

TO ALL RULERS OF FAMILIES, Of whatever sort, herein concerned.

—By *George Fox*

I. To all rulers of families of whatever sort, who have an authority and command of children and servants, and who should train them up in the fear of God, and in modesty, civility, sobriety, and subjection, and gravity; but on the contrary, the unchristian-like conduct is manifest, and discovers itself, and shows itself forth unto all people. For look upon yourselves and children, how wild and wicked they are: vain, proud, and a multitude of unsavory words. It has been the practice of your servants and children to almost continually come to the elect people of God, in scorn called Quakers, to their meetings, and houses, scoffing, and scorning, and mocking, with all manner of slanderous expressions they can invent, casting upon the same people; and abusing them verbally, and casting mire and dirt, and stones at their windows. If you had either modesty, gravity, or good a neighborhood, you would be ashamed to see your children do such things, or hear of it, which many times have been said before several of you. Thus you act contrary to christianity, in which lies virtue, and also have cast the law of God behind your backs, which is to do unto another as you would be done unto. What, would you have us to mock and scoff, and throw dirt at you, as you go to your meetings, and throw stones at you in your meetings, and break your windows? Would you say this was good neighborhood, or good christianity? Or is it observing the law to do unto another as you would be done unto? So by this, do you not see that your young people are not trained up in soberness? For many old people have encouraged youth and young people into the same actions, which shows gravity has been lost, when old people should be grave and moderate, and young sober and temperate.

II. And also all you masters of colleges and schools, of whatever sort, are you not ashamed to hear of the abuses of your scholars? Have not you been often told of it, and it laid before you? Should you not teach your scholars civility and manners? Do not evil words corrupt good manners? Is this breeding and manners, for your scholars to come to sober and civil peoples' houses, and break their windows, and throw dirt at civil people, and throw dirt and stones among them, when they are met together to wait upon the Lord, and mock, and scoff,

and reproach, and revile, and slander with the slanderous tongue all manner of slanders they can invent? Would you be so served yourselves, and so done by?

Do you either train up your children in the fear of God, or law, or gospel? Are not you ashamed of these things? Or do you call this neighborly? Or are you not ashamed to look your neighbors in the face? Surely gravity, modesty, civility, sobriety, and the training up children in the fear of God is lost among you; and does not this shame christianity to all forms; for many of the heathen have not been so bad towards us.

III. All you heads of colleges, are you not ashamed to see your scholars or hear of their rudeness, and of their unvirtue, and of their unsoberness, and ungraciousness, and of their immodesty in their carriage towards the sober people of God, in scorn called Quakers among you? Have not your young scholars torn their clothes and knocked them down in their channels, and shed their blood in the streets upon your pavements, and torn their clothes off their backs, and thrown dirt and stones and muck among them, and upon them, and broken their windows, and forms where they sat, and leapt among them, and bruised them, and beat them, with the same things that they broke off their forms, and brought drink and threw it in the faces of them that met in the fear of God, and ask for lasses, women, and wenches; are these the two fountains and eyes of the nation, and the two well-springs of learning, and the two famous universities of the land!* Oh do not these actions shame modesty, and christianity? Are these fit to be ministers, and trained up ministers of Christ, among whom is no better government? For it is not a few that have come, but sometimes by many scores they have showed these many abuses in and at our meetings. Does not this show impiety, and does not this manifest the orders and the governors, and the masters and heads of colleges to not be grave themselves? Seeing their young men are not sober, manifest the old are not grave, who should train up the young to be sober and temperate. For where there is soberness, and temperance, and modesty, and civility, and gentleness, and meekness, and holiness, and righteousness, is what beautifies a people among you? For would you be so served yourselves, for any other people to come and mock, and reproach, and throw stones and dirt among you in your meetings? Would you call this manners, breeding and gravity? Do not these actions shame both master and scholars, and dishonor virtue, breeding, and manners, and render to all strangers the incivility of their schools? We have found more gravity among the heathen than these two observations of the nation, which have not the name of piety, whose actions declare against it. Therefore, amend your ways and lack of control.

* To read the shocking records of these corrupt students of the ministry, in both Oxford and Cambridge, see [Persecutions](#).

