by the hands of those whose very manner adds sweetness to their words. It is hard to make Christian people understand that there is a Union of professed Christians, which receives into its fellowship persons of any creed, or no creed, so long as they have been baptized. It is not easy to believe that men professing to hold the truth of God will retain in their communion men whose views are far removed from what is understood to be the evangelical faith.

We are not anxious that Christians of other lands should be assured of a fact which is so greatly to be deplored; but certainly it is to the most of them a great surprise. Few who have spoken with us have failed to see that there is a tremendous current, both broad and deep, which is running counter to the inspiration of Holy Scripture, and to those fundamental truths which until lately have been considered vital to the Christian religion. The question now raised strikes at the root of all true religion.

It is not so much which doctrine is Scriptural, but is there any inspired Scripture from which doctrine can be drawn with certainty? After dreaming and doting upon a future other than Scripture reveals, men now dream about Scripture itself. However, all this will have its day, and before long true hearts will turn from it with loathing. We believe that God and his great future are on the side of the old faith, and we are content to wait, and see what he will do. The Pastor and Church at the Tabernacle are now free from all hampering connections with Unions and Associations, but by no means without communion of the warmest kind with the Lord's faithful people.

We have no doubt that ways will be found in which all the benefits of fellowship will be enjoyed with those churches with which we can honestly and heartily unite. Of any movement our friends shall be informed. We hope they will believe nothing which the newspapers may insert, since in the absence of information they are apt to make guesses, and state them as facts. Our attitude is that of waiting for divine direction. Unbelief is in a hurry, faith can bide its time. Mr. Henry Varley is doing grand service by his papers upon inspiration in Word and Work, in answer to Mr.

Horton's book. No doubt there will, as the struggle is intensified, be raised up other brave advocates for the eternal Word; but meanwhile our brother is doing the work in a thoroughly efficient manner. Although the policy of silence is again adopted by the Loose School in the matter of the "Down-Grade," it is happily the case that it is impossible to apply the pitch-plaster to all mouths; there are yet men and papers which cannot be burked or bought. All our readers should see what Mr.

Varley has written, and Baptists especially, since the author whom he criticizes is chosen by the Baptist Union to take a leading part at its autumnal session. The prayers of the Lord's people at the Tabernacle have been graciously heard in the restoration to us of our beloved brother and deacon, William Olney, after long suffering, borne with a cheerful patience which has been a lesson to us all. Long may he now be spared to the Lord's work! His son, Mr. William Olney, Jr., continues his laborious service at Haddon Hall, and week by week we see persons, some from the poorest and most degraded districts, brought to Jesus.

Week by week our numbers receive additions. The College is not in session, for the men are having their vacation; the orphans are nearly all away; the seat-holders are most of them at the seaside; yet through the influx of strangers the crowds are even greater than usual, and many: feel the power of the Word, though as they mostly return to the country, we shall not have the home church thus increased. The Lord is with us, and we magnify his name.

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