

# The Christian's Stewardship

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Two facts are observable, in the walks of life, which strikingly correspond to declarations in the Bible, concerning two descriptions of character. The first is, that those, whether rich or poor, who have a conscientious respect to the temporal and spiritual necessities of their fellowmen, and to the will of their Creator in the use and disposal of their possessions, have the purest and most lively enjoyment of the blessings of this life; and drink most abundantly of the pure stream of consolation which flows from the throne of God. The scripture that corresponds with this fact is, "The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." (Prov. 11:25)

He, on the contrary, whether unregenerate or Christian, who, turning his attention from the Divine will, determines the manner of using and disposing of his property by his own desires and partialities, and consigns to the control of his pride and ambition that portion which humility and confidence in God would relinquish to the relief of the needy; knows least of the enjoyments which flow from earth or heaven. And this fact corresponds with the declaration, "There is that withholdeth more than is meet; but it tendeth to poverty." (Prov. 11:24)

The first character is that most frequently witnessed, when the powers of the soul are first rectified by the renewing of the Holy Spirit, when the heart is first elevated to "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Rom. 12:2) The latter is an instance of degeneracy, produced by the maxims of a world which, amid

all the demonstrations of an overruling providence that surround us, knows not God. The former receives the blessings of Heaven as a gift; and enjoys them with all the zest which a lively gratitude can impart while the latter receives them as a matter of course, and a matter of right, and discovers not, or heeds not, the kind hand which bestows them. How greatly is it to be deplored that the last description of character is so prevalent as it is, among those who have been redeemed, not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ! For, what might not the energies of the Christian host effect, with the promised blessing of God, were but those energies all aroused and properly directed!

This degeneracy is a consequence of inattention to the origin of our mercies, and forgetfulness of our absolute dependence on God, even for the most ordinary and constant streams of prosperity with which our lives are refreshed.

There is a fondness in the heart for whatsoever presents itself in the shape of an antidote to the ills of life, and as a means of promoting our happiness; and consequently a proneness to suffer the attention to be engrossed with the gift, while the Giver, because unseen, is forgotten. Hence it comes to pass, that we look on what we possess as our own, to be held by us, our heirs, and assigns, forever; in fee simple of man, and quit claim of God. And whenever the idea of obligation is brought before the mind, we are apt to ask as if neither man nor God had a right to negative the question: "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" (Matt. 20:15) To save or destroy; to give or withhold?

From this source has arisen a ruinous mistake in the calculations of many, concerning the extent of our accountability. While it is admitted that we must give an account of the deeds done in the body, according to their moral character; it is forgotten that this accountability is, in any manner, regulated by the circumstances of temporal blessings in which the providence of God has placed us; that we are stewards of his goods, and have to give an account of our stewardship. Hence, while the rightful claim of Heaven to that obedience, the capacity of rendering which lies equally in the breasts of all, is admitted; the relinquishment of any portion of property for the promotion of the cause of truth, or for the relief of distress, is considered as a free gift, which entitles the giver not only to the gratitude of the object aided, but to a score of credit in the book of his account with God.

Now this is an error which loudly demands correction, inasmuch as, in some, it is to be feared that it is the ground of a false confidence of their acceptance with God, by the preponderance of their charities against their transgressions. While in multitudes of those who have fled for refuge to a better hope, it subjects the heart to the pride of life, and consequently often shuts the hand, while the voice of duty, which bids bestow, is unheard. The most effectual method to correct these evils is, to consider attentively and habitually,

- The character we sustain;
- The source of our prosperity;
- The nature of our tenure; and,
- The responsibilities with which it is connected.

In contemplating our character, we should remember that we are but men. The wealthiest, the proudest, the mightiest of us, is but a man. A creature who, but yesterday, embarked on the sea of life with nothing but ignorance and helplessness; a common adventurer, among the thousands of his kind, amid the perils and uncertainties of the winds and the waves; and who, even in the day of his greatest strength and loftiest pride, can neither persuade nor terrify the minister of disease, nor resist the demands of death, nor beguile the worm of his prey. In all his glory, he is but dust and to the dust he must return.

Now if we brought nothing into the world, it behooves us to consider how we came into possession of that which he have. Under the influence of the error of which we have spoken, the FARMER will tell us that he has arisen to a comfortable independence by his own industry,— "by the sweat of his brow" and, that the hard earned products of his labour he knows how to value, and he knows how to keep. But we would ask, of what avail is all his labour? Does it dissolve the snows of winter, and break the chains in which the earth is held? Does it move forward the revolutions of the seasons from winter to seed-time, and from seed-time to harvest? Does it raise the vapours from the earth and ocean, and mould them into clouds? Does it bring down the rain, "the former and the latter rain?" Does it cause the sun to warm the bosom of the ground into which he casts his seed? Then why does he ever labour for nought, or spend his strength in vain?

We suppose it was while he was asleep that the blasting and mildew destroyed his hopes: and because he was ignorant of the mischief, that the fly took the blossom, and the worm, the root. Oh, no! He who gave light and joy to the land of Goshen, and darkness and pestilence and death to Egypt; HE it is who rolls on the seasons: who commands the wintry blast from his northern stores, or gives the glowing breath of summer skies.

At his command the morning ray  
Smiles on the earth and leads the day;  
He guides the sun's declining wheels  
Over the tops of western hills.

Seasons and times obey His voice:—  
The evening and the morn rejoice  
To see the earth made soft with show'rs,  
Laden with fruit, and dressed in flow'rs.

The MERCHANT, whose warehouses are filled with goods, is apt to feel no less freedom from obligation than the yeoman; and when interrogated, whence he received them, will be likely to tell us that he purchased them; that he imported them. But who, we would ask, prospered your industry with the means? Who gave to your canvass the favoring wind which wafted them to you, and, why did not He who blessed you with gentle gales, meet you with impoverishing whirlwinds and devouring tempests?

The prosperity of the MECHANIC is the result of the industrious exercise of his muscular powers and of his skill. But we would ask him whence came these powers, and whence this skill? That they are not among the inseparable endowments of humanity you may learn by a visit to the abode of the idiot; the cell of the lunatic; and the couch, where the victims of agues, consumptions, and fevers lie agonizing and helpless.

The PHYSICIAN advances in reputation, and in the confidence of the community, and consequently in wealth, by the happy exercise of his professional skill. But whence hath this man this wisdom? Omitting to say anything of his accomplishments in the theory of physic, which, amid the ten thousand diversified forms and shades of character that disease assumes, is, of itself, of so little avail; how came he into the possession of that quick and nice discernment, by which he so successfully detects the lurking foe in the machinery of the human frame; ascertains his direction and his power; and by which he is enabled to apply the appropriate and timely remedy, to stay the work of destruction, and to repair the injury sustained?

The COUNSELLOR and the STATESMAN are crowned with honour; and with a meet reward for their successful support of the rights and the interests with which they have been entrusted. But, from whom did they receive that retentiveness of memory which secures the fund of knowledge they have laboured for years to obtain? Who gave them that vigorous comprehension; that rapidity of conception; that liveliness of feeling; that promptitude; that grace; that force of communication; which at once enlighten the understanding, control the judgment, and captivate the heart? —All, all is the boon of Heaven — the Farmer, the Merchant, the Mechanic, the Physician, the Counsellor, the Statesman, all are endowed with whatsoever of prosperity, of favour they possess, by the "Father of lights from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift."

It being then conceded that for whatever of worldly blessings we possess, we are indebted to the bounty of God.

But it is certain that riches do take to themselves wings and fly away; that the conflagration sometimes wraps them in ruin, and consigns their owners to wretchedness and sorrow. It is certain that the tempests and the floods, sometimes do sweep our floating treasures to "the dark unfathomed caves of ocean."

It is certain that the scorching sun consumes the husbandman's hope; and that after all his labours of sowing and planting, and his watchful care—after he has done his utmost, the seed is sometimes "rotten under their clods, the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down; for the corn is withered. How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. O LORD, to thee will I cry: for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field. The beasts of the field cry also unto thee: for the rivers of waters are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness." (Joel 1:17-20)

It is certain that the insect tribes of the air, in alliance with the creeping inhabitants of the ground, which the God of judgment calls his great army, do march forth in dark and fearful array; and "that which the palmerworm hath left, hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left, hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left, hath the caterpillar eaten." (Joel 1:4)

Yet the God of judgment—the God of the winds and of the waves, the fire and the tempest,—the leader of this desolating and irresistible army, is a "God of truth, without iniquity; just and right is he." (Deut. 32:4) And we have as little right to question his doings, as power to stay his hand: and, in the midst of all, we are bound to cherish the sentiment and the temper of a sufferer of ancient time: "the LORD gave and the LORD hath taken away, blessed be the name of the LORD." (Job 1:21)

Brethren, examine the character, and the sufferings, of the man whose words we have just quoted; and you will learn that we are tenants at will. Now, that we are amenable to God for the use we make of his bounties is a reasonable and necessary consequence of the tenure by which we hold them. The truth is, they are, strictly speaking, His; and are committed to our trust, to be used and disposed of by us, in accordance with his revealed will.

