

# Running After Novelty in Theology

by Horatius Bonar

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*The sermon warns against the dangers of running after novelty in theology, emphasizing the importance of trusting God's Word and seeking His guidance through prayer and the Holy Spirit.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 119:89, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 40:8, Malachi 3:6, John 17:17, Romans 3:4, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 13:8, James 1:5, 1 John 2:20

**Topics:** "Truth vs. Error", "Stability in Faith"

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## Description

Horatius Bonar addresses the confusion and instability in contemporary theology, emphasizing the overwhelming number of changing opinions and doctrines that can lead believers astray. He warns against the allure of novelty and the dangers of fickle minds that easily shift from one belief to another without a firm foundation in truth. Bonar stresses the importance of a tender conscience and reliance on God's unchanging Word for guidance, rather than succumbing to the whims of popular opinion. He encourages believers to seek wisdom from God and to trust in the eternal truths of Scripture amidst the chaos of modern thought.

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## Transcript

My Dear Friend,

You seem bewildered amid the opinions of the day, almost as much as you would be in the midst of a company where each spoke in a different tongue. The difficulty of judging what is truth seems increasing, instead of disappearing. You know not what to think, nor which way to turn, in order to discover who is right, or where certainty is to be found; so many novelties stagger and amaze you. There seem to be good men on both sides, and that perplexes you still more.

You long for peace amid the jar of these unruly elements, and for stability amid these shifting sands. Yet rest comes not. There is no end of change. One novelty begets another, and that, in its turn, becomes equally productive. One error requires another to maintain it, this second must have a third or fourth to lean upon. One false step leads to twenty, or perhaps a hundred more. Who knows where all this is to end?

The changes are numerous. Every month produces some new doctrine, or at least some modification of the old. Fickle minds lie in wait for something new. As the edge of one novelty wears down, another must be provided in its place to keep up the unhealthy excitement. Thus fickleness becomes doubly fickle by

being gratified; novelties multiply, and the sore evil spreads. Men do not tremble at the thought of falling into error. To change opinions upon some casual impulse, or some shallow catch of an argument, is thought but a light thing; as if the falling into error were no great matter, instead of being a fearful calamity; or as if the entrance upon truth were an indifferent occurrence, instead of being the occasion of deep and solemn joy. Many who but lately were high Calvinists are now Arminians of the lowest grade, passing through the different levels with the most singular facility and flippancy, as easily and airily as the musician runs up and down the scale with the finger or the voice

Nothing is more needed in our inquiries after truth, than the watchful jealousy of a tender conscience. Yet how little is there of conscience at all in these last days! There is what is called independence of mind, or thinking for ones self; but that is not conscience. There is a spurning of creeds, and catechisms, and all olden theology, but that is not conscience. It is not waiting upon God for teaching. It is trusting our own heart, and taking the guidance of our own eyes. It is not ceasing from man, but the mere pretence of it. It is ceasing from one man in order to trust in another, from one age to trust in another, from one book to trust in another, from one heart to trust in another, and that other perhaps the most deceitful of all, our own. Hence there is such running after novelty, such readiness to receive any plausible error, such instability of opinion and fickleness of spirit; such self-willedness and headstrong precipitancy of judgment; such high-mindedness, pride, and censoriousness of others; so little thought of our own foolishness and fallibility; so slender a sense of the awful responsibility we are under to God, for what we believe for ourselves, and propagate among others, as his precious and eternal truth.

Yet be not amazed. Jehovah changes not; neither does his word. It abideth forever, firm as the rocks of earth, undimmed as the azure of the heavens. Seek unto God for light, and to his Word for wisdom. Take his Holy Spirit as your teacher. Heed not the jar of mens warring opinions. Let God be true, and every man a liar. The Bible is the Bible still. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God. Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

-Taken from Truth & Error, 1845.

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