



The Character of Jehovah's Glory Applied to Jesus

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The apostles and evangelists, when alienating the dignity of their Divine Master, made no scruple of applying to him those oracles of the Old Testament which express the characters of God's essential glory. Of this various instances have been already produced, which we shall examine more particularly hereafter. And our adversaries themselves do not deny it, since they pretend that those oracles are applied to Christ by way of allusion or accommodation.

But it is very surprising and absolutely unaccountable that the apostles should make such application to him, if he be not the true God. For common sense, one would have thought, was sufficient to inform them that such things as were spoken only of the Creator ought not to be applied to a mere creature. It was never known that such applications were made without being censured by those that feared God of impiety and blasphemy.

The ancient heathens, indeed, were not very scrupulous in this respect. For it was common with them to debase God and to exalt creatures by attributing to them the glories of the Deity; and in this the prodigious excess of their superstition principally confided. Their example, however, ought to have no weight with us; as it was, we may allure ourselves, detested by the apostles. For they had been instructed in the school of the prophets; they, therefore, were incapable of falling into such a mistake. The care of the prophets, in that respect is very remarkable. Always jealous for the glory of God; they are perpetually cautious that the Creator should not be confounded with any of his creatures. And being thus constantly upon their guard, they never apply the

characteristics of Jehovah's glory to any mere creature.

It cannot, I think, be supposed that those exalted and descriptive characters, which the apostles give of Jesus Christ are more sacred, or more peculiar to him than those which the prophets gave of the God of Israel. As therefore we should not dare to apply the peculiar characters of Christ to any of his apostles; so a similar reason ought to hinder us, ought to have hindered all, from applying the distinguishing characters of Jehovah to Jesus Christ if he be not the true God.

A man would be justly charged with blasphemy, were he to apply to Peter, for instance, the following names, characters and works of Jesus Christ. Were he to call him:

- The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world

- Our king, prophet and priest; the high-priest of our profession and a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedeck
- The Prince of Peace
- Immanuel
- The Word
- The Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last
- The Lion of the tribe of Judah
- The Saviour and Redeemer
- The Son of God, his own Son, and his only begotten "Son"

Were he to proceed and assert that Peter redeemed the church with his own blood. That he bare our sins in his own body on the tree. That we have redemption through his blood, and are reconciled to God by his death. That there is no name but that of Peter, by which we must be saved. That Peter is made unto us of God, wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. That Peter dwells in our hearts by faith. And that there is no condemnation to them that are in Peter. Were any one thus to speak of that great apostle, what would the Christian world say of him? They would certainly call him, either a madman, or a blasphemer.

Nor would their indignation against his conduct be much abated, were they to hear him once and again acknowledge that "Jesus Christ is greater than Peter." For they would boldly tell him that by such a declaration, he only contradicted himself, and tacitly confessed his blasphemy.—Nor would it avail such an one to say that the application he makes of the characters and attributes, the grace and works of Jesus Christ to Peter, is only by way of allusion and accommodation. For it would quickly be replied that such allusions and accommodations are impious, are absolutely unwarrantable, and are pregnant with blasphemy.

If, then, an application of the principal characters, attributes, and works of our Lord to Peter would be considered and treated by Christians, as abominable blasphemy; it must be a much higher degree of that malignant crime to apply the names and titles, the attributes and works of the Supreme Being to Jesus Christ if he be not a Divine Person. Nor is it any wonder that the Jews should so consider it. For if the disproportion between Jesus and Peter lie great, that which is between Christ and God is inconceivably greater according to the principles of our opponents; the former being finite, the latter unbounded. Consequently, the blasphemy in the one case is infinitely greater than that in the other.

The impiety of applying the characters of Christ to Peter will appear in a still stronger light, if, in the case supposed, he who makes the application be considered as knowing that this question, "Is Peter equal to Jesus Christ?" had been debated on very important occasions; and that he foresaw this error, would become general in the world; so that, for many ages, Peter would bear the names and receive the honours of Jesus Christ. In such a case, he would be guilty of prodigious impiety indeed; the consequences foreseen being so injurious to the honour of Christ, and so fatal to the souls of men.

This, it is obvious, is applicable to the apostles. For they were not ignorant that this question, "Is Jesus Christ equal with God?" had been debated. Nay, they well knew, that it was under a charge of pretended blasphemy, for claiming an equality with God, that the Jews had persecuted their Master and procured his death. And as they foresaw that false teachers would arise in future ages, and were able to describe their heretical doctrines. They could not be ignorant, that vast multitudes profaning Christianity would so apostatize, as to put Jesus Christ, a mere creature, in the place of God.

