

The 'Down Grade' Controversy From Mr. Spurgeon's Standpoint (From the Autobiography, Vol. Iv)

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon's sermon addresses the Down-grade Controversy, emphasizing the importance of defending traditional Christian truths amidst modern skepticism and heresy.

Scripture: 2 Timothy 4:7

Topics: "Faithfulness in Controversy", "The Resurrection of Truth"

Description

C.H. Spurgeon addresses the 'Down Grade' controversy, emphasizing the duty of a Christian minister to defend the faith despite the discomfort of controversy. He acknowledges the potential loss of reputation and the reproach that comes with standing for truth, yet assures that true honor lies in faithfulness to Christ. Spurgeon reflects on the historical challenges faced by the Church and expresses unwavering confidence in the resurrection of truth, despite modern skepticism. He encourages believers to cling to the old doctrines, asserting that they have proven their worth through trials and tribulations. Ultimately, he calls for steadfastness in faith, trusting that God will vindicate His servants.

Transcript

Controversy is never a very happy element for the child of God: he would far rather be in communion with his Lord than be engaged in defending the faith, or in attacking error. But the soldier of Christ knows no choice in his Master's commands. He may feel it to be better for him to lie upon the bed of rest than to stand covered with the sweat and dust of battle; but, as a soldier, he has learned to obey, and the rule of his obedience is not his personal comfort, but his Lord's absolute command. The servant of God must endeavour to maintain all the truth which his Master has revealed to him, because, as a Christian soldier, this is part of his duty. But while he does so, he accords to others the liberty which he himself enjoys.--C. H. S., in address at the Tabernacle, 1861.

A Christian minister must expect to lose his repute among men; he must be willing to suffer every reproach for Christ's sake; but, then, he may rest assured that he will never lose his real honour if it be risked for the truth's sake, and placed in the Redeemer's hand. The day shall declare the excellence of the upright, for it will reveal all that was hidden, and bring to the light that which was concealed. There will be a resurrection of characters as well as of persons. Every reputation that has been obscured by clouds of

reproach, for Christ's sake, shall be rendered glorious when the righteous shall "shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father."--C. H. S.

Just now, the Lord Jesus is betrayed by not a few of His professed ministers. He is being crucified afresh in the perpetual attacks of scepticism against His blessed gospel; and it may be that things will wax worse and worse. This is not the first occasion when it has been so, for, at various times in the history of the Church of God, His enemies have exulted, and cried out that the gospel of past ages was exploded, and might be reckoned as dead and buried. For one, I mean to sit over against the very sepulchre of truth. I am a disciple of the old-fashioned doctrine as much when it is covered with obloquy and rebuke as when it shall again display its power, as it surely shall. Sceptics may seem to take the truth, and bind it, and scourge it, and crucify it, and say that it is dead; and they may endeavour to bury it in scorn, but the Lord has many a Joseph and a Nicodemus who will see that all due honour is done even to the body of truth, and will wrap the despised creed in sweet spices, and hide it away in their hearts. They may, perhaps, be half afraid that it is really dead, as the wise men assert; yet it is precious to their souls, and they will come forth right gladly to espouse its cause, and to confess that they are its disciples. We will sit down in sorrow, but not in despair; and watch until the stone is rolled away, and Christ in His truth shall live again, and be openly triumphant. We shall see a Divine interposition, and shall cease to fear; while they who stand armed to prevent the resurrection of the grand old doctrine shall quake and become as dead men, because the gospel's everlasting life has been vindicated, and they are made to quail before the brightness of its glory.--C. H. S., in sermon at the Tabernacle, 1878.

I protest that, if all the sages of the world were to utter one thundering sarcasm, if they concentrated all their scorn into one, universal sneer of contempt, I do not think it would now affect me the turn of a hair, so sure am I that my Lord will justify my confidence.--C. H. S., in sermon at the Tabernacle, 1878.

