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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1887.

CHRISTIAN people the world over were considerably astonished the other day to learn that Spurgeon had withdrawn from the Baptist Union. In announcing his decision, he says:

To pursue union at the expense of the truth is treason to Jesus. To tamper with His doctrine is to become traitors to Him. We have before us the wretched spectacle of professedly orthodox Christians publicly avowing union with those who deny the faith, calling the fall of man a fable and denying the personality of the Holy Ghost. Replying to the question why he does not start a new denomination, he says that it is a question for which he has no liking; that there are enough denominations already, and that if another were formed the thieves and robbers who have entered the other gardens walled around would enter it also, so nothing would be gained.

All of which is no doubt true, but would it not have been better for Spurgeon to have remained within his church and to have put the heretics out? Any one can easily understand how a man who loves preaching as Spurgeon does, and who has so many kinds of useful work on his hands, would shrink from the loss of time and from the worry and strife of a long heresy trial. Still disagreeable duties have to be discharged, and we think a majority of good men would say that Spurgeon should have stood his ground and made the heterodox men go. Dr. Patton found heresy in the Chicago Presbytery, but instead of going out himself, he made things so hot that Swing had to go. Perhaps Spurgeon is afraid that there are not enough of orthodox men in the English Baptist Union to put the heterodox men out.

SPECIAL religious services in a Methodist Church in a Western town, conducted by a lady evangelist, were brought to a sudden close last week under rather peculiar circumstances. The audience room of the church had been newly painted, and the trustees thought the paint was not quite dry. The friends of the lady thought differently, and insisted on moving the meeting from the basement to the body of the church. A local paper states the difficulty, in this way:

The lady's friends say that the best portion of the Church is none too good to save souls, that the angels would give the best rooms in paradise if they could bring but one erring sinner into the fold of Christ. Those who support the action of the trustees do not deny all that, but say on the other hand that an earnest striver after the water of life could find it as pure and sweet in the plainest as well as the "best" room, and that while undoubted damage would be done to the new furnishings of the church in their present inchoate state, the cause of Christ could be no better served there than in the basement.

And a sensible man would perhaps say that if either party had much of the spirit of Christ this unseemly strife would never have arisen. And a sceptic would be sure to point to the quarrel as fresh evidence that religion is a fraud. And men who don't believe in special services will most assuredly use this quarrel as evidence that special services are fraught with danger, and almost certain to produce strife. And worse than all, old Satan will have a triumph in the very Church of God. There is no triumph that helps the devil so much as a triumph *within* the Church. A triumph in a bar-room of a hotel is not worth half as much to the devil as a triumph within the Church.

THE problem that Spurgeon has just solved by cutting himself loose from the Baptist Union is one that in principle, though on a smaller scale, often presents itself to many a useful minister. In his congregation a clique is formed to worry him into a resignation. A large majority of the people are in his favour, but they are slow in making their influence felt. The clique is organized, and the people are not. The clique are aggressive, but the people are passive. The clique like fighting; the people want peace. The clique use any kind of means, however vile, to accomplish their purpose, the people, if they move at all, will not do anything unclean. The alternative presented to the pastor is: Stay, and fight that clique, or go elsewhere and preach the Gospel in peace. Usually he goes. Perhaps he hates strife, while his opponents like it. He knows that if the case comes before his Presbytery it will soon be so encumbered with technicalities and side issues that the main issue will be lost sight of. He may know, too, that some members of Presbytery are in sympathy with the clique, and will do all in their power against him. He values the peace of his family, and knows that so long as the clique continue to fight him his family will be kept in a state of torture. Usually he solves the difficulty by going. And still the question will always come up, Is that the right thing to do? Should the wrong be allowed to triumph over the right in the Church of God? People make a great fuss when there is a failure of justice in a civil court, or when the wrong triumphs over the right in Parliament. Some of the very same people will tell you that minority rule and a triumph of the wrong over the right are for the good of the Church!

#### SPURGEON'S SECESSION.

As was hinted in several quarters a few weeks ago, Mr. Spurgeon has at last taken the grave step of severing his connection with the English Baptist Union. Such a proceeding on the part of the great Baptist preacher is in a measure surprising, and it is regarded by very many with profound regret. He is not only endowed with great gifts, and possessed of eminent piety, but he is no less eminent by reason of his strong common sense; hence it is all the more surprising that he virtually passes sentence of excommunication on all his brethren, orthodox and heterodox alike. It is from no sentimental motive that he assumes a position of ecclesiastical isolation. There is nothing of the modern Pharisee about the pastor of the Tabernacle. His strong healthy moral nature would prevent him from aberrations of that kind. It is not from overweening vanity that he is prompted to place himself in conspicuous solitude. Considering the very prominent position he has maintained for over thirty years, he is singularly free from vanity and affectation of all kinds. A man of his make and surroundings could not possibly be devoid of all self-consciousness, but there has never been an obtrusion of its presence. Neither is Mr. Spurgeon afflicted with the craze that he is born and sent into the world to dominate the minds of men. No public man has been more energetic in remonstrance against the domineering assumption of personal leadership, either in Church or State.