But if they knew and foresaw these things, ought not a zealous regard for the honour of God, and a tender concern for the souls of men, to have prevented their applying those oracles of the Old Testament, which express the glory of JEHOVAH, in contradistinction to that of his creatures, to Jesus Christ? Who, then, on the principles of them we oppose, can justify the conduct of the apostles, in so doing? Who can exculpate Jesus himself, by whole command and inspiration they wrote? Who can justly condemn the conduct of the Sanhedrin, who arraigned him for blasphemy and caused him to end his life on the cross, as an enemy to God and a deceiver of men? Or who can blame the modern Jews for continuing in their infidelity?



Christ's Precious Blood

From *The Pulpit Cyclopaedia*, 1851

"The precious blood of Christ..." I Peter 1:19

The word **precious** signifies valuable, of great worth:

- (1) It is applied in the divine Word to human life. One of the captains sent to seize Elijah said, "O man of God, let my life and the life of these fifty servants be precious in thy sight.
- (2) It is also applied to the blood and death of the saints, "And precious shall their blood be in his sight." "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."
- (3) It is applied to the divine Word. "The word of the Lord was precious in those days."
- (4) To the redemption of the soul. "The redemption of the soul is precious."
- (5) To wisdom. "Wisdom is more precious than rubies."
- (6) Loving-kindness of God. "How precious is thy loving-kindness, O God!"
- (7) It is applied to Christ as the foundation-stone. "Behold, I lay in Zion a precious corner-stone," &c.
- (8) To the promises. "Whereby are given to us precious promises."
- (9) To faith. "That have obtained like precious faith."

Finally, it is applied to Christ's blood. "The precious blood of Christ."

- I. IT IS PRECIOUS COMPARATIVELY.
- II. IT IS PRECIOUS INTRINSICALLY.
- III. IT IS PRECIOUS SUPERLATIVELY.

I. IT IS PRECIOUS COMPARATIVELY.

Every creature of God is good. He made nothing in vain; not a leaf, pebble, grain of sand, drop of water. We see more of the divine glory in the animal creation. All creatures are precious, so much so, that his wisdom, power, and goodness, for them, &c. They are all formed with love of life. How they cling to it!

Cruelty is abominable wickedness, insulting to God. God however was pleased, under the old dispensation, to allow some of these creatures to be slain for sacrifices, &c. God in this exhibited the evil and desert of sin, the doctrine of mediation, the provision of a substitute. Now, however precious the blood of these creatures, yet it possessed no real merit in reference to the sin of man.

"Rivers of oil and seas of blood,
Alas, they all must flow in vain."

They were but shadows, symbols, types, &c.

II. CHRIST'S BLOOD IS PRECIOUS INTRINSICALLY.

1. The blood of a human being. You may learn God's estimate from the price he set upon Cain, Gen. 4:15. When he spake to Noah, Gen. 9.
2. The blood of an innocent, spotless being. Men may deserve to die. "Soul that sinneth," &c. Christ was perfect, no stain, no weakness, no guile.

3. The blood of a holy, benevolent being. He was endowed with every excellent quality; just, good, merciful. Every virtue and grace in him in a state of perfection.
4. The blood of the Son of God. Christ was the tabernacle of the Deity, all the fulness of the Godhead. A creature is great in proportion to the resemblance to Deity. "Christ is the express image," &c. What value it imparted to Christ's person and work, the life of God's anointed Christ! If all creatures had been sacrificed in earth and heaven, not equal to this. Could easily have created more, but God never had, nor ever will have, but one "only begotten Son," Jesus Christ.

III. CHRIST'S BLOOD IS PRECIOUS SUPERLATIVELY.

1. Christ's blood made a true and real atonement for sin, which no other blood did or could. Animals could not. A million of them are not equal to one soul. How could the blood of unconscious, short-lived animals, atone for immortal souls? Angels could not. Sin affected body and soul. They have no bodies. Besides, they are a different order. The law was violated by human nature, and human nature must suffer or satisfy the broken law. Man could not. All are guilty. Law demanded his life. When he had given that he had nothing left. Now the law demanded obedience, Christ rendered it, and gave his own blood or life for the redemption of the sinner. It was truly human nature, though holy, and therefore possessing infinite virtue and efficacy.

- (1.) This atonement extended to all sin. The figurative atoning sacrifices under the law, made no provision for reckless, daring, presumptuous sins; but Christ's blood extends to all manner of sins and blasphemies, &c.
- (2.) This extends its influence to all sinners. Priests of old made an atonement for the congregation of Israel and proselyte strangers, Christ for the whole world. "Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man." "Who gave himself," &c. "And he is the propitiation," &c. And this extends to all ages. Of old the sacrifices had often to be renewed—the great sacrifice once every year. But this reaches from the beginning to the end of the world, eternity to eternity. "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many," Heb. 9:28; 10:11, 12, 14.

