

CREED OR NO CREED ?

A QUESTION FOR THE BAPTIST UNION.

BY A BAPTIST MINISTER WHO IS A MEMBER OF
"THE UNION."

WITH A PREFATORY NOTE

BY

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AN EARNEST NOTE BY C. H. SPURGEON.

This admirable pamphlet has been prepared by a minister of the Baptist Union, that the grave question to be discussed may be fairly placed before the Union from our point of view. He has largely used remarks of the late venerable Dr. Steape, and of the redoubtable Andrew Fuller, because he hopes that their opinions will not be altogether without weight, even in this age of progress. I think he has argued both forcibly and temperately, and hence I am glad to send forth his paper at this most solemn crisis.

Cannot the brethren lay aside all that is personal to me in the discussion, and look the position in the face upon its own merits? Is there any denomination in Christendom which declines to state its views upon fundamental doctrine? Should there be any religious body devoid of a basis of union drawn from Holy Scripture? In all ages the Baptists have sent forth their confessions of faith, and our associations and churches still have them. What the strong objection to them can be based upon, it is competent for others to set forth; but I know nothing on that side which has any real force in it.

To me it seems that a strong desire to retain in fellowship those who seriously differ from the faith once delivered to the saints is the real motive for opposing a definite statement of fundamental truth; and therefore I urge upon brethren who hold to evangelical principles to avail themselves of the present opportunity to require such a statement. If this could be obtained at once, as I greatly fear it will not, they could justify their remaining in the Baptist Union, and could look for peace and unity; but without this their union will not be real, nor minister to their peace of conscience.

If such a concession is not made, there will be great searchings of heart in those who are not indifferent to vital principles. What will they do? Will they take the short and Scriptural method of coming out from a creedless confederacy, or will they remain to continue their efforts? I have taken the former course, and believe that in the end they will have to do the same; but as they judge that, for the present, the latter course is more prudent, I wish them the success for which I dare not hope.

At any rate, an opportunity for decided action is now before them, and it may never occur again with such prospects. Will not all who abide by the old faith vote for a firm but kindly statement of principles, such as will be submitted to them? All question about the vote of censure, as far as I am concerned, may be set aside. If any one wishes to repeat it, I trust he will find no friend of mine diverting the assembly from its main work by opposing him. Let the one question be discussed in all good temper, and let the truth be contended for in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Shall the Baptist Union be a resort for men of every school of thought, or shall it be declared to be an evangelical institution?*

The result of the Assembly's deliberations must determine the future course of many, and I pray that the Holy Spirit may graciously direct them in the way which will best promote the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom, and the truth so dear to them. Future generations may have to lament the decision arrived at by the Baptist Union, or may inherit untold blessings therefrom. May the Lord himself order it for his glory!

Creed or No Creed?

A QUESTION FOR THE BAPTIST UNION.



IN March, 1872, Dr. EDWARD STEANE published his valuable work, "The Doctrine of Christ." He was then the Senior Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland. He was still closely connected, as he had long been, with the Evangelical Alliance, its literature and its operations. He had a wide range of observation, and few, if any, knew better than he the state of the Theological Barometer at home and abroad. He was a man of wide sympathies, the very reverse of a bigot, the opposite of all that was narrow-minded, the soul of geniality, kindness, and sincerity; but he was a man of firm principles, and a steadfast adherent of what he believed to be the truth of God.

In the preface to the above-named work, he makes the following observations:—

"Neither the intention nor the spirit of the volume is polemical, but it is, nevertheless, designed to exhibit and to maintain Evangelical views of Revealed Truth as they centre in the mediatorial Person, and are illustrated in the mediatorial offices and work of the Redeemer. It is felt by the writer, in common, as he believes, with many of the elder ministers of the gospel, that the present are times in which an incipient departure from sound doctrine may be perceived, and a tendency to relax rather than to fortify and corroborate the faith. They are times, consequently, which call for the re-publication and enforcement of those grand fundamental verities of Christianity, which, after the long night of Papal superstition, revived at the dawn of the Reformation, and were subsequently preached, first by the Puritans, and then by the ablest and best of our divines down to the close of the first half of the present century. Since that time the current of Theological Thought has been flowing in two opposite courses,* both divergent, as the writer deems, from the old channel of that river which makes glad the City of God."

