

Introduction

The substance of this tiny work first saw the light of day as an article which I published with, I admit, the less-than zippy title of ‘Christendom in the Raw: “Christian” Last Rites for Unbelievers. Disturbing Thoughts Prompted by the Recent Church Farewell to Stephen Hawking’. Despite its uninviting title, I really did want to reach as wide an audience as possible with what I had to say. So, even as I was publishing the article, I decided to set the material in booklet form. Hence this present work – the substance of the article slightly edited for this purpose.

Although I am not in the same league as C.H.Spurgeon – I am hardly on the same planet! – I have similar feelings to his when he preached and then published his sermon ‘Baptismal Regeneration’, preached on 5th June 1864, and for very similar reasons. Now while I do not think a sermon was the proper vehicle for his material, nevertheless I fully support Spurgeon’s purpose and admire his courage in saying what he said, and saying it so clearly. The relevant point is that Spurgeon warned his publishers that he expected his proposed publication to arouse such opposition that it would ruin the circulation of his printed sermons. In the event, he was proved wrong. Gloriously wrong! Nonetheless, this is what he felt would happen. And more. He foresaw wrath being heaped upon him. In this, he was right. He clearly saw it coming. Even as he was opening his sermon, he laid out his ‘defence’ or ‘apology’,¹ declaring:

Wherever the apostles went they met with obstacles to the preaching of the gospel, and the more open and effectual was the door of utterance the more numerous were the adversaries. These brave men... wielded the sword of the Spirit [so] as to put to flight all their foes; and this they did, not by craft and guile, but by making a direct cut at the error which impeded them. Never did they dream for a moment of

¹ That is, a justification.

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adapting the gospel to the unhallowed tastes or prejudices of the people, but at once directly and boldly they brought down with both their hands the mighty sword of the Spirit upon the crown of the opposing error. This morning, in the name of the Lord of Hosts, my Helper and Defence, I shall attempt to do the same; and if I should provoke some hostility – if I should through speaking what I believe to be the truth lose the friendship of some and stir up the enmity of more, I cannot help it. The burden of the Lord is upon me, and I must deliver my soul. I have been loath enough to undertake the work, but I am forced to it by an awful and overwhelming sense of solemn duty. As I am soon to appear before my Master's bar, I will this day, if ever in my life, bear my testimony for truth, and run all risks. I am content to be cast out as evil if it must be so, but I cannot, I dare not, hold my peace. The Lord knows I have nothing in my heart but the purest love to the souls of those whom I feel imperatively called to rebuke sternly in the Lord's name. Among my hearers and readers, a considerable number will censure if not condemn me, but I cannot help it. If I forfeit your love for truth's sake I am grieved for you, but I cannot, I dare not, do otherwise. It is as much as my soul is worth to hold my peace any longer, and whether you approve or not I must speak out. Did I ever court your approbation? It is sweet to everyone to be applauded; but if for the sake of the comforts of respectability and the smiles of men any Christian minister shall keep back a part of his testimony, his Master at the last shall require it at his hands. This day, standing in the immediate presence of God, I shall speak honestly what I feel, as the Holy Spirit shall enable me; and I shall leave the matter with you to judge concerning it, as you will answer for that judgment at the last great day.²

As I say, although Spurgeon was right in that his sermon and its subsequent publication did provoke a massive furore, including not a little hostility, he was mistaken about the circulation figures.

Whether my booklet will get a similar response – both ways – only time will tell. My real fear, however, is that hardly anybody will notice, and those who do will scarcely

² C.H.Spurgeon sermon 573.

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turn a hair. Even so, whatever the reaction, I must publish. If the heavens should fall, then fall they must. If they remain as brass, as brass they must remain. If scarcely a ripple disturbs the placid surface of the water, so be it. At least I shall have done what I consider to be my duty before God.

I hope, however, that the reaction will be better than my fears. I hope, at the very least, that my work will cause many to stop and think. For the fact is, all of us will one day have to face God; in this specific case, I will have to answer for what I have written, and you will have to answer for what you have done with what you read.

Beyond that, what a joy it would be if more believers came to see the grimness of Christendom, the horrendous and eternal damage which that spiritual monstrosity is inflicting on the souls of men and women, and heed the biblical injunctions about separation (2 Cor. 6:14 – 7:1, for instance).

Whatever men may say, I deny that I am being cruel in what I publish here. But there is a cruelty in this business – the cruelty which Christendom and its advocates inflict on men. I know those who are willing to conduct funerals according to the principles of Christendom think they are being kind, yet the truth is they are being anything but. I use ‘deceit’ in my title. I could have used ‘pretence’: ‘Pretence in Death’. Not to mince words, I am talking about lies. Countless lies are constantly repeated at Christendom’s funerals. And that is the real cruelty; not mine, for pointing out the emperor’s lack of clothes. My burden is that believers should not taint themselves with the sordid rigmarole. I publish this small work in hope that it might do some good in this respect.

Further, what an encouragement it would be to hear that some unbelievers have been converted through this little work!

But whatever the outcome, one wish above all stands head and shoulders above the rest. Come what may, may God be glorified.