2. Christ's blood has given a most illustrious exhibition of the divine glory. Of holiness—sin pardoned, not palliated. God displayed his great abhorrence of sin. Justice magnified, and iniquity punished. Mercy triumphing in harmony with inflexible righteousness. God inexorably just and yet the Saviour.

3. His blood has procured for us inexpressibly great and precious blessings. Forgiveness of sin, peace and reconciliation with God, purity of heart, final victory over our enemies, and meekness for eternal glory.

APPLICATION

Value this blood, apply it, glory in it; exhort sinners to come to it.



We see the blood of Jesus shed
Whence all our pardons rise,
The sinner views th' atonement
made, And loves the sacrifice.

On Amusements

J. Blowood

From *The Baptist Magazine*, 1858

"Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it." Prov. 25:16

Are amusements lawful for the Christian? If so, what amusements? And to what extent? These are questions that claim our careful and candid consideration. In the present day, the pursuits of the church and of the world appear so nearly one, and the love of amusements has become so nearly universal, that every disciple of Christ is bound fairly to consider what course he ought to pursue in regard to them.

It may be presumed that innocent pleasures are not displeasing to God, and that Christians may consistently share in them to a certain extent. Disinclination for social delights is a disease, not a virtue; and asceticism is the foe to piety as well as to enjoyment. All nature teems with proofs of the benevolence of God, and his delight in the happiness of his creatures. He made our senses to be the inlets of enjoyment, and then clothed the earth with beauty, and filled the air with music. "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man." (Psalm 104:14-15a) True piety is not blind to the beauties of nature, nor insensible to the sweets of life. It finds pleasure in those innocent recreations which call into united exercise the intellect, reason, and affections; whilst it avoids those which excite the passions without engaging the mind and the soul.

Many Christians, however, condemn all recreation as a waste of time which belongs to God, and as therefore sinful. Those who, by severe self-discipline or natural aptitude, are able to devote all their time and energies directly to spiritual things deserve all honour. The man who can live every moment in direct communion with God, is pre-eminently a happy man. Such a one was the Son of Man. We should fix our eye and our heart on him, and, as closely as possible, tread in his footsteps; great will then be our happiness and reward.

But to those who take this position, and condemn every innocent relaxation, I say, be consistent. Let your whole life accord therewith. Do not, for instance, condemn all amusements and spend your time in inactivity, in unmeaning employments, or in idle and worse than idle gossip. Do not condemn amusements, and devote all your energies to the business of this life, and the pursuit of wealth. If you do, you are far less Christ-like than him who labours for the glory of God and the good of man, though he occasionally spends an hour in recreation. Be consistent; sleep only to restore vigour; eat only to sustain life; labour only to obtain what is essential to an honest livelihood; eschew ornaments and elegancies; your time, your wealth, your energies, your all, devote to God; and remember, that "when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." (Luke 17:10) and beware, too, lest whilst you "strain at a gnat, you swallow a camel." (Matt. 23:24)

Such cases as those now adverted to are however the exception, not the rule. Man needs relaxation; both mind and body require rest; and it is better to find it in amusements than in listless inactivity. Man is endowed with certain tastes, and it cannot be supposed that God intended them to be entirely neglected, and they may be made to serve purposes at once pleasant and profitable. Further, Christians are associated with others in the relationships of life. Relatives and friends are necessarily brought into association with one another.

Now what course should Christians pursue towards their unconverted relatives and associates? By what course are they most likely to benefit them and glorify God? Should they be austere ascetics, manifesting their Christianity by the avoidance of all relaxation; condemning all mirth and recreation, and frowning on every pursuit or pleasure not strictly or technically religious? Decidedly not. They would be much more likely to benefit their unconverted companions by mingling in their innocent amusements, and thus showing them that religion teaches us to be happy and make others happy; at the same time winning their confidence, and thus preparing the way for a word that may turn their thoughts to Christ.

The indiscriminate condemnation of amusements by Christians has done much harm to the sinner, and hardened many a heart against God. Besides which, joyfulness is the Christian's special prerogative: "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works." (Eccl. 9:7)

I am not then prepared to condemn amusements of all kinds, and under all circumstances. But it must be admitted that amusements may present powerful temptations to evil; that when there is no evil in them per se, they may exert an evil influence; and that many amusements are in themselves evil, or are inseparable from evil. Now whenever this is the case it is clearly the duty of the Christian to abstain from them. Not, indeed that all amusements that present temptations are to be avoided. If I avoid every engagement that does or may involve temptation, I know not what engagements I should not avoid. I must withdraw from the business of this world altogether; I had need become a hermit, and seek a lodge in some vast wilderness. Whilst even there, Satan would intrude, or my own thoughts become tempters.