Dr. Steane laid no claim to prophetic foresight, but he witnessed certain movements, the source of which he well knew, and the results of which he could distinctly foresee. His book was intended as a testimony for the truth. Speaking in modest language of his excellent work, he says:—"There will at least be found in it no *concealment* and no *disparagement* of the proper and all-sufficient atonement for sin in the blood of Christ; of the now frequently discarded doctrines of substitution and imputed righteousness, and, in a word, of a redemption completely accomplished in the priestly work and sacrificial death of the Divine Redeemer." He then, in his own gentle way, warns his "younger brethren in the ministry" not to "suffer themselves to be seduced by the fascinating but misleading lights of modern theology."

* Ritualism and Rationalism must be intended.

Such words, coming from a man so temperate and judicious and full of brotherly love, have immense weight, and may well be recalled at the present crisis; when, if we may judge from the utterances of some of the Baptist Union Council, and still more from various letters in the papers, "the word of the truth of the gospel" seems to be very far from a matter of chief concern. We have no wish to refer to the many gross personalities which have blotted the columns of some of the journals, but rather to recall the question of the great importance of truth—the truth in relation to sin and salvation—over and above all consideration of learning, of cleverness, of position, of personal admiration, or even personal excellency. It is the truth with which we have to do—the truth once delivered to the saints—the truth entrusted to the church of Christ and her ministers, for preservation, exposition and diffusion. How best to preserve it inviolable, how best to diffuse and propagate it, and how best to illustrate its power and excellency, are surely and seriously our great concern. How can we best do this? Not certainly by discarding it, concealing it, toning it down, or being ashamed of it; much less by denying it. But those who begin by concealing it, commonly end by denying it. This has been only too true, over and over again, in multitudes of individuals and numbers of churches.

This is a fact which an immense proportion of the members of the Baptist Union would readily admit. But, if they admit the result as a fact, why should they question the tendency? The tendency to fundamental error, we mean. But in the case of some of the members of the Union, both in the Council and out of it, we have to do—taking their own words, at least—not with a *tendency* only, not with error in the bud, but with error full blown; not with a slight deviation from evangelical orthodoxy, but with rank heresy. Yes, we have to do with it. The thing is there, and it must be dealt with. The question is, how? Certainly not by a time-serving policy. Certainly not by compromising truth in the interests or under the name of charity. "Honesty is the best policy," has been proved times out of number. But this is a question, not so much of *policy* as of *principle*, and "Straight-forward is the best runner" always.

Turning back to the "Constitution" of the Baptist Union, as prefixed to the Handbook (it was called a *Manual* then) for 1855, we read, Rule III.:

"That the following are the objects contemplated by the Baptist Union:—
1st. To extend brotherly love and union among the Baptist Ministers and Churches, who agree in the sentiments usually denominated evangelical.

We cannot speak with certainty, but it is more than likely that Dr. Steane had a hand, at least, in drawing up the constitution of the Union of which he was Chief Secretary; and it is at least equally likely that he had a hand in framing the basis of evangelical faith adopted by the Alliance. We may fairly conclude, therefore, that the evangelical basis of the Alliance was the same substantially as the "sentiments usually denominated evangelical" of the Baptist Union. Now, why was that part of the constitution altered, so as to omit entirely any reference to evangelical doctrines, while simply retaining the principle of nonconformity, and the doctrine or rite of baptism? There needed no re-affirming of baptism as one of the distinctive features of the

denomination, for the members of the Union were Baptist Ministers and Churches; but if the grave fears of Dr. Steane sixteen years ago were well-founded, there needed a re-affirming of the great evangelical truths of the gospel. But this there was not; but rather an entire removal of all reference to evangelical faith. It was quite well to look after the out-works and see to the redoubts, but why leave the citadel undefended? Why take away the walls and the inner defences?

"Why?" say some of the advocates of breadth and charity and progressive theology, "because we want no creed at all. Creeds are useless, therefore away with them!" Now that is soon said; but saying and proving are not one and the same thing. We are quite ready to make some admissions. Confining ourselves to the different denominations of Protestants, we are quite ready to admit that there has been no creed framed, whether in Germany, Switzerland, Holland, France, or Great Britain, but it has in many cases been departed from, eluded, or gainsaid. But does that prove their uselessness? The same people who, having once professed, say, for instance, the Lutheran, the Reformed, the Helvetic, or the Westminster faith, but afterwards departed from it, professed also to take the Bible as their guide and rule, but have, in renouncing the one, departed from the other. Is the Bible, therefore, of no avail? Shall we away with it? Locks and bars have not in all cases been sufficient to keep out thieves and to protect property against robbers; are locks and bars therefore useless? The strongest bulwarks have sometimes proved ineffectual to keep out an invading enemy, and even a Redan and a Malakoff have been stormed and taken; shall we on that account discard all walls and bastions, and give no heed to defensive fortifications?