A man may sometimes seem self-assertive when, really, he has so completely lost himself in God that he does not care what people think about him,--whether they regard him as an egotist or not. Some men appear to be modest because they are proud, while others seem to be proud because they have sunk themselves, and only speak so boldly because they have their Master's authority at the back of their words.--C. H. S., in exposition of 1 Kings 17:1.

As the Roman sentinel in Pompeii stood to his post even when the city was destroyed, so do I stand to the truth of the atonement though the Church is being buried beneath the boiling mud-showers of modern heresy.--C. H. S., in sermon at the Tabernacle, 1887.

I might not have had such an intense loathing of the new theology if I had not seen so much of its evil effects. I could tell you of a preacher of unbelief, whom I have seen, in my own vestry, utterly broken down, driven almost to despair, and having no rest for the sole of his foot until he came back to simple trust in the atoning sacrifice. If he were speaking to you, he would say, "Cling to your faith, brethren; if you once throw away your shield, you will lay yourself open to imminent dangers and countless wounds; for nothing can protect you but the shield of faith."--C. H. S., in address at College Conference, 1891.

I am well content to go shares with those who have gone before me to the skies. Some of them, as they burned to death for Christ's sake, cried aloud, "Christ is all." I am quite willing to take my part with the apostles whom the wise men of to-day count to be fools; and with those still greater fools, as many consider the Reformers who brought back into the light the great doctrine of justification by faith. I am satisfied to tread the path my sires have trod; I have an illustrious pedigree in the skies, and I will not snap

that chain which links me with those who have entered the glory-land.

This faith saved them in the time of poverty, and persecution, and martyrdom, and death: and it will save me. At any rate, I would sooner risk my soul on all the difficulties of the old theology, so long tried and proved, than on all the beauties of the novel doctrine taught by so many nowadays. I believe we are all of one mind upon this matter, and some of its may live to see great alterations concerning the present popular teaching. We may learn a lesson from what happened in the last century, the style of much of the preaching was such as tended to the emptying of chapels, and the multiplication of spiders.

Nonconformity gradually drifted away towards Unitarianism, and true religion would have become almost extinct in England if the Lord had not raised up those two believing men, Whitefield and Wesley, and others like-minded, who were a great power for good in the land. And I believe the Lord has raised us up, together with many others who hold the same faith, that we may fight this battle, and win the victory, to the glory of His holy Name. Whenever I have found myself represented as a fool because I cling so tenaciously to the old faith, I have thought to myself, "What mail, by proclaiming any new doctrine, has been able to draw such congregations as have filled the Tabernacle for the last quarter of a century simply to listen to the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified?"

We do not set up to be anything great in ourselves; but we do claim to be servants of the great God, believers in the great Saviour, proclaimers of His great salvation, and, God helping us, we shall keep on doing this till we die; and then, unto principalities and powers in the Heavenly places, we will make known the manifold wisdom of God.--C. H. S., in address to students of the Pastors' College, 1885. R. SPURGEON'S Standard Life could not be complete without a reference to that most sorrowful but important episode,--The "Down-grade" Controversy;--yet how shall I dare to touch the strings of that rifted lute?

The lightest and most skilful fingers could scarcely draw harmony from it now, and I would fain not be expected to awaken any of its discords. Oh, for the guiding Hand to be laid on heart and brain and pen, that gently and tenderly, albeit truthfully, the outlines of the sad story may be given! There are many dear and able friends who could write the full history of the Controversy; but, after much thought and prayer, I have been led to allow the shadow of the past to rest upon it in a measure, and to conceal, under a generous silence, most of the documentary and other evidence which could be produced to prove the perfect uprightness, veracity, and fidelity of my dear husband throughout the whole of the solemn protest which culminated in the "vote of censure" by the Council of the Baptist Union!

Therefore, in accordance with the autobiographical character of this record, the Controversy is sketched from Mr. Spurgeon's own point of view;--he tells the story in his own way, so that only as much as he chose to make known of the deepest grief of his noble life is chronicled in these pages.