That they are not bestowed to be employed as our own predilections and our often erroneous judgments of our interests shall prompt, is evident.

The very idea of prosperity is connected with the promotion of happiness, and as all real prosperity comes from God, the bestowment of wealth, which preserves from many of the ills incident to life, and which ministers to our innocent enjoyments, is a clear indication of his benevolence, and of his design in giving them for our use.

No one can doubt that the Almighty clothes the earth with verdure, and covers the fields with waving plenty, for the promotion of the happiness of his creatures.

But the good which the husbandman possesses is only a single variety of that wealth, all the varieties of which spring from the same source, and are all imparted for the same end.

He who is prospered with more than is requisite for the attainment of his own happiness, has received the surplus for the same general end for which the rest was given; he is therefore entrusted with the means of happiness to others. Consequently, he is not at liberty to cast it into the fire, to bury it in the earth, or to merge it in the flood; nor, least of all is he at liberty to make it subservient to the violation of the laws of God the giver, in licentious prodigality.

Perhaps there is no disposition more prevalent among those who are under the influence of moral principles at all, than that which prompts them to accumulate wealth for their posterity. Now, if this disposition, to the extent to which it is generally indulged, received the Divine approbation, the indulgence of it would tend to the *promotion of happiness*—the happiness of the parents, as following out the direction of God's pleasure and the happiness of the children, as coming into the possession of an unperverted trust.

But, that you may judge whether this object is at by the spirit of accumulation which is abroad in society, we would have you take a tour of minute and careful observation through the different walks of life. Go, read the histories of families from the father to the son, and the history of the son from infancy to manhood. Trace the effects which meet your daily notice, up to their legitimate, but frequently, not obvious causes. Consider, on the one hand, the condition and the real enjoyments of those who, possessing a competency, exchange the redundancy of their income, for the pleasure of doing good - either in the way of enlightening the ignorant, or in reclaiming the vicious, or in feeding the hungry, or in clothing the naked and succouring the distressed.

Observe their early and well-formed habits of activity which are so conducive to health—the basis of all sublunary enjoyment. Witness the flow of their spirits; and their contentment, which remains undisturbed amid all the enticements of the influence and honors of fortune. Mark well the sound constitutions and the industrious habits of their rising posterity; who expect, from their parents, no more than a frugal beginning in life, depending for their subsequent prosperity, on the faithful practice of those lessons of industry and virtue, with which their tender minds were imbued by parental piety.

Consider, we say, and compare this course of procedure and its attendant blessings, with that in which the cumbrous accumulation of wealth, and the aggrandizement of family by the privileges of fortune, are the objects of supreme regard. Where the avarice of gain steels the heart against the voice of imploring woe, and locks up from its own enjoyment, the abundance already possessed. Where luxury pours its poisons into the cup of infancy, and is the companion of the nursery and the physician of childhood. Where youth, unacquainted with the checks of that happy medium which is independence to virtue, but poverty to vice, is accustomed to every gratification which wealth abused can bring.

And, Oh, would to God ten thousand melancholy examples did not compel us to proceed—where deliverance from all concern about a livelihood, lifts the youthful mind above all feeling of dependence on man or God, raises the floodgate of every passion, and turns the whole mind and soul adrift in a sea of licentious pleasure, ending in poverty and pain, a constitution shattered and broken, and a soul in despair.

Compare the two descriptions, and we think it will be no difficult matter for a common discernment to determine in favour of which system of procedure the balance of substantial enjoyment turns. On that side rests the approbation of God, for it is that which accomplishes the end for which his bounties are conferred. And on the other falls his frown, for his goods have been perverted to forbidden purposes.

In the very miseries, therefore, consequent upon such a perversion, or, if you will, in the very constitution of nature, by which the blessings of Jehovah are, in their abuse, transformed into curses, we recognise both his right and his intention to call us to account for the manner in which we have used them.

It being then established, that we have received from him every good we possess, that so far from his relinquishing his right in the bounty, he has made us accountable for the use and disposal of the whole, and that the bestowment confers not only obligations of gratitude but of service; the question becomes, to every honest steward of the Creator's bounties, a matter of deeply interesting inquiry—**How MUCH do I owe to my Lord?**

For, on whatever objects I expend that which he has entrusted to me, and whatever responsibilities these favours may impose on them; still I have to account to God for all I have received at his hand. A portion of what he has given me is undoubtedly to be "occupied" for the promotion of my own happiness, and the happiness of those whom he has entrusted to my care, but what proportion is best calculated for the attainment of this end, and what he has required to be expended **for Him**—are questions which demand my most impartial and prayerful investigation.

Yes! They are questions the importance of which is magnified by all the pleasure of doing good, and by all the peace of a conscience void of offence towards God; and by all the terrors of being weighed in the balance of his justice and found wanting. Questions, Brethren, which, thankfully remembering how great the disparity between what you receive at his hand, and what, as imperfect and sinful, you merit, you must determine by the light which the Bible throws on your responsibilities, and which the records of providence shed on the designs of your Benefactor in the dispensations of his gifts.

And having ascertained the extent of your obligations, suffer yourselves to be induced to the discharge of them. Oh, by all the considerations of gratitude, by all the motives of self-enjoyment, and by all the impulses of self-interest as well as of duty, suffer yourselves to be stimulated to a prompt discharge of those obligations, in promoting the temporal and spiritual welfare of your fellowmen.

We say, of self-enjoyment, because that undue anxiety for accumulation, which resists the demands of Charity and Religion, is destructive of the finest feelings, and the richest bliss of the soul; and if it does not deliver it to the lashes of conscience, it renders it an utter stranger to that pure and godlike pleasure which springs from doing good. And we have said, of self-interest, because the Christian who is growing rich, by withholding what the Lord demands, is absolutely growing poor, by confining the enjoyment of his wealth, to the short portion of his existence which he passes on earth while it is in his power to export his possessions to the shores of eternity.

Yes, Brethren, there is such a thing as almost literally laying up our treasures in heaven. "I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." (Luke 16:9)

I say unto you secure the friendship and gratitude of those who are poor in this world but rich in faith, by contributing from that which so many hoard and worship, to the relief of their temporal, and spiritual necessities. That when ye die, those whom you have blessed, and who have gone before you may hail you with grateful joy, and bid you welcome to the

mansions of everlasting rest. Here then, the bliss of the world above will be affected in a most interesting point by your works of charity below; and the pleasures which burn in the beneficent bosom oil earth are to be rekindled in the world to come.

But above all things else, Brethren, be incited to a diligent and faithful discharge of the duties of your stewardship, by the consideration of that greatest gift to you, which Heaven ever gave to man. Consider that "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (II Cor. 8:9) Rich in everlasting habitations; rich in spotless robes of righteousness; rich in unfading diadems of glory; rich in a right to the tree of life, and the crystal waters that flow from the throne of God.

And in anticipation of your robe and crown, your habitation and rest, in that land "where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, where thieves do not break through nor steal." (Matt. 6:20) Where the flames cannot devour, nor the hand of time deface, rise to your duty; and "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." (Eccl. 9:10)

The cause of suffering humanity entreats your aid. Remember the poor whom ye have always with you; and to whom, whensoever ye will, ye may do good. Whensoever ye will, ye may deliver the fatherless, and him that hath none to help him; whensoever ye will, ye may cause the widow's heart to sing for joy, and the blessing of him that is ready to perish to come upon yourselves.

The period has been foretold when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. That period is at hand; and most animating must the reflection be to every friend of God. But it must not be forgotten, that it is through the instrumentality of the saints, that the Redeemer is to diffuse the knowledge of his grace among the nations, and bring the world into subjection, under the reign of his love.

The age and circumstances then, in which we live, call for pre-eminent Christian activity, and a consecration of heart and life, of talents and wealth to Him, whose we are, and whom we serve.



## The Prince of Darkness Sends Out His Grand Tyrant - Sin

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Benjamin Keach

From *The Travels of Ungodliness (An Allegory)*, 1736

**T**he pedigree rife, original and antiquity of this cruel and Hell-bred enemy, Sin, having briefly been opened to you: Apollyon having now nourished and brought him up fit for his turn, work and service; and finding he had already so wonderfully succeeded in his first and main enterprise, he saw he would be a true and faithful friend to him, and a rare foot stool or stirrup for him, to mount or raise him up to his longed-for sovereignty; and finding him, by this time, grown to some considerable maturity, resolved to fend him abroad to travel into all quarters of the Earth, to manage the affairs of his infernal kingdom, greaten his power and actually subdue all enemies under his feet, in all nations, countries, and kingdoms of the world. But before the Tyrant entered upon this woeful journey, we will suppose the Devil gave him his commission and instructions how to proceed in all his achievements; to whom he addressed himself after this manner:

**Sin's Commission, Received from the Devil**

My most dear and beloved child,

The true Image of thy father, and choice darling of Hell, and the only hope of this infernal lake, whom my Lord Lucifer, Beelzebub, and other inferior Princes, as Belial, Satan &c. do adore:

Hearken to thy Father who begat thee, and gave thy being to thee. Thou art my creature. What care I, though the Powers of Heaven hate thee, I will, in despite of all thy mortal enemies, make thee great, raise thy honours, and crown thee as king and chief ruler throughout the whole universe.