But these arguments deal only with the bare *defence* of truth; that is a noble thing to do, and must be done, and cannot be done by neglecting the truth and letting it lie uncared for to be trodden under foot of men. The truth committed to our trust is the food of the soul; it is heavenly bread, without which men can neither thrive nor live. Shall we not be careful whom we take as our co-workers? It may be they will seek to build again that which we destroy, and destroy that which we build. It may be that, while we give, or seek to give, the people wheat, they will give them chaff; that while we seek to train them up in faith and sound doctrine, the men who come with the same marks of authority and bearing the same name, will teach them another gospel; that while we sow, or when we have sown, the seed of the kingdom, the enemy will come—the enemy in the disguise of a friend and fellow-worker—and sow tares among the wheat. Such things have been done in Baptist Churches as well as in other communities; done over and over again. The wide gate of the Baptist Union, there being now no other test than adherence to nonconformity and belief in baptism, will admit men of any faith and men of no faith at all.

But why have baptism and nonconformity been retained, while all that relates to evangelical doctrine has been shelved and, in the "constitution," practically ignored? If creeds are of no avail, why retain the remnant? If creeds are useless and worse than useless, why retain the outer garments when the body itself has disappeared? What is Baptism without Christ? What is nonconformity without the

Mediatorial King, without redemption and sanctification by the blood and grace of him who has said to all his followers, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing"?

All this mischief and misery, this contention and these disputes, have arisen out of the "tendency to relax", as Dr. Steane says, "rather than to fortify and corroborate the faith." It has all come of that "current of theological thought" which has been flowing towards rationalism, and in some cases is terribly near the point of confluence. Young minds with little balance of Christian modesty and humble faith, and with little experimental acquaintance with Christ and his glorious gospel, have suffered themselves to be "seduced," as Dr. Steane again says, "by the fascinating but misleading lights of modern theology." And so "the doctrines which have hitherto nourished our churches in faith and godliness," are to be ignored, tampered with, thrust into the background, toned down, and all for what? for the sake of retaining a few—we hope there may be fewer than some think—a few daring men, who would fain have us count them deep thinkers and men of advanced ideas, because they break down God's hedges, and "rush in where angels fear to tread."

"The progress of error," says Dr. Angus, "we may mark, is ever downward. Men first worshipped an image made like to corruptible man—and at last creeping things." * And the remark of the same worthy and honoured writer in reference to those who were on the "down grade" to gross idolatry, will commonly apply to those who have left the "good old way" for the new and untrodden paths of speculation: "So little did man feel his condition, that, while his folly most clearly appeared, he was boasting of his wisdom."

One of the arguments against a creed of any kind is that it cramps thought, restricts liberty, and fosters hypocrisy. Might it not be more correct to say that it *stimulates* thought, and helps to hold the mind in the safe middle course between servility on the one side and license on the other? And as to hypocrisy, men can act that part without a creed, and do, and even the Bible itself does not restrain those who are of a double heart.

The Council of the Baptist Union have among them men of the very first rank, some of them for learning, but more for long-trying fidelity to evangelical truth, and a few of them are known the world over as such. The thing to be deplored is that they have suffered themselves to be to some extent compromised by the action of *the Council as a body*. The "tendency to relax rather than fortify and corroborate the faith," of which Dr. Steane complained, and the "incipient departure from sound doctrine" which he "perceived," has become more than a "tendency"; for "the progress of error," as Dr. Angus says, "is ever downward" and the "incipient departure" more, and in some cases, much more than "incipient departure." Men have gone down into the mists and fogs of speculation, and casting dishonour on the inspired testimony of God's Word concerning sin and salvation, redemption and justification, eternal life and everlasting death—everlasting fellowship with God and eternal separation from God—they have been left to blunder on, and

frame to themselves, or adopt from others, notions which repudiate inspiration and falsify the grounds and principles of God's government of the world.