Poor Edward Irving lost his balance amid the excitement of fashionable London. At one time he was the idol of the great who crowded his church, and then left him to neglect and the bitterness of disappointment. Edward Irving and Charles H. Spurgeon are differently constituted men, and their histories are different. No one expects that the latter will wander off into absurdities, and claim the gift of tongues. He finds the plain, vigorous Saxon he knows so well how to employ sufficient to express the thoughts he desires to convey to the people. The maintenance of his position is almost unprecedented. He has given no reason why he should be neglected, but popular appreciation is sometimes lacking in discernment, and is proverbially fickle. In Spurgeon's case, however, it has been phenomenal constant. From the first his place of worship was crowded, necessitating in a short time the erection of one of the largest auditoriums for religious services in London. There has been no falling away in the attendance, or in the appreciation of the great preacher. Neither has there been any diminution of his pulpit power. English-speaking visitors to the British metropolis, no matter whence or how far they have come, inquire their way

to the Surrey Tabernacle, and listen with interest, delight and profit to Spurgeon's proclamations of Gospel truth. His printed sermons have found numerous readers in all quarters of the world. It is not disappointed ambition that has induced Mr. Spurgeon to snap the ties that bind him to his brethren.

It is unquestionable that there have been wide departures from evangelical doctrine, both in the English Congregational and Baptist Churches; but it is possible that Mr. Spurgeon may be inclined to take a too pessimistic view of the outlook. After all, have Churches resting on the Congregational theory of government a fixed and definite standard of doctrines by which delinquents can be tried? By what process can an unsound pastor be brought to book? An association has only a very imperfect and shadowy jurisdiction over an erring theologian, whether broad or narrow. If his congregation is in sympathy with his views, whatever they may be, there the matter ends, he is free to go or stay as a majority of the congregation may determine. Is it because Congregationalism virtually is powerless to deal with heretical teaching that Mr. Spurgeon has felt constrained to withdraw from the Baptist Association? He has not yet said so, and the conclusion that such is the case is scarcely warranted.

In both the English Congregational and Baptist Churches there are men of rare endowments adorning the Nonconformist ministry, who are markedly evangelical in their preaching, and there are many of lesser note in both communions against whom there is no room for suspicion that they are departing from the faith once delivered to the saints. Why act as if they were heathen men and publicans? Why not remain in the association, and give the orthodox brethren the support and sympathy that union with them would enhance. In a recent cable despatch it is stated that Mr. Spurgeon has no intention of establishing a new branch of the evangelical Church, but he has expressed his desire for a larger union of the Christian Church than has yet been realized. It does not seem the most direct way to begin such a movement by cutting loose entirely from all organization, except on the supposition that Church union is to be attained by pulling all existing Churches to pieces, and constructing a better and more glorious union out of the material thus thrown loose.

The effect of Mr. Spurgeon's withdrawal from the Baptist Union is not likely to lead to very great results. Sympathizers with the New Theology will not be much affected by it. They will continue to spin and expound the theories that please them and their adherents, and matters will remain much as they are. Mr. Spurgeon will neither add to nor diminish his orthodox stature by assuming a solitary position in the dissidence of dissent. He will be listened to with the same cordiality as ever, and will be respected for his conscientiousness, but his retirement from the Baptist Association will neither work an ecclesiastical revolution, nor a doctrinal reformation.

#### SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

FOR several weeks the greatest capital in the world has been more or less disquieted on account of demonstrations by a section of unemployed workmen and chronic idlers. Beyond putting quiet citizens into a state of trepidation and alarm, no serious consequences have as yet followed the demonstrations. Unlike similar risings two years ago, resulting in the sacking of shops, there has been nothing beyond street parades and the delivery of pungent oratory by stump speakers. The police have only interferred occasionally to break up processions and to protect property. There has been studied forbearance on the part of the authorities. They have wisely abstained from action that would only have caused exasperation and led to serious consequences. One of the most notable and most unwarrantable of the demonstrations was the unseemly intrusion into the sacred precincts of Westminster Abbey during divine service, and the behaviour of the crowd in the sanctuary. The officiating clergyman did not act unworthily in the unusual position in which he was placed. He made an honest though unsuccessful endeavour to propitiate the unlooked-for addition to his audience, presenting a marked contrast to the ordinary class of worshippers who assemble in the stately building. His conciliatory remarks were met by rude and indignant retorts, and there is little evidence that the