And all who will not obey thee and yield subjection to thee, I will raise all manner of mischief upon, make them miserable, and tread them under thy feet, Thou seest how successful already thou hast been, and what a mighty conqueror thou art become in thy very nonage. Thou hast, at one blow, defeated all the hopes of this newborn mortal, and crushed him to pieces in the very bud. He that was the other day the darling, of Heaven, who swam in pleasures, and was mounted so high in sovereignty, glory and inconceivable grandeur shining as a Star of the first magnitude; possessing perfect union and communion with his creator, is now by thee, by the power of thy hand, and success of thy arms, made miserable, and become so hateful to him whose delight he was that he hath cast him off and turned him out of Paradise.

Ah, how I laugh to see it! How is he become the reproach and scorn of all the princes and mighty host of this unconquered lake! What care I, though there is much bitter enmity put between me and the woman's seed? Do I fear what hurt anyone that shall proceed from her can do to me? If thou in thy nonage hast done such mighty things, and overcome this excellent creature, when all his internal powers were utterly averse to us and no ways inclined to favour our interest, what any of her offspring do to our hurt, much less break my head or destroy thy sovereignty, since now we have got so strong a party to our side in their own house? Thou hast been so happy in this late mighty victory that the powers of that noble soul possessed by this creature are at once brought over to us.

I have a purpose to send thee to travel to and fro in the Earth until thou hast gone through the whole universe. And to my joy, I find all people are prepared by thee and made willing participants for all their faculties are inclined to entertain thee, so that I have no cause to doubt of an happy progress. I am sure thou wilt find a ready welcome in all places, not only amongst the poor and baser sort, but amongst the mighty and noble ones of the Earth.

An now therefore know that I am thy Prince and only Sovereign, and I do here give thee a commission, a passport read drawn and signed for thee by all the high and might lords of these dark and vast Regions; with certain instructions how to carry thyself in all they travels. I have also prepared for thee two great wings that sometimes (as need shall require) thou mayest fly to and fro and be as swift as thought. The vast deep shall be no less to thee. Thou shalt pass from port to port, from place to place, from one land and kingdom to another without ship or galley, and shalt never need to stay for wind nor tide. I will also teach thee to transform thyself into any form or shape at my pleasure.

And to hide thy sting and ugly visage, I have provided thee a cloak which thou shalt have power and skill to alter or change in the fashion of as will best suit thy occasion at any time. Be thou sometimes a dog to fawn, a dragon to devour, a dove to seem innocent, be a serpent or fox for subtilty, a lion for strength, and in all thy travels observe the constitutions and natural inclinations of all people. Build rather thy nest among willows that bend every way that on tips of oaks whose heads are said to be solid. Fly with the swallow, close to the Earth when storms are at hand, but keep company with birds of greater talons when the weather is clear, and never leave them till they look like ravens. Creep into every bosom.

Fear not to approach the course of emperors, kings, princes and noble ones of the Earth – for I will cause thee to find favour amongst all ranks and conditions of men. I will teach thee to get in at their eyes, ears, mouth, nay a thousand ways thou shalt have to invade them and to spread the wings of thy infection over them. Make every head they pillow to lean upon, and use it like a mill to grind mischief. When thou meetest a Dutchman, teach him to stab; when a Spaniard, how to betray. Present an Italian with a fair damsel, and teach him to poison. When though meetest a Scot, teach im false-heartedness;

when with an Irishman, teach him to forswear himself; great men hard, they are my very good benefactors, and their example hath commonly when an Englishman to do all this.

Pursue great influence upon those of a lower rank. Haunt taverns, there thou shalt find brave youths easily overcome. Erect store of play-houses, for they tend greatly to the enlarging of my principalities. There I keep my market, and vend my wares more abundantly or offer my rotten goods to sale, burnished up bravely to the eye, enough to bewitch all who lack understanding to dote upon them.

Be sure to beset (on every side) the younger sort, for if thou canst get possession of their hearts timely, thou wilt find it easy to keep them safe enough, and make them thy constant slaves and vassals to the end. And when thou meetest with them afterwards, shew them the glory of this world, allure them with thy pleasures, and hold forth they golden apples to them. But if that sorry fellow, Conscience, at any time gets power to frighten them, promise them late repentance, and assure them of long life, and thereby thou wilt soon overcome them.

When though meetest with the rich, tempt them to trust in it, set their hearts upon it, and make their bags of gold and silver their god. And grind the face of the poor, and force them to sell their commodities cheaper than they can afford them, and not give them a penny to relieve their necessities. For thereby thou wilt subdue them both at once. For the one I am sure of, and the other will be so hunted with one of thy offspring, called Carping-Care, that if Light-Finger doth not overcome and tempt him to steal, the other will break his heart, and force him to take the Name of God in vain, and not think of anything else than what will tend to the strengthening of thy hands and conduce to my interest in him.

When thou comest to meet with such who are naturally inclined to ambition, or have an eager desire and thirst after honour, suit thy bait accordingly. Teach them how to contemn their God, their conscience, their good name, the law and religion, too, that so they may the better mount the hill of ambition and earthly grandeur.

When thou dost approach to a melancholy person, entice him to be alone, and not to open his mind to anybody, as he renders his life also persuade him nobody in the world can tell what his distemper is, and make him believe he is damned. Nay, tell him there is a way, but to hell he must go, and then we shall between us, perhaps entice him to hang, drown or poison himself, or cut his own throat, and so we shall destroy many of these silly souls and that way enlarge our kingdom.

When thou meetest with an old man, make him conceited, vain-glorious, fretful, and very peevish. Fill his head with tales and old stories, and to put them off the better, tempt him to add to them.

When though comest to married people, make one jealous of the other. If a man have a beautiful woman to his wife, trouble his thoughts without just cause because she is fair, make him conclude she is false and every one that looks on her, persuade him he loves her. If she speaketh him fair, let him believe she feigneth. If she behave herself dutiful, make him think she then doth counterfeit. When she goes abroad, fill his head with fear, and make his heart pant. If she be neatly dressed, persuade him it is to allure and please others. If she be homely dressed, 'tis because she knows that he will keep house that day.

If by any means we can but kindle this spark in either of them to be jealous-headed, we shall do our business effectually.

Be sure to what you can to make discord between every couple. When one is hot, let not the other be cold. Suffer not one to throw water upon the fire which the other kindles. For by this means we shall let the house on fire and then warm ourselves with the sparks and heat thereof. Teach them to live either below what they have or else above what they have, and if they have children, I will give thee instructions about them hereafter. When thou enterest the country of nonage, if they go behind-hand thou must stir up the husband to lay all the cause thereof on his wife, and let the wife charge the husband wholly with it. Do what thou canst; be sure in the morning and evening to prevent prayers, for that I fear more than all the Pope's holy water.



We must make the fountain muddy, and the spring cannot be clear. Discords and confusion in a family do as much to strengthen my kingdom as anything in the world. You cannot think how I am pleased, how greatly it delights me to see men and their wives live at strife and variance.

When though meetest with a singer, or unmarried person, perplex his mind continually about a wife, and render his life not worth regard without one. If though canst tempt him to uncleanness, do. I will stand his friend in the matter, but if he will marry, let him more mind portion than the person. Let his inquiry be what money she hath, not what grace she hath, as you love me. We must also find but such a one for him as may be a plague to him as Job's wife was to him. Never let him mind the temper of the woman, nor whether she will or not be a suitable help-meet, only that she doth but please his eye, and bring ore of gold and silver into his coffer.

When though does assault a choleric or passionate man, raise his anger to madness. If thou canst cause his mind to swell high and so full that there may be no room left for any god word or motion. Make his I his fits like spider-poisoned toad, so that reason, modesty, grace and humanity may fly from him as people do from a house that is all on fire. Let it be contumely without any distinction or respect, had to friend or foe, alien or familiar to him also add violence of hand, savage or monstrous behaviour like the troubled sea it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, fuming and foaming like a muddy channel. Add a distorted countenance, sparkling eyes, foul languages, and let him not come to himself nor speak a word to his nearest friends for two or three days.