To battle with temptation would be a nobler deed, and to struggle for the crown which is promised to him that overcometh. But if any amusement become to me a powerful temptation; if I find, for instance, that it excites unholy desires, tempts me to neglect duties, or brings me into too close an association with ungodly companions, then it is clearly my duty to avoid it. Christ taught his disciples to pray, "Lead us not into temptation." (Matt 6:13) If we ask God not to lead us into temptation, we are not to rush into it. If duty leads us into temptation we may go safely, trusting on the arm of God; but if inclination leads us there, we have no right to expect help.

If, then, any amusement prove to me a powerful temptation, to me that amusement is sin. I say, to me, not necessarily to another, for the same action may be safe for one and not for another, and may be right and wrong for the same reasons under different circumstances. The wind that puts to death the plant may brace the hardy shrub; and the same rays of the sun which cause one flower to wither may excite another into bloom. I must not judge others by myself, nor condemn in others everything I condemn in myself.

An amusement apparently harmless may under certain circumstances, be injurious, and must then be avoided. For example, a Christian loves music; this love of music leads him frequently to the concert, and brings him into close association with companions devoid of religion. As a consequence the business of life is neglected, and, which is of infinitely more importance, the worship of God and the welfare of his soul. The worldly atmosphere around him enfeebles the growth of piety, and induces indifference to, or a distaste for religious pursuits. He finds that he must entirely crucify his musical taste, or sacrifice his spiritual welfare. His duty is plain.

Jesus Christ supplies the rule: "If thy right eye offend thee (i.e. prove a stumbling-block), pluck it out, and cast it from thee—or thy right hand, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." (Matt. 5:29) The music may not in itself be sinful; it is not the concert that may be wrong; but though the music or the concert be in themselves harmless, if they are to him injurious, make him neglect his duties, or prove a stumbling-block to his salvation, then to him they are sin; and his duty is AT ONCE to crucify the taste and abstain from the gratification.

In this respect all forms of gambling are particularly objectionable. I do not say that in a game of cards there is anything absolutely sinful. But it is a complete waste of time; it does not bring any faculty of the mind or body into healthful exercise to render it sufficiently exciting. It is generally played for money, and though the stake be small, not more than the marble to the schoolboy, it begets a love of play, feeble perhaps at first, but strengthened by every game, which may never be conquered. A gambling disposition cannot be too strongly deprecated, whether manifested in amusement or in business; and many of the speculations and elsewhere are quite as sinful and infinitely more dangerous than games of chance.

Their injurious influence on OTHERS is a reason why the Christian should, under certain circumstances, avoid some amusements. There is a sense in which I am my brother's keeper. I am not, indeed, always bound to regard the scruples of others, and make their opinions the rule of my conduct. I leave others to follow the convictions of their consciences, and feel myself free to follow the convictions of my own. But if my conduct be a stumbling-block to a weak brother, and lead him astray, then Christian charity, and duty also, should lead me to surrender any gratification, though it be to myself harmless. For instance, I may attend a concert without injury to myself; my companion, influenced by my example may, as

already pointed out, attend and experience injury; or my attendance at places of innocent amusement may encourage him to attend those of a more questionable character; under such circumstances my course is clear.

There are some amusements in themselves harmless, but whose concomitants are, in most cases, sinful, or at least questionable. Such amusements the Christian cannot frequent without sin—for instance, the theatre. There may be nothing wrong in the play itself; what may be read for amusement may be witnessed. The mere performance of a play in itself unobjectionable, cannot fairly be objected to. But the concomitants of a theatre are always vicious. The performers can hardly be strictly chaste; the environs of a theatre are always scenes of iniquity; and a pure stage has always been a failure. I feel no hesitation, then, in condemning the theatre, on the ground of the evils which invariably, if not necessarily, stand associated with it.

The race course must be included in the same category. The race itself may be harmless. But the betting and other evils invariably, if not necessarily, associated with the turf, render it a place in which the Christian ought not to be found. The ballroom should be shunned on the same grounds. There may not be any harm in the mere act of dancing, but the late hours, the devotion to dress, the unhealthy excitement, and the provocations to vanity, invariably connected with the ball, are sufficient to make it a very unsuitable place for a Christian. It may be said that these are not necessary accompaniments of a ball. I answer, they are its invariable accompaniments, and that amounts to the same thing. The reading of the Bible and prayer must be very tame and very gainful to one who has just withdrawn from the exciting atmosphere of a dancing room. Any amusement which is found to unfit the mind for devotion, is, on this ground, unsuited for a Christian, and ought to be avoided by him.