For the information of readers of the Autobiography, who are unacquainted with my beloved's articles upon "The Down-grade," I thought it might be well to include in this chapter a condensation, or summary of them; but, on reading them with that object in view, I find it impossible to strike out a single word of his protest. It is equally impossible to transfer it all to this work, so the only course open to me is to omit it altogether, and to leave the testimony still to speak for itself from the pages of The Sword and the Trowel. From August, 1887, to February, 1892, scarcely any number of the magazine appeared without some reference to the Controversy and its various issues. The most pathetic "Note" of all was written within a few days of my dear husband's home-going, for in it he revealed the fact, already known to all who were

nearest and dearest to him, that his fight for the faith had cost him his life. Yet he never regretted the step he had taken; for, throughout the whole affair, he felt such a Divine compulsion as Luther realized when he said, "I can do no other."

So far as the Baptist Union was concerned, little was accomplished by Mr. Spurgeon's witness-bearing and withdrawal. The compromise at the City Temple, in April, 1888, confirmed the position of the modern-thought men in the Union, and made "the vote of censure" the act of the whole assembly with the exception of the noble seven who voted against it. But, in other respects, I have had abundant proofs that the protest was not in vain. Many, who were far gone on "the Down-grade," were stopped in their perilous descent, and, by God's grace, were brought back to the Up-line; others, who were unconsciously slipping, were made to stand firmly upon the Rock; while, at least for a time, in all the churches, Evangelical doctrines were preached with a clearness and emphasis which had long been lacking.

The ultimate results of the whole matter must be left in the hands of Him who never makes a mistake, and who will, in His own right way, vindicate His obedient and faithful servant from the "censure" so unjustly passed upon him.

Not long after Mr. Spurgeon's withdrawal from the Baptist Union, he went to the South of France for much-needed rest; and the letters he there wrote, during that time of suffering and reproach, contained many allusions to the painful subject. Naturally, those written to me referred to the more personal and private aspects of the Controversy, as the following extracts will show:--

"I was greatly surprised at the note from--(one of 'our own men'), but when we are in a battle, we must expect calamities. It is a serious matter to know how to act; but one thing is plain enough, I must go on clearing myself of union with those who belong to the broad school. I felt so well, this afternoon, when sitting under the palms, and as happy as a birdie beneath the blue sky. Then came the letter, just to sober me, and drive me from the sunshine to my Lord, who is the Sun itself. I can bear anything for Jesus while His everlasting arms are underneath me. The hills around Hyeres are called 'the mountains of paradise,' but the serpent comes even here. Ah, well! the Serpent-Killer is with us, and He will subdue all things unto Himself. I am sorry that the evil flood should carry away one of my men; but the wonder is, that more have not gone. It shows how much more evil was abroad than I dreamed of. I have done my duty, even if all men forsake me. Those who write in *The Freeman* and *The Christian World* show how everything I do can be misconstrued. Nevertheless, I know what I have done, and why I did it; and the Lord will bear me through. In Him I rest, and I am in no haste to answer opponents, nor even to think about them in a depressing way. What a providence that I am here, out of call! Luther was best at the Wartburg, was he not? I did not plan this, nor plan anything.

"What a farce about my seeing these brethren, privately, according to Matthew 18:15! Why, I saw the Secretary and the President again and again; and then I printed my plaint, and only left the Union when nothing could be done. Now, something will be done. Not until I took the decided step could I effect anything. Luther was very wrong to nail up his theses on the church door; he should have seen the Pope, and prayed with him! Do not let these things distress you, for my sake. The Lord will give both of us the heroic spirit and we shall neither fear men, nor become ungenerous toward them."

"Canon Sidebotham called yesterday to assure me of the sympathy of all Christian Churchmen, and his belief that my stand for truth will help all believers. He told me that he meets with amazing scepticism among young men whom he has been called to visit in sickness, and he believes there is an epidemic of it

everywhere. He says the antidote was needed, and came just at the right time. So may God grant! "How I do delight in the Lord! I am now consciously nearer to Him than ever before, and I revel in a sense of blessedness.