Nay stir him up in his mad fit to run away, though there was no cause for the feud, and if thou canst, persuade him to throw the house out of the window. Tear his wife's linen and fine clothes to pieces, or break her chinaware. But know, we are cautious observers of the tempers and various passions of men. In some anger hath a quick and sudden motion, but presently ceases. This they call choler. And they think it is an influence of some angry planet. Let the fools have their fancy, but I must tell thee, 'tis a child of thy begetting, but this like fire in the stubble, soon kindled, soon goes out. Or like gunpowder, which no sooner thou puttest fire to, it but flies in the faces of their dearest friends. These they say are the best natured men, but they may thank us for that excuse.

There is another sort whom thou canst not so suddenly move, but when passion is raised, it takes deeper hold in their memory. And this fire is not so easily kindled, so neither is it easily put out. If thou dost but do they best 'twill prove fire and iron, which hardly taketh, and long abideth.

A third sort there be in whom thou mayest kindle this fiery passion suddenly, and retain it perpetually, not desisting without revenge. These are like fire which ceaseth not without the ruin and waste of that matter whereon it hath caught. Mind they instructions, for by this engine thou mayest destroy thousands.

There is yet another kind of people which thou must attack whom I perfectly hate and hold for my mortal enemies, and they are called Saints, bout whom we have held diverse Grand Councils in Hell how to destroy. These are they who are also called the woman's seed.

Most noble Prince, if thou canst beguile, deceive and subdue this sort, the day is our own. Thou must do it, or it never can be done. Therefore I conjure thee, in the name of my Lord Lucifer Beelzebub, and in the name of all the mighty thrones, dominions, principalities and powers of this burning lake to use thy utmost skill and policy. For what thou dost upon these thou must do by craft, and after a more wary and clandestine manner. For they have studied our politics, and are not ignorant of our devices. Yet, let me tell thee there are some who bear that Name and are accounted of their company who are our good friends and indeed, as serviceable to our interest as most in the world.

But as touching advice and counsel, how thou shouldest prey upon those my grand enemies, I shall forbear at present, it being a secret that out not to be revealed. I shall give thee therefore instructions hereafter when thou meetest with them in the Town of Religion, how to betray and overcome them.

Moreover, there are diverse other ranks, qualities and conditions of people with whom thou wilt meet in thy travels which I have not yet mentioned, viz. noblemen, counsellors, lawyers, doctors, & c. and all sorts of mechanics. But when thou enterest into the Town of Commerce, thou shalt have advice and directions how to handle them.

And now because I am sensible of the great weight and importance of this grand enterprise, and how by the travels I am like to lose or win all, I am resolved to accompany thee continually to the end of the world. I will go with thee and be as a servant to thee. And I must tell thee also, I have got the skill to transform myself into any shape. If need be, I can be an Angel of Light, and become devilish godly. We must both sometimes be very religious for else how should we set up our spiritual kingdom. For such a one I have and shall have, as well as a fleshly. And the advantage thereby to us is and will be very great. Otherwise, we should never have spent so much time, and held so many grand cabals in Hell about contriving, ushering in and establishing, this our ecclesiastical state of the world.

Lastly, that we may not lose time, I shall only admonish thee of diverse grand enemies which thou must be aware of and thoroughly be revenged upon, or al our design will prove in a great measure fruitless. I shall therefore, before thou begin thy travels, give thee their names:

**The first is a paper enemy, a contemptible for to look upon.** And yet I dread him more than all the powers of Heaven and Earth. May it please your greatness, 'tis a book. Not a play book. No, no, that is an engine of my own forging. Not a conjuring book, for that same this hath often made me brave sport. Nor is it a song book. No, nor a book of Philosophy or Physic, but 'tis the Bible. I would wish all the plagues of Hell to light upon it if that would do. But I see is in vain, for 'tis under the perpetual care of Him who reigns above, and cast me down into these lower regions.

We must do, therefore, what we can to keep all men ignorant of it, and not suffer them to have it in their mother tongue. Or, if we cannot do that, then take off their hearts from it so that they may not read, meditate upon it, nor remember what is contained in it. For 'tis like a cruel Sword with Two Edges, which if they got skill to use it, it will destroy them utterly. Yet do not fear, for I can teach thee to use it so as to turn the edge of it against themselves and wound them with their own weapon. Besides, I will show thee how to magnify some other books, and unwritten verities, mere inventions of our own devising above it, and raise up others to cast it away as a dead letter and also to wrest it and to make a nose of wax of it and cause thousands to believe that it doth not belong to lay people to read it and forewarn them not to study it on their peril.

**The second enemy I must advise thee of is one Theology,** a holder forth, a preacher forsooth that gives himself up wholly to study how to bring both thee and I to shame, nay and to destroy thee utterly. This fellow pries into all our secrets, but I will teach thee how, one way or another, to be revenged upon him.

**The third adversary is a Spirit. Some call him the Holy Spirit.** I must confess he is a powerful enemy, and I cannot deny but he hath been sometimes too hard for all the mighty powers of this burning lake. When soever therefore he breaks in upon thee, with his Sword drawn in his hand, he will slay thee at once, nay such cruel hatred he hath to thee that no other death will satisfy him but to crucify thee which grieves my heart to think upon. Therefore, beware of him and keep the door shut (where thou hast possession) against him. Moreover, I shall teach thee man other ways to quench his heart and hinder his prevailing power upon men's hearts. Yes, tire his patience, and grieve him so that he shall not strive against thee, nor appear for their help any longer.

**The fourth is a rare and beautiful damsel. Her name is Grace, and she hath also several sisters – as Faith, Hope, Charity, & c.** It grieves me to think thou shouldst at any time be worsted and utterly vanquished by any of the feminine gender. But thou wilt sustain great loss, I perceive, by her means. For, she has a cruel train of powerful enemies to torment us continually attending her. Yet, I shall teach thee how to mar her beauty and spoil her growth.

**The fifth enemy is called Knowledge of God,** but I think there is no great fear of him. For the greatest parts of the world I doubt no, but we shall keep in ignorance, in heathenism, and popish darkness. But if he gets in, he will do us great hurt by discovering al our intrigues.

**The sixth is only morality.** I hate him as a man hates a toad. Yes, as we will order matters, he shall do us a great kindness, for he is not very well-known, and so we will cause diverse silly creatures to trust in him for life and salvation. That way, we shall bring some solid blades to Hell with mighty hopes of Heaven in their noddles.

**The seventh is a scurvy, obstinate fellow, called Enlightened Conscience;** a mere tell-tale one that never will be bribed, nor doth he fear frowns, nor regard flatteries. I doubt he will prove a plague to thee in all they ravel, but I will shew thee hereafter how to deal with him.

**The eighth is an engine of war, an enemy that has made the very foundations of Hell itself to shake. I think they call him prayer,** but he can do little hurt without faith. And I will teach thee many rare devices to make him ineffectual. There are some prayers thou needest no fear, viz. such that some use beads, &c. Prayer always prevails according to the nature, holiness, truth, sincerity, fervency, skill and care of the person who use him. Besides I fear not the prayers of unsanctified persons.

**The ninth is repentance,** but fear him not, if he comes not in timely, or approaches alone, without his dreadful retinue whom I tremble at the thoughts of which are there following viz. Godly sorrow, holy revenge, vehement desire, spiritual indignation, filial fear, heavenly care, self-clearing, fiery zeal, &c.

**The tenth enemy is consideration** who is the ringleader to all the mischiefs, troubles, wars and disquietments raised up in any kingdom, and were it not for him, I would not fear any adversary on Earth. Therefore, thou must prevent his coming to the assistance of parties thou dost encounter with which thou mayest do by filling their minds with the cares of this life. Also render him odious make them believe his is a dangerous fellow, have made many a brisk youngster a mere mope, causing them to hang down their heads like bulrushes to fold their arms and to spend their days in tears and sighing, and hath caused many to go besides themselves. Moreover, thou mayest drive him away by sending the party to some play or tavern or such like diversion.

**The eleventh are truth and justice** both implacable enemies to our empire, but I am resolved to do what I can to make them wander resolved to do what I can to make them wander like vagabonds in the open air, for truth shall find no lodging unless it be with a mute, and justice though shalt throw her down in the street and equity shall not enter. We will so handle her that few or none shall know her when they see her, they shall indeed have ready at hand in every kingdom, a multitude of such brave catchpoles that I hope they effectually will do her business. Let her fly to Heaven what hath she to do on Earth? And as for who bears that name, we will turn her Sword against our enemies (and as much as in us lies) to spare our friends.

**The twelfth enemy is one whom they call true godliness,** who hath been travelling up and down a long time to undermine my kingdom. He is made up, they say, with a right faith and holy life, but I am glad he meets with no better entertainment. Now, my grand design by granting thee this commission is to spoil his enterprise, and finally to vanquish him out of these lower regions. Ponder well what hath been said and bestir yourself. Fly to and fro, east, west, north and south beset all mortals. My instructions will serve for every age, and will suit with all climates and countries throughout the whole universe, but chiefly I aim at the latter times. Be gone and raise my honour, and let my renown break forth in all quarters.