God gave the Church and the world a final revelation when he spake unto us by his Son ; and we are assured that though "heaven and earth shall pass away, his word shall not pass away" ; that while "all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man"—the glory of intellect and other natural and acquired powers—"as the flower of grass, the word of the Lord endureth for ever." Dr. Steane tells us in his Preface, "that the doctrines of the New Testament"—"the doctrines which have hitherto nourished our Churches in faith and godliness"—and, we may add, founded, extended, and built up in power and influence our Missionary and other Institutions—"will be found imbedded in the writings of Howe, and Owen, and Charnock, and Flavel ; of Leighton, Romaine, Thomas Scott, and Dr. Chalmers, and still later, in those of Andrew Fuller, Dr. Pye Smith, Edward Bickersteth, Dr. Wardlaw, and Dr. John Brown." He justly describes Andrew Fuller as "at once massive in thought, exact in discrimination, and conclusive in argument," and of the rest he speaks in terms equally expressive and appropriate.

But these men of mark, some of the new lights would have us believe, were men unworthy of our admiration, much less of our confidence ; they were only groping their way along, and the light of "modern thought" and "progressive theology" had not even begun to dawn upon them. But the truth is, all these men had a creed ; they believed it ; and they held it fast, though they all subordinated it to the direct utterance of Holy Writ. Dr. Steane would have the doctrines these good men taught, still taught in our pulpits and held by our Churches, and, thank God, they are both held and taught in hundreds of Churches, and by hundreds of ministers. Why, then, should the honoured brethren and fathers, ministers of the denomination, so far yield the vital points at issue, so far implicate themselves in an endeavour to frame a formulary—it matters little whether you call it a "creed" or a "declaration," the thing is the same, which practically says to orthodox and heterodox alike,—“Here is a ‘declaration’ of belief ; read it your way, and find as much of what you want as you can.” Now this will never do. The thing won't wash ; the building will not stand ; the denomination will not have it ; at least, it is hoped not. Let us have, in a few plain sentences, easy to be understood, a simple statement of evangelical truth ; the things which our fathers surely believed, and which are as true now as they were then. And then, if any will not receive this doctrine, let them find a home somewhere else.

Well, but, they say, and others who ought to know better say with them, and for them, "We don't want a creed at all. Let us all be free to believe and teach what we like, so that we are Baptists and Nonconformists."

Whether or not an evangelical creed adopted by the Union would force these gentlemen to exercise their "liberty" somewhere else or not, it would form a platform for united action. In connection with many of our older churches there exist statements of doctrine, more or less diffuse, but commonly not differing much one from another ; and on the circular letters of the different associations in former years there was

(and in some cases is, I believe, to this day) a statement of the doctrines and principles on which the association was founded, and which the churches acknowledged. This often gave a degree of compactness to the churches, united them more closely together, and ministered more or less of force and energy to their enterprises, in proportion as the doctrines were held, not as theories, but as truths most surely believed.

The very general laxness of modern days rebels against this order of things, and the common argument is, "We don't want a human creed; we take the Bible." It might be inferred that such people have a larger, fuller, and deeper acquaintance with the Word of God than had the fathers of the present generation. But, in most cases, we believe the result of an examination would be the discovery that in former generations Christians were better versed in the Word of God and its teachings than the bulk of professors are at this present time.

But this cry is not always sincere, and is commonly unreasonable. "The man who has no creed," says Andrew Fuller,* "has no belief; which is the same thing as being an unbeliever; and he whose belief is not formed into a system has only a few loose unconnected thoughts, without entering into the harmony and glory of the Gospel. Every well-informed and consistent believer, therefore, must have a creed—a system which he supposes to contain the leading principles of divine revelation."

There are a few other passages or sentences which we beg to quote from this luminous and forcible writer. He says:—

"If, indeed, a subscription to articles of faith were required without examination, or enforced by civil penalties, it would be an unwarrantable imposition on the rights of conscience; *but if an explicit agreement on what may be deemed fundamental principles be judged essential to fellowship, this is only requiring that a man appear to be a Christian before he can have a right to be treated as such.*" Again, he says:—

"Whatever may be said on the propriety of human systems of faith, they are not to be considered as the proper ground on which to rest our religious sentiments. The Word of God, and that alone, ought to be the ground of both faith and practice. But all this does not prove that it would be wrong for an individual to judge of the meaning of the divine Word, nor for a number of individuals, who agree in their judgments, to express that agreement in explicit terms, and consider themselves as bound to walk by the same rule."