I am delivered from all fear of failing in this battle; and the Lord, whom I sought to honour, bows me low at His feet in gratitude for His tender mercies. We are safe in His hands. This is where I love to feel that I am, and that you are, and the dear boys, and the Church, and the College, and 'the Down-grade,' and all!" "I trust I may be made stronger for the stern task which awaits me; but I try not even to think of that, but just to abandon myself to a bath of rest. This, I trust, is the wisest course; and yet I keep on longing to be doing some good, or bearing some fruit unto the Lord.

Little occasions for this do occur, and I am eager to use them aright. "Yesterday was eventful. First came a telegram, saying that there had been a hot discussion, and that my brother had left the Council meeting in indignation because my veracity had been impugned. Just as I was going to rest came another telegram:--'Council has appointed Culross, McLaren, Clifford, and myself to confer with you at Mentone, without delay, to deliberate with you how the unity of our denomination in truth, and love, and good works may be maintained.

When can we see you? Letter sent. Booth.' Think of four doctors of divinity coming all this way to see me! I was in great perplexity, and knew not what to reply. I don't quite see what it all means. I lay awake till one o'clock, and then got a pencil, and wrote out a telegram:--'Cannot reply without further information. Respectfully request deputation to await my return. Tone of discussion suggests caution. Will write.' Afterwards, I wrote a letter. Briefly, I urge them not to come so far;--it would be four to one, and I should be at the disadvantage of having been the cause of great expense.

If they really mean brotherly conference, I will see them when I return, right gladly; that is to say, if I find there is any use in it. Now I shall need wisdom. I do not fear four doctors, but I think it a very wise move on their part. If it means that they will surrender, it is well; but if it is meant to fix on me the odium of being implacable, it is another matter. In any case, the Lord will prepare me for all that is to happen. It is of His mercy that I am here, or I should not be able to bear it all; but being quiet, and rested, and not worried by personal assaults, I can look round the question calmly.

"The four doctors are not coming. Very likely my brother will call to tell you about the affray. He was justly wroth, and describes the Council meeting as 'horrible.' For Dr. Booth to say I never complained, is amazing. God knows all about it, and He will see me righted. I have just received a letter from England in the words of Jeremiah 15:19, 20." That passage was so peculiarly appropriate to the circumstances of the case, that many friends afterwards sent it to my beloved, who was greatly comforted by the reassuring message which was thus repeatedly conveyed to him.

During that visit to Mentone, an incident occurred, to which Mr. Spurgeon often gratefully referred as a remarkable token of the Lord's approval of his protest against false doctrine and worldliness. Before I give extracts from his letters concerning it, a brief explanation is necessary. For many years before this eventful period of my dear husband's life, he had been most generously aided in all his beneficent plans and purposes by a friend to whom God had given abundance of this world's wealth. These supplies came with loving freeness, and invariable regularity; and more than a mere hint was given that they might be depended on while the donor had it in his power to be thus royally open-handed. However, Mr. Spurgeon's attitude in the "Down-grade" Controversy alienated the heart of this friend, and caused him to withdraw

altogether the splendid help which had, for so long a period, exempted my beloved from much financial anxiety.

The letter, announcing this failure of friendship and sympathy, arrived during Mr. Spurgeon's absence at Mentone, and it therefore became my duty to open and read it. Then followed one of those hallowed enlargements of heart which leave their mark for ever on the life of the person experiencing them. At once, I took the letter, and spread it before the Lord, pleading, as Hezekiah did, that He would "hear and see" the words written therein; and He gave me so strong a confidence in His overruling and delivering power that, as I knelt in His presence, and told Him how completely I trusted Him on my husband's behalf, the words of petition ceased from my lips, and I absolutely laughed aloud, so little did I fear what man could do, and so blessedly reliant did He make me on His own love and omnipotence!