Clothe my ambitious children with ornaments of gold, and crown them with glory and honour. Fill the voluptuous with pleasure and the delights of this world. Let the envious and choleric have all the sweet reverie their precious hearts can desire. Glut them with rapine, massacre and murder. Set one man against another: husband against the wife; wife against the husband; parents against their children; and the children against their parents. And teach masters to be cruel to their servants, and servants to rob and steal from their masters, promoting lying, swearing, whoring, blasphemy, atheism, flattery, drunkenness, cruelty, pride, hardheartedness and all many of debauchery.

Raise up wars and commotions in every kingdom, let all before thee be put to fire and sword. Introduce superstition, heresy, false doctrine and gross idolatry. Visit all in thy journey – the young, the old, the high, the low, the rich, the poor,

the king on the throne, the beggar on the dunghill. Let truth, righteousness, justice and equity, conscience, charity, fidelity, simplicity and modesty be banished in all the regions of the Earth.

Thou art my great emmissary and hast they parent of assignment and grand from me, the great Prince of Darkness, whom thou must daily honour, and under whose standard continually advance thy colours, and spread the flag of my authority by which not only the lodgings and outward gates of all courts and cities of the world, but also the inward and inmost chambers and closets therein will soon fly open and give way to this strong commission.

Thou hast the world, the flesh and me, the Devil; nay, all devils and infernal spirits for thee to side with thee and take thy part.

All men are ready to receive thee, no tradesmen, nor others can well live without thee, but be sure to remember that never be satisfied to take up they quarters in their barns nor stables, nor in their outward courts, nor castle yards, but command the best room they have viz. their hearts and be sure where thou comest there sway the scepter and make them all subject to thee and become thy servants vassals forever.

Let me see thee bring millions of millions into these dark regions to dwell with us in everlasting burnings.



## The Epistle Dedicatory

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Thomas Collier

From *Confessions of Faith, and Other Documents Illustrative of the History of the Baptist Churches of England in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century*, Edward Bean Underhill, Editor, 1854

To the Sons and Daughters of Zion, grace, peace, &c., be multiplied.

Dearly Beloved,

It may with some seem altogether needless and useless to bring to public view, a narrative of faith in such a day as this is; especially there having been the like brought forth by several baptized congregations formerly (We mean the Narrative published by the seven churches in London). Unto which we reply, that our publishing this narrative of our faith and practice, is not from any dislike we found with the former confession of our beloved brethren, whom we own, and with whom we are one both in faith and practice, neither is there anything in ours contradictory to our brethren, that we know of, that have gone before us.

We can say, when the Lord set us first upon this work, we did not think of bringing it to public view; but did it rather for a trial of our unity in the faith, for our more clear fellowship one with another, from our harmony in faith and practice.

Yet, having finished it according to our apprehensions (and we believe a measure of the teachings of the Lord), now judge there is a more than ordinary necessity for us thus to publish our faith.

1. In regard of the general charge laid upon our profession, as if none in the countries that professed baptism were of our brethren's judgment that published that confession of faith in London, but hold freewill, falling away from grace, &c., all which, through the grace of God, we disclaim; and not only we, but to our knowledge many other

churches in the adjacent counties, who stand fast in the profession of the unchangeable love of God in Jesus Christ to his people.

2. Being very sensible of the great distractions and divisions that are amongst professing people in this nation, the many ways and wiles of Satan to seduce and deceive souls, the great departing from the faith, and that under glorious notions of spiritualness and holiness, Satan transforming himself into an angel of light, and his ministers into ministers of righteousness., we could not but judge it our bounden duty in this our day to come forth in a renewed declaration of our faith, as a public testimony before all men that (through grace) we do with one soul desire to cleave to the Lord, contending earnestly for the faith that was once given to the saints.

For this being the great design of Satan to destroy the faith and practice of the gospel churches, we judge nothing more suitable and proper to us as churches of our Lord, wherein we might bear our witness for him (in this day of temptation) in print as well as in practice, than this our testimony to the faith and truth as it is in Jesus. And, oh that it might be a remembrancer to all our sister churches in this commonwealth, that they be not soon moved from the hope of the gospel, and give us leave to cry mightily unto you, and to be your remembrancers, as from the Lord, in these few following particulars:

**1. That it be your care, and that which may daily lie next your hearts; to have a high and precious esteem of Jesus Christ, and of him crucified.** God having made him to his people to be the way, the truth, and the life. John 14:6. I know that it hath been the design of Satan in all ages to seek the undermining of Him, for Satan knows that God hath made him to be the way of salvation to all that truly believe in him. Hence it is that the devil said to Christ, We know thee who thou art, &c. The devil knows that there is no other name given under heaven by which we may be saved, Acts 4:12; he who goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, I Pet. 5:8; and if he cannot have his prey in one way, he will seek it in another. He can and doth transform himself into an angel of light, and his ministers as the ministers of the righteousness, II Cor 11:14, 15. It is all one with the adversary, whether he ruin souls in the way of profession or in a way of profaneness; and if in profession he cannot quiet souls with the form without the power, which is his great work, II Tim. 3 from the first to the fifth verse, I Pet. 1:16; then he will pretend to bring them into a power without all form : all form must be accounted fleshly, yea, Christ himself (the most glorious dispensation of God, the spirit and the life of souls truly living in him by faith, without whom there is neither grace nor glory) must now be accounted fleshly, and all that own it, must be of the devil.

Oh! The subtle ways of Satan to deceive and ruin souls. Oh! Give us leave to call upon you, and to cry unto the Lord both for ourselves and you, that he who is our shepherd, and bishop of our souls, would now be our keeper in this hour of temptation. Oh! Be not easily cheated out of your esteem of and interest in a crucified Jesus. Oh! Little do souls think what they lose when they part with the man Christ Jesus, trampling the blood of the covenant under feet, for nothing but wind and vanity. They sow the wind, and shall reap the whirlwind, if mercy do not recover them again, who lay aside Christ, Scripture, and obedience all at once, subjecting themselves to a suggestion, or voice within them, more than to the mind of God, written in the Holy Scriptures; who lay aside Christ in all his offices.

We say again, let it be your care, yea, your great care, as you hope for mercy in that day, that you keep close to your head, Christ Jesus, from whom some are turned aside. And let it be our work rather to be mourning and lamenting the state of poor deluded souls, than to run away from Christ and truth with them. Oh! Let not any of us, who have owned the Lord, part with him because others do it; or trample under foot his ordinances because we see and hear others do it. But rather let that noble spirit appear in you that was in the prophet, Psa. 119:97, and 126, 127, They make void thy law, therefore I love thy commandments above gold, &c. Do men under pretense of light, trample underfoot the blood of the covenant, and his ordinances, all at once, and pretend love in it, and persuade you to do it? Oh! Love Christ and his laws the more, love them above gold, yea, fine gold; so shall you manifest yourselves to be the spouse of Christ, betrothed unto him in truth, and not a harlot that Both run away from him, and then say all is well, &c.

**2. Let it be your great care to press after, and live more in the power of the gospel.** This is that which will prove the condemnation of men who live in the profession of the gospel without the power and life of the gospel, II Tim. 5; Titus 1: 16. For the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, Rom. 1:16; and if you do indeed live in the power of the

gospel, you shall have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. Rom. 6:22.

We do not mind such a power as men pretend to in these days, viz., a light and a voice within them, without any relation to church or Scripture, but the power of Christ handed forth in the ministration of the gospel, through the exercise of faith in Jesus: for ye are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, I Pet. 1:5; living in the constant apprehension of Christ crucified for you, ever living to make intercession, Heb. 7:25 by virtue of which the spirit, power, and virtues of Christ are daily manifest in you, so Christ is not only for you, but in you, the hope of glory.

**3. Take heed of being ensnared and entangled with the evils of the world.** This is that which Christ hath prayed for (to his Father), that those who believe in him might be kept from the evils of the world. John 17:15. And, indeed, we cannot but judge that it much concerns the Lord's people (on whom his name is called) to die daily to the world's ways and fashions. How often are the saints called upon in Scripture to this work, Eph. 4:17, 18, 19, This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their minds, &c.; Col. 3:5, Mortify therefore your members which are upon earth, &c.; Rom. 12:2, And be not conformed to this world, &c.; I Pet. 1:14, As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance, &c.; with many other the like.

Oh! Therefore, give us leave to mind you (and we desire the Lord to mind both you and us) of those abominable sins of formality, hypocrisy, covetousness, pride, &c., with many other gross enormities, which are too incident to professing people, and we have cause to fear it is that which hath and doth at this day very deeply wound the truth. Oh! That it might wound our hearts more, and that the hearts of saints might be sighing and crying, not only for the abominations of the profane, but likewise of professing people. These aforementioned evils we can say, through grace, that God hath in a measure set home upon our hearts, but two of them we shall mention more particularly, viz., pride in apparel, and covetousness; and hath likewise set our hearts in seeking and endeavouring a reformation. And we shall present unto you our light in this matter, covetousness and pride being not only natural sins, but reigning evils, where not discovered and opposed.