There are some amusements which are wrong in themselves, and therefore to be avoided. It is unnecessary to mention them. One, however, which I cannot but regard as such claims a passing remark—the Oratorio. There are many who condemn concerts, and yet frequent oratorios. Their conduct is incomprehensible. Oratorios, when conducted by pious persons, and some when not so conducted, may be innocent; but for ungodly men to take the most solemn words upon their lips, such as parts of Mozart's Requiem, or Handel's Messiah, simply to afford amusement, must be offensive to God; and infinitely more grievous in his sight must be the conduct of his professed children, who derive gratification from such impious mockery of himself, and desecration of holy things. It may be objected that, on the same grounds, all singing should be excluded from our places of worship. It must, however, be remembered, that the ungodly in our religious assemblies sing of their own accord, neither at the invitation nor for the amusement of the pious. The Christian identifies himself in prayer and praise simply with the godly present, and is not responsible for the conduct of others.

One important question in connection with this subject is, what course of conduct in relation to amusements should Christian parents pursue towards their children? Should they allow them to follow out their own inclinations, or should they exercise restraint, and if so, to what extent? This is a very difficult point. As to amusements sinful in themselves, or in their associations, the Christian parent should forbid them, mildly but firmly; and explain why he forbids them. As to other amusements, supply them to your children, of that kind, and to that extent, which shall not injure them, and make as far as possible their amusements auxiliary to their intellectual and moral advancement.

Direct their pleasures, and as far as possible share them, and you will thus gain a place in their hearts, which will at all times impart the power of law to your simplest wish, and induce a ready relinquishment of the amusements you may condemn. Never cultivate a taste, the gratification of which you feel it wrong to encourage. Let them not, for instance, be taught dancing, if you mean to discourage the ball-room. To do so would be both dangerous and cruel. The parent who directs and unites in the amusements of his family will have his reward. He who drives his children to seek recreation away from home, will generally have to mourn over the results of his conduct. Happy is that parent who knows what to forbid and what to allow.

On the whole then it appears that we should not so much condemn amusements as the LOVE of amusements. It is not the occasional mingling in the enjoyments and pleasures of this life that will injure us, but the constant pursuit of them. It is when amusements are eagerly sought, and day after day are delighted in, that they are injurious. And then it is not so much the immediate effect of each pleasure, as the general frame of mind produced. The effect of the love and pursuit of amusements, is to enfeeble the mind, to induce and strengthen the craving for present gratification, and thus to promote

selfishness. It destroys all noble ambition and manly vigour; it indisposes to exertion, to duty, and to the self-denial which philanthropy and piety demand.

They who have enlightened and blessed the world—whose memories have been embalmed, and whose deeds have left their trophies on the plain of time—have not been the votaries of pleasure; but men whose bodies and minds have been invigorated and braced for active life by self-denial and contempt of present gratification.

The history of by-gone ages may teach us that contempt for pleasure has conducted to greatness, and the love of amusement has led to degradation and ruin. Look at Greece—as long as the brave was the good, she was mighty and glorious; but when the beautiful and the harmonious became synonymous with the excellent, she decayed and withered. Look at Rome—in the days of her Commonwealth, manhood was virtue; in the days of her decay, beauty and art were substituted for manhood. Rulers and people surrendered themselves to the gratification of their tastes and passions; luxury and pleasure became the grand objects of life; and it was not long before her dominion and glory faded away, and she fell an easy prey to barbarism.

And so will it ever be both with countries and individuals; when a nation becomes worldly and voluptuous—fond of shows and show—delighting in accomplishments and amusements—preferring the external and flashy to the real and substantial—it loses its strength, and its "end draweth nigh." May our nation be preserved from such ruin! When we contemplate the prevalence of the aesthetic in religion, the growing preference of popular and exciting preaching to that which is instructive and scriptural, the rage for accomplishments and amusements which marks all classes, the increasing thirst for gold and love of appearances, and the little self-sacrifice and self-denial which are found even among Christians, one almost trembles. May God avert the threatened danger, and restore our nation to a sound mind and healthy condition!

Beware, then, of the intellectual and moral degradations to which the paths of pleasure conduct. Allow not those habits to be formed in youth which may never be overcome; permit not your faculties and energies to be weakened by the fascinations of pleasure, and your future life enfeebled and embittered. Fix your eye on Christ; follow in his footsteps; and through the path of self-denial and sacrifice, arrive at the reward and crown.