In this exultant frame of mind, I wrote to Mentone, making light of the trouble, and endeavouring to parry the blow which I knew must sorely wound the sensitive heart of my beloved. I told him, too, how the Lord had "made me to laugh" as I was laying the matter before Him, and had filled me with righteous scorn and indignation at the means used to dishearten him in his sublime stand for the truths of the old gospel. So, as far as I was able, being absent from him, I comforted and upheld my much-tried spouse. In less time than I had thought possible, I received this telegram:-- "I laugh with you. The Lord will not fail us, nor forsake us;"--and, by the next post, there came a letter recording the dear writer's unswerving faith in the God, whose he was, and whom he served, and to whom he left all the issues of that painful trial. The following extract will indicate the spirit in which he wrote:--

"Mentone,

"Nov. 18, 1887.

"You are as an angel of God unto me. When I began to read your letter, I trembled, for I could not tell what was coming; but when I finished it, I could laugh with you. Bravest of women, strong in faith, you have ministered unto me indeed and of a truth. God bless thee out of the seventh heavens!

"I do not know that I have ever before really suffered any loss for Christ's sake; I feel decorated and elevated by this honour. His yoke is easy, and His burden is light. But our friend uses a queer sort of argument! I am to be set right;--therefore, stop the supplies to God's work! The fire must be put out;--whip the child! I do not see the connection between the end desired and the means used. Your loving sympathy has fully repaid me already. I rejoice in the Lord who has dealt bountifully with me hitherto. All that I possess belongs to Him.

"There, take an inventory of all I have,

To the last penny; 'tis the King's."

While this correspondence was passing to and fro, the Lord was working on behalf of His dear servant in a wonderful way. Writing to one of his deacons, Mr. Spurgeon said:--"I have had a very remarkable deliverance out of a pecuniary difficulty inflicted upon me in consequence of the 'Down-grade' Controversy. It is as nearly a miracle as anything I ever heard of. The living God guards me on every side, and covers my head. To Him be praise!"

A lady from the Antipodes, who was staying in London, afterwards related that, during the time under consideration, she felt an overpowering impression that she must go to Mr. Spurgeon, in the South of

France, and carry him some financial help to meet a special emergency. She said that, on other occasions, when similar intimations had come to her, she had obeyed her Lord's commands, and in each instance had found that she had been infallibly guided by Him, so she at once made arrangements for the thousand miles' journey. The amount she was to give was not at first revealed to her, nor did she know exactly where she was to go, as it had been announced that Mr. Spurgeon would be moving from place to place. However, the Lord, who had entrusted her with the commission, directed her to Mentone; and, on her arrival there, she was further guided to the Hotel Beau Rivage. What happened there, my beloved thus records:--

"An awe is upon me as I write to you, for I feel the Lord to be so near. On Tuesday evening, there came to this hotel three ladies who asked if Mr. Spurgeon were here, and left cards. The next morning, they were at our family worship; and, today, Mrs. R--gave me the enclosed letter, and cheque for 100! I told her of my trouble afterwards, I had not mentioned it before, and I read to her a few sentences of your dear letter. 'There,' she said, 'that is the Lord's reason for moving me to give it to you; let it go to make up the lack for the next six months.' I worshipped the Lord with a thrilling joy. She added, 'I do not doubt but that the Lord will see you right through the difficulty.' I believe so, too, and that all the help will come from someone who does not know of my special need, so that it will be the more conspicuously 'of the Lord.' The money will be surer from Him than from Mr.--, although he promised it for life. It may be very childish of me, but I could not help sending you the very cheque and letter, that you may see with your eyes what the Lord sent me. How this lady came to know my hotel, I cannot imagine, but Mr. Harrald says that He who sent her knew where I was.