For the finding out of which evils, that it may be discerned and dealt withal, we judge covetousness to consist either, 1, in getting of goods, and not by right; or 2, in an over-eager pursuit of a lawful calling; or, 3, in a close keeping, when the necessity of the saints calls for it. And for pride and vanity in apparel, we judge that things that are altogether needless and useless, may clearly come under the denomination of vanity and pride; as likewise costly array, when more costly than profitable. These we judge are the symptoms of a vain mind; and Oh! That the Lord would set it home upon the hearts of all the saints to reform, and that it might become church work to look after those things, for church sins will bring down church afflictions, if not repented of. See Revelation, second and third chapters.

As the Lord in his infinite goodness hath purposed to work his people into a conformity to Jesus, that as they have borne the image of the earthly, so they might bear the image of the heavenly man, I Cor. 15:49; so it is or should be the longing desire of all the saints that do indeed expect to be like Christ in glory, to be pressing more after a conformity to him here; I John 3:3, *He that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself as he is pure.* But how much doth the contrary appear?

Are not many professing men and women in our days rather pressing after the world in its pride and fashions, than after Christ in meekness and holiness? And we fear that there may be some rising in some good people against a reformation in these things, and we earnestly desire that none may so pursue it, as to adventure the loss of an interest in Christ, rather than to part with such lusts as these are, which do indeed war against the soul. But it may be objected that pride consisteth in the heart and not in apparel: persons may be as proud in mean apparel, as others are in costly.

We answer, first, it is true it may be so, yet we have no rule to judge our brethren's heart in such a case. But love should teach us other things, and we do not question but that those that are most mortified in this matter, have still experience of too much pride in their nature.

And, secondly, we judge it to be too carnal a way of reasoning, for saints to suppose their brethren may be proud in mean apparel, and from hence resolve to be proud in gay apparel. We desire that Satan may not get such advantage over any of

the Lord's people in this thing.

Thirdly. We cannot but judge, and that from our own experience in part, that the true cause why there is so much vanity and pride of apparel upon the back is, because the root of all lieth in the heart. If it were not in the heart, it would not appear so much on the back as it doth, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, and suitably the body acteth. If we see a proud and gay outside, we may easily conjecture where there is a proud heart.

**Objection:** We find ourselves in the use of such things not at all puffed up, and therefore we judge it lawful, &c.

We answer, first, if it be so in truth, it is the better. But, secondly, we cannot but conceive that as the original of all lieth in the heart, so that those that do not know that those needless vain things on the back doth minister occasion to the vain mind to be puffed up, doth not know their own hearts. And it may be discovered in such things as these:

1. The heart's desiring after and preferring of persons in gay attire, before those in mean. James 5.
2. The heart's unwillingness to part with it. A heart never so knows his love to pride in a thing, till he comes to part with it.
3. A heart rising against a reproof of this vanity. Herod heard John the Dipper gladly, till he touched him in his beloved sin. And this reformation probably may make many startle, who are glorious in profession, but we hope that Sion's sons and daughters will be willing upon a right information to come to a right reformation.

**Objection:** If we should lay aside the fashions of the world, we should be slighted amongst the people of the world, pass through shame, be as an owl among birds. None of fashion would care for our company.

We answer, first, it is the portion of the followers of Christ to suffer shame in the world for his sake, and to be slighted of men, I Pet. 1:4, They think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot. And shall any that fear the Lord run with the world to this excess of pride in apparel, that so the world may not think strange of them? God forbid.

But secondly, We are in expectation of such a general conviction (from the Lord) amongst the saints in this matter, that ere long it will be a shame to a saint to be found in Babylon's deckings in the outward man, as well as in spiritual things. But we desire not to be tedious. We hope a word to the wise, through the blessing of God, may be enough. Only we commend to you further:

- First. That the name of the Lord is much concerned in it. What advantage doth Satan and his instruments take to reproach the truth, from the vanity and pride of professing people in this matter.
- Secondly. It is a sin that is attended with many other sins, as covetousness, oppression, &c., to maintain it.
- Thirdly. It is a sin most of all abhorred of God. All that are proud in heart are an abomination to him. He resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.
- Fourthly. It was the sin and cause of the condemnation of the devil, I Tim. 3:6. It was the sin and cause of the fall of man from his first estate, Gen. 3:6, Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil; and this prevailed to draw on to disobedience.
- Fifthly, and finally. It is that for which men must stand liable to the burning flame, when the great and terrible day of our Lord comes; which day we believe to be near at hand.

When the day cometh that shall burn like an oven, Mal. 4:1, then proud persons must be the fuel of that fire. Oh! Therefore

give us leave to cry aloud unto you to take heed and beware of this sin of pride, both in heart and in the outward man. Take heed and beware of covetousness. Take heed and beware of hypocrisy, and of all those abominations by which men are fitted for the everlasting burnings: for even our God is a consuming fire.

**Objection:** It may be some may fear they should be accounted covetous by the world, if they should set about such a reformation as we here mind.

We say that God hath appointed other ways for his people wherein they may give convincing testimonies of their liberality; that is, in clothing the backs and refreshing the bowels of the poor and needy, and not in decking their own backs with needless vanities, and that too, it may be, when the poor and needy are crying for want. Oh! That it may be your care and ours for the future, to show forth the life and virtues' of Christ, by our good works, to the praise and glory of God.

**4. Let it be your care to seek after things that make for peace, and things wherein you may edify one another.** Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which none shall see the Lord, Heb. 12:14. As God is the God of peace, and Jesus Christ is the Prince of peace, so let the Lord's people manifest themselves to be indeed the sons of peace. But if any be contentious, let no such custom be owned in the churches of Christ.

**5. Let it be your care in this evil day to cleave close to the principles of truth, the want of which we judge to be the cause of falling from the truth, souls not being grounded in principles.** For we judge that there are such doctrinal principles of truth, left by the Lord unto and wrought in his *people* that if an angel from heaven should come and preach contrary unto it, they might let him be accursed. Some of which we believe to be that Jesus Christ crucified was raised again by the power of God, and is the way, the truth, and the life; that we are justified by faith in his blood; that a person justified is to live to him and obey him, according to his will in Scripture; that he is ascended into the heavens, and is with the Father, making intercession for his people; that he will come again, and change and raise his people, and judge, and reign, and rule, &c., and his people shall reign with him, &c.

**6. Let it be your care in all things to live holy in this world; to be holy in all manner of conversation.** I Pet. 1:15; that both you and we may have our conversation in heaven, from whence we look for a Saviour, &c. Phil 3:20.

**7. Let it be much upon our hearts (to the end that it may be so) to be much in the expectation of, and [in] the exercise of faith on the promises of God, for the pouring forth of a greater measure of the Holy Spirit.**

And, lastly. Oh, that the glorious appearing and kingdom of our Lord Jesus might be much upon your hearts and ours, which is the blessed hope of saints. Tit. 2:13 Then what manner of persons should we be in all manner of holy conversation, &c. For he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, as he is pure. I John 3:3.

But lest we should be thought too tedious, we shall proceed no further. Only mind a word to the reader, for his help in the narrative, we have set down for the most part the Scriptures between every clause or branch of the article, and most of the Scriptures are set down at length. For the benefit of the reader, the articles are in the same letters and characters as this epistle is, and what is in a different character from these, they are the Scriptures in proof of the foregoing article.

Thus, dear friends, having given some account of the reasons of our publishing this narrative at this time, we commend it to you as it is, desiring it may be useful to that end for which it is intended. We have not desired either to follow cunningly devised fables, nor to use the excellency of speech, which man's wisdom teacheth, but to bring forth the truth of our faith, in the plainness and simplicity of our hearts, and what we believe according to the truth as it is in Jesus-in whose hands we leave it for a blessing upon it to you. Fare ye well.