It must be admitted that there is considerable force in what follows:

"The substance of the enquiry (concerning creeds) therefore would be, whether a body of Christians have a right to judge of the meaning of the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel, and to act accordingly? That an individual has a right so to judge, and to form his connections with those whose views are most congenial with his own, will not be disputed; but if so, why have not a society the same right? If Christ has given both doctrines and precepts, some of which are more immediately addressed to Christians in their social capacity, they must not only possess such a right, but are under obligation to use it. *If the righteous nations, which keep the truth, be the only proper characters for entering into gospel fellowship, those who have the charge of their admission are*

obliged to form a judgment on what is truth and what is righteousness ; without which they must be wholly unqualified for their office."

If this argument is correct—and we ask any one who can to dispute it—then, there ought to be, and there must be, some acknowledged basis of doctrine as well as practice, some *platform*, upon which all the churches composing the Baptist Union, and all the members, representative and personal, can find a common ground of agreement; and without some such basis or platform, the Union is no union, or a union only in name.

It is a common objection against all subscriptions and articles of faith generally, that they limit freedom of inquiry, and restrain the liberty of those who set their hand to or otherwise consent to them.

But this is in no wise the case; or, at least, it need not be; and the same argument would apply to the Bible itself. Different persons vary as to their opportunities for diligent research and their capacities for acquiring religious knowledge, and there will always be degrees of knowledge in every Christian community. A plain and easy compendium of doctrine, drawn from Scripture, and having the common consent of Christian people, has been found invaluable for novices in the Christian faith, and immeasurably beneficial in the instruction of the young in the truths of the gospel. The almost general disuse of Catechisms in Sunday Schools has resulted in the rising up of a race of young people having extremely vague notions as to Christian truth. The awakened mind is always an inquiring mind, and in the first stages of Christian enlightenment there is always a desire for teaching, and a feeling which the awakened eunuch fitly expressed in his answer to Philip's inquiry, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" "How can I, except some man should guide me?" A brief compendium of doctrine, as far as possible in the words of Scripture, would be helpful to many young and unlettered believers, who have little time for systematic study, and, perhaps, less capability.

The writer, in his school days, made the acquaintance of three Catechisms—the Church Catechism, the Baptist Catechism, and the Assembly's Shorter Catechism. The first he has never forgotten, though its special teachings were never really believed; the other two are a good deal alike, excepting, of course, on Baptism. These, and especially the last, have been very helpful to him. The study of them by some of our ministers might help them to a better understanding of Divine truth, and make them more acceptable preachers. This personal reference is introduced in order that the writer may testify that though, many years ago, he thought out for himself, with very little aid from books, and none from other men, that system of belief and teaching to which he holds more tenaciously than ever, he never found his Catechism knowledge hamper him in the least degree. A "Thus saith the Lord" was the weight he put into the scale, and whatever balanced the scale he retained, and whatever did not, being "found wanting," was rejected. He has read and heard and thought a great deal since, but his faith has never been shaken by any of the ologies which have been introduced to masquerade their little day on the theatre of Christendom, and then to retire to the limbo whence they came.

Before we advance to our next point, it may be well to quote again

from the pages of Mr. Fuller:—"Every one feels the importance of articles, or laws, in civil society; and yet these are nothing less than expositions, or particular applications of the great principle of universal equity. General or universal equity is that to civil laws which the Bible is to articles of faith; it is the source from which they are all professedly derived, and the standard to which they ought all to be submitted. The one are as liable to swerve from general equity as the other from the Word of God; and where this is proved to be the case in either instance, such errors require to be corrected. But as no person of common sense would on this account inveigh against laws being made, and insist that we ought only to covenant in general to walk according to equity, without agreeing in any leading principles, or determining wherein that equity consists; neither ought we to inveigh against articles of faith and practice in religious matters, provided that they comport with the mind of God in His Word. If articles of faith be opposed to the authority of Scripture, or substituted in the place of such authority, they become objectionable and injurious; *but if they simply express the united judgment of those who voluntarily subscribe them, they are incapable of any such kind of imputation.*"

Credes have been abused for purposes of tyranny, and have often proved ineffectual to repel or expunge error and its abettors; but is a creed therefore useless as a fence and barrier? Laws are intended to safeguard the honest and upright and law-abiding; but do the wisest and most wholesome and most carefully drawn laws entirely prevent dishonesty? Do they hinder the scheming and crafty and those on evil bent from pursuing their nefarious practices? They, no doubt, exercise an effectual check on a great many, though the bold and daring often outrage all law as well as conscience, and make gaps in the strongest fences. Shall we do away with all laws, then, because they are not wholly effectual to prevent fraud and robbery? We might just as well argue that laws are useless because some people break them, as conclude that credes are useless because they are not an effectual fence against the bold and daring innovator, or the crafty and Jesuitical heresy-monger. Men who make little of the landmarks of inspiration, and go far to ignore the judicial claims of God as the Judge and Ruler of men, will not be effectually restrained in their belief—or rather their want of belief—by any creed, however simple, well-drawn, and soundly scriptural. They are a creed to themselves: their "inner consciousness," as they say, or, in other words, the evanescent vagaries of their own heart and brain, are their law and rule. Against such, fencing is useless, and barriers are vain.