And let the Christian remember, that amusements, how innocent whatsoever in themselves, become dangerous and sinful when an immoderate attachment is felt for them; when they are more than a passing recreation; when they are essential to his happiness; when the time that ought to be devoted to God is devoted to them; when the mind dwells with fond recollection on the past amusement, and anticipates with longing anxiety the one in prospect; when the concert-room or evening party is preferred to the house of prayer or religious instruction; when the Christian can find time for amusement, and not for the week-day service of the sanctuary; they then usurp that place in his affections which belongs to the gospel. This love of amusement, alas, is too prevalent among professing Christians. It indicates a feebleness of piety, and a worldly-mindedness, inconsistent, if not incompatible, with genuine Christianity. This is "to love the world and the things of the world;" (I John 2:15) this is to be "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God;" (II Tim. 3:4) this is "to mind earthly things," (Phil. 3:19) and to be "enemies of the cross of Christ." (Phil. 3:18)

But there are pleasures with which no alloy mingles, and which may be indulged in without restraint; which leave no injurious influence on the mind, and which at once gladden and strengthen the heart; pleasures which follow in the train of Him at whose birth angels sang "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will towards men." (Luke 2:14) Of divine wisdom it is true that "her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." (Prov. 3:17)

True religion sweetens every sorrow, and hallows every enjoyment. It lights up the path to our Father's house, where the redeemed, as one happy, loving family, shall feast at the marriage supper of the Lamb; and in "his presence find fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore." (Ps. 16:11) If thy heart be full of these, if Jehovah be thy Father and thy Saviour, and death thy friend, then thou mayst mingle in the innocent pleasures, and partake of the inferior joys, with which a bountiful God has enriched this world. But if this be not the case; if thy sins be unpardoned, and if death may in a moment bear thee away to everlasting woe, what madness to linger, even for an hour, amid the pleasures and amusements of earth!

Imagine a condemned cell turned into a ball-room, or the deck of a dismantled and sinking ship covered with a vain and frivolous crowd of dancers, intent upon displaying their agility and grace once more before the hungry waves suck them

down in the vortex. Neither of these scenes would be more incongruous than a company of guilty condemned sinners on the brink of perdition, giving themselves up to vain delights and thoughtless mirth.

Imagine thyself borne away from the festive scene to the bar of God, there to hear the sentence from his lips—"Cast ye the UNPROFITABLE servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 25:30)

Dear friend, let safety, not pleasure, be thy first pursuit; let heavenly, not earthly, joys be thy first aim; give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids, until thou hast secured, through Christ, the friendship of God, in whose "favour is life," (Ps. 30:5) and whose "lovingkindness is better than life." (Ps. 63:3) Then, on earth shalt thou have secure delight, and in heaven eternal bliss. Then shalt thou find that "light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." (Ps. 97:11)



God's Blessings Are Upon Independent Baptists

Norman H. Wells

From *The Church That Jesus Loved*, 1973 (Chapter 9)

- Number of Independent Baptist Churches is Growing by Leaps and Bounds
- Missionaries are Being Sent Out
- Bible Schools Are Growing and New Ones Are Being Started
- There Are Many Fine Baptist Publications and More Are Coming
- Fine Fellowship Exists Among Pastors and Churches
- Revival is On Every Hand and Souls Are Being Saved

We are so thankful to be a part of this great surge among Baptists. The tide has turned! For a long time Baptists were sold on the idea that the only way to get God's work done was with great Conventions, Associations, Fellowships, etc. It seemed to be forgotten that the only organization mentioned in the New Testament is the local church. Baptists set out to build something bigger and better! Group after group blossomed on the scene only to wither away.

Then the stirring began. All over the country voice after voice was heard calling God's people back to God's way of doing things. God's people began to listen. Churches began to listen. Man-made organizations were examined again. In various sections of the country these Baptists began seeking one another out for fellowship. The number increased.

Today, all over this United States there are multiplied hundreds of Baptist churches who have severed all connections with these man-made, extra-scriptural organizations and are giving God's way a chance. The result is amazing!

Convention, Association and Fellowship Baptists are asking themselves the question, "What's the use of all this organizational machinery?"

No longer can the Organization Bigwigs say it can't be done without their machinery because it is being done. God's way works! Independent, local, Baptist churches (without Boards, Conventions, Associations, Fellowships, etc.) are sending out missionaries, training preachers, publishing papers, starting new churches, having wonderful fellowships, and enjoying God's blessings.

