

CHARLES H. SPURGEON'S TESTIMONY

*To the piety and the unity of the
Metropolitan Tabernacle Church,*

Together with a

SOLEMN WARNING

*As to what would happen if such
a highly-favoured company of people
should ever prove unfaithful.*

I THANK GOD THAT we have a great many very warm-hearted, earnest Christians in connection with this church, — I will make bold to say, such true and lovely saints as I never expected to live to see. I have beheld in this church apostolical piety revived; I will say it, to the glory of God, that I have seen as earnest and as true piety as Paul or Peter ever witnessed. I have marked, in some here present, such godly zeal, such holiness, such devotion to the Master's business, as Christ Himself must look upon with joy and satisfaction.

God has been pleased to favour us with profound peace in the church. We have been disturbed by no word of false doctrine, by no uprising of heretics in our midst, or any separations or divisions. This is a blessed thing; but, still, Satan may make it a dangerous matter. We may begin to think that there is no need for us to watch, that we shall always be as we are; and deacons, and elders, and Pastor, and church-members, may all cease their vigilance, and then the "root of bitterness" may spring up in the neglected corner till it gets too deeply rooted for us to tear it up again.

Though we are not free from ten thousand faults, yet I have often admired the goodness of God which has enabled us, with a hearty grip, to hold each other by the hand, and say, "We love each other for Christ's sake, and for the truth's sake, and we hope to live in each other's love till we die, wishing, if it were possible, to be buried side by side." I do thank God for this, because I know there is more than enough of evil among us to cause dissensions in our midst.

We who bear office in the church have the same nature as others; and therefore, naturally, would seek to have the supremacy, and every man, if left to himself, would indulge an angry temper, and find many reasons for differing from his brother. We have all been offended often, and have as often offended others. We are as imperfect a band of men as might be found, but we are one in Christ. We have each had to put up with the other, and to bear and forbear; and it does appear to me a wonder that so many imperfect people should get on so well together for so long. By

faith, I read over the door of our Tabernacle this text, “When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?”²

When some of our members were first taken into the church, I received a very suspicious character with them. It was said, “Well if Mr. Spurgeon accepts such-and-such a man, he has been so great a trouble in our church, that he will be the beginning of wars at the Tabernacle.” But those very persons, who came with that doubtful character, have become the most zealous of our working community; and, instead of differing and disagreeing, they have felt that there was so much to do that it would be a pity to spend one grain of strength in quarrelling with other children of God. If a man thinks himself to be some great one, his importance vanishes as soon as he joins our vast host. I have been warned, sometimes, by fellow-ministers who have had a member who has proved troublesome to them, and who wished to come into our midst. I have been told that I must watch him very carefully, for he would be sure to be a cause of anxiety to me; but I have answered, “No one ever troubles me; I do not let him.” Many of these people, who are supposed to be so dangerous, only want something to do; they have too much energy to be unemployed. I set them to work, and they are no longer troublesome; if that does not cure them, I give them still more work to do. They have too much vigour for small places, and need to be where their powers can have full scope, for then they have less time to notice things with which they do not wholly agree.

Possibly, my brethren, many of you do not sufficiently prize the peace which reigns in our church. Ah! you would value it if you lost it. Oh, how highly you would esteem it if strife and schism should ever come into our midst! You would look back upon these happy days we have had together with intense regret, and pray, “Lord, knit us together in unity again; send us love to each other once more;” for, in a church, love is the essential element of happiness.

IF WE, AS A CHURCH, prove unfaithful; if we leave our first love; if we do not plead in prayer, and seek the conversion of souls, God may take away His presence from us as He has done from churches that were once His, but which are not so now. The traveller tells you that as he journeys through Asia Minor, he sees the ruins of those cities which once were the seven golden candlesticks, wherein the light of truth shone brightly. What will he now say of Thyatira? Where will he find Laodicea? These have passed away, and why may not this church? Look at Rome, once the glory of the Christian Church, her ministers many, and her power over the world enormous for good; and now she is the place where Satan’s seat is, and her synagogue is a synagogue of hell. How is this? Because she departed from her integrity, she left her first love, and the Lord cast her away. Thus will He deal with us also if we sin against Him.

You know that terrible passage: “Go ye now unto My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My Name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel.”³ God first of all had the tabernacle pitched at Shiloh, but

it was defiled by the sin of Eli's sons, so the tabernacle was taken away, and Shiloh became a wilderness. So may this flourishing church become.

If justice should thus visit you, you may hold your prayer-meetings, — probably those will soon cease, — but of what avail will your formal prayers be? You may get whom you will to preach, but what of that? I know what you would do, if some of us were fallen asleep, and the faithful ones buried — if the Spirit of God were gone, you would say, “Well, we are still a large and influential congregation; we can afford to pay a talented minister, money will do anything;” and you would get the man of talents, and then you would want an organ and a choir, and many other pretty things which we now count it our joy to do without. Then, if such were the case, all these vain attempts at grandeur would be unsuccessful, and the church would ere long become a scorn and a hissing, or else a mere log upon the water. Then it would be this alteration and that; but if the Lord were gone, what could you do? By what means could you ever make this church, or any other church, revive again?

Alas! for the carnal, spasmodic efforts we have seen made in some churches! Prayer-meetings badly attended, no conversions, but still the people have said, “It is imperative upon us to keep up a respectable appearance; we must collect a congregation by our singing, by our organ, or some other outward attraction;” and angels might have wept as they saw the folly of men who sought almost anything except the Lord, who alone can make a house His temple, who alone can make a ministry to be a ministration of mercy, without whose presence the most solemn congregation is but as the herding of men in the market, and the most melodious songs but as the shoutings of those who make merry at a marriage. Without the Lord, our solemn days, our new moons, and our appointed feasts, are an abomination such as His soul hateth.

May this church ever feel her utter, entire, absolute dependence upon the presence of her God, and may she never cease humbly to implore Him to forgive her many sins, but still to command His blessing to abide upon her! Amen.

¹This tract is taken from the last portion of Chapter LXXV, “Mutual Love between Pastor and People” in *C. H. Spurgeon's Autobiography*, Vol. III (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1899; reprint edition, Pasadena, Texas: Pilgrim Publications, 1992) 254-256. ²Job 34:29 ³Jeremiah 7:14



The righteous are bold as a lion—Proverbs 28:1

Post Office Box 100 · 1 South Main Street · Avinger, Texas 75630
Tel. 903-562-1234 · Fax 903-562-1430
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