Signed, in the name and by the appointment of the several churches, by us whose names are as followeth:



In the County of Somerset

- Of the church of Christ meeting at Bridgewater, Alexander Atkins, and Tobias Wells
- Of the church meeting at Taunton Thomas Mercer
- Of the church meeting at Ryden, Robert Adridge
- Of the church meeting at Hatch, George Parsons
- Of the church meeting at Chard, Robert Channon and John Sprake
- Of the church meeting at Somerton, William Scriven and William Anger
- Of the church meeting at Wells, David Barret and Thomas Savery
- Of the church meeting at Wedmore, Thomas Urch and Richard Coals
- Of the church meeting at Stoak, William Hare
- Of the church meeting at Wincanton, Blaze Allen and Ambrose Brook

- Of the church meeting at Munticue, Tho. Bud

In the County of Wilts

- Of the church meeting at North Bradley, William Crab and Nicholas Elliot

In the County of Devon

- Of the church meeting at Luppit, Edmund Burford and Samuel Ham

In the County of Gloucester

- Of the church meeting at Sedbury, James Nobs
- Of the church meeting at Bristol, Henry Hineham

In the County of Dorset

- Of the church meeting in and near Lime, Abraham Podger



# An Address to Southern Baptist Slaveholders

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Elon Galusha and O. S. Murray  
From *Facts for Baptist Churches, 1850*

The American Baptist Anti-Slavery Convention, holding its first session in the City of New York, on the 28th, 29th, and 30th of April, 1840,

To the Baptist Slaveholders of the Southern States:

Fathers and Brethren:

**W**e have assembled, to the number of one hundred persons at the written call of seven hundred Baptists from thirteen of the United States. Of this number, about four hundred are accredited ministers of Jesus Christ.

A conviction of duty, which we humbly conceive, is based upon the fear of God and the love of our fellow-men—whether bond or free, oppressors or oppressed—constrains us to submit a few thoughts for your special and candid consideration. In doing so, we appeal with the firmest confidence to the Omniscient God for the rectitude of our intentions.

We solemnly profess a prayerful and submissive reverence for the principles of his recorded will. We feelingly avow a tender sympathy, not only for the slave, but also for you, upon many of whom slavery is entailed by heritage, and enforced by law; while inexorable habits, formed in the passive state of infancy, as well as universal usage, impose bonds upon yourselves scarcely less stronger or less oppressive than the fetters of the slave.

Hear us, then, with patience and kindness. It is our firm conviction that the whole system of American slavery, in theory and practice, is a violation of the instincts of nature—a perversion of principles of justice—and a positive transgression of the revealed will of God. For, man instinctively seeks happiness and repels outrage; while slavery compels him to forego the former and endure the latter, for himself and his posterity, until the end of time.

Justice, in its very nature, assumes the existence of free moral agents, mutually bound by established principles, and acting towards each other with perfect reciprocity. We do not speak of justice towards a "chattel personal," a horse, or a swine. But the statutes of the South pronounce a slave "a chattel personal" to all intents and purposes whatsoever; and thus set him beyond the pale of justice as utterly disqualified to assert a right and to redress a wrong.

Divine revelation, as committed to Moses and expounded by our Lord, teaches that pious self-love is the only proper measure of our love towards others. Does slavery, especially its laws which quench or smother in the slave the light of the mind, which tear from his agonized bosom the dearest objects of his natural affection conform to that rule of Holy Writ?

We believe that God only has the right to take away the health, the wife, the children or the life of men guilty of no social crime. When man, single or associated, uses his power for such ends, he appears to us to arrogate to himself the prerogative of the Almighty, and to assume a responsibility under which an archangel would stagger.

God, it is true, made use of the Jews to exterminate certain heathen tribes, and to inflict upon others a mild servitude, carefully defined and restricted. To employ this mode of punishment, or any other that He chose, was His unquestionable right. But where is the Scripture warrant to apply this special license of Jehovah for the extirpation of the human race at large, or the enslavement of any nation in particular? This specific direction to His oracular people is but an exception that confirms the general rule of His Son. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The heart of the Blessed Jesus was indeed an overflowing fountain of the tenderest sympathy for human woe.

Food, health, and life were his boon, never withheld when solicited, and the gospel preached to the poor was the peculiar and characteristic proof of his being the Son of God and the Savior of the world.

No evidence exists that He ever witnessed a scene of slavery. It is not shown that Hebrews of that day trafficked in human flesh. The chained coflle, the naked gang of the cotton field, the exposed female reeling under the lash, the child torn forever from its mother's breaking heart, these and worse acts of slavery's tragedy were not performed, so far as history speaks, before the face of Jesus. But his warmest, almost His only burst of indignation, is against those who devoured the helpless widow's substance and for a pretense made long prayers and liberal contributions to the cause of God.

His itinerant inspired followers were too busy in draining off the universal deluge of idolatry, explaining the nature of the one living God, and establishing the claims of Jesus as the true Messiah, to define, or to condemn, in form, every species and variety of crime, in every age, that hell, fruitful of inventions, might suggest, and fallen human nature perpetrate. Hence, horse-racing, gambling, piracy, the rum-traffic, and the African and American slave-trade, remain ungraduated in the Scripture scale of human sins.

Paul, however, exhorts the servants of *heathen* masters to respectfulness and patience, for the reason that the name of God be not blasphemed; and advises them, while patient under bondage, to prefer freedom. He enjoins *Christian* masters to give their servants what is just and equal. Do the slaves of American Baptists obtain justice and equity? He implores his brother Philemon to receive again the converted fugitive, not, as he probably had been, the heathen vassal of a heathen lord, but as a beloved brother in Jesus Christ. Thus we behold, in all the Scriptures a virtual and total condemnation of American slavery.

Besides, American Baptists, as a whole denomination, have been hitherto regarded by the Christian world as responsible for the sins of Baptist Slaveholders, and the sufferings of one hundred thousand Baptist slaves. And if we fail, as many do, to testify our abhorrence of a system that allows a fellow-Christian to sell his brother, or his brother's wife or child, or to dissolve the marriage tie at pleasure, we see not how to escape the merited contempt of mankind, the reproaches of conscience, or the displeasure of God. For, the followers of Jesus are ordained the light of the world and His witnesses of the truth until the end of time.

Further, in the exhaustion of your once teeming soil,—the non-increase, and, in some parts, diminution of your white population,—the depreciation of your staple products, and the competition of British enterprise in India,—the jubilee shout of West Indian emancipation, rousing the dormant spirit of your slaves to assert the rights of man,—your intrinsic incapacity of self-defense in case of foreign aggression,—your constant exposure to servile insurrection and massacre,—and in the general reprobation of republican slavery throughout the rest of the civilized and Christian world,—we behold indications that God attests, by earthly signs, the precept of his heavenly oracles, to "let the oppressed go free."

Again, if you have thus far heard us with candor, you may perhaps inquire, "What would you have us do?" We answer —at once confess before heaven and earth the sinfulness of holding slaves; admit it to be not only a misfortune, but a crime; remonstrate against laws that bind the system on you; petition for the guaranty to all of "national and inalienable rights."

If your remonstrances and prayers to man are disregarded, cast yourselves on the God of providence and justice; forsake, like Abraham, your father-land, and carry your children and your households to the vast asylum of our prairies and our wilderness, where our Father in heaven has bidden our mother earth to open her exuberant breast for the nourishment of many sons.

Finally,—if you should, (which Heaven avert!) remain deaf to the voice of warning and entreaty,—if you still cling to the power-maintained privilege of living on unpaid toil, and of claiming as property the image of God, which Jesus bought with His precious blood,—we solemnly declare, as we fear the Lord, that we cannot and we dare not recognize you as consistent brethren in Christ.

We cannot join in partial, selfish prayers, that the groans of the slave may be unheard; we cannot hear preaching which makes God the author and approver of human misery and vassalage; and we cannot, at the Lord's Table, cordially take that as a brother's hand, which plies the scourge on woman's naked flesh, which thrusts a gag into the mouth of man, which rivets fetters on the innocent, and which shuts up the Bible from human eyes. We deplore your condition; we pray for your deliverance; and God forbid that we should ever sin against Him by ceasing so to pray.

*Elon Galusha, President*

*O. S. Murray, Secretary*



## An Appeal to the Unconverted

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Howard Malcom

From *The Baptist Pulpit*, 1850

It is not to be questioned that all men are bound to humble themselves, and accept the gospel:

"Repent and believe," (Mark 1:15) is a plain command.

"He that believeth not shall be damned," (Mark 16:16) is a plain warning of the penalty of neglect.

No soul will be lost, but by its own impenitence and perversity.

"Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." (John 5:40)

While alarming denunciations of wrath are uttered for our warning, the most cheering and positive invitations and promises are offered for our encouragement.

"Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." (Isa. 45:22)

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." (Isa. 55:1)

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16)

The proclamation of mercy is without the least restriction to classes of men. It is "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." (Luke 2:10) There is which makes it in vain for any son of Adam to seek eternal life. Your sole concern is to submit yourself at once to God, and apply earnestly for mercy. Why should we disbelieve God when he says:

"Whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17)

"It is impossible for God to lie." (Heb. 6:18)

His word is, Christ "is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." (Heb. 7:25)

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isa. 1:18)

How amazing that such a Redeemer, and such declarations should meet a cold and stupid reception! How strange is the unbelief, and contempt, and opposition, and hatred, and ridicule, with which the gospel of God is received! What ingenuity is displayed in the invention of excuses, the discovery of flaws, the explaining away of precepts, and the perversion of truth! Fearful must be the guilt of thus treating a message of infinite mercy! The case of heathens is sad enough. But what shall we say of men, who thus spend their entire lives, while from the cradle to the tomb they are surrounded by the meridian splendor of revelation, and are fully, freely, daily, urged to lay hold on the hope set before them.