Any independent Baptist church will tell you that they have opportunity to do everything God requires of a church. What then is the need of any other organization?

THERE IS NOT ONE SINGLE OPPORTUNITY OR ADVANTAGE POSSESSED BY A CONVENTION, ASSOCIATION OR FELLOWSHIP CHURCH THAT IS NOT AVAILABLE TO EVERY INDEPENDENT CHURCH!

Independent Baptists are happy folks. The fellowship is wonderful. They are rejoicing in the return of God's people to God's way, and are trusting that many, many more will turn God's business back into God's hands.



Maternal Piety

Jabez Burns

From *Mothers of the Wise and Good*, 1860

When I say that there is a connection between the piety of mothers and the salvation of their children, I do not mean the connection which God has instituted in the covenant of grace; for this covenant applies equally to both parents. There is something peculiar in the case of a mother so that, independently of the covenant of God, maternal piety is more likely to be followed by the conversion of children than the piety of a father.

1. **A mother's piety is peculiarly affectionate.** There is nothing severe or ceremonious in its exercise, but it mingles itself with the numberless little natural kindnesses by which the heart of a child is won, and acquires a hold on the first rising affections of his mind. A pious mother, while she watches over her sleeping or sick child, while she guides his tottering steps, or furnishes him for his school, or his pastime, or leads him up to the house of God, has a yearning of the soul over his soul, and cherishes and often expresses a feeling of solicitude for his eternal welfare which diffuses a restraining and chastening influence over his mind while it is precious also in the sight of God.

Her prayers, which she pours out over him, are in those wonted accents of tenderness and love, which have always soothed his mind, and kindled his affection. Her counsels, and admonitions, and chastisements, are the manifest dictates of a heart laboring with desires for his conversion and salvation, and carry with them, on that account, an authority which truth and reason alone would be unable to exert.

2. **A mother's piety is familiar.** It labors with her child, and before God on his behalf, in a style which he understands and feels. The language of her counsels and her devotions is a simple and artless expression of her desires adapted to his youth, his inexperience, his infirmities and temptations. It comes home to his heart. He recognizes the voice that speaks to him to be the same which has always lulled him into his evening slumbers, and greeted him with morning salutations; and he feels that it means as much kindness for him, when speaking in counsel, or in prayer, as when it has soothed his pains, or tempted his smiles, or encouraged his festivities. If a father's efforts for the spiritual good of his child produce more of reverence, solemnity, and fear; yet a mother applies herself more directly to the heart, and fastens there a cord which holds the affections and the sensibilities when the other more powerful emotions have subsided.

A mother will teach her child, will soften, or restrain, or encourage him with incomparably more facility and effect than any other individual. She will fix in his mind an outline of the whole history of the Bible, of its system of doctrines and precepts, sooner and better than any other person can initiate him into the first principles of Divine knowledge. He understands her tones, her looks, her gestures. They all speak to him, and they fix an impression which is always sure and abiding. And there is no time when a pious mother cannot have access to her child.

How soon will she penetrate his heart, and ascertain the causes of all his troubles; how soon will she allay the storm of passion; how soon apply to him the admonitions of Providence; how soon excite an inquisitive spirit, and how successfully follow up a father's sterner reproof and correction, with heart-breaking expostulations, reducing him to penitence, and fortifying him against future temptation. A pious mother is a sort of better conscience to a child, a messenger of God ever the most ready and the most able, next to the Holy Spirit, to rescue him from the power of his depravity, and turn his feet into the paths of peace.

3. A pious mother has peculiar opportunities of saving her children. She is ever at their side to restrain their corrupt propensities, to regulate their inordinate desires, and encourage them to obedience. She can turn almost every event of Providence into an occasion of salutary instruction, can mingle counsel as it were with their medicine and their food, can be ever distilling upon them the wholesome words of eternal life, as the dew upon the tender herb, and the soft rain that waters the earth. Her mind is not burdened with cares for their sustenance, but with anxieties for their salvation; and while preparing for them their raiment, while superintending their tasks or their sports, she can be lifting up to God her desires for their everlasting happiness.

Her watchful eye can pierce through their duplicity, and search out their secret sins, while the leisure that God gives her for this very purpose can be employed in explaining to them the obligations and sanctions of the Divine law, the nature of their corruptions, the consequences of their sins, and the way of salvation through the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

It is hers to commend them to God, when she commits them to their pillows, and when she leads them out to the employment of the day. They may enjoy her guidance as their constant monitor till they are qualified to go out to another residence. And her daily prayers and frequent correspondence may afterward keep alive the precious instructions of their childhood, and procure for them the better teaching and direction of the Holy Spirit. To the mother belongs most appropriately the duty and privilege of administering line upon line, and precept upon precept.