IV. And all you ministers and overseers, are you not ashamed to see your people so rude, so light and so vain, and so immodest, and so intemperate; what drunkenness, and what swearing and profaneness is among you? Is it not like Sodom, and people more like Egyptians than christians? More wolves and Philistines than sheep? Therefore, consider what account you will give to the Judge of all, who will reward every man according to his works and doings. Therefore, where is modesty among you; where is sobriety? Do not your young men lack gravity, and your young women lack shamefacedness and sobriety? Have not you teachers lost both the example and pattern, which should have been showed forth unto people? Look among your people; is not good breeding almost lost, and good manners corrupted by evil words, and that people neither walk according to law nor gospel? For if they walked according to the law, then you would do unto all men, as you would they should do unto you; and if they walked according to the gospel, then they would love enemies. Is it loving enemies, to stone, mock, beat and slander the people of God, who are peaceably met together to worship God? Would you be so served yourselves? would you have others do so unto you? do you to others as you would have for others to do the same to you? Do you either observe the law or the gospel? Therefore, all rulers of families, schoolmasters, and mistresses, and masters of colleges, and governors, and teachers, and magistrates, and all people; do unto all men as you would they should do unto you; observe that rule of the law and the prophets, if you cannot obey the gospel, which is to love enemies, and love one another. If you cannot come so high as to a christian's life, as to the gospel which is to love enemies, which love out of a pure heart is the end of the law, yet at least come to obey the law, which is to do as you would be done by.

Friends,—You have had a day of persecuting, of imprisoning, of spoiling the goods of the people of God, denying the light, manifesting your works of darkness and deeds to be always such that hated the light, and persecuted it; that the place for the (children), professors of light was your jails, houses of correction, and stocks, and your whipping of such as walked in it. Now what good has all your profession done you, and your works, and what has it all come to? Was not your zeal blind, your worship in your wills, your humility feigned, and your religion vain? Does it not now show, that now it is not worth standing to, and by?

Now that your church faith and directory* is not worth taking up in the streets; may not all that pass by say, O how is the beautiful city fallen? What has become

of the wall and the doors? Has not your desolation now come, with the loss of your children? Do not many of you gnaw your tongues for pain, and stand aloof, and cry, alas, alas? How has the great city fallen? What howling is there among the merchants! So manifest that you are turned with the dog to the vomit, and the sow into the mire that had been washed away? Were you not at your height, as a sow that did rend, and as a dog that did bite? Was not persecution always blind?

*At this time Parliament has passed a law that all religious meetings were illegal, except that of the Church of England (Episcopal). The Quakers continued to meet openly and suffered arrest, fines, and imprisonment – even death. But the Presbyterians, Baptists, and Puritans tried to meet secretly or simply converted to become Episcopalians, including most of their ministers – many, seeking employment in districts far removed from their previous parishioners, to avoid the embarrassment of taking employment for money in the same church they had been so adamantly critical of being too popish in tradition, ritual, and ceremony.

Must you not give an account for all the goods you have seized as spoils, and all the evil deeds you have done, and for all the blood of the righteous you have spilled, both by whippings, imprisonings to death. For example, consider that innocent James Parnell, a saint, whose righteous blood lies upon you; besides many others, whose righteous blood has long cried for vengeance, which is now coming on the heads of you, who are spattered with the blood of the righteous, and filled yourselves with the spoils of the innocent, yes including many houses. Is not the Lord coming upon the spoiler, and to rebuke the devourer? What havoc you made a few years ago, when you were in the height and prime of your religion: whipping, stocking, imprisoning, hauling up and down to your courts? Hardly any could come near you, your pride had grown so high. Is not the Lord staining your pride, and laying your honor in the dust? It will be well for you if you find a place for repentance, and come to see the way of peace, and it is not hidden from your eyes. For the way you went on in, was not like to prosper, turning your sword backward against the righteous, and letting the evildoers have liberty until they got over you. So that the just hand of God is upon you, and you may say you had time, but did not prize it. Therefore, consider the days you have spent, and the deeds you have done, and evil ways you have walked in; and consider now if you can see yourselves where you are. See if all your religion, and your worship, and profession was not a work of darkness; for now in a tempest and storm you dare not hold to and continue it, it will not cover you: and so it was a religion for summer, when your sun did shine,

when you had the club, staff, and bag, then every viper crept out; but now winter is come, none of you are seen in public; so your flight is in the winter; so you are not only apostatized from the apostles' doctrine and religion, but also from your own; and what may all men say of you? now you are manifest to open view.

From a friend of your everlasting souls, and ever was one that never turned his back nor cheek from your smiting, nor his hair away from your plucking it off, who have plucked and struck until you have tumbled yourselves into the ditch, for we thrust you not in; and if you have not enough, our backs are ready still, and we still have a cow, and a little corn, and can give bread and drink to our enemies, if they want it; and also we have a pot, and platter, and a horse, and credit, who were so vilified by you, which you in your day thought to have taken all away.

George Fox