But if a simple, evangelical creed be no fence and effective barrier against such, any more than bolts and bars are against an accomplished burglar, it may serve as a test to discover and prove who are true and who are recreant to "the faith once delivered to the saints," so that "the contrary part may be made manifest."

"Ah, but you should have charity; charity sir, charity; charity as well as truth!" Even so. Charity by all means. Charity always, but not at the expense of truth; that is not charity, but unfaithfulness; it may even be treachery. We have all read of one who was renowned for charity; he was a man of deep and ardent affections; he was "the

disciple that Jesus loved." But neither bold and daring Peter, nor Paul who is renowned for his keen logic, his deep penetration of mysteries, and his unsparing denunciation of evil and error, is equal to "John the beloved" in his unflinching testimony against those who are the abettors of heresy, especially heresy relating to the Person, Offices, and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He calls things by their proper names; he calls, as we say, "a spade a spade." A man who gainsays the truth is to him "a liar," and a liar of the worst kind. We may all read how, in the epistle to "The Angel of the Church of Ephesus" dictated by the "True Witness," the Risen Saviour, "He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks," he commends that Church because she had tested the doctrines of certain false teachers,—“Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.” Without even hinting at any special system of interpreting these Apocalyptic Epistles, we all believe that they were written for our learning, and are specially adapted to guide us in difficult crises, like that through which the Baptist Denomination is now passing.

In Holy Scripture, though everything necessary to salvation and true Christian obedience is very plainly revealed, the doctrines and duties are not arranged systematically. It has been left to men gifted by God with special qualifications of knowledge, experience, and godliness, to arrange the doctrines and duties in such simple phrase and harmonious relations that they may be conveniently used as summaries of faith and practice and tests of orthodoxy; an appeal, in all cases, as a matter of course, always being open to the Holy Scriptures themselves. Now it is such a *test* that is wanted now, according to which churches and ministers may be received into and retained within, or, in case of proved heterodoxy, expelled from the Baptist Union. Some simple, well-defined formula of belief, with no vague generalities, and no utterances of doubtful or double-meaning, there must be, if the Union is to regain its former place in the confidence of Christendom. For it must be remembered that the Union and the Denomination are not precisely identical. The Denomination existed, laid the basis of its large and extensive growth, and founded the institutions which are its greatest glory, and which God has so marvellously blessed, many years before the Baptist Union as such was even an idea; and whatever the Union as a Union may do, the Denomination will continue, continue its testimony, continue its work, and by God's blessing, go on from grace to grace, and from glory to glory. Whether or not the Union, at its next assembly, adopt a sound evangelical *basis*, which shall serve as a *platform* for brotherly love and peace and unity, as a *barrier* against error and erroneous teaching, and a *test* of evangelical orthodoxy, there will be those, and a very large number too, who, in the Union or out of it, will do what our fathers did before there was any Baptist Union, evangelize the masses, found churches, diffuse education and religious literature, establish missions, translate the Scriptures, train the young, and testify for Christ as the Prophet, Priest and King, the sole Head of His Church, and the Saviour of all that believe.

Give us then a true, simple, and well-defined basis of evangelical doctrine, and it will serve all the purposes afore-named, and serve also

as a *rallying point*, around which the sympathies, the confidence, the affection, the well-tried energies of the Denomination shall gather, and then, united in the "One faith," led by the "One Lord," and still bearing our testimony against Rome and all that tends to it, in our "One baptism," we shall still go on "Conquering and to conquer."

Honoured fathers, beloved brethren! Let us hear and heed and act upon the inspired admonition and testimony of the disciple of love, the Apostle who above all others preached and exercised charity:— "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed: for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 8-11).

Let us act, I say, in obedience to this salutary and infallible rule, casting aside all personalities—all personal considerations of every kind—and peace may be restored; "peace with honour"—peace with truth and righteousness. Take the other course, sacrifice truth, or at least compromise truth, in the interest of a creedless unity, and who can tell what mischief will follow?

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