"Our College men have met, with grand result; the only dissentient being one who is, practically, out of the ministry. Yesterday, I went to see an afflicted gentleman,* whose deceased wife was Miss Havergal's sister. His doctor met me, just now, and told me that I had done his patient great good. I was, however, the greater gainer, for he read me three letters from his son, a clergyman in Islington, in which he told his father to be sure to meet me, and wrote very many kind things, which I am not egotistical enough to repeat; but he said that all who loved the Lord, whom he knew, were bearing me up on their hearts. Truly, I am delivered from all fear of failing in this battle, which is the Lord's, not mine. I feel as if I must not write about anything else upon these two sheets. 'Holiness unto the Lord,' is written on them; and the domestic matters must go on another sheet of paper. Oh, how I praise the Lord for you! You are dear to me, as a woman and a wife, beyond all expression; but now, more fully than ever, we wear the yoke of Christ together, and mutually bear the double burden of service and suffering for Him."

Less than a week after the above letter was received, my husband wrote as follows:--"Prepare for further rejoicing. We had been out driving all day, and when I came in, I found your dear letter, and saw you sitting 'in Expectation Corner,' with the door open. Please receive the fresh token which the Lord has sent in the form of a second £100! Letter and cheque enclosed. What hath God wrought! I never gave Mrs. R--a shadow of a hint. I never thought she would do more. Why should she? But, as you say, 'the living God does deliver His children.' How I praise Him! Or, rather, how I do wish I could praise Him, but I feel as if my gratitude was cold and superficial when contrasted with His great goodness! Blessed be His Name for ever!

"What a dear soul you are! How I love you! Our inward and spiritual union has come out in this trial and deliverance. We will record all this to the glory of the Lord our God. The weather here is rather of Heaven than of earth; warm, clear, bright, and yet life-giving and refreshing. The toothache touches me every now and then; but, moderated by interludes of ease, I hardly ought to mention it, my mercies are so great.

What are pains when God is so near? This one theme is so predominant in my soul, that I cannot write about anything else. The Lord liveth, and blessed be my Rock!

"Send cheque to Bank. Sing the Doxology. Keep all my love, and rest under the blessing of the Lord our God."

After the letters to myself, probably those written to the friends at the Tabernacle expressed most fully what was in the dear Pastor's heart. Shortly after he reached the South of France, he wrote thus to them:--

"I wish to thank you all most heartily for your constancy of love during four-and-thirty years of fellowship. We have been many in number, but only one in heart, all through these years. Specially is this true in the present hour of controversy, for my heartiest sympathizers are in my own church. Several enthusiastic ones proposed a general meeting of church-members, to express their fervent agreement with their Pastor; but the ever-faithful deacons and elders had taken time by the forelock, and presented to me a letter signed by them all as representing their brethren and sisters. Such unity comes from the grace of God, proves that His blessing is now with us, and prophesies future happiness. What can I do but thank you all, love you in return, labour for you as long as strength remains, and pray for you till I die? The infinite blessing of the Eternal God be with you for ever!"

In reply to the letter from the church-officers, and to a further communication sent by them, the Pastor wrote:--

"Mentone,

"Nov. 27, 1887.

"To the Co-Pastor and the Deacons,

"My Own Dear Brethren,

"I am touched by your loving letter. It is just like you; but it is so tenderly, so considerately done, that it has a peculiar sweetness about it. May the Lord deal with each one of you as you have dealt towards me, even in tender love and true faithfulness!

"The more you know of this Controversy, the more will your judgments, as well as your hearts, go with me. It is not possible for me to communicate to anyone all that has passed under my knowledge; but I have had abundant reason for every step I have taken, as the day of days will reveal. All over the various churches there is the same evil, in all denominations in measure; and from believers, in all quarters, comes the same thankful expression of delight that the schemes of errorists have been defeated by pouring light upon them.

"I cannot, at this present, tell you what spite has been used against me, or you would wonder indeed; but the love of God first, and your love next, are my comfort and stay. We may, perhaps, be made to feel some of the brunt of the battle in our various funds; but the Lord liveth. My eminent predecessor, Dr. Gill, was told, by a certain member of his congregation who ought to have known better, that, if he published his book, *The Cause of God and Truth*, he would lose some of his best friends, and that his income would fall off. The doctor said, 'I can afford to be poor, but I cannot afford to injure my conscience;' and he has left his mantle as well as his chair in our vestry.