O sinners, receive not the grace of God in vain. Spend not your hasty moments in questions and doubts suggested by Satan, and nourished by pride. The kingdom of God must be received by you "as a little child," or not at all. He, who instead of praying, is considering the compatibleness of prayer with Divine immutability, loses the blessing which God ordains to them that ask. Though no toil can make the seed to grow, yet he who neglects to plant shall have hunger instead of harvest. He, who neglects to accept "so great salvation," while he pries into its extent, dies unredeemed. How can we understand what "angels desire to look into?" First obey intelligible calls, and then commend yourselves to the teachings of that Spirit who is to "guide you into all truth." Lazarus, though dead, was commanded to come forth. The withered arm was commanded to be stretched forth. You are required, O sinner, to forsake your way, and "turn unto the Lord, who will have mercy."

If you still say there may be no atonement for you, then see that this alone keeps you from the skies. So perform all that is in your power, that if turned into hell it shall not be your fault. Slight no warning, refuse no instruction, omit no endeavor. Repent and turn from all your sins. Believe on the Lord Jesus. Watch unto prayer. Live in love, and die casting yourself on the mercy and merit of a Divine Saviour. Then, if lost, the rigors even of hell would be mitigated. Yea, you might triumph in your overthrow, and all the rebels thenceforth have some joy. For your condemnation would prove the gospel a deception, its invitation mockery, and its promises untrue. It would shake the throne of the universe, and tarnish the character of the Almighty!

Why complain, dear fellow-sinners, of limited powers, when what you know you can do, is omitted—omitted from choice, not necessity, as yourselves even insist. Why cavil, when judgment and conscience approve? Believe on the Son of God. You are deciding your eternal doom by rejecting this Saviour. Your path is the road to hell. You are halting away from the presence of God, and all felicity. There is but a step between you and death. Look aloft at the promises; look round at the brevity of your probation; look back at your sins, and "flee from the wrath to come." (Matt. 3:7) Sport not away these precious moments, while toppling on the verge of opportunity.

How can you behold hell and destruction at your feet, and feel no anxiety? Arise and call upon God. Today you may die. O look to Jesus, and be saved! Frail, irresolute, exposed, dying mortal, come taste and know that the Lord is gracious. How often would he have gathered you "as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." (Matt. 23:37) Proceed not, until, smitten of God, you sink on a death-bed of damnation, and in the agonies of dissolving nature, realize the fearful sentence, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." (Prov. 1:24, 26)

Now, now "is the day of salvation." (II Cor. 6:2) "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." (Heb. 3:7-8) Begin this moment, and never cease to make salvation and the service of God the business of your life. Wait for no better opportunity. Seek no present carnal indulgence—contrive no sophistry—listen to no seduction—allow no discouragement—desire no relaxation of terms—make no reserve—wait no further impulse. Begin, not by laboring of yourself to grow better; but by pressing to your heart and conscience the consideration of your great guilt, and the blessed message of the text—that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (I Tim. 1:15)

Begin at Christ, or you miss "the way." "Strive [agonize] to enter in at the strait gate." (Luke 13:24) If even the reading of religious books, or an attendance at inquiry meetings, leads you to a dependence on these things, they lead you astray. If even your solemn resolutions of self-dedication, induce you to postpone the act, they are not of the Lord. Kneel down at the foot of the cross. There the Christian race begins. There go for cleansing, and for spiritual life. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (I John 1:7) "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life"... "but the wrath of God abideth on him." (I John 5:12; John 3:36)



## The Nature of Succession

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D. B. Ray

From *Baptist Succession: A Handbook of Baptist History, 1871*

All well-informed Baptists are agreed in the belief that we as a people have continued from the time of Christ until the present. In other words, they hold and teach the perpetuity of the Church of Christ. They believe that the Baptist succession exists; that there has been no period of time since the death of Christ when Baptists have not existed. But Baptists do not claim "apostolic succession" because they admit that the apostolic office expired with the death of John the beloved. There was no more necessity for the apostolic office when Christianity was fully established and the canon of revelation completed. Neither do we claim Popish succession, for this is only the succession of Antichrist.

But while some agree that the Baptist succession does exist, or that a succession of Baptists has continued from the time of Christ to the present, yet they, at the same time, deny that the succession can be proved. This is wholly inconsistent; for no one has the right to believe that which cannot be proved. There can be no intelligent faith without evidence. If we have no evidence to prove a succession, it is out of the question to affirm that we believe in the existence of such succession. It appears that the taunts of our opponents have caused some of us almost to surrender our birthright.

They tell us that this claim to succession is a "Popish principle" a "mark of the Beast," etc. But shall we reject a Bible doctrine because it has been perverted by the Church of Rome? Shall we reject the divinity of Christ because this is held by the Church of Rome? Shall we reject the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper because these have been perverted by the Church of Rome? Or shall we give up our church organization because the Church of Rome, professing to be the Church of Christ, has become the most cruel ecclesiastical despotism which has ever disgraced the name of Christianity? Shall we reject all currency because of the counterfeit? And shall we surrender the perpetuity or succession of the "everlasting kingdom" of Jesus Christ because the Catholics have inaugurated the Popish succession of Antichrist?

But again, we are told that there is no importance whatever attached to the doctrine of succession; that it makes no difference whether we are in the succession or not, if we hold the Bible doctrine at the present time! But no man can hold the Bible doctrine of church organization who denies the succession. No man can be in the church or kingdom of Jesus Christ who is not in that kingdom which has the succession from the apostolic age. Is it not important to know that the words of Jesus Christ have been verified which are recorded in Matt. 16:18, "Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"?

Is it not important to know that the Church of Christ, which is the "pillar and ground of the truth," has been "kept by the power of God" as the beacon-light of the world through the dark ages, while the masses of mankind were wondering after the Beast? Is it not important to know that the more than fifty millions of martyred saints, whose blood has been poured forth like rivers, or whose bones have bleached upon the mountains and vales of Europe, and whose ashes have been scattered to the four winds of heaven, were members of the Church of Christ? Or shall we say, it makes no difference with us whether they fell as martyrs of Jesus Christ or died as members of Antichrist?

It is no new doctrine among Baptists to claim the succession of the churches of Jesus Christ. The author of the *Religious Encyclopedia* says: "They [Baptists] think that the Christian church, properly so called, was not visibly organized in the family of Abraham nor in the wilderness of Sinai, but by the ministry of Christ himself and of his apostles...All this time there were Baptist churches...A succession of the Novatians, or the true church, has continued down to the Reformation." (*Rel. Encyc.*, p. 188)

Joseph Belcher says: "It will be seen that the Baptists claim the high antiquity of the commencement of the Christian church. They can trace a succession of those who have believed the same doctrine and administered the same ordinances directly up to the apostolic age." (*Re. Denom. in E. & A.*, p. 53)

Mr. Benedict says: "The more I study the subject, the stronger are my convictions, that if all the facts in the case could be disclosed, a very good succession could be made out." (*Ben. Hist. Bapt.*, p. 51)

Dr. Howell says: "I assert that from the days of the apostles to the present time the true, legitimate Baptist Church has ever been a missionary body." (*Letters to Dr. Watson*, p. 3)

John L. Waller says:

"Here we rest our cause; the case is made out. The doctrine of reforming the Papal Church is unwarranted by Scripture and unsupported by history.

"The Church of Christ was persecuted, but never overthrown; cast down, but not destroyed. It was built upon a rock, against which neither the powers of darkness nor the seductions of Satan, transformed into an angel of light, could prevail. Poor, persecuted, obscure, and despised, still the true friends of the Redeemer maintained the great truths of our holy religion, unterrified by opposition and unswayed by corruption.

"And the honor of being the witnesses for the truth and the Word of God, when the civilized nations of the earth had bowed in blind and servile obedience to the authority of the Roman Pontiff, in sustaining in undiminished radiance and splendor the altar-fires of our holy religion during the long and dreary darkness of the world's midnight, belongs to the Baptists.

"This is confessed by their enemies; and thus in them is fulfilled the predictions of the prophets, and illustrated that promise of the Savior, 'that the gates of hell should not prevail against his church.'"

The succession was also maintained by the Baptist martyrs of past ages. One important object in pointing out our denominational history is to stimulate the zeal of modern Baptists by the heroic examples of our ancient brethren and sisters, who sealed their testimony with their blood, by showing that they suffered the loss of all things earthly for the same principles which distinguish us as a denomination. In other words, our principles have been handed down to us at a cost of the lives of millions of our brethren and sisters who loved the Church of Christ more than life itself. Like Abel, being dead, they yet speak to us of the glorious things concerning the kingdom of Christ, and still continue to bear witness against every form of Antichrist.