To bring up her children for God is her great business, her honorable distinction, and it is connected in the Divine Providence with results the most encouraging and glorious. Not, indeed, that there is any intrinsic efficacy in the means which she employs, not that any means will necessarily procure the salvation of the soul, but so it is that God accomplishes the purposes of his mercy. He saves according to his pleasure, may be educated for his kingdom. He blesses her counsels and her prayers because to this end He qualified her to promote the interests of his Kingdom.

We cannot better conclude these forcible remarks than by the following affecting testimony and beautiful verses:

"When I was a little child," said a good old man, "my mother used to bid me kneel down beside her, and place her hand upon my head while she prayed. Ere I was old enough to know her worth she died, and I was left too much to my own guidance.

"Like others, I was inclined to evil passions, but often felt myself checked, and as it were drawn back by a soft hand upon my head. When a young man, I traveled in foreign lands, and was exposed to many temptations; but when I would have yielded, that same hand was upon my head, and I was saved. I seemed to feel its pressure as in the days of my happy infancy, and sometimes there came with it a voice in my heart, a voice that must be obeyed—'O do not this wickedness, my son, nor sin against thy God.'"



"Where'er believers meet,
There, they behold thy mercy-seat;
Where'er they seek thee, thou art found,
And every place is hallow'd ground."

The Power of Conscience

J. Shannon

From *The Baptist Pulpit*, 1850

It is hard to pursue a course of sin in opposition to the dictates of conscience. There may, no doubt, be some transgressors, who, by a long-continued course of sinning, have acquired a character for sinning so desperate, and attained to a pre-eminence in guilt so fearful, as to be seldom annoyed with the visits of remorse. Their situation is truly terrible; terrible beyond all description, and hopeless, I had almost said, as if they were already damned!

The heart sickens at the contemplation of their wretched case, and we hasten to consider the transgressor in a condition less fearful, where he has not yet been utterly deserted by the Holy Spirit, nor had his conscience seared as with a hot iron. This is a more favorable view, which charity would fondly take of the greater part of the family of transgressors. How fares it, then, with the sinner even in this state?

Although he may be surrounded with all those circumstances, which make him an object of envy to the unthinking multitude, the eye of faith can easily discover that his way is hard. Created by God, sustained by him, and redeemed by the blood of his dear Son, reason tells him that he should pay supreme regard to the will of his Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor. Memory recounts the innumerable blessings his heavenly Father has lavished upon him from time to time, reminds him of his entire want of suitable affections to that Father, and the many crimes he has shamefully committed against him; points him to the blackness of darkness, that might have been his portion; bids him look to bleeding love on Calvary; and conscience asks, Is it reason, is it gratitude, that such a friend should be so requited?

Oh! There are seasons when the ungodly, even in his most prosperous state, must feel under the lash of a guilty conscience, that the curse of Cain is on his path; and that fugitive and vagabond in the sight of heaven, is the character of all who walk in it. But the sinner stops not here. Every day's experience teaches him, that earth is by no means a state of permanency; that here he has no abiding city; and that could he possess all things under the sun, and enjoy them to the greatest possible extent, it would avail him but little; for soon he must bid them an eternal farewell, and take his departure for an unseat world.

In the Bible he reads, or hears read, the story of a character that much resembles his own. He reads of a rich man, clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day, whose history is closed in the words, piercing like a dagger to his soul— "He also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." (Luke 16:22-23)

How knowest thou, O foolish man, says conscience, that ere long thy case may not be like his? Why shouldst thou run so fearful a hazard? Dost thou, indeed, as a rational being, prefer the body to the soul, earth to heaven, and the short and fleeting moments of this life to the never-ending duration of eternity?

And the poor man, although conscience tells him, and the Scriptures tell him, that this night his soul may be required at his hands, yet he still continues to drudge and toil more laboriously than a galley-slave in the way of transgression, that in the end he may reap the wages of eternal death!

Surely if there be a hard way on earth, it is that of the transgressor against God. Did he enjoy peace of mind, it would, at least for the time, be some alleviation. But "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. (Isaiah 57:21)

At war with himself and with his best interests, at war with his better judgment, his conscience, and his God, he is doomed, under the influence of a wretched infatuation to walk self-condemned in a path, where he enjoys not one particle of true happiness in time. And at the end of which he can look for nothing but blackness of darkness, the bitter pangs of remorse, and the stings of an accusing conscience throughout eternity. From the hard, miserable fate of transgressors may the good Lord deliver us.

