

It requires but little reflection to discover that the fiercest disputes about religion are about what the bible does *not* say, rather than what it *does* say—about words and phrases coined in the mint of speculative theology.

Among christians there is now, as there was at the beginning, a very great diversity in the knowledge of the christian institution. There are babes, children, young men, and fathers in Christ now, as well as in the days of the Apostle John. This, from the natural gifts of God, from the diversities of age, education, and circumstances, is unavoidable. And would it not be just as rational and as scriptural, to excommunicate one another because our knowledge is greater or less than any fixed measure, as for differences of opinion or matters of speculation?

If God has bestowed better gifts or better opportunities on one man than on another, by which he has attained more knowledge, instead of thanking God for his kindness to the community, they beg God to take him away; and if he will not be so unkind, they will at length put him from them under the charge of heresy. In most instances the greatest error of which a brother can be guilty, is to study his bible more than his companions—or, at least, to surpass them in his knowledge of the mystery of Christ.

It is a virtue to forget scholastic jargon, and even the names of the dogmas which have convulsed christendom. It is a concession due to the crisis in which we live, for the sake of peace, to adopt the vocabulary of heaven, and to return the borrowed phraseology of the schools to its rightful owners—to speculate no more upon the opinions of Saint Austin or Saint Origen—but to speak of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit—of the gospel, of faith, of repentance,—of baptism, of election,—of the death, of christ, of his mediation, of his blood,—of the reconciliation, of the Lord's supper, of the atonement, and of the church of God, in all the phrases found in the Record, without any partiality—to learn to love one another as much when we differ as when we agree, and to distinguish between the testimony of God and man's reasonings and philosophy about it.

There is nothing more essential to the union of the disciples of christ than *purity* of speech. So long as the earth was of one speech, the human family was united. Had they been then of a pure speech as well as of one speech, they would not have been separated. God, in his just indignation, dispersed them; but before he scattered them *he divided their language*. One