DR. GILL'S CHAIR

"I should like to see you all walk in here, and to hear your loving voices in prayer, for I feel knit to you all more and more.

"Yours for ever,

"C. H. SPURGEON."

Among the letters written by Mr. Spurgeon, at that period, is one that is of special and permanent importance, first, because it was the reply to a kind communication from Dr. Culross, the President of the Baptist Union; and, next, because it sets forth so clearly the reason for Mr. Spurgeon's protest and action:--

"Mentone,

"Nov. 26, 1887.

"My Dear Dr. Culross, "I think it most kind of you to write me. Your brethren have usually fired at me through the newspapers their loving appeals and advices. Of this I do not complain; but, assuredly, yours is a way which commands an answer. Letters to the papers are literature, and may or may not be worth one's notice; yours is a letter sent to me, and I will at least heartily thank you for it. "Do I need to say that, with you, and such brethren as Dr. McLaren, Mr. Aldis, and Dr.

Angus, I have no sort of disagreement, except that you stay in the Union and I am out of it? We shall, according to our light, labour for the same cause. We are all Christians and Baptists, and can find many ways of co-operation. "The 'Metropolitan men' in London request the Union to devise some way by which I, with others, can return to it. This is very right from their point of view, but I wish you to understand, as President of the Union, that the request is not mine. I do not ask you to do what I am sure you cannot do.

If I had thought that you could have done anything which would enable me to return if I retired, I should have asked you to do it before retiring. "So long as an Association without a creed has no aliens in it, nobody can wish for a creed formally, for the spirit is there; but at a time when 'strange children' have entered, what is to be done? Whatever may theoretically be in your power, you practically have no power whatever. You will go on as you are; and, unless God's grace calls back the wanderers, their numbers will increase, and their courage will cause them to speak out more plainly, to the sorrow of the faithful ones who shielded them in patient hope of better things.

"I have followed out our Lord's mind as to private remonstrance by seeing Presidents and Secretary on former occasions, and I have written my remonstrances again and again without avail. I had no course but to withdraw. Surely, no sane person thinks that I should have made a tour to deal with the individual errorists. I have no jurisdiction over them, and should have been regarded as offensively intrusive if I had gone to them; and justly so. My question is with the Union, and with that alone.

I have dealt with it all along. "Your very clear declaration, that the Union could not have a creed, or, as I read it, could not declare its doctrinal views otherwise than by practising baptism and the Lord's supper, closes the door finally against me. Neither do I knock at that door, nor wish for another door to be made. The good men who formed the Union, I fancy, had no idea that it would become what it now is, or they would have fashioned it otherwise. It has, by its centralization and absorption of various Societies, become

far other than at the first.

This is a good thing, but it involves a strain on the frail fabric which it is ill adapted to bear. So I think; but time will be the best proof of that. "I wish I could have worked with you in this particular way; but, as I cannot, we are not therefore deprived of a thousand other ways of fellowship. You feel union of heart with men who publicly preach Universal Restitution: I do not. I mean, you feel enough fellowship to remain in the Union with them: I do not. It is the same with other errors.

Still, I am in fellowship with you,--Union or no Union. If I think you wrong in your course,--as I surely do,--I will tell you so in the same spirit as that in which you have written to me. "From the Council of the Union I cannot look for anything which I should care to consider as the voice of the Union. It is too largely committed to a latitudinarian policy beforehand, and I have no question to refer to it. "I am happily free from all responsibility for its actions, and all allegiance to its sovereignty.

"Very heartily yours,

"C. H. SPURGEON."

I have received, from many friends, copies of my dear husband's letters written during this trying period; but I do not think any good purpose can be served by the publication of more than I have here given. Those who sympathized with him in his protest need nothing to convince them of the need and the wisdom of his action; while those who were opposed to him would probably remain in the same mind, whatever might be said, so there the matter must rest as far as I am concerned.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/the-down-grade-controversy-from-mr-spurgeons-standpoint-from-the-autobiography-